

VISIT SOUTH  
**GEORGIAN BAY**

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Georgian Triangle Tourist Association

# **The Business Case for Regional Tourism**

**Presentation to the:**

**The Town of The Blue Mountains**

# GTTA Mission and Vision

- The mission of the Georgian Triangle Tourist Association (Georgian Triangle) is to lead and develop partnerships aimed at promoting our regional destination.
- The Georgian Triangle region will continually assess our assets, unbridled by political boundaries, and determine likely geographic travel patterns of potential visitors based on a research driven understanding of consumer needs and wants.
- The Georgian Triangle represents tourism for Collingwood, The Blue Mountains and Wasaga Beach and area.



# Strategic Vision

- In 2009, the Georgian Triangle decided to develop a comprehensive, fully integrated Strategic Destination Plan. This Plan would become the roadmap for the future success of our Association and our South Georgian Bay destination region.
- Our Strategic Goal is to optimize the tourism benefits for our region, integrating the interests of our visitors, the visitor community and the visitor industry.
- In order to be successful, we determined that the Georgian Triangle would need to leverage our destination and create a sense of place – a brand promise and experiences. This brand must be unique and relevant in the marketplace.



# Tourism is an Investment

## For Residents,

- Elevates community pride by celebrating what it is we love about where we live.
- Supports a greater number of service and entertainment business for residents that could otherwise not survive on the resident population alone
- Helps bring new and more jobs to our region  
– diversity



# Tourism is an Investment

- **For Business Owners (Tourism & Non-Tourism)**
  - A thriving tourist economy contributes to a positive experience thus fuelling.....
    - Extended stays
    - Increased per capita spending
    - Return visits
    - Viral marketing
    - Greater economic impact
    - Year-round revenues
    - Tax dollars

# Tourism is an Investment

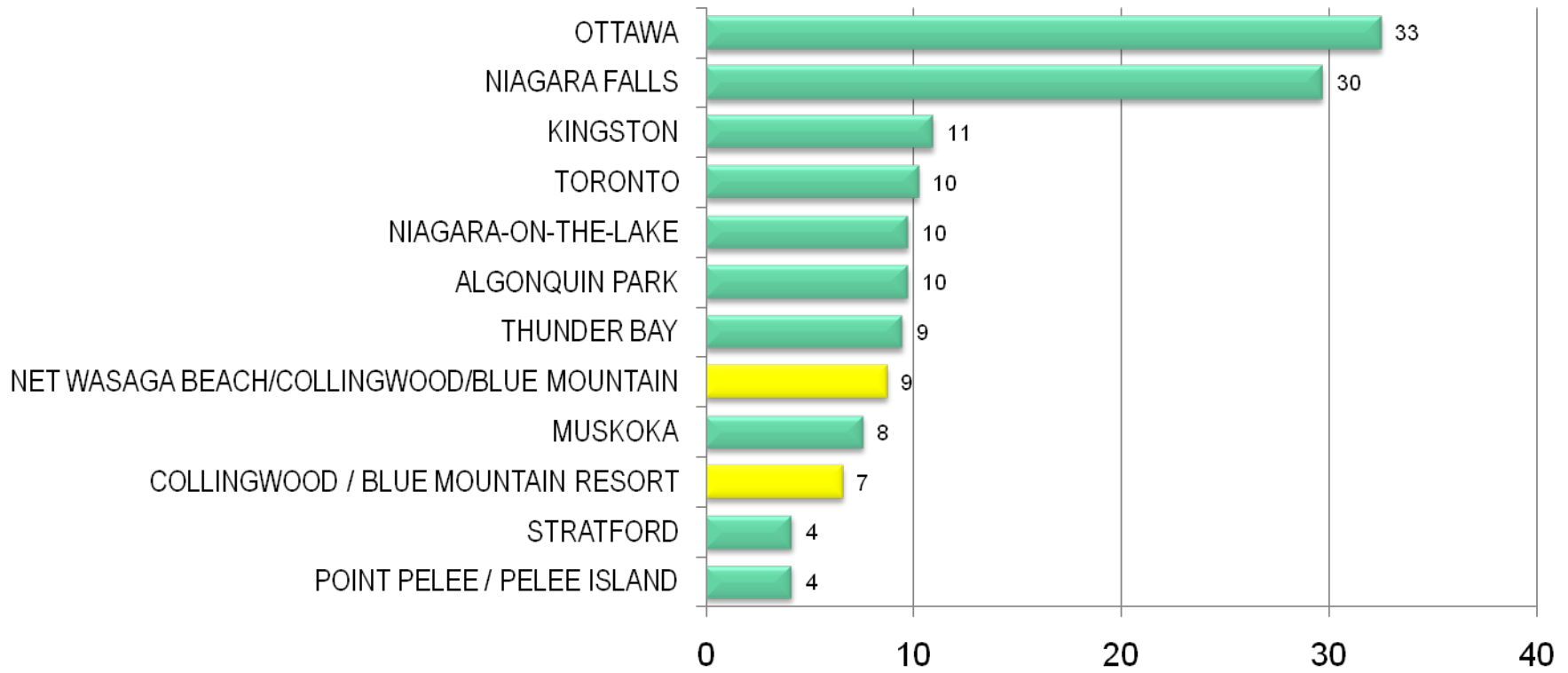
- **Governments – Municipal & Provincial**
  - Tourists dollars reduces the tax burden on residents for infrastructure, municipal and social services bringing incremental revenues and tax dollars to our communities
  - Improves the profile & desirability for business relocation and/or start-ups
    - Bricks & mortar, labour and overheads are fixed
  - Improves the ability of a business to attract and keep its employees
    - Quality of life and experiential offerings
    - Live. Work. Play.

