



**B.C. Hospitality Industry Conference**

**Premier Gordon Campbell  
November 28, 2005**

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I want to say how much I appreciate the work Telus does in every part of the province, providing support for community events, for sporting events, for activities that help to define British Columbia and the quality of place that we are. As you all know, we are the best place on Earth, but it's important to reach out and make sure that the rest of the world knows that we're the best place on Earth. Telus helps us do that time after time. I want to say thanks to Telus for all your work on behalf of all of us.

I also want to say how much I appreciate you asking me back again this year. I sat down beside Dave. I said: "Dave, how's it going?" He said: "Pretty good. I'd like a whole bunch of announcements, if you don't mind." Announcements have come every other year.

I want to say thanks to Dave for the work he has been doing on behalf of all of you in the industry, and I want to say thanks to your CEO for the great job over the years in advocating for the industry, for talking about the possibilities in this province for your industry.

I can't tell you how important that is to any government regardless of their political stripes. If you don't have an organization that's excited about what they can do and excited about building partnerships and opening up opportunities, it's very difficult for us to reach our full potential.

But I can tell you, with Craig and with Jim and with all of you in different parts of the province, you've really done a great job of putting the industry of hospitality on the table in British Columbia and saying, "Let's do this together." I want to say thanks to every single one of you for the work that you do. It's just really making a big difference.

It's also important as we think of the future.... I know there are day-to-day challenges that we face, and there are a lot of issues that we have, in talking with Jim and Craig particularly, that we have to think about approaching in different ways. We have to put on new sets of glasses in some cases because the hospitality industry, like the rest of the world, is changing. It's changing dramatically.

Those changes can be negative, or they can be positive. One of the things that we want to try and make sure is that we continue to build on the opportunities that tourism presents in British Columbia. But tourism itself is hospitality. You don't have a tourism industry if we don't bring people to our province and make them feel comfortable, and turn them into our own best messengers when they go back to wherever they've come from.

We want people to leave British Columbia and go home -- whether it be China or India or to England or Germany or the United States -- and say to their friends: "If there's one place you want to go, if there's one experience you want to have, it's British Columbia, Canada." If we can accomplish that goal together by asking ourselves how can we take these visitors who come and join us here in B.C., and turn them into our best marketers and ambassadors? If we can create that idea, we're going to do an awful lot to build the quality of experience that we want our visitors to have and the opportunities right here at home that we need.

When you think about vacations.... Now, everyone, close their eyes.

Your eyes are not closed. Just because you're from Kamloops, it doesn't mean you get to keep your eyes open.

Everyone's eyes closed? You're going on vacation. What did you just see? How many of you saw the Northwest of the province, the incredible opportunities that that adventure tourism presents there? How many of you saw the Kootenays in the summer or the wintertime? How many of you saw the resources that are world-renowned right here in British Columbia?

What we want to do is make sure that when British Columbians close their eyes and think of what they want to do and where they want to go and what they can do for their kids and how they can do things, they see pictures of British Columbia. They see pictures of the best place on Earth. They see pictures of the adventures they can take, of the cultural opportunities that they can take advantage of, right here in British Columbia.

You know, as I travel around I talk to people and I tell them about the great array of opportunities and attractions we have in B.C., a lot of people say, "I didn't know that." Well, we have to make sure that people do know.

We have to make sure that people know how great it is and how much the rest of the world enjoys places like the Kingfisher in Courtenay or the Vines Lounge at the Grand Okanagan Resort or the Heritage Inn in Cranbrook. We want to make sure that when people think of destinations or activities, they're thinking of British

Columbia.

We've got lots that we can be proud of here; we've got lots of attractions that speak for themselves and that have been actually recognized. For the second year in a row Vancouver has been voted the Best City in the Americas by Condé Nast. That's pretty good. In fact, that's great. Rocky Mountaineer train service was voted the World's Leading Travel Experience by Train. Right here, the best travel experience by train.

How many people have heard of the Orient Express? How many have heard of the other legendary tours to be taken across Europe? Now remember, the Rocky Mountaineer is being voted the best in the world in train experiences.

