

COUNCIL – AGENDA REPORT

Meeting Date: 16 May 2022

Subject: Tourism Week Proclamation

Boards Routed Through: N/A

Date: N/A

Issue:

Council is being asked to proclaim May 29 to June 4 2022, as Tourism Week in Airdrie.

Background:

The visitor economy, by way of tourism and travel trade, was the first hit, the hardest hit, and will be the last to fully recover from the calamities caused by the pandemic. Tourism has always served as an economic platform, offering a broad and diverse effect on Airdrie's economy, supporting jobs, driving infrastructure, propelling growth and revitalizing communities. After more than two devastating years border restrictions have finally been removed and the Tourism Industry Association of Canada will roll out their Travel Now: For Work, Life and Play! campaign along with #GreenMeansGo social media.

Economic Development acknowledges the important role tourism and tourism providers have in fostering a sustainable economy and improving residents quality of life by supporting local businesses, attracting new investment and placemaking in Airdrie.

Last year, Council proclaimed the inaugural Tourism Week, launching the *Summer Like You've Never Summered Before* campaign, marketing on behalf of accommodations with our [local hotel guide](#), highlighting events and festivals with targeted regional campaigns in Brooks, Drumheller and Lloydminster, producing and distributing a staycation '[Eat Play Stay](#)' guide with airdrielife magazine.

Economic Development continued to build on strengthening the foundations of Airdrie's visitor and place economy by initializing a Taste of Place culinary strategy, marketing Airdrie to the 'visiting friends and relatives' market with a Winter Your Way destination campaign and sampling an online 'Love It Here' tourism experience survey.



Figure 1 2021 RevPar notes the revenue per available room collected by the hotels, and often benchmarks their financial health. OCC depicts the collective occupancy rates.

The 2021 summer stats came in and Airdrie hotels saw an incredible upswing compared to other Alberta hotels (*excluding Major cities and resorts*) during the summer months. Feedback from one general manager noted they experienced the busiest August on record in the past five years. The Summer Classic Car Show festival organizer also provided feedback that it was their busiest car show to date, with record breaking attendance. While pent up travel demands may have played a factor in their success, the departments' work marketing Airdrie as an easy, affordable and family friendly destination did have positive influence.



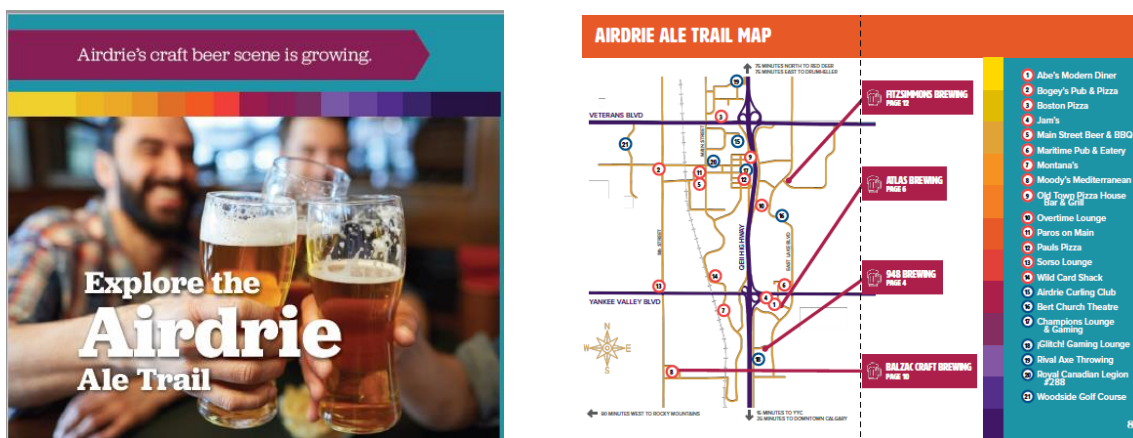
Last summer the department also focused on the leisure motorcycle tourism target market, influencing riders to pass through Airdrie as a part of their Rumble Alberta touring routes and highlighting Airdrie as a 'rider friendly' community with our sponsorship to the Canadian Motorcycle Tourism Association. The graphic above depicts one of the social media and print images staff used to collectively market motorcycle, car and bmx events in and around Airdrie. It was the most 'link clicked', and well received promotion across all four cities targeted. Economic Development is very excited to offer support to a new motorcycle tourism event that will take place at the Airdrie Airpark in July, led by the

