

Tourism Saskatchewan 2014-2015 Annual Report





\$2.12 BILLION
in travel expenditures*

MORE THAN 12.5 MILLION
visits to and within Saskatchewan*

4.6 MILLION
contacts made with potential visitors in 2014-2015

57,000
Saskatchewan residents employed in tourism

*Source: Statistics Canada, 2012 International Travel Survey, Travel Survey of Residents of Canada. Complete expenditures and visitation data for 2013 and 2014 are unavailable at the time of printing.

A scenic view of a lake at sunset. The sky is filled with warm, orange and yellow clouds, reflecting on the calm water. A dense forest of evergreen trees lines the opposite shore. In the foreground, a grassy bank slopes down to the water. A wooden boardwalk or set of steps leads from the grass down to the shoreline. Three people are visible: one person stands near the water's edge, while two others sit on the wooden steps, looking out at the lake.

VISION:

A vibrant entrepreneurial tourism industry offering year-round compelling and memorable Saskatchewan experiences

MISSION:

Connect people with quality Saskatchewan experiences and advance the development of successful tourism operations

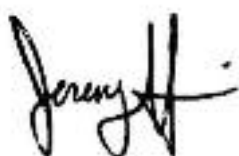
Letter of Transmittal

Her Honour, The Honourable Vaughn Solomon Schofield, S.O.M., S.V.M.
Lieutenant Governor of the Province of Saskatchewan

May it Please Your Honour:

With respect, I submit Tourism Saskatchewan's Annual Report for the fiscal period ending March 31, 2015.

In compliance with *The Tourism Saskatchewan Act*, this document outlines the corporation's business activities and includes audited financial statements.



Jeremy Harrison
Minister Responsible for Tourism Saskatchewan

Introduction

This Annual Report contains information about Tourism Saskatchewan's activities during the past fiscal year (April 1, 2014 to March 31, 2015), along with financial statements for that period.

The purpose of the document is to report to public and elected officials on commitments made and other key accomplishments within the identified fiscal period. It outlines results on committed strategies, actions and performance measures identified in Tourism Saskatchewan's *Strategic Plan 2014-2016*, and denotes progress made on Government commitments, as identified in

Government Direction for 2014-15: *Steady Growth, The Saskatchewan Plan for Growth – Vision 2020 and Beyond*, the funding agreement with the Ministry of the Economy, throne speeches and other statements.

The information contained within demonstrates Tourism Saskatchewan's commitment to effective public-performance reporting, transparency and accountability.

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Cover image: Grasslands National Park

Message from the Minister



As the Minister Responsible for Tourism Saskatchewan, it brings me great pleasure to acknowledge the organization's achievements. The highlights of 2014-2015, reflected on the following pages, summarize a year in which the influence of social media was clearly evident, and the commitment to excellence in customer service and human resources was rewarded. It was a year that placed emphasis on research and gathering ideas, stories and images to inspire the creation of a new marketing direction.

Saskatchewan's tourism resources are vast and breathtaking, captured in the sweeping landscape, majestic living skies, pristine lakes and lush boreal forest. Our tourism assets include an impressive parks system, numerous attractions, along with exciting festivals and events. At the heart of the industry are the people who demonstrate a welcoming and entrepreneurial spirit and make our communities great places to live and visit.

The numbers tell the story of a vibrant tourism sector in Saskatchewan. Annual travel expenditures in the province exceed \$2.1 billion, contributing to our strong, diversified economy. The sector employs nearly 57,000 residents. More than 95 per cent of tourism businesses are small- or medium-sized, independently owned enterprises. These businesses are located in communities throughout the province – urban and rural.

The Government of Saskatchewan recognizes the importance of our province's tourism sector and is committed to tourism growth. This commitment is identified in the *Saskatchewan Plan for Growth* and is evident in investments made in event hosting and in work with partners to market the province as a tourist destination and attract more visitors.

Tourism Saskatchewan's work and accomplishments in 2014-2015, outlined in this document, are commendable.

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jeremy H.'

Jeremy Harrison
Minister Responsible for Tourism Saskatchewan

Alignment with Government's Direction

Tourism Saskatchewan's 2014-2015 Annual Report aligns with Government's Vision and four Goals:

Our Government's Vision

Saskatchewan's vision is to be the best place in Canada – to live, to work, to start a business, to get an education, to raise a family and to build a life.

Government's Goals

1. Sustaining growth and opportunities for Saskatchewan people
2. Meeting the challenges of growth
3. Securing a better quality of life for all Saskatchewan people
4. Delivering responsive and responsible government

Government's Vision and four Goals provide a directional framework for ministries, agencies and third parties. Tourism Saskatchewan's 2014-2015 activities align with these priorities in an effort to achieve greater success in the efficient delivery of Government services.

Together, all ministries and agencies support the achievement of Government's four Goals and work toward a growing and prosperous Saskatchewan.

In 2014-2015, Tourism Saskatchewan supported Government's Goals through the following:

- Developing a strong new tourism marketing direction for Saskatchewan
- Implementing the steps and actions outlined in the *Strategic Plan 2014-2016* to support sector growth and advancement and build awareness of Saskatchewan as a tourism destination
- Executing a highly successful marketing campaign in Saskatchewan and Alberta
- Delivering reputable, high-quality tourism education and training programs to enhance employment opportunities and build a skilled, service-driven tourism workforce
- Delivering an Event Hosting Program that supports a range of events in Saskatchewan communities and attracts national and international showcases, along with special projects that build awareness and visitation
- Building a new and improved consumer website and employing innovative technologies and social media channels to engage consumers and influence their travel choices
- Delivering professional travel counselling and visitor services to address consumer inquiries, promote Saskatchewan hospitality and contribute to positive first impressions and remarkable guest experiences
- Establishing strong communication channels and providing industry with beneficial information, materials and opportunities to enhance business
- Engaging in partnerships with industry stakeholders and Government to maximize resources, align activities and strengthen and expand tourism opportunities
- Developing a comprehensive study and strategy to market outfitted angling in Saskatchewan
- Facilitating discussion of tourism expansion and sustainable lakefront development around Lake Diefenbaker

Message from the Chair



The 2014-2015 fiscal year marked the second cycle of work and activities aligned with the priorities identified in the *Strategic Plan 2014-2016*, and guided by the following statements:

- Tourism Saskatchewan's Vision – *A vibrant entrepreneurial tourism industry offering year-round compelling and memorable Saskatchewan experiences.*
- Tourism Saskatchewan's Mission – *Connect people with quality Saskatchewan experiences and*

advance the development of successful tourism operations.

The role of the Board of Directors is to provide broad policy direction to Tourism Saskatchewan and to ensure sound management of the affairs and business of the Treasury Board Crown Corporation. The pages of this Annual Report affirm that business and affairs are in order. The document also provides an overview of the challenging schedule of activities and broad range of projects and services managed by Tourism Saskatchewan.

Early in 2014-2015, the Board of Directors began a search for a new Chief Executive Officer. At mid-year, I had the pleasure of announcing that we had made our choice – Mary Taylor-Ash, who had been serving as Interim CEO, was the successful candidate. Mary initially joined Tourism Saskatchewan in the spring of 2013. She embraced her role as Executive Director of Marketing and Communications with passion and exuberance, and infused new energy into the organization. Her vision and enthusiasm are inspiring, and she has a leadership style that is motivating and that achieves results. Additionally, she has over two decades of experience in private, not-for-profit and public sectors of the tourism industries.

My Board colleagues and I value the opportunity to serve Tourism Saskatchewan and work with a talented Executive Leadership Team who, along with staff in Regina, Saskatoon and four field offices, illustrate the

organization's values through their daily work. The outcomes of their efforts and dedication are reflected in the contents of this document, which highlights progress in relation to strategic priorities.

The planning and development of a new marketing direction required a concentrated effort to merge all of the intricate pieces and communicate, in 60-second television commercials, stories that capture the essence of this province – the commanding landscape, magnificent skies and welcoming community spirit. Witnessing the process, from research to preliminary design to adding the finishing touches, was an enriching experience.

Advancement on key initiatives such as the Event Hosting Program provide evidence that the priorities and key actions are on track with leading the province's tourism sector along a route toward industry growth and greater understanding and interest in making Saskatchewan an inviting destination.

Growth in the *Employer of Choice* program points to stellar work in delivering education and training programs, as well as to leadership among the industry that demonstrates a commitment to best practices and to investing in human resources.

The following pages affirm Tourism Saskatchewan's delivery on its sweeping mandate that addresses tourism marketing, visitor services, industry development, education and training and event hosting. In addition to featuring operational highlights, this document reports another period of sound financial management. The organization has every reason to be proud of its accomplishments in 2014-2015 and confident about the future.

Norm Beug
Chair, Board of Directors

Board of Directors



Left to right: Norm Beug, Lionel Tootoosis, Cory Rideout, Irene Seiferling, Sandra LeBarre, Brian Simpson. Missing: Dana Soonias

Tourism Saskatchewan is led by a seven-member Board of Directors appointed by Government. As a skills-based board, members bring solid business knowledge and experience to their role in providing broad policy direction to the Treasury Board Crown Corporation.

The Board has established three committees to address specific areas of responsibility:

- Audit Committee
- Governance Committee
- Human Resource Committee

Tourism Saskatchewan acknowledges the following individuals for their commitment to serving on the Board of Directors:

- Norm Beug, Chair
- Brian Simpson, Vice-Chair
- Sandra LeBarre
- Cory Rideout
- Irene Seiferling
- Dana Soonias
- Lionel Tootoosis

Message from the CEO



I have spent half my life working in tourism, starting out on the frontlines of the accommodations industry, which led to an opportunity to gain experience in training, education and human resources. From there, I moved into marketing, product development and research while working with the Ministry of Tourism in Newfoundland and Labrador. Looking back, I see that the knowledge and experience gained along the way helped prepare me for what was to next come – relocating three-quarters

of the way across Canada to head the Marketing and Communications division at Tourism Saskatchewan in 2013 and, one year later, embracing the challenge of leading the organization as Chief Executive Officer. I consider it a privilege to work with such a great team of colleagues and with a dedicated Board of Directors.

I arrived at Tourism Saskatchewan just in time to play a role in the strategic planning process and help plot a course for advancing the industry and positioning the province more competitively as a travel destination. The comprehensive plan that was crafted identifies three strategic priorities: 1) Marketing Saskatchewan Experiences; 2) Developing Saskatchewan Experiences; and 3) Fostering Operational Excellence. With this framework in place, all work has a clear purpose and focus, and is aimed at delivering results.

In some ways, the past fiscal year reminds me of a puzzle – one that seems, at first, intimidating because there are so many pieces. Trying to see the big picture too soon can slow the process, and there is often beauty in discovering stories and meaning in the smaller elements. When those pieces begin to fit together, something wonderful happens.

An ambitious project for us, one identified as a key action in the *Strategic Plan 2014-2015*, was the creation of a new marketing direction. During the research phase, consumers shared their stories about Saskatchewan – what it is that takes hold in their hearts and why this place is so unique and special. Those stories inform the big picture – a multi-year campaign inspired by the striking characteristics of this province – the panoramic landscape and dramatic skies above; wide-open spaces and a feeling like you have all the time in the world; the warm, welcoming sense of community – that Saskatchewan is “home” to everyone.

