

Going Places

Saskatchewan's Tourism Industry Newsletter

Spring 2019

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Cover Image

Qu'Appelle Valley

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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INDUSTRY ADVISORY: Ignore suspicious calls urging updates with "Sask Tourism"

Tourism Saskatchewan recently alerted operators to the activities of a company identifying itself as "Sask Tourism" and contacting tourism businesses in the province. The caller asks the business to update information with "Sask Tourism." Upon further inquiry, the caller may state that the cost to update will be in the hundreds of dollars, and suggest that the business has paid for this update in the past.

Please be advised that Tourism Saskatchewan is **NOT** affiliated with this company in any way.

Tourism operators receive FREE web listings on TourismSaskatchewan.com. If you are contacted by someone who is unwilling to provide details about Tourism Saskatchewan, give their name, phone number or any other pertinent information, or is asking for payment for your online listing, you are advised to discontinue the call. Instead, contact Tourism Saskatchewan at 1-877-237-2273 or information.updates@tourismsask.com to update your Tourism Profile.

REMINDER: UPDATE YOUR TOURISM PROFILE

Tourism Saskatchewan offers **FREE** listings on TourismSaskatchewan.com for tourism operators, including businesses, attractions, accommodations, campgrounds, communities, etc. 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.

Event organizers are encouraged to submit dates and details about festivals, community celebrations and tourism events in 2019. Simply use the submission form located at TourismSaskatchewan.com/things-to-do/events/submit-an-event.

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



MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

The annual Saskatchewan Tourism Awards of Excellence Gala is always a meaningful occasion. The recent celebration on April 11 was particularly special and marked a milestone – 30 years of honouring individuals and businesses that make exceptional contributions to tourism.

Every gala has a special moment. It may be a heartfelt acceptance speech that conveys deep pride of place; or a tribute to someone no longer with us but whose legacy will endure. A highlight this year was the tribute paid to Dan Cardinal, who retired from the Sheraton Cavalier Hotel Saskatoon on April 1.

Dan was the “face of the Sheraton” for 50 years. A career of that length with a single employer and that has attained such an impressive track record puts him in a category all of his own. Gala MC Jim Bence reflected on Dan’s humility and attitude that made a difference to guests and co-workers: “He has enough stories to fill several volumes. When he reflects on his experiences with celebrities such as Johnny Cash and Kenny Rogers, it becomes clear that, to him, people are simply people and everyone deserves and appreciates respect.”

It was truly a pleasure to acknowledge Dan as he embarks on a new life chapter (with more time to cheer on his beloved Saskatchewan Roughriders).

For photographs of the award winners and Tourism Builders, along with candid moments from the evening, turn to page 6.

The Gala always assembles an interesting mix of characters and it is inspiring to see innovative new entrepreneurs standing alongside of industry veterans. Tourism thrives when people with different ideas,



(Left to right): Dan Cardinal; Honourable Gene Makowski, Minister Responsible for Tourism Saskatchewan

personalities and experiences see the value of combining their strengths and working together.

Tourism Saskatchewan’s guiding principles include collaboration and alignment, and we actively pursue opportunities to forge relationships that benefit all partners. Our work with Destination Canada and the Tourism Industry Association of Canada (featured on page 8) brings valuable exposure to the province in key international markets. At home, programs such as Destination Employment (page 12) help to build a robust tourism workforce and enhance the quality of life for Saskatchewan residents.

Mary Taylor-Ash

Content marketing and culinary tourism hot topics at HOST Saskatchewan Conference



The 2019 HOST Saskatchewan Conference, held on April 11 at TCU Place in Saskatoon, welcomed approximately 140 representatives of tourism businesses, organizations, attractions and events from across the province.

The one-day forum offered delegates engaging presentations and valuable networking opportunities. An impressive schedule of speakers and presentations addressed timely topics. Panel presentations focused on events, festivals and the visitor economy, Indigenous tourism, culinary opportunities, and more.

William Bakker, Chief Strategist and Partner at Destination Think!, delivered a plenary session titled *Destination Marketing in a World of Disruptors*. The session focused on content marketing success stories and included case studies, as well as best practices and strategies for industry, provincial marketing organizations and destination marketing organizations to work together.

Rebecca Mackenzie, President and CEO of the Culinary Tourism Alliance (CTA), delivered the keynote address at the delegate luncheon.

In a dynamic presentation titled *A Recipe for Developing a Taste of Place*, Mackenzie touched on the history of growing the food tourism industry in Ontario and shared CTA accomplishments and successful partnerships. Industry benefited from facts about current consumer demand for food tourism and developments taking place within the broader tourism industry.

Turn to page 15 for a *Food Tourism Market-Ready Checklist* that was shared with delegates. The resource is also available on Industry.TourismSaskatchewan.com, along with presentations delivered by Mackenzie and Bakker.

The evening celebration of the 30th annual Saskatchewan Tourism Awards of Excellence Gala was a festive conclusion to the industry assembly (see pages 6-7 for award recipients). Tourism Saskatchewan thanks all of the delegates, speakers and sponsors for contributing to the success of the conference and gala.

Statistics Canada research provides snapshot of visitors



Crooked Lake Provincial Park

The Statistics Canada Travel Survey of Residents of Canada reflects trends, characteristics, spending and activities of Canadians travelling within their home country. This two-part series presents a summary for Saskatchewan, based on 2017 data. Part one, featured in the Winter 2019 issue of *Going Places*, answered basic questions about Saskatchewan visitors – Who are they? How much are they spending? Where are they staying?

In this issue, the focus is on leisure travel, which accounts for one-third of overnight visitation to Saskatchewan.

PART TWO: TOP DRAWS FOR LEISURE TRAVEL

Saskatchewan is one big, beautiful place. Its tourism brand pillars – land and sky, time and space, and community – speak to the defining characteristics that travellers, from far and near, appreciate and seek in a destination. Understandably, nature and outdoor experiences are popular attractions.

Parks and more parks

Saskatchewan has an enviable parks system. Two national, 36 provincial and close to 80 regional parks are favourite holiday destinations for Saskatchewan residents, the province's primary travel market. Visitors from Alberta, the second largest market, are equally keen to enjoy holiday time in Saskatchewan parks. In 2017-2018, nearly 4 million visits were made to Saskatchewan provincial parks. Grasslands National Park and Prince Albert National Park recorded 317,000 visits.

World-class fishing and hunting

With nearly 100,000 lakes and waterways, Saskatchewan offers an abundance of fishing, boating and water-based activities. In 2018, more than 34,000 angling licences were sold to Canadian travellers from outside of Saskatchewan, while 10,350 licences were sold to U.S. visitors. Saskatchewan continues to gain recognition in the U.S. as a premier destination for hunting, demonstrated by a 25 per cent increase in hunting licence sales to American visitors in the past five years. Hunting and fishing are especially popular activities in northern Saskatchewan, where leisure travel makes up 60 per cent of overnight visitation.



Rowan's Ravine Provincial Park

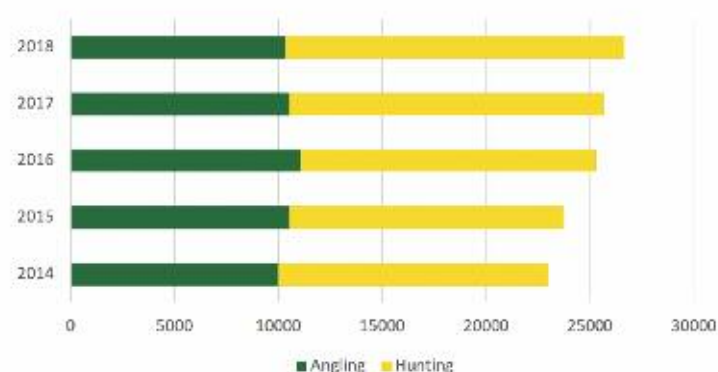
Big city sights

Sports events are the top leisure attractions for visitors to Regina and Saskatoon. In March, the Canadian Sport Tourism Alliance named Saskatoon as the No. 1 destination for hosting sporting events among cities with populations of 150,000-500,000. Regina was listed as No. 3 in the same category. Saskatchewan will play host to several high-profile events over the next two years, including the 2019 NHL Heritage Classic and 2020 Grey Cup Championship, both in Regina; 2020 Scotties Tournament of Hearts in Moose Jaw; and 2021 Canadian Curling Trials – Roar of the Rings in Saskatoon.

