



Fact Sheet

British Columbia Tourism Initiatives

Why does Western Economic Diversification Canada support tourism initiatives?

Western Economic Diversification Canada is working to increase Western Canada's competitiveness and to shift its reliance away from natural resources. We partner with provincial and local tourism organizations to create a stronger, more diversified economy.

What types of projects does Western Economic Diversification Canada support?

- BC Cruise Ship Industry
- BC Tourism Consortium
- Tourism Association of B.C. Licensing
- Merritt Walk of Stars
- Britannia Innovation and Interpretive Centre Project
- Sullivan Mine Interpretive Centre

BC Cruise Ship Industry

What is the B.C. Cruise Ship industry?

British Columbia is one of the top cruise vacation destinations in the world. The province's scenery, wildlife, and culture have all contributed to this fast growing industry.

Many economic benefits come from expanding BC's cruise ship terminals, including increased jobs for residents of coastal towns, increased foreign spending in BC communities and a more diversified economy for many towns relying on primary industries.

Western Economic Diversification Canada has invested in several cruise ship terminals and strategies across the province, assisting our cities in meeting cruise ship demand and providing route variety to cruise ship operators. These projects include the Port of Prince Rupert, the Campbell River Cruise Ship Terminal and the BC Coastal Cruise Strategic Plan.

- ***Port of Prince Rupert***

Prince Rupert has the potential to become a major port of call for cruise ships, rivaling Alaska. Western Economic Diversification Canada has supported several projects that will enable the Pacific Northwest region and this north coast city to tap into cruise industry growth by creating infrastructure for large cruise vessels and identifying key requirements for the cruise ship market. Prince Rupert has the potential to attract 140 vessels and over 250,000 passengers per year within ten years of constructing the dock facility.

The development of the cruise terminal dock facility will help establish Prince Rupert as a port of call for international cruise lines and develop the tourism industry in the Pacific Northwest region. This project is part of the B.C. Cruise Initiative, announced in April 2003, designed to enhance the cruise industry in B.C.

Western Economic Diversification Canada investment:
\$1,560,000 for the completion of a new dock facility at the Northland Cruise Ship Terminal
\$30,000 for a cruise-labour gap analysis

- ***Campbell River Cruise Ship Terminal***

The Campbell River Cruise Ship Terminal will soon become North America's only First Nations themed passenger port. With investments from Western Economic Diversification Canada, and Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, the terminal is expected to bring over \$2 million in tourism revenue to Campbell River annually.

Western Economic Diversification Canada investment:
Phase One: Preliminary Engineering and Environmental Assessment Costs

Phase Two: Design and Engineering
\$200,000 to aid in the design and engineering of the terminal

Phase Three: Construction
\$3,000,000 for the development and construction of terminal

- ***BC Coastal Cruise Strategic Plan***

The Vancouver Port Authority received funding on behalf of the BC Ports and Destinations Group to research and develop a provincial plan to address the opportunities for coastal communities to participate in a thriving cruise industry.

The plan was developed in two stages: phase one identified and evaluated the opportunities for BC communities and phase two prepared an implementation strategy that outlined action plans and responsibilities for achieving goals set forth in the plan.

Western Economic Diversification Canada investment:
\$200,000 for the development of the BC Coastal Cruise Strategic Plan

What are the benefits for British Columbia?

By identifying new opportunities for coastal communities and creating beneficial infrastructure, economy development in the cruise ship industry can increase in major urban centers as well as communities along the coast.

Tourism Standard Consortium of Western Canada

What is the Tourism Standard Consortium's strategy of Western Canada?

Led by the Tourism Standards Consortium (Western Canada) Inc., the tourism strategy responds to reduced travel and tourism in Western Canada brought on by extraordinary events such as forest fires, flooding, Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE) and lingering concerns about Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) and West Nile Virus.

The Tourism Standard Consortium's tourism strategy has two components.

1. The strategy will help communities develop strategic plans and expertise to recover from the current tourism downturn and promote long term tourism growth.
2. It will also address labour market and skill shortages by implementing activities to recruit and train new people, and retain the existing workforce.

In addition, the Consortium will explore community outreach with Western Economic Diversification Canada's partners: the Canada Business Service Centres and Community Futures Development Corporations.

What are the benefits for British Columbia?

