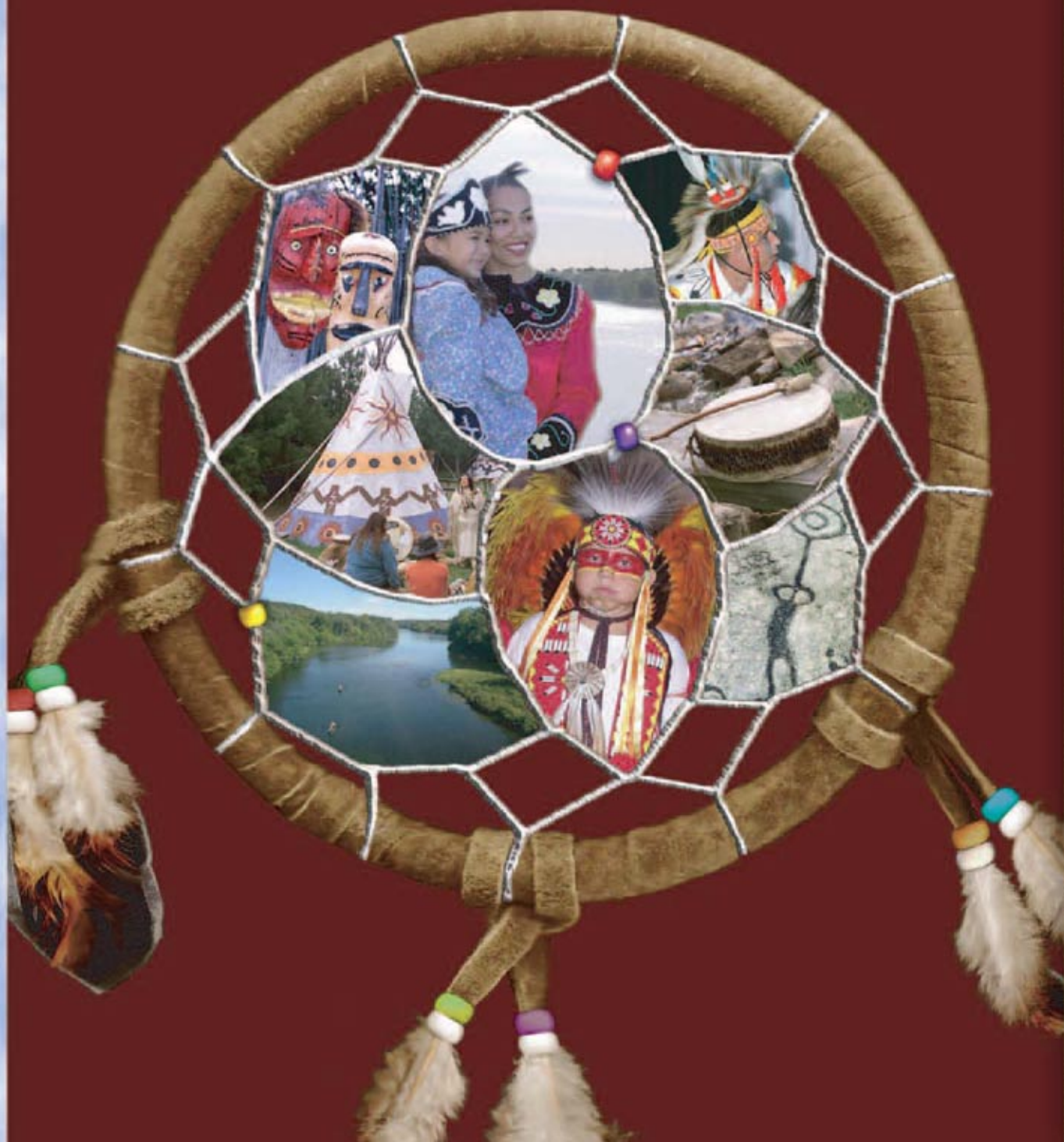


# CATCHING THE SPIRIT OF 2010

APRIL 26-27, 2005 • FERN RESORT, ORILLIA



*conference report*

# 5th Annual Ontario Aboriginal Tourism Conference

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

CONFERENCE NOTES: DAY ONE	4
Welcome Address	4
Opening Remarks	5
Plenary Presentation: Branding of Canada and Aboriginal Canada	6
Branding	7
Market Readiness in Ontario for Canadian and American Markets	9
Market Readiness and Export Readiness in the European Markets	11
Market Readiness In the Asian Markets	12
Small Group Discussions: Summary of Group Findings	13
Stories of Success in Ontario's Aboriginal Tourism Industry	14
CONFERENCE NOTES: DAY 2	21
Defining Aboriginal Market-Readiness	23
Packaging for the International Market	26
Packaging to the Domestic Market	29
Tourism and Economic Development	30
Cooperation for Tourism Development	31
SPEAKER BIOS	34
Opening Prayer	34
Welcoming Address by Host Nation	34
Welcoming Address by ATASO Chairperson	34
Welcoming Address by NONTA Chairperson	34
Conference Purpose	35
Branding	35
Market Expectations	36
Market Readiness	37
Aboriginal Tourism Co-Facilitators	37
Making The Case For Tourism	37
FINAL AGENDA	39
Monday, April 25, 2005	39
Tuesday, April 26, 2005	39
Wednesday, April 27, 2005	42

## CONFERENCE NOTES: DAY ONE

TUESDAY, APRIL 26, 2005

### MARY JAMIESON, CONFERENCE CHAIR PERSON

Mary Jamieson, Conference Chairperson opened the conference by welcoming respected elder, leader and entrepreneur, Wilmer Nadjiwon.

### OPENING PRAYER

Wilmer Nadjiwon respected elder, leader and entrepreneur opened the 5th annual Ontario Aboriginal Tourism Conference with a traditional prayer.



Fern Resort

## WELCOME ADDRESS

### CHIEF SHARON STINSON HENRY

Chief Sharon Stinson Henry, Chippewas of Mnjikaning welcomed delegates to the Chippewas territory on behalf of herself, Council, and community members of Mnjikaning First Nation. She acknowledged and thanked elder, Wilmer Nadjiwon for his words of wisdom and opening prayer. Chief Stinson Henry thanked conference coordinator Turtle Island Tourism Company, for selecting Mnjikaning First Nation territory for this year's conference. She provided a brief history of her ancestors and their involvement in the tourism industry as guides for explorers, to artists and artisans that made quill boxes, sculptures, and paintings. She referred to her territory as the "gathering place," where great meetings were often assembled.

She thanked delegates for attending a 'Behind the Scenes' Tour of Casino Rama Conference facility, sharing statistics on the success of Casino Rama. Chief Stinson Henry stated, "...that the Chippewas of Mnjikaning First Nation takes great pride as the host of Casino Rama that provides benefits for all other First Nations in Ontario." She encouraged entrepreneurs to take advantage of opportunities that enable aboriginal people to excel in the business world, benefiting from working together and learning from each other's experiences, successes, and failures. Indicating that she regretted that her schedule wouldn't allow her to remain at the conference, Chief Stinson Henry concluded by wishing delegates well and success for economic development and tourism.

### JACK CONTIN

Jack Contin, President of ATASO, and Executive Director of G'Nadjiwon Ki welcomed delegates to the region and conference noting that their participation is adding vital

energy to the development of aboriginal tourism. He emphasized the need to look to the future as we come together to reconnect to our culture and people and to share aboriginal culture.

Jack suggested that delegates look to the future to build stronger relationship with partners, also thanking partners, Aboriginal Business Canada, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, Ontario Tourism Marketing Partnership, Ministry of Tourism and Ontario Native Affairs Secretariat for their continued support noting that we are at the stage to accelerate development.

He suggested "...it is important to strive for connection and open communication as we work to build a stronger relationship for our primary partners – aboriginal businesses". He invited delegates to ask questions and to address aboriginal tourism issues referring to aboriginal tourism as a young industry facing many challenges.

### VIRGINIA MCKENZIE

Virginia McKenzie, NONTA, President welcomed delegates to the conference and acknowledged those NONTA Board Members present and extended regrets from NONTA members who could not attend. She elaborated on the question of "What is aboriginal tourism?" by providing an analogy of the Anishinabek "gift of vision" and pointing out that in that gift is the responsibility to care for future generations.

Virginia suggested, "Tourism is way a that can allow us to sustain future generations through sustainable and renewable economic growth. It is a way that we can share our culture without having to sell our grandmothers, and grandfathers, or violate our sacred traditional ways. It gives us a way that we can share our understanding of the stories and the earth that gives us life."

She observed that many youth are leaving First Nations in the North in search of employment because there is no economic base to sustain them. Her view is that NONTA must develop a tourism industry that can support youth and their families and will keep them home. This places an emphasis on capacity building and educating our own people to manage their own businesses.

Further Virginia suggested that as aboriginal operators we are also educating the rest of Canadians as to who we are as indigenous peoples, opening up doors and building partnerships. "Through those partnerships can we develop sustainable future for Canada, and a role model for the world".

## OPENING REMARKS

### MARY JAMIESON Conference Chair Person

The chair, Mary Jamieson, indicated the theme for this year's conference is Market Readiness and Branding. She also reflected on the recent improvements of Aboriginal tourism industry in Southern Ontario, including successful marketing initiatives such as brochures and packages. She suggested, "It is good that Aboriginal businesses have identified their for need assistance in developing their products".

Mary emphasized that market readiness will be critical when all eyes will be on Canada during the 2010 Olympics. She stated that Ontario Aboriginal Tourism must ready to take advantage of this major event, suggesting that as some our Aboriginal Tourism businesses are more ready than others. "There are benefits to working together sharing skills, best practices and valuable experience".

In keeping with the spirit of aboriginal entrepreneurship, the chair reflected on the accomplishments of Aboriginal entrepreneurs. Thanking them for their dedication and continued spirit she pointed out that successful tourism businesses are the results of work that Aboriginal tourism industry has done on its own, with some help from governments.

In closing Mary thanked INAC, Aboriginal Business Canada, Ministry of Tourism, ONAS, and Ontario Tourism Marketing Partnership for their continued assistance, funding and support.

## **PLENARY PRESENTATION: BRANDING OF CANADA AND ABORIGINAL CANADA**

### **VIRGINIA DOUCETT Canadian Tourism Commission**

Virginia thanked Wilmer Nadjiwon for his prayer and remarks and the coordinators for the invitation to speak at the conference. She expressed her appreciation for the greeting to Chippewa territory.

Virginia elaborated on the evolution of the CTC, and some of the challenges, best practices, and lessons learned in developing an international marketing brand for Canada as an international tourism destination.

She provided a brief history of the Canadian Tourism Commission (CTC), a federal crown corporation since 2001. Virginia elaborated on some of the activities and ideas that led to the development of the CTC as a marketing organization that works in 4 key areas: sales, promotion, product development and research, operating in number of different markets.

