

Going Places

Saskatchewan's Tourism Industry Newsletter

Fall 2019

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Cover Image

Brian Kraft
 Saskatoon area
 2019 ExploreSask Photo Contest

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MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

Collaboration is one of Tourism Saskatchewan's guiding principles. We welcome opportunities to work with partners eager to embrace research and align efforts that advance our industry and position Saskatchewan more competitively.

We are proud to play a part in the development of Saskatchewan's first Indigenous Tourism Corridor. This relationship recently yielded a valuable study into key travel markets and their knowledge of Indigenous tourism experiences.

The results confirmed that there is strong interest in Indigenous experiences among the Canadian markets examined, as well as travellers from Germany, U.K. and parts of the U.S. However, expectations and perceptions are vastly different and provide challenges to communicating with these markets. These differences also need to be considered when developing export-ready experiences that will entice potential visitors and appeal to their sense of discovery.

The study's findings are summarized in a two-part series in *Going Places*. Part one appears on page 4 and delves into the topic of authenticity – a quality that travellers agree is important, but differ on its meaning.

In the upcoming weeks, a full report will be posted on Tourism Saskatchewan's industry website, Industry.TourismSaskatchewan.com.

The site's new Statistics and Research section is rapidly expanding with the addition of detailed and timely reports on industry trends, research projects, labour force challenges and a variety of fundamental topics. The resources provide a clear and current picture of the state of tourism and the visitor economy, and help tourism operators and businesses make sound decisions about marketing and development activities.

Tourism Saskatchewan has adapted its research and reporting methods, employing a more universal approach to accessing data. We are now able to create a precise picture of Saskatchewan's visitor economy and provide current and more accurate information to industry.

A quarterly *Tourism Trends Report* is a new and much-anticipated feature on our industry website. It presents an overview of tourism statistics and trends relevant to our province, and reports on Saskatchewan-U.S. border crossings, international air travel, hotel occupancy and average daily rates, discretionary spending patterns, exchange rates and other pertinent categories.

Up-to-date research is vital to informed, strategic decision-making. Tourism Saskatchewan values its role to engage in various research projects, share findings and empower operators and stakeholders.

Mary Taylor-Ash

Dr. Nancy Arsenault to deliver keynote address at HOST Saskatchewan Conference



Dr. Nancy Arsenault

Mark your calendar for the 2020 HOST Saskatchewan Conference on April 2 at the Delta Hotels by Marriott Regina. The one-day conference offers valuable networking, learning and development opportunities.

Dr. Nancy Arsenault, Managing Partner of Tourism Café, is this year's keynote speaker. Tourism Café specializes in boutique tourism training and experiential travel, product and market development, community tourism, destination development and visitor experience assessments. In addition to her keynote address, Dr. Arsenault will lead an interactive experience design workshop.

More details about the HOST Saskatchewan Conference agenda, speakers and presentations will follow in the next issue of *Going Places*. Conference updates will also be posted on Industry.TourismSaskatchewan.com.

The 31st annual Saskatchewan Tourism Awards of Excellence Gala will be held that evening. The gala honours people, places, businesses, organizations and events that go above and beyond to offer superior tourism experiences to Saskatchewan visitors and residents. The nomination deadline is **January 24, 2020**. Turn to page 7 for information about award categories and the nomination process.

HOST Saskatchewan Conference registration includes the daytime sessions, the keynote luncheon and a ticket to the Saskatchewan Tourism Awards of Excellence Gala. The cost is \$189 (plus GST). Contact Nancy Hubenig at 306-787-9844, nancy.hubenig@tourismsask.com to register.

New research study identifies opportunities for Indigenous tourism



Two Spirit Powwow, Beardy's & Okemasis' Cree Nation. Photo by Urban Systems.

Across Canada, Indigenous tourism generates \$2.7 billion in gross economic output, \$1.4 billion in GDP and more than \$142 million in taxes.

Tourism Saskatchewan, in partnership with the Indigenous Tourism Corridor, hired Insightrix Research to conduct a qualitative research study with key travel markets to gauge interest in Indigenous tourism experiences in Saskatchewan. This two-part series examines some of the findings and recommendations for developing and marketing Indigenous tourism opportunities.

PART ONE: GOALS, OBSERVATIONS AND MARKET PERCEPTIONS

The study's goals were to gain a better understanding of Saskatchewan's export markets; identify Indigenous tourism experiences that interest prospective long-haul and international visitors; and gather top-of-mind impressions about travel to Canada and Saskatchewan.

Six online chat-based focus groups were held with English-speaking international travellers living in Tourism Saskatchewan's key markets: Canada (short-haul and long-haul), Germany, U.K. and U.S. (short-haul and long-haul).

Previous research was undertaken by Destination Canada and the Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada. It found that despite unfamiliarity with Indigenous culture and history in Canada, prospective overseas travellers are interested in incorporating Indigenous experiences into their trips. The new study sheds light on misconceptions and conflicting views of authenticity.

Authenticity matters, but what does it mean? Authenticity is important and socially desirable for travellers seeking cultural experiences; however, the term is subjective. Lack of

knowledge of a destination's history and culture shapes biased views of authenticity based on stereotypical or romanticized images.

Study participants expressed concern about ownership of Indigenous tourism attractions and the primary beneficiaries. They questioned whether commoditization resulting from tourism exploits local Indigenous communities. Prospective travellers want assurance that the money they spend goes back to Indigenous people. This was clearly stated by domestic markets (Canada and U.S.) and in the German market. They also want to know that their participation in tourism experiences is respectful to Indigenous people.

Overseas markets share a lack of general knowledge of Canadian and Indigenous history. Misunderstandings about Indigenous culture fuel perceptions of inauthenticity when travellers are presented with Indigenous tourism opportunities. German focus group participants were particularly skeptical and many had inaccurate preconceptions of what defines authentic Indigenous experiences. Imagery of Indigenous individuals wearing non-traditional clothing or participating in more modern cultural elements triggered sharp criticism from participants.

Indigenous – a misunderstood term

The word "Indigenous" caused confusion among the overseas participants. Many were unfamiliar with its use as referring to the people who inhabited Canada prior to European contact and settlement. In fact, some believe Indigenous refers to all Canadians or think of the word in more general terms, not limited to Canadian geography.

Canadian and long-haul U.S. participants had sufficient knowledge about Indigenous and Native American history. This suggests potential interest in Saskatchewan Indigenous

experiences. Conversely, short-haul U.S. participants expressed low interest due to perceptions that similar Indigenous experiences are available locally.

While Canada is a top destination for many overseas participants, Saskatchewan is not top-of-mind. Unlike North Americans, the U.K. and German participants did not distinguish Indigenous tourism from general tourism in Canada. Overseas travellers desire a holistic Canadian experience, which encompasses both Indigenous and non-Indigenous attractions.

Advice and recommendations

- **Education is key to promoting Indigenous tourism in export markets.** Overseas travellers are unfamiliar with or may have misconceptions of Canadian Indigenous history and culture. A combination of education and use of more familiar terms may be necessary in marketing materials.
- **Create separate marketing strategies for domestic and international markets.** North American markets have greater familiarity with Indigenous history and culture, which translates into a high level of interest for visitation to Saskatchewan. Among overseas travellers, there is interest in visiting Canada but Saskatchewan remains unknown. Tourism Saskatchewan recommends working with travel trade to reach these markets.
- **Design marketing materials to convey authenticity and avoid visuals that appear staged or enterprise-driven.** One of the most significant marketing challenges for the Indigenous tourism industry will be to appeal to the expectations of overseas travellers, while presenting experiences in a way that maintains the integrity and truthfulness of the cultural content. This will be of particular importance when marketing in the U.K. and Germany.



MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

One of the themes of this issue of *Going Places* is shoulder season travel. There is certainly potential for Saskatchewan to expand in this area and proudly showcase the beauty of its four distinct seasons.

In September, my Board colleagues and I enjoyed the opportunity to see southeast Saskatchewan bathed in rich fall colours. The purpose of our trip was to gather for meetings. While in the area, we found time to enjoy the surroundings of Moose Mountain Provincial Park – a showpiece in Saskatchewan’s parks system.

We appreciated the hospitality extended to us from local operators. It was a privilege to spend time with them, learn about their challenges and listen to plans for attracting more visitors, year round, to this inviting corner of the province.

For ideas and information about shoulder season and winter tourism, turn to page 14.

