

So Your Community Wants Travel/Tourism?

Guidelines for Attracting and Serving Visitors

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Travel/tourism presently ranks as Minnesota's third largest industry and generated in excess of \$5 billion in travel expenditures, more than a \$1 billion payroll and some 108,000 jobs in 1986.¹ This importance in the Minnesota economy parallels growth in the travel industry nationwide. More than 150 million U.S. residents and over 20 million persons from other countries travel annually within the U.S.

There are three kinds of travelers: pleasure travelers we know as tourists, people traveling for personal reasons, and business travelers. The language is confusing. For example, the U.S. Census of Travel describes a tourist as anyone traveling 100 miles or more from home. It is becoming more common to talk, instead, about **visitors**—anyone who travels. In this publication, there is no need to sort out recreational, personal purposes, or business pursuits as reasons for travel. The cash registers of your community do not attempt to make that distinction either. It is more important to consider the service to, and economic benefit from, all who visit your community—regardless of distance or travel purpose.

Nearly Every Community Could Increase Its Income From Serving Visitors

All communities have visitors and businesses to serve them. The amount of travel income generated and the scope of visitors' services available depend on many factors including location, travel routes, and most important, the types of attractions that persuade travelers to come and stay, use local services, and thereby contribute to the community.

Most Minnesota communities could increase their visitor industry substantially. This is true even where travel/tourism is now an important element or the most dominant economic sector, since few communities really get it all together for serving visitors. In outlining a strategy to expand the visitor industry, this publication describes:

- Impressions and perceptions about the travel/tourism industry
- The components of travel/tourism
- Benefits and costs of the visitor industry
- An action plan to get going to attract and host travelers

¹1986: most recent figures available.

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Community Leaders Need to Understand Travel/Tourism

Many communities fail to reach their travel/tourism potential because the industry is widely misunderstood. Some of the following situations are common:

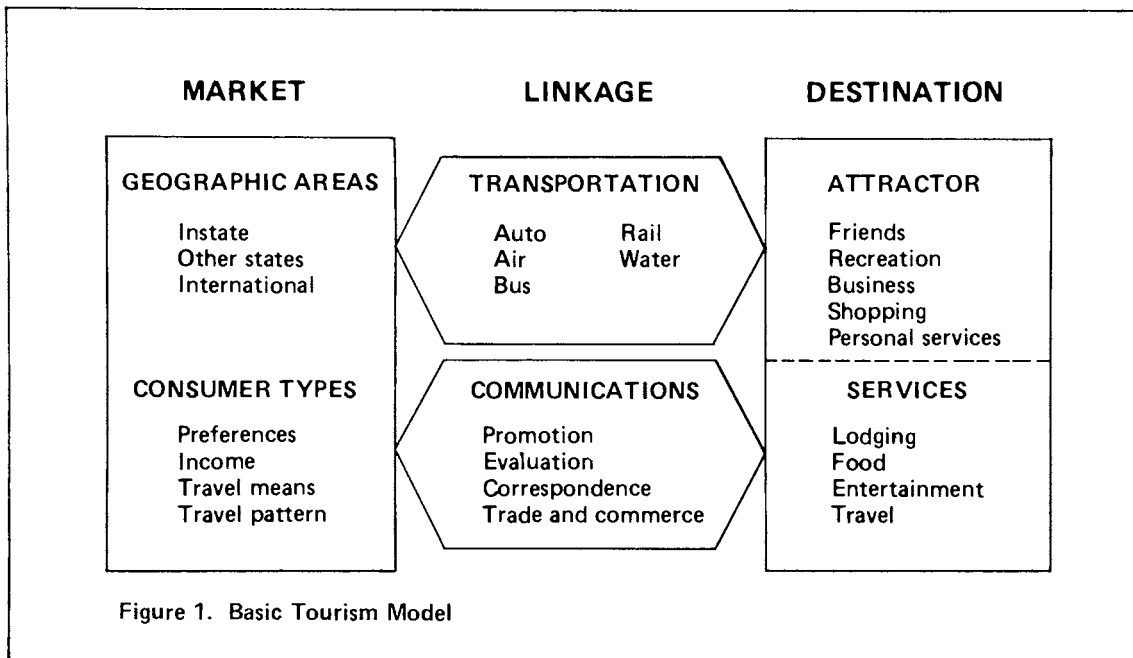
- A visitor is thought of as a unique kind of person, but actually visitors are just ordinary people, away from home for a variety of reasons. Remember, any time you are out of your home community, you are a visitor.
- Good data about travel/tourism are difficult to obtain, since separating sales to residents from sales to visitors is difficult.
- The idea of a visitor industry is sometimes hard to grasp, since travel produces some intangibles that cannot be seen or felt. Actually, travel produces services and life experiences that are essential to our well-being and mental health; furthermore, it provides jobs, profits, and tax base just like any other industry.
- Many think only of pleasure travelers as tourists and fail to consider business travelers. While the distinction is useful for some purposes, it is not realistic when assessing visitor-generated income. Most travelers need food, lodging, entertainment, and various commodities regardless of travel purpose.

