

For Immediate Release

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B.C. TOURISM INDUSTRY STILL SHORT WORKERS DESPITE GLOBAL ECONOMIC WOES

Vancouver – go2 – B.C.'s tourism industry may be nervous about the current global economy, but it isn't removing its "help wanted" signs.

Ironically, despite the downturn, the industry remains hungry for workers and is heading offshore to find them.

A delegation from B.C. that includes employers, industry associations and representatives from BC's Provincial Nominee Program, is off to Europe for its latest manpower hunt.



They will take part in Destinations Canada 2008, a series of job fairs presented by the Embassy of Canada in France in partnership with public agencies from employment and international mobility in France, Belgium and Germany.

"We may be heading for challenging times, but at this point we don't know what the impact will be," says Arlene Keis, CEO of go2, B.C.'s tourism human resource association. "What we do know is we continue to be short on workers particularly in some key positions and we need to continue working on creative solutions."

One of go2's mandates is to work with the tourism industry to find workers. Projections for potential labour shortages in the tourism sector in B.C. indicate labour shortages in jobs will be 30,000 by 2015 and this figure will more than double to 64,000 in 2025.

Keis adds that despite economic fears, go2 is seeing more job openings cross their desks than ever before. "Canadian demographics are a major factor affecting our workforce," she says. "With baby boomers leaving the workforce in record numbers and declining fertility rates, we'll need people now and into the future."

Lynne Henshaw, go2's director of marketing & communications, will be attending the job fair. This is the second year she has participated and the first time that Germany has been included. go2's role at the fairs is to promote B.C. tourism jobs and collect resumes on behalf of employers unable to go themselves.

"With unemployment staying high among young people in countries such as France, qualified seasonal workers are relatively easy to find and are a great fit for the many seasonal jobs in tourism and hospitality," Henshaw says.

Tourism operators such as the Wickaninnish Inn and Pacific Coast Lines have been highly impressed with the workers they recruited from last year's event, Henshaw says. "These trade fairs invariably attract eager young people who are educated, multilingual and excited about a chance to work, live and play in British Columbia."

While it may seem odd to some to be travelling overseas to recruit workers right now, Henshaw says: "When everyone is bracing for the worst, employers still need workers and they need good ones who will provide visitors with a remarkable experience."

"Visitors who do spend their hard-earned dollars are going to have higher expectations than ever."

About go2:

go2 is BC's tourism human resource association helping the industry to recruit, retain and train to support industry growth. Tourism is one of the largest resource industries in BC comprising 18,000 mostly small to medium sized businesses which directly employ over 117,900 British Columbians. For more information, visit www.go2hr.ca.

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