



KDCA

Working together on Tourism issues in North Western Ontario

NWOTA/KDCA Working Group
PO Box 65
Morson, Ont. P0W 1J0
Ph/Fax (807) 488-5514



NWOTA

Dear Partners in Tourism:

In February 2009 the Ontario Ministry of Tourism Competitiveness Study *Discovering Ontario: A report on the future of tourism* was released to the public (kdca-nwota.ca/simplecms/uploads/report_en.pdf). The report addressed four major strategies with several recommendations. The strategies include: changing how Ontario government and tourism work together; establishing globally competitive standards; maximizing investments in all tourism sectors; and revitalizing tourism marketing through regionalization. With few exceptions, the report was generally well received by a majority of the tourism industry.

On February 27, 2009 representatives from KDCA-NWOTA traveled to Thunder Bay to meet with the author of the report (Greg Sorbara) to express concerns regarding two specific report recommendations – establishment of “just two” regions in Northern Ontario and distribution of destination marketing fees (kdca-nwota.ca/simplecms/uploads/Sobara).

In Northern Ontario there are two distinct marketing regions based on visitor and visitor spending. The regions are significantly different than the regions recommended in the Competitiveness Study document as well as those regions proposed in the *Northern Ontario Five-Year Tourism Marketing Strategy 2008-2012*. Specifically, close to 60% of the customer base in Sunset Country derives from the United States and accounts for over 80% of the revenues; customer bases of the other regions (e.g., Thunder Bay and Sault Ste. Marie) are 75% Canadian with 60-75% of the revenues deriving from Canadians. This profile suggests that Northwestern Ontario should not be “lumped” into a region with these other travel destinations but *should be viewed as a distinct region*.

Our second concern derives from the first concern in that the formation of a Destination Marketing and Management Organization (DMMO) which represents two major cities (Thunder Bay and Sault Ste. Marie) would overshadow the marketing efforts and collection of destination fees in the Sunset Country Travel Area. Specifically, this alignment begs the question: While the Sunset Country would generate over 50% of the tourism expenditures will this regionalization plan ensure that Sunset Country Travel Area receive a proportional allocation of destination marketing monies?

The tourism industry in NW Ontario has great marketing organizations already in place and have generations of marketing experience for our individual businesses. After all, we spend some \$11.3 annually to market these businesses. In addition, NW Ontario has started Destination Marketing Organizations that are constantly growing (www.nwontdestinations.com). With these practices and organizations in place we believe it essential to maintain our distinct identity by ensuring a region is put in place that protects this identity while guaranteeing an equitable allocation of destination marketing fees.

Representatives of KDCA/NWOTA are planning to visit Toronto, meet with governmental officials and present our case with respects to the establishment of a “Region 12.” We would like your support by signing a resolution that would establish this “Region 12” and then be sent to Mr. Hampton MPP Kenora-Rainy River, Mr. Mauro, MPP Thunder Bay – Atikokan, Honourable Michael Gravelle, Minister of Northern Development and Mines and Honourable Monique Smith, Minister of Tourism. Your support would be most welcomed and appreciated.

Sincerely,

Harald Lohn
President
KDCA

Jerry Fisher
President
NWOTA