

# **Premier Ranked Tourist Destination Report**

**For**

**Prince Edward County**

**September 14, 2005**

Prepared by:

**BRAIN TRUST**  
MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS

## Table of Contents

Acknowledgements .....	3
Introduction .....	4
What is the Premier Ranked Tourist Destination Process (PRTD)? .....	4
Why Prince Edward County? .....	5
Project Process .....	5
Prince Edward County PRODUCT Evaluation: Rating <input checked="" type="radio"/> .....	8
Prince Edward County PERFORMANCE Evaluation: Rating <input type="radio"/> .....	12
Prince Edward County FUTURITY Evaluation: Rating <input type="radio"/> .....	15
Starting From a Position of Strength .....	18
Summary of Areas Where Improvement Is Required .....	19
Current Tourism Initiatives Underway in PEC.....	20
Conclusions .....	20
Recommendations.....	21
Action Steps .....	22
APPENDICES.....	23

## **Acknowledgements**

### **Prepared For:**

**The Corporation of the County of Prince Edward**

332 Main Street, Drawer 1550

Picton, Ontario

K0K 2T0

### **Prepared By:**

Christine Renaud, Project Coordinator

Candice Ens, Researcher

Troy Talbot, Researcher

Susan Gifford, Administrative Assistant

### **With The Assistance Of:**

Beverly Cameron, Ontario Ministry of Tourism

Paul Samson, Ontario Ministry of Tourism

### **Advisory Team Representation:**

Dan Taylor, the Corporation of the County of Prince Edward

Lawrie Ackerman, Prince Edward County Chamber of Tourism & Commerce

Aggie Bortolussi, Sandbanks Provincial Park

Carol Rutter, Picton BIA

Barry Turpin, Bloomfield BIA

Dean Munroe, Wellington & District Business Association

Caroline Granger, Prince Edward County Wine Growers Association

Elizabeth Hunter, Manager, Prince Edward County Museums

Rick Caruso, President, Prince Edward County Accommodation Association

Rob Johnson, Treasurer, Regent Theatre Board of Directors

Nancy Johnson, Chair, Prince Edward County Arts Council

Grace Nyman, Executive Director, Taste the County

## **Introduction**

### ***What is the Premier Ranked Tourist Destination Process (PRTD)?***

The Premier Ranked Tourist Destination (PRTD) was developed by the Ontario Ministry of Tourism & Recreation (MTR) to provide a framework for tourism destinations across Ontario to define their competitive position within the tourism marketplace on domestic and international levels.

**“Premier ranked is defined as:  
“A place more attractive than the rest, a place the tourist  
should consider first when making travel plans.”**

MTR developed a resource audit and workbook format that outlines the attributes/factors/conditions that are considered prerequisites for a tourist destination to be considered a serious destination. The workbook format provides a simple methodology that communities can follow to ensure consistency, accuracy, and maximum involvement of the key tourism and economic development stakeholders in the process. The workbook emphasis is on enabling any tourist destination of any scale to operate at the highest possible level it can achieve – not necessarily in competition with other operators, but in a complementary context within that particular destination.

There are three specific dimensions of tourism assessment included in the study:

#### **1) The Product Dimension**

A Tourist Destination provides a high quality tourist experience, enabled through the destination’s offerings of:

- Distinctive Core Attractions
- Quality and Critical Mass
- Satisfaction and Value
- Accessibility
- An Accommodations Base

#### **2) The Performance Dimension**

The quality of the tourist experience and the destination’s success in providing it is validated by:

- Visitation
- Occupancy and Yield
- Critical Acclaim

### **3) The Futurity Dimension**

The ability for a destination to thrive from tourism into the future is sustained by:

- Destination Marketing
- Product Renewal
- Managing within Carrying Capacities

The process involves several critical steps along with a serious commitment and investment of time by the industry partners involved. Intended for use by tourism stakeholders in a destination area, the framework defines a self-contained analytical process. This investment of time and energy is rewarded by the industry insights and directions gained. At its conclusion, partners will have a database of critical baseline data, a very clear picture of the destination's status, the strengths and weaknesses and gaps constraining that status, and the directions that might be pursued to further improve tourism industry success.

The additional benefit of this methodology is the expanded and more capable network of industry stakeholders it involves, who, by working through this process, will have a more cohesive focus on solving ongoing and future challenges.

### ***Why Prince Edward County?***

PEC is in the midst of significant change as it relates to tourism as an economic engine in the region. Industry leaders as well as the regional economic development authority recognized the need to gain an accurate and realistic perspective on this change and begin to understand the implications as it relates to the future. Tourism is one of four pillars in the PEC Economic Strategy and for this reason the PRTD became a perfect tool to determine a number of key factors for tourism development and growth within PEC. The industry and the political leaders in PEC have embraced the process and are anxious to learn of the outcomes and recommendations from the PRTD process.