Exploring arts and culture

Destinations that nurture a vibrant arts scene and diverse cultural landscape attract travellers. People who visit a location for its cultural activities (museums, galleries, performances, music festivals, Indigenous experiences, etc.) stay longer and spend more than other types of travellers. Statistics for Saskatchewan reflected this fact. Among overnight visitors to the province, cultural explorers spent an average of \$390 during their stay, while outdoor adventurers spent about \$128.

Saskatchewan hunting and angling licences sold in U.S.



Tourism Statistics and Research section featured on Industry.TourismSaskatchewan.com

Tourism Saskatchewan is committed to providing industry partners with high quality data and insights that help to enhance the effectiveness of marketing and destination development activities in the province.

A new section on Industry.TourismSaskatchewan.com is dedicated to providing industry with timely information and reports that highlight tourism and industry trends, regional tourism activities, labour force

statistics, and the results of primary and secondary research projects conducted both internally and by external research partners.

Visit industry.tourismsaskatchewan.com/tourism-statistics-and-research often and use the tools and reports provided to inform business decisions.



MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Spring is certainly a busy season for tourism operators and businesses across Saskatchewan. Despite demanding schedules, they take time from their schedules to attend industry events and participate in celebrations like Saskatchewan Tourism Week.

Tourism Saskatchewan values the support for such activities that broaden awareness of tourism and shine a spotlight on the province's wealth of tourism resources.

My Board colleagues and I enjoyed the opportunity to spend time with delegates who attended the HOST Saskatchewan Conference in April. The enthusiasm of industry for this annual assembly is always appreciated. We are grateful to operators and tourism representatives who took time away from business to contribute to this day dedicated to networking, sharing ideas and gaining new knowledge to help grow tourism.

The 2019 HOST Saskatchewan Conference offered an interesting mix of engaging speakers and timely topics. Delegates received sound advice about content marketing from an expert in the field – William Bakker, who is part of the leadership team at Destination Think! Bakker presents his material in a way that inspires audiences and gives tourism operators the confidence to put his recommendations into practice. His presentations delivered at the conference are available on

Industry.TourismSaskatchewan.com. I encourage anyone who was absent to review the material.

Keynote speaker Rebecca Mackenzie, President and CEO of the Culinary Tourism Alliance, also shared a useful tool – a *Food Tourism Market-Ready Checklist* (reprinted on page 15). Mackenzie's keynote presentation *A Recipe for Developing a Taste of Place* is also available on Industry.TourismSaskatchewan.com.

In this issue of *Going Places* are new research figures from Statistics Canada (page 4), advice for collecting consumer data (page 9) and tips to consider when applying to funding programs (page 11).

On page 16 is summary of Saskatchewan Tourism Week celebrations, held in communities provincewide. There is definitely a food/barbecue theme highlighted throughout the week. In addition to keeping guests and attendees at local events well-fed, industry pulled out all the stops to showcase showcase tourism attractions and encourage Saskatchewan residents to explore, discover and enjoy tourism in our province.

Norm Beug

Meet the Board of Directors



Left to right: Chief Jeremy Norman, Jori Kirk, Kevin Dureau, Norm Beug, Sandra LeBarre, Irene Seiferling, Brian Hoffart
Missing: Cory Rideout

Tourism Saskatchewan is led by an eight-member, government-appointed Board of Directors. As a skills-based board, members bring solid business knowledge and experience to their role in providing broad policy direction to the Treasury Board Crown Corporation.

Current board members include:

- Norm Beug, Chair
- Cory Rideout, Vice-Chair
- Kevin Dureau
- Brian Hoffart
- Jori Kirk
- Sandra LeBarre
- Chief Jeremy Norman
- Irene Seiferling

For biographic information on each board member, visit Industry.TourismSaskatchewan.com/about-tourism-saskatchewan/board-of-directors.

Industry achievement celebrated at 30th annual Saskatchewan Tourism Awards of Excellence Gala

Saskatchewan's tourism sector honoured businesses and individuals at the 30th annual Saskatchewan Tourism Awards of Excellence Gala, which was celebrated in Saskatoon on April 11 at TCU Place.

The gala has become a yearly showcase of achievement, bringing together representatives from every corner of the province and from a diverse range of businesses and attractions to pay tribute to the accomplishments of industry colleagues. More than 300 tourism stakeholders gathered for the celebration that coincided with the HOST Saskatchewan Conference.

Congratulations to the recipients of the Saskatchewan Tourism Awards of Excellence for 2018.



ROOKIE OF THE YEAR AWARD

Sponsored by the Saskatchewan Roughrider Football Club



Wheatland Express, Cudworth/Wakaw
(Left to right): Ashlyn Weninger (Wheatland Express), Miriam Johnson (Saskatchewan Roughrider Football Club)

SERVICE EXCELLENCE AWARD

Sponsored by the Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce



Harvest Eatery, Shaunavon
(Left to right): Lorie Klein-Willms (Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce), Kristy Thienes and Garrett "Rusty" Thienes (Harvest Eatery)

TOURISM EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR AWARD

Sponsored by Harvard Broadcasting Regina



Brenda Peterson, Parks Canada, Grasslands National Park
(Left to right): Ralph Bird (Harvard Broadcasting), Brenda Peterson (Parks Canada)

TOURISM EMPLOYER OF THE YEAR AWARD

Sponsored by the Regina Airport Authority



Gold Eagle Casino, Saskatchewan Indian Gaming Authority, North Battleford
(Left to right): Kevin Sapp (Gold Eagle Casino), Sandra LeBarre (Tourism Saskatchewan Board of Directors)

GIL CARDUNER MARKETING AWARD

Sponsored by Phoenix Group



Kinder Surprises Antiques, Davidson
(Left to right): Erin Kinder (Kinder Surprises Antiques), Pam Klein (Phoenix Group)

FRED HEAL TOURISM AMBASSADOR AWARD

Sponsored by Wanuskewin Heritage Park



Watrous Manitou Marketing Group, Watrous
(Left to right): Brendan Manz (Watrous Manitou Marketing Group), Darlene Brander (Wanuskewin Heritage Park)

TRAVEL MEDIA AWARD

Sponsored by Vendasta



Robin and Arlene Karpan, Saskatoon
(Left to right): Robin Karpan, Arlene Karpan, Troy Wruck (Vendasta)

INDIGENOUS TOURISM EXPERIENCE AWARD

Sponsored by Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies



Wanuskewin Heritage Park, Saskatoon
(Left to right): Andrew McDonald, Tara Janzen and Darlene Brander (Wanuskewin Heritage Park), Lorian Kennedy (Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies)

COMMUNITY EVENT OF THE YEAR AWARD
Sponsored by the Saskatchewan Arts Board



Taste of Maple Creek Festival, Maple Creek
(Left to right): Gillian Moch and Royce Pettyjohn (Taste of Maple Creek Festival), Jason Aebig (Saskatchewan Arts Board)

MARQUEE EVENT OF THE YEAR AWARD
Sponsored by CTV



2018 WBSC Junior Men's World Softball Championship, Prince Albert
(Left to right): Felix Casavant (2018 WBSC Junior Men's World Softball Championship), Pat McKay (CTV)

BUSINESS OF THE YEAR AWARD (Under 20 Full-time Employees)
Sponsored by the Saskatchewan Indian Gaming Authority



Over the Hill Orchards and Winery, Lumsden
(Left to right): Dean Kreutzer and Sylvia Kreutzer (Over the Hill Orchards and Winery), Jarvis Pelletier (Saskatchewan Indian Gaming Authority)

BUSINESS OF THE YEAR AWARD (Over 20 Full-time Employees)
Sponsored by Inshtrix Research



Regina Exhibition Association Limited, Regina
Back (Left to right): Lisa McIntyre and Jade Dolan (Economic Development Regina), Sandra Masters, Roberta Engel and Bob Crowe (Regina Exhibition Association Limited)
Front (Left to right): Tim Reid (Regina Exhibition Association Limited), Partha Roy (Inshtrix Research), Miriam Johnson (Saskatchewan Roughrider Football Club)

TOURISM BUILDER AWARD
Sponsored by Tourism Saskatchewan



Randy Fernets, Saskatoon
(Left to right): Randy Fernets, Norm Beug (Chair, Tourism Saskatchewan Board of Directors)



Scott Ford, Saskatoon
(Left to right): Scott Ford, Norm Beug (Chair, Tourism Saskatchewan Board of Directors)



Shann Gowan, Swift Current
(Left to right): Shann Gowan, Norm Beug (Chair, Tourism Saskatchewan Board of Directors)

Detailed information regarding each category winner is available at Industry.TourismSaskatchewan.com.

