

## **Backgrounder: Sea-to-Sky Tourism Human Resources Strategy**

The Sea-to-Sky Tourism HR Strategy Steering Committee, working with go2, the British Columbia tourism industry's human resources association, is coordinating a comprehensive tourism labour market study of the Sea-to-Sky Corridor – including all communities from Britannia Beach to Pemberton.

The projects' steering committee is comprised of local tourism leaders, Chambers of Commerce, First Nations groups, union leaders, community colleges, and municipal officials. This will ensure that the strategies developed are well grounded with practical solutions to actual, local needs.

The findings from the research, community consultation sessions, focus groups and an online survey will be used to develop a comprehensive regional human resources plan to support tourism growth to 2015. The plan, expected to be completed by fall 2006, will include recommendations on recruitment, retention and training to support tourism growth now, during and after the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games.

### **Highlights of the Labour Market Analysis for the Sea-to-Sky Area - Released May 31, 2006**

- Growth in the four key tourism related industries of accommodation, food and beverage services, recreation and retail trade, is expected to add an additional 2,500 jobs in tourism related activity over the next 10 years to 2015.
- While the majority of the new jobs are expected to be in Whistler, the growth rate for tourism jobs in the surrounding area is projected as being slightly higher than for Whistler itself.
- The study also confirmed that labour shortages already being felt in the Sea-to-Sky region will worsen over the next decade.
- Tourism operators in the region need to rely on attracting an average of 3,500 (Note: This number does not fully account for the major seasonal differences and could be higher for the peak season) workers every year from outside the Sea-to-Sky area to meet demand for available tourism jobs. This accounts for fully one-third (32%) of the region's total tourism workforce.
- The study reports that it will not be possible to recruit sufficient workers from the local labour market over the next 10 years to establish a balance in the numbers. This annual shortfall of local workers is most acute in Whistler. While the area's population is expected to increase more rapidly than for B.C. as a whole, this increase will not compensate for the shortfall.
- This data does point out that there is some additional capacity in the Aboriginal population to be recruited into the tourism sector. However it emphasizes that this capacity is fairly limited and cannot meet to any meaningful extent the labour shortfall seen in the Whistler tourism labour market.
- Tourism operators in the Sea-to-Sky region have typically bridged this shortfall by recruiting workers from elsewhere in B.C., across Canada and, to a large extent, overseas workers with temporary work permits.
- The study reports that increased pressure from other sectors, an aging demographic, and the high cost of living in the resort region will make it increasingly more difficult to attract workers over the next decade.
- The report was commissioned the Sea-to-Sky Tourism Human Resources Strategy Steering Committee, research and analysis by Ruth Emery, Canbritic Consultants Ltd., Vancouver. Emery is highly regarded as a labour economist in Canada.
- Access the full report and related information online at [seatosky.go2hr.ca](http://seatosky.go2hr.ca).

### **Upcoming Public Forums:**

**Pemberton:** Monday, June 12<sup>th</sup> - 7:00 to 9:00 pm at the Pemberton Valley Lodge

**Squamish:** Tuesday, June 13<sup>th</sup> - 7:00 to 9:00 pm at the Capilano College Campus, Room 109

**Whistler:** Wednesday, June 14<sup>th</sup> - 7:00 to 9:00 pm at the Telus Conference Centre, Wedgemount Room

For those that cannot attend the public forum, there will be an online survey available for input. Visit [seatosky.go2hr.ca](http://seatosky.go2hr.ca) for details.

The public forums, additional focus groups and the online survey are being managed by Leadership Sea-to-Sky, a well-known local consulting firm on behalf of the Sea-to-Sky steering committee.