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For immediate release

Leadership transition underway at Banff Lodging Company Long term employees promoted

BANFF, AB – After more than twenty years working for the Banff Lodging Company, Gord Lozeman, president and CEO, and Sean O’Farrell, vice-president of sales and marketing, will step away from their full-time executive positions effective May 1, 2021. Shawn Birch, former CFO, will assume the role of president and CEO, Cathy Geisler becomes vice president, sales and marketing, and Chris Thorburn will continue as vice president, operations.

As highly vested shareholders of the company, Lozeman and O’Farrell join primary and founding shareholder, Wim Pauw, to form a board of directors committed to preserving the organization’s local way of doing business.

“We are creating a board framework that will ensure the ongoing stability of Banff Lodging Co., particularly in regard to its commitment to local ownership, reinvestment, and community involvement – or, as we like to say, ‘keeping Banff in Banff,’” said Lozeman. The long-term vision for the company’s sustainability is to transition to 100 per cent employee ownership, which will be achieved as employees gradually acquire shares in a greater proportion.

Despite not being involved in day-to-day operations, the executives will retain working board positions. They will shift their focus towards strategic oversight and business development. This includes communications and advocacy within the community and tourism industry, special projects, and providing guidance and governance over the employee shareholder ownership plan.

“We’ll definitely remain involved and close-by to support the new senior executive team; we’re just not sure whether our board meetings will take place in the office or out on the skating rinks and hiking trails of Banff,” said Lozeman, an avid outdoor enthusiast.

“We have great confidence in the ability of Shawn, Cathy and Chris to lead the company through this operational change and into this new chapter of governance. They have depth of knowledge in their current positions with recent anniversaries celebrating 19 years with the company for Shawn, 17 years for Chris, and 15 years for Cathy. With strong teams already in place the team is well positioned to step into these new leadership roles,” said Lozeman.

Shawn began his career with Banff Lodging Company in the spring of 2002, as an accounts payable supervisor, when the company only owned three hotels. As the company grew, Shawn helped it implement its property management system and its restaurant point of sale system. In 2010, he stepped away from the finance department to work exclusively

About Banff Lodging Company

Banff Lodging Company is a locally owned and operated hospitality company in Banff National Park. Founded in 1985, the company provides memorable vacation experiences in accommodation settings that celebrate our spectacular mountain environment. Banff Lodging Company (a division of Banff Caribou Properties Ltd.) owns 15 hotel and condominium properties in Banff and Canmore, two spas, 7 restaurants, Ultimate Sports and Lux Cinema, all in the picturesque resort town of Banff, Alberta, Canada.

establishing the company's construction division, including helping it manage room renovations at the Banff Caribou Lodge. In 2014, while still leading the construction division, he rejoined the finance department and took on the role of chief financial officer. As CFO he helped the company navigate through the negotiations and agreements to acquire: Tunnel Mountain Resort, Bumpers Inn, Rocky Mountain Ski Lodge, Pocaterra Inn, Rundlestone Lodge, Irwin's Mountain Inn, and the Red Carpet Inn. He also helped oversee the construction of the Moose Hotel and Suites.

Chris began working for Banff Lodging Company in 2004, as a front office manager for Hidden Ridge Resort. The following year he was promoted to general manager (GM). During his career with the company he has also been the GM for Banff Caribou Lodge and Red Earth Spa, Banff Ptarmigan Inn and Meatball Restaurant, Director, and now Vice-President of Operations. Thorburn's current role oversees all hotel, restaurant, human resources, grounds, and staff housing divisions.

Cathy started working for Banff Lodging Company in 2006, as the company's reservations manager. Although her title didn't change for 15 years her responsibilities evolved over the years, including becoming the call centre manager, overseeing the events and reservations teams and getting involved in product development and revenue management. She also oversaw marketing campaigns and supported the company's communications activities. In 2013, she earned the privilege to represent Wim & Nancy Pauw as the executive director of the newly established Wim & Nancy Pauw Foundation, which is a philanthropic organization committed to creating a more vibrant, active, and healthy community.

Together, these three promotions serve as compelling examples of the potential upward movement that is possible within Banff Lodging Company, which maintains the core belief that promotion should take place internally.

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