



2025 Year in Review

March, 2026

ROOTED IN PLACE. RISING TOGETHER.



Photo Courtesy: BLT, Shannon Martin

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

To our valued members,

As 2025 comes to a close, I am proud to reflect on another remarkable year for the Banff & Lake Louise Hospitality Association (BLLHA)—a year defined by growth, collaboration, and continued progress in strengthening the foundation of our destination's future.

This year, we continued to elevate our partnership with Banff & Lake Louise Tourism (BLLT) in significant ways, including a 35% increase in funding to support key projects within our new strategic framework and priority areas. These include advancing Government and Partner Relations, Workforce and Community Wellbeing, and reinforcing our shared commitment to the 10-Year vision for Tourism – Lead Tourism for Good. Together, we are ensuring that Banff and Lake Louise continue to thrive as both places to live and work and world-class destinations to visit.

In 2025, we proudly refreshed the BLLHA brand and launched a new website – Rooted in Place. Rising Together – reflecting not just a new look but a renewed sense of purpose. This refreshed identity embodies our shared commitment to collaboration, solutions-based advocacy, and the wellbeing of the people who make our community thrive.

Workforce development continued to be at the heart of our work this year. We welcomed Jenn Porter as our new Director of Workforce & Destination Affairs, whose leadership is already helping advance critical workforce initiatives across the Bow Valley. We also extend a heartfelt thank you to Karli Fleury, whose many contributions helped shape the strong foundation we build upon today, and who now continues this important work with BLLT. And of course, a sincere thank you to Heather Bodnarchuk, our HR Committee Chair, for her continued leadership and dedication to strengthening the people side of our industry.

In the spirit of celebrating our people, the 10th Anniversary of the Housekeeping Olympics marked a special milestone this year, an incredible success led once again by Melanie Brehon, whose enthusiasm and care make this event a true highlight of the year!

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT (continued)

Another major initiative in 2025 was our partnership with MNP to conduct a comprehensive Economic Impact Study, a key step in quantifying and communicating the value of our industry. The study is scheduled for completion by year-end and will serve as an essential tool to inform our future advocacy and planning.

On the advocacy front, BLLHA has been an active voice in shaping the Town of Banff's Community Plan, ensuring alignment with principles of collaboration, evidence and solutions-based decision-making, and outcome focused. This work, paired with continued engagement during the municipal budget process, helped achieve a major outcome this year: reducing the proposed tax increase from nearly 8% to 5.6%, a meaningful step forward in our partnership with Town Council.

As part of our municipal election advocacy strategy, we hosted breakfast roundtable discussions for members and a municipal candidates forum, fostering informed dialogue and strengthening the connection between business, residents, and local leadership.

Emergency preparedness also remained a focus in 2025, highlighted by our Crisis Communications Workshop, part of a broader effort to enhance readiness and resilience across the community at large.

Finally, we are delighted to welcome new board members: Jay White (Brewster Mountain Lodge) and Andrew Waddell (Canadian Rocky Mountain Resorts). Their experience and insight will be invaluable as we continue to evolve and deliver on our mission.

As I reflect on this past year, I am filled with gratitude, for our dedicated board, our members, and our admin team, whose commitment and collaboration continue to strengthen both our organization and our community. Together, we are proving that when we unite around shared goals, we can achieve truly remarkable outcomes for Banff and Lake Louise.

Sincerely,



Yannis Karlos, President
Banff & Lake Louise Hospitality Association

ABOUT BLLHA

ROOTED IN PLACE. RISING TOGETHER.

Representing more than 120 hotels, restaurants, attractions, and ski resorts employing over 5,000 people, the Banff & Lake Louise Hospitality Association (BLLHA) is the voice of Banff's tourism economy.

We champion a balanced, sustainable future for residents, visitors, and businesses, ensuring Canada's first National Park remains a thriving community within a protected landscape.



