

Clark, Robertson to lead B.C. trade missions to Asia

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Vancouver Mayor Gregor Robertson and B.C. Premier Christy Clark will both head to Asia next month on separate trade missions. Mr. Robertson will depart first and make stops in Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou and Hong Kong. The mission will cost the city \$275,000. The mayor will be joined by representatives of Vancouver's creative, technology, tourism and cultural sectors, several of whom were at city

hall for a news conference on Tuesday, and will pay their own way on the trip. Some of those representatives, and observers, talk about the merits of the trade delegation:

Chan Hon Goh

Director, Goh Ballet Academy

“The Goh Ballet was founded 35 years ago in Vancouver. Our relationship with China runs deep because both my parents were principal dancers of the National Ballet of China in the 1970s before immigrating to Vancouver. After they came to the city, they felt it important to pass on what they knew as artists to the community, and to give back to the community through the arts. They've managed over the past 35 years to build generations of dancers who now represent our city, our country, on world stages. ...I hope that with my involvement on the mission, that we will be able to really deepen our ties with many cultural entities.”

Chuck Johnson

Co-founder and chief operating officer of animation company Nerd Corps Entertainment

“Why China and why this mission? China, for us, represents probably our largest untapped potential market for brand growth for our properties. It's not a secret that it's one of the biggest economies in the world and is very tight with Canada, B.C., and Vancouver in general, and all the great work that's been done here. We are looking to identify new partnerships, build and strengthen existing partnerships, and ultimately grow our brands and gain audience in China and southeast Asia in general.”

Ian McKay

Chief executive officer, Vancouver Economic Commission

“These are important missions. They build not just friendships and cultural relationships, but they build business ties and they build networks and they build educational exchanges and

whatnot. So the value of the mission is immeasurable, quite frankly, and we're absolutely delighted to be leading it."

Jianzheng Gao

Consul responsible for government and media affairs, consulate-general of the People's Republic of China in Vancouver

"I'm pretty sure that your visit will promote not only Vancouver's image in China, but also promote the trade, investment, culture, and people-to-people co-operation."

John Ries

Professor, Sauder School of Business, University of British Columbia; co-author of the study Do Trade Missions Increase Trade?

"We got trade data, as well as investment data, and even had some service trade data, and basically did a before-and-after study, looked to see what happened with trade with the target country that Canada had visited. ... The result of that study was that we found nothing, that there was no statistical increase in trading goods, investment, as well as trade and services. ... There were memoranda of understanding and letters of intent. A lot of them were not solid deals. And so a lot of these obviously didn't come to fruition, or would have been done anyway."