Much travel is multipurpose. For example, a business person travels to a community 200 miles away to transact financial business. A spouse comes along to visit friends during the day. Later, they see a play and go out to dinner. Consider an individual who travels for a Friday business meeting but stays for the weekend to attend professional baseball games. Or a vacation traveler could plan a travel route to contact an important business associate.

In each instance, the key consideration to the community is this: These travelers are attracted by the community's array of businesses, government headquarters, amenities, shopping, and personal services. The community has developed a unique set of opportunities to induce travel and the purchase of local goods and services by visitors.



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The Overall Travel/Tourism System: Destination, Market, Linkages

Travel/tourism is intricate, requiring the host community to pay attention to three major components (figure 1).

- 1) The destination area**—where travelers go. Every community is a destination area for certain travelers. The destination area is made up of **the travel attractors**, or the reasons why people travel, and **hospitality services**, the means whereby the community provides goods and services to the visitor and generates income from these sales.
- 2) The market**—the people who travel. The market can be described by their home location, various demographics such as income and age, their reasons for travel, activity or lifestyle patterns, mode of travel, where they stay, or by other service needs.
- 3) The linkages**—the connections between the market and the destination area, including an information/communication system, transportation, and research.

Travel Attractors Define a Destination Area

To have a travel industry there must be a reason for people to come to your community. Each area has its own unique resources for attracting travelers: these capabilities can be developed and improved. Today's market of multi-purpose travel requires attention to a multiple set of appeals. The more a community offers visitors in shopping, business, aesthetic qualities, and things to see and do, the better its opportunities for travel income. Here are several major reasons for traveling to specific locales: see if your community can use these assets to expand its travel industry.

Outdoor Recreation.—Many Minnesotans might name outdoor recreation as the main element of the state's visitor industry. Outdoor recreation is given as a desirable activity by 89 percent of all U.S. adults and accounts for more than 480 million annual recreation hours by Minnesotans.

Outdoor recreation activities vary from the use of motorized equipment such as snowmobiles and power boats, to canoeing, hiking, cross-country skiing, and sailing; and from leisure pursuits such as hunting and fishing, to appreciative activities like nature photography. Winona's birdwatching brochure is an example of one community's appeal to a specific outdoor recreation market with potentially significant economic impact. Personal expenditures for outdoor recreation may range from thousands of dollars annually for owning a second home or recreational vehicle, to minimal amounts for an afternoon hike near home. Outdoor recreation as an attractor requires providing visitors with access to high quality resources to realize full travel/tourism potential.

Sightseeing and Entertainment. Sightseeing and entertainment account for 13 percent of those traveling in the U.S. and 8 percent of those traveling in Minnesota, but varies widely across the state. For example, 30 percent of all trips to the North Shore of Lake Superior are for sightseeing, which can include viewing natural wonders and scenery, wildlife, architecture, cultural, and historic areas. Entertainment may mean going to sporting events, to the theater, to musical performances, to art or history museums, and to other kinds of performances and activities. A stay in a hotel or motel may in itself be the entertainment attraction. To illustrate, Shakopee has become an entertainment center for the Twin Cities by developing a concentration of attractions like a race track, an amusement park, a major fall festival, and a bingo facility.



Visitors are attracted by unique shopping opportunities and personal services that are distinctive of the local area. (Village of the Smoky Hills, Park Rapids)



Annually, travelers in Minnesota have over 1,200 community festivals to choose from. These events often have significant economic impact.

