

VISIT THE COUNTY

ANNUAL REPORT 2025



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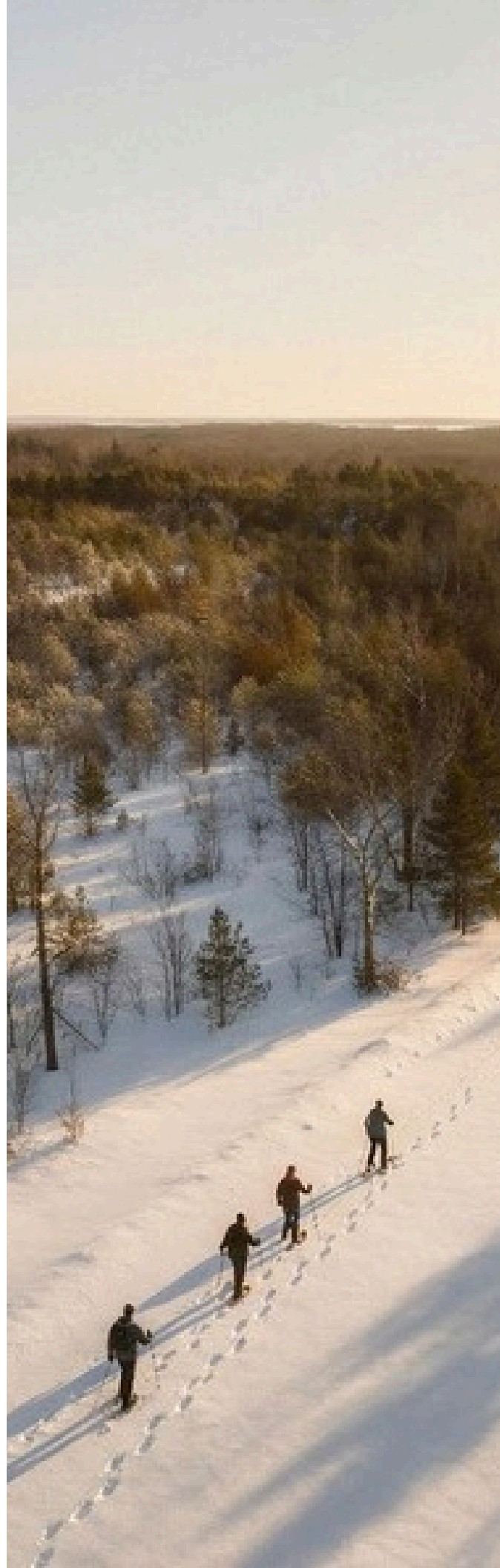
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Land Acknowledgement

Visit The County acknowledges that it is on traditional land that has been inhabited by the Anishnaabeg, Wendat, and Haudenosaunee Peoples and adjacent to the Kanien'keha:ka (Mohawk) community of Tyendinaga. We give thanks to all the generations of people who have taken care of this land for thousands of years.

We recognize and deeply appreciate Indigenous Peoples' historic connection to this land.

Today, Prince Edward County is still home to many First Nations and Metis people, and we are grateful to have an opportunity to meet here, work, travel, and continue stewardship on this land.





About

Visit The County is the official destination marketing and management organization for Prince Edward County. We promote The County as an attractive travel destination and enhance its public image as a dynamic place to visit, live, and work.

Mission

Visit The County's mission is to enrich the quality of life in Prince Edward County through responsible and sustainable destination management and marketing.

Vision

2030 we envision Prince Edward County as a world-class, year-round destination with a flourishing visitor economy that is embraced by all community stakeholders.

Letter from the Executive Director

Dear friends, partners, and neighbours,

Visit The County (VTC) is Prince Edward County's official destination marketing and management organization. Our mandate is to drive responsible tourism but this extends beyond promotion. Our goal is to enhance the experience of both visitors and residents, supporting local businesses and growing local prosperity. 2025 showed real progress against that mission.

FROM FOUNDATIONS TO GROWTH AND IMPACT

Founded in 2022, our first few years were focused on launching impactful destination marketing while building the strong foundation (governance, partnerships, and processes) that makes us a powerful tool for sustainable tourism. In 2025, we cemented our ability to deliver results by leaning into our strategic pillars:

1. Increase visitor revenues through more overnight stays, visitor spending, and shoulder season demand
2. Deliver visitor excellence to drive repeat visitation
3. Enrich the lives of residents through community and economic development

This report highlights how our strategic marketing is translating into real-world value for The County. You will see strong year-over-year growth across our digital platforms, but more importantly, you will see how we are using those channels to attract travellers who stay a little longer, explore beyond the busy summer months, and actively support our local businesses. By focusing on extending stays and boosting off-peak travel, we are striving to deliver outcomes that truly matter to our community: steady economic support for local businesses and a thriving, year-round visitor economy.

FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY

The Municipal Accommodation Tax serves as the primary funding source for Visit The County, and we treat that as a responsibility, not just a revenue line. In 2025, we worked to budget and found ways to do more with less, shifting our investment toward owned marketing channels rather than paid advertising, leaning into partnerships and earned media opportunities to drive visits. That decision helped us deliver results within our budget, and it reflects how we plan to keep operating: efficient by design, not by necessity.

As part of our commitment to strong financial stewardship, we have proactively built a robust reserve fund to insulate our operations from unpredictable external factors. We recognize that Municipal Accommodation Tax (MAT) revenues naturally fluctuate based on elements outside our control—such as unpredictable weather patterns, global events, or broader market shifts that impact pricing. By contributing an additional \$25,000 in 2025, our reserves now stand at \$170,000. This ensures VTC remains resilient, operating from a position of strength and long-term stability regardless of the economic landscape.

WHERE WE'RE GOING NEXT

This place and our people remain our biggest asset. One of my favourite parts of the job is meeting with hosts and business owners in our community to better understand their offerings, their pain points, and how it all connects to our tourism strategy. Our job is to ensure visits continue to increase in the shoulder season, that guests become repeat visitors who appreciate this place as much as we do, and those visits lead to tangible benefits for the entire community.

To deliver on that mandate, we continually look at ways to test and learn and improve. This year marked the end of the initial terms for some of our inaugural board members, who were instrumental in building our foundation. As they step down, we have increased our bench strength by welcoming new leadership with targeted experience in public relations and community engagement. We are also examining more ways to measure our results that go beyond marketing impressions and visitor counts, and include new ones that demonstrate how tourism is contributing to the County's broader economic development, plus inform which of our tactics are most effective in delivering that agenda.

Every step forward we took in 2025 was made possible by the passion and resilience of our local business owners, residents, and partners. We look forward to continuing to champion a sustainable, vibrant, and welcoming County as we move into the next exciting phase of our development as an organization.

Thank you for your continued partnership and collaboration.

Sarah Fox
Executive Director
Visit The County

“Visit The County has been an invaluable partner in helping us showcase Prince Edward County's vibrant wine region. Their ongoing support in marketing, promotion, and event collaboration has strengthened our reach and helped create memorable experiences for our visitors. Their commitment to promoting the region benefits our wineries and the entire tourism community.”

Sharon Vreugdenhil

Executive Director, PEC Wine

“The Picton BIA is grateful to count Visit The County as a valued community partner. Their support, including the grant funding provided to the Holiday Night Market over the past two years, has helped strengthen our marquee annual event. We deeply appreciate their commitment to fostering vibrant, welcoming experiences in Prince Edward County and look forward to continuing this meaningful partnership.”

Mark Rose

Executive Director, Picton BIA

"2026 marks the second year of our exciting partnership with Visit The County! Working together to leverage VTC's expertise, we can offer a welcoming human and tailored introduction to the county for visitors. This partnership also drives foot-traffic to our historic theatre, making it a win-win collaboration."

John Galway

Executive Director, The Regent Theatre

"The Prince Edward County Chamber of Commerce values our partnership with Visit The County and the shared commitment to strengthening our local economy. Together, we are building a more resilient, vibrant, economy through initiatives like the Four-Season Visitor Economy Partnership that supports local businesses and creates opportunities that benefit both residents and visitors."

Duarte Da Silva

CEO, Prince Edward County Chamber of Commerce

Staff

The Visit The County team brings expert Destination Marketing and Management skills, representing local partners to strategically grow tourism. Their goal is to boost the local economy while ensuring tourism remains sustainable and enriching for both visitors and residents.



Sarah Fox, Executive Director

Active in the region since 2018, Sarah served as Executive Director of The Picton BIA, where she led the revitalization of downtown Picton. She also held roles as Manager of Community Relations at Base31 and in Tourism and Economic Development at Hastings County. As a former Visit The County Board member, she brings a deep understanding of the organization and strong ties to community partners. She was appointed Executive Director in December 2024.



Lindsay Medeiros, Marketing Strategist

Lindsay brings extensive tourism expertise, having worked with RTO 9 (the regional tourism organization for South Eastern Ontario) and destination partners across South Eastern Ontario. She is passionate about developing strategic marketing initiatives, creating engaging content, and supporting tourism operators through collaboration and destination development.



