

Going Places

Saskatchewan's Tourism Industry Newsletter

Fall 2018

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AND TOURISM
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CORRIDOR



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Cover Image

Near Outlook
Jeff Wizniak

Bookmark Industry Website

The new industry website, Industry.TourismSaskatchewan.com, is your one-stop site for the latest news and information from Tourism Saskatchewan and the province's tourism sector. You will find information on partnership opportunities, upcoming events, education and training programs and more.

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Remembering tourism friends



Darlene Friesen

Jason Peterson
(Photo courtesy of Into the Wild TV)

Saskatchewan's tourism sector was struck by the recent loss of two industry champions. Tourism Saskatchewan extends condolences to the families and friends of Darlene Friesen and Jason Peterson, whose contributions to tourism in Saskatchewan are deeply admired and appreciated.

Darlene Friesen

Darlene Friesen passed away suddenly on July 26, 2018. Her influence was felt across Saskatchewan through her work as Executive Director of the Saskatchewan Regional Parks Association, a position that she held since 2002. Additionally, she was secretary-treasurer for Memorial Lake Regional Park. Industry colleagues acknowledge her leadership, professionalism and immense pride in Saskatchewan's regional parks system and the communities that support them.

Jason Peterson

Jason Peterson was killed when his ultralight plane crashed near Grande Prairie, AB on July 31. He was 43. Peterson was an avid hunter and outfitter, and producer/host of *Into the Wild TV*. His adventures took him around the world, and into remote and rugged parts of northern Saskatchewan. He made friends wherever he travelled, and widely extended the invitation to discover Saskatchewan's remarkable fishing, hunting and outdoor experiences.



MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

Tourism Saskatchewan has a valuable partner in the Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada (ITAC). We were proud to play a role in the International Indigenous Tourism Conference that ITAC hosted on October 30-31 in Saskatoon. Delegates travelled from across Canada and beyond our borders to share ideas

and success stories, and acquire knowledge about market research, development opportunities and effective, strategic marketing. There was something for everyone – a variety of concurrent sessions offered advice for visitor-ready, market-ready and export-ready businesses.

Prior to the conference, a Saskatchewan Indigenous Tourism Planning Day was organized. This special assembly was dedicated to sharing information and highlighting opportunities for Indigenous tourism in our province. Tourism Saskatchewan appreciated the chance to present details about our programs and services. My colleagues and I enjoyed making connections with engaged operators and people who are driving exciting new developments and creating authentic, meaningful experiences that will enrich Saskatchewan's tourism offerings.

The International Indigenous Tourism Conference ended with a colourful award celebration that paid tribute to Canadian Indigenous experiences that have earned success in marketing, business improvement, adventure travel and cultural leadership. Four Saskatchewan awards were presented, and it was exciting to see Aski Holistic Adventures (Cumberland House), Bear Claw Casino & Hotel (White Bear First Nation), Chief Poundmaker Museum (Cut Knife) and Métis Cultural Days

(Saskatoon) honoured for their work. Photographs of the proud award recipients are on page 12.

The Saskatchewan Tourism Awards of Excellence are approaching a milestone anniversary. On April 11, 2019, the 30th annual award gala will be held in Saskatoon. It will be an occasion to celebrate impressive achievements in our industry, and a perfect time to introduce a new award. The Indigenous Tourism Experience Award will bring recognition to innovative operators, partners, businesses and organizations committed to excellence in the delivery of authentic Indigenous experiences. Tourism Saskatchewan considers it a privilege to administer the Saskatchewan Tourism Awards of Excellence and host the annual gala, and we encourage industry to submit their nominations by the January 25 deadline.

I had the privilege of attending the recent Canadian Tourism Awards Gala in Gatineau, Quebec. Scott and Theresa Reesor (Historic Reesor Ranch) and Tourism Saskatoon were recognized for exceptional work. The Reesors are passionate ambassadors for Saskatchewan and deeply committed to honouring and sharing our province's history. Tourism Saskatoon has a dynamic and innovative team of professionals that goes above and beyond to attract visitors, events and meetings to the city. The honours are well-deserved.

Mary Taylor-Ash

Historic Reesor Ranch and Tourism Saskatoon win Canadian Tourism Awards

It was a proud night for Saskatchewan when Canadian Tourism Awards were presented to Historic Reesor Ranch (Maple Creek) and Tourism Saskatoon (Saskatoon) at a gala celebration on November 28 in Gatineau, Quebec.

Historic Reesor Ranch received the Hilton Worldwide Small- or Medium-sized Business of the Year Award. Located high in the Cypress Hills, Historic Reesor Ranch has established a proud legacy during its 113-year history. The working guest ranch is a Canadian Signature Experience and is Saskatchewan's first ranch to be designated a Provincial Heritage Property.

Tourism Saskatoon, in collaboration with Tourism Victoria (BC) and Destination St. John's (NL) received recognition for a new initiative, *Cities in Sync*. Their efforts garnered the Marriott Hotels of Canada Innovator of the Year Award. *Cities in Sync* was designed to assist meeting planners, encouraging them to book a three-year rotation of meetings in Saskatoon, St. John's and Victoria and take advantage of incentives and benefits.

The Canadian Tourism Awards, presented by the Tourism Industry Association of Canada (TIAC) and *The Toronto Star*, recognize success, leadership and innovation in Canada's tourism industry, and honour those people, places, organizations and events that go above and beyond to offer superior visitor experiences to travellers in Canada.



Top: Historic Reesor Ranch
Bottom: Saskatoon

Indigenous Tourism Experience Award category added to the Saskatchewan Tourism Awards of Excellence

A new category in the Saskatchewan Tourism Awards of Excellence will publicly recognize a business, partnership, organization, event or attraction that incorporates Saskatchewan Indigenous culture, traditions and stories into its product offering.

The recipient of the Indigenous Tourism Experience Award will demonstrate a commitment to delivering authentic Indigenous experiences and working collaboratively to enhance the tourism landscape in Saskatchewan.

The Saskatchewan Tourism Awards of Excellence acknowledge exceptional contributions to the province's tourism sector. These industry awards honour individuals, businesses, communities and events that go above and beyond to provide great experiences and service.

Consider your own accomplishments or those of your peers and submit your nominations.

Awards are presented in 13 categories:

- Business of the Year Award
 - Over 20 Full-time Employees
 - Under 20 Full-time Employees
- Community Event of the Year Award
- Marquee Event of the Year Award
- Fred Heal Tourism Ambassador Award
- Gil Carduner Marketing Award
- Indigenous Tourism Experience Award – **NEW**
- Rookie of the Year Award
- Service Excellence Award
- Tourism Employer of the Year Award
- Tourism Employee of the Year Award
- Travel Media Award
- Tourism Builder Award

Visit Industry.TourismSaskatchewan.com to download the award nomination forms. Start your nominations early. Taking the time to provide clear, concise, well-crafted answers will

enhance your submission. Send your completed nomination forms, along with any supporting materials, such as images or video, to awards@tourismsask.com.

The deadline for nominations is January 25, 2019. If you have any questions about award categories or criteria, contact your local Tourism Saskatchewan Field Representative or Nancy Hubenig at 306-787-9844, nancy.hubenig@tourismsask.com.

The 30th annual Saskatchewan Tourism Awards of Excellence Gala will be celebrated at TCU Place in Saskatoon on April 11, 2019, in conjunction with the HOST Saskatchewan Conference.

TOP FIVE TIPS FOR SUBMITTING AN AWARD NOMINATION

1. CELEBRATE YOUR ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Compete on the provincial stage for recognition as one of Saskatchewan's top tourism businesses. Peer recognition can be important to your future success and can help build credibility with your customers.

2. PROMOTE YOUR BUSINESS

Award winners will experience direct marketing benefits from Tourism Saskatchewan. Your business will be profiled in *Going Places*, media releases, online and other promotions.

3. INSPIRE YOUR TEAM

Produce a show-stopping entry and share the experience with your team. Employees will feel a sense of pride working for a business that has received such an honour.

4. RETAIN AND ATTRACT TOP TALENT

A win can motivate staff and boost morale. The accolades will also make your company more attractive to potential hires and new recruits.

5. BENCHMARK YOUR BUSINESS

The award application process will provide you with the chance to look at your business from a different perspective and compare yourself to your competitors. An in-depth analysis of your current business practices could lead to new opportunities.

Mark your calendar for the HOST Saskatchewan Conference – April 11

The 2019 HOST Saskatchewan Conference will take place on April 11 at TCU Place in Saskatoon. The day-long forum will provide delegates with engaging presentations and valuable networking opportunities.

The 30th annual Saskatchewan Tourism Awards of Excellence Gala will be celebrated that evening.