Community Events or Festivals. These may be celebrations or highlights of some local or area activity built on a fact of history, or based on a natural resource. Just glancing through the *Minnesota Explorer* newspaper (Minnesota Office of Tourism publication), it is possible to find special events created around harvest time (Maple Syrup Festival in Annandale), foods (Rutabaga Festival in Askov), fish (Walker's Eelpout Festival), physical fitness (numerous bike rides), and music (Polka Days at Ironworld), to name just a few. These festivals can reinforce other attractions or be the main draw for travelers. They can fill slack times of year, distribute visitors over a longer season, and introduce newcomers to the town and its offerings. Celebrations may primarily be intended as an event for local people, for visitors, or most often, for both.

Business and Convention (Conference) Travel. Business and convention travel in the U.S. accounts for about 14 percent of all person-trips.² Modern business depends on travel as a source of supply, a means of sales outlets, and a way of obtaining technicians and consultants for various kinds of professional services. Often travel is generated because the headquarters of operations ranging from government agencies to business corporations are in a given community. Attracting conventions depends heavily on the community's hospitality services and its amenities—food, lodging and entertainment. Mankato, billing itself as a "Wellness Capital," has made a name for itself in attracting professional groups to a community that stresses healthy cuisine and fitness facilities.

Population: Visits from Friends and Relatives. The largest proportion of all person-trips² in the U.S. (38 percent) is to visit friends and relatives. The population base of many communities is therefore an important travel attractor.

²A person-trip is defined as one-person making one trip to a point at least 100 miles from home. Two people traveling together are counted as two person-trips.

Travelers who visit friends are often ignored because they are perceived to be economically unimportant to the host community. However, the activity patterns of people when they visit as well as when they have guests contradict this assumption. Often special activities such as going to the theater, eating out, and shopping await friends' visits. A study in the International Falls area found that 10 percent of the people eating at restaurants there were primarily "visiting friends and relatives." A Duluth study found that out-of-town travelers visiting family and friends spent an above-average dollar amount in the Duluth-Superior area, in comparison to other groups. For a community to achieve the most from this travel/tourism attractor, it is important for the resident population to have good information about the community, be proud of it, and be willing to share it and show it off. Recent promotional events such as Duluth's Reunion or Tennessee's year-long Homecoming are organized ways to encourage these family and friendship visits.

Other Personal Business. Personal travel includes going to school and attending to personal legal affairs, finance, or health concerns. The better equipped the community is to provide these services, the more likely it is to supply other travel services to those who visit.

Shopping. Shopping can be considered a trade center function of a community. While shopping can be both personal or business-related, it is treated separately here to emphasize that the better the wholesale, retail, and supply functions of a given community, the more likely it is to generate travel and trade with other communities. Studies in Duluth found that visitors who said shopping was a major reason for their trip, spent nearly three times more than the average out-of-town traveler. Travelers are definitely a part of the profit picture for retail businesses.

The potential for shopping includes sales opportunities designed especially for visitors—art, crafts, sporting goods, gifts, and souvenirs,—as well as standard items. Where



Minnesota's major interpretive centers for agriculture, mining, and forestry combine natural resources and history as major travel attractors. (Forest History Center, Grand Rapids)



Increasingly, public/private partnerships provide more diverse recreation opportunities.

possible, unique items produced locally should be available as these contribute directly to the income of the community. The growth of crafts cooperatives that sell directly to visitors is evidence of this trend.

Travel Node. Many people travel to a community simply because they cannot avoid it—the train, bus, or plane goes there, or the road leads through. Whether or not a community capitalizes on this travel node function depends on its impulse appeal and its ability to offer readily available services.

Drawing travelers from a nearby highway is not automatic. The fact that 10,000 automobiles a day pass by is no guarantee any will stop. Studies in Duluth illustrate the problem dramatically. It was found that 30 percent of the through traffic did not stop in Duluth, a city of 100,000 population. Services were available, but did the traveler know about them? And were they readily accessible? Overcoming these conditions requires real ingenuity, as the towns along Interstate 90 in southern Minnesota have found in trying to differentiate their appeal.

Destinations Need Hospitality Facilities and Services

Together with attractions, hospitality services are an essential component of a successful travel/tourism destination area. Visitors must be able to meet their daily needs, as well as special requirements, while away from home. Include restaurants and lodging in this category, as well as auto repair and service stations, gift shops, many retail establishments, groceries, and many of the entertainment and recreation operations. Much of the income generated by travelers is spent at these hospitality businesses, many of which are relatively small, single-family operations. Here are some guidelines for developing adequate hospitality services:

- Hospitality operations need to offer variety to fit the changing demand for lodging, food, and other services.

