

Council Presentation March 17, 2014

Highlights of 2013 and 1st quarter of 2014

Mr. Chair

Very successful year, you will receive our newest USB giveaway loaded with our 2012 Audited Financial statements, a sample of stories we generated and two copies of our new videos. One video is our general Richmond video which has received almost 8,000 views since it was launched on You Tube in November. The second video is the Chinese New Year video you just saw.

I would now like to provide you with some highlights from our programs and initiatives:

Awards:

It was an award winning year.

365 Days of Dining:

- The Tourism Industry Association of Canada for Social Media Initiative of the Year
- The Vancouver Social Media Award for Best (Public) Social Media Campaign
- The Richmond Chamber of Commerce Annual Award of Excellence for Innovation of the Year

International Association of Professional Brochure Distributors' Best Brochure Award – Destination Guide (we experienced 50% increase in pick-up of this brochure)

365 Days of Dining officially ended in June 2013. This campaign generated over 322 stories; that is almost one story every day of the campaign. We saw $\frac{3}{4}$ million visits to the blog site, and still today we experience over 4,000 visits per month. This campaign will be relaunched in a new format with new content next month. We continue to build upon this campaign with our Dining Guide. This guide was so popular that after only four months we had to reprint it.

Throughout 2013 our **media** team was very busy generating stories by conducting familiarization tours with media like our Farm to Fork tour where we hosted 6 media on an urban agriculture themed press trip highlighting Richmond's rich farming industry and fishing harbor. We also send out press releases and newsletters to media throughout the year. These efforts generated over 633 print stories and 20 broadcast stories of Richmond in all our key markets and with influential media such as the New York Times, Smart Meetings Magazine, Via Rail magazine, West Jet Up Magazine. Again a sample of stories can be found on your USB key.

We continue to have great success when we focus our key messages on our **triple A attributes** – Accessible (to YVR and Vancouver), Affordable (compared to downtown Vancouver) and Asian culture and cuisine.

In 2013 we continued our **Attraction Pass** campaign in our key markets Alberta, Victoria and Seattle. The campaign was simple, if you booked three consecutive nights between June and September you would receive an attraction access pass valued at \$200 per person. We experienced 147% increase in participation (which equates to 29% increase in room bookings) and increased the length of stay from 2.43 in 2012 to 3.7 in 2013. This campaign met our goal of getting visitors to stay another night which is part of our five year strategic plan. It also tied into our triple A approach by addressing the affordable and accessible elements. When we surveyed a couple of the key markets on the awareness of this campaign, we discovered that 1 – in – 4 Calgarians were aware of the promotion and among those surveyed, 1 – 10 participated in the promotion in the past. As well, 3 – in 4 are likely to stay in Richmond for 3 nights or more in order to receive the pass.

We continue to be strong in our **social media** initiatives; our 2013 website traffic increased 102% over 2012 due to our search engine optimization strategies. These strategies included a revamped website, as well as ensuring our website contained key searchable words throughout so that when an individual searched for certain things like Richmond restaurants our website would come up in their search results. Mobile visits were up 210% confirming the importance of our new mobile site which will be launched in the next few weeks.

Engagement is very important involving social media. You want to make sure you are having a conversation. Our first quarter in 2014 included a couple of new social media initiatives.

Chinese New Year:

- We had over 4,300 entries for our Chinese New Year campaign which included winning small prize packages. Our goal was 1,000 entries
- Over 67% entries were from non-local participants
- Our Facebook spend was very successful. With a budget of \$1,500, we only spent \$0.31 cents per engagement (4,703 engagements).
 - The internet average is approximately \$0.80 per engagement

OnceWednesday

- Over 3,400 entries in our contest promoting awareness of OUAT in Steveston giving away a small prize package

Facebook Page:

- Has grown from 18,900 in 2013 to 21,536 to date due to these successful contests and engaging content

Our **Sales** team was successful in sending 74 leads to our hotel partners, representing almost 35,800 room nights. The meetings market average length of stay is 3.24 nights in Richmond, slightly up from 2012, proving the importance of this key travel segment. This represents over \$15 million in economic impacts to the Richmond community.