Tourism Saskatchewan is bracing for the busy months ahead, which include campaigns to attract anglers from the U.S., along with the launch of a new project to grow interest in outfitted hunting in Saskatchewan. Details about this project are on page 8.

Planning for the 2020 HOST Saskatchewan Conference is well underway, and it will be pleasure to welcome industry to this annual forum on April 2 in Regina. We are fortunate to have Dr. Nancy Arsenault as our keynote speaker. Founder of the Tourism Café, Dr. Arsenault advocates the value of small and medium-size businesses and rural operators, and their role in making a destination more diverse and appealing. Preliminary details about the HOST Saskatchewan Conference are on page 3.

The conference highlight will be the 2020 Saskatchewan Tourism Awards of Excellence Gala, which honours exceptional leadership and service among our industry. The January 24 deadline for nominations is just weeks away.

On the topic of awards, I am delighted to acknowledge Wanuskewin Heritage Park – Saskatchewan’s newest Canadian Tourism Award winner. Wanuskewin received the ITAC Indigenous Tourism Award on November 20 at a gala celebration in Ottawa. Saskatchewan was well-represented that evening, with a total of five award finalists. Congratulations to Wanuskewin Heritage Park and the other deserving finalists – Harvest Eatery, Over the Hill Orchards & Winery, Brenda Peterson and Tourism Saskatoon.

Norm Beug

Board of Directors visits southeast Saskatchewan



Bear Claw Hotel and Casino



Moose Mountain Provincial Park



The Red Market Barn

Members of Tourism Saskatchewan’s Board of Directors were treated to southeast hospitality during a visit to Moose Mountain Provincial Park and area in September. Between meetings and addressing board business, they became acquainted with local amenities and operators.

A guided tour of the park was a highlight of their visit. Park interpreters Joel Harrison and Ainsley Sauter shared their knowledge of the area and introduced board members to some of the delights of the forest – particularly high-bush cranberries. The group was briefed on programs offered in the park and the popularity of winter activities. An impressive system of trails attracts visitors who enjoy cross-country skiing and snowshoeing. Consequently, accommodation properties in the park and nearby benefit from year-round activities.

Other stops on the Board’s southeast Saskatchewan visit included Bear Claw Hotel and Casino, where they received a warm welcome from Marketing Director Joe Whitehawk and his colleagues. At The Red Market Barn, owner Brenda Johnston gave an overview of her successful Sunday markets that attract customers from across southern Saskatchewan and Manitoba.

Tourism Saskatchewan extends thanks to the Kenosee Inn & Cabins, and to everyone who shared their time and insights.

Saskatchewan wins at Canadian Tourism Awards



Wanuskewin Heritage Park. Photo provided by Tourism Saskatoon.

It was a proud night for Saskatchewan when a Canadian Tourism Award was presented to Wanuskewin Heritage Park at a gala celebration on November 20 in Ottawa. Wanuskewin Heritage Park received the Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada (ITAC) Indigenous Tourism Award.

Located on the northern edge of Saskatoon, the park has been a centre for sharing Indigenous culture, traditions and history for nearly 30 years. Wanuskewin Heritage Park is on Canada's tentative list for UNESCO World Heritage designation.

"Tourism Saskatchewan is thrilled by the achievements of our Canadian Tourism Award finalists and award winner," Mary Taylor-Ash, Tourism Saskatchewan CEO, said. "It was meaningful to see recognition paid to passionate champions for our province – Dean and Sylvia Kreutzer, Garrett "Rusty" and Kristy Thienes, Brenda Peterson, Tourism Saskatoon and repeat award winner, Wanuskewin Heritage Park. This strong representation by Saskatchewan on the national stage is inspiring."

"Saskatchewan truly made an impressive showing at the Canadian Tourism Awards," Minister Responsible for Tourism Saskatchewan

Gene Makowsky said. "The Government of Saskatchewan is pleased to congratulate all of the finalists, and acknowledge Wanuskewin Heritage Park for their win. The accomplishments of this group reflect the innovative work that drives our province's tourism industry, strengthen the visitor economy and make Saskatchewan a remarkable place to visit."

The Canadian Tourism Awards recognize success, leadership and innovation in Canada's tourism industry. Since its inception in 2003, the Canadian Tourism Awards gala has become a highlight of The Tourism Congress, TIAC's annual conference. For a complete list of the 2019 Canadian Tourism Award winners, visit tiac.travel.

Congratulations to award winner Wanuskewin Heritage Park and Saskatchewan finalists:

Harvest Eatery, Shaunavon
Restaurants Canada and Diversey Culinary Tourism Award

Harvest Eatery has put rural Saskatchewan on the culinary map. The 45-seat farm-to-table operation is the brainchild and creative collaboration of husband and wife duo, Chef Garrett "Rusty" and Kristy Thienes.

Over the Hill Orchards & Winery, Lumsden
Hilton Small Business of the Year Award
Over the Hill Orchards & Winery is owned by Dean and Sylvia Kreutzer. Over the past 18 years, the family business has evolved from selling raw fruit to processed fruit products to wine and now specialty dinners that combine the products grown on the property.

Brenda Peterson, Grasslands National Park
Tourism HR Canada Employee of the Year Award
Brenda Peterson is recognized for her unwavering loyalty and service to Grasslands National Park. She wears many hats as Visitor Experience Lead for the East Block, along with roles as Interpretation Co-ordinator, Quality Visitor Experience trainer, Park Duty Officer and Fire Patrol.

Tourism Saskatoon (VIPlane initiative), Saskatoon
Tourism Innovation Award

Tourism Saskatoon is a membership-based, non-profit visitor and convention bureau that markets Saskatoon and region as a destination of choice for leisure and business travel. The VIPlane initiative boosted attendance at the 2019 Canadian Innovation Conference.

Nominations open for Saskatchewan Tourism Awards of Excellence



The nomination deadline for the Saskatchewan Tourism Awards of Excellence is quickly approaching. Consider your own accomplishments or those of your industry peers and submit nominations by **January 24, 2020**.

The annual Saskatchewan Tourism Awards of Excellence acknowledge exceptional contributions to the province's tourism sector. Awards are presented in 13 categories:

- Business of the Year Award
 - Over 20 Full-time Employees
 - Under 20 Full-time Employees
- Community Event of the Year Award
- Marquee Event of the Year Award
- Fred Heal Tourism Ambassador Award
- Gil Carduner Marketing Award
- Indigenous Tourism Experience Award
- Rookie of the Year Award
- Service Excellence Award
- Tourism Employer of the Year Award
- Tourism Employee of the Year Award
- Travel Media Award
- Tourism Builder Award

Visit Industry.TourismSaskatchewan.com to download the award nomination forms. Start your nominations early. Taking the time to provide clear, concise, well-crafted answers will enhance your submission. Send your completed nomination forms, along with any supporting materials, such as images or video, to awards@tourismsask.com.

If you have any questions about award categories or criteria, contact Nancy Hubenig at 306-787-9844, nancy.hubenig@tourismsask.com.

Need help drafting a nomination? Check out *Top Five Tips for Completing an Award Nomination*, available at Industry.TourismSaskatchewan.com/advice-and-resources/top-five-tips-series.

The 31st annual Saskatchewan Tourism Awards of Excellence Gala will be celebrated on April 2, 2020 at the Delta Hotels by Marriott Regina. The gala is held in conjunction with the HOST Saskatchewan Conference (see page 3 for conference details).

TOP FIVE REASONS FOR SUBMITTING AN AWARD NOMINATION

1. CELEBRATE YOUR ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Compete on the provincial stage for recognition as one of Saskatchewan's top tourism businesses. Peer recognition can be important to your future success and can help build credibility with your customers.

2. PROMOTE YOUR BUSINESS

Award winners will experience direct marketing benefits from Tourism Saskatchewan. Your business will be acknowledged in media releases, online channels, print materials and other promotions.

3. INSPIRE YOUR TEAM

Produce a show-stopping nomination and share the experience with your team. Employees will feel a sense of pride working for a business honoured and respected by industry peers.

4. RETAIN AND ATTRACT TOP TALENT

Qualifying as a finalist or scoring the top honour builds credibility and profile. The accolades will also make your company more attractive to potential hires and new recruits.

5. BENCHMARK YOUR BUSINESS

The award application process will provide you with the chance to look at your business from a different perspective and compare yourself to your competitors. An in-depth analysis of your current business practices could lead to new opportunities.

