

connections



The Gentle Island

An E-Newsletter
Connecting Industry
with the Department
of Tourism and Culture

August 2011



Minister's Message

Growing awareness of P.E.I. for long-term benefits

Prince Edward Island has received unprecedented exposure over the last two years.

Of course, all eyes were on Prince Edward Island as we hosted the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge earlier this summer, bringing international attention to our Island.

The visit was followed by the Cavendish Beach Music Festival,

which attracted thousands of fans to hear some of the hottest country music acts perform.

Earlier this year, the Scotties Tournament of Hearts and the ECMAs drew a large number of visitors to our Island, providing a welcome boost to our industry during the winter and spring months. These events follow past successes such as *Live! With Regis and Kelly* and *the Big Break*.

In partnership with industry, we're going to continue to seek new ways to promote our Island. Building awareness of our Island is a long-

term process that will help cement our province's position as a world-class vacation destination. After all, visitors need to have heard of Prince Edward Island, if they're to book a vacation here.

I am confident that with industry and government working together we will continue to grow this important industry. To all of our dedicated operators, thank you for your commitment and hard work.

Honourable Robert Vessey
Minister of Tourism and Culture
Prince Edward Island

Quick Stats YTD to June

FULL TOURISM INDICATOR REPORT:
www.peitac.com www.gov.pe.ca/tourism

TRAFFIC

Bridge	-3.8%
Air	-4.1%
Ferry.....	-6.6%
Cruise Ships	+96.7%

OCCUPANCY

Overnight Stays	+2.7%
Fixed Roof Room-nights Sold	+6.1%
Fixed Roof Occupancy Rate.....	31.5%
Campground Site-nights Sold.....	-14.1%
Campground Occupancy Rate.....	17.5%

VISITOR ORIGINS

Canada	+3.2%
New Brunswick	+8.8%
Nova Scotia.....	+4.4%
Ontario.....	-0.1%
Quebec	-12.5%
United States	-5.7%
International	+11.4%

New initiatives to promote Island as cultural destination

Prince Edward Island's rich cultural heritage is an important contributor to the province's tourism industry. A new cultural action plan has been developed to grow this important sector by identifying new opportunities and enhancing the province's existing cultural offerings, including attractions, festivals, and the vibrant arts' scene. In addition, the Tourism Advisory Council's new five-year strategy includes an objective to heighten Prince Edward Island's status as a leading cultural destination. As part of the cultural action plan, two new initiatives showcasing the province's culture were introduced this summer:

Island Fusion Festival

The Island Fusion Festival is a province-wide event showcasing some of Prince Edward Island's best cultural events, from musical celebrations to visual arts.

The festival, which took place from June 16 to July 3, acted as an umbrella festival for existing events such as the Festival of Small Halls, the Rollo Bay Bluegrass Festival and Canada Day celebrations, among many others.

In partnership with the Tourism Industry Association of Prince Edward Island, the Island Fusion Festival

showcased these events as an Island-wide cultural celebration. Packaging these events together as a single festival will help educate visitors to the fact that Prince Edward Island is a year-long cultural tourism destination.

Island artisans opened their studios to visitors during the festival, sharing the art of their crafts – from potters, wood workers and metal workers, to jewelers, weavers and painters.

Island Fusion Festival is intended to be a great way to kick-start the summer and create some excitement during a traditionally quieter part of the summer season. www.tourismpei.com/fusion

Arts and Heritage Trail

The Department of Tourism and Culture, in partnership with the Tourism Industry Association of P.E.I. and the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency,

has created an Arts and Heritage Trail to profile the quality of Island art and heritage that has defined the values and lifestyle of Islanders.

Building on the success of the Flavours Trail, the Arts and Heritage Trail guided visitors to the cultural offerings on Prince Edward Island – from museums and concert halls to the shops and studios of Island artists – from tip-to-tip of the province.

The trail identifies existing cultural destinations, as well as promotes various venues and sites along the province's coastal drives. Each destination is clearly marked with a quilt board sign specifically designed to mark its participation in the trail.

www.tourismpei.com/fusion

important dates & info

September 2-25

Fall Flavours Festival



Tourism and Culture Minister Robert Vessey talks about the new Island Fusion Festival with potter Cindy Lentz (far left), fiddler Cynthia MacLeod (second from left), and piper Carsen Campbell.

New model of funding for regional tourism associations

In consultation with industry and after looking at best practices elsewhere, the Department of Tourism and Culture has developed a new funding and partnership model for regional tourism associations.

Under the new model, government will invest in professional tourism managers to work in six areas of the province.

