

— VISIT SOUTH —
GEORGIAN BAY



Georgian Triangle Tourist Association

B.1

The Business Case for Regionalism

**Presentation to the
The Town of The Blue Mountains**

GTTA Vision & Mission

- The Georgian Triangle Tourist Association's Vision is promoting regional experiences
- The Georgian Triangle will lead and develop partnerships aimed at promoting our regional tourism destination
- The Association represents 250 businesses
- The Georgian Triangle represents tourism for Collingwood, The Blue Mountains and Wasaga Beach

Your Support Was Critical

- The \$35,000 in Municipal funds for 2009 were used for staffing regional Visitor Centre Operations
- In 2009, we grew our Visitor Centre presence in The Blue Mountains through collaborations with The Craigleith Depot, The Blue Mountains Chamber, Creemore BIA and through a collaboration with the Blue Mountain Village Association
- In negotiations with the Village and Depot for 2010
- The core strength of the GTTA remains the operation of our Visitor Centres. Regional Visitor Centres help move people around the region, extending their stay and resulting economic impacts.

2009 Successes

Increased tourism, supporting the local economy

- Creation of a Regional Strategic Tourism Plan, providing the GTTA with a clear vision and strategy to build regional tourism in South Georgian Bay and to ensure the GTTA's long term sustainability
- Completed Strategic Plan March 2010, with Marketing Plan on hold until we learn more about Role and Functions of New Regional Tourism Organizations
- Led Region #7 Regional Tourism Application

GTTA's 2009 Successes

Increased funding for marketing and outreach:

- Increased municipal support with Wasaga Beach support
- Increased grant funding, through Community Futures - \$44,000
- Extended Trillium Foundation grant funds through 2009/2010 - \$75,000
- 20 % increase in training revenues in 2009 –extended Service Excellence and Super Host training across the region
- Despite decline in Visitor Centre visitation across Ontario – we kept our visitation at 2008 numbers through increased Visitor Centres operations across the region (Creemore, Thornbury, Village at Blue, Craigleith Depot and Collingwood...plus a summer Mobile Events Team)

GTTA's 2009 Marketing Goals

Increase in advertising, GTTA supported events and marketing

- Production of Pocket Visitor Guide -May 2009. New 2010 Visitor Guide in 3 weeks featuring the Best of South Georgian Bay
- Production of Regional Passport map completed Fall of 2010 with re-launch May 2010
- A new web site was developed June 2009 and web-visits increased by 20% by December 31st 2009 – Web site fully completed with visitation on the rise with marketing initiatives
- New I-phone, Blackberry, Smart Phone web applications for May 2010
- Successful Regional Radio Campaign in February/March across Southern Ontario + collaborative marketing opportunities
- Many regional print opportunities promoting South Georgian Bay

The Full Economic Impact of Visitor Spending in Simcoe (533,838,000) and Grey (201,996,000)

2006 Data only available to date

| | Impacts Retained in the local economy of Simcoe County | Total Impacts in Ontario as a whole |
|------------------------------|--|--|
| GDP (Gross Domestic Product) | 337,453,000 – Sim 165,714,000 - Grey | 441,473,000– Sim 134,211,000 -Grey |
| Wages and Salaries | 203,310,000 – Sim. 81,439,000 - Grey | 271,194,000 – Sim 101,940,000 -Grey |
| Number of Jobs | 6376-Simcoe 2528-Grey | 7850-Sim 2979-Grey |
| Taxes | 200,845,000 – Sim 79,719,000 -Grey | 245.224,000-Sim 93,110,000 -Grey |

Tourism Is a Quality Industry For Us

- Why?

- It brings money into the community.
- It supports a diverse mix of business types and sizes.
- It also helps support community quality of life amenities.

A nice place to visit is a great place to live, and a good place to establish a business.

