



Tourism Lethbridge

Annual Report 2019



About Tourism Lethbridge

WHAT IS A DESTINATION MANAGEMENT ORGANIZATION?

The Lethbridge Destination Management Organization, publicly known as Tourism Lethbridge, was approved by City Council in May 2017 and mandated to provide direction and proactive leadership that promotes and fosters growth related to the visitor experience in Lethbridge. A Destination Management Organization is more than the sum of a marketing body. While Marketing is one of the key tools used to enhance the destination, this new organization also focuses on the development of capacity to attract new tourists.



“The experience the visitor has is more important than the marketing we do, or the research we conduct. This is a pivotal shift in the way destination marketing organizations operate. We focus on the who, the what and the why of attractions, stakeholders and events to ensure visitors experience the most lethbridge has to offer.”



KEY SERVICES OFFERED TO STAKEHOLDERS

Marketing Support

- Photo creation
- Video creation
- Social media development

Event Research and Support

- Mobile tourism assistance
- Mobile event research
- Event development services

Destination Marketing

- Marketing of activities
- Marketing of things to do
- Marketing in Lethbridge Visitor Centre

Capacity Development

- Assist in developing new programs and products in Lethbridge

DEDICATED TO OUR STAKEHOLDERS

At the heart of our operations is our desire to help our stakeholders grow and achieve more within Lethbridge. We focus solely on the City of Lethbridge with the aim of growing the destination into a major tourism hub in Southern Alberta. Our goal is to provide supplemental marketing and capacity development support to stakeholders and ensure that we connect with as many travellers, visiting friends and relatives, and international travelers as possible.

To learn more about how we can help, contact our office at 403-394-2403 or info@tourismlethbridge.com.

EXPERIENCE

Staff at Tourism Lethbridge have been selected and hired based on their ability to adapt tourism best practices and innovative new ideas. With over a half a century of experience in the tourism sectors, this organization's staff will continue to drive results.

INNOVATION

A diverse and “out of the box” approach to tourism is front and centre to the way Tourism Lethbridge operates. New innovation is key to attracting visitors and groups to the community and increasing opportunities for our tourism stakeholders.

BOARD

A diverse governance board supports the operations of the organization. With nine directors from a wide variety of stakeholders and tourism industries, stakeholders' concerns are front and centre. It is this voice that ensures tourism needs of Lethbridge are met.

Letter from the Executive Director



"A true spirit of adventure lives in this community and with those that embrace the desire to share it. With such a warm and hospitable city, travel to Lethbridge is easy. Lethbridge showcases its spirit through many of its activities and day to day adventures."

Executive Director
WILLIAM SLENDERS

TO OUR FRIENDS IN LETHBRIDGE

I would like to thank all of you for your continued support of this new organization, and for the ability to adapt in an ever-changing world. I remain humbled to serve the destination and all its tourism stakeholders. From the beginning, this organization had a large role to fill and it's only thanks to the support and understanding of all of the local Lethbridge stakeholders that we have been able to make such dramatic

strides in the past year. Now entering into our third year of operations, Tourism Lethbridge is poised to deliver even more great work.

Tourism Lethbridge has a diverse portfolio of items to manage. Managing Leisure, Sport, and Meetings and Conventions allows us to see travel from a new and holistic perspective. This spirit of innovation is present in the very culture that we have created in Lethbridge. Now, more than ever, we continue to ask that

stakeholders and those looking to tap into the travel sector work with us to enable a stronger tourism economy. Together, we will cultivate amazing travel opportunities in Lethbridge.

Lethbridge has an incredible history and a history of community support. I look forward to harnessing that local passion to help us develop new opportunities. This development is crucial to the future success of the tourism industry of Lethbridge. I encourage anyone who has had travel ideas in the past to talk to us.



Over the past year, Tourism Lethbridge has identified unique means of attracting new opportunities to the community. In so doing, we have found incredible new ways to create efficiency with our messaging and build additional opportunities for our local stakeholders. Of these innovations are our three public advisory committees: Sports, Meetings, and Leisure and Attractions. If you, as a stakeholder of the tourism industry, have an interest in sitting on one of these committees, I would invite you to reach out and connect with us.

