

History of Indiana Dunes Tourism Involvement with the Pavilion Redevelopment and Banquet Building Construction

Destination Audit

Findings

Indiana Dunes Tourism completed the Porter County Destination Audit and Product Position Analysis in April 2005, this document is normally referred to as the destination audit. The goal of this project was to determine what new tourism development should be undertaken within Porter County. This report suggested the following in terms of new product development and enhanced development of existing product:

1. Maximize existing nature and heritage based experiences
 - a. Develop an ecology trail and market the trail
 - b. Development within the Indiana Dunes State Park needs to include:
 - i. Pavilion reuse for food and beverage (discussed best way to achieve this is private/public partnership)
 - ii. New lodging element on parking facilities (discussed best way to achieve this is private/public partnership)
 - iii. Integrate educational elements
 - iv. Require portion of commercial revenues to support Save the Dunes initiatives
 - v. Enhance sites, signage, staging area and trail development
2. Build on unique heritage opportunities
 - a. Develop Indiana Steel Fortress to tell the story of steel
 - b. Create an industrial observation tower at the Port of Indiana
3. Expand and enhance the power of family entertainment
 - a. Create the Indiana Dunes Attractions passport
 - b. Advocate for the right product development for Porter County (example given was Georgia's Development Council)

See Attachment A (Destination Audit Report) and B (Strategic Plan and Business Plan)

Results and Implementation

Indiana Dunes Tourism did the following in terms of implementing the applicable findings of this study:

Maximize existing nature and heritage based experiences

Ecology Trail:

Indiana Dunes Tourism contracted with Fermata to create the Beyond the Beach Discovery Trail. This trail links the Indiana Dunes to the Kankakee River in southern

Porter County. It was originally meant to be a trail located within Porter County, but was expanded to seven counties. This effort included the following steps:

1. Evaluated sites in seven counties.
2. Developed a trail that included natural, cultural and historical assets.
3. Created the marketing materials to promote the trail.
4. Created a signage program.
5. Created a site improvement plan.
6. Generated ideas on how to encourage green businesses to move to Porter County.

State Park Development Opportunities:

It was suggested in the 2005 destination audit that a hotel be developed on currently disturbed property at the state park, which was the parking lot. The hotel project was driven by the Indiana Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and had no involvement by our organization.

At that time, the Indiana Dunes Tourism board voted and took the following position:

“The Porter County Convention, Recreation and Visitor Commission reaffirmed the destination audit recommendation of a need for lodging in the State Park, but expresses reservations on the presently proposed location due to ongoing lake access and environmental concerns.”

In 2006 or 2007, there were discussions with Indiana Dunes State Park Property Manager Brandt Baughman regarding redevelopment of the pavilion. It was discussed during this conversation that the state may want to consider a private/public partnership if they do not have the money to redevelop the pavilion.

Brandt stated that DNR was working on several large capital improvement projects for the Indiana Dunes State Park, which included phases I and II of the Dunes Creek daylighting project and the new gate construction project. No further discussion on the pavilion ensued.

In November 2011, Indiana Dunes Tourism was notified that a request for proposals (RFP) had been issued by the DNR for the redevelopment of the Indiana Dunes State Park pavilion.

Build on unique heritage opportunities

Steel museum and industrial observation tower at the Port of Indiana:

Our organization met with one of the former Port of Indiana directors to discuss the observation tower. He was excited about this endeavor and wanted to see the tower and museum merged into one project. He also noted that the story needed to be expanded beyond steel to include the Port of Indiana and trains.

This director left shortly after this discussion and the new director was not as interested in this type of development.

Also, an independent group that was not involved with Indiana Dunes Tourism's effort on this project met to discuss creating a steel museum. Indiana Dunes Tourism opted to step back on our efforts and to be a resource for this group as they moved their project forward. We continue to work with one of the key members involved in this project.

Expand and enhance the power of family entertainment

Passport of Attraction:

Indiana Dunes Tourism did not create the Passport of Attractions. Instead, we created the Best of Porter County brochure and we distributed this at the Indiana Dunes State Park for two years. Then we replaced the Best of Porter County brochure with the Dunes Deals booklet. This booklet is distributed at the state park, and the goal is to encourage dunes visitors to shake off the sand south of the dunes and visit our local restaurants, shops, hotels and attractions.

Advocate for the right product development (create a development approval council):

Indiana Dunes Tourism opted not to create a development approval council and instead created the Product Development Advocacy Program. A developer, non-profit or governmental entity can complete an application asking for an endorsement from our board for their project.

Pavilion Redevelopment and Banquet Building Development Project

RFP:

Indiana Dunes Tourism learned that DNR was considering a public/private partnership after the RFP was released. There was never any conversation about this project between Indiana Dunes Tourism and any DNR officials stationed in Indianapolis.

Upon learning about the RFP, tourism's goal was to get as many restaurant developers interested in this project as possible and to increase the number of proposals submitted. A total of 24 businesses and individuals were contacted by our organization regarding DNR's RFP, which included Porter County restaurant owners that owned multiple restaurants, the Indiana and Illinois Restaurant Associations and Purdue Calumet.

These efforts were reported at our board meetings and in the local newspapers.

During the conversations with the local restaurant owners, they noted that they could not make the pavilion profitable unless they were allowed to serve alcohol. This was due to the large amount of money they would have to invest in rehabbing the building. Plus, they would consider developing banquet space as part of this project and you cannot

hosts weddings, special events, etc. without offering alcohol. Multiple restaurant owners were interested in the project, but only if alcohol could be served at the pavilion.

DNR Discussions:

Upon learning that DNR had issued a formal RFP for the redevelopment of the pavilion, Gary Miller from DNR was contacted regarding the project. Gary answered several questions directly and required other questions to be submitted in writing.

During the conversation Gary noted multiple things:

1. The RFP process was purposefully not giving too many detailed specifications on what could and could not be done with the pavilion. He said the DNR is not the expert on running profitable businesses and they were leaving the creativity up to the businesses/developers that submitted a proposal on what they wanted to do with the pavilion.
2. He said that once the RFPs were submitted, the DNR would review them and, if there were any viable proposals, they would choose the proposal they felt was the best fit for this project.
3. He also said that the proposals could recommend anything they wanted, but DNR would ultimately decide what could and could not be done.
4. He also noted that once a proposal was chosen, they would start the negotiations on the overall project and through this process they would agree on the actual specifications of the project.
5. He did note that DNR would only allow development on currently disturbed land.
6. When asked about alcohol being allowed only at the pavilion he said DNR would consider this, but this was a legislative matter and the DNR could not file legislation.

Our agency was contacted by Dunes Pavilion Renaissance because they were interested in submitting a proposal and wanted additional tourism information. This group invited both Heather Ennis, who at the time was in charge of the Duneland Chamber of Commerce and Executive Director of Indiana Dunes Tourism, Lorelei Weimer, to meet with their group. We stayed for half of the meeting and answered questions they had about tourism, the area and what we knew of the RFP process. However, we left halfway through because we could not be part of any formal proposal being submitted.

We also did a walk through of the pavilion with White Lodging. Again, tourism was there to provide any additional information regarding tourism. This group did not end up submitting a proposal.

Pavilion Partners, LLC never contacted our organization for any tourism information.

Senate Bill 61 and I.C. 14-18.2.3:

During the general assembly in 2012, consideration of SB 61, which dealt with the availability of alcohol being served at the Indiana Dunes State Park Pavilion, became an important component of the deliberations for a successful approach to redeveloping the pavilion.

Indiana State Senator Karen Tallian was enlisted to help sponsor SB 61 because the Indiana Dunes State Park was in her district.

Senator Tallian agreed to sponsor legislation to allow alcohol to be sold and consumed at the Indiana Dunes State Park Pavilion.

SB 61 was combined with pending legislation sponsored by Indiana House of Representative Ed Soliday, which passed and became I.C. 14-18-2-3.

Indiana Dunes Tourism spoke in favor of SB 61. Indiana Dunes Tourism did not have a lobbyist or lobbying firm regarding SB 61 and what became I.C. 14-18-2-3. Our organization is a member of Northern Indiana Tourism Development Commission (NITDC). At that time, NITDC was contracted with Matt Whetstone from Krieg DeVault for lobbying services. However, Matt did not lobby on behalf of NITDC or our organization for this law.

Our agencies involvement in the passage of I.C. 14-18-2-3 was covered in the local media, which include several local newspapers and we received no negative feedback at that time.

Indiana Dunes Tourism was unaware that I.C. 14-18-2-3 was being amended in 2015. Our first knowledge of the amended language occurred at the Chesterton Middle School meeting that was hosted in April 15, 2015 by DNR.

Information from Pavilion Partners, LLC :

Indiana Dunes Tourism learned that Pavilion Partners was the group chosen to redevelop the pavilion approximately in May or June of 2013. This information was provided to our agency subsequent to Chuck Williams being appointed to the tourism board of directors.

The Porter County Board of Commissioners expanded our board of directors in April of 2013 from nine board members to eleven board members. At that time they appointed Chuck Williams and former Portage Mayor Doug Olson. Both Doug and Chuck were appointed to move the development of sports forward within Porter County. Doug and Chuck co-chaired the Indiana Dunes Sports Cabinet.

After it was disclosed to our agency that Pavilion Partners was the chosen developer, on occasion we would ask Chuck how the project was progressing.

Our agency serves as an information source and advisor to developers, but we don't make decisions for the developers or disseminate information about their potential projects unless asked to do so. We also write letters of support for local organizations and businesses seeking grants and, if an organization or business seeks an official project endorsement from our board of directors, we take the matter to the board.

Indiana Dunes Tourism started having direct involvement with Chuck Williams and Deb Butterfield, who is their communications specialist, in their capacity with Pavilion Partners in 2014.

Deb met with several individuals, including our organization, on July 29, 2014 to discuss the project.

It was at this meeting that we learned that one component of this project was the construction of a new building for banquet space. Our agency had anticipated that banquet space would be part of this project, but thought it would be in the pavilion. There wasn't much information given about the banquet center/new building, and only basic information was given about the pavilion.

We learned that the banquet facility was supposed to be built on the existing cement pad on the west side of the pavilion. Based on our agencies earlier conversations with the DNR during the RFP process, the DNR had told us they would not allow any development off of currently disturbed property, which is why we didn't think much about the second building, because it was to be constructed on disturbed property and was inline with our previous conversation with DNR.

Pavilion Partners also met with our agency, along with other local entities, to discuss this project on June 28, 2015.

Indiana Dunes Tourism Project Support:

Pavilion Partners wanted our board to consider endorsing this project. This is not unusual for our board to be approached for endorsing a project. We have written support letters throughout the years for private businesses/developers, non-profit organizations and governmental units, and have brought matters to the board for an official board endorsement.

Our board first considered supporting this project in the spring of 2015. We knew we had several board members that were very supportive of this project. Plus, our organization's history of this project was supportive. However, we didn't know what the majority of the board members thought about the project.

We debated hosting a board meeting outside our normal monthly board meeting date. It is challenging to get a board quorum at our normal monthly meetings and it would be

challenging to get a quorum at a special meeting. We opted to have a discussion at our April 16 board meeting.

At our April 16 board meeting, our agency opted not to discuss the pavilion project because we had attended the DNR public comment event held on April 15. There were a lot of questions raised and not all of the questions were answered. We explained at this meeting that we would host a special meeting to elicit input and discussion from Pavilion Partners and people who opposed this project, which we hoped would enhance the communications.

As Pavilion Partners prepared their presentation they contacted us and requested a copy of our economic development report, which was provided.

We do an economic impact study every other year and we contract with Certec, Inc. We keep this data fresh because we get requests annually for this information. We always spend time with developers explaining the report and helping them access the information that best fits the project they are considering for Porter County.

July Board of Directors Meeting Background

There have been multiple questions about the structure of our Pavilion Partners presentation and public comment meeting that we hosted on July 16, 2015. The questions have to do with who created the agenda, who determined the place and time, why didn't we answer more questions, why was it moved to Valparaiso, etc.

Here is the background information regarding this meeting:

- At our June 18 board of directors meeting it was decided that the pavilion partners presentation and public comment meeting would be held on Thursday, July 16 from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. in the theater at our building, the Indiana Dunes Visitor Center in Porter. Our normal meeting time is 3 p.m. and we opted to move it to 4:00 p.m. to allow public comment.
- It was not realized until Friday, June 19, 2015 that we had already committed the theater space to Northern Indiana Regional Planning Commission for the public comment meeting regarding bikes on the South Shore Line Trains. Plus, NIRPC had already publicized this meeting. It was up to us to find a new location.
- Mitch Peters, as our board president, considered hosting the meeting at the Porter County Commissioners and Council chambers at the Porter County Government Administration Building. However, it was decided to host the meeting at the Memorial Opera House, because it was similar to our theater, and was three times larger. We didn't think that Valparaiso would be an issue because it's the county seat, so everyone in the county would have easy access to this meeting – and the discussion was about a state park. The time remained the same, from 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

- The only newspaper to publish the original date, time and place was the Chesterton Tribune. Once we decided on a new location the Chesterton Tribune was contacted immediately.
- At the request of certain elected officials it was agreed upon that the location of the event would remain at the Memorial Opera House, but the timeframe of the meeting would be 5:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.
- The agenda format was created by Mitch Peters, Attorney David Hollenbeck, Richard Riley and Lorelei Weimer.

Most of the agenda followed the format of the Porter County Plan Commission. We wanted to provide equal time for the presenters, people in support of the project and those opposed to the project.

We opted to have 15 minutes for questions submitted in writing. We had received a letter from Desi Robertson requesting us eliminate the written questions from the agenda. We opted to keep them, so if someone was not able to attend they could still submit their question. We received virtually no questions until a few days before the event. Most of the questions came in the day before or the day of. Plus, many people were asking multiple questions.

It was clear by the sheer amount of written questions submitted that we could not come close to answering the questions that evening. So, attorney Hollenbeck felt it best to read some of the questions so the audience had an idea as to the types of questions submitted. We noted that we would provide answers to the questions and they would be posted on our website.

We did not anticipate that we would have so many questions submitted. Plus, we didn't realize we would be answering those questions in writing until that evening. We had no issues answering the questions submitted, but our schedules did not afford us the opportunity to answer those immediately.

- On August 3, Indiana Dunes Tourism received a public records request to obtain public records regarding Dunes Tourism's role in promoting, advocating and/or analyzing the proposed renovation and expansion of the Dunes State Park Pavilion, the proposed banquet center, as well as legislative efforts to allow alcohol at the Indiana Dunes State Park, including current efforts to obtain a liquor license. The public record range was August 1, 2006 through the present.

Our agency began working on this request on August 10, 2015 and provided the documentation for legal review on September 10, 2015.

This request was being fulfilled at the same time our agency was working on the question and answer document from the July 16 meeting, as well as this white

paper that outlines the history of this project as it related to Indiana Dunes Tourism's involvement. This request caused a delay in getting these documents finalized and dispersed.

Answers to Questions submitted for Indiana Dunes Tourism July 16, 2015 Meeting

Indiana Dunes Tourism Questions and Answers

1. If RDA funding can be used for renovation of your building (Visitor center redesign) why can't RDA funding be used to renovate the Pavilion?

We would recommend this question being asked directly to RDA. Here is the website link to their Facebook page that list contact information for this organization.

<https://www.facebook.com/RDACatalyst>

2. Alcohol. -Original proposal; alcohol permitted in existing 1930 pavilion. Now: out side within 100 feet of structure?

Please see the History of Indiana Dunes Tourism Involvement with the Pavilion Redevelopment and Banquet Building Construction document.

3. My question is as follows; who approved this project and why aren't they attending this meeting?

DNR approved this project. They were not invited to participate because they hosted an open house on this project at the Indiana Dunes Visitor Center and they hosted a public comment forum at Chesterton Middle School. Pavilion Partners, LLC asked to present before our board, and our board was interested in learning more about this project from Pavilion Partners and the people who were opposed to the project.

4. Does the Indiana Dunes Tourism board support this proposal? If so, can you explain why you support the low rent and small percentage being sent downstate and not kept in the local economy?

Our board voted to support this project at the July 16 pavilion partners presentation and public comment meeting. The vote was 7 in favor, 1 opposed and 1 abstention.

The board was provided historical information on this project and this project matches our destination vision and strategic goal for destination product development. We believe this project will enhance the Indiana Dunes State Park for both residents and visitors.

We see that private dollars are being invested to improve a public facility. We think DNR, state residents and visitors will have a greatly improved pavilion with more amenities to improve their overall experience at the state park, a new comfort station, which is a huge improvement over these amenities in the pavilion and a place to hold events, weddings, etc. on Lake Michigan.

5. If so, why do you feel that certain people should profit from building on our state park and not paying anything into the local economy?

Indiana Dunes Tourism had nothing to do with the selection of Pavilion Partners nor were we involved in the negotiations of the lease. That being said, private/public partnerships are not unusual. This structure had fallen into disrepair. This building is an iconic structure and one that needs to be saved, maintained and better utilized.

They are responsible to pay taxes on anything that is taxable within the state of Indiana.

Plus, they will be bringing visitors to our area year round and helping make the Indiana Dunes State Park an attraction in all four seasons.

The banquet facility will be attracting weddings, conferences, seminars etc. Some of the people attending will be coming from outside of Northwest Indiana and will stay in our local hotels, eat at our restaurants, shop, etc.

6. Is there a conflict of interest with the Indiana Dunes tourism board being involved with this proposed building?

No. Indiana Dunes Tourism has no financial interest in this project.

7. Are you aware of any legal conflicts with the regulations of the National Park System and this proposed new facility? If so, how are they being addressed?

We have read what has been reported in the newspapers regarding the Land and Water Conservation Fund. We did contact EPA and NPS to determine what was factually reported and what was not. We did this just for our own information. However, this is outside our jurisdiction and is a matter between NPS and DNR.

8. Are you aware of how many people drown in Lake Michigan every year?

We are very aware of drowning's occurring annually in Lake Michigan and have discussed this issue with DNR and NPS over the years on how best to educate people on the dangers of Lake Michigan when there are rip tide current closures in effect. We were given a statistical presentation by NPS and DNR in 2012 at one of our board meetings on the drowning's that had occurred over a course of multiple years and the reasons for the various drowning's.

Here's the link to the article that appeared in the Chesterton Tribune regarding this presentation to our board.

http://chestertontribune.com/PorterCounty/nps_says_poor_decisions_chief_fa.htm

9. Do you think serving alcohol in the proposed new facility and within 100 yards of it may affect the dangers of further drownings or rescues that will be needed?

The law allows alcohol in the pavilion, banquet center and 100 feet from the facility into the parking lot and not onto the beach. Pavilion Partners must comply by the laws and rules of the Alcohol & Tobacco Commission. <https://secure.in.gov/atc/isep/index.htm>

Couple of additional facts about alcohol and the dunes:

1. Currently, alcohol is allowed at NPS' Kemil Beach and their beaches east of Kemil Beach.
2. Alcohol was banned from the Indiana Dunes State Park in 1990 to curb violence by several Chicago street gangs trying to make the park their summer home. http://articles.chicagotribune.com/1990-05-25/news/9002120618_1_chicago-street-street-gang-members-ban
3. Red Lantern restaurant, located on the beach where Lakeview beach and picnic shelters are now, operated and served alcohol for years in Beverly Shores.

10. Who was involved in the original proposal and negotiations.

The entire RFP process was DNRs process, which included writing and issuing the RFP and doing the full negotiations. Indiana Dunes Tourism was not part of writing and issuing the RFP or in any of the negotiations. See History of Indiana Dunes Tourism Involvement with the Pavilion Redevelopment and Banquet Building Construction document.

11. When this agreement was made were you aware that the rent and percentages paid to the DNR would remain downstate and not help the local economy or tourism?

We were not involved in the negotiations of the lease agreement. We have always been aware that the gate fees generated at the Indiana Dunes State Park are used to fund the entire DNR, which includes the Indiana Dunes State Park.

12. Are you aware that Indiana Dunes State Park is the jewel of Indiana's state parks?

We are extremely aware of how special both the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore and State Parks are. The Indiana Dunes National and State Park are the destination drivers for the Indiana Dunes Country. We have an entire section of our website dedicated to the Indiana Dunes. <http://www.indianadunes.com/indiana-dunes/>

We produced a video series on the Indiana Dunes to help better educate people about the dunes and help them better understand how to enjoy what the dunes have to offer them. <http://www.indianadunes.com/video-podcasts/#Orientation>

We devote a good amount of space on the dunes in our Activities Guide starting on page 4. <http://www.flipsnack.com/IndianaDunes/activities-guide-2015-links-ftu9annpg.html>

We lease and share space in the Indiana Dunes Visitor Center with the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore to help promote the Indiana Dunes.

13. Are you aware of how many visitors come there from all over the country and world?

The Indiana Dunes State Park attracts one million visitors annually. 60% of those visitors are from outside of Indiana.

These out-of-state visitors contribute significantly to the revenues brought in by the Indiana Dunes State Park. Until 2015, out-of-state visitors paid double the entrance fee. In 2015, the in-state gate fee is \$7 per car and the out-of-state fee is \$12 per car. The out-of-state visitors contribution is significant because of the higher rate they pay and the higher percentage of out-of-state visitors compared to in-state. Northwest Indiana residents account for approximately 20% of the total attendance.

14. Why was the local paper, The Times, given the wrong email address for us to contact the DNR. Or did they print an incorrect address deliberately?

We didn't know they had printed the wrong address and we have no idea why they did this. We would recommend contacting the TIMES directly regarding this question. The TIMES editor, Bob Heisse, can be contacted at this address: Bob.Heisse@nwi.com

15. Why where these requirements for submitting questions only made public days before the meeting?

The rules for the meeting were determined by Mitch Peters, President of our board of directors, Richard Riley, Treasurer of our board of directors, Attorney David Hollenbeck and Lorelei Weimer, Executive Director for our organization. We met to discuss the agenda and the rules. Then Attorney Hollenbeck created the document based on our discussion. The document was reviewed by Mitch, Richard and Lorelei. Once the rules were totally finalized, they were submitted to the public.

Once we knew the date, time and place of the meeting we got that information out immediately.

16. Are you, the local media, the members of PPLLC, the DNR deliberately trying to make it more difficult for us to protest this proposed new banquet facility? It certainly appears that way.

We can only speak for our organization. Our organization accepted an invitation from Pavilion Partners to speak to our board of directors regarding this project and we also wanted to hear from the opponents.

This is not our project and the meeting we hosted was not an official public input meeting. We wanted to allow both supporters and opponents the opportunity to speak regarding this project, which we did.

We had people contact us that were either undecided about the project or in support of the project and were offended at how they were treated by people who opposed this project at the open house DNR hosted at our visitor center. We also saw first hand people acting rudely at the open house and at the event that DNR hosted at Chesterton Middle School. We created rules to try to eliminate this type of behavior. The rules were not meant to make it difficult to protest, but were made to give people on both sides of the issue an equal opportunity to comment in a civil environment.

Everyone has the right to express their opinion and not be bullied, booed or harassed for expressing their beliefs.

17. Have you or any members of the PPLLC actually ever seen anyone drown? the DNR members? The NW Indiana tourism board?

We cannot answer the question regarding Pavilion Partners, LLC or DNR members seeing someone drown.

Here's a list of board members and staff and their response as to whether or not they have seen someone drown.

Board members:

Mitch Peters: Yes
 Scott Tuft: No
 Richard Riley: No
 Karen Webb: No
 Jesse Harper: ?
 John Johnson: No
 Barb Lusko: No
 Mike Mantai: ?
 Doug Olson: ?
 Chuck Williams: No

Full-Time Staff

Lorelei Weimer: No
 Christine Livingston: No
 Patti Boyer: No
 Ken Kosky: No
 Angela Pasyk: No

Part-Time Staff

Julie Brown: No

Judy Hutton: No

Dennis Penning: Yes

Nancy Panozzo: No

Elizabeth Dresh: No

18. Was Chuck Williams, both a principal with Pavilion Partners LLC and a Dunes Tourism Board member, in any way involved in the selection of location and/or parameters for the public meeting this Thursday evening, 7/16/15?

No. See History of Indiana Dunes Tourism Involvement with the Pavilion Redevelopment and Banquet Building Construction document.

19. To TB: We understand the law requires that board members be involved in Tourism related fields, but what fire walls are there when a board member stands to reap huge benefits and assistance from this board?

We are not sure what huge benefits and assistance you are referring to. Indiana Dunes Tourism operates in compliance with the applicable federal and state laws.

20. To TB: When did Tourism first become aware of an executed contract between the DNR and Pavilion Partners?

We were officially told that Pavilion Partners were chosen as the developers by Chuck Williams in 2013 after he was appointed to our board. Please see the History of Indiana Dunes Tourism Involvement with the Pavilion Redevelopment and Banquet Building Construction document.

21. To TB: There is a published photo of Ms. Weimer handing out awards to state legislators thanking them for helping to pass legislation in 2012 to allow alcohol in the park. Please explain your role in proposing changes in the 2015 law to allow alcohol sales outdoors? Was any member of this board or staff in direct talks with the DNR or legislators to propose these laws?

Please see the History of Indiana Dunes Tourism Involvement with the Pavilion Redevelopment and Banquet Building Construction document. SB 61 and I.C. 14-18-2-3 are both explained.

22. With the Nichols report showing that people come to the IDSP for nature and to get away from urban blight, it's apparent that privatization of the beach and constructing new buildings is counter-intuitive to the eco-tourism that has been an anchor for many years in Duneland. Please explain how someone coming to an all encompassing IDSP will venture beyond the Dunes to other local businesses? Please

explain how driving eco-tourists past the birthplace of ecology in America to Warren Dunes is good economics.

The beach is not being privatized. The beach is still owned and operated by the Indiana Department of Natural Resources.

Porter County Destination Audit and Product Position Analysis completed by Mitch Nichols in April 2005 noted in the findings that the pavilion needed to be reused/redeveloped for food and beverage. Please see the History of Indiana Dunes Tourism Involvement with the Pavilion Redevelopment and Banquet Building Construction document. This document gives more detailed information regarding this report.

We do not believe the improvements being made to the pavilion, the new comfort station and the new banquet center will take away from the nature based story of the Indiana Dunes State Park or the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore. Rather we believe it will enable more people to appreciate the Indiana Dunes in even more ways.

The main goals of Indiana Dunes Tourism is to attract visitors to our destination and extend their stay by experiencing all the great things our communities have to offer south of the dunes. If you review our destination guides and online materials you will see we are giving information on the Indiana Dunes and the amenities south of the dunes.

Furthermore, we print and distribute the Dunes Deals booklet at the Indiana Dunes State Park gate. This booklet contains coupons for restaurants, shops, attractions, hotels, etc. and the goal of this booklet is to get the dunes visitors into our communities.

Last, Indiana Dunes Tourism has invested heavily in developing the Beyond the Beach Discovery Trail, the educational eco-tourism guide, birding guide, fishing guide, and other outdoor attractions to really tell the ecology story of our area to visitors and locals. We believe these efforts will continue to attract visitors to learn this great ecology story of our area.

23. Please explain your role in proposing changes in the law to allow alcohol sales within 100 feet of the pavilion and the parking lot?

We had no involvement. Please see the History of Indiana Dunes Tourism Involvement with the Pavilion Redevelopment and Banquet Building Construction document.

24. Has PCCRVC performed any type of study regarding ecotourism in the Duneland area in the past five years? If so, what types of ecotourism opportunities were found to be present, and what types of future ecotourism opportunities were suggested? If such a study was not performed, would PCCRVC consider performing one to better understand intrinsic ecotourism opportunities?

No, we have not performed any study in the last five years on eco-tourism in the

Duneland Area. We did an extensive study that included site evaluations of our nature and historic assets in seven counties as part of the Beyond the Beach Discovery Trial initiative. This research was done beyond five years-ago.

Please see the History of Indiana Dunes Tourism Involvement with the Pavilion Redevelopment and Banquet Building Construction document.

25. How much are we really welcoming visitors, if we allow prime beach vista to be taken over for the benefit of corporate conferences?

The destination wedding market is a growing market and we get frequent requests for weddings on the beach. We believe the banquet center on Lake Michigan will greatly enhance the wedding experience. We also service seminars, conferences and other event coordinators, that are interested in coming to our destination. The group market can be an excellent economic generator for a destination. We believe a banquet center will make Porter County a more desirous place to host conferences, seminars and similar events because of the location on Lake Michigan and proximity to appealing amenities in nearby cities and towns.

The development of the new banquet center is on currently disturbed property. This was an important factor in our board being in support of this project. We believe an improved facility will enable more people to appreciate the Indiana Dunes in even more ways.

26. Has the Porter County Tourism Board approved this project?

Our board is in support of this project and voted on July 16 to support it. The vote was 7 in favor, 1 opposed and 1 abstention.

27. If the tourism board has no authority why did they choose to have this forum?

Indiana Dunes Tourism wanted to provide communications between Pavilion Partners and opponents in hopes of facilitating a better understanding of the project.

