

Tourism Matters

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Editorial

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MSU Extension



Customer safety is first and for most and basic to citizens of the U.S. The only way we can win in tourism anytime is to offer a safe product. When a major airline scrutinizes their frequent flyer members and then lets someone with questionable credentials and a bomb in their shoe board an airline we as consumers know that the security is not working and this mode of transportation is not as safe as is proclaimed.

Airlines are about making a profit, when they cut corners on security to save dollars they jeopardize losing business. If airlines say that they cannot afford to make their product secure and they want government to do it for them, to me they are saying their product safety is out of their control.

And then after criticizing the airline I look at the other side and think, this mode of public transportation has been tested to the maximum with unthinkable security problems. If any other business were challenged like this they also would have difficulty maintaining security. What if your business had a security problem? Could you and I do any better?

I received a newsletter from the Outpost Lodge, Ontario, Canada. Their safety information is to the point. "The Outpost will always be a safe and trusted place for everyone. The border at Sault Ste. Marie was never closed although the guards are checking more thoroughly now. Expect maybe an extra half an hour- really not bad considering. Make sure everyone has identification-picture ID for the adults and a birth certificate for the kids." They go on to say call if you need more information.

In 2002 Promote what's hot:

- A pleasant drive
- A Family experience
- Warm fireplace
- A gathering place for family and friends

- Comfort food
- Quite pleasant place to stay
- Non-Urban areas
- Down home atmosphere
- Local crafts
- Friendly people
- A learning adventure
- Locally owned business
- Promote your region, not just your business, promote hiking trails, parks, agriculture tourism, lakes and streams, outdoor sports, unique shops, history and everything good about your area. Always be honest in your promotions.
- Make it a priority this year to network with other local business to build a good travel package including lodging, food and activities.
- Internet shopping
- Home cooking
- Home improvement, goods & services
- Gardening (red, white and blue flowers)
- Home entertainment equipment
- New Keywords: Community, Cooperation, Together

This Issue.....

This and That.....Page 2
Michigan's Great Outdoor Tour
Recognized.....Page 2
Promoting Tourism On Michigan
Farms.....Page 3
Agriculture Tourism Studies in the
Thumb.....Page 4
"Rebuilding Our Past"—Theme for
Conference in May.....Page 5



Wednesday, March 6, 2002, Michigan Tourism Outlook Conference 2002. Lincoln Room, Kellogg Center, East Lansing, Michigan. Tourism strategies for uncertain times. For more information, please visit Tourism Resource Center's web site: www.tourismcenter.msu.edu or call Teresa Herbowicz at 517-353-0793.

Travel Michigan Vice President Selected: George Zimmermann has been selected as the new head of Travel Michigan. Zimmermann was previously the State of Ohio Tourism Director for seven years. Most recently, he was the Senior Vice President of Sales and Marketing for CallTech Communications, an advanced technology contact center. In 1997, Zimmermann was named "State Tourism Director of the Year." Travel Michigan is the State of Michigan's official agency for the promotion of tourism. Travel Michigan works with convention & visitors' bureaus, destination marketing organizations and other associations to help market Michigan as a tourism destination.

Golf in Michigan: A recent combined issue of Business Week and Golf Digest named Northern Michigan the number one destination for golfers to settle down. The combined issue identified 18 of the best places in the United States to live and play golf, including traditional golf havens, such as Florida and North Carolina. The ranking was based on crime rate, housing affordability, healthcare, and climate, among other quality of life issues. Bay Harbor Golf Club in Bay Harbor and Timberstone Golf Course in Iron Mountain also were named as two of the "Top 75 Places to Entertain Clients." To view the complete list, visit the web site at http://bwnt.businessweek.com/golf/best_places.asp



"Cold is Cool" is the theme for Travel Michigan's winter promotions. Broadcast e-mail promotions will target Michigan's key loyalty markets to encourage visits to our ski and snowmobile web pages. Ski promotions will highlight the Michigan Ski Industries Association (MSIA) two-for-one midweek ski coupons and three ski prize packages.

Snowmobile promotions will target Indiana, Ohio, Wisconsin, Illinois, and Minneapolis/St. Paul and offer winter activity prize packages. The snowmobile web page will include links to top snowmobile web sites identified by the Michigan Snowmobile Task Force and to the DNR web site for trail maps and snow conditions. For detailed information of Travel Michigan's winter promotions, contact Robin Peebles at (517) 373-7462 or peeblesr@michigan.org.