### ***Project Process***

Following the lead of the Economic Development Department at the Corporation of the County of Prince Edward an Advisory Team was struck in November 2003 for the purpose of implementing the PRTD process in Prince Edward County (PEC). The Advisory Team was made up of senior representatives of PEC's tourism industry and included individuals from the following organizations:

- Business Improvement Areas in Picton, Bloomfield & Wellington
- Corporation of the County of Prince Edward
- Prince Edward County Chamber of Tourism & Commerce
- Prince Edward County Wine Growers Association
- Prince Edward County Museums
- Prince Edward County Accommodation Association
- Prince Edward County Arts Council
- Regent Theatre Board of Directors
- Sandbanks Provincial Park
- Taste the County (DMO)

The Advisory Team was briefed on the PRTD process by a Ministry of Tourism representative. The process was explained in detail including relevant background, upside possibilities and opportunities as well as the potential challenges and barriers that could be encountered. The Advisory Team, after consideration endorsed that the process and agreed it would be beneficial to PEC and therefore work began immediately.

Four individuals were employed through HRSDC in November, 2004 and they constituted the Audit Team. The role of the Audit Team was to conduct field research through a comprehensive survey process. Field work began in December 2004 and continued through the spring of 2005. The Audit Team provided ongoing updates to the Advisory Team and meetings were held in March and again in early July 2005 where preliminary survey findings were presented and various aspects of the findings were discussed. Further direction was given to HRSDC staff during these meetings in order that outstanding issues could be addressed prior to preparation of the final PRTD report. Field work concluded late in July 2005 and a consultant experienced in the PRTD process was retained to work with the Advisory Team in preparing the final PEC PRTD Report.

A four stepped PRTD process was used as illustrated below:

#### **Step One: Data Base Design and Collection**

- A database of 733 tourism businesses was created, after analysis many were dropped through duplication or businesses not qualified as tourism organizations
- 430 questionnaires were delivered to companies representing the accommodation, food and beverage, attraction, heritage and cultural, wineries, campgrounds & parks, marinas, golf, transportation, retail, and outdoor adventure sectors,
- 337 surveys were completed representing a 73% completion rate, they were either completed and returned by mail or completed in person or by the telephone
- Data was accumulated, entered, clarified, and analyzed and evaluated and used in completing the PRTD workbook including the Tourism Resource Opportunity Matrix

#### **Step Two: Evaluation of the Product, Performance and Futurity Dimensions**

- Each of 118 measures included in the PRTD Workbook were completed using the survey data
- Third party research was also utilized to supplement survey data

### **Step Three: Completing the Destination Performance Summary**

- An initial summary of findings was presented to the Advisory Committee for comment, clarification and suggestions
- Supplementary work was completed to fill in information gaps and supplement initial findings, some gaps were not filled due to lack of information, for example customer experience data
- Preparation of preliminary recommendations

### **Step Four: Draft and Final Report**

- Presented to internal stakeholders for feedback and revisions
- Presented to the Advisory Team for feedback, and suggested revisions
- Final Report printed and presented to all PEC tourism stakeholders

*Evaluation is the step to understanding the reality of PEC's tourism offering in very specific terms through a comprehensive Resource Audit. The audit includes understanding and measuring objectively PEC's Product, its Performance as a tourism destination and its Futurity in terms of how it plans to improve, enhance, and market its attractiveness as a tourism destination.*

Throughout this report symbols are used to indicate the performance rating of each section as determined by the participants in the process.

The symbols are as follows:

- *Yes, the affirmation can be made and supported for the destination*
- ◐ Almost - the affirmation can almost be made and supported – one to several key efforts / investments will enable affirmation
- *No, the affirmation cannot be made or supported for the destination*

## **Prince Edward County PRODUCT Evaluation: Rating D**

The **Product** components, criteria, and measures address the features that enable a destination to offer a high quality tourist experience enabled through the destination's offerings of:

- Distinctive Core Attractions
- Quality and Critical Mass
- Satisfaction and Value

The following product characteristics reveal Prince Edward County's product attributes:

### **Distinctive Core and Supporting Attractors**

This section assesses what it is about a destination that makes it stand out and distinctive, how the attractors are distinguished and how they are relevant to market wants. The evaluation process has identified PEC core and supporting attractors, their distinctiveness, and the nature and size of the visitor markets to which they are to be considered to be attractive.

**Core attractors** should meet at least two of the following criteria:

- Attract a significant number of visitors annually
- Have a physical or historical link to the destination
- Be a destination landmark

#### **Prince Edward County Core Attractors:**

**Beaches**  
**Wine & Culinary Experiences**  
**Outdoor Activities**

#### **Beaches**

With over 800 km. of shoreline, PEC boasts some of the most spectacular beaches in Ontario. Thousands of visitors travel to the area annually to experience the island atmosphere and lakefront location. Sandbanks Provincial Park attracted over 450,000 visitors in 2004 for a variety of reasons but most importantly its wide variety of beautiful beaches and sand dunes. Windsurfing, canoeing, sailing and boating compete with sunbathing and swimming as favourite park activities.

#### **Wine & Culinary Experiences**

PEC boasts a number of fine dining establishments including several top-rated restaurants. The area has attracted a number of award-winning chefs who have established some of the finest dining rooms in the province. PEC is also Ontario's newest wine region; the area now features twelve wineries (9 now open, 3 to open in 2006) producing some of the finest wines in Ontario. It is also creating a reputation for a wonderful variety of specialty food products like artisan / gourmet cheese.

#### **Outdoor Activities**

A significant number of high quality outdoor activities are available year round within PEC. They include a variety of hiking trails, countless birding opportunities, cycling

routes, and canoeing, kayaking, swimming and scuba diving locations. A significant number of camp sites and RV parks are available as well as numerous summer and winter fishing spots. All of these activities are easily accessible throughout PEC and many are provided free of charge.

