

## **TORONTO'S MAJOR TOURISM WINS SET THE STAGE FOR GROWTH YEAR**

TORONTO (February 2, 2010) – Toronto welcomed 10 million overnight visitors in 2009 according to Tourism Toronto's initial estimates for the year. In what was a challenging period for the tourism sector worldwide, Toronto kept pace with other top destinations and ended the year with the momentum of a series of major wins.

"Toronto is definitely getting its swagger back," said David Whitaker, President and CEO of Tourism Toronto. "It was a difficult economic environment to operate in, but we're looking forward to a strong year ahead centred around the G20 in June, which will bring in tens of thousands of people and put Toronto on TV screens, newspapers and social media networks around the world."

### **2009 Tourism Recap**

Toronto retained its 10<sup>th</sup> place ranking in occupancy performance among North America's top 28 cities. In the 12 months of 2009, Toronto hotels' Average Occupancy\* was 62.3 per cent, down from 67.6 per cent in 2008.

In addition, Toronto retained its 8<sup>th</sup> place ranking in Average Daily Room Rate, within that same group of 28 cities.

"Toronto kept pace with other major centres and continues to be a highly valued destination," said Mr. Whitaker. "Toronto's hotels felt the pinch, especially during the first half of the year. But our final months saw some gains in occupancy - and some good news like the agreement to add Canada to China's Approved Destination Status list - propelling us into what looks to be a better year ahead."

### **Major Wins in 2009**

The latter half of 2009 also saw the results of months of groundwork in landing four major events: The G20 summit in June 2010, the Pan Am Games in 2015, World Pride in 2014 and the International Indian Film Academy Awards (IIFA) in 2011. These events bring with them international media attention, thousands of hotel room nights and millions of visitor dollars spent on everything from restaurant meals to taxis to attractions. In the first weeks of 2010, another win for Toronto came when it was announced the JUNO Awards and week-long 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary festival would take place in Toronto in March 2011.

### **Growth focus in 2010**

Historically, Toronto's biggest visitor market – at around 65 per cent of the approximate 10 million overnight visitors annually – comes from other parts of Canada.

"In 2009 we took advantage of the trend toward staying closer to home and stepped up our marketing initiatives in Ontario and throughout Canada," said Mr. Whitaker. "Looking ahead, growth will come from the major centres around the world, where sophisticated urban travellers are looking for getaways and the kind of experiences Toronto delivers."

Important markets for Toronto such as the U.S. (approximately 2 million visitors annually), Great Britain (244,000 visitors) and Germany (77,000 visitors) remain growth priorities this year, in addition to expanded sales and marketing efforts in emerging markets such as Brazil, China and India.

### **About Tourism Toronto**

Tourism Toronto, Toronto's Convention and Visitors Association, is an industry association of more than 1,200 members established to sell and market the greater Toronto region as a remarkable destination for tourists, convention delegates and business travellers around the globe. For more information please visit [www.seetorontonow.com](http://www.seetorontonow.com).

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\*Hotel data from Smith Travel Research