

T O U R I S M R E D D E E R

2024
YEAR IN
REVIEW

V I S I T R E D D E E R . C O M

TOURISM
Red Deer

@tourismreddeer



VISIT
**RED
DEER**



A MESSAGE FROM THE
TOURISM RED DEER BOARD



As we reflect on an eventful 2024 at Tourism Red Deer, we are filled with immense pride to announce that our transition to the regional Destination Marketing Organization (DMO) is now complete. This evolution marks a significant milestone in our organizations commitment to not only promote but also solidify our reputation as the top major event destination among mid-sized cities in Canada.

We extend heartfelt thanks to our dedicated staff, whose relentless efforts and unwavering dedication have been instrumental in our growth and success. Together, let us embrace these changes with enthusiasm and work collaboratively to grow Red Deer and region's visitor economy through impactful tourism marketing, destination development, and tourism event attraction.

Jonathan Strome

Jonathan Strome
Chair | Tourism Red Deer

A MESSAGE FROM THE TOURISM RED DEER CEO

2024 was a milestone year for Tourism Red Deer as we officially completed our transition to becoming the DMO for Red Deer and the region.

I am filled with immense pride to provide an update on the state of our organization. With a full staffing compliment in place, Tourism Red Deer is starting to achieve big things! With the ambitious goal of becoming recognized as the top major event destination among mid-sized cities in Canada by 2030, Tourism Red Deer has worked tirelessly in 2024 to set the wheels in motion to achieve this goal. I am confident we are in a great place moving forward into 2025!



Alberta's tourism sector is well-positioned for sustained growth in 2025, driven by its natural beauty, diverse attractions, and investments in marketing and infrastructure. Collaboration between government, industry stakeholders, and our members will be essential to continue leveraging emerging opportunities in our region.

To our members, industry and community partners, and funding agencies, thank you for your confidence in us! We look forward to collaborating with you in 2025 as we continue to showcase Red Deer and the region locally, provincially, nationally, and internationally.

Together, we will make 2025 a landmark year for Tourism Red Deer!

Jesse Smith

A handwritten signature of Jesse Smith in white ink. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

CEO Tourism Red Deer

2024 *AT A GLANCE*

MEMBERSHIP

Our membership base remains a critical pillar of our organization. Our members are the ones who make Red Deer and the region attractive to visitors. Without them, we wouldn't be able to support and showcase our region as effectively.



Panelists discussing tourism related topics at the Red Deer Tourism Townhall (April 2024)

In 2024, Tourism Red Deer set a membership record with 129 members, an increase from 110 in 2023. A re-established partnership between Hotels Red Deer and Tourism Red Deer was finalized in April 2024, setting both organizations up for tremendous growth potential with a continued commitment to work together.

The Tourism Townhall was once again hosted in Red Deer with over 80 people from Central Alberta registering to learn about Travel Alberta's provincial strategy to growing the visitor economy to \$20B by 2035. At our Annual General Meeting (AGM) in April 2024, Board members were elected/re-elected into their 2024 positions, our 2023 audited financial statements were approved and 2023 highlights were presented to the membership.



Hotels Red Deer, Alberta Hotel and Lodging Association(AHLA) and Tourism Red Deer meeting at Sunterra Market(December 2024)

Shortly after the AGM, Tourism Red Deer celebrated our official transition to becoming the DMO of Red Deer and region. This evening also included the release of our 2024 Visitor Guide surrounded by our members, community stakeholders and funding partners.

ADVOCATING FOR TOURISM AND The VISITOR ECONOMY TO ALL levels of GOVERNMENT



Tourism Red Deer asking Premier Smith a question at the Economic Update and Premiers Dinner in Edmonton (November 2024)

Tourism Red Deer recognizes the importance of advocating for our region. In 2024, we participated in key advocacy meetings, including Tourism Industry Association of Alberta (TIAA) Advocacy Days and The Economic Forum, TIAA Hill Days in Ottawa, and numerous engagements with MPs, Ministers, MLAs, and municipal councils. During these interactions, we highlighted Red Deer's state-of-the-art facilities, premier hotels, local cuisine, and emerging attractions. We also took the opportunity to advocate to varying levels of government on topics that impact the visitor economy locally as well as in Alberta.

As we continue our organizational growth, we are committed to enhancing our advocacy and government relations strategy to foster stronger relationships with elected officials.



