



Inaugural ThinkOttawa Gala Recognizes Local Industry Leaders

Ottawa Tourism, Shaw Centre, and Invest Ottawa proud of ThinkOttawa 2019 successes

OTTAWA, November 29, 2019— The inaugural ThinkOttawa gala was held last night at the Shaw Centre in celebration of local champions who work to bring international conferences to Ottawa. The event recognized those involved in successful bids within the last five years (2012-present) and those to be held in future years. From this group, 21 local ambassadors who have worked with ThinkOttawa during their bid process were recognized.

ThinkOttawa is a joint initiative managed by Ottawa Tourism, the Shaw Centre, and Invest Ottawa. The program launched in April 2019, and exists to increase local conference hosting through support to local industry, academic, government, and non-profit leaders looking to raise the international profile of their industry, association, or research by championing a bid to bring a global, national, or regional conference to Ottawa. Expertise and tools available to local leaders include bid development, marketing and promotional materials, venue and accommodation selection, partnership support, and financial aid for eligible events.

At the gala, 21 ambassadors who have bid on and won 17 international conferences held from 2012-present and looking towards future years were recognized, such the International Association of Firefighters Conference 2022 and the International Society of Paediatric Oncology 2020 Congress. The upcoming international conferences brought to the city through this initiative are estimated to bring over \$20 million in spending, filling 40,000-70,000 room nights.

ThinkOttawa looks forward to continuing to work with local ambassadors to attract more meetings to Ottawa. Industry leaders looking to host an international event or interested in submitting a bid to host a conference in Ottawa can visit www.thinkottawa.com for more information.

Quotes

“Ontario delivers the world in one province, and thanks to the work of the 21 ambassadors recognized at the ThinkOttawa Gala, we are welcoming delegations from across the globe to our doorstep,” said Lisa MacLeod, Minister of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries. “We all share the common goal of showcasing Ontario and our nation’s capital as a place of innovation, excellence and opportunity. I want to thank Ottawa Tourism, InvestOttawa, The City of Ottawa and the Shaw Centre for their commitment to the promotion of our city to the world and the continued growth of Ottawa’s tourism sector.”

- *Lisa MacLeod, Minister of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries*

“The City of Ottawa is proud to support and work with Ottawa Tourism, Invest Ottawa and the Shaw Centre to help attract international conferences and events to the nation’s capital. Through our collaborative efforts, we’ve successfully hosted several major conferences that have had a significant economic impact for our local economy and have helped put Ottawa on the map as a world-class destination. I’d like to congratulate our industry leaders who were recognized at the inaugural ThinkOttawa Gala, and I thank them for representing Ottawa so proudly on the global market.”

- *Jim Watson, Mayor, City of Ottawa*

“Ottawa Tourism is thrilled to be working with Shaw Centre and Invest Ottawa to support local ambassadors in bringing their meeting, event, or convention to Ottawa. These events represent an important component of the local economy, contributing to the overall figure of \$2.2 billion in visitor spending in an average year. Through this program, we look forward to increased economic activity in our community and raising our international profile. Ultimately, this will strengthen the visitor economy in Ottawa.”

- *Michael Crockatt, President and CEO, Ottawa Tourism*

“On behalf of the Shaw Centre and our partners, Ottawa Tourism and Invest Ottawa we are delighted by the turnout for the first annual ThinkOttawa Gala. It was a tremendous evening honouring the industry ambassadors who have worked tirelessly to bring the world to our wonderful city. The support shown last night, demonstrates the strength of the ThinkOttawa program and how it has raised the international awareness of Ottawa.”

- *Nina Kressler, President & CEO, Shaw Centre*

“Invest Ottawa is proud to be a ThinkOttawa partner, an alignment that seamlessly allows us to promote Ottawa as a leading business and tech hub, and create new innovation and business opportunities across key sectors and industries. This gala event affords us the important time to step back, and proactively celebrate and congratulate the local champions that are working to bring international meetings to Canada’s Capital, in turn driving business and investment for our city.”

- *Sonya Shorey, Vice-President Strategy, Marketing and Communications*

Media kit, including program logos, photos, video links, backgrounder, and media release available at: www.thinkottawa.com/media-centre/

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#ThinkOttawa

About Ottawa Tourism

[Ottawa Tourism](#) provides destination development and marketing, strategic direction, and leadership in cooperation with its members and partners, welcoming leisure travellers, business travellers, group tours, and conventions to Ottawa and Canada's Capital Region. Its goal is to support the local tourism economy, fueled by an estimated 11 million visitors per year and with \$3 billion in economic output for Ottawa, generating community wealth through tourism. Ottawa Tourism's vision is to offer the complete capital experience, tell the story of Canada, and get people talking.

About Shaw Centre

The [Shaw Centre](#) is an architectural icon in the heart of downtown Ottawa. With 192,000 square feet of state-of-the-art meeting space, it is ideal for conventions, meetings, trade and consumer shows, galas, receptions, banquets and entertainment. Step outside and you're within walking distance of national sights and historic landmarks—including the UNESCO World Heritage Site, the Rideau Canal—and 6,000 hotel rooms. Shaw Centre is highly accessible, an easy 20-minute commute from the award-winning Ottawa Macdonald-Cartier International Airport. Shaw Centre's modern, minimalist design combines form, function and flexibility, from the expansive, pillar-free Canada Hall to smaller meeting spaces. The centre is fully accessible with leading-edge technology infrastructure, environmentally sustainable features and practices recognized industry-wide. In 2018, the Shaw Centre hosted more than 400 events, including 45 conferences, boosting Ottawa's economy by over \$167 million in direct spending from out of town visitors.

About Invest Ottawa

[Invest Ottawa](#) is the lead economic development agency for Canada's capital, facilitating economic growth and job creation in the City of Ottawa. Guided by a vision to help realize Ottawa's full potential as a globally-recognized, innovative and future-ready city, and the best place to learn, work, live, and play, Invest Ottawa delivers venture development and global expansion programs and services that catalyze the growth and success of entrepreneurs and firms. These include: small business training; mentorship; acceleration for technology firms; foreign business and investment attraction; local business retention and expansion in targeted sectors; commercialization; and marketing Ottawa's diversified economy and high quality of life. Since 2012, Invest Ottawa has worked with thousands of startups, scale-ups and SMEs; helped firms to attract \$322 million in capital; contributed to the creation of more than 6,350 jobs; and attracted \$293 million in Foreign Direct Investment.