

**Press release**
**For immediate release**

**A positive winter season for the Eastern Townships**

**Sherbrooke, April 24, 2023 –** Drawing on data submitted by 100 tourism entities, Tourism Eastern Townships (TCE) reveals that the 2022-23 winter season performed well and that the region’s tourism industry has now returned to “normal”, pre-pandemic levels.

“We’re very pleased with the results from the winter season,” says Annie Langevin, General Manager of Tourism Eastern Townships (TCE). “Close to 75% of respondents indicated that the economic outcome of the winter season was the same, or even better, than in 2019-2020. That was due, in part, to the return of visitors from outside the province of Quebec.

"Although Mother Nature had not been very accommodating this winter, the snowfall in March and the mild weather allowed us to extend the season for skiing and other winter sports, encouraging people to take part in outdoor activities and attractions in the Eastern Townships.”

**KEY TAKEAWAYS**

* The data show that figures for the tourism businesses in the Eastern Townships are approaching the levels of the winter season prior to the pandemic, 2019-2020.
* Some 25% of respondents noted a rise in the number of visitors from Ontario and international visitors (notably from the United States) compared to last winter.
* To the delight of skiers and snowboarders, the slopes remained open in early April at the four major ski centres in the region. The season ended on April 16.
* For the period from November to February, the average occupancy rate among hotel establishments was 43%. February reached an occupancy rate of 49%, a record for the past five years.

**L’EST GO Card**

* The L'EST GO card, which allows holders to save on daily ticket prices at the Townships’ four major ski centres, experienced record sales - 5,800 cards that generated more than 18,000 days/ski. Those sales represented a 35% increase over the first season (2019-2020) for L’EST GO.

**Promotional Campaigns**

Tourism Eastern Townships promotional campaigns and the *New York Times’* inclusion of the region on its 2023 list of “Best places to visit” have helped to generate interest in the region:

* Quebec, Ontario and American audiences respond very well to TCE promotional campaigns. The recent winter campaign generated over 39% of visits (web sessions) to the destination site.
* For the first time, the TCE’s websites - cantonsdelest.com and the English version easterntownships.org - passed a milestone of one million visits during the winter period. This represents a 58% increase compared to the same period in 2019-2020.

***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 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 17,000 jobs.*

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