

MN 2000:CTP-5/2



# Centerpoint

A Newsletter for the Tourism Industry

Volume V Issue 2

Fall 1997


## In this issue...

- **President Yudof Talks Tourism**
- **At Your Service Goes to Ghana**
- **Center to Study Transportation**
- **Making a Tourism Degree Program**
- **Agritourism Business Takes Off**



MINNESOTA EXTENSION SERVICE

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

 printed with agribased ink on recycled paper, 10% postconsumer waste

## Yudof Tours with Tourism Center



Photo courtesy of Wabasha County Herald

New University of Minnesota President Mark Yudof recently toured southeastern Minnesota along with Bill Gartner and Kent Gustafson of the Tourism Center. In addition to visiting LARK Toys in Kellogg, the president talked to local business owners and tourism promoters at a tourism round-table discussion in Wabasha.

During the discussion, some participants raised concerns that tourism in southern Minnesota is not promoted as much as in northern Minnesota. Dissatisfaction was also voiced about the lack of a

tourism-educated workforce. In response, Gartner outlined the proposed tourism degree program at the University of Minnesota which is designed to alleviate this problem.

"This visit was helpful in briefing President Yudof on tourism and related issues in southern Minnesota," says Center Director Bill Gartner. "Seeing these tourism businesses first-hand exemplifies the importance of tourism in economic development for the state."

*Phyllis W. Jenks*

University of Minnesota President Mark Yudof and his wife, Judy (right) pose by a large moose at LARK Toys in Kellogg, MN. With them are part of their entourage, Director of the Tourism Center, Bill Gartner (left) and the U of M Vice President Tom Swain.

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



# Centerpoint

A Newsletter for the Tourism Industry

## Tourism Center Receives Research Grant

The Tourism Center was recently awarded a research grant of \$120,000 from the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MN-DOT). The grant funds a study of transportation-related barriers to expanding Minnesota's share of international visitors. This area of research was identified by the state's tourism and travel industry (See Centerpoint, Fall 1996).

Aside from studies on travelers' modes of transportation, not much transportation-related tourism research has been done. While many studies have analyzed the travel decision process with respect to the most frequently encountered barriers, there is little research that pertains to transportation barriers specifically. Some studies have concluded that time and cost are the two most important barriers confronting potential visitors. Other frequently cited barriers are cultural distance between host and guest, quality of destination services and lack of information. This project will focus on barriers to increasing international visitation to Minnesota and within Minnesota. Specific study objectives are to:

- identify the most significant barriers (e.g., transportation, cultural) affecting international travel to and within Minnesota;

- describe the relative importance of each identified barrier to the travel decision process;
- relate each barrier to different market segments (e.g., air vs. road, familiar vs. unfamiliar); and
- describe actions that could be taken to reduce identified barriers.

It is expected that the study will:

- identify and reduce transportation barriers and increase international visitation to Minnesota;
- improve the intermodal transportation system within the state;
- spur the development of effective educational and marketing programs for international markets by the Minnesota Office of Tourism; and
- increase the number of international travelers and thus improve the international trade climate for Minnesota businesses.

The project is expected to be completed in July 1999. Research grants from MN-DOT are coordinated through the University's Center for Transportation Studies. For more information, call Linda Limback at (612) 624-4947.

Dan Erkkila

## At Your Service Program Goes International

The *At Your Service* program reached a new landmark this summer when it was licensed for use in Ghana, West Africa. Tourism Center faculty member Cynthia Messer traveled to Ghana in August to deliver the program to more than 200 tourism industry staff and managers in the key tourist areas of Accra and the Central Region. The program will continue to be offered in Ghana by local instructors. The training was held under a partnership arrangement between the Ghana Tourist Board and MUCIA/Ghana.

