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TRAVEL TRADE  
 SECTION Pg. 11

# Best of times, worst of times, for the ski industry

Last month a rich little lady from Texas with a short skirt and plenty of J.R. Ewing moxie blew into Kelowna on a Texan tailwind, caught a cab to Big White and instantly commanded the attention of the B.C. ski area's sales department.

by Lori Knowles

Working on tips from the almighty internet and a pal who liked to snow-board, within hours she'd pumped hundreds of thousands of George Washingtons into three... three!... new condos. One for her, she said, and two for the rest of her family.

It's the kind of big American spending Vail and Aspen... even Whistler and Blackcomb... have always been privy to, but it's relatively new for up-and-comers like Big White and it's catching on faster than fire in a stack of hay on a hot Texas day. "Out here," says Michael J. Ballingal, VP of Big White, "real estate is booming."

## WESTERN CANADA "IN THE MONEY"

Indeed, real estate, lift ticket sales and skier visits have been on a steady upsurge in the Canadian west – the Canadian Ski Council reports a 20.7 per cent increase in skier/rider visits in B.C. and 22.8 per cent in Alberta in the last five ski seasons. Blankets of snow and a new-found cool factor have encouraged Eastern Canadians, Americans, British, Australians and Germans to come a-knocking and go a-skiing. It's a phenomenon that's spurred Big White and its Okanagan buddies – along with Fernie, Kimberley, Mt. Washington, Sunshine and Lake Louise – to add

lifts, expand terrain, and build out accommodation. And while ski area numbers in the rest of Canada have been flat or even in decline, Western Canada's success has kept the overall numbers stable. Says Jimmie Spencer, President and CEO of Canada West Ski Areas' Association (CWSAA): "We've shown a steady increase over the last 10 years."

## BRITISH COLUMBIA

Thanks to little Texan ladies with lots of money, Big White, B.C. is one of the most optimistic. This giant of a mountain has come a long way from its bankruptcy days in the 1980s. Last spring, the Kelowna area announced it would pump \$35 million into a mega-expansion called Happy Valley, a new village cut into the mountain below Big White's existing development.

*continued on page 3* ➔

## Partnerships – new relationships for changing times

by Stephen Pearce

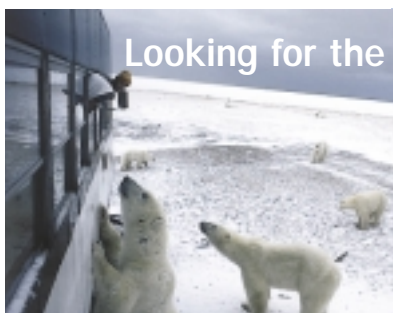
Destination marketing is inherently about building relationships on a number of levels. Stakeholders combine resources to identify prospects,

and collaborate to communicate, attract and host visitors. There is implicit recognition that tourism is about experiences, and that regions, provinces and even countries have

a vested interest in supporting marketing efforts that will yield results to all participants.

Explicitly defined partnerships are becoming an increasingly important means of leveraging scarce resources within an environment that is becoming increasingly competitive and a marketplace that is becoming increasingly fragmented.

*continued on page 9* ➔



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Indeed, it has been said that some parts of Canada have nine months of winter and three months of poor skiing. (Or, as some wag put it, tourism industry organizations have three months of summer and nine months of meetings!)

The ski and snowboard industry continues to develop apace in this winter country of ours. Developers continually eye new locations for hills and facilities, and the advent of the snowboard has broadened the appeal of this ultimate mountain sport. And the more slow-paced, but equally challenging and satisfying, cross-country ski experience is growing in popularity as part of a trend towards fitness and relaxation.

As with all tourism products, customers seek good value for their money, and their expectations are getting higher. Well groomed trails and slopes (or pristine mountain powder) are as important as ever, but high-end accommodation, food, and service are increasing in importance. Canada cannot rest on its laurels as a ski-destination, despite our well-earned reputation; we must ensure that one of our "icon" products – winter – is delivered in a manner that caters to the new tourists' expectations.

Because snow sports are "a natural" for Canada, it follows that every time we share our slopes, trails, and glaciers with a visitor, we have a wonderful opportunity to share our culture as well. Winter is one of the things that makes us Canadian, that shapes our identity, and offers us the chance to build a "point of difference" from our competitors in Europe, the U.S., and elsewhere. This is "value-added" at its best: building our competitive edge in the marketplace while reaping new dollars from enhanced product.

Next month we will look at non-ski, winter products. They will range from Northern Lights to dog-sledding, snowmobiling, and winter carnivals. Our researchers tell us that many of our long-haul ski clients want more than just skiing... let's make sure we find a zillion ways to give them what they want.

### - ERRATA -

In the last issue of *Communiqué* we wrote in error that John Williams, formerly V-P for CP's Princess Resorts in Arizona and Mexico, had been appointed V-P of Fairmont Hotels in British Columbia. Mr. Williams has, in fact, been appointed Vice President of Fairmont Hotels world-wide. We extend our apologies.

Also, MC&IT Committee member Dave Gazley was identified as the Director of Marketing at the Sutton Place. This was his former position; currently he is Director of Sales & Market Development, Meetings & Events, Tourism Vancouver.

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### COMMUNIQUÉ 2000 EDITORIAL SCHEDULE

MONTH	SPOTLIGHT	EDITORIAL DUE	
Nov.	Winter non-ski – Spas and Xmas Packages	Wed.	Oct. 4
Dec.	Heritage, Aboriginal (heritage, historical sites and experiences)	Wed.	Nov. 1

The aforementioned product groupings are not meant to be exhaustive lists, but serve to offer some examples. Follow Communiqué for more details in coming months.

## New committee to drive CTC internet technology development

Canadian Tourism Commission Vice President for Marketing Roger Wheelock has been focusing the CTC's thinking on the use of internet technology for marketing. He and his colleagues have recognised that the CTC needs a thoughtful and well-planned strategy for the use of technology in the same way that strategies are developed for the other traditional advertising and promotional media.

It is generally recognised in the industry that the business community is well ahead of government on adoption of technology and that the CTC needs to learn from their experience.

### ROSENBERG TO HEAD NEW COMMITTEE

Marc Rosenberg, VP Sales and Product Distribution for Air Canada and current Chair of the Europe Marketing Committee, has agreed to bring his broad experience with

the development and use of internet technology in the travel industry to bear on this new initiative as Chair of a committee of up to ten members of the industry with technology and tourism expertise. This group will represent a mix of large and small enterprises and government organisations.

The committee's mandate will be to define a vision and role for CTC in technology development for the industry, and develop a 3-year technology plan for the CTC. Wheelock notes that the CTC needs to set a clear direction for its use of technology in the next six months or it may fall too far behind competitors like the U.K. and Australia, leaving technology companies to assume what should be the CTC's role as the Canadian travel portal.

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**BEST OF TIMES, WORST OF TIMES...***continued from page 1*

The aggressive plan – the largest in Big White history – includes an eight-passenger gondola, a 24,000-square-foot daylodge, accommodation, an adventure park and a trendy new golf academy. This fall the resort's partners added another \$10 million to the budget for Trapper's Crossing, 42 townhomes in the heart of the old village. And in upcoming years, Ballingal says new six-person, high-speed lifts, more terrain and even more accommodation are in the offing.

All this is made possible, Ballingal says, thanks to steady growth in skier and snowboarder numbers. In 1995/96 Big White entertained 435,000 skier/rider visits. In 1999/00 they'd increased that to 572,000 visits. And by the finish of the 2000/01 season the resort expects to top 600,000 – not bad for a ski hill operating in the red in the 1980s. Plus, says Ballingal, "we think we're just at the tip of the iceberg." By relying on word-of-mouth, smart marketing overseas and the building of strong customer loyalty, Ballingal predicts growth for Big White for a long time to come.



Down the road, Silver Star is mounting a major campaign to catch up – a \$150-million development budget that includes new on-hill condominiums for this year, several high-end subdivisions, a youth hostel, and a new Summit restaurant and bar, plus much, much more for upcoming seasons. Silver Star VP and General Manager Guy Paulsen pre-

dicts that by 2001 a new high speed lift will be strung up somewhere on this challenging mountain, and new terrain may be cut. As he says, Silver Star "needs to stay ahead of capacity problems."

**NEW FLIGHTS WILL HELP**

This Okanagan resort's big plans come in the midst of news Air Canada has added weekly direct flights from Toronto to Kelowna. Nearby areas are banking on an influx of skiers from Eastern Canada, the U.S. and overseas – skiers who have been there and done that at big areas like Banff and Whistler/Blackcomb and are looking for more of what Paulsen calls "boutique" skiing. Indeed, Silver Star's skier/rider visit numbers have already been encouraging, rising from 192,000 in 1997/98 to 292,000 in 2000. If all goes well, Paulsen predicts 325,000 by the end of next season. "The expansion plans have been on Silver Star's books for sometime," says Paulsen. "Now that we've seen growth, we've decided to blow the dust off them."

**KICKING HORSE ON TRACK**

Leaving others behind in the dust, however, may be Kicking Horse Mountain Resort, the province's much anticipated, brand-spanking-new ski area near Golden, B.C. that will rival Whistler/Blackcomb in sheer magnitude and vertical. Kicking Horse owners kicked off last spring with announcements they're reconstructing the former area of Whitetooth into a world-class mountain experience: 4,133 feet (1,260 metres) of vertical, the highest in the Rockies and second only to Whistler/Blackcomb. Kicking Horse is developing terrain renowned for years as primo heli-skiing territory. Opening officially December 8 will be the \$25-million Phase 1: an eight-person gondola, a chairlift, a timber and stone mountaintop restaurant and an 8,600-square-foot daylodge.

Watch for Phase 2 through 2001 and 2002 to include more terrain, more lifts and some on-mountain accommodation.

Ski times in B.C. are good, says Kicking Horse General Manager Johan Brandenburg, and that's a major reason investors pressed ahead with their aggressive development. But Brandenburg believes it would



be naïve to place all bets on a single race horse, no matter how well it's bred. "It would be difficult for a ski area to make it alone," he says. "That's why we're creating a four season resort. We're located near the Trans Canada Highway, and we have high expectations for summer tourism."

High expectations also abound in the rest of B.C. and in the Rockies of Alberta. Grouse Mountain in Vancouver is installing a new high-speed quad. Vancouver Island's Mt. Washington added a lift recently, improved its access road and increased its accommodation. The Resorts of the Canadian Rockies (RCR) is riding high with its developments at Fernie – new lifts and new base developments have shot this funky snow haven to the top the skier/rider charts and yearly visits have doubled to 305,000 in 2000 from 150,000 in the mid-1990s. And despite a dip in visitations at nearby Kimberley, RCR's western region Director of Marketing Scott Lazenby claims it's full speed ahead with more skier-friendly base village development.

**ALBERTA**

As for RCR's efforts in Alberta, Lazenby reports business was down slightly in 2000 at the company's flagship Lake Louise. Still, the Lake's \$4-million plans for a new high-speed quad, super pipe and extensive snowmaking upgrades should be in shape by opening day this November. Growth in the number of new Canadian skiers "has been flat for 15 years," says Lazenby, "but growth in the snowboard market has been high and we've had gains from other (Canadian and foreign) markets."

And there's the rub. Both Lazenby and Big White's Michael J. Ballingal remind us that increases in skier visits in B.C. and Alberta have not been thanks to new interest in skiing by the Canadian public. In fact, the Print Measurement Bureau's 2000 report lists a 4 per cent decline in the number of Canadian skiers over its 1999 report. Both Ballingal and Lazenby claim instead it's a reflection of the Canadian industry learning to boost its appeal in foreign markets, including the US, the U.K., Australia

and Europe. By beefing up their areas and their marketing campaigns, they've managed to steal skiers from the rich resorts and give to the poor.

**NEW DEVELOPMENT VIEWED AS CRITICAL**

Meanwhile, back at Alberta's Sunshine Village, \$5-million infusion this season into two new lifts will ease commuter traffic between old and new sections of the mountain. With a surge in overall visits from 530,000 in 1998/99 to 590,000 in 1999/00, John Ross, Director of Marketing, says Sunshine is also hoping for Federal Government approval of a new access lift to ease the load on Sunshine's gondola. "As it is," says Ross, "if that gondola goes down we're pooched." Still, the Alberta resort is predicting nothing but good times in its immediate future due to its proximity to Calgary and the phenomenal growth of the city.

Overall, skier and rider visits in the entire province of Alberta have risen a whopping 22.8 per cent in the past five years.

**ONTARIO AND QUÉBEC**

Fast forward to Québec and Ontario, where the stats aren't quite as encouraging. Skier/rider visits in Ontario sank 3 per cent in 2000 from the previous season, and were down 2 per cent in Québec – drops that were in response to warm temperatures and poor snow conditions. Still, the shakers in the business refuse to be dismayed. "We were only down 3 per cent," says Ontario Snow Resorts Association Executive Director Margot Minardi. "That's not bad considering the season we had last year."

Minardi reports a record seven new lifts will be installed at Ontario ski areas by the start of this season, and it's still all systems go for Intrawest's multi-expansion of Ontario's Blue Mountain. And despite Mother Nature's penchant for ultra-warm spells and melting snow in Ontario, Rich says Blue Mountain will neutralize further decline in business by creating a resort that's not just based on skiing.

*continued on page 5*

# Canada on top for helicopter and snowcat skiing

Helicopter and Snowcat Skiing evolved in the 1960's as an extension of alpine ski-touring, using a helicopter or snowcat instead of climbing skins and muscle power as the mode of uphill transportation. Since its inception, both helicopter and snowcat skiing have gained world-wide acceptance, and Canadian operations are viewed as offering the most exciting and challenging form of recreational skiing.



A helicopter or snowcat skiing territory covers a large area. In B.C., as the various operators started their businesses, a natural partitioning of the mountain areas occurred, was dictated by geographical and logistical considerations and an informal "gentleman's agreement".

## ASSOCIATION FORMED IN 1978

In 1978 the British Columbia Helicopter and Snowcat Ski Operators Association (BCHSSOA) was formed to define standards and operating guidelines. The BCHSSOA mandate is to:

- Set standards for safety, client care, environmental stewardship, and operating methods for the industry;
- Act as a collective voice for backcountry ski operators in co-operation with the B.C. Ministry

of Environment, Lands and Parks, and to ensure that the members govern themselves in a responsible manner in all aspects of conducting business;

- Strengthen co-operation and promote cordial relations between its members;
- Promote high mountain skiing by helicopter or snowcat as a viable eco-tourism industry within the Provinces of British Columbia, Alberta and the Yukon Territory.

## PROFESSIONAL GUIDES

Members of the Association hire certified guides who are dedicated professionals. The process of becoming a fully certified Mountain Guide or Ski Guide is arduous and a minimum of assistant winter guide status is required by the Association. Guides must have received certification from the Association of Canadian Mountain Guides (ACMG), or its European equivalent (UIAGM), or Canadian Ski Guide Association (CSGA) or equivalent training recognized by the BCHSSOA membership. Over and above this certification each operation has extensive

ongoing in-house training. The BCHSSOA employs independent examiners to inspect and evaluate each member in an on-going process to ensure the Association's minimum operation standards are maintained.