Selling Saskatchewan

Jenna McKeown thrilled by Cree River Lodge Inc.



Lodge guide Dwayne "Chip" Cromarty and Jenna McKeown. Photos provided by *The New Fly Fisher*.

Jenna McKeown, host of *The New Fly Fisher*, made her first trip to Saskatchewan in August. She and her crew were guests at Cree River Lodge Inc., where they captured footage for an episode that will air in March on the World Fishing Network and PBS.

"Massive, massive fish" and great guides top the long list of highlights from her visit. She shares credit for her catch of a 46-inch northern pike with lodge guide Dwayne "Chip" Cromarty: "Chip did an excellent job taking us to locations that he knew were sheltered from the wind but would still hold a lot of fish – and big fish. It was an awesome, awesome experience to work with someone so knowledgeable and passionate about pike and about fly fishing."

McKeown has caught her share of pike, but was struck by the size of those pulled from the Cree River. "They weren't just long, but very thick, and they fight so well," she said. "For me, that is one of the best parts of fly fishing. The experience is going to sustain me this winter when I'm not fishing."

With plenty of pike footage "in the can," the crew turned their attention to Arctic grayling. "I'd never fished for grayling before, and now I'm absolutely hooked. They are gorgeous and there is such an abundance there," she said.

McKeown was born into a fishing family. Her dad, Colin McKeown, originated *The New Fly Fisher* television series 20 years ago. Inspired by his daughter's sense of adventure, he is eager to talk about the increasing number of young anglers and changes that signal a bright future for the sport. "Female anglers are the fastest growing part of fly fishing," Colin said. "It used to be about 5 per cent women – now it's 30 per cent and growing."

"I'm working on some of my female friends to convince them to come fishing with me," Jenna said. "It's my passion and I'm happy that more women are getting into fly fishing and the outdoors. It's something that really feeds your soul when you become invested in it."

Tourism Saskatchewan's involvement in Destination Canada's National Angling Program has led to strong relationships with *The New Fly Fisher* and a number of popular outdoor media partners. The shows bring profile to Saskatchewan in key North American markets.

For more highlights from Jenna's Saskatchewan adventure, check out *The New Fly Fisher* on YouTube.

Two-phase project designed to trigger greater interest in hunting

Outfitted hunting and fishing in Saskatchewan is a lucrative industry, generating more than \$120 million annually. Anglers and hunters from the United States drive the bulk of that figure and are the province's highest yielding and largest tourism export market. They are drawn to the world-class outdoor experiences that Saskatchewan offers in remote and rural areas.

Tourism Saskatchewan and the Saskatchewan Commission of Professional Outfitters, with support from Western Economic Diversification, are partners in a project to attract more U.S. hunters.

A two-phase project is underway to identify favourable new markets in the U.S., expand marketing activities and develop media partnerships that will yield high-quality, compelling content and stories.

Phase one involves research. Tourism Saskatchewan's research agency of record, Environics Research, is leading a study of geographic markets,

industry trends, demographics, travel motivators, trip planning sources and other factors. Surveys with U.S. hunters will yield information about their hunting experiences in Saskatchewan and elsewhere.

Research will be completed in early 2020, and a report delivered in the spring. Findings will shape phase two of the project – implementation of a digital-first, content marketing strategy. With solid data identifying new markets, Tourism Saskatchewan can plan and implement advertising campaigns across digital channels popular with target audiences.

The research-driven marketing strategy will be a valuable resource for planning outdoor media visits and content collection activities. The project will provide support to industry for content development.

For more information, contact Amy McInnis at 306-787-2199, amy.mcinnis@tourismsask.com.

TOP FIVE TIPS FOR WORKING WITH OUTDOOR MEDIA

Good coverage in the media can boost the profile of your business, lodge or region of the province. Tourism Saskatchewan's Travel Media Team works with a variety of media to generate stories about Saskatchewan and its exciting outdoor adventures. Here are some tips to help you connect and work with outdoor media.

1. DO YOUR RESEARCH

Take time to do background work and check out a number of media sources. Make sure that the group or individual whom you are inviting is a good fit for your business. Does their television program and/or social media channels reach your target market? Is their audience your audience? Are they well-established and recognized as a trusted resource by the consumer? If you are uncertain about where to start, contact Tourism Saskatchewan's travel media professionals.

2. ATTEND TO DETAILS

When working with international outdoor writers and media, it is important to know and understand customs and immigration details. Media may require a Letter of Invitation to present at Ports of Entry. If they are transporting firearms, ensure that they complete the required documentation before crossing into Canada. Positive first impressions begin long before they arrive at your property. Go above and beyond to make the travel portion of their trip is seamless as possible.

3. CLARIFY YOUR ROLE AND OFFERING

During preliminary discussions, inform visiting media of all items and services covered in the cost of their trip. Advise them early of their responsibilities, such as obtaining and paying for licences. Clarify any additional charges, such as floatplane costs, enhanced services, etc.

Include clear details in all correspondence and maintain a record of emails and conversations. Clear communication up front is critical and helps to avoid disagreements.

4. BUILD RELATIONSHIPS

Outdoor media have opportunities across the world to hunt and fish. What makes your operation and experience special? Building relationships with media helps to gain their trust. Like you, they want a good return on their investment. Once you have made a positive connection with media, stay in contact with them. An influential spokesperson who is passionate about your experiences and offerings is a valuable source of advertising.

5. EXCEED EXPECTATIONS

Think of outdoor media as adventurers seeking the trip of a lifetime. Like your customers, they enjoy the thrill of a trophy hunt or record-setting catch. But the full experience includes camaraderie in camp, at the lodge, in the boat, in the blind, etc. Make their trip unforgettable by ensuring exceptional quality and services – from meals to accommodations to knowledgeable guides, and more.

To inquire about working with outdoor media, contact Daryl Demoskoff at 306-787-3712, daryl.demoskoff@tourismsask.com.

Saskatchewan Fishing and Hunting Map promotes outdoor adventure

The *2020 Saskatchewan Fishing and Hunting Map* is available for distribution. The map is a popular conversation-starter at outdoor adventure tradeshows and marketplaces.

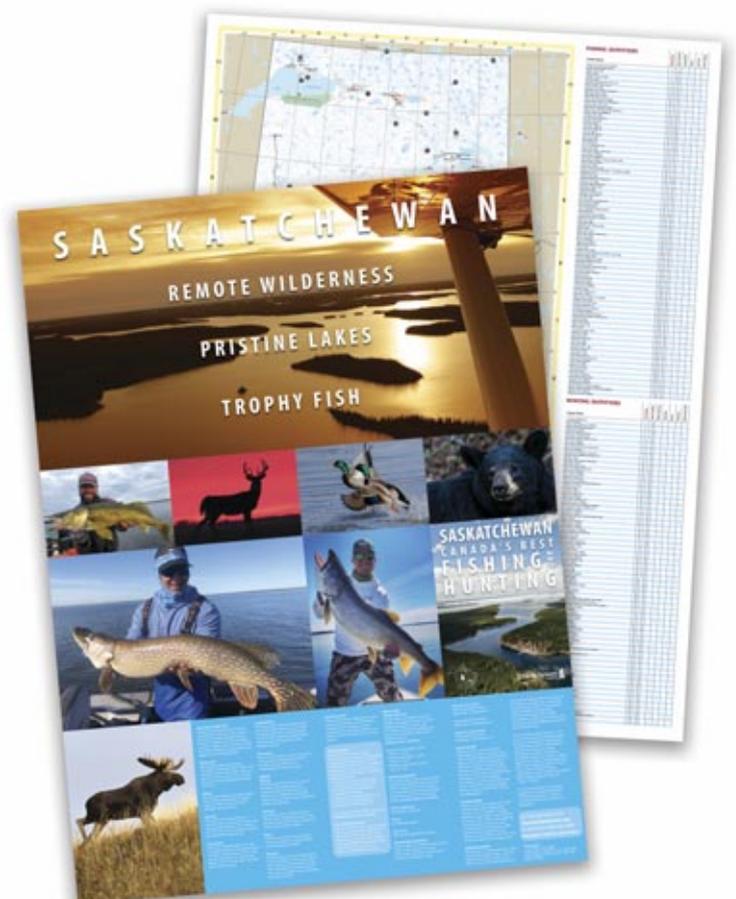
It measures 56 cm (22 in.) x 76 cm (30 in.) but folds neatly into a compact, 16-panel resource that offers quick facts and information about Saskatchewan's world-class fishing and hunting experiences. Impressive photographs highlight the province's pristine wilderness, healthy wild game and bird populations and trophy fish common to Saskatchewan lakes.

