



Dec. 6, 2006
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A Message from Interim State Tourism Director Jim Greenhalge

The holiday season offers an opportunity for reflection on the past year and for considering what potential the new year might hold for us. We ask ourselves whether we should continue what we did last year or venture to make some changes. Here at the Division, we have already started to see some changes, and there will certainly be more developments in the months ahead.

Most notably, Lt. Governor and Development Director Bruce Johnson announced his departure from State Government effective Dec. 8. Governor-elect Ted Strickland has announced that Lt. Governor-elect Lee Fisher will be nominated to fill the role of Development Director.

Additionally, representatives of the new administration have begun to assess current structures and functions of state

The Month in Numbers

All statistics represent a

government departments and agencies. I met this week with transition team representatives to discuss the function and results of the Division of Travel and Tourism.

fiscal-year-to-date figure. The Division's fiscal year began July 1, 2006 and lasts until July 31, 2006.

Against this backdrop of change, the Division of Travel and Tourism is continuing the work outlined in our strategic plan. We are looking forward to working with many of you in the Ohio travel industry on media missions to New York (January) and Toronto (March) and to creating new opportunities for Ohio in the reunion planning and multicultural arenas. We look forward to introducing Ohio's new advertising creative and putting a new face on DiscoverOhio.com. We look forward to continuing our work with each of you to promote Ohio's outstanding tourism experiences and to enhance the economy of our great state.

And we look forward to changes that lead to growth.

Happy Holidays from the Staff of the Ohio Division of Travel and Tourism!

MAP Phase Two Concludes Dec. 31

Please take note that Phase Two of the Marketing Assistance Program (MAP) will end on Dec. 31, 2006. Reimbursement requests may be submitted to Fahlgren as early as Jan. 1, 2007, but must be in their office no later than 5 p.m. on Feb. 28, 2007. When submitting your reimbursement request, please provide all back-up media for the phase. The required materials for back-up are described in the [MAP guidelines](#).

Also, please remember that failure to complete 80 percent of the approved media plan or failure to submit reimbursement forms will result in a one-year disqualification from the Cooperative Marketing Program. We want to work with you to ensure that this doesn't happen. Please take a look at your approved Phase Two plan; if you find that you are not on track to complete 80 percent, please contact Julie Camp. An electronic version of the reimbursement form can be found [here](#).

Please keep copies of all of the back-up materials accompanying your reimbursement request. In the event that we question your compliance with the program rules or logo guidelines, you will need these materials for reference.

Your invoice must be on your company's letterhead, billable to Fahlgren, Inc. The invoice cannot exceed the pre-approved amount. Due to accounting procedures involved, please allow up to eight weeks for receipt of your reimbursement check.

Please send the original reimbursement form, invoice and all



DiscoverOhio.com
Pageviews

Up 10% YTD
(through November 30)

back up media to:

Fahlgren, Inc.
Attn: Ann Oliver
585 South Front St., Suite 300
Columbus, OH 43215

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Julie Camp at (614) 466-3734, or via email at jcamp@odod.state.oh.us.

DiscoverOhio.com's New Look

By now, you've heard all about the January launch of the newly redesigned DiscoverOhio.com. Visitors will experience a range of new features along with the new look. Consumers will be able to search the site more easily and with better results. Your listings will be displayed with your photos prominently featured, drawing the visitors' attention. And some exciting new technical features put DiscoverOhio.com on the cutting edge of online tourism marketing.

But it's not all about improving the experience for the consumers; it's for our industry members as well. We've taken your feedback and incorporated it into the Web site plan. Entering events and attractions will be easier than ever with an improved submission form. A new preview feature lets you see how your photos and description look and help you find any errors you may have missed. An interactive message board allows you to stay in touch with each other and with us. Industry specific podcasts let you listen to interesting info that matters to you.



Calls to 1-800-BUCKEYE

Down 36% YTD
(through November 30)

DiscoverOhio.com Monthly Contest: A Great Way to Build Visibility

The November contest received more than 6,800 entries - the highest total of any monthly contest we've promoted on DiscoverOhio.com! The contest is a great way to build brand visibility, and sponsors are forwarded the list of entrants and their email addresses from which to choose a winner and use as a one-time marketing list.

Can you beat November's record amount of contest entries? Starting in early 2007, we will be taking requests to sponsor our 2008 monthly contests on DiscoverOhio.com. Keep an eye on our Web site and in BuckeyeLine for more



PR Earned Media Total
Circulation

Up 12% YTD

information.

(through Oct. 31)

Update Events and Attractions on DiscoverOhio.com for Division PR Campaigns

Keeping your attraction, hotel, restaurant or event listing updated on DiscoverOhio.com is always a good idea. As the Division begins to ramp up its black history campaign for 2007, we encourage all sites and events with ties to this topic to update their listings on DiscoverOhio.com. The Division also will begin its 2007 Discover Ohio in Bloom campaign shortly, and has recently launched an indoor waterpark pitch. Make sure your listing is present and updated so you can reap the benefits of our PR campaigns and pitches. Click [here](#) to get started.