***Supporting attractors*** are features and facilities that attract guests to a destination by giving additional reasons to travel there. Supporting attractors are generally supporting attractors to core attractors.

**Prince Edward County Supporting Attractors:**  
**Arts, Heritage, Cultural Experiences**  
**Festivals & Events**  
**Shopping**

The core and supporting attractors have significance on their own but also as part of a regional complex. These attractors are certainly linked to the physical setting of the destination, that being the natural island setting and coastal location. There are also significant historical links to the core and supporting attractors as evidenced by the rich agricultural heritage of the area and the ties to early Canadian life established as far back as the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

There does exist within reasonable proximity of PEC's feeder markets significant competitive product. The shorelines of Lake Erie, Lake Huron and Georgian Bay offer similar waterfront appeals and the Niagara wine region are well within driving distances of Southern Ontario population centres and in particular the greater Toronto area. However while PEC's core and supporting attractors are available in other areas of the province, the complete collection of experiences offered within PEC certainly provides a compelling travel proposition. The destination's product positioning statement; "A Beautiful Island Adventure", does captures the essence of the core and supporting attractors for PEC however may not articulate the uniqueness of the destination.

The tourism product available in PEC is relevant to visitors in Regional, Provincial, National / U.S. and International markets according to CTS/ITS data. In other words, a significant number of person trips are taken annually for the purpose of experiencing similar products as are available in PEC. For the most part PEC's core products have niche appeal as opposed to mass appeal which is not necessarily a negative. Unfortunately, the product experiences available in PEC do not have appeal on a year round basis; the vast majority of visitation takes place in the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> quarters of the year.

## Quality and Critical Mass

*This section addresses the extent to which a destination provides a memorable experience by offering a broad and deep range of options for engaging in core and related activities as well as entertainment, dining, and shopping. The evaluation process has assessed the size of PEC's activity and amenities base and the quality of its entertainment, dining and shopping offerings.*

PEC offers visitors a range of memorable core and supporting experiences sufficient to sustain interest for more than 24 hours; however, these are not available on a year-round basis. An issue facing the destination is that products are not easily accessed or purchased from outside the region. Accommodations can be pre-arranged and booked but attractions, tours and dining experiences usually need to be booked on-site. In terms of cost for the various attractors these are made available at a wide variety of price points. The range is from free to \$100 plus.

PEC offers visitors a range of activities encompassing a variety of activities. These include:

Relaxation	Entertainment	Interpretation	Education	Culture & History	Skills Development	Adventure
Hiking - \$0	Quarter Moon Café - \$0	McCauley Xmas - \$4	Maple Country \$0	Museums, Archives \$0 - \$40	Culinary Workshops \$80 - \$460	Shipwreck Diving \$400 \$800
Canoe Rental \$15 - \$30	Regent Theatre \$20 - \$30	Nature Tours \$0 - \$100	Bergeron Zoo \$10	Cemetery Tours \$0	Fishing \$80 - \$460	PE Bird Sanctuary \$0
Golf - \$50	Waring House Pub \$10				Arts Workshops \$80 - \$460	Boat Charters \$110

Source: PEC PRTD Audit Team

In terms of promotion the PRTD process could not affirm that this list of activities (above) was well promoted, easy to buy, or had multiple distribution points. It also appears that the destination makes no attempt to animate public spaces to generate interest or excitement in places visitors congregate.

While the destination offers a variety of cultural and entertainment experiences and features some well known performers and artists these are not viewed as being extensive or of having mass appeal. They are available however at a variety of price points and usually are associated with annual events. For example:

Jazz Festival	– Jeff Healey, Guido Basso - \$25
Art in the Country	– juried art show – free
Regent Theatre	– Second City - \$20 - \$30
33 Wines	– Jim Cuddy Band
Taste	– Regional Cuisine - \$25
Chamber Music Festival	– Cassatt String Quartet

When it comes to a variety of dining experiences the destination excels. PEC boasts a number of dining options that feature well known chefs, restaurants with extensive wine lists all available at a variety of price points.

In terms of retail shopping experiences, while PEC does not have a long list of recognizable retailers or malls, factory outlets or discount outlets, it does have a variety of medium to high-priced specialty stores, galleries, antique and artisan shops.

### **Satisfaction & Value**

*This section documents the extent to which PEC offers its guests a warm welcome, satisfies expectations, and offers value for money. The evaluation process has identified how guests and outside marketers view the region against these attributes. It also evaluates how PEC is investing in improving performance in these areas.*

The PRTD process has identified a significant gap in valuable customer satisfaction research. The destination does not have any current visitor experience data that can attest to guest experience in terms of hospitality, warm and friendly people, and value for money etc. This is cause for concern.

### **Accessibility Rating**

*This section assesses the ease of getting to and traveling within PEC, the transportation modes that serve it and the importance of transportation to the tourist experience. The evaluation process has identified how accessible PEC is and how well that accessibility is being managed.*

PEC is ideally situated and in close proximity to a major international gateway. Toronto is located less than 3 hours or 225 kms. and Ottawa 3.5 hours and 270 kms. The population base within a 3 hour drive is in excess of 7 million people (Toronto, Ottawa, and Montreal). The drive time to a U.S. border crossing is also less than 2 hours. PEC also has air access that is less than 1 hour from the regional airport in Kingston.

