

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
January 31, 2008

Record Year for Tourism to Toronto in 2007

TORONTO, ON –Toronto took another step forward as a global tourism destination in 2007, welcoming a record 10,660,000 overnight visitors. Tourism Toronto's marketing and sales programs focused on attracting high-value customers, including overseas travellers and major conventions, helping offset formidable challenges such as new passport rules and the rising Canadian dollar.

"Toronto is showing its resilience as a global destination," said David Whitaker, President and CEO of Tourism Toronto. "In a year when the forecasts started out rather dire, in the end more visitors came, hotel occupancy rose and our convention business continued to be a bedrock for today and the future."

In 2007 visitors to Toronto spent more than \$4.5 billion on hotels, restaurants, attractions, performing arts, shopping, taxis and meeting facilities, illustrating the continued importance of tourism as an economic driver across the region. Tourism to Toronto supports the employment of nearly 100,000 people.

Hotel occupancy in 2007 across the Toronto region rose to 68.3 per cent, the highest level since 2000. Among the top 30 U.S. and Canadian cities, Toronto moved up three spots to 13th in hotel occupancy and was the seventh-fastest growing destination in 2007 in occupancy.

Overseas visitors remain an important area of growth for Toronto. Mexico and China were the fastest-growing international markets at approximately 15 per cent annual growth each. Toronto's largest overseas market is the U.K., which grew by two per cent in 2007 to approximately 280,000 visitors. Tourism Toronto has active sales programs in all three of those markets, along with other target international markets such as Germany, South Korea and Japan.

"We continue to reach more and more high-value travellers who come to Toronto to enjoy the finer things. In marketing our destination we play to Toronto's great strengths - above all its diversity of experiences found in festivals, cuisine, arts and hotels," said Mr. Whitaker.

Strong convention business

Toronto's meeting and convention business continued to grow in 2007 as Tourism Toronto's sales programs extended deeper into the Canadian, U.S. and international markets. Tourism Toronto's sales team booked 470,000 future room nights in convention business that will produce direct visitor spending in Toronto of more than \$250 million. Tourism Toronto and its partners booked 46 future meetings with more than 1,000 room nights each, including 14 "city-wide" meetings. Some of the largest conventions booked for Toronto in the past year include:

- American Bar Association in 2020 (20,000 delegates, 30,000 room nights, \$16 million in spending)
- North American Roller Hockey Championships in 2009 (12,500 delegates, 13,000 hotel room nights, \$4.4 million in spending in Mississauga and West Toronto)

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- International Society on Thrombosis and Haemostasis in 2015 (7,000 delegates, 30,000 hotel room nights, \$16 million in spending)
- National Society for College Admission Counselling in 2013 (4,250 delegates, 10,000 hotel room nights, \$5.3 million in spending)
- Canadian Cardiovascular Society in 2012 (3,750 delegates, 7,550 hotel room nights, \$4 million in spending)
- International Continence Society in 2010 (3,500 delegates, 9,500 hotel room nights, \$5 million in spending)

“Toronto’s position among global meeting destinations is on the rise,” said Mr. Whitaker. “This year Toronto opened its first overseas sales office, with a bureau in London that, along with offices in Chicago, Washington, D.C. and Ottawa, is already driving business to Toronto.”

“Looking ahead, 2008 presents new opportunities alongside sustained challenges. Our festival line-up is strong and cultural institutions continue their revitalization, while some hard new realities in global currencies, passport rules and greater competition force us to be more creative and more aggressive. The momentum of a stronger-than-expected 2007 puts us in a solid position to start the new year,” said Mr. Whitaker.

About Tourism Toronto

Tourism Toronto, Toronto’s Convention and Visitors Association, is an industry association of more than 1,100 members established to sell and market the Greater Toronto Region as a remarkable destination for tourists, convention delegates and business travelers around the globe. For more information please visit www.torontotourism.com.

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Statistical sources:

Visitor figures are Tourism Toronto estimates
 Hotel occupancy data from Smith Travel Research