- Quality in hospitality offerings is an absolute must. Personal service may be an attraction in itself, as bed and breakfasts have demonstrated.
- Hospitality services usually are a part of the private enterprise sector. Although private business is not directly responsive to public decisionmaking, the community can encourage and influence development through public education about investment opportunities, assisting current businesses to be profitable, and by developing visitor guidelines that spell out hospitality service needs and priorities.
- Hospitality services, such as resorts and campgrounds, are as much a part of travel appeal as lakes and woods: they provide essential access to outdoor recreation.

Identify Potential Markets

Who will buy the products your community is marketing? One certain way to fail is to try to please everyone. Instead focus on target markets that are strongly attracted to opportunities available in the community. A target market is a group of individuals sharing common characteristics, toward whom marketing efforts can be directed. Target markets can be defined by several factors—geography, characteristics like age, sex and income, and behavior. The publication *Community Travel and Tourism Marketing* listed in the bibliography outlines specific methods for identifying potential markets.

The process of dividing the total market into high-potential target markets is called market segmentation and involves these steps:

- Identifying and describing the different segments that make up the total market.
- Evaluating the economic potential of each segment.
- Focusing on one or more market segments.

Linkages: Connecting the Community and the Target Markets

There are three types of linkages. The **information/communication link** is the means whereby communities and visitors exchange information. Advertising is a part of communication, as is visitor feedback about the destination. Marketing programs, weather information, road signs, and personal communications by mail or telephone, visitor information centers and public interpretation of an area's history are among the diverse actions that help a consumer learn more about a place, and help a community gain information about a potential visitor. The end product of this communication should be a destination that meets traveler needs and therefore, increased visits.

The **transportation linkage** provides the physical means for travelers to get from home to the destination. This covers every means of travel including air, highway, rail, and water. The costs of travel in terms of time, effort, money, and safety can give a destination an edge in competition for visitors. However, the stronger the attraction base, the easier it is for a community to overcome transportation disadvantages.

Finally, **research** information flows between the community and markets to advise the destination area of changing conditions in the travel/tourism marketplace.

The Impacts—Pros and Cons—of Developing Travel/Tourism

Your community has little choice whether visitors will come; travel is inherent in today's world. But you can influence to what degree you develop and take control of travel as an industry. Community leaders need to consider how the community can take advantage of the positive benefits and reduce the negative effects of travel/tourism.

Pros—Community Benefits from the Travel Industry

Income from Travelers. Travel/tourism provides income to the host community. It may offer a chance for a town that relies on a single industry to diversify its economic base or hope to communities in decline. To realize income from visitors, the community must have something to sell. The opportunity is illustrated in Minnesota by Cook County in northeastern Minnesota, where overnight lodging can accommodate more people than live permanently in the county.

Motels, resorts, or campgrounds do not gain at the expense of other community segments. Industry studies consistently have found that visitor purchases impact all segments of the community. Nearly all retailers gain directly from tourists. In 1986, the Minnesota travel dollar expenditure breakdown was:

Lodging15
Food and Beverage24
Transportation44
Entertainment09
Retail purchases08
Total	\$1.00

Travel brings in new outside dollars to a community. Money spent by visitors filters through the local economy; much of it remains there. In addition to gains from direct visitor sales, many other community elements gain indirectly by supplying the businesses that make these direct sales. This re-spending of travel-generated income is called the multiplier effect.

Travel/Tourism Jobs. There are an estimated 108,000 jobs directly related to travel in Minnesota. Many of these paychecks compare favorably with employment in other industries. However, the average pay in the food and lodging services is low, and some jobs are part-time. But a positive aspect of this situation is that part-time or seasonal jobs often match employment needs of youth and second wage-earners in the family.

The number of jobs in the industry is generally stable because travel is such a major part of current lifestyles that it can weather many kinds of economic downturns. If energy supplies become scarce, travel patterns may change to more recreation close to home, but the emphasis on the personal rewards of travel appear to guarantee expansion in the years ahead. Evidence for this continued travel growth comes from the U.S. Travel Data Center: studies indicate person-trips in the U.S. continue to increase. Participation rates for outdoor recreation activities as reported in *Americans Outdoors* also continue to increase rapidly.

