

1000 ISLANDS

2010 Marketing Plan



1000 Islands International Tourism Council

Background:

The Thousand Islands International Tourism Development Corporation (dba 1000 Islands International Tourism Council) is the direct successor of the Thousand Islands International Council. Together the two corporations have served the tourism promotion interests of the 1000 Islands international region since 1956. Since the beginning, the TIITC has been an international partnership.

The TITDC is a New York State 501(c3) nonprofit corporation, whose largest financial supporters are the Thousand Islands Bridge Authority (TIBA), Federal Bridge Corporation Limited of Canada, and Jefferson County, New York. The Corporation contracts as the official Tourism Promotion Agency for Jefferson County and receives bed tax funds from the county. The TIITC works closely with the Ontario-based 1000 Islands –St. Lawrence Seaway Marketing Partnership to coordinate international marketing efforts.

Through an agreement for staff and services with the TIBA, the Corporation has five full-time staff members, five full-time, seasonal staff members and one part-time year-round staff member. Its overall budget for 2010 is about one million dollars USD.

The mission of the TIRTDC is development, promotion, enhancement and retention of the tourism industry and its associated employment base within the territory encompassing generally the County of Jefferson in the State of New York, an area of approximately the same size in the southern portion of eastern Ontario, Canada, abutting the St. Lawrence River and approximately opposite Jefferson County, but extending slightly farther both easterly and westerly for the overall economic benefit of the region.

Key program objectives are:

- Create unified marketing effort for the 1000 Islands bi-national region
- Maintain core visitation in traditional tourism seasons
- Attract new visitors to area
- Lengthen average stay, increase average spending
- Promote cross-visitation of communities and attractions within region
- Develop traffic in shoulder and "off" seasons
- Support health and growth of local tourism businesses
- Support introduction new tourism products
- Encourage investment in tourism in region

The 1000 Islands Regional Tourism Development Corporation (dba 1000 Islands International Tourism Council) is governed by a nine-member board of directors. The Corporation's principal supporters appoint members to the board. Five members are appointed by the Thousand Islands Bridge Authority and four members are appointed by the Jefferson County Board of Legislators.

Situation

Coming off another soft summer season in 2009 and dealing with the impact of a down economy, tourism in the 1000 Islands Region will likely continue to face significant challenges for 2010. Many operators reported satisfaction with the 2009 season based on lower expectations. A wet, cool early summer in 2009 negatively impacted many outdoor-based operations. The lodging sector tended to perform more positively than recreation providers or attractions, with sales of rooms bolstered by military and other business activity.

As a primarily drive-to destination the price of gasoline is a significant variable in buyer attitude, if not actual expense. The region also attracts an older and retired clientele and the impact of huge reductions in the value of retirement investments may become a significant factor in spending.

The region's vacation home market has slowed, but continues to be relatively strong compared to many other destinations. This stable base of visitors is committed to use of their vacation homes and anecdotal evidence shows that they are hosting more friends and family guests as people look for cost saving vacation alternatives.

The exchange value of the US and Canadian dollars has moved to near par, with the CAD trading at around .95 USD during the fourth quarter of 2009. For New York, this has helped to counter-balance the impact of WHTI implementation. Visitation to New York from Canadian shoppers has been strong, but attracting leisure spending from Canadian markets is still a work in progress after years of a weak Canadian dollar. Northbound tourism to Canada has been negatively impacted by the same factors and has been aggravated by a marketing withdrawal from the US market by many Canadian tourism offices.

Military investment in the region has continued at Fort Drum and more soldiers continue to arrive at the post. Fort Drum is creating a market of VFR and business visitors that performs differently than the traditional geographic base of the region. The region expects continued strong VFR business related to the military.

Fishing and hunting have traditionally been key components of the Region's tourism product mix. Trends in hunting and fishing participation continue to slowly erode and the impacts are felt strongly in the region. The Region is shifting its outdoor recreation marketing to include broader activities such as paddling, hiking, birding, and cycling.

The region does have substantial product offerings for value-conscious consumers. It will work to better leverage its easy and low-cost access to outdoor recreation. The region will also work to better coordinate product offerings in the agri-tourism area.

