

To view this email as a web page, go [here](#).



May 9, 2006
Welcome!

In this issue:

- [A Message from State Tourism Director Claudia Vecchio](#)
- [Discover Ohio! Week, May 13-21](#)
- [2007 Discover Ohio Travel Planner Listing Deadline July 21](#)
- [Live BUCKEYE/DiscoverOhio.com Database Training May 16](#)
- [The Progress Fund Seeks Ohio Entrepreneurs](#)
- [Division Receives Four PRism Awards](#)
- [Fodor's Ohio Compass America Guide Available](#)
- [Become an Ohio Destination Expert](#)
- [Update on Division's Research](#)
- [Last Chance to Participate in Economic Impact Study](#)
- [June Dates Available for Buckeye Counselor Training/Partner Days](#)
- [Technology Corner: Tracking ROI for Non-Sales Web Sites](#)
- [Best Practices: When Planning PR Efforts, Don't Ignore Books](#)
- [Where in the World?](#)

The Month in Numbers

(Statistics reflect a fiscal year-to-date figure. FY 2005-2006 runs July 1, 2005-June 30, 2006.)

A Message from State Tourism Director Claudia Vecchio

At the tourism marketing conference, Longwoods International provided trending details on how consumers find information about travel destinations. We have definitely seen a shift within the past five years as to how consumers find information. It used to be that personal experience led the way, followed closely by recommendations from friends and family. While both of these are still important, the ever-increasing power of the Internet has taken over as the number one way people find information about travel sites.



DiscoverOhio.com Page Views (through April 30)
Up 28% YTD

In fact, when you consider the traditional advertising avenues, magazines, TV and radio, they are at the end of the list of the leading methods. Here they are in order from most used to least:

Internet - 37%
 Personal experience - 35.9%
 Advice from friends/relatives - 21.4%
 Hotels/resorts - 15.8%
 Auto Club - 14.7%
 Toll-free number - 12.4% (after a downward trend, 2004 saw a tripling of this method)
 Travel books - 11.4%
 Magazines - 6.3%
 Tourism offices - 6.2%
 Chambers of Commerce/CVBs - 6.1%
 Travel Association Club - 4%
 Group Tour Company - 3.5%
 Airline Carrier - 3.4
 Travel Agent - 3.2%
 Television - 1.9%
 Newspapers - 1.6%
 Radio - 0.5%

Does this mean that 63 percent are finding their information in ways other than the Internet? Yes, but you can also see that a strong Web presence or public relations can influence any of the top three methods. The best news is that each of these is a cost-effective way to disseminate your message.

So, how can you crack into the Internet if you have a small budget? The Division is putting together a one-day workshop that will give you the tools you need to create a great online presence. The workshop will provide information for three budget tiers, \$2,000, \$5,000 and \$10,000. Watch for more information about this. We are planning to hold this the first week of November. Developing a strong Web presence, marketing it via search engine optimization and then tracking the activity is the most important marketing effort any DMO can do. We want you to succeed!

Discover Ohio! Week, May 13-21

The Ohio Division of Travel and Tourism is kicking off its summer marketing campaign with an in-state promotion, Discover Ohio! Week May 13-21, 2006. The week-long promotion is designed to boost in-state tourism through promoting Ohio's unique travel experiences.

The heightened focus on the in-state audience is in response to the results of the Division's commissioned research, as well as a review of current travel trends and psychographic and economic realities. Since 2001, travelers are more interested than ever in getaways that are close to home, provide a chance to bond with family and offer authentic experiences.



PR Earned Media Total
 Circulation
 (through March 31)
Up 42.7% YTD

This coupled with the rise in gas prices, decrease in personal time and complexity of family life requires that vacations be value-oriented, easy to plan and able to be enjoyed during a long weekend. Ohio is well positioned to take advantage of all these factors.