Some broad regions that CTC works with are Asia, Europe, Mexico, U.S.A, and Canada. She continued by outlining some branding strategies and shared some best practices and lessons learned in creating a "Brand for Canada" which is currently in its final stages of preparation.

"In the late 1990s CTC undertook to develop a number of brands and Canada was branded differently for each of the markets the CTC was in". For example Europe was the 'nature component' and the USA was 'Come and refresh your spirit and to get respite from the hectic world of the U.S.A.'" Other campaigns were done for Asia and different parts of the world.

The result was mixed images and mixed messages that did not help to develop brand loyalty to Canada in the larger sense.

It also meant that CTC had to develop different campaigns with separate costs for all of our agencies developing respective brands and collaterals various countries.

In the late 1990s it was decided to have a single brand and single image to market Canada and that brand was called "Canada, Discover Our True Nature." Many of the provinces, and a lot of the industry marketed underneath this umbrella brand of Canada.

Virginia explained that in retrospect "the design and branding development was done with only CTC and their advertisement agencies, so there was a missing component. That was the industry and the customer with the result that there was not a total buy-in."

This is where the shift came from previous research conducted by the CTC, in the U.S. This research suggested tourists wanted their own adventure noting, "... that the Aboriginal experience provides a unique opportunity to

appeal to the individual'. Virginia encouraged delegates to appeal to the individual and transform them.

In closing she reminded delegates that they have the products, the experience, and the ability to share. They have the potential to take aboriginal tourism to another level that will be key in taking advantage of this exponential shift in the industry.

### **VIRGINIA MCKENZIE Board Member, Aboriginal Tourism Canada**

Virginia provided a brief history of Aboriginal Tourism Canada (ATC), and the Regional Tourism Associations of Canada (RATAs) and explained how together the Aboriginal Tourism Association of Southern Ontario (ATASO) and NONTA work within the RATA structure She explained their involvement as board members of ATC.

She spoke briefly on the issues of intellectual property rights and authenticity. Virginia suggested that there is a need to develop policies to protect the integrity of people, names and cultures, emphasizing that authenticity is a key component of protection. Some these policies could help ensure that tourists visiting an Aboriginal Tourism destination would be guaranteed a genuine aboriginal experience.

She elaborated on the rich history of Aboriginal people and the importance of developing products that reflect who we are as a people. She indicated the need to develop Aboriginal Tourism products and a clear direction in preparation of 2010 Olympics and noted that the recent designation that China has given Canada, as a "travel destination" should encourage further partnerships in the development of Aboriginal Tourism products

She spoke briefly on some of the activities at Aboriginal Tourism Canada, and reminded delegates that Aboriginal

tourism is a developing industry, encouraging operators who are developing products to recognize the diversity of Aboriginal people, to protect our rich cultures, languages, lands and wildlife and to welcome accountability with our people as they create viable businesses.

She closed with three suggestions; to keep the needs of our youth in mind; to reinforce and foster partnerships; and to focus on product development.

## **BRANDING**

### **MARIETTE SUTHERLAND The Great Spirit Circle Trail**

Mariette spoke about the development and structure of the successful grass roots organization "The Great Spirit Circle Trail," an aboriginal collective marketing organization based at Waubetek Business Development Corporation on the North Shore of Manitoulin Island.

The collective represents the 8 First Nations in the Manitoulin and Sagamok region which include the general businesses, tourism businesses and events and activities that take place in the 8 First Nations. A representative committee of stakeholders, band economic development officers, business owners and people involved in tourism guides the collective. They help to guide the activities and implement the marketing strategy; a factor that works to ensure the collective is on the right course.

Waubetek was also instrumental in development of the initiative, performing a "secretariat function" and assisting with infrastructure activities, a role that was not filled in early stages of development. This strategy allowed the collective to focus on the tourism and tourism development business at hand.

Mariette elaborated on the process of developing products and a brand for the Great Spirit Circle Trail. She reflected on the methodology used in developing the Great Spirit Circle Trail, including a traditional consultation approach that respected the values of the 8 First Nations in the Manitoulin and Sagamok region.

The Great Spirit Circle Trail started with a marketing strategy in 1998 that became more formalized as it evolved. Although it did take some time before international marketing began, the collective realized that they had to fully understand “what their product was” prior to marketing internationally.

She stated the questions asked in their branding process included: Who we are? What do we have to offer? What is the market looking for?

A key principle in their work was that development of product identity and brand had to come from within their own community and within what the community has to offer.

Mariette indicated that the Great Spirit Circle Trail collective had to recognize who they were as a collective, including the identity of First Nations, various businesses and tourism operations. To jointly market and to develop a common identifier, they needed to share a vision of what they were going to promote about the region and about the products.

The process of developing a brand helped “gel” the group, to bring that vision under one banner. Moreover, this process helped build brand equity in the market place, so that visitors see it as a recognizable symbol of the type of

quality service, product and experience the visitors will receive.

The result is a recognizable brand internationally but most importantly the First Nations people recognize it as the identity of their region.

The process of initiating and developing a brand brings people together, to be “of one mind”, resulting in a common vision. The process is inclusive, bringing together all the community stakeholders with a role to play - band economic development officers, business owners, partners, people promoting the Pow Wows, elders, youth – all drawn into a collaborative approach. A significant factor in success was that as many community members as possible were consulted to get a wide variety of perspectives and a good handle on the pulse of the tourism opportunity.

It was important to know what people wanted to see portrayed as their identity because that “image” is not just for the Great Spirit Circle Trail regions but becomes the image across the Canada for the developing products that want to portray their image or brand in worldwide markets.

Mariette conveyed that in developing an image, it is important to look into the future, to ensure that the image will stand the test of time and represent your community well in the future.

She encouraged Aboriginal operators to take advantage of their unique heritage, history, and beautiful artwork when developing images for logos – work that translates well into marketing campaigns. She suggested that is

important to keep in mind that the images must translate well and be easily transferable electronically to signage, billboards, brochures, letterhead web sites and so on.

Mariette elaborated on the meaning of the Great Spirit Circle Trail, and history, and trails of the ancient peoples.

The slogan selected by the collective is “Enjoy the Past, Enjoy the Present”. It represents the history, heritage, past and culture. It indicates who we are as a people in the present and who we are going to be in the future, showing that culture evolves, as do our people.

She stressed the importance of sharing how culture evolves and how it has advanced by building on a solid history and traditional teachings while also demonstrating progressive community values. “It is essential that we share from an aboriginal perspective that is truly authentic and maintains culturally integrity”.

Mariette elaborated on the images of the logo for the Great Spirit Circle Trail, which represents the culture and rich heritage of the people, the vision and values of the people. The logo is a quality professional image that represents the image of the people. That image “...represents the traditional teachings of the people and helps visitors to understand who we are as a people”.

In concluding, Mariette stressed, “...Branding is about a promise. In everything associated with the brand, visitors will experience pride, quality level of service, and a sharing of the vision of the people”.

Done well, Branding and developing a marketing image stand the test of time, and translate well into the future.

## MARKET READINESS IN ONTARIO FOR CANADIAN AND AMERICAN MARKETS

### ANNA KOVCHIS Ministry of Tourism

Anna presented her findings from a select survey by the Ontario government that asked the questions: What are the expectations of aboriginal experiences? Who are our visitors, and what do they actually want to do?

Two-thirds of pleasure travelers who visit Ontario are involved in out door activities of one sort or another, walking and hiking being the most popular, with fishing and hunting most popular amongst the U.S visitors.

Culture seekers represent fewer than 10% of the Canadian traveler and over 12% of the U.S. visitor. When looking at the volume of Canadians traveling in Ontario and Americans visiting Ontario, these numbers are significantly high and these travelers want a variety of experiences.

These statistics represent mature or senior couples and singles looking for cultural outdoor activities including aboriginal experiences. They are looking for “hands on” activities that include dances and interactive experiences.

Approximately 35% of American culture seekers give the impression that they are most likely to intend to take a trip to Ontario. From March to May, there are 6.3 million Canadian and 10.6 million American travelers planning to visit Ontario. “We need to harness these visitors and get to them to experience aboriginal sites”.

It is critical to understand that not only do the tourists want an authentic experience; they want to have mainstream activities in packages, like visiting art gallery, and museums. Travelers are well aware of nature, outdoor,

touring, city and urban and arts and culture products. The numbers indicate that market readiness is key, indicating that when planning the product we should take this into consideration

There are issues such as Anti- Americanism, delays at the border, SARS and a perception that Canada breeds terrorism. Countering this is the sense that Canadians are generally very friendly, though we may not be as friendly as in the past.

The Ontario experience is highly rated for its arts and culture, outdoor, touring and city experiences. On of a scale 10, the average respondent rated Ontario as a 9. Of the Canadians who participated in this survey 69% of them had taken a trip within in Ontario. Thirty-one percent of respondents who had not taken a trip still gave a score of 7/10.

Part of the exercise of market-readiness is to have unified branding that motivates people to travel and see something new.



Networking

In accommodation, Mature Travelers want comfort, and something different, welcoming and authentic in design. Food service that offers a positive experience for travelers strongly enhances the overall tourism experience.

Festivals & Events provide a strong incentive to travel, helping people to plan trips that will bring them into your community. In order to make these experiences positive, marketing should be accurate, staff should be well trained and you must have the capacity to accommodate large tour groups and bus routes with proper infrastructure.

Research indicates a positive future for Aboriginal tourism, though in order for it to work there has to be consistency in distribution channels, in marketing approach and in product standards. These factors will enhance the positioning of all aboriginal tourism products. Once we achieve this consistency it will enhance the product in the international and domestic markets.

Culture and Heritage of which Aboriginal tourism is a big part, is an asset for Canada. However, it is matter of harnessing and getting it out there so that people know that what is available to them.

It is important to understand the demographics of travelers. 65% of travelers earn under \$60,000 per year and they are concerned that they are getting value for their dollar. Travelers want what was promised to them, heightening the importance of being market ready. Half of travelers are over the age of 45 and are evenly divided between men and women.

U.S. travelers are more likely to have participated in an aboriginal experience as opposed to the Ontario traveler, with participation higher among the senior and well-educated travelers. Trends with the aging population will increase the demand for experiential and learning tourism.

The larger trends of "Globalization" have created an awareness of other cultures and lifestyles, which is why people are looking at an aboriginal, culture or historic experience. Other trends include:

- Nature Based Tourism – learning about the environment and protecting it.
- Soft Adventure – adventure with lower risk
- Experiential Tourism – activities with active participation
- Authenticity – demand for authentic experience, rejecting commercial offerings
- Multi-faceted Experiences – doing a number of different things
- Short Duration Experience – 3 to 4 days of experiences
- Special Interest – cultural natural learning based tourism

## MARKET READINESS AND EXPORT READINESS IN THE EUROPEAN MARKETS

### TARA INGRAM Moccasin Trails Tours

Moccasin Trail Tours is a receptive tour operator that packages multi-day 3 to 7- day tours and offers itinerary planning, group packages and Fully Independent Travelers (FIT) planning.

