

One-Year Tactical Plan Template

Designated Recipient:	Town of Smithers
Designated Accommodation Area:	
Date Prepared:	November 22, 2022
MRDT Repeal Date:	“Grandfathered”
Five Year Period:	2022- 2027



Section 1: Overview and Update to Five-year Strategic Business Plan

Strategic Direction

The Tourism Smithers Society is the Destination Management/Marketing Organization (DMO) for the Town of Smithers. A non-profit society, the organization works with Destination BC, the Northern BC Tourism Association, sector associations, as well as other community DMO’s and industry-related partners within the region to foster the sustainability and growth of tourism, to strengthen partnerships and to support BC’s brand and global reputation.

The Tourism Smithers 2022 – 2027 five-year plan was completed and submitted earlier this year. Smithers is one of the ‘grand-parented communities’ and began collecting what was known as the 2% additional hotel room tax in 1999. In 2017, the MRDT collection was increased at the 3% level.

ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE

Since 2018, the Smithers Tourism Society has been responsible for the delivery of tourism services under contract with the Town of Smithers, which is the Designated Recipient for the Municipal Regional District Tax (MRDT). Oversight for Tourism Smithers lies with its volunteer board of directors. A new 5-year agreement between the Town of Smithers and Tourism Smithers is in place through to the end of 2026.

VISION

The Town of Smithers, through Tourism Smithers, will be recognized as an exceptional destination offering excellent tourism opportunities in outdoor recreation, arts and culture, festivals and events, First Nations experience and food and lodging. Tourism will have a prominent and recognized role in our local and regional economy.

MISSION

Tourism Smithers will foster an understanding of the economic and social benefits of a sustainable tourism industry for the Town of Smithers. The Town of Smithers, through Tourism Smithers, the Visitor Information Centre and the Tourism Advisory Committee, will work successfully with tourism industry stakeholders both locally, regionally and

	<p>provincially, to grow the tourism industry and increase visitation to Smithers by 20%¹ by 2022.</p> <p>As communities across the province emerged from the worst of the effects of the pandemic in 2022, Tourism Smithers turned its organizational attention to the goals and objectives outlined in the 2022-2027 (Five-Year) Plan. The strategic framework is built upon four priority areas of focus; marketing, destination management, events, and visitor services (managed by the Smithers District Chamber of Commerce under a separate fee for service contract with the Town of Smithers).</p> <p>In early 2022 tactics identified in the one-year tactical plan were initiated.</p>
Key Learnings and Conclusions	<p>External Context</p> <p>There are several learnings and conclusions from 2022 that will influence and inform the 2023 Tactical Plan.</p> <p>The COVID-19 crisis has challenged BC’s tourism industry in ways that could not be imagined just a few years ago. Before the pandemic, tourism was one of the fastest growing industries in the world, and BC was no exception. British Columbia’s tourism industry generated revenue of \$22.3 billion in 2019, (a normalized year). Despite the challenges in recent years, tourism remains to be a major economic player, however, it is widely understood in the past year that BC’s tourism sector remains the hardest-hit of all major industries resulting from the continued impacts of the pandemic and will be the last to recover.</p> <p>At the national and provincial level, there are still considerable disruptions in supply chains, inflation is expected to continue to rise and interest rates are poised to continue rising in the foreseeable future. These latest trends and uncertainty are expected to have a direct impact on tourism businesses and influence leisure travel considerations in the foreseeable future.</p> <p>It is important to note however, with COVID restrictions in most jurisdictions steadily easing over the course of 2021-22 and both business and leisure travel rebounding from historic lows, the BC tourism industry has made a substantial and much-anticipated recovery over the past year.</p> <p>Tourism in Smithers</p> <p>For Tourism Smithers, a key learning from the pandemic carried through in 2022 – namely flexibility and willingness to work with the businesses who were ready. This will also be the considerations for 2023.</p> <p>Smithers, along with much of northwestern BC found itself in a different economic state this year. During the last two years, major industrial development took hold in the community – with increased numbers of workers, (pipeline, railroad, mineral exploration and miners). While some industrial</p>

¹ MRDT annual revenue will be the proxy measurement for growth

activity is common in Smithers and the Bulkley Valley, the lower number of leisure travelers during the pandemic coupled with increased industrial workers, we were a bit transformed. Hotels have been very busy, but not with the usual mix of leisure and corporate guests. Additionally, a severe labour shortage and housing crunch challenged those in accommodation, food and beverage, retail and other tourism businesses to successfully carry out their business. Residents and guests became accustomed to ‘closed due to staff shortage’ signs on doorways. Some hotels were not operating a full capacity and closed off rooms when housekeepers were in short supply. Communication with industry-related businesses confirms that ongoing labour shortages and the inability to operate some accommodation properties at full capacity will continue to be a challenge in 2023.

Effective November, 2022 the Smithers Regional Airport resumes passenger air service from 2 airlines; Air Canada 7 days per week to YVR and Central Mountain 3 days per week to YVR. The limited supply of flights has hampered recovery for both angling and hunting guides who rely on service to/from YVR and other parts of the world. Cat and heli-ski operators struggled with reliable air passenger service in the winter of 2021-22 resulting in operators making decisions to use Terrace airport as their gateway. It remains uncertain if those businesses will return to Smithers airport when passenger service improves.

This past season, the transportation sector was bolstered by the return of travel on the Alaska Marine Highway and the cruise season returning to the port in Prince Rupert. In 2022, the port saw a 230% increase in cruise ship passenger volumes, compared to 2019 – the busiest cruise season in a decade for Prince Rupert. Historically, the Marine Highway was another travel route for visitors to and through Northern BC. Cruise passengers are important to the leisure travel sector, who often consider returning to the province/region after an initial positive experience. The Marine Highway also directly connected the SE Alaska community of Ketchikan to Smithers. Through a long historical connection, Ketchikan residents were a popular target market for the ski industry, with many residents owning property at the ski resort. There is optimism the return of the marine route will re-establish the return of this demographic to Smithers in future.

Angling is a key activity in Smithers and the Bulkley and Skeena River system. 2022 saw the angler season established for both residents and visitors. Non-Canadians were able to fish for steelhead in 2022, which resulted in the opening of lodges that accommodate anglers for the first time since the pandemic. Resident anglers (anyone from BC), were also able to fish, which saw guests travelling from other parts of the province to the region. Along with accommodators, retail, food and beverage and campgrounds also benefitted with the return of visitors for the purpose of fishing.