While key objectives of the marketing campaign will not change at the macro level, implementation of strategies will reflect the current market realities. In general, a greater focus will be placed on near-drive markets. The region will also work to fully exploit "low hanging fruit" opportunities and work to create value-driven offerings in its messages. It is also anticipated that government funding will become scarcer and private buy-in income will be more difficult to raise as businesses face the impact of the economic downturn. With that in mind, the region will also work "guerilla" marketing efforts, including publicity programs, e-mail direct mailings and other low-cost, carefully targeted efforts.

Key objectives of marketing campaign

1. Support tourism spending in traditional summer season and adjacent shoulder seasons

Create a marketing program that drives traffic to the region during the time period in which operators report the majority of earned income. Nearly half of the area's operators reported that 80% or more of their income is earned June-August (2005 survey).

2. Maximize traffic to the 1000 Islands – Seaway Region generated by established travel distribution channels

Maintain active marketing to the travel trade. Assure representation of the 1000 Islands-Seaway Region in materials and sales programs developed by auto clubs; national, provincial and state tourism agencies; and private travel publishers (i.e. Fodors, Mobile, etc.) in both print and electronic media. Build partnerships and on-going relationships within the trade. Work to better position the 1000 Islands-Seaway Region within key travel websites.

3. Increase economic impact of recreational tourism activity, particularly water-based recreation

Organize marketing efforts to enhance sustainable tourism activity across a broad range of recreational pursuits. Strategically pursue enthusiasts through highly targeted marketing channels. This will include niche strategies for fishing, boating and paddling enthusiasts. Fishing is particularly important to the Region's tourism base. About a third of all out-of-state fishing license sales for New York are made in the 1000 Islands – Seaway Region.

4. Exploit strategic niche opportunities

Lead marketing efforts to exploit high ROI niche markets that represent "low hanging fruit" for incremental income to hospitality and tourism businesses in region. Projects identified for 2010 include:

- Military VFR
- War of 1812 Military Heritage
- I-81/401 corridor traffic
- Day visitor traffic from Ottawa and Syracuse areas

Target geographic markets

The 1000 Islands-Seaway Region is traditionally a rubber tire market with over 98% of its visitors arriving by car. The 2009 business confidence survey reinforces the view that near markets can achieve growth in this weak economy with 43% of operators noting an increase in New York visitors during the summer of 2009.

Question: Did you see increases or decreases in the number of visitors from particular markets?

	Quebec	Ontario	Other Canada	New York	Penn	Other USA	Overseas
Saw Large Increase	0%	2%	0%	10%	5%	4%	2%
Saw Some Increase	12%	24%	11%	33%	25%	21%	12%
About the Same	27%	27%	33%	39%	36%	37%	29%
Saw Some Decrease	17%	17%	20%	11%	11%	8%	4%
Saw Large Decrease	2%	4%	2%	1%	5%	5%	4%

Geographic markets identified

- Upstate New York,
Especially I-90 and I-81 corridor communities within 2 hours driving distance. (4.9 million TV households) Driving range: 1-4.5 hours.
- Eastern Ontario and Toronto,
401 Corridor Toronto to Quebec; and 416 Corridor to Ottawa. (4.5 million households in Ontario) Driving range 1 – 4.5 hours.
- Pennsylvania,
I-81 Corridor (1.3 million TV households) Driving range 3-5 hours.
- Montreal,
A-20 corridor (1.4 million households in Montreal) Driving range 1 – 3 hours

Target consumers

Prime target markets for the 1000 Islands-Seaway Region tourism product are households with over \$75,000 incomes, with an age demographic in the 35-55 range, especially couples without children.

The TIRTDC 2007 survey of businesses showed that couples currently comprise the most common traveling party in the region. Further, small groups of friends and relatives are an important segment.

Thinking about your customers, please estimate how many fit into the following type of groups?

	Under 15%	16% to 30%	31% to 45%	46% to 60%	61% to 75%	76% to 90%	Over 90%
Single individuals	62%	19%	7%	7%	4%	1%	0%
Couples	8%	20%	18%	20%	15%	10%	9%
Families with children	22%	22%	19%	19%	9%	8%	1%
Small groups of friends/relatives	31%	30%	14%	12%	8%	6%	1%
Large groups	71%	15%	6%	3%	3%	2%	1%

Income:

Key markets in Ontario have some of the highest incomes in Canada, with median family income in Ontario urban areas running about \$12,000 higher than Quebec urban families. The median family income in Ottawa is around \$64,000. This provides the region with a substantial pool of affluent prospects. It also means that these markets have the means to select longer-haul competitive destinations.