This project had a number of complex parts that required attention. A complete makeover of Tourism Saskatchewan’s website brought this important resource in line with the campaign themes and made it more user-friendly. Research was another critical component, and will continue to be as we monitor the success of phase one of the campaign in 2015 and plan to tell more stories of this great province.

It is obvious, from the points outlined on the pages ahead, that this was a busy and eventful year and that Tourism Saskatchewan has a team of professionals who are passionate about tourism, who care about this province and are committed to working collaboratively with industry, stakeholders and partners.

Mary Taylor-Ash
CEO

Tourism Saskatchewan

Tourism Saskatchewan promotes the province as a tourism destination by providing in-province and out-of-province marketing and visitor services. Tourism Saskatchewan assists industry to market and develop quality tourism products through co-operative marketing, education and training and event funding programs.

Tourism Saskatchewan was established pursuant to *The Tourism Saskatchewan Act* proclaimed on July 1, 2012. A Treasury Board Crown Corporation within the meaning of *The Crown Corporations Act, 1993*, Tourism Saskatchewan is a continuation of the Saskatchewan Tourism Authority, created under *The Tourism Authority Act, 1994*.

The corporation's mandated purposes are:

- a) To market Saskatchewan as a tourism destination in domestic, national and international markets
- b) To assist Saskatchewan's tourism industry operators to market their products
- c) To develop and promote the quality of tourism products and services in Saskatchewan
- d) To provide visitor information services
- e) To undertake any other activities or functions assigned by the Lieutenant Governor in Council

Responsibility for Tourism Saskatchewan is jointly assigned to the Minister of the Economy and the Minister Responsible for Tourism Saskatchewan. On June 5, 2014, the Honourable Jeremy Harrison was assigned this portfolio.

Tourism Saskatchewan's Board of Directors undertook a search for a new CEO following the departure of Pat Fiocco, who held the position from December 2012 until May 30, 2014. Mary Taylor-Ash, who joined Tourism Saskatchewan in the spring of 2013 as Executive Director of Marketing and Communications, was named Interim CEO. A comprehensive search process was conducted and on October 17, 2014, Board Chair Norm Beug announced to industry that Taylor-Ash was chosen to lead the organization as CEO.

Taylor-Ash was pivotal to the 2013 strategic planning process that involved widespread industry consultation and identified clear priorities and a direct course of action. Under her leadership, work continues to build on the organization's solid foundation and steer the organization toward fulfilling its goals. Activities and projects align with the Vision, Mission, Corporate Values and Guiding Principles.

Vision: A vibrant entrepreneurial tourism industry offering year-round compelling and memorable Saskatchewan experiences

Mission: Connect people with quality Saskatchewan experiences and advance the development of successful tourism operations:

Corporate Values

- Nurture a vibrant and creative organization dedicated to serving the industry and the visitor
- Empower each other and our stakeholders to be innovative and to take risks
- Work collaboratively to build effective, respectful relationships and an inclusive approach for the purpose of delivering excellent results

Guiding Principles:

- Alignment – align our activities, internally and with stakeholders
- Collaboration – collaborate for the mutual benefit of the organization and our stakeholders
- Market-driven – ensure initiatives are market-driven
- Accountable – to industry, public taxpayers and Government

Tourism Saskatchewan's *Strategic Plan 2014-2016* identifies three Strategic Priorities:

- Marketing Saskatchewan Experiences
- Developing Saskatchewan Experiences
- Fostering Operational Excellence

With this solid framework in place, focus and attention are directed at key markets supported by research, and on projects and activities that will advance the province's tourism sector and stimulate economic growth.

Organizational Structure

Executive Office

Tourism Saskatchewan's Executive Office is responsible for the framework and day-to-day oversight of all operational activities and serves as the main interface between the corporation, its Board of Directors and Government. Through the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), the department leads Tourism Saskatchewan in the delivery of its mandate and vision, manages Government and community relations, nurtures stakeholder and industry partnerships and oversees the strategic plan and tactical operations. Additionally, Executive Office provides administrative support to the Board of Directors.

Marketing and Communications

Tourism Saskatchewan's Marketing and Communications division is responsible for campaigns and initiatives that promote Saskatchewan tourism experiences and generate visitation to and within the province. With staff in Regina and four field offices across Saskatchewan, the team works closely with industry, providing operators with opportunities to market their products. These professionals also manage industry and corporate communications, participate in research to determine high-impact target markets that produce the greatest return for the province's tourism operators and deliver professional travel counselling through Tourism Saskatchewan's Regina headquarters and two Visitor Reception Centres. Marketing and Communication's departments include:

- Markets, Advertising and Media
- Communications
- Online Marketing
- Field Operations
- Visitor Services

Industry and Community Development

Tourism Saskatchewan's Industry and Community Development division supports efforts to attract national and international events to the province and manages sponsorships that assist communities with event hosting. The division is responsible for tourism education and training, along with quality assurance, to enhance service standards and address the challenges of a competitive labour market. With staff in both the Regina and Saskatoon offices, the team assists destination areas and communities in developing and coordinating tourism assets to enrich the quality of experiences. Industry and Community Development's departments include:

- Events
- Saskatchewan Tourism Education Council (STEC)
- Industry Development
- Quality Assurance

Corporate Services

Tourism Saskatchewan's Corporate Services division is responsible for providing leadership and coordination in the areas of strategic planning and monitoring, financial services, enterprise risk management, legislative compliance and contract management. The division strives to provide excellent internal customer service that enables the corporation to deliver efficient and effective programs and services and connect with industry and stakeholders. Additionally, it manages human resources, oversees technological support functions and is responsible for research, information collection, access and privacy and records management. Corporate Service's departments include:

- Finance and Administration
- eBusiness and Technology
- Human Resources
- Planning and Research

Saskatchewan's Tourism Sector



Batoche National Historic Site

As a four-season destination, Saskatchewan offers great diversity in travel experiences. Year-round, communities throughout the province – large and small, urban and rural – host festivals and events that showcase talent, culture, athleticism and the remarkable brand of hospitality for which Saskatchewan is known.

Tourism is an important player in the Saskatchewan economy, generating more than \$2.12 billion in travel expenditures annually.* More than 12.5 million visits are made to and within the province each year. According to data collected by Statistics Canada in 2012, Saskatchewan residents account for 71 per cent of overnight or longer visits and 55 per cent of expenditures. Other Canadians account for 25 per cent of overnight or longer visits and 32 per cent of expenditures, while international visitors, from the United States and overseas, are responsible for 4 per cent of overnight or longer visits and 13 per cent of expenditures.

Although complete expenditures and visitation data for 2013 and 2014 were not available at the time of printing, preliminary figures indicated that tourism in the province maintained growth of 4 per cent, significantly higher than inflation.

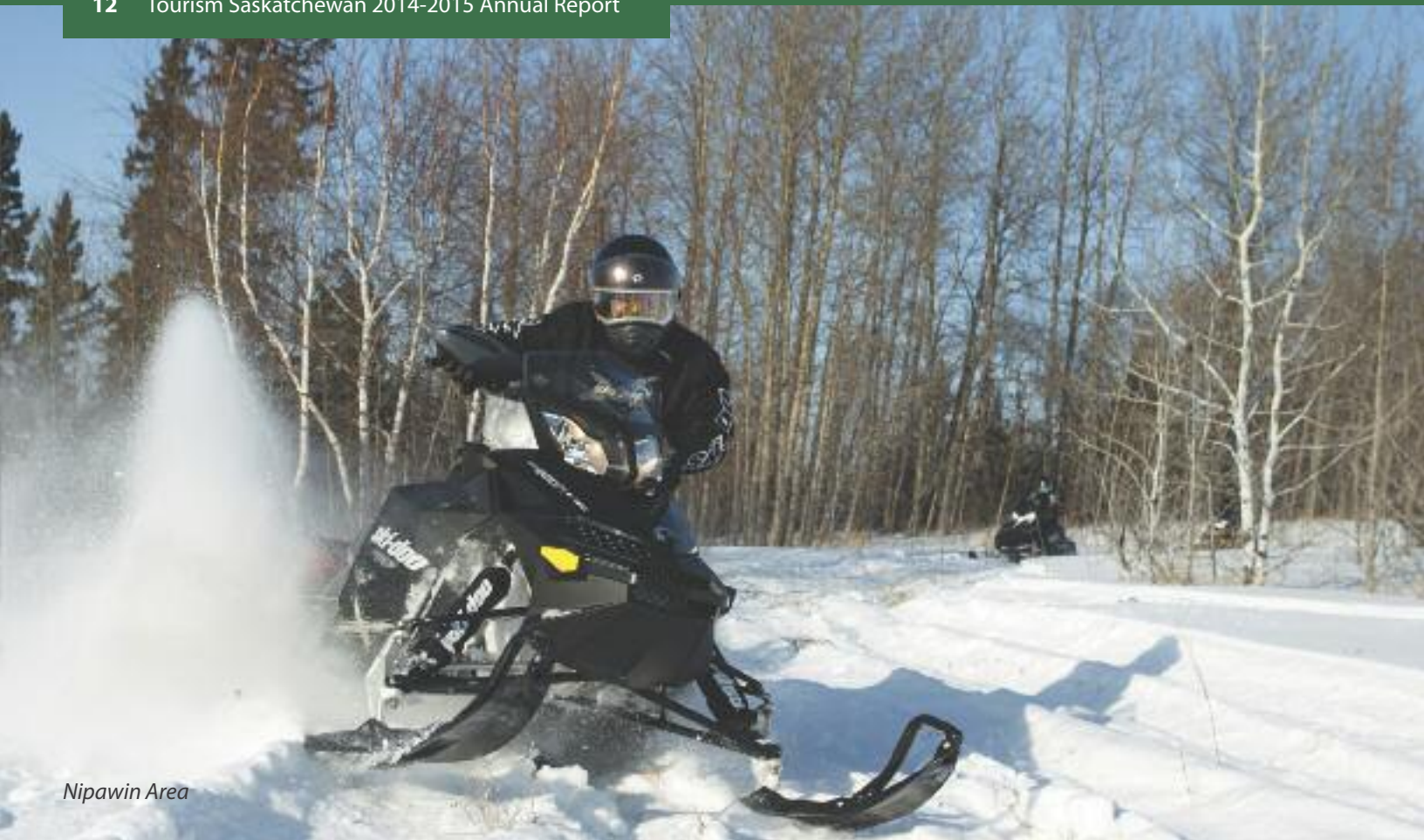
After several years of maintaining occupancy levels higher than most provinces (except Newfoundland), Saskatchewan saw a decline to the national average of 54-57 per cent in late 2014 through early 2015. Consequently, there was also a decline in REVPAR (revenue per available room) during this period. Over the past five years, there has been substantial growth in the number of new hotel properties in Saskatchewan, which factors in the occupancy rate.

*Source: Statistics Canada, 2012 International Travel Survey, Travel Survey of Residents of Canada. Complete expenditures and visitation data for 2013 and 2014 are unavailable at the time of printing.

