

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 20, 2026

Brockville Named Port of the Year by Tall Ships America

BROCKVILLE, ON — February 20, 2026 — The City of Brockville is proud to announce that Tall Ships Brockville has been named Port of the Year for the 2025 Great Lakes Tall Ships Challenge® Series.

Presented by Tall Ships America, this award recognizes the top performing host port based on excellence in:

- Attendance
- Social and cultural programming
- Sponsorship success
- Educational components
- Community impact
- Overall execution and collaboration

Brockville is the third Canadian city to receive this award since 2001.

“Brockville absolutely knocked it out of the park and kicked off our summer series by setting the bar very high,” said Erin Short, Director of Events & Communications with Tall Ships America. “Their ability to overcome challenges, lead their team of volunteers effectively, and create innovative solutions deserves the highest praise. The community of Brockville truly exemplifies the spirit of sail training and tall ships.”

The 2025 festival welcomed a fleet of visiting tall ships to the St. Lawrence River waterfront and generated an estimated 41,000 visits over three days. Online ticket sales exceeded \$308,000, with more than \$82,000 in gate sales, contributing to an estimated \$5 million in regional economic impact.

February 20, 2026

Held every three years, with 2025 marking the fifth time Brockville has hosted the festival, Tall Ships has grown from a modest celebration into a signature waterfront event and major tourism driver.

“This was an entirely new committee coming together for the first time to lead an event of this magnitude,” said Jeremy Newman, Chair of the Brockville Tall Ships Festival. “The record attendance, record revenues, and now this Port of the Year award affirm the strong foundation built by past organizers and reflect how our new committee approached the festival with preparedness, stewardship, and innovation.”

Tourism-driven events like Tall Ships create meaningful economic ripple effects throughout the community, supporting local hotels, restaurants, cafés, retailers, vendors, and attractions. In 2025 alone, the festival generated an estimated \$5 million in regional economic impact. Initiatives such as the Tall Ships Scavenger Hunt encouraged residents and visitors alike to explore Brockville’s downtown and surrounding neighbourhoods.

“Being named Port of the Year is an honour,” added Jen Devlin, Tourism Marketing Officer and Festival & Events Coordinator. “This recognition belongs to the leadership that has spanned more than a decade and to the sponsors, volunteers, City departments, Provincial partners, and the broader community whose collaboration made the 2025 festival possible.”

“On behalf of Brockville City Council and our entire community, I am incredibly proud of this recognition,” said Mayor Matt Wren. “Hosting the Brockville Tall Ships Festival is more than an event, it is a celebration of our maritime heritage and vibrant waterfront. This honour reflects the dedication of our volunteers, sponsors, staff, and waterfront partners who work tirelessly to deliver an exceptional experience for crews, visitors, and residents alike.”

February 20, 2026

Special thanks are extended to:

- Title sponsors - Canarm and Northern Cables
- Festival committee members Chris Culhane, Jeremy Newman, Kerey Bolton, Kelly Spicer, Nik Wever, Terry Gardiner, Winfield Sifton, Katherine Hobbs, and Meg Brazeau
- 130 volunteers who dedicated their time throughout the weekend
- The Brockville Tourism team
- City departments including Parks, Harbour, Water, and Public Works
- Provincial support through Ontario's Experience Ontario program
- Community sponsors and waterfront stakeholders

This recognition affirms that strategic investment in cultural tourism events delivers meaningful, long-term returns, not only during the festival weekend, but in the visibility, economic vitality, and community pride it fosters year-round.

We look forward to hosting the Brockville Tall Ships Festival again in 2028.

- 30 -

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