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Michigan State University Extension Service  
Phil Alexander  
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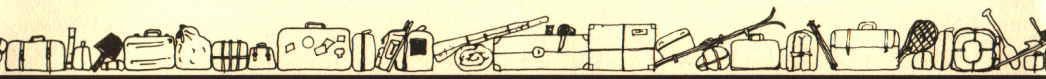


## Tourism information series no. 3

Cooperative Extension Service  
Michigan State University  
Extension Bulletin E-1958  
January 1987  
65 cents

# Developing A Tourism Organization





# DEVELOPING A TOURISM ORGANIZATION

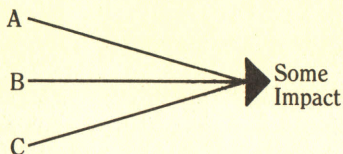
By Phil Alexander



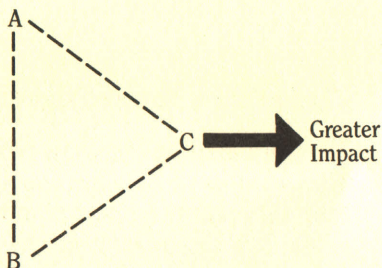
## Introduction

**F**orming a tourism organization can be both successful and beneficial in achieving your goals and the goals of others in the community. Your ideas, knowledge, time, and energy combined with that of other people who share a common interest in tourism development is more powerful and effective than individuals working alone.

When organizations work alone.



When organizations work together.



But how does a tourism group get started? Who should be included? Where can you go to get help and suggestions? Listed below are examples of tourism organizations in Michigan.

### STATEWIDE

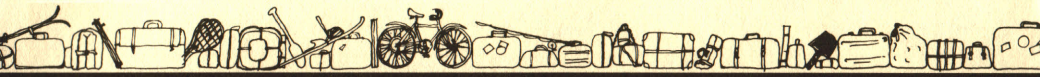
Dept. of Commerce  
Travel Bureau  
Dept. of Transportation  
Dept. of Natural  
Resources  
State Chamber of  
Commerce  
MSU Cooperative  
Extension Service  
Travel, Tourism and  
Recreation Resource  
Center (TTRRC)

### REGIONAL

Regional Tourist Assocs.  
EMTA, WMTA, UPTRA,  
SWMTTA  
Northeast Michigan  
Tourism Alliance  
U.P. Tri-County  
Tourism Council  
Southwest Michigan  
Tourism Council

### LOCAL

Convention & Visitors  
Bureau  
Chamber of Commerce  
County Commission  
MSU Cooperative  
Extension Service



Once you find where your local organization fits into the tourism picture, you can look at some options for getting started.

What type of tourism council do you want to form? There are several forms to choose from and you should select the one that best satisfies your needs and individual situation. The list that follows offers examples of tourism councils. Modification and combinations of this list are common and encouraged.

- Committee within the Chamber of Commerce
- Voluntary Membership Tourism Council
- Tourism Council of Associations
- Council based on Room Tax or Assessment.

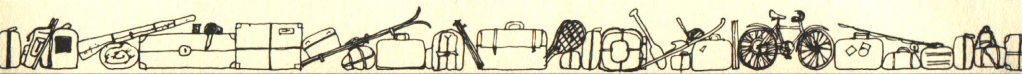
### **Committee Within The Chamber of Commerce**

This is the most common type of tourism organization because the group is already formed and has similar goals. Many tourism councils originate as part of the chamber and then develop into a separate organization.

### **Voluntary Membership Tourism Council**

A new, independent organization is created to promote tourism for a community or group of communities. Tourism related business leaders meet and decide on a project that benefits the group or community. They form an official non-profit organization, attract additional members, pool resources (money, expertise, human resources), and become an official tourism representative for local residents, government, and visitors. The chart (see next page) illustrates how the council can be organized.

Modifications to the model shown in the chart can be made that best satisfy any situation. For example, smaller councils may consolidate some of the committees and their functions. The stated responsibilities for each committee serve as a check list for any sized tourism council.



