

Information Byway



NORTH WESTERN ONTARIO
TOURISM ASSOCIATION

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DESTINATION MARKETING

Since the summer of 2005 KDCA and NWOTA have been working together on a project called Destination Marketing Fund (DMF). DMF is a strategy to market Northwestern Ontario as a destination paid for by those visiting Northwestern Ontario. During this time we met several times with Sunset Country Travel Association, Patricia Region Tourist Council and North of Superior Travel Association to understand how we could work together to maximize the marketing effort for Northwestern Ontario.

We are all well aware of the lack of support by the government of Ontario and Canada to market our area as a destination. The tourism industry, in Sunset Country, spends more than twice as much marketing its own businesses as OTMPC spends to market Northern Ontario.

According to the Globe and Mail - 29 Aug 06.

"Canada has an image problem south of the border. It's not that Americans have a bad impression of their northern neighbour — **it's that they have no impression at all.**

The underlying factor though, say tourism experts on both sides of the border, is that **Canada has simply fallen off the radar of most Americans.** As other countries such as Australia are busy waging marketing blitzes, there's simply no buzz about Canada south of the border.

Funding may be part of the problem. The commission's \$78.8-million budget has shrunk by almost a quarter since 2000. Worldwide government investment in tourism promotion, by contrast, jumped 11% last year from 2004, according to a United Nations study."

With DMF, our industry will no longer have to rely on government funding. We will be able to dedicate marketing dollars to market Northwestern Ontario as we feel it should be.

Last summer we made several presentations which included OTMPC, NODN, and others. The concept was well received. On November 3rd, KDCA/NWOTA had its first formal meeting. A steering committee was formed, made up of KDCA/NWOTA volunteers. This committee has met every week since, to move the association to a level that the new board of directors could hit the ground running with most of the ground work completed.

It was decided early on that a well designed web site was needed to inform those interested in participating and to use as a focal point for our future marketing effort.

Our web site is under construction but the direction we plan to follow should be noticeable by the end of February. The site is www.nwontdestinations.com. Fort Frances has agreed to work with us to show how communities can participate. On the members map click on Fort Frances and you will see an area around Fort Frances. Then click on Fort Frances and you will see a road map of that community. Soon you will also see balloons for businesses in Fort Frances. Fort Frances will be used as an example when we travel to other communities promoting this project. The site is a work in progress so monitor it periodically for updates.

The web site should answer questions like;

- What is DMF about
- Background on the project
- Legal documents such as constitution and agreement.
- Examples of other areas that collect DMF.
- How do I become a member?
- How do I calculate the fee?
- How will your business information be protected?

After we have had a chance to get the word out and businesses have had a chance to sign up, a board will be elected. Target will be this spring.

There will be a major presentation on this project at the Northwest Sport Show, Minneapolis Convention Center, Thursday, March 29 at noon. All are invited to participate.

Late April to early May we will be traveling to 9 Northwestern Ontario communities, to spread the DMF message to all businesses in Northwestern Ontario.

We are in the planning stages of a facilitated strategic planning session for members. The objective will be to determine how our organization can best reflect the interest of those participating and where we should be focusing our marketing effort and resources. It will be scheduled for Mid Summer 2007.

If the web site does not answer your questions or if you have suggestions please call any steering committee member or call Cindy at the NODMA office (807) 488-5796. If she is unable to answer the question she will forward it to a steering committee member who will get in touch with you.

PASSPORT REQUIREMENTS

The following information has been taken from the DHS web site.

For Land/Sea Travel

As early as January 1, 2008, U.S. citizens traveling between the U.S. and Canada, Mexico, the Caribbean, and Bermuda by land or sea (including ferries), could be required to present a valid U.S. passport or other documents as determined by the Department of Homeland Security in a forthcoming separate rule.

While recent legislative changes permit a later deadline, the Departments of State and Homeland Security are working to meet all requirements as soon as possible.

We will provide advance notice so you can obtain acceptable documents for land/sea entries.

This is a posting on Senator Norm Coleman's website who was instrumental in getting an extension to June 1, 2006.

September 29th, 2006 - Washington, D.C. - Senator Norm Coleman today announced that deadline to implement the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative (WHTI) had been extended until June 2009, through a provision in the Department of Homeland Security Appropriations conference report, which passed unanimously. WHTI will require all travelers, including U.S. citizens, to and from Canada, Mexico, and the Caribbean, to have a passport or other accepted document that establishes the bearer's identity and nationality to enter or re-enter the United States. This is a change from prior travel requirements. The proposed changes were originally scheduled to go into effect by December 31, 2007.

