

# Community Tourism News

Duncan, British Columbia

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## Tourism's Road from Recession to Long Run Recovery

**A**dvertising *Critical* screamed my local community newspaper at the end of January. This admonishment might be doubly true for tourism destinations worldwide. Why? Take a look at the last six months of our Dow Jones Travel & Leisure Sector Titans 30 Index (\$DJTCGS) that we tracked several times last year. The chart indicates not only investor sentiment in travel and tourism, but also the general state of the industry. Right now despite a recent rally which some analysts liken to a sucker punch, it is in steep decline. It is a shake out that will result in significant structural reorganization of the industry.

The article that screamed the headline cited above quoted Canadian Institute of Communications Agencies' CEO, Gillian Graham: "While some industries [and that would certainly include tourism] are showing more signs of being challenged than others, smart clients have recognized that one of the worst things they can do is to cut spending ... . It is broadly accepted that



maintaining marketing and advertising spending is important to sustaining and growing share, both for the downturn and the recovery. It has been proven those who cut spending in these times will exacerbate their revenue challenges and ultimately lose share. There can be significant opportunities for companies during a recession if they are bold."

For tourism destination communities there are two important messages in Graham's comment. One is if your community cuts back on its promotional spending and marketing efforts to attract tourists, you will likely lose

market share and revenue over the long term.

The other and not so obvious message is that most community's right now have an extraordinary opportunity to boldly move forward with planning for new directions in tourism development and then to attract and encourage new investment in attractions, services, and infrastructure. This will be the road to long run recovery.

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## Community Tourism Planning Online

The great State of Texas now offers community tourism planning online. “This website has been developed for community leaders to consider and initiate tourism development in their communities. This site outlines a step-by-step process for organizing, inventorying and evaluating tourism assets, identifying community goals, and developing strategies for tourism development.”

There are five sections that guide the planner through the “How To’s” of community tourism development. One of the real unique aspects of the web site is the inclusion of twenty interactive pdf worksheets that can be downloaded, filled in on a computer, and then printed for project documentation or distribution at community workshops.

The site has adapted several paper “self-help” community tourism assessment and planning guides, most notably guides developed in Nova Scotia and Minnesota. Material drawn from these sources allows the site to be useful to non Texan communities as well as the intended users in Texas.

The guide is hosted by Texas A&M University and can be accessed at the web address below.

[www.rpts.tamu.edu/tourism/index.html](http://www.rpts.tamu.edu/tourism/index.html)



The View from Nanaimo

*“For today’s tourism, a destination can be defined as a community (or several) and its attractions within and in the surrounding area. Increasing greatly in guiding the development of tourism are community governments and citizen groups. It is their decision making that controls all the infrastructure so important to tourism: streets, lighting, water supply, waste disposal, police, fire control. They have the power to accept or deny new tourism developments such as shopping areas, as well as food and lodging services. Governments and agencies having jurisdiction in the surrounding areas often have polices that govern access, land use, and the establishment of attractions.”*

– Dr. Clare Gunn, 2004, *Western Tourism: Can Paradise be Reclaimed?*  
Cognizant Communications, New York.

Community Tourism News is edited and published four times a year by Michael E. Kelly, AICP, MCIP in Duncan, British Columbia. The newsletter may be freely copied and distributed to others with due credit and contact information provided to recipients. Contact [newsletters@community-tourism.net](mailto:newsletters@community-tourism.net) to be added to or deleted from our distribution list, for further information, or to make contributions to future issues.

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