

2011 Summer Tourism Season Business Confidence Survey Executive Report



Section One:	Overview and observations
Section Two:	Result tables in percentages
Section Three:	Survey comments

1000 Islands International Tourism Council
P.O. Box 400, Alexandria Bay, New York 13607
P.O. Box 69, Lansdowne, Ontario K0E 1L0
315-482-2520
www.visit1000islands.com
info@visit1000islands.com

more information at www.ticouncil.com

Section One – Overview and Observations

The Survey

The intention of this survey was to gain a general picture of the condition of the tourism industry in the 1000 Islands for the summer season in 2011. It asked businesses to rate their satisfaction with the season's business and compare it to previous years. The survey also asked businesses about their perceptions of the region's tourism business climate looking into the past and future, as well as opinions on the effect of a number of factors related to the tourism business. The survey was very similar to one that has been conducted since 1999.

The Details

The charts included after the narrative detail the percentages of answers for every question.

Questionnaires were mailed in September to the TIITC's database of regional businesses of about 800 and 247 usable questionnaires were returned. The survey does not represent a scientific sample in that it is based on the information voluntarily returned to the TIITC. Given a response rate of over 30%, it does provide a reliable indicator of general business sentiment in the 1000 Islands tourism community.

General Satisfaction

Overall, this year saw a bit less satisfaction with the summer's business than 2010. Disappointment was expressed by 5% more respondents.

Fewer Canadians than Americans had positive feelings about this year's summer season. A more significant divergence of opinion is seen between types of businesses, with 55% of lodging operators saying they were either pleased or very pleased while only 39% of attractions offered the same response.

Considering your own business, how would you rate your feelings about this year's summer season?

	11	10	09	08	07	06	05	04	02	01	00	99
Very Pleased	19%	19%	15%	14%	26%	13%	21%	13%	23%	28%	22%	33%
Pleased	29%	36%	22%	23%	30%	29%	34%	28%	27%	31%	23%	43%
Satisfied	32%	31%	33%	34%	25%	27%	26%	29%	31%	26%	31%	13%
Disappointed	17%	13%	22%	24%	17%	26%	17%	28%	17%	12%	25%	10%
Very Disappointed	3%	2%	7%	4%	2%	6%	2%	2%	1%	1%	0%	2%

	USA	Canada
Very Pleased	21%	17%
Pleased	27%	29%
Satisfied	32%	31%
Disappointed	17%	20%
Very Disappointed	3%	2%

	Attraction	Recreation & Sport	Lodging	Food	Retail
Very Pleased	13%	12%	28%	16%	10%
Pleased	26%	32%	27%	20%	13%
Satisfied	34%	35%	28%	40%	47%
Disappointed	26%	21%	13%	16%	27%
Very Disappointed	2%	0%	5%	8%	3%

General Trend

Comparing year-to-year performance, responses were typically split with fewer seeing 2011 as better than 2010 than saw 2010 as better than 2009. However, the overall trend is similar to the response seen in 2008 and 2009.

Compared to last year, how would you describe your own business for this year's summer season:

	11	10	09	08	07	06	05	04	02	01	00	99
Much Better	7%	13%	9%	8%	15%	5%	14%	11%	6%	15%	13%	25%
Somewhat Better	30%	35%	23%	21%	40%	28%	31%	27%	37%	42%	32%	44%
About the Same	35%	30%	34%	35%	28%	35%	36%	35%	30%	26%	22%	23%
Somewhat Worse	24%	20%	26%	28%	15%	25%	18%	22%	19%	15%	31%	5%
Much Worse	4%	2%	8%	5%	2%	8%	2%	4%	3%	3%	2%	2%

	USA	Canada
Much Better	7%	7%
Somewhat Better	29%	29%
About the Same	36%	39%
Somewhat Worse	24%	23%
Much Worse	4%	2%

	Attraction	Recreation & Sport	Lodging	Food	Retail
Much Better	6%	5%	9%	8%	7%
Somewhat Better	32%	27%	28%	36%	30%
About the Same	36%	36%	36%	32%	33%
Somewhat Worse	23%	31%	21%	20%	30%
Much Worse	2%	1%	6%	4%	0%

Summer Months

The survey asked about the variances in business from month to month. As usual, business got stronger as the summer progressed. As usual July and August performance was strong for the majority of respondents. However early and late season business did not fare as well; only 34% ranked September as either somewhat or very weak and only 26% described June as either fairly or very strong. .

