

Media Release

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Northeast Collaborative launching new wave of tourism development work, training in northeast Alberta

Federal funds to assist with destination development and tourism training project

Lac La Biche... As tourism rebounds in the wake of COVID-19, an emerging tourism cluster in northeastern Alberta is getting a significant boost with help from the Government of Canada.

The award-winning Northeast Collaborative, a partnership of five destinations, is receiving a federal investment of \$170,780 through PrairiesCan's Tourism Relief Fund to develop a visitor corridor development plan and deliver training to tourism operators and employees. Tourism businesses within the Collaborative will be able to take advantage of these training opportunities to build capacity for digital and social media marketing and visitor experience development. This project is helping tourism providers respond to the "new normal" that COVID-19 has created. The partners are Lac La Biche County, Athabasca County, Métis Crossing, the Municipal District of Bonnyville and the Town of Vermilion.

The partners have worked together in the annual #TakeItToTheLake / #NEAB promotional campaign for the past several years. The new project will strengthen the collaboration and engagement in corridor activities, increase awareness of the partner destinations and support the development of new experiences to grow the visitor economy.

In addition to the strategic destination planning work, the project will engage around 50 businesses across the region, including 23 Indigenous entrepreneurs, with training between now and the end of March 2023.

The Tourism Relief Fund helps organizations in the tourism sector adapt operations to meet public health requirements, offer innovative products and services to visitors, and prepare to welcome travelers to Canada. With a budget of \$500 million over two years, including \$50 million specifically dedicated to Indigenous tourism initiatives and \$15 million for national initiatives, this fund is positioning Canada to be a destination of choice for domestic and international travel.



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Quotes

“From pristine wilderness and outdoor activities, to authentic Indigenous cultural experiences and history, communities in northeast Alberta have attractions that draw thousands of visitors each year from across Canada and around the world. Our government’s investment in the Northeast Collaborative will help create new opportunities for tourism operators to promote their offerings while establishing a long-term plan to position the region as a leading destination for visitors.”

- ***The Honourable Daniel Vandal, Minister for PrairiesCan***

“Through the Tourism Relief Fund, our federal government is investing in projects that support sustainable economic growth by encouraging residents and visitors to explore Alberta and Canada’s natural beauty, history and diverse culture. Our investment in the Northeast Collaborative is helping local businesses and tourism operators market their outstanding tourism experiences at home and abroad while supporting the community.”

- ***The Honourable Randy Boissonnault, Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance***

“Lac La Biche County has invested a significant amount of effort, money and time in tourism to help diversify our regional economy. Our visitor attraction efforts are paying off and we’re thankful to the Government of Canada for helping us and our partners continue to develop and innovate in this area.”

- ***Mayor Paul Reutov, Lac La Biche County***

“The Northeast Collaborative has gained considerable momentum in the last several years, connecting with new audiences and attracting new tourism entrepreneurs at a level that it might have been impossible for us to reach individually. This new project we’re embarking on will take everything a step further, giving us the tools we need to continue growing and evolving as destinations, both on our own and as parts of a larger tourism ecosystem.”

- ***Alex Fuller, Communications Coordinator, Lac La Biche County***

Media inquiries may be directed to:

Alex Fuller, Communications Coordinator

Lac La Biche County

Phone: 780-623-6817

E-mail: alex.fuller@laclabichecounty.com

