



TOP FIVE TIPS for being a tourism ambassador in your community

When visitors stop in a community, their experiences are shaped by the people whom they meet. Their first point of contact may be a gas station attendant, staff at a local shop, a park entrance employee or a resident who provides directions. Everyone has the potential to serve as a tourism ambassador for their

community. There is a responsibility to consider. Your interaction with visitors shapes their first impressions and influences the messages and stories shared about their travels. These five tips will help you fulfil your role and make your community inviting.

1. TAKE PRIDE IN PROVIDING SERVICE TO OTHERS

Being of service to others is important and valued. Be courteous and friendly. Smile and greet your customers in a welcoming manner. Ask how you can help. Listen to them and make them feel like they are an important part of your day. A positive, cheerful attitude is pivotal to a great first impression.

2. KNOW YOUR COMMUNITY

Develop a thorough knowledge of local activities, events and attractions. Make a list of your favourite things to do in your area. Better yet, make it a community effort – work with other businesses, associations and town administrators to create a list of attractions, events and popular activities. Distribute the list to every local business and organization, and encourage operators to share with staff. As a bonus, you may discover something new about your community and develop a deeper sense of pride in your hometown.

3. SHARE INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

Stock up on maps and materials offering visitor information. Travellers will be grateful when you can provide them with information or show them directions. Organizers of local events or festivals may have brochures or flyers that you can distribute to your customers. The materials often become conversation starters. They are reminders of the busy schedule of local activities and enable fast and easy reference. With examples on hand, no one can say, "There is nothing to do around here." If there are no specific activities

that day, use the examples and resources to highlight upcoming events. Your guests may decide to extend their stay or plan a return visit.

4. TAKE THE LEAD

Your leadership and the positive experiences that you provide as a tourism ambassador will inspire others. People may come forward with their own ideas for making the community a welcoming destination. Informal networks may grow into formal tourism and economic development strategies. Your personal effort may be what it takes to get the ball rolling.

5. SHARE AND CELEBRATE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Organize, as a community, to recognize and reward those who go "above and beyond." Highlight their efforts in the local newspaper or a company newsletter. Share stories of appreciation that you hear from visitors.

The Saskatchewan Tourism Education Council (STEC) offers a range of resources and workshops to help individuals, businesses and groups become enthusiastic ambassadors and develop tourism in their communities to its full potential. For information, call STEC toll-free at 1-800-331-1529.