



## Ontario Restaurant Hotel & Motel Association Board of Director's Meeting

Tuesday, June 7th, 2011

Hazel McCallion A&B, Delta Meadowvale Resort and Conference Centre

*Thank you David. On behalf of Premier McGuinty and the Government of Ontario, it is a pleasure to participate in the Ontario Restaurant Hotel and Motel Association's Annual General Meeting. This is an important opportunity to recognize the many contributions ORHMA has made to support the success of Ontario's tourism sector. Your dedication and commitment help ensure Ontario's place as a preferred destination for guests from around the world. Your ideas, your insight and your innovation help the industry move forward. And for that, I thank you.*

*Ladies and Gentlemen, today we have a moment to reflect on the accomplishments of Ontario's tourism industry. Today we have a chance to study the innovative approaches we've taken. Today we have an opportunity to visualize our path ahead as we move forward, together and I can tell you – it truly has been a journey! Ontario is a diverse and dynamic destination offering unique experiences that can satisfy any traveller. Visitors come to do business, to catch sports games, to shop at our world-class boutiques, to visit our internationally acclaimed cultural attraction, or to experience our exciting festivals and events. But it is our reputation as a host – our hospitality and our services that keep them coming back time and time again.*

*From our world renowned wineries in the south, to the great forests and lakes under our beautiful northern skies, Ontario has what it takes! But in order to stay ahead of the curve we must think creatively. We must continue to build on our successes. That is why our government has been a proud partner of our tourism sector. We have worked in concert with industry stakeholders and leaders like ORHMA to ensure a cooperative approach to tourism across the province, taking decisive steps to accomplish key priorities set out in the 2009 Competitiveness Study, including the establishment of 13 new industry-led tourism regions that span the province, and ensuring that regional tourism partners benefit from a coordinated and collaborative strategy that maximizes resources, encourages greater strategic planning and investment, and stronger marketing with better reach.*

*Our government's investment of \$188 million dollars from 2010-2013 and an additional \$40 million in on-going annual funding will help build capacity and a more competitive tourism industry across Ontario. What's more, we are revitalizing marquee attractions like the Art Gallery of Ontario, the Royal Ontario Museum and Fort Henry and Upper Canada Village. We are promoting the Ontario brand through our support of the Ontario Tourism and Marketing Partnership Program. We are investing in key projects that attract tourism dollars and help grow the industry through the Tourism Development Fund. We are attracting diverse audience with one-of-a-kind festivals and events through our increased funding to Celebrate Ontario to an impressive \$20 million, guaranteeing that Ontario is host to internationally anticipated events like the International Indian Film Academy Awards this summer, the 2012 Grey Cup, World Pride in 2014, and the Pan-Am Games in 2015. And we are actively exploring new partnerships with emerging markets like India, Korea and Brazil. It is no secret that the international tourism business – is big business. Today global tourism is a trillion dollar industry, and the worldwide travelling population is expected to double – to 1.6 billion in 10 years. Ontario must take action to make sure we share in that growth. Since 2003, the McGuinty government has actively engaged the world through trade missions in emerging markets like: India, China, Dubai and Israel to name a few. I personally had the pleasure of accompanying the Premier to China where Approved Destination Status was achieved.*

*We, as a government, will continue to explore new partnerships with emerging markets for Ontario. And we are committed to positive partnerships, cooperating with our Federal, Provincial and Territorial colleagues to discuss ways in which Ontario can keep competitive, exchanging information and ideas on the Global Tourism Environment, International Markets, Industry Perspective on Market Trends, and Market Development Priorities. And advocating for proactive policies that will leverage funds for important markets like our US visitors, relax VISA requirements from key markets such as Mexico and improve air access from emerging markets.*

*These are all critical to Ontario's, and Canada's success, because tourism is truly an important pillar in our economy. It is an industry that contributes \$22 billion dollars to our GDP, an industry that generates over 300,000 jobs for Ontarians in communities across the province, an industry that is helping Ontario's economy move forward and turn the corner. Despite the challenges that we have faced during the 2008 economic crisis... a high Canadian dollar, soaring gas prices, and fierce international competition... recent estimates demonstrate that visits by Ontario residents increased by 2 percent, visits from overseas tourists increased by 5 percent, and visits from other Canadian provinces grew by an impressive 26 percent. We, as a government, are committed to growing this important industry, we are determined to ensure Ontario's place on the map as an international travel destination, and we are dedicated to working with important partners like ORHMA. Thank you for your efforts in ensuring that Ontario is not only a place to discover – but experience. Because there truly is No Place Like This!*