Moccasin Trails uses brochures extensively to present northern products.

Brochures include a detailed itinerary of information that assists international tour operators to market products of Canadian suppliers. These include the National Tour

Association (NTA) to the U.S., and ITB. Some of the packages include joint marketing with other mainstream tour attractions such as parks and museums.

Appropriate Market Ready and Export Ready Criteria include maintaining all licenses, insurance and codes of practice in good standing. All criteria must be maintained in accordance with marketing standards, including a website which allows online registration, 72 hour turn-around for all requests, a 24 hour message system and standard payment and cancellation procedures.

Tara detailed some key business procedures that must be in place, including a defined commission rate including net rate discounts with travel trades operators, a wholesale tariff with net rate packages and appropriate business policies including the ability to accept travel trade vouchers. Customer service includes provision of contact information allowing travel trade operators to contact you by email, cell-phone and phone answering. Operators must be able to advertise and guarantee prices for 12 months in advance of travel bookings.

Moccasin Trails has done some work in the European Market that accounts for 1.2% of visitors to Ontario. The primary markets are U.K., Germany and France. Marketing was completed through international trade shows and included offering all-inclusive packages.

"We found that German Traveler Criteria focus on: Relaxation, Sightseeing, Culture and Adventure with authenticity of aboriginal experiences and interactive components extremely important.

In closing, Tara pointed out that it is important to remember we are competing with worldwide markets, and to compete well we must research and define our market and have brochures available in the appropriate language.

## MARKET READINESS IN THE ASIAN MARKETS

### TRINA MATHER-SIMARD Turtle Island Tourism Company

Trina explained that the Asian market is essentially a new market for Aboriginal tourism operators, one not traditionally pursued. It has proven to be successful for Turtle Island Tourism Company and some of the other businesses located in Ottawa.

Trina provided a background on Turtle Island Tourism Company illustrating with some of the activities and best practices that take place at its "Aboriginal Experiences" attraction. The objective of the business is to provide Short-term Interactive traditional experiences that deliver a sense of the culture in a very short time frame through a tour of the village, dance, food, and interactive experiences.

She has found that it is important that your product and the package that you create match the market you are trying to reach. Many Asian groups will tour Eastern Canada including Ontario and Quebec within 5-7 days. Your product must fit time constraints imposed by this scheduling.

To achieve a market ready product, the first step in international marketing is research. You must find out what visitor expectations are and what they are looking for in terms of experience. You can then create something that meets those expectations – that ensures a market match.

You must be certain that your product and program is ready to welcome Asian visitors by being ready to meet their cultural needs. For example, to address language barriers Turtle Island produced a multi-media presentation in Japanese to ensure that visitors understand the

information about traditional costuming and dance that is shared. The menu was also adapted to include "maple salmon", and grilled fish that are more in keeping with normal Japanese diets.

Trina shared some statistics, indicating that in 2002 197,000 Japanese visitors came to Ontario, though this number more than halved the following year with SARS. The top activities for Japanese tourists are sightseeing, shopping and visiting Provincial Parks, historic sites and Museums. The average dollar value spent by the Japanese visitor is \$1,100.00 in 3 days, which is higher than the average German visitor over 7 nights.

Trina reported that the outbound travel trend in Japan is up 33% in 2004, and the market of women over 70 is increasing 226% each year. There is currently a shift from bus tours to Fully Independent Travel while there is growth in outdoor activities with more emphasis on city experiences and nature.

China is new market for Ontario, as Canada has recently received approved destination status. With a population of 1.3 billion, increased ability to travel may bring significant business to Canada's tourism industry. They will be coming here to experience Canadian culture.

Trina shared the experience of Turtle Island Tourism Company in working with Asian markets:

- Expect that it will take 3-4 years to build solid relationships
- It is important to work with local receptive operators
- Joining an organization such as CTAP, an inbound Asia-Pacific operators organization, is a worthwhile investment
- Learn about Asian culture and protocols
- Recognize that images of Asians in brochures participating in activities is important to sales

## SMALL GROUP DISCUSSIONS: SUMMARY OF GROUP FINDINGS

### ROAD MAP TO SUCCESS

Facilitators: Arlene White, Christine Anderson and Tracey Desjardins

The purpose of these small group sessions was to test a training module developed by the Ontario Ministry of Tourism and Recreation to assist tourism operators to successfully advance their businesses. This module is one of a series of 8 modules that was brought together in March 31, 2004. The draft of Module One was presented to participants as an overview to test the materials and to seek input and feedback for the Ministry as to what type of assistance the operator would like to focus on in the future.

The module is meant to provide a business overview to operators to help them focus on priorities. The Ministry is testing the material to determine if there were gaps and how operators would fill some of the gaps over short, medium and long-term planning horizons.

An overview of the elements in the module was provided, including Business Development, Product Profile, Customer Profile, Human Resources Profile (volunteers, paid staff, board), Training, Demographics of Clients (local, primary cities and regions, and target markets) The facilitators also provided research information on the tourism industry in international, domestic, and local markets, based on data derived from the World Tourism Organization.

The goal of the presentation was to share information with operators who could collectively provide input and insight to enhance the development of their businesses. The module is meant to assist operators with development plans, business skills, market-readiness planning and to

assist operators to assess where they are in relation to the needs of the tourism industry.

Each participant was encouraged to rate the operation of their business in terms of where they would like future assistance or workshops in specific areas of: Product Profile, Business Management, Jurisdictional Bylaws and Regulation Customer Definition, Human Resources, Communication, Public Relations, Transportation, Accessibility, Customer Services, Pricing, Health and Safety, Marketing, Performance Measurements/Tracking, Partnership, Succession Planning, Determining and Valuing Assets and Identifying Current Access.

The following questions were provided to direct discussion.

- Why do you want to work in the tourism business?
- Does your community understand why you want to be involved in the tourism business?
- What products and services do you offer?
- What are your current business goals and how do you propose to deliver those products and tap the success of those products?
- Do you offer quality experiences to visitors?
- Does your product offer something unique and how do you differentiate your product from other products?
- Do you know who your competition is?
- Do your business objectives meet the reality of the industry?
- Do you know the vision and do other employees know the vision of your business?
- How is staff involved in your business development and business plan?
- What stage of development is your business at?
- Does your business have a succession plan?

- What types of things threaten your business and where do you find this type of information?
- How do you currently track the success of your business?
- Do you maintain customer databases and relationships?
- There are Legislative policies and guidelines for member databases where you collect customer information.
- Do you let your clients know why you are collecting data and how you plan to use it?

Partnerships and relationship building were identified as key issues. On the issue of maintaining partnerships, suggestions were made to ask communities and industry partners if they know what type of services you offer. It is important to keep them informed about who you are and what you are doing to take advantage of their role as a source of referrals.

Partners can also share information about pricing and can help you conduct research at the local level to enhance your product. It is also important to share control and decision-making in order to further develop your product and to get feedback. Successful packaging is an important end product of partnering.

It was recognized that it is important to understand the supply and demand characteristics of "core products" in local, regional, and non-Aboriginal businesses that rely on the tourism trade. This helps you understand what resources are available to assist in the development of the aboriginal tourism business through networking/product partnership with other business.

One important reason for maintaining regular contact with other businesses is that they can provide support and help access for information on emergency situations. This can happen when you need to rely on other resources

to serve clients when problems arise on your site. An example is the client that finds it impractical to stay in the tenting accommodation that they booked. Relationships with other operators who offer accommodations can help you in difficult situations like this and can assist you to maintain high levels of customer satisfaction.

Participants agreed that it is important to evaluate / track the success and quality of their business in order to identify weaknesses and strengths. The types of measurements used to examine the quality of success such as surveys, should include input from employees, volunteers, and administrators. This kind of work also helps in evaluating your site and assessing how you can use it differently.

Training for and adopting industry standards were elaborated on as a key means to enhance the quality, customer service, and consistency of products. The use of job descriptions, performance evaluation and short surveys for employees and volunteers were stressed as key to success.

Adopting training techniques such as role-playing were suggested as effective tools in improving performance. Moreover, it is important to focus on the types of employees and volunteers needed to reflect the type of product or service you want to portray. Look for staff that is keen to learn about aboriginal history and to build relationship. Skills could include interpretation, familiarity with diverse languages, artisan and artistic skills, ability to involve the community, performance skills such as storytelling, amateur theatre production, musical performance, and acting.

Customer profiling included who the customers have been, who is coming now, and projection/forecasts of who your customers will be 25 years from now which can include research from travel motor coach reports and the gov.on.ca website.

Tracking marketing and mechanisms to do this was a significant topic that focused on the demographics of clients, which clientele are to be targeted, determining what customers are doing on their travels and repeat customers.

A brief over-view of communications and public relations provided insight on the different ways to get the message out on your products included sponsoring events, approaching rotary clubs, chambers of commerce, business improvement association and committees, all of which extend information into the community. Other suggestions included developing and following a communication plan and identifying resource people who know how to write the correct message for different target audiences.

Other communication mechanisms suggested included:

- Creating "Frequently Asked Question" sheets on your business
- Identifying interpretative material or services that respond to the perceptions and expectations of clients
- Building media kits based newspaper articles
- Developing a strong set of photographs
- Scheduling frequent Website updates
- Adhering to rapid response time standards
- Frequent sharing of information with your own staff

The discussion on marketing included:

- Know generally the condition of the world economy as it affects your incoming clientele
- Track your marketing – (visa, coupons)
- Assess what type of information do you have on your website, brochures, toll free numbers, and direct mail/

databases, maintain membership lists for clients and media, and tracking software for email.

- Develop a product profile that defines the difference and diversity of your product
- Plan for medium and long-term growth
- Make someone responsible for Marketing
- Define the role of Public Relations (different from marketing)
- Track your Public Relations and evaluate which activities give the best return on your investment (e.g. Sponsoring sports teams and donations)
- Provide personal hand written cards to recognize sponsor contributions
- Use exit surveys to track clients
- Know and adhere to legislation and regulations regarding protection of privacy
- Determine what type of assets you have, such as using empty parking lots at special events for free parking passes
- Know the total cost to distribute flyers and brochures

Discussions on transportation provided insights on issues that must be addressed including:

- Accessibility of your product to clients
- Disability access
- Options for clients that require car rentals
- Parking availability
- Proximity to other business, washrooms, food, currency exchange and ATMs

Pricing was identified as a fundamentally important issue and included timely price structure review and updating to reflect current market situations, price points for tourism products, allowance for commissions, net rates and incentives that can be structured on volume



price discounts. Other pricing issues discussed included projecting discounts in advance to confirm rates, including travel vouchers (perceived as a value by clients) or establishing a preferred card to build relationships with a supplier. Serving the corporate sector includes promoting types of services available and offering leasing options for corporate events.