28. Why didn't the Indiana Dunes Tourism consider building this banquet (facility) at Miller Beach (Gary) or at Portage? Gary could use all the support to bring tourism.

This is a DNR project and not an Indiana Dunes Tourism project. This project is specifically for the current pavilion building that is located at the Indiana Dunes State Park.

Does PCCRVC know how this project will negatively impact current and future eco-tourism opportunities?

We do not believe this project will negatively impact current and future eco-tourism opportunities.

Indiana Dunes Tourism understands the value of eco-tourism, which is why we have invested heavily in developing the Beyond the Beach Discovery Trail. Birding, fishing, paddling and other outdoor recreation are important tourism markets..

There have been multiple issues brought up regarding this project and Pavilion Partners have been open to discussing these issues and are working on solutions.

Questions Submitted to Department of Natural Resources

1. The original RFP 50 years now 65 years?

The term of the lease is 35 years with the possibility of two 15 year extensions if Pavilion Partners is interested in an extension, AND if DNR is satisfied with their performance under the original lease. The State's prospectus, when released, said on page 8 "Generally, for a development of this nature, the IDNR would enter into a ground lease, and the term of the lease would be 30 years with two 10 year options to renew." The term of a lease of this nature is not established by law – it is negotiable and that is what happened in this situation.

2. Competitive bidding -Did other developers know they could build new structures of this magnitude?

The prospectus that was released stated on page 7 "The Adaptive Reuse of Indiana Dunes Pavilion is offered to prospective operators to redevelop, operate and maintain the Indiana Dunes Pavilion and other appropriate facilities that would be compatible and enhance the operation" so yes, other developers who read the proposal would have known they could propose new structures.

3. Alcohol. -Original proposal; alcohol permitted in existing 1930 pavilion. Now: out side within 100 feet of structure?

See an explanation at www.stateparks.IN.gov/8462.htm under the section entitled "Alcohol." Alcohol is not now and will not in the future be permitted on the beach.

4. Original RFP: Marina?

The prospectus may have mentioned a marina, but that is not included in this lease and there are no plans to construct a marina.

5. Original RFP: Lodging?

Although "other appropriate facilities" were included as possibilities in the prospectus, DNR has no plans to construct a hotel, and there are no plans for a hotel in the lease.

6. Minimum investment on historic 1930 pavilion \$200,000? - Really only 200k.

The key word is minimum. Pavilion Partners will invest what is required to meet historic preservation standards and provide for a successful operation of the facilities inside the pavilion.

7. Where any environmental impact studies done regarding a new building being built on sand near the creek?

There is no construction on sand. All construction is on either existing asphalt or concrete. An early coordination review was conducted through DNR's Division of Fish & Wildlife, and Pavilion Partners is conducting an environmental assessment as a part of the Land and Water Conservation Fund conversion planning.

8. Have any environmental scientific studies done on the effects of the bird migratory fly away area of the Indiana Dunes State Park?

Park staff have maintained records of bird strikes associated with buildings over the last seven years. There have been NO bird strikes recorded at the Pavilion. Additional information regarding migratory patterns is available at www.stateparks.IN.gov/8462.htm under the section "Conserving the Environment." Pavilion Partners will consult with experts in relation to construction of the banquet center to minimize any impacts.

9. Or on the effects of new nighttime lighting affecting the sky views?

The response to this question is available at www.stateparks.IN.gov/8462.htm under the section "Conserving the Environment." Pavilion Partners will consult with experts in relation to construction of the banquet center to minimize any impacts.

10. Was any public input requested concerning the night sky viewing?

Pavilion Partners will consult with experts in relation to construction of the banquet center to minimize any impacts.

11. Have there been any environmental studies on the effects to the roads and parking areas that already exist due to the increased usage by heavy trucks versus most beach attendees in regular automobiles?

There have been no specific studies, but roads and parking areas are designed to handle appropriate weight loads and have been used for years by loaded school busses, motor coaches, heavy equipment, loaded trash trucks, tractor-trailers, etc. Concrete trucks and other heavy equipment were used during the Dunes Daylighting project with no impacts.

12. Why were these agreements kept secret for years from the general public?

They were not kept secret. There is an explanation of the process at www.stateparks.IN.gov/8462.htm under the section “Process for Establishing This Public-Private Partnership.”

13. Does the Indiana DNR also support these proposals? If so, can you explain why you support the low rent and small percentage being sent downstate and not kept in the local economy?

The Indiana DNR released the prospectus, reviewed the two proposals that were submitted and negotiated the lease so yes, the DNR supports this project. The rent and yearly payments are similar to those in other public-private partnerships. Examples of other public-private partnerships can be seen at www.stateparks.IN.gov/8462.htm under the section “Finances and Revenue.” Pavilion Partners has already invested \$600,000 in the construction of restrooms, which become a State asset. Pavilion Partners will maintain those restrooms, will pay local taxes and will employ a number of individuals so significant dollars will remain in the local economy.

14. Do you also support these proposed builders being freed of paying local property taxes, while other such businesses already existing in the area having to pay local property tax?

Land owned by the State is exempt from property taxes pursuant to I.C. 6-1.1-10-2. However, Pavilion Partners may be subject to an assessment for improvements made on leased ground and any other property tax deemed applicable by appropriate entities. Pavilion Partners will also be subject to sales tax and there may be other taxes that apply now or in the future.

15. If so, why do you feel that certain people should profit from building on our state park and not paying anything into the local economy?

See answer above. Pavilion Partners will contribute to the local economy through sales tax and by employing Northwest Indiana residents.

16. Do you think serving alcohol in the proposed new facility and within 100 yards of it may affect the dangers of further drownings or rescues that will be needed?

Alcohol is not permitted on the beach, and that will not change. For additional information, see www.stateparks.IN.gov/8462.htm under the section “Alcohol.”

17. Who will be responsible for costs of such rescues, or of lawsuits if there are increased drownings due to the serving of alcohol at this proposed new facility? Have there been any legally signed agreements about who might be responsible for these costs?

For a response to these questions, see www.stateparks.IN.gov/8462.htm under the section “Alcohol.”

18. Who was involved in the original proposal and negotiations?

Indiana State Parks Director Dan Bortner; Indiana State Parks Deputy Director for Inns and Concessions Gary Miller; members of Pavilion Partners, Inc. and DNR and Pavilion Partners' legal counsels.

19. Who then agreed on the low amount of said rent and percentages?

All involved in the negotiations agreed to the terms, which are not really any different than public-private partnerships that operate in other Indiana State Parks. Examples of these partnerships and the financial arrangements can be seen at www.stateparks.IN.gov/8462.htm under the section "Finances and Revenue."

20. Did whoever negotiate this deal realize that it could damage the beautiful views, the environment, and many people's simple enjoyment of this park?

Anytime we authorize any development – whether it is a trail or a campground or facility such as the banquet center – we carefully weigh impacts on natural and cultural resources with the benefits of development.

21. Are you, the local media, the members of PPLLC, the DNR deliberately trying to make it more difficult for us to protest this proposed new banquet facility? It certainly appears that way.

The DNR has provided (and continues to provide) opportunities to comment on this project in several ways. We have provided an email address where people can express their concerns or support and ask questions. We have read and responded to over 120 emails sent to DunesPavilion@dnr.IN.gov. The DNR has provided a webpage that illustrates our intent to be transparent with information and anyone may sign up to receive a notice when new information is added to that webpage. The DNR hosted an open house at the Indiana Dunes Visitor Center. The DNR hosted a public meeting at the Chesterton Middle School. Opportunities were provided at both the open house and public meeting for people to leave written comments that have all been addressed on the DNR webpage at www.stateparks.IN.gov/8462.htm.

22. Have you or any members of the PPLLC actually ever seen anyone drown? the DNR members? The NW Indiana tourism board?

Several of the DNR staff involved in this project, both at the property level and in our Central Office have been involved with rescues and drownings on DNR properties where they have worked. Safety is of utmost importance to us. That is why no alcohol is allowed on the beach, and that rule will continue.

23. As an elected member of the Porter County Council, I would like reassurance right now that there will be no costs involved to Porter County Taxpayers due to

this lease agreement between the DNR and PPLLC. If there are costs, there will be an explanation on how the county will be compensated, beings that PPLLC pays no county taxes. The costs I'm concerned with is for police protection, EMT service, fire service, sewage disposal and road repair due to increased road traffic.

Land owned by the State is exempt from property taxes pursuant to I.C. 6-1.1-10-2. However, Pavilion Partners may be subject to an assessment for improvements made on leased ground and any other property tax deemed applicable by appropriate entities. Pavilion Partners will also be subject to sales tax and there may be other taxes that apply now or in the future. Indiana Dunes State Park's sewage disposal is handled internally through our own wastewater treatment facility. We do not anticipate any increases in county services as a result of this project.

24. Why are the beavers at the Indiana Dunes State Park being discouraged from building on their chosen park property and not the Pavilion Partners crowd? Both are invasive species and about equally welcome. (Although beavers are cuter.)

The two projects are unrelated.

25. Before PP gets to go ahead, has anyone calculated how fast and strong a North wind is when blowing the length of Lake Michigan in the winter? What will happen when such winds hit their first obstacle, the windows of the banquet center? What might such a wind in a strong winter storm pick up in its travels the length of the lake - and throw against those windows?

As noted previously, Pavilion Partners will be consulting with experts to evaluate the best way to construct the banquet center with consideration for weather, birds, lighting and other environmental concerns.

26. How will a bride and groom plus their families and guests feel about birds and maybe fish crashing against the windows of the banquet center during their wedding reception if there is such a storm battering the windows?

As noted previously, Pavilion Partners will be consulting with experts to evaluate the best way to construct the banquet center with consideration for weather, birds, lighting and other environmental concerns.

27. Who is going to pick up dead birds and maybe fish and driftwood thrown by the wind against those windows? Will they be put in with all the garbage from the banquets or shall they be piled up by the visitors' center?

As noted previously, Pavilion Partners will be consulting with experts to evaluate the best way to construct the banquet center with consideration for weather, birds, lighting and other environmental concerns.

28. The state park is a large tract of land. Why not put their banquet center in some other part of the park? The beavers won't mind sharing.

This question is answered at www.stateparks.IN.gov/8462.htm in the section "Banquet Center Design"

29. When did the Department of Natural Resources stop caring about the park? And why?

The DNR has not stopped caring about the park. To better understand the investment in facilities and natural and cultural resources that DNR has made over the last 10 years, see www.stateparks.IN.gov/8462.htm in the section "Conserving the Environment."

30. My question is what is the plan for parking when there is a restaurant and possibly a wedding at the banquet facility. Are they planning on more parking, having a shuttle (who is paying for that) or just turning people away from the beach, restaurant or wedding because there is no room to park?

Weddings and banquets will be conducted after regular beach hours. Additional information about parking can be seen at www.stateparks.IN.gov/8462.htm in the section "Park Logistics."

31. Isn't the park already too busy to add this facility", part of the answer is "They will not book a wedding for 2 p.m. on a Saturday in July" and "Mid-day weekend visitation will not increase". Are the booking hours for the banquet facility specified in the lease? Won't the restaurant increase the visitation during mid-day weekends?

Information regarding minimum hours for operation and associated restrictions are on page 5 in the lease, which can be seen online at www.stateparks.IN.gov/8462.htm in the "Documents" section.

32. How much does alcohol influence overall criminal behavior at the Indiana Dunes State Park?

Between 2011 and 2014, 471 citations were issued at Indiana Dunes State Park. Of those 471 citations, 161 (approximately 34%) were alcohol related.

33. If and when the convention center ceases to be a viable operation, to whom will responsibility for it pass?

DNR owns the buildings that are being constructed.

34. We understand the state will receive 2% of gross receipts per year; however, the lease is only \$18,000 a year or just \$1,500 a month for beachfront land – so why is

there no provision for an increase of that rent over the possible 65 years of the lease?

The terms of this lease are similar to other long-term leases we have. Examples of these partnerships and the financial arrangements can be seen at www.stateparks.IN.gov/8462.htm under the section “Finances and Revenue.” Leases can be amended in the future if needed.

35. Regarding the proposed Indiana Dunes State Park Pavilion additions, what impact studies have been done? If done, what were the results? For example, beach parking capacity, effort on environment and other?

The DNR reviewed a variety of issues in the formulation of the prospectus and again in the negotiation of the lease– these can be seen as a part of the lease in the “Documents” section of the web page at www.stateparks.IN.gov/8462.htm .

36. After 100+ years, why is it necessary to have alcohol on the beach?

Alcohol is not currently permitted on the beach, and that will not change.

37. Why will alcohol be permitted in the state park when it is not permitted presently?

Questions and answers related to alcohol sales at the Pavilion can be found at www.stateparks.IN.gov/8462.htm .

38. Please explain your role in proposing changes in the law to allow alcohol sales within 100 feet of the pavilion and the parking lot?

DNR’s legislative liaison responded to questions about the legislation from legislators.

39. How did you arrive at the \$18,000 total?

We reviewed other long term leases that are in place, and held extensive negotiations with Pavilion Partners. Examples of these partnerships and the financial arrangements can be seen at www.stateparks.IN.gov/8462.htm under the section “Finances and Revenue.”

40. This project should be reviewed publicly. Outline the process and tell us where in the process we are now?

You can see a detailed outline of the timeline for development of the lease at www.stateparks.IN.gov/8462.htm in the section titled “Process for Establishing This Public-Private Partnership.” In addition, the restrooms have been completed and are open, interior demolition is in progress on the Pavilion with estimated completion and opening in for the beach season in 2016. Banquet center design is beginning.

41. What does the contract say if the Pavilion Partners do inadequate maintenance or investors abandon the building in 15 to 30 years?

Information regarding the terms of the lease is provided at www.stateparks.IN.gov/8462.htm ; look in the section “Terms of Lease” or review the lease in the “Documents” section.

Pavilion Partners, LLC Questions and Answers

1. Will this project pay any county, township or property taxes?

Yes, property taxes will be paid on equipment, furniture and fixtures.

2. Has a building permit been issued for the New banquet center?

No

3. Was the building permit only \$1750 for this portion of the project.(1.75 million for restroom and renovation of Pavilion)

State release was given to construct the Comfort Station and to do some demolition and elevator construction in the Pavilion, however a new building permit will be required for the full Pavilion renovation and banquet center when plans are submitted.

4. Are a marina and hotel still proposed?

A marina and hotel were never a part of this proposal.

5. Alcohol. - Original proposal; alcohol permitted in existing 1930 pavilion. Now: out side within 100 feet of structure?

The legislation allowing alcohol 100 feet outside of the premises is for special events only. Prior approval will be required first by DNR and then a special permit by ATC.

6. Minimum investment on historic 1930 pavilion \$200,000? - Really only 200k.

The DNR prospectus asked for a minimum investment of \$200,000. The current projected investment is \$2.7 million.

7. Have any environmental scientific studies done on the effects of the bird migratory fly away area of the Indiana Dunes State Park?

Pavilion Partners LLC has engaged Cardno to conduct the Environmental Assessment, which will include effects on migratory birds.

8. Or on the effects of new nighttime lighting affecting the sky views?

Pavilion Partners LLC has engaged Cardno to conduct the Environmental Assessment, which will include effects nighttime sky views.

9. Where will the new handicapped parking spots be located, or will there even be handicapped parking available?

Handicapped designated parking is available now and will continue to be available for the existing and new facilities.

10. Will there be handicapped parking reserved for the proposed facility?

There will be handicapped designated parking.

11. Assuming that guest attending events at the proposed new center intend to park at the current beach parking area, have there been any plans on how to accommodate those additional automobiles, or where they will be allowed to park?

Per the lease agreement, events from Memorial Day – Labor Day will occur after 6 pm on Fridays and Saturdays. No parking will be reserved for event guests.

12. Has there been any agreements with the local police departments regarding the expected congestion on Route 49 regarding the influx and outgo of people attending any event there. Will there be patrols, or new lights, or any suggestions on how to handle the increased traffic, which will be generally all moving in and out at about the same time?

Pavilion Partners will coordinate traffic flow with DNR.

13. If this giant new facility is actually allowed to be built, who will patrol the beach and surrounding areas while events are being held? Have the builders signed any agreements that they will be responsible for such necessary patrols, and also responsible for any accidents or resulting lawsuits from people being harmed by going into the lake after any such events?

Security will be required for events serving alcohol in the banquet center.

14. Have there been any discussions with the proposed builders about how many delivery trucks will need to access the state park? Will they pay to enter the park?

Delivery trucks currently enter the park and do not pay to enter.

15. Has there been any discussions/agreements about the increased needs for garbage disposal due to these proposed events? Will there have to be increased pick ups? Will they pay to enter the park?

Pavilion Partners LLC is responsible for all operating maintenance of the facilities which includes garbage pick up.

16. Who will pay for the extra needed garbage disposals, and have agreements already been signed stating who will pay such increases.

Pavilion Partners LLC is responsible for all operating maintenance of the facilities, which includes garbage pick up.

17. Will there be any emergency responders patrolling the beach area, or parked nearby in case of accidents?

Security will be required for events serving alcohol in the banquet center.

18. Will there be security at each event, and has anyone agreed in writing on who will pay for such necessary security?

Security will be required for events serving alcohol in the banquet center and will be paid by the event host.

19. Have there been any discussions, or signed agreements with the nearby towns of Porter and Chesterton to have emergency first responders available during events? Who will cover their additional costs to be available?

Security will be required for events serving alcohol in the banquet center and will be paid by the event host.

20. Do you personally support these planned additions? If so, can you explain why you support the low rent and small percentage being sent downstate and not kept in the local economy?

Yes, we obviously support these plans and have documented the significant financial benefit to the state and Northwest Indiana beyond the rental payments.

21. Do you also support these proposed builders being freed of paying local property taxes, while other such businesses already existing in the area having to pay local property tax?

Pavilion Partners will pay property taxes on equipment, furniture and fixtures.

22. Are you aware of how many people drown in Lake Michigan every year?

Information regarding drownings is public information.

23. Do you think serving alcohol in the proposed new facility and within 100 yards of it may affect the dangers of further drownings or rescues that will be needed?

Currently there is no control over illegal use of alcohol on the beach. With a liquor license alcohol consumption within the premises or within 100 feet for a special event will be regulated by a properly obtained alcohol permit and operators serving will be required to follow all laws regulating the sale and consumption of alcohol.

24. Who will be responsible for costs of such rescues, or of lawsuits if there are increased drownings due to the serving of alcohol at this proposed new facility? Have there been any legally signed agreements about who might be responsible for these costs?

The lease agreement includes a hold harmless indemnification for the state for incidents that are proven to be a result of the actions of the lessee.

25. Who was involved in the original proposal and negotiations?

Chuck Williams and his attorneys.

26. Who then agreed on the low amount of said rent and percentages?

Of the two proposals received by the State for this project, Pavilion Partners provided significantly more financial benefit to the State and taxpayers, including the lease payment, % of revenues, and maintenance and operation of facilities. The other proposal suggested \$10 per year in lease payment.

27. Did whoever negotiate this deal realize that it could damage the beautiful views, the environment, and many people's simple enjoyment of this park?

Pavilion Partners believes that this project will enhance the enjoyment and views for the millions who visit the park annually.

28. How where the PPLL formed and asked to be part of this process, and are they politically connected to our current state government?

Chuck Williams, a principal in Pavilion Partners LLC thought of the idea in 2010. He contacted the DNR about his ideas and as they often do the DNR issued a prospectus in late 2011 of what the State would be looking for in a development project at Dunes State Park and the pavilion area. Pavilion Partners, then known as Dunes Development, responded to the prospectus.

29. Are you, the local media, the members of PPLLC, the DNR deliberately trying to make it more difficult for us to protest this proposed new banquet facility? It certainly appears that way.

There have been numerous opportunities to provide input and ask questions regarding the project.

30. Have you or any members of the PPLLC actually ever seen anyone drown? the DNR members? The NW Indiana tourism board?

No

31. As an elected member of the Porter County Council, I would like reassurance right now that there will be no costs involved to Porter County Taxpayers due to this lease agreement between the DNR and PPLLC. If there are costs, there will be an explanation on how the county will be compensated, beings that PPLLC pays no county taxes. The costs I'm concerned with is for police protection, EMT service, fire service, sewage disposal and road repair due to increased road traffic.

No question

32. Before PP gets to go ahead, has anyone calculated how fast and strong a North wind is when blowing the length of Lake Michigan in the winter? What will happen when such winds hit their first obstacle, the windows of the banquet center? What might such a wind in a strong winter storm pick up in its travels the length of the lake - and throw against those windows?

Pavilion Partners LLC has engaged Cardno to conduct the Environmental Assessment, which will include effects of winds off the lake.

33. How will a bride and groom plus their families and guests feel about birds and maybe fish crashing against the windows of the banquet center during their wedding reception if there is such a storm battering the windows?

The Dunes State Park Director reports that no birds or fish have crashed into any buildings as a result of wind.

34. Who is going to pick up dead birds and maybe fish and driftwood thrown by the wind against those windows? Will they be put in with all the garbage from the banquets or shall they be piled up by the visitors' center?

Pavilion Partners LLC is responsible for all operating maintenance of the facilities which includes garbage pick up.

35. The state park is a large tract of land. Why not put their banquet center in some other part of the park? The beavers won't mind sharing.

The location the banquet facility is currently proposed has been deemed the best option for the banquet facility. Pavilion Partners have indicated they are willing to consider a different location so long as a lake view is maintained.

36. My question is what is the plan for parking when there is a restaurant and possibly a wedding at the banquet facility. Are they planning on more parking, having a shuttle (who is paying for that) or just turning people away from the beach, restaurant or wedding because there is no room to park?

Parking will continue to be available on a “first come first served” basis. No events will be scheduled prior to 6 pm on Fridays and Saturdays from Memorial Day to Labor Day. Alternative parking solutions are being explored, but there will be no reserved event parking within the existing parking lots.

37. Isn't the park already too busy to add this facility”, part of the answer is “They will not book a wedding for 2 p.m. on a Saturday in July” and “Mid-day weekend visitation will not increase”. Are the booking hours for the banquet facility specified in the lease? Won't the restaurant increase the visitation during mid-day weekends?

The booking hours are specified in the lease. It is expected that the restaurant will enhance the beach experience for those visiting the park at all times, including weekends.

38. Why should I not see this as a "dash for cash" on the part of Pavilion Partners LLC since you could not stay with the original DNR request for bids on Pavilion ONLY restoration? It seems to me that with so many beach goers Pavilion Partners LLC still would stand to make a large amount of money on those 2 restaurants, and be able to invest much less.

In order for the renovation cost of the Pavilion to be financially viable for the investors the banquet facility and related year round business it will provide is necessary. The State's prospectus asked any group responding to be creative and asked for proposed additions to the project that would increase the chances for financial success.

39. The is certainly nothing wrong with making money & owning a business, it's the American Way. But why did Pavilion Partners LLC not look into PURCHASING land at some nice properties along 49 in Chesterton? The Coffee Creek Watershed Preserve is beautiful and many bridal parties take their pictures there. It is vacant and already zoned for business, or how about the land next to the Visitors Center? You keep touting Mr. Richardson's and Mr. Kaiafas' banquet halls, why not build something nice and big on one of these properties and you would have adequate parking, no one would need to be "shuttled". If making money off the Indiana Dunes State Park is so important to you, keep the plans for the 2 restaurants, we do eat while at the beach and scrap that horrid controversial banquet hall idea. Seems like a "win-win" for everyone & nature too!

The DNR's prospectus was specific to the restoration of the Pavilion and asked for the proposal of additional facilities. The draw for year round business in the banquet center is obviously the Lake Michigan view which is not available in Coffee Creek or other inland locations.

40. According to the DNR on the In.gov websites Q & A section, the issue comes up of who will be the insured party in case of a drowning due to alcohol consumption. It states that the state is fully funded and that Pavilion Partners, LLC will be required to carry insurance and the DNR listed on their policy. It states that "proof" would have to be made that the victim became intoxicated on your premises. What are your plans to guard against letting patrons get intoxicated, & drowning? Are you going to restrict the number of drinks that can be served or serve as much as they want to consume and take your chances of being sued by their loved ones? We no longer are a country of people who take responsibility for their actions, but a country of victims who sue over anything and everything.

Licensed operators serving alcohol will be required to follow all laws regulating the sale and consumption of alcohol.

41. With the failure of the Strongbow Inn, and the failure to complete a simple "comfort station" by the May 2015 deadline, what should make us, the taxpayers and owners of our beloved Indiana Dunes as it currently exists, believe this venture will be completed and made a success? Can you still make it a success without alcohol?

In the event the liquor license is not approved, will Pavilion Partners, LLC still go through with their plans?

Pavilion Partners will not speculate on its plans until the status of the alcohol license is determined.

42. According to the DNR portion of In.gov website, under the Q & A, there is a question "will there be safety issues for pedestrians with drivers who have been drinking? will the DNR pay for additional security and lifeguards that may be needed? The state's answer was security will be the responsibility of Pavilion Partners LLC through those who are renting a facility. The issue of driving under the influence will continue to be monitored by law enforcement officers as in the past. My question to you is how many security officers and lifeguards will you be hiring? You will need them during ALL HOURS OF YOUR OPERATION since you will be selling alcohol, not just when a banquet is occurring?"

Licensed operators serving alcohol will be required to follow all laws regulating the sale and consumption of alcohol. Security will be required for events serving alcohol in the banquet center and will be paid by the event host.

43. In Amy Lavalley's Post Tribune article dated March 19, 2015, this article was familiarizing the public with who the Pavilion Partners LLC were. It said "the partnership includes Chuck Williams, a Valparaiso Businessman, former city councilman, and former Republican Chair for Porter County, Tom Collins & Ryan Richardson who operate County Line Orchard in Hobart, Peter Kaiafas, owner of Avalon Banquet Center, Merrillville, Porter Architect Scott Virtue, and Deb Butterfield, spokeswoman". The word "partnership includes" leaves me to believe there are more partners not listed. Are either Republican Senator Ed Charbonneau or Republican State Representative Ed Soliday, partners either silent or "interested investors" as you put it in your proposal? I am asking because they authored SB515 to bring alcohol to the Indiana Dunes State Park for the benefit of the Pavilion Partners LLC plan for a banquet hall. I have to be "transparent" when entering tonight and let you know who I am, and I expect the same "transparency" from you.

Senator Ed Charbonneau or Republican State Representative Ed Soliday are not investors in the project, nor are any other legislators who voted in favor of the bill.

44. Why not use the upper floor of the renovated building as a banquet center if there is a real need for this at the Dunes?

Because the Pavilion building has enormous columns that obstruct views and layout for events, only approximately 100 people can be accommodated for an event. The banquet facility will accommodate larger groups.

45. To PP: Please explain how you calculated what the state will receive – how do you get to \$8.7 million over 35 years? Does this include the first 2 years when you are not required to pay out anything? We would like to see the math.

There is a 2 year period when % of revenue is not paid, however, lease payments and cost of maintenance and operations of facilities will be made. In fact, maintenance and operation of the comfort station has already begun.

46. To PP: The PP team told the Duneland Chamber of Commerce that the plans for the banquet center are in flux and that you may even move it to another location within the park as long as it has a lake view. Knowing that thousands of us are against this banquet center being in the park at all, what have you discussed as the alternate site?

Pavilion Partners has indicated it is willing to consider other sites as long as a lake view is maintained.

47. What would the cost of leasing lake front property in Indiana and Michigan if you decided to build the banquet hall else where?

That information has not been explored.

48. How much does alcohol influence overall criminal behavior at the Indiana Dunes State Park?

Statistics regarding crime at the Indiana Dunes State Park are available through public records.

49. Expound on your official business plan that was submitted to the state and its date.

Pavilion Partners proposal is available on the DNR website.

50. The new building will block the view of the lake in the main parking lot. The west parking lot fills up quickly. Why put the new building next to the old pavilion? When I have been there and seen Lake Michigan come to the northside of the pavilion myself, why not place the banquet hall farther south?

The new building is being designed with raised construction to allow for continued lake views and covered enjoyment by those at the Park. Pavilion Partners has expressed its willingness to consider other locations within the park so long as a lake view is maintained.

51. There are multiple banquet facilities in the area. There are two at Miller Beach, one in Whiting. Why do we need a 4th at the state park?

The DNR prospectus asked for creativity and the proposal of additional facilities, and accepted the Pavilion Partners proposal to include a banquet center.

52. Who are the principle investors?

Chuck Williams, Tom Collins, Ryan Richardson

53. Why did you pass the local liquor board when there vote was split? Doesn't that tell you something about their concerns?

It is our understanding the local liquor board had a split vote because some members wanted additional information about the project. One member asked for a continuance but did not have support for that suggestion. The State's ABC recognized that at least one local board member wanted more information and sent it back to the local board for reconsideration.

54. Regarding the proposed Indiana Dunes State Park Pavilion additions, what impact studies have been done? If done, what were the results? For example, beach parking capacity, effort on environment and other?

Pavilion Partners LLC has engaged Cardno to conduct the Environmental Assessment.

