

Manitoba Travel Manitoba's industry news

voyageur

winter 2011

**Sharing the Manitoba
Story Overseas**

**IT'S MANITOBA TIME:
*Partnership Opportunities for 2012***

**Three new entries to Canada's
'Signature Experiences'**



Manitoba voyageur

is published by

Travel Manitoba

7th Floor - 155 Carlton Street, Winnipeg, Manitoba R3C 3H8

Tel. 1.204.927.7800 Fax 1.204.927.7828

Toll Free 1.800.665.0040

Travel Manitoba's Board of Directors

Bob Sparrow (Chair)

Owner, Norwood Hotel

Marion Morberg (Vice Chair)

Board Member, Spirit Way

George Alevizos

Controller, Manitoba Government & General
Employees' Union

Cynthia Campbell

Corporate Controller, Canadian Wheat Board

Normand Gousseau

Chief Executive Officer, Entreprises Riel

Merv Gunter

Owner/Operator, Frontiers North Adventures

Helen Halliday

General Manager, Delta Winnipeg

Riva Harrison

Executive Director, Marketing and Communications,
CentrePort Canada Inc.

Wadood Ibrahim

Chief Executive Officer, Protegra

Bill Knowlton

Vice President Sales & Marketing, Jonview Canada Inc.

Sonny Lavallee

Chairman, Board of Directors, Northern Manitoba
Trappers' Festival

Eva Luk

Principal, Luk-Law

Karen Oliver

General Manager, Provincial Exhibition of Manitoba

Daryl Silver

President, Continental Travel Group

Gerry Turenne

President & CEO, Turenne et Cie (2005) Ltée



MESSAGE FROM THE President and CEO

Manitoba is on a roll. There's increasing excitement around Manitoba as a tourism destination. Our tourism products and attractions, both those existing and those soon coming to market have positioned our tourism industry favourably for future growth.

A new airport, improvements and additions at Assiniboine Park, the rise of the Canadian Museum for Human Rights against the backdrop of The Forks, and a renewed sense of community pride with the return of the Winnipeg Jets are just a few of the reasons it's Manitoba's time to shine.

Indeed, our guests at Travel Manitoba's Annual General Meeting, CEO Michele McKenzie and Board Chair Steve Allan of the Canadian Tourism Commission, were blown away by their visit to the province, sharing their impressions and excitement about the compelling happenings here. (See story, page 3.) The CTC also recently recognized three more Manitoba experiences, bringing the province's number to six in the CTC's Signature Experiences Collection. (See news of the most recent entries on page 14.)

We know that our industry continues to face challenges, such as this summer's flooding, declining U.S. visitation and instability in global economies. Even in the face of these factors, the industry recorded positive growth and continues to expand. (For Summer highlights and a look ahead to 2012, see page 13.) Tourism remains a critical economic driver in Manitoba, sustaining more than 5,600 tourism businesses and 17,000 direct tourism jobs. The tourism industry is a key

contributor to the provincial economy generating \$1.2 billion in annual expenditures which results in more than \$550 million in federal, provincial and municipal tax-based revenues. With new experiences and attractions coming on stream every day throughout the province, we believe now is the time to maximize public and private investment in tourism and continue to grow the industry, the product and our reputation for quality service. We must collaborate and align our forces to increase investment in tourism marketing and development, ensuring that Manitoba establishes a strong tourism brand both nationally and internationally.

In 2008, Travel Manitoba received three years of federal Economic Partnership Agreement funding. With those funds depleted as of 2012, we are currently in the process of applying for additional funds. It is clear that there have been a lot of successes in the international markets over the last three years, so we look to continue to build on the foundations we've put in place in Canada, the U.S. and abroad.

Numbers aside, at the heart of Manitoba's tourism industry is partnership. Strong bonds with government, industry associations and our industry here in the province enable us to capitalize on the opportunities in the global visitor economy.

Our new five-year business plan focuses on aligning our forces for stronger marketing impact, including placing a greater emphasis on partnership. (See pgs. 3-4 for more on our Partnership program opportunities.) We're stronger – not to mention more efficient – when we work together. I look forward to continuing to work with you to continue to grow Manitoba's tourism industry.

Colin Ferguson



On the cover:
Cover photo:
Yvette Cardzo

Momentum fuels tourism industry growth



Michele McKenzie, President and CEO of the CTC, speaks at Travel Manitoba's annual general meeting.

It's Manitoba's time.

Momentum has arrived in the form of a Renaissance in the province, from the rebirth of the Jets hockey team, to our new airport and the continuing development of the Canadian Museum for Human Rights.

"There is so much to be excited about and we want to share that excitement with travellers from around Manitoba, across Canada and the world," said Travel Manitoba President and CEO Colin Ferguson at the organization's annual general meeting, held August 31 at the Manitoba Museum.

While still tested by factors such as declining U.S. visitation, unstable economic conditions, and this year's flooding and drought conditions in the province, the industry recorded positive growth in the last fiscal year and is forecast to grow by 4.2% in 2011 according to the Conference Board of Canada.

"As tourism rebounded after the recession, Manitoba operators also saw visitors returning – although some have still not returned to the same volume of sales," said Ferguson, addressing a crowd of more than 200 attendees. Building on successes of 2010, including the Manitoba Homecoming initiative, increasing domestic travel will be crucial to growing tourism in Manitoba, he added. Travel Manitoba is also anticipating long term

economic benefits from hosting Rendezvous Canada 2010, an international tourism marketplace that brought 300 international tourism buyers to Manitoba in May of 2010.

Reaching the media and more

Expanded initiatives in international marketing, media relations, e-marketing and visitor services also contributed to the successes experienced in 2010. Travel Manitoba's media relations efforts directly influenced \$9.2 million worth of travel publicity, new niche websites increased the number of unique visitors seeking information on Manitoba's tourism products and the organization's new Visitor Services Network enhanced the availability and quality of information for the travelling public.