Health and Safety issues discussed included writing a crisis plan for accidents, emergencies and severe weather problems and training your staff in violence management situations



Alan Rimmington

Participant motivations for engaging in the Tourism industry

- The opportunity through tourism
- To start up and develop tourism businesses with authentic aboriginal programs and products
- To enhance the value of aboriginal history and provide a vehicle for cultural preservation of language and a means to maintain traditional knowledge for keepers of the knowledge
- To teach about and interpret aboriginal culture
- To expand tourism and cultural development in current markets and to assist in the growth of authentic aboriginal tourism experiences
- To create tourism products as opportunities for employment and to meet seasonal demands for work
- To promote aboriginal tourism in urban centers
- To develop a valuable vehicle for information sharing with community members
- To promote the development of eco-tourism through traditional authenticity
- To encourage the link between community development, economic development and sustainable aboriginal tourism

In summary participants said

- Preservation of traditions is essential
- The community economic impact of aboriginal tourism is considerable
- Youth employment is a sound outcome of tourism development
- Environmental protection can be advanced through development of tourism

## STORIES OF SUCCESS IN ONTARIO'S ABORIGINAL TOURISM INDUSTRY

### G'NADJIWON KI

#### JACK CONTIN

Jack provided a view of the development of G'Nadjiwon Ki, and it's drive to create multiple products. Since 2000, G'Nadjiwon Ki has raised 2.5 million with funding partners including Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, Ontario Native Affairs Secretariat, Human Resources Development Canada, the Minister of Culture, Trillium Foundation, and Ontario Works. The organization has focused on becoming market ready, operating in the context of a five-year business plan.

In 2001 G'Nadjiwon Ki secured funding to purchase 45 acres of property with four thousand square feet of retail space to develop a small business centre, the first revenue generator. The business plan proposed revenue generation of \$30 to 40, 000 in the first year but the actual revenue was \$70,000.

Jack told the group that there is room to grow, but that overhead costs for human resources to run the four thousand square foot facility and pay for heat and hydro exhausts resources quickly.

The concept of developing multiple products has been central to the plan for the organization. This has included time-consuming negotiations on development options

work with Simcoe County and the town of Midland. Future plans include:

- A 50 site RV campground
- Outdoor Amphitheatre
- Heritage Village
- Field School for youth Adults for training
- Training for 68 students in Tourism Development

Jack indicated that in his view there are three key elements to success: making partnerships, networking and long-term visioning. He noted that it takes perseverance and patience to move forward and to sell ideas to the industry and to the funding agencies that are always adapting to government changes and new policies.

### WASAYA AIRWAYS

#### TOM MORRIS, PRESIDENT

Tom explained that 8 First Nation communities from northwestern Ontario own Wasaya Airways. The logo depicts the sun coming over the land that in the Oji-Cree language means "Wasaya". The concept of the airline originated from a Kingfisher Lake elder's vision.

The elder advised that economic development should be used as a tool by First Nations' people to achieve economic self-reliance, self-sufficiency and involvement in economic activities in the geographic region.

Following this advice, the communities formed Wasaya Group Inc., the parent company of Wasaya Airways. Tom told the conference that it has 3 business entities: Wasaya Airways, Wasaya Petroleum Company – that includes a non-First Nation partnership and a propeller shop that

repairs aircraft propellers for clients in the Canadian market, Korea and the United Kingdom. Wasaya Group employs 280 staff and has bases in Pickle Lake, Red Lake, Thunder Bay and Sioux Lookout.

Tom indicated that develop relationships and partnerships has been a priority of the Wasaya Group. An example is the partnership between Wasaya Airways and the Northern Ontario Tourism Association, now in its third year, a commitment that continues to develop.

During the first year of this partnership, Wasaya flew over 300 tourists from Thunder Bay to destinations in the North and in the second year this increased to over 400 tourists. As a native business working with the Northern Ontario Native Tourist Association, Wasaya flies tourists to Native owned tourist destinations. Wasaya also develops partnerships with non-native businesses and service agencies.

"This is indeed the vision and concept Wasaya promotes. As a First Nation business we work together as a group to develop the Aboriginal tourism market in both aviation and business".

Last year Wasaya Group generated \$67 million in revenue, a major achievement. Wasaya started in 1989 when three non-First Nation partners offered 49 percent of ownership for \$49.00 to start up the business. The 8 First Nations gathered community support and with non-First Nation partners working in management, Wasaya generated \$2.5 million. In the second year 8.9 million was generated and last year the airline generated over \$50 million in revenues.

Wasaya continues to enjoy positive relationships with the 8 First Nations, with NONTA and with many other partners and will continue to develop these commitments with all parties.

## INDIAN ART-I-CRAFTS

### RON ROBERTS AND CATHERINE CORNELIUS

Ron began his presentation with the observation that Aboriginal business and tourism growth requires dedication. Also "We have to have faith in our spirituality and culture to keep us honest and grounded in the tasks that we take on."

Indian Art-I-Crafts of Ontario is now in its 20th year as an organization that has overcome many struggles, grown and survived. The International Aboriginal Festival, started at the Sky Dome in 1993, is one successful achievement. Indian Art-I-Crafts also founded the Aboriginal Music Awards 6 years ago, an event that has grown phenomenally as one of the most successful parts of the Festival.

In 2006 the Music Awards will be held in Winnipeg. This means our music awards will be traveling throughout various regions of Canada, in essence reaching out to people across the country, making it a national event. The Economic Development Conference that is part of the Festival will also take on a more national presence.

The festival will remain at the Rogers Centre a facility now operated by a more community-based organization. Indian Art-I-Crafts hopes that this will mean a stronger business relationship with the owners.

Ron noted that in 2004, the Assembly of First Nation passed a resolution in Charlottetown, naming the Canadian Aboriginal Festival the signature event for all aboriginal communities throughout Canada. The Assembly of First Nations is now playing a much more active role with the Festival.

Ron commented that receiving government support from the provinces is a challenge. When we go to some

departments their response is "you are just a cultural event and we don't support cultural events." Ron's response to the provincial and federal governments is that "you cannot separate culture and economic development when analyzing our activities."

In support of this point Ron said that their cultural event generates between 3 and 4 million dollars in activity over one weekend for culture and economic development. "We combined economic development and culture because they go hand in hand.

To see our children and elders converging on a world-class venue sharing our culture is a tremendous reward for us. Many elders have worked with Catherine and me and we recognize that we could have never aspired to what we have accomplished without them." Youth see the results of our partnerships, contributing to the aboriginal community and working with ATASO, NONTA and other industry stakeholders. We inspire our young people as they watch what we are doing; we are their role models.

Overall the cooperation Indian Art-I-Crafts has received from government and the private sector is wonderful. What we have often found in organizing education programs and other activities is that we only have to ask once for support and help and it is there.

Ron suggested the aboriginal tourism industry should be reaching out in the same way while focusing on Aboriginal product development. To do this, we need to know where our aboriginal businesses are so we can be out there supporting them and our community.

Ron suggested that aboriginal tourism businesses need to do a better job of marketing their products in our own communities while continuing to build non-aboriginal public support. This effort will ensure that we grow and succeed in the tourism industry.

## SIX NATIONS TOURISM

### ALLAN EMARTHLE

Allan set out to share some of the projects completed by Six Nations Tourism and the activities that made these projects possible. He explained that for 25 years Six Nations did not have welcome signs and there were no clear indicators of how to accomplish this task. The Tourism group consulted with the traditional community and the council and both agreed on an actual welcome sign. The result is 7 welcome signs on roads that lead to Six Nations of the Grand River Territory including county roads and Highway 403.

Allan explained that in their view, market readiness is about being friendly and letting people know where you are. Another project to accomplish this is the mapping project, informing people where they can and can't go while respecting residents' privacy. The group created a map that provides contact information of various attractions, sites, and businesses, contains an historical summary and provides a downtown-core map of Oshweken. Maps are distributed at every available location throughout the region. The clear message is that "Six Nations has a lot to be proud of".

Allan said that he has come to understand that building bridges is important. "Building bridges outside your own communities is sometimes easy while building bridges within your First Nation community can be much harder". It is important to sit down together with your community partners or potential partners to discuss your community vision. It is as important to have the support of the community, as it is to have product. "The community has to agree to what we are going to do and how we are going to do it.

As the Tourism Manager for Six Nations, Allan learned that knowing what assets we had and becoming the 'number

one cheerleader' was the key to success. He realized that this was difficult as he discovered that he was afraid to market their products at first.

Allan said that Six Nations Tourism is working on an overall tourism strategy, laying out what is planned is planned for the year ahead. They hope to get together with ATASO and communities from Southern Ontario to develop a new approach, whole new angle; "This is what we are doing as a community and we welcome other communities to join in developing a model strategy that can influence tourism policy."

Allan recommended that Aboriginal tourism operators support Heritage Canada in developing and promoting aboriginal culture through tourism in the context of the real conditions in communities. "Our cultural sites are lacking staff and they require maintenance and restoration. We have to be able to get out there to access resources for our extremely resourceful people." We have to go together to the federal and provincial governments to get that done.

Allan closed saying that partnerships are extremely important, with a longstanding partnership with the Town of Brantford as an important example at Six Nations. Another important partner the DMO Southern Ontario Tourism Association has just failed meaning that it is essential that ATASO step forward to assist all to be ready for the 2010 Games.

## CONFERENCE NOTES: DAY 2 WEDNESDAY APRIL 27

### BREAKFAST PLENARY SESSION: MAKING THE CASE FOR TOURISM IN YOUR COMMUNITY

**Kimberley Johnson & Alan Rimmington,**  
Ontario Ministry of Tourism and Recreation

The role of the Investment and Development Office of the Ministry of Tourism and Recreation was described as being to facilitate product development, to stimulate investment in the province, to provide quality information services related to Tourism, Culture and Recreation sectors, all in order to strengthen the economy by increasing jobs and investment in the Province.

The "Making the Case for Tourism" presentation at this conference is the 3rd presentation since the toolkit was launched after a 2-year development process. It was developed to advance the objectives of the Ministry. The reason for the presentation at this conference is to confer with Aboriginal operators to see if the serious of modules can be adapted for use in Aboriginal communities.

Allan explained that although tourism is used as the example in the toolkit, it can easily be used as an economic development tool and has been used to support cultural entities.

"The toolkit is a way of organizing information and presenting it. It is a planning tool to analyze infrastructure within a region and to identify where it is today and where it can go tomorrow."

The toolkit was described as being appropriate for any community, including First Nations that want to participate in this quality industry, one of the fastest growing industries in the world. "Tourism is a desirable industry, with relatively low impact that brings new investment into communities, brings new money into the local economy, supporting job growth and stability, local attractions and events in a self-sustaining way."

