

**From the Chair:**

March has arrived in the Heart of the Continent and with it surprisingly warm spring weather. The area we live in is gorgeous, temperamental, urban and wild. It is an asset which keeps many of us living here and draws people from all over the country and the world.



It was HOCP's energy and amazing wild lands within its boundaries that led National Geographic to invite us to participate in their Geotourism Initiative. As they have learned we are much more than the Boundary Waters and the Quetico. And we have learned much about ourselves through their process. This Thursday and Friday we kick off the finalized products of this effort. I want to thank Jim Dion of National Geographic and Mary Somnis, one of our steering committee members and staff at the IRRRB for their incredibly hard work in making this happen. And also John Cameron and Doug Franchot, Mary's co-chairs on the project. Others who helped are too numerous to name but I want to note that this wouldn't have been possible without the nearly 60 people who formed the design team and our steering committee. Now there is more hard work to do and go out and enjoy the coming of spring.

Frank Jewell  
*HOCP Steering Committee Chair  
and St Louis County Board*

**EDCO Award Press Release**

The Economic Developers Council of Ontario (EDCO) recognized excellence in economic development initiatives from Ontario communities February 12. Hosted at the Hamilton Convention Centre, the 58th annual Awards Gala was the final event of an outstanding three-day conference. The Gala, in conjunction with the prestigious Presidents' dinner, gathered over 300 industry leaders who came together to celebrate and recognize the contribution of their peers.

One hundred and twenty-nine award submissions were made for projects commencing in 2014 by communities from across the province. Among them, Atikokan Economic Development Corporation (AEDC) was recognized for its efforts in the Heart of the Continent and its Geo-tourism site campaign.



"We've been fortunate to have such strong leadership on both sides of the border, which has made this project very easy to get behind," said the AEDC's Gord Knowles. "Both the Heart of the Continent Partnership and its Geo-Tourism project (done in collaboration with National Geographic) embody the types of tourism projects that are viable, sustainable and celebrate the spirit of tourism in our region that we want to foster and grow."

**National Geographic Geotourism Initiative.**

You may have brought this newsletter home from one of the three venues that we have scheduled for the media launch of The Heart of the Continent Geotourism map-guide and web-site. That would mean that you took part in our celebration. We appreciate and welcome participation and hope that the passionate efforts of all who were involved in making this happen inspire others to join us. The landmark project has taken two years to plan and execute and is a historically significant for all who live, work and play in the Superior border lakes region that we call Heart of the Continent. [www.traveltheheart.org](http://www.traveltheheart.org)



**Partners words:** "The Heart of the Continent Partnership builds a regional spirit of cooperation. I am proud that Quetico Provincial Park is involved in this important partnership that brings land managers, businesses, municipalities and others together from both sides of the border."  
*Trevor Gibb—Superintendent Quetico Provincial Park*

**Recap of HOCP quarterly meeting**

Laurentian Environmental Center  
Britt, MN—13-14 November, 2014

A well attended late Fall meeting near Britt MN was held at the Laurentian Environmental Center. Evening talks by Brian Bluhm, Kristin Foster, Jim DeVries were of local partnerships within the Iron Range. Friday Ardy Nurmi-Wilberg, Bob Manzoline –uniting the towns of the Mesabi Trail. "I don't care if my hockey team hates your hockey team. We're all on the Mesabi Trail."

Laurentian was a wonderful setting and we had some great networking

**Next HOCP Meeting: June 25 –26  
2015—Fort Frances Ontario  
Dragon Boat festival June 27**

