



# EXPLORERS' EDGE

RTO12 Industry Status  
March 25, 2020



# Governance

- RTO12 Board meeting yesterday – some of the Directors are going to join us today
- Motion to approve bridge financing for the RTO while we wait for Q1 TPA payment
- TPA payment also being expedited in order for the RTO to continue to operate and to help our industry right now – very good news because otherwise our work can just stop

# Municipalities: Call To Action

- Heard loud and clear this week from operators was the need for immediate municipal tax relief (with payment deadlines looming at the end of March)
- Yesterday, in response, the RTO12 Board sanctioned the development of official request to municipalities in the RTO12 catchment to assist SMEs, so they can maintain liquidity
- This letter is posted to [RTO12.ca](http://RTO12.ca) and is being distributed to municipalities today

# Municipalities: Call To Action

- This letter is posted to RTO12.ca and is being distributed to municipalities today



3 Taylor Road, Bracebridge, ON P1L 1S6  
1-800-835-7303  
Algonquin Park, Almaguin Highlands, Loring-Restoule, Muskoka,  
Parry Sound & South Algonquin  
www.explorersedge.ca



*Tuesday March 24, 2020*

***AN URGENT PLEA TO ALL ELECTED MUNICIPAL OFFICIALS AND ADMINISTRATORS IN THE  
RTO12/EXPLORERS' EDGE GEOGRAPHICAL CATCHMENT REGARDING IMMEDIATE SUPPORTIVE  
MEASURES FOR TOURISM SMEs IN RESPONSE TO COVID-19***

**To Whom It May Concern:**

The tourism industry accounts for 13% of this region's GDP and is one of the top three industry employers here; in fact, this region relies on tourism for economic development more than any other area in Ontario.

The bulk of the industry is composed of SMEs that are now facing challenges never before seen as a result of Covid-19, and which could be potentially compounded by the prospect of spring flooding and a global recession.

Measures legislated (or slated to be legislated) by the federal and provincial governments to combat the varying effects of Covid-19 have been, though necessary, disastrous for our regional tourism industry, and we are now faced with the reality that, unless supported by all levels of government, many of our stakeholders will not be able to keep their doors open at all. This is not hyperbole or alarmism; data sets run by the Canadian Federation of Independent Businesses, the Tourism Industry Association of Ontario, and the RTO's business consultant concur.

The RTO12 Board and its staff are working tirelessly to ensure tourism SMEs in our region not only survive this unprecedented crisis, but are also able to thrive on the other side of it. To that end, on behalf of my fellow Directors, the Executive Director and tourism SMEs in our region, I am writing to inform you that the most pressing issue facing them is the need for tax relief or deferrals from municipalities, and the need for that to be enacted immediately (prior to March tax deadlines).

RTO12 COVID-19 Measures Pg.1

# Important Industry Intel

The Canadian Federation of Businesses published the results of their survey of Small Businesses across Canada

- **Highlights:**

- 11K responses since March 20
- 55% of businesses indicated they were partially or entirely shut down
- More than on third reported a decrease in gross revenues greater than 75%
- One quarter have laid off staff and 53% said they will do the same in the next two weeks without help
- CFIB is lobbying hard for 75% subsidy of employee wages like Denmark and the UK – 10% currently going through federal legislation not considered enough to keep people employed or to sustain them

# Important Industry Intel

The Canadian Federation of Businesses published the results of their survey of Small Businesses across Canada

- 30% of businesses survey say they can survive LESS THAN A MONTH under current conditions
- 41% say they can survey 1-3 months
- We need higher wages subsidies for employers wanting to keep people on payroll
- Loans will potentially add to the burden of business – therefore we need other relief measures, such as deferred tax, and possibly lump sum payments to sustain businesses (rather than loans)



# Additional Intel

Tourism Industry Association of Ontario also surveyed tourism stakeholders

- 35% of respondents have already laid off staff
- 52% of respondents have shut down already
- ***Need for regional-specific numbers in order to inform our Regional Development Agency – FedNor RTO12 ACTION ITEM***

