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News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Tourism professionals from Northern New York and Southeastern Ontario will cultivate their similarities and commemorate their historical differences May 6 at the region's sixth bi-national Tourism Summit. The summit is hosted every two years by the 1000 Islands International Tourism Council. This year's theme is *Enhancing Cultural Connections: Heritage & Performing Arts*. Fittingly, it will be at the Clayton Opera House, a fine example of how community investment in the arts can benefit the 1000 Islands.

The day-long summit will include workshops, tutorials and networking. Featured topics to be discussed by guest speakers are the War of 1812 Bicentennial, Performing Arts Venues and Cultural Tourism Planning and Packaging. There will also be an update on the latest from the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative, for which new land-crossing requirements take effect June 1.

"The natural beauty of the 1000 Islands is well-known," said Gary DeYoung, council tourism director. "That's why we wanted to focus this year on how the region can better market itself as a destination for performing arts and historically significant events. Our scheduled speakers are experts at promoting cultural tourism, be it in theaters or recreating historical military engagements."

Lynn "Spike" Herzig, Geneva, is a tourism consultant whose clients have included Orpyland, the country of Mexico and General Mills. He has crossed the state explaining how tourism offices can reap the rewards of incorporating arts, culture and heritage into their attractions. He will provide summit attendees with the best practices and current trends in cultural tourism packaging and marketing.

Representatives of the Sackets Harbor Battlefield will give an overview of the significant local engagements of the War of 1812 and discuss plans by the St. Lawrence War of 1812 Bicentennial Alliance to mark the 200th anniversary with commemorations and re-enactments along both sides of the border. They will be joined by officials from the Alliance, Fort Henry National Historic Site of Canada and the Great Lakes Seaway Trail National Scenic Byway.

Leaders of performing arts venues and promotion organizations in Clayton, Brockville, Gananoque and Kingston will detail how significant investments and improvements to theaters have buoyed tourism and share thoughts for growing their success.

Approximately 100 tourism professionals are expected to attend. The event is held every two years, with its location alternating between the two sides of the border. Presentations will be from 9 am to 3:30 pm, with registration and a coffee & pastries mixer beginning at 8 am. Registration is \$25 CDN or \$20 USD for the day, lunch included.

To register for the summit, contact Janet Ainsworth, TI Tourism Council, 315-482-2520 or janet@visit1000islands.com.

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