



Tourism Signage Review 2010

Executive Summary

Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island,
Ontario, Québec, Maine, New Hampshire,
Vermont & New Brunswick

Prepared by:
Department of Tourism and Parks and
Department of Transportation
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Tourism Signing Review 2010

Introduction

The Department of Tourism and Parks and Department of Transportation work cooperatively on tourism related signing for the Province of New Brunswick. Signing can be a contentious issue as it may be perceived differently according to the stakeholder.

It was therefore decided to send a representative from each Department to several neighbouring jurisdictions to take a closer look at tourism related signing programs available elsewhere. This report outlines the various signing programs available in other jurisdictions as well as in New Brunswick. The report also contains information on program costs, and the best practices and current issues for each jurisdiction. Each jurisdiction has had the opportunity to review the information in this report to ensure the accuracy.

Objective

The objective of the Tourism Signing Review was to obtain information on tourism signing programs in other provinces and states, to compare New Brunswick's tourism sign programs with these jurisdictions and to make recommendations to enhance, improve or update current New Brunswick programs. This was a joint mission, completed by the Department of Tourism and Parks and the Department of Transportation. Areas selected were Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia, Vermont, Maine, New Hampshire, Ontario and Québec.

The goal was to obtain information on the following:

1. Programs available to tourism industry operators.
2. Costs to the tourism industry,
3. How signing programs are working.
4. Signing "best practices".
5. How New Brunswick signing programs compare.

Methodology

A questionnaire was prepared and mailed to each jurisdiction prior to meeting with provincial or state representatives. New Brunswick staff travelled to each location to meet with representatives from both Tourism and Transportation departments and to observe signing in these jurisdictions.

In many cases, the actual signing was followed to observe the confirmation or follow-up signing from the main arterial or interstate highway system to the establishment being advertised and to obtain photographs of the signing programs.

Parts of the final results were obtained from a considerable number of documents provided by the jurisdictions as well as research obtained throughout the process.

The meetings included thorough discussions on tourism signing in each of the jurisdictions. The level of interest in the Tourism Signing Review and the quality of the participation from everyone was overwhelming. In most cases, many senior staff from the jurisdictions participated in the discussions.

Following is the Executive Summary of the review results. The complete Tourism Signing Report 2010 will be available upon request.

Executive Summary

For the most part, the information contained in the **Tourism Signage Review 2010** is based on tourism type signing along controlled access highways.

Key Findings

1. **Tourist Oriented Directional Sign (TODS) Program** – Out of seven jurisdictions visited, five have a program similar to the New Brunswick Tourist Oriented Directional Sign (TODS) Program and two have an Official Business Directional Sign (OBDS) Program, which is similar to TODS but is not limited to only tourism businesses.

In all jurisdictions, three or four signs are permitted per sign structure. It is understood that the visitor/motorist cannot read all the information on the sign structure. The jurisdictions advised that the visitor is looking for a particular location/attraction and the eye will scan directly to the sign face for the specific establishment name being sought.

Access Controlled Highways – Major Attraction Signs



NS MTASP Sign



QC PTE Sign



ON TOD Sign



NB TOD Sign

Major Attraction signs were introduced in New Brunswick in the late 1990's when private advertisements outside right-of-way were prohibited within 500 metres of the edge of the highway. One major attraction establishment per sign structure is allowed and the signs are designated for major attractions only. The sign size is determined according to the message on the sign however the signs are approximately 16' x 14' in size.

Compared to the other jurisdictions the New Brunswick Major Attraction signs are designed to be easily read on high speed highways thus increasing visibility and safety.

Note: In Prince Edward Island, Maine, Vermont and New Hampshire, attraction signs on access controlled highways are banned.

Major Attraction Sign Costs

Place	Initial Cost	Yearly Cost	18-year Cost
NB	\$12,320	As required	* \$12,320
NS	\$13,600	As required	\$13,600
ON	\$4,977	\$4,977	\$89,586
QC	\$2,187	\$729	\$15,309

* A Major Attraction sign in New Brunswick lasts approximately 18 years.

