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A Message from State Tourism Director Amir Eylon

The Month in Numbers
Statistics represent a fiscal-year-to-date figure unless otherwise noted. The Division's fiscal year began July

Greetings to all Ohio Tourism Industry partners! As previously announced, I re-joined the team here at the Ohio Division of Travel and Tourism last week. I wish to thank the many members of our Industry who have welcomed me to this new role since the announcement was made. It is definitely with a sense of great honor and responsibility to this industry that I approach this new role.

1, 2007 and lasts until June 30, 2008.

That being said, there is a lot of work to be done in a short period of time to ensure that we continue to deliver the innovative and effective campaigns and partnerships that will help grow Ohio's tourism economy while enhancing our image as a destination. In the next few months, our team will be assessing and reviewing all partnerships, programs and agencies tasked with helping us tell the world about Ohio. We will be compiling our new marketing plan and key strategies, which will involve even greater collaboration with our industry partners, relevant government agencies, key Administration leadership and other stakeholders.

We cannot, however, do this alone. We need your help! While this Division's marketing programs are based on a solid foundation of market research, travel industry data and trends, we must also make sure that they are serving the needs of the industry. This makes hearing your input a top priority as we begin moving forward in our planning for the next year and beyond.

So....we are coming for a visit and a chat!

In the coming weeks, our new Assistant Director, Alicia Reece, and I will be traveling around Ohio to conduct a series of stakeholder meetings. The purpose of these meetings is to provide a live forum for industry partners and Division leadership to meet, interact, ask questions and gather feedback that will be considered in the development of future marketing programs and partnerships. These will be either town hall or open roundtable formats, depending on the venues, where all industry partners within the particular region will be invited to attend. If you are interested in hosting one of these meetings, please contact Joy Doty at jdoty@odod.state.oh.us or (614) 466-5377.

Aside from these meetings, I encourage any member of the industry to reach out to my office directly at aeylon@odod.state.oh.us or (614) 466-3704 to share any thoughts about the Division, the industry, your organization or tourism in general.

I look forward to seeing many of our industry partners in the coming months, and am eager to engage in the dialogue that will only help to strengthen our industry. Let's work together to forge new partnerships for success!

Yours in Partnership,

Amir

Niche Guides to Arrive July 16

The Division is excited to announce the arrival of our latest niche guides that compliment our current marketing campaigns. Topics of the guides include: Culinary Retreats , Multicultural Excursions and Family Reunions and Gatherings . All three guides offer a completely editorial format and are available to anyone who would like to distribute them to visitors. The Division thanks the Ohio Restaurant Association, Ohio Department of Natural Resources, Miles Media, DAR Public Relations and Fahlgren for their contributions to these invaluable guides. If you are interested in ordering a quantity of the guides for distribution, please visit the industry section on DiscoverOhio.com, click on *Tourism Information* from Division Resources and select *bulk publication request* or click [here](#). If you have any questions regarding these guides, please contact Julie Camp at jcamp@odod.state.oh.us.



DiscoverOhio.com Pageviews

Up 11% YTD
(through June 30)

Division Issuing RFPs for Four Agency Contracts This Month

The Ohio Division of Travel and Tourism is seeking bidders for four of its contracts this month. Requests for Proposals for the Division's Call Center, Multicultural Marketing, Advertising and Public Relations contracts will be posted later this month. All current agencies and vendors are welcome to reapply for these contracts. In addition, a firm may apply for the Advertising and Public Relations contracts separately or as a unit.

Once posted, the RFPs may be reviewed at the Ohio Department of Administrative Services Web site [here](#). To receive notification of RFP postings, vendors must register with State Purchasing. They may do so: in person at 4200 Surface Rd., Columbus, OH 43228, via phone at 614-466-5090 or via the Office of State Purchasing Web site [here](#).



Calls to 1-800-BUCKEYE

Down 15% YTD
(through June 30)

SOS: Support Ohio's Springfield!

America's favorite cartoon family, the Simpsons, may be headed to the Buckeye State for the premier of their new movie. To host the premier and firm up a role as the geographically ambiguous setting of the long-running show, 14 Springfields across the country have produced short films that feature their Simpsons spirit. Though Springfield, Ohio, doesn't have a nuclear plant or long-burning tire fire, its merits come across in the video.