In recent years, the relative income of Ontario markets and New York markets was fairly similar when adjusted for exchange rates. With increased value of the Canadian dollar, Ontario urban markets are now relatively more affluent than Upstate New York cities. This income pattern, combined with pricing differentials between Ontario and New York has attracted value-seeking travelers to New York.

The reality is that many of the DMAs within the NY/PA geographic markets have household incomes well below the national average. This reduces the opportunity for high-end product offerings and increases the attractiveness of less expensive options, such as camping and short weekend trips to the 1000 Islands region.

Age:

Key markets in NY/PA have increased in relative age over time at a rate greater than the national average. For example, 8% of the Ottawa market is over 65, while 13% of the Syracuse CSA is over 65. This reality must be acknowledged and dealt with in marketing. Operators in the region report an aging clientele and much of the product in the region is more attractive to an older audience.

Family:

Family tourism the 1000 Islands-Seaway Region is constricted by school calendar scheduling in New York State and Ontario. Students begin school shortly after Labor Day and finish at the end of June, making July and August the only available warm-weather months for family tourism. However, Pennsylvania does have districts that end the school year by the beginning of June, presenting an opportunity for early season family vacations.

Psychographic

Various lifestyle segmentations have been used by travel researchers, making it difficult to communicate a standard of definition lifestyle segmentation. Using CLARITAS PRIZM categories, the most closely targeted groups for the 1000 Islands Region are:

The Affluentials

“The six segments in The Affluentials are one socioeconomic rung down from the Elite Suburbs—with a 25 percent drop in median income—but their residents still enjoy comfortable, suburban lifestyles. The median income in S2 is nearly \$60,000, the median home value is about \$200,000, and the mostly couples in this social group tend to have college degrees and white-collar jobs. Asian Americans make up an important minority in these predominantly white segments. As consumers, The Affluentials are big fans of health foods, computer equipment, consumer electronics and the full range of big-box retailers.”

The Middleburbs

“The five segments that comprise Middleburbs share a middle-class, suburban perspective, but there the similarity ends. Two groups are filled with very young residents, two are filled with seniors and one is middle-aged. In addition, S3 includes a mix of both, homeowners and renters as well as high school graduates and college alums. With good jobs and money in their jeans, the members of Middleburbs tend to have plenty of discretionary income to visit nightclubs and casual-dining restaurants, shop at midscale department stores, buy dance and easy listening CDs by the dozen and travel across the U.S. and Canada.”

Key attributes / regional attractions to be emphasized in marketing

The 2009 tourism business survey asked the importance of various activities in attracting visitors to the region.

The results illustrate that fishing and boating remain very important to a large percentage of businesses in the region. Sightseeing and historic sites also score well as attractors. With these results in mind, the Region will continue to focus on product messages that put water access and heritage sites in the forefront.

	Most Important	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Marginally Important	Not at all Important
Fishing and boating	41%	45%	10%	3%	1%
Other outdoor recreation	18%	48%	25%	8%	1%
Sightseeing	24%	51%	17%	6%	2%
Visiting historic sites	16%	31%	30%	20%	3%
Attending cultural/arts events	10%	20%	31%	26%	13%
Attending sports events	2%	14%	21%	27%	35%
Shopping	4%	34%	34%	20%	8%

Product Message: *Majestic Waterways*

Waterfront & Rural Communities

Customers are attracted to authentic experiences in waterfront and rural areas that offer a relaxed atmosphere, traditional downtowns, and access to water and agri-tourism activities.

Scenic Touring

Scenic boat tours, auto tours and cycling along the waterfront and through the countryside are mature products that continue to perform well.

Water-based Recreation

Freshwater boating, fishing, diving, and paddling all represent premier-quality destination products that can be marketed to enthusiasts on a regional and national basis.

Product Message: *Authentic Heritage*

Historic Attractions

Architectural, maritime and military heritage sites abound in the region. While there are only a few premier sites, a critical mass of historically significant sites create a worthwhile experience for the historic traveler. During 2010, plans will continue to be laid for bi-centennial promotions related to the War of 1812.