Thank you to the following individuals who embraced the challenge of selecting the finalists and recipients of the Saskatchewan Tourism Awards of Excellence for 2018. To avoid potential conflict of interest, Award Selection Committee members were not included in the judging when their own companies were nominated in a category (business or individual).

Jim Aho, Waskimo Winter Festival, Regina
Carey Baker, Town of Unity, Unity
Jim Bence, Saskatchewan Hotel and Hospitality Association, Saskatoon
Craig Blackmur, Wollaston Lake Lodge, Wollaston Lake
Christian Boyle, Glyph Creative Strategy, Saskatoon
Trent Fraser, Fraser Strategy, Regina
Ashlyn George, The Lost Girl's Guide to Finding the World, Saskatoon
Sarah Laxdal, Canadian Western Agribition, Regina
Sandra LeBarre, Naicam
Penny Lee, City of Humboldt, Humboldt
Kerry Lubchenko, Western Development Museum, Saskatoon

Royce Pettyjohn, Town of Maple Creek, Maple Creek
Angela Pratt, FHQ Developments, Regina
Randy Pshebylo, Riversdale Business Improvement District, Saskatoon
Theresa Reesor, Historic Reesor Ranch, Maple Creek
Kristy Thienes, Harvest Eatery, Shaunavon
Jesse Tiefenbach, d3h Hotels Inc., Saskatoon
Amanda Wapass-Griffin, Saskatchewan Indian Gaming Authority, Saskatoon



Selling Saskatchewan

Saskatchewan commands attention at Rendez-vous Canada



Saskatchewan contingent at Rendez-vous Canada

Saskatchewan has a reputation for offering remarkable hospitality and memorable experiences to visitors. Tourism Saskatchewan takes this trademark sense of welcome to travel marketplaces and industry events. Saskatchewan made a bold statement, once again, at Rendez-vous Canada (RVC), the nation's premier international travel trade marketplace that was held in Toronto on May 28-31.

The annual showcase assembles nearly 2,000 buyers and sellers from Destination Canada's core markets and tourism industry representatives from across the country. A busy week of prescheduled meetings, market updates and networking ensues. Tourism Saskatchewan conducted 150 appointments with travel trade buyers and media from China, Germany, India, Japan, U.K., U.S. and Canada. Several Saskatchewan industry partners attended, including Manitou Springs Resort & Mineral Spa, Lloyd Lake Lodge, RCMP Heritage Centre, Tourism Saskatoon and Wanuskewin Heritage Park.



Grasslands National Park backdrop attracts attention

Standing out in the RVC atmosphere demands some creativity. In 2018, the popular Saskatchewan Experience Suite injected a dose of nature and the outdoors into the Halifax Convention Centre. Tourism Saskatchewan increased the stakes this year with a dramatic display highlighting the province's tourism brand pillars – land and sky; time and space; and community.

A 56-ft. backlit photomural of Grasslands National Park was a crowd pleaser and natural conversation starter. The spectacular image set Saskatchewan's booth area apart from competitors and enticed guests. Once inside the distinctly Saskatchewan space, they were treated to warm hospitality and themed tastes of the province, including sea buckthorn chai cider, walleye sliders and morel mushroom tarts.

Saskatchewan Travel Guide created for Chinese market

Tourism Saskatchewan's partnership with the Tourism Industry Association of Canada (TIAC) enables the province to gain a stake in the growing market of travellers from China. Recent figures from Statistics Canada showed that air arrivals to Saskatchewan from China increased 16 per cent in 2018. The growth was partly due to the 2018 Canada-China Year of Tourism, celebrated by governments of the two nations.

A new Saskatchewan travel guide designed for Chinese travellers was completed in time for Rendez-vous Canada (RVC) on May 28-31. Tourism Saskatchewan designed a colourful,

20-page resource that articulates the province's unique selling proposition and compelling brand pillars: land and sky; time and space; and community.

Saskatchewan has a number of natural assets that resonate with the Chinese market and differentiate the province from competitors. These assets include fields of waving wheat and blooming canola and flax, wide-open prairie landscapes, dramatic skies and scenic lakes. Impressive photography captures the essence of Saskatchewan and complements the copy and messaging. Details about education and



business opportunities in Saskatchewan are also included.

The guide was well-received at RVC by travel buyers who appreciate quality, comprehensive information to educate their staff and promote travel to Saskatchewan.

What's in a Postal Code?



Tunnels of Moose Jaw

In the Winter 2019 issue of *Going Places*, Tourism Saskatchewan emphasized the importance of collecting consumer information. Postal codes, in particular, are links to a wealth of information about markets and customers. Collecting postal code data benefits various types and sizes of businesses, and is particularly valuable to tourism operators, organizations, events and attractions.

Tourism Saskatchewan has partnered with Destination Canada (DC) and other provinces and territories to licence two powerful postal code-based segmentation systems: DC's Explorer Quotient (EQ) and PRIZM5 by Environics Analytics.



How does market segmentation work?

PRIZM defines consumers based on their neighbourhood (at the postal code or ZIP code level) and enables more focused marketing efforts. It provides marketers with a better understanding of their customers and insights on how to reach and appeal to them.

The system classifies 850,000 Canadian postal codes into 68 unique lifestyle segments by integrating geographic, demographic and psychographic data modelled to postal codes. Each segment has its own unique profile, which captures demographics, lifestyle characteristics, consumer behavior, and settlement patterns in Canada.

The 68 PRIZM segments are mapped to one of the nine DC Explorer Quotient® EQ Traveller Profiles. The EQ system emphasizes the importance of traveller segmentation based on their psychological characteristics, such as their attitudes, beliefs, values, motivations and behaviours. At a provincial or community level, its use enables tourism organizations and businesses to understand what drives people to choose a destination and why different travellers seek out different experiences.

Segmentation in action: Tunnels of Moose Jaw

Since opening its doors in 2000, the Tunnels of Moose Jaw *Chicago Connection* and *Passage to Fortune* tours have attracted thousands of guests from all over the world. A third tour is currently in development and will be unveiled in 2020. General Manager Jeff Grajczyk reached out to Tourism Saskatchewan for help with identifying new marketing tactics and opportunities to grow the customer base.

A market segmentation study was undertaken using postal codes collected from the Tunnels of Moose Jaw's online ticketing system. The analysis revealed the Authentic Experiencer EQ Type as a market with strong growth potential. Authentic Experiencers are typically understated travellers who are looking for authentic, tangible experiences. They have a particular interest in understanding the history of places that they visit.

Tourism Saskatchewan used the data to create customized maps of top geographic markets, pinpointing neighbourhoods with the highest concentrations of Authentic Experiencers. The analysis also provided insights into the recreational and leisure interests of visitors. With this valuable information in hand, Tunnels of Moose Jaw can leverage options with other attractions to cross promote experiences that will motivate visitors to spend more time in Moose Jaw.

Tourism Saskatchewan welcomes inquiries from tourism businesses that are collecting postal codes and wish to participate in a segmentation study. Contact Jeannette Lye at 306-787-9556, jeannette.lye@tourismsask.com.

Top Five Tips for Collecting Consumer Information

Check out Top Five Tips for Collecting Consumer Information, available on Industry.TourismSaskatchewan.com.

Put the advice into practice during the busy summer travel season.



In Development

Indigenous tourism AWEshop held in Cypress Hills



AWEshop participants gather at Historic Reesor Ranch

Tourism Saskatchewan hosted an Indigenous tourism AWEshop on May 7-8 at Historic Reesor Ranch, located high in the Cypress Hills. The event built on the foundation of experiential tourism AWEshops previously delivered to a number of Saskatchewan operators.

