

A person wearing a brown winter jacket and a grey beanie stands with their back to the camera, looking into a vast ice cave. The cave is illuminated with vibrant blue and green lights, creating a magical atmosphere. Large icicles hang from the ceiling, and the walls are covered in intricate ice formations. The person is standing on a snow-covered floor.

# Growing Through the Crisis 2020 Report to Members

Tourism Industry Association of Alberta (TIAA)

Photo Credit: Robin Tuck @robtuck1

# Chair's message

While the pandemic crisis has been exceptionally hard on Canada's tourism industry, Alberta was already facing unprecedented, structural economic challenges that preceded COVID-19. The dual effect of these crises on the provincial economy, combined with an increased societal attunement to the role sustainability must play in all dimensions of our economy, positions tourism to be a key economic driver for the future.

Recovering and growing the visitor economy to new heights is going to take all the effort industry can muster. Focusing on becoming a \$20B industry by 2030 must be our collective aim. Our province's reputation as trailblazing entrepreneurs isn't just something that serves us in good times alone: it summons the grit and determination necessary to reinvent and weather difficult circumstances.

In this context, your voice matters more than ever. The industry's voice matters more than ever. And, TIAA's voice, as a proxy for all the connected sectors that comprise the visitor economy, matters more than ever.

I want to say a special thank you to those industry colleagues that have stepped into this space to help make TIAA a reality, specifically, those businesses that joined the association as members, and, those who agreed to become part of the founding board of directors. Your time, leadership and passion for the future of our industry has been an inspiring reminder that our best days in this industry definitely lie before us.



**Alida Visbach, Board Chair**  
Tourism Industry Association of Alberta (TIAA)



Photo Credit: Travel Alberta / Mike Seehagel

## TIAA Founding Board of Directors (2019/2020)

**Alida Visbach, Former President and CEO**  
Heritage Park Historical Village  
Sector Represented: Events and Attractions

**Bob Sartor, President & CEO**  
The Calgary Airport Authority  
Sector Represented: Transportation

**Robin Locke, Vice President, Strategy & Corporate Development**  
Lake Louise Ski Resort  
Sector Represented: Attractions & Events

**Jace Anderson, Executive Director**  
Tourism Medicine Hat  
Sector Represented: Destination Marketing/Management Organizations

**Dan DeSantis, Area General Manager, Calgary**  
Calgary Airport Marriott In-Terminal Hotel, Delta Hotels Calgary Airport In-Terminal, Westin Calgary Downtown  
Sector Represented: Accommodation

**Arlindo Gomes, Vice President, Venues**  
Edmonton Convention Centre, Edmonton EXPO Centre  
Sector Represented: Meetings, Conventions & Incentive Travel (MCIT)

**James Overall, Dean, School of Hospitality and Tourism**  
Southern Alberta Institute of Technology (SAIT)  
Sector Represented: Post Secondary Institutions

**Ryan Robb, Chief Executive Officer**  
Stoney Tribal Administration  
Sector Represented: Indigenous

**Dan Arndt, President**  
ZZA Hospitality Group  
Sector Represented: Food and Beverage

**Leanne Shaw, Board Chair**  
Alberta Hotel & Lodging Association  
Sector Represented: Industry Associations

# Growing through the crisis

## Reflecting on a Year of Unprecedented Change

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Photo Credit: iStock

TIAA was formed late in 2019 to support a provincial goal of becoming a \$20B industry, believing that Alberta's tourism industry should be the driving force of sustainable, community economic development.

The timing couldn't have been better for a provincial tourism industry association to be created, as the pandemic crisis that erupted early in 2020 stretched businesses' management capacity to the limits and necessitated a proxy voice that could work in the best interests of the whole of the visitor economy. It would also offer a single point of contact that government could work through to contextualize the needs of business operators.

Prior to COVID-19, Alberta's visitor economy supported 23,000 businesses and 72,500 full-time equivalent jobs, accounting for 3.2% of all full-time equivalent jobs in the province.

Although the impact of the pandemic has been deep and left no segment of the visitor economy untouched, this is all the more reason why Alberta's goal of becoming a \$20B industry by 2030 must now - more than ever - be supported by a whole of government approach to support integrated policy-making, strategic infrastructure investment, and, business environment to encourage risk taking and new product development.

TIAA is excited about the future of Alberta's visitor economy and the challenge to more than double its economic impact over the next decade. We are committed to work with industry partners, government, investors, visitors, and, the citizens of the province to make this a reality.

# Advocating for the recovery of the visitor economy



## Call to Action Report

While the full economic impact of COVID-19 won't be known for some time, it has been well established that tourism has been one of the hardest hit sectors in the Canadian economy.

Following the guidance of eight senior tourism sector leaders and input received through more than 20 sector associations, the TIAA-authored Call to Action report resulted in 40 actionable recommendations to assist the government in taking immediate actions to ensure Alberta's tourism industry is in a position to weather, and recover, from the pandemic crisis.







