

## **A positive summer season for the Eastern Townships**

**Sherbrooke, September 28, 2022** – Eastern Townships Tourism (TCE) has released the highlights of a survey conducted at the end of the summer season, covering the period from mid-May to the end of September. 260 tourism businesses responded, over one third of those approached by TCE, and the survey shows very positive trends.

"We are pleased with the results," says Annie Langevin, General Manager of Eastern Townships Tourism. "They indicate that compared to 2019, tourism is once again moving forward. Multiple promotional campaigns by tourism partners in addition to the removal of health protocols have attracted visitors from outside Quebec to the region once again."

### **KEY TAKEAWAYS**

- The data show that the tourism businesses throughout the Eastern Townships are almost back to the "normal" pre-pandemic levels of 2019.
- The majority of respondents noted that the 2022 summer season was a little weaker than in 2021, but that there was an increase in visitor traffic - a positive trend nonetheless. Close to three quarters (72%) of respondents said that tourism traffic met, or exceeded, their figures for 2019, particularly true for accommodations. Recall that last summer, the borders were closed and many Quebecers stayed within the province, resulting in travel patterns outside of the norm.
- Unsurprisingly, it was the return of American visitors that caused the greatest change in visitor arrivals since 2021 – a result noted by almost half of the tourism businesses that took part in the survey.
- Although Ontario visitors were already returning to the region during the summer of 2021, there was a marked increase during 2022, noted among 30% of the survey respondents.
- According to the respondents, the majority of visitors continued to make reservations in advance, but this summer, they tended to do so using a much shorter lead time.
- Last minute bookings were particularly evident in the hotel business. In the restaurant sector, fewer people made reservations in advance.
- The summer wave of COVID-19 did not seem to have resulted in more cancellations than in previous years.

## PROMOTION

- This summer, TCE proactively targeted visitors from Quebec, Ontario and the United States.
- Between May and September, the cantonsdelest.com website generated 1.7 million sessions – an increase of 14% compared with 2021. The rise is attributed to the English language website – easterntownships.org – which experienced double the amount of traffic from the year before.
- During the period from May to September, TCE organized 18 press tours. Eight were for members of the Quebec media and the other 10 for media outside Quebec.

## IN CONCLUSION

Tourists continue to flock to the Eastern Townships – not least because the destination is known for the high quality of its diverse attractions and activities. TCE recognizes the fact that much of the region’s popularity is due to the hard work and excellent quality experience offered by local tourism businesses.

“The results of the summer season prove that the recovery of the tourism industry is well and truly underway,” says Annie Langevin. “We’re looking forward to a successful fall, especially following the announcement on Monday that the COVID protocols at the borders will be discontinued.”

### ***About Tourism Eastern Townships***

*Tourisme Cantons-de-l’Est (Tourism Eastern Townships) is one of 22 tourism associations (ATRs) in Quebec and the official representative of Quebec's Ministry of Tourism in the Eastern Townships. Since 1978, the TCE’s mission has been to promote tourism development, marketing the region within Quebec and internationally. TCE brings together more than 500 members throughout the 9 regional county municipalities (MRCs) and in all sectors of the tourism industry: accommodation, restaurants, attractions, activities and events. The Eastern Townships region is the fourth most popular tourist destination in Quebec. The region attracts some 10 million visitors every year, accounting for 6.5 million overnight stays and spending more than \$900 million annually. The tourism sector is also the region’s fourth largest employer, accounting for 20,000 jobs.*

- 30 -

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