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Osoyoos chosen as 'Celebration Community' for Olympic Torch Relay



Osoyoos has just won its own version of two Olympic gold medals. First, it was announced Nov. 21 that this town at the southern end of the Okanagan Valley **will be on the route for the Torch Relay for the 2010 Winter Olympic Games.** And to top it off, it was also revealed that Osoyoos is one of the locations chosen to be a special **“celebration community”** along the route of the Olympic flame.

Officials announced that the Torch for the 2010 Olympics in Vancouver and Whistler will begin its 106-day cross-Canada journey in Victoria on Oct. 20, 2009, after the Olympic Flame arrives from Greece. The Torch



Relay will travel in B.C. for its first five days before going east to Newfoundland to begin a trek across the country. It arrives back in B.C. from Alberta on Jan. 21, 2010 and spends its last 22 days going throughout the province. It arrives in Osoyoos late on Jan. 24, 2010, coming from the east along Highway 3. A community celebration will be held and the Torch will overnight in Osoyoos. The next day the Torch Relay will proceed north on Highway 97 with celebration stops in Penticton and Kelowna.

The B.C. portion of the Olympic Torch Relay will include 3,500 torchbearers and will visit 266 communities in the province – coming within a one-hour drive of 92 per cent of every British Columbian. The relay ends with the dramatic lighting of the Olympic Cauldron during the Opening Ceremony for the 2010 Winter Games on Feb. 12.

B.C. Premier Gordon Campbell says, “The Olympic Flame is a powerful symbol of the hope, optimism and pride Canadians feel as we countdown to hosting the world for the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games. The relay is an incredible opportunity to showcase the unique character of our nation and our communities, and to unite everyone in cheering on our athletes.”

Destination Osoyoos CEO Glenn Mandziuk says Osoyoos’ selection as a celebration community on the Torch Relay route is wonderful news. “This is an exciting announcement and recognition of our community’s importance as a resort destination.” The Torch Relay and evening celebration will give Osoyoos national and international visibility and will give local residents a chance to take part in the Olympic festivities.



Mandziuk credits the work of a number of partners, including the area’s Spirit Committee, Town of Osoyoos, and the Osoyoos Indian Band, with helping to bring the Olympic Torch to Osoyoos. The Spirit Committee worked with other Spirit Committees in the Valley to ensure that the torch route came through the Okanagan. “I want to strongly acknowledge the Osoyoos Indian Band, together with partners such as Bellstar Hotels & Resorts, for helping to make the pitch to have the torch stay overnight in our community,” Mandziuk adds.

In a Nov. 21 news release, the Town of Osoyoos says, “This event will be an excellent opportunity to showcase our scenic town and will give residents of Osoyoos the chance to partake in the Olympic experience as it unfolds and becomes a reality on its final leg to Vancouver.”

The Olympic Torch route and other details about the 2010 Winter Olympics can be found online at www.vancouver2010.com, and information about how residents can apply to be torchbearers can be found online at www.icoke.ca and rbc.com/carrythetorch. Coca Cola, RBC, and the Canadian government are sponsoring the Olympic Torch Relay, and Coke and RBC are managing public participation in the Olympic Torchbearer Program.

Trail Extension officially opened



Dignitaries from the local, regional and federal governments officially opened a major extension to the Osoyoos Canal Trail Nov. 7, launching a new recreational amenity in the South Okanagan.

The recently completed project, which began in January, adds a seven-kilometre extension to the trail, stretching through Osoyoos' famous desert habitat. The extension, built by a Destination Osoyoos work crew, runs northward along the east side of Highway 3, past the Osoyoos Airport, then through native desert habitat to the Osoyoos Desert Centre.

