

Island Coastal Economic Trust

Comox Valley Marketing and Investment Attraction Campaign

Final Report – August 23, 2010

Introduction and Summary of Work

We are pleased to provide the final project report that fulfils the requirements as set out in the Island Coastal Economic Trust funding requirements.

The funding from Island Coastal Economic Trust enabled the Comox Valley to achieve unprecedented Olympic legacies; over 600 athletes and coaches from International elite sport community training and competing in the region; over 30 media delegations and 1 million dollars of media generation during the weeks around the Olympics; over 2.9 million in direct sport infrastructure improvements; a total of over 44.4 person years people employed through these Olympic initiatives.

Additionally we are pleased to advise this project allowed the Comox Valley to significantly leverage the Island Coastal Economic Trust funding to extend the Olympic impact for the community. The total project costs have resulted in Island Coastal Economic Trust contributing 12% of the total project cost, vs. 25% originally outlined.

Completion of Project Objectives:

Project #1: Creation of interactive multimedia marketing material, expanding on BC Explorer Program.

- 1) Official Comox Valley Visitors' Guide - increased culinary, agri-tourism editorial content, team hosting and destination content and images. Increased printing by 25% to 100,000 copies printed and distributed.
- 2) HD Video Shoot – High Definition tourism and economic development footage and video production featuring Culinary, Agriculture, Investment Tourism product and attractions. Used in BC Explorer in Beijing Olympic and Vancouver 2010 Olympics, posted on our Invest and Discover websites, You Tube and used in media, immigration, consumer and agri-investment attraction.
- 3) Media Kit Development- story hooks, pre written stories and destination backgrounder were researched and developed by a professional writer that showcased the region's agri-tourism, shellfish and agri-investment opportunities.
- 4) Image Bank - Three photographers engaged to expand image bank inventory in culinary, agri-tourism and agriculture resulting in an additional 300+ images. These have been presented online and have been provided to extensive media.
- 5) Agri-investment Attraction Cards – Profiled the unique agri-investment opportunities for use at immigration attraction shows.

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6) Taste Comox Valley Producer and Chef Profiles - 28 different chefs and producers were interviewed and photographed, with a professional writer developing profiles, to showcase the depth of agricultural producers and the chefs who use their product. Used for media, agri-tourism and investment attraction efforts.

7) Farm Tour Maps were produced and posted to the website and included in all media kit packages to drive media, visitors and locals to buy-direct from over 70 farm businesses in the Valley.

8) An 'Island Inspirations' Cookbook, profiling 20 local producers and chefs and their recipes with supporting imagery was researched, designed and developed, 1000 copies printed and launched at the Fall Fair.

9) An agrologist consultant was contracted to meet with 12 local producers to prepare them for media farm tours in gathering and developing content, company backgrounders and reviewing media farm tour/site visit strategies to enable these companies to be 'media ready'. Over 100 agriculture and agri-tourism media toured these properties, resulting in increased media to the region and these businesses.

Project #2: Coordination and hosting of international media opportunities.

A Media Relations firm was contracted to roll out a Culinary and Agri-investment Media Hosting Program. The firm circulated Comox Valley agri-tourism, agri-investment and culinary product to over 100 media outlets and consequently secured over 20 culinary and agricultural related media familiarization tours to the Comox Valley. They also attended Go Media and met one on one with over 25 National and International media promoting the Valley's culinary and agricultural product as part of the overall highlights of the destination. The results were increased awareness amongst media about the product and increased media coverage for the sector.

Pre-Olympic Taste Comox Valley Media Hosting

A media relations firm distributed media invitations and Taste Comox Valley itineraries and tours options, highlighting our agri-tourism and agri-investment product, as part of Comox Valley Olympic team training media fams of the Comox Valley. The firm worked directly with over 15 International CTC and TBC offices, as well as contacted 150 media outlets from the 33 National Olympic Committee team nations. Over 30 media visits were hosted to learn about the culinary, agri-investment opportunities and the destination overall, including 7 National Olympic Broadcasters, generating over \$1 million in earned media exposure.

Games Time Media Release Program

A media relations firm was contracted to produce and circulate daily releases for the duration of the Games regarding our those teams that trained in the destination and their competition results, as well as our agricultural and tasting events. 28 releases circulated to major National and Provincial media outlets.

Over 100 Canadian agri-media came to their annual Canadian Farm Writers Federation conference that was secured for the Comox Valley and resulted in one of the largest conferences in their history, despite distance of travel required. Hosting this conference provided the opportunity to present the depth of agricultural and agri-tourism activity and opportunities available in the Comox Valley to a National agri-media base. Three distinct media farm farm tours were hosted for the delegates to 10 outstanding producers' properties and businesses.

