

# 2011 Tourism Annual Report

May 2012

## 2011 Key Accomplishments

- Strategic Plan 2011-14
- Social media plan and growth
- 20% Partner increase
- More Meeting leads & bookings
- Culinary Tourism expansion



## Financial Highlights 2011

<b>Revenue</b>	<b>\$438,471</b>
<b>Expenses</b>	<b>\$430,154</b>
<b>'11 Surplus</b>	<b>\$8,317</b>
<b>Un. Surplus</b>	<b>\$96,819</b>
<b>Reserve Fund</b>	<b>\$71,989</b>
<b>Capital Fund</b>	<b>\$58,085</b>
<b>Transition Funds (Rev/Exp)</b>	<b>\$418,497</b>

## Our Vision—Exceptional Visitor Experiences

This report provides details on performance measures, events marketing, and initiatives for 2011 & 2012.

2011 was an exciting year with the opening of the new Burlington Performing Arts Centre and renovations at local hotels.

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.

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.

Thanks to everyone who participated in the surveys and focus group sessions. This year a comprehensive social media plan was developed which focused priori-

ties and tracked ROI in more detail. Social media continues to grow and is highlighted on pg. 3.

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

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 DMF or levy. In July 2010 when HST was implemented the destination marketing fees (DMF) no longer were being collected. Interim funding was provided by the province to DMO's such as Burlington who relied on DMF funds to deliver many marketing initiatives. This funding is in

### 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

place until Dec. 2012 and we are in discussions with the local hotels about reinstating a DMF.

With Burlington now being recognized as the 2nd best place to live in Canada, let's invite visitors to see what our residents are so proud of...our great city.

*P. Belgrade*

## Message from the Chair Gord Langford

One of our most important projects in 2011 was the update of our strategic plan. With the assistance of a consultant, we canvassed our tourism partners to help us develop a new vision, mission and directions. We are committed to providing **exceptional visitor experiences, growing**

**tourism prosperity and engaging the community.** We will update you on our plan progress through our Enews and at our AGM. This year we continue to see changes to the Tourism industry in Ontario. As a member of the Hamilton Halton Brant Regional Tourism Organization, we have

helped develop marketing campaigns, governance, product development and many other initiatives. I appreciate the support of the Board of Directors, staff and the volunteers over the past year who are dedicated to providing exceptional visitor experiences.

*Gord Langford*

# Measuring 2011 Tourism Performance

Information Centre visits/calls/emails	14,264 +7 %
Waterfront—Discovery Landing visits	5,048 +12.3%
Website Visits	Visits 471,103 +33%
Virtual Tour	Visits 9,352 +35% Total tours on site 40 +7
Volunteer Hours	945
Souvenir requests groups/individuals	216 requests
Out of country requests	101 out of country
Pins distributed on behalf of city souvenir program	7,029 City pins 4,524 Canada flag pins
Advocacy—support letters, presentations	10 letters— 2 presentations
Public Relations—Displays/Events/FAM tours	4 Displays/ 108 events/ 3 interviews
Partner contributions—DMF/Transition, Partner ads, sponsorships, in kind, grants	\$520,000

Working with our partners, we have been tracking performance in a number of areas: Our Centre visitation was up 7% compared to 2010 while the province showed a decrease. Waterfront stats were also up. Our website unique visits have increased by 33%. We distributed over 11,553 pins on behalf of the City. We represented tourism at 108 community/regional events. With the DMF/Transition funds our partner contributions continue to grow with a total of \$520,000. Hotel occupancy an important indicator is up 4.75 points to 60.35% year or year. (Continued bottom of page 4)



## 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 attrac-

tions, hotels, events, 400 Highways centres and trade shows

- Leisure ads with 2.3m more impressions in various advertising publications, signage and websites
- Hotel Deals campaign had 7.4 m impressions- sold 972 packages
- Coupon Book—25,000 copies distributed to groups, visitors& online
- \$29,200 grants/sponsorships
- Travel Counsellors provided at

Discovery Landing from June until Labour Day greeted 5,048 visitors

- Updated meetings video, created television ads on CHTV and brochure sent to 600 businesses/associations = 14 inquiries and 12 bookings—5 Cash back—\$8,000
- Group Tour developed SW Ont tour catalogue, ads in travel planner & group connect, 3 eblasts and OMCA sponsorship. 4 inquiries.

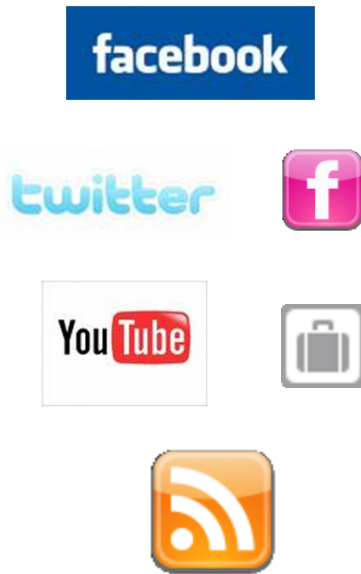
## RTO#3 - Hamilton, Halton, Brant THE OF ONTARIO.COM

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 Halton, Hamilton, Brantford, Brant County and Six Nations/New Credit.

RTO#3 has developed a strategic plan is now incorporated and has an interim board in place until June 2012. Tourism's E.D. and Chair are members of the interim board. Activities in year 2 focused on governance and putting proper policies, training, financials and processes in place.

Marketing included maintaining The Heart of Ontario website, increasing photo/video library, War of 1812-14 product development, and Group tour initiatives. For more info visit region3tourism.ca or theheartofontario.com.

