

Circuit patrimonial
Rideau
Heritage Route



RHRTA MARKETING PLAN 2014

April 2014 VERSION



Part of three Ontario Regional Tourism Organizations (RTOs 9, 10 & 11)

Overview

The Rideau Heritage Route Tourism Association plans to meet objectives through a range of marketing vehicles, promotions, and communications strategies in order to facilitate the visitor encounter. Partnerships to market the Rideau Corridor will be negotiated with other tourism partners including Chambers of Commerce, Tourism Kingston, The Great Waterway (RTO 9), Ontario's Highlands (RTO 11), Ottawa Tourism (RTO 10), Ontario Tourism Marketing Partnership (OTMPC) and other tourism groups. This region has been the focus of a great deal of activity related to tourism based on natural and cultural heritage (sustainable tourism). In addition to the UNESCO World Heritage Site, we have a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve, the National Model of Sustainable Tourism, and particular new interest by the National Geographic Society in a special region-wide designation relating to sustainability. All of these factors indicate an opportunity to position the region in the minds of that rapidly growing market segment interested in natural and cultural heritage.

RHRTA Marketing Objectives

- To position the entire RHR Corridor as a natural and cultural heritage destination
- To provide industry leadership, strategic direction and destination marketing of the RHR Corridor in cooperation with members & partners.
- To facilitate the development of new revenues for tourism businesses along the corridor.
- To assist in the development and market cultural and ecologically sustainable tourism experiences located all along the RHR.

Corridor Brand - A World Heritage Destination

On June 30, 2007 the Rideau Canal and its fortifications in Kingston were designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site; a first for the province of Ontario and the 14th for Canada. The RHRTA brought together Rideau tourism marketing agencies to develop a corridor brand that would provide a consistent and professional message to benefit all the communities and partners all along the corridor. Communities and partners can promote themselves as "**A World Heritage Destination**". The region's assets include authentic arts, recreation, natural and historical experiences.

The National Geographic Society's Center for Sustainable Destinations rated the Rideau Canal National Historic Site of Canada second best on the 2008 "Places Rated" survey. This annual survey measures the world's top historic sites for authenticity, stewardship and their tourism footprint.

Market Focus

The RHRTA marketing campaign will be targeted primarily at consumers. As the region's Destination Marketing Organization (DMO), the RHRTA will profile tourism businesses in its marketing collaterals and on the web site. Once the Rideau product is more secure in the tourism marketplace, and the tour industry sees the success of the product, a concerted effort can then be undertaken to engage mainstream operators. The Travel Media market will be targeted directly through identified initiatives and the Travel Trade market will be reached in partnership with OTMPC, Ottawa Tourism and Tourism Kingston.

Seasonality

The RHRTA marketing campaign will be a four-season effort with a strong emphasis on the Summer & Fall seasons. Marketing a critical mass of cultural and natural experiences within a single brand and marketing campaign - will grow the volume of visitations to the RHR Corridor.

Distinctive Themes

The RHR will be marketed as a "tapestry of experiences" centered around four distinctive themes that reveal the unique history and culture of the entire Rideau region. The RHR marketing collateral will feature these themes:

- Story of a Nation (1st Capital to current Capital, First Nations, legacy of Irish & Scottish canal workers)
- Celebrations and Diversions (events, music, theatre)
- Colours & Flavours along the Rideau (Fall Touring and Local flavours / agri-tourism initiatives)
- A Day in the Countryside (paddling, cycling, hiking, walking & driving tours, recreation)

Evaluation

RHRTA will review various data including web analytics, visitation stats from Rideau Canal land & water based visitors, Statistics Canada reports and area special event attendance, OTMPC Segmentation Research and Direction Ontario surveys. RHRTA will also work with RTO 9 to collect visitor data at key lock stations along the Rideau. RTO 9 has implemented a robust data collecting project through visitor tallies and visitor surveys with results being available to all partners.

Outlook for the Tourism Sector (compilation of data from OTMPC, CTC, Parks Canada, Ottawa Tourism)

The CTC “Explorer Quotient”

The EQ model is based upon a solid research foundation. Through adaptations of Environics* Social Values model, the CTC can effectively develop a profile (EQ) based on the reasons why people travel. The profile is not based solely on age, gender or education, but includes qualities of someone’s personality. The CTC can then suggest Canadian experiences that are relevant to the traveller and consistent with the traveller’s EQ. To create a profile travellers complete a 25 statement questionnaire dealing with travel habits and motivations. The RHRTA has a unique opportunity to fully integrate this sophisticated, proprietary tool into our operation. RHRTA can use the EQ tool to enrich our tourism product development and marketing activities. Simply put: EQ can help transform a world of explorers into some of our best customers.