Enhancing Communities through Employment and Opportunities

Tourism is a sector of five industries:

- Accommodation;
- Food and Beverage;
- Recreation and Entertainment;
- Transportation; and
- Travel Services.



Nipawin Area

Virtually all other areas of business or commerce are influenced by activities in tourism.

A vibrant tourism sector, one committed to product and service excellence, reflects a positive image for a destination and contributes to the success of other businesses.

Saskatchewan has approximately 3,400 tourism-related businesses that provide full- and part-time employment to 57,000 citizens, 10 per cent of the working population. There are twice as many people employed in tourism-related jobs than in the mining and oil and gas sectors combined.

Saskatchewan's tourism sector is 95 per cent small- or medium-sized businesses, with a large segment of those located outside of the province's two major cities. Seventy-nine per cent of tourism businesses and events are situated in communities other than Regina and Saskatoon, and 51 per cent of tourism-related employment is in these areas.

Tourism Benefits Quality of Life

A strong, healthy tourism sector benefits Saskatchewan citizens on many levels. It contributes to the quality of life through public investments in infrastructure, transportation, provincial and regional parks, cultural activities, attractions, events, recreational facilities and other areas.

Tourism is a valuable source of tax revenue for all levels of government. In 2012, tourism in Saskatchewan generated \$579 million in taxes on tourism wages and expenditures.

Federal taxes	\$280 million
Provincial taxes	\$264 million
Municipal taxes	\$34.5 million

Total	\$579 million
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Tourism is an important export industry. Export revenue for 2012 totalled \$576.6 million. This is new money coming into the province, staying in the province, and benefitting cities and towns, municipalities, communities and the people who live and work in Saskatchewan.

PROGRESS IN 2014-2015



STRATEGIC PRIORITY: MARKETING SASKATCHEWAN EXPERIENCES



Grasslands National Park

Key Action:

Create and implement a strong tourism identity for Saskatchewan that instils pride in residents and resonates with visitors

Results:

- A major focus for Tourism Saskatchewan in 2014-2015 was on developing a new tourism marketing direction and establishing a foundation for a compelling, multi-year promotional campaign. The effort required input from all departments and involved working closely with advertising and research agencies of record, Phoenix Group and Insightrix. Extensive consumer research was undertaken and included surveys and focus groups in Saskatchewan and Alberta. Participants shared their impressions of the province and provided insight into some of the special features and experiences that have a profound effect on people, contribute to meaningful memories and inspire them to visit.

From the stories and information gathered during the research phase, the following brand pillars were identified: land and sky; time and space; and community. Creative components focus on the emotional connection formed.

Two new, 60-second TV commercials were produced for the 2015 campaign and accompanying marketing initiatives, as well as online activities and print advertising. The new commercials are designed to drive visitation to and within the province and instil a sense of pride among residents.

The first commercial, filmed in Grasslands National Park, showcases the landscape and night sky – Canada's darkest Dark Sky Preserve – and the wonder and awe that it inspires. The second commercial promotes Saskatchewan's warm sense of community and welcoming hospitality. The sharing of a community meal and the inviting atmosphere portrayed in the commercial highlight the welcoming character of our people.

Production costs totalling \$535,000 for the two commercials were incurred in 2014-2015. The next commercials in the multi-year series will be filmed in 2015 and will feature different locations, to further explore chapters in the Saskatchewan story and highlight unique attributes and experiences that the province truly owns.

- Tourism Saskatchewan's consumer website, TourismSaskatchewan.com, underwent a complete redesign and redevelopment to reflect the fresh new look of the campaign and better meet the needs and expectations of consumers. New features offer ease and convenience and ensure that consumers have an engaging experience regardless of the device they are using – desktop computer, tablet or mobile phone. Strong integration with the industry database and Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system provides quick access to tourism operator information and offerings.
- Market research projects in 2014-2015 included post-advertising surveys in Saskatchewan and Alberta, which provided overviews of camping and fishing markets in these provinces. The surveys also yielded preliminary data on the use of mobile devices and tablets during advance trip planning and as a part of decision making while visitors and residents are travelling the province.

Key Action:

Generate excitement about Saskatchewan's tourism experiences in key markets to increase awareness, visitation and expenditures through the following tactics:

- Review geographic and product/experience markets to identify and prioritize key markets
- Develop a market readiness program
- Develop a comprehensive market plan that is in full alignment with the tourism identity

Results:

- More refined targeting has increased the ratio of viewers who have contacted Tourism Saskatchewan after seeing a message or advertisement encouraging travel to the province. In 2014-2015, messages about tourism opportunities in Saskatchewan were viewed **362 MILLION** times by visitors and potential visitors, targeted through online advertising, social media, consumer and trade shows, television, magazine and newspaper advertising, billboards, radio and publicity generated through travel media, both traditional and online.

Consumer contacts numbered **4.6 MILLION**, an increase of 28 per cent over figures for 2013-2014. These contacts were made via social media (*Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest*), website visits, live chat, telephone, in-person and through Tourism Saskatchewan's travel literature series (print and online).

The return on every dollar invested in advertising is \$40 in visitor spending.

- Paid advertising initiatives, involving a mix of television, online and co-operative print advertisements, targeted residents of Saskatchewan and Alberta, and anglers and hunters in select markets in the United States.

Television spots aired in Saskatchewan and Alberta from mid-April to mid-July. The target audience was 35-54 in age, with a slight male skew (54 per cent) and a household income of over \$75,000. Over the course of the campaign, more than **37 MILLION** impressions were generated. In Alberta, 314 television spots generated eight million impressions. In Saskatchewan, 1,338 30-second spots resulted in nearly five million impressions. The supporting online campaign generated **24 MILLION** impressions and over 47,000 click-throughs to TourismSaskatchewan.com.

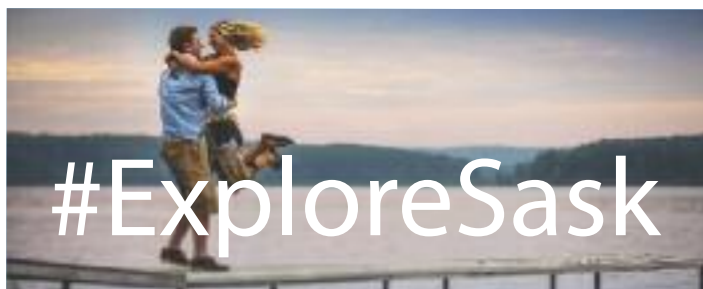
Print advertising initiatives in Saskatchewan and Alberta supported 138 industry partners, whose investment totalled \$116,210. A 10-page advertorial in *Westworld Saskatchewan* and an eight-page initiative in *Westworld Alberta* reached approximately 700,000 households. Other co-op initiatives included *Destination Saskatchewan*, *WestJet UPI*, *Prairies North Magazine*, *SNORIDERS* and *Yellowhead IT*.

In the United States, a combination of print and online advertising, with a small amount of advertising on outdoor television shows, targeted anglers and hunters. The U.S. campaign generated over 23 million impressions. Co-op ads in *In-Fisherman Magazine*, *Bear Hunters Online Magazine*, *North American Whitetail Magazine* and *Wildfowl Magazine* reached a combined circulation of 433,000 subscribers. Each double-page ad carried a chart of fishing or hunting outfitters matched to the experience. The two-page fishing ad was also published in two Alberta publications: *Alberta Outdoorsmen Magazine* and the 2014-2015 *Alberta Guide to Sportfishing Regulations*, with a total circulation of over 300,000. Outfitter charts accompanying the ads carried 100 outfitter listings.

- In 2014-2015, Visitor Services responded to approximately 86,253 inquiries via telephone, live chat, email, direct email, website visits and in-person. This was a 4.9 per cent increase over the previous year, largely due to the extension of the operating season at the Maple Creek and Fleming Visitor Reception Centres (VRCs). The two locations were open from the beginning of May until Thanksgiving and saw 28,508 and 28,831 visitors respectively, 30.6 per cent more than in 2013.

Almost 337,000 pieces of travel literature were distributed to consumers through a variety of qualified, tourism-related third-parties.





- Social media engagement and activities (via Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest, Twitter, YouTube, Tumblr and Google+) continue to prove successful in broadening awareness and influencing travel plans. Concentrated focus on increasing activities, creating quality, compelling content and delivering appealing, dedicated campaigns to engage consumers helped to expand numbers from a combined 61,000 followers in 2013-2014 to more than 108,000 in 2014-2015. Total organic social engagement actions went from 619,000 to more than 1.5 million. Tourism Saskatchewan continued to promote and lead curation of the hashtag #ExploreSask across multiple channels, encouraging the creation and sharing of great Saskatchewan content. At the end of the fiscal year, more than 28,000 images were tagged with #ExploreSask on Instagram alone, and thousands more on Twitter.

Through a partnership with the Saskatchewan Roughriders, a joint social media-based contest attracted interest during the 2014 Canadian Football League season. The 2014 *Bucket List Giveaway Contest* ran during the second half of the season and enticed football fans across Canada. The grand prize was a trip for two, in 2015, to Regina to experience Saskatchewan hospitality and see the team of their choice play the Riders at Mosaic Stadium. The winners also received two season tickets for their home team. Over 8,600 entries were received, and the majority of contestants opted to subscribe to *SaskSecrets*, Tourism Saskatchewan's consumer e-newsletter.

During the filming of *Corner Gas: The Movie* in 2014, Tourism Saskatchewan was involved in social media initiatives that connected with fans of the popular television series and brought profile to the movie and to the province. Promotional activities included the takeover of Tourism Saskatchewan's Twitter account @Saskatchewan by the originator of the series and star of the film Brent Butt.

- Tourism Saskatchewan hosted its first Instameets in Saskatoon and Waskesiu in September 2014. As the name suggests, Instameets are gatherings of active *Instagram* users. In addition to engaging the Instagram community and encouraging them to use #ExploreSask, Tourism Saskatchewan scheduled content collection trips in several areas of the province, during which images and videos were gathered and shared across social media channels. Material collected also informed stories in the monthly consumer e-newsletter *SaskSecrets*, which has 26,000 subscribers. Overall, organic and strategic paid social media initiatives accounted for over **56 MILLION** impressions and over **2.2 MILLION** consumer engagements.
- Tourism Saskatchewan's travel guides are core marketing pieces for the organization and the sector. The *Saskatchewan Discovery Guide* is a comprehensive travel publication filled with information about communities, events, attractions, parks, history, culture, accommodations, campgrounds, suggested itineraries, opportunities for adventure and recreation, and more. The *Saskatchewan Fishing & Hunting Guide* includes feature stories and articles on operators, individuals and topics of keen interest to U.S. and Canadian hunters and anglers. The annual golf-specific guide, *The Perfect Drive*, did not generate enough consumer interest or a sufficient return on investment to justify its production and was, therefore, discontinued. Golf course operators were notified and provided an opportunity to list their businesses in the *Saskatchewan Discovery Guide* within their respective cities, towns or geographic area. In 2014, all 150,000 copies of the *Saskatchewan Discovery Guide* were distributed to residents, visitors and potential visitors.
- A comprehensive review of the market in the United States for Saskatchewan outfitted fishing experiences was conducted by Southwick Associates, who worked closely with Tourism Saskatchewan and with the Ministry of Environment. Research included surveys of U.S. anglers who come to Saskatchewan to fish and of U.S. anglers who, although they may travel to enjoy the sport, have never visited the province. The project also examined the fishing market landscape in the U.S. and provided information on demographics and lifestyles, and identified concentrations that could be targets for promoting Saskatchewan's fishing outfitters, trophy-sized

catches and the world-class fishing experiences available here. The report submitted by Southwick Associates provides fundamental data and recommendations that will inform a three-year marketing plan.

