

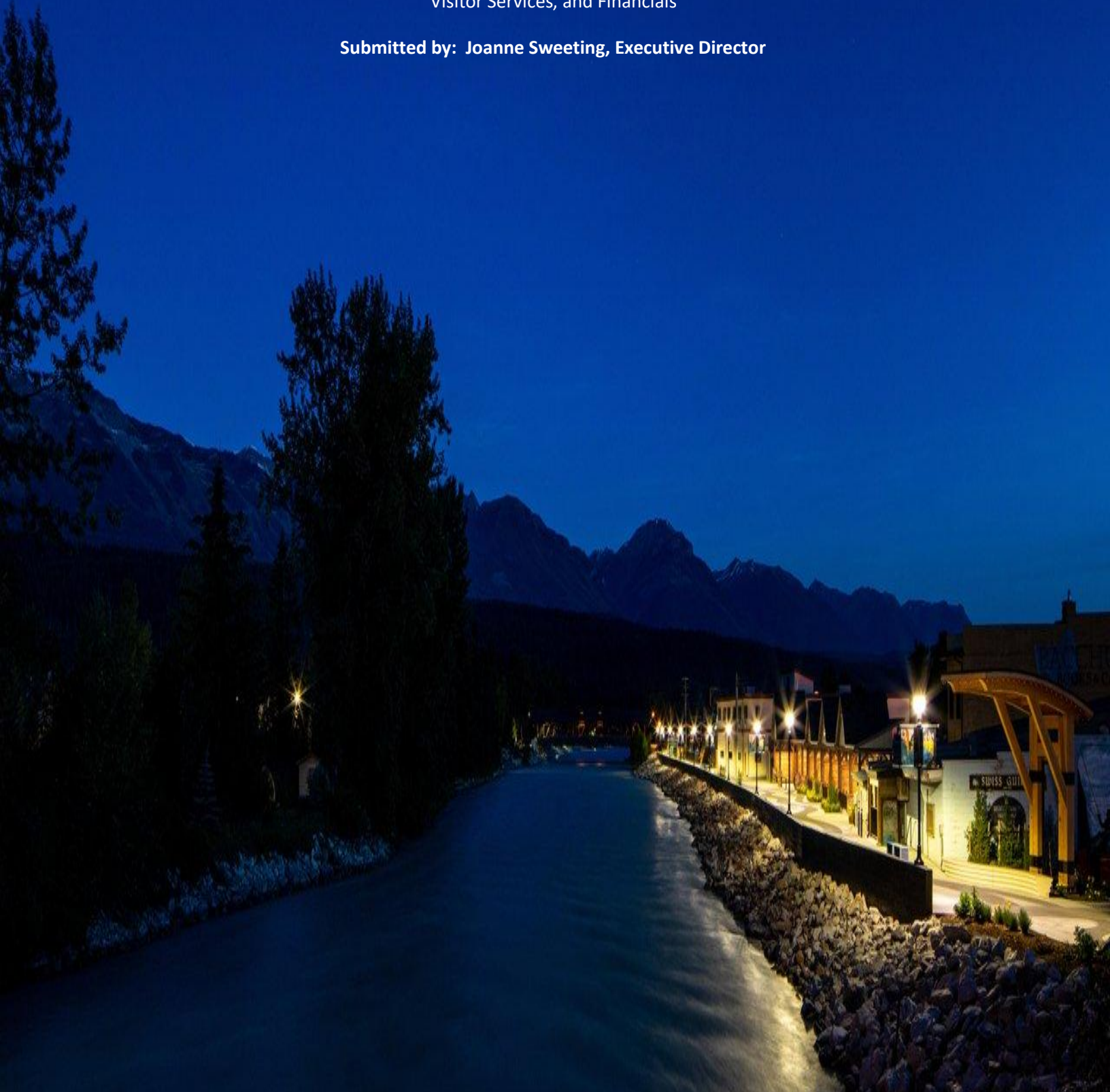
ANNUAL REPORT 2024

A summary report of the activities of the Tourism Golden Association

January 1st to December 31st, 2024

Key Reporting areas include Destination Performance, DMO Performance, Destination Management, Destination Marketing, Visitor Services, and Financials

Submitted by: Joanne Sweeting, Executive Director



Indigenous Acknowledgement

Tourism Golden is grateful to live, work and play on the traditional unceded territory of the Ktunaxa and Secwepemc peoples and chosen home of the Metis Nation Columbia River Society.

We respectfully acknowledge the culture and history that connects these Nations with this land, and their wisdom, sacrifices and stewardship of the past, the present and the future.



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Front & inside cover images by Dave Best - Best Impressions

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#GOLDENRULES
#GOLDENBC



Directors, Officers, Committees & Staff

Board of Directors from May 2024

Elected

Representing Town of Golden Accommodators

Channin Liedtke replaced Jordan Egan, Basecamp

Lodge Golden

Atma Sandher, Ponderosa Motor Inn

Gaurav Randhawa, Prestige Inn Golden

Representing General Accommodators (all locations)

Brandy Beliveau, Bellstar Hotels & Resort

Representing Area A Accommodators

John Lush, Lush Mountain Accommodations

Jo-Anne Best, Mount 7 Lodges

Representing Tourism Operators

Graeme Kreiner, Golden Golf Club

Ryan Johannesen, Glacier Raft Company

Toby Barrett, Kicking Horse Mountain Resort

Tristan MacLaggan, Golden Skybridge

Officers

President	Toby Barrett
Vice President	Brandy Beliveau
Treasurer	Graeme Kreiner
Secretary	Jo-Anne Best

Committees

Finance Committee

Graeme Kreiner (Treasurer), Toby Barrett, Tristan MacLaggan

HR Committee

Jo Best, Toby Barrett, Brandy Beliveau

Stakeholder Committee

Atma Sandher, John Lush, Toby Barrett, Ryan Johannesen

Governance (Constitution and Bylaw) Committee

Atma Sandher, Toby Barrett, Ryan Johannesen

Co-op Programs Committee

Atma Sandher, Brandy Beliveau, Jo-Anne Best,

Staff

Executive Director	Joanne Sweeting
Communications Manager	Andy Brown
Marketing & Ops. Manager	Hugh Brown
Destination Services Mgr.	Mariela Encina-Lanus
Communications & Asset Development Coordinator	Griffin Robinson

The board establishes the vision, mission, and objectives of the organisation and approves the annual marketing plan and budgets. It ensures fiscal responsibility and fulfilment of the organisation’s mission.

About Tourism Golden

- ❑ A non-profit society incorporated in 2006 and mandated as the DMO and eligible entity until July 2027.
- ❑ The DMO area contains the Town of Golden and CSRD Area A, not including Yoho National Park.
- ❑ Representing tourism stakeholders (accommodations, activity operators and attractions).
- ❑ Primarily funded by the Municipal and Regional District Tax (MRDT) leveraged with grant monies and ‘pay to play’ stakeholder co-op advertising sales.
- ❑ Governed by a board of 11 directors representing accommodations and tourism operators.

Mandate

Tourism Golden Association will lead, direct, and manage destination marketing activities and support tourism development initiatives on behalf of Golden and Kicking Horse Country by maintaining a collaborative and inclusive industry driven organization, and by providing opportunities for stakeholders to increase revenues. We will provide a consistent voice for Golden and Kicking Horse Country in the tourism marketplace.

Tourism Vision

“We will inspire travellers who share our community’s values to stay longer and experience Golden, creating deep connections and lasting memories.”

Tourism Mission

“Tourism Golden works collaboratively with its stakeholders and leverages its resources effectively to execute research-informed destination management strategies that responsibly grow Golden’s year-round visitor economy and contribute to the community’s economic sustainability and resident quality of life.”

Values & Guiding Principles

As we progress towards our vision and fulfill our mission, Tourism Golden will make strategic, research informed decisions, and conduct itself in a manner that is:

- ❑ Respectful of our community, our stakeholders, our partners, and the environment
- ❑ Inclusive and Collaborative
- ❑ Transparent and Accountable

Executive Summary

2024 was rollercoaster year for tourism in Golden. A snow drought and cold temperatures at the start of the year and the Dogtooth FSR fire near the town boundary prompting evacuations south of town from July 24th could both have had a significant impact on industry performance and revenue. Winter MRDT revenues decreased year over year. However, spring into early summer saw a turnaround in accommodation performance, and whilst the fire threat caused immediate large-scale cancellations, these were almost immediately mitigated by the devastating fire in Jasper which diverted visitors to Golden and caused a large uplift in accommodation occupancy and revenue in August, September and into October. Consequently, the year ended with an overall 8% increase in accommodation revenue.

Thanks to previous training and preparation, and immediate support provided by the BCRTS and Kootenay Rockies Tourism during the early days of the Dogtooth FSR fire, we were able to promptly provide industry stakeholders with information and communication tools such as statements, templates and immediate notification of official updates, as well as act as an effective information channel for official information using the already established emergency information webpage, website alert banners, and push notifications via the Golden BC app. Continuous monitoring of the official updates from the Town of Golden and other information sources, and immediate communication through these in-house channels was effective. 16,000 views of the Emergency Information page and almost 600 app downloads were counted between July 24th and August 31st.

Other situational influences included inflation moderating to 2.4%, the completion of the multi-year Kicking Horse Canyon Phase 4 project in late 2023 and the launch of the Highway 95 bridge replacement project in downtown Golden which caused intermittent noise disruption and an on-going visual quality impact.

