

Marketing

2025-2026



Marketing Objective

To enhance awareness of Ontario and South Eastern Ontario as premier travel destinations and drive visitor engagement in target markets, directly contributing to tourism-driven economic growth by:

- Showcasing the unique destinations and experiences within the South
- Eastern Ontario brand.
- Inspiring visitors with fresh and innovative ways to explore the region's offerings.

To elevate the profile of RTO 9 as a central hub for ideas and a leader in tourism initiatives that bolster South Eastern Ontario's economy by:

- Gathering insights, input, and feedback to maximize the potential of regional tourism assets and identify new opportunities for growth.



Marketing

RTO 9 has established robust partnerships with all 11 destinations across South Eastern Ontario. By leveraging targeted regional marketing initiatives and fostering ongoing collaboration, RTO 9 actively promotes each destination while encouraging multi-destination travel and increasing awareness of the region's diverse tourism assets.

Through seasonal consumer marketing campaigns—featuring both paid and earned media—effectively engages key target markets to boost visitation and extend overnight stays. The South Eastern Ontario brand serves as a unifying platform, showcasing the region's unique offerings in a cohesive and compelling way.



Target Markets

Domestic Markets:

- **Ontario:** Targeting major cities and regions within Ontario, including Toronto, Ottawa, and the Greater Toronto Area (GTA), attracting a significant number of domestic travellers seeking weekend getaways or short vacations
- **Quebec:** Quebec residents, particularly those in Montreal and surrounding areas, are drawn to South Eastern Ontario for its cultural attractions, outdoor activities, and proximity.

Neighbouring U.S. States:

- **New York State:** Targeting cities like New York City, Buffalo, and Syracuse attracts visitors interested in exploring the nearby Thousand Islands region, Prince Edward County and the Rideau Canal World Heritage Site in South Eastern Ontario
- **Michigan:** Cities like Detroit, Ann Arbor, and Grand Rapids are within driving distance of South Eastern Ontario and may be interested in cross-border travel opportunities, particularly for outdoor recreation and cultural experiences.
- **Other Nearby States:** Marketing efforts in neighbouring states such as Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Vermont, where travellers may be interested in exploring Canada's natural beauty and cultural offerings.

Consumer Profiles

Outdoor Explorers

This daring explorer craves the thrill of unknown landscapes and loves to overcome challenges.

Culture Seeker

These sociable, free-spirited individuals seek unique, authentic experiences.

Refined Globetrotters

These travellers prioritize travel above all, indulging in world-class destinations, gourmet dining, and exclusive experiences.

Purpose Driven Families

This conscientious traveller seeks for their entire family to learn about the world through culture.

City Trippers

These independent, sociable, and trendy travellers prioritize having fun, indulging, and living in the moment.

Simplicity Lovers

These travellers seek peace, relaxation, and familiarity in their journeys, preferring easy and affordable destinations with a small-town feel.

Fun and Sun Families

These travellers cherish relaxation and shared family experiences in familiar, kid-friendly, and affordable destinations.

The Taste Trailblazer

These travellers prioritize culinary experiences, including trying local cuisine, visiting wineries, and exploring food markets.

By tailoring marketing efforts and experiences to these consumer profiles, South Eastern Ontario can effectively attract a diverse range of travellers who align with the region's offerings and attractions.

Marketing

- Opportunities with Destination Ontario
 - Sector Campaigns
 - US Fall Campaigns
 - Destination Ontario Photoshoots
 - FAM Tours
- Paid Media
 - CTA
 - Attractions Ontario
 - Ontario By Bike
 - LCBO

- Owned Media & Digital Marketing
 - SEO and RTO 9 channel Management
 - Contests
- Collateral Materials
 - SEO Road Maps
- RTO 9 Website renewal

Destination Ontario Opportunity

Quebec Campaign - Tourism Kingston and RTO 9 Collaboration

In collaboration with Tourism Kingston & Destination Ontario, RTO 9 will be re-entering the Quebec market in spring 2025. The goal of this campaign is to encourage repeat visitation and increased expenditures from this important drive market with easy access into South Eastern Ontario. Creative messaging will be delivered in French, reinforcing experiences we're known for and those for which opportunities to build consideration exist.

Market: Quebec

Timing: Spring campaign (6 weeks): April 21 – June 5, 2025



Destination Ontario Opportunity

US Campaign - 2025 Tall Ships Festival

Solidify South Eastern Ontario's reputation as having vibrant waterfront communities and is a key destination for travel.

RTO 9, in partnership with Brockville Tourism, seeks to secure a co-marketing partnership with Destination Ontario's 2025-26 US Drive Market Plan to promote the Tall Ships Festival in Brockville, slated for June 2025. As a signature event in South Eastern Ontario, the Tall Ships Festival is a compelling draw for U.S. visitors seeking unique cultural and historical experiences, directly aligning with the campaign's objectives of driving repeat visitation, increasing visitor expenditures, and showcasing South Eastern Ontario's things to See and Do.

