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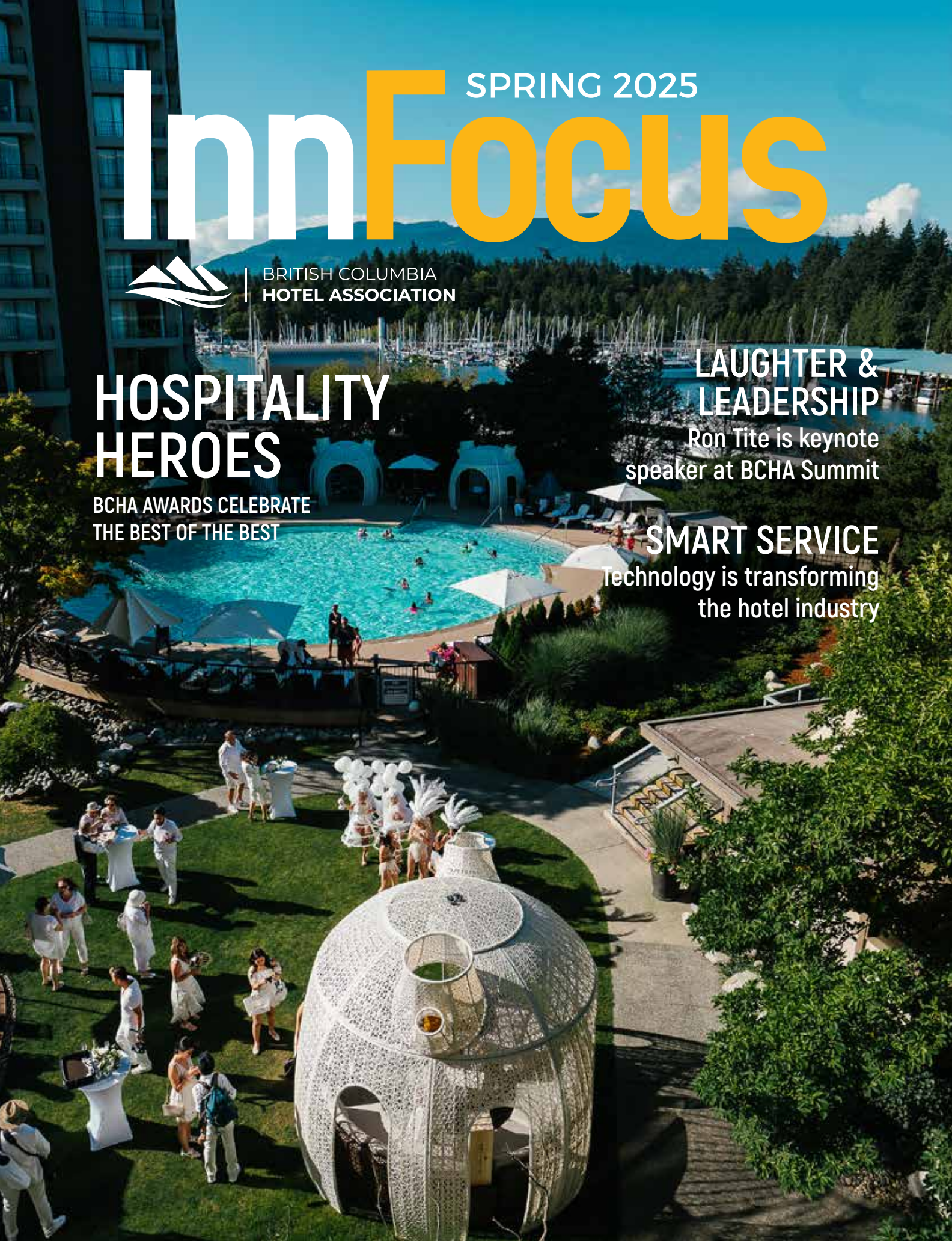
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InnFocus Summit Edition

President's Welcome

The Summit issue of InnFocus magazine is always an exciting one for our team. Planning, developing and orchestrating the BC Hotel Association (BCHA) Annual Summit is one of the highlights of the year. Bringing our industry together for networking, learning and celebrating excellence is central to the Summit; here we are collectively praising the strength of our industry.

I am truly looking forward to joining you at this year's event.

This Summit will be special for many reasons. The Marketplace is the largest we have ever hosted, showcasing innovative products and services that will help shape the future of our sector. I'm particularly excited about our powerhouse opening keynote speaker, Ron Tite. His blend of humour, engagement and wisdom will set an inspiring tone for the 2025 BCHA Summit.

Additionally, we will be joined by Skift's Greg Klasen, providing invaluable insights into global trends that are transforming our industry. As we navigate the evolving landscape of demand, growth in new

markets and shifting business trends, Skift's perspective will be key to understanding how we can remain competitive both now and in the future.

As I step into the role of president and CEO of the BCHA, I want to take a moment to recognize and deeply thank former president Ingrid Jarrett for her exceptional leadership and dedication to the association. Ingrid has been instrumental in setting the organization on a path for continued success. I know I have big shoes to fill, and I am incredibly grateful for the work she has done with our board and stakeholders, as well as the outstanding team she has developed.

Ingrid, on behalf of the entire industry, thank you for your unwavering commitment, vision and tireless efforts. We are all fortunate to have benefited from your leadership, and I personally look forward to continuing the momentum you have created.

I am excited about what lies ahead for the BCHA and look forward to leading our industry forward with passion and purpose. I cannot wait to meet many of you at the Summit and continue the great work that has already been set in motion.



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New at the helm of the BCHA

Paul Hawes brings a wealth of experience to his leadership role

By Lauren Kramer



As Paul Hawes steps into the role of president and CEO of the British Columbia Hotel Association, he can't help but reflect on the 30 years that have led him to this point.

At 22, he arrived in Canada as a tourism and hospitality student from Henley College in the United Kingdom. He had chosen a four-month placement at Banff Cariboo Properties (now Banff Lodging Company), which turned out to be an eye-opening experience for him.

"For the first time I was in an internationally renowned destination that attracted visitors from all corners of the globe," he recalls. "I recognized there was so much opportunity in the Canadian industry compared to the UK, and I knew I wanted to come back."

Immediately after graduating, Hawes made his way back to Banff, resuming his work with the hotel company as front office manager. Over the next five years, he moved into sales and marketing, helping as the company rapidly expanded its portfolio.

"I love the industry as a whole for its openness and excitement," he says. "There are so many opportunities to make a difference with guests and to deliver an experience that's beyond expectations."