Travel Industry Association of America may offer the best information on the issue.

http://www.tia.org/govtaffairs/legislative_WHTI.html

Bottom line -

It may be in your best interest to advise your guests to get a passport before next spring. As the administration is still pushing for December 31, 2007 Norm Coleman's office is also recommending the same.

CANCELLATION OF STEWARDSHIP COUNCILS

A couple of weeks ago NWOTA received a letter from Gaye Smith informing us that the Minister had dropped the stewardship program for lakes in Northern Ontario. Both Temagami and Nipissing were no longer classified as Stewardship area.

This is sad news as it takes the management of large lakes away from those that have the greatest interest especially those that have major investments on that water body and an interest in maintaining high quality fisheries.

We will have to wait and see how this unravels.

GST VISITOR REBATE

On April 1 2007 the GST rebate will be eliminated. You can give your opinion by logging on and signing a petition going to Honorable James Flaherty, Minister of Finance.

The site is

<http://www.petitiononline.com/vrp1/petition.html>

To date a little over 10% of our industry (NW Ontario) has logged on. **Not sure how much effort NWOTA should be devoting to this with such a small response/interest?**

A message from TIAC;

Since the release of the *GST Visitor Rebate Program for Individual Travellers; an Economic Impact Analysis*, TIAC has been engaging in constructive dialogue with Department of Finance officials. They have provided some suggestions as to how we may strengthen and clarify our findings. In light of this, TIAC is reviewing and refining the report, and we hope to have a revised version available in the next few weeks.

In the meantime, you can support our efforts at the local, regional and provincial/territorial levels, as many have already been doing.

We encourage you to engage in a more targeted letter-writing campaign to drive home the economic fallout of canceling the VRP and remind the government of the industry's solidarity on this issue. Send a letter to Finance Minister Jim Flaherty outlining your concerns about the cancellation of the GST/HST Visitor Rebate Program. This letter should be copied to Industry Minister Maxine Bernier, Secretary of State for Small Business and Tourism Gerry Ritz, and your MP asking for his or her assistance in defeating the measure. You can use the letter template developed by TIAC (included). Letters can be mailed, postage-free, care of the House of Commons, Parliament Buildings, Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6. You may also choose to fax or email copies.

Sometimes you see something happening and cannot talk to anyone at MNR, i.e. on a weekend or holiday, to report it

**Call 1-877-TIPS-MNR
1-877-847-7667**

Report Resource Abuse

**Call 1-800-222-8477
CRIME STOPPERS**

Meeting dates are tentative – visit the website for current dates & locations.

2007 Monthly NWOTA Meetings

March 1, Emo Inn, Emo, ON
April 5, Emo Inn, Emo, ON

**Annual Spring NWOTA Meeting
May 3, 2007
Nestor Falls Community Centre,
Nestor Falls, ON**

July 5, Green's Barbecue Bar,
Nestor Falls, ON
August 2, Green's Barbecue Bar
Nestor Falls, ON
September 6, Green's Barbecue Bar,
Nestor Falls, ON

**Annual Fall NWOTA Meeting:
October 4, Location TBA**

November 1, Emo Inn, Emo, ON
December 6, Emo Inn, Emo, ON

Members are encouraged to attend monthly meetings whenever possible. A call to the NWOTA office ensures that enough seating can be arranged.

AULNEAU PENINSULA COMMITTEE

The Aulneau Committee met in Sioux Narrows on Oct. 17th. Scott Lockhart has taken over as temporary Chair while Betty Wires is on assignment in Thunder Bay. O.P.P. was there to discuss patrols related to ice roads when there is future timber harvest on the Aulneau. The committee will work with O.P.P. on issues of concern with the management plan.

Juanita Jourdain from AKRC gave a presentation on the progress of First Nations Forestry Education Workshops held over the summer. Phase One of this process is complete with Phase Two completion expected by Nov. 2007. Issues remain but the committee is very supportive of this work and will continue to address issues of Native Values and Traditional Uses.

MNR is working toward removing itself from all boat transfer systems including Turtle Portage and is looking at options including private operation. The committee will visit the site in May and MNR will come back to the committee with options.

Next meeting will be in May 2007.