Partnerships are a key factor in Travel Manitoba's success in marketing the province as a quality tourism destination. "Our industry partners see the value in participating in our marketing and development programs," said Bob Sparrow, Chair of Travel Manitoba's Board of Directors. "We are more successful in marketing Manitoba when we work together."

Industry participation in development initiatives, such as best practice missions, was also strong last year and Travel Manitoba expects to build on those

programs as it moves towards supporting experiential tourism development.

Travel Manitoba continued its effective partnership with the Canadian Tourism Commission through initiatives such as the Signature Experience Collection, which highlights unique Canadian experiences in the CTC's global marketing.

"Manitoba offers some of Canada's most distinctive travel experiences," said Michele McKenzie, President and CEO of the CTC, who along with CTC Board Chair Steve Allan addressed the audience at the meeting.

"The Government of Manitoba is proud to support this province's tourism industry, which is a vital contributor to our economic vitality and the quality of life for all Manitobans," said the Honourable Flor Marcelino, Minister of Culture, Heritage and Tourism. "With exciting new tourism developments and new experiences in the areas of aboriginal tourism, agritourism and ecotourism, we look forward to working with Travel Manitoba to promote everything our province offers to visitors from all over the world."

TOGETHER IN 2012:

PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES FROM TRAVEL MANITOBA



We're all in this together – and together we are stronger. It's not too late get in on the opportunities to help make 2012 a great year for tourism in Manitoba. Travel Manitoba has created a line-up of marketing opportunities that will help you to inspire travellers to discover what Manitoba Time is all about.

It's Manitoba Time continues as the creative positioning statement for 2012. The campaign tested well and continues to produce great results, says Lilian Tankard, of Travel Manitoba's Partnership Programs.

ENHANCED PARTNERSHIP WITH THE WINNIPEG FREE PRESS

Travel Manitoba is working in partnership with the Winnipeg Free Press to produce and distribute Mega Vacation planners for 2012. These glossy publications help promote your experiences in key markets and align your offerings with the Travel Manitoba brand.

The planners will combine the information traditionally found in the Vacation & Accommodation Guide and the Events Guides, with the exception of accommodation listings which will move online. Each planner will showcase points of interest, events, Winnipeg's neighbourhoods, individual communities

and their attractions in each rural region, and a separate section for both fishing and golf. Three planners will be distributed in 2012: A winter planner in January, a spring version in April and a fall guide in September. With a print run for each of 230,000 copies, the guides will be distributed in Winnipeg and rural Manitoba, Northwest Ontario, Saskatchewan and North Dakota.

Offering a showcase for Manitoba experiences, a weekly full page editorial and advertising feature is also planned for the Winnipeg Free Press Travel Section. These pages allow partners to present their distinct offering as part of a unified full page, blending editorial and striking photography with packages and offers. Weekly "Bucket List" promotions will highlight some of Manitoba's most unique experiences.

With online becoming the go-to source for travel information and ideas, a new event website will be a highlight of the Winnipeg Free Press website, also accessible from the Travel Manitoba website. The website is searchable by area, date or event. Winnipeg Free Press SEO experts ensure anyone searching for vacation or event information for Manitoba will be directed to this site. Banner ads are available.

FISHING AND HUNTING

Travel Manitoba's Fishing and Hunting Guide will continue to include all lodge and outfitter listings, Master Angler Awards and the opportunity to purchase ad space. It's just one of the opportunities to attract the memorable experiences available for hunters and anglers in Manitoba.

Wild TV Hunting and Fishing Network: Travel Manitoba's has partnered with Wild TV on a package that includes a 5-show sponsorship, branded billboards, and 221 commercials per quarter, beginning January 2012.

World Fishing Network: World Fishing Network is the only 24/7 television network dedicated to all segments of fishing. Travel Manitoba has partnered with WFN on an advertising and promotional package that includes a contest tie-in to the "Hookin' Up with Mariko Izumi" show, beginning November 7. Airtime will be used to promote fishing in Manitoba and direct viewers to the Manitobamonsters.com website. An episode on fishing in Manitoba will also air on the program.

Unique partnership opportunities may still be available with these two television promotions.

PRINT ADVERTISING

Travel Manitoba has partnered with Hockey News in two contest promotions – one fishing and one hunting for 2012. Read by over 2 million hockey fans, Hockey News is recognized as the authoritative source of hockey information. Advertising will include both brand ads (fishing and hunting in Manitoba) and contest ads in issues throughout 2012.

Bear Hunting magazine is the only national media outlet to cover hunting exclusively. Travel Manitoba will advertise hunting in Manitoba in the Jan/Feb and March/April 2012 issues.

Shows: Travel Manitoba will attend the Barrett Jackson show in Scottsdale Arizona and the All-Canada Pheasant Run show in Chicago. Partners will be able to share booth space at greatly reduced rates.

Manitoba Monsters website sponsorship, banner and package ad opportunities are available for the customized www.manitobamonsters.com site.

Three Master Angler e-newsletters are also planned with distribution dates in February, April, and June to more than 6,000 recipients. These newsletters will provide valuable content to subscribers, while connecting them with partners' offerings.

TRAVEL TRADE

In 2012, Travel Manitoba representatives will attend select marketplaces to identify hot prospects, as well as coordinate targeted sales missions. We also have well-placed general sales agents in Germany, the United Kingdom, and the long haul U.S. market and have secured joint marketing agreements with key tour operators.

Travel Manitoba will continue to market to the travel trade within the primary markets. Marketing tools will be refreshed for consumers and travel trade in French, German, Chinese, and Spanish languages.

