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Michigan State University

News Release

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State Tourism Planning Effort Picks Up Momentum

EAST LANSING— With the assistance and support of Michigan State University and Travel Michigan, a planning council comprised of over 75 Michigan tourism industry organizations has been formed to work on developing the first-ever strategic plan to help guide the industry into the future. “Our goal is really pretty simple,” says MSU project specialist Gary Warnell, “create a plan that will help provide actionable growth strategies and direction to this 17 plus billion dollar industry while creating partnerships and a structure to maintain the planning initiative into the future. The industry has come together in a way that has never been seen before to work hand-in-hand to create this shared vision.”

In May, the volunteer council convened and identified several major issue areas that the plan should address and work teams have been organized around each of the areas. Each team will develop potential strategies to overcome barriers or capitalize on opportunities identified within each issue area. Information compiled by the teams will then be brought together to create an overall comprehensive plan which will be presented at an industry summit in March of 2007.

“Engaging everyone who should be involved in developing a comprehensive plan for such a large and diverse industry is essential for it to be successful but presents a major challenge for the planning team,” notes MSU team leader Dr. Don Holecek.

As part of the planning process, during the month of July, several "listening sessions" will be held around the state. These sessions provide an opportunity for those in the industry to learn firsthand about the project and provide feedback. Upcoming sessions are Battle Creek (7/10), Dearborn (7/12), Frankenmuth (7/13), Traverse City (7/19) and Alpena (7/20). The sessions are free of charge and open to all industry stakeholders. The team will also gather industry input using web-based communications to keep all interested parties engaged in the process.

For more information about the project and the upcoming sessions, visit the plan website at <http://www.tourismcenter.msu.edu/plan>.