Despite the uncertainty, the trajectory of achieving our objective to increase visitation in spring and fall continued with an increase in accommodation revenue of 15% in spring and 30% in fall¹.

Similarly, the average length of stay increased to 2.9 nights², a 21% increase compared to 2019 and an 11% increase against 2023.

Other Key Performance Highlights that support the Strategic Objectives are summarised on page 9.

The achievements in 2024's destination performance reflect a longer-term trend. Comparing the 2023 Value of Tourism Study against the 2019 study, confirms that tourism in Golden continues to go from strength to strength despite a global pandemic and ever-changing environmental factors. Comparisons demonstrate that:

- Direct tourism revenues in 2023 grew 36% against 2019.
- Tourism-related jobs increased by 28%.
- Tax revenues increased by 70%

It's gratifying to note that the 2024 Stakeholder Survey confirms a 73% satisfaction rate with Tourism Golden's overall performance, reflecting the value of member support programs, advocacy activities, and perhaps a recognition of tourism revenues generated from marketing activities

¹ CoStar STR Destination Report & AirDNA
Executive Summary

² Golden Summer Visitor Study 2024
2024 Annual Report

which reflect \$107 spent directly in local businesses for every \$1 spent in destination marketing.³

The 2024 Stakeholder Survey identifies the continuing top barriers to growth in tourism are:

- Housing affordability and availability.
- Outdated community planning.
- Lack of transportation to & within Golden.
- Industry staff compensation.
- Labour shortages.

Projects and activities in 2024 on these key issues include:

- Support for a tourism housing project available to the Golden CED when called for.
- Continuing support for the season winter airport and in-destination shuttle services⁴.
- Seasonal worker Living Wage study launched.
- Participation in local and regional Immigration Tables to advocate for improved industry support in federal and provincial immigration programs.

The Destination Management plan was completed in 2024 and identified key themes and project areas:

- Support development of tourism businesses & experiences.
- Housing the tourism workforce.
- Cultivating visitors who care.
- Rec Site protection & Enhancement.
- Social and community impact of tourism.

Projects to address or investigate solutions launched in 2024 or earlier include:

- Tourism Business Incubator Feasibility study.
- Educational interactive visitor experience program development

- Golden Guide online education program new modules on responsible recreation, invasive species prevention, and why these matter.
- Responsible travel and recreation asset development to support Destination Management objectives.

Additional key projects and activities included:

- Completion of the 2023 Value of Tourism study and launch of video campaign asset development featuring local businesses.
- Website upgrade project launch.
- Continuation of the 'always on' online visitor study.
- Visitor Centre renovation and upgrades to improve working conditions for staff and enhance accessibility.⁵
- Emergency preparedness for the organisation, including cyber security.
- Participation in the newly formed local Firesmart roundtable.

Relocation to the new office improved our presence and accessibility in the downtown and consequently we welcomed more visitors to the marketing office in 2024 during the winter months when the visitor centre was closed. We took the opportunity to start selling Parks Canada Parks Passes from this location.

In November 2024 Tourism Golden received a huge disbursement of MRDT from the Ministry of Finance which included an overpayment in the amount of \$585,589. The Ministry paused disbursements until the overpayment was recovered. We therefore received no further disbursements until March 2025. With Board approval, the overpayment amount was placed in a

³ 2023 Value of Tourism in Golden

⁴ Using RMI, partner and Tourism Golden's non-MRDT funds

⁵ Using Destination BC Visitor Services Network funds

1-year GIC and is referenced as Deferred Income in the financial statements.

The original 2024 budget assumed a 5% increase in net MRDT revenues over 2023. The actual increase was 13.4%.

MRDT funds are typically disbursed two months after the accommodation remitting month, meaning that the original budget prepared for Board approval in October 2023 did not include all MRDT disbursements for Q3 2023. The 2024 budget included a modest estimated carry-forward of \$370,000. However, with robust MRDT disbursements for August to December, the 2023 fiscal year ended with an overall carry forward into 2024 of \$704,000.

With the uncertainty of the impact of the fire season and the confusion caused by the overpayment, along with an unexpected \$108,000 increase (153% against November 2023) in OAP for November 2024, expenses were controlled until we gained clarity from the Ministry on MRDT disbursements, and therefore on the financial position. This was finally confirmed in spring 2025. Consequently, the 2024 fiscal year ended with large cash assets of over \$1.7 million.

The AGM was held in May with presentations from the Town of Golden on the Resort Development Strategy and Short-Term Rental Bylaw update as well as the Ministry of Transportation on the Kicking Horse Highway 95 Bridge 2-year construction project. The event was well attended by industry and community organisations as well as local government. The Board of Directors remained consistent with previous years and continued to support staff in the tactical implementation of the annual plan and strategic priorities.

As a Resort Municipality, Golden benefits from RMI funding and under the 2022 – 2025 Resort Development Strategy. Under multi-year agreements with the Town of Golden we received funds to support in-destination winter shuttle services, the continued development of the Golden Guide online destination training programs and a contribution to the collection of industry data.

We recognize these factors that make our success possible:

1. The *MRDT program* which provides reliable multi-year funding for marketing and projects.
2. The focus of Tourism Golden staff and board on *strategic planning informed by research and data*.
3. Tourism Golden stakeholders who *invest and innovate* in products and experiences, engage with us in *collectively promoting Golden* and *support our efforts* in content creation and media relations.
4. The Town of Golden and CSRD Area A who support our position and efforts as the eligible entity and lead organisation for tourism.
5. Destination BC and Destination Canada who provide *consistent leadership, research, and support*.
6. Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture's *Festival, Fairs and Events Program* which provides funding for events.
7. The *RMI program* which provides project funding via contribution agreements with the Town of Golden.
8. TIABC and the BCHA who provide collaboration and industry advocacy on key issues.
9. The BCRTS who provide education and support in crisis communication and emergency planning.

PERFORMANCE HIGHLIGHTS

Destination	DMO Performance	Destination Management
 169.4 M direct tourism revenue +36% against 2019 	 \$107 direct revenue generated for every \$1 spent on destination marketing in 2023	 Completed Destination Management plan
 2386 tourism jobs +28% against 2019 	 54 members Funded in TG asset development & Check In Canada referral programs	 Completed Business Incubator Feasibility plan
 1.03 M visitors No change 	 45 features From 53 hosted & Influencers	 23 Golden Stroll interpretive videos
 57.2% Average occupancy No change 	 73% Stakeholders rate TG Excellent or Very Good	 11,273 Winter shuttle ridership +94% 
 \$67.9 M Accommodation revenues +8% against 2023 +15% Spring +30% Fall 	 4.37 M Accommodation referral value +35% 	 13,400 Active users Workingolden.ca
 2.9 nights Average stay +21% against 2019 	 14,472 Visitors served at the Visitor Centre +37% 	 538 Total Golden Guide graduates

Strategic Objectives and Measure of Success

The 5-year strategic plan is the guiding document for the annual marketing plan and tactical activity. Tourism Golden's five-year strategy is designed to deliver measurable results in the pursuit of seven core objectives across four themes:

Economic Contribution	• Increase overall value of the tourism economy • Increase average length of visitor stay at all times of year • Increase shoulder season occupancy levels and rate
Visitor Experience	• Connect more visitors to remarkable experiences via multiple channels • Educate visitors to experience a safe and responsible vacation
Stakeholder Experience	• Deliver enhanced stakeholder programs and support
Resident/Community Experience	• Increase resident understanding of the value of the local tourism industry and support for the tourism industry • Balance resident values with visitor demand and business needs

The methodology for measuring progress against each of these objectives is as follows:

	Objective	Methodology	Measure
1.0	Increase overall value of tourism economy	Value of tourism input/output model baseline established in 2019	Value of tourism economy in 2025 equivalent or better than 2019
2.0	Increase average length of stay at all times of year	Accommodation reporting	Average length of stay increases year over year
3.0	Increase shoulder season occupancy and rate (April/May and October/ November)	Use MRDT collected in these months as a proxy for performance	MRDT collected in shoulder seasons increases year over year
4.0	Connect more visitors to destination experiences through multiple channels	Visitor Intercept Survey Visitor Centre Stats Mobile engagements	Increasing engagements with visitors in destination
5.0	Educate visitors to experience a safe and sustainable vacation	Visitor Intercept Surveys	Visitor awareness and understanding levels
6.0	Deliver enhanced stakeholder programs and supports	Stakeholder survey	Top Box ratings
7.0	Residents of Golden understand the value of tourism and support the local tourism industry	Periodic resident survey	Maintain support for tourism industry
8.0	Balance resident values with visitor demand and business needs	Periodic resident survey	Resident sentiment index