AWEshops engage participants in an immersive, interactive forum that generates ideas and concepts for distinct, authentic tourism product offerings. Operators are introduced to Left Field philosophy, which encourages a focus on the small details to create unexpected, memorable guest experiences.

Historic Reesor Ranch proved an ideal setting for the two-day session that involved representatives of Cowessess First Nation/Last Oak Golf & Country Club, Beardsley's & Okemasis' Cree Nation, Nekaneet First Nation and Whitecap Dakota First Nation.

Ranch owners Scott and Theresa Reesor have earned national recognition for their exceptional service, business practices and guest experiences. Their property provided a nurturing atmosphere for both classroom learning and hands-on experiences. Historic Reesor Ranch closely represents the environment characteristic of many Indigenous tourism

experiences – remote outdoor setting, natural surroundings, authentic, unique accommodations and a focus on storytelling, history and traditions.

AWEshop participants were introduced to Left Field coaching by consultants Jill Vandal (the Tourism Company) and Chris Hughes (BC Hughes). The coaching phase was designed with flexibility to meet the participating operators' needs and varying levels of market-readiness. The experience also provided Historic Reesor Ranch with an opportunity to receive feedback on two experiences currently offered: Wine in the West Tour and Hanging Out With Horses.

AWEshops are an opportunity to engage in networking and idea sharing, and examine challenges and opportunities. Operators involved in the May assembly brought forward their vision for welcoming guests to their communities and for storytelling that enriches the visitor experience.

Feedback is an essential part of the process and helps plan next steps and future events. Participants valued the material covered and expressed their appreciation of the knowledge and inspiration provided to them.

Event Hosting Program open for submissions

Tourism Saskatchewan reminds communities and organizations hosting tourism events to submit their application to the Event Hosting Program by September 30, 2019. Funding is available in four categories; Community Annual Tourism Events, Marquee Annual Tourism Events, National and International Tourism Events (Tier 1 and Tier 2 Sport and Culture), and Special Tourism Projects. To inquire about the program or application process, contact Tyler Lloyd at 306-787-5525, tyler.lloyd@tourismsask.com.

SPECIAL EVENT SERIES OFFERED ONLINE

The new, seven-course Special Events Series is available online at stec.com. The series covers fundamental information that takes the guesswork out of event planning. The training is based on proven skills recognized by *emerit* National Occupational Standards. Content was developed with the assistance of some of Saskatchewan's most successful event planners.

Extensive industry validation consultations yielded independent advice about business and community needs and goals.

The series includes a free download of the Special Events Toolkit, which contains two dozen templates and forms. The resources guide organizers through every stage of the process, including the completion of a business plan, critical checklists, and more.

TOP FIVE TIPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL EVENT FUNDING APPLICATION

Tourism Saskatchewan's Event Hosting Program receives hundreds of applications. With so many events vying for the limited available support, crafting the best possible proposal is vital. Here are some tips for completing an application that will sell your event to funding committees.

1. DO YOUR HOMEWORK

Every funding organization has stated objectives that it is trying to reach with its programs. Research those objectives and tailor your application accordingly. Read the guidelines thoroughly. If you do not understand something, call and ask for clarification.

2. CRAFT A PERSUASIVE, INTERESTING DOCUMENT

Adjudicators often read dozens of applications. They can easily lose sight of the proposal if it is hidden beneath "PR" rhetoric, topics unrelated to the project or past grievances with stakeholders. Place the main idea at the beginning of each paragraph, and consider these style tips:

- Be clear and direct.
- Avoid acronyms and jargon.
- Speak/write in third-person (avoid "we" and "I").
- Do not copy other's work or use a grant template from another proposal.
- Use citations and quotations correctly. Do not plagiarize.
- Use action verbs.
- Be positive. Applications are not an appropriate forum for complaints, past grievances or "tales of woe."
- Include page numbers to help grantors move through your proposal easily.

3. OBEY THE THREE Cs – CONCISE, CLEAR AND COMPLETE

The goal of the application should be to provide a complete reckoning of what is to be done, as briefly as possible. The proposal should be self-contained – do not rely on appendices and supplements. Specify the scope of the application upfront and make sure it is realistic to the amount requested. Match your ask with an expense line in your budget. Show funders that the money is going to be used for a specific purpose.

Avoid proposing too much. Focus on one aspect of the event (e.g. marketing) and solidify the arguments for that area alone. Use formatting (boldface, formatted lists, etc.) to your advantage. Emphasize and restate your key points where appropriate. Start each section with a summary of the key points.

4. THE 5 Ws (AND ONE H)

The person reading your proposal needs to understand these aspects of your event:

Who: Describe your organization, affirm why you are qualified to run the event/project and list any partners who will be involved.

What: Identify the challenge, need or opportunity being addressed.

When: List the dates, length of the project and any notable milestones.

Where: Identify the community/location and confirmed facilities/spaces.

Why: State the goals and objectives of the event/project.

How: State what will occur, what you will need to fulfil your plans and objectives, and how success will be determined (this will form the bulk of your proposal).

5. USE FACTS – SHOW THAT YOU CAN MEASURE RESULTS

The grantor will be more likely to fund projects that have specific measures in place for both quantitative (based on numbers) and qualitative (based on people) feedback. Show potential funders how you will measure the success of the project.

Field Representatives welcome inquiries

Tourism Saskatchewan's Field Operations department plays an important role in fostering connections with tourism operators and communities throughout the province. Field Representatives meet regularly with industry stakeholders to share information about programs and services that benefit business and contribute to tourism growth.

For information or to request a meeting with a Field Representative, contact the following:

- Bob Kadis (Saskatoon and Regina inquiries), 306-933-5903/306-221-2642, bob.kadis@tourismsask.com

- Corrina Kapeller, East Central Office, 306-769-8850, (fax) 306-769-8804, corrina.kapeller@tourismsask.com

- Kevin Sawicki, Northern Office, 306-519-1513, kevin.sawacki@tourismsask.com

STEC News

Destination Employment opens doors to job opportunities

Tourism Saskatchewan, through its education department – the Saskatchewan Tourism Education Council (STEC) – is a proud partner in the Destination Employment program, which helps newcomers to Canada gain meaningful employment in the tourism sector.

Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada launched the three-year pilot program in June 2018, in partnership with Tourism HR Canada and the Hotel Association of Canada. Saskatchewan was among five regions chosen to receive funding for the program. Delivery of the program in the province is led by STEC, working with the Saskatchewan Hotel and Hospitality Association (SHHA) and other partners.

Tourism is one of the world's most rapidly growing sectors. Maintaining an adequate, skilled labour force is a challenge. Estimated growth in tourism will require the creation of more than 500,000 jobs between now and 2035. At the current rate of labour force growth, that total will fall short by nearly 200,000 positions, thereby limiting the expansion of the industry and compromising service levels.

Destination Employment assists hoteliers and accommodation businesses with attracting new employees and retaining valuable staff. The benefits are wide reaching and enrich communities through increased economic activity, greater opportunities for Saskatchewan residents and a more diverse tourism sector that provides exceptional service.



Day 1 of classes for Destination Employment participants in Saskatoon

Delivery partners working with STEC include the Saskatoon and Regina Open Door Societies and the Saskatoon Industry Education Council. Currently, 10 Saskatchewan businesses are active employers in Destination Employment. The SHHA plays a role in identifying hotels that wish to participate.

Fifty-seven individuals, selected by the delivery agencies, recently completed the program. At the end of training, program participants are matched to employers.

By supporting them in areas of language proficiency, workplace safety concepts and employment-related skills, Destination Employment positions some of Canada's most vulnerable residents on a pathway to stable employment and job advancement.

"It is a privilege for STEC to lead this initiative in Saskatchewan and work with people from around the world who have come to Canada for a new start," Carol Lumb, Director of STEC, said. "They bring a wealth of knowledge and skills with them that strengthen Saskatchewan's tourism sector."

Announcing Employers of Choice for 2019

The Employer of Choice (EOC) program, administered by STEC, encourages businesses to engage in best practices, improve human resources practices and be leaders in the province's tourism sector. It recognizes employers whose actions make Saskatchewan a welcoming, service-driven destination. Employers of Choice are positioned to attract and retain employees who are highly skilled, take pride in their work and provide exceptional service and experiences.

