



Tourism and Culture
Box 2703, Whitehorse, Yukon Y1A 2C6

March 2, 2015

Blake Rogers
Executive Director
Tourism Industry Association of the Yukon
#3-1109 Front Street
Whitehorse, YK
Y1A 5G4

Dear Mr. Rogers.

Further to Minister Taylor's letter of February 12, 2015, please find attached the department's response to the Tourism Marketing Committee recommendations flowing from the May 12 and October 21, 2014 Tourism Marketing Committee meetings.

I look forward to discussing these further at our Wednesday meeting.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Pierre Germain". The signature is stylized and fluid.

Pierre Germain
Director, Tourism

Appendix A – Tourism Marketing Committee Recommendations, May 12, 2014 & October 21, 2014

The following recommendations were made by the Tourism Marketing Committee during the meetings on May 12, 2014 and October 21, 2014:

- 1. The TMC recommends that the Department of Tourism and Culture approach the Canadian Tourism Commission (CTC) to develop a strategy to ensure more Yukon content that acknowledges the Yukon as an Aurora Borealis viewing destination is used by the CTC. The social media team should be contacted to discuss this matter, and should also be provided with strong content to use. Due to recent staff turnover, a CTC fam tour would be particularly helpful.**

The department has contacted the CTC and spoken to them about updating the content they use to represent Yukon. They are happy to load any new content we provide and we are in the process of identifying what materials to send. Much of the new material will come from the Yukon NOW projects and other photo and video shoots we are undertaking.

Regarding fam tours, the CTC does not generally initiate tours for their staff. Rather, the CTC will often have staff or their commissioned contractors accompany film shoots, media or trade fairs they initiate. Given recent budget reductions, the CTC has increasingly relied on partners to provide escorts for fairs and updated video and photography content. That being said, we have extended an offer to CTC that we will be happy to support any of their new staff wishing to experience Yukon within the context of their position.

- 2. The TMC recommends that the Department of Tourism and Culture maintain an ongoing dialogue with air service providers regarding flight schedules, and their compatibility with international flights to and from Yukon's gateway cities. The TMC requests that the Department provide an update to the industry whenever developments come to light. Air access has a large and distinct impact on visitor numbers.**

Working with air carriers is an ongoing activity by Tourism Yukon. In the domestic market we are in regular contact with Air North, Yukon's airline and more periodic contact with Air Canada, West Jet and Condor. A key focus for us on the international front is to enable and facilitate the best connections out of Vancouver, Calgary and Edmonton from international arrivals. In spite of our relationships with Air Canada and West Jet, both air carriers generally inform us of their schedule changes after decisions have been made. The department will continue to reach out to all domestic air carriers to stress the importance of air connections out of our gateway markets

and to inform us of any schedule changes that may impact our stakeholders and partners.

- 3. The TMC recommends that the Department of Tourism & Culture explore increased expenditures on winter marketing. More winter content should be included in the vacation planner, and a winter-centric TV campaign would be of great benefit. The TMC acknowledges that since this matter was discussed at its meeting on May 12, the marketing budget has generously been increased, and the YukonNow project has been launched. TMC looks forward to the implementation of this campaign.**

As a result of the Yukon NOW funding, the department's winter marketing budget has increased from approx. \$150,000 in 2013/2014 to over \$600,000 this year which included a fall 2014 and a February/March 2015 execution. The February execution included the launch of one of our new TV commercials which was shown on 24 conventional network and specialty stations within Canada.

A similar budget allocation is expected for the 2015/2016 winter marketing campaign and will include the launch of our second new winter commercial this fall.

The department has also moved forward and developed a new winter guide in late 2014 that is being used to fulfill against specific winter inquiries generated by the winter campaign.

- 4. The TMC recommends that the Department of Tourism and Culture continue to explore Asian, and particularly Chinese, markets.**

As was recommended by the TMC, a forum that included experts on the Chinese market was facilitated in November by the Departments of Tourism and Culture and Economic Development, as well as TIA Yukon. This forum was a welcome announcement, and the TMC looks forward to the continued exploration of Asian, and in particular, Chinese markets.

The Asia markets of Japan and China in particular offer new opportunities to grow overall visitation in winter and summer. The China Forum hosted in November 2014 was the first step towards developing an entry strategy for the China market, which is a Strategic Priority in the 2015-2016 Marketing Plan.

