

# Adventure Central

CENTRAL DESTINATION MARKETING ORGANIZATION ELECTRONIC NEWSLETTER

volume 2  
2009

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING SET

Since its inception, the Central DMO has operated beneath the efforts of a volunteer steering committee, comprised of tourism stakeholders from across the region who have done their best to get the DMO ball rolling. Now, we are collectively making the transition to formalizing the Central DMO by electing our first Board of Directors at our inaugural Annual General Meeting, to be held at the Mount Peyton Hotel in Grand Falls-Windsor at 7 pm on Thursday, May 7. At the AGM, the interim steering committee will be dissolved and members will elect a board of directors, who will then elect an executive.

The interim steering committee has discussed at length the representation model it will propose at the AGM. This was no an easy task. Many of the DMOs and other tourism entities within the province are either currently revisiting their board model or have structures that would not reflect the unique needs of Central Newfoundland.

The interim committee approached a board model with a few things in mind. One, that the board has to be primarily tourism operators, that is, people who make a living from the commercial operation of a tourism business. Two, the Central region's geography demands we ensure each of the good regional representation. Three, some sectoral representation, such as a representative of outdoor tour operators and accommodations providers, is needed to ensure a broad scope of your interests are at the table. Four, at large seats must be made available so the board is comprised of the best possible candidates. Lastly, and most importantly, there is no perfect model. We need a starting point and will likely revisit this in coming years with a view to changing it as the Central DMO matures.

The proposed board structure and bylaws will be circulated to both current and prospective members in the lead-up to the AGM. Those who attend the AGM should be prepared to nominate or be nominated for service.

Perhaps you are considering running to serve on the inaugural board of directors? Remember, the Central DMO is a marketing organization. It establishes a marketing direction for Central, developed for and by tourism operators. So what are we looking for in a director? Passion for the task at hand. Creativity. Tourism knowledge. Someone who embraces our founding principle, that is, the more visitors we get to the region, the better the chances of our members profiting. The Central DMO's board of directors is a hands-on working committee. Directors are expected to take an active role in promoting Central Newfoundland and the DMO's goals beyond just attending monthly meetings. Of course, you need to be a registered member to be eligible to serve.

The strength of any non-profit organization is dependent on the work of its board. This is your opportunity to have a say in the marketing direction for Central.



## Executive Director's Message



Since beginning in the Executive Director's capacity in mid-February, things have been a bit of a blur. Beyond the semantics of setting up our Grand Falls-Windsor office, the Central DMO has been working to grow its membership, prepare for upcoming trade shows, develop our brand, execute our marketing plan and get our governance model in place. In the midst of all this activity, I wanted to take a moment to thank the greater tourism community in Central for allowing me this opportunity.

I come from a private sector background in marine technology, so the tourism industry is relatively new to me. Let me say, though, that as a marketing professional, we are only as good as the product we promote. In Central Newfoundland, that product - a cultural and natural adventure in the heart of the province - has incredible potential and plenty of room to grow.

Getting back to basics, studies show that there are three primary growth sectors for tourism: cultural/heritage experiences, soft adventure and winter activity. We can offer all three, in spades. Our challenge is to tell our story, in a compelling way that makes us different from our competitors, and to tell it to the right people. It's a task I relish and will give every ounce of my effort to achieve.

On a personal note, I am incredibly fortunate to have an opportunity to move back to Central Newfoundland from the Avalon Peninsula (I'm a fisherman's son from Musgrave Harbour, with great pride) and be part of something new, exciting and full of opportunity.

I am eager to get out and meet with you in the coming months to discuss the Central DMO and what role it can play in growing your business. Hope to see you soon.

Shannon Pirsent



**Central DMO**

16 High Street, 2nd Floor Grand Falls-Windsor, NL A2A 1C6  
Ph: 709.489.9887 Fax: 709.489.7765 Email | [spinsent@centraldmo.com](mailto:spinsent@centraldmo.com)

## DELIVERING THE ULTIMATE PACKAGE

Packaging is a buzzword sweeping through the tourism industry right now. The reason? Companies who embrace packaging opportunities make more money, pure and simple. Developing imaginative packages that extend visitor stays and increase spend rates are at the heart of the Central DMO's strategy.

For those interested in becoming packaging savvy, the Department of Tourism, Culture and Recreation, in partnership with the Coast of Bays and Exploits Valley economic development corporations, will be hosting workshops in Central Newfoundland featuring packaging gurus Maria Matthews of Vision The Atlantic Co. and Eva Gutsche of STEM Consulting and Marketing. Sessions will be held in St. Alban's on March 30 and Buchans on March 31. Registration details are being circulated. The Central DMO will also deliver a presentation at both events.

## PHOTOS WANTED

Good photos are the spine, soul and heart of any marketing effort. Beyond engaging the services of a professional photographer this summer, the Central DMO is seeking your help in building its image library.



If you or your organization has decent resolution images to share for use in our marketing collateral, please contact Shannon Pinsent toll-free at 1-888-489-CDMO or email [spinsent@centraldmo.com](mailto:spinsent@centraldmo.com)

## CENTRAL DMO ON THE ROAD

Tradeshows season is upon us and the Central DMO is attending several key tradeshows in the important Ontario market as part of the Newfoundland and Labrador pavilion.

