

**Michigan Tourism Strategic Plan Project
Eastern UP Stakeholder Listening Session
Issue Areas Comments/Feedback
June 1, 2006
Sault Ste. Marie, MI**

Importance by vote (red dots):

Industry Organization and Leadership (8)
Funding (14)
Collaborations and Partnerships (9)
General Promotion (Media) (15)
Research and Market Segmentation (2)
Public Policy and Government Relations (14)
Training/Leadership (7)
Visitor Experience (23)

- 1.) Industry Organization and Leadership
 - 1.) Who will implement the plan?
 - 2.) We need to change our way of thinking. Things are changing!
 - 3.) An economic development orientation
 - 4.) Be brave enough to set benchmarks. (Goals to judge effectiveness by, etc.)
ACCOUNTABILITY
 - 5.) Shift thinking to tourism being Michigan's #1 industry for job creation – new focus – invest in the industry.
 - 6.) Introduce tourism as a career option in our schools.
 - 7.) Changing demographics – should we look at new opportunities for advertising?
 - 8.) Make sure the plan is reviewed.
 - 9.) The U.P. needs to be better represented in industry organizations. The U.P.'s issues are often not understood down state.
 - 10.) Wish U.P. businesses would be contacted by more industry association groups – small business owners don't have time to make contacts by themselves.
 - 11.) Broaden our definition of tourism... Other businesses serve tourists (Hospitals, etc.)

- 2.) Funding
 - 1.) Reexamine how assessment funding is collected and where it's distributed.
 - 2.) One penny gas tax per gallon.
 - 3.) Assessment/taxes should be shared and collected across the board by all tourism sectors/businesses.
 - 4.) Redirect general sector use taxes to tourism – a portion of the 6%
 - 5.) Economic development paradigm need to change to reposition tourism jobs as being favorable.
 - 6.) How are we spending our existing dollars at the state level? Perhaps we could use our money more effectively for tourism.

- 7.) Earmark money specifically for tourism
 - 8.) Advertisers aren't doing enough to support/promote tourism... assessment should be across the board. 70% ads/30% info – if can't give more publicity; give more funding support.
 - 9.) Funding for private operators – tax incentives, interest-free loans, etc. – improve access to capital. Product development/upgrade and new infrastructure.
 - 10.) Need operations and marketing funding as well as development funding
- 3.) Collaboration and Partnership
- 1.) Be realistic – It isn't easy
 - 2.) Work together to learn more about our consumers; coordinated matrix of our users/visitors; centralized; accessible; collected by surveys
 - 3.) Redirect state, federal, and private sector efforts in terms of data collection – coordinate together
 - 4.) Most businesses willing to collect and share customer data!
- 4.) General Promotion (Media)
- 1.) More free editorials in media, or making costs lower.
 - 2.) What will we be promoting? (General areas [“prettiest”]? Every area will want its own attractions promoted on the “state” level.
 - 3.) U.P. has jewel attractions, yet they are not promoted outside the region (country) – Expand marketing “globally”
 - 4.) Too time consuming to update info on the Travel MI website.
 - 5.) The U.P. isn't that far!
 - 6.) Advertising through collaboration with other places/organizations e.g. sister cities, one club inviting another club → then reciprocate the hosting
- 5.) Research and Market Segmentation
- 1.) Coordinated database collection(s) and dissemination to “everybody.”
 - 2.) Sharing data collected by state (e.g. MDOT) and private entities.
 - 3.) Info on repeat customers (appreciation/VIP offers)
 - 4.) Jobs – wages, start-up info to other careers, better self-esteem among industry and outside
 - 5.) Get results out to media and public
 - 6.) How the government can recognize the value of tourism business(es)
- 6.) Public Policy and Government Relations
- 1.) Post Labor Day School opening for higher education (college-age employees not available after mid-August)
 - 2.) Need more help to “keep doors” open of tourism business (they attract a lot of out of state visitors)
 - 3.) Educate ourselves, attend legislative meetings, and lobby for tourism industry (when to talk to legislators, what to tell them, and how to tell them) – training on how to interact with legislators
 - 4.) How to hold legislators accountable

- 5.) Start with dealing with local governments
- 6.) Those “trained” in local issues will be more understanding when they move to state government level
- 7.) Not always “come with hand out” – partnering with legislators
- 8.) Industry may not afford as many lobbyists as manufacturing, health care, etc., so it’s important to invest your personal time/effort

7.) Training/Leadership

- 1.) Internal marketing – importance of our industry; our jobs build our own self image!
- 2.) Real value of training/ROI/make it public
- 3.) Hospitality Training tie to visitor experience

8.) Visitor Experience

- 1.) Role of transportation/ especially public
- 2.) Hallmark attraction(s) recognized nationally and internationally (makes people want to come and come back)
- 3.) “Great Water” program
- 4.) Friendly, memories, fun, adventurous, enjoyable
- 5.) Accessible (infrastructure)
- 6.) Desire to return, relationships, products, culture, knowledge/education, family satisfaction
- 7.) 5-stage experience (pre + destination + post experiences)
- 8.) Hospitable/service quality

Other (none)

Comment Cards:

- 1) Where do the financial institutions fit into the picture? They need to be part of the picture....are there any in attendance?
- 2) Visitor experience-not looking for the same experience in the lower peninsula as the upper peninsula.
- 3) How do we market such a diverse state?
- 4) Need positive promotion of the UP from the entire state.
- 5) Need more UP representation!
- 6) Why is the UP being penalized by having downstate visitors pay \$5 to get across the and back over the Mackinac Bridge?
- 7) Our schools – high school and college – should be encouraged to offer courses in the hospitality industry.
- 8) The UP is its own hallmark attraction!
- 9) Funding-PA 59 assessments-Each CVB/tourist Association should contribute and established amount to aid the promotion of a regional concept.
- 10) Enlist the cooperation of the businesses that want to keep their businesses in Michigan.

- 11) General Promotion-We have said our customer base is from Michigan, but Michigan's economy is in trouble. We should put our focus on a wider market.
- 12) If Hawaii is doing it the best, why not use as much of their plan as we can. Retread the tire—don't reinvent the wheel....
- 13) Stress the varietylodging, dining activities etc. that will help the small business enjoy their place in the scheme of things.
- 14) Number one industry deserves number one leadership ---go back to Governor as leader.
- 15) Hire lobbyist.
- 16) Formation of large parks.