

**For Immediate Release
September 24, 2007**

**IMPROVEMENTS TO THE TEMPORARY FOREIGN WORKER PROGRAM
WILL HELP BC TOURISM EMPLOYERS FILL LABOUR SHORTAGES**

VANCOUVER – go2 - the BC tourism industry’s human resources association was pleased to hear the joint announcement made today by the Honourable Monte Solberg, Minister of Human Resources and Social Development, the Honourable Colin Hansen, Minister of Economic Development and Minister responsible for the Asia-Pacific Initiative and the Olympics for British Columbia and the Honourable Olga Ilich, British Columbia’s Minister of Labour and Citizens’ Services. The announcement was on improvements to the Temporary Foreign Worker Program that will help BC tourism employers by making it faster to hire foreign workers when there are no Canadian citizens or landed residents available to fill the positions.

go2 has been working together with other industry associations and government at all levels to address the foreign worker and immigration policies as part of the strategy to deal with labour shortages in the tourism industry. “We view this announcement as positive news for our industry, and believe that the changes will have an immediate and favourable impact on the tourism and hospitality industry’s ability to fulfill its staffing requirements and offset severe labour shortages in some occupations,” said Arlene Keis, CEO of go2.

The newly announced pilot program will allow employers who are pre-authorized to expedite the process to obtain approval to hire foreign workers in several key tourism & hospitality occupations. These occupations are: Hotel housekeepers, front desk agents, snowboard and ski instructors, food and beverage servers, food counter attendants, tour and travel guides, and retail sales personnel.

Due to a lack of Canadian workers to fill these positions, employers across the province have been operating their tourism and hospitality businesses without a full complement of employees in these key occupations, (and additional occupations) for at least the past two years.

“We know that BC ski resorts are ramping up for the 2007/2008 season and are scouring BC and Canada for qualified staff. As it gets closer to opening day many will discover, like they did last year, that they will need additional staff. Under this new pilot program, ski areas will now be in a position to recruit from other countries to fill the gap in time for their peak winter season,” said Keis. “Using temporary foreign workers to fill the gaps has had minimum success in the past, and we welcome the federal and provincial government’s attention to both adding resources to this division as well as changing policy to facilitate accessibility to the program,”

go2 will work with industry and government in piloting this new program and will provide the industry with regular updates on its success. The full media release from today’s announcement as well as the application to apply for eligibility can be obtained [here](#).

About go2

Established by the BC tourism industry in April 2003, go2 is the resource for people in tourism. go2’s mission is to assist the tourism industry as they address challenges in attracting employees and retaining its workforce in order to support industry growth. For more

information on go2 and human resource development initiatives for BC's tourism industry, visit www.go2hr.ca.

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