



COMMUNITY
TOURISM
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TOURISM PLAN
DAWSON CREEK
AND POUCE COUPE, BC
JULY 06, 2009

Contacts:

Tourism BC Representatives:

April Moi
Northern BC Tourism Region
april@nbctourism.com

Caterina Papadakos
Tourism BC
(604) 660-3754
Caterina.Papadakos@tourismbc.com

Tourism BC Facilitator:
Simone Carlisle-Smith
(604) 885-5924
simonecs@telus.net

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

This tourism plan has been created through the *Community Tourism Foundations*® program. This document provides direction to improve the tourism economy in the Dawson Creek and Pouce Coupe area through consultation with tourism stakeholders. It includes an overview of the aspects of tourism development to ensure the long-term success of the area as it moves forward with destination development. It also outlines a proposed approach to implementation that includes capacity building for tourism development. A Situation Analysis was produced to set the strategic direction for this plan. It is essential the reader refer to that document to understand the context of the tourism plan. It is intended to be a resource document for all tourism stakeholders in the Dawson Creek / Pouce Coupe area. Refer to the Tourism Dawson Creek website at: http://www.tourismdawsoncreek.com/tourism_foundations.php

1.2 Description of the *Community Tourism Foundations* Program

The *Community Tourism Foundations* program is designed for communities just starting out in the business of tourism. It offers a range of tools, proven resources and customized destination development assistance. Its step-by-step approach can accommodate the needs of communities at different stages of the tourism development process. The full planning cycle is engaged, beginning with an initial assessment phase, followed by a market, product and destination analysis and a subsequent strategic planning phase.

Tourism BC's *Community Tourism Opportunities*¹ program may provide funding support for the tourism plan implementation assessed on a project-by-project basis administered by the Regional Destination Marketing Organization (RDMO), Northern BC Tourism (NBCT). A separate but related program, the *Tourism Partners Program*, provides local operators the opportunity to reach a wider audience by participating in sophisticated, Tourism BC-branded, cooperative marketing campaigns also administered by Northern BC Tourism.

1.3 Methodology

The content of this report was based primarily on a literature review, including web-based resources as well as tourism trend and market research provided by Tourism BC. This was supplemented by an initial meeting of stakeholders on November 06, 2008, with follow-up stakeholder interviews and a planning workshop held April 15, 2009. Tourism Dawson Creek supplied an inventory of tourism businesses and features to support the Situation Analysis and the Tourism Plan direction. Market and visitor trends in the local, provincial and national economies were analyzed in the Situation Analysis. All supporting documents can be found online at: http://www.tourismdawsoncreek.com/tourism_foundations.php

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http://www.tourismbc.com/IndustryPrograms/BuildingAndGrowingYourBusiness/Community_Tourism_Programs.aspx

2 SITUATION ANALYSIS OVERVIEW

2.1 Study Area

Recognizing that visitors do not distinguish a destination by political boundaries, but rather the attraction base of the area, the tourism marketing boundaries may differ from the political boundaries. The study area for the purposes of tourism planning is the City of Dawson Creek and the Village of Pouce Coupe located on the northeast corner of British Columbia in the centre of the Peace Region. Incorporated in 1936, Dawson Creek has a total land area of 22.32 square km. Incorporated in 1932, Pouce Coupe has a total land area of 2.06 square km. Both are in the Peace River Regional District. Dawson Creek is the point of origin of the historic Alaska Highway, which stretches 2,400 km north to Fairbanks in Alaska. Dawson Creek by highway is 41 miles (65 km) southeast of Fort St. John, 258 miles (412 km) northeast of Prince George, 717 miles (1,198 km) north of Vancouver, and 78 miles (125 km) west of Grande Prairie, Alberta. Population 11,615. Pouce Coupe is located 10 km southeast of Dawson Creek on Highway 2 approximately 35 km from the Alberta border. Population is under 1,000. Refer to the Official Community Plans for more information.

2.2 Strengths and Assets

- Alaska Highway Community Initiative
- Built attraction base is growing and plans have been developed
- Central visitation point for the majority of visitors travelling through and to the area
- Dawson Creek is easily accessible from every direction during summer and winter due to its location at the crossroads of several major highway systems including Highway 97 South to Prince George and Vancouver (the Hart Highway); Highway 97 North to the Yukon and Alaska (the Alaska Highway); Highway 49 East to the Alberta Peace; and Highway 2 South to Grande Prairie and Edmonton.
- Desire to formally establish a Tourism Advisory Committee
- General roadways are in good condition
- Good planning for attractions development
- Good programming for tourism through the BC Government and new announcements for a national tourism strategy
- Good visitor research studies
- Known Alaska route (320,000 visitors drive the route annually; 2012 is the 70th anniversary of the construction of the Alaska Highway)
- Local government support for tourism
- Located directly on the highway
- Mile 0 of the Alaska Highway
- Proven track record for successfully hosting the 1998 and 2005 Northern BC Winter Games, supported by economic impact studies
- Proximity to Alberta

- Proximity to Chetwynd, Tumbler Ridge, Pouce Coupe, Taylor, Hudson's Hope and Fort St. John (all within 1-hour to 2-hour travel time)
- Record room occupancy due to the oil and gas sector
- Recreation, sports and entertainment complex – South Peace Community Multiplex – and potential for convention centre
- Scheduled air service and airport in close proximity to the community
- Second busiest visitor centre in Northern British Columbia; visitor numbers down from 2002-2004 peak period
- Service centre for tourists (leisure and business travellers)
- Sport facilities
- Steady stream of Alaska-bound visitors are already intending to come to the area
- Sustainability identified as a strategic direction for the City and Dawson Creek and Tourism Dawson Creek
- The Circle Tour of Northern British Columbia incorporates the Alaska Highway through the Rocky Mountain foothills to Watson Lake in the Yukon, linking with the Stewart/Cassiar Highway and Yellowhead Highway 16 in the south. The Inside Passage Tour and the Native Heritage Tour follow the same route, from Port Hardy on Vancouver Island north by ferry to Prince Rupert. Visitors catch another ferry to the Queen Charlotte Islands, or venture east on the Yellowhead Highway to Prince George, and south through the peaceful Cariboo to Vancouver along the historic Cariboo Wagon Road.
- Tourism Dawson Creek – lead tourism organization
- Tourism Opportunity Study/Regional Tourism Assessment: The major strengths of the study area are its diverse natural attributes, a full range of experiences from the scenic alpine to prairie lands, abundant wildlife and ability to deliver on the wilderness experience and quality heritage resources.
- Value of the traditional summer tourism cycle, which spans from May to September in Dawson Creek, is approximately \$15.3 million.
- Very good Official Community Plan references and commitment from the City of Dawson Creek
- Key visitor types for Dawson Creek and the Pouce Coupe area are primarily leisure travellers, Free Independent Travellers (FIT) and groups via RV Caravans touring (en route to Alaska or other destinations) and special interests in events. Famous for Mile 0 of the Alaska Highway, the area attracts leisure visitors for day trips and overnight stays for tourists in transit en route to Alaska and regional markets for organized sports, recreation, entertainment, reunions, weddings. Business travel includes workers for the oil, gas and coal sectors and government employees for meetings. Traditional summer peak season has occupancy availability in fixed-roof accommodations as Alaska-bound visitors typically travel in RVs and off-season fixed-roof accommodators fill with business travel (workers for oil, gas, etc.). Market origin includes: Regional BC and Alberta, Canada other, US, Europe, Asia/Pacific.

2.3 Weaknesses and Challenges

- Ambitious plans for attraction development, downtown, tourism infrastructure and potential for a conference centre require additional resources, both financial and human
- Annual statistics report required that summarizes trend analysis for annual review and strategic planning
- Communication materials require integrated targeted website content sections and print materials for each visitor type and stage in the purchase cycle; some refinement is required working from the current base.
- Dated Economic Development Plan (Dawson Creek) but update set for 2009
- Dated Official Community Plan (Pouce Coupe) but update set for 2010
- Global economic downturn will have direct and indirect effects on tourism travel, e.g. Caravan tours are in decline and initial indicators for 2009 are a sharp decrease
- Lack of appreciation for the value of tourism
- Pouce Coupe accommodation options are limited and the life cycle of the properties are either in the maturity or decline stage
- There are few tourism operators in Pouce Coupe and the accommodation sector is occupied by long-term rentals and industry
- Tourism Opportunity Study/Regional Tourism Assessment: Weaknesses include distance from markets, poor road conditions, infrastructure gaps, lack of interpretative facilities and a lack of community cooperation on key product development such as circuit tours.
- While a cross-section of community stakeholders has been involved in many workshops over the years, there is not the level of community engagement desired
- While increased accommodation options are available in Dawson Creek, the record level occupancy is due to the oil and gas sector. Although event and convention markets would utilize fixed-roof accommodation, RVs and Caravans will utilize the RV park.
- Written annual action plan required that summarizes key focus of effort for each year (support process with planning matrix)

2.4 Opportunities

- Event development
- For Northern BC communities in close proximity to major highways leading north to the Yukon and Alaska, RVers constitute a significant market segment
- Given the current economic climate, camping and RV markets are expected to increase as people will still travel but will spend less
- Increase capture ratio of drive-by traffic en route to other destinations
- Increased community awareness and engagement was identified as an opportunity to create momentum within the community. Enhancements to the existing communications strategy may support greater community engagement.
- Integrated sport and event plan
- Partnerships between Dawson Creek and Pouce Coupe
- Small meetings and conferences – develop a conference plan

- Sport Tourism
- Tourism currently contributes approximately 5% to the local economy, which could increase with additional resources
- Tourism Opportunity Study/Regional Tourism Assessment: Opportunities for tourism development in the study area are good. Lodges, huts, river/lake, trail products and winter products all have potential to expand. The main challenges to tourism and economic development will continue to be the lack of infrastructure, services and access to financing, both for communities and for businesses.
- Tourism Revenue from the Additional Hotel Room Tax could yield between \$250,000 and \$330,000 annually for incremental tourism initiatives
- Target Markets: For Alaska-bound travellers, targets include US, Canada, Europe and Asia/Pacific. For the event mix of conventions, travel shows, consumer shows, family shows and concerts, key targets include the Peace Region, which is a large geographic area with unique topography. The overall population is approximately 221,465 dispersed over vast landscape that is roughly the size of California and is largely comprised of agricultural and forested lands.
- Major communities by radius and population:
 - 150 km radius of Dawson Creek, population 133,295: Dawson Creek, Fort St. John, Tumbler Ridge, Chetwynd, Pouce Coupe, Taylor, Grande Prairie, Spirit River, Rycroft, Wembley, Sexsmith (included are portions of Counties, Municipal Districts and Regional Districts)
 - 200 km radius of Dawson Creek, population 7,010: Hudson's Hope, Mackenzie, Grimshaw, Valleyview (included are portions of Counties, Municipal Districts, and Regional Districts)
 - 300-400 km radius of Dawson Creek, population 81,160: Fort Nelson, Peace River, Fox Creek, High Level, Grande Cache (included are portions of Counties, Municipal Districts and Regional Districts)

2.5 Implications for Development

- British Columbia, with its spectacular scenery and remote but accessible areas, provides great opportunity for product and market development capitalizing on current trends, however, each community within the regions will require a strategy to differentiate and brand itself within this broader context.
- By creating a tourism plan for Pouce Coupe and refining the existing plan for Tourism Dawson Creek, all aspects of community tourism development will be addressed with varying degrees of detail. The plans will cross-reference each other where partnerships are identified.
- Canadian and American travellers present the largest potential volume of visitors to BC communities with regional markets being a key focus for the event product in the area and long-haul travellers bound for Alaska.
- Economic outlook is not favourable in the short term, however, early indicators are that people will continue to travel closer to home and for less cost, resulting in camping and RV markets anticipated to increase.

- Implementation of existing plans requires additional resources and community engagement at all levels in order to achieve goals and objectives.
- Pouce Coupe is in the initial stage of the tourism destination life cycle (vision and planning); by contrast, Dawson Creek is in the growth stage (product development). For Pouce Coupe, resources are limited in terms of human and financial capacity, with \$35,000 for economic development and \$21,000 tourism funding. In contrast, Tourism Dawson Creek has \$390,000 in base funding, plus grants.
- Pouce Coupe provides limited visitor amenities and one major annual event; by contrast, Dawson Creek has developed attractions to appeal to tourists in transit en route to Alaska and aspires to increase the capture ratio with new product and services.
- The recently opened South Peace Community Multiplex provides opportunities to expand the event, meeting and small conventions markets; sport facilities provide opportunities for increased sport tourism; and the demand for fixed-roof accommodation by industry currently supplies a stable occupancy. The convention facility is not completed and requires a plan.
- The US market is expected to continue to be an important international market but the number of visitors is not expected to grow in the short term, with challenges such as new passport requirements, and border and security issues. Leisure travel in Canada and the US makes up a larger number of trips, and is growing faster than business travel. Baby boomers continue to be the largest demographic segment, with the baby/bust/Generation X the second-largest segment that is seeing the highest growth rates.
- Having an Internet presence is important as the majority of American and Canadian travellers use the Internet for vacation planning and about half book online.
- While there are opportunities for both communities to partner on initiatives, the difference in destination life cycle and resources must be taken into account. While Pouce Coupe and Dawson Creek are within the same geographic area, they are at different stages of development, therefore they will evolve differently while still having opportunities to work together.

2.6 Planning Requirements

- Create the initial tourism plan for Pouce Coupe and supply a revised tourism plan for Dawson Creek.
- Identify best practices for core programming: communications, product and industry development, marketing, visitor services, research and resource library.
- Identify issues and challenges for existing plans to move forward with implementation for Dawson Creek.
- Recommend an enhanced tracking and evaluation process that relates to each objective and strategy within the plan.

2.7 Industry Composition

An inventory of tourism businesses and features was compiled by Tourism Dawson Creek.

The Dawson Creek area has fourteen B&B/Cabins for a total of 29 units and 835 units. There are eleven RV Park/campsite facilities for a total of 492. Pouce Coupe has one RV/campsite at the regional park and three accommodation properties (two motels and one small vintage hotel.)

There is a mix of food and beverage service in Dawson Creek including Asian Cuisine, Fast Food, Pizza, Soup/Sandwich, Pubs/Lounge/Bars, Family Restaurants and Steak/Seafood and Pasta Selections for a total of 43 establishments. There are no restaurants in Pouce Coupe, however there is a limited food store at the local gas station. There are five antique/giftstores in Dawson Creek.

2.8 Product / Market Match

2.8.1 Dawson Creek

Dawson Creek is recognized around the world as Mile “0” of the Alaska Highway. The Mile 0 Post and Mile 0 Cairn are icons of the Alaska Highway and provide international recognition for the City.

Key attractions include: Alaska Highway House, Mile 0 Post and Cairn, Pioneer Village, NAR Park Station Museum, Dawson Creek Art Gallery. Activities include: golf, fishing, hunting, downhill and cross-country skiing, snowmobiling, organized sports and South Peace Community Multiplex. Major events include the following: Dawson Creek Exhibition and Fall Fair – the largest event in Northeastern BC, Mile 0 Cruise, a biannual Air Show and Heritage Days.

2.8.2 Pouce Coupe

Pouce Coupe Regional Park with event and RV/camping facilities, museum, trestle and annual Canada Day BBQ.

2.8.3 Major Events

The province of British Columbia and the City of Dawson Creek will experience unprecedented international opportunities and major milestones. These include:

2010: Province of British Columbia hosts the Winter Olympic and Paralympic Games

2012: 70th anniversary of the construction of the Alaska Highway

2.8.4 Visitor Types

Key visitor types for Dawson Creek and the Pouce Coupe area are primarily leisure travellers, Free Independent Travellers (FIT) and groups via RV Caravans touring (en route to Alaska or other destinations) and special interests in events. Famous for Mile 0 of the Alaska Highway, the area attracts leisure visitors for day trips and overnight stays for tourists in transit en route to Alaska and regional markets for organized sports, recreation, entertainment, reunions, weddings. Business travel includes workers for the oil, gas and coal sectors and government employees for meetings. Traditional summer peak season has occupancy availability in fixed-roof accommodations as Alaska-bound visitors typically travel in RVs and off-season fixed-roof

accommodators fill with business travel (workers for oil, gas, etc.). Market origin includes: Regional BC and Alberta, Canada other, US, Europe, Asia/Pacific.

2.8.5 Target Markets

Trends

National and international tourism trends show that visitor markets and the industry continue to change. Visitor motives for travel are becoming more attraction oriented and fundamentally different from the socially oriented free independent traveller of the past. Visitors are also seeking more convenience, more learning and educational experiences and safer outdoor recreation activities.

Outlook

The long-term outlook for tourism in BC and the region is positive. In the short term, the best opportunities are to continue expanding the existing market base in the regional and short-haul BC markets for events while long-haul markets will be in decline.

Targets

For Alaska-bound travellers, targets include US, Canada, Europe and Asia/Pacific. For the event mix of conventions, travel shows, consumer shows, family shows and concerts, key targets include the Peace Region, which is a large geographic area with unique topography. The overall population is approximately 221,465 dispersed over a vast landscape that is roughly the size of California and is largely comprised of agricultural and forested lands.

Major communities by radius and population:

- 150 km radius of Dawson Creek, population 133,295: Dawson Creek, Fort St. John, Tumbler Ridge, Chetwynd, Pouce Coupe, Taylor, Grande Prairie, Spirit River, Rycroft, Wembley, Sexsmith (included are portions of Counties, Municipal Districts and Regional Districts)
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- 300-400 km radius of Dawson Creek, population 81,160: Fort Nelson, Peace River, Fox Creek, High Level, Grande Cache (included are portions of Counties, Municipal Districts and Regional Districts)

2.8.6 Destination Assessment

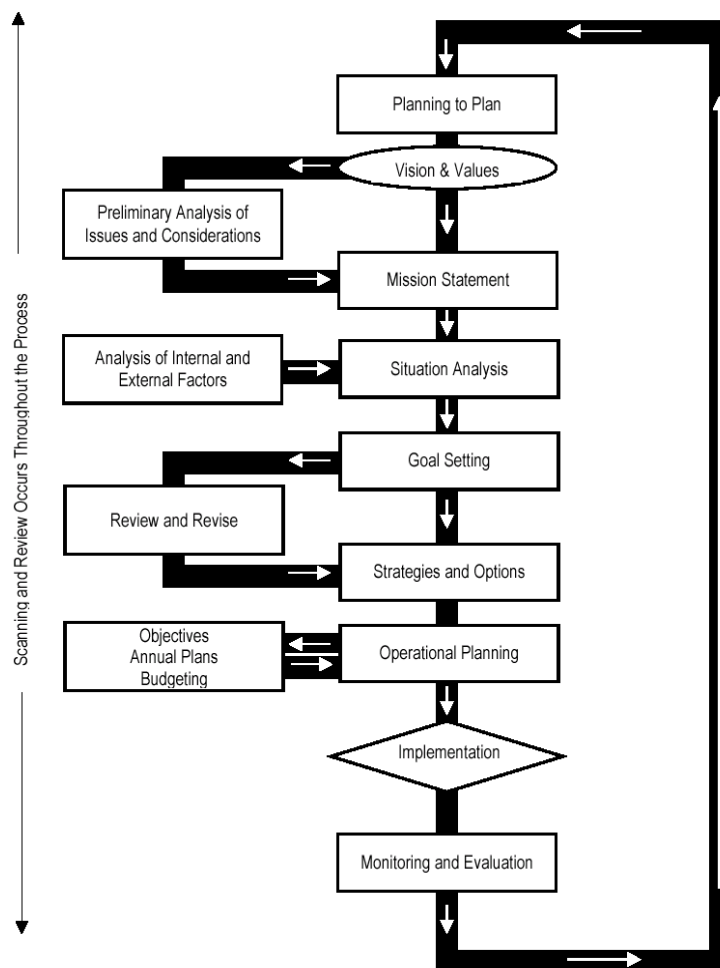
Tourism planning and development is a continuum. As one milestone is achieved, there is typically another to strive for as the community moves through the destination life cycle, which includes the early stages of development planning (vision and plan), growth (product development), maturity (products from the vision are achieved and the destination is being utilized by the target markets), decline or rejuvenation (the destination requires redevelopment or it will decline, losing market share and economic impact).

Both Dawson Creek and Pouce Coupe have expressed an interest in working more closely together. While at different stages of development in the destination lifecycle (Pouce Coupe – visioning and planning; Dawson Creek – growth and product development), the visitor experience can be enhanced through investments in infrastructure, product and industry development. The area has potential to capitalize on the regional opportunities through event development while long-haul markets are in decline due to the economy and eventual demographic shift. The long-term success of tourism development effort will be dependent on the recognition that it takes a community of stakeholders to deliver a positive visitor experience, as each component is interdependent.

3 PLAN DIRECTION AND PLANNING FOR IMPLEMENTATION

The process guiding the preparation of this plan is depicted in Figure 3.1. Each step in the sequence is meant to take the community from the general to the specific, from a broad expression of future expectations down through gradually more specific identification of the means and ends that go into making a coherent and cohesive plan. The vision, mission and goal statements for Dawson Creek are articulated based on existing plans, while the vision and goals for Pouce Coupe are based on the planning session and a previous tourism workshop. Due to the different stages of development, the Village of Pouce Coupe Tourism Plan is presented first, followed by Tourism Dawson Creek.

Figure 3.1: The Strategic Planning Process



3.1 Key Assumptions

Given that the tourism planning process being introduced by the *Community Tourism Foundations* program is providing the first tourism plan for Pouce Coupe, as it relates to an overview of all aspects of tourism planning and refinement of the Tourism Dawson Creek Tourism Plan, it is assumed all tourism-related stakeholders who may not have been present during the initial meeting or planning session will be involved in the process by being informed of the tourism plan through industry communications. They will then have opportunities for involvement during implementation.

Given the fact that the development of community tourism involves many stakeholders, both direct and indirect of the tourism industry, the programs and services are intended for all tourism stakeholders equally as part of the “stakeholder model”² which provides equal opportunity for any and all businesses in the study area.

It is assumed that additional resources will be secured to implement the tourism plan, and that the tourism planning process introduced by this program will be maintained by the Village of Pouce Coupe and Tourism Dawson Creek.

It is also assumed that the goals and objectives of the plan will be endorsed by the tourism community, accepted by the community at large, adopted by council and incorporated into the next update of the Official Community Plans of the Village of Pouce Coupe and the City of Dawson Creek.

Given that external market conditions can change rapidly, it’s assumed actions will be adjusted based on changing conditions.

² A stakeholder model is inclusive of all business, organizations and government representatives as tourism development affects residents, the business community and local government; as opposed to a “membership” model which is in decline in tourism organization structure due to the recognition that it takes the hospitality of the community as a whole to create a successful visitor destination or experience. Where core funding is from public sources all businesses should be entitled to representation and cooperative opportunities. Refer to the Supplementary Situation Analysis for a description of tourism organization structures.

http://www.tourismdawsoncreek.com/tourism_foundations.php

3.2 Community Tourism Management Roles for Dawson Creek and Pouce Coupe

The following table outlines the functions of community tourism development and the roles of the government and organizations in the delivery of tourism services. The tourism plan identifies a series of goals and objectives related to the full spectrum of tourism development activity.

Destination and Infrastructure Development	Product, Business and Industry Development	Destination Marketing	Visitor Services
<p>Vision and Policy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Dawson Creek, Mayor and Council • Village of Pouce Coupe • Peace River Regional District <p>Economic Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Dawson Creek, Mayor and Council • Village of Pouce Coupe • Peace River Regional District 	<p>Product Development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Village of Pouce Coupe • Tourism Dawson Creek • Peace River Regional District • City of Dawson Creek • Sector Organizations <p>Business and Industry Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tourism Dawson Creek • Village of Pouce Coupe • Sector Organizations • Dawson Creek Chamber of Commerce 	<p>External marketing activities (outside the area) as it relates to attracting visitors to the destination.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tourism Dawson Creek • Northern BC Tourism (Tourism BC) Tourism/Alaska Highway Community • Global Spectrum Facility Management 	<p>Internal marketing as it relates to servicing visitors once they have decided to come to the destination.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tourism Dawson Creek • Pouce Coupe Museum

3.3 Tourism Management

3.3.1 Management Pouce Coupe

The Village of Pouce Coupe has the mandate for community development, of which tourism forms a component. Tourism management is carried out by the Chief Administrative Officer of the Village of Pouce Coupe.

3.3.2 Management Dawson Creek

Tourism Dawson Creek (a subsidiary organization of the Northern Rockies Alaska Highway Tourism Association) has the mandate for tourism development. Northern Rockies Alaska Highway Tourism Association is aligned with Northern BC Tourism – Agent for Tourism British Columbia. Northern BC Tourism is the delivery agency for projects relating to the Alaska Highway Community, which include the City of Dawson Creek and the Peace River Regional District.

Global Spectrum Facility Management has a role in tourism management as this group is responsible to the City of Dawson Creek for fulfilling the management of the EnCana Event Centre, which is a major draw for regional product and market development for events, small meetings and conferences.

3.3.3 Tourism Partnerships

Both Dawson Creek and Pouce Coupe have expressed an interest in working more closely together. While at different stages of development in the destination life cycle (Pouce Coupe – visioning and planning; Dawson Creek – growth and product development), both communities have opportunities to create a closer working relationship through a strategic alliance. The Action Plan Priorities list the strategies that will be implemented over the next year. As an established destination management organization, Tourism Dawson Creek is positioned to offer administrative and project management services to support Pouce Coupe. The process of determining the action plan will allow the parties to define their roles and create the foundation for an administrative agreement. Both parties will lead elements of the plan independently as well as in partnership.

The initial meeting group identified opportunities to work together. The following ideas were expressed for potential partnerships:

- Bus tours
- Connecting walking trails from Pouce Coupe to/from Dawson Creek (tree-lined highway to connect the communities)
- Co-promote each other's community; get visitors moving around between the two (current 2009 summer promotion stamp project is a good example)
- Dawson Creek does not hold a Canada Day Event, but promotes and supports the annual event at Pouce Coupe Park (3,000-5,000 people attend)

- Identify future attractions development: farmers' market; event development (e.g. half-marathon route, wind-powered go-carts, high tea in Pouce Coupe, storytelling, pioneer days); agri-tourism development (e.g. interpretive tours of crops, honey farms); circle tours with other communities, bus tours with food at each stopover and BBQ or feast on final day; industrial tours (e.g. oil rig); historical; ghost town
- Museum (co-promoting each other); Historical Societies working closer together (information exchange)
- Recreation clubs (e.g. Skidoo, ATV, etc.)
- Trail development (issues, usage, tenure, mapping, etc.)

3.3.4 Tourism Advisory Committee (TAC) – Pouce Coupe and Dawson Creek

A new Tourism Advisory Committee (TAC) would be formed to gather insight from the tourism industry and maintain two-way communications with local and regional government, organizations and First Nations. The primary TAC function is as an advisory group. The group would meet a minimum of two times per year with a maximum of four times per year to review the current tourism plan, discuss current issues and challenges and identify what key priorities the annual tourism plan should focus on, based on resources available. The TAC is informal and does not have any authoritative powers and does not determine policy of any governing body. The role is to create a forum for information exchange and potential partnerships. In addition to an advisory role, the TAC participants would act as ambassadors of the tourism industry and as such they would assist the tourism management organizations by:

- Creating awareness of the value of tourism and benefits of tourism development
- Assisting with special projects as a task force such as the Additional Hotel Room Tax
- Fostering the evolution of the tourism industry
- Representing the tourism industry

Although originally the establishment of a Tourism Advisory Committee was intended for Tourism Dawson Creek, expanding the makeup of stakeholders to be inclusive of the regional representatives allows all parties with a stake in tourism to be aware of each other's management roles in the study area, which includes Dawson Creek, Pouce Coupe and the Peace River Regional District.

Tourism Dawson Creek will support the administration of the TAC by maintaining the committee contact list, notifying the committee of the meeting schedule, setting and circulating the agenda, and recording and distributing minutes to committee members.

Tourism Advisory Committee Composition (TAC)		
Sector	Member (s)	Representation
Accommodation	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1-2 representing motels, hotels, resorts • 1 RV/campground • 1 representing a B&B or Inn
Attractions/Events	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 representing an attraction • 1 representing an event or festival
Chamber of Commerce	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 representing the Chamber
Education	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 representing an educational institution or program
Event Centre	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 representing Global Spectrum Facility Management (Multiplex)
Food and Beverage	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 representing a food and/or beverage establishment
Government	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 each representing the City of Dawson Creek, Village of Pouce Coupe and the Peace River Regional District
Heritage, Arts and Culture	1-2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 representing Heritage • 1 representing Arts or Culture
Recreation	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 each representing the community centre / Parks and Recreation or an organization • 1 representing a recreation business or organization
Retail	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 representative from a retail business or retail business alliance or association
Tourism Organization	1-2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 representing Tourism Dawson Creek (Northern Rockies Alaska Highway Tourism Association) • 1 Northern BC Tourism – Agent Tourism BC
Transportation	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 representing a transportation interest
Visitor Services	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 representing a Visitor Centre
	21-23	Range

3.4 Community Tourism Funding

3.4.5 Pouce Coupe

Funding is limited to Village resources on a project-by-project basis as well as tourism grants and programs. The Village provides financial support to the Museum, which provides visitor information. The Village of Pouce Coupe has secured three grants: \$35,000 for economic development from Northern Development Trust, \$15,000 from the UBCM Phase II tourism program and \$6,000 from the Tourism BC *Community Tourism Opportunities* program.

3.4.6 Dawson Creek

Tourism Dawson Creek's (TDC) core funding is supplied by way of contract with the City of Dawson Creek, and is supplemented by additional funds from tourism grants and programs. The City of Dawson Creek is the major financial supporter of tourism development and management for Dawson Creek. This includes destination development capital investments, reports and studies, operation of Tourism Dawson Creek, the visitor centre, supporting events and other organizations that supply tourism products or services. Tourism Dawson Creek's operational budget for 2008 was \$315,000, plus \$75,000 for the Visitor Centre for a total of \$390,000. Tourism Dawson Creek also actively looks for special grant funding for specific projects to increase Tourism infrastructure and services (Heritage Branch, Union of BC Municipalities).

Tourism Dawson Creek was recently approved for grant funding from the Tourism BC *Community Tourism Opportunities* program.

The City of Dawson Creek also provides funding support for local events such as the fall fair Rodeo, Dawson Creek Air Show and, for 2008, the Dawson Creek 50th Anniversary celebrations.

In order for TDC to fulfill the goals and objectives of existing tourism development projects, additional core funds between \$250,000 and \$330,000 can be raised through the implementation of the Additional Hotel Room Tax.

Refer to the Appendices for more information on the Additional Hotel Room Tax. Refer to Tourism BC Community Tourism Foundations Report on Funding Sources posted under Resources at: http://www.tourismdawsoncreek.com/tourism_foundations.php

4 VILLAGE OF POUCE COUPE TOURISM PLAN

4.1 Vision Statements

The vision statement describes a desired future state for tourism in the area. It provides direction for development efforts and it can incorporate political, economic, social and cultural elements, but is always forward focused.

4.1.1 Community Vision Statement Village of Pouce Coupe

Currently there is no community vision statement in the Official Community Plan for the Village of Pouce Coupe Bylaw # 652, 1993.

4.1.2 Tourism Vision Statement for Village of Pouce Coupe

During the planning session held April 15, 2009, participants were asked to list key words and phrases that would be distilled to form a vision statement for tourism. The following draft statement is intended for review and revisions by Pouce Coupe.

The Village of Pouce Coupe encourages and welcomes visitors to our small visitor friendly community, which, as one of the original settlements in the South Peace Region, celebrates a rich history, culture, and spirit.

4.2 Goals and Objectives

The planning workshop held in April 2009 generated discussion that resulted in the overall formation of the goals for the tourism plan. In addition to the discussion, conclusions from the situation analysis and industry best practices also form the direction for the tourism plan. The following goals provide guidance for the strategies and actions that appear in subsequent chapters of this document. For early stages of community tourism development, the following represents foundation goals for the development of community tourism; they are not unique for communities at the vision and planning stage of development but they create the foundation for tourism planning.

The following goals and objectives are intended to be included in a dedicated tourism section for the next update of the Official Community Plan (s).