The Fernie Alpine Resort. Fernie. Now, be honest. When most of you think of Fernie, do you think of a vacation playground? Do you think of a place where people can go and enjoy themselves for weeks on end? Do you really think of an alpine resort? The Fernie Alpine Resort was voted North American Resort of the Year in 2004-2005 - Fernie. Fernie, British Columbia, best in North America. Is anyone happy about that?

Over to Vancouver Island. The Aerie Resort on Vancouver Island, the World's Best Resort Under \$250 by Travel and Leisure Magazine. The best for under \$250. Now, how many of you can afford 250 bucks? So go to the Aerie, it's the best thing going.

That's the kind of experience we're starting to develop and we're starting to build on; we're starting to recognize in British Columbia what we have to share with the world.

Yesterday we had Grey Cup right here in Vancouver, British Columbia. The days leading up to the Grey Cup, do you know what people were saying? Best Grey Cup ever, best time I ever had. Grey Cup, Vancouver, British Columbia volunteers telling the hospitality industry and people from all over the country: "Come on, party in the Pacific, have a great time, and by the way, come on back to British Columbia." That is the kind of hospitality industry we need and we're building in British Columbia.

I got to go to part of the party. As you may know, I party now in a different way than I used to. But I spent a lot of time doing what I call dancing. It was great, and people loved it.

Imagine someone coming from Calgary and saying: "Boy, I had a better time here than I've ever had in Calgary." That's pretty good stuff, and there wasn't one horse in the hotel, that I know of.

And we got between \$30 and \$40-million pumped into our economy -- \$30 to \$40-million.

We all think of 2010 and the Olympics and how exciting that's going to be. It was announced today the B.C. Canada pavilion in Torino is opening up and featuring beautiful carved doors by an aboriginal carver from Squamish. Those doors will be welcoming people from around the world.

I'll tell you they're coming.... I met those folks from different countries, and they said to me: "We'll see you in Torino." It was not because they want to sit beside me as we're watching athletic events. They're going to come and talk about British Columbia and what we have to offer and what we can do and the products we have and how we make connections. Hundreds and hundreds of them are going to be there over that two-week period.

We've got a province with one of the best products in the world. Now, we can't take credit for the ocean or the rivers or the lakes or the mountains, but we can take credit for how people feel when they arrive.

We had the Grey Cup yesterday and this December and January we're hosting the World Junior Hockey Championships here.

Millions of dollars are coming into our economy and people from all over the world are coming here. When we host them, if we do a great job, we get a chance to have them back and have them back again and have them back again. That's what we want to try and accomplish as we move through the years ahead.

In 2008, the World North American Indigenous Games. First Nations athletes from all over the world are going to Cowichan. That's expected to generate an additional \$30-million in the Cowichan Valley.

The 2009 World Police and Fire Games. Now, a lot of people have recognized that the Olympics is this great, big, huge thing that the whole world is part of. But the Police and Fire Games will bring more athletes and their families to Burnaby, British Columbia, than the Olympics will. Now, I'm not expecting this to have quite the same kind of television presence or international media presence, but I can tell you it's another opportunity for us.

As we think of the Olympics, we can't lose sight of all those things that underpin the Olympics, that lead up to the Olympics, that build on the Olympics, so that after the Olympics we have a continuing growth spurt in British Columbia in tourism and hospitality opportunities.

We're going to have to meet the challenge of people. Now I want to talk briefly about people. We want our customers, the people that come and visit, to have the best time they possibly can. But here's the real challenge we have: You've been so successful over the last few years, we're starting to have a shortage of people for the industry. Without that human interface, without that human understanding of how you make someone feel comfortable, we cannot take full advantage of the expected growth in tourism.

So as Craig and Jim pointed out to me, we're going to have to look at different models and different tools we can use to meet that shortage. And we're going to have to be proud of the industry.

We have a full array of jobs, a full array of opportunities. And there are huge opportunities in the tourism and hospitality industry in this province.

Now, think of this. I want you to think of this. It happens that tomorrow morning I'm going to be talking to what's called the Leadership Council for the Vancouver Board of Trade. The Leadership Council is talking is saying they want us to think about 2020.

