



## Message from the Chairperson



As I sit down to reflect on the past year, I am surrounded by good news about our industry. Visitor statistics for the 2016/17 fiscal year have been released by the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) and the numbers are record-breaking. The official opening of the new highway to Tuktoyaktuk on November 15th creates new tourism experiences and new business opportunities in the Western Arctic.

Our industry's contribution to the territorial economy is on track to reach \$235 million by 2020/21. It's an ambitious target, but one we set when the Board of Directors approved the Five-Year Marketing Strategy in 2016. I know this target can be met when we work together to make every visitor's experience in the Northwest Territories spectacular. I encourage our members and governments to manage our destination, putting the visitor experience first in all we do. Our core value is to give every visitor a spectacular experience when they are in our territory.

I would like to thank our funding partners – the Government of the Northwest Territories and the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency (CanNor) for putting their trust in our organization, funding our marketing

research and our marketing efforts so all NWT Residents can benefit.

And finally, as my term as Chairperson comes to an end this year, I would like to thank my board colleagues and our hard-working staff for their commitment and contributions. It has been a pleasure to serve all of you over the past four years.

Sincerely,

**Don Morin**

*Chairperson, NWT Tourism*

**SPECTACULAR  
NORTHWEST  
TERRITORIES**

# Message from the Executive Director



As Canada grows its share of global tourism spending, our destination is keeping pace and growing its share. The positive signs are all around us and below are just a few highlights. In 2016/17 the Northwest Territories welcomed an estimated 108,500 visitors (up 15% over the previous year) and these visitors spent over \$200 million dollars (a 21% increase).

The opening of the new highway to Tuktoyaktuk is a monumental event in Canadian history. This new highway now makes it possible to drive year-round to the Arctic Coast. Our market research, completed

this spring, shows our marketing of this new opportunity has already increased the desire for Canadians to travel to the Western Arctic in the next two years.

Our 2017 Secrets Campaign generated the largest response to a campaign we have ever seen on our website, our social media channels and in our call centre.

The number of licensed tourism operators has grown 26% from 111 in 2010 to 140 in 2017. Our 2017 market research shows consumers are responding to our advertising by actively researching our destination and considering it as a place to visit with friends and family.

Early indicators shown by the GNWT for visitation in 2017 suggest a continued upward trend in visitation and our small organization has been named a finalist for a national marketing award by the Tourism Industry Association of Canada. I am so proud of our small but mighty

marketing team and our talented Agency of Record. The work we do to market this destination and to advocate for our members on industry matters is aimed at supporting your business success. Many of you are our partners, whether you are helping us with Trade or Media Familiarization Tours, participating with us in Consumer Trade Shows or Travel Trade Shows or are participating in cooperative advertising with us. We value your partnership in all of these areas.

On behalf of our team at NWT Tourism, we wish you a safe and happy holiday season and prosperity for your businesses in 2018.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Cathie Bolstad'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end.

**Cathie Bolstad**

*Executive Director*

## NORTHWEST TERRITORIES TOURISM

# YEAR IN REVIEW

## Integrated Marketing Campaign – Discover our Secrets



On January 1, 2017, we rolled out our 2016/17 Integrated Marketing Campaign, seizing the opportunity to leverage Canada's 150th birthday to show Canadians that the Northwest Territories is Canada's best-kept secret.

We revealed 150 secrets about the Northwest Territories over 150 days, and gave 150 lucky winners a chance to fly to the NWT to see it for themselves, while also encouraging them to bring along family and friends. Five super-prize pack winners got a trip for two into each of our five regions for an all-inclusive trip, pushing consumers to dream about what was possible when visiting the NWT and going beyond the capital city.

Within two days of our press release going public to push consumers to our social media accounts and website, we surpassed campaign goals and raised them again. We aimed for a 10% increase in Facebook page likes and got a 42% increase. For the SpectacularNWT Twitter account, a 10% increase was targeted and we tripled our followers with a 192% growth over the campaign.

For the SpectacularNWT Instagram account, which is made up almost entirely of user-generated content, we saw a 63% increase in followers. While we had a worry that the new likes and follows were from people who've only signed up for a better chance to win the contest, the engagement from the audience swiftly dispelled that thought as our posts surpassed 2.5 million, and the engagement rate stayed high at 5.9%.