NOTE: The size comparison for the four jurisdictions varies considerably. (See page 21)

Regular Attraction Signs



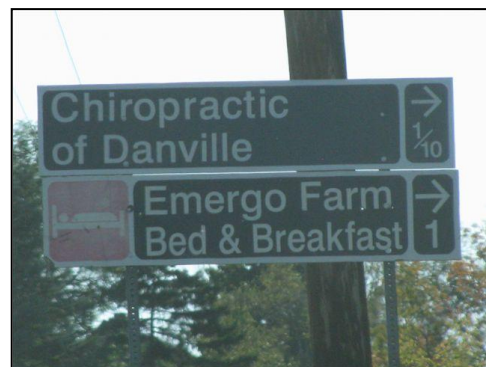
PE TDS Sign



ON TOD Sign



QC Tourist Facility Sign



VT OBDS Sign



NH TOD Sign



ME OBDS Sign

In New Brunswick, one establishment per TOD sign structure is allowed and the signs are designated for tourism operators only. The signs are designed to be easily read and include follow-up signs from the primary TOD sign to the establishment. Based on feedback and challenges from various New Brunswick tourism operators over the past few years, the majority of tourism operators are not fully aware of the signage programs available in general, and more specifically the TOD Signing Program for rural highways.



NBDOT TOD sign

Cost for Regular Attraction TOD-type Signs

<u>Jurisdiction</u>	<u>Initial Cost</u>	<u>Yearly Cost</u>	<u>6-year Overall Cost</u>
NB	\$ 600	\$ 100	\$ 1,200
PE	\$ 480	\$ 180	\$ 1,560
ON	\$ 4,977	\$ 4,977	\$ 29,862
QC	\$ 2,187	\$ 729	\$ 5,832
VT	\$ 560	\$ 450	\$ 3,560
NH	\$ 1,835	\$ 37	\$ 2,060
ME	\$ 560	\$ 112	\$ \$1,120

Note: In evaluating costs, note the size comparison for the jurisdictions vary considerably (see table on page 21). Also New Brunswick's cost is based on one sign per structure and all other jurisdiction's costs are based on three signs per structure.

It should also be noted that in New Brunswick, all follow-up signing is included in the initial cost of the Regular attraction sign which is not the case in any of the other jurisdictions.

All Costs are based on Canadian currency.

2. **Highway Advertisements (private signs)** – in Prince Edward Island, Maine, Vermont and New Hampshire, highway advertisements (private signs) are banned.

Nova Scotia prohibits signs within the regulated area, which is 1,000 metres (1 km) from the centre line of the highway and Ontario prohibits signs within the regulated area which is 400 metres (nearly ½ km) from the highway right-of-way (ROW).

Quebec prohibits advertising signs within 300 metres of the highway unless a permit is obtained from the Minister of Transportation in which case the advertisement sign is permitted 75 metres from the edge of the highway. Quebec does not limit permits to only tourism businesses.

In New Brunswick, the regulated area is 500 metres from the near edge of the travelled portion of the highway (white edge line). New Brunswick allows highway advertisements within this regulated area. Advertisements are allowed one metre outside the highway ROW which is generally 45 metres from the white edge line.

Note: signs in New Brunswick are limited to tourism businesses only.

Prince Edward Island and Vermont consider signage as having a negative impact on maintaining and preserving a scenic environment. Preserving the natural environment and protecting the scenic quality of their province/state takes priority over tourism signing.

3. ***Distance Between Sign and Business*** – In most jurisdictions, the distance a sign can be installed from the tourism business is considerably shorter than distances permitted in New Brunswick. Ontario's criterion is a maximum of 40 km. In Nova Scotia, the furthest distance between a sign and business is 38 km and in Quebec 20 km.

In New Brunswick, the distance a tourism sign can be installed from the establishment is 60 km if the sign is installed along a controlled access highway, and 25 km if the sign is installed along the secondary highway system.

Research recommends that the distance a sign be installed from an establishment not exceed 30 km for higher speed roadways (100 km/h or greater) and 20 km for lower speed roadways (less than 100 km/h).