Market: USA

Timing: Spring campaign (6 weeks): May 19 – June 29, 2025



Destination Ontario Opportunity

Fall Colours Boat Cruising Campaign – Showcasing Kingston and South Eastern Ontario

RTO 9, in partnership with Tourism Kingston, proposes a collaborative campaign with Destination Ontario's US Drive Market Plan for Fall 2025 to highlight Kingston & South Eastern Ontario as the ultimate fall destination. This campaign will centre around the unique appeal of Fall Colours Boat Cruising and feature attractions that remain vibrant and welcoming during the autumn months. By leveraging the unmatched beauty of the St. Lawrence River and Lake Ontario during the fall foliage season, this campaign will target high-value U.S. drive markets, including Western and Upstate New York. The goal is to drive visitation during the shoulder season, increase visitor expenditures, and showcase Kingston and South Eastern Ontario as a destination that thrives year-round.

Market: USA

Timing: Fall - August 11-September 21, 2025



Destination Ontario Opportunity

Fall 2025 - Taste the Bounty of South Eastern Ontario

- Showcase South Eastern Ontario's thriving farm-to-table food scene, highlighting local farmers, food artisans, and restaurants.
- Promote local food as a driver for tourism and enhance South Eastern Ontario's reputation as a sustainable and delicious culinary destination.
- Educate consumers on the benefits of eating locally and sustainably.
- Support local farms, restaurants, markets, and food businesses by promoting their offerings.

Market: Ontario

Timing: Fall 2025

Destination Ontario Opportunity

Destination Ontario Spotlight Campaign - Winter 2025 RTO 9 and Visit the County Partnership

- Showcase Prince Edward County as a winter wellness destination.
- Promote outdoor winter activities combined with wellness experiences.
- Encourage year-round tourism, focusing on winter as a quieter, more relaxing season.
- Increase off-season bookings for hotels, resorts, and spas.

Market: Ontario

Timing: Winter 2025/2026





Destination Ontario Opportunity

Photo/Video Partnership Program 2025-2026

Opportunities with Destination Ontario throughout the year - TBD

Destination Ontario and Region 9 Tourism Organization will collaborate on asset acquisition for 2 or 3 Destinations in SEO. Destination Ontario will coordinate and deliver all final assets on an external hard drive:

- Up to 50 retouched images
- All raw/unedited images for Partner use
- All raw/unedited footage (.mp4/.mov format)
- Contact sheets for all images
- 60 second video reference reel

Earned Media/ Media Relations/FAM Tours

RTO 9 will host [7 Familiarization Tours](#) to the region in 2025-26 to garner good news stories for the region.

Quarterly, RTO 9 will reach out to our destination partners and asks for resonating story ideas under themed categories. RTO 9 will compile a list of potential story ideas, and in turn, pitch these story ideas to national and regional media outlets to secure published content.



Destination Ambassador Program

Continue Ambassador Program - freelance digital content creators who live in each specified destination and can provide a consistent stream of coordinated raw digital footage for social media reels (vertical video) to RTO 9.

The 11 regions are divided as follows to ensure each destination has fair representation.

1	WEST	PEC (includes Tyendinaga)	Quinte West Belleville	L&A
2	CENTRAL #1	Gananoque	Kingston	Frontenac
3	CENTRAL #2	Brockville	Rideau	(Backup For other regions)
4	EAST	Cornwall (Includes Akwesasne)	Prescott/Russell	SDG 

Owned Media

(SEO and RTO 9 channel management)

www.southeasternontario.ca

- SEO content development
 - Themes
 - Creation of Blogs and Itineraries
 - Photo Video
- Digital Advertising, Promotion and Boosting
- Social Media Management
- Contesting

www.rto9.ca

- RTO 9 Website Renewal
- Content development
- Content Posting & Sharing
- Social Media Management
- Promotion and Boosting of Partnerships
Fund Recipients



Contesting

A strategic approach to seasonal [contests](#) in Partnership with Tourism Partners

- Attractions Ontario - Prescott Russell and SDG
- CTA - Kingston, BoQ & PEC
- Ontario By Bike - Lennox and Addington and Frontenac County



Paid Media

Attractions Ontario

- Passport Magazine and Coupon Book
- Regional Cover
- An Influencer visit
- Social Media sharing events and news year round
- Web Banners on site during busiest traffic months
- Contest

Ontario By Bike

- OntarioByBike.ca Digital Advertising Leaderboard Banner Skyscraper and E-news banners Placement
- Custom Blog Content Development, Posting & Promotion
- Rack Card Distribution at all shows
- Destination feature article in our e-newsletter for 2025.
- Contest

Culinary Tourism Alliance

- Visit, interview and document businesses from across the food tourism value chain in South Eastern Ontario over 5 days – minimum 4 per day - Kingston
 - A mix of photos, interviews, social posts or blog will be created
 - Instagram Stories will be created during the in-market road trip featuring tagged photos and videos
 - 3 Instagram feed gallery posts highlighting businesses in the region
 - 1 gallery post on Facebook highlighting the best experiences
 - Photography for the region visited will be shared with RTO 9
- Contest
- Great Taste of Canada partnership with TK

1000 Islands International Tourism Council Partnership

- Paid Marketing Campaign featuring 1000 Islands communities
- Bi-National Fam Tour

Collateral Materials

- Distribution of South Eastern Ontario Maps
 - SEO Maps to Ontario Visitor Centres, DMOs and partners
 - Revamp website structure incorporating cycling information on SEO Website
- CMEE Trade Show