- An in-house study of hunters from the United States was conducted, based on general information provided by the Ministry of Environment – state of origin, gender, age and species. Data analysis that has enabled clearer understanding of the market, and will inform efforts to promote Saskatchewan hunting adventures and experiences to American hunters. Of particular interest is the different geographic markets determined for hunting white tail deer versus waterfowl/bird or black bear.
- Tourism Saskatchewan supported a combined media trip to Cree River Lodge that was organized by Cabela's. The trip was the subject of articles in *Field & Stream* and *American Angler*, and received profile on the television show *Hook Shots*. In addition to the partnerships forged, this collaborative effort resulted in nearly two million impressions, and exposure valued at more than \$160,000 in advertising.
- Attendance at three key marketplaces – Canada Media Marketplace, Travel Media Association of Canada Marketplace Conference and GoMedia Canada Marketplace – provided opportunities to “sell” Saskatchewan to travel media. Individual contact was made with 156 representatives. Prior to the GoMedia Canada Marketplace, Tourism Saskatchewan hosted media from Canada.com and *Westworld Magazine*, as well as an editor from *Food and Travel Mexico*. They were introduced to Saskatoon's culinary scene and toured parts of Prince Albert National Park on horseback, in search of Plains bison.
- Informational workshops were hosted in Nipawin and Waskesiu and provided operators with knowledge about Tourism Saskatchewan's travel media and travel trade programs. Presentations included an overview of key markets and current trends, and highlighted recent marketing initiatives. The sessions explained the basics of working with travel trade and travel media and offered operators advice on promoting their business through these channels.



- In July 2014, Tourism Saskatchewan hosted a diverse group of five media representatives from the United Kingdom on an extensive FAM that took them on a road trip of more than 1,000 kilometres – from Missinipe to Regina, with several stops along the way. They enjoyed fishing in northern Saskatchewan, culinary delights in Saskatoon, horseback riding at La Reata Ranch in the south and bootcamp at the RCMP Academy, “Depot” Division, in Regina. Articles appeared in seven UK daily newspapers and in *JetWings*, *Irish Tatler Man*, and *The Huffington Post*. The trip was the subject of three UK-based travel blogs, one of which was posted in *World Travel Guide* and was a finalist in the *British Travel Media Awards of Excellence*. A combined circulation of over 5 million resulted from all articles.
- Tourism Saskatchewan represented the province at five key travel trade marketplaces in the United States, Canada and Germany. Staff training with four Canadian Receptive Tour Operators was scheduled and partnerships were formed with six Tour Operators on co-operative marketing projects. Through these and other initiatives, 493 contacts were made with the travel trade.



Travel Media Hosting

SASKATCHEWAN STORIES MAKE HEADLINES

- *The Social Traveler*: Bjorn Troch, from Belgium, has three passions – people, travel and social media. His “Social Around the World” travel project brought him to Canada, which he crossed in a 1978 Volkswagen van and with the help of friends he met along the way and through social media channels. Travelling through Saskatchewan, he stopped in Saskatoon, Waskesiu and Cypress Hills. His adventures are shared across social platforms and on his website TheSocialTraveler.com.
- *Snow Goer Magazine*: In the September 2014 issue, an article by Craig Nicholson, titled “Uniquely Saskatchewan,” brought attention to snowmobiling in east central Saskatchewan, where the diverse landscape and abundance of wildlife contribute to the area’s reputation as a premier snowmobiling destination.
- *ToqueandCanoe.com*: In August 2014, renowned Canadian poet Lorna Crozier returned to her home province to rediscover the beauty of southern Saskatchewan, exploring Grasslands National Park, the Big Muddy Badlands and Castle Butte, and riding the rails along the Southern Prairie Railway. Crozier shares her experiences at Grasslands National Park in “Exploring Light’s Birthplace,” featured on ToqueandCanoe.com. The story is complemented by alluring images captured by photographer Lori Andrews.

- A new travel trade co-operative program was introduced in 2014, which provided support for industry partners attending Rendez-vous Canada, the Canadian Tourism Commission’s global marketplace that was held in Vancouver. In total, 97 partners participated in travel trade initiatives last year.

Eighteen buyers representing key travel trade markets, Germany, Canada and the United States, were hosted by Tourism Saskatchewan at a dinner held during Rendez-vous Canada. The evening provided an opportunity for Tourism Saskatchewan and industry partners – Tourism Saskatoon, Tourism Regina, Waskesiu & Area Wilderness Region, Canada Nature Escapes, the RCMP Heritage Centre and Elk Ridge Resort – to introduce these buyers to Saskatchewan experiences and products. A notable result of this initiative was the addition of the Athabasca Sand Dunes to the product listing of German tour operator Diamir Erlebnisreisen.

Following Rendez-vous Canada, travel trade representatives from Germany were hosted on a FAM tour that took them to Saskatoon, Waskesiu & Area Wilderness region, Spiritwood, Battlefords Provincial Park and North Battleford. Two delegations of travel trade from the United Kingdom were treated to Saskatchewan hospitality and experiences during FAM tours in July and August. Interest in ranch vacations determined the focus and itinerary of one of the UK tours, which took guests on a seven-day adventure through southern Saskatchewan.

- Tourism Saskatchewan engaged in a partnership with German tour operator SK Touristik and Deuter Sport, a high-end German brand of backpacks and sport bags for hiking, trekking, snow sports and other activities. This was the largest consumer promotion, to date, aimed at the German market, and resulted in 800,000 consumer impressions and confirmation of a 10-day visit to the province by a media representative, Deuter Sport representative and six consumers from Germany, scheduled for 2015.

Key Action:

- Lead and engage tourism stakeholders to promote alignment in marketing strategies

Results:

- Tourism Saskatchewan provides cost-shared assistance for tourism operators to participate in a co-ordinated provincial advertising campaign. This investment supports partnered activities that promote a tourism attraction, event or experience. Components include outdoor, online, radio, television and print advertising. The 2014-2015 Saskatchewan Campaign was supported by 122 participants, 21 per cent more than the previous year. These industry partners invested \$581,000 of their own marketing dollars, an increase of \$278,000 over 2013. Dollars were matched by Tourism Saskatchewan for a campaign budget of over \$1,162,000. More than 74,000,000 impressions were generated.

For the third consecutive year, Tourism Saskatchewan partnered with PostMedia to place full-page, full-colour advertorials in spring/early summer issues of *The StarPhoenix* and *Leader-Post*. Five placements were featured in 2014 on select Saturdays in May, June and July, and received online exposure via PostMedia websites. Topics included: festivals and events, parks, rural hotspots and destination areas. Camera-ready copy and graphic design were supplied by Tourism Saskatchewan for placement. The advertorials provided tourism businesses and organizations the opportunity to purchase half-price advertisements in the placement(s) of their choice and gain access to an estimated one million consumer impressions.

An online component involved *Google Adwords*, *Facebook* and *Twitter* advertising. Twenty-three businesses participated in this initiative that involved consultation, followed by ad design, creation and execution. Results reported over 15 million ad impressions and almost 47,000 click-throughs to operator listings or packages on TourismSaskatchewan.com.



- Through the established consumer marketplace co-operative opportunities, Tourism Saskatchewan supported 73 industry partners to attend 15 shows, an increase of three supported shows over the previous year. Total partner investment was \$157,600. More than 54,000 contacts were made and over 396,000 impressions generated. Tourism Saskatchewan had a booth presence at 10 trade shows, which included five in Alberta, two in Saskatchewan and three fish/hunt shows in the United States. Twenty-one industry partners received support to attend 16 shows through an application-based program. Partner investment was almost \$69,000 – an increase of 133 per cent over operator participation last year.
- Colorado is a key target market for promoting Saskatchewan fishing and hunting experiences. Prior to the Denver International Sportsmen's Exposition in January 2015, Tourism Saskatchewan hosted an event for 25 local media who were provided with information about travel in Saskatchewan. As well, they were introduced to representatives of the Saskatchewan Outfitters Association who were attending the marketplace. To date, three media trips have been planned. Tourism Saskatchewan was a major show sponsor, which increased exposure for the province and for Saskatchewan outfitters.



2014 ExploreSask Photo Contest Honourable Mention, Saskatoon

SASKATCHEWAN TOURISM WEEK

Tourism Saskatchewan led the celebration of *Saskatchewan Tourism Week*, June 15-21, which coincided with *Tourism Week in Canada*. More than 40 events were held in communities across the province to celebrate this important week for the industry. Tourism Saskatchewan's annual photo contest was refreshed, retitled and launched as part of *Saskatchewan Tourism Week* activities. Province-wide media coverage during the week – radio trivia contests, newspaper ads and inserts, news releases and interviews – brought profile to the sector and its contribution to the province's economy, image and quality of life.

In collaboration with the Tourism Industry Association of Canada (TIAC) and the Canadian Tourism Commission (CTC), an open forum on the state of Canada's tourism industry was hosted in Saskatoon. More than 70 tourism operators and stakeholders from across the province participated in the town hall-style meeting, which garnered attention from media and contributed to the 46 articles and news stories related to *Saskatchewan Tourism Week*.

The *ExploreSask Photo Contest*, which ran June 15-September 30, received 1,400 entries in the seven award categories. Tourism Saskatchewan's 2015 *Land of Living Skies Calendar* featured, exclusively, 12 images that were submitted to the contest.

- 2014 marked the third and final year of the project supported by Western Economic Diversification Canada to promote Saskatchewan as a destination for business and leisure travel and with a goal to attract direct international air service. Tourism Saskatchewan, along with partners – the Regina Airport Authority, Saskatoon Airport Authority, Tourism Regina and Tourism Saskatoon – attended the 20th annual World Routes Development Forum in Chicago. In addition to a series of meetings, briefings and sessions with airlines, the Saskatchewan delegation hosted a booth on the marketplace floor, which provided higher profile for the province. Going forward, the five partners will continue to work together on air service development.
- Tourism Saskatchewan was involved in consultations undertaken by the Canadian Tourism Commission (CTC) regarding changes to the *Canadian Signature Experiences (CSE)* collection. The program is now co-managed by the CTC and Provincial and Territorial Marketing Organizations. Tourism Saskatchewan assumed more responsibility for managing the application process and now serves as the first point of contact for Saskatchewan operators interested in pursuing CSE designation.
- In partnership with the CTC, Tourism Saskatchewan participated in a social media and in-market promotion with influential tour operator, Black Tomato, based in the United Kingdom. Black Tomato sent a photographer and a blogger to Saskatchewan. While visiting La Reata Ranch they discovered their own inner cowboy, and shared their experience through blog posts and contesting. La Reata Ranch participated in a 12-part postcard campaign distributed to 10,000 consumers.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY: DEVELOPING SASKATCHEWAN EXPERIENCES

Key Action:

Champion industry excellence to build unique and memorable Saskatchewan experiences through developing and implementing the following:

- Quality Experience Strategy
- Tourism Human Resource Strategy
- Major Event Hosting Strategy

Results:

- Work began on the development of a Saskatchewan Experience Strategy, which will guide future experiential tourism development projects. Research examined programs in other jurisdictions. Approaches to engaging industry, particularly Destination Areas and Destination Marketing Organizations, in experiential tourism were explored.

