



1000 ISLANDS CONTACT

The Newsletter of the
1000 Islands Gananoque Chamber of Commerce
JUNE 2007

From the president's desk

June 21st is the first official day of summer and this year the 1000 Islands Gananoque Chamber will celebrate with a cruise through our wonderful islands.

This fundraising event is a joint project with the Brockville and District Chamber with whom we have partnered to create a unique networking venue.

Like most residents I take every opportunity to enjoy the river in spite of it being the "busy summer season". Having the chance to network with members of different communities can often open new cross promotion opportunities. I have found that individual referrals help grow my business, not only during the summer, but often lead to off-season growth as well.

Be sure to bring plenty of business cards for networking and of course for your chance to win some door prizes. See you there!

~ Alicia Vandine, president

Take a look inside...

Details on the rebate debate	Pg 2
Chamber website hits milestone marker	Pg 2
Check out who joined our crew this month!	Pg 3
Clearing up WHTI questions	Pg 3
Hydro One extends business deadline	Pg 4

Cruising with the chamber

Celebrate the first day of summer by hopping aboard a boat cruise with the 1000 Islands Gananoque Chamber of Commerce!

The chamber is excited to cross-promote our new fundraiser event with the Brockville and District Chamber of Commerce ~ a 1000 Islands boat cruise aboard Rockport Boat Line! Set for **June 21, 2007 from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.**, the cruise will weave participants around the picturesque 1000 Islands for an unforgettable evening.

Aiding in partnering and promotion for the event is Rockport Boat Line, 103.7 BOB FM, Howard Travel 1000 Islands Duty Free, Business Steps, OLG Casino Thousand Islands, Chambers of Commerce Group Insurance Plan, Cogeco and the Employment and Education Centre.

Take advantage of this expanded marketing opportunity to network with your neighbours and to treat staff, customers, community members and business partners to an evening of entertainment.

"We're very pleased to be partnering with Brockville for this event," said Bonnie Ruddock, operations manager of the 1000 Islands Gananoque Chamber of Commerce. "It's a great opportunity for our members to

network with businesses from another community as well as with each other."

The cruise is the Chamber's major fundraiser, as the annual golf tournament is on hiatus this year. Hosted by Rockport Boat Lines, it's set to be a success.

Both chambers hope to have a combined total of about 200 people at the event. Hors d'oeuvres will be served on the cruise. This event is open to the public, everyone is welcome.

This event is sure to sell out quickly, so save your spot as soon as possible. Call, drop by or email the chamber office to add your name to the list; \$25 for members of the 1000 Islands Gananoque Chamber of Commerce, \$30 for future members plus GST. Payment must be received prior to attending the cruise.

For more information, call the 1000 Islands Gananoque Chamber of Commerce office at 613-382-3250 or email marketing@1000islandschamber.com.

What: Spring Boat Cruise

Where: Departing from 23 Front Street, Rockport Boat Line

When: June 21, 2007 from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Cost: \$25 chamber members; \$30 future members

We don't shy away from the limelight

We're making news! The 1000 Islands Gananoque Chamber of Commerce is pleased to say that we're hot off the presses!

In May, the area was highlighted in the Montreal Gazette's travel section in a piece with photos which mainly focused on the historical aspect of the town as well as arts, culture and the natural elements of the area. The chamber again facilitated hosting a reporter from the Ottawa Citizen for a piece including the Thousand Islands Playhouse as one of five summer theatre destinations. The same reporter also took advantage of the local studio tour and walked the trails of Landon

Bay for a more in-depth look at the 1000 Islands for a separate article. Both articles are slated to appear this month. Gananoque and the Islands was the subject of a front cover piece in Boomersview Magazine out of Montreal last month. The piece took the two-page centre spread of the publication, with many photos as well as editorial. In addition, Gananoque is featured in the May edition of Cottage Times, as well as a host of travel guides which promote the area to visitors. We're always scouting for more publicity for the 1000 Islands Gananoque area. If your business has been in the press lately, drop us a line and tell us about it!

The low-down on the GST Visitor Rebate Program

On March 19, 2007, the Government of Canada confirmed their intention to eliminate the GST/HST Visitor Rebate Program and announced the introduction of the Foreign Convention and Tour Incentive Program.