**DISCOVER OUR  
SECRETS**  
SPECTACULAR NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

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**42%** increase in  
**Facebook**  
page likes

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**192%** increase in  
**Twitter**  
followers

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**63%** increase in  
**Instagram**  
followers

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367%

increase in visitation to  
[spectacularnwt.com](http://spectacularnwt.com)

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People were sharing our posts and user-generated content, tagging friends, asking questions and expressing their delight to discover that the Northwest Territories had so much to offer. Instagram consistently was our most engaging platform. Audience engagement rate was 6.6% – mostly comments about how beautiful the scenery is and users tagging friends to take a look at our destination and urging friends and families to plan a trip.

We launched two new television commercials, and with funding from CanNor rolled out a television awareness campaign that included commercials in “True North Calling” a CBC television program featuring two NWT tour operators; Tundra North Tours and Great Slave Lake Tours.

Visitation to [spectacularnwt.com](http://spectacularnwt.com) grew 367% over the campaign and close to 600 calls and emails were made to our call centre to get help on planning a trip to the Northwest Territories. NWT Tourism staff enjoyed visits from a number of winners over the summer and fall. They were venturing beyond the capital city into our territory with friends and family to explore our destination.

This complex campaign incorporated radio, television, out of home, print and digital advertising, street teams, consumer shows, decal GoTrain and RV, and even culinary delights from Great Slave Lake (see page 12). We could not have achieved the campaign results without the hard work of our Agency of Record, Outcrop Communications, our dedicated and hard-working staff and the partnership with the Government of the Northwest Territories, Department of Industry, Tourism & Investment, and CanNor.

Finally, as we write this annual update, our campaign has been named one of three finalists by the Tourism Industry Association of Canada for a national tourism marketing award. While we await the decision regarding the winner of the “WestJet Social Media Marketing Campaign of the Year Award”, we also just learned that our Secrets social media campaign has been selected by the International Council on Hotel, Restaurant and Institutional Education (ICHRE) as a case study for tourism marketing students worldwide.

# MARKET RESEARCH

Early in 2017, with funding from CanNor, we began research in Canada to establish a benchmark for Canadian awareness of our destination, our Spectacular NWT brand and of the opening of the new highway to the Arctic Ocean.

Working with Environics Research, we measured awareness early in the Secrets campaign and again after the campaign. We learned that our advertising campaign increased destination awareness, consideration, positive perceptions and motivation to travel to the NWT among those who saw our advertising. Our advertising was also successful in motivating interest and action by potential visitors to discuss the destination with friends and family or seek more information about the destination. Eight in ten people who saw our advertising said they were more likely to visit the Northwest Territories after seeing our ads.



# CONSUMER SHOWS

In the first quarter of 2017, NWT Tourism staff and a number of tourism operator partners participated in six different consumer shows to promote the NWT and the tourism experiences offered. Shows included the Toronto Outdoor Adventure and Travel Show, Vancouver Outdoor Adventure and Travel Show, Toronto Sportsman Show, Calgary Outdoor Adventure and Travel Show, Montreal Outdoor Adventure Show and the Chicago Fishing & Outdoor Adventure Show.

The 2017 Secrets Campaign was integrated into our attendance at Canadian consumer shows. Using both social media and radio advertising, we drove consumers to visit Northwest Territories booths, offering over 3,000 chances for consumers to win one of 150 trips to the NWT.





## MEDIA MARKETING

NWT Tourism attended Go Media in Montreal, Quebec in October 2016, taking 32 appointments with media interested in telling a story about our destination. NWT Tourism hosted and assisted a total of 20 media familiarization tours in the 2016/17 fiscal year. Media from Canada, the US, Australia, Japan, China, Germany and South Korea visited various regions in both summer and winter.

In addition to hosting and organizing media FAMs, NWT Tourism staff are regularly contacted by media for information to develop story ideas, check facts on stories and for photos to bring visual elements to media stories. Maintaining a selection of images for which we have acquired the rights for tourism promotion by ourselves, or our tourism partners, is key in assisting media and members in promoting the Northwest Territories.

In 2016/17 we had over 2,000 photos available for tourism promotion in our public library and staff handled requests that resulted in 1,133 photos being downloaded for promotional use. North American media coverage of our destination reached a total circulation of 124,363,388 readers and the media value in stories produced about our destination in 2016/17 was \$5,368,191.



