

TOURISM INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION OF MANITOBA
ADVOCACY FORUM



Tourism Industry Association of
Manitoba

2026 Presenter Biographies

Thank you to everyone who is speaking at this year's TIAM AF!



Sara Berger

Sara Berger is a Business Consultant with CGI who helps organizations turn chaos into clarity by connecting people, process and technology to do more of what matters. A recovering event planner turned operations leader, change agent, AI readiness advisor and community builder, Sara is passionate about responsible AI and helping leaders consider not just what AI can do, but what it should do - grounded in respect for the people and experiences technology is meant to serve.



Dorota Blumczynska

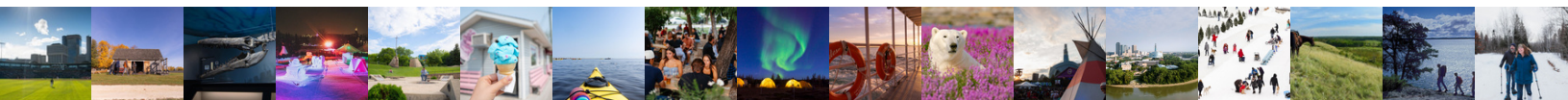
Dorota Blumczyńska is Chief Executive Officer of the Manitoba Museum, bringing extensive experience in community leadership, organizational growth, and social impact.

A former refugee who arrived in Canada with her family in 1989, her personal journey has shaped a career dedicated to inclusion, equity, and community building. Prior to joining the Museum, she served for 13 years as Executive Director of the Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization of Manitoba (IRCOM), where she led a period of significant growth, innovation, and influence.

Since joining the Manitoba Museum in 2020, Dorota has championed the Museum's role as a trusted gathering place that fosters intercultural dialogue, celebrates our shared humanity, and advances reconciliation.

She currently serves as President of the Canadian Museums Association and is a Trustee with United Way Winnipeg.

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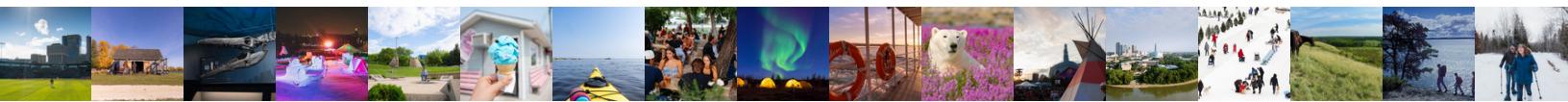
Angela Cassie

Angela Cassie is an arts, culture and tourism executive who is currently serving as Travel Manitoba's Interim CEO and Chief Operating Officer. She has held executive roles with two of Canada's National Museums - the National Gallery of Canada in Ottawa and the Canadian Museum for Human Rights in Winnipeg. She has extensive experience in strategic planning, communications and marketing, programming, risk management, leadership development and coaching, government and stakeholder relations and leading teams to achieve corporate goals in government and the non-profit sector. Angela holds a BA from the University of Winnipeg and completed an Executive Development program (mini MBA) from McGill University's Executive Institute.



Cindy Desrochers

Cindy Desrochers is a Red River Métis museum leader with more than 30 years of experience in heritage, administration, and community governance. Executive Director of Le Musée de Saint-Boniface Museum (MSBM) since 2021, she began her career there as an interpreter and progressed through administrative and management roles. Over the past two years, she has led MSBM through a multimillion-dollar restoration of the historic Grey Nuns' Convent, coordinating capital work, fundraising, government relations, and continued museum operations during its closure. Her leadership brings together heritage preservation, organizational sustainability, and a commitment to sharing Francophone and Métis history through accessible, community-centred experiences.



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Jamie Dumont

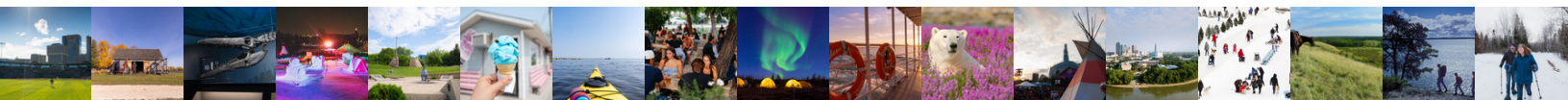
Jamie Dumont is Red River Métis and grew up in St. Laurent, Manitoba.