The EOC program receives ongoing and periodic evaluations to ensure that it remains relevant to employers and beneficial to employees. Updates to the program in 2018 were made after consultation with the Alberta Hotel and Lodging Association. Following the application closure in December, the Edwards School of Business was engaged to undertake a review of the program for 2019. A survey tool used by EOC applicants was distributed to employers. Tourism Saskatchewan appreciates the feedback shared by industry.

Twenty-nine Saskatchewan businesses and organizations were designated the Employers of Choice for 2019.

Congratulations to the following:

- CAA Saskatchewan
- Canalta Hotels
 - Canalta Assiniboia
 - Canalta Esterhazy
 - Canalta Humboldt
 - Canalta Kindersley
 - Canalta Martensville
 - Canalta Melfort
 - Canalta Moosomin
 - Canalta Shaunavon
 - Canalta Tisdale
 - Canalta Weyburn
 - Ramada Weyburn

- d3h Hotels Inc. (Dimension 3 Hospitality)
 - Days Inn Regina Airport West
 - Days Inn Regina Eastgate*
 - Home Inn & Suites Regina Airport
 - Home Inn & Suites Saskatoon
 - Home Inn & Suites Swift Current
 - Home Inn & Suites Yorkton
 - HomeSuites Regina
 - Delta Hotels by Marriott Bessborough
 - Delta Hotels by Marriott Saskatoon Downtown*
 - DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel & Conference Centre Regina
 - Gold Eagle Lodge, North Battleford
 - MasterBuilt Hotels
 - Microtel Inn & Suites Estevan
 - Microtel Inn & Suites Lloydminster
 - Microtel Inn & Suites Weyburn
 - Prairieland Park*
 - Sheraton Cavalier Saskatoon Hotel
 - Tourism Saskatchewan
- *Employer of Choice since 2010



The Employer of Choice program is available to all Saskatchewan tourism businesses. For information, contact Brenda Robertson at 306-933-7466, brenda.robertson@tourismsask.com.

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 2019. In this issue, Tourism Saskatchewan salutes three award winners.



Wheatland Express, Cudworth/Wakaw, Business Rookie of the Year Award

*Sponsored by the Saskatchewan Roughrider
Football Club*

Wheatland Express is central Saskatchewan's exclusive excursion and event passenger train that connects the communities of Cudworth and Wakaw. The not-for-profit company is aimed at generating tourism, economic and employment opportunities for local communities, and providing first-rate attractions and events to visitors from Saskatchewan and beyond. Wheatland Express provides a made-in-Saskatchewan experience and collaborates with local partners to showcase the province's culture, services and talents. Eight tours for approximately 800 guests were initially planned for the inaugural season, which was scheduled to end in September. Overwhelming ticket demand required additional scheduling and, by the end of 2018, 25 tours hosted nearly 4,000 guests. The expanded season included The Magical Winter Express, a new winter experience that brought more than 1,000 visitors to Wakaw over four days in December. Visit wheatlandexpress.ca to book passage in 2019.

Brenda Peterson, Parks Canada, Grasslands National Park, Employee of the Year Award

Sponsored by Harvard Broadcasting

Brenda Peterson is the Visitor Experience Lead for the East Block of Grasslands National Park, but wears many other "hats" for the greater good of the park and the community. She plays an invaluable role as Interpretation Coordinator, Quality Visitor Experience trainer, Park Duty Officer and Fire Patrol in the East Block. Peterson leads by example, is highly motivated and always goes the extra mile. She works tirelessly to improve services in the park, evident through the positive feedback received, as well as the steady increase in visitor numbers and revenue year after year. She has been instrumental in nurturing partnerships with the Royal Saskatchewan Museum, Royal Astronomical Society, Wood Mountain Wagon Train, Wood Mountain Historical Society, local rural municipalities and operators.

Gold Eagle Casino, Saskatchewan Indian Gaming Authority, North Battleford, Employer of the Year Award

Sponsored by Regina Airport Authority

Since 1996, Gold Eagle Casino has been a premier entertainment source for the Battlefords and tourist destination that regularly draws over 28,000 visitors a month from surrounding provinces and the local area. It is part of the family of First Nations-themed casinos, owned and operated by the Saskatchewan Indian Gaming Authority (SIGA). The casino is one of the largest employers in the Battlefords, employing over 300 people. With a mandate to employ an 80 per cent First Nations workforce, SIGA has taken pride in being an industry leader in engaging and growing First Nations people by providing employment and development opportunities. The entertainment company invests in its people and is committed to cultivating the talent of employees. Through robust learning and professional development programs, health and wellness initiatives and opportunities for career advancement, SIGA builds an engaged workforce and an enviable workplace culture.

Tourism Trends

Skift research report offers food for thought



Avenue Restaurant and Bar, Regina

Global tourism research company Skift released an interesting report in February titled *The New Era of Food Tourism: Trends and Best Practices for Stakeholders*. The document provides some basic definitions, and comments on the evolution of food tourism. It answers questions about who should be involved in, and benefits from, food tourism. The report also shares best practices and industry success stories.

Food and drink experiences have and always will be a significant part of tourism. The World Food Travel Association explains it simply as “Everyone eats and drinks, so food and drink products are relevant to 100 per cent of visitors or customers.”

The popularity of food tourism is rising dramatically. TripAdvisor data for 2017 revealed 57 per cent growth in bookings for food tours and cooking classes (Skift, p11). Travel spending on food and drink in the U.S. has seen 5.8 per cent compound annual growth since 2012, and accounted for 25 per cent of consumer travel expenditures in 2017.

The report highlights the distinction between “foodies” and “food connected consumers” – who view “cooking and eating as fun experiences and as opportunities to explore.” Citing the Culinary Tourism Alliance, the shift in marketing to the broader group is explained:

“No longer are destinations concentrating on a very small percentage, hyper-niche market of foodies and gastronomic interested people . . . but they’re starting to understand that any and all experiences can often be enhanced through food and drink.” (p14)

Skift survey results illustrate the point, with several casual categories of food and drink experiences enjoyed while travelling outranking gourmet or upscale experiences. Most appealing were markets, festivals and specialty grocers, preferred by 46 per cent of recent travellers. Gastropubs, burgers and beer followed at 38 per cent. (p15)

Two main groups of food tourists, deliberate and incidental, are explained. Deliberate food tourists will carefully plan out their trip to include as many food experiences as possible. Incidental food tourists may be travelling for different reasons, such as visiting friends and family or attending conferences. They are still considered “food connected consumers” for their

appreciation of food and their interest in seeking food- and/or drink-related experiences in their free time. (p17)

The report lists ten best practices for operators and stakeholders seeking to “develop, promote, and/or participate in their region’s food tourism scene.” Tourism Saskatchewan has pulled out insights relevant to the province’s food tourism landscape and its potential for growth.

One-size does not fit all

Local flavours and authentic experiences differ from place to place. Processes for developing and promoting food tourism also vary. It is important for destinations and stakeholders to identify their food tourists (Deliberate or Incidental?), determine if the existing experiences are enough to attract and please them, and know if offerings are being communicated clearly. Product development may be required in some locations, while in other instances, better messaging may be all that is needed.

Roles and partnerships

Stakeholders, in addition to destination marketing organizations (DMOs), have an active role in developing and promoting food tourism. Consider all the players. Hotels, for example, are often omitted from food tourism conversations but can play an important part in the food scene by bringing local character and cuisine into properties or facilitating opportunities for guests to have food tourism experiences in the community.

Partnerships and collaboration are key. Organizations and associations, like DMOs, have the ability to introduce stakeholders and foster collaboration. It takes commitment from operators and stakeholders to deliver on the promise and ensure memorable visitor experiences.

Focus on unique and authentic

There is an understanding in tourism that “your competition is whoever is doing the same thing as you, but closer to the traveller’s home.” It is important to focus on and communicate the uniqueness of the experiences and the cuisine of a destination. “When food businesses focus on their destination’s true, unique specialties, it encourages exploration into less commonly visited places.” (p32-33)

The term “authentic” can be interpreted in many ways. It is important for stakeholders to understand what authentic means locally – What elements of a region’s cuisine are truly authentic and should be a focus? What opportunities can be created around these authentic, locally produced products?