Destination Performance

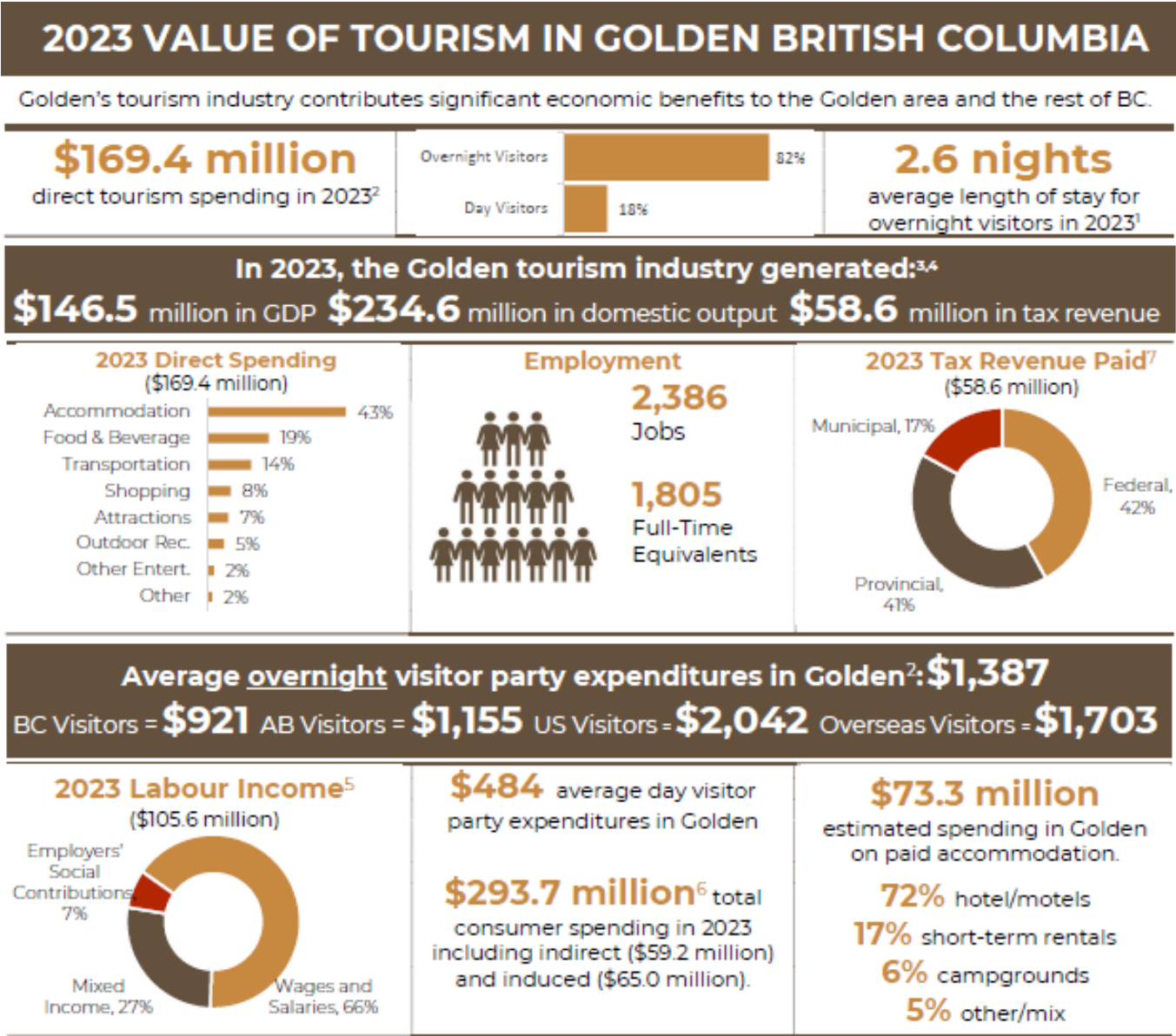
Destination performance reflects Tourism Golden's on-going marketing activity and industry support as well as key trends and events that disrupt or support visitation as detailed in the situational analysis.

SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

- ❑ Inflation 2.4%
- ❑ Completion of KH Canyon phase IV in 2023
- ❑ Jasper evacuation
- ❑ Early season snow drought & extreme cold
- ❑ Dogtooth FSR fire
- ❑ Highway 95 bridge replacement project started
- ❑ Ongoing affordable housing shortages
- ❑ Labour shortages & changes to the TFWP

The 2023 Value of Tourism Study was launched in fall 2024 and completed in early 2025. A communication campaign including industry and community testimonial videos was launched in April 2025 aimed at residents and industry stakeholders. When compared to the same study in 2019 (see Appendix A) the data demonstrates significant strides in achieving strategic objectives of increasing tourism revenues and overnight stays and tax contributions.

Overall visitor numbers increased minimally year over year. Winter conditions led to a reduction in winter visitors, but numbers rebounded significantly between June and October.⁶

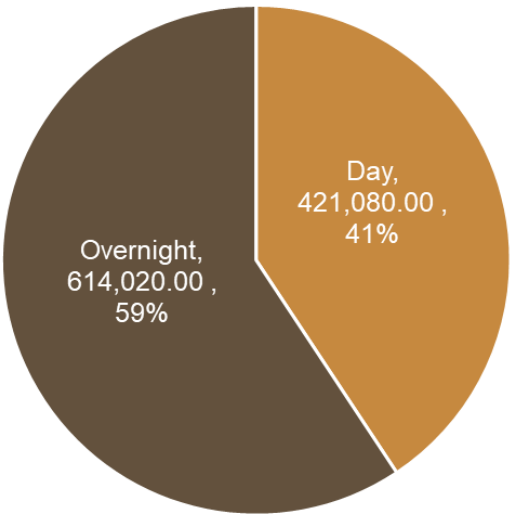


The average length of stay increased to 2.9 nights. This is a small increase against 2023, but significantly a 21% increase against 2019.⁷

1,035,280
visitors

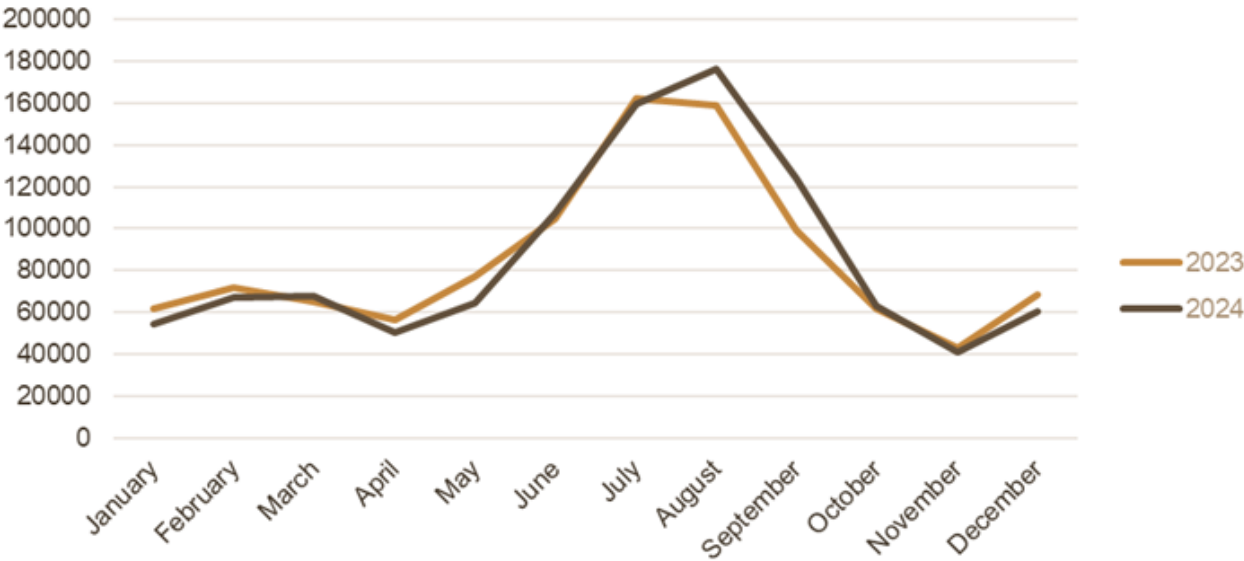
2.9 nights
Average
stay

2024 Overnight and Day Visitors



8

Visitation by month 2024 -v- 2023



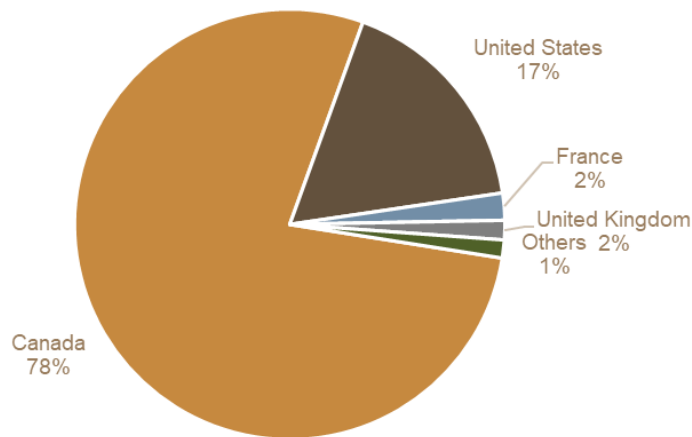
⁷ Source: 2019 and 2023 Value of Tourism in Golden studies

⁸ Source: Telus Insights

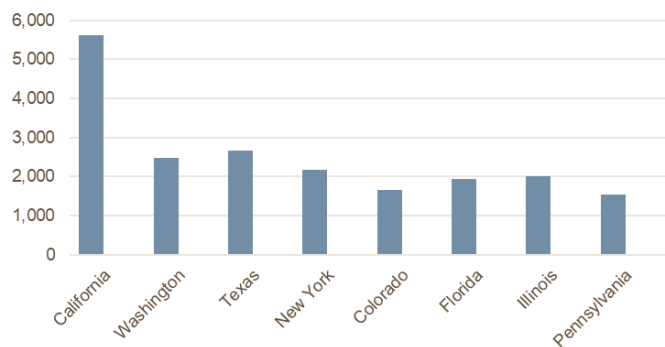
As is typical, Canada is the primary market for overnight visitation in Golden. US visitors are the second largest followed by France, UK and Germany with significantly smaller numbers.

