

Media Backgrounder and Fact Sheet

Ministry of Housing and Social Development
Government of British Columbia

B.C. BECOMING MOST DISABILITY-FRIENDLY TOURIST HOT SPOT

British Columbia is making travel easier for people with disabilities by ensuring it has accessible restaurants, hotels, businesses – and even hiking trails, earning a reputation as the wilderness accessibility capital of the world and a premier travel destination for people with disabilities.

With one in eight people worldwide living with a disability, people with disabilities represent one of the fastest growing tourism markets. The Government of British Columbia is partnering with the tourism industry, communities, disability organizations and 2010 Legacies Now to meet their needs – whether that means having wheelchair-friendly trails in parks or emergency alarms in businesses for people with hearing or visual impairments.

- In North America alone, people with disabilities spend more than \$13 billion each year on travel.
- Through 2010 Legacies Now's Accessible Tourism program, businesses can maximize economic opportunities by determining how accessible they are for people with disabilities and improve and market themselves to this significant tourism market.
- To date, Accessible Tourism has assessed 2796 businesses so far across B.C. and 1712 (61%) of those businesses have achieved the accessibility criteria.
- The Accessible Parks and Trails Project is helping parks agencies in Vancouver to assess and upgrade their park accessibility.
- In the Cariboo, the community is building hiking trails that are accessible to people in wheelchairs.
- 2010 Legacies Now's Measuring Up initiative is fostering opportunities – from building wheelchair ramps to creating inclusive employment programs – in over 100 communities so that people with disabilities can participate more fully in everyday activities.

CONTACTS

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2010 Legacies Now is a not-for-profit society committed to creating sustainable legacies that will benefit all British Columbians as a result of hosting the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games. To build more inclusive and accessible communities, 2010 Legacies Now is leading both the Measuring Up and Accessible Tourism initiatives.

VISUAL RESOURCES

- Photographs of decals that show accessible businesses – contact Karen McDonald above
- Video of Accessible Tourism initiative – contact Karen McDonald above

WEB RESOURCES

- The 2010 Legacies' Now's Accessible Tourism – explains how businesses are assessed and given decals: http://www.2010legaciesnow.com/accessible_tourism/
- Accessible Tourism Video – interviews people with disabilities and demonstrates how businesses are assessed: www.2010legaciesnow.com/541
- 2010 Legacies' Now Measuring Up – explains how the program is supporting communities with becoming more accessible and inclusive for people with disabilities: http://www.2010legaciesnow.com/measuring_up/
- Tourism British Columbia's Accessible Tourism Strategy: <http://tourismbc-web.ktx002.com/0810/news/3.html>

MEDIA COVERAGE

- Legacies Now grants promote accessibility, canada.com, September 21, 2007
<http://www.canada.com/cityguides/princerupert/story.html?id=995b742d-e071-4b70-8faf-30465ffaf29f>
- A parallel dream, Vancouver Sun, March 12, 2009
<http://www.vancouversun.com/Travel/parallel+dream/1380186/story.html>
- New accessible Tatlayoko trails opened, Williams Lake Tribune, August 14, 2008
www.measureupthenorth.com/userfiles/file/media_np_wl_t_lake_opening_Aug_14_2008.pdf

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