

— VISIT SOUTH — GEORGIAN BAY



Georgian Triangle Tourist Association



**Georgian Triangle Tourist Association
Presentation to Bruce Grey Simcoe
Nov 1, 2012**



GTТА Board of Directors

2012/2013 GTТА Board Directors

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Jay Worsley, The Huron Club, Collingwood

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Ray Lapp, Heidelberg Inn, Collingwood

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Linda Proudfoot, Pretty River Valley Country Inn, The Blue Mountains

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Kevin Lloyd, Councillor, Town of Collingwood

Michael Martin, Councillor, The Blue Mountains

Evelyn Lumsden, Cranberry Golf Resort, Collingwood

Sue Nicholson, Collingwood BIA, Collingwood

Sandra Meagher, Community Connection, 211, Collingwood



GTTA Mission and Mandate

- ◉ The Georgian Triangle will lead and develop partnerships aimed at promoting our regional tourism destination.
- ◉ The Association is a not-for-profit/charitable, Destination Marketing and Management Organization (DMMO) representing our Core supporting municipalities of Collingwood and The Blue Mountains and more than 200 tourism businesses
- ◉ We operate with a Volunteer Board of Directors, representative of tourism industry, sector and South Georgian Bay region.
- ◉ Our Destination Marketing and Management Organization/DMMO is a testament to **a true tourism destination region - a region unbridled by political boundaries.**
- ◉ Our Visitors cross the political lines all the time, and want Visitor Services for the greater SGB region.



Who We Are and What We Do

The GTTA considers Visitor Services/Communications as its main functions.

1. Visitor Services and Communications
2. Volunteer Industry Driven Board of Directors
3. Collaborative and Fiscally Accountable
4. Best in Class Visitor Centre Operations/Accredited Staff
5. Developed Brochure Distribution System
6. Creators of the SGB Regional Strategic Destination Plan
7. 2 year Business Plan/Action Plan
8. See and Do Visitor Guide
9. Enhanced Media
10. Best-in-Class Mapping



GTТА Return On Investment

GTТА/ DMMO Performance is measured against several objectives, some examples include:

- ◉ Incremental economic impact of visitors to the destination – 2.6 Million in Economic Impact from Collingwood VC in person visits
- ◉ Leveraging resources through community-based coalitions, partnerships and alliances
- ◉ Developing a formal planning process including a Strategic Destination Plan (GTТА SGB Longwoods Research-based Strategy)
- ◉ 4-Season Promotion



GTТА LETTER TO RTO7



August 23, 2012

Paul Cryster
Chair BruceGreySimcoe Board
Regional Tourism Organization 7
P.O. Box 973
Thornbury, ON N0H 2P0

Dear Paul,

The Board of the Georgian Triangle Tourist Association (GTТА) has several concerns regarding the direction of Regional Tourism Organization BruceGreySimcoe. Of primary concern, is the fiscal accountability of BruceGreySimcoe with more than 2 million dollars of Public Ministry of Tourism Monies. The Guiding principles from BruceGreySimcoe's Strategic Plan, includes the following:

1) Good Product Research and Market Research to Identify Strengths and Weaknesses

The RTO7 Longwoods' Research was to be the base for educated Strategic and Marketing decisions to grow visitation and tourism receipts. The RTO7 Research clearly demonstrated that the three Counties had a poor image compared to the competition. There was huge name recognition for 8 towns within the Longwoods' Research including Collingwood, The Blue Mountains and Wasaga Beach. Yet the RTO7 Board made a decision to name the region BruceGreySimcoe – a choice that defied the research. Our Board feels that this naming decision has ultimately affected development of any BruceGreySimcoe regional brand.

