



**2013 COMMUNITY EXCELLENCE AWARDS
Category Worksheet**

BEST PRACTICES, General

Name of Local Government: Thompson-Nicola Regional District

Project/Program Title: TNRD Locations Movie Map
(tnrdlocationsmoviemap.com)

Project Summary Paragraph

Please provide a summary of your project/program in 150 words or less.

The Film Commissioner for the Thompson-Nicola Regional District (TNRD) completed her Master's thesis paper on *Fostering Film Tourism in Rural BC*. Based on an extensive and in-depth literature review, the primary best practice for developing film tourism in rural areas is developing a locations movie map. Consequently, designed and created was the TNRD Locations Movie Map (Map).

The Map is an online Google map peppered with icons and information cards that identify locations where motion pictures, television programs, commercials, documentaries or others productions were filmed in the TNRD. The information cards contain posters, synopsis, and web links to movie trailers and dedicated project web sites, trivia and photo galleries of location and production stills.

Availability of web, print and mobile-friendly versions make this Map different than most. In addition the map can indicate many locations for one project, and comprises many communities, not just one.

Project Analysis

Please answer the question in 300 words or less in 11 pt Arial font (our judges value directness and brevity). If you experience difficulty answering a particular question, consider the aspects of your program that may relate to the question and show us how they are linked.

Remember to include measurable results whenever possible.

1. SERVICES

How has the implementation of this program/project improved services in your community?

The Map has improved services in our communities by expanding the return-on-investment beyond dollars spent by production while filming, to dollars spent by visitors well after filming has ended. Based on feedback, anecdotal evidence and web visits, the Map has raised

global destination awareness, increased visitation and expenditures, enhanced the visitor experience and fostered community pride.

In addition the film industry in BC and local economic development sectors also benefit because the Map is used as a tool to illustrate the large number and scope of productions that TNRD communities have supported in the past, and can in the future. The latter supports sustainability.

Small municipalities and unincorporated communities, where filming often takes place, do not have the capacity to develop materials to reach the target market. Displaying all information on the Map provides economies of scale and the opportunity to access film tourism. Film tourism is an expanding niche tourism market based on the global demonstration that there is a thirst for knowledge about, and a desire to experience what the public has seen on television and in theatres.

2. EFFECTIVENESS

How is the program/project more efficient and/or effective than it was before?

Film production locations were noted on the Thompson Nicola Film Commission (TNFC) webpage, however the Map now:

Builds Destination Awareness Globally

- Effectiveness became evident by:
 - 700 unique visits in first week; sustaining new visits monthly. This is substantially more visits than on the Past Projects page on the film commission's dedicated web site (www.tnrdfilm.com);
 - Social network postings;
 - Received compliments from England, Australia, Holland and South Africa
 - Its excellence was acknowledged on the International Film Tourism Facebook Group
- Efficient:
 - Film industry stakeholders are more aware of projects that have filmed in our region through this map than through printed materials
 - The Commercial Production Association of Western Canada reported the map had gone 'viral' in their production cluster

Increases Visitation and Expenditure

- Effective:
 - Tourists reported they decided to visit sites on a day trip, went to locations and ate locally;
 - Anecdotal reports of visitors who said they chose to stay at a certain motel because John Cusack and Woody Harrelson (cast of *2012*) stayed there (if it's good enough for them then it is good enough for us);
 - Motel, restaurant owners and pub staff report bragging about projects and actors that have stayed at their premises.

Promotes Filming Activity and Locations

- Efficient:
 - It's a marketing tool that promotes the region in a more appealing and interactive way, which aligns with tourism and film industry best practices in marketing trends;
 - BC-based Locations Managers report using the map as a research tool;

- The map illustrates what and where productions were filmed in one quick glance, promoting trip planning or extended stays;

Fosters Community Pride

- Effective:
 - TNRD Board of Directors report positive responses from constituents and visitors
 - Amenity operators and community members promote past filming activity

Enhances Visitor Experiences

- Effective
 - Builds on intrinsic knowledge of area with fun facts and interesting points.