Last minute booking and internet usage

Financial concerns will accelerate the trend towards last minute bookings and the internet will prove indispensable as a source for up to the minute trip planning. A noticeable increase has been noted with “stay-cations” where visitors are travelling closer to home and discovering their “own backyards”.

Emerging Markets

New International Travel markets will play an increasing role in the next two decades especially with the new UNESCO World Heritage designation and the National Geographic interest in the region. Close attention will be given to emerging markets identified by OTMP and Ottawa Tourism especially in light of the signing of ADS with China. Many of our Rideau communities are twinned with cities or regions in China which will require a long term strategy.

Ontario Tourism Industry Changes

There are numerous fundamental changes happening in the Ontario Tourism industry and it will take some time before roles are defined.

- OTMPC has completed its review but roles and operating parameters are still undefined, including how they will work with partners in future.
- The Regional Tourism Organizations (RTOs) continue to be in a transition going into their 4th full year of operation but have made great progress with successful initiatives & projects completed.
- The RTL (Regional tourism levy) issue has been resolved and funds are being collected & managed by DMPs (Destination Marketing Programs).
- The RHRTA jurisdiction is divided into 3 new RTO regions (RTO 9 – Great Waterway, 10 - Ottawa, 11- Ontario’s Highlands)
- EODP / CFDC Funding programs require 50% matching funds for projects which will change the way RHRTA can access funding.

Sustainable Tourism experiences

According to the Tourism Industry Association of Canada (TIAC), Sustainable tourism actively fosters appreciation and stewardship of the natural, cultural and historic resources and special places by local residents, the tourism industry, governments, and visitors. It is tourism which is viable over the long term because it results in a net benefit for the social, economic, natural and cultural environments of the area in which it takes place. Sustainable Tourism preserves our natural and cultural capital, and enhances society and economy.

Economic Trends

Energy costs, transportation, World Markets changing rapidly and declining disposable incomes are all concerns that impact visitation.

Strategic Framework

Targeted cooperative marketing investment

Consolidate marketing investment into a limited number of identified high potential geographic and market segments. Focus on geographic markets that have shown visitation results in recent years. Partner with both Ottawa and Kingston Tourism to reach International markets. Work with partners to enhance marketing efforts and leverage tourism investment by offering cooperative marketing opportunities.

Dynamic web presence

RHRTA must match or exceed the expectations of its web visitors. Web enhancements including interactive features, and new modules (blogs, RSS feeds, email blasts, web based itineraries, packages and publications. Increase online presence for Rideau tourism businesses through new Social Media applications and others like Google Local, Trip advisor and online contests.

Tourism training/ Visitor Services

Facilitate the delivery of tourism training sessions in the areas of front-line customer service, market readiness and awareness of RHR experiences through partnerships with key associations such as Transportation Options to offer their popular "Welcome Cyclist" program to RHRTA partners. RHRTA will also work closely with Parks Canada to develop the paddling experience along the Rideau including infrastructure upgrades, signage and itinerary development.

Regional Initiatives

RHRTA will work with existing partnerships to successfully leverage several new initiatives that will shape the future of the Rideau; Parks Canada's Landscape Strategy; the Frontenac Arch Biosphere projects with National Geographic for a National Model for Sustainability; Ottawa & Kingston Tourism as they develop travel trade initiatives; and the Regional Tourism Organization Transition Teams in Eastern Ontario (RTO 9, RTO 10, and RTO 11) in order to participate in regional initiatives.