What best describes your business in each summer month this year? (JUNE)

	11	10	09	08	07	06	05	04	02	01	00
Very Strong	6%	12%	10%	11%	12%	8%	8%	7%	7%	12%	8%
Fairly Strong	20%	21%	24%	21%	30%	15%	26%	18%	19%	23%	24%
Moderate	41%	36%	25%	35%	32%	35%	37%	36%	28%	35%	33%
Somewhat Weak	25%	22%	29%	19%	17%	29%	22%	26%	32%	20%	24%
Very Weak	8%	10%	13%	11%	8%	14%	7%	12%	14%	9%	12%

What best describes your business in each summer month this year? (JULY)

	11	10	09	08	07	06	05	04	02	01	00
Very Strong	28%	32%	28%	25%	13%	24%	34%	19%	28%	35%	25%
Fairly Strong	35%	33%	23%	33%	30%	30%	33%	36%	34%	29%	33%
Moderate	25%	24%	27%	24%	32%	25%	23%	27%	24%	20%	19%
Somewhat Weak	9%	8%	15%	11%	18%	16%	8%	12%	11%	12%	20%
Very Weak	3%	3%	6%	5%	9%	5%	2%	5%	3%	3%	3%

What best describes your business in each summer month this year? (AUGUST)

	11	10	09	08	07	06	05	04	02	01	00
Very Strong	30%	37%	29%	34%	46%	29%	34%	25%	37%	36%	33%
Fairly Strong	36%	36%	35%	33%	32%	32%	37%	38%	37%	34%	36%
Moderate	23%	21%	20%	20%	14%	25%	18%	24%	20%	25%	19%
Somewhat Weak	8%	4%	11%	7%	7%	12%	10%	9%	4%	4%	8%
Very Weak	4%	3%	4%	2%	8%	2%	2%	3%	2%	1%	4%

What best describes your business in each summer month this year? (SEPTEMBER)

	11	10	09	08	07	06	05	04	02	01	00
Very Strong	9%	13%	10%	15%	21%						
Fairly Strong	23%	25%	28%	22%	29%						
Moderate	35%	36%	38%	31%	26%						
Somewhat Weak	27%	16%	13%	18%	14%						
Very Weak	7%	11%	11%	9%	9%						

The Past & Future

With a majority (55%) expecting improvements, the tourism community remains bullish about the future of the region. Generally, Canadian responses were more optimistic about the region's future, with twice as many Americans (14%) predicting a decline as Canadians (7%).

Respondents tended to be more optimistic about their own business. For example, 58% of Americans expect improvements in their own business, while 47% expect overall improvement in 1000 Islands tourism business.

Thinking about the next five years, do you believe overall tourism business in the 1000 Islands will?

	USA	Canada	Overall
Improve Significantly	9%	15%	12%
Improve Slightly	38%	49%	43%
Be About the Same	38%	28%	34%
Decline Slightly	12%	6%	10%
Decline Significantly	2%	1%	2%

Thinking about the next five years, do you believe your own business will?

	USA	Canada	Overall
Improve Significantly	13%	19%	15%
Improve Slightly	45%	42%	44%
Be About the Same	36%	32%	34%
Decline Slightly	5%	5%	5%
Decline Significantly	2%	3%	2%