The Toolkit was developed to explain these ideas to communities, which often don't think of tourism as an industry. It has always been on the "edge" of interest in part because people in the tourism sector have tried to sell tourism to their communities in soft and fluffy "feel good" ways.

Allan explained that the problem has been that people have gotten the impression that tourism is just about marketing – thinking that's all it is, putting brochures together – and not about economic development. As a result of not being sold properly in a business like way to the communities the communities have not accepted tourism as serious business.

The result has been that Tourism has a poor image. Many people think that there's no future in it – that all the jobs are low paying and do not lead to wealth creation. Giving our communities a more accurate picture will change the image.

He explained that other businesses always talk about jobs, the economic impact and new money in the community when they sell their business ideas in their community. Tourism has rarely taken that approach.

This toolkit is designed to pull together various templates, identify the sources of facts about tourism, provide examples from other communities, suggest local

sources of information and organize the information in a presentation format.

This approach can help you to define regions and territories, identify your needs for economic data and help you collect relevant data. "It helps you to identify what type of data is required, how to get it, how to interpret it, how to understand it and how to use it to your advantage".

Alan talked about making the case to communities. He recognized that it is difficult to make the case for many reasons including the industry itself that is fractionalized with a lot of small businesses that are run by very independent people who really don't want to share information. There are also those that don't believe they are in the tourism business, such as local gas stations.

"Assisting tourism businesses in the competition for resources is an important function for the Tool Kit." Councils are being pressured by all kinds of monetary demands – schools, roads, housing, infrastructure and programming. The Kit helps Tourism proponents to fight for resources, to make the business case for tourism when talking to council.

But ultimately, Band Council or any Council is only going support what the community believes in over the longer-term, and if the community does not believe that tourism is a viable industry, does not believe tourism is important to their economy, then in the long-term council is not going to support it.

Alan advised that there is a need to focus on your community in order to get members in support of tourism initiatives. A well-informed council can be of great assistance in reaching this objective.

Kimberly then explained that the toolkit is available on-line at <http://www.tourism.gov.on.ca/english/ido/>

mtc.htm. It has embedded links to allow quick access to other resources.

She explained that the toolkit is broken down into four sections, and has a compilation of resources that can help in communications and in building a profile of your tourism industry.

She then provided a brief summary of the 4 sections in the Toolkit, and encouraged participants to go to the web site and to put it to work.

The toolkit begins with general Frequently Asked Questions about the tourism industry with statistics on economic impacts and the scope of the tourism industry in Ontario, visitor spending, economic impacts and the benefits other than economic impacts.

The Kit then goes through the process of preparing Power Point Presentations. She explained that there are 2 power-point presentation included, one quite extensive and a shorter version.

Section three provides information on how to prepare Frequent Asked Question sheets to profile your community, outlining the benefits that tourism can bring to local facilities, arts and culture programs, festivals and events.

Section four is a compilation of resources that can help you to develop communications. It includes the communications manual "Communicating the business case for tourism in your community," to help in successfully organizing and developing a communications plan to direct communications efforts.

The media relation section explains how to build a media plan and how to foster media relationships using press releases and news conferences. It also provides some of



Kimberley Johnson

the tactics used when doing media relations because engaging the media is important.

Alan and Kimberly explained that they hoped to incorporate feedback from the small group sessions into the evolving Toolkit, and in the best practices section in particular because they are seeking creative ways of making the case in communities. Their experience shows that anecdotal stories often make a bigger difference in decision-making than reams, and reams of statistics.

## RESPONSE FROM MARY JAMIESON

Thank you for the excellent presentation. It showed that not only do you have to convince council; you have to convince the community because they experience the direct impacts of tourism.

## DEFINING ABORIGINAL MARKET-READINESS

Facilitators: Arlene White, Tracey Desjarding and Christine Anderson, Ministry of Tourism

Co-Facilitators: Linda Sarazin, Anishnaabe Experiences  
Kim Porter, ATASO Board Member  
Lucy Trudeau, ATASO Board Member

Now that we have look at the components that ensure our businesses are "market ready" we have to think about what constitutes a "market ready Aboriginal experience". The Aboriginal tourism industry has unique issues of authenticity, ownership and content that affects the quality and value of an experience.

As we begin to look at developing the "market ready" guidelines for new and existing tourism businesses we wanted to ask you as industry operators what we need to be careful to consider respecting the diversity and authenticity of tourism products before taking them to market. What is your perspective on what is an "Aboriginal" tourism product?

How should we define Aboriginal tourism?

- Aboriginal ownership and operation
- Nature of content in the product as a cultural experience
- Majority of staffing are aboriginal
- Provides benefits to the aboriginal community
- Community based decisions regarding traditional practices

- Ownership 51% or more Aboriginal, allowing for partnerships
- Authenticity and respect for intellectual property
- Traditional capacity and teachings shared with guests but no marketing of sacred ceremonies

What constitutes market-readiness for an Aboriginal tourism experience?

When looking at market ready guidelines for new and existing tourism businesses, what do we need to be careful of? How should the elements of aboriginal, product, staff, and cultural content be defined?

- Aboriginal tourism must be a cultural experience with 51% aboriginal ownership to ensure decision-making control. When the ownership and decision-making elements are not fulfilled, then Aboriginal people lose control over the Aboriginal tourism industry
- Crawford Lake tourism business was used as an example to indicate how a successful non-Aboriginal business consulted with the Six Nation community to determine its programming but then produced limited benefits as there were no aboriginal staff, owners or sharing by the Crawford Lake business in Aboriginal community events
- An Aboriginal owned fly-in fishing camp could be considered an aboriginal cultural tourism business because the client and the operator engage in an interactive dialogue and exchange cultural values thus sharing an aboriginal experience. Fishing with an aboriginal person is the aboriginal experience where a relationship exists between 2 parties, potentially developing into a friendship that leads to further questions about the community and its culture
- An "aboriginal experience" operation should have majority of aboriginal staff

- Cultural experience and traditional capacity are significant factors in determining an aboriginal tourism experience including could include aboriginal language, cultural lifestyles, and dancing.
- The traditional component of an aboriginal experience can include traditional teachings and spiritual guidance. Some existing experiences include teachings through authentic sweat lodges. However, policy on the appropriateness of these experiences needs to be developed and would vary from community to community
- Aboriginal spirituality and sacred ceremonies should not be marketed unless invited by and approved by the community. There is a moral responsibility to respect traditions and to develop process recognizes this. Culture and traditions cannot be marketed across the board

What roles to Regional Aboriginal Tourism Associations have to play in business development "market-ready" preparations? Are there areas where you feel ATASO and NONTA could support your business or community?

- Provide a collective voice for tourism and generate a common identifier
- Provide a focus point allowing a dialogue between aboriginal operators, an exchange and sharing of opportunities and potential for joint tourism experiences and collaboration
- Provide regional liaison
- Develop an updated listing of Aboriginal accommodation and tourism product
- Showcase "best in class" experience – quality service
- Train the trainer/accreditation opportunities through Tourism Inc.
- Provide Education / Promotion sessions – awareness sessions highlighting opportunities in tourism

- Facilitate economic development linkages with tourism operators including access to research and statistics that assist and guide operators in business planning
- Define market-ready and certification criteria for aboriginal tourism experiences to be showcased by RATAs
- ATASO and NONTA could provide train the trainer, and accreditation services

What business development services are needed in becoming market-ready, and are there any areas that ATASO and NONTA could support your business or community?

- Distribute a product development guideline/check list
- Facilitate a process to assist operators and entrepreneurs to determine if their product is a viable business
- Assist in identifying financing and funding
- Assist with Training, Marketing and Community communications
- Provide an accreditation process using guidelines to determine if a venture is market-ready. This opens a debate on the difficulty, right and criteria in determine if a venture is market-ready
- Provide a check-list to assist in the development of the aboriginal tourism business that would identify product development opportunities
- Develop Aboriginal databases as working tools to initiate dialogue, and create the opportunities
- Create tools to direct clients to aboriginal businesses that focus on tourism and accommodation
- NONTA provides services that assist operators in hospitality and marketing, assists operators to prepare brochures, and provides advice on how to

- interact professionally in the international markets
- NONTA helps operators develop the skill sets to be market ready including social skills that assist local entrepreneurs to engage in fostering dialogue and networking to assist in community development

Health and Safety Must be addressed from a planning perspective as it can have serious impact on tourism (i.e. SARS, emergency response, and bacterial infections)

- Plans should be flexible and able to address visitor concerns for health and safety issues
- Client registration surveys should include information on known food allergies
- Market readiness should include a long term plan to address visitor expectations including emergency response measures
- A crisis communication plan should be created
- An example of a part of a Crises Communication Plan is having one person designated as the health and safety official and ensuring that only this person speaks to the media

The marketing presentation focused on three areas: Market Research, the marketing plan and assessing effectiveness of your marketing plan

- In the context of Market Readiness the Marketing Plan must be regularly updated and checked for its effectiveness and research information should be kept current
- Plans should address the perception of "aboriginal experience" in the context of what is really available
- Marketing as an education process can help form the reality of an aboriginal experience
- Plans should include use of "Word of mouth", websites and tradeshow

- Network with clients and be creative by promoting word of mouth help from clients (tell your friends) and tracking those clients
- Marketing must address stereotypes in order to match client expectations.
- Research shows that domestic market stereotypes are quite different from International views
- Marketing material should be tested before it is used to ensure that it is market ready
- Education is necessary when marketing an aboriginal experience or the perception of the experience can be minimized or skewed
- For example, to the visitor's untrained eye, traditional and competition dancers are the same. Explaining the difference enriches the experience
- Materials should provide real information on transportation to the destination
- The marketing plan should involve your partners locally, regionally, and internationally, including events, accommodations, out door adventures.

Joint Ventures can be important in establishing your market readiness and can include accommodations (food and beverage), Fly-in Fishing camps, resource partners, suppliers of equipment, Eco-Adventure operators and others

- Negotiate to share the benefits when establishing partnerships. There has to be a mutual benefit to the partnership based on what is being offered. Ask who really benefits from the partnership?

Finally, in assessing your market readiness, you must understand how your staff or volunteers provide value to your experience. Value added components that they bring could include language, traditional teachings and dance, knowledge of crafts and traditional hunting and fishing methods, traditional foods and beverages and local knowledge and history

## PACKAGING FOR THE INTERNATIONAL MARKET

**Tracey Desjardins**  
Regional Services Branch,  
Ministry of Tourism and Recreation

The following Research Resources for International Marketing were recommended

- Use universities and students as Ambassadors for your business
- Hire a Japanese tourism consultant to penetrate the market quickly
- Go to information provided by the World Tourism Organization, a fabulous resource to assess global tourism and the growth of Canada in the market place
- Find out where the industry is conducting their tourism marketing campaigns (i.e. FedNor) and tap into those resources.

