



Sept. 6, 2007

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A Message from State Tourism Director Amir Eylon: September Means Change in Ohio Tourism!

Greetings from 77 S. High St.! As I settle back into my office after enjoying a beautiful Labor Day Weekend, I am reminded that the "traditional" peak summer family travel season in Ohio is now shifting into fall getaways. While it will be some time before we know the actual numbers for the season, anecdotal reports from our partners around Ohio generally indicate that business this summer season

The Month in Numbers

Statistics represent a fiscal-year-to-date figure unless otherwise noted. The Division's fiscal year began July 1, 2007 and lasts until June 30, 2008.

has either been flat or slightly up compared to the same season period last year (and last year was generally considered a decent year by most.) Have we dodged any potential challenges posed by rising gas and consumer prices? Being a primarily regional driving destination, do we benefit from this? What will the next twelve months hold for us? How can we best prepare for whatever scenario happens? These are the questions running through my head, and those of many of our colleagues.

The only thing that is certain as we move forward is that things will change. Over time, short term or long, consumer trends will change. Prices will change in some direction. The way people travel will continually evolve, thus changing the way folks gather information and make travel decisions. This means that we all must prepare for change. Personally, I have always been a believer that in every potential challenge exists opportunity. As an Industry, we must capitalize on the next opportunities for change, so that we can grow our bottom line. My message to all of you this month is that, like the changes that happen to the leaves on the trees and the nature of our visitors every fall (some of you will see incredible amounts of fall travelers, while others will be winding down for the year), let's embrace this opportunity to prepare ourselves for the future.

As you begin preparing your 2008 business models and update your marketing plans, please remember to ask a few simple questions:

What is working?

- How do I know?
- What is happening in the marketplace?
- How do we proactively address those trends?
- Who are my partners in telling my story?
- Who could be my partners in telling my story?

These are the same questions we have been asking ourselves at the Division as we develop our new marketing plans for 2008 and beyond. In fact, September marks a month of changes for us at the Division. Alicia and I have completed our organizational assessment and are beginning to implement the improvements to our organizational chart in order to ensure that proper staffing is in place to support the needs of the industry and the Department in as efficient a manner as possible, given the staffing parameters outlined in the budget process. In addition, we are quickly moving forward on our vendor RFPs. We should be awarding the telemarketing contract within the next week, and the review process has begun for the advertising and public relations contracts. The multicultural RFP is now being drafted as it is the next one on our plate. Our Stakeholder Meetings are reflecting the change in enhanced communication with Ohio's Travel Industry partners. We have completed two-thirds of the first round of meetings already and the turnout and dialogue has been phenomenal. I wish to personally thank all partners who have helped in hosting, planning, touring and attending these meetings. Your feedback is invaluable to our process of positive change!

So what's next? We secure our vendor contracts for key marketing

initiatives within the next month and then move quickly to establish the cooperative programs and marketing strategies for 2008 and beyond. Again, your partnership is critical to this success. As always, BuckeyeLine will help communicate key program announcements, but I encourage everyone to attend upcoming Stakeholder Meetings and other upcoming events where the Division will be present (ex. Ohio Travel Association's Annual Conference on Tourism) in order to chat with us in person about current and upcoming programs.

The next year will be an exciting one for tourism in Ohio as we move forward on our plans to capitalize on the latest trends and opportunities. As you reflect on those six questions above in your preparations, I would ask you to consider the Division of Travel and Tourism part of the answer for the last two.

Have a terrific September!

Yours in Partnership,

Amir

Sept. 7 Deadline for 2008 Spring/Summer Calendar Listings

Tomorrow is the deadline to submit event listings to be considered for inclusion in the printed 2008 Spring/Summer Discover Ohio Calendar of Events (100,000 quantity will be printed). Please submit/update your information to the [Buckeye database](#) by 5 p.m. on Friday, Sept. 7.

If the event is already in the database, there is no need to re-submit. Please review your entries to ensure dates, phone numbers, etc., are accurate. The calendar will cover events that take place between March 1 and Aug. 31 of 2008. Due to space limitations, not all events submitted and approved will appear in the printed calendar, however, all approved events will be available on DiscoverOhio.com.

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. 1175.

Save the Date! Group Tour Stakeholder Meeting Planned

Group tour partners are invited to join the Division for a luncheon meeting from 11 a.m. - 2 p.m. on Thursday, Oct. 4, at the Ohio Historical Center in Columbus. Participants may bring their own packed lunch or order a boxed lunch and drink from OHS for \$10. More details to follow in a special BuckeyeLine.



