

DESTINATION CANADA ATTENDS FCM 2025 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

to empower communities to leverage
the positive impact of tourism.



At Destination Canada, we believe that destination development is most impactful when it's community-led and supported through meaningful collaboration. Our partnership with the Federation of Canadian Municipalities reflects a shared commitment to strengthening place-based economies, supporting community well-being, and advancing long-term community vitality through tourism. We're always looking to work with people, organizations, and communities who see tourism as a catalyst for positive change. If you're interested in collaborating, we invite you to connect with us and explore opportunities to support destination development across Canada.

GET IN TOUCH

INTRODUCTION

Destination Canada's sharing of the value of tourism including tools and resources was well received during the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) Annual Conference 2025, held in Ottawa, ON, from May 29 to June 1. This year, Destination Canada took centre stage, building on the momentum of a three-year collaborative partnership with FCM. The partnership is designed to foster a deeper understanding of the positive impacts of a well-managed visitor economy, while educating municipal leaders on tourism supports and ecosystems to ensure the visitor economy is intentional and planned across every community in Canada. FCM and Destination Canada are working to develop joint initiatives and programs that highlight the power of collective destination stewardship and development.

Along with ongoing year-round engagement via webinars, newsletters and smaller, focused municipal leadership gatherings, the annual meeting provides the invaluable opportunity for Destination Canada's destination development and research teams to engage directly with over 1,700 municipal leaders from across Canada.



As delegates entered the Rogers Centre main stage on the opening morning, they were greeted with Canadian flags on their seats and breathtaking, larger-than-life images from across Canada displayed on the big screen. This powerful visual welcome set the stage for Destination Canada's President and CEO, Marsha Walden, to deliver her opening remarks. Leaning into the delegates' open-hearted pride for Canada, Marsha's speech underscored the critical role of a thriving visitor economy in community resilience, economic recovery, and cultural vitality. Her remarks were widely quoted on social media and featured in conference coverage, reinforcing Destination Canada's leadership and commitment to supporting communities of all sizes.

Destination Canada's high-profile booth was a hub of activity, welcoming delegates to explore tourism opportunities tailored to their communities. Utilizing large-screen monitors and the expertise of research specialists, the booth showcased data and insights from the Canadian Tourism Data Collective. The team also took the opportunity to interview delegates on camera about the impact of the annual conference and the value of tourism for their communities. These interviews were featured in a dynamic wrap-up video, which was shown during the closing session—ensuring that Destination Canada and tourism left a lasting impression.





LAUNCH OF DESTINATION CANADA'S DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT TOOLKITS

A highlight of this year's conference was the launch of Destination Canada's Destination Development Toolkits. These resources, co-created with FCM, are designed to guide communities through the tourism destination development process. The tool kits provide practical tools, resources, and strategies for sustainable tourism growth, with a

particular focus on rural, remote, and northern communities. Their launch marks a significant milestone in the ongoing collaboration between Destination Canada and FCM, providing municipal leaders with the support needed to harness tourism as a driver of economic and social well-being.

PANEL DISCUSSION: ASK THE EXPERTS

Throughout the four-day event, Destination Canada ensured that tourism remained top of mind. The team hosted a popular “Ask the Experts” session, formally launching the tool kits and facilitating direct engagement between delegates and a panel of community tourism

champions. The interactive format allowed municipal leaders, tourism operators, and economic development professionals to discuss destination development, share best practices, and explore the value of having access to robust resources and data.





Mayor Maxime Bourgeois

Village of Memramcook, New Brunswick

Mayor Bourgeois actively promotes tourism through a blend of cultural, historical, and outdoor activities. Memramcook—often called the cradle of Acadia—is a vibrant, predominantly French-speaking community renowned for its Acadian heritage, natural environment, and welcoming spirit. Currently, the mayor and his team are focusing on agritourism development to attract more visitors and prosperity to Memramcook.



Daniel Wiltzen

Economic & Tourism Development Officer, Fort Smith, NWT

A proud member of the Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation, Daniel brings extensive experience in cultural tourism marketing and community development. Fort Smith, the gateway to Wood Buffalo National Park (Canada's largest national park and a UNESCO World Heritage Site), attracts visitors with its extraordinary whitewater paddling, abundant wildlife—including bison, pelicans, and endangered whooping cranes—and signature events like Paddlefest and the Dark Sky Festival. Daniel emphasized the emotional power of community-centered tourism, which celebrates local culture and brings significant benefits to residents.



Jessie Olsen

Director of Economic and Community Development, District of Tumbler Ridge, BC

Jessie Olsen has forged strong relationships with the UNESCO Global Geopark, local cultural attractions, and the Outdoor Recreation Association, while working closely with regional destination management and marketing organizations. Her efforts not only attract visitors but also enhance the wealth and well-being of local residents, ensuring tourism development benefits the entire community.



MAINTAINING THE MOMENTUM

The response to Destination Canada's presence at FCM 2025 was overwhelmingly positive. The number of visitors to the Destination Canada booth doubled year over year, there were over 1,300 new views of the Destination Development knowledge hub and 500 downloads of the tool kits during the conference. The Destination Development team is now following up with FCM members who requested ongoing support for their tourism development journeys. We are now working with FCM to ensure broad distribution of the toolkit via their website, social and communications channels.

It is an exciting time as municipal leaders increasingly recognize the value of tourism in supporting their economic growth plans, while celebrating the pride in Canada, Canadian culture, and uniquely Canadian experiences that was felt throughout the annual conference. Destination Canada will be there to support municipalities along this journey with tools and resources to ensure they maximize the visitor economy for the wealth and wellbeing of their residents.