“This project provides a safe, level, compacted-gravel surface and scenic views stretching from northwest of town,” Destination Osoyoos CEO Glenn Mandziuk says. “This walking and hiking trail gives area residents and visitors to our region a great new part of our unique ecosystem to explore. Providing more fitness and environmental opportunities like this fulfills part of our Destination Osoyoos **mandate to develop local infrastructure and improve the quality of life for people in the community.**”

The path features viewing platforms, interpretive signs, benches, and small bridges over creeks. It offers first-hand views of antelope brush, the desert ecology, orchards, vineyards and the scenic South Okanagan valley.

Mandziuk says the trail is the result of a co-operative effort. “Destination Osoyoos worked closely with the Regional District Okanagan Similkameen (RDOS), the Town of Osoyoos, the federal government, and the Osoyoos Desert Centre on this recreational development.” RDOS granted \$15,000 to the project, the Town granted \$25,000, the federal government through Service Canada granted \$110,000, and the B.C. Resort Municipality Initiative contributed \$20,000.

“The path has turned out beautifully,” Mandziuk says. “Our crew has done a first-class job. I want to recognize the excellent work done by the crew – John Wells, Kyle Simms, Richard Collins, and Jeff Enns. I also want to thank all levels of government for their key support on this project – and especially RDOS Area A Director Mark Pendergraft, Osoyoos Town Council, Osoyoos Leisure Services Director Gerald Davis, and former Desert Centre Executive Director Joanne Muirhead for their help with the new trail. The Desert Centre helped us ensure the project won't have any negative impact on the endangered desert ecology in the area.”

