



For Immediate Release

March 9, 2018

**Low-res photo attached. High resolution photos available upon request.*

Island Lake Lodge Wins 2018 Employees First Award

Kelowna, BC – Island Lake Lodge has won the coveted 2018 Employees First Award, presented this afternoon at the BC Tourism Industry Conference in Kelowna. The award is sponsored by go2HR, BC's tourism human resource association, as part of the 2018 Tourism Industry Awards.

The Employees First Award recognizes a British Columbia tourism industry employer who has upheld high standards of excellence in human resources and people management practices. Based in Fernie, BC, Island Lake Lodge runs on a grassroots, team-oriented organizational culture.

"At Island Lake we recognize how important our staff are to the overall success of the company. They are the very foundation of the brand and business and their stories are integrated into the overall story of the company," said Mike McPhee, Island Lake Lodge's Director of Sales and Marketing. "We have striven to be a modern employer with an offering of unique benefits, perks, flexibility, continual training / education and collaborative atmosphere."

The company's vision and values revolve around providing a safe workplace and a collaborative environment. Some examples include:

- Extensive onboarding training at the beginning of each season, covering occupational health and safety, social media, guest services, and more;
- Ongoing support for professional development, such as First Aid, WHMIS, avalanche training, Red Seal Chef training, and Serving It Right;
- Weekly staff recognition, and end-of-season awards that include peer recognition;
- Company perks and benefits including swag giveaways, staff meals, shuttle to work, catskiing trips and outings, and photos contests; and
- Open and ongoing communication including suggestion box for employees, regular team meetings, and monthly employee newsletter.

With such a dedicated focus on employee training and satisfaction, Island Lake Lodge has seen positive results as their retention rate steadily climbed over the years. In 2017, 90 per cent of staff had returned for the season. On TripAdvisor the company is ranked #1 in the speciality lodging category in Fernie and awarded a Certificate of Excellence. It is not uncommon to see individual staff regularly recognized by guests in post-visit surveys.

"Island Lake Lodge's inclusive, team-oriented culture contributes to a high level of employee satisfaction, which in turn leads to high levels of guest satisfaction," said Arlene Keis, go2HR's CEO. "By providing a work environment that employees can grow, thrive, and take pride in, Island Lake puts their employees first and boasts an impressive retention rate, setting a fine example for our industry as an employer. We congratulate the Island Lake Lodge team on their achievements."

To learn more about the BC Tourism Industry Awards, visit bctourismconference.ca/awards.

About go2HR

go2HR is BC's tourism human resource association, responsible for coordinating the BC Tourism Labour Market Strategy. go2HR provides tourism employers with resources in the area of recruitment and retention, as well as training and certification programs to develop relevant skills for prospective and current tourism and hospitality employees. For more information, visit www.go2hr.ca.

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