

For one day or the entire summer – The Townships is the place to be!

Sherbrooke, May 23, 2024 – Tourisme Cantons-de-l'Est (TCE)/Tourism Eastern Townships has launched its summer season and with it more than 100 new offerings, further enriching the “visitor experience”. Across the entire region there are a slew of activities and attractions aimed at all age groups - culinary experiences, outdoor activities, spas, festivals, family-friendly entertainment and a wide choice of accommodations. TCE, in partnership with regional counties and tourism industry players, is promoting all the wonderful experiences the Townships has to offer.

“The Eastern Townships region is known for its diverse tourism attractions and activities,” says Isabelle Charlebois, General Manager of TCE. “Innovative ideas are the driving force behind our tourism businesses, as witnessed by the multitude of new products being launched today. We want visitors to take the time to truly immerse themselves in the region and to discover for themselves why the Townships is such a great holiday destination!”

A PROMISING SUMMER

Tourism businesses throughout the Eastern Townships are looking forward to summer 2024. A survey of the members of TCE shows that a large majority – some 70% of respondents – are “optimistic” or “very optimistic” about the high season and their expectations and positive outlook are clearly a sign of confidence in the region’s ability to attract more visitors. There are several reasons for their optimism. As well as there being an even greater range of experiences for visitors to enjoy, labour shortages are less of an issue than in previous years, so that too, will benefit both tourists and those who work in the industry.

These welcome forecasts have followed a winter tourism season with mixed results. The weather was unusually mild and there was heavy rainfall, which had a negative effect on the bottom line of a number of tourism operators. Nonetheless, things picked up with the advent of the total solar eclipse on April 8, 2024. This extraordinary astronomical phenomenon attracted thousands of visitors (around 55,000 from outside the region) and resulted in record-high occupancy rates.

The economic impact was estimated at over \$4 million, which, not surprisingly, has resulted in an optimistic outlook for the future of tourism in the region, not to mention the fact that the Townships was extensively profiled in the media in Canada and internationally, increasing its visibility across the globe.

PROMOTING THE DESTINATION

Tourisme Cantons-de-l'Est/Tourism Eastern Townships is rolling out its « Proche de vous. Loin de l'ordinaire » mass marketing campaign in Quebec, along with its English version “Close to you. Far from *ordinaire*” in Ontario and the Northeastern United States. Incorporating input from content providers,

influencers and media relations strategists, the marketing campaign is designed to stimulate interest in a destination already known for its wide choice of high-quality tourist experiences. Backed by close to \$600,000 in funding, local players and associate members are also participating in these promotional initiatives, to ensure the marketing message is the same across the board. As well, there will be campaigns themed around cycling, golf and gourmet experiences.

During the past year, the Townships has also enjoyed extensive media coverage and our team is actively leveraging the region's newfound popularity to seek new partnerships – at home and abroad. During the coming months, journalists and content creators from our target markets will be invited to visit the region and to share their experiences with their audiences and “followers”.

WHAT'S NEW IN THE TOWNSHIPS

In addition to our large selection of must-see attractions and activities, this summer there will be **more than 100 new (or enhanced) tourism offerings** across the 9 regions that make up our beautiful corner of the province.

Accommodations that cater to every taste

The [Auberge du changement d'ère](#) in Coaticook has expanded its accommodation offerings with “Gouttes d'air” – giant, raindrop-shaped units tucked between the branches of trees. In Piopolis, [Hébergement aux Cinq Sens](#) takes its lead from First Nations culture with eco-friendly lodging, the latest of which is the Yahra mini-home. [Huttopia](#), in Sutton, has expanded its ready-to-camp units, adding 15 spacious new “Canadienne” tents equipped with wood stoves. A brand new condotel in Magog - [Quartier des marinas](#) - is targeting the corporate market. It houses 30 luxury suites with fireplaces and heated balconies. [Espace Hors Champs](#) in the rural community of Austin, offers a range of attractions to tourists – lodging, various activities, a weekly farmers market and field-to-fork dining.

And at the national parks...

