



PRINCE RUPERT DISCOVER OUR NATURE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Provincial and Regional Travel Key to Summer 2020 Tourism Season

Prince Rupert, September 16th, 2020 – The summer tourism season looked a little different in Prince Rupert this year, with COVID-19 travel restrictions dominating the headlines and forcing all travellers to re-evaluate their summer plans. In British Columbia, after the start of Phase 3 of BC’s Restart Plan in July, provincial residents were encouraged to travel within the province this summer, sticking close to home while still supporting the hard-hit tourism sector through a tumultuous season. Despite the increased travel restrictions, Prince Rupert experienced a busier summer season than expected, though visitor volume was still notably decreased from past years. The Visitor Information Centre located in the Atlin Terminal on Cow Bay Road saw 1,863 guests in July this year, compared to 6,166 in July of 2019, and 1,621 in August, compared to 6,320. This steep decline can mainly be attributed to the cancellation of the 2020 cruise season, as well as the lack of international visitors. Still, the VIC was able to help an average of 90 visitors per day throughout the months of July and August, with the most popular requests for information related to charter fishing, bear & whale watching, and local dining recommendations. While many of our usual wildlife viewing tours were cancelled this year, charter fishing experienced a strong season and local restaurants, hotels, and retail establishments in the downtown and Cow Bay areas reported an influx of regional visitors.

To help support local tourism-reliant businesses and encourage regional travel to Prince Rupert this summer, Tourism Prince Rupert launched a summer marketing campaign, titled *See for Yourself*, on July 6th, 2020. Building off the awareness and engagement created through our 2018 and 2019 campaigns, *See for Yourself* was all about converting social media engagement into real-life trip planning. Playing off the idea that there is more in Prince Rupert than can be seen in just one day, or just in one social media post, this campaign brought wildlife, drinks & dining, boutiques, and R&R to travellers by teasing them with limited-time offers, peek-a-boo style content, and messaging targeted specifically at the people most likely to take action: those who had expressed interest in the past and those within driving distance of Rupert.

Partnering with 21 local businesses, including the Crest Hotel, Wheelhouse Brewing, Fukasaku of Prince Rupert, the Argosy, LeBlanc Boutique, and many more, the *See for Yourself* campaign ran for 6 weeks until August 17th, 2020, and used social media advertising, organic social media, & email newsletters to highlight a variety of exclusive deals and promotions. All paid advertising was limited to the Northern BC region, and linked back to a campaign landing page where interested locals and visitors could select the promotions that interested them and request more information. The promotion details were then sent by email, along with an exclusive coupon to be used when redeeming the promotion. This process allowed us to efficiently track not only engagement with our campaign advertising, but also the specific number of conversions for each business promotion. In total, the campaign reached over 150,000 unique social media users, generated 373,000 impressions and 9,443 engagements, and directed over 3,400 hits to our campaign landing page. Combined with over 2,400 eyes on our email promotions, this activity generated 551 requests for more information about the promotions offered by our local businesses.

By partnering with local businesses to offer exclusive deals and promotions, we highlighted all the different ways a Prince Rupert trip can be planned out and all there is to do in our unique community. This was done only within Northern BC in an effort to address concerns from residents and follow the lead of the provincial health's office's recommendations to stay close to home this summer.

"This summer tourism season felt quite different from past years in Prince Rupert, and there's no doubt that many local businesses and tour operators were challenged to operate at their usual capacity while following the recommended health & safety guidelines. The tourism sector is resilient, but we have a long way to go to recover to pre-2019 levels. Tourism Prince Rupert is dedicated to supporting the recovery of our local tourism sector by continuing to advocate for tourism relief, marketing our community in new and creative ways where possible, listening to our residents and stakeholders, and partnering with local businesses to offer support and additional resources. We thank all of the incredible local businesses who partnered with us this year and salute their dedication and tireless efforts to weather this storm."

- Ceilidh Marlow, Executive Director, Tourism Prince Rupert

As we head into the fall and plan for tourism recovery in 2021, Tourism Prince Rupert will be working carefully in partnership with nearby communities to market our region safely as well as to promote key local events such as Craft Beer Month in October and the holiday shopping season. We will also continue our advocacy work to ensure that Prince Rupert maintains its important role as a key transportation gateway, supporting efforts to have both ferry & air transportation resumed to full service levels in 2021. Finally, we will be making

early efforts to plan our 2021 marketing efforts and working closely with the Prince Rupert Port Authority to plan for the 2021 cruise season, a key component of our local tourism sector that will be crucial to its long-term recovery.

With the ongoing effects of COVID-19 being felt by every business in Prince Rupert and the tourism sector remaining one of the hardest hit by the COVID-19 pandemic, Tourism Prince Rupert is dedicated to providing support, resources, and information to help our local tourism-dependent businesses get through this challenging time. Further information about our summer marketing efforts, our response to COVID-19, and available local resources can be found on our corporate website at www.tourismprincerupert.com.

Media Contact

Ceilidh Marlow

Executive Director, Tourism Prince Rupert

Phone: 778-361-0440

Email: ceilidh@visitprincerupert.com

Corporate Website: www.tourismprincerupert.com

Visitor Website: www.visitprincerupert.com

Mailing Address: PO Box 236 Prince Rupert BC V8J 4P8