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NEWS RELEASE

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RTO12 Launches International Marketing Campaign to Build American Visitation *The initiative will target travelers in four major cities.*

BRACEBRIDGE, Ont. (April 10, 2018) – Explorers’ Edge has developed a new international marketing initiative to attract Americans from four major urban centres and to also build a database of leads to target should commercial air service into the Muskoka Airport (YQA) become a reality in the next year, said Executive Director James Murphy today.

Also known as Regional Tourism Organization 12 (RTO12), for two years the provincially-funded agency has led the charge to introduce commercial air service into Muskoka, including building the business case for such a service, conducting outreach with the airline industry, and coordinating logistical requirements with municipal, provincial and federal stakeholders, including Transport Canada. RTO12 is pleased to have partnered with the District of Muskoka for much of this work, added Murphy.

“The commercial air service project is an incredibly important opportunity for economic development in our region, and we are delighted to be moving forward with it,” he said. “We are, however, in a holding pattern as we await royal assent of the omnibus Bill C49 in the Canadian parliament because an amendment within this Bill would allow smaller airports to access the Canadian Air Transport Security Authority’s (CATSA) screening services, which must be in place in order to attract a commercial carrier to the Muskoka Airport.”

Murphy says while RTO12 and the District of Muskoka wait out Bill C49’s passing, the organization has moved forward with its international campaign targeting high potential markets in Boston, New York City, Washington and Chicago, in order to get on the travel consideration set of audiences in those cities.

“We know that the United States is Ontario’s number one market for international visitors, and we want to make sure they are coming to this region of the province. Research shows us that longer stays for these travelers are trending upwards, and we hope to get them interested now for

the time when commercial air service becomes a reality in our region, which will make their decision to come here even easier.”

Murphy added that it is not known how long Bill C49 will take to be passed by both the House of Commons and the Senate, but he is hopeful it will be in time for a summer 2019 service.

“A lot of great work has been done on the commercial air service project to date, and we are simply waiting for the political arena to catch up so we can move forward once again.”

RTO12’s new international campaign is funded in part by FedNor, Destination Ontario and the District of Muskoka.

“We are grateful to these partners for recognizing the importance of building international visitation to the region and for working with us on this project, which will be supported additionally by the RTO’s core marketing budget.”

Murphy says the new campaign, which relies on sophisticated social content marketing strategies, will run until September 2018.

About Explorers’ Edge:

Explorers’ Edge (RTO12) is the regional tourism organization for Algonquin Park, the Almaguin Highlands, Loring-Restoule, Muskoka and Parry Sound funded by the Ontario Ministry of Tourism, Culture & Sport. With some of Canada’s most iconic natural landscapes within its borders, including those that inspired the Group of Seven painters, and recognized as one of the most popular travel destinations in the province, Explorers’ Edge promotes travel to the great Canadian wilderness just north of Toronto in all four spectacular seasons.

More information is available at www.explorersedge.ca

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