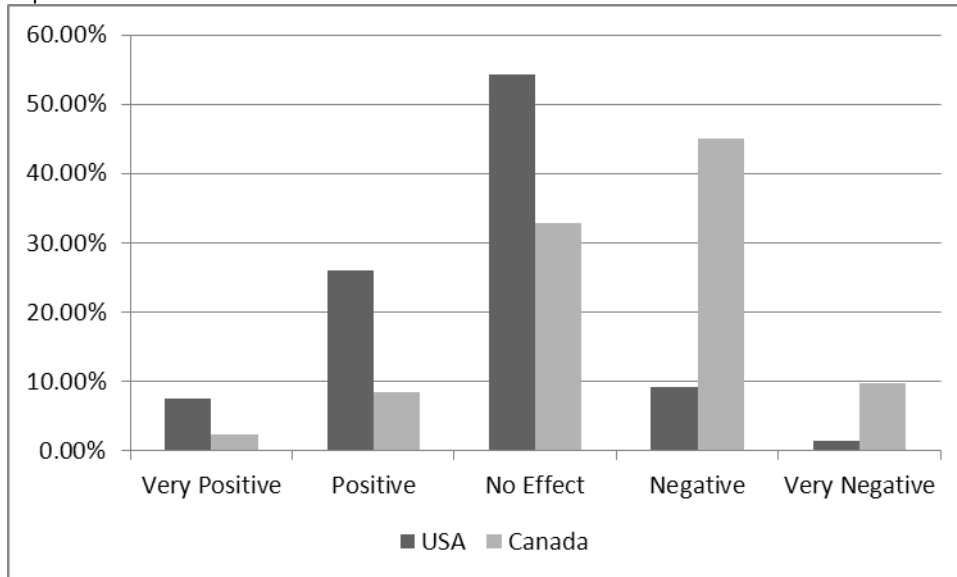
Positive and Negative Effect of Various Factors

Weather

The summer weather was generally warm and sunny in 2011, although the area did experience a wet fall. Three quarters of those surveyed felt this year's summer weather had a positive impact.

US/Canada Dollar Exchange Rate

Although the exchange rate has hovered near par during 2011, "purchasing power parity" has an impact on how Americans and Canadians evaluate the exchange rate's impact. The majority of Canadians (55%) saw it as having a negative or very negative impact, while a third of Americans (34%) saw it as having a positive or very positive impact.



Ease of Border Crossing

40% of those responding continue to see the ease of border crossing as having a negative impact, a number similar to 2010. There is a difference between nations, with 50% of Canadians seeing it as a negative and 34% of Americans view it as a negative. 19% see the ease of border crossing as having a positive impact on their business. It should be noted that anecdotal evidence indicates that, just as a poor economy encourage some people to travel closer to home, some businesses may see a benefit when travelers are reluctant to cross the border.

Gas Prices

After a couple of years of less negative impact, 65% of those responding cited gas prices as either a negative or very negative factor.

Water Levels

Although water levels fell quickly in the fall, compared to the last two years fewer respondents cited water levels as a negative as compared to the past two years.

General Economic Conditions

The economy continued to be seen as bad for tourism, with 63% saying it had a negative effect, which is the largest negative percentage in the history of the survey... Interestingly, 19% felt the economy was having a positive impact.

Internet Marketing and Social Media

This year's survey asked about Internet and social media marketing. While 7% of those surveyed did not complete this question, 96% of those answering indicated that they had a business website.

Facebook and Tripadvisor were also used by a significant number of businesses. Canadians are more likely to use the various Internet marketing outlets listed on the survey.

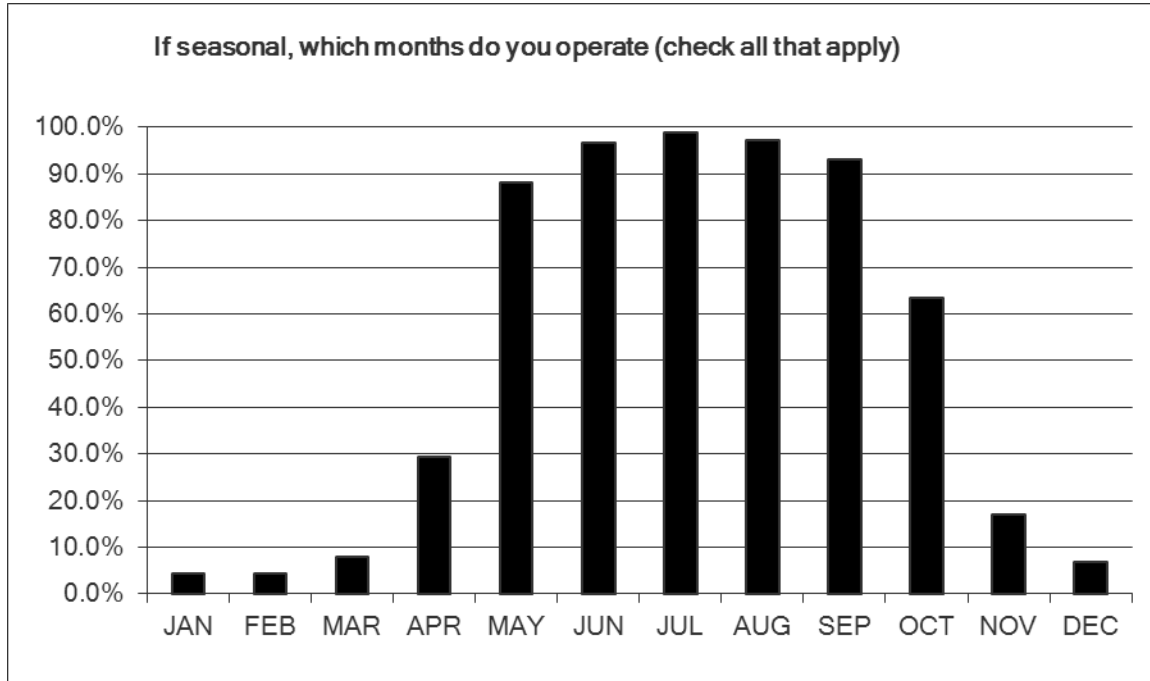
Several businesses also mentioned listings on directory sites (such as visit1000islands.com) and hotlinks from other sites.