## **Tourist Council of Associations**

Basically, this group consists of representatives from existing tourism agencies, committees, and associations. Typical members of this council are from the Chamber of Commerce, Convention and Visitors Bureau, Motel Association, Restaurant Association, Economic Development Committee, Downtown Business Groups, Historical Development Committee, and Festival Committees.

The association is designed for communities that have various tourism groups working independently. By working together, a centrally coordinated effort helps reduce the problems of a fragmented approach.

## **Council Based on Room Tax or Assessment**

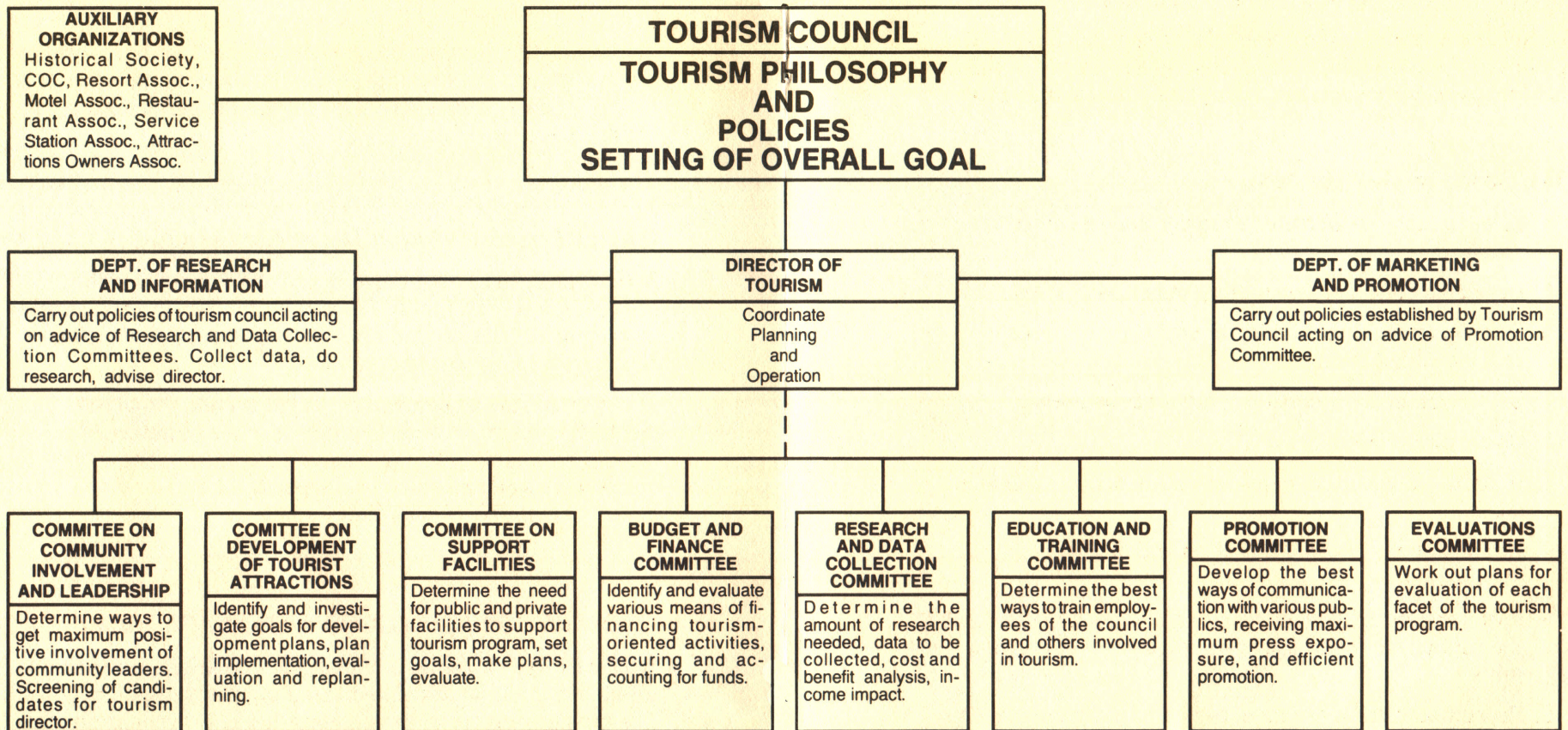
Both arrangements are funded by an added charge on the rental of overnight rooms. Funds are used for tourism promotion and development. Certain requirements and legislative approval are necessary prior to implementation.

