



Tourism Industry Association of Manitoba

TOURISM INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION OF MANITOBA (TIAM) CELEBRATES TOURISM WEEK WITH INAUGURAL CONFERENCE & AGM

TIAM Elects first Board of Directors

April 18, 2024 - WINNIPEG, MB – The Tourism Industry Association of Manitoba (TIAM) celebrated Tourism Week by welcoming 125 participants to their first annual conference and AGM held at the RBC Convention Centre in Winnipeg.

“Tourism is a cornerstone of Manitoba’s economy,” said new Board Chair, John Gunter of Frontiers North Adventures, “We want to thank everyone who came together to celebrate the industry and thank our incredible group of speakers from across Canada. We are ready to tackle the industry’s challenges together and bring even more tourists from around the world to enjoy what Manitoba has to offer.”

Many tourism operators and businesses continue to recover after the pandemic, but the future looks bright. According to a report by Tourism Economics in June of last year, visitation to Manitoba will meet 2019 levels in 2024, with international visitation recovering by 2026. Visitor spending has already surpassed 2019 levels.

The most recent Statistics Canada data for 2022 shows Manitoba welcomed 8.7 million visitors, who spent just over \$1.8 billion throughout the province. The Manitoba Tourism Strategy targets to grow visitor spending to \$2.5 billion by 2030. This vital industry was responsible for over 18,000 tourism jobs in Manitoba in 2022, providing valuable opportunities for youth, first time workers and newcomers to Canada in all regions of the province, with avenues for skill development and career growth.

The conference featured an exciting lineup of speakers from Manitoba and across Canada covering important topics such as creating a competitive advantage for Manitoba tourism businesses, using tourism as reconciliation, and navigating the tourism labour market. Hon. Glen Simard, Minister of Sport, Culture, Heritage and Tourism joined the conference on behalf of the provincial government, participating in a fireside chat hosted by Manitoba Chamber of Commerce President and CEO, Chuck Davidson. Travel Manitoba and Tourism Winnipeg also hosted the second annual Tourism Awards, recognizing outstanding contributions to the tourism industry in Manitoba.

Over the past year, in addition to planning for its inaugural AGM, TIAM’s acting board and founding members have worked at identifying industry priorities and advocacy efforts. TIAM continues to grow as industry partners and operators join their membership roster, and today announced their first Board of Directors.

“The Tourism Industry Association of Manitoba will be a unified voice for industry,” said the new Board Vice-Chair Shaun Jeffrey, Manitoba Restaurant & Foodservices Association, “We have heard from members about what they need to grow and better serve visitors to Manitoba – now we’re ready to get to work.”

The inaugural Board of Directors of the Tourism Industry Association of Manitoba are:

- **Chair** - John Gunter, Frontiers North Adventures, Travel Trade Representative
- **Vice-Chair** - Shaun Jeffrey, Manitoba Restaurant & Foodservices Association, Representative At Large
- Karly McRae, Lakehouse Properties, Accommodations Representative
- Caleigh Christie, Falcon Trails Resort & Falcon Ridge Ski Slopes, Attractions and Events Representative
- Doug Stephen, WOW Hospitality, Food and Beverage Representative
- Ashley Smith, Turtle Village (Turtleback Homes), Indigenous Tourism Representative
- Pit Turenne, Aikens Lake Wilderness Lodge, Lodges and Outfitters Representative
- Jayde Finkbeiner, Heartland International Travel & Tours, Meetings, Conventions and Incentive Travel Representative
- Barbara Hacio Kirby, Ô Tours, Transportation Representative
- Merv Gunter, Frontiers North Adventures, Representative At Large
- Marilyn Williams, Red River North Tourism, Representative At Large
- Freitz Arenas, J&F Travel, Representative At Large
- Jackie Storry, Churchill Wild, Representative At Large