55. After 100+ years, why is it necessary to have alcohol on the beach?

The request for alcohol license is for use within the facilities and on a limited basis for special events. It is not intended to, and does not allow, “alcohol on the beach.”

56. Please explain your role in proposing changes in the law to allow alcohol sales within 100 feet of the pavilion and the parking lot?

Pavilion Partners and DNR discussed the issue of alcohol sales specifically for special events, with DNR approval and a special event alcohol permit, to allow for events, festivals, etc. such as July 4th Fireworks celebrations.

57. A question for each of the partners to respond to: Opponents have expressed their feelings about the proposed banquet center. When YOU look at the artist's rendering of the three-story addition, what do YOU see?

The drawing that was used in early April is NOT a rendering of the building addition, it was simply created to use with State historic preservation to show size mass of building. Architectural drawings are being created and along with that a rendering of what the building will actually look like. In other words, we do not see a representation of the architecture of the building.

58. You have heard the visceral reaction many have expressed against the proposed addition and the various impacts it will have on the park. How do you react to that - do you understand why opponents' emotions are so intense? WHY do you think that opposition is so intense?

The reaction that we have seen from some who oppose the project has been disappointing and surprisingly uncivil. Pavilion Partners LLC has committed to invest millions of dollars to restore a declining State asset and improve the amenities that will be available to millions who visit and enjoy the Indiana Dunes State Park annually. Facilities will be available now on a year-round basis. The project is consistent with longtime Tourism assessments and even the Town of Porter’s Gateway plan for redevelopment. Local businesses will be given the opportunity to expand or create new businesses and jobs as a result of the project. Hundreds of construction jobs will be created. We cannot speculate as to why some have been so intense in their opposition when questions and concerns are being addressed. We have been consistently told by these people that they “don’t care” about and disregard any answer or solution to any concern.

On the other hand we have had hundreds who are equally positive about the project but have not come forward because of the “visceral” (uncivil) opposition at public meetings and online threats.

59. Is there any chance that intense opposition to the banquet center would prompt you to consider altering your plans significantly?

Pavilion Partners has indicated its willingness to locate the banquet center elsewhere in the park so long as a lake view is maintained.

60. Have Pavilion Partners LLC performed an economic impact study regarding this project? If so, what issues did this study address and what negative aspects were found? Who performed the study and what is the nature and source of the data used?

Pavilion Partners has a long history of restaurant and banquet facility management and are confident in their business plan for the facilities.

61. I am concerned not only about the aesthetics of the building on the beach, but what it says about the citizens of Porter County, and what we offer tourists in general.

No questions

62. I am concerned about the longer-term implications, as well. Namely, how bad the building will look when the partnership dissolves, or goes out of business, and the building becomes abandoned. Perhaps the business survives more than 5 years, beating the average lifespan of new businesses. But we can pretty much agree, it is highly unlikely the business remains functional for the full 65 years of the lease. What then? The DNR has told us there is no escrow, bond, or other sources of funding for removing the building when corporations no longer wish to frequent it. The building will become abandoned. There is no reason to believe the DNR will have the money to maintain or remove the building, given its historic inability to maintain the existing Pavilion.

No questions

63. Will this project be built with local contractor and local labor?

Local labor has already been used to construct the Comfort Center. Bids will go out for the remainder of the project and contractors and subs will be selected based on bids and quality of work.

64. What projects were submitted to the DNR as comps to the new project, not the renovation?

The prospectus from DNR did not request comparable projects, however, numerous public/private partnerships that involved the construction and operation of new facilities at State Parks are listed on the DNR website.

65. Please tell us the banquet center rental information specifics:

- What is the maximum people capacity, such as cooks, waitstaff, bartenders, security, guests and total.**
- Will on-site parking be allowed and will reserved parking be allowed? Will they be required to pay state park entrance fee?**
- If off-site parking is arranged how many shuttles will be used for maximum capacity rental, what is the people capacity on each shuttle, how much money will this add to the rental cost over a facility that has free on site parking?**
- How many off-duty officer or park rangers will be required for security inside and how many outside?**

- Capacities will be determined when final designs are complete and operators of the facilities are engaged. Number of employees is therefore not yet determined.
- There will be no reserved parking for employees or event parking.
- Details about off-site parking and shuttles have not been explored to that level of detail.
- Security will be required for events serving alcohol in the banquet center and will be paid by the event host. The number of attendees at the event will determine the number of security officers needed.

A.



Porter County Destination Audit and Product Positioning Analysis

April 2005

Nichols  **Tourism**
Group

TABLE OF CONTENTS

SECTION	PAGE
1.0 INTRODUCTION AND STUDY FORMAT.....	1
2.0 WHY FOCUS ON TOURISM	3
3.0 PORTER COUNTY VISITOR PERCEPTIONS	6
4.0 PORTER COUNTY TOURISM PRODUCT SWOT.....	15
5.0 NEW DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES.....	27
6.0 APPENDIX – IMAGE /PERCEPTION SURVEY INSTRUMENT.....	37

1.0 INTRODUCTION & STUDY FORMAT

1.1 Study Introduction

Similar to destinations around the country, Porter County faces a tourism environment with rapidly escalating competition and an increasingly demanding consumer marketplace. Given this environment, the Porter County Convention, Recreation & Visitor Commission (PCCRVC) retained Phoenix-based Nichols Tourism Group and its alliance partner The National Laboratory of Tourism and eCommerce at Temple University to develop a Destination Audit and Product Positioning Analysis. The planning effort was crafted in a manner which included both private and public sector entities to ensure the ultimate plan would be embraced as an industry-wide plan. This report presents findings of the planning effort and outlines the tactical steps for the destination to progress on the targeted development goals and objectives.

1.2 Study Process and Report Format

The planning effort incorporated a process used by NTG around the county and includes five primary topic areas;

1. Why it is critical for Porter County to place a focus on its tourism industry and future development opportunities,
2. How do visitors currently perceive the Porter County visitor environment,
3. What tourism product strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats are currently possessed by Porter County,
4. What tourism development opportunities hold the greatest potential for further development, and what steps should Porter County undertake to capitalize on future opportunities?

Figure 1-1



The ultimate goal of this planning process is to provide a strategy for the industry to create or maintain sustainable competitive advantage over the many other destinations vying for a larger share of the tourism pie. By doing so, the strategy will play an integral role in stabilizing and growing the industry, while at the same time strengthening its ability to continue to: 1) Remove part of the tax burden to residents, 2) Increase visitor expenditures, 3) Play a vital role in overall economic development and 4) Be a catalyst in the development of improved visitor and resident amenities. In order to create a sustainable competitive advantage, any recommended strategy must have more than a temporary impact on the industry; rather it must build upon Porter County strengths that cannot be easily duplicated by other destinations.

To fully comprehend the various issues faced by the diverse interests throughout Porter County, NTG engaged in a series of individual interviews with private and public sector representatives throughout the Porter County region. In addition, the firm analyzed all related research currently available, made site visits to attractions throughout the area and undertook a perception/image study for the region.

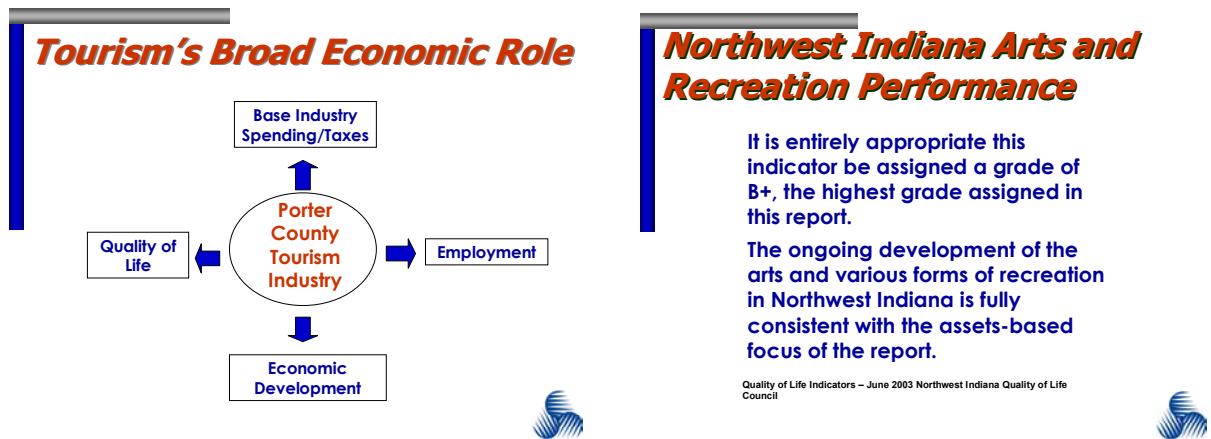
2.0 WHY FOCUS ON TOURISM?

2.1 Recognition of Tourism's Broad Role

More and more communities around the country are recognizing that tourism plays a broader role in their economic fabric than many previously understood. In Porter County, more than 3 million visitors and their associated spending are attracted on an annual basis. While these visitors and their spending are important numbers to consider, the industry can play a much broader role in Porter County's economy. Think of it as a four legged stool – spending and the associated taxes are a key leg of the industry. A second leg is the broad diversity of jobs impacted by the industry. Many communities have also integrated tourism as a third leg in broader economic development efforts and the fourth leg is all about how tourism can be used to expand the quality of life attributes so important for both current and future residents to the county.

These quality of life factors were examined in 2003 by the Northwest Indiana Quality of Life Council. In that report, the arts and recreation elements of the region received the report's highest grade and ongoing development and expansion of these elements were given important recognition.

FIGURE 2-1



When NTG's home state of Arizona undertook one of its most extensive statewide economic studies in 2003 it characterized tourism as the state's "Common Denominator," as it was the only "base" industry present in all 15 of the state's counties. The study defined "base" or "export-oriented" industries as those resulting in the importing of money into the region through the sales of goods and services to customers who do not live in the region. Examples of base industries can frequently include manufacturing, tourism, export-related business services, retirement, and federal government employment. In their report, the economic advisors used the ghost towns of the Old West as an illustration of the importance of base industries. In their example, mines were a previous base industry for a number of Arizona communities, but once the mine ran out, many communities ceased to exist. Their point was that as a community's ability to import money was gone, so was the community's viability. It

emphasized that viable economic strategies must, by definition, focus on these base industries.

In order to build this important segment, the industry recognized it had to move from the traditional approach much of the tourism industry takes, to a more strategic one. Rather than taking its products as a given and then determining who to sell it to, these strategic destinations start with which customers they want to attract and then take proactive steps to develop the kinds of products that speak to those segments.

FIGURE 2-2



A number of Midwest states have also embraced this type of thinking. Kentucky was the first state to aggressively pursue programs to stimulate new tourism product development when in it launched its Kentucky Tourism Development Act in 1996 and 1997. This program allowed a developer to fund up to 25 percent of development costs through recapture of state sales taxes over a ten year time period. Projects had to demonstrate they would attract a minimum of 25 percent of their visitors from out of state and pose limited direct competition to existing businesses. Since its inception, the program has stimulated over \$500 million in new investment in twelve projects, generating between \$2.4 to 2.9 billion in total economic impacts.

Iowa is frequently noted around the nation as one of the most aggressive in attempting to build tourism as a greater base industry for their state. They had experienced both outsourcing of manufacturing jobs and declines in its agricultural sectors. In response, their legislature approved two new direct grant initiatives in 2000, their Vision Iowa and Community Attraction and Tourism Program. These programs were funded primarily through state gaming proceeds and were directed to new development efforts that promote recreation, education, entertainment and cultural activities within the state. The Vision Iowa program is a \$300 million program (\$15 million for 20 years) directed to large projects (\$20 million minimum size.) Since its inception in 2000, the program has provided twelve projects with \$212 million in direct grants. These grants are being leveraged over five times, stimulating approximately \$1.1 billion of new construction activity. The program has allowed cities like Dubuque to develop its America's River

project, a \$188 million mixed-use project on the banks of the Mississippi. The Community Attraction and Tourism Program is a \$62 million program (\$12.5 million for five years) directed to smaller projects. Approximately 120 projects in 100 communities across the state have received funding so far.

FIGURE 2-3

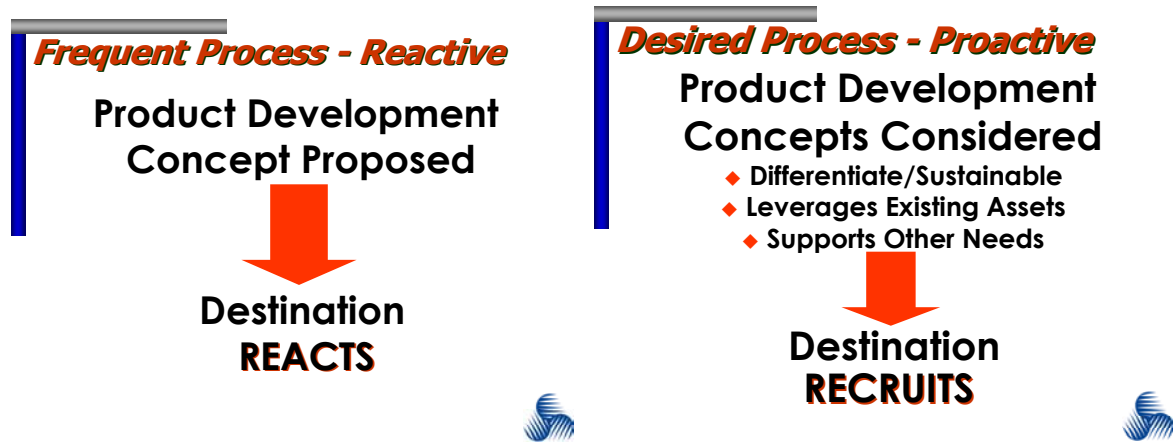


Illinois has also taken steps to stimulate new tourism product development through its Tourism Attraction Grant Program. While not funded to the level of Iowa, it provides close to \$2 million annually in grant funds to assist tourism development expansion or enhancement efforts. This program has assisted projects like a tourist lodge at the Ohio River Recreational Area, an Adventure River Water Park and a Lewis and Clark Memorial Tower at the confluence of the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers.

Michigan has taken a different approach as it recognized one of the greatest opportunities to stimulate tourism related investment was to deepen the investment community's understanding of the tourism industry and new development potential. In 2004, a 1 ½ day Michigan Tourism Investment Forum was developed to help build this understanding. The forum brought together development, finance, legal, economic development and tourism professionals and was an important start in deepening the interaction among the various groups.

All of these examples illustrate the progression from staying in a reactive mode, where a destination waits until a concept is proposed, and then responds, to a more proactive state. The most effective entities consider potential products that can further differentiate the destination and leverage existing assets. They then use tools, incentives and proactive recruitment to attract the right new products to the region.

FIGURE 2-4



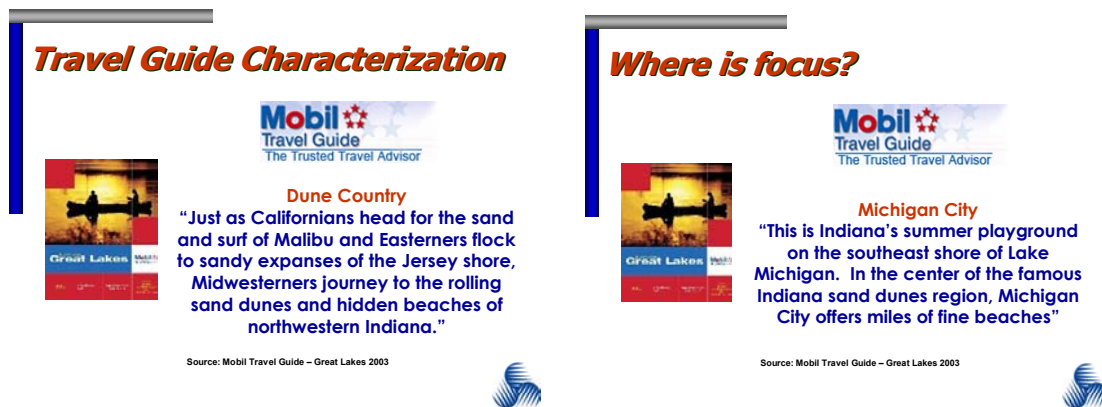
This proactive state is where Porter County needs to be. By considering its options and noting those which hold the greatest potential, the County can best maximize the role of tourism in its economic performance.

3.0 PERCEPTIONS OF PORTER COUNTY VISITORS

3.1 Visitor Image/Perception Study

In order to assist Porter County in determining what new product development areas hold the greatest potential, it is of key importance to understand how the traveling public currently perceives the destination. One source of insight is how nationally recognized guidebooks characterize the destination. Mobil Travel Guides are one such source for the Great Lakes Region and when they characterize Dune County, they note *“Just as Californians head for the sand and surf of Malibu and Easterners flock to sandy expanses of the Jersey shore, Midwesterners journey to the rolling sand dunes and hidden beaches of northwestern Indiana.”* While they present this attractive characterization, the area most prominently recognized is Michigan City, not communities in Porter County.

FIGURE 3-1



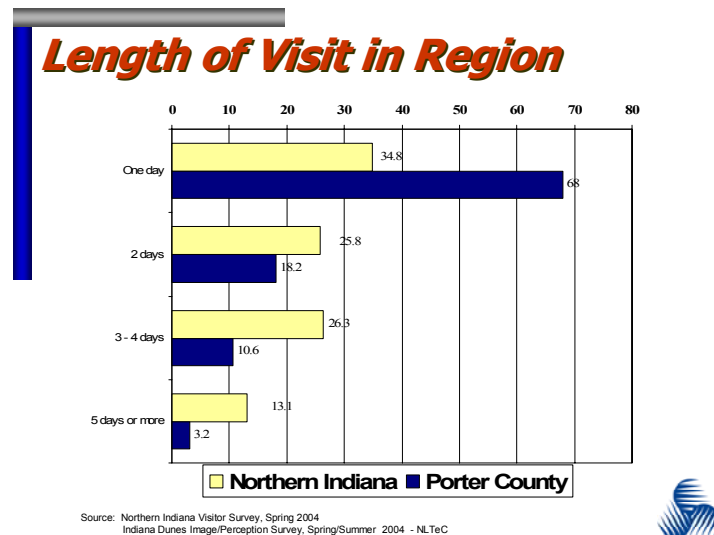
In order to develop a deeper understanding of these perceptions, a survey effort was undertaken to determine the current attitudes and perceptions of Porter County as a destination. The National Laboratory of Tourism and eCommerce at Temple University undertook this survey and focused on key visitor feeder markets for Porter County. A copy of the survey instrument is presented in an appendix to this report. A total of 421 completed surveys were received from randomly selected households in Indiana, Illinois, Ohio and Michigan, with findings having a margin of error of + or – five percent. This survey effort is particularly helpful because findings can be benchmarked to a similar effort undertaken for Northern Indiana and the Northern Indiana Tourism be contrasted to these broader regional findings. The survey addressed the following five broad topic areas:

1. Overall trip characteristics
2. General name recognition and drawing power
3. Indiana Dunes competitive strengths and weaknesses
4. Interaction and role of PCCRVC
5. Travel party characteristics

3.2 Characterization of Visit

One of the most significant findings the survey clarified is the short trip duration of most visitors to the Dunes area. When considering the length of a visitor's "overall trip", the average duration for an Indiana Dunes visitor was 2.3 days, only one-half that of the typical visitor to the Northern Indiana region. Even more concerning was that the portion of the trip "spent in the Indiana Dunes region" was even shorter, with approximately 2/3rds of the visits being of a day trip orientation, a level twice that of the typical Northern Indiana visitor.

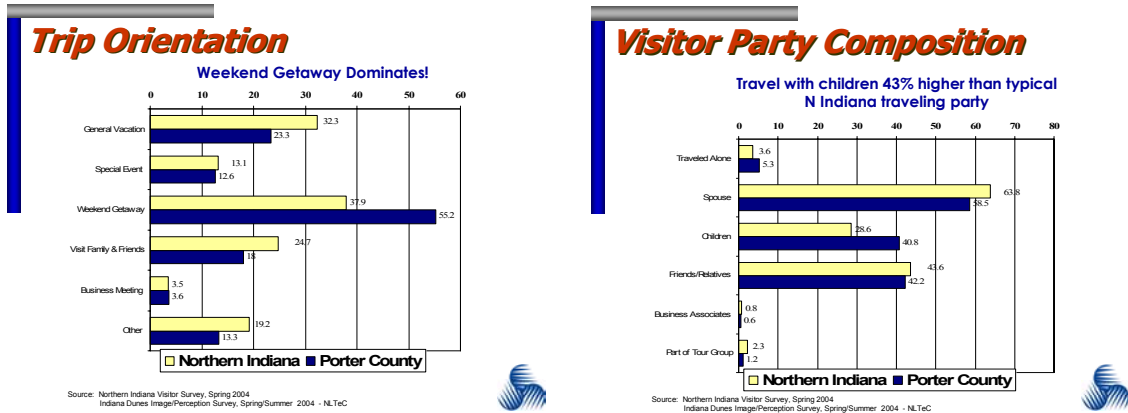
FIGURE 3-2



This shorter duration was also reflected in the greater orientation of many of these trips as weekend getaways. When compared to Northern Indiana averages, these weekend getaways were much more prominent (55.2 % versus 37.9) and general vacations were less frequently noted (23.3 versus 32.3.) The family orientation of many of these visitors was also evident, as approximately 41 percent of visitors traveled with children, a level significantly higher than the typical visitor to Northern Indiana.

The short duration of many of these visits have historically limited the financial contribution of the visitor industry to Porter County. It should be clearly recognized, however, that this norm provides a strong opportunity for the region to significantly expand the contribution of the visitor industry in the future. Unlike many other destinations which face the fundamental challenge of getting visitors to their community – Porter County's challenge is how to get these visitors to stay longer and spend more within their boundaries.

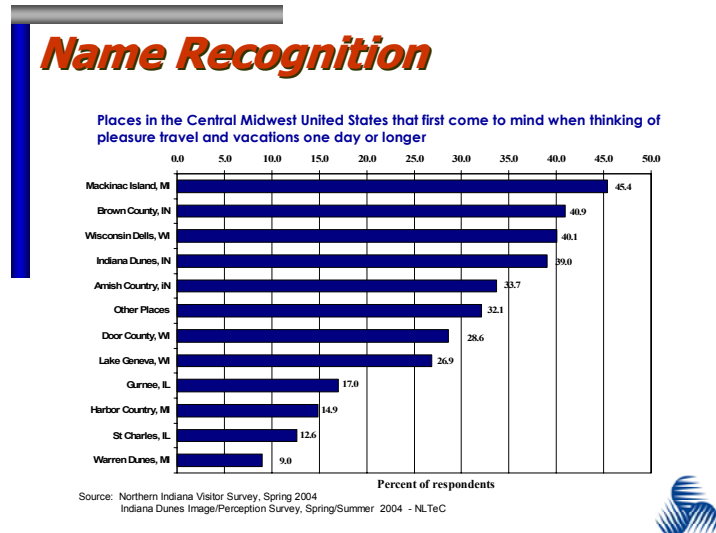
FIGURE 3-3



3.3 Drawing Power of Indiana Dunes

The strong recognition of the Indiana Dunes region was evident when respondents were asked which places first come to mind when thinking of pleasure travel and vacations of one day or longer. The Indiana Dunes region was the fourth most frequently noted destination, behind Mackinac Island, Brown County, and Wisconsin Dells. Importantly, the Indiana Dunes region was noted more often than other well known mid-west destinations, like Amish County, Door County and Lake Geneva.

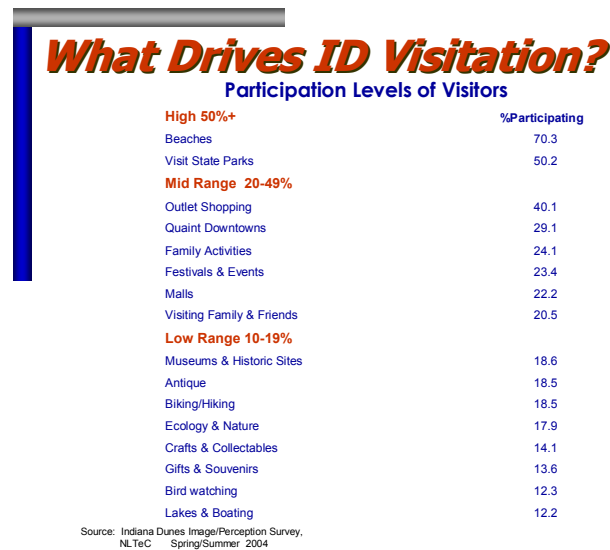
FIGURE 3-4



In order to better understand what is truly driving visitation to the Indiana Dunes region, respondents were asked what activities they participated in during their trip to the Dunes region. These responses were categorized into three categories; "High Level Activities" or those in which more than 50 percent of

respondents participated in, “Mid Level Activities” those in which 20 to 49 percent participated and “Low Level Activities” those with less than 20 percent participation. As expected, beaches and state parks were the key activities that are truly driving most visitors to decide on the Dunes region. Outlet and mall shopping, visiting quaint downtowns and family activities were important mid level activities. While Porter County's strongest asset is a National Lakeshore, which is positioned near a dense metropolitan area and possesses a broad range of nature based experiences, hiking, biking, birding and ecological activities fell into the lowest activity categories.

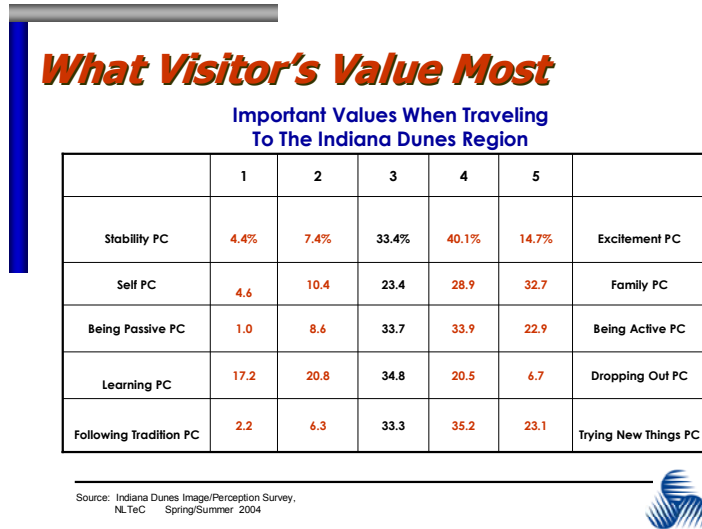
FIGURE 3-5



In attempting to extend the stay of visitors and/or draw new visitors, it is important to understand what visitor's value most when they travel to the region. Respondents were asked to note their desires on five differing attributes. In Figure 3-6, ratings in column 3 represent desire midway between the attributes. Those in columns 1 and 2 favor the attribute to the left, while columns 4 and 5 favor the attribute to the right.

In considering these responses, visitors clearly desired more excitement rather than stability in their vacation experience (54% noting columns 4 & 5 – 11.8 % noting 1 & 2.) The importance of family rather than a self oriented experience is again clear (60.6% noting columns 4 & 5 – 15.0 % noting 1 & 2.) An active, rather than passive experience is also strongly desired (9.6% noting columns 1 & 2 – 56.8 % noting 4 & 5.) While not as pronounce, more were looking for a learning experience, rather than just dropping out (38.0% noting columns 1 & 2 – 27.1 % noting 4 & 5.) Finally, more visitors are interested in trying new things rather than following tradition (8.5% noting columns 1 & 2 – 58.3 % noting 4 & 5.).

FIGURE 3-6



3.4 Indiana Dunes Competitive Strengths

In order to better assess the competitive strengths of the Indiana Dunes' region, respondents were asked to rate Indiana Dunes to four other destinations (Door County, WI, Galena, IL, Mackinac Is., MI and Wisconsin Dells, WI) on a variety of features. The following figures identify the feature and note which of the destinations achieved the highest rating for the associated feature. The final column then identifies an Indiana Dunes' Index which contrasts the average rating for Indiana Dunes to the highest rated destination. Thus, for those features in which Indiana Dunes was rated highest, it has an index of 100, while for a feature in which the Dunes achieved a rating half that of the highest destination its index would be 50.

As shown in Figure 3-7, the Dunes' region highest competitive strengths were its beach, relaxing outdoor environments and shopping experiences. Its convenient access, good value and range of festivals and events were also very highly recognized strengths of the region.