# Background & Purpose

- The Georgian Triangle Tourist Association initiated a Strategic Planning Process with the goal of ensuring that the region builds on past successes, and increases tourist visitation and associated economic impacts.
- To help inform this process, the GTTA commissioned a study by Longwoods International in order to measure consumers' image of familiarity with the region as input into future brand development, including brand positioning.

# Unaided Brand Awareness\*

Base: Residents of Ontario



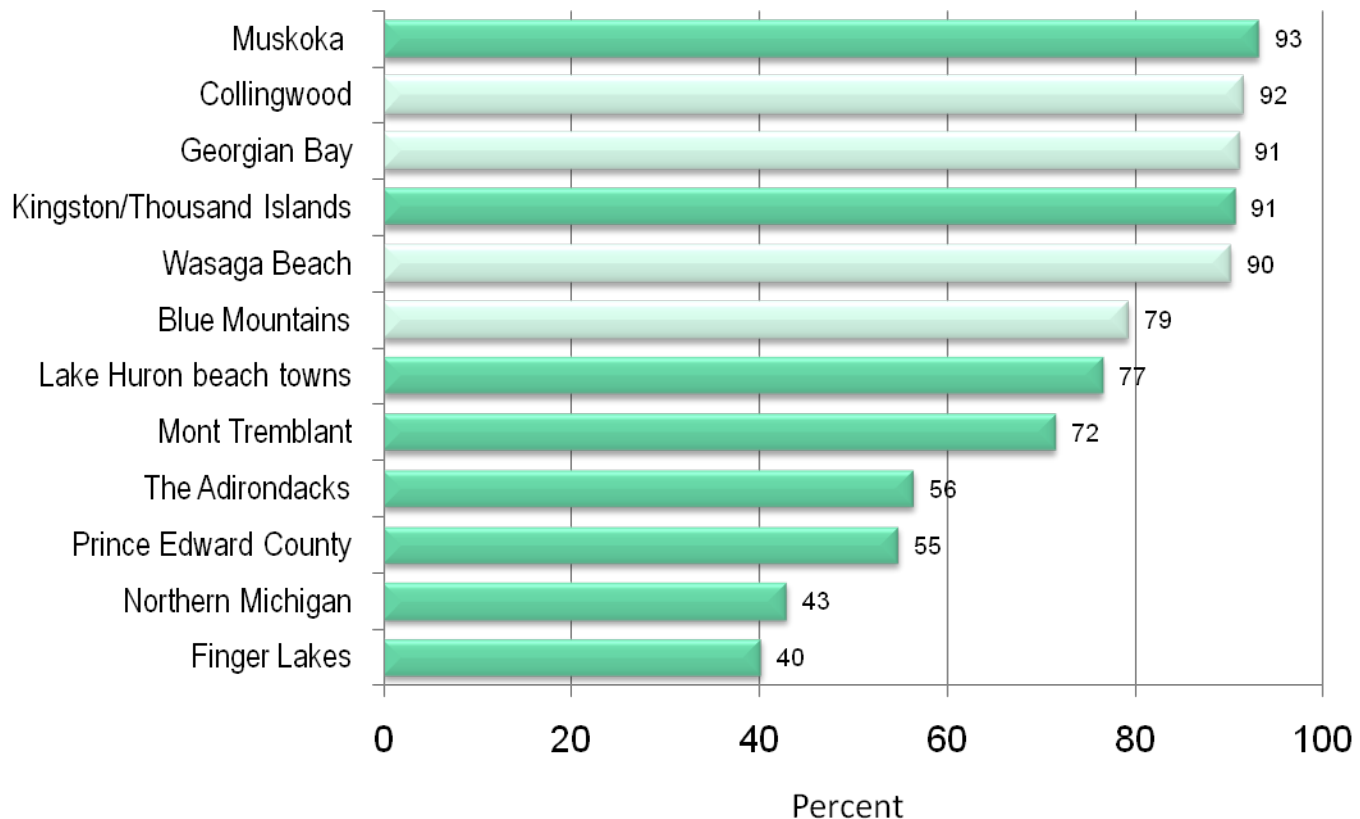
\* Spontaneous mentions of Ontario destinations would enjoy visiting.

