

# 2020 Operations Report





## VISION | MISSION | OBJECTIVES

Travel Penticton is a not-for-profit society governed by the BC Societies Act as well as an elected Board of Directors who represent tourism business interests within the City of Penticton.

Working in close partnership with Destination BC (DBC) and regional partners, we are charged with the task of providing destination marketing and awareness to potential travelers on a regional, provincial, national and international level.

### WHO WE ARE

Travel Penticton is a member driven organization, consisting of 88 accommodation providers, who collect the 2% Municipal Regional District Tax (MRDT) along with other tourism businesses who pay an annual membership fee. We work in cooperation with the City of Penticton, Penticton Trade and Convention Centre, South Okanagan Events Centre, Penticton Chamber of Commerce, Downtown Penticton Association, TOTA, DBC as well as many local clubs and organizations. By doing so we are able to leverage our collective resources to yield optimal results that are of mutual benefit to our community and the tourism industry as a whole.

### OUR MISSION

To promote, protect and enhance Penticton and Wine Country and position it as one of North America's premier holiday and lifestyle destinations.

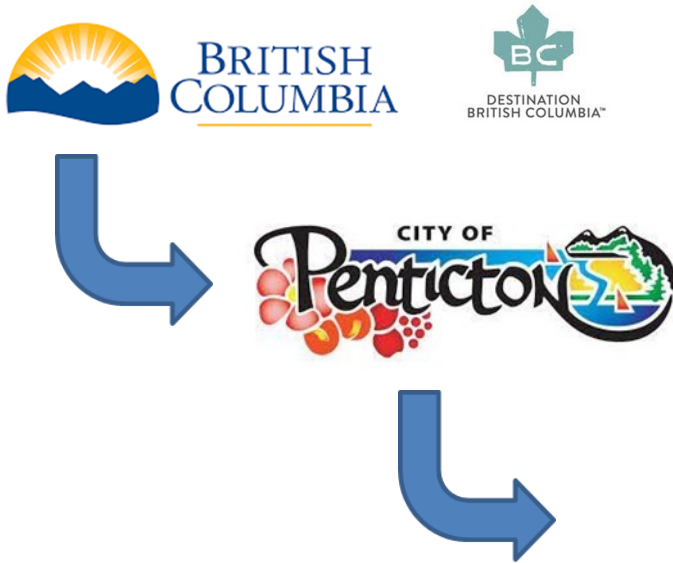
### OUR VISION

Penticton will be a successful year-round destination renowned for the authentic and remarkable experiences that we have to offer visitors of all ages, backgrounds and abilities.

### OUR OBJECTIVES

- To increase overnight visitor stays and occupancy rates for the Penticton accommodation sector and local businesses.
- To increase visitor length of stay and tourism revenue.
- To promote the interests of the accommodation industry and build tourism in Penticton.
- To promote events, attractions and experiences to encourage visitation, with focus on four seasons.
- To champion goodwill and collaboration among the public, media, government and local, provincial and national tourism organizations.
- To keep members informed and to represent and promote the interests of members on matters of public importance, including any proposed legislation or regulation.
- To develop a cooperative and ethical environment in which all operators can voice their concerns and work together to improve relationships between accommodation properties and other members of the society.
- To encourage excellence in accommodation properties and tourism product providers and offer professional development opportunities to enhance tourism knowledge and skills.
- Develop and maintain a relevant and realistic COVID Recovery Plan.