The full agenda will be posted on Industry.TourismSaskatchewan.com as sessions and presenters are confirmed. Watch upcoming *Industry Updates* for additional details. For more information about the HOST Saskatchewan Conference, contact Nancy Hubenig at 306-787-9844, nancy.hubenig@tourismsask.com.





MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Members of Tourism Saskatchewan's Board of Directors are spread across the province, from as far south as Regina to the northern communities of Green Lake and Flying Dust First Nation.

At least four times a year, we meet face-to-face. These assemblies are valuable opportunities for board members to become better acquainted with each other and direct our full attention to tourism matters. Meetings are often scheduled in conjunction with industry events and enable us to spend time with the people who drive tourism in Saskatchewan.

In September, the Board of Directors met in North Battleford, where we had the pleasure of welcoming local operators to a Tourism Talks event. Tourism Saskatchewan hosts its series of Tourism Talks in different communities throughout Saskatchewan. Attendees include local operators, as well as representatives of economic development organizations, civic and municipal governments, nearby First Nations, and other parties committed to tourism growth and advancement.

Our visit helped us gain a better appreciation of the tourism assets in The Battlefords region and the work that is underway to develop,

promote and deliver great visitor experiences. For more on Tourism Talks, turn to page 9.

My colleagues and I are pleased to welcome Chief Jeremy Norman, who recently began his term on the Board of Directors. Chief Norman brings expertise and skills that will benefit Tourism Saskatchewan and the industry, and will be an asset at the board table.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I extend heartiest congratulations to Tourism Saskatchewan's Ready to Work (RTW) Tourism Careers team upon receiving the Premier's Award for Excellence in the Public Service. Recipients Lynne Kennedy, Carol Ingell, Darrell Noakes, Lendee Wiebe and Cindy Wright are with Tourism Saskatchewan's education branch, the Saskatchewan Tourism Education Council in Saskatoon. They certainly deserve recognition for their work in delivering the renowned RTW program and helping people transition to fulfilling employment. Read about their efforts on page 9.

Norm Beug

Chief Jeremy Norman joins Board of Directors



Tourism Saskatchewan welcomes Chief Jeremy Norman to its Board of Directors. He is Chief of Flying Dust First Nation, near Meadow Lake, and has been involved with band administration for nearly 20 years. Chief Norman is active in the tourism industry as a partner in Tawaw Outfitters/cabins, located in Meadow Lake Provincial Park.

Best wishes and gratitude are extended to outgoing board member Lawrence Joseph.

Chief Jeremy Norman

Take advantage of free operator listings on TourismSaskatchewan.com

Saskatchewan tourism operators, including businesses, attractions, accommodations, campgrounds, communities, etc., are encouraged to take advantage of FREE listings on TourismSaskatchewan.com.

Extensive customer research of key Saskatchewan tourism markets revealed that an overwhelming majority of travellers use online sources to find information and plan their vacations. Web, mobile and social media are now the most used and preferred information and search methods.

Ensure that your Tourism Profile is up-to-date. For changes to current web listings, contact Tourism Saskatchewan at 1-877-237-2273 or information.updates@tourismsask.com.

For more information about Tourism Profiles, contact Kathy Rosenkranz at 306-787-2312, kathy.rosenkranz@tourismsask.com.

Tourism Saskatchewan hosts content collection FAM in Prince Albert National Park



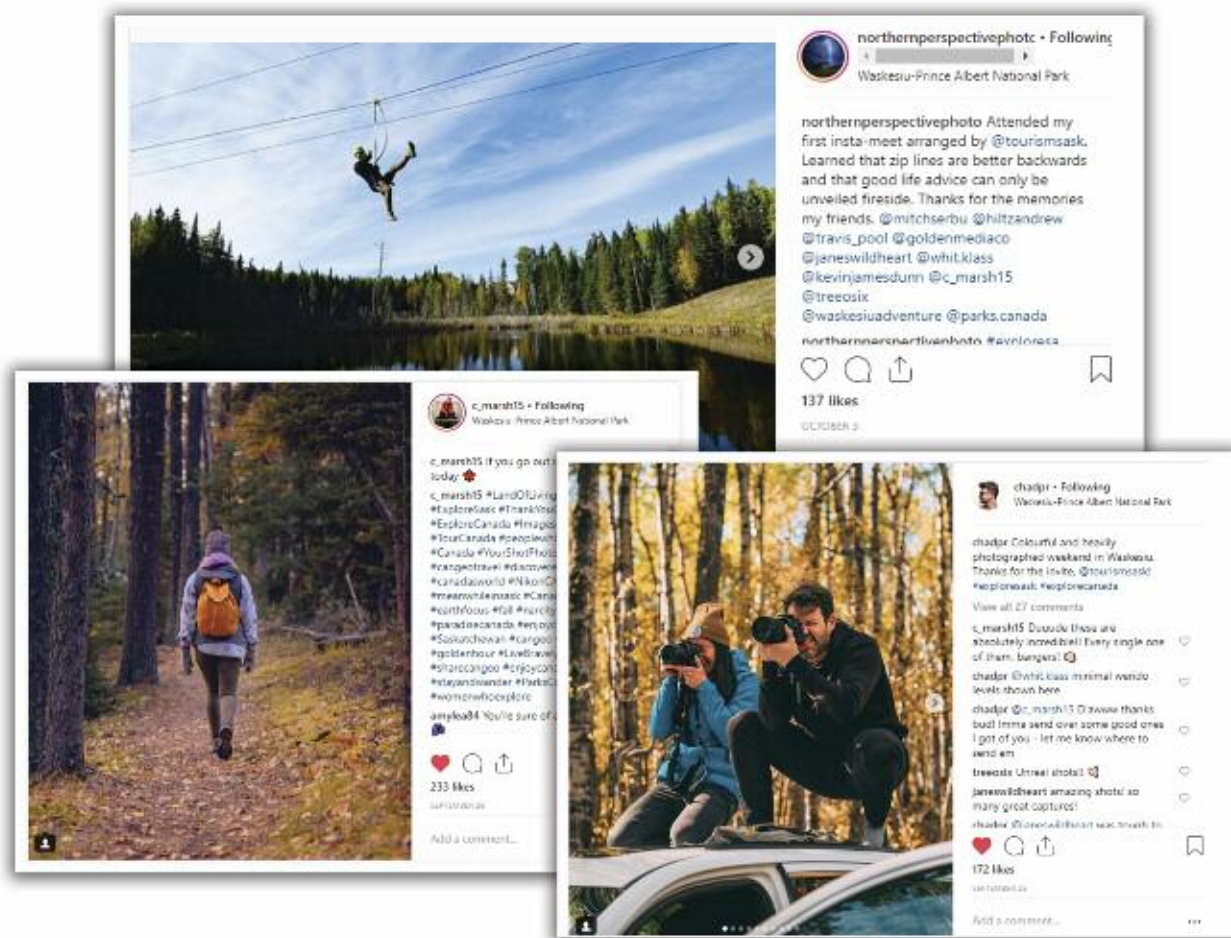
Beaver Glen Campground



Narrows Peninsula Trail



Namekus Lake



Tourism Saskatchewan has a longstanding tradition of hosting familiarization (FAM) tours. Guests have often included travel writers, outdoor media personalities and their production crews, and international travel trade representatives. A digital-first focus and need for fresh compelling content on consumer channels presents opportunities to build on the successful FAM tour model.

