

Experiential tourism set for Annapolis Digby

Workshops look at everything from niche marketing to blogging

Article online since November 26th 2008, 13:50

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Early snow did not deter 21 operators in the Annapolis Digby region from participating in the third of a series of experiential tourism workshops held in Cornwallis last week.

On November 17 and 18, 25 people spent two days delving into the opportunities for cuisine related tourism, and Friday and Saturday saw 21 other operators – some of whom attended both workshops - look at the opportunities afforded by new technology to create and market experience-based tourism. This builds on the successful experiential tourism workshops held in the region last November.

“We are on the cusp of an emerging food, culinary and experiential tourism explosion,” said Michael Howell, executive chef of The Tempest restaurant in Wolfville, at the cuisine workshop on Monday. “We need to be ready.”

Vicky Graham, who owns Hooking by the Sea Retreats on Brier Island, is ready.

“I want to use this workshop to experience more learning about how to make my business grow using e-marketing, and getting input from other operators on how to work together to expand experiences and audiences.”

GROWING INTEREST

Hosted by the Annapolis Digby Economic Development Agency, the workshop capitalized on the growing world-wide interest in experiential tourism, and the fact that visitors and guests are using on-line technology to search for travel opportunities.



Participants in an experiential tourism workshop last week in Cornwallis, had their laptops out and were learning the fine art of blogging, just one of many exercises tourism operators can apply to their own businesses. Submitted

“We are delighted that so many operators have joined us for this workshop,” said Joy O’Neill, development officer with the development agency. “We need them to make this succeed.”

Celes Davar, the workshop leader, is no stranger to this area. He and Todd Lucier have brought their skills and innovation to the tourism industry here.

“We are here to discover the hidden gems in the Valley – like peeling back the layers on an onion to reveal those local resources that are magical for our visitors,” said Davar.

Brendan Enright from Lightning Tree Vineyard near Bear River is delighted with the exposure this session is providing for networking opportunities.

“Part of success is being able to let people know where you are – we all have to get out there,” he said during a break from learning the art of blogging.

LOTS TO LEARN

The participants learned about niche markets interested in experiential tourism, how to craft experiences, how to reach these people via the internet in new and innovative ways, and most importantly, how to do this as a community.

“This as an opportunity to learn new ways to collaborate with others in the community, to apply web-based social media for the benefit of all and for marketing,” said Paul Stackhouse co-owner of the Hillsdale House Inn in Annapolis Royal.

Davar owns and operates Earth Rhythms Inc., an experiential learning and travel company that specializes in customized outdoor and enrichment experiences for his clients. He is an award winning tourism crafter / trainer / broker from Manitoba. Todd Lucier is the principle facilitator of Tourism Key Internet Marketing Training, and founder of Northern Edge Algonquin Inc. He has been demystifying technology for tourism businesses since 2000, and has trained thousands of individuals on how to use the internet to enhance client relationships and grow a sustainable business.

To learn more about experiential tourism visit www.tourismcafe.ca