



The Rebirth of The Hotel Acadia in Grand Tracadie

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Random people often stop me to talk, or to ask my opinion. I don't mind these encounters, but one question always makes me perk up:

"Tim, what are you doing out there in Grand Tracadie?"

Most people ask about the roads, buildings and the environment. But what I love most about these chats is how they give me a chance to talk about something we care about even more: Revitalizing a Community.

It's a poorly kept secret, but I'm happy to officially announce the opening of The Hotel Acadia at Blackbush. This marks the unveiling of the heart of our development and a big part of the growth of a more vibrant community in Grand Tracadie.

The Hotel Acadia, also known as the Lorne Hotel, was first built in 1872, just a few hundred metres from where its new namesake now stands. It was the economic hub of Grand Tracadie until 1906. The hotel was known for warm personal service. It was also a place for neighbours and visitors to relax, retreat, and enjoy the bounties of our Island. In those days, Grand Tracadie was a bustling community, with a health spa and busy fish market that drew people seeking relaxation and renewal. The community prospered because Islanders and visitors alike were welcome, and local entrepreneurs could thrive and work together.

Things started to decline quickly when The Hotel Acadia burned down. The next economic surge came twenty years later, during Prohibition, when rebel rum-runner entrepreneurs ran a lucrative trade by night. Decades later, it felt like the spirit of the community was broken by folks who abused the beach and left bottles and bonfire debris along the shore. Those days are over, Folks! The opening of The Hotel Acadia at Blackbush is a deliberate nod to the best days past, but also a hint of an even better future.

As our team worked this year on how to easily explain what Blackbush is all about, we landed on the slogan, "Experience Our Nature." It captures the full double meaning of our new vision. We want everyone who visits Blackbush to experience the feeling of awe of the dunes and the power of the sea. And, we want visitors to experience the warmth, creativity and kindness that define us as Islanders. Our local residents exemplify this. Some of us can be bossy assholes (what I'm mostly called). But underneath all that, most of us are pretty decent folks who are proud of Prince Edward Island and want this place to thrive. That's what Blackbush is about.

People I meet don't know this, but I like to explain that everything we do rests on a foundation of what we call Blackbush Standards. These include a commitment to environmental stewardship, personal service, and social enterprise. These pillars define everything we do. And it's working. Blackbush is now the biggest year-round employer in the area, after generating hundreds of well-paid positions since the Fall of 2021 in construction and trades. Locals, from teens to retirees, are finding new well-paying jobs as part of a creative resort team that we want to feel like family. We've made our best effort to work with local contractors and sub trades, and to engage local talent from musicians and artists to folks who work their magic in the kitchen. We're already proving it at "FiN", our casual family restaurant. And, in November, we'll open "Fluke", a unique dining experience with spectacular panoramic views from the top floor of The Hotel Acadia. More on this coming soon!

Blackbush will continue to grow as part of a great Community, Grand Tracadie (GT), aka God's Territory. Our beach will outshine the best, year-round.

So, yes, I like to talk about building things. But I really love to talk about building our vision for a prosperous and healthy Community. Come say hello at Blackbush. "We'd love to see yah!"