Product Development Strategy / Rideau VEOC <http://www.pc.gc.ca/eng/lhn-nhs/on/rideau/plan/plan4.aspx>

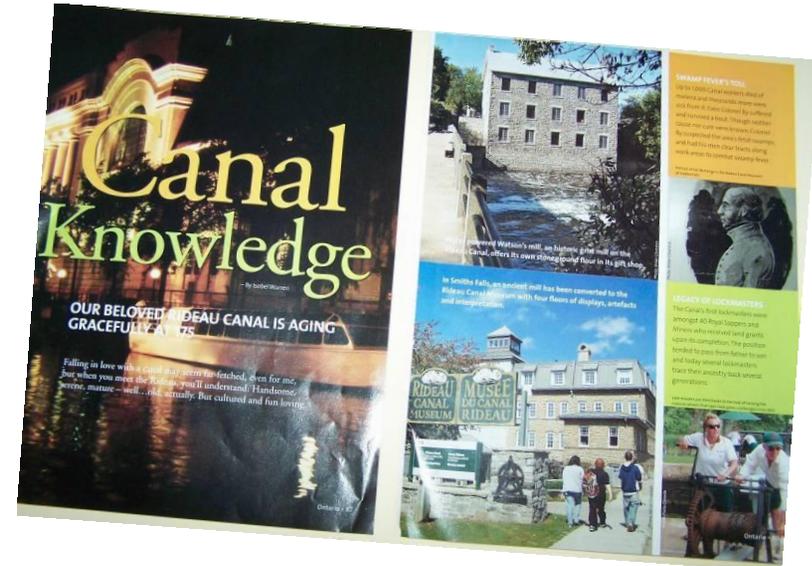
In the summer of 2013, with the support of Member of Parliament for Leeds-Grenville, Gord Brown, a steering committee was formed by representatives from the Rideau Roundtable, United Counties of Leeds and Grenville, Parks Canada, Valley Heartland Community Futures Development Corporation (representing support from Grenville CDFC, Frontenac and 1000 Islands CDC), the Rideau Heritage Route Tourism Association, Lanark County, Town of Smiths Falls, and the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport for the Province of Ontario to jointly share the management and leadership of an important initiative.

The Rideau Canal VEOC process occurred during October and November 2013 with a series of six 2-day, facilitated discussions with small stakeholders groups, made up of people from a wide array of interests and backgrounds from specific geographical regions of the Rideau Corridor. These groups were tasked with brainstorming new or enhanced experience concepts that would create a base for collaboration and action aimed at enhancing the financial sustainability of the canal and adjacent communities, and ensuring the canal meets its potential as a world class site, vibrant and animated. There have been a wide range of ideas and initiatives generated. Some actions will be implementable immediately, some actionable in the next few years, and some, when opportunity permits.



Familiarization Tour Strategy

The RHRTA Fam Tour Manual will continue to be shared with partners in order to promote the benefits of Fam Tours as a very cost effective way to target several key markets including the consumer market, travel trade and niche markets such as paddling, boating, cycling, cultural explorers and many others since Travel media have the ability to reach these markets efficiently and in a precise manner with relatively low cost to RHRTA.



Travel Media article featuring the Rideau

TARGET MARKETS

Initial focus will be on nature & culture oriented leisure travellers. The boating and outdoor recreation markets have been established along the Rideau since the early 1930s with generations of families coming to their cottages or the same lodges year after year. This pattern is changing and the market requires an infusion of new visitors to sustain the current facilities. Many of these facilities require upgrades to maintain market share.

GEOGRAPHIC MARKETS 2014 (derived in consultation with Ottawa Tourism and Kingston Tourism)

Primary	Secondary	Passive/Emerging (indirect reach w/partners & travel media)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eastern Ontario - Ottawa • Montreal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GTA • New York, New Jersey • Pennsylvania 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UK, France, Germany • Asia-Pacific (China, Japan, Australia)

