

2023

Q1 MANAGEMENT REPORT

The Team at Tourism Abbotsford is energized to begin implementing the strategic direction outlined in the new five-year strategy. 15 priority activities for year one have been identified.

Destination Marketing

- 1 Make It Easy for People to Choose Abbotsford
- 2 Share 'More Abby' and Extend Visitor Length of Stay/ Encourage Return Visits
- 3 Grow Visitation from Washington State
- 4 Leverage Abbotsford's Ability to Host Events
- 5 Continue to Secure New Stories, new Content and Host Media, Influencers
- 6 Execute Loud, Proud & Compelling Marketing
- 7 Participate in Cooperative Marketing Campaigns

Destination Development

- 8 Grow Taste of Abby Fall Food Festival
- 9 Support and Advocate for Experiential and Infrastructure Enhancements
- 10 Grow Awareness and Understanding of 'Experience the Fraser' Concept Plan

Partnerships & Collaboration

- 11 Proactively Communicate with Stakeholders and Partners

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Our Team

- 12 Celebrate and Promote Abbotsford's Culture & Diversity and Work with Stakeholders to add Scale, Depth and Density of Experiences
- 13 Embrace Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

Sustainability & Reconciliation

- 14 Support Indigenous Tourism Development
- 15 Educate Visitors on Responsible Travel



DESTINATION MARKETING

Media Activity

- Vancouver Magazine published an article in February on “**8 Things to do in Abbotsford When It’s Raining**”.
- Hosted Julia Duin on March 24th – Julia visited the Sikh Heritage Museum, her story on Sikh Heritage Month and visit to Abbotsford has been published in **SpokaneFavs**.
- Hosted **Kurtis Kolt** in support of a Fraser Valley wine and travel feature he is working on for the spring issue of SIP Magazine.

Coop Marketing Campaigns

- In collaboration with Destination Fraser Valley and Gardens BC, Tourism Abbotsford will be participating in a Gardens BC campaign. Content in support of the campaign and future garden features will be captured July 3-5.
- Destination Fraser Valley received confirmation from Destination BC that the 2023/24 cooperative campaign will be receiving \$100,000 of funding.
- Destination Fraser Valley attended the Northwest Flower & Garden Show in Seattle February 15th – 19th. DFV engaged with thousands of attendees and handed out over 1,750+ Experiences guides, 800+ wine guides and Circle Farm Tour guides, Garden’s BC brochures and Fraser Valley Merch. In addition to engaging with attendees, we also met with five Northwest based travel writers to discuss future familiarization trips to the Fraser Valley.
- Attended the Vancouver Outdoor Show March 4th and 5th. We had a strong presence at the show with over 15 booths representing the Fraser Valley spread out over two aisles, providing an assortment of Fraser Valley Experiences guides, maps, and stickers.
- Updated the **Fraser Valley Food & Wine Guide**, new guides will be received in Q2. The guide will continue to be distributed through visitor centres, local businesses, and consumer shows.

Community Guide

- Work continued on the development of the Abbotsford Community Guide. The Guide will showcase the unique experiences in our community and encourage people to explore events, eateries, neighborhoods, art & culture offerings, outdoor recreation, family-friendly trails, and agritourism experiences.

Marketing Activities

- We planned for and began execution of the 'Spring Breakaway' contest in time for spring break. For the contest, we partnered with the Abbotsford Canucks and Tradex to run a contest featuring tickets to hockey game, Tradex BC Beer & Beverage Festival, overnight accommodation at Coast Hotels, breakfast, and \$100 of ADBA downtown dollars. Spring Breakaway Giveaway: 588 entries and 10.7k views of the 9573 accounts reached, 4541 were non-followers so we were able to reach a whole new audience.
- Published 6 blogs during quarter including **15 Things to Do for Spring Break** in Abbotsford and **5 Unique Abbotsford Date Ideas**.
- Partnered with Economic Development to host a booth at the Pacific Agriculture Show in January. Tourism focus was on Circle Farm Tour.
- Guest comment about **Tourism Abbotsford website** - Christoph N., Germany – “We’re planning a trip to Vancouver & Vancouver Island, also visiting Abbotsford, where our daughter is spending a year at Yale Secondary school. I came across your website, which has so many attractively presented ideas and recommendations for tourists. No questions left unanswered! Thanks for your dedication!”



