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Revolutionizing the hospitality industry

CEO MESSAGE: RECOVERY



Jim Bence
Hospitality Saskatchewan
President/CEO

Recovery noun

re-cov-ery ri-'kə-və-rē

Plural recoveries

1 : the act, process, or an instance of recovering
especially: an economic upturn (as after a depression)

I'm not sure that there was ever more anticipation for a summer like the one we had this year. With COVID-19 to a large extent now firmly in the rear-view mirror, we plowed into summer with high expectations for renewed revenues caused by pent up demand. And for the most part, our customers delivered.

Our leisure travelers couldn't wait to get back to the great outdoors and our resort and outdoor adventure activities revenues soared, with some reporting that they had one of their best years EVER! So great to hear, yet these stories were very localized and by percentage, very small.

Although most operators were very encouraged by the return of travelers, many were still a long way off pre-pandemic revenues. Unfortunately, for the accommodation sector, the return of the leisure traveler could only provide so much business for our urban downtown properties. Built more for corporate clients and events, the summer was predictably slow.

Almost every other aspect of tourism across the province also reported the positive impact of Saskatchewan's booming economy, particularly because of the resource market. Oil and gas and mining all saw increased activity and crews moving into our rural and midscale markets had a significant and very positive impact on many communities and the businesses in them.

The reactivation of the film industry also has had an immediate impact on our tourism industry and not just in Regina, home of the "John Hopkins Sound Stage". Across the province we are seeing the start of location development and planning for shooting. Several productions are well underway providing a much-needed boost to local economies and an increase in labour.

Starting in May, we saw the wave coming and we prepared to ride hard. And during the euphoria of those summer months, we were able to suspend the reality of the shadows and clouds on the horizon and hope for the best. We knew what was coming and really didn't want to think about the coming storm.

When Hurricane Long-Haul hit our shores, it came in smooth and under our radar. Impacted by so many factors beyond our control (war in Europe, supply chain issues, sky rocketing fuel and grocery costs, rise in energy bills, PST on entertainment, minimum wage increases) we as operators struggled with managing our already thin margins without passing along too much to the customer. We know that our guests, like us, only have so much discretionary spending and with Christmas coming, we didn't want to scare off our loyal fan base with price increases.

Add to this mix that labour is incredibly hard to find, and customer demands are higher than ever, we now have many owners and operators working double time trying to provide the service and product the guests have grown accustomed to. And they are exhausted.

There is no sugar coating it. So many operators were hoping for a fantastic, busy Christmas season to carry them through to the new year, but unfortunately for some, they are just not able to hang on. Every week we see more and more businesses, most small to medium sized enterprises wave the white flag and call it a career.

After such an incredibly hard 2 years, it's very difficult to see these people, families and businesses succumb to the long-term effects of the pandemic. Tourism really is the Long-Haul sector of Covid. This runway has stretched out much longer than any of us ever imagined. With debt

accumulated during the last 2 and half years, many have said that they are arguably in worse shape now that during the height of Covid.

But having said all of that, reviewing the laundry list of sometimes depressing (economically and psychologically) challenges we face daily, most of you will live to see another day. We will see prices stabilize and return to some sort of normal. Because of the great work we are doing with our provincial government, we will see a significant increase in labour to our province. We will see businesses start up with enthusiasm and take their place as the "new place" down the block that you just got to try out.

This recovery is going to happen across the province and as our economy sets the pace in Canada, we will see people from across the nation, and world, interested in investing, working, and living in our great province. We are in this for the long haul and with having some major wins under our belt in 2022, we know 2023 will be our year. We must hang on for a little bit longer....

SEASON'S GREETINGS

Season's greetings, your continued dedication to Hospitality Saskatchewan has been remarkable, and we are extremely grateful. In 2023, let us all continue to work together for the common good and recovery of the tourism & hospitality industry.

Hospitality Saskatchewan's Board of Directors would like to extend a sincere thank you to all our members, stakeholders, and sponsors for your support throughout 2022.

The Board of Directors also acknowledges the dedication and professionalism of the Hospitality Saskatchewan staff and their ongoing commitment to the association.

We wish you all a safe & joyous holiday season!



