

AGM Report

18





Vision

To be recognized as the leading strategic tourism partner by destinations in our region.



Message from the Board Chair

The Vision of RTO 9 says it all; “To be recognized as the leading strategic tourism partner by destinations in our region.” We are here to serve our Destinations.

In conjunction with our partners, RTO 9 has developed initiatives that have proven to resonate with our Destinations and assist them in growing their tourism revenues. The RTO is completely focussed on growing your business.

- RTO 9 has changed from a Marketing organization to a Management organization
- RTO 9 is the hub for gathering of data, trends and research
- RTO 9 supports Destination product development initiatives (new and enhanced)
- RTO 9 supports Destination initiatives through our Partnership Program

The Board of Directors are pleased with and confident in the staff team we have in place and are eager to see the positive impacts they will have this year and beyond. I encourage you to connect with the RTO 9 staff to discuss how your Destination or business can leverage the services and resources the RTO has to offer.

On a personal note, it has been my absolute pleasure to serve as the Board Chair for the last 2 years. The staff and the Board of Directors have done an amazing job in assisting with the growth and evolution of RTO 9, which is now recognized as setting the standard for RTO's in Ontario.

Warm regards,

Murray Matheson

Chair, RTO 9 – The Great Waterway

Message from the Executive Director

I would like to welcome you to the 2018 AGM. For the 2017/2018 fiscal year RTO 9 focused on partnerships/ collaboration and communications. With the re-launch of RTO 9's Industry newsletter we have been able to create an effective line of communications with our stakeholders.

RTO 9 was successful with their first TIPP application in 2017. Again, RTO 9 was able to bring together industry partners to collaborate on a fall/winter campaign that was targeted outside of the Province, to drive overnight stays to the region.

RTO 9 also focused on providing resources and tools that will assist both the organization and our stakeholders in making better informed decisions to grow their business and tourism for the region. This is being done through various means of research and data collection, as well as providing workshops.

Product development remains as one of our main areas of focus, with our first group of stakeholders attending 'Edge of the Wedge', in Newfoundland in October of 2017. RTO 9 will continue to look at innovative ways to assist the industry to develop new products for the region so we remain competitive domestically and globally in an ever-growing market.

Going forward, we will continue to position RTO 9 as your leader in regional tourism and we will continue to strengthen our relationships with our tourism industry and work collaboratively to provide products and services that will attract new visitors and encourage repeat visitation to South Eastern Ontario.

All of our efforts would not come to fruition without the support and guidance from our Board of Directors, Destination Advisory Committee and Tourism Advisory Committee. We are very thankful for all of the time and expertise that they dedicate to RTO 9.

Warm regards,

Bonnie Ruddock

Executive Director, RTO 9 – The Great Waterway



Organizational Structure

Vision

To be recognized as the leading strategic tourism partner by destinations in our region.

Guiding Principles

1. Every destination has an opportunity to prosper as a result of a collaborative and collective approach to tourism destination development and marketing.
2. Recognizing that not all destinations have been created equal and have the same needs, decisions will be made based on the best interest of the collective.
3. Engagement with, and input from tourism industry stakeholders and government will drive the Corporation's activities.
4. Destination Marketing Organizations (DMO's) Destination Marketing Programs (DMP's), Stakeholders and Municipalities play an important role and the Corporation will count on them to contribute to its collective efforts.
5. Recognizing the importance of the accommodations sector, the Corporation will strive to develop initiatives that stimulate overnight visitation.
6. The Corporation embraces the principle of balanced representation, where no one destination, organization or sector dominates the Corporation for its own purpose and / or gain.
7. The Corporation is committed to exceeding visitors' expectations, those who visit for pleasure or business for a day or for overnight through the delivery of excellent products, experiences and superior customer service.
8. The Corporation will maintain and support existing tourism brands and commitments within Region 9 that have established levels of awareness as a result of demonstrated past investments to destination marketing, and product development and, in reasonable practice as exercised by the Board of Directors from time to time, allocating its resources in a prioritized manner using these guiding principles:
 - i. Resources directed to existing brands where a destination marketing fee was in place (as defined by the Ministry of Tourism & Culture);
 - ii. Resources directed to brands that can demonstrate reasonable levels of tourism business and a core group of tourism businesses that generate the majority of their revenue from the visitor market;
 - iii. Resources directed to emerging destinations that offer potential to become more viable tourism destinations;
9. The Corporation shall from time to time, if and as required, develop, revise and implement its Vision Statement, Guiding Principles, Policy Statements, Rules, Regulations, Guidelines, and By-Laws in accordance with and subject to the Objects contained in the Letters Patent of the Corporation.

Mission

Fostering successful destinations in RTO 9 that set the standard in Ontario.

