

**2012-2017 Michigan Tourism Strategic Plan  
Promotion, Marketing & Communications (PMC) Committee Meeting  
City Flats Hotel, Holland, 10am – 4pm, October 21 2013**

**Agenda**

1. Welcome – Sally Laukitis and Stuart Verhoef
2. Introductions – All
3. Review of July 9 Meeting Notes – All
4. Update from September 20 Travel Commission Meeting – Travel Commissioners Roger Curtis, Camille Jourden-Mark and Sally Laukitis
5. Update from Travel MI/on Pure Michigan – George Zimmermann
6. Status of Action Items from July 2 Meeting
  - a. MSU Extension posts – Sarah Nicholls
    - i. General site: <http://msue.anr.msu.edu/> (tourism is under the 'Business' tab)
    - ii. Post on Canadian visitors to Michigan:  
[http://msue.anr.msu.edu/news/welcoming\\_international\\_tourists](http://msue.anr.msu.edu/news/welcoming_international_tourists)
    - iii. Post on ROI:  
[http://msue.anr.msu.edu/news/tourism\\_marketing\\_return\\_on\\_investment](http://msue.anr.msu.edu/news/tourism_marketing_return_on_investment)
  - b. PMC committee member from Delta – Sarah Nicholls
  - c. Partnering with Brand USA on the translation of web content – George Zimmermann
  - d. AACVB's international website – Stefanie Kulpe
  - e. MDNR information re. loyalty programs – Kristin Phillips
  - f. International students at MI universities – Sarah Nicholls
  - g. LinkedIn group: Michigan Forum on International Tourism – Sarah Nicholls
  - h. Portrait of American Traveller – George Zimmermann and Sarah Nicholls
7. Results of Niche Market Survey
8. Discussion of Funding/Research RFP
9. Next Steps and Next Meeting

**2012-2017 Michigan Tourism Strategic Plan  
Promotion, Marketing & Communications (PMC) Committee Meeting  
City Flats Hotel, Holland, 10am – 3pm, October 21 2013  
Meeting Notes**

**In attendance:** Barry Owens (Co-Chair), Allen Crater, Camille Jourden-Mark, Stefanie Kulpe, Sally Laukitis, Kristin Phillips, Dave Serino, Jill Stone, Jennifer Zieger, George Zimmermann, Sarah Nicholls, Louise Smith.

**Absent:** Roger Curtis (Co-Chair).

**Welcome** – Provided by Sarah Nicholls, Sally Laukitis and Stuart Verhoef (GM of City Flats).

**Introductions** – Made by all.

**Review of July 9 Meeting Notes** – no changes made.

**Update from September 20 Travel Commission Meeting** – Noted that the TC has a new Chair (Roger Curtis) and Vice Chair (Mike Busley) as well as four new members: Stephen Kircher (President, Boyne Eastern Operations, Boyne Resorts), Bill Parlberg (President/COO, Zehnder's of Frankenmuth), Christian W. Øverland (Executive Vice President, The Henry Ford) and PMC committee member Camille Jourden-Mark. Roger encouraged the Commissioners to be more active in relating news from TC meetings back to their communities. Discussion of the role and responsibilities of the TC, e.g., vis-à-vis Travel Michigan's budget – how can the TC get involved in advocating for the increases as desired per the MTSP?

**Update from Travel MI/on Pure Michigan** – George provided an update on TM's activities for 2014, including new fall and winter guides, \$2 million for spring-summer buys in Toronto, new ad partners for winter and fall as well as next summer. GZ traveled to China with the Governor in September. The outbound travel potential from China is tremendous (China became the largest spender on outbound international travel in the world in 2012), though knowledge of the Midwest and Michigan is currently minimal at best. Traditional travel pattern for now is to the big cities on the E and W coasts and in large groups. But as market matures and becomes more experienced and independent will be more opportunities to draw visitors away from those destinations. But, every state and country is marketing to China and MI's budget = small. In process of hiring a Chinese rep. Biggest draws = auto heritage, lack of congestion/pollution and clean/pure image. TM is also increasing its spend in Europe (UK and Germany). IPW is in Chicago in April 2014, huge opportunity for Travel MI and for MI attractions/CVBs. There will be an international information session on Wednesday, December 4th, 1-4pm, at the Kellogg Center, 219 S Harrison Rd, East Lansing (RSVP to Regina McCloud at [McCloudR@michigan.org](mailto:McCloudR@michigan.org)).