4. ***Logo Program*** – four of the seven jurisdictions offer a Logo Program on controlled access highways with one of the four allowing logo signs to be installed only on the exit ramps. Several jurisdictions felt logo programs were unfair to most tourism operators, especially the smaller ones (not a level playing field). In two jurisdictions, logo sign programs replaced private advertisements outside ROW.

Vermont tested the value of a logo program with the consumer and the public reaction to a logo program was negative.



NS Logo Program



ON Logo Program



NH Specific Motorist Service Sign



QC Logo Program



ME Logo Program

In New Brunswick, a version of a logo program was introduced in 1997 and industry participation was extremely low. The majority of the tourism industry, which are smaller operators, believed the program to be unfair and inequitable. The program was discontinued after public consultations were held in 2000.

5. **Service Tab Signing** – all jurisdictions sign for police, hospital, etc. with service tabs. This report deals with blue service tabs only.

Four of the seven jurisdictions offer a Service Tab Signing Program, funded by Transportation, but three of the jurisdictions sign only for essential services (food, fuel, accommodation, visitor information, campgrounds and telephone). None of the jurisdictions visited offered a Rural Service Tab Signing Program for services on non-controlled access highways or local roads.

New Brunswick offers two service tab signing programs for essential services and tourism establishments.

- #1 The Blue stand-alone (BSA) service tab signs are installed along controlled access highways to advise motorists of essential services and tourism establishments available at each exit.
- #2 Rural service tab signs are installed along secondary highways for essential services and tourism establishments in rural New Brunswick.



NBDOT BSA Sign

Additional Promotional Programs – three jurisdictions developed an additional component to compliment the signage programs for the travelling public. In Prince Edward Island, the component is called “Map Stops”, in Vermont called “Travel Plazas” and in Ontario they are called “Tower Signage”. This component allows Tourism operators to purchase advertising space to promote their attraction in free-standing structures where large volumes of visitors stop/congregate.



PE Map Stop Sign



Vermont Travel Plaza

6. **Fairness** – all jurisdictions visited control signing within municipalities along controlled access highways.

In New Brunswick, along controlled access highways, cities and towns control highway advertisements outside the highway ROW within the municipal limits.

This is a challenge and confusing for industry as it creates another layer for the tourism industry in New Brunswick to deal with. It also reinforces the issue that some tourism operators do not have to follow the rules which causes frustration and anger for operators.

Tourism operators in New Brunswick consistently ask for:

- Fairness with all sign programs
- A level playing field (Same rules for everyone)
- Everyone to be required to follow the rules

7. **Administration of Signage Programs** – in the US jurisdictions, with the exception of “turnpikes”, and in most Canadian jurisdictions, Transportation departments are responsible to administer highway signing regulations.

In New Brunswick, depending on the location and/or type of sign, industry may be required to communicate with several administrators regarding the installation of a sign; i.e. DOT, Brun-Way Highway Operations, Maritime Road Development Corporation (MRDC), Dexter Transfield Systems or a city or town.

This can be confusing and very frustrating for industry, as well as for provincial government staff, to know which administrator to contact to access information.

8. **“Welcome To New Brunswick” Signs** – there is only one jurisdiction (Prince Edward Island) that changes the “Welcome To Province/State” sign message and design on a regular basis. All other jurisdictions have installed a more permanent type of “Welcome To Province/State” sign.

New Brunswick has “Welcome To New Brunswick” signs installed at all border entry points into the province. In the past, the message and design on the signs, at the major entry points, changed to reflect the tourism marketing message/branding. Changes occurred from summer to winter seasons and the designs were revised every two to three years.

Tourism and Parks will revise the “Welcome To New Brunswick” gateway signs in 2010 and 2011.





9. **Scenic Drive Signing** – all jurisdictions have a Scenic Drive type of program.

The Scenic Byways Program in the US is a national program where routes throughout the United States receive a national designation. This program includes government grants and is a very flexible program, but nationally, is very competitive. There is \$40 to \$50 million designated annually for the program throughout the United States and some state governments may match funds that are awarded to their specific state.

All provinces visited also have scenic drive type programs but signage appeared to be inconsistent and not as wide-ranging as New Brunswick's scenic drive signing. Next to New Brunswick's Scenic Drive Program, Quebec's Tourist Route Program appears to be well organized with defined criteria and standards for designating a tourist route. In addition, all costs associated with the designation and signing of a tourist route in Quebec are the financial responsibility of the lead organization of the tourist route.