• TRAINING RECORD SET

The Saskatchewan Tourism Education Council (STEC) delivered industry training and skill development products to **5,008** participants in 2014-2015, for growth of **25 per cent** over the previous year. This new figure establishes a record of delivering STEC training to approximately one out of every 10 people employed in tourism in Saskatchewan.

- **4,683** in online training and workshops, including *Service Best*, *Service Best Management*, *Service Best for Teachers*, *Selling is Service*, *Showing We Care*, *Serve It Right Saskatchewan*, *SIRS Awareness*, and *Workplace Hazard Materials Information System*;
- **325** trained in recruitment programs, such as *Ready to Work*

This training represents **2,569** training products sold, with training provided to a total of **221** communities.



Ready to Work (RTW) is a career awareness, skills development and transition to employment program, delivered by the Saskatchewan Tourism Education Council (STEC), that assists individuals in finding long term, rewarding careers in the tourism and hospitality sector. Projects were held in twelve Saskatchewan communities in 2014-2015:

- Birch Narrows
- Deschambault Lake
- Kahkewistahaw First Nation
- La Loche
- Lloydminster
- Meadow Lake (3 projects)
- Montreal Lake First Nation
- Pinehouse
- Regina (2 projects)
- Sandy Bay
- Saskatoon
- Waterhen Lake

More than 300 individuals participated in *Ready to Work*, with 75 per cent obtaining employment or returning to school. In addition to the delivery of projects in communities across the province, STEC made presentations about the program to more than 600 people from 50 Saskatchewan First Nations.



Waskesiu Nature Centre

- The *Canadian Academy of Travel and Tourism (CATT)* program, which introduces and promotes tourism careers to high school students, is coordinated in Saskatchewan by STEC. Eight high schools in the province deliver *CATT* programs, two more than the previous year: Charlebois Community School in Cumberland House; John Paul II Collegiate in North Battleford; Bethlehem Catholic High School, Mount Royal Collegiate, and Nutana Collegiate Institute in Saskatoon; Punnicthy Community High School; Dr. Martin LeBoldus Catholic High School in Regina; and Martensville High School.
- Enhancements to *Service Best* training included the introduction of *Service Best Plus*, a series of exercises that build on the skills that participants learn in *Service Best* workshops or online training. The *Service Best* online examination tool was made available to all participants in 2014-2015. Already offered with *Service Best Online*, a stand-alone version of the online examination was introduced for workshop participants, thereby streamlining administration for facilitators in the workplace and teachers of *Service Best* in high schools. A steady increase in participation in *Service Best* at the high school level was recorded, with 76 teachers now leading workshops in 44 Saskatchewan schools.
- Growth in the *Serve It Right Saskatchewan (SIRS)* program was particularly strong in the first three months of the 2014-2015 fiscal year, which followed a targeted distribution of information to employees of permitted establishments, liquor stores and franchise operations. The mail-out provided advice on standard drink serving sizes and included a staffroom poster and informative postcard. Based on the success of previous campaigns, a new poster and information providing advice for documenting incident reporting were distributed in January 2015. Tourism Saskatchewan undertook the design and distribution, with funding provided by the Saskatchewan Ministry of Health, on behalf of the Saskatchewan Server Intervention Program (SSIP) industry-led advisory group.

The *SIRS* course content received minor revision in 2014-2015, with the addition of an appendix updating information about Saskatchewan Government Insurance (SGI) licence suspensions, alcohol and drug education programs, fines and other administrative penalties.
- STEC serves as the Industry Joint Training Committee for Journey person in the Food and Beverage Person and Guest Services Representative trades, recognized by the Saskatchewan Apprenticeship and Trade Certification Commission (SATCC). Two apprenticeship program deliveries in 2014-2015, supported by funding from the SATCC,

provided training for 24 Apprentices to complete their Journeyperson qualifications in the aforementioned tourism trades.

- Saskatchewan's *Online Cook Upgrading Program* was developed jointly by SATCC, Saskatchewan Polytechnic and STEC. This approach to training and upgrading offers greater convenience and confronts some of the limitations, particularly distance and scheduling, that have hindered the development of Cook Journeypersons in Saskatchewan. In 2014-2015, a total of 24 experienced cooks enrolled to complete the tradesperson training and fully qualify as Cook Journeypersons.
- The *Hybrid Cook Apprenticeship Program* is an alternate delivery model for the traditional Cook Apprenticeship training. STEC was instrumental in the design of this program that involves online training, practical assignments and onsite observation, and offers a different approach to learning. In 2014-2015, STEC recruited 16 Hybrid Cook apprentices in nine Saskatchewan communities. The program is an effective, responsible model that engages and motivates participants and helps to ease the shortage of skilled labour.
- Tourism Saskatchewan celebrated its 21st annual Professional Recognition Dinners in Regina and Saskatoon. The dinners honoured 70 new nationally *emerit* certified tourism professionals and 22 apprentices who earned Journeyperson status. Also recognized were 21 *emerit* Property Recognition businesses and 29 *Service Best Businesses*. Four *Tourism Ambassador Awards* were presented. In Regina, the *emerit* Milestone Award was presented to Casinos Regina and Moose Jaw. With 281 *emerit* certified professionals on staff, the casinos received the award for surpassing a 250 milestone.
- Resource materials for two streams of the voluntary Quality Assurance Program (QAP) were assembled in 2015. Handbooks for Professionally Managed Museums and Outdoor Adventure were completed.

EMPLOYER OF CHOICE

In 2014-2015, 25 organizations achieved the designation of *Employer of Choice*, a **67 per cent** increase over the previous year. Additionally, there was growth in the number of communities, from four Saskatchewan cities in 2014 to 12 cities and towns in 2015.

Administered by STEC, the *Employer of Choice* program is designed to help tourism businesses attract and retain staff. It encourages employers to engage in best practices, increase staff training, improve human resources practices and become leaders in the tourism sector.

2015 Employers of Choice:

CAA Saskatchewan
Canalta Hotels:

- Canalta Assiniboia
- Canalta Esterhazy
- Canalta Humboldt
- Canalta Melfort
- Canalta Shaunavon
- Canalta Moosomin
- Canalta Weyburn
- Canalta Tisdale
- Ramada Weyburn

d3h Hotels Inc. (Dimension 3 Hospitality):

- Days Inn Regina Eastgate*
- Days Inn Regina Airport West
- Home Inn & Suites, Swift Current
- Home Inn & Suites, Yorkton
- HomeSuites, Regina
- Home Inn & Suites Regina Airport

Delta Bessborough Hotel, Saskatoon

Delta Regina Hotel

Gold Eagle Lodge, North Battleford*

Radisson Hotel Saskatoon*

Saskatoon Prairieland Park Corporation*

Sheraton Cavalier Saskatoon Hotel

The James Hotel, Saskatoon

Tourism Saskatchewan

Travelodge Hotel Saskatoon

**Employer of Choice* since 2010

Tourism Saskatchewan's application-based Event Hosting Program provides funding for events through four program streams: Community Annual Events; Marquee Annual Events; National and International Events; and Special Tourism Projects.

In 2014-2015, 102 applications were received during three intake periods. Funding was approved for 38 events.



2015 Cowtown Pro Rodeo	\$2,500
2014 Mortlach Saskatoonberry Festival*	\$3,326
2014 Dog Patch Music Festival.....	\$4,500
2015 Waskesiu and Area Winter Festival.....	\$4,570
2014 Saskatchewan Handcraft Festival*	\$4,837
2015 Canadian Junior Boys National Championship.....	\$5,000
2014 Canadian Sprint Canoe Kayak Championship*	\$5,000
2014 Summer Solstice Festival d'été.....	\$5,000
2014 Saskatchewan Paddling Symposium	\$5,000
2014 Wild West Daze* (Leader)	\$6,000
2015 Regina Afrofest.....	\$7,500
2014 Unity Western Days	\$8,500
2015 Loons and Laughter: Waskesiu Lake Festival	\$9,000
2014 Saskatoon Comic & Entertainment Expo	\$10,000
2014 Age Grade Prairie Regional Championship* (Rugby)	\$10,000
2014 Saskatoon EX*	\$10,000
2014 Beach Bash* (Estevan)	\$11,885
2015 Potash Corp Wintershines Festival.....	\$15,000
2014 Wanuskewin Days Cultural Celebration & Powwow.....	\$15,000
2014 John Arcand Fiddle Fest*	\$15,000
2014 World Junior A Challenge (Hockey)	\$20,000
2014 U18 Football Canada Cup	\$20,000
2014 U18 Women's Canadian Softball Championship*	\$20,000
2014 Summer Invasion*	\$20,000
2014 SaskPower Windscape Kite Festival*	\$23,000
2014 Shakespeare on the Saskatchewan Festival*	\$24,062
2015 Red Bull Kite Farm.....	\$25,000
2014 SIGA Dakota Dunes Open	\$35,000
2014 Regina Folk Festival*	\$35,000
Ness Core Ventures.....	\$50,000
Wings for Life World Run	\$50,000
2014 Subaru Saskatoon Triathlon	\$50,000
Craven Country Jamboree	\$50,000
<i>Fish Camp: Past the Pavement</i>	\$100,000
2015 Scotties Tournament of Hearts.....	\$150,000
Saskatchewan Roughriders Football Club, Riderville	\$210,000
2014 North American Indigenous Games	\$1,453,610
<i>Corner Gas: The Movie</i>	\$1,500,000
TOTAL	\$3,993,290

The total annual amount is higher in certain years due to one-time funding of major events or special projects.

Economic impact models were used to determine the impact on the local economy during 13 community, marquee and sporting events (identified by *). The models used were appropriate to the size of host communities and calculated based upon attendance and original information collected and supplied by the events. Tourism Saskatchewan provided \$188,000 in funding to these 13 events that supported 213 jobs and had a local GDP impact of \$17.8 million.

