



Every month we will be sending you the latest insights, research and thoughtful perspectives on the issues that matter most to tourism businesses and operators in RTO 9.

**This month's newsletter is about wellness and adventure tourism trends, opportunities and traveller needs.**

If there are topics you want to read about in a future newsletter please email [lmedeiros@region9tourism.com](mailto:lmedeiros@region9tourism.com) with your ideas.

# State of Tourism

## Monitoring the Impact of COVID-19

As communities and businesses around the world respond to the challenges presented by COVID-19, now more than ever there is a strong need for solid tourism research and data. In addition to the resources on our [COVID-19 resource webpage on Tourism Talk](#), we have been monitoring trends in key areas to help you understand the trends and respond strategically.



## The Impact Of COVID-19 On The Ontario Economy And Consumer Sentiment

To better understand the impact of COVID-19 on the economy, the consumer mindset and to inform marketing recovery strategies, Destination Ontario has accessed various economic and public attitude and behavior studies.

COVID-19 has seen a significant negative economic impact causing noticeable changes in public behavior. Market research firm Ipsos is tracking public attitudes and behavior in Canada and other countries to assist organizations in their strategic and tactical planning. The research consists of weekly online polling of a random samples of Canadians and citizens from various countries.

[VIEW THE LATEST DATA & INSIGHTS](#)

# Market Insights



## **Tourism Employment Insights**

The tourism industry experienced a rise in total employment levels during September. Typically this month sees an employment drop as students return to school and the summer season ends, but this year there was an increase of 4,200 jobs. There was also a significant movement from full-time to part-time:

- Tourism gained 96,900 part-time staff in September, and lost 92,600 full-time, resulting in the overall jobs growth figure
- There were 61,400 new hires in food and beverage services (+19,900) and transportation (+41,500). Accommodations, recreation and entertainment, and travel services saw jobs decline.

The two highest earning brackets of employees recovered to staffing totals even higher than February 2020, while the lowest two earning brackets remain below pre-COVID levels.



Economic influences include: the increase in major Canadian airline passengers since, food and beverage's July sales rebound to just over \$5 billion after peak lows in Spring, and a decline in September and October hotel occupancy rates following August's lift.

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## **Resident Sentiment**

Destination Canada's resident sentiment report now reveals how safe residents of each province/region feel about travelling to different places in Canada. Here are the highlights for the week of October 20:

- 50% of Ontarians said they feel safe about travel to communities in their province and 66% said they do feel safe about travel to communities that are near them. Nearly a third said the same about travelling to other provinces.
- Similar to Saskatchewan/Manitoba and Atlantic Canada, Ontario resident feelings of safety towards all travel destinations remained stable versus the previous week, while BC and Quebec saw a positive increase.

At the national level, the majority of people in every province said they would feel 'very unhappy' seeing an ad promoting their community to other countries as a place to visit when it is safe. Meanwhile, the majority of Canadians said they'd feel 'neutral' or 'very happy' to see ads promoting travel to their community to other areas of Canada. However, the portion of residents who would feel 'very unhappy' at messaging to attract out-of-province visitors still sits fairly high at 25-48% depending on the province.

This collective snapshot presents a case for Canadian tourism marketers to run promotional messaging that is focused on hyper localized tourism, and secondly to audiences travelling within the same province.

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## Hotel Performance Trends

Canada's hotel industry performance fell slightly in the week of October 11-17 compared to previous weeks.

Occupancy reached 29.9%, a dip after 32.2% the week before and well below same week last year (-55%). Vancouver was the only major market to achieve above 30% occupancy rates, hitting 33.7%. Quebec saw the lowest provincial occupancy at 15.6%, with Montreal at 12.9%.

Average ADR across Canada was \$114.62 (-26.1% from 2019), and RevPAR was \$34.24.

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## Hotel Performance Trends: Q3 2020 Report

STR has released Canadian hotel industry figures for Q3, noting improved performance following the previous quarter:

- 38.1% occupancy (-49.8% to prior year)
- ADR of \$131.65 (-28%) and RevPAR of \$50.15 (-63.9%)

Absolute occupancy in Q3 was the lowest on record in STR's database, but more than doubled Canada's results from Q2 2020 (19.4%).