Information for visitors on touring by scenic drive did not appear to be readily available in any jurisdictions.

Based on the jurisdictions visited, New Brunswick's Scenic Drive Program appeared to be more comprehensive than the other areas. The comprehensive approach of using highway signage, the Touring Guide, the Travel Map, the website, etc. works well but there are areas that can be improved upon. Although Tourism and Parks will continue to include scenic drives in Tourism Marketing Programs, municipalities and tourism operators need to play a critical role by promoting their scenic drive as widely as possible.

It should be noted that an improvement in New Brunswick for the 2009 season was the new design of the scenic drive symbols and changes to the highway signs. In most cases, the extruded highway signs at the beginning of each Scenic Drive and the trail blazers were enlarged (larger symbol and increased letter heights).



10. **Access to Signage Information** – most jurisdictions have websites where industry may access information on various highway signage programs.

New Brunswick also provides information on various signing programs available to the tourism industry through DOT's website and the Highway Advertisements Information Kit. Links to DOT's website are available on the Tourism and Parks corporate website as well as the Tourism Industry Association of New Brunswick's (TIANB) website.

A variety of information related to signing is on the Tourism and Parks corporate website to compliment the DOT website.

11. **Communication with Industry** – most jurisdictions have very little direct communication with the tourism industry regarding signing programs; other than the information provided on the websites, all jurisdictions communicate with the tourism industry through tourism associations.

Most of the jurisdictions indicated that, overall, industry is supportive of the regulations and the various signage programs.

Numerous jurisdictions noted that there will always be a few that want what they cannot have.

12. **Technology** – the modern day traveller uses a variety of tools such as travel maps, Map Quest and Google Earth websites, Global Positioning System (GPS) devices, etc. to provide directions or guidance to various destinations. Most jurisdictions felt the demand for highway signage will diminish as the use of GPS devices increase.

Also, any hand-held or portable device (PDAs, computers, etc.), that have the capability to download, can download maps and information from websites.

13. ***The Purpose of Tourism Signage*** – all jurisdictions identified that signage is consumer driven and based on the needs of the consumer (the motorist). The goal is to direct the consumer to the business.

All jurisdictions identified that signs are to be used for wayfinding and directional purposes only and not a means of advertising or promotion. This is further confirmed with research from an international expert on human behaviour related to highway signage, that on highways where speed exceeds 90 km/h, the motorist can only read and understand 8 to 10 words (less if photos or pictograms/symbols/logos are used).

All jurisdictions noted that highway signage is not a marketing tool and regulated that marketing type information is not permitted on highway signs. In most cases, signs cannot carry enough information to “sell” an unknowing visitor on a product or a location.

14. ***Enforcement*** – all jurisdictions believe that enforcement must be strict and swift to be fair to all operators. In jurisdictions where enforcement is strict, it appears that industry supported the regulations and some actually monitored their competitors. Quebec is in the process of amalgamating the two Acts regulating the installation of private advertisements and will implement an enforcement plan following the amalgamation.

In New Brunswick, operators consider the programs unfair when one operator is allowed to install an illegal sign and it appears no action is taken to remove the sign. Operators are frustrated, and in some cases angry, that it takes so long have illegal signs removed. Some have openly advised that it is worthwhile installing an illegal sign due to the length of time it takes the province to deal with it.

It should be noted that signs installed outside the highway ROW along level I and level II controlled access highways within cities and towns, fall under municipal bylaws. Therefore, it appears to the operators that the Province is allowing exceptions by allowing their competitors to install illegal signs.

15. ***National Transportation Associations*** – all seven jurisdictions are members of a National Transportation Association.

It is all-important to safety of highway users, that consistency of signing be maintained to best serve driver expectation and therefore provide the best opportunity to optimize safety related characteristics. Inconsistent traffic control devices, of which signing is one of the most visible, must be avoided if highway safety is to be promoted by the various jurisdictions.

In the USA, the national organization is the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), while in Canada it is the Transportation Association of Canada (TAC).