## Status of Action Items from July 2 Meeting –

- a. MSU Extension posts – MSU Extension has a Tourism page (<http://msue.anr.msu.edu/>, tourism is under the ‘Business’ tab). Sarah worked with MSUE colleague Andy Northrop on two PMC-related posts:

Northrop, A., and Nicholls, S. (2013). Tourism marketing return on investment: Interpret ROI with care! Michigan State University Extension website, [http://msue.anr.msu.edu/news/tourism\\_marketing\\_return\\_on\\_investment](http://msue.anr.msu.edu/news/tourism_marketing_return_on_investment) (stressed by George that it is impossible to compare ROIs for different states since each measures different returns on different investments using different methodologies)

Northrop, A., and Nicholls, S. (2013). Welcoming international tourists: Michigan’s focus on the Canadian market. Michigan State University Extension website, [http://msue.anr.msu.edu/news/welcoming\\_international\\_tourists](http://msue.anr.msu.edu/news/welcoming_international_tourists)

- b. PMC committee member from Delta – Andrew Zarras has moved to a new position/location. Sarah will continue to work with Michael O’Callaghan (Detroit CVB) to identify a potential member.
- c. Partnering with Brand USA on the translation of web content – topic for December 4 international information session (as referenced above).
- d. AACVB’s international website – Stefanie reported that AACVB’s Japanese micro-site receives 2,000-3,000 visits per month, the German page not so many. There is also a German Facebook page. International pages developed by Sunrizing. No information on cost was provided by AACVB.
- e. MDNR information re. loyalty programs – Kristin summarized some data that MDNR has collated on the declining popularity and active use of loyalty programs. Such programs are expensive to set up and maintain, and they need to offer real added value to be successful. Consumers are increasingly concerned about the sharing of their personal information.
- f. International students at MI universities – Sarah and Louise compiled a listing of MI colleges and universities and the number and proportion of international students at each (these were 2011-12 data, we are currently updating them with the recently released 2012-13 numbers). Handout of top ten provided to committee; those with a hospitality and/or tourism program asterisked (could use faculty and students in these programs to distribute information, collect data, etc.). Estimated that there are 25,000-30,000 international students in the state, including more than 13,000 at U of M and MSU alone. U of M and MSU ranked #8 and #9 in the nation for the number of international students in 2012.

Need to determine: what is appealing to international students in terms of travel within MI; how to access them and their friends/families; how to inform/educate them about

opportunities in MI (using what materials or resources); what incentives to offer. Could there be a page for international students on Michigan.org? Committee would like every international student to receive a briefing on the state – How? Via orientation programs (required for all new international students). Proposed that Sarah and Louise develop and pilot a survey of the international students at MSU and use the results to help identify next steps, with goal of developing a program to be presented at orientations in August 2014. Draft survey coming soon.

How to use outbound Study Abroad students as ambassadors also discussed. MSU ranks #4 in the nation for study abroad participation, with 2,380 MSU students studying overseas in 2011-12.

How to access international workers + their families also discussed. Suggestion to target students first and consider this group later.

- g. LinkedIn group: The Michigan Forum on International Tourism was launched on September 30 and has 163 members as of October 20. Purpose (what every new member see when (s)he joins): “The Michigan Forum on International Tourism is dedicated to increasing the Michigan tourism industry’s understanding of the international market, and to improving the industry’s ability to provide superior experiences to the state’s growing number of international guests. It provides a venue for tourism industry members to share news about and seek resources regarding the international promotion and marketing of Michigan, and to discuss how to best provide for the varying needs of our international visitors. The Michigan Forum on International Tourism is one of several implementation efforts associated with achievement of the Promotion, Marketing & Communications and the Service Excellence goals of the 2012-2017 Michigan Tourism Strategic Plan.”

The challenge will be to maintain the momentum of the site, to keep the content current and the conversations active. PLEASE visit the group often and get involved in the discussions. The entire PMC committee should take responsibility for sustaining conversation on the site, in conjunction with the SE committee.