Be collaborate, not competitive

Collaboration among stakeholders can make an area a food tourism destination. According to the *6+ Gastro-Cluster Destination Development Model* – “if at least six food tourism attractions in a two hour radius co-market themselves under a single brand image, it increases the likelihood that food tourists will consider the area worthy of a trip.” (p36)

Think beyond tourists

Locals matter. Tourism “ebbs and flows” and there is no guarantee of a steady stream of visitors from elsewhere. Local and domestic travellers are willing participants in food tours, hands-on activities and unique offerings. They are a critical market not be overlooked.

Sources:

Skift research. *The New Era of Food Tourism: Trends and Best Practices for Stakeholders*, 2019.

World Food Travel Association. *Have Fork Will Travel: A Practical Handbook for Food & Drink Professionals*, 2014.

Tools offered for measuring food tourism market-readiness

At the HOST Saskatchewan Conference in April, keynote speaker Rebecca Mackenzie provided delegates with interesting food for thought on developing food tourism and creating quality taste experiences that attract and delight travellers.

Mackenzie is President and CEO of the Culinary Tourism Alliance (CTA). She granted Tourism Saskatchewan permission to share the CTA’s Food Tourism Market-Ready Checklist (reprinted below), which was available to HOST Conference delegates. The checklist is a helpful tool for identifying strengths and determining areas for improvement. Sample questions help operators clearly assess whether they have achieved market-readiness or still have some work ahead. Suggested activities encourage staff engagement and partnerships.

Mackenzie also shared her PowerPoint presentation *A Recipe for Developing a Taste of Place*, available on industry.tourismsaskatchewan.com under the menu heading: Industry Events and Presentations. Another valuable CTA tool is GROW FOOD TOURISM, which offers services to bridge the gap between food and drink initiatives and travel industries. Visit growfoodtourism.com to learn more.

FOOD TOURISM MARKET-READY CHECKLIST

1. ATTRACTING AND WELCOMING VISITORS

- ☐ Do we have an attractive, mobile-friendly website with maps, directions and high quality photos?
- ☐ Do we post our hours of operation and adhere to them?
- ☐ Do we have visible signage and route markers to direct visitors?
- ☐ Do we have a dedicated retail space for customers to purchase our products? Is it inviting?

Play tourist: Step into your business as if it is your first visit. Record your impressions.

2. EMPOWERING YOUR STAFF

- ☐ Is there staff present to greet the visitor within seconds?
- ☐ Is our staff knowledgeable and passionate about our products? Do we communicate our story and heritage with pride?
- ☐ Do we offer tastings, field trips and/or service training to educate our staff? Do we invite our suppliers to lead tastings?
- ☐ Do we encourage our staff to promote other “Must Visit” businesses in the region?

Start a friendly competition between your staff to see who can sell the most of a special item. Winner gets dinner at a local restaurant or tour of a local craft brewery.

3. TELLING YOUR STORY

- ☐ Do we offer a unique “taste of place” that is an authentic expression of the region?
- ☐ Is our unique story and “taste of place” evident to the visitor, online and in person?
- ☐ Do we serve local food and/or beverages?

Chalk it up! Use a blackboard to share your seasonal specials and promotions.

- ☐ Does our retail space offer products from the region? From Saskatchewan?
- ☐ Do we promote where our ingredients/products are sourced from?
- ☐ Do we call out the specific growers and producers we work with?

Providing more information about a supplier, ingredient or product will build your credibility in the eyes of your customer.

- ☐ Are we making the most of the food/drink available to us locally?
- ☐ Do we promote our partnerships within the local food community?

4. ENRICHING THE VISITOR EXPERIENCE

Become a triple threat – offer your customers chances to taste, tour and take away.

- ☐ Do we offer tastings and samplings on our property?
- ☐ Do we have educational signage?
- ☐ Do we offer any classes or educational opportunities?

Ask for help. Partner with other businesses to provide these experiences, overcome capacity issues and leverage their unique skills. Bonus – the consumer loves collaborations.

- ☐ Do we offer entertainment?
- ☐ Do we host any tours? Do we participate as a stop on a tour?
- ☐ Do we host any events onsite?

5. KEEPING VISITORS ENGAGED

- ☐ Are we active on social media? (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram...)
- ☐ Are we active on social review sites? (TripAdvisor, Yelp, Booking.com...)
- ☐ Do we display our social media handles onsite and encourage customers to tag/share their experience?
- ☐ Do we offer incentives, run contests or promotions?
- ☐ Do we ask our customers for feedback and suggestions for what they would like to see at our business?
- ☐ Do we participate in off-site events? Do we promote this involvement?

Go content crazy! Enlist your staff to write for your business’ blog. Share customer photos on your website. User-generated content lets you do more storytelling and increases consumer engagement.

Around the Province

Saskatchewan Tourism Week celebrated from May 26-June 1

Communities throughout Saskatchewan celebrated Saskatchewan Tourism Week. Public barbecues, community tours, open houses, and contests and promotions acknowledged the week that was officially proclaimed by the Government of Saskatchewan.

Festivities in the north included a barbecue in La Ronge at the Woodlands & Waterways Regional Visitor Centre. In Prince Albert, there was live entertainment, museum tours, food trucks onsite and product and service demonstrations from local tourism businesses.

Waskesiu & Area Wilderness Region festivities included numerous promotions from partner businesses, including Grey Owl Center, Waskesiu Marina Adventure Centre, Little AL's Mini Golf, Lake Country Cottage Restaurant, Ambrose Grocery, Big River Regional Park, Sturgeon River Ranch, Elk Ridge Resort and SK Jeep Tours. Christopher Lake held a free community barbecue.

The east central area was buzzing with activity throughout the week. Carrot River hosted Paddle Day in Saskatchewan's OUTBACK. An afternoon paddle on the Petaigan River ended with a free hot dog roast at the Carrot River Community Square. More than 30 kayakers took part in the event. Hudson Bay Regional Park and Hudson Bay Heritage Park offered free entry on designated days. Visitors to the Hudson Bay Museum were treated to cake and refreshments. A geocache hunt took participants on an adventure through the town.

In Yorkton, the Get on the Bus FAM Tour travelled to various attractions through the city. Tourism Yorkton also launched its Great Trail Treasure Hunt.

Melville kicked off a week-long schedule of events with an open house at the Tourism Melville office in the Horizon Credit Union Centre. Attendees were treated to a barbecue, Kerr's Bouncers and the Rodz & Relics Car Show. Free batting cages and a meet and greet with the Melville Millionaires Baseball Team, as well as a WMBL game against the Yorkton Cardinals were highlights during the week. Other activities included free family golf, fishing, museums tours and tennis lessons.

The Watrous Manitou Marketing Group, in partnership with Manitou Springs Resort and Mineral Spa, hosted a Saskatchewan Tourism Week



Paddle Day in Saskatchewan's OUTBACK, held during Saskatchewan Tourism Week

barbecue on the outdoor patio at the resort in Manitou Beach. Approximately 200 people attended the event.

In Cudworth, Wheatland Express Excursion Train kicked off its 2019 season with live music courtesy of David James & Big River. The Johnny Cash-themed excursion and dinner show departed the Cudworth Heritage Museum – Railway Station with a sold out crowd.

In the south, Coronach Tourism led Big Muddy Tours. The three-hour tours took visitors to Paisley Brook School, Outlaw Caves and Turtle Effigy. The Coronach District Museum held a pancake breakfast, make your own sundae event and open house.

The Town of Leader hosted a bus tour throughout the area and community barbecue at the Leader Tourist Caboose. The bus tour focused on unique Saskatchewan sites, such as the Great Sandhills, Checkboard Hill, South Saskatchewan River, Blumenfeld Church and St. John's School.

The community of Shaunavon previewed its Saturday in the Park events with live music and entertainment and a farmers'/artisan market at Memorial Park. The Sandy Shores Resort at Lake Diefenbaker had an open house with tours of the development and water treatment plant, nature walk, prize draws and a photo contest.

