

2012 Tourism Annual Report

May 2012

2012 Key Accomplishments

- Social Media
- Meetings campaign
- Taste Success
- Chocolate Trail cross marketing
- DMF Funding



Financial Highlights

Revenue	\$443,515
Expenses	\$420,546
'12 Surplus	\$22,969
Un.Surplus	\$119,788
Reserve Fund	\$74,154
Capital Fund	\$68,751
Transition Funds (Rev/Exp)	\$419,000

Tourism Important Economic Driver

This report provides details on performance measures, events marketing, and initiatives for 2012.

Tourism is an important economic driver in Burlington with 1.3m visitors in 2008 generating \$112.2m in total tourism receipts, resulting in over 1,606 jobs. Working with Halton Region and now that Stats Canada statistics have been released we will soon will have updates to share.

With industry input the board and staff finalized the strategic plan for our organization for the next four years. A copy of the plan is available on the website. Our social media continues to see growth in every platform and details are outlined on page 3.

Taste of Burlington is continuing to see tremendous

support.

Through new marketing initiatives the number of meeting inquiries and bookings have increased and our city is being seen as a meetings destination.

2012 was all about chocolate with a number of cross-marketing initiatives taking place to promote exhibits, trails, and events. (see pg.4)

Tourism Burlington has been actively involved in the Provincial Tourism Regions (RTO#3) and we were pleased when the province announced that they would not be regulating a provincial DMF or levy. We are fortunate that the Burlington Hotel Association has agreed to utilize their reserve funds for 2013 marketing initiatives and incentives so that we can continue to promote Burlington to various audi-

2008 Burlington Tourism

Profile- Stats Canada

1.3m visitors 3 out of 4 were same day visits

\$112.2m spent in area

\$48.2m direct economic activity in city

70% of overnight tourists came to visit family & friends

910 direct jobs-1,606

indirect \$52.2m in taxes

ences. We appreciate the support of the BHA and look forward to discussions with the local hotels and their management groups about reinstating a DMF. With Burlington now being recognized as the best city of its size to live in Canada, let's invite visitors to see what our residents are so proud of...our great city.

Thanks to our Board & Volunteers

Tourism Burlington depends on our board, committees and our volunteers to help us deliver exceptional visitor experiences. We appreciate their enthusiasm and support.

Centre Volunteers: Elaine, Wendy, Jim, Carol, Lorraine, Cheryl (Students Lucie, Shelby)

Board Members: Gord Langford, Barbara Teatero, Drew Furtney, Mark Gregory, Jason Stoner, Mary Nichol, Dave Miller, Julia Thomson, Andreas Kyprianou/Darlene Bennett-Howe, Councillors Dennison & Sharman, Victor Szeverenyi, Sharon Jackman, Bill Davidson, Bob

Meehan Marketing Committee: Dave Miller, Victor Szeverenyi, Carla Marshall, Lesley Peppin, Andreas Kyprianou, Lesia Malanchuk-Stephens, Sylvia Hentz, Pat O'Reilly, Bonnie Harrison, Steve Taver, Janice DeSilva, Terry Milewski, Jewel McCabe, Kelly Arnott, Susan Stock, Julie Sutton-Yardley, Sheila Wiebe, Leila Hurley

Measuring 2012 Tourism Performance

Information Centre visits/calls/emails Waterfront–Discovery Landing visits	12,876 visits 906 calls, 412 emails 4,072 visits
Website Visits	113,949 Visits 23,502 Used mobile devices
Virtual Tour	10,300 Visits 40 total tours on site
Volunteer Hours	1,306
Souvenir requests groups/individuals Out of country requests	167 group requests 62 out of country
Pins distributed on behalf of city souvenir program	5,641 City pins 2,354 Canada flag pins
Advocacy—support letters, presentations	11 letters
Public Relations—Displays/ Events/FAM tours	4 Displays/ 126 events/ 4 interviews/ 4 FAM tours
Partner contributions—DMF/Transition, co-op ads, sponsorships, grants	\$100,027

Working with our partners, we have been tracking performance in a number of areas: Our Centre visitation was up 1% compared to 2011 while the province showed a decrease. Our website stats remain steady and note that mobile users have increased. We distributed over 8,000 pins on behalf of the City. We represented tourism at 126 community/regional events. With the DMF/Transition funds our partner contributions continue to grow with a total of \$. Average Hotel occupancy is up .8 points to 61.17% for year.

