

## FY 2008 Welcome Center Plan

Travel Michigan, in partnership with the Michigan Department of Transportation, oversees the state's system of 13 Welcome Centers. These centers greet close to **9 million annual travelers** that stop into the centers for a relaxing environment, clean restrooms, tasty vending products, and to pick up some of our 4,000 free state travel publications. Our knowledgeable and experienced staff also assist the travelers with traffic and weather updates, answer questions and provide guidance regarding the many enjoyable things to see and do across the great state of Michigan.

For **FY 2008**, the Welcome Centers will accomplish the following:

**1. Assure clean and well-maintained facilities.**

This includes working with MDOT to resolve all maintenance issues as quickly as possible, keep the grounds/facilities clean, and the restrooms and literature areas well-stocked.

**2. Provide the highest quality of customer service.**

Staff will greet as many visitors as possible with a smile and a welcoming remark. They will seek to answer all visitor questions and provide the most appropriate travel guidance/assistance. Center managers will orient all staff on the Fish Philosophy of customer service and seek to integrate/promote this philosophy within daily operations.

**3. Staff will increase their collection of visitor email addresses by at least 3% over 2007 levels.**

By using center Guestcards, staff will secure visitor completion of the Guestcards including email addresses for e-Newsletter subscriptions. To provide incentives to visitors, centers will work with the Industry to obtain give-away items that can be used as visitor prizes.

**4. Staff will work with the Industry to host promotional events at their centers and increase the events held in 2008 by at least one (1) per center over the 2007 level.**

Promotional events are desirable partnership activities. Centers will initiate contact with Industry representatives to jointly develop and host such events at the centers.

**5. Travel Michigan will work cooperatively with MDOT to open the new Detroit Welcome Center in Mexicantown in 2008.**

MDOT has finalized its lease with the Mexicantown Community Development Corp., and Travel Michigan is preparing to staff, open, and operate the new 5,000 sq. ft. center at the foot of the Ambassador Bridge in southwest Detroit.

**6. Travel Michigan will work cooperatively with MDOT and the selected contractor to further develop the newly implemented multimedia system.**

MDOT and Travel Michigan selected a vendor in 2007 to install, maintain, and manage a multimedia broadcast system throughout the Welcome Center network. This system provides the state with the ability to broadcast emergency traffic and weather alerts, plus display a variety of state and Industry tourism promotional messages. The vendor is to continue to improve the system in 2008.

**7. Travel Michigan will continue to work with MDOT and new center construction projects.**

The Port Huron center is under consideration for a rebuild, and the Dundee center and St. Ignace "Gateway" center had master redesign plans finalized in 2006. Travel Michigan will follow up with MDOT on the next steps involved in each of these projects.

**8. Travel Michigan will finalize and adhere to the FY 2008 Interagency Agreement with MDOT.**

Each year, Travel Michigan and MDOT enter into an Interagency Agreement for the oversight of the Welcome Center system. This Interagency Agreement details the roles and responsibilities of each party, as well as stipulating the total funds available for annual operations.

**9. Travel Michigan will work with MDOT and the Department of Information Technology on the Wi-Fi pilot project.**

This pilot started four years ago and is scheduled to terminate in 2008. Travel Michigan will work with MDOT and DIT to determine the future of Wi-Fi services at Welcome Centers and other state sites.