Throughout the crisis, TIAA's board of directors has been laser-focused on identifying and managing risks facing the visitor economy by advocating for financial and policy supports that will ensure the survival of all segments of the visitor economy.

TIAA presented a comprehensive state of industry overview to the Standing Committee on Alberta's Economic Future on October 21. This was an opportunity to socialize visitor economy needs, to speak to the priorities that will assist with the recovery and advancement of the industry's growth, and, to summon government's attention to the need for a whole of government approach to support the industry.

TIAA advocated for and was pleased with the announcement of the new position of Parliamentary Secretary (PS) of Small Business & Tourism to support the recovery and growth of the visitor economy; the association continues to work closely with the PS.

Aligning our advocacy efforts with those of other provincial and federal partners (eg. Coalition of Hardest Hit Businesses) has, and will continue, to be key to support the industry's recovery.

TIAA also participated in regular discussions with the Tourism Industry Association of Canada (TIAC) and its provincial and territorial tourism industry association counterparts to ensure quick and responsive actions were taken on emergent threats to tourism sector survivability.

COVID-19 RISK REGISTER		2020	2021
	<b>BUSINESS LIQUIDITY</b> Sustained fiscal stimulus supports remain in place until the market returns to near pre-COVID-19 levels	EXTREME	EXTREME
	<b>PREDICTABLE MARKET ACCESS</b> Standardized health and safety protocols, guidance for businesses & visitors, introduction of travel bubbles	EXTREME	EXTREME
	<b>VIABILITY OF AIRPORTS &amp; AIRLINES</b> Liquidity, route viability, federal fees re: air travel costs, security & nav. fees, excise tax on fuel, etc.	EXTREME	EXTREME
	<b>HEALTH &amp; SAFETY PROTOCOLS</b> Ongoing business measures/investments to ensure health and safety of workers, visitors and members of the community	EXTREME	HIGH
	<b>COVID-19 SPIKES</b> Business and workforce resilience in the face of the possible shut-down of the economy (eg. by region, sector, etc.)	EXTREME	HIGH
	<b>TIAA RESILIENCE</b> Association's ability to support the needs of industry through this crisis while ensuring its own operational sustainability	EXTREME	EXTREME

# Measuring success

The policy actions prescribed by TIAA are intended to provide restorative capacity to the industry and place it on a solid foundation to advance toward becoming a \$20B industry by 2030. TIAA is committed to benchmark its efforts against the following aims:

## Visitor & resident health

Protect visitor and resident health by minimizing the risks for transmission of COVID-19 through tourism. Restore visitor and host community confidence in, and support for, travel.

## Recognition & commitment

The visitor economy is recognized and invested in as a priority industry for the diversification and recovery of Alberta's economy.

## Accelerate recovery & avoid long-term impacts

Long-term economic, employment and social impacts on the visitor economy from COVID-19 are prevented and recovery and resilience of the industry is accelerated.

## Improve lives & communities

The lives of Albertans and their communities are improved by the visitor economy.

## Sustainability

Alberta will become a showcase for leadership in sustainable tourism and the implementation of the UN's 17 Sustainable Development Goals.

## Celebrate & conserve cultures, heritage & the environment

Alberta's cultures, heritage and natural environment are celebrated and conserved through the visitor economy.

## Strong leadership & accountability

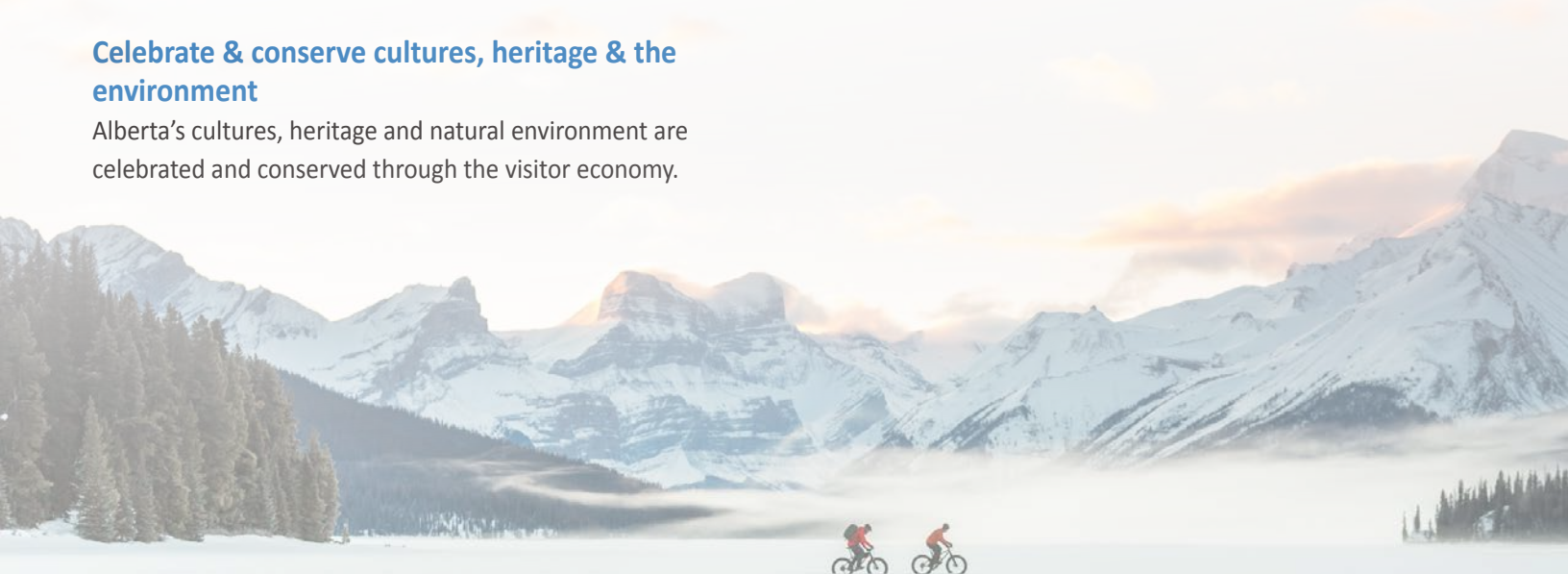
Strong and accountable leadership ensures our shared vision for the accelerated recovery and sustainable growth and resilience of the visitor economy is championed.