Percent

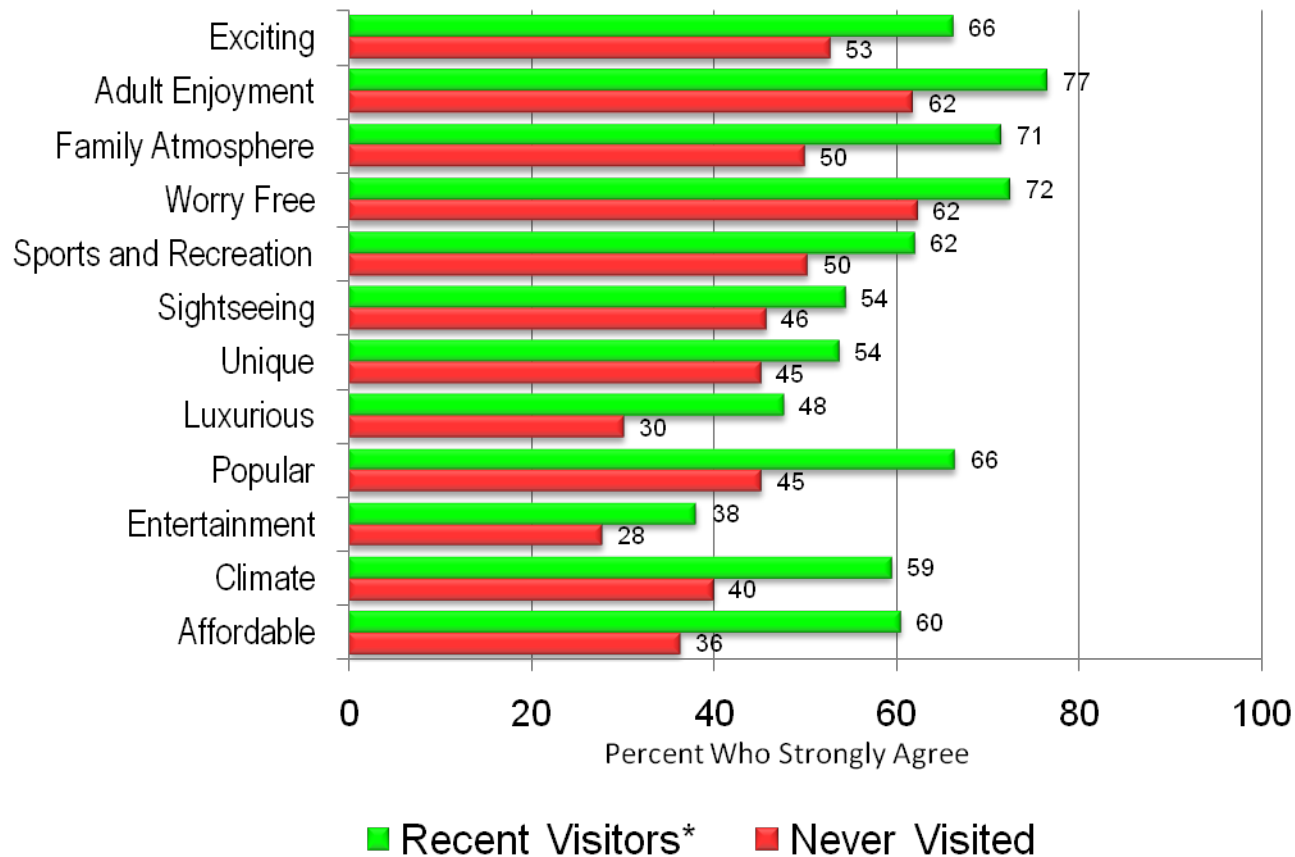
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# Aided Brand Awareness