She is Co-Owner of Chadwick Consulting Ltd, and a consultant with over 13 years of senior central government experience with the Province of Manitoba, specializing in Indigenous and northern economic development.

Jamie is also a skilled facilitator, with experience in strategic planning, and community and employee engagement strategies.

Jamie previously served as the Chair of the Indigenous Chamber of Commerce and currently serves on the board of directors of the Manitoba Chamber of Commerce, the Manitoba Mineral Development Fund, and UWCRC 2.0, as well as the Truth and Reconciliation Advisory Council of the Manitoba Liquor & Lotteries Corporation and the Indigenous Affairs Committee of the Canadian Chamber of Commerce.

In 2022, Jamie was re-elected as Trustee for Ward 1 of the Winnipeg School Division.



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Tara Elder-Young

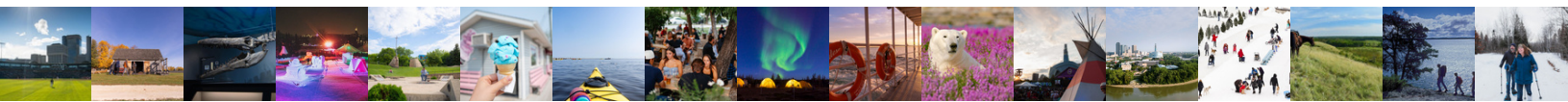
Tara Elder-Young is the Vice President of Business Development and Marketing at Calm Air International, where she leads strategic initiatives that foster regional growth and build meaningful partnerships across Northern Manitoba.

With over 17 years experience in tourism in Northern Manitoba, Tara brings deep insight, a collaborative spirit, and a strong commitment to community-driven development. She is a dedicated business leader with a profound passion for Northern Manitoba—its people, landscapes, and rich cultural heritage. Throughout her career, Tara has championed sustainable, inclusive initiatives that celebrate and strengthen the North's unique identity. Her approach blends strategic thinking with heartfelt commitment, and she continues to advocate for opportunities that create lasting impact through collaboration, innovation, and shared vision.



John Gunter

John Gunter is CEO of Frontiers North Adventures, a family-owned company based in Churchill that has been connecting visitors with Manitoba's North for over 30 years. From polar bear and beluga whale viewing to northern lights expeditions, John has helped grow Manitoba's international profile as a premier destination for wildlife and northern experiences. He is also a strong advocate for sustainable tourism and community partnerships, ensuring that northern tourism continues to thrive while respecting the land, wildlife, and cultures that make Churchill unique. In his role as Chair of TIAM, John has worked to strengthen advocacy, expand partnerships, and give Manitoba's tourism industry a strong and unified voice.



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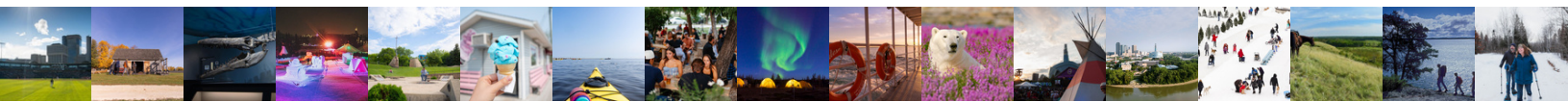


Jeff Hnatiuk

With over 30 years of sport leadership experience, a Bachelor of Recreation Studies degree from the University of Manitoba and an Administration degree from the University of Winnipeg, Jeff Hnatiuk became the first President and CEO of Sport Manitoba when the organization was formed in 1996. He previously served as the executive director for both Golf Manitoba and Hockey Manitoba.

During his 24 years in leading Sport Manitoba, Jeff oversaw the delivery and development of sport in our province. He also served on many provincial and national boards, task forces and completed a secondment as president and CEO of the 2017 Canada Summer Games Host Society.

In addition to his role at Sport Manitoba, he served on the Advisory Committee to the Faculty of Physical Education and Recreation Management at the University of Manitoba, sat on the Board of Directors for the 1999 World Junior Hockey Championships, the 1999 Pan American Games Legacy Committee, and was a member of the National Task Force commissioned for development of a National Alternate Dispute Resolution System for Sport in Canada.