"Rebuilding Our Past", 2002 Upper Peninsula Tourism Conference, May 15—16, Copper Harbor, Michigan. For more information contact Rita Hodgins, 906/228-4830 or hodgins@msue.msu.edu 🏠

MICHIGAN'S GREAT OUTDOORS CULTURE TOUR RECOGNIZED AS A MODEL PROJECT

(LANSING)— A new publication, "Share Your Heritage: Cultural Heritage Tourism Success Stories," from the National Trust for Historic Preservation has recognized Michigan's great Outdoors Culture Tour as one of two dozen "model" projects nationally, the only Michigan cultural tourism project featured.

The program is highlighted in a six-page, full-color article, "A Niche in the Northwoods: Michigan's Great Outdoors Culture Tour." The partnership project is sponsored by Michigan Humanities Council and the Michigan Council for Arts and Cultural Affairs with Michigan State Parks, National Forests, National Parks and community cultural groups.

"The stories in this publication represent the results of an intensive search and review process to identify exemplary programs that can serve as models for others," wrote Kenneth I. Chenault, Chairman—CEO of American Express Company whose grant supported the publication. "We hope that these 'how-to' stories will serve to inspire and guide many other cultural heritage tourism programs and projects."

Frank Ettawageshik, chair of Michigan Humanities Council, states: "Michigan's Great Outdoors Culture Tour has been a very effective program in raising the public's awareness of heritage and culture. Taking the next step in cultural tourism by presenting the Humanities in collaboration with a wide variety of partnerships has proved successful."

Each summer since 1998, Michigan's Great Outdoors Culture Tour has fielded a six-week series of 84-94 live programs that celebrate the colorful stories, cultural heritage and traditions of the state's northwoods and Great Lakes for audiences of campers, tourists and local residents at parks and recreation areas and in small communities of northern Lower Michigan and the Upper Peninsula. Programs take place from July 1 through mid-August.

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Musicians, storytellers, dancers, artists and poets, historical role-players and interpreters of ethnic culture have educated and entertained more than 28,000 people with the fascinating adventures of Great Lakes mariners, voyageurs and fur traders; lives and customs of immigrant settlers, legendary miners and hardy lumberjacks; traditional ways and rich culture of Native American peoples, and natural heritage and scenic beauty of the Great Lakes State.

Audiences soak up local history and culture at the one-hour evening programs in casual and picturesque outdoor settings, according to Nancy Mathews, director of community programs for Michigan Humanities Council and Culture Tour coordinator.

Michigan's Great Outdoors Culture Tour also received the 2000 "Window on the Past" national heritage award from the Chief of the USDA-Forest Service for "innovative work in bringing Michigan artisans together with the public to showcase natural and cultural heritage" and was a finalist this fall for a Travel Industry Association 2001 Odyssey Award for Cultural Heritage.

For more information on the "Share Your Heritage" publication, contact the National Trust for Historic Preservation, 1785 Massachusetts Ave. NW, Washington DC 20036 or call 202/588-6000.

Contact Michigan Humanities Council at 517/372-7770 to receive the upcoming Michigan's Great Outdoors Culture Tour schedule when it is available in April, 2002. Information about the program is also found on the council's web site: <http://michiganhumanities.org> or is available from the coordinator at the council's northern office, 906/789-9471.

Michigan Humanities council, founded in 1974, is the state's private, non-profit affiliate of the national endowment for the humanities. 

PROMOTING TOURISM ON MICHIGAN FARMS--MARKETLINE MAKES IT EASY

By Carol Osborne

"People visit our farm to shop, but also for the farm experience. We realize how lucky we are to live in a rural setting, and if we were to forget, our visitors often remind us." Barbara Marr, Marr Haven Wool Farm, Allegan, MI

This quote from a west Michigan farmer serves as a reminder about the role that Michigan farms can play as an attraction for local tourism. While much attention goes to on-farm entertainment or activities such as u-pick farms, petting farms, corn mazes or hayrides, some farms provide nothing more than the opportunity to visit a working farmstead and buy products direct from the farmer. For promoters of local tourism, these farms are often untapped assets in your community.

Through a new website called Marketline--www.miffsmarketline.org--visitors can find these working farms in any Michigan county whether they are visiting for the first time from out of state, or heading to their weekend vacation cottage on the lake.

Marketline made its debut in summer 2000, and since then, over 150 farmers from across Michigan have registered on the site to advertise the products they have available. Most of these farms sell goods on-farm or at local farm markets. Customers can find just about any farm product grown or raised in Michigan--hay, fruit, grains, nursery stock, vegetables, meat, cheese, fiber, Christmas trees, and more. Listings on the site currently are free, and it's easy to register a farm business on-line or by mailing in a registration form.