The Discover Ohio! Week campaign will be seen throughout the state with components in all major advertising outlet types, including television, radio, print and outdoor, as well as collateral pieces on a variety of applications including scaffolding barrier wraps, restaurant tent cards, transit stands, taxicabs, parking lot entrance and exit arms and coffee cup sleeves. Most of the components will run during the week only, however, some will have a presence throughout the month of May.

The Division will hold a news conference to announce the first-ever Discover Ohio! Week and provide insight into our summer marketing campaign as well as the state of Ohio tourism. If you're in the area, you are more than welcome to attend! The press conference will be held at 10 a.m., Friday, May 12, on the 3rd Floor of the Vern Riffe Center, outside the Capital Theater, located at 77 South High Street, Columbus.

2007 Discover Ohio Travel Planner Listing Deadline July 21

Be a part of the 2007 Annual Discover Ohio Travel Planner! All Ohio travel entities are invited to submit a free listing to be considered for inclusion in the printed 2007 Discover Ohio Travel Planner (500,000 will be printed). The planner will again include free listings of attractions, recreation, convention and visitor bureaus, restaurants, lodging and more. Each listing will include: business name in bold, address, contact information, Web address, dates/days and hours of operation. Enhanced listings and other advertising services may be purchased by contacting Emily Vanuch, Great Lakes Publishing advertising coordinator, evanuch@ohiomagazine.com or (216) 771-2833, ext. 175.

Please submit/update your information in the [Buckeye database](#) by 5 p.m. on Friday, July 21.

If your database entry is current, there is no need to re-submit. Please review your entries to ensure dates, phone numbers, etc. are up to date 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. (Chain and franchised restaurants will not be published in the planner or on the Web site.)

Log on to the Buckeye database today to add your listings. Please contact Eric Herzog at (614) 466-0338; ehertzog@odod.state.oh.us, or Roger Barker at (614) 466-



PR Earned Media ROI
Circulation
(through March 31)
Up 47.7% YTD

5158; rbarker@odod.state.oh.us with questions about the Buckeye database.

Live BUCKEYE/DiscoverOhio.com Database Training May 16

The BUCKEYE/DiscoverOhio.com Database is the industry's key to many free marketing opportunities with the Division.

May 16, 2 - 3 p.m., industry members can attend a free Database Training workshop at the Vern Riffe Center in Columbus. The training offers industry members live Internet access for a true "hands-on" experience. You'll be able to log into your own listing during the training session to learn exactly how the submission system works and can ask specific questions about your listings. By becoming a registered user and submitting/maintaining your attraction and event, your listing information will:

- appear on DiscoverOhio.com, that state's official tourism Web site
- be available to 1-800-BUCKEYE travel counselors
- be considered for the Division's printed publications, the Discover Ohio Travel Planner and Calendar of Events
- be available to Division staff for use in marketing projects

If you don't already have a user account, please be sure to register at www.DiscoverOhio.com/edit prior to attending the workshop.

Space is limited. Click here to register online for the workshop. For more information, contact Contact Roger Barker at rbarker@odod.state.oh.us or (614) 455-5158, or Eric Herzog at ehertzog@odod.state.oh.us or (614) 466-0338.

The Progress Fund Seeks Ohio Entrepreneurs

Consider this true story:

What's hot enough to draw 30,000 visitors to far northern Pennsylvania in mid-February? The answer since 1998 has been the Ridgway Chainsaw Carvers Rendezvous, the largest non-competition chainsaw-carving event in the world. Founders Rick and Liz Boni decided to turn the log-to-art phenomenon into a year-long draw by launching the Appalachian Arts Studio and Museum.



Calls to 1-800-BUCKEYE
(through April 30)
Down 25% YTD



E-Newsletter Subscribers
(through April 30)
Up 11% YTD

The Bonis faced the problem many tourism entrepreneurs do: "A local bank was not willing to give us the loan we needed," said Liz. A team helped the Bonis put together a business plan and secure \$185,000 in financing. Funding came from several local sources and The Progress Fund.