Alberta and B.C. remain the primary producers of Canadian overnight stays. California, Texas and Washington in the US. These reflect the identified target markets in the 5-year Strategic Plan and annual marketing plan and budget.⁹

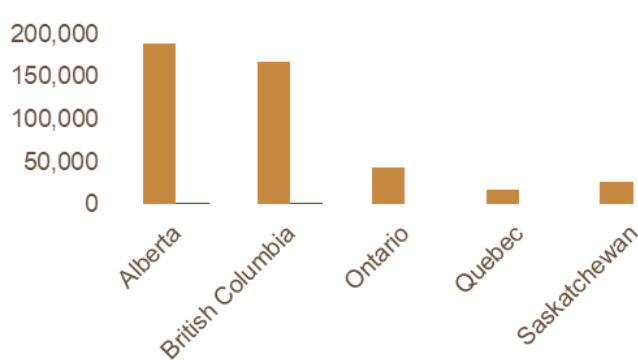
2024 Top 5 Country of Origin for Overnight Visitors



2024 Overnight US Visitors



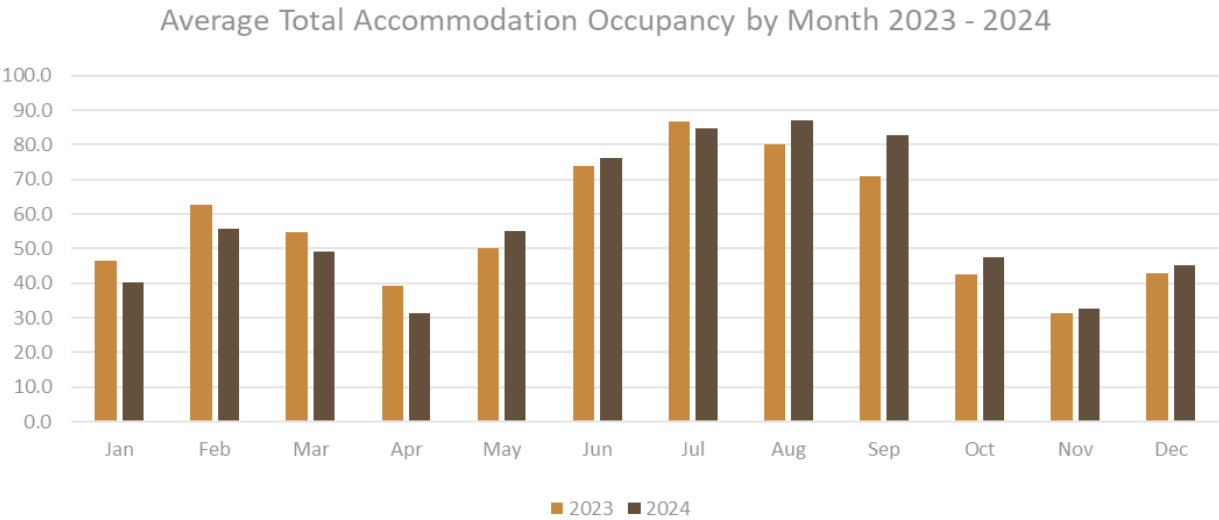
2024 Overnight Stays by Canadian Province



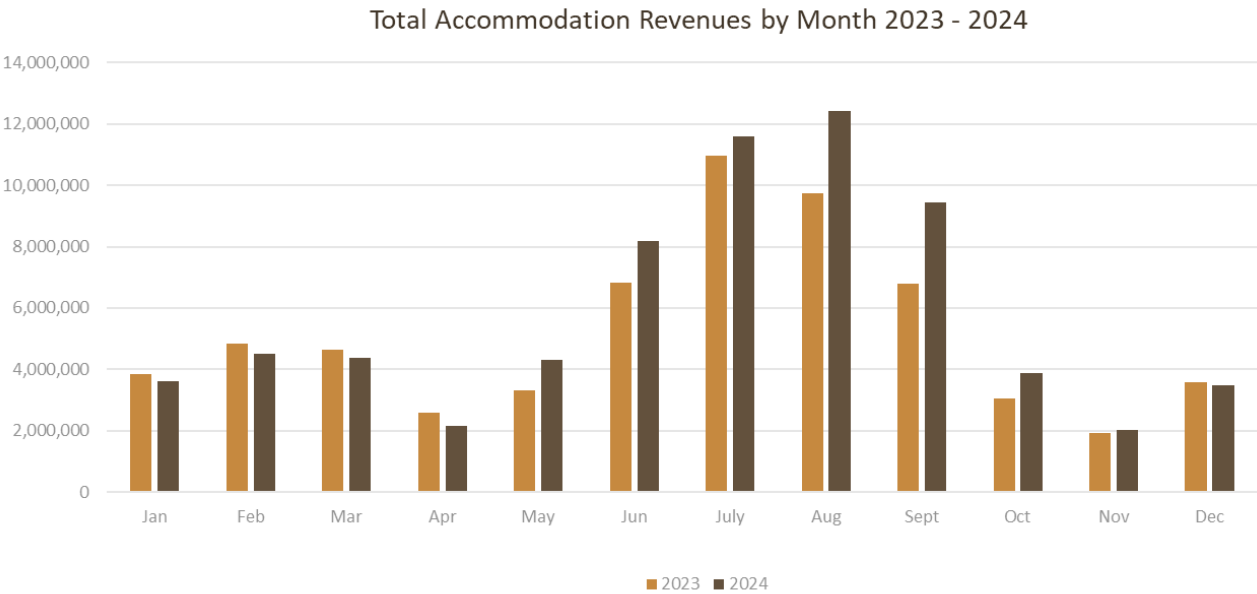
Whilst average occupancy showed minimal increase year-over-year, accommodation revenues increased 13% when compared to 2023. May to October occupancy and revenues increased with the largest change occurring in August,

⁹ Source: Telus Insights

September and October, likely because of the Jasper evacuation. When compared to 2019, accommodation revenues have increased by 46%.¹⁰



Sources: CoStar STR Destination Report, AirDNA



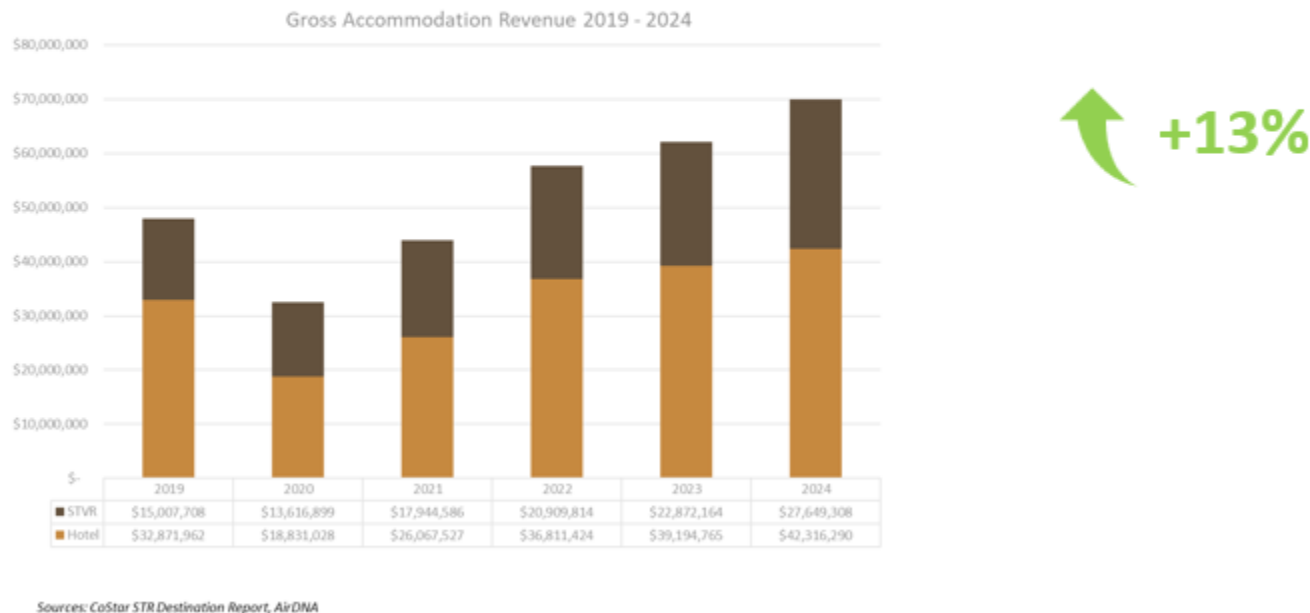
Sources: CoStar STR Destination Report and AirDNA