For visitors who travel by automobile or motorcoach the drive to PEC is achievable with minimal effort and discomfort as the route is made up largely of 4 lane highway (Hwy. 401) and regional roads (Hwy. 62, 49 and Loyalist Pkwy.). The destination suffers from a lack of alternate transport modes (other than personal vehicle). No scheduled bus, air, limo, boat service is available. Travel within the region is also limited and restricted to 1 or 2 small cab companies operating a very limited number of vehicles. There are 2 or 3 travel centres that operate or are open in high season.

### **Accommodation Base**

*This section assesses the breadth and depth of the PEC's offering in terms of the range of accommodation classes available, their location, and the presence of higher end operators. The evaluation characterizes the region's accommodation base.*

PEC offers visitors a variety of accommodation options at a variety of price points within close proximity of core and supporting attractors.

Type of Accommodation	Properties	# Of Rooms	Price Range
RV Park / Campground	30	3500	\$28 - \$35
Bed & Breakfast	73	211	\$50 - \$150
Lodge	4	33	\$100 - \$200
Resort / Hotel / Inn	7	174	\$50 - \$260
Motel – Independent	2	47	\$50 - \$100
Motel – Chain	-	-	-
Hotel – Independent	1	29	\$50 - \$150
Hotel – Chain	-	-	-
Cabins / Cottages	68	512	\$50 - \$150
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>185</b>	<b>4506</b>	

Source: PEC PRTD Audit Team

Although there are no chain motels or hotels within PEC, several name brand chains are located within minutes of the PEC border in Trenton and Belleville.

## **Prince Edward County PERFORMANCE Evaluation: Rating ○**

*The **Performance** measures identify the extent to which PEC is successful and recognized in the marketplace. By comparing PEC's performance attributes in terms of hard data conclusions can be determined as to its actual performance against its primary competitors and in a competitive marketplace context. Visitation statistics, accommodation occupancy levels, and critical acclaim are all industry standards to measure performance.*

*The quality of the tourist experience and the destination's success in providing it is validated by:*

- *Visitation*
- *Occupancy and Yield*
- *Critical Acclaim*

### **Visitation**

*This section assesses PEC's market performance in terms of visitation numbers and market share, attractiveness to different market segments, and different times of the year. The following Statistics Canada CTS/ITS 2002 and 2003 Travel Survey Data information break down visitation numbers and purposes:*

**NOTE:** The following visitor statistics have been obtained from the Ontario Ministry of Tourism using Canada and International Travel Survey data. Some generalizations have been made to identify performance for Prince Edward County. While the numbers are reliable, certain assumptions have been made.

<b>2003 PEC Visitor Statistics</b>					
	<b>Total</b>	<b>Other Canada</b>	<b>Ontario</b>	<b>U.S.</b>	<b>International</b>
<b>Person Trips</b>	404,995	22,168	349,342	28,139	38,831
<b>Same Day</b>	140,172	-	126,198	12,968	13,973
<b>Overnight</b>	264,823	22,168	223,143	15,171	23,853
<b>Pleasure</b>	252,701	20,189	213,544	16,039	21,877
<b>VFR</b>	92,604	1,980	79,291	9,167	13,499
<b>Business</b>	2,705	-	-	2,444	2,965
<b>Other</b>	56,986	-	56,497	489	489

Source: CTS / ITS, Statistics Canada

PEC attracts most of its visitation from the domestic market and primarily from Ontario. 85% of overnight visits and 90% of day visits originate from Ontario. Few visitors originate from the U.S. or international markets placing PEC well below provincial averages for visitors from outside Ontario's borders. The percentage of visitors from any point of origin is negligible compared to the percentage of total trips to or within Ontario. Meetings & convention business to PEC is insignificant.

### **Occupancy & Yield**

*This section assesses PEC's market performance in terms of accommodation occupancy and guest expenditure levels. The evaluation compared occupancy and expenditure performance against industry and provincial averages.*

Although no formal hotel occupancy reporting is done within the region an informal survey by the Audit Team has revealed that occupancy averaged 43% in 2004. At 43% accommodation occupancy is well below the industry norm of 65%. As shown in the chart below occupancy is highest in Q3 and lowest in Q1.

#### **2003 Hotel Occupancy**

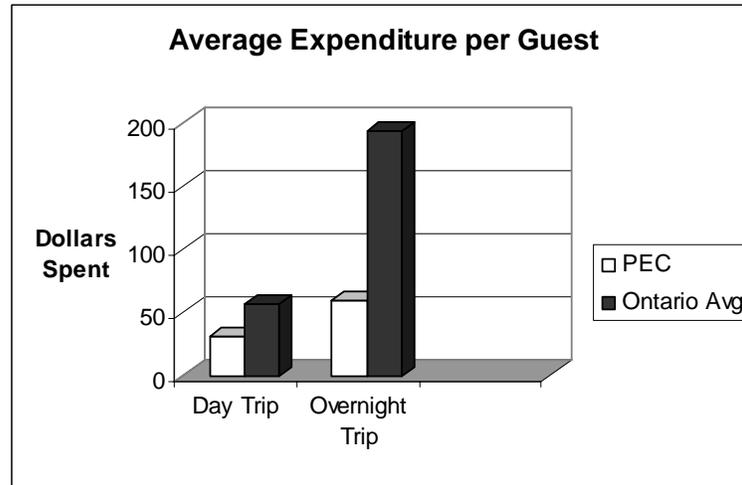
<b>QTR. 1</b>	<b>QTR. 2</b>	<b>QTR. 3</b>	<b>QTR. 4</b>	<b>Average</b>
26%	38%	75%	31%	42%