Hawes was immersed in the industry at an early age in the UK. Interviewed by a local newspaper when he was 12 years old, Hawes spoke even then about his love of travel and the chance it offered to learn about different cultures and ways of life. His mother ran several pubs in England and, as a teen, he found work in some of them as a dishwasher, server and cook. By 18

he was appointed assistant manager at one pub and provided relief management for other pubs when their owners were away.

The return to Canada in 1995 was supposed to last just one year, but somehow, the tug of opportunity kept Hawes on Canadian soil. He joined Canadian Pacific Hotels and was later part of its evolution to Fairmont Hotels and Resorts, helping create the Fairmont brand and seeing its portfolio of hotels grow.

His resume snowballed from there; it included positions at Travel Alberta, Resorts of the Canadian Rockies, Destination Canada, Destination Greater Victoria and, most recently, Explore Edmonton Corporation. During those years, he dived into rebranding and repositioning, leading sales, marketing, media, public relations and research teams. Under his leadership, the city of Edmonton was recognized by Lonely Planet as one of the top places to visit in 2025.

During his tenure at Explore Edmonton, Hawes was an executive sponsor for the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Council.

"I'm an openly gay leader, and inclusion and equity are the foundations of my leadership," he says. "These fundamental principles make all the difference in today's business."

Somewhere along the way, Hawes fell in love with Victoria's Rockland area, near Oak Bay. He purchased a 1908 home in the neighbourhood and lovingly restored it. Today, he shares that home with his partner, and now commutes between Victoria, Vancouver and across the province, advocating for the interests of the hospitality sector.

There are many challenges he'll need to address in this role.

"I love the industry as a whole for its openness and excitement," he says. "There are so many opportunities to make a difference with guests and to deliver an experience that's beyond expectations."

"A lot of the industry is still recovering after the pandemic, and is trying to get back to pre-pandemic revenues," he reflects. "The rising cost of goods and services is deeply affecting the industry, and in order to grow our tourism revenues in line with the lofty goals we've set for the next decade, we're going to need to align all industry players."

Hawes said his intention is to build on the foundation laid by previous BCHA president and CEO Ingrid Jarrett, expanding and modernizing the association and its work.

"It's a real privilege to be a spokesperson for the industry, and I'm humbled by it," he says.

The association will be well represented by Paul, says Tanya Stroinig, chair of the BCHA board of directors.

"Paul's leadership style, in addition to his wide-ranging understanding of our industry and sector, will serve him well to lead the BCHA forward, building on the foundation and framework established by Ingrid over the past five years," she says. "We are both excited and humbled that Paul has committed himself to our province and sector."

When he's not in meetings or at work, you'll find Hawes dipping in the ocean, regardless of the weather or water temperature.

"I'm a swimmer, and visiting outdoor pools is a huge part of my summer activities," he says. "The ocean is really important to me, and I love life on the island and on the West Coast in general."





The Annex Hotel

Smart **SERVICE**

Technology is transforming hospitality while enhancing the personal touch

By Natalie Bruckner

For an industry built on hospitality, hotels and motels have been surprisingly hesitant to roll out the red carpet for smart technology. While other sectors have embraced automation, AI and data-driven solutions to elevate customer experiences, many in the accommodation industry remain hesitant, continuing to rely on legacy systems and traditional processes.

The fear? That technology will strip away the personal touch that defines hospitality. The reality? Smart tech, when thoughtfully implemented, enhances personalization, streamlines operations and redefines what exceptional service looks like.

Forward-thinking leaders, however, are proving that innovation doesn't mean sacrificing human connection—it can mean

strengthening it. From AI-powered concierge services that anticipate guest needs to smart room controls that tailor environments to individual preferences, modern technology is making hospitality more intuitive, efficient and guest-centric than ever before. By automating repetitive tasks and optimizing workflows, smart tech frees up staff to focus on what they do best—delivering exceptional, personalized service that keeps guests coming back.

Integrating smart technology into hotel operations is one of the themes that will be explored at the BC Hotel Association (BCHA) Annual Summit this April.

"There's a misconception that tech threatens hospitality, but in reality, hospitality isn't going anywhere," says Ryan Killeen, CEO at Toronto's The Annex Hotel. "When guests book a hotel, they expect a certain level of experience. If technology is used correctly, it simply facilitates a smoother process—whether it's booking, communication or entry—so guests can focus on enjoying their stay. The problem is that tech is sometimes introduced in a way that makes it seem more complicated than it actually is."

Killeen's perspective on hotel technology is rooted in a lifetime of hospitality experience. Growing up around the industry—his mother worked for Fairmont—he was exposed early to the intricacies of hotel operations. That curiosity turned into a career spanning traditional roles in luxury hotels and more progressive positions abroad. Returning to North America, he worked with tech-driven accommodation platforms like Airbnb and Sonder before joining The Annex Hotel in 2019. Here, he found the ideal intersection of experience, innovation and forward thinking.

Killeen isn't alone in his belief that technology enhances rather than replaces hospitality. Major brands are already proving that smart tech, when used thoughtfully, elevates both convenience and personalization.

"At Hilton, the stay is at the heart of everything we do, and smart technology often serves as a complement to our signature hospitality," says Michael Leidinger, senior vice president and chief information officer at Hilton.

With guests increasingly expecting a seamless experience, Hilton has embraced innovations like digital check-in, keyless entry and its Connected Room Experience, which allows visitors to control lighting, temperature and entertainment from their mobile devices.

"Beyond convenience, travellers are increasingly seeking personalization," Leidinger adds. "Our Connected Room Experience, for example, welcomes guests by name on the TV and enables them to personalize their stay experience, from controlling room settings to streaming their favourite content."

By integrating these technologies, Hilton ensures that efficiency and guest comfort go hand in hand, demonstrating that digital advancements don't diminish hospitality—they refine it.

While guest experience is a top priority, smart technology also plays a crucial role behind the scenes, easing the burden on hotel staff and streamlining daily operations.

"Hoteliers are constantly inundated with things to do—it's a 24-hour business," says Tommy Kalita, sales manager at Mews, a hospitality management system. Before joining Mews, Kalita owned a hotel. That firsthand experience made him realize how outdated processes were slowing down operations.

"People in this industry are passionate about what they do, but they're also overworked. Staffing is a challenge, especially across BC right now."

Many manual tasks persist simply because they've always been done that way, even if they no longer serve a purpose.

"That's where technology comes in—getting rid of the menial tasks so staff can focus on guests. If someone is staring at a screen for seven minutes just trying to complete paperwork, that makes it really hard to deliver a great guest experience," says Kalita.