4.2.3 Tourism Goals

- 1) To diversify the local economy by enhancing and expanding the tourism industry as a way of increasing the tax base, jobs and income available to residents;
- 2) To enhance community appeal for visitors by attracting infrastructure investments through local, regional, provincial, national and private sources;
- 3) To support business and industry development that complements and strengthens products and attractions of most appeal to visitor markets;

- 4) To encourage tourism operators to work cooperatively and in collaboration with community stakeholders to leverage resources wherever possible; and
- 5) To maintain a tourism management function through contracting Tourism Dawson Creek to administer tourism to ensure leadership, organizational capacity, funding and communications that support tourism stakeholders and the community in achieving the vision for tourism.

4.2.4 Tourism Objectives

Tourism Planning and Management

- Implement the 2009 Pouce Coupe Economic Marketing Strategy, which overlaps with tourism related opportunities.
- Allocate resources to implement the tourism plan in phases, built around community, industry, government participation, partnerships and communications.
- Develop a Tourism Marketing Plan

Tourism Infrastructure and Development

- Expand infrastructure that has overlap with tourism supporting the Village of Pouce Coupe Official Community Plan and the Tourism Vision.

Product Development

- Support businesses, organizations and entrepreneurs to create or improve their product offerings.

Information Management and Research

- Utilize Tourism Dawson Creek Resource Centre to establish a business directory and resource centre that will support the development of community tourism and provide the information and research needed to strengthen the tourism effort.

Business and Industry Development

- Supply information and resources that help the needs of local tourism business operators and organizations.

Market Position and Targets

- Improve overall tourism performance by increased awareness, length of stays, overnight stays, visitor spending and overall market share of leisure travellers, Free Independent Travellers (FIT) and small groups of tourists in transit.

Marketing Partnerships and Programs

- Engage in cooperative marketing programs with local partnerships such as Northern BC Tourism and Tourism Dawson Creek that leverage resources and extend market reach.

Branding

- Maintain graphic standards for use of the “Pouce Coupe – British Columbia, Canada” logo.

Promotional Tools & Materials

- Maintain an official set of marketing materials to support visitor services.

Integrated Promotional Mix

- Working with local partners, participate in marketing communications activities as resources permit.

Visitor Services

- Aid the Museum in providing enhanced visitor services as resources permit.

Plan Tracking / Monitoring and Evaluation

- Establish and maintain a tracking and evaluation program that is directly associated with the goals and objectives of the tourism plan.

Communications

- Establish and maintain a communications strategy that engages and informs the tourism industry, residents, government and regional partners to contribute to an enhanced tourism development climate.

4.3 Planning for Implementation – Tourism Planning and Management

The following section outlines the management preparation required to undertake the plan implementation. Section 4.15 Action Plan Priorities summarizes the priority strategies from throughout the plan for the focus of effort for 2009/10. This Tourism Plan is intended to act as a reference document while the Tourism Plan Status Report will summarize all the strategies with a timeline, next steps, lead organization, budget, tracking and current status for stakeholders to use as a tool for monitoring the plan implementation.

Tourism Planning and Management

Objective: Implement the 2009 Pouce Coupe Economic Marketing Strategy, inclusive of tourism-related opportunities and develop a tourism marketing plan/strategy that is alignment with Tourism Dawson Creek’s marketing plan/strategy.

Rationale: The tourism plan incorporates the Tourism BC Business Essentials workshop, the current Economic Development Marketing Strategy, and outcomes from the current tourism planning workshops. The combined outcome in the tourism plan will provide guidance for the Chief Administrative Officer of the Village of Pouce Coupe. The newly released Pouce Coupe Economic Marketing Strategy identifies key strategies that have overlap with the tourism sector. Pouce Coupe has very limited tourism product and tourism services, however, regardless of its size it does have a minor tourism component as part of its overall economy and as such the scale of activity for future growth is appropriate within this context. Key recommendations from the

Strategy have been highlighted with a tourism context for implementation throughout the tourism plan.

Strategies:

1. **Incorporate the tourism industry perspective within the broader context of the goals and action items of the Economic Development Marketing Strategy.**

Refer to relevant sections of this tourism plan for integration with recommendations from existing plans or previous workshops.

Objective: Allocate resources to implement the tourism plan in phases, built around community, industry, local government participation, partnerships and communications.

Rationale: The tourism plan will require both financial and human resources for implementation, therefore the following strategies are recommended.

Strategies:

2. **Determine the allocation of both human and financial resources required to undertake the implementation of the tourism plan and undertake negotiations to contract TDC to administer the Tourism function for the community.**

Ideally a projects coordinator position will be created through the Village to support community projects, which would include tourism initiatives; perhaps a part-time contract.

3. **Engage the tourism industry, on an ongoing basis, by participating a Tourism Advisory Committee (TAC).**

Refer to the Tourism Management section 3.3.

4. **Encourage participation of existing stakeholders to assist in the implementation of the tourism plan.**

Pool financial and human resources to create a budget and management plan.

Establish a volunteer registry, volunteer and leadership development and volunteer recognition program.³

5. **Establish the 2009/2010 budget to coincide with pooled resources and known grants available to implement the plan, and adjust accordingly as new grants or resources are secured.**

Leverage funds from existing sources: Village of Pouce Coupe, business and organizations and Tourism BC's *Community Tourism Opportunities* program.

Refer to the Appendices for a Summary Tourism Budget template. The final tourism plan will be delivered with an Excel workbook that includes a series of templates.

³ Economic Development Marketing Strategy

6. **Establish a set of promotional tools to support existing visitors and potential visitors.**
Given the limited resources, the focus of effort will be to create the foundation of marketing communication tools such as the new rack brochure, enhanced website and image bank.

7. **Produce a Community Profile – Relates to Business Investment and Promotion Investment⁴**

Ensure the tourism industry profile is included with an asset inventory (attractions and services), visitor statistics from the Pouce Coupe museum⁵ and land-use opportunities suitable for tourism. Any statistics that can be provided by the Village should be included, as well as the current business composition.

8. **Develop a Communications Strategy to encourage communication between the Pouce Coupe Historical Society and the South Peace Historical Society/Roots Group, Dawson Creek Beautifications Committee and all committees that may provide relevant expertise to notable projects.** Refer to the Tourism Advisory Committee and Communications sections of this report.

9. **Develop a market strategy – Relates to Business Investment and Promotion Investment⁶**

Assuming the tourism sector may be identified for opportunities for potential investment, include tourism-specific information if applicable within the framework of the overarching strategy; e.g. Opportunity with Cooky's Restaurant.

10. **Develop land inventory – Relates to Business Investment and Promotion Investment⁷**

Include current available land for potential tourism use classified, for example, as Bed and Breakfast, attractions, etc.

11. **Monitor government and tourism agency programs to identify partnerships or opportunities for funding, assistance and additional planning for implementation of the tourism plan.**

There is a multitude of government programs that can assist communities in tourism development. The Bike BC program is a \$31-million initiative for cycling infrastructure (cycling trail development) from the Province of BC. The new Community Cultural Tourism Strategy will get underway in 2009 with stakeholder interviews throughout the province. Recent announcements include plans to develop a provincial cultural tourism strategy,⁸ as well as the BC Partnership for Sustainable Tourism.⁹ Refer to the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and the Arts.¹⁰ Tourism development can be found at: <http://www.tca.gov.bc.ca/tourism/>.

⁴ Economic Development Marketing Strategy

⁵ Refer to the appendices for a template to record the visitors to the Pouce Coupe Museum with Tourism BC.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Announcement at the 2008 UBCM convention.

⁹ News Release 2008TCA0110-001632O October 27, 2008.

¹⁰ <http://www.gov.bc.ca/tca/>

Rural BC provides an excellent website for programs and resources.
<http://www.ruralbc.gov.bc.ca/>.

Northern Development Initiative Trust provides an excellent resource for Community Funding.
<http://northerndevelopment.bc.ca/community-funding>

Subscribe to Tourism BC's *The Tourism Brief* E-Newsletter for program updates and industry news. Email to subscribe: TourismBrief@tourismbc.com. Newsletter archives can be accessed at: <http://www.tourismbc.com/Media/TourismBCNewsletter.aspx>

Key programs through Tourism BC that are immediate opportunities for the Village of Pouce Coupe include:

Tourism BC's *Community Tourism Opportunities* program. This program may provide funding support for the tourism plan implementation assessed on a project-by-project basis administered by the Regional Destination Marketing Organization (RDMO), Northern BC Tourism. Note: Pouce Coupe has already been approved for this program for immediate projects; refer to the Action Plan.

12. **Establish an annual planning process that coincides with the Village planning process and the annual tourism planning cycle.** Tourism activities typically must be integrated with other plans and the overarching community planning process.

Refer to the Appendices for a Sample Tourism Annual Planning Cycle.

- a. Develop an Annual Budget
- b. Develop an annual Year-at-a-Glance calendar that outlines key deadlines and annual activities, providing a focus of the month and record for succession planning.
- c. Set the quarterly meeting schedule for the Tourism Advisory Committee (TAC).
- d. Create a Tourism Sector web page that displays the tourism vision, TAC, status of projects, PDF copies of reports, contacts, meeting and event notices, annual action plan and links to the *Community Tourism Foundations* program information web page for the tourism industry to view online.
- e. Establish a records management system that allows for tracking and evaluation of activities, orientation for new members of the TAC and succession planning for both the TAC and the Village of Pouce Coupe CAO. A binder system is recommended with all relevant materials in print and CD or some form of electronic backup and online PDF versions where possible.
 - i. Terms of Reference for the Tourism Advisory Committee
 - ii. TAC committee and key contact list
 - iii. Communications protocols
 - iv. Tourism Action Plan / Work Plan for 2009/2010 (Refer to Action Plan section of the Tourism Plan)

- v. TAC Meeting Agenda, Minutes
 - vi. Annual written summary report (to include key tourism activities, visitor statistics, economic development and tourism projects), to keep the area's tourism industry, local and regional government and the community informed.
13. **Maintain connectivity to the tourism industry in the region, and BC, through regional and provincial alliances and/or participation in industry associations, conferences, events and through professional development.**
- a. Business Advisory Council – Relates to Business Retention goal of encouraging growth in existing businesses.¹¹
 - i. For council composition ensure one expert is from the tourism industry; this may include a participant from the proposed Tourism Advisory Committee
 - ii. Refer to the Business and Industry Development section for additional strategies that support a Business Advisory Council
 - b. Ensure open communications between the Village of Pouce Coupe, Northern BC Tourism and the TAC.
 - c. Consider attendance by an area representative at the annual BC Tourism Industry Conference held in February each year, sponsored by the Council of Tourism Associations of BC and Tourism BC.¹²
 - d. Attend the Northern BC Tourism AGM.
 - e. Participate at the committee and/or board level of tourism-related organizations or alliances, e.g. local TAC committee.
 - f. Register to receive tourism industry e-newsletters and RSS feeds. (Tourism BC, Canadian Tourism Commission, sector organizations, government, etc.) *Refer to the Tourism Dawson Creek industry resource centre for websites to subscribe to.*
14. **Maintain the tourism inventory.** Expand the inventory created through the *Community Tourism Foundations* program and ensure the tourism profile is recorded in the proposed Community Profile and the enhanced section of the Village of Pouce Coupe website. Regardless of the quantity or quality of the tourism assets of a community, an inventory supplies information required to profile a community and evaluate its strengths, weaknesses and opportunities.

4.4 Destination and Market Development

This chapter addresses all aspects of tourism development. Destination development refers to the community itself and the causal linkages it has with the tourism economy in terms of public policy, land use, resource management, physical development, infrastructure, business climate,

¹¹ Economic Development Marketing Strategy

¹² <http://www.bctourismindustryconference.ca/>

human resources and other programs. Product development primarily involves the private sector and its investment and contributions to goods and services consumed by visitor markets. Finally, marketing programs are needed to complement the product and destination efforts. This includes strategies to build capacity for marketing by assembling a set of promotional tools and to sell the uniqueness of the study area to travel markets, while visitor services respond to the needs of visitors who have already made the decision to visit the area.

4.4.5 Tourism Infrastructure & Development

Objective: Expand infrastructure that has overlap with tourism supporting the Village of Pouce Coupe Official Community Plan and the Tourism Vision.

Rationale: Tourism infrastructure development is a requirement for many communities because the expansion of physical assets, including recreation, trails, transportation and communications systems, is critical in creating the right conditions for investment in complementary products and services. Entrepreneurs will be more willing to invest in their own properties and businesses if they perceive a commensurate willingness by government to enhance the sorts of infrastructure and services that visitors use. Regardless of the stage of development in the destination life cycle or the size of the community, infrastructure improvements or development must be considered within the context of the future vision for the community. At the present time the Official Community Plan for the Village is outdated and the new plan process is budgeted for 2010.

Strategies:

15. **Create a master list of municipal, regional and provincial infrastructure improvements that will contribute to tourism development capacity and potential, and prioritize to coincide with the tourism development opportunities that fit both the community vision and the tourism vision.**

Include infrastructure requirements in a master Community Development Matrix (including a status report of each key initiative with a timeline, lead agency, funding sources and next steps), which can be used to effectively communicate the current situation. This would include infrastructure in support of regional airport expansion; development of trails and facilities (e.g. community gathering places; cultural, recreational and sports facilities); meeting and conference facilities; public facilities to host festivals and events; support services for visitors (public washrooms); broadband; RV parking; highway entrance; directional, trail and interpretive signage; and affordable housing. Note: A template will be supplied by *Community Tourism Foundations*.

The following are recommended for the tourism development matrix:

- a. **Official Community Plan Update**

- i. When the existing Official Community Plan is updated in 2010, ensure the Tourism Plan Vision and Goals are incorporated.

- b. **Develop a Beautification Master Plan**

- i. A visually charming or beautiful community does not just benefit tourism; the results contribute to community pride. When contemplating beautification for the area, consider tourism markets in plans.
 1. Current initiatives such as a cleanup and paint program and eight street banners displaying the Share the Excitement brand for Main Street have been approved for co-sponsorship through the *Community Tourism Opportunities* program for 2009.
 2. Consider the Communities in Bloom program. Communities in Bloom is a Canadian non-profit organization committed to fostering civic pride, environmental responsibility, beautification and to improving quality of life through community participation and the challenge of a national program, with focus on the protection and promotion of green spaces.¹³
 3. As noted in the Economic Development Marketing Strategy, key items that relate to this initiative include:
 - Community Beautification Committee
 - Planters and Hanging Baskets
 - Rest Areas

Key action items include:

Community Beautification Committee

- Form a Community Beautification Committee to identify immediate areas of concern. Formulate a five-year strategy to improve the corridor. An example is the “Beautification Hillcrest Project” carried out in the City of Whitehorse for the Parks and Rec Department and residents of Hillcrest. Similar workshops such as the Visioning Workshop that was held for this economic strategy were held to identify priorities in the Hillcrest Community. There was a consensus on what the community wanted to see changed. In the Visioning Workshop held in June 2008 it was identified that residents would like to see Pouce Coupe dressed up like the “Best Christmas Tree at Christmas.” Unlike the June workshop, this workshop to get the committee going would focus on a strategy to make their vision possible in beautifying Pouce Coupe. It is crucial to have buy-in by the community as well as business. Solicit input from the community to become involved in a beautification program for Pouce Coupe.

¹³ <http://www.communitiesinbloom.ca/Default.aspx?ID=7>

- This committee would have representation from community members, groups and businesses, with a council liaison.
- The committee would review what has been identified from the Visioning Workshop and further discuss what the options are and what is important to them. In a process such as this it invites input from all sectors, which inspires buy-in to a beautification project.
- When forming a committee you should look at businesses that may be able to provide in-kind services, such as earth removal for planting.
- Some communities host fundraisers for their beautification programs with the proceeds going to purchase trees and flowers. Planters can be sponsored by families, businesses and interest groups.
- We would recommend that the Village of Pouce Coupe provide a budget line within their budget for a Beautification Project for a five-year period.

c. Develop a Parks, Trails and Recreation Master Plan

The Village of Pouce Coupe has initiated projects to improve the Pouce Coupe Park infrastructure. By creating a master plan for all parks and recreation opportunities, the plan will integrate the needs for the local community and quality of life benefits with increased services and attractions for tourism markets.

- i. As part of the Community Profile, an inventory of all park and recreation assets should be made. Evaluate the current assets with a SWOT analysis, determine gaps and prioritize projects for implementation.
- ii. Coordinate and integrate future trail development inside and outside of municipal boundaries
- iii. Liaise with the private sector, industry and government for access and land use
- iv. Monitor the new government programs for suitability: Bike BC, Cycle BC and the existing Provincial Trails Strategy and programs for trail maintenance¹⁴
- v. As noted in the Economic Development Marketing Strategy key items that relate to this initiative include:
 1. Tree Highway Corridor (tree line to Dawson Creek with trail). Key action items include:
 - Inspire the community with a simple project taken on by the village. A recommendation would be to start small, such as

¹⁴ <http://www.gov.bc.ca/ministries/>

planting a screen of trees along Highway 2 in front of the industrial park as you are entering Pouce Coupe from Dawson Creek. Tower Poplar trees would be recommended, as they are not costly and they grow very fast giving quick results.

- Tower Poplars planted behind rink, baseball diamonds to buffer the industrial area from the highway as well as the school.
- Also plant Tower Poplars across the highway in front of the residents to form a uniform green effect as you are entering the village. This would enhance the spectacular mountain view that you experience when you look straight ahead as you are driving into town. Tower Poplar is a fast-growing tree that would give quick results. They are easy, low maintenance and hardy for this region.

2. Walking Path

- There is potential to further develop Pouce Coupe as a walking destination from Dawson Creek. The path could possibly be an extension of the DC Rotary Trail that ends at the Dawson Creek Golf Course – cross the highway by the UFA – enter Pouce Coupe – into the new subdivision – through to downtown – to old Edmonton Highway – to Pouce Park.
- Signage would be required, plus KM markers.
- This is a project that could be done in partnership with DC Rotary Club, City of Dawson Creek, Village of Pouce Coupe and perhaps the new Business Advisory Council.

vi. Improvements to **Pouce Coupe Regional Park** include 11 new sites, with power and current plans including re-aligning access to the park when the new bridge construction gets underway. Ideally a walking trail to Dawson Creek lined with trees will be developed, visually connecting the two communities.

d. **Develop a Signage Master Plan**

Under the UBCM Phase II program, Pouce Coupe created the entrance signs to the community. Currently banners are being developed and co-sponsored through the Tourism BC *Community Tourism Opportunities* program.

By creating a master signage plan, an evaluation of future signage needs can be identified. Regardless of the size of a community, the key benefits of a signage strategy are in having adequate signage to generate interest in getting drive-by traffic to stop in the community and to have visitors in the area stay longer.

Utilizing the existing logo for the Village of Pouce Coupe into signage design is important for branding recognition to be effective.

A signage plan includes an inventory of all existing signage, SWOT analysis, identification of gaps, new signage requirements and a plan for implementation (leadership organization(s), regulatory approvals, sponsorship, design, key messaging, locations, budget, timeline, action items and maintenance plan). Key signage elements include the full range of signage such as advance (outside the community and regional area), entrance (welcome), Visitor Centre (highway advance, approach and building), directional (highway and local), destination (key attractions, landmarks, parks, kiosks), route marking (trails) and interpretation.

- i. Refer to the community resource guide, *A Manual to Enhance Community Signage and Visitor Experience*, June 2007, by the Tourism Research Innovation Project, Malaspina University College. Visit the online resource centre at Tourism Dawson Creek
http://www.tourismdawsoncreek.com/tourism_foundations.php
- ii. Dovetail with the provincial Service and Attraction Highway Sign Program through the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure.¹⁵
- iii. Dovetail signage programming with Tourism BC Tourism Product Services,¹⁶ for local map production, website content and themed tours for the area.
<http://www.tourismbc.com/IndustryPrograms/MaximizingTheVisitorExperience/QualityAssuranceServices/HighwaySignProgram.aspx>
- iv. Recent signage includes “Welcome to Pouce Coupe” entrance signage (through UBCM Phase II funds). Current signage projects include historic signs throughout the village as part of the walking trail. This project is being co-sponsored through the Tourism BC *Community Tourism Opportunities* program.
- v. The Village of Pouce Coupe has issued Bylaw No. 885, 2006 Sign Regulations. <http://www.poucecoupe.ca/office/bylaws/index.php>
- vi. As noted in the Economic Development Marketing Strategy key items that relate to this initiative include:
 1. Highway Signage
Action items include:
 - Build a large “Gateway to British Columbia Sign” behind the existing Pouce Coupe welcome sign coming into town from the east. Then flank it with shrubs, evergreens and flowers consistent with the rest of the community.

¹⁵ http://www.th.gov.bc.ca/Publications/eng_publications/geomet/geometsigns.htm

¹⁶ Tourism BC, Wanda Hook (250) 387-0104

- Plant flowering crab trees on the empty lot space along both sides of the highway leading up to the “Gateway to British Columbia” signage.
- Landscape around the Pouce Coupe sign that is located just after entering the municipal Boundaries coming from the northwest with similar flowers and shrubbery used on the boulevard and planters.
- Signage directing traffic to turn at the Old Edmonton Highway to the “Boulevard.”

e. **Develop a Facilities Master Plan**

Facilities development in Pouce Coupe includes the new community centre. Inventory existing facilities, summarize key strengths and weaknesses and identify opportunities for improvements and new facilities suitable for the area.

- i. Improve the **Pouce Coupe Museum**¹⁷ – New special needs washroom installed, painted upstairs and downstairs walls, and Heritage House. Exterior building not insured; need storage facility and painting. Exterior sign around fence required; funds secured.
- ii. Improve the **Trestle**¹⁸ – Consider the development of a park/tourist viewing location. Ideally connecting a walking trail, gazebo and picnic area, interpretive signage and guardrail for safety would draw visitors to the site. Land assessment and access to be determined. Connect bus tours with trestle when product is market ready.

f. **Bed and Breakfast Opportunity**

The new Pederson Subdivision overlooks the Bisette Creek and Train Trestle. Consider zoning and a business attraction campaign for a bed and breakfast alternative to accommodation in Pouce Coupe.

- g. As noted in the **Economic Development Marketing Strategy (relates to Community / Quality of Life)** other items that relate to infrastructure include:
- i. Pedestrian stop light
 - ii. Parking

4.4.6 Product Development

Objective: Support businesses, organizations and entrepreneurs to create or improve their product offerings.

Rationale: In order to attract more visitors, and to keep them coming back, the area needs to complement and expand its existing product base. Expanding the product base to enhance the

¹⁷ Tourism BC Community Essential workshop

¹⁸ Ibid

visitor experience will extend the tourism season, allowing a greater return on investment for operators. To cultivate an environment for product development, entrepreneurs require information and support for business development. As noted in the Canadian Tourism Commission Experiences Toolkit,¹⁹ “A tourism product is what you buy. A tourism experience is what you remember”. A journey is more than getting from one place to the next, it’s about exploring and discoveries made along the way. Travellers like to immerse themselves in the communities they visit. Travel experiences engage travellers in a series of memorable events that are revealed over a duration of time, that are inherently personal, involve the senses and make a connection on an emotional, physical, spiritual or intellectual level. When considering product development, incorporate unexpected elements and textures to the product design and learning opportunities that create favourable memories. To satisfy today’s more sophisticated visitor; the new approach to product development is to tailor tourism activities as experiences. This can be done by seeking out unique stories about the community and presenting them in a simple, factual and compelling manner. Showcasing local stories and assets as the “unique selling proposition” is an opportunity to create value and generate visitor spending. Providing an exceptional and memorable experience can produce an emotional response and an interest in the community that could generate repeat visitation. However, thoughtful planning is important as consideration must be given to the each of the touch points of the visitor experience which range from the first to the final point of contact. The experiences developed by the tourism stakeholders of Pouce Coupe have the potential to create publicity at a low cost while building community pride.

Strategies:

16. Identify Tourism Product Opportunities that contribute to a sustainable and growing tourism industry.

Given the small geographic area for the Village of Pouce Coupe (2 square km) tourism product development opportunities are limited. Conduct a workshop with existing tourism operators to identify gaps and potential with current product offerings.

- a. A key attraction for development that has been identified is the railway trestle, which has potential for a picnic area and interpretive signage.
- b. Develop co-programming for the Museum in Pouce Coupe and Dawson Creek
- c. Evaluate the following ideas from the initial meeting discussion: farmers’ market; event development (e.g. half-marathon route, wind-powered go-carts, high tea in Pouce Coupe, storytelling, pioneer days); agri-tourism development (e.g. interpretive tours of crops, honey farms); circle tours with other communities, bus tours with food at each stopover and BBQ or feast on final day; industrial tours (e.g. oil rig); historical; ghost town, garden tours, relationship with Alaska Highway, themed tours with Dawson Creek.
- d. Co-promote each other’s community; get visitors moving around between the two (Current 2009 summer promotion stamp project is a good example, connecting walking

¹⁹ <http://www.keep-exploring.ca/experiences/en/>

trails from Pouce Coupe to/from Dawson Creek (tree-lined highway to connect the communities).

4.5 Information Management and Research

Objective: Establish an enhanced business directory and resource centre that will support the development of community tourism and provide the information and research needed to support the tourism effort.

Rationale: Tourism stakeholders require information about the tourism industry, policy, markets and promotional opportunities. Ongoing research is vital to success, as markets and situations are constantly changing. Compiling research through the regional, provincial and national destination marketing organizations, government at all levels, sector associations and other sources is an ongoing requirement. The proliferation of information sources on the Internet makes this accessibility convenient, however, time constraints and information overload can often interfere with the use of that information. The tourism information clearinghouse is a useful and easy-to-deliver service that provides a central access point for consumer, industry, visitor and market research.

This service would not necessarily be limited to gathering and distributing information from industry, national and international sources; it also provides research analysis and data needs within the Pouce Coupe and Dawson Creek area itself to assist with strategic positioning and plan evaluation. In addition to collecting secondary research (existing information), primary research (e.g. Pouce Coupe Visitor Centre study) fills the information gap by providing specific information relevant to the current situation.

Currently Community Information is available online at <http://www.poucecoupe.ca/about/more.php> and the Business Directory (based on Village of Pouce Coupe business licences) is online at: <http://www.poucecoupe.ca/business/index.php>.

Strategies:

17. Enhance the Business Section of the Pouce Coupe website.

Currently information visitors would require about visiting the area is presented with all other information, e.g. Business Directory, Museum, Park, etc. Enhance the content for the visitor by expanding the information for accommodations, services (food, fuel, etc.) and attractions profiled on one web page section. Enhanced business directory content for tourism can include number of units per accommodation, services (e.g. pub, liquor store).

18. Create an online resource library that can be utilized by tourism stakeholders and local organizations.

Given the size of the tourism industry, a comprehensive online resource centre is not recommended for the Village of Pouce Coupe, but there should be a link from the Pouce Coupe Village website to the Tourism Dawson Creek enhanced Resource Centre. The current Community Information page is adequate to add the proposed Community Profile.

Refer to the business and industry development section of the Tourism Dawson Creek Tourism Plan for the enhanced industry resource centre.

4.6 Business and Industry Development

Objective: Supply information and resources that support the needs of local tourism business operators and organizations.

Rationale: A more diverse, competitive and innovative tourism sector will benefit from the promotion and facilitation of quality, service and professional standards. It is through tourism operators themselves that the benefits expected from the implementation of this tourism plan will be realized. More visitors, longer stays and higher spending will translate directly into increased occupancies and yields, employment and capital investment among operators. Creating this positive cycle requires that industry meet standards in service quality, marketing and overall business development so the visitor experience is truly enriched and leads to a more sustainable base. Most communities in BC are experiencing some form of skill and/or labour shortage. As the Village of Pouce Coupe in the vision and planning stage an assessment for skill development and labour supply would need review. Promoting product will not be effective unless the product meets or exceeds the expectations of the target market. The brand promise that is made through marketing communications must be in line with the products and services being offered. As the area develops its tourism opportunities, both individual businesses and the collective industry require professional development.

Since the attraction base is not owned by businesses (Pouce Coupe Park, Community Centre Events, Canada Day Event and Pouce Coupe Museum), none of the three accommodation properties is approved by Tourism BC, and all three are older properties either in the mature or declining life cycle.

Strategies:

19. **Establish industry training, standards, certification and professional development programming and encourage adoption of industry and government standards by tourism operators.** The uptake of professional ratings, certification and training programs by accommodation facilities and other tourism operators not only enhances progress toward having more “market-ready” product, it will also improve the bottom line for the operators themselves.
 - a. **Refer to the Tourism Dawson Creek Business and Industry Development section for additional content for the Resource Centre and workshops and programs.**
 - b. **Encourage uptake of accommodation standards recognition programs.**
 - i. Encourage participation in Tourism BC’s Approved Accommodation inspection and registration program for accommodation properties. Benefits include a listing in the BC Approved Accommodation Guide, and “Approved Accommodation” signage. New opportunities include the HelloBC Listings

program. Tourism Product Management is also responsible for designating artisans, attractions and accommodations for the purpose of highway signage.²⁰

4.7 Market Position and Targets

Objective: Improve overall tourism performance by increased awareness, length of stays, overnight stays, visitor spending and overall market share of leisure travellers, Free Independent Travellers (FIT) and small groups of tourists in transit.

Rationale: Knowing the clientele most likely to be interested in purchasing the area's tourism product is critical to the entire marketing process. Many tourism businesses (and communities) make the mistake of attempting to be all things to all people, when in fact it is difficult, expensive and inherently risky trying to appeal to the "average" traveller. It is therefore important to segment the market based on the profile of existing visitors, as well as those markets that might be enticed by the combination of products and activities that are, or could reasonably be, available in the study area.

Effective community marketing can only be achieved through a collaborative and cooperative approach, as the tourism organization does not have control or ownership of the components that impact the visitor experience. This plan is a working document, therefore it will evolve as potential partnerships and alliances are formed and resources are leveraged during the implementation stage. As noted in the research section, accessing market information by visitor activity is crucial to understanding how to appeal to market segments.

Visitor Types

Key visitor types for Dawson Creek and the Pouce Coupe area are primarily leisure travellers, Free Independent Travellers (FIT) and groups via RV Caravans touring (en route to Alaska or other destinations) and special interests in events. Famous for Mile 0 of the Alaska Highway, the area attracts leisure visitors for day trips and overnight stays for tourists in transit en route to Alaska and regional markets for organized sports, recreation, entertainment, reunions, weddings. Business travel includes workers for the oil, gas and coal sectors and government employees for meetings. Traditional summer peak season has occupancy availability in fixed-roof accommodations as Alaska-bound visitors typically travel in RVs and off-season fixed-roof accommodators fill with business travel (workers for oil, gas, etc.). Market origin includes: Regional BC and Alberta, Canada other, US, Europe, Asia/Pacific.

Target Markets

For Alaska-bound travellers, targets include US, Canada, Europe and Asia/Pacific. For the event mix of conventions, travel shows, consumer shows, family shows and concerts, key targets include the Peace Region, which is a large geographic area with unique topography. The overall population is approximately 221,465 dispersed over a vast landscape that is roughly the size of California and is largely comprised of agricultural and forested lands.

²⁰ http://www.tourismbc.com/prod_mgmt.asp?id=1248

Target regional market potential. Major communities by radius and population:

- 150 km radius of Dawson Creek, population 133,295: Dawson Creek, Fort St. John, Tumbler Ridge, Chetwynd, Pouce Coupe, Taylor, Grande Prairie, Spirit River, Rycroft, Wembley, Sexsmith (included are portions of Counties, Municipal Districts and Regional Districts)
- 200 km radius of Dawson Creek, population 7,010: Hudson's Hope, Mackenzie, Grimshaw, Valleyview (included are portions of Counties, Municipal Districts, and Regional Districts)
- 300-400 km radius of Dawson Creek, population 81,160: Fort Nelson, Peace River, Fox Creek, High Level, Grande Cache (included are portions of Counties, Municipal Districts and Regional Districts). (Source: EnCana Business Plan, 2009)

Touring Market

The touring market seeks a range of activities, multiple destinations (e.g. circle tours) and a variety of accommodation options. Many are considered the rubber-tire segment; that is, entering and leaving the area by automobile. This segment includes the RV market and visitors who rent vehicles to travel through the area, as well as those who travel in their own private vehicles.

Free Independent Travellers (FIT)

Free Independent Travellers (FIT) travel unescorted and usually have no formal itinerary.

Small groups and meetings

With the new Community Centre, small groups can be attracted for events, e.g. weddings.

4.8 Marketing Partnerships

Objective: Partner in cooperative marketing programs with local partnerships that leverage resources and extend market reach.