FIGURE 3-7

Indiana Dunes' Strong Attributes

Feature	# 1 Destination	Indiana Dunes Index
Is great for outdoor activities	Indiana Dunes, IN	100%
Has attractive beaches/waterfront areas	Indiana Dunes, IN	100%
Offers reduced rates	Indiana Dunes, IN	100%
Is a nice quiet place	Indiana Dunes, IN	100%
Is convenient to my home	Indiana Dunes, IN	100%
Offers good value for my time and money	Indiana Dunes, IN	100%
Is a good place to relax	Indiana Dunes, IN	100%
Offers great shopping at outlet stores	Indiana Dunes, IN	100%
Has appealing festivals/cultural events	Door County, WI	98%
Offers good shopping	Galena, IL	86%
Has beautiful scenery	Mackinac Is., MI	85%

Source: Indiana Dunes Image/Perception Survey, N.L.TeC Spring/Summer 2004



While possessing these strengths, other destinations were perceived significantly stronger in their range of food offerings and in their quality of accommodations – important features in a visitor's decision to extend their length of stay. The greatest weaknesses of the Dunes region are that it is not seen as providing unique or quaint experiences, whether in its towns, architecture, or historic landmarks. Particularly important is that it is also not seen as providing lots of things to see and do, or in providing a variety of activities for children. These perceptions again help to reinforce the identity of the Dunes region as a good day trip, but not a destination for a longer getaway experience.

FIGURE 3-8

Indiana Dunes' Mid Attributes

Feature	# 1 Destination	Indiana Dunes Index
Offers good/different food	Wisconsin Dells, WI	60%
Offers quality accommodations	Wisconsin Dells, WI	55%
Offers great antique/specialty shopping	Door County, WI	42%

Source: Indiana Dunes Image/Perception Survey, N.L.TeC Spring/Summer 2004



Indiana Dunes' Lower Attributes

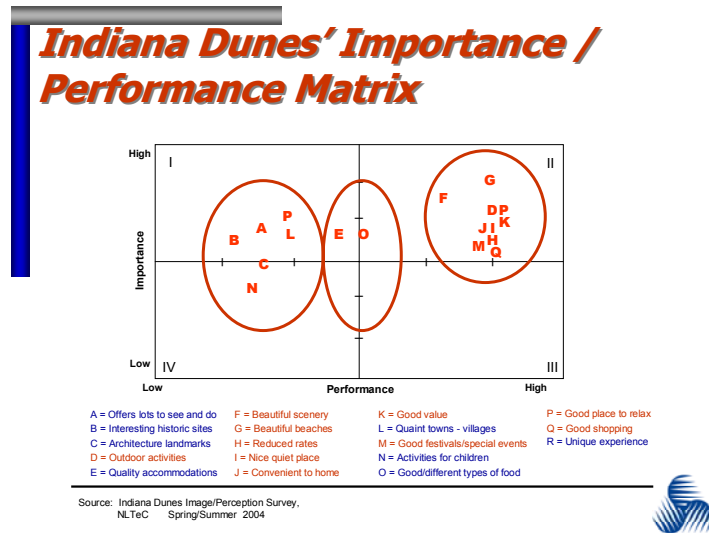
Feature	# 1 Destination	Indiana Dunes Index
Has quaint towns or villages	Galena, IL	39%
Provides a unique experience	Mackinac Is., MI	38%
Has beautiful architecture/landmarks	Galena, IL	32%
Offers lots of things to see and do	Mackinac Is., MI	31%
Has lots of activities for children	Wisconsin Dells, WI	29%
Has interesting historic sites	Mackinac Is., MI	24%

Source: Indiana Dunes Image/Perception Survey, N.L.TeC Spring/Summer 2004



In addition to having respondents rate these features, they were also asked to note the importance of the features in their travel decision. Figure 3-9 combines these responses and notes the importance ratings (low to high) and contrasts them to Indiana Dunes' ratings or performance (also low to high.) The features in Quadrant II (top right hand and noted in red at the bottom of the chart) are the features with both of strong importance and key strengths of Indiana Dunes.

FIGURE 3-9



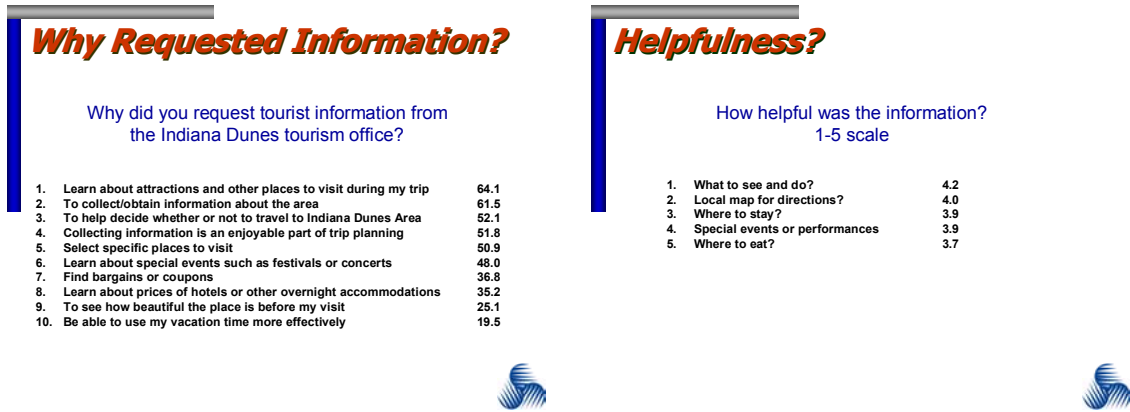
3.5 Influencing Indiana Dunes Trip Decisions

A final element of the survey questioned those respondents who had received travel information by contacting the tourism office, responding to advertising or visiting their website within the past year. These questions were used to develop a better understanding of how these contacts were influencing prospective traveler's actions.

The greatest uses of these communication efforts was to assist in general trip planning, with almost 2/3rds of these respondents noting they used the information to deepen their understanding of the mix of attractions and accommodations in the region and to help them decide if they would visit the Indiana Dunes region. Potential travelers also used the information to understand the range of events and find information on pricing, bargains or coupons, but these were at a lower level.

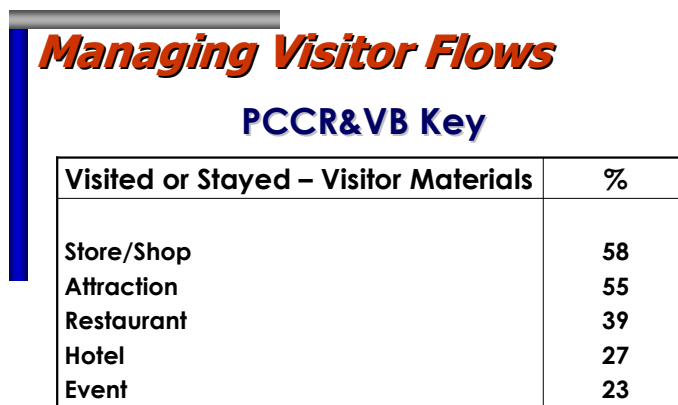
Most of these recipients found this information very helpful, with all ratings being above average. The provision of maps and understanding what to see and do were the most highly regarded elements of these materials. In addition to helping in these roles, 15 percent of respondents noted they extended the length of their trip because of these materials, adding an average of 1.9 days to their trip.

FIGURE 3-10



Respondents were also asked if they decided where to stay or visit as the result of the advertising or travel information obtained before or during the trip. More than one-half noted their decision on what shop or attraction they chose was influenced by these materials. While a smaller percentage, approximately one-quarter also noted these materials helped them decide on their hotel or the event they attended. By reaching these visitors, it is clear that these efforts and materials are helping Porter County better manage these visitor flows. Like any theme-park, destinations like Porter County must not just get the visitor to their "gate," they must also help ensure the visitor has the best overall experience once they get to the destination – a critical role for the PCCR&VB.

FIGURE 3-11



4.0 PORTER COUNTY TOURISM PRODUCTS

4.1 Porter County Tourism SWOT

In order to better evaluate where the greatest opportunities lie for future product development or enhancement, the destination's current Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) need to be considered. To facilitate this SWOT analysis, Porter County's tourism products can be thought in one of five key product categories; Nature and Adventure, Culture and Heritage, Sports and Outdoor Recreation, Entertainment and Attractions, and Lodging and Conference. The major tourism products within each of these segments were inventoried and the associated SWOT factors were then considered.

FIGURE 4-1



4.2 Porter County Nature/Adventure

As presented in Section 3, Porter County's nature products drive the most significant number of visitors to choose the region and are a key element in the strong name recognition of the region. The Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore (IDNL) and Indiana Dunes State Park are clearly the most dominant nature attractions, providing beaches, camping and a variety of nature trails. These major national and state attractions are supplemented by facilities like the Sunset Hill Farm County Park, the Coffee Creek Watershed Preserve and the Kankakee River.

FIGURE 4-2

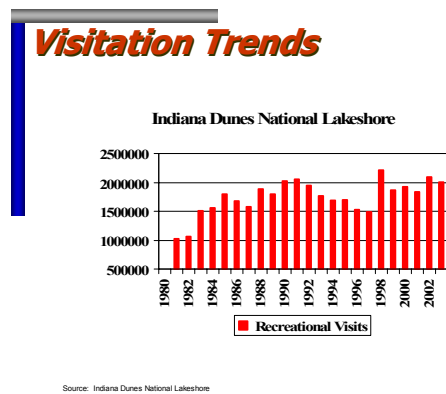
Nature/Ecology Product Examples

- Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore
- Indiana Dunes State Park
- Indiana Dunes Environmental Learning Center
- Dorothy Buell Memorial Visitor Center
- State Park Nature Center
- The Calumet Trail
- Devil's Slide
- Cowels Bog
- Pinhook Bog
- Heron Rookery
- Sunset Hill Farm County Park
- Coffee Creek Watershed Preserve
- Taltree Arboretum and Gardens
- Birding
- Kankakee River



While most know that the IDNL is an important attraction for Porter County, many don't realize just how dominant the park is. Of the 353 National Park facilities located across the United States, the IDNL has the 37th highest visitation, with close to 2 million recreational visits annually. The Indiana Dunes State Park adds close to an additional million visitors annually for a total of approximately 3 million visitors annually to the region. It must be recognized that these parks join as a very strong engine for Porter County, an engine many other destinations strive to develop. Importantly, this level of visitation already exists within Porter County and has been relatively consistent since the late 1990s.

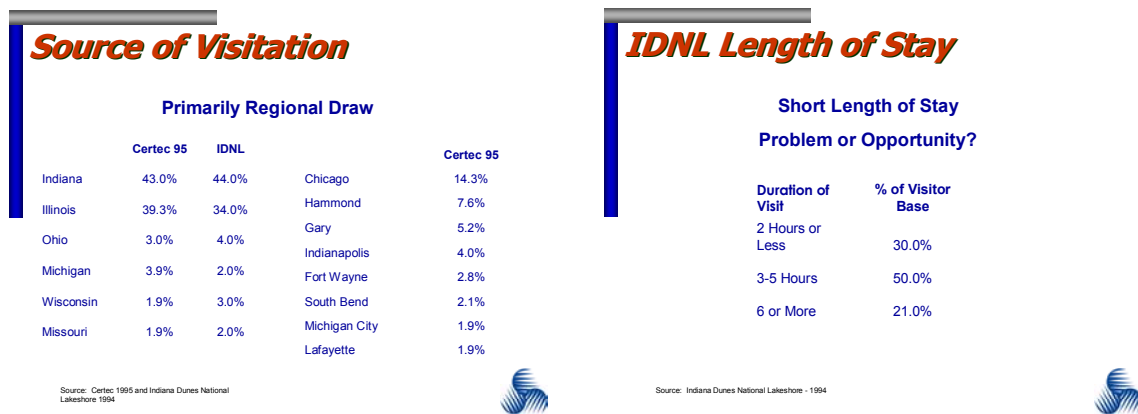
FIGURE 4-3



The strong regional draw of the IDNL is evident as a National Park survey conducted in 1994 (the most recent visitor survey) noted approximately 80 percent of park visitors come from the states of Indiana and Illinois. A very similar

regional draw was also reflected in a Porter County visitor survey conducted in 1995 by Certec. The close proximity for many of these regional visitors allows a large percentage of visitors to look to the region as a short day trip option. Based on the IDNL visitor survey, fully 80 percent of visitors to the Park stay for less than five hours. While the surveys themselves are somewhat dated, the findings were consistent with input received in personal interviews and anecdotal evidence. These findings reinforce the key points noted in the image study presented in Section 3. While the IDNL is a major engine for Porter County, the short day visit orientation is not allowing the County to maximize the potential of this visitor base.

FIGURE 4-4



In further considering the Nature/Adventure product sector, the following Porter County strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats should be considered.

Strengths

- ◆ Possesses IDNL, a NPS property with recreational visitation close to 2 million annually.
- ◆ IDSP adds approximately 1 million additional visitors annually to the region.
- ◆ IDNL possesses a broad array of ecological environments.
- ◆ The region's close association with Dr Henry Cowels – The Father of Ecology.
- ◆ One of the longest stretches of protected beach areas in region.
- ◆ Possess strong identity as a Lakeshore destination.
- ◆ Possess other nature based assets - Kankakee River, Heron Rookery, and Coffee Creek Preserve.
- ◆ The Marquette Greenway Plan can play a future role in this theme.
- ◆ Planned visitor center provides new opportunity to engage and educate visitors.

Weakness

- ◆ Many utilize the region's key visitor driver as a day trip, without experiencing the broader Porter County region.
- ◆ The linear orientation and multiple entry points of IDNL the limit ability to aggregate/intercept the visitor base.

-
- ◆ It is difficult to reach and educate visitor bases as to the range of available experiences.
 - ◆ Beach closures raise negative attitudes towards IDNL.
 - ◆ Minimal linkages among natural environments limit collective power.
 - ◆ There is generally a limited regional recognition of the opportunity and potential role of tourism in Porter County's economy.
 - ◆ Capacity constraints and concerns regarding additional development and demand can limit future opportunities.

Opportunities

- ◆ The growing mature population segments are a positive trend for nature based interest.
- ◆ Eco-tourism themes are experiencing enhanced interest – often attracting environmentally sensitive and higher spending visitor bases.
- ◆ The Marquette Plan holds potential to heighten interest/identity of nature elements in the region.
- ◆ Interest in birding is growing rapidly.
- ◆ The major Chicago population base does not have as strong a nature option within their state.
- ◆ Porter County offers an alternative that is closer and more easily accessible than other nature based options.

Threats

- ◆ Michigan competitors offer a broader array of beach/lake experiences and are often seen as better options for extended stay experiences.
- ◆ Surrounding environments do not carry on natural/undeveloped character – sometimes possess strong negative images.

Nature and Adventure Critical Issues

In considering the nature and adventure segment, a number of critical issues must be recognized and addressed as this segment holds the greatest opportunity for Porter County to more fully capitalize on the evolving visitor market.

1. The linkages and integration of natural resource products must be expanded.

While Porter County possesses one of the strongest natural resource “drivers” in the region, only limited integration of other Porter County natural resources are “served up” to visitors. As noted in Section 3.3, the beach is the key product experience, however, many of the related outdoor/natural resource experiences fall much lower in a visitor's activity participation (hiking/biking, nature/ecology, birding, lakes and boating.) This is a significant opportunity for Porter County given the significant expansion of Eco-tourism themes occurring in the visitor industry and the higher spending segments these themes most frequently attract. The multiple entities representing these resources must collectively develop the linked itineraries and the themes behind them. An important caveat should be considered with this critical issue – just because a visitor base is not currently participating in a range of activities (hiking/biking, nature/ecology, birding, lakes and boating) it does

not mean that it cannot be grown. In this development audit and strategy, the focus is not only on who is coming today, but who do we want to attract tomorrow.

2. Approaches to educating existing and potential visitor bases to these nature based experiences must be expanded.

This integrated thinking must take place by the destination through presentation of multi-experience themed itineraries, consistent collateral materials, integration within the web site and cross-selling by individual attractions. One of the best opportunities to achieve this education is when a destination has visitors in their own backyard and can stimulate repeat visitation. Porter County must increasingly reach and motivate these visitors when they are already experiencing the destination.

4.3 Porter County Culture/Heritage Products

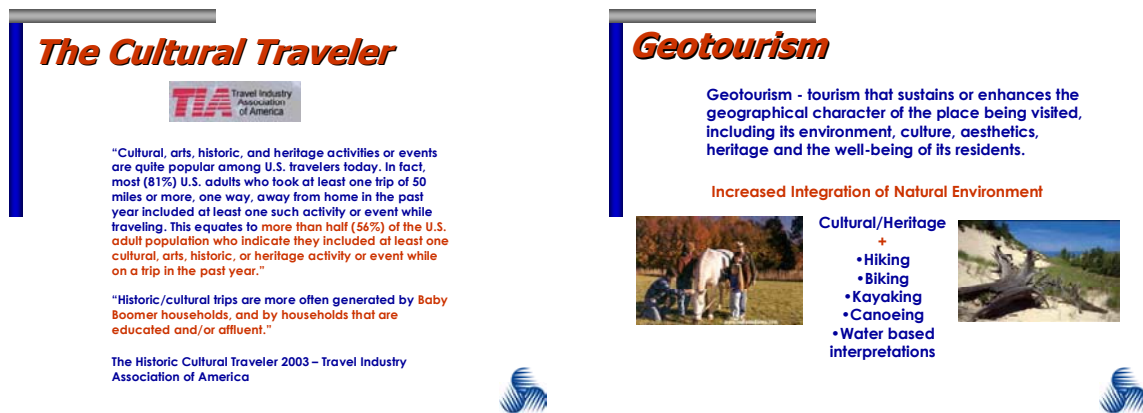
In considering the cultural and heritage products in Porter County, a wide range of examples can be noted as presented in Figure 4-5. While possessing a relatively broad range of products, few are truly powerful enough to attract significant visitor interest. Valparaiso University and a couple of unique festivals are the most significant cultural/heritage products. The limited range of products that truly draw is further hampered in that Porter County festivals only draw visitation for a limited time period, but can require significant time and resources for their development and management. This is not to say that the festivals should not be valued and pursued, however, their limited ability to be a consistent generators of visitation and spending should be recognized.

FIGURE 4-5



Although Porter County's current mix of cultural/heritage products is somewhat limited, the importance of this cultural traveler and the potential integration with Porter County's natural environments are important factors to consider. The Travel Industry Association of America (TIA) has undertaken research on this important visitor segment and found that more than half (56%) of the U.S. adult population include at least one cultural, arts, historic, or heritage activity or event while on a trip in the past year. Importantly, these historic/cultural trips are more often generated by the rapidly increasing Baby Boomer household base, many of which are more highly educated and/or affluent. The interest and linkages of this cultural traveler to a region's natural resources has been increasingly recognized and a new term has been recently been utilized by the Travel Industry Association of America and National Geographic Traveler that speaks to this integration – "Geotourism." The geotourism concept understands that a visitor intrigued by a destination's natural environments is often also attracted to the culture and heritage of the region and the two themes should be integrated and marketed as one. Geotourism is defined as tourism that sustains or enhances the geographical character of the place being visited, including its environment, culture, aesthetics, heritage and the well-being of its residents. This integration of natural resources and cultural/heritage elements must be more fully considered in Porter County.

FIGURE 4-6



In further considering the Culture/Heritage product sector, the following Porter County strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats should be considered.

Strengths

- ◆ Porter County possesses a relatively diverse range of cultural and heritage elements.
- ◆ This sector received strong ratings and recognition in Quality of Life Indicators Report.
- ◆ A number of elements are positioned in close proximity to natural assets.
- ◆ Many elements are in place and do not require new development efforts.
- ◆ There are a strong range of festivals, a number of which are very well recognized.

Weakness

- ◆ Vast majority of products are not powerful enough to truly drive visitor interest.
- ◆ Visitor participation levels are generally low – many of the products are more oriented to resident, rather than visitor customer segments.
- ◆ The locations of many elements are outside of typical visitor flow patterns.
- ◆ Because of the dominance of day trippers to Indiana Dunes, the majority of travel parties are not able to incorporate these elements into their trip.
- ◆ As there is strong incorporation of children in many of Porter County travel parties, it is difficult to “choose” culture and heritage elements.
- ◆ Many elements do not “engage” visitors, are too static and non-experiential, thus reinvestment is often needed.
- ◆ Festivals possess capacity constraints and typically attract visitors for only a short duration.

Opportunities

- ◆ Geo-tourism is growing as a theme and interest of travelers across the U.S.
- ◆ The expanding mature market segments are also drawn to these experiences.
- ◆ Heritage elements can also speak to the nature oriented traveler.
- ◆ Porter County possesses a number of unique heritage themes including “Steel” and “Ports of the Great Lakes” which have not been capitalized on. These could be powerful themes and attract participants that have not historically been incorporated in Porter County’s visitor industry.

Threats

- ◆ Other competitors have as strong, or stronger cultural and heritage elements, particularly Chicago.
- ◆ Culture and heritage attractions which do not interpret for “today’s visitor” are experiencing declining demand.
- ◆ Other new cultural and heritage projects are “raising the bar” on expectations for heritage attractions.

Culture and Heritage Critical Issues

In considering the culture and heritage segment, two critical issues must be recognized and addressed.

- 1. Thinking “Geotourism” and integrating existing cultural/heritage products with the region’s natural resources hold the greatest potential to leverage this segment.**

Porter County must lead with its competitive advantage, its natural resources, and use them to leverage its cultural resources. Integrating cultural/heritage elements in geotourism itineraries or themes should be more fully pursued, recognizing it is not the power of any individual product that is motivating, it is the collective power of the suggested experience.

2. Porter County must recognize its strongest areas of cultural and heritage differentiation and work to develop them in new and different ways.

Steel and the Port of Indiana are heritage elements that played unique roles in the region's history, but have historically played limited, if any, place in the region's visitor experience. New and innovative ways to integrate these two areas should be more examined and pursued, again thinking of potential ways to integrate the natural environments of the area in the theme interpretation.

4.4 Porter County Sports/Outdoor Recreation Products

In considering the Sports and Outdoor Recreation products in Porter County, a number of examples can be noted as presented in Figure 4-7. A number of these products are tied to the natural environments of Porter County, with many of the man-made experiences oriented more to the resident base of the region, rather than the visitor.

FIGURE 4-7



In further considering the Sports and Outdoor Recreation product sector, the following Porter County strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats should be considered.

Strengths

- ◆ Porter County possesses a number of sport and outdoor recreational facilities and activities.
- ◆ The facilities are dispersed throughout County.
- ◆ The quality marina in Portage is one of the most differentiated and holds potential for further development as a more powerful product.
- ◆ These experiences could be an attractive add-on to the beach oriented family traveler.

Weakness

- ◆ Most products are oriented towards local residents, rather than out-of-area visitors.
- ◆ Most products lack uniqueness or differentiation – would not drive visitation or be a major element in a travel experience.
- ◆ Limited incentives or tools are currently in place to encourage new development.

Opportunities

- ◆ Family travelers often look to these elements to round out a vacation experience.
- ◆ Linking of existing facilities could enhance utilization to Porter County visitors.

Threats

- ◆ Many Michigan competitors possess a broader array of higher quality facilities.
- ◆ If visitor has similar elements in their own back yard, limited potential to attract.

Sports and Outdoor Recreation Critical Issues

In considering the sports and outdoor recreation segment, two critical issues must be recognized and addressed.

1. Coordination and assistance in marketing to targeted visitor segments is the greatest opportunity to build this segment.

Porter County's range of sports and outdoor recreation facilities is somewhat undifferentiated and positioned primarily to local rather than visitor bases. Rather than attempting to build additional products, Porter County can have its greatest impact by assisting in the coordination and marketing of these products to the large visitor base that already exists, particularly the family market. New and different approaches need to be considered in aggregating the range of family oriented attractions and providing value oriented sales offerings.

2. Provide assistance and advocacy to the right new products

Rather than pursue new development entities within the Sports and Outdoor Recreation segment, Porter County should focus on being recognized as a developer friendly environment for projects that can meet important criteria and in essence be an advocate for the right project. This would recognize there are other tourism development areas that currently hold stronger priorities, but that Porter County would still reach out to those products that can meet important guidelines and criteria.

4.5 Porter County Entertainment and Attraction Products

In considering the Entertainment and Attraction products in Porter County, a number of examples can be noted as presented in Figure 4-7. A number of these products are tied to the natural environments of Porter County, with many of the man-made experiences oriented more to the resident base of the region, rather than the visitor.

FIGURE 4-8



In further considering the Entertainment and Attraction product sector, the following Porter County strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats should be considered.

Strengths

- ◆ A mix of attractions exist in region, with some in close proximity to IDNL.
- ◆ Certain attractions have expansion plans.
- ◆ A number of attractions speak to a family visitor market and help extend the stay of visitors.
- ◆ Most attractions possess limited differentiation.

Weakness

- ◆ There are limited linkages/cross promotions by existing attractions.
- ◆ Most are not powerful enough to stimulate a visitor's travel decision.
- ◆ Most attractions don't have enough scale to develop major marketing campaigns to build demand.
- ◆ Themes unique to Porter County have not been built on or maximized.

Opportunities

- ◆ Unlike natural assets, these man-made products can be developed, enhanced and expanded.
- ◆ New investment often looks to areas with existing visitor bases – ability to further penetration – Porter County has this existing engine.

-
- ◆ More commercial businesses are looking to integrate with visitor industry as part of their marketing/promotional efforts.

Threats

- ◆ Increasing number of states and destinations possess tools and incentives to bring the right attraction to their region.
- ◆ There is strong competition to lure branded attractions.

Entertainment and Attraction Critical Issues

In considering the Entertainment and Attraction segment, the same critical issues presented in the Sports and Outdoor Recreation area apply.

4.6 Porter County Lodging and Conference Products

In considering the Lodging and Conference products in Porter County, a number of examples can be noted as presented in Figure 4-9.

FIGURE 4-9



In further considering the Lodging and Conference product sector, the following Porter County strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats should be considered.

Strengths

- ◆ There are a range of moderately priced lodging options available to visitors.
- ◆ A number of newer properties have recently been added to the County's inventory of rooms which are enhancing the quality and identity of the region's room base.

Weakness

- ◆ There are only a limited number of better quality lodging options for visitors.

-
- ◆ Many properties are of a lower quality and have deferred maintenance, thus not appealing to today's visitor demands and setting too much of the image of the product.
 - ◆ Conference facilities are oriented primarily to local events and lack the scale to attract outside meetings and conferences.
 - ◆ The day visit orientation of many of Porter County's visitors limits new demand and similarly the revenue availability for owners to reinvest.
 - ◆ If a visitor lodging experience is negative, it can override other positive experiences of trip.
 - ◆ Limited bureau resources can be diverted

Opportunities

- ◆ Capital markets are investing in destinations which possess true potential for growth.
- ◆ New development can often stimulate and grow demand pools.

Threats

- ◆ Poor performance by existing products can limit new investment interest.
- ◆ The supply of new conference and convention products has significantly exceeded new demand and is requiring operating subsidies by many communities.

Lodging and Conference Critical Issues

In considering the Lodging and Conference segment, one critical issue must be recognized and addressed.

1. Expansion and enhancement of lodging stock can best be influenced by extending the length of visitor's stay.

The greatest ability to enhance the quality and range of lodging inventory within Porter County will be to motivate the visitor to extend their stay in the region and thus provide incremental revenue bases for reinvestment. Much of the dilemma of the lower quality lodging stock is essentially a market demand problem and attempting to attract new developers without addressing this fundamental issue will not be effective. By aggressively building on the other critical issues outlined in Section 4, there will be a much greater potential of having visitors to the region consider the destination as more than just a day trip.

5.0 PORTER COUNTY PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

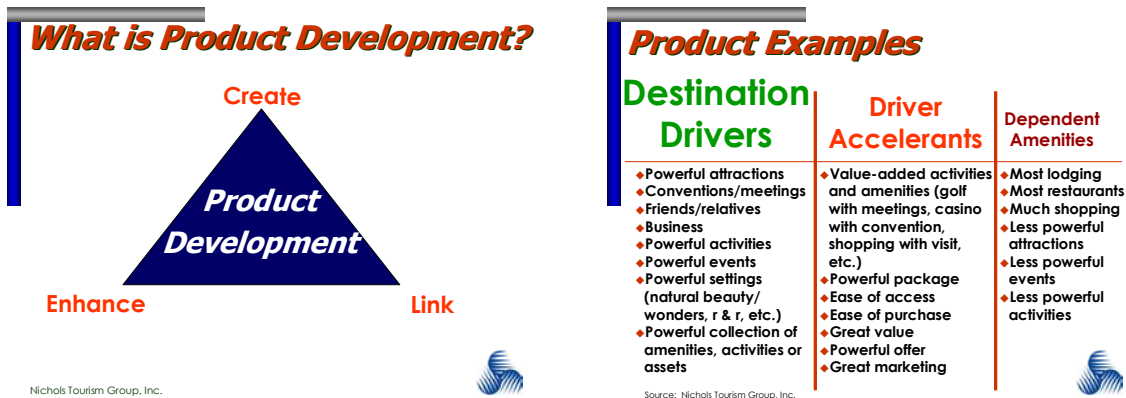
5.1 New Tourism Development Thinking

As discussed through this analysis, Porter County has the potential to significantly expand the role and influence tourism has on its economy. As the product review has shown, this cannot be accomplished by marketing initiatives alone, but will require creative efforts to expand and enhance the range of tourism product the County offers to visitors.

