

## Tourism Langley: Artists help lure visitors

BY ROXANNE HOOPER, LANGLEY ADVANCE AUGUST 27, 2010



Deborah Strong and Vivian Harder painted a mural on the wall of Tourism Langley that incorporates a map of Langley with a couple distinct points of interest.

**Photograph by:** submitted, for Langley Advance

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Two Langley artists have joined forces on an unusual piece of art aimed at promoting Langley.

Deborah Strong of Cat and Mouse Design partnered with Vivian Harder of Thunderfoot Studios were commissioned to paint a wall-sized mural inside the new Tourism Langley digs.

In their first ever collaboration, Strong and Harder were asked to create a map of Langley that featured a number of local points of interest, such as the Fort Langley National Historic Site, Greater Vancouver Zoo, vineyards, and equestrian facilities.

The concept for the wall-sized map was first discussed last year, when Tourism Langley executive director Deborah Kulchiski was working out designs for the new visitors centre on the ground floor of the Langley Events Centre.

“The map provides a visual, artistic interpretation of Langley, while showcasing the spectacular landscape, as well as the unique and diverse products that make up our community,” Kulchiski said.

Already well used, it has proven to provide the tourism counsellors at the centre with a hands-on, fun tool for directing visitors and residents throughout the community.

“One of the objectives of relocating the Langley visitor centre was to acquire ample space to enable the delivery of enhanced visitor services,” Kulchiski elaborated.

“In my years of experience, some of the more successful visitor centres I have viewed have been those that delivered the flavor and true characteristics of the community to the visitor. That is often captured through architecture and design,” she said.

“Visitor centres can also influence a lasting impression as it is often the first or last stop in a community, before travelling to their next destination. I have always compared the visitor centre of a community as the living room of your home.”

Most of this unique art project came together during the 2010 BC Summer Games last month, Kulchiski explained.

“Where visitors to our community had the opportunity to view their artistic talent at work,” she elaborated.

Recognizing that heritage, arts, and culture together account for a huge component of the local tourism draw, Kulchiski said she was excited about this project.

“Aside from our agri-tourism product, one of the first qualities of Langley that I recognized when relocating here from northern B.C., was the incredible wealth of world-wide artistic talent that reside here,” she said.

“It was a personal vision to find another opportunity that could showcase our local artisans, while at the same time support their work.”

The Langley visitor centre is open seven days a week during the summer months from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and is located at the Langley Events Centre 7888 200th St. where this new map is available for viewing.

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