DiscoverOhio.com Pageviews

**Down 22% since
July 2007**
(through August 31)



PR Earned Media Total Circulation

Up 113.7% YTD
(through July 31)



PR Earned Media ROI Circulation

Up 40.4% YTD
(through July 31)

Stakeholder Meetings Set for New Philadelphia, Troy and Cincinnati

As a member of Ohio's tourism industry, you are invited to attend an Ohio Tourism Stakeholder Meeting with Amir Eylon, Ohio's new State Tourism Director, and Alicia Reece, Assistant State Tourism Director. This is your opportunity to meet the leadership team, hear the latest Division updates and provide your input and feedback for Ohio's tourism direction and plans in 2008 and beyond.

So come on out and be a part of the process to set the course for the future of Ohio's Tourism Industry!

Following are details on upcoming Stakeholder meetings.

New Philadelphia

Monday, Sept. 10, 10 a.m. – noon

Hampton Inn

1299 W. High Avenue

New Philadelphia, Ohio 44663

RSVP to Chrissy Blackwell at chrissyblackwell@tusco.net

Troy

Wednesday, Oct. 3, 10 a.m. - noon

Bruckner Nature Center

5995 Horseshoe Bend Rd.

Troy, OH 45373

RSVP to Diana Thompson at dthompson@VisitMiamiCounty.org

Cincinnati

Friday, Oct. 12, 10 a.m. - noon

Cincinnati Museum Center at Union Terminal

1301 Western Ave

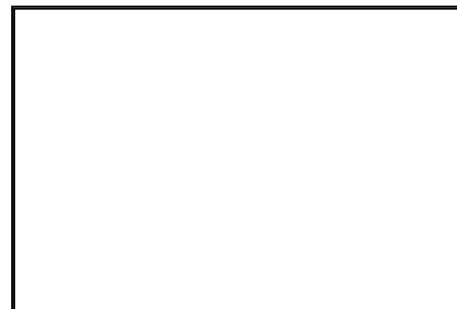
Cincinnati, OH 45203

RSVP to Beverly Cunningham at BCunningham@CincyUSA.com

We look forward to hearing your ideas for enhancing Ohio's tourism economy.

2006 Visitor Study Now Available at DiscoverOhio.com/Industry

The Division has received our Ohio Visitor Study for the 2006 travel year from Longwoods International. Details of the study can be found at <http://industry.discoverohio.com/media/30/383.pdf>. In brief, the research shows a slight increase in visitors to Ohio. Travelers took 173.8 million trips in 2006, accounting for \$33.7 billion in visitor



spending. Travelers took 33.6 million overnight trips to Ohio. Please see the full study for more details and in depth trending information.



PR Earned Media Ad Value
Up 84.8% YTD
(through July 31)

Monthly Contest Entries Up 68 Percent

DiscoverOhio.com's Monthly Contest is one of the Division's most successful free marketing opportunities available to industry members. With an average of 6,200 entrants each month so far this year, sponsoring a contest allows partners to deliver a targeted message directly to visitors who have already shown an interest in traveling to Ohio.

A Monthly Contest icon, prominently displayed on the DiscoverOhio.com's home page, includes a description of the prize package with a link leading to a feature page. Sponsors can provide up to 500 words of text and five digital images to appear on the feature page, along with the questions for the contest. In addition to the fantastic exposure, sponsors receive a list of all contestants with permission to use the contact information as a one-time marketing list.

To participate in this program, industry members must provide a prize package valued at \$500 which includes entry to at least one local attraction, accommodations and meal. See our [Monthly Contest Sponsorship Form](#) for more details and to register. Sponsorships are awarded on a first-come, first-served basis. We are now accepting sponsorships for 2008.

Travel Buzz, the easy-to-use online bulletin board developed just for Ohio's tourism industry partners, is the perfect tool to meet with other industry members in your area to plan a prize package. Travel Buzz is available on our [Industry Web site](#). Just look for "Travel Buzz" in the upper left corner of your screen.

Labor Day Travel Barometer

1. Time Period Reported:

Memorial Day

2. Name of destination/property:



Calls to 1-800-BUCKEYE

Down 25% YTD
(through August 31)



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

Hot Topic of the Month: How do you promote religious attractions?

3. Name of respondent (in case we have a question):

4. E-mail address of respondent:

5. Did your attendance change from the same holiday period last year?

- Increased
- Decreased
- Did Not Change
- Not Applicable/Unsure

6. If your attendance changed, by what percentage did it change?

7. Did your estimated revenue change from the same holiday period last year?

- Increased
- Decreased
- Did Not Change
- Not Applicable/Unsure

8. If your estimated revenue changed, by what percentage did it change?

9. Did your destination-property conduct a holiday-related promotion to drive business for this holiday period?

- Yes
- No

10. If yes, please provide a summary of the promotion(s):

11. Were there any special events in your city or at your property to drive tourism during this holiday period?

- Yes
- No

12. If yes, please provide a description of the event(s):

13. Has your business to this point in the year changed compared to last year at this time?

- Yes
 No

14. If yes, please give an anecdotal summary of how it has changed.

Submit

If you do not receive a confirmation page after clicking submit, please click [here](#).