Cultural Connections

Farm-based attractions, local artisans and environmental sites reflect the cultural roots of Northern New York and Eastern Ontario. The rural countryside and small communities of the region offer authentic experiences.

Competitive advantages

Authenticity

The region presents itself as an authentic experience in contrast to artificial/theme park-type experiences offered by high-volume developments. The sense-of-place presented by is highly valued by loyal customers and proves intriguing to new prospects.

Sustainable Development

The natural progression of community-based, entrepreneurial investments in tourism in the region has created a sustainable tourism industry. Visitors looking for a tourism experience in harmony with communities and the environment will find the 1000 Islands Region attractive.

High-quality water recreation

Freshwater fishing, boating, paddling and diving experiences in the region are recognized as superior by experts. Enthusiasts basing their vacation plans on participation in these activities find the Region a highly competitive destination.

Market access

The region has a remote feel, but is very accessible by highway with relatively short drives from many large markets.

Major Supporters and Cooperative Partners

Thousand Islands Bridge Authority – Federal Bridge Corporation, LTD

An agreement for staff and services between the Thousand Islands Bridge Authority and the Thousand Islands Regional Tourism Development Corporation provides the administrative staff and office facilities for the TIRTDC. Under the auspices of the Bridge Authority, funding is also forwarded from its Canadian operating partner, the Federal Bridge Corporation Limited (Canada). This “in-kind” investment represents the largest single source of funding for the TIRTDC. This plan anticipates funding from the TIBA/FBCL at \$360,000 for administrative staff, occupancy and Visitors Center operations.

Jefferson County, New York

The TIRTDC is the official tourism promotion agency for Jefferson County, New York. As such, the County has annually provided the TIRTDC with funding as an authorized agency. The funding level for 2010 is budgeted at \$280,000.

Thousand Islands Marketing Partnership

Tourism and economic development organizations in Leeds-Grenville and Stormant-Dundas Counties pool funding to support 1000 Islands Marketing and tourism development through the Thousand Islands Marketing Partnership. This budget anticipates TIMP support for several projects, most notably underwriting the production and distribution of the International Travel Guide. Major structural changes in the organization and funding of regional tourism marketing in Ontario make it difficult to project available support in the coming year. This plan anticipates \$52,000 in direct and in-kind support from the TIMP.

1000 Islands – Seaway Region, New York

The State of New York is divided into 11 Tourism Region. The 1000 Islands-Seaway region includes the counties of Jefferson, Oswego and St. Lawrence. The region functions as an ad hoc committee of the three official tourism promotions agencies representing each county, with the TIRTDC providing administration of the regional programs. Assuming final award of funding by the State of New York, the three counties will pool about \$240,000 for regional advertising and promotion, with \$80,000 forwarded from Oswego and St. Lawrence County agencies representing a portion of their matching fund awards along with their local match (50/50).

New York State Division of Tourism

New York State legislates a Tourism Matching Funds program that provides marketing project funding to each county tourism promotion agency under a defined set of guidelines. Assuming final award of funding by the State, this plan anticipates \$89,000 from the State of New York.

Community Tourism Marketing Agencies and Private Business and Organizations

Local communities in the 1000 Islands International Region support the TIRTDC in a number of different ways through buy-ins to marketing projects. For example, the City of Watertown annually considers an overall buy-in contract. Several tourism offices coordinate multi-page purchases of cooperative ads in the Travel Guide. Also, several tourism offices and municipalities support the annual summer media campaign. This plan anticipates that these partnership buy-ins will total \$215,000 in 2010.

Marketing Project Plans

Advertising:

Expected Achievements:

- Enhance visitation during core summer season
- Generate 12,000+ new, qualified leads for actionable offers
- Drive increased traffic to websites
- Develop interest in core recreational products

Metrics:

- Inquiries (phone & email)
- Web traffic trends related to ads (landing sites)
- VOD traffic data
- Qualitative partner feedback

Print Media

Consumer Magazines

Participation in the TPA/I Love NY cooperative magazine ads

- *National Geographic Traveler (May-June)*
- *New York Times Magazine*
- *AAA/CAA Magazines*

Annuals & Travel Directories

Placements will be made in select annual guides and travel directories that match demographic and geographic targets.