Tax Dollars to Government. All levels of government benefit from travel/tourism tax dollars. A visitor pays sales, use, gasoline, cigarette, liquor, and entertainment taxes. As a consumer, the visitor helps pay real estate, business, and income taxes because these are paid by business firms from customer revenue. This makes the traveler a major tax contributor and usually not a major tax consumer.

Diversity and Quality of Community Facilities. A major visitor industry may result in swimming pools, tennis courts, high quality food services, increased shopping selections, and evening entertainment—largely financed by travelers, but also available for residents. Without visitors the community might not be able to support these facilities or services that benefit everyone. Some communities initiate community events and pageants and put their heritage as well as current industry or resources on display.

Frequently these community improvement activities result in greater local pride. Tourism helps a town become more attractive because to draw and satisfy visitors, the community must be visually appealing.

Attracting Industry and Investors. Many kinds of industry prefer to locate and operate in relatively high-amenity areas. A community that maintains its resource quality and offers high quality service designed to attract visitors also may find that it is an attractive location for industries.

Visitors are also potential investors in a community. A visitor who likes a community may choose to relocate a business there, purchase property, or become a permanent resident. New blood and investment stimulate the community's economic growth.

Cons—Community Costs and Liabilities from the Travel Industry

Conflicts with Visitors. Travel/tourism means that strangers will come to your community. Their activities may conflict with residents' activities. Visitor-resident competition for local services and facilities, on the highway, in food services, and at local attractions may be one of the most serious negative aspects of travel/tourism. For example, hunting is a big part of the local lifestyle in many parts of Minnesota, meaning that conflicts over resource use must be negotiated before hunting is promoted as a primary visitor attraction. Careful design and community planning for visitor services and access can do much to minimize visitor-resident conflicts.

Internal Community Conflict. In some communities a "travel/tourism industry" versus "rest-of-the-community" feeling develops into antagonism. The entire community should be kept informed and, as much as possible, involved in local decisions and activities in the travel/tourism sector to prevent a "we" vs. "they" attitude from developing.

Environmental Quality Concerns. People-pressure on local resources and services may cause environmental deterioration and pollution. Will these pressures eventually destroy the qualities that now attract people?

Job Quality. Many entry level, travel-related jobs are seasonal and low-paying.

Added Pressure on Public Services. Travelers increase the demands on many public services: roads and streets, parking, water, sewer, trash, restrooms, health, and safety. Will the tax revenues from visitors offset the additional expense to government? In addition, operational costs occur once the tourism program grows to a size and stature that requires formal administration. Again, consider financial costs and benefits from these added investments in the travel/tourism industry.



Pride in your community can be shared with visitors by attention to how your community looks. Many cities, like Fergus Falls, have rediscovered their waterfront and its appeal.

How To Get Going

Many communities can build travel/tourism into a major industry. It takes many of the same inputs required for development of most other industries:

- A vision of the potential.
- Community understanding and support created through information and education.
- Leadership in securing new investments, both public and private.
- Management of human, financial, and natural resources.
- Building of the community's image in the minds of travelers.

What Can You Do? Where Do You Start?

Begin by sounding out your travel/tourism ideas with associates. These may be friends, neighbors, business people, civic leaders, or city officials. Bring the subject up for discussion in a group you belong to: the Chamber of Commerce, your civic club, the city council, the county board of commissioners, or a similar community oriented organization or agency. At least one community oriented organization should make a formal commitment to be the lead travel industry group, with the acknowledgement, and support of other groups. Most often a Chamber of Commerce or Visitors Bureau will play the lead role.

Talk with others who can assist with organizing and planning: the Minnesota Office of Tourism, your regional tourism association, your County Extension Director, and the Tourism Center of the University. With a core group interested in travel/tourism in place, develop a program. Positive steps suggested in order to move forward follow.

Study Your Present Travel Industry's Resources. Study of travel-serving facilities, resources and marketing programs should be done systematically. Start with an assessment of current conditions. How much tourism do you have now?



Too often, a tear-down philosophy diminishes the travel appeal of a community. Many buildings of the past are worthy of refurbishing into visitor attractions. (Central School, Grand Rapids)

What are your community's natural, historical, and cultural resources?

- Prepare an inventory of your present attractions and travel-related businesses. Group existing travel/tourism resources into the categories suggested by the model (figure 1).
- Ask yourself why anyone would come to your community. As the previous section outlined, the attractors for visitors may be natural, constructed, historical, economic, educational, or human services.
- What services and facilities do you have? Without a "sales package," a set of attractions and services, the local community cannot maximize economic gain from travelers. Remember, transportation is a special part of services. Travel access affects both the kinds of people and numbers who come to your community.