MISSION

The Banff & Louise Hospitality Association (BLLHA) is a powerful advocate for the accommodation, food & beverage and tourism sectors. Since 1974, BLLHA has been helping the tourism industry work toward common political and economic interests that will benefit the communities of Banff and Lake Louise as a whole.

VISION

The Banff & Lake Louise Hospitality Association is a respected, consensus-building organization that promotes the well-being of the accommodation, food & beverage, and tourism sectors in Banff National Park.



2025 BLLHA HIGHLIGHTS

Lead Tourism for Good

Visitor Experience



- Professional Development Training
- Crisis Comms Training
- Scale Naturally Leadership Training
- Mobility Engagement

Climate Action Nature Positive



- BLLHA Emergency Preparedness Series
- Banff Borrows
- Climate Resiliency Workshops
- ICS Training

Community Wellbeing



- Housekeeping Olympics
- BLL Mentorship Program
- DB Legacy Bursary
- Workplace Inclusion Charter
- HR Committee
- BMHAAW
- Banff Community Plan
- G7 Comms Group
- Municipal / Federal Election forums
- ToB Service Review

Indigenous Connections



- ITA membership
- ITA Cultural Awareness Training

Smart Tourism



- Economic Impact Study
- BLT Hospitality Performance Dashboard
- STR Report
- Occupancy Reports
- Labour Forecast
- BLLHA Brand work



BLLHA STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

To guide and strengthen BLLHA's work, the Association is anchored by a clear strategic framework that reflects our core responsibilities: managing the association effectively, advocating for the commercial sector, and supporting a thriving, sustainable destination.

This framework provides clarity of focus, supports effective prioritization of resources, and ensures strong alignment with our members, community partners, and Banff & Lake Louise Tourism's 10-Year Vision for Tourism – Lead Tourism for Good. It also reinforces a consistent, outcome-driven approach to advocacy, workforce leadership, and community wellbeing.

At its core, the framework is built around three interconnected priorities.



Government & Partner Relations – positioning BLLHA as a trusted, data-informed advocacy leader that advances solutions through collaboration at all levels of government and across the destination.



Workforce Development – continuing leadership on workforce challenges and opportunities by supporting employers, strengthening the employee value proposition, and advocating for the conditions that allow people to live, work, and grow in Banff National Park.



Community Wellbeing – building forward with a balanced approach where economic prosperity, environmental stewardship, and community resilience reinforce one another.

Together, these priorities provide the lens through which the following year-in-review highlights are shared.



Priority 1

Government & Partner Relations

2025 Highlights

Throughout 2025, BLLHA strengthened its role as a trusted advocate, convener, and partner, working across municipal, provincial, and federal landscapes to ensure the commercial sector's voice was constructive, aligned, and outcome-focused.

Key Activities

- Elevated evidence-based advocacy through research, including commissioning a comprehensive Economic Impact Study with MNP to better quantify tourism and hospitality's contribution to Banff and Lake Louise and strengthen future policy discussions.
- Refreshed the BLLHA brand and redeveloped the Association's website, strengthening clarity, consistency, and transparency in how we communicate priorities, share research and advocacy, and engage members, partners, and governments.
- Represented members at the Tourism Industry Association of Alberta (TIAA) Advocacy Summit, Hill Days in Ottawa and TIAC Congress reinforcing priorities around workforce development, emergency preparedness, and the importance of a stable, predictable business environment.
- Convened federal and municipal election forums and member roundtables, strengthening democratic engagement and ensuring business perspectives were clearly reflected in public dialogue and policy discussions.
- Provided leadership on emergency preparedness and interagency coordination, including G7 Summit planning, crisis communications readiness, and ongoing collaboration with Parks Canada, the Town of Banff, RCMP, and provincial partners.
- Secured a significant increase in partner funding to support BLLHA's work, growing annual investment from approximately by nearly 35%, strengthening the Association's capacity to deliver on advocacy, workforce, and community priorities.



Workforce Development

2025 Highlights

Supporting employers and strengthening Banff National Park's talent pipeline remained central to BLLHA's work in 2025, with a focus on practical tools, informed advocacy, and long-term workforce resilience.

