Orillia’s Got Talent: Attracting Tourists with Nonstop Entertainment

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Abstract

The cottage country in the Province of Ontario is a major tourist destination. Bringing tourists into a specific part of cottage country requires a unique attraction. When one thinks of Orillia, Ontario, for example, one thinks of author Stephen Leacock’s fictional town, Mariposa. When one thinks of Mariposa, one thinks of the Mariposa Folk Festival. While this is the key event in Orillia’s tourist program, it by no means stands alone. The Jazz Festival, the Blues Festival, the Beatles Celebration, and other musical events have been linked with art, drama, comedy, literary, and other cultural events to create an extended summer of tourist attractions. This paper discusses the development of this cultural tourism program and examines its success at drawing tourists to Orillia, contributing to the redevelopment of the downtown, and providing employment alternatives to a bygone industrial community.

Keywords: urban tourism, cultural economy, economic development, downtown redevelopment

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Holiday resorts usually attract tourists because of their sunny beaches, their snow-covered ski-slopes, or their golf courses. In addition, they frequently offer other kinds of entertainment to their guests. At the ski resorts, it is often an atmosphere of informality, at a cosmopolitan resort like Miami Beach, it may be night clubs and stage shows. In San Juan, in addition to legal gambling, there are historical sites in the old city or tropical rain forests only a few miles away. Many of the resorts give instruction in scuba diving combined with visits to coral reefs. And of course most of t

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