## World class destinations & visitor experiences

Alberta's competitiveness as a destination of choice for Canada and the world is elevated through the development of new world class regional destinations including David Thompson Country, Crowsnest Pass and Castle and Lakeland Country. Existing destinations continue to be enhanced.

## An enabling business climate

The enabling policy and regulatory environment on public lands, in Alberta parks and in municipalities within priority destinations recognizes the importance of the visitor economy and supports private sector investment, creation of new destinations and visitor experiences, and creation of jobs.



# Industry & stakeholder engagement

In addition to building functional organizational capacity in its inaugural year, TIAA was focused on providing guidance and support in the development of health and safety protocols and, acting as a communications conduit for smaller segments of Alberta's visitor economy. Other capacity building efforts included:

- publishing a high-impact industry newsletter 3-4x/month with a focus on providing: timely policy insights, summary of association advocacy efforts, and, reference to new industry reports and economic impact studies.
- amplified association messaging by effectively using TIAA's website and LinkedIn to disseminate timely information and engage the membership (eg. TIAA has attracted nearly 500 followers)
- one-on-one supports to business on matters of legislative interpretation;
- provincial and federal advocacy efforts aimed at ensuring funding resilience for DMOs and tourism sector associations;
- organized a tourism industry associations roundtable early in pandemic crisis to help inform government on issues facing the industry; shared a cross-sector issues summary to different associations to promote awareness and alignment on sector-specific issues
- TIAA's board chair serving as the co-chair of the Red Tape Industry Panel for Tourism & Hospitality
- relationship building with key elected and government officials to support TIAA's policy aims
- participated in 10-year tourism strategy consultation sessions and contributed a formal policy submission



TIAA is committed to supporting the education and training needs of members by organizing high-impact, low cost learning opportunities; this includes the curation and promotion of sector-specific events that can assist with building the overall leadership and operational capacity of Alberta's visitor economy.

TIAA's partnership with western Canadian law firm, MLT Aikins, led to the delivery of a 4-part webinar "Travelling Forward" that focused on business interpretation and application of Bill 32 (Restoring Balance in Alberta's Workplaces), insurance and risk management considerations, pandemic-related corporate restructuring issues, pandemic-related immigration, and, securing foreign labour. The event was offered free to TIAA members, representing a training and educational value of approximately \$500/attendee.

TIAA hosted an Industry Breakout Session at the recent Tourism Industry Association of Canada's (TIAC) Tourism Congress with more than 230 Alberta participants. The panel included Parliamentary Secretary of Small Business & Tourism, Martin Long, and Travel Alberta CEO, David Goldstein.

An Alberta Tourism Advocacy Day that had been planned in the spring to coincide with TIAA's AGM was cancelled in light of Covid-19. TIAA is committed to organizing an event, just as soon as the time is right.

# Going forward

The visitor economy is literally “everyone’s business”. As a representative voice of business, employment and lifestyle experience for countless Alberta communities, the policy recommendations TIAA advances and the measures the government implements now, during the height of the pandemic crisis, will truly influence the character and capacity of our industry for years to come.

If you’re a TIAA member, thank you. Your support in ensuring the association was successfully launched has mattered greatly to ensuring the industry’s future economic resilience. If you’re not a TIAA member, you are encouraged to consider the opportunity not from the perspective of cost but rather, as a partnership investment with an organization that is here to help manage organizational risk, and the issues facing the entirety of the visitor economy.



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