

2009 Annual Report

MESSAGE from the Chair



Bruce Sparkes, HNL Chair

Dear Members and Partners:

It is with sadness and excitement that I deliver this final message to you as Chair of Hospitality Newfoundland and Labrador. After three years as Chair, HNL has become a large part of me but I am excited to turn the reigns over to a new Chair who will foster new ideas and fresh approaches. So, as a new chapter begins, I present to you an overview of 2009 and the foundation the Board of Directors has laid for 2010.

2009 was an exciting year at Hospitality Newfoundland and Labrador even with the economic uncertainty. However, we were not surprised when we achieved success despite the cause for concern when poor tourism forecasts and reports of falling tourism numbers trickled in from around the country. While there were many nervous people, the industry persevered, concentrating on the delivery of quality products and services and marketing ourselves to our defined target markets. When the dust settled at the end of the busy summer season, some were shocked by reports from Marine Atlantic that passenger movements in both directions were up by 2.6% over 2008 and that non-resident air travel was up 0.2% over 2008. While these numbers show only slight increases, we were one of the few provinces in Canada to see increases at all! A true testament to the hard work of tourism stakeholders in this province!

This year was the first year for a new Board of Directors working under HNL's new governance structure. With a nimble board of 11 tourism leaders poised to develop and implement the association's strategies, the group was more productive than ever. Under the order of Policy, Governance/Membership, Finance, and Professional Development committees, board members worked diligently on these four areas. The HNL Board is encouraged by the efficiency of this structure and looks forward to continued success in 2010.

One of the Board's biggest tasks in 2009 was the development of HNL's three-year Strategic Plan. With the help of an independent consultant, HNL engaged its members in determining the association's main priorities for 2010-2012. HNL was encouraged to hear that members are pleased with the association's direction and believe HNL is effective in its mandate of advancing growth in tourism through advocacy, professional development initiatives, and membership opportunities. However, members noted important ways that HNL could improve. HNL must ensure it understands, represents and responds to the needs of all tourism stakeholders regardless of their business type or rural or urban location in the province. HNL must ensure industry is aware of the efforts of the association and encourage more feedback and participation in policy planning and events from members. HNL must continue to identify ways to financially sustain the organization. After great deliberation and analysis, I am pleased we were able to listen so wholeheartedly to members. The three main priorities on which the Board and staff will focus in 2010 and beyond are: 1. Address the critical sustainability priorities; 2. Provide effective communications to internal and external stakeholders; and 3. Increase the tourism industry's engagement in the association and its initiatives.

In 2009, HNL was also pleased to become a part of the new Tourism Board which will guide the strategic direction of *Uncommon Potential: A Vision for Newfoundland and Labrador Tourism*. In the numerous Tourism Board meetings HNL has participated in, I can safely say that I am encouraged by the direction and leadership demonstrated by the leaders around the table. While the Tourism Board is just getting started, there has been considerable collaboration and communication among all partner organizations.

In closing, I would like to express my sincerest thanks to members and partners of HNL that have made my last three years as Chair and my previous four years as a Board member an absolute pleasure. I would also like extend my sincerest appreciation to the efforts of all our employees for their professionalism and contribution to furthering the goals of HNL. I wish the new Board of Directors luck in continuing the great work of the association in 2010 and I look forward to seeing you all at future HNL events.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bruce Sparkes', written in a cursive style.

Bruce Sparkes

PROVIDING LEADERSHIP

HNL's New Governance Structure

In 2008, HNL's membership voted unanimously in support of a new Board structure that would see a change in HNL's governance in 2009. Within the new structure, the HNL Board is comprised of seven (7) at-large director positions; three (3) sector association representatives (hotel/motel, bed and breakfast and restaurant) and two (2) appointees. HNL's Board met 10 times this year, compared to four times under the old structure, and aligned Board committees to allow more efficient board strategic planning and implementation.

