

BBC pops up to make videos about Tacoma

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Matt Danzico, a BBC reporter, films students Thursday in the afternoon glass-blowing program offered by Hilltop Artists at Jason Lee Middle School. A team from BBC is in Tacoma — the last of six U.S. cities on its tour — to report on ways the community is on the rise.

PETER HALEY — Staff photographer [Buy Photo](#)

To learn more about BBC Pop Up and to watch the videos, visit bbc.in/Yqk2YI. Follow what they're doing and submit story ideas at twitter.com/BBCpopup.

Matt Danzico and his BBC Pop Up team think Tacoma might take off in about five years, and they wanted to get here before that happens.

“The fact of the matter is the Seattle-Tacoma region is booming right now,” he said last week. “We were initially interested in figuring out why that is. It’s interesting to be here when the city is on its way up, rather than when it has already arrived.”

The team, a venture of the British Broadcasting Corp., is visiting six up-and-coming cities in six months. Tacoma is the last stop.

The goal is to capture the essence of each city in a series of short videos, to be posted online and compiled into 30-minute shows for BBC World News Television, one episode per city.

The team has been to Boulder, Colorado; Pittsburgh; Baton Rouge, Louisiana; Sioux Falls, South Dakota; and Tucson, Arizona.

They've had various team members on the road trips, and three have made their way to Tacoma. The trio got here a little more than a week ago and will stay until the beginning of March.

It's uncertain what the team's videos will be about yet, though Danzico is working on one about the Hilltop Artists program. He's interested in at-risk youth in Tacoma and the large number of programs set up for them, he said.

"Seeing how this once crime-ridden city is now becoming a hub of culture and art — just general greatness — it's quite a unique story," he said.

The team lets the communities tell their stories to the world, by crowdsourcing what topics they should cover. They use Twitter, email and conversations with people around town to ask locals what stories they should report.

"Sometimes they're positive, sometimes they're negative," he said. "We just try to give a sense of place, no matter where we go."

Team member Benjamin Zand said he's working on a story about the federal immigration detention center on Tacoma's Tideflats.

He was surprised, he said, at how different Tacoma is from Seattle, given that they're so close. It's gritty, and its industrial side reminds him of his hometown, Liverpool, he said.

"It's just like the perfect city for BBC Pop Up," Zand said. "It has the right size, and so much going on that we'd like to cover."

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