The new model will also see partnerships form between associations. This will allow the different associations to work more closely together, coordinate their priorities and benefit from each other's successes.

The new North Cape Coastal Partnership Tourism Destination Area includes: Western P.E.I. Tourism Association, Association Touristique Evangeline, and Summerside (offering organizational support). The new Central Coastal Partnership includes: Kensington and Area Tourism Association, Red Sands Tourism Group Inc, and Cavendish Beaches and the Dunes Shores Tourism Association (offering organizational support). The Points East Coastal Partnership is comprised of the associations that formed Island East Tourism Group Inc.

These associations have largely been volunteer-based. Having dedicated managers will allow the



Health Minister Carolyn Bertram (left) and Tourism and Culture Minister Robert Vessey (right) present a cheque to Matthew Jelley, president of the Cavendish Beach and Dunes Shores Tourism Association. The provincial government recently announced a new funding and partnership model for regional tourism associations.

associations to seek new opportunities, build the skills and knowledge of our tourism operators and work on applications, event management and reports.

The three partnership groups will receive \$60,000 to hire a full-time tourism manager, while Summerside, Charlottetown and Cavendish regional

tourism associations will each receive \$45,000 to hire a tourism manager.

This is particularly good news for rural areas and fits nicely with the province's rural strategy. By working together with a professional tourism manager, these regions will be able to draw more

visitors to communities across the Island.

This is a three-year agreement to allow the associations and the department to determine its success.

New five-year strategy identifies five demand generators for tourism growth

The Tourism Advisory Council has released its new five-year strategy designed to promote Prince Edward Island as a world-class destination by focusing on five key demand generators that represent P.E.I.'s best opportunities for growing visitation – the assets and strengths that appeal to our key target markets.

Strategy 2015: Momentum – Invention – Mobilization builds on the success the industry has experienced over the past five years, while laying the groundwork to better anticipate and provide the products and experiences visitors are seeking. The widespread industry consultation resulted in a strategy that recognizes the challenges faced by tourism operators and sets out to address such obstacles as access to capital and labour issues faced by the industry. Heightening the stature of the industry and engaging all operators in the strategy are the two objectives that focus on these industry needs.

The goal of the strategy is to reach \$500 million in direct tourism revenue by 2015. Revenues for 2010 were approximately \$370 million.

The strategy identifies five key areas

that drive the Island's tourism industry and reflect those experiences visitors to the province are looking for: coastal (the defining demand generator), culinary, culture, golf, and meetings and conventions.

Based on consumer research, these areas have been identified as having the greatest potential for return on investment. Moving forward, these areas will be the focus of marketing campaigns, new models of partnership and the development of new products.

Changing market trends, economic conditions, demographics and the competitiveness of the industry present new challenges and opportunities. By focusing on the five key demand generators, industry partners will be able to create experiences and products tailored to the interests of visitors and capitalize on product-market matches.

The importance of the tourism industry to Prince Edward Island can not be understated. In 2010, more than 1.3 million visitors chose the Island as their vacation destination. Tourism accounts for almost seven per cent of the provincial Gross Domestic Product,

generating more than \$42 million in tax revenues for the province.

The tourism industry is built on partnerships. With industry and government working together to implement the necessary actions to fulfill the strategy objectives, it is the vision of the Tourism Advisory Council to make Prince Edward Island the Canadian destination of choice for consumers seeking cultural entertainment, personal enrichment and rejuvenation.

Created in 2004, the Tourism Advisory Council is an industry-led organization that advises the Minister of Tourism and Culture on tourism related research, product development and marketing strategies. The council works with partners at the Department of Tourism and Culture, the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Parks Canada and the Tourism Industry Association of PEI to create shared strategies that promote and enhance Prince Edward Island as a premier tourism destination.

To read the strategy and find out how you can get involved, visit www.peitac.com/2015.



New Chairman for Tourism Advisory Council

John-Anthony Langdale, owner of the Rustico Resort Golf & Tennis Club, was recently welcomed as the new chairman of the Tourism Advisory Council.

He replaces outgoing chairman Kevin Murphy. Other new members of the council include Duke Cormier, Duke Foods; Karen

Hatcher, College of Piping; Brian Howatt, Results Marketing; Brian MacKenzie, Kwik Kopy Printing & Design Centre; and Zubair Siddiqi, Delta Prince Edward. The following members completed their terms: Thom MacMillan, Joan Perrin and Sarah Jane Bell.

***John-Anthony Langdale,
Honourable Robert Vessey,
Kevin Murphy***