RHRTA Proposed 2014 Marketing initiatives

<i>ITEM</i>	<i>Market</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Details</i>	<i>Funding</i>
Travel Trade				
OTMP Quebec Sales Mission	QUE	Spring	Lead: Direction Ontario (Que Travel Trade)	RHR
Consumer Shows				
MEC PaddleFest	NEAR	May	RHR to have booth at Ottawa Paddle Event	RHR
Salon du Vélo - Montreal	QUE	Feb	Lead: Direction Ontario	DO
Colonel By Festival - Ottawa	NEAR	Aug	RHRTA & Chambers display of information	RHR
1000 Islands Brochure swap	NY	May	RHRTA to take partner brochures to show	RHR
Montreal Boat Show	QUE	Feb	Lead: Direction Ontario	DO
Montreal RV Show	QUE	March	Lead: Direction Ontario	DO
Travel Media Shows				
TMAC - Toronto Chapter	GTA	Bi-Monthly	Bi-Monthly Media mingle events in Toronto	RHR
GoMedia Marketplace	INT'L Media	Sept	TIAC Show - Int'l Media	RHR
TMAC Marketplace	CAN Media	May	Travel Media Assoc of Canada	RHR
Canada Media Marketplace	US Media	April	CTC Show - US Media	RHR
Advertising				
L'Ontario en francais - Guide	ONT	May circ	French DO guide / co-op ad revenue	RHR & coop
Great Drives - Fall	ONT	Aug circ	OTMP campaign	RHR
Boating East	NEAR	May circ	1 pg destination ad	RHR & coop
CJAD Travel Radio	NEAR	July	Montreal live 1 hr travel radio show	RHR & coop
North Grenville Visitor Guide	NEAR	May N/C	RHR to supply camera ready full page ad	RHR & coop
Communication strategies				
Web / SEO	ALL		updates, new images, hosting , languages	RHR
Social Media	ALL		Facebook page	RHR
RHR Newsletter	Partners		Electronic newsletter for partners	RHR
Familiarization Tours	ALL		Mileage, meals, gifts	RHR
Guide Distribution program	NEAR		combination of distribution channels	RHR
On-line RHR e-Travel guide	ALL	May	Update Travel guide online	RHR & coop
Rideau-1000 Islands Map	NEAR	For 2015	Produce 3rd edition of map w/ ads	RHR & coop
TODS Signage	NEAR		Annual contract renewal	RHR
Regional signage projects	ALL	New	Ottawa 2012/ South Frontenac 2014	RHR
Text2 Visit RHR APP	ALL			RHR
Street Banner Program	NEAR	Spring	Coordinate bulk order for communities	RHR
Rideau Experiences - web	NEAR	Ongoing	Enhanced web listings for Rideau partners	VH CFDC

PARTNERSHIP VENTURES / JOINT INITIATIVES

1. PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

Mineral & Motorcycle Projects	RTO 11 (Ontario's Highlands)
Cycling & Golf Development	RTO 9 (The Great Waterway)
Paddling Development	Parks Canada
Motorcycle Touring Map	Kingston Tourism

2. TRAVELTRADE REPRESENTATION (joint representation at shows through partnerships)

SHOW	MARKET	PARTNER
ABA	US	Ottawa Tourism, 1000 Islands Travel Council
NTA	US	Ottawa Tourism, 1000 Islands Travel Council
OMCA	Ontario Motor Coach	Ottawa Tourism, Kingston Tourism
Rendezvous Canada	International trade	RTO 11
Ottawa Sportsman Show	Regional	RTO 9
Bienvenue Quebec	Quebec Tour Operators	Ottawa & Kingston Tourism

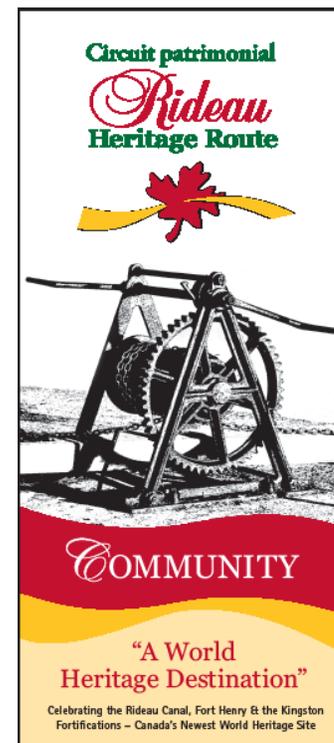


Promoting Luxury Rideau Paddling at Media Show

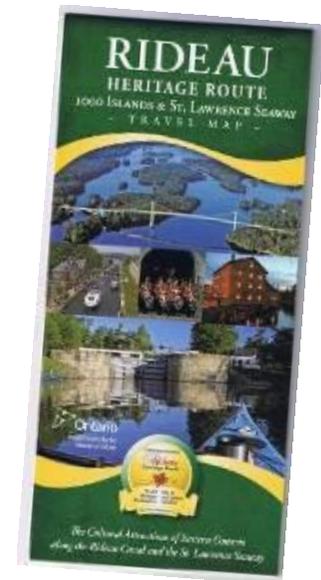


Promotional items & Marketing tools

- Presentation Folders
- Image DVD & Video
- Boat Flags
- Banners
- RHR Logos (WHD or original)
- RHR Decal
- RHR Travel Guides (English or French)
- Rideau-1000 Islands Travel Maps
- Website advertising



RHR Banner



Rideau Travel Map