After one year under the new structure, all indications are that the new structure has improved the responsiveness and effectiveness of the organization. Policy, governance/membership, finance and professional development committees were established to allow closer examination of HNL activities and this has required much more commitment and diligence from the Board. It has also allowed strategic priorities to be more efficiently discussed and acted upon.

The Board will be continuing under the new structure in the coming year with new Board representatives being announced at the *2010 Lookout! Tourism Summit*. A copy of the original governance report, new bylaws and other important information is available at www.hnl.ca.

HNL's Silver Anniversary Scholarship

Established in 2008 in honour of HNL's 25th Anniversary, the *Silver Anniversary* Scholarship is a means of investing in future leaders of the tourism industry and giving back to HNL members for the hard work that they do on behalf of the industry. For over 27 years, HNL member businesses have provided solid support to the industry association so that HNL can perform its vital role in the province. In 2009, HNL was pleased to award the Scholarships to help two deserving individuals to assist in their pursuit of post secondary education.

On October 23, 2009, HNL proudly presented the *Silver Anniversary* Scholarships to Sarah Murphy, daughter of Annette Parsons, Manager of Neddies Harbour Inn in Norris Point, and Nicole Alexander, daughter of Linda Alexander, owner of the Wood'n Bed and Breakfast in Kippens.

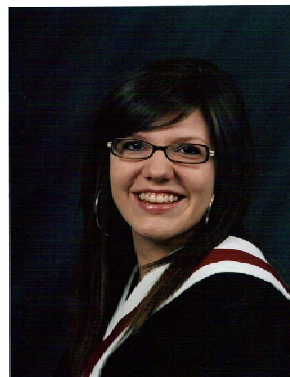
HNL's Silver Anniversary Scholarship is proudly supported by:

- The Sparkes Family
- The Boone Family
- Hospitality Newfoundland and Labrador

Each recipient received a \$1500 scholarship.



Nicole Alexander



Sarah Murphy

PROVIDING LEADERSHIP

Uncommon Potential: A Vision for Newfoundland and Labrador Tourism

After officially launching *Uncommon Potential: A Vision for Newfoundland and Labrador Tourism* at the 2009 Lookout! Tourism Summit, the process began for selecting the Tourism Board who would be responsible for leading the implementation of the seven strategic directions as outlined in Vision 2020.

As a public/private partnership, representatives from industry and government were selected to comprise the Tourism Board. Tourism Board representatives include:

Industry Representatives:

Jill Curran, Lighthouse Picnics
John Dicks, Steele Hotels/HNL Vice-Chair
Yvonne Power, Cruise Newfoundland and Labrador
Bruce Sparkes, Comfort Inn Gander/HNL Chair

Government Representatives:

Cathy Duke, Deputy Minister, Department of Tourism, Culture and Recreation
Mary Taylor-Ash, Assistant Deputy Minister, Department of Tourism, Culture and Recreation
Rita Malone, Assistant Deputy Minister, Department of Innovation, Trade and Rural Development
Rick Comerford, Director General, Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency

Destination Marketing Organization Representatives:

Jack Cooper, Destination Labrador
Maria Matthews, Western Destination Marketing Organization
Danny Huxter, Adventure Central
Mark McCarthy, Destination St. John's

Since the first meeting in July 2009, the Tourism Board has been busy getting acquainted with the intricacies related to each of the strategic directions. In October 2009, the Tourism Board held a Partnership Forum, inviting representatives from the provincial destination marketing organizations and regional tourism associations. The Partnership Forum allowed the Tourism Board to get feedback on a potential structure for the tourism industry and define more clearly the roles and responsibilities of each organization in an effort to better align efforts and maximize resources.



Atlantic Canada
Opportunities
Agency

Agence de
promotion économique
du Canada atlantique

Canada



BUILDING SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORTATION

Marine Access

The tourism industry in Newfoundland and Labrador is dependent upon affordable and reliable service provided by Marine Atlantic Inc.'s ferry service between Nova Scotia and Newfoundland and Labrador.