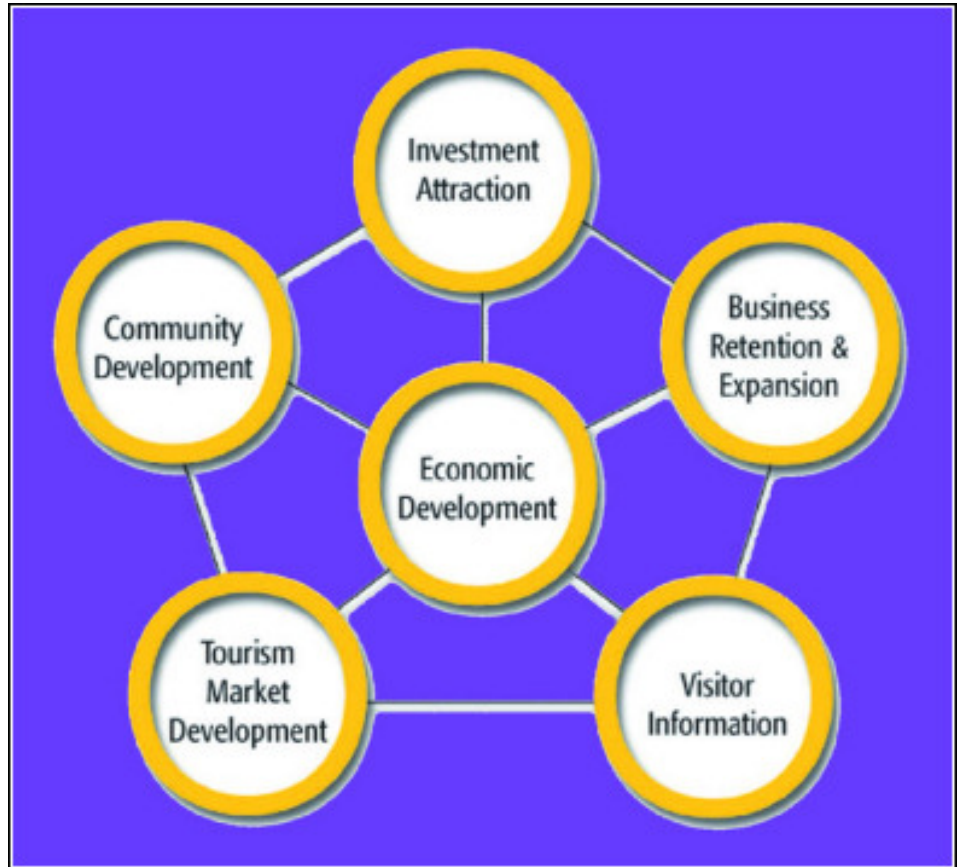


*Dignitaries cut the ribbon Nov. 7 to officially open the newly extended Osoyoos Canal Trail. From left are: Destination Osoyoos (DO) CEO **Glenn Mandziuk**, DO trail crew leader **John Wells**, former Osoyoos Mayor **John Slater**, Osoyoos Leisure & Recreation Director **Gerald Davis**, Regional District Okanagan Similkameen Area A Director **Mark Pendergraft**, Osoyoos Leisure & Recreation Secretary **Carol Nerdoly** (partly hidden), Destination Osoyoos Board Chair **Chris Bower**, Destination Osoyoos Board members **Derek Noske** and **Gordon Kandola**, Destination Osoyoos Director of Tourism & Visitor Experience **Jo Knight**, **Eileen Noske**, Service Canada Program Officer **Debbie Wagar**, and Destination Osoyoos Administrative Assistant **Evelyn Yuzik**.*

D.O. presents Economic and Tourism plans to Town Council

On Nov. 3, Destination Osoyoos Chief Executive Officer Glenn Mandziuk made an oral presentation of the organization's draft 2009 Economic & Tourism Strategic Plan to Osoyoos Town Council, and also presented Council with a wide-ranging 70-page document detailing the Destination Osoyoos vision, plans for 2009, and dozens of major achievements in 2008.

Mandziuk reported to the Mayor and Councillors that Destination Osoyoos (D.O.) recognizes and appreciates the major funding provided to it by the Town of Osoyoos. He noted that D.O. is a non-profit grassroots organization governed by a local volunteer Board of Directors, which works closely and collaboratively with Town Council, the Regional District, Osoyoos Indian Band, businesses, and groups to support the economic, physical, social and cultural wellbeing of Osoyoos and improve the quality of life for all residents. He said D.O. measures its success by how well it achieves its goals of partnership, excellent operating practices, sound financial management, and a focused long-term approach to all of its activities.



“Thanks to our joint efforts with so many partners locally, regionally and provincially, in recent months Osoyoos has reached a new milestone – ‘the next level’ – in its development,” Mandziuk told Council. “The reason our efforts have been more rewarding than ever is because in many ways this year has truly been a banner year for Osoyoos, marked by the successful completion of a number of milestone achievements that give Osoyoos a much greater ability to attract investment, to grow our tourism market, to support our visitors, and to develop our local economy.”

Mandziuk told Town Council that D.O. has *recommended* an ambitious set of strategic directions for 2009 for Council consideration. He noted all of the organization's accomplishments and future plans revolve around the main core theme of Economic Development. The organization's five core strategic areas of D.O. activity are:

- Investment Attraction
- Business Retention & Expansion
- Visitor Information
- Tourism Market Development
- Community Development

Mandziuk gave the Osoyoos Mayor and Councillors the goals and a wide range of activities in each of these five strategic areas that D.O. proposes as important initiatives for the year ahead. Some of these were:

INVESTMENT ATTRACTION

GOAL: Identify and attract services to the airport that will foster its commercial use:

- Help qualified fuel distributors to consider locating at the Osoyoos Airport.
- Deliver presentations to commercial charter airlines that may provide services to and from the Airport.
- Talk with the Canada Border Services Agency about locating a Customs Clearance and/or Immigration Office at the Airport.

GOAL: Attract new qualified industrial businesses to the industrial land at the airport:

- Identify and talk with industrial buyers who may be interested in purchasing Airport industrial lots.

