

Volume III Issue 2

Centerpoint

A Newsletter for the Tourism Industry

Fall 1995

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your service

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 10% postconsumer waste

Recreational Homeowners Are Good for Local Business

A research project on seasonal housing in the Great Lakes States was recently conducted by the University of Wisconsin at Madison in collaboration with the Tourism Center. Funded by the North Central Regional Center for Rural Development, the project was undertaken in response to requests for information on the development implications of recreational homes in rural areas of northern Wisconsin and Minnesota.

While study participants were mainly from Wisconsin, general findings have implications for Minnesota, where many northern counties have significant numbers of recreational homes. The 1990 Census showed Minnesota counties with the highest percentages of recreational homes were Aitkin, 52%; Cass, 51%; Cook, 48%; Lake of the Woods, 40%; Crow Wing, 37%; and Hubbard, 35%. The state average is 6%.

Unique data was collected on the attitudes and opinions of local residents and seasonal homeowners using secondary data, surveys, and focus group interviews. The average recreational homeowner participating in the study was in his or her early 40s and had a higher income than local residents. Many married couples participated. Participants were primarily from the Fox River Valley Region of east-central Wisconsin.

A major finding of the study showed that the recreational homeowner plays an important role in generating local business activity. It was found that recreational housing development has positive local benefits in terms of generating revenues that often outweigh costs such as demands on local services.

Recreational homeowners in this study:

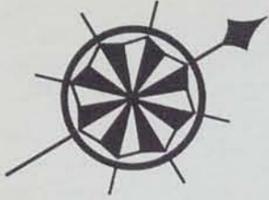
- used their properties roughly 22 days per month in the summer and 7 days per month in winter;
- spent an average of \$6000 per year on items relating to their recreational home;
- made 20-70% of their seasonal home-related purchases locally. These expenditures were primarily for construction/remodeling and dining/drinking.

In addition, the research showed that many recreational homeowners had previously visited the region as destination vacationers. As recreational homeowners become older, a significant number of recreational homes become retirement homes. This is particularly true for seasonal or "snowbird" retirement homes. It was also found that recreational homes are currently in high demand. While existing recreational properties are changing ownership, significant investments are being made to upgrade them.

Data indicated that residents were more strongly tied to local business activity and development of the local area than recreational homeowners. When compared to local residents, recreational homeowners were more apt to want limits on land development and on public access to waterways.

Communities that want to promote development in recreational home ownership can benefit from a better understanding of recreational homeowners and their local impacts.

This archival publication may not reflect current scientific knowledge or recommendations.
Current information available from University of Minnesota Extension: <http://www.extension.umn.edu>.



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A Newsletter for the Tourism Industry

What's Trendy about Tourism?

The **4th International Outdoor Recreation and Tourism Trends Conference** was held in St. Paul Minnesota May 14-17, 1995. Tourism Center faculty played a key role in organizing and hosting the conference which was attended by over 400 people. Five keynote speeches highlighted the conference which offered 46 different workshops. Summarized here are some of the key trends presented.

Copies of conference proceedings and the *Trend Tracker* containing one page listings of significant trends related to each workshop are available. Contact Jerrilyn Thompson, Forest Resources Department, University of Minnesota, 612/624-3699.



Participants look at new recreational equipment for people with disabilities.

Key Tourism Trends

- ▲ There is increased popularity of risk recreation activities.
- ▲ Recreation services are being offered by non-recreation tourism businesses.
- ▲ Outdoor recreation decisions will be influenced by new and modified equipment such as specially equipped wheelchairs.
- ▲ Peak traffic in some parks exceeds that of many metropolitan roads.
- ▲ There is an increase in visitors to parks and recreation areas.
- ▲ The demand for outdoor recreation on public lands is outpacing the supply of public lands.
- ▲ Landowner perceptions of liability are often greater than actual legal risks.
- ▲ Travelers are seeking authentic culture as an educational component of the family vacation.
- ▲ Lifestyle changes include women in leadership, longer-lasting marriages, couples caring for elderly parents, two-income families, and a need to be closer to family.
- ▲ Small businesses and rural areas need to improve service quality to compete.
- ▲ "Urbanization" of rural services such as lodging and food is changing the small town individuality of rural communities.
- ▲ The growing demand for alternative tourism experiences will result in the development of ecotourism resorts and new tourism strategies.
- ▲ Two to four day getaways to rural areas are becoming more common than longer vacations.
- ▲ People with disabilities will have greater leisure expectations.
- ▲ Partnerships and collaborative efforts are using resources more effectively and efficiently.
- ▲ The Internet is changing the way business is being done.

For the Asking ...

Q: What are the opportunities for advertising my resort on the Internet?