Advocating for the needs of Red Deer & Region at the TIAA Advocacy Summit (January 2024)



The honorable Minister of Tourism Soraya Martinez Ferrada addressing crowd at TIAA Hill Days in Ottawa, ON

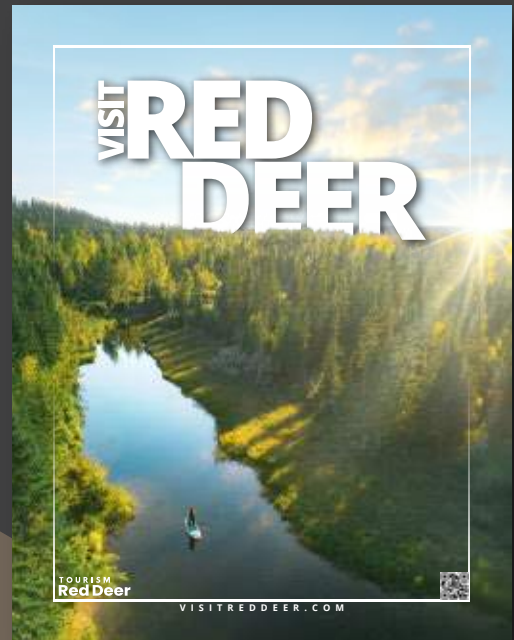
MARKETING

& PROMOTING OUR REGION

In 2024, Tourism Red Deer achieved significant milestones in promoting Red Deer and its surrounding region. Key new attractions, such as the Adventure Park and Zipline at Canyon Ski Hill opened in June which continues to help boost the region's appeal to visitors regionally, provincially and nationally. We launched a commercial that aired during the Professional Bull Riders National broadcast on TSN, showcasing our community to a wide audience. We also developed tailored event itineraries to enhance the visitor experience and produced the 2024 Visitor Guide to highlight key attractions.

Our social media efforts saw tremendous success, with influencer partnerships reaching up to 330k views on Instagram reels, and our online audience grew by over 2,000 followers. Additionally, Tourism Red Deer expanded our photo and video library to support future storytelling initiatives. We introduced a monthly email newsletter, which has quickly gained traction, surpassing 4,500 subscribers. This new channel enables us to connect directly with visitors, share valuable information, and market Red Deer as a top destination.

These initiatives reflect our ongoing commitment to innovative tourism promotion, community engagement, and strategic marketing efforts to position Red Deer as an appealing place for both visitors and residents.



Canyon Ski Resort's New Adventure Park & Zipline (June 2024)

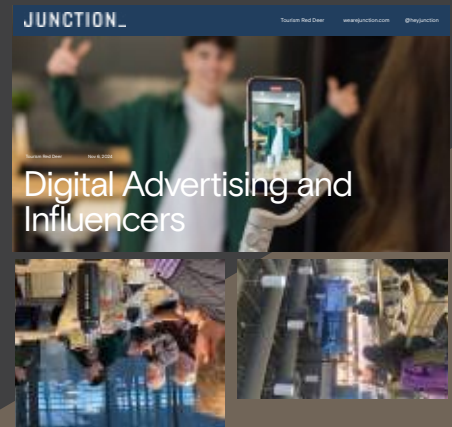


DNA Gardens long table dinner (September 2024)

DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT

In 2024, Tourism Red Deer took bold steps to empower our members with the knowledge and resources needed to thrive in today's digital-first world. We organized a series of educational and training sessions focused on key areas such as marketing, artificial intelligence, digital advertising, sales, and influencer marketing, all aimed at helping local businesses stay ahead of industry trends.

A key project of the year was our Digital Influence Assessment initiative, where members received a tailored report on their online presence. This valuable insight, coupled with personalized coaching from our Destination Development Manager, allowed members to enhance their digital footprint and drive more traffic to their websites—a critical strategy for success in the highly competitive digital landscape.



Membership Training Sessions (Fall 2024)



Our commitment to the success of our members extends beyond digital tools. In August 2024, we launched the inaugural Central Alberta Attraction Pass—a one-stop-shop for visitors to explore the region's top attractions and enjoy exclusive discounts. This innovative tool has proven to be a game-changer in driving visitation and highlighting the diverse experiences our region offers. We kept the Pass dynamic, refreshing it several times throughout the year to include new attractions and exciting places to visit.

Listening to the needs of our members, Tourism Red Deer also facilitated numerous meet-ups throughout the year, creating opportunities for them to connect, collaborate, and establish partnerships. These gatherings fostered new relationships and collaborations, driving growth and innovation within our local tourism ecosystem.

