

For Immediate Release
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KOOTENAY ROCKIES TOURISM IMPLEMENTS PLAN TO TACKLE STAFF SHORTAGE ISSUES

Vancouver, BC – The Kootenay Rockies Tourism Board has teamed up with the Kootenay Rockies Regional Economic Alliance to tackle the region's tourism worker crunch.

The two organizations have partnered to implement a human resources strategy developed in response to a labour market report released in June.

The report, issued by go2, the BC tourism industry's human resources association, paints a grim picture of a tourism worker shortage in the Kootenay Rockies. It states that 20 per cent of the tourism jobs in the area are expected to go unfilled.

The eastern part of the Kootenay Rockies is one of the hardest hit areas of the province in terms of labour shortages. There, the situation is expected to worsen in the next decade with the number of key tourism occupations predicted to increase by more than 50 per cent to almost 7,000 positions. Seasonal employment is also a concern with 1,400 more workers in the summer and 550 in the winter peak needed to meet demand.

The Kootenay Rockies Tourism Human Resources Strategy Report was developed by a steering committee made up of local business leaders and tourism operators, the Kootenay Rockies Tourism Association, Ktunaxa Nation, go2, College of the Rockies, and Unite Here Canada Local 40 union.

Now, the Kootenay Rockies Tourism Board and the Kootenay Rockies Regional Economic Alliance have stepped up to execute the plan that includes recruitment, retention and training strategies to address labour market gaps and other human resources challenges.

"This is a serious issue and it's only going to get worse," says Chris Andrews, Community Programs Manager with the Kootenay Rockies Tourism Board. Tourism is a significant driver of our economy, but without workers, we can't deliver on the promise we make to visitors. We can't sit idly by. We need to take action."

John Leschyson, go2's Director of Industry Human Resources Development, is pleased that the strategy has been adopted and is looking forward to working with the region to help implement the strategy.

"This is an important first step," Leschyson says. "It's a great example of how collaboration can lead to action."

"It won't happen overnight, but it will happen," Andrews says. "We have the will, the strategy gives us the way, and by working together to challenge ourselves and our industry, we have an opportunity to set an example for the rest of the province."

About go2

Established by the BC tourism industry in April 2003, go2's mission is to assist the tourism industry by addressing 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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