

## **GO2 ADVISES VANCOUVER ISLAND TOURISM INDUSTRY TO PREPARE FOR FUTURE LABOUR SHORTAGES**

### ***Report: Long term labour demand will outstrip supply***

**June 23, 2009, Vancouver, B.C.** – Despite more people pounding the pavement this season, Vancouver Island's tourism employers need to be vigilant in implementing good human resources practices to recruit and retain a qualified workforce to meet future demand advises go2, BC's tourism human resource association, based on a recent labour market study conducted by Roslyn Kunin & Associates.

"The current slowdown in tourism and other sectors is making it easier to fill positions now," says Dr. Roslyn Kunin. "This is the ideal time to attract, train and retain workers as long term demographic trends foresee many people retiring and relatively few new young workers to take their places."

According to Kunin's report, core tourism occupations in the region will continue to grow positively and job demand will generally be met by available labour until 2013. However, an aging population will eventually create a severe labour shortage. Even more daunting is the fact that employment in food services, as well as front desk clerks and conference and event planners will start showing shortfalls as early as 2010.

"Despite the current job market, the industry needs to continue to actively promote tourism as a viable career choice to meet our future growth. Our industry relies heavily on youth for staffing, but that demographic is shrinking, so we need to target new labour pools," says Arlene Keis, CEO of go2. "Employers need to develop their organizations to be employers of choice to ensure they will be able to successfully recruit and retain employees over the next decade."

The labour market study was commissioned to estimate labour supply and demand in the Vancouver Island tourism region to 2015, identify gaps and ensure training requirements are aligned to provincial and regional needs. Regional tourism stakeholders provided input into the analysis and support the overall provincial human resources strategy already in place being coordinated by go2. Based on the research results, a long-term human resources plan will be developed for the region.

The report includes recommendations on strategies that employees, employers, the industry and government can undertake to help Vancouver Island's tourism industry to reach its goals for long term revenue and employment growth. While go2 already has a number of programs in place to address some of these issues, continued industry engagement and involvement is needed in each region. The recommendations include:

- ❖ Promoting the value of entry-level positions and how experience, education and training can help employees "move on up" with over 400 careers to choose from;
- ❖ Providing seasonal accommodation for staff in remote destinations and employers need to increase investment in training
- ❖ Educating employers on wages, benefits and incentives to help attract more seasoned managers and employees at all levels
- ❖ Government supporting small businesses with incentives to offset business costs like

affordable housing, and improve the foreign worker program.

The full report can be found on the go2hr.ca website: <http://www.go2hr.ca/research.aspx>

Results from additional regional labour market studies for the Lower Mainland and Okanagan are expected to be released later this summer.

**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](http://www.go2hr.ca).

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