

Castlegar casts its line to snag fishermen

By Dale West
Castlegar Current

It's Jim Hoey's dime but he's calling the U.S. and Canada for Castlegar.

Dimestore Fisherman producer and founder Hoey was in town last week to film an episode of the destination fishing program that promises to alert fisherman to Castlegar as a great fishing spot but also as a great spot to visit.

Hosted by the Castlegar and District Chamber of Commerce, the Dimestore crew was toured around the area, casting a line for fish as well as interesting places for viewers to visit.

Hoey gets around. This summer he's been to the City of Miramichi, N.B.,

Prince Edward Island, Slave Lake, Alta., Buffalo Narrows and North Battleford, Sask., and Sioux Lookout and Rice Lake Ont. After Castlegar he was bound for Williston Lake, back to home base in Calgary for three days, then up to Edmonton for a charter to Yellowknife and then nine degrees south of the North Pole.

"It just keeps going until the second week of October," said Hoey as he sought out scenic locations with chamber president Peter Perepolkin.

Back in 1998 Hoey was finishing school and working as a cashier at Safeway when he and a friend landed perhaps the biggest fish he will ever catch — the idea to do a fishing show. Now,



DALE WEST PHOTO-ILLUSTRATION

ON LOCATION. The Dimestore Fisherman in Castlegar.

almost 10 years later, the program has aired over 100 episodes and is seen in the United States and Canada.

"We're seen 60 to 70 times per week, with the

bulk of the broadcasts in the U.S.," said Hoey. "It runs five or six times a week in Canada."

In the show's formative years, the program received

help from the British Columbia Fishing Resort Outfitters Association.

"We said let's make this about destination features, these are the people who have really supported us as opposed to the fishing industry," said Hoey.

The program was further refined by polling anglers in the streets of Lethbridge, Calgary and Edmonton. That research found three important building blocks for Dimestore Fisherman programming ideology. Firstly, people felt fishing shows had become over commercialized. Secondly, locations visited by most shows weren't relevant to the average angler. And thirdly, the average angler was overwhelmed. With a

truck and boat rig costing \$120,000 they didn't stack up when they got to the water.

So the decision was made to bring a young, fun, exuberant approach to the show, injecting a lot of fun and energy into each program.

"We're loud and proud in the spirit of Don Cherry, and we like to have a little fun."

Loud and proud, the Dimestore folks also feel an affinity for the Average Joe.

"It's as much about the people as the fishing," said Hoey. "We want to do an information documentary-style program ... what are the attractions, what are the eco-adventures. That's something we have never deviated from." 