Olivia Timm, Social + Content Strategist

Olivia Timm was born and raised in Picton and brings over a decade of experience in marketing, communications, journalism, and storytelling. Before joining Visit The County, she helped shape the marketing vision for Base31, one of Prince Edward County's leading cultural destinations. Passionate about authentic storytelling and community connection, Olivia creates engaging content that showcases the people, places, and experiences that make The County unique.



Our Organizational Values

AUTHENTICITY

We believe in sharing our destination with the world in an authentic manner, one that is true to the collective heritage, ambitions, and natural environment of Prince Edward County and its community.

INTEGRITY

We approach campaigns, collaborations, and communications from a place of integrity, informed by strategy, data, and industry expertise.

INCLUSIVITY

We are dedicated to shaping a Prince Edward County that is inclusive, equitable, and accessible to all, and we work to amplify tourism operators creating experiences that reflect this value.

SUSTAINABILITY

We understand deeply our responsibility to the natural environment of our region and prioritize sustainability when marketing the destination, working to attract visitors that share this value to ensure the long-term enjoyment of Prince Edward County for generations to come.

COLLABORATION

We believe collaboration is crucial to accomplishing our shared community goals and prioritize fostering close relationships with local and regional community and industry partners.

2025 Highlights

STRATEGIC GOAL: GROW TOURISM REVENUES

- More than 44,000 additional room nights booked in 2025 vs. 2024
- 21.1% more room nights booked in the 2025 shoulder season (64,705 vs. 53,444 in 2024 – January, February, March, October, November, and December).
- Municipal Accommodation Tax payable rose \$592,573, from \$1.29 million (2024) to \$1.88 million (2025)
- Visitor spending in overnight accommodations reached \$47.2 million, up from \$32.4 million in 2024

STRATEGIC GOAL: HOST VISITORS

- Total website visits up 10% to 654,206
- Page views up 14% to 1,334,698
- Outbound clicks to operator sites up 50% to 190,464
- 642 local businesses listed on the website
- 2,400+ photo and video assets available to media and operators
- Central Visitor Information Centre launched in partnership with The Regent Theatre, Picton BIA, and County Transit, open seven days a week in July and August

STRATEGIC GOAL: ENRICH THE LIVES OF RESIDENTS

- New Community section launched on the website, including a plain-language MAT explainer, open meeting records, and a resident feedback form
- \$26,750 in funding provided to 15 community events between November 2025 and March 2026
- Inclusivity training made a standing monthly practice for the team, with progress tracked in newsletters and on the website