AREA SEEING MAJOR INCREASES IN NON RESIDENT HUNTER NUMBERS

As the deer herd in Ontario continues to grow so do the problems associated with the hunt. Non-resident hunter numbers continue their upward trend, and reports from outfitters and residents throughout the region indicate a lot of problems associated with competition for areas, private land trespass and a variety of other complaints not all associated with just non-resident hunters.

It seems the underground economy is alive and well across the region, with new hunting rentals, services and guides showing up for a few weeks starting mid October right from the border to Dryden and Kenora. Other provinces and states are laughing at the state of the deer hunt in Ontario, where they protect their resource and manage it, we give it away to the person who will pay the least.

Because of the dwindling numbers of moose (partially caused by the increase in Deer) and the growing economic loss to our industry and Ontario, this issue is of major importance.

The KDCA/NWOTA working group will meet this month to discuss the issue. A recommendation will be brought to each organization for discussion. Recommendations will be sent back to the working group and a formal position paper will be developed.

ONTARIO SUNSET COUNTRY TRAVEL ASSOCIATION AGM

Wednesday, April 25, 2007

Fort Frances, ON

For more information call 1-800-665-7567 or contact gerry@sunsetcountry.net

KDCA SPRING MEETING

Friday, May 4, 2007

Waldorf Hall

For more information log on to www.kdca.ca or call (807) 223-3266

RECIPES NEEDED!

NWOTA would still like to produce a cookbook like no other!

Please submit your recipes to: NWOTA, Box 458, Emo, ON POW 1E0

Email to: info@nwota.com or fax to (807)488-5514.

Geoff Gillon was honoured at the 2006 Annual Fall Meeting of the North Western Ontario Tourism Association (NWOTA) for his outstanding contribution to the Association and the Tourism Industry in Northwestern Ontario



Jerry Fisher, NWOTA Vice President and Tom Pearson, NWOTA President presenting to Geoff Gillon, 2006 NWOTA Outstanding Person in Tourism Award

**2007 ANNUAL
SPRING NWOTA MEETING**
Thursday, May 3, 2007
Nestor Falls Community Centre
Nestor Falls, ON

TENTATIVE AGENDA ITEMS:

Invasive Species Prevention

Kelli Saunders – Lake of the Woods Property Owners Association & Francine MacDonald, OFAH

Discussion with OMBAAC

Luncheon speaker MP Ken Boshcoff

NOTO Update, Dave McLeod

Regional Director, MNR

Updates to Fire Code

MNR Future point of sale

MRT update on RBT future outlook

Destination Marketing Fund (DMF)

Log on to www.nwota.com for updated information.

BORDER ISSUE

The border continues to have a major impact on the economy of our industry and Northwestern Ontario.

After CBSA gained access to the FBI NCIC database in early 2001; the tourism industry has seen a major crackdown on visitors with minor criminal background. At last fall's AGM NWOTA members indicated 2006 was one of the worst years ever.

None of us want criminals in Canada but many of these visitors have been vacationing in Canada for years. Those being rejected at the Fort Frances/Rainy River border, and many times those with them, are spending their money in northern Minnesota (estimated at \$14 million CDN. in 2004) instead of Northwestern Ontario.

We have been told that Fort Frances is a "hot spot"(Honorable Nault/Coderre, Oct. 2002). Despite the request for data to compare Fort Frances with other Ontario border crossings showing statistics on "denied entry for minor criminal offenses" for the last 10 years, comprehensive reports have not been provided.

The KDCA/NWOTA Working Group was recently told that Fort Frances couldn't be compared with other Ontario ports because the visitors were different. We feel that is profiling.

In January NWOTA received another letter from Mr. Boshcoff's office and again from Honorable Stockwell Day. This was in response to a KDCA/NWOTA letter documenting 8 issues. Two issues were the focus of the letter.

- 1) Rehabilitation.
- 2) A system similar to the US 'Non-resident Alien Border Crossing Card' for US visitors wanting to vacation in Canada.

A Non-resident Alien Border Crossing Card allows Canadians with a criminal record to work and play in the United States.

Mr. Day has indicated that Mr. Richard Comerford, Regional Director General of CBSA's Northern Ontario Region would be available to meet with delegates from the area. KDCA/NWOTA is working with Mr. Boshcoff's office to arrange this meeting.

NWOTA will continue to urge the Federal government to look for alternative methods like the US border crossing card and ways to reduce processing time for those wanting to visit our area and are admissible to Canada.

One puzzling aspect of this issue is why the press has not documented the economic impact of the border to their communities and Northwestern Ontario. The International Falls Daily Journal recently published an investigative report documenting the border issue and the positive impact the Fort Frances port of entry is having on the economy of northern Minnesota.

