

Tourism Lethbridge
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Nikka Yuko Japanese Garden
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Lethbridge, Alberta, T1K 0C6



Press Release

For Release:
June 4, 2025

Executive Director of Nikka Yuko Japanese Garden Earns Prestigious CDME Certification

Michelle Day Miles Earns Prestigious Certification, Elevating Lethbridge's Tourism Leadership

LETHBRIDGE, Alta – The Lethbridge and District Japanese Garden Society and Tourism Lethbridge are proud to announce that Michelle Day Miles, Executive Director of Nikka Yuko Japanese Garden and long-time advocate for tourism in the region, has achieved the Certified Destination Management Executive (CDME) designation. This esteemed certification is the highest individual credential in the tourism industry, awarded by Destinations International to recognize excellence in destination management leadership.

Day Miles's achievement marks a significant milestone not only for her personally, but for the entire Lethbridge tourism community. The CDME program is designed for senior-level professionals and focuses on strategic leadership in destination organizations, setting the standard for excellence in tourism development, planning, and community engagement.

In addition to her role at Nikka Yuko Japanese Garden, Day Miles has served with distinction on the Tourism Lethbridge Board of Directors for five years, including three years as Board Chair. Her visionary leadership helped guide the organization through major strategic initiatives, strengthening tourism infrastructure and forging strong partnerships across the region.

"Michelle's commitment to excellence and her tireless work to promote Lethbridge as a dynamic cultural destination is an inspiration," said Erin Crane, CEO of Tourism Lethbridge. "Her achievement of the CDME certification is a testament to the leadership we've been fortunate to have in our community."

Day Miles has led Nikka Yuko Japanese Garden through a transformative period since taking on the role of Executive Director in 2015. Notable accomplishments include the launch of the popular Winter Light Festival, the development of year-round programming, the garden's designation as a Municipal and Provincial Historic Resource in 2017 and opening of the Bunka Centre in 2022. She also played a central role in hosting Her Imperial Highness Princess Ayako of Takamado during the garden's 50th anniversary.

President of the Lethbridge and District Japanese Garden Society, Dawn Sugimoto, shared that "It has been a privilege for the Lethbridge and District Japanese Garden Society board to work with Michelle and see her bring ideas to life. Our investment in her professional development is repaid many times over through her collaborative spirit, her can-do attitude, and her relationship-building which makes our tourism sector and community stronger."

As both a cultural institution and tourism leader, Michelle's work continues to strengthen Lethbridge's role as a vibrant, welcoming destination for visitors from around the world.

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About Tourism Lethbridge

Tourism Lethbridge is the official Destination Management Organization for the City of Lethbridge. Funded by the municipality, the organization works to attract leisure, sport, and business tourism by leveraging partnerships and regional assets. Tourism Lethbridge proudly showcases Lethbridge as a gateway to Southern Alberta, the heart of Canada's Premier Food Corridor, and a growing hub for culture, sport, and innovation.

About Nikka Yuko Japanese Garden

Nikka Yuko Japanese Garden is a treasured cultural landmark in Lethbridge, Alberta. Offering a serene escape that celebrates the rich traditions of Japanese horticulture and art, the garden provides a wide array of seasonal events, educational programs, and community outreach. As one of the city's premier attractions, Nikka Yuko continues to play a key role in positioning Lethbridge as a dynamic tourism destination in southern Alberta.

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