



October 31, 2011

A Message from Tom Ruth, Chair, Interim Board of the NSTA:

Dear Partners,

As the interim chair of the new Nova Scotia Tourism Agency (NSTA), I'm pleased to be in touch with you through this bulletin, the first in a monthly series that I hope will be a useful way to communicate how the agency is progressing as we take these first steps in creating a new long-term strategy for tourism in Nova Scotia.

Since the initial announcement, the interim board has been meeting regularly to assess all of the steps that must be taken to ensure we are on track to meet our goals of developing a successful strategy and establishing the structure of the new agency. This includes ensuring a dedicated focus on economic growth and establishing a new governance structure that will redefine industry and the government's role in building a prosperous future for the tourism sector.

You are crucial to this process. One of our first priorities is ensuring that we hear from you. Your feedback will be essential in developing and implementing a strategy that will deliver profitable growth for the industry.

Progress to date:

The interim board has struck three working groups that will begin implementing next steps.

- 1) 2012 Tourism plan committee. Led by board member, Danny Bartlett, this group will work with tourism staff to address the marketing and product development plans for the upcoming year. Initial discussions are already underway.
- 2) Long-term strategy committee. Led by Vice-Chair, Scott MacAulay and myself, Tom Ruth, this committee will begin the consultation process with industry to begin next steps for a long-term strategy and the structure of the NSTA.
- 3) CEO recruitment committee. Led by board members, Judy Saunders and Don Mingo,

this committee will hire a consultant to begin a national executive search for a CEO.

Over the coming months, we will be reaching out to you, our industry professionals, department of tourism employees, operators and tourism experts to hear your constructive ideas about maximizing the future of tourism. Opportunities for input and engagement will be available through a variety of mechanisms. One of the first will be at the upcoming 2011 Tourism Summit, where we will be sharing plans for industry consultation as well as answer your questions.

Some of you have already begun to ask us questions so we have attached a summary of answers and background information. As I mentioned, we will be providing updates on our collective progress. Please look for these monthly bulletins through some of our existing communications channels, including inTouch from the Tourism division, and through TIANs.

To share your views on the agency and the future of tourism, please contact Cathy Kalil NSTA Secretariat, kalilcx@gov.ns.ca or 902-424-0377, and she will ensure your views reach the board.

On behalf of the interim Board members, we look forward to working with all of you as we shape this exciting new direction for the Nova Scotia tourism industry.

Sincerely,

Tom Ruth
Chair, Interim Board of the NSTA

Please find below information regarding how the NSTA came into being:

What we've learned -

In a review of various operating and governance models across the country, we learned that many jurisdictions are currently in the process of re-thinking their tourism delivery models, or have recently done so. Many are moving away from hosting tourism marketing and development within a government department and moving toward a private-public partnership model. In fact, many of the provinces are moving to a special operating agency model.

A new way forward -

After reviewing best practices and meeting with industry partners, the Province of Nova Scotia has positively endorsed a new special operating agency model for tourism that will have industry and government working collaboratively together to accelerate growth in this strong, viable industry.

Tourism division update -

There have also been some significant changes within the Department of Economic and

Rural Development and Tourism that I would like to share with you. John Somers, Executive Director of Tourism, will be leaving his position to join the Office of Policy and Priorities for the Nova Scotia government as Senior Corporate Policy Analyst on November 1. We wish John well in his future endeavours.

Of course, we want to ensure that the division retains strong leadership and support during this time of transition. With that in mind, I am pleased to announce that Heather Spidell has agreed to take on the role of Acting Executive Director for Tourism, effective immediately. In her role as Director, Strategic Initiatives and Collaboration for ERDT, Heather has already been working closely with the interim board to ensure staff are engaged in the development of a long-term tourism strategy for the province and the successful recruitment of a new CEO.

In further news, Cathy Kalil will be joining the Nova Scotia Tourism Agency secretariat as coordinator, part of a larger role she will be filling as Change Management Coordinator for the department. Cathy was previously employed in the Tourism division as a coordinator for the Tourism Partnership Council, which involved working collaboratively with government and tourism industry specialists to ensure marketing plans and tourism strategies for the province were effectively developed and implemented.

Q. What is a special operating agency?

A. The new NSTA will take the form of an arm's length agency of government, led by a CEO and guided by a board. The CEO will report and be accountable to the Deputy Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism. Board members will be appointed by the Minister.

Q. Who is on the interim board and will board members be paid?

A. The members of the interim board are Chair Tom Ruth, President and CEO of the Halifax International Airport Authority; Vice-Chair Scott MacAulay, CEO of Cape Breton Resorts; Judy Saunders, General Manager of the Old Orchard Inn; Don Mingo, President of Maritime Inns and Resorts; Danny Bartlett, Vice-President of Finance, Bay Ferries, and Chair of the Tourism Industry Association of Nova Scotia; and Sandra McKenzie, Acting Deputy Minister of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism.

Board members will only be reimbursed for their expenses related to meetings and travel. These are not paid board positions.

Q. Will you consult with industry?

A. It is important for us to begin working on our long-term strategic plan and marketing strategy immediately. We have therefore struck an interim board which will ensure broad-based consultation with industry partners and staff throughout the planning process to decide the best way forward. Please look for future communications with details on how you can participate.

Q. What are some of the key deliverables for the interim board working with the Nova

Scotia Tourism Department?

A. One of the key early priorities of the interim board will be to lead the recruitment process to hire a CEO to head up the NSTA. Another important priority will be to work with stakeholders, the new CEO and the Nova Scotia Tourism Department to develop a comprehensive long-term tourism strategy for the province and the NSTA. As the strategy nears completion it will be easier to ensure we optimize the structure of the new agency and determine which functions and responsibilities should be a part of its mandate and which functions are best managed directly by the government department.

Q. When do you expect the new structure to be decided?

A. The permanent agency, including structure and staffing requirements, will be proposed before the end of the fiscal year, March 31, 2012. This is an ambitious timeline and as we work through this process, we will be sure to communicate updates and progress.

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