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TIAC'S ASSOCIATE PROGRAM AVAILABLE TO HOSPITALITY SASKATCHEWAN MEMBERS

As the National voice for the travel and tourism sector, the Tourism Industry Association of Canada (TIAC) acts on behalf of Canadian tourism businesses promoting and supporting policies, programs, and activities that will benefit the sector's growth, development, prosperity, and survival.

TIAC represents the full suite of sectors, including accommodation, recreation and entertainment, food and beverage services, retail, culture, travel services, transportation, business meetings, sports tourism, convention centres and emerging sectors. Our membership reflects partnerships with sector-specific associations, destination marketing organizations, and provincial, territorial, and regional tourism associations, enabling the association to address the full range of issues facing Canada's tourism industry.

TIAC works with Jim Bence, Hospitality Saskatchewan's President & CEO, and his team, to ensure provincial matters are heard and addressed.

Collectively we have raised your concerns on a National and Provincial level and recommended a range of solutions to address the challenges you face. As a Hospitality Saskatchewan Member, you can enroll in TIAC's Associate Program. By visiting <https://tiac-aitc.ca/associatemembership.html> you can become a TIAC Associate Member, you will have access to a range of TIAC benefits AND add your voice to National efforts all for \$25. If you are already a TIAC associate member, you will receive a renewal notice before your anniversary date.

If you are already a full TIAC member, you have enhanced advantages. You will continue to enjoy added benefits and savings over and above what is available to Associate Members, including the TIAC member advantage program at Rendez-vous Canada.

TIAC's Associate Program, another benefit of membership in Hospitality Saskatchewan.

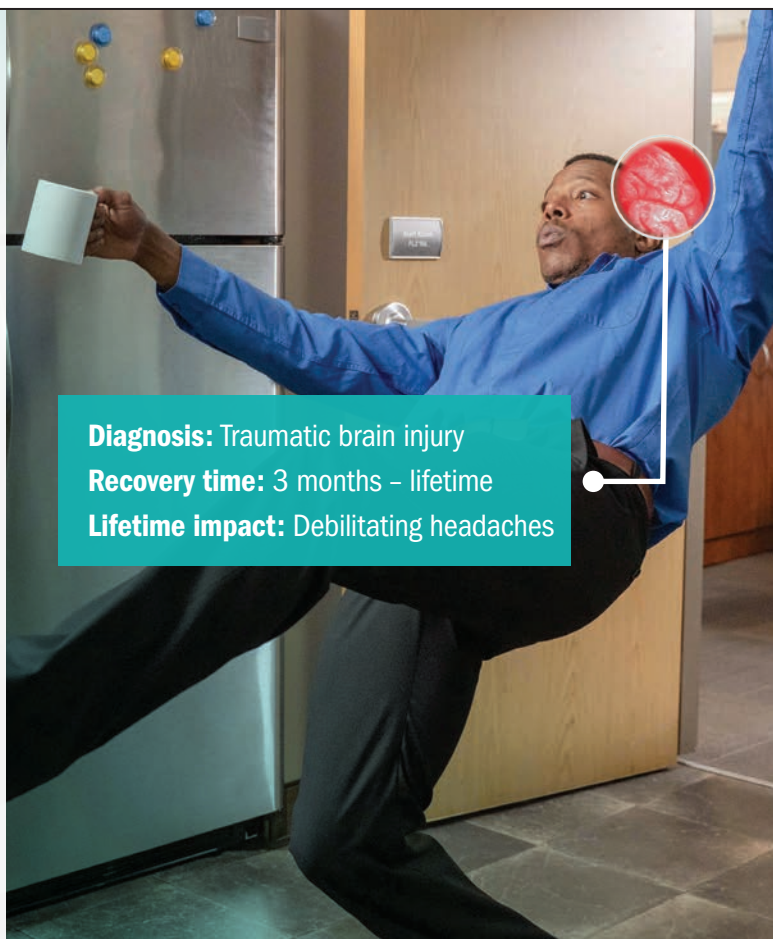
For a list of Associate Program benefits please visit: https://tiac-aitc.ca/_Library/documents/Member_Benefits.pdf

Questions? Please contact: Julie Gauvreau Manager, Member Services 613-688-1454 or jgauvreau@tiac-aitc.ca

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HOSPITALITY SASKATCHEWAN'S ADVOCACY WORKS - CANADA TO EXPAND WORK PERMIT ELIGIBILITY

Early in the pandemic, our association understood that an acute labour shortage was looming on the horizon and started with productive conversations with our provincial government, including Minister Jeremy Harrison, Minister of Immigration and Career Training and Minister Responsible for Tourism Saskatchewan to take proactive steps to create and implement solutions. "The Hard to Fill Skills Project" in Saskatchewan was one of those steps and it positioned Saskatchewan with a unique opportunity to recruit people from across Canada.