Travel Trade is a key segment for group travel. Our receptive tour operators – dealing primarily with China, experienced approximately 11% increase in their business to Richmond. We were in China with our Richmond partners for two trips in 2013 selling to this key market. (Shenzhen, Shanghai, Beijing, Guangzhou, Hangzhou, Chengdu and Shenyang) We were able to send 1,077 referrals to our members throughout Richmond.

We are very pleased with the results from the **Steveston Visitor Center** and the seasonal kiosk. We experienced an 11% increase in visitors, serving 20,300

people. Trends with visitor servicing include moving the servicing to where the visitors are, instead of asking the visitors to come find you. Moving out of the highway visitor center allowed us to concentrate our limited resources in a high visitor traffic location. In addition, our operating agreement with the Steveston Historical Society requires us to operate the Post Office in the Steveston Museum. The responsibilities of the Post Office posed some challenges for the team including financial sustainability and the need for additional personnel. We increased marketing for the Post Office and have seen very good results because of it. However sales still do not exceed the expenses, but we are closing the gap.

Membership at the end of 2013 was at an all-time high, with 329 members.

Key member events include our very successful Tourism Richmond Commercial Driver Appreciation event held at YVR and partnered with YVR.

We continue to meet with the team representing the **Richmond Olympic Experience** and we have already generated stories in support of it. You will find a sample of these on your USB key. As well, our sales team is already pitching it to tour operators to encourage them to add it to their itineraries in the future. For example, the Active America Travel China Summit we hosted last week, included a tour of the Oval for the 60 China tour operators.

Our **AGM and Industry luncheon** is scheduled for April 7 at the Executive Plaza hotel and conference center. At this event we will highlight additional plans for 2014 and beyond.

Our **Service Awards** are scheduled for May 13 at the River Rock Casino Resort.

We truly hope you will be available to attend both events.

Visitor Volume Study – May to September 2013

Overall, between May and September almost 1.9 million people visited Richmond for independent leisure purposes. Those visitors spent approximately \$400 million dollars in Richmond.

Overnight visitors accounted for just under 1.3 million visitors (67% of all visitors) and \$347 million in expenditures (87% of all visitor expenditures).

Overnight visitors that stayed in hotels accounted for 47% of all visitors and 66% of all expenditures, while visitors that stayed with friends and relatives accounted for 14% of volume and 15% of expenditures (because they stayed longer). Day visitors accounted for 33% of visitors and 13% of total expenditures.

These estimates include business travelers that spent time doing leisure activities or visiting friends and relatives activities in Richmond. Business travelers equaled 14% of total visitor volume and 11% of visitor expenditures.

Ontario and Alberta continue to be strong markets for us. And Washington and California are strong US states. Not surprising is China as our strongest Asia/Pacific market followed by Australia and Hong Kong. Our visitors from Asia Pacific account for 70% of overseas markets. In Europe, the UK and Germany are our strongest.

Our visitor age profile is generally older than the general traveler profile for all of Canada. 57% were 45+, 76% were 35+. This demonstrates that our products are more appealing to mature people.

According to the CTC, travellers to Canada (compared to other countries) have a higher level of education and this was confirmed for Richmond as well.

The visitors that chose to stay in our hotels have higher than average income levels of \$100,000+.

Richmond was the primary destination for 30% of the visitors that stayed in paid accommodation, followed by 24% for Greater Vancouver. This is very good news as we continue to promote Richmond as a stand alone destination.

ASIA-PACIFIC REPORT

IN BRIEF

AUSTRALIA

Employment rises by three times forecast

Australian employers boosted payrolls in February by more than three times economists' forecast, underscoring an improving economic outlook that prompted the central bank to adopt a neutral policy stance. The number of people employed rose by 47,300, the statistics bureau said in Sydney. That compares with the median estimate for a 15,000 increase in a Bloomberg News survey of 28 economists. The jobless rate held at six per cent. Central bank governor Glenn Stevens reduced the benchmark interest rate by 2.25 percentage points since late 2011 to a record-low 2.5 per cent and signalled a period of steady borrowing costs. The jobs data and a stronger housing market indicate businesses are beginning to invest in an economy that policy-makers predict will accelerate.