3. ECONOMIC IMPACT

How has the program/project saved the community money and/or resources or encouraged economic development?

The project saved money because it is an additional marketing tool that may be used freely by tourism offices, as well as small communities and electoral areas. It increased web presence for all TNRD communities; municipalities, and electoral areas

From an economic perspective, the Map helps promote visitation in order to sustain small and medium enterprises such as The Packing House Café in Spences Bridge or the Ashcroft River Inn which features a movie poster display in its lobby, or a visit to Historical Hat Creek Ranch where the German language feature film *Gold* was filmed.

BC is the fourth largest filming centre in North America. Development of this unique web based interactive map and associated mobile application capitalizes on the expanding film tourism trend and promotes destination awareness, visitation and expenditures.

4. ACCOUNTABILITY

How has this program/project improved upon accountability to the community's citizens?

From an accountability perspective, the Map clearly illustrates the positive impact of TNRD tax dollars requisitioned to fund the film commission. By listing the projects and where they filmed in the region, it also identifies where productions dropped money into the local economy through payment of location fees and accommodations, purchase of production supplies, employment of local labour and acting talent, and rental of business and private vehicles and equipment. It also represents where cast and crew members ate, drank and went shopping, or possibly partook in local entertainment and activities, thus providing a verifiable point of interest for future visitors.

The map also encourages spending in the TNRD after a production has left by enticing visitors to the locations. For example, three persons from Seattle, Toronto and New York visit Kamloops annually to visit *Battlestar Galactica* locations. Other fans visit as well and this is their web site: <http://www.battlestarlocations.com/filming-in-kamloops.html>.

5. AWARENESS

How has this program/project created more awareness in the community about local government actions?

Typically film productions do not want filming or film locations made public during filming. Unless directly impacted, community members are not aware of the economic impact in the area or region wide. The Map provides awareness about TNRDs film commission service and its impacts via the following:

- Website - stats are as follows:
 - Week 1 – 700 unique visitors;
 - Week 45 – (now) 145 unique visitors 88.1% new, 11.9% return;
- Links to map are on TNRD, Thompson Nicola Film Commission and tourism web sites, as well as TNRD community web sites;
- Explore Gold Country incorporated film locations into their Geo Cache Program to increase uptake, and enhance visitation throughout the region; they report they have received positive responses and visitation to those caches;
- Explore Gold Country is revising its web site and will include the map;
- TNRD Board of Directors, municipal office personnel, tourism stakeholders and property owners/managers were consulted for intrinsic knowledge of past projects, filming locations, and fun trivia and stories about filming in their area.

6. TEAMWORK

Tell us about the teamwork involved in making this program/project possible.

The TNRD Board of Directors, made up of elected officials from 11 municipalities and 10 electoral areas, approved the Map principle and authorized staff to secure project funding.

FUNDERS:

- Northern Development Initiatives Trust;
- TNRD.

The following were involved in contributing content and creating product awareness:

CONSULTANTS:

- Explore Gold Country Tourism;
- Destination BC – Regional Department;
- Royal Roads University;
- Association of Film Commissioners International;
- Creative BC (new film industry organization).

The TNFC Film Commissioner envisioned the project and the following were hired and/or consulted:

PRODUCTION:

- Project coordinator (Ragan & Associates);
- Software creator;
- Researchers;
- Information and resources;
 - Chambers of commerce;
 - Local tourism offices;

- Local economic development offices;
- Local government agencies (municipal offices, forestry, Front Counter BC);
- Property owners;
- Property managers;
- Business owners (small and medium enterprises);
- Locations Managers, Producers, Directors & others;
- Local newspaper editor and entertainment writers;
- Data-entry persons;
- Beta testers of site (TNRD staff);
- TNRD IT department;

7. INNOVATION

What makes this program/project innovative and creative?