Resource based tourism in North Western Ontario has a long way to go in communicating its economic importance to the communities in which we live, work and spend our hard earned money.

2006 Allied NWOTA Members

All Canada Show , Depere WI
Ph. (920) 983-9800

Business Development Bank of Canada,
Kenora, ON
Ph. (807) 467-3525

Cloverleaf Shop-Easy, Emo, ON
Ph. (807) 482-2599

Creative Print All Ltd., Steinbach, MB
Ph. (204) 326-1718

Custom House Currency Exchange,
Winnipeg, MB
Ph. (204) 987-6006

Dalseg's Trading Post, Nestor Falls, ON
Ph. (807) 484-2172

Dryden GM, Dryden, ON
Ph. (807) 223-7123

Falls Hardware Ltd., Nestor Falls, ON
Ph. (807) 484-2454

Fort Duty Free, Fort Frances, ON
Ph. (807) 274-7151

Fort Frances Chamber of Commerce,
Fort Frances, ON
Ph. (807) 274-5773

Fort Frances General Supply,
Fort Frances, ON
Ph. (807) 274-2971

Fort Frances Times Ltd., Fort Frances, ON
Ph. (807) 274-5373

Gill's Morson Marina, Morson, ON
Ph. (807) 488-5551

Green's Countrywide Furniture,
Fort Frances, ON
Ph. (807)274-3251

Meyers Norris Penny, Kenora, ON
Ph. (807)468-3338

Morson Shopping Centre, Morson, ON
Ph. (807) 488-5673

Nestor Falls Marine, Nestor Falls, ON
Ph. (807) 484-2134

Norlund Oil (2003) Ltd., Emo, ON
Ph. (807) 482-2680

Pardon Services Ent. MB, Winnipeg, MB
Ph. (807) 488-6350

**Peter Allison, Certified Management
Accountant,** Nestor Falls ON
Ph. (807) 484-2563

Pinewood Sports & Marine, Fort
Frances, ON
Ph. (807) 274-7737

The Standard Insurance Brokers,
Kenora, ON
Ph. (807) 468-3333

Tompkins Home Hardware, Emo, ON
Ph. (807) 482-2754

Please support the above businesses that support the NWOTA & the tourism industry

www.canadawelcomesyou.net

- ***What can I bring into to Canada?***
- ***What is prohibited from Canada?***
- ***What kind of identification is required when crossing the border into Canada?***
- ***What do I need to know when traveling with children?***
- ***Am I admissible to Canada?***
- ***What do I need to know about bringing Firearms across the border?***

- ***Log on to answers to all these questions and more!***

Developed by KDCA/NWOTA Working Group to keep visitors from the United States informed on crossing the border.

NOTO UPDATE

Submitted by Dave McLeod

Since the last NOTO election, changes have been made to the way the association will operate. NOTO is committed to keeping stakeholders informed by ensuring that the NOTO board moves towards a more effective manner of doing business, clarifying role responsibilities of the board members and staff & changing communication methods.

In saying that, there are many facets of each of the above.

The board recognizes that there is not a clearly established planning process in the organization. As you know that is a critical element in any organization's ability to move forward in a manner that is visible, accountable, etc. In January we introduced a planning framework that establishes a process for the board and staff to use. This framework will lead to NOTO establishing a broad based Strategic Plan that will guide the organization over a five year time frame. The process for the plan should start late next year. The board passed a motion accepting the framework, the philosophy, and the fact that a policy will be drafted and presented at the March board meeting. It is notable that we are now in stage four of this process in our action planning phase of our objectives.

We have clearly established that the BOARD establishes, monitors and approves plans for the attainment of yearly objectives. We have clearly established that the STAFF accepts these objectives and must develop the action plans for the attainment of these objectives.

Implementation is progressing well to date.

In addition to the above we had much discussion and eventually accepted the concept of establishing a set of "OPERATIONAL PRINCIPLES" that will guide us while we do business and in effect act as 'secondary goals' at all times. As with the planning framework, we will pass a policy in our March board meeting that sets the principles in policy and mandates their usage. The following is a list of the principles that will be expanded upon and distributed to the membership. The board must and will be held accountable to ensure that the organization is operating as per the principles!

- Leadership - NOTO will work in a manner at all times that
 - generates ideas
 - leads exercises
 - grows leaders
 - to be expanded upon
- Proactive – NOTO will endeavour to work in a proactive manner rather than a reactive manner.
- Partnerships, Excellence, Communication, Accountability, Equality, Meaningful, Professionalism and Goal Setting round out the list.

