



THINKING BIG.

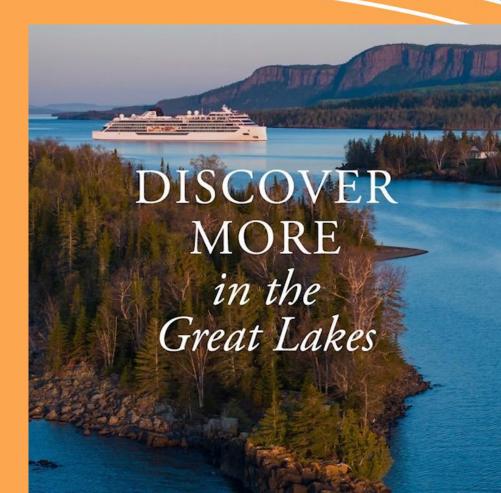
CRUISE PORT THUNDER BAY

Explorers' Edge Regional Tourism Summit November 6, 2024





"LAKE SUPERIOR IS AS EXOTIC AS ANYWHERE ELSE ON EARTH."





WHY CRUISING IS IMPORTANT

- It brings significant global media attention
- It attracts affluent, educated, influential and curious travellers to the community.
- It helps the community showcase existing experiences and develop new visitor experiences.
- Builds community pride of place





CRUISE SHIPPING IS A LONG GAME

2009 - Pool 6 Cruise Terminal opened

- 2009 2011 22 vessel visits
- \$250 000 in capital upgrades "lipstick on the pig."
- 2021-2024 39 vessel visits
 \$3 million in capital upgrades
- Introduced the "Cruise Port Thunder Bay" brand





COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS ARE CRITICAL

- It all starts with the cruise lines They go where their customers will pay for the experience
- Public, private and not for profit sectors working together is essential and achievable.
- Define roles and communicate among partners.
- The media is a partner too.







MUNICIPAL AND REGIONAL LEADERSHIP

Elected, administrative and business champions are critical to success.

- Engage them early on
- Communicate progress regularly
- Critical advocates for provincial and federal funding supports and regulatory change
- Support the seed capital required to develop

The cruise industry notices strong municipal support and leadership in their ports of call.





THINK OUTSIDE YOUR COMMUNITY

Engage in local, regional and even international partnerships to achieve success.

- Tourism Organizations including RTOs
- Indigenous communities
- Rural communities
- Cruise Advocacy Organizations
 - Great Lakes Cruise Association
 - St Lawrence Seaway Development Corporation (US)
 - Cruise the Great Lakes





CELEBRATING SUCCESS

- Generated \$15 million in economic impact (2022-2024)
- Chamber of Commerce "Gamechanger Award"
- One of five global "Ports on the Rise" in Cruise and Ferry Magazine
- Welcomed thirteen cruise media and twelve cruise travel trade representatives





THE RIGHT TOOLS FOR SUCCESS

The **Municipal Accommodation Tax** is the most powerful tool available for local tourism development

- Provides top up funding to leverage municipal, federal and provincial capital funding.
- Powers global cruise marketing and communications programs, partnerships and visitor shore experience development.
- Supports capacity growth with cruise partners.





LESSONS LEARNED

- Make data driven decisions
- Develop a cruise focused identity and invest in marketing tools
- Be creative in shore excursion development
- Be customer focused passengers AND crew
- Be persistent
- Be nimble to change
- Communicate progress, success AND challenges
- Manage community expectations







THANK YOU!

visitthunderbay.com/cruiseships

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