As we conclude our second year of operations, I must thank the LDMO Board of Directors and the staff at Tourism Lethbridge. These individuals are stewards of the community and have helped foster an extraordinary support of tourism. It has made Lethbridge a better place.

"2020 and beyond looks promising for growth and development in Lethbridge. Our unique advantage will not come from high tourist volumes, but rather a unique authenticity of product not seen in other destinations."

Tourism Lethbridge Key Strategic Plans

SOLUTION

Following a successful startup in 2018, 2019 was a success as we transitioned from the Destination Management Plan to the LDMO Board's Strategic Plan. Still integral to the ongoing plans of the organization, the Destination Management Plan is a transitional document that enabled Tourism Lethbridge to focus on its key priorities and develop strategies to address future direction and plans.

The Strategic Plan, developed in early April of 2019, set the groundwork for many of the projects and programs of the year. The LDMO Executive Director followed the newly formed Strategic Plan developed by the Tourism Lethbridge Board Members to ensure that the core operational areas identified in the Lethbridge Destination Management Plan were implemented in a timely manner. The newly developed Strategic Plan focuses on three primary areas:

DID YOU KNOW?

Our logo visually represents the iconic High Level Bridge, our rolling coulees, and the famous Lethbridge breeze.



Our Community

Breaking down silos is key. We continually strive to create a community that is informed, empowered, and works together to advocate for tourism in Lethbridge.



Our Promise

We will be the professional, knowledgeable, and trusted tourism expert. Our plans continually move us to an elevated market position, which outperforms other tourism destinations.



Our Organization

Our start-up model balances strong financial, organizational and political performance. We ensure interim performance is achieved as we build a strong foundational structure.



STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

By implementing these three structures, Tourism Lethbridge, has been able to develop at incredible speeds. Tourism Lethbridge has increased support and service to our not-for-profit events and new tourism programming opportunities, developed and delivered increasingly more effective tourism support for partners in the community, and launched new hyper-targeted campaigns. The goal is higher conversions for attractions, increased leisure travel and meetings and conventions bookings, and active stakeholder networks capable of elevating and informing community partners about opportunities in Lethbridge.

2019 Board Successes

The LDMO Board of Directors is hard at work monitoring and providing feedback about the tourism industry in Lethbridge. From 2018, four key strategies were identified by the board in relation to the successful operation of the organization.

HOST FIRST ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The first Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Lethbridge Destination Management Organization was held April 11th, 2019, at the Galt Museum and Archives. New board members were recruited to continue the work of founding board members who stepped down at the AGM.

ORGANIZE AND COMPLETE STRATEGIC PLANNING

A facilitator delivered a Strategic Planning Session to the Executive Director. The purpose was to clarify the focus and direction of the new organization. A full day session allowed the board to focus on the most essential elements of tourism in Lethbridge.



BOARD RECRUITMENT

At the previous AGM, not all board vacancies were filled. The Board is currently identifying new directors for the organization. These new board members are set to be brought in after the 2019 AGM in April 2020.

CONTINUE BOARD POLICY DEVELOPMENT

With the speed of development at the organization, policy development has been a key focus. At present, the board has completed fiscal and operational policies to assist the Executive Director on day-to-day items. Enhanced operational policies are still in development.



"The board takes great pride in the diversity of skill sets that have come together to represent the tourism industry of Lethbridge. Co-operation is a key strength."



BOARD MEMBERS OF TOURISM LETHBRIDGE

SUZANNE LINT *Chair of the Board* - Allied Arts Council

SUSAN BURROWS-JOHNSON *Vice Chair* - Galt Museum/Fort Whoop-Up

RYAN PARKS *Treasurer*

JEFF CARLSON *Member at Large* - City of Lethbridge

DALENE HECK *Member at Large*

GREG NORMAN *Member at Large*

SHILPA STOCKER *Member at Large* - Lethbridge Lodging Association

BRAD TUCKER *Member at Large* - Alberta Parks

ABOUT THE BOARD

Board meetings happen on the fourth Thursday of every month. As many board members work in the tourism sector, the board breaks in June and July to focus on the busy summer season. There is also a break in December. This is a governance board, which does not make operational decisions about the organization. The board currently has a maximum of 9 board members.