Events/Sport Tourism

- Team Tourism hosted Events Advisory Committee Meetings in January and March. Agenda items included an update from Go2HR, overview of ADBA strategic development, City’s Community Event Toolkit, grant opportunities, BC 55+ Games, and Canada Day updates.
- We partnered with Life Cycles for a bike giveaway at the Early Bird RV Show, as well supported the Western Golf EXPO with a contest giveaway featuring Ledgeview Golf Passes/Dinner.



- Facilitated meetings with Watchtower Conventions, City of Abbotsford and Abbotsford Centre.
- Attended VYPER meeting to learn more on how Tourism can support their weekly Pow Wows.
- Attended Thunderbird Square Truth and Reconciliation Event planning meeting.
- The team was very busy providing support (marketing, accommodation blocks, visitor servicing, grants etc.) to many events including:
 - Volleyball BC
 - Pacific International Judo Championships
 - Abby Innovation Network
 - Run for Water
 - 55+ Games
 - Abbotsford Film Festival
 - With a Good Heart Pow Wow
 - City of Abbotsford Canada Day
 - Strive Sports Event
 - Twisters International Event
 - Abbotsford/Mission Boxing Event



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DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT

Taste of Abby Fall Food Festival

Planning for this year's **Taste of Abby** is already in full swing. We hosted a ToA partner meeting in January at R62, some partners are already considering leveraging ToA for their own events including Arts Council - Arty Awards, ADBA Wine & Art Walk, and The Reach Gallery Museum Dig For Your Rights.

Many great ideas were discussed including surprise pop-up dinners, activating lanes with tastings/longtable/music, cultural night around food theme, personal chef meal tour, Indigenous storytelling dinners and/or foraging tours, traveling course dinner (one course per location, shuttled), perfect pairing series (jazz), collab beer pack, home brewers club contest, Hotel Sip + Stays, and chef collabs (Vancouver/professional chefs in local restaurants).

Destination Development Activities

- Participated in Fraser Valley Development Council meetings in January and February.
- In collaboration with Destination BC and the FV Development Council, we continued focus on development of **Experience the Fraser**. Once complete, the goal is for ETF to provide a walkable/bikeable trail from Hope to the Salish Sea. You can see the **slide deck** here which was presented to FVRD Council in January.
- Secured provincial funding to help offset costs of new parking lot kiosk and trail marker signage on Sumas Mountain. More information to come in Q2.
- Collaborated with City of Abbotsford Economic Development to continue exploration of a Hotel/Conference facility. The plan is to work with a consultant to help us understand next steps and define the opportunity.
- Collaboration continues with the University of the Fraser Valley (UFV) City Studio and ADBA on development of an accessible tourism strategy. Next steps are to engage UFV students in projects around Accessible Tourism in Abbotsford.
- The Abbotsford Tulip Festival is returning to Abbotsford this spring! Lakeland Flowers will be showcasing 27 acres of Tulips in April and May, tourism team met with Lakeland Flowers and Slap Communications to discuss event and levels of support.
- Planning for this summer's Sun & Soil Concert Series commenced – hoping to host one concert in each of Langley, Abbotsford, Chilliwack and Harrison.
- Met with **Chew on This Tasty Tours** to discuss planning for their Spring/Summer 2023 Tours.