This summer, Mont Megantic National Park is celebrating its 30th anniversary and at the ASTROLab (which is within the park) there will a new astronomy show - [Poussières d'étoiles](#) (“Star Dust”). Within the Frontenac National Park, the Rivière-aux-Bluets campground has converted 10 ready-to-camp units into larger “Étoile” accommodations, which are able to sleep up to six people. L'Oasis (near the supervised beach) is a meeting space for corporate events and is now available for rent. And finally, Yamaska National Park (Roxton Pond) has added 26 ready-to-camp units to its existing accommodations.

The bounty of the land!

Along the Brome-Missiquoi Wine Route, one of the wineries - [Val Caudalies](#) - has just launched a most unusual beverage, namely, a melon-infused white wine! Another unusual product is the fruit grown at [La Vallée du Moulin](#). This fledgling business based in Melbourne, produces organic figs – a first for the province of Quebec. Figs originate in the hot countries of the Mediterranean but these ones are grown in an energy-efficient greenhouse and interpretative panels give detailed information on the sweet, exotic fruits.

In Dunham, the new [Restaurant Ôma](#) has opened its doors at the Vignoble du Ruisseau winery. Operated by owner/chef Hakim Chajar, a winner on the TV show *Les Chefs* (2014), it will specialize in country-style food - simple dishes incorporating fresh, local ingredients packed with flavour!

Things are “brewing” in the Townships....

The [Halte des Crinqués](#), whose décor is a nod to the era of the Vikings, is a new microbrewery in Sherbrooke – a place to gather and enjoy a craft beer or two! [À l’Abordage](#) microbrewery has operated in Sutton for almost a decade, raising the profile of artisanal beer makers in the process and it has recently opened a second location in Bromont. There’s a new microbrewery on the Brome-Missisquoi Wine Route in Dunham - [Matera Brasseurs](#), and local brewers, inspired by Britain’s long-established craft beer industry, have developed the [Brasseurs des Cantons](#) network along [Chemin des Cantons](#) (Townships Trail). Those who follow the *Hop!* route, can learn about the history of beer making, as well as sample the local brews. Cheers!

More places to employ pedal power

The [Val-Saint-François](#) region has designed eight new gravel bike routes, bringing the total to nine, stretching over 426 kilometres of roadway. [La Frontalière](#) is a new bike path that runs in an 87-kilometre loop, linking Ayer’s Cliff and Newport, Vermont. In Granby, the [Circuit des Trois Lacs](#) connects the Estriade bike trail to the region of Brome-Missisquoi, a distance of 74 kilometres (round trip). Along the way, cyclists can enjoy views of lakes Boivin, Waterloo and Brome. Those seeking thrills ‘n’ spills can head over to the [Centre national de cyclisme de Bromont](#) (the National Cycling Centre) to try out the new freestyle area in the Vélodrome Sylvan Adams.

Family-friendly activities

The [Moulin à laine d’Ulverton](#) is offering an immersive tour of the woollen mill’s history, with special effects provided by augmented reality (AR) and 3D audio – a first for Quebec! The [Cœur villageois de Scotstown](#) has four new podcasts (“Balado Découverte”) that visitors can listen to as they explore the village. And in Magog, [Maison Merry](#) is presenting an exhibition entitled *Carte mémoire (Mapping Memory: Photographing Downtown Magog)* which documents the cityscapes of Magog. The photographer (René Bolduc) has taken the photographs at the same locations as archival images – linking the past with the present.

New festivals and events. Mark them in your diary!

The Townships will be in a celebratory mood all summer long with new events such as [Les Restos prennent l’air](#), [Festival FAUNE](#) and [Folk & Blues des Cantons](#). Dozens of festivals are taking place around the region, themed around music, food, sports and culture. In other words, something for everyone! For a list of summer happenings, click [here](#).

Tourisme Cantons-de-l'Est (Tourism Eastern Townships) is one of 21 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 600 members representing more than 1,000 tourism offerings 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 a tourism spend of more than \$900 million annually. Tourism in the region also generates more than 20,000 jobs.

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Source :

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