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News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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1000 Islands tourism business confidence survey: Results show soft season, high hopes

Alexandria Bay, New York -- The 1000 Islands International Tourism Council's annual tourism business confidence survey confirmed that some tourism operators in the region experienced a soft summer season in 2006.

According to Gary DeYoung, the Council's Director of Tourism, while more than a third of those surveyed said 2006 was better than 2005 for their own business, 7% said their business was "much worse."

"What we're finding this year is a 'perfect storm' of negative impacts," said DeYoung. "Weather, border security issues and high gas prices were all cited as having negative impacts on this past summer's tourism."

But, as is typical with these surveys, bad news for some tourism operators was good news for others.

While 35% saw the season's weather as a negative, 41% say it was a positive. Commenting on how a wet summer can be seen as a positive for some tourism operators, DeYoung said, "A little bad weather can be good for some businesses. A rainy day will often encourage visitors to go shopping, visit an indoor attraction or treat themselves to a nice meal. As long as the long-term weather forecast hasn't prevented visitors from coming in the first place, some clouds have a silver lining."

Another changing factor is the US-Canadian dollar exchange rate. In the early part of the decade, a discounted Canadian dollar was seen as a positive lure to Ontario. The impact of a

near-par Canadian dollar is now seen as a positive by 45% of New York respondents. In 2005, 29% of New Yorkers saw the exchange rate as positive as opposed to 9% in 2004 and 4% in 2002.

Despite the soft 2006 season, the long-term trend shows most tourism operators remaining bullish on their business prospects, with 65% reporting they expect their business to improve over the next five years.

The survey also asked operators their opinions on priority geographic markets and preferred media for advertising. A slight surprise in the response was how highly ranked Pennsylvania was by operators as a market. Ontario operators ranked Pennsylvania as a higher priority than any Upstate New York metro area and 22% of New York operators ranked it as a number one priority. DeYoung muses, "This really confirms the tourism value of developing the Capital Corridor concept, focusing on I-81 and 401 as a key trade route."

"We have conducted this annual survey since 1999, and it is an important tool in helping us understand business trends over time and providing the Council with input on planning and evaluating its programs," said DeYoung."

A complete copy of the survey can be accessed at the Council's tourism industry website at www.ticouncil.com, click "Tourism Data."

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