E-MARKETING AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Efforts continue to streamline our existing primary websites: travelmanitoba.com, media website, and the tourism industry website. New initiatives will increase our email list through online marketing efforts. A unified e-newsletter targeting various market segments is scheduled each month with supplemental, single message- blasts. Enhancement of microsites through online campaigns and social media continue, focusing on

For more information on partnering with Travel Manitoba, contact:

Lilian Tankard

Senior Manager, Partnership Programs
Travel Manitoba
(204) 927-7821
ltankard@travelmanitoba.com

Michel LaRiviere

Partnership Programs Coordinator
Planning and Market Development
(204) 927-7837
mlariviere@travelmanitoba.com

Lindsay Penner

Assistant, Partnership Programs
Planning and Marketing Development
(204) 927-7835
lpenner@travelmanitoba.com



It's time to bag your
Manitoba Monster.



Manitoba Monsters, Everything Churchill and the What's Hot? events site. Travel Manitoba will make continued investment in social media via Facebook and Twitter focusing on linking key product experiences to unique social media communities.

Banner ads are available on travelmanitoba.com as well as customized landing pages. The customization is open-ended. You will be able to upload your own offers, photographs, videos and connect to your existing social media feeds, driving traffic to your sites.



Online Campaign Exceeds Expectations

Earlier this year Travel Manitoba rebranded its Facebook page to match the “It’s Manitoba Time” campaign, engaging new users with an online contest for a weekend at Elkhorn Resort. The contest generated 574 entries. With the combined efforts of the campaign ads, page interaction, TV and print ads as well as Facebook ads, fans of Travel Manitoba on Facebook increased to 8,919 by the end of July. Fans of the Travel Manitoba Facebook page are 55% female, in the age ranges of 25-34 (17%) and 35-44 (14%).

The top five countries Travel Manitoba Facebook fans are from are Canada,

United States, Germany, Philippines and the U.K.

A summer online campaign also provided a healthy boost for Travel Manitoba’s e-newsletter. Subscriptions over the summer months were up by 10,471, with the increase attributed to the “engagement” portion of the campaign. The campaign resulted in a click-through rate of .11, well above the industry standard of .04 to .06 percent.

A new, unified email newsletter list will ensure more people will see the events, programs and more from Travel Manitoba, and ensures quality content in each themed issue.

Heather Fisher, of Roblin, Manitoba was the Facebook contest winner of a stay at Elkhorn Resort.

Her prize package includes:

- 2 nights’ accommodation in a deluxe room with fireplace
- 2 adult park passes for one day
- 2 trail rides with Elkhorn Riding Adventures
- 2 rounds of golf on Elkhorn Course



TRAVEL MANITOBA STUDIES ECONOMIC IMPACT OF HUNTING AND FISHING

HUMAN RESOURCES IN TOURISM

Travel Manitoba has partnered with the Canadian Tourism Human Resource Council and 10 other provinces/territories on development of a Provincial level Human Resource Module, drawn from the national level module in the Tourism Satellite Account. While the project is detailed in scope, the end results of this three-year project will provide comparable, credible, and consistent provincial tourism human resource data.

THE SURVEY SAYS

Travel Manitoba's annual survey of Manitoba's tourism operators is conducted to develop a sense of "real time" tourism traffic for operators; to generate visitation forecasting data; to implement an ongoing process of consultation with industry to explore industry quality, and to determine the importance of various products and services offered by Travel Manitoba. This survey is scheduled to be in the field in November/December.

Travel Manitoba has also been participating in Probe Research's Omnibus, a quarterly survey of 1,000 Manitobans. Following the benchmark survey questions commissioned in June, the biannual waves of this survey will monitor and measure the impact of our in-province campaign.

As well, Travel Manitoba has two "home-grown" surveys underway. The first project is an in-market survey of Forks visitor centre customers that is being used in planning for future services. The second project is an online survey of anglers through the Master Angler Awards program. These surveys help us to understand what visitors are looking for and to use that information ensuring Travel delivers on its mission to lead and stimulate sustainable tourism growth.

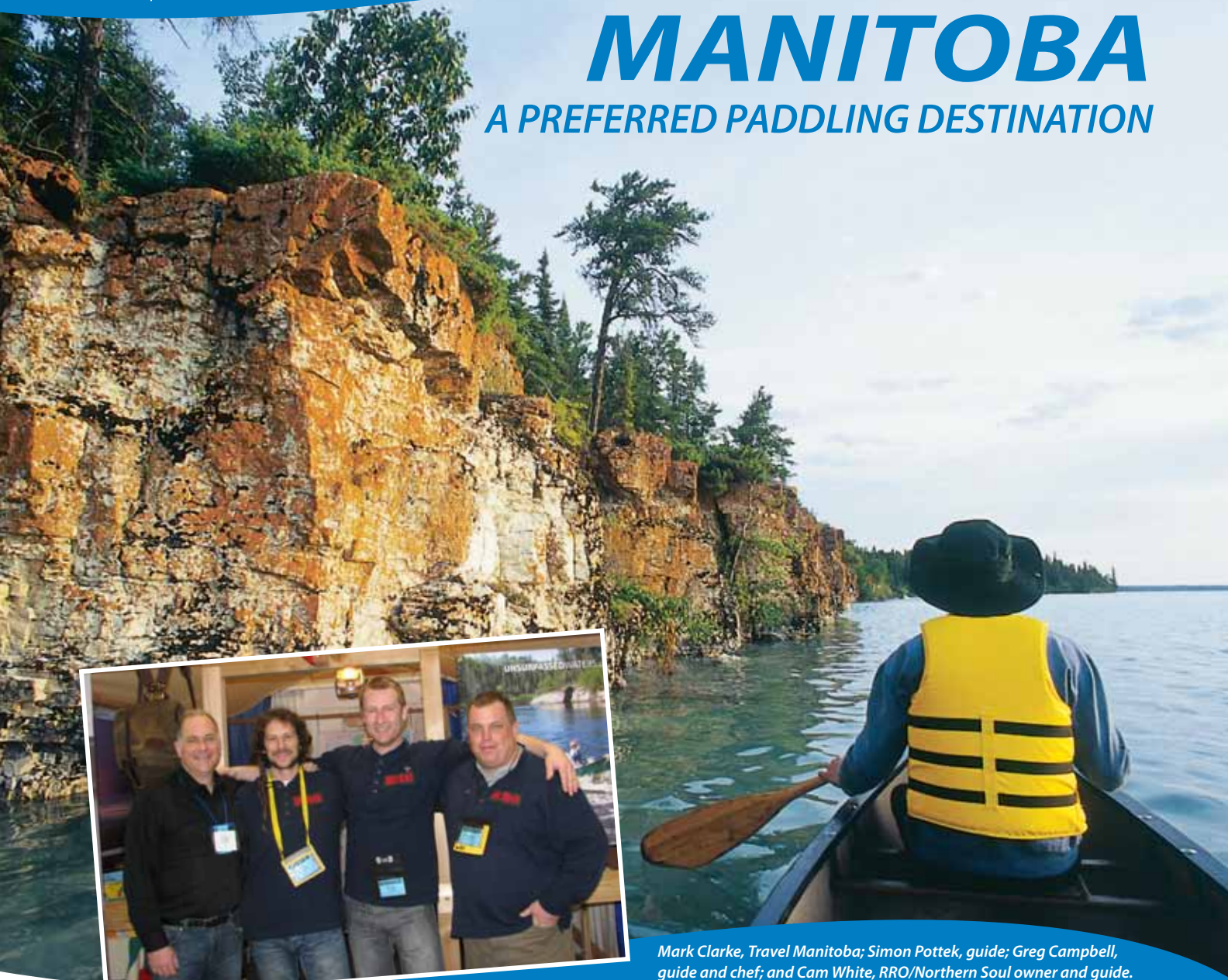
Preliminary findings reveal that anglers choose Manitoba for its high quality of fishing and clean lakes. Additionally, 93% of all anglers surveyed reported they were satisfied with their fishing trip to the province.

