



## QUARTERLY STATUS REPORT FOR MUNICIPAL PARTNERS

July – August - September 2014

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### Visitor Centre Snapshot

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#### Overview

Throughout the summer months, the GTTA operated two Visitor Center locations, one in Collingwood (The Station Museum) and one in The Blue Mountains (Craigleith Depot). Both locations are connected to each Town's museum. The Collingwood Visitor Centre is open 7 days a week, year round. The Craigleith location was staffed 3 days a week (Friday, Saturday, Sunday) in July and August.

The GTTA provided staff and set up an information booth in downtown Collingwood during the Collingwood Elvis Festival.

#### Statistics

##### Collingwood Visitor Centre

- Face time, emails and phone calls from travellers and guests decreased 35% over the 2013 period of July – September. Visitors serviced in this period totaled 5151. Visitors to the Tall Ships event in 2013 represented a significant portion of our stats and can be attributed to the decline in 2014 numbers. Many area attractions and accommodations have also reported a decline in visitation over last year due to a combination of poor weather and last minute cancellations, higher gas prices, and the lag in the economy.
- 25% of visitors were from the Greater Toronto area, 15% were from Bruce/Grey/Simcoe, 17% were from Southwestern Ontario
- 40% of visitors were day visitors. Tracking overnight guests, the highest percentage stay is for 7 nights (15%) followed by 2 nights (13%)

##### Craigleith Depot Visitor Centre

- Visits from travellers for July and August 2014 totaled 607. This is a decrease from 2013 (1159 visits), however the open days were reduced from 40 days in 2013 to 24 days in 2014.

## Online Activity

- Website visits are on the rise with 20% more visits over the same period in 2013. Total visits for July, August and September were 30,000.
- 108,000 web page views over the quarter
- 77% of website visitors arrive via a search engine search. This represents a significant increase over the same period last year (40% from search engine in 2013) and points to the website's improved search engine ranking
- The top geographical source of visitors are Toronto, Collingwood, Barrie, Mississauga, Guelph, Montreal, Brampton, Hamilton, Ottawa
- The top web pages visited (after the homepage) are: EVENTS (event listings), SEE AND DO (attraction listings), HIKING TRAILS (suggested hikes), STAY (accommodation listings), SHORELINE ADVENTURES (beach descriptions and locations), GUIDES / MAPS (downloadable maps and guide), COUPONS, COLLINGWOOD ELVIS FESTIVAL (festival information)

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## Operations

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### GTТА and Municipal Partners 2015 Planning

Collaborations with municipal and business partners are at the core of all GTТА initiatives. The Board of Directors of the GTТА held a 2015 planning meeting with key staff from the Municipalities and the Counties of Simcoe and Grey in an effort to get feedback about improving GTТА membership and partner benefits in 2015 and to review the overall funding and operations model. A second meeting for further discussion has been scheduled on November 25<sup>th</sup> at 2:00pm.

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## Regional Marketing

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### Regional Map

The 2014 summer edition of the South Georgian Bay Visitor Map has been published and distributed in and around the region in GTТА brochure stands and other locations including resort/hotel/motel lobbies, grocery stores, Activity Centre at Blue Mountain, the Collingwood LCBO and multiple other business locations.

This map continues to be the most sought after tourist information piece by both visitors and business owners that use it to provide regional way-finding service to the customers. The map provides directions to attractions, shopping, trails, lookouts, parks, marinas, fishing areas, golf courses, museums, parking, etc. 20,000 copies will be distributed over the coming months. An additional 5000 maps were

printed and distributed at the 2014 International Plowing Match & Rural Expo held in Ivy on September 16 – 20<sup>th</sup>.

Advertising revenue covered all production, printing and distribution costs of the Map with some key support from the Collingwood BIA, Scenic Caves Nature Adventures, Blue Mountain Resort and Free Spirit Tours.

The GTTA South Georgian Bay map will also be printed in a very large, wall size format and will be posted at Blue Mountain Resort for all their visitors to use as a way-finding tool to all the area's features and attractions.

### **Visitor Guide**

The 2014 edition of the South Georgian Bay SEE & DO Visitor Guide continues to be distributed across the province and in the region in GTTA brochure stands and other locations including resort/hotel/motel lobbies, grocery stores, Activity Centre at Blue Mountain, the Collingwood LCBO and multiple other business locations. To date 34,000 copies have been distributed.

### **Web Site and Email Communications**

The Visitsouthgeorgianbay.ca web site continues to experience steady growth in traffic with 20% more visits over the same period in 2013. The GTTA upcoming events e-newsletter continues to be published weekly and contributes to the increase in website visits.

### **Social Media**

Facebook and Twitter followers are steadily increasing each month. A Pinterest and Instagram presence has also been established for South Georgian Bay. Combined total social media followers is 4777, an increase of 566 over last quarter. New posts are added almost daily featuring upcoming events, member news and area features.

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## **Destination Marketing Organization Efforts**

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### **Tourism Industry and Partner Initiatives**

Together with Blue Mountain Village, Bruce County, Grey County, Owen Sound Tourism, The Province of Ontario and RTO7, the GTTA and some members teamed up to promote fall activities in the region in a joint Grey Bruce Adventure Fall Campaign. The web site GreyBruceAdventure.com as well as print and social media ads, blogs, videos and itineraries were created. The results so far show an increase in web site traffic over the 2013 campaign, with 36,000 pageviews between Aug 15 and Oct 7.

## Next 3 Months

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### Operations

- Hold AGM and additional planning sessions for 2015 funding model, communications plan and visitor services structure
- Board of Directors development

### Membership Development

- Revise membership package
- New membership sales
- Monthly member email newsletter communications/updates

### Regional Marketing

- See & Do Visitor Guide 2015 and Spring/Summer Map 2015 ad sales, development and production for launch in March 2015
- Launch interactive online map
- Ongoing website content development and social media marketing