¹⁰ CoStar Destination Report & AirDNA

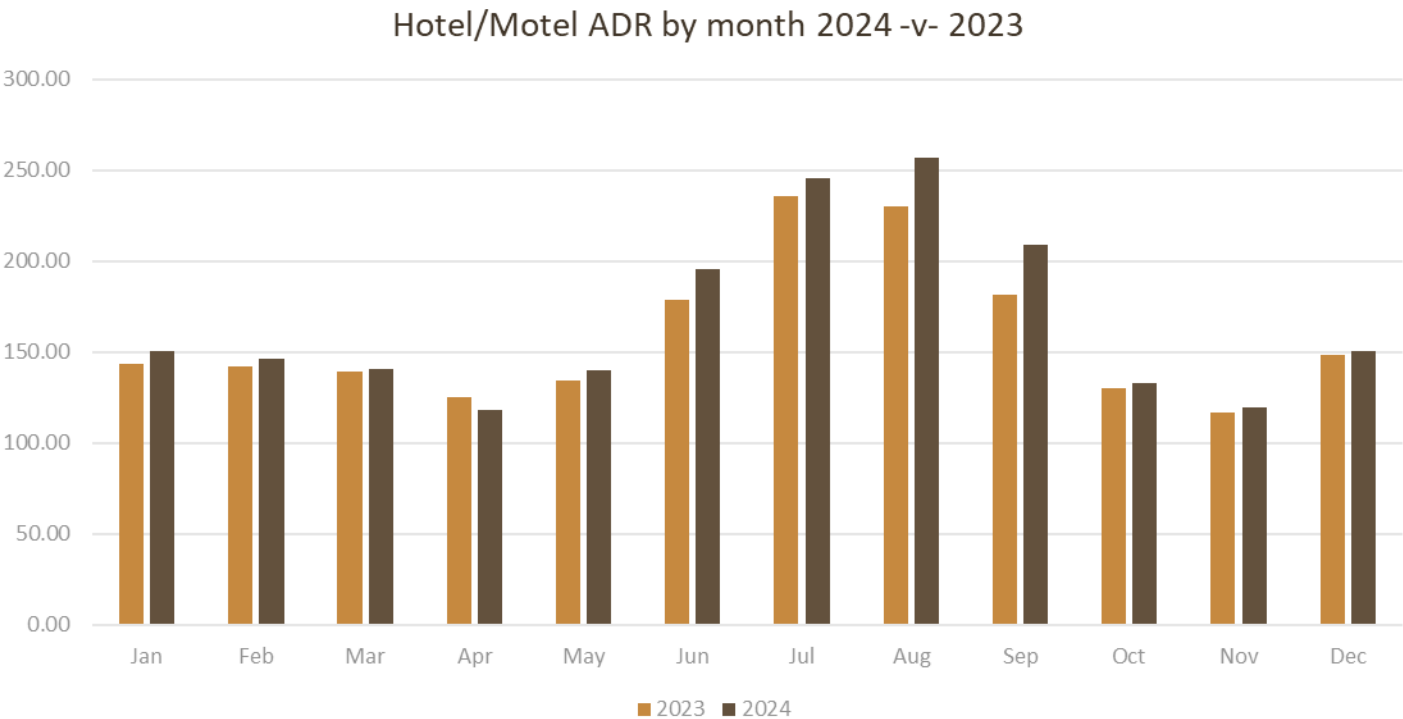
Despite occupancy rates remained static, hotel/motel ADR increased by 5%. Significantly, ADR has increased by 27% when compared to 2019.

Estimated Direct Accommodation Revenues

\$69,965,598



Source: STR & AirDNA Destination Reports



DMO Performance

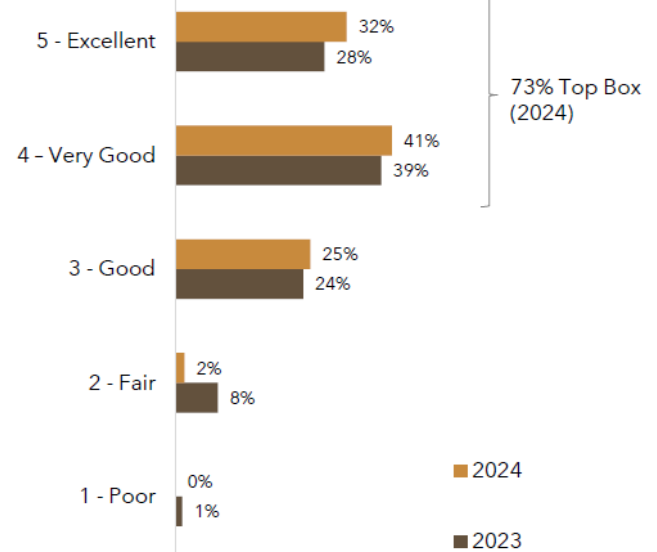
Stakeholder Survey Results

73% of respondents in the 2024 Stakeholder Survey rated the overall performance of Tourism Golden as 'Very good' or 'Excellent'. This is an improvement on the 69% rating in the 2023 survey. Also noteworthy is that none of the respondents rated the organisation's performance as 'Poor'.

Assessment of performance against the Strategic Objectives shows significant improvement against the scores in 2023. Increasing shoulder season revenue is still rated lowest, however as shown in the following graphic, the data on accommodation revenues demonstrates 14% increase in spring and a 43% increase in fall revenues comparing 2019 to 2024.

Tourism Golden Overall Performance

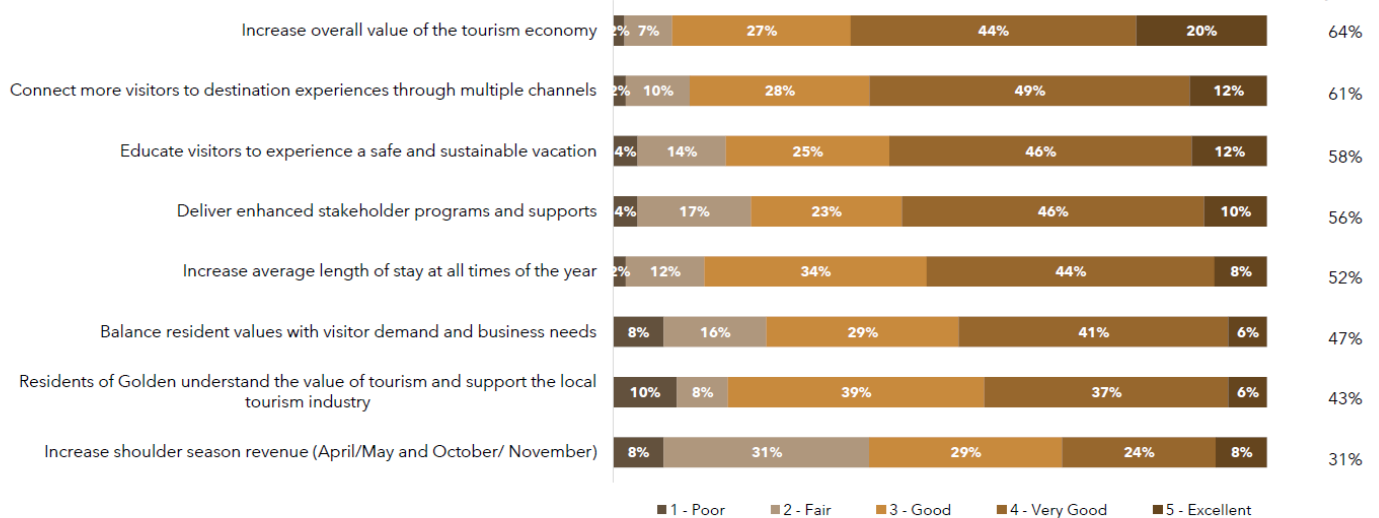
(% of Stakeholders)



Tourism Golden Strategic Objective Performance

(% of Stakeholders)

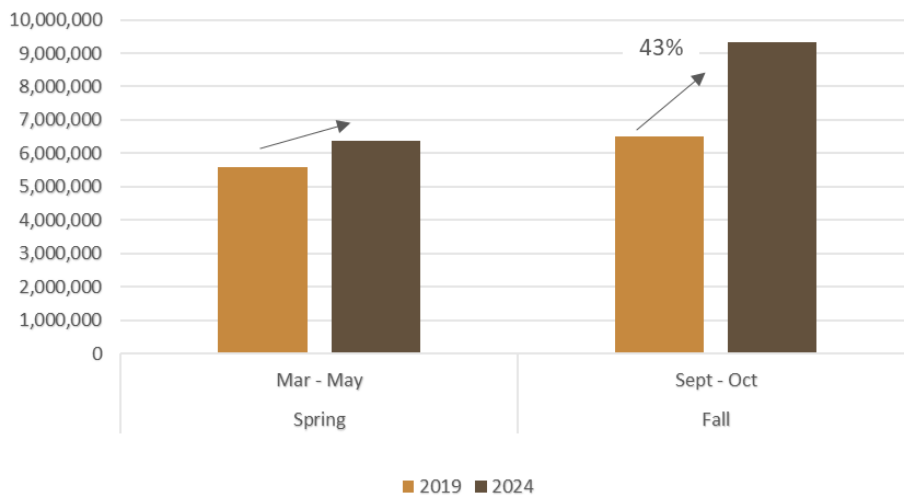
Top Box



In Tourism Golden's 2022-2027 strategic plan, there are four themes that directly impact the tourism industry include: 1. Economic Contribution, 2. Visitor Experience, 3. Stakeholder Experience, and, 4. Resident/Community Experience. Based on these themes, 8 key objectives were identified. How would you rate Tourism Golden's performance on each of those objectives. n=50-55

31

Seasonal Hotel/Motel Gross Revenue Growth 2019 -v- 2024



Below are some highlights specific to tactical activity undertaken in 2024. More detail follows in the Destination Marketing and Management sections.