These initiatives reflect our unwavering commitment to fostering the growth and success of our members, ensuring they are equipped with the tools, knowledge, and networks to continue attracting visitors and showcasing the best of Red Deer and the surrounding region.



Summer Kick-Off w/ Community Partners & Membership (May 2024)

EVENTS & BUSINESS ATTRACTION

With an ambitious vision to become the leading major event destination among mid-sized cities in Canada by 2030, Tourism Red Deer is laying the foundation for this goal, today. In 2024, we took a strategic and intentional approach to supporting a diverse range of events, from major gatherings to regional and developmental opportunities. We understand that events, when nurtured with care and attention, have the potential to grow into significant and long-lasting fixtures within our community.

By embracing this approach, Tourism Red Deer is ensuring that in the coming years, our region will be well-positioned to host a wide variety of events, including meetings, conventions, trade-shows, sporting events, cultural celebrations, agricultural gatherings, and other niche events. This forward-thinking strategy not only strengthens our event calendar but also ensures that Red Deer is ready to welcome diverse opportunities for years to come. We are confident that our commitment to event development will secure a steady stream of event hosting opportunities, enriching our community and boosting our visitor economy for the long term.

The following is a list of events that Tourism Red Deer supported financially in 2024.

EVENT	DATE	TYPE OF EVENT
Grand Slam of Curling	January 2024	Major
Professional Bull Riders	January 2024	Developmental
Horse Expo	April 2024	Regional
National Women's Softball	July 2024	Regional
BMX Nationals	August 2024	Major
Canadian National Arabian Championship	August 2024	Major
African Caribbean Festival	August 2024	Developmental
Filipino Food and Music Festival	July 2024	Developmental
AAA Rebels Hockey Tournament	September 2024	Developmental
Agritrade (40th Anniversary)	November 2024	Major
WHL Cup	October 2024	Regional
Spirit of Red Deer	October 2024	Developmental
Canada Cup Soccer	November 2024	Regional

EVENTS & BUSINESS ATTRACTION

Events play a vital role in raising the profile of our community, showcasing our outstanding amenities, facilities, hotels, and venues. In addition to their cultural and social value, these events deliver significant economic benefits to our region. In 2024, the cumulative economic impact of the events supported by Tourism Red Deer resulted in an estimated direct and in-direct spend of over \$20 Million direct and over \$30 Million in-direct, respectively, highlighting the vital role that events play in fueling our local economy.



Professional Bull Riding at Peavey Mart Centrium (January 2024)

Beyond financial support, Tourism Red Deer worked closely with event organizers to ensure their success in our region. We provided essential resources such as visitor guides, marketing materials, and connections to Hotels Red Deer, fostering a seamless experience for over 30 event producers. Our collaboration with these organizers ensures they not only choose Red Deer but are more likely to return, drawn by the exceptional Central Alberta hospitality they experience.

In 2024, our events and business development team took proactive steps to expand our reach, traveling coast to coast to engage with event producers. These efforts have been instrumental in ensuring that Red Deer remains top of mind when event organizers are planning their next major gathering.



Grand Slam of Curling at Servus Arena (January 2024)



Mayor Johnston and Olympian Molly Simpson at the BMX Canada Cup Finals in Red Deer

LOOKING AHEAD TO 2025 (AND BEYOND)

As we move into 2025, we are eager to build on the momentum from 2024. We can look forward to many things but more specifically:

Destination Development

- Strengthening regional capacity to support tourism.
- Collaborating with event organizers to ensure our members are well-prepared to welcome guest to our region.
- Addressing regional deficiencies to enhance the visitor experience.
- Showcasing our amazing regional amenities to event producers who are unfamiliar with Red Deer and region.

Marketing and Communications

- Launching an in-depth cohesive marketing strategy highlighting Red Deer and region.
- Producing the 2025 Visitor Guide.
- Expanding influencer marketing and direct-to-visitor campaigns.
- Promoting hotel and attraction packages in collaboration with our members.

Business and Event Attraction

- Maintaining a robust events calendar to optimize capacity.
- Actively bidding for and supporting major events.
- Facilitating smooth transitions for event organizers.
- Showcasing grassroots events to attract tourists.

Advocacy and Government Relations

- Advocate for tourism-related initiatives with federal and municipal politicians ahead of the 2025 elections.
- Build new partnerships with key community stakeholders to align on shared goals and objectives.

Together, we will make 2025 a landmark year for Tourism Red Deer!