In comparison to 2021, Smithers and the Bulkley Valley did not experience weather-related disruptions (i.e. flooding, wildfires, etc.), however, looking ahead to 2023, several other factors will be taken into consideration and Tourism

	<p>Smithers will continue to monitor and adjust marketing and promotion efforts accordingly:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supply of goods • Available inventory of accommodation/hotel rooms • Restaurant capacity <p>A further disruption to recovery in 2022 is the loss of the local taxi operator, coupled with the lack of car rental availability, challenging transportation needs upon arrival at Smithers airport (YYD). This has resulted in travelers utilizing Prince George as their hub prior to and after their visit to Smithers. This challenge is impacting both the business and leisure traveler as well as the reputation of the community. There remains continued effort by stakeholders to seek a solution.</p> <p>In July 2022, Tourism Smithers canvassed their stakeholders to identify their understanding of the programs and services delivered by the organization, their perceptions of Tourism Smithers, their most pressing concerns and to gather any additional feedback. The survey results were assessed for their feasibility and have been considered in the 2023 Tactical Plan. Approximately 42% of respondents stated their business revenues increased from 2020 to 2021 with much optimism to the year ahead. 67% of the survey respondents are either optimistic or very optimistic the tourism industry in Smithers will grow (an increase of 9% compared to the previous survey year).</p> <p>Also to consider, additional analyses that has been undertaken by provincial and regional destination management/marketing organizations, provincial and local government and advocacy organizations has also been included to develop a plan aimed at supporting the ongoing recovery and resilience of the tourism sector in Smithers and Bulkley Valley region.</p> <p>The easing of restrictions in 2022 marked the return of many annual festivals and events and provided the opportunity to introduce and deliver new events. It is long understood that festivals and events have direct and indirect impacts on communities such as Smithers. They provide opportunities for participation, destination development, volunteering and social, cultural and economic developments. Pre-pandemic, Smithers community festivals and events helped to attract tourists and visitors predominately at the regional level. In May 2022, Tourism Smithers launched its inaugural <i>Tourism Roundtable</i>, - an informal event for the Tourism Smithers staff and Board and Visitor Centre team to meet with stakeholders, deliver informative presentations and explore future collaborative opportunities. The event was deemed a success, and will be considered as an annual industry event.</p> <p>In 2022, Tourism Smithers invested resources to enhance digital marketing efforts. The primary focus was the launch of a refreshed website, combined with increased frequency of communication on social media channels (Facebook and Instagram) that has resulted in a significant increase in followers and engagement as well as an increase in overall traffic, organic traffic, average time on the site and average page views.</p>
Overall Goals and Objectives	<p>The overall goals, objectives and targets remain unchanged and are aligned with the Five-Year Plan. Adjustments may be required to accommodate any unforeseen</p>

	<p>challenges that could hamper travel to the region and community. The key focus will remain on the following four pillars:</p> <p>Marketing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Aligning marketing activities to target markets can strengthen the appeal of Smithers and the Bulkley Valley region and increase expenditures. <p>Destination Management and Product Experience:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Enhancing the appeal of Smithers and Bulkley Valley can attract new visitors, extended stays, encourage repeat visitation, generate word-of-mouth referrals and support advocacy. <p>Festivals & Events:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Community events provide opportunities to showcase and create awareness of Smithers and to build upon a desire to visit the region as a leisure traveler. <p>Visitor Services Visitor Experiences:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The success of positioning Smithers as a destination will rely heavily on the quality of the visitor experience.
Strategies	<p>Key strategies from the Five-Year Plan overall remain unchanged. Key content themes for 2023 include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● All-season, outdoor activities (ski, hike, fish, touring, mountain-biking) and events ● Friendly, safe community ● Unique community with urban amenities ● Strengthen relationships with industry-related businesses ● Strengthen relationships with industry-related services and service clubs ● Build upon collaboration opportunities with neighboring DMO's ● Increase awareness to Northern and Northwestern BC with emphasis on Smithers and Bulkley Valley ● Drive traffic to Northern and Northwestern BC with emphasis on Smithers and Bulkley Valley
Target Markets	<p>The types of visitors that are priorities for Smithers in the next year, including primary and secondary target markets, geographic target markets, demographics, and activity-based target groups are as follows:</p> <p>Primary: Northern BC, Other BC, Alberta, US Pacific Northwest Secondary: Other Canada, European, Other US Visitor Types: Couples & Families, Weekend Warriors, Outdoor adventure enthusiasts, Visiting Family & Friends, Leisure travelers (FIT), Touring Regional Destination Seekers: Festivals, Events, Fairs, Concerts</p> <p>The desired length of stay that Smithers is seeking from the noted target markets are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Destination travelers seeking outdoor experiences: (angling, hunting, adventure holidays) range from 7- 14 days. ○ Other: ski, mountain bike, hike, events average 2-4 days. ○ Touring: aim to achieve overnight stays

Section TOURISM SMITHERS 2023 PROJECT PLAN

Please provide a Project Plan for each major activity you will undertake in the year ahead using MRDT funds. Authorized purposes of MRDT funds are tourism marketing, programs and projects and any other prescribed purposes as set out by regulation.

Major Category: Marketing | Consumer

Activity Title: Co-op Marketing Programs

(NOTE: Tactics of each Co-op marketing program is outlined in the individual applications and tactical plans for each program, and are highlighted below).

1). Route 16 Motorcycle Touring Promotion

Tactics: Identified in group application submitted by Tourism Prince George

Implementation: Identified in group application submitted

Source of Funding: MRDT

Budget: \$5,000 (Tourism Smithers partner portion)

2). SkiNorth BC

Tactics: Identified in group application submitted by Tourism Smithers in conjunction with Seekers Media

Implementation: Identified in group application submitted

Source of Funding: MRDT, partner funding

Budget: \$7,000 (Tourism Smithers partner portion) – Total project budget \$46,000

3). Ride North / Mountain Bike Promotion

Tactics: Identified in group application submitted by Western Canada Mountain Bike Association

Implementation: Identified in group application submitted

Source of Funding: MRDT, partner funding

Budget: \$5,000 (Tourism Smithers partner portion)

4). Ale Trail

Tactics: Identified in group application by BC Ale Trail

Implementation: Identified in group application submitted

Source of Funding: MRDT, partner funding

Budget: \$6,500 (Tourism Smithers portion)

5). Golf

Tactics: Identified in group application submitted by Tourism Prince George

Implementation: Identified in group application

Source of Funding: MRDT, partner funding

Budget: \$2,000 (may be revised)

6). North by Northwest Regional Campaign

Tactics: Identified by group application submitted by Tourism Smithers

Implementation: Identified in group application

Source of Funding: MRDT, partner funding

Budget: \$4,000 (Tourism Smithers portion), Project total: \$70,000

Major Category: Marketing

Activity Title: Media Advertising and Promotion

Tactics:

Targeted high-impact, on brand advertising to increase awareness of Smithers among potential visitors, in primary and secondary markets.

Implementation Plan:

Short Description

Where possible ads for Smithers Tourism and/or accompanied with ads from Smithers area tourism businesses, using primarily digital media or in some cases traditional media.

- Will feature a call to action: www.tourismsmithers.com or specific landing pages on that website and, if appropriate, 1-800-542-6673
- Target – including: touring, adventure travelers, (ski, hike, ski, snowmobile and mountain bike, fish, camp, explore).
- Sample publications and sites: The Milepost, Go Camping, Black Press, Bell Media, partner and sector websites and social channels, use of signage opportunities.