	USA	Canada	Overall
Your own website	95.00%	97.40%	95.90%
Mobile site	6.70%	9.10%	7.70%
Banner ads	10.10%	18.20%	13.30%
Paid search (i.e. Google Adwords)	5.00%	9.10%	6.60%
Facebook page	32.80%	37.70%	34.70%
Twitter feeds	4.20%	18.20%	9.70%
YouTube channel	2.50%	6.50%	4.10%
TripAdvisor listing	15.10%	27.30%	19.90%

Seasonality

This year's survey asked about the operating season. Over two thirds of the responding businesses said they operated seasonally.

Nearly all seasonal businesses were open in June, July and August. The majority seasonal businesses were also open in May (88%) and September (63%). A minority were open in April (29%) or November (17%). Fewer than 8% were open some of the winter months (December –March).



Summer Tourism Business Confidence Survey: Trends 1999 - 2011

Result tables in percentages

percentages have been rounded to whole numbers - totals may not add to 100% due to rounding or "no answer" responses

Business satisfaction and perception questions

Considering your own business, how would you rate your feelings about this year's summer season?

	11	10	09	08	07	06	05	04	02	01	00	99
Very Pleased	19%	19%	15%	14%	26%	13%	21%	13%	23%	28%	22%	33%
Pleased	29%	36%	22%	23%	30%	29%	34%	28%	27%	31%	23%	43%
Satisfied	32%	31%	33%	34%	25%	27%	26%	29%	31%	26%	31%	13%
Disappointed	17%	13%	22%	24%	17%	26%	17%	28%	17%	12%	25%	10%
Very Disappointed	3%	2%	7%	4%	2%	6%	2%	2%	1%	1%	0%	2%

Compared to last year, how would you describe your own business for this year's summer season:

	11	10	09	08	07	06	05	04	02	01	00	99
Much Better	7%	13%	9%	8%	15%	5%	14%	11%	6%	15%	13%	25%
Somewhat Better	30%	35%	23%	21%	40%	28%	31%	27%	37%	42%	32%	44%
About the Same	35%	30%	34%	35%	28%	35%	36%	35%	30%	26%	22%	23%
Somewhat Worse	24%	20%	26%	28%	15%	25%	18%	22%	19%	15%	31%	5%
Much Worse	4%	2%	8%	5%	2%	8%	2%	4%	3%	3%	2%	2%

Compared to last year, how would you describe overall 1000 Islands tourism for this year's summer season:

	11	10	09	08	07	06	05	04	02	01	00	99
Much Better	5%	11%	2%	1%	8%	0%	3%	5%	6%	4%	5%	20%
Somewhat Better	18%	34%	8%	11%	26%	12%	27%	19%	24%	33%	16%	49%
About the Same	49%	38%	48%	42%	44%	44%	48%	42%	40%	38%	37%	23%
Somewhat Worse	26%	15%	37%	35%	20%	40%	20%	30%	26%	15%	41%	7%
Much Worse	2%	2%	6%	5%	3%	5%	2%	4%	4%	3%	1%	1%