By automating administrative processes, smart tech not only improves efficiency but also allows hotel teams to dedicate more time to genuine hospitality—the very heart of the industry.

However, with so many options available, choosing the right technology can feel overwhelming. Many hoteliers have grown accustomed to "tech debt"—the idea that systems are inherently slow and clunky, requiring countless clicks to complete simple tasks.

But that doesn't have to be the case, says Kalita: "The first thing is to understand that past experiences with tech don't always reflect what's available today."

He recalls speaking with a hotelier in his 70s who had recently switched to Mews, citing its intuitive design as the deciding factor.

"The goal is to reduce friction. The right technology should make things easier, not harder."

At The Annex Hotel, technology plays a key role in enhancing both operations and the guest experience.

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—Richard Connema, theater critic

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“Mews is at the centre of it all,” says Killeen, highlighting the property management system that integrates everything from guest data to communication with online travel agencies. The hotel also uses Akia, which automates responses to common questions, allowing staff to spend more time engaging with guests in person. This tech-driven efficiency has helped the boutique hotel deliver a seamless experience, competing with larger brands despite its size.

“AI isn’t about replacing people—it’s an extension of the team that helps improve efficiency.”

Hilton, too, demonstrates how technology elevates service and operations. The Hilton Honors app, SMS and WhatsApp allow guests to communicate seamlessly with staff, while the exclusive Property Engagement Platform (PEP) speeds up transactions and streamlines processes across over 4,800 properties.

“When we use technology to automate routine tasks, we free up our team members’ time,” says Leidinger. This enables staff to focus on personalized touches like surprising a guest with a curated birthday celebration—proof that tech can empower exceptional service.

As the hospitality industry looks to the future, it’s clear that technology will continue to evolve in ways that enhance both guest experiences and operational efficiency.

“AI is a big one,” says Kalita, highlighting the importance of thoughtful implementation. He believes that as AI becomes more integrated into daily processes, it will no longer be seen as a buzzword but simply part of how things work.

Leidinger echoes this sentiment,

emphasizing the potential of generative AI to transform how guests book and experience travel.

“As AI-driven applications advance, they will bring a new level of ease and personalization, helping travellers find and customize their stays faster and more intuitively,” he says.

But while technology continues to enhance the guest journey, Killeen notes that the real shift is in the consolidation of systems.

“Some brands will lean into futuristic gimmicks—like robots in lobbies—but those are more for PR than efficiency. Property management systems are evolving and expanding to include revenue management, CRM, and communication tools. In reality, no one has reinvented the wheel—they’ve just repackaged existing solutions in a better way.”

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Honouring HOSPITALITY HEROES

BCHA Awards
celebrate BC's
best in hospitality
excellence

By Natalie Bruckner



Four Seasons Resort Whistler.

Long hours, tireless dedication and an unwavering commitment to guests—hospitality professionals go above and beyond every day, often with little recognition. From front desk staff, who turn first impressions into lasting memories, to behind-the-scenes teams ensuring seamless stays, BC's accommodation industry thrives on passion and perseverance.

The BC Hotel Association (BCHA) Awards of Excellence shine a well-deserved spotlight on those who set the bar for hospitality excellence. These leaders drive innovation, inspire their teams and elevate the guest experience. To be nominated is an honour—to win, a career-defining moment.

"For me, being a finalist is quite emotional," says Lukas Exelby, chef at Treetop Tapas & Grill at Tigh-Na-Mara Seaside Spa Resort in Parksville. "I've dedicated my life to this industry and love it just as much as I did on the first day. To be recognized for my contributions is truly an honour."

Exelby is one of three finalists for the 2025 Culinary Excellence award, alongside Renee Lauzon, food and beverage manager at the Victoria-based Magnolia Hotel's The Courtney Room, and Mitch Shafer, executive chef at Cordo Resto + Bar at Delta Hotels by Marriott Kamloops.

"It's more than recognition—it validates years of hard work, creativity and dedication," says Shafer.

Beyond passion, what sets these chefs apart is their relentless pursuit of excellence. Shafer pushes creative boundaries while fostering a dedicated team, because, as he says, "It takes a team to make it all work."

Exelby agrees; he embraces a "full circle" approach that ensures nothing—whether it's ingredients or knowledge—is wasted.

"There's zero waste in my kitchen," he says. "Leftover wine turns into vinegar, which pickles onions or marinates fish. The same goes for training staff. There's no point in just assigning someone a single task; instead, I say, 'Let's get your skills full circle.'"

That same commitment to sustainability—whether in developing people or lessening the footprint—is increasingly shaping BC's accommodation scene. Hotels and resorts are stepping up, with industry leaders earning recognition for their efforts.

The Sustainability Champion award honours those leading the way in environmental responsibility. Among this year's finalists is Best Western Plus Kelowna Hotel & Suites, a standout for its dedication to continuous improvement. Through its partnership with the BCHA and GreenStep's EcoFund program, the hotel reinvests in projects that enhance sustainability while maintaining top-tier guest experiences.

"The EcoFund program, for example, allows us to continuously improve our environmental impact while ensuring the highest standards for our guests," says general manager Jennifer Stier.

Black Rock Oceanfront Resort in Ucluelet and Sandman Hotel Group are also finalists in this award.

Sandman also participates in the EcoFund program, where a \$2 eco fee per night is reinvested into carbon reduction initiatives.

"We're confident that our focus on becoming a greener company will benefit our communities and team members, and also strengthen our business relationships," says Sean Braid, vice president of the Sandman Hotel Group.



Mitch Shafer, executive chef, Delta Hotels by Marriott Kamloops.



Lukas Exelby, chef at Treetop Tapas & Grill at Tigh-Na-Mara Seaside Spa Resort in Parksville.



Sun Peaks Grand Hotel & Conference Centre.

The Accommodation of the Year award honours both the properties and the dedicated teams that bring them to life. Nominated in this category are Four Seasons Resort and Residences Whistler, The Parkside Hotel & Spa in Victoria and the Sun Peaks Grand Hotel & Conference Centre.

Chelan Goonetilleke, general manager at Four Seasons Resort and Residences Whistler, is also a finalist in the Hotelier of the Year category.

“At Four Seasons Whistler, exceptional hospitality starts with our people,” says Goonetilleke. “We foster a workplace culture that ensures our team is motivated to deliver thoughtful service.”

This commitment extends to guests, with details designed to create unforgettable mountain experiences—from enchanted rooms for children to après-ski indulgences at The Library by The Macallan.

