

# **Three-year Osoyoos Tourism Market Development plan**

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Destination Osoyoos has unveiled a major new three-year Tourism Market Development Plan for 2008 that sets bold new goals designed to increase tourism and make Osoyoos an even more popular year-round resort area for visitors from across Canada and around the world.

At a launch event held at the new Walnut Beach Resort today, local tourism, business and government leaders and TourismBC officials gathered as Destination Osoyoos CEO Glenn Mandziuk released the new document.

Mandziuk says the Plan, developed over the past year by TourismBC's Community Tourism Foundations® program, sets out goals and specific actions to boost area tourism with the more than \$200,000 per year now available generated by the new 2% Additional Hotel Room Tax which came into effect Dec. 1, 2007.

"This is really cause for celebration," Mandziuk says. "This new plan positions Osoyoos extraordinarily well because it complements our community's Resort Development Strategy and because of the overwhelming support for the Plan from the local tourism industry and government." Osoyoos Town Council recently gave its support to the document.

Local resort owner/operator Ron Stephens, chairman of OHMO, says, "We're definitely on the right track, prioritizing a number of the things we want to get done in Osoyoos. The Plan has lots of good potential and I'm pleased with it." Stephens is also head of the local Tourism Advisory Committee (TAC) which will work jointly with Destination Osoyoos on overseeing the projects outlined in the new Plan.

Osoyoos has a long history as a tourism and vacation spot. The town now has 1,017 hotel and motel rooms, and about 350,000 visitors come each year. Direct visitor spending is estimated at \$72 million. About 55 per cent of the visitors are from within B.C., 27 per cent are from the rest of Canada, seven per cent are from the U.S., and 10 per cent are from Europe.

By 2010 the Plan aims to boost the number of annual visitors by seven per cent - or 24,500 - and to hike total visitor spending by 10 per cent - or \$7.2 million.

"Osoyoos is a really good example of private/public partnerships," says Tourism BC's Jennifer Houiellebecq, the project's facilitator.

Mandziuk notes that in addition to helping with the development of the Plan, the Community Tourism Foundations® program will also contribute \$50,000 over the next three years to help Osoyoos implement it.

The new Plan calls for initiatives during 2008 in four main categories: Growing Tourism Revenue through External Marketing; Strengthening the Visitor Experience; Maintaining a Market-Focused Industry; and, Strengthening Internal Communications.

Among the dozens of planned initiatives are:

- Building awareness of the new brand: 'Osoyoos - Canada's Warmest Welcome'.
- Developing web-based tourism marketing.
- Positioning Osoyoos as a destination of choice for meetings and conferences.

- Generating increased media exposure for Osoyoos as a resort destination.
- Raising awareness of quality-assurance programs and becoming a BC 'SuperHost' community.
- Working with local stakeholders to develop new winter and shoulder-season tourism products.
- Promoting environmentally and socially responsible visitor experiences.
- Adding a market development co-ordinator and a focus on tourism research and market intelligence within Destination Osoyoos.

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