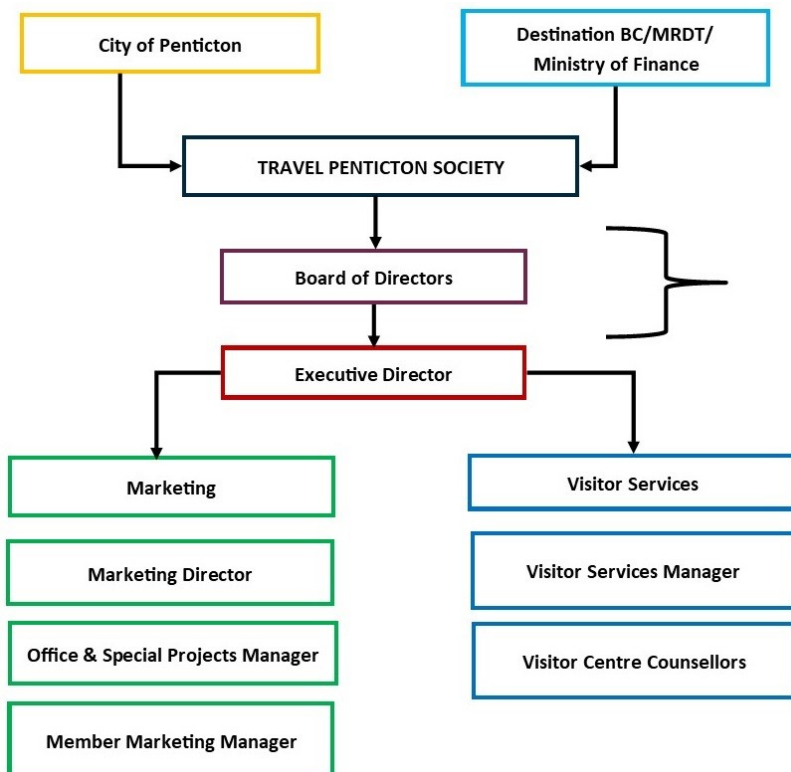
## FLOW OF FUNDS



\* The City holds the MRDT Contract with Destination BC

# TRAVEL Penticton

## SOCIETY STRUCTURE



### Elected Directors:

- 7 Accommodators  
(3 large, 3 medium and 1 small)
- 2 Winery/Brewery/Distillery/Agri-tourism
- 1 Restaurant/Retail
- 1 Attraction
- 1 Sport Tourism
- 1 MICE (meetings, incentives, conferences, events)

### 13 Voting Directors

### Appointed Representatives:

- 1 City of Penticton (non-voting)
- 1 Chamber of Commerce (non-voting)
- 1 Penticton Indian Band (voting)

### 1 Voting Appointed Representative

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2020 began with the promise of being another successful tourism season for Penticton. The buzz generated at consumer trade shows and our Winter Media FAM tour in January served to strengthen our position as a destination of choice for both Canadian and international travellers.

Events took a drastic turn in mid March, as the COVID-19 pandemic swept across the globe and Travel Penticton was forced to restructure its entire marketing strategy and budget. While dealing with issues concerning staff and public safety we had to pivot from external marketing to initiate projects and campaigns encouraging more localized travel and offering much needed support for our local tourism businesses.

Working closely with provincial and regional tourism organizations and following guidance from the Provincial Health Ministry the team set about preparing for a very challenging tourism season. While COVID-19 definitely put a strain on our tourism providers by reducing capacity, increasing workload and hindering access to seasonal workers, most businesses rose to the challenge and continued to offer exceptional service and amazing visitor experiences.

Even with the loss of all of our major annual events, Penticton's Summer season was busier than anticipated and our accommodators fared far better than many others in the province with near-normal visitation numbers. Timely and relevant communication has been key to our success this year. Travel Penticton has done our utmost to ensure that both Visitors and Members have had access to information and resources to help navigate any issues arising from the COVID pandemic.

The last quarter of 2020 was probably the most difficult for our tourism sector, as travel even within the province was discouraged and Destination BC placed restrictions on how their funding may or may not be spent. During this time Travel Penticton concentrated our marketing efforts on "staying local" and "supporting local", through key cooperative advertising initiatives.

Throughout 2020, Travel Penticton has also been preparing a recovery strategy. We are very aware we will face significant competition from other destinations. Once travel restrictions are lifted we will need to hit the ground running with engaging campaigns and attractive offers that will compel travellers to choose Penticton.

## TEAM MEMBERS 2020

Thom Tischik - Executive Director

Jo Charnock - Office & Special Projects Manager

Brad Morgan - Marketing Director

Raquel Meriam - Member Services Manager

Graham Filek - Visitor Services Manager

Jacob Winstone - Visitor Services Counsellor (Summer)

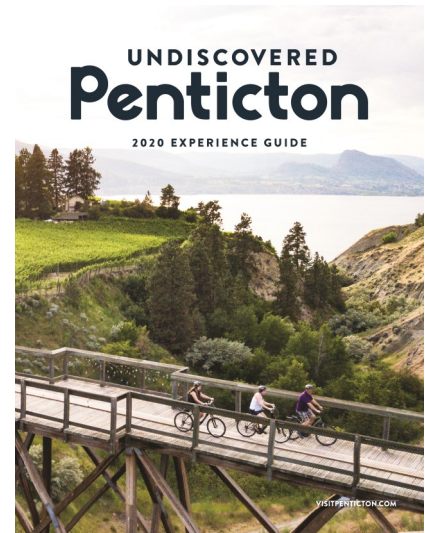
Kyla Lionello - Visitor Services Counsellor (Summer)