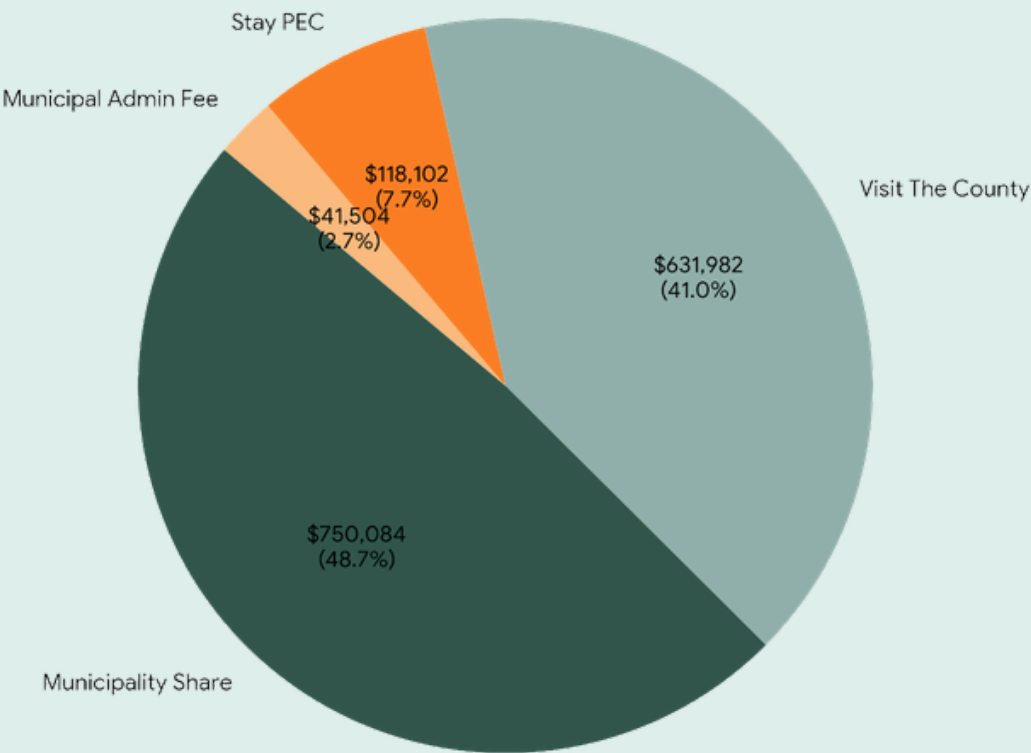
Visitation Results

Visit The County is funded through PEC’s Municipal Accommodation Tax (MAT) which is split between the municipality, StayPEC and VTC. In 2025, visitors contributed more than \$47M in overnight accommodations – an increase of almost \$15M from 2024. This resulted in \$1,5M in MAT collected on overnight lodging room nights. As a municipal services corporation, Visit The County is a not-for-profit organization with a key mandate to advance responsible tourism management, environmental sustainability, and regenerative tourism goals.

MUNICIPAL ACCOMMODATION TAX 2025



2025 Total MAT Revenue & Distribution
(Total Collected: \$1,541,672)



IMPACT

296,000
ROOM NIGHTS SOLD*

(*STA only, does not include
room nights for hotels)

80.7 Days
BOOKING LEAD TIME

845 Licences
PROCESSED FOR SHORT TERM
ACCOMMODATIONS

3.3 Days
AVERAGE STAY

(Source: AirDNA Tourism Insights)

Percent Increase in Room Nights Booked (2025 vs. 2024)

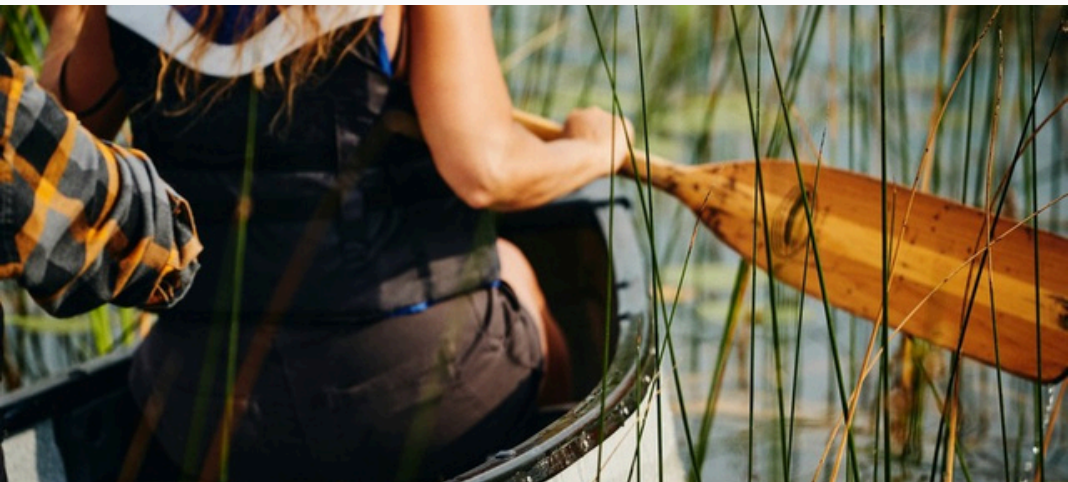
Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
+42.2%	+21.7%	+6.0%	+9.1%	+20.4%	+23.2%	+21.5%	+17.5%	+9.8%	+29.4%	+13.2%	+14.4%

*Air DNA updated its methodology in 2025 to improve the accuracy of its reporting. As a result, 2024 room-night figures were revised down to 249,809. The change reflects updated data capture only and provides better consistency for future year over year comparisons.



2025 Highlights

DIGITAL STORYTELLING



642
BUSINESSES LISTED
ON THE WEBSITE

2400+
PHOTO & VIDEO ASSETS
AVAILABLE TO MEDIA
& OPERATORS

WEBSITE PERFORMANCE

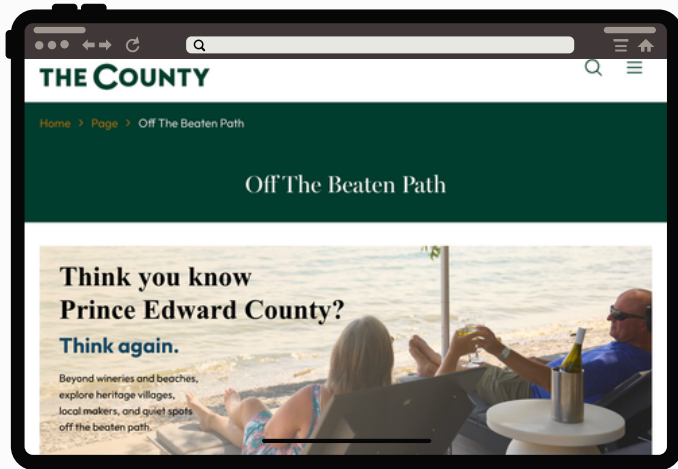
Metric	2025	2024	% Change (YoY)
Total Website Visits	654,206	587,545	+10%
Page Views	1,334,698	1,150,196	+14%
Outbound Clicks	190,464	94,402	+50%