In 2009, the relationship between HNL and Marine Atlantic continued to be cooperative; however, it has never been more evident that an investment in the aging Marine Atlantic infrastructure and fleet is needed to deliver the service expected by resident and visitor travellers.



Auditor General's Report on Marine Atlantic

In November 2009, the Auditor General of Canada released a report, identifying Marine Atlantic as a key piece of national infrastructure and suggested that long-term funding is required in order for Marine Atlantic to deliver its service, meet increased capacity needs and operate more effectively as an organization. HNL was delighted with the validation the report gave to what the HNL has been stating for the past couple of years. HNL has advocated to all levels of government that Marine Atlantic needs further investment if they are ever going to be able to deliver its service commitment to Newfoundland and Labrador. HNL is hopeful that the Auditor General's call for increased investment in Marine Atlantic will have an effect on the federal government's decision for long term investment.

MV Atlantic Vision

The *MV Atlantic Vision* had a tumultuous first year and garnered a great deal of media attention, mostly for a fire that broke out on board in July during the busiest and most inconvenient time of the year. While this problem could not have been prevented, the media stir caused a great deal of negative attention to be brought to the ship.

In a meeting with the Honourable Rob Merrifield, Minister of State (Transport), HNL stressed the urgency of commitment to and investment in Marine Atlantic and encouraged the future acquisition of vessels similar to that of the *MV Atlantic Vision*. The deficiencies with the *Vision* were apparent in 2009, which included ineffective loading capabilities and an imbalance of seating vs. cabin capacity. As such, HNL has requested that the *Atlantic Vision* be retro-fit to better suit the needs of the travellers availing of the service and that any similar vessels purchased to replace the aging fleet be aligned with the retro-fit specifications. HNL was pleased to have the opportunities to discuss these challenges with Minister Merrifield and looks forward to seeing an action plan for Marine Atlantic in 2010.

Air Access

In 2009, the Department of Business released the much anticipated Air Access Strategy which analyzed the current status of air access and services in Newfoundland and Labrador and identified recommendations for moving forward.

The Strategy has been widely circulated and industry groups have been solicited for feedback. HNL reviewed the strategy and submitted several recommendations to the Department of Business for moving forward. HNL noted in its submission that one of the most pressing concerns was the need for greater coordination of efforts among stakeholders in building relationships with airlines and identifying opportunities for the expansion/introduction of air services.

A comprehensive go forward action plan is expected to be released by the Department of Business in February 2010.

BUILDING TRANSPORTATION NETWORKS

Wayfinding

In 2009, a new wayfinding initiative began in Newfoundland and Labrador. HNL, together with several departments of the provincial government agreed on the priorities for improving directional and wayfinding services in the province. The three main areas include fixing directional signage deficiencies, developing and implementing a Tourist Oriented Directional Signage (TODS) policy and utilizing electronic wayfinding technologies (i.e. Global positioning systems, etc.).

The first step in the process was the strict enforcement of the current highway signage regulations which began in June 2009. Highway signage that did not have proper permits were removed, which resulted in the removal of a great deal of non-tourism related promotional signage. This step alone resulted in less clutter on the sides of the highway for the peak summer season.

The second step towards an improved wayfinding system was the establishment of an Advisory Committee. The Advisory Committee is made up of representatives from government, municipalities and HNL. HNL's role on the committee is to represent the interests of tourism services and attractions in the development of the new policy and to guide directional signage and GPS wayfinding recommendations.

HNL received a great deal of feedback from operators regarding the practical implications of the implementation of a new signage policy, and the directional signage and GPS deficiencies in their regions. In order to ensure that HNL continues to understand the needs of its members, the Board has established a membership Wayfinding Advisory Committee which will advise the Board on wayfinding initiatives over the next year.



