



Explore Edmonton announces Traci Bednard as CEO

Explore Edmonton Corporation is incredibly excited to share that Traci Bednard has been appointed as the new Chief Executive Officer.

Bednard is no stranger to the tourism sector after more than two decades at the Edmonton International Airport. She brings a significant amount of sector-specific experience to the role, as well as strong business acumen and experience leading diverse teams in a dynamic organization. The Board of Directors for Explore Edmonton Corporation was involved in a rigorous search for its next CEO and has every confidence that Bednard is the best choice to lead the organization out of the pandemic, into a period of recovery and growth.

“The Board had a lot of discussion about the kind of leader we wanted in the role, and we took our time to make sure we found the right person. We are thrilled that Traci is joining the Explore Edmonton team. Given her experience at EIA, and her knowledge of the organization having worked with us as an industry partner, we know she will hit the ground running.” – Marcela Mandeville, Chair, Explore Edmonton Board of Directors

While supporting the recovery of the tourism and events sectors in Edmonton will be challenging work in the coming year, there is also exciting, impactful work ahead to elevate Edmonton as a destination of choice.

“I couldn’t be any more excited to join the industry-leading team at Explore Edmonton. I’ve worked closely with many of these people in my previous role at the airport, so I know what they are capable of. It’s been a tough couple of years for the sector, and for Explore Edmonton, but I am optimistic 2022 is the year we kickstart the recovery of the industry and get back to business.” – Traci Bednard, CEO, Explore Edmonton.

Bednard brings expertise and knowledge of tourism from a national perspective as she’s a member of the Board of Directors for the Tourism Industry Association of Canada and she sees the value that Edmonton brings as a destination in Canada.

With Bednard’s appointment, it brings interim CEO Maggie Davison’s tenure as the interim CEO to a close. Davison joined the former Edmonton Economic Development Corporation to lead the Edmonton Tourism division in 2012. Over nearly a decade, Davison helped build the Explore Edmonton brand, execute strategies that led to significant growth in visitation to Edmonton, culminating with a banner year for tourism in 2019, before the pandemic. She also led the restructure of the organization from EEDC to Explore Edmonton and managed the team through the last two, incredibly challenging, years.

“This is a bittersweet moment for me, as I have loved every minute of my time at Explore Edmonton, but I know Traci, and I am thrilled that she will be taking on the CEO job. Over the years, with an amazing

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group of teams, we built something very special, and I am so excited to see what the next chapter in their story brings.” – Maggie Davison, outgoing CEO, Explore Edmonton

The pandemic has devastated the tourism sector – it was the first hit, the hardest hit, and it will take the longest to recover – and it was also incredibly challenging for the Explore Edmonton team. It’s expected visitor spending won’t recover to 2019 numbers until at least 2026. By working together, by supporting each other, and taking the difficult pandemic environment one day at a time, the organization is ready to tackle recovery.

“The struggles of the last 18 months have highlighted the importance of Edmonton’s visitor economy and the significant impact it drives for our community. As we emerge from the pandemic, there is opportunity to make it stronger than ever. I look forward to working with our partners, industry stakeholders, and all orders of governments to get tourism and events booming again in our city.” – Traci Bednard

In 2019, Edmonton welcomed more than 6 million visitors to Edmonton, who spent almost \$2 billion in the local economy, supporting thousands of jobs and hundreds of businesses. In the same year, Explore Edmonton, through its work in the tourism sector and the operation of the Edmonton Convention Centre and the Edmonton EXPO Centre, generated \$260 million in economic impact.

Bednard is available for one-on-one interviews with media today between 1:30 and 3:00 p.m. To set up an interview within this time frame, please contact:

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