Informational copy includes season dates, species detail, how to purchase a licence online, and rules and regulations concerning border crossing and firearms import.

Opposite to the promotional copy and photographs is a map that identifies the locations of 175 Saskatchewan licensed outfitters. A corresponding index categorizes fishing and hunting outfitters (some appear in both sections) and lists the available species.

The colourful, eye-catching piece is easy to transport to tradeshows, offers quick reference to Saskatchewan's fishing and hunting experiences, and gives interested hunters and anglers a colourful take-away to assist them with their travel planning.

To order your copy of the *2020 Saskatchewan Fishing and Hunting Map*, contact Patti Peesker at 306-787-2388, patti.peesker@tourismsask.com.



In Development

Over the Hill Orchards & Winery celebrated as Saskatchewan's first Economusée®



Dean and Sylvia Kreutzer



Over the Hill Orchards & Winery

Sylvia and Dean Kreutzer, owners of Over the Hill Orchards & Winery, have enjoyed a monumental year. In April, they received a Business of the Year Award at the Saskatchewan Tourism Awards of Excellence. On November 20, they were in the national spotlight at the Canadian Tourism Awards.

These events bookend a busy season operating the 20-acre orchard that overlooks the Qu'Appelle Valley, near Lumsden. Activities like the weekly Supper in the Orchard make the property a popular destination in addition to the work of growing and producing delicious local fare.

The Kreutzers took time out to celebrate another milestone when Over the Hill Orchards & Winery was named Saskatchewan's first Economusée® on September 20.

The Economusée® Society Network, founded in Quebec in 1992, has grown into an international movement with Economusées® located across Canada and at least six other countries.

An Economusée® is defined as, first and foremost, an enterprise in the field of crafts or the agri-food sector that employs authentic techniques and know-how in commodity production. Businesses and artisans that have earned Economusée® designation open their doors and workshops to the public, thereby sharing their knowledge, talent and goods in a unique setting. The concept showcases the types of authentic experiences that more and more travellers are seeking, and satisfies a growing interest in purchasing quality local products made with great care and attention.

The Kreutzers have a more personal definition of the term Economusée®, reflected in Dean's remarks when they were awarded the designation on September 20. "It's all about stories – every person, every artist, every entrepreneur has an interesting story, but few opportunities to tell it," he said. "Being an Economusée® is like opening a book that allows you to peek inside and see the history of where we came from and how it has guided us to where we are now; to see what drives us to persevere in challenging times . . . to live and share our dreams and our passions to see what is in store for the future."

Earning the title requires commitment and patience. The first step for the Kreutzers was completing a feasibility study in March 2016; however, the seed was planted earlier. "We were initially inspired to seek Economusée® designation to bring recognition to our story on the national and international stage," Sylvia said. "There is also a certain level of exclusivity – only certain businesses match the Economusée® model. Being different, being unique, has always been a priority for us, so we seemed to fit well with the concept."

The Kreutzers faced a steep learning curve with challenges that ranged from securing funding to shifting from a product-based to destination-focused business model. Their determination, along with assistance from various partners, kept the project on track. "We have strong support from the Economusée® network, who pushed the project forward," Sylvia said.

Close alignment with the Conseil Économique et Coopératif de la Saskatchewan (CÉCS) helped to address obstacles and maintain focus on fulfilling the qualification requirements. "Artisans really need support on the journey to becoming an Economusée® because it is a long and very demanding process, and the expectations are high," Stephane Remillard, CÉCS Economic Development Advisor, said. "The CÉCS plays an important role for Economusée® development in Saskatchewan. We have to develop with the artisans a presentation with which they feel comfortable. We remind them to stay true to themselves because, basically, their products are reflections of their skills and the reason why they were selected in the first place."

"The next Saskatchewan enterprise to become an Economusée® should have an easier time now that there is a blueprint to follow," Dean added. "We hope to see many more businesses in Saskatchewan become an Economusée®."

Destination Development Strategy explained in Q&A statements

The ten-year Destination Development Strategy for Saskatchewan has sparked conversations and inquiries about next steps, industry participation, key considerations and a range of topics.

Demand for the document has been steady since its release in September. Tourism Saskatchewan appreciates the response from industry and welcomes questions about aligning with its goals and priorities. Some of the most common questions are listed below, with answers that will help industry navigate the comprehensive strategy and put solid advice into practice.

1. How is Tourism Saskatchewan presenting the Destination Development Strategy to the industry?

There are several documents available on Industry.TourismSaskatchewan.com. These resources include the full report titled *Delivering on the Promise*, the Executive Summary and two visual infographics. Tourism Saskatchewan's Industry Development professionals have been invited by various communities and regions to present the information at meetings and highlight relevant aspects of the plan.

2. The strategy document is lengthy. What are the key parts that an operator should read?

The Executive Summary is a good place to start. It presents the highlights in an abbreviated format. Operators will benefit from becoming familiar with the four goals:

- Strengthen Saskatchewan's global position through innovative tourism products and experiences
- Increase tourism revenue through new markets, longer visits and greater spending
- Reduce seasonality and spread economic benefits across the province
- Raise awareness of the economic and cultural value of tourism

Five core priorities are also explained in the Executive Summary, with greater detail about each provided within the document. Operators will see where they fit in the bigger picture by diving deep into the four experiential themes: 1) Embracing Saskatchewan life; 2) Pursuing Saskatchewan adventure; 3) Savouring Saskatchewan flavours; and 4) Experiencing Saskatchewan creativity.

3. What else is Tourism Saskatchewan working on that relates to the strategy and may help me as an industry partner?

The strategy largely focuses on the importance of experience development. Tourism Saskatchewan is currently working on creating courses, workshops, workbooks and accompanying materials for industry. These resources will explain how industry can align experiences and products with Saskatchewan's tourism brand, as well as develop new experiences to appeal to key visitor markets.

Immediate outcomes of the strategy are two new pilot programs that were launched on October 1. The Destination Experience Development Program and the Tourism Product Diversification and New Market Development Program have deliverables and requirements tied directly back to the recommendations and themes within the long-term plan.

Read the full document at Industry.TourismSaskatchewan.com/advice-and-resources/destination-development-strategy.

If you have questions about the strategy, contact Kwame Neba at 306-933-5918, kwame.neba@tourismsask.com.

New Marketing and Event Partnership Program streamlines funding applications

Tourism Saskatchewan operates several funding programs that benefit tourism operators, attractions, communities and events. These include the Co-operative Advertising Program (CAP), Community and Marquee Annual Event Programs, Content Development Program, and Marketplace Fund.

A comprehensive review of the above-mentioned programs was recently undertaken to identify areas for improvement. The review examined common aspects of the programs, notably support for marketing activities, and looked for ways to simplify the application process and eliminate duplication.

Insights gathered during the review informed a strategy for merging the steps and requirements of various programs and creating a single application process.

The new Marketing and Event Partnership Program offers the same valuable funding opportunities of previous marketing programs, with a more streamlined approach. Access to the program is through an online portal that enables applicants to ask questions and receive guidance as they complete their submissions.

Program guidelines will be available on Industry.TourismSaskatchewan.com. To inquire about the program, contact Spencer Robertson at 306-787-2302, spencer.roberton@tourismsask.com.

Starting in January, applications will be accepted for the 2020 Spring Intake, which closes on February 28, 2020.

STEC News

Destination Employment participant values program

Destination Employment is a three-year pilot program that links newcomers to Canada with employers in the accommodation industry. The program was introduced in 2018 by its partners – Immigration, Refugee and Citizenship Canada, Hotel Association of Canada and Tourism HR Canada.

The Saskatchewan Tourism Education Council (STEC) leads the program locally, working with the Saskatchewan Hotel & Hospitality Association and other partners, including the Regina and Saskatoon Open Door Societies.

Eighteen Saskatchewan businesses are active employers in the program, which delivered training in tourism-related jobs to 88 participants. Many have found meaningful work in the hospitality industry and see possibilities for career advancement.

Michael Adekanye was recruited for Destination Employment by the Saskatoon Open Door Society. Upon completing the training, he was offered employment at the Super 8 by Wyndham Saskatoon Circle Drive.