The Bonis are transforming an abandoned factory complex into a multi-artist studio and museum expected to draw artists and tourists year-round. When complete, it should secure Ridgway's position as the capital of chain saw artistry.

The Progress Fund is available to assist tourism entrepreneurs living in Ohio's Appalachian counties with starting, expanding or refurbishing a tourism-related business. Contact them to find out how they can help you and/or your community at www.ProgressFund.org.

Division Receives Four PRism Awards

The Division earned four awards from the Central Ohio Chapter of the Public Relations Society of America for its PR efforts in 2005. Entrants competed for PRism Awards and Awards of Excellence in 29 categories. Senior members of the Nashville Chapter of the Public Relations Society of America judged the entries. PRism awards are the highest honor in public relations, awarded to first-place winners. Awards of Excellence denote work of merit, and are presented to second-place winners.

The Division's awards were: *Discover Family Fun in Ohio! - Pillar Mailing to Travel Writers* won the PRism award for Direct Mail/Direct Response in the non-profit category. *Ohio Division of Travel & Tourism "Fall Foliage Driving Tours" Podcasts* won an award of excellence for New Media - Other Applications of Technology in the non-profit category. *The Underground Railroad in Ohio - Interactive CD Press Kit* won an award of excellence for Interactive CD-ROM in the non-profit category, and *Ohio Division of Travel & Tourism Media Kit* won an award of excellence for Media/Press Kits - Services/Events/Other in the non-profit category.

Congratulations also go to the many other tourism businesses that took home awards.

Fodor's Ohio Compass America Guide Available

The Division has a quantity of the new Fodor's Compass American Guide: Ohio Edition available for sale below retail cost to members of the Ohio tourism industry. The book, which retails for \$21.95 is being offered for \$8.50 plus shipping and can be sent individually or in bulk quantities of 24. The guide includes more than 300 pages of content on all

regions of the state from Cincinnati author Brad Crawford and photographer William Manning. Guides may not be resold. Click [here](#) for an order form that can be printed and remitted with payment to Jim Greenhalge, Ohio Division of Travel and Tourism, 77 South High Street, Columbus, Ohio 43216.

Become an Ohio Destination Expert

Becoming an Ohio tourism ambassador is really quite easy and, we hope, a lot of fun. All you need to do is complete a few short learning sections and you'll be awarded with a certificate of achievement! We also hope you'll gain some valuable insights into selling Ohio and its remarkable tourism experiences. After all, the more valuable Ohio's hospitality professionals are for customers the better it is for Ohio... and we hope for you too! To learn more about this unique online learning program, click [here](#). Let us know what you think!

Update on Division's Research

Thank you to everyone who participated in the Division's economic impact studies. The surveying portion of the visitor study is complete. Surveys for the Hotel, Motel & Resorts (HMR) were finished in March. The Campground surveys were completed in mid-April. Longwood's International is in the process of tabulating the data. Once complete, that data will be sent to Rovelstaad and Associates so they can apply the economic impact model to the data.

Last Chance to Participate in Economic Impact Study

Because the Division had a later start on surveys this year than in years past, there is a final opportunity to participate in the county level economic impact study. Pricing will vary by county and will not be due until the reports are delivered . (Projected delivery is mid- to late August.) If you are interested in participating you MUST contact Eric Herzog at (614) 466-0338 by May 14.

June Dates Available for Buckeye Counselor Training/Partner Days

There are still a few dates and times available for BUCKEYE partner days during the latter half of June. Partner Days are a chance for you to meet and provide training to the 1-800-BUCKEYE travel counselors about your Ohio travel product. All partner day visits are held on Wednesdays

between 9 a.m. and 3 p.m. Contact Eric Herzog at (614) 466-0338 for additional information or to schedule your partner day visit.