In September, a content collection FAM introduced five travel influencers to new adventures in Prince Albert National Park (PANP). Tourism Saskatchewan's Digital Marketing Consultants Travis Pool and Mitch Serbu, along with Content Creation Specialist Andrew Hiltz hosted these guests:

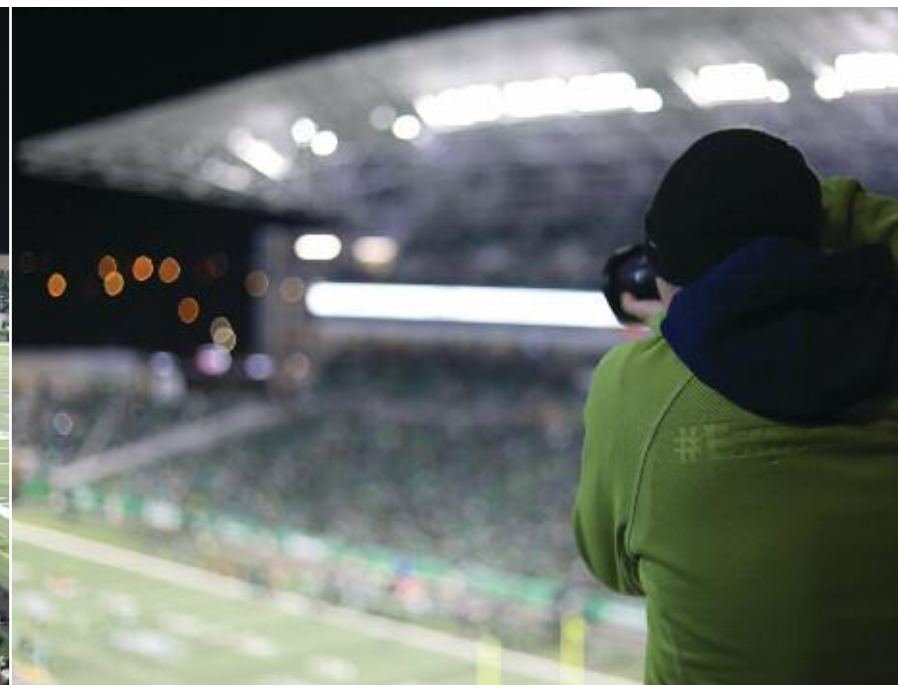
- Kevin Dunn – @saskatchewanwanderer (28,100 followers)
- Dean Johnson – @northernperspectivephoto (1,386 followers)
- Whitney Klassen – @whit.klass (6,413 followers)
- Casey Marshal – @c_marshall15 (1,988 followers)
- Chad Reynolds – @chadpr (1,750 followers)
- Carolyn Wensley – @janeswildheart (1,762 followers)

Short- and long-term benefits ranged from multiple Instagram stories shared during and after the trip to an enhanced inventory of impressive photographs and video highlighting the fall season in PANP.

Tourism Saskatchewan shares third-party or user-generated content (UGC) on its social media channels and in digital marketing initiatives. Valuable relationships have been established with talented influencers, from within and outside of the province, whose posts match the Saskatchewan tourism brand and reach key target audiences.

The recent content collection FAM engaged an enthusiastic group of Saskatchewan ambassadors, introduced them to new experiences, and provided exciting discoveries that will have a lasting impact on their travel storytelling.

Tourism Saskatchewan engages Saskatchewan Roughrider fans through partnership with the team



Game-day video captures the spirit of Saskatchewan Roughriders fans

Saskatchewan's compelling tourism brand is built on three pillars: 1) Land and Sky; 2) Time and Space; and 3) Community. When it comes to storytelling, "community" is a common theme that speaks to Saskatchewan's renowned hospitality and deep pride-of-place that residents feel and visitors come to understand.

Arguably, nothing speaks to the third pillar louder than the cheers of Saskatchewan Roughrider fans, which echo throughout Canada and beyond.

Tourism Saskatchewan and the Saskatchewan Roughriders recognized that the two brands are a natural fit and entered into a four-year partnership, from 2017-2020, to cultivate brand alignment.

The collaboration broadened opportunities to promote Saskatchewan tourism experiences and engage the widespread network of Rider fans.

Tourism Saskatchewan's content collection schedule included conducting game-day interviews with fans and capturing video of imaginative displays of Rider Pride. Two videos were created from the authentic and entertaining fan stories interwoven with fast-action game footage. The videos were posted on Tourism Saskatchewan's online channels, as well shared among the team's social media followers. This additional exposure saw Facebook views triple and engagement on Twitter increase four-fold.

Check out the videos on [Facebook.com/TourismSaskatchewan](https://www.facebook.com/TourismSaskatchewan).

ExploreSask Photo Contest showcases impressive talent and images

Tourism Saskatchewan extends congratulations to the winners of the 2018 ExploreSask Photo Contest. The competition, launched in June, received a record 3,400 entries by the September 15 submission deadline.

A new category, titled *Wildlife*, was added to the contest this year. Photographers were invited to submit their images of Saskatchewan's wild game and bird species.

A panel of judges selected the winning photograph in each category, along with additional photographs that merited honourable mention. Once again, the impressive quality of the entries presented judges with a challenge. The selected photographs capture the essence of Saskatchewan – its extraordinary natural beauty, breathtaking landscapes, unique travel experiences, and the remarkable spirit of its people.

Visit TourismSaskatchewan.com/PhotoContest to view the category winners and honourable mentions.

Grand Prize Winner:
Colleen Edwards, Herbert, SK

Events and Festivals
Winner: Colleen Edwards, Herbert, SK
Honourable Mention: Vasya Omelchuk, Lloydminster, SK

Outdoor Fun
Winner: Colleen Edwards, Herbert, SK
Honourable Mentions: Nicholas Garbruch, Saskatoon, SK; Tracy Kerestesh, Melville, SK; Dan Parsons, Lumsden, SK; Darcy Senft, Saskatoon, SK; Julie Worfolk, Eston, SK

Park Adventures
Winner: Andrew Marshall, Regina, SK

Prairie Life

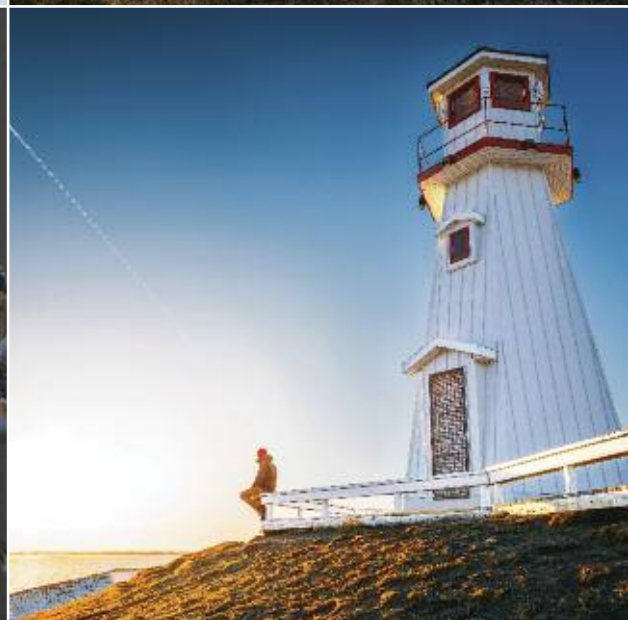
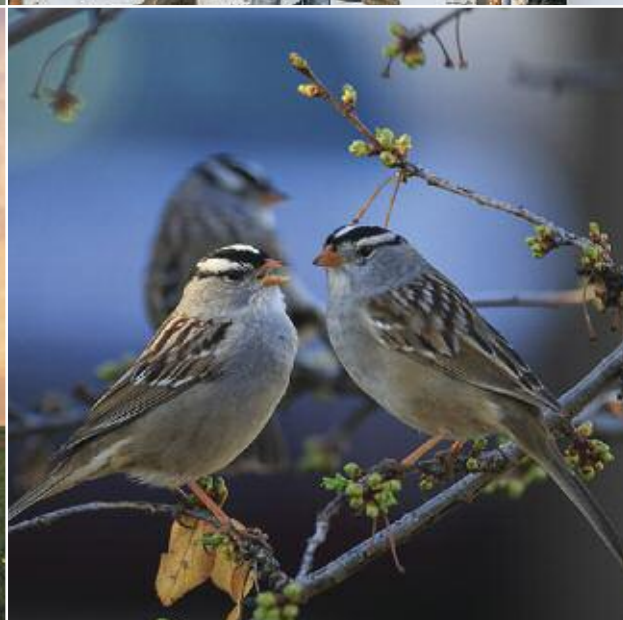
Winner: Herry Himanshu, Regina, SK
Honourable Mentions: Scott Aspinall, Pilot Butte, SK; Brendon Fidek, Invermay, SK; Lindsay Haubrich, Herbert, SK; Herry Himanshu, Regina, SK; Tracy Kerestesh, Melville, SK; Mickey Watkins, Aylesbury, SK (two photos)

Wildlife

Winner: Hanna Walczykowski, Regina, SK
Honourable Mentions: Colleen Edwards, Herbert, SK; Richard Main, Thunder Bay, ON; Mickey Watkins, Aylesbury, SK; Emery Wolfe, Regina, SK

Woods and Water

Winner: Vasya Omelchuk, Lloydminster, SK
Honourable Mentions: Dale Boan, Saskatoon, SK; Brenda Davis, Tisdale, SK; Lisa Rachul, Saskatoon, SK



Top row, left to right: Colleen Edwards (Grand Prize Winner/Outdoor Fun); Colleen Edwards (Events and Festivals); Andrew Marshall (Park Adventures)
Bottom row, left to right: Herry Himanshu (Prairie Life); Hanna Walczykowski (Wildlife); Vasya Omelchuk (Woods and Water)

Ready to Work honoured with Premier's Award for Excellence in the Public Service

Tourism Saskatchewan is proud to acknowledge its Ready to Work (RTW) Tourism Careers team – Lynne Kennedy, Carol Ingell, Darrell Noakes, Lendee Wiebe and Cindy Wright – with the Saskatchewan Tourism Education Council (STEC), based in Saskatoon. The team was presented with the Premier's Award for Excellence in the Public Service at a celebration in Regina on November 22.