## 2020 KEY INITIATIVES

### 2020 Experience Guide

- **50,000** guides printed.
- Published digitally through ISSUU (**230 reads**, 1,126 impressions).
- **6,750** distributed throughout Alberta through Interwest.
- **6,215** distributed to **53 Visitor Centre Locations** throughout BC via GoBrochures.
- **4,320** copies distributed via the Visitor Centres at 888 Westminster and the Peach
- **1,475** copies distributed at conferences and tradeshows.
- **12,228** delivered to members and stakeholders in Penticton & surrounding area.



There were approximately 20,000 Experience Guides left in stock at the end of the year, so Travel Penticton decided not to produce a 2021 Experience Guide. We felt that seeking advertising revenue from our membership, when they are already under significant financial strain would be insensitive. Also, with the tourism industry remaining in such a fluid state, we were unable to anticipate the length of time that any updated information would be valid. Most of the information contained in the 2020 Guide is still relevant and consumers are sympathetic with the situation and comfortable with the fact some information may be out of date.

### 2020 Event Funding Assistance

At the start of the year, 17 community events had successfully applied for funding through our program and initial funding cheques were distributed, as per signed agreements. At the beginning of April, it became apparent, due to group gathering restrictions, most events would not proceed. We realized, though events were cancelled, some organizers had already spent their allotted funding. This was an unprecedented situation and we could not, in good conscience, hold event organizers accountable to a situation that was totally beyond their control. After discussion with our Board of Directors, Travel Penticton decided, if proof of expenses were provided, we would honor our funding commitment. Of the original \$100,000 budgeted **\$56,444 was distributed** to support event marketing efforts.

We were very fortunate that 3 events were still able to go ahead. The CSSHL BDO Championship in March was cut short, but still provided good exposure for Penticton within the hockey community. Organizers of Penticton Beer Week in October and The Ashley Home Store Curling Classic in November showed resilience and ingenuity by taking advantage of digital platforms to engaged audiences remotely.





## 2020 KEY INITIATIVES

### Consumer Tradeshows

- Spoke directly to **over 4,200 potential visitors**, handed out hundreds of Experience Guides, Let's Ride Guides, Penticton Ale Trail brochures and other member marketing materials to attendees.
- **Motorcycle Shows:** Calgary & Vancouver - over 65,000 attendees, spoke directly with **over 3,000** consumer groups.
- **Outdoor Adventure & Travel Show:** Vancouver - over 15,000 attendees, spoke directly with **over 1,270** consumer groups.

Travel Penticton was planning to also attend the Outdoor Adventure & Travel Show in Calgary, The Seattle Bike & Outdoor Show and the Calgary Beer Festival. Unfortunately safety issues and COVID-19 travel restrictions meant these were no longer viable.



### MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences & Events)

Travel Penticton has continued to work closely with the Penticton Trade and Convention Centre, South Okanagan Events Centre and Penticton Lakeside Resort to develop our MICE market. Travel Penticton provided marketing and financial support for the CSAE Tête à Tête event in Ottawa in January, which elicited great feedback. However, COVID-19 restrictions have absolutely decimated the MICE sector and we felt that further financial investments would be irresponsible. The allocated budget has been held over for 2021 and our focus is developing a multi-year strategic plan to aid recovery when the timing is right.



### Culinary Trails & Accessible Tourism

In 2019 we secured **\$112,500 in funding** over a 2 year term from Western Economic Diversification (WED) to develop a new Culinary Trail(s) with an Accessibility component and were making significant progress with the program. COVID-19 restrictions prevented us from holding planned workshops and conducting on site audits that are key deliverables. Following discussions with WED we have been permitted to extend the project and funding over 3 years, which gives us until March 31, 2022 to deliver our final report.



## 2020 COVID-19 INITIATIVES

### Emergency Advertising Support

Working with local media providers, the objective of this initiative was to provide heavily subsidized cooperative advertising opportunities for local tourism and related businesses to promote products and services available to visitors and locals throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. For a nominal fee of \$100, participants were able to secure a customized 4 week targeted advertising campaign, with Travel Penticton covering the remaining 75-90% of the cost. We initially budgeted \$10,000 for this initiative. The program received such incredible feedback that it was continued throughout the year and almost **\$30,000 has been invested to date.**

**44 companies benefited** from the program in 2020 and below are a few examples .



## 2020 COVID-19 INITIATIVES

### South Okanagan Tourism Alliance

This collaboration between Penticton and our neighbouring communities was established to ensure that when COVID-19 restrictions are lifted we are in a prime position to aid and speed up the recovery efforts of our tourism sector.