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Tara Jago

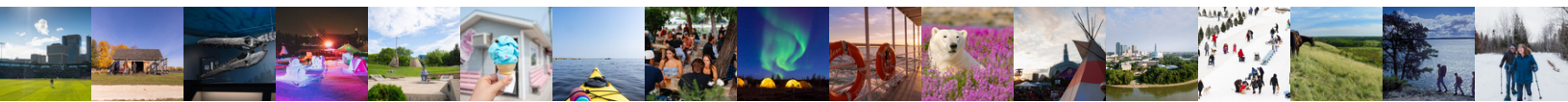
Tara Jago is Senior Manager, External Affairs at WestJet, where she supports relationships and engagement with government partners, tourism organizations, industry associations, and key stakeholders across Canada. She is responsible for advancing WestJet's external affairs priorities and fostering collaborative relationships that support the airline's growth, stronger connectivity, and contributions to Canada's tourism and economic development objectives.

Since joining WestJet in 2023, Tara has helped build and maintain the airline's reputation as a trusted and transparent partner. She works closely with federal, provincial, and municipal governments on legislative, regulatory, and public policy matters affecting WestJet and the broader aviation and tourism sectors. Her work focuses on identifying opportunities for collaboration and advocating for policies that support a competitive, sustainable, and accessible air transportation network.

Beyond her government relations responsibilities, Tara supports WestJet's broader external affairs efforts through strategic stakeholder engagement, partnership development, and relationship management. She is passionate about bringing together industry, government, and community partners to address shared challenges and create opportunities that benefit travellers, businesses, and local economies.

Prior to joining WestJet, Tara held senior advisory roles with the Governments of Alberta and Manitoba, developing deep expertise in public policy, stakeholder engagement, communications, and issues management.

Outside of work, Tara enjoys spending time with family and friends and can often be found on the golf course.



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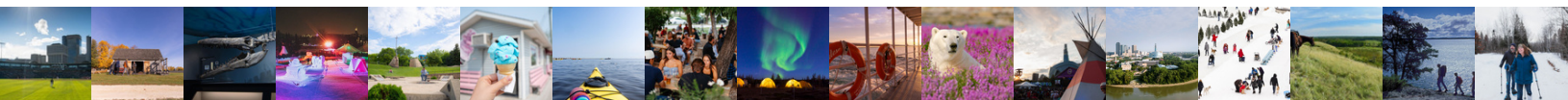


Shaun Jeffrey

Shaun Jeffrey is a non profit specialist as the CEO and Executive Director of the Manitoba Restaurant and Foodservices Association. His involvement in board and charity development extends over 15 years in three different industries. Shaun is also the proud owner of the Carpe Diem group, a thriving real estate and property management company.

Shaun is passionate about driving business and showcasing the best of Manitoba. As a proud Manitoban, he feels we need strong voices showcasing the best we have to offer visitors. Shaun believes our province has so many jewels that need to be explored. “There's not a corner of the province that you can visit that doesn't have a spectacular concept of tourism that can only foster future growth and visiting by tourists,” says Shaun.

As part of the tourism industry, Shaun has taken a personal responsibility to continue to foster new and exciting ways for visiting Manitobans and resident Manitobans alike to realize how amazing this province is and what we have to offer. This drive continues to press Shaun to get involved in future events and find ways to experience and showcase culinary tourism.



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The Honourable Nellie Kennedy

Nellie Kennedy was elected as the MLA for Assiniboia in 2023 and appointed Minister of Sport, Culture, Heritage and Tourism in 2024.

As Minister, she has advanced legislation to make sport safer, stronger and more inclusive, including the Protecting Youth in Sport Act, the Combative Sports Amendment Act and the Inclusion in Sport Act.

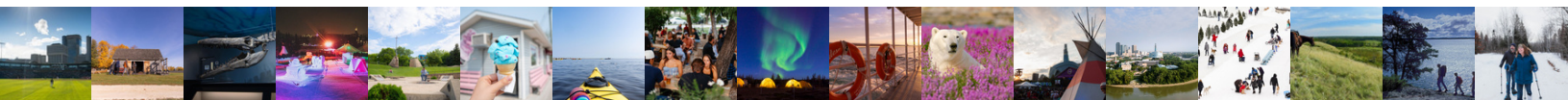
Minister Kennedy is a strong champion for Manitoba's arts, culture and heritage sectors. She recognizes that these sectors do more than enrich our quality of life. They strengthen our communities, contribute to our economy and help tell the stories of who we are as Manitobans.