“It’s amazing to be recognized for all the hard work we’ve put in this year!” says Goonetilleke. “We’ve had a big year with multiple awards and recognitions, and to top it off, we also achieved our highest employee satisfaction score. It really shows that when we take care of our team, they take care of our guests. This nomination is a testament to everyone’s efforts—our employees, our guests and our partners—all coming together to create something special.”

For the team at Sun Peaks Grand, this philosophy aligns.

“We get to know our guests through subtle questions and by paying attention to their history with us,” says Tony MacDonald, general manager. “We tailor packages to their needs—whether they’re here for adventure or relaxation.”

That dedication to detail led to the creation of Grand Moments, a program with curated guest events and all-inclusive activities.

“It’s a way to elevate the experience, making every visit unique,” MacDonald says, adding that being a finalist is all thanks to the team. “The fact that our staff is being recognized

for their hard work is really rewarding. It’s not just me—it’s the team’s dedication. And, of course, the feedback we get from guests supports this; we’ve maintained more than 90 per cent overall satisfaction this year.”

Sustainability, creativity and an unwavering commitment to excellence are qualities shared by all of BC’s hospitality leaders.

Goonetilleke captures it best when he says, “At Four Seasons Whistler, we believe that exceptional hospitality starts with our people. That’s why we’re focused on fostering a workplace culture that is both welcoming and rewarding.”

OTHER AWARD FINALISTS INCLUDE

- **The Leader of the Future Award** celebrates emerging leaders who drive progress through innovative initiatives. Finalists: Amandeep Kaur of Sandman Hotel Group and Eddie Salehi of Delta Hotels by Marriott Kamloops.
- **The Hotelier of the Year Award** recognizes those whose dedication to excellence inspires their teams and elevates the guest experience. Finalists: Kimberley Hughes (Delta Hotels Victoria Ocean Point), Jocelyn Bennett (Delta Hotels by Marriott Kamloops) and Chelan Goonetilleke (Four Seasons Whistler).
- **The Housekeeping Excellence Award** honours teams who demonstrate a commitment to service, cleanliness and satisfaction. Finalists: Paradox Hotel Vancouver, The Cove Lakeside Resort in Kelowna and Crystal Lodge in Whistler.
- **The Community Contribution Award**, a new addition for 2025, highlights individuals who make a meaningful impact, both within their local communities and the hospitality industry. Finalists: Lisa Jaager (Summerland Waterfront Resort & Spa), John Kearns (Sheraton Vancouver Guildford), Ozzy Goksel (Sheraton Vancouver Wall Centre).

Winners will be celebrated at the highly anticipated Awards Gala on April 23, as part of the 2025 BCHA Summit, hosted at The Westin Bayshore in Vancouver.



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- **Anna Baird, Cocoon Advisory**
- **Ron Tite, Church + State**
- **Beth McMahon, Hotel Association of Canada**
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EVENT DETAILS

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A focus on first aid

Preparing for new workplace requirements

By Allison Jones, WorkSafeBC manager, Occupational Health and Safety Prevention Programs and Services

The Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Regulation was amended in 2024, and changes to requirements for workplace first aid are now in effect. The requirement to provide first aid services appropriate to the workplace is a basic responsibility of all employers. If you are a BC employer, there are some steps you need to take to ensure you are prepared for when these changes come into effect.

The OHS Regulation amendments bring BC requirements in line with other provinces, following the guidance of national standards from the Canadian Standards Association (CSA). The most significant changes affecting the hotel industry are described here.

These key changes are in the following areas:

- first aid assessments required by employers;
- first aid certification and training levels;
- first aid kits;
- emergency transportation; and
- first aid drills.

FIRST AID ASSESSMENT

All employers are required to conduct and document a first aid assessment. This assessment helps determine the minimum levels of first aid services, supplies, facilities and transportation arrangements needed—and this may be different from what you had in place before the regulation changes.

Your assessment needs to consider several factors, including:

- how many workers you have at the workplace;
- your assigned hazard rating—high, medium or low; and
- whether your workplace is considered “remote” and/or “less accessible.”

If you have more than one workplace, you will need to do an assessment for each one.

When you conduct your first aid assessment, you need to do it in consultation with your joint health and safety committee (or worker health and safety representative) if you have one at your workplace.

FIRST AID ATTENDANT TRAINING AND CERTIFICATION LEVELS

Certification levels for first aid attendants are now aligned with CSA standards. The former Occupational First Aid (OFA) Levels 1, 2 and 3 are now basic, intermediate and advanced, respectively. Any certified first aid attendants at your workplaces will have their current certificates recognized under the new names, and they do not need to do anything until it's time to renew their certificates. However, if your workplace assessment indicates you need first aid attendants at higher levels than what you have now, you will need to ensure you have attendants trained at the correct level.

FIRST AID KITS

First aid kit requirements have also changed to align with the CSA standards. Based on your assessment, you may need to add new supplies to your existing kits to comply.

EMERGENCY TRANSPORTATION

If your workplace is defined as remote, based on your first aid assessment, you may need an emergency transportation vehicle. You have more flexibility under the new requirements in the type of emergency transportation vehicle you supply, as long as it is capable of allowing a first aid attendant to provide care to an injured worker while safely transporting them to a hospital or BC Ambulance Services.

FIRST AID DRILLS

Drills give you and your workers the chance to test first aid procedures, rehearse duties and address any potential issues. Under the 2024 OHS Regulation changes, you now need to carry out these drills every year and whenever there are substantial updates to your procedures.



FOR MORE INFORMATION

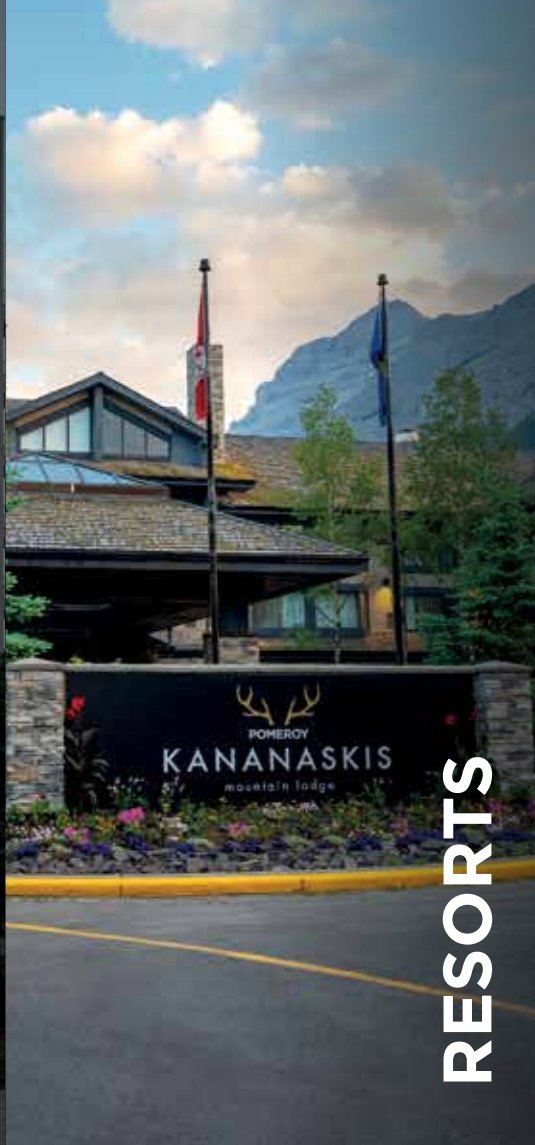
WorkSafeBC has developed resources to help you implement the OHS Regulation changes, including a worksheet to help you do your workplace assessment, a first aid kit supplies list, a frequently-asked-questions document, and a backgrounder that explains the changes in more detail. Find these resources at worksafebc.com/firstaid.

