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News Release

For Immediate Release

Media Contact: Shelley Munn
506-458-5646

shelley@tianb.com

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Ensuring New Brunswick's tourism industry has the workforce it needs

Fredericton – December 17, 2018 - The Tourism Industry Association of New Brunswick (TIANB) is determined to find solutions to counter the workforce shortage in tourism with a new workforce development strategy.

Tourism is one of New Brunswick's most important industries with annual visitor spending exceeding \$1.5 billion, making it one of the top 3 largest service export industries for the province. But just like many other businesses, tourism operators are not spared and are struggling to find and hire skilled workers, both seasonal and year long.

According to Statistics Canada's latest Job Vacancy Survey, the accommodation and food services sector and the arts, entertainment and recreation sector have the highest job vacancy rates among the 20 main industry groups across the province. New Brunswick has the third highest job vacancy rate in the accommodation and food services sector among the 10 provinces across Canada.

"When the staff says, let's hope that we don't fill up tonight because we don't know how we will be able support more clients with so little staff, we have a serious problem that limits the growth of the industry", says Carol Alderdice, President and Chief Executive Officer of TIANB. "We are leading an initiative specifically in labour force in tourism that is aiming at better understanding the needs and seeing how we can help the industry grow and find the workers they need today, but also to plan for future growth."

The first step in the development of this strategy will be to gather input to better understand the current and future needs of the industry. Online surveys have been developed and operators, workers and young people who might consider the industry as a career path from around the province will be asked to provide their input in the coming weeks.

"There is no silver bullet to this challenge and the solution will involve multiple segments of the labour market including attracting more young New Brunswickers into the sector, bringing in more immigrants, engaging New Brunswickers 55 and older, sharing of workers within seasonal industries and promoting tourism entrepreneurship ", says Alderdice.

Ron Toogood is the Owner and President of Coastal Inns Inc. "In 28 years in the hospitality industry, I have never heard such a high level of concern expressed among business owners and managers. Many accommodation operators, including ourselves, came very close to shutting down rooms this past summer due to staff shortages. When accommodations close rooms that otherwise would be sold, the economic impact is far greater than the lost room

sale. Think of all the local services that are impacted when potential visitors cannot be accommodated – restaurants, attractions, shopping, local artisans, and so on.”

Currently, more than 12,000 New Brunswickers are working directly in the tourism sector and close to 30,000 in tourism-focused industries such as restaurants, hotels, recreation and related services. Thousands of additional workers will be needed in the coming years to achieve the objective of increasing visitor spending to \$2 billion by 2025, as stated in the New Brunswick Tourism Growth Strategy launched last year.

The tourism sector generates more than \$250 million in tax revenue every year for local, provincial and federal governments. This money goes to fund public services and public infrastructure around the province.