11

- ✓ \$107 direct revenue generated by \$1 marketing spend*
- ✓ 40.2 million digital advertising impressions
- ✓ 45 earned media features from hosted media
- ✓ 15,000 bookings from Winter Expedia campaign (\$1 spent returned \$16 in actual booking value)
- ✓ 445k website users +28%
- ✓ \$4.37 million accommodation listing referral value from tourismgolden.com
- ✓ 14,472 visitors served +37%
- ✓ 4 sporting events supported
- ✓ 538 total Golden Guide graduates

¹¹ Sources: 2023 Value of Tourism in Golden & MRDT revenues

Stakeholder Support & Programs

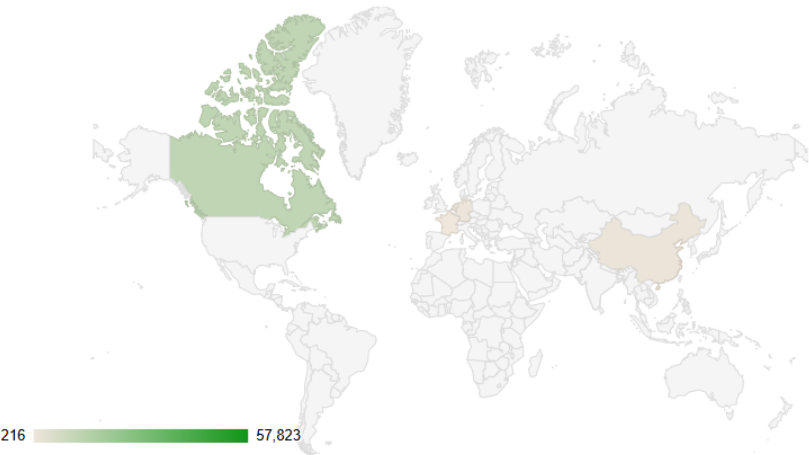
MRDT-collecting Member Support

The program started during the pandemic continues and has a savings value of \$615 per accommodator. It includes free inclusion in the Check-in Canada referral program generating direct leads from a ‘Book Now’ button on tourismgolden.com to accommodation websites. The estimated 2024 referral value is \$4.3 million, an increase of 35% against 2023.

The package also includes a free listing in the Golden Travel Planner and on tourismgolden.com.

Performance Summary
1/1/2024 - 12/31/2024

SUMMARY	
Total Visitors	85,240
Total Search	20,557
Total Impression	665,431
Total Referral	12,489
Total Referral Amount	\$4,370,119



Co-op Photo & Video Asset Development

15 businesses took advantage of the program which subsidises 50% of a video or photo shoot cost.

Subsidised Co-op Advertising

Subsidised advertising opportunity within a branded destination advert in 3rd party print publications as well as in-house guides and maps.

Media Hub

Image and video library available to stakeholders and media.



Event Hosting Co-op Support

With the support of RMI funds the program provides a subsidy up to 50% of eligible local hosting costs. In 2024, the program supported four major events:



Freeride World Tour returned for its 8th year in February 2024. It attracted 8 media including Powder Magazine, Explore Magazine and SBC Media.

Golden Rush, endurance mountain bike event in June returned with a new format (previously it was known as the Golden 24) and over 200 athletes.

Psychosis, downhill mountain bike event in July 2024 celebrated 25 years since its inception attracting 200 riders to Golden.

The Golden Ultra 3-day trail running event in September celebrated its 9th event and maximum capacity of 600 racers.

Research

We remain committed to informing and measuring our activity with research and proven data which is used to track destination and DMO performance and inform marketing activity. In 2024, the data sources and studies included:

- ☐ Telus Insights visitor volume & demographics
- ☐ AirDNA Short-term rental destination data
- ☐ Co-Star hotel/motel destination data
- ☐ Annual Stakeholder Survey
- ☐ 'Always on' Online Visitor Study



Destination Management

The Destination Management plan was launched in fall 2023 and completed in spring 2024. It included engagement with industry and community stakeholders, Indigenous Nations and sector specialists. The plan focuses on the following key themes:

Support development of tourism businesses & experiences.

A feasibility project to investigate specific needs and practicality of implementing a business or experience development program that supports the goal of a responsible and sustainable tourism destination was completed. The study engaged with existing businesses and some community organisations to identify knowledge gaps and key issues. The resulting study includes recommendations and considerations that will inform a new program that we hope to launch by the end of 2025.

We were pleased to be able to collaborate with Kootenay Rockies Tourism on their Experience Development Program. The program was delivered by Firecircle using their off-the-shelf Tourism Experience Development (TED) program. Golden had four businesses participate and received positive feedback on the program.

With funding from the DBC Experience Development program we began work on creating a new interactive walking tour along the Rotary Trail that circumnavigates the downtown and includes Golden's two historic rivers and their confluence as well as views of the Purcell mountains. The tour will be managed through the GoldenBC app and utilises existing signage infrastructure that will house QR codes directing visitors to short

videos in an itinerary within the app. 23 videos will connect visitors to Golden's Indigenous Nations and cultures, history, activities, industries and community stories along with tips on responsible recreation. It will meet an identified need for an accessible and educational experience that any visitor of any age and ability can enjoy. The videos feature local community members. This was a large content development project that will launch in summer 2025.

Housing the tourism workforce.

In the 2024 Stakeholder Survey, approval of the use of MRDT funds to support housing initiatives that benefit the tourism industry remained strong with 79% and 78% supporting workforce housing and affordable housing respectively for the tourism industry. Stakeholders remain ambivalent about supporting general affordable housing projects. We continue conversations with Golden Community Economic Development about potential projects that they may bring forward, and which qualify for the supported use of OAP funds.

Cultivating visitors who care.

Efforts have been underway for almost two years in creating and sharing information and messaging on responsible recreation and travel. Modules in the Golden Guide, created in collaboration with Parks Canada, Wildsight and the Ktunaxa Nation, will help locals to educate visitors and themselves. To date there have been 538 Golden Guide graduates.

In 2024, work began on planning a series of engaging and educational video shorts entitled "Why Bother?". Content creation for this visitor-facing social media campaign will complete in 2025.

Rec Site Protection & Enhancement.

We opened conversations with Wildsight on confirming or identifying locations of concern that are not managed by RSTBC, and how we can collaborate on educating and managing visitor behaviour in those locations specifically, but also in general in all outdoor activities.

Social and community impact of tourism

New modules of the Golden Guide focussing on community support services were created in collaboration with the Golden Food Bank, Golden Women's Resource Centre and Family Centre. These modules were added to the 2025 intake.

Industry compensation was also identified in the 2024 Stakeholder survey as a barrier to industry growth. Since many tourism businesses employ temporary or seasonal workers, we approached Golden Community Economic Development to develop a temporary tourism worker persona to add to their ongoing 'Living Wage' project. With funding from Tourism Golden, engagement of winter seasonal workers began in January 2025 and will be completed following engagement with summer seasonal workers.

Continuing destination management projects include:

Winter Shuttle Services:

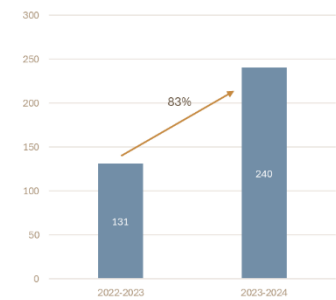
- ✓ YYC – Golden-Kicking Horse
- ✓ In-destination



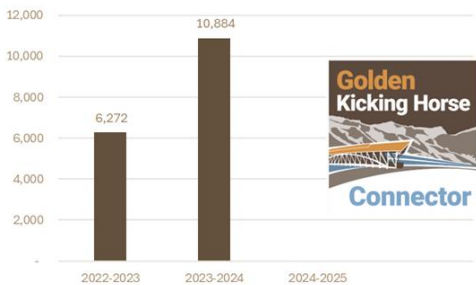
The partnership with Kicking Horse Mountain Resort continued for a second season of operation between December 2023 and April 2024. Tourism Golden manages the partnership and funds and receives RMI funding from the Town of Golden. Tourism Golden’s contribution comes solely from additional revenues generated from advertising and retail sales, and not from MRDT. For the operation Jan – April 2024, we were also successful in receiving monies from the Regional Transport Expansion program offered by ETSI-BC. These grant funds supported an additional vehicle on the in-destination service, and consequently rider numbers increased to

10, 884, an increase of 73% against the prior season. The Champagne Powder Shuttle service between YYC and Golden also saw an increase of 83% as awareness increased from targeting tour operators at the Mountain Travel Symposium in spring 2023 and a successful consumer marketing campaign.

Champagne Powder Shuttle Ridership



Golden Kicking Horse Connector Ridership



Workinggolden.ca

We launched the custom Golden job board for local employers in February 2023. The supporting paid advertising campaign in 2024 resulted in 13,190 new users in 2024.

Goldenguide.ca

The Golden Guide online destination education program for seasonal front-line workers and residents was created with the objective of having ‘ambassadors’ at all direct and indirect visitor touchpoints. In collaboration with Indigenous nations, Wildsight and Parks Canada, three modules aimed at educating on the importance of respecting and connecting to the land and waterways around Golden, why they are special, and specifics of responsible recreation, including preventing the spread of aquatic invasive species.



Course Curriculum

Feedback Survey	▼
Module 1: Responsible Recreation	▼
Module 2: Wildsight Golden	▼
Module 3: Aquatic Invasive Species	▼
Module 4: What Does This All Mean?	▼

The Golden Guide: Part 2

Free

4 Modules

Marketing Summary

The [2022-2027 Strategic Plan](#) and the 2024 Marketing Plan identify the marketing objectives, target markets, marketing strategies and budgeted spend.

Tactical marketing activity expenses represented 45% of overall expenditure. We continued to focus on driving shoulder season and winter visitation and longer stays in Golden.