Hiring from within our own borders as a priority, we know that our labour needs would also need strategies that extended beyond our provincial and national boundaries and recruitment abroad. We also needed a federal strategy and work with our federal ministries would be key.

In May of 2022, long before many of these issues were on anyone else's radar, Hospitality Saskatchewan took the unprecedented steps of engaging our federal government with meetings, both in person and virtually, recommending a series of enhancements to current immigration streams to better position Canada and provinces as a destination for workers.

Over the course of three days in Toronto, we met with the Ministries of Tourism, Labour and Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada for robust discussions on the labour shortages that were significantly restricting the recovery of our industry. Our meeting with Randy Boissonnault, Tourism Minister, and Associate Minister of Finance, was particularly productive and we were very encouraged by his response to our proposal.

Every recommendation we made with the different ministries was met with an agreement that the suggestions were reasonable and would have a positive impact on the employment challenges we faced.

We were proud to be the first group in Canada to approach our federal agencies directly with a series of suggestions that were taken seriously and could be actionable in the short term.

As a result of our advocacy work, we are delighted Sean Fraser, the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship (IRCC), and Randy Boissonnault, Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, announced a new measure to help solve the labour shortage that will come into effect beginning January 2023. Canada will extend work permit eligibility for spouses, common-law partners, and working-age dependents of temporary workers in **all skill levels**.

The 3 phases

- **Phase 1** enables family members of workers coming to Canada by applying for an open work permit through the high-wage stream of the Temporary Foreign Worker Program or the International Mobility Program.
- **Phase 2** aims to expand the measure to the family members of workers from the low-wage stream of the Temporary Foreign Worker Program following consultations.
- **Phase 3** will include consultation with agricultural partners and stakeholders to assess the operational feasibility of expanding the measure to family members of agricultural workers.

Hospitality Saskatchewan would like to acknowledge the insight and expertise of Daniel Hirschhorn, of Saskatoon Immigration & Employment Consulting Services (SIECSI). As our immigration subject matter expert, Daniel continues to be our trusted advisor on all things immigration.



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RAMADA PLAZA REGINA HOTEL: OUTSTANDING CORPORATE PHILANTHROPIST



Terry Groff, Ramada Plaza by Wyndham Regina General Manager (Center) accepts the Red Cross, Outstanding Corporate Philanthropist award on behalf of the hotels management and staff. Representing the Red Cross, Georgiana Matharu, Senior Manager Risk Reduction Saskatchewan, and Rachel Solberg Corporate Partnerships Manager.

The Ramada Plaza by Wyndham Regina as well as the Ramada by Wyndham Saskatoon have been amazing supporters of the Canadian Red Cross (CRC) for several years. They have been donors to the CRC and have also sponsored the CRC "Power of Humanity Awards" for four years.

The support of The Ramada Plaza by Wyndham Regina had an incredible impact during the COVID-19 pandemic as one of the CRC's vendors during their COVID-19 response and they have always gone above and beyond to give back.

From your friends at Hospitality Saskatchewan, congratulations Terry!

AS WE APPROACH THE NEW YEAR



Daniel Hirschhorn
Saskatoon Immigration &
Employment Consulting Inc. (SIECSI)

It's almost the end of the year of one of the tightest national labour markets in recent history, and most employers by now have found a strategy to deal with their labour issues. Of course, if any of those strategies involved foreign workers recruited via LMIA or SINP, the sad reality is that for many employers, their workforce is still absent from Canada due to remarkably long processing times at all levels.

Moving in to 2023 we all want to know what to expect from our Province and Federal Government when it comes to matters of immigration and foreign workers. Fortunately, we have multi-partisan support for immigration and foreign workers across Canada, and this is still one area where the Provinces and Ottawa can generally agree on. Of note, the federal government has announced what is arguably one of the most aggressive immigration strategies in history, while our own Province will be pushing to capture as much of this as possible and manage it with less interference from Ottawa.