- h. Portrait of American Traveller – Michigan’s desirability as a state to visit has varied as follows: 2010 29th (of 51), 2011 31st (of 54 – Guam, Puerto Rico and the US Virgin Islands were added to the choices), 2012 29th (of 54), 2013 30th (of 54). The PMC objective as stated in the MTSP is to rank 15th or better by 2017. The top five most desirable states typically include California, Florida, Hawaii, New York and Alaska. The states receiving the most similar scores to Michigan typically include Utah, Vermont, New Hampshire and Wisconsin. Noted that this ranking will realistically take a long time to shift upwards since these kinds of preferences are based on overall life experiences and general perceptions of different states. Also noted that other states are also increasing/improving their marketing efforts.

## Results of Niche Market Survey –

The niche market survey was sent to all CVBs; 43 responses received as of October 20, Sarah will work to generate additional responses before she closes survey and finalizes results. CVBs were asked to (1) Please identify the 5-10 niche activities that have historically been most popular with visitors to your area, or for which your area has traditionally been best known, and (2) Please identify the 5-10 niche activities that are currently emerging most rapidly in your area, or that your visitors are increasingly inquiring about.

The historically most popular niches (those identified by more than 10 respondents) were as follows:

Festivals /Events	26	60.5%
Fishing	19	44.2%
Sports	17	39.5%
Shopping	16	37.2%
Museums	13	30.2%
Boating	12	27.9%
Hiking	12	27.9%
Hunting	11	25.6%
Snowmobiling	11	25.6%
Beaches	10	23.3%
Historic Attractions	10	23.3%
Live Theater	10	23.3%

And the emerging niches identified by more than 10 respondents were:

Biking	17	39.5%
Festivals/Events	11	25.6%
Agricultural Tourism	10	23.3%
Canoeing/Kayaking	10	23.3%

Noted that festivals appear on both lists. Issue of “festival fatigue” discussed – for whom, attendees or residents?

Could overlay these results with Shifflet data, to confirm historic trends in activity participation. Sarah will acquire more recent Shifflet data – in 2010, the top five activities participated in by MI visitors were dining, shopping, entertainment, sightseeing, and gambling.

Discussion of whether or not to share survey with broader industry (lodging, etc.). Would also be desirable to survey consumers – but would need to differentiate between activities that serve as primary purpose of travel, versus those activities that visitors happen to participate in during their stay but that were not planned in advance.

Discussion of whether this focus overlaps with work of CCP committee. Not really – that group met November 8 and is focusing on building relationships with groups such as the Michigan Restaurant Association, Michigan Retailers Association, Small Business Association of Michigan, Michigan Manufacturers Association, and Michigan Association of Realtors.

Next steps:

- Sarah will contact non-respondents and finalise survey.
- Committee will identify 2-3 niches for preliminary focus and develop a tourism marketing plan for each niche (suggested that committee splits into 2-3 sub-groups):
  - Identify stakeholders related to niche activity
  - Educate these stakeholders re. the role and value of the activity as a component of the tourism industry
  - Encourage stakeholders to unify themselves and to partner with the tourism industry/Travel Michigan
  - Incorporate niche into Governor’s Conference (note: theme of 2014 conference = culinary, there will also be a break-out session on trails)
  - If successful, use these first 2-3 niches as “demonstration projects” for other activities to replicate

**Preliminary Identification of Funding and Research Needs** – An RFP related to the preliminary research and funding needs of the MTSP implementation committees was distributed on behalf of the Funding and Research/Technical Assistance committees on September 15. The RFP encourages the committees to concentrate on the identification and acquisition of data, research and/or technical assistance that specifically relate to (i) the development of metrics for the plan’s objectives and/or (ii) the procurement of baseline data against which progress towards those objectives can be measured. Proposed that Sarah develop a request to assist with the international student survey.

**Next Meeting** – Would like to meet 2-3 times before Governor’s Conference (March 9-11). Possible 2-3 hour meeting in Lansing before Christmas (please respond to Doodle, coming soon).

**Action Items and Their Status** –

- Sarah and Louise will develop a draft of a survey of international students at MSU.
- Sarah will draft response to Funding/RTA RFP to cover international student survey.

- Sarah will finalise niche survey and recommend 2-4 niches on which the committee should focus.

**Future Agenda Items –**

- Final choice of niche markets on which to focus.
- Report to be given at Governor's Conference on March 11 – who will report on what?