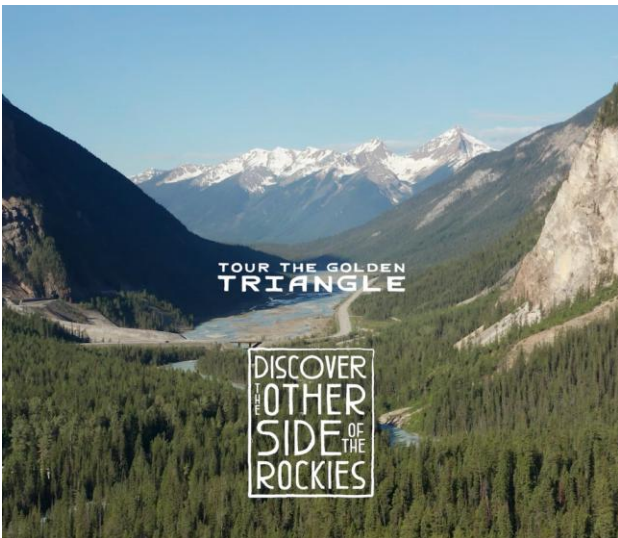
Through the DBC Co-op Marketing program we participated with CDMOs and activity associations on the following:

- ☐ Golden Triangle (Hwy 93/95/1 road trip/tour)
- ☐ BC Bird Trail (Columbia Valley Bird Trail partnership)
- ☐ Kootenay Dirt (mountain biking)
- ☐ BC Nordic
- ☐ Sled Kootenay (snowmobiling)
- ☐ Fishing BC
- ☐ BC Ale Trail

Tourism Golden leads the “Golden Triangle” consortium which includes Tourism Radium, Yoho and Kootenay National Parks. In its 4th year of the campaign, we saw a substantial 147% increase in website visits and onsite engagement increase by 21% with users browsing for over a minute and undertaking identified conversion actions that demonstrate intent and planning. Both Google Search and Meta paid campaigns delivered an above average conversion rate with Google Search reaching 21% and Meta 23.5%.

The campaign also concentrated on asset development and promoting diversity and inclusivity.

[Click to watch the campaign video](#)



Advertising

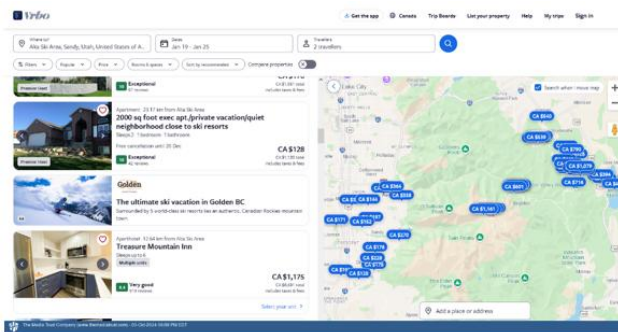
Advertising highlights include:

- ✓ 40 million digital ad impressions
- ✓ 38 print advertisements:
 - ✓ Canada
 - ✓ US Pacific NW US
 - ✓ UK
 - ✓ Australia
- ✓ 2 regional TV campaigns Spring & Fall



Key campaigns included:

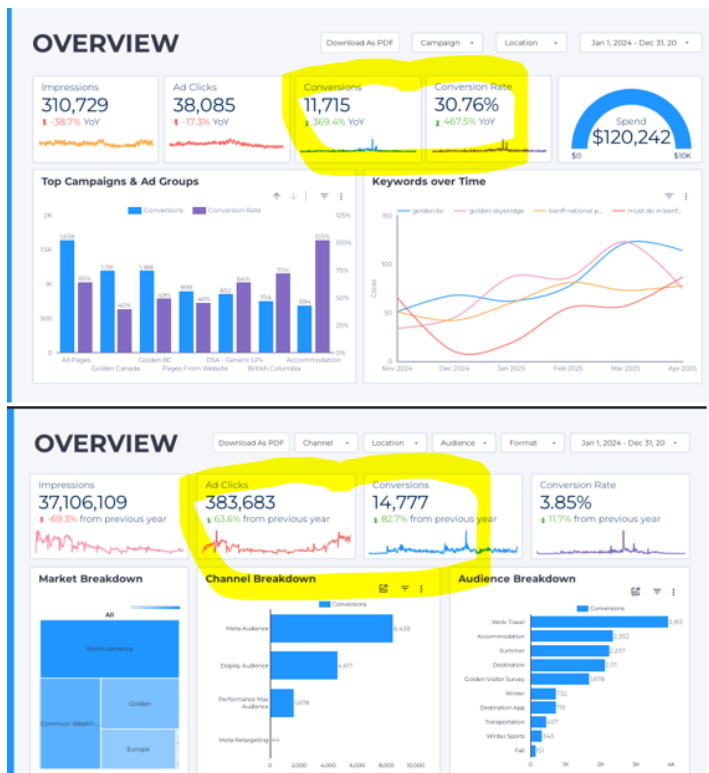
- ❑ Horizon Travel & Lifestyle multi-channel campaign including front cover headline, Yonge & Dundas video screen and a feature in a Toronto Ski Show issue which returned 341% media value ROI.
- ❑ A winter campaign on Expedia portfolio booking platforms in N. America with excellent results



Expedia winter campaign:
 854 roomnights booked
 1,500 travellers
 \$422,000 value
 16x ROAS



We continue to focus our digital display and search campaigns on conversions rather than impressions, supporting the rationale of quality over quantity and connecting with engaged and well-qualified audiences. Consequently, we saw a significant increase in conversions and conversion rate from display campaigns against 2023.



Google
Search

Display

Media Relations

- ✓ 29 hosted media trips
- ✓ 40 media
- ✓ 13 content creators or influencers

=> 45 features directly resulting from TG activity.



✓ Adventure Travel Trade Association – spring 2024

- ✓ 20 meetings
- ✓ 3 hosted visits in 2024

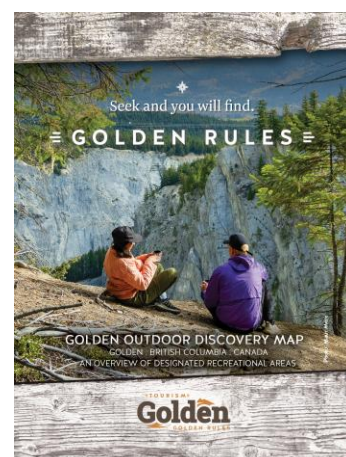
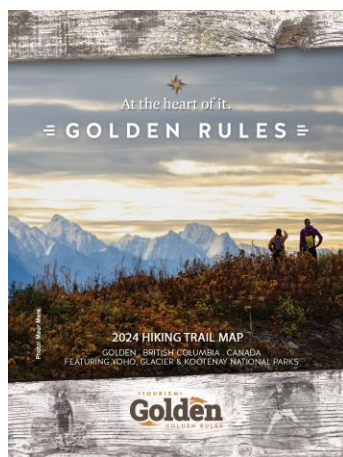
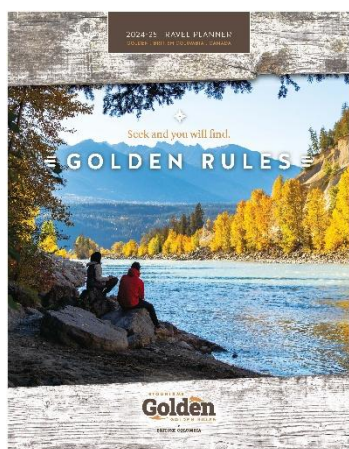
✓ Northwest Travel & Words - 24 meetings

- ✓ 2 hosted visits in 2024

Marketing Collateral & Asset Development

We continue to produce and distribute in-house annual publications to inform visitors and encourage safe and positive visitor experiences:

- ☐ Golden Travel Planner – 72,000 copies
- ☐ Golden Hiking Trail Map – 21,000 copies
- ☐ Golden Biking Trail Map – 11,500 copies
- ☐ Outdoor Discovery Map - 10,000 copies



Aside from local distribution in Golden, the Golden Travel Planner is distributed in Calgary, the Bow Valley, Jasper and the Columbia Valley. Additionally, it is mailed upon request to visitor centres in appropriate locations throughout the province. To avoid wasted paper products and recycling, we annually assess remaining inventory for each product and adjust our print run accordingly.

A project to upgrade the website was launched in fall 2024 to be completed in early 2025. Aside from upgrading to the latest Drupal version, the project incorporated improved CMS functionality and instant language translation using Weglot platform services.

The team implemented significant asset development projects either stand-alone or in partnership with stakeholders or content creators. These activities resulted in:

- ☐ 3 new modules for the Golden Guide
- ☐ 23 short videos for the new Golden Stroll interactive walking tour to be launched in summer 2025

- ❑ [Value of Tourism](#) & [Value of a DMO](#) videos launched during tourism week 2025.
- ❑ 2 refreshed destination videos
- ❑ Ski photography
- ❑ 15 stakeholder co-op photo and video projects

The GoldenBC app continued to show increased usage, particularly during the Dogtooth Fire when



Visitor Services

From May 18 to September 30, the Golden Visitor Centre provided information services to 14,472 visitors (6568 parties). Thousands of others used the washrooms, picnic tables and sani-dump. or other site facilities.

Due to the increase in visitors, we extended opening until the end of September, rather than the planned mid-September.

Whilst we experienced an approximate 25% increase in visitors from the start of the season, reflecting the strong destination performance, the strong August and September numbers can be attributed to visitors diverting from Jasper due to the fire in late July.

