

Manager's Report

I was asked by the Directors to report what my priorities are as Manager. They are as follows:

Chamber Duties, InfoCentre, Publications, Web Site, Membership, Other Initiatives

The Chamber duties must be kept up to date because keeping the organization alive is necessary to provide the other services.

In my opinion, the InfoCentre (now called a Visitor's Centre) is our most important function. Tourism is one of our biggest local employers and the Centre also serves as a front door to prospective new residents.

The publications we produce extend the reach of our information services to adjacent communities. It's gratifying when a guest arrives at the Centre with a well-used map they picked up in Nelson or Kaslo because I know that it has served the purpose of providing ideas for activities that may keep them in our area for a day or two more. The two publications are provided to the Visitor Centres in Nakusp, Kaslo, Nelson, Castlegar and Silverton (Interpretive Centre).

The web site provides a front door to the world. My priority is to keep the site current and easy to navigate, with no dead links. The possibilities to expand the site are endless, but the one area I do plan to work on is the photo album. I designed the site as a framework to accept more content, and now that the basic information is provided some pictures are needed.

As you can see, Membership is not at the top of my list. My approach has always been that all local businesses need to be represented if we are to provide complete information to visitors. For example: a brochure listing the restaurants who are Chamber members would only have five of the 16 currently listed in the Valley Brochure – not much use to a visitor.

Visitor Centre

We had another successful year at the Centre. Visitor numbers were about average despite the events that made our community less hospitable than usual. And our QSR (Quality Service Report) scores were 84% and 89% which should ensure further funding.

Publications

We have run out of the map we produce, so there will be costs for reprinting it next year. The other flyer didn't seem to be used as much this year, and I don't know if it was the size, or the fact that "West Kootenay" is the prominent title. I plan to change that title to "Slocan Valley" for next year.

Manager's Job

I am trying to determine if we have enough funding to support this part-time Manager's job at \$12 per hour. So far I have been paid about \$200 per month during normal months, and when the Visitor Centre is open I work 3 days per week and earn about \$1100 dollars per month for those 2 months. I did not charge any time for the Pancake Breakfast organizing, the design of the publications (30 hours +) or supervising each day in the Visitor Centre.

I think we need to discuss the way the Chamber is funded. I can see that a lot of time and energy is used to just keep track of the membership. I can understand that it's not a high priority for businesses to join, so then do we keep reminding them time and again to do so, and again next year?

And now we are obliged to request funding from the Villages based on specific projects.

The old formula of a percentage of business license fees funding the Chamber worked well. And if we could include a small membership fee with those licenses then all businesses would be members, which is really how we operate anyway.

Thanks to those who do join, and thanks to the Directors who keep this organization going.

Jeff Bustard

Manager