HOLLYWOOD

Chinese firm in joint film studio venture

Hony Capital Ltd., a Chinese private-equity firm, will start a U.S. film studio with partners including producer Robert Simonds, in the latest example of Chinese investment in Hollywood. Simonds will lead the venture, which plans to invest more than \$1 billion over five years. Other associates investing include TPG Capital and Gigi Pritzker, chief executive officer of OddLot Entertainment. The unnamed studio will finance, produce and self-distribute eight to 10 "star-driven" theatrical films for global markets each year, the partners said in a statement. Honky Capital, backed by Legend Holdings Ltd., the largest shareholder in computer maker Lenovo Group Ltd., is the anchor investor for the business and has agreed to a strategic partnership for film and television production with SMG Pictures, the statement said. Additional equity and debt are being provided by the business interests of Pritzker. Hollywood is attracting more investor interest from China after posting record sales of \$10.9 billion last year and starting 2014 strongly.

INDIA

Inflation eases as factory output rises

Indian consumer-price inflation eased for a third straight month in February while factory output unexpectedly rose in January, as interest-rate increases cooled Asia's fastest price rises before elections next month. The consumer-price index

OPINION

A growing gateway for Chinese tourists



Chuck Chiang

Tourism: Vancouver's favourable location sets it up for success

In many ways, Metro Vancouver's growing role in Asia-Pacific business relations was demonstrated by an event in Richmond last week.

That event was the opening reception of the Active America-China Travel Summit, which took place last Tuesday. The conference gathered 60 buyers from China's tourism industry and 115 tour suppliers from Canada and the United States. Their goal was simple: To better facilitate (and profit from) the waves of Chinese tourists arriving in North American airports daily.

The fact that the gathering (which lasted all this past week) was held in Richmond was revealing in itself. In the six years since the conference's launch, this was the first time the event took place on



KIM STALLMECHT/PNG PHOTO

Asian tourists pose for pictures at the steam clock in Gastown. More Chinese are visiting the city.

Canadian soil. The symbolism may be more telling than the event itself, which amounted to a cross-Pacific tourism trade fair. But Canada — and Metro Vancouver in particular — has clearly wedged itself into the travel industry conversation.

This is not just a reflection of the increase in Chinese tourists coming to Canada since the two nations signed the Approved Destination Status agreement in 2010, making it easier for Chinese travellers to obtain permission to visit the Great White North.

Since 2008, the number of visitors coming to Canada from most major nations has seen little change, or even declined. From 2008 to 2013, the visitor count from France changed from 425,409 to 465,548; Germany, from 332,008 to 322,419; Britain, from 869,926 to 663,219; and Japan, from 287,198 to 238,474.

Compare that, however, to the figures for Chinese tourists (excluding Hong Kong): 165,823 in 2008 to 365,314 last year. During that period, China went from ninth

place on Canada's foreign tourist rankings to fourth — and may, if current growth trends continue, overtake France and join the U.S. and Britain as Canada's biggest sources of tourism dollars.

The decision by Active America to bring the conference to Richmond, with the summit's large number of American participants, indicates that Vancouver may now be gaining momentum as a jumping-off point for Chinese tourists looking at visiting south of the border.

Ever since Canadian authorities implemented the China Transit Program in late 2012, Chinese visitors can fly to Vancouver and connect to another U.S.-bound flight without a Canadian visa. Given Vancouver's geographic advantages over other ports of entry on the North American west coast, the transit program has given YVR another valuable source of business: connecting traffic.

Take a look at Vancouver's distance and flight times to Beijing, as compared to cities like Los Angeles and San Francisco: the distance

from Beijing to Vancouver is about 8,536 kilometres, roughly an 11-hour flight. The same trip from Beijing to San Francisco is 9,525 kilometres (or 12 hours, 20 minutes), and to Los Angeles is a whopping 10,083 kilometres, a 13-hour flight.

Vancouver maintains a similar advantage when it comes to flights to and from Shanghai.

Vancouver makes a lot of sense as North America's most popular gateway for Chinese tourists looking for a shorter flight. And the availability of bilingual English-Mandarin personnel in the city also helps to provide connecting Chinese passengers with as seamless a connecting experience as possible in a country where Chinese is not an official language.

YVR officials have long stated they want to see a similar program struck with Latin American countries, so as to connect Chinese business travellers with the country's growing interest in Central and South America.

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