



November 2019

As a follow up to our Annual Report Attached you will find the RRNT budget for 2020. Our hard-working volunteers enjoy bringing visitors to the region and in the past year have contributed approximately 5,200 volunteer hours on behalf of tourism for our shareholders and other funders.

Regional supporters have identified Tourism as a major element of their strategic and business planning. The Red River North Region is now well identified as an area of "day trip" attractions within the capital region and we have developed a number of events and tours to serve that tourism sector.

Growth in tourism will only occur through a coordinated approach to marketing of our regional cultural and heritage events, recreational opportunities, museums, and other physical attractions. Similarly, an organized and comprehensive coordination of social media and internet presence will increase visitation to the region. Social media content is coordinated and the social media following has increased. We now have over 1200 dedicated, and many more occasional, followers. We make every effort to be inclusive and cross share social media of with members, shareholders, partners and businesses and other organizations throughout the region.

In the coming year RRNT plans to expand successful programs and introduce new tourism products. Opportunities are only limited by the energies of our volunteers and the financial support available.

Walking tours have proven popular in the past and RRNT has developed a number of new ones, primarily within the City of Selkirk. During the summer months of our historic 150 celebrations in 2020 we look forward to weekly tours delivered by trained summer students.

With the assistance of Gaynor Regional Family Library, a "Mural Walk" has been developed. This tour will undergo a "test drive" during Holiday Alley. A year-round, self-guided, brochure version will also be developed. This may also be used to provide a novel Saturday evening kick-off "tour and reception event" to the Garden and Art Tour. Discussions with the Selkirk Community Arts Centre in this regard are underway.

We are in discussion with the +55 Senior Games regarding what can be provided for visitors attending the Games. Packages for visitors will be available, highlighting the many heritage sites and other attractions within the region and our volunteer base is building.

A convention/conference package has been developed and used successfully this past year. This will now be promoted on the website and through other tourism agencies. Soon, these same packages will be formatted for family reunion use as well. Wherever possible with group use, the services of Selkirk Transit are included.

The New Product Development Committee is scheduling more short videos of our many hidden gems to be added to the RRNT You Tube channel. A walk through the Marine Museum, a day building sandcastles in Grand Marais, and a tour of the potpourri of summer markets are among the several ideas. Through the Garden and Art Tour we know that visitors are drawn here from outside the region to participate in these activities.

Cemetery tours are in development for 2020. Many would enjoy a chat with Duncan McRae or Chief Peguis! We will apply for available grants for this project.

In February, with the assistance of Ubuntu`s Anna Badenhorst, RRNT will host a workshop to explore promotional ideas, particularly for the many farmer`s markets, and local artists and artisans, working closely with presenting organizations.

Each year something new is added to the Garden and Art Tour. Last year, book authors and young musicians were added. In 2020 we are exploring the addition of culinary arts to the event. The Selkirk and District Horticultural Society has a number of garden possibilities and we will be meeting confirming the participating gardens early in the new year. The success of the 2019 Garden and Art Tour was outlined in the Annual Report. Tour attendance increased and with that 122 of 220 exit surveys were returned. Information gathered showed over \$8,000 was spent by these attendees over and above the price of the ticket. We are confident that in one day \$10,000 – \$12,000 was spent in the area.

A business plan is now in development regarding the preservation and maintenance of Captain Kennedy House. It is expected this will be a cooperative to present venture with the RM St. Andrews and will seek the approval of Manitoba. Enquiries continue to be received regarding this historic and once popular site.

Through our preparation the Selkirk Journal will present monthly tourism features. These 400 word articles will inform readers about who RRNT is, what we represent and all that is to offer in the region. A tourism coordinator has been hired for an eight week job share trial with the RM St Andrews. This individual will assist in preparing materials for print and, if successful, it is hoped the position will continue this into the New Year.

We will be laying the foundation for a Made in Red River North Film Festival, acting on the feasibility study commissioned this year.

Development of the connection with area roots in the Orkney Islands is being realized through production of information to be distributed throughout the Islands and Scotland. Local businesses are assisting with the planning and delivery of this information program.

We continue to be heavily involved in Homes for the Holidays and Holiday Alley. We market these events and contribute huge volunteer hours to these projects aside from our regular volunteer hours.

All these major events require a coordinated plan, major marketing and promotion, and supportive sponsors. Tourism efforts must be coordinated to reap economic benefits. To that end, we continue to meet with other tourism agencies, not-for-profits, and businesses.

In closing, we respectfully request consideration of the financial appeal outlined in the budget, noting that RRNT continues to actively pursue additional funding through event revenues, memberships, grants and sponsorships, in an effort to match shareholder funding.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lois Wales". The signature is written in a dark ink and is positioned above the typed name and title.

Lois Wales
President
Red River North Tourism