SOCIAL MEDIA PERFORMANCE

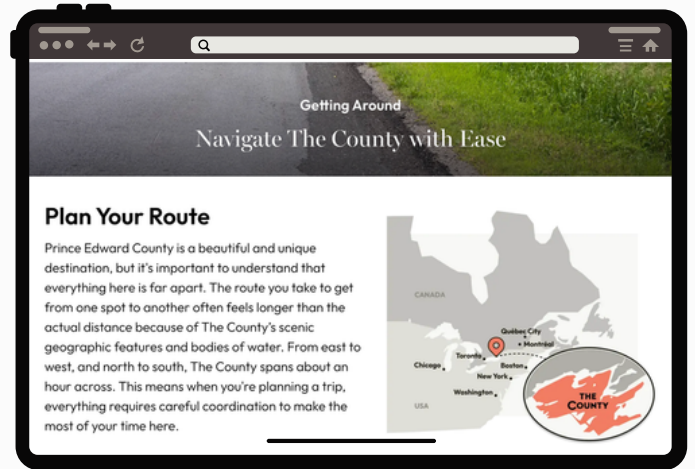
Metric	2025	2024	% Change (YoY)
Engagement	279,645	226,137	+19%
Total Followers	62,277	57,319	+4,958
Instagram Followers	47,678	43,423	+4,255

Website & Visitor Experience

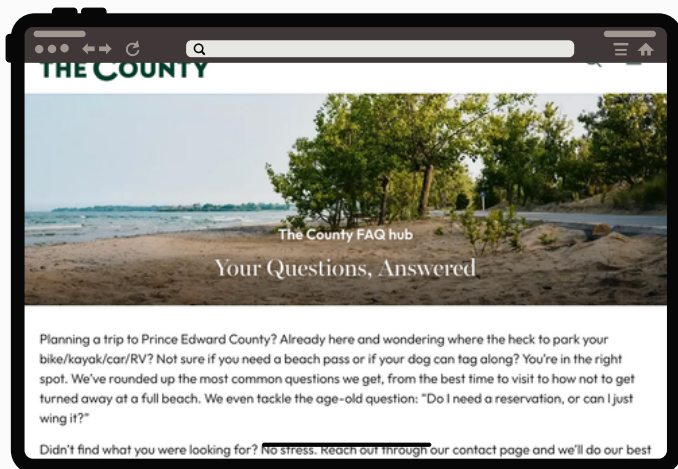
Throughout 2025, Visit The County expanded its digital visitor experience with new planning resources, seasonal guides, transportation information, FAQs, and curated itineraries and blogs, making trip planning easier than ever.



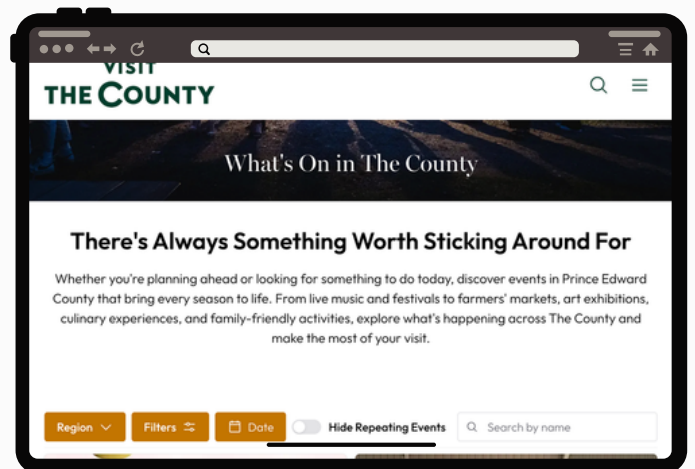
A dedicated hub inspiring visitors to explore unique experiences beyond the expected.



New transportation resources help visitors plan their trip, including driving, biking, and getting around The County.



New FAQs and insider tips help visitors plan like a local and make the most of their County experience.



A comprehensive, up-to-date calendar links to relevant landing pages and makes it easy for visitors to discover events year-round.

Campaigns

Visit The County delivered targeted campaigns throughout the year supporting seasonal travel, shoulder season visitation, and local operators through both paid and organic digital marketing.