Titles include:

- *Seaway Trail Journey Magazine*
- *Central NY Summer Guide*
- *Destinations of NYS (languages)*

Fishing and Boating Niche Media

Purchase will be made from January – December in key fishing and boating niche publications in cooperation with regional partners.

Titles include:

- *Field & Stream (national destinations section)*
- *Game & Fish (Eastern Edition)*
- *Great Lakes Scuttlebutt*

On-Line/Digital

As part of its summer campaign, the Region will place banner advertising on sites matching its demographic and geographic targets. Geographically targeted sites will likely be those that are affiliated with media outlets. Thematically targeted sites will be chosen based on their appeal to targeted enthusiasts.

Example sites include:

- Syracuse.com Banner Ads
- Canoe.ca Banner Ads

The TIRTDC will make modest investments in Google Ad words to assure visibility of the region in key searches.

Television

Television will be purchased on both cable and broadcast in near-drive markets, including

Central New York

- Rochester DMA – 390,590 homes
- Syracuse DMA – 388,000 homes

Pennsylvania

- Wilkes Barre/Scranton DMA – 594,570 homes
- Harrisburg /Lancaster DMA – 738,880 homes

Ottawa

- Ottawa/Gatineau Region – 1.4 million population

The television cooperative program will be designed to include partner messages within a regional image “doughnut.” Where available, the buy will take advantage of video-on-demand and digital subscriber direct inquiry services to enhance the effectiveness of the campaign.

Collateral

Expected Achievements:

- Deliver quality, compelling messages to 325,000 leads
- Conversion of leads to visits
- Build cross-visitation within region

Metrics:

- Consumer surveyed satisfaction levels
- Redemption rates on offers and coupons

1000 Islands International Travel Guide

The International Travel Planner plays an important role in the Corporation marketing efforts. It is mailed to advertising inquiries, given away at sports and travel shows and used in highway information centers in Pennsylvania, New York and Ontario. The Guide is well accepted by advertisers who feel it is an important source of business leads. Investments from public agencies in both Canada and the USA are used to cover distribution costs of a 325,000 copies.

2010 will mark a change in the design of the Travel Guide, with 225,000 copies produced in a 40-page "lure" version that provides overview information and listings of key attractions and points of interest. This version will be used at travel centers and through paid distribution channels. Another 100,000 copies of the Guide produced in an extended 68-page version that includes the extensive listings of the traditional version. It will be used in response to all advertising inquiries and distributed at travel shows.

1000 Islands Fishing & Hunting Guide

The Fishing & Hunting Guide features a directory of guide services in the region, along several overview articles about fishing and hunting in the 1000 Islands. A press run of 15,000 copies is used at sports shows and to fulfill inquiries to niche ads and

1000 Islands Agricultural Tour

The 1000 Islands Agricultural Tour is a special initiative developed in Jefferson County in 2009 as part of an "Explore New York" grant. The brochure provides information about local agricultural attractions to encourage cross-promotion within the group.

Visitor Value Coupons

As part of the summer media campaign fulfillment, a coupon book is provided to seasonal inquiries. Participating business buy coupon space at nominal cost and the 15,000 copies are distributed via mail to summer leads.

Summer Events Tabloid

As part of the summer media campaign fulfillment, an eight-page tabloid is created with extensive listings of summer season events, as well as articles on the major partners in the media campaign. The 15,000 copies are distributed via mail to summer leads.

Visitor Service Collateral

Small runs of collateral such as maps will be made to support visitor services operations.

Fulfillment, Distribution and Direct Mail

Expected Achievements:

- Deliver quality, compelling messages to qualified leads
- Conversion of leads to visits
- Build cross-visitation within region
- Make 40,000+ contacts by direct mail

Metrics:

- Quantified count of inquiries contacted
- Conversion percentages based on sampled follow-up
- Redemption rates on offers and coupons
- Qualitative response from travel trade sales leads

Mailing

An active program of fulfillment to advertising and publicity inquiries provides potential customers with information packages that include travel guides from each participating county and other materials as appropriate to the advertising campaign.

As more consumers use the Internet for travel research, the quantity of leads and mailed kits has fallen. Yet, they remain an important component of the marketing mix.

Over the years, a customer database has been developed by the Region. Currently, about 80,000 leads generated by direct email and phone contacts over the past four years are in the database. Mailing programs will be developed to continue contact with these leads.

