

City wins provincial award for skilled worker attraction campaign

(Penticton, BC – Wednesday, April 19, 2023) – A City of Penticton campaign geared to attract skilled and remote workers to the community has been awarded a Marketing Innovation Award from the BC Economic Development Association.

The 'Welcome Home' campaign and its overarching Start Here Penticton brand have been recognized for its efforts in showcasing the city as a welcome community for working professionals.

"Penticton has long recognized the importance of attracting skilled and remote workers to our community, who fuel our local economy, add vibrancy, shop local and offer unique sets of skills," says Mayor Julius Bloomfield. "We're thrilled that our efforts are being recognized and that this campaign is proving successful in placing Penticton hot on the radar for those who seek the ideal work-life balance."

Much like a 'welcome wagon' concept, the City's economic development and communications teams prepared packages for newcomers that provided information and materials from the City, Visit Penticton and the Penticton & Wine Country Chamber of Commerce, as well as free passes to the Community Centre plus other perks. The idea was to connect new residents with resources to help them get settled or to open a business.

By July 7, 2022, a total of 128 respondents filled out a form to request a pack, representing 301 residents. The data collected through the form revealed that efforts to attract skilled workers were working, with the 31 to 44-year-old age group being the largest of arrivals between April and July 2022. Of those, the greatest majority relocated from Vancouver/Lower Mainland for a job (31 per cent), with remote working showing strong growth, at 14 per cent.

The campaign also included creating a series of videos highlighting key employment sectors, with the goal of building awareness of the variety of jobs on offer in Penticton. The six sector videos were played 327,693 times over LinkedIn and Facebook alone. During this time, the City's LinkedIn feed jumped substantially, gaining 250 per cent more followers and showing a 34,000-per-cent increase in post impressions over the previous month.

The City also produced a magazine for newcomers, which was distributed to local realty offices and other locations that are a first point of call for newcomers. Similarly, *Your Guide to Business* was printed and distributed for those interested in starting up a business, also available to view online at penticton.ca/business-guide.

The City's website, StartHerePenticton.com, also provides a unique service by showcasing the lifestyle of living and working in Penticton. This provides original content and is supported by dedicated social media channels. This initiative followed recommendations from the COVID-19 Safe Restart Task Force to focus on resident attraction, while building upon the 2018-2022 Economic Development Strategic Plan's key strategies involving attracting and retaining skilled labour and businesses.

The BC Economic Development Association awards recognize B.C.'s best economic development programs, partnerships, economic reconciliation, resiliency and marketing initiatives.

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