She is a passionate advocate for Manitoba's tourism sector and the people and organizations who showcase the incredible beauty, experiences and hospitality our province has to offer. She is proud to help share Manitoba's story and welcome more people from across Canada, and around the world to discover everything our province has to offer.



James Lindsey

James Lindsey is the President and Chief Executive Officer of the Thompson Regional Airport Authority. Mr. Lindsey is an experienced executive with over twenty-five years experience in the aviation sector. Prior to joining the Thompson Airport, Mr. Lindsey held executive positions within the airline, air ambulance/aerial emergency services, airport and consulting sectors of the aviation industry. Mr. Lindsey is active as a board volunteer, currently sitting on the Board of Directors for the Manitoba Northern Regional Health Authority, Regional Community Airports of Canada (Chair), Canadian Ski Instructors Alliance (Vice-Chair), and serving on the National Advisory Committee for Hope Air. Mr. Lindsey has a Master of Science in Airport Planning and Management and is accredited with the International Association of Airport Executives – Canada.



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Scott Marohn

As Vice President of Commercial, Scott oversees all commercial assets for WAA including key business areas such as Air Service, Air Cargo, Revenue Marketing, Retail and Concessions, Parking, and Real Estate. In addition, Scott has oversight of Airport City Winnipeg Ltd. as this company looks to diversify revenue through land development and other prospective opportunities.

Scott started with WAA in 2005 in the Operations department and provided strategic leadership during the major terminal redevelopment project, which opened in 2008. His expertise in the startup of new common use, boarding bridge, and baggage handling systems has allowed him to bring the operations role of the facility over to commercial development in order to gain extensive knowledge of various sides of the business in discussions with airlines. Scott holds a Bachelor of Commerce degree from the University of Manitoba.

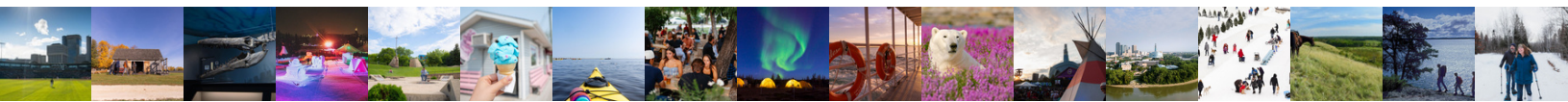


Karly McRae

Karly McRae is an entrepreneur, destination builder, and community leader dedicated to strengthening rural economies through innovative tourism development and authentic visitor experiences. Since 2011, she has played a leading role in the revitalization of tourism in Riding Mountain National Park, helping position Clear Lake as one of Manitoba's most dynamic and growing year-round destinations.

Through business leadership, community collaboration, and industry advocacy, Karly is passionate about building tourism experiences rooted in place — celebrating landscape and culture while contributing meaningfully to regional economic development. Her work reflects a strong belief that thoughtful tourism development can enrich communities while protecting the landscapes that make them special.

Through her leadership and advocacy, she continues to help shape the evolving story of Manitoba as a compelling and distinctive tourism destination.



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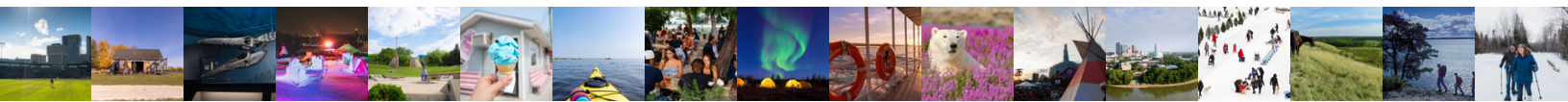


The Honourable Jamie Moses

Minister Moses was elected in 2019 and has served as MLA for St. Vital ever since. He was one of the first three black MLAs elected in Manitoba's history. As an MLA, he passed legislation to recognize Emancipation Day in Manitoba and to establish anti-racism training for provincial employees.

In October 2023, Moses was appointed to the provincial cabinet as minister of economic development, investment, trade, and natural resources. Now serving as minister of business, mining, trade, and job creation, he is dedicated to expanding economic opportunities, growing Manitoba businesses, and supporting a diverse workforce in the province.

