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International Border

Crossings: U.S. overnight crossings up in March

- International border crossings into Ontario remain down by 9.8% over the first quarter of 2003 and down by 19.7% over the first quarter of 2002.
- Border crossings from the U.S. dropped by 10.0% over the first quarter of 2003 and by 20.2% over the first quarter of 2002. Border crossings from overseas countries dropped by 6.3% over the first quarter of 2003 and by 5.8% over the first quarter of 2002.
- While total U.S. border crossings were down in January, February and March 2004 over the same periods of 2003, overnight border crossings from the U.S. increased by 2.1% in March 2004.
- Travel by Ontario residents to the U.S. and overseas countries increased by 8.2% in the first quarter of 2004 over the same period of 2003.

Message from the Minister

Dear Tourism Partners:

As we prepare to launch the summer tourism season, it is my pleasure to present you with this issue of Ontario Tourism Facts and Figures.

As members of the industry, we must all work in partnership to ensure that decisions are made with the best available information as we work toward our shared goal of enhancing every visitor's experience of Ontario. When my Ministry consulted with industry stakeholders about the Ontario Tourism Strategy, they told us of the importance of access to research that is accurate, relevant and easy to understand to support them in making business decisions.

My Ministry is responding by looking at ways to more closely align its research activities with the industry's needs. The strategy reflects the importance of research as a key element in building a strong foundation for the development of the tourism industry. Applying research will enable tourism operators to make appropriate decisions in responding to the tourism market, thereby leading to improved profitability and contributing to an increase in Ontario's economic growth and quality of life.

It is with the support and hard work of all tourism partners and stakeholders that we look forward to a season that will bring hope and revitalization to our province and our industry. Best wishes to all for a wonderful summer.

Yours sincerely



Jim Bradley
Minister

International Border Crossings into Ontario JANUARY TO MARCH 2004 PERCENT CHANGE OVER SAME PERIODS OF 2003

	January 2004	February 2004	March 2004
Total U.S.	-19.3%	-4.1%	-6.2%
Overnight U.S.	-9.6%	-2.0%	2.1%
Total Overseas	-14.8%	-5.6%	0.8%
Overnight Overseas	-15.1%	-6.8%	-1.2%
Total International	-19.1%	-4.1%	-5.9%
Overnight International	-10.5%	-2.8%	1.6%

Source: Statistics Canada

Ontario's Travel Price Index (TPI): Prices lower in first quarter of 2004

- Ontario's TPI decreased by 0.9% in the first quarter of 2004 over the same period of 2003. This means that the same amount of travel-related goods and services in Ontario cost 0.9% less in the first quarter of 2004.
- In March 2004, the prices of two major components consumed by travelers in Ontario decreased compared to March 2003 - "Inter-city Transportation" by 4.0%, "Traveler's Accommodation" by 9.5%. At the same time, the prices of three other major components increased - "Other Recreational Services" by 2.9%, "Other Retail" by 2.1% and "Food and Beverage at restaurants" by 1.8%. Overall, Ontario's TPI was 1.2% lower in March 2004 than it was in March 2003.
- In comparison, Ontario's Consumer Price Index (CPI) increased by 1.1% in March 2004 over March 2003. This means that March 2004 was the eleventh consecutive month where the inflation rate of travel-related goods and services was lower than that of overall goods and services consumed in Ontario.
- The TPI in the U.S. increased by 2.3% in the first two months of 2004 compared to the same period of 2003.

Short Term Economic Indicators

CANADA & ONTARIO

		Q4 2003	Q1 2004 (f)	2004 (f)	2005 (f)
Real Gross Domestic Product – ROC	Can	0.9	1.3	2.8	3.1
	ON	1.0	1.1	2.7	3.6
Consumer Price Index – ROC	Can	0.1	0.3	1.6	2.1
	ON	0.2	0.3	1.6	2.1
Unemployment Rate	Can	7.5	7.5	7.2	6.7
	ON	6.8	6.8	6.5	5.9
Personal Disposable Income– ROC	Can	0.3	1.5	3.9	5.5
	ON	0.3	1.8	4.3	5.9
Exchange Rate	USD/CAD	0.76	0.76	0.74	0.72

f) = forecast, ROC = Rate of change over previous period

Source: Conference Board of Canada

Ontario Travel Information Centres (TICs)– Visitation down in first four months of 2004

- Visitation to Ontario Travel Information Centres (TICs) increased by 4.1% in April 2004 over April 2003. April 2004 was the first month in which TICs experienced an increase in visitation since August 2001.
- However, visitation remained down in the first four months of 2004 (-2.5%) over the same period of 2003.
- All TICs experienced decreases in visitation in the first four months of 2004, with the exception of TICs in Barrie, Eaton Centre and St. Catharines.