With the broad reach of the internet, anyone can find farm listings on Marketline to use for their travels through Michigan. Marr Haven Wool Farm is a good example of how the internet and Marketline draws tourists to the farm. Marr Haven sells a range of wool products, fiber art supplies and sheepskin products made from their own flock of Merino-Rambouillet sheep. They sell products year-round such as yarns, sheepskin slippers,

goatskin gloves, and a variety of knitting and crochet supplies. Since 1996, Marr Haven has had its own farm website (www.marrhaven.com) to advertise its products, and as a result, its customer base comes from all over the United States through internet and mail-order sales. Marr Haven also participates in the local Michigan Fiber Festival held in August, an event that attracts over 5000 people.

Because they wanted to spend more time on the farm and enjoying their animals, Barbara and Gene Marr are promoting their on-farm sales, and they offer site visits for small, special groups like knitting guilds. According to Barbara, "we often get repeat customers who are dedicated fiber art people, knitters, spinners and the like. They like to buy home grown wool because much of the yarn sold in the United States is imported."

Barbara Marr sees how the internet and her Marketline listing attract people to visit her farm. "People are using the internet to search for particular items they want to buy, or to get directions to our farm. Marketline is a very economical way for us to advertise, not only locally but long distance, a cost that would otherwise be out of reach for us. We have found many people from out of state who check to see what's available in our area when they are planning vacations or weekends in Michigan."

Marr Haven Wool Farm is a member of the West Michigan Tourist Association. Barbara and Gene value the promotional work done by WMTA, as well as the services provided through the State of Michigan's Travel Michigan website. Both offer searches for farm markets and agricultural tourism.

The MIFFS Marketline website--www.miffsmarketline.org--provides a link to farms in your county or region that may not think of themselves as tourist attractions. As you promote local tourism opportunities, consider how you can

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make Marketline work for you. Add the Marketline website link to your own website, and recruit local farms to join Marketline as an easy way to advertise their farm and farm products. These simple, working farms are often the heart of our beautiful rural landscapes. This is, after all, the Michigan that many people come to see. 🏡

Editor's Note: Carol Osborne, of Gaylord, MI, is a consultant for sustainable agriculture and environmental organizations. Marketline is a project of Michigan Integrated Food & Farming Systems (MIFFS), a nonprofit organization that promotes diverse community efforts to foster and sustain food and agriculture systems that improve economic, ecological and social well-being. MIFFS Marketline was created through a grant from the USDA Rural Business Enterprise Grant Program. Marketline promotion is funded by The Frederick S. Upton Foundation and the Saginaw Bay Watershed Initiative Network (WIN).

AGRICULTURAL TOURISM STUDIED IN THE THUMB

By Bob Johnson

With a Kellogg Foundation Grant to a community group in Marlette and funding from the MSU Extension - Tourism Area of Expertise Team, an extensive study of the viability of agricultural tourism in Sanilac, Tuscola and Lapeer Counties was implemented. The study indicated a wealth of agricultural resources in the area and a broad public support in communities for the development of agricultural tourism businesses.

Community leaders, Michigan State University Extension staff, and the MSU Travel, Tourism and Recreation Resource Center staff, joined together to explore the viability of agricultural tourism in the Thumb. The goals of the project included: to create an awareness of agricultural tourism in the three counties; and to aid in the development of agricultural tourism as a way of diversifying local economies.

In the first year of the study, the steering committee documented numerous agricultural tourism resources in the counties and carried out a workshop. The agricultural tourism resources were listed in the "An Inventory of Agricultural, Human and Tourism Resources in Lapeer, Sanilac, and Tuscola Counties" directory. In addition, 81 people attended a workshop that featured the opportunities of establishing agricultural tourism. This included presentations by MSU Specialists and resource people who were operating successful agricultural tourism business in other parts of the state. Participants represented a number of agencies and people with a slight interest in establishing an agricultural tourism business.

In the second year, another agricultural tourism workshop was carried out with 27 participants with a high interest in starting or enhancing their agricultural tourism business. Strong emphasis was given to marketing, insurance and risk management, and planning and zoning issues. This program involved more interactions with speakers, who indicated their high interest in the topics. In addition, a "Resident Attitude of Ag Tourism" survey was sent to 300 families in each of the three counties with nearly 300 responses. Some of the key responses to questions in the strongly agree or somewhat agree categories included:

- 72% of the responses indicated support of agricultural tourism in their community.
- 81% indicated that agricultural tourism would in-

crease public understanding of agricultural practices and issues.