From his initial introduction to the program, Adekanye recognized that Destination Employment offered a pathway to fulfilling work and career advancement. "I attended the orientation program and was thrilled to learn that the opportunity was from entry to executive," he said. "This meant that I could begin my career as a Housekeeping Room Attendant and work my way to the top of hotel management. I believed I had the required attitude and mindset to succeed in this career path."

The program is designed to help participants develop skills to succeed in a variety of positions in the hospitality industry. Support is also provided in language proficiency and other key areas.

In his conversation with Tourism Saskatchewan, Adekanye shared his appreciation of the learning components:

"The six weeks of training and practicum that followed was a very rich and rewarding experience, and it proved to be a great preparation for my first job. I learned about the roles and responsibilities of a Housekeeping Room Attendant, safety in the workplace, as well as other important aspects of the job. The training was engaging and fun, and we were also provided with resources for reference and information. Overall, I felt confident, prepared and ready for work at the end of the exercise."

Tourism is about welcoming guests, treating them to remarkable hospitality and experiences, and turning them into loyal, repeat visitors. Professionalism and pride in the workplace are key to meaningful first impressions and exceptional customer service.

"During the training, the emphasis was placed on being professional and having the right attitude at work," Adekanye said. "I have received compliments for the quality of my work. Currently, I am receiving training for a supervisor position and it is still my first month at work. I am truly excited about the future. I would say that with the right attitude and hard work, anyone can begin their career in this profession."



Top: Michael Adekanye (centre) and Destination Employment classmates in Saskatoon
Bottom: Destination Employment participants in Regina

Brenda Robertson, Tourism Saskatchewan's Workforce Development Consultant, works with employers, partners and participants to ensure seamless delivery of the program in Saskatchewan. For information, contact Robertson at 306-933-7466, brenda.roberston@tourismsask.com.

Outstanding Journeypersons in tourism trades honoured

Ivy Castro and Torin Locke were among the 33 new journeypersons honoured at the 19th annual Apprenticeship Awards, hosted by the Saskatchewan Apprenticeship and Trade Certification Commission on November 1 in Regina. The awards recognize individuals who achieve the highest marks on the certification exam in their designated trades.

Castro received the Outstanding Journeyperson Award in the Guest Services Representative trade. She enjoys serving on the front lines of tourism and is employed at Days Inn Regina Airport West.

Committed to providing exceptional customer service, Castro finds fulfilment in her work and in helping others. "I always end up sleeping with a smile, because I did everything to my ability and I made people happy today," she said.

Castro emphasizes that "education is a continuous process" and hopes that her accomplishment will inspire others to pursue learning opportunities.

Locke was named Outstanding Journeyperson in the Food and Beverage Person trade. A self-professed "jack of all trades," Locke has extensive experience in the hospitality and construction industries. He is an instructor at Saskatchewan Polytechnic Prince Albert Campus and is pursuing Red Seal chef designation.

"Tourism is a career that you can take wherever you go," Locke said. "It's a great way to finance your travels as you go. See the world, meet people and get paid to do it."

Tourism Saskatchewan extends congratulations to these two impressive journeypersons and wishes them success in their careers.



Mary Taylor-Ash, Tourism Saskatchewan CEO, and Ivy Castro, Outstanding Journeyperson – Guest Services Representative

In the Spotlight

Recipients of the Saskatchewan Tourism Awards of Excellence earn their place in the spotlight by demonstrating exceptional work and a commitment to treating visitors to great service and experiences. Throughout the year, *Going Places* profiles those who took top honours at the Saskatchewan Tourism Awards of Excellence Gala in April 2019. In this issue, Tourism Saskatchewan salutes three award winners.



Kinder Surprises Antiques, Davidson, Gil Carduner Marketing Award

Sponsored by Phoenix Group

Kinder Surprises Antiques has transformed a 100-year-old hip-roofed barn, near Davidson, into an antiques wonderland. By harnessing the power of social media, owner Erin Kinder connects with customers, shares heartwarming stories and encourages people to embark on a road trip. The business welcomes visitors on Sunday afternoons from spring until fall. The company's marketing conveys the charm and feeling of living in rural Saskatchewan through compelling content, videos and photographs. In addition to highlighting the calm, stress-free pace of country life, messages promote "girl power." Advertising and posts are created with an 88 per cent female demographic in mind. Activities on Facebook and Instagram have successfully reached the desired audience. Sales have increased by 25 per cent annually since the business started in 2014. Check out the surprises at facebook.com/KinderSurprisesAntiques.

Watrous Manitou Marketing Group, Watrous, Fred Heal Tourism Ambassador Award

Sponsored by Wanuskewin Heritage Park

The Watrous Manitou Marketing Group, a partnership between the Town of Watrous and Resort Village of Manitou Beach, promotes tourism, economic and community development. With one full-time employee, one part-time and a seven-member volunteer Board of Directors, the group has worked tirelessly to revitalize the area into a major tourism destination in rural Saskatchewan. Initiatives undertaken by the group include developing a long-term community tourism plan, branding activities, support of education and training opportunities for local businesses, aggressive marketing plans, new product development initiatives and implementation of a destination marketing program for sustainable growth. This program has also helped to increase the area's marketing reach, secure a strong position within the Saskatchewan travel market, and create long-term financial stability for the destination area. As a result of the efforts of the Watrous Manitou Marketing Group, the region continues to experience an increase in visitation, with many businesses recording record numbers of visitors year over year. Visit watrousmanitou.com – the complete "guide to unsinkable experiences."

Robin and Arlene Karpan, Saskatoon, Travel Media Award

Sponsored by Vendasta

Robin and Arlene Karpan are travel writers, photographers, book publishers and bloggers specializing in Saskatchewan travel. They are authors of 15 books, including *Saskatchewan's Best Scenic Drives*, *Photographer's Guide to Saskatchewan*, *The Great Saskatchewan Bucket List* and *Northern Saskatchewan Canoe Country*, among others. Some have won awards and others have become Canadian bestsellers. Book sales are well over 100,000 copies. In 2018, the Karpans released *Saskatchewan's Best Scenic Drives*, a 208-page guidebook with 185 colour images and 42 maps showcasing the most spectacular road trips in the province. The book's release sparked extensive media coverage and quickly landed it on Saskatchewan bestseller lists. In addition, the Karpans highlighted Saskatchewan's natural beauty in *The Canadian Nature Photographer*, *CAA Saskatchewan Magazine*, *The Western Producer*, as well as on Photojourneys.ca, their popular travel blog. Their photography has twice graced the cover of *Canadian Geographic* and was featured on a Canada Post stamp. For more about the Karpans and their work, visit parklandpublishing.com.

Tourism Trends

Saskatchewan positioned to attract shoulder season travellers



Greenwater Lake Provincial Park

In 2018, Destination Canada (DC) released a report titled *Unlocking the Potential of Canada's Visitor Economy*. The study examines five barriers that constrain growth of Canada's tourism sector. First on the list of challenges is the fact that demand for Canadian tourism experiences is geographically and seasonally concentrated. (p8)

Simply put, three provinces see the most travel activity. Ontario, Quebec and British Columbia welcome 85 per cent of visitors to Canada, with the cities of Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver receiving 74 per cent of these visitors. Compression issues in these popular locations open possibilities for other provinces and destinations.

Summer is peak travel season in Canada. Leisure travellers in July-September outnumber those visiting in winter by 3.5 times.

Canada is recognized worldwide for its snowy winters, and there is certainly potential to expand and grow winter tourism. Despite the advantage, only one per cent of visitor activities capitalize on the season.

For tourism operators interested in expanding business and welcoming more visitors, winter and shoulder season (weeks or months preceding or following peak season) are periods to consider.

Many travellers prefer to take trips during shoulder season. Transportation and accommodation costs are often lower, and fewer crowds make visiting popular destinations more inviting. With greater choice and flexibility, the pace of the journey is more relaxed. Opportunities to add experiences or alter schedules, without paying stiff penalties, add to the appeal.

Discount travel offers are another incentive to travel outside of peak season. Operators who inject some imagination and effort into creating travel offers see a boost in visitation numbers. Customer satisfaction and positive reviews may also increase as visitors enjoy an attraction's features with some added bonuses, minus the crowds and lineups.

Shoulder season travel can yield special moments and discoveries that simply are not possible during the excitement and congestion of peak season. These can range from watching spring unfold to witnessing the explosion of fall colours; from sightings of elusive wildlife to the uninterrupted sounds of nature. Later sunrises and earlier sunsets, campsites with fewer than a handful of neighbours, and traffic-free roads and trails are additional draws.