Minister Taylor is leading the first ever Tourism Trade Mission to Japan and China in February and March 2015 and is being accompanied by 12 Yukon private sector individuals representing 10 Yukon tourism businesses. This mission will see Yukon businesses meet with over 80 Japanese and over 20 Chinese travel trade operators.

5. The TMC believes that social media is an important marketing tool for the territory. Concerns have been raised that many of the festivals and events that took place this year were not adequately promoted through social media by Tourism Yukon during or after the event. It is understood that this may be due to an overlap of vacations at both the Department, and Outside the Cube. A strategy to avoid such lapses of coverage for future events should be implemented. Further, a strategy should be developed to ensure that the experiences of visitors who are winners of contests funded by Tourism Yukon are consistently shared on social media.

The use of social media is an important component of the departments Digital Strategy. The department also has a number of strategies for various social media channels that includes regular and ongoing posts in coordination with our agency.

Over the past year the department has utilized our social media channels to promote Yukon as a travel destination including activities, events, information, etc. and has brought in a number of social media as part of our Fam Tour program to write and photograph the Yukon.

In the coming year, the department will assess our social media channels to ensure the resources (both human and financial) invested in social media match the opportunity social media provides as a destination marketing tool to move a follower along the path to purchase.

6. The TMC knows that Yukon resident travel is an important source of tourism revenue for the tourism industry. Pursuant to the draft Tourism Branch Annual Strategic Plan for the 2015-2016 fiscal year that was presented at the TMC meeting on October 21, the TMC recommends that the Department of Tourism and Culture present on the methods it is using to “support Yukon communities and businesses to take advantage of resident visitation”, as is stated in the draft plan.

As per the 2015-2016 DRAFT Tourism Plan provided to TMC for the March 15 meeting, the department has identified “Support Yukon communities and businesses to take advantage of resident visitation” as one of four “strategies” to achieve our “strategic objective” of “Maximizing Visitor Expenditures”. Some tactics identified within our plan include:

- *Work with the City of Whitehorse in development of a welcome package for new residents.*
- *Promote information about travel opportunities and experiences online that residents can share.*
- *Encourage resident visitation to Yukon VICs to learn more about what there is to see and do within Yukon.*

- *Provide advice and information to communities and businesses to better target Yukon resident travelers.*
- *Facilitate community and business networking opportunities to build relationships and strengthen initiatives targeting Yukon resident travelers.*

Additional initiatives in support of resident visitation also include ongoing development and distribution of a Yukon-wide calendar of events delivered through What's Up Yukon, continuing to allow tourism events to access the TCMF for promotion of their event in conjunction with packages and working with TIAY to roll out a 'Be a tourist in your own town' initiative in conjunction with national tourism week in June.

- 7. The TMC believes that the training that the staff at Yukon Visitor Information Centers (VICs) receives has a direct and distinct impact on visitor experience. The TMC recommends that the Department of Tourism and Culture work with industry to develop a component of annual staff training that helps VIC staff familiarize themselves with other attractions in their own communities and other Yukon communities. Doing so will serve to better the visitor experience, and also has the potential to increase visitors' length of stay.**

The department is currently working with TIAY to facilitate an opportunity for Yukon tourism businesses to showcase their products and services to VIC staff during their annual VIC Training which will take place in April of this year.

- 8. The TMC recommends that the Department of Tourism and Culture update the TMC on the Tourism Branch Annual Strategic Plan for the 2015-2016 fiscal year with insight into how it will be implemented from a marketing perspective. Specifically, the TMC would like to better understand the role of units within the Department of Tourism and Culture, as well as other Departments, in this implementation.**

The department's annual Tourism Plan is linked to the annual Department Strategic Plan. The 2015-2016 DRAFT Tourism Plan will be presented and discussed at the March 4 meeting.

- 9. The TMC recommends that the Department of Tourism and Culture develop an official policy for FAM Tours.**

Fam tours play an integral role in positioning Yukon as a travel destination by raising awareness of Yukon (Media fams) and by increasing the amount of product carried by the travel trade (Trade fams). In recognition of this role and in an attempt to increase the effectiveness of our Fam Tour program, the department has committed to review its current Fam Tour Policy. As part of that review, we would like to work with industry on ways we can increase broader participation and contribution to the Fam Tour program so that we can bring more media and trade up to experience Yukon.

We will be looking to the TMC and TIAY for leadership on how this can be accomplished and recommend that this topic be included as an agenda item for the upcoming TMC retreat.

10. The TIAY board supports the YukonNow project as presented.

A report on the Yukon NOW initiatives will be provided at the March TMC meeting.