



TRENT HILLS & DISTRICT
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Panel on the Future
of the Trent-Severn Waterway:

*How the waterway contributes to
economically sustainable communities*

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INTRODUCTION

The Trent Hills & District Chamber of Commerce is a not for profit organization with a 9-member Board of Directors supported by two full-time staff, two part-time staff, two students. Our mission to nurture, support and sustain the business community of Trent Hills is achieved through membership services and benefits, as well as marketing Trent Hills as a destination. Areas of focus include:

- Represent 235 member businesses
- Destination Marketing Organization (DMO) for Trent Hills promoting all tourism industry stakeholders
- Manage Old Mill Park Docking facility
- Manage year-round Visitor Information Centre
- Driver & Vehicle Licensing Office Issuer

The Trent Severn Waterway has a significant economic impact on the business community of Trent Hills, through the operation of two municipal marinas, 20 cottage resorts, 17 B & B's, 2 motels, 11 locks, and the many events and attractions in close proximity to the Waterway. Our presentation will focus on how the waterway contributes to economically sustainable communities.

DIRECT ECONOMIC IMPACT OF THE WATERWAY

Hastings Marina

Municipal-owned marina operated by Marina Management Board with staff support through contract manager and student staffing. Located at the mouth of Rice Lake opposite Lock 18. Seasonal docking and transient docking available.

Old Mill Park Docking Facility

We have a fee for service agreement with the municipality to promote and market Trent Hills as a destination. Included in the agreement is the operation and management of Old Mill Park Docking along the core wall in Campbellford. Located mid-way between Locks 12 and 13. On the west wall there is space for 16 boats that can accommodate 11 boats with 30 amp service and 3 with 15 amp service. On the east wall 12 boats can be accommodated with 30 or 50 amp service. Despite the declining numbers of boaters, the increased fuel costs, and the unfavorable US\$ exchange rate, overnight docking at Old Mill Park in Campbellford has remained consistent. This year we are anticipating a 20% increase.

Year	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Overnight Stays	532	631	329	531	526	490*

*As at August 12. Forecasting 630 by season's end.(2004's dramatic decrease was due to lock closures related to flood in Peterborough, maintenance on Locks 11/12 and labour disputes.)

Old Mill Park Docking Fee Revenues

- Funds the daily operation of the facility providing 15, 30 and 50 amp power, potable water, wireless internet, shower and public washroom facilities, maintenance and administration costs.
- Operate visitor information center 7 days a week May to October.
- Marketing funds to promote Old Mill Park Docking and Hastings Marina
- \$25,000 investment in waterfront development over the past four years

Boater Spending in Campbellford

Direct Spending per person based on \$91* per person, average number of passengers on boat is 2.2, represents an injection of \$150,071 (includes docking fees) into the local economy this boating season.

**Source: Todd Lucier, The Tourism Company in a presentation to Northumberland County on behalf of the Ministry of Tourism*

Businesses that Benefit from Boater Spending

Following is an inventory of the businesses that are within walking distance from Hastings Marina and Old Mill Park Docking:

- 14 Restaurants & Coffee Shops
- 26 Retail locations
- 3 Gas Stations (accessible by waterway)
- 3 Grocery Stores
- 3 Laundromats
- 2 Marine Repair
- 1 Taxi Service

(Taxi service provides an opportunity for boaters to visit other attractions such as theatre, golf, cheese factory and microbrewery)

Visits by Land

The operation of the Visitor Information Centre is made possible in part due to the revenues from the docking at Old Mill Park. This is a vital piece of our tourism role as it is an opportunity to promote all three business communities – Campbellford, Warkworth and Hastings.

In 2006 there were 2783 visitors to the information center. Attractions ranked highest in the number of inquiries (outlet stores, Westben Concerts at the Barn, micro-brewery, Ranney Gorge Suspension Bridge, military museum, \$2 coin) followed by outdoor activities (parks, trails, golfing, beaches, TSW, fishing). The waterway falls into both of these categories.