A complete package and policy will be forwarded in March.

Over time, the board hopes to ensure that these topics will be evident in our plans and actions of addressing our primary objectives. The organization should use the language in order that those with whom we interact will become aware of the manner in which we work, that which we believe in, and that which we stand for.

In late January, the board established five objectives that the organization will develop ACTION PLANS for in the hopes that the objectives will be achieved in a particular time frame. Staff are working on the action plans to bring to the board for approval. This is to occur in our February board meeting. In addition to action plans for the five "new" objectives, staff will bring plans forward for all other objectives of the organization. This is the most CRITICAL exercise of an organization in that it guides the direction, sets objectives for attainment in particular time frames, holds staff and the board accountable for work performed and objective attainment.

When these plans are approved by the board they will be monitored on a monthly basis. They will also be available to NOTO membership. NOTO should be proud of what it is doing and of how it is working to objective attainment!

The following topics are the basis for the five objectives established by the board;

1. Engage with regional, local and municipal government and associations
2. Increase membership
3. Resource based licensing
4. Border crossing
5. GST rebate

Objectives will be forwarded as it is stated for each of the above at a later date.

I am encouraged with the attitude of the board members and staff in respect to the above. I am hopeful that in the midst of much daily work to be accomplished we can always keep a focus on addressing the "moving forward" organizational issues.

Name, MP
Constituency office
Your town, Your province/territory
Postal code

Date

Dear Mr./Mrs.

As a constituent of yours and a hardworking member of the Canadian tourism industry, I am writing to express concern about the federal government's plan to eliminate the GST/HST Visitor Rebate Program (VRP).

The Conservative government has based its decision to eliminate the program on incomplete information about its potential impact on Canada's \$62.7 billion tourism industry and on the Canadian economy as a whole. This decision was made without consulting with an industry that keeps 1.6 million Canadians working, supports economic and community development in all regions—including your own riding—and generates an estimated \$15.3 billion a year in tax revenues, including a federal share of \$7.7 billion, money that supports a range of public policy priorities.

While there has been a solid case for keeping the VRP for conventions and group tours from the beginning, I am concerned about the repercussions of removing the program for individual travellers as well. By cancelling the individual VRP, while potentially maintaining the program for in-bound foreign tour and convention business, the government will create distortions and inequities in the foreign visitor market.

Leisure visitors may choose to book with foreign tour operators that would still be GST exempt rather than directly through Canadian businesses and internet sites, resulting in less revenue for tax-paying Canadian tourism organizations, while putting more dollars in the hands of foreign operators who pay no taxes to Canada.

Many conventions and trade shows are not designated "foreign conventions" *i.e.*, 75% foreign participants, and are therefore not eligible for the automatic GST exemption. If the government eliminates the individual VRP, these non-resident attendees and exhibitors at Canadian conventions will no longer be able to obtain a tax refund for their accommodation and eligible retail expenses.

Because a third of Canadian tourism revenues derive from spending by international visitors, the GST/HST Visitor Rebate Program was developed in the early 1990s to acknowledge tourism's status as an export industry, an industry which is typically exempt from value-added taxes like the GST in virtually all other countries. The program was designed to remove the GST/HST from the Canadian tourism equation for international visitors. Cancelling the program will arbitrarily revoke the tourism industry's export status, even though it continues to be a significant source of foreign currency revenue. Tourism is being singled out for different treatment than all other exports.

Canada would have the dubious distinction as being the only OECD member country to cancel a value added tax program.

The Visitor Rebate Coalition, a group of 14 national industry and business associations, including the Tourism Industry Association of Canada, Global Refund Canada and the Frontier Duty Free Association, has proposed that a new VRP become a self-regulated and financed industry program, subject to certification and audit by the appropriate federal agencies.

In light of the economic impact of its proposed cancellation, I ask that you support the maintenance of the GST/HST Visitor Rebate Program by expressing your views in caucus, by speaking out against it in the House of Commons and other venues, and by voting against any bill that seeks to eliminate it.

I look forward to the opportunity to meet with you at your earliest convenience to discuss the issue and address any questions you may have. I trust the small businesses, hoteliers and retailers that make up the tourism industry in **[your riding]** and beyond can count on your support in maintaining the GST/HST Visitor Rebate Program.

Yours sincerely,

Your name
Your title