Source: Ontario Ministry of Tourism and Recreation

SPECIAL TOPIC: TOURISM IN NORTH-CENTRAL ONTARIO

This article is the second in a series that highlight specific tourism regions in Ontario. The following provides a profile of visitors to North-Central Ontario.

North-Central Ontario includes the following Census Divisions: Parry Sound District, Nipissing District (excluding Nipissing Unorganized South Part, and Airy Township) and Timiskaming District.

In 2002 (the latest statistics available from Statistics Canada) North-Central Ontario received 3.0 million person visits, which represents a 14% increase over 2001. Ontario as a whole received 129.9 million person visits in 2002, a 3% growth over 2001. North-Central Ontario received 2% of total person visits in 2002.

Of the 3.0 million visitors to North-Central Ontario, 95% were Canadians (of which 96% were Ontario residents travelling to or within the region), 4% were Americans and 1% were from overseas countries. These visitors spent \$375 million in the region in 2002 or an average of \$123 per person visit. Residents of North-Central Ontario spent an additional \$51 million on Canadian carrier fares to travel outside of the region.

Nearly half (48%) of visitors travelled to North-Central Ontario primarily for a pleasure trip compared to 42% of the total visitors to Ontario.

Visiting friends and/or relatives was the primary reason for travelling to North-Central Ontario for 31% of visitors in 2002 compared to 34% for Ontario as a whole.

Visitors to North-Central Ontario were very active, participating in an average of 2.2 activities per person trip to the region. The top activities in 2002 were visiting friends and/or relatives (56%), participating in sports or outdoor activities (44%), shopping (41%), sightseeing (24%), and going to bars and nightclubs (12%).

Visitors from overseas countries stayed in the region for an average of 4.3 nights, while Americans stayed for an average of 4.0 nights and domestic visitors for an average of 2.2 nights. Americans and Canadians tended to stay longer in North-Central Ontario than they did in the province as a whole with average stays of 1.0 and 1.1 nights, respectively.

Americans visited North-Central Ontario in groups of two (2.1 persons), as did Americans that travelled Ontario as a whole (2.1). Meanwhile, domestic visitors to North-Central Ontario travelled in groups of two (2.0) and to Ontario as a whole travelled in groups of 1.7 persons. The vast majority of visitors from any origin to North-Central Ontario and to Ontario as a whole travelled in groups of adults only. For example, 82% of domestic visitors to North-Central Ontario travelled in groups of adults only.

Accommodations: Hotel occupancy rates down by 1% in first quarter of 2004

Occupancy and Average Daily Rates—First Quarter 2004

Market	Occupancy Rate		Avg. Daily rate	
	Q1 2004	%ch*	Q1 2004	%ch*
Greater Toronto Area	57.8%	2.1	\$118.70	-1.3
Downtown Toronto	58.7%	2.6	\$134.83	-2.8
Toronto Airport	71.7%	7.2	\$112.94	0.0
GTA West	54.9%	-1.3	\$103.34	1.8
GTA East/North	49.3%	1.2	\$105.70	-0.3
Eastern Ontario	45.7%	-1.2	\$89.36	4.8
Kingston	49.8%	-2.7	\$96.25	6.3
Other Eastern Ontario	43.7%	-0.5	\$85.39	3.7
Ottawa	57.9%	-2.0	\$121.84	-2.7
Downtown Ottawa	60.6%	-0.4	\$127.07	-3.3
Ottawa West	48.0%	-6.4	\$109.85	2.7
Ottawa East	56.8%	-0.5	\$98.33	1.8
Southern Ontario	44.5%	-3.4	\$95.55	1.8
London	60.1%	10.1	\$94.48	0.7
Windsor	57.3%	-4.7	\$101.22	-3.9
KW/Cambridge/Guelph	54.6%	-2.8	\$94.02	1.0
Hamilton/Brantford	46.8%	-10.3	\$90.05	1.6
Niagara Falls	33.3%	-2.4	\$101.53	5.6
Other Niagara Region	34.1%	-15.5	\$81.68	2.6
Other Southern Ontario	41.4%	-1.7	\$87.63	0.0
Central Ontario	44.3%	-8.1	\$122.24	0.8
North Eastern Ontario	55.8%	-0.6	\$77.50	-1.4
North Bay	50.4%	-9.6	\$81.14	-0.8
Sudbury	53.1%	-7.5	\$82.72	0.9
North Central Ontario				
Sault Ste Marie	46.8%	-14.8	\$84.61	1.6
North Western Ontario	56.5%	-4.0	\$86.36	5.3
TOTAL ONTARIO	52.9%	-1.1	\$110.39	-0.7

