

## Rain, rain go away

Maritime tourism officials want good weather — and tourists — to arrive

By KEVIN BISSETT The Canadian Press

TOURISM OPERATORS in the Maritimes are hoping the recent spate of bad weather has only caused a rain delay in travel, and not vacation cancellations.

Officials say while they don't have any firm numbers yet, they have seen a drop in business, especially among people travelling within the region.

Faced with travelling an hour or two away, some prospective visitors are changing their plans, said Darlene Grant Fiander, president of the Tourism Industry Association of Nova Scotia.

"I think it impedes spontaneous travel," she said. "We have to embrace the weather that we have, and there are still a lot of things that can be done — a lot of attractions and great events throughout the province and the Maritimes."

"Hopefully people will still get out and enjoy those things."

Claude Cote, a meteorologist with Environment Canada, said the Maritimes have received rain everyday since June 18.

He said a system in the jet stream has affected the entire eastern half of the country from the Great Lakes to the East Coast.

"Typically a system like this lasts four or five days . . . but this has lasted much longer than normal," said Cote.

Real Robichaud of the New Brunswick Tourism Industry Association said visitors from outside the region are still arriving, but may have to change their plans if they had planned to camp or do other outdoor activities.

"Based on research, people coming to the province are on a flexible itinerary," Robichaud said.

"Certainly you're not going to see people lining up on the beaches, but then again there are plenty of other activities."

Organizers say weather was one of the reasons for a poor turnout at a weekend festival in Charlottetown.

Police estimate 4,000 people took in the two-day Festival of Lights concert, down from 14,000 last year.

Don Cudmore, executive director of the Prince Edward Island Tourism Industry Association,

said while the season has gotten off to a bad start, it can recover.

"If the weather would co-operate from here on in, we certainly have time to pick it up," he said from his office in Charlottetown.

"When people decide to come, we'll be able to accommodate them."

The tourism operators are hoping a number of major outdoor concerts over the next few weeks will help improve their revenues.

A two-day country music festival, featuring Tim McGraw and Reba McEntire is set for Cavendish, P.E.I., this coming weekend, while Paul McCartney rocks the Halifax Commons.

As for the forecast, Cote said the region can expect better weather later in the week, but showers return on the weekend.

CLOSE WINDOW

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