Industry Canada Website is the best resource tool

- Go to the Market Research Section, use search feature and type in German market <http://strategis.ic.gc.ca/epic/internet/inimr-ri.nsf/en/gr118432e.html>
- It will give detailed research and contact information including who are the top travel agencies and how to get to that sector

WTO traveling monitoring company IPK provides Global Travel Trends

- They provide some of the global trends in tourism marketing such as, demographics, outbound information on tourists and major global tourism destinations

StatsCan provides good statistics for the Asia Pacific Tourism Market

The European Travel Commission <http://www.etc-corporate.org>

- Provides a lot of trend forecasting and explains what it means
- The focus of this research is demographics which is very important when marketing
- Each section provides the consequences of demographic change for the tourism sector such as the increase in need for quality and the growing demand represented by baby boomers
- For Europeans, quality service and proper standards are critical
- Other issues covered include health and wellness, the significant role of education, interest in arts, culture and history and spiritual tourism
- Canada has not tapped into this market as yet

The group then discussed the Potential for Aboriginal Heritage Products, based on research conducted by the Canadian Tourism Research Commission.

- Visitor numbers: 2.7 UK, 2.5 German, 3.1 Million Italians
- The Italian market is very interested in Aboriginal Heritage products and is the best potential secondary market in the European market based on their actual vacation habits
- To attract Italian travelers, it is important to look at "travel patterns" and make sure that what you offer is within their specific time frames
- Italians often use travel agents to book their flights and are fully independent travelers
- This shows that you have to look at some of the fine details in the market your are looking to serve

Tracey suggested that "sustainability consciousness" is continuing to increase, and demand is building for sustainable destinations, where community plays a role in sustaining the culture

- In this context it is the responsibility of the aboriginal tourism operators to inform the tourist about appropriate protocols
- In Australia, guidelines have been developed explaining what you can and cannot do in order to protect the environment and peoples
- This is a critical orientation that also helps provide education about the culture of local communities
- The protocols on visiting aboriginal communities were elaborated

Tracey stressed that there are stringent Consumer Protection Laws in some European countries

- Germany has laws in place to protect travelers
- Germans who travel to Canada can sue the German operator if they do not receive what is depicted on the brochures and their expectations are not met
- This makes travel companies cautious on what Canadian suppliers they select because they have to guarantee that they are going to receive what is being offered
- Further, the expectations of tourists from France were explained, including their likes and dislikes regarding beverage and food preparation
- These issues are of critical importance in preparing marketing materials

Tracey stressed that it is important to Work with a Travel Receptive such as JTB Travel (Japan), Johnview Travel (Germany) because they can count on quality and you can find out about visitor expectations

Use available research to determine the best markets for your products to target. Resources are limited and attending international trade shows is expensive

- The aboriginal team needs to market together partnering with other operators

Know your product to determine what markets you target, based on the perceptions of the clients

- Understand what is unique and authentic
- Know whether your product offering a contemporary or traditional experience
- Be aware of the real capacity of your business
- Know how strong your community support is for tourism and make sure your community is in agreement with what your business is portraying

The group then discussed Visitor Expectation Trends using Canadian Tourism Council statistics.

- We need to sell tourism on three levels; country, region, and local. There is an educational process to this
- Find out what the existing trends that are in your customer's country and determine how you fit into their existing travel patterns including food and interactive preferences
- Address trends that indicate travelers want to experience the culture
- For example, this means that the traveler will be visiting smaller destinations and communities
- Some of the basic statistics were provided from German, Italian, Japanese, Korea France, and Australia

To meet customer expectations it was decided that it was important to

- Portray yourself accurately and professionally
- Relay the right message using professional services in marketing
- Don't confuse the consumer – deliver what you promise
- Show special traditional aspects of the traditional experience but also show / include the contemporary every day

When building the relationship between the trade operators work with your local and regional receptive operators and invite them to your location. This helps you to move along with the larger market

Final advice from participants included:

- When developing brochures and other marketing materials, use your own "community-hidden" resources and talents (e.g. artists, web designers)
- Welcome signs that make an attempt to extend a warm welcome are useful
- Use your research to target the appropriate market for you
- Creating Media Kits can help to establish a really good FAQ sheet -- a one page of what you offer. The FAQ sheet is critically important in reaching international markets.

## PACKAGING TO THE DOMESTIC MARKET

**Christine Anderson,  
Regional Services Branch  
Ministry of Tourism and Recreation**

The session began with a discussion about Identifying Partners and Packaging. It was recommended that operators approach and work with receptive operators to create and provide packages that can tap into communities and their unique resources (i.e. canoe making, drum making, basket making).

- Aboriginal communities have a lot to offer and need to work together to create products and share the benefits provided by new experiences for the visitor
- Working with partners is key to developing packages of Aboriginal experiences
- Packages are seen as the "new normal approach to marketing in tourism"
- Identify the reason that you want to package your operation with others
- This will help you decide what you have to offer
- Help define benefits you want to achieve
- Define your motives, which could be to expand and diversify your business, to increase your business volume or to educate the market.
- Assessing your reason for packaging will also help to determine who your partners should be, when you should proceed and what price point should be negotiated with your partners around the table
- In packaging, expose the traveler to various other events, and then ground them again with an aboriginal culture experience

Identifying Your Market Opportunity was discussed as a primary issue to be resolved

- Analyze who are the customers you are seeking,
- Assessing what they want,
- Identifying what new product can you offer to attract a new visitor

Take the time to do the research within the community to identify customer expectations then ask what you can start to work on.

Demand generators are core motivators, such as Pow Wow. Large events fit well into broader packages and reach the wider audience. A demand generator raises questions: "What else does your community have to offer? And "What do we have the opportunity to build on because of a demand generator?"

- Focus on a couple of things that you are leading with in the marketplace and identify what trends are telling you
- Recognize that non-Aboriginal communities are willing to engage with the aboriginal experiences by networking with special events
- Demand generators such as the museum in Golden Lake provide a unique experience by providing guided tours and craft workshops
- It could also provide horseback riding, artist retreats and camping experiences based on museum clients
- There is potential to expand to provide education, to regenerate lost skills and crafts such as canoe and snowshoe making. This type of activity reinforces preservation of culture and traditions
- The Museum promotes White Water Rafting in the Algonquin region. It was suggested that the museum communicate with the White Water Rafting companies to acquire price points

- Timiskiming provides a variety of experiences through the museum / art gallery including picnics, school groups, traditional and non-traditional foods, educational experiences and history of the Algonquin
- The Algonquin Canoe Company could expand services to include educational services for youth on the history of the canoe and the craft of canoe making
- A group that included the Toronto International PowWow, Museums and a Canoe Excursion were explored as demand generators and core attractions to package new ideas and experiences

The session ended with the following advice

- It is important to keep in mind the integrity of your business and whether the partner(s) are going to jeopardize or enhance integrity and service quality in a group package
- Finding partners, establishing pricing, and coordinating packages does take time. However, when the process is complete you can have a great package
- The key is to look at tourism trends and unique demand generators to incorporate a value added experience
- The reality is that other services are there for packaging opportunities. It is a matter of communicating with other operators to build enhanced services

## TOURISM AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

### Vaughn Sunday & Mariette Sutherland

This workshop examined Tourism and Economic Development and explored the interconnection between them.

There was concern expressed that often tourism development and economic development are not connected because tourism is not a high priority in economic development circles. It was suggested that this occurs partly because tourism businesses and jobs are seasonal – tending to put tourism on a lower scale of priorities for INAC and other funding agencies.

We know that funding programs redesign our goals and strategies, but in assisting each other, Economic Development Officers must be willing to resist senior government strategic directions. EDOs have the tools and education to be able to assist entrepreneurs in tourism type businesses. They often have college educations that provided aboriginal economic development courses specific to native business. They need to use their resources to assist tourism development.

The EDOs have education and basic experience to assist any entrepreneur. When an entrepreneur wants to start a tourism business EDOs can assist by helping the entrepreneur to build a business plan that can be funded by ABC.

Business plans require statistics from Statistics Canada, Canada Business Services Centers and local Chambers of Commerce. The Mohawks of Akwesasne, through their Economic Development Department, provide a 12-week

course for entrepreneurs to research and write their own business plans. The course is offered in conjunction with the federal government funding cycle, so that entrepreneurs can apply to funding agencies at the beginning of the funding cycle.

This has been a successful process that we recommend to NONTA/ATASO – provide a course directly for tourism. We also recommend that EDOs look at case studies of existing tourism operations because these provide an understanding, ideas and questions that illustrate what it takes to succeed.

Speakers have emphasized the role that EDOs can provide in developing marketing strategies and tourism strategies. Gaining support, preparing presentations seeking resources and delivering them to chief and council for approval are key EDO roles.

Speakers have also stressed that the important players to engage are community members, community business owners, Chief and Council, as well as government partners and funding agencies. The EDOs are clearly able to do this work and to make the best use of links between tourism development and economic development. The process is one and the same.

## COOPERATION FOR TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

Economic Development Officers and Organizations can provide assistance to tourism entrepreneurs, as they

- Have the knowledge of financing that is available through grants programs, Aboriginal Capital and Community Futures Corporations and banks
- Are familiar with project proposal writing and program criteria

- Understand Training and Employment Human Resource Development Agreements
- Know of potential investors and understand how to create business plans that will address financial returns needed to attract investment
- Can include tourism development in community 5-year planning processes
- Can assist the community to decide which tourism opportunities they want to examine
- Are in a position to sell the tourism concepts to the community
- Can develop inventories of aboriginal services and foster partnerships and packaging
- Can promote the installation of welcoming signage to replace threatening signs depicting jurisdictional issues
- Prepare and maintain Community Profiles – an important tool for tourism development

How can Tourism Associations add value for their members and Economic Development professionals?

- Generate an Ontario wide inventory and mapping of tourism businesses
- Tourism associations could assist in developing specific courses for tourism operators engaging guest speakers to focus on sectors within the tourism industry
- From the economic development perspective, tourism associations could work in cooperation with the Aboriginal Human Resource Development Agreement groups to obtain teachers and offer courses
- Advance regional marketing objectives by attending Trade Shows
- Promote tourism as a viable career for young people that can help them return to communities



- Propose that the Province of Ontario add a page for Aboriginal tourism on their tourism web page
- Lobby Aboriginal Political organizations and First Nations to allocate funding now directed for economic development on First Nations to tourism initiatives
- Provide answers and communicate them regarding what tourism does for our communities
- Provide tourism presentations at EDO meetings and events, such as the Canadian Association for Development of Economic Development Officers
- Promote provincial “tool kits” on tourism development
- Assist in promoting tourism friendly welcome signage and messages within the communities to make all aware and accepting/receptive of visitors
- Create a communication tool – newsletter or website for economic development officers regarding Aboriginal tourism, including current information on what is available, providing an ongoing, consistent information source on tourism as a sector, much like the resources available to the forestry sector
- Collect and distribute tourism development information to existing resource centers such as Community Futures Corporations and Aboriginal Capital Corporations, including
- Success stories, funding criteria
- Information regarding certificate of possessions,
- Best practices to overcome impediments based on real case studies that explain what went right, what went wrong

How can Economic Development and Tourism work together and compliment each other?