Our combined resources, marketing dollars and strength in numbers approach, offers the opportunity to increase our reach and presence in a way that would not be possible when operating independently. This collaboration has also enabled us to secure additional funding through Destination BC's Cooperative Marketing Partnership Program.

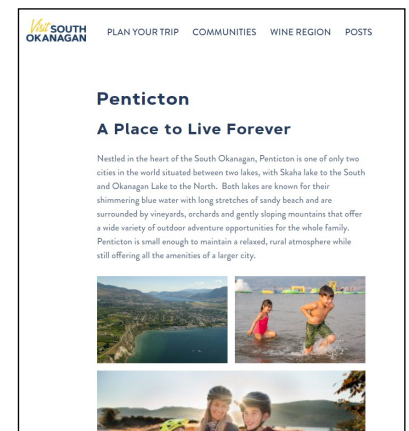
The program is off to an incredible start with brand creation, which includes a unique identity for each participating community: Destination Osoyoos, Discover Naramata Association, Oliver Tourism Association, Peachland Community Arts Council, RDOS Area I (Kaleden, Apex), RDOS Area D (Okanagan Falls), and Summerland Chamber of Commerce.

SOTA also launched a new website [www.visitsouthokanagan.com](http://www.visitsouthokanagan.com) in August which, up until December 31st has received **13,212 page views** and **5,021 users**.

Due to COVID travel restrictions SOTA was forced to scale back external marketing activities in the Fall and focus on more localized travel. The group used this time to focus on individual community messaging and build new photo and video assets in preparation for recovery.

The Visit South Okanagan Facebook Page (@VisitSouthOkanaganBC) has already acquired **248 followers** with a **reach of 88,000** and **2,200 engagements**. The Instagram Page (visitsouthokanagan) has **656 followers** with a **reach of 43,000** and **1,500 engagements**.

SOTA partnered with GolfBC to create a contest to win a South Okanagan Gold Package. The promotion was sent out in their Inside Golf eNewsletter, which boasts **50,626 subscribers**. The contest was a great success and received **1,275 entries**.





## 2020 ADVERTISING

- **Inside Motorcycles Magazine** - Canadian publication - **65,000 readership**  
Full page in January/February 2020 edition.
- **Motorcycle Mojo Magazine** - Canadian publication - **59,400 readership**  
Full page in March 2020 edition.
- **Route 97 Road Trip Map Guide** - Title sponsor/front-facing placement - **40,000 copies BC, 10,000 copies Washington**  
(Wenatchee to Oroville Border Crossing)
- **Coast Mountain Culture** - Full page in Spring & Winter publications, **20,000 copies** (BC, Alberta, PNW-US). Includes additional digital promotion through CMC social channels and in-market editorial feature.
- **Back Road Map Books** - 2-page community write up and Visitor Centre highlight in Thompson Okanagan Map Book.
- **Westjet Magazine** - Full page in April/May editions (co-op with Destination Osoyoos). Because the magazine could not be distributed in the usual way (flight seatback pockets) Westjet sent it DIRECTLY to their Top Tier Platinum, Gold & Silver Loyalty Reward Members. An **exclusive list of more than 50,000 subscribers**, that has never been shared for purposes other than WestJet's own Jetmail.
- **Mountain Bike Tourism Association (MBTA) Co-op Marketing Campaign** - Partnership with Vernon, Kelowna, and Penticton to create the 'Okanagan Single Track' mountain bike campaign. Promotes mountain biking specific to the Okanagan region through a digital advertising campaign including landing page, digital ads, social ads, print and digital editorial in US magazine FreeHub.
- **Destination BC Co-op Advertising** - Ran a series of ads in 19 community newspapers from 3 major publishers (Black Press, Glacier Media, Post Media) with a total **circulation of 819,340** in BC.
- **Vancouver is Awesome** - Collaborated with Penticton Ale Trail and Penticton Lakeside Resort to promote a Fall contest with an accompanying article highlighting craft beer in the region. The online article generated **2,161 reads 35,152 Facebook impressions** and **935 contest entries**.