WINTER WELLNESS

The Winter Wellness campaign showcased Prince Edward County as a premier winter escape through wellness experiences, cozy stays, and seasonal adventures in partnership with Destination Ontario. The campaign generated more than 27.4 million impressions, 177,000 ad clicks, 703,000 social impressions, and 97,000 video views, inspiring winter travel and supporting local tourism operators.



OFF THE BEATEN PATH

The Summer Off the Beaten Path campaign encouraged visitors to explore Prince Edward County through curated itineraries, trip-planning resources, and storytelling that promoted sustainable travel and local businesses. The campaign generated more than 356,000 social impressions, 136,000 video views, and 18,000 website visits, while a Destination Ontario partnership expanded its reach to an additional 710,000 impressions, inspiring visitors to discover experiences beyond the expected.



COUNTYLICIOUS

Countylicious celebrates Prince Edward County's culinary scene through seasonal prix fixe menus featuring local flavours and ingredients while encouraging shoulder-season visitation and supporting local businesses. In 2025, the Spring and Fall campaigns generated more than **756,000 digital impressions, 518,000 video views, 89,000 landing page views, and 114,000 menu views**, reinforcing Prince Edward County's reputation as one of Ontario's premier culinary destinations.



HOLIDAYS IN THE COUNTY

The Holiday in The County campaign showcased festive events, local makers, holiday shopping, and seasonal experiences to encourage shoulder-season visitation and support local businesses. The campaign generated **3,719 website visits, 5,455 page views, 727 outbound clicks to local businesses, and nearly 30,000 Google Map views**, helping position Prince Edward County as a festive winter destination.

MARKETING + COMMUNICATIONS

Brand Photography

Visit The County continued investing in photography and video storytelling that inspires visitors to explore beyond the expected, capturing the people, places, and experiences that make Prince Edward County a unique year-round destination.



**SEASONAL IMAGE
COLLECTION**



**WINTER
PHOTO
CONTEST**



**HOLIDAY PHOTO
AND VIDEO SHOOT**



**REEL ASSETS FROM
STORIED MARKETING +
BRANDING & BUZZING**

MARKETING + COMMUNICATIONS

Media Relations

Visit The County supports media coverage through story development, itinerary planning, local connections, interviews, and access to a library of more than 2,000 photo and video assets. The media coverage tracked throughout the year reflects a combination of Visit The County-supported stories, independently produced journalism, and operator-led paid media that collectively help keep Prince Edward County top of mind for potential visitors.

HIGHLIGHTS

\$7.9 MILLION
MEDIA VALUE

246 PIECES
EARNED MEDIA ARTICLES

3.8 MILLION
ESTIMATED VIEWS OF PUBLISHED ARTICLES



The New York Times

NEW YORK POST

Forbes

**TRAVEL+
LEISURE**

**Condé Nast
Traveler**

Paid Media

Visit The County extended the reach of local tourism experiences through strategic media partnerships and targeted marketing initiatives. Highlights included a featured segment on Global News Local Escapes, editorial and print content through Ontario By Bike, Meta advertising support for Community Partnership Fund recipients and destination campaigns, and local media partnerships that helped amplify Countylicious and seasonal tourism initiatives.