Development of new software was required to ensure the site displayed what was envisioned. Software requirements included:

- Ability to display many locations and info for one project at one time;
- A search engine within the site;
- Icon responsiveness (they wiggle to let you know what applies);
- Logos and links to stakeholders (NDIT, Explore Gold Country, TNFC, TNRD);
- A mobile version (iPhone, Blackberry, Android);
- A print friendly version;
- Ability to function on platforms such as Internet Explorer, Safari, Foxfire, Google Chrome, for example. The designer had to work with respective IT departments regarding some required efficiencies or code.

8. SUSTAINABILITY

What measures have you put in place to ensure the continued operation of this initiative? (e.g. staff time, resources, financial)

The TNRD budgets for the film commission 5 years in advance. The operation of this web site is and will be included in all future budgets. The site is managed completely by staff and only new projects need to be entered so cost and staff time to ensure a current product is minimal. The initial Map creation and project population demanded the lion's share of financial and human resources, and was completed before launch.

Based on research papers, the best practices in sustainability of film tourism are:

1. maintain a film commission;
2. film and tourism collaboration on initiatives, and
3. maintain an inventory of all applicable components such as locations, where actors stayed or ate, and legacies (such as Philadelphia and the Rocky statue). The TNRD is practicing all three.

9. BEST PRACTICES

What sets this program/project apart as a winning idea? Why should it be considered a best practice, in comparison to other similar programs?

The TNRD adopted best practices in film tourism by producing a locations map which expanded on previous initiatives by indicating multiple locations for a single project. The Map is authentic in its presentation and information – the locations still exist and the

information is truthful. Also, this map enables visitors to go precisely where the locations are situated and if accessible by the public.

There is a mobile version. The United Nation estimates that in 6 months there will be as many mobile phones as there are people in the world. Consequently, having a mobile version is a competitive edge.

For an older generation, having a print version is desirable. When compared to others, the TNRD map is the most comprehensive and future orientated product.

10. TRANSFERABILITY

How is this program/project transferable to other local governments?

This project is very easily transferable as long as local governments have access to Google Maps and have filming in their jurisdiction. However, it's how in-depth and what features are desired that affects human and financial resources, and ingenuity.

Developed software is adaptable to other themes in that the information can be changed from film to other feature subjects; ie heritage sites, geo cache sites, economic opportunities.

11. KNOWLEDGE SHARING

What helpful advice would you share with other communities looking to embark on a similar project?

Helpful advice comprises following these steps (not necessarily in order):

1. Identify a champion or partners for a film tourism project (ie film commission, economic development officer, tourism destination management organization, steering committee, chamber of commerce, or community visitor bureau)
2. Identify expectations (to build awareness, new business attraction, increase visitation and expenditures, build community pride, attract filming, build on fans' initiatives)
3. Determine scope (municipal, regional, a heritage building, etc)
4. Inventory motion picture projects or other identified subject matter
5. Identify locations and their access
6. Search the internet for similar community or area and their film tourism initiatives such as https://www.facebook.com/groups/filmtourism/571326542892668/?notif_t=group_activity
7. Choose a film tourism product(s) (map, app, part of an established tour, create a guided tour, publish a guide, a walking tour, other)
8. Determine budget
9. Seek funding

12. TELL US MORE

Please share any other information you think may help us better understand your submission.

Globally, the public is demonstrating a thirst for knowledge about, and a desire to experience what they have seen on television and in theatres. To quench that thirst, film tourism initiatives are being adopted worldwide. Destinations, as well as hotels, heritage sites and parks, are boasting about motion picture productions that shot on their premises to leverage their notoriety and bring in additional visitors and revenue

The TNRD film locations map provides a platform to showcase all locations in a compelling and interactive way, and in one easily accessible database. It is broad in its scope to benefit many jurisdictions and appeal to the casual or the ultimate movie fan. Plus, a wonderful byproduct has been community pride and that's a valuable commodity for leveraging other initiatives by those with tight budgets.

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