## AVALANCHE SECURITY

The BCHSSOA members also work closely with the Canadian Avalanche Association and together have developed a daily information exchange program. This program, known as InfoEx, involves 60 companies across B.C. who submit daily observations concerning snow and stability conditions. The CAA consolidates this information and sends a summary to all participants. This daily report has become an important tool for the member's guides in their daily forecasting.

At present there are 26 indepen-

dent operating members in western Canada representing 32 separate areas of operation. Collectively, the industry accounts for nearly 90,000 to 100,000 skier days with gross revenues exceeding \$80-100 million annually. Approximately 1500-2000 people are employed directly by members of the Association. Western Canada is known worldwide for having the best possible conditions and terrain for wilderness ski adventures and the industry is recognized for the protection of the environment in which they operate.

## CHOOSING THE RIGHT SKI ADVENTURE

The Canadian mechanized backcountry ski industry is very well organized, and the standards of safety and client care amongst members of the BCHSSOA are considered exemplary by the worldwide heli and snowcat industry. Considering the diversity of terrain, the quality and quantity of snow, the years of guiding and safety experience, the Canadian government's commitment to avalanche research and safety and the host operation's exuberance for the wilderness mountain experience, it comes as no surprise the vast majority of helicopter and snowcat skiing clients from around the globe choose Canada as their destination.

Not all snowcat and helicopter skiing operations are the same. Each location has a variety of differences, and the more effort made into planning the correct place for a winter holiday will result in a much happier guest, with more repeat clients and more referrals. The following is a list of questions that when asked of potential clients and/or of potential service providers will result in a much happier marriage of the two:

- What level of ability are you/do you serve?
- How much backcountry experience do you have/do you require?
- How many days are you looking for/do you have available?
- What type of terrain are you looking for/do you offer? Some offer big open areas, others gladed or treed areas, others a mix of both. The terrain also relates to the ability of the guest.
- Level of Safety: What are the guiding standards? Client to Guide ratio? How many years of operation? How many serious injuries/deaths?
- Is it important to have an isolated mountain lodge/is this offered? Many operations offer accommodation that is dorm style, others motel, and even others private room, lodge style. Some guests appreciate a more rustic atmosphere while others find food and accommodation to be as important as the outdoor portion of their

## SNOWCAT SKIING IN THE KOOTENAYS

Using tracked "Snowcats" to bring clients to the summits of the Selkirk Mountains in British Columbia's famous Kootenay Valley, where the average annual snowfall in the mountains ranges from 10 to 14 metres (394 - 551 inches), a variety of new and established operations provide a deep powder experience for snowcat skiing and snowboarding enthusiasts.

This region has long been popular to backcountry enthusiasts, but the recent boom of the Snowcat Skiing Industry in the area sparks reminders of the Silver Rush days of the late 1800's. The two oldest operations (Selkirk Wilderness Skiing and Great Northern Snow Cat Skiing) have each been around for over 20 years, joined in the past decade by White Grizzly Adventures and Retallack Alpine Adventures. Two new areas are scheduled to open in the near future, and some of the operations are expanding capacity as the demand from powder hungry guests increases. This means six operations on a North - South axis within 150 kilometres of each other.

### SNOWCATS LESS WEATHER SENSITIVE

As an attractive alternative to helicopter skiing and ski resorts, powder cat skiing and snowboarding is fast becoming the premier method to visit powder fields and steep treed terrain. While slower and arguably less "sexy" than travel by helicopter, a snowcat is not restricted by weather so guests are not confined to the lodge.

Temperatures in the Kootenay Valley are relatively moderate, rarely dropping below -15° C (5° F) in the alpine, and you can expect an average daily high of -5° C (22° F) during most of the winter months. Of course, you can count on a lot of snow; the summits already had a thin dusting of white August 19<sup>th</sup>... let it snow!

**Kootenay Snowcat Websites**  
[www.selkirkwilderness.com](http://www.selkirkwilderness.com)  
[www.greatnorthernsnowcat.com](http://www.greatnorthernsnowcat.com)  
[www.retallack.com](http://www.retallack.com)  
[www.whitegrizzly.com](http://www.whitegrizzly.com)

adventure. Find out how important hot tubs, private bathrooms, gourmet food and so on are to the potential clients before identifying potential service providers.

Availability is a big issue. Only a few operations accept single day bookings. Many are 3-day minimum, some offer only week long packages. How long would the client like to experience? It is recommended to book in the spring for the following year, but some operations will be able to fit guests into the schedule during the summer or early fall.

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# The classic national park ski experience

Jasper National Park is Canada's largest Rocky Mountain National Park and one of North America's largest natural areas and wildlife sanctuaries spanning over 10,000 square kilometres. Designated a World Heritage Site in 1984 by UNESCO, Jasper offers four season fun in a pristine Rocky Mountain environment. Shimmering glaciers, abundant wildlife, crystal clear lakes, thundering waterfalls, deep limestone canyons and evergreen forests surrounded by towering peaks are all a part of the Jasper experience.

Nestled in the midst of Jasper National Park's vast unspoiled grandeur lies the picturesque town of Jasper where many first-class facilities await the visitor. One unique aspect of Jasper National Park is its only ski area, Ski Marmot Basin. Just 20 minutes from the town of Jasper, Marmot Basin is home to some of the best skiing and snowboarding in Canada. With almost 1500 acres of terrain, 3000 vertical feet, wide open runs, world-class facilities and on-mountain services; Marmot Basin attracts skiers from Canada and around the world.

## NEVER FAR REMOVED FROM NATURE

Marmot Basin's unique terrain provides skiers and snowboarders with the opportunity to experience many of the ecosystems found throughout the park. From the high alpine bowls and chutes, skiers and snowboarders pass through trees and sub-alpine terrain all within the ski area's leasehold. Visitors truly have an opportunity to experience several aspects of the national park, even without leaving the ski area. Visits to Marmot Basin from the US, Europe and Australia are growing annually and many are third and fourth time visitors.

Marmot Basin has been steadily improving its facilities over the past few years. One aspect of the business that is currently being improved is its commitment to customer service. The ski area has committed to improve its customer service further this season by implementing Alberta's Service Best hospitality program, in



which all staff will be put through the training course in an effort to educate each individual on how to exceed customer expectations.

## TRAINING OF STAFF KEY TO SUCCESS

President and CEO Dave Gibson says, "Customer service has always been a top priority at Marmot Basin. We've always boasted about the friendliness of our staff, and we plan to prove to our guests that service at our ski area will not only improve, but we hope to set service standards within the ski and snowboard industry." In its commitment towards the highest level of customer service, focus will also be placed on pre-season

hiring, training all supervisors and managers, and implementing customer service standards into all job descriptions around the resort.

## THE NATIONAL PARK EXPERIENCE

Marmot Basin is also focusing on heritage tourism in an effort to provide visitors with a complete 'national park' experience. Marmot Basin provides information on the Park's heritage to its entire staff, and encourages all its employees to share their knowledge

with guests to the area. Many visitors to the park wish to learn all they can about the destination to which they travel, and Marmot Basin recognizes the importance of educating all visitors on the special and unique aspects of Jasper National Park.

Jasper and Marmot Basin have managed to balance an unspoiled and natural 'national park' experience with a world-class ski and snowboard experience for its visitors. By growing in small steps, the ski area hopes to continue to offer its guests the best skiing and snowboarding experience of their lives, while still remaining a protected winter paradise.

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**BEST OF TIMES, WORST OF TIMES...**  
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The key, reiterates the President of the Canadian Ski Council, Colin Chedore, is for "resorts to offer visitors other amenities."

## QUÉBEC FACES SKIER DECLINE

Perhaps hardest hit in participation has been Québec, the province that's suffered a 9 per cent decrease in skier/rider visits over the past five years. "There was a decline from 1990 to 1997 because of demographics," says Claude Péloquin, head of the Québec Ski Areas' Association. "We have the same number of skiers but they're skiing less during the season."

It's a stat that's encouraged RCR, owners of Mont-Sainte-Anne and Stoneham, to exploit outside markets for new visitors. "The U.S. market," says Guy Desrosiers, head of RCR's eastern development, "has big potential." What's more, Desrosiers says RCR is confident its proposed new villages for Sainte-Anne and Stoneham will attract new business. Plus, he says, recent information on Canadian demographics points to a rise in the number of teens taking to the slopes – an increase Desrosiers expects will be as big as the Baby Boomer phenomenon of the last generation. Supporting that is PMB 2000 reports of a 21 per cent increase in snowboarders over 1999.

And while Claude Péloquin says there's not much new planned for other Québec resorts this season, he reminds us Intrawest continues to infuse cash into Tremblant, and Charlevoix's Le Massif has massive plans to qualify as a ski race training centre with a new lift, new terrain and a new daylodge.

## CANADA CAN NOW COMPETE IN ANY MARKET

Indeed, it is the best of times and the worst of times for Canadian skiing. There's much ballyhoo in B.C., a lot going on in Alberta. And despite roller coaster ups and downs, Ontario and Québec are pushing ahead. Says Jimmie Spencer, head of the CWSAA and Chair of the Canadian Ski Council: "Canada is able to compete now with anyone, and we're very optimistic about the future."

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and the ski industry

# Newfoundland? Skiing? But of course!

Newfoundland may not be the destination the average skier thinks of when planning a winter vacation, but it very possibly should be. With over 1600 feet vertical lift and 16 feet of snow per winter, Marble Mountain near Cornerbrook is right in there when it comes to competitive destinations.

Marble boasts the only detachable quad lift in Atlantic Canada, and over 150 acres of ski-able terrain. Back in the early 1990s, the provincial government invested heavily into developing what had for 30-some years been a local (Newfoundland) treasure, largely developed and operated by volunteers and clubs. Now,

new lifts, modern grooming equipment, and a 54,000 square-foot lodge with a 1000-seat capacity entertainment area have brought the mountain services into the same league as many of the giants in Canada.

Marc Sexton, Manager of Marblewood Village Resort near the base of the mountain, told *Communique* that "there are almost 1200 pillows" (over 500 rooms) within four miles of the ski hill. The City of Cornerbrook, the adjacent major community, has at least a dozen accommodation facilities including brand hotels like Holiday Inn and Best Western. The Marblewood Village Resort itself has 56 beds, housed in deluxe suites.

Air travel access is through the Deer Lake airport, served by scheduled service from Halifax (the main gateway). However, Canada 3000 and Royal have been putting large-aircraft charter services into Deer Lake as well, with direct flights out of Toronto costing as little as \$400.

Sexton, and other accommodation and tourism service providers in the area, have been concentrating scant marketing dollars within the Atlantic Canada region. While there was a major marketing push into developing markets (Boston, Toronto) back in the mid-nineties, a couple of bad seasons caused a re-thinking of priorities "for the moment".

The area markets itself as Newfoundland's best kept secret; it could well be that it is one of Canada's!

[www.marblemountain.com](http://www.marblemountain.com)

# A consistent vision creates the finest ski resorts

When Joe Ryan hiked to the top of Tremblant sixty years ago, he was overwhelmed with the view and knew he had to find a way to share it. Within a year, a ski lift was built and the beginning of a vision for a new Tremblant began.



The resort quickly earned the title of "the" place to ski. Today, *Ski Magazine's* readers rate Tremblant as the #1 resort in Eastern North America. Within 10 years of Intrawest purchasing Tremblant, more than CDN\$800 million has been invested to create this four-season, international resort that now boasts 93 trails, an extensive snowmaking system that creates a five-month ski season, one of the oldest ski schools in Canada, and two championship golf courses. Guests also have the choice of hiking, biking, rock climbing, snowshoeing, ice skating, dog sledding or even spending a day at the Scandinavian spa or the La Source waterpark.

While the soul of Tremblant will always be the mountain, the heart of the resort is now the village. It encompasses 80 shops and restaurants, a cinema, indoor/outdoor swimming, health club complex, a Kidz Club and a handful of high quality hotels including a Marriott, Fairmont and a Westin.

## THE VISION IN ACTION

The village's architecture is particularly eye-catching. Colourful roofs, cobblestone streets, with an eye on Québec's cultural heritage makes Tremblant feel like Europe in North America. A year-around schedule of events and festivals means that everybody visiting Tremblant needs to be prepared to have a good time.

The village theme is charming visitors from around the world. The blend of modern accommodations

and retail spaces in the heart of the pedestrian village has become an icon in defining an Intrawest-signature village. The creative restoration and renovation of Tremblant's heritage cottages and other buildings in the "Vieux" Tremblant has defined what

a resort's entertainment and nightlife district should feel like. In short,

Tremblant is in full blossom and reaching the status of a mature four-season resort of international caliber.

## PANORAMA A FOUR-SEASON VILLAGE ATMOSPHERE

With over 4,000 feet of vertical, 2,000 acres of alpine skiing including the view of 1,000 Peaks area and over 700 square miles of heli-skiing right from the village, Panorama is coming of age. Located near Banff, Panorama has a unique intimate village atmosphere with the sophistication of an Intrawest resort. Four distinct neighborhoods linked by pedestrian pathways and a village gondola, a 6,000-square foot heated slopeside waterpark called Panorama Springs and Greywolf, Panorama's 18-hole championship golf course that was awarded "Best New Golf Resort in Canada," all add up to a great lineup of fun, on and off the slopes, summer and winter.

Framed by the Canadian Rockies and Ancient Purcells, Panorama is the best kept secret among North America's mountain resorts. It is a rustic mountain village, a "boutique" resort differentiated by limited development under a comprehensive plan.

## BLUE MOUNTAIN BUILDS FROM FAMILY VISION

The time has finally arrived for Blue Mountain – billed as Ontario's

largest mountain resort – to begin its long awaited transformation from a local resort into a world-class destination. This winter represents the 2<sup>nd</sup> year Blue Mountain has been aligned with Intrawest, following 59 years of operation by the family of its visionary – Jojo Weider. The Blue Mountain/Intrawest partnership represents a shared reputation for service and quality while Intrawest's proven village development expertise has made the vision for the Village at Blue Mountain a reality.

Located two hours north of Toronto, Blue Mountain borders the southern shores of Georgian Bay. Originally conceived as a winter playground featuring the province's highest vertical across 235 acres of skiable terrain, the resort has developed into a four-season destination. This reputation is the result of 'green season' additions highlighted by the nationally ranked Monterra Golf course, mountain biking and hiking trails, water park slide rides, as well as a seven-acre private beach on Georgian Bay. These attractions are

complemented by 60,000+ square feet of conference facilities along with accommodation consisting of the 97-room Blue Mountain Inn and four condominium developments.

When the village is complete in the summer of 2008, Blue Mountain will have 1,482 units of accommodation making the resort a true destination. Blue Mountain currently employs 220 year-round, 880 winter seasonal and 170 summer seasonal employees.