PR Earned Media ROI
Circulation

Up 9% YTD
(through Oct. 31)

Last Chance to Send CD Press Kits to New York and Toronto

For those who cannot attend a media mission but would like to have their information delivered to media in New York or Toronto, the Public Relations Office again is offering assistance. Ohio travel industry partners can have their press kit CD included within a branded Ohio Tourism CD case and left behind at media appointments for a fee of \$50 for one mission (of your choice) or \$100 for both.

If you do not have a CD press kit, the Public Relations Office will work with you to build your own press kit, which will then be added to the branded CD case and left behind at media mission appointments. Additionally, you will be provided with 10 CDs for your use. Cost is \$100 for one mission and \$150 to be included in both.

There are 12 slots available for CD press kits for each media mission. Participants in the media missions will have their pre-made CD press kits included in the CD case for free or may ask the Division to produce a kit for a cost of \$50. Please contact Joe Vargo at jvargo@odod.state.oh.us with questions or to reserve a place for your CD press kit no later than Dec. 15.



PR Earned Media ROI Ad
Value

Down 8% YTD
(through Oct. 31)

World Travel Market a Success for Ohio

As part of the Great Lakes of North America (GLNA) delegation, the Division was represented at World Travel Market, Nov. 6-9 in London, by Joe Vargo, public relations coordinator. The event is the UK's largest travel industry trade show, and included 25 appointments with British travel media including Condé Nast Traveller, British travel agents and tour companies, and airline marketing representatives. The topic of most interest was ecotourism and soft adventure travel, an area in which the Great Lakes states excel.

Several great media leads came out of the conference, and those of you who are impacted will be contacted in the near future. We also had a lot of interest from airlines in developing special offer packages to help drive visits in the form of city breaks. For instance, an airline may ask for an exclusive rate or package from a hotel or CVB that it will promote along with a discounted fare. The partner's potential for exposure would be great. Additional information will be forthcoming.

While the UK market for travel to the United States has been soft the past four years, it still ranks as the #2 nation of origin for overseas visitors and is expected to rebound steadily in the next five years. A large number of British travelers have been to the United States on previous trips and many are looking for places to visit other than Florida, New York City and Las Vegas. That is great news for our region, as we are well poised to absorb some of that market with great outdoor adventures and fun, manageable cities.

If you have any questions about World Travel Market, please contact Joe at jvargo@odod.state.oh.us.

Watch for Group Tour Tracking Survey

The Division will distribute a group tour tracking survey to CVB partners in December to collect motorcoach activity from attraction, restaurant and hotel group tour partners to gauge the direction of the group tour market. Please collect and submit your information by the January deadline indicated on the survey. If you have any questions, please contact Celeste Krolak, CTP, CTIS, Tour Marketing Specialist, at (614) 728-4668 or ckrolak@odod.state.oh.us. Thanks for your assistance with this research project.


Group Tour Trade Show Season Gearing Up

Jonett Haberfield will represent the Division at the American Bus Association Annual Marketplace in January in Grapevine, Texas, and at Heartland Travel Showcase in



E-Newsletter Subscribers

Up 57% YTD
(through November 30)



Database Submission Tips

When entering dates for Specials and Packages, keep in mind that they will only show up on your listing page during those dates.

Save the Date!

February in Cincinnati. Group tour partners are invited to submit updated materials/profile sheets for the 2007 and 2008 travel season to Celeste Krolak by Jan. 9 at ckrolak@odod.state.oh.us or (614) 466-6744. A pre-convention caucus will take place in Columbus on Jan. 9. Please R.S.V.P. to Celeste by Dec. 18 to participate.

The Division's 2007
Travel Marketing
Conference will be
held April 24-25!

Group Travel Advisory Council Invites New Members

The Ohio Group Travel Advisory Council is made up of attraction, CVB, hotel, motorcoach company and restaurant representatives who are active in Ohio's group tour industry at the state and/or national level. If you would like to serve on the 2007 Ohio Group Travel Advisory Council, please contact Jim Greenhalge at (614) 995-4233 or jgreenhalge@odod.state.oh.us or Jonett Haberfield at (740) 432-8789 or jonett@atasteofohio.com by Jan. 1, 2007.

Public TV Auction Offers Promotion Avenue

WCNY, Syracuse, N.Y.'s public television station is offering an opportunity to extend your brand awareness to its market through its 2006 Travel Auction. This fundraiser, slated both on air and online for Jan. 12-14 and 19-20, will reach viewers in 19 counties in central New York.

In exchange for a donation of a travel package of at least two nights' stay, the station will create a videotaped promotional spot which will include a professionally voiced script. To participate or for more details, please contact Nina Haley at 315-453-2424, ext. 516 or nina_haley@wcnny.org.