The Tourism Standard Consortium's tourism strategy will equip our communities with the information and tools to recover from the tourist downturn in recent years. Our communities will also train and recruit qualified employees to prepare an increase in tourism again.

Western Economic Diversification Canada investment:
\$2,400,000 for the development and implementation of the strategy

Insurance and Risk Management Program for Tourism Operators

The many tourism-based businesses in BC have had to deal with a variety of set backs in the last few years, such as the SARS scare, the increasing Canadian dollar and wildfires. Of all these hardships however, rising insurance premiums were the most detrimental. With aid from Western Economic Diversification Canada, the Council of Tourism Associations of BC was able to develop a more cost-effective insurance alternative to nature-based tourism operators. The new insurance and

risk management program encourages high safety standards, promotes risk management practices and assists businesses in securing financial savings on their insurance premiums.

What are the benefits to British Columbia?

Many nature-based tourism operators found that continuing operations or expanding their business was not financially viable given the cost of rising insurance premiums. Some of these business owners were facing up to quadruple what they used to pay for similar liability coverage. As a result, many business owners had to downsize their workforce and put expansion plans on hold indefinitely. The new program now gives these business owners the ability to operate in a financially viable industry, meaning more people will be employed in the industry and more owners will be able to reinvest in their businesses.

Western Economic Diversification Canada investment:
\$45,000 to assist in developing the business model for the insurance and risk management program.

Merritt Walk of Stars

What is the Merritt Walk of Stars?

The Merritt Walk of Stars is a western-themed in Merritt, B.C. Granite and bronze handprints of more than 100 country music stars are being installed in the downtown core sidewalks, forming a Country Music Walk of Fame.

What are the benefits for Merritt?

This project helps the City of Merritt continue its transformation from a logging, ranching and mining community into the Country Music Capital of Canada. Hard hit by the softwood lumber dispute, the town's residents have rallied around country music as a way to rebuild their economy. The town is already famous to country music fans as home of the Merritt Mountain Music Festival. It is expected that tens of thousands of country music fans will view the stars each year.

Western Economic Diversification Canada investment:
This \$827,000 project is receiving \$375,000 in support from the Softwood Industry Community Economic Adjustment Initiative, administered by Western Economic Diversification Canada.

Britannia Innovation and Interpretive Centre Project

What is the Britannia Innovation and Interpretive Centre?

Located in the community of Britannia Beach, the Britannia Mine has long been a towering sight along British Columbia's Sea-to-Sky Highway. For decades the mine was active in producing copper ore, and was, at one time, the largest producer of

copper in the commonwealth. Today the mine lies dormant and instead houses the BC Museum of Mining. The Britannia Beach Historical Society is actively trying to improve current operations and increase tourist visits.

The Britannia Innovation and Interpretive Centre will offer the public an in-depth and interactive look into the mine's history, and the mining industry. Phase one and two of the Britannia Innovation and Interpretive Centre focus mainly on the feasibility, marketing, and fundraising for the implementation of the project. Western Economic Diversification Canada is proud to invest in the first two phases of this project.

What are the benefits for the Britannia Beach community and the Sea-to-Sky corridor?

Increased tourism and community investment will establish a more viable economy in communities along the Sea-to-Sky corridor. The Interpretive Centre will showcase an important part of British Columbia's history and industrial development. It will also help to diversify tourism activities along the corridor by providing a more rich cultural experience to tourists who are accustomed to adventure vacations.

Western Economic Diversification Canada investment:
\$190,000 to complete phase two of the development plan
\$75,000 to aid in transitioning the project from development to implementation (phase two to three)

The Sullivan Mine Interpretive Centre

What is the Sullivan Mine Interpretive Centre?

Located in British Columbia's Kootenay region, the Sullivan Mine was recently decommissioned after decades in operation. As a result, the community rallied to pursue another burgeoning industry in the region: tourism. The mine is now an Interpretive Centre that welcomes students, tourists and local residents.

The investment will extend the current rail line and will include a 750-foot railway tunnel in the Mark Creek Valley to provide tourists with an underground mining experience.

What are the benefits to Kimberley?

By helping to diversify the economy in Kimberly, the effects of the Sullivan mine closure can be minimized through increased tourism.

Western Economic Diversification Canada investment:
\$987,500 to plan, develop and construct the new Sullivan Mine Interpretive Centre