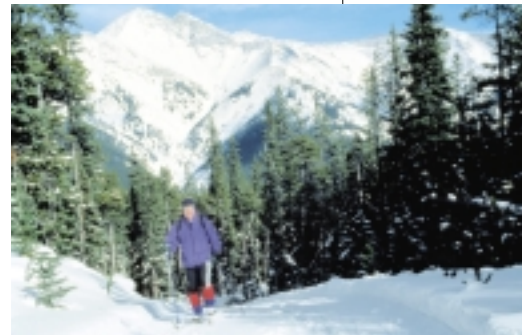
The village master plan calls for the development of 1,275 condo-hotel units and 100,000 square feet of commercial space. Another 207 townhomes are planned for development around the perimeter of the village core. Intrawest is also a joint venture partner in the current development of 624 single-family and townhome units being built around the Canadian Top-10 Monterra Golf course.

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# Cross country ski product club off to a good start

What could be more Canadian than winter, and we do it so well! One of our growing product lines is cross-

skiing as a viable Tourism Product. The primary goal of this product club is to assist people in the industry,



through training seminars, to become "Market-Ready" with image, products and services that tourists are looking for and will want to purchase. Club members will benefit from a fully personalized web page easily reached

by people from around the world through a Cross Country Ski Tourism "portal" at minimum cost. The product club is in the process of producing a winter tourism travel planning guide for travel organizers and tour operators in Canada and abroad, as well as a quarterly newsletter.

country skiing on the thousands of kilometers of beautiful natural trails we offer in this country. As an example of how well Canada delivers this product, of the many Cross-Country Ski events throughout the world there is only one that has never been cancelled for lack of snow or poor conditions and that event is here in Canada: the world-class, world renowned Keskinada Loppet.

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# Australians gear up for the Canadian ski season

The Canadian Tourism Commission, Canada's West Ski Consortium and the local travel industry have been busy promoting the 2000/2001 Canadian ski season to Australian consumers with the recent ski expos and the launch of the Ski 'n Board brochure.

Some of the best ski resorts in Canada came down under for a series of ski and snowboard expos held in Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane. Visiting resorts from Canada included: Whistler/Blackcomb, Sun Peaks, Silver Star, Big White, Fernie, Kimberley, Panorama, Banff Mount Norquay, Sunshine Village, Lake Louise and Marmot Basin/Jasper.

## AUSTRALIAN TOUR OPERATORS KEEN

The expos were also supported by Australia's leading ski and snowboard tour operators to provide visitors with the latest deals, discounts and holiday packages to ski in Canada. Tour operator participants included Alpine World, Mogul Ski World, Ski A Rama, Ski Max, Snowave Travel, Travelplan and Value Tours.

Participation numbers at each show were excellent with 1300 people attending the Sydney expo, 480 attending the Melbourne expo and 250 attending the Brisbane expo. "More Australians than ever are travelling to Canada to ski. In the peak months of January and February 2000, a total of 20,841 Australians travelled to Canada, a 15.07 per cent increase over the same period the year before," said Donna Brinkhaus, Managing Director, Asia Pacific for the Canadian Tourism Commission.

"With the level of interest shown by consumers at each expo we should see another increase in Australian visitation to the ski resorts of Canada this season," said Ms Brinkhaus.

## BROCHURE DETAILS SKI OPERATIONS

The Canadian Tourism Commission in Australia and New Zealand have released this year's Ski 'n Board Canada – a 28 page colour brochure describing in detail the resorts of British Columbia, Alberta and Québec.

Ski 'n Board features the top 16 ski resorts in Canada including Whistler/Blackcomb, Big White, Sun Peaks, Grouse Mountain, Silver Star, Red Mountain, Panorama, Fernie, Kimberley, Lake Louise, Banff Mount Norquay, Sunshine Village, Nakiska and Fortress, Marmot Basin, Mont Tremblant and Mont-Sainte-Anne.

Each resort in Ski 'n Board has information on accommodation, the vertical rise of the mountain, ski-able



terrain, number of lifts, number of trails and average snowfall. The guide is designed for skiers of all levels, from people who have never skied before to the most advanced skier who is looking for a new challenge.

Ski 'n Board also features information on the many winter activities available for families and the adventurers when not on the slopes. Dog sledding, snowmobiling and sleigh rides are just a few of the activities offered in addition to superb skiing.

## DISCOVER CANADA WINTER EDITION

In addition to Ski 'n Board, the CTC in Australia has also published the winter edition of Discover Canada, a 12 page free colour newspaper featuring new product information, latest deals and packages and editorial.

The CTC, Canada's West Ski Resorts and local industry have also

invested additional funding to facilitate awareness of Canada as a viable destination for Australian skiers. This will constitute a global awareness campaign as well as individual wholesaler/resort promotions.

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## 150,000 long-haul German skiers

Germany has almost 6 million active skiers, of whom 37 per cent travel seven times a year, 38 per cent once and 25 per cent not frequently. 150,000 of them have the potential to travel-long-haul. Currently, about 15,000 Germans spend their ski vacation in Canada.

German skiers mostly travel to European resorts which can be reached by car, in particular in Austria, Switzerland, Italy and France. However, over the past ten years skiing trips to North America have become quite trendy. It's a skiers dream to once experience the champagne powder snow in the Rockies. U.S. ski resorts such as Vale and Aspen are very well known in Germany, but also Canadian destinations such as Banff/Lake Louise and Whistler have been gaining ground over the past years. The World Cup downhill events have also helped to build a brand for these resorts.

Germans appreciate good value for money, uncrowded slopes, excellent snow conditions and good access from their hotels (in comparison to European resorts). More lately, tour operators have been successfully selling rather new and yet less known destinations such as Big White, Sun Peaks and Silver Star. For a successful marketing, it is crucial to have good air access and an excellent infrastructure including accommodation, ski lifts, transfer services as well as shopping and après-ski facilities. German travellers also like to explore non-ski

activities such as dogsledding and snowshoeing during their ski vacation.

## MARKETING INITIATIVES

As in the past, the CTC has produced a winter insert covering various products and destinations. This insert has a total distribution of over a million and will be placed in targeted magazines and newspapers beginning at the end of September. A wide array of partners could be recruited for this initiative – provinces, territories, resorts, hotels, German tour operators and Air Canada. Each participating region is represented by selected tour operator packages. The total partner contribution amounts to \$364,000. Based on past years' experience, the CTC Germany expects a response from more than 10,000 consumers.

Also, a cooperative agreement was signed with Marlboro Reisen, one of Germany's leading tour operators for ski packages. Marlboro Reisen will run an extensive advertising campaign throughout Germany and introduce new and already existing products. Tourism BC, Travel Alberta and Tourism Whistler are partners for this initiative which will also begin by the end of September. CTC investment is \$35,000 with \$65,000 coming from partners.

## "SKI-PASS" DIRECT MAIL CAMPAIGN

Last but not least, the German CTC office is currently producing an attractive direct mail piece (in form of a ski pass) which contains information on Banff/Lake Louise and Whistler. Canadian partners are contributing \$11,500. The "pass" will be mailed to selected consumer addresses all over Germany and also provide information on attractive travel packages.

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## U.S. LEISURE SKI PROGRAM

The current U.S. Leisure Ski Program (2000/2001) consists of a high impact 11-page presence in Ski Magazine, October issue and Skiing Magazine, September issue, including CTC and partner pages. Added value includes full-page and 1/3-page ads listing all partner telephone numbers in subsequent issues of each publication. A ski section on the CTC consumer site includes links to partner sites.

Opportunities for the ski industry also exist within the Cities & Resorts Getaways program currently and in the 2001/2002 program year. Ski opportunities for 2001/2002 will be developed based on an evaluation of the existing program in consultation with the Ski/Winter Sub-Committee and the Ski Industry.

U.S. Visitors to Canada in the winter season last year (98/99), made 480,800 ski trips and generated revenue of \$348M. The current U.S. Leisure ski program is valued at \$700K and a wide range of partners are involved including resort properties, airline suppliers and DMOs.

# CTC continues to work Japan ski market

It is estimated that the total number of skiers and snowboarders in Japan is 12 million, with the potential for long-haul skiers to be between 300,000 and 400,000. Long-haul skiers are based both on those who travel overseas, and those who travel to Hokkaido (Japan) as this regional ski resort requires an airplane trip and overnight stay of two or more nights.

The actual number of skiers who travel long-haul is believed to be between 60,000 and 75,000, and the current number of skiers coming to Canada is between 15,000 and 20,000 annually. Canada's market share had been relatively consistent when compared with the decline of the overall long-haul ski market.

However, Canada lost its share of the overseas ski market from 75 per cent to 69 per cent in 1999-2000. The decline of ski market can be attributed to two factors; an aging Japanese population and economic recession in that country.

## PROMOTION OBJECTIVES AND TOOLS

The CTC objective is to promote both the Canada brand and the individual Canadian ski resorts to the target Japanese ski and snowboard market and build greater awareness and increased package sales. Promotion tools include:

- Train jack and station posters in Tokyo, Osaka, and Nagoya.



- Advertorial (ski articles on Whistler and Banff in a leading Japanese consumer travel magazine).
- Internet advertising.
- Direct mail.
- AC/CP and CTC joint newspaper advertising.
- Ski campaign page on CTC Japan website.
- CTC distributes a special supplement "Big Ski Canada 2001" (36 pages), which includes both destination guide and tactical

information in combination with package tours ads by travel agencies. This supplement fulfils all the inquiries and the direct mailing list.

- Partners include airlines, travel agencies, provinces and DMOs, and ski magazines.

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# Another side of training and tourism

## A snowboarder looks at professionalism, pay, and profit

There's a very simple factor that unites everyone in the snow sports industry, from instructors to resort owners, and from sales staff to groomers. It's fun. Let's not underestimate the fun factor. If clients don't have fun, resorts don't have clients, and nobody works. When clients don't enjoy their experience, they don't come back, and you can only sustain an industry for so long like that before you run out of clients.

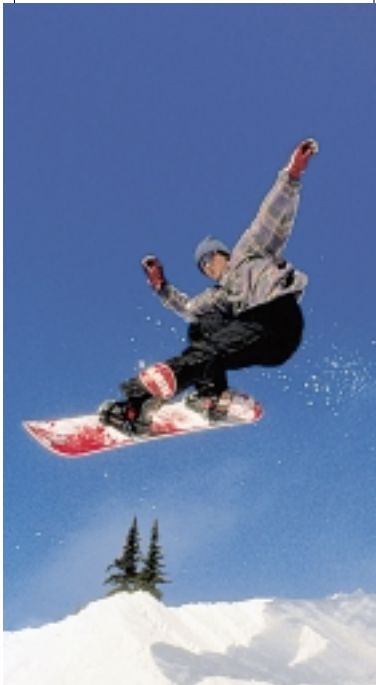
So everyone who works at a resort is charged with maintaining the fun factor in some way. Whether it's ensuring the food is of good quality and value, or that the trails are in good condition, each job has an impact on the client's experience. Some jobs are a little more complex than others, and involve varying degrees of personal responsibility, but - as in the corporate world - they're rewarded (salaried) accordingly. Or are they?

## DOING WHAT YOU LOVE, FOR HIRE, IS - WORK

Consider the Pro (Ski or Snowboard Instructors). The stereotype of a fun-loving carefree hell-raiser is misplaced: the Pro is responsible to more than one master, for more than one task, and some of these are heavy responsibilities. For example:

- Responsibilities to clients. Of course, a lesson has to be fun for every client - no mean feat when you're

teaching groups of varying sizes, varying abilities and varying personalities. That's why training has



to be stringent and most of all, safe. Responsibility for the safety of each individual is one of the biggest responsibilities of all.

- Responsibilities to management. Let's face it, the experience a Pro gives to clients during a lesson makes one

VITAL difference for owners: it determines whether the client becomes a repeat customer, or is lost forever. A good, motivated Pro becomes an effective salesman for the resort.

- Responsibility to the industry. The Pro's effectiveness at creating long-time skiers or snowboarders will impact on manufacturers' abilities to sell product, and upon all segments of the tourism service industry involved in bringing clients to the door (hill).

Obviously the Pro is vital to the industry as a marketer, an educator, an entertainer and a guardian. Start-up and maintenance costs for the average Pro are unquestionably high, and so, with high levels of responsibility and high costs, it stands to reason that our pros should be remunerated accordingly. But here is where it breaks down: they are not... far from it, in fact.

Despite the responsibility and the cost, Pros are paid between \$7 and \$15 an hour, depending on their region and their qualifications. Most are only paid when they actually teach; in fact, some are penalized when they add value to a customer's lesson and teach an additional 15 or 20 minutes on their own time.

Furthermore, resorts are known to cram 20 and more clients to a lesson (with no reward to the instructor) to maximize their profit margin, but surely the gain is short-term. The result of such policies is to increase stress on the instructor, limit his or her ability to give an effective lesson, and ultimately leave clients dissatisfied with the product. In the long-term, the instructors lose, the resorts lose and the industry loses.

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## CTC's tourism ski team in place

Three staff members of the Canadian Tourism Commission have been assembled as a team to work with Canada's ski industry. Caroline Boivin will work with marketing issues, Oliver Martin on research and planning, and Frank Verschuren will be involved in ski product development. The three will undertake these roles in addition to their regular duties.

Roger Wheelock, CTC's Vice President for Marketing, told *Communique*: "This team has been assembled to assist the leadership of Canada's ski industry to develop and implement the industry's own, comprehensive, ski strategy." It is felt that this integrated approach will enable the industry and its partners to maximize the return on investment in development and marketing activities.

Ladd Snowsell of Ski Banff/Lake Louise is keen about the potential for this CTC team approach to reach into and across the ski sector's geographic markets. "The ski and snowboard product in Canada is very strong, very competitive," said Snowsell from his office. "We have no problem bringing back repeat clients; our task at hand is to effectively reach into the international marketplace to get new clients to make their first visit to our ski destinations. This direction (of the CTC) is very meaningful for us."

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## **PARTNERSHIPS, NEW RELATIONSHIPS...**

*continued from page 1*

They are a means of diversifying risk and sharing the benefits of mutual investment. They build ownership for shared goals and often are the catalyst for innovative initiatives that were not originally contemplated.

### **NEED FLEXIBILITY, PATIENCE**

Partnerships are also hard work. Setting objectives is a consensual process that requires flexibility and patience. Financial risk may be diluted through a partnership but sharing control may also impose new risks in terms of image, reputation and quality control. Resolution requires clear communication, specific goals and mutual respect.

Partnerships have been a fact of life at Tourism Saskatchewan since its inception. Originally conceived as an industry/government partnership, the organization has instilled this philosophy through all facets of its operation. Paid membership is approximately 1,900. As of August 2000, no less than twelve separately incorporated businesses were strategic partners of Tourism Saskatchewan. Relationships are negotiated on a multi-year basis and benefits – both cash and in-kind – are accrued to the organization and to the industry members. Examples of partnered initiatives run the gamut from new marketing campaigns, to published calendars, telephone calling cards, insurance discounts, educational training programs, on-line fulfillment publications and on and on.