Below are all the events and activities that visitors by land can experience that take place on or in close proximity to the waterway:

- Healey Falls located at Locks 15 and 16
- 22 musical concerts at the Gazebos along the waterway
- Canada Day Celebrations in Hastings and Campbellford
- Hastings Fireworks
- Campbellford BIA Waterfront Festival
- Hastings Antique Boat and Waterfront Festival

- Trans Canada Trail in Hastings (includes winter access), Rotary Trail
- Ranney Gorge Suspension Bridge
- Shore fishing
- Hastings Midnight Madness
- Picnicking
- Ferris Provincial Park
- Campbellford Lions Beach and Hastings Marina Beach

While we do not have the resources to measure the spending related to land visits, we anticipate that it is much greater than the boating visitor given the number of events and activities that take place either on the waterway or in the vicinity.

RECOMMENDATIONS

We wholeheartedly endorse the program recommendations made by the Municipality of Trent Hills at the July 25th presentation:

- Clarify and Communicate Role & Responsibilities
- Create opportunities for the public to be aware & participate
- Develop marketing plans & coordinate with communities
- Share information with communities regarding land use planning, infrastructure maintenance and enhanced tourism services & facilities

We would like to take this opportunity to share more specific ideas and opportunities on how you can achieve some of these recommendations:

1. Develop US marketing strategy

We are approaching record numbers for overnight stays this year attributed to U.S. boating. We have learned there is a new club of “loopers”, between 100 and 150 boats planning the Great Loop trip. Reaching this new market has been through an advertisement in the Ports Guide, as well as word of mouth and Internet blogging amongst the boating community. We hope to see more of this new club next year and possibly the year after. Develop a US marketing strategy to reach these boaters and others like them.

2. New visitor experience: Geocaching

Geocaching is fast becoming a new traveling experience, reaching a global market. Northumberland County Tourism has organized a county-wide Treasure Hunt the month of August. We also had a visitor in our office this past week traveling the waterways by road using his GPS. We were able to provide him with general addresses of the lock stations to continue on his way. The waterway is ideally situated for this type of visitor experience increasing visits by land.

3. Marketing partnership with stakeholders

Develop marketing partnerships with area stakeholders. Utilize their skills and experience to develop and promote land use of the waterway. For example: Driving, cycling and hiking tour brochures, signage, attracting the bus tour market.

4. Trent-Severn Waterway marketing fund

It has already been established that the waterway is not marketed to its full potential. We see an immediate need to market the waterway. Create a fund similar to the Eastern Ontario Development Program delivered through Community Futures Development Corporations to promote economic growth in local communities. This type of marketing can begin on an interim basis until a long-term marketing strategy is developed.

5. Create a Partnership with Province

Explore how the Ministry of Tourism can promote the waterway. Currently there seems to be an emphasis on the 401 corridor, Niagara Falls, and northern Ontario. The waterway is located in the middle of these two areas creating a very large corridor of tourism specific industry.

6. Recognize Stakeholder Challenges

Tourism stakeholders are faced with many challenges that are becoming more and more difficult to overcome. We highly recommend that the stakeholders be not burdened further with user pay fees and/or the transfer of services to the municipalities.

CLOSING REMARKS

As a Chamber of Commerce the well being of the business community is our mandate. We appreciate that the panel is evaluating ways in which the waterway can contribute to economically sustainable communities. Today's presentation focuses on the tourism initiatives. This is only a portion of the economic impact that the Waterway has on Trent Hills. Equally important is the recreational aspect for residents and potential residential growth through real estate development.

I would like to close with some direct quotes from our boater surveys:

"We will be returning with fellow visitors."

"This was our first trip on the Trent – we did 12 locks on our first day. Several lockkeepers recommended Campbellford...we had a very friendly welcome and we rewarded ourselves with a splendid dinner at a local restaurant. Filling up on cheap gas before we go."

"We have noticed many of the improvements in the town area. For a small town you have some very big ideas to your credit."

"The lockmasters at all the locks on the Trent-Severn are real ambassadors for your communities."

"Very friendly town, if you are friends to us Great Loopers we will return again and again. The two of us spent over \$500 here."

As you can see, the Trent-Severn Waterway is vital to the economy in Trent Hills. We look forward to the opportunity to assist further to ensure that the Trent-Severn Waterway has a bright future.

Thank you for the opportunity to make a presentation and thank you for the time and energy that each of you is devoting to this project.