- EDO Training could incorporate curriculum in tourism as “Tourism 101”, including tourism business models, hospitality, marketing and promotion perhaps with

videos to show success stories and illustrate the knowledge / skills needed by “small operators”

- Share market readiness information with EDOs for new entrepreneurs / business owners
- Share training in pricing / value added financial management for tourism
- Share information on aboriginal tourism listings by area or region with EDOs
- Economic development can facilitate Land Use / community planning that recognizes and supports Tourism opportunities and helps to ensure that Tourism strategies are an integral part of economic development strategies
- Use tourism as a way to promote working for ourselves, supporting one another and keeping money circulating on reserve

#### Tourism Development Issues

- Sustaining tourism businesses from an economic development perspective is difficult because of limited tourism experience for both entrepreneurs and Economic Development Officers
- There is lack of knowledge of the larger market in Indian county because many people prefer to stay home in aboriginal tourism businesses
- Promoting tourism as a viable career for young people is critical
- Negative attitudes and stereotypes about the tourism industry in the communities need to be addressed

And finally, some advice from the Session

Don't watch the train go by JUMP ON BOARD!

## CLOSING REMARKS

### MARY JAMIESON

Mary elaborated on the success of the conference noting that it provided a “hands on approach” to making tourism businesses “Market Ready”. Market readiness checklists are especially useful for entrepreneurs because they help keep the process simple and straightforward.

“Making the Case for Tourism” helps prove the fact that tourism businesses can be and are viable businesses that are important for the economy of the community. In some communities, tourism is the driver for economic development as there is no other major economic focus.

She observed that many presentations at the conference stressed the need to engage community support because of the issue of good customer service. Some tourism operators and communities lack customer service skills and need to be knowledgeable of best practices in treating the public.



Mary Jamison

“The toolkits and resources presented to the conference are clearly useful in assisting community economic development practitioners and are essential because everyone can use the help.” Mary thanked those who contributed their skills and knowledge to the event.

Mary noted that hosting the 5th Ontario Aboriginal Tourism Conference in Southern Ontario brought the opportunity for many southern operators to participate. However, the lack of government support for northern travel did limit northern participation. She expressed hopefulness that this problem will be resolved in future.

Mary discussed the cutbacks around government funding both in economic and tourism development and noted the proposal from Aboriginal Business Canada to cut back on support for Regional Aboriginal Tourism Associations. Mary recommended that delegates write to the Minister and remind him that every dollar invested in the tourism business returns \$3.25 to taxes – a good return on investment. She suggested that comments not be limited to the bureaucracy but include the politicians – asking them to be champions of aboriginal tourism in recognition of the fact that in Canada the Aboriginal peoples an important part of the attractiveness of Canada in the tourism industry.

### JACK CONTIN

Jack thanked Mary for her continued strength, dedication and leadership in the Aboriginal tourism industry.

### CLOSING PRAYER BY WILMER NADJIWON

## SPEAKER BIOS

### OPENING PRAYER

Wilmer Nadjiwon, respected First Nations elder, carver and Aboriginal tourism partner has graciously accepted the honour of opening and closing the Conference in a traditional manner.

### WELCOMING ADDRESS BY HOST NATION

Chief Sharon Stinson Henry will welcome delegates to the traditional territory of the Chippewas of Mnjikaning.



Jack Contin, ATASO Chair

### WELCOMING ADDRESS BY ATASO CHAIRPERSON

Jack Contin is the President of ATASO and the Executive Director for G'Nadjiwon Ki Aboriginal Tourism Association and a member of the Henvey Inlet First Nation, located on the central coast of Georgian Bay. He holds an Honours B.A. in Anthropology/Native Studies from Trent University. He worked for 13 years with Parks Canada and at the Fort Malden National Historic Site in Aboriginal Interpretation. His work experience also includes working for Environment Canada as the Aboriginal Affairs Coordinator. This involved facilitating meetings with Health Canada and INAC managers, specifically on land claims, co-management agreements and governmental policies pertaining to First Nation environmental issues. Mr. Contin currently sits on the Board of the Aboriginal Tourism Association of Southern Ontario, the Ontario Ecotourism Society, the Southern Georgian Bay Arts Circle and as an advisor to Canadore College on curriculum-based programs.

### WELCOMING ADDRESS BY NONTA CHAIRPERSON

Virginia McKenzie has been active in the tourism industry for more than 16 years. She is the owner/operator of the Temagami Anishnabai Tipi Camp where she welcomes guests from both domestic and international markets. The camp offers a unique experience that strengthens the relationship between guests and creation as she takes participants on a journey through time and shares her love for the land and the teachings that she holds close to her heart.

Ms. McKenzie is a direct descendent of the Teme-Augama Anishnabi (Deep Water People) also known as the Algonquin and Ojibway Nations. She has worked and traveled in the social work field for many years and

is the President of the Northern Ontario Native Tourism Association. These organizations work to assist Aboriginal entrepreneurs in the Tourism industry and represent them as world leaders in cultural tourism.

### CONFERENCE PURPOSE

**Mary Jamieson**  
Conference Chairperson

Mary Jamieson is a Mohawk from Six Nations of the Grand River in Southern Ontario. She has owned and operated her own community-based consulting company, Native Management Services for the past 15 years. Prior to that, Ms. Jamieson worked with both the provincial and federal governments in middle and senior management positions. She is the past Vice Chairperson of the National Aboriginal Economic Development Board (NAEDB) with interests focusing on International Trade and Tourism.

As a part of her tenure on the NAEDB, Ms. Jamieson co-Chaired the First Canada-Mexico Aboriginal Indigenous Round Table on Trade in Mexico City in 1996. In 2001, Mary was contracted to consult Aboriginal business people across Canada on CIDA's Indigenous Peoples Partnership program.

### BRANDING

**Virginia Doucett**  
Canadian Tourism Commission

Virginia Doucett, from the Mi'kmaq Nation has been part of the mainstream and Aboriginal tourism industry for close to twenty years. She is currently the Director of the Tourism Innovation Partnership (TIP) Program & Special Projects with the CTC. She continues to support the

growth and development of Aboriginal Tourism Initiatives and has contributed her extensive experience to the Aboriginal tourism sector. Virginia is a former Executive Director for Aboriginal Tourism Canada and currently sits on the Board of ATC in an ex officio capacity.

**Virginia McKenzie & Kimberly Porter**  
Ontario Board Reps, Aboriginal Tourism Canada

Aboriginal Tourism Canada (ATC) is a partnership of business and government whose role is to create opportunities for the growth of Aboriginal tourism. The ATC Board of Directors consist of Regional Aboriginal Tourism Associations (RATAs) from each province with the exception of Ontario where North and South are represented by Virginia McKenzie and Kimberly Porter. Both Virginia and Kimberly have dedicated extensive time to their own RATA with BOD positions while continuing to represent their region's interests at a National level on the ATC Board.

**Mariette Sutherland**  
The Great Spirit Circle Trail

Mariette Sutherland is currently a Tourism Consultant with The Great Spirit Circle Trail, a cooperative tourism marketing initiative representing 8 First Nations and over 50 business partners in the Manitoulin and Sagamok Region of Northern Ontario.

Prior to joining The Great Spirit Circle Trail, Mariette's work experience included a number of progressively responsible positions including: Executive Director of a Health Centre; Manager, Ontario Region, Aboriginal Business Canada, Senior Business Consultant, Ministry of Northern Development and Mines; and International Marketing Consultant with the Exports Ontario. Along the way, Mariette also established a small consulting practice providing services in economic development, workshop

& conference facilitation, strategic planning, operational review and business planning.

Mariette's academic background includes language studies abroad, studies in International Business Strategy at the London School of Economics, a certificate in Economic Development, University of Waterloo and her B. Eng in Chemical Engineering from McMaster University. Mariette is currently a student of Laurentian's Nishnaabemowin - Ojibwe language studies.

Originally from the Whitefish River First Nation, Mariette currently resides on beautiful Manitoulin Island with her husband Greg, son Miles and daughter Avery.

## MARKET EXPECTATIONS

### DOMESTIC AND US MARKETS

#### Anna Kovachis

Anna Kovachis has worked in the tourism industry for the past twenty-five years. Anna is co-owner and director of Canadian Discoveries, a receptive tour company which has offered inbound services to Eastern Ontario since 1984. Canadian Discoveries also provides specialized consulting services for the tourism, hospitality and customer service industries. Anna also holds a senior position as manager of Odyssey Learning Adventures (OLA). OLA is a division of Odyssey Travel that specializes in offering educational travel programs for the mature market in a variety of countries around the world. She also teaches courses at The Odyssey Travel School in Kingston and TheTravel School in Toronto.

Anna's responsibilities include training tour leaders and program staff; tour escorting; itinerary planning and operations; product design and development; supplier negotiations; and office management. Anna has over ten years of experience designing and marketing Canadian and International tourism product. This is combined with her years in the hospitality industry and her committee work with the Kingston Economic Development Corporation, Canadian Tourism Commission and Ontario Tourism Marketing Partnership. Anna's commitment to customer satisfaction will assist businesses in making the right decisions in today's experience economy.

#### Tara Ingram

### EUROPEAN MARKETS

Tara Ingram is the Marketing Director for the Northern Ontario Native Tourism

Association (NONTA) and is currently managing Moccasin Trail Tours. She has been with the Association for 9 years and has assisted in the growth and development of the expanding aboriginal tourism industry. She has considerable experience in new tourism initiatives in the areas of product development, marketing and packaging for aboriginal owned fishing camps and eco-tourism / adventure products. She works closely with the International travel & trade operators on a Provincial and National level. She has worked with aboriginal tourism operators to develop winter and summer multi-community packages in the development of aboriginal tourism in Northern Ontario. Tara is looking forward to developing strong networks and partnerships in the tourism industry.

### ASIAN MARKETS

#### Trina Mather-Simard

Trina Mather-Simard is President of the Turtle Island Tourism Company (TITC) which is owned in partnership with the Odawa Native Friendship Centre. TITC provides unique and interactive experiences, which share the authentic living culture of the many Aboriginal communities of urban Ottawa with both domestic and international groups. Their daily programs include guided tours of the native village, vibrant traditional dance performances packaged with traditional meals of wild rice, buffalo, maple salmon and other traditional treats from across Canada. Trina has been part of the ATASO Board of Directors since their inception and has also been part of the Attractions Ontario Board and the European Marketing Committee of Ontario Tourism. Additionally, she has been able to lend her experience as a consultant to Aboriginal Tourism Canada, Department of Indian and Northern Affairs and the Department of Canadian Heritage in various projects supporting the growth and development of Aboriginal tourism in Canada.