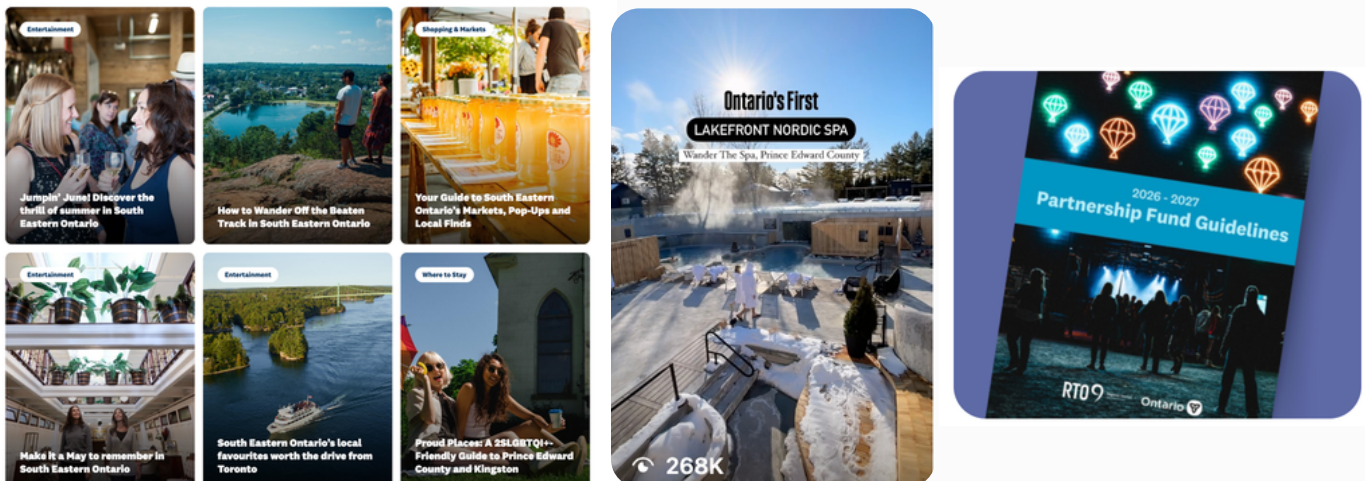
Tourism Partners

DESTINATION ONTARIO

Visit The County continued its strong partnership with Destination Ontario throughout 2025, collaborating on strategic marketing initiatives that elevated Prince Edward County to audiences across Ontario. Key collaborations included the Off the Beaten Path domestic marketing campaign, a co-funded Winter Wellness campaign, and support for the Global News Local Escapes feature, showcasing the region's unique experiences to inspire year-round visitation.



Through RTO 9, we collaborated on regional storytelling, industry programs, and content creation that support operators and inspire travel across South Eastern Ontario.



Industry Collaboration

Throughout 2025, Visit The County strengthened relationships with tourism operators through ongoing communications, educational resources, partnership marketing, and collaborative campaigns designed to support sustainable tourism growth across Prince Edward County.



INDUSTRY NEWSLETTERS — 3X MONTHLY

Sharing DMMO updates, tourism insights, funding opportunities, and more.



COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP FUND SUPPORT

Creating Meta campaigns for recipients to extend reach and drive visitation.



COMMUNITY HUB LAUNCH

A new online hub designed to improve transparency and community engagement by providing residents with information on tourism in Prince Edward County.



VISITOR SENTIMENT RESEARCH PILOT

The Voice of the Customer Pilot Survey launched in Fall 2025 to better understand visitor experiences and support data-driven tourism planning and decision-making.



SEASON LAUNCH WEBINAR

Engaging industry at the start of the summer season with insights and marketing updates.



2025 Highlights

PARTNERSHIP FUND RECIPIENTS

- Slake Snake Hill Climb
- Cabaret the Musical: At the Cape
- The Firelight Lantern Festival
- The Maker's Hand
- Wassail
- Comedy Country @ The CAPE
- Stone Soup / Harvest Market
- Picton Night Market - Holiday Edition
- SWANA PEC Arts & Culture Festival
- BIGLAKE Series and Events: The Canadian Children's Opera Company
- Family Day Weekend Festival at The Regent Theatre
- Built Heritage Speaker Series at The Prince Edward County Public Library
- Elevage Winter Wine Festival
- Alchemy Winterlude 2026

\$26,750
TOTAL AWARDED

15 LOCAL
COMMUNITY EVENTS

Nov 1, 2025 to
March 31, 2026



Consolidated Statement of Operations

YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2025

Revenues	2024 (Audited)	2025 (Audited)
MAT Revenue	623,822	522,749
Partnership Revenue	34,350	12,500
Programs	13,300	5,200
Interest	2510	62
	673,982	540,511

Note: MAT revenue fluctuates from year to year due to factors such as delayed or incomplete stay reporting and the use of prior-year visit data to establish annual allocations. Accordingly, the reduction in 2025 revenue reflects the decline in stays the County experienced in 2024. Increased stays recorded in 2025 have supported a recovery in revenue for 2026.

Expenses		
Advertising	409,263	255,361
Amortization of Tangible Capital Assets	19,300	19,299
Consulting Fees	19,130	35,910
Insurance	2,896	3,002
Office and General	21,621	14,813
Training	6,870	7,741
Wages and Benefits	251,381	217,028
	730,461	553,154
Annual Surplus (deficit)	(56,479)	(12,643)
Accumulated Surplus, beginning of period	312,825	256,346
Accumulated Surplus, end of period	256,346	243,703

Note: VTC's focus on owned channel strategies and away from paid advertising in 2025 drove an on-budget performance in 2025, despite the year's revenue realities.

