



Every month we'll 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 delves into the topic of placemaking and what it means for destination branding and travel marketing.

If there are topics you want to read about in a future newsletter please email lmedeiros@region9tourism.com with your ideas.

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RTO 9 News

SAVE *the* DATE

RTO 9 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

06 . 01 . 21

2021 TIAO's AGM, RTO9's AGM and TIAC Town Hall

We invite you to join RTO 9, the Tourism Industry Association of Ontario (TIAO), and the Tourism Industry Association of Canada (TIAC) for our Annual General Meeting, followed by a TIAC Town Hall.

When: Tuesday, June 1st, 2021, 1 PM - 5 PM EST

[REGISTER HERE](#)



Creating Sustainable Events Webinar

Join RTO 9 and The Sustainable Events Forum (TSEF) for an engaging look at steps that event planners can take to move toward hosting sustainable events. Whether your event is small or you are planning ahead for post-COVID larger events, this is a great opportunity to learn from the experts at TSEF.

When: Thursday May 20th 1:00 PM - 2:00 PM EST

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[VIEW PAST PRESENTATIONS & WORKSHOPS](#)

State of Tourism

Stay-At-Home Order Extended

The Ontario government, in consultation with the Chief Medical Officer of Health, has extended the Stay-at-Home Order (O. Reg. 265/21) until at least June 2, 2021. All public health and workplace safety measures under the provincewide emergency brake will also remain in effect.

Stay Up To Date

Get the latest case data, vaccine updates, mental health supports and services, regional updates and the latest COVID-19 announcements from the Government of Ontario.

[READ THE LATEST UPDATES](#)

Ontario Tourism And Travel Small Business Support Grant

Applications are now open for the Ontario Tourism and Travel Small Business Support Grant. This grant provides a one-time payments of \$10,000 to \$20,000 to eligible small businesses in the tourism and travel sector.

Tourism and travel businesses have been hard hit by the pandemic, as people and employers follow the necessary public health restrictions to keep people safe. That's why the *2021 Budget* included this new grant that will provide direct one-time payments to these businesses.

This grant will provide an estimated \$100 million to eligible small tourism and travel businesses that did not receive the Ontario Small Business Support Grant (OSBSG), such as travel agents, hotels, motels, resorts, bed and breakfasts, and more. To qualify, businesses must demonstrate they have experienced a minimum 20 per cent revenue decline between 2019 and 2020 and have fewer than 100 employees. Businesses affiliated with an OSBSG recipient are not eligible

The deadline to apply for the Ontario Tourism and Travel Small Business Support Grant is June 25, 2021.

Should you have questions, please call 1-855-216-3090 from Monday to Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 8 p.m. or Saturday and Sunday from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. (excluding government and statutory holidays).

[LEARN MORE & APPLY](#)

Market Insights



1. Tourism Employment Insights

In March, tourism industry employment levels increased for the second straight month but recent travel restrictions and lockdowns will hamper improvement in April.

- Most industry groups noted employment gains in March.
- The largest job increases were driven by recreation and entertainment and accommodations, which rose by 28,800 and 18,000.
- Travel service employment rose by 4,600 mainly part-time jobs.

There has been a significant decline in the number of active tourism businesses operating—as of December 2020, there were 71,578 active businesses, representing an 8.3% drop from pre-pandemic.

Employment for young people aged 15-24 has improved from January to March. Those earning less than \$30K per year are still facing the most significant losses in tourism (e.g., restaurant, accommodations, and performing arts workers).

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2. Hotel Performance Trends

In March, Canada's hotel occupancy reached highs last seen in September 2020.

National occupancy levels came in at 31.9% (-46.8% compared to 2019). Lack of high-end group demand in urban centres and ongoing travel restrictions resulted in an ADR of CAD117.86 and RevPAR at CAD37.64, which is still significantly low.

With widespread vaccinations underway, domestic leisure demand this summer may help to recover losses and build momentum towards recovery.

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3. Resilience At The Heart Of Placemaking

The COVID-19 has many people and destinations questioning what the future of public spaces looks like. Cities in particular, have been grappling with concerns about safety and how to attract people back to live and visit when recovery begins. City Nation Place's four part series on post-pandemic resilience, seeks to find answers through placemaking, reputation management, leadership and more. Here are the key insights from the placemaking series:

Rethinking Public Space

The allocation of space for businesses and residents and the recognition that some areas are space-poor and other space-rich has to be at the heart of discussions around welcoming residents, visitors, and businesses back to city centres. Two examples of residents working with urban designers to drive vibrant communities are: 1) In Tokyo, a process termed machizukuri ('town planning') empowers residents to work with urban designers to improve their neighbourhoods and develop community belonging and identity within a local area, and 2) Paris is attempting to implement a 15-minute city strategy to ensure every household can quickly and easily access key amenities. When travel restarts, visitors will once again be seeking destinations that provide the opportunity to interact with local people and opportunities to experience community on a deeper level. Developing unique communities and community identities can support differentiation of destination.

Looking Hyperlocal

There is untapped potential to bring the community together and elevate the quality of life offerings in targeted areas. Sweden is creating a 'one-minute city' project. This strategy promotes residents to become co-architects of their streets—inviting them to evolve streets into community spaces. From a tourism perspective, this has the potential to disperse visitors into areas they may not have considered.