Source: PEC PRTD Audit Team

#### **2004 Hotel Occupancy Comparison**

<b>PEC</b>	<b>Other Niagara</b>	<b>Kingston</b>	<b>Hamilton/Brant</b>	<b>Windsor</b>
43%	46.3%	61%	60.1%	53.9%

Average per capita day trip expenditure for a guest is \$31.26 well below (55%) of the provincial average which is \$57.00. Overnight expenditures per guest are also below the provincial average. PEC average overnight expenditure was \$59.69 or 30% of the \$194.00 average for Ontario.



<b>2003 PEC Visitor Spending</b>	<b>\$44,697,381</b>
Public Transport	46,407
Vehicle Rental	206,617
Vehicle Operations	5,511,158
Local Transport	63,988
Accommodation	14,547,748
Food & Beverage (Total)	13,985,303
Food & Beverage at Stores	4,111,517
Food & Beverage at Restaurants/Bars	9,873,785
Recreation/Entertainment	3,813,567
Retail/Other (Total)	6,522,594
Clothing	3,552,761
Other Retail	2,969,832

Source: CTS / ITS, Statistics Canada

### Critical Acclaim

*This section addresses the extent to which PEC is recognized as a must-see destination, has a profile that contributes to the attractiveness of Ontario and Canada as a destination, and is a “top-ranked” place to visit. The evaluation identifies if PEC is recognized as standing out from its competitors.*

One could argue that PEC is a must-see destination given its unique personality and charm, its famous sandy beaches and dunes and its growing wine industry.

However, being totally objective, it is difficult to truly consider PEC a “must see / must do” destination for out of town guests when compared to other destinations in close proximity to PEC.

Within the markets PEC draws from, several other destinations exist that would rank higher on the list of must see locations. In a competitive set they include Niagara Falls, Niagara on the Lake, Niagara's wine route, Toronto, Wasaga Beach, Muskoka, and Ottawa to name but a few.

However, for some of its core attractors PEC does have critical acclaim. Sandbanks Provincial Park has accumulated a long list of accolades from national and international travel writers. The Ontario Tourism Marketing Partnership used the park and its renowned sand dunes in a recent television commercial. Canadian Geographic magazine has ranked Sandbank's dunes as the "world's largest fresh water sand dunes" and several of PEC's dining establishments and country inns have received glowing reviews from critics across the country.

## **Prince Edward County FUTURITY Evaluation: Rating ○**

***Futurity** identifies the extent to which PEC is investing in its future as a place with viable and continuing attractiveness to evolving markets. It includes the activities in place to raise awareness for the destination as well as the degree in which new investment in the form of capital dollars will be made to enhance its product offering. It also determines its capacity in a number of physical measures such as infrastructure.*

*The ability for a destination to thrive from tourism into the future is sustained by:*

- *Destination Marketing*
- *Product Renewal*
- *Managing within Carrying Capacities*

### **Destination Marketing Rating**

*This section identifies to what extent PEC targets viable markets, invests in managing and promoting its tourism marketplace, and consults with the travel trade serving PEC. The evaluation identifies if PEC is actively matching its product to the expectations of the tourism marketplace and is taking advantage of the knowledge of its travel trade customers.*

PEC's core and supporting attractions do have appeal and market demand. While difficult to prove, anecdotal evidence is available. For example, Sandbanks Provincial Park reaches capacity regularly throughout the summer months often turning visitors away at the gates. Several of PEC's inns, restaurants, and retailers have seen significant revenue growth and the increase in vehicular and pedestrian traffic is most noticeable in high tourist traffic areas. Combine this data with the increase in building and development of wineries, housing subdivisions, and other commercial buildings and the picture of a growing "in demand" tourism product is evident.

Within PEC there are several organizations involved in tourism. These include the County's Economic Development department, Prince Edward County Chamber of Tourism and Commerce, Taste the County, as well as several BIA's.

All play a role in the tourism industry, whether it is in the area of product development, research, marketing or visitor services. While it is safe to say the DMO is not adequately funded it does take advantage of a wide variety of co-op marketing opportunities and partnership programmes. The destination does not currently do any marketing or tracking research and therefore cannot measure the effectiveness of the marketing dollars it is spending.

PEC does have a tourism development and marketing strategy in place. Its focus however is aimed at growing the tourism business specifically in the shoulder seasons and does not take a holistic development or marketing approach. The effectiveness of the plan is not currently being monitored or tracked.

While customer service training is viewed as important, little or no area-wide initiatives are in place. Individual businesses may conduct some form of tourism hospitality or service training but it appears there is a gap of delivering consistent quality training. Without visitor survey data it is difficult to determine if hospitality and service performance is an issue or area of concern.

### **Product Renewal**

*This section identifies the extent to which PEC is making capital investments in its attractiveness into the future. The evaluation documents the status and magnitude of PEC's investment in the future.*

In the past five years significant dollars have been invested in facility renewal and / or expansion and development. 80% of this investment has occurred in the last two years. There appears to be an ongoing commitment from individuals to continually reinvest in programming and infrastructure.