With a background in agri-business, the financial sector, and as a former coach, Jamie is passionate about creating opportunities for all people. Jamie and his wife are long-time residents of St. Vital, where they are raising their two children in the neighbourhood they love.



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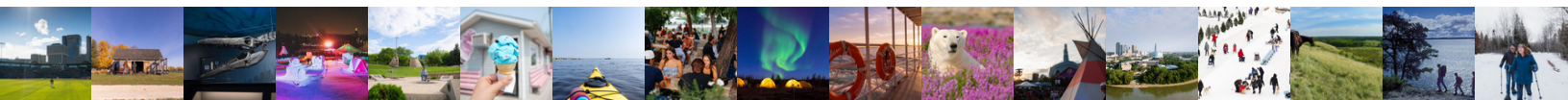
Martha Petrusevich

Martha Petrusevich is an Economic Development Officer with the Rural Municipality of Taché, Manitoba, bringing over 8 years of combined experience working with municipalities, non-profit organizations, community groups, and boards. Her career has focused on turning community priorities into tangible projects through economic development, strategic partnerships, funding, and collaborative leadership.

Since joining the RM of Taché in 2024, Martha has helped advance major municipal and community projects by securing and pursuing funding, building partnerships with all levels of government, and connecting local priorities with provincial and federal opportunities. Her work spans infrastructure and site readiness, housing and investment attraction, business support programs, climate adaptation, tourism development, and community-focused economic initiatives.

A key focus of Martha's work has been the continued development of the Centre of Canada as a tourism and economic development destination. She has worked alongside municipal leadership, community volunteers, businesses, tourism organizations, and government partners to expand the Centre of Canada Market and advance long-term plans for the site.

Martha is passionate about rural economic development and tourism and believes strong communities are built through collaboration, practical solutions, and relationships between municipalities, businesses, residents, and government.



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Brenna Philp

Brenna Philp is the Director of Recreation & Leisure Services for the Rural Municipality of Gimli, where she leads recreation, leisure, cultural and tourism initiatives that enhance community well-being and support local economic growth. As a longtime resident of the community and mother of two active boys, Brenna is passionate about creating the kinds of spaces, programs, and experiences that help families thrive. She believes the work of recreation, leisure, and tourism professionals extends beyond facilities and events. It is about building vibrant, connected communities where people want to live, visit, and raise their families. Through collaboration with community partners, volunteers, and stakeholders, Brenna is committed to fostering opportunities that strengthen quality of life and showcase the unique character of Gimli.

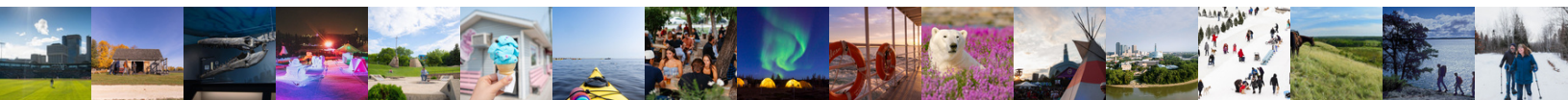


Maureen Riley

With 30 years of experience in the tourism sector, Maureen brings an unparalleled depth and diversity of experience in the tourism sector, both in Canada and globally. She began her career as a tour guide, then worked with a receptive tour operator, where she connected with the tourism supply chain and dependent economies. Furthering her experience, Maureen worked with Tourism Whistler, Travel Alberta and gained international experience as the Managing Director for the Japan Market, for Destination Canada.

Throughout her career, Maureen has championed a collaborative model and global view of tourism.

Moving from her previous role of VP International at Destination Canada, Maureen is now VP Industry Engagement, where she will work to strengthen DC's commitment to the growth of the tourism sector and support Industry advancement and engagement.



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Valerie Shantz

Valerie Shantz is the Executive Director of the Winnipeg Folk Festival, joining in January 2024. She has spent much of her career in the arts working in festivals, theatre, film and funding.

The Winnipeg Folk Festival is a charitable organization that presents one of North America's premier outdoor music festivals. July 2025 marked the 50th edition of the festival where each July the festival's cumulative attendance exceeds 75,000 and includes visitors and performers from across North America and around the world.

While rooted in folk music, programming includes diverse genres including roots, world, bluegrass and indie rock.

Highlights of the Winnipeg Folk Festival include 9 stages, a vibrant camping community of thousands, a family area, an annual prairie outdoor art exhibit, and locally made food and hand made goods.