Ready to Work is a career awareness, skills development and transition to employment program that assists individuals in finding long-term, rewarding careers in the tourism and hospitality sector. The program has a 25-year history of success. More than 5,600 participants have enrolled in RTW training and mentoring, achieving an average completion rate of 85 per cent. Over 80 per cent have found meaningful employment or returned to school. The program has been delivered in more than 50 Saskatchewan communities and has involved a number of First Nations.

"As an organization, we know about the great work performed by this team and the impact that they have on the lives of residents of our province," Mary Taylor-Ash, Tourism Saskatchewan CEO, said. "This government-wide recognition further highlights that the work of this team makes a tremendous difference. Congratulations to our colleagues in Saskatoon."



Back: Carol Lumb, Cindy Wright, Darrell Noakes, Lendee Wiebe, Carol Ingell
Front: Cam Swan, Deputy to the Premier and Cabinet Secretary; Honourable Gene Makowsky, Minister Responsible for Tourism Saskatchewan; Honourable Gord Wyant, Deputy Premier; Lynne Kennedy; Dr. Louise Greenburg, Premier's Awards Advisory Committee; Honourable Nadine Wilson, Provincial Secretary; Mary Taylor-Ash, Tourism Saskatchewan CEO

Tourism Talks hosted in North Battleford

Tourism Saskatchewan hosted a Tourism Talks assembly on September 11 at the Dekker Centre for Performing Arts in North Battleford. More than a dozen tourism operators and stakeholders participated in the day-long forum.

Tourism Saskatchewan Board Chair, Norm Beug, opened the meeting with greetings from the organization. CEO Mary Taylor-Ash introduced the agenda and shared objectives for the series of meetings across the province. Tourism Talks are designed to:

- 1) foster industry relationships and partnerships;
- 2) support tourism growth through education and collaboration; and
- 3) increase awareness of Saskatchewan tourism products and experiences.

Tourism Saskatchewan professionals were present and spoke to the programs and services offered to industry. A group activity identified tourism assets in The Battlefords and initiated conversations about collaborative opportunities to market the region and increase visitation.

Delegates recognized value in the networking opportunities, and in meeting face-to-face to discuss issues and explore future partnerships.

Tourism Saskatchewan extends thanks to the local tourism operators and representatives who attended Tourism Talks.



2019 Saskatchewan Fishing and Hunting Map promotes outdoor adventure

The 2019 Saskatchewan Fishing and Hunting Map is fresh from the printer and available for distribution. Introduced in 2018, the map is a popular conversation-starter at outdoor adventure tradeshows and marketplaces.

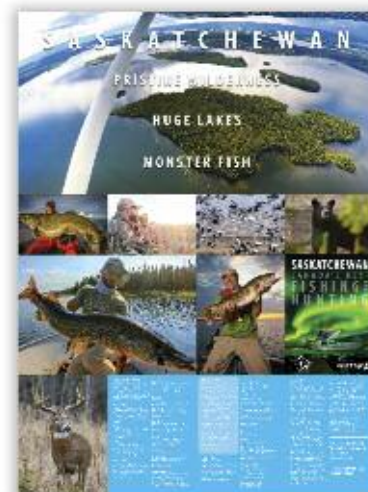
It measures 56 cm (22 in.) x 76 cm (30 in.) but folds neatly into a compact, 16-panel resource that offers quick facts and information about Saskatchewan's world-class fishing and hunting experiences. Impressive photographs highlight the province's pristine wilderness, healthy wild game and bird populations, and monster fish common to Saskatchewan lakes.

Informational copy includes season dates, species detail, requirements for licence purchases, and rules and regulations concerning border crossing and firearms import.

Opposite to the promotional copy and photographs is a map that identifies the locations of 185 Saskatchewan licensed outfitters. A corresponding index categorizes fishing and hunting outfitters (some appear in both sections) and lists the available species.

The colourful, eye-catching piece is easy to transport to tradeshows, offers quick reference to Saskatchewan's fishing and hunting experiences, and gives interested hunters and anglers a colourful take-away to assist them with their travel planning.

To order your copy of the 2019 Saskatchewan Fishing and Hunting Map, contact Patti Peesker at 306-787-2420, patti.peesker@tourismsask.com.



Selling Saskatchewan

Tourism Saskatchewan partners with TIAC to tap China's travel market

China is a strong travel market for Canada. It is the nation's largest source of travellers from the Asia-Pacific region and Destination Canada's second largest overseas market. A record of 682,000 arrivals in 2017 was 12 per cent higher than the previous year.

The market is significant, with almost 11 million Chinese long-haul pleasure travellers intending to visit Canada in the next two years. Several factors account for the growth – a favourable exchange rate, increased air capacity and a growing population of Chinese Canadians, resulting in more trips to Canada to visit friends and relatives.

China is currently a developmental market for Tourism Saskatchewan. Focus has been in travel trade opportunities and, to some extent, travel media. A new partnership between Tourism Saskatchewan and the Tourism Industry Association of Canada (TIAC) will create greater opportunities to attract Chinese travellers.

"The potential to increase visitation from China to Saskatchewan definitely exists," Jonathan Potts, Tourism Saskatchewan Executive Director of Marketing and Communications, said. "Direct flights to Calgary work in our favour, and we have soft adventure experiences that a growing number of Millennial independent travellers are seeking. Furthermore, compression issues in Alberta and British Columbia have Chinese tour operators looking for new destinations to introduce to their clients."

The agreement with TIAC outlines a number of key tactics, including developing messaging and content that articulates Saskatchewan's tourism brand. Partnered activities will begin in the New Year and will include China-readiness training for tourism operators. A co-ordinated Chinese tour operator FAM and the creation of resources, such as Saskatchewan itineraries and a Saskatchewan travel guide for the Chinese market, are also planned.

The partnership includes assessment of Tourism Saskatchewan's efforts in this market.

TRAVEL MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS



Tourism Saskatchewan hosts travel writers from Canada, France and the U.K.

Tourism Saskatchewan participates in GoMedia Canada Marketplace and Pre-tour

Tourism Saskatchewan regularly attends the GoMedia Canada Marketplace, organized by Destination Canada (DC). The event is an opportunity for provincial, territorial and regional tourism organizations to network with top Canadian and international travel media and influencers. At the 2018 marketplace in Calgary on October 1-3, Tourism Saskatchewan held 32 appointments with travel writers, editors and DC representatives from Canada, Germany, the U.K. and U.S. The marketplace was an opportunity to renew relationships and forge new connections with influential media.

Prior to the marketplace, GoMedia Pre-tours were hosted across Canada. Tourism Saskatchewan welcomed five visiting travel writers on a five-day FAM titled *Wandering the Wilds of Northern Saskatchewan*.

The guests included David Webb (Canada) – writer and editor, *Explore Magazine*; Alexandra Pope (Canada), Digital Editor, *Canadian Geographic Travel*; John Zada (Canada), freelance writer, photographer and author; Marie Dagman (France), freelance journalist; and Edward Aves (U.K.), freelance writer and editor.

An itinerary was planned that began at Wanuskewin Heritage Park, near Saskatoon. From there, the tour headed into northern Saskatchewan. Time spent in Prince Albert National Park enabled the guests to explore the ecology of this transition zone between aspen parkland and boreal forest.

In Missinipe, the schedule included fishing, a floatplane tour, visit to Stanley Mission, where the group met with local Indigenous craftspeople, and a boat tour along the Churchill River.

Sure-Shot Game Calls hosts outdoor media in North Battleford

Tourism Saskatchewan renewed a relationship with Sure-Shot Game Calls at the Professional Outdoor Media Association Conference, held in June in Lincoln, Nebraska. An outcome of that meeting was the popular five-day Sure-Shot Game Calls Wingshooting media event, held in North Battleford on September 24-28.

"This was our second time hosting the largest North American waterfowl media conference in Saskatchewan," Charlie Holder, President and CEO of Sure-Shot Game Calls, said. "It is fitting to have the largest gathering of waterfowl media in a location that sees the most concentrated waterfowl populations. It's the perfect reunion of wildfowl, corporate sponsors, and outdoor media in the best location at just the right time."

Participants represented networks and publications, such as *Wildfowl Magazine*, Ducks Unlimited, Women's Outdoor News, Sporting Dog Adventures TV, *American Waterfowler*, and others.

