

Straits Area Offers Travel Packaging

Local Attractions Beginning To Tap New Potential of Packaging, Says Phil Porter

By Karen Gould

To help lure people to the Straits area, local agencies are offering travel packages that offer one-ticket convenience and price discounts. The St. Ignace Visitors Bureau, the Mackinaw Area Visitors Bureau, and Mackinac Island Carriage Tours each offer packages that include discounts ranging from 13% to 20%. Two packages offer online ordering.

Local attractions are just beginning to tap the potential of packaging, said Phil Porter, director of Mackinac State Historic Parks. By purchasing a package online before coming to the area, the visitor has made the decision to travel here.

Measuring the success of the new packages may be difficult, with high gas prices and high state-wide unemployment steering some potential visitors toward shorter vacations closer to home. Approximately 70% of tourism dollars spent in Michigan come from state residents, but the state has the highest unemployment in the country, at 7.1%, up from 6.8% one year ago.

"We're competing as much for their hour as their dollar," Mr. Porter said. "What we want

to do is put packages together that have value and convenience that will attract people to the Straits of Mackinac."