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## **COVID-19: The Wake Up Call To Wellness**

With Canadians facing struggles of social isolation, home stresses and financial strains, the importance of pursuing mind and body health wherever possible is high.

New research from the Wellness Tourism Association (WTA) showed 24% of people believe wellness vacations could or will be the purpose of their next holiday, and that 20% said they're extremely likely to book these trips within the next 2 years. WTA's survey also revealed consumers' top 8 motivators for taking wellness trips, which tourism leaders can use to create impactful experience packages and targeted marketing:

- Return feeling rejuvenated. 38% of people stated this as a key reason to take a wellness holiday, making it the highest surveyed motivator for travel.
- Escape the demands of everyday life. 26% listed the desire to unwind and escape stress as a key draw.
- Get a better night's sleep. 17% of those surveyed stated improved sleep as motivation for booking a break.
- Connect with nature. 24% of respondents feel connecting with the outdoors is an important element of wellness trips.

[READ MORE](#)



## Wellness Tourism And The Future Of Travel

In 2019, the global wellness tourism market was valued at US\$641.298 billion, making it an attractive market for powerhouse brands like Marriot, Accor and Intercontinental, which have been investing in this space. Though pandemic restrictions to travel, and wellness operations like spas, have dampened industry growth this year, there is still an evolving trend within tourism: experiences that cater to multi-dimensional well-being.

A market watch report from The Wellness Institute showcased this 2020's top wellness immersion trends, which include:

- Travel explorations of sobriety as an alternate lifestyle choice
- High tech/highly personalized transformations
- Detoxifying masculinity, health and well-being excursions for men
- Psychedelic healing
- Long stay format sabbaticals

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# Workforce Development



## **Resilience, Reservoirs, & Community Connections**

Adventure Travel Trade Association presents their first, one-day virtual event series with the aim of providing industry learning, transformation, and emergence beyond pandemic business challenges. Attendees can expect to gain powerful insight into effective COVID marketing and communications strategies, and to develop meaningful connections with leading travel providers, media, and tech company representatives.

[REGISTER FOR THE SERIES](#)



## **X. Festival 2020 Digital Tourism Think Tank**

Join this five-day, online festival designed to help DMOs, industry leaders, tourism boards, membership organizations and enterprise agencies shape business recovery plans and boost the visitor economy.

**[REGISTER FOR THE FESTIVAL](#)**





## **FoodTrex North America Summit**

An online hosted exploration business of culinary tourism and travel. FoodTreX presents a line up of leading industry speakers and influencers, sharing inspiring expertise and bringing together sector entrepreneurs, destinations and key stakeholders.

[REGISTER NOW](#)



## **Navigating LGBT+ Diversity & Inclusion in the Tourism Industry**

Learn the basics of an LGBT+ -inclusive vocabulary, space, and workplace. This training is presented in two parts:

- Online course: An Introduction to LGBT+ Diversity & Inclusion (mandatory completion in advance of webinar) You'll leave with a certificate acknowledging your participation and action items to transform your workplace into an LGBT+ safe space.
- Live Workshop webinar - various dates throughout November

**[REGISTER NOW](#)**





## Economic Development Virtual Summit

The Leeds Grenville Economic Development Office, in partnership with Michael Barrett M.P., Hon. Steve Clark, M.P.P., the Eastern Workforce Innovation Board and the 1000 Islands, Grenville and Valley Heartland Community Futures Development Corporations invite you to the region's top Economic Development event of the year.

[REGISTER NOW](#)



## **2020 Virtual Tourism Congress**

Registration is open for the Tourism Industry Association of Canada's (TIAC) first virtual Tourism Congress. This year, registration is free and includes access to all online virtual congress sessions, virtual marketplace and networking events.

**[REGISTER NOW](#)**





## eCommerce Retailing for Local Merchants

This webinar with Scott Maybee from Digital Main Street will help you learn the basics of selling online with Shopify, how to get products to your customers, and ways of leveraging both social media and traditional promotional marketing to create integrated e-commerce retail strategies that support your customers and help future-proof your business.

[REGISTER NOW](#)



## **Relevant Advertising and Promotion**

In this workshop, you will complete a 12-month plan that details the goals you want to achieve, what advertising methods you will use, and what are the associated costs with a monthly budget.

**[REGISTER NOW](#)**



## **October 21st 2020 - Welcoming Cyclists in South Eastern Ontario**

We partnered with Ontario By Bike to host a webinar on how welcoming cyclists can be good for your business and destination.

