

# The Lake Report

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## **PC51 – Online Special Initiative**

Dear Judges:

Reporter Evan Saunders tackled two major series on short-term rentals, examining how the proliferation of them in small tourist communities was sparking major concerns and he also took a look at what other tourist communities worldwide are doing.

In exhaustive reporting, he spoke to mayors as far as Venice and others closer to home to see if short-term rentals have impacted their communities and the solutions they are seeking to prevent residential areas from being exploited by what in essence are commercial businesses.

He spoke with economists, stakeholder groups and counter-groups to put together extensive investigative pieces.

While the Town of NOTL had statistics and raw data on the number of rentals in the community, no one had ever analyzed it. So Saunders did – and discovered that, in just a few short years, at least 10 per cent of all homes in Old Town (an area about two kilometres square) had become short-term rentals. Some streets had more rentals than lived-in residences.

He helped create maps for print and clickable, interactive online maps of the data for readers to see exactly where each rental is located.

It shone a light on a serious situation which had been ignored, as our town created a committee stacked with industry stakeholders to make recommendations on how to deal with the hollowing out of neighbourhoods and affordability issues created by rentals.

He also exposed that almost none of the short-term rentals would be subject to the town's new accommodation tax — problems that are still being talked about today and became major issues during the municipal election.

**Respectfully submitted,**

**Richard Harley  
Managing Editor**