

For Immediate Release
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Bonjour Parisian. Voulez-vous couchez en BC?
Staff starved BC hospitality industry looks to Europe for workers.
Ski staff on the top of the list.

Vancouver, BC (Nov. 1, 2007) - They have the workers, we need the workers, and this month, a delegation that includes BC tourism employers will travel to France and Belgium to recruit 'etoile' (star) workers to this province's staff-starved tourism and hospitality industry.

At 8.7 per cent, unemployment in France is high, while here in BC, tourism operators are crying out for staff. Specifically, youth (15-25) unemployment in France at 22 per cent is double Canada's youth unemployment rate of 11 per cent.

go2, an industry association that helps the BC tourism industry with human resources issues, will be attending *Destination Canada 2007*, a series of job fairs presented by the Embassy of Canada in France in partnership with public agencies for employment and international mobility in France and Belgium. The fairs run from November 20 – 26 in Paris, Lyon and Brussels. More than 1,800 job seekers are expected to attend and check out employment opportunities in Canada.

go2 will attend as part of a BC delegation with financial support from Citizenship and Immigration Canada related to the Francophone Minority Communities initiative to increase the number of French-speaking immigrants to Francophone-minority communities.

go2's role will be to promote BC tourism jobs overall and to serve as an ambassador for employers who can't make the trip by bringing job descriptions, chatting with potential workers and collecting resumes. go2 has also been actively inviting BC tourism employers to join the BC delegation.

Recent changes to Canada's Temporary Foreign Worker Program have sped up approval for workers in hard-to-fill jobs, opening the door for employers to cast a wider net.

"We applaud these recent changes, as this will certainly help some employers filling specific positions that they can't find people for here in Canada," says Arlene Keis, CEO go2. "However, this is only one of many strategies that tourism employers need to do to address the labour shortages, including ensuring that they are strong employers and that they are recruiting from under-represented groups like new immigrants, aboriginals and persons with disabilities."

In addition to go2 and employers, the BC delegation attending these fairs will include representatives from the BC Provincial Nominee Program, Association francophone de la vallée de Comox, and the Comox Valley Economic Development Society. The BC delegation will be joined by 10 provinces, the Yukon and Northwest Territories.

Lynne Henshaw, Director of Marketing & Communications, go2 who will attend the fairs, says she's been snowed under by requests from tourism employers asking her to keep her eyes open for la crème de la crème.

Henshaw says the biggest push has come from the ski industry with employers seeking staff to fill positions from ski and snowboard instructors to lift operators to workers in the beverage, customer service, retail, rental, housekeeping, ticket sales, hotel and condo reservation trades. Big White Ski Resort, Mount Seymour Ski Resort, and Sun Peaks Resort Corporation are just a few of the employers who have contacted Lynne to gather resumes.

BC's tourism industry is at a crisis point with a tight labour market that is particularly concerning as the 2010 Olympics looms closer. It's an issue that's only expected to worsen over the next 20 years as low fertility rates and the retirement of baby boomers is expected to create a market crisis of epic proportions.

"We're happy to work with BC tourism operators on creative solutions to help them find the workers they desperately need," Henshaw says. "We all know there's no silver bullet and this is just one of many avenues, but it's an option we're willing to try to preserve BC's reputation as a first class destination."

About go2

Established by the BC 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

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