In addition to its summer festival, the organization presents dozens of concerts and events throughout the year.

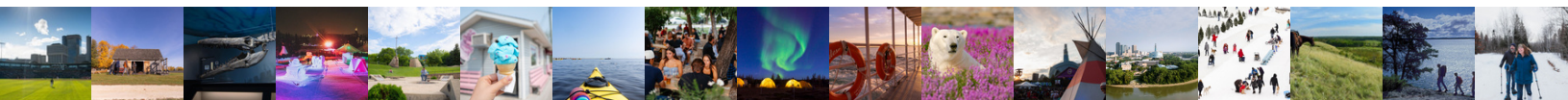


Tony Siwicki

Tony Siwicki is a third-generation owner and operator of Silver Heights Restaurant & Lounge, a Winnipeg institution that has been family-owned since 1957. With decades of experience in Manitoba's hospitality industry, Tony has been an active advocate for restaurants, tourism, and local business.

He served six years as Chair of the Manitoba Restaurant & Foodservices Association and continues to play an active role in industry events and initiatives. Tony is also involved in organizing major industry events, including Taste of Manitoba, and is a strong supporter of Manitoba's local businesses and tourism community.

Known for his practical, people-first approach to hospitality, Tony believes great tourism starts with creating experiences that make people feel welcome and give them a reason to come back.



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Holly Spence

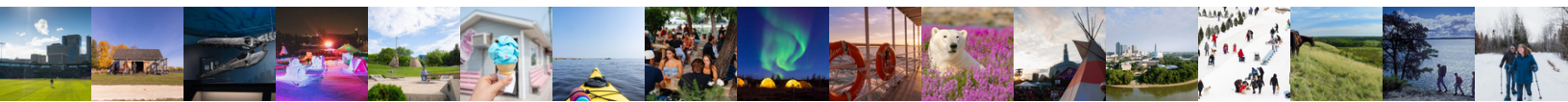
As the CEO of ITM, Holly Spence is tasked with leading the growth and development of the Indigenous tourism industry in Manitoba. In collaboration with TMB and ITAC, Holly will lead the implementation of the Manitoba Indigenous Tourism Strategy, which focuses on the development of a sustainable market-ready and export-ready Indigenous tourism products, as well as increasing the demand for Manitoba's Indigenous tourism experiences. Holly was born and raised in Peguis First Nation, where she owned and operated multiple successful businesses. She understands the barriers and complexities of owning a business both on and off the reserve and brings that first-hand knowledge to tourism operators in Manitoba. Through her previous work as the Manitoba Regional Coordinator at ITAC from 2019 to 2022, she guided many Indigenous entrepreneurs and community-owned tourism enterprises to strengthen their offerings into market and export-ready products. Holly's connections and leadership within the region are proven and she is a true advocate for Indigenous tourism in Manitoba.



Lanny Stewart

Lanny Stewart is the Director of Marketing and Communications for Brandon Tourism, where he leads the organization's marketing, communications, brand development, and destination promotion efforts. His work focuses on strengthening Brandon's profile as a visitor destination, showcasing the people, experiences, events, and stories that make the city unique.

Lanny plays a key role in advancing Brandon Tourism's strategic direction, working with local tourism businesses, community organizations, event organizers, Indigenous partners, and regional stakeholders to build a stronger and more collaborative visitor economy. He is currently involved in the development of Brandon's tourism strategy and new community place brand, with a focus on positioning Brandon for sustainable tourism growth over the coming decade.



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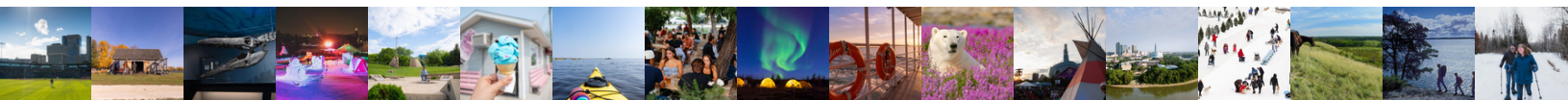


Jennifer Taylor

Jennifer Taylor is a seasoned professional with over three decades of experience in the tourism and hospitality industry, known for her strategic leadership and innovative approach. Currently, as the Vice-President of Business Development & Member Relations at the Tourism Industry Association of Canada (TIAC), Jennifer excels in supporting members and elevating TIAC's brand. Her expertise lies in business development, strategic partnerships, and comprehensive marketing strategies. She is adept at driving member engagement, retention, and recruitment, while executing integrated marketing and communication plans that enhance non-dues revenue.

