

Tourism Matters

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Serving the Tourism Industry of Michigan

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Editorial

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MSU Extension*



On the morning of September 11 my luggage was packed to fly to New York City. Needless to say I never went to New York. On September 24, I decided not to take a leisure flight to Georgia. According to travel reports, I am not alone when I canceled my travel plans.

As an experienced traveler, I have never been emotionally stopped from travel before. I have endured an earthquake, a hotel evacuation from a gas leak, a whole city black out, a hurricane on the coast, a blizzard and a hotel fire. The September event shook tourism to the core, and like myself, stopped many thousands of people from leisure and business travel.

The tourism industry has always been flexible and able to change course as the economy changed either up swing or down. We can do the same now, once we analyze what the consumer wants.

Here is a list of promotional adjustments to consider:

- People want to be assured of safety: Travel in rural areas by car may be appealing to them.
- Travelers will enjoy the company of friends and family: Leisure weekends with friends with time to interact rather than a frantic pace vacation will entice them.
- Family oriented activities will feel like the thing to do: Promote things to do as a family.
- It is predicted that charter airplane travel will increase: Lodging should offer shuttle service to and from small airports.
- Ditto for train and bus travel.
- Take this advice media and theater: Citizens of the U.S. are no longer interested in seeing violence portrayed as entertainment; we have experienced the real thing.

(There may have been a reason for all the great love stories and family movies that came out of the World War II era.)

Travel is a fundamental freedom in the U.S. but travelers will change their habits of travel, it is our job in tourism, to suggest opportunities that meet the mood of the nation.

Share these and your own ideas with your local tourism council and make adjusted promotional plans.

The question, where will tourism be a year from now reminds me of a true story that happened to me in July that brings about the profound Amish humor that stops you in your tracks.

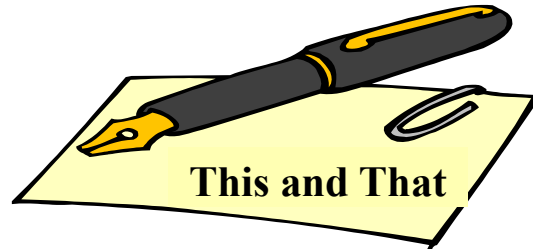
I was discussing with the Amish work crew the upcoming weather for the week as they were about to take the roof off of my house and replace it with a new one. Each of the group, including myself, expounded what we had heard or read about the latest weather prediction with conflicting reports of rain and dry weather. Finally, the most senior member of the group said. "I can better tell you at the end of the week"

I guess we can better tell what will happen in Tourism a year from now than we can speculate now. Be flexible by preparing for rain, and working hard when the sun is shining is the best I can offer and "I can tell you better by the end of next year". 🏠

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We are so sorry, Michigan Festivals and Events Association meeting in Kalamazoo November 1-4 and Travel Michigan Tourism Conference, October 14 and 15 at the Grand on Mackinac Island were rolled into one article in the last *Tourism Matters*. We still don't know how that happened, other media confirmed that they received the article that way too. Gremlins at work. I wish both conferences a huge success without our help.



2002 Host Committee Formed: Steve Hamp, president of Henry Ford Museum and Greenfield Village and vice-chair of the Michigan Travel Commission, and Pete Walters, senior vice president of Guardian Industries and a member of the Michigan Economic Development Corporation Executive Committee, will co-chair the MEDC's 2002 Host Committee. The Committee will oversee the state's activities to "roll out the red carpet" for out-of-state visitors to major events next year, such as the International Auto Show and the Society of Automotive Engineers Conference, both in Southeast Michigan.

Michigan Ranks 12th in Small Business Survival: Michigan ranked 12th in the nation in the Small Business Survival Committee's sixth annual rankings of the states according to their respective policy climates for small business and entrepreneurship. The study ties together 17 government-related taxes and other costs affecting small businesses. The most entrepreneur-friendly state is Nevada, followed by South Dakota, Washington, Wyoming and Florida.

Hunting Lease Package: Bill Bivens, Jackson County MSUE has a Hunting Lease Package for those thinking about leasing land to hunters. The publication is \$10.00 payable to MSU Extension—Jackson County and includes sample leases. You may contact the Jackson County office at (517) 788-4292. 🏠



Holland Area Convention and Visitors Bureau Wins National Website Award From Destinations Magazine



The Holland Area Convention and Visitors Bureau's new Web site, www.holland.org has been awarded first place in *Destination Magazine's* 2001 Guide Awards. The award winning web site was selected from over 200 entries submitted by federal, state, provincial, regional and local tourism agencies in the US and Canada. The contest, sponsored by the American Bus Association, recognizes destination marketing organizations' outstanding efforts and creativity in attracting group tour business to their region.