When many destinations think product development, only one approach is primarily considered, how do we “Create” or build new tourism product – a bricks and mortar approach. The more strategic destinations recognize much can also be achieved using innovative ways to “Link” or “Enhance” existing products. Often this requires the creative thinking of local professionals, in essence using “mental mortar,” rather than bricks and mortar. The linking and enhancing approaches of the product development pyramid is especially crucial to destinations with limited resources or incentive tools that can defray the high cost of many development initiatives.

It is also important that destinations don't think of all products as created equal. Think of them in three classes. The truly powerful products that stimulate the fundamental travel decision are the region's “Destination Drivers.” “Accelerants” are those products which are important motivators helping enhance the travel decision, but don't rise to the level of drivers. Finally, “Dependent Amenities” typically encompass the bulk of most destinations' products. These are important products that many visitors will utilize or experience, but they rarely play a role in motivating a travel party to choose the destination. When pursuing new product development, too many destinations fall into the trap of focusing on just one more dependent amenity, rather than a concept that could significantly play a driver or accelerant role. These are the areas Porter County must focus on.

FIGURE 5-1



5.1 Maximize Existing Nature and Heritage Based Experiences

There are three principal product development initiatives that Porter County should build on. The first focuses on building on Porter County's nature based competitive advantage and using it to extend visitation.

FIGURE 5-2



In order to act on this initiative and address the critical product issues noted in Section 4.2, Porter County should take a lesson from other regions of the U.S. which have developed linkages and trails around common themes. Texas was one of the earliest and most successful in developing linked trails around the state. They used birding as a common theme and linked 310 sites and communities around The Great Texas Coastal Birding Trail. This effort was led by their Department of Transportation and developed a mix of illustrated maps, integrated signage and enhanced viewing and interpretive areas.

FIGURE 5-3



A neighbor to the east is starting to utilize this type of thinking and has integrated natural and heritage elements in their trails. The Lake Erie Coastal Ohio Trail has linked over 300 sites in a trail of history and adventure. Lake Erie Coastal Ohio is a recently formed nonprofit organization created to develop a resource-based tourism strategy for the Lake Erie shoreline. Its focus is to tell the "story of Lake Erie" through the region's natural, cultural and historical resources. Their funding has come from an Ohio Heritage Area Program grant through their Department of Development and by the seven visitors and convention bureaus bordering Lake Erie.

FIGURE 5-4

Lake Erie Coastal Ohio Trail

Lake Erie Coastal Ohio is a nonprofit organization linking more than 300 sites across the Ohio lakeshore into a *trail of history and adventure*. We'll show you how Lake Erie has influenced our industrial development, as well as inspired our pursuit for freedom. You'll see firsthand how the glaciers molded our landscape, leaving behind precious minerals and fertile soil. You'll learn how nature created both barriers and opportunities for early settlement.








Porter County should implement this type of thinking using the strong brand identity of Indiana Dunes and develop the "Indiana Dunes Nature and Heritage Trail." It would use the link and enhance portions of the development pyramid and coordinate the trail around a variety of themes such as birding, ecology, water and others.

FIGURE 5-5

Nature Product Development

Create



Enhance


Link



Nichols Tourism Group, Inc.

How Does Porter County Respond?

Indiana Dunes Regional Nature and Heritage Trail

- Identify and link nature and heritage elements
- Coordinate with key themes – birding, ecology, water based, others
- Develop and integrate collateral materials – print, web, visitor center
- Enhance sites – signage, staging areas, trail development



These nature based trails can integrate green pathways and thorough fare development to help both visitors and residents understand how to experience these assets and facilitate their movement through the county. Another important element in maximizing the role of this effort will be the effective communication of the trails to visitors. In addition to enhanced collateral materials, web site integration and signage, the new PCCRVC Visitor Center will have a strong opportunity to educate a much broader range of visitors. As previously noted, while the IDNL generates significant visitation, one of the greatest challenges in the past has been in intercepting and educating the visitor on the broader range of visitor experiences Porter County can offer. The new center and its integration with the National Park Service, should serve as a centerpiece for trail system presentations.

The opportunity to reach and educate visitors about the nature and heritage trail, while enhancing Porter County natural environments should also be considered within the Indiana Dunes State Park. Reuse alternatives of the Pavilion are being considered and should include some form of enhanced food and beverage facilities, along with an interpretive element for not only the Dunes themselves, but for the broader Porter County visitor experience. While additional dialog will clearly be required, development of some form of quality lodging element within Park boundaries could an important addition to changing the impressions of Porter County and the Dunes to a multi-day experience. These facilities could be developed on existing disturbed lands off the shoreline and provide other options for existing visitor parking. If structured effectively, there is strong likelihood that another educational element could be incorporated within these facilities and that the operator could allocate some portion of operational revenues to groups like Save the Dunes Council to further their goals through enhanced trail development, signage, and educational coordination.

FIGURE 5-6

Development Within State Park

- Pavilion reuse – food and beverage
- New lodging element on parking facilities
- Integrate educational elements
- Require portion of commercial revenues to support Save the Dunes initiatives
 - Enhance sites, signage, staging areas, trail development



In order to move forward on this initiative a variety of steps should be taken including:

1. Boundaries for the trail system should be determined – will they include only Porter County or should elements in adjoining counties be considered.
2. Inventory of both natural resource and heritage elements should be undertaken, with an associated grading of the quality and potential interest potential.
3. Identify a minimum of five themes in which the trails would be developed (Birding, Great Lake Heritage, Ecology etc).
4. Develop integrated trails which link the identified elements around the chosen themes and consider ways in which green pathways and thorough fare development can be incorporated.
5. Create marketing and collateral materials, using the new visitor center as a central staging area.

5.2 Build on Unique Heritage Opportunities

The second principal product development initiative that Porter County should build on considers the unique heritage elements that have not historically been maximized by the region. Its focus should capitalize on elements that truly differentiate Porter County from other competitive destinations and reinforce the image as a visitor destination.

FIGURE 5-7

Product Development Opportunity

Initiative 2

**Integrate unique heritage
elements of Porter County
which can further
differentiate the region and
reinforce the area as a visitor
destination**




Destinations have frequently built on unique heritage themes by teaming with associated commercial operations in creating and presenting the story. With this teaming, both the destination and the business can win as a heightened awareness can be created for both entities.

This teaming has been done effectively in both large and small destinations. Detroit builds on the visiting public's allure of history and the car with the Henry Ford Museum & Greenfield Village. When this facility celebrated its 75th anniversary they instituted a name change to "The Henry Ford -America's Greatest History Attraction" and undertook a \$200 million enhancement to their facilities. They have built a heritage attraction around an automobile theme and a mix of villages, plant tours and museums. This teaming has also been done in the smaller community of Moline, Illinois with John Deere. This community structured a significant downtown renewal around an agricultural heritage theme, anchored by the town's affiliation with John Deere. The John Deere Pavilion was a centerpiece of this heritage story and had been followed by additional development of a Collectors Center and Historic Site.


FIGURE 5-8





Detroit's Approach



"This is more than a name change - We're creating a much more understandable institution with multi-venues."

Steve Hamp
President the Henry Ford






Deere Pavilion

\$50 million Civic Renewal Project – Quad Cities

Most comprehensive agricultural exhibit in the world

Opened 1997 – has attracted more than 1 million guests – one of Illinois' top 5 tourist attractions

Followed by Historic Site, Collectors Center, Home & Gardens

Porter County has a similar opportunity to build on a compelling and important heritage element – steel. This power of this theme has been recognized in Pennsylvania where they have established a National Heritage Area based on the history of steel and are pursuing the development of a new National Park.

FIGURE 5-9

Pennsylvania Capitalizes

- Presents history and heritage of "Steel Making Capital of the World"
- National Heritage Area created in 1996
- Encompasses 3000 square miles
- Bill in Congress to create the Homestead Works National Park






Ohio Also Embraces

Developed through Ohio Historical Society

THE OHIO HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Youngstown Historical Center of Industry & Labor



"The impact of the iron and steel industry on Youngstown and other Mahoning Valley communities."



Youngstown, Ohio is also capitalizing on this theme and has developed the Youngstown Historical Center of Industry & Labor. The facility is operated through the Ohio Historical Society and provides an overview of the impact of the iron and steel industry on Youngstown and other Mahoning Valley communities.

A similar opportunity exists for Porter County in which steel and its history on the Great Lakes is presented. Importantly, this attraction would not have to stimulate fundamental visitation to the region, but would only need to engage the 3 million plus visitors who already chose the Indiana Dunes region on an annual basis. While a range of names could be chosen, a working title could be “Indiana’s Steel Fortress.” The attraction would tell the story of steel both within America and on the Great Lakes. The attraction could be separate from operating plants, but still use today’s technologies to allow visitors to experience the manufacturing process and the evolution of the industry. Regional steel manufacturers could be increasingly positioned as allies to the community, while they educated a large mix of the public as to the importance of the steel industry and the challenges it faces.

FIGURE 5-10



"Indiana Steel Fortress"

Opportunity for Porter County

- History of Steel in America’s development
- Steel’s Role on the Great Lakes
- Unique manufacturing processes - development and evolution
- The changing face of the industry – a community ally

In order to move forward on this initiative a variety of steps should be taken including:

1. Discussions should commence with ISG and other related entities as to the concept and interest level.
2. Potential integration should be considered with state heritage groups like the Indiana Heritage and Culture Council, as well as ways to integrate concept within the Marquette Plan.

-
3. Based on input from the various entities, preliminary concepts should be developed that provide a preliminary understanding of the attraction size, acreage requirements and potential ownership/operating structures.
 4. Using the preliminary conceptual concepts, initial funding requirements and prospective sources would be identified.

5.3 Expand and Enhance the Power of Family Entertainment

The final principal product development initiative that Porter County should pursue is further expansion and enhancement of product elements that speak to the family oriented visitor. As much of these attraction elements will be undertaken by private sector entities, the critical role for the destination will be to help these operations enhance their revenue generating potential and facilitate and advocate for appropriate projects.

FIGURE 5-11



As presented in Section 4.5, the existing family entertainment related products possess limited linkages and cross promotions by existing attractions is minimal. Most are not powerful enough to stimulate a visitor's travel decision and don't have enough scale to develop major marketing campaigns to build demand. The PCCRVC can play an important coordinator role in developing cross marketing materials that help sell and promote these family attractions. An effective approach has been used in Southern Arizona in which multiple attractions came together in the development of an Attraction Passport. An Indiana Dunes Attraction Passport could be developed which integrated a broad range of family oriented attractions in a single booklet, with many offering some form of value element in the passport. The passport would be offered through the web, as well as in the individual attractions and hotels, broadening

the understanding of visitors as to the range of experiences and attractions available.

FIGURE 5-12

Serving Up Existing Attractions

- Indiana Dunes Attraction Passport**
- Integrate in single booklet**
- Provide value proposition**
- Stimulate cooperative thinking among attractions**
- Link to Web site**
- All Attractions sell**



In addition to assisting these family entertainment attractions in cross promotion efforts, the destination can also play a critical role in advocating and assisting in new development or enhancement efforts. Georgia has recognized that often a destination's most valuable role is not in the provision of grants or low interest loans, but in being an advocate for a project. They developed a Tourism Product Development Council in which they review plans, provide advice and if they meet certain criteria, advocate on a developer's behalf.

FIGURE 5-13

Advocate for Right Product

Georgia's Development Council

- ◆ **Georgia Tourism Product Development Council (GTPDC)**
- ◆ **Reviews plans - provides advice, advocacy access to decision-makers**
- ◆ **Can provide "Seal of Approval"**
- ◆ **Broad council representation – economic development, state legislature, natural resources, tourism and cultural affairs**



In order to move forward on this initiative a variety of steps should be taken including:

1. The range of family oriented attractions should be integrated in a session in which the Passport concept is presented and discussions on value oriented offers and cross-selling approaches held.
2. Based on these discussions, the PCCRVC should develop a mock up of a Passport and coordinate prospective production and distribution approaches.
3. The PCCRVC should begin discussions with its Board and associated entities (County Planning and Zoning, Economic Development etc) regarding the development of a Porter County Tourism Product Development Council. Council makeup and key criteria they would consider in order to play an advocacy role would be determined.

Appendix

NLTeC

Porter County Image and Perception Survey

Please read each question carefully before responding. Your responses will vary from section to section: fill in, check or circle the appropriate answer in the designated space. Please answer to the best of your ability. Thank you for your help!

1. In the past twelve months, how many day pleasure trips and short overnight getaway vacations have you taken to towns, cities or attractions within the Central Midwest United States? The Central Midwest United States includes Illinois, Indiana, Michigan and Wisconsin. Please fill in a number.

_____ Number of day pleasure trips (one day or less)

_____ Number of short 'getaway' trips (2 to 4 days)

2. How likely are you to take a vacation trip to a destination within the Central Midwest United States in the next 12 months? Please circle a response.

Extremely Unlikely	Quite Unlikely	Slightly Unlikely	Slightly Likely	Quite Likely	Extremely Likely
1	2	3	4	5	6

3. Which of the following places in the Central Midwest United States first come to mind when thinking of pleasure travel and vacations away from home that are one day or longer? Please ✓ all that apply.

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Benton Harbor, MI | <input type="checkbox"/> Mackinac Is., MI | <input type="checkbox"/> St. Charles, IL |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Door County, WI | <input type="checkbox"/> Merrillville, IN | <input type="checkbox"/> Traverse City, MI |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gurnee, IL | <input type="checkbox"/> Michigan City, IN | <input type="checkbox"/> Wisconsin Dells, WI |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Indiana Dunes, IN | <input type="checkbox"/> Lake Geneva, WI | <input type="checkbox"/> Other places |

4. Below are five phrases used in tourism advertising. Please ✓ the **one** destination that you believe uses each phrase in its advertising.

	"Celebrate the Timeless Beauty of..."	"We Make Smiles"	"Drive Less. Getaway More."	"The Art Colony of the Midwest"	"Welcome to the Casual Coast"
Brown County, IN	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Galena, IL	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Northern Indiana, IN	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rockford, IL	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Indiana Dunes, IN	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Don't know	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

5. Have you obtained travel information from the tourism office in the Indiana Dunes Area (by contacting their office, responding to advertising or visiting their website) within the past year? Please ✓ one.

- Yes (Continue) No ➔ PLEASE SKIP TO QUESTION # 10)

If **YES**, which of the following reasons describe why you requested tourist information from the Indiana Dunes tourism office? Please ✓ all that apply.

- To help decide whether or not to travel to Indiana Dunes Area
- Learn about attractions and other places to visit during my trip
- Select specific places to visit
- To collect/obtain information about the area
- Learn about activities or other things I might do during my visit to the Indiana

Dunes Area

- Learn about special events such as festivals or concerts
- Learn about prices of hotels or other overnight accommodations
- Find bargains or coupons
- Be able to use my vacation time more effectively
- To see how beautiful the place is before my visit
- Collecting information is an enjoyable part of trip planning

6. How did you contact the Indiana Dunes Area tourism office to request this information? Please ✓ all that apply.

- By telephone Website (www.indianadunes.com)
- By mail By E-mail
- By FAX Other (please describe) _____

IF OVER THE TELEPHONE, was the staff courteous, professional and helpful?

- Yes No ➔ PLEASE EXPLAIN):

7. Did you receive the travel information you requested from the Indiana Dunes Area tourism office? Please ✓ one.

- Yes No ➔ PLEASE SKIP TO QUESTION # 10)

8. How satisfied are you with the travel information you received from the Indiana Dunes Area tourism office? Please circle one.

Not at all Satisfied		Somewhat Satisfied		Extremely Satisfied
1	2	3	4	5

9. How helpful was the travel information you received in terms of the following...
Please circle one for each experience.

	Not At All Helpful		Neutral		Extremely Helpful
What to see and do?	1	2	3	4	5
Where to stay?	1	2	3	4	5
Special events or performances?	1	2	3	4	5
Where to eat?	1	2	3	4	5
Local map for directions?	1	2	3	4	5

10. Have you (or any member of your household) taken any vacations or pleasure trips (1 day or longer) within the past 12 months? Please ✓ one.

- Yes No ➔ PLEASE SKIP TO QUESTION # 34)

If **YES**, how many vacation or pleasure trips have you taken within the past 12 months?
Please fill in a number.

_____ Number of trips

11. Did any of the vacations or pleasure trips (1 day or longer) indicated above in Question # 10 include travel to or through the Indiana Dunes Area? Please ✓ one.

- Yes No ➔ PLEASE SKIP TO QUESTION # 34)

If **YES**, how many times have you visited the Indiana Dunes Area within the past 12 months? Please fill in number.

_____ Number of trips to/through the Indiana Dunes Area

The next set of questions asks about your most recent pleasure or vacation trip to/through the Indiana Dunes Area.

12. Before your most recent trip, did you see or hear any tourism advertising or obtain travel information about the Indiana Dunes Area? Please ✓ one.

- Yes No ➔ PLEASE SKIP TO QUESTION # 15)

13. Did you increase your length of stay as the result of the advertising or travel information seen or obtained before or during the trip? Please ✓ one.

Yes

No

If **YES**, how much longer did you stay? Please fill in the blank.

_____ Number of days (or portion of)

14. Did any of the following events occur as the result of the advertising or travel information obtained before or during the trip? Please circle a response for each statement.

Did you....	Did you?		
Visit an advertised attraction?	Yes	No	Don't Know
Visit an advertised restaurant?	Yes	No	Don't Know
Attend an advertised event?	Yes	No	Don't Know
Visit an advertised store or shop?	Yes	No	Don't Know
Stay in an advertised hotel?	Yes	No	Don't Know

15. How long was your trip that included a visit to/through the Indiana Dunes Area? Please fill in the blank.

_____ Number of days (or portion of)

16. How many days (or portion of) did you spend in the Indiana Dunes Area on this trip? Please fill in the blank.

_____ Number of days (or portion of)

17. What cities, towns, or attractions did you visit within the Indiana Dunes Area? Please list up to three places you visited.

City/town/attraction #1 _____

City/town/attraction #2 _____

City/town/attraction #3 _____

18. What was the nature of your most recent trip that included travel to/through the Indiana Dunes Area? *Please ✓ all that apply.*

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> General vacation | <input type="checkbox"/> Weekend get away | <input type="checkbox"/> Business meeting |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Special event | <input type="checkbox"/> Visit family or friends | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) |
-

19. How many persons were in the travel group on your most recent visit to the Indiana Dunes Area? *Please fill in the blank.*

_____ Number of persons in travel group

20. Please check the type(s) of person(s) that accompanied you on your most recent visit to the Indiana Dunes Area. *Please ✓ all that apply.*

- | | | |
|-----------------------------------|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Spouse | <input type="checkbox"/> Friend(s)/Relative(s) | <input type="checkbox"/> Part of a tour group |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Children | <input type="checkbox"/> Business associate(s) | <input type="checkbox"/> Traveled alone |

21. How far in advance did you (and/or members of your travel group) start planning your most recent trip to the Indiana Dunes Area? *Please ✓ one.*

- | | | | |
|--|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Planned during the trip | <input type="checkbox"/> 1- 6 days | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 - 8 weeks | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 - 6 months |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Day of departure | <input type="checkbox"/> 1- 2 weeks | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 - 3 months | <input type="checkbox"/> More than 6 months |

22. Where did you obtain information to plan/guide your most recent trip to the Indiana Dunes Area? *Please ✓ all the information sources that apply.*

Newspaper/Magazine

- Chicago Tribune
- Indianapolis Star
- AAA Home & Away
- Midwest Living

Travel Guide

- Indiana Dunes Travel Guide
- N. Indiana Getaway Guide
- Indiana State Travel Guide
- Other travel guides (please list)

Other

- Internet
 - Friends/Relatives
 - Previous experience
-

23. What type(s) of overnight accommodations did you use on this trip to the Indiana Dunes Area? *Please ✓ all that apply.*

- Hotel/motel Bed & Breakfast Camping Friend/relative
 Did not stay overnight in the Area ➡ PLEASE SKIP TO QUESTION # 25)

24. In which community(s) did you stay overnight during your most recent pleasure trip which included travel to/through the Indiana Dunes Area? *Please ✓ all that apply.*

- Beverly Shores Dunes Acres Portage
 Burns Harbor Hebron Porter
 Chesterton Kouts Valparaiso
 Crown Point Michigan City Other (Please list below)
-

25. What activities did you (and/or members of your travel group) participate in during your most recent trip which included travel to/through the Indiana Dunes Area? *Please ✓ all that apply.*

Shopping

- Antique/specialty
 Auctions
 Malls
 Outlet shopping
 Quaint downtowns

Outdoor

- Beaches
 Biking/hiking
 Birdwatching
 Canoe/kayaking
 Fishing/charter boat
 Golf
 Lakes/boating
 Skiing/sledding
 Self-guided scenic tours
 Visit State Parks
 Waterparks

Other Activities

- Concerts/live entertainment
 Craft demonstrations
 Cultural and performing arts
 Family activities
 Festivals & events
 Museums, historic sites, etc.
 Sightseeing
 Sporting events
 Visiting family/friends

30. In total, how much did your entire travel party spend (including cash and credit) on your most recent trip to the Indiana Dunes Area for the following items? *Please estimate to the best of your ability.*

Expense Categories	Expenditures in the Indiana Dunes Area
Lodging	\$ _____
Meals and restaurants	\$ _____
Attractions / Festivals	\$ _____
Evening entertainment	\$ _____
Shopping (other than food)	\$ _____
Local transportation	\$ _____
Other (please specify)	\$ _____

31. How many adults and children do these expenses cover? *Please fill in a number for both.*

_____ Number of adult(s)

_____ Number of children

32. **Tell us your story!** We invite you to describe one or two special moments, events or experiences that made your most recent trip to the Indiana Dunes Area memorable. *Please describe in your own words using the space provided below.*

Special moment: _____

Would you provide permission to use your words along with your name and city in our promotional materials or on our website? *Please* ✓ *one and/or fill in.*

Yes

No

If **YES**, please fill in below.

Name (please print): _____

Signature: _____

City/State: _____ Date: _____

33. We are interested in the activities you consider important when deciding whether to visit the Indiana Dunes Area. Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements about the importance of activities in your destination decision. *Please circle a response for each statement.*

I visit the Indiana Dunes because I can...	Strongly Disagree		Neutral		Strongly Agree
go antique/specialty shopping.	1	2	3	4	5
go birding or participate in ecotourism	1	2	3	4	5
go golfing.	1	2	3	4	5
visit a beach/waterfront area.	1	2	3	4	5
go hiking/biking.	1	2	3	4	5
go fishing and/or charter a boat.	1	2	3	4	5
visit the Indiana Dunes.	1	2	3	4	5
go skiing/sledding.	1	2	3	4	5
visit a cultural/performing arts site.	1	2	3	4	5
visit a museum/historic site.	1	2	3	4	5
attend a festival/special event.	1	2	3	4	5
visit state parks.	1	2	3	4	5
visit a family farm.	1	2	3	4	5
visit a youth/sports facility (BMX, Rollerblade,	1	2	3	4	5
visit a winery.	1	2	3	4	5
pick fresh produce.	1	2	3	4	5

34. Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements that describe the reasons for visiting the Indiana Dunes Area. *Please circle a response for each statement.*

I visit the Indiana Dunes Area because...	Strongly Disagree		Neutral		Strongly Agree
I enjoy going back to places that I know.	1	2	3	4	5
it takes less time to drive there.	1	2	3	4	5
I can easily find places/attractions that are fun	1	2	3	4	5
I can visit places with a small town	1	2	3	4	5
there are attractions that are great for the	1	2	3	4	5
it is easy for me to "drop out" and relax.	1	2	3	4	5
I enjoy learning about the local culture.	1	2	3	4	5
I have more time to do the things I really want	1	2	3	4	5

it is a destination that I am familiar with. 1 2 3 4 5

36. Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements about the importance of the following features in your destination decision. *Please circle a response for each statement.*

I think Indiana Dunes Area...	Strongly Disagree		Neutral		Strongly Agree
offers lots of things to see and do.	1	2	3	4	5
has interesting historic sites.	1	2	3	4	5
has beautiful architecture/landmarks.	1	2	3	4	5
is great for outdoor activities.	1	2	3	4	5
offers quality accommodations.	1	2	3	4	5
has beautiful scenery.	1	2	3	4	5
has attractive beaches/waterfront areas.	1	2	3	4	5
offers reduced rates.	1	2	3	4	5
is a nice quiet place.	1	2	3	4	5
is convenient to my home.	1	2	3	4	5
offers good value for my time and money.	1	2	3	4	5
has quaint town or villages.	1	2	3	4	5
has good festivals and special cultural events.	1	2	3	4	5
has lots of activities for children.	1	2	3	4	5
offers good/different types of food.	1	2	3	4	5
is a good place to relax.	1	2	3	4	5
has good nightlife.	1	2	3	4	5
offers good shopping.	1	2	3	4	5
provides a unique experience.	1	2	3	4	5

37. The following list includes word-pairs that can be used to describe what a visitor values most when traveling to the Indiana Dunes Area. Please indicate what you value most when you travel to the Indiana Dunes Area by circling a response for each word-pair.

Stability	1	2	3	4	5	Excitement
Self	1	2	3	4	5	Family
Being passive	1	2	3	4	5	Being active
Learning	1	2	3	4	5	Dropping out
Following tradition	1	2	3	4	5	Trying new things

38. From the eleven cities/places listed below, indicate the "most attractive" for each of the following features. *Please indicate the most attractive city/place for each feature using the numbers provided.*

1 = Benton Harbor, MI	5 = Mackinac Is., MI	9 = St. Charles, IL
2 = Door County, WI	6 = Merrillville, IN	10 = Traverse City, MI
3 = Gurnee, IL	7 = Michigan City, IN	11 = Wisconsin Dells, WI
4 = Indiana Dunes, IN	8 = Lake Geneva, WI	

Which destination	Most Attractive or "Best" Place
offers lots of things to see and do?	_____
has interesting historic sites?	_____
has beautiful architecture/landmarks?	_____
is a great area for outdoor activities?	_____
offers quality accommodations?	_____
has beautiful scenery?	_____
has attractive beaches/waterfront areas.	_____
offers reduced rates?	_____
is a nice quiet place?	_____
is convenient to my home?	_____
offers good value for my time and money?	_____
Which destination	
has a quaint town or villages?	_____
has good festivals and special cultural	_____
has lots of activities for children?	_____
offers good/different types of food?	_____
is a good place to relax?	_____
offers good shopping?	_____
provides a unique experience?	_____
offers a great antique/specialty shopping?	_____
offers a great shopping at outlet stores?	_____
has a great beach/waterfront area?	_____
Which destination is best for	
going hiking/biking?	_____
visiting a cultural/performing arts site?	_____
visiting a state park?	_____
visiting a museum/historic site?	_____
attending a festival/special event?	_____
going golfing?	_____
birding or participating in other ecotourism	_____

visiting a youth/sports facility (BMX,
visiting a beach/waterfront area?

This last section of the survey asks for information about you and your family, and will be kept in the strictest confidence and used for statistical purposes only.

39. Do you (or members of your household) have a computer at home? *Please ✓one.*

Yes No (PLEASE SKIP TO QUESTION # 39)

If **YES**, is your computer connected to the Internet? *Please ✓one.*

Yes No

40. Are you? *Please ✓one.*

Female Male

41. Your age? *Please ✓one.*

Under 21 36 - 49 Years Over 65 Years
 21 - 35 Years 50 - 65 Years

42. Are you married? *Please ✓one.*

Yes No

43. How many children 17 years of age or younger live in your household? *Please fill in the blank.*

_____ Number of children 0 to 17 years old

44. Which of the following statements best describes your total annual household income (from all sources) before taxes? *Please ✓one.*

Less than \$10,000 \$30,000 to \$39,999 \$60,000 to \$69,999
 \$10,000 to \$19,999 \$40,000 to \$49,999 \$70,000 to \$79,999
 \$20,000 to \$29,999 \$50,000 to \$59,999 \$80,000 and over

45. What is the zipcode of your place of residence? *Please fill in the blank.*

_____ Zipcode of your place of residence

Please share any comments you may have in the space provided below.

Thank you for your participation in this very important study!
National Laboratory for Tourism & eCommerce

B.



Indiana Dunes Tourism Strategic and Business Plan

2015-2017



INDEX

Key Terms	3
U.S Travel Answer Sheet	4
Power of Travel	5
Industry Outlook	6
What is a Destination Marketing Organization?	8
Vision and Mission	9
Strategic Goals	12
Management/Organization Description	13
-Board of Directors	17
-Management and personnel	21
Financial Analysis and Plan	26
-2015 Budget	30
Strategic Plan	32
-Introduction	33
-SWOT Analysis and Conclusion	35
-Indiana Dunes Country Strategic Outlook	38
-Destination Branding and Marketing Initiatives	39
-Destination Product Development Initiatives	40
-Internal and External Communications	40
-Finance and Administration Initiatives	41
-Indiana Dunes Tourism Research 1991-present	42
Business Plan	45
-Destination Branding and Marketing Initiatives	46
-Destination Product Development Initiatives	50
-Internal and External Communications	52
-Finance and Administration Initiatives	53



Welcome to the 2015 – 2017 Strategic and Business Plan for Indiana Dunes Tourism

Tourism is responsible for bringing \$386 million annually to the economy of Porter County. The board and staff of Indiana Dunes Tourism take this responsibility to heart, and are committed to growing tourism and contributing to the economic well-being of our county.

