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Conducting A Tourist Hospitality School in Your Community

Michigan State University Extension

Tourism Resort Series Bulletin

Robert W. McIntosh, School of Hotel, Restaurant and Institutional Management

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a
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School

IN

YOUR COMMUNITY

By Robert W. McIntosh

School of Hotel, Restaurant and
Institutional Management

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY
COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE
EAST LANSING

Conducting A Tourist Hospitality School In Your Community

By Robert W. McIntosh*

INTRODUCTION

Tourism is very important to the economy of almost every Michigan community. In most instances, however, this business could be enhanced by a vigorous educational program designed to create a most favorable attitude toward visitors. Travelers and vacationists will repeat their visits many times and tell their friends about a place where they receive a cordial welcome and unusually courteous and friendly treatment.

This folder outlines a program for a "tourist hospitality school" intended for all persons — adults as well as young people — who directly contact the traveler. Formal instruction in the course consists of three parts: (1) an indoctrination in the importance and value of the tourist and resort business, (2) the art of courtesy and hospitality, and (3) learning about the tourist attractions and points of interest in your community and county.

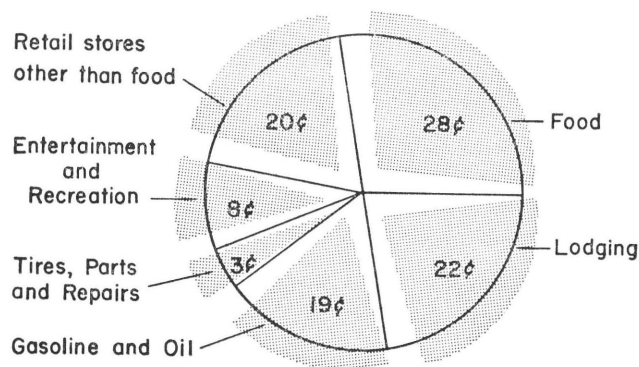
MICHIGAN'S TOURIST BUSINESS

Travel and vacations constitute one of Michigan's three major industries, the others being manufacturing and agriculture. Our Michigan Tourist Council estimates the volume of business for the 1958 tourist season at about \$600 million. This is big business, and prospects for future growth are excellent. More leisure time, increased prosperity, improved roads and transportation systems, and expanded recreational facilities combine to attract millions of vacationers to Michigan.

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EVERYBODY BENEFITS

Tourists spend dollars in several different ways which benefit every person in the community. The American Automobile Association has found that the typical automobile vacationist spends his dollar as follows:¹



The above chart shows that tourist money reaches most types of local businesses and indirectly benefits them all. It goes into payrolls, materials, supplies, utilities, retail purchases, and taxes. Thus, every person gains from the tourist business and could gain more if the community would make an effort.

A new booklet, *Your Community Can Profit from the Tourist Business* (1957) is now available from the Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C. This publication contains many helpful and practical suggestions as well as interesting data on tourist expenditures. Write for a copy.

PLANNING THE TOURIST HOSPITALITY SCHOOL

A basic principle of successful community action is to involve as many people as possible in the planning process. Your citizens will be much more interested and enthusiastic about one of these schools if they have been consulted in advance and asked to participate.

Advance planning is essential. In fact, groundwork should be completed *before the first of the year*. Follow these steps in planning:

1. Select as chairman an enthusiastic individual who

¹*Americans on the Highway* (Washington, D. C.: American Automobile Association, 1956) p. 4.

is sold on the tourist hospitality school idea. He will serve as the coordinator.

2. Obtain any supplementary services and information from the resource organizations listed at the end of this folder.
3. Assign your committee(s) to the following jobs:
 - Course planning and instruction
 - Membership and attendance
 - Publicity
 - Follow-up and evaluation

Course Planning and Instruction

Date: April or May is recommended.

Length: One day is probably enough, or a series of afternoon or evening classes can be held.

Subjects:

1. Indoctrination in the importance of tourism to Michigan and to the community.
2. Description of local and regional tourist attractions.
3. The art of hospitality. This includes the dignity of human services and the high regard we should hold for our opportunities to offer warm hospitality to our guests.
4. Luncheon with inspirational speaker.
5. "Know Your Community and County."

Methods:

The most effective method of teaching is with visual aids, demonstrations, and tours.

For the indoctrination portion, charts, graphs, and figures should be shown, along with lectures.

Tourist attractions and regional points of interest are illustrated most effectively with color slides and movies. Local photographers can doubtless provide good pictures. Obtain additional films from the resource organizations listed in the last portion of this folder.

A tour will be essential in order to "Know Your Community and County." The tour should include all of the outstanding tourist attractions, restaurants, entertainment places, library, shopping facilities, industries, museums and other places and facilities which are of interest to tourists. The tour requires careful planning. Be sure all your folks understand each point of interest,

and that those in charge know the full story of what is being described.

