

**THE ANTIGONISH EVERGREEN INN**  
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We are living in a new age for entrepreneurs, with the internet taking over as the main place where clients can find pertinent information about the business which is of interest to them.

For the new owners of the Antigonish Evergreen Inn, this is good news, indeed.

Since they took over as owners of this little Inn, in July of 2008, which saw much practical work completed by “proprietors/host’s”, Lynne DeLorey-Vasil and Bill Vasil, the Inn has transformed itself from a relatively down-at-heel motel into a popular place for the visiting public - so popular, in fact, that it had to turn away many potential guests during the summer of 2009.

Today’s travellers look at websites such as [tripadvisorcanada.com](http://tripadvisorcanada.com), for information about where to stay while on trips. In the past few months, the Antigonish Evergreen Inn has been in the top 3 inns/motels **for all of Canada** on that website! This means that travellers, who have come to the Inn since its renovation, have taken the time to log onto the website, to tell others about the great service and welcoming atmosphere awaiting them at this little Inn.

The smiles and philosophy of proprietors / hosts Bill Vasil and Lynne DeLorey-Vasil have made this jump into the top category at that website easy to understand.

When one enters the cosy “office” one is greeted by the smell of rich coffee, part of Bill’s breakfast specialty, as well as tidy tables where breakfast is served. The walls boast photographs of Antigonish landmarks, highlights such as the Highland Games, as well as scenes from the natural beauty that surrounds this area of Nova Scotia - eagles, water, trees - all beaoning the visitor.

This is part of the philosophy of the Inn owners - underlining the beauty of this area, by the presentation and use of all things local.

Part of that “beauty” is what brings people back to this Inn. When asked what the main draw to this little motel is, Bill was quick to answer “We accommodate every guest needs”. This has included towing broken-down cars after having arranged for their repair, washing cars, taking people to the bus station, and picking up lost luggage which can be held for future pick-up. Of course, although pointing people in the direction of special events and especially interesting places is a main feature of the service offered by the Inn, its quietness and proximity to those interesting places gives it a unique quality .

We cater to the weary guest with easy access drive up units (no stairs), every possible amenity; and all large “spa-like” ensuite/private bathrooms. Other amenities include microwave, fridges, DVD's WiFi, coffee makers, etc.etc....

The whole experience, for the guest, must be good. The owners have created a feeling of trust in the business, and in themselves as owners of that business. It means that people will come back - and will tell others about their experience.

The internet is a place to tell those stories. And those stories have worked! They have meant that the Inn is looking forward to expansion from its current availability of eight rooms by the eventual construction of a second building which will allow the Inn to have not only a doubling of its capacity, but also a bigger breakfast area.

The fact that the owners live on the property, means that all visitors meet with these friendly and accommodating people at least once during even an over-night stay.

During the winter months, the people who are staying at the Inn are, often, in this area to work - at the new Wind-Farm operation, on the Trans-Canada highway expansion, at the Coady Institute, at St. Martha's Hospital. These people appreciate the “at-home” atmosphere and the friendship of the owners who are never far away. They are always there to address the needs of their guests.

This must be the reason there has not been one negative comment from any guest at the Inn since the new owners began their work. Suggestions made by guests - such as the need for better draperies for the individual entrance windows, to keep the light out during the night when all exterior Inn lights remain on, or the placement of a hook near the bath for easy towel access - have seen immediate implementation, with a “thank you” for the suggestion.

The owners are filled with enthusiasm, and this enthusiasm is catching. People who come to the Inn are made to know immediately that they have been accepted and appreciated, even when there is no room. The owners will find a place for these potential guests somewhere in the vicinity - and perhaps they will return to the Evergreen Inn in the future. Certainly, they will tell friends of their welcoming experience at the Inn.

To make it all work, of course, there are others - both family members, and employees - who work at the Inn. During the “peak season” there are three full-time and two part-time workers, as well as the owners. During the winter months, there are two part-time workers.

To assure that they keep informed about the community, the owners are active in the local community, as well as in business organizations such as the Chamber of Commerce, the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, AESTA, TIANS, and contribute to many charitable organizations. To give back to the community, they help by donating time and services to events such as the Visitor Information Center, charitable auctions, ie: Hospital Foundation Help Day and benefit fundraisers.

Watch this local business as it points the way to successful growth at a time of economic stress.