The main difference between the room tax and room assessment is in administration. The *room tax* is administered, collected, and allocated by the county government. The *room assessment* is administered by a separate agency, and no governmental unit is involved.

## **COOPERATION AND COORDINATION ARE THE KEYS**

Whatever type of tourism council that you select, it requires a diversified structure capable of handling many responsibilities. The primary purpose of the organization is to accomplish tourism goals set by the community. The organization is the formal "people base" upon which the community's tourism program will be built. It spells out who is to do what, when, how, and where. It will only be as successful as the competency and commitment of those directly involved in making, implementing, and evaluating results of the plan.

# Tourism Organizational Structure (Sample)



Source: Tourism USA: Guidelines For Tourism Development, 1986.



In an industry as competitive and segmented as tourism, cooperation and coordination are essential. Cooperation means doing things together. Coordination then occurs, because, as people cooperate, communication channels are established and improved. As ideas and information are exchanged, members have an understanding of who is doing what. Duplication, ignored concerns, activities of mutual benefit and those of direct conflict can all be identified and discussed.

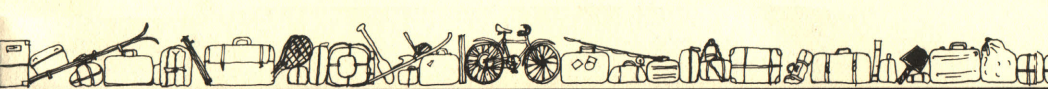
Combine community efforts and take advantage of existing groups in the community with similar goals. They can provide funding assistance, expertise, labor, and political influence.

### **Ten Steps to Get Started:**

1. Select a name that creates an image and identifies the group.
2. Develop a policy: statement of purpose and by-laws.
3. Develop an action program: set goals and methods of accomplishing them.
4. Set up committees and sub-committees as needed.
5. Create awareness.
6. Unite to solve mutual problems and to achieve common goals.
7. Establish lines of communication and develop a flow of information.
8. Foster a spirit of close cooperation and coordination among the various communities, agencies, and other organizations.
9. Recognize tourism as one of the primary uses of land.
10. Recognize tourism as an important economic development factor.

Contact the Cooperative Extension Service for assistance in getting started. There is an Extension office in every Michigan county. The local agents can provide additional resource material, help facilitate organizational skills, and put you in touch with tourism specialists at Michigan State University.





## **FURTHER INFORMATION**

Capacity Building Skills series by Donna Sweeny:

Extension bulletins:

E-1915—Express Yourself.

E-1916—Influencing Others.

E-1917—Local Boards—Working Together.

E-1918—Why We Don't Agree, and What We're Going To Do About It.

E-1919—Building A Local Team.

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

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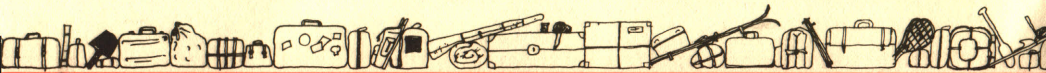


# Tourism Information Series

The Tourism Information Series is for those interested in tourism development. To obtain the series, contact your county Cooperative Extension Service office. Look in the white pages under County Government.

1. E-1937, Tourism and Its Significance in Local Development
2. E-2004, Tourism Planning
3. E-1958, Developing A Tourism Organization
4. E-1959, Tourism Marketing
5. E-1992, Feasibility Analysis in Tourism
6. E-1939, Developing A Promotional Strategy
7. E-1957, Creating A Promotional Theme
8. E-1940, Information and Traveller Decision Making
9. E-1938, Managing Tourism Information Systems
10. E-2005, Selecting Promotional Media
11. E-1999, Pricing Tourism Products and Services
12. E-1960, Direct Marketing of Agricultural Products to Tourists

Series editor: Maureen H. McDonough, Associate Professor,  
Department of Park and Recreation Resources.



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Michigan State University

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