As we move into 2023, we can expect to see current options for foreign labour to remain and possibly even grown, as the federal government finds new ways to transition foreign workers into Permanent Residents. Having said that, we all very much hope that the province can get a handle on their unprecedented delays in assessing jobs for Saskatchewan employers, while Ottawa can find a way to deal with their astronomical backlog of applications.

CO-OP, WANUSKEWIN LAUNCH NEW BISON PRODUCTS



After two years of development, Wanuskewin Heritage Park is thrilled to announce the launch of four new products created in collaboration with Co-op.

This exciting new product line creates a full circle of benefit showcasing Northern Plains Indigenous culture, highlighting artist Linus Wood's artwork, as well as creating revenue opportunities for Wanuskewin's non-profit cultural organization.

These delicious new items are available across western Canada in Co-op's grocery stores, and ultimately into convenience stores as well.



This one-of-a-kind partnership clearly demonstrates Co-op's commitment to supporting local communities as well as to answering the Truth and Reconciliations Calls to Action, specifically call #92.

The products include bison burgers, jerky, meat sticks and smokies, and discussion about future products is already underway.

Over the past 30 years Wanuskewin has developed a reputation for having incredible culinary experiences, both in our restaurant and in our meeting and event catering services.

<https://www.fcl.crs/news-reports/news/article/Co-op-Wanuskewin-launch-new-bison-products>




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ROBOT SUPPLY DEPOT

REVOLUTIONIZING THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY

By Meghan Haukaas, Benchmark Public Relations



It's a typical day at Yip Hong's Dim Sum restaurant in Saskatoon as hungry patrons come and go throughout the day. It's not just the food that keeps them coming, it's also the service they receive from one of their favorite servers, Gina.

She's not your typical server, but she's good at her job. Gina – as she is affectionately known by both staff and patrons – is a robot that delivers food to waiting customers. Gina comes from the Robot Supply Depot, a distributor for Keenon Robotics Co. Ltd., a leading manufacturing in China. Keenon specializes in artificial intelligence, which supplies service robots around the globe.

"We wanted to find a new product that could fit into people's day to day operations. So, we did some research to see what AI product we wanted to focus on, and we narrowed it down to a restaurant delivery robot," said William Wang, an associate at the Robot Supply Depot.

Robots like Gina have the ability to think independently and calculate with multiple sensors such as laser radar, machine vision, and visual depth. Once the order is taken by a server and the food is ready, the meal is autonomously navigated and stops automatically at the delivery point with the use of machine learning.

"The robot's capabilities are based on navigation systems using sensors and label positioning to enable the robot to know where it is positioned in respect to the restaurant layout," Wang said. "By sensing the surrounding area, the robot can navigate between different tables and other obstacles to deliver food to any given table in the building."

Wang said the robot technology caught the attention of Sam Yang, owner of Yip Hong's Dim Sum, who saw business slow during the pandemic and wanted to look at ways to conduct business more safely for both customers and staff alike. Now this artificially intelligent staff member is garnering significant attention in the surrounding community.

The owner of the restaurant told Wang that the robot is working perfectly and even draws in more business. "People come in just to see the robot, especially with their young children. In this way, the robot itself is a promotional tool," Wang said.

Beyond the spectacle of a real-life robot increasing foot traffic, these products have many more practical benefits. Wang said that the technology not only saves on labor costs, but also increases production and marketing of the business.

He added that a concern he often hears from people is the fear of losing jobs. "A lot of people think the intention of these products is to replace human beings," he said, "But these robots can increase the number of customers you are able to serve, so you may actually need more staff."

Robot Supply Depot products still rely on a certain level of human interaction. Wang said most customers prefer to talk to a human and deal with a waiter or waitress. But by using these robots, employees can save time, giving them more time to talk to the customer resulting in much higher levels of customer satisfaction.

He added that there are many other applications for these robotic delivery products in the hospitality industry. Automated products can be applied in fields such as catering, hotels, entertainment, retail, transportation, pay stations, and more. "We are trying to mature the market and educate the customer to promote these new technologies so we can have more innovative products in the province."

Keenon has developed a variety of commercial service robots to meet different customers' needs. Its robots can now be found in more than 500 cities in China, as well as over 60 other countries, including the United States, Germany, and Spain.

