



Keeping Inn Touch

Newsletter of the Innkeepers Guild - www.innkeeperguild.com

August . 2009

70 Years of Professional Innkeepers and Quality Properties



Editorial

Partners or Competitors? The Owners & the Government

In every province, there are a variety of ways that accommodation owners and their provincial governments interact. The owners of accommodations, campgrounds, restaurants or craft stores are the “primary investors”.

Government is also an investor, but government invests to realize a profit through taxes generated by the accommodation sales, associated sales, as well as gain general economic advantage of job creation.

Tourism in Nova Scotia is worth \$1.3 billion per year and provides an estimated 30,000 jobs compared with Forestry, valued at \$1 billion, and providing 15,000 jobs.

Tourism businesses rely heavily on Government for such services as Visitor Information Centers, guidebook advertising, and reservation services.

Government is also a “regulator” and in that role we hear many owners ask at times, “Is Government working with the owners, or is government working against us?”

We saw recently in New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward Island how the provincial governments decided to resolve the issue of “unlicensed properties”, and how owners were in-

cluded, or not included, in those decisions.

On the issue of ratings, Nova Scotia announced a policy in May, effective in June, which implemented a variation of mandatory ratings and called it “mandatory quality programs”. This new policy was really not negotiated with the owners and as such is an “imposition”, one which many owners reject.

This raises the question of what exactly is the relationship of owners and government. If you are in a province where you are licensed, we suggest you really have a contract with government and vice versa.

Regardless, when owners are having business problems because of government policy or administrative actions, we need to speak up.

The associations do play a role, but, while we can act as “spokesperson” or as “advocate”, we are a third party. We have to ask our members for their opinions; we can’t speak for members without discussion.

Government, on the other hand, may communicate with associations, and that has created a third party communication that in many cases excludes the owners.

As with the issues of unlicensed properties and mandatory ratings, the communication between government and the “investors”, the owners, has not been fully open and transparent. Owners should be more vocal and advise government when they feel there is such a problem.

Innkeepers Guild has consistently stated that tourism is an economy and government should recognize the financial situation owners face. We need to share every “number” we possible can. PEI has a “tourism research” function that really is a good model.

Fundy Coastal Drive

Falcon Ridge Inn



Four spacious guest rooms with: Bay view, queen bed, fireplace, cable, VCR/DVD, telephone - free local calls; calling card long distance, complimentary high speed internet, mini-Fridge, coffee-maker, robes. Four piece ensuite bath featuring a double whirlpool tub. Complimentary full breakfast with flexible times and individual tables featuring fresh roasted coffee from NB’s own Down East Coffee Co. or full selection of teas from Donna’s tea box.

Hosts: Donna and Peter Colpitts
Web Site: www.falconridgeinn.nb.ca

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New Tourism Policy

Nova Scotia: Ratings & Quality

On May 22, 2009, the Minister of TCH announced a new policy that makes it mandatory for owners to register for membership in a "quality program". It is effective in 39 days, on June 30, 2009.

It identifies three eligible "quality programs", namely CAA, Canada Select and a new program called the Nova Scotia Quality Standards program. This NSQS program is only in a "pilot" stage.

This is a "policy" decision that has huge impact on some owners; unfortunately there was no prior discussion. This policy is an addition to the Tourism Accommodations Act that has regulations, basically standards, that apply to every property in the province. One standard for all properties.

Innkeepers Guild has consistently recommended to The Minister of TCH:

a. to retain a Tourism Accommodations Act and Regulations (standards) that is enforced.

b. it is the owner, not government, who should decide to have their property rated

[Click to read our 2007 submission.](#)



New Brunswick

New "Approved Accommodations" System

The province of New Brunswick has taken two steps regarding accommodations. First, they discontinued licensing. Second, they implemented their version of quality standards by implementing a New Brunswick Approved accommodation system.

The key is that owners have the option to belong to this New Brunswick Approved Accommodations AND/OR Canada Select "Rating" system. Canada Select is no longer mandatory in the province.

[Click here to read the PDF.](#)



Recommendation List

Recommended Web Sites & Quality Properties

The Innkeepers Guild would like to help owners receive good value for money by compiling a list of recommended web sites.

When buying a listing on a web site, the challenge is to decide what sites will provide the best value. To begin, you can look at your competitors' listings. We see more and more sites that list what we call the "underground economy", the "illegal" and the "unlicensed properties". Unfortunately, potential customers do not know they may be renting from an owner or renting a property that is not adhering to any rules or standards, and that they have increased risks.