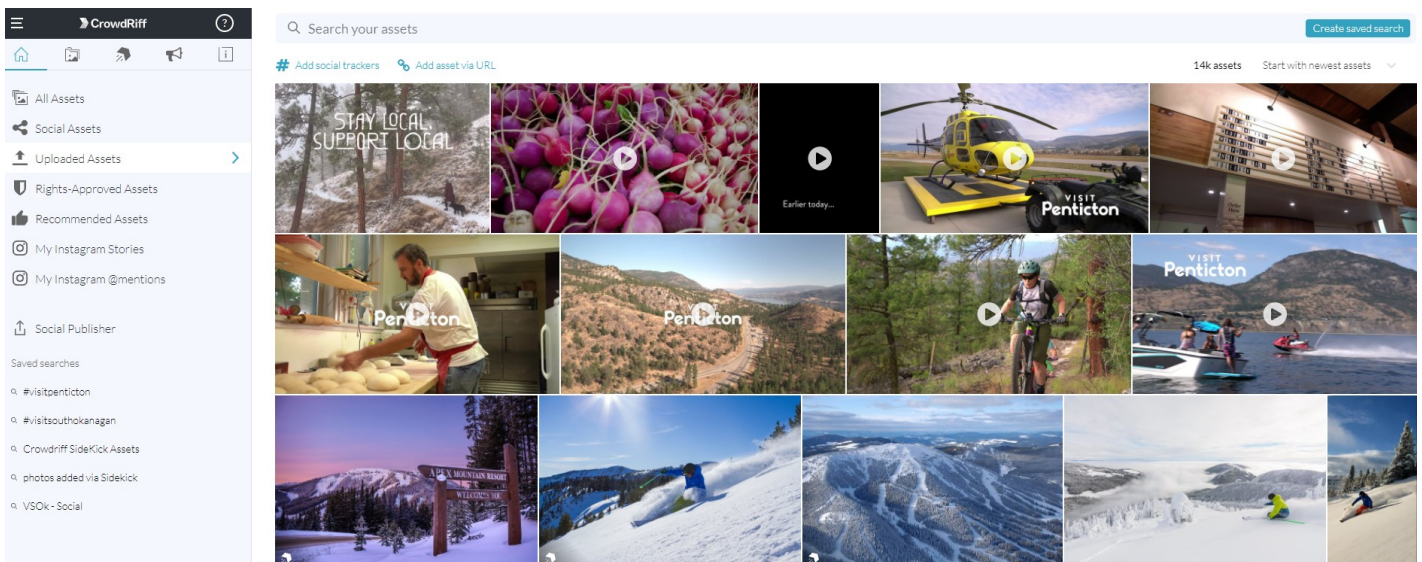


## 2020 VIDEOGRAPHY/PHOTOGRAPHY

When Travel Penticton reassessed our available budget for 2020 we decided that this would not be a good time to place significant investment in new photo/video assets. Our visitors this year are not reflective of a typical tourist season and anything portraying mask usage and social distancing would only serve to date any assets and limit their future usability. Any images including COVID safety protocols were done on an 'as needed' basis.

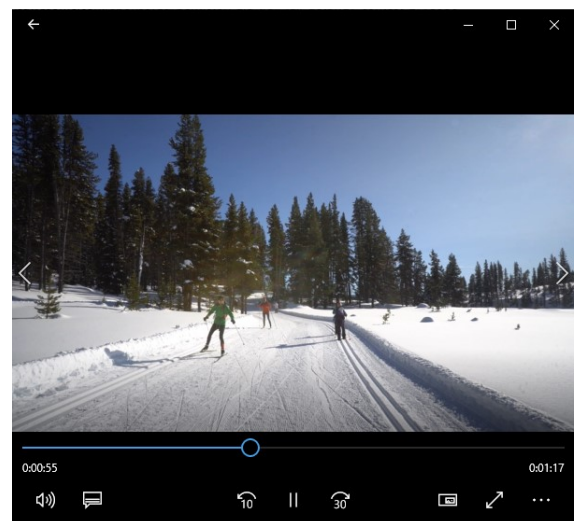
### Crowdriff Digital Asset Management

We did continue to build on our existing digital content library and increased our **Travel Penticton owned assets by 1,279** and our **User Generated Content assets by 59,831**.



Work is also ongoing with local videographer, Chris Stenberg of Vine & Beach Media to develop some new Winter themed digital assets.