### **BOTTOM LINE RESULTS ESSENTIAL**

However, the ultimate measure of the effectiveness of any destination marketing organization is its accountability to its industry partners – the businesses who comprise the experiences that attract and encourage visitors to come and spend money in our country. Macro-based statistics and corporate partners are nice, but if an operator doesn't see a relationship between an investment in Tourism Saskatchewan and an improvement to his/her bottom-line then there is little basis for longevity.

Marketing investments by Tourism Saskatchewan are planned in concert with industry participation and monitored closely in terms of return on investment. Whether using traditional media or the Internet, every attempt is made to marry opportunities in the marketplace with industry operators who can book business. Ongoing communication and feedback with industry partners allows marketing efforts to become increasingly refined and, consequently,

increasingly relevant to the industry. Tourism Saskatchewan is intended to serve.

### **REDEFINING PARTNERSHIPS**

The recent meeting of the Small and Medium Enterprise Committee (SME) in Saskatchewan (full story on page 16) was an opportunity to underscore the symbiotic relationship between Tourism Saskatchewan and its industry partners. Together, they are having an impact in markets that are relevant to their constituency.

Are there implications for the Canadian Tourism Commission in support of regional marketing initiatives with SMEs? Absolutely, but it may require a redefinition of the boundaries of what defines a partnership. The CTC offers a cadre of opportunities in a variety of markets but unfortunately the cost is often prohibitive for SMEs. Choice of media or markets may also present barriers to participation by smaller operators.

What might be contemplated instead is investment by the CTC in a regionally driven marketing program that represents a priority investment by a nucleus of industry operators. Benefits would include strong industry participation, highly levered investment and quantifiable results. Equally important, it may well open avenues for new opportunities that further broadens the relationship with CTC.

### **SMEs NEED TO BE TRUE PARTNERS**

If success is measured only in absolute terms (i.e. number of visitors, inquiries, etc.) then regionally-led initiatives, or campaigns that are sensitive to the needs of SMEs at all, may be problematic. However, if an objective of the CTC is to effectively engage SMEs as true partners within Canada's evolving tourism industry – then regionally inspired partnerships may be the route to consider. And cumulatively, the impact could be tremendous.

*Stephen Pearce  
Vice President, Marketing and  
Acting CEO, Tourism Saskatchewan  
1 306 787-9575*



*Stephen Pearce*

# Flexibility in programs important to industry partners

Tourism businesses, and sectoral, regional, and destination marketing organizations across Canada have been vocal about the need for flexibility in the Canadian Tourism Commission's marketing programs. All partners recognize the value of placing Canadian product and destinations squarely in front of potential customers.

Two important programs in key markets have been developed with the express purpose of engaging tourism businesses and regions in marketing programs: the Domestic Regional Tourism Marketing Initiatives Program and the U.S. Leisure Industry Proposal Program.

### **U.S. LEISURE**

The Industry Proposal program was introduced by the U.S. Leisure Executive Committee this past year as a means for industry to come to the CTC with proposals for innovative projects outside the established U.S. marketing program. The program is based on guidelines developed and approved by the Executive Committee and on annual reviews and availability of funds. Proposals must fit within the overall strategy of targeting customer segments, aimed at target markets, and position Canada and its product as unique. The program must be incremental, extending product lines, reaching new markets, or possibly addressing seasonality. It could be a pilot project that, if successful, could in the future be

integrated into the Core Program. The launch announced in the September issue of *Canada Communiqué* is a second wave of this program. It is your opportunity to submit proposals for programs for the 2001/2002 program year. Deadline for submissions is November 15, 2000. Please refer to the Guidelines as outlined in the September issue.

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### **DOMESTIC REGIONAL PROGRAM**

The Regional Program seeks to develop jointly-funded initiatives that promote inter-provincial travel during non-peak periods. It is aimed at "enticing more Canadians to vacation in their own country rather than seek similar experiences in the U.S."

The overall objective, of course, is to create incremental domestic travel within Canada. One-time promotions will be considered, but preference in this program will be given to proposals that demonstrate a longer-term commitment. The program is complementary to the CTC's main domestic program, but it is not intended to replace provincial or territorial programming.

*Details on the next round of the Domestic Regional Program will be announced in the December issue of Communiqué*

## **JAPANESE LANGUAGE WEBSITE LAUNCHED FOR NIAGARA**

On September 1, 2000, Nandemo Japan launched a Japanese web directory of the Niagara Region. To date, 11 Hotels, Inns, and B&Bs in Niagara Falls and Niagara-on-the-Lake have registered with the web directory, which can be found at [www.niagara-nippon.com](http://www.niagara-nippon.com). Properties wishing to register can do so in English, although people will need a Japanese-configured computer to view this site properly.

Up until now, there has been little Japanese information regarding the Niagara region even though Japanese are the largest non-English speaking group to visit the Niagara area each year and spend approximately \$5000 per person while visiting Canada.

The Canadian Tourism Report (1999) stated that only 6 per cent of Japanese tourists consider themselves "very fluent" in reading and writing English and identified "access to Japanese information about Canada" as a marketing weakness.

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# Airline realignment may pose barrier to growth for Japan market

Overnight arrivals to Western Canada from Japan have fallen by more than 5 per cent during the first half of 2000, compared with the same period last year. While arrivals to Central Canada have remained almost unchanged, the decline in Japanese visitors to Alberta and B.C. has created a 3.3 per cent overall national decline in arrivals from that market.

Derek Hood is the Canadian Tourism Commission's Managing Director for Japan. He explains that while Canada rates high as a destination in the Japanese market, and while the level of client satisfaction is also high, there are two factors that are limiting growth in the market: domestic air travel connections beyond the gateways, and price.

## CANADA EXPENSIVE

Canadian vacation packages are more expensive than most other competi-

tors (as much as CDN\$500 more for a Western Canada package compared with Western U.S.). Despite our country's desirability as a destination, when that amount is compounded with higher domestic airline transfer costs, it becomes increasingly difficult for Japanese travel agents to justify the extra effort needed to sell Canadian product.

Furthermore, Japanese travel agents are having trouble making those necessary interline transfers beyond the gateways into Canada, especially for the group travel market. "Travel agents tell me they have little problem finding domestic air travel capacity for, say, families or individuals," says Hood, "but it is getting very difficult to find space for larger groups." Priority for interlining space has changed because of the Air Canada/Canadian Airlines merger: carriers in Air Canada's Star Alliance now receive a higher priority and

better pricing than non-Star Alliance members. (Canadian Airlines had their own interlining agreement with Japanese Airlines (J.A.L.) before the merger, and that agreement has been terminated in favour of Star Alliance.)

## J.A.L. HURT BY CANADA'S AIRLINE RESTRUCTURING

Japanese Airlines handles almost 25 per cent of Japanese visitors to Canada; and Air Canada/Canadian Airlines handles about 30 per cent. 45 per cent arrive in Canada via U.S. gateways and carriers. Based on 1999 numbers, about 50 per cent of the total Japan market is potentially impacted by the issue of availability of connector flights within Canada.

J.A.L. has traditionally carried many of the large group tours into Canada. There is some sign that changing demographics are having their effect on the products being sought. The 45+ age group has been tending towards F.I.T. travel, or "skeleton" F.I.T., and that is the growing age group in the Japan market.

## CANADA "ON NOTICE"

The Japan Travel Bureau has, in effect, put Canada "on notice". They have inserted a prompt on their in-house computer system warning their sales

agents that if they try to book a package or tour to Canada they will likely be unable to obtain domestic air space. Further, the JTB has stopped encouraging their agent to book customers to Canada.

On the other hand, Kintetsu International, another major travel agency in the Japan market, reports that package tours are selling reasonably well, although organized tour sales are very poor due to the inability to block domestic space for groups.

## LOST OPPORTUNITY

Derek Hood worries that the combination of higher price and bad interior connections will result in a lost opportunity for Canada as Japan begins to rebound from its economic woes, which have had a negative impact on tourism to Canada in the last part of the nineties. He muses: "In a normal world, competition and normal market adjustments quickly come into play to answer to demand; under the present circumstances, where one carrier controls 80 per cent of Canada's domestic airline traffic, I am less than confident that we will see this response anytime soon."

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## Snowboarders welcomed at Banff

by Ian Stalker

Those who prefer boards won't be bored in Banff.

The national park is synonymous with downhill skiing to many, thanks to opportunities for schussers to hit the slopes at Lake Louise, Sunshine Village and Banff Mount Norquay. Those famed ski hills continue to welcome downhill skiing enthusiasts, but Banff is also putting out the welcome mat for the growing number of people who enjoy snowboarding and those who strap on cross-country skis, reports Melody Kultgen of the Banff-Lake Louise Tourism Bureau, who says that all three ski hills welcome snowboarders who can use the same lifts and terrain alpine skiers do, and the hills have added the "half pipes" that are very much part of the snowboarding scene.

As well, snowboards can be rented in the townsite of Banff, which

Kultgen says isn't surprising. "Snowboarding has become pretty popular," she says, adding she's met Europeans who've opted to snowboard in Banff.

Particularly adventurous snowboarders might head for slopes found on the countless number of undeveloped mountains in Banff. However, because of safety concerns, that isn't recommended unless people have backcountry experience, emergency beacons and a partner. Skilled snowboarders might also decide to enter competitions staged at the ski hills.

### CROSS-COUNTRY OPPORTUNITIES ABOUND

Kultgen says cross-country skiers will be in their element in Banff National Park, which truly becomes a winter wonderland after fall ends. "It's definitely a combination of outstanding scenery and excellent champagne powder," she says of the park's

appeal to the skinny-skis crowd.

"Groomed trails are found in some parts of the park, but many cross-country skiers prefer to head off the beaten track, doing their own thing," Kultgen reports.

Those eager for a true backcountry experience will find 6,641 square kilometres awaiting them in Banff, which borders Jasper, Yoho and Kootenay National Parks. The four parks have collectively been declared a United Nations World Heritage Site.

An information centre in the townsite can give cross-country skiers the lowdown on skiing opportunities.

Lake Louise always earns accolades from cross-country skiers as its high altitude means it has a good snow base in winter. Kultgen says cross-country skiers eager to be surrounded by the Great Outdoors at night while in Banff National Park can stay in a lodge found outside the townsite. Shadow Lake is comparatively new and its cabins are found between Lake Louise and the townsite of Banff. Other choices are the historic Lake Louise-area lodge of Skoki, and rustic Sundance, near the townsite. Cross-country skiing equipment can be rented in the townsite.



### CANMORE'S OLYMPIC NORDIC CENTRE

Kultgen also notes that the Canmore Nordic Centre – found just outside Banff National Park and used for competitions during the 1988 Winter Olympics – can be used as a cross-country venue during the day and is lit for night skiing once winter sets in.

Meanwhile, Kultgen points out that Banff offers a host of other winter activities, including dog-sledding.

*Ian Stalker is a writer for the Canadian Travel Press and a Communiqué contributor  
istalker@baxter.net*

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# Canada, eh...

## Festivals liven Manitoba winters

Two annual mid-winter festivals are lively proof that Manitobans have never let a little cold weather get in the way of a good time.

The *Festival du Voyageur*, held in Winnipeg's French quarter, St. Boniface in February, is western Canada's largest winter carnival; the *Trappers' Festival at The Pas* (also in February) celebrates the life of the tough and versatile trapper who epitomizes the hardiness of northerners.

Celebrate the "Joie de vivre" of the French Canadian fur traders at the Festival du Voyageur. This unique ten-day celebration, centred around the fur trade era is a place of sights, ceremony and celebration – a reflection of Canada's unique French-Canadian heritage, and a showcase of historic and cultural treasures. It is informative, educational and just plain fun.



One of the Festival's biggest attractions, the winter galleries are made up of more than 80 spectacular snow sculptures and ice carvings created by amateur and professional sculptors from around the world. The majesty of Voyageur Park is a winter wonderland

with snow sculptures, sleigh rides, sled dog rides, maple taffy on snow and lively toe-tapping entertainment in large heated tents. At historic Fort Gibraltar, craftspeople do things the old-fashioned way such as making horseshoes over hot coals.

And if you like voyageur-style entertainment, you can always kick-up your heels and enjoy a good tune. With a choice of more than 10 night spots, 250 performers and more than 400 shows, you can choose from storytelling, sing-songs, fiddling, dancing, tunes rooted in Canada's



folklore, comedy, Cajun music, pow-wows and rock and roll... right into the wee hours.

The *Trappers' Festival*, initiated in 1916, is one of Manitoba's original festive events, featuring dog-sled races, Native handicrafts and food, a fur fashion parade and the Fur Queen and King Trapper contests.

Highlight of the five-day event is the renowned *World Championship Dog Race*, a 105 mile (170 km) trek divided into 35 mile (56 km) laps and run over a period of three days.

Contestants come from across North America to compete for prize money and trophies.

The King Trapper has to win out over stiff competition in a series of events requiring skill and endurance as recalled by the early pioneers and natives of the area. This includes tree climbing, tree falling, wood cutting, bannock baking; tea boiling, muskrat skinning,



canoe packing, flour packing, trap setting, snowshoe racing, moose and goose calling. The festival also features a Queen Trapper contest for the ladies which includes nail driving, tea boiling; bannock baking, snowshoe racing and flour packing. The Junior King and Queen Trapper competitions include pole cutting, log swing, trap setting, and snowshoe racing.

Top all of this with professional entertainment and the Festival du Voyageur and the Trappers Festival become a must for any Manitoba winter visitor. See you there!

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# OPEN FORUMS CONFIRM ACTA'S DIRECTION

The Association of Canadian Travel Agents (ACTA) has been busy over the past year on a number of fronts. The hundreds of agents that came out to the nationwide ACTA Open Forums on "The Future of Travel Agencies in Canada" were excited and motivated by their association's activities at the national level.

Ninety-nine percent of attendees felt the forums met or exceeded their expectations and 94 per cent responded that the Open Forums were educational and informative. Randy Williams, President and CEO of ACTA, led the sessions designed to update and communicate with the retail travel sector. A mix of presentations and open discussions kept all delegates engaged for more than three hours.

## CONCERNS OVER BILL C-26

One of the issues discussed was Bill C-26 on airline restructuring which became law on July 5, 2000. ACTA has been advocating the following five concerns related to this Bill for the past nine months:

- The right to negotiate fair minimum compensation for the work travel

agents do on behalf of the airlines.

- Changing the CRS regulations to ensure information pertaining to volumes purchased by travel agencies for all airlines is not accessible to competing airlines as it places travel agencies at a disadvantage when negotiating compensation.
- Introducing a service fee box on tickets for the optional use of travel agents.
- Introducing a number of laws preventing anti-competitive behaviour such as predatory pricing and incentives based on market share.
- Fostering a competitive airline industry in Canada.

ACTA has successfully advocated for the first three points. It will continue advocating to the Transport Department the need for a service fee box on tickets as well as for a competitive airline industry in Canada which will offer consumers a number of options in each market.

