



TOURISM VANCOUVER NEWS RELEASE

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VANCOUVER ON SHOW DURING BESTCITIES CLIENT WORKSHOP

Vancouver, BC: Tourism Vancouver's Meeting and Convention Sales team was delighted to welcome key customers to Vancouver last week for the BestCities Client Workshop, July 27 to 31.

BestCities is a global convention bureau alliance that unites top convention destinations providing clients with continuity and the highest professional standards as their conferences move around the world between BestCities partners. The eight BestCities partners are Cape Town, Copenhagen, Dubai, Edinburgh, Melbourne, San Juan, Singapore and Vancouver.

The BestCities Client Workshop began last Tuesday just as approximately 2,600 delegates from Meeting Professionals International's (MPI) World Education Congress wrapped up their four-day conference at the Vancouver Convention Centre. Last week's two events combined to put Vancouver on show to thousands of influential meetings industry clients with the potential to bring high-yield future convention business to the city.

During the four-day BestCities event, the partner cities and 10 executives from eight major associations in Europe and North America came together for educational forums, networking and to learn about Vancouver's world class meeting and convention opportunities.

"We are extremely pleased that Vancouver had the opportunity to host the BestCities Client Workshop," said Randy Zupanski, general manager of the Fairmont Pacific Rim, host hotel for the event. "The workshop brings key decision makers to Vancouver who hold annual conferences around the world with anywhere from 400 to 4,000 delegates. We are optimistic that now they've experienced our destination, they will want to host their next meeting in Vancouver."

"Tourism Vancouver has been a member of BestCities Global Alliance since its inception in 1999," noted Richard Yore, director of Meeting and Convention Sales for Tourism Vancouver. "Our organization's longtime association with BestCities gives us another edge in the marketplace – not only is our city beautiful and home to a world-class convention centre, hotels and attractions, we also have the BestCities quality assurance guarantee which tells meeting planners that our convention bureau comes with the highest professional standards in destination expertise, bid assistance, convention planning, building attendance and onsite event servicing."

Feedback from clients attending Vancouver's BestCities workshop was overwhelmingly positive. Two letters are included below.

Tourism Vancouver's focus is on building exceptional customer relationships with meeting planners, travel influencers, travel media and independent tourists. The Meeting and Convention Sales team actively promotes Vancouver worldwide as a premiere event destination and services hundreds of meetings each year. Tourism Vancouver's "service edge" strives to deliver the best combination of customer sales, service and destination value anywhere in the world.

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**Martine Coutu, Executive Director
Société Internationale d'Urologie**

I recently attended the BestCities workshops in Vancouver on behalf of the Société Internationale d'Urologie (SIU), an international association serving over 4,000 urologists in some 114 countries. Our hosts from Tourism Vancouver, along with all the suppliers who extended their welcome, are extremely knowledgeable and capable professionals who are very proud of their city. We were treated to a warm welcome, lovely surroundings, attentive hosts, and a plethora of workshops and activities showcasing the infinite possibilities that Vancouver has to offer as an international-calibre host city.

I was but vaguely familiar with the BestCities concept, but thought it sufficiently interesting to make the trip out to this event. The fact that our association has already held (or will hold) congresses in five of the eight member cities led me to believe – and rightly so – that we appeared to be on the right track in our choice of destinations. One of the more valuable aspects of the BestCities alliance is their mission to establish industry standards and ensure that they are maintained, in order for clients to benefit from this certification of quality. It is essential for association executives to have the assurance that the host city convention bureau is doing its utmost to proactively make their event a success on all fronts. After the many hours of discussion and interaction with BestCities representatives, I have the certainty that BestCities accreditation is the way of the future for cities competing for international business.

I came away from this experience with the benefit of privileged contact with peers with backgrounds in associations, PCOs, and convention bureaus; with better tools with which to lead our Board of Directors in their selection of a host city and, conversely, to guide our members wishing to propose their country as a host destination; and finally with an improved grasp of those qualitative criteria that should constitute the baseline when assessing the suitability of a destination city.

Thank you to the Vancouver BestCities team and to BestCities for an exciting and educational opportunity.

**Sabine David, Events Co-ordinator
Union Internationale des Avocats**

I would like to thank Tourism Vancouver for the invitation to this wonderful site inspection experience, as well as Richard, Dorte and Liz for their time and the excellent organization.

It has been a real pleasure for me to take part in this adventure and to meet with the different BestCities representatives.

I do hope to have the opportunity to work with all of you in the future in the occasion of a UIA congress, or to see you soon on another occasion.