Travel Penticton remains very focused on showcasing Penticton as four season destination. While we had to concentrate on local markets for the latter part of 2020, the new assets being created will play a critical role in our recovery efforts. As travel restrictions ease, competition for visitor dollars will intensify and we need to be in a position to set ourselves apart from other destinations.





## 2020 DIGITAL/ONLINE

### Boosted Facebook Content

- Boosted 11 posts out of a total of 207 as we are aiming to generate the majority of interest from organic content, which has \$0 cost and is found to be most authentic by users.
- Boosted posts achieved a total **reach of 108,875**, with **12,045 engagements** and **19,807 video views**

### Hootsuite

- Provided a better overview of our digital marketing strategy and enabled us to align the content ad schedules of several different social media platforms.
- Our #visitpenticton was used **32,754 times**.

	Followers 2019	Followers 2020	Growth
Facebook	9,896	10,921	10.4%
Instagram	10,900	12,567	15.3%
Twitter	6,597	6,508	-1.3%

### Search Engine Marketing

- In Fall of 2019 Travel Penticton secured **\$10k per month** (\$120K per year) of in-kind Google Ads advertising through the Google Ad Grants Program.
- From January 1 - December 31, 2020 received **333,958 impressions, 33,991 clicks, 10.2% CTR**
- **16.8 % conversion rate**. This is the percent of consumers who go directly to the VisitPenticton.com website from a Google Ad.
- The Google Ads report provides a wealth of other useful marketing data, such as most popular searches, geographic location of users and audience behaviours, which helps to hone our targeting and achieve optimum return on investment.

### Email Marketing - Constant Contact

- Constant Contact is used to send mass emails including: Monthly Consumer Newsletters, Weekly What's On Sheets, Member Updates, Consumer eBlasts and B2B eBlasts.
- This year our focus has been primarily Member communication and "Stay Local, Support Local" consumer messaging.
- In 2020 there were a total of 405,400 emails sent, 84,274 opens, 6,150 clicks
- Overall **open rate 23%** (9% above industry average)
- Overall **click rate 7%** (2% above industry average)

## 2020 MEDIA DEVELOPMENT

### Serena PR

#### Winter Media Visit - January 7 - 10

- Hosted 4 travel writers from Vancouver and Calgary (Leigh McAdam, Michelle Hopkins, Ayssa Hirose, Sarah Anderson)
- Stayed at Penticton Lakeside Resort
- Enjoyed meals at Tratto Pizzeria, Bad Tattoo Brewing, Wayne & Freda Coffee House, The Bench Market, Elma Turkish Restaurant, The Hooded Merganser Lakeside Restaurant
- Participated in tasting at Great Estate Okanagan Wine Experience Centre, Cannery Brewing, Slackwater Brewing, TIME Winery, Little Engine Winery, Red Rooster Winery.
- Attended Brewski craft beer event at Apex Mountain Resort.



#### Individual Media Visits:

- March 13 - Stacey Hunt from The New Zealand Herald and Sara Darling from The Handbook UK
- July 5 - Fiona Morrow from Monte Christo Magazine
- July 6 - Gemma Taylor, a local blogger for Off Track Travel
- July 7 - Steve MacNaull from Kelowna Daily Courier
- July 19-20 - Judy Dill, a freelance travel writer from Vancouver
- July 19-20 - Joanne Sasvari, Editor of Vitis
- August 9-11 - Lisa Kadane, a Western Canada based writer
- August 12-14 - Rebecca Bowlitt (aka Miss 604), a freelance travel writer and renowned blogger from Vancouver
- September 3-4 - Roanna Young, a Vancouver based blogger for Foodiegram.ca
- September 4-6 - Jane Mundy, a freelance travel writer from Vancouver
- September 10-13 Elaine Rystead & Taylor Lauren, Vancouver based travel bloggers for Localwander.com
- October 7-8 Adrian Brijbassi, Managing Editor for Vacay.ca
- October 13-14 Emma Choo, a Vancouver based blogger for Vancouverfoodie
- October 15 - Ryan Tessier, Founder of online publication Ale Sessions
- October 22 - Claudia Laroye, a freelance travel writer from



The media, digital and television articles featuring Penticton, as a direct result of our 2020 media hosting have earned more than **8.8 million impressions** to date, which is extremely positive when considering the restrictions that were placed on travel.

A total of **108 individual tourism businesses** were featured in articles published by hosted media writers.