Marketing initiatives have not followed the findings of the Longwoods' Research. Two recent examples of this include the roll-out of the Summer Marketing campaign and BruceGreySimcoe Web-site development. Web-site Development continues to focus on the Counties for navigation. 55,000 unique hits were registered for the month of July for BruceGreySimcoe. How are these potential Visitors navigating our South

Georgian Bay region with NO Live Answer or Visitor Referral? They certainly are not being referred to our Destination Marketing Organization (DMO), which has little to no presence on the BruceGreySimcoe site. The GTТА drop in RTO7 web referrals from 120 in June to 0 in July, is evidence of BruceGreySimcoe Marketing decisions that are not research-based. The RTO7 web-site content does not reflect the product strengths or visitor motivators identified in the Longwoods Research. The inclusion of a Golf micro-site simply mystifies our Board, as Golf has no product strength or recognition according to the Longwoods' research. Touring components are also missing from the BruceGreySimcoe site, despite research that indicates touring as a primary trip motivator. The only links to Tours are back to the Counties. The GTТА has incredible Touring Product, based on our South Georgian Bay Custom Research. This includes Beaches and Shoreline Adventures, Cycling Adventures, Taste of The Bay, Cultural Places and Spaces, Scenic Drives and Most Awesome Treks. GTТА product is absent from any BruceGreySimcoe Marketing efforts.

2. Understanding How to Reach Across Governmental and Geographical Divisions to Create Regional Cooperation

Tourism is a dominant economic driver in our region and BruceGreySimcoe's Strategic Destination Plan must be a true partnership between government, business and community to achieve success. Strategic success is always based on cooperation, collaboration and partnership of all stakeholders. It is evident that BruceGreySimcoe is struggling to achieve success across these divides. The GTТА is the only DMO in BruceGreySimcoe that crosses county political lines. BruceGreySimcoe's marketing initiatives have not brought more Visitors to our web or to our South Georgian Bay Visitor Centres. We have witnessed several examples where BruceGreySimcoe is simply duplicating and copying DMO industry and product content. In fact, we have several complaints from industry and tourist entities regarding this Role and Function dilemma. It's hard for any entity to collaborate, participate and volunteer with another entity, when the relationship is one-sided and not reciprocal.

3. Aggregate Enough Assets and Resources to Reach a Critical Mass.

It is evident that RTO7 has more money resources than any other entity in the BruceGreySimcoe region. Despite resources, our DMO has not received in-person and web referral from BruceGreySimcoe. RTO7 staff have indicated several times in presentations that their job is to bring

people here. We see no evidence of these marketing efforts through our Visitation statistics.

The messaging platform for our South Georgian Bay Strategic Plan focuses on Water & Escarpment – both providing unique opportunities for visitation in our destination region. Key South Georgian Bay Visitor Segments offering Greatest Opportunities include Beaches, Touring, Outdoors/Soft Adventures and Special Events and Festivals. These Visitor Segments were identified using our South Georgian Bay Longwoods Research. The GTТА Strategic Plan is based on our Custom Brand Study from Longwoods. BruceGreySimcoe's recent Summer Campaign does not address any of these Visitor Segments. In Fact, The Summer is Big Here banner, shows a Beach in Kincardine, and failed to capture the biggest and longest freshwater beach in the World at Wasaga Beach. RTO7 is working with two smaller festivals, yet has made no effort to work with the Biggest and Largest Festival in Ontario – Elvis. For an entity that is promoting the BIG assets, we are confused, why our local assets have been excluded from Marketing promotion. The video, also failed to address motivators for travel, and potential market segments.

In conclusion, Consumer Research must be the foundation for the BruceGreySimcoe Brand promise and Brand platform and subsequent marketing efforts. The Guiding Principles of BruceGreySimcoe will continue to be compromised until BruceGreySimcoe follows and adheres to the Longwoods' research.

The GTТА's mandate is to provide an exceptional level of service to our stakeholders, keeping them apprised of our & our partners' successes. As well as our local industry members, both the Town of Collingwood & The Town of The Blue Mountains are expecting "Value added" initiatives from BruceGreySimcoe with the funding that has been provided from the government. Unfortunately, at present, we are hard pressed to demonstrate any tangible benefits from the BruceGreySimcoe initiatives. We will be pressured from our local government stakeholders to escalate these issues if we cannot remedy the situations outlined above. I would suggest that a meeting would be in order as soon as possible. We look forward to your immediate response.

Regards,

Linda Simpson
Linda Simpson
Executive Director
Georgian Triangle Tourist Association
On behalf of the GTТА Board of Directors

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