While Manitoba has a strong reputation as a premier destination for outdoor sporting enthusiasts, and fishing and hunting play a major role in our tourism economy, no quantitative/qualitative work in assessing the economic value of the fish and hunt tourism sector has been done since 1995.

In order to quantify the sector's impact on the tourism economy, Travel Manitoba has engaged local research firm Kisquared to undertake an economic assessment study evaluating the impact of both outfitted and non-outfitted hunting and fishing activities in Manitoba, as well as the social and environmental impacts of fishing and hunting in the province. While there were some initial challenges in sourcing consumer data, the study has now begun in earnest, and should be completed in January 2012. This project will provide all Manitoba stakeholders with essential information about the sector.

MANITOBA

A PREFERRED PADDLING DESTINATION



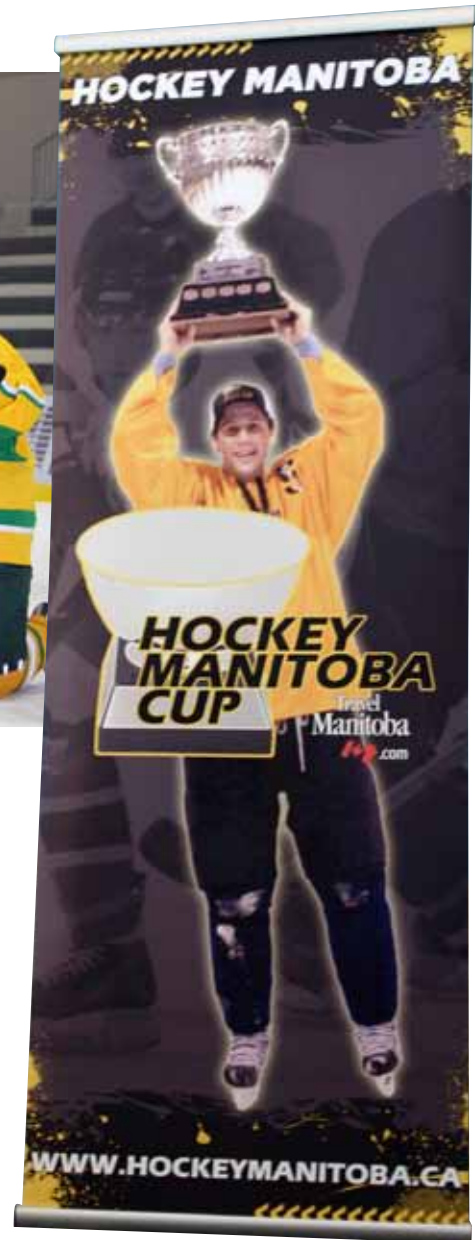
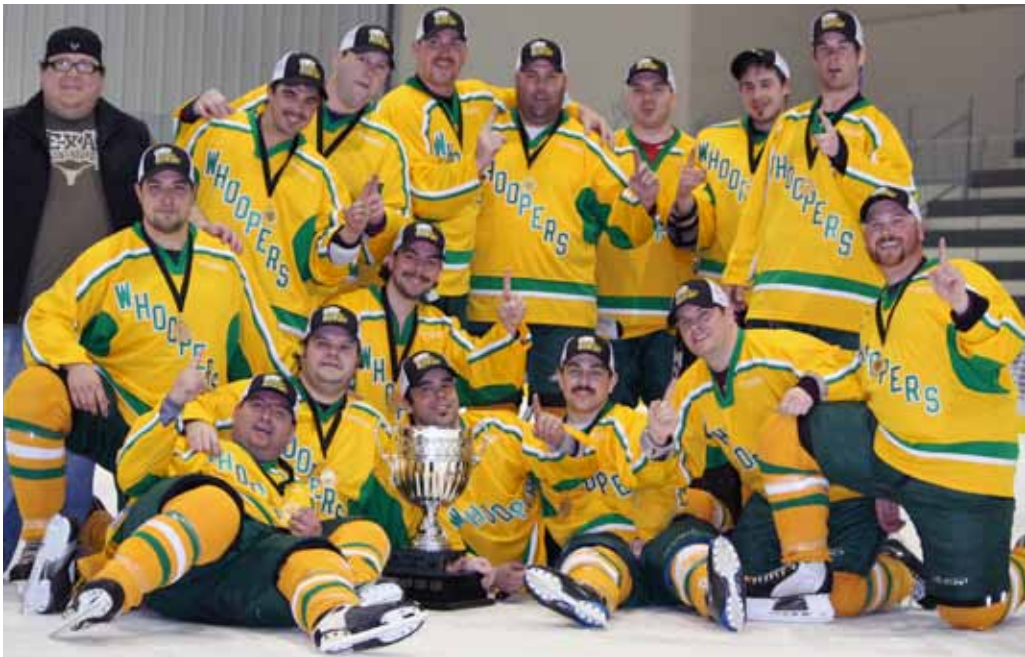
Mark Clarke, Travel Manitoba; Simon Pottek, guide; Greg Campbell, guide and chef; and Cam White, RRO/Northern Soul owner and guide.

