Hello Fellow IIMC Members!

I am so thrilled and honored to be the Host for the 78th Annual 2024 IIMC Conference happening May 19th to the 22nd, in beautiful Calgary Alberta! And I am so excited to have this opportunity to tell you what is planned and why you don’t want to miss it!!

It is a major undertaking to bring and host an international event of this caliber, and I can’t do it alone, it takes a team. So, I would like to introduce the Host Conference Committee members:

• Lana Antony – Canadian IIMC Director, Coaldale, Alberta
• Cheryl Hyde - IIMC Conference Sub-Committee, Chair, Canmore, Alberta
• Jaylene Knight - Canadian IIMC Director, Cochrane, Alberta
• Libbey McDougall – Banff, Alberta
• Sam Rodwell – Red Deer County, Alberta
• David Sarsfield – Lethbridge, Alberta
• Charlotte Satink – Airdrie, Alberta
• Ryan Westerson – Alberta Municipal Clerk Association, President, Lethbridge, Alberta

Together, with partners, IIMC and Tourism Calgary, we promise to deliver an amazing and unforgettable conference and experience in CALGARY and showcase what we have to offer.

Now, let me tell you about Calgary. Home to 1.4 million people, Calgary is an exuberant city, rich with beautiful landscapes, picturesque skylines and urban vibrancy. Renowned for its warm western hospitality and community spirit, Calgary prides itself on being the Ultimate Host City. With an exploding culinary, arts and culture scene, and an impressive list of attractions and activities to suit every type of visitor, Calgary is a city that delivers a remarkable experience from arrival to departure.

The conference venue - The Calgary TELUS Convention Centre, is located in the heart of downtown Calgary, which is very walkable and safe. There you can discover over 1,000 stores 200 restaurants and 50 entertainment spots as well as lots of public art.

With one of the world’s most modern and welcoming airports, including a brand-new international terminal, getting to Calgary for travelers from around the world by air, is simple and a great experience. Book early to get the lowest price. At the time of writing, these were the starting $US return airfares to Calgary from Houston ($325, nonstop), Phoenix ($360, nonstop), Atlanta ($374, 1 stop) and Amsterdam ($606, 1 stop) to give you an example. For those of you driving, Calgary is only three hours from the US border, north of Montana.

If you live outside Canada you will need a valid Passport. But it is a simple process, however be forewarned as it can take up to three months to process.

Here are 12 Fun Facts about Calgary:

1. Calgary was ranked as the most livable city in North America in 2018 and 2019 and named the 4th most livable city in the world in 2018.
2. For music lovers, there is Studio Bell - Home of the National Music Centre and for animal lovers there is the Calgary Zoo rated the third-best zoo in North America!
3. Within the City, there are 20,000 acres of open space and parkland to explore, and over 525 miles of paved pathways ... so bring your sneakers for a picturesque run or walk along the Bow or Elbow rivers. Or rent an e bike or scooter to explore.
4. Calgary’s Bow River is the 3rd best spot for trout fishing in the world.
5. The Plus 15 or +15 is a skyway network in downtown Calgary. It is the world's most extensive pedestrian skywalk system, with a total length of 16 kilometres (10 miles) and 86 bridges connecting 130 buildings.

6. Calgary is full of rich and wonderful diversity and culture being the third most diverse major city in Canada with more than 120 languages spoken.

7. Calgary was the first city in North America to have a Muslim Mayor, Naheed Nenshi, whom I was lucky enough to work with, and who was also awarded World Mayor in 2014.

8. In 2021, Calgary elected their first female mayor, Jyoti Gondek, an Indian Punjabi Sikh, who will be speaking at the Opening Ceremonies.

9. As one of Canada’s largest airports, Calgary International Airport welcomes millions of visitors to Calgary each year.

10. 200,000+ free pancakes are served during the 'Greatest Outdoor Show on Earth' - the Calgary Stampede.

11. Alberta does not have a provincial or state sales tax. The Goods and Services Tax (GST) is only 5%.

12. For those of you from Europe and United States, your currency is worth way more than the Canadian dollar – 33% more! So, your dollar stretches further!

Plan to stay a few extra days before or after the conference and take a short drive:

- An hour West to the Canadian Rocky Mountains and Banff National Park;
- East to Drumheller, the dinosaur capital of the world with the Royal Tyrrell Dinosaur Museum and the Alberta badlands;
- South to Lethbridge to see the coulees and the Lethbridge Train Trestle Bridge - the longest, highest bridge of its kind in the world; or
- North to Edmonton, Alberta’s capital city and home to the West Edmonton Mall – the largest mall in North America!

For fans of the award winning TV series, ‘The Last of Us’, it was all filmed in the places just noted and received a 96% thumbs up on Rotten Tomatoes!

If I haven’t convinced you yet, that you have to come, see for yourself and watch this video! Did that convince you! Who’s coming to Calgary now!?

Well mark your calendars and start planning to join us in Calgary. We are expecting a sold-out event and we hope you are one of them.

If you want to know more check out...
- Our Facebook page
- The Tourism Calgary ‘2024 IIMC Calgary Conference’ web site
- IIMC’s 2024 Conference page

And thank you to those that stopped by our booth in Minneapolis - your support, kind words and well wishes meant so much and we appreciate you all so much.

Thank you so much and I hope to see you in Calgary! PS: Bring your western attire! Yahoo!

Bonnie

Bonnie Hilford
Host, 2024 IIMC Conference
Calgary, Alberta, Canada
May 19-22, 2024