Board of Directors 2017-2018

RTO 9 is governed by a 13-member Board of Directors that oversees the annual Business Plan and assures fiscal responsibility for the organization. The Board is geographically represented across the region.

Executive Committee	Region
Murray Matheson, <i>Chair</i>	Kingston
Linda Wilson, <i>Vice Chair</i>	Cornwall & The Counties
Kathrine Christensen, <i>Treasurer</i>	Gananoque
Stephen Paul, <i>Past Chair</i>	Land O' Lakes

Directors	Region
Richard Allen	At Large
Sean Billing	At Large
Rob Kawamoto	Kingston
Megan Knott	Kingston
Trevor Norris	Bay of Quinte
Elizabeth Pilon	At Large
Bill Rogerson	Brockville
Carol Sudds	Leeds and Grenville
Lynn Sullivan	Prince Edward County

Tourism Advisory Committee	Region
Michelle Caron	1000 Islands
Julie Fossitt	City of Kingston
Sylvia Marino	NAV Centre
Steve Lawrence	Kingston by Bike
Jennifer Rushlow	City of Quinte West
Carol Sudds	1000 Islands Rockport Cruises

Destination Advisory Committee	Region
Ann Weir, Interim Chair	Rideau Heritage Route Tourism Association
Karen Palmer, Destination Development & Marketing Coordinator	Prince Edward County
Dug Stevenson, Executive Director	Bay of Quinte Tourism Council
Rob Plumley, Community Development Officer	Land O'Lakes Region
Rob Kawamoto, Executive Director	Tourism Kingston
Megan Knott, Executive Director	Kingston Accommodation Partners
Katherine Hobbs, Tourism Manager	Brockville & District Chamber of Commerce
Kevin Lajoie, Tourism Coordinator	Cornwall and The Counties
Kathrine Christensen, Executive Director	1000 Islands Accommodation Partners
Amy Kirkland, General Manager	1000 Islands Gananoque Chamber of Commerce

Operational Team

Bonnie Ruddock

Executive Director

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Mission

**Fostering successful
destinations in RTO 9
that set the standard
in Ontario.**

Snap Shot of Key Activities

Region 9 Regional Tourism Organization (RTO 9), operates under five pillars as outlined by the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport.

1. Governance and Administration
2. Marketing
3. Product Development
4. Investment Attraction
5. Workforce Development

Governance and Administration

Objective – To increase the flow and frequency of communications with our industry partners.

- Regular meetings were held with the Board of Directors, Tourism Advisory Committee and Destination Advisory Committee.
- Re-launch of RTO 9 Industry newsletter took place.
- RTO 9 maintained memberships in relevant sector industry associations with common goals and objectives to benefit all tourism businesses in the region.
- RTO 9 participates on a committee comprised of all other provincial Regional Tourism Organizations, as well as the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport.
- RTO 9 partnered (50/50) on 26 collaborative projects with tourism businesses across the region to advance the goals in the areas of Travel Media and FAM tours, Enhancement of Festivals & Events, Trade Shows, Bilingual Collateral and Tourism Ambassador Training. Additional funding through the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport supported these initiatives, totaling over \$469,202.00.

Marketing

Objective – To raise awareness that South Eastern Ontario (RTO 9) is a place that one can do all the things they love to do anywhere within the region during anytime of the year.

- Campaign theme for 2017/2018 was “Do the Things You Love.” The theme was integrated into all aspects of TGW’s consumer marketing efforts.
- RTO 9’s media efforts were a blended balance of experiences and destination focus.
- RTO 9 targeted the GTA, Ottawa, Montreal and Northern New York state with their marketing efforts, focusing on Connected Explorers, Memory Builders, Knowledge Seekers and Up and Coming Explorers.
- Increase in consumer traffic visits exceeding 315,066 in 2017/2018 compared to previous fiscal year at 305,000 visitors.
- In our 2017 fiscal year, our Facebook Followers increased from 17,557 to 21,283, Twitter Followers increased from 3,203 to 3,465, and our Instagram Followers increased from 1,785 to 2,228.
- Launched 7 sector videos (i.e. On the Water, Golf, Cherish Fall, Cycling, Embrace Winter, Flavours of South Eastern Ontario, Rideau Canal) on our YouTube channel which resulted in 124,100 views.
- Produced 8 Destination Video’s that will be used in future promotion of destinations in South Eastern Ontario.
- Consumer contesting continues to build TGW’s email newsletter database.

RTO 9’s full marketing plan is available on tourismtalk.ca, under the marketing tab.

Product Development

Objective – To provide industry stakeholders with the resources they need to grow their business, which will increase tourism receipts for the region.