The Central DMO will be attending the Toronto Travel & Leisure Show from March 27- 29th and The Travel & Vacation Show in Ottawa in early April.

The DMO is looking for unique artifacts that represent our distinct culture, resilient people and breathtaking landscape. If you have something in mind please contact us.

## WELCOME TO OUR NEWEST MEMBERS!

The Central DMO is proud to welcome its newest members to the fold.

Queen Street Dinner Theatre  
Kittiwake Economic Development Corporation  
Town of Musgrave Harbour  
Town of Gander

If you haven't received your membership package, drop us a line at [spinsent@centraldmo.com](mailto:spinsent@centraldmo.com)

Remember, members have to be registered in order to attend the upcoming Annual General Meeting or run for the board of directors.

# Good to Go?

With winter fast coming to its curtain call (save for a few major snowstorms before spring, as is the norm), our minds inevitably turn to the peak tourism season. Are you ready? Here's a brief list of things to action to ensure the best possible season - for you and your guests - this summer.

## TIDY UP.

We know most of you do this anyway, but now is an opportune time to review your operation with a keen, objective eye. Remember, the devil is in the details. Is the table in the corner of the restaurant unlevel? Is the artwork in the entrance straight? Do the shower curtains need replacing? Are you going to purchase that fire pit you considered? Add wireless internet? Are you going to stock green tea after getting 20 requests for it last summer? Have windfalls fallen across the hiking trail? Take a clipboard, sweep through your operation, make note of any deficiencies and create a list to action. Ask your employees and peers for feedback on what needs to be done. They are often closest to the customers and operation.

## MEET THE GATEKEEPERS.

So soon as your local visitor information centre opens, go meet the tourism officers, talk about your business, what it does and what may be new. Do the same with your peers in the area. Give them information that empowers them to make referrals. Tourism marketing begins at home and means we all need to play a role in supporting each other.

## CIRCULATE YOUR PROMOTIONAL MATERIAL.

Your sharp new brochure doesn't get any mileage sitting and gathering dust. Get it out there, in places where people can find it. Ferries. Major gateways. Service stations. One of the most convenient ways to circulate your brochures is through the Department of Tourism's literature distribution program. More information is available by contacting Mr. Nick Dawe, Distribution Officer, Department of Tourism, Culture and Recreation at 709-729-5228 or [ndawe@gov.nl.ca](mailto:ndawe@gov.nl.ca)

There are other non-traditional means of promoting your operation within the region. Maybe you have colleagues with tourism businesses in the area. Maybe the local restaurant will use your custom designed placemat promoting your business. Maybe the pub owner will allow you to place an ad in the washroom. Look for complementary opportunities outside the norm.

## WORK THE WEB.

The number of people using the web to book vacations, tours and accommodations has crept over 80%. If you don't have a functional, professional online presence, you need to revisit your marketing plan. Fast. Simply put, it's the cheapest means to access the most potential customers.

## YOUR FREE PROVINCIAL LISTING. DO IT.

The deadline for your free listing in the provincial traveler's guide for 2010 is May 31. Circle the date. Add it to your things to do. Get it done. For listings information, contact the Tourism Destination Management System (TDMS) Team at 709-729-5599 or email [tdms@gov.nl.ca](mailto:tdms@gov.nl.ca)

## JOIN THE CENTRAL DMO

Sorry, we couldn't resist a shameless plug. For a membership package, or for further information, contact our office.



## CENTRAL DMO MEMBER PROFILE

### Danny Huxter, Springdale

Since its establishment in 2006, the Riverwood Inn has fast earned a reputation as one of Central Newfoundland premiere places to stay, play and work. The 4.5 star facility, nestled in a pristine valley along Indian River in Springdale, features meticulously designed furnishing and suites.

“Our goal is to impress the most discriminating traveler who demands exceptional comfort and contemporary décor,” explains Riverwood’s Danny Huxter. “All of our suites offer a panoramic view of Indian River with outside decks and private relaxation spaces. Our concept is that the Inn blend seamlessly into the natural surroundings and create a stress-reducing warmth. It’s no accident we are located on a historic, serene, waterway. It’s part of our brand, character and the entire Riverwood experience.”

Danny has long been a proponent of a destination marketing organization and currently serves on the interim steering committee working to strengthen marketing in Central. He took time to answer some of our questions.

**Q. For a tourism operation like yours, what are the benefits of membership in a Destination Marketing Organization?**

First and foremost, the Central DMO provides us with an opportunity to participate in the development of the tourism experience for this entire region. A DMO enhances the likelihood that the tourism product is professional and represents the needs of our market base. Secondly, it allows us as an individual business to market our own products and services to clients who are looking to come to the area. A DMO is a fantastic resource for businesses who are looking to compete in today’s tourism industry.