Business confidence questions

Thinking about the next five years, do you believe overall tourism business in the 1000 Islands will:

	11	10	09	08	07	06	05	04	02	01	00	99
Improve Significantly	12%	14%	11%	4%	16%	10%	14%	21%	16%	20%	18%	30%
Improve Slightly	41%	56%	48%	33%	42%	44%	38%	45%	57%	46%	52%	38%
Be About the Same	36%	22%	29%	32%	27%	28%	30%	24%	20%	22%	19%	17%
Decline Slightly	10%	9%	10%	21%	15%	15%	18%	5%	5%	7%	9%	10%
Decline Significantly	2%	0%	2%	4%	1%	2%	0%	1%	2%	1%	2%	5%

Thinking about the next five years, do you believe your own business will:

	11	10	09	08	07	06	05	04	02	01	00	99
Improve Significantly	16%	15.8%	19%	12%	26%	19%	18%	25%	22%	31%	27%	35%
Improve Slightly	42%	54.0%	51%	43%	41%	46%	46%	50%	56%	44%	52%	43%
Be About the Same	35%	22.3%	21%	25%	25%	29%	25%	17%	13%	18%	16%	17%
Decline Slightly	5%	6.5%	6%	14%	7%	6%	11%	6%	7%	3%	4%	4%
Decline Significantly	2%	1.4%	2%	2%	1%	0%	0%	1%	2%	2%	2%	1%

Monthly trend questions:

What best describes your business in each summer month this year? (JUNE)

	11	10	09	08	07	06	05	04	02	01	00	99
Very Strong	6%	12%	10%	11%	12%	8%	8%	7%	7%	12%	8%	
Fairly Strong	20%	21%	24%	21%	30%	15%	26%	18%	19%	23%	24%	
Moderate	41%	36%	25%	35%	32%	35%	37%	36%	28%	35%	33%	
Somewhat Weak	25%	22%	29%	19%	17%	29%	22%	26%	32%	20%	24%	
Very Weak	8%	10%	13%	11%	8%	14%	7%	12%	14%	9%	12%	

What best describes your business in each summer month this year? (JULY)

	11	10	09	08	07	06	05	04	02	01	00	99
Very Strong	28%	32%	28%	25%	13%	24%	34%	19%	28%	35%	25%	
Fairly Strong	35%	33%	23%	33%	30%	30%	33%	36%	34%	29%	33%	
Moderate	25%	24%	27%	24%	32%	25%	23%	27%	24%	20%	19%	
Somewhat Weak	9%	8%	15%	11%	18%	16%	8%	12%	11%	12%	20%	
Very Weak	3%	3%	6%	5%	9%	5%	2%	5%	3%	3%	3%	

What best describes your business in each summer month this year? (AUGUST)

	11	10	09	08	07	06	05	04	02	01	00	99
Very Strong	30%	37%	29%	34%	46%	29%	34%	25%	37%	36%	33%	
Fairly Strong	36%	36%	35%	33%	32%	32%	37%	38%	37%	34%	36%	
Moderate	23%	21%	20%	20%	14%	25%	18%	24%	20%	25%	19%	
Somewhat Weak	8%	4%	11%	7%	7%	12%	10%	9%	4%	4%	8%	
Very Weak	4%	3%	4%	2%	8%	2%	2%	3%	2%	1%	4%	

What best describes your business in each summer month this year? (SEPTEMBER)

	11	10	09	08	07	06	05	04	02	01	00	99
Very Strong	9%	13%	10%	15%	21%							
Fairly Strong	23%	25%	28%	22%	29%							
Moderate	35%	36%	38%	31%	26%							
Somewhat Weak	27%	16%	13%	18%	14%							
Very Weak	7%	11%	11%	9%	9%							

What kind of effect have the following factors had on your business this year?