PARTNERSHIPS & COLLABORATION

Industry/Partner Support

- Distributed 200 pads of **Abbotsford tear off maps** to accommodation partners and CFT partners.
- Participated in the City of Abbotsford Abby Fresh meeting in January.
- Hosted Indigenous Tourism BC representatives for a **Day in Abby** on January 24th including visits to Máthekwi (Matsqui Regional Park), Teq'qéyex (Sumas Mountain Regional Park), and Semá:th Spéłhxel (Sumas Prairie).
- As part of our ongoing stakeholder meetings, met with Coast Hotel and Clarion Hotel representatives to learn about how their spring season was shaping up and to ensure the properties are aware of the supports that Tourism Abbotsford can provide.
- Met with Old Yale Brewing to learn about the new location opening in Abbotsford in the spring.
- Met operator of **Windberry Farms** to view farm and discuss ideas for supporting events and overnight stays.
- Attended the Abbotsford Chamber of Commerce AGM March 29th at the Sandman Hotel.
- Participated in the City of Abbotsford's Economic Development Table kick-off meeting March 30th. Topics discussed included the Taste of Abby as well as exploring a hotel/conference facility.
- Published monthly Partner Newsletter in **January, February** and **March**. Newsletter is sent to 200 partners with an average open rate of 38.1%. Highest open rate is 60.1% in March.
- Coordinated (and funded) the participation of partners in the Tourism Challenge Passport program – participating partners include The Reach Gallery Museum, EcoFarm, and Castle Fun Park.
- Supported the City of Abbotsford to provide 'Explore Abbotsford' gift baskets for service milestone recognitions.
- Met with Swoop Airlines to discuss possible collaboration and potential sponsorship of Taste of Abby Fall Food Festival.
- Distributed tulip bouquets to 98 businesses in Abbotsford to promote the return of the Abbotsford Tulip Festival to the community.

MRDT Survey

As part of the Municipal Regional & District Tax (MRDT) requirements, communities that collect 3% MRDT are required to do an annual stakeholder satisfaction report. On March 23rd we sent the MRDT survey to over 260 partners and stakeholders. Survey results and findings will be sent to Destination BC in May and summarized in our Q2 report.



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DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION & OUR TEAM

Team Updates

- We hosted a Thank You & Farewell open house for Kate Glenn on Feb 2nd. Kate first joined the team in March 2020.
- Audrey Arcigal joined the team as our Marketing & Administrative Coordinator on March 6th. Audrey joined us from the Abbotsford Canucks where she worked as a Marketing Coordinator the past two years. Audrey was born in the Philippines but grew up in Abbotsford - she loves to read and last year successfully achieved her goal of reading 100 books during the year.
- Recruitment for a new Destination Marketing Manager launched in February and was ongoing through March.
- Recruitment for the 2023 Summer Ambassador Team began in March – the 'More Abby' team will be out in the community May – September to spread the good word of Abbotsford!
- Aimee Churchill hired in March as our Visitor Services Coordinator.

Tourism Conference

In early March, Craig and Barb attended the Tourism Industry Association of BC and the BC Hotel Association's BC Tourism & Hospitality Conference in Prince George. It was the first

time the conference was held in Northern BC, and Prince George pulled out all the stops to make the conference a memorable event. Highlights included keynote speaker Chief Frank Antoine, co-Founder of Moccasin Trails & ITBC director, an opening reception at the Caledonia Nordic Ski Centre, a Prince George Cougars hockey game, the 2023 BC Tourism & Hospitality Awards, and several informative workshops and plenary sessions.

Society Info (Administrative)

- Renewed General Liability insurance for the Society.
- Advocacy – attended the City of Abbotsford's public hearing on the McKee Peak Neighbourhood Plan, spoke of the need for collaboration to ensure long-term viability of outdoor recreation in Abbotsford.
- Renewed truck insurance and lease for one year.
- Hosted regular Board Meetings on January 27th, February 22nd, and March 29th.
- Attended the BCDMOA Board meeting in January (Victoria) and February (Prince George).

SUSTAINABILITY & RECONCILIATION

- Attended VYPER meeting to learn more on how Tourism can support their weekly Pow Wows.
- Attended Thunderbird Square Truth and Reconciliation Event planning meeting.
- Hosted Indigenous Tourism BC representatives for a **Day in Abby** on January 24th including visits to Máthekeki (Matsqui Regional Park), Teq'qéyex (Sumas Mountain Regional Park), and Semá:th Spélxhel (Sumas Prairie).



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