Letter from the Chair

AS I COMPLETE MY FIRST TERM

As the Chair of the Board of Tourism Lethbridge, I am encouraged by the progress our organization has made as we work to establish ourselves as leaders in supporting tourism growth in Lethbridge. As a relatively new organization, much of the Board's focus this past year has been on ensuring Tourism Lethbridge has a sound structure and foundation to complete this important mission.

There were many accomplishments in 2019. Foremost was the completion of the Board's new strategic plan. This plan provides direction for our staff and outlines the approach our organization will take to develop tourism strategies and cultivate opportunities. It is the guide to our future operational successes.

Another highlight occurrence last year was the move from our original downtown location to the visitor centre on Scenic Drive South. This move will provide improved access for the diverse clients who require our information while increasing the physical visibility of Tourism Lethbridge.

Members of the Lethbridge Board of Directors and staff participated in the EDL Team Lethbridge initiative. Jeff Carlson, Susan Burrows-Johnson and Executive Director, William Slenders, joined the Team Lethbridge mission to Edmonton in November 2019, where they were able to represent the City's tourism sector in a meaningful relationship-building project. Team members met with the Provincial Government to build awareness of our community and its strengths. Tourism Lethbridge will continue to participate in this valuable program if it is available.

The Board also spent considerable time ensuring there were robust policies and operational structures in place to support the work of the LDMO staff. Tourism Lethbridge is a fledgling organization; therefore, we continue to focus our efforts on reviewing, modifying and improving our legislative, administrative and program framework.

The achievements of Tourism Lethbridge are the result of the efforts of a strong team. The Board of Directors would like to acknowledge and thank the Tourism Lethbridge staff for their hard work in implementing the Board's strategic plan and their commitment to building a strong tourism environment in Lethbridge.

We would also like to recognize several members who are leaving the Board. We express our sincerest appreciation to retiring board members Susan Burrows Johnson and Dalene Heck and thank them for their service to Lethbridge Tourism.



We must also acknowledge and thank the City of Lethbridge, Travel Alberta, and the Government of Alberta for their ongoing financial support as well as our stakeholders and tourism partners for their efforts and dedication to enhancing tourism in Lethbridge.

Tourism Lethbridge began 2020 with a large degree of optimism. Having completed a significant amount of foundational work, we were ready to focus our

efforts and resources on stakeholder support and tourism growth initiatives. Unfortunately, the outbreak of the Coronavirus and the resulting critical response and need to self-isolate has effectively shut down the tourism industry. Tourism Lethbridge, like all service and support organizations, is evaluating its strategies for moving forward. The Tourism Lethbridge Board of Directors

and staff are committed to continuing to build innovative, thoughtful and relevant tourism resources, so we are positioned to attract visitors to our city when the crisis abates.

Chair of the Board
SUZANNE LINT



CORE PROGRAMS AT TOURISM LETHBRIDGE



Operational Successes in 2019

Tourism Lethbridge is working to innovate through strong operational programs and promotions that highlight Lethbridge as a holistic and desired destination. This innovation is poised to support and develop programs and to implement the new strategic plan as laid out by the board of Tourism Lethbridge.

Continued work with community partners and stakeholders are achieving results and leading to comprehensive strategies and new tourist conversions. In summary, capacity development and comprehensive digital marketing strategies have led to faster marketing times, shorter waiting times for stakeholders in marketing and greater results in conversion. These programs are essential to the timely promotion of the destination for future years.