2025 Board of Directors



Mikki Arends
Chair



Christal Agostino
Vice-Chair



Geoff Burman
Treasurer



Micheline Kuepfer
Secretary



Rebecca Mackenzie
Past Chair



Charles McKee
Director



Sherry Karlo
Director



Janna Smith
Director



Karen Orme
Director



Sam Grosso
Director
PEC Councillor



Chase Ogwari Brant
Director
Mohawks of the BoQ

2026 Board of Directors



Christal Agostino
Chair



Micheline Kuepfer
Vice-Chair



Shelagh Paul
Treasurer



Janna Smith
Secretary



Karen Orme
Director



Tara Wood
Director



Carson Arthur
Director



Courtney Khimji
Director



Samantha Valdivia
Director



Sam Grosso
Director
PEC Councillor



Chase Ogwari Brant
Director
Mohawks of the BoQ

A huge thank you to Mikki Arends, Geoff Burman, Rebecca MacKenzie, Charlie McKee, and Sherry Karlo for their incredible leadership and the legacy they've left our organization and new board members with.

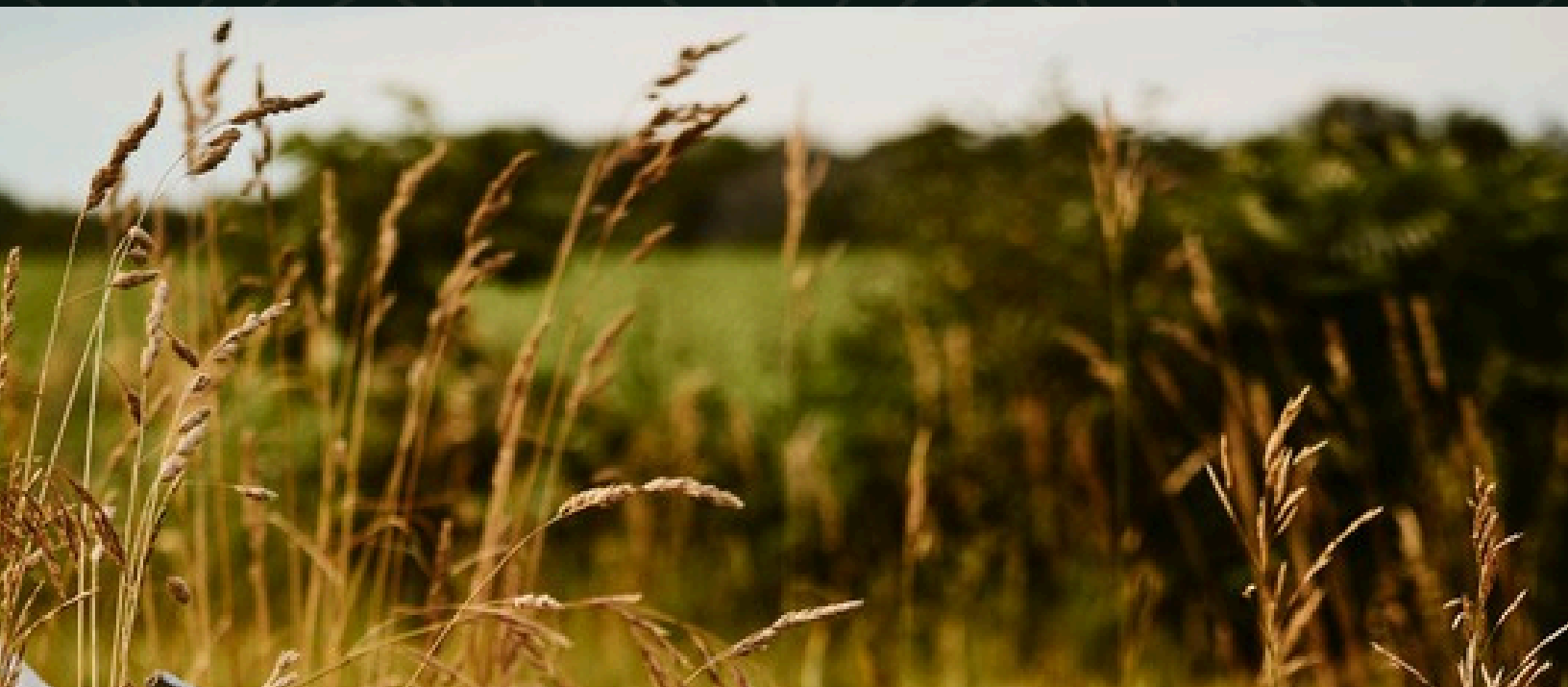
We welcome five new members this year: Shelagh Paul, Tara Wood, Carson Arthur, Courtney Khimji and Samantha Valdivia.



Be Part of What's Next for Tourism

**Request a copy of the
VTC 2026 Strategic Plan**

**Tell us your tourism
marketing re-investment idea at
hello@visitthecounty.com**



VISIT
THE COUNTY

PRINCE EDWARD COUNTY
ONTARIO CANADA