A precedent-setting legislation, and the envy of national travel agency associations worldwide, Bill C-26 continues to be the priority for ACTA and the industry. ACTA has established an Airline Negotiation Team

representative of the entire industry that will begin negotiations with Air Canada this fall on behalf of the travel agency community. The law provides for the right to negotiate for domestic compensation with any air carrier having more than 60 per cent market dominance. Strategies for these negotiations have been discussed with travel agency owners and managers since March 2000. ACTA has met with Debra Ward, the Independent Observer on Airline Restructuring to discuss ACTA's approach and her submission to Parliament in January which will detail the effectiveness of Bill C-26. A process for arbitration or conflict resolution will be sought in this report if negotiations fail over the next six months.

## CONSUMER AWARENESS CAMPAIGN

ACTA will be launching its first ever Consumer Awareness Campaign in September to support ACTA travel agency businesses during this time of changing buying patterns and new service fees. The advertising campaign is valued at approximately \$450,000 and will be in Canadian national

and local newspapers as well as on national television. The campaign will promote the message "Without a travel agent, you're on your own" and will be strengthened by a number of supplier partners supporting the message to consumers.

## NATIONAL ADVOCACY BASED ON INDUSTRY INPUT

ACTA sent out a survey to all travel agencies to prioritize sixteen issues ACTA identified as pressing for the industry. This survey was discussed in detail at the Open Forums and participants provided invaluable input. This feedback will not only assist ACTA on focusing on the most critical concerns of members, but will also allow ACTA to effectively and accurately articulate the views of its members to key decision-makers in both the public and private sectors.

In addition, ACTA has released its Charter of Rights for Air Travellers which encapsulates what it believes air travellers should reasonably expect from airlines. A number of sources were researched including consumer groups, national travel agency associations and Canadian travel agencies.

[jsavard@acta.ca](mailto:jsavard@acta.ca)



## SELLING CANADA

## City & Ski combinations offer unique booking opportunities in Québec

by Fred White

When we think of reservation opportunities for skiers and snowboarders, we often only think of resorts. It is sometimes forgotten that this highly active and mobile audience offers the perfect prospects for combined city experiences, too. And in this respect, Québec resorts are unique in their proximity to major city centres like Québec City and Montréal.

With average snowfalls of up to 22 feet, and state-of-the-art facilities, the Eastern Townships and the Laurentians can satisfy the most fastidious winter vacationer. In fact, the prestigious *Snowboard World Cup* takes place at Mont-Sainte-Anne, Dec. 15-17 this year; and that the World Cup Freestyle Fest will be staged, Jan 12, at Mont Tremblant in the Laurentians.

However, it is often forgotten that Mont-Sainte-Anne and Stoneham, are so close to Québec City, one can practically ski to the cobbled street of this historic provincial capital. The Eastern Townships, at Sutton, Orford and Owl's Head; and Le Massif in the beautiful Charlevoix region, all offer great skiing and touring and many package opportunities.

What more can be said about the Laurentians that has not been said before. Less than two hours from Montréal, Mont Tremblant, eastern Canada's highest skiing peak, Mont Saint-Sauveur, Mont Blanc, and Mont Gabriel are part of the highest concentration of resorts and night-lit ski runs in North America.

In offering the many packages available, combining ski and snowboard excitement with city experiences, it is worth remembering the scores of special events staged in Québec City and Montréal each winter. The Québec Winter Carnival, Jan. 26 to Feb. 11, is now in its 47<sup>th</sup> year and is probably the best known winter festival in the world. The Montréal High Lights Festival, Feb. 8 to March 4, will illuminate the downtown area in a magical display of urban "northern lights," showcas-

ing the city's performing talents, culinary arts and special attractions.

Each ski and snowboard area across Canada has its own personality and appeal, so it is perhaps wrong to single out just one. But for the winter vacationer who wants it all, I find it difficult to top the ski and city combinations that are offered in Québec.

For information and reservations  
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## Musing on the end of summer

by Bob Mowat

### SEVEN WONDERS FORGETS CANADA

Alright, this is a call to action. The Canadian tourism industry needs to stand up and vote for some of this country's wonders otherwise it

appears that the rest of the world, including our neighbours to the south, will lay claim to all seven of them.

What, you may well say, is this guy babbling on about? Well, I'll tell you – you knew I would, didn't you?

Last week, I receive a release from Radisson Seven Seas Cruises – I'm not sure why – about how Americans could vote for the "New Seven Wonders of the World."

In all, 17 so called wonders were listed, but not a Canadian site was to be seen – no Niagara Falls, Magnetic Hill, Percé Rock, Rocky Mountains, Head-Smashed-In-Buffalo Jump, etc., etc., etc.

I'm concerned because while this list contains some wonderful wonders – the Great Wall, Eiffel Tower, Mayan Pyramid, Easter Island Statues, Taj Mahal, Statue of Liberty – I'm also chauvinistic/nationalistic enough to believe that Canada should be represented. So here's the deal:

The voting is based on 480 man-made world heritage sites designated by UNESCO's World Heritage Centre and I have yet to discover whether an organization in Canada is involved in the "New Seven Wonders" project that could lead the charge to get this country represented.

see over

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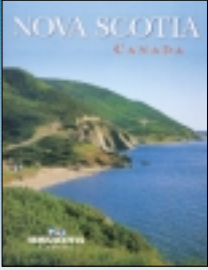
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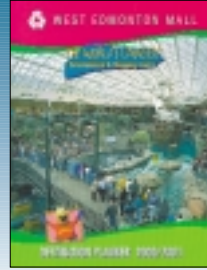


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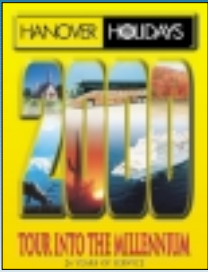
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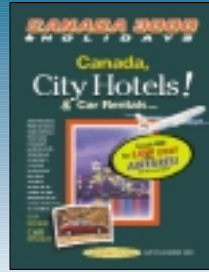


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So go to [www.new7wonders.com](http://www.new7wonders.com) and vote for a Canadian site. The criteria is based on the original criteria developed by Philo of Byzantium in 200 B.C. That criteria selected landmarks that were "extraordinary, exceptional and exemplary of human engineering spirit" and I'm sure that Canada has a few of those.

Oh, and FYI, Bernard Weber is the founder and chief executive officer of the New 7 Wonders Society, so you may want to have a word with him. Who knows, this kind of collective, cooperative effort may just galvanize

the Canadian tourism industry. Then again, it may not.

### LET'S GET ON THE SAME PAGE

ACTA Canada and the Canadian Standard Travel Agency Registry (CSTAR) need to get on the same page and real quick.

I've said this before and I'll say it again. The two organizations have spent the summer in a bit of a turf war, battling over who represents the interests of the Canadian retail travel agent and how effectively they do the job. Each association has its

supporters and its detractors and I am quite happy to see them argue the pros and cons out and some point in time, but not at this point in time.

Here's the problem: On July 5, Bill C-26 was passed and in that legislation, travel agents gained the right to collectively negotiate fair compensation with this country's dominant airline (one controlling 60 per cent of the domestic market) – aka Air Canada.

Good so far, right? Wrong! If travel agents want to succeed in their negotiations with AC, they're going to have to speak with one voice and

negotiate with one voice. Both ACTA and CSTAR agree on this, but where they appear to be diverging is on exactly where that voice will be coming from.

I really don't think that Air Canada is going to be too patient with these kind of antics. In fact, I wouldn't be surprised if they told ACTA and CSTAR to come back when they spoke as one – not two. Divide and be conquered.

*Bob Mowat is Managing Editor Canadian Travel Press and a contributor to Communiqué*  
bmowat@baxter.net

# Financing solutions for small tourism businesses

In the tourism industry, what's new is also attractive, for both customers and investors. However, in terms of financing, ambitions are often stymied by the fact that many tourism businesses are seasonal and, generally speaking, do not meet the criteria for a conventional loan. It can be difficult for them to guarantee a high enough, sustained occupancy rate. And having to make loan repayments in the off-season can be very difficult.

## BUILD OFF-SEASON TRADE

Small Canadian tourism businesses need to focus on several areas in order to ensure growth. These areas include developing innovative products and services to offer their clients, and finding creative uses for their

tourism operation. Some hotel businesses, for example, have added health packages with massages and other services in order to attract a year-round clientele. Others have joined networks of inns for sports enthusiasts and now attract cyclists in the summer and cross-country skiers in the winter. Some golf clubs turn into cross-country ski centres in the winter so they can extend their activities to the entire year.

The Business Development Bank of Canada (BDC) understands the tourism industry and is able to recognize the potential of businesses in this sector. It offers them more flexible repayment terms and conditions tailored to their particular situation. Also, the BDC Consulting Group has specialists who can guide small

tourism businesses in making the right decisions.

To help small tourism businesses meet new challenges, the Business Development Bank of Canada offers the following tools:

## TOURISM INVESTMENT FUND

The BDC Tourism Investment Fund provides financing for expanding and upgrading facilities and for starting new tourism businesses in niche markets with strong growth potential.

Entrepreneurs can apply for term loans between \$250,000 and \$10 million. Flexible repayment terms, based on the growth of the business and performance indicators such as occupancy rate and length of stay, may include deferred principal payments the first year and reduced payments in the second and third years.

## WORKING CAPITAL FOR GROWTH

Working Capital for Growth can "top up" the financing available from an operating line of credit. This type of loan from BDC may entice other lenders to increase their commitments. A Working Capital for Growth loan

provides the critical additional financing that many small businesses need to capitalize on business opportunities. Loans up to \$100,000 are available to augment working capital.

## BDC CONSULTING GROUP

The BDC Consulting Group can help entrepreneurs to:

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Business Development Bank of Canada

# Linking training and safety is critical

It's true that providing excellent customer service will affect a ski hill operator's bottom line. It's also true that with the growing popularity of skiing, customer expectations are increasing and providing trained staff is one of the most effective ways that an operator can deliver on these expectations. But, good training leads to more than satisfied customers and an increased bottom line: properly trained staff also offer safety on the ski hill. And safety is a number one issue for ski hill operators across the country.

"Training is a high priority. We deal with a high level of turnover with front-line staff. In order to bring them up to speed you have to have an intensive and standardized training program," explains Jim Walters, Risk Management Chair, Alberta region, Canada West Ski Areas Association. The Association, with membership from ski operations across the west, aims to establish a level of consistency in skill hill standards and actively advocates safety.

The safety issue is three-fold. First, there is worker safety. This is paramount because lift machinery and the ever-changing weather environment create inherent risks that staff must be able to address. "Training is the only way to initiate

new staff to these challenges or to maintain a high level of awareness with existing staff," adds Walters.

## CLIENT SAFETY MUST BE TOP OF MIND

Then there is customer safety and the guest experience. In order to ensure that guest expectations are fully met, safety must always be in the minds of staff. In the ski business, if a customer becomes injured, it may taint their feeling of the hill, or even the sport. The relationship with a customer may even be terminated on the basis of one negative experience.

Risk management for insurance purposes is a third concern. With property loss, such as a broken ski lift, the down time means lost revenues. Lawsuits resulting from an injury claim are one of the greatest fears of a ski hill operator. Staff properly trained around safety issues can help a ski operator to avoid these unnecessary costs.

## TRAINING TOOLS

The *LiftZone Video* and accompanying *Companion Guide* produced by the Canadian Tourism Human Resource Council is a training tool made for the Ski Lift Operator. The Canada West Ski Areas Association uses this video, according to Jim Walters:

"The video helps to orient staff who are completely green to the industry. In half an hour, they can get a seasonal snapshot. Most of the hands-on training that occurs on ski hills is prior to opening, so trainees don't get experience of dealing with public. Ski lifts run great when no one is on them," Walters explains. "The real challenge is gaining an understanding of how to safely operate the lifts when the hills are abounding with skiers. This is where the *LiftZone Video* is invaluable."

The *LiftZone Video* and *Guide* review the safety regulations, policies and procedures that Lift Operators are required to know for their job. The 28-minute *Video* and *Companion Guide* describe the three major risk factors for lift operation – weather, machinery and people.

To order copies of the *LiftZone Video* and *Companion Guide* or the National Occupational Guidelines for Ski Areas Resort Operations, contact the Canadian Tourism Human Resource Council. They will put you in touch with the tourism education council in your province or territory.

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# Canada voted "World's Best Country"

Canada was voted "World's Best Country" in a recent readers poll conducted by Condé Nast "Traveller" magazine in the United Kingdom. The awards marked the magazine's third anniversary and over 30,000 readers voted in 20 award categories, ranging from "World's Best Country" to "Best Destination Spa".

Countries were judged by awarding points for the following criteria: scenery, culture, climate, environmental friendliness, range of accommodation, variety of attractions, safety, value for money, people and hospitality, food and restaurants. Canada rose to the top position, from second place in 1999, with a total score of 97.98, hardly falling below 90 in any criteria. At the first awards ceremony in 1998, Canada was not even featured in the top ten listing.

Additional tribute came when the Fairmont "Banff Springs Hotel", Alberta, Canada, was voted by readers in second place, in the category of "Best Overseas Destination Spa", the first time a Canadian hotel property has been featured in the hotel/spa categories.

Nim Singh  
Marketing Manager CTC  
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## Product club program calls for new proposals

The Canadian Tourism Commission is again sending a request for proposals for the creation of new product clubs, to be launched in April 2001. Updated criteria and application forms will be available on October 06, 2000 through the Internet [www.canadatourism.com/productclubs](http://www.canadatourism.com/productclubs) or by mail from the address given at the end of this article.

The Product Club program is currently in its sixth round and is reaching out once more to tourism organizations and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to help them develop new, sustainable market-ready products.

A Product Club typically consists of a consortium of SMEs which creates new or enhances existing tourism products in Canada.

### \$1.5 MILLION OVER THREE YEARS

Total CTC funding of existing and new Product Clubs is \$1 million annually. Over the next three years, the CTC will commit an estimated \$1.5 million to this new round of successful Product Club applicants.

Approved Clubs will receive a CTC partnership contribution for a maximum of three years, after which the club is expected to become self-sustaining. It is important to note that successful applicants must have industry financial support as a pre-requisite. The CTC program provides for partnership funding; it is not a grant.

"A key challenge in the industry today is that tourists demand a lot when visiting a destination. Capturing

a larger share of the international market requires creating new products and expanding demand for it across all sectors. Product clubs can effectively do that and provide a stimulus to the industry by supporting small business," says Terry Ohman, Director of the Product Club program.

The strength of the program lies in its ability to bring partners together in a united effort to promote industry interests and accomplish activities that would not be possible alone. Product clubs are an opportunity for the industry to develop and implement their creative tourism product idea in a successful proven partnership approach. Not only do Product Clubs help build local and regional alliances but they can help build relationships elsewhere in Canada and even help future product clubs establish their own partnerships.

### UNIQUE PROJECTS SOUGHT

The CTC is looking for unique, self-sustainable projects, adaptable by other regions and provinces, which follow the tourism industry's defined

vision and mission. The objectives are to bring new products to a market-ready status, to create learning opportunities and to enhance the quality of existing tourism products in Canada into the next Millennium.

Since the inception of the program in 1996, 31 product clubs have been created across Canada involving about 250 partner organizations and more than 5,000 associated members and businesses.