STAFF AT TOURISM LETHBRIDGE

WILLIAM SLENDERS Executive Director
STEPHEN BRAUND Director of Marketing & Creative
JACKIE STAMBENE Director of Visitor Services
JAROM SCOTT Content Creator
ANNA SHIRDEL Experience Development Manager
EMMA BURNARD Digital & Social Media Specialist
MATTHIS BRUELHEYDE Tourism Ambassador
DIANA NUALA Tourism Ambassador



WEBSITE REVIEW

TourismLethbridge.com operates as the organization's central home for traveller information and marketing. This website compiles attractions, activities and things to do in Lethbridge for easy use. In 2019, the website continued to grow in relation to other, existing city-based information providers. In 2019, Tourism Lethbridge had:

- 369,561 page views
- 120,610 unique visitors
- 1,592,745 search engine hits

LETHBRIDGE NETWORK SUCCESSES

TourismLethbridge.com is a part of a local syndicated network of websites. Therefore content created and uploaded on TourismLethbridge.com also appears on other community sites, increasing reach. This network led to Tourism Lethbridge information contributing to the following:

- 1,323 events created
- 43,866 profile views for attractions
- 310,492 profile views for all profiles on the website

Marketing Report 2019



As seen in the above map, Tourism Lethbridge focuses regionally. Our primary target is the Visiting Friends and Relatives (VFR) market, while Calgary, with its sizeable nearby population base, is the main non-VFR market beyond our community. Beyond this, we also ensure our message reaches north to Red Deer, west to Cranbrook, south into Northern Montana, and east to Medicine Hat and onto Swift Current.

SOCIAL MEDIA SUCCESSES — GENERAL LETHBRIDGE

Facebook — Post Total Impressions	643,852	Instagram continues to be a platform of growth and increased connectivity with a younger demographic than Facebook. We achieved approximately 1,700 followers by end of 2019.
Facebook — Post Total Reach	417,409	
Instagram Impressions	156,715	Our winter campaign promoted the Winter Light Festival at Nikka Yuku Japanese Garden, generating 170,000 impressions in two weeks, and delivering 1,500 clicks.
Facebook Engaged Users	29,996	

MARKETING LETHBRIDGE

2019 was a big year for Tourism Lethbridge. In our first full year of operations, there was a significant focus on creating new promotional media and content and capacity development. The focus was on City attractions and major events. Along with print and digital products, this content is now ready to promote facilities and events in 2020 and beyond. Furthermore, community members can use this content to promote their events and travel to Lethbridge once it is available on our online database.

While our focus was on the Visiting Friends and Relatives (VFR) market to build an audience, visiting journalists and influencers ensured Lethbridge received attention beyond city limits.

Online, We grew our followers on social media at an exponential rate and, which was achieved, for the most part, organically. We were able to promote Sport, Meetings and Conventions, and Leisure Travel to the city in print, using both in-house print projects and advertisements in other key publications.

PRINT MEDIA

We promoted the City of Lethbridge in print publications of our own and through advertisements in other publications. Our publications are shared with travellers in person at Visitor Information Centres (VIC) across the region, at events and in conference bags.

Major Print Projects

VISITOR MAP Traveller-focused, it features local attractions and a Downtown map with parking zones.

TRIFOLD BROCHURE Conveniently sized, it focused on events and city attractions like Fort Whoop-Up.

VISIT LETHBRIDGE GUIDE Tourism Lethbridge supplied art, copy, and message direction. The guide was distributed to regional VICs and over 100,000 households via the InRoads Guide.

PUBLIC RELATIONS & INFLUENCERS

Through our Public Relations specialist, Tourism Lethbridge brought in numerous Influencers and journalists to ensure Lethbridge received attention further afield. These writers promoted various aspects of the city across multiple media.

MICHAEL CUNNINGHAM *Journalist -*

Golf and Culture

CHRIS ISTACE *Blog/Social -*

Peaks to Prairies EV eco-tour

ANDREW PENNER *Blog/Social -*

Outdoors and culture

KAREN UNG *CBC Radio, Blog -* Family focus

JENNIFER BAIN *Post Media Journalist/Blog -*

Nature and History

ADVERTISEMENTS

As our mandate includes Sport and Meetings and Conventions along with Leisure travel, we advertised across multiple media.