Quantifiable Objectives

- increase number of visits to www.tourismsmithers.com (compared to 2022)
- increase length of time on website (compared to 2022)
- increase # of requests for info
- increase downloads and requests for Smithers Visitor Guide

Rationale

- For touring, The Milepost remains a major tool used by travelers on route to Alaska. Smithers is on two of the possible routes: Highway 16/37 and Highway 16/marine route, if Alaska Marine Route operates again 2023. (Maintaining a presence will keep Smithers in the eye of the traveler during the planning and while on route in the region. Northern BC and Smithers are a destination for BC/Alberta vacationers looking for an in Canada holiday.

Action Steps

- Work with regional DMO's, the Northwest BC Coop, Northern BC Tourism, sector organizations and business partners in determining key advertising opportunities in the touring sector.
- Work with tourism businesses and other partners to increase the marketing presence where possible.
- Create and refine creative for all marketing areas.

Potential partnerships

- Northern BC Tourism
- Regional District of Bulkley Nechako – Visit Bulkley Nechako
- Tourism stakeholders
- Sector associations

Resources

- Tourism Smithers staff time

Sources of Funding

- MRDT
- Stakeholder funds if additional private sector ads

Responsibility

- Tourism Smithers

Timeframe

- 2023

Budget

- \$30,000

Performance Measures:

Expected outputs

- Continuing strong presence of Tourism Smithers (& partner) ads across media (digital, and traditional)

Expected outcomes

- Increased visits to website.
- Increasing requests for information.
- Downloads and requests for Smithers Visitor Guide.

MRDT at 2019 levels or better.

Major Category: Marketing

Activity Title: Ski and Stay Winter Marketing

Tactics:

Targeted marketing to support the goals of the Ski and Stay marketing cooperative – namely increase visitation to Smithers, Hudson Bay Mountain Resort, Skeena Cat-Skiing, and partner hotels

Implementation Plan:

Short description

Targeted winter marketing online and in traditional media of the established Ski and Stay brand will drive skier and snowboarder visitation to Smithers and to our ski and accommodation partners. Target market: skiers and snowboarders between Prince George and Prince Rupert first, other BC and Alberta as secondary markets.

Ski and Stay promotes a welcoming winter destination and fulfills dreams of outdoor adventure and provides opportunity to connect with the human spirit

Quantifiable Objectives

- Increasing overnight visitor bookings to hotels and ski partners in the winter months
- Increasing number of visits to www.skiandstay.ca
- Increase awareness of ski product and winter tourism
- Increased ski packages booked through the hotels

Rationale

Winter marketing focuses on driving skier/snowboarder visitation to Smithers, and to our ski and accommodation partners. The Ski and Stay brand has an established 18 year history. Private sector partnerships are in place and are listed in the first paragraph.

Action Steps

- Social Media Campaign: Use Facebook, Instagram to share messages and stories. Contesting whereby individuals post pictures of themselves in ski/snowboard gear @tourismSmithers, and hashtag: #smithersbc, #playgroundofthenorth and #explorebc. Messaging is further shared on the social media feeds of business participants and Tourism Smithers. *Costs: \$1,500*
- Paid Advertising: Digital campaign with primary target market NWBC, then BC and Alberta. Digital ads, including short videos, sponsorship of sport pages, & some regional print marketing driving readers/listeners/viewers to www.skiandstay.ca. *Cost: \$11,500*
- Website: www.skiandstay.ca Maintain and optimize the website. The site provides a link to the reservation pages of the partnered hotels. Additional value is gained through connection to participating retailers. Ski and Stay Smithers is the primary message on all marketing and the website domain name. *Cost: \$1,000*
- Graphic Design: Necessary to support the marketing initiatives outlined above. *Cost: \$1,000*

Partnerships

Private sector partnerships in place include the Hudson Bay Mountain Resort, Skeena Cat Skiing, Bear Mountaineering, Prestige Hudson Bay Lodge, Aspen Inn, Stork Nest Inn and Fireweed Motel. Complimentary partnerships include the not-for-profit Bulkley Valley Cross Country Ski Club as the BV Nordic Centre and the Bulkley Backcountry Ski Society as the Hankin-Evelyn Backcountry Ski Recreation Area.

Resources

- Tourism Smithers staff time

Sources of Funding

- MRDT, private sector

Responsibility

- Tourism Smithers

Timeframe

- 2022/23

Budget

- \$15,000

Evaluation mechanism

- The presence of Ski and stay marketing in various media - traditional, digital and on social channels, through-out the season.

Expected outputs

- Ski and Stay website maintained and refreshed.
- Site visits comparable to 2019
- Advertising & Social media campaign activated

Expected outcomes

- Positive response from partners and increase in overnight stays and ski pass sales through Ski and Stay

Major Category: Marketing**Activity Title: Steelhead Paradise****Tactics:**

Steelhead Paradise is an in-region marketing brand welcoming anglers, especially non-Canadian, non-guided anglers to Smithers and including signage, window decals and angling related events.

Implementation Plan:**Short description**

This program welcomes anglers to *Steelhead Paradis* and was developed when regulations changed to limit non-Canadian, non-guided anglers to fishing 5 days a week on classified waters on the Bulkley, Babine, Morice, Kispiox and parts of the Skeena. That means no weekends.

In 2021, the Skeena watershed was closed to steelhead angling, following the 2020 pandemic year of travel restrictions. That meant one more crisis year for guide and lodge operations. In 2022, a video campaign amplified by business owners and angling guides sent a positive message before it was known if there would be a season. There was! Visiting anglers reported they missed the events normally held in season. In 2023, we will focus on events again which may include film nights, speakers, gear nights and other events created in the fishing shops.

Marketing includes the welcome message: signs, window decals, stickers for tackle boxes, bumpers, boats etc., and posters for events.

www.steelheadparadise.com is where events, regulations, and stories are posted for visiting and local anglers. The site has been dormant. Over the winter, we determine if the site should be updated vs creating a new page to replace it at www.tourismsmithers.com Our hashtag is #steelheadparadise

Quantifiable Objectives

- Events hosted, for both visiting and local anglers.
- Positive feedback from anglers at events, from fishing shop owners and staff and from the accommodation sector on the numbers of non-Canadian, non-guided anglers.

Rationale

- Steelhead angling is a major tourism activity in the Smithers region. Smithers and the rivers that are accessed through Smithers are a global destination for steelheaders. Local businesses thrive on the anglers and steelheading culture. Smithers is the centre of Steelhead Paradise.

Action Steps

- Work with:
 - local fishing shops to book events like Fly Fish Film Festival and speakers nights.
 - the Town of Smithers to install welcome signs on the highway.
 - local business to ensure the welcome decals are up on storefronts.
 - others agencies to create positive accurate messaging.