<b><u>Location</u></b>	<b><u>Investment</u></b>
Waring House	\$900,000
Merland Park	\$500,000
Currah's Restaurant	\$265,000+++
Carmella's Winery	\$2,350,000
Sandbanks Provincial Park	\$225,000
The Grange	\$2,500,000
Huff Estates	\$7,000,000
Claramount Spa & Inn	\$NA

Source: PEC PRTD Audit Team

PEC recognizes the importance of reinvesting in underdeveloped or underperforming tourism assets and has identified them in the resource audit. While PEC understands more focus needs to be put on this area there are a number of redevelopment initiatives currently underway. They include enhancements being made to Huff Inn / Winery, the annual Birding Festival, and the Gilbert / Light Hall store. Other items have been identified for future enhancement and development; they include heritage and educational experiences, diving and exploring shipwrecks and development of a resort / conference hotel.

## **Managing Within Carrying Capacities**

*This section assesses the extent to which PEC is aware of, and manages within, its capacity thresholds specifically its local economy, ecosystems and soft services infrastructure, its guest's satisfaction levels, hard services infrastructure, and its administrative systems. The evaluation documents PEC's ability to manage the system that sustains it.*

Tourism has positive economic impact to PEC. Employment rates, especially in the summer are strong and there is a significant number of tourism businesses recently opened or in development. It appears the popularity of the area has also increased housing costs. Home prices have risen 19.4% since 2004 according to Quinte MLS. This could be considered a negative as high housing costs could impact the destination's ability to attract other business and a work force to populate developing businesses. There is no immediate plan in place to understand or resolve this increased demand on housing and rising housing costs. There are however, plans in place to develop low cost housing in Macaulay Village over the next 24 months

Generally speaking the labour pool in PEC is limited especially when it comes to the tourism and hospitality industry. Many operators complain that it is difficult to find qualified help. There is no plan in place to address this issue. However while there is no county wide initiative to address a shortage of skilled hospitality workers, several restaurant owners and chefs have opened a training school for food and beverage kitchen staff in order to alleviate labour shortages.

In terms of the carrying capacities of the natural systems that sustain local ecosystems there is no environmental monitoring programme in place which warns that the quality of the resource or visitor experience is at risk of being impaired. Water and sewage capacities are near capacity in Picton while other parts of PEC still have sufficient capacity. Growth in visitation is having environmental impact at Sandbanks Provincial Park especially in the summer and the threat of beach closures continues due to e-coli bacteria in the water.

High traffic tourist areas are receiving attention when it comes to road, transit, and parking issues. There is in place an Official Plan for Roads in PEC and the Picton Downtown Revitalization Plan is underway.

## **Starting From a Position of Strength**

PEC has a number of qualities and attributes to be proud of. The PRTD has identified that PEC is starting from a position of strength including:

- Significant critical acclaim and notoriety evidenced by the countless third party published articles and reviews
- A new and growing product experience in wineries that has appeal to a vast audience and is associated with a tourism experience
- An expanding culinary scene with many renowned chefs presenting memorable meals
- Sandbanks Provincial Park consistently and annually attracting a significant number of guests
- Individuals and organizations who continue to invest in new product development and infrastructure

## **Summary of Areas Where Improvement Is Required**

### **PRODUCT:**

- The accommodation offerings are limited with no “name brand” hotels available
- The destination experience is not known to be unique or memorable
- PEC culture and heritage product is underdeveloped and underperforming
- Core and supporting attractors are not widely promoted
- Core and supporting attractors are not easy to purchase
- Product offering is primarily available June to October
- No investment has been made in animating public spaces

### **PERFORMANCE:**

- Primary visitation is limited to the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> quarters
- It appears primary visitation involves day trips
- Destination does not carry out regular guest surveys to track customer satisfaction with value, service and hospitality
- Key experience, service, and prices are not monitored
- Lack of transportation links into and throughout the region; visitors’ dependent upon private automobiles to see full range of offerings
- Accommodation occupancy well below the provincial averages

### **FUTURITY:**

- No cohesive long term tourism development or marketing strategy is in place
- Destination marketing dollars are inadequate and unreliable
- The general awareness of the importance of tourism within PEC is low
- Destination or any of its core attractors do not rank “best in class” or “top tier”
- No destination progress tracking mechanism is in place
- No customer service training program is in place
- More investment required in developing and revitalizing underdeveloped and underperforming assets
- No plan in place to manage tourism carrying capacity within the region – labour market, housing prices, quality of life, natural systems

## **Current Tourism Initiatives Underway in PEC**

There does not appear to be any tourism specific initiatives currently underway in PEC; however some work has and is being done in the following areas:

- Wellington Marina Expansion Plan
- Other marina development (Picton)
- Regent Theatre Development Plan
- Chef's School Chamber of Tourism & Commerce Initiative
- Downtown Picton Action Plan

## **Conclusions**

The areas that require attention and improvement under the Product, Performance, and Futurity headings on the previous page have led to a number of conclusions; they can be summarized as follows:

1. Need to formalize the tourism industry leadership role within PEC
2. Need for a long term tourism development and marketing strategy that addresses the changing complexion of the tourism offering in PEC
3. Need for annual quantifiable research to monitor guest satisfaction levels
4. Need for ongoing hospitality training related to delivering excellent customer service
5. Need for improved public transportation options between communities and tourism attractors within the region
6. Need for consistent and ongoing investment in destination development and marketing
7. Need for resources and energy to be directed to underdeveloped tourism experiences especially within the not for profit culture and heritage sector
8. Accommodations sector should establish standards or best practice guidelines for all those in the accommodation sector
9. PEC has a growing reputation as a wine and culinary destination this could be further fostered through the expansion of the fledgling Chef's School
10. Need to understand and manage the impact that growth from tourism will have on infrastructure within PEC over the long term

## Recommendations

<b>Key Findings</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>Partner(s) Responsible</b>
<b>1</b> -Need to formalize the tourism industry leadership role within PEC	-Create a Tourism Advisory Group ASAP -Capitalize on the investment in time and energy made to date by the organizations involved in the leadership of the PRTD process and make these individuals the initial Advisory Group -Add new players as required	PRTD Advisory Group
<b>2</b> -Need for a long term tourism development and marketing strategy	-Initiate a process for the creation of a Long Term (3 Year) Tourism Development & Marketing Strategy for PEC -Strategy to be complete by March 31, 2006	PRTD Advisory Group  County of Prince Edward, Economic Development
<b>3</b> -Need for annual quantifiable research to monitor guest satisfaction levels	-Implement a "Guest Satisfaction" survey process ASAP	PRTD Advisory Group
<b>4</b> -Need for ongoing hospitality training	-Implement a tourism hospitality training programme for front line tourism workers in spring 2006 -Capitalize on existing service training modules that are in use	PRTD Advisory Group
<b>5</b> -Need for improved internal public transportation options	- Make internal transportation a key priority within the Long Term Tourism Development Strategy	Transportation Group
<b>6</b> -Need for consistent and ongoing investment in destination development and marketing	-Explore the possibility of instituting a Destination Marketing Fund (DMF) including collection options within the context of the Long Term Tourism Development Strategy and implement by spring 2006 -use best practices from other destinations	PEC Accommodations Association  PRTD Advisory Group
<b>7</b> -Need for resources and energy directed to underdeveloped tourism experiences	-Identify key culture and heritage product enhancements and identify potential public, private or non-profit funding opportunities by spring 2006 -Introduce a "Experience Development" training series for underdeveloped attractions - Introduce the Ministry of Tourism's "Tourism Inc" training programme to educate the industry on becoming "market ready"	PEC Museums  County of Prince Edward, Economic Development
<b>8</b> -Accommodations sector should establish standards and guidelines	-Establish a series of accommodator regulations and standards for roofed commercial accommodations within PEC and ensure these are followed through self regulation by spring 2006	PEC Accommodation Association
<b>9</b> -Foster the expansion and promotion of the Chef's School	-Support the Chef's School development within the Long Term Tourism Development Strategy -Continue to work with Loyalist College to formalize the Chef School	PRTD Advisory Group