Saskatchewan Flavours fosters culinary, community and agricultural connections

Saskatchewan Flavours is a new initiative of the Regina Exhibition Association Limited (REAL), designed to inspire new culinary experiences and enrich connections between REAL guests, stakeholders, local communities and Saskatchewan's agricultural industry. Details include a commitment to increasing the use of local ingredients in food and beverage offers at Evraz Place by 5 per cent annually.

Originally formed in 1884 as the Assiniboia Agricultural Society, REAL has a proud history of showcasing Saskatchewan agricultural products and supporting the industry. In its news release and on its website, REAL expresses the commitment to working with local producers, sharing their stories and building connections with other businesses.

To view the Saskatchewan Flavours menu and meet some of the participating producers, visit evrazplace.com/services/saskatchewan-flavours.

"Opportunities exist to build the next generation of chefs, offer farm-to-table cooking classes, provide more access to agricultural programming – all with the goal of giving Saskatchewan people a better understanding of and appreciation for where our food comes from." -
EVRAZ PLACE

A Saskatchewan wonderful winter

Submitted by Saskatchewanwanderer Zane Buchanan

I'll never cease to find the novelty in the following sentence: "I'm Zane Buchanan, and I'm your 2019 Saskatchewanwanderer." I've been actively immersing myself in this position for nearly five months now and the idea that THIS is my reality remains incomprehensible.

Now that we have been formally acquainted, I have a confession – although my roots are firmly planted here in the Land of Living Skies, I did temporarily stray off the beaten path. Following my graduation from Greenall High School in Balgonie, I pursued studies and work experience in Vancouver and Toronto, respectively. It was on that soul-searching mission that I acquired the technical tool-set necessary for this position. More importantly, along the way, I also gained a new appreciation for my home province and a fresh perspective to bring with me on my travels.

Thus far, this position has allowed me to enjoy many outdoor winter activities. I went dogsledding not once, but twice. The first time, I was invited to Fort Qu'Appelle High School where they were hosting and facilitating a Cree workshop lead by Kâniyâsihk Culture Camps – a grassroots not-for-profit camp based out of Ministikwin Lake. Among many other immersive Cree experiences, I was taught to operate a dog sled.

This skillset served me when, on a whim, former Saskatchewanwanderer Andrew Hiltz asked me to join him at Sundogs Excursions, a sled dog camp in the wilderness neighborhood of Anglin Lake. Although I had a wonderful time doing laps around the track at Fort Qu'Appelle High School, it was an entirely different experience gliding through the boreal forest!

While in that neck of the woods I was also given the opportunity to take in the Prince Albert Winter Festival – a seasonal staple for locals and tourists in the area. With 55 years under its belt, the event has established itself as the largest winter festival in Western Canada. During my visit, I tested my less-than-impressive strength in an arm wrestling competition, took a horse-driven sleigh ride, indulged in a fish fry, shopped in the local market



Saskatchewanwanderer Zane Buchanan on a winter adventure with Sundogs Excursions

and disregarded the recommended age of the Kid's Zone. I was even a short-lived contender in the festival's annual King Trapper Competition, where I put my survival instincts to the test (and immediately failed).

Every day I am reminded of my fortune to live in a place as great as Saskatchewan. Even with the unbelievable travel itinerary I have under my belt, I know that the best is yet to come. I can't wait to share it with you!

Join along on my travels by following me on Facebook (facebook.com/skwanderer), Twitter (@[skwanderer](https://twitter.com/skwanderer)) or Instagram (@[saskatchewanwanderer](https://instagram.com/saskatchewanwanderer)).

Making waves in Rowan's Ravine Provincial Park

Submitted by the Ministry of Parks, Culture and Sport

This summer, Rowan's Ravine Provincial Park will be teaming up with Wild Waves Waterpark to take water-based recreation to new heights.

Wild Waves Waterpark is new to the Sask Parks team of private business lessees and will be bringing a fresh and exciting experience to the provincial park system. Wild Waves is a floating inflatable waterpark that includes a 16-ft. jungle, 10-ft. tower, 12-ft. iceberg, 12-ft. teeter-totter, trampoline and many fun and challenging obstacles.

The new addition to Rowan's Ravine Provincial Park is scheduled to open on June 28 and is expected to draw a significant number of visitors, both new and returning. The waterpark will enhance experiences enjoyed by families who regularly camp at the park, and will also attract day visitors who live nearby.

The waterpark is one of the first of its kind in Saskatchewan, and Sask Parks is looking forward to working with the Wild Waves team. More details about the Wild Waves Waterpark can be found on Facebook or at wildwaveswaterpark.ca.

Park lessees, such as Wild Waves Waterpark, are important assets to provincial parks. They provide additional services and amenities, and enrich the visitor experience. There are now more than 100 commercial businesses operating in the provincial parks system. They offer approximately 200 services that range from different types of recreational activities to a variety of fixed-roof accommodations.



Wild Waves Water Park scheduled to open on June 28

Sask Parks recognizes the value that private businesses and services bring, and welcomes new applications. Additional information on the application process can be found at Saskatchewan.ca by searching "develop a business in a provincial park." By working together toward a common goal, Sask Parks and the many private business lessees throughout the provincial park system are able to keep the parks fresh and fun for visitors.

2019 ExploreSask Photo Contest underway



2018 ExploreSask Photo Contest entry, Pense

Tourism Saskatchewan's ExploreSask Photo Contest launched during Saskatchewan Tourism Week on May 26-June 1. Changes to the 2019 contest include refreshed categories and increased prize amounts.

Amateur and professional photographers are encouraged to submit their most striking images that capture the natural wonders of Saskatchewan and tell stories about its people and communities. The six contest categories are:

- **People (#ExploreSaskPeople)** – Portraits of Saskatchewan people from all walks of life enjoying indoor or outdoor activities.
- **Places (#ExploreSaskPlaces)** – Photos that portray the community spirit and liveliness of Saskatchewan cities and towns, including events and festivals, cityscapes, local attractions, dining and urban life.
- **Prairie (#ExploreSaskPrairie)** – Scenic photos from prairie regions; hidden treasures such as valleys, hills and badlands; other natural features displaying the province's diverse geography in any season.
- **Water (#ExploreSaskWater)** – Photography that features Saskatchewan's abundant lakes and rivers.
- **Wildlife (#ExploreSaskWildlife)** – Images that showcase Saskatchewan's beautiful wild animals, birds and insects.

- **Woods (#ExploreSaskWoods)** – Photos that highlight Saskatchewan's diverse forests and trees, from lodgepole pine and aspen groves in the south to the boreal forests of the north.

The prize-winning photographer in each category will receive a \$500 Visa gift card. The Grand Prize winner, selected from the six category winners, will receive an additional \$500 Visa gift card. There will also be up to five honourable mention prizes in each category.

Photographers may also submit entries through Instagram and Twitter by using the [#ExploreSask](#) category hashtags. Submissions will be displayed in an online gallery open for comments or to share with friends.

For complete contest rules and to submit your entry, visit TourismSaskatchewan.com/PhotoContest or call Tourism Saskatchewan toll-free at 1-877-237-2273.

The deadline for entries is September 16, 2019.

Download the contest poster on Industry.TourismSaskatchewan.com (under Industry Events and Presentations). Display it at your business or attraction, and spread the word to visitors.

TOP FIVE TIPS FOR PHOTOGRAPHING YOUR BUSINESS

As more and more travellers consult the internet to plan their next vacation, attractive photographs of your operation are increasingly important for creating a great first impression. Here are a few tips to get you started on producing beautiful images to promote your business and entice customers.

1. MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR GEAR

High-end cameras may rule the roost, but consider the phone in your pocket. Most smartphones are capable of taking great photos, especially if loaded with dedicated photo apps that help you with everything from taking the shot to touching it up afterwards and sharing your results on social media.

2. PICK THE RIGHT SUBJECT

Photos of signs and doors do not tell potential customers much about your business. Show consumers the most attractive aspects of your operation – beautiful landscapes, an impressive fleet of boats, trophy-sized fish, for example. If you take photos of your guests with the intent to use them on your website or elsewhere, get their permission first.