### FOLLOW DIRECTIONS

All Product Club proposals must follow the directions contained in the Information and Application package. **The deadline for submissions is Friday January 12<sup>th</sup>, 2001 5:00 pm Eastern Standard Time.** To obtain the Information and Application package, please: retrieve the document from the Product Club Web page on the CTC website: [canadatourism.com/productclubs](http://canadatourism.com/productclubs)

or  
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Tel: 819 956-1772  
Fax: 819 997-2229

[sylvain.diamond@pwgsc.gc.ca](mailto:sylvain.diamond@pwgsc.gc.ca)

## SME committee hears from industry

The Canadian Tourism Commission's Small and Medium Enterprises (SME) Committee held a three-day series of meetings in Saskatchewan in late August. As a kick-off to the discussions, tourism industry professionals from Saskatchewan had the opportunity to meet the CTC Board Members on the Committee, and staff of the CTC, at a morning fact-finding session in Saskatoon.

Hal Stupnikoff, the long-serving Executive Director of the Saskatchewan Outfitters Association, was very enthusiastic about the existence of the SME Committee, and that the needs of this sector of the industry were being addressed. "Small enterprises are a Saskatchewan reality," says Stupnikoff, "Almost all of our tourism product and services fall into this category." Stupnikoff also expressed frustration that there is an apparent lack of opportunity to partner with the CTC in U.S. markets for the province's fishing sector, a highly productive tourism product especially in the north.

### FLEXIBILITY SOUGHT

Several participants in the morning session wanted to see greater accessibility to CTC marketing programs. Randie Goulden, representing one of the regional organizations, said that when she asked her members for a message to bring to the CTC, they identified the cost of buying

into programs as a deterrent.

Stephen Pearce, Vice President for Marketing of Tourism Saskatchewan, sought flexibility in the criteria for marketing programs to encourage partnership development. (An article by Pearce appears elsewhere in this issue of *Communique*.)

### COMMUNICATION IS KEY

The Committee has developed a series of recommendations that are designed to assist the SMEs to play a more comprehensive role in tourism planning, development, and marketing. A number of these recommendations will be submitted to a full meeting of the Board of the CTC in Moncton in October. The recommendations are designed to be of benefit to Canada's tourism industry as a whole.

The Committee members strongly felt that communication within the industry was key to enhancing the development of the SME sector. Based on industry feedback, the Committee identified that *Communique* magazine is the most effective and widely-circulated communications tool for the sector. Board member Debbie Greening has been charged by the Committee with the task of enhancing SME involvement in the magazine.

The next meeting of the Committee will be in Halifax prior to the Board meeting in Moncton in October.

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## Insurance and risk management guide in development

Knowledge of risk management and insurance concepts are extremely important for tourism operators, especially for the adventure tourism, ecotourism and skiing sectors. In an effort to assist tourism operators in these sectors, the Canadian Tourism Commission has commissioned the International Risk Management Group (IRMG), in conjunction with the

Cameron and Associates Insurance Consultants, to develop a *Risk Management and Insurance Guide for Tourism Operators in the Adventure Tourism and Ecotourism and Alpine Skiing Sectors*.

The guide will provide a basic understanding of insurance principles and will offer best practices for managing risk in these sectors. The CTC hopes that this guide will improve the industry's ability to manage risk and access comprehensive and cost-effective insurance. It is expected to be published in both official languages by the end of this year.

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## CATCH AND RELEASE FISHING DOMINATING NORTHERN TOURISM SECTOR

Over 20 years ago in Saskatchewan, the fishing lodges in the north started making changes. "They recognized that the core of their product was big fish, and that big fish were being taken from the lakes in numbers far too great to sustain the industry," says Hal Stupnikoff of the Saskatchewan Outfitters Association. Over the intervening years, operators have re-positioned their product to the point where Stupnikoff says that about 95 per cent of the fishing lodges offer catch-and-release fishing only.

That seems to be reflected across Canada's north. In Ontario, tourism officials report that northern lodges are predominantly catch and release. Manitoba has adopted a barbless-hook policy to facilitate the safe release of fish back into the lakes and rivers.

Saskatchewan's Stupnikoff says that fishing in the northern lakes and rivers is a high-yield tourism sector for the province, drawing heavily on the U.S. market. The move to catch and release fishing, and the adherent cost-savings such as decreased labour and transportation requirements to handle caught fish, has meant that the industry is more sustainable than ever, economically as well as environmentally.

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## The Maserati “Canada 10,000” challenge

by Martha Plaine

This summer, two deluxe Italian-made sports cars tackled the highways and back roads of this country of ours, and exposed their journalist drivers to the myriad of attractions along the way. These elegant cars represent a partnership of extraordinary vision and cooperation for tourism promotion for Canada.

### COMING TOGETHER: THE CONCEPT

Like so many other great ideas, this one started over dinner. “The famous dinner”, as some people now call it, took place just a year ago, in Bologna, Italy, in September 1999. Lucia Vimercati, director of the CTC’s Italy program, found herself seated next to Antonio Ghini, communications director of a large car manufacturer. The occasion was a banquet hosted by the Canadian Embassy.

Lucia remembers the conversation well. She and Mr. Ghini were

different locations in Canada. Lucia jumped at the idea.

### SETTING IT UP

In Ottawa, Joan Pollock, director of the Europe marketing program, liked the idea at once. The Maserati name attracts the kind of customer Canada is after, she explained. That’s a high-earning professional, who enjoys luxury consumer goods – like cars – and travel. A high-profile event and media tour would ensure good press coverage.

Judd Buchanan, chairman of the CTC Board, was also enthusiastic, and the Canada Maserati Challenge was born. This was the plan:

- The tour would be a cross-country car relay to promote the new Maserati in European and North American markets. The company calls the car “a coupe that matches elegance, power, and comfort.” At the same time, the tour would promote Canada as a



chatting about Gilles Villeneuve, Québec’s great Grand Prix driver and one-time world champion. Ghini was a big fan. After all, Gilles Villeneuve had been a driver for an Italian team. Ghini had a brain storm: Canada and Maserati, the luxury sports car manufacturer, would get together in a joint promotion. It would be a cross-country car relay of Canada. Top journalists from around the world would drive Maseratis. As they crossed the country visiting everything from Parliament Hill to Niagara Falls and the Rockies, they’d file stories about

spectacular destination whose natural beauty, diverse attractions and hospitality make for memorable touring.

- Canada and Maserati wanted a major media tour for international journalists. This would result in extensive press coverage for both partners.
- Photojournalists would record the tour for a glossy souvenir book of photographs, with calls-to-action mailed to Maserati customers for more information or to book a trip to Canada. A video television

program would also be produced. Canada would provide many scenes of natural beauty to compliment the Maseratis.

- A Maserati web site would give fans a day to day diary of the relay. The site would publish photos and information about Canadian destinations. There would be links to Canadian sites.
- Promotions featuring Canada would take place at Maserati dealerships in Europe and North America.

With a partnership agreement in place, in April, 2000 planning for the event shifted into high gear. Maserati requested a cross-country route to traverse more than 10,000 kilometres of Canada’s most scenic and demanding highways. After all, this was to be a road trip to prove the mettle of one of the world’s most technically advanced automobiles.

The official tour would start in Montréal, cross the country to Vancouver on the Pacific Coast, and finally head north to Inuvik, the remote city on the Arctic coast literally the end of the road in Canada. The estimated distance to be driven was 10,000 kilometres.

### ATTENTION TO DETAIL

It was not possible for one person, or even one office to do all the planning. The CTC’s Caroline Boivin sought out partners to develop itineraries to coordinate and provide accommodations, meals, and activities.

Provinces, territories, and cities gave their enthusiastic support. Tourism Québec, Tourism Manitoba, Tourism Saskatchewan, Tourism Alberta, Tourism B.C., Tourism Yukon and Northwest Territories Arctic Tourism joined the effort to find partners and organize their part of the saga. The cities of Ottawa, Kingston, Toronto, Niagara Falls, and the Northern Tourism Marketing Association took it upon themselves to plan the Ontario component. These partners worked closely with Johanne Larivière from the CTC’s office in Italy to finalize trip itineraries.

The provinces, territories, and cities established links with smaller partners in towns and villages. They organized accommodations in big city hotels, at country inns, at rural health spas, and at guest ranches. They planned to feed the hungry travellers by arranging more partnerships with restaurants, cafes, attractions, and even community groups. For a final feast under the Midnight Sun in the Arctic, they planned a



community barbecue of caribou, moose, and char. Museums, science centers, and other attractions planned special guided excursions to show off their treasures.

In Italy, Antonio Ferreira handled the last details of the promotion for Maserati. He organized the shipment of two shiny new Maserati 3200 GT coupes, one silver and one blue as he himself prepared to fly to Canada for the launch of the tour. Mechanics, a video crew, and photojournalist were set to go. The first pair of journalists, representing Italy, were ready. On June 15th the Maserati Canada 10,000 Challenge hit the road.

### GETTING IT DONE

Following a warm-up tour between Montréal and Québec City, the first leg of the relay covered the highway from Montréal to Ottawa. The cars drove on to Kingston for a tour of Fort Henry. They finished the first leg of the relay touring the sites of the big city, including Toronto’s theatre district. The distance was 1300 kilometres.

Massimo Pacifico, a freelance photojournalist from Italy, was a driver on this leg. Although he is a Canada expert with many trips under his belt, Pacifico says he saw something new: a more vigorous tourism industry in Montréal and Ottawa. “The cities were full of energy – and I discovered how much I love Canada’s National Gallery and Museum of Civilization. I’m going to tell my readers to visit.”

### HEADED WEST

The second leg of the tour was the longest: more than 2400 kilometres from Toronto through Sudbury and the Sault, to Thunder Bay, around the rugged north shore of Lake Superior and across the prairie to Winnipeg.

Journalists on this route may have had the most varied experiences of Canada. They visited man-made wonders, such as the CN Tower and the SkyDome in Toronto. And they had the opportunity to view some of the region's most spectacular natural wonders - the Agawa Canyon, Kakabeka Falls, and the sacred burial grounds of Manitou Mounds.

American free-lance writer Andrew Slough took his turn behind the wheel during this second leg of the tour. The north shore of Superior was new territory for him. Slough says he was "dumbfounded" by the beauty and the sheer breadth of Ontario. He sold his story to *Diversions Magazine*, a specialty magazine for doctors in the USA and Canada, with circulation of about 400,000. The article will appear in the December issue.

The third leg of the relay traversed the distance between Winnipeg and Calgary, more than 1500 kilometres. Here drivers had an opportunity to see a herd of bison at Riding Mountain National Park, drive the fabled route through the Qu'Appelle Valley, and experience prairie hospitality in Regina and Moose Jaw.

Italian journalist Cristiano Chiavegato drove this leg of the tour. He filed stories with pictures in the newspaper *La Stampa*, in Turin, and an article in the magazine *Specchio*. Chiavegato described his tour as a voyage of adventure through an inspiring country. For him, the Maserati car was the perfect vehicle for the voyage.



### TESTING THE MOUNTAINS

The fourth leg of the tour covered the Canadian Rockies and the ranch and wine country of British Columbia. The drivers clocked a distance of 1,460 kilometres, from Calgary over the Rockies at the Yellowhead Pass and on to Vancouver.

Karin Elvers, the lone female driver, was the journalist-driver from Germany for this leg of the tour. On August 1, the *Frankfurter Allgemeine*

*Zeitung*, a paper with a circulation of 450,000 and Germany's leading quality daily newspaper, carried a story Elvers wrote about her tour.

The fifth leg of the trip was short but intensely beautiful, just 900 kilometres from Vancouver to Prince George. Highlights of this itinerary were horseback riding at a guest ranch and accommodations at a health spa.

Emmanuel Rubin, the editor in chief of *L'Optimum*, a men's magazine in France, drove this leg of the tour. He wrote an eight page story with photos about his adventures for the September 22 issue of his magazine, a weekly with a circulation of more than 100,000. Rubin found Canada an enchanting destination for a road trip. He raved about the scenery he saw - especially the glaciers.

### GOLD RUSH COUNTRY

Leg six of the tour covered nearly 1700 kilometres from Prince George to Whitehorse. Driving conditions along this stretch were interesting and varied: the drivers were called upon to handle the Maseratis on logging roads, on sandbars in rivers, along gravel roads to view glaciers, and even down a road perched on top of a ridge of hardened volcanic lava.

Jurgen Lewandowski was the journalist chosen by Maserati to write about this leg of the tour for the German auto press. "Of course I found

the beauty of British Columbia and the Yukon magnificent. But the people of the Yukon were especially interesting."

The seventh and final leg of the tour was the most difficult. The distance was 1270 kilometres from Whitehorse to Inuvik. After panning for gold and hitting the saloons in Whitehorse and Dawson City, the drivers headed out across the treeless tundra along the Dempster Highway. The Dempster is an unpaved, unsealed gravel road. Except for the

small settlement of Eagle Plains, this is an uninhabited land.

Canada saved its greatest challenge for last. On the final driving day of the tour the tour had to traverse the Stewart and Richardson Mountains, from Eagle Plains to Inuvik. "Drivers experienced four seasons in a single day," says Johanne Larivière, with the CTC's office in Italy. "They faced sun, wind, mud, and even snow and ice." When the cars pulled in to Inuvik thirty-one days after the start of the



relay in Montréal, it was just in time. Authorities decided to close the Dempster Highway for a few hours because of slippery conditions.

### A CONSUMMATE PARTNERSHIP: CANADA AND THE CARS BOTH WIN

The two Maseratis were a little dusty, but they were none the worse for wear. The sports cars had lived up to Canada's challenge: they had driven 14,000 kilometres across Canada, from Montréal in the East to Vancouver on the Pacific Ocean, and north beyond the Arctic Circle to the settlement of Inuvik on the Beaufort Sea. The cars had sustained no damage save for one flat tire. For the drivers, the tours had been glamorous, often thrilling rides through landscapes of great beauty.

If Guinness is keeping track, this may go down in history as the world's biggest familiarization tour. Seven teams comprising fourteen journalists from the United States, Japan, Switzerland, Germany, France, Great Britain, and Italy took part. On its website Maserati posted a statistical summary of the tour: 14,000 kilometres; 200 total driving hours; 3300 litres of gas; 2 speeding tickets; 2000 photos; 50 hours of film; 5 bears, 7 moose, 1 red fox, eagles, and a herd of bison.

Although the tour has ended, the benefits to Canada and Canadian partners go on. During the tour, activity on the Maserati website was hot. There were more than 15,000 hits.

The site was linked to Canadian partners' travel sites. Press coverage of the event will continue for months. The journalists have filed major articles in newspapers and magazines in Europe, Japan, and the United States. Photographs have been chosen for the souvenir book of the tour, scheduled for publication. And Canada is preparing promotional material for a direct mail activity with Maserati customers.

Antonio Ferreira, the director of public relations for Maserati, reports

that the video of the tour has been edited. Maserati is negotiating television rights with several media outlets. "The Canada Maserati tour was a fantastic adventure, exciting and tough," he says. "With the long distances to be covered, it was a real challenge."