Rationale: With limited resources, partnering marketing efforts will extend market reach for the benefit of the destination and the participating marketing partner, other organizations and other communities in the study area. Tourism BC's *Community Tourism Opportunities* program provides funds to assist with the implementation of the plan. This provides an opportunity to complete special projects that will elevate the level of marketing activity. Ideally, if additional funds are secured in the future to maintain the new level of activity in creating more visibility in the marketplace, then achieving the goal of increasing the overall performance of the tourism industry is possible.

Strategies:

20. Work with the regional destination management organization, Northern BC Tourism.

The Village of Pouce Coupe has already been active in working with the NBCT and has been accepted for three projects under the *Community Tourism Opportunities* program: banners,

brochure and walking trail signage. Additional opportunities are based on priority projects identified from annual consultation with communities. This tourism plan will provide a variety of initiatives that may be eligible for funding through the *Community Tourism Opportunities* program and other programs. The Tourism Partners Program, provides local operators the opportunity to reach a wider audience by allowing them to participate in sophisticated, Tourism BC-branded, cooperative marketing campaigns. Northern BC Tourism also offers support to communities and operators such as the Social Networking tutorial.

21. **Work with Tourism Dawson Creek.** As identified at the initial meeting, both the communities of Dawson Creek and Pouce Coupe expressed an interest in working closer together. Both recognized the two communities are in completely different stages of development and as such there are limits to the activity or participation for Pouce Coupe in tourism development. Regardless of the size of Pouce Coupe, the principles of tourism development apply to any community and as such the recommendations for Pouce Coupe have been scaled down to coincide with the resources of the community.

4.9 Branding and Positioning

Objective: Maintain graphic standards for use of the “Pouce Coupe – British Columbia, Canada” logo.

Rationale: The purpose of a community brand is to create a unique identity that clearly distinguishes your area from that of your competition. By consistently using the brand throughout all communication applications, you develop brand equity, starting with awareness, recognition and ultimately loyalty, creating a place in the mind of the consumer that represents the positive aspects of the visitor experience. Brands are developed from a review of the strengths of the community, environment, current activities, attractions, characteristics and history, and by defining the visitor experience. Without understanding how visitors perceive the destination now it is hard to know which marketing communication messages are appropriate.



The brand promise that the community makes to a potential visitor must be well defined; this serves as a basis when communicating what the “Pouce Coupe” experience is, whether that is on its own or part of a regional context.

The Canadian Tourism Commission undertook a rebranding strategy for Canada and, although communities will not embark on a branding process of this calibre, the principles are the same. Refer to the Brand Canada Toolkit for more information on place branding for tourism.

http://www.corporate.canada.travel/en/ca/about_ctc/brandtoolkit/index.html

Positioning

For marketing communications, Pouce Coupe will be positioned as a stopover that supplies riverside camping services.

Strategies:

22. **Create graphic standards usage guidelines for third-party use of the Pouce Coupe, British Columbia logo artwork.** If community groups, the Pouce Coupe Museum or marketing partners require use of the logo to co-promote Pouce Coupe within their own promotions, ensure usage rights meet the criteria of the logo standards for both print, web ad signage use. The guidelines document indicates the variations of the logo artwork, signature images, colour scheme, fonts, tag line and conceptual designs for a community web page, brochure or visitor guide cover and print advertisements. Stationery for use by the Visitor Centre should be produced, as well as an email signature.

4.10 Promotional Tools & Materials

Objective: Maintain an official set of marketing materials to support visitor services.

Rationale: A set of quality and professionally created promotional tools and materials provides a solid foundation for supporting visitor enquiries and undertaking marketing activities. Small communities are competing with areas that have larger budgets, therefore many small communities do not meet industry standards. Ineffective communication tools waste valuable resources. By building a strong foundation, Pouce Coupe will have an advantage over other communities by simply being effective with the design and production of their communication tools. It is imperative that the right communication tool is targeted during the appropriate stage in the purchase cycle (Awareness, Interest, Evaluation, Purchase, Loyalty). The application of the community brand needs to be incorporated into all designs while artwork and content is customized for the communication objective of the materials being developed.

The system to generate visitor inquiries must include key messaging and appropriate promotional tools to distribute throughout the purchase cycle with adequate means to get the message out.

This includes:

- promoting awareness of the destination and its attributes;
- generating interest in the destination as a travel choice;
- be convincing as the choice over other destinations;
- indicate convenience to purchase; and
- provide an option to receive more information in the future.

Corresponding photography, colours and font selection forms part of the area identity. The official website address would appear on all materials; if there is a toll-free number it would appear where appropriate. It is recommended that a professional graphic designer and copywriter, who have a thorough understanding of tourism marketing and place marketing, develop the artwork and the promotional tools and materials. Ideally the designer would be familiar with this tourism plan.

Currently the Walking Trail brochure, street banners and historic sites around the Village are approved projects under the *Community Tourism Opportunities* program and are set for production in 2009.

Strategies:

23. **Develop the image bank.** Continue compiling a combination of low-resolution images for the website and e-newsletter and high-resolution images for print media. Ongoing updating of images will be required. Through the efficiency of digital cameras, high-resolution quality images, low-resolution standard images and video clips (suitable for website use) can be captured more readily. A combination of both professional and amateur sources will be adequate to maintain the image bank over time. Partnership with the regional DMO, Northern BC Tourism can leverage resources for the image bank. Other sources include Tourism BC and stock agencies easily accessible from the Internet.

In addition to the logo artwork, key photographic images will be used consistently to illustrate visually the attributes that make up the image for Pouce Coupe, British Columbia, Canada. Copyright restrictions vary depending on the source for images, so a usage guide for all images is recommended. Ensure any images that include people have a model release; for those under 19 years old, a parent or guardian release is required. High-resolution scans of images in digital format make for ease of distribution via the Internet or by CD/DVD. Professional photography, whether supplied or contracted to a photographer to capture images, requires high-resolution digital format, minimum 300 pixels per inch, which is now industry standard. Low-resolution scans or digital format images are suitable for the website. Image bank projects, in partnership with the regional destination marketing organization and Tourism BC, may be co-sponsored.

- a. **List categories for images.** To expand the image bank, the first step is to review the tourism features to provide a starting point for developing an image list by categories.
- b. **Compile an inventory of existing images.** List current inventory and determine initial gaps from categories list. Compile existing images from various sources to reduce costs and duplication of effort. Various groups, organizations and businesses will have images that they will share for no cost. *Identify the gaps from the initial inventory to determine next steps.*
- c. **Purchase usage rights of existing images.** Additional images can be compiled by purchasing usage rights of existing images from professional sources (for high-resolution needs and the signature series) and archival images purchased through BC Museum and Archives. When collecting images from secondary sources, determine copyright and usage guidelines.
- d. **Access free images** through partnerships with local operators for use of their copyrighted images and image banks through regional, provincial (Tourism BC,²¹ Picture BC)²² and national sources such as the (CTC).²³

²¹ <http://www.tourismbc.com/IndustryPrograms/AdditionalMarketingResources/ImageBank.aspx>

- e. **Contract professional photographer(s) to shoot images.** After compiling secondary sources, new image acquisitions can be contracted out to professional photographers to complete the image bank. Ensure all copyrights remain with the tourism organization whenever possible.
 - f. **Maintain an online image inventory and retrieval system.** Access to images can be accomplished through the website.
 - g. **Purchase a combination digital still and video camera with high-resolution capability to supplement the image bank.** The maintenance of the image bank is ongoing. Digital technology allows high-resolution quality images to be captured for use in print media (magazines for media use or posters, etc.) All-in-one cameras now double as video recorders. The website will require fresh images by season, and as new products are developed. The Village of Pouce Coupe can capture images of industry and community events that are ideal for the newsletter and presentations. In addition to marketing purposes, the camera would be an asset to the community and could be loaned to businesses/organizations to take images for their websites or promotional use.
 - i. Digital cameras with a minimum 5 megapixel capability set to the highest resolution capture the required high-resolution images needed for quality print media. A minimum 300 pixels per inch data resolution is required based on the final size of the image when output. Often people refer to DPI (dots per inch), however, this refers to the output of the final printed material not the input of gathering high-resolution digital data. Technology has advanced to where 10 megapixel capability is becoming minimum standard for cameras.
24. **Produce the Official Pouce Coupe Visitor Brochure.** Currently the Village of Pouce Coupe has received funding approval for a Walking Trail brochure. Given the limited services in the community it is recommended the content of the brochure include general information about Pouce Coupe, the accommodation options, Pouce Coupe Park, Trestle, Museum and Community Centre as well as the walking tour information and the Canada Day event. Include a map feature that shows images of the Museum, Park, etc. With the recent development of the Village website, the visitor brochure would serve as a visitor services piece that focuses on all services and features, including a basic map and access routes to the area since some distribution will be to visitor centres in the area. The rack format folds down to 4x9" but can be expanded in multiple panels. This format also allows for placement of the brochure in a #10 business envelope (4 1/8" x 9 1/2") convenient for mail-outs. Hiring a design firm that will undertake the communications suite is important for branding to be effective; this includes copywriting and editing services. Internal distribution (inside the study area) would include the Pouce Coupe and Dawson Creek Museum and a selection of Visitor Centres in the area.
25. **Market the Community Centre – Relates to Community / Quality of Life – Economic Development Strategy**

²² <http://www.picturebc.ca/>

²³ <http://mediacentre.canada.travel/photos-footage>

- a. Develop a promotional sheet with details of the community centre capacity, booking information, etc.
- b. Enhance the existing content on the Community Centre section of the website (refer to next strategy).
- c. Recommendations from the Economic Development Strategy include:
 - i. Develop photo library of kitchen in progress.
 - ii. Community Centre set up for different events such as banquets, meetings, sports events, etc.
 - iii. Identify cost structure, availability of caterers, have a list of caterers available.
 - iv. Number of guests the hall can hold.
 - v. Develop brochure and market to the surrounding communities.
 - vi. Display in flower shops in Dawson Creek, send to all economic development departments in the region, and send to all clubs in Pouce Coupe, Dawson Creek and Toms Lake, etc.
 - vii. Develop two annual events to use the center – Regional Arts & Craft Fair, Regional Farmers’ Market – Blue Ribbon Fair, New Year’s Dance – invite DC & Toms Lake. (Host industry event.)

26. **Enhance the Village of Pouce Coupe website <http://www.poucecoupe.ca/index.php>** For consumer marketing, third-party website statistics consistently indicate the importance of an effective website.²⁴ Overall the current Pouce Coupe website has a clean feel with lots of white space and two column format. The Guest Book is a great feature and Village staff does respond to comments left on the site as many are questions. Given the recommendations in the newly released Economic Marketing Strategy, further consideration for the website needs to appeal to three primary markets: 1) Residents 2) Business /Investors and 3) Visitors. The content and site map require refinement. When creating content for a website that must appeal to all markets, the home page must link out to key pages on the site that will give an overview of the three main markets. E.g. the Home page should have a welcome message that appeals to all three markets and the initial message should create awareness about the community. A summary introduction page for each of the three markets should have links to more details.

Recommendations for website enhancements include:

- Ensure access to the Home page is from **every** page on the site. (The Home page access at the footer section of the page.)
- Rework the Home page with a welcome message that appeals to the three market types with links directly to an overview page summarizing content related to Residents/Business/Visitors.

²⁴ <http://www.newmediatrendwatch.com/markets-by-country>

- Standardize the design of the headings for the sub-pages; they currently are inconsistent with the design and feel of the rest of the site. E.g. Pouce Coupe Museum (large purple font), Seniors Centre (multi-colour and different size font), Library (two-colour and wavy font), Park (multi-colour and different size font), Community Centre (angled coloured font).
- For the Visitor page, summarize the key attractions (Park, trestle, walking tour, Museum, Canada Day BBQ). Indicate that visitor information is available at the Museum and hours of operation, accommodation options, links to the online map and the walking map/brochure are available.
- Pouce Coupe Park: Expand description and images. Show riverfront aspects and mention Canada Day celebrations with link to a dedicated page about the event. Describe all features of the park.
- Pouce Coupe Community Centre: Describe the capacity of the room for different types of events (e.g. maximum number for tables /sit-down dinner vs. meetings, theatre-style seating, etc). Profile types of events and services available for potential events. Photo gallery indicates it's coming soon.
- Photo Gallery: Describe each photo. Indicate what the copyright and usage rights are for the gallery images on the main page.
- For the proposed Business introduction page summarize the business composition in the area and investment opportunities, and have a section for a tourism industry description including local stats and links to other resources such as the refined Tourism Dawson Creek Resource Centre. If the proposed Community Profile is listed under "About – Learn More" then link to it from the Business page.
- Community: Assuming the Pederson Subdivision opportunity will get replaced, relocate this information under Community. The current community map should be available in PDF format for download and printing in 8.5x11" format. Currently, enlarging the image as indicated is still too small for effective use.
- Village Office: Provide a welcome message from the mayor and summarize the key highlights of Village plans and focus of effort of the current government. (E.g. OCP update in 2010, Tourism Plan underway, new Economic Development Marketing plan just released, Pouce Coupe Park improvements, new subdivision lots for sale, etc.). The OCP should be available online.
- Contact: Include contact for visitors to get more information about coming to the area, the Pouce Coupe Museum and/or the Village of Pouce Coupe.
- Promote one official URL **www.poucecoupe.ca** for all marketing and communications as set out in the tourism plan.

- Upload the Share the Excitement “Widget” which can be displayed on community, municipal or business websites. The widget²⁵ is being used to highlight HelloBC’s user-generated content (blogs). For instructions on how to install the widget refer to: <http://www.hellobc.com/en-CA/ShareExcitement/BritishColumbia.htm>.

Investment Website – Relates to Business Investment and Promotion Investment²⁶

- Given the size of Pouce Coupe the existing website could be enhanced with additional content that is structured by type of interest, e.g. Visit, Business, Residents. Tourism opportunities should have its own section, e.g. Bed and Breakfast, Food and Beverage, etc. within the “Invest” section.

4.11 Integrated Promotional Mix

Objective: Working with local partners, participate in marketing communications activities as resources allow.

Rationale: Due to the limited market-ready product and current life cycle of the fixed-roof accommodation sector, marketing efforts are recommended for visitor servicing.

Strategies:

27. Partnerships with Dawson Creek.

- a. Partnerships include cross-promotion of the Dawson Creek Museum and Pouce Coupe Museum
- b. Tourism Dawson Creek for local promotions (Summer 2009 \$1,000 contest), content in the Tourism Dawson Creek guide and cross-promotion of community websites.

28. Internet Marketing

- a. The Pouce Coupe website is the best source of information about the community. Maintain updates and keep the home page content fresh. Given “Pouce Coupe” is in the URL name, Google searches rank the official website number one without any external web marketing activity.
- b. Tourism BC’s investments in HelloBC and mobile technology with the iPhone²⁷ will provide unprecedented access to information about BC’s communities and activities.

²⁵ A badge or button incorporated into a site or social network space by its owner, with content or services typically served from another site making widgets effectively a mini-software application or web service. Content can be updated in real time since the widget interacts with the server each time it loads. Source: <http://www.davechaffey.com/E-marketing-Glossary/Widget-in-Internet-marketing.htm>

²⁶ Economic Development Marketing Strategy

²⁷ The iPhone is an internet-connected multimedia smartphone designed and marketed by Apple Inc. with a flush multi-touch screen and a minimal hardware interface. The device does not have a physical keyboard, so a virtual keyboard is rendered on the touch screen instead. The iPhone functions as a camera phone (including text messaging)

With a link from the Tourism BC HelloBC site to the official tourism website in each community, visitors will be able to access the dynamic information community websites provide.

Tourism BC has invested significant resources in the HelloBC²⁸ consumer website as the call to action for all marketing activities, especially at the provincial and regional levels. The site currently receives 7 million unique visits annually over its international network of websites. Visitors may access detailed information by their interests (hiking, fishing, etc.) or by geographic area, classified by regions and cities. Currently there is no profile for Pouce Coupe, although there is mention of Pouce Coupe on the Dawson Creek community pages. Regional DMO websites, such as Northern BC Tourism Association have been replaced by the enhanced HelloBC.com web presence.

Tourism BC is working with the Regional Destination Marketing Organizations and community contacts to enhance the community profile sections on the site to build additional community content. The website will also link to the local community websites. Future development of the HelloBC website includes expanded content for regions and communities.

Tourism BC Programs can be found online at:

<http://www.tourismbc.net/dms/Public/TBCPrograms.aspx>.

- c. Communities are strongly encouraged to build user-generated content through HelloBC blogs. Blogs are a powerful tool used to communicate first-hand experience in a community, which is proven to be very effective with consumers. HelloBC blogs can accommodate text, images and video content.
- d. Tourism BC is currently in the process of developing a province-wide product inventory with potential for online booking capability on their consumer website. Individual businesses can buy program listings. Tourism businesses including activities, attractions, events, transportation and accommodations can participate. The HelloBC Listings Program is targeted to assist consumers with their vacation planning. The 1-800 HelloBC Call Centre provides a booking service. In 2007 the Call Centre received almost 120,000 consumer inquiries and generated 8,800 reservation bookings. http://www.tourismbc.com/prod_mgmt.asp?id=1248. New for 2009 is the increase from a 40-word description to 100 words and the ability to upload one video clip.

4.12 Visitor Services

Objective: Support the Museum to provide enhanced visitor services as resources permit.

Rationale: The Pouce Coupe Museum is the “welcome” centre for visitors to the area and the key distribution outlet for brochures and maps about the area. The Museum receives financial

and visual voicemail), a portable media player (equivalent to an iPod), and Internet client (with email, web browsing, and local Wi-Fi connectivity). <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/IPhone>

²⁸ <http://www.hellobc.com/en-CA/default.htm>

support from the Village of Pouce Coupe. The centre is open in summer to greet visitors. As noted in the business and industry development section internal FAM tours and training of staff and volunteers can coincide with the Tourism Dawson Creek training program for the annual summer season, this could also include the camp attendants at Pouce Coupe Park.

Strategies:

29. **Maintain financial support to the Pouce Coupe Museum to operate and support information services to visitors.**
30. **The Village of Pouce Coupe to supply the official marketing materials and resources for visitor services.** The recommendations for the enhanced website will include visitor information. The Village of Pouce Coupe is currently producing the new rack brochure.
31. **Tourism Dawson Creek to assist in staff training to increase knowledge and professionalism and community orientation for all visitor centre staff provided in both communities.**

4.13 Plan Tracking

4.13.7 Monitoring and Evaluation

Objective: Establish and maintain a tracking and evaluation program that is directly associated with the goals and objectives of the tourism plan.

Rationale: Tourism development programming should be monitored and evaluated so that community stakeholders, local government, funders and other partners can assess plan progress. This will help with managing and allocating resources, assist with partnership development and build a better relationship with the community by communicating expectations, outcomes and benefits. The Tourism Plan Status Report, by separate cover, supplies a tracking reference to the following strategies for all strategies in the Plan.

Strategies:

32. **Maintain the strategic planning process.** Tourism development initiatives are long-term and may take years before implementation can occur. This tourism plan refers to strategies that will require further planning and is subject to resources being available. The tourism plan will require updating in three years – annual planning to move the strategies toward implementation require priority setting and a champion organization or group to spearhead the process. Develop an annual planning process to coincide with annual budgeting cycles. By having an annual plan with a focus each month, the plan can be implemented without being overwhelming. A year-in-review process provides valuable insight for future planning. *Refer to the Appendices for the Annual Planning Process.*
33. **Produce an annual tourism report.** Summarize the goals, objectives and strategies from the tourism plan. Report on the status of the objectives and strategies that were completed for the year. Include the focus of effort for the next year so progress can be noted. New opportunities will arise during the implementation stage; the annual report provides a mechanism to record accomplishments and opportunities that were not known at the time of the tourism plan

production. The Village of Pouce Coupe is a part of the South Peace Value of Tourism Study, which, is currently, be managed by Tourism Dawson Creek, and funded through the South Peace Economic Development Council. Information from this research project should be included in the tourism report.

34. **Track Activities.** The following are basic measures for key elements of the tourism plan, which can be monitored and included in the year-end report.
- a. **Inquiries** – Track the number, origin, party size and origin of visitors to the Pouce Coupe Museum.
 - b. **Brochure Distribution** – Track the distribution of the new brochures to gauge demand for future planning.
 - c. **Website Statistics** – Track website usage using the free Google Analytics service. <http://www.google.com/analytics/>. Check with the website hosting firm, which may also have a tracking mechanism included in the service.
 - d. **Industry Feedback** – Gather general feedback from industry stakeholders and marketing partners.
 - e. **Visitor Centre Statistics** – Utilize the custom reporting template supplied by Community Tourism Foundations to track visitors to the Pouce Coupe Visitor Centre.

4.14 Communications and Community Engagement for Pouce Coupe

Objective: Establish and maintain a communications strategy that engages and informs the tourism industry, residents, government and regional partners to contribute to an enhanced tourism development climate.

Rationale: A communications program that targets all stakeholders in the community and keeps them informed about the progress of initiatives and overall plan progress is recommended. Communicating the value of the tourism industry to government and residents will be important in sustaining their support for future investment in this economic sector. Communicating with local industry is critical for gaining momentum and creating the positive business climate needed to nurture product and destination development and program uptake. A communications How-To Guide is supplied by the *Community Tourism Foundations* program and is available for view online at http://www.tourismdawsoncreek.com/tourism_foundations.php.

Strategies:

35. **Maintain the Tourism Plan Status Report.** The tourism plan is intended for activities for the next 3-5 years. Based on available resources, an annual action plan will outline the strategies from the tourism plan. The status report indicates current status, next steps, timeline, lead organization, working budget and tracking and evaluation. Presented in table format, the Village Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) could maintain the updates to summarize the progress of the tourism plan implementation. The initial draft will be provided by *Community Tourism Foundations* as part of the final tourism plan.

36. **Report on the status of the Tourism Plan progress.**

- a. **Village of Pouce Coupe website.** Ensure program progress and updates for tourism planning and implementation are available online as part of the Village of Pouce Coupe website. Link to the *Community Tourism Foundations* web page as the program is ongoing into the implementation stage.
http://www.tourismdawsoncreek.com/tourism_foundations.php.
- b. **Village of Pouce Coupe Newsletter.** Ensure program progress and updates for tourism planning and implementation are included in the Village of Pouce Coupe Newsletter.
http://www.poucecoupe.ca/news_events/index.php

37. **Establish a broadcast email and fax system.** For quick communication of meeting notices or announcements, set up a group email system that allows messages to be sent to tourism-related businesses by community, organizations and government contacts.

38. **Host an Annual Open House for Residents.** As part of an annual open house for information on all aspects of community planning, include tourism initiatives updates and encourage input and feedback from residents.

39. **Partner with Tourism Dawson Creek for a more comprehensive communications strategy.** Refer to the Tourism Dawson Creek Communications section.

4.15 Action Plan Priorities for Pouce Coupe

The following list is intended for projects to be undertaken in 2009/10. The Tourism Plan is supported by an Excel workbook that includes the Tourism Plan Status Report and working templates for tracking and budgeting. As part of a strategic alliance both Pouce Coupe and Dawson Creek can determine their role in implementing these strategies.

Strategy # 1	Incorporate the tourism industry perspective within the broader context of the goals and action items of the Economic Development Marketing Strategy.
Strategy # 2	Determine the allocation of both human and financial resources required to undertake the implementation of the tourism plan and undertake negotiations to contract TDC to administer the Tourism function for the community.
Strategy # 3	Engage the tourism industry, on an ongoing basis, by participating a Tourism Advisory Committee (TAC).
Strategy # 4	Encourage participation of existing stakeholders to assist in the implementation of the tourism plan.
Strategy # 5	Establish the 2009/2010 budget to coincide with pooled resources and known grants available to implement the plan, and adjust accordingly as new grants or resources are secured.
Strategy # 7	Produce a Community Profile – Relates to Business Investment and Promotion Investment
Strategy # 8	Develop a Communications Strategy to encourage communication between the Pouce Coupe Historical Society and the South Peace Historical Society/Roots Group, Dawson Creek Beautifications Committee and all committees that may provide relevant expertise to notable projects.
Strategy # 9	Develop a market strategy – Relates to Business Investment and Promotion Investment
Strategy # 11	Monitor government and tourism agency programs to identify partnerships or opportunities for funding, assistance and additional planning for implementation of the tourism plan.
Strategy # 12	Establish an annual planning process that coincides with the Village planning process and the annual tourism planning cycle.
Strategy # 13	Maintain connectivity to the tourism industry in the region, and BC, through regional and provincial alliances and/or participation in industry associations, conferences, events and through professional development.
Strategy # 14	Maintain the tourism inventory.
Strategy # 15 a)	Official Community Plan Update
Strategy # 17	Enhance the Business Section of the Pouce Coupe website

Strategy # 18	Create an online resource library that can be utilized by tourism stakeholders and local organizations.
Strategy # 20	Work with the regional destination management organization, Northern BC Tourism.
Strategy # 21	Work with the regional destination management organization, Northern BC Tourism.
Strategy # 21	Produce the Official Pouce Coupe Visitor Brochure
Strategy # 25	Market the Community Centre – Relates to Community / Quality of Life – Economic Development Strategy
Strategy # 26	Enhance the Village of Pouce Coupe website http://www.poucecoupe.ca/index.php
Strategy # 27	Partnerships with Dawson Creek.
Strategy # 29	Maintain financial support to the Pouce Coupe Museum to operate and support information services to visitors
Strategy # 30	The Village of Pouce Coupe to supply the official marketing materials and resources for visitor services.
Strategy # 31	Tourism Dawson Creek to assist in staff training to increase knowledge and professionalism and community orientation for all visitor centre staff provided in both communities.
Strategy # 33	Produce an annual tourism report
Strategy # 34	Track Activities
Strategy # 35	Maintain the Tourism Plan Status Report
Strategy # 36	Report on the status of the Tourism Plan progress
Strategy # 39	Partner with Tourism Dawson Creek for a more comprehensive communications strategy.

5 SUSTAINABLE DAWSON CREEK TOURISM DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2010-2015

5.1 Introduction

The Tourism Dawson Creek 2006-2012 Tourism Development Plan outlined six strategic areas: Destination Development; Sports and Events; Communication; Visitor Services; Marketing and Promotion; and Education.

This plan is a refinement of the existing plan and will be known as *Sustainable Dawson Creek Tourism Development Plan 2010-2015*. This document will provide a detailed overview of the development and marketing goals and objectives within Dawson Creek and assist in directing Tourism Dawson Creek, the City of Dawson Creek and stakeholders. The proposed activities are for the next six years. This plan will also assist in meeting the provincial tourism objective to double tourism revenues by 2015. The Plan outlines seven strategic areas: Management and Planning; Information Management and Research; Communications; Destination Development (Infrastructure and Services); Product Development; Business and Industry Development; and Marketing and Visitor Services.

Tourism Hospitality, Management and Planning

The hospitality of a tourism destination is reinforced by policy at all levels. Without government policy, programming and funding, communities and regions would be limited in their effort to develop destinations and to support tourism businesses. The community attitude toward tourism development is also essential for the equation to be balanced. Community engagement, education and training are the responsibility of local policy and supporting programs.

5.2 Vision Statements

In order to create a context for tourism, development of the industry must dovetail with the overall vision for the community as a whole.

The vision statement describes a desired future state for tourism in the area. It provides direction for development efforts and it can incorporate political, economic, social and cultural elements, but is always forward focused.

5.2.1 Community Vision Statement

Dawson Creek will be a visionary community that works together for innovative social, cultural, economic and environmental vitality.

5.2.2 Proposed Community Tourism Vision Statement

The tourism industry in the City of Dawson Creek will be a catalyst for economic sustainability while increasing social, environmental and cultural awareness and elevating the quality of life for residents while providing a world-class visitor experience to our visitors.

5.2.3 Vision and Mission Statements for Tourism Dawson Creek

Vision Statement

That Tourism Dawson Creek be recognized as a provincial leader and innovator in destination development and marketing while leading the City of Dawson Creek towards sustainable economic growth and development utilizing the tourism industry.

Current Mission Statement

To facilitate and coordinate the development and promotion of the tourism industry within the City of Dawson Creek for the benefit of the community by creating year-round, memorable visitor experiences through quality visitor information and visitor services management, sport and events, destination development, marketing, communication and education.

Proposed Mission Statement

To facilitate and coordinate sustainable development and promotion of the tourism industry within the City of Dawson Creek for the benefit of the community by creating year-round, memorable visitor experiences through effective Management and Planning; Information Management and Research; Communications; Destination Development (Infrastructure and Services); Product Development; Business and Industry Development; and Marketing and Visitor Services.

Operating Principles

Tourism Dawson Creek will operate on the following operating principles:

- An advocate for industry standards and professionalism
- Entrepreneurial, creative
- Research based and industry driven
- Passionate about customer service, satisfaction and loyalty
- Inclusive and innovative
- Minimize the tourism industry's negative economic, environmental and socio-cultural impacts

Inclusively

We will create an invitational climate by: Ensuring all individuals have equal access to services and opportunities for success; Seeking ways to reflect and celebrate the diversity of our community and ensuring physical accessibility; Engaging people in issues that directly affect them; and Maintaining and strengthening our links to First Nations, Aboriginal and Métis.

About Tourism Dawson Creek

Tourism Dawson Creek (TDC) is the recognized destination management organization (DMO) for the City of Dawson Creek with emphasis on development and management of the tourism industry. Tourism Dawson Creek is a division of the Northern Rockies Alaska Highway Tourism Association (NRAHTA) and was formally established in August 2001. The contract was

awarded by the City of Dawson Creek to the NRAHTA on April 1, 2004; the current contract expires in 2011.

5.2.4 EnCana Event Centre Vision and Mission Statement

Vision

Recognize the EnCana Events Centre as the premier entertainment facility in the entire British Columbia and Alberta Peace Region while leading the City of Dawson Creek towards increased quality of life and sustainable social and economic growth by utilizing the EnCana Events Centre as its catalyst.

Mission

To increase the number of entertainment opportunities for the citizens of the Peace Region while striving to meet and exceed the City of Dawson Creek's and our customers' expectations.

5.3 Tourism Dawson Creek Goals and Objectives

Tourism Dawson Creek has operated from tourism plans since the original 2001 Tourism Outlook and Marketing Plan. The following goals build on existing goals, but they have been refined to coincide with the seven strategic areas of the plan framework. The City of Dawson Creek has identified sustainability as a priority for the community and sustainable initiatives are currently underway. <http://www.planningforpeople.ca/index.asp>. Tourism Dawson Creek recently held a workshop promoting Green Best Practices for Tourism Businesses and recognizes that sustainability must be embedded in the 2010-2015 Sustainable Tourism Plan. To achieve these refined goals, Tourism Dawson Creek will coordinate a sustainable and adaptive tourism strategy that incorporates the following elements:

Tourism Dawson Creek's Road Map for Sustainability

- a. Define policy for tourism sustainability
- b. Identify and engage stakeholders
- c. Set objectives and key performance indicators
- d. Implement and measure
- e. Check
- f. Review

Pillars of Sustainable Tourism

- a. Environmental
- b. Social
- c. Economic
- d. Cultural

City of Dawson Creek Strategies and Actions for Sustainability

- Sustainability Planning
- Arts & Culture

- Community Planning
- Economic Development
- Energy
- Governance
- Green Space
- Social Well-being
- Transportation
- Water

The Toolkit for Tourism Operators titled *Green Your Business* offers the following key tips:²⁹

- Make the switch – be prepared to commit to sustainability in business
 - Make a Statement
 - Take Action
 - Measure Progress
- a. Monitor the BC Partnership for Sustainable Tourism.³⁰ The Partnership will:
- i. Establish best practices for sustainability specific to tourism businesses;
 - ii. Develop and implement a certification program for “green” tourism operators;
 - iii. Set up a system for tracking and reporting sustainable tourism indicators;
 - iv. Offer practical carbon calculators for small and medium-sized tourism enterprises;
 - v. Embark on communications and outreach for businesses and travellers; and
 - vi. Hold workshops across the province to educate businesses on emission strategies and best practices.
- b. Monitor the government of BC Sustainable Green Tourism Action Plan progress.³¹ A sustainable, green tourism sector in BC is:
- i. Prepared for and readily adapting to change;
 - ii. Addressing needs and aspirations of present and future generations;
 - iii. Promoting and encouraging ethical behaviour;
 - iv. Recognizing the connectivity of the entire planet;
 - v. Promoting long-term health and well-being of visitors, suppliers, employees, host communities and the natural environment and built environment;

²⁹ http://www.tiac-aitc.ca/english/documents/advocacy/2008/green_your_business_toolkit.pdf

³⁰ Province of BC News release # 2008TCA0110-001632

³¹ http://www.tca.gov.bc.ca/tourism/docs/Action_Plan.pdf

- vi. Promoting long-term socio-economic vitality of the tourism system; and
- vii. Seen as a leader in Canada, across North America and in the rest of the world in a way in which it has tackled sustainability in a successful, collaborative and unified way.
- c. Review Whistler 2020 Moving Toward A Sustainable Future for existing initiatives of developed communities.
<http://www.whistler2020.ca/whistler/site/homepage.acds?instanceid=1930792&context=1930501>

The following goals and objectives are intended to be included in a dedicated tourism section for the next update of the City of Dawson Creek Official Community Plan.