Partnerships

- Fishing shops, Upper Skeena Steelhead Guides, Steelhead Society of BC Northern Branch

Resources

- Tourism Smithers staff time

Sources of Funding

- MRDT, stakeholder partnerships

Responsibility

- Tourism Smithers

Timeframe

- June 2023 – October 2023

Budget

- \$5,000

Evaluation mechanism

- Steelhead Paradise events held
Steelhead Paradise branding visible

Performance Measures:

Expected outputs

- at least two Steelhead Paradise events held
- an increased number of decals branding throughout Smithers
- welcome branding present at entrance to town during angling season

Expected outcomes

- positive feedback from anglers at events
- positive feedback reported from fishing shops and the accommodation sector by non-Canadian non-guided anglers

Activity Title: BV Artisan Studio Tour

Tactics:

Working Bulkley Valley artists and artisans, to promote the 6th annual Artisan Studio Tour attracting regional visitors to Smithers and to create a summer marketing campaign with the Artisan Studio Tour as the lure.

Implementation Plan:

Short description

- Use the positive image that Smithers has in the Northwest Region for its unique downtown and cultural hub to attract visitors to enjoy a self-guide art tour
- Use the natural amenities to enhance the cultural amenity. One will experience the natural beauty and the artistic beauty on display on the Artisan Studio Tour.
- Utilize social media, online marketing, posters and maps to promote the self-guided tour. This Artisan Studio Tour will reinforce a message of the benefit of regional travel. *“There is beauty and quality to be found in the Bulkley Valley.”*

Quantifiable Objectives:

- Increase awareness of the quantity and quality of visual artist and products in the Smithers/Bulkley Valley area.
- Number of visitors to the tours
- Generate overnight stays of studio tour visitors
- Campaign designed and launched in June 2023
- Tour map updated to reflect the 2023 event.
- Contest prize of weekend getaway to Smithers

Rationale

- Increasing awareness that Smithers is a regional destination for high-quality art products will add to the positive image the community has for its outdoor amenities and unique downtown. It will provide one more reason to visit, not just at the time of the studio tour but year-round. Art purchased will be a constant reminder of a positive experience.

Action Steps

- In late winter work with organizer of the Studio Tour (representative of the artisans) to design the campaign. Budget: \$500
- Confirm event dates. (August Long Weekend).
- Produce the tour map. Print posters and maps for distribution. Budget \$500.
- Posters and maps created for mobile and web.
- Create online campaign including start and end dates. Opportunities include Instagram, Facebook, and local media through their online channels. Budget: \$500

Partnerships

- Tourism stakeholders, hotels, restaurants, artists, artisan, Smithers Visitor Centre.

Resources

- Tourism Smithers staff time

Sources of Funding

- MRDT, partner contribution

Responsibility

- Tourism Smithers & participating artists

Timeframe

- March 2022 – Aug 2022

Budget

- \$2,000

Evaluation mechanism

- Increase in visitors to artisan studios
- Hotel bookings for the tour weekend

Performance Measures:

Expected outputs

- BV Artisan Studio Tour materials created: Posters, map, digital files
- Page created on TourismSmithers.com
- # agreed to by all parties for use on social media

Expected outcomes

- Increase in visitors to studios over 2019.
- Increased engagement on Tourism Smithers social media channels during Artisan Tour weekend.

Major Category: Marketing

Activity Title: Travel Media

Tactics:

To work with Destination BC, Northern BC Tourism and stakeholders to identify potential visits by travel media.

Implementation Plan:

Short description

- To host travel media by providing local tours, supporting accommodation or other requests deemed of value.
- Be flexible and open to writers, photographers, and social media influencers.

Quantifiable Objectives

- Host 2 – 4 travel media professionals by providing local tours, supporting accommodation or other requests.

Rationale

- The value of unpaid media has long been established. Receiving written articles, videos and social media content without financial obligations is accepted as a more reliable source of information. Travel media may become advocates for the area if they have had a successful visit.

Action Steps

- Identify hosting opportunities with stakeholders that include businesses, service clubs and event holders.
- Communicate with DBC and Northern BC Tourism Association (NBCTA) about possible travel media visits
- Work with other DMO's in the region to leverage experiences
- Share new experiences and product with DBC, NBCTA teams

Potential Partnerships

- DBC, NBCTA, and stakeholders

Resources

- Tourism Smithers staff time

Sources of Funding

- MRDT

Responsibility

- Tourism Smithers

Timeframe

- Flexible timeframe throughout the year to accommodate seasonal activities and events

Budget

- \$6,000

Evaluation Mechanism

- Positive feedback from the travel media upon completion of their visit.

Performance Measures:

Expected outputs

- 2 co-hosted or guided travel media visitors.

Expected outcomes

- Two unpaid travel media stories published mentioning Smithers.

Major Category: Marketing

Activity Title: Travel Trade

Tactics:

To support Familiarization Tours to the community (FAMS) as they are requested

Implementation Plan:

Short description

- Periodically, throughout the year, requests are made by DBC/NBCTA to support travel trade familiarization tours to the region.

Quantifiable Objectives

- To ensure FAM tours are supported as requested

Rationale

- Investment in a regional tour provides an opportunity to have Smithers included in itineraries. This may be adding value such as a local tour, hosting a meal, or providing accommodation. Overall, this is beneficial to the local community and tourism sector. The pandemic, and changes to the protocol of handling travel trade has realized a decline in requests, however, Tourism Smithers remains committed to opportunities and ensures an annual budget is allocated.

Action Steps

- This is a reactive notion.
- Tourism Smithers to remain committed and prepared to deliver positive support and experience to FAM participants in the Smithers area.

Potential Partnerships

- Destination BC, Northern BC Tourism, local and regional tourism stakeholders

Resources

- Tourism Smithers staff time

Sources of Funding

- MRDT

Responsibility

- Tourism Smithers

Timeframe

- To be available to opportunity year-round

Budget

- \$2,000

Evaluation Mechanism

- Positive feedback from FAM participants
- Engagement on social media channels

Performance Measures:

Expected outputs

- To co-host 1 tour in 2023

Expected outcomes

- Engagement with FAM participants
- Increased engagement on social media channels
- Positive word-of-mouth

Major Category: Marketing – Consumer**Activity Title: Consumer Focused Asset Development****Tactics:**

- Identify gaps in imagery and b-roll to curate and produce photography, videography and written copy to support marketing campaigns
- Build upon digital asset library and ensure full ownership of materials to be remarketed and make available to stakeholders

Description:

Over the last few years, Tourism Smithers has expanded video and photography assets and consistently receive a positive response when shared. We are better positioned to share/contribute more imagery with our stakeholders for the variety of marketing programs and will continue to identify gaps and build upon our current database of owned visual assets.

Implementation Plan:**Short description**

- Identify gaps in imagery/b-roll and stories that need to be told
- Create relevant and compelling content.

Quantifiable Objectives

- Emphasis on high quality images and footage
- Update Data Hub with images and b-roll
- Amount of owned assets
- Traffic to Tourism Smithers website
- Social media followers and engagement
- Stakeholder interest and collaboration

Rationale

There is an ongoing demand from Destination BC and Smithers stakeholders for on-brand, refreshed imagery, b-roll and engaging content to ensure awareness and heightened interest in Smithers. Enhancing imagery/b-roll will refresh marketing campaigns. Strong imagery and compelling b-roll can move interest to the purchase cycle.