[VIEW THE PRESENTATION](#)



# Media Spotlight



## Around The Globe: Pandemic Pampering

Business Insider has gathered insight into a number of wellness resorts and spas that reported unusually strong sales performance and even increases from 2019, through the COVID-19 period.

"Our overnight occupancy has been running at 95% to 100% since May 28," John Morris, General Manager at Wisconsin's Sundara Inn and Spa. "We're typically busy in the summers, but it's now at least 10 to 15 occupancy points



higher." Guest perception around the safety of remote destinations like Sundara. Having access to enough business space to operate in line with social distancing rules, drive access for guests, and available wellness amenities were listed as some of the key success factors.

Other noted companies benefited from running innovations like new guest spa services, classes hosted in open-air spaces, and 30-day extended stay rates (ideal for families and guests working remotely).

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## **Around The Globe: The Digitization Of Wellness**

In an interview by the Global Wellness Institute, expert Amaya Becvar Weddle (VP of Research and Product Marketing at wellness tech platform, Mindbody) forecasts how meditation, spa, beauty and fitness are going digitally hybrid.

Lockdown restrictions prompted a spike for online, at-home forms of wellness consultations and classes, but Weddle predicts that in the long-term this online engagement will continue in combination with clients' return to wellness facilities. "We're learning from boutique fitness consumers that roughly half plan to do virtual experiences as part of their day-to-day, even after storefronts reopen," she explains, highlighting the opportunity for industry brands to continue building great online and offline experiences for reopening stages and beyond.

On the wellness services end, 79% of people plan to go to spa and beauty businesses they went to before the pandemic, and more than half of people said they'd feel comfortable going to salons (64%) and wellness businesses (54%).

Weddle stresses that digital technology solutions to enhance spa/salon safety, like text alert systems as a complete replacement for physical waiting rooms and digital temperature checks on arrival, will be a critical step in ensuring wellness customers come back.

[READ MORE](#)

# Opportunities

## #SAFETRAVELS



## 'Safe Travels' Stamp Application

The specially designed stamp will allow travellers and other Travel & Tourism stakeholders to recognise destination authorities and companies around the world that have implemented health and hygiene protocols that are aligned with WTTC's Global Safe Travels Protocols.

Below are all the resources you need to complete your application:

- [Download the Safe Travels Application Form](#)
- [Download the Safe Travels Guidelines](#)
- [Review the Safe Travels Terms and Conditions](#)
- [Review the Safe Travels Protocols](#)

[LEARN MORE](#)



## Regional Relief And Recovery Fund

More support for Southern Ontario businesses and organizations impacted by COVID-19 is now available through FedDev Ontario's Regional Relief and Recovery Fund.

[LEARN MORE](#)

[REVIEW GUIDELINES](#)



## **Deadline For The Digital Transformation Grant is November 30th**

Digital Main Street (DMS) is a program focused on assisting main street small businesses (MSB) with their adoption of technologies. Through a partnership with FedDev Ontario and the Province of Ontario, grant opportunities are available to enable this digital transformation process.

The Digital Transformation Grant (DTG) program will provide funding for training, advisory support, and contributions to main street small businesses looking increase their capacity through digital transformation.



Eligibility includes:

- A business owner with less than 10 full-time employees (or less than 25 employees for a restaurant)
- Businesses located in a storefront / bricks and mortar building on a main street
- A business paying commercial property taxes

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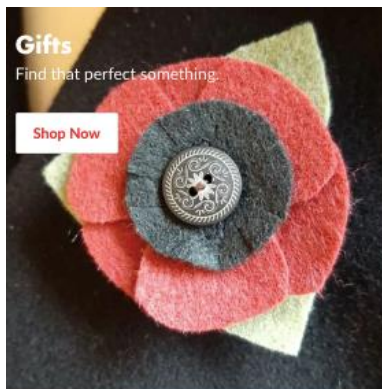


## The Great Taste of Ontario

The Great Taste of Ontario (GTOO) is a provincial recovery program involving +80 partners (including DMOs, RTOs, Sector Organizations, media and charities). The program is designed to push Ontarians to rediscover the province and boost regional economies by increasing tourism visits. It's success is dependent on a unique mix of destination development, market readiness training, procurement tracking and strategic marketing partnerships.