Putting Locals First

Destinations that were feeling the adverse effects of too much tourism pre-pandemic are taking the opportunity to revive their cities through

community. An ambitious project is underway to transform one of Barcelona's most tourism-dominated streets into a cultural hub that residents, as well as tourists, find valuable (e.g., immersive art, green space, public-private initiatives).

Inclusion At The Heart

Recovery strategies need to benefit all residents and inclusivity needs to be at the core. To bring community together, revitalize a local economy, drive new developments and ensure a sustainable future—efforts need to be made to ensure everyone is supported and can benefit.

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4. Rapid Placemaking To Bring Back Main Street

The Bring Back Main Street campaign, coordinated by the Canadian Urban Institute with the support of partners from across the country, developed a Rapid Placemaking to Bring Back Main Street Toolkit. The toolkit seeks to build the connection between main street and community with the goals of advancing an equitable design process, highlighting programming

opportunities and offering design ideas that together, bring back main streets.

The toolkit guides users through the five overlapping stages of the Rapid Placemaking Process with activities along the way. The stages are as follows:

1. Inspiration: Frame the challenge and identifying ways to approach it
2. Ideation: Create relevant, feasible, and actionable ideas, as well as clear ideas of what success looks like
3. Implementation: Apply one or more of these ideas on your main street
4. Engagement: Gather feedback from an array of people who can add diverse perspectives on the implementation
5. Iteration: Measure the success of the implementation and adjust based on feedback and data
6. Assessment: Measure the success of the implementation

Examples programs and interventions include: Community Mapping to identify assets, Market days on closed streets, Outdoor reading rooms

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Workforce Development



How to Set Up Instagram Shopping for Your Business

Every month, 130 million people tap on an Instagram shopping post to learn more about products.

So it's time to make sure you're using Instagram shopping posts as effectively as possible — we're talking beautiful imagery, great captions, and sales pitches timed to perfection!

Check out the guide below to learn how you can turn likes into sales.

[VIEW THE GUIDE](#)

Inside Google Marketing: How We (Finally) Proved The Value Of Influencer Marketing

The question wasn't whether or not using influencers was a credible avenue for the marketing. Rather, the question was how to show their real value. As Marvin Chow, Google's VP of marketing, said: "No doubt influencer marketing does something. But to comfortably put spend and resources behind it, we needed to better understand the return on investment." Follow Google's four-point outline to evaluate your own influencer performance.

[READ MORE](#)

Video: Creating Local Destinations Through Placemaking

About: Happy City's Mitchell Reardon will share stories of how placemaking has created new and local destinations in cities and towns around the world.

[WATCH NOW](#)



Regional Agritourism Strategies for Community Economic Development

This gathering highlights how international regions as diverse as Canada, Iran and Georgia are using agritourism as a way to build resilience by celebrating agricultural history, ecology, and heritage.

[VIEW RECORDING](#)

Plus: The International Workshop on Agritourism presents *Agritourism Gatherings: A virtual series for farm, food, and travel communities*. The series brings together farmers, researchers, service providers, tourism experts and many others to share their knowledge and experience from around the world.

[VIEW ALL RESOURCES](#)

Conference: Walk/Bike/Places

About: Wike/Bike/Places is a conference for walking, bicycling, and placemaking professionals from the public, private, and non-profit sectors in North America. The theme is “The Route to Recovery” which will explore how streets and public spaces can promote healing from the pandemic.

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Media Spotlight



Travel & Tourism Innovators

Around The Globe: Downtown Vancouver's Laneways

Happy City and the Downtown Vancouver Business Improvement Area (BIA) mapped out potential routes for a network of inviting, unique and safe laneway routes that support moving, lingering and local business. The destination aims to boost well-being and inspire the imaginations of people across the region, and around the world.

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Around The Globe: Granby Park Pop-Up

‘Granby Park’ was a temporary ‘pop-up’ park in a vacant site in Dublin’s inner-city. Over 500 volunteers came together and generously shared recycled, up-cycled, reclaimed, borrowed, donated materials to make “a place of creativity, nature, imagination, play and beauty for everyone.”

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Opportunities

2021 Leeds-Grenville-Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes Business Survey: COVID-19

Leaders from Leeds-Grenville-Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes have been working together since March of 2020 to identify the impacts of COVID-19 on the business community.

These leaders are looking to update the government on the type of support programs and services that are currently necessary to continue to support the recovery of the community.

Your input is critical. Please take a couple of minutes to complete the 2021 survey by Tuesday, May 18, 2021 at 12 PM.

[TAKE THE SURVEY](#)



Great Taste of Ontario Culinary Cultural Diversity Survey

The Culinary Tourism Alliance is looking to increase the representation of diversity within the local culinary tourism industry, and within the Feast On program. The Culinary Cultural Diversity Program key priority is to reach more businesses within the BIPOC and LGBTQ+ communities who could benefit from their platform and programs.

[TAKE THE SURVEY](#)

We have also attached information and resources for businesses featured in Great Taste of Ontario passports and content to help you make the most of your participation in the program.

[VISIT THE BUSINESS PORTAL](#)

#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](#)

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



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