Action Steps

- Engage with NBCTA & photographers/videographers to acquire required images
- Upload to content hub
- Provide visual assets to stakeholders to ensure refreshed imagery, b-roll in campaigns
- Ensure media writers gain access to content for their stories
- Share owned images and video with DBC for inclusion in their digital asset management system

Potential Partnerships

- Destination BC, NBCTA, the Regional District of Bulkley Nechako, and private sector.

Resources

- Tourism Smithers staff time

Sources of Funding

- MRDT funds

- Tourism Smithers

Timeframe

- Ongoing, as opportunities are presented

Budget

- \$10,000

Evaluation Mechanism

- Images/b-roll/story material gathered

Performance Measures:

Expected outputs

- Images approved and uploaded to the content hub
- Gallery of images and b-roll on Tourism Smithers website and Co-op marketing campaigns
- Increase in social media and engagement

Expected outcomes

- Increase in demand from stakeholders to use Tourism Smithers imagery/b-roll
- Increased use of photos and videos and better variety representative of brand
- Increased brand alignment and representation
- Ease of access and better navigating of the digital assets
- Increased engagement on social media channels

Major Category: Marketing – Consumer

Activity Title: Digital Marketing and Social Media Optimization

Tactics:

Additional investment was made to the Tourism Smithers website in 2021 and additional resources were invested into maintenance of the Tourism Smithers social media channels (Facebook and Instagram). Tactics for 2023 will include:

- Content updates to Tourism Smithers website as needed
- Build awareness about Tourism Smithers refreshed website as informative resource and trip planning tool
- To increase social media engagement by building awareness about new activities, experiences, events, products and services
- Use key story-telling themes aligned with brand
- Increase awareness to primary target markets
- Position Smithers as a destination to Northwestern B.C. and Northern BC demographics

Implementation Plan:

Short description

- Content is current, with refreshed, functional and attractive site
- To maintain content and provide content updates where/when required. Quantifiable objectives

Rationale

Digital and social media marketing remain an efficient and effective way to create awareness of Smithers as a destination. The Tourism Smithers website (www.tourismsmithers.com) is a critical component to drive awareness and consideration, to intent, to triggering conversion. The DMO website must be informative and encourage the consumer and potential visitor to move from interest to purchase. A refreshed site was launched in early 2022 and is built upon the new slogan “*Get Good Natured*” with much new imagery and content that includes comprehensive events listings, storytelling, and enhanced information about businesses and things to see and do. To complement the website, Tourism Smithers has increased resources to their social media channels. Social media is a cost-effective way to generate, curate and amplify destination stories and bring them

to a targeted audience. Always-on, social media (including content marketing) will keep Smithers top of mind while increased storytelling by others will generate additional earned media in a credible way.

Action Steps

- Web team (Designworks and Coffee Web Development) to regularly review and update the site as needed.

Potential Partnerships

N/A

Resources

- Tourism Smithers staff time & contractor

Sources of Funding

- MRDT

Responsibility

- Tourism Smithers

Timeframe

- 2023, ongoing

Budget

- \$6,000

Evaluation Mechanism

- Website is updated and functioning well
- Traffic to Tourism Smithers website
- Length of time on Tourism Smithers website
- Number of followers on Tourism Smithers Facebook and Instagram
- Engagement on social media channels

Performance Measures

Expected outputs

- www.TourismSmithers.com responsiveness
- Tourism business listings
- Blog posts and events listings
- Refreshed content and imagery

Expected outcomes

- Increased traffic and length of time on Tourism Smithers website
- 15% increase in number of followers on Tourism Smithers social media channels
- Increased engagement to Tourism Smithers social media channels
- Increase in overnight stays

Major Category: Marketing – Consumer

Activity Title: Google Ad Search and Digital Campaign

Tactics:

- To work with War Room Inc. to achieve the benefits of the Google ad search grant program and associated digital marketing campaign.

Implementation Plan:

Short description

- To extend information distribution about Smithers through investment in google ads.
- To develop a digital marketing campaign to be delivered winter of 2022/23 utilizing the google ad search benefits.
- To bolster other campaigns with google ad search.

Quantifiable Objectives

- Contract War Room Inc. to apply for and deliver the ad search program and to manage the connected digital campaign.
- Work with DesignWorks BC to develop creative for digital marketing campaign.

Rationale

Google ad search is an effective tool better position Tourism Smithers to meet travelers and potential visitors demands as they are searching, browsing and watching across google search engines and the web. Initial approval to apply for the Google Ad grant was given to Tourism Smithers by the Board in August, 2019 but placed on hold in 2020. To fully benefit from the program, it was identified that additional resources would be required. This opportunity will be achievable in 2023.

- Working War Room Inc., the intention is to build awareness for different key activities in our area: skiing, hiking, mountain biking, fishing, Main Street/downtown core, arts and culture, motorcycle touring, Indigenous product.

Action Steps

- Work with War Room Inc. to maintain dynamic list aligned with Tourism Smithers target markets using keywords and program areas (i.e. ski, mountain biking, fishing).
- To provide creative materials and to liaise with web builder to ensure required URL's are in place.
- Establish creative calendar to support the various activities to be promoted and maintain rotation to ensure content is fresh, and up to date.
- Maintain communication with War Room to ensure responsive campaigns, via monthly meetings and feedback reports.
- Where possible link to/support other marketing programs that Tourism Smithers participates in. For example, mountain bike creative will support Smithers Mountain Biking and #ridenorth, the regional campaign that drives people to the mountain bike trails in Northern BC, supporting the objective of increasing awareness, and actual visitation.

Potential Partnerships

- Partners in existing marketing campaigns.

Sources of Funding

- MRDT
- Grant; Google Ads

Responsibility

- Tourism Smithers

Timeframe

- Ongoing

Budget

- Digital campaign \$18,000
- Search Campaign \$36,000
- Application fee \$1,500

Evaluation Mechanism

- Regular reports from War Room.
- Meet goals of creative content to be produced and delivered.

Performance Measures:**Expected Outputs:**

- Regularly scheduled campaigns with changing content that is driven to applicable URL's.
- Monthly reports on effectiveness of Google ad search and digital campaign.

Expected Outcomes:

- Increased awareness of Smithers as a desirable place to visit for multi-activities and cultural reasons.

- 15% increase in number of followers on social media platforms (FB & IG).
- Increased traffic and length of time on Tourism Smithers website.
- More robust search engine optimization (SEO) which leads to higher opportunities & rankings for organic search
- Monthly reports from War Room.

Major Category: Marketing – Print Collateral

Activity Title: Smithers and Area Visitor Guide 2023-24

Tactics:

Tourism Smithers produces and distributes the Smithers and Area Visitor’s Guide every 2 years. The 2023-24 publication and distribution is scheduled for 2023.

