

DATA Annual Report.

The 2015-16 fiscal year was a busy one for DATA. One of DATA's main objectives is the promotion of the Digby Area as a tourism destination. We have been working toward this goal with the following initiatives.

1. Pack Your Rubbers Social Media Campaign (summer 2015)
2. This Lighthouse Matters, successful crowdfunding program (summer 2015)
3. Booths at
 - Canadian Senior Curling Championships (March, 2016)
 - Saltscapes Expo (April 22,23,24,2016)
 - Hiking Summit (April 30, 2016)
 - Nova Scotia Heritage Conference (Oct. 2015)
4. Inspiring Content Partner Program (Submitted application on April 25)

Other initiatives:

UNESCO Sign, reaching out to Bay Ferries, a person to write articles and blog posts, website and social media.

A brief review of each committee

Executive Committee:

The executive committee rarely meets unless there is an issue that needs attention. Consists of Chair, Vice Chair, Past Chair, Treasurer and Secretary.

There are members of the Board of Directors who represent their geographic area to act as a liaison with businesses and bring ideas and concerns from their area to the table.

Marketing Committee

The Marketing Committee has met several times to brainstorm initiatives and develop a plan. All members of DATA are welcome to join this committee. There will be a lot to do in 2016-17. (see report)

Education Committee

This committee was not active in 2015-16, however, a brief discussion among Tina, Mary, Saskia and Greg recently could lead to an initiative to develop a host program for businesses in the area – everyone from grocery clerks to front desk staff. The big question is how do we compel people to be aware of what the area has to offer and convey that to visitors? How do we facilitate that awareness program? It will be on the agenda of our next regular monthly meeting, so get thinking!

Product Development Committee

A Town of Digby Map was developed by Bee Stanton and is now available on the digbyarea.ca website.

The new Digby Neck and Islands Map has been completed and printed. Because of a transfer of funds from the Digby Neck Tourism Group and advertising fees collected, there was no cost to DATA. The supply should last about 3 years.

Membership Committee

There is an ongoing initiative to encourage tourism operators and others to become members: emails, phone calls, visits. Early in 2016, Mary sent out countless emails to a huge list of businesses in the Digby Area. It resulted in some new memberships and participation in Saltscapes and the Inspiring Content Partner Program. Hopefully, exposure through the Inspiring Content will “*inspire*” others to become involved.

One comment we frequently hear in justifying non participation is, “I’m too busy to attend meetings.” It’s nice, but not a requirement for members to attend meetings. To keep up with what is happening, members receive emails and have access to the “members only” section on the website.

It should be our goal to make DATA compelling enough for businesses to want to join. Hopefully, we are doing that!

We need a membership champion, so if anyone is interested, now is the time to speak up.

Membership summary:

2014 : 24 members

2015: 27 members

2016: 30 members

Marketing Committee Initiatives

UNESCO Sign.

As the result of a partnership with the Municipality of Digby and the UNESCO Biosphere committee, a ***Welcome to the UNESCO Southwest Biosphere*** sign was designed and erected at the Shore Road provincial entry point near the Bay Ferries terminal. Funding was a grant from the Municipality of Digby.

Saltscapes Expo

DATA took the show on the road again this year with a successful booth at the Saltscapes Expo in Halifax, April 22,23,24. Based on the number of Explore Digby guides handed out, we introduced about 1500 people to our area. We cooked and served 21 pounds of scallops and talked our lips off about the experiences our area has to offer. There is no question we raised the profile of the area. We all agree

there was an increase (over last year) in the number of people indicating they are planning a trip to the Digby Area. It was hard work and we really worked the crowd. The booth was made possible by member contributions for ads on the photo presentation, Municipal government (Town and MODD) contributions and generous contributions of scallops from Birch Street Seafoods, O'Neil Fisheries and the Municipality and Town of Digby. The Municipality of Digby contributed significantly with the in-kind services of Robert Hersey, master story teller, scallop chef and booth designer. Thanks to the many volunteers who came to help at the booth.