This past spring Travel Manitoba partnered with Northern Soul and Red River Outfitters for an exhibit at Canoeconia— North America's largest canoe and kayak marketplace. Held annually in Madison, Wisconsin, the show attracts paddling enthusiasts from Wisconsin, Minnesota, Illinois and Indiana. Based on discussions with industry partners, it was felt that support from Travel Manitoba would add value and strengthen the province's position as preferred paddling destination.

Cam Whyte, owner of Red River Outfitters/Northern Soul constructed the booth, set up as a tent camp, with Travel Manitoba providing interior images. There was solid traffic to the camp and show goers were invited to come in and enjoy the Manitoba experience. Although there was interest in the longer wilderness river trips, a key takeaway was that a significant number of U.S. paddlers are looking for shorter trips, primarily in the five day range. A new venture, Trail of the Wolf Adventures, will help to

broaden the appeal of unique Manitoba experiences. Celebrating the richness of Aboriginal culture the guided trip will regale participants with historical stories and ancestral music. Enhancements to Travel Manitoba's microsite Unsurpassed Waters are also underway with the goal of driving potential leads to industry partners.

For more information on Travel Manitoba's paddling initiatives, contact Mark Clarke at maclarke@travelmanitoba.com.



MARKETING PARTNERSHIP FOR INVITATIONAL SPORT TOURNAMENTS HIT THE MARK

Travel Manitoba and Sport Manitoba launched the Invitational Tournament Incentive Partnership in April 2011.

This innovative pilot program provides marketing assistance to provincial sport organizations in hosting new or expanded invitational tournaments. The goal is to encourage participants, their families and friends to explore the destination by visiting attractions, restaurants, shopping and nightlife.

“There is definitely a market opportunity to grow invitational tournaments” says Brenda Wiwcharyk, Grants Manager for Sport Manitoba. “The challenge for many provincial sport organizations is not having the resources to co-ordinate tournaments, so Travel Manitoba’s initiative addresses this issue.”

The first Invitational Tournament held was the Hockey Manitoba Cup, hosted by Hockey Manitoba on Easter weekend.

“We saw an opportunity to significantly grow the adult recreation hockey market and Travel Manitoba helped us get there,” said Scott Furman, Director of Finance and Operations with Hockey Manitoba. This

year’s tournament saw the number of teams double from 24 to 48, with close to half the teams from outside Winnipeg.

“Looking ahead to 2012 we want to grow this tournament from 48 to 60, cementing our position as the largest invitational adult hockey tournament in the country,” Furman added. Hockey Manitoba also hosted activities around the tournament including a social and a game featuring Winnipeg Jets alumni.

In late July, Manitoba Soccer held the Prairie Invitational tournament in Winnipeg, while Football Manitoba, working in partnership with Brandon First, hosted the Red River Cup. Soccer Manitoba officials were pleased by the number of out of province teams and their interest in visiting Winnipeg and area attractions. The City of Brandon hosted a Tailgate Reception and the Shilo Service Club organized a skills camp. Brandon hotels realized more than 1,000 room nights during the tournament.

According to Rob Berkowits, Executive Director of Football Manitoba there is tremendous potential to grow this event. “This year we saw the participation of two

out of province teams—Thunder Bay and Nova Scotia. We have strong interest from both Alberta and Saskatchewan, so we’ll be working on bringing them onboard for 2012.”

Most recently, Brandon welcomed CurlManitoba’s Sun Life Junior Challenge, including 24 rinks from the U.S., Alberta, Saskatchewan and Ontario - as well as the Canadian Youth Olympic team. This is a mixed men’s and women’s team that will represent Canada at the Youth Olympics in Austria this February.



MEDIA TRIPS FROM BISON TO BELUGAS

Over the summer months the Travel Manitoba media relations team hosted a record number of group media trips. These trips were in addition to the dozens of visiting individual writers we hosted throughout the months.

As a result hosting media on these six group trips, online and print articles appeared in the following outlets: *Home & Away AAA Magazine* (Minnesota), *Up Magazine.com*, *The Sydney Morning Herald* (Australia), *Examiner.com*, *Harrisburg Patriot-News* (US), *The Scotsman* (UK), and *Globe and Mail.com*.

Manitoba in Harmony Group Media Trip July 4-9

5 travel media and 1 representative from the Canadian Tourism Commission

Media included Canadian and UK media

This trip kicked off the summer on a high note, with a northern expedition with Frontiers North Adventures and a trip to the Winnipeg Folk Festival.

Fish & Folk Group Media Trip July 7-9

Six media: 1 U.S., 3 Saskatchewan, 2 Alberta

From a Death and Debauchery tour of Winnipeg's Exchange District, to catfishing on the Red River with City Cat Todd Longley (aka The Rock 'n' Roll Fisherman) to Gimli, Hecla Island and the Winnipeg Folk Fest, this itinerary was packed with ideas for journalists to share with audiences closer to home. This trip focused on media in the high-volume areas (Saskatchewan, North Dakota, South Dakota, Minnesota, Northwest Ontario and Alberta

Travel Journalist Guild Sub-Arctic Summer Adventure July 23-29

7 travel media from all corners of the U.S.