Implementation Plan:

Short description

- The Tourism Smithers Visitor Guide will be produced in winter 2022-23 with distribution scheduled for spring 2023.

Quantifiable Objectives

The Smithers and Area Visitor’s Guide is an additional tool to encourage extended stays and increase spending in the community.

- Project timeline and budget has been confirmed and content development in process.

Rationale

- The Smithers & Area Visitor Guide acts as a lure piece for Tourism Smithers and continues to be readily used by businesses, the Smithers Visitor Centre, and visitors to the region.
- Internet/cellular connectivity remains sporadic in Northern BC, and print collateral remains an important promotional tool.
- A digital version of the guide is hosted on the Tourism Smithers website.
- Increase length of stay by providing visitors a guide for pre-trip planning that includes experiences and activities.

Action Steps

- Complete project review with project scope.
- Determine distribution.

Potential Partnerships

- Smithers and area businesses re: paid advertising

Resources

- Tourism Smithers staff time, consultant time

Sources of Funding

- MRDT
- Generated advertising revenue

Responsibility

- Tourism Smithers

Timeframe

- Winter, 2022-23

Budget

- \$27,000

Evaluation Mechanism

- Completed project plan
- Publication and distribution date of March, 2023

Performance Measures:**Expected outputs**

- Approved 2022/23 Smithers & Area Visitor Guide production timeline.
- Visitor Guide distribution, March 2023.
- Distribution of Smithers & Area Visitor Guide through Smithers stakeholders.

Expected outcomes

- Requests for Visitor Guide through BC Visitor Network.
- Number of direct requests for print collateral material.
- Number of downloads of guide from Tourism Smithers website.

Major Category: Marketing**Activity Title: Festivals & Events Promotion** www.smithersevents.com**Tactics:**

- Identify status (post-pandemic) of Smithers annual or new festivals and events for 2023 and ensure promotion to key target markets;

Returning Festival & Events; Bulkley Valley Exhibition, The Midsummer Festival, Festival of Trees, Festival of Voices, Spirit of the North Classical Music Festival, BV Artisan Studio Tour, Canada Day.

- To contract Coffee Web Development to update and maintain Smithers Events.
- To deliver 2nd annual Tourism Roundtable & Mixer.

Implementation Plan:**Short description**

- Community festivals & events provide guests with a reason to visit and extend their stay. Tourism Smithers and the Smithers District Chamber of Commerce in its role as operator of the Visitor Centre combine to support www.smithersevents.com Festivals & events are displayed on an attractive kiosk in the Visitor Centre, and on www.tourismsmithers.com
- Manage social media channels and blogs and ensure updated content on smithersevents.com website.

Quantifiable Objectives

- To post community events that will be of interest to visitors in a timely fashion.
- To increase awareness to residents and visitors about community festivals & events.
- To encourage cross-promotion and collaboration in promotion of community festivals & events.
- To increase number of attendees (tickets sold) at festivals & events
- To increase traffic to smithersevents.com website.
- To increase number of social media followers and engagement.
- To increase number of unpaid media stories generated.

Rationale

To establish Smithers and the Bulkley Valley as a host destination of unique festivals and events by supporting the promotion, and growth of festivals and events with the goal to increase visitation, further develop the shoulder season and strengthen partnerships and relationships. This collaborative approach to maintaining event listings is an efficient and cost-effective method that also ensures both parties are well-informed of community events.

Action Steps

- To extend contract with Coffee Web Development to ensure www.smithersevents.com is maintained

Potential Partnerships

- Coffee Web Development
- Smithers District Chamber of Chamber/Visitor Centre
- Local arts and culture organizations
- Wet'suwet'en First Nation

Resources

- Tourism Smithers staff time (minimal)
- Coffee Web Development

Sources of Funding

- MRDT

Responsibility

- Tourism Smithers and Coffee Web Developments

Timeframe

- Ongoing

Budget

- \$4,000

Evaluation Mechanism

- Ongoing maintenance and updates to event listings.
- Number of festivals and events in 2023
- Number of tickets sold
- Increased traffic to smithersevents.com and social media channels.
- Increase in hotel occupancy.
- Number of unpaid media stories.

Performance Measures:

Expected outputs

- Enhanced and maintained listings on smithersevents.com
- Cross-promotion of festivals and events from stakeholders
- Increased awareness to businesses, local stakeholders, visitors and guests of event listing opportunity.

Expected outcomes

- Increased traffic to www.smithersevents.com with goal to reach website analytics at minimum 2019 level.
- 5% Increase in hotel occupancy during festivals & events
- 15% Increase in number of social media followers and engagement over previous year

Major Category: Marketing

Activity Title: Consumer Shows

Tactics:

To continue collaboration with Northern BC DMO partners in consumer shows aimed at Tourism Smithers and region target markets.

Implementation Plan

- Tourism Smithers is a participant of an informal coop from Northern BC that have been attending consumer shows for many years. By collaborating, resources can be shared and ensure stronger promotion than if attending consumer shows as a stand-alone community.

Short Description

- To identify and confirm attendance and/or support at agreed upon consumer shows in 2023 with the Travel Northern BC partners.

Quantifiable Objectives

- The goal is to attend three shows in 2023 that include the Abbotsford Early Bird RV Show and Vancouver Outdoor Adventure Show. A 3rd show is to be determined.

Action Steps

- Confirm partner attendance and level of support for 2023 consumer shows.
- Book required show space.
- Determine staffing requirements, tradeshow theme and collateral materials required.

Rationale

Prior to the pandemic, evaluation of tradeshow by the coop confirmed that visitors to the shows and booth expressed interest and motivation to travel. 2022 saw the return of travel, and with the pent-up desire for people to travel, and uncertainty to travel to other parts of the world (i.e. Europe), it is anticipated that tradeshow activity will be busy again with highly motivated travelers. Northern BC communities offer safe destinations, wide and open spaces, unique and all season experiences and businesses – meeting the needs of travelers who are seeking a safe destination.

Potential Partnerships

- Northern BC DMO partners (Tourism Prince Rupert, Terrace, Nisga'a, Kitimat-Stikine, Smithers, Bulkley Nechako, Prince George and NE BC Coop).

Resources

- Tourism Smithers staff time

Sources of Funding

- MRDT

Timeframe

- January 2023 through to March 2023

Budget

- \$8,000

Performance Measures**Expected outputs**

- Representation of Smithers products, services, activities, events at tradeshow.
- Increased awareness of sub-region as a premier destination.

Expected outcomes

- Number of quality conversations with potential visitors.
- Number of collateral materials distributed.

Major Category: Destination and Product Experience Development**Activity Title: Industry Development and Training****Tactics: Tourism Stakeholder Information Session****Implementation Plan**

Building on the success of the 2022 Tourism Smithers Roundtable session, plan and deliver an annual, informal stakeholder information session for community stakeholders including local businesses, service clubs, accommodation providers, event holders and local government.

Short description

- Invite Tourism Stakeholders to an information event.
- Develop list of topics to be delivered and include relevant presentations from industry representatives.
- Target date Spring 2023.