Car Rentals

After another summer season with complaints of rental car shortages in the peak weeks, HNL and the Department of Tourism, Culture and Recreation initiated a study to find solutions to the rental car issue. The study will give a situational analysis of the rental car industry in the province and make recommendations on how to improve rental car availability for the 2010 summer season and beyond.

Consultant Marilyn Butland began work on the study in the fall of 2009 with a final report expected in February 2010. The summary of findings from the study will be presented during the 2010 *Lookout! Tourism Summit* in Gander.

DEVELOPING A SUSTAINABLE INDUSTRY

Tourism Resource Management

HNL continued to advocate to the provincial government for an overarching land use management plan in 2009. After a meeting with the Departments of Tourism, Culture and Recreation, Environment and Conservation, Natural Resources and Municipal Affairs, HNL was pleased to learn that each department is taking steps towards more land use management planning. HNL encouraged continued work and collaboration with stakeholders to ensure land use conflicts are minimized and important natural and cultural tourism resources are protected and preserved.



HNL received a commitment from the Department of Tourism, Culture and Recreation to begin the identification process of all tourism assets in the province as a means of working towards tourism resource management principles to become policy in Newfoundland and Labrador.

MAINTAINING A DYNAMIC WORKFORCE

SuperHost Atlantic

SuperHost Atlantic is an internationally recognized Customer Service and Tourism Awareness Training Program. A seven-hour, interactive workshop that focuses on communication and customer service, the program examines our attitude to service and interactions with our customers.



More than 700 tourism employees from across the province participated in the *SuperHost Atlantic* customer service workshop in 2009. Also in 2009, HNL entered a partnership with Cupids 400 to train management to deliver *Superhost* training to all Cupids 400 staff hired for the celebrations.

Career Awareness

Increasing the awareness of career opportunities in the tourism industry is a primary focus of HNL. In partnership with the Canadian Tourism Human Resource Council and Tourism, Culture and Recreation, through the Discover Tourism program and marketing campaign, HNL travelled province wide in 2009 to spread this message.

Package To Performance

In 2009, HNL and the Department of Tourism, Culture and Recreation and ACOA engaged a consultant Eva Gutsche to provide mentoring support on package development to 50 tourism businesses. When these packages were completed they were posted on www.newfoundlandlabrador.com. Eva also lead Perfect Fit packaging workshops in St. John's, St. Alban's and Buchans, West St. Modeste, Labrador City, Cupids and Trinity.

Training Needs Assessment

Hospitality Newfoundland and Labrador in conjunction with its partners has begun an in-depth training, professional development and leadership needs assessment for the industry. The research will also develop a plan to improve industry engagement and uptake in programs. The research is scheduled to be completed in March 2010 with preliminary findings being presented during the HNL's Lookout Summit in February 2010.

Responsible Alcohol Service

The Responsible Alcohol Service program helps businesses identify ways to reduce alcohol-related risks while maintaining or enhancing profits.

In 2009, 214 beverage servers participated in Responsible Alcohol Service. Certifications were achieved using the on-line version of the program or through correspondence.



Ready to Work

Ready-to-Work is a national skills development program designed to assist people with transitions in the workforce and operates on the premise of community partnerships. HNL's current partnerships are with Fortis Properties and the Association of New Canadians' English for Work Program.

This venture is a perfect example of what can be accomplished when community groups, government and industry work together to develop mutually beneficial employment opportunities for people who want to build a career in the industry.



Ready-to-work
Emplois - clés en main

In 2009, HNL partnered with College of the North Atlantic to deliver training to Marine Atlantic employees who received training in Stephenville and Port aux Basques.

MAINTAINING A DYNAMIC WORKFORCE

emerit® Professional Certification

emerit® Professional Certification is awarded when an employee demonstrates they have mastered the required skills and met the standards of their profession in a practical job setting.