2012 Performance Measures continued

- 5 Time Out sport networking meetings—attendees
- 245 New Resident Packages
- 5 media stories/interviews
- 10,000+ New souvenir giveaways—luggage tags and carabiners
- 34m marketing impressions
- 15 photo requests
- 834 partners (up from 520)
- 850,617 total attraction attendance (not all provided)
- Event/festivals -480,000 attendance
- Group tour attendees—33,456
- 61.17% aver. hotel occupancy (up .8)

NOTE: Not all partner information provided on a consistent basis.



2013-14 Visitor Guide

RTO#3 - Hamilton, Halton, Brant

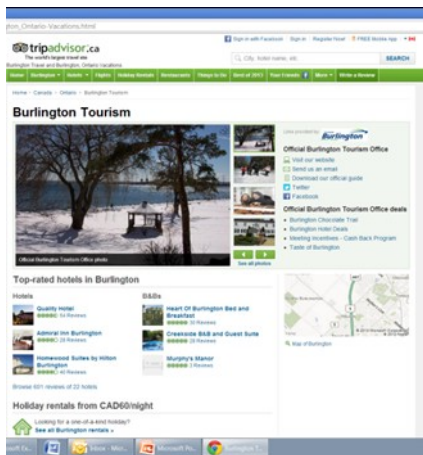
THE  OF ONTARIO.COM

The Ministry of Tourism's *Report On The Future Of Tourism*, recommended the establishment of tourism regions to better coordinate marketing and management across Ontario. Burlington is part of RTO#3 which includes Hamilton, Halton, Brantford, Brant County and Six Nations/New Credit.

Hamilton/Halton/Brant developed a strategic plan, is incorporated, and has a governing board. Tourism's E.D. is a member of the board and staff participate in various committees and initiatives. Year 3 focused on product development for War of 1812-14, arts & culture, outdoor adventure and group tour.

Industry development included customer service training in cooperation with OTEC. Marketing included re-launching **The Heart of Ontario website**, a leisure spring and fall campaign and increasing the photo/video library. Visit hamiltonhaltonbrant.com or theheartofontario.com.

Social Media Growth



Trip Advisor Sponsored Page

In late 2011 we completed a social media plan to help guide our social media campaigns. We analyzed our platforms and our priorities moving forward are our facebook and twitter sites. The plan identified how to maximize the impact of all our platforms. Interest in our social media continues to grow and be an important part of our marketing. Stats as of April 30/13 - Our **Facebook-Discover Burlington Ontario** has **1768 likes**. **Twitter-BurlingtonTour** has **4,141 followers** and we are ranked **#1** in Burlington! Become a fan and follow us! A number of videos have been posted to YouTube and we have had **23,185 lifetime views**. Check them out & share friends. Our blog continues to be

popular with new blogs added weekly and **154,500** total views. We have hired guest bloggers for special features. We have sponsored a page on **Trip Advisor** to better control information on this site and encourage our partners to engage in this platform. Our **Visitor ENews** has **821** subscribers and is sent to visitors, residents and partners 5 x/yr. highlighting events, attractions, and specials for the upcoming season. Anyone can subscribe by visiting our website. It is a very useful tool for front line staff who greet visitors, so print and post. Our partner Enews goes out twice a month to over **1,000** local partners and stakeholders. Social media for Taste of Burlington has **511** likes, **1180** followers & **4548** Enews subscribers.

2012 Tourism Events

In 2012, Tourism hosted or participated in many local events. We presented the 2011 Tourism Ambassador Award to Mike Wallace and Walter Mulkevich and the Builder award to Keith Strong and Gary De-Groote for their work on the Burlington Performing Arts Centre at the Chamber Business Awards in April. Our AGM in May had a War of 1812-14 theme with over **50** attendees at the Burlington Golf & Country Club.

At the Tourism Ambassador Training, 36 front-line hotel, attraction and service industry staff and volunteers were trained as **ambassadors**.