So long as our provincial governments are not prepared to take any steps to make sure unlicensed and illegal properties are not on the market, we all suffer. In addition, this raises the potential of a tourist having a bad experience and affecting our reputation as a destination. We can't advertise quality if we do not work to take properties off the market that operate illegally, regardless of their physical quality.

If you wish to recommend a site or property, or to tell us about a site or property that we should not recommend, send your recommendations to:

admin@innkeeperguild.com

This list of recommended web sites and properties will only be made available to members of the Innkeepers Guild. Request the list at the address above.

Members helping Members

Referral to Referral

Do you have a referral book or index system?

Easily build a referral network for your business. Buy a binder, or an index/business card box. An "alpha" index will allow you to find references by location.

Each time a guest asks for help on a location, you give them your advice, and then drop a card, or make a card for that location and the places you recommended, put it in the box. Now, who can you connect your business to that location, or near there, especially, for a fellow member.

If you get a referral from a member of Innkeepers, then do the same thing. Soon, you'll see a pattern unfold. You will get to see where your guests travel. This is why we feature different properties every newsletter. Print off a copy, save it in a binder or the box to show your guests.

Prince Edward Island

Sandpiper Cottages & Suites



Two pine tree-lined acres, five-minute walk to beach. Close to championship golf courses, restaurants, lobster pound, deep-sea fishing and the new Stanhope Promenade, perfect for walking, running, biking. Three two-bedroom housekeeping cottages with decks, barbecues, cable TV/VCRs, ceiling fans, fridges, microwaves. Queen, double, twin beds. Linens supplied.

Hosts: Pat and Keith Notman

Web Site: www.sandpiperpei.com

Innkeepers Guild

Social Networking

“Social networking”, a new buzz phrase, is a way to use the Internet as a marketing tool. It takes work. It’s not as simple as it sounds. The more popular way to “network” is to have your own “blog” which is really your own personal web page where you try to attract attention and followers.

The “travel forum” is an other social network is that you join, such as Trip Advisor, where you answer questions from travellers to help them, but also to try to entice them to your location.

You’ll soon see that on all of these sites, there are ads for every major hotel chain, so you have to compete.

Facebook is another alternative but you will now find corporate entities starting to intervene.

You should at least look at these if you are so inclined. Do we recommend this as a marketing tool? If you have the time, it may be helpful, but the question is whether it gives you business. Yes, you can promote your area, but the potential guest still has to find you. We have yet to find any one who can tell you how to measure whether this is worth the effort.

Fundy Shore, NS

Bayside Farm & Cottages



Historic 90 acre farm property (c 1855) on St. Mary’s Bay. Beautiful view of Digby Neck; wonderful sunsets. 10 km to kayaking on Sissiboo River; 30 km to 2 golf courses; four beaches within 40 km.

Hosts - Louise & Roger Mullen
Web site: www.baysidefarm.com

An Innkeepers Opinion

What is the cost of an unlicensed property to Provincial Government and to taxpayers? Why does the government not collect the taxes they are owed?

Let’s compare a licensed property, a two bedroom fully furnished cottage, to a four bedroom fully furnished vacation home that is not licensed.

The licensed cottage is assessed at a value of \$30,000. Taxes on the property at a commercial rate of \$2.00/\$100.00 equals \$600.00. Residential taxes would be \$300.00. Assume the owner rents for four weeks at \$1000.00, which equals \$4000.00 gross. GST paid is \$520.00. Assume a net return of \$2000, so the owner pays \$600 in federal taxes.

Taxes paid - licensed property:

Municipal - \$600
GST - \$520 (?)
Income tax - \$600
Total - \$1720

The unlicensed four-bedroom vacation home is assessed at a value of \$175,000. The owner pays residential taxes of \$1.00/\$100, so \$1750 - not the \$3500 at the commercial rate. The owner does not pay the \$520 in GST, pays no tourism association fees, and does not pay income tax on \$4000, even a net income of \$2000.00, means not paying \$600.00 in taxes.

Taxes paid: Taxes not paid:

Municipal \$ 1750	\$1750
GST - \$0 (?)	\$520 (?)
Income tax - \$0	\$600
Total - \$1750	\$3870

In this case, the unlicensed property owner is gaining \$4000 annual revenue and not paying a tax bill of \$3870.

If you assume there are 200 such vacation homes operating unlicensed every year in NS alone, the revenue lost to the industry is certainly \$800,000 plus, lost GST is \$104,000, lost Municipal taxes is \$350,000 plus, lost income tax could be \$120,000 plus, a total revenue loss to government of \$ 574,000.