BIZBASH (Meetings and Conventions)

CM&E CORPORATE MEETINGS AND EVENTS

(Meetings and Conventions)

IGNITE (Meetings and Conventions)

ADRENALINE (Sports)

BUCKET LIST AB DIGITAL CAMPAIGN

Similar to 2018, Tourism Lethbridge contracted ZenSeekers media to promote Lethbridge digitally. This year, adventure influencer Dax Justin visited Lethbridge to share mountain biking, the Sik-Ooh-Kotoki Friendship Centre Pow-Wow and Indian Relay Races. Impressed and inspired, he created multiple Lethbridge posts.

SOCIAL MEDIA REACH 243,981

DAX JUSTIN 5,366 people reached

#LETHBRIDGESPIRIT HASHTAG REACH (not limited to this campaign) 414,683

GO WEST CONFERENCE 2020 primary sponsor (Meetings and Conventions)

B93 AND COUNTRY 95 RADIO ADS (Leisure)

VIDEO CONTENT IS KING — GENERAL LETHBRIDGE

Video Views — All Channels 125,964

Facebook Organic Video Views 85,407

Instagram Video Views 4,398

Video outperforms other types of posts on Facebook and other social media channels. The success of our videos confirmed this industry standard.

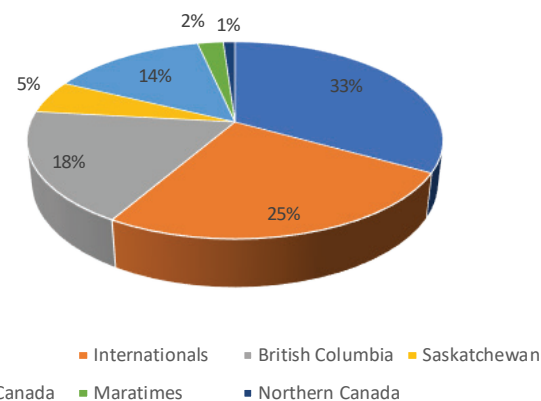
Multiple videos achieved big numbers on Facebook. An April Fools Days post, promoting partners and two ATB Centre videos reached over 100,000 people.

Visitor Centre Report 2019

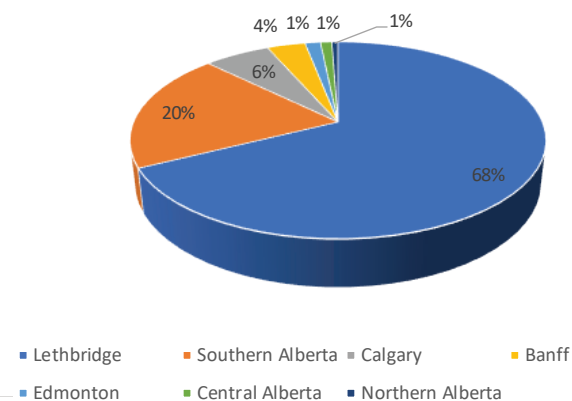
The following section highlights the activities taken at the Visitor Information Centre. The numbers represented in this report represent two different operating centres. Until June of 2019, Tourism Lethbridge was located downtown at 327 5 St. S. Then, in July 2019, Tourism Lethbridge moved to the Information Centre at 2805 Scenic Dr. S. This move resulted in statistics reflecting two very different groups of users and visitors. The reporting for the 2020 season will represent, for the first time, a full reporting year in one location for Tourism Lethbridge.

As we approached summer, we hired four summer student staff members to deliver information during the months of May to August. At events in and around town, they shared information regarding what happens in Lethbridge. We successfully attended 59 events throughout 2019 and provided information, resources and increased awareness for our website. Working with our stakeholders, we created FAM (familiarization tours) for our staff to help them improve their knowledge of the community to promote to all visitors.