A blog posted on travelalerts.ca weighs in on the advantages, including temporarily claiming your space in an unhurried environment: "When you feel like you can own something entirely to yourself, even for just a moment, it creates the kind of lasting memory that can be hard to come by when you're trying to account for someone else's physical presence or overhearing other people's conversations. Also, the absence of crowds will often put locals in a better mood and they may be more likely to chat or offer up their indispensable advice about where to eat, what to see and why their country is special to them."

International travel trade is another area that caters to shoulder season offerings. In Germany and the U.K., travellers classified as "Learners" are interested in travel during the spring and fall. They are also interested in exploring destinations that offer experiences different from over-travelled locations.

Currently, Saskatchewan's overseas market is small, accounting for less than one per cent of visits to the province. It is a high-yielding market, however, measuring almost three per cent of overnight or longer expenditures. There is considerable opportunity to expand in this area, given compression areas in other parts of Canada that have international tour operators and travellers seeking new discoveries and lesser-known destinations.

Tourism Saskatchewan's new Market Development Program and upcoming Market-readiness Workshops are initiatives aimed at growing the number of export-ready tourism products that will attract international travellers.

Creating travel offers in winter or shoulder season can drive new business and build a steady flow of visitors to a destination or community. Tourism Saskatchewan encourages operators to list unique, appealing offers on its consumer website TourismSaskatchewan.com. The free, year-round service shortens the path to purchase by including a direct link to tourism operators' websites or booking platforms.

Visit TourismSaskatchewan.com/travel-offers for examples. Email information.updates@tourismsask.com to inquire about creating and listing Travel Offers.

Sources:
Destination Canada. *Unlocking the Visitor Economy*, 2018.
TravelAlerts.ca. "Why it's Better to Travel in Shoulder Season," travelalerts.ca/blogs/travel-in-shoulder-season.

TOP FIVE TIPS FOR ATTRACTIVE TRAVEL OFFERS

Are you looking for ways to refresh your business, attract more customers in shoulder season and extend your marketing reach? Packaging tourism products and experiences can create fresh appeal and renew interest in your property. Creating travel offers can drive shoulder season traffic and inspire travel trade to take a serious look at your business. Consider the following tips as you begin designing your travel offers and preparing for more guests.

1. THINK SEASONAL

Travel offers can be effective in filling rooms and driving visitation outside of peak season. Identify opportune periods/dates for extending your operating season or expanding into winter. Look at examples offered by other businesses or destinations. Special occasions, such as holidays, seasonal activities or community festivities and events, can provide interesting themes for designing and packaging your offer.

2. PLAN CAREFULLY

Plan at least six months in advance to ensure that no important features or potential problems are overlooked, and to allow time for promotion. Confirm staffing needs and schedules, and commit to delivering on the promise made to visitors. Match your offer to the needs of the market you are trying to attract (couples, families, outdoor enthusiasts, travel trade, etc.). If you are working with local partners, thoughtful planning and co-ordination are required to align components with the theme of the offer.

3. CREATE A HOOK

Travellers have countless choices when it comes to shopping for vacation packages. To stand out among the competition, you need a hook – a unique or enticing service, activity or package that will attract visitors. If you are feeling really creative, consider adding incentives to make your travel offer even more exclusive and appealing.

4. PROVIDE A UNIQUE CUSTOMER BENEFIT

Consider offering your customers a benefit that they can only receive by purchasing the complete travel offer. These benefits may include a discount on specific services, such as a spa treatment. Another option is to offer a free or exclusive feature, such as complimentary equipment rental – cross-country skis, snowshoes, skates, bicycles, golf carts, etc.

5. PRICE YOUR OFFER COMPETITIVELY

The price of your travel offer must be competitive with other operators, and affordable to your target market. The price should not exceed the cost of buying the package components separately. At the same time, profits need to be substantial enough to make your efforts worthwhile. To help determine the price, research comparable travel bundles. Free items should be accounted for, at cost, to avoid losing money.

The Travel Offers section on TourismSaskatchewan.com is an effective channel for promoting unique, authentic products and experiences in shoulder season and winter. Tourism operators and businesses can include up to four offers with their free online listing.

For more information, visit Industry.TourismSaskatchewan.com/advice-and-resources/travel-offers, or email information.updates@tourismsask.com.

Winterruption delivers a blast of sound in three Saskatchewan cities

Five years ago, the Regina Folk Festival and Saskatoon's Broadway Theatre struck a partnership to take the chill out of winter and fire up music fans in and around the two cities. Winterruption, a multi-day/genre/venue collection of live events, became an instant hit with its impressive lineup and festival-like atmosphere.

As the name suggests, Winterruption shakes up the season and coaxes people out of hibernation for the much-anticipated showcase. "It gives Saskatchewan folks something to look forward to during the longest, coldest, darkest month of the year," Kirby Wirchenko, Broadway Theatre Executive and Artistic Director, said. He stresses that opportunities to see great talent and shows are key to enticing people out of their homes to enjoy festivities in January.

Tourism Saskatchewan is a proud supporter of Winterruption through its Marketing and Event Partnership Program. Federal support from Western Economic Diversification is assisting expansion of the festival in 2020 and 2021.

"In five years, Winterruption in Saskatoon has gone from seven shows over three days in three different venues to the current schedule for 2020 – 26 shows in five days in nine venues, plus two days of free outdoor

events," Wirchenko said, adding that the festival is now in Edmonton and Swift Current, as well.

"The last five years have gone by in a flash of great music and partnerships, both provincially with our friends at the Broadway but also locally with concerts in various venues, outreach in schools and outdoor activities," Sandra Butel, Regina Folk Festival Artistic Director & CEO, said. "We are looking forward to enticing people out of their homes for another great edition of Winterruption in Regina."

Check out winterruptionsk.ca for a full schedule of activities in Saskatoon, January 22-26.

In Regina, the festival takes place January 22-26 at The Exchange and The Artesian. Details are available at reginafolkfestival.com.

Swift Current's first Winterruption festival will be held at the Lyric Theatre on January 23-25. Visit lyrictheatre.ca for the schedule.

Around the Province

A truly wander-ful year!

Submitted by Saskatchewaner Zane Buchanan

It seems like only yesterday that I was scrambling to piece together an application for the 2019 Saskatchewaner position. That applicant feels like an entirely different person from who I am today. 2019 has seen me travel the lengths of the province I call home. I have explored every terrain and immersed myself in every community imaginable. Even so, there's so much more Saskatchewan to see.

I ventured to a couple of northern locations – places like Stanley Mission and Cumberland House. Not only are these communities aesthetically enriching but they also offer insight into Canada's history. On a personal level, I developed such a sense of self on these expeditions, as I became acquainted with the fur trade route and the homeland of my Métis ancestry.

I explored Saskatchewan's "deep south," as well – a land saturated with more diverse landscapes than one could imagine. From the not-so-flat cliffs of Cypress Hills to the palaeo-rich landscapes of Grasslands National Park to the desert ripples of the Great Sand Hills - it's hard to believe that all of these scenes call the same province home.

Despite the photo-ops with which Mother Nature has so graciously presented

Saskatchewan, the real takeaway of my term has been the people I met along the way. Prairie folk have garnered a reputation as being some of the world's kindest people. This has been solidified during my travels.

Throughout my tenure as Saskatchewaner, I have been exposed to many different programs, not-for-profits and events devoted exclusively to the promotion of culture within Saskatchewan. These initiatives set out to not only support the diversity of our province, but celebrate it.

In September, I was connected with SaskCulture, which acted as my liaison to Culture Days – a national celebration of arts and culture. This year marked the 10th anniversary of this web of events, and Saskatchewan has been a devoted player since the beginning. The fun isn't limited to just major cities. Saskatchewan communities from Creighton to Melfort to Lloydminster have been members of the Culture Days family since 2010.

Saskatchewan has used Culture Days as a vehicle to practice reconciliation through creative and immersive mediums. I witnessed this firsthand when friends and I were invited to compete in the annual Tipi Raising Competition at the University of Regina. We didn't take home



Zane Buchanan (left) and friends during Culture Days

a trophy, but had a blast participating in this competitive spin on an important exercise.

My first blog of the term was titled *Saskatchewan: the Most Inviting Place in the World*. I think that this year and the 40,000 km I've racked up in the process constitutes as a fact check for that title. I whole-heartedly confirm it.