GOAL: Feature and promote the Osoyoos area's natural features and community sites to the film sector for potential film and commercial sets:

- Attract a major film in partnership with the Okanagan Film Commission to the Osoyoos area to film locally.
- Find partnership dollars and in-kind contributions for film productions.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

GOAL: In partnership with the local medical community and Interior Health, assist in the recruitment of new physicians and medical practitioners to the Osoyoos Area:

- Show the community to doctors who may be interested in locating here, and attract two new physicians to the local area over the next two years.
- Foster the development of a local medical facility.

GOAL: Implement the Osoyoos Resort Strategy to develop a sustainable year-round tourism industry and all-season resort community, delivering welcoming and unique, authentic, quality visitor experiences:

- Develop with the Town of Osoyoos' Planning Department a strategy for affordable housing.
- Develop with the Town of Osoyoos' Recreation Department a Multi-Use Trail Plan and Implementation Program.
- Create and install a Public Art Program.
- Support the establishment of an Airport shuttle.
- Develop a comprehensive program to improve local wayfinding signage.
- Purchase a beach cleaner and work with the Town of Osoyoos' Public Works Department to maintain all public beaches.

BUSINESS RETENTION & EXPANSION

GOAL: Enhance economic interrelationships with neighbouring communities to establish a viable and

competitive four-season business community while maintaining ‘rural authenticity’:

- Prepare a three-year Sustainable Development Plan for the Osoyoos region.
- Develop a new Business Investment Section on the Destination Osoyoos website.

GOAL: Establish new and augment existing business development programs:

- Secure financial support from senior government to expand business communication capacity in the Osoyoos area through the use of technology.
- Complete a Business Feedback Survey and Directory involving over 500 area businesses.

GOAL: Enhance economic activity in the shoulder season through special events and conferences:

- Develop and co-ordinate two local festivals and events with special emphasis on the shoulder season.
- Support existing events with expanded marketing resources and expertise designed to increase attendance.

TOURISM MARKET DEVELOPMENT

GOAL: Increase market awareness of Osoyoos as a four-season resort and generating a greater volume of visitors and increased visitor spending year round:

- Increase annual visitor numbers by 7% from 350,000.
- Increase tourism revenue by 10% from \$72 million.
- Establish a new tourism webpage on the Destination Osoyoos site.
- Generate unpaid media exposure to the value of \$650,000 annually.

GOAL: Improve the competitiveness of Osoyoos year-round:

- Become a SuperHost Community by 2010.
- Create identifiable new shoulder and winter season products.

GOAL: Create a cohesive tourism industry and build awareness, appreciation and support for its role in the local economy:

- Communicate with the tourism industry at least monthly.
- Provide an annual networking/forum opportunity for stakeholders.
- Develop ownership for the Osoyoos brand with at least 60% of all tourism stakeholders adopting it in their communications material by 2009, and 80% by 2010.

VISITOR INFORMATION

GOAL: Enhance services and infrastructure to better serve visitors:

- Diversify services at the Visitor Centre.

- Increase local bookable products on the TBC Hello BC Reservation System by 10% over 2008.
- Expand reservation services and program offerings.

GOAL: Provide quality service to Greyhound and increase organizational capacity to serve the travelling public:

- Relocate freight services off-site and Increase services available to the bus-traveling public.

Mandziuk also told Town Council that in *2008 Destination Osoyoos undertook dozens of projects and initiatives*. These included:

- Making great strides in the collaborative effort to recruit physicians to the Osoyoos & Oliver area, with three doctors being recruited to this area in past six months.
 - Helping Osoyoos gain status as one of B.C.'s 13 Resort Municipalities, and collaborating on development of the local Resort Strategy, which will use up to \$200,000 per year from the Resort Municipality Revenue Sharing Program towards a number of important projects in town. These include: the Osoyoos Hiking Trail Extension Project; and purchase of a 'green technology' beach-cleaning machine to regularly clean local beaches.
 - Launch of the community's new brand: "Osoyoos – Canada's Warmest Welcome" at an official ceremony in front of Town Hall in February.
 - Working with Town Council and the Osoyoos Hotel/Motel Association to bring the Additional Hotel Room Tax to Osoyoos and develop the community's new Tourism Market Development Plan. This will bring about \$200,000 per year to Osoyoos for tourism promotion efforts.
 - Working closely with the Town and the Province to make arrangements for the planned servicing and sale of industrial land at the Osoyoos Airport.
 - Making a number of improvements to the operation of the BC Visitor Centre @ Osoyoos.
 - Operating the Community Information Radio Osoyoos (CIRO 106.5-FM), and launching new initiatives to make this service even more valuable for the community.
 - Serving as regional agent for TourismBC's world-renowned SuperHost Program, which consists of first-class hospitality training courses.
 - Pursuing an aggressive set of media and communications activities to help market Osoyoos, providing the free equivalent of about \$800,000 in paid advertising.
 - Publishing the Official Osoyoos Visitor's Guide.
 - Continuing to provide organizational assistance and co-ordinating services to groups hosting special events in Osoyoos.
 - Working with the Okanagan Film Commission to attract producers to come to Osoyoos to shoot their TV series, commercials, feature movies, and corporate videos here.
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Spirit Ridge 'Phase 3' sales get off to flying Start

Sales of the latest luxury condominiums in Osoyoos are off to a flying start.

Bellstar Hotels & Resorts, developer of the Spirit Ridge Vineyard Resort & Spa, held the initial VIP sales launch for Phase 3 of the resort during the Fall Okanagan Wine Festival in early October. **Phase 3, to be called the Spirit Ridge Residence Club,**

will be 37 bungalow-style villas located just above the Sonora Dunes Golf Course, in the Osoyoos Indian Band's Nk'Mip Resort area on the east side of Osoyoos.



Spirit Ridge Real Estate Manager Curt Jansen says the initial release of 14 units received complete sales offers right away. The units are sold in one-eighth, one-quarter, one-half or full unit shares. Jansen says the developer then released nine more units – and five of them received sales bids very quickly.

Despite the economic slowdown elsewhere, for Spirit Ridge “it all looks extremely good,” Jansen says. He adds that the strong sales prove that buyers recognize the relatively high value of the luxury Spirit Ridge Residence Club homes. He says that on a recent visit to seven residence clubs in Arizona he noted that “our plans are as nice or nicer than any there, and our interiors are far better” – yet while the Arizona units are being sold at \$2.5 million to \$7 million, the average Spirit Ridge unit is listed in the \$800,000s.

The Phase 3 homes have a spectacular view of Osoyoos Lake, the mountains, orchards, vineyards and desert landscape. The units are luxuriously appointed, and unique folding glass walls open to a large covered patio to maximize the indoor-outdoor Okanagan lifestyle. They have spa-style bathrooms and each master bedroom has a trellised patio. There are large two- and three-bedroom floor plans available.

Jansen says construction of Phase 3 is set to begin in late-spring 2009, with completion scheduled for the summer of 2010. Sales to the public will be launched in the early spring of 2009.

