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# Region dealing with stay-at-home tourism since terrorism attacks

BY JEFF MITCHELL  
Staff Writer

Tourism in the wake of Sept. 11 terrorist attacks on the U.S. is a vastly changed industry, with destinations competing fiercely for travellers who want to find fun and relaxation close to home.

And York Region must take steps to ensure it secures its share of that market, a report to the planning and economic development committee concludes.

"Since (Sept. 11) tourism has experienced new challenges," tourism pro-

motion co-ordinator Brenda McGowan told the committee recently. "The stay at home mentality will be out there."

Terrorist attacks in the United States and the resulting air of anxiety that has shrouded the planet have had a chilling effect on the tourism industry everywhere, McGowan said.

But international travellers have not traditionally been the basis of the local tourism industry anyway, she said.

"The domestic market is the region's primary target," she said, adding 98 per cent of the market is from the domestic market. "We have a great

audience right on our doorstep."

What has changed is the level of competition as various markets attempt to woo those domestic vacation-seekers, McGowan said.

The region, she said, is working in conjunction with local tourism operators to promote York as a place to visit for recreation and as a destination for business travel as well.

The key to attracting such travellers will be to promote the region's attractions and accommodations, stressing the safety of York in turbulent times, McGowan said.

The focus of the region's tourism industry should begin with the Greater Toronto Area and York residents, expanding to Ontario at large with a focus on Eastern Ontario and on down to secondary markets in the United States and beyond, McGowan said.

Such attractions as golf, cultural sites and events and ecotourism should figure prominently in promotions.

The plan includes strategies for advertising as well as generating as much free editorial promotion as possible, she said.

Committee members endorsed the report.

Chairperson Frank Scarpitti of Markham said there may be opportunities to capitalize on a "pent-up demand for people to look for opportunities locally instead of travelling."



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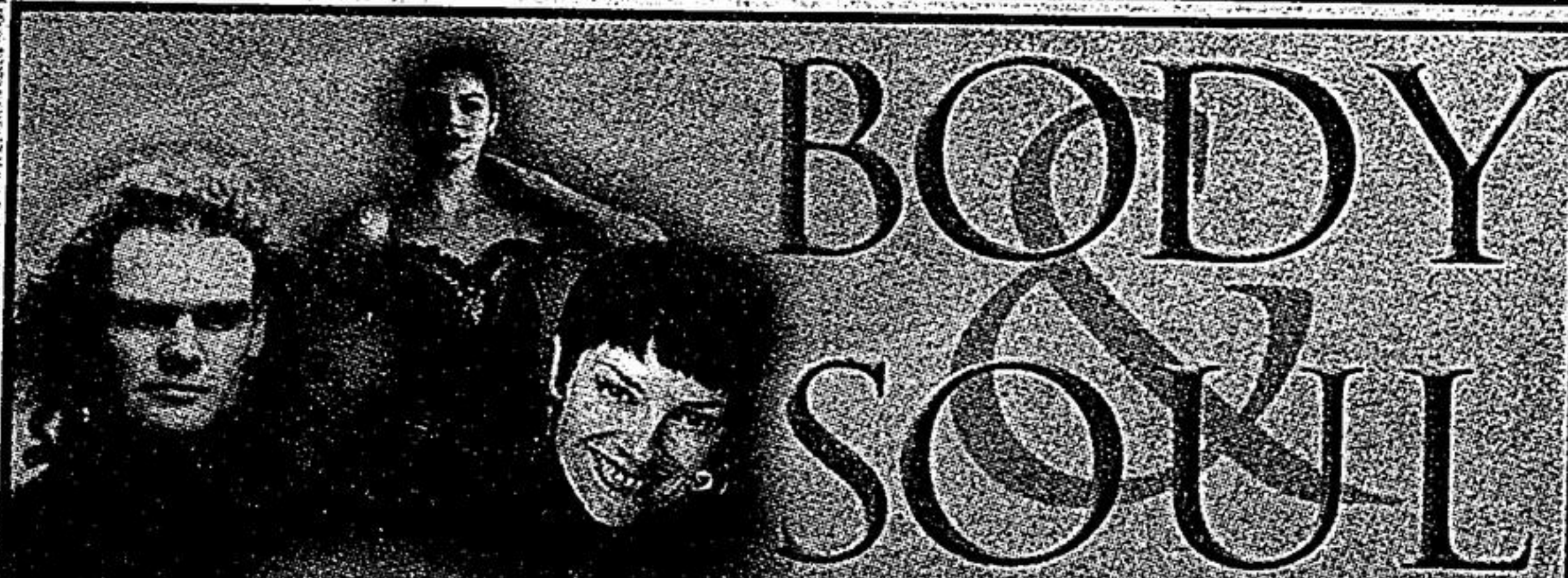
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