You can also get support from go2HR, the health and safety association for BC's tourism and hospitality industry. Visit go2HR.ca for a variety of resources, including one-on-one consultations, documentation review and first aid drill planning.

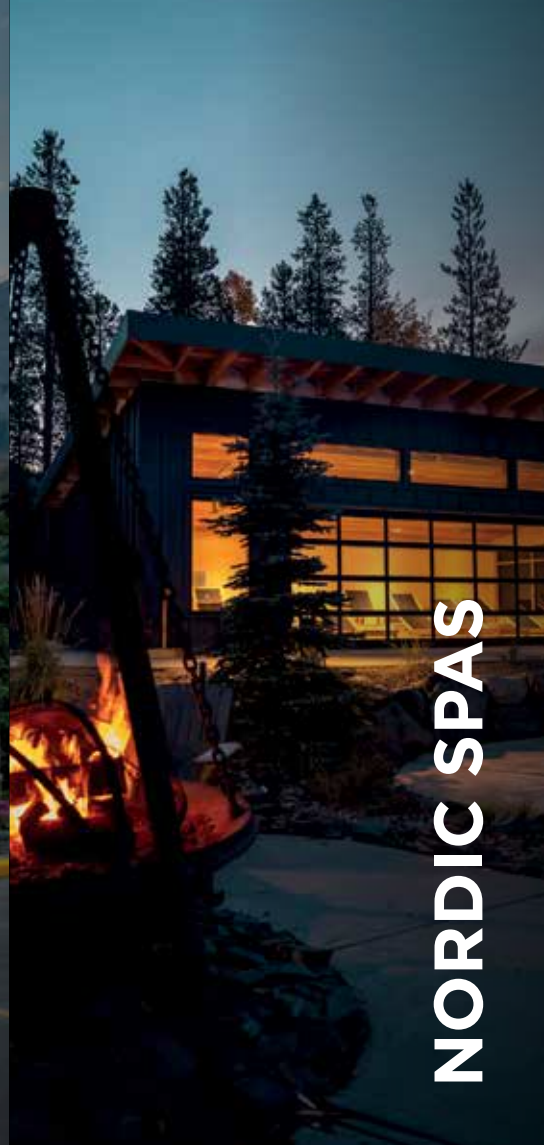
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"Great organizations grow when they think it and do it and say it. Not surprisingly, so do great people."

Purpose, growth and OVERCOMING CHAOS

BCHA Summit keynote address promises laughter and leadership

By Sean McIntyre

There really couldn't be a better time to sit back and listen to Ron Tite.

"The world is in a state of chaos," he says. "Leaders are struggling with the chaos that surrounds themselves, but when you talk to people, they want to do the right thing. They're just not sure what the right thing is."

The post-pandemic era has thrown the hospitality industry no small number of challenges. Labour shortages, shifts in consumer spending, rising expenses, mounting operational costs and, most recently, a souring relationship with our country's largest international trading partner. These challenges are in addition to the continued rise of online travel agencies (OTAs) and disruptive accommodation-oriented businesses linked to the sharing economy over the past decade or so.

Tite, who will give the keynote speech at the BCHA Summit 2025 in Vancouver on April 22 and 23, has defined his career by overcoming chaos through curiosity. He is a best-selling author, an inspiring speaker and a successful entrepreneur.

When it comes to speakers at business conferences, participants might get a comedian, who nails the punchlines but neglects the content, or they might get a businessperson, who fully understands the content but just can't keep the crowd's attention. But with Tite, you get both humour and content. With close to 15 years performing comedy, Tite knows how to be funny and engaging, and with more than 25 years in advertising, he's got a firm grasp on content.

"Obviously with my background in comedy, I love using humour on stage as a speaker. But I'm not there to be funny, I'm there to be effective. The comedy sets up the more important content that I think people need to hear to be successful."

Marketing magazine included Tite on its list of "Top Ten Creative Canadians." He is the founder of Toronto-based advertising agency Church+State and has worked as the award-winning creative director for a host of global brands, including Air France, Evian, Fidelity, Hershey, Johnson & Johnson, Kraft, Intel and Microsoft. Add that to his passion for comedy, and Tite is a popular draw for organizations which are eager to have him speak about leadership, disruption, branding and creativity.

Tite brings all his interests together in his popular podcast, The Coup (with Rogers Frequency Podcast Network), and he sits on advisory boards for the Toronto Sketch Comedy Festival and the Institute for Health & Human Potential—a testament to how well Tite has learned to balance out creativity and business acuity.

"Ron Tite was selected as our opening keynote because he is a charismatic and energetic speaker," says Paul Hawes, BCHA president and CEO. "His keynote will focus on leadership and growth. We think he will be a great speaker to open this year's Summit and set the tone for a positive and insightful event."

In Tite's latest book, The Purpose of Purpose (out May 6 but available for pre-order), he describes the importance for organizations, leaders and employees to be guided by their sense of purpose. It's this purpose, he adds, that is crucial to driving loyalty with employees and customers.

"Purpose attracts talent, builds customer loyalty and makes work meaningful," he says.

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your values through the acts that you take.”

Tite’s notion of purpose builds on a foundation laid out in his 2019 book, *Think Do Say*.

“It’s the alignment of these three actions within any setting that is ultimately responsible for optimizing personal and organizational performance,” Tite says.

These key actions are fundamental to purpose.

“It’s about: What you think. What you do. What you say. When an organization and all its people think, do and say the same things, it creates complete alignment,” he says. “But when an organization and its people don’t think or do or say the same things, the result is an integrity gap. That’s not good for careers. And it’s certainly not good for business.

