



NEWS RELEASE

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For immediate release

Penticton's business case for air service gets warm welcome

June 29, 2012

PENTICTON — The City of Penticton is pleased with the response to the presentation made to WestJet officials this week. The delegation members are optimistic as to a positive outcome.

“Everywhere we went, WestJet staff and other delegates were talking about Penticton,” said Mayor Dan Ashton. “The City has received significant attention over the last few months with our promotional campaign, and we want to keep that momentum going through the next steps.”

WestJet invited 33 communities to give in-person presentations at its headquarters in relation to the launch of its new regional carrier, which has yet to be named. The City of Penticton was invited, and to mark the occasion, the Mayor proclaimed the City would be named “WestJetville” for June 28, which caused a stir with airline officials and media in Calgary and beyond.

The presentation sessions were used by WestJet officials to get to know the communities under consideration and to review the individual business cases. The Penticton delegation used a multimedia approach: a short video highlighting the costs of travelling to Kelowna for flights opened the presentation, followed by video testimonials of South Okanagan-Similkameen key stakeholders, a “Top 10 Reasons Penticton Stands Out” list, an overview of the attributes of the area, breakdown of the local economy and an analysis of the local air service market opportunity.

Air travel within the South Okanagan has been extensively studied using actual ticket data from residents who travel by air from our region. In addition, extensive consultation was carried out with surveys of all local travel agencies and 70 leading businesses. Their responses were used to substantiate market demand for non-stop air service to Calgary.

In 2011, Penticton Airport served approximately 80,000 passengers; however, market analysis identified that the total air travel market is more than 200,000 annual passengers – sufficient to support additional daily air service both to Calgary as well as Vancouver.

Another important survey of South Okanagan residents using the Penticton Airport is also underway, and the results will be provided to the airline.

With the initial presentation completed, the City will be following up with WestJet officials and will remain in close contact as the airline moves ahead with its regional network planning.

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Top 10 Reasons Penticton Stands Out

1. We're a Top 10 International Travel Destination for 2012, according to HuffingtonPost.com and Facebook.
2. Sunshine. Over 2,000 hours of it annually, to be exact.
3. More than 100 wineries within a one hour's drive of Penticton. We are quite literally the heart of wine country.
4. We are a desired placed to live. You can work in Alberta, and live in Penticton.
5. We are an outdoor adventure playground – year round.
6. Penticton has two big beautiful lakes, with a bevy of beaches (voted No. 2 Beaches in Canada by TripAdvisor users for 2011).
7. Nature and all the amenities you could possible need – right at your doorstep. This makes work-life balance a cinch.
8. Corporate business meeting place: We have the largest convention centre between Vancouver and Calgary, only one in the Okanagan.
9. Penticton is a breezy 35-minute drive to world-class skiing at Apex Mountain Resort and championship golf to the south.
10. Penticton is the gateway to the South Okanagan.

To view the opening video, visit http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7H1Z9AQu_sU.