PR Earned Media Total Circulation

So congratulations to Springfield, Ohio, for its hilarious film, and good luck! To view the videos and vote, visit <http://www.usatoday.com/life/movies/simpsons-contest.htm>. The contest ends Monday, July 9, so vote for Ohio's Springfield today! And don't miss the movie, which, with your support, will open in Springfield, Ohio, on July 27.

Down 20.8% YTD
(through May 31)

2008 Discover Ohio Travel Planner Listing Deadline July 27

All Ohio travel and tourism entities are invited to submit/update your information in the [Buckeye database](#) by **5 p.m. on Friday, July 27** to have your listing considered for inclusion in the 2008 Discover Ohio Travel Planner (400,000 printed).

The planner features listings for attractions, recreation, convention and visitor bureaus, restaurants, lodging and shopping. Each listing includes: business name in bold, address, city, ZIP, phone and Web address. Enhanced listings and advertising services may be purchased by contacting Emily Vanuch, Great Lakes Publishing advertising coordinator, at evanuch@ohiomagazine.com or (216) 771-2833, ext. 175.

If your database entry is current, there is no need to re-submit. Please review your entries to ensure information is current and accurate. Due to space limitations, not all listings submitted and approved will appear in the travel planner, however, all approved listings will be available on DiscoverOhio.com.

Convention and Visitors Bureaus are invited to request a free report to see which travel entities from their respective counties have listings in the database. CVB personnel can then contact hotels, restaurants and attractions that aren't in the database to encourage them to sign up. Only entities with active database listings are eligible for inclusion in the Discover Ohio travel publications.

To request a report, for questions regarding the Buckeye database or to inquire about your listing, please contact Eric Herzog, ehertzog@odod.state.oh.us or (614) 466-0338, or Roger Barker at rbarker@odod.state.oh.us or (614) 466-5158.

DiscoverOhio.com Monthly Contest Sponsorships Available

The Division is now accepting sponsors for the 2008 DiscoverOhio.com Monthly Contest program. The monthly contest continues to increase in popularity with consumers. With contest entries up on average 68 percent over last year, more visitors than ever before are learning about the amazing variety of destinations our sponsors offer. In fact, 2007's monthly contests attracted an average of 6,200 entrants!



PR Earned Media ROI Circulation

Up 7.9% YTD
(through May 31)



Contest sponsorship is a very economical way to market your destination and surrounding area. In exchange for a contest prize package valued at \$500 or more, the sponsoring destination is featured on the DiscoverOhio.com Monthly Contest page. The feature copy includes up to 500 words of text and five digital images. The sponsor also receives a list of all contestants with permission to use the contact information as a one-time marketing list. This contact list is very valuable since it represents thousands of potential customers who have already shown interest in your destination. To request sponsorship for a 2008 Monthly Contest, complete the [Monthly Contest Sponsorship form](#). Sponsorships are awarded on a first-come, first-served basis.

PR Earned Media Ad Value

Up 40.4% YTD
(through May 31)

See Ohio's Multicultural Initiative Marketing Elements

Ohio's new Multicultural Initiative was rolled out last month with print ads, Web ads, a radio ad, Web site, and a soon-to-be-released Multicultural Excursions booklet. The Division invites you to browse the Web site at <http://www.DiscoverOhio.com/Multicultural> and take a look at the advertising creative located at http://consumer.discoverohio.com/pressroom/default_media.aspx. The Division will soon be accepting RFPs (Request for Proposals) from agencies interested in working with the Division to continue Ohio's multicultural marketing efforts. See story on Division RFPs in this issue.



Not a member? [Join](#) today!

Ohio Shines in National Spotlight on TV and Radio July 27

Cleveland, Ohio will be in the national spotlight again on July 27 when the CBS' "Early Show" and the Tom Joyner Show both broadcast live from the city. The CVB of Greater Cleveland is inviting all Ohioans to the taping to show their spirit for our state. On "The Early Show," Food Network Chef Bobby Flay will be cooking up some great recipes, punk rocker Patti Smith will treat the crowd to a free concert at the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, meteorologist Dave Price will prognosticate about the weather, and at least one of the show's anchors will be on hand to showcase Cleveland.

In addition, nationally syndicated radio personality Tom Joyner will be broadcasting live from Cleveland the same day! Joyner will broadcast his show from Cleveland's Music Hall Auditorium from 6 -10 a.m., July 27. There will be 3,000 free seats available

for the broadcast, but lines start forming the night before. The Division will have a presence at the show, and will be promoting Ohio's multicultural travel opportunities to the audience.