Key Action:

Build a supportive environment through partnerships that enable the sector to fully realize its potential through:

- Identifying opportunities to align activities with non-traditional partners
- Strengthening tourism opportunities in strategic destination areas and product clusters

Results:

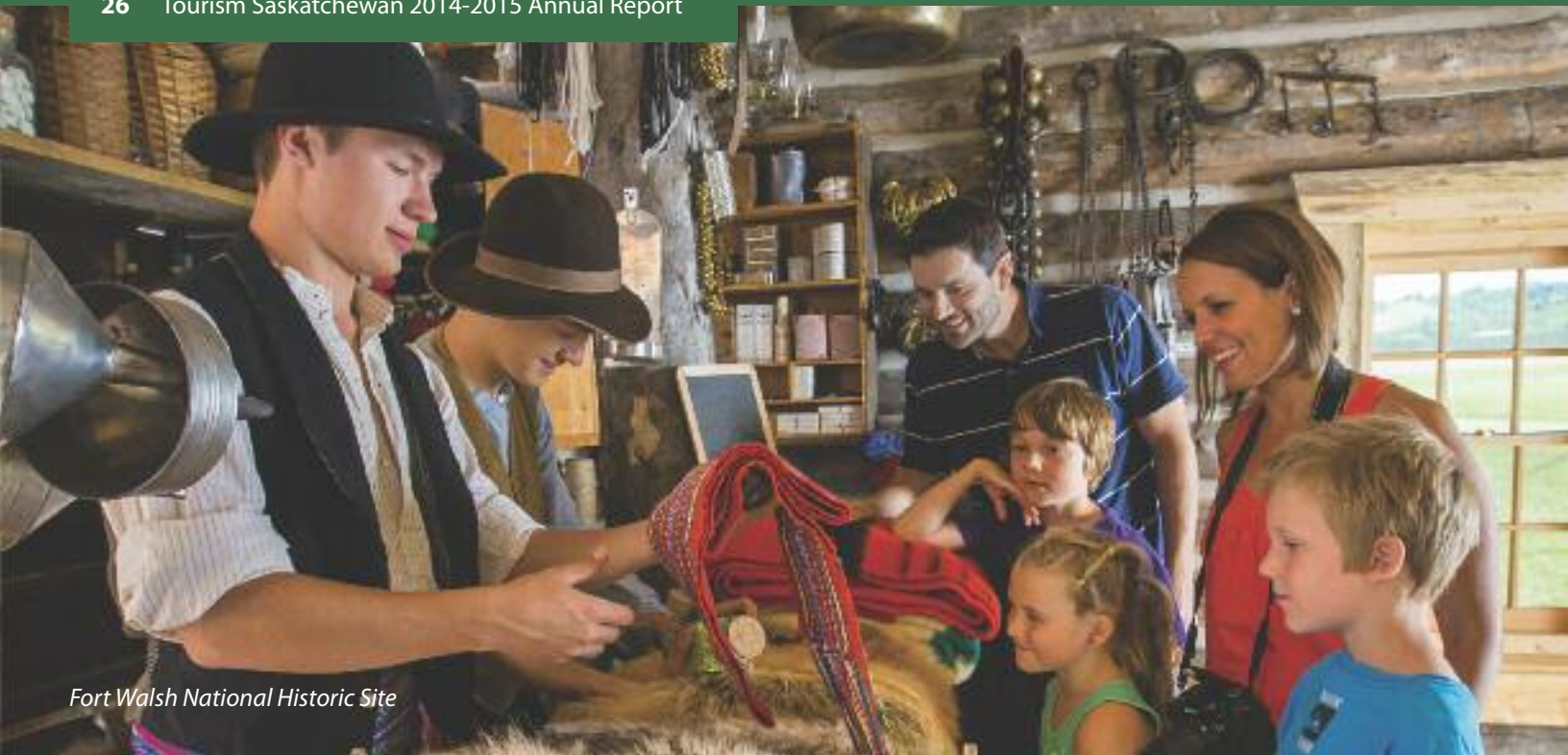
- Tourism Saskatchewan partnered with the Ministries of Agriculture, Economy and Parks, Culture and Sport and to provide support for the *Saskatchewanwanderer* program. Investment by these four partners enables a full-time, four-season “ambassador” to travel the province and, through social media channels, share stories and experiences that showcase Saskatchewan as a great place to live, work and visit. Caitlin Taylor, *Saskatchewanwanderer* for 2014, worked closely with the marketing team to identify locations and events for consideration among her itinerary. Tourism Saskatchewan was active in the search and interview process for the 2015 *Saskatchewanwanderer* and participated in the news conference introducing Ashlyn George, the successful candidate.
- For the eighth consecutive year, Tourism Saskatchewan partnered with the Ministry of Parks, Culture and Sport and provided telephone services for the Provincial Parks toll-free number.
- Tourism Saskatchewan partnered with Parks Canada on a 13-day summer/fall photography shoot at Prince Albert National Park and four National Historic Sites. Photographs from these locations were among the 250 new images added to Tourism Saskatchewan’s online image library, which had 1,147 images downloaded. There were 165 requests for still photos, 17 requests for B-roll footage and 14 requests for videos.
- Tourism Saskatchewan, through its Industry Development department, works with four rural destination areas: Cypress Hills Destination Area (CHDA), Lake Diefenbaker Tourism Destination Area, Waskesiu & Area Wilderness Region (WWR) and Watrous Manitou Marketing Group (WMMG). This work ranges from providing advice and guidance to support for individual projects. Progress among

these destination areas is evident on a number of levels, including recognition for their achievements. The Cypress Hills Destination Area and the Watrous Manitou Marketing Group were named *Saskatchewan Tourism Awards of Excellence* finalists for 2014.

Tourism Saskatchewan hosted a workshop for communities administering Destination Marketing Programs (DMPs) to share best practices and explore product development. The two-day workshop was held at Manitou Beach in October 2014 and was attended by representatives of ten communities with active DMPs that collect contributions from local accommodation properties and, in some instances, other attractions and services. The funds are targeted towards tourism marketing and development. Four rural Destination Areas were also involved (Cypress Hills Destination Area, Watrous Manitou Marketing Group, Lake Diefenbaker Tourism Destination Area, and Waskesiu & Area Wilderness Region). The workshop agenda included a session facilitated by Jill Vandal from The Tourism Company, who shared successful models and approaches to product development.

Watrous Manitou Marketing Group – In 2014, the Watrous Manitou Marketing Group implemented the first Destination Marketing Program for the area. Collected funds go directly to product development projects and marketing and tourism planning. A four-season, multi-use trail development commenced last year. As well, town and village councils agreed on a 2013 proposal received from the WMMG to explore a strong joint brand for tourism and economic development promotion.

Lake Diefenbaker Tourism Destination Area – The *Saskatchewan Plan for Growth: Vision 2020 and Beyond* identifies strategies for increasing economic benefits, including “strengthening tourism opportunities and improving Saskatchewan’s parks and outdoor products, such as sustainably developing the lakefront potential around Lake Diefenbaker.” The 2008 *Lake Diefenbaker Tourism Destination Area Plan* was re-examined in 2014-2015. Participants in this project included the Ministries of Environment, Highways and Infrastructure, and Parks, Culture and Sport; the Water Security Agency; WaterWolf District Planning Commission; Whitecap Dakota



Fort Walsh National Historic Site

First Nation and Tourism Saskatchewan. Lake Diefenbaker Tourism, in partnership with the Trans Canada Trail, Tourism Saskatchewan, Whitecap Dakota First Nation and Mid-Sask CFDC, is working on the planning, development and designation of Saskatchewan's first blueway trail – the Chief Whitecap Waterway, which spans 120 kilometres of the South Saskatchewan River from Gardiner Dam to Saskatoon.

- A new project was undertaken to help tourism operators take advantage of internet marketing opportunities. To establish a baseline of average skill and activity levels, a survey and sample assessment of operators were conducted in the summer, 2014. The data gathered informed workshops to assist with building awareness of and increasing online marketing skills. Tourism Saskatchewan worked with Deep Dish Digital to develop and facilitate pilot workshops in the Cypress Hills Destination Area and Waskesiu & Area Wilderness Region. Participants came away from the workshops feeling more knowledgeable, empowered and confident. More than 85 per cent of participants have taken steps to improve their websites and web-based marketing plans.
- Work was conducted in the Big Muddy area to help build an understanding of the opportunities and challenges to tourism growth. Eight sessions in six communities were held, and a Tourism Product Inventory for the area was created.

• **BrandCamp 2014**

In May 2014, six communities and areas of the province – Carrot River, Melfort, Melville, Qu'Appelle Valley, Watrous/Manitou Beach and Lake Diefenbaker – worked on developing their community brand with internationally recognized tourism branding consultant, Roger Brooks. Brooks is a founding member of the award-winning Destination Development International team that has assisted more than 1,000 communities with their branding, tourism, downtown development and marketing efforts. Participants were empowered by Brooks' 13-step community branding process that included various exercises to help communities identify what is unique and sets them apart from others. The multi-community BrandCamp was a beneficial exercise for guiding communities toward a solid brand direction and promise. Advice and recommendations addressed initial product development and marketing tactics, as well as key marketing messages. Each community received step-by-step instruction on how to proceed and put to work the ideas and knowledge shared. Tourism Saskatchewan has continued to work with and provide support to these communities as they move forward in the branding process.

- Tourism Saskatchewan's involvement with the Trails of 1885 Association was specific to a three-province tourism marketing and development initiative for the 150th anniversary of Confederation in 2017. Four sites in Alberta and 11 in Saskatchewan that are related to the 1885 Northwest Resistance and two Louis Riel-related sites in Manitoba are participating in this project.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY: FOSTERING OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE

Key Action:

Develop and utilize systems and processes to support effective communication and knowledge sharing

Results:

- Regular communication with industry and stakeholders is maintained through a variety of channels, including the quarterly printed newsletter, *Going Places*, the IndustryMatters.com website, and *Industry Update* and *Here & There* e-newsletters. Each of these communication items reach a targeted industry audience of approximately 3,500. The average readership rate of the two e-newsletters was 34.5 per cent in 2014-2015, an increase of more than seven per cent over the 2013-2014 average. This higher readership rate may be a result of a more strategic frequency schedule implemented last year.

The IndustryMatters.com website received 40,663 visits, 30,878 unique visitors and 72,269 page views in 2014-2015. These numbers are significantly higher than 2013-2014 (18,132 visits, 13,505 unique visitors and 41,441 page views). Factors driving this increase may be attributed to several site changes that included the move of STEC-related pages to within the IndustryMatters.com umbrella site, the addition of the Saskatchewan Events Hosting Program section, as well as a general interest in the "Importance of Tourism" page from Google searches.

- Tourism Saskatchewan professionals travelled the province and made face-to-face contact with industry, conducted meetings and delivered training during a total of 821 visits to 331 Saskatchewan communities.
- Tourism Saskatchewan's *Opportunities Catalogue* was offered to industry for the third consecutive year. This guide contains a comprehensive listing of marketing, education, advertising, training and partnership opportunities to advance the industry, provide benefits to stakeholders and grow their business. An *Education and Training Opportunities Catalogue* was also produced, listing programs delivered by STEC.
- Upgrades to the data centre included increases in both computing and storage capacity to address increasing system demands. Offsite backup, business continuity and disaster preparedness systems were upgraded and tested.



Tourism Saskatchewan organizes the annual *Saskatchewan Tourism Awards of Excellence Gala* and administers the online nomination process. A quarter century of achievement in the industry was celebrated at the 25th annual gala, held in Saskatoon on April 10, 2014. Forty-four award finalists and recipients were honoured at that event.