Project #3: Attendance at specific tradeshows and marketing events in key markets including immigration events.

Comox Valley Shellfish Festival, Comox Valley, June

Profiled our agriinvestment attraction materials and depth of locally produced products to thousands of local and out of area attendees.

Grand Opening of Brambles Market and launch of Growers' Guide, Comox Valley, June

Invited culinary, agricultural and mainstream media to attend this event, as well as local governments as a way to showcase the regions ability to support a 100% local grocery store and promote our agriinvestment destination. 5 media in attendance with coverage in regional media outlets and You Tube.

Canadian Western Agribition, November

Showcased our agriinvestment opportunities to over 140,000 attendees. Generated 20 solid leads that were followed-up with. Three visits from the potential agriinvestors from the show occurred.

Pacific Ag Show, Abbotsford, February

Showcased our agriinvestment opportunities, culinary product and destination at the largest agricultural show in BC. 10 leads generated and were followed up with by staff.

UK Armed Forces Emigration Fairs - Emigrate London; Emigrate MOD, Surrey; Emigrate Glasgow, March

These immigration attraction shows allowed us to present our agricultural investment opportunities face to face with potential investors and individuals wishing to immigrate to the region for agriculture.

EAT Vancouver, May

Presented the depth of culinary attractions, events, farm tours, supported by tastings to over 38,000 attendees. Over 2000 samples provided.

Table Champetre, Comox Valley July

Hosted four culinary and mainstream media outlets to attend the event that presented a 100% local dinner event. Media coverage generated in Chek TV and Eat Magazine.

Mount Washington Alpine Food Festival, September

Presented the depth of culinary attractions, events, farm tours, supported by tastings to over 22,000 attendees. Hosted four media on fam tours with celebrity chefs and local chefs to visit farms that were being featured at the Festival.

Feast of Fields, Duncan, September

Producers, farms, restaurants and wineries attended the event under the Taste Comox Valley branding which was the only regional pavilion at the show and provided tastings and marketing materials to over 1000 attendees. 200 new culinary interested consumer emails collected.

Vancouver Island Economic Development Association Conference

Comox Valley product and producers were featured to over 100 attendees from around the Province.

A online Google promotion was implemented to support these initiatives and drive further attention to the destination, our investment and immigration opportunities.

Project #4: Launching attraction efforts in Beijing 2008 and Vancouver 2010

Building upon the success of the Comox Valley 2006 Torino Olympic Delegation, Comox Valley Economic Development created and launched an attraction strategy at Beijing 2008 and Vancouver 2010 to enhance the Comox Valley's business and tourism opportunities through the Games, generate media and Olympic connections, and profile the Comox Valley as a region of significance. The initiatives included:

Pre-Beijing 2008:

- Hosted Think Asia Workshops with the Ministry of Economic Development to support local business expansion and preparation into the Asia Pacific market
Developed and coordinated a 13 person delegation consisting of investors, companies, resorts, Destination Marketing agencies, Olympic volunteers
- Hosted pre-blitz meetings with the Chinese Consulate General to discuss tourism, trade and investment opportunities

Beijing 2008:

- Held panel discussions on Sport Event Attraction and Hosting, and Leveraging 2010 Olympic Tourism and Business Opportunities with delegates from International corporations, London 2012, and SportsWorld
- Held meetings with Chinese media, official tour operators and teams managers for potential team training
- Toured 4 National Olympic Committee Houses
- Hosted a dinner for 45 guests comprised of potential investors, tour operators, sport associations and Trade Representatives at the BC Canada Pavilion in Beijing

Pre-Vancouver 2010:

- Sent delegations to European FIS World Cups and Nations to secure media prior for Vancouver 2010
- Solicited and hosted all FIS Teams to train in the Valley, and hosted over 15 National Olympic Committee site inspections to secure team training.
- Secured the 2009 IPC World Cup event to be held in the Comox Valley, allowing the region to target those teams for team training and to leverage the event for media awareness.

Pre-Vancouver event attraction efforts included:

Comox Valley 2010 Update, 2010 Commerce Centre, BC Olympic Secretariat, Vancouver September

A local chef and two wine producers presented locally produced food and shellfish to over 100 key Lower Mainland based business people, investors and media as part of the profile of the destination, agricultural opportunities and its connection to the Olympics.