Tourism Goals

- 1) Management and Planning, Information Management and Research and Communications: To sustain an effective tourism management function to ensure leadership, organizational capacity, adequate funding, research-based planning and open communications that support tourism stakeholders and the community in achieving the vision for tourism while integrating sustainability into every day decision-making;
- 2) Destination Development: To deliver a quality visitor experience by enhancing destination development and appeal for visitors through attracting infrastructure investments from local, regional, provincial, national and private sources while integrating sustainability into every day decision-making;
- 3) Product Development: To diversify the local economy through strategic expansion of the tourism industry as a way of expanding the tax base, and increasing jobs and income available to residents while balancing community values while integrating sustainability into every day decision-making;
- 4) Business and Industry Development: As an integral element of industry growth, to foster business and industry development that complements and strengthens products and attractions of most appeal to visitor markets and cultivates a welcoming community while integrating sustainability into every day decision-making;
- 5) Marketing: To encourage tourism operators to consistently and strategically market the area to target markets by working cooperatively and in collaboration with community stakeholders to leverage resources wherever possible in the community while integrating sustainability into every day decision-making;
- 6) Visitor Services: To maintain the visitor services programming to integrate with increased tourism activity, providing a seamless experience for the visitor; and
- 7) Visitor Experience: To develop a strategy that focuses on providing exceptional experiences and excellent value to extend the stay and increase visitation and recommendations that will position Dawson Creek as a preferred destination. The strategy will address the pre, core and

post visitor experience and will guide tourism stakeholders in delivery of an exceptional and consistent message while integrating sustainability into every day decision-making.

Goal: Management and Planning, Information Management and Research and Communications: To sustain an effective tourism management function that ensures leadership, organizational capacity, adequate funding, research-based planning and open communications supporting tourism stakeholders and the community in achieving the vision for tourism community while integrating sustainability into every day decision-making.

Tourism Objectives Tourism Planning and Management

- Identify resources required to implement the tourism plan in phases, built around community, industry, government participation, partnerships and communications.

Plan Tracking / Monitoring and Evaluation

- Maintain a tracking and evaluation program that is directly associated with the goals and objectives of the tourism plan.

Information Management and Research

- Maintain an online tourism industry database and resource centre that will support the development of community tourism and provide the information and research needed to support the tourism industry.

Communications

- Maintain a communications strategy that engages and informs the tourism industry, residents, government and regional partners to contribute to an enhanced tourism hospitality climate.

Goal: Destination Development: To deliver a quality visitor experience by enhancing destination development and appeal for visitors through attracting infrastructure investments from local, regional, provincial, national and private sources community while integrating sustainability into every day decision-making.

Tourism Objective Destination Development: Tourism Infrastructure and Services

- Expand and improve tourism infrastructure that cultivates a sustainable community and the tourism vision.

Goal Product Development: To diversify the local economy through strategic expansion of the tourism industry as a way of expanding the tax base, and increasing jobs and income available to residents while balancing community values while integrating sustainability into every day decision-making.

Tourism Objective Product Development

- Identify and prioritize product development opportunities and compile resource material that aids with pre-feasibility for business opportunities and policy support while integrating sustainability into every day decision-making.

Goal: Business and Industry Development: As an integral element of industry growth, to foster business and industry development that complements and strengthens products and attractions of most appeal to visitor markets while raising the level of customer service and satisfaction community while integrating sustainability into every day decision-making.

Tourism Objective Business and Industry Development

- Maintain a business and industry development program that supports the needs of local tourism business operators and organizations.

Goal: Marketing and Visitor Services: To encourage tourism operators to consistently and strategically market the area to target markets by working cooperatively and in collaboration with community stakeholders to leverage resources wherever possible while integrating sustainability into every day decision-making.

Tourism Objectives Marketing and Visitor Services

Market Position and Targets

- Improve overall tourism performance by increased awareness, length of stays, overnight stays, visitor spending and overall market share of leisure travellers, Free Independent Travellers (FIT) and small groups from domestic and foreign markets.

Marketing Partnerships and Programs

- Maintain a cooperative marketing program with regional partnerships that leverage resources and extend market reach.

Branding

- Improve brand recognition in key markets by promoting the place identity of “Dawson Creek – British Columbia, Canada.”

Promotional Tools & Materials

- Maintain the official set of promotional tools and materials for destination marketing and visitor services.

Integrated Promotional Mix

- Maintain an integrated promotional mix of marketing activities to raise awareness of the Dawson Creek area in its current stage of development, communicating the attributes of market-ready product in key markets.

Visitor Services

- Maintain the visitor services programming to integrate with increased tourism activity, providing a seamless experience for the visitor.

5.4 Management, Planning and Planning for Implementation

The following section outlines the management preparation required to undertake the plan implementation. Section 5 Action Plan Priorities summarizes in point form the priority strategies from throughout the plan for the focus of effort for 2009/10. This Tourism Plan is intended to act as a reference document while the Tourism Plan Status Report will summarize all the strategies with a timeline, next steps, lead organization, budget, tracking and current status for stakeholders to use as a tool for monitoring the plan implementation.

Objective: Identify resources and short-term actions required to implement the tourism plan in phases, built around community, industry, government participation, partnerships and communications.

Rationale: Tourism Dawson Creek is operating at maximum capacity based on existing funding, programs and services. Several plans have been completed to improve destination development, however, the barriers to progress include limited financial and human resources, lack of appreciation of the value of tourism, and lack of a coordinated plan for sport, event and conference development. Plan implementation will not be successful without full commitment to the tourism vision through securing of adequate resources. Tourism activities must coincide with the annual planning cycle of key stakeholders.

Strategies:

1. **Encourage the participation of existing stakeholders to assist in the implementation of the tourism plan.** As noted in the Plan Direction section 3, by establishing a Tourism Advisory Committee all key stakeholder groups and organizations will provide input and determine how each community stakeholder can contribute to the overall vision for the community.
2. **Establish an Annual Tourism Action Plan that coordinates the three key tourism management stakeholders: Tourism Dawson Creek, the City of Dawson Creek and Global Spectrum Facility Management.**
 - a. Develop an annual planning process to coincide with year-end deadlines and the tourism marketing cycle. By having an annual plan with a focus each month, the plan can be implemented without being overwhelming. A year-in-review process provides valuable insight for future planning. The Tourism Status Report is a tool for tracking the progress of the tourism plan in summary format.
Refer to the Planning for Implementation section for the annual planning process.
 - b. Dawson Creek has several plans that are moving forward as resources become available. In order to create synergy, as the plans have overlap, increase coordination of effort amongst the three stakeholders.
 - c. Key plans or initiatives that require a coordinated annual action plan include: Sustainable Dawson Creek, City of Dawson Creek Economic Development Plan (update 2009), Dawson Creek Attractions Master Plan 2007, City of Dawson Creek Heritage Strategy 2007, Communications Plan 2005 (Alaska Highway Corridor Thematic Strategy, Dawson

Creek Thematic Strategy, Dawson Creek Downtown Revitalization, Alaska Highway House Concept Plan – Phase II), Alaska Highway Community Initiative, the EnCana Event Centre plans and the proposed new arts and cultural centre.

- d. Maintain the Tourism Planning Matrix Template supplied by *Community Tourism Foundations* as a Status update on all existing plans and initiatives. This tool is intended for the three stakeholders to plan the next steps in moving plans forward toward implementation. Key components of the template include a list of key plans, reports or initiatives in community planning that have an overlap with tourism. Summarize the current situation and action items for next steps to move plans toward implementation. Table headings include Lead Organization, Status, Overlap with other plans, Next Steps, Partners, Timing, Budget Considerations, Grant Status, Key Contact, Comments and Online web link to further information. Include TDC Sustainable Tourism Strategies in the Tourism Planning Matrix Template. Refer to the Infrastructure and Services section.
3. **Develop a formal Sport, Event and Conference Plan.** A formal Sport, Event and Conference Plan will integrate with existing plans while contemplating future development of the arts and cultural centre, sport tourism, convention centre, events and wellness area of the EnCana Event Centre. Tourism Dawson Creek has identified the need for a Sport Tourism position, which is subject to securing resources.

There are two options to undertake the strategy:

- b. Internal approach produced in cooperation with Tourism Dawson Creek and Global Spectrum Facility Management.
- c. Professional facilitation by hiring consultants who specialize in sport, event and conference tourism planning.

Tourism Dawson Creek will submit an Expression of Interest to the Tourism BC's Sport Tourism program for December 2009. The community contribution budget is \$10,000. Given this program focus is on Sport Tourism only, the strategy will need to be supplemented with an event and conference component through additional consultation services.

4. **Expand capacity of Tourism Dawson Creek for incremental tourism activities through the establishment of the Additional Hotel Room Tax.**

With multiple initiatives identified through existing plans and potential for product and market development in sport, events, meetings and conferences, additional financial and human resources are required to achieve the future vision of the community. The Additional Hotel Room Tax (AHRT) could yield between \$250,000 to \$330,000 per year based on market conditions. Conduct a Sustainable Funding workshop with stakeholders.

Refer to the Tourism BC Report on Options for Funding in the Resources section at http://www.tourismdawsoncreek.com/tourism_foundations.php.

Refer to the Appendices for more information on the Additional Hotel Room Tax.

5. **Acquire Destination Marketing Accreditation.** As noted in the recommendations from the *Best Practices for the Effective Use of the Additional Hotel Room Tax Revenue in British Columbia*, May 2007,³² DMOs are encouraged to seek membership with Destination Marketing Association International (DMAI)³³ and to become an accredited Destination Marketing Organization through the Destination Marketing Accreditation Program (DMAP).³⁴ Accreditation directly addresses standards of performance, best practices and techniques and service excellence. The following industry standards can be found online³⁵ by the following categories:

Branding	Governance	Management and Facilities	Sales
Communications	Group Sales	Marketing	Stakeholder Relationships
Destination Development	Human Resources	Membership	Technology
Finance	Innovation	Research / Market Intelligence	Visitor Services

6. **Consider the future organizational structure for Tourism Dawson Creek.** With the relationship of the Northern Rockies Alaska Highway Tourism Association integrating with the Northern BC Tourism – Agent for Tourism British Columbia, a review of the organizational structure is recommended for 2010 before the current contract expires in 2011 between Tourism Dawson Creek and the City of Dawson Creek. Also consider the legal entity to be identified to receive and manage the Additional Hotel Room Tax.
7. **Support the feasibility and development of a Business Improvement Area (BIA).** Much planning has been done around attractions, beautification, signage, etc. that affects the downtown core. Currently a new arts and cultural centre is planned. To support the merchants and key initiatives in achieving the vision for the downtown area, a Business Improvement Area plan is recommended. A Business Improvement Area is a defined area where property owners elect to pay an additional tax to support improvements to the area.
8. **Monitor government and tourism agency programs to identify partnerships or opportunities for funding, assistance and additional planning for implementation of the tourism plan.**

There is a multitude of government programs that can assist communities in tourism development. The Bike BC program is a \$31-million initiative for cycling infrastructure (cycling trail development) from the province of BC. The new Community Cultural Tourism Strategy is

³² Grant Thornton

³³ <http://www.destinationmarketing.org/page.asp?pid=114>

³⁴ http://digbro.com/entry/index.cfm?user_id=3939&l=0&r=0&c_id=&getFl=1&fl_id=1

³⁵ http://www.destinationmarketing.org/images/pdf/Domains_Standards_Elements_3012008.pdf

underway with stakeholder interviews being conducted throughout the province. Recent announcements include plans to develop a provincial cultural tourism strategy,³⁶ as well as the BC Partnership for Sustainable Tourism.³⁷ Refer to the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and the Arts.³⁸ Tourism development can be found at: <http://www.tca.gov.bc.ca/tourism/>.

Rural BC provides an excellent website for programs and resources.
<http://www.ruralbc.gov.bc.ca/>.

Northern Development Initiative Trust provides an excellent resource for Community Funding.
<http://northerndevelopment.bc.ca/community-funding>

Subscribe to Tourism BC's *The Tourism Brief* E-Newsletter for program updates and industry news. TourismBrief@tourismbc.com

Refer to the Business and Industry Development Section for websites that have RSS feeds and newsletters.

Key programs through Tourism BC that are opportunities for Tourism Dawson Creek include:

Tourism BC's *Community Tourism Opportunities* program. This program may provide funding support for the tourism plan implementation assessed on a project-by-project basis administered by the Regional Destination Marketing Organization (RDMO), Northern BC Tourism (NBCT).
http://www.tourismbc.com/IndustryPrograms/BuildingAndGrowingYourBusiness/Community_Tourism_Programs.aspx

9. Create awareness of Tourism Dawson Creek and maintain connectivity to the tourism industry in the region and BC, through local, regional and provincial alliances and/or representation and participation in industry associations, conferences, events, and through professional development.

- Ensure open communication between the regional destination marketing organization, Northern BC Tourism and the TAC.
- Ensure attendance by an area representative at the annual BC Tourism Industry Conference held in February each year, sponsored by the Council of Tourism Associations of BC and Tourism BC.³⁹
- Attend the Northern BC Tourism Association AGM.
- Participate at the committee and/or board level of tourism-related organizations.
- As sector development opportunities arise, identify sector-related organizations and programs and monitor opportunities for participation.

³⁶ Announcement at the 2008 UBCM convention.

³⁷ News Release 2008TCA0110-0016320 October 27, 2008.

³⁸ <http://www.gov.bc.ca/tca/>

³⁹ <http://www.bctourismindustryconference.ca/>

- Register to receive tourism industry e-newsletters and RSS feeds. (Tourism BC, Canadian Tourism Commission, sector organizations, government, etc.)
- Maintain membership in the following organizations:
 - American Bus Association
 - BC Destination Marketing Association
 - BC Sport Tourism Network
 - British Columbia Museum Association (Alaska Highway House)
 - Canadian Association of Convention and Visitor Bureaus
 - Canadian Sports Tourism Alliance
 - Council of Tourism Associations of BC (through NRAHTA)?
 - Dawson Creek and District Chamber of Commerce
 - Deh Cho Travel Connection
 - Experiences BC: RV & Camping Coalition (through Northern BC Tourism)
 - Northern BC Tourism Association
 - Northern Rockies Alaska Highway Tourism Association
- Maintain an active role in the following community groups and associations:
 - Mile 0 Park Society
 - Dawson Creek Air show Committee
 - Dawson Creek Heritage Commission
 - Downtown Dawson Creek Merchant Association
 - Measuring Up the North Committee
 - Provincial RV & Camping Working Group

10. **Update the Official Community Plan with tourism section**– Ensure the tourism sector is recognized with its own section in the next update of the Official Community Plan with the inclusion of the tourism vision, goals and objectives.

5.5 Plan Tracking / Monitoring and Evaluation

Objective: Maintain a tracking and evaluation program that is directly associated with the goals and objectives of the tourism plan.

Rationale: Tourism development programming should be monitored and evaluated so that community stakeholders, local government, funders and other partners can assess plan progress. This will help with managing and allocating resources, assist with partnership development and build a better relationship with the community by communicating expectations, outcomes and benefits. The Tourism Plan Status Report, by separate cover, supplies a tracking or evaluation reference for all strategies in the Plan. Currently Tourism Dawson Creek produces a quarterly report to the City of Dawson Creek directly related to the goals and objectives of the current tourism plan.

Strategies:

11. **Maintain the Tourism Plan Status Report.** The tourism plan is intended for activities for the next 5 years. Based on available resources, an annual action plan will outline the strategies from the tourism plan. The status report indicates current status, next steps, timeline, lead organization, working budget and tracking and evaluation. Presented in table format, Tourism Dawson Creek could maintain the updates to summarize the progress of the tourism plan implementation. The initial draft has been provided by *Community Tourism Foundations* as part of the final tourism plan.
12. **Maintain the strategic planning process.** Tourism development initiatives are long-term and may take years before implementation can occur. This tourism plan refers to strategies that will require further planning and is subject to resources being available. The tourism plan will require updating in five years. Annual planning is required to move the strategies toward implementation requiring priority setting and a champion organization or group to spearhead the process.
13. **Produce an annual tourism report.** Summarize the goals, objectives and strategies from the tourism plan. Report on the status of the objectives and strategies that were completed for the year. Include the focus of effort for the next year so progress can be noted. New opportunities will arise during the implementation stage; the annual report provides a mechanism to record accomplishments and opportunities that were not known at the time of the tourism plan production. The annual report is for public distribution to the tourism industry, community and the City of Dawson Creek.
14. **Track sustainability strategy indicators** (as per Whistler 2010). Compare sustainable objectives to achievements and report on progress.
15. **Track the marketing program.** Marketing activities that are meant to increase visitation, spending and visitor satisfaction all imply measurement. The essence of marketing is dynamic so standards and conventions are frequently broken, but the measurable results are important. The following are basic measures for key elements of the marketing program, which can be monitored and included in the year-end report:
 - **Communication Tools** – Track and quantify distribution of all materials, e.g. service brochures, maps, visitor guide, etc.
 - **Conversion Studies** – Future consideration – Tracking all visitor inquiries in a database can provide a source for supporting conversion studies to evaluate the effectiveness of the marketing programs. Conversion studies are conducted to determine whether the inquiry actually resulted in a visit to the area and whether the information visitors found on the web or received by mail influenced their decision to visit. In essence, the research seeks to determine whether an inquiry “converted” to an actual purchase. Typically these surveys can be costly and are done by research firms.

- **Economic Impact Studies** – Dawson Creek has been active in tracking events and the tourism industry impacts through economic impact studies. Currently the Tourism BC Value of Tourism project is underway for 2009.
- **Industry Feedback** – Information and general feedback from industry stakeholders and marketing partners.
- **Industry Online Survey** – Utilize the convenience of web services that allow the creation of customized online surveys that supply an automated report. <http://www.surveymonkey.com/>
- **Inquiries** – Track unique website hits, create landing pages and website responses through an email form. Customize email addresses and domain names for promotional purposes, e.g. info@URLname.com (dedicated web addresses can point to any page on the website or email addresses can be forwarded to the general mailbox and tracked by unique address). Track inquiries against a list of marketing activities for the toll-free number that is answered at the Visitor Centre by asking how the person got the number.
- **Media** – Collect “tear sheets” or PDF copies of printed articles or e-news items, and follow up with all visiting media or media inquiries. Calculate the advertising cost of equivalent media space.
- **Occupancy Data** – As noted in the research section, Tourism BC’s Occupancy Tracking and Value of Tourism programs are both recommended.
- **Participation Rates** – Growth in volume and program spending by local industry and partners in Tourism Dawson Creek tourism programs.
- **Trade, Travel and Consumer Shows.** Trade Show reports would include a summary of contacts, key outcomes and next steps. Consumer and travel show reports indicate number of visitors to the booth, number of publications distributed, analysis of entry forms for trip give-away and comparisons to previous years’ statistics, noting weather and competing events. Quantify permission-based email additions to the database for follow-up.
- **Visitation and Spending** – Activity measures used in the Situation Analysis (VC visitation, room revenues) as well as primary research (i.e. visitor survey). *Refer to the Information Management and Research section.*
- **Website Statistics** reports can be used to monitor the way in which sections of the website are performing, and to track the growth of traffic to the site as a whole. This information is useful when considering additions and renovations to the site. Tracking will also include email requests for the visitor guide and general requests for information. Web developers can supply internal website tracking reports; as well, Google Analytics⁴⁰ is a free service. Web hosting firms also provide their own statistics. When engaging a web marketing program, ensure the campaign has a tracking component. Implement several URLs to track and market specific marketing initiatives: www.tourismdawsoncreek.com;

⁴⁰ <http://www.google.com/analytics/>

www.dawsoncreektoalaska.com; www.alaskahighway.ca; www.dawsontodawson.com;
www.stayandplay.ca; www.dawsontodawson.ca; www.alaskahighwayhouse.com;
www.sportsdawsoncreek.com; www.rvbc.ca

16. **Determine if comparable benchmarking against other communities would be beneficial in giving a better understanding of the area tourism performance.** The process of benchmarking includes gathering data to see how well the community performs against others, and is also a way of identifying new ideas. It is important to understand the cost and time issues of benchmarking – measurement tasks that cannot be reasonably performed, either because of data gaps or time constraints, should not be undertaken. Information needed to fulfill a benchmark analysis should be readily available or relatively easy to obtain. VC statistics, room revenues (BC Stats), visitor exit surveys (Tourism BC), changes in accommodation inventories (BC Stats) and tourism labour force (Statistics Canada) are among the more easily identified and assembled benchmarks.

Information Management and Research

5.6 Information Management and Research

Objective: Maintain an online tourism industry database and resource centre that will support the development of community tourism and provide the information and research needed to support the tourism industry.

Rationale: Tourism stakeholders require information about the tourism industry, policy, markets and promotional opportunities. Ongoing research is vital to success, as markets and situations are constantly changing. Compiling research through the regional, provincial and national destination marketing organizations, government at all levels, sector associations and other sources is a continuing requirement. The proliferation of information sources on the Internet makes this accessibility convenient, however, time constraints and information overload can often interfere with the use of that information. The tourism information clearinghouse is a useful and easy-to-deliver service that provides a central access point for consumer, industry, visitor and market research.

This service would not necessarily be limited to gathering and distributing information from industry, national and international sources; it also provides research analysis and data needs within the Dawson Creek regional area itself to assist with strategic positioning and plan evaluation. In addition to collecting secondary research (existing information), primary research fills the information gap by providing specific data relevant to the current situation.

Refer to the business and industry development section of this report for additional sources of content for the industry resource centre.

Tourism Dawson Creek has been very active in research projects with partners to provide quantifiable data to support tourism in Dawson Creek and throughout the region. These include the Northern Rockies Alaska Highway Visitor Study (2005), the Motivations of RV Travel, and the Northern Rockies Value of Tourism study. Economic Impact Studies for the Northern BC Winter Games and Fall Fair Rodeo have also been conducted by Tourism Dawson Creek.

Strategies:

17. **Maintain the online inventory.** In order to quantify, track and evaluate the tourism industry for trend and gap analysis, communications and industry composition, an inventory of tourism businesses and features is required. As part of the *Community Tourism Foundations* program, templates were supplied to update the existing inventory. Maintain the current online inventory to ensure that all businesses, community and sector groups, First Nations and government, with a stake in tourism, have been included. Maintain the Community Partner Organizations database bi-annually in partnership between Tourism Dawson Creek and Parks and Recreation. Monitor trend analysis by comparing the composition of the tourism industry year over year.
18. **Enhance the Tourism Dawson Creek Resource Centre for tourism stakeholders and local organizations.** <http://www.tourismdawsoncreek.com/resourcecentre.php>

The current online industry section under Corporate Services includes About Us, Contact Us, Hosting Events, Official Photographer, Spirit of BC, Partner Organizations, Resources, *SuperHost*, Awards, Forms and Funding. Key recommendations include keeping all pages up to date or not displaying those that are not current. Dated material gives the impression this section of the website is not important. The current Resource Centre has PDF files of existing reports, plans and the tourism newsletter. Current statistics are not yet posted. Key recommendations include an expansion of the Resource Centre to include links to a variety of resources as well as the proposed annual tourism report and other resource materials such as the TIAC Green Your Business: Toolkit for Tourism Operators,⁴¹ which was recently reviewed at a sustainability workshop. The Resource Centre could be restructured to display a landing page that summarizes what is currently happening with tourism and then a series of links will lead to other pages in the Corporate Services segment of the website.

The following is a guide for content:

- About Tourism Dawson Creek (Vision, Mission, Guiding Principles)
- Tourism Advisory Committee (Representation, Terms of Reference)
- Tourism Plans (Local, regional, provincial, national)
 - Maintain a Tourism Plan update page. Ensure program progress and regular updates (no less than quarterly) for tourism planning and implementation.
- Tourism Industry Newsletter – Mile 0 Signal (Quarterly archives)
- Training and Certification (Local, regional, national, sector)
- Research (Primary and Secondary / Local, regional, national, sector)
- Resources (Local, regional, national, sector)
- Statistics (Local, regional, national, sector)
- Links (Local, regional, national, sector)

Refer to the Appendices for content to be uploaded to the Resource Centre.

⁴¹ http://www.tiac-aitc.ca/english/advocacy_sustainabletourism.asp

19. **Maintain participation in Tourism BC’s Accommodation Tracking program and Value of Tourism research programs.** Dawson Creek has been active in the Accommodation Tracking program but a lack of minimum participants does not allow custom reporting for the area. In 2009, Tourism Dawson Creek is completing the Tourism BC Value of Tourism Research project.

Understanding the aggregate performance of the industry by season will create a benchmark for comparative analysis over time. Using monthly surveys of accommodation properties, the Tourism BC program tracks occupancies and average daily room rates for the current month and provides a forecast for the next three months. Tourism BC compiles the data to estimate the percent change in room revenue compared to the previous year. Aggregated reports for the province and communities with enough participation (at least 5 accommodation properties) are provided to each participating property. The program not only provides invaluable benchmarking data for evaluating plan progress but important business planning information for individual properties. Contact Tourism BC Research and Planning via email at research@tourismbc.com or visit <http://www.tourismbc.com/Research.aspx>

In addition to Tourism BC’s accommodation tracking program, accommodation properties can participate in the **Value of Tourism** research program. The objective is to provide a conservative and credible estimate of visitor volume and direct tourism expenditures within a community. The Value of Tourism model provides a structured, consistent approach to estimate the volume and value of tourism. The core data collection component of the model is an accommodation survey to gather the most recent annual performance data from commercial accommodation operators (including campgrounds). This information is then applied to local, regional, provincial and national tourism indicators to provide an informed estimate of the total number of visitors (overnight, day and visiting friends and relatives) and their expenditures in the community. Contact Tourism BC Research and Planning via email at research@tourismbc.com or review the website at <http://www.tourismbc.com/Research/IndustryPerformance/ValueOfTourism.aspx>

20. **Conduct a follow up Alaska Highway Visitor Study.** The last Alaska Highway Research Study was conducted in 2003, with reports released in 2005. Re-analysis of existing data continues to be released with recent examinations of trip routing information. Independently or in conjunction with a Visitor Centre study (see below), an update to the current research is required in time. The project will be undertaken in close collaboration with the North to Alaska program and Northern BC Tourism, Tourism BC and Yukon and Alaska partners. <http://www.tourismdawsoncreek.com/resourcecentre.php>
21. **Conduct a local Visitor Centre study.** Currently the Value of Tourism study is underway, therefore consider this strategy for future planning in the event a feasibility study was being conducted for a new visitor centre. The main Visitor Centre in Dawson Creek is the second busiest in Northern BC. Through the Tourism BC Research and Planning department, a study can be conducted to determine the value of the Visitor Centre and profile visitors to the area. The use of the VCs provides communities with an opportunity to influence the activities and satisfaction of travellers, thus increasing the length of stay and the probability of a return visit

to the community and British Columbia. The methodology for this study will serve to provide a more in-depth understanding of visitors to the area as well as economic impacts of Visitor Centres. Note: This project should be considered for future planning as the program is suspended for 2009. A summary of research studies done to date is being compiled by Tourism BC Research and Planning. Samples of the studies from other communities can be found at: <http://www.tourismbc.com/Research/ResearchByRegion/ValueofVC.aspx>

22. **Maintain Economic Impact Studies.** Dawson Creek has produced economic impact studies for the Dawson Creek 1998 and 2005 BC Winter Games and the Dawson Creek Exhibition, 2005 Economic Impact & Visitor Satisfaction Analysis. Tourism Dawson Creek is currently working with Global Spectrum Facility Management and the City of Dawson Creek in conducting an economic impact study for the South Peace Community Multiplex. Economic Impact Group have been contracted to do the study.
<http://www.tourismdawsoncreek.com/resourcecentre.php>
23. **Use established research methods for tracking and evaluating the economic impact of attractions, events and festivals.** As a resource the following information is provided. In 2005 and 2006 a consortium of national, provincial and territorial organizations produced a set of guidelines. These guidelines can be adapted for any visitor study but were originally developed to generate credible and consistent inputs for estimating the tourism economic impact of festivals, events and attractions. There are six customized versions of the guidelines. Contact Tourism BC Research and Planning via email at research@tourismbc.com or visit <http://www.tourismbc.com/Research/ResourcesForResearchers.aspx>

Communications

5.7 Communications and Industry Engagement

Objective: Maintain an integrated communications mix that engages and informs the tourism industry, residents, government and regional partners to contribute to an enhanced tourism development climate.

Rationale: A communications program that targets all stakeholders in the community and keeps them informed about the progress of initiatives and overall plan progress is recommended. Communicating the value of the tourism industry to government and residents will be important in sustaining their support for future investment of this key economic sector. Communicating with local industry is critical for gaining momentum and creating a positive business climate needed to nurture product and destination development and program uptake. While it was agreed that tourism forms part of the composition of the future economy in the Dawson Creek area, tourism also must be compatible with other industries. A communications How-To Guide is supplied by the *Community Tourism Foundations* program.

Strategies:

24. **Promote the enhanced tourism industry Resource Centre on the Tourism Dawson Creek web page distributing the URL link throughout all communications.** Refer to the Business and Industry development section for content recommendations.
<http://www.tourismdawsoncreek.com/resourcecentre.php>.
25. **Support Pouce Coupe in utilizing the online Dawson Creek Resource Centre** section by having Pouce Coupe link directly to the website. Local Pouce Coupe information can be posted on Dawson Creek's website.
26. **Maintain a broadcast email and fax system.** For quick communication of meeting notices or announcements, set up a group email system that allows messages to be targeted to some or all of those groups that make up the contact list, e.g. tourism-related businesses by community, organizations and government contacts.⁴² Deliver as an integrated feature of the database-driven website where possible.
27. **Maintain a quarterly tourism electronic newsletter.** Currently Tourism Dawson Creek produces the *Mile 0 Newsletter*. <http://www.tourismdawsoncreek.com/resourcecentre.php>. Deliver as an integrated feature of the database-driven website where possible or through third-party software (although this would create duplication of effort to maintain data for the distribution list). The e-newsletter should always contain web links to the industry resource centre, progress reports on the implementation of the tourism plan, industry news, current events, tourism trends and statistics, new investments, business developments, infrastructure developments and links to the appropriate third-party websites. Marketing opportunities would be distributed via email on an as-required basis, however, the newsletter would have a direct link back to the marketing opportunities section on the website. Archival copies should always be maintained online.
28. **Maintain quarterly progress reports to the City of Dawson Creek.** Currently Tourism Dawson Creek provides an activity update to the City of Dawson Creek. It is recommended the written report continue with highlights from the reports providing the key accomplishments as content for the industry and community newsletter.
29. **Make presentations to local high school students on the value of tourism and its career opportunities.** Produce a handout with local resources that is targeted to students.
30. **Host input sessions for tourism stakeholders.** The tourism plan has been produced with stakeholder input from two meetings; a final presentation was made for acceptance of the Plan, next steps are adoption by council. Ongoing input is required to carry out the plan objectives and to motivate stakeholders to buy into programs, communicate their situation, identify opportunities, etc. Hosting regular meetings for the larger stakeholder group is recommended at least twice a year, once for input and once for feedback and evaluation.

⁴² Refer to the website features section in the Appendices.