Based on the Tourism Center's highly successful *Minnesota At Your Service* program, *At Your Service* was tailored for an international audience. "The tourism industry in Ghana is just developing, and this program provided important training in understanding and meeting the wants, needs and expectations of the international visitor to Ghana," says Messer. Americans, particularly African-Americans, are a primary market for Ghana because of their interest in the castles and forts used during the slave trade. The Elmina and Cape Coast castles in the Central Region are designated World Heritage sites.

This opportunity developed out of the Tourism Center's work on a USAID-funded tourism development project in Ghana. The new Executive Director of the Ghana Tourist Board, Mr. Nana Amoo Adade Boamah, is a graduate of the University of Minnesota's Carlson School of Management.

"This project not only represents an exciting new market for the *At Your Service* program, but provides a fresh perspective and a wealth of information to use in the Minnesota program," Messer states.

## Quality Service Program Coming in '98

Tourism Center staff are also working on a service quality program for managers to be introduced in 1998. The new program will complement the *Minnesota At Your Service* program for front-line staff and managers and offer an in-depth approach to building and maintaining a quality-focused service organization. Like the Minnesota program, the tools provided and skills taught will allow managers to evaluate and improve aspects of the business that directly affect quality service including leadership, staff and systems.

Center staff recently conducted a series of focus groups about the program with members of Minnesota's tourism industry, and will be field-testing portions of the program in the coming months.

Cynthia Messer

## Agritourism Venture Launched

Country Heritage Adventures is a good example of agritourism. This southeastern Minnesota organization offers a variety of farm tours. Each member of the 22-farm organization provides numerous activities and events for people of all ages. Visitors can view exotic animals such as emu, learn about agricultural production techniques, pick their own strawberries or stay overnight in a turn-of-the-century inn. Special interest tours can be coordinated with local tour guides.

Country Heritage Adventures was developed with the assistance of the University Minnesota Extension Service. Toni Smith, Wabasha County Extension Educator, has guided the group through its initial organizational development and continues to advise the group on funding, marketing and development issues.

For additional information, Country Heritage Adventures can be contacted at: P.O. Box 9203 Rochester, Minnesota 55903-9203.

Kent Gustafson

## For the Asking ...

**Q:** Is tourism a sustainable industry?

**A:** Tourism can be a very sustainable industry for your community. But like all business activities, how you develop and manage tourism is critical to its initial success and its long term sustainability. The success and sustainability of tourism depend on the type of attractions, services and activities you develop and the level of development.

The tourism products offered must have the qualities that draw visitors. These products include attractions such as history, culture and recreation plus the tourist services such as lodging, dining and entertainment. Community tourism businesses can be successful if they meet these needs.

Factors affecting sustainability are:

### The expected life of tourist attractions and services

Some elements don't last and merely respond to fads. Others have lasting value and with proper care may continue indefinitely. Proper care may include not just protecting the attraction but also the surrounding area that provides the appropriate setting and atmosphere.

### Resource preservation goals

How much impact and change to the natural, historic or cultural resource base is your community willing to accept? As visitation increases, the impact also increases. In communities with tourism overdevelopment, degradation of scenic qualities, loss of open space, congestion of parks, shops and roads and overload of community infrastructure may occur. Without planning, the community can become overrun with commercial activity and lose the qualities that brought visitors in the first place.

### Social and political limitations

When communities feel excessive impact from tourism, social and political pressures will try to decrease tourism efforts. The acceptance of tourism as a valuable element in the community is related to the type, size and location of tourism activity. Tourism can be a valuable and lasting addition to a community. The community, however, must guide development and manage growth for tourism to thrive.

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 Extension Service, 1994 Buford Ave., St. Paul, MN 55108. Center faculty will answer questions in each issue.

## SHORT TAKES...

**Limback Joins Center...** Linda Limback, Research Director for the Minnesota Office of Tourism (MOT), will be joining the Tourism Center in a partnership arrangement with the MOT. Limback will direct the transportation research project and develop a "barometer" to measure tourism activity in the state. The "barometer" research is being funded by the Endowed Chair.

