

**Michigan Tourism Strategic Plan Project**  
**NE Lower Michigan Stakeholder Listening Session**  
**Issue Areas Comments/Feedback**  
**July 20, 2006**  
**Alpena, MI**

**“Top Four Issues” vote:**

Industry Organization and Leadership (6)  
Collaborations and Partnerships (3)  
Funding (3)  
Research and Market Segmentation (5)  
Public Policy and Government Relations (4)  
General Promotion (Media) (4)  
Training/Leadership (0)  
Visitor Experience (3)

- 1.) Issue Organization and Leadership
  - 1.) Tourism needs to be a higher priority in all levels of government
  - 2.) Wisconsin has a cabinet-level tourism position. Should Michigan have one?
  - 3.) We need a clear definition of what the Travel Commission is.
  - 4.) Regional Tourism Organizations used to have 4 seats on the commission.
  - 5.) We have an over-abundance of organizations trying to advance the industry. Consolidate.
  - 6.) Individual associations are not representative of the industry. What is TICOM's role? What is TICOM?
  - 7.) CVB's do represent destinations. Regional DMOs cannot join MACVB because they don't collect assessments.
  - 8.) We do not need another association.
- 2.) Collaboration/Partnership
  - 1.) Need more emphasis on “improving communications”
  - 2.) Travel Michigan has gotten used to doing things the same old way.
  - 3.) This industry has a lot of turnover.
  - 4.) How do we better communicate into the field?
  - 5.) More outreach is needed.
- 3.) Funding
  - 1.) Everybody is looking for ways to fund their industry (i.e. – state parks – 1 cent gas tax)
  - 2.) State tourism industry is already generating a lot of tax dollars for the state. Would not be inappropriate to use state money to fund tourism needs.
  - 3.) DNR gets no money from state's general fund, neither does MDOT. Retroactive funds are not forthcoming.

- 4.) The state doesn't have money to fund programs. There is not a lot of money to go around. If you don't collect taxes, there is no money.
  - 5.) Term limits are a problem.
  - 6.) Justification of income – legislature does not believe us or hear us about the ROI generated by tourism. Why? What should we do about it?
  - 7.) There is a “law of diminishing returns.” Legislators don't buy into 3-1 or even 2-1 ROI of tourism.
  - 8.) Key question: Is the industry willing to tax itself?
- 4.) Research and Market Segmentation
- 1.) Travel MI staff, et. al. need to be more aware of the product that Michigan has to offer
  - 2.) This should be one of the legs that the industry stands on. We need more definitive information to use for making decisions.
  - 3.) Michigan Tourism Economic Impact Model (MITEIM ) should be available and easy (user-friendly) for everyone to use. Assessments alone are not a good measure of activity.
  - 4.) Data (i.e. – Shifflet data) is needed to run MITEIM and should be made available.
  - 5.) Understanding impact is important to decisions making.
- 5.) Public Policy and Government Relations
- 1.) We know about term limits – we need to continually educate new legislators
  - 2.) MDOT gathers legislators together to inform them about what's going on with road construction. Does MEDC have a similar program?
  - 3.) 4 out of 38 state senators are from north of Bay City.
  - 4.) Does the industry need a PAC?
  - 5.) Go to the decision makers, instead of making them come to us. Go to Lansing.
- 6.) General Promotion (Media)
- 1.) Inquiries/hits to Michigan.org continue to increase...where's the conversion to hotel occupancies?
  - 2.) We need some more creative new ways to market our products.
  - 3.) More emphasis on positive image is needed.
  - 4.) We need to change negative perceptions
  - 5.) Travel Michigan doesn't proof “Michigan Travel Ideas” or check it for accuracy.
  - 6.) We need to rethink Michigan branding, use brand across industry – multiply impact.
  - 7.) Bring back “Yes Michigan.” We need to create a consistency – don't keep changing our brand. Residents also miss “Yes Michigan.” Make it “Say Yes to Michigan...Again!”

- 8.) How do we light a fire under Michigan travelers and get them excited enough to invite others to Michigan?

#### 7.) Training/Leadership

- 1.) Create partnerships with colleges and universities to develop hospitality skills training – regions could collaborate. (Ex: Hospitality University)
- 2.) Use PSA's to inform/educate populace and employees that tourism is important to Michigan. Link to "say yes" campaign.
- 3.) Keep it going...(Robert Penske's quote about Detroit Super Bowl)
- 4.) Treat visitors well

#### 8.) Visitor Experience

- 1.) What does it mean?
  - i. Wow factor
  - ii. Did they enjoy?
  - iii. Memories
  - iv. Do it again
  - v. Meet or exceed expectations
  - vi. Recommend to somebody else
- 2.) How do we measure visitor experience?
- 3.) V.E. consists of 2 parts:
  - i. Perception/Anticipation
  - ii. Realization

Other Issues (none)

#### Comment Cards

- 1.) Examine a need for co-op advertising money to support branding campaign
- 2.) Create a brand that will support designation collaboration. Example: Michigan Sports
- 3.) To sell our own individual cities, we have to sell Michigan first
- 4.) Seek out and collaborate with big name companies to show off these companies, etc. Up John, Kellogg, Ford Motors, GM, others. Encourage greater promotion of these "show off places."
- 5.) Some citizens of MI do not want "successful tourism" because it will bring in people. These citizens want to keep MI their "quiet space." They would "circle the wagons" and keep "too many people out"
- 6.) More active to go to the media to promote, sell, encourage tourism. Ask, get the TV, radio, newspapers to do session, time about places in Michigan.
- 7.) Lansing CVB does – "Be a tourist in your own town." Initiate statewide promo similar to the Lansing CVB.
- 8.) Ways to communicate EDC loans to small businesses to upgrade product and physical plant.