president of the Airdrie Oilmen's Association, and a significant partnership with Harley Davidson. This annual event has the potential to produce significant economic impact into Airdrie.

Economic Development also notes the travel and tourism sector can provide a vital and valuable stimulus to commercial growth through the visitor economy. Alberta's visitor economy holds great promise as a core pillar of economic diversification now and into the future. While the pandemic has affected tourism more than most sectors with business closures and thousands of jobs lost, it will rebound.

Therefore, to continue the momentum for sector recovery, Economic Development will launch the *Summer Stop Airdrie* campaign, focused on highlighting festivals and events, things to do and places which welcome visitors. It is essential Airdrie builds on the familiarity, ease of convenience and affordability of experiences for visitor and residents alike.

One of the new tourism assets includes the Airdrie Ale Trail, a culinary guide featuring Airdrie's four local breweries and the business establishments which serve them. Through food tourism, staff are on a culinary journey to make Airdrie a connected, collaborative, and sustainable foodway system in Alberta. Airdrie Ale Trail will be distributed in 20,000 copies of *Culinaire* magazine's May 'Craft Beer' edition in both Calgary and Edmonton, and available online or in select local business right here at home. Airdrie Ale Trail ads will also appear in other publications across Alberta.



Summer Stop Airdrie is also a 'feature road trip' segment with a 40,000 distribution of Avenue Magazine and 38,000 regional print distribution in Great West Media 'Summer Explorer Guide'. Economic Development continues to work with valued partner Frog Media, of airdrielife magazine for local storytelling, content features and highlighted specials for year-round tourism and business promotion.

Economic Development requests Council proclaims May 29 to June 4, 2022 as Tourism Week in Airdrie. To officially kick off the upcoming summer vibe, staff are pleased to launch this promotional video created by Rocky View Aerials to capture what makes Airdrie a *Summer Stop* to love. Further social media highlighting local support of Tourism Week will be released and as always, Council is urged to share the content on their own respective social accounts.

Alignment with South Saskatchewan Regional Plan and AirdrieONE:

The South Saskatchewan Regional Plan (SSRP) promotes a strong and diversified economy.

Airdrie's Economic Strategy and the work of Economic Development is aligned with AirdrieONE goals in these areas:

1. Economic Prosperity
2. Built Environment
3. Socially Sustainable Communities
4. Arts, Culture and Recreation
5. Sustainable Transportation

Boards Routed Through:

N/A

Alternatives/Implications:

1. Council could choose to proclaim May 29 to June 4, 2022, as Tourism Week in Airdrie. Choosing this option shows Council's support for the opportunities that promoting Airdrie to visitors brings to the community, including supporting the visitor economy, local businesses and placemaking.
2. Council could choose to not to proclaim Tourism Week in Airdrie. Choosing this option would signal Council is not ready to endorse Airdrie as a destination for visitors, or Airdrie is limited in supporting the visitor economy.

Public Engagement and Communications Plan:

Economic Development will work with Corporate Communications on a communications plan to promote Tourism Week.

Recommendation:

That Council proclaims May 29 to June 4 as Tourism Week in Airdrie.

Shauna Quinn
Tourism Development Officer

Presenter:	Shauna Quinn
Department:	Economic Development
Reviewed by:	Sara Chamberlain, Jamal Ramjohn, Kevin Weinberger
Attachments:	N/A
Appointment:	N/A