Base: Residents of Ontario

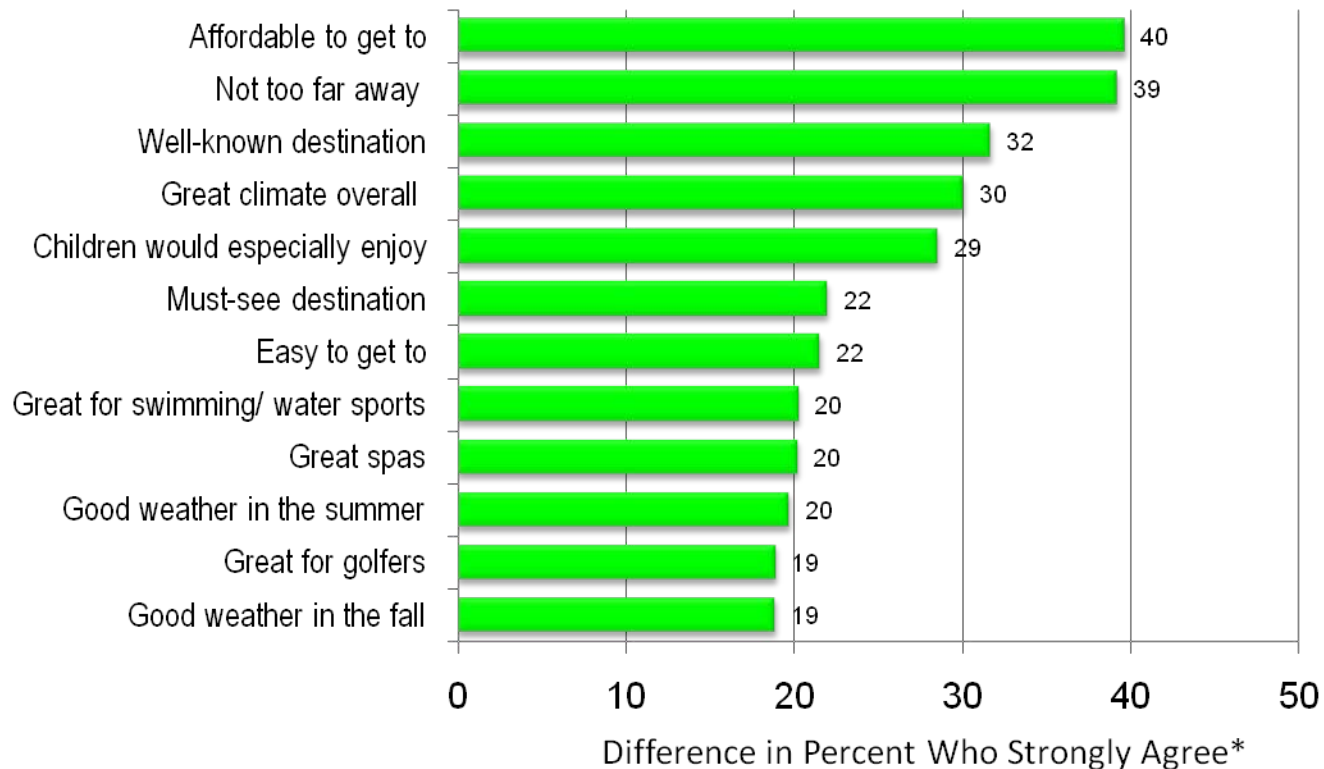


# South Georgian Bay's Product Vs. Image



\*Visited South Georgian Bay within the past 2 years

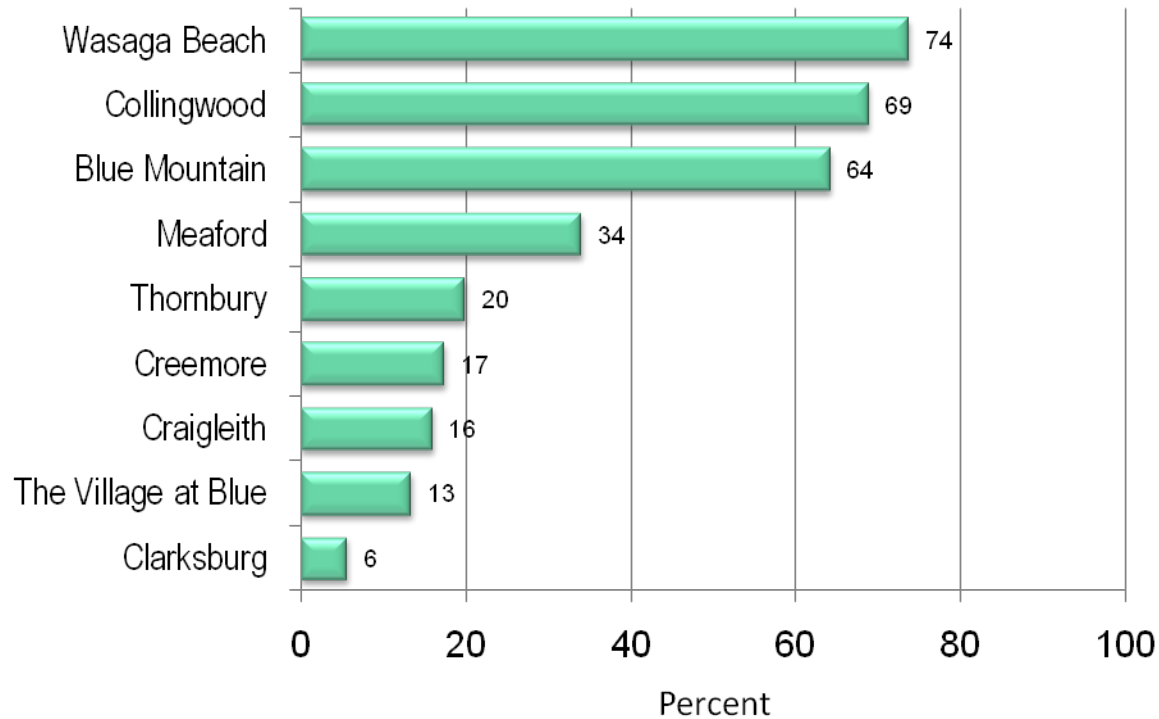