According to the government visitor rebate claims filed, to recover GST/HST on purchases of goods and short-term accommodations made **after** March 31, 2007, will be held by the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) until the legislation has passed. Non-residents who purchase goods in Canada after March 31, 2007, and export them, will no longer be entitled to a rebate of the GST/HST paid.

The Foreign Convention and Tour Incentive Program will provide relief after March 31, 2007, for GST (and federal part of the HST) in respect of certain property and services used in the course of foreign conventions held in Canada, for non-resident exhibitors and the

short-term accommodation portion of tour packages for non-resident individuals and tour operators.

More information about the program can be found on the website. All new forms, policies and guidelines will be posted on the CRA website as they become available. In the meantime, please consult the Department of Finance's Budget 2007 documents for details.

You will continue to have one year to file your application for goods purchased prior to April 1, 2007.

Yes, you can still obtain a rebate at participating duty free shops for goods and accommodations **purchased prior to April 1, 2007**, to the extent that it would be valid under the proposed amendments.

For more information click on the government site:

www.cra-arc.gc.ca/tax/nonresidents/visitors/qa-e.html

Keeping you posted ~ Chamber tidbits

Just a few quick items of interest to keep you reading!

~ We have topped 1,000,000 page views on our site! That's a lot of promotion for our members. After launching the new site in January, we were able to also add our new French promotional piece to the site. Now, both our English and French guides to the 1000 Islands area available through mail order and by download. We are currently getting a ton of requests for each every day from around the globe. Topping the million mark on the site proves we're catering to people who are interested in the islands!

~ Our brochure swap and new member night was a success! Many thanks to those who came out despite

the frigid weather. If you missed it and missed our rounds during local distribution, our visitor's guides are still available for pick up at the chamber office at 10 King St. East.

~ Thanks to everyone who voted for the 1000 Islands or some aspect of them during the Seven Wonders of Canada competition last month! The contest, run through Sounds Like Canada and CBC's The National, has narrowed down the field to 50 wonders. Unfortunately the area did not make the cut, but the competition reminded us of why we hold the 1000 Islands so dear to our hearts and fostered civic pride, so it was a positive experience anyways!

Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative border concerns

The Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative (WHTI) continues to raise concerns in the travel and tourism industry. The Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative is a new U.S. law that requires all travellers, including Canadians, to carry a valid passport or other appropriate secure document when travelling to the United States from within the western hemisphere. This is a change from prior travel requirements.

This policy requires all those who wish to enter the US to have a passport or NEXUS card (a pre-approved card designed to speed border clearance for travelers to and from the US). WHTI has serious implications for Ontario, especially for land border travel. The province borders six US states and tourism officials have voiced concern that such an initiative could represent lost jobs and revenue for those businesses and communities that rely on foreign dollars.

The Ontario Chamber of Commerce reports that US Ambassador David Wilkins has been touring the country urging people to get their passport or a NEXUS card. Air travellers were first subject to WHTI beginning in January 2007. Land and marine travellers have until January 1, 2008 to get their documentation in order.

According to the US government, the goal of the initiative is to strengthen border security and facilitate entry into the United States for US Citizens and legitimate foreign visitors by providing standardized secure and reliable documentation which will allow the department of homeland security to quickly and accurately identify a traveler.

However, the tourism industry is especially concerned. It is estimated that 35 per cent of Canadians and only 23 per cent of Americans have a passport. According to the OCC, tourism is Ontario's seventh largest export industry with over 156,000 businesses representing over 18 per cent of all businesses in the province. The Ontario Ministry of Tourism estimated that the prov-

ince could lose 7,000 jobs and \$700 million by 2008 due to WHTI restrictions. The Canadian government says it is continuing to work closely with the US to quickly prepare alternative, low-cost, secure travel documents for land border travel.

The OCC has also been urging both the federal and provincial governments to create an economic tourism strategy that addresses and attempts to mitigate the impact of a decline in American travellers. The Conference Board of Canada estimates that American tourism was down in 2005 by 366,000 visits. Air travel between countries declined in February 2007 as well. Statistics Canada notes that this is the sixth consecutive quarter in which travel from the United States recorded a year-over-year decrease. Both the Tourism Industry Association of Canada and Statistics Canada have stated that the publicity surrounding the WHTI may be deterring American businesspeople and tourists.