Summer weather

	11	10	09	08	07	06	05	04	02	01	00	99
Very Positive	31%	43%	9%	8%	36%	9%	51%	11%	42%	42%	2%	31%
Positive	43%	37%	17%	21%	42%	33%	29%	14%	36%	35%	14%	45%
No Effect	15%	13%	21%	17%	12%	22%	11%	20%	10%	7%	17%	15%
Negative	10%	6%	36%	38%	8%	29%	8%	39%	10%	14%	45%	9%
Very Negative	2%	1%	18%	12%	1%	7%	1%	12%	1%	0%	22%	0%

Canadian/US dollar exchange rate

	11	10	09	08	07	06	05	04	02	01	00	99
Very Positive	5%	3%	5%	4%	9%	7%	3%	3%	6%	14%	7%	14%
Positive	20%	21%	15%	21%	22%	21%	20%	14%	28%	16%	28%	15%
No Effect	47%	48%	51%	43%	36%	38%	50%	52%	35%	39%	29%	23%
Negative	22%	23%	24%	22%	22%	26%	25%	27%	21%	19%	23%	25%
Very Negative	5%	5%	4%	6%	10%	6%	1%	0%	10%	11%	13%	22%

Ease of border crossing

	11	10	09	08	07	06	05	04	02	01	00	99
Very Positive	4%	2%	7%	2%	1%	3%	2%	3%				
Positive	15%	13%	9%	9%	10%	8%	6%	3%				
No Effect	41%	42%	33%	44%	38%	33%	41%	41%				
Negative	28%	29%	32%	29%	36%	42%	34%	37%				
Very Negative	12%	14%	18%	10%	13%	13%	16%	10%				

Gas prices

	11	10	09	08	07	06	05	04	02	01	00	99
Very Positive	5%	2%	9%	5%	2%	6%	3%	3%		3%		
Positive	10%	16%	12%	5%	8%	6%	7%	8%		7%		
No Effect	19%	38%	46%	11%	29%	15%	20%	23%		47%		
Negative	51%	36%	27%	44%	46%	45%	48%	47%		36%		
Very Negative	14%	8%	5%	28%	15%	24%	20%	15%		7%		

General economy

	11	10	09	08	07	06	05	04	02	01	00	99
Very Positive	5%	3%	6%	5%	2%			4%	3%	1%		
Positive	14%	17%	12%	7%	24%			14%	21%	17%		
No Effect	19%	25%	23%	21%	35%			24%	29%	34%		
Negative	52%	46%	45%	51%	35%			47%	41%	41%		
Very Negative	11%	9%	14%	10%	4%			6%	6%	5%		

Lake/River water levels

	11	10	09	08	07	06	05	04	02	01	00	99
Very Positive	4%	5%	4%	5%	2%	2%	1%					
Positive	14%	6%	14%	21%	8%	6%	13%					
No Effect	62%	57%	63%	56%	48%	68%	58%					
Negative	12%	22%	15%	9%	29%	20%	16%					
Very Negative	6%	11%	4%	4%	10%	3%	7%					

Comments:

Occupancy was down from 2010 by about 1% while Number of Guests were down by 10% so average visit was up by almost 1 day. Very wet spring contributed most of the decline
#4 - The rainy wet weather in June causes us to have a slow start to the season however we made up for that in the later part of the summer. #7 - The 1000 Islands is a big tourist draw however I can't help but wonder how the negative publicity with regards to the tick infestation will affect future tourism?
1000 Islands will definitely continue to grow in popularity over the next decade.
2011 Summer didn't really start until July 4th weekend due to all the rain we had.
2011 was an excellent year for my B & B.
Accommodations have increased @ 40% for our US guests. Room Tax was 5% and refundable at the border. Now it is 13% and non-refundable. US dollar was equal to \$1.30 US = 1.00 cdn. Now .95 US = 1.00 cdn. With the 1000 Islands boarding the US waterway, we need to encourage the US trade not discourage. How many years would you continue to vacation in your favorite spot at a 40% increase? We are putting on true, repeat customers at HIGH risk!
Because our campground is mainly a place where people are getting a site for the whole season, it is hard to comment on the tourist business. The high gas prices have actually been helpful to us as people do not want to pull their campers and decide to get another seasonal site.
Over all year for us has been pretty good. We have pretty much remained steady with walk in traffic but our POS was up this year by 16%. The nice summer definitely worked in our favour.
General economic conditions are causing a slowdown in our economy. People don't appear to have as much discretionary income to spend...increased gas prices, food costs, electricity increases. Seniors living on investment income also have less spending power due to lower investment returns.
I think the Alex Bay area in which we are can only grow if it is cleaned up and resists having the predominant businesses being T-shirt stores and bars. What we hear from people who come for the first time is that once you have walked down the street of A Bay and taken the boat cruise, there is little to make them return in the future. Our regular customers are boaters, people who fish and people who enjoy sitting on the dock--not people who spend much time in town. Another complaint is the very high prices for meals that are often mediocre to poor. Much more can be done with the right leadership.
I wish we could get the weather people to look more closely at Alexandria Bay weather and include us more fairly in their reporting. Lumping us with other communities' weather puts us at a disadvantage. People now days plan their excursions around weather reports and our weather along the river is different. This is probably people to become so attached to reports and opinions it would be nice to have that report for this area a little more correct.
It was an interesting season. Because we have boats that are here year after year, we did better than the rest of the marinas.
I've included a copy of the summary sheet for the aquarium. The aquarium is only part of the building open to the public so mu answers on the survey are based on that. I believe that the overall economic condition the country is in right now is still having a huge impact on the travel plans people have.
Just a couple of overseas visitors or tourists outside of the region. Huge increase in local and seasonal residential business, and can see this growing more.
Less US visitors this year. Still nowhere near 2007 numbers for sales or number of customers.
Maybe the Tourism Council could have a liaison with local town, village county boards to help foster tourism and help prevent local policies and laws that negatively affect tourism. Just and Idea, Fishing regulations very negative.
My season was ruined by the ethanol in gasoline-caused many expensive problems and loss of business. The gov't that required use of ethanol fuels gave no warning of the problem that it can cause when used in gasoline engines.