# South Georgian Bay's Product Strengths



\*Difference in percent between recent visitors and those who never visited South Georgian Bay.

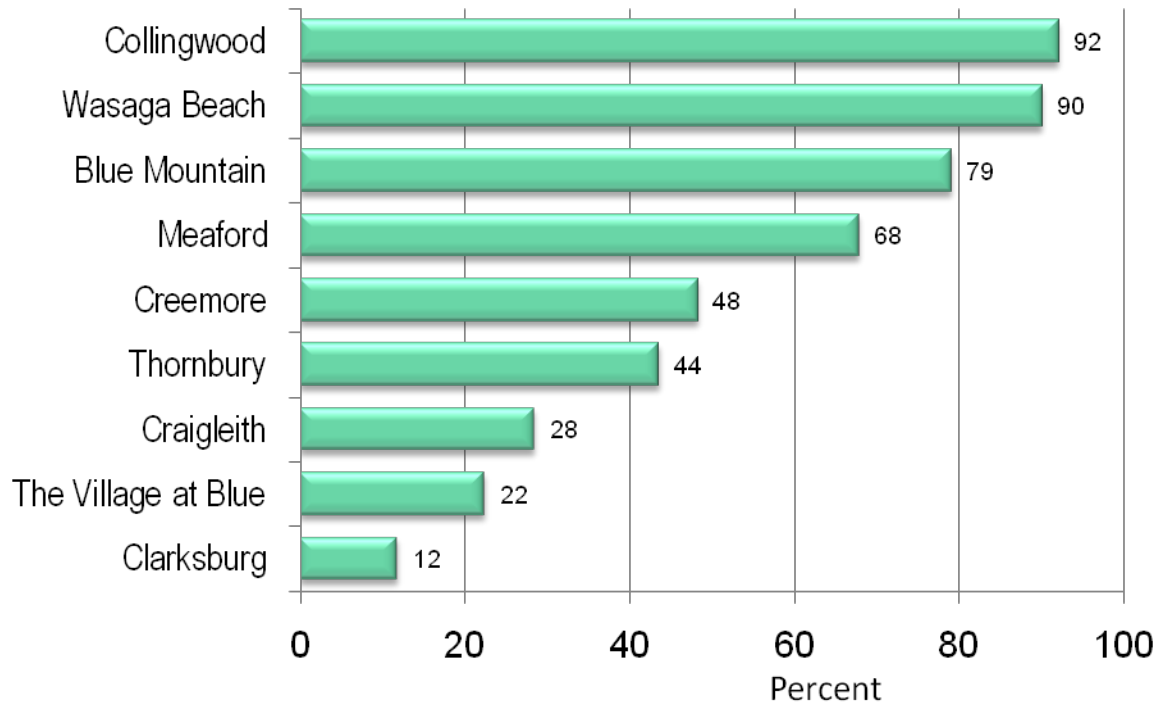
# Ever Visited Towns/Places in South Georgian Bay