Tourism Saskatchewan provided investment through its Travel Media Program. The event attracted sponsors, such as Remington Arms Company and Polaris, with Legendary Northway Outfitters Ltd. providing outfitting services.

Japanese tour operators invited to explore Saskatchewan



Visiting receptive tour operators cruise the South Saskatchewan River with Prairie River Cruises



Exploring Prince Albert National Park with Sundogs Excursions

Tourism Saskatchewan's long-standing relationship with Destination Canada (DC) yields valuable exposure in international markets. The benefits of this partnership were evident during a familiarization (FAM) tour in September that hosted Japanese receptive tour operators (RTOs). They represented tour companies that serve Asian markets – JTB International (Canada) Ltd., H.I.S. Canada Inc., Nippon Travel Agency Canada Ltd., Maple Fun Tours Ltd., and Kintetsu International Express (Canada) Inc.

Additional guests included Chiho Anami, DC Manager of Travel Trade, and Chie Katayama, freelance travel writer. Katayama was on assignment to capture content for use in training resources that deepen knowledge about a destination and assist in developing travel itineraries. "It is crucial to educate RTOs and provide them with a good understanding of the tourism products and program offerings available for itinerary building," Anami said.

A goal for the tour was to provide the visiting RTOs with first-hand knowledge of awe-inspiring cultural experiences, as well as a taste of Saskatchewan's culinary scene. A five-day itinerary introduced the group to tourism operators and experiences in Saskatoon, Prince Albert National Park, Manitou Beach and Regina.

"Japan is a promising market and its citizens are avid travellers; however, few are familiar with Saskatchewan," Jonathan Potts, Tourism Saskatchewan Executive Director of Marketing and Communications, said. "Tourism Saskatchewan appreciated the opportunity to partner with Destination Canada in hosting Japanese receptive tour operators. The FAM was an example of industry partners collectively showcasing authentic, unconventional locations and treating influential travel professionals to exciting new discoveries."

FAM tours are made possible through industry collaboration. Tourism Saskatchewan acknowledges all of the participating industry partners. Special thanks is extended to Tourism Saskatoon, Sundogs Excursions, Wanuskewin Heritage Park, Black Fox Farm & Distillery, Prairie River Cruises, Western Development Museum, Manitou Springs Resort & Mineral Spa, and Over the Hill Orchards for going above and beyond to make the tour a success.

What are receptive tour operators?

Receptive tour operators (RTOs) are influential brokers of tour services/packages. Considered destination specialists, they share their knowledge about a particular place (province, territory or country) with international tour wholesalers/operators. RTOs represent a wide range of products, itineraries and expertise, and are part of a vast network of travel influencers. Many wholesalers/operators will only work with RTOs and avoid dealing directly with tourism businesses. Establishing relationships with RTOs is beneficial to expanding a destination's profile in markets worldwide.

In Development

International Indigenous Tourism Conference hosted in Saskatoon



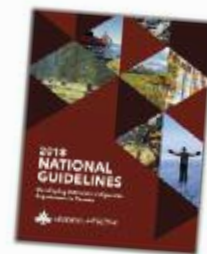
International Indigenous Tourism Conference Grand Entry (Photo provided by Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada, Neil Zeller Photography)

Tourism Saskatchewan was a proud sponsor of the 2018 International Indigenous Tourism Conference, held for the first time in Saskatchewan on October 30-31 in Saskatoon. The annual conference is organized by the Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada (ITAC), in partnership with various regional Indigenous tourism associations and provincial and destination marketing organizations. The assembly attracts delegates from across Canada and beyond the nation's borders. This year, representatives from as far away as Colombia, Australia and China attended the event.

A pre-conference Saskatchewan Indigenous Tourism Planning Day on October 29 brought together more than 150 Indigenous tourism operators and stakeholders who are an important part of Saskatchewan's tourism industry. The day-long agenda included a Tourism Saskatchewan presentation that summarized research and key travel markets for the province, education and training opportunities, and programs that support tourism growth.

The two-day conference featured an impressive lineup of speakers and panelists. Break-out sessions provided value to tourism businesses at various stages of development – visitor-ready, market-ready and export-ready. Updates from ITAC shared timely research, outlined support programs for business and industry growth, and addressed working with national and international partners. A session introducing ITAC's 2018 *National Guidelines* demonstrated how to use the comprehensive resource that includes a self-assessment guide and checklists. The document can be accessed online at

indigenoustourism.ca/corporate/national-guidelines/.



A highlight of the conference was the Indigenous Tourism Awards celebration. Four awards were presented to Saskatchewan Indigenous tourism businesses. Tourism Saskatchewan extends congratulations to the award recipients.

SASKATCHEWAN INDIGENOUS EXPERIENCE AWARD – INDOOR



Chief Poundmaker Museum (Cut Knife)
(Left to right): Keith Henry (ITAC), Brian Tootoosis, Milton Tootoosis, Eric Tootoosis, Alvin Baptiste (Chief Poundmaker Museum), Norie Quintos (National Geographic Travel Media)

SASKATCHEWAN INDIGENOUS EXPERIENCE AWARD – OUTDOOR



Aski Holistic Adventures (Saskatchewan River Delta, Cumberland House)
(Left to right): Norie Quintos (National Geographic Travel Media), Michela Carrière (Aski Holistic Adventures), Keith Henry (ITAC)

SASKATCHEWAN INDIGENOUS LODGING AWARD



Bear Claw Casino & Hotel (White Bear First Nation)
(Left to right): Norie Quintos (National Geographic Travel Media), Ella Redwood (Bear Claw Casino), Keith Henry (ITAC)

SASKATCHEWAN INDIGENOUS ARTIST/EVENT AWARD



Métis Cultural Days (Saskatoon)
(Left to right): Norie Quintos (National Geographic Travel Media), Shirley Isbister (Métis Nation Saskatchewan, Métis Days Festival), Keith Henry (ITAC)

Partners plan for 2020 opening of Saskatchewan's first Indigenous tourism corridor

Christian Boyle is a familiar face in tourism circles, having worked for Lake Diefenbaker Tourism, Whitecap Development Corporation and other organizations before launching his consulting firm, Glyph Creative Strategy. He is currently working with three partners in the Saskatoon area – Beardy's & Okemasis Cree Nation, Whitecap Dakota First Nation and Wanuskewin Heritage Park – on a plan for Saskatchewan's first Indigenous tourism corridor. Boyle took time from his busy schedule to share information about the project with Tourism Saskatchewan.

What triggered the concept for an Indigenous tourism corridor?

"It started at Whitecap Dakota First Nation with conversations about planning resort products while the new Dakota Dunes Hotel is under construction. The hotel complements the Dakota Dunes Golf Links and Casino, and presents an opportunity to appeal not just to the domestic market, but export markets, too. We recognized the potential to develop a four-season resort that would provide visitors with a variety of authentic Indigenous experiences that they could book in advance. It occurred to me that Wanuskewin Heritage Park already does some of this work, so we approached their team about packaging experiences. When I began working with Beardy's & Okemasis Cree Nation on implementing their tourism development plan, I saw a natural fit with what Wanuskewin and Whitecap were doing. The three are close enough to package tour products and linked by shared history, by connections to the South Saskatchewan River, and by the Trans Canada Trail (The Great Trail). Collectively, we came up with the idea of an Indigenous tourism corridor and the three partners signed an MOU."

What are some of the experiences in development?

"At Whitecap, we connected with the community and looked at what was viable for experience development. Equestrian activities, such as horseback tours, were suggested and cultural experiences were discussed. There will be opportunities to take visitors onto the land, have them speak to Elders and learn about Dakota culture.

Wanuskewin is refining some of its offerings, while undergoing expansion and preparing the land for the return of Plains bison. At Beardy's, the focus is on developing arts-related and cultural experiences, along with high-end camping at Fort Carlton. Land has been leased adjacent to the fort, where lodges will accommodate group gatherings. Evening performances will include commissioned plays that tell the stories of people from



Government of Canada announcement of support for Indigenous tourism corridor (Left to right) Darrell Balkwill, Whitecap Development Corporation; Councillor Kevin Seesequasis, Beardy's & Okemasis Cree Nation; Christian Boyle, Glyph Creative Strategy; Chief Darcy Bear, Whitecap Dakota First Nation; The Honourable Mélanie Joly, Minister of Tourism, Official Languages and La Francophonie; Tara Janzen, Candace Wasacase Lafferty, Andrew McDonald, Wanuskewin Heritage Park

Beardy's & Okemasis Cree Nation – the signing of Treaty 6, the Cree contribution to the Riel Resistance, the burning of the Duck Lake residential school, and more. There is also work on creating an extensive trail network at Beardy's and enhancing trails at Wanuskewin and Whitecap."