Senior Curling Championships and Hike Summit (both held in Digby)

We were also able to promote the area with a booth at both of these well attended events. Again, thanks to the volunteers who helped!

The curling championships and the hike summit were huge boosts to our area. DARC is doing economic impact studies for these events to determine just how much of a boost. Several of us had the opportunity to network with folks during these events, keeping the Digby Area top of mind and encouraging them to return in the future to enjoy local experiences.

Website

Our website, digbyarea.ca continues to be our main vehicle to get the message out. Mary has set up a members page with a login ID so minutes and important documents are available. The web site information was made available to everyone who picked up an Explore Digby County guide at the Saltscapes Expo. We affixed a sticker with the DATA logo and URL on every guide. The Digby Town Map and the Digby Neck and Islands Map is now on the website. Mary works hard to update the events section as well. This site is a valuable resource for members and visitors.

Social Media

DATA has active Facebook (713 page likes), Instagram (29 followers), Twitter (156 followers), and YouTube (2 subscribers)

Explore Digby County Guide – TC Media

The guide was printed early this year so it would be ready to give out at the Saltscapes Expo. We asked for and received 2000 copies to take to the Expo. Significant this year, is the input we were able to have regarding local copy. Very few errors slipped through and generally (except for the things beyond our control) it was quite well done. The dialogue with TC Media will continue so improvements can be made and this guide can serve as our main Digby Area resource.

Article Writer

Peter Turner has agreed to write articles about the area. Thanks Peter. All members are encouraged to write blurbs that may be of interest to all.

Pack Your Rubbers Contest

Facebook Page Likes = 1068 from all around the world.

The #PackYourRubbers social media campaign was an idea of Bee Stanton and Les Barr.

The campaign ran from June through to August with prizes awarded for the Public Favorite, Judge's Favorite and Creative Favorite. Post reach throughout the period of June through to August ran between 800 - 2,000 impressions, with several peaks going up to 8,000-9,000 impressions in a day.

Combined with proper marketing materials (video, photography), this campaign could grow to reach many more people.

We were able to continue the promotion at Saltscapes with people able to meet Bee Stanton as she sketched about the Digby Area at the booth.

This Lighthouse Matters

- Digby Area won the social media voting contest for the Digby Pier Lighthouse
- DATA received the first half of \$7500 in September 2015.
- The rest of the \$7500 will be used on materials and moving the lighthouse to her permanent spot.
- A report will be filed with the "This Lighthouse Matters" head office after which the next part of the funds will be released.
- Any leftover funds will go towards interpretive signage and such.
- A celebration will be held in June.

Display of Photos and Ads in the window of a downtown business or at the VIC

Linda has been working hard to see if this idea is viable and has had conversations with many people about making it work. More to come.

Halifax Guide

DATA will have a hyperlink to the digbyarea.ca website in the online Halifax Guide.

Inspiring Content Partner Program = EXCITING!!

Late 2015 - Tourism NS released a one page document advising of a program available to business owners and destination marketing organizations to acquire top quality photographic and video content.

Early 2016 – DATA considers applying for the program and begins lobbying local businesses and municipal governments for support

January to April, 2016 – presentations made to MODD, ToD, DABoT, and general public about the program and DATA`s intent to apply

April 5. - Public meeting. TNS opens the program for applications. Deadline April 25.

April 7 – DATA decides to go for a combined project worth \$40 000.

April 5-25. DATA goes into high gear to secure the \$20 000 funding needed locally.

- MODD, \$10 000
- ToD, \$3 000
- DATA up to \$6 000, depending on support from local partners. Includes funds in account from previous municipal grants
- Local Partners \$1000. (current amount = _____?)

A huge thank you to the partners for the generous contributions!!

Our application is currently being reviewed by TNS and we should hear soon about the timing for our discovery meeting and development of a MOU.