

Tourism Matters

CANADA'S TOURISM LEADERSHIP SUMMIT



Red, Whites & Blues - Renewing American Travel to Canada was the theme of this year's Canada's Tourism Leadership Summit which took place at the Fairmont Empress in Victoria, British Columbia from November 4 – 6, 2007. Shawna Batten, Regional Tourism Coordinator, attended the annual national summit for the first time.

"The theme and content of this year's summit was very relevant to us in Southwest Manitoba," exclaims Shawna Batten. The three-day summit featured sessions on Canada's competitiveness as a destination, research on the US market, impact on marketing, aspects of sustainable tourism and also featured the Tourism Industry Association of Canada (TIAC) Annual General Meeting and Canadian Tourism Commission Public Meeting.

The National Awards for Tourism Excellence, presented by The Globe and Mail, were also presented during the summit. The gala evening event recognized over 30 individuals and businesses from across the country and honoured 13 of those individuals and businesses with an exquisite crystal award.

"The summit is an excellent opportunity to network with others in all facets of the industry and from all across the country," states Batten. Over 375 industry stakeholders attended this important tourism event to take advantage of the opportunity to stay connected, debate the issues, explore partnerships, discover the trends, and network.

Season's Greetings from the Board & Staff!

The Board & Staff would like to take this opportunity to wish all the members a Happy Holiday Season.

We look forward to working with you again in the New Year.

The START office will close December 21, 2007 at 1:00 pm and will re-open January 2, 2008 at 8:30 am.



WELCOME

The Board & Staff would like to take this opportunity to welcome the following new members of START!

**Commonwealth Air Training
Plan Museum, Laws Way Bed &
Breakfast, and The Garden
Path Bed & Breakfast**

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STAFF

Shawna Batten

Regional Tourism Coordinator

START pursues its mandate with



USING BIRDING TO GROW YOUR BUSINESS

Six people from the southwest region including Aggie Buhler, Tourism Coordinator for Turtle Mountain CDC & International Peace Garden; Amy Louttit, Economic Development Officer for Melita & Area EDC; Marg Whetter, Owner of River Park Farm in Hartney; Susan Proven, Owner of Fairmount Bed & Breakfast in Minnedosa; Anne Baron, Owner of Woodbine Farms in Carberry; and Shawna Batten, Regional Tourism Coordinator took part in a three-day best practice mission. Organized by Travel Manitoba, the group headed off to western Minnesota in the proximity of the Prairie to Pine and Minnesota River Valley Birding Trails near Vergas and Thief River Falls to learn how others have capitalized on birding experiences.

During the mission, participants met with local bed and breakfast owners that have incorporated birding opportunities into their business, Minnesota wildlife officials responsible for an innovative program called "Bed, Breakfast & Birding", Chamber of Commerce representatives and other community champions who developed and promoted a birding festival and visited two key National Wildlife Refuges to learn how to promote tourism at these sites through programming, birding festivals and the birding trail.

START will be planning a regional forum in the near future to discuss interest in further developing the birding product. Please watch for more information.

TRIBUTE TO TOURISM GALA

Mark your calendars!

START is pleased to announce that the 5th Annual Tribute to Tourism Awards will once again be presented at a special Tribute to Tourism Gala scheduled for Wednesday, June 4th, 2008 at Remington's Seafood & Steakhouse in Brandon in conjunction with National Tourism Week.

Nominations will be accepted in the following categories: Marketing, Service Excellence, Partnership, Volunteer of the Year, Product Development and Artisan/Culture/Heritage. Don't miss your opportunity to pay tribute to an individual, business or organization from your community.

Nomination and registration forms will be available soon.

SOUTHWEST TRAILS ASSOCIATION FOR REGIONAL TOURISM

141 ROSSER AVENUE · BRANDON, MANITOBA · R7A 0J6

Phone (204) 726-1513 · Fax (204) 727-5832 · E-mail battens@cfwestman.ca

www.southwestmanitoba.ca