“Great organizations grow when they think it and do it and say it. Not surprisingly, so do great people.”

When Tite takes the stage at The Westin Bayshore in April, attendees can count on learning how to incorporate a shared and common purpose to meet and overcome the daunting and unrelenting challenges faced by the hotel industry. The answers may surprise and will hopefully inspire. They’ll even have people laughing along the way.

“Great challenges always create new opportunities. Amazing and wonderful new opportunities. And what’s before you now? This is a once-in-a-lifetime, once-in-a-career opportunity to not just recover but to reinvent and prioritize your growth,” Tite says. “Like most business speakers, I’m driven and excited about what business could be and should be, but I’m not just thinking about it and talking about it, I’m doing it.”

But what is purpose? An idea? A fancy slogan? A feel-good sentiment? In so many cases, a company’s sense of purpose can become unobtrusive and subdued. Purpose for purpose’s sake grows stale, says Tite, and then becomes meaningless.

“Leaders want to do the right thing, their people want to do the right thing, but wanting it is not enough. Leaders need to pursue growth, growth that is bound by a purpose that is defined by the actions that they take and that is adopted by other people through communications,” he says. “I shouldn’t read your values, I should experience your values, and I experience

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¹Renewable Natural Gas (also called RNG or biomethane) is produced in a different manner than conventional natural gas. It is derived from biogas, which is produced from decomposing organic waste from landfills, agricultural waste and wastewater from treatment facilities. The biogas is captured and cleaned to create RNG. When RNG is added to North America's natural gas system, it mixes with conventional natural gas. This means we're unable to direct RNG to a specific customer. But the more RNG is added to the gas system, the less conventional natural gas is needed, thereby reducing the use of fossil fuels and overall greenhouse gas emissions. ²FortisBC uses the term renewable and low-carbon gas to refer collectively to the low-carbon gases or fuels that the utility can acquire under the Greenhouse Gas Reduction (Clean Energy) Regulation, which are: Renewable Natural Gas (also called RNG or biomethane), hydrogen, synthesis gas (from wood waste) and lignin. FortisBC's renewable and low-carbon gas portfolio currently includes only Renewable Natural Gas. Other gases and fuels may be added to the program over time. Depending on their source, all of these gases have differing levels of lifecycle carbon intensity. However, all of these gases are low carbon when compared to the lifecycle carbon intensity of conventional natural gas. The current burner tip emission factor of RNG is 0.27 grams of carbon dioxide equivalent per megajoule of energy (gCO₂e/MJ) and the current renewable and low-carbon gas portfolio lifecycle emissions for stationary combustion are -22 gCO₂e/MJ. This is below B.C.'s low carbon threshold for lifecycle carbon intensity of 30.8 gCO₂e/MJ as set out in the 2024 Greenhouse Gas Reduction Regulation amendments.



In full BLOOM

Vancouver is where a short visit or a long stay captures spring at its finest

By Natalie Bruckner

With its stunning coastal setting, vibrant downtown and mountain-framed views, Vancouver blends cosmopolitan allure with distinct West Coast charm. As spring ushers in a season of renewal, the city shakes off its winter chill and bursts into life with culture and activity.

April is an especially captivating time to visit, as Vancouver's landscapes and experiences awaken with quiet energy. Mild temperatures strike the perfect balance, inviting outdoor adventures—from kayaking on the Pacific to the final days of skiing on nearby peaks. Gardens bloom, whale-watching season begins and the city's famous cherry blossoms paint the streets in shades of pink.

"Few things signal the arrival of spring in Vancouver quite like the city's 40,000-plus cherry trees bursting into vibrant pink and

white blooms," says Michael Drake, vice president, meetings, conventions and events at Destination Vancouver. "Visitors to the city who are here for the annual BCHA Summit will be just in time to experience the very best of the season."

April invites visitors to embrace a slower pace before the summer crowds arrive, with half the number of visitors compared to August, according to Destination BC.

With fewer crowds and plenty of space to explore in April, visitors can fully immerse themselves in the city's charm. From peaceful park strolls to seasonal events like the Vancouver International Wine Festival, the month offers an authentic taste of Vancouver at its finest—welcoming, vibrant and beautifully unhurried.

"Whether it's cycling on Stanley Park's scenic seawall,



“Whether it’s cycling on Stanley Park’s scenic seawall, snowshoeing on the North Shore mountains, or dipping into our renowned culinary scene, there’s no shortage of activities to enjoy while you’re in Vancouver for the Summit.”

snowshoeing on the North Shore mountains, or dipping into our renowned culinary scene, there’s no shortage of activities to enjoy while you’re in Vancouver for the Summit,” Drake says.

For visitors with limited time, Vancouver’s most famous landmarks offer a stunning introduction to the city’s diverse landscapes and culture.

Spanning 400 hectares, Stanley Park is one of the largest urban parks in the world, featuring towering cedars, vibrant gardens and the iconic seawall with breathtaking waterfront views. The park is also home to famous landmarks like Lost Lagoon, Siwash Rock, the Hollow Tree, Beaver Lake and Prospect Point.

Near Brockton Point, visitors can explore an impressive collection of First Nations art, including nine totem poles, and just offshore, the Girl in Wetsuit statue gazes out to sea, a quiet nod



did you know?

- In April 2024, Greater Vancouver **welcomed 763,000 overnight visitors.**
- Vancouver attracts a diverse range of visitors, with the **largest group in April coming from Canada and the US, particularly those aged 25 to 34.**
- The UK is well-represented, with travellers mostly in the **25-to-34** and **65-to-74** age groups. Australians tend to visit in their **50s, 60s and 70s**, while Mexican visitors are largely in the **25-to-34** bracket.
- This steady influx of travellers helps keep occupancy rates strong in April, reaching **80.9 per cent citywide** and **82.6 per cent downtown.**



to Vancouver's maritime spirit. Animal lovers won't want to miss the Vancouver Aquarium—located in the park and home to marine life from the Pacific Northwest and beyond.

Vancouver's proximity to nature means adventure is always within reach. Just a short drive from downtown, Grouse Mountain offers hiking trails, wildlife encounters and—through early April—the final days of ski season. Nearby, Capilano Suspension Bridge Park provides a thrilling perspective of the coastal rainforest, with its 140-metre bridge swaying 70 metres above the river. Visitors can also explore the historic cliffside cabin built by Scottish civil engineer George Grant Mackay in 1888 and gain insight into the region's Indigenous history at Kia'palano, where stories and traditions of the local First Nations people come to life.