Throughout her career, Jennifer has consistently demonstrated her ability to foster stakeholder relations, facilitate corporate growth, and implement business development initiatives. Her strategic planning and execution skills have resulted in successful marketing and sales strategies that drive increased revenues and profits. Jennifer's approach combines a deep understanding of market dynamics with innovative solutions, ensuring that business objectives are met and exceeded.

In previous roles, Jennifer's leadership extended to managing strategic partnerships, enhancing membership programs, and overseeing event management. Her skills in budget development, project leadership, and team supervision have been instrumental in delivering high-quality programs and services. Jennifer's ability to liaise with industry stakeholders and governmental agencies has further solidified her reputation as a key player in the tourism sector, driving both regional and global marketing efforts.

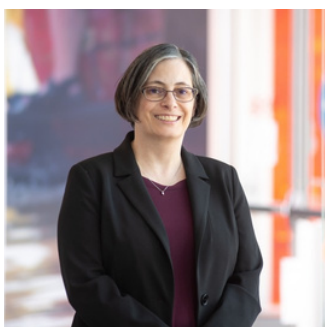


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Jackie Tenuta

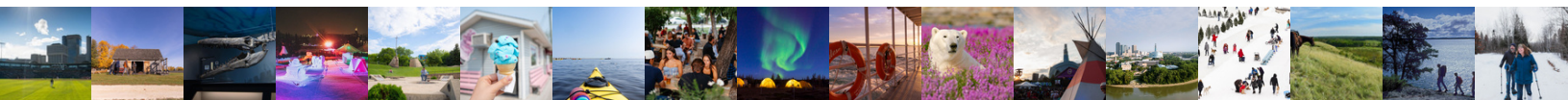
As VP, Tourism Growth and Research at Travel Manitoba, Jackie Tenuta leads a dedicated team focused on providing market research insights and supporting the development of Manitoba's tourism industry.

Jackie spent 25 years working in international market development, market research, consumer marketing and performance measurement roles in the agriculture and food industry before moving into the tourism industry seven years ago. In her spare time, Jackie enjoys exploring Manitoba's great campgrounds, hiking trails and lakes with her family.



Natalie Thiesen

Natalie Thiesen is the Vice President of Tourism at Winnipeg Economic Development & Tourism, where she leads the Tourism team. Her focus areas include driving leisure visitation, attracting business events, sports and special events by developing and maintaining strategic partnerships to boost Winnipeg's tourism sector. She holds a Master of Arts in Tourism Management from Royal Roads University and a Bachelor of Commerce from the Ted Rogers School of Management at Toronto Metropolitan University. Natalie previously lent her expertise as the past President of the Festival du Voyageur Inc. board. She also currently serves on the Board of Directors of Destination Canada, The Forks and Culture Days Manitoba.



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Martijn van Luijn

Martijn van Luijn is the Economic Development Manager for the City of Dauphin and a member of the Travel Manitoba Board of Directors. With more than two decades of experience in economic and community development, Martijn has worked extensively with municipalities, businesses and community organizations across Manitoba.

In his current role, he leads economic development and tourism initiatives for the City of Dauphin, including the development of Tourism Dauphin and its “Dauphin: Adventure From Here On Out” destination brand. His work focuses on building strong communities through collaboration, creative placemaking, tourism development and partnerships across sectors.

Originally from the Netherlands, Martijn has called Manitoba home since 2002 and brings both a local and broader perspective to conversations about tourism, community development and the role communities play in growing Manitoba’s visitor economy.



Josephine Wasch

Josephine Wasch has spent more than 20 years working alongside tourism and travel industry partners across Canada in her role as Senior Manager, Domestic and International Sales with VIA Rail Canada. Prior to VIA Rail, she spent 13 years managing and selling a remote lodge in the Canadian Rockies, an experience that sparked her appreciation for hospitality, adventure, and the unique stories that destinations have to offer. An enthusiastic rail traveler, Josephine loves exploring Canada by train and often describes VIA Rail's iconic journeys as "hotels on wheels." Winnipeg remains one of her favourite stops along the route.