



Oct. 5, 2006
Welcome!



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A Message from State Tourism Director

Claudia Vecchio

I am quite sure that the news has spread and almost everyone has heard that I have accepted another position and my last day as State Tourism Director is Oct. 6. My decision was made with great mixed feelings, as I feel Ohio tourism has enormous potential and I have loved being a part of it for the past three-and-a-half years.

While there is much speculation about what will happen in regard to certain programs, with the leadership of the Division and how this transition will compare to others, let me just tell you what I told the staff. The best course of action will be to retain the current course of action. The Division has a solid marketing plan in place, a great family of agencies bringing innovative and strategic thinking and dedicated staff members who will be taking on additional work in an already-stretched environment. I have complete confidence in everyone's ability to masterfully execute the plan.

For the past three years I have encouraged the Ohio tourism industry to consider innovative marketing solutions. From the first Industry Day when Watts Wacker talked about the almost chaotic marketplace to Jim Gilmore's introduction of experiential marketing to Chuck Underwood's discussion about generational marketing, we have heard about the need for innovation. As we all know, marketing the Ohio travel experience needs to evolve to reflect a changing audience. Some of you are more willing to accept this remarkable opportunity than others - and that's fine. But, the time has come for everyone to unclench teeth, pick up firmly planted feet and move ahead. Take some risks, try new programs, give change a chance and celebrate the wins... which will definitely come.

During this transition time Jim Greenhalge will oversee the Division along with the staff. Please keep in mind that Jim was hired to supervise the internal staffing and operations of the Division. While he is a capable marketer, he will be managing several of these projects for the first time. Your patience and support will be greatly appreciated.

Great thanks to you all for teaching, assisting, supporting and influencing me during my time in Ohio. The lessons and friendships will never be forgotten.

The Month in Numbers

All statistics represent a fiscal-year-to-date figure. The Division's fiscal year began July 1, 2006 and lasts until July 31, 2006. The statistics for some measures only take into account data from the first two months of this new fiscal year.

Claudia Vecchio on the Future of Ohio's Packaged Travel Program

I've written and re-written this piece, and until the last minute decided against including anything regarding this effort, but, I feel I cannot go without addressing some of the issues that are swirling throughout the Ohio travel industry regarding packaged travel marketing. I have just two simple things to say. First, all efforts done to enhance Ohio's packaged travel marketing programs were based on marketing opportunities, not personnel changes. Second, packaged travel marketing needs to evolve to meet a changing industry. Determining how to best do this will be in the very capable hands of the Packaged Travel Board. Please give the Board your best insight, expectations and consideration as they work with you all to determine the best solution. The Division is committed to moving forward in an innovative and results-driven way.

In the same way we changed our marketing efforts to be experiential- rather than attributes-driven, the same way we embraced technology and eliminated programs that were not technology-driven, every decision made was done in the best interest of Ohio tourism. Although I have much more that I could relay, I'm going to keep it at that. I look forward to seeing what progress is made in Ohio and how you are able to move beyond the place you are now.

Nelson Mandela said, "Sometimes it falls upon a generation to be great. You can be that generation." In Ohio, the opportunity to be great is yours. Look to the future, think big and be passionate.

Group Tour Advertising Cooperative Opportunity

The Canadian Travel Press will publish an Ohio supplement in the April 9, 2007 edition. This is a widely read weekly piece for travel professionals throughout Canada. We believe this will be an ideal way to reach Canadian tour operators, travel agents and others who could potentially bring groups to Ohio. For more information about this advertising opportunity, please contact Brenda Seymour at (416) 968-7252 ext. 342 or by email at bseymour@baxter.net. More information about the publication can be found at www.TravelPress.com.