Jim Watson, the new President of the CTC, is highly enthusiastic about the partnership development exemplified by the Maserati Challenge and its benefit to Canada's tourism industry. "We are very grateful for the expression of faith in our country and its product that has been demonstrated by the European participants," said Watson. "I am also very well aware of the value of contributions made by our Canadian partners, and the tremendous amount of work done by CTC staff to bring this exciting project to fruition."

*Martha Plaine is a freelance writer and a frequent contributor to Communiqué*

**VISION** - Canada will be the premier four-season destination to connect with nature and to experience diverse cultures and communities.

**MISSION** - Canadas tourism industry will deliver world-class cultural and leisure experiences year round, while preserving and sharing Canadas clean, safe and natural environments. The industry will be guided by the values of respect, integrity and empathy.

## - NON-TRADITIONAL PARTNERSHIPS -

# A winning strategy in Europe

by Martha Plaine

Much is made of the word "partnership" these days, but often the opportunities and processes involved in creating successful partnerships are not fully understood, especially when it comes to developing "non-traditional" partnerships. For example, the Canadian Tourism Commission has just completed the "Canada 10,000" Maserati Challenge, a hugely beneficial venture that is remarkable because of its scope and size. But such partnerships are a standard way of promoting Canada in the European market.

Joan Pollock sees it this way: "A non-traditional partnership is a hook that lets us reach our partner's customers. For a modest investment we get access to the partner's clients. At the same time, we get opportunities to promote Canada and build our image."

The CTC's staff in Europe are always on the look out for non-traditional partners. In general, they're seeking upscale retailers which cater to an affluent customers in the 35 to 55 age group. Research has shown that these are the sort of clients who are likely to travel to Canada.

## GETTING A GOOD FIT

"We approach potential partners in terms of whether Canada – or Canada's image – would benefit them. We look for a good fit," Joan says. One European partnership that is a particularly good fit is the promotional campaign with Schweppes beverage company in France. Schweppes owns the Canada Dry brand. Canada Dry advertises on French television.

When Bernard Couet and Alyre Jomphe of the CTC's Paris office happened to see the ad, they recognized an obvious opportunity. They phoned Schweppes. Together, Canada and the beverage company developed a promotion that's in its second year.

Basically, it's a straightforward marketing campaign with specially marked Canada Dry packages to promote Canada. There's also a contest with a prize trip to Canada. Jomphe estimates that some 400,000 French households have purchased the Canada Dry products with the Canada logo. And ballots for the prize trip have yielded names for Canada's data base for direct mail activities.

## ACCENT ON THE CUSTOMER

Couet is director of the CTC's program in France. He explains that

non-traditional partnerships fit with the CTC's current strategy of focusing on consumers.

In the late 80's, the emphasis was on developing tour packages. In the 90's the focus shifted to working with travel agencies to market the tours. "Now, non-traditional partnerships are allowing us to put the accent on the consumer," Couet says. "We work with businesses which have a large bank of clients, and find creative ways to get to those customers ourselves," he explains. "It wasn't easy at the beginning, but now we get more requests for partnerships than we can handle."

Canada does promotions with partners from a range of French retail businesses that are not ordinarily associated with tourism: an insurance company, a luggage company, even a coat manufacturer.



In England the emphasis on non-traditional partnerships is equally important. One of the year's top promotions was with a very non-traditional partner – a snack food manufacturer. The company, KP Foods, was getting ready to launch a new advertising campaign for its product, McCoy's Crisps. "KP Foods came to us," says Ian Harrower, director of the London office of the CTC. "They thought that the image of Canada made a good fit with their brand of chips. They wanted to associate the product with freshness, nature, and the Great Outdoors."

## IMAGE BUILDING

Canada agreed to contribute about \$40,000 towards a million dollar promotional campaign. Alberta and British Columbia joined as partners. Canada's logo appeared on specially marked packages of the chips. More than 12 million packages were sold during the four-month campaign. Promotions in supermarkets and food outlets included posters, displays, and pamphlets about destinations in western Canada. A Canada web site was a popular feature: it registered 25,000 "hits" in the first week. KP Foods was so pleased that the company is now contemplating more

partnerships with Canada. A McCoy-Canada travel web site may result.

In Germany, Karl-Heinz Limberg, director of the CTC program, has a sharp eye for good deals with non-traditional partners. "These partnerships build our image. That's especially good for our Canadian partners," he says. Limberg points to the recent promotion with Twentieth Century Fox as an example.

In Germany, the usual image of Canada is something of a cross between the back woods and complete wilderness. Canadian destinations would like to expand the notion most Germans have of Canada to include sophisticated cities with interesting cultural attractions. When Twentieth Century Fox proposed a joint consumer promotion, Limberg saw his chance.

The hook for the film company were the premieres of two films with a Canadian connection. "Grey Owl," starring Pierce Brosnan is about a Canadian subject. The film was shot in Canada. "The Whole Nine Yards," with Bruce Willis, was shot, in part, in Canada, and Canada agreed to a partnership.

The result was a large image-building campaign for consumers and the travel trade. More than five-hundred guests in the travel trade and media attended sneak previews of the films. There was a raffle with prize trips to Canada provided by Air Transat. More than 250,000 consumers saw ads for the raffle on television and in stores. Canada billed itself as the Hollywood of the North. Toronto and Montréal were showcased as top locations for cultural events and festivals. Ontario and Québec promoted natural attractions such as Niagara Falls, parks, canoeing and fishing.

## THE BENEFITS GO ON AND ON

In addition to the image-building, Canada received tangible benefits including 8,000 names of German travellers who are interested in visiting Canada for the database. They'll be included in mailing lists in future direct mail promotions in Germany.

Being alert for partnership opportunities, and being flexible – thinking "outside the box" – is a way of life for promoting Canada in the European market.

*Martha Plaine  
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frequent contributor to  
Communiqué*



## Our man in China

As reported in the June 2000 issue, the CTC plans to open a representative office in China this year. This has now received official approval from the Chinese authorities. Plans are proceeding accordingly for an inauguration in November 2000 coincident with the Prime Minister's Team Canada mission visit to that country.

Heading-up Canada's tourism interests is Richard Liu, whom CTC Chairman the Hon. Judd Buchanan has appointed as CTC Director for China, based in Beijing. Richard, who was born in Shanghai, received his education there and in several European countries, as well as Canada where he had fourteen years of teaching experience. He is also a published author of seven books.

His relationship with the tourism industry started following China's open door policy when, in 1978 he initiated cultural and educational exchange programs involving Canada, the United States and China, completing more than forty since that time. He organized the first sister-city relationship between Suzou, China and Victoria, British Columbia which led to some 30 other such China-Canada relationships.

## ASSISTING CTC SINCE 1994

Since 1994, Richard has been assisting the Canadian Tourism Commission in the development of tourism between our two countries. His current challenge is to work to obtain "Approved Destination Status" (ADS) for Canada from the Chinese government, and begin to position Canada as a primary market for visitation by Chinese leisure travellers through the organization of a Canadian presence at the China International Travel Mart taking place in Shanghai from October 18-21, 2000.

Watch for a China update report from Richard in the December issue of Communiqué, at which time we will provide direct contact coordinates for the new CTC Beijing office.

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## Highlights of travel forecasts

The highlights of the latest forecast report for 2000 to 2004 for the major inbound markets to Canada and for Canadian outbound travel to the United States were prepared by the Canadian Tourism Research Institute (CTRI) for the Canadian Tourism Commission. They are based on the most recent economic forecasts and market intelligence.

### INBOUND TRAVEL FROM THE U.S.

Overnight travel from the United States is projected to increase by a modest 2 per cent this year, down slightly from the 2.6 per cent recorded in 1999. While economic growth in both the U.S. and Canada has been strong in recent times – coupled with a very favourable exchange rate for Americans – travel growth from the U.S. has moderated sharply from the 11.1 per cent increase witnessed in 1998.

Both quantitative and qualitative evidence suggests that Canadian travel price increases, like those witnessed last year, played an important role in dampening some of the potential gains from the U.S. overnight market. While travel price increases primarily affected overnight pleasure travel from the U.S., overnight business travel also performed below expectations.

### FORECAST OF OVERNIGHT PERSON-TRIPS FROM THE UNITED STATES TO CANADA (VOLUME IN 000s; PERCENT CHANGE FROM PREVIOUS YEAR)

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
<b>United States Total</b>	15,483 (2.0%)	15,793 (2.0%)	16,030 (1.5%)	16,271 (1.5%)	16,515 (1.5%)
<b>United States Non Business</b>	13,123 (2.3%)	13,464 (2.6%)	13,707 (1.8%)	13,954 (1.8%)	14,177 (1.6%)
<b>United States Business</b>	2,411 (2.5%)	2,459 (2.0%)	2,508 (2.0%)	2,558 (2.0%)	2,635 (3.0%)

Even though the convention market within Canada was weaker than expected, more troubling was the fact that U.S. meeting planners continue to express concern about the availability of adequate meeting space for large conventions in Canada. While the problem of an inadequate amount of meeting space is not expected to be solved

anytime soon, the Canadian Tourism Research Institute (CTRI) still expect overnight business and pleasure travel to expand this year. Significant real wage gains in the U.S. coupled with high consumer confidence and a favourable exchange rate present some strong economic motivators for travel to Canada.

While airline consolidation is currently presenting some challenges to both foreign and domestic travellers alike, air access between Canada and the U.S. continues to improve through progress on the Open Skies agreement.

### INBOUND TRAVEL FROM OTHER MAJOR MARKETS

In 1999, overnight travel from most of Canada's major European markets expanded. While the growth rates, for the most part, were not exceptional, they were quite welcome on the heels of back-to-back travel volume declines in 1997 and 1998. This year, the outlook continues to remain quite positive despite a further depreciation of the euro. While the implementation of the euro has inflicted a high price on the economic prosperity of many Europeans, it is viewed as a necessary pill to swallow for global competitiveness. Overall, Europe is now much better off economically.

Next year, the outlook for travel from Europe is even more positive. While economic factors are expected to remain strong, a projected 5.7 per cent appreciation of the euro (relative to the Canadian dollar) will have the effect of making travel to Canada significantly cheaper. For 2002, we are looking once again for an even stronger euro, strong eco-

### FORECAST OF OVERNIGHT PERSON-TRIPS FROM THE MAJOR OVERSEAS MARKETS TO CANADA (VOLUME IN 000s; PERCENT CHANGE FROM PREVIOUS YEAR)

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
<b>United Kingdom</b>	819 (5.0%)	852 (4.0%)	894 (5.0%)	930 (4.0%)	972 (4.5%)
<b>France</b>	431 (4.0%)	463 (7.5%)	493 (6.5%)	520 (5.5%)	549 (5.5%)
<b>Germany</b>	405 (3.0%)	425 (5.0%)	444 (4.5%)	462 (4.0%)	480 (4.0%)
<b>Japan</b>	516 (0.0%)	526 (2.0%)	547 (4.0%)	569 (4.0%)	592 (4.0%)

nomie growth and ultimately more travellers from Europe. Many non-euro countries in Europe – such as the U.K. – are also projected to be quite strong economically in the short-term. While travellers from these non-euro countries may not benefit from an appreciating euro, it will have the effect of adding value to a Canadian vacation compared with the cost of travel to other parts of Euroland.

### IMPACT OF AIRLINE CONSOLIDATION A FACTOR

The outlook for inbound travel from Asia – and overseas travel in general – needs to be taken in context with the perception of the impact of airline consolidation on inbound travel. While CTRI acknowledges increased reports of peak-period overbooking and frustration by foreign travel agents over carrier changes, their travel forecasts still assume that the supply of air travel will grow or contract, for the most part, to meet demand. The alienation of foreign travel agents would undoubtedly have a much larger negative impact than what CTRI perceives to be the case.

Japan, once considered the economic engine of Asia, is still mired in economic problems. Last year, overnight travel to Canada increased 6.8 per cent. Much of this increase in travel came as a consequence of special government spending initiatives and unfounded consumer confidence. This year, the travel forecast to Canada is flat. A rebound to the

glory days of the mid-90s is not projected within the short three- to four-year time period covered by this report.

Last year, overnight visits from the rest of Asia increased. In particular, overnight travel from South Korea and Taiwan to Canada increased by 50 and 26.2 per cent, respectively, over 1998. The travel forecast for these countries and most of Canada's major Asian markets is quite strong for this year and for the next few years. While the economic growth of this region alone is inspiring, travel to Canada will also benefit through increased marketing by the Canadian Tourism Commission.

### CANADIAN OUTBOUND TO THE U.S.

Canadian overnight travel to the United States increased 5.1 per cent last year. While travel to the U.S. had declined 11.2 per cent in 1998 as the Canadian dollar sunk to historic lows, travel increased surprisingly last year with virtually the same exchange rate. Domestic travel price increases and a fair bit of pent-up demand attributed to the reversal. This year, CTRI forecast calls for a further 7.5 per cent increase in the number of overnight trips to the U.S. Substantial domestic travel price increases and strong real wage gains are projected to provide enough of an economic motivator to offset the weaker Canadian dollar.

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### FORECAST OF OVERNIGHT PERSON-TRIPS FROM CANADA TO THE UNITED STATES (VOLUME IN 000s; PERCENT CHANGE FROM PREVIOUS YEAR)

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
<b>Total Canada</b>	15,168 (7.5%)	15,775 (4.0%)	16,564 (5.0%)	17,143 (3.5%)	18,001 (5.0%)

# Canada's overseas ski market

In the last five years, the international inbound ski/snowboard market for Canada has undergone tremendous change. The 1998/1999 winter, the most up to date season for available numbers, saw approximately 242,600 overseas visitors ski and/or snowboard at Canadian ski areas. This represented a 4 percent increase over the previous winter and an 11 percent increase from the 1996/1997 winter season. During their ski trips in the 1998/1999 season, overseas visitors spent \$320 million. This was a healthy 11.4 percent increase over the previous season.

The largest number of overseas ski visitors to Canada have been from the United Kingdom. They accounted for roughly 40 percent of ski travel expenditures in Canada in 1998/1999, or \$128 million. The second largest market were visitors from Japan who accounted for 13 percent of the total overseas ski expenditures in Canada in 1998/1999. Although this number is substantial, it has slumped since the 1997/1998 season, when Japanese ski visitors accounted for 20 percent of ski expenditures. The next largest overseas ski market for Canada is Australia, which has been increasing in recent years. In the 1998/1999 season, Australians accounted for 10 percent of the ski visits and 6 percent of the ski

expenditures. The Australian ski visit growth to Canada models that of the Mexican ski visit growth, which has also seen tremendous increases in the last three years. Mexican ski visits to Canada accounted for 6 percent in the 1998/1999 season. This was up from 1 percent during the 1996/1997 season.

## WHERE THEY GO

In terms of the most popular provinces visited for skiing, during the 1998/1999 season, about half of all overseas ski visits to Canada were to resorts and ski areas in British Columbia. Approximately 23 percent went to Alberta, followed by 13 percent each respectively to Québec and Ontario. The average length of stay was 10 nights, which was slightly lower than the average length of stay for all overseas visitors to Canada in 1999 (11.3 nights). The average spending for ski trips during the 1998/1999 season was \$1,318. This was up from \$1,232 recorded in 1997/1998. Average spending on ski trips was also \$150 more than on total overseas trips in 1999.

