

Michigan Tourism Strategic Plan  
Public Policy and Gov't Support Implementation Committee (PPGS)

## MEETING AGENDA

**July 16, 2013, 9:30 AM**

Public Affairs Associates  
One Michigan Avenue Bldg., 120 N. Washington Square, Suite 1050, Lansing.

Welcome & Introductions  
(Jon & George)

Brief Description of Coordinator's Role  
(Sarah Nichols)

Brief Overview of Current Lansing Political Environment Regarding Tourism  
(Bruce Ashley, Bret Marr)

Brief Review of PPGS Goal and Objectives  
(Jon & George)

Review & Discussion of Vetted and Unvetted Suggested Strategies/Tactics  
(All)

Next Steps

Next Meeting

**2012-2017 Michigan Tourism Strategic Plan (MTSP)  
Public Policy & Government Support (PPGS) Committee Meeting  
Lansing, July 16 2013**

**Meeting Notes**

**In attendance:** Jon Nunn (Co-Chair), George Moroz (Co-Chair), Bruce Ashley, Don Holecek, Bill Lobenherz, Dave Lorenz, Bret Marr, Andy Northrop, Barry Owens, Sarah Nicholls.

**Absent:** Tom Nemacheck, Jerry Preston.

**Welcome** – Provided by Jon Nunn and George Moroz.

**Introductions** – Made by all.

**Coordinator's Role and Update** – Provided by Sarah Nicholls.

Sarah Nicholls has been hired by Travel Michigan to work with and for the Travel Commission on implementation of the plan. Her primary responsibilities are to coordinate and facilitate the plan implementation process, i.e., to organize and facilitate committee meetings, liaise between committees and with the industry, provide progress reports at TC meetings, conduct an annual evaluation of progress towards each goal and its associated objectives, etc. In addition to her time she has a graduate student assistant with 20 hours per week committed to this project. All meeting materials, annual progress reports, etc. will be posted on the plan website: [tourismplan.anr.msu.edu](http://tourismplan.anr.msu.edu)

Noted that this is a comprehensive, state-wide plan for the entire industry, i.e., it is not just a TM plan. Also that this is more than a marketing plan – promotion/marketing/communications is just one of eight critical elements, as identified in the eight goals.

The Funding committee is in the process of preparing a call for preliminary funding needs (coming this fall). Note that there is no other state funding for plan initiatives; per communication from TM, monies allocated to TM are mandated for PM campaign only.

**Overview of Political Environment** – Provided by Bruce Ashley, Bill Lobenherz and Bret Marr.

All agreed that the atmosphere with respect to tourism in Lansing is positive, and that support for Pure Michigan is high. Discussion of need for industry members to talk to legislators, to explain why tourism is relevant and important. Discussion of short legislative cycles and influence of term limits. Bill provided example of Michigan Infrastructure and Transportation Association (MITA); tourism also needs a strong, well-funded coalition with a strong and effective leader. Problem is that tourism is so much more fragmented than

many other industries; in addition to the main segments (lodging, attractions, etc.) there are many other more tangential interests that are hard to identify and bring together. There are lots of small efforts going on but no single group that speaks with one, effective voice. Reminder that TM can attempt to unite the industry but that it cannot engage in lobbying activities.

### **The PPGS Goal and Objectives –**

GOAL: Empower the industry to encourage policy-makers at all levels to support the travel industry.

*Objective One: Improve understanding of the value of tourism and support for the tourism industry among state legislators, county and local officials, businesses and residents.*

*Objective Two: Improve existing and develop new organizational structures to enhance public sector interaction with and support of tourism policy and planning activities.*

**Discussion of Strategies** – Each committee member was asked to rank their top few strategies from the ‘Suggested Strategies’ portion of the MTSP.

Don Holecek:

- Identify and implement new strategic partnerships with related industries and entities.
- Continue to invest in ROI research.
- Encourage MEDC to consider tourism as an economic development tool in the same way as high-tech and manufacturing, and to add tourism to their (inter)national missions.
- (Re)Establish a "Tourism Leadership Academy" to support development of a cadre of tourism industry leaders.
- Integrate advocacy training into tourism/hospitality programs at MI universities/colleges.
- Develop a strategy for dealing with the media.

Andy Northrop:

- Identify and implement new strategic partnerships with related industries and entities.
- Develop a short presentation highlighting key tourism statistics/impacts; work with MSU Extension (e.g., the Sustaining Community Prosperity Workgroup), industry associations and CVBs to share with relevant groups, e.g., Chambers of Commerce, County Commissions.

Bill Lobenherz:

- Identify and implement new strategic partnerships with related industries and entities.
- Continue to develop clear and unified state and regional lobbying efforts.

Group agreed to prioritize four items:

- Continue to develop clear and unified state and regional lobbying efforts.
- Identify and implement new strategic partnerships with related industries and entities.
- Work with Travel Michigan/MEDC to establish the current and potential impact of (increased) Pure Michigan funding on tourism spending, tax receipts and jobs.
- Develop a short presentation highlighting key tourism statistics/impacts; work with MSU Extension, industry associations and CVBs to share with relevant groups.

Other discussion of potential strategies:

- The notion of a legislative toolkit – to educate people about how to work with state legislators and county/local government officials, to provide them with reliable and accurate data to use in these discussions, etc. – was raised at multiple of the summer stakeholder sessions. Questions: What information relevant to such a tool is currently available? What information is missing? What information is desirable?
- The establishment of a tourism caucus was also raised at several summer sessions. Such a caucus would be attractive to join, but what would it do, what would its agenda be?
- Garner more support at the local level – reach out to county and local government, to groups like the Michigan Municipal League, etc.

Other discussion:

- Not all parts of the state are covered by a CVB. A system of regional tourism organizations used to exist (some still do, e.g., WMTA). What could be the role of MEDC's regional offices? While regional interests to vary there is still a need for the industry to be able to speak with a single and united voice.

#### **Potential Action Items –**

- Distribute copies of MTSP to legislature and to Chairs of hospitality/tourism programs.
- Invite Representatives Pettalia and Kosowski to next PPGS committee meeting (Bret).