Direct mail will also be used as a component of the Lake Ontario Fishing promotion, contacting lead lists in spring 2010.

Distribution

An aggressive distribution plan will be developed employing paid distributors and other outlets to display 1000 Islands materials in key travel locations within New York, Ontario and Pennsylvania.

Travel Trade

Expected Achievements:

- Sustained long-haul group business
- New client day-tour business from near drive markets
- Diversification of itineraries from existing trade
- Contact 2,000+ group leads in North America

Metrics:

- Qualitative feedback on sales calls
- Booked tour data
- Catalog exposure

Trade Shows

The TIRTDC will promote the region to the travel trade through attendance at appointment-taking shows where staff is able to present the 1000 Islands Region to tour operators and group leaders. At many shows, partnership opportunities are offered to private operators. Appointments are followed up with the 1000 Islands Group Tour Planner. The TIRTDC also maintains an online version of the group tour planner www.tour1000.com.

Motor coach Shows & Organizations:

- Pennsylvania Bus Assn. Winter Sales Retreat
- American Bus Association
- Bank Travel
- Heartland Travel Showcase
- Pennsylvania Bus Association Marketplace
- Pennsylvania Bus Association Sales Retreat
- Maryland Bus Owners Association
- New York State Travel Expo
- Ontario Motor Coach Association
- National Tour Association
- RCMA (membership only)

Meetings & Conferences Shows

- Binghamton Business Show
- Reunion Network
- Empire State Society of Association Executives

1000 Islands-St. Lawrence Seaway Region Group Tour Planner, 2010-11 edition

A new edition of the Group Tour Planner will be published in 2010. This edition will depart from the traditional catalog format and be re-designed as a kit that includes a 24-32 page itinerary overview lure piece and a data DVD that includes detailed information on group-friendly attractions, restaurants, inns and services in the region. The DVD will also include a short introductory video, a photo collection and other materials to aid tour operators in selling the region. About 3,000 of the kits will be direct mailed to contacts in the region's operator database.

Internet

Expected Achievements:

- Communicate value propositions to close sales
- Present compelling stories to encourage visits
- Organize information that encourages planning for longer visits
- Surpass 800,000 unique visits to visit1000islands.com
- Grow e-newsletter subscriptions by 15% to 16,000

Metrics:

- Unique visits trends
- Average time spent – use of feature elements trends
- E-newsletter sign-up trends
- Direct inquiry trends
- E-mail opens & click-throughs
- Qualitative partner feedback

Visit1000islands.com

During 2010, continued investments will be made to upgrade visit1000islands.com. The goal will be to better engage visitors with an introduction to the region, playing off of the key marketing themes.

- **On-line reservations**
The Region has contracted with Meridian Reservations System to develop a pan-regional on-line reservations interface. Individual lodging properties, attractions, golf courses and outfitters will be able to subscribe to the service to sell their products.
- **Enhanced video and photography**
During 2010, additional efforts will be made to enhance the site with compelling photography and video content.
- **Language Translations**
During 2010, the Region will explore the feasibility of offering a Francophone version of visit1000islands.com, as well as posting content in Chinese.

Micro-sites

The TIRTDC will continue to use micro-sites and landing sites to support specialty marketing projects and seasonal campaigns. Deals1000.com will provide a micro-site featuring special lodging deals and attraction offers and interfaces with both iloveny.com and getawaynewyork.com for wide distribution of special offers by New York operators.

E-mail Newsletter

The TIRTDC will continue to produce a monthly events and special offers newsletter for email distribution to a double-opt-in list of about 14,000 contacts. The newsletter will focus on promoting major and unique events. Additionally, select special offers will be featured in each edition.

Social Media

The TIRTDC will continue work to place 1000 Islands promotional messages in social media, working with websites such as YouTube; Facebook; and Tripadvisor.

Promotions

Expected Achievements:

- Communicate value propositions to close sales
- Introduce region to recreation enthusiasts
- Capitalize on VFR market

Metrics:

- Quantity of contacts at consumer shows
- Staff a analysis of contact trends at shows
- Business survey feedback

Consumer Shows

Consumer shows continue to be an important opportunity to prospect for visitors. The Region will work to identify the most productive niche markets and geographic regions for its show participation focusing on fishing, sports and boating shows. The Region will actively partner with other organizations to place its literature at shows in a cost-effective manner. The following shows are under contract during the first quarter of 2010.