When will the Indigenous tourism corridor officially begin welcoming visitors?

"We are looking to have this all launch in the first quarter of 2020 – that is when the hotel will be opening. The partners are working on training that will assist with planning and developing experiences. We will be doing extensive testing of the experiences prior to the official launch. All of the different components – research, engineering, construction, marketing, communications – all of this has to come together before 2020."

On October 30, the Government of Canada announced its \$600,000 investment, through Western Economic Diversification Canada, in the Indigenous tourism corridor. Additionally, a commitment of \$80,825 was made to Meadow Lake Tribal Council to develop Indigenous tourism in the Meadow Lake area.

Turn to page 14 for details about Heritage Interpreter training for experiences along the Indigenous tourism corridor.

Scotties Tournament of Hearts returns to Moose Jaw in 2020

Tourism Saskatchewan is proud to sponsor the 2020 Scotties Tournament of Hearts (Scotties), which returns to Moose Jaw for the second time in five years. The tournament will be played at Mosaic Place in Moose Jaw, from February 14-23, 2020. The annual Scotties sees the top women's teams from each province compete for the national title and the chance to represent Canada at the women's world curling championship.

Event Hosting Program open for submissions

Tourism Saskatchewan reminds communities or organizations hosting tourism events to submit their application to the Event Hosting Program by February 28, 2019. Funding is available in four categories: Community Annual Tourism Events, Marquee Annual Tourism Events, National and International Tourism Events and Special Tourism Projects. To inquire about the program or application process, contact Tyler Lloyd at 306-787-5525, tyler.lloyd@tourismsask.com.

STEC News

Customizing *emerit* Heritage Interpreter training to tell Saskatchewan stories

The Saskatchewan Tourism Education Council (STEC) has a record of success with customizing programs to meet the needs of clients. STEC's involvement has helped large institutions, such as the University of Saskatchewan, enhance customer service and develop in-house training to meet unique needs. It has assisted in raising service standards and quality, evident in its work with Saskatoon's taxi industry.

In July, STEC was approached by Glyph Creative Strategy, a Saskatoon-based company working with Beatty's & Okemasis Cree Nation, Wanuskewin Heritage Park and Whitecap Dakota First Nation on creating Saskatchewan's first Indigenous tourism corridor. The project will link tourism experiences between the three locations, with the majority of offerings to launch in 2020.

"Our conversation with STEC began with customer service and transitioned to occupation-specific programs," Christian Boyle, Glyph Creative Strategy owner, said. "With a goal of appealing to both domestic and international travellers, export-market quality is the standard we want for experiences along the corridor. To achieve that culture of quality, we need a consistent level of training for frontline employees all the way up to management."

STEC identified *emerit* Heritage Interpreter training as key to equipping staff with the skills to deliver authentic, meaningful visitor experiences. In the official course description, *emerit* defines the position as follows: "A Heritage Interpreter must be a master storyteller, and use acquired knowledge combined with firsthand experience so visitors can relate on a personal level. You will transform information into an experience."

The Indigenous Tourism Corridor project has unique needs, given its multiple locations and partners, and the demanding work to bring plans to fruition. STEC is currently working with partners to determine appropriate modifications to Heritage Interpreter training that will assist in the creation of new experiences along the corridor. A three-day workshop will be held in early 2019 for individuals involved in planning interpretive programming to enrich visitor experiences.

To inquire about *emerit* Heritage Interpreter or other training delivered by STEC, contact Kari Burgess at 306-933-5913, kari.burgess@tourismsask.com.

Turn to page 13 for more details about the Indigenous tourism corridor project.

Outstanding journeypersons in tourism trades honoured

Erin Beth and Krystal Roemer were among the 33 new journeypersons honoured at the 18th annual Apprenticeship Awards, hosted by the Saskatchewan Apprenticeship and Trade Certification Commission on November 2 in Regina. The awards recognize individuals who achieve the highest marks on the certification exam in their designated trades.

Beth received the Outstanding Journeyperson Award in the Food and Beverage Person trade. She has more than 15 years of experience in the

food and beverage service industry, and works as a server and bartender at The Hotel Saskatchewan, Autograph Collection, in Regina.

Roemer was named Outstanding Journeyperson in the Guest Services Representative trade. She holds the position of Front Desk Supervisor at Days Inn Regina Airport West.

Tourism Saskatchewan extends congratulations to these two impressive journeypersons and wishes them success in their careers.



Left to right: Krystal Roemer, Tourism Saskatchewan CEO Mary Taylor-Ash and Erin Beth

STEC refreshes Education and Training Opportunities Catalogue



STEC's *Education and Training Opportunities Catalogue 2019-2020* has a new look and layout. This valuable resource for industry is a broad listing of STEC's programs, categorized to help tourism businesses and organizations find programs and services to suit their needs. Seven sections identify beneficial training in the following areas:

- Food and Beverage
- Accommodation
- Events and Attractions
- Outdoor Adventure and Recreation
- Tourism Economic Development and Community Services
- Education
- Leadership Development

Sections relating to the Ready to Work and Employer of Choice programs are also detailed. Visit Industry.TourismSaskatchewan.com to download the *Education and Training Opportunities Catalogue 2019-2020*.

In the Spotlight

Recipients of the Saskatchewan Tourism Awards of Excellence earn their place in the spotlight by demonstrating exceptional work and a commitment to treating visitors to great service and experiences. Throughout the year, *Going Places* profiles those who took top honours at the Saskatchewan Tourism Awards of Excellence Gala in April 2018. In this issue, Tourism Saskatchewan salutes three award winners.



Jim Byers, Toronto, Travel Media Award

Sponsored by Vendasta

Jim Byers ranks among Canada's most prolific travel writers. His work has appeared in major publications, such as *The Globe and Mail*, *National Geographic*, *Zoomer Magazine*, *The Dallas News*, and many others. An impressive career involved serving five years as travel editor of the *Toronto Star*. He is popular as a speaker and panelist at tourism events. Byers visited Saskatchewan in 2017, through Tourism Saskatchewan and Tourism Saskatoon's travel media programs. The trip inspired a number of stories that received widespread exposure and reached nearly 12.5 million readers. The articles "10 Canadian National Parks You Should Visit This Summer" and "Exploring Saskatoon Like a Local" each appeared in more than 30 Postmedia outlets; "The Wacky Fans of this Canadian Football Team Love Watermelon Hats and All Things Green" was featured in *The Dallas News*; and "Stellar Things to do in Surprising Saskatchewan" appeared on Skyscanner.ca.



YXEats, Saskatoon Community Event of the Year Award

Sponsored by the Saskatchewan Arts Board

YXEats showcases the prowess of local food producers and culinary artists in Riversdale, Saskatoon's oldest neighbourhood. Known as the *Festival for Foodies*, it includes culinary tours, longtable brunches, cooking schools and other ticketed events, which have sold out each year. With the goal of making YXEats the neighbourhood's most iconic event, the Riversdale Business District Association has brought vendors and restaurants together as a whole greater than the sum of its parts. The festival demonstrates the same hard work and ingenuity of the small businesses it represents by refreshing its event program annually and reaching out to local food producers to enhance its offerings. This effort has resulted in greater participation and additional sponsorships, assuring long-term growth and giving foodies from Saskatoon and beyond a culinary adventure that leaves them coming back for more.



Ness Creek Music Festival, Big River Marquee Event of the Year Award

Sponsored by CTV

Since 1991, the Ness Creek Festival has been an annual showcase of great music in a beautiful northern setting. Today, it is one of Saskatchewan's signature summer events and attracts more than 3,500 attendees from across the province, Canada and beyond. The four-day schedule features over 100 artistic and cultural performances and hands-on activities in 10 festival venues. Attendees appreciate the community-focused atmosphere and opportunities to enjoy talent, as well as gain deeper ecological awareness and understanding of the boreal forest. Programming represents both the cutting-edge of new music and the bedrock of the festival's traditional roots. Local, national and international acts range from bluegrass and folk to funk and almost everything in between. Ness Creek Festival audiences have come to "expect the unexpected." In 2017, the entertainment extended to a floating stage – the Stage of Aquarius – on nearby Nesslin Lake.

Save the Date: Tourism Workplace Leadership Conference – June 12, 2019

The 4th annual Tourism Workplace Leadership Conference will take place on June 12 at the Radisson Hotel Saskatoon. The forum offers practical, progressive human resource strategies to strengthen business and enhance the province's tourism sector.

