



**South Canadian Rockies Tourism Association
Resident Tourism Partnership Forum**

April 20, 2026

Pincher Creek Community Hall: 287 Canyon Drive, Pincher Creek

9:00 am - 12:00 pm

**Lunch will be served at 12 pm; attendees are invited to stay for further networking and discussion.*

Agenda:

8:45 am: Doors open

9:00 am - 9:15 am: Welcome and Land Acknowledgment, Blessing performed by Elder Herman Many Guns.

9:15 am-9:45 am: Introductions from Travel Alberta, Municipality of Crowsnest Pass, MD of Pincher Creek, and Town of Pincher Creek.

9:45 am - 10:00 am: Expectations of the forum, and the role of the South Canadian Rockies Tourism Association

10:00 am - 10:15 am: Coffee Break (refreshments provided)

10:15 am - 10:30 am: Review of Resident Sentiment Survey

10:30 am- 10:45 am: Keynote, Stavros Karlos, Tourism Industry Association of Alberta

10:45 am - noon: Panel discussion, Q & A

Noon: Lunch provided by DK's Smoke Station, everyone is welcome to stay, network, and ask further questions.

Speakers:

Natalie Gibson, MC and moderator: For over 20 years, Natalie has been encouraging community leaders through her dedication to positive change, working in both the public and private sectors. Natalie is an excellent problem solver who can identify, discuss, and determine the best path forward for a community of any size. President of InnoVisions & Associates, Natalie is an award-winning, international economic development and marketing expert based in Alberta, Canada.

Stavros Karlos, Tourism Industry Association of Alberta: Stavros Karlos is a recognized leader in Alberta's tourism, hospitality, and civic planning sectors. Currently serving as the Director of Government Affairs, Research & Policy for the Tourism Industry Association of Alberta (TIAA), he has a passion for strategic advocacy and tourism as a source of sustainable economic development across the province.

Armed with a Political Science degree from the University of Calgary, Stavros built a 20-year entrepreneurial career as a co-founder of the Banff Hospitality Collective, project managing 14 successful Bow Valley venues. A fierce champion for local business and community, he spent a decade on the Banff Town Council as Deputy Mayor and Councillor, co-founded the Alberta Craft Distillers Association, and remains an active investor in Alberta, Stavros is a dedicated family man and an avid outdoor enthusiast who frequently volunteers with the Bow Valley Mountain Bike Alliance.

Bev Thornton, Executive Director, Alberta SouthWest Regional Economic Development Alliance (AlbertaSW): Bev Thornton has been the Executive Director of Alberta SouthWest Regional Economic Development Alliance (AlbertaSW) since its

formation in 2002. This partnership of 15 rural municipalities has received over 30 provincial, national, and international awards for projects that work to advance economic development in key industry sectors in the southwest region: agriculture, renewable energy, innovative technology, and tourism. Bev is an enthusiastic cheerleader for regional collaboration and is excited about the opportunities and potential in rural communities.

Kevin Weidlich, VP Commercial & Destination Development, Travel Alberta:

Kevin Weidlich's 38-year career spans Canada's private and public sectors and is built on a foundation of military service, where he served on four international operations. Kevin was awarded *The Chief of the Defence Staff Commendation* for his leadership in the Middle East. Kevin applied his leadership skills to his civilian career, which includes entrepreneurship, project management and executive roles in economic development and tourism.

In 2013, Kevin joined the then Edmonton Economic Development Corporation (now Explore Edmonton), where he held the role of Vice-President, Marketing and Communications. Over the course of his tenure with EEDC, Kevin led place re-branding initiatives, including the award-winning EDMONTON ORIGINAL brand.

Most recently, Kevin was the inaugural President & CEO of Fort McMurray Wood Buffalo Economic Development & Tourism (FMWBEDT). Under his leadership, he led the development and execution of the region's economic development and tourism strategy by delivering award-winning campaigns, establishing a new business incubator, Startup YMM, and attracting commercial and retail investment.

Kevin joined Travel Alberta earlier this year as the VP Commercial & Destination Development, where he is responsible for delivering on Travel Alberta's ambitious tourism product development goals that will increase Visitor Spending to \$25 Billion per year by 2035.

Kevin is husband to Gaylene Weidlich and the father of three very active sons. Kevin plays golf poorly but enthusiastically and enjoys traveling with his family.