31. **Host an annual pre-season tourism industry event.** As services and resources evolve for tourism operators – such as the enhanced resource centre on the website, visitor guide, workshops and seminars for business and industry development, local statistics reporting, trend analysis, market forces, etc.– coordinate an annual event that showcases all programs and services that support the tourism industry, review the Visitor Centre services, showcase new businesses or services (table or booth displays) and provide a general networking opportunity. Sharing of information is also intended to stimulate a collaborative approach to coordinating schedules, visitor services and enhancing the visitor experience. This event could include seminars, workshops, internal FAM tour of local product and Visitor Centres, followed by a BBQ or social activity for networking. Display of the tourism association booth, marketing materials and handout of the annual tourism plan would keep the community informed of activities and progress
32. **Host an annual open house for residents, government and tourism industry stakeholders.** The open house could be combined with the tourism industry pre-season kick-off event with the broader audience attending the social event and evening presentation of the annual tourism plan.
33. **Utilize the local newspaper.** Include tourism updates in press releases in the local media, or establish a regular column.

5.8 Destination and Market Development

Destination development refers to the community itself and the causal linkages it has with the tourism economy in terms of public policy, land use, resource management, physical development, infrastructure, business climate, human resources and other programs. Product development primarily involves the private sector and its investment and contributions to goods and services consumed by visitor markets. Finally, marketing programs are needed to complement the product and destination efforts. This includes strategies to build capacity for marketing by assembling a set of promotional tools and to sell the uniqueness of the study area to travel markets, while visitor services respond to the needs of visitors who have already made the decision to visit the area.

Destination Development (Infrastructure and Services)

5.9 Tourism Infrastructure & Development

Objective: Expand and improve tourism infrastructure that cultivates a sustainable community and the tourism vision.

Rationale: Tourism infrastructure is a priority issue for many communities because the expansion of physical assets, including recreation, trails, transportation and communications systems, is critical in creating the right conditions for investment in complementary products and services. Entrepreneurs will be more willing to invest in their own properties and businesses if they perceive a commensurate willingness by government to enhance the sorts of infrastructure and services that visitors use.

Strategies:

34. Maintain a master list of municipal, regional and provincial infrastructure improvements that will contribute to tourism development capacity and potential, and prioritize to coincide with the tourism development opportunities that fit both the community vision and the tourism vision.

As noted in the planning section, a template has been supplied to track the status of key initiatives that support destination development infrastructure requirements such as airport expansion; development of trails, facilities (e.g. community gathering places; cultural, recreational and sports facilities); meeting and conference facilities; public facilities to host festivals and events; support services for visitors (public washrooms); broadband; RV parking; highway entrance; directional, trail and interpretive signage; affordable housing, etc.

The following are recommended for the tourism development matrix:

a. Official Community Plan Updates

Building on the existing Official Community Plan vision and content, ensure the Tourism Plan Vision, Objectives and Goals are incorporated into the next update of the Official Community Plan for the City of Dawson Creek.

b. Develop a Regional Way-Finding / Signage Master Plan

While signage is noted throughout several plans and within the bylaws of the City of Dawson Creek, a master signage plan would take into account the multiple references to signage and ensure an integrated approach. Signage needs will change over time and as part of the annual planning process, signage priorities need to be identified and put forward into an action plan. The community branding for the City of Dawson Creek has been incorporated into existing signage. Entrance signage has been identified as a priority.

A signage plan includes an inventory of all existing signage, SWOT analysis, identification of gaps, new signage requirements and a plan for implementation (leadership organization(s), regulatory approvals, sponsorship, design, key messaging, locations, budget, timeline, action items and maintenance plan). Key elements of a master signage program include a full range of signage such as advance (outside the community and regional area), entrance (welcome), visitor centre (highway advance, approach and building), directional (highway and local), destination (key attractions, landmarks, parks, kiosks), route marking (trails) and interpretation.

- i. Refer to the community resource guide, *A Manual to Enhance Community Signage and Visitor Experience*, June 2007, by the Tourism Research Innovation Project, Malaspina University College. Visit <http://nadb.kics.bc.ca/index.php?page=ctfhome>

- ii. Dovetail with the provincial Service and Attraction Highway Sign Program through the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure.⁴³
- iii. Dovetail signage programming with Tourism BC Tourism Product Services,⁴⁴ map production, website content and themed tours for the area.
- iv. Work with and present to appropriate jurisdictions, i.e. City of Dawson Creek, Ministry of Highways Branch for approval and implementation.

c. Develop a Beautification Master Plan

A visually charming or beautiful community does not just benefit tourism; the results contribute to community pride. When contemplating beautification for the area, consider tourism markets in plans. Dawson Creek has increased its visual appeal through a number of activities including, but not limited to, City-wide cleanup campaign; downtown hanging flower baskets; street banners along 8th Avenue and around City Hall; flower pots in the downtown core (Horticultural/City). While beautification is noted throughout several plans and within the initiatives of the City of Dawson Creek, a master beautification plan would take into account the multiple references to beautification and ensure an integrated approach. As part of the annual planning process, priorities need to be identified and put forward into an annual action plan.

- i. Consider the Communities in Bloom program. Communities in Bloom is a Canadian non-profit organization committed to fostering civic pride, environmental responsibility, beautification and to improving quality of life through community participation and the challenge of a national program, with focus on the protection and promotion of green spaces.⁴⁵

d. Implement the Dawson Creek Attractions Master Plan 2007

The Dawson Creek Attractions Master Plan was completed in fall 2007. To date there has been very little from the proposed plan that has been implemented due to costs. In addition, each attraction has its own governing structure and its own goal, which don't always coincide with the goals and objectives in the attractions master plan. As noted in the planning section, priorities for the next year need to be identified within the planning matrix. Incremental funds will be explored through the feasibility of the Additional Hotel Room Tax.

e. Implement the City of Dawson Creek Heritage Strategy 2007

Identify and prioritize tactics that can be included in the annual action plan. Refer to the Community Planning Matrix template as a tool to assist in this process.

f. Implement the Communications Plan 2005 (Alaska Highway Corridor Thematic Strategy, Dawson Creek Thematic Strategy, Dawson Creek Downtown Revitalization, Alaska Highway House Concept Plan – Phase II)

⁴³ http://www.th.gov.bc.ca/Publications/eng_publications/geomet/geometsigns.htm

⁴⁴ Wanda Hook (250) 387-0104

⁴⁵ <http://www.communitiesinbloom.ca/Default.aspx?ID=7>

Identify and prioritize tactics that can be included in the annual action plan. Refer to the Community Planning Matrix template as a tool to assist in this process. Incremental funds will be explored through the feasibility of the Additional Hotel Room Tax, as well as other funding programs for infrastructure development.

g. Support the Alaska Highway Community Initiative

Tourism Dawson Creek plans to support the Peace River Regional District, and Northern Rockies Alaska Highway Tourism Association in conducting the Alaska Highway inventory to support the American Scenic Byways program and National Historic Site nomination. (Tourism Dawson Creek will be an advocate and catalyst but the lead agency will need to be PRRD, as Tourism Dawson Creek does not have the financial means or human resource capacity to undertake the project.

h. Support the EnCana Event Centre for a conference centre and health and wellness area

As noted in the planning section, an integrated plan for Sport, Events and Conference development is recommended.

i. Support the proposed new arts and cultural centre

A new project has been announced for the development of an arts and cultural centre in downtown Dawson Creek. Identify and prioritize tactics that can be included in the annual action plan. Refer to the Community Planning Matrix template as a tool to assist in this process. The Calvin Kruk Arts and Cultural Centre will be a community anchor in the downtown corridor, and support sustainable growth in the area.

j. Support development of a new campground / RV Park

Identify and prioritize tactics that can be included in the annual action plan. Refer to the Community Planning Matrix template as a tool to assist in this process. Review Recommendations for Recreation Vehicle Park Development in BC.

http://www.tsa.gov.bc.ca/tourism/docs/RV_Park_Development_in_BC.pdf

k. Support transportation access and scheduling to RV parks and attractions

Identify and prioritize tactics that can be included in the annual action plan. Refer to the Community Planning Matrix template as a tool to assist in this process.

5.10 Product Development

Objective: Identify and prioritize product development opportunities and compile resource material that aids with pre-feasibility assessment for business opportunities and policy support.

Rationale: In order to attract more visitors, and to keep them coming back, the area needs to complement and expand its existing product base. Expanding the product base will extend the tourism season, allowing a greater return on investment for operators. To cultivate an environment for product development, entrepreneurs require information and support for business development.

Strategies:

35. Prioritize tourism product opportunities for the area that will contribute to a sustainable and growing tourism industry.

Create a matrix by ranking these product types by tourism attraction values only, conduct a dedicated workshop for refining product opportunities, next steps for key activities, timeline, lead agency, funding, etc., similar to the infrastructure matrix concept. The following product areas have been prioritized for development opportunities; they are not presented in priority order.

- a. **Attractions:** As noted in the Communications Strategy (attractions plan).
- b. **Events: Develop a support function for the organization, enhancement and delivery of events that draw visitors from outside the community.**

As noted in the planning section, an integrated plan for sport, events and conferences is recommended. Currently Global Spectrum Facility Management, the City of Dawson Creek – Parks and Recreation department, and Tourism Dawson Creek are engaged in the development of bid proposals for sporting events

- c. **Health and Wellness**

There is an opportunity for a health and wellness area in the EnCana Event centre as identified by Global Spectrum Facility Management. Identify and prioritize tactics that can be included in the annual action plan. Refer to the Community Planning Matrix template as a tool to assist in this process.

- d. **Achieve International Scenic Byway Designation**

Work with the Northern Rockies Alaska Highway Tourism Association (NRAHTA) to support the long-range vision of the Alaska Highway Community Initiative to achieve international Scenic Byway designation. Work with NRAHTA to complete the “Scenic Byway” inventory for the Dawson Creek area and submit to NRAHTA in 2009.

- e. **Heritage, Arts and Culture**

Work with the Dawson Creek Heritage Commission and Local Historical Society to preserve historical aspects and elements of Dawson Creek.

- 36. Expand product packaging and itinerary development.** Travellers are increasingly seeking experiences as a collection of specific products and services. It reflects the growing preference among aging travellers, especially for the bundling of the entire visitor experience into a simple, single purchase decision. This requires the provision of a coordinated range of products and services, preferably in a seamless fashion. The objective of packaging is to offer an integrated, interesting product to encourage visitors to increase their stay within the region.

Cooperation among tourism operators on packaging has the added benefit of gaining economies of scale in relation to marketing and other business costs. Packaging can provide market reach that would not be possible by an independent business. Perhaps most importantly, it encourages operators to experiment with innovative and interesting experiences reflecting the region's best attributes. Packaging itineraries can include the Circle Tours in the region, themed product, e.g. health and wellness, events, and others.

Depending on how packages are sold, they require compliance to government regulations by the Business Practices and Consumer Protection Authority of British Columbia.⁴⁶

http://www.bccpa.ca/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=194&Itemid=132

- a. Inventory current packages, identify gaps, and create packages that can be promoted through the marketing programs.
- b. Develop themed itineraries based on destination experiences, enhance with other products and promote market-ready itineraries.
- c. Promote market-ready itineraries for self-guided touring (no packages), e.g. themes and Northern BC, Peace Region, Circle Tours, e.g. Dinosaur/pre-history circle tour. (Refer to the website recommendations.)
- d. Develop guided tours. For example Alaska Highway House, Sewell Valley Game Farm, Agricultural tours, Refurbished 1942 Army Truck, Pioneer Village, etc.

Business and Industry Development

5.11 Business and Industry Development

Objective: As an integral element of industry growth, to foster business and industry development that complements and strengthens products and attractions of most appeal to visitor markets while raising the level of customer service and satisfaction.

Rationale: Tourism Dawson Creek strives to be a leader in sustainable tourism education and industry best practices within Dawson Creek in order to create and sustain a commitment to quality products, services and visitor experiences through the promotion, coordination and cooperative facilitation of training and professional development opportunities.⁴⁷ A more diverse, competitive and innovative tourism sector will benefit from the promotion and facilitation of quality, service and professional standards. More visitors, longer stays and higher spending will translate directly into increased occupancies and yields, employment and capital investment. Creating this positive cycle requires that industry meet standards in service quality, marketing and overall business development so the visitor experience is truly enriched and leads to a more sustainable base. Regardless of the current downturn in the economy, based on current demographics the need for skill development and labour supply will still be a key strategy in the

⁴⁶ http://www.bccpa.ca/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=186&Itemid=125

⁴⁷ Tourism Dawson Creek Tourism Development Plan 2006-2012

long term. Volunteer burnout has been identified as an issue. Promoting product will not be effective unless the product meets or exceeds the expectations of the target market. The brand promise that is made through marketing communications must be in line with the products and services being offered. As the area develops its tourism opportunities, both individual businesses and the collective industry require professional development.

Strategies:

37. **Participate in and host NRAHTA, NBCTA or other tourism AGMs and adjoining conferences.** The NRAHTA AGM & Hello North Tourism Rendezvous is the premier event within the region, providing learning and networking for tourism operators. The NRAHTA & Hello North Rendezvous was last held in Dawson Creek in 2006. This event will be discontinued with the integration of NRAHTA and Tourism BC-Northern Region.
38. **Establish industry training, standards, certification and professional development programming and encourage adoption of industry and government standards by tourism operators.** The uptake of professional ratings, certification and training programs by accommodation facilities and other tourism operators not only enhances progress toward having more “market-ready” product, it also improves the bottom line for the operators themselves. Currently Tourism Dawson Creek promotes and is a delivery agency for the *SuperHost* program <http://www.tourismdawsoncreek.com/superhost.php>, now known as *WorldHost*.⁴⁸
39. **Foster relationships with educational institutions to offer tourism/hospitality and experiential learning programs. Partner with the local high school system and the regional college to deliver tourism programming.** Tourism Dawson Creek has built working relationships with the University of Northern British Columbia and Vancouver Island University through the Tourism Research Innovation Program. Tourism Dawson Creek has also been kept up to date with the progress of the Outdoor Adventure program at Northern Lights College in Tumbler Ridge.
40. **Establish tips for businesses on how to be more sustainable.** Tourism Dawson Creek has hosted a workshop on sustainability for local businesses. Utilize information from the workbook for inclusion for the refined online resource centre as well as provide links to other relevant websites to assist businesses.
41. **Host Tourism BC workshops** to improve local understanding of business development, marketing, service excellence and financial and human resource development. Workshops are an alternative to certification or classroom training because they are more convenient and less time-consuming for operators who might not otherwise be able to participate in formal programs. Tourism BC has a series of education and training tools available to assist tourism-related businesses, using workshops and guides. Tourism British Columbia offers workshops for BC communities on several topics from the Tourism Business Essentials® series: Tourism Packaging & Product Distribution – introductory and advanced, Ads & Brochures

⁴⁸ <http://www.tourismbc.com/IndustryPrograms/MaximizingTheVisitorExperience/WorldHostTrainingServices.aspx>

That Sell, Travel Media Relations and Sport Tourism. Note: Tourism Dawson Creek held the Sport Tourism Workshop in 2006. Workshops are three hours in length and facilitated by industry professionals who will travel to your community. A minimum number of participants is required.

Contact Chris Lofft, Coordinator, Tourism Business Essentials at Chris.lofft@tourismbc.com for further details on all workbooks and workshops.

42. **Acquire the Tourism BC Tourism Business Essentials® workbook series** as a resource for local industry. The Tourism Business Essentials® series provides tourism operators with valuable information on key aspects of running a successful tourism business through a number of how-to guides and workshops. Developed by Tourism British Columbia in partnership with the tourism industry, the eight informative how-to guides are easy to read, easy to understand, and are must-haves for any business competing in today's dynamic tourism market. The guides are: *Ads & Brochures That Sell*, *Internet Marketing*, *Mountain Bike Tourism*, *Tourism Packaging & Product Distribution*, *Environmentally Responsible Tourism*, *Travel Media Relations*, *Starting a Tourism Business*, *Sport Tourism* and *Employees First – The Essential Human Resources Guide for Tourism Operators*.
<http://www.tourismbc.com/IndustryPrograms/BuildingAndGrowingYourBusiness/TourismBusinessEssentials.aspx>

43. **Encourage expansion of accommodation standards recognition programs.**

Encourage participation in **Tourism BC's Approved Accommodation** inspection and registration program for accommodation properties. Benefits include a listing in the BC Approved Accommodation Guide, and "approved accommodation" signage. New opportunities include the HelloBC Listings program. Tourism Product Management is also responsible for designating artisans, attractions and accommodations for the purpose of highway signage.⁴⁹

Tourism Dawson Creek's Accommodation program is to elevate the quality of the accommodation within the City of Dawson Creek, while providing incentive for the operator. Tourism Dawson Creek provides marketing opportunities to those operators that are a part of the Tourism BC Approved Accommodation program. The Tourism Dawson Creek Visitor Centre promotes ALL accommodation operators as per the regulations set out by Tourism BC. Tourism Dawson Creek encourages and assists operators in becoming certified.

Encourage accommodation providers to engage in the "**Canada Select**" industry-led, consumer-sensitive rating program developed for the purpose of providing the travelling public with a national, consistent standard of quality within categories of accommodation.⁵⁰

Currently five properties in Dawson Creek are Canada Select certified with the highest rating of 3 ½ stars.

⁴⁹ <http://www.tourismbc.com/IndustryPrograms/ConnectingWithConsumers/HelloBCListingsProgram.aspx>

⁵⁰ <http://www.canadaselect.com/>

Encourage accommodation providers to engage in “**Camping Select**,” the national campground/RV rating program developed to address the need for a comprehensive Canadian set of standards.

Conduct a sustainable assessment of accommodation properties, utilizing an industry recognized certified program. Supply the link to the Greening your Business Toolkit on the Tourism Dawson Creek website.

44. **Encourage uptake of certification and training programs.** The Canadian Tourism Human Resource Council (CTHRC)⁵¹ administers certification of the National Occupational Standards for the tourism industry and works with provincial agencies for delivery of training tools and professional certification services. These standards are rooted in the hospitality sector and are broadly based. In addition to striking associations with provincial and territorial partners, CTHRC works closely with the business, labour and educational representatives from all sectors of Canada’s tourism industry. Core objectives include raising the level of professionalism and attracting the labour force needed to ensure a profitable and sustainable tourism industry. The Council’s programs have been brought under the umbrella of its Emerit brand.⁵² The designated agency in BC is go2,⁵³ an independent organization that supports tourism employers, managers and entrepreneurs in attracting and retaining a sufficient number of skilled individuals into the tourism workforce in order to meet their business needs. Hunting and fishing guides, heritage interpretation and outdoor adventure guides are some of the accreditations offered.
- a. **Promote awareness of best practices in business planning, product management, packaging and marketing.** The Canadian Tourism Commission has produced several reports on product development and enhancement in areas such as spa and wellness, adventure recreation, cuisine, cultural/heritage and winter products.⁵⁴ Local operators can use these best practices and case studies to upgrade their own companies and resolve critical business issues such as financing and insurance. Guides for tourism funding, risk management and insurance for outdoor operators, database of insurance providers and insurance tutorials are available on CTC’s website. Emerit has developed a human resource tool kit, which is a searchable, comprehensive training kit that informs on fundamental HR best practices. It features clear tools, templates, and forms that will assist employers to successfully recruit, hire, train, and manage employees. The ready-to-use, downloadable templates range from job advertisement and interview tools to retention and reward guidelines and can be customized to suit any business’s needs. <http://emerit.ca/en/default.aspx>
 - b. **Educate tourism operators on how to become “Export Ready” in preparation for working with the travel trade.** Tourism British Columbia coordinates many

⁵¹ <http://cthrc.ca/en/default.aspx>

⁵² http://www.emerit.ca/eng/page.aspx?id=about_us.htm

⁵³ <http://www.go2hr.ca>

⁵⁴

<http://www.canadatourism.com/ctx/app/en/ca/publication.do?catId=home.catalog.publications.productDevelopment>

international programs that require BC tourism suppliers to meet specific criteria in order to be considered for participation. These conditions are based on the input of overseas travel trade, tourism product suppliers and receptive tour operators, and have been developed to ensure the best possible representation of British Columbia's tourism industry in international markets. The industry development program offers both introductory and advanced workshops and workbooks for Tourism Packaging and Product Distribution.⁵⁵ As the tourism industry in Dawson Creek evolves, consider the Export Ready workshops in partnership with the Regional Destination Marketing Organization, Northern BC Tourism.

Refer to the Appendices for Export Ready Criteria.

- c. **Encourage businesses, organizations and government officials to participate in Tourism BC's SuperHost® Customer Service program.** Now known as *WorldHost*, the workshops exist to ensure that tourism-related businesses and organizations in British Columbia have a professional, well-trained workforce enhancing the travel experience for visitors to British Columbia and motivating them to return. *WorldHost* workshops are interactive, informative and offer valuable service skills that can be applied in any work environment. With eight distinctive workshops to choose from and content customization features, the sessions are led by certified trainers. Workshops include: Ambassador (aimed at organizations to train volunteers in preparation for events), Fundamentals, Japanese Service Expectations, Service Across Cultures, Customers with Disabilities, Solving Problems Through Service, Sales Powered By Service and Frontline Management Solutions. The Recognized *WorldHost* Business Program recognizes those businesses that are committed to providing excellent customer service.⁵⁶

Tourism Dawson Creek is the coordinating body for the Tourism BC *WorldHost* program.

- d. **Encourage operators to become more sustainable and eco-friendly** while increasing their bottom line. Monitor the provincial programs for sustainable planning. Post information on the newly enhanced Tourism Dawson Creek website.
- e. **Facilitate access to enterprise services offered in the region for business and community development.** *The following content is intended for inclusion in the enhanced online Resource Centre.*
 - i. The **Rural BC** website provides easy reference to resources and program funding information designed to assist communities and regions.
<http://www.ruralbc.gov.bc.ca/>.

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http://www.tourismbc.com/IndustryPrograms/BuildingAndGrowingYourBusiness/Community_Tourism_Programs.aspx

⁵⁶<http://www.tourismbc.com/IndustryPrograms/MaximizingTheVisitorExperience/WorldHostTrainingServices.aspx>

- ii. **Northern Development Initiative Trust** provides an excellent resource for Community Funding. Northern Development offers funding to municipalities, regional districts, First Nations, not-for-profit organizations and public authorities to support sustainable economic development and diversification throughout central and northern British Columbia. <http://northerndevelopment.bc.ca/community-funding>
- iii. The **Community Futures Network**⁵⁷ was established in 1986 by the federal government in response to the severe economic and labour market changes faced by rural Canadian communities. Over the last 20 years Community Futures in BC has played a significant role in entrepreneurial and community development. Comprised of 34 locally and strategically positioned organizations, the BC Community Futures Network has a significant impact on the socio-economic development and diversification of the rural communities it serves. Community Futures works with the existing business community to increase its capacity, to assist with entrepreneurial potential and develop a diversified and self-reliant economy. Programs include business loans, business planning, economic development, workshops and special projects, which can include tourism development capacity building. Community Futures Peace River-Liard serves the Dawson Creek area, with an office located in Dawson Creek.⁵⁸
- iv. **Ministry of Small Business, Technology and Economic Development.**⁵⁹ The Ministry of Small Business, Technology and Economic Development helps to build a strong provincial economy that maximizes opportunities and small business growth throughout the province. The Ministry facilitates economic growth, wealth and job creation, and diversification of provincial and regional economies. The Ministry is committed to working with First Nation communities, Aboriginal people, local communities and regions as well as small businesses, industry, educational and non-governmental organizations.
- v. **Canada Business Services.**⁶⁰ Canada Business is a government information service for businesses and start-up entrepreneurs in Canada. Canada Business reduces the complexity and burden of dealing with various levels of government by serving as a single point of access for federal and provincial/territorial government services, programs and regulatory requirements for business.
- vi. **Small Business BC.**⁶¹ Small Business BC, a public and private sector collaboration, is the comprehensive Business Development Resource for people exploring opportunities, launching new ventures and growing existing businesses.

⁵⁷ <http://www.communityfutures.ca/provincial/bc/>

⁵⁸ <http://www.communityfutures.biz/>

⁵⁹ <http://www.gov.bc.ca/tted/>

⁶⁰ <http://www.canadabusiness.ca/gol/cbec/site.nsf/en/index.html>

⁶¹ <http://www.smallbusinessbc.ca/>

- vii. **Front Counter BC**⁶² is a single-window service for clients of provincial natural resource ministries and agencies. Staff members guide clients through all regulated natural resource issues. Business clients can think of the staff at the counter as their direct link to BC's natural resource ministries and agencies. Staff are specifically trained and knowledgeable in authorizations required by natural resource businesses and clients for mining, forestry, agriculture, health, etc. Front Counter BC staff act as advocates for timely decisions and responses, and help a client navigate – from start to finish – what can sometimes be a maze of licences, permits and registrations. In the past, clients of BC natural resource ministries and agencies often had to go from agency to agency to obtain their necessary authorizations. The Front Counter BC centres simplify the process for small to medium-sized natural resource businesses. There is an office in Fort St. John.
http://www.frontcounterbc.gov.bc.ca/contact/fort_st_john.html

45. **Identify labour and skill requirements.** Despite the current economic downturn, both skill and labour shortages are expected as the economy recovers due to the shift in demographics in North America. In the long run, a strategy to address labour and skill issues is recommended.

- a. **Conduct an online survey of the local industry** for an initial assessment of the labour and skill issues for operators. <http://www.surveymonkey.com/Default.aspx>
- b. **Set-up a Labour and Skills page on the refined online Resource Centre** of the Tourism Dawson Creek website with the following links and a selection of key reports.
- c. **Review the Kootenay Rockies Tourism / Go2 Human Resource Strategy** and Tourism Labour Market Analysis project for work done to date.⁶³ The Kootenay Rockies Tourism Human Resource Strategy Report and other reports can be found online at: <http://www.go2hr.ca/research.aspx>
- d. **Monitor the Canadian Tourism Human Resource Council Skills Canada initiative.** The Canadian Tourism Human Resource Council (CTHRC) and Skills Canada recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), formalizing a new partnership which will see them work together towards improving the quality of the Canadian labour force by promoting skilled trades, professional certification, and careers to Canadian youth. Both the Council and Skills Canada are interested in securing Canada's future labour force and helping youth discover rewarding careers. The agreement remains in effect until April 2014.
http://cthrc.ca/en/cthrc_news/2009/skills_canada_mou.aspx
http://cthrc.ca/en/programs_services/skills_training_upgrading_and_certification.aspx

⁶² <http://www.frontcounterbc.gov.bc.ca/index.html>

⁶³ <http://www.kootenayrockies.com/hr.html>

- e. **Monitor the Ministry of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development.** The government of BC, is committed to ensuring that a skilled workforce is in place to provide world-class services during the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games, and to support training for the expansion of the tourism industry in the years following. As part of that commitment, government has established a tourism and hospitality consortium in consultation with stakeholders. The British Columbia Tourism and Hospitality Education and Training Consortium will provide overall strategic direction and facilitate communication and planning among educational institutions, industry and government to ensure the education and training requirements of tourism and hospitality are met.
<http://www.aved.gov.bc.ca/tourism/welcome.htm>
- f. **Monitor the WorkBC Action Plan initiative for baseline data and the provincial strategy.** The WorkBC initiative includes an action plan that sets out provincial priorities and steps for the way in which government, working with business and industry, will address skills shortages for the next five years and respond to longer-term labour market challenges. The action plan recognizes BC's proximity to Asia, and addresses each of the following five strategic areas:
 - 1. Keep the workforce we have;
 - 2. Develop the skills of the existing workforce;
 - 3. Increase Aboriginal participation and labour market success;
 - 4. Find and attract more workers to BC; and
 - 5. Address regional skills shortages.http://www.workbc.ca/workbc_action_plan.htm
- g. **Monitor the go2 website** for employer and employee programs, and research. go2 was created by the BC tourism industry in 2003, on the recommendation of an 18-month task force involving more than 100 industry representatives and stakeholders around the province, to deal with the labour shortage and other HR issues. Through its programs and services go2, an independent, non-profit industry association, assists BC's tourism industry to recruit, retain and train employees to support industry growth. <http://www.go2hr.ca/AboutUs/tabid/121/Default.aspx>
- h. **Monitor the Welcome BC website**, which offers resources for potential workers to come to British Columbia. It also houses resources for employers.
<http://www.welcomebc.ca/en/index.html>
- i. **Post the online guide** *Tourism BC's Employees First – The Essential Human Resources Guide for Tourism Operators* on Tourism Dawson Creek Resource Centre website.
<http://www.tourismbc.com/IndustryPrograms/BuildingAndGrowingYourBusiness/TourismBusinessEssentials.aspx>

46. Develop a “Tourism Friendly” business program.

- a. Utilize a “Fair Exchange” program to assist US Visitors

- b. Develop an RV and Motorcycle Friendly program to complement business promotions
- c. Develop a new welcome orientation program for new people moving to Dawson Creek.

Marketing and Visitor Services

5.12 Target Markets

Objective: Improve overall tourism performance by increased awareness, length of stays, overnight stays, visitor spending and overall market share of leisure travellers, Free Independent Travellers (FIT) and small groups from domestic and foreign markets.

Rationale: Knowing the clientele most likely to be interested in purchasing the area's tourism product is critical to the entire marketing process. Many tourism businesses (and communities) make the mistake of attempting to be all things to all people, when in fact it is difficult, expensive and inherently risky trying to appeal to the "average" traveller. It is therefore important to segment the market based on the profile of existing visitors, as well as those markets that might be enticed by the combination of products and activities which are, or could reasonably be, available in the study area.

Effective community marketing can only be achieved through a collaborative and cooperative approach as the tourism organization does not have control or ownership of the components that impact the visitor experience. This plan is a working document, therefore it will evolve as potential partnerships and alliances are formed and resources are leveraged during the implementation stage. As noted in the research section, accessing market information by visitor activity is crucial to understanding how to appeal to market segments.

Dawson Creek is recognized around the world as Mile "0" of the Alaska Highway. The Mile 0 Post and Mile 0 Cairn are icons of the Alaska Highway and provide international recognition of the City. Key attractions include: Alaska Highway House, Mile 0 Post and Cairn, Pioneer Village, NAR Park Station Museum, Dawson Creek Art Gallery. Activities include: golf, fishing, hunting, downhill and cross-country skiing, snowmobiling, organized sports and South Peace Community Multiplex. Major events include the following: Dawson Creek Exhibition and Fall Fair – the largest event in Northeastern BC, Mile 0 Cruise, a biannual Air Show and Heritage Days.

5.12.5 Visitor Types

Key visitor types for Dawson Creek are primarily leisure travellers, Free Independent Travellers (FIT) and groups via RV Caravans touring (en route to Alaska or other destinations) and special interests in events. Famous for Mile 0 of the Alaska Highway, the area attracts leisure visitors for day trips and overnight stays for tourists in transit en route to Alaska and regional markets for organized sports, recreation, entertainment, reunions, weddings. Business travel includes workers for the oil, gas and coal sectors and government employees for meetings. Traditional summer

peak season has occupancy availability in fixed-roof accommodations as Alaska-bound visitors typically travel in RVs and off-season fixed-roof accommodators fill with business travel (workers for oil, gas, etc.). Market origin includes: Regional BC and Alberta, Canada other, US, Europe, Asia/Pacific.

5.12.6 Target Markets

Strategies:

47. **Target long-haul US and Canadian Markets en route to Alaska and other points north.** For Alaska-bound travellers, targets include US, Canada, Europe and Asia/Pacific.
48. **Target regional market potential.** For the event mix of conventions, travel shows, consumer shows, family shows and concerts, key targets include the Peace Region, which is a large geographic area with unique topography. The overall population is approximately 221,465 dispersed over a vast landscape that is roughly the size of California and is largely comprised of agricultural and forested lands.

Major communities by radius and population:

- 150 km radius of Dawson Creek, population 133,295: Dawson Creek, Fort St. John, Tumbler Ridge, Chetwynd, Pouce Coupe, Taylor, Grande Prairie, Spirit River, Rycroft, Wembley, Sexsmith (included are portions of Counties, Municipal Districts and Regional Districts)
- 200 km radius of Dawson Creek, population 7,010: Hudson's Hope, Mackenzie, Grimshaw, Valleyview (included are portions of Counties, Municipal Districts and Regional Districts)
- 300-400 km radius of Dawson Creek, population 81,160: Fort Nelson, Peace River, Fox Creek, High Level, Grande Cache (included are portions of Counties, Municipal Districts and Regional Districts)

Touring Market

The touring market seeks a range of activities, multiple destinations (e.g. circle tours) and a variety of accommodation options. Many are considered the rubber-tire segment; that is they enter and leave the area by automobile. This segment includes the RV market and visitors who rent vehicles to travel through the area, as well as those who travel in their own private vehicles.

Free Independent Travellers (FIT)

Free Independent Travellers (FIT) travel unescorted and usually have no formal itinerary.

