

**For Immediate Release
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PROPEL™ to help skilled-labour-starved hospitality industry by putting more credentialed workers into the marketplace

Vancouver, BC – go2, the B.C. tourism industry's human resource association, officially announced today the launch of PROPEL, a new division of go2.

Recently branded as PROPEL, this division of go2 was sanctioned by the Industry Training Authority (ITA) to take on an industry-driven training mandate for British Columbia's tourism sector. The apprenticeship programs for cook, baker and meatcutter currently fall under the jurisdiction of PROPEL.

Labour shortages in the foodservice sector are at a crisis point and there is a severe lack of trained workers in the cooking field and other foodservice occupations.

With an ultimate goal of easing the labour crunch through increasing credential completion, PROPEL is gathering input from the industry on the program standards and delivery models to ensure the programs are designed to meet the needs of employers.

"We've done extensive research and employers have told us they want workers with more practical experience as part of their entry-level and apprenticeship training programs," says Kate Dodd, chair of go2's industry training advisory committee. "They want people who know what's involved in the trade, and can hit the ground running."

She adds that the students are looking for more on-the-job experience so they can understand the realities of the trade, earn while they learn, and complete the training faster so they can start their careers."

Today, PROPEL was launched at the B.C. Foodservice Expo at B.C. Place as part of a black box cooking competition dubbed "The Culinary Face Off". Working closely with the B.C. Chefs' Association, the contest was designed to show the value of the practical experience that comes from on-the-job coaching and the industry working together to achieve results.

It pitted Kirk McLean, Vancouver Canucks Alumnus and co-owner of So.Cial at Le Magasin Restaurant against Colin Hansen, B.C. Minister of Economic Development,

with coaching from prominent local chefs Jeffrey Van Geest, chef/owner of Aurora Bistro in east Vancouver, Robert Belcham, chef/owner of Fuel Restaurant on Vancouver's west side and hands-on assistance of young chefs from the junior chapter of the B.C. Chefs' Association, Max Wang (president) and Rachel Webster (incoming president).

Kirk McLean won the face off by one point. Hansen made an excellent showing and had much praise for PROPEL.

"We need a training culture in B.C. in order to be successful and that requires active involvement from industry," said Colin Hansen, Minister of Economic Development. "By forming PROPEL, the tourism industry's success can only continue to grow and the programs they offer will expand accordingly."

"Industry leadership like what we're seeing from PROPEL is critical to the success of B.C.'s industry training system," says Kevin Evans, ITA chief executive officer. "Apprenticeship is predominantly work-based, with about 80 per cent of training done on- the-job. Giving tourism and hospitality employers the opportunity to define the skills needed for success and productivity in today's workplace will ensure that they get a positive return on their training investment."

About the Industry Training Authority

The Industry Training Authority (ITA) was established in 2004 to significantly expand training participation in B.C. through the development of an industry-led training model. Industry Training Organizations (ITOs) are the principal way in which the leadership is being delegated and have been launched in six key B.C. industry sectors to date.

About go2

Established by the B.C. tourism industry in April 2003, go2's mission is to assist the tourism industry address challenges in attracting employees and retaining its workforce in order to support industry growth. For more information about go2 visit www.go2hr.ca. For more information about PROPEL, visit www.go2propel.ca.

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Note to editors: Further images of the Culinary Cook Off are available.

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