A: Increasingly, travel and other businesses are putting information on the Internet. There are opportunities for free listings and paid ads. The Internet is full of lodging lists, restaurant guides, attraction descriptions, transportation options, city, state and even country guides. The biggest area of commercial use is on the World Wide Web, an aspect of Internet that allows fancy text, graphics, photo graphs, and even sound to be used in listings and ads. While some successes have been reported, it remains to be seen how worthwhile a tool the Internet will be for businesses. Little research has been conducted to document the response.

Individual businesses should strongly consider free listing opportunities. The Minnesota Office of Tourism has developed a home page (directory) on the Web which lists categories of travel opportunities by its four travel regions. Subcategories include: *Where to Stay, Places to Go, Arts Calendar, Sports Calendar, and Misc. Calendar*. Call 1-800-657-3737 for more information. In addition, some Minnesota cities have home pages that include lodging listings.

Your business doesn't have to have an Internet connection to take advantage of the opportunity. Addresses and phone numbers, especially 1-800 numbers, in listings can produce good response. However, people using the Internet may wish to respond directly to your Internet address with inquiries and reservation requests while they are online. Thus, an e-mail address on the information highway helps! The Internet may indeed be a new marketing opportunity for the tourism industry.

Glenn Kreag

For the Asking is a regular feature of *Centerpoint*. Readers should direct brief tourism questions to the Tourism Center, 116 Classroom Office Building, University of Minnesota, 1994 Buford Ave., St. Paul, MN 55108. Center faculty will answer questions in each issue.



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SHORT TAKES...

Cocciarelli Leaves Center... Research Fellow, Janet Cocciarelli, has left the Center to pursue career opportunities with a relief services organization. Janet was instrumental in the development of the *Minnesota At Your Service* program and provided key management assistance on the Ghana project. All of us at the Center wish her well.

Erkkila Elected to Board... Center staffer, Dan Erkkila, was recently elected to a two-year term on the board of directors of the CenStates Chapter of the Travel and Tourism Research Association. CenStates covers eleven central states.

Gartner Honored... Center Director, William Gartner, received the *Presidents' Award* at the CenStates Travel and Tourism Research Association's conference held in Lexington, Kentucky, in September. The award recognizes outstanding, long-term service to the association.

Minnesota At Your Service Goes Statewide

The *Minnesota At Your Service* customer service program makes its debut across the state this fall. Approximately 50 industry representatives from around the state have been trained as instructors and more than 800 staff and managers from tourism businesses have already completed the customer service training component. The program helps participants provide A+ service via the four A's of service: attitude, attention, action and appearance.

"*Minnesota At Your Service* really is an inspiring program," says recent trainee, Patti Watt, of Waldheim Resort in Finlayson. "It taught me that I have the control to make or break the customer's experience," she states. "I learned about working as a team and how to develop a positive attitude. It enabled me to make the change."

Instructors are offering the course throughout Minnesota this year. For information on *Minnesota At Your Service* training opportunities in your area, contact the Tourism Center, 612/624-4947.



Sandy Lien, Education Director, Minnesota Restaurant, Hotel and Resort Associations, leads customer service training.



William Gartner, Director

Off the Top

Approximately 2½ years ago the Tourism Center began a process of restructuring. Over this time we have developed programs, based on industry input, in the areas of Business Retention and Expansion, Service Quality (Minnesota At Your Service), Rural Tourism Development, Certified Festival Management and conducted special conferences. We are now entering into a period of program delivery and must make sure the industry has the opportunity to take advantage of these quality programs.

To that end we have also restructured our Advisory Board. We have three categories of Board membership. Standing seats are held by all the major tourism-related private sector associations or organizations in the state. These Board members are selected by their constituencies and serve for two-year terms. A second category consists of public sector representatives and selected members of the tourism industry. These three-year, at-large seats, are filled through appointment of

the Center Director. A third category is reserved for permanent membership by organizations, associations, etc. that have entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with the Center. These are permanent seats filled by the Center Director. Currently only the Minnesota Office of Tourism holds a permanent seat.

Center faculty believe that this restructuring will benefit members of Minnesota's tourism industry. The programs we have developed are of high quality and respond to the needs identified by a cross-section of Minnesota tourism. The Board members are a direct conduit back to their constituents. We hope that through this process more people will not only become aware of our programs, but make use of them. The success of our restructuring depends on how well we deliver what we have spent much time developing. I hope you will hear more about us in the coming months and find an opportunity to sample some of what we have to offer.

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Tourism Center Mission...

to lead in providing education, research and outreach services that enhance the understanding of travel and tourism and its relationship to people, communities, industry and the environment

TOURISM CENTER
 MINNESOTA EXTENSION SERVICE
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