The Blue Mountains has Unique Appeal

- **Incredible geography**
 - **The Niagara Escarpment**
 - **Georgian Bay**
- **Successful events**
- **Endless Four season experiences**

GTТА Measures

These measures are not enough. Our Board wanted to do more to grow visitation and increase economic impact. By working collaboratively together, we could do GREAT things!

| | | |
|---|----------------|--|
| Days Open | 364 | |
| Visitors Served in person | 25,000 | |
| Telephone enquiries | 9,000 | |
| Email enquiries | 8,000 | |
| Memberships Tourism Businesses/Partners | 250 | |
| Visitor Guides published & Distributed | 100,000 | |
| South Georgian Bay Passport Map | 25,000 | |
| Brochures Managed 300+ | 142,000 | |
| Website visits – newly launched visitsouthgeorgianbay.ca | 100,000 | |

The GTTA Brings Value as the DMO for The Blue Mountains

- The GTTA understands that identifying destination development and marketing initiatives for cooperation and implementation will benefit tourism and economic development
- Our approach is to build community linkages and partnerships, increase the level of customer service, and experiential linkages
- We have a mandate to position the Georgian Triangle/South Georgian Bay as a destination

What have we've been doing?

- GTTA recently initiated a Strategic Planning Process to”
 - build on past successes
 - increases tourist visitation and associated economic impacts
- Commissioned Longwoods Intl. to:
 - measure consumers' image/familiarity with the region
 - input into future brand development/positioning/marketing
- Working with Volunteer Strategic Planner, Scott Hanson – Thornbury resident and Destination expert with 20 years of tourism experience, Clients include Finger Lakes, Michigan, Vale, New York State
- Learned that stronger collaboration between The Georgian Triangle & area municipalities could be mutually beneficial

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

Benefits of Collaboration Cont.

- Strengthen the economic impact of our respective marketing investments - ROI
 - Awareness
 - Lift in intentions to visit
 - Conversion
 - Tourism related jobs
 - Sales tax & other revenues

Our Thought Process....

STEP I

**CLEARLY UNDERSTAND CONSUMER
WANTS & NEEDS**

STEP II

**ASSESS OUR ASSETS
UNBRIDLED BY POLITICAL BOUNDARIES**

STEP III

**DETERMINE THE GEOGRAPHIC TRAVEL
PATTERNS OF POTENTIAL VISITORS**

STEP IV

**IDENTIFY POTENTIAL PARTNERS & SOURCES
OF FUNDING - PRIVATE & PUBLIC SECTOR**

Research Objectives

- Brand awareness
- Past visitation/future intentions
- Destination hot buttons
- Image vs. competition
 - Strengths & weaknesses
- Product delivery
- Awareness/experience with regional places/attractions
- Interest in places/attractions
- South Georgian Bay “concept”

Longwoods Methodology

- Self-completion internet survey
- Sample of 916
 - Regional quotas
- Consumer panel members
- Qualifications:
 - adults 25+
 - “travelers”
- Fieldwork August 10 to September 2
- Data weighted to be representative, projectable
- Information is proprietary to the GTTA, and portions will be released at our AGM as part of our Executive Summary

What have we learned?

Custom Image Research Highlights

Main Research Slides to be presented, but not in hard or e-mail copy.

Key Factors to Success

- Clearly Define Roles & Responsibilities – clearly defined identity
- Sustainable Funding Model – tied to a plan
- Ability to successfully leverage the unique geographical assets & infrastructure 4 seasons
- Strength & Alignment of Partnerships – municipalities/ industries
 - private & public
 - direct & indirect beneficiaries
- Ability to adapt to Government decisions
 - ensure GTTA is top of mind with Gov. official
- Local government & private sector accountability
- Ownership & public support for GTTA
- Mandate
 - direction & decision
- Communication of mandate & achievements
- Clearly defined identity / Brand position

Business Goals & Objectives

- Business Goals & Objectives
 - education and training of front line staff
 - ensuring the visitor experience is exceptional
 - market research– consumer related / visitor image
 - benefits of tourism in this area
 - economic impact of tourism
- Ensure that all front line staff in region are prepared to answer & guide visitors to “our” experiences
- Maximize duration of experience, stay & expenditure once in the region – influence return visitation
- Ensure stakeholders are informed about travel trends, market opportunities, and public policy issues
- Demonstrate value of tourism to communities on ongoing (annual) basis.
- Branding

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
 - Increase visitor volumes from:
 - Within Ontario
 - Quebec
 - Bordering states
 - Ultimately strengthening the economic significance of tourism within our communities and residents alike by driving increased spending, tax revenues, and job creation.