

# Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport – 2017 Year in Review

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## *Economic Development Council of Ontario (EDCO) Annual Report*

### **Tourism**

The tourism sector continues to be a major driver of the Ontario economy, and a significant contributor to local economies. The sector generates over \$32 billion in tourism receipts and supports over 389,000 jobs throughout the province.

The Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport (MTCS) and the industry are implementing the 2016 Strategic Framework for Tourism in Ontario to maximize the growth and competitiveness of Ontario's tourism sector and to position our province as a global tourism destination of choice.

Ontario continues to build on the regional approach to developing the tourism sector announced in 2009 in the Discovering Ontario report. We are starting to see more effective partnerships and collaboration between government, the 13 Regional Tourism Organizations and private tourism operators. We are working together to create, enhance and market tourism offerings, attract more visitors and generate more economic activity and jobs.

#### **Ontario150**

In 2017, Ontario150 funding programs helped municipalities, community groups, provincial agencies and attractions, and not-for-profit organizations mark Canada and Ontario's 150th anniversaries in unique ways and create social and cultural legacies.

Community engagement was at the heart of Ontario's 150th anniversary celebrations. More than 2,000 events and initiatives built pride, celebrated inclusivity, promoted innovation and opportunity, and boosted local economies. Ontario150 events and initiatives excited, engaged, and involved Ontarians, and supported communities in laying the groundwork for strong economic, social and cultural legacies across the province.

For example, SESQUI, with its innovative 360° film, HORIZON, generated more than \$15 million in economic impact in Ontario through its seven-community cinematic dome tour and its additional tour to another five communities. The project also created other legacies, such as new expertise in Ontario's immersive media sector, and innovations in filmmaking.

#### **Ontario Place**

The revitalization of Ontario Place into a world class destination moved forward with the summer openings of the new Trillium Park and the William G. Davis Trail, named in honour of Ontario's former Premier. The Trail links to the existing trail system that stretches from Niagara

Falls to Cornwall – a tremendous asset for families and visitors. The iconic Cinesphere IMAX movie theatre at Ontario Place reopened during the Toronto International Film Festival and continues to attract audiences seeking a giant movie-going experience.

The next phase of revitalization is for the east and west islands in 2018.

### **Destination Ontario**

This is the new name of the Ontario Tourism Marketing Partnership Corporation. Destination Ontario has been leading the way on improving marketing alignment by increasing collaboration among Destination Canada, Regional Tourism Organizations, destination marketing organizations, sector associations and the industry at large.

Initiatives include drawing up a multi-year strategic plan, developing a content playbook under a strong Ontario brand, and working with tourism partners to build collaborative opportunities and increase efficiencies.

Destination Ontario also responded to consumer preferences by consolidating and modernizing its multi-language website, [www.ontariotravel.net](http://www.ontariotravel.net), to better meet visitors' high expectations for digital marketing and travel planning.

### **Celebrate Ontario**

Through the Celebrate Ontario program, Ontario invested more than \$20 million to support over 300 festivals and events across the province in 2017. The 2017 Celebrate Ontario program was launched with improved program guidelines, including recognition of rural and northern Ontario festivals and events, and helped sustain events through multi-year funding. The program followed through by funding 126 distinct festivals and events in rural or northern areas that showcased the diverse traditions that make these communities so unique.

### **MTCS and EDCO**

In November 2017, MTCS worked with EDCO and the Ontario East Economic Development Commission to host two “Meet the Investor Dragons” events in Toronto and Ottawa. The events attracted over 16 investors interested in land sites and 33 municipalities promoting tourism-related investment opportunities in Accommodations, Attractions, Entertainment, Food and Culinary, Event Space, Retail and Travel-Related Operations.

### **Francophone tourism**

This past summer, we unveiled the **Route Champlain**, a new tourist experience that traces the historic journey taken by Samuel de Champlain. This project is a partnership with RDÉE (Réseau de développement économique et d'employabilité), and represents the next step in advancing francophone tourism in Ontario.

### **Cycling mixes tourism and sport**

In 2015 (the most recent data available), 1.7 million cycling tourists in Ontario spent nearly half a billion dollars while they were here.

In 2017, we launched *Tour by Bike: Ontario's Cycling Tourism Plan* as part of the Strategic Framework for Tourism. The plan aims to increase and support cycling tourism opportunities in

the province and promote cycling as a tourism draw in Ontario communities. Ontario also invested \$1 million in 2017 to support bike parking options at provincial agencies and attractions and \$93 million this year to support Ontario municipalities in making it safer and more convenient for people to get around by bike.