"The Holland CVB's creativity, marketing savvy, and commitment to the group tour market are all evident in their winning Web site entry," said *Destinations'* editor in chief, Veronica Chao. 🏠

Tourism Area of Expertise Accomplishments

Let me list a few of the accomplishment of the Michigan State University Extension Service Tourism Area of Expertise team over the last year. Team members are listed on the back page of this publication.

- Lodging survey completed, results shared and training on marketing strategies complete
- Database for Extension publications developed
- Developed a Specialty Business Network in the U.P.
- Under development, a tourism leadership project
- Development of Tourism Natural Resources Network in Northern Lower Michigan
- Two Tourism Assistance Program completed (www.tourismcenter.msu.edu/M-66TAP/M-66Home.asp)
- Preparing for the National Tourism Extension Conference to be held in Traverse City, September 2002
- Work with Sea Grant programming to build a tourism emphasis
- Edit and publish *TOURISM MATTERS*
- Building community consensus around a major highway design
- Conducting guest service training
- Creating County tourism profiles (www.tourism.msu.edu)
- Working with Downtown Development and the MSU Small Town Design Initiative on revitalization.
- Serving on local tourism councils
- Historic restoration
- Provide leadership for Legislative Conference on Tourism
- Design Tourism AOE web site
- Provide leadership for a state roadway historic designation
- Planning for a corridor enhancement study
- Upper Peninsula Tourism Conference and Study Tour



MIFFS Marketline

(Michigan Integrated Food & Farming Systems)

Connecting Farmers & Buyers of Michigan Farm Products. Be sure your farm product is connected or that you are selling Michigan products.

- A searchable website created by MIFFS in 2000, with funding from USDA, to link farmers, buyers and processors of Michigan agriculture products (www.miffsmarketline.org)
- Free listings for farmers and for buyers of farm products. Farms register by listing the products they want to advertise for sale, along with contact information for interested buyers. Buyers register by listing products they want to buy and their contact information. Buyers include businesses like restaurants, retail stores, wholesalers, farm markets and processors.
- Farmers and buyers can register themselves on the website, or print a registration form that is mailed in and processed at the MIFFS office.
- As of August 2001, the website includes farmers and sellers from at least 50 of Michigan's 83 counties, with 138 farms and 30 buyers listed.
- Search the website by farm name, buyer name, county, or product, or search for a list of all sellers or buyers.
- Over 76 different farm products are available at the farms listed so far, from apples to zucchini. A variety of other farm services are also listed. Here are just a few:

alfalfa and hay	Christmas trees	jams & jellies	on-farm recreation	flowers	cheese
apples & cider	corn mazes	lamb	bakery goods	vegetables	hay rides
eggs	maple syrup	popcorn	potatoes	grapes	cabbage
beef	broiler chickens	gift shops	pork	hard red wheat	bedding plants

Survive And Thrive In Uncertain Times

by Bob and Susan Negen, WhizBang! Training

If you are like most store owners and small business people we speak to, you are feeling a little (or maybe more than a little) nervous about the future of your business and the business community you belong to. And with good reason! Some businesses won't make it through the tough times ahead.

Experience shows us there are common sense strategies to turn adversity into opportunity. Here are just a few.

First, and perhaps most importantly, you must throw back your shoulders, put a smile on your face and repeat after me – “I am TENACIOUS.”

When you start to feel the pressure that comes from slower sales DO SOMETHING. Call a customer, sweep the sidewalk, refocus your marketing efforts, or remerchandise a section of the store, but always respond to stress with action. Don't mope, whine or feel sorry for yourself. Your customers want a fun shopping experience and your staff needs you to provide positive, proactive leadership.

Focus intensely on marketing and creating sales – but try to use imagination and hard work instead of cash. Be smart, be cheap - be a guerilla marketer. You don't have to spend a lot of money to keep your message in front of your customers and prospects. In uncertain times, marketing is more important than ever. It shows confidence, and it will allow you to leapfrog your competitors who are reactive and driven by fear.

Manage your inventory like your business depends on it, because it does. Chances are you have more money invested in your stock than anywhere else in your business. Effectively managing your inventory will increase your cash flow and boost your profits. Get rid of all your old, shop worn merchandise, slow movers and overstocks. Also, never run out of your best sellers and the “staples” people expect you to always have in stock.

