

B.C. Tourism Industry Launches Plan to Attract, Retain and Train More Workers

go2 spearheads new tourism HR initiatives

VICTORIA, B.C. (February 26, 2004) – British Columbia’s tourism human resources organization – **go2** – is launching a new province-wide human resources strategy to address the shortage of skilled workers projected for the industry, the organization announced today at the annual B.C. Tourism Industry Conference in Victoria.

Arlene Keis, **go2**’s CEO, told conference delegates that studies are pointing to a looming labour gap that could hamstring the industry’s growth potential and compromise visitor services leading up to 2010. An additional 85,000 skilled and entry-level workers will be needed by then to fill a wide range of tourism careers from chefs and guides to hotel workers and resort managers, among others.

“Industry’s goal is to double annual revenues to more than \$20 billion by the next decade,” said Keis. “This can only happen if we find, keep and develop the right people to reach this goal. Tourism is a people business, and we need to get the message across that our industry can provide a rewarding, exciting career, not just entry-level jobs for British Columbians.”

A key component of the HR plan is a new tourism web portal – **go2hr.ca** – that includes a Job Board and information for jobseekers about starting a career in tourism, information on tourism education and training programs, as well as online HR development tips and case studies for tourism industry operators.

The site’s searchable Job Board will list available positions by job type, region and city. The **go2** organization will aggressively promote the Job Board with employers and jobseekers to make **go2hr.ca** the prime online marketplace for tourism jobs in British Columbia.

“If the tourism industry is to remain competitive and grow, we need to become the employer of choice for people thinking about where to start their career or business,” said **go2**’s industry board chair Simon Evans. “Our research shows that many jobseekers, parents and students are carrying around outdated ideas or misconceptions about the range of well-paying and rewarding career opportunities that exist in B.C.’s tourism industry.”

Later this year the organization hopes to launch a multi-year public relations and advertising campaign to address these misconceptions and improve the public's perception of tourism as a career choice. Titled "Behind the Scenery™", this career awareness campaign will feature real people, real jobs, and real careers in tourism. Tourism career opportunities will also be featured in recruitment drives and information sessions at career awareness and job fairs.

For tourism employers, **go2** will encourage industry HR "best practices" through a series of province-wide leadership roundtables and a new **go2** HR Clinic designed to help small and medium-sized tourism operators advance their human resources programs and practices.

Established by the B.C. tourism industry in April 2003, **go2** is the resource for people in tourism. Its vision is to help industry build the best tourism workplaces in the world. For more information on **go2** and human resource development initiatives for B.C.'s tourism industry, visit www.go2hr.ca.

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