



To Whom it May Concern,

On behalf of Vision Merritt, I am delighted to write this letter for Greg and Colin Gerard in support of their “first-to-market” rural community/regional marketing program called “Experience Community”.

I have been involved in the Merritt and Nicola Valley version of this program (Experience Nicola Valley) since its inception and believe that this program provides an economical and effective online solution to many of the needs and challenges of rural communities and regions. The flexibility of the program enables communities to concentrate on “areas of need” including promoting upcoming events, extending seasons, increasing average stays, developing physical inventory and new markets, as well as, attracting new business, families and investment to our community.

Using authentic real-time personal stories and experiences produced by passionate community residents, volunteers, non-profits, associations, small businesses, etc is absolutely brilliant. Not only has the involvement of the community in the marketing process increased our community's search engine and social media visibility, it has also created a heightened sense of community pride.

In addition to providing us with analytics and data that are evidence of the increased visitor traffic to our social media sites, the transformation I have witnessed in our community's online presence as a result of Experience Nicola Valley has far exceeded our expectations.

The professionalism demonstrated by Greg and Colin and their expertise and knowledge has created an asset of great value to our community. I would not hesitate to recommend to those responsible for tourism and economic development in all communities and regions to adopt this new and exciting technology-advanced program into their marketing strategy.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Amber Papou". The signature is written in a cursive style and is enclosed within a thin black rectangular border.

Amber Papou
Vision Merritt