Journalists explored Churchill's four ecosystems by four modes of transportation, from Zodiacs and kayaks in search of beluga whales, to the view from a helicopter over the boreal forest and a trek across the tundra both on foot and aboard a tundra buggy.

Sub-Arctic Summer Adventure - Belugas August 2-6

Society of American Travel Writers (Canadian Chapter)

5 influential Canadian travel writers and 1 representative from Canadian Tourism Commission's U.S. office

From snorkelling to sunset hikes and tours of the new Churchill Northern Studies Centre, this trip made the most of four days in Churchill.

Splendour in the Park August 14-18

4 U.S. travel writers

This Riding Mountain area experience featured culinary highlights from Aditis Touch Greenhouse owner and chef Jason Kelly and Siesta Cafe's Vaughn Barkman, bread baked in a clay oven at the Trembowla Cross of Freedom Historical Site & Museum, a Lake Audy bison tour and more.

WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING

"Pat Rousseau – the best guide I've ever had. His wealth of information, personal interaction, family history and love of the North is what made this trip memorable. This we will keep with us for a long time." – Mitchel Osborne, Travel Journalist Guild member

"I wanted to extend a huge thanks and congratulations to Travel Manitoba and the Frontiers North team on the execution of a great tour. The media on the trip seemed to have been wholly impressed, as was I. Thank you for inviting the CTC; I found it highly beneficial to increase my understanding of the fantastic experiences Manitoba has to offer."

Kate Duffy, Manager Social Media, Canadian Tourism Commission Manitoba in Harmony Group Media Trip



@ShelbyGonzalez (Shelby Gonzalez)

Superfresh salad at Aditis Touch Greenhouse in Onanole, Manitoba. Almost too pretty to eat! Almost.

@lolaugustine (Lola Augustine Brown)

Churchill Manitoba is the ultimate Canadian vacation destination if you want to see wildlife. And wild people. #belugababes

@catenrmp (Cate Watrous)

The bison put on a great show for the travel writers in #RidingMountain @parkscanada

Wild Serenity September 14-18

8 media: 2 German, 2 Australian, 4 Canadian

This was a pre-tour for attendees of Go Media, an event that took place in Edmonton from Sept 18-22. This experiential itinerary was hosted by Celes Davar, president of Earth Rhythms as well as members of Travel Manitoba's media relations team. Wildlife spotting at Riding Mountain National Park, Elkhorn Riding Adventures, song writing and a behind-the-scenes tour of Clear Lake Golf Course were included.

Representing MANITOBA across the pond



Travel Manitoba has international in-market media relations representatives helping to share the Manitoba story with the overseas market. We caught up them: Maria Weigold of MSi in Germany, and the U.K.'s Lee George of Clover-George and Eve Gardiner of First Public Relations.

Weigold is responsible for marketing activities and public relations. In recent years, she's noticed a shift in the German market's perceptions of Manitoba as a prairie, moving to a better understanding of the different landscapes here. One of her favourite parts of her role is visiting Manitoba. "I enjoy meeting people who love what they do, from setting up a new lodge, or creating unique itineraries and programs."

Lee George's role is exclusively media. "It's a question of getting together with as many of them as we can so that we can chat to them face-to-face, and to do that we have to hold interesting functions to persuade them to join us. Things like the

Ice Bar event we held in London earlier this year."

Working with travel media is interesting, as some of them know about Manitoba. "Or think they do,"

says George. "In actual fact many knew very little. For example, when we first started meeting with them very few knew about the belugas in the Churchill area, and none that I have spoken to knew about the snake pits at Narcisse. We've only been doing this for two years so it'll take time to get the message across that Manitoba isn't just 'that place in the middle of Canada.'"

"The perception of Manitoba was that it is cold, remote and expensive," says Gardiner, who with FPR carries out training to front line sales staff, creates consumer promotions with tour operator partners and works with CTC in the U.K. to ensure Manitoba has a presence as part of Canada along with all the key provinces. "We are changing these perceptions with the travel industry and consumers through positive exposure and promotions as well as broadening Manitoba product offerings."

The representatives agree the whole world is Manitoba's competitor. "The world is

becoming smaller as far as many travellers are concerned. For example, it's now as cheap to travel from the UK to Australia as it is to Canada so consumers have so much more choice than they once had and they have to have a compelling case put to them to persuade them to destination A rather than B," says George.

"Norway strongly promotes its Polar Bear experience as does Alaska and Ontario," says Gardiner. "By broadening product into niche markets such as bird watching tours and wildlife experiences ensures different price points and a long season for U.K. visitors to visit Manitoba."

REACHING OUT TO HUNT AND FISH MEDIA

Similar to George and Weigold's efforts with media overseas, Travel Manitoba also has an agent, Nathan Silverman, working with the media on behalf of Manitoba in the long haul hunting and fishing market. Among other activities, he attended the Outdoor Writers of America Association's national conference, held July 9-11 near Salt Lake City, Utah. Silverman was able to network with outdoor writers, explaining the range of hunting and fishing experiences in the province.

Participate and place your business **ON THE CUTTING EDGE**



Tourism industry members in the inaugural Cutting Edge program held at the Elkhorn Resort focused on finding their advantage in the globally competitive environment of tourism. The event packed four days of in-class learning and experiences around the Riding Mountain National Park area with 25 participants and facilitators Nancy Arsenault of The Tourism Cafe and Celes Davar of Earth Rhythms, as well as experts from the Travel Manitoba staff.

The program featured a combination of classroom workshops and in-the-field hands-on techniques to support learning.