Base: Residents of Ontario



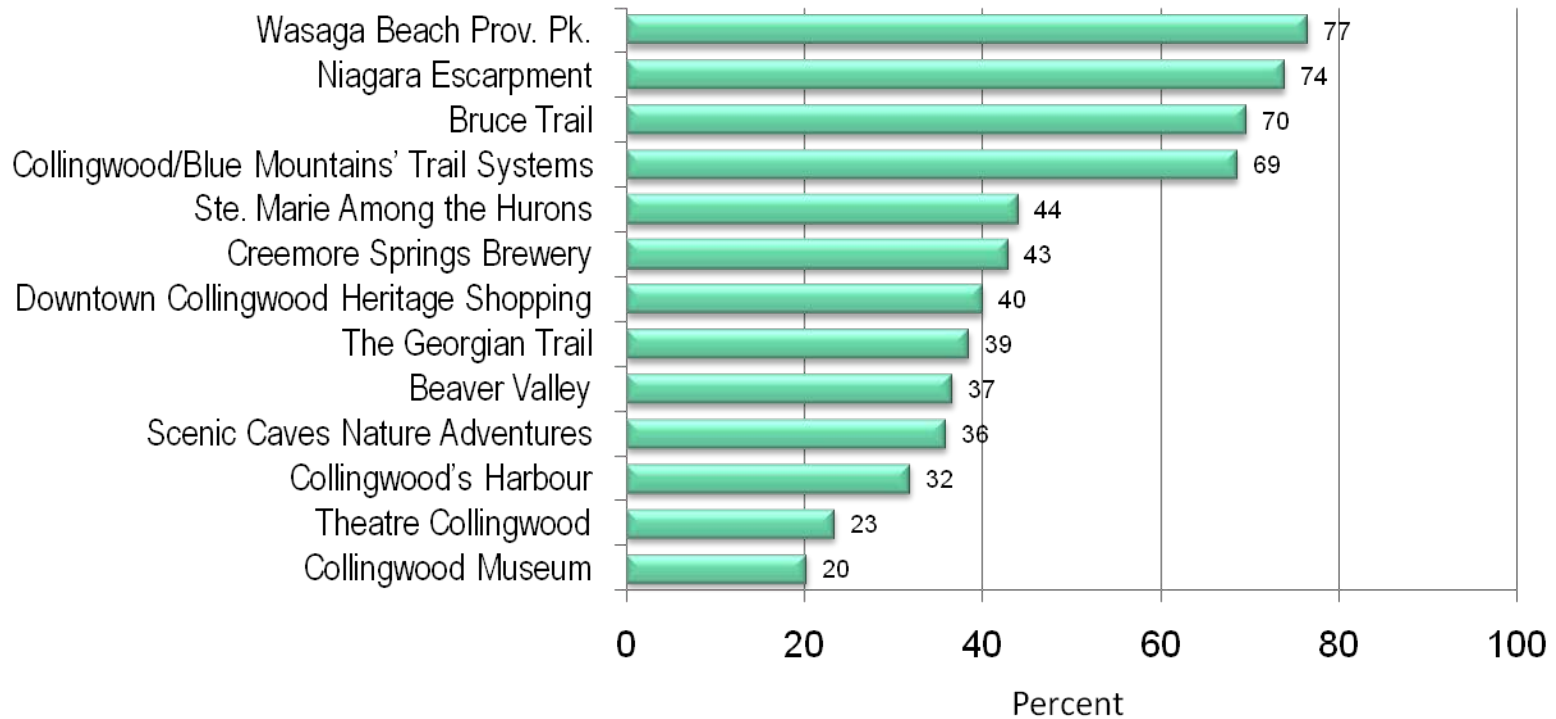
# Aided Awareness of Towns/Places in South Georgian Bay