## SIZE OF MARKET HARD TO DEFINE

Due to the difficulty in obtaining accurate statistics on the size and

### OVERSEAS SKI VISITS TO CANADA, WINTER 1998/1999

	Spending (\$'000)	Visits	Average (\$'000)
GERMANY	20,036	12,400	1,616
NETHERLANDS	6,756	6,700	1,008
UNITED KINGDOM	128,274	79,900	1,605
TAIWAN	2,498	2,800	892
JAPAN	42,036	37,800	1,112
SOUTH KOREA	2,381	4,100	581
AUSTRALIA	30,124	23,400	1,287
MEXICO, BRAZIL, ARGENTINA	27,052	21,800	1,241
OTHER	60,518	53,700	N/A
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>319,675</b>	<b>242,600</b>	<b>1,318</b>

Source: Statistics Canada

## A MONTHLY GUIDE TO TRAVEL & TOURISM DATA

Tourism Activity	Reference Period	Quantity	% Change from previous year
<b>TOURISTS TO CANADA</b>			
<b>From the U.S.</b>	January-July 2000	8,549,633	-0.2
By Auto	January-July 2000	5,375,715	-0.9
By Non-auto	January-July 2000	3,173,918	1.1
<b>From Overseas - Total</b>	January-July 2000	2,488,339	7.5
United Kingdom	January-July 2000	487,256	9.2
Japan	January-July 2000	255,972	-2.0
France	January-July 2000	215,952	2.6
Germany	January-July 2000	209,270	0.9
Hong Kong	January-July 2000	88,460	-0.1
Australia	January-July 2000	99,009	13.0
Taiwan	January-July 2000	99,414	10.5
<b>OUTBOUND CANADIAN TOURISTS</b>			
<b>To the U.S.</b>	January-July 2000	8,642,886	7.2
By Auto	January-July 2000	4,633,739	4.9
By Non-Auto	January-July 2000	4,009,147	9.8
<b>To Overseas - Total</b>	January-July 2000	2,803,804	3.6
<b>EMPLOYMENT IN TOURISM</b>			
<b>Total Activities</b>	First Quarter, 2000	520,200	4.2
<b>Accommodation</b>	First Quarter, 2000	139,800	5.4
<b>Food and Beverage</b>	First Quarter, 2000	140,200	2.0
<b>Transportation</b>	First Quarter, 2000	99,400	4.9
<b>SELECTED ECONOMIC INDICATORS</b>			
<b>Personal Disposable Income</b>	First Quarter, 2000	\$19,059	3.5
<b>GDP at market prices (1992, \$ billion)</b>	Second Quarter, 2000	\$918.7	5.3
<b>CPI (1992=100)</b>	August 2000	113.9	2.5
<b>EXCHANGE RATES (in Cdn\$)</b>			
<b>American dollar</b>	August 2000	1.4825	-0.7
<b>British pound</b>	August 2000	2.2066	-7.9
<b>Japanese yen</b>	August 2000	0.0137	3.9
<b>French franc</b>	August 2000	0.2044	-15.3
<b>German mark</b>	August 2000	0.6854	-15.3
<b>EURO</b>	August 2000	1.3406	-15.3

Note: All tourist estimates deal with trips of one or more nights. All data on this table is not seasonally adjusted. Source: Statistics Canada and the Bank of Canada.

scope of the global ski market and the conflicting estimates of ski resorts, operators and national ski councils, the size of the international ski market is in question. According to the *Economist's* "Travel and Tourism Analyst", the global overseas ski market (the world minus Canada and the United States) is comprised of roughly 43 million skiers. Using a variety of sources, including but not limited to, some NTA's, some European ski councils, "Travel and Tourism Analyst", and other various tourism research journals, the actual international long-haul outbound ski market (travel outside of their respective regions) is considerably smaller, registering approximately 510,000 skiers. It should be noted that these numbers are not official, but rather the best available estimates. Given that Canada registered 242,600 overseas ski visits during the 1998/1999 season, the potential to attract the remaining 190,000 overseas skiers is tremendous.

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## Conference to examine tourism industry consolidation

A one-day conference will be held November 21, 2000 in Montréal entitled "Tourism and the Trend Towards Consolidation". This conference will examine alliances, mergers and acquisitions in the tourism industry, both here and abroad, and analyze the effects on the airline and hotel industries and the distribution network. Panelists include top executives from Canada, the United States and Europe directly affected by the phenomenon. At lunch, guest speaker Jean-Claude Baumgarten, President of the World Travel & Tourism Council, will talk about globalization and its impact on tourism.

514-987-6671  
www.unites.uqam.ca/tourisme

# All major markets increase spending in Canada

According to the results of the International Travel Survey of Statistics Canada, foreign tourists visiting Canada spent almost \$1.6 billion during the first quarter of 2000. While all major markets for Canada had increases in tourism spending, Mexico, Argentina and Brazil recorded the highest percentage increase in tourism spending (35.5%), followed by the U.S. business travel market (18.1%). The Asia/Pacific market generated

7.5 per cent more in tourism revenues during the first quarter of 2000 compared with the same period last year, while the European market and the U.S. Leisure market recorded increases of 3.1 per cent and 1.0 per cent respectively.

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## US LEISURE TRAVEL:

	First Quarter 1999	First Quarter 2000	% change over 1999
Visitors	1,534,900	1,609,400	4.9%
Revenue\$	\$597.5 million	\$603.6 million	1.0%

## US BUSINESS TRAVEL:

	Actual 1998	Actual 1999	% change
Visitors	473,500	488,900	3.3%
Revenue\$	\$295.3 million	\$348.8 million	18.1%

## EUROPE:

	Actual 1998	Actual 1999	% change
Visitors	292,000	317,000	5.6%
Revenue\$	\$344.1 million	\$354.9 million	3.1%

## Asia/Pacific\*:

	Actual 1998	Actual 1999	% change
Visitors	152,000	163,200	7.4%
Revenue\$	\$177.5 million	\$190.8 million	7.5%

\* Excludes Israel

## MEXICO, ARGENTINA, BRAZIL :

	Actual 1998	Actual 1999	% change
Visitors	28,000	26,900	-3.9%
Revenue\$	\$30.1 million	\$40.8 million	35.5%

Note: all visitor and revenues estimates deal with overnight travel.

Source: International Travel Survey, Statistics Canada.

## Travel deficit on the increase

Canada's international travel deficit reached \$579 million in the second quarter of 2000, a rise of \$378 million over the first quarter, according to the International Travel Account seasonally adjusted results released recently by Statistics Canada. Despite this second quarter increase, the size of the annual deficit remains much lower than the high of \$6.4 billion experienced in 1993, before the foundation of the Canadian Tourism Commission (CTC).

The international travel account measures the difference between what Canadians spend abroad and what foreigners spend in Canada.

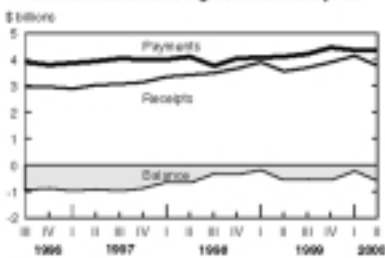
### LOWER YIELDS PART OF PROBLEM

This growth in the travel deficit is explained by a combination of factors: a 2.5 per cent decline in the number of U.S. visitors arriving in Canada and lower yields per U.S. visitor due to a shift in of modes of travel by Americans from air to automobile. This is the first such shift since the signing of the Open Skies Agreement in 1995.

"It is too early to predict what our overall year will look like from these preliminary figures," said Jim Watson, President of the Canadian Tourism Commission. "The first quarter was exceptionally good, the second one is weaker. We need to wait for the third quarter results before we can anticipate what the full year will look like."

Tourism is dominated by large seasonal fluctuations. Travel account figures are seasonally adjusted to remove these regular variations and make them easier to understand and use. On the other hand, the season-

Decrease in spending by foreigners in Canada brought the travel deficit to its highest level in two years.



ally unadjusted numbers are used to calculate the actual quarterly tourism numbers compared year over year, as well as their percentage change. According to these unadjusted numbers, the total deficit of the international travel account to date reached \$2.9 billion, an increase of 13.7 per cent over the same period in 1999.

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## Characteristics associated with Canadian bird and wildlife viewers

by Ken C. Smith

Bird watching is often a part of product development in Canadian rural areas. In fact, there are a number of destinations in Canada that cater especially to this market niche: Percé in the Gaspé region of Québec, Point Pelee in Ontario and Last Mountain Lake in Saskatchewan to name but a few.

The purpose of this study was to examine the characteristics associated with domestic bird and wildlife viewers in Canada in 1998, based on data derived from the Canadian Travel Survey (CTS). Highlights from this study show:

- In 1998, 3.1 millions Canadians travelling in Canada reported having participated in wildlife-related activities. Roughly half of these travellers:
- were married or had common-law relationships, while the other half were either single or were separated, divorced or widowed.
- The largest proportions of viewers were from Ontario (43%) and Québec (22%), followed by British Columbia (12%) and Alberta (12%).
- In 1998, Ontario was the most frequented province of destination for viewers but when viewers are taken as a percentage of the resident population, British Columbia ranked as the number one bird and wildlife viewing destination.
- Bird and wildlife viewers travelled an average of over 393 km during their trips, whereas non-viewers averaged just over 281 km.
- On average, viewers to Western Canada travelled just under 550 km and spent 5.3 nights away from home. In contrast, viewers journeying to Eastern Canada travelled an average of just over 321 km and spent 3.7 nights away from home.
- Many bird and wildlife observers were Baby Boomers who fell into the 35-54 age groups (32%). Nineteen percent of wildlife viewers were adults between 20-34 years of age, and 16% were over the age of 55.
- Fifty-eight percent of all viewers indicated that children from their

households accompanied them on their trips.

- In 1998, 61% percent of Canadian viewers were graduates with post-secondary certificates or diplomas, or university degrees.
- About 68% of the trips taken by bird and wildlife viewers occurred in the third quarter of the year, between July and September.
- All viewers were involved in sports, about 88% indicated that they went walking, 64% went swimming and 50% went sightseeing.
- Camping is popular, especially in western Canada where 41% of bird and wildlife viewers indicated that camping (including staying in trailer parks) was their main form of accommodation during their trips in 1998. In contrast, only 10% of non-viewers chose camping as their main accommodation type.

In many regions of the country, an increasing numbers of commercial bird and wildlife viewing operations are beginning to emerge. As Canadians become more concerned for endangered species and their critical habitats, viewing will likely become an increasingly popular activity. This study has revealed several distinct characteristics of Canadian bird and wildlife viewers that may lead to some tourism planning and development considerations. It will be important to keep track of the characteristics associated with this market segment so that tourism planners and operators can provide the amenities and services that these viewers require.

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# WIN with WINTER in Canada



## CONTEST OPPORTUNITY

**The Win With Winter in Canada contest is a Canadian Tourism Commission initiative that provides an opportunity for individual tourism operators, communities, regions and sector specific associations to develop new winter tourism product.**

The purpose of the contest is to provide an added element of incentive to the industry in order to develop exciting and "market-ready" winter product to Canada's inventory. Not only will participants win by developing new product and grow revenue in the winter months but they also will have an opportunity to win free international promotional exposure of their specific product. An international panel of Tour Operators will judge new product submissions against specific criteria.

Winners and finalists will benefit from a variety of promotional opportunities including inclusion in a new Winter Package Lure Brochure, a quantity of product specific sell sheets and subsidized attendance at international travel shows and marketplaces.

The program is being facilitated through six Regional Champions, as follows:

<b>Atlantic</b> <small>NB, PEI, NS, NFLD</small> Debbie McKinnon Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency 902-626-2482 or 1-800-871-2596 dmckinno@acoa-apeca.gc.ca	<b>Prairies</b> <small>AB, SASK, MAN</small> Stephen Pearce Tourism Saskatchewan 306 787-9575 stephen.pearce@sasktourism.com
<b>Québec</b> Claude Ducharme ATRAQ 450 686-8358 ducharme@atraqsqt.org	<b>The North</b> <small>NU, NWT, YU</small> John Spicer Yukon Tourism 867 667-5633 John.Spicer@gov.yk.ca
<b>Ontario</b> Lori Waldbrook Ontario Tourism Marketing Partnership 705 755-2630 lori.waldbrook@edt.gov.on.ca	<b>British Columbia</b> Maria Greene Tourism British Columbia 604 660-2902 maria.greene@tourism.bc.ca

This program is sponsored in part by the Business Development Bank of Canada. For more information contact your Regional Champion or program administrator Richard Innes by email at [richard.innes@sympatico.ca](mailto:richard.innes@sympatico.ca)

**DEADLINE FOR ENTRIES IS NOVEMBER 15, 2000**



Business Development Bank of Canada

## SPECIAL PEOPLE MAKE PRODUCTS SPECIAL

*Indeed. Special people do, in fact, create and operate special products throughout Canada, and our tourism industry and Canada's overall product selection is incredibly rich and diverse because of it. Communiqué wants to champion these innovators and dedicated professionals through a new feature that gives them an opportunity to express, to well over 60,000 readers, just what it is that they have to offer. This month, we feature*

**LAEL C. LUND OF WHITEHORSE**



My name is **Lael C. Lund** and my business is called Birchwood Tours, based in Whitehorse, Yukon. I offer a product I call "Aurora Viewing Tours" at Watson Lake, Yukon and have been providing the tours for three years. My principal market is Taiwan, and my primary developing market is South Korea, and I have had over 100 customers per year for each of these last three years. I feel that what makes my business very special

is that when our company began marketing aurora viewing itineraries, we went out on a limb to introduce a niche product to a far-off market for travel to Yukon during the winter months. It was agreed that we were either really crazy or possibly very clever to approach product development from this angle! The tourism experience I offer is distinctly Canadian because we provide our guests with a composite perspective of the North, introducing unique elements of history, culture, the great outdoors, and fine Northern hospitality!

1 867 633-3509  
[birchwood@yukon.net](mailto:birchwood@yukon.net)

## PEOPLE

### Tony Glynn announced as executive assistant

Canadian Tourism Commission President, Jim Watson, announced

September 6 that **Tony Glynn** of the CTC will be his executive assistant. Tony Glynn has been with the CTC since its formation in 1995, and before that with Tourism Canada for four years. He has worked on tourism policy, industry and market analysis, and has managed the Meetings and Incentive Travel Program. Recently his attentions have been focused on corporate planning for the CTC.

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## Progress update on Bill C-5

CTC President Jim Watson and a number of CTC officials appeared before the Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology as part of the Senate review of Bill C-5, an Act to establish the Canadian Tourism Commission. The Committee

heard about the advantages of making the CTC a Crown Corporation and some of the economic achievements the CTC has helped bring about in the Canadian tourism industry in recent years.

Industry leaders hope that the hearings are the last hurdle before Third Reading in the Senate and Bill C-5 receives Royal Assent.

Canadian Tourism Commission  
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