Set Goals. What kind of travel/tourism do you want, and how much is an appropriate amount for your community? You and other community leaders should consider what you want the local travel industry to look like in the future. Write these goals down. This vision will certainly change over time, and should reflect widespread public participation.

Determine Needs For Travel/Tourism Development. What development is needed? Action is required if you are to realize community goals for economic development.

● What really "big idea" or "major theme" can you identify around which to build a destination image? Can one be developed? Select or create a distinct image that sets your community apart from others; focus on its uniqueness. The easiest example of this strategy is a community like New Ulm that builds on its German heritage. The Park Rapids area has turned its location as the birthplace of the Mississippi River into the "Land of Legends" theme.

- What public investment is needed?
- What new facilities would round out the attractions base?
- What commercial visitor services are needed?
- Are basic community services adequate—roads, water systems, waste disposal, and utilities?

Plan For Environmental Quality. How will you maintain or improve your community's environmental quality? Environmental quality should be more important to residents who live in a locale 365 days a year than to travelers who are there only for a few days or weeks, but it is essential to attract and keep visitors. Would you spend hard-earned money to vacation in a place with polluted waters, unappealing views, dirty streets, poorly maintained landscape, or noise intrusions? Overcrowding is another potentially serious problem for residents and visitors alike. Good design can help greatly to reduce the problems. Consider:

- Design of road access and circulation patterns—does all the traffic snarl up at certain spots?



Bus tours are a rapidly growing segment in travel/tourism. Familiarization ("fam") tours for travel writers or agents are one way of stimulating this interest.

- Space for certain outdoor recreation activities—those that require relative isolation, like hiking, nature study, or cross-country skiing, to separate them from other more active sports.
- Design facilities for special experiences—visitors can be concentrated at well-designed, special interest facilities, thereby minimizing conflict with on-going community activities.
- Keep in mind the need for services to the handicapped in both public and private facilities.

Your community may find it beneficial to participate in self-help programs such as the Governor's Design Team, Minnesota Community Improvement Program, Minnesota Main Street, or Minnesota Beautiful to achieve environmental quality goals. Contact the Minnesota Department of Trade and Economic Development for more information.

Study Markets. Who is your present market that visits now, why do they come, and what do they do? Look at present traveler statistics, but reach beyond, asking what the future market potential for your community might be.

Provide Adequate Information/Direction/Interpretation.

—What kind of information-direction-interpretation program is needed? Use a broad definition of marketing in attempting to link attractions and services with the market. How do people learn about what your community has to offer? How readily accessible is this information? Included is the development of brochures, directional and informational signs, traveler information centers, advertising, and promotion.

Who should prepare information for the public? This activity is best looked at as an overall system spanning all industry segments from the individual business operation to the state. Some of the responsibility is Minnesota's; some belongs to the region of which your community is a part. The community must play a part, and each firm must see that the traveling public has information about itself.



Providing good directional signs that identify with a major feature of heritage of a community adds appeal for visitors. (Pipestone)

Interpretive programs and signs can create interest and "hold" the traveler. More and more, opportunities to learn are listed as a motive for travel. Today's visitors want to know about the economy and people of the places visited. They want to examine the history and savor the lifestyle. Interpretation takes place in more than a museum. It can be shown in the architectural style, in tours of industrial plants, in retail stores, food and lodging places, and in special events that the community develops.

Educate Your Community. Is there broad-based community support to attract visitors? In the average community, many citizens resist the change increased travel/tourism may bring. As outlined earlier, few realize that most parts of the community can gain from visitors and how traveler impacts can be managed. This lack of awareness about travel/tourism tradeoffs means that ongoing education is needed in the community. It may include public meetings, programs in civic clubs and ongoing newspaper, radio and television coverage about the travel/tourism industry. One example of a training program for employees who meet and greet the traveling public is outlined in the final section of this publication.

Encourage Community Appreciation And Pride. Do residents exhibit real pride in the community? This is the ultimate in sales—community enthusiasm by its residents. Every community has its unique natural endowments and its own heritage of achievement. All too often these are not appreciated by those who live there. Often residents may direct visitors to another community for good meals or things to see and do! Perhaps you will want to expand your educational "know your community" programs to include a program of community pride. The goal might be to develop a first rate living environment and to create awareness of this in school children and adults who live in your community.