- Toronto Boat Show
- Western New York Sports Show
- Cleveland Sports Show
- Pentagon Travel Shows
- NYSTVA brochure placement at Shows

Strategic Opportunity Promotions

Military VFR

A second edition of the military supplement to the 1000 Islands International Travel Guide will be completed in the first quarter of 2010. Contacts on post at Fort Drum have been very supportive of the publication and use it frequently. The TIRTDC will also continue to attend the spring and Fall Pentagon Travel Shows and participate in events on post at Fort Drum. The TIRTDC will also work on expanding its partnership to promote to the military VFR market to include Oswego and Syracuse tourism interests as well as areas in Eastern Ontario.

Black River Recreation

Working with the Tug Hill Commission, the City of Watertown, Lewis and Oneida County interests, the TIRTDC will continue to organize marketing projects related to the Black River Blueway initiative. Early in 2010 a new tri-county Black River guide will be completed. Additional work will be initiated on the blackriverny.com website and a publicity kit focusing on the river will be assembled and distributed.

War of 1812 Bicentennial Commemoration

The TIRTDC will continue to work with Ontario and New York interest in identifying marketing opportunities related to the commemoration of the War of 1812 bicentennial. During 2010, it is anticipated that some modest initial marketing projects will be initiated along with planning for more substantial efforts from 2011-2014.

Publicity

Expected Achievements:

- Receive positive coverage of the region in new and niche markets
- Maintain strong image and ample coverage in local, captivated markets
- Assist nonprofit and interest-based organizations with retreat/convention planning

Metrics:

- Print, TV, radio and on-line spots in travel and niche publications
- On-line viewership and social-networking connections
- Referrals

Feature spotlights and other types of “free media” are becoming an increasingly cost-effective way to land positive publicity. Costs are typically limited to staff time and occasional lodging or entertainment, while viewers and readers are anecdotally relying more on trusted information sources.

Media Releases

The TIRTDC will produce and distribute annual notices and newsworthy announcements to regional media.

Media Kits

The TIRTDC will update and distribute general and niche press kits to appropriate media.

Photo and Video Assets

Work will be done to upgrade and refresh image inventory to be provided to travel and niche media. TIITC images are being moved to an on-line storage site for easier access by interested media.

Social media

Efforts will be made to develop presence within on-line communities such as youtube.com and facebook.com and disseminate news and event notices as well as package promotions. Outreach will be made to bloggers with audiences aligned to the 1000 Islands tourism interests.

Visitor Services

Expected Achievements:

- Encourage additional visitor spending through personal contacts
- Expand cross-visitation within region
- Encourage unscheduled stops or returns to the region by pass-through tourists
- Complete personal interaction with 30,000 visitors

Metrics:

- Brochure distribution counts
- Personal assistance tracking
- Toll free tracking

Welcome Center

The TIRTDC will continue to manage the Thousand Islands Bridge Authority's Welcome Center adjacent to its New York toll plaza on US Interstate 81. The Center has traditionally provided personal assistance to between 25,000 and 30,000 travelers annually and distributed hundreds of thousands of regional brochures through its displays. In addition to the staff information counter, the TIRTDC will also stock literature at the two NYSDOT rest areas located on US Interstate 81 in Jefferson County.

Toll Free Telephone

The TIRTDC will continue to provide phone assistance and receive travel inquiries on its toll-free lines at 800-8-ISLAND and respond personally to e-mail inquiries.

Industry Events

To encourage cross-visitation and regional cooperation, a spring Hospitality Expo will be held at Boldt Castle. The Expo will be promoted to hospitality employees as an opportunity to familiarize themselves with area attractions and communities exhibiting at the event. The TIRTDC will also host a spring brochure exchange at the Welcome Center.

Resources

Current economic conditions have created funding challenges as businesses have become cautious with marketing investments and governments are changing tourism programs and dealing with deficit situations. Fortunately, the TIRDTC's major funders, the Thousand Islands Bridge Authority, Federal Bridge Corporation, Limited and Jefferson County are providing stable funding for the 2010 calendar year. Building on that base, the TIRDTC has set a budget goal of \$1,094,000 USD (including custodial funds) in support of this plan.