Eastern Shore, NS

Fairwinds Motel & Restaurant



Licensed A/C dining 7am to 9pm, overlooking the harbour. Ten units, 4-pc bath, CBTV, radio, phone; some with harbour view. No pets, please. Children under age 9 stay free. Payment Options: MC, VS, AE, DD. The Fairwinds Motel is located 115 km (70 miles) East of Halifax on the Marine Drive, Highway 7. If you are travelling the Trans-Canada, take Highway 7 West from Antigonish or Route 374 from Stellarton.

Hosts - Ralph & Vera LeBlanc
Web site: [fairwindsmotel](http://fairwindsmotel.com)

Newfoundland Labrador

The province of Newfoundland Labrador invests an additional million dollars in marketing, now up to \$13 million in Tourism.

[Click to read the article.](#)

Cabot Trail

Information Kiosks

Twenty-three kiosks have been erected at various locations around the Cabot Trail to provide travellers with local maps and information. The locations vary from VIC’s to popular look-offs.

www.cabottrail.travel

Numbers

The Atlantic Business magazine, May/June, shows the revenue in Atlantic Canada from Accommodations and Food Services is valued at \$364.8 million per year. What’s your share?

Web Site Update

New Feature - Video Tours

Video Tours are now being added to the province pages in an effort to highlight various Atlantic communities and attractions. Feel free to recommend one for your area.

Your Innkeepers Listing

Keeping your listing up to date on our web site requires a password. If you need a password, please contact us at info@innkeeperguild.com. You are encouraged to add any "specials" or "discounts" you are offering in 2009.

Travel Planner

Our goal in developing the Travel Planner is to offer visitors to the site a means by which they can locate resources for their stay in your area. The plan is to have at least three links for local "Amenities and Attractions" listed for each community. To add links to the Travel Planner for your community, send the names and web site links to:

info@innkeeperguild.com

Anne's Land - PEI

Surf Cottages



On Gulf Shore Rd., 3 km from scenic nature trails. Hear the ocean, walk the beaches. Spacious area of natural surroundings. So quiet and so peaceful. Cottages privately spaced. Knotty pine cathedral ceilings and interior. Patio tables/umbrellas, playground, laundry, gas barbecue, new appliances, telephone, cable, campfires. Store, restaurants, 1 km.

Hosts: Joanne Wood
Web Site: www.peisland.com/

Innkeepers Caution!

Potential Scam

There is a potential scam that has surfaced in Prince Edward Island. Property owners are receiving telephone calls saying they MUST purchase a first aid kit to meet provincial standards. The kit is priced at \$300.00.

This is misleading. The PEI Tourism Industry Act does require a CSA first aid kit for campgrounds and RV parks, and acceptable kits cost in the \$10-\$50 range. For more information, contact Janet Wood, Tourism PEI, 902 368-4792, or contact your provincial tourism department.



Innkeepers Tips

Quality Service Hint

Use your answering machine to help your clients. It only takes a minute to change your message. When you have vacancies, say so in your message, or if no vacancies, say so. If you will be out, you can always say, "I'm away until 4 pm today - please tell me if you may want one of my rooms and where I can reach you." Missed a call? If you have caller ID, call the number back ASAP.

You only have to salvage one booking to make it worthwhile.

Mike The Maintenance Man Says:

The mechanisms on vinyl windows can be damaged by salt air. Try white grease or what is called "Fluid Film", it comes in a gold coloured can. Check it out at <http://www.fluid-film.com>. Rub the screw heads and all the metal on the window at least once a year to avoid an expensive repair.

River Valley Scenic Dr. NB

Kilburn House



Home away from home. Located in the midst of downtown Fredericton. Full Breakfast. An 1895 family home in the heart of downtown Fredericton within walking distance of restaurants, tourist attractions, shopping, antiques, and banking. Close to riverfront walk and trail system and walking distance to Crowne Plaza and Delta hotels.

Hosts: Bonnie and Clark Kilburn
Web Site: www.bbcanada.com/

We're Now on Face Book

Facebook is a social network that allows you to connect to the community at large through the internet. In effect Facebook is a marketing tool. You can now sign up at "InnkeepersGuild-Canada" on Facebook. It is a closed group, so when you wish to join, your name will come to an administrator to verify your membership. Once verified you can take part in the discussion group. We welcome property owners in all provinces. The link below will take you to the sign-on page.

<http://www.facebook.com/r.php>

Publication Information

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To have your property featured in the next newsletter, send your request to: info@innkeeperguild.com