In order to keep the *Saskatchewan Tourism Awards of Excellence* program fresh and relevant, an internal review program was undertaken in 2014. Information gathered from industry helped identify appropriate new awards and beneficial changes to some of the existing categories and criteria. Twelve award categories were determined, with new awards created for Marquee Event of the Year and Community Event of the Year.

Over 80 submissions were received for the 26th annual *Saskatchewan Tourism Awards of Excellence*. The finalists were announced in February 2015. Tourism Saskatchewan created a toolkit that was provided to award finalists, to encourage and assist with their own promotion of their accomplishment.

In 2014, Cypress Hills Eco-Adventures Ltd. was the first Saskatchewan recipient of a *Canadian Tourism Award*, taking home the Small- or Medium-sized Business of the Year Award, presented by Hilton Worldwide.



- Improvements made to data collection systems and processes led to a three-fold increase in operators who updated their Industry Profiles online. Forty-four per cent of the more than 3,400 businesses in Tourism Saskatchewan's database took advantage of the online process to refresh and update their information. Savings in staff time and resources were realized, and the project enhanced industry communications and customer service.
- Upgrades were made to core software components, including Microsoft Dynamics CRM, to ensure a platform for industry communication and business process management; and Microsoft SharePoint, to provide a platform for collaboration and document/records management. A new website content management and customer engagement platform (SiteCore) was acquired, configured and implemented. This product will help Tourism Saskatchewan to continue to provide excellent online customer service and experiences.
- A Risk Scorecard and Detailed Risk Register were developed and will be formally monitored on a quarterly basis. The scorecard, which maps risk factors in relation to strategic priorities and key actions, provides a visual tool to enable quick identification of risk areas. The Detailed Risk Register lists specific risks and associated mitigation strategies.
- A comprehensive business plan for 2014-2015 was developed out of the *Strategic Plan 2014-2016*, with all divisions and departments contributing input on tactics, activities and measurements. Activities are monitored quarterly.
- Program Reviews were conducted on Industry Development programs and initiated in areas of Marketing and Communications.
- Improvements to accounting processes included automated data import to financial systems, eliminating duplication and reducing errors that can occur during manual data entry. A system-side review of accounts payable processes was undertaken and recommendations for efficiencies are forthcoming.
- A review of Tourism Saskatchewan's policy for addressing complaints determined opportunities and methods to streamline the process, reduce the number of staff contacts while ensuring appropriate levels of customer service, and maximize operational efficiencies. A new policy was introduced in May 2014.

Key Action:

Support an internal culture that encourages continuous employee development to ensure a committed and engaged workforce

Key Action:

Identify and integrate innovative and creative solutions to achieve continuous improvement

Results:

- Pilot projects to provide interim visitor services with Tourism Yorkton and the Lloydminster Cultural and Science Centre were tested in 2014; however, the partnership was not renewed in 2015. A continuing review of Visitor Reception Centre (VRC) operations informed the decision to close the North Portal VRC in 2015 and redirect resources to an integrated customer service strategy development in 2015-2016. The changes to Visitor Services complement the investments Tourism Saskatchewan has made to strengthen its online, mobile and social media presence, and reach greater numbers of consumers through the channels increasingly accessed by travellers.
- A framework for an organizational succession plan was developed, for implementation in the next fiscal year.
- In-house photography and skills were enhanced through staff photography workshops. Quality images from industry events, workshops, meetings and conferences are important documentation of the work conducted by Tourism Saskatchewan. Five workshops involved 44 participants.
- Individual Work Plans were introduced throughout the organization, tying the work of each Tourism Saskatchewan employee to the priorities and key actions identified in the *Strategic Plan 2014-2016*.
- A new framework for an employee recognition program was developed, for implementation and presentation of the first awards in 2015-2016.
- Two information sessions were delivered to ensure employees are aware of The *Public Interest Disclosure Act* and the procedures for disclosure of a wrongdoing in the workplace.
- A new four-year collective agreement was negotiated in alignment with the priorities of government.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES



Kiteboarding near Regina

Deliverable	Performance Measure	Unit	Benchmark (2011/2012)	2013/ 2014	2014/2015
Marketing	Total marketing partnerships with industry	#	1,329	1,698	1,859
Marketing	Total expenditure of industry partners involved in marketing activities	\$	904,752	1,111,710	1,450,633
Events	Total industry partnerships in events supported by Tourism Saskatchewan	#	16	24	38
Events*	Tourism Saskatchewan expenditure on supported events	\$	1.2 million	3 million	3.99 million
Training Delivery	Participants in training programs	#	3,329	4,357	5,008
Quality Assurance Program**	Accredited tourism operators	#	n/a	n/a	n/a
Product Development***	Quality tourism experiences	#	n/a	n/a	n/a

Industry Outcomes	Performance Measure	Unit	2011	2012	2013	2014
Tourism Revenues [†]	Total expenditures by travellers in Saskatchewan	\$	2 billion	2.12 billion	TBD	TBD
Visits [†]	Visits both same day and overnight in Saskatchewan	#	11.9 million	12.5 million	TBD	TBD
Employment ^{††}	Number of individuals employed in tourism-related profession	#	58,000	57,300	55,600	56,900

*The total annual amount is higher in certain years due to one-time funding of major events or special projects.

**Quality Assurance Program handbooks for two program streams were developed.

***Saskatchewan Experience Strategy document completed. Research included internal consultations and experiential tourism models in other jurisdictions.

[†]Complete expenditures and visitation data from Statistics Canada for 2013 and 2014 are unavailable at the time of printing.

^{††} Fluctuating employment figures often reflect the inability to fill positions due to competition for workers, rather than a reduction in jobs available.

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

TOURISM SASKATCHEWAN

March 31, 2015



MANAGEMENT'S RESPONSIBILITY

To the Members of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan:

Management is responsible for the preparation and presentation of the accompanying financial statements, including responsibility for significant accounting judgments and estimates in accordance with Canadian Public Sector Accounting standards and ensuring that all information in the annual report is consistent with the statements. This responsibility includes selecting appropriate accounting principles and methods, and making decisions affecting the measurement of transactions in which objective judgment is required.

In discharging its responsibilities for the integrity and fairness of the financial statements, management designs and maintains the necessary accounting systems and related internal controls to provide reasonable assurance that transactions are authorized, assets are safeguarded and financial records are properly maintained to provide reliable information for the preparation of financial statements.

The Board of Directors and Audit Committee are composed entirely of Directors who are neither management nor employees of Tourism Saskatchewan. The Board is responsible for overseeing management in the performance of its financial reporting responsibilities, and for the approval of the financial information included in the annual report. The Audit Committee has the responsibility of meeting with management and external auditors to discuss the internal controls over the financial reporting process, auditing matters and financial reporting issues. The Audit Committee is also responsible for recommending the appointment of Tourism Saskatchewan's external auditors.

MNP LLP, an independent firm of Chartered Professional Accountants, is appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council to audit the financial statements; their report follows. The external auditors have full and free access to, and meet periodically and separately with, both the Audit Committee and management to discuss their audit findings.

May 19, 2015



Chief Executive Officer



Chief Financial Officer

AUDITORS' REPORT

To the Members of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan:

We have audited the accompanying financial statements of Tourism Saskatchewan, which comprise the statement of financial position as at March 31, 2015 and the statements of operations, changes in net financial assets and cash flows for the year then ended, and a summary of significant accounting policies and other explanatory information.

Management's Responsibility for the Financial Statements

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of these financial statements in accordance with Canadian Public Sector accounting standards, and for such internal control as management determines is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

Auditors' Responsibility

Our responsibility is to express an opinion on these financial statements based on our audit. We conducted our audit in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards. Those standards require that we comply with ethical requirements and plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements are free from material misstatement.

An audit involves performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. The procedures selected depend on the auditors' judgment, including the assessment of the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error. In making those risk assessments, the auditor considers internal control relevant to the entity's preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the entity's internal control. An audit also includes evaluating the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall presentation of the financial statements.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinion.

Opinion

In our opinion, the financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of Tourism Saskatchewan as at March 31, 2015 and the results of its operations, changes in net financial assets and its cash flows for year then ended in accordance with Canadian Public Sector accounting standards.



Regina, Saskatchewan

May 19, 2015
Chartered Accountants

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION


As at March 31

	2015	2014 (Note 12)
FINANCIAL ASSETS		
Cash (Note 5)	\$3,893,696	\$4,742,713
Accounts receivable	437,973	343,400
Inventory for resale	2,236	4,600
	4,333,905	5,090,713
LIABILITIES		
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	\$1,306,749	\$1,255,631
Unearned revenue	283,914	201,373
	1,590,663	1,457,004
NET FINANCIAL ASSETS	2,743,242	3,633,709
NON FINANCIAL ASSETS		
Tangible capital assets (Note 6)	1,947,707	1,262,291
Prepaid expenses	230,325	201,095
	2,178,032	1,463,386
ACCUMULATED SURPLUS	\$4,921,274	\$5,097,095
Contractual Obligations (Note 7)		
Designated Assets (Note 8)		

See accompanying notes to financial statements.

APPROVED BY THE BOARD:


Director


Director

STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS

For the Year Ended March 31

	Budget 2015 (Note 3)	2015	2014 (Note 12)
REVENUE			
Provincial Operating Grant (Note 9)	\$16,172,000	\$16,172,000	\$15,171,999
Other Grants and Contributions	1,638,125	1,395,989	1,752,323
Sales of Products and Services	617,150	470,086	567,276
Certification and Training	400,800	187,913	264,788
Partnership	525,000	612,776	538,164
Interest and other	46,200	95,885	114,345
	19,399,275	18,934,649	18,408,895
EXPENSES (Schedule 1)			
Administration	4,630,314	4,002,870	3,908,133
Marketing	7,141,413	6,572,990	7,125,168
Industry Development	5,800,852	5,472,997	4,485,727
Education and Training	2,516,835	2,066,143	2,342,398
Visitor Services	1,002,861	995,470	940,842
	21,092,275	19,110,470	18,802,268
(DEFICIT) FOR THE YEAR	\$(1,693,000)	\$(175,821)	\$(393,373)
Accumulated surplus - beginning of year	5,097,095	5,097,095	5,490,468
Accumulated surplus - end of year	\$3,404,095	\$4,921,274	\$5,097,095

See accompanying notes to financial statements.

STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN NET FINANCIAL ASSETS

For the Year Ended March 31

	Budget 2015 (Note 3)	2015	2014 (Note 12)
(Deficit) for the year	\$(1,693,000)	\$(175,821)	\$(393,373)
Acquisition of tangible capital assets	(908,000)	(1,084,658)	(484,503)
Amortization of tangible capital assets	517,000	399,242	375,449
	(2,084,000)	(861,237)	(502,427)
Purchase of prepaid expenses and supplies	-	(29,230)	(111,140)
(Decrease) in net financial assets	(2,084,000)	(890,467)	(613,567)
Net financial assets - beginning of year	3,633,709	3,633,709	4,247,276
Net financial assets - end of year	\$1,549,709	\$2,743,242	\$3,633,709

See accompanying notes to financial statements.

