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**"North Country challenge: Make Canadians feel welcome again"**

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North Country challenge: Make Canadians feel welcome again

Plattsburgh

This town, near the border with Canada, has sometimes considered itself almost a suburb of **Montreal**. Canadian **travelers** often use the local airport for bargain flights to Florida and other destinations, and Canadian companies such as Nova Bus and Bombardier are major employers at the former air base outside town.

So the harsh criticism directed at Canada during last weekend's G7 summit in **Quebec** left many locals scratching their heads.

We enjoy a very special bond between the North Country and Canada, especially between Plattsburgh and **Montreal** said Garry Douglas, president of the North Country Chamber of Commerce. They know we are in this challenging period together, and to date we continue to enjoy their visitation and their investment.

In the Lake Placid area, James McKenna, CEO and president of the Regional Office of Sustainable **Tourism**, said the weak Canadian dollar has been more of a challenge than the strained relations. He estimated Canadians make up 10 to 20 percent of the region's **visitors**.

President Trump's comments apparently didn't help the currency exchange situation. The U.S. dollar rose to C\$1.30 this week.

That could make **vacations** in Canada less expensive, posing more competition for U.S. border areas.

Douglas recalled past contributions of Canadians to American security.

It was a Canadian general commanding NORAD at the time of 9/11, managing North American defenses in the aftermath, he said. And can we forget the warm reception American passengers enjoyed in Canada after 9/11 when their inbound flights were forced to land in Canada, following the closure of American airspace.

And surely we must not forget the many Canadian troops who gave their lives with our forces in Afghanistan, he added.

And he suggested cooperation, not competition, with Canada.

Making things with Canada, he said, is a big part of the solution to competing with China.

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