Base: Residents of Ontario



# Aided Awareness of Regional Attractions

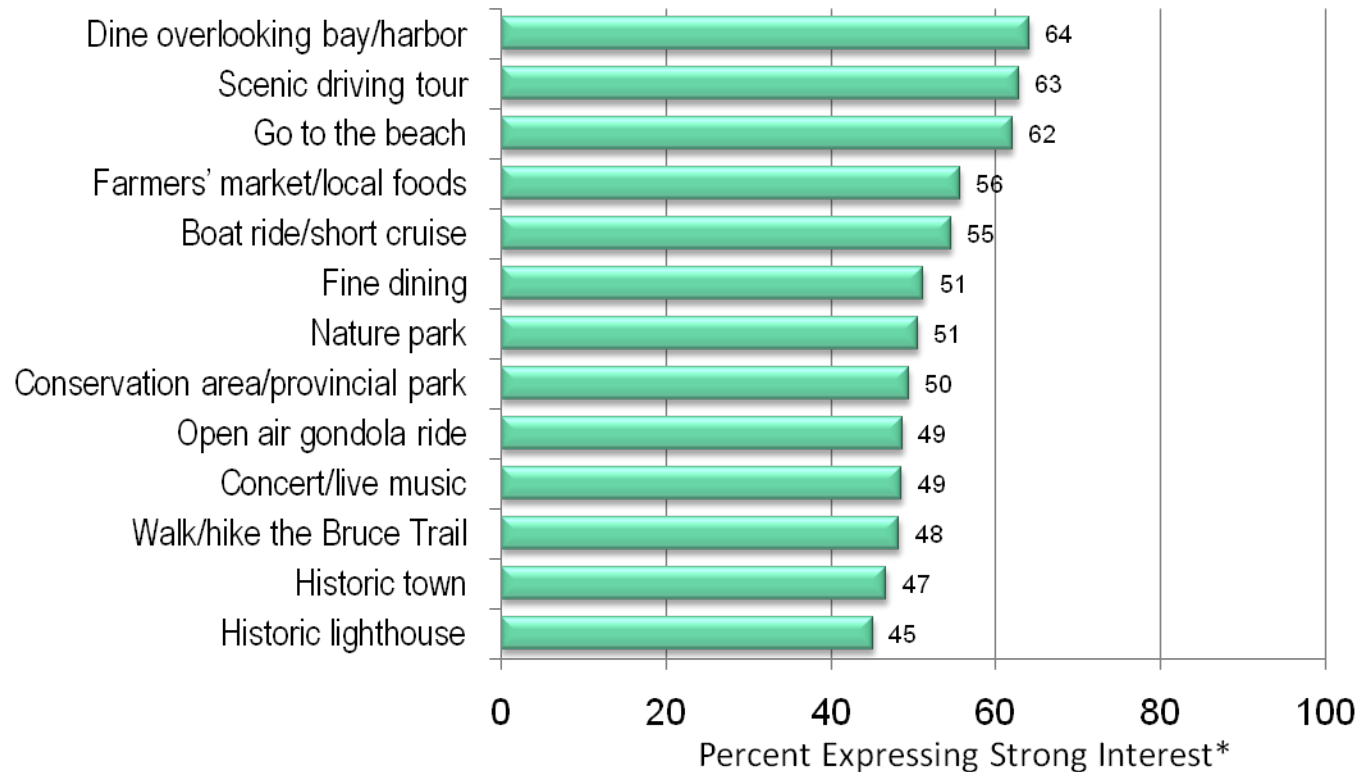
Base: Residents of Ontario



# Interest in Attractions/Activities/Events

Base: Residents of Ontario

\*Percent giving items a score of 8, 9, or 10, on a 10-point scale



# Conclusions/Recommendations

- South Georgian Bay's key distinguishing feature is WATER
- To which must be added the excitement of:
  - Sightseeing variety
    - Playing off of the area's unique geological features and setting on the water
    - Scenic drives, gondola rides, Escarpment, Bruce Trail
    - Dining by the water/fine dining
    - Local historic sites --- lighthouses



# Conclusions/Recommendations

- Other broad appeal/accessible recreational activities
  - Swimming, boating
  - Hiking, cycling
  - Special events

# Strategic Priorities

## Education and Training

- Ensure that all front line staff in the region are prepared to answer & guide visitors to “our” experience to ensure the visitor experience is exceptional
- All front-line GTTA staff accredited with professional certification as Tourism Visitor Information Counsellors through Canadian Tourism Human Resources Council
- 20 % increase in training revenues in 2009/2010 –through successful funding grant opportunities the GTTA extended Service Excellence and Super Host training across the region
- All Visitor Centre Visitation increased 10% in 2009 from the previous year with 2010 appearing to remain at 2009 levels.
- South Georgian Bay Event Team attended more than 6 Major Festivals and Events over the summer months providing on-site Visitor Services for Elvis, Wakestock, Salsa, Copper Kettle Festival, Apple Harvest Festival and Canada Day celebrations across the region.



