



Michigan Tourism Strategic Plan

"a plan for the industry, by the industry"

Industry Organization and Leadership

IWT Report to the Council

November 3, 2006

Section 1: **Overview**

The members of the Industry Organization and Leadership Issue Work Team began deliberations in a meeting held at the Michigan Historical Museum in Lansing on September 7. Two additional meetings were convened in Flint, hosted by the Flint Area Convention and Visitors Bureau. At the subsequent meetings, the issue statement was approved and recommendations deliberated upon.

Participating members of the Issue Work Team

- Chris Dancisak, Michigan Historical Museum (Chair)
- Lisa Myers, Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore-NPS
- Dan Trotochaud, Baymont Inns and Suites of Mackinaw City
- Don Clingan, Lake Michigan Carferry
- Eric Rule, Michigan Retailers Association
- Barb Barden, Livingston County Convention and Visitors Bureau
- Steve Yencich, Michigan Hotel, Motel and Resort Association
- Jerry Preston, Flint Area Convention and Visitors Bureau

The approved issue statement is as follows:

Michigan must develop the Leadership and Organization to grow Michigan's travel industry to be one of the top five travel destinations in the nation. Effective leadership will:

- Encourage Michigan's fragmented travel industry to work together synergistically promoting the state as a destination.
- Encourage the development of standards for local Destination Marketing Organizations.
- Enhance organizational structure at the state level that supports local promotional initiatives to attract out of state visitors.
- Focus on existing product enhancement and encourage new products.
- Assist with the development of industry hospitality training objectives.
- Serve as ombudsman for visitor experiences between Destination Marketing Organizations and state departments (DNR, MDOT, etc)
- Provide market research to the Michigan travel industry.
- Develop coordinated promotional opportunities for the Michigan Travel Industry.
- Elevate the status of Michigan's travel industry as an important component of the state's economy, worthy of the funding necessary to achieve dynamic growth.

At the September 7th and 28th meetings, discussion took place on several items related to the organizational structure of the industry, especially the infrastructure of state government's tourism program.

Travel Michigan—discussion centered on where Travel Michigan should be housed within state government.

Travel Commission – there was discussion as to the Travel Commission being an advisory board vs. a policy making board.

Coordination Between the Public and Private Sectors—there was discussion as to expanding TICOM, or the creation of a similar entity to represent a broad cross-section of the industry for the purpose of coordinating action on critical issues and lobbying activity as needed.

Section 2: **Challenges**

Most of the challenges identified during work group deliberations relate to political or governmental action.

The recommendations of the work group were ultimately developed as incremental changes designed as initial steps toward addressing identified concerns.

Section 3: **Recommendations**

- Membership of the Michigan Travel Commission be strengthened and structured in order to ensure the broadest possible industry representation and input. Toward that end, it is recommended that, in addition to geographic representation factors, membership on the commission be selected from names put forward by leading industry trade associations, as part of the gubernatorial appointment process.
- The Michigan Travel Commission convene an annual joint meeting with representatives of the Michigan Departments of History, Arts and Libraries (HAL); Michigan Department of Agriculture; Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT); and the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR); for the purpose of evaluating common issues that impact the Michigan travel industry, and establishing a common action agenda to positively address those issues.

Budget

The specific recommendations of the work group do not have budgetary implications. However, it is implied in the work group statement that Michigan must have an overall budget that is competitive with promotional expenditures of the other states in the top tier in order to be competitive.

Time Frame for Implementation

Legislative action would be required to implement, by statute, the recommendation of the work group regarding the composition of the Michigan Travel Commission. However, the sitting Governor could, if in agreement, begin to implement the recommendation immediately with the next gubernatorial appointments to the commission. The commission could implement the second recommendation as one of its action items.

Section 4: **The Process**

The initial visioning process aided the discussions of the work group. It provided an overview of issues of interest to the participating representatives of the industry. Further information was generated from reviewing comments made at the regional meetings.