The Osoyoos Landscape in the Fall

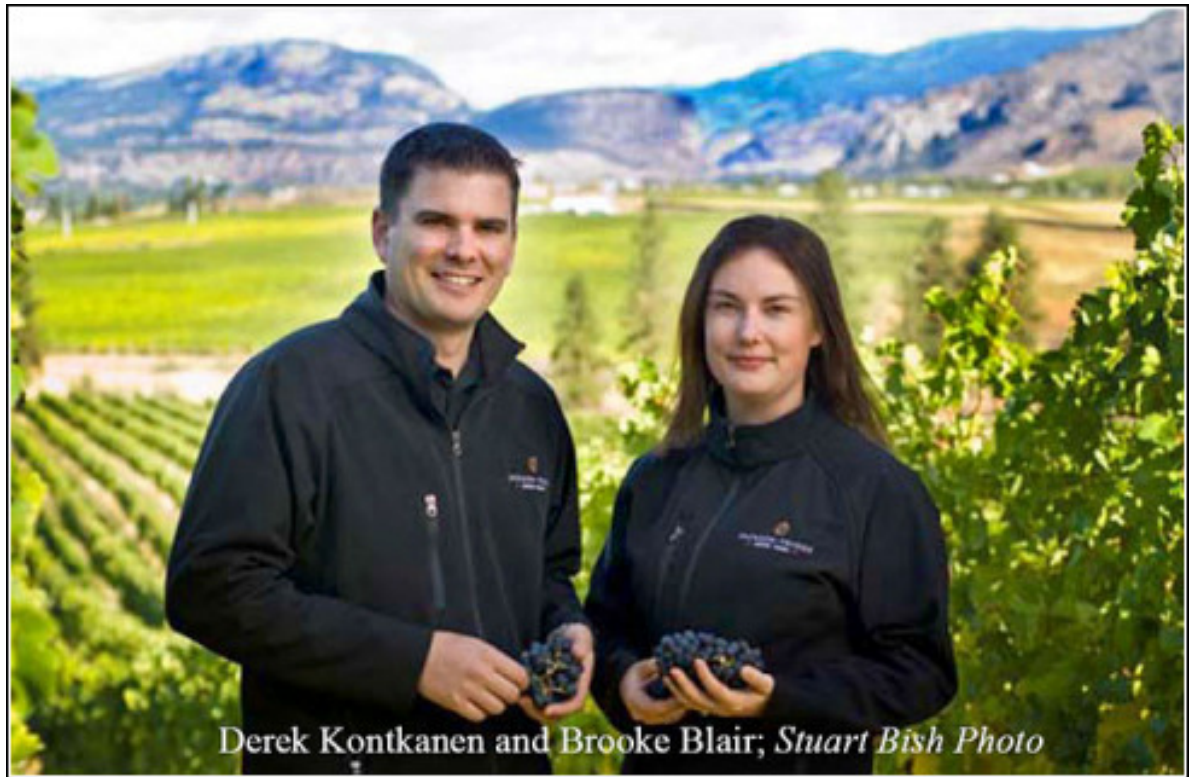


Jackie Fredrick, Director of Sales for the Thompson Okanagan Tourism Association (TOTA), captured this beautiful view of part of Osoyoos on Nov. 4, taken from **Anarchist Mountain looking west**. It shows Osoyoos Lake, the southern edge of Osoyoos adjacent to the U.S. border, the joint Canada/U.S. Border Facility, Kruger Mountain, low-lying cloud, and snow-capped mountains farther to the west.

Jackson-Triggs 'Winery of the Year'

Jackson-Triggs Okanagan Estate Winery has been named Winery of the Year in the **2008 Canadian Wine Awards competition**, sponsored by Wine Access magazine. This marks the fourth time since 2003 that Jackson-Triggs' Okanagan operation has won this prestigious honour.

The winery's two young winemakers, Brooke Blair and Derek Kontkanen, who were mentored by their predecessor Bruce Nicholson, have stepped up to carry on Jackson-Triggs' legacy of excellence. The pair have garnered international awards and acclaim.



Derek Kontkanen and Brooke Blair; *Stuart Bish Photo*

Jay Wright, President of Vincor (Jackson-Triggs' parent company), says, "Our investment in leading viticulture practices, combined with state-of-the-art equipment and extremely talented and passionate winemakers, is our winning formula. I am extremely proud of our teams at Jackson-Triggs Okanagan Estate, whom I know are very honoured to receive this prestigious award for the fourth time."

This year's Wine Access 2008 Canadian Wine Awards competition, held in September, saw a record 1000 entries from five provinces. Jackson-Triggs' Okanagan and Niagara wineries were awarded five gold, 12 silver, and 12 bronze awards.

