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**Going for bold: Destination Think to launch revamped Campbell River tourism strategy**

New tourism management is set to launch innovative, leading edge digital marketing and in-person service for Campbell River visitors.

Destination Think, an industry leader in destination marketing based out of Vancouver, will launch the new tourism strategy and marketing plan and manage visitor services on behalf of the City of Campbell River and in association with the local Tourism Advisory Committee.

*“The City received several quality proposals to provide tourism services. Three were shortlisted to present to Council, and, after thorough review, Council selected Destination Think, a B.C. company that has local tourism expertise and worldwide reach,”* says Mayor Andy Adams.

Destination Think provides tourism services across Canada for Vernon, Langley, Richmond, Banff Lake Louise, Calgary, Montreal, Stratford and Destination BC as well as to international locations such as Gold Coast Tourism Australia, and clients in the UK, Europe and the United States.

*“Their plan includes a proven ability to work with local tourism advisory volunteers and set up staff teams to serve visitors, both out-and-about and in a visitor information centre,”* the Mayor adds. *“Their global knowledge of destination marketing is strongly based on digital techniques, which also achieves the goal we heard in community consultation of allocating 75 per cent of funding directly to marketing.”*

Remaining funding will be available to cover administration costs, including staffing, to deliver the tourism plan that was developed based on six months of extensive community consultation.

*“Campbell River has many remarkable experiences to offer, and we are looking forward to directly applying the most efficient and effective marketing methods from around the world in order to contribute to the City’s economy and quality of life,”* says Rodney Payne, CEO of Destination Think. *“Destination Think’s extensive use of modern, digital marketing techniques will help position Campbell River ahead of the curve – to showcase spectacular Campbell River as a destination of choice around the world.”*

In November 2016, the City invited submissions from qualified proponents to manage and operate visitor services and to promote local tourism-related businesses, attractions and events. Members of the new tourism advisory committee began their two-year term on Jan. 1, 2017.

*“With a long list of major events drawing visitors to Campbell River this year, the new committee, the new tourism management and the new hotel tax that took effect March 1, we can look forward to an even stronger tourism presence in a globally-competitive market,”* adds city manager Deborah Sargent. *“The five-year tourism strategy builds on the hard work and momentum established over the years to tell the compelling Campbell River story.”*

The new three per cent tax on room bookings will help fund local tourism marketing. Conservative estimates on annual funding generated through a local hotel tax paid by visiting guests is in the range of \$250,000. The City will continue to contribute \$250,000 annually for local tourism marketing, programs and projects.

This year, Campbell River will welcome the Association of Vancouver Island Coastal Communities and the Vancouver Island Sustainable Technology Association conferences as well as major events such as the BC Elders Gathering and Tribal Journeys hosted by the Wei Wai Kum and We Wai Kai First Nations.

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Contact: Deborah Sargent, City Manager

250-286-5740

Members of the new Tourism Advisory Committee are: Clint Buchholz, Harley Elias, Erin Neely, Wayne Nikolaisen, Tom Olsen, Carly Pereboom, Dean Prentice, Jonathan Shead and Sukhy Bains. Non-voting members include: Councillor Colleen Evans, Dave Hamilton representing the Chamber of Commerce and one person representing the following four organizations: Campbellton Neighbourhood Association, Downtown Heart of the City BIA, Pier Street Association and Willow Point BIA.