Preserve your cash. Right now cash is king and you must preserve it. Forgo major purchases, run your inventory lean and mean, work a few extra hours yourself...you get the picture. However, don't indiscriminately slash and burn. Spending money on keeping your best people, keeping your marketing efforts strong and proactive, and investing in training are necessary expenses that keep your business strong and ready to take advantage of opportunities that always emerge from uncertainty.

Generate cash from unused or underused assets. Almost every store owner we know has a room, or rooms, full of demo merchandise, old displays, fixtures and appliances, old office equipment, and lots of other junk. Have a big “garage sale” – TURN IT INTO CASH.

Your relationships with your vendors and your banker are more important than ever. If there is going to be a problem let them know ASAP. Nobody, especially bankers, like surprises. They are much more willing to work with you if you are proactive about solving problems.

Be willing to change how you do things. The ability to adapt to changing circumstances is a defining trait in all successful business people. If your old strategy isn't working any more – find a new one that does!

Finally, hang in there. Remember, “You are tenacious!” To be successful in business, you have to stay in business. Things will change, we will get back on our feet and be stronger and better than ever!

Retail and small business experts Bob and Susan Negen are the owners of WhizBang! Training. To receive a FREE “WhizBang! Tip of the Week” via e-mail contact them at retailer@iserv.net or call them at 616-842-4237. 📞

Hunting Lease Information Package Now Available

Bill Bivens, Jackson County Tourism Area of Expertise member tells us that in Michigan, outdoors-recreation opportunities continue to increase, as does the population. While there are many state, county and municipal parks and recreations areas, they cannot meet all of the recreational needs. There are recreational opportunities for private landowners through a hunting and or wildlife viewing lease agreement with groups or individuals. A lease information package is now available from Jackson County Extension.

The increasing pressure for land development of open space decreases land availability for hunting and fishing and increases the cost of ownership of the open land. Prior to the 1980's it was uncommon to lease Michigan land for recreational use. Since then, due to the increasing costs of land ownership, growing population and decreasing available land leases provides a method to compensate for the benefit of access/usage and the cost of maintaining the resource. Not all leases are cash leases, Bill says, some are reciprocal services for barter, goods or resources.

For a copy of the Hunting Lease Information Packet send \$10.00 (to cover duplication and postage) to MSUE – Jackson County, Hunting Lease Packet, 1699 Lansing Avenue, Jackson Michigan 49202-2176 🏠



This information just in from Lori Martin, MSU Tourism Resource Center: **Updated Travel Date Reports from MSU.** The June 2001 and July 2001 Michigan Travel Indicator reports are now posted on our web site at www.tourismcenter.msu.edu. August will also be completed in the near future. Then we will begin moving backwards through the months until all months for 2001 and 2000 have been completed. Thanks to all the individuals who make these reports possible! 🏠



Special Events Make For Special Times

The Terrace Inn in Bay View, just north of Petoskey, and the Grand Hotel on Mackinac Island each hosted unique weekend getaways in October.

The Terrace Inn invited their guest to learn “How to be an Innkeeper”. They presented a special hands-on workshop. Participants learned all about the aspects of innkeeping from experts, enjoyed a fireside reception and northern Michigan buffet dinner. The package also included two nights lodging and two continental breakfasts for \$159 per person.

The annual Big Band Weekend at the Grand Hotel where famous swing bands and jazz greats performed big band concerts throughout the weekend. Dance instructors were on hand as well. Cost was just \$859 per couple. Rates for singles and groups of three were also available. Those who wanted to make the trip even more special asked for “A Touch of Romance” gift package which included an arrangement of fresh cut flowers, a box of fudge and a bottle of wine for just \$88 more.

Make A Weekend of It — Most hotels, inns and bed & breakfast facilities offer some type of romance package for guests. If you are in a complimentary business such as flowers, candy, dinner train, etc., find out how you can work with these packages locally. Most hotels, inns and bed & breakfast facilities offer some type of romance package for guest. Check web pages to find out who offers what.

In West Michigan you can check “accommodations” on www.wmta.org for a detailed list of bed & breakfasts, country inns, hotel, motel and cottage/cabin rentals. 🏠

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

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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. *Tourism Matters* is also available on Michigan State University extension Web site at www.tourism.msu.edu. Circulation is 4,000 hard copies statewide.

Publication deadlines are: January 1, 2002 - March 1, 2002 - August 1, 2002 - October 1, 2002

Letters/Notes

I truly enjoy reading this newsletter and don't want to miss any issue. Please note my name and address change.

Sherri Bakos
Owasso, Michigan