

NEWS BRIEF - July 29, 2010

By Katie Bailey



## **The marketing org is using a Bluetooth and Wi-Fi strategy to zap a 40-second video to tech-savvy visitors.**

The city of White Rock, a scenic chunk of shoreline near Vancouver, BC, may have a rich history as a seaside retreat, but it is taking a decidedly modern approach to marketing this summer with the launch of a Bluetooth-based promotional strategy.

Tourism White Rock, the city's marketing arm, has launched a city-wide network of Bluetooth and Wi-Fi zones in partnership with Blue Jamb Media, a locally based media solutions provider and ad network. Project sponsors include Blue Jamb, Scotiabank, Peace Arch News (who will promote the technology with half-page ads in 2010) and Allscenes Media in Surrey, BC.

The BlueZones deliver content, provide internet access and work as an advertising medium. When cell users enter the hotspot, they receive a permission-based text message asking if they would like to join the network. If they accept, they receive a 40-second video promoting White Rock tourism activities and are directed to the city's mobile site where they can download its new mobile app. The hotspots are also accessible via PC.

White Rock's busy summer beaches, packed with out-of-towners armed with smartphones, made seaside mobile marketing an ideal way to reach out to visitors, Betina Albornoz, executive director for Tourism White Rock, tells *MiC*.

"Recent tourism trends confirm that the [modern] traveller plans on-the-go, often choosing where to stay and what to do based on information they can glean from one click of a button," she says. "The White Rock BlueZone provides locals and visitors with in-the-moment community information... It's an innovative platform to showcase the best our community has to offer."

The hotspots are hosted by local businesses, which are afforded the opportunity to advertise via the hotspots in exchange for their internet connections. There are 14 hotspot access points in the White Rock network, hosted at businesses along the oceanfront promenade. BlueJamb installed the network at its own expense, and will generate revenue through selling advertising via the video content.

Advertising via permission-based mobile takes special consideration, Michelle Herlihy, president, Blue Jamb Media, explains.

"Sending content to mobile devices must be respected and done in a very unique way. We will always send content that is relevant to where people are, for example, tourism content in White Rock or sports clips at the local stadium. We will never send ads [directly] to phones: content is permission based and our software will not resend to someone who has opted out of receiving it."