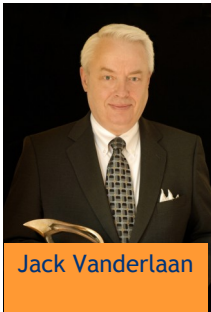
# Social Media Plan



In the later part of 2011 we completed a social media plan to help guide us in our social media campaigns. We analyzed our platforms and our priority moving forward is our facebook and twitter sites. The plan also identified a number of ways that we could maximize the impact of all our platforms. Interest in our social media continues to grow, here are our stats as of April 30/12. Our **Facebook-Discover Burlington Ontario** has **1363 likes**. **Twitter-BurlingtonTour** has **2428 followers** and we are ranked #6 in Burlington! Become a fan and follow us! A number of Tourism Burlington videos have been posted to YouTube and we have had **12,124 lifetime views**. Check them out & share

friends. Our blog continues to be popular with new blogs added weekly and **57,217** total views. We have hired guest bloggers for special features. We also added Flickr and Pinterest to our menu. Our **Visitor ENewsletter** has **686** subscribers and is sent to visitors, residents and partners 5 times per year and highlights events, attractions, and specials for the upcoming season. Anyone can subscribe to this ENews by visiting our website. It is a very useful tool for front line staff who greet visitors, so **print and post**. Our partner Enewsletter goes out twice a month to **800** local partners and stakeholders. We have also set up social media and enews to promote Taste of Burlington with **407** likes and **612** followers.

## 2011 Tourism Events



Jack Vanderlaan

In 2011, Tourism hosted or participated in many local events. We presented the 2010 Tourism Builder Award to Jack Vanderlaan from the Municipalization Committee at the Chamber Business Awards in April. Our AGM in May had

a Sport tourism theme and was held at Climbers Rock. At the Tourism Ambassador Training, 54 front-line hotel, attraction and service industry staff and volunteers were trained as **ambassadors**. In June Team Burlington hosted a **Business Summit** focusing on the City's strategic plan input. We provided **visitor information** at 8 major festivals during the summer season, greeting over **4,121** visitors.

We played host to the **Cdn National Cycling Championships**, the **Cdn Nat. Vintage Baseball Championships** and co-hosted the **Mobility Cup** a sailing event for disabled athletes. We coordinated the **Taste of Burlington** prix fixe dining winter and summer programs. This program continues to grow from 12 restaurants in 2008 to **26** with a financial impact of **\$200,000+/program**.

## Performance Measures cont. pg 2

- **6 Time Out** sport networking meetings—**357** attendees
  - **238** New Resident Packages
  - **17** media stories/interviews
  - New souvenir giveaways—luggage tags and carabiners
  - **40** ads in publications
  - **31** photo requests
  - **769** partners (up from 520)
  - **1.06m** total attraction attendance (not all provided)
  - **8** Event/festivals -attendance **480,000**
  - Group tour campaign & mailings
  - Group tour attendance **60,745**
  - Group welcome bags RBG—**100**
  - **3** Group Tour Email blasts—**750**
  - Hotel occupancy **60.35%** (up **4.75**)
- NOTE:** Not all partner information provided on a consistent basis.

## Burlington



Call toll free for more information 1.877.499.9989

2012-13 Visitor Guide

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## Tourism Burlington Team

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**Congratulations to  
2011 Tourism Award  
Recipients  
Instrumental in the  
development of the Burlington  
Performing Arts Centre**

**Mike Wallace &  
Walter Mulkewich  
Gary DeGroote &  
Keith Strong**



## Chocolate Trail

In conjunction with the RBG chocolate exhibit we launched a **Burlington Chocolate Trail** in January 2012 with 19 participating sites. Marketing of the trail includes a website, flyer, site identification, social media, hotel in-room promotion, CH Morning Live segment and we have received some good media coverage. Some of our partners have also adopted the chocolate theme offering events at the Museums and Paletta Mansion

and chocolate delights during A Taste of Burlington. For more details & a map of sites visit [burlingtonchocolatetrail.ca](http://burlingtonchocolatetrail.ca)



## Marketing & Partner Initiatives in 2012

A number of new marketing and partner activities are planned for 2012. We have created 4 new **seasonal tabletop banners** and two themed banners (**culinary and history**) to use at displays and exhibits. We have also updated our **tourism video** and uploaded more videos to youtube. We have expanded our advertising to the **Chinese market** in partnership with the RBG.

We are celebrating **National Tourism Week** by increasing public awareness of attractions and driving traffic to our website through a special social media campaign targeted to residents focusing on Hidden Gems.

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 **\$321,000** in grants and sponsorships to local events. We have developed a sport discussion paper and are creating a new sport committee to help prioritize sport tourism initiatives. **Burlington Hotel Deals** promotion continues and tactics include online advertising through sites such as the Weather Network, ontario-travel.net and promotion at Go Stations and local shopping centres etc. 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 and Niagara through online, electronic, print ads and posters at Ontario Travel Information Centres.

Our meetings campaign continues with a new brochure being produced and promotion on the Cash Back incentive program which offers an incentive of up to **\$3,000** for meetings including overnight stays. Our **group tour operators**, through seasonal email updates about events and attractions and ads in trade publications.

RTO#3 is working on 3 different product development projects which we are involved in, focusing on Arts, Culture and Heritage, Group Travel and Outdoor Adventure.

We are pleased to be working with partners to host a number of conferences and tournaments this year which are featured on our website. For more details refer to our **Tourism ENews**.