Manage Travel/Tourism: An Ongoing Job. The economy is dynamic. What worked in the beginning to develop travel may not be best later on: your own residents change as the generations progress. To maintain a strong travel/tourism industry:

- Monitor the system. Is your industry stable, growing, or shrinking?
- Adapt to new technology affecting travel or services.
- How are your customers' needs changing? Adapt to basic market shifts as income, tastes, family, travel patterns, and lifestyles change.
- Maintain environmental quality. Avoid blight as facilities age; but conduct renewal without a "tear down" philosophy.
- Reexamine your travel industry goals. What's the next step? Do they need to be advanced? Can they be made more realistic in the light of experience?

Education to Better Serve Visitors in the Community

Education of retail service people, both business owners and employees, is essential to help them recognize travelers and provide information that will make their visit more pleasant. One program to reinforce hospitality skills in employees and employers is the Community Hospitality Seminar. A model outline for this half-day session follows.³ Its goals include:

- Providing information about services, facilities, and attractions of Minnesota and your community—and instilling pride in these features.
- Developing understanding of the value and responsibility of serving visitors.
- Recognizing the economic impacts of the visitor industry.
- Developing constructive attitudes toward visitors and increasing the level of sales-sense and guest relations skills.

Who Should Attend a Hospitality Seminar?

All those who meet or serve visitors in your community should attend. Traditionally we think of the innkeeper, the restaurant manager or the resort owner from the nearby lake. However, if you observe the activities of visitors, they are out doing things like making purchases in local retail outlets—grocery, drug, hardware stores, and gift shops. Travelers ask for directions and recommendations, and workers at these establishments are potential community hosts. Visitors will shape their impressions from contact with these local residents.

³Before proceeding with plans for such a seminar, check with your Regional Tourism Office or local County Extension Office. Efforts are being made to offer annually a statewide mass-media approach to hospitality training. It means having much of the state examine the quality of service and knowledge of Minnesota's travel/tourism resources at the same time. As this planning proceeds, it still includes many of the same presentations to be delivered locally.

A list of participants in hospitality training should include both the private and public sectors: lodging facilities, restaurants, retail businesses, attractions and recreation facilities, visitor information centers, service stations, and banks and financial institutions. Owners, managers, and employees are invited. Employees are important because they are the visible contacts with visitors, and shape visitor response to the community. Owners and managers instill goals in their entire organization.

Advance Preparation for the Seminar

At least a month before the event, a task force should be formed. It ought to represent organizations concerned with strengthening the travel industry: Visitor and Convention Bureaus, Chambers of Commerce, restaurant, resort, motel, hotel and campground associations, and the Minnesota Extension Service. The task force would assign responsibilities, select dates and places for the event, identify and contact presenters for the local parts of the program, and market the seminar within the community to build enthusiasm and participation.

Model Program: “Community Hospitality—Your Town”

1. Open with a brain teaser on Minnesota’s travel attractors. This exercise points out how little we often know about the product we have to sell to our guests.
2. The Value and Responsibility of Serving Visitors. A discussion about the economic and social impact of being a host community. Note what other communities are doing to enhance their travel/tourism industry and guidelines for improvement. Presenter: a knowledgeable spokesperson live or on video.
3. The Art of Hospitality. How to develop constructive attitudes toward the visitor and basic principles of good guest relations. Presenter: a motivational speaker.
4. The State Role in the Travel Industry. Review of the statewide marketing program and promotion publications. Outline of local joint-venture programs and other assistance available to communities. Presenter: spokesperson from one of the Regional Offices of Tourism.
- - - Break for refreshments - - -
5. Know Your Community. A series of presentations designed to update the information base for those who meet or serve visitors. Emphasis on being more effective in encouraging casual drop-in visitors to stop in the community and those already there to remain longer. Brief, yet comprehensive presentations delivered enthusiastically. Good visual aids such as slides, videotapes, charts, and diagrams add to the comments. Here are some suggested topics:
 - A “light touch” of history. Origin of place names within the area and history that defines the community’s heritage and cultural resources.