**Hot off the Press...** Landscape architecture students at the University of Minnesota have completed a new publication titled *Design and Planning for Small Minnesota Resorts*. The publication summarizes landscaping issues and suggested improvements for Minnesota resorts based on a two-year effort. Recommendations related to design for traffic flow, erosion control and pedestrian movement are included. To order call the Distribution Center, 612-624-4900 or 1-800-876-8636 and ask for MI-7062.

# Off the Top

Should the University of Minnesota offer a graduate degree program in tourism? What should it look like? These are the questions faculty at the University of Minnesota have been asking this summer.

There are currently a number of programs in the United States that offer degrees that include tourism. For example, Michigan State University has a program in Parks, Recreation Resources and Tourism. A similar program exists at Texas A&M. The University of Wisconsin-Stout offers a degree in Hospitality and Tourism. When the degree programs are analyzed it becomes clear that tourism is not the *raison d'être* for the degree but rather a feature that enhances the diversity of these programs and makes them more appealing to a wider range of students. There are also some very practical reasons for this arrangement. Almost everyone in the recreation or hospitality industry is influenced by a market base that includes a large percentage of tourists. Therefore, to stay current and relevant and to fully understand your markets and stakeholders it becomes increasingly important to

understand tourists and tourism. It just makes common sense to introduce tourism into the standard curriculum. But is this sufficient?

Tourism is a phenomenon that touches almost all aspects of life. If tourism is indeed the world's largest private sector activity and if almost 15 percent of all jobs worldwide are somehow connected to tourism, why is it not more prominently featured in our academic programs? The answer is simply that tourism is not a discipline, which is how academic institutions structure themselves, but rather a field of study that cuts across disciplines. This, then is what a graduate degree in tourism should look like.

The M.S. degree in tourism, as envisioned by the faculty at the University of Minnesota, will have a core set of required courses each degree student will take in addition to a set of elective courses. The key distinguishing feature will be a program specific concentration or specialization. Each discipline contributing to the degree will offer a set of courses that form the specialization. All



William Gartner, Director

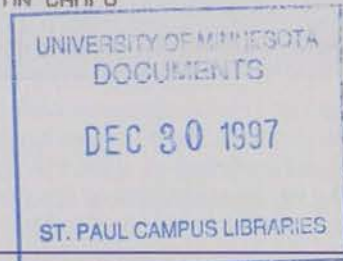
students will find common ground in the core, branch out to specialize and come back in a capstone seminar where cross-disciplinary exchange will take place. Although students will be concentrating in one specific area, they will share common knowledge and gain an understanding of how tourism influences other disciplinary thinking.

This is what is currently being proposed at the University of Minnesota. The degree program will go through the University approval process and we hope to offer it in Fall 1999.

*Centerpoint*  
Tourism Center  
116 Classroom Office Bldg.  
University of Minnesota  
Extension Service  
1994 Buford Avenue  
St. Paul, MN 55108

Non-Profit Org.  
U.S. Postage  
**PAID**  
Mpls., MN  
Permit no. 155

DOCUMENTS  
UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA  
ST PAUL CAMPUS CTRL LIBRARY  
1984 BUFORD AVE  
SAINT PAUL MN CAMPU



TOURISM CENTER  
UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA  
EXTENSION SERVICE



Published by the Tourism Center and produced by the Educational Development System, both of the University of Minnesota Extension Service.

**Managing Editor.....Phyllis Jenks**  
**Design/Layout..... Lisa Peck**

If you would like to regularly receive *Centerpoint*, contact: Tourism Center, 116 Classroom Office Building, University of Minnesota Extension Service, 1994 Buford Avenue, St. Paul, MN 55108, 612/624-4947

<http://www.extension.umn.edu/>

This material is available in alternative formats upon request. Please contact the Tourism Center at 612/624-4947.

The University of Minnesota Extension Service is an equal opportunity educator and employer.