Best Practices: The Long Tail of Tourism

In the tradition of mindset changing business books like *The Tipping Point*, [The Long Tail: Why the Future of Business Is Selling Less of More](#), by Chris Anderson (editor-in-chief of *Wired* magazine), has shed light on a fascinating phenomenon that is shifting many business models and American culture as well. The "Long Tail" refers to the vast number of products in a category that only rarely sell. Until recently, infrequently selling products, especially music and books, have been thought of as unprofitable failures because they have taken up shelf space, which equals rent in brick and mortar stores. But now, as the Internet offers unlimited and nearly free digital storage space, there is much aggregate profit to be made from selling small

amounts of products.

Another hallmark of the Long Tail phenomenon is that individuals have become the tastemakers rather than marketers. You may have noticed that mainstream TV, music and movies have all lost customers in the past five years. As fringe content becomes available online, consumers are shifting to niche offerings there rather than accept the mainstream products the big media companies promote. YouTube is stealing TV's audience. NetFlix (with 50 times the movie titles online) is driving Blockbuster's shelf-spaced limited offerings into the ground. EBay has even given the garage sale a worldwide audience.

Tourism is an industry at a distinct advantage when it comes to online shopping. Customers come to collect their purchase (travel experience), and there is no shelf space to take up. People are comfortable buying travel online. All this is good and bad news for all of us in the Ohio tourism industry. As consumers realize their choices are vast, their interest in mainstream, traditional travel experiences like Disney and Las Vegas may wane. But only if they can find a destination that fits their exact needs. With a robust Web presence, vivid descriptions and plenty of options, you can earn a prime position in several niches of the tourism spectrum.

The two biggest lessons to learn from this are: make everything available, and make everything easy to find. If you are a lodging facility, make as many packages as possible available. If you're a CVB, encourage your members to submit packages to you. If you're an attraction, partner with as many lodging and dining establishments as you can. Price your packages at various points, and consider a mechanism to create on-the-fly a la carte packages. But don't just list all your offerings on one long Web page. Make it easy to match packages with customers, possibly through a quick online survey. Segment your offerings into groupings that speak to a specific niche interest. With this resource in hand, you'll be positioned to reap the benefits of the digital revolution.

Tech Corner: Improving Your Web Site

If you weren't able to attend the Division's workshop with internet marketing guru Susan Sweeney last month, you missed an opportunity to better understand what separates good Web sites from great Web sites. But don't worry: following are a few tips to help you get your Web site into top form, while keeping costs to a minimum. To celebrate Ohio State's victory over Michigan, we'll take this opportunity to salt the wound a bit by showing you some great examples of Ohio tourism Web sites alongside some sites from that

state up north that could benefit from a few quick fixes.

- **Evaluate the graphic design of your Web site.**

You only get eight seconds to make a first impression. If the look of your Web site is outdated, cluttered or doesn't reflect your product, most of your online visitors will click away without giving you a second thought. If the graphic design of your site is out of date (with a wallpaper background, script font or dated colors), make changes as soon as possible. A white or solid background, a sans-serif font and a modern color palate will do much to keep eyes on your site. Make sure your most important content is "above the fold" (the area that shows up on your screen without scrolling.) Also, make sure your photography is professional, vivid and inviting. A picture says 1,000 words. Make sure your pictures are saying the right words about your destination.

Notice the wallpaper and grainy photos on this site give it an outdated, less professional look:

<http://www.sherwoodforestbandb.com/>

This site uses compelling photography and clean look to attract discriminating consumers:

<http://www.barnatwalnutglen.com/>

- **Ensure your navigation is clear, concise and intuitive**

If it's not easy to find information on your Web site, a reader will click away quickly. Make sure the navigation tools are constant throughout your site, that all the navigation can be found in one spot (usually across the top or down the left side of the screen), and that a user can get back to your homepage without trouble.

This Web site's major navigation bar changes from columns on the right and left to a bar across the top. This could be confusing for Web viewers: <http://www.irtourism.com/>

This site maintains a constant navigation system throughout, making it easy to get from one point to another:

<http://www.1800hocking.com/>

- **Incorporate viral and permission marketing elements to keep traffic coming back**

It might be an old adage, but it's true that it's 10 times as easy to keep a customer than to gain a new customer. Keep potential customers coming back to your site by using elements of permission marketing. Give travelers an opportunity to let you keep in touch. Develop a brief email newsletter, to be sent on a regular basis, and provide links back to your Web site when new products or services are announced. And capitalize on the traffic you get by incorporating some viral marketing elements. Make it easy

for a traveler to tell a friend about your business. Whether you're marketing a vacation package or a historic site, people rarely travel alone. Let your Web visitors endorse your product to their traveling companions.

This site gives customers opportunities to sign up for an e-newsletter and offers a link that makes it easy to tell a friend about a package or special:
<http://www.redmapleinn.com/specials.htm>

Where in the World

Dec. 14 - Jim attending Great Wolf Lodge opening in Mason

Dec. 14 - Members of the staff attending CocoKey opening at Cherry Valley Lodge in Newark

Dec. 19 - Jim and Eric in Loudonville for Division presentation

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