## 2020 MEDIA DEVELOPMENT

### Agility PR Media Monitoring

In March 2019 the Travel Penticton Board approved a 3-year investment in this media monitoring service, which allows us to:

- Monitor online, print and broadcast news relating to travel and tourism in Penticton
- Receive a weekly brief of recent coverage
- Easily share coverage with stakeholders
- Create executive ready charts and reports
- Access PR news and insights to gain a better overview of hot tourism topics.

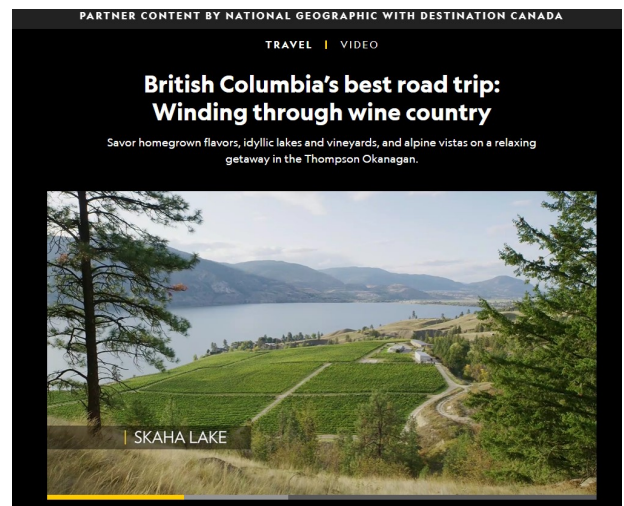
### Earned Media

In addition to our own media monitoring efforts through Serena PR and Agility PR, Travel Penticton also receives quarterly reports from Destination BC, which provide an overview of the media articles that featured Penticton based on generic tourism key word searches. The table below shows a comparison with the previous 2 years and it is extremely encouraging to see, despite the pandemic, Penticton still garnered a considerable amount of media attention.

Year	Number of Articles	Circulation	Ad Equivalency Value
2020	4,019	56,097,917	\$1,402,080
2019	855	32,482,457	\$1,107,631
2018	729	24,632,260	\$738,924

Destination BC also provides one off updates when Penticton features in a particularly prominent article. Examples from 2020 include:

- An article on Yahoo! US Online entitled
- The 16 Best Places to Visit in Canada, which had a **circulation of 7,393,839** and an ad equivalency **value of \$184,846**
- A 4-page feature in Decanter Magazine entitled From Okanagan to the World, which had a **circulation of 660,000** and an ad equivalency **value of \$25,211**
- A travel video and blog on National Geographic website, entitled British Columbia's best road trip: Winding through wine country. This had a **circulation of 939, 250** and an ad equivalency **value of \$23,481**



## 2020 MEMBER DEVELOPMENT

At the start of the year, Travel Penticton had a series of free workshops and events planned for our Members, including some new First Aid and Pool Maintenance courses. However, because of Provincial restrictions on group gatherings these were no longer possible.

We needed to quickly find other ways in which we could help our Members through what would undoubtedly be a very trying time.

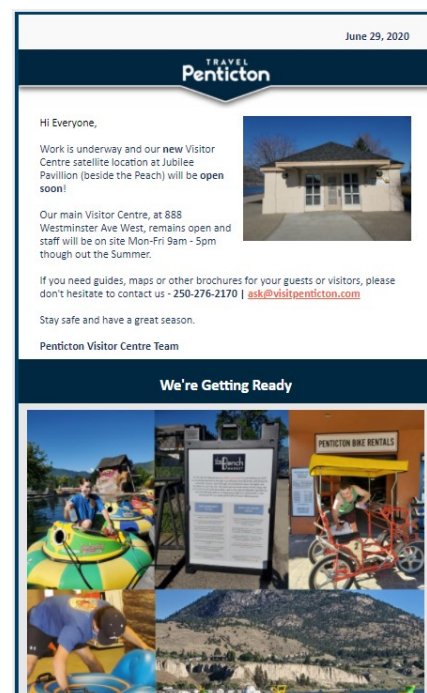
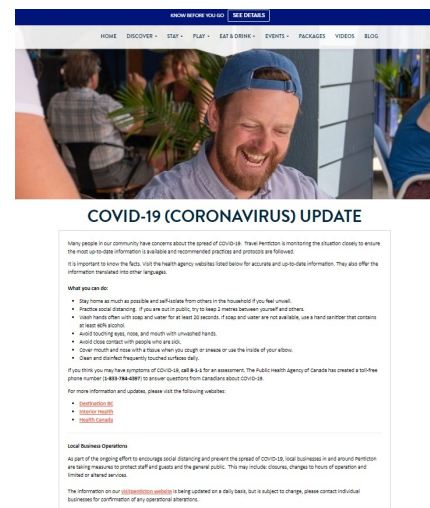
Our first action was to strengthen channels of communication by creating a COVID-19 page on our website containing information and resources for visitors, business owners and local residents. The page was well used seeing **24,598 views** with an average time spent on page of 00:02:23.