[LEARN MORE](#)

[FEAST ON® CERTIFICATION](#)

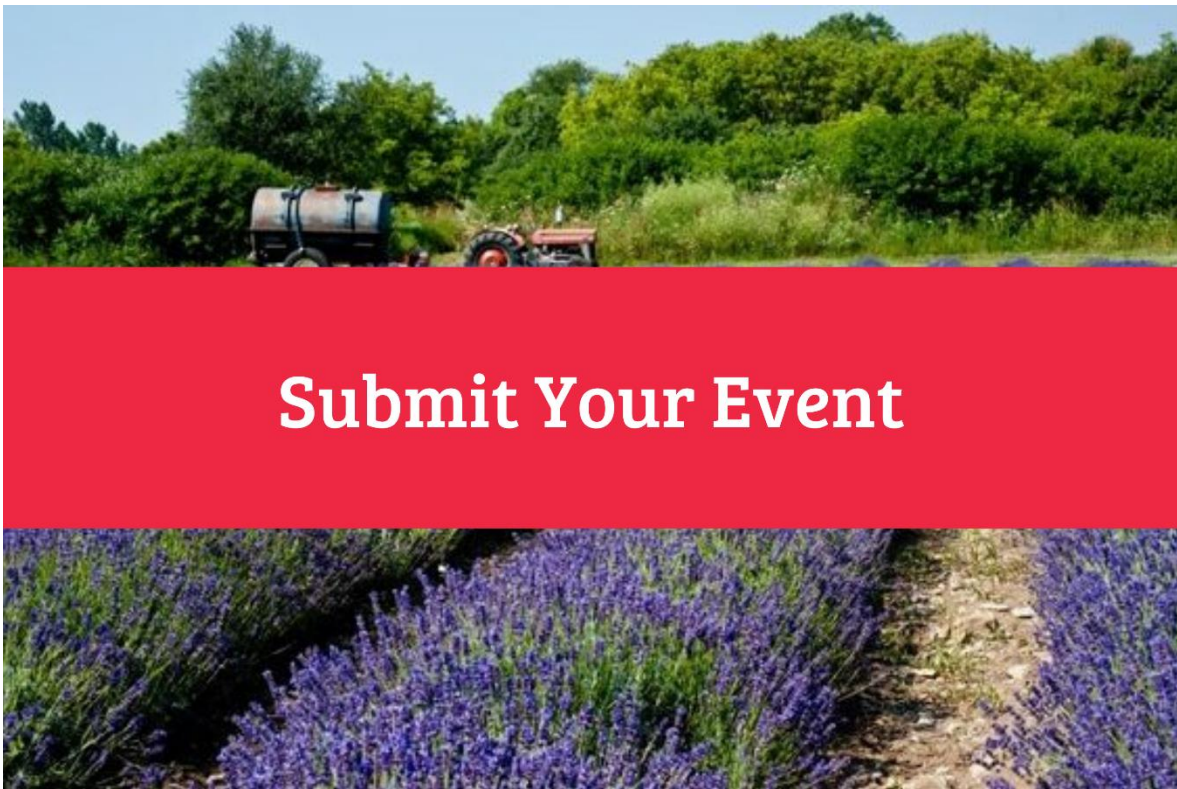


## My Local Market

Have a local product? My Local Market is selling 1000's of local products from farmers, makers and small business in one online cart.

[SIGN UP TODAY](#)

[CHECK OUT HEY LOCAL TOO!](#)



## Submit Your Event

Event organizers are welcomed to submit virtual events, workshops designed to draw visitors, and future events that comply with all restrictions related to COVID-19. Once we have an active events page, we will be promoting our page with paid advertising.

Add your **virtual events/workshops** to our [consumer site](#) below.

[ADD YOUR EVENT TO OUR SITE](#)



**#SouthEasternOntario**

## **Keep In Touch With Us Online**

Using our consumer brand - South Eastern Ontario we can stay connected for future content opportunities to draw visitors to the region. Tag us in your social media post and use our hashtag **#SouthEasternOntario**.





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### Get Social With Us!

Connect and engage with our industry brand '**RTO 9**' on social media.



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### Get Social With Us!

Connect and engage with our consumer brand '**South Eastern Ontario**' on social media.



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