

N.B. tourism is an adventure

■ **Tourism operator travels province in an RV to share unique stories and places**

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What started as an idea to promote tourism in New Brunswick has turned into a summer long adventure in discovery for a married mother of two.

Yennah Hurley says she was sitting in a tourism meeting a few months ago and got the feeling there needed to be a more aggressive campaign for tourism throughout the province.

A former tourism operator herself in Saint John for six years, Hurley says in no way is she discrediting what Tourism New Brunswick does for the tourism trade in the province but she says we all need to do our part.

"I feel it is the responsibility of every New Brunswicker to promote our province and that is why I am doing this."

What Hurley is doing is spending eight weeks travelling throughout New Brunswick in a decked out RV visiting tourism sites, unique places, interesting businesses to see and hear what they are all about. Then she is sharing what she has learned and seen through social media. She has a Facebook page called Yennah's Edge, a website (www.yennahsedge.com), a twitter account and a YouTube channel.

"I was supposed to be a writing a blog too but I quickly learned you can't do everything."

But it is not for lack of trying. Hurley's schedule is jam packed until the end of August and she is adding something new every time she rolls into a city, village or community. She started her journey in Saint John, moved on the Gagetown and Fredericton along the River Valley Scenic Drive through the northwestern part of the province as far as Edmundston, then to Saint Quentin.

The next part of the journey took her along the Appalachian Range Route to Campbellton then to Bathurst and Petit Rocher on the Acadian Coastal Drive. From there she explored through Shippegan, Miscou and Tracadie-Sheila before moving onto the Miramichi area, spending time in Tabusintac, Escuminac and numerous places in between. And all along the way she has discovered things she never knew about and tried things she never dreamed she would do.

"I climbed Sugarloaf Mountain in Campbellton. I mean I would never do that but I did it and when I got to the top...what a beautiful experience."

Hurley's enthusiasm is contagious and



GAIL SAVOY/TIMES & TRANSCRIPT PHOTO

Yennah Hurley has spent three weeks travelling around New Brunswick visiting numerous tourism sites in her RV.

moved by that."

But she has also seen the passion shown in cultural pride. "I mean when I went to the northern part of the province, the Acadians, their culture. They have flags flying, poles painted...everything, I mean the culture and the pride is everywhere."

Hurley will be sharing what she has learned on her journey so far when she meets Premier David Alward in Woodstock Monday.

"I am going to tell him what I have been finding out about New Brunswick and what I think could be done regarding tourism."

Hurley hopes she has a voice left for the meeting because by Friday she was losing it during her visit to Miramichi and the Irish Festival activities were just getting underway. She said she had been going two weeks straight and was looking forward to a few days off to be with her family.

But Tuesday she will be hitting the road again and sharing more of her discoveries.

Hurley says this province has everything to offer - geography, scenery, culture but most of all, stories. "The



she wants to keep sharing it.

"I want to get people excited about what is in their own back yards."

Hurley is hoping to spur residents to be advocates and ambassadors of what is going on in their own province.

"We're citizens of this province and it is up to us, not any certain organization."

Hurley wants to get New Brunswickers excited right now about what the province has to offer. Using the social media tools allows her to have an instant conversations with people. There are comments on the photo albums she is posting from her various visits and on her videos. She is also on Shift, CBC's afternoon radio on Tuesday between 5:30 and 6 p.m.

"My mission is to get New Brunswickers excited about what we have and get them to tell others. There are a lot that don't even know what we have."

Hurley admits she is one of those people. "I didn't know anything about the Escuminac Disaster until I went there on Wednesday."

She says she was amazed at how it still affects the fishing villages along the bay more than 50 years after the disaster took place.

"The emotion, the passion. I was so

storytelling is amazing."

Hurley's efforts through social media mean she is not only reaching people in N.B., but tourists already in the province who may see her somewhere or hear her on the radio.

When asked about people's reaction upon meeting her, she laughed. "They think it's fun, they think it's exciting and they love hearing what I am doing."

Hurley has a videographer and photographer along with her on the trip documenting the entire process. Her plan is take all the footage she has and make a documentary about her trip.

"It will be about interesting people, places, escapes, places to eat, and experiences."

While shopping her documentary around, Hurley says she will also use it show people in government what is she has learned about tourism in the province.

"I'm not doing this to get money or anything like that from government, let's make that clear. I want people to know this is an entirely sponsored tour."

Through major funding sponsors Leisure Time RV, Signs Plus and Picaroons and the operators of the sites she is visiting, Hurley gets to experience New Brunswick.



GAIL SAVOY/TIME&TRANSCRIPT PHOTO

Yennah Hurley of Yennah's Edge poses beside the logo designed for her by Gene Fowler, owner of Loogaroo, a Miramichi animation and gaming studio.

"The operators are excited. I didn't have much resistance from operators when I went out asking for places to stay, places to eat, experiences. They were like, yes, come promote us."

Hurley's next part of the journey will take her to St. Martin's, St. Andrew's, Campbello Island on the Fundy Coastal Drive then back to the upper reaches of the Miramichi River to Boiestown, Doaktown and Blissfield where her husband is from.

Hurley says she will be in Caraquet on Acadian Day, August 15. "I am told if I want to really experience Acadian Day, I need to be in Caraquet."

She will finish her journey along the Fundy Coastal Drive in Kouchibouguac, Bouctouche, Alma, and a number of places in between.

For more information on Hurley's adventure go to www.yennahsedge.com.