

First-of-its-kind Indigenous Tourism Development Strategy is launched in Edmonton

EDMONTON – Explore Edmonton, Stormy Lake Consulting, and Moccasin Trails Inc, along with Indigenous partners and communities in the Edmonton region, are excited to launch an Indigenous Tourism Development Strategy.

This is an important step in the tourism landscape for Edmonton as Indigenous tourism is an avenue for Indigenous peoples to share their truth and culture in an authentic and meaningful way.

The strategy is based on five interconnected elements, with the goal of building a thriving community of Indigenous tourism operators, entrepreneurs and events:

- **Relationships:** which includes the creation of a network of Indigenous tourism operators and entrepreneurs.
- **Storytelling:** which will be centred around building the presence of Indigenous tourism in marketing, as well as building understanding and knowledge by sharing Indigenous stories.
- **Empowerment & Learning:** create a tourism incubator workshop and Explore Edmonton will commit to building a hub of resources on its website.
- **Shared leadership:** this strategy should be Indigenous led and the Advisory Circle, which was involved in development of the strategy, must be sustained and supported by all partners.
- **Gathering:** including bringing Indigenous tourism experiences into Explore Edmonton events and bidding on major Indigenous events.

While Explore Edmonton has collaborated in the development of this strategy, it has been led by the Indigenous community and Indigenous tourism operators to ensure our Indigenous partners define what is authentic and the best cultural representation for their communities.

“Explore Edmonton is proud of the relationships and friendships created with our Indigenous communities and tourism partners,” said Paul Hawes, vice president of destination development and marketing with Explore Edmonton. “As we now begin our journey, activating on our Indigenous Tourism Strategy, it’s fundamental that we maintain and continue growing strong relationships - these friendships are the cornerstones of the Indigenous Tourism Strategy. This philosophy recognizes that we are living in a moment of truth and reconciliation and Explore Edmonton understands that tourism is reconciliation in action; it is not simply a ‘moment,’ but a long-term commitment.”

“Working with Explore Edmonton over the last several months, I see the reward of a relationship based on trust, respect and a commitment to sustainability and cultural integrity,” said Amberly Morin, tourism manager for Enoch Cree Nation. “It’s these relationships within the Indigenous tourism sector that are essential for preserving language, culture and creating meaningful experiences.”

“By sharing their cultures and approaches to environmental stewardship, and extending their hospitality to the world, First Nation, Métis and Inuit communities and businesses can achieve increased prosperity, heritage preservation and self-determination,” said Hawes.

There are four key audiences that the group believes will seek out Indigenous tourism experiences. That is Canadians 18-34 years old, Canadian families seeking educational experiences together, well-traveled US visitors from California, Texas and New York, and long-haul travellers from UK and Germany. The fourth key audience is business events, which could be hosted by Indigenous-owned venues, or an add-

on for conferences and conventions not hosted at Indigenous venues. This element would serve as a differentiator for organizers looking at Edmonton.

There are currently 89 Indigenous tourism businesses in Edmonton and region, 65 per cent of which are Indigenous owned and operated.

[Please click here to view the strategy.](#)

For more information, please contact:

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About Explore Edmonton:

Explore Edmonton Corporation (EEC) is the Destination Management and Marketing Organization (DMMO) for Edmonton. EEC tells our city's story, elevates the Edmonton experience and generates inbound visitation. EEC manages the Edmonton Convention Centre and the Edmonton EXPO Centre. While EEC's mandate is focused on attracting visitors from beyond our city's limits, what we do and how we do it also enhances and amplifies the quality of life for Edmontonians.