16. ***Digital Signage*** – most jurisdictions have not had requests for the installation of digital signs but two legislatures, Ontario and Quebec, have ruled against digital signs on highways due to the impact on safety.

17. ***Out-of-Province/State Signs*** – none of the jurisdictions allow out-of-province/state signs within their province/state.

Technology

The modern day traveller uses a variety of tools such as travel maps, Map Quest and Google Earth, GPS devices, etc. to provide directions or guidance to various destinations. Most jurisdictions felt the demand for highway signage will diminish as the use of GPS devices increase.

The use of GPS for travellers has increased considerably over the past few years. Over the next few years, the pressure will be on Transportation Departments to ensure all guide signs, route markers and street name signs are in place as the demand and usefulness for advertising type signing diminishes.

Best Practices

Following are common Best Practices identified by all jurisdictions visited.

1. The consistency in the design and layout of signs.
2. Defined criteria for businesses that qualify for signs.
3. The understanding that signs are wayfinding and directional only and are not used as a marketing tool.
4. Strict and swift enforcement of programs promotes fairness for all operators.
5. Transportation controls the installation of private advertisements on controlled access highways outside the highway right-of-way even through municipalities.
6. The responsibility for controlling sign clutter and maintaining a pristine and scenic environment.

Current Issues

Following are common Issues identified by all jurisdictions visited.

1. Space availability/limitations along controlled access highways in some areas for various sign programs.
2. Unlevel playing field for all industry operators i.e. exceptions for some and not others, sign decisions made contrary to standard highway practices, etc.
3. Cost of sign programs not covering actual costs for manufacture and installation.
4. Sign maintenance costs and time required to keep up with the volume of maintenance required.
5. Dealing with operators who want to install signs illegally.

Conclusions

Based on all jurisdictions visited:

1. It appears that New Brunswick and Québec have more signing programs available from a tourism industry standpoint.
2. The cost of a New Brunswick TOD sign is less expensive than all other jurisdictions visited (based on sign size and annual fees).
3. Sizes for TOD Attraction signs available to New Brunswick tourism operators are considerably larger than most jurisdictions.
4. Considerable efforts are made to ensure:
 - Fairness with all sign programs
 - A level playing field (Same rules for everyone)
 - Everyone required to follow the rules

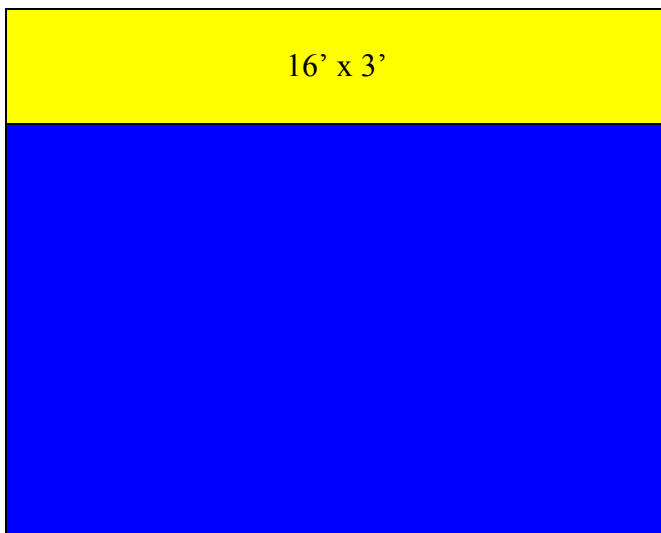
Major Attraction - Sign Size Comparison Controlled Access Highways

