

## Tourism: *Industry Needs 'Emotional' Experience*

\* Continued from page 1  
recorded by survivors of the Titanic.

"When we think about an engaging experience for visitors," Dr. Anderson said, "some of it is hands on, some of it is interactive, but it also can be an emotional experience, and that's an important element."

In Grand Rapids at the Gerald R. Ford Museum, visitors can sit in a replica of the President's cabinet room and assume the role of a 1975 cabinet member.

Visitors are given three problems and asked to offer advice on them. They include deciding if President Ford should pardon Richard Nixon, if the United States should send military forces into Cambodia to rescue captured sailors, and if the U.S. treasury should bail out financially-troubled New York City. Visitors are given background information and then asked to voice an opinion as a cabinet member before being told how Mr. Ford actually acted in each situation.

The state has "almost unparalleled natural resources," said Dr. Anderson, and it has sites that are ranked among top national historic attractions, including the four major attractions at Mackinac State Historic Parks. In 2006, for a period of just five months, from May through October, the park saw 346,000 paid admissions. For the entire year in 2006, paid admissions at Colonial Williamsburg in Virginia amounted to 383,000. At the Henry Ford Museum in Dearborn, 366,000 paid admissions were counted in 2006.

For Michigan, tourism is an industry, he said. It generates more than \$17 billion in revenue, supports 108,000 jobs, and represents \$1.9 billion in personal income.

To take advantage of tourist dollars, he said, Michigan communities need to be creative in promoting their unique features. In Galesburg, Illinois, town leaders got their congressman to designate the city as the

National Railroad Hall of Fame because it has a history with the railroads dating to 1849.

To be effective at promoting a destination, Dr. Anderson said community leaders also need to think regionally and partner with nearby communities to provide a complete package for visitors. Leaders can do this by taking an inventory of their town's assets and then assess those in other communities that compliment them.

"People expect more from us than they have in the past," he said. "We need to create regional destinations."

North Carolina has created regional destinations based on craft heritage trails. Planners of the program require participants to meet specific criteria that fit with the craft and regional theme. Those requirements include requiring studios to be open at dependable times, galleries to display objects made in America with a focus on North Carolina, restaurants to feature dishes indigenous to the region, and inns to have historical architecture.

An example of an Upper Peninsula regional destination, "Echoes of the Edmund Fitzgerald" offers such an experience and takes advantage of Michigan's maritime heritage, said Dr. Anderson. It is a collaboration of areas that follows the ship's journey through towns along the Lake Superior shoreline. The driving tour begins at the iron ore docks and the Marquette Maritime Museum, includes a boat ride to view shipwrecks, stops to view artifacts from the freighter, and ends at the Soo Locks in Sault Ste. Marie.

"We have great cultural and heritage resources and they are undervalued," he said, "and we are not marketing that opportunity. It is a win-win situation when we create destinations where we all benefit from the economic value that we produce."

## Girls Need To Make Choice in Fall Sports

\* Continued from page 1

Soccer in the Upper Peninsula, however, will not coincide with MHSAA's soccer season in the Lower Peninsula. After MHSAA announced it will hold soccer season in the spring, U.P. schools agreed that spring would be too early to play in the north.

"I don't think MHSAA realized how long our winters can be up here," said Dr. Schrock.

MHSAA announced the first day of soccer practice next spring would be March 10, but Paradise still had 10 inches of snow on the ground at that time this year, he said.

The Northern Lights League is still developing a post-season tournament for all U.P. teams.

"We were successful in holding a post-season basketball tournament in the league, Dr. Schrock said, "and I think holding one for soccer would be just as successful."

While some female athletes may want to choose between playing volleyball and co-ed soccer, Dr. Schrock said many of the girls are interested in trying to play both.

"It would be strenuous for them, but we do have a number of girls who said they want to



With high school sports seasons changing, female athletes on Mackinac Island now need to decide whether they want to play co-ed soccer, volleyball, or both in the fall season. Girls basketball will be the only winter sport available for Island female athletes.

do that," he said. "The tough thing really will be making both practices."

The Northern Lights League has discussed holding only 32-

minute soccer games instead of 40 minutes and allowing teams to field a minimum of seven players instead of a standard 11-player team.

## Park Board To Meet in Mackinaw City

The seven-member Mackinac Island State Park Commission will meet Friday, May 25, at 1:30 p.m. in the banquet room at Audie's Restaurant on Nicolet Street in Mackinaw City.

In July and September, commissioners will return to their regular meeting location in the boardroom of the 1860 Post Hospital building at Fort Mackinac.

Both the Friday, July 20, and the Friday, September 21, meetings will be at 1:30 p.m. at the fort.

The commission was formed in 1895. Members are appointed by the governor to six-year terms.

They are responsible for all aspects of managing Mackinac State Historic Parks, which includes Fort Mackinac, Mackinac Island State Park,

and several downtown museums on Mackinac Island, and Mackinac Point Lighthouse in Mackinaw City.

Colonial Michilimackinac, Historic Mill Creek, and Old Commission meetings are open to the public.

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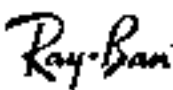
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