Looking forward to spring 2018, we expect to introduce Action Plan 2.0, the next step in advancing #CycleON – Ontario’s Cycling Strategy, as well as Ontario’s plan to strengthen cycling education across the province.

### **Looking ahead**

A key tourism initiative that the ministry is working on with the federal government is the Canada-China Year of Tourism 2018, designed to increase tourism between the two countries. We are working with our industry partners to develop ways that Ontario can take full advantage of the tourism opportunities available.

In May 2018, European tour boat operator Le Boat plans to begin operating their first ever North American operation just outside of Ottawa. This new tourism experience will showcase the breathtaking beauty of the Rideau Canal, while boosting the local economy and supporting job creation.

And finally, beginning with consultations in February 2018, we will work with industry as part of our response to the Red Tape Challenge, seeking ways to modernize regulations for the tourism sector and reduce unintended regulatory costs on business as part of our government’s Business Growth Initiative.

## **Sport**

Visitors who participated in sport tourism in 2017 spent \$2.3 billion on their trips in Ontario and contributed to the employment of over 43,000 Ontarians. The Invictus Games, hosted in Toronto in September, were the largest Invictus Games to date and generated \$42.2 million in economic impact for local communities. Ontario also hosted the North American Indigenous Games (NAIG) in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area in July 2017, which brought over 5,000 participants to Ontario and generated an economic impact of \$21.9M within the Province.

### **Games Ontario**

Ontario continues to invest in municipalities to host sporting events that encourage the creation of lasting partnerships, produce economic and social benefits and help develop sport at the community club level. The economic benefits include enhanced public infrastructure and increased levels of tourism, job creation, and tax revenue. As well, sport generates significant economic activity, from equipment and clothing purchases to membership fees, travel and accommodation.

In 2017, the Ontario Games were held in the City of Brantford / County of Brant and Cobourg. In 2018, Ontario will support various Games to be held in Orillia (Youth Winter Games),

London (Youth Summer Games), and Mississauga (55+ Ontario Summer Games). These Games have a combined projected economic impact of \$14 million.

Ontario also continues to invest in the 2021 Canada Games, which will be held in the Niagara Region and are estimated to generate an economic impact between \$130M and \$160M for the Niagara Region.

## **Culture**

Culture contributes over \$25 billion, or nearly four per cent, to Ontario's GDP, supporting almost 280,000 jobs. Ontario launched the province's first Culture Strategy in 2016, establishing goals and actions to promote participation in arts and culture, and to build on the sector's economic impact in communities across the province. Engagement in arts and culture is a catalyst for creative thinking and innovation, and communities where arts and culture thrive attract creative, talented and skilled people to live and work there. These are essential qualities in the knowledge economy and vital to Ontario's future growth and prosperity.

The Ontario Media Development Corporation (OMDC) is MTCS's primary program-delivery agent for the for-profit entertainment and creative cluster. The OMDC administers five cultural media tax credits to assist the film and television, book publishing and interactive digital media industries. Those investments in tax credits have resulted in record-breaking returns from film and TV production in the province, contributing \$1.7 billion to the provincial economy in 2016. The Interactive Digital Media tax credits helped boost the Ontario economy by \$1.1 billion in 2016. Results for 2017 promise to continue those trends.

In 2017-18, the ministry is expected to invest \$484.5 million in Ontario's creative industries through tax credits.

### **Ontario Music Fund**

As well as tax credits, we continue to support our creative industries through programs like the Ontario Music Fund. The Fund helps live music presenters and promoters expand their programming through festivals, tours and year-round venues. It helps increase music production activity, provides a foundation for developing and advancing an Ontario Live Music Strategy, and creates opportunities for emerging artists and music businesses in Francophone, Indigenous and diverse communities, as well as diverse musical genres.

Fund-supported artists have sold over 5.6 million recordings in Canada, and more than 7 million around the world. In the past two years, almost four million people have attended live music events supported by the Fund, featuring more than 4,000 performances by Ontario artists.

In 2017-18, Ontario is investing approximately \$15 million through the Fund to provide 190 grants to events such as the Kazoo! Festival, to industry players like Sony Entertainment Canada, and to acts like A Tribe Called Red.

We look forward to the continuation of a strong partnership with EDCO, to support our communities and economy, create jobs and help people in their everyday lives.