Sponsorship opportunities are available. For information, contact Darcy Acton, 306-933-7466, darcy.acton@tourismsask.com.

Tourism Trends

Decoding Customer Experience



Danceland, Manitou Beach

In this two-part series, Tourism Saskatchewan shares some of the research and tools that help businesses identify their customers, connect with them and gain their loyalty.

Part One, "Understanding Customers," appeared in the Summer 2018 issue of *Going Places*.

PART TWO: CONNECTING WITH CUSTOMERS

By investing in digital marketing, tourism businesses can gain a clear picture of their customers – Who are they? Where do they live? What are their interests and expectations? How do they access travel information? Collecting the data is one thing; making it work for you is another matter. There is no one-size-fits-all approach to connecting with customers. But with a bit of creativity, it is possible to grab their attention and win them over.

If someone else said so, it must be true

Consumers value the opinion of their peers over company messages. With advancements in technology and the rise of social media, third-party or user-generated content (UGC) has become the trusted source. According to Crowdriff, a global visual-marketing platform that helps brands connect with audiences through UGC, 70 per cent of consumers value peer

recommendations above professional copy. Customer reviews are trusted 12 times more than an organization's marketing messages. Additionally, 92 per cent of consumers value word-of-mouth above any kind of advertising.¹

Think before you post

Gathering content has been made easier by the availability of smartphones that can take high-quality photos and videos. However, developing compelling content that tells a story and resonates with consumers requires patience, imagination, strategic thinking and some technical skills. Once an image, video or message is posted, it lives forever in the cyber world. Uploading material that is inaccurate, unflattering or misleading compromises a business's hard work and reputation. There are certainly many savvy operators who create their own content and manage their online channels. For others, sourcing quality third-party content or collaborating with industry partners are options.

Content is easily within reach

Where do you start sourcing content? If you are an Instagram user, you already have an important tool for accessing UGC (photos, videos or written accounts shared online by customers or a third-party). Instagram is visually appealing, easy-to-use and far-reaching. Proper etiquette when

sharing UGC is to request permission from the source via the comments section of a post. Always credit the user's account name in the description of the item. Tagging is standard practice and gives a shout out to the originator. It also shows that real people value your business, and their endorsement will resonate with the public.

Collaboration packs a punch

There are definite advantages to working with travel influencers and industry partners who are champions for Saskatchewan. It builds on a business's own efforts to create an online presence, attract loyal social media fans and increase website traffic. Collaboration is a cost-effective way to broaden reach into lucrative markets and amplify messages about product offerings and experiences. It is a win-win for all partners. A tourism business receives exposure to the influencer's audience, which can be widespread. In turn, travel influencers are explorers and welcome opportunities to make fresh discoveries, meet new friends and share inspiring stories. By aligning with an influencer whose audience matches your own, your message will be in front of people looking for what you have to offer. Consumers will respond and the conversations that evolve, along with "likes" and "shares," speak volumes about your business.

For more information about working with digital marketing, connecting with consumers and working with travel influencers, visit

Industry.TourismSaskatchewan.com/advice-and-resources/digital-marketing.

1. Crowdriff. "21 User-generated Content Stats You Need to Know," Crowdriff.com/user-generated-content-stats/



Prince Albert National Park

TOP FIVE TIPS FOR USING INSTAGRAM

Instagram has a lot to offer tourism businesses. The visual nature of this social platform makes it an excellent tool for sourcing and leveraging content, and sharing inspiring vacation stories. Instagram offers up its own unique set of features. Trying to sort out filters, hashtags, captions, etc. can be a puzzling task. Here are a few tips to help you use your Instagram account to its full potential.

1. LOAD-UP YOUR PROFILE

On Instagram, your profile bio is the only place that you can add clickable URLs. Use this valuable real estate to your advantage and make sure that you are including a link to your website or to a current promotion or offer.

2. ENGAGE WITH OTHERS

Follow relevant users and engage with others on this platform. Search for content that relates to your business via hashtag searches. Use hashtags that are activity or location-based (i.e. #ExploreSask), and like or comment where appropriate.

3. MAKE IMAGERY AND HASHTAGS COUNT

Instagram is a visual tool, so use quality photographs to your advantage. Every image that you post is a reflection of your brand. Make high-quality, appealing photos your standard. Use mobile phone editing tools, and don't overdo it with the filters. Vertical images and video are preferable, given that most content is consumed on mobile devices.

Subtle promotion will keep followers interested. Imagery that constantly includes your logo may come across as too pushy – followers may become disengaged and stop following your account. Consider more of a

soft sell by showcasing an experience that you provide, and use photos of your location to entice people.

Hashtags allow users to find topics of interest and share posts with an engaged community. Avoid overusing, underusing or misusing hashtags. Irrelevant hashtags can devalue your credibility and your account, or potentially be perceived as spam.

4. BALANCE YOUR POSTING

Posting too often can make people feel like they are being spammed by information. You want to keep them engaged and inspired. On the other hand, posting infrequently can look like you are neglecting your account. Be consistent and try to use content that is not time-sensitive. That way, gaps in your content cycle are less obvious.

Instagram Stories and IG TV are additional tools offered on the platform. For testing ideas and building audience curiosity, Instagram Stories is effective because posts are automatically deleted after 24 hours. IG TV was created to house long-form vertical video, unlike Instagram's original feed that limits video to one minute. Although created specifically for vertical video, IG TV can also accommodate horizontal video.

5. MONITOR YOUR STATS

Numbers count. By keeping track of your statistics, you can determine which days and times get you the most engagement. Time your posts accordingly.

Around the Province

Fall in love with Saskatchewan

Submitted by Saskatchewaner Kevin Dunn



Waters Edge Eco Lodge, Greig Lake



Porcupine Hills Provincial Park



Meadow Lake Provincial Park

The adventures of travelling Saskatchewan shouldn't end when summer is over. I made stops at three different parks this fall. My advice is to pack extra camera batteries, because the autumn scenery in Saskatchewan is spectacular.

Southeast of Hudson Bay is a place of cultural diversity and natural beauty. The dense forests, open grasslands and beautiful lakes will take your breath away. I had never been to the Porcupine Hills before, but Saskatchewan's newest provincial park was so beautiful and pristine that I felt like I was dreaming with my eyes wide-open.

On the other side of the province is one of the largest provincial parks in Canada. This was my first time visiting Meadow Lake Provincial Park. Once again, the scenery blew me away.

The park is also home to a not-so-ordinary woodland getaway. Waters Edge Eco Lodge is an all-season luxurious lakeside accommodation, nestled in the beautiful natural environment of Meadow Lake Provincial Park. What makes the lodge unique? It focuses on sustainable ecological practices that have been incorporated into the design, construction and operation of this destination. Facing the beautiful water's edge on Greig Lake, it's the perfect place to escape the day-to-day hustle and bustle of life, allowing you to finally relax and enjoy your time in the natural environment that surrounds you.

Prince Albert National Park (PANP) was where I made my third stop. Known as one of Saskatchewan's greatest summer destinations, it is also a spectacular place to put on your fall travel bucket list. The autumn colours are on full display in September, with camping options at

various locations in the park and one that includes the unique family-size oTENTiK. A trip to PANP during the fall is one you must take.

Visiting these places in autumn truly opened my eyes to understanding that there is lots to see and do in Saskatchewan, even when summer is over. Fall is a beautiful time of year in Saskatchewan and should be taken advantage of while those vibrant colours are in full display.

Join along on my travels by following me on Facebook (facebook.com/skwanderer), Twitter (@skwanderer) or Instagram (@saskatchewanwanderer).

Keep up with the latest blogs and videos on saskatchewanwanderer.ca and YouTube (youtube.com/user/skwandererofficial).

Over \$11 million invested in Saskatchewan provincial parks

Submitted by the Ministry of Parks, Culture and Sport

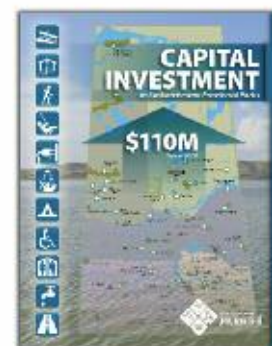
Saskatchewan provincial parks are special places for families to visit year after year. Visitors can explore trails, learn to fish, light a campfire or simply enjoy the beauty that surrounds them in Saskatchewan's backyard.

Each year, Sask Parks works hard to provide the best experience possible for visitors. Guest satisfaction is achieved through offering a wide variety of programs, activities and events to all ages, but also by maintaining and enhancing park facilities and infrastructure.

In the 2018-19 fiscal year, the Government of Saskatchewan is investing over \$11 million in provincial parks for facility and infrastructure improvements.