DiscoverOhio.com Page Views (through Sept. 30)
Up 42% YTD



PR Earned Media Total Circulation (through Aug. 31)
Down 11% YTD

New Canadian Group Tour Data Released

Canadians traveling to the United States by motor coach were up by 11 percent in June of this year for a year-to-date increase of 6.7 percent. Cities such as Toledo, Piqua, Troy, Dayton and Cincinnati benefit greatly from the repeat afternoon and evening tour stops, meals and overnight motor coach packages for groups traveling south, while Cleveland also is a top group destination. The Ontario Motor Coach Association hosts an annual marketplace in November to target Canadian tour operators (www.omca.com).

In 2005, Ohio ranked 11th in Canadian leisure travel visitation. To review the research results, go to: <http://www40.statcan.ca/l01/cst01/arts39a.h>



PR Earned Media ROI
Circulation
(through Aug. 31)
Up 11% YTD

2007 Cooperative Marketing Program Changes

The new guidelines for the 2007 Ohio Cooperative Marketing Program, formerly known as the Marketing Assistance Program (MAP) have been posted to the industry Web site. Please read through the new guidelines at <http://industry.discoverohio.com/contentindex.asp?ID=148&rootid=4> and contact Julie Camp (jcamp@odod.state.oh.us) with any questions.



Calls to 1-800-BUCKEYE
(through Sept. 30)
Down 36% YTD

Bulk Orders of Ohio Travel Planners Available for Fall Travel Season

As fall travel grows in popularity, many travelers are thinking beyond the summer "high season" for vacation ideas. Make sure your literature racks remain stocked throughout the fall and winter holiday season. Travel Planners are available in boxes of 50 and are delivered free of charge. Visit <http://industry.discoverohio.com/form.asp?ID=354&rootid=5> to place an order.



PR Earned Media Ad Value
(through Aug. 31)
Up 15% YTD

Information Session Materials Available Online

If you missed the Division's information sessions last month, don't fear! You can access the details presented at the conference, including an outline of the Division's 2007 cooperative marketing opportunities, on the industry Web site at <http://industry.discoverohio.com/media/11/420.pdf>.



E-Newsletter Subscribers
(through Sept. 30)
Up 3% YTD

A special thank you goes out to all who helped organize the information sessions. Your assistance was greatly appreciated and helped the Division present marketing opportunities to people in more locations than ever before.

Fall Foliage Site Live on DiscoverOhio.com

The Division launched its new Fall Foliage Web site in early September to continue to entice travelers to enjoy autumn in Ohio. The site includes driving tours, information about fall festivals, farm markets and much more. The site has been receiving a large number of visitors and can be viewed at www.discoverohio.com/fallcolor.

Governor's Trade Mission to Mexico

Ohio tourism will be represented on the Governor's upcoming trade mission to Mexico during a reception on Oct. 9. The reception will be held at Le Cirque restaurant in Mexico City. Similar to the receptions held in other international cities, this event is designed to introduce Ohio to tour operators, travel agents, travel media and industry influencers. Tom Carton, assistant director, Department of Development, will represent the Division. A Spanish language video has been produced for the event.

Free Internet Development and Marketing Workshop Nov. 14

Susan Sweeney, a recognized leader in tourism industry Web site development, will present an Internet boot camp for CVBs, properties and any Ohio tourism entity interesting in learning how to create a dynamic, business-building Web site. The workshop, Maximizing a Shoestring Budget, will be geared toward organizations with annual Internet development budgets ranging from \$2,000 to \$10,000. Sweeney will discuss how to develop and market your site and showcase best practices. Her seminars usually are offered for \$750 per person, but this opportunity is absolutely free!

For more information, visit <http://industry.discoverohio.com/article.asp?ID=494&rootid=1>. To register, visit <http://industry.discoverohio.com/form.asp?ID=413&rootid=1>.

Where in the World

Oct. 11-13 - Jim, Tammy and Eric at OTA Conference on Tourism in Perrysburg

PR Survey Reminder

If you haven't filled out the Division's Public Relations survey, please visit <http://www.zoomerang.com/survey.zgi?p=WEB225QJCJ4BK5>. Your answers will be kept confidential and will help improve the range of services the Public Relations Office offers.