## MEETING AND INCENTIVE TRAVEL (MCIT)

NWT Tourism established the NWT Conference Bureau in June 2014 and officially launched the NWT Conference Bureau website in 2015. NWT Tourism participated in the following Meeting, Conference & Incentive Trade Shows this year to promote the NWT as a great place to host a meeting or conference and provide travel incentive programs into the NWT.

Name of Show	Location of Show	Business to Business Planner Appointments Taken
Incentive Canada	Quebec City	32 appointments
Incentive Works	Toronto	18 appointments
IMEX America	Las Vegas	23 Appointments
CSAE	Toronto	Open show format
Tête-à-Tête	Ottawa	Opens how format

By the end of the 2016/17 fiscal year, the NWT Conference Bureau had handled cumulatively \$5,033,200 in conference bids since 2015. Close to \$1 million in conference revenue has now been realized in the NWT. NWT Tourism has secured another \$1,280,000 in future conference revenue and, at the close of this fiscal year, NWT Tourism had proposals valued at \$1,495,200 awaiting decisions by event planners outside of the NWT.

The cumulative value of bids lost to other destinations at the end of the year was estimated to be \$1.3 million dollars. One of the key challenges NWT Tourism continues to face is driving conference traffic into the regions outside of the capital city, due to the added cost and additional time to travel that is required. We remain committed to promoting all five regional centers as great destinations wherever we travel for MCIT events.



## TRAVEL TRADE PROMOTIONS

The Travel Trade continues to be an important marketing channel for NWT Tourism. NWT Tourism staff work closely with a variety of international travel trade companies who have offices in Canada and abroad to ensure they are up to date about information on the tourism products in the NWT. Our staff made a total of eleven sales calls into national and international markets and participated in five travel trade shows, including: Rendez-Vous Canada, Focus Japan, Showcase Canada Asia, ITB Berlin and the Australian trade show Corroboree. A total of five Travel Trade FAMS were hosted in the year, with a FAM for each international target market: China, Japan, South Korea, Germany and Australia. As part of our plan to grow the Australian market, NWT Tourism completed contracts with three Australian travel trade companies for cooperative advertising in the 2017 Calendar Year.

**In Germany**, our General Sales Agent (Michaela Arnold) facilitated a number of ads and advertorial placements, which included Kanada Magazin, Holiday & Lifestyle, Spot on News, Bentley Club, Porsche Club, Life and Pioneer Elebrisreisen. She also made close to fifty sales calls to German-speaking travel trade companies. NWT Tourism's General Sales Agent also worked with the NWT Film Commission to promote "The Sun at Midnight", a film made in the Western Arctic by NWT filmmakers which was shown at the European Film Festival in Berlin, ensuring local travel media were able to see the film.

**In Japan**, NWT Tourism's General Sales Agent (Eiko Tanaka) worked closely with Destination Canada and other members of Team Canada to coordinate marketing activities with key trade accounts as part of Destination Canada's Canada Theatre Program. Interest in the episodes about the Aurora outperformed all other regions of Canada and Northwest Territories' story content about Aurora to this market continues to take top spot.





## TOURISM 2020 MARKETING INITIATIVES

Tourism 2020 funding is targeted at addressing two key marketing areas, namely Regional Tourism initiatives, and other special marketing initiatives that are initiated by ITI and mutually agreed to by ITI and NWT Tourism as they arise. Below is a summary of how we have worked with the regions and on special marketing initiatives.



**In the Western Arctic**, the regional plan included a variety of activities including paid advertising, out of home advertising, and support for the Western Arctic website. The Western Arctic was featured in a ¼ page ad in the Globe and Mail, Yukon Visitor Guide, Town of Inuvik Guide and Dawson City Guide. Digital marketing was used to support the Billy Joss Golf Tournament.

The Dempster Highway was featured in the Discover Our Secrets marketing campaign in both the television advertising and the images used for decals on the RV driven throughout the lower mainland of BC. A promotional piece for the Great Northern Arts Festival was developed and handed out by street teams working with the decaled RV as part of our out of home activities in British Columbia.