Tech Corner: Enhanced Mapping

When it comes to travel, a map has always been the best way to demonstrate how to get from point A to point B. However, the days of the cumbersome highway maps (that you can never get folded back the right way) are coming to an end. A pair of new mapping technologies is changing the way travelers interact with maps and tourism information.

The first has been around a few years, but now is becoming more common. In-vehicle navigation systems use global positioning system software to pinpoint a car's exact location and help the driver find the best route for his or her trip. It can recalculate a route if a detour changes traffic patterns. Many models plot lodging and dining destinations on the map on the fly, negating the need for advance planning.

It's easy to see how this is a step above the former standard, Mapquest. It's portable, personalized, adaptive, and easy to use. As more travelers purchase the systems (which come standard in some car models and can be added aftermarket to almost all others), we may see some shifts in traveler behavior.

Another technology that has even more potential for tourism marketers is the "Map Mashup," which can be created and viewed with sites such as Google and its map application Google Earth. Anyone can create a map on Google and mark it with their favorite destinations, add descriptions, URLs, photos and even video clips. It's an easy interface for users to interact with, and it tells more of a story than a destination listing on a Web page. Once created, maps can be embedded in your Web pages, free of charge.

The Division has created a few of these enhanced maps as a test project in conjunction with our fall foliage podcast program. Click [here](#) to view one. The maps pair well with podcasts, because they can relay the same information in a way that's suitable for more visually oriented travelers, and it's possible to elaborate on destinations mentioned in a podcast without reading long URLs or boring people with long audio descriptions. It's far easier and less

time consuming than building your own maps to use online. To build your own map (great for demonstrating an itinerary or just showing the attractions in your area) click [here](#).

Best Practices: Green Travel – Trend or Paradigm Shift?

It seems that everywhere we look in the travel industry, there is news of another hotel, car rental company or destination “going green.” What being green entails is still poorly defined in the public consciousness, but basic components include using fewer resources, using renewable energy sources and being sensitive to the environment. It is much more than asking guests to reuse sheets and towels (which looks as much like a measure to cut costs as a green “amenity”).

Transportation, especially by plane and car, is a leading factor in climate change, so travel in and of itself is a major target of environmental activists. A roundtrip flight from Ohio to Europe creates almost as much carbon dioxide per passenger as driving a car 6,000 miles.

We’ve seen resorts in the Caribbean, hotels in Aspen and even attractions in Ohio, such as Blue Rock Station and the Great Lakes Science Center make a commitment to becoming green. However, much of Ohio has been slow to give up its energy intensive ways. Green travel is definitely a trend, but most experts believe it is here to stay.

How can you participate in this worthy cause and still make a profit doing so? You can offer guests or visitors the opportunity to purchase a carbon offset. Their money would then go to a foundation that invests in renewable energy. If you have a lodging property, you can offer bicycles for guest use. Create some bicycle maps and itineraries for your guests – both shorter and longer trips – to generate interest in the program. If you’re a tour operator, purchase carbon offsets for your motorcoach emissions. These may seem like returnless investments, but increasingly, travelers are willing to pay more to support environmentally friendly services and destinations. The key to turning a profit on green travel is marketing. Once you’ve gone green, shout it from the rooftops. Make sure your potential guests and visitors know all you’re doing, and get listed in the growing number of web sites that feature eco-friendly travel options. Few Ohio sites currently offer truly green travel experiences so the first businesses out of the box have the greatest potential to realize the interest of visitors.

California has started a [green lodging program](#), which has some good resources for hotels and travelers interested in going green. [LowImpactLiving.com](#) is another good site for those researching carbon offsets and interested in finding green destinations. An alliance of hotels in Cleveland has taken the reins in creating an eco-friendly reputation for the city. Watch for details. An article about emerging green travel trends can be found [here](#).

Where in the World

Sept. 10 - Amir and Alicia in New Philadelphia for Stakeholder Meeting

Oct. 3 - Amir and Alicia in Troy for Stakeholder Meeting

Oct. 4 - Amir, Alicia and Celeste at Ohio Historical Center in Columbus for Group Tour Stakeholder Meeting

Oct. 12 - Amir and Alicia in Cincinnati for Stakeholder Meeting

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
Ted Strickland, Governor; Lee Fisher, Lt. Governor

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