Meanwhile, those seeking a more relaxed experience can unwind along the sandy shores of English Bay, watching the waves roll in against the city's stunning skyline.

Beyond its well-known attractions, Vancouver is full of hidden gems waiting to be explored. For art and history enthusiasts, the Vancouver Art Gallery offers world-class exhibitions, while the Museum of Anthropology at the University of British Columbia (UBC) provides a deep dive into Indigenous art and culture.

Nearby, the UBC Botanical Garden and Greenheart TreeWalk invite visitors to wander through lush greenery, offering a peaceful retreat among towering trees. Also, Queen Elizabeth Park's vibrant floral displays and the tropical oasis of the Bloedel Conservatory provide a colourful escape from the city's bustle. These lesser-known spots offer a quieter, more immersive way to experience Vancouver's natural beauty and cultural heritage.

No visit to Vancouver is complete without exploring its vibrant Chinatown, a cultural treasure within the city. A guided experience like A Wok Around Chinatown offers an exploration of the district's rich history, traditions and flavours. This culinary and cultural walking tour invites visitors to savour the neighbour-

hood's storied past, while indulging in its renowned cuisine.

After a full day of sightseeing, there's no better way to unwind than by embracing Vancouver's food scene—as diverse as its landscapes, it offers a mix of fine dining, casual bites and international flavours. Food is an essential part of Vancouver's identity, and the city's dining scene reflects its multicultural character. As a coastal hub, seafood is a standout—wild salmon and Dungeness crab appear on menus across the city.

Michelin-starred restaurants like Published on Main, offering contemporary fare, and St. Lawrence, blending classic French cuisine with the rich gastronomic traditions of Quebec, exemplify Vancouver's fine dining scene. Sushi Masuda and Masayoshi bring together the finest local ingredients and global influences, while Granville Island Public Market dazzles with its selection of artisan cheeses, fresh produce and gourmet treats. Street food is just as integral to the city's culinary culture—whether it's a steaming bowl of ramen in the West End, a salmon burger from Go Fish, or a bite from one of Vancouver's 100-plus food trucks, the city's offerings are as diverse as its landscapes.

One of the best things about visiting Vancouver is how easy it is to explore. The city is highly walkable, with many attractions, shops and restaurants within strolling distance. For longer journeys, the public transit system—including buses, SkyTrain and SeaBus—offers an efficient way to get around. Cycling is another popular option, with dedicated bike lanes and rental services making it easy to explore on two wheels. Ridesharing and taxis provide additional convenience, ensuring that visitors can navigate the city with ease.

Whether you have just a few hours between events or can extend your stay by a few days, this is the perfect time to experience the city's iconic sights, hidden gems, outdoor adventures and culinary delights. It's a chance to see Vancouver at what some may argue is its most magical.

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Preview the BCHA Allied Member Marketplace at the 2025 Summit

By BCHA staff

Join us at the 2025 BCHA Summit in Vancouver and connect with over 50 of our accommodation industry's leading allied members.

Our team has worked closely with hotel members to curate a network that meets your evolving needs. Discover new suppliers and enhanced partnerships through our collaborative efforts.

Explore the Summit Marketplace—a hub for sparking projects, building relationships and discovering cutting-edge solutions. We've prioritized companies offering relevant, competitive and innovative solutions.

For a comprehensive list of BCHA Allied Members, visit bcha.com/benefit-programs. You can also access exclusive benefits and discounts in your member portal. Our user-friendly directory provides all necessary contact information, organized by category.

These trusted suppliers align with our association's high standards and many offer exclusive incentives for our BCHA community.

We value your feedback on these suppliers. Please contact our member development coordinator, Lien Chang, at lien@bcha.com.



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Karissa Bourgeault,
Project Manager, BCHA

Shaping a greener future

A new era for BC hotels

In today's ever-evolving hospitality industry, sustainability is no longer a buzzword but an essential pillar of success. British Columbia's accommodators are at the forefront of this shift, championing eco-friendly practices that benefit both the planet and their bottom lines.

Recognizing this, the BC Hotel Association (BCHA) is excited to present the newly updated BCHA Sustainability Playbook. This invaluable resource offers fresh insights, partnerships and tools to help hotels of all sizes achieve their sustainability goals while improving profitability and guest satisfaction.

EMBRACING A GREENER FUTURE WITH THE BCHA SUSTAINABILITY PLAYBOOK

Originally launched at the 2022 Summit, the BCHA Sustainability Playbook is more than just a guide; it's a road map to achieving meaningful environmental progress. With clear and actionable strategies, the Playbook demystifies sustainability, making it accessible for properties regardless of where they currently stand. Whether you're starting from scratch or looking to refine existing practices, this updated edition offers everything you need to take the next step.

One of the most significant enhancements is the expanded resources that enable the inclusion of new partnerships. These collaborations connect members with industry leaders who provide innovative tools and incentives.

For example, the Playbook highlights programs and partners such as GreenStep, Green Key Global, Fox Fold, EcoFund, Veri-tree and many more, which are tailored to assist with the unique challenges and opportunities faced by BC's hospitality sector. Updated case studies, practical checklists and clear implementation strategies ensure that even the smallest property can achieve tangible results. The updated Playbook is exclusively available to BCHA members. Download it now through BCHA's Member Portal.

UNLOCKING OPPORTUNITIES WITH THE GREENSTEP ECOFUND PROGRAM

Central to the Playbook's offerings is the GreenStep EcoFund program, a groundbreaking initiative that helps properties fund projects that reduce their environmental impact, while improving operational efficiency. This program is designed to address three critical areas: energy and water consumption; waste management; and carbon footprint reduction. By investing in these areas, hotels can both meet and exceed growing customer expectations for responsible business practices.

The EcoFund program begins with a complimentary energy performance analysis, making it accessible to all BCHA members. This initial analysis provides invaluable insights by examining energy consumption patterns over the past year. Using the Energy Star Portfolio Manager (ESPM), GreenStep's experts identify inefficiencies and benchmark opportunities. For example, a 148,000-square-foot hotel in BC recently used this analysis to pinpoint areas of excessive energy use. The result? A road map to significant cost savings and a reduced carbon footprint.

Following the analysis, EcoFund supports members in funding capital projects aimed at sustainability. These projects might include upgrading to energy-efficient lighting, optimizing HVAC systems or implementing water-saving technologies. By aligning financial incentives with environmental goals, the EcoFund program ensures that sustainability is not just a responsible choice but also a profitable one.