Technology Corner: Tracking ROI for Non-Sales Web Sites

There is one task that everyone in the tourism industry must undertake to ensure our resources are being used properly - the dreaded ROI calculation. For some arms of business, this information can be readily pulled together: for print advertising, you can track calls generated; for media relations, you can tabulate circulation and ad value for stories placed. But for Web sites, especially sites that don't offer a monetary product, ROI can be notoriously difficult to nail down.

The first step is one that should already be in place: setting goals. If you have a Web site that sells a product or service, one of your goals likely is to sell as much as possible. But if your Web site doesn't have a product for sale, like most CVB sites and DiscoverOhio.com, what can you measure? Some common goals are to attract as many visitors as possible, to keep viewers at your Web site for the longest possible time and to increase recognition of your brand within your target audience.

Now that you have goals in place, you'll need to come up with ways to measure them. Web analytics software, provided by many Web hosting companies, can help you measure page views, unique visitors and the length of page views. Also, track the number of hits to the order form for your brochure or guide, as well as page views of any online versions of these.

During the year, track your expenditures for Web development, online advertising and promotional campaigns that direct consumers to your Web site.

And always include questions about your Web site in surveys of travelers. It is imperative to track the percentage of travelers who used your Web site to make travel decisions. This is the only way a concrete dollar figure can be attached to your ROI report. If you can determine the financial impact your Web site has on tourism spending in your region, you will have a much more solid financial report for your stakeholders. Couple this with the data you can glean from Web analytic software such as WebTrends or ClickTracks, and you can improve your site's utility and value to tourists and to your bottom line.

Best Practices: When Planning PR Efforts, Don't Ignore Books

In tourism-oriented public relations, the wait for a good

placement can be agonizing. A newspaper may hold a travel story until a slow news day arrives. A magazine likely has a story written six months before it will be published. But for travel books and guidebooks, the wait routinely tops a year.

Guidebooks have remained popular with travelers for more than 150 years because they provide something that news articles can't - comprehensive information in a compact format; as well as something DMO-produced publications aren't expected to have - objectivity.

Getting into guidebooks can be a challenge, though. Production schedules for guidebooks are lengthy, and the time between editions for Midwestern destinations like Ohio can approach a decade. That makes it all the more important to do your best to get a placement in the book, because it will have a long shelf life.

Some editors and contributors will be suspicious of overt offers for assistance, because it might compromise their objectivity. Others are willing to accept free passes to attractions or tours of lodging facilities to offset their costs. The best idea for approaching a guidebook writer with information about your property is by introducing yourself with an email or phone call. The writer will likely follow up if interested in your destination.

There is a great source for finding out about upcoming editions of guidebooks as well as revisions. PublishersWeekly.com regularly reports the titles of upcoming travel guides. For titles being released through July, click [here](#) and [here](#). To get farther ahead of the curve, contact the publishers directly to learn when new editions are planned and to whom you should direct your information.

Where in the World?

May 6-11 - Claudia is at the POW WOW International Sales Show in Orlando

May 7-9 - Tammy is at the POW WOW International Sales Show in Orlando

May 12 - The entire staff will be at the Discover Ohio! Week and summer marketing campaign news conference

May 15 - Claudia will be in Athens for a presentation to the OU Public Relations Student Society of America chapter

May 16 - Roger and Eric at Database Training Workshop in Columbus

May 24 - Claudia will visit the Newark Earthworks

May 24 - Claudia will be in Cleveland for an event at the Plain Dealer

May 31 - Claudia will travel to Burton for a presentation to the Burton Chamber of Commerce

June 5 - Claudia will be in Chicago for the annual meeting of the Great Lakes of North America international marketing consortium

Discover Ohio!

www.DiscoverOhio.com - 1-800-BUCKEYE - AskOhioTourism@odod.state.oh.us
Ohio Department of Development, Division of Travel and Tourism,
77 South High Street Columbus, Ohio 43215-6130
Bob Taft, Governor; Bruce Johnson, Lt. Governor