The focus on experiential tourism is about differentiating your offerings, attracting new markets and higher-yield customers, all without incurring considerable risk or having to make major investments in larger-scale infrastructure.

Experiential travel can help make this happen, by engaging visitors in a series of memorable travel activities, revealed over time, that are inherently personal, utilize the senses and make connections on a physical, emotional, spiritual, social or intellectual level.

Arsenault walked participants through customer profiling and using the CTC's Explorer Quotient (EQ) to figure out what customers are looking for and how to cater to those expectations when creating an experience.

Davar introduced participants to the 12 ingredients that go into making an experience memorable for the visitor, while Travel Manitoba social media expert Doug Evans gave a crash course on social media including the do's and don'ts associated with it.

The experience earned high ratings. "The Cutting Edge truly reinforced the concepts and technical end of experience development. Just like the products to be developed, the methods told the story so well," said one participant.

Travel Manitoba's Visitor Experiences team is working on the next Cutting Edge, taking place in Winnipeg January 16-19 at the Inn at the Forks. Ongoing coaching on experience development is a feature of this initiative, modelled after a similar program pioneered in Atlantic Canada through the Gros Morne Institute for Sustainable Tourism. The Cutting Edge program is a collaborative effort with GMIST.

Registration information is available on the TI website. Follow the link to Conferences and Workshops from www.travelmanitoba.com/TI/IndustryToolbox

DREAMS BECOME A REALITY FOR CONTEST WINNER

Nearly a week after finding out that she had won the grand prize of trip for two to Nanuk Polar Bear Lodge as part of Travel Manitoba's "It's Manitoba Time" contest with partners CTV and Churchill Wild, Michelle Holigroski still couldn't quite believe her luck.

"Someone pinch me," said Michelle. "I've wanted to see polar bears all my life. I've always been an animal lover."

As a biologist who used to work studying the impact of humans on the environment, the issue of climate change and how that is affecting polar bears is an issue dear to Michelle's heart.

Michelle and her husband Craig, who plan to make the trip to Churchill Wild's Nanuk Polar Bear Lodge in September of next year, had put a trip to see Manitoba's polar bears on their bucket list.

"With climate change, we were slowly moving it up the list," she said. "It's going to be so wonderful to commune with nature, to see polar bears and the northern lights. I'm sure we're going to just fall in love with it."

"It's totally a dream come true. I'm so grateful to be taking a trip like this. I really can't thank you enough!"

Travel Manitoba thanks media partner CTV and industry sponsor Churchill Wild for helping to make Michelle's dreams come true.



L-R: Rick Kemp, Director of Marketing & Communications at Churchill Wild; contest winners Craig and Michelle Holigroski; Kris Laudien, Co-Host of CTV Morning Live



SUMMER TRAVEL – STEADY AS SHE GOES

What kind of summer was it for the tourism industry in Manitoba? It was an unusual season, with some areas of the province basking under the summer sun while other areas of the province were still under water from spring flooding. A Tourism Sector Review from the Conference Board of Canada reveals an estimated 5.4% year-over-year growth in domestic and inbound tourism. This year-over-year increase in the revenues of Canadian tourism businesses is attributed to Canadians travelling within Canada as well as foreign travellers coming to Canada.

According to border crossing traffic counts, traffic from the U.S. picked up slightly for the summer months (June-August 2011). Total traffic was up by 0.7% (+1.3% overnight, -0.5% sameday). According to the latest Tourism Outlook Briefing presented by the Conference Board of Canada, passport requirements and the high exchange rate are still major factors affecting visitation from the U.S. Economic and financial concerns, curtailed discretionary spending and higher gas prices are also major factors affecting visitation.

In overseas visitation, unfortunately, the rebounding trend witnessed last year did not continue for this year. Overseas entries were down by 10.8% this summer and 7.7% year-to-date. Meanwhile, hotel occupancy rates in Manitoba during the summer months were up slightly (0.8%) over 2010, sitting around 65.4%.

Festival success

Some of Manitoba's top festivals saw record audiences this summer. The Winnipeg Folk Festival topped its previous attendance record with 59,553 people (a 10% jump) attending the five-day event. The Winnipeg Fringe Festival broke the record for the highest overall ticket sales in its history, reaching a total indoor attendance of 87,845. Dauphin's CountryFest had a sold-out crowd of 13,000 festival goers. After setting a three year high last year, Folklorama attendance was down slightly, 3%, due to a drop in U.S. bus tours.

Positive trends

Optimism is high for 2012, with forecasts indicating a 3.5% increase in total overnight tourism expenditures, according to the Conference Board of Canada.

explorez sans fin
Canada
keep exploring



Manitoba experiences highlighted in international tourism campaign

A tour that unravels the esoteric mysteries of Manitoba's Legislative Building, a unique fishing experience that includes a river boat ride to a historic fur trade portage, and kayaking with pods of beluga whales are three of the latest Manitoba tourism experiences to be included in Canada's "Signature Experiences" collection.

The prestigious Signature Experiences Collection® of the Canadian Tourism Commission is an innovative marketing program with the goal of inspiring more high-spending international travellers to book their next vacation in Canada. It showcases high-quality Canadian tourism enterprises that deliver the authentic experiences CTC research says international customers look for when they choose a vacation.

The 115 SEC members are ambassadors of Canada's tourism brand, "Canada. Keep Exploring," and have met rigorous criteria to ensure they will stand out in a crowded and competitive marketplace.

The newest Manitoba Signature Experiences include:

• **Hermetic Code Tour of the Manitoba Legislature** – Heartland International Travel and Tours: Hosted by Frank Albo, researcher and academic inspiration behind The Hermetic Code, the tour is an evening of

decoding the famous symbols and architecture that make the Manitoba Legislature unique.