- Hotel occupancy rates in Ontario reached 52.9% in the first quarter of 2004 (January to March), 1.1% lower than the same period of 2003. The overall average daily rate dropped by 0.7% in the province to \$110.39.
- London's hotel sector experienced the largest increase in occupancy rates (10.1%), while 'Other Niagara Region' (does not include Niagara Falls) experienced the largest drop in occupancy (-15.5%) during the first quarter.
- Toronto Airport hotels experienced the highest occupancy rate (71.7%) in the first quarter of 2004, an increase of 7.2% over the same period of 2003. Downtown Toronto hotels experienced the highest average daily rate (\$134.83) in the first quarter of 2004, a decrease of 2.8% over the same period of 2003.
- Revenue per available room (RevPar) reached \$58.45 in the province during the first quarter of 2004, a 1.7% decrease over the same period of 2004. The highest RevPar was achieved in the Toronto Airport region (\$80.97) and the lowest in Other Niagara Region (\$27.86).

The table at left outlines actual occupancy and average daily rates for several different markets across the province for the first quarter of 2004.

* percent change over first quarter of 2003
Data based on PKF's unweighted sample, which tends to be branded properties of 30 rooms or more. Source: PKF Consulting Inc.

Visitor Inquiries, Web site user sessions up

- In April 2004 there were nearly 180,500 user sessions on www.ontariotravel.net, an increase of 66.1% over April 2003 and up by 39.0% over April 2002.
- In the first four months of 2004, user sessions increased by 57.2% over the same period of 2003.
- There were 24,000 inquiries to 1-800-ONTARIO in April 2004, an increase of 5.7% over April 2003. Inquiries were down by 21% compared to April 2002.
- Total inquiries to 1-800-ONTARIO decreased by 3.2% in the first four months of 2004 over the same period of 2003 and by 31% over the same period of 2002.

Source: Electronic Data Solutions

What's New in Research?

New Research and Publications

The results of the third wave of the Travel Intentions Study in Canada and the U.S. will be available on our web site at www.tourism.gov.on.ca in early July 2004 (top-line results will be available by the end of June). This study tracks where and when travel has been planned and if respondents do not plan to travel, the reasons for not travelling are tracked. The study also looks into how Ontario is perceived as a destination to Americans and Canadians.

A new web-based tool developed by the Tourism Research and Industry Competitiveness Unit will be available in June 2004 at www.tourism.gov.on.ca. The **Regional Tourism Profiles** tool provides detailed tourism statistics, including economic impact data, on a census division level, travel region level and for the province as a whole.

A new report on the factors that influence North American travellers' choices of urban destinations can be found at <http://www.tourism.gov.on.ca/english/tourdiv/research/reports.htm>.

Several new tourism market reports, including Ontario's Domestic Market 2002 and Ontario's Business and Convention Travel Markets 2002 can be found on our web site at www.tourism.gov.on.ca/english/tourdiv/research/reports.htm

The Ontario Tourism Strategy has been completed and is available on the MTR web site at www.tourism.gov.on.ca.

Upcoming Conferences

The Association of Municipalities of Ontario's (AMO) Annual Conference will be held at the Westin Hotel and Ottawa Congress Centre from Sunday, August 22nd to Wednesday, August 25th, 2004. The theme of this year's conference is *Renewing Our Communities: From the Municipal Front Door to Parliament Hill*. For further information on the conference please go to AMO's website at www.amo.com.

Canada's Tourism Leadership Summit (formerly called the National Conference on Tourism), organized each fall by the Tourism Industry Association of Canada, is an important opportunity for tourism

industry leaders and stakeholders from across Canada to plan for success—by obtaining current information, networking, exploring new opportunities, and discussing ways to meet current and emerging challenges in key areas. This year's event will be held in Whitehorse, Yukon, from October 24-26, 2004. Please go to www.tiac-aitc.ca for more information.

Useful Web Sites

MTR Tourism Monitoring web page:
www.tourism.gov.on.ca/english/tourdiv/research/monitor.htm

Ontario Tourism Marketing Partnership:
www.tourismpartners.com

Canadian Tourism Commission:
www.canadatourism.com

Statistics Canada: www.statcan.ca

TTRA Canada: www.ttracanada.ca

TTRA International: www.ttra.com

Tourism Investment in Ontario:
www.2ontario.com/tourism

World Tourism Organization—
www.world-tourism.org

US Department of Commerce, Tourism Industries: <http://tinnet.ita.doc.gov>

Visit our website, www.tourism.gov.on.ca, for information on the industry's current performance, as well as historical trends and statistics.



Questions? Suggestions

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