

December 20, 2016

Tourism update: Hotel tax, Committee members, Museum temporary Visitor Info Centre

Tourism promotion will get a major funding boost in 2017 thanks to provincial approval of Campbell River's application for a three per cent hotel tax. The tax on local hotel/motel rooms to be effective Mar. 1, 2017.

"This tax paid by visiting guests will provide a significant source of funding to support tourism promotion, especially given all the major events planned for 2017," says Mayor Andy Adams.

Conservative estimates on annual funding generated through a local hotel tax paid by visiting guests is in the range of \$250,000. The City will continue to contribute \$250,000 annually for local tourism marketing, programs and projects.

Campbell River will accommodate visitors during the 2017 Association of Vancouver Island Coastal Communities and the Vancouver Island Sustainable Technology Association conferences as well as the BC Elders Gathering and the 2017 Tribal Journeys hosted by the Wei Wai Kum and We Wai Kai First Nations.

City Council has also confirmed members of the new Tourism Advisory Committee who will guide the five-year tourism strategy. Clint Buchholz, Harley Elias, Erin Neely, Wayne Nikolaisen and Tom Olsen have been appointed for two years beginning Jan. 1, 2017. Carly Pereboom has been appointed for a one-year term. Non-voting volunteers on the committee include Heather Gordon Murphy, representing the Downtown Business Improvement Area, Dave Hamilton from the Chamber of Commerce, Dean Prentice, Jonathan Shead and Sukhy Bains representing accommodation providers and the City's economic development officer.

"We look forward to the committee's experience raising awareness of Campbell River as a destination of choice and promoting year-round tourism opportunities," says Mayor Adams.

The Campbell River Economic Development Corporation will cease tourism operations at the end of December, and new management of tourism services is expected to begin early in 2017.

"The City extends hearty thanks to the transition team that carried Campbell River's tourism work forward over the past year," says the City's economic development officer Rose Klukas.

The new contractor will also take over the Visitor Information Centre, which will temporarily move to the museum starting in January.

"Similar to last year, when we temporarily closed the downtown facility for renovations during January – the slowest time of year for visitor traffic – Visitor Information Services will continue uninterrupted," Klukas explains. *"Paid museum staff will have all necessary tools, supplies and training, and this continued service will be provided at no increased cost to the City. The added profile for the museum will be a benefit for promoting that facility."*

Signs will be posted at the downtown facility about the temporary re-location of these services, updates will be posted on the City and Campbell River Travel websites, and social media posts will advise visitors of the temporary location. Washrooms and the art gallery next to the downtown Visitor Information Centre will remain open.

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