# Strategic Priorities

## Market research– Consumer Related / Visitor Image

- Completed 2009 Longwoods Custom Image Research. The most accurate Image research completed in region to date (97% accurate) and disseminated the results of this research to stakeholders through varied opportunities: Georgian Triangle AGM, GTDI Conference, SBEC Conference, web, media and more
- Completed South Georgian Bay cluster research for the Georgian Bay Destination Development Partnership, completing 1/4 of all surveys collected.
- Led and participated in local Event Research for Elvis, Salsa, and Apple Harvest Festival Events



# Strategic Priorities

## Economic Benefits of tourism in this area and advocate for Stakeholders

- Increased Regional tourism and tourism expenditures, supporting the local economy
- South Georgian Bay positioned as key destination in Ontario, with municipal and key stakeholders realizing a demonstrated Return on Investment
- Economic impact of tourism reviewed and Marketing Committee assessed ROI for advertising and marketing opportunities across the South Georgian Bay region.
- Continue to advocate for support of Regional Tourism. The Georgian Triangle has the ingredients; a strong sense of place, a strong sense of community, a regional labour force, and is a desirable place to live, work and play.



# Strategic Priorities

**Ensure stakeholders are informed about travel trends, Market opportunities, and public policy issues**

- Strong advocate for Regional Tourism and collaboration amongst stakeholders
- Increased exposure through Events Newsletter and increased circulation of GTTA
- E-zine
- GTTA advocated for the region through the continued development of the new Regional Tourism Organization and is leading the RTO process as the Accountable Body.
- Working collaboratively with the Ministry of Tourism, Counties, Municipalities and stakeholders to ensure Regional Tourism and strategies are consumer focused

# Strategic Priorities

## Marketing and Branding

- Creation of a Regional Destination Plan, providing the GTTA with a clear vision and strategies to build regional tourism in the Georgian Triangle. This plan ensures the GTTA's long term sustainability and builds on past successes. One of the main objectives is to grow tourist visitation and associated economic impacts
- Building the South Georgian Bay Brand through Cooperative Marketing including Breakfast Television, CTV Television and other marketing and advertising opportunities
- Increase number of visitors and expenditures and maximized the duration of stay of visitors in the region
- Influenced return visitation

# Strategic Priorities

## Marketing and Branding

- 100,000 Visitor Guides distributed around the province with approximately 60,000 distributed out of region. The 2010 Visitor Guide was our first South Georgian Bay branding piece that motivated visitors with key demand generators to South Georgian Bay.
- 10,000 South Georgian Bay Passport Maps distributed. Regionalism is about pulling our visitors across the South Georgian Bay region, increasing length of stay and expenditures.
- Visitsouthgeorgianbay.ca web site increased visitation more than 50% over 2009. The web site is the number one Regional Destination web site and enjoys first page ranking for most tourism experiences on Google.
- CTV Media cooperative Marketing Campaign. Impact assessed in excess of \$75,000
- Wasaga Beach –Breakfast TV Episode with Live Eye- media value assessed at \$70,000

# Strategic Priorities

## Marketing and Branding

- Meaford Breakfast Television Episode with Kevin Frankish and Live Eye - media value assessed in excess of \$130,000
- Front Cover CanPages with 7 pages of copy for 50,000 distributions for 2010 and 2011. Village at Blue Cover for 2009/2010 and Wasaga Beach cover for 2010/2011. Key branding messaging and mapping incorporated into 7 pages of editorial copy. Approximate assessment of impact in excess of \$25,000
- New Mobile Phone Application for South Georgian Bay launched March 2010. First tourism app in the province. Value of impact – Priceless as markets the region collaboratively based on Consumer Needs/Wants and key Motivators to the Region.
- Cooperative South Georgian Bay Winter radio campaign (2010) in Southern Ontario markets including Kitchener, Hamilton and Burlington and greater GTA. Impact assessed at more than \$50,000.



# Strategic Priorities

## Fund Development

- Continue to seek sustainable funding for Regional Tourism efforts
- Southern Ontario Economic Development Fund – Marketing and Training Grants - \$40,000
- Finalized Ontario Trillium Foundation Grant - \$75,000
- Cooperative Marketing Funding through industry stakeholder partnerships



# Why Collaborate?

- Consumers seek “unique” travel experience, unbridled by political boundaries.
- By combining our tourism assets we can:
  - Increase market appeal
  - Strengthen product differentiation
  - Reduces seasonality strains
  - Increase economic impact of tourism to our respective communities
- Fuel stronger promotional & marketing programs, unaffordable by most businesses & communities alone
  - Reach & sustainability

# In Conclusion...

- We believe we have a great opportunity to build on the strength of our current programs and assets to:
  - Strengthen the differentiation of our regional brand given the natural parallels with consumer wants and needs
  - Bolster our relationships with surrounding businesses and government bodies based on the business model and Strategic Destination Plan