This strategic plan maps out the future of tourism in Porter County over the next three years, outlines 20 strategic priorities that will be undertaken in that time, and itemizes the projects that will make 2015 the first step on the way to achieving our goals.

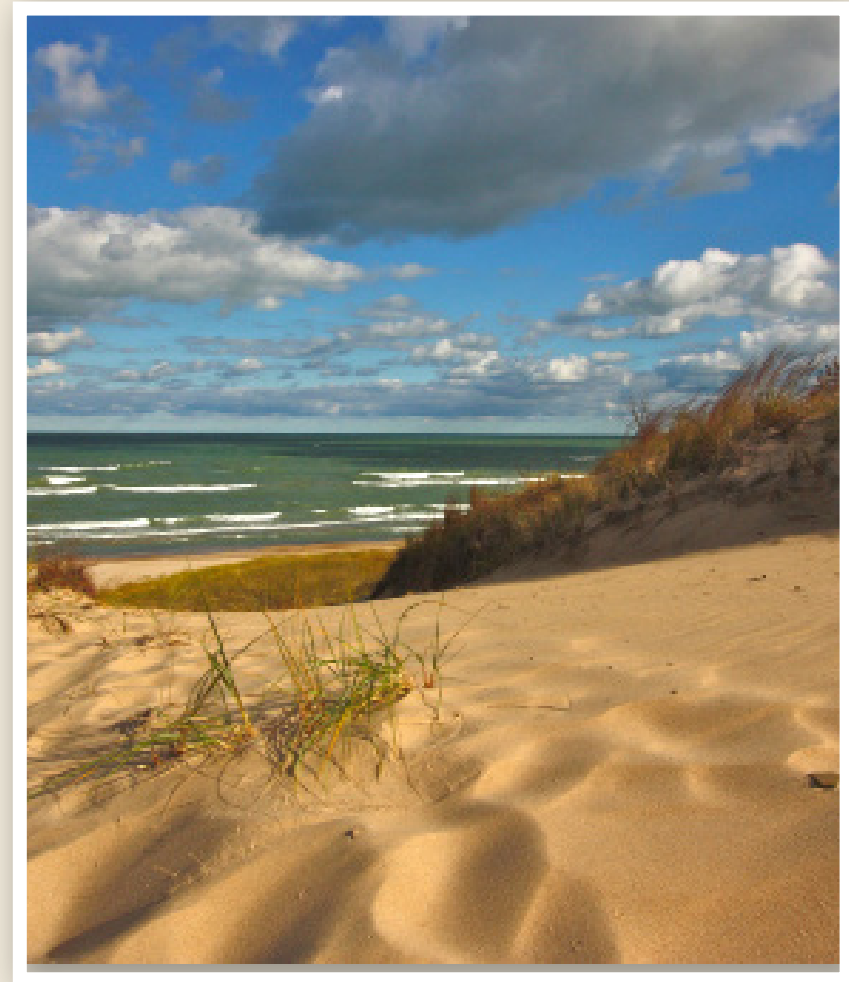
The board of directors and staff of Indiana Dunes Tourism have worked together diligently to create this strategic plan. It's a plan that we expect will continue to grow tourism in Porter County, and achieve our vision of being the recognized leader in unparalleled parklands, trails and dunes; unique cultural communities; and family-friendly attraction and events.

Please join us in supporting this plan and in realizing this vision.

Mitch Peters
President, Board of Directors
Indiana Dunes Tourism

KEY TERMS

- **BBDT** – Beyond the Beach Discovery Trail
- **DDI** – Destination Development International
- **DK TRAIL** – Dunes Kankakee Trail
- **DMO** - Destination Marketing Organization (same as CVB or Convention and Visitor Bureau).
- **IDT** - Indiana Dunes Tourism
- **IDNL** – Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore
- **IDSP** - Indiana Dunes State Park
- **LBAA** - Lutheran Basketball Association of America
- **NIRPC** – Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission
- **NITDC** - Northern Indiana Tourism Development Commission



U.S. TRAVEL ANSWER SHEET

FACTS ABOUT A LEADING AMERICAN INDUSTRY THAT'S MORE THAN JUST FUN



LEISURE TRAVEL

- Direct spending on leisure travel by domestic and international travelers totaled \$21.1 billion in 2013.
- Spending on leisure travel generated \$4.6 billion in tax revenue.
- More than 7 out of 8 domestic trips taken are for leisure purposes (79%).
- U.S. residents booked 1.6 billion passenger trips for leisure purposes in 2013.
- Top leisure travel activities for U.S. domestic travelers: (1) visiting relatives; (2) shopping; (3) visiting friends; (4) fun dining; and (5) beaches.

BUSINESS TRAVEL

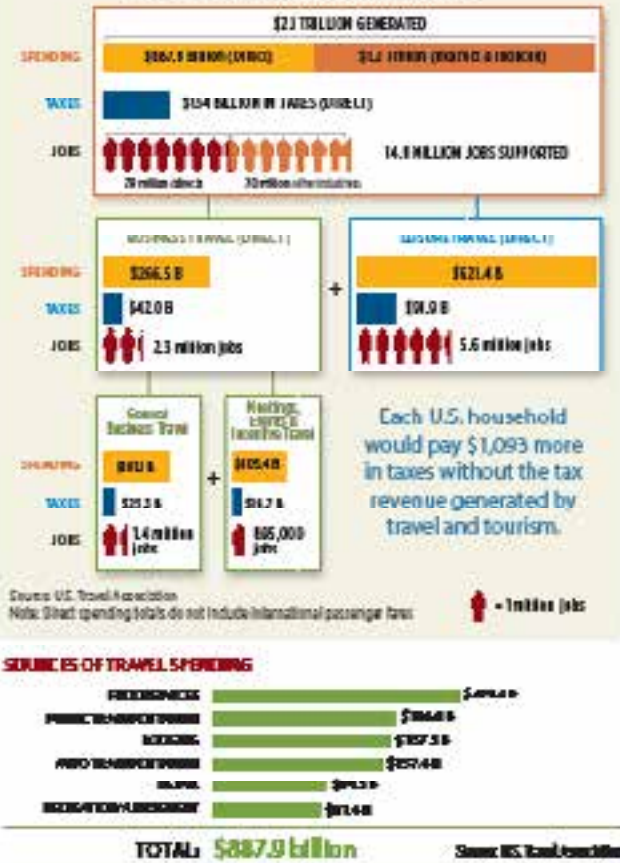
(including meetings, events and incentives)

- Direct spending on business travel by domestic and international travelers, including expenditures on meetings, events and incentive programs (MICE), totaled \$26.5 billion in 2013.
- U.S. residents booked 4.2 billion passenger trips for business purposes in 2013, with 20% for meetings and events.
- For every dollar invested in business travel, businesses benefit from an average of \$2.50 in increased revenue and \$2.68 in new profits (2012).

*These additional advantages to a trip are far less weighty than the economic benefits they bring to the places they visit or even just exist in.



U.S. Travel Industry Impact



BY THE NUMBERS

(all data 2013 unless indicated otherwise)

\$2.1 trillion: Economic output generated by domestic and international visitors (includes \$887.9 billion in direct travel expenditures that spurred an additional \$1.2 trillion in other industries)

14.9 million: Jobs supported by travel expenditures (includes 7.9 million directly in the travel industry and 7.0 million in other industries)

\$209.5 billion: Wages shared by American workers directly employed by travel

\$133.9 billion: Tax revenue generated by travel spending for federal, state and local governments

2.7%: Percentage of nation's gross domestic product (GDP) attributed to travel and tourism

No. 1: Where travel ranks among all U.S. industry exports

1 out of 9: U.S. jobs that depend on travel and tourism

No. 6: Where travel ranks in terms of employment compared to other major private industry sectors

84%: Percentage of travel companies that are considered small businesses (2012)

2.1 billion: Number of person-trips* that Americans took for business and leisure purposes

69.8 million: Number of international arrivals in the U.S. in 2013, including 32.0 million from overseas markets

Travel is among the top 10 industries in 49 states and D.C. in terms of employment

THE POWER OF TRAVEL

How Travel Dollars Support America



INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL

- In 2013, U.S. travel exports (travel and passenger fares) totaled \$106.7 billion and U.S. travel imports (travel and passenger fares) totaled \$124.6 billion, resulting in a trade surplus of \$57.1 billion in favor of the U.S.
- The U.S. received 628 million international arrivals in 2013. Of these, approximately 22.8 million were from overseas markets and 377 million were from Canada and Mexico.
- The 10th of October's share of total international arrivals is 6.9% lower than 7.5% in 2011.
- International travel spending directly supported about 1.7 million U.S. jobs and wages of \$26.5 billion.
- Each consumer traveler spends approximately \$4,500 when they visit the U.S. and stay an average 17 nights (2012).

Direct spending by resident and international travelers in the U.S. averaged \$2.4 billion a day, \$171.4 million an hour, \$1.7 million a minute and \$28,154 a second.

The U.S. travel industry is the largest, non-profit organization representing all components of the travel industry that generates \$21 billion in economic output. It is the value for the private industry of the U.S. travel industry and the association's 1,100 member organizations. U.S. Travel's mission is to promote and facilitate the economic and social benefits of the United States. U.S. Travel is a 501(c)(6) not-for-profit organization. For more information, visit www.USTravel.org or www.TravelEffect.com.

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INDUSTRY OUTLOOK TRAVEL FORECAST

- The U.S. Travel Association (USTA) predicts a good year for travel in 2015. Their predictions are based on the improving labor market, moderate inflation and increasing discretionary income, which in part is due to the lower cost of gas. USTA forecasts a 1.6% increase in domestic trip volume, which will equate to 2.1 billion trips and a 4.1% increase in international travelers to the United States.
- Global Business Travel Association predicts a 2.5 increase in domestic ticket prices for domestic air travel.
- PKF Consulting predicts hotel room rates will jump 5.7%.
- Ron Archer, who wrote Travel Predictions for 2015 for Travel Nuts and Bolts – An Insider's View of the Travel Industry, noted the following travel trends in 2015:
 - Airlines will introduce "Basic Economy" Fare. More airline tickets will become a "use it or lose it" policy and seats will continue to shrink in size, as will the amount of legroom.
 - STR and Tourism Economics predicts that average hotel occupancy will rise 1.1% for an average occupancy rate of 65.1%. The average daily rate will increase by 5% to \$127.37. The revenue per available room is expected to grow by 6.2% for an average revenue per available room of \$79.06.
 - It is predicted that hotel chains will consolidate and hotel companies will go public.
 - 200 major hotels are projected to open worldwide, with half opening in the US.
- In 2014, over 40% of U.S. travel was booked on mobile devices. It is estimated that in 2015, mobile travel bookings will increase by 9%.
- Do It Yourself is a growing trend in travel. However, the complexity of the rules and regulations for travel is causing people to get professional travel advice from travel agents and consultants.
- Hipmunk.com Travel Tips and Predictions has made the following travel predictions for 2015, which are:
 - Low gas prices mean more road trips.
 - Americans will use more travel days. 54% of Americans are planning to take 10+ days off in 2015.
 - More hotels are using mobile check in.

This technology is making travel easier and more efficient"



INDUSTRY OUTLOOK TRAVEL FORECAST CONTINUED

- According to Hotel News Now, multigenerational travel continues to grow. 35% of multigenerational travel is paid for by the grandparents, and the grandparents and parents are not making the destination choice. 49% of multigenerational travelers agreed that the grandchildren influence their destination choice and the hotel and resort they choose. Also, 40% said the grandchildren actively participated in planning the trip.
- According to AARP, baby boomers will be active travelers in 2015, taking an average of four to five trips next year. The 50+ market spends \$120 billion every year in leisure travel, and travel by this age group is not slowing down. The baby boomer main reason for travel is escape, relaxation/rejuvenation and spending time with family and friends.
- Ernie Smith, from iStock/Thinkstock, recently wrote that new research by Global Business Travel Association finds that most European companies require some kind of sustainability clause in their travel contracts. The U.S. is behind their European counterparts, but this trend is also growing in the U.S. The European companies initiate these practices for both financial and environmental benefits, while companies in the U.S. focus on the human relations aspect of sustainability.
- In her article Travel Trends 2015 for FOX Business, Donna Fuscaldo wrote that mobile usage will continue to transform travel. Henrik Kjellberg, President of Hotwire, said in a recent interview, "we expect the number of mobile bookings to grow exponentially as we head into another year of digital and social travel planning, with more travelers of all ages becoming more comfortable using mobile devices. Consumers can already book flights, check in at airports and get flight alerts from their mobile devices. Next you will be able to use your phone as a room key and to make payments."



WHAT IS A DESTINATION MARKETING ORGANIZATION?

A destination marketing organization (DMO), or as it used to be called, a convention and visitor bureau (CVB), promotes a town, city, county, region, or country in order to increase the number of visitors. A DMO also markets and promotes the development of a destination. Each DMO tailors its marketing approach based on the destination product. For example, some cities have convention centers and the DMO helps promote the destination for convention business. Other destinations have strong leisure markets and they focus on marketing the destination to the leisure traveler. Some destinations have multiple markets, which includes conventions, motorcoaches and leisure because they have the product to support multiple markets.

DMOs promote economic development of a destination by increasing visits from tourists. These visits increase overnight lodging demand for a destination, visits to restaurants, and shopping revenues. DMOs are the most important tourism marketing organizations in their respective tourist destinations, as they are directly responsible for marketing the destination brand to visitors through travel and tourism product awareness. DMOs produce billions of dollars in direct and indirect revenue and taxes for their destinations' economies with their marketing and sales expertise.

DMOs are also called travel, convention, visitor, or tourism bureaus, welcome centers, information centers and more. Regardless of the name, these organizations offer many services to the traveling public. Source: Wikipedia.



VISION AND MISSION

DESTINATION VISION (2020)

A 2020 destination vision statement for Indiana Dunes Country was written based on board and management discussions. It follows:

- *Indiana Dunes Country is the eco-friendly, sustainable Great Lakes destination that will be the recognized leader in unparalleled parklands, trails and dunes; unique cultural communities; and family-friendly attractions and events.*

VISION REALIZATION

Some of the projects, programs and policies to be enacted to achieve this vision are detailed as follows:

Eco-friendly, sustainable Great Lakes destination

- Great Lakes and Midwest ecological focus
- Integrated preservation, conservation and economic development education
- Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore (IDNL) designated as a national park rather than a national lakeshore
- Green certification standards and recognition
- Attention and support for ecotourism and agritourism initiatives

Unparalleled parklands, trails and dunes

- Beyond the Beach Discovery Trail (BBDT) development
- Ecological interpretive programming

- National and state parks partnership strengthening
- Develop and enhance recreational opportunities

Unique cultural communities, and family-friendly attractions and events

- Individual community positioning aligned to destination brand
- Community and visitor industry cooperation
- Family-friendly/children certification standards and recognition
- Further private attraction investment
- Stronger tie-in between Indiana Dunes Tourism and Northern Indiana Tourism Development Commission (NITDC) marketing, research and product development



ORGANIZATION VISION

The vision for Indiana Dunes Tourism was again reviewed and found appropriate, taking into account that Indiana Dunes Tourism aspires to be an influential organization based on astute leadership and professional management as follows:

- *Indiana Dunes Tourism is the active and engaged destination leader by supporting and marketing the county's distinct visitor experiences and advocating community and regional tourism benefits.*

VISION REALIZATION

Some of the projects, programs and policies to be enacted to achieve this vision are detailed as follows:

Active and engaged destination leader

- Utilize destination research
- Continue Indiana Dunes Tourism board member community involvement
- Increase Indiana Dunes Tourism funding with entrepreneurial/partnership initiatives

Support and market the county's distinct visitor experiences

- Be the Indiana Dunes Country destination brand developer and deliverer.
- Make optimal use of innovative marketing technologies
- Tie Indiana Dunes Tourism marketing into NITDC's "Drive Less. Getaway More." brand
- Be a product development catalyst and facilitator of incentives

Advocate community and regional tourism benefits.

- Educate locals about Indiana Dunes Tourism and NITDC programming and the return on our investments
- Take an ongoing proactive stance on tourism issues
- Have a speakers bureau
- Solicite more corporate engagement
- Increase the understanding of locals on the value of tourism and inviting families and friends to visit Indiana Dunes Country



ORGANIZATION MISSION, PHILOSOPHY AND CUSTOMER COMMITMENT

A revised mission statement was developed for Indiana Dunes Tourism and is presented below. This focused mission will be accomplished through goals, strategies and programs that meet the majority of the filter tests indicated.

- *Indiana Dunes Tourism is the official agency for destination marketing, planning and development and a key economic driver of sustainable visitor growth.*

MISSION FILTER TESTS

- Brings in new visitors and repeat visitors
- Extends the stay of visitors in our destination
- Increases economic impact through visitor spending
- Reinforces the destination brand
- Assists in achieving the destination vision and mission
- Encourages partnership development
- Has the ability to quantitatively and qualitatively measure the impact

Indiana Dunes Tourism performs its mission effectively by adhering to the following values and guiding principles and by delivering on customer promises.

- Professional
- Visionary
- Partner oriented
- Customer and visitor-centric Ethical
- Focused
- Accountable

PARTNER PROMISE

Indiana Dunes Tourism's board and staff commit to leverage relationships among our communities and the visitor industry by creating profitable business opportunities through heightened visitor experience awareness.

VISITOR PROMISE

Indiana Dunes Tourism's board and staff commit to being the visitor representative and advocate by providing comprehensive, on-demand destination information and advice based on the goal of fulfilling visitor expectations.

STRATEGIC GOALS

There are four long-term strategic goals that guide everything Indiana Dunes Tourism does to achieve its mission.

DESTINATION BRANDING AND MARKETING

- Enhance the awareness of the destination brand.
- Increase visitor conversion.
- Increase visitor length of stay.

DESTINATION PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

- Be a catalyst and endorse the development of attractions, events, hospitality services and related public infrastructure that enhance our destination vision.

INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS

- Lead the communications effort on the value of tourism to all county communities and the partnership roles and effectiveness of Indiana Dunes Tourism.
- Increase the amount of earned media coverage on Indiana Dunes Country as a destination.

FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

- Function as a fiscally responsible, transparent and accountable organization through effective planning and measurement.



MANAGEMENT/ORGANIZATION DESCRIPTION

COMPANY HISTORY

The doors to Indiana Dunes Tourism opened on January 2, 1986. John Bowman was hired as the first executive director, Patti Hart-Jacobs was hired as the first administrative assistant and David Hollenbeck was the first attorney. The first office/Visitor Center was located in Chesterton on the southeast side of Indian Oak Mall.

To date, Indiana Dunes Tourism has had six executive directors and has grown to a full-time staff of five employees, one part-time contractual employee, four destination concierges for the Visitor Center and two volunteers. The Indiana Dunes Tourism offices and Visitor Center have been housed in five different locations, including the current location. The Visitor Center is an important marketing tool because it allows Indiana Dunes Tourism to interact directly with a large number of visitors who have chosen our destination and tell them the story of the Indiana Dunes and Indiana Dunes Country.

The organization is funded through the innkeeper's tax. The original amount collected was three percent of the cost of lodging, but it was increased to five percent with the innkeepers' support as long as the funding was spent on marketing to increase visitation to Porter County's hotels, restaurants, attractions, etc.

Indiana Dunes Tourism's mission from the very beginning was to bring visitors to Indiana Dunes Country and extend their stays through effective marketing programs. As tourism grew over the years, Indiana Dunes Tourism expanded its marketing efforts by creating a

comprehensive Activities Guide and multiple niche publications, and by conducting key research to determine its customers. Our organization received accreditation through Destination Marketing Association International's accreditation program in 2009 and was reaccredited in December 2013, which strengthens our status as an elite DMO. Our organization changed its "doing business as" name to Indiana Dunes Tourism in 2010 to reflect the primary reason visitors come to Porter County, which is to visit the Indiana Dunes. The new name allows the organization to be more effective in marketing Porter County's main assets. Indiana Dunes Tourism continues to increase its marketing efforts and its promotion of the destination brand — The Indiana Dunes, Nature's Masterpiece. The organization has also increased its emphasis on digital marketing and creating effective earned media and group/niche market programs.

Indiana Dunes Tourism has evolved into a visionary organization proactively involved in destination development planning, including the creation of a strategic product development plan for new and enhanced product development within Indiana Dunes Country. Indiana Dunes Tourism also has a staff of professionals who make the vision a reality. They have been successful, in part, due to the quality and quantity of the partnerships they have formed. One of the strongest partnerships is with the NITDC, which allows Indiana Dunes Tourism to leverage marketing dollars with six other Northern Indiana DMOs and private sector businesses. This allows Indiana Dunes Tourism to have a strong presence in key feeder markets.

FORM OF OWNERSHIP

Indiana Dunes Tourism is a department of county government, but is structured differently than other departments. On May 21, 1984, the Porter County Board of Commissioners — Michael Aylesworth, William Carmichael and Larry Sheets — created the organization. The commissioners wanted to diversify the local economy by creating other industries, such as tourism, due to the decline in the steel industry. The Porter County Board of Commissioners created the Porter County Convention, Recreation & Visitor Commission (PCCRVC) (now doing business as Indiana Dunes Tourism) pursuant to I.C. 6-9-19-1 (Indiana Uniform Innkeeper's Tax Law) and County Commissioner Resolution 84-4. It was amended on November 21, 1994 with Resolution 94-13 and was amended again on January 1, 1998 with Resolution 97-22. In 1985, the Porter County Council adopted the Uniform County Innkeeper's Tax as the sole funding mechanism for Indiana Dunes Tourism.

BUSINESS LOCATION AND HOURS

The Indiana Dunes Tourism offices, Indiana Dunes Visitor Center and IDNL are located in the same building at 1215 North State Road 49 in Porter. The IDNL is a partner in the visitor center, is leasing space in the facility, and is paying 50 percent of the operational expenses. Indiana Dunes State Park (IDSP) is part of this partnership. They do not provide financial support or staffing, but were instrumental in helping us secure the Transportation Enhancement Funds for the construction of the Visitor Center.

The business offices are open 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. The Visitor Center is open every day except New Year's, Thanksgiving and Christmas.

The Visitor Center hours are 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Memorial Day to Labor Day and 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Labor Day to Memorial Day.

The purpose of the Visitor Center is to greet visitors and assist them with information about the Indiana Dunes and Indiana Dunes Country attractions, hotels, restaurants, retail shops, etc. The goal is to manage the flow of visitors throughout the county, extend their stay and create a positive experience in the destination that will lead to repeat visitors.



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The Indiana Dunes Tourism Board of Directors consists of eleven members, all of whom must reside in Porter County. Each member is appointed to a two-year term on the board, with each term commencing on January 1 and concluding on December 31 of the subsequent year. No more than a simple majority of members of the board may be affiliated with the same political party, and a simple majority must be engaged in or involved in the promoting of a convention, visitor or tourism business. Two of the appointees must be engaged in the business of renting or furnishing rooms, lodging or accommodations.

Indiana State Statute I.C. 6-9-18-3 defines the makeup of the board members, and the Porter County Commissioner's Resolution 97-22 further defines who appoints the members and the requirements of the members.

The members of the board shall be appointed as follows:

- The Board of County Commissioners shall make five appointments to the commission. If available and willing to serve, one of the five appointments of the Board of County Commissioners shall be engaged in the business of renting or furnishing rooms, lodging or accommodations.
- The Porter County Council appoints one member.
- The mayor of Portage appoints two members, each of whom shall be a resident of Portage Township. One of the appointees shall be engaged in the business of renting or furnishing rooms, lodging or accommodations.

- The mayor of Valparaiso appoints one member to the commission who shall be a resident of Center Township.
- The towns of Burns Harbor, Chesterton and Porter collectively appoint one member who shall be a resident of Westchester Township. In the event that two of the three above-named town boards cannot concur on the appointment by December 1, then the Porter County Board of Commissioners shall make the appointment.
- The towns of Kouts and Hebron collectively appoint one member who shall be a resident of Boone, Pleasant, Porter or Morgan township. If the towns of Kouts and Hebron cannot agree on an appointment by December 1, the Porter County Board of Commissioners shall make the appointment.



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Each appointing authority shall, on or before December 1 of each calendar year, appoint the person who will fill its respective position on the commission. The person so appointed shall take office on January 1 of the following year. If a vacancy occurs, the appointing authority shall appoint a qualified person to serve for the remainder of the term. In the event that any of the political subdivisions enumerated above fail to appoint its member or members to the commission by February 1 or if a vacancy on the commission is not filled within thirty (30) days, the commission shall, by a majority vote, appoint a replacement to fill the unexpired term. A member whose term expires may be re-appointed to serve another term.

APPOINTING AUTHORITY	TERM	BOARD OF DIRECTORS
Commissioner John Evans	1/1/14 to 12/31/15	Richard Riley
Commissioner Laura Blaney	1/1/13 to 12/31/16	Jesse Harper
Commissioner Jeff Good	1/1/13 to 12/31/16	Dr. John Johnson
Commissioners	1/1/13 to 12/31/15	Doug Olson
Commissioners	1/1/13 to 12/31/16	Chuck Williams
Porter County Council	1/1/14 to 12/31/15	Mitch Peters
Mayor James Snyder	1/1/13 to 12/31/16	Barb Lusco
Mayor James Snyder	1/1/13 to 12/31/16	Karen Webster
Mayor Jon Costas	1/1/14 to 12/31/15	Scott Tuft
Towns of Burns Harbor/ Chesterton/Porter	1/1/13 to 12/31/16	Judy Chaplin
Towns of Hebron/Kouts	1/1/14 to 12/31/15	Mike Mantai



Mitch Peters, President:

Mitch is serving his third term on the Indiana Dunes Tourism Board of Directors and is appointed by the Porter County Council. Mitch graduated from Valparaiso University with degrees in elementary education and law. He has been an attorney since 1986. Mitch is also a veteran of the United States Navy. He is involved in numerous organizations, including the Respite House, a halfway house for men seeking recovery from addiction and alcohol. In his spare time, Mitch enjoys hunting, fishing, archery and golf.



Scott Tuft, Vice President:

Scott is serving his second term on the Indiana Dunes Tourism Board of Directors and is appointed by Valparaiso Mayor Jon Costas. Tuft is director of sales and marketing for Accucraft Imaging in Hammond and is the Account Executive for Elegan Customwear in Valparaiso. He is also an active community volunteer through the Valparaiso Rotary Club and the Valparaiso Boys & Girls Club, and he has served as a volunteer coach for basketball, soccer and baseball. Tuft lives in Valparaiso.



Richard Riley, Treasurer:

Richard is serving his second term on the Indiana Dunes Tourism Board of Directors and is appointed by Porter County Commissioner John Evans. Riley is an attorney specializing in real estate zoning for telecommunications structures, and he and his wife, Ann, are also owners of Riley's Railhouse Bed & Breakfast in Chesterton. Riley has two children, Rebecca and Christopher, and two stepchildren, Angela and Lauren.

Karen Webster, Secretary:

Karen, who previously served on the Indiana Dunes Tourism Board of Directors, returned to the board in 2015 and is appointed by Portage Mayor James Snyder. She studied business finance, accounting and elementary education at Franklin College in Franklin, IN and Purdue University Calumet in Hammond. She has been manager of Days Inn in Portage from 1994 to 2006 and again starting in 2014. From 2007 to 2013, she worked for Super 8 in Delavan, WI. Karen has two sons and previously coached youth sports in Portage and, as part of her managing duties at Days Inn, worked with the Elvis FANTasy Fest in Portage to accommodate VIPs and the Wizard of Oz Festival in Chesterton to accommodate the visiting munchkins.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Judy Chaplin:

Judy is serving her sixth term on the Indiana Dunes Tourism Board of Directors. She is appointed by the towns of Burns Harbor, Chesterton and Porter. Judy's family history is well rooted in Chesterton with Shady Lawn Florist and Greenhouse. She moved to Chesterton when her grandparents, Jesse and Lillian Williams, bought Shady Lawn in 1946. Judy and Jim kept Shady Lawn a family business by purchasing it in 1969. Judy and Jim have made Shady Lawn a superior florist, a Top 1000 producer for FTD for over a decade. Judy served on the Duneland Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors for six years and also the chamber's Executive Board for two years.



Jesse Harper:

Jesse is serving his second term on the Indiana Dunes Tourism board of directors. He is appointed by Porter County Commissioner Laura Blaney. A graduate of Valparaiso High School, Jesse studied film production at University of California, Los Angeles, and earned a bachelor's degree in political science from California State University, Northridge. He is currently pursuing his law degree at Valparaiso University. He owns JBH Productions, Inc. in Valparaiso, a company which does video and film production as well as media consulting. He created and taught for three years the American Citizenship course of Gloria Dei, part of the Northwest Indiana Lutheran Hispanic Mission Society. He is also a volunteer for the Valparaiso YMCA.