Meetings, Groups and Conferences

When the new facilities of the Multiplex are complete, groups can be attracted for meetings and conferences. Current group targets include Reunions and Weddings.

5.13 Marketing Partnerships and Programs

Objective: Maintain a cooperative marketing program with regional partnerships that leverage resources and extend market reach.

Rationale: To leverage resources, partnering of marketing efforts extend market reach for the benefit of the destination and the participating marketing partner, other organizations and other communities in the study area. Tourism BC's *Community Tourism Opportunities* program provides funds to assist with the implementation of the plan. This provides an opportunity to complete special projects that will elevate the level of marketing activity.

Strategies:

49. **Maintain a close working relationship with the regional destination management organization, Northern BC Tourism – Agent for Tourism BC.**

Dawson Creek has been actively working with the NBCT. The new alliance with Northern BC Tourism – Agent for Tourism BC – and the Northern Rockies Alaska Highway Tourism Association creates closer links as Tourism Dawson Creek is currently a division of NRAHTA.

As of August 2008, the tourism function of NRAHTA merged with Northern BC Tourism. Outcomes of initial planning sessions indicate the evolution of the organization to represent the Alaska Highway as a Community. There are several more stages to the development of this concept; however, collaborative planning to address issues relating to the Alaska Highway will continue to be the prime area of focus of these stakeholder groups. Tourism BC and Northern BC Tourism will be working closely with the communities to raise the awareness of the Alaska Highway as a tourism icon.

NBCT opportunities are identified from annual consultation with communities. This tourism plan will provide a variety of initiatives that may be eligible for funding through the *Community Tourism Opportunities* program and other programs.

50. **Expand cooperative marketing programs with Pouce Coupe and local businesses.** The following provides program content that could expand the marketing effort.

- a. Expand cooperative advertising opportunities – Cooperative programs include partnering in display advertising in key publications and participation in the current Dawson Creek Mile “0” official visitor guide. Refer to the advertising section.
- b. Develop a cooperative marketing program with Global Spectrum that includes marketing, media, promotions, to capitalize on the opportunities for tourism.
- c. Expand travel show partnerships – New programming may include partnered show attendance, brochure distribution or advertorial in flat-sheet format, shared booth space at select shows, and promotional trip giveaways for incentive-based market research.
- d. Expand Media Relations partnerships with local businesses – Cooperative programs may include participation and sponsorship of FAM tour components, business profiles as part of the online press kit, image bank and links from the media page to

- sections on the website that display business listings, press releases and feature article content.
- e. Generate trip giveaway promotions – Cooperative programs may include sponsorship of prize components for trip giveaways as promotions.
 - f. Expand niche cooperative marketing programs – e.g. Cooperative marketing with the Multiplex.
 - g. Website – Business profiles and enhanced business listings, or full web pages for those businesses that do not have their own websites, can be developed for a fee. All stakeholders should be requested to link to the official website for Dawson Creek, increasing awareness and usage of the website while increasing Google rankings.

5.14 Branding and Positioning

Objective: Improve brand recognition in key markets by promoting the place identity of “Dawson Creek – British Columbia, Canada.”

Rationale: The purpose of a community brand is to create a unique identity that clearly distinguishes your area from that of your competition. By consistently using the brand throughout all communication applications, you develop brand equity, starting with awareness, recognition and ultimately loyalty, creating a place in the mind of the consumer that represents the positive aspects of the visitor experience. Brands are developed from a review of the strengths of the community, environment, current activities, attractions, characteristics and history, and by defining the visitor experience. Without understanding how visitors perceive the destination now it is hard to know which marketing communication messages are appropriate.

The brand promise that the community makes to a potential visitor must be well defined; this serves as a basis when communicating what the “Dawson Creek” experience is, whether that is on its own or part of a regional context.

The brand artwork has been incorporated as the community identity in non-commercial applications for place marketing and used for signage, which has tourism implications, as well as community development. For branding to be effective for tourism marketing, artwork, images, colours and the graphic design of materials created must be consistent, with the same message repeated over time.

The Canadian Tourism Commission undertook a rebranding strategy for Canada and, although communities will not embark on a branding process of this calibre, the principles are the same. Refer to the Brand Canada Toolkit for more information on place branding for tourism.

http://www.corporate.canada.travel/en/ca/about_ctc/brandtoolkit/index.html

Positioning

Dawson Creek will be positioned as an ideal stop en route to Alaska and points North for the touring market and an events destination for regional markets. The City of Dawson Creek is using “Capital of the Peace” and “Centre of It All” as its positioning statements. Tourism Dawson Creek changed its positioning statement in 2001 to “Mile ‘0’ to Adventure” which

encapsulates a wide variety of mental images. First, it recognizes Dawson Creek as Mile 0 and, second, it denotes the many adventures that are in our area and beyond.⁶⁴

Strategies:

51. **Create a Branding Usage Guidelines document that clearly communicates the place-marketing brand identity for tourism.** Currently logo artwork exists for the City of Dawson Creek and Tourism Dawson Creek. A branding usage guidelines document includes design elements including logo artwork, signature photographic images, colour scheme, style, fonts, tag lines and designs for promotional tools, travel show booth, marketing campaigns, banners, signage, merchandise, etc. Include a “brand promise” statement that the tourism industry can commit to when delivering their product, which forms part of the tourism experience. Stationery should include designs for business cards, letterhead, newsletter, Power Point and email signature. Co-op stationery incorporating the Visitor Centre logo should also be included. Usage guidelines should include the CMYK colours, use of logo treatments and use of official artwork by third parties. Branding usage guidelines should be available on the Tourism Dawson Creek online Resource Centre.

5.15 Promotional Tools & Materials

Objective: Maintain the official set of promotional tools and materials for destination marketing and visitor services.

Rationale: A set of quality and professionally created promotional tools and materials provides a solid foundation for undertaking marketing activities. Smaller communities are competing with areas that have larger budgets, therefore many communities do not meet industry standards. Ineffective communication tools waste valuable resources. It is imperative that the right communication tool is targeted during the appropriate stage in the purchase cycle (Awareness, Interest, Evaluation, Purchase, Loyalty). The application of the community brand needs to be incorporated into all designs while artwork and content is customized for the communication objective of the materials being developed.

The system to generate and service visitor inquiries must include key messaging and appropriate promotional tools to distribute throughout the purchase cycle with adequate means to get the message out.

This includes:

- promoting awareness of the destination and its attributes;
- generating interest in the destination as a travel choice;
- be convincing as the choice over other destinations;
- indicate convenience to purchase; and
- provide an option to receive more information in the future.

⁶⁴ Tourism Dawson Creek, Tourism Plan 2006-2012

Corresponding photography, colours and font selection forms part of the area identity. The official website address for the tourism consumer site appears on all materials; the official marketing toll-free number would appear where appropriate. It is recommended that a professional graphic designer and copywriter, who have a thorough understanding of tourism marketing and place marketing, develop the artwork and the promotional tools and materials that follow. Ideally the designer would be familiar with this tourism plan.

Strategies:

52. Develop the image bank. Refreshing the image bank is an ongoing requirement. Compile a combination of low-resolution images for the website and e-newsletter, high-resolution images for print media and B-roll for broadcast media. Through the efficiency of digital cameras, high-resolution quality images, low-resolution standard images and video clips (suitable for website use) can be captured more readily. A combination of both professional and amateur sources will be adequate to maintain the image bank over time. Partnership with the regional DMO, Northern BC Tourism, has been identified to leverage resources for the image bank. Other sources include Tourism BC and stock agencies easily accessible from the Internet.

In addition to the logo artwork, key photographic images will be used consistently to illustrate visually the attributes that make up the image for Dawson Creek, British Columbia, Canada. The image bank of photography will be used for all types of media: website, print media (posters, postcards, visitor guide, advertising), travel show booth equipment displays, visitor services, wall displays, media relations, merchandise, slide shows and many other purposes. B-roll (broadcast quality raw footage) will be used for broadcast media. Northern BC Tourism will spearhead production of B-roll for their media programs. Copyright restrictions vary depending on the source for images, so a usage guide for all images is recommended. Ensure any images that include people have a model release; for those under 19 years old, a parent or guardian release is required. High-resolution scans of images in digital format make for ease of distribution via the Internet or by CD/DVD. Professional photography, whether supplied or contracted to a photographer to capture images, requires high-resolution digital format, minimum 300 pixels per inch, which is now industry standard. Low-resolution scans or digital format images are suitable for the website. Image bank projects, in partnership with the regional destination marketing organization and Tourism BC, may be co-sponsored.

- a. **List images by categories.** To prepare for the image bank maintenance, review existing images against the tourism products and area features to provide a starting point for developing an image list by categories.
- b. **Compile an inventory of existing images.** Compiling existing images from various sources will keep costs down and avoid duplication of effort. Various groups, organizations and businesses will have images that they will share for no cost. Identify the gaps from the initial inventory to determine next steps.

- c. **Purchase usage rights of existing images.** Additional images can be compiled by purchasing usage rights of existing images from professional sources (for high-resolution needs and the signature series) and archival images purchased through BC Museum and Archives. <http://www.bcarchives.bc.ca/bcarchives/default.aspx>. When collecting images from secondary sources, determine copyright and usage guidelines.
- d. **Access free images** through partnerships with local operators for use of their copyrighted images; image banks through regional, provincial (Tourism BC,⁶⁵ Picture BC)⁶⁶ and national sources such as the CTC.⁶⁷
- e. **Contract professional photographer(s) to shoot images.** After compiling secondary sources, new image acquisitions can be contracted out to professional photographers to complete the image bank. Ensure all copyrights remain with the tourism organization whenever possible.
- f. **Maintain an online image inventory and retrieval system.** Access to images can be accomplished through the tourism website with integrated or third-party software that can house, sort and display images. Ensure areas for both public viewing of low-resolution images and secure areas for restricted viewing of the full image library (for media).
- g. **Maintain a combination digital still and video camera with high-resolution capability to supplement the image bank.** The maintenance of the image bank will be through an ongoing process of third-party photography supplemented by images taken by Tourism Dawson Creek. Digital technology allows high-resolution quality images to be captured for use in print media (magazines for media use or posters, etc.). All-in-one cameras now double as video recorders. The website will require fresh images by season, and as new products are developed. TDC can capture images of industry events, community events and FAM tours as well, which is ideal for the industry newsletter, open house and presentations. In addition to marketing purposes, the camera would be an asset to the tourism community and could be loaned to businesses/organizations to take images for their websites or promotional use.
 - i. Digital cameras with a minimum 5 megapixel capability set to the highest resolution capture the required high-resolution images needed for quality print media. A minimum 300 pixels per inch data resolution is required based on the final size of the image when output. Often people refer to DPI (dots per inch), however, this refers to the output of the final printed material not the input of gathering high-resolution digital data. Technology has advanced to where 10 megapixel capability is becoming minimum standard for digital cameras, allowing high-resolution images as standard options.

⁶⁵ <http://www.tourismbc.com/IndustryPrograms/AdditionalMarketingResources/ImageBank.aspx>

⁶⁶ <http://www.picturebc.ca/>

⁶⁷ <http://mediacentre.canada.travel/photos-footage>

53. **Refine the Official Dawson Creek Visitor Guide.** The current full-colour magazine-style format is 8 ¼ x 10 ¾"; distribution includes insertion into official Dawson Creek Community Guide (also the same format). Consider reformatting the visitor guide to 8x9" expanding to 16x9" when opened, providing ample opportunity for double-page editorial and photographic spreads. A soft-fold option for a portion of the print run allows for standard rack-size format of 4x9". This format also allows for placement of the guide in a #10 business envelope (4 1/8 x 9 1/2") reducing postage costs for mail-outs and convenient for carrying. The cover artwork can be changed for the soft folded version based on the original design of the full format. The centre spread map can be overrun as a stand-alone piece. The smaller format can still be inserted into the Dawson Creek Community Guide but would be saddled stitched in after the initial production. Based on existing content the guide is intended for visitors during the awareness to experience stages of the purchase cycle. Key recommendations include a restructure of the flow of information and content targeted to the purchase cycle (Awareness information up front, services toward the back). In addition to the centre spread of the local map, a regional orientation within the context of the Pacific Northwest is recommended as the guide is distributed at travel shows in North America as well as locally. A gatefold, double gatefold or double centre spread fold-out could expand the map display. The guide should open with a summary of key features as to why a potential visitor would come to the area, emphasizing the Dawson Creek experience. A series of double-page spreads targeting each attraction or product cluster would follow. Typically maps are located in the centre spread. The back part of the guide would be used for visitor services, highlighting access and transportation services. Back cover advertising should be limited to a full-page display ad, not stacking of ads. The inside front cover should form part of the opening editorial welcome summary of key messaging and images to entice the reader, accompanied with a subtle table of contents within a double-page spread. Hiring a design firm that will undertake the communications suite is important for branding to be effective; this includes copywriting and editing services.

Internal distribution (inside the study area) includes: Dawson Creek Visitor Centres, advertisers, accommodation front counters, businesses and select events.

External distribution (outside the community) includes fulfillment from all inquiries generated by tourism marketing activities, locations along the Alaska Highway, travel shows, select visitor centres in BC, Alberta and Washington. With the new proposed format, distribution can include rack-size options such as ferries on the Alaska route and rack distribution programs. (While magazine style can be accommodated with these options, there can be additional costs). When mailed the guide should be accompanied with a customized cover letter and additional business brochures as it relates to the nature of the inquiry. The guide would be supplied to marketing partners who will be attending travel or consumer shows or other suitable activities that expand distribution.

Primary distribution options for rack-size publications include:

- a. **Certified Folder Display Service Canada, Inc.**, provides racking services for over 21,000 locations throughout western Canada and the US. Racking programs include

Auto Clubs and various hotels, corporate headquarters, BC Ferries, airports, Visitor Centres throughout the province and geographically specific areas. The airport distribution package for both terminals in Vancouver can be targeted. In addition to racking services, display and advertising opportunities are also an option.

<http://www.certifiedfolder.ca/>

- b. **Tourism BC** provides brochure racking services in partnership with Certified Folder Display. The official visitor guide for each community in BC can be racked at the six provincial Visitor Centres (Vancouver Airport, Peace Arch border crossing, Merritt, Mt. Robson, Golden and Osoyoos). Those visitor centres that form part of the Tourism BC Visitor Centre Network will receive this service at no cost (except for shipping the guides to the warehouse). Note: The brochure must not exceed 50% advertising and must be standard format.
- c. Prince George **Airport** and regional airports such as Dawson Creek and Fort St. John.
- d. **Seattle Convention and Visitors Bureau**⁶⁸ <http://www.visitseattle.org>
Membership benefits of the Seattle Convention and Visitors Bureau include a website link, listings in their travel publications, Seattle Visitor Center & concierge services kiosk in the Washington State Convention and Trade Center and paid distribution at Sea-Tac Airport available to members only and marketing opportunities. For more information visit the member benefits section of the website.
<http://www.visitseattle.org/members/joining/>

54. **Maintain Targeted Services Brochures.** Update annually prior to the summer season in print and PDF online format.

- Dawson Creek Fishing guide
- Dawson Creek Transportation/Automobile guide
- Dawson Creek Restaurants
- Dawson Creek Weddings and Reunions guide
- Dawson Creek Services
- Dawson Creek Birding
- Self-guided downtown historic walking and mural tour
- Self-guided Pioneer Village Walking Tour
- Gas Stations and Campgrounds along the Alaska Highway

55. **Produce a kit folder for professional presentation of materials.** Kit folders with double pockets will hold a variety of materials: visitor guide, brochures, maps, etc., as well as DVDs. The folder would be used for various purposes: as an orientation kit for tourism businesses to the area, business attraction package for tourism and economic development, welcome package for meeting attendees and press kit for media relations, FAM tour kit, marketing programs, industry development training materials, etc. Not limited to tourism use,

⁶⁸ <http://www.visitseattle.org/bureau/default.asp>

the folders would be utilized by the City and the Chamber. Digital print technology allows for economical low-volume options providing professional-quality outputs without the need for traditional high-volume print runs.

56. **Produce an online press kit for media.** A press kit for media relations is an essential tool for any community that intends to support a media relations program. Whether working with media in person (FAM tours) or by distance, providing key information and support is vital to ensure facts and information about the destination are available to both media directly or media partners such as Northern BC Tourism as part of the provincial media relations strategy. Develop a section on the TDC website by providing a convenient summary of information required by travel writers. Once completed, ensure the regional DMO, Tourism BC and the CTC receive the link to the new media section on the tourism website, as the majority of media visits will be generated through these sources. Hard-copy press kits can be created and sent to media prior to their arrival or upon their arrival.
- a. Tips for press kits and working with media can be found as part of the Tourism BC Travel Media Relations workshop and Tourism Business Essentials® workbook. All workbooks will be available for free download online in 2009. Samples of media pages are available on a variety of websites by tourism organizations such as:
<http://www2.hellobc.com/travelmedia/>,
<http://www.tourismpenticton.com/media/media.aspx>
<http://www.bellacoola.ca/media.php>
 - i. Media content tips include: quick facts about the area, story ideas, CD or DVD of sample images that are available in hi-resolution suitable for print media, maps, visitor guide, key contact list, detailed itinerary of FAM tours planned during their stay in the community, with all inclusions noted.
 - b. A fact sheet or “list of facts” needs to be compiled into one reference source, where information about Dawson Creek can be easily accessed. This resource is ideal for media to understand the area in order to write stories, for researchers writing copy for the website, for feature stories or press releases, and for businesses needing information. Maintaining a quick reference of key facts will be more efficient as it presents one version of verified facts rather than having individuals conduct their own research from multiple sources, which may not be accurate or up to date.
 - i. Utilize information from existing sources and the Situation Analysis, tourism inventory, BC Stats Community Profile, existing local websites and other sources.
 - ii. Update on a regular basis.
 - iii. Post information on the community website as well as the media page (or cross-reference appropriately).
 - iv. Fact checking third-party sources for accurate editorial representation of Dawson Creek should be an ongoing process and where websites or

publications do not have adequate or accurate information, corrections or additions should be forwarded to these sources with links back to the Quick Facts page of the website. Web links to the Quick Facts information should be sent to any businesses or organizations that are promoting or doing research for the area, whether they are for third-party websites, travel guides, media, etc.

- v. In addition to the Quick Facts, any text written for Dawson Creek (under contract or by agreement), where possible, should remain under copyright to the lead tourism organization or the City of Dawson Creek and should be shared with other stakeholders to ensure the information is utilized. Editorial copy written for media press releases or feature stories should also be posted on the website and made available for any businesses that need information for promotional purposes. Check copyright on any material before use.
- c. Pre-written stories, along with all other information noted above, must be available on the web with links to corresponding websites from the media section of the official tourism website.
- d. Produce both print and web versions of information and update as required.
- e. To qualify media, forward a media profile template for completion by any media who have approached Dawson Creek directly. This will also serve as a contact follow-up form if media does visit the area.

Refer to the Appendices for a Media Profile Template sample. A Media Itinerary should be supplied to visiting media.

57. Compile base map data that can be used to produce a series of maps for print or web format. Both print and web version maps are important tools as web research is on the rise for trip planning. Large-format print maps are especially helpful for a regional area and smaller-format maps are ideal for a local area. Maps will vary in scale and if geographic information system (GIS)⁶⁹ technology is used, one set of data can serve as a foundation for producing a multitude of maps that are true to scale. Map artwork from master files can be made to any scale, therefore maps can range from basic giveaway pad maps to large-format 2x3-foot recreation feature maps, which are likely to be sold due to their high cost to produce. Production of large-format maps will likely be in partnership with the master trails strategy and any future signage plan. Current maps include the pad map, PDF format online city map and city map in the visitor guide. A poster format Alaska Highway map highlights key features of the route. Small format maps that can be output in standard letter size for view online and as a printable PDF file are ideal for travel planning prior to visitors coming to the area. Web access to these maps is also ideal for use by the Visitor Centre as required.

⁶⁹ GIS is analysis that combines relational databases with spatial interpretation and outputs in the form of maps. It includes computer-based methods of recording, analyzing, combining, and displaying geographic information such as roads, streams, stand or habitat types, sensitive areas, soil types, or any other feature that can be mapped on the ground.

Suggested maps for the Dawson Creek area include:

- a. **Maintain the online street map and pad map.** For the pad map, incorporate supporting text for key attractions other than ads. Replace corresponding numbers on ads with a grid system with letters across the horizontal frame and numbers along the vertical frame. (A1, B1, C1, A2, B2, C3, etc.), this system is more effective in finding a location versus the current system where numbers are not in sequence on the map, e.g. from top to bottom and left to right.
- b. **Maintain the Historic Waking Tour map.**
- c. **Develop a route map to Alaska** with Dawson Creek day trips and the local area focus, so that when tourists in transit are planning their trip, or are in the area, there is a context to the Dawson Creek experience. Incorporate this map into the visitor guide and online versions. Minimum format 11x17" or double fold of the visitor guide format of 16x9".

Future consideration for maps for the Dawson Creek area include:

- a. **Produce directional maps for use by businesses.** Directional maps can be custom made for tourism businesses, providing a tool that can be downloaded from the business's website prior to the customer leaving for their location. Created as a PDF file, the 8.5x11" format prints easily in either colour or black and white. Key content includes logo and contact information of the business, directional information from all access routes (airport and highway access), inset maps that outline the regional orientation and the surrounding area to access the business. This project could earn revenues for the tourism organization.
- b. **GIS Base Map** – The base map could be compiled using existing provincial and local/regional datasets. GIS data is available through a multitude of existing sources, and local individuals, groups, government and organizations often have access to data.
 - i. Inventory all map sources available to build on existing datasets (e.g. City of Dawson Creek, Regional District, Province of BC,⁷⁰ trail user groups, independent mapping companies (e.g. <http://www.cloverpoint.com/>), etc.).
 - ii. Consider the season (summer/winter) and end user, e.g. special features, references points for directions and trail information vs. overall general orientation of the area.
 - iii. Determine a series of map outputs based on organizational needs, tourist needs, land-planning needs, etc.

⁷⁰ <http://aardvark.gov.bc.ca/apps/gga/>

GeoBC provides a window to data and information sources provided by various ministries and agencies from the Natural Resource Sector within the British Columbia Provincial Government. The focus is on spatial and attribute data and associated applications that allow display and interaction with the data.

- iv. Review best practices from other communities.
- v. Contract professionals to undertake the project.
- vi. Develop a master set of geographic information system (GIS) mapping data and encourage community partners to invest in developing the map series based on their individual needs.
- vii. Coordinate with the master trails and signage strategies.
- viii. To view examples of web maps that originated from large-format print and billboard-sized original versions visit:
<http://www.sunshinecoastcanada.com/sunshine-coast/map.php>
<http://www.gibsonsbcc.ca/maps.php>

- c. **Produce a large-format GIS recreation and attractions map.** Future consideration for a large-format map includes GIS technology and a map grid with letters and numbers as a cross-reference to aid in finding key reference points. This topographic design concept features major highway and secondary road information combined with key editorial content such as attractions, recreation features and key points of interest with icons and major access routes in and around the study area. For broader distribution for the general tourism markets a 24x36" format map folding to rack size 4x9" allows for maximum print size for standard print economies. The large-format map can double as a poster for framing or window display at businesses and organizations throughout the area. When printed at the same time as the fold-down version, poster-quality paper can be exchanged during the printing process for poster production using the same artwork. This project could earn revenues.

58. **Display Equipment – Utilizing the branding artwork, maintain banners and display equipment for local events, trade, travel and consumer shows.**

Tourism Dawson Creek currently attends the American Bus Association⁷¹ trade show and the Quartzsite RV⁷² consumer show. This marketing strategy has had favourable results from research conducted by Tourism BC. In order to reinforce the Dawson Creek brand the booth display needs to be targeted to promote Dawson Creek as an ideal stop-over destination en route to Alaska. For local or regional events, alternatives to costly large-format displays include the use of retractable banners.

⁷¹ <http://www.buses.org/> ABA represents approximately 1,000 motorcoach and tour companies in the United States and Canada. Its members operate charter, tour, regular route, airport express, special operations and contract services (commuter, school, transit). Another 2,800 member organizations represent the travel and tourism industry and suppliers of bus products and services who work in partnership with the North American motorcoach industry. ABA is also home to ABA Foundation, a non-profit organization with an emphasis on scholarships, research, and continuing education.

⁷² <http://www.quartzsitervshow.com/>

- a. Ensure unique selling features are incorporated into the branded designs using striking images, a map of the area and key messaging (key words or phrases), and the community tourism website URL.
- b. Develop banners for local events. Banners can be loaned to business and organizations to promote the area.
- c. The trend of retractable display banners has now become standard due to their portability and cost. Certain models can support partial height extension making them suitable for tabletop displays. Alternatively traditional booth display equipment that is professionally designed can have greater visual impact over pop-up displays, as large-format displays with compelling images can stand out in the clutter of show displays.

Consider a retractable display banner series based on each product cluster, e.g. recreation, hot springs, events, circle tours, etc., and mix and match components targeting the appropriate market for the show or event. Creating interchangeable banners provides an ideal option for product sector groups that may wish to share the costs and the benefits of this type of display.

- d. In addition to the display equipment, accessories must also be considered, such as tables, lighting, carpet tiles, brochure rack holders, podium, dolly, contest entry box and slide show, audio, video or laptop equipment.

59. Develop a branded merchandise line for promotional purposes and retail sales.

- a. **Dawson Creek Mile 0 of the Alaska Highway, British Columbia Canada** merchandise serves as both a promotional tool and a revenue generator while offering value to the consumer in the form of a souvenir. High-quality functional items are recommended, such as travel mugs, coffee mugs, fleece vests and jackets, shirts, postcards, posters and – for fun – postage stamps. Local products that are authentic from the area would be of more value than imported items. Ensure the official website URL is included in designs where possible. The City of Dawson Creek and TDC produce a variety of promotional items including pins.

For travel shows, media FAM tours or when representing the area in an official capacity, representatives could be outfitted with branded jackets, vests or shirts. As noted in the cooperative marketing section, this would earn revenue for both the lead tourism organization and the retailers.

- b. **Custom Stamps:** Canada Post offers a custom-made stamp program. Using the community brand, produce customized stamps. These postage stamps could be sold as souvenirs through the local post office, visitor centres or through retail outlets.
https://www.picturepostage.ca/picpostageprod/DispatcherServlet?op=welcome_public&lang=ENGLISH

60. Enhance the official tourism website for Dawson Creek, BC Canada.

<http://www.tourismdawsoncreek.com/index.php> In the tourism sector, an effective website is the most important asset a business or community can invest in. The number one

marketing, visitor services and industry communications tool is an integrated database-driven website. For consumer marketing, website usage statistics consistently indicate the importance of an effective website.⁷³ With technology today, features that were limited to large corporations are now available for small organizations, and options continue to improve year by year. The primary objective of the tourism component of the website is to promote the study area – Dawson Creek, BC – as a desirable place to visit. The secondary objective is to provide administrative support for the community organizations that will utilize the site for administrative functions; as well, it serves as a resource for the community. Dawson Creek is in the product development stage of the tourism development life cycle and tourism industry information will be of value for investment in tourism and business development.

The website needs to be consumer-focused, assisting visitors throughout all stages of the purchase cycle (Awareness, Interest, Evaluation, Purchase, Experience, Loyalty). Functionality must serve both visitor needs and the needs of the host organization. An integrated online database with content management software technology can be utilized for both the consumer side of the website and for communications, administration and research for the administration side.

For effective online results, communities must consider website development and Internet marketing. Both are distinct but interrelated.

Refer to the Appendices for Industry Best Practices.

Recommendations for enhancing Tourism Dawson Creek include a general audit to refine the website:

- a. Recommendations for the industry are noted in the Information Management section of the plan.
- b. Rework content on the home page for search engine optimization (SEO) after a web search analysis. Home page content needs to be dynamic and content should highlight why someone should visit the area, with links to subsequent pages.
- c. Refine the content to serve the primary target, the consumer. Currently the site is structured to appeal to both the consumer and the industry. Although this strategy is adopted by many small communities, it's important to structure the site to focus primarily on the consumer first and have all industry information accessed through one area.
- d. Online Shopping page: Ensure the full range of options is visible before having to scroll down to see other options.
- e. What's New page: The content is directed to industry and the last entry was the announcement of the Alaska Highway House opening. All references to the local community and industry should be compiled in one area and kept up to date.

⁷³ <http://www.newmediatrendwatch.com/markets-by-country>

- f. Recreation page: Summarize the key recreation highlights before lining or bulleting information. Subsequent pages have excellent detail. Outdoor recreation: Add section on Bear Mountain and Powder King (content viewed in local events under snow report).
- g. How To Get Here page: A summary introduction of the ways to get to the area and naming the highways is recommended for the introduction as well as a summary of flight information, e.g. Central Mountain Air offers one daily direct flight from Vancouver International Airport main terminal. Add contact information for airport car rentals. Update Transport/Automotive guide (dated 2006/07). Add a visual map for orientation on the page display. Add a section on itineraries and routing.
- h. Travel Tips page: Passport information is dated. Refer to the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative http://travel.state.gov/travel/cbpmc/cbpmc_2223.html and the Government of Canada Enhanced Driver's Licence and Province of BC Press Release http://www2.news.gov.bc.ca/news_releases_2005-2009/2009OTP0067-000704-Attachment1.htm
- i. Free "Magazine" page: Change heading to Visitor Guide versus magazine.
- j. Contact Us: References to the Visitor Information Centre no longer use the word "information."
- k. Visitor Info page: Transportation Auto Services, Services and Dining PDFs dated 2007. Multiplex information dated. Road Reports update link for Drive BC <http://www.drivebc.ca/>
- l. Attractions page: Multiplex information dated. Too much scrolling to see all the attractions. Consider one page per attraction to allow quick navigation. Add information about the Casino.
- m. Accommodations: Update PDF from current guide. Provide Alaska-bound RV traveller information at the top. Add a database search feature for accommodation amenities.
- n. Local Events: Place events in chronological order. Dated events are at the top of the page. Too much scrolling to see all the events. Consider one page per event to allow quick navigation.
- o. Alaska Highway: Introduction is the same as the history page. Highways Services PDF dated 2007. Multiplex information dated. Local links not current, e.g. Pouce Coupe. Major opportunity is to add a page on the Dawson Creek experience en route to Alaska; summarize what services, attractions and trip planning assistance there is. Emphasize the <http://www.travelalaska.com/> website for further planning.
- p. Corporate Services: As noted earlier consider a separate link to a new web section for all non-consumer related content. Add a section for caravan and bus tour hospitality.

5.16 Integrated Promotional Mix

Objective: Maintain an integrated promotional mix of marketing activities to raise awareness of the Dawson Creek area in its current stage of development, communicating the attributes of market-ready product in key markets.

Rationale: Destination marketing is highly competitive and increased community destination marketing activities provide the much-needed level of detail required to move the consumer through the purchase cycle. Segmentation of markets with appropriate messaging backed up with market-ready product will create a positive visitor experience.

Integrated marketing communications is the process of developing and implementing various forms of persuasive communication programs for customers and prospects over time. The goal is to influence or directly affect the behaviour of the selected communication audience.⁷⁴

Communicating the appropriate message about the destination is required. In addition to the primary research available for the Alaska-bound market, a resource document titled “*Situation Analysis Supplementary Appendices*” has been supplied to support the Situation Analysis and can be found on the Tourism Plan web page under reports at:

http://www.tourismdawsoncreek.com/tourism_foundations.php.

This document provides a profile of market segment to BC and Canada. Consult this source prior to finalizing the tactics plan for promotion.

The annual marketing plan will identify tactics for 2010 when Tourism Dawson Creek undertakes its annual planning process. For 2009 tactics included:

- Key Consumer Advertisements: Hello North – Dawson Creek; Milepost; Dawson Creek/ Alaska Highway House; NBCTA Guide – General.
- Cooperative Opportunity with stakeholders: Bells Alaska Travel Guide
- Other Advertisements: Tumbler Ridge Visitor Guide; BC Magazine; Alaska Highway House
- Trade Shows: American Bus Association (ABA)
- Consumer Shows: Quartzsite RV Arizona RV Show
- Website: Website development & maintenance
<http://www.tourismdawsoncreek.com/index.php>.
- Miscellaneous: HD Video, Events, Media, Photography, Cross-promotion
<http://www.dawsontodawson.com/>

Other show attendance includes: Edmonton RV Show, Edmonton Motorcycle Show, Vancouver Motorcycle Show, Abbotsford Sport and Outdoor Show, Dawson Creek Kiwanis Trade Show.

