

Celebrating Tourism Week

Mr. Speaker, this is tourism week in the Northwest Territories and is an opportunity to celebrate the unprecedented growth that we have nurtured and witnessed during our time as the 18th Legislative Assembly.

During the life of this Legislative Assembly, visitor numbers in the NWT have increased by more than 30%. This includes a 61% increase in Aurora tourism.

Our tourism sector is now worth over \$203 million, a 48% increase in spending over the last five years; and led by a 75% growth in spending by leisure travelers.

As our government continues to support a more diverse economy this is great news, and it's the kind of success that we look forward to highlighting and celebrating each year at this time.

Mr. Speaker, we are able to celebrate extraordinary growth in our tourism sector, because of the commitments that we have made to investing in it.

In 2018/2019 alone, the GNWT has invested approximately \$5 million to support our destination marketer NWT Tourism, tourism operators, Indigenous partners and community groups in their work to attract and cater to visitors to our spectacular territory.

In the NWT, our parks play a significant role in attracting summer visitors and we are set to invest \$7 million this year in parks infrastructure and improvements.

But, Mr. Speaker, tourism infrastructure, marketing, funding supports, training and a spectacular product only make up a portion of our formula for success.

Year in and year out, the people who visit our territory tell us that the best part of their trip is the people.

For this reason, the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment is once again celebrating tourism week with a campaign recognizing NWT residents who personify the qualities of a northern host and ambassador for our territory.

Our campaign encourages residents to nominate people on social media who exhibit the warm, welcoming spirit of northern hospitality that our tourism industry is built on.

Nominated individuals are eligible for prizes with two winners awarded in each region.

Last year's campaign unearthed a ton of amazing stories about NWT residents going above-and-beyond to make folks feel welcome. Nominations have already begun rolling in for this year's campaign and will continue to be received through the end of the week.

I would encourage all Members to join our celebration by sharing a story from their constituency using the hashtag NWT Host on Facebook or Twitter.

Mr. Speaker, while we celebrate northern hosts, the Department will also be offering free Northern-Most-Host workshops throughout the week for tourism operators, hospitality employees, and vendors who interact with the tourism industry.

These will be supplemented by networking activities, community barbecues, and other events celebrating tourism across the Northwest Territories. Again, I encourage Members to support events in their riding and join events here in the capital between attending to the business of our Legislative Assembly.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.