Anthony Gismondi, Editor-in-Chief of Wine Access, says, "The Winery of the Year award has captured the imagination of growers across the country since its inception in 2001. In 2008, the wines of Jackson-Triggs Okanagan displayed both the depth and breadth of quality required to gain the attention and respect of our judges and ultimately win this country's most prestigious wine accolade. From the vineyard to the winery and beyond, Jackson-Triggs Okanagan is establishing itself as a Canadian wine force."

Jackson-Triggs' Okanagan and Niagara Estate operations have garnered Best Winery accolades an unprecedented 18 times over the past nine years from competitions including the International Wine & Spirit Competition in London, England, the Vinitaly International Wine Competition in Verona, Italy, the San Francisco International Wine Competition, and the Wine Access Canadian Wine Awards.

Tourism Trends

Passenger traffic at **Kelowna International Airport** grew to 1.36 million passengers in 2007, an increase of 11.2 per cent over 2006, according to the Regional District of the Central Okanagan's Economic Development Commission.

BC Tourism, Culture & the Arts Minister Bill Bennett recently announced the Province, industry organizations and businesses have contributed \$560,000 to create a new **BC Partnership for Sustainable Tourism (BCPST)**. The initiative will address the issue of climate change and the future sustainability of the tourism industry. The BC Partnership for Sustainable Tourism will:

- Establish best practices for sustainability specific to tourism businesses.
- Develop and implement a certification program for "green" tourism operators.
- Set up a system for tracking and reporting sustainable tourism indicators.
- Offer practical carbon calculators for small and medium-sized tourism enterprises.
- Embark on communications and outreach for businesses and travelers.
- Hold workshops across the province to educate businesses on carbon emission strategies and best practices.

Following the trend to be green and sustainable, local governments around B.C. are **starting to approve the use of Low-Speed Vehicles (LSVs)** for travel on their streets. LSVs are electric vehicles only permitted by Transport Canada to travel up to a maximum speed of 40 km/h because of their safety standards. Recent changes to B.C.'s Motor Vehicle Act allow local governments to take another look at LSVs. The changes on July 1, 2008 allow the vehicles on roads that have a speed limit of 40 km/h or less, and allow municipalities to pass bylaws allowing the LSVs on all local roads with speed limits of no more than 50 km/h. Some municipalities are considering restricting the travel of electric vehicles to the right-hand lane only, unless making a left turn. Oak Bay was the first municipality in BC to adopt an LSV bylaw, on August 18. It has been followed by Colwood, Esquimalt, Vancouver, Burnaby and Qualicum Beach. The issue is now on the table in other communities across the province, including Whistler, Saanich, Summerland and Port Coquitlam.

Results of the **2008 Whistler Housing Authority's Employer Housing Needs Assessment** were unveiled Nov. 3. The survey was conducted from May to August. It targeted 560 Whistler businesses. Whistler continues to exceed its 2020 target of housing 75 per cent of its workforce within municipal boundaries. In 2007-08, approximately 11,100 full-time equivalent (FTE) employees (or 79 per cent of the workforce) lived in Whistler during the winter season. According to the survey, Whistler's workforce is projected to reach about 14,300 FTE employees in the 2008-09 winter season. With nearly 30 per cent of Whistler's employers indicating that they were unable to meet their staffing requirements during the 2007-08 season because of a shortage of affordable housing and the high cost of living in Whistler, the resort could face increased challenges in coming years. Currently, 17 per cent of local businesses provide housing for their employees for a total of 2,400 beds, and 26 per cent of businesses surveyed had plans to provide new or additional staff housing for employees. Approximately 38 per cent of Whistler's resident workforce resides in resident-restricted housing (of these, 21 per cent live in restricted ownership units and 17 per cent live in restricted rental units). Approximately 2,200 new resident-restricted beds (615 units) are currently being planned and developed as part of the long-term vision for housing and will bring the total resident restricted inventory in Whistler between 2009 and 2011 to more than 6,400 beds (2,000 units).