Strategies:

61. Internet Marketing – Establish and maintain a website optimization and web marketing program. With countless studies and references indicating continued growth in Internet use for information gathering, travel planning and bookings, the web is a valuable

⁷⁴ Source: Don Schulz, *Marketing*

way to reach the consumer. By increasing the text content and improving keywords and Meta tags,⁷⁵ rankings on Google will increase. Having the local tourism businesses link to the community site will also increase rankings with Google. In addition to strategically planning for content and structure for search engine optimization, an effective website will need to be marketed to drive traffic to the site. Internet marketing will raise the profile of Dawson Creek by being higher in rankings by key search criteria.

Currently <http://www.tourismdawsoncreek.com/> is ranked number 5 when searched by “Dawson Creek, BC” and number 8 when searched by “Dawson Creek.” Web marketing is specialized and ever changing and can consist of press releases, paid and non-paid links, listing ads and banner ads where appropriate, among other options. It is recommended the Internet marketing plan be developed by a specialized web marketing firm that understands tourism marketing and can work along with the website design team maintaining the site.

Tourism BC

Tourism BC has invested significant resources in the HelloBC⁷⁶ consumer website as the call to action for all marketing activities. The site currently receives 7 million unique visits annually over its international network of websites. Visitors may access detailed information by their interests (hiking, fishing, etc) or by geographic area, e.g Dawson Creek.⁷⁷ Tourism BC is working with the Regional Destination Marketing Organizations and community contacts to enhance the community profile sections on the site to build additional community content. The website links to the local community websites. Businesses can be listed on the Tourism BC website for a fee and in some cases they must meet industry standards before being included, e.g. Approved Accommodation.⁷⁸ Communities are strongly encouraged to build user generated content through HelloBC blogs.⁷⁹ Blogs are a powerful tool used to communicate first-hand experience in a community, which is proven to be very effective with consumers. HelloBC blogs can accommodate text, images and video content.

Current opportunities with Tourism BC include the Blogs on HelloBC.com. Dawson Creek can populate information about the community on the site, which now includes video capabilities.⁸⁰ The latest Blog is dated March 13, 2009, by Tourism Dawson Creek.

The new Share the Excitement “Widget” has been installed on community website homepage. The widget⁸¹ is being used to highlight HelloBC’s user generated content (blogs). Businesses can now upload the widget.

⁷⁵ Meta elements such as Description and Keywords that provide information about web pages, usually to help Search Engines categorize pages. Meta tags are inserted into the HTML code, but are not visible to website visitors.

⁷⁶ <http://www.hellobc.com/en-CA/default.htm>

⁷⁷ <http://www.hellobc.com/en-CA/RegionsCities/DawsonCreek.htm>

⁷⁸ <https://www.tourismbc.net/dms/Secure/default.aspx>

⁷⁹ <http://www.hellobc.com/en-CA/HelloBCBlogs/BritishColumbia.htm?LOCID=408&FXMID=%7c1%7c>

⁸⁰ <http://www.hellobc.com/en-CA/HelloBCBlogs/BritishColumbia.htm?LOCID=408&FXMID=%7c1%7c>

⁸¹ A badge or button incorporated into a site or social network space by its owner, with content or services typically served from another site making widgets effectively a mini-software application or web service. Content can be updated in real time since the widget interacts with the server each time it loads. Source:

Future development of the Hello BC website includes expanded content for regions and communities. All six regional DMO websites, such as Northern BC Tourism, have been replaced by the enhanced HelloBC.com web presence. Tourism BC is investing strategically in the HelloBC website and Dawson Creek will benefit directly from the integrated promotional strategy of Tourism BC with links to the Dawson Creek community website.

Tourism BC is currently in the process of developing a province-wide product inventory with potential for online booking capability on their consumer website. Individual businesses can buy program listings. Tourism businesses including activities, attractions, events, transportation and accommodations can participate. The HelloBC Listings Program is targeted to assist consumers with their vacation planning. The 1-800 HelloBC Call Centre provides a booking service. In 2007 the Call Centre received almost 120,000 consumer inquiries and generated 8,800 reservation bookings. New for 2009 is the increase from a 40-word description to 100 words and the ability to upload one video clip.

<http://www.tourismbc.com/IndustryPrograms/ConnectingWithConsumers/HelloBCListingsProgram.aspx>

Tourism BC's investments in HelloBC and mobile technology with the iPhone⁸² will provide unprecedented access to information about BC's communities and activities. With a link from the Tourism BC HelloBC site to the official tourism website in each community, visitors will be able to access the dynamic information community websites can provide.

Tourism BC Programs can be found online at:

<http://www.tourismbc.net/dms/Public/TBCPrograms.aspx>

62. **Media Relations – Work with Northern BC Tourism.** Editorial coverage is worth thousands of dollars in equivalent advertising space and readers have more confidence in editorial copy versus advertising claims, therefore media relations is a key marketing strategy. Media relations include responding to media requests for information, hosting familiarization (FAM) tours and generating the interest of media in order to have stories written and published. Hosting media requires cooperation amongst transportation, accommodation, food services and tour providers in order to be successful. Typically, Tourism BC and the regional DMO will coordinate media trips and contact the community destination marketing organization and operators directly, however, having support materials for these organizations or responding to media requests directly is required. In order to serve the needs for media the following tactics are recommended.

<http://www.davechaffey.com/E-marketing-Glossary/Widget-in-Internet-marketing.htm> For instructions on how to install the widget refer to: <http://www.hellobc.com/en-CA/ShareExcitement/BritishColumbia.htm>.

⁸² The iPhone is an internet-connected multimedia smartphone designed and marketed by Apple Inc. with a flush multi-touch screen and a minimal hardware interface. The device does not have a physical keyboard, so a virtual keyboard is rendered on the touch screen instead. The iPhone functions as a camera phone (including text messaging and visual voicemail), a portable media player (equivalent to an iPod), and Internet client (with email, web browsing, and local Wi-Fi connectivity). <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/IPhone>

Refer to the promotional tools and materials section for the creation of an online press kit and the Appendices for media templates.

- a. **Establish a media web page.** A media web page is critical to display the soft-copy version of press kit contents, which will include pre-written stories, story ideas, suggested itineraries, press releases, contacts, web links and availability of high-resolution scans of photography for print use and B-roll for broadcast, if available.
 - b. **Utilize Tourism BC media programs.** Travel media relations play an integral role in maximizing consumer and trade awareness of British Columbia as a top travel destination through unpaid media coverage in key markets. Travel media include freelance journalists, travel editors, broadcasters, producers and travel trade media. The Tourism BC Travel Media Relations program includes activities such as attending key media events, initiating and organizing trips for qualified media, building relationships with key media, and positioning unique story ideas with media. In addition, this division develops press kits and image bank materials for distribution to appropriate travel media.⁸³ <http://www2.hellobc.com/travelmedia/>
 - c. **The Tourism BC Visiting Journalist Program**⁸⁴ provides support of eligible costs to bring media to communities, primarily by air or ground transportation. Industry is expected to provide media with accommodations, meals and activities.
 - d. **Host Media FAM Tours.** Media FAM tours are coordinated by the regional DMO. Press kits should be developed according to the specific interests of the participants of the FAM tour.
 - e. **Host the Tourism BC Travel Media Relations workshop.** As noted in the industry development section a series of workshops with workbooks is available. Having local business understand the needs of media will increase the opportunities for media coverage and media visits will be more effective.
<http://www.tourismbc.com/IndustryPrograms/BuildingAndGrowingYourBusiness/TourismBusinessEssentials.aspx>
 - f. **Hire a public relations firm.** In addition to generating media interest through the tourism organization, contracting services to a public relations firm with a proven track record in tourism can be beneficial to supplement media activities. Established firms have a database of key contacts and can provide targeted contacts. Alternatively, sending professional written press releases to key publications with links to the image bank can generate media coverage.
63. **Advertising – Define the advertising program by target markets.** For the tactical marketing plan, define the advertising plan by product/market match and develop the website to coincide with the supporting information and a landing page. Northern BC Tourism offers cooperative marketing opportunities that provide access to publications and programs that

⁸³ <http://www2.hellobc.com/travelmedia/contactUs.aspx>

⁸⁴ <http://www2.hellobc.com/travelmedia/vjprogram.aspx>

would otherwise cost more to book direct. In addition, their programs form part of an integrated promotional strategy, therefore the primary fulfillment piece, Northern BC Travel Guide, is a key recommendation.

Types of advertising typical of community marketing:

- a. Place marketing, using the banner “Dawson Creek, BC” with tag line identification only (selling the destination; no specific businesses identified).
- b. Cooperative advertising using the header banner “Dawson Creek, BC” with tag line identification and sharing space and costs with tourism businesses and/or neighbouring communities in local or regional identities, sometimes with editorial content as well as display ads.
- c. Cooperative advertising using the footer banner “Tourism Dawson Creek, BC” with tag line identification for the area with the call to action to the official tourism website to be partnered with a tourism business that advertises directly on its own, cooperatively promoting the destination.

64. **Trade, Travel and Consumer Shows** – Currently Dawson Creek participates in shows. Participation in travel and consumer shows provides an opportunity to create awareness of a destination, distribute information, and collect information directly from potential visitors. Tourism BC conducted primary research to evaluate the effectiveness of consumer shows, which resulted favourably. Market research by activity type has revealed people do make decisions to visit a destination based on visiting travel and/or consumer shows.

Consumer show presence is recommended through the regional DMO partners program, which provides discounted bulk purchase rates and a proven track record. Partnerships with businesses and other community tourism organizations, and circle route partners, could expand the representation at shows and expand market reach. Shows can be booked directly with suppliers, however, the regional DMO Partners Program benefits include discounted rates and participants from the region are together in one area, reinforcing the regional brand.

Trade shows are limited to export-ready businesses that meet certain criteria to work with travel wholesalers (not the consumer). Operators must take into account the level of business they are prepared to block space for in order to accommodate intermediaries to sell on their behalf. Given the cost to attend these shows directly, it is recommended that any trade show activity be directed through the regional DMO, NBCT, and any operators who wish to expand their distribution channel should participate in the Travel Trade workshop provided by Tourism BC.

Programs for North America http://www.tourismbc.com/marketing_sales.asp?id=1236#cp

Programs for Overseas http://www.tourismbc.com/marketing_sales.asp?id=1237

Trade Shows http://www.tourismbc.com/marketing_sales.asp?id=1238

65. **Promotions – Establish a promotional trip giveaway program.** Promotions would be developed in cooperation with those independent businesses that want to participate in a trip giveaway program. Official Dawson Creek branded merchandise (clothing) and retail items,

such as books about the area, could be used for small prizes. A grand prize of a trip to the area can be used as a motivator for people to enter the draw. Promotion of the contest could include any of the promotional mix noted above. A trip can also be used for incentive-based visitor research as well.

66. **Direct Mail** – Targeting regional markets for events in cooperation with the Multiplex for packages is recommended. Targeting geographical areas through direct mail is a cost-effective way to promote awareness of the area for residents with visiting friends and relatives, and awareness of events for locals. Canada Post offers direct mail services. Domestic products include Addressed Admail, Unaddressed Admail, Direct Marketing Online, AdCard and Publications Mail. For more information on products and services visit: <http://www.canadapost.ca/business/prodserv/mdm/default-e.asp>. Content for direct mail can include a customized brochure or oversized postcard depending on the target audience. When using direct mail with quantities over 1,000 pieces, utilize the services of a mailing house; it automates the production process and the discounted postage rate offsets the costs of using its services versus supplying addressed mail through Canada Post. Direct mail options may include the Canadian Tourism Commission and the regional destination marketing organizations databases. Programs vary; consult these organizations directly for current programming.

67. **Maintain the Hiway Howdy! Program for Travel Trade Caravan and Bus Tour Hospitality.** Tourism Dawson Creek has identified Travel Trade as an important priority over the past three years. Tourism Dawson Creek caters to the RV Caravan and Motor Coach sector. The travel trade program consists of:

- Dawson Creek Trip Planner and flat sheet
- Database of and contact with every bus tour and caravan that has come through the city in the past five years.
- Hiway Howdy Program: staff personally met every tour group and welcomed them to the city and provided city pins, coupon books, etc.

The Hiway Howdy! program takes into consideration two elements: the individual participant on group travel and the company tour planners and their field staff: wagonmasters, tailgunners and tour guides.

In the scope of Tourism Dawson Creek's (TDC) Hiway Howdy! program, the Northern Experience can be defined as the gateway, introduction to, and the setting of the stage for an individual travelling the Alaska Highway (North America's last frontier) that will reveal an international diversity of culture, history, wildlife, and scenery, while discovering and enjoying what Dawson Creek has to offer.

The second focus of the program for planners and tour leaders is to make sure that this Northern Experience happens for their clients in the most rewarding and efficient way

possible; and to offer Tourism Dawson Creek services that will make company staff feel confident about planning tours and embarking on their northern guiding experience.⁸⁵

68. **Maintain an integrated cooperative meeting, event and conferences program.** Tourism Dawson Creek currently promotes Hosting services. The web page resources include Conferences and Events, Weddings and Reunions, Special Events and Sporting Events. The “Howdy! Welcome to Dawson Creek” program offers an extensive list of products and services for event planners and delegates. Expand promotional opportunities with the Multiplex. http://www.tourismdawsoncreek.com/conference_request/

5.17 Visitor Services

Objective: Maintain the visitor services programming to integrate with increased tourism activity, providing a seamless experience for the visitor.

Rationale: A Visitor Centre is arguably the most important component of any community or tourism agency. It is usually the first point of contact in a community and the place where the visitor is enticed to stay longer in the community they are inquiring about. Tourism Dawson Creek is adopting a visitor-first approach to their operations: the visitor must come first in all activities, programs, and best efforts must be targeted towards the visitor.⁸⁶ Visitor services refer to those services that directly assist visitors as they move through the purchase cycle (Awareness, Interest, Evaluation, Purchase, Experience, Loyalty). This includes fulfillment (responding to visitor inquiries). Effective visitor services programming will extend visitor stays and create a positive experience, resulting in favourable word-of-mouth referrals to others, which is one of the most common ways visitors hear about destinations. The visitor services program ensures the community has collectively contributed to creating a positive experience for the visitor.

Strategies:

69. **Maintain both Visitor Centres and operate in an efficient and customer-orientated manner.** Visitor Centre statistics estimate approximately 300,000 people visit the community each year, many of which are travelling the Alaska Highway; however, many are coming for sporting tournaments, community events and outdoor recreation.
- a. Offset operational costs through the sale of merchandise
 - i. Operate a gift shop
 - ii. Mark up items at a minimum of 100% where applicable
 - iii. Maintain inventory tracking methods
 - b. Access local, regional, provincial and national programs
 - i. Make application to Service Canada annually for Summer Student programming

⁸⁵ Source: Tourism Dawson Creek

⁸⁶ Tourism Dawson Creek Tourism Development Plan 2006-2012.

- ii. Make application to the Tourism BC Visitor Info Network for Special Projects funding
- iii. Monitor programs for suitability for Visitor Centre opportunities

70. Retain membership of the Visitor Centre in the Tourism BC Visitor Centre Network program. Through membership in the Visitor Info Network, regional and provincial information is provided to visitors and local residents. Membership benefits include standard identification of the Visitor Centre through regional branding and support for the centre's enhancements through qualified programs. The Tourism BC Fee-For-Service Visitor Centre Network program agreement specifies the program requirements.

Some enhancements for the Visitor Centre can be sponsored in part by Tourism BC's Visitor Centre Network Special Projects program, which provides funds for items such as racking, computers, signage and other requirements a Visitor Centre needs to comply with minimum standards for membership in the program. These funds are for special projects that may not otherwise be funded.

71. Utilize and promote one official website for all visitor information about Dawson Creek, BC. Encourage businesses, community, and recreation group website owners, etc., to link to the tourism website so visitors can access the official website. The new visitor website URL will be the official call to action for all marketing activities and the website will have a prompt for the visitor guide.

72. Coordinate with organizations or businesses that produce marketing materials to integrate their materials with the community tourism marketing strategy, incorporating the community brand, website address and call to action for the visitor guide in their materials. Given the broader context of destination marketing with the tourism plan, materials produced by individuals, community groups, recreation groups, etc., have a role in promoting aspects of the tourism experience for the area. Ensure all materials promoting the area comply with graphic standards for the brand "Dawson Creek, British Columbia, Canada" and include the toll-free number.

73. Establish a Community Visitor Ambassador program. A Dawson Creek Ambassador program is in the 2009 work plan. Although many visitors to the area stop in at the Visitor Centre, not all of them do. Many seek information throughout the community. This may be at retail stores, restaurants, accommodations, gas stations and the recreation centre. In addition to educating the local tourism industry about products and services in the area, it is effective to encourage the community at large to be hospitable. When visitors encounter kind, knowledgeable people, it leaves a positive impression. Training of frontline staff about the local features and amenities will enhance community hospitality. This involves training retailers, accommodation providers and frontline workers who have the greatest opportunity to encounter visitors throughout the community. The program standardizes key information about things to do and see and places to stay, and provides racking and adequate supply of promotional materials. Awareness of the tourism website and its user-friendly printable pages can serve as a tool to assist visitors for any business that has a computer. In addition to

WorldHost training, local area information content would be incorporated into industry development training programs. Tourism Nanaimo has developed this type of program, as have other communities in the province.

- a. Create an ambassador program that utilizes local volunteers
 - b. Work with the local RCMP detachment on “Red Serge” photo opportunities
74. **Introduce a local product FAM tour program.** The travelling public will visit areas throughout the region, so it’s imperative that local operators know what products and services are within the town and area. Internal FAM tours showcasing the current businesses, organization programs, community attributes and Visitor Centre are important not only for Visitor Centre staff and/or volunteer training but also for local awareness of the communities in the region.
- a. Coordinate with the Visitor Centre training, including local businesses and frontline staff.
 - b. Include partnerships with other neighbouring communities
 - c. Develop the Visitor Stay Another Day Program and coordinate and develop “Be a Tourist in Your Own Town Month” with coordination of National Tourism Week by the Canadian Tourism Commission and Hello North’s Programming.
 - d. Produce event poster
 - e. Create a frontline staff summer orientation program
 - f. Promote winter activities through weekly snow reports
 - g. Create awareness of the tourism website and the ability to print pages for visitors as required.
 - h. Train frontline staff through customized *WorldHost* programs that also include product and service knowledge of the local area.
 - i. Develop a racking program where small racks will house the rack version of the visitor guide and services brochures throughout the community in visible locations – Kicking Horse Mountain Resort has an effective program in Golden.
 - j. Direct visitors to the Visitor Centre for more detailed information.
75. **Refine the fulfillment services program (responding to visitor inquiries) to coincide with the increased marketing activity and establish tracking reports for future evaluation and planning.** Marketing activities that promote the toll-free number at the Visitor Centre require tracking of inquiries to monitor against marketing activity. *Also refer to Plan Tracking and Evaluation in the next section.* The following best practices are for review only.
- a. **Call to Action** – The web address of the official tourism website is the primary reference used on all materials for tourism promotion, with a prompt for the visitor guide. Landing pages are used for tracking of marketing campaigns. The toll-free number for the Visitor Centre is to be used where appropriate.

- b. **Email Address Protocol** – Generic email addresses can be set up based on the domain name and then forwarded to those individuals or organizations who will respond to them. For example, the Visitor Centre can receive industry-related email for tourism, which can be forwarded to any existing email account such as tourism@officialURLaddress.com, info@officialURLaddress.com and/or visit@officialURLaddress.com. These can be forwarded to whoever will respond to this type of inquiry. The public email address remains the same but the forwarding address of email can change. Never use personalized email for marketing promotions or the email address supplied by the service provider (telephone or cable company), e.g. tourism@telus.net. In the event people move on or the account supplier changes, the old email address would require forwarding and the account maintained. Always use the domain name for the published email series (which can be unlimited), and be sure to check with the website hosting firm to ensure it can provide this service. Dedicated email addresses like these can provide a source for tracking promotions and inquiries.
- c. **Activity Notices** – A weekly activity/events sheet can be output from the website through a database-driven system. Tourism businesses or any retail outlet that has a computer and printer can generate outputs. This service could run independently or as part of the Visitor Centre program. The number of inquiries for this service should be tracked and recorded.
- d. **Mail Packages** – All official publications for tourism should be used for fulfillment services to ensure graphic standards are met and the information being sent is consistent with the marketing strategy. Specific brochures on types of tours or activities by businesses should also be included, where appropriate, based on the interests of the inquiry and availability of information. The number of inquiries for this service should be tracked and recorded. When possible, develop print materials to fold down to 4x9" rack size for distribution through racking services and to fit into a standard #10 business envelope (4 1/8"x 9 1/2"), reducing postage costs. Co-branded stationery is currently designed to include both the community brand and the Visitor Centre logos.
- e. **Email Requests** – Email requests will need to be responded to within 24 hours. If the email response form is utilized from the website, the form would request the specific areas of interest so that appropriate information can be mailed. If an email reply request is required, links to specific areas of the website would form part of the reply, ensuring the recipient gets the targeted information they are looking for. Note email address protocols above.
- f. **Visitor Statistics** – Visitor data collected for Tourism BC through the Visitor Centre Network program can be presented as trend analysis. This information can be published as seasonal and annual reports. Refer to the Situation Analysis for one sample. As noted in the research section a Value of Visitor Centre study is recommended.

76. Improve the Visitor Experience

Visitor Strategies:

- Use research tools to identify the expectations of visitors pre-arrival and to determine their level of satisfaction when in the community
- Improve the visitor experience through enhancements to existing municipal services and communication tools
- Shift municipal products and services to visitor experiences

Stakeholder Strategies:

- Develop partnerships with stakeholders to create a shared visitor experience vision for the City of Dawson Creek
- Develop partnerships with stakeholders and industry partners to help facilitate an exceptional pre, core, and post visitor experience for the Alaska Highway visitor
- Provide municipal support for engaging, innovative and entertaining opportunities that attract new and return visitors
- Utilize partnerships to help finance broad visitor experience initiatives

Resident Strategies:

- Engage residents in visitor experience discussion
- Encourage all partners to add a resident focus to visitor oriented events

5.18 Action Plan Priorities

The Tourism Plan is supported by an Excel workbook that includes all strategies in the Tourism Plan Status Report with working templates for tracking and budgeting.

The Tourism Dawson Creek plan is for the period 2010-2015 as the current work plan for 2009 is being implemented. In order to adopt the new tourism plan, the following activities will be a priority for 2009/2010 to prepare for the transition.

Tourism Advisory Committee Strategy Priorities

Strategy # 12	Maintain the strategic planning process.
Strategy # 30	Host input sessions for tourism stakeholders
Strategy # 31	Host an annual pre-season tourism industry event.
Strategy # 32	Host an annual open house for residents, government and tourism industry stakeholders.
Strategy # 45	Identify labour and skill requirements
Strategy # 73	Establish a Community Visitor Ambassador program

Tourism Dawson Creek Strategy priorities in addition to existing activities that have been noted in the plan, some with recommendations for refinement where applicable.

Strategy # 1	Encourage the participation of existing stakeholders to assist in the implementation of the tourism plan.
Strategy # 2	Establish an Annual Tourism Action Plan that coordinates the three key tourism management stakeholders: Tourism Dawson Creek, the City of Dawson Creek and Global Spectrum Facility Management.
Strategy # 3	Develop a formal Sport, Event and Conference Plan
Strategy # 4	Expand capacity of Tourism Dawson Creek for incremental tourism activities through the establishment of the Additional Hotel Room Tax
Strategy # 6	Consider the future organizational structure for Tourism Dawson Creek
Strategy # 7	Support the feasibility and development of a Business Improvement Area (BIA).
Strategy # 10	Update the Official Community Plan with tourism section
Strategy # 11	Maintain the Tourism Plan Status Report
Strategy # 13	Produce an annual tourism report (for industry and stakeholders)
Strategy # 14	Track sustainability strategy indicators
Strategy # 15	Track the marketing program

Strategy # 18	Enhance the Tourism Dawson Creek Resource Centre for tourism stakeholders and local organizations
Strategy # 22	Maintain Economic Impact Studies
Strategy # 24	Promote the enhanced tourism industry Resource Centre on the Tourism Dawson Creek web page distributing the URL link throughout all communications.
Strategy # 25	Support Pouce Coupe in utilizing the online Dawson Creek Resource Centre
Strategy # 36	Expand product packaging and itinerary development
Strategy # 38	Establish industry training, standards, certification and professional development programming and encourage adoption of industry and government standards by tourism operators.
Strategy # 40	Establish tips for businesses on how to be more sustainable
Strategy # 43	Encourage expansion of accommodation standards recognition programs
Strategy # 46	Develop a “Tourism Friendly” business program
Strategy # 48	Target regional market potential
Strategy # 50	Expand cooperative marketing programs with Pouce Coupe and local businesses
Strategy # 52	Develop the image bank
Strategy # 58	Display Equipment – Utilizing the branding artwork, maintain banners and display equipment for local events, trade, travel and consumer shows.
Strategy # 60	Enhance the official tourism website for Dawson Creek, BC Canada. http://www.tourismdawsoncreek.com/index.php
Strategy # 61	Internet Marketing – Establish and maintain a website optimization and web marketing program.

6 APPENDICES

6.1 Appendix A: Summary Vision and Goals – Village of Pouce Coupe Tourism Plan

Community Vision Statement Village of Pouce Coupe

Currently there is no community vision statement in the Official Community Plan for the Village of Pouce Coupe Bylaw # 652, 1993.

Draft Tourism Vision Statement for Village of Pouce Coupe

During the planning session held April 15, 2009, participants were asked to list key words and phrases that would be distilled to form a vision statement for tourism. The following draft statement is intended for review and revisions by Pouce Coupe.

The Village of Pouce Coupe encourages and welcomes visitors to our small visitor friendly community, which, as one of the original settlements in the South Peace Region, celebrates a rich history, culture, and spirit.

Tourism Goals

- 1) To diversify the local economy by enhancing and expanding the tourism industry as a way of increasing the tax base, jobs and income available to residents;
- 2) To enhance community appeal for visitors by attracting infrastructure investments through local, regional, provincial, national and private sources;
- 3) To support business and industry development that complements and strengthens products and attractions of most appeal to visitor markets;
- 4) To encourage tourism operators to work cooperatively and in collaboration with community stakeholders to leverage resources wherever possible; and
- 5) To maintain a tourism management function through contracting Tourism Dawson Creek to administer tourism to ensure leadership, organizational capacity, funding and communications that support tourism stakeholders and the community in achieving the vision for tourism.

6.2 Appendix B: Summary Vision and Goals – Tourism Dawson Creek Tourism Plan

Community Vision Statement

Dawson Creek will be a visionary community that works together for innovative social, cultural, economic and environmental vitality.

Proposed Community Tourism Vision Statement

The tourism industry in the City of Dawson Creek will be a catalyst for economic sustainability while increasing social, environmental and cultural awareness and elevating the quality of life for residents while providing a world-class visitor experience to our visitors.

Vision and Mission Statements for Tourism Dawson Creek

Vision Statement

That Tourism Dawson Creek be recognized as a provincial leader and innovator in destination development and marketing while leading the City of Dawson Creek towards sustainable economic growth and development utilizing the tourism industry.

EnCana Event Centre Vision and Mission Statement

Vision

Recognize the EnCana Events Centre as the premier entertainment facility in the entire British Columbia and Alberta Peace Region while leading the City of Dawson Creek towards increased quality of life and sustainable social and economic growth by utilizing the EnCana Events Centre as its catalyst.

Mission

To increase the number of entertainment opportunities for the citizens of the Peace Region while striving to meet and exceed the City of Dawson Creek's and our customers' expectations.

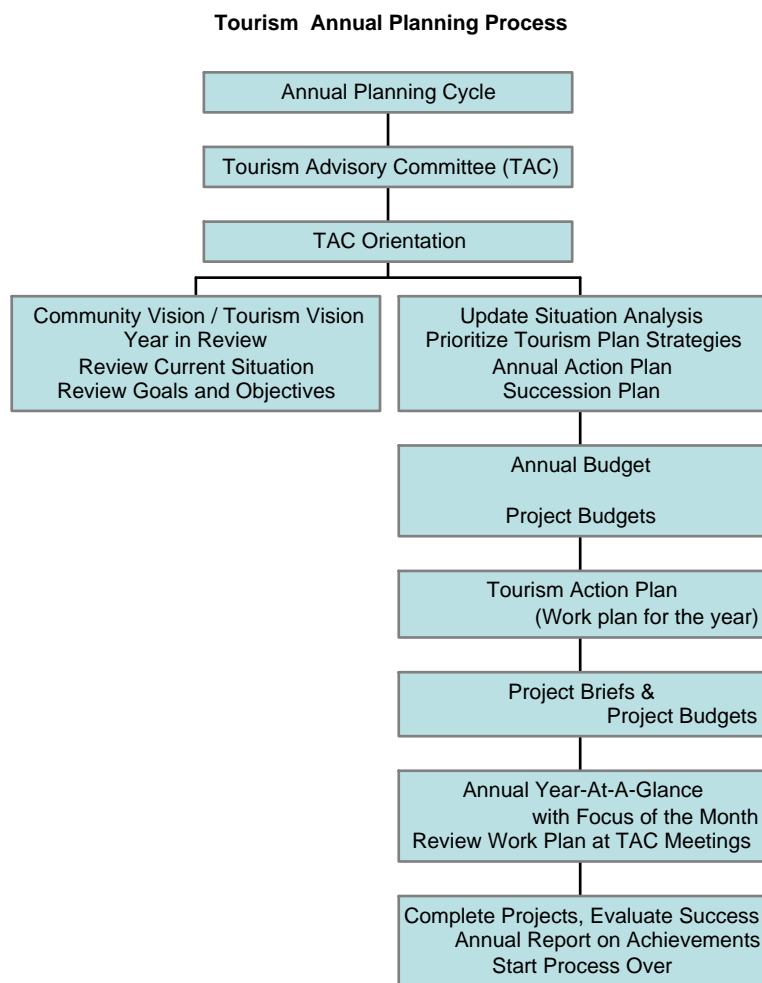
Goals

The following goals are intended to be included in a dedicated tourism section for the next update of the City of Dawson Creek Official Community Plan.

Tourism Goals

- 1) Management and Planning, Information Management and Research and Communications: To sustain an effective tourism management function to ensure leadership, organizational capacity, adequate funding, research-based planning and open communications that support tourism stakeholders and the community in achieving the vision for tourism while integrating sustainability into every day decision-making;
- 2) Destination Development: To deliver a quality visitor experience by enhancing destination development and appeal for visitors through attracting infrastructure investments from local, regional, provincial, national and private sources while integrating sustainability into every day decision-making;
- 3) Product Development: To diversify the local economy through strategic expansion of the tourism industry as a way of expanding the tax base, and increasing jobs and income available to residents while balancing community values while integrating sustainability into every day decision-making;
- 4) Business and Industry Development: As an integral element of industry growth, to foster business and industry development that complements and strengthens products and attractions of most appeal to visitor markets and cultivates a welcoming community while integrating sustainability into every day decision-making; and
- 5) Marketing: To encourage tourism operators to consistently and strategically market the area to target markets by working cooperatively and in collaboration with community stakeholders to leverage resources wherever possible in the community while integrating sustainability into every day decision-making;
- 6) Visitor Services: To maintain the visitor services programming to integrate with increased tourism activity, providing a seamless experience for the visitor.
- 7) Visitor Experience: To develop a strategy that focuses on providing exceptional experiences and excellent value to extend the stay and increase visitation and recommendations that will position Dawson Creek as a preferred destination. The strategy will address the pre, core and post visitor experience and will guide tourism stakeholders in delivery of an exceptional and consistent message while integrating sustainability into every day decision-making.

6.3 Appendix C: Tourism Annual Planning Cycle



6.4 Appendix D: Tourism Budget Template

The following budget template is to summarize all tourism-related initiatives from the tourism plan. Budget templates with a breakout for each line item attached are supplied in Excel format through *Community Tourism Foundations*.