# RTO12 UDPATES

- Lobbying for tax relief for businesses from area municipalities to ensure liquidity
- Adding voice to calls for greater wage subsidies and cash flow to businesses (not just loans)
- Advocating for a loosening of rules for BTIF grants (eliminate 50 cent collars from Parry Sound Muskoka Community Network so businesses can pivot to e-commerce)
- Continue to meet with the Minister – there is a round table with operators and we want to get that opened up to all
- Develop immediate mini seminars to assist tourism business owners with “scenario planning”



# RTO12 UDPATES

- Updating FedNor representatives and working on additional funding for immediate operator assistance
- **OPERATOR CARE**
  - This is a big one; more and more distress calls are coming into the office and we take the time to listen and follow up. VERY IMPORTANT
  - Mental health issues regarding affects of Covid-19 stress on owners and staff need to come to the front burner
  - Operator to operator networking very important during social isolation

# RTO12 UDPATES

## Marketing (traveler retention)

- Peter has sent recommendations and will speak to those, and post them on the rto12 site.
- Talking to Destination Ontario tomorrow

# Audience Retention

This screenshot shows the Facebook profile of Explorers' Edge. The profile picture is the Explorers' Edge logo. The page name is "Explorers' Edge" with the handle "@ExplorersEdge". A navigation menu on the left includes Home, About, BookDirect, Photos, Videos, YouTube, Pins, Twitter, Posts, Instagram, Google+, Flickr, Events, Services, Shop, Notes, Offers, Jobs, and Community. A "Promote" button and "Visit Ad Center" link are at the bottom of the menu. The main content area shows a post from Explorers' Edge, published by Kate Edge on March 17 at 5:12 PM. The post text reads: "COME GATHER AROUND THE EXPLORERS' EDGE SOCIAL DISTANCING CAMPFIRE! To help us stay connected while we are all far apart (let's flatten that curve!), Explorers' Edge will be doing a series of posts called 'Campfire Comfort: Tales From Cottage Country.' Tune in daily to hear and read interesting snippets about our region and our tourism businesses, and add your own campfire stories. We look forward to the day when the world comes back again, but for now, let's gather around and listen to some tales. Watch the video and learn what it's all about! (NOTE: in the spirit of keeping up morale when we are all rising to the social distancing challenge, negative comments will be shut right down 🙄) #flattenthecurve #campfirecomfort #socialdistancing #hunkerdown #explorersedge". Below the text is a video thumbnail showing a person in a blue hoodie and a black beanie with the Explorers' Edge logo, wearing sunglasses. The video title is "Social Distancing with Explorers' Edge".

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**Explorers' Edge** Published by Kate Edge [?] · March 22 at 8:39 PM · ⚙️

The Explorers' Edge #digitalcampfire is getting a little more crowded from across the nation! Gather 'round for Mark Dunn in the Sing Song Rainbow Connection Throw Down! 🎸🎵🎶 #stayconnected #campfirecomfort #socialdistancing




572 Views

**M.D. Dunn**  
March 22 at 3:01 PM

Could not resist this call out by Charlie J. Angus for #virtualcampfire performances of "Rainbow Connection" to support Explorers' Edge. Sorry, it's not by a campfire. I am city-locked. #digitalsingsong #socialdistancing

**Explorers' Edge** Published by Kate Edge [?] · March 22 at 8:35 PM · ⚙️

The Explorers' Edge #digitalcampfire Sing Song Throw Down is on! Thanks John Emms for another lovely version of The Rainbow Connection to soothe us all until we can be together again! #campfirecomfort #socialdistancing #accousticfun




1,865 Views

**John Emms**  
March 22 at 6:58 PM

These are indeed trying times. So Here is my take on Rainbow Connection from The Muppet Movie on the challenge from Charlie Angus. Cheers