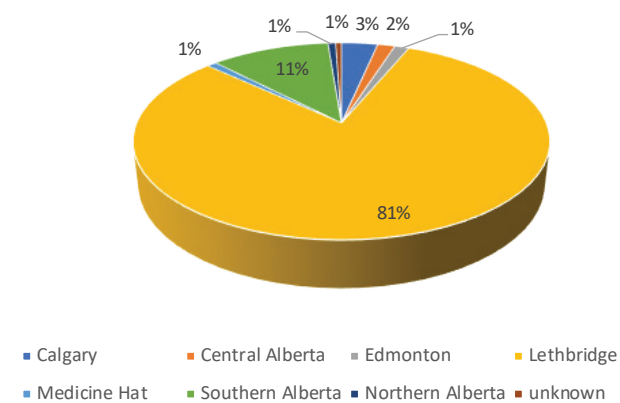
CITY OF ORIGIN: OUTSIDE ALBERTA



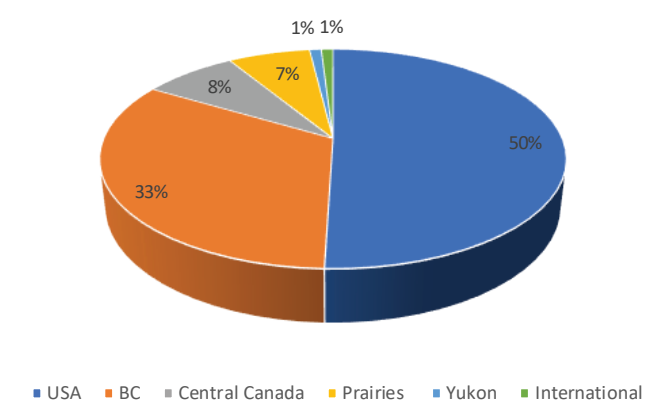
PRIMARY TRAVEL DESTINATION: ALBERTA



CITY OF ORIGIN: ALBERTA



PRIMARY TRAVEL DESTINATION: OUTSIDE ALBERTA



*Lethbridge residents have been factored out of this chart. This chart represents true visitors to the destination

TOTAL NUMBER OF GUESTS SERVED IN 2019

10,184

TOTAL NUMBER OF INQUIRES

WALK-INS 2,088

EMAIL 13

WEBSITE 38

TELEPHONE 444

SOCIAL MEDIA 10

MAIL 3

IMPRESSIONS 1,182

MOBILE CONSULTATION 4,140

TOTAL INTERACTIONS 7,921

SATISFACTION LEVEL WITH INFORMATION

9.6 out of 10

PURPOSE OF VISIT TO LETHBRIDGE

TL ADMINISTRATION 321

ARRANGING FOR OTHERS 40

BUSINESS TRAVEL 13

DOWNTOWN VISITOR 1,212

EVENTS/SPORTS/ GROUP FUNCTIONS 90

INDEPENDENT TRAVELLER 3,132

NON-TRAVEL-INFO ONLY 2,636

RELOCATION 69

SHOPPING 4

STUDENT 170

UNKNOWN 171

WASHROOM 61

QUARTER 1 REPORT

EVENTS ATTENDED BY MOBILE TOURISM

AMBASSADORS 15

CONFERENCE BAGS CREATED 840

LETHBRIDGE LITERATURE DISTRIBUTED 8,415

QUARTER 2 REPORT

EVENTS ATTENDED BY MOBILE TOURISM

AMBASSADORS 15

CONFERENCE BAGS CREATED 774

LETHBRIDGE LITERATURE DISTRIBUTED 9,319

QUARTER 3 REPORT

EVENTS ATTENDED BY MOBILE TOURISM

AMBASSADORS 16

CONFERENCE BAGS CREATED 1,021

LETHBRIDGE LITERATURE DISTRIBUTED 11,970

QUARTER 4 REPORT

EVENTS ATTENDED BY MOBILE TOURISM

AMBASSADORS 12

CONFERENCE BAGS CREATED 1,080

LETHBRIDGE LITERATURE DISTRIBUTED 8,450






**WE ARE HERE
TO HELP!**

We are here to support the destination and all tourism partners within the City of Lethbridge. Call or email us today and see what we can do to help your business, event, attraction, and more!



Tourism Lethbridge

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