Now, be honest with yourselves now. When you hear 2020, doesn't that seem kind of far away to you, 15 years? It feels a little bit far. Now think 1990. How many here remember 1990? How many of you remember all the things that have changed since 1990?

I can tell you a lot of stuff has changed since 1990. In 1990 I was still young. I was also fit. I had colour in my hair. I was the mayor of Vancouver. I was a relatively new mayor of Vancouver; I'd just been mayor for four years.

In 1990 you could look along this waterfront here. Nothing was here. In 1990 we were just getting to the plans for this waterfront. In 1990 you could look at the north shore of False Creek at what is now called Concord Pacific in Vancouver. You know what was there? Any ideas? Nothing. The stadium was seven years old in 1990; it was still brand new.

But you know what happened? We had some people who said, "Let's think about what we want to do; let's think of how we get there; let's take it step by step by step." We had some times when we didn't do as well as we could have. No question about that in my mind.

In 1993 I remember running for leadership of the B.C. Liberals, the provincial party. I had a plan. My plan was that in 1996 I was going to be elected Premier. Well, darn, if that didn't fall apart.

But we still had a vision of where we could go and what we could do and how we could do it. And we stuck with it, and we stayed on it.

So let's think out 15 years... let's just think out ten. What are we going to do? What's going to feel different next year? What are the steps we're going to take by next year that will get us to that place we want to be ten years out? Then, what are the steps we're going to take the year after that? What are the attractions we're going to build? What are the resource models that we're going to use? What is the tax regime we're going to have? What are the regulatory codes going to be?

We've made some progress in the last few years, but we know we've got a ways to go. We've got \$13-billion in resort development investment plans for the next five years in British Columbia -- \$13-billion. It's easy to say the words; it's way harder to make sure those dollars flow so they create the kind of opportunities you want so you have the kind of successes you aim for. All of those things are part of building a long-term partnership that will build the kind of future we should have in British Columbia.

As we think of our sports tourism, we think of the thousands of athletes who train here and the families that come here and the opportunities it creates for us. Let's think beyond them arriving. Let's think about what they feel like when they leave and what they're going to do in addition to leaving money and resources here in B.C. What are they going to take with them that will make them want to come back?

How many people here have visited Europe? Put up your hand if you've visited Europe. How many would visit again? How many would say to your friends: "You should try visiting Europe?" That's pretty powerful marketing.

We want the same thing to happen with us.

Now, here's where we sit. British Columbia is Canada's only Pacific province. Just think of that: We're the only one.

When I was mayor of Vancouver, we had a big-city mayors' conference. I was sitting there. Ralph Klein was still the mayor of Calgary, and there was a fellow named Laurence Decore who was the mayor of Edmonton. We were sitting there in the room, and they started talking about the fact that Calgary and Edmonton were Pacific Rim cities. I was a pretty young mayor at the time, but I felt I should interject. I said: "Actually, there's the Rocky Mountains between Edmonton and Calgary and the Pacific."

We're the only Pacific Rim province in Canada: British Columbia. We have not just an opportunity but also a responsibility and an obligation to show Canada the way to the Pacific, to show them a way to maximize those opportunities.

Now, think of this: By 2020, 15 years out, they estimate there will be one hundred million Chinese tourists a year traveling the globe -- one hundred million.

How many of you have visited China? Not as many.

When you went to China, did they require you to speak Mandarin so you could get around? When you went to China, did they say you better speak Cantonese, or you're not going to find out what's happening in Guangdong or in Hong Kong or in Shanghai? No, they didn't; they spoke to you in English. They made sure when you came that they tried to make you feel as comfortable as they could when you were visiting their country.

We have a market of one hundred million people we can take advantage of. We can serve them better than anyone else and as we serve them, we should always be thinking about how to improve.

Now, I know Dave wants an announcement. I have an announcement today. Dave will be starting his Mandarin lessons the day after tomorrow, and he'll be fluent in Mandarin by 2020. That's one announcement.

We're going to have to think about marketing, what's the cost of it, what the packages look like. We're going to have to think about what really responds to their

needs because they come from a different culture.