Statistics Canada reports that tourism generated \$19.7 billion of revenue in Canada in 2007, **up 4.3 per cent from 2006**. The increase was largely attributed to higher domestic tourism spending, which was up 6.1 per cent. Overall tourism GDP (at basic prices) for 2007 was \$28.6 billion, a 5.9-per-cent increase from 2006.

Ī Tourism BC and the Council of Tourism Associations (COTA) are calling for nominations for the 2009 BC Tourism Industry Awards, which will be presented on Feb. 12, 2009 at the Hyatt Regency Vancouver. Do you know of a tourism business practicing industry excellence? Nominate it for one of the nine categories:

- [Tourism Industry Leader of the Year](#) (sponsored by Tourism BC)
- [Best Tourism Marketing Campaign](#) (sponsored by the Vancouver Sun)
- [Environmentally Responsible Tourism](#) (sponsored by British Columbia Magazine)
- [Foresight Sustainability Award](#) (sponsored by COTA)
- [Tourism Media](#) (sponsored by Delta Hotels)
- [SuperHost® Customer Service](#) (sponsored by SuperHost)
- [Technology in Tourism](#) (sponsored by Telus)
- [Employees First](#) (sponsored by go2)
- [Sport Tourism Community Legacy](#) (sponsored by 2010 Legacies Now)

Winners will be selected by a panel of judges and will be honoured at the Tenth Annual British Columbia Tourism Industry Awards held during the BC Tourism Industry Conference in Vancouver. This is one of the most important events of the year for BC's tourism industry. For more information on the conference, visit www.bctourismindustryconference.ca. Find award nomination forms and criteria on Tourism BC's website at www.tourismbc.com. The nomination deadline is Nov. 28, 2008.

Events around Osoyoos

Ī Nov 27-Dec 6, the **Southern Okanagan Association for Integrated Community Living** will present its Silent Auction Charity Event, at Double-O Bikes in Osoyoos from 10 a.m.-4 p.m. This is a fundraiser for renovations to the Fairview School for adults with developmental disabilities. Do a little early Christmas shopping and support a good cause.

Ī Nov. 27-29, **The Sound of Music** will be presented at the Osoyoos Mini-Theatre at 7:30 p.m. Tickets (\$18, \$15 & \$12) are available at Imperial Office Pro in Osoyoos and Sundance Video in Oliver.

Ī Nov. 28, Osoyoos' annual pre-Christmas sales event, **Ms. Santa's Night Out**, will be held at the Sonora Community Centre from 7-9 p.m. It will feature many vendor tables with a wide variety of items perfect for under the Christmas tree or in your loved ones' Christmas stocking. Tickets \$5.

Ī Dec. 5-6, Osoyoos will hold its annual **Christmas Lite-Up parade and craft fair**. The parade will be held Dec. 5 at 6:30 p.m., with downtown Main Street merchants holding their Open House for shopping Dec. 5 from 5-8 p.m. Call Sue at 495-7723 to sign up for the parade. On Dec. 6 the Lite-Up craft fair will be held at the Osoyoos Legion from 9 a.m.-3 p.m.

Ī Dec. 7, **Breakfast with Santa** will be held at the Osoyoos Legion from 8:30-11 a.m. (\$5). Pictures with Santa will be available (\$3 each or 2 for \$5).

Ī Dec. 13, The South Okanagan Chamber of Commerce will host its **First Annual President's Ball** at the Walnut Beach Resort in Osoyoos. It is a great opportunity to show your appreciation to your staff by inviting them to the

Ball. Dolci Deli will cater the event and Kyle Anderson and the Amazing Rubber Band are the evening's entertainment. Special room rates are being offered by the resort at \$89 per night or transportation will be available to and from your door.

For more upcoming events around Osoyoos, please visit our [Events Page](#).

For more information about Osoyoos, please call (250) 495-3366 or visit destinationosoyoos.com.

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