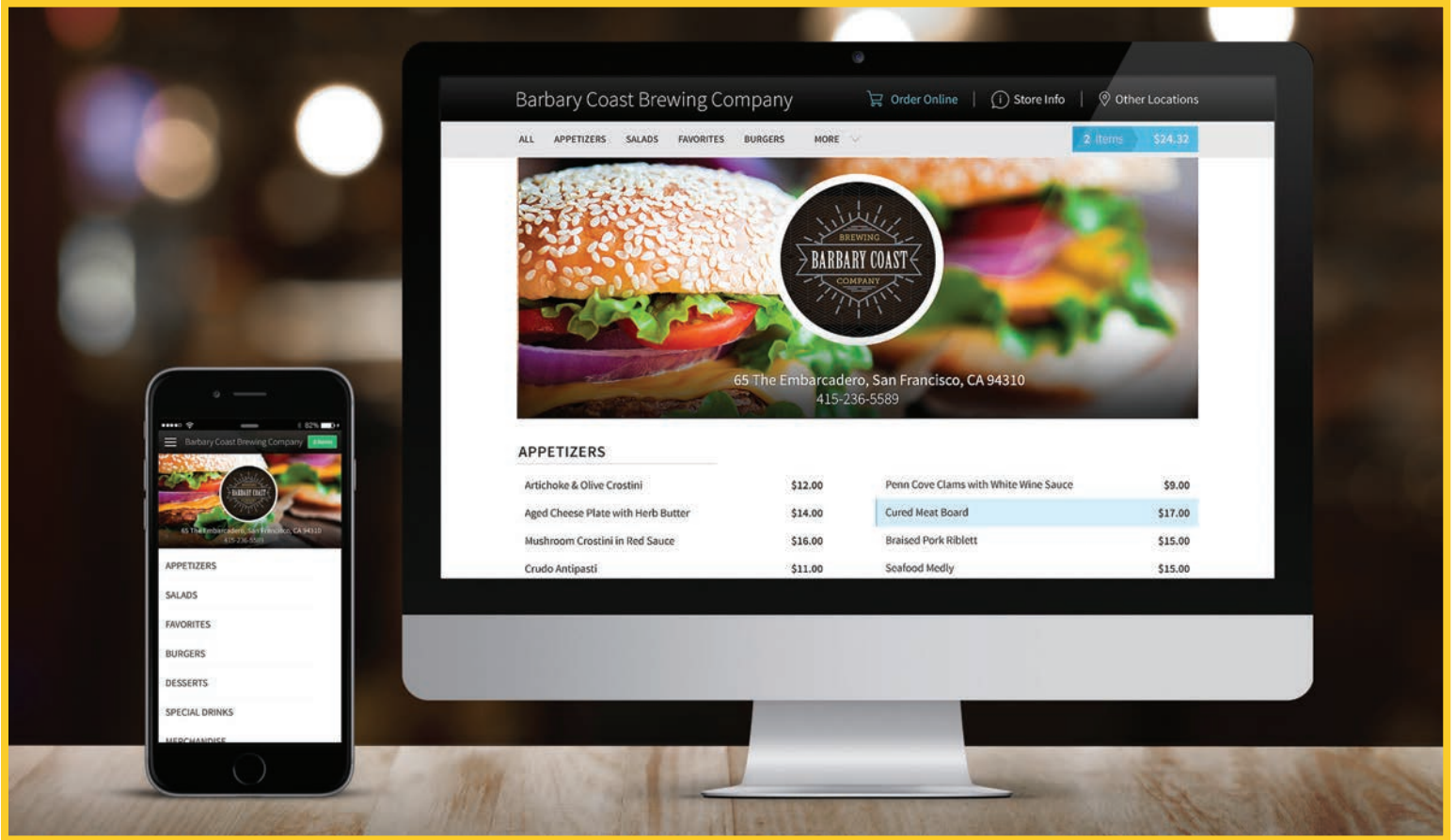
The Robot Supply Depot is bringing the future to Saskatchewan and is proud to offer such unique and innovative services. "As far as I know, we are still the only business in the province to offer these products," Wang said.

To see this technology in action, visit Yip Hong's Dim Sum in Saskatoon. For more information on how to take your business to the next level, contact Hongju Chen at mier.chen@mierco.ca.

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