To clear up any questions or concerns, the following is the Canadian government's standing on what documents are acceptable under the WHTI. The U.S. government released the final rule for air travel to the United States on November 24, 2006. The following documents are acceptable for entry into the United States from within the western hemisphere by air:

- ~ A valid passport;
- ~ A NEXUS card when used at a NEXUS kiosk at designated airports;
- ~ A valid Merchant Mariner's Document for U.S. citizens; or
- ~ Valid U.S. military identification and orders, when travelling on active duty.

Again, land and marine travellers must have one of these documents by January 1, 2008. For more information or for answers to frequently asked questions, click on <http://cbsa.gc.ca/agency/whti-ivho/what-quoi-e.html>

The 1000 Islands Gananoque Chamber of Commerce will continue to follow the issue.

A big welcome to our new members!

The 1000 Islands Gananoque Chamber of Commerce is still growing! Last month, two new businesses signed up to join the ranks of the chamber.

~ **Fireplaces Unlimited** out of Kingston and Brockville came out to our brochure swap and new member night in mid-May and signed on soon after for the remainder of the 2007 season. The retail outlet sells stylish fireplaces and heating solutions to the Kingston, Leeds Grenville and 1000 Islands market.

~ **Ivy Lea Suites** down the Parkway also took the

plunge and became a member. The Hipwell's offer holiday luxury efficiency suites right on the St. Lawrence River. Visitors can also rent bicycles, take advantage of a water taxi and more, all while being totally self-sufficient in their apartment-style accommodations.

The 1000 Islands Gananoque Chamber of Commerce is re-vamping its membership package materials this year, to include a more comprehensive layout of the benefits and options to being a member. Watch for more details in the upcoming months!

Hydro One extends business incentive deadline

Hydro One has extended to July 3 its PowerSaver Business Incentive Program that is producing energy savings (up to \$250) for its Business, Institutional and Agricultural customers. Please note that total incentives are capped at \$50,000 per facility.

To qualify, customers must:

- Be a non-residential customer of Hydro One Networks.
- Submit an application within 90 days (on or prior to program deadlines) after new equipment is installed and operational.

Installing energy-efficiency equipment will reduce energy usage, potentially lower maintenance costs and reduce operating expenses.

To apply for the program, download the appropriate application form(s) and guideline(s) found at www.PowerSaver.ca. Mail or courier the completed application including all worksheet(s) to:

Hydro One Networks
Conservation and Demand Management Program Office
483 Bay Street, 14th Floor
Toronto, ON M5G 2P5

Contact Hydro One Networks at PBIP@HydroOne.com, or work with the existing contractor or vendor to complete the project. Incentive cheques are usually processed within four weeks.

Fixed Incentive (pre-approved)-Rebates are offered for pre-approved technologies(energy-efficient lighting products, agricultural fans, creep heat and controls; and ENERGY STAR® qualified unitary A/C units or three-phase power transformers etc) on a per-unit or performance basis.

Custom Projects (requires pre-approval before work begins) - All technology, equipment and systems are evaluated on the basis of their energy performance improvement. The incentive offered of \$250/kW is based specifically on the level of improvement. *Article courtesy of the Ontario Chamber of Commerce*

Canadian chamber backs counterfeiting report

Earlier in May, the Canadian Anti-Counterfeiting Network released a report on the problem of counterfeiting and piracy in Canada. The report, which was endorsed by the Canadian Chamber of Commerce, highlights reason for concern about weak intellectual property protection and enforcement in Canada. It states that while counterfeiting used to consist primarily of knock-off t-shirts and other novelty items, the high profitability and low risk involved has allowed criminals to become active counterfeiting virtually everything from pharmaceutical products to electrical products, movies, food, wine and automobile parts. The report calls for action from the Canadian government to address the problem.

Key recommendations which came out of the Road Map for Change report include: increasing and improving the coordination of government resources dedicated to IP enforcement and education; creating an effective IP border enforcement regime, and enacting legislation to address shortfalls in the current legislative framework, including the lack of adequate trade-mark enforcement provisions.

To view the report, click on www.chamber.ca and look under the news column at right.

1000 Islands Gananoque Chamber of Commerce

10 King St E Gananoque, Ontario K7G 1E6

Phone: (613) 382-3250

Fax: (613) 382-1585

Email: info@1000islandschamber.com

www.1000islandsgananoque.com

