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Okotoks Economic Development Recognized with Tourism Award

The Town of Okotoks has been awarded the **Growing Rural Tourism Champion Award** recognizing its collaboration with rural tourism partners and for providing partners promotional and training opportunities. Okotoks accepted the rural tourism excellence honour at the Growing Rural Tourism Conference held in Camrose, AB on February 23.

The Town plays a key role in support of the Cool Little Towns initiative, the Foothills Holiday Roadshow and the promotion of farms (Kayben, Saskatoon and Chinook) within Okotoks and M.D. of Foothills boundaries.

The award also recognized the Town for its 'innovation through adaptation.' Its summertime tourism campaign *Let Your Summer Unfold in Okotoks* had incredible interest after a portion of the C-train advertisement highlighting a 'number of things to do' in Okotoks went viral. A *#thingstodoinokotoks* Twitter account and social media contests were quickly launched and strategic updates to the tourism portion of the Town's website were made. Heightened interest was not only a benefit to Okotoks, but to the Cool Little Towns participants who were also featured in the Town's Visitor & Activities Guide.

The Growing Rural Tourism Champion Award is designed to honour outstanding accomplishments, innovation and leadership in rural tourism and is presented annually in partnership with Travel Alberta, Alberta Culture & Tourism, Alberta Association of Agricultural Societies, and Tourism Camrose.

Economic Development Specialist, Alexandra Ross said, "this award demonstrates that Okotoks has truly displayed a commitment to supporting rural tourism by working closely with our partners and by sharing learning and marketing opportunities."

Okotoks is a member of Tourism Calgary, Travel Alberta, Economic Developers of Alberta, Economic Developers Association of Canada, and a participant at regional Visitor Centre meetings and roundtables. The Town also participates in Destination Marketing Organization roundtables.

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