- 64% indicated that agricultural tourism development would result in significant economic benefit to their community.
- 78% indicated that agricultural tourism development would help to preserve community agricultural heritage.

Some of the comments shared from the three counties who completed the Resident Attitude survey are as follows. Sanilac - "When we think of bringing in more tourists, it can only be for the better for our community." "We have been interested as a family for the past 15 -18 years in coming up with a way to keep our family farmland and create an income in some recreational service area and 80 acres in Brown City "Amish" countryside." "It would be of a great advantage to our community to develop agricultural tourism - economically, socially, and psychologically." Tuscola - "Many people within the area take for granted our agricultural heritage. We are now approaching a time when young people want and need to know about the foundation of America and Michigan "GO FOR IT" agricultural tourism." "I hope this is pursued. Although I have nothing to offer, I grew up on a farm and would like to see "ag-awareness" grow among today children's young adults. We have lost our roots." Lapeer - "We need to preserve our agricultural heritage and farms to ensure our future. Farms are a necessary part of life and play a key role in our future. We must help farming before it's lost entirely." "I think Agricultural Tourism could be very helpful in educating people from non-rural areas and give them a better understanding of how important agriculture is and why we must preserve land for agriculture."

In summary, most people support agricultural tourism development because they feel it will create more jobs in the area, preserve the cultural heritage, bring significant economic benefits and increase public knowledge of agriculture. 🏡

Editor's Note: Bob Johnson is currently the County Extension Director with Huron County MSU Extension, and has been an active member of the Tourism AoE. He is planning to retire in April of this year.

“REBUILDING OUR PAST”
THEME FOR MAY CONFERENCE IN THE UPPER PENINSULA

By Rita Hodgins

The planning team for the 2002 Upper Peninsula Tourism Conference met recently and discussed trends and opportunities in the travel industry as they attempted to zero in on a theme and focus for the May conference. The team is comprised of individuals who represent businesses, organizations, attractions, the US National Forest Service and the US National Park Service.

People around the table were optimistic about the future. Ninety nine percent of travelers to the region, travel by automobile. The region is blessed with two national forests and three national parks which are seeing increased visitation nationally. Visitors to the Upper Peninsula are still heavily dominated by the lower peninsula and it will be easy to promote that we're only a gas tank away, or discover what's in your own backyard. There's a renewed interest in history and the region is rich in culture and heritage. Another key factor is the trend that families are re-connecting and wanting to spend time together. Visiting friends and relatives has always been high on the list as the reason people visit to the Upper Peninsula.

We also talked about external threats and opportunities. Here it is...December 19th and there isn't enough snow on the ground to participate in most winter sports. Only one ski hill in the region was open. The economy is another threat which could also be viewed as an opportunity. When people are laid off, they have time to travel whereas when the economy is booming, often time doesn't permit it. A national trend is the growth of adventure travel. The Upper Peninsula offers unique opportunities for the soft and hard adventurers.

Discussion really got exciting when the group began talking about the region where the conference will be held; Copper Harbor. It gives participants coming to the conference, the opportunity to explore the entire Keweenaw Peninsula. So much is happening with the Keweenaw National Historical Park and its unique public/private partnerships. The rich story that is being told there captures the faces and places that were so important in the growth and development of our state and nation. The Keweenaw offers us the opportunity to learn about partnerships, unique adventures, and cultural itinerary planning.

The team settled on “Rebuilding Our Past” for the theme of the May 15 – 16, 2002 conference. It allows us to focus on not only our rich culture and history, but also to look at the new product based on that past. You're invited to join us. For more information contact: Rita Hodgins, 906.228.4830 or hodgins@msue.msu.edu 🏠



Copper Harbor Lighthouse

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Michigan State university Extension Tourism Area of Expertise team funds this quarterly publication to the tourism industry called *Tourism Matters*. The purpose of *Tourism Matters* is just in time information to the tourism industry on upcoming conferences, training trends, research and success stories. *Tourism Matters* is distributed through each Michigan Extension office to their local tourism clients. Circulation is 4,000 hard copies statewide. *Tourism Matters* is also available on Michigan State University Extension web site listed below.

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Call your County Michigan State University Extension Service to subscribe to this newsletter.

Look for *Tourism Matters* on the Internet: <http://www.tourism.msu.edu>

Or at: <http://www.msue.msu.edu/stjoseph> then click on Com & Econ Development

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