Quantifiable Objectives

- Ensure strong representation of Tourism Smithers in attendance using 2022 numbers as goal to achieve or exceed.

Rationale

With the ease of restrictions, it is once again possible to deliver in-person events. Information and networking sessions are valuable actions that support other methods of information distribution and education while providing a platform to communicate with stakeholders in a face-to-face atmosphere.

- Networking opportunity with Tourism Smithers Board of Directors and team.
- Deliver updates to Tourism Smithers activities and provide platform for industry feedback.

Action Steps

- Consult with Tourism Smithers Board to determine date, location and theme of 2023 industry.

Potential Partnerships

- Town of Smithers, Smithers District Chamber of Commerce (Smithers Visitor Centre), Bulkley Nechako Tourism Working Group, Northern BC Tourism, Destination BC, Tourism Stakeholders.

Resources

- Tourism Smithers staff time

Sources of Funding

- MRDT
- In-kind contributions from private sector (i.e. venue, food & beverage)

Responsibility

- Tourism Smithers

Timeframe

- No later than spring of 2023

Budget

- \$2,500

Evaluation Mechanism

- Number of stakeholders in attendance
- Quality of feedback from attendees

Performance Measures

Expected outputs

- Confirmation of stakeholder event.
- Engagement with tourism industry stakeholders, community organizations and Tourism Smithers Board and team.

Expected outcomes

- Positive feedback from attendees.
- Number of attendees to exceed 30.

Major Category: Destination and Product Experience Development

Activity Title: Product Experience Enhancement and Training

Tactics:

- To host or co-host one tourism stakeholder education event in 2023.

Implementation Plan

Short description

- In consultation with the Tourism Smithers Board conduct a relevant tourism education event.

Quantifiable Objectives

- The hosted or co-hosted event will be for the main purpose of training community industry stakeholders, thereby better educating on the value of tourism and to provide additional tools to support recovery efforts.
- To ensure a minimum of 20 participants through an in-person or virtual training session.

Rationale

Providing resources and educational tools aids in maintaining positive stakeholder relations and adds value to the tourism sector overall.

Action Steps

- In consultation with the Tourism Smithers Board and potential partners, select a relevant topic, secure date, and organize and host the event.
- Widely promote the event to community.

Potential Partnerships

- Smithers District Chamber of Commerce, Bulkley Nechako Tourism Working Group, NBCTA, DBC.

Resources

- Tourism Smithers staff time

Sources of Funding

- MRDT

Responsibility

- Tourism Smithers

Timeframe

- 2023

Budget

- \$1,500

Evaluation Mechanism

- Number of attendees attending event.
- Feedback from the event attendees and partners.

Performance Measures**Expected outputs**

- Stakeholder meeting takes place.
- Positive interest from potential attendees.

Expected outcomes

- Positive feedback from attendees.
- Stakeholder engagement with tourism industry stakeholders and Tourism Smithers.
- Educational resources and better understanding on the value of tourism to Smithers.

Major Category: Destination and Product Experience Development**Activity Title: Industry Development & Training – Tourism Excellence Award****Tactics:**

To support the annual Smithers District Chamber of Commerce Business Excellence Award by sponsoring the Smithers Tourism Excellence Award.

Implementation Plan**Short description**

The Smithers District Chamber of Commerce hosts the annual Business Excellence Award and Tourism Smithers sponsors the Tourism Excellence Award. This award gives prominence and recognition to a business or organization that is an example of excellence. It is presented by a Tourism Smithers Board or staff member and includes an opportunity to speak about the recipient.

Quantifiable Objectives

- Number of qualified nominations for Tourism Excellence Award received and presented.

Rationale

The *Tourism Excellence Award* is an opportunity to increase the profile of the tourism sector to Smithers and area while delivering on community pride and goodwill. It is also a platform to annually recognize achievements and contributions to the tourism sector by finalists and award recipient.

- A significant event for the community that increases awareness of the tourism sector and celebrates excellence.
- Creates a path to recognize achievements and contributions.

Action Steps

- Confirm partnership with Smithers District Chamber of Commerce.
- Present award at Business Awards Night.

Potential Partnerships

- Smithers District Chamber of Commerce (Smithers Visitor Centre).

Resources

- Tourism Smithers staff time in partnership with Smithers District Chamber of Commerce staff time.

Sources of Funding

- MRDT

Responsibility

- Tourism Smithers

Timeframe

- 2023

Budget

- \$500

Evaluation Mechanism

- Tourism Excellence Award presented and received at the Annual Business Awards.
- Number of nominations received for Tourism Excellence Award.

Performance Measures:**Expected outputs**

- Promotion of Call for Nominations for Tourism Excellence Award.
- Tourism Excellence Award presented.

Expected outcomes

- Number of nominations received.
- Media coverage of Award finalists and recipient that includes focus on Smithers and area tourism sector and Tourism Smithers.
- Presentation of Tourism Excellence Award.

Major Category: Destination and Product Experience Development**Activity Title: Research & Evaluation****Tactics:**

To meet the criteria of Ministry of Finance / DBC annual MRDT reporting for 3% communities that includes the delivery of an annual Stakeholder Satisfaction Survey.

Implementation Plan**Short description**

- The 2022 (Operating Year) Tourism Smithers Stakeholder Satisfaction Survey will be conducted 1st quarter 2023.

Quantifiable Objectives

- The annual stakeholder survey will build upon the previous year survey and be approved by Tourism Smithers and DBC prior to delivery.
- As per survey reporting guidelines, the report will be submitted to Tourism Smithers for review with the final report to DBC.

Rationale

- The information extracted from the survey provides insight to the perceptions of Tourism Smithers and its delivery of programs and services from its stakeholders and guides in the annual tactical planning.

Action Steps

- Secure consultant to do the work in a timely fashion.
- Forward survey results to DBC within the annual reporting period.

Sources of Funding

- MRDT

Responsibility

- Tourism Smithers

Timeframe

- Spring, 2023

Budget

- \$2,500

Evaluation Mechanism

- Survey completion date
- Date submitted to Tourism Smithers Board and DBC

Performance Measures:

Expected outputs

- Creation and distribution of survey
- Analysis of results

Expected outcomes

- Increase completion rate by 15% in comparison to 2022 stakeholder satisfaction survey.
- Increase overall satisfaction rate of Tourism Smithers by 5%.

Major Category: Other - Destination Development

Activity Title: Smithers Wayfinding Project

Tactics:

To connect the Northwestern BC Destination Development Strategy, the Great Northern Circle Route and Thematic Framework and implement an effective wayfinding system for the Town of Smithers.

Implementation Plan:

Short Description

- To source funds and connect visually to the thematic framework effective wayfinding signage for the Town of Smithers. This may be focused on entry welcoming signage.

Quantifiable Objectives

- Establish a Steering Committee that represents stakeholders, businesses and residents of Smithers.
- Determine Scope of Work of project.
- To enhance the local visitor economy and help with recovery efforts for the tourism sector, while building on the Town of Smithers vision and OCP.
- Consideration to be given to installation of welcome signs at each main entrance to Smithers.

