

S.S. NORISLE CALLING

Devoted to providing regular updates on the progress of Northern Ontario's important marine development

CANADIAN HERITAGE STEAMSHIP TO BECOME MAJOR NORTHERN ONTARIO ATTRACTION

There's some very exciting news coming out of Manitowaning, a community that played an integral role in the early development of Manitoulin Island as the earliest European settlement and also, the main shipping port.

Manitowaning is home to the S.S. Norisle, the first passenger steamship built in Canada after World War II. Built at the Collingwood Shipyards in 1946, the Norisle provided regular seasonal passenger services from 1947 to 1974 between Tobermory (on the Bruce Peninsula) and South Baymouth (on Manitoulin Island).



The Township of Assiginack in conjunction with Friends of the Norisle is pressing forward to develop the opportunity of turning the steamship Norisle into a northern-based economic generator.

The Norisle measures 215'9" in length, has a beam of 36'3" and a draft of 16 feet. The ship was designed to carry 200 passengers, up to 50 vehicles and featured 58 staterooms that provided for overnight accommodations. Her extremely rare 1,000 HP triple expansion steam engine provides a cruising speed of 10 knots and a top speed of 12 knots.

The Norisle was retired from service in 1974 and later purchased by the Township of Assiginack in 1975 to serve as a floating marine museum and tourist attraction for the community of Manitowaning. Over the years, the ship has provided thousands of visitors with a "hands-on" interpretation of what earlier marine transportation was like on the Great Lakes. Most recently, she also served as a training ground and summer camp for the Sudbury based Navy League and Sea Cadets.

In the fall of 2006, the Norisle was threatened when her lower hull flooded. Although she was pumped

and secured, it became abundantly clear that new options needed to be explored as soon as possible to determine what the future can hold for our regional historic marine asset.

A group of compassionate citizens from across Manitoulin Island gathered at a public meeting and with the blessing of the Township of Assiginack - formed Friends of the Norisle.

Since the organization was formed, a number of dynamic opportunities have been envisioned in order to allow the Norisle to serve Ontario yet again. Fortuitously, through public support and excellent media attention, significant resource people and organizations have come forth and inspected the ship on a preliminary level; providing their recommendations and services not only to preserve the ship but also advising on the opportunities of reinstating her as a distinguished heritage cruise ship, prominent provincial tourist attraction and Ambassador to Ontario's northlands.

Based on these opportunities and the many examples of similar successful projects globally (there are approximately 200 heritage steamships serving as operating tourist attractions around the world today), the Township of Assiginack in conjunction with Friends of the Norisle is pressing forward to develop the opportunity of turning the steamship Norisle into a northern-based economic generator. This regional project is designed to create new jobs and foster new and diverse economic benefits, while generating innovative branding and marketing opportunities across northern Ontario.

Another Ontario Heritage Steamship success story is the R.M.S. Segwun. Since her return to public service in 1980 and becoming the most important large attraction in Ontario, her direct and indirect business benefits have become an economic pillar to the Muskoka region. Norisle's larger size, greater flexibility and broader Great Lakes operating scope presents numerous added northern region support opportunities.

The Friends of the Norisle Executive has established Terms of Reference to undergo a market / feasibility study that will determine ports of call and operating programs for the Norisle throughout the North

Channel and beyond. The study will verify support for such adventure voyages with passenger comfort and services designed to the highest standards that will be stately and complementary to her era. The study should be completed late spring or early summer of 2008.

Interest is clear for International tourism partnerships with bus and rail tour groups and large Great Lakes cruise ships, which cannot access the smaller ports or the most picturesque locations of the North Channel - yesterday's voyageur trade route and today's internationally popular cruising destination.

Opportunities include a broad range of classic passenger steamship experiences, including elegant day cruises to various locations, and week long multiple port and regional sojourns with stateroom comfort. All opportunities will provide a new and supportive awareness of the region's rich history, unique cultural diversities and developing attractions harmonized into a dynamic, educational and entertaining northern adventure.

The 200 plus and growing Friends of the Norisle are committed to returning our northern ship to the region she was originally designed and built to serve. She will provide a time voyage from the past, through the present and into the future.



The Norisle, a classic steamship provided regular passenger services from 1947 to 1974.

Norisle's call to service will develop a major self-sustaining regional attraction, while preserving and promoting one of the finest surviving examples of Canadian nautical history that sailed on the Great Lakes. The call of her steam whistle will unite the region's strengths for the ongoing support and benefit of future generations.

For additional information and to learn how this project may benefit your area, please contact:

Friends of the Norisle

P.O. Box 98 . Manitowaning . ON . P0P 1N0
www.norisle.com . info@norisle.com

MUNICIPALITY  OF ASSIGINACK

Corporation of the Township of Assiginack

P.O. Box 238 . Manitowaning, ON . P0P 1N0
(705) 859-3196 or 1-800-540-0179 . Rob Maguire EDO
www.assiginack.ca . asigmtg@amtelecom.net