- RTO 9 continues to contract the services of CRBE to gather monthly occupancy ADR, RevPAR and year over year accommodation data for analysis.
- RTO 9 commissioned a travel intention survey to be conducted in Quebec.
- In partnership with our destinations sensors were installed in high traffic areas to gather on-line to off-line statistics.
- A multi year research strategy was developed and phase one is being rolled out in 2018/2019.
- RTO 9/10/11, KAP and Tourism Kingston worked jointly to drive overnight stays in the region via Le Boat clientele.

Investment Attraction

Objective – To continue to support the efforts of Ontario East Economic Development Commission to attract new investors to the region.

- RTO 9 continues to serve on the Tourism Sector Committee of Ontario East Economic Development Commission (OEEDC).
- Two 'dragons' den' events were held (Ottawa and Toronto) where representatives from OEEDC had an opportunity to showcase available tourism investment properties in South Eastern Ontario to global investors.
- RTO 9 continues to present and participate in various panel discussions and summits across the region to update stakeholders on the initiatives and collaboration opportunities available.

Workforce Development

Objective – To provide training to assist tourism stakeholders in the region.

- RTO 9 hosted 13 workshops across South Eastern Ontario.
- Through St. Lawrence College, RTO 9 was able to provide 2 co-op students with a valuable workplace experience.
- RTO 8&9 in collaboration with the Ministry of Tourism, Culture & Sport hosted a Tourism Research Community of Practice meeting in Kingston.
- In partnership with OTEC, RTO 9 hosted 3 workshops across the region to discuss the workforce development challenges the tourism industry is facing.

RTO 9 works to support and grow tourism in South Eastern Ontario.



Financial Report



Region 9 Regional Tourism Organization

Schedule of Yearly Operating Revenues and Expenses
Year ended March 31, 2018

Revenues

Ministry of Tourism – Ontario Funding	1,724,207
Partnerships contributions	234,601
Total Revenue	\$1,958,808

Expenditures

Governance and operations

Salaries and benefits	133,038
Finance & administration	24,169
Governance	13,789
Overhead/Facilities	47,428
Travel	14,248
Industry relations/Stakeholder engagement	35,671
Information technology	87,057
	\$355,400

Product development

PKF – Accommodation tracking report	5,695
Conference Board of Canada – attraction tracking report	30,375
Visitor tracking	17,640
Travel intention surveys	66,840
Tui Le Boat	25,000
	\$145,550

Investment attraction

Ontario east involvement – Tourism investment sector team	1,398
Municipal engagements – speaking/information sessions	574
	\$1,972

Workforce development

Industry workshops/training	31,406
Programming	11,834
	\$43,240

Marketing

Salaries and benefits	60,412
Consumer marketing campaign	515,826
AOR fees	116,993
Public relations (curated services/FAM)	51,702
Social Media	29,347
OTMPC	105,760
TGW collateral materials	34,616
Content assets (photo/video/web hosting)	6,701
Website maintenance	21,200
	\$942,557

Partnerships funding

Salaries and benefits	14,000
Travel Media and FAM tours support	75,584
Enhancement of festivals and events	315,064
Tradeshows	14,002
Bilingual collateral	42,921
Tourism ambassador training	10,989
Total Expenditures	\$1,961,279

Summary

Total Revenue	1,958,808
Total Expenditures	1,961,279
Revenue over expenditures (expenditures over revenue) for the year	\$ (2,471)

Note 1 – Basis of Accounting

As defined in the operating agreement between the organization and the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport signed April 1, 2017, the schedule is prepared in accordance with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations.

The importance of tourism in South Eastern Ontario



7,798,500

visitors (2016)



\$817,003,000

in visitor spend (2016)

Visitors arriving from

**Ontario, USA, Overseas,
Other Canadian Provinces**



6,645

tourism related businesses
with the majority being
small and medium size



Power of Partnerships

RTO9 partners with Destination Ontario, Ontario's lead tourism marketer, to drive awareness and visitation to South Eastern Ontario. In 2017-18 Destination Ontario showcased South Eastern Ontario over 100 times through media and travel trade familiarization trips.

RTO9 has partnered with over 40 different stakeholders in South Eastern Ontario, leveraging tourism investments by \$1.3 million on key projects related to marketing, product development and workforce development. These projects have supported competitiveness, economic growth and collaboration in the region.

Tourism in Ontario and Canada



20.8 million

international overnight visitors
in Canada (2017)



2.8 million

international visitors came
to Ontario (2017)

\$5 billion

annually in tax revenues
for the Provincial Government



\$26.9 billion

in visitor spend (2016)



+144 million

visitors welcomed to Ontario (2016)

390,000

tourism related jobs
in Ontario



186,000

tourism related businesses
in Ontario