**In the North Slave Region**, general advertising included a quarter page Globe and Mail ad placement. Festivals were supported overall through the #YKFestivals program which included a competition for social media sharing, printed advertising, and digital advertising.

Digital ads were developed specifically to support new website stories for each of the following: SnowKing Festival, LongJohn Jamboree, Folk on the Rocks and Ramble & Ride. Angling promotions were delivered in a fishing program airing on WILD TV.



**In the Dehcho Region**, we completed a media, photo/video project. The project was an opportunity to showcase communities and activities around festivals celebrating the coming of the Spring. Video footage and still images were captured in preparation of a short-edited video plus B-roll and still image asset collection for future promotional uses.

Other small projects included the development of story content for the spectacularnwt.com website which was featured on social media outlets and in the Discover Our Secrets campaign. Stories included the travel to the end of the road and the teepee featured on the Timber Kings episode, and we augmented destination marketing in the commercial slots on the Timber Kings episode.

**In the Sahtu Region**, website content development was our focus and we completed stories featuring paddling that were showcased on the spectacularnwt.com website, in the Discover Our Secrets contest online and on our social media channels.

Digital advertising support to the stories and sponsored social media gave the seven stories we developed a larger reach and more viewers. Additional wildlife footage B-roll and stills were purchased from a media group on familiarization tours into the region.

Print advertising in the Globe & Mail included a half page spread focusing on Sahtu operators. Additional print support for activities within the Sahtu were provided to Up Here Magazine and a future Up Here story on the Canol Trail was completed.

**In the South Slave**, various marketing activities were undertaken. Festivals were featured through digital campaigns such as a 'Spring Carnivals' campaign, plus campaigns to support specific festivals which included the Polar Pond Hockey tournament and Dark Sky Festival. Print advertising included a quarter page ad in the Globe and Mail, and an ad in Sky News featuring the Dark Sky Preserve. With a focus on attracting regional driving traffic into the South Slave, a tradeshow campaign was undertaken which included photo acquisition for new collateral, tradeshow display panel replacements and attendance at the Grande Prairie Sports Expo and La Crete Show. A video featuring the Polar Pond Hockey tournament was edited and featured on the web. Booth space for consumer shows was purchased for the La Crete Spring Trade Show and the Grand Prairie Sports Expo. Ads were purchased in co-operation with NWT Parks which were featured in the Milepost, and digital ads aimed at regional visitors ran through early Spring.





NWT Tourism Board Member Heather Moses (left) presents Ms. Amy Badgley with her scholarship in Inuvik, NT.



## SPECIAL INITIATIVES

### Special Initiatives – Aurora Love Video Shoot

The video shoot for Aurora Love which is being produced by Sagafish Media, was completed in Japan and Yellowknife in March of 2017. A four-minute trailer was prepared and submitted by Sagafish Media to Toronto Hot Docs for consideration. Work on the larger piece for this documentary project is in progress and NWT Tourism will be obtaining video b-roll later in 2017 as part of this partnership.

### Special Initiatives – Destination Canada – Angling Program

NWT Tourism participated in Destination Canada's National Angling Program as part of our involvement in the Connecting America partnership. One segment on In Fisherman TV featured fishing in the NWT and ran on SPMN and Wild TV in 2017. Thirty 30-second commercials played in rotation and 2-4 minute digital segments were placed within the Canada Tab on the In Fisherman TV Web Page. Pageviews on What to Do/Fishing that are attributed to the Angling Program Facebook Slideshows amounted to 19,033 views.

### 2017 Scholarship Winner

Our fourth annual Northwest Territories Tourism Scholarship, valued at \$1500 was presented to Ms. Amy Badgley this summer. Amy is studying a Bachelor of Tourism Management degree at Vancouver Island University in British Columbia. Amy graduated from high school in Inuvik, Northwest Territories and has recently completed her first year of university study.