As most events were suspended, instead of our usual weekly "What's On" mailers we switched to sending weekly Member Updates, which provided information on the work the Travel Penticton was undertaking, COVID-19 news, access to financial support and funding as well as links to a variety of other useful resources such as free workshops and webinars. Over **35,650 emails were sent** to Members between March and December and were very well received with an average **open rate of 38%** (industry average is 20%) and an **average click rate of 17%** (industry average is 8%).

To further assist our Members, we looked at ways to help ease some of their financial burdens. Our Emergency Co-op Advertising Support and local business support, certainly provided a much needed boost to marketing and advertising initiatives.

Also, for all of the businesses that paid for 2020 Member Services, we decided to carry over those services to the end of 2021 at no additional cost **saving our Membership more than \$35,000.**

The Travel Penticton team has worked hard to secure available provincial and federal funding to offset the significant reduction in our own budget, as a result of decreased MRDT and locally generated revenue. This will ensure that we are in a strong financial position to aid recovery and remain competitive when national and international travel resumes.





## 2020 VISITOR SERVICES

### COVID-19

When the pandemic was first announced in March, Travel Penticton made the decision to close the Visitor Centre to the public. Services were provided remotely via email and telephone. In mid-June, as the province began to move into phase 2 of their re-opening strategy staff returned to the Visitor Centre to prepare for welcoming back visitors.

We created a COVID-19 Safety Procedures Handbook, which was reviewed by all staff members. We also invested in new signage in accordance with recommendations from Worksafe BC and BC Government, as well as installing protective plexi-glass screens and hand sanitizing stations.

### Hiring

In January 2020, Travel Penticton submitted an application to the Canadian Summer Jobs Program and were successful in securing funding to cover cost for one of the two students we hired for the Summer season.

### New Satellite Location

After establishing an agreement with the City of Penticton, we began working on our new satellite Visitor Centre at Jubilee Pavillion, which was opened to the public in July. The addition of this location in a prime tourist hotspot played a key role increasing our visibility in 2020, particularly since we were unable to operate Mobile Visitor Services. Despite the addition of the new location, COVID-19 had a significant impact on visitor numbers with a 36% drop compared with 2019. This was a trend seen across the province and could be attributed to several factors including the reluctance of people to be in enclosed spaces and the fact that the majority of visitors were more local and would not have to rely on Visitor Services, being already familiar with Penticton.

### Retail

As well as offsetting some of the cost of Visitor Centre operations our retail element is a great way to get the 'Penticton' brand out there. In 2020 the loss of the Downtown Community Market had a huge impact on retail sales and we saw an 80% drop in revenue compared with the previous year. On-line sales were attempted with marginal results.



## 2020 KPIs

KPI	2019	2020
MRDT Collected	\$616,045	\$492,052 (to Nov)
MRDT Collected OAP	\$80,123	\$64,920 (to Nov)
Room Revenue	\$32,587,291	\$27,848,614 (to Nov)
Occupancy Rate (Average)	51.9%	36.0%
Average Daily Room Rate	\$153	\$137
Visitor Centre Traffic	11,562	4,615
Satellite Visitor Centre Traffic	16,797	945
Visitor Centre Retail Sales	\$40,226	\$7,874
Website - Page Views	375,287	406,848
Website - Unique Visitors	145,368	151,132
Website - Impressions on Listings	650,708	933,775
Website - Clicks on Listings	14,760	22,951
Website - Impressions on Packages	138,194	230,158
Website - Clicks on Packages	662	2,972
Website - Event Page Views	123,052	41,649
Facebook Post Reach	1,120,941	744,937
Facebook Engagements	99,322	68,726
Facebook Video Views	200,487	167,422
Twitter Impressions	172,600	27,287
Twitter Engagements	2,516	1,123
Instagram Likes	32,250	25,311
Instagram Engagements	553	436
eNewsletter – Open Rate	19%	20%
eNewsletter – Click Rate	5%	6%
eBlast – Open Rate	26%	33%
eBlast - Click Rate	5%	4%