If you get a new email address, your information can be changed in our system by logging in at www.discoverohio.com/edit and clicking "Update My Profile." Keep in mind all rejection and approval notices are sent to the email on file.

We Need Your Holiday Events, Packages & Specials!

Are the winter holidays here already? Well, not quite, but they will be in no time. Preparations for a special holiday section of DiscoverOhio.com are already underway. We will once again feature a wide variety of holiday events from around the state. As an added benefit to visitors this year, we are also including holiday-oriented specials and packages.

As always, we will be turning to the [DiscoverOhio.com/BUCKEYE database](http://DiscoverOhio.com/BUCKEYE_database) for information. Input your events celebrating Christmas, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa and New Year's and your holiday-specific packages and specials no later than Oct. 25, to have them considered for this special section.

With thousands of visitors to DiscoverOhio.com daily, you don't want to miss out on this free marketing opportunity to help boost your business. And if you know of other Ohio travel destinations not listed on our site, help promote Ohio's tourism industry by sharing this information.

Best Practices: Social Responsibility

A few months ago, you read about ecotourism in this column. Another related, yet distinct topic is social responsibility. For the past 10 years, social responsibility has been an increasing concern for most companies. The travel industry seems to have lagged behind a bit in implementing it as a marketing tool. Social responsibility is not just a way to keep your company in line with society's morals; it's also a way to set yourself apart from the competition and appeal to a more sophisticated clientele.

Social responsibility goes beyond complying with the law. One of its main assertions is that businesses can profit more by doing good for others while doing good for themselves.

Many tourism businesses employ workers at the lower end of the pay spectrum. That's not bad in and of itself - everyone needs a job - but what does your business do to create a more positive work environment? Are there any business practices that make life better for your lower-wage workers? What about suppliers? Do you support

local businesses with your supply orders? Do you support a charity with either time or monetary donations? If you can answer yes to any of these questions, let your potential visitors know! If not, start thinking about ways you could incorporate these ideas into your business plan.

Travelers want to feel good about where they go and to whom they give their hard-earned money. There is increasing guilt over travel, due to its environmental impacts. Being socially responsible makes it easier for these values-based travelers to feel good about spending more time (and money) with you.

Tech Corner: A Different Strategy for Consumer Generated Media

If you've been involved in online marketing over the past year, you have heard about the advent of a new internet paradigm: Web 2.0. And if you aren't familiar with the term, you've undoubtedly seen the meteoric rise in the popularity of Web sites that espouse its principles such as MySpace, Facebook and YouTube.

Until recently, Web sites were places where information was presented by one voice and read by consumers. Web 2.0-embracing sites allow consumers to post information, leading to a social network among all the diverse users of the site. The upshot is that consumers are also content providers and therefore spend significantly more time on the site than pages offering only one-way conversation.

We've seen the success of the new social networking sites, and many marketers have been devising ways to tap into the tremendous potential of these networks. On sites like MySpace, marketers have uploaded profiles for their corporate mascots, providing a more informal presentation of information about their brand. However, the sheer volume of companies jumping on this bandwagon is reducing that approach's marketing utility.

Other companies have taken a more thoughtful approach to tapping into social networking sites. They are developing promotions that offer prizes to consumers who generate content that includes your brand, most notably, video and podcast contests. In reality, most of these contests won't generate a huge amount of submissions, because they take a significant amount of effort for a participant to create. If you plan to use the content to stock a Web site, you'll probably be disappointed with the turnout. But the real value of

these contests is in the connections between the content creators and their numerous acquaintances within the social network. Someone who produces a video for your contest is extremely likely to pass it along to his or her online friends as well. This third-party endorsement is one of the most valuable marketing tools in the box!

Discover Ohio! _____

www.DiscoverOhio.com - 1-800-BUCKEYE - AskOhioTourism@odod.state.oh.us

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