3. TAKE A MOMENT

Before you press the shutter on your camera, check what is in your viewfinder or screen. Is the horizon straight? Is the background free of distracting or unwanted objects? Is the light casting harsh or unflattering shadows on people's faces? Move your subject or shift your point of view, if necessary.

4. INVOLVE YOUR GUESTS (AND GET SOCIAL-MEDIA SAVVY!)

A happy customer is the best advertisement. Encourage visitors to take photos of their stay and share their pictures on Instagram, Twitter or Facebook. Make up your own hashtag for easy sharing or extend your reach with the [#ExploreSask](#) or [#ExploreCanada](#) hashtags.

5. DON'T FORGET VIDEO

Most cameras and smartphones today can record crisp, high-resolution video. Create video clips of your operation and upload them to YouTube. Make your own YouTube channel to keep customers engaged and intrigued. With video, you can create compelling stories that pique customer interest.

Here & There

Top 10 Saskatchewan Bed and Breakfast list announced

The Saskatchewan Bed and Breakfast Association (SBBA) announced the names of the Top 10 accredited member bed and breakfast operations on April 4. All SBBA members are inspected to meet the association's standards. The Top 10 rankings are based on feedback from visitors, collected through guest comment cards. Congratulations to the following:

1. Fir River Ranch, near Hudson Bay, Audrey Stauber
2. Academy Bed & Breakfast, Rosthern, Jill and Stewart Mitchell
3. Gilbertson Guest House, Frontier, Don and Donna Hernberg
4. North Country Bed & Breakfast, near Hudson Bay, Norma and Wyman Jennings
5. Orioles Paradise Bed and Breakfast, Carnduff, Jean Hanson
6. TIE: Historic Reesor Ranch, Cypress Hills area, Scott and Theresa Reesor; and Roadside Retreat, Turtle Lake, Jim and Nancy Range
8. Harbour View Bed & Breakfast, near Midale, Valerie and Meryl Wanner
9. B-Say-Tah Point Bed and Breakfast, near Fort Qu'Appelle, Mike Maier and Eileen Lewko
10. Eagles Wings B&B Retreat and Training Centre, Big River, Anita Turgeon

9 Mile Legacy Brewing Co. and Nokomis Craft Ales declared medal winners

Winners of the Canadian Brewing Awards were announced at a gala celebration on May 4 in Toronto. The gala was the closing event of a three-day conference of Canadian brewers and industry professionals. Saskatoon's 9 Mile Legacy Brewing Co. scored gold for its 9 Mile Ale, entered in the English Style Pale Ale category. Nokomis Craft Ales, located in the village of Nokomis, was awarded the bronze medal in the Imperial Stout category for its Nokomis Imperial Stout.

Darlene Brander named CEO of Wanuskewin Heritage Park

Darlene Brander was introduced as the new CEO of Wanuskewin Heritage Park in January and assumed responsibilities on March 4. The announcement came after a comprehensive national search that garnered interest from a strong field of candidates. Brander held the position of Aboriginal Awareness Co-ordinator at Wanuskewin Heritage Park from 1998-2000. Prior to the announcement in January, she was Director of Human Resources for Athabasca Catering Limited Partnership. She is an active community volunteer and is Chair of the Saskatoon Board of Police Commissioners and serves on the Board of Directors for the Nutrien Wonderhub and the Canadian Association of Police Governance.



Brander rejoins Wanuskewin Heritage Park as the facility continues to move forward with an ambitious renewal project that includes building and programming expansion, grassland restoration and reintroduction of bison to the area. The National Historic Site is on Canada's Tentative List for designation as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.



Scotty the T. rex at the Royal Saskatchewan Museum, Regina

World's largest T. rex now on spectacular display

On May 17, the Royal Saskatchewan Museum (RSM) officially opened its new CN T.rex Gallery and unveiled a recreation of the most terrifying creature ever discovered – Saskatchewan's internationally acclaimed Tyrannosaurus rex, Scotty. An academic paper recently published in *The Anatomical Record* confirmed Scotty's new status as the largest T. rex and largest meat-eating terrestrial creature known to have existed, outsizing the Chicago Field Museum's Sue by 400 kilograms and more than one-half metre in length. The RSM's dynamic new exhibit has brought Scotty to life through multiple stations, including the awe-inspiring recreation of the roar of a T. rex. The original replica of Scotty remains on display at the T.rex Discovery Centre (TRDC) in Eastend, near where its fossilized remains were first discovered by a team of RSM scientists in 1991. Admission is by \$5 donation (\$10 at the TRDC). Check out royalsaskatchewanmuseum.ca for more information.

Saskatchewan and Manitoba travel hotspots featured in new book

In April, travel writers Jenn Smith Nelson and Doug O'Neill released their book *110 Nature Hot Spots in Manitoba and Saskatchewan: The Best Parks, Conservation Areas and Wild Places*, published by Firefly Books. The 224-page resource is an ideal travel companion for nature lovers, outdoor adventurers, bird and wildlife watchers, and plant enthusiasts. Readers will appreciate the striking photography along with details and descriptions of less-travelled areas of Saskatchewan and Manitoba.



Ramada Weyburn receives award

Congratulations to the Ramada Weyburn for receiving a Ramada "Best Of" award by Wyndham Hotels & Resorts. The annual awards recognize properties worldwide. Scoring is based on a property's achievements in terms of quality assurance, guest satisfaction and a consistent Trip Advisor rating of 3.99 or higher. The 78-room Ramada Weyburn is owned and operated by Canalta Hotels, and is among the 29 Saskatchewan tourism businesses that earned Employer of Choice designation for 2019.

Travel Offers generate interest and business

The Travel Offers section on TourismSaskatchewan.com provides a channel to promote unique, authentic product offers that will tempt customers. Tourism operators and businesses can list their offers for free on the consumer website.

Travel offers are an additional and effective way for tourism businesses to extend their season, create shoulder season traffic and drive new business by getting messages in front of travellers already considering a Saskatchewan vacation.

The service is year-round, and options are flexible and varied. A travel offer can include a packaged deal (accommodation, transportation, meals, etc.); value-added incentives, such as attraction passes or a meal included in the price; or discounts for a specific amount or percentage.

Visit TourismSaskatchewan.com/travel-offers for ideas and examples. Give your offer a short, convincing title that evokes a sense of intrigue. Craft a clear, concise description (approximately 100 words), using active, inviting language and including the price/value. An accompanying image should convey the experience offered. Quality photographs that feature people resonate with prospective customers, who may envision themselves enjoying your unique experience.

Consumers want details. Include the start and end dates, and a direct link to your company's web page, where customers can acquire more information and book their travel.

Email information.updates@tourismsask.com to inquire about a Travel Offer.

Going Places is available online.

Issues of the popular industry newsletter (dating back three years) are posted on Tourism Saskatchewan's industry website. To view, download or print past issues, visit Industry.TourismSaskatchewan.com/news/going-places-newsletter.

Industry Events, Opportunities and Resources

INDUSTRY EVENTS

Chinese Travel Trade FAM

July 15-19, 2019 Manitou Beach, Regina, Saskatoon

Destination Canada German FAM

July 15-21, 2019Prince Albert National Park and Missinipe

CanadaFest

July 16-21, 2019London, U.K.

Go Media Canada Pre-tour

August 5-11, 2019.....Grasslands National Park

Go Media Canada

August 11-15, 2019Ottawa, ON

German Travel Trade FAM

August 26-September 1, 2019Southern Saskatchewan

International Indigenous Tourism Conference

November 12-14, 2019Kelowna, BC

Tourism Congress

November 19-20, 2019.....Ottawa, ON

Canadian Tourism Awards

November 20, 2019Ottawa, ON

Event Hosting Program Intake

deadline: September 30, 2019

Information at Industry.TourismSaskatchewan.com/apply-for-funding

Co-operative Advertising Program

deadline: September 30, 2019

Information at Industry.TourismSaskatchewan.com/apply-for-funding

INTAKES AND DEADLINES

Employer of Choice Intake

period: May 1-November 30, 2019

Information at Industry.TourismSaskatchewan.com/business-recognition-programs

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
189 - 1621 Albert Street
Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada
S4P 2S5
E-mail: travel.info@tourismsask.com

TourismSaskatchewan.com
1-877-237-2273