Dr. John Johnson:

Dr. John Johnson previously served on the Indiana Dunes Tourism Board of Directors and was instrumental in the development of the Indiana Dunes Visitor Center and the partnership with the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore. He was asked to serve again by Porter County Commissioners. He is serving his third term after being reappointed. Dr. Johnson, a resident of Valparaiso, has been the proprietor of The Inn at Aberdeen in Valparaiso since 1995. He is also the owner of Immediate Care Center: The Doctor Is In, which is located in Schererville. He serves on the boards of Porter-Starke Services and Pines Village Retirement Center, and he is on the HealthLinc Quality Assurance Committee. He completed his undergraduate degree and medical school at Indiana University.



Barb Lusco:

Barb is in her first term on the Indiana Dunes Tourism Board of Directors and is appointed by Portage Mayor James Snyder. She studied philosophy at Prairie State College in Chicago Heights, IL and Indiana University Northwest in Gary. She is director of the Portage Public Marina. She is active as a volunteer with the Portage American Legion Post #260 and has a son and two grandchildren. Barb has 20 years of boating experience on Lake Michigan and is on the board of the Lake Michigan Yachting Association.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Michael Mantai :

Michael Mantai is serving his third term on the Indiana Dunes Tourism Board of Directors. Michael, a Hebron resident, was appointed by the town councils of Hebron and Kouts. He studied environmental policy at Indiana State University and is a self-employed real estate appraiser. He also serves on Hebron's Redevelopment Commission and Hebron's Town Events Committee. He also oversees the town's website and newsletter.



Doug Olson:

Doug is in his second term on the Indiana Dunes Tourism Board of Directors. He is appointed by the Porter County Commissioners. A graduate of Indiana State University, he is the government affairs director for SEH Inc. Doug previously served Portage as mayor, county clerk, clerk-treasurer and city councilman. His past professional associations include Northwest Indiana Regional Plan Commission, Lake Michigan Marina Commission, Lake Michigan Shoreline Development Commission, and Indiana Association of Cities and Towns Legislative Committee. His awards include the Excellence in Economic Development Award from Portage Economic Development Corporation, R.O.S.E. Award from Indiana Dunes Tourism and the Sagamore of the Wabash Award for distinguished service to the state.



Chuck Williams:

Chuck is in his second term on the Indiana Dunes Tourism Board of Directors, having been appointed by the Porter County Commissioners. He is a graduate of Indiana University and is a business developer. He is a former Valparaiso City Council member and serves the community in a variety of other capacities.



David Hollenbeck, Attorney:

David has been serving as the attorney for Indiana Dunes Tourism Board of Directors since the creation of the organization in 1986. David, a Valparaiso resident, is a partner in the law firm of Blachly, Tabor, Bozik and Hartman. In addition to serving the Indiana Dunes Tourism Board of Directors, he is also the attorney for the Porter County Board of Health and many other government entities. He serves on the Porter County Community Foundation finance committee. David, who earned his undergraduate and law degrees from Valparaiso University, teaches classes at the Valparaiso University School of Law and is an NCAA clock operator and scorer for the Valparaiso University men's basketball team.

BOARD OF DIRECTOR MEETINGS

- Board meetings take place on the third Thursday of each month at 3:00 p.m. at the Visitor Center at 1215 North State Road 49 in Porter, unless otherwise noted.
- The board conducts itself as a public body and observes the requirements of the Indiana Open Door Law.
- The public is invited to attend and observe open meetings of the commission and committees.
- Members of the public may, at the discretion of the president or committee chairperson, provide commentary at an open meeting. The president or chairperson may limit or cut off further discussion at his/her discretion.
- Minutes of the meetings of the board shall be completed and distributed to its membership in a timely fashion.
- Each board member shall faithfully attend all board meetings. In the event that any member is absent from three consecutive board meetings, the Porter County Board of Commissioners, at its discretion, may remove said member from the membership on the board.



MANAGEMENT AND PERSONNEL



Lorelei Weimer, Executive Director:

The executive director is responsible for directing and leading Indiana Dunes Tourism towards achieving its vision and mission. The director works closely with the board of directors on policy making and business strategies for the organization. The director serves as the primary spokesperson and chief executive officer. Lorelei holds a bachelor's degree in hospitality and tourism management from Purdue University Calumet and obtained her Fellow Certified Destination Management Executive certification from Destination Marketing Organization International. Lorelei started her career with Indiana Dunes Tourism in 1991. She currently serves on the Indiana Tourism Council representing Northern Indiana and she is a current member and past board of director of the Indiana Tourism Association. Lorelei currently serves as the treasurer and is a past president of the Board of Directors for Northern Indiana Tourism Development Commission. She is currently a board member of the Portage Economic Development Corporation, serves on the Porter County Economic Alliance group, chairs the Dunes-Kankakee Trail initiative and served as a staff member to the Porter County Jobs Cabinet. Lorelei is a member of the Duneland Exchange Club.



Christine Livingston, Assistant Director:

The assistant director is responsible for the development and implementation of marketing strategies to meet the goals and objectives of Indiana Dunes Tourism. This includes managing advertising initiatives, the Indiana Dunes Tourism website and database, photo inventory, and the BBDT - a campaign designed to draw visitors into Porter County communities. She also leads Indiana Dunes Tourism in the executive director's absence. Christine has a bachelor's degree in organizational communication from Indiana University Northwest. Previously she worked for several nonprofits as program manager and on various outreach and marketing initiatives. She has served as an advisory member of Purdue's Indiana Water Research Center, and has served on committees for various community projects such as the Porter County Corridor Plan Committee, Duneland School Improvement Committee and Porter County Parks Master Planning Committee. She is currently the vice president of the Indiana Department of Natural Resources Coastal Advisory Board and is a board member of the Illinois-Indiana Sea Grant.



Patti Boyer, Operations Director:

The operations director is responsible for supervision of the front desk staff, accounts payable and accounts receivable, information technology, tracking grants and overseeing building maintenance. Patti has an associate's degree in computer technology and a bachelor's degree in supervision from Purdue University. Patti previously was an application developer and instructor for a local business. She also has managed and taught accounting programs for multiple software businesses. Patti is currently active with the Portage Chamber of Commerce, Portage Relay for Life, is a board member of Midwest Family Credit Union and a member of Tri Kappa Sorority.

MANAGEMENT AND PERSONNEL



Ken Kosky, Promotions Director:

The promotions director promotes the activities of Indiana Dunes Tourism through media partnerships, including acting as spokesperson for the organization. The promotions director also oversees the production of the Activities Guide, several niche publications and oversees the implementation of the internal and external communications plan and crisis plan. He is the organization's primary writer and editor, and he manages the internship program. Ken has a bachelor's degree in journalism/public relations from Ball State University. He joined Indiana Dunes Tourism after more than twenty years as a reporter with The Times. He has been active for the Banta Feeds food drive organization, Central Elementary School, Rebuilding Together Portage, United Way Day of Caring and the ValPlayso construction.



Angela Pasyk, Niche Market Director:

The niche market director is responsible for developing, promoting and soliciting niche markets and groups. These niche markets and groups include birders, car clubs, bicyclists, outdoor enthusiasts, weddings, motorcoaches, sports, meeting planners and reunions. The niche market director also creates niche market publications and website pages. Angela has a bachelor's degree in communications/public relations from Purdue University. She previously served as marketing/communications coordinator for NET Ministries in West St. Paul, Minnesota and visitor information specialist for the Lafayette-West Lafayette Convention & Visitors Bureau. She is currently a board member for Sports Indiana. In her free time she coaches 8th grade girls volleyball at St. Mary's and has been active in Big Brothers Big Sisters and Special Olympics.



Julie Brown, Special Project Coordinator:

The special projects coordinator is responsible for gathering festival and event information, as well as coupon information, for print pieces and the website. The special projects coordinator also maintains and updates the database for use in mailings, marketing and website purposes. Julie previously operated a licensed home day care business, and worked for Guideposts for Kids/Teens magazines, Chesterton/Duneland Chamber of Commerce, St. Anthony Health System, Pathway Family Center and KPM group. She is active in Boy Scouts of America, Indiana Addictions Coalition, National Autism Association, PFLAG, St. Patrick's Church and the Duneland community.

DESTINATION CONCIERGE STAFF

The operations director manages and directs the activities of the destination concierge staff. The concierge staff is responsible for opening and closing the Visitor Center, greeting visitors, assisting visitors with travel information, maintaining accurate visitation records, data input, fulfillment of travel information requests, and assisting with special projects.



Judy Hutton



Dennis Penning



Nancy Panozzo



Elizabeth Dresh

VOLUNTEER STAFF

Indiana Dunes Tourism relies on volunteers to assist with special projects. Volunteers are used to greet visitors and fulfill requests for travel information.



Maggie Diaz



Carol Short



POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

As stated earlier, Indiana Dunes Tourism is a department of county government, and it follows the policies and procedures as created by the Porter County Board of Commissioners and the Porter County Council. Indiana Dunes Tourism has created supplemental organizational guidelines that are specific to our industry as defined by Destination Marketing Association International.

ACCREDITATION

In 2013, Indiana Dunes Tourism was reaccredited and as of December 2014 is one of 193 DMOs accredited through Destination Marketing Association International's accreditation program. Gaining accreditation means Indiana Dunes Tourism is recognized by the world's largest association of DMOs for providing outstanding services and for meeting international standards and benchmarks in the destination marketing field. Indiana Dunes Tourism completed and passed all 86 critical areas (everything from technology, to visitor services to innovation). Indiana Dunes Tourism also received "exemplary" status for its strategic plan and green practices. Our executive director was asked to speak about our strategic plan at two classes at the Destination Marketing International Association's 100th Anniversary Annual Conference in Las Vegas in 2014.



CONTRACTUAL AND ADVISORY SUPPORT

Indiana Dunes Tourism contracts with a variety of businesses that assist our organization in using best management practices in our operations. These contractual services include:

- **Attorney:** Attorney David Hollenbeck, from Blachly, Tabor, Bozik & Hartman, provides legal services.
- **Insurance:** Anton Insurance provides insurance through the county.
- **Contractors:** Indiana Dunes Tourism contracts with a variety of professionals to assist with various projects. Contractors used in the past have included researchers, developers and computer programmers. They are hired based on their expertise and through a request for qualifications process.
- **Accountant:** ADP does our payroll processing and tax administration
- **Creative team:** Smith Donovan Marketing & Communications is utilized for strategic and tactical collaboration, brand management and specialized creative projects, including print and video production.
- **Website:** VERB Interactive is the web provider for NITDC and Indiana Dunes Tourism.
- **Database:** Simpleview is the database provider for NITDC and its seven members, including Indiana Dunes Tourism. We are working off of eight databases, but because we agreed to have the same database structure for all eight partners, Indiana Dunes Tourism is able to save 50 percent on its annual costs with Simpleview.

INDIANA DUNES TOURISM PARTNERS

Our partners are those businesses, organizations and groups of people that Indiana Dunes Tourism works with to better market and manage our destination.

- Indiana Dunes Tourism Board of Directors
- Government officials (local, regional, state and national)
- Travel and tourism industry
- Non-travel and tourism industry
- Economic development commissions (local and regional)
- Parks (city, county, state, and national)
- Local chambers of commerce
- Other destination marketing organizations (regional, state, national, and international)
- Grant recipients
- Service organizations
- Environmental groups
- Emergency management

TRAVEL PUBLICS

- The travel publics are the groups to which we are marketing Indiana Dunes Country.
- Leisure groups
- Sports groups
- Meeting planners
- Travel writers
- International visitors
- Visiting friends and relatives
- Event planners (family reunions, weddings, class reunions, fraternal, etc.)
- Niche groups
- Car clubs
- BBDT (birding, hiking and other outdoor enthusiasts)
- Biking
- Culinary Tour
- Family
- Fishing

FINANCIAL ANALYSIS AND PLAN

FUNDING

As noted previously, Indiana Dunes Tourism is a department within Porter County government. Indiana Dunes Tourism is funded through a five percent innkeeper's tax and does not receive any funds from the Porter County general fund. This tax is paid daily by any visitor staying in a Porter County lodging establishment for fewer than 30 days. The innkeepers collect the tax, keeping .83 percent of the tax as a collection allowance, and submitting the remaining 4.17 percent on a monthly basis to the Porter County Treasurer. Indiana Dunes Tourism receives a monthly check from the Porter County auditor. The tax dollars received by Indiana Dunes Tourism are two months behind the actual collection month.

The tax collected is used for promotion, marketing efforts and operations of the Visitor Center and office space. The governing code for Indiana Dunes Tourism is the Uniform Innkeeper's Tax Code and this code states that money in a convention, visitor and tourism promotion fund "may be expended only to promote and encourage conventions, visitors and tourism within the county through expenditures for advertising, promotional activities, trade shows, special events and recreation:

ACCOUNTING SYSTEM

Indiana Dunes Tourism does its own accounting, but uses ADP for payroll and tax filings. Indiana Dunes Tourism subscribes to cash base accounting principals and procedures outlined by the Indiana State Board of Accounts. The Indiana State Board of Accounts audits Indiana Dunes Tourism annually.

2014 FINANCIAL REVIEW

Hotel usage in Porter County declined in 2014 compared to 2013. The hotel room inventory within our destination decreased slightly by 0.7% (+4.7% in 2013). The average daily room rate increased by 5.7% (+3.9% in 2013), and the revenue per available room decreased by 0.4% (+3.9% in 2013). Overall room revenue was down 1.0%, which was the same for 2013 and total rooms sold was down 6.4% (-4.7% in 2013).

Despite the decline in hotel IDSP increased their gate revenue by 3.78% and their nature center saw a 10.06% increase in traffic.

Destinations in our competitive sets, with the exception of Lake County, Indiana, did not have the decline in travel numbers as we did in Porter County. Also, we have conflicting data because usually if the dunes are doing well the hotels are doing well, and that was not the case between the state park numbers and the hotel numbers. We do not have IDNL numbers for 2014.

Weather is a critical and defining factor for our destination. We are a beach destination and our peak season is during the summer months. 2012 was a banner year for our destination, and a lot of that was due to the weather. In 2012, we had a warm spring and the temperatures continued to increase to produce a hot, dry summer. Visitors flocked to our number one attraction, the Indiana Dunes.

In contrast, 2013 was the opposite. We not only had a cold spring, but the cold stayed with us through June. The weather got travel to our destination off to a very slow start and we were not able to make up the difference in the other two summer months.

The weather in 2014 was even worse than 2013. Once July hit in 2013 we had normal summer weather. In 2014, we never really had normal summer weather. Weather experts said it was due to the extreme cold winter we had and that Lake Michigan was almost completely covered in ice. This produced a wet and cold summer, which is not good weather for the beach. How do we explain the state park having increased numbers? In June 2014, Indiana Dunes Tourism launched The 3 Dune Challenge. We got great media coverage, especially locally. We had a lot of local people do The 3 Dune Challenge, and the number of locals doing the challenge would have increased the state park numbers, but would not have impacted the hotel stays

RESERVE FUNDS

Indiana Dunes Tourism maintains three reserve funds, which include a crisis stability account, an operating stability account and a long-term replacement account. The crisis stability account is in place to protect Indiana Dunes Tourism financially if a financial crisis would occur. Several years ago, the Porter County Auditors Office created new department identification numbers. During this transition, our organization did not receive any innkeeper's checks for several months. We had to borrow from one of our reserve accounts so we could pay our bills.

Furthermore, Indiana Dunes Tourism experiences high expenses and receives the lowest innkeeper's tax in the first two quarters of each new year. The imbalance of expenses versus income has created financial hardships for Indiana Dunes Tourism in the past. Several years ago, Indiana Dunes Tourism created an additional reserve fund that allows us to pay our bills in the first two quarters and then replenish the reserve fund at the end of the year when income is higher and expenses are lower.

The third reserve account is our long-term replacement account. This is an account to which Indiana Dunes Tourism and IDNL contribute funds to pay for capital improvement items to the Visitor Center, such as carpet, heating and cooling units, a new roof, etc.

ELECTRONIC RECORD KEEPING

Indiana Dunes Tourism is 100 percent electronic with all of its financial and attendance records and has Indiana State Board of Accounts approval for our electronic record keeping.



2015 BUDGET

As previously stated, Indiana Dunes Tourism is a department within Porter County government and subscribes to the budgeting process as defined by the Porter County Council. Indiana Dunes Tourism operates on a calendar year, January 1 through December 31.

A draft of the budget is prepared by the Indiana Dunes Tourism staff and is presented by the executive director, assistant director and operations director to the Indiana Dunes Tourism Board of Directors Budget Committee in May. The budget committee and staff discuss and make changes to the budget. The budget committee presents the final budget at the June board meeting for approval by the full Board of Directors. Once the budget receives approval, it is submitted to the Porter County Auditor's Office by July 1. The Porter County Council normally has two readings on each department budget. Both hearings can start as early as the end of August and can continue through October.

Any additions or transfers that need to be made to our budget throughout the year require Indiana Dunes Tourism Board of Directors and the Porter County Council to approve those changes.

Indiana Dunes Tourism operates on cash base accounting principles, and it has a budget that is approved annually. However, it receives innkeeper's checks on a monthly basis that vary in amount based on the collections. Indiana Dunes Tourism must continually monitor its expenditures to coincide with the cash on hand.

The budget presented in this plan is formatted differently than the budget that is used internally. The one presented in this plan follows a typical budget format found in most nonprofit organizations.

ACCOUNTS

Indiana Dunes Tourism has two main accounts, which are the Tax Revenue Account and the Non-Tax Revenue Account. Both accounts have separate accounting records. The Tax Revenue Account has a budget and is funded by the innkeepers tax, grants and the IDNL rent. The Non-Tax Revenue Account does not have a budget and is funded through advertising and merchandizing sales. The Indiana Dunes Tourism Board of Directors approved policies on how the money in the Non-Tax Revenue Account can be spent.



MEASUREMENTS

Indiana Dunes Tourism believes strongly in measuring the impact our efforts have on achieving our goals of attracting visitors and extending their stay. Indiana Dunes Tourism has four strategic goals that drive all of our initiatives and they include: Destination Branding and Marketing; Destination Product Development; Internal and External Communications; and Finance and Administration. There are measurements for each strategic goal and there are measurements for each project under the strategic goal.

It is important to remember that Indiana Dunes Tourism does not sell any actual product, such as hotel rooms, restaurant meals or retail items. Since we are not the actual point of sale, we cannot track success through increased profits. Furthermore, the promotional information we produce is not sold to visitors. This makes overall measuring challenging for DMOs.

We measure our effectiveness in a variety of ways that include activity-based and results-based measurements. The activity based measurements include number of brochures distributed, number of unique users to our website, and number of followers on Facebook. The results-based measurements include number of people who visited Indiana Dunes Country based on the information Indiana Dunes Tourism provided, number of visitors converted due to email blasts, etc.

The results-based measurements can be challenging for Indiana Dunes Tourism and most DMOs. The only way to really measure the conversion of visitors based on our marketing information is by conducting research, such as a conversion study. Research is expensive. Indiana Dunes Tourism believes strongly in research to not only tell us how effective we have been with our marketing efforts, but more importantly, how we need to market in the future. Since Indiana Dunes Tourism finds research valuable, we undertake at least one research project annually.



2015 BUDGET

Item	Budget	Explanation
Administration Expenses		
Salaries	\$243,319	
Hourly	\$67,000	
Benefits	\$114,52	
Other (unemployment, workers' compensation, bonds)	\$5,695	
FICA:	\$23,739	
Total:	\$453,905	
Operational Expenses		
Lease	\$10,000	Lease agreement, equipment: copier
Building liability	\$6,600	Insurance for building and motor vehicles
Building supplies & maintenance	\$10,000	Cleaning and maintenance products, restroom supplies, light bulbs, etc.
Office supplies	\$10,000	General office supplies for organization
Office equipment	\$7,085	Postage machine, fax machine, furniture, and fixtures, lease purchase agreements and equipment over \$100
Telephone	\$19,500	Local, long distance, 800 number and Internet
Postage	\$5,000	Business mailings
Legal	\$14,000	Attorney representation
Vehicles/mileage	\$24,100	Vehicle repairs, tires, lubes, mileage and gas
Utilities	\$34,500	Power, disposal, water and sewage
Maintenance	\$60,000	Plumbing, cleaning service, all maintenance agreements, heating and cooling, etc.
Data processing	\$9,000	Computer maintenance, equipment, repair, software, and network configuration
Volunteer services	\$900	Volunteer program, which includes volunteers working in the visitor center
Training and education	\$5,000	Professional training for IDT personnel.
Meals and lodging	\$1,000	Travel expenses for meetings, educational conferences, and trade shows
Dues and subscription	\$4,600	Dues in chambers of commerce, associations (Indiana Travel Association and NITDC), and trades; subscriptions to trade journals and newspapers
Contractual	\$10,000	Accounting services and consulting
Building	\$38,000	Building improvements
Miscellaneous	\$0	Bank fees
Total:	\$269,285	

Marketing Expenses	Budget	Explanation
Postage	\$20,000	Promotional mailings and mailing information packets as requested through our advertising
Telephone	\$500	800 number calls for people requesting travel information after seeing our advertising
Marketing	\$235,000	Leisure advertising, regional cooperative advertising and direct mail, travel writer stories, travel packages, etc.
Uniforms	\$1,000	Logowear to represent Indiana Dunes Tourism
Training & education	\$5,000	Education seminars for Porter County businesses and organizations; professional training for Indiana Dunes Tourism personnel in marketing, sales, public relations and operations
Meals and lodging	\$3,000	Travel expenses for meetings, educational conferences, and trade show
Dues and subscriptions	\$10,000	Dues in Chambers of Commerce, associations, and trades; subscriptions to trade journals and newspapers
Contractual	\$115,000	Contract work for website, database and publications
NITDC	\$40,000	Regional partnership for marketing, research and product development
Website development	\$40,000	Website development, maintenance and improvements
Total:	\$468,500	

Grants and County Venue Expenses

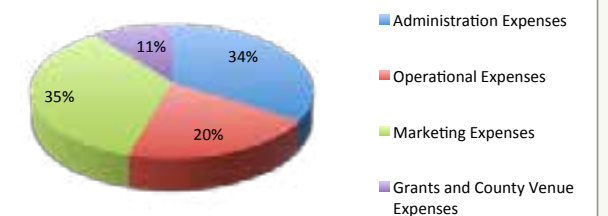
Tourism Grants	\$50,000	Matching grant program to assist festivals, events, sporting events, communities and businesses with their marketing, and product development
Porter County Parks	\$35,640	Funding for promotional activities
Porter County Expo Center	\$17,820	Funding for promotional activities
Memorial Opera House	\$17,820	Funding for promotional activities
Porter County Museum	\$17,820	Funding for promotional activities
Total:	\$139,100	

Total Budget: \$1,339,100

Budget Chart:

Administration (blue)	\$453,905
Operations (red)	\$269,285
Marketing (green)	\$468,500
Grants/Venue Support (purple)	\$139,100

2015 Budget Breakdown





STRATEGIC PLAN 2015

INTRODUCTION

The Strategic Plan provides a sharp focus and a clear and consistent direction for Indiana Dunes Tourism over the next three years.

PURPOSE, BENEFITS AND USES

The original 2008–2010 Strategic Plan was developed in 2007 as a result of seven meetings with the board and management team on the topics of Indiana Dunes Tourism's current situation, future direction and annual business planning alignment. Since this time, the strategic plan has been revised annually to act as a current, rolling three-year plan.

The purposes of the strategic plan are:

- To gain a clear understanding of the visitor industry and its current situation in Indiana Dunes Country, including opportunities for new development and marketing.
- To identify the critical issues and challenges relative to the destination and Indiana Dunes Tourism.
- To review the Indiana Dunes Country destination and the Indiana Dunes Tourism vision, and to reevaluate the organization mission and long-term goals.
- To revise the Indiana Dunes Tourism strategic goal programming and related matters, where required.
- To acknowledge the critical factors in the continued success of Indiana Dunes Tourism.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Based on meeting discussions and a review of past documentation, the key accomplishments of Indiana Dunes Tourism since its inception in 1986 were determined to be the following:

- Formed as a department of county government and currently has a budget of \$1.3 million.
- Witnessed the annual visitor spending increase from \$348.3 million in 2011 to \$386.6 million in 2013, which was a 5.5% annual increase.
- Helped develop and grow the longstanding, successful regional marketing partnership of NITDC.
- Developed a state-of-the-art and partner-supported Visitor Center.
- Produced a comprehensive family of promotional publications.
- Developed a user-friendly and dynamic destination website through a regional partnership with NITDC and its seven members.
- Purchased a comprehensive database exclusively developed for destination marketing organizations with the members of NITDC and reduced the annual costs for Indiana Dunes Tourism by 50 percent.
- Developed and launched the BBDT.
- Created and oversee the DK Trail development committee.
- Oversaw the Strategic Branding, Development and Marketing Plan project and continues to work on the implementation of the plan within Indiana Dunes Tourism and the county.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS CONTINUED

- Rebranded Porter County as a destination and elevated all of Indiana Dunes Tourism marketing tools.
- Changed our organizational name from PCCRVC to Indiana Dunes Tourism and changed our destination name from Porter County to Indiana Dunes Country. Both are better understood by the visitor.
- Created a strong video production and photography development plan.
- Conducted research-based destination assessment, marketing and long-term plans.
- Coordinate community and visitor industry grant program providing \$2 million in grants for over 27 years.
- Fostered a professional board of directors and staff leadership team.
- Created the Indiana Dunes Sports Cabinet.
- Completed the first Porter County Sports Development Analysis Report.
- Completed the Porter County Expo Center Redevelopment Feasibility Study.
- Developed the Indiana Dunes Country Dunes Deals for distribution at IDSP, Visitor Center and Indiana Dunes Country hotels.
- Finalized the Indiana Dunes Tourism Crisis Plan.
- Developed and promoted The 3 Dune Challenge and T-shirts and hoodies in the Visitor Center.
- This is the first time Indiana Dunes Tourism sold product in the Visitor Center.
- Developed a strong birding partnership with seven entities along the BBDT and produced:
 - The birding backpack program that allows visitors to checkout backpacks that are equipped with binoculars and birding information.
 - Purchased purple martin houses for Coffee Creek Watershed Conservancy to establish a large colony.
 - Purchased a portable restroom facility for Kankakee Sands to better serve birders and overall visitors to this site.
 - Enhancements to Jasper-Pulaski's Fish and Wildlife Area's sandhill crane outreach materials.
 - Accredited for the first time in 2009 and reaccredited in 2013 with exemplary status for the Indiana Dunes Tourism Strategic Plan and Business Plan and our green practices.
 - Since 2011, Indiana Dunes Country has been promoted in 895 articles and broadcasts, reached 226,452,372 readers and viewers and received \$1.65 million in earned (free) publicity.
 - Executive director received Fellow Certified Destination Marketing Executive in 2004 and was recertified in 2008 and 2014.
 - Assistant director started the Certified Destination Marketing Executive program in 2014.
 - Continued to invest in annual research with NITDC, the University of Florida and Nichols Tourism Group.
 - In 2014, completed conceptual plans for the redevelopment of the Visitor Center.
 - In 2014, developed and launched a new, responsive designed website.

SWOT ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSIONS

A SWOT (strengths-weaknesses-opportunities-threats) analysis was conducted from a tourism perspective and covered commentary on product development (both county and communities) and marketing (both to visitors and local audiences).