**Explorers' Edge** Published by Kate Edge [?] · March 22 at 3:19 PM · ⚙️

MP Charlie Angus from Timmins-James Bay joins the Explorers' Edge #digitalcampfire for Week One of the Sing Song Throw Down and gives a shout out to tourism operators going thru it right now. Check out the pinned post for details - a new Sing Song Throw Down every Saturday night around the campfire and gift certificates up for grabs for when we are all travelling again! His dog steals the show!! 🐕🎸🎵🎶 #socialdistancing #keepgoing #campfirecomfort #stayconnected Thank you Charlie!  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-O79D2LC2YU>



YOUTUBE.COM

**CHARLIE ANGUS CAMP FIRE SING SONG THROW DOWN**  
Helping out Ontario tourism operators with a virtual campfire celebration....

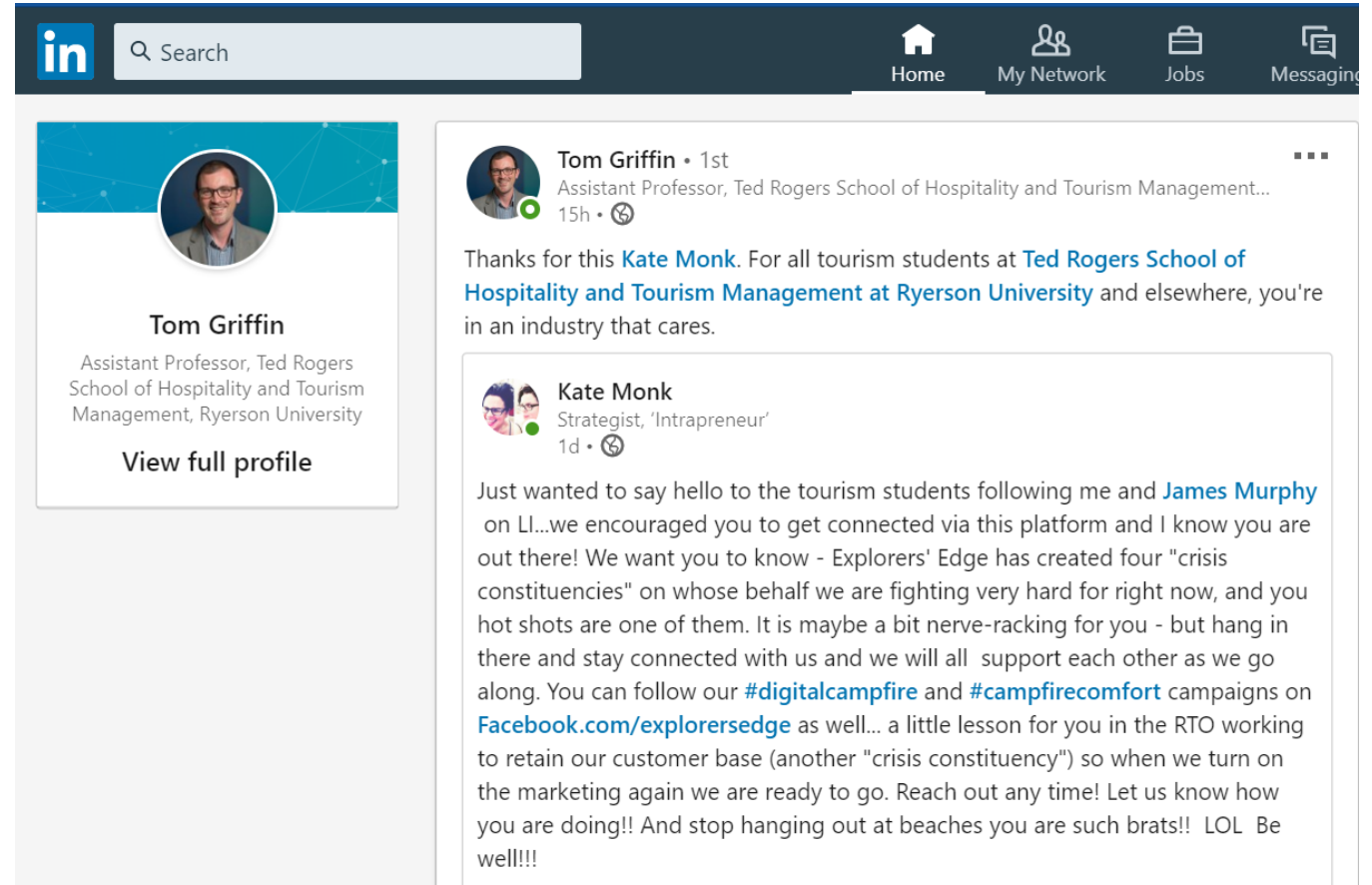
11,981 People Reached      222 Engagements      [Boost Post](#)