New Brunswick

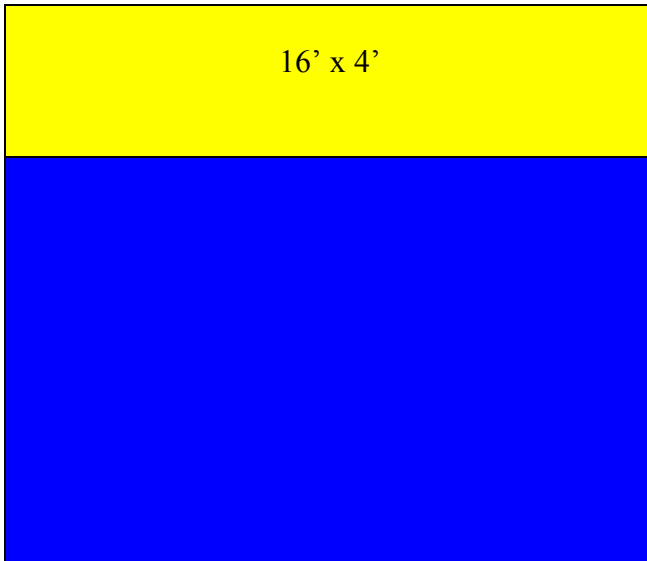


The full outline below is the average size of a Major Attraction sign in New Brunswick. The yellow is the size of the Major Attraction sign in the jurisdiction.

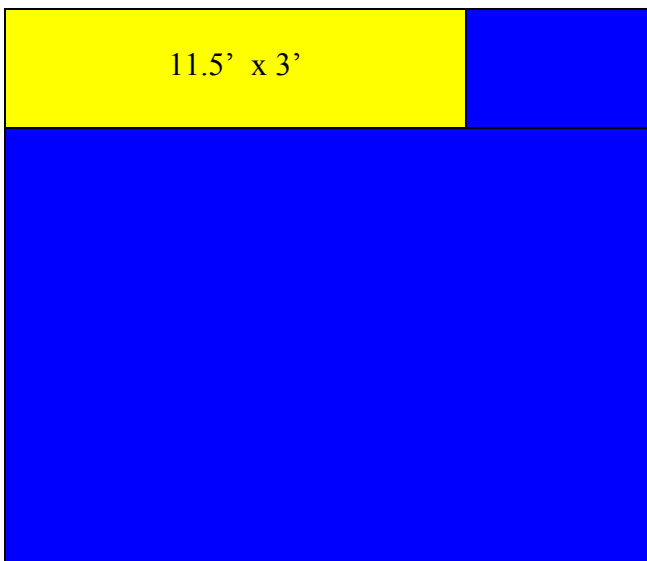
Nova Scotia



Ontario



Québec



Regular Attraction Sign Size Comparison Rural Highways

New Brunswick

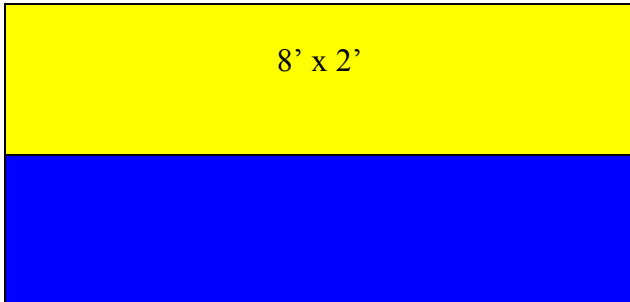


The full outline below is the average size of an Attraction sign on rural highways in New Brunswick. The yellow is the size of the comparable signs in the jurisdiction.

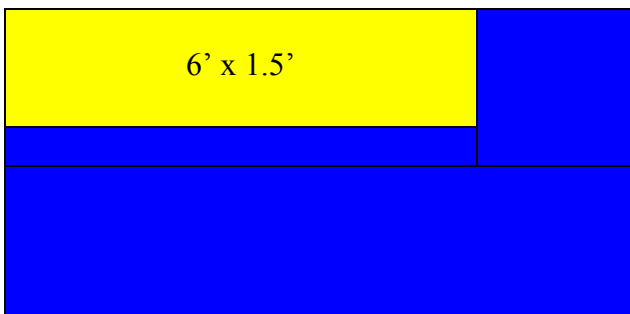
Ontario

18' x 1.5'	
	Square footage: Ontario = Rural 27 sq. feet Urban 40 sq. feet NB = 40 sq. feet