## INDUSTRY ADVOCACY

Important work on advocacy issues continues to be done by our team on your behalf. Key advocacy issues we took on this year included;

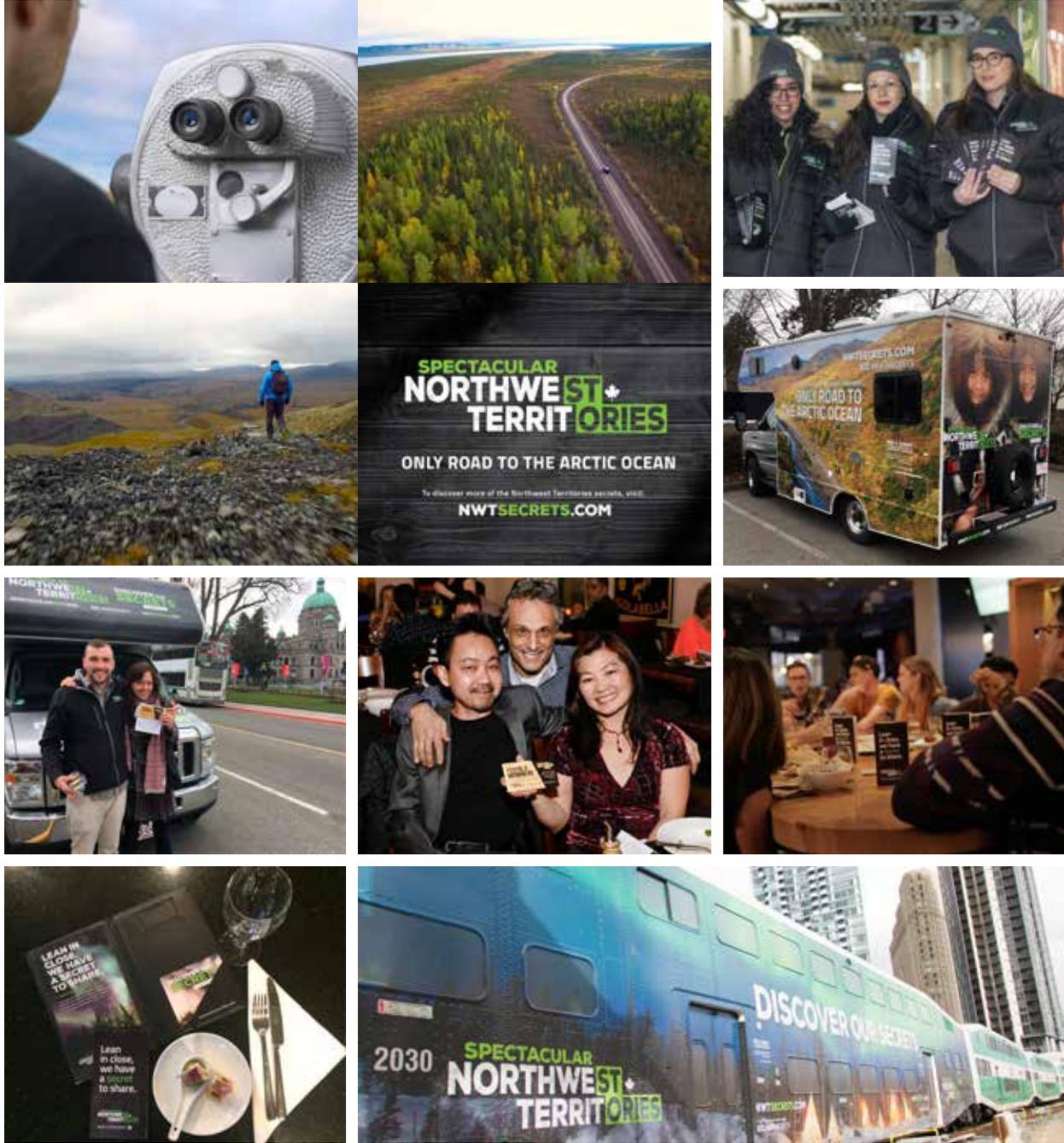
- working for lower airport costs
- pushing for easier access to liquor licenses for tourism operators
- raising the importance of spectacular destination management
- seeking to change employment conditions that make hiring employees with foreign language skills from our key target markets easier and faster
- advocating for the one day fishing license

Advocacy for these issues, plus others are all done with the intent to make the conditions for operating your business ideal. A detailed report on member resolutions and our work to address the issues raised in member resolutions is being provided to all members attending the 2017 Annual General Meeting.



# DISCOVER OUR SECRETS

SPECTACULAR NORTHWEST TERRITORIES



**SPECTACULAR**  
**NORTHWEST**   
**TERRITORIES**

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