In 2009, 414 emerit products and business planning tools were sold to make 2009 one of the most successful years ever! Since 1996, over 600 individuals from various tourism occupations (i.e. food and beverage server, heritage interpreter, front desk agent, etc.) have achieved their certifications.



Temporary Foreign Workers

In 2009, the Fédération des francophone de Terre-Neuve et du Labrador (FFTNL) underwent stakeholder consultations in three regions: Avalon, Stephenville, Corner Brook and Labrador City. It was identified that there was a tremendous need for skills in certain key positions in the tourism industry such as chefs, food & beverage servers, front desk agents, housekeeping room attendants and guides.

HNL has also recently highlighted the challenges that the industry will face in the coming years relating to the availability of a skilled labour force.

After attending Destination Canada, the FFTNL came back with almost 200 resumes matching the positions advertised. The potential employees are mostly bilingual (French and English) and available for seasonal or permanent positions. This opportunity is made possible with the Youth Mobility Program between Canada - France and Belgium that allows people between 18 and 35 (30 in Belgium) to work in Canada for one year and was supported by Immigration Canada and the provincial Office of Immigration and Multiculturalism.

HNL in partnership with Fédération des francophone de Terre-Neuve et du Labrador and the Réseau de développement économique et d'employabilité will be assisting employers who would like to hire these individuals.

Research Activities

Tourism Sector Compensation Research

While this research began in 2006, the benefits for participating businesses came to fruition in 2009. The research examines compensation as a means of attracting talent and retaining trained part-time and full-time staff. Participating businesses received access to a database which allows them to make comparisons and forecasts based on geography, industry group, type of occupation, and demographic and employment aspects that are specific to their needs. The study also offers information that organizations can use to set pay policies and assess competitiveness.

Meeting the Growing Demand for Labour

In 2009, the tourism industry remained proactive in researching the future labour requirements and supply solutions for the employment sectors causing the most concern. The research discussed items such as, which employment sectors will show the most difficulty for retaining and attracting employees and which regions will suffer the least supply. By identifying the points for concern, strategies to overcome the potential crisis were identified and can help employers weather labour uncertainty.

MAXIMIZING TECHNOLOGY RESOURCES

Tourism Technology

Connectivity within the industry is essential. Without it, our tourism industry cannot remain competitive in the rapidly changing online environment or offer visitors a world-class experience. It is imperative that operators embrace technology to the fullest and understand how it can give them a competitive advantage.

TourismTechnology.com was established to promote and enhance technology integration within the tourism sector. This partnership includes the four Atlantic Tourism Industry Associations, the four Atlantic Provincial Governments, and the Tourism Atlantic branch of the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA).

TourismTechnology.com has developed initiatives focused on enhancing technology applications and providing training for tourism operators across Atlantic Canada. Technology mentoring sessions allow tourism operators to receive one-on-one instruction with a Technology Resource Coordinator. Sessions acquaint operators with the basics of technology to get technology working for them.



Technology Support Help Desk & Mentoring

2009 was another busy year for HNL's Technology Support Help Desk. With the widespread use of social media, more operators are seeing the value in using technology as a cornerstone of their business plan. HNL's help desk provided quick answers to many little problems. The Help Desk is open to all members of HNL and can help guide members through new technology processes.

Many members also took advantage of available Technology Mentoring sessions offered by HNL's Technology Resource Coordinator. Sessions involve one-on-one instruction and website examination. Participants leave with practical applications to help their technology work better for their own business.

Icebergfinder.com

Icebergfinder.com utilizes satellite imaging and technology to locate icebergs off the coast of Newfoundland and Labrador. It provides up-to-date iceberg information and helps answer the one question that has plagued tourists for generations - "Where can I go to see an iceberg?"

The website illustrates the location of icebergs along the coast of Newfoundland and Labrador using real-time satellite radar data and highlights local communities, visitors and tourism operators in the province. Icebergfinder.com also provides historical information for visitors planning trips to the province as well as providing educational information about icebergs and satellite radar to those interested.

Hospitality Newfoundland and Labrador, C-CORE, in conjunction with the Canadian Space Agency, and the Department of Tourism, Culture and Recreation, are partners in this project. In 2009, the website was embedded into www.NewfoundlandLabrador.com to help with the integration of all tourism related materials to a central website. HNL continues to administer the Icebergfinder.com Ambassador program and Iceberg Alerts.



CELEBRATING EXCELLENCE AND PARTNERSHIPS

2009 Tourism Excellence Award Winners

Corporate Partner of the Year Award – The Organic Farm, Portugal Cove-St. Phillips, NL
H. Clayton Sparkes Accommodator of the Year Award – Neddies Harbour Inn, Norris Point, NL
P.R.I.D.E. Award – Inn by the Bay, Dildo, NL
Norman Parsons Memorial Award – Hagan's Hospitality Home, Aquaforte, NL
The Cruise Vision Award – Holland America
Cultural Tourism Award – Festival 500, St. John's, NL
Sustainable Tourism Award – Johnson Family Foundation, St. John's, NL
Tourism Atlantic Technology Award – MarbleZip Tours, Steady Brook, NL
Doug Wheeler Award – Bruce Sparkes, Steve Sparkes and Judy Sparkes-Giannou
Restaurateur of the Year Award – Steve Watson – presented as an appreciation award
Innovator of the Year Award – CapeRace Cultural Adventures, St. John's, NL
Tourism Business of the Year Award – Mayflower Adventures, Roddickton, NL

2009 National Tourism Awards (Tourism Industry Association of Canada)

Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide Inc. Corporate Partner of the Year Award - The Organic Farm – Recipient

Deloitte Innovator of the Year Award - CapeRace Cultural Adventures - Finalist

Events

2009 Lookout! Tourism Summit – February 5-8, 2009

HNL's Annual Convention and Tradeshow returned to Corner Brook's Pepsi Centre in 2009. Over 350 delegates made the trip to Corner Brook which featured keynote speaker, Jonathon Tourtellot from National Geographic. With a sold out tradeshow, delegates and exhibitors alike had plenty of opportunity to network and create new business partnerships.

Tourism Awareness Week – June 1-7, 2009

Minister of Tourism, Culture and Recreation, the Honourable Clyde Jackman joined HNL Vice Chair John Dicks and many HNL members at Atlantica Restaurant in Portugal Cove-St. Philips to kick off Tourism Awareness Week. Tourism Awareness Week focused on building awareness of the significant contribution that tourism makes to the economic well being of the province and the quality of life of our residents. The exceptional number of quality tourism experiences in Newfoundland and Labrador was also showcased throughout the week. Other activities included a clean-up of Signal Hill in partnership with Ocean Net, free *Explora Tours* of Signal Hill in partnership with Parks Canada, and a free technology webinar for tourism operators in Newfoundland and Labrador. The flagship event for the week was HNL's Tourism Awareness Week Luncheon held at the Sheraton Hotel Newfoundland where industry and government came together to celebrate tourism in our province. The luncheon also featured the announcement of the newly established Newfoundland and Labrador Tourism Board.

HNL's Annual Golf Tournament – September 15, 2009

HNL's Annual Gold Tournament has always been met with tremendous success and this year was no exception. Terra Nova Golf Resort provided a central locale for participating members from across the province. Over 80 golfers were in attendance and kicked back for a day of networking on the links.

HNL's Annual Christmas Reception – December 3, 2009

HNL's Board of Directors and staff invited members to HNL's Annual Christmas Reception which took place at the Waterford Manor on Waterford Bridge Road, St. John's. There was an enormous turnout for the event giving all attendees the opportunity to get into the Christmas spirit early!

HNL BOARD OF DIRECTORS & STAFF



Board of Directors

Bruce Sparkes, Clayton Hospitality Inc., *Chair*

John Dicks, Steele Hotels, *Vice-Chair*

Jill Curran, Lighthouse Picnics, *Secretary/Treasurer*

Rex Avery, Steele Hotels, *Director-at-Large*

Derrick Aylward, The Guv'nor Pub and Eatery, *Restaurant Representative*

Danny Benoit, The Park House, *Bed and Breakfast Representative*

Connie Fillier, Provincial Airlines, *Director-at-Large*

Roger Jamieson, Kilmory Resort, *Director-at-Large*

Darlene Thomas, Seaside Suites, *Director-at-Large*

Kory Turpin, The Beach House Rooms and Suites & Atlantica Restaurant, *Director-at-Large*

Todd Wight, The Ocean View Hotel, *Hotel/Motel Representative*

Staff

Carol-Ann Gilliard, *Chief Executive Officer*

Juanita Ford, *Manager of Programs and Projects*

Lynn Taylor, *Policy Manager*

Karen So, *Accountant*

Craig Foley, *Technology Resource Coordinator*

Leslie Thomas, *emerit Resources Coordinator*

Megan Peckford, *Membership and Communications Coordinator*

Catherine Walsh, *Ready-to-Work Coordinator*

Jane Smith Parsons, *Professional Development Coordinator*

Minerva King, *Operations and Projects Coordinator*

Brenda Hodder, *Labrador Representative*

Shawn Stratton, *Package to Performance Project Coordinator*

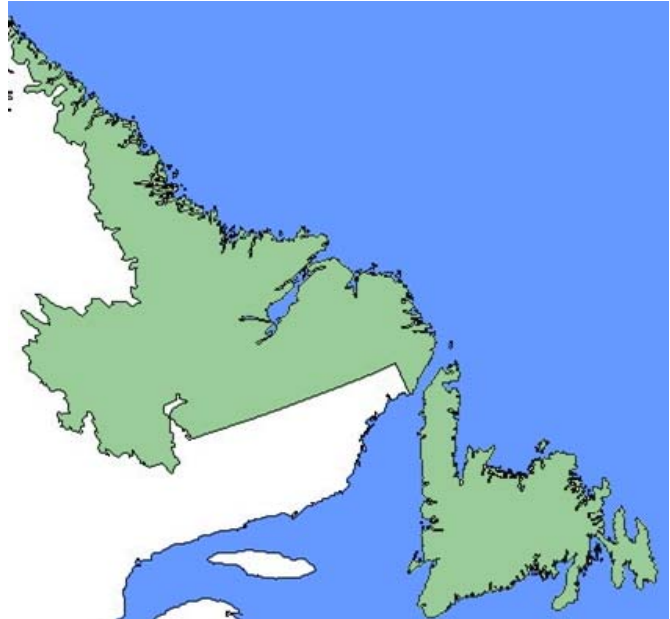
Lisa McDonald, *Tourism Board Manager*

ON THE ROAD AGAIN!

Throughout 2009, HNL's Board of Directors and employees hosted events or professional development sessions, attended regional meetings, made presentations and visited members in all regions of the province.

Here is a snapshot of some of those places...

Baie Verte - Battle Harbour - Bay Bulls - Bay Roberts - Bonavista - Brigus - Cape Broyle - Carbonear - Cartwright - Clarenville - Conception Bay South - Corner Brook - Cow Head - Elliston - Ferryland - Gander - Glovertown - Goulds - Grand Falls-Windsor - Greenspond - Happy Valley-Goose Bay - L'Anse au Clair - Labrador City - Labrador Straights - Marystown - Musgravetown - Placentia - Point Amour - Port Aux Basques - Port Blandford - Port Rexton - Port Union - Princeton - Rocky Harbour - Roddickton - Rose Blanche - Salmonier - Sheshatsiu - Springdale - St. Alban's - St. Brides - St. John's - Stephenville - Swift Current - Trinity - Witless Bay



HNL's 2009-2010 Industry Partners

