



## **Rebuilding Abbotsford's Visitor Economy** *The Importance of Events at the Fraser Valley Trade and Exhibition Centre (Tradex)*

**For Immediate Release**

**March 29, 2021**

(Abbotsford, BC) The Board of the Tourism Abbotsford Society is shocked and disappointed to hear of Mayor & Council's decision to issue a Request for Proposals for the use of the Fraser Valley Trade and Exhibition Centre (Tradex) facility and is responding with an appeal for stakeholder support.

Since taking over the operation of Tradex in 2003, Tourism Abbotsford has operated the facility with the mandate of generating economic impact for local businesses. A 2017 economic impact study detailed how Tradex is a significant revenue-generating asset, revealing that the total amount spent within our community derived from Tradex events was \$14.8 million dollars. The direct impacts contributed almost \$7 million in GDP and \$5.2 million in wages while generating 366 jobs and approximately \$2.5 million in taxes.

"Denying local businesses revenue stemming from event activity at Tradex, so that the City of Abbotsford can realize a new revenue stream, will hurt our local businesses. Losing an event asset like Tradex that drives significant visitor spending in the fall and winter months, will handcuff many of our partners — particularly hotels, restaurants, and retail businesses, and will be devastating to the long-term recovery of our tourism and hospitality sector. Abbotsford is not a traditional leisure travel market, as it does not have beaches, lakes, and resorts, but what it does have are well-attended, revenue-generating, large-scale events. Losing Tradex would cause 80% of current events to relocate to other communities and remove one of our key strengths as an event destination," says Craig Nichols, Executive Director of Tourism Abbotsford.

Events play a significant role in generating economic activity. In a typical year, the economic impact from hosting 270 plus events throughout the community would generate economic activity of approximately \$55 million. It is the Board of Tourism Abbotsford's firm position that event tourism is a strong economic driver, benefiting all of its stakeholders, the community, and its guests.



Daniel Laverick, Board President of Tourism Abbotsford states, “As the city reviews other revenue-generating ideas, the Board would care to remind them of the economic study that was completed in 2017. Tradex has an enormous role to play in the recovery of Abbotsford’s events and tourism economy and there is no other facility like it in Abbotsford. Losing it as an event space would be pushing millions of dollars per year, and hundreds of potential jobs, into neighbouring cities. We feel that this is an incredibly short- sighted decision to remove such a highly regarded community outlet.”

On the heels of the negative impact from covid-19 to the tourism and hospitality sector, a press release was distributed just last month sharing Tourism Abbotsford’s plan to reignite the local tourism economy of which a large component is event tourism. The formation of an Events Advisory Committee was announced with nine representatives from Tourism Abbotsford’s Board of Directors, Tourism Abbotsford’s staff, the City of Abbotsford, Abbotsford Centre, Tradex, Sport Abbotsford, Chamber of Commerce, Fraser Valley Indo-Canadian Business Association, and Large and Small Event Producers.

Since Destination BC declared that communities would continue to be hindered this summer by the absence of events, communities were advised to prepare now as competition will be steep as soon as provincial public health orders allow for events to re-occur. A united, integrated, and collective effort is Abbotsford’s strongest chance to recover and reset.

The Board of the Tourism Abbotsford Society strongly believe that Tradex should remain a large-scale event venue as events will be critical to rebuilding Abbotsford’s visitor economy post-pandemic. The Tourism Board and staff are confident the community will stand behind this need, communicating loudly to Mayor & Council and the City of Abbotsford that Tradex is a valuable revenue-generating asset.

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## **About Tourism Abbotsford**

Tourism Abbotsford represents over 300 marketing partners, leads the delivery of Visitor Services, and has operated the Fraser Valley Tradex & Exhibition Centre (Tradex) since 2003. Tourism Abbotsford’s commitment to best practices has resulted in being recognized as a BC Tourism Industry Award recipient in Community Sport Tourism, in addition to earning a BC DMO Professional Excellence Award.



## Current Tradex Events That Would Be Forced Out of Abbotsford:

Event Name	Sq Ft Required	Could stay in Abbotsford?
Vancouver Motorcycle	120,000 +	No
Pacific Agricultural Show	120,000 +	No
Earlybird RV Show	120,000 +	No
Fraser Valley Home and Garden show	80,000	No
Pet Lover's Show	120,000	No
Durham College	20,000	No
BC Boat & Sportsman Show	120,000 +	No
Olde Farmhouse Spring	60,000	No
BC Custom & Classic Car Show	120,000	No
Skills BC	120,000 +	No
Volleyball Week #1	120,000	No
Volleyball Week #2	120,000	No
Coastal Swap Meet	120,000 ++	No
West Coast Small Home Expo	40,000	No
ADSE	40,000	No
MCC	120,000 +	No
BCLNA	120,000	No
Snowbird RV Show	120,000 +	No
West Coast Women's Show	120,000	No
Olde Farmhouse Fall	60,000	No
Creative Stitches	40,000	No
APNA	120,000 +	No
Essemble IQ	60,000	No
West Coast Christmas Show	80,000	No