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THINKING BIG.

# CRUISE PORT THUNDER BAY

Explorers' Edge Regional Tourism Summit  
November 6, 2024





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**THUNDER BAY**.COM

**“LAKE SUPERIOR IS AS  
EXOTIC AS ANYWHERE  
ELSE ON EARTH.”**



**DISCOVER  
MORE**  
*in the  
Great Lakes*



# 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





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**THANK YOU!**

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