**Q. It seems you are always seeking out new revenue opportunities.**

It is not so much seeking new revenue streams as it is finding ways to enhance the overall experience of our clients. It is easy to offer a nice bed for folks to have a good night sleep but that’s not what Riverwood Inn is all about. We are proud of our area and we want to show it off. The first thing we do when a tourist calls us is try to determine their interests. Using that information, we help them plan a travel itinerary. This approach required we get familiar with the areas of our region that help offer a distinct product, therefore giving us a competitive edge. We have put together a three-day travel package for guests which brings them to the Baie Verte Peninsula, King’s Point area and Green Bay South. We decided to offer picnic lunches for our guests so they can take their basket and blanket along the river, sit in a private area and enjoy nature along with a glass of wine, good food and the sounds of nature.

**Q. What role does the internet play in your marketing plan?**

The Internet has played a major role in our marketing efforts and will continue to grow in importance. We have developed a website which is reflective of our product. Most of our bookings come through the website, along with word of mouth referrals. I recently developed a Facebook Ad and it led to over 300 additional hits on our website which so far has translated into a return of almost 20 times the investment. These ads are targeted, effective, and easy to do. We have a facebook group and I will soon begin travel blogging, which has become an important tool in tourism marketing.



**Q. You seem to approach your business through partnerships with other stakeholders in the area. How does that work?**

We know that our greatest strength is not the luxury beds, jacuzzi or workmanship of the Inn. Our greatest strength is the experience guests have as a whole. We tell our guests about the great restaurants that are in King’s Point, Triton or LaScie. We call these places and make reservations, even though we have our own dining area. The point is that these places offer something we cannot. If you go to By The Sea Cafe, you can enjoy a beautiful meal on the harbour where you will likely see a whale. We can’t offer that. We may also send them to King’s Point Pottery, or set up an experience for them where they can learn a traditional activity with one of the locals. We recognize that for us, Gros Morne, Grand Falls-Windsor and the coastal communities in our region are assets we have to make work for us. This means that we sometimes lose people because they end up staying in Gros Morne, but I can guarantee that they are telling their friends about the experience they had at the Riverwood Inn. Our business model revolves around the customer and not us; we go above and beyond to make sure people have a memorable Riverwood experience.

**Q. Name three things every tourism operator should do to strengthen its marketing?**

The first is customer profiling. You have to know who your clients are, and this is tricky because you may think your customer represents one demographic when in fact it is totally different. Get to know the people who come through your doors, ask questions and seek advice - people love to feel like they are helping out! Secondly, you have to know your strengths and weaknesses - flaunt your strengths and acknowledge your weaknesses. I never try to hide the fact that we are weak in certain areas, I speak freely

about it with our clients and they always appreciate our honesty. In many cases, they offer very valuable suggestions. On the other hand, I never turn down an opportunity to brag about our product, either. The third is to plan. Planning allows

you to do the profiling and understand your strengths and weaknesses but it also gives you a guideline. A good plan always allows flexibility because the market dictates who you need to reach with your message. We found out early on that our inn was an ideal location for weddings, but this was not a part of our original plan. When we look back now, it is obvious - we have a beautiful location, luxurious accommodations, spacious conference facilities and a desire to work with clients. From my point of view there is no better place in the province to host a wedding! Later this month we are going to a wedding show ... it wasn't in our marketing plan at first but it is now.



**Q. How do you view the future of tourism in Central Newfoundland?**

I am very confident tourism in Central Newfoundland and Labrador will experience significant growth. There are operators here who are committed to providing a professional service to the global marketplace. If you provide quality experiences, you will get quality clients, and these clients will be more than happy to help you grow your product. We need to work together to ensure Central becomes a destination and the more we do that, the more we will benefit. If a client is looking for something different from what I can offer - I want to have an alternative venue where I can send them so that they have a great experience. That's the bottom line.

## Tourism Gems



Central Newfoundland is full of fantastic sights, sounds, tastes and traditions. Some are well-trodden tourism icons, while others are hidden jewels waiting to be discovered. Let's get started, shall we?

**Tilting.** What to say about tradition-rich Tilting? A photographer's dream, distinctly Irish flavored and an absolute essential for any visit to Fogo Island, or Central Newfoundland for that matter. It's cliché to call a community charming, but it fits the bill for Tilting.

**Murray Hard.** Central Newfoundland boasts literally thousand of kilometres of trail beckoning the avid hiker. For this issue, we focus on famed Alexander Murray Trail in King's Point. It's well maintained, affords spectacular views of Green Bay and is a bit of a calf-burner in steep sections. Allow three hours to do it justice.

**Miawpukek First Nation Powwow.** In early July, traditional dancers, drummers, spiritual leaders and elders from across the Mi'kmaq Nation converge on Conne River to celebrate their traditions, culture, and spiritualism. Guests can partake in activities and events such as; traditional dancing and chanting, sacred ceremonies, feasts, traditional food sampling and sharing culture and traditions.

That's it for this issue. Write us at [spinsent@centraldmo.com](mailto:spinsent@centraldmo.com) and let us know about your choices for Central Newfoundland's Tourism Gems so we can feature them in our next edition. It could be the fish and chips at a diner, a secluded beach, a hiking trail with great vistas, or a rollicking festival.