



News Release

April 25, 2003

A new private-sector tourism industry organization – go2 – is unveiled as part of a 5-year human resources action plan announced today

Vancouver, BC – A group of more than 70 tourism industry CEOs, general managers, human resource directors, industry association leaders and tourism educators have been working for the past year and a half to address issues surrounding the British Columbia tourism industry's challenge to find and keep the people it needs to support its growth strategy.

At a presentation this morning to tourism industry counterparts and journalists at the Fairmont Hotel Vancouver, the group presented its innovative strategy to tackle these issues and pave the way for businesses to meet goals through an investment in people.

With strong indications that the local tourism industry will exceed historical rates of business growth and revenue generation, this industry-financed and industry-driven action plan will help B.C. tourism businesses recruit, retain, train and develop its workforce. It is the first human resource development plan of its kind.

The issues include:

- stiff competition for qualified workers by other industries
- a decline in youth entering the labour pool
- the perception that tourism jobs are entry-level and low paying
- an unacceptably high turnover rate
- few part-time training options for retraining or upgrading
- a lack of credit transfers between training programs
- supervisory staff with weak human resource skills

"Tourism businesses would never consider operating without a marketing strategy," says Ian Powell, General Manager of the Fairmont Empress and task force Chair. "Now, these businesses can no longer consider operating without a human resources strategy. The best people to create an HR plan for British Columbia's tourism industry are those whose livelihood depends on it – people in the business.

"We are excited to announce that – after extensive research and industry consultation – an action plan is now in place to address all of the major issues we identified. Furthermore, we're pleased to announce the creation of go2 – a new, independent coordinating organization – to put this plan to work for British Columbia." more...

Ms. Arlene Keis is appointed go2 CEO effective immediately and reports through a board of industry leaders which is now being created. The organization has an operating budget of \$1.2 million funded in part through the sale of courses (including 'Serving it Right' and 'FoodSafe' by correspondence.) As well, go2 received funding and generates revenue through the Canadian Tourism Human Resource Council and sales of its training products and occupational certification. These programs were previously administered by the now-retired Hospitality Industry Education Advisory Committee. Tourism British Columbia will make a \$300,000 annual contribution to support this work.

Keis says, "With a clear mandate, approach and series of concrete tasks, go2 will help members of our diverse and growing industry become more attractive and successful employers. We must not forget that tourism ranks as one of the largest sectors of the British Columbia economy in terms of revenue and employment. The tourism industry should be commended for its vision and for recognizing the importance of effectively identifying and tackling its human resource issues. Our province-wide meetings were inspiring and go2 is set to start our work immediately."

With a small, focused and professional staff, go2 will help attract 50-84,000 new workers to the province before 2010; help establish high profile career pathways; help position tourism as an employer of choice; contribute to a dramatic drop in turnover rates; help establish learn-while-you-earn part-time upgrading options; encourage education to develop tomorrow's tourism industry leaders; and forge co-operative human resource efforts and partnerships that ensure a thriving industry.

The Human Resource Development Task Force is grateful for support of Tourism British Columbia, the Hospitality Industry Education Advisory Committee, the B.C. Ministry of Skills Development & Labour, the Council of Tourism Associations of British Columbia, the Government of Canada; the Hotel Restaurant Culinary Employees & Bartenders Union Local 40 and the individual industry representatives who volunteered their time.

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About the BC Tourism Human Resources Development Task Force

The British Columbia Tourism Human Resources Development Task Force is an independent tourism industry working group supported by Tourism British Columbia, Council of Tourism Associations and the Hospitality Industry Education Advisory Committee. Ms. Sylvia Holland, consultant, was the task force independent Chair. Mr. Ian Powell General Manager, Fairmont Empress was the task force Industry Chair. Its work started in fall 2001 and is now complete.

Responsibilities now fall to the new provincial human resources coordinating body, go2 – the resource for people in tourism.

2.

About tourism in British Columbia

- 267,000 workers in BC tourism-related businesses
- 112,000 workers in direct tourism employment
- 200,000 direct employment by 2012
- 18,000 tourism businesses in BC
- Serving 30 million overnight visitors by 2012
- \$9.3 billion revenue generated in 2002
- \$20 billion annual revenue by 2012
- \$1 billion annual contribution to provincial government expected to double by 2012

3.

Action Plan for go2

Year 1

Compensation & benefits research

Begin development of human resources portal website where people can find jobs and businesses can recruit candidates

“Career in Tourism: Getting Started” update

Customize career awareness info sessions and expand target audiences

Identify & develop stronger linkages between career awareness activities and industry recruitment efforts

PR campaign to enhance industry image as employers of choice

Groundwork for tourism “magnet schools”

Provide best HR practices information to employers using a variety of information vehicles including hosting workshops or roundtables

Establish foundation for a clearinghouse for HR information

Enhance current on-line directory of training resources

Develop partnerships and implement strategies to ensure education & training suppliers are aligned with the industry’s needs

Establish partners and process to ensure the industry’s voice is heard regarding employment-related legislation, policy and regulatory issues

Years 2-5

Job recruitment and career awareness fairs

Portal website enhancements

Tourism magnet school pilot

Teacher education

Round tables and workshops

HR resources clearinghouse

Skills recognition framework

Credit transfer strategies

Industry endorsement of training programs

Ongoing planning & research