### MARKET READINESS

Ontario Tourism Facilitators:  
Arlene White, Tracey Desjardins and Christine Anderson

Regional Tourism Development Consultants:  
Ontario Ministry of Tourism and Recreation

Background on speakers will be distributed with workshop materials. Arlene, Tracey, and Christine will be facilitating the Market-readiness workshops as well as the Packaging workshops on Day 2 of the Agenda.

### ABORIGINAL TOURISM CO-FACILITATORS

#### Linda Sarazin

Anishnaabe Experiences

Linda Sarazin, an Algonquin from Pikwakanagan, Ontario has been involved in Aboriginal tourism for several years. She has held many positions in this industry at the regional, local and national levels. Ms. Sarazin has marketed extensively in Europe, Canada and the USA.

#### Kimberly Porter

Aboriginal Tourism Association of Southern Ontario BOD

Kimberly Porter has been part of the ATASO Board of Directors since their inception. She currently represents ATASO at the national level with Aboriginal Tourism Canada and has marketed ATASO members extensively in domestic and international markets.

#### Lucy Ann Trudeau

Aboriginal Tourism Association of Southern Ontario BOD

Lucy Ann has been an active member of the Board of Directors for ATASO for two years now. She has had the opportunity to represent her region (Huron North) as well as ATASO at both regional and international levels.

### MAKING THE CASE FOR TOURISM

#### Kimberley Johnson

Ontario Ministry of Tourism and Recreation

Kimberley Johnson is a Senior Development Consultant for the Ontario Ministry of Tourism and Recreation. She specializes in tourism product development for culture and heritage, and festivals and events industries.

Prior to this position, Kimberley has held various public relations and communications positions within the Ontario Public Service and with the Wildlands League, the Ontario chapter of the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society.

Kimberley has a political science degree from Bishop's University, and a post-graduate certificate in public relations from Ryerson University.

#### Alan Rimmington

Ontario Ministry of Tourism and Recreation

Alan is a Senior Consultant in the Ministry of Tourism's Investment & Development Office where he is the lead for municipal relations, travel industry relations and quality service initiatives. He joined the Ministry in January 2000, bringing more than 20 years private sector experience in the travel and tourism industry.

Alan held senior management positions in both the retail and wholesale sectors of the travel industry as well as being the founder and managing director of central Ontario's first receptive operator. Throughout these endeavours, he has worked with travel and tourism leaders around the world.

Alan has served on the Board of Directors of: Muskoka Tourism, the Muskoka Employment Training Centre, the Caribbean Tourism Organisation (Canadian Chapter) and is the Ministry's Liaison Director to EDCO. He also chaired the host committee for Ontario Marketplace 1996. This extensive background gives Alan a unique perspective and allows him to provide valuable insight to the Ministry and the industry on the challenges facing Ontario tourism. Alan is a graduate of the University of Guelph.

#### Vaughan Sunday Facilitator

Vaughn Sunday-Tehoweesonte was born and raised in the Akwesasne Mohawk Nation. He is a member of the Wolf Clan. He is also a graduate of Trent University with a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Political Science. He is also a graduate of the Banff School of Advanced Management.

He has worked within the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne for the past 20 years in various capacities. He has been the Director of Economic Development for a total of 15 years. He was instrumental in the development of the Peacetree Mall, which is a 14,000 sq. ft. retail plaza, the Ohwistha Capital Corporation (ACC), the Stanley Island Cabins, the on reserve mortgage program offered by the Bank of Montreal, and the development of the Akwesasne Area Management Board (ARDHA recipient).

Within the Akwesasne community he has volunteered as coach for youth sports such as baseball, basketball, hockey and adult sports coaching women's softball and volleyball. He also enjoys activities with his kids.



Dining

## FINAL AGENDA

### MONDAY, APRIL 25, 2005

- 2:00 p.m. Registration  
FERN RESORT LOBBY
- 5:00 pm Welcoming Ice-Breaker Reception and Dinner  
FERN RESORT DINING ROOM
- 7:00 pm "Behind the Scenes" Tour of Casino Rama Conference Facility  
SHUTTLE DEPARTING FROM FERN FOR CASINO RAMA

### TUESDAY, APRIL 26, 2005

- 8:00 a.m. Registration  
FERN RESORT LOBBY
- 8:00 a.m. Breakfast  
DINING ROOM
- 9:15 a.m. Opening Prayer  
Welcoming Address by Chief Sharon Stinson Henry, Chippewas of Mnjikaning BERGWEN HALL
- 9:30 a.m. Welcoming Address  
Speakers:  
Chairperson, ATASO, Jack Contin  
Chairperson, NONTA, Virginia McKenzie
- 9:50 a.m. Conference Purpose  
Speaker: Mary Jamieson, Conference Chairperson

10:00 a.m. Plenary Presentation:  
Branding of Canada and Aboriginal Canada

Speakers:  
Virginia Doucett, Canadian Tourism Commission  
Ontario Board Reps, Aboriginal Tourism Canada  
Mariette Sutherland, The Great Spirit Circle Trail

CTC will introduce the process that is underway in launching the new Canada brand and how this new experience-driven brand image relates to Aboriginal tourism in Ontario. ATC will follow with presenting their recent National Aboriginal tourism branding exercise and introduce how ATC's brand will affect Aboriginal tourism in Ontario. The Great Spirit Circle Trail will demonstrate the branding process that was undertaken at a community level and how this has helped them to successfully capture international markets. Presentations will demonstrate the steps that were involved in the development of a brand and how it expresses the "message" to consumers.

10:45 a.m. Networking Break

11:00 a.m. Plenary Presentation:  
What is a "market-ready" Aboriginal experience for:

Domestic and US: Anna Kovachis, Canadian Discoveries  
European Markets- Tara Ingram, Moccasin Trail Tours  
Asian Markets- Trina Mather-Simard, Turtle Island

One of the greatest challenges facing Aboriginal tourism operators is what the elusive "market-ready" expectations are for their business. While delegates will look at adapting Ontario's market readiness guidelines to respect Aboriginal cultures and teachings later in the agenda, this presentation will provide insight into the industry's perspective on "market-readiness". Each speaker will introduce the expectations of an Aboriginal experience within their perspective market.

11:45 a.m. Luncheon  
DINING ROOM

1:00 p.m. Facilitated Small Group Workshops:  
Defining Aboriginal tourism "market-readiness"

Final Groups (red, black and yellow posted at Dining Hall)  
RED GROUP – BERGWEN  
BLACK GROUP – HURONIA  
YELLOW GROUP - #110

This interactive session will provide attendees with the tools to assess their current tourism market readiness through a series of thought-provoking questions. The session profiles all aspects of the business planning cycle including: product, customer, communications & PR, customer services, pricing, health & safety, marketing, partnerships, amongst others. Upon completion of the session, participants will have an assessment of areas of strength; and other areas in which they would like to advance their market readiness skills. Groups will then determine how these guidelines could be adapted by the Aboriginal tourism industry to ensure cultural content is respectful and authentic, in addition to meeting industry standards.

Facilitated by:  
Arlene White, Tracey Desjardins and Christine Anderson  
Tourism Development Consultants (Ministry of Tourism)

Co-Facilitated with:  
Linda Sarazin – Anishnaabe Experiences  
Kim Porter – ATASO Board of Directors  
Lucy Trudeau – ATASO Board of Directors

2:15 p.m. Networking Break

5:00 p.m. Workshops Conclude

6:30 pm Evening Dinner Function  
DINING HALL

During dinner some of our local success stories in Aboriginal tourism will have the opportunity to share some of their best practices followed by a traditional smoke dance performance by Haudenasuane Singers and Dancers.

The evening entertainment will highlight famous blues musician Murray Porter at Mary'Lous, 900 p.m.

## WEDNESDAY, APRIL 27, 2005

- 8:30 a.m. Breakfast Plenary:  
Making The Case for Tourism in your community  
Kimberley Johnson, Ontario Ministry of Tourism and Recreation  
DINING HALL
- In First Nation communities, the impact of cultural tourism extends far beyond that of simple economics and it is extremely important to involve and consult the community throughout the planning and operations of the tourism initiative for it to be successful. Often First Nations leaders have limited knowledge of the opportunities that tourism could present their communities. The Ministry of Tourism, Investment and Development office, will introduce a new toolkit "Making the Case for Tourism" that could provide the necessary resources and statistics to help communities understand the benefits of tourism.
- 9:45 a.m. Concurrent Workshops (Choice of only one)
- GROUP A: Packaging To the International Market  
BERGWEN
- Participants who are currently packaging their product and are interested in extending their reach within international markets are encouraged to attend this workshop. Participants will discuss their experience with cultural nuances and visitor expectations of international markets. Information will be provided on commission structures, booking procedures, FIT (Fully/Foreign Independent Traveller) and group markets; as it relates to international markets. Participants will then work in smaller groups to develop new packages.
- Facilitated by: Tracey Desjardins, Tourism Development Consultant with the Regional Services Branch of the Ministry of Tourism and Recreation
- 9:45 a.m. Concurrent Workshops (Choice of only one)
- GROUP B: Packaging To the Domestic Market  
HURONIA
- Participants beginning to, or are interested in packaging are encouraged to attend this workshop. Participants will discuss their experience in developing partnerships and packages. Information will be provided on components of a successful package including: theming; finding complimentary partners; terms and conditions; and administration of the package. Participants will then work in smaller groups to develop new packages.
- Facilitated by:  
Christine Anderson, Tourism Development Consultant  
with the Regional Services Branch of the Ministry of Tourism and Recreation

- 9:45 a.m. Concurrent Workshops (Choice of only one)  
GROUP C: "Aboriginal Tourism Development Tool Kits"  
ROOM #110
- ATASO and NONTA both recognize the need to increase the capacity of Economic Development officers and other community tourism planners to assist them in fulfilling their role of supporting Aboriginal tourism development in First Nations. For EDO's to effectively support tourism development they must have the necessary resources and information. This working group will review Ontario's toolkit "Making the Case for Tourism" and determine what tools they feel would be necessary for them to support the Aboriginal tourism industry.
- Facilitated by:  
Vaughan Sunday, Mohawk Council of Akwesasne
- 10:45 a.m. Networking Break
- 11:00 a.m. Concurrent Workshops Cont.
- 12:30 p.m. Luncheon with closing remarks by Conference Chair
- 1:45 pm Closing Ceremony
- 2:00 pm –4 pm. ATASO AGM  
Bergwen
- During the Annual General Meeting ATASO will update members on key activities over the past year and elections will be held from membership for new BOD to represent the regions, portfolios and support positions.

## CONFERENCE DELEGATES

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# 5th Annual Ontario Aboriginal Tourism Conference

# 5th Annual Ontario Aboriginal Tourism Conference

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