As in previous years, European visitors, largely from Germany, UK and France, were the largest users of information services at Visitor Centre followed by visitors from the US, Alberta and Other Canada. Visitors from BC were the smallest geographic origin interacting with information counsellors making up 12% of parties.

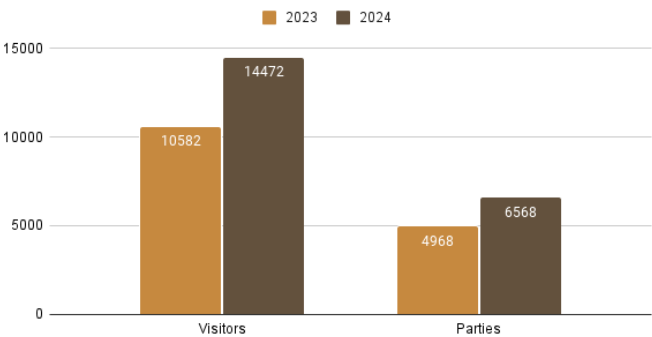
Visitors primarily sought information about National Parks, outdoor activities and local attractions, camping along with maps and directions.

The seasonal visitor centre team was multi-generational and multi-cultural and consistently received positive feedback on their service through the season, as evidenced by their 4.3-star Google Business rating.

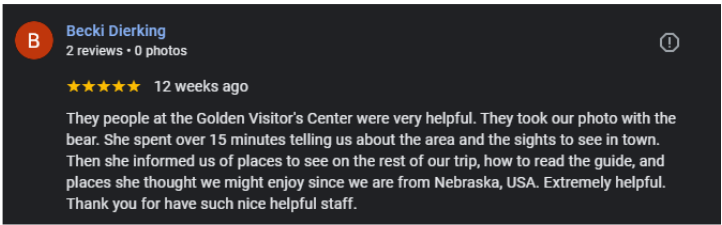
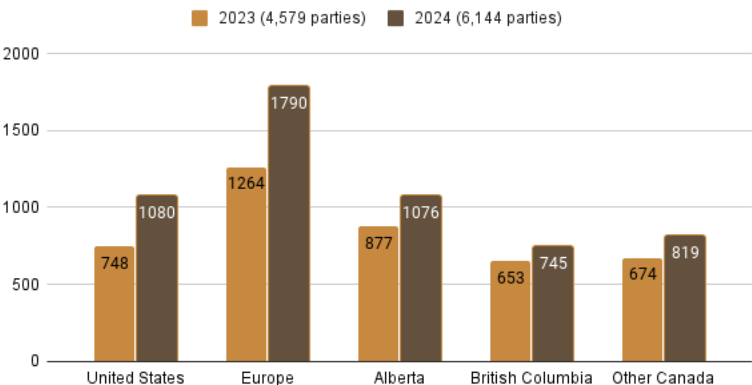
14,472
visitors
served

+37%

Parties & People - 2023 & 2024 Seasons



Top five of Visitor Origin - 2023 & 2024 Seasons





With a strong, reliable team we were able to regularly attend local events such as the Golden Farmers Market and Golden Skybridge weekly evening markets, serving approximately 400 visitors in those off-site pop-up locations.

Parks passes and Golden Skybridge ticket sales were the top in retail sales, although all ticket, maps and souvenir sales increased significantly.

The Visitor Centre also hosted 3 outreach events for Wildsafe BC, Parks Canada and Columbia Shuswap Invasive Species Society.

The final phase of the Indigenous Learning Project, supported by funding from DBC's Visitor Services Network was completed. Visitors and staff are able to enjoy interactive exhibits of art, culture and history completed in partnership with the Columbia River Metis Nation, Ktunaxa Nation and Shuswap Band.



We are grateful to the RMI program and the Town of Golden who supported the completion of an upgrade to the washroom block. The project not only increased the number of washrooms but also transitioned the washrooms to becoming fully non-binary. As a result of the washroom project, the site and main VC building benefitted from upgrades. These included relocating the vendor kiosk and adding shade sails to the picnic area as well as incorporating a 'quiet room' to provide a quiet and calm environment for visitors and staff with sensitivities or hearing impairment.

As a result of the washroom upgrades, the continued issues with washrooms disappeared, the visitor experience improved, and staff were able to focus on their primary function of providing exceptional visitor information services.

With the addition of new phones to assist hearing-impaired staff and producing Braille versions of site signage and the Golden Travel Planner, we continue to move towards becoming a more accessible and inclusive workplace and service provider at the Golden Visitor Centre.



Financial Summary

MRDT taxed levied at 3% is the primary source of revenue for Tourism Golden. Funds are disbursed monthly and are received net of deductions by the Ministry for admin fees and contribution to the Destination Events Program. Net MRDT contributed 71% of total revenue in 2024.

The organisation continued to operate a ‘pay-to-play’ model and does not charge an annual fee for membership. Instead, we leverage co-op advertising programs, grants and partner project funding along with retail sales at the Golden Visitor Centre.

In October 2024, the Ministry of Finance mistakenly overpaid the organisation \$585,589 in MRDT. The Ministry chose to pause monthly disbursements until the overpayment was recovered. The Board of Directors elected to place these funds in a 1-year GIC and the amount of \$585,589 is recorded as Deferred Income in the 2024 financial statements produced by Cox Tress Advisors and will be utilised in the 2025 fiscal year.

We began the fiscal year with cash assets of \$896,587, largely due to unexpected increases in MRDT in the 2023 fiscal year. With the Deferred Income from the MRDT overpayment, the fiscal year ended with \$1,700,420 in cash assets.

Below is the statement of revenue and expenditure in the year ending December 31st, 2024.

2024 FY REVENUE	%	AMOUNTS
CORE MRDT (nett of Admin fees)	33%	\$ 858,813
OAP MRDT	22%	\$ 558,479
MRDT (Overpayment Deferred Income	23%	\$ 585,589
DMO-LED INITIATIVES	4%	\$ 112,654
GRANTS	13%	\$ 330,801
VISITOR CENTRE SALES	5%	\$ 127,857
OTHER	0%	\$ 5,894
		\$ 2,580,086

2024 FY EXPENSES	%	AMOUNTS
MARKETING	48%	\$ 940,792
DESTINATION MANAGEMENT	14%	\$ 279,860
VISITOR SERVICES	13%	\$ 244,299
ADMINISTRATION (nett of MRDT fees)	5%	\$ 104,751
FTE SALARIES	19%	\$ 378,202
		\$ 1,947,904

Financial statements produced by Cox Tress Advisors and approved by the Tourism Golden Finance Committee and Board of Directors are available on request.

Appendix A



2019 VALUE OF TOURISM IN GOLDEN BRITISH COLUMBIA

Golden's tourism industry contributes significant economic benefits to the Golden area and the rest of BC.

285 Tourism-Related Businesses ²	\$124.5 million direct tourism revenues collected by tourism-related businesses in 2019. ¹	On average, 75% of gross business revenues ⁷ are generated from tourism
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In 2019, the Golden tourism industry generated:^{3,4}		
\$87.8 million in GDP	\$174 million in domestic output	\$34.5 million in tax revenue

2019 Tourism Revenues (\$124.5 million) - Paid Accommodation 35% - Food & Beverage 29% - Outdoor Recreation 26% - Transportation 5% - Retail/Shopping 3% - Attractions 1% - Other Services 1%	Employment 1,866 Jobs 1,392 Full-Time Equivalents	2019 Tax Revenue Paid (\$34.5 million) - Federal, 50% - Provincial, 39% - Municipal, 11%
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Average summer visitor party expenditures in Golden:⁵ \$606			
BC Visitor = \$415	Alberta Visitor = \$576	US Visitor = \$670	Overseas Visitor = \$720

2019 Labour Income⁶ (\$61.7 million) - Employers' Social Contributions 9% - Mixed Income, 19% - Wages and Salaries, 72%	\$350 in average client expenditure at tourism-related business. \$496,130 average tourism revenues in 2019 for Golden tourism-related businesses.	\$44.5 million in revenues generated from paid accommodation. 88% from hotel/motels 8% from short-term rentals. 4% from campgrounds.
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Notes/Sources: All economic impact data are from the Tourism Golden report entitled 2019 Tourism Economic Benefits and Labour Market Challenges Research in Golden, British Columbia and is available from Tourism Golden.

1. Tourism revenues are monies collected from tourism-related businesses and discounted for the percentage of revenues collected from visitors (on average this was 75%).

2. Tourism-related businesses are defined as any business that provides services to visitors and operates in the Golden and Kicking Horse Country, British Columbia.

3. GDP is Gross Domestic Product and is measured at basic prices. It is defined as the value added to the economy by tourism activities. The cost of supplies and services used to produce goods or services are subtracted from total revenue.

4. Domestic output is equal to tourism spending minus consumer taxes.

5. Visitor spending data is available in the report entitled Summer 2019 Golden Visitor Survey Results and is available from Tourism Golden.

6. Mixed income is income derived from unincorporated businesses/sole proprietorships while social contributions are payments made by employers for the benefit of their employees including registered private and public sector pension plans, the Canada and Quebec pension plans, the Employment Insurance Fund, workers' compensation funds, health and life insurance plans, and retirement allowances.

7. 10% of tourism-related businesses (see number 2 above).

PROPOSED
Golden
GOLDEN SLOPE

ALIGN
CONSULTING GROUP

AA
Pacific
Analytics Inc.

-End-