We provided **visitor information** at 7 major festivals during the summer season, greeting over **2,960** visitors. We offered marketing sessions for local restaurants in conjunction with Inspire Marketing and a culinary information sharing session.

Time out sports networking sessions

were held throughout the year with entertaining guest speakers on a variety of topics and an average of 45 attendees each session.



Transition Funds (DMF) Highlights

Through an agreement with the Province, Tourism leveraged the Destination Marketing Fee replacement funds to increase awareness of Burlington as a destination. Our plan, developed with the Marketing Committee, BHA and the Tourism Board included:

- **Visitor Guides additional distribution** to Toronto & Niagara attractions, hotels, events, trade shows
- **Leisure ads with 34 m. impressions** in various advertising publications, signage and websites + a feature on spas and Chocolate Trail in SpaLife magazine
- **Hotel Deals campaign sold 3,737 packages** since 2008
- **\$103,800 grants/sponsorships/incentives/event funding**
- **Travel Counsellors provided at Discovery Landing** from June until Labour Day greeted **4,072** visitors
- **Updated meetings video, updated brochure sent to 600 businesses/associations = 20 inquiries -27 bookings**
- **Cash back incentive program had 13 events \$27,000**
- **Group Tour catalogue** created by RTO#3, ads in travel planner & group connect, 3 eblasts and OMCA sponsorship. 5 inquiries, 2 FAM tours and 2 tour bookings through Tourism.

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Tourism Burlington Team

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Congratulations to
2012 Tourism Award Recipients

**BURLINGTON EAGLES CITY
REP HOCKEY CLUB**



Culinary Tourism

In conjunction with the RBG chocolate exhibit we launched a **Burlington Chocolate Trail** in January 2012 with 19 participating sites. Marketing of the trail included a website, flyer, site identification, social media, hotel in-room promotion and CH Morning Live segment. For more details and a map visit burlingtonchocolatetrail.ca. We coordinated the **Taste of Burlington** prix fixe dining winter and summer programs.

This program continues to grow from 12 restaurants 2008 to 26 with a financial impact of **\$200,000+/program**. We worked with our local restaurants to host food editors and were featured in 3 issues of Sing Tao. We liaise regularly with the Restaurant Association and local partners and food trucks.

We are working with the Halton Region on a Agritourism/ Culinary Tourism Strategy.

What's New for 2013

A number of new marketing and partner activities are planned for 2013. Our major initiative is redesigning our website to a more user friendly and visually appealing site. This includes a mobile website and branded social media pages. The soft launch of the site is scheduled for May. Later in 2013 we plan to RFP for an app using our website database and working in conjunction with the city to include the events calendar. We have updated our **tourism video** and uploaded to youtube. We are celebrating **National/ Provincial Tourism Weeks** June 3-16 by increasing public awareness of attractions and driving traffic to our website through a special social media campaign in conjunction with couponing and a contest which encourages people to visit participating loca-

tions. We are kicking things off with a twitter party (#VisitBurlON) on **Monday June 3** from 8-9pm.

We continue to offer the **Event Funding Grant program**, and hosting **Time Out Sport** networking sessions to promote sport tourism. Since we started the event funding program in 2008 the BHA has provided over **\$300,000** in grants and sponsorships to local events. We are working with the City on an Events Hosting strategy to help advance sport tourism initiatives.

Burlington Hotel Deals promotion continues. These deals include \$20 off regular rack rate at BHA hotels plus a \$20 gift card for local shopping and services. Encourage your customers, friends and family to visit and take advantage of these great deals.

Our leisure marketing includes events and focuses on the GTA & Niagara through online, print and posters.

Our meetings campaign continues with a new brochure in circulation and online promotion on the Cash Back incentive program which offers up to **\$3,000** for meetings including overnight stays.

Our **group tour** initiatives include promotion to tour **operators**, through seasonal email updates about events and attractions and ads in trade publications. We are pleased to be working with partners to host a number of conferences and tournaments that are featured on our website. For more details refer to our **Tourism ENews** or contact us at marketing@tourismburlington.com

Our CASH BACK Program

\$3,000 CASH BACK

For new meetings, conferences or special events
in our city that include overnight stays.