- Facilities and services to host visitors. A discussion of the overnight accommodations, food services, entertainment features, unique shopping opportunities and the like. Much of this information may exist already in brochures. Look over written promotional pieces to see how they can be used to better equip those who meet visitors.
 - The area’s recreation resources. An overview of the natural resources to serve both visitor and resident. The best method may be a narrated slide show that focuses on the quality, diversity, and quantity of such resources and how to access them. Use existing brochures and maps to complement the presentation.
 - The events and festival schedule for the year. Put this calendar in the hands of service personnel to help stimulate visitor participation and attendance at events. Highlight any new event.
 - A review of local marketing efforts. This presentation is designed to update local residents on the current efforts and investments to attract visitors. It is appropriate to reinforce the linkage between the local groups and regional or state agencies.
6. Wrap up and evaluation. A summary statement by the local program leader should complete the program by showing how the pieces fit together. A worksheet could be used to collect feedback from participants who might otherwise not share their opinions.

Other ideas may be incorporated in the program as lead-in or follow-up activities. Organize a bus tour for attendees to visit the major attractions of the area. Create a “Courtesy Contest” to identify and reward exceptional service. This may be done before the event as the attention-getter or after the seminar to emphasize hospitality as a local priority. Use buttons that identify the wearer as a trained host/hostess: “Smile, you’re in Benson,” “Ask me, I’m from Duluth,” or other appropriate slogans. Reward those who attend with a certificate of completion which can be posted in their business.

Above all, put a systematic, ongoing program in place to spread the word about travel/tourism in the community. Design activities aimed at the overall population to improve their awareness and support of the visitor industry. Work with your editor on regular news releases. Build in programs about local history at the schools. Consider a photo contest or create a slide set highlighting local points of interest. These efforts broaden participation in travel/tourism issues, and can only strengthen the ability of your community to attract and host visitors.

Support Resources to Help You Develop Your Travel/Tourism Industry

As your community moves toward enhancing your attraction base, its services and facilities for visitors, and local marketing programs, you may wish to consult with some of the following organizations:

Minnesota Office of Tourism:

Central Office	Field Offices
375 Jackson Street 250 Skyway Level St. Paul, MN 55101 (612) 296-5029 1-800/652-9747	Brainerd, (218) 828-2335 Duluth, (218) 723-4692; and Mankato, (507) 389-6258.

The state and field offices describe their role this way: "To market Minnesota's products and services that relate to travel, to maintain and increase the gross sales of Minnesota travel businesses, and to be responsive to Minnesota's community business and consumer needs as they relate to tourism."

The initial contact with the Office of Tourism should be made at the nearest field office. Joint venture marketing, including financial assistance and cooperative community marketing and promotion, are one source of assistance. Central office advice and assistance is available for group travel, international visitors, and meetings and convention planning.

Tourism Center, Minnesota Extension Service, University of Minnesota, 240 Coffey Hall, 1420 Eckles Avenue, St. Paul, MN 55108; (612) 624-3070 (or contact your local County Extension Office).

The Tourism Center provides educational programs and materials, research assistance, project advice and consultation, as your community explores ways of developing its travel/tourism industry. Publications of the Center, as noted in the bibliography, may be helpful in this process.

For information about specific segments of the travel industry you may wish to contact the offices of **appropriate trade associations**:

The Minnesota Resort Association, Minnesota Restaurant Association, and Minnesota Hotel & Motor Hotel Association are located at 871 Jefferson Avenue, St. Paul, MN 55102 (612/222-7401).

The Minnesota Motel Association and Minnesota Association of Campground Operators are located at 1000 East 146 Street, Suite 121G, Burnsville, MN 55337 (612/432-2228).

Minnesota Historic Bed and Breakfast Association, 649 West Third Street, Hastings, MN 55033 (612/437-3297).

Minnesota Association of Convention and Visitors Bureaus, 600 NCL Tower, 445 Minnesota Street, St. Paul, MN 55101-2108.

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Dedication

To: Uel Blank and Dayton Larsen, two of the three authors whose original work, titled, *So Your Community Wants Tourism?* is the basis of this revision. Uel, now retired, and Dayton, deceased, were tireless workers on behalf of Minnesota's travel/tourism industry.

To: Jane Preston, deceased, a friend and teacher. She often observed—"towns are like people and first impressions often count the most—and may last the longest," reminding us of the important role of hospitality when serving visitors.

This publication is based on and replaces two earlier Minnesota Extension publications: *So Your Community Wants Tourism?* CD-FO-9679 and *Know Your Community* CD-FO-0758.

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