

NANAIMO TOURISM BULLETIN

March 2018

Wobbly Tourism Performance in First Quarter

“Transportation indicators have been strong in the first quarter with both BC Ferries and the Nanaimo Airport experiencing strong year-over-year and year-to-date growth. However, occupancy was down by 8% compared to March of last year and, on a year-to-date basis, is down by just over 4%. We anticipate that occupancy will improve as we get further into spring. We also want to take this opportunity to congratulate the Snuneymuxw First Nation on their recently announced innovative tourism development plans for Newcastle Island!”

Frank Bourree, CMC, Partner

- An article in HospitalityNet (March 29, 2018) notes that digital marketing trends (e.g., use of online platforms and mobile devices) and shifting demographics are continuing to change the world of hospitality marketing. Five key trends for 2018 are identified including: 1) Digital channels are now primary, not secondary; 2) Younger travelers start with search engines like Google and Bing; 3) Smartphone use is rising but desktops still matter; 4) Visual content matters more than ever; and 5) Loyalty members are engaged but not always loyal.
- It’s the time of year when many tourism operators are on the hunt for summer staff. According to an article in SiteMinder (March 29, 18), following are the six best traits for successful hotel staff (although these traits also apply to other tourism sectors): 1) guest-first attitude; 2) can tolerate stress; 3) are technically savvy; 4) can collaborate well with colleagues; 5) can keep on top of applicable rules, regulations and laws; and, 6) have good listening and inter-personal skills.
- According to Stats Canada, the number of U.S. licensed vehicles entering B.C. from the U.S. in March 2018 was up by 11.5% compared to March of 2017 (representing an increase of 20,300 vehicles). Hopefully, this increase represents the start of a strong year for U.S. visitation to the province.

| TOURISM STATISTICS | March | | Variance | Year to Date | | Variance |
|---|----------|----------|----------|--------------|----------|----------|
| | 2018 | 2017 | | 2018 | 2017 | |
| Average Occupancy | 66.33% | 74.38% | (8.04%) | 58.36% | 62.61% | (4.25%) |
| Average Daily Room Rate | \$121.71 | \$115.77 | \$5.94 | \$119.78 | \$116.02 | \$3.75 |
| Revenue Per Available Room (RevPAR) | \$80.74 | \$86.11 | (\$5.37) | \$69.90 | \$72.64 | (\$2.74) |
| BC Ferries (Tsawwassen – Duke Point) | | | | | | |
| ➤ Vehicles | 56,814 | 53,900 | 5.41% | 138,931 | 132,474 | 4.87% |
| ➤ Passengers | 126,274 | 121,512 | 3.92% | 298,955 | 284,650 | 5.03% |
| BC Ferries (Horseshoe Bay – Departure Bay) | | | | | | |
| ➤ Vehicles | 89,348 | 87,903 | 1.64% | 221,141 | 212,881 | 3.88% |
| ➤ Passengers | 247,963 | 244,707 | 1.33% | 599,786 | 582,622 | 2.95% |
| Nanaimo Airport | 33,057 | 28,836 | 14.64% | 85,859 | 77,908 | 10.21% |
| Vancouver Island Conference Centre | 53 | 319 | (83.39%) | 3,059 | 5,189 | (41.05%) |

Quotations and reproductions of statistics provided in the Victoria and Nanaimo Tourism Bulletins are permitted with credits to Chemistry Consulting Group. Note that year-to-date data may not reflect statistical updates that agencies make to historical data after the fact.

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