

## Tourism SkillsNet North Launches

### Providing Customized Labour Support for Hard-hit Sector in Northern Ontario

(Sault Ste. Marie – May 27, 2021) Announced this morning by Monte McNaughton, Minister of Labour, Training and Skills Development joined by Lisa McLeod, Minister of Heritage, Sport, Tourism, and Culture Industries, The Ontario Tourism Education Corporation (OTEC), Destination Northern Ontario, Nature and Outdoor Tourism Ontario, District Social Services Administration Boards, Indigenous Tourism Ontario and Northern Ontario Workforce Planning Boards have collaborated to launch **Tourism SkillsNet North** – a new initiative designed to provide support to the hard-hit tourism sector. The newly launched initiative will identify workforce labour gaps specific to northern Ontario, design responsive customized training to meet these specific needs, train employees and match them with available job opportunities within Northern Ontario's tourism sector.

The Ontario government is investing \$1.25 million through Destination Northern Ontario to identify and train 300 employees and match them with a minimum of 150 employers within Northern Ontario's tourism sector, as tourism operators scale up for the year of the Ontario Staycation. Qualified employers whose businesses have been negatively impacted by the pandemic will be eligible for a 30 per cent wage subsidy up to \$3,000 per employee.

"The goal of **Tourism SkillsNet North** is to understand and support the skills and talent needs of the tourism sector. This initiative will not only allow 300 participants to develop skills and a passion for the industry but also address the needs of the local labour market and more than 150 employers that have been impacted by the pandemic." stated David MacLachlan Executive Director, Destination Northern Ontario "Once Ontario opens for business, the Northern Ontario tourism industry will be ready."

"At its heart, tourism has always been about people," said Adam Morrison, President and CEO, OTEC. "As we work collaboratively with our partners to support post pandemic workforce recovery, it's critical that we focus on attraction and retention of highly skilled people who have a passion for this vital sector. To that end, we're delighted to play a responsive role in providing new customized training solutions designed to meet the very specific needs of Northern Ontario's tourism sector just as reopening plans begin to take shape."

An industry survey was conducted in early May 2021 to support, analyze and identify specific workforce labour gaps and available opportunities within Northern Ontario's tourism sector. The survey results also helped to inform and support the skills and talent needs of the tourism sector by developing and delivering training to best meet the specific labour gaps identified by employers.

"We are very pleased to participate in this collaborative initiative. We know that tourism businesses have been finding it difficult to fill labour gaps for the last few years. This pandemic has only increased the size of those gaps. When leisure travel resumes, people will want the

outdoor vacation options that Northern Ontario has. Having a strong workforce to continue providing quality outdoor guest experiences is critical." stated Laurie Marcil, Executive Director Nature and Outdoor Tourism Ontario. "This program will help to showcase the wide variety of jobs in tourism in Northern Ontario. It will also go a long way in building a workforce that is ready for careers in the tourism industry which will help our tourism businesses be ready to welcome all guests back."

Details of the **Tourism SkillsNet North** initiative, including online registration, criteria and training schedule will be released in the coming weeks.

### **About Destination Northern Ontario (DNO)**

Destination Northern Ontario is one of 13 not-for-profit regional tourism organizations funded by the Ontario Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries. We are the largest tourism region in geography, the second largest in expenditure and the only region that includes sub-regions.

Northern Ontario will be a unique and distinctive tourism destination wherein high-quality products and experiences resonate with consumers, entrepreneurship is valued, and tourism provides local, regional and global connections for the entire region. **Destination Northern Ontario** will take a leadership role to strategically guide and champion growth in Northern Ontario's tourism industry, through strong communication, collaboration and partnerships with industry.

For more information on Destination Northern Ontario, please visit: [www.destinationnorthernontario.ca](http://www.destinationnorthernontario.ca) "[www.destinationnorthernontario.ca](http://www.destinationnorthernontario.ca)". Follow us on Twitter at [www.twitter.com/DestNorthernOnt](https://www.twitter.com/DestNorthernOnt) or on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/DestinationNorthernOntario](https://www.facebook.com/DestinationNorthernOntario) for the most up to date news and information.

### **About OTEC**

The Ontario Tourism Education Corporation (OTEC) is Ontario's tourism and hospitality workforce development organization. This not-for-profit organization delivers award-winning skills training, consulting, research and insight – guiding workforce strategy and evidence-based investment. OTEC leads Tourism SkillsNet Ontario – an award-winning alliance of industry partners comprised of more than 120 organizations and 12 regions across Ontario – working collaboratively to align provincial workforce strategy with local industry-specific regional labour challenges. The first of its kind in Canada, Tourism SkillsNet Ontario leverages provincial collaboration and investment to tackle skills, labour and strategic challenges at the local level, offering customized solutions to address these challenges and to build an empowered, resilient and thriving industry.

### **About Nature and Outdoor Tourism Ontario (NOTO)**

NOTO is a sector organization that has been representing the needs of over 1,100 resource-based tourism businesses in Ontario since 1929. We are a membership-based organization that



304-111 Elgin Street  
Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario P6A 6L6  
(705) 575-9779 telephone | (705) 575-9780 fax  
[communications@destinationnorthernontario.ca](mailto:communications@destinationnorthernontario.ca)  
[www.destinationnorthernontario.ca](http://www.destinationnorthernontario.ca)

works to advocate for policies and regulations that support a vibrant and prosperous outdoor tourism industry in Ontario. We engage with all industry stakeholders, tourism organizations, and government offices at all levels to collaborate for optimum outcomes.

For more information please visit our website: [www.noto.ca](http://www.noto.ca).

-30-

*The views expressed in the publications are the views of the Recipient and do not necessarily reflect those of the Province.*

**Media contact:**

**Sara Dekker**

Destination Northern Ontario  
[s.dekker@destinationnorthernontario.ca](mailto:s.dekker@destinationnorthernontario.ca)

**Shelagh O'Donnell**

Director, Marketing Communications | OTEC  
[sodonnell@otec.org](mailto:sodonnell@otec.org)  
p. (416) 622-1975 ex. 223 / (1-800) 557-6832

**Laurie Marcil**

Executive Director | Nature and Outdoor Tourism Ontario  
[laurie@noto.net](mailto:laurie@noto.net)  
p. 705 472-5552 x24 c. 705 499-7556