Skits help greatly to heighten interest and could be effectively used to teach guest courtesy, giving directions, and similar skills. Group participation should be encouraged as much as possible.

Tips for Effective Meetings:

1. The room should be comfortable, well lighted, and roomy enough to avoid crowding. Some enlarged pictures, maps, travel posters, and similar decorations create an atmosphere conducive to lively and stimulating discussion.
2. Each meeting should be carefully planned and provide plenty of time to cover each subject.
3. Change the pace of the meetings to hold interest. Mix in visual aids, demonstrations, skits, and tours. Strive to get participation and use imagination and stimulation. Do not allow long speeches.
4. Publish the program in advance and send a copy to each person who will be participating.
5. If mechanical props and equipment are being used, check them in advance to be sure they are working properly.
6. Have someone on hand to greet each person as he arrives in order to create a friendly and relaxed environment.
7. Start and stop the meetings on time. Adhere to your schedule for each session, including the breaks and luncheon. Punctuality creates a feeling of respect between the audience and the speakers.
8. Provide for a summary at the end of each meeting. This helps to firm the lesson in the student's mind for longer retention.
9. Have someone designated to take notes of the most important elements of the presentations. These will be useful in future meetings.
10. If possible, provide handout material such as maps, display cards, or folders. A hospitality reminder card to be mounted in a conspicuous place should be helpful to the student when on the job.

Membership and Attendance

Owners and employees of every business should be urged to participate, particularly stores, service stations, sleeping accommodations, restaurants, shops, marinas, and parks. Committee members should make *personal contacts* with owners and managers to urge their cooperation. Keep records of attendance.

Two sessions may be necessary to keep the crowd within manageable size. Also, business people may wish to split their staffs, so all could attend.

Publicity

As this school is wholly a public relations effort, the committee should set a good example and do an outstanding job of informing the public. Full and sustained newspaper and radio coverage is necessary. The publicity schedule needs to be carefully planned. It should include a time schedule of releases, nature of releases, media, and persons responsible.

Pictures taken at some of the early planning meetings will provide good material for your initial publicity program. Publicity should also be given to the school program, speakers, films to be shown, and benefits to be derived from attending the school.

Some good news stories about the tourist hospitality school can also be used for a large audience in your region and throughout the entire state.

Do not skimp on publicity. The more the better — keep your public informed!

Follow-up and Evaluation

If done properly, the school should have a most favorable acceptance by the students and the lessons should prove to be of everyday use in dealing with tourists.

The school could be continued on an annual basis. New people are constantly being hired and those who have attended previously could consider the school as an opportunity to “brush up” on current tourist attractions and facilities.

A questionnaire is very useful in soliciting constructive criticism from those who attended.

Interviews with the managers of businesses who cooperated in the school is also recommended.

Next year's planning committee should carefully review all evaluation reports so that the most useful ideas can be incorporated into the new instruction program.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Tourist Agencies

Michigan Tourist Council, Stevens T. Mason Bldg., Lansing

West Michigan Tourist and Resort Ass'n., Manger-Rowe Hotel, Grand Rapids

Southeastern Michigan Tourist & Publicity Ass'n., 1407 Washington Blvd., Detroit 26

East Michigan Tourist Ass'n., Log Office, Bay City
Upper Peninsula Development Bureau, Harlow Block, Marquette

Your local Chamber of Commerce

State Agencies

Michigan Dep't. of Economic Development, Stevens T. Mason Bldg., Lansing

Vocational Education, Michigan Dep't. of Public Instruction, Capitol Bldg., Lansing

Michigan Department of Conservation, Stevens T. Mason Bldg., Lansing

Michigan Historical Commission, Lewis Cass Bldg., Lansing

Michigan State Highway Dep't., Stevens T. Mason Bldg., Lansing

Michigan State Police, East Lansing

Michigan Dep't. of Health, DeWitt Road, Lansing 4
Mackinac Bridge Authority, St. Ignace

Travel and Trade Associations

American Automobile Association, 139 Bagley Avenue, Detroit 26

Michigan Hotel Association, 624 Book Tower, Detroit 26

Michigan Restaurant and Caterer's Ass'n., 425 Farwell Bldg., 1249 Griswold St., Detroit

Michigan Motel and Resort Assn., 1308 N. Hayford Street, Lansing

Audio-Visual Aids

Audio-Visual Education Center, University of Michigan, Administration Bldg., Ann Arbor

Audio-Visual Center, Michigan State University, East Lansing

Colleges and Universities

Cooperative Extension Service, Michigan State University, Agricultural Hall, East Lansing, and your local County Extension Director of the Cooperative Extension Service

Extension Service, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor

Hillsdale College, Hillsdale

Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo

Central Michigan College, Mt. Pleasant

Eastern Michigan College, Ypsilanti

Northern Michigan College, Marquette

Michigan College of Mining and Technology, Houghton