Tourism Budget Summary

Last Update:

Sources of Revenue	Jan-Dec YR	Jan-Dec YR	Jan-Dec YR	TOTAL
Carry forward from previous year (multiple sources)	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Local Government	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Regional Government	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Provincial Program: Tourism BC Community Tourism Opportunities	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Provincial Program: UBCM phase 1	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Provincial Program: UBCM phase 2	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Provincial Program: Other	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Additional Hotel Room Tax (AHRT)	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Economic Development / Tourism Division	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Cooperative marketing with stakeholders	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Visitor Centre: Fee For Service (sources)	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Other:	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Other:	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Other:	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Other:	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Other:	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Other:	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Total Funds	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -

Tourism Expenses	Jan-Dec YR	Jan-Dec YR	Jan-Dec YR	TOTAL
Infrastructure Development	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Product Development	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Information Management and Research	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Industry and Professional Development	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Branding, Promotional Tools and Materials	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Integrated Promotional Mix (Marketing)	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Visitor Services (Visitor Centre)	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Administration / Travel / Office / Meetings	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Project Management / Contractors	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Other:	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Other:	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Total Costs	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -

Reconciliation of Budget	Jan-Dec	Jan-Dec	Jan-Dec	TOTAL
Total Revenue All Sources	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Total Costs All Sources	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Balance	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -

Note: Visitor Centre budget separate

6.5 Appendix E: Additional Hotel Room Tax Information

Source: Government of BC, Ministry of Finance <http://www.gov.bc.ca/fin/>

1 ELIGIBLE ENTITIES

1.1 Municipalities and Regional Districts

1.2 The Hotel Room Tax Act also allows other eligible entities, as prescribed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council, to apply for the **Additional Hotel Room Tax (AHRT)** levied on their behalf.

Any public body, other than a municipality or regional district, interested in implementing the AHRT in a specific area should contact the Director of Tax Policy Branch, Ministry of Finance (Finance), PO Box 9469, Stn Prov Govt, Victoria, British Columbia V8W 9V8. The remainder of this document refers to municipalities and regional districts, but requirements and conditions also apply to other eligible entities.

2 PURPOSE OF TAX

The additional tax is intended to assist municipalities and regional districts in funding tourism activities (particularly tourism promotion, and the financing and operation of new tourism facilities), which have the joint support of the municipalities or regional districts and tourism industry in the applicant's geographic area. The tax funds are not intended to replace existing sources of funding for tourism in a community nor are they generally intended to fund existing facilities unless significant upgrading to the facilities takes place, although this may be considered in certain circumstances.

3 ENABLING LEGISLATION FOR THE ADDITIONAL TAX

Section 3 of the Hotel Room Tax Act enables collection of an additional room tax of up to 2% on sales of accommodation in designated areas of the province. The following information is provided for municipalities, regional districts, and others who may be interested in this tax.

4 IMPLEMENTATION OF TAX

Municipalities and regional districts may request that the province levy, on their behalf, an additional tax on accommodation sold within their jurisdiction, with the funds collected being committed to a specific purpose. The tax may be levied in the whole municipality or regional district, or a prescribed area within the boundaries of the municipality or regional district.

This tax is collected by the Province through the existing hotel room tax collection system run by the Ministry of Small Business and Revenue. The tax collected is then remitted to the municipality/regional district on a monthly basis. The branch charges the municipality/regional district a collection fee to recover the additional costs incurred for collection of the tax and the distribution of the collected funds to the municipality/regional district.

The AHRT will be implemented for a period of 5 years. In order to extend the tax for an additional 5-year period, a municipality, regional district or other eligible entity must re-apply to Finance. All applications are subject to the same requirements. There is no restriction on the number of times a municipality, regional district or other eligible entity can extend its AHRT.

Administration of the collected tax funds may be conducted by the municipality or regional district or through the establishment of a local organization, such as Tourism Vancouver for example.

5 APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

AHRT applications must provide no less than all of the following information:

- 5.1** Rate of the proposed tax up to a maximum of 2%.
- 5.2** Municipality, regional district or other specific geographical area within a municipality or regional district to which the proposed tax will apply.
- 5.3** Desired effective date for implementing the new tax, which allows for the lead time required to implement the tax.
- 5.4** How the revenue from the tax will be administered. Whether the applicant proposes to administer the revenue directly or whether an alternative local organization (for example, Tourism Vancouver) is the proposed administrator.
- 5.5** A business plan is an integral part of the application and must describe the proposed use of funds. It must also provide evidence that the use of the requested funds will complement (not duplicate) existing tourism initiatives and that they are consistent with other regional and provincial industry initiatives.

Illustration of how the proposed use of the funds will contribute to an overall increase in tourism revenue.

- 5.6** Evidence that the AHRT tax funds are incremental to existing sources of funds. They should not replace existing sources of tourism funding in a community.
- 5.7** Note any additional funding sources that will be available to support the business plan, and the activities these sources will fund. Preferred consideration will be given to projects that do not solely rely on the additional tax.
- 5.8** The municipality or regional district must pass a bylaw that requests the province to levy the AHRT on its behalf, and provide a copy of the bylaw with its application. The bylaw should contain the following information:
 - Rate of tax to be imposed;
 - Geographic area in which the additional tax will apply; that is, whether it will apply in the entire municipality or regional district or in a smaller area;

- Purpose for the funds; and desired effective date of the new tax, recognizing that some lead time will be necessary to implement the tax.

If the applicant is a regional district, it must provide evidence of its authority to use the funds for the intended purpose, either through letters patent or statutory authority.

- 5.9** The municipality or regional district must have consulted and have broad support for the application and business plan from the tourism industry in general and documented support from the local accommodation sector specifically. A lack of support for the application and business plan may lead to its rejection or a request that the business plan be revised.

The applicant must provide evidence that:

- The proposal has enough support from the accommodation sector to merit a review. The minimal support by the accommodation sector is 51% of the number of establishments that would collect the AHRT, and representation of at least 51% of the total number of rooms. Higher support from the accommodation sector will increase the likelihood that an application will receive approval, providing that all other requirements are met;
- If a municipality is applying, the regional district in which it is located has been consulted and whether the regional district supports or opposes the imposition of the AHRT;
- If a regional district is applying, the municipalities within the regional district agree with the additional tax being imposed in the regional district.

Note: In the case of a conflict between a regional district and a municipality about whether additional hotel room tax should be imposed in a particular area, priority will generally be given to the position of the municipality.

- 5.10** A current list of all accommodation establishments that would be subject to the AHRT and located within the specified geographic area must be provided. This will ensure that all accommodation operators within the jurisdiction can be contacted and issued tax return forms for submitting the tax.
- 5.11** Any additional information that you believe will support your application.
- 5.12** Applicants should consult with Tourism British Columbia to ensure that proposed spending in the business plan does not duplicate the agency's broader promotional programs.

6 ASSISTANCE WITH APPLICATION

Before submitting a formal application, municipalities and regional districts may wish to consult with the Director of Tax Policy Branch.

7 REVIEW OF APPLICATIONS

Applications should be submitted to the Minister of Finance, PO Box 9048 Stn Prov Govt, Victoria, British Columbia V8W 9E2. The Ministry of Tourism, Sports and the Arts (MTSA) and Finance will review the applications and make recommendations to Cabinet. Please note that the applicant may be asked to provide additional information.

An applicant can contact the Director of Tax Policy Branch for an update on the status of its application.

8 UPON APPROVAL OF APPLICATION

An Order in Council will be prepared for the Lieutenant Governor in Council to authorize the government to collect the AHRT on behalf of the applicant. The applicant will be informed when the Order in Council is passed. As well, the Consumer Taxation Branch will provide information on the procedures for collecting the tax to all accommodation establishments required to collect the tax.

9 ANNUAL REVIEW

Under the terms of the *Hotel Room Tax Act*, agencies, i.e., municipality, regional district or other eligible entities that have the AHRT in place, are required to annually submit audited documentation to the Minister of Finance. The document must show the disposition of all funds collected and contain a statement that the AHRT funds were used for the purposes originally approved and are consistent with the business plan.

Financial reporting should be consistent with the municipality or regional district's business plan. The implementation of the business plan will be monitored in conjunction with the audited financial statements.

If at any time a municipality or regional district wishes to change the approved uses of the AHRT, a new business plan must be submitted to the Minister of Finance for approval. This new business plan must be reviewed by the local tourism industry, primarily the accommodation sector, and the results submitted with the revised plan. A lack of support for the new business plan may result in its rejection or a request for revisions to the plan.

Officials of Finance and MTSA will review the annual report for compliance. Should a municipality or regional district be found to be in non-compliance with these requirements, Finance and MTSA will investigate and seek to resolve outstanding issues. Failing this, the parties will recommend to the Minister of Finance, and the Minister of Tourism, Sports and the Arts whether the AHRT should be discontinued in that municipality or regional district.

10 FURTHER INFORMATION

For further information, please contact the Director of Tax Policy Branch, Ministry of Finance, PO Box 9469, Stn Prov Govt, Victoria, British Columbia V8W 9V8.

Information on the administration of the *Hotel Room Tax Act* may be obtained by contacting Customer Service and Information Branch, Ministry of Small Business and Revenue, PO Box 9442, Stn Prov Govt, Victoria, British Columbia V8W 9V4.

6.6 Appendix F: Tourism Dawson Creek Online Resource Centre Content

The following resources are supplied to assist with refinement of the content of the online Resource Centre. The resources of Tourism BC,⁸⁷ the Canadian Tourism Commission,⁸⁸ Aboriginal Tourism Association of BC⁸⁹ and other senior government agencies should be compiled and made available to local operators. In addition to tourism organizations, sector groups and organizations are also good sources for information. All existing plans, studies, visitor statistics and subsequent trend analysis should be compiled and posted in the industry resource section of the tourism website for easy access by users and maintenance by the host organization. The Situation Analysis and the Supplementary Situation Analysis identified the existing reports and market sectors for posting on the site.

a. Research⁹⁰

Primary Research

Existing primary research for visitor profiling of Dawson Creek includes the Tourism BC Visitor Centre Network program statistics. Trend analysis from this source was presented in the Situation Analysis. Other research includes the Northern Rockies Alaska Highway Visitor Study (2005), the Motivations of RV Travel, and the Northern Rockies Value of Tourism study. In 2009, Tourism Dawson Creek is completing a Dawson Creek Value of Tourism Study. Economic Impact Studies for the Northern BC Winter Games and Fall Fair Rodeo have also been conducted by Tourism Dawson Creek.

Future projects will include Economic Impact studies on the South Peace Multiplex facility, and a revision of the Alaska Highway Visitor Study in close collaboration with the North to Alaska program and our Northern BC Tourism, Yukon and Alaska partners.

Secondary Research

Tourism BC provides a variety of information on its corporate website. Research sections include Tourism Statistics, Regional Profiles/Research, Market Profiles /Research, Sector/Activity Research, TAMS (Travel Activities and Motivations Study), BC Visitor Study and Resources for Researchers.

The **Regional Profile** for Northern BC summarizes regional data and compares it to provincial statistics when possible. Type of information presented includes visitor volume indicators from Visitor Centres, accommodation type and capacity, room revenue, transportation statistics, an overview of regional tourism products and local demographic

⁸⁷ <http://www.tourismbc.com/index.asp?id=1>

⁸⁸ <http://www.corporate.canada.travel/en/ca/>

⁸⁹ <http://www.aboriginalbc.com/corporate/>

⁹⁰ <http://www.tourismbc.com/Research.aspx>

information. Note: This profile was presented in the Situation Analysis and can be found online with other Northern BC research at:

<http://www.tourismbc.com/Research/ResearchByRegion/NorthernBC.aspx>

Research Resolutions & Consulting was commissioned to examine characteristics of British Columbia's key North American urban markets by activity group. Summaries of current and projected market size (to 2025) and demographic characteristics are reported for each major urban market and activity group. The reports are based on the *Travel Activities and Motivations Study (TAMS)*, which was led by the province of Ontario with partner agencies across the country, including Tourism British Columbia. There are two full reports: one for Canada and one for the United States. For each, there is access to the full report, the executive summary or the individual activity groups.⁹¹

The 2006 Travel Activities and Motivations Survey (TAMS) was a comprehensive survey of North American households designed to examine the travel habits, activities and behaviours of Canadians and Americans over the past two-year period. It collected information on destination choices (where respondents had travelled on overnight trips in the past two years) and trip activities (types of activities engaged in on overnight trips during the past two years) as well as travel motivations and planning behaviours.

<http://www.tourismbc.com/Research/TravelMotivations.aspx>

Tourism BC provides market profiles at:

<http://www.tourismbc.com/Research/ResearchByMarket.aspx>

Tourism BC provides sector activity profiles at:

<http://www.tourismbc.com/Research/ResearchbyActivity.aspx>

The *British Columbia Visitor Study* conducted in 1995/96 provided profiles of visitors throughout all regions in BC. Although the data is now dated, it was a primary source of information for many years. It is of value for historical analysis and survey design.

The **Value of Visitor Centre** reports provide local visitor profiles in addition to their primary objective of measuring the impact of the VC on traveller behaviour and to determine the economic benefit of the VC. Tourism BC has a limited intake for this type of study and communities may have to contribute to the study costs.

<http://www.tourismbc.com/Research/ResearchByRegion/ValueofVC.aspx>

b. **Canadian Tourism Commission**⁹²

The Canadian Tourism Commission (CTC) provides a resource section on its industry website. Sections include Industry Update, Research and Statistics, Media Centre, CTC News, Markets, Brand toolkit for partners, Publications and Image Gallery.

The CTC has developed the “Experiences ToolKit”. Download this resource from

⁹¹ Tourism BC

⁹² http://www.corporate.canada.travel/en/ca/index.html?sa_campaign=domains/un/www.canadatourism.com/home

http://www.corporate.canada.travel/en/ca/markets_products/products/product_development/product_development.html

The CTC provides various national reports by market and sector, which can be found at http://www.corporate.canada.travel/en/ca/research_statistics/index.html and http://www.corporate.canada.travel/en/ca/research_statistics/statsFigures/index.html

Overseas consumer market research, led by the Canadian Tourism Commission, is an ongoing initiative of several Canadian tourism-related associations including Tourism British Columbia. Consumer market research examines the characteristics, motivations and planning habits of the long-haul pleasure travellers of an international market through interviews with that market segment. The research also examines the awareness of Canada, potential of the market, and Canada's competitive analysis as a destination.

Resources for media can be found at: <http://mediacentre.canada.travel/>

c. Provincial Government⁹³

The Province of BC conducted a series of **Tourism Opportunity Studies (TOS)**, which is an information tool that can be used to identify, develop and promote appropriate, sustainable tourism development opportunities for a region. The studies are useful tools for business people, governments and local communities. Market and community profile information is included in the studies. <http://ilmbwww.gov.bc.ca/cis/initiatives/tourism/tos/index.html>

The Dawson Creek TOS was noted in the Situation Analysis and can be found online at: http://ilmbwww.gov.bc.ca/cis/initiatives/tourism/tos/Dawson_Creek/DC_TOS_Report_fulldoc.pdf

d. Other sources for tourism information and resources include:

2010 Commerce Centre <http://www.2010commercecentre.gov.bc.ca/>

2010 Legacies Now <http://www.2010legaciesnow.com/>

Aboriginal Tourism Association of British Columbia <http://www.aboriginalbc.com/>

BC Bed & Breakfast Innkeepers Guild
<http://www.bccanada.com/associations/bcinnkeepers/index2.html>

BC Centre for Non-Profit Development <http://www.bccnprd.ca/home>

BC Council of Tourism Associations (COTA) <http://www.cotabc.com/>

BC Fishing Resorts & Outfitters Association <http://www.bcfroa.ca/>

BC Lodging and Campgrounds Association <http://www.bclca.com/>

BC Restaurant and Foodservices Association <http://www.bcrfa.com/Home/home/Home>

BC Stats – Tourism Sector Monitor http://www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/pubs/pr_tour.asp

⁹³ <http://www.gov.bc.ca/bvprd/bc/home.do>

BC Wilderness Tourism Association <http://www.wilderness-tourism.bc.ca/>

BC and Yukon Hotel Association <http://www.bcyha.com/>

Civic Info BC <http://www.civicinfo.bc.ca/index.asp>

Discover Tourism – Human Resources
http://www.discovertourism.ca/page_em.aspx?id=em_home.htm

Economic Development Association of BC <http://www.edabc.com/>

Guide Outfitters Association of BC <http://www.goabc.org/>

Go2 <http://www.go2hr.ca/>

HeliCat Canada <http://www.helicatcanada.com/>

Human Resources and Social Development Canada <http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/en/home.shtml>

Link BC (Formally BC Centre for Tourism Leadership and Innovation) <http://linkbc.ca/main/>

Ministry of Tourism, Culture and the Arts <http://www.tsa.gov.bc.ca/tourism/>

Rural BC <http://www.ruralbc.gov.bc.ca/>

Small Business BC <http://www.smallbusinessbc.ca/index.php>

Statistics Canada <http://www.statcan.ca/start.html> Community Profiles
<http://www12.statcan.ca/census-recensement/2006/dp-pd/prof/92-591/index.cfm?Lang=E>

Sport Fishing Institute of BC <http://www.sportfishing.bc.ca/>

Tourism BC – Business and Community Programs
<http://www.tourismbc.com/IndustryPrograms/BuildingAndGrowingYourBusiness.aspx>

2010 Legacies Now Sport Tourism Partnership
http://www.2010legaciesnow.com/sport_tourism/

Tourism Industry Association of Canada (TIAC)
<http://www.tiac-aitc.ca/english/welcome.asp>

Union of BC Municipalities <http://www.civinet.bc.ca/siteengine/activepage.asp>

Website statistics by country <http://www.newmediatrendwatch.com/markets-by-country>

Canada website statistics <http://www.newmediatrendwatch.com/markets-by-country/11-long-haul/45-canada>

Small Business Resources

Small Business BC

Resources include books, seminars and events, employment resources, templates and checklists.

Home <http://www.smallbusinessbc.ca/index.php>

Marketing Guide <http://www.smallbusinessbc.ca/bizstart-marketGuide.php>

Promotional Ideas <http://www.smallbusinessbc.ca/bizstart-marketResearchPromo.php>

Resource Centre for Small Business – Ministry of Small Business and Revenue

<http://www.sbr.gov.bc.ca/resource-centre/index.htm>

Community Futures of British Columbia <http://www.communityfutures.ca/provincial/bc/>

All Business <http://www.allbusiness.com/>

BC Centre for Non-Profit Development

<http://www.communityfutures.ca/provincial/bc/>

BC Chamber of Commerce

<http://www.bcchamber.org/>

6.7 Appendix G: Tourism BC Export Ready Criteria

The following criteria are used by Tourism British Columbia when determining if a supplier is ready to work with Tourism BC in offering “export ready” product to international markets:

Suppliers Must:

- Be in business at least one year, with a proven track record for safe and professional operation.
- Demonstrate an adequate budget and marketing plan that includes international tour operators.
- Understand the roles played by receptive tour operators (RTOs), tour operators/travel wholesalers, and retail travel agents. This includes an understanding of rack or retail pricing, agent commissions and wholesale net rates and client relationships at each level.
- Be willing to include receptive tour operators in your marketing and sales plan, and implement a regular sales call program directed toward these operators.
- Be willing to provide contracted wholesale net rates to receptive tour operators. As a general guideline, requirements are: 15% off the retail price for day activities and transportation and 20-30% off retail pricing for accommodations (higher discounts are common for volume production).
- Honour the contracted net rates; no price changes before the expiry of the contracted agreement.
- Provide detailed pricing and program information to tour operators and receptive operators at least one year in advance of selling season, i.e. May 1999 for the summer/fall 2000 season.
- Be prepared to communicate and accept reservations by telephone, fax and/or email. Provide same-day confirmation of booking arrangements.
- Set up billing arrangements with the operator, agency or receptive tour operator. Accept client vouchers as confirmation of payment for reservations.

- Determine business priorities in terms of group or FIT business. If you plan to pursue group business, consider access by tour buses, parking/turnaround areas, washroom facilities, etc. Determine your maximum group size.
- Carry adequate insurance (minimum \$3 million liability insurance for adventure product suppliers is recommended). Discuss this with your receptive operator (sometimes they can add suppliers to their existing policies at nominal cost).
- Provide support (free or reduced rates) for international media and travel trade familiarization tours.

In addition to the above, the following should be considered “next steps” for consideration as business and market presence expands:

- Consider attending travel trade shows involving international buyers, either in North America or overseas.
- Expand the sales call program to include overseas contacts as well as Canada-based receptive operators.
- Be prepared to provide tour operators and media with 35mm slide, CD ROM or standard computer format images of the product or operation, for use in brochures, promotions and editorials.
- Consider producing video footage of product or operation for promotional and training purposes.
- Consider development of a website offering information on your product.
- Be prepared to adapt to uniqueness of certain overseas markets. Flexibility may be required with regard to last-minute bookings and changes.
- Consider hiring frontline staff who speak the language of the markets you are interested in pursuing.

6.8 Appendix H: Draft Dawson Creek Tourism Media Profile

Dawson Creek Tourism Media Profile	
Publication / Network	
Media Type: (newspaper, magazine, travel show, TV, radio, website, business, lifestyle, travel)	
Visit dates	
Media names and title crew names	
No. in party	
Key Contact Person (address, phone, fax, email, website)	
Feature Title	
Feature Content / Interest	
Feature Length	
Airdate / Publication date	
Market area / Demographics	
Circulation / Audience size	
Advertising Value (CAD\$)	
Coverage for Dawson Creek (i.e. Toll-free number and official tourism website)	
If freelance, please advise if you are on assignment (Attach assignment letter)	
Specific Requirements or Specific Services Requested	

Return to Tourism Organization – Insert Contact Information

6.9 Appendix I: Website Industry Best Practices

Website technology utilizes open source content management software, allowing the user to access the site over the Internet through security passwords. This allows authorized users to change the content without the cost of third-party web masters. In addition, the website function must include an integrated database. This combination of features is the single most efficient and effective solution.

The online database is an integrated component of the content management system software and as such creates a powerful system to manage the content, communications and reports for the host organization.

The database can be classified for multiple outputs such as online reports, exportable raw data in Excel format, page displays (selected criteria of sub-categories) throughout the website (e.g. accommodation businesses on the accommodation page) and email communications. A variety of major categories is required, such as businesses in the study area further defined by business type, sub-type, tourism organization stakeholder status, services, amenities, etc.; services or organizations (e.g. medical services); car/RV repair, etc.; media contacts; industry contacts; and, in the future, consumer tracking from initial visitor inquiries with permission to contact in the future.

Maintaining the product inventory of local businesses will be essential in assisting with marketing, partnerships, product development, communications and packaging. The contact list of operators supports the internal communication system that distributes information, as well as allowing the ability to conduct primary research of the local industry. In addition, media, suppliers and industry contacts would also form part of the database.

Features include industry partners having online access through a log-in component for the purposes of data maintenance, receiving communications, news, and participation in marketing programs. It will also allow those undertaking travel planning, and visitors already in the region, to conveniently plan their stay. A robust database system will allow users to search and explore their travel options by any number of dimensions. Destination visitors will most likely want to view information by activity, whereas visitors en route to other destinations are more likely to be interested in information that is grouped geographically by specific service centres along highways. Accommodation, products, activities, towns, parks, itineraries and circle tours could all be tailored according to visitor needs and expectations.

The approach for design, navigation and content should be influenced by consumer web usage statistics, not by personal opinion. This will ensure the website will create a competitive advantage over other websites with similar or competing content. Engaging a tourism web marketing firm is critical at the initial stages of conceptual development to ensure key search words and web usage patterns are considered. As well, a competitive analysis of key sites will determine how your website will stand out.

Key Steps

- a. Identify key functions required by the system to serve both visitor needs and administrative support for users of the site. (Refer to list in the next section.)
- b. Develop a Content Outline to summarize the key areas that need to be included in the site. (Refer to list in the next section.)
- c. Develop a Creative Brief that summarizes the key products, markets and unique selling features and competitive environment of the study area. (Refer to the Situation Analysis.)
- d. Develop an Expression of Interest or Request for Proposal process for qualified web development firms and a web marketing firm.
- e. Hire professionals who have a thorough understanding of tourism and understand the unique aspects of the regional visitor experience and the current stage of destination development to create the website concept, database, communication system, copy, graphic design, and supply commercial-grade software capabilities and production ability to achieve the objectives for the end product. Website marketing for the initial stage of web development differs from the launch of the site and subsequent promotional tactics.
- f. Review existing websites for best practices.
- g. Develop the structure, site map and content outline.
- h. Develop the database.
- i. Produce content (copywriting, editing, image selection, graphics).
- j. Incorporate the community brand or a consistent design theme in the design.
- k. Design and populate the database.
- l. Populate the site.
- m. Develop test site online.
- n. Launch website.
- o. Launch website marketing and Search Engine Optimization programs.
- p. Maintain website updates by set schedule classified by the site map sections.

Evaluate the following industry standard key features for inclusion in the website.

- Advertising Module (optional /can be used as a design tool for editorial content, not just for advertising)
- Automatic notification of news information posted
- Automatic content display timer feature on any page or section of the website

- Availability Matrix (for accommodation and/or tours)
- Blog
- Broadcast email communication by select groups in both branded tourism organization newsletter header artwork and basic email messaging styles; tracking of email sent, encoded to prevent email address harvesting
- Broken link reporting
- Business Directory by category and feature page with summary description, display options and content management options
- Calendar of Events module
- Category and sub-category assignments to identify users or data records
- Content management features include ability to view, create and edit content and review before final posting to site (administrator function)
- Contact Us form
- Database for business directory for public display / user list for communications
- Design feature: ability to change colour schemes with existing artwork
- Email forwarding through domain name series, e.g. info@domainname.suffix to “any email address” – hosting service feature
- FAQ module
- File management system for digital documents (loading, sorting, describing, viewing by category and authorized users)
- Form set-up ability for gathering information or registering for events
- Forum option to allow identified users to communicate within a secure area (e.g. Tourism Advisory Committee)
- Hosting firm services (third-party or integrated with design firm / confirm off-site backup system)
- Image bank management system
- Licensing and software upgrading copyright fees and policy
- Log-in feature
- Maps (Google and custom, static or GIS link). Reference:
<http://www.sunshinecoastcanada.com/sunshine-coast/map.php>
- Management services for tourism organization stakeholder database
- Meta tags: ability to edit

- Navigation management features including full flexibility to add pages and sections to the site without additional service costs
- News section (module)
- Newsletter branded (integrated with the website and associated with database, not third-party software, avoiding the need to maintain multiple lists) and archive capability (sample at: <http://www.bellacoola.ca/newsletter/?action=view&nid=1>)
- Online database with multi-layer categories, report functions and export capability
- Online survey capability (polling vs. third-party software or use Survey Monkey <http://www.surveymonkey.com/> and link back to local web page)
- Online system with access to the website domain via the Internet 24/7
- Open source code
- Page set-up (ability to create new pages and sections with timer or restricted view feature)
- Press-release module
- Printer-friendly page outputs
- Reservations capability (accommodation and/or tours)
- RSS Feed
- Search capabilities (word search, accommodation by type/cost/feature, etc., PDF files)
- Search Engine Optimization (design features, word use, word placement features, etc.). To “optimize” a website means to build it so that it will be discovered by search engines, and to design each page in such a way that the site’s contents will be thoroughly mapped and indexed to key words that potential customers employ when seeking your products or services. Inquire as to services your provider can supply or consider a third-party firm.
- Security features allowing controlled access to viewing and updating the site and protection of access to the site by unauthorized users
- Site map
- Slide show capability (dial-up considerations and hi-speed options)
- Standards-compliant code that can validate
- Tracking and Evaluation – Determine whether the system has its own tracking of page usage and reports vs. Google Analytics or your hosting firm’s report features
- Unlimited categories for defining a registered user on the system

- User database for inventory, business links displayed on pages throughout the site, email communications, list displays by category and authorization for viewing select areas of the site
- User database log-in feature (for users to update their feature page and to view secure areas)
- Virtual Tours
- Weather icon with link to forecast
- Website design, content and domain owned and operated by the tourism organization or “client”

Other features will be determined based on consultation with the web firm(s), which will depend on programming capability, software selection and advances in technology.

Evaluate the following industry standard key sections for inclusion in the website content outline.

Main navigation and the site plan can be developed from the following list. Each main item has its own page with content written for the awareness stage in the purchase cycle. Detailed pages follow as a sub-set of the main category. Break out each main category based on the classifications of products and services that are market ready.

- Home page (text driven with links based on SEO⁹⁴ strategy)
- About Us – Tourism organization or host organization(s) if community cooperative
- Tourism Industry (Industry support/resource centre, database and email communications/industry newsletter)
- Chamber of Commerce (dedicated sections for Chamber use or link)
- Economic Development (dedicated sections for economic development or link)
- Local and Regional Government (dedicated sections for local government(s) or link)
- Media
- Disclaimer
- Copyright
- Privacy Policy
- About Community Name or Study Area
- Accommodations (database-driven search feature, availability matrix and/or reservations system booking)
- Adventure
- Blog
- Business Directory
- Contact Us
- Events and Festivals
- FAQ
- Food and Beverage
- Getting Here / Getting Around (access, transportation, circle tours, routes and itineraries)

⁹⁴ Search Engine Optimization

- Health and Wellness (if applicable)
- Heritage, Arts, Culture (if applicable)
- Maps
- News
- Parks and Trails
- Photo Gallery
- Search
- Services
- Site Map
- Sports (if applicable)
- Things To Do
 - Summer
 - Winter
- Tours and Rentals
- Visitor Centre
- Weather Link

Web Marketing

Resources for industry standards for web marketing can be found online at the E-Marketing Associations <http://www.emarketingassociation.com/>, the Canadian Marketing Association <http://www.the-cma.org/?WCE=C=47%7CK=224875>, Association of Internet Marketing and Sales <http://www.aimscanada.com/> and Canadian tourism e-marketing specialists, A Couple of Chicks <http://www.acoupleofchicks.com/> who will soon be releasing their book “Online Marketing Revealed.”

Web marketing trends worldwide can be reviewed at:
<http://www.newmediatrendwatch.com/markets-by-country>

6.10 Appendix J: Situation Analysis and Tourism Plan Contacts

The following contacts formed part of the tourism planning process by attending meetings, workshops, interviewed by the Tourism BC Facilitator or the final tourism plan presentation. WG indicates those who were part of the Working Group.

First Name	Last Name	Association/Affiliation	WG
Anne	Haycock	South Peace Historical Society	Yes
April	Moi	Northern BC Tourism, Agent Tourism BC	
Brent	Neuman	City of Dawson Creek	
Bud	Powell	City of Dawson Creek	Yes
Carol	Frost	Pouce Coupe Museum	Yes
Caterina	Papadakos	Manager, Community Partnerships, Tourism British Columbia	
Chin	Hong	Days Inn	Yes
Christabelle	Kux-Kardos	Village of Pouce Coupe	Yes
Colleen	Groat	Pouce Coupe Museum	
Darcy	Dober	Mr. Mikes Westcoast Grill	Yes
David	Roch	Dawson Creek and District Chamber of Commerce	
Deb	Chaffee	Dawson Creek Art Gallery	Yes
Dolly	Fynn	Pouce Coupe Seniors	Yes
Dustin	Bodnyark	Tourism Dawson Creek	Yes
Ellen	Correa	Dawson Creek Art Gallery	Yes
Gerry	Clare	South Peace Historical Society	
Heather	Newman	The Granaries on Bear Mountain B&B	Yes
James	Bridges	Dawson Creek and District Chamber of Commerce	Yes
Janine	Cumberland	Dawson Creek Downtown Merchants Association	
Joe	Simons	Pomeroy Inn / Best Western	Yes
John	Bass	Intrinsic Tourism Solutions	
Judy	Kuckaruk	Foorprint Management Systems	Yes
Kelsey	Milne	Tourism Dawson Creek-Alaska Highway House	
Keltie	Durrell	Tourism Dawson Creek	Yes
Lyman	Clark	Mayor, Village of Pouce Coupe	Yes
Marilyn	Belak	City of Dawson Creek	
Mike	Bernier	Mayor, City of Dawson Creek	Yes
Peter	Thomas	CAO, Village of Pouce Coupe	Yes
Richard	Powell	School District #59	
Ryan	MacIvor	General Manager, EnCana Events Centre Global Spectrum	Yes
Sadie	Lukan	Nawichan Friendship Centre	Yes
Simone	Carlylse-Smith	Tourism BC Facilitator	
Stephanie	Oestreich	Dawson Creek and District Chamber of Commerce	Yes
Sue	Kenny	Community Futures / City of Dawson Creek	Yes
Valerie	Gilson	Peace Energy Cooperative	Yes
Wayne	Hiebert	Peace River Regional District	Yes