ENERGY REPORTING MADE SIMPLE WITH BCHA'S GOGREEN ENERGY ANALYSIS

Complementary to the EcoFund program, the GoGreen Energy Analysis is an exceptional resource offered to BCHA members at no cost. While the EcoFund focuses on funding and implementing large-scale projects, the GoGreen analysis serves as

an entry point for understanding a property's energy landscape. This service provides a detailed review of current energy usage, identifying trends and inefficiencies that might otherwise go unnoticed.

For hotels specific to the Vancouver region, the timing of this service couldn't be better. Introduced in 2024, the city's new energy reporting requirements mandate annual reporting of energy consumption and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions for buildings over 100,000 square feet. As of February 2025, this requirement extends to all commercial buildings over 50,000 square feet. These regulations aim to track and reduce the city's overall GHG emissions, and GreenStep's expertise ensures that BCHA members stay ahead of the curve.

The GoGreen Energy Analysis not only helps properties comply with these regulations but also provides actionable recommendations for reducing energy-related costs. For instance, after completing the analysis, a mid-sized property in Vancouver implemented simple changes like recalibrating thermostats and optimizing boiler settings. These adjustments led to measurable savings and a stronger commitment to sustainability.

WHY SUSTAINABILITY MATTERS MORE THAN EVER

The hospitality industry's pivot toward sustainability is driven by several factors. Guests are increasingly prioritizing eco-conscious accommodations, with many willing to pay a premium for properties that demonstrate environmental stewardship. Meanwhile, governments and regulatory bodies are introducing stricter policies to combat climate change, making sustainability a legal and economic obligation.

Beyond external pressures, sustainability offers intrinsic benefits. Efficient resource use translates to lower operational costs, while reduced energy consumption and waste management improve long-term profitability. Properties that adopt these practices often experience enhanced brand loyalty, as guests appreciate their commitment to preserving the environment.

MAKING THE FIRST MOVE

For many hoteliers, the journey to sustainability starts with a single step. The BCHA Sustainability Playbook is designed to guide them through this process, offering practical advice and connecting them with resources like the GreenStep EcoFund program and GoGreen Energy Analysis, as well as a wide array of partners and suppliers to collaborate with every step of the way. The Playbook breaks down complex challenges into manageable actions, ensuring that every property can make progress, regardless of its size or budget. Taking the first step is easier than you might think.

A VISION FOR THE FUTURE

As BC's hospitality sector continues to evolve, sustainability will remain a cornerstone of success. By embracing the tools and resources provided by the BCHA Sustainability Playbook, hotels can lead the way in demonstrating that environmental responsibility and business profitability go hand in hand. Together, we can create a thriving industry that respects the planet and secures a sustainable future for generations to come.

For more information or to get started, contact Karissa@bcha.com.

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GreenStep



Alison Langford,
Workforce Strategist

Staffing OPPORTUNITIES

Building your team for a successful season

As the busy summer season approaches, it's time to start recruiting seasonal and permanent staff to meet your property's staffing goals.

NAVIGATING INTERNATIONAL RECRUITMENT

Properties involved with international recruitment are likely aware of the federal government's recent changes to the Temporary Foreign Worker (TFW) program and international student hiring, which make the process more challenging. If the Labour Market Impact Assessment (LMIA) stream isn't an option for you this year, here are two LMIA-exempt programs you might want to consider:

- **International Experience Canada (IEC):** This working-holiday program allows individuals from visa-exempt countries to work and travel in Canada for at least one year. We've

partnered with Languages Canada and expect over 200 eager students to arrive this spring, ready for summer hotel employment. Look for updates on this in our weekly newsletter.

- **Francophone Mobility Program:** This program brings participants from the Destination Canada Mobility Forum to Canada. We have a database of pre-screened candidates ready for interviews. This LMIA-exempt program offers workers a two-year work permit.

EXPANDING YOUR CANADIAN RECRUITMENT

For members who are focused on recruiting Canadian workers, we can provide some positive options you may not have considered. Organizations such as Mosaic and Inter-Cultural Association of Greater Victoria (ICA) work with newcomers to Canada. Both agencies have some very successful employment programs that provide access to new Canadians seeking employment. These workers are eligible to enter the workforce because they have been issued their permanent residency, or they have open work permits.

MOSAIC'S EMPLOYMENT RESOURCES (MAINLAND FOCUS)

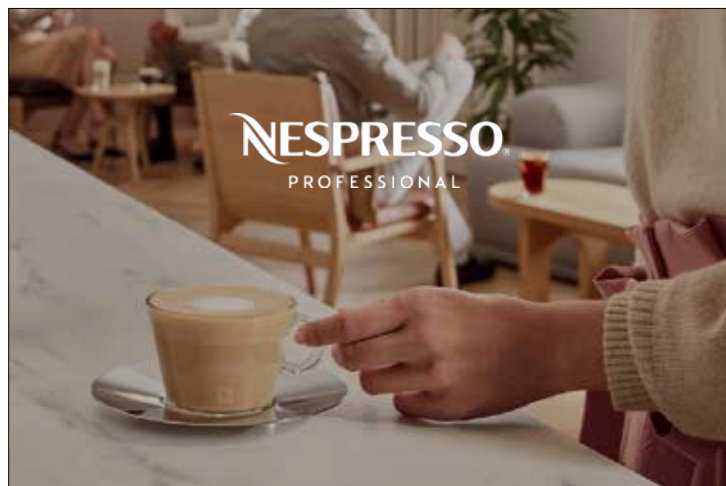
We are working with Mosaic on the mainland to connect our members with these potential employees. Mosaic has various programs to benefit recruitment efforts. These workers are keen to access the workforce and gain valuable work experience.

- **Employment programs:** Visit the Mosaic website and search for "Employment Services."
- **Job postings:** Email Mosaic at employers@mosaicbc.org.
- **Translation services:** Visit the Mosaic website and search for "Translation Services." Website: mosaicbc.org

ICA RESOURCES (VANCOUVER ISLAND FOCUS)

We are also working with the ICA located in Greater Victoria and its partner organizations across Vancouver Island. Like Mosaic, the association has a variety of employment programs that focus on newcomers' access to job opportunities, and offer support for workforce readiness. Website: icavictoria.org

I am available to answer any questions regarding the employment and recruitment strategies I have outlined above. Feel free to reach out to me with any questions or to book a one-on-one consultation. I can be contacted at alicatconsulting@gmail.com.



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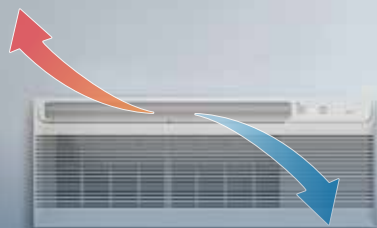
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