Vancouver Ski Show, September

Vancouver 2010 drove massive media and consumer attention to the Province, in particular the lower mainland and its winter attractions. This attention has increased demand for accommodation and room rates, traffic congestion and security issues are tightening accessibility, and in some cases, mountains were closed for weeks to the general public. With these obstacles, there was a growing belief amongst the lower mainland winter enthusiasts that their regular ski destinations will be too busy, too expensive or inaccessible for the 2010 ski season.

Given the perceived and real challenges created by Vancouver 2010 for the winter consumer, coupled with the growing International team hosting destination reputation, the Comox Valley took advantage of the Games by targeting the lower mainland as a to build a new client base for future ski seasons including:

- Ski Show Pavilion, 1000 sq ft.
- Global TV Promotional Spots: 6 weeks, 48 x 15 second spots, \$28,400 value
- Global TV On-air Editorial: 8 morning news shows, total 10 minutes, \$17,280 value
Total Viewers: 2,177,900
- Vancouver Sun and Province Ads: ¼ page ads, full colour
- Vancouver Sun and Province Editorial: Readers 882,000. Ad Equivalency \$3,900
- Times Colonist: 5 full page ads
- BC Ferries Terminal Exposure: Approx. 275,000 views
- Total Contest Entries Received: 6000

Vancouver 2010:

Sweden vs China Olympic Exhibition Women's Hockey Game, VIP Tasting Room, February

6 local food and beverage producers provided tastings and company/product information to over 195 VIP attendees and National and International media during this Olympic event.

Ministry of Agriculture, Olympic Marketing Event, Vancouver 2010 Unaccredited Media Centre, February

Attended to network with key Ministry staff, industry representatives and agrifood contacts.

Taste of Vancouver Island, Commerce Centre, Vancouver, February

Supported the development of the event plan, provided Taste media marketing materials and company profiles to over 60 National and International media in attendance. Also ensured a local chef and product were part of the event programming, in addition to locally produced shellfish tastings and displays.

BC Shellfish Growers Media Event, Vancouver 2010 Unaccredited Media Centre, February

Worked with the media firm responsible for the Vancouver 2010 Unaccredited Media Centre to drive invitations to National and International Media to attend this tasting event and provide media and marketing materials on our agricultural related opportunities. Over 50 media attended, which generated 30 articles, news stories and features in National and International media outlets.

BC Street, Richmond OZone, Richmond, February

Using the National Olympic Committee team hosting story, Comox Valley marketing materials, signage, images and videos were presented for the duration of the Olympics including product displays, information distribution and media event tastings. 500,000 consumers visited the Richmond Ozone. A Taste Comox Valley oyster tasting was held to coincide with Valentines Day on BC Street, and saw 450 oysters sampled in 1.5 hours. Over 30 domestic newspapers, 12+ radio stations and four radio stations covered BC Street activities driving increased visitation to our booth and awareness around the destination, its agri-tourism and agri-investment opportunities.

Economic Impact: See also Economic Impact of Olympic Games Related Activities in the Comox Valley Report.

- Pre Game Training: \$570,000, 7.9 person years job creation
- Pre-Games Activities in prior years (event hosting): \$675,000, 10 person years job creation
- Infrastructure and Facility Development: \$2.9 million, 26.5 person years job creation

Total Quantified Impacts: \$4.35 million, 44 person years job creation

Media Relationships:

Over 1 million in earned media attention occurred in the weeks of the NOC Team hosting, from 30 media delegations, 7 of which included National Olympic Broadcasters. The community does not have the resources to buy this exposure, and now has developed an extensive media network to further promote and drive sport tourism awareness to the region.

Visitation Impacts:

Additionally, the combined result of increase earned media generation and event attendance has had dramatic results for Comox Valley visitation. After a slow January 2010, the Comox Valley accommodation revenue for the month of February and March showed an increase in accommodation revenue of 18.2 percent and 12.4 percent respectively. The first quarterly figure reported to the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and the Arts, Research, Planning and Evaluation, shows an upward trend of 6.6 percent compared to last year when it was down 17.3 percent. The Comox Valley is the only region within the North Central Vancouver Island region to be showing increases. In the first six months, the Comox Valley Airport recorded an increase in the number of passengers that flew into the region. The year-to-date figure shows a four per cent rise in passenger volume as opposed to 2009 when the number was down 15.2 percent. In the first six months as well, the number of people that visited the Comox Valley Visitor Centre has also increased. It received 6,137 people from January to June, which is up from last year's total of 4,183 people.