

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### ***South Georgian Bay Tourism Celebrates 45 Years of Regional Tourism Promotion!***

**September 2023** – Forty-five years, five municipalities, two counties, five hundred tourism operators at its peak, and millions of tourism-based revenue and visitors - South Georgian Bay Tourism (SGBT) has a lot to celebrate in 2023!

Established in 1978 as the Jozo Weider Information Centre and renamed the Georgian Triangle Tourist Association in 1982. The founder, George Weider, son of Jozo and a former President of the Georgian Triangle Tourism Association, continued the legacy of his father who was an entrepreneurial visionary and the founder of Blue Mountain Resort. His vision for regional tourism extended well beyond the ski slopes. Though Jozo passed away in 1971, the Weider family carried on his legacy, bringing his vision to life at Blue Mountain and throughout the region. The Jozo Weider Information Centre, which later became the Georgian Triangle Tourist Association, played a key role in the economic development of the area, with participation and support from hotels, service businesses, and municipal governments. “It was a fitting tribute to my father Jozo, who launched the ski industry in 1941 and built an impressive year-round resort operation over the next thirty years,” says George Weider.

In addition to the evolution of the Tourist Association, the local economy has significantly evolved over the past 45 years. Tourism is now a substantial economic driver for the region. In 2019, the regional municipalities that make up the South Georgian Bay area drew more than eight million total visitations! The South Georgian Bay region is well-known throughout the province and beyond as a year-round destination for adventure, relaxation, exploration, and outdoor-inspired recreation. SGBT’s anniversary celebrates cooperation and participation across five municipalities and two counties for over four decades. Wasaga Beach, Clearview, Collingwood, Blue Mountains, and Meaford have all worked collaboratively on a common goal of providing memorable experiences for visitors and locals alike.

Sheila Metras was the original Executive Director and held the position from 1978-2006, carrying the organization through several economic downturns and the digital revolution. Metras prides her tenure on relationship-building across municipal and county borders. “Alone, you do not have the ability to sell yourselves as a tourist destination. But combine Blue Mountain and Collingwood with the longest freshwater beach and beautiful harbours in Thornbury & Meaford - it’s a no-brainer!”

Scandinave Spa Blue Mountain is one of many regional businesses that relies on tourism that have worked with SGBT and benefitted from their tourism promotion efforts. “While the tourism industry has evolved over time from information centres to competitive online marketing, SGBT has ensured relevancy with smart, innovative, and effective marketing products & services. SGBT continues to be a reliable source for all there is to see & do, in every season across South Georgian Bay,” says Mylisa Henderson, Director of Marketing for Scandinave Spa Blue Mountain.



To mark the occasion, SGBT will be hosting flag raisings throughout participating municipalities and the celebration will culminate with an anniversary celebration in November 2023. Details and invitations to this event are forthcoming.

### **About South Georgian Bay Tourism**

South Georgian Bay Tourism is the official In-Destination Education and Marketing Organization for Collingwood, the Blue Mountains, Clearview, Meaford and Wasaga Beach.

SGBT is Ontario's 4 Season (365 days) playground, unified by water, rugged landscape, and adventurous people and stitched together by popular places. South Georgian Bay has significant assets that are unique to the region, Ontario, and Canada. These points of differentiation set it apart from other destinations.

To learn more about SGBT and its rich history, follow along on social media and visit [www.southgeorgianbay.ca](http://www.southgeorgianbay.ca). SGBT is an incorporated not-for-profit led by a volunteer board of directors made up of industry leaders within the regional tourism business community.

Explore your next adventure in South Georgian Bay at <https://visitorguide.southgeorgianbay.ca>.

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