

January 15, 2020

Destination Greater Victoria and City of Victoria look ahead to record 2020 conference year

VICTORIA, B.C. – Destination Greater Victoria and City of Victoria have contracted their thirty-fifth city-wide conference at the Victoria Conference Centre (VCC) for 2020. This milestone is six more than the 29 city-wide conferences hosted at the VCC in 2019. This number could also increase as the year progresses. A city-wide conference is defined as one that has at least 400 delegates on peak night staying at two or more hotels. Thirty-five city-wide conferences is a record number and will create an estimated economic output of more than \$47M in Greater Victoria.

“Conference business is critical to the year-round viability of small business in Greater Victoria” said Paul Nurse, CEO of Destination Greater Victoria. “Conference delegates are the highest spending segment of out of town visitor. These are the type of visitors all destinations desire and we couldn’t be happier to see meetings planners from across Canada and the US choose Greater Victoria for their next conference.”

“The work that City of Victoria staff and Destination Greater Victoria do to attract this business to our community makes a tremendous impact” said Lisa Helps, Mayor of Victoria. “Not only do these conferences support growing sectors such as ocean and marine and high tech, but they are vital to high value jobs and growing our local economy.”

In addition to the 35 city-wide conferences contracted for 2020, there are also 32 additional smaller conferences that include hotel room blocks contracted for the VCC in 2020. The total number of “delegate days” – a measure of the total number of days delegates attend conferences – is expected to exceed 122,000 in 2020. This would be up from 118,000 in 2019.

Conference business is cyclical and in Greater Victoria limited by the size of the VCC as it is only able to accommodate one city-wide at a time. To understand the trends and projections for future conference business, Destination Greater Victoria and City of Victoria have initiated a study undertaken by CBRE to assess the future needs for the VCC. This work includes situational analysis, consultation with stakeholders and analysis of industry trends. A final report is expected to be released in Spring 2020.

On January 1, 2017, Destination Greater Victoria assumed leadership of sales and marketing of the VCC from City of Victoria. City of Victoria is responsible for operations, maintenance and event coordination of the facility. The partnership between Destination Greater Victoria and City of Victoria has been beneficial to the community’s small businesses and stakeholders as overall conference business has increased since the agreement commenced. For example, the net operating income (NOI) of the VCC increased from just under \$800K in 2016 to \$1.2M in 2018. 2020 marks the second year of the Customer Advisory Board (CAB) as well – a body of 12 meetings professionals recruited from across Canada with the goal of improving the competitiveness of Greater Victoria’s meetings offerings. The CAB will be in Greater Victoria January 13-14 to discuss future meetings business in Greater Victoria.

Destination Greater Victoria (Greater Victoria Visitors and Convention Bureau) is our region’s official, not-for-profit destination marketing organization working in partnership with nearly 1,000 businesses and municipalities in Greater Victoria.

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MEDIA CONTACTS:

Matthew Holme

Manager of Corporate Communications and Destination Management, Destination Greater Victoria

250 818-7846 or 250 414-6976

matthew.holme@tourismvictoria.com

Bill Eisenhauer

Head of Engagement, City of Victoria

250 361-0210 or 250 858-1061

beisenhauer@victoria.ca