Comments, continued

Over all I think it was a good year! Growth is small but it seems to steadily be on the rise! Future looks good!
Questions # 3 and # 7. I am not able to answer for others who operate Tourism businesses in the region. Question # 9 - Tithe answers Re purely based on a handful of conversations, without a survey of our visitors it is impossible to give any accurate answers to these.
Should be more done in preserving old building instead of building new ones. f. i. Brockville: great potential downtown old buildings, but they are neglected, not enough good quality. Restaurants: too many chains not unique.
Should the \$5.50 charge per person for Canadian travelers by boat or air remain in effect the tourism in this area would suffer greatly.
Started General Coach Dealership - sold 6 models on site. Much demand for seasonal campsites. Nightly sites full every weekend except on in August.
Thank you for your efforts.
Thank you T. I Council for promoting and highlighting the best our area offers! Because of our listing in your brochures Canadians are aware that we exist. Thank you for all your efforts. The HHS!
Thanks to everyone at the T. I. Council for all your help this year.
The Cornwall Brothers Store & Museum had a good year with fund raising events. Our visitors were down and gift shop sales were down.
The political establishment in Washington with all their rules and regulations and mishandling of our tax dollars are slowly but surely destroying our economy. They have to go before things in the business community gets better. Fire the Dems get them out of Washington.
The Thousand Islands should market itself as a cooler destination in the summer. Global warming is making southern vacation spots less desirable during the months of July and August. Global warming will work to our regions benefit.
The weather is an important factor in our business. May and June with the rainy weather killed us. The rest of the summer was above normal. Border crossings are important to us as we compete very well with Canadian golf courses.
Typically over 50% of our summer guests are from outside of North America, however this year we believe there was quite a decrease in Europeans, Australians, Germans, etc. traveling to Kingston or Canada so that negatively impacted us. We were pleased however with our Canadian and American guest numbers as they increased, however did not entirely replace the loss from non-North Americans. We believe 2012 will be a bit stronger still for Americans and Canadians to our area due to the bicentennial attraction.
We are no longer in the water sports business. We will only be doing the winter Snow Kiting business.
We had a great year with wind-weather and fishing!!
We had a good year. We are in the marine business and our two major problems over which we have no control...are the border crossing....Both by water and land...and water levels.
We once again had a good B & B season (and felt we needed a break so planned a 2 wk getaway) I do believe gas prices were factor for travelers, coupled with increases in food prices it is difficult for families to consider traveling too far away. European reservations were down for us but then there is severe economic turmoil in many countries. Keep up the good work!!!! promoting the 1000 Islands.
Would like to see more people from the deep south. It seems the region has always attracted mainly northeastern people, usually the same people each year, which would explain a lack of growth a bigger airport in Watertown would be helpful someday, if it happens.
Tourists are not our main market. We are fully-furnished short-term rental accommodation