

## Presidents Report 2020

Good afternoon everyone.

Well what can we say about 2020 and the Tourism Industry?

Many adjectives come to mind.

The report I thought I would be delivering this year is much different...

The thought was the bank accounts would be topped up and the planning would be under way for another banner year in 2021.

It would be safe to say most people involved in Tourism cannot wait to flip the calendar on December 31<sup>st</sup>.

The challenges by times seem almost insurmountable ...

Where one sector is devastated others are thriving, which is hard to wrap our heads around.

The hotel, airline, car rental, restaurant industries have been hit without mercy and the road is a long one ahead.

We all know the numbers and have seen the statistics... they are what they are.

So, the questions are where do we go? What do we do from here?

The laundry list is long as far as challenges going forward.

In a normal world, business is about creating demand for your product.

Convincing consumers to buy your product is generally the biggest challenge in a business/industry.

In our current circumstances this not the case.

People want to travel. Demand is not the issue. Fear is the issue.

In a recent meeting that I attended, Destination Canada ran a survey and more than 50% of respondents want to travel... but of that same sample only 7% felt safe to travel.

Fear is the new challenge. How do we overcome fear?

Time.

But as the old saying goes, time is money. We will all need to adjust budgets and business plans accordingly, to get to the brighter days ahead.

But fear is not only shared by travelers it's also in our local population.

For our industry to return to its former self... we as a population have to be accepting of tourists again.

For those of you who are familiar with the TV comedy show “This hour has 22 minutes” -

they recently did a skit on this very topic ... how Atlantic Canadians are not very accepting of outsiders.

For those of you who are familiar with the show, political satire is their bread and butter and usually hits fairly close to the mark... albeit in a comedic way.

We need to change this mind set or all will be for not.

Is there a silver lining?

I believe we will come out of this and recover much more quickly than many places in the world.

We are deemed a safe place.

People want what we have, albeit short term(vacation) or long term (living permanently).

Proof of this can be seen in the real estate industry.

As mentioned earlier it is hard to understand such discrepancy from one sector to another, but I believe we need to look at this as a sign of better times to come.

If more people are moving to our province then real estate sales go up, population increases, which in turn creates a larger tax base.

But even more direct, is people will come to visit friends and family of the new residence.

It is a start.

Creativity has never been so important. For those who can adapt and adjust, they will survive.

As well, it has never been more crucial for all stake holders to be working together.

I can tell you that the Board of Directors and TIAPEI staff are dedicated and committed more than ever to help reset this industry.

All of the RTA's are fully engaged and doing all they can in this time.

The folks at Tourism PEI have been working tirelessly to regain whatever we can as quickly as we can, and their efforts would be second to none in country.

ACOA/ federal government has recognized Tourism is to be singled out as a top priority.

We will get through this... we will survive... and we will thrive again.

Respectfully submitted,

Kirk Nicholson, President

October 27, 2020