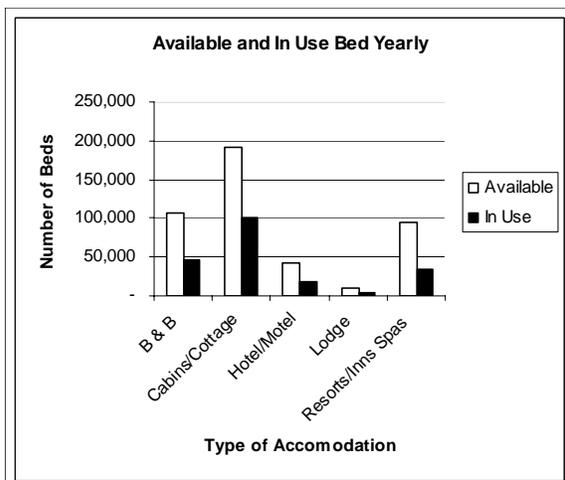
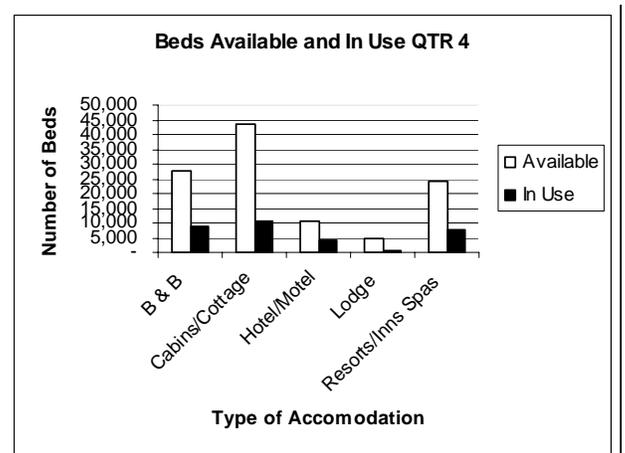
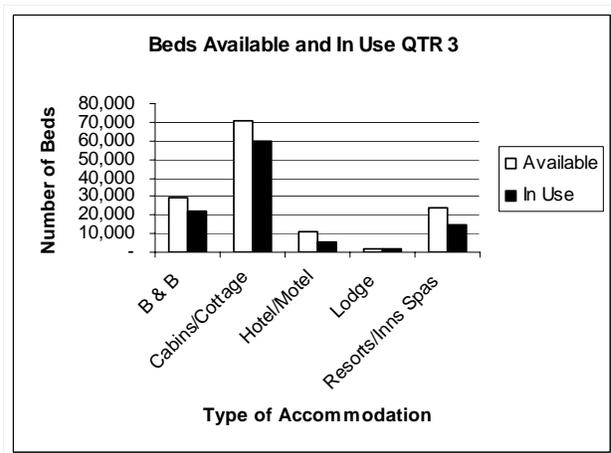
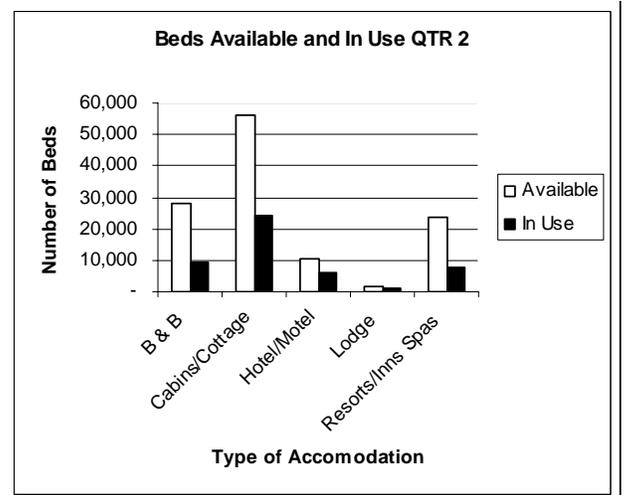
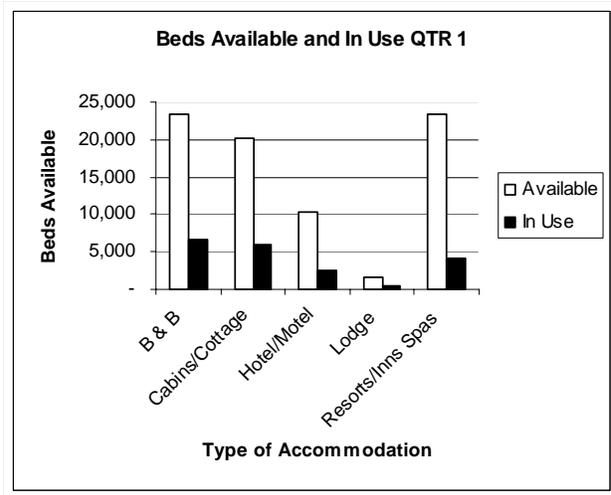
	-Use an enhanced Chef's School as reinforcement to the growing perception that PEC is a viable and attractive wine & culinary destination	
<b>10</b> -Need to understand and manage the impact the growth from tourism will have on infrastructure	- Initiate a Tourism Impact Planning Process among key municipalities by fall 2006	Municipal partners

## Action Steps

<b>Action Step</b>	<b>Timing</b>
1. Formalize the Tourism Advisory Group as the "Tourism Authority" in PEC	October 30
2. Identify the Terms of Reference for the creation of a Long Term Tourism Strategy and begin the work	November 15
3. Explore the possibility, outline a process for the introduction of a DMF	November 15
4. Complete SWOT analysis of the culture and heritage product in PEC	November 30
5. Establish an Accommodation Grading Task Team and develop guidelines and standards for roofed accommodation in PEC	January 31
6. Completion of the Long Term Tourism Strategy and presentation to tourism industry	March 31

# APPENDICES

## 1. 2004 Accommodation Performance Summary



<b>Occupancy 2004</b>	<b>26%</b>
<b>QTR 1</b>	
<b>QTR 2</b>	<b>38%</b>
<b>QTR 3</b>	<b>75%</b>
<b>QTR 4</b>	<b>31%</b>
<b>OVERALL</b>	<b>43%</b>

Source: PRTD Audit Team  
Based on survey results from 99 roofed accommodations located in PEC

## **2. List of 2005 Major Festival & Events**

March	Maple in the County - March 19 - 20
April	Rotary Wine Festival - April 23
May	Birding in the County – May 13 - 23 Kiwanis Fishing Weekend – May 7 - 8 Apple Blossom Festival – May 22 Highland Gathering – May 28 PEC Author's Festival – May 27 - 29
June	Ride to Remember June 4 - 5 (largest motorcycle gathering in eastern Ontario) Art in the County June 24 – July 17 41st Annual Antique Show – June 17 - 19 Joust in the County Fathers Day Weekend
July	Fiber fest Bloomfield Breakaway – July 15 - 17 PEC WI Art & Crafts (about 4,500 attendees – ½ from outside) July 28 Wellington Waterfront Festival
August	Jazz Festival – Aug 18- 21 Garlic Festival – Aug 21 Chamber Music Festival July and August – 3 last weekends in July and 1 <sup>st</sup> in August Renaissance Faire – Aug 20 - 21
September	Amazing Loyalist Adventure Sept 17 - 23 The Studio Tour – Sept 23 - 25 Picton Fair – Sept. 9- 10 PEC Classical Music Festival – Sept 21 - 23 Fall Harvest Festival - Sept - 24
October	TASTE! A Celebration of Regional Cuisine – Oct 8 Pumpkin Fest – Oct 15
November	The Makers Hand – Nov 5 - 6 Festival of Trees – Nov 25 - 27

Source: PRTD Audit Team