Key Activities

- Supported members through a complex labour and immigration environment by sharing timely guidance on federal policy changes, labour market trends, and alternative workforce pathways.
- Gathered critical insights through the active leadership and ongoing support of HR Committee members, the 2026 Member and HR Surveys, ensuring member perspectives directly inform BLLHA's strategic priorities, advocacy focus, and professional development planning.
- Continued administration and expansion of the David M. Bayne Legacy Program, announcing 2025 bursary recipients and reinforcing long-term investment in Banff National Park's future workforce.
- Celebrated the 10th Anniversary of the Housekeeping Olympics, a signature workforce event that honours "heart of house" excellence, builds pride and connection across teams, and reinforces the value of these critical roles in Banff and Lake Louise. Participation included 22 teams from 20 different hotel properties, more than 350 spectators and 60+ volunteers supporting the event.
- Advanced leadership development through the BLLHA Mentorship Program, connecting 66 emerging and experienced leaders across the hospitality and tourism sector.
- Promoted inclusive, safe, and informed workplaces through training opportunities focused on equity, diversity, inclusion, human trafficking awareness, and Indigenous cultural awareness.
- Supported continuity and leadership in workforce wellbeing initiatives by recruiting for the next Volunteer Chair of Banff Mental Health & Addiction Week.
- Through a grant received by the BCF, BLLHA hosted two professional development workshops facilitated by Scale Naturally, with 120 participants in September and a further 100 in the November session.



Community Wellbeing

2025 Highlights

In 2025, BLLHA continued to advance a broader understanding of community wellbeing, recognizing that business success, resident experience, environmental stewardship, and visitor trust are deeply interconnected.

Key Activities

- Played an active leadership role on the Banff Community Plan Steering Committee and throughout public engagement, helping shape a final Plan that balances economic prosperity, mobility, environmental stewardship, and community resilience through flexible, outcome-focused policy.
- Supported and promoted Banff Mental Health & Addiction Week, amplifying opportunities for connection, conversation, and physical wellbeing across workplaces and the wider community.
- Advanced sustainability and stewardship through continued support of Banff Borrows and alignment with Lead Tourism for Good initiatives, contributing to long-term waste reduction and nature-positive outcomes.
- Strengthened emergency preparedness through crisis communications training, real-time member updates, and continued use of Basecamp as a central coordination and information-sharing tool.
- Was active behind the scenes and in Council chambers throughout the 2025 Budget & Service Review, speaking, meeting, and submitting multiple letters to Council—contributing to a significant reduction in the proposed municipal tax increase from nearly 8% to 5.6%.
- Advocated for the strategic reinvestment of Visitor Paid Parking (VPP) revenues into visitor-serving infrastructure and services, supporting a user-pay approach that reduces pressure on residents and businesses, resulting in ROAM Transit being fully funded through VPP.

CLOSING REFLECTIONS



Rooted in Place. Rising Together

Across 2025, BLLHA's work reflected a consistent principle: progress is strongest when it is shared. From strengthening evidence-based advocacy and workforce resilience to shaping long-term community policy, the Association remained focused on collaboration, clarity, and outcomes that serve both the commercial sector and the broader community.

As we look ahead, the foundation laid this year positions BLLHA, and its members, to continue leading with confidence, care, and purpose in support of a strong, resilient Banff and Lake Louise.

Rooted in place Rising together



BLLHA Board of Directors

Yannis, Karlos, President
Ebony Remple, Vice President
Chris Thorburn, Treasurer

Francis Hopkins
Remi Lambeau
Gregor Resch
Danielle Spooner

Luke Sunderland
Darren VanMackelberg
Andrew Weddell
Jay White

Administration Team

Mike Kelly, Executive Director

Jenn Porter, Director, Workforce & Desitnation Affairs
Melanie Behon, Operations Administrator
Karen Sandrelli, Accounting & Finance Manager
Sarah Pearson, Communications & Government Relations Strategist