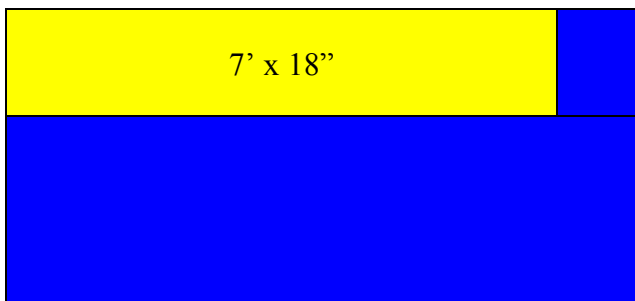
Québec



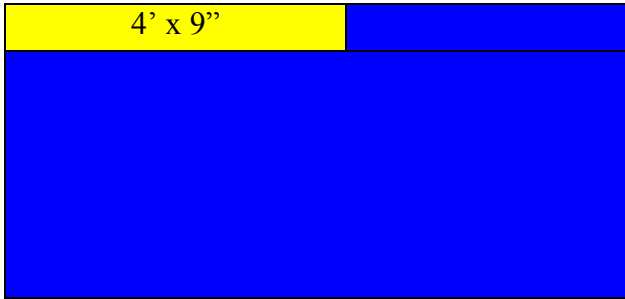
Québec



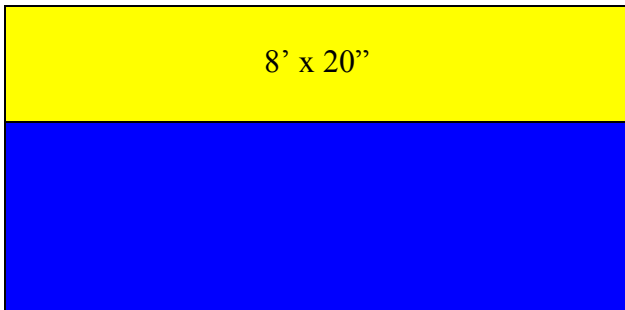
Prince Edward Island



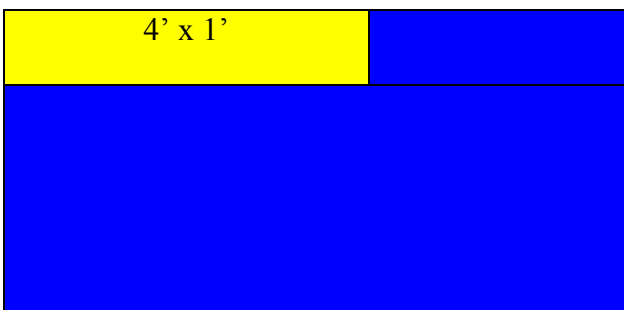
New Hampshire



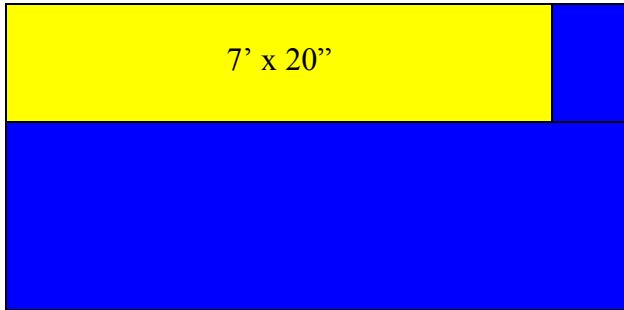
New Hampshire



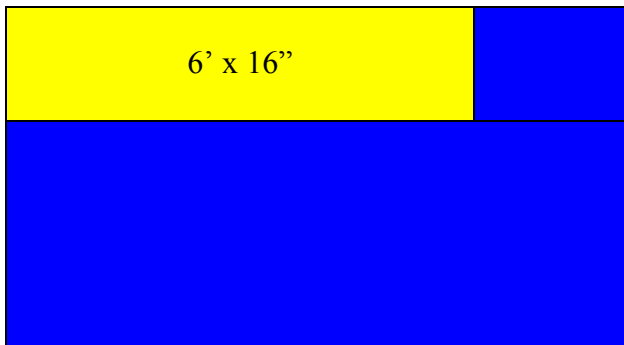
Maine



Maine



Vermont



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We share the creation of the information in this report with these colleagues and thank them for assisting us.

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