Visitor Marketing, Branding, Development, Communications, and Finance and Administration

Strengths (present advantages)		Weaknesses (present disadvantages)
+ Proximity to Chicago	+ The success of the 3 Dune Challenge	- Majority of attractions seasonal
+ Unique Indiana Dunes and Lake Michigan natural resource	+ Attractive communities	- Lack of quality and quantity of tournament-ready sports facilities
+ Strong national and state parks presence	+ Use annual strategic and business plans to drive what IDT does	- Primarily limited-service lodging and some of the lodging is aging.
+ Major roadways: 30, 6, 80/90, 94, 20 and 12	+ Long-term NITDC partnership	- Inadequate visitor activities on and off beach
+ Surrounding rural/green environment	+ Visitor Center	- Restrictive park policies on marketing
+ Positive destination image/awareness (family-based)	+ Portage Lakefront and Riverwalk	- Relatively small Indiana Dunes Tourism budget/staffing
+ Large repeat visitation	+ Good resident buy-in on destination and community brands	- Getting communities to implement branding project
+ Bass Pro Shops	+ Utilizing technology to further Indiana Dunes Tourism mission	- Parking at Indiana Dunes during summer holidays and weekends
+ New superintendent for the IDNL	+ Using research by Nichols Tourism Group and University of Florida to direct marketing efforts	- Lack of new product being developed south of the dunes
+ Strong national media coverage	+ Private/public partnership in redeveloping the IDSP Pavilion	- Great Visitor Center, but needs to be more engaging and experiential
+ The success of digital marketing efforts and responsive design website	+ Measuring effectiveness of IDT programs	- Lack of family attractions south of the dunes
+ Effective niche marketing		- Lack of tourism product owned and operated by private sector
+ South Shore Heritage Train donation		- Expo Center and fairgrounds buildings are old and tired
		- Lack of cohesive wayfinding signage for the entire county and all of its communities
		- Mt. Baldy hole incident and overall negativity to the dunes

Opportunities (potential advantages)		Threats (potential disadvantages)
+ Innovative marketing programming	+ Increased community relations efforts	- Loss of sense of place identity
+ Development of major indoor attraction(s)	+ Strengthened connections between communities and Indiana Dunes	- Limited visitor and family attractions development
+ Enhanced NITDC partnership	+ Enhanced and redesigned visitor center	- Understanding regional tourism
+ Cohesive county brand with allied community partnerships	+ Larger presence for Northern Indiana on I-80/90 (Toll Road)	- Agenda driven politics
+ BBDT enhancements / developments	+ Develop sports facilities	- Lack of funding to move big initiatives forward at a faster pace
+ New resort facility potential	+ Operational South Shore Heritage Train.	- People not working together to achieve specific development goals
+ Cultural tourism and ecotourism opportunities		- Misunderstanding of the role of a DMO like Indiana Dunes Tourism

Given the visitor product development and marketing SWOT analysis, it was generally found that there was a need for:

- Continued experiential product development to complement the Indiana Dunes and family-based image.
- New indoor attraction(s) with the best potential in industrial heritage, ecotourism and family activities.
- The destination brand promise and related identity to be agreed to so as to increase partnership marketing.
- Increased destination marketing funding and talent resources.
- Funding to develop: the DK Trail; sports facilities; redevelopment of the Porter County Expo Center and fairgrounds; wayfinding signage; South Shore Heritage Train development; and BBDT development.

MAIN CHALLENGES

Given the SWOT analysis and related workshop session commentary, it is generally understood that the top challenges facing Indiana Dunes Tourism are as follows:

- Increased community buy-in on a focused and actionable strategic destination plan, which includes Indiana Dunes Tourism board, staff and Porter County communities.
- Enhanced community awareness of tourism's value and Indiana Dunes Tourism's role.



- Increased Indiana Dunes Tourism resources given new strategic responsibilities (brand marketing, product development support and visitor center redesign).
- Increased investment in technology marketing capability and programming.
- Enhanced database and personal marketing opportunities.
- Focused communications and funding support for new visitor product development.
- Involvement in county and product development planning.
- Conflicted regional CVB partnerships.
- Increased Indiana Dunes Tourism marketing budget.
- Investment in Northern Indiana and state of Indiana brand delivery.
- Continued political issues.

CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS

The critical factors that need to be focused on for Indiana Dunes Tourism's future success are identified as the following:

Indiana Dunes Tourism

- Destination/community brand buy-in and delivery on promises.
- Integrated destination development master plan formulation.
- New visitor product development that enhances the stay of visitors and improves the quality of life for residents. Implementation of an approved, measurable strategic destination plan.
- Recognized leader for community tourism efforts.
- Further leveraging of Indiana Dunes Tourism and visitor industry resources.
- United and effective Indiana Dunes Tourism board leadership.



INDIANA DUNES COUNTRY STRATEGIC OUTLOOK

THREE-YEAR STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Over the next three years, Indiana Dunes Tourism will focus on the following key project and program areas:

- Broaden the speaking voices on supporting Indiana Dunes Tourism and travel/tourism in general.
- Implementation of the destination brand identity platform at the county and community levels.
- Ongoing website and database upgrades with improved tracking.
- Enhanced digital marketing/promotional programming.
- Develop and expand niche markets.
- Increased internal and external earned media.
- Expanded marketing performance measurement and tracking capability.
- Continued NITDC regional marketing alliance investment.
- Support for BBDT development projects.
- Preparation and communication of a tourism investment opportunities prospectus.
- Execution of an internal and external communications plan.
- Ongoing community leadership dialogue engagement.
- Accountable annual strategic and business plan.
- Reaccreditation in the Destination Marketing International Association Accreditation Program.
- Continued community grant funding support and evaluation.
- Visitor Center redevelopment.
- South Shore Heritage Train development.
- Indiana Dunes sports development.
- Redevelopment of the Porter County Expo Center and fairgrounds.
- Indiana Dunes Country wayfinding signage.
- Development of the DK Trail.



DESTINATION BRANDING AND MARKETING

The annual destination focus and the three-year initiatives for Indiana Dunes Tourism have been determined as follows:

Goal/Program

DESTINATION BRANDING AND MARKETING - \$468,500

Enhance the awareness of the destination brand and increase visitor conversion and length of stay.	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMING			COMPLETED
		2015	2016	2017	
Promotion and Marketing					
» Advertising - digital marketing	AD	✓	✓	✓	
» Advertising - NITDC	AD	✓	✓	✓	
» Beyond the Beach Discovery Trail promotion	AD	✓	✓	✓	
» Branding and brand management	AD	✓		✓	
» Children character development	ED	✓			
» Content marketing evaluation and research	ED/AD	✓	✓		
» Coupons (Dunes Deals, online and groups)	SPC	✓	✓	✓	
» Database	SPC	✓	✓	✓	
» Groups (meetings, motorcoach, reunions, sports, weddings)	NMD	✓	✓	✓	
» Niche market development, promotion and servicing	NMD	✓	✓	✓	
» Partnership meetings	NMD	✓	✓	✓	
» Partnership sales advertising (Activities Guide and niche guides)	AD	✓	✓	✓	
» Photo management	AD	✓	✓	✓	
» Social media engagement	NMD	✓	✓	✓	
» Sports - niche development	NMD	✓	✓	✓	
» The 3 Dune Challenge	ED	✓			
» Top 10 lists (Must See and Do)	ED	✓	✓	✓	
» Video production and promotion	ED	✓	✓	✓	
» Website	AD	✓	✓	✓	
Publications (guides) - printed and online:					
» Activities Guide (4-pager and tri-fold)	PD	✓	✓	✓	
» Art & Earth / Foodie Trail (new brand) - NITDC	AD/SPC	✓	✓	✓	
» Beyond the Beach Discovery Trail (trail guide, education guide and map)	AD	✓	✓	✓	
» Biking Map	AD	✓		✓	
» Birding Guide	AD	✓		✓	
» Calendar of Events	NMD/SPC	✓	✓	✓	
» Event Planner	NMD	✓	✓	✓	
» Fishing Guide	PD	✓	✓	✓	
» Indiana Dunes Country Dunes Deals	ED/SPC	✓	✓	✓	
» Indiana Dunes Country Culinary Tour	ED		✓		
» Kids Guide	NMD	✓		✓	
Research					
» Annual research project	ED/OD	✓	✓	✓	
» Program performance measures and tracking	ED/AD	✓	✓	✓	
Visitor Center					
» Visitor servicing and retail	OD/AD/ED	✓	✓	✓	
» Promotional materials fulfillment and distribution	OD	✓	✓	✓	
» Redesign and rebranding of public space	ED/BRD/OD	✓	✓	✓	
» Team training for concierges	OD	✓	✓	✓	
AD Assistant Director ED Executive Director PD Promotions Director SPC Special Projects Coordinator BRD Board of Directors NMD Niche Market Director OD Operations Director					

DESTINATION PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

Goal/Program

DESTINATION PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT - (PART OF \$468,500 BUDGET)

Be a catalyst and endorse the development of attractions, events and hospitality services and related public infrastructure.	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMING			COMPLETED
		2015	2016	2017	
Destination product development					
» Art & Earth Trail/Foodie Trail - (new brand) NITDC	AD/SPC	✓	✓	✓	
» Beyond the Beach Discovery Trail	AD/ED	✓	✓	✓	
» Bike route maintenance	ED/AD	✓	✓	✓	
» Blueways/Greenways (water and land trails)	wAD	✓	✓	✓	
» Community branding revival	ED	✓	✓	✓	
» Dunes-Kankakee Trail	ED/BRD	✓	✓	✓	
» Expo Center redevelopment	ED/BRD	✓	✓	✓	
» Hotel development and improvement plan.	ED		✓		
» Indiana Dunes Visitor Center redevelopment	ED	✓	✓		
» Industrial museum development	ED	✓	✓	✓	
» International market development	ED	✓	✓	✓	
» Investment Guide update	ED	✓	✓	✓	
» Product Development and Funding Plan update	ED	✓	✓	✓	
» Railroad viewing platform	ED	✓	✓	✓	
» Sports Cabinet development	ED/BRD	✓	✓	✓	
» Sports facilities development	ED	✓	✓	✓	
» South Shore Heritage Train development	ED	✓	✓	✓	
» The 3 Dune Challenge	ED	✓			
» Wayfinding signage	ED	✓	✓	✓	

INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS - (PART OF \$468,500 BUDGET)

Lead communications on the value of tourism to all county communities and the partnership roles and effectiveness of Indiana Dunes Tourism.	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMING			COMPLETED
		2015	2016	2017	
» Crisis Plan management	PD	✓	✓	✓	
» Internal/External Communications Plan implementation	PD	✓	✓	✓	

AD Assistant Director ED Executive Director PD Promotions Director SPC Special Projects Coordinator
 BRD Board of Directors NMD Niche Market Director OD Operations Director

FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

Goal/Program

FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION - \$269,285

Function as a fiscally responsible and accountable organization through effective planning and measurement.	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMING			COMPLETED
		2015	2016	2017	
Annual strategic and business planning					
» Strategic plan development and approval	ED/BRD	✓	✓	✓	
» Annual business plan with budget allocation	ED	✓	✓	✓	
» DMAP accreditation	OD			✓	
» Ongoing electronic board manual	OD	✓	✓	✓	
Budgeting, measurement and reporting					
» Audited financial statements	OD	✓	✓	✓	
» Ongoing budget and measurement usage	OD/ED/AD	✓	✓	✓	
» Strategy driven budget development	OD/ED	✓	✓	✓	
Human resource development - staffing expenses - \$453,905					
» Performance evaluations	ED/AD	✓	✓	✓	
» Professional development/training investment	AD/OD	✓	✓	✓	
Administrative and building operations					
» Building and operations management	OD	✓	✓	✓	
» Capital replacement	OD	✓	✓	✓	
» National Parks Service relationship development	ED	✓	✓	✓	
» Office/administrative personnel	OD	✓	✓	✓	
» Professional and quality subcontractors and vendors	OD	✓	✓	✓	
» Travel expenses	OD	✓	✓	✓	
Community funding support - \$139,100					
» County venues program evaluation	OD	✓	✓	✓	
» Grant funding allocation and follow-up reporting	OD/ED/BRD	✓	✓	✓	
» New grant program evaluated and modified	OD/ED/BRD	✓			

AD Assistant Director ED Executive Director PD Promotions Director SPC Special Projects Coordinator
 BRD Board of Directors NMD Niche Market Director OD Operations Director

INDIANA DUNES TOURISM RESEARCH FROM 1991 TO PRESENT

Indiana Dunes Tourism has a strong history of investing in quality research. Research is critical to our overall success because it helps us determine how effective our current efforts are in bringing visitors to our destination and extending their stay. The research also allows us to modify our marketing approach to be even more effective in what we do. Listed below are all of the research projects Indiana Dunes Tourism has done since its inception in 1986.

- How to Increase Travel to Porter County – 1991 by Robert Siegel and Associates.
- Porter County Economic Impact - 1991 by Davidson–Peterson, Inc.
- Porter County Conversion Study I – 1991 by Lorelei Weimer.
- Conversion Study II – 1992 by Lorelei Weimer.
- Porter County – A Strategic Marketing and Economic Impact Analysis – 1994 by Certec Inc.
- Visitor Profile Study of Porter County Visitor Center I, II, III – 1993–1999 by Lorelei Weimer.
- 80/90 Toll Road Marketing Research – 1997 by Strategic Marketing & Research Inc.
- Northern Indiana Focus Group Image Assessment – 1998 by University of Illinois Tourism Research Laboratory.
- Branding Northern Indiana – 1999 by University of Illinois Tourism Research Laboratory.

- Branding Identification Niches – 1999 by University of Illinois Tourism Research Laboratory.
- Porter County Visitor Guide Research – 1999 by Valparaiso University students.
- Porter County Website Research – 1999 by Valparaiso University students.
- Porter County Strategic Marketing Plan – 1999 by Valparaiso University students.
- Northern Indiana Brand and Porter County Brand – 1999 by Valparaiso University students.
- Festival Research – 1999 by Strategic Marketing & Research Inc.
- PCCRVC Visitor Survey – 2000 by University of Illinois Tourism Research Laboratory.
- Understanding Visitors to Northern Indiana – 2001 by University of Illinois Tourism Research Laboratory.
- Evaluating the Effectiveness of the NITDC 2002 Getaway Design – focus groups - October 2002 by University of Illinois Tourism Research Laboratory.
- Evaluating the Effectiveness of Lake, Porter, LaPorte, LaGrange and Kosciusko Counties' CVBs' Travel Planners – focus groups - November 2002 by University of Illinois Tourism Research Laboratory.

RESEARCH CONTINUED

- Porter County Destination Audit (Product Development Audit) and Image Assessment - 2005 by Nichols Tourism Group and Dr. Daniel Fesenmaier of the National Laboratory for Tourism & eCommerce School of Tourism and Hospitality Management of Temple University.
- Northern Indiana Visitor Survey by Dr. Daniel Fesenmaier of the National Laboratory for Tourism & eCommerce School of Tourism and Hospitality Management – spring 2004 by Temple University.
- Economic Impact of Travel and Tourism in Porter County - 2006 by D.K. Shifflet and Associates.
- Northern Indiana Visitor Center Study by Dr. Daniel Fesenmaier of the National Laboratory for Tourism and eCommerce School of Tourism and Hospitality Management - 2006 by Temple University.
- Northern Indiana Getaway Guide Study by Dr. Daniel Fesenmaier of the National Laboratory for Tourism and eCommerce School of Tourism and Hospitality Management - 2007 by Temple University.
- 2007 Porter County Economic Impact Study - 2008 by Certec Inc.
- SMART research program, which is an internet based ongoing conversion study and visitor profile study. Names and email addresses gathered on our website are given to Dr. Daniel Fesenmaier of the National Laboratory for Tourism and eCommerce School of Tourism and Hospitality Management - Temple University on a quarterly basis for surveys to be sent. Started 2008. Ongoing. Porter County Community Assessments - 2008 by Destination Development International.
- Porter County and Communities Branding, Product Development and Marketing Plan - 2009 by Destination Development International.
- Performance measurement project - 2009 by Nichols Tourism Group.
- Hotel, Festival, Visitor Center and Attractions Research - 2009 by Indiana Dunes Tourism and Temple University.
- 2009 Porter County Economic Impact Study - 2010 by Certec. Inc.
- Demonstrating Indiana Dunes Tourism Roles and Impacts - Expanding Tourism's Role in Porter County - 2011 by Nichols Tourism Group.
- 2011 Porter County Economic Impact Study - 2012 by Certec. Inc.
- Indiana Dunes Tourism 2012 Lead Database Survey Findings - 2013 by Nichols Tourism Group and Temple University.
- Indiana Dunes Tourism 2013 Lead Database Survey Findings - 2014 by Nichols Tourism Group and University of Florida.
- 2013 Porter County Economic Impact Study - 2014 by Certec. Inc.

DUNES



BUSINESS PLAN 2015

DESTINATION BRANDING AND MARKETING

The Business Plan is an annual plan for the current year and is developed based on the projects defined in the Strategic Plan. It contains the measurements for each strategic goal and a chart that lists the projects for each goal and the quarter of Goal and Target Markets.

Enhance the awareness of the destination brand and increase visitor conversion and length of stay.

- Art visitor
- Beach traveler
- Bicyclist
- Birder
- Car club members
- Culinary traveler
- Family
- Festival and special event visitors
- Fishing
- Group business (motorcoach, reunions, meetings, wedding, etc.)
- Outdoor enthusiasts (BBDTI, which includes hiking, kayaking/canoeing, birding, etc.)
- Shopping traveler
- Sports event participants and spectators

TRAVEL MEDIA INFLUENCER

- Critical Factors for Successful Destination Marketing.
- Effective advertising campaign.
- Effective usage of coupons.
- Growth in social media influence on travel to destination.
- Success with The 3 Dune Challenge promotion.
- Effective and engaging new exhibit in Visitor Center.
- New quality photographs added to our inventory.
- Destination/community brand buy-in with delivery on promises.
- Lucrative niche market identification, strategic development and related programming.
- Well-performing and effective website.
- Strong performing promotional materials and videos.



PROGRAMS AND MEASUREMENT INDICATORS

1. Collateral assessment and production.

- Number of destination promotional materials distributed by channel, which includes Visitor Center, calls, web, advertising leads, etc.
- Number of converted visitors based on print/online collateral materials - conversion study by Nichols Tourism Group and Temple University.
- Decision-making influence of print/online collateral materials -- conversion study, flipbook results and number of downloads.

2. Website performance

- Number of sessions.
- Number of users.
- Bounce rate.
- Total number of pageviews.
- Average time spent on the site per visitor.
- Average pageviews per visitor.
- Average time spent per page.
- Number of reservation tabs used.
- Total number of outbound links.
- Total reads of publications on flipbook.

3. Devices used to access IDT website

- Number of smartphone users.
- Number of tablet users.
- Number of desktop users.

4. Beyond the Beach Discovery Trail

- Number of sessions.
- Number of users.
- Number of pageviews.
- Social Media - YouTube and web videos.
- Number of YouTube views.
- Top five YouTube videos.

5. Social media - Facebook

- Number of Likes.
- Percentage of growth of Likes.
- Average number of engaged users.

6. Social media - Twitter

- Number of followers.
- Percentage of increase in followers.

7. Market development and servicing.

- Number of group tour servicing requests filled .
- Number of meeting/reunion servicing requests fulfilled.
- Number of sporting event servicing requests.

8. NITDC member programming

- Number of sessions.
- Number of users.
- Number of clicks to Indiana Dunes website.

9. Earned Media

- Number of media inquiries/converted inquiries.
- Number of requests and fulfillments for photos and video footage.
- Number of articles/broadcasts and readers/viewers.
- Value equivalency of media coverage.



10. Visitor Center

- Number of on-site visitors.
- Degree of on-site influence on travel within Indiana Dunes Country and Indiana Dunes.



11. Applied market research (visitor profile survey and internal reporting)

- Number of destination/Indiana Dunes Tourism program performance measures tracked.
- Number of destination visitors by type and spending.
- Key visitor demographics and behavior characteristics.



2015 DESTINATION BRANDING AND MARKETING PRIORITY PROGRAM CHECKLIST

Program (with itemized actions)	TIMING				STAFF	COMPLETED
	1Q	2Q	3Q	4Q		
Promotion and Marketing						
» Advertising - digital marketing	•	•	•	•	AD	
» Advertising - NITDC	•	•	•	•	AD	
» Beyond the Beach Discovery Trail promotion	•	•	•	•	AD	
» Branding and brand management	•	•	•	•	AD	
» Children character development	•	•	•	•	ED	
» Content marketing evaluation and research	•	•	•	•	ED/AD	
» Coupons (Dunes Deals, online and groups)	•	•	•	•	SPC	
» Database	•	•	•	•	SPC	
» Groups (meetings, motorcoach, reunions, sports, weddings)	•	•	•	•	NMD	
» Niche market development, promotion and servicing	•	•	•	•	NMD/AD	
» Partnership meetings	•	•	•	•	NMD	
» Partnership sales advertising (Activities Guide and niche guides)	•	•	•	•	SPC/AD	
» Photo management	•	•	•	•	AD	
» Social media engagement	•	•	•	•	NMD	
» Sports - niche development	•	•	•	•	NMD	
» The 3 Dune Challenge	•	•	•	•	AD/PD	
» Top 10 lists (Must See and Do)	•	•	•	•	PD	
» Video production and promotion	•	•	•	•	ED	
» Website	•	•	•	•	AD	
Publications (guides) - printed and online:						
» Activities Guide (4-pager and tri-fold) (Annual)	•			•	PD	
» Art & Earth/Foodie Trail (new brand) - NITDC (2015)	•	•	•	•	AD/SPC	
» Beyond the Beach Discovery Trail (trail guide, education guide and map) (2015)	•	•			AD	
» Biking Map (branded BBDT) (2016)					PD	
» Birding (2016)				•	AD	
» Calendar of Events (Annual)			•	•	NMD/SPC	
» Event Planner (Annual)	•			•	NMD	
» Fishing Guide (2016)				•	PD	
» Indiana Dunes Country Dunes Deals (Annual)	•	•			ED/SPC	
» Indiana Dunes Country Culinary Tour (2015)	•	•			AD/ED	
» Kids Guide (2016)				•	NMD	
Research						
» Annual research project	•	•	•	•	ED/OD	
» Program performance measures and tracking	•	•	•	•	ED/AD	
Visitor Center						
» Visitor servicing and retail	•	•	•	•	OD/AD/ED	
» Promotional materials fulfillment and distribution	•	•	•	•	OD	
» Redesign and rebranding public space	•	•	•	•	ED/BRD/OD	
» Team training for concierges	•	•	•	•	OD	
AD Assistant Director ED Executive Director PD Promotions Director SPC Special Projects Coordinator BRD Board of Directors NMD Niche Market Director OD Operations Director						

DESTINATION PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

GOAL AND KEY PROJECTS

- Be a catalyst and endorse the development of attractions, events, hospitality services and related public infrastructure.
- Implement the action steps of the Indiana Dunes Tourism Product Development and Funding Plan.
- Work with NITDC as they rebrand Northern Indiana, the Art & Earth Trail and Foodie Trail.
- The development of new amenities and improvements of existing amenities at sites along the BBDT.
- Revitalization of the community branding effort.
- Continued trail development and trail connectivity, such as the DK Trail and Calumet Trail.
- Maintain and improve the Indiana Dunes Country Bike Route system.
- Implementation of the CSL findings for the development of sports in Indiana Dunes Country.
- Implementation of Product Development and Funding Plan.
- Update tourism investment opportunities prospectus annually or when new data is issued.
- Determine the next steps for the development of the South Shore Heritage Train.
- Encourage Blueways/Greenways development.
- Advocate the value of a comprehensive wayfinding plan for the county and all its communities.

CRITICAL FACTORS FOR SUCCESSFUL DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT

- Funding sources for development and maintenance of destination development projects.
- Resident and elected official support for development projects.
- Collaboration between partners for specific projects.

PROGRAMS AND MEASUREMENT INDICATORS

- Annual summary of Dunes-Kankakee Trail accomplishments.
- How many new initiatives developed or started with BBDT partners?
- How many signs needed replacing and repairing on the Indiana Dunes Country Bicycle Routes and what changes occurred to improve the routes?
- Were we successful in encouraging one to three communities to engage in developing a community branding, development and marketing action plan?
- Summarize the actions taken in developing sports based on the CSL recommendations.
- What actions have been taken to move forward each project that is outlined in the Product Development and Funding Plan?
- How many tourism investment prospectuses were distributed in the calendar year?
- What efforts did Indiana Dunes Tourism make in encouraging Blueways/Greenways development?

2015 DESTINATION PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT PRIORITY PROGRAM CHECKLIST

Program (with itemized actions)	TIMING				STAFF	COMPLETED
	1Q	2Q	3Q	4Q		
Destination Product Development						
» Art & Earth Trail/Foodie Trail - (new brand) NITDC	•	•	•	•	ED/AD/SPC	
» Beyond the Beach Discovery Trail	•	•	•	•	AD/ED	
» Bike route maintenance		•			ED/AD	
» Blueways/Greenways (water and land trails)	•	•	•	•	AD	
» Community branding revival	•	•	•	•	ED	
» Dunes-Kankakee Trail	•	•	•	•	ED/BRD	
» Expo Center redevelopment	•	•	•	•	ED/BRD	
» Indiana Dunes Visitor Center redevelopment	•	•	•	•	ED	
» Industrial museum development	•	•	•	•	ED	
» International market development	•	•			ED	
» Investment Guide update	•	•			ED	
» Railroad viewing platform			•	•	ED	
» South Shore Heritage Train development	•	•	•	•	ED	
» Sports Cabinet development	•	•	•	•	ED/BRD	
» Sports facilities development	•	•	•	•	ED	
» Product Development and Funding Plan update	•	•	•	•	ED	
» The 3 Dune Challenge		•			ED	
» Wayfinding signage	•	•	•	•	ED	
AD Assistant Director ED Executive Director PD Promotions Director SPC Special Projects Coordinator BRD Board of Directors NMD Niche Market Director OD Operations Director						



INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS

GOAL AND TARGET AUDIENCES

Internal communications goal: Lead communications on the value of tourism to all county communities and the partnership roles and effectiveness of Indiana Dunes Tourism.

- Indiana Dunes Tourism Board of Directors.
- Elected and appointed state/county/community officials.
- Visitor industry operators/partners.
- Media representatives.
- Corporate leaders.
- Industry/trade association proponents.
- Residents.
- External communications goal: Motivate IDT's external audiences to visit our destination and extend their stay via earned media.
- Visitors who live outside the Northwest Indiana (Lake, Porter and LaPorte Counties) and in our key feeder markets of Chicago, Indianapolis and Fort Wayne.

- Visitors who meet the profile for each of our niches.
- Media representatives.

CRITICAL FACTORS FOR SUCCESSFUL COMMUNITY ADVOCACY

- United and influential board leadership.
- Ongoing mutual relationship building with key target audiences.
- Detailed Internal/External Communications Plan implementation.
- Earned media coverage in our feeder markets.

PROGRAMS AND MEASUREMENT INDICATORS

- Internal/External Communications success is identified under the Destination Branding and Marketing section.

2015 INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS PRIORITY PROGRAM CHECKLIST

Program (with itemized actions)	TIMING				STAFF	COMPLETED
	1Q	2Q	3Q	4Q		
» Crisis Plan management	•	•	•	•	PD	
» Internal/External Communications Plan implementation	•	•	•	•	PD	

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 BRD Board of Directors NMD Niche Market Director OD Operations Director

FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

GOAL AND TARGET AUDIENCES

Function as a fiscally responsible, transparent and accountable organization through effective planning and measurement.

- Professional staff.
- Professional, quality and reliable suppliers/vendors/subcontractors.

CRITICAL FACTORS FOR SUCCESSFUL FINANCIAL AND TALENT MANAGEMENT

- Continue to produce a rolling three-year strategic plan with a one-year Business Plan, Marketing Plan, Social Media Plan, Internal/External Communications Plan, Product Development and Funding Plan and a Finance and Administration Plan.
- An effective, professional Indiana Dunes Tourism team.
- Increase outside revenue streams.

PROGRAMS AND MEASUREMENT INDICATORS

1. Budgeting, measurement and reporting

- Monthly claims reviewed and approved.
- Income statement/balance sheet prepared and accepted.
- Budget reserves maintained.

- Executive director reviews and approves the following:
 - Monthly reconciliation forms with bank statements for each account.
 - Monthly cash flow statement.
 - Monthly budget status report.
 - Monthly credit card statements.

3. Human resource development

- Staff performance evaluation.
- Investment in education/professional development recorded and approved.

4. Administrative and building operations

- Building operating costs recorded and evaluated.
- Capital replacement account allocated and capital improvements made.

5. Community funding support

- Number of grant applicants.
- Number and value of grants distributed.

6. Venue funding

- Evaluation of effectiveness of venue usage funds.

2015 FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION PRIORITY PROGRAM CHECKLIST

Program (with itemized actions)	TIMING				STAFF	COMPLETED
	1Q	2Q	3Q	4Q		
Annual strategic and business planning						
» Strategic plan development and approval	•		•	•	ED/BRD	
» Annual business plan with budget allocation	•			•	ED/AD	
» DMAP accreditation				•	OD	
» Ongoing electronic board manual	•	•	•	•	OD	
Budgeting, measurement and reporting						
» Audited financial statements	•		•	•	OD	
» Ongoing budget usage and measurement	•	•	•	•	OD/ED/AD	
» Strategy driven budget development		•		•	OD/ED	
Human resource development						
» Performance evaluations	•				ED/AD	
» Professional development/training investment	•	•	•	•	AD/OD	
Administrative and building operations						
» Building and operations management	•	•	•	•	OD	
» Capital replacement	•	•	•	•	OD	
» National Park Service relationship development	•	•	•	•	ED	
» Office/administrative personnel	•	•	•	•	OD	
» Professional and quality subcontractors and vendors	•	•	•	•	OD	
» Travel expenses	•	•	•	•	OD	
Community funding support						
» County venues program evaluation	•			•	OD	
» Funding recipient required follow-up reporting	•	•	•	•	OD	
» Grant funding allocation and follow-up reporting	•	•	•	•	OD/ED/BRD	
» New grant program evaluated and modified	•	•			OD/ED/BRD	
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