Park visitors can look forward to:

- Electrical upgrades and service expansions in many provincial parks, including Cypress Hills, Echo Valley, Meadow Lake and Moose Mountain;
- New service centres at Kimball and Greig Lake campgrounds in Meadow Lake;
- A new visitor reception centre at Echo Valley and new interpretive exhibits at Douglas;
- New water treatment systems at The Battlefords and Echo Valley;
- Boat launch improvements at Meadow Lake and Buffalo Pound;
- Park road upgrades at Meadow Lake and Good Spirit; and
- Trail improvements at Candle Lake, Buffalo Pound, Condie and Pike Lake.



Many of the improvements will be completed before the 2019 camping season. These enhancements will help ensure safety, increase accessibility, provide greater convenience and continue to make provincial parks enjoyable places for families to visit every year.

Over the last decade, nearly \$110 million has been invested in park facilities and infrastructure.

Here & There

The Grand Theatre and Ancient Echoes Interpretive Centre receive National Trust for Canada Awards

The National Trust for Canada Awards “celebrate places that matter” and recognize “contributions to community, identity and sense of place.” Saskatchewan was well-represented among the 2018 award recipients. The Grand Theatre (Indian Head) and Ancient Echoes Interpretive Centre (Herschel) each received an Ecclesiastical Insurance Cornerstone Award. The award’s two categories recognize: A) projects that have creatively renewed or transformed historic places or landscapes for new uses; and B) owners and organizations using historic places or landscapes in ways that illustrate extraordinary resilience, significance and benefit to a community over a sustained period.

Dakota Dunes Hotel project breaks ground

In September, construction started on the Dakota Dunes Hotel, located on Whitecap Dakota First Nation. The new hotel and conference centre will complement the Dakota Dunes Casino and award-winning Dakota Dunes Golf Links, creating an impressive four-season resort south of Saskatoon. The \$38-million property will have 155 rooms, a business centre, restaurant, pool and fitness centre. Indigenous themes and décor will feature throughout. At the time of ground breaking, the Government of Canada announced an \$8.6-million investment in the project, through the Community Opportunity Readiness Program. Dakota Dunes Hotel is expected to generate \$8.5-million in annual revenue and create as many as 150 new jobs. The hotel will open in 2020.

Chief Darcy Bear named to Advisory Council on Jobs and the Visitor Economy

The Government of Canada recently announced formation of the Advisory Council on Jobs and the Visitor Economy. Chief Darcy Bear, Whitecap Dakota First Nation, has been named to the 13-member council that consists of entrepreneurs, business owners, tourism operators and professionals. Their responsibilities include identifying key issues among Canada’s tourism sector and recommending new approaches to increase tourism opportunities and bolster competitiveness. Chief Bear is widely respected for his business, economic and cultural achievements. He is serving his eighth consecutive term as Chief of Whitecap Dakota First Nation, which is recognized as a “national example of positive community development and heightened self-determination.”



Limestone petroglyph, Ancient Echoes Interpretive Centre, Herschel



Fossil discovery made by RSM paleontologists

Royal Saskatchewan Museum shares fossil “hits” of the summer

The Royal Saskatchewan Museum (RSM) announced a list of recent fossil discoveries made by RSM paleontologists. Fieldwork was underway at a number of sites in the province during June-August. The RSM’s list of “fossil hits of the summer 2018” and their locations includes:

- Infant elasmosaur (long-necked marine reptile) skull, Lake Diefenbaker
- *Edmontosaurus* (duck-billed dinosaur) skull, Shaunavon area
- Partial juvenile bronotother (38-million-year-old rhino-like mammal) skeleton, Eastend area
- *Triceratops* bones, Grasslands National Park
- *Gorgosaurus* (large carnivorous dinosaur that resembles *Albertosaurus*) teeth, Consul area
- Ankylosaur (armoured dinosaur) teeth, Consul area
- Amber samples containing insects from the Cretaceous period, Bengough area

For more details and blogs shared by RSM researchers, visit royalsaskatchewanmuseum.ca/rsm.

Historic Reesor Ranch among 2018 ABEX Award winners

On October 20, the Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce hosted the 2018 ABEX awards at TCU Place in Saskatoon. The evening showcased 50 finalists, with 12 businesses honoured as award recipients. Historic Reesor Ranch, located in the Cypress Hills, took home the Service Award, which recognizes “exceptional performance in providing quality customer service.” The ABEX Awards were introduced in 1984 to honour outstanding achievements in business excellence.

China readiness workshops scheduled in January

In January, the Tourism Industry Association of Canada (TIAC) will be hosting a series of China Readiness workshops across Canada. Saskatchewan tourism businesses and organizations are encouraged to register for the session in Saskatoon on January 22 (9 a.m.-12 p.m.) at the Radisson Hotel Saskatoon.

The FREE workshops are recommended for small- and medium-sized tourism businesses interested in tapping the Chinese market. Content examines the following:

- Chinese tourist profiles
- Preferred payment methods
- Cultural insights and communication tips
- Visitor needs and wants
- Mobile and social media habits

The workshops provide insights into the market and include one-on-one time with a China Readiness trainer.

Register online for the January 22 workshop at <https://tiac-aitc.ca/ChinaReady.html>. A second workshop will be held in southern Saskatchewan in the upcoming months. Details will be shared with industry through *Industry Update* e-bulletins.



2018
YEAR OF TOURISM
L'ANNÉE DU TOURISME
中加旅游年

The governments of Canada and China proclaimed 2018 as the Canada-China Year of Tourism – a tribute to the deep friendship and ties between the two nations. China is Canada’s third-largest tourism source market, following the United States and the United Kingdom. Canada welcomed more than 300,000 tourists from China in the first half of 2018, a nine per cent increase over the same period in 2017. The Government of Canada’s Tourism Vision seeks to double the number of visitors from China by 2021.

Mark Your Calendar

PUBLIC EVENTS

Saskatoon Farmers' Market

Year-roundSaskatoon

BPH Enchanted Forest Holiday Light Tour

November 17, 2018-January 5, 2019Saskatoon

RCMP Sergeant Major's Parade

January 1-December 10, 2019Regina

New Holland Canadian Junior National Curling Championship

January 19-27, 2019Prince Albert

Winterruption

January 23-26, 2019Regina and Saskatoon

Beer Bacon Bands Festival

January 25-26, 2019Regina

Nutrien WinterShines

January 26-February 3, 2019Saskatoon

Regina Restaurant Week

January 28-February 8, 2019Regina

Mushers Rendezvous

February 1-3, 2019Preeceville

Prairie Women on Snowmobiles

February 2-8, 2019Various Locations

Prince Albert Winter Festival

February 10-24, 2019Prince Albert

Living Sky Casino Pow Wow

February 16-17, 2019Swift Current

Canadian Challenge Sled Dog Race

February 18-23, 2019
.....Prince Albert to northern destinations

Provincial Snowmobile Festival

February 22-23, 2019Hudson Bay

Mid-Winter Blues Festival

February 23-March 2, 2019Regina

Government House Historical Society

Victorian Teas

March 2-December 8, 2019Regina

INDUSTRY EVENTS

HOST Saskatchewan Conference

April 11, 2019TCU Place, Saskatoon

Saskatchewan Tourism Awards of Excellence

April 11, 2019TCU Place, Saskatoon

49° x 110° Spring Conference

May 2-3, 2019Swift Current

Tourism Workplace Leadership Conference

June 12, 2019Saskatoon

Tourism Professional Recognition Dinner

June 12, 2019Saskatoon

TRADESHOW/MARKETPLACES/FAMS

Safari Club International

January 17-20, 2019Dallas, TX

International Media Marketplace

January 24, 2019New York, NY

American Bus Association Marketplace

January 25-29, 2019Louisville, KY

International Tourism Bourse (ITB)

March 6-10, 2019Berlin, DE

Northwest Sportshow

March 21-24, 2019Minneapolis, MN

Information subject to change.

Is your event listed on TourismSaskatchewan.com?

Tourism Saskatchewan's consumer website, TourismSaskatchewan.com, receives more than 1.5 million visitors annually. The site is a popular resource for vacation planning and researching activities and events in Saskatchewan communities. Posted information ranks highly in Google searches.

Event organizers are encouraged to submit dates and details about upcoming festivals, community celebrations and tourism events. Simply use the submission form located at TourismSaskatchewan.com/things-to-do/events/submit-an-event.

Have dates or details about your event changed? Avoid disappointment and missed opportunities by updating your current information. Submit changes by contacting Tourism Saskatchewan at 1-877-237-2273, information.updates@tourismsask.com.

Return Undeliverable Canadian Addresses
to:

TOURISM SASKATCHEWAN
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