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS

For the Year Ended March 31

	2015	2014 (Note 12)
OPERATING ACTIVITIES		
(Deficit) for the year	\$(175,821)	\$(393,373)
Items not requiring cash:		
Amortization of tangible capital assets	399,242	375,449
Net change in non-cash balances relating to operations:		
Accounts receivable	(94,573)	1,832,942
Inventory	2,364	4,360
Prepaid expenses	(29,230)	111,140
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	51,118	90,276
Unearned revenue	82,541	134,495
	235,641	1,933,009
CAPITAL ACTIVITIES		
Acquisition of tangible capital assets	(1,084,658)	(484,503)
	(1,084,658)	(484,503)
Increase (decrease) in cash	(849,017)	1,448,506
Cash, beginning of year	4,742,713	3,294,207
Cash, end of year	\$3,893,696	\$4,742,713

See accompanying notes to financial statements.

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

March 31, 2015

1. STATUS OF TOURISM SASKATCHEWAN

Tourism Saskatchewan was established pursuant to *The Tourism Saskatchewan Act* proclaimed on July 1, 2012. Tourism Saskatchewan is a Treasury Board Crown Corporation within the meaning of *The Crown Corporations Act, 1993*. Tourism Saskatchewan is a continuing corporation of Saskatchewan Tourism Authority, established under *The Tourism Authority Act on October 1, 1994*. Tourism Saskatchewan promotes the province as a tourism destination by providing in-province and out-of-province marketing and visitor services. Tourism Saskatchewan assists industry to market and develop quality tourism products through cooperative marketing, education and training and event funding programs.

Tourism Saskatchewan is exempt from income taxes under the *Income Tax Act*.

2. SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES

The Statement of Remeasurement Gains and Losses has been omitted as there were no relevant transactions to report.

a. Basis of Accounting

These financial statements are prepared by management in accordance with Canadian public sector accounting standards for provincial reporting entities established by the Canadian Public Sector Accounting Board.

b. Measurement Uncertainty

The preparation of financial statements in conformity with Canadian public sector accounting standards requires management to make estimates and assumptions that affect the reporting amounts of assets and liabilities, and disclosure of contingent assets and liabilities, at the date of the financial statements and the reported amounts of the revenues and expenses during the period. Items requiring the use of significant estimates include accounts receivable, accrued liabilities and amortization.

Estimates are based on the best information available at the time of preparation of the financial statements and are reviewed annually to reflect new information as it becomes available. Measurement uncertainty exists in these financial statements. Actual results could differ from these estimates.

c. Cash

Cash is comprised of monies on deposit and is recognized at their fair value. Fair value is approximated by the instrument's initial cost in a transaction between unrelated parties.

d. Inventory for Resale

Inventory for resale is valued at the lower of cost and net realizable value. Cost of merchandise is determined principally on a first-in, first-out basis. Inventory cost includes the costs of purchase plus other costs, such as taxes and transportation that are directly incurred to bring inventories to their present location.

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

March 31, 2015

e. Non-financial Assets

Non-financial assets are not available to discharge existing liabilities and are held for use in the provision of services. They have useful lives extending beyond the current year and are not intended for sale in the ordinary course of operations.

f. Tangible Capital Assets

Tangible capital assets are recorded at cost, which includes amounts that are directly related to the acquisition, design, construction, development, improvement or betterment of the assets. Cost includes overhead directly attributable to construction and development, as well as interest costs that are directly attributable to the acquisition or construction of the asset. Tangible capital assets are amortized over their estimated useful lives. Amortization expense is calculated using the straight-line method at the following annual rates:

Photo library	10% to 20%
Furniture and equipment	10% to 20%
Computer equipment and systems	25% to 33%
Leasehold improvements	10%
Signs and displays	20%
Video and video footage	20% to 33%

When tangible capital assets no longer contribute to Tourism's ability to provide goods and services, they are written down to residual value.

g. Revenue

Grants and contributions are recognized as revenues when the grant or contribution is authorized, any eligibility criteria are met, and reasonable estimates of the amounts can be made, unless the transfer stipulations establish a liability, in which case revenue is recognized as the stipulations are met.

Other revenue, which includes partnership, sales of products and services and interest revenue, is recognized in the period in which the transactions or events occurred that give rise to the revenue.

h. Grants

Grants provided to clients for a variety of programs are recorded as an expense by Tourism Saskatchewan when it approves the transfer and the recipient meets the eligibility criteria.

3. BUDGET

The budget figures are presented for comparison purposes. Tourism Saskatchewan's 2014-15 budget was approved by the Board of Directors on February 26, 2014.

4. FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS

Tourism Saskatchewan's financial instruments include cash, accounts receivables, accounts payable, accrued liabilities. The carrying amount of these instruments approximate fair value due to their immediate or short-term maturity. These instruments do not have significant interest rate or credit risk.

5. CASH

Tourism Saskatchewan has access to an operating line of credit in the amount of \$500,000, repayable on demand with interest paid monthly, at the Scotiabank prime rate less 0.25%. As of March 31, 2015, Tourism Saskatchewan has not drawn on the operating line. In 2014, there were no draws on the operating line.

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

March 31, 2015

6. TANGIBLE CAPITAL ASSETS

	Photo library	Furniture and equipment	Computer equipment and systems	Leasehold improvements	Signs and displays	Video and video footage	2015 Total	2014 Total
Cost								
Opening Balance	358,491	249,387	1,100,879	1,295,310	56,896	1,870,184	4,931,147	4,446,644
Additions	-	8,539	505,737	-	29,121	541,261	1,084,658	484,503
Disposals	-	-	(86,880)	-	-	-	(86,880)	-
Write-downs	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Closing Balance	358,491	257,926	1,519,736	1,295,310	86,017	2,411,445	5,928,925	4,931,147
Accumulated Amortization								
Opening Balance	341,154	140,196	853,892	581,039	34,805	1,717,770	3,668,856	3,293,407
Amortization	8,092	30,739	186,952	129,531	5,824	38,104	399,242	375,449
Disposals	-	-	(86,880)	-	-	-	(86,880)	-
Write-downs	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Closing Balance	349,246	170,935	953,964	710,570	40,629	1,755,874	3,981,218	3,668,856
Net Book Value	9,245	86,991	565,772	584,740	45,388	655,571	1,947,707	1,262,291

Included in the cost of Computer equipment and systems class is an asset under development with a net book value of \$273,680 (2014 - \$nil). Included in the cost of Video and video footage class is an asset not yet in use with a net book value of \$541,261 (2014 - \$nil). No amortization of these assets was recorded during the current year because neither the website nor the video were complete at year-end. Completion of the website did not occur until April 2015, and the video did not air until April 17, 2015.

7. CONTRACTUAL OBLIGATIONS

Contractual obligations include:

Leases

Tourism Saskatchewan has entered into leases for office premises, Visitor Reception Centres and storage space at various locations in the province.

Operational

Tourism Saskatchewan has operating agreements that enable day-to-day operations of the corporation.

Program

Tourism Saskatchewan has program related obligations to assist Saskatchewan's tourism industry operators to market and develop quality tourism products through cooperative marketing, education and training and event funding programs.

	Leases	Operational	Program	Total
2015-16	\$837,091	\$24,960	\$734,188	\$1,596,239
2016-17	849,611	18,575	355,000	1,223,186
2017-18	765,597	7,910		773,507
2018-19	644,044	2,695		646,739
2019-20	556,392	-		556,392
thereafter	2,885,460	-		2,885,460
	\$6,538,195	\$ 54,140	\$1,089,188	\$7,681,523

Contractual obligations do not include those contracts which are paid on a usage basis.

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

March 31, 2015

8. DESIGNATED ASSETS

Tourism Saskatchewan is holding \$1,370,000 as designated assets to be spent on the following programs in future years.

• Marketing	\$730,000
• Event Hosting Program	\$350,000
• Education and Training	\$290,000

In 2014, Tourism Saskatchewan had designated assets of \$2,216,000 for the following::

• Marketing	\$1,340,000
• Event Hosting Program	\$876,000

9. PROVINCIAL OPERATING GRANT

Tourism Saskatchewan receives grants from the General Revenue Fund out of monies appropriated by the legislature or authorized by Order in Council. From April 1, 2014 to March 31, 2015, Tourism Saskatchewan received \$16,172,000 from the Ministry of the Economy.

10. RELATED PARTY TRANSACTIONS

Included in these financial statements are transactions with various Saskatchewan Crown corporations, ministries, agencies, boards and commissions related to Tourism Saskatchewan by virtue of common control by the Government of Saskatchewan and non-Crown corporations and enterprises subject to joint control or significant influence by the Government of Saskatchewan (collectively referred to as "related parties").

Routine operating transactions with related parties are settled at prevailing market prices under normal trade terms. These transactions and amounts outstanding at year end are as follows:

	2014-15	2013-14
Accounts Receivable	\$92,172	\$123,900
Accounts Payable and Accrued Liabilities	72,914	85,100
Other Revenue	744,329	719,611
Expenses	1,456,606	1,635,003

Other related party transactions are disclosed elsewhere in these financial statements.

11. DEFINED CONTRIBUTION PENSION PLAN

Tourism Saskatchewan participates in the Public Employees' Pension Plan (PEPP), a defined contribution plan. Tourism Saskatchewan's obligations are limited to matching contributions made by the employees, up to a rate of 7.25%, for current services. From April 1, 2014 to March 31, 2015, Tourism Saskatchewan contributed \$422,515 (from April 1, 2013 to March 31, 2014 - \$425,576).

12. COMPARATIVE FIGURES

Certain comparative figures have been re-classified to conform to the current year's presentation.

SCHEDULE OF EXPENSES

Schedule 1 - Expenses by Program For the Year Ended March 31

	Administration	Marketing	Industry Development	Education & Training	Visitor Services	2015	2014
Salaries	\$1,498,838	\$2,011,449	\$945,828	\$817,653	\$589,167	\$5,862,935	\$5,818,970
Benefits	308,784	301,086	140,972	125,957	103,535	980,334	1,003,485
Professional Services	520,584	190,774	115,382	789,720	87,396	1,703,856	1,818,372
Advertising	-	2,945,828	2,619	-	-	2,948,447	3,175,188
Promotion and Other Marketing	44,609	162,679	544,055	4,623	148,451	904,417	795,542
Print	-	315,884	168	9,933	-	325,985	331,649
Travel	43,103	438,901	62,674	17,771	12,977	575,426	565,851
Board and Committees	44,004	-	-	-	-	44,004	19,201
Rent and Equipment Purchases	856,839	1,175	278	7,290	6,690	872,272	930,015
Supplies and Services	218,313	34,813	7,476	21,877	5,938	288,417	277,974
Other Related Business Expenses	68,554	55,710	84,255	10,029	1,316	219,864	310,224
Amortization	399,242	-	-	-	-	399,242	375,449
Grants	-	114,691	3,569,290	261,290	40,000	3,985,271	3,380,348
Total	\$4,002,870	\$6,572,990	\$5,472,997	\$2,066,143	\$995,470	\$19,110,470	\$18,802,268



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