Cultural tourism a huge opportunity for us. India: B.C.'s Indo-Canadians are here in the marketplace to actually help us make the connection with people from India. The largest middle class in the world is in India, and it's growing 6, 7 and 8 per cent a year. They're ready to come if we're ready to serve.

How do we serve? We don't just serve by doing what we've always done. We're going to have to think about developing a different product, and we're going to have to think about how we do that so it works for you and it works for them. It requires all of us to think differently about our future.

When I initially talked with some of the folks in the hospitality industry about some of liquor regulations that we have and stuff like that, it wasn't so much that they were concerned about themselves, they're were advocating on behalf of their customers.

We're going to find different requirements as we build a stronger and stronger hospitality industry across the province. But I believe we can do it. We're going to have to keep working together to build better products.

Today we're sitting here in a waterfront hotel. Right to the west of you there is a \$500-million project being built called the Trade and Convention Centre. It has now opened up opportunities: 66 per cent of the people that come here for a convention at the centre will also go somewhere else in British Columbia.

If we're smart, when they come and they book the convention, they will have already booked what they're going to do and where they're going to go after it. But it won't happen because I wish it would happen. It'll happen because we all get to work and make it happen. It'll happen because we want it to happen.

I can guarantee you this: If you put your minds to it and your creativity to it and your product development to it, it's going to happen.

We estimate today there's about \$107-million a year that will be added to the hospitality industry as a result of that convention centre, every single year \$107-million. Instead of losing 50 to 60, we'll be gaining 107. That's good, but we've got to take full advantage of that.

We're talking about enhancing and developing a new museum of Asia Pacific Trade and Culture here. In the Lower Mainland we have a huge Asian population, a huge opportunity to expand cultural tourism.

We're looking at what we can do with the art gallery, what we can do with First Nations art, and how we can reach out across the province to build on those attractions and that cultural tourism which is such an incredible and important part of where we go.

People aren't going to come to British Columbia to see Mounties and mountains only. They want to see more than just Mounties and mountains. They want to see great golf courses. They want to find great places that they can eat. They want to see great attractions. Most importantly, they want to feel at home. They want to feel that this is exciting for them, that it's a great place, that it's a great break. It's something that's special.

The thing that you know, better than any other group in British Columbia, is you know we can deliver on that because you've got the talent to do that.

Our goal over the next ten years is to try and double -- double -- tourism revenues. To do that will require investment, public sector and private sector. It will require us to think about how we deal with transportation infrastructure.

The announcement by the federal government, by the way, of the new Pacific Gateway Strategy is going to be great for us. It's going to mean that we have more people coming from more parts of the world and landing in Prince George, in Cranbrook, in Kamloops, in Vancouver and Victoria, in Campbell River and Courtenay. Those are opportunities for us. Those are customers for us; those are people we can serve. And those are people that will help us build this business.

Doubling the tourism revenue, about \$9-billion in ten years, is no small task, but we can do it if we work together, if we continue to work openly, honestly, and directly, recognizing that the whole province benefits from a hospitality industry that's excited about the future.

The whole province, young British Columbians and older British Columbians, benefit from this industry.

So today and over the next couple of days as you think about your industry and your conference, I hope you'll think about the future you want to create because at the end of the day it is in your hands.

You have a willing partner in your provincial government. Our new Ministry of Tourism, Sport and the Arts is aimed specifically at ensuring that we take full advantage of the opportunities that are in front of us.

Olga Ilich, who's the minister, will work across all of the ministries. Colin Hansen, who's the minister responsible for the Olympics and Economic Development, will work across all of the ministries.

We shall work directly with you. We want to be sure that collaboration happens and it works for all of you and on behalf of all of you in every part of the province. We have the assets; you have the creativity.

Now the question for all of us is: Are we all willing to make the commitment?

I believe you have the leadership; I believe that you do have the know-how. So I ask you to join us as we not just double the tourism opportunities that exist in

British Columbia over the next ten years, but as we make sure that everyone who comes to this province, when they leave and go home, when they're at the water cooler on their first day back to work after their vacation, they say to someone: "You know what? British Columbia is the best place on Earth. You should go there."

Thank you very much.



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