• **Pathway of the Voyageurs** – Aikens Lake Wilderness Lodge: Visitors fly to Aikens Lake Lodge in the Atikaki Provincial Wilderness Park, where they meet local guides and head out by boat to learn about wilderness fishing and enjoy a traditional shore lunch before visiting a historic fur trade portage, a wilderness walking trail where fur traders would have carried canoes and goods around rapid waters or waterfalls. This is followed by a Franco-Manitoban evening of cuisine and storytelling.

• **The Lazy Bear Wilderness Expedition** – Lazy Bear Lodge: Guests travel by float plane to the Headwaters of the South Knife River to embark on Huck Finn-style rafts carrying them deep into the boreal forest. The experience also includes a day kayaking among the beluga whales in Hudson Bay, travel to the Seal River in search of the polar bears and a cultural tour of the Churchill area.

Previously designated members of the Signature Experiences Collection® from Manitoba include Marvels of Manitoba from Churchill Nature Tours, Birds, Bears and Belugas from Churchill Wild and Polar Bears by Tundra Buggy by Frontiers North.



Two Manitoba finalists in National Tourism Awards

Congratulations to Aikens Lake Wilderness Lodge and Manitoba Homecoming 2010, both finalists in the Tourism Industry Association of Canada's 2011 National Awards for Tourism Excellence.

Aikens Lake Wilderness Lodge, a finalist for the Traveller Experience Award, has risen to meet the changing needs and expectations of its clients. Located on the northeast shore of Aikens Lake, major renovations in the last 10 years have turned this lodge, open since 1948, into a fully-modern luxury destination. This, combined with the world-class service and great fishing, make the "Aikens Experience," one that is sought by sport-fishing enthusiasts around the world.

Manitoba Homecoming 2010 was a finalist for the Campaign of the Year Award. Initiated by Travel Manitoba and Tourism Winnipeg in partnership with the Province of Manitoba, Manitoba Homecoming 2010 was a year-long celebration that brought former and current Manitobans, visitors, family and friends together for events across the province. More than 200,000 people attended over 400 events, generating more than \$30 million in economic activity.

**American Bus Association
Annual Marketplace**

**January 6 – 10,
2012 Grapevine, Texas**

Appointment-based annual marketplace connecting buyers with sellers in the North American group packaged travel industry.

**The Educational Travel Conference
January 18 – 21, 2012 Orlando
Florida**

The only event of the year where group travel suppliers can come face-to-face with more than 250 group travel planners from alumni associations, universities, art and natural history museums, zoos, aquariums, conservation and national non-profit organizations. As well more than 200 group tour operators, suppliers and destinations that serve the growing educational travel market for lifelong learning and affinity travel attend the conference.

Florida RV SuperShow

Jan 11 – 15, 2012 in Tampa, Florida.
More than 1,000 RVs and 450 vendors in attendance at this, the biggest RV show in North America.

**Canadian Tourism Commission
Media Dinner**

January 29 in Seattle, WA

Cocktail reception and dinner with influential US travel media from Washington state. Opportunities for participating partners to meet new media, share story ideas and offer marketing materials.

**Northeast Sales Mission (New York,
New Jersey, Connecticut,
Massachusetts)**

February 6-10 (tentative) 2012

Travel Manitoba will lead a trade sales mission to which will include events and visits in New York City and Boston, along with targeted appointments to the larger tour operators in New England in partnership with featured supplier partners.

California Sales Mission

February 18-24 2012

Travel Manitoba will lead a trade sales mission including targeted events and appointment-based office visits to San Francisco, San Diego and LA areas in partnership with featured supplier partners.

DECEMBER 2011

| Su | Mo | Tu | We | Th | Fr | Sa |
|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 01 | 02 | 03 |
| 04 | 05 | 06 | 07 | 08 | 09 | 10 |
| 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 |
| 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 |
| 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 |

JANUARY 2012

| Su | Mo | Tu | We | Th | Fr | Sa |
|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 07 |
| 08 | 09 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 |
| 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 |
| 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 |
| 29 | 30 | 31 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 |

FEBRUARY 2012

| Su | Mo | Tu | We | Th | Fr | Sa |
|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| 29 | 30 | 31 | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 |
| 05 | 06 | 07 | 08 | 09 | 10 | 11 |
| 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 |
| 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 |
| 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 01 | 02 | 03 |

Tourism Conference and Awards move to Fall in 2012

Mark your calendars – the 14th annual Manitoba Tourism Awards and 2012 Manitoba Tourism Conference will take place in the fall of 2012, rather than the spring. The call for nominations for the next Manitoba Tourism Awards will come in January 2012, with a submission deadline of April 3, 2102. This year marks the addition of a new category: Event of the Year.

MANITOBA VOYAGEUR IS MOVING ONLINE

A lot has changed since we published the first issue of Manitoba Voyageur in the summer of 2006. Its mission was to communicate with tourism industry members, bringing updates on Travel Manitoba initiatives and programs, industry performance and other matters of interest to industry stakeholders.

While a lot has changed, keeping industry members informed will always be one of our greatest roles and responsibilities – and we aren't about to stop.

You've told us you'd like more timely information, and that's what you'll find as we move stories that would typically have appeared in the Voyager to Travel Manitoba's tourism industry website at www.travelmanitoba.com/TI.

The tourism industry site contains articles offering practical advice and is also a great place to share ideas and discuss with other tourism professionals through the forum. You can also sign up to receive the new Travel Currents e-newsletter, offering up-to-date tips as well as new information and tools.



http://www

Don't miss out on any of the important industry news from your colleagues and Travel Manitoba. Sign up today at www.travelmanitoba.com/ti/industrytoolbox

Manitoba
voyageur

Manitoba Voyageur is produced by **Travel Manitoba** to keep industry informed about trends and events affecting the province's tourism industry.

Please send your comments or questions to
Claudine Gervais, Communications Coordinator at:
Travel Manitoba
7th Floor, 155 Carlton Street
Winnipeg, Manitoba R3C 3H8
or by email to: cgervais@travelmanitoba.com