So head to Cleveland and join in the fun!

Ohio Tourism Professionals Mourn the Passing of Bob Evans

The Ohio Division of Travel and Tourism joins the Ohio travel industry in mourning the passing of Bob Evans on June 21 at the age of 89. Evans will be remembered as a true Ohio icon – an entrepreneur, family farmer, restaurateur and friend of Ohio tourism. Bob Evans dedicated decades of service to many causes, including wildlife preservation, higher education, the 4-H and the FFA, and was an inspiration to many in the food service industry. Bob Evans Farms, Inc. has long been a major supporter of the Ohio tourism industry.

From sponsorships of the Great Ohio Road Trips publication and a pull-out map in the 2007 Discover Ohio Travel Planner to GOBA (the Great Ohio Bicycle Adventure) and many more events throughout the state, the Bob Evans legacy of hospitality and welcoming Ohio visitors continues. The company's Homestead Museum and Craft Barn remain among Gallia County's most visited attractions, and its restaurants throughout the state offer a touch of Ohio hospitality to road weary travelers and residents alike.

We offer condolences and warm memories to the friends and family of Bob Evans and those in the extended family of Bob Evans Farms, Inc. To share your memories of Bob Evans, please go to <http://www.bobevans.com/website/Legacy.nsf/pages/Memories1?OpenDocument>

Best Practices: Older Generations Are Online, Too

Last month in this column, you learned some tips for attracting kids to your Web site. But did you also know that more than half of Americans older than 60 are online as well? In fact, the over 60 crowd represents the fastest growing sector online! Many have been online since the beginning, and have more discretionary income than most other groups.

The most common online activity for people older than 60 is email. Most new Internet users focus on email first. So email

marketing may be a great way to reach this valuable audience.

The art of marketing to people older than 60 has become more precise in recent years. With the first Baby Boomers turning 60 last year, some new terms are being used: "Senior citizen" is no longer the gold standard for older people – even AARP has shunned the term. New words like "Young-Old" (age 55-75) and Old-Old (older than 85) are the terms du jour.

There's more than just semantics behind this shift. Marketers can target different groups of older people with relevant messages instead of just relying on one "senior" marketing scheme. The Young-Old are likely to still be working. These people are mature in their careers and, therefore, have greater earning power and more vacation days than most other demographics. They are generally active and adventurous. They don't want to be marketed to as seniors and would probably not be enticed by a senior discount.

The Old-Old are a different story. This World War II generation is more of a traditional audience. They generally appreciate senior discounts and prefer low-stress destinations. The Old-Old may have health problems that impact their physical and financial ability to travel. They also generally prefer to travel in multigenerational groups.

Tech Corner: Email Marketing Beyond Open Rates

One of the prickliest problems in email marketing is determining the real open rate. It might seem like too easy a solution, but the answer is: stop worrying about your numerical open rate.

Open rates are affected by many variables and email tracking just isn't sophisticated enough to give you a numerical value for open rates. Bulk emails may be the victims of increasingly finicky spam filters if not worded impeccably. They may be opened from a Blackberry or other PDA that doesn't support html email and won't be counted. They may even be counted as opened even if the recipient doesn't read them (likely when the message appears in an email program's preview pane, only to be deleted.)

The real data that you should be interested in is the trending of open rates across multiple email sends. If you have a monthly newsletter, compare a year's worth of open rates. Because most attractions in Ohio are seasonal destinations, you may see a slight drop-off of interest in the early winter months. But for the most part, the rates should be at least steady across the months. If you're doing your job particularly well, you should see an increase.

Also, ensure that you don't have any deliverability issues. They can start your program off on the wrong foot, even if the messaging is perfect for your audience. Test different subject

lines to see which are opened more often. Use spam checking software for every message – it only takes a few minutes. And contact your email provider if deliverability rates are less than 80 percent.

Where in the World

July 16 – Amir and Alicia at stakeholder meeting in Cleveland

July 17 – Amir and Alicia at Travel Summit in Cleveland

July 23 or 25 – Amir and Alicia at Stakeholder meeting in Columbus

Aug. 3 – Amir at OSAE Annual Meeting in Dayton

