



FOR RELEASE
September 27, 2012

Yukon marks Tourism Day with local awards

WHITEHORSE—Yukon celebrated World Tourism Day at a breakfast event hosted by the Department of Tourism and Culture, the Tourism Industry Association of Yukon and the Whitehorse Chamber of Commerce. The day is part of the United Nations' World Tourism Organization annual celebration to recognize the value of tourism to local economies.

"Today we celebrate and recognize the important social and economic contributions of Yukon's tourism sector," Tourism and Culture Minister Mike Nixon said. "All Yukoners benefit from the continued growth of tourism across the territory."

Nixon thanked the private sector for its support in maintaining and growing Yukon's strong tourism marketplace. Recent visitor statistics show a three per cent increase in border crossings and a 12 per cent increase in travellers arriving and departing the Erik Nielsen Whitehorse International Airport between January and July 2012.

Tourism Industry Association of Yukon executive director Blake Rogers also spoke to the value of tourism.

"Yukon's tourism stakeholders work hard to ensure that tourism remains one of Yukon's strongest economic drivers," Rogers said. "Yukon continues to gain recognition as an attractive destination both domestically and internationally. It's vital that we continue this trend by showcasing all that Yukon has to offer and we're always looking for ways to enhance the visitor experience."

Nixon also presented the 2012 Yukon Tourism Champion Awards to Marsha Cameron, Sylvain Turcotte, Claude Vallier and Richard Zral.

"It is an honour to recognize these four individuals who have championed Yukon to others, either by way of print, web and social media, or through their everyday interaction with people eager to know more about Yukon," Nixon said.

The Government of Yukon invests over \$5 million annually through a variety of programs and services to market tourism worldwide.

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See backgrounder below.

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2012 Yukon Tourism Champion Award

The Yukon Tourism Champion Award was created in 2008 to recognize individuals whose passion for Yukon helps to promote the territory as a must-see destination.

2012 Yukon Tourism Champion Award winners

Marsha Cameron and Sylvain Turcotte operate Boréale Mountain Biking. They are being recognized for their overall enthusiasm and passion for Yukon, which goes far above and beyond their business activities. They have attended venues in Southern Canada where they share their love of Yukon's natural beauty, history, culture and community with others, and they have hosted journalists, family and friends in Yukon.

Claude Vallier's guide *White Pass: Backcountry Skiing Between Yukon and Alaska* is available in English and French and lists ski-touring routes in the White Pass area. In addition, Vallier's website, photos and promotional video can be viewed online by winter enthusiasts worldwide. Vallier has also worked with local tourism operators to create packages to promote winter tourism in the territory.

Richard Zral is a marathon runner and member of the Automobile Licence Plate Collector Association. Zral's regular attendance at the Victoria Marathon allows him an opportunity to set up a booth promoting Yukon races such as the Yukon River Trail Marathon, Mayo Midnight Marathon, and the Klondike Trail of '98 Road Relay. Each year, while attending a national convention in the U.S., Zral encourages his fellow licence plate collectors to come to Yukon.

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