Join along on my travels by following me on Facebook ([facebook.com/skwanderer](https://www.facebook.com/skwanderer)), Twitter (@skwanderer) or Instagram (@saskatchewaner).

Keep up with the latest blogs and videos on saskatchewaner.ca and YouTube ([youtube.com/user/skwandererofficial](https://www.youtube.com/user/skwandererofficial)).

New ice skating loop the first of its kind in Saskatchewan provincial parks

Submitted by the Ministry of Parks, Culture and Sport

Saskatchewan Provincial Parks are magical places year round, where visitors of all ages can enjoy a range of activities.

New this year is the first ever ice skating loop in a provincial park. The Aspen Campground in Echo Valley Provincial Park will be flooded to create a unique outdoor skating experience. "Skate the Park" will be open on Thursday evenings and Saturday afternoons from January 16-March 19. Two special winter-themed events will be held on January 18 and February 14, offering guided snowshoe hikes and horse-drawn sleigh rides in addition to ice skating.

No services are available outside of these scheduled activities, but park visitors may still skate the loop.

"This winter, we are offering more than a dozen special events in Sask Parks from December until mid-March," Ministry of Parks, Culture and Sport Assistant Deputy Minister Jennifer Johnson said. "We want to show residents and visitors alike that winter in our parks can be full of adventure, too. From skating, to snowshoeing, the way to survive winter in the prairies is to embrace it."

Upcoming events include a festival of lights, an evening candle-lit ski, plus cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, tobogganing and ice fishing. Attendees will be encouraged to participate in a Collect & Win contest,

where a stamp will be given for each winter event attended. Two stamps will enter participants into a draw for a Sask Parks prize package.

Mark your calendar:

2019

Festival of Lights, Pike Lake Provincial Park, December 19-21
Festival of Lights, Candle Lake Provincial Park, December 20-31

2020

New Year's Day Tobogganing Party, Cypress Hills Interprovincial Park, January 1
Tracks and Crafts, Meadow Lake Provincial Park, January 11
Snowshoe Through Time, Last Mountain House Provincial Park, February 1
Candle-Lit Ski, Moose Mountain Provincial Park, February 14
Winter Fun Day, Buffalo Pound Provincial Park, February 15
Winter Fun Day, Douglas Provincial Park, February 23
Winter by the Lake, Great Blue Heron Provincial Park, March 7
Winter Carnival, Duck Mountain Provincial Park, March 14
Winter Escape, Saskatchewan Landing Provincial Park, March 14
Learn to Ice Fish, Blackstrap Provincial Park, March 21

For more details, visit saskparks.com and select Activities, or follow Sask Parks on Facebook ([facebook.com/saskparks](https://www.facebook.com/saskparks)).

Meewasin marks 40 years with gala celebration



Saskatoon River Landing – then and now

Candace Savage, 2019 Meewasin Conservation Award recipient

In September, friends and supporters of Meewasin Valley Authority celebrated 40 years of leadership and dedication to conserving the natural and cultural beauty and assets of the South Saskatchewan River Valley. A gala evening in Saskatoon was an occasion to reflect on accomplishments that have enabled the valley to flourish and maintain a respectful balance between conservation and development efforts.

Through Meewasin’s work and oversight, the valley is a defining feature in the Saskatoon and area landscape, and benefits tourism on many levels. Hundreds of acres of protected habitat, lush green space and more than 80 kilometres of primary and secondary trails provide opportunities to explore and enjoy nature. These features enrich the quality of life for Saskatoon and Saskatchewan residents.

“The 40th anniversary gala was an important fundraiser and an opportunity to bring back key leaders who championed the concept and drove efforts for Meewasin to become an entity through its 100-year plan,” CEO Andrea Lafond said.

A gala highlight was the presentation of the Meewasin Conservation Award to Candace Savage, award-winning author and dedicated Meewasin advocate. The annual award recognizes leadership and commitment that advances goals and enables the valley to be a welcoming place where nature and human activity can co-exist.

Lafond shared preliminary details about new features that will enhance Meewasin experiences. A series of interpretive panels linked to a digital platform will be created.

These are made possible through support from Western Economic Diversification and partners that include Whitecap Dakota First Nation and Wanuskewin Heritage Park.

“The panels will enhance storytelling and help navigate our youth through the history of our region,” Lafond said. “The primary stories will centre on Indigenous history, both First Nations and Métis, within the South Saskatchewan River Valley system. It is a two year project, starting with community engagement sessions to determine content for the panels and how we will share the history of the valley locally and with tourists.”

Enjoy Meewasin in winter

Temperatures drop, frost naturally decorates the trees and bikers mount their fat tires – these are signs that winter is here. The Meewasin Valley transitions into a snowy, picturesque fantasyland with an assortment of activities to celebrate the season.

What’s not to love about skating on the Meewasin outdoor rink while a bonfire lights up Kiwanis Park North? Meewasin hosts multiple skating parties, which offer refreshments and always feature something unique.

Another cherished winter experience is a visit to Beaver Creek Conservation Area, located 13 km south of Saskatoon. Enjoy spectacular views of the

area where prairie creek meets river. After taking in the scenery on one of the multiple groomed hiking trails, try your hand at feeding the black-capped chickadees who call the area home.

Breathtaking ice patterns on the South Saskatchewan River are visible from almost anywhere along the Meewasin trail, which is maintained and cleared all year. Experience the wonderland vibes in areas with overhanging trees, like Cosmopolitan Park on the east side of the valley or the Silverwood Dog Park trails in the northwest. Groomed cross-country ski trails are popular routes for exploring the valley and experiencing its charm in winter.



ExploreSask Photo Contest showcases impressive talent and images

Tourism Saskatchewan extends congratulations to the winners of the 2019 ExploreSask Photo Contest. The competition, launched in June, received more than 4,500 entries by the September 15 submission deadline.

A panel of judges selected the winning photograph in each category, along with additional photographs that merited honourable mention. Once again, the impressive quality of the entries presented judges with a challenge. The selected photographs capture the essence of Saskatchewan – its extraordinary natural beauty, breathtaking landscapes, unique travel experiences, and the remarkable spirit of its people.

Visit TourismSaskatchewan.com/photo-contest to view the category winners and honourable mentions.

Grand Prize Winner

Danielle Bergen, Drake, SK

People

Winner: Danielle Bergen, Drake, SK

Honourable Mention: Emory Keller-Kurysh, Saskatoon, SK; Tracy Kerestesh, Melville, SK; Gwen Nesvold, Assiniboia, SK; Lisa Rachul, Saskatoon, SK

Places

Winner: Indrasish Banerjee, Regina, SK

Honourable Mention: Chris Attrell, Shaunavon, SK; Cam Barlow, Swift Current, SK; Colleen Edwards, Herbert, SK; Donald Johnston, Regina, SK; Michael St. Laurent, Moose Jaw, SK

Prairie

Winner: Jeff Wizniak, Saskatoon, SK

Honourable Mention: Scott Hryciuk, Saskatoon, SK; Tracy Kerestesh, Melville, SK; Jessica McKinnon-Fehler, Qu'Appelle, SK; Amanda Shalovel, Saskatoon, SK

Water

Winner: Cameron Kraft, Vancouver, BC

Honourable Mention: Jonathan Dunn, La Ronge, SK; Bob Ferguson, Saskatoon, SK; Corey Hardcastle, Air Ronge, SK; Braeden McKay, Martensville, SK; Dale White, Saskatoon, SK

Wildlife

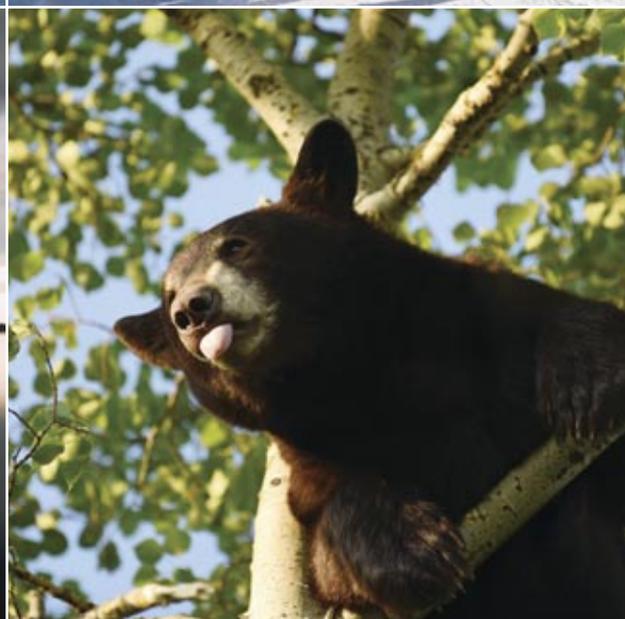
Winner: Jennifer Hanlin, Whitewood, SK

Honourable Mention: Cam Barlow, Swift Current, SK; Angie Carver, Cochin, SK; Tom Fulcher, Silton, SK; Jenny Hagan, Eatonia, SK