Rationale

A well-designed wayfinding system can convey information effectively and have a positive impact on residents, visitors and the community. It provides increased visibility for attractions and local businesses and can encourage visitors to further discover Smithers offerings. The alignment of welcome signs within the destination is critical to ensuring the visitors who do come feel invited, valued and safe. A lack of wayfinding elements can present an un-inviting perception to visitors, while a successful wayfinding system can influence the travel experience and the community’s identity.

Action Steps

- Determine budget for design, strategy and fabrication of wayfinding signage.
- Conduct discovery session(s) with community.
- Explore design considerations and ensure alignment with community brand and OCP.
- Source funding for wayfinding project

Sources of Funding

- Province of BC (Accessible municipal funding & grant programs)

- Town of Smithers

Responsibility

- Town of Smithers

Timeframe

- 2023

Budget

- To be determined

Evaluation Mechanism

- Review of the Northwest BC Destination Development Strategy
- Review of the Town of Smithers OCP
- Visually appealing welcome to the community and area

Performance Measures

Expected outputs

- Visually appealing signage to the Town of Smithers
- Visitor welcome to community
- Build upon community pride

Expected outcomes

- Extended stays in community
- Increased expenditures to local visitor economy

Major Category: Visitor Services

Activity Title: Visitor Centre (VC) Operations

Tactics:

Visitor servicing will continue to support the visitor in finding product and experiences to extend their stays and increase expenditures while in-destination. The Visitor Centre operations will continue to be delivered by the Smithers District Chamber of Commerce and be focused on continuing to streamline operations to minimize costs while providing meaningful service to guests as representatives of our community, region and overall Northern BC visitor experience.

- To provide in-destination visitors with accurate and reliable information, year-round to encourage extended stays and increased spending
- Continue annual training of VC staff and maintain uniformed approach to operations
- Provide visitors with friendly, motivating, accurate and up-to-date travel information and services
- Continue with the VIBE outreach mobile visitor servicing program
- Ensure Smithers themed mascot “Alpine Alice” used at events to enhance promotion of SmithersEvents.com
- Work with the Town of Smithers to ensure a safe environment is created and maintained for staff and visitors.

Implementation Plan:

Short Description

- To maintain the hours of operation and the existing high standards of visitor services, VC staff training, vs. staff professional look and the existing successful VIBE car program and mascot promotion.

Quantifiable Objectives

- The Smithers Visitor Centre operates year-round, with extended hours during the summer season.
- Summer staff are well trained and uniformed.
- VIBE car in operation and mascot Alpine Alice remains active.

Rationale

Travelers demands and expectations include access to readily available information, interaction and personalization. Tourism Smithers will continue to work with the Smithers District Chamber of Commerce and Smithers Visitor Centre team to ensure a positive first impression and warm welcome to the community and meet the needs and demands of travelers and potential visitors. A year-round VC with expanded summer hours is an important community asset for on-going, year-round visitor services.

Action Steps

- Implement training and purchase uniforms for VC staff.
- Seek sponsors for VIBE program.
- Ensure Alpine Alice in attendance at community events.
- Ensure Smithers print collateral readily available for distribution.

Potential Partnerships

- Funding partner for enhanced training opportunities
- Corporate sponsor for VIBE Program.

Resources

- Visitor Centre staff admin time

Sources of Funding

- Town of Smithers

Responsibility

- Smithers District Chamber of Commerce/Visitor Centre staff time

Timeframe

- Ongoing, 2023

Budget

- \$86,050

Evaluation Mechanism

- Year-round operation of Smithers Visitor Centre with enhanced summer hours
- Trained VC staff
- Activation of VIBE Program and Alpine Alice mascot

Performance Measures:

Expected outputs

- Distribution of Smithers & Area Visitor’s Guide.
- Training of VC staff.

Expected outcomes

- 20% increase in number of visitors served at Smithers Visitor Centre.
- Increase in requests for VIBE Program.
- Increase in requests for attendance of Alpine Alice mascot at community events.
- Increase in traffic to Tourism Smithers website.

Major Category: Visitor Services

Activity Title: Riverside Municipal Campground Operations

Tactics:

To maintain the high quality of the Riverside Municipal Campground site and maintain high occupancy rate.

Implementation Plan:

Short description

- The Town of Smithers Public Works department will ensure that they conduct annual and seasonal work plans to the campground that will both improve and maintain the facility and operations.

Quantifiable Objectives

- To maintain the high number of users of the park
- To maintain the 28 serviced sites, the potable water, the firewood supply, the cook shelter, the playground, the day use area and the perimeter trail access.

Rationale

- Visitation to the campground continues to increase and occupancy remains at a high level. To meet visitor demands and expectations, deliver a positive experience and ensure a high occupancy rate, the campground requires ongoing maintenance. the number of campground visitors is increasing and the site is consistently occupied.

Action steps

- Ensure annual works routines, seasonal works routines and ongoing maintenance to the park.

Potential partnerships

- N/A

Resources

- Town of Smithers Public Works staff time

Sources of Funding

- Town of Smithers campground user fees

Responsibility

- Town of Smithers Public Works Department

Timeframe

- Ongoing (Seasonal and annual maintenance schedule)

Budget

- Public Works department Parks and Recreation budget of \$50,000

Evaluation Mechanism

- Well maintained park
- Maintain or improve occupancy rate

Performance Measures:

Expected outputs

- Public Works staff maintain and improve campground

Expected outcomes

- Maintained or increased visitor numbers to the park
- Maintained or increased occupancy to the campground

Major Category: Visitor Services

Activity Title: Smithers Regional Airport

Tactics:

To implement the marketing plan for the Smithers Regional Airport.

Implementation Plan:

Short Description

- The Smithers Airport and The Town of Smithers have marketing plans for the Smithers Regional Airport. Marketing efforts take place year-round and are heightened throughout the year to focus on important activities and services.

Quantifiable Objectives

- To act upon the marketing plan.

Rationale

- The Smithers Regional Airport is a vital, world-wide link to the valley’s recreational assets and tourism sector. Marketing this municipal asset and regional facility will benefit the local economy and the tourism industry in general.

Action Steps

- continued advertising, brand promotion and marketing of the Smithers Regional Airport.

Potential Partnerships

- N/A

Resources

- Town of Smithers Airport Manager and airport staff time

Sources of funding

- Town of Smithers
- Airport user fees

Responsibility

- Town of Smithers Airport staff

Timeframe

- Jan 2023 to December 2023.

Budget

- \$20,400.

Evaluation Mechanism

- presence of advertising in airport
- presence of brand promotion
- Staff in place to oversee project

Performance Measures:

Expected outputs

- Increased awareness of Smithers Regional Airport services

Expected outcomes

- Increased revenue generated in media advertising
- Increase in revenue generated from airport user fees
- Promotion of Smithers Regional Airport and Town of Smithers brand