👍❤️ You and 37 others      5 Comments 6 Shares

👍 Love      💬 Comment      ➦ Share      🌐

# RTO12 UDPATES – Students (Retention)

- Continue to teach to finish the semester
- Motivation on Linked In



The screenshot shows a LinkedIn profile for Tom Griffin, Assistant Professor at Ted Rogers School of Hospitality and Tourism Management, Ryerson University. A post from Tom Griffin, dated 15 hours ago, thanks Kate Monk for her support of tourism students at Ted Rogers School of Hospitality and Tourism Management at Ryerson University. The post includes a quote from Kate Monk, a Strategist and 'Intrapreneur', who encourages students to stay connected and follow campaigns like #digitalcampfire and #campfirecomfort on Facebook.com/explorersedge. She also mentions a lesson about retaining a customer base during a crisis and encourages students to reach out and support each other.

**Tom Griffin**  
Assistant Professor, Ted Rogers School of Hospitality and Tourism Management, Ryerson University  
[View full profile](#)

**Tom Griffin** • 1st  
Assistant Professor, Ted Rogers School of Hospitality and Tourism Management...  
15h • 🌐

Thanks for this [Kate Monk](#). For all tourism students at [Ted Rogers School of Hospitality and Tourism Management at Ryerson University](#) and elsewhere, you're in an industry that cares.

**Kate Monk**  
Strategist, 'Intrapreneur'  
1d • 🌐

Just wanted to say hello to the tourism students following me and [James Murphy](#) on LI...we encouraged you to get connected via this platform and I know you are out there! We want you to know - Explorers' Edge has created four "crisis constituencies" on whose behalf we are fighting very hard for right now, and you hot shots are one of them. It is maybe a bit nerve-racking for you - but hang in there and stay connected with us and we will all support each other as we go along. You can follow our [#digitalcampfire](#) and [#campfirecomfort](#) campaigns on [Facebook.com/explorersedge](#) as well... a little lesson for you in the RTO working to retain our customer base (another "crisis constituency") so when we turn on the marketing again we are ready to go. Reach out any time! Let us know how you are doing!! And stop hanging out at beaches you are such brats!! LOL Be well!!!

# Weekly Action Items

- RTO12 to organize “Scenario Planning Webinar Sessions” for owners (which will also include how to navigate legislation)
- REGIONAL SPECIFIC SURVEY LAUNCH TO INFORM DECISION MAKERS
  - How much do you need to get through this summer?
  - How much do you need to get through to next summer?
  - Are federal, provincial, municipal programs enough and are they being delivered fast enough to save you
  - Advocacy for grants not loans or deferrals (we will do a calculation for funders)

**NOT WAITING FOR PROGRAMS TO SAVE US**

**WANT TO INSTEAD PRE-EMPTIVELY SHAPE THOSE PROGRAMS TO ENSURE THEY WILL  
NEED REGIONAL SPECIFIC INTELLIGENCE**

**NEED SMEs to commit to filling out this important survey by Monday at 5pm**