Woods

Winner: Nichole Huck, Regina, SK

Honourable Mention: Jason Eustacio, Saskatoon, SK; Paula Gerein, Edmonton, AB; Nicole Ladouceur, Saskatoon, SK; Kosala Rajapaksha, Saskatoon, SK; Michael St. Laurent, Moose Jaw, SK

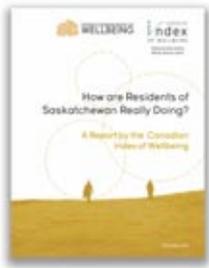


Top row, left to right: Danielle Bergen (Grand Prize Winner/People); Indrasish Banerjee (Places); Jeff Wizniak (Prairie)
Bottom row, left to right: Cameron Kraft (Water); Jennifer Hanlin (Wildlife); Nichole Huck (Woods)

Here & There

Saskatchewan's heritage recognized as a national treasure

The National Trust for Canada recently honoured Saskatchewan with two prestigious awards. Heritage Saskatchewan received a 2019 Governor's Award and the Town of Maple Creek received the Prince of Wales Prize.



Heritage Saskatchewan is forging new paths for the heritage movement. Through a partnership with the Community Initiatives Fund, it released the *Saskatchewan Index of Wellbeing* (SIW) report in the fall.

The SIW measures the quality of life and wellbeing of Saskatchewan citizens. The index informs holistic approaches to community and policy development. This information fosters understanding of the impact of heritage in the lives of Saskatchewan people.

"The SIW data, when combined with the GDP, provides a more comprehensive picture of wellbeing," Ingrid Cazakoff, CEO of Heritage Saskatchewan, said. "Through our partnership with the CIF, we see the Index as a means to encourage holistic, multi-sectoral, solution-oriented conversations and actions, and this evidence-based information will be used by our organization as a means to further connect heritage to wellbeing."

The Prince of Wales Prize recognizes exemplary heritage stewardship and bringing heritage to life through political will, good policy-making and effective citizen engagement. This impact is obvious in Maple Creek, where heritage conservation fueled a regional tourism boom.

Passion for heritage is at the heart of the town's revitalization and tourism success. The Maple Creek community fundamentally embraces the connection between conservation and economic and tourism development. As a result, a commitment to preserving heritage helped to diversify Maple Creek's economy.



Ingrid Cazakoff and Royce Pettyjohn accept awards on behalf of Heritage Saskatchewan and the Town of Maple Creek.

Formal municipal plans for heritage development and tax incentives for heritage building rehabilitation fueled rejuvenation efforts and inspired locals to initiate new projects. New businesses, cultural festivals and other tourism activities followed, creating even more opportunity for investment and job creation. As a result, Maple Creek became a model for heritage-led community development and one of Saskatchewan's flagships for heritage conservation.

Moose Jaw wins Marketing Canada Award

In September, the City of Moose Jaw was among recipients of the prestigious Marketing Canada Awards, presented by the Economic Developers Association of Canada (EDAC). Moose Jaw took the top honour in the Event category for its response to the Mac the Moose controversy. An international clash began in January when the iconic figure lost its distinction as World's Tallest Moose Statue to the luminous sculpture Storelgen, in the town of Stor-Elvdal, Norway. Moose Jaw stoked the friendly dispute in an imaginative and entertaining social media campaign that gained widespread attention. In just two months, the effort achieved nearly one million mentions on social media. A report commissioned by the city calculated the value of activities as worth \$6.3 million in international media coverage and \$1.1 million in social media coverage. Mac the Moose reclaimed its former title in October when the statue was fitted with a new set of antlers. Mac stands tall and proud at 10.36 metres, compared to Storelgen's height of 10.1 metres.

New Watrous Manitou Beach Heritage Centre opens

Main Street in Watrous gained a welcome addition when the new Watrous Manitou Beach Heritage Centre opened in the summer. The centre is dedicated to the preservation of artifacts and archives meaningful to the communities and surrounding area. Displays reflect pre-settlement history, the railway era, CBK radio history and a variety of themes. Collections include detailed railway and architectural models by Orin McIntosh. Staffed by volunteers, the centre is open during the winter on Fridays and Saturdays, from 1-5 p.m., or by appointment. Its daily schedule will resume in the spring. Visit watrousheritage.ca for more information.

Statistics and Research section featured on Industry.TourismSaskatchewan.com

Tourism Saskatchewan is committed to providing industry partners with high quality and timely data and insights, which help to enhance the effectiveness of marketing and destination development activities in the province.

A new section on Industry.TourismSaskatchewan.com is dedicated to providing industry with timely information and reports that highlight tourism and industry trends, regional tourism activities, labour force statistics, and the results of primary and secondary research projects conducted both internally and by external research partners.

Visit industry.tourismsaskatchewan.com/statistics-and-research often and use the tools and reports provided to inform business decisions.

Going Places is available online.

Issues of the popular industry newsletter (dating back three years) are posted on Tourism Saskatchewan's industry website. To view, download or print past issues, visit Industry.TourismSaskatchewan.com/news/going-places-newsletter.

Industry Events, Opportunities and Resources

INDUSTRY EVENTS

Safari Club International
January 9-12, 2020Dallas, TX

American Bus Association Marketplace
January 10-14, 2020Omaha, NB

International Media Marketplace
January 22-23, 2020New York, NY

Grand Rapids Ultimate Sport Show
March 19-22, 2020Grand Rapids, MI

HOST Saskatchewan Conference
April 2, 2020Regina

Saskatchewan Tourism Awards of Excellence
April 2, 2020Regina

Rendez-vous Canada
May 5-8, 2020Quebec, QC

INTAKES AND DEADLINES

Saskatchewan Tourism Awards of Excellence nomination deadline:
January 24, 2020

Information at Industry.TourismSaskatchewan.com/industry-events-and-presentations/saskatchewan-tourism-awards-of-excellence

Marketing and Event Partnership Program intake deadline: February 28, 2020
Information at Industry.TourismSaskatchewan.com/apply-for-funding

FREE online listings offered to tourism operators

Saskatchewan tourism operators, including businesses, attractions, accommodations, communities, etc., are encouraged to take advantage of FREE listings on Tourism.Saskatchewan.com.

Extensive research of key tourism markets confirms that the majority of travellers use online sources to find information. Tourism Saskatchewan's consumer website is a valuable resource for vacation planning.

Update your Tourism Profile to ensure that details about your tourism business are current and accurate. For changes to current web listings, contact Tourism Saskatchewan at 1-877-237-2273 or information.updates@tourismsask.com.

Event organizers are encouraged to submit dates and details about festivals, community celebrations and tourism events in 2020. Simply use the submission form located at TourismSaskatchewan.com/things-to-do/events/submit-an-event.

For more information about Tourism Profiles, contact Kathy Rosenkranz at 306-787-2312, kathy.rosenkranz@tourismsask.com.

Is your event listed on TourismSaskatchewan.com?

Tourism Saskatchewan's consumer website, TourismSaskatchewan.com, receives more than 1.5 million visitors annually. The site is a popular resource for vacation planning and researching activities and events in Saskatchewan communities. Posted information ranks highly in Google searches.

Event organizers are encouraged to submit dates and details about upcoming festivals, community celebrations and tourism events. Simply use the submission form located at TourismSaskatchewan.com/things-to-do/events/submit-an-event.

Have dates or details about your event changed? Avoid disappointment and missed opportunities by updating your current information. Submit changes by contacting Tourism Saskatchewan at 1-877-237-2273, information.updates@tourismsask.com.

Return Undeliverable Canadian Addresses
to:

TOURISM SASKATCHEWAN
189 - 1621 Albert Street
Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada
S4P 2S5
E-mail: travel.info@tourismsask.com

TourismSaskatchewan.com
1-877-237-2273

