



New poll pegs tourism as B.C.'s largest contributor of jobs and economic activity in the future

VANCOUVER, BC (June 22, 2004) - British Columbians believe tourism will be the largest contributor of jobs and economic activity in the future, according to a new Ipsos-Reid poll conducted by BC Technology Industries Association in collaboration with the Council of Tourism Associations of BC (COTA) and go2, which was released just in time for National Tourism Week.

Tourism led the way, with 46 per cent of respondents saying the industry will create the most jobs and economic activity in the future, ahead of high-tech (27%) and forestry (16%). In the same poll, British Columbians also ranked tourism as the largest current contributor to the provincial economy for the second year running.

"As Tourism Week falls on the final week of the election campaign, we are calling on Federal candidates to commit to making tourism a top funding priority and to improve transportation access," said Michael Campbell, president of COTA. "Canada is losing market share to foreign competitors because of budget cuts to the Canadian Tourism Commission and air services are in decline, while fees and add-ons are up."

Campbell challenged all parties in the federal election race to eliminate the air travellers security charge (ATSC) criticized by tourism groups across the country for sapping the industry of jobs and revenues. Campbell reminded those looking for support that Conservative Leader Stephen Harper has already said he would eliminate the \$12 tax.

"I'm not surprised by the poll results. Tourism is a major B.C. employer and is expecting significant growth in the future," said Arlene Keis, CEO of go2, British Columbia's tourism human resources organization. "There will be 84,000 new tourism jobs created in B.C. in the next decade. Many of these will be for management and skilled trades including cooks and chefs. National Tourism Week is the ideal time to celebrate the impact this industry has on our economy - now and into the future."

Organized around the theme, "Tourism Makes Canada Smile," National Tourism Week celebrates the Canadian tourism industry and highlights its contribution to national, provincial and local economies. In B.C., tourism is making residents and visitors alike smile this week with events such as the kick-off of Tourism Vancouver's 100 Days of Summer promotion, the Peace Country Blue Grass Festival in Dawson Creek, the 10th Annual Kispiox Valley Music Festival in Kispiox, the Ashcroft Stampede, the 2nd Annual Chemainus Guitar Fest, and Coal Miner Days in the Kootenays.

...continued next page

Established by the B.C. tourism industry in April 2003, **go2** is the resource for people in tourism. Its vision is to help industry attract and retain skilled employees and 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.

COTA is a federation of organizations and businesses representing an industry of nearly 18,000 businesses throughout British Columbia. COTA is an advocate for the \$9 billion tourism industry which is responsible for the direct employment of over 117,500 British Columbians.

-30-

Contact:

Mary Mahon Jones, Chief Executive
Officer
Council of Tourism Associations of
BC
Tel: (604) 685-5956 or cell (604) 833-
3290 cotabc@telus.net

Lynne Henshaw, Marketing
Manager
go2 – The Resource for People in
Tourism
Tel: (604) 930-9770 ext. 234
lhenshaw@go2hr.ca

Mel Buenaventura
Marketing Communications
Manager
BCTIA
Tel: (604) 683-6159
mel@bctia.org