# CEO Report

**Tourism Industry Association of Prince Edward Island**
**2026 Annual General Meeting**

Good afternoon, everyone.

As I reflect on the past year, I'm proud of the progress we continue to make as an organization and as an industry. But what I'm most proud of is the team behind that work.

Alex, Ryan, Lori, Colleen and Kelley bring different strengths to TIAPEI, and together they accomplish an incredible amount. From member support and training to communications, events, industry engagement and advocacy, they are constantly looking for new ways to support our members and move tourism forward.

A lot of this work happens behind the scenes, but it makes a real difference. I want to take a moment to recognize each of them for their commitment, creativity and the care they bring to this industry every day.

One of our highlights this year has been the launch of **PEI Best Bytes under Alex's leadership**. This is an exciting new training tool designed to help tourism businesses elevate their customer service through practical, accessible learning.

We all know that the visitor experience can make or break someone's impression of a destination. The people visitors meet, the service they receive and the experiences they have are often what bring them back — or encourage them to tell others to visit. PEI Best Bytes gives our industry another way to invest in those experiences, and I'm really proud of what the team has brought forward.

We also launched **Tourism Talk, our TIAPEI podcast**, giving us another platform to share industry perspectives, explore important issues and highlight the people and businesses that make tourism such an important part of PEI.

These initiatives reflect what we want TIAPEI to be: an organization that listens to the industry, identifies opportunities and develops practical ways to help our members succeed.

## Advocacy and the value of tourism

Advocacy continues to be a significant part of our work. We need to make sure tourism is part of the conversations where decisions are being made, both provincially and federally.

Over the past year, we have met with federal ministers, including Rechie Valdez and Julie Dabrusin, and continued our regular engagement with provincial government representatives.

In our meeting with Minister Valdez, we discussed the workforce challenges facing tourism businesses, the importance of continued federal investment in our industry, and the need to recognize tourism as a service export that supports communities.

That last point is particularly important. Tourism brings new money into our economy. Visitors come here and spend money on our accommodation, restaurants, attractions, transportation, local products and experiences. That spending supports businesses and jobs well beyond the tourism sector itself.

We need government policy and investment to recognize the full value of that contribution.

In our discussions with Minister Dabrusin, we focused on climate risk and the role tourism businesses can play in supporting their communities during extreme weather events and other emergencies.

Our operators have facilities, resources and local knowledge that can be valuable when communities need support. But if we want tourism businesses to help communities during times of need, we also need to help those businesses prepare for the risks they face.

That means supporting operators in becoming more resilient, protecting their investments and ensuring they can continue to operate when challenging circumstances arise. Climate resilience is not just about individual businesses. It is about strengthening the communities and destinations that depend on them.

We have also maintained regular meetings with provincial government representatives, raising industry priorities, sharing concerns from our members and working toward solutions.

These conversations matter. Advocacy is not always about getting an immediate answer or achieving everything we ask for. It is about building relationships, making sure decision-makers understand the realities facing our industry and keeping tourism's needs on the agenda.

We will continue to push for the investment, policies and collaboration that support our industry's long-term success.

Our advocacy around the NHL marketing partnership is another example. Working alongside industry partners, we have continued to make the case for strategic marketing investment that helps PEI reach new audiences, remain competitive and generate economic activity for businesses across the province.

And the numbers remind us why all of this matters.

In 2025, tourism generated an estimated **$988.4 million in economic impact**, representing 12.4% of PEI's GDP. Visitor spending reached approximately $981.7 million, an increase of 12% over the previous year.

Tourism also generates an estimated **$167 million annually in provincial tax revenue**, helping support education, health care, infrastructure and transportation.

Those are significant contributions.

Tourism supports our farmers, fishers, food producers, artists, retailers, transportation providers and countless other businesses. It supports jobs and helps sustain the communities we call home.

We should not have to work so hard to explain why tourism matters, but we do need to continue telling that story — clearly, confidently and with the facts to back it up.

## Growing the industry together

Our five-year industry strategy gives us a clear direction: grow visitor spending and extend the tourism season.

We have tremendous opportunities to build on PEI's reputation, develop new experiences and encourage visitors to stay longer, spend more and explore more of our Island.

But growth does not happen simply because we have a great destination.

**While our TIAPEI team continues to push forward with new projects, training, advocacy and activities, we need to see that same commitment from the industry itself.**

TIAPEI can create opportunities, provide resources, bring people together and advocate for the conditions businesses need to succeed. But we cannot do the work for individual operators.

Meaningful and sustainable growth requires all of us to keep moving forward. It means investing in our people, improving our products and services, embracing training, collaborating with other businesses and looking for opportunities to do things differently.

It also means thinking beyond the traditional summer season.

Our food, culture, communities, events and experiences give us opportunities to attract visitors at different times of the year. But extending the season takes more than marketing. It requires businesses to develop products people want to experience, invest in their operations and work together to create reasons for visitors to come.

We also need to be thoughtful about how we grow. Success is not just about bringing more people to PEI. It is about generating greater value, supporting viable businesses, creating quality employment and ensuring tourism benefits our communities while protecting the natural and cultural assets that make this Island special.

Our work on climate resilience, including the completion of our Climate Risk Assessment and Adaptation Plan, is part of that longer-term responsibility.

We have an opportunity to build an industry that is not only economically stronger, but better prepared for the challenges ahead.

Ultimately, our strategy will only be successful if we work together. TIAPEI, government, tourism partners and individual operators all have a role to play. We need alignment, commitment and a shared understanding of what we are trying to achieve.

## Looking ahead

As we look to the year ahead, our focus remains on supporting our members, strengthening our advocacy and delivering practical initiatives that help tourism businesses succeed.

We will continue to develop training and resources, build partnerships, create opportunities for industry collaboration and advocate for the investment and policies needed to keep PEI competitive.

We will also continue to challenge ourselves as an organization. We need to remain responsive to our members, thoughtful about where we invest our time and resources, and focused on work that makes a real difference.

I want to thank our Board of Directors for their leadership and support, our government and industry partners for their collaboration, and our members for your continued engagement and trust in TIAPEI.

And I want to recognize Alex, Ryan, Lori, Colleen and Kelley once again. I am proud of what this team continues to accomplish. Their commitment and willingness to keep bringing forward new ideas, projects and opportunities are a big part of what allows us to move this industry forward.

To our members, I encourage you to keep engaging with us, take advantage of the resources and opportunities available, and continue looking for ways to strengthen your own businesses and the visitor experience we collectively deliver.

We have a strong industry, a clear direction and tremendous opportunities ahead of us. But we cannot become complacent. We need to keep investing, keep improving and keep making the case for tourism's value to this province.

Tourism is a major economic driver for PEI. It supports our businesses, our communities and the services Islanders rely on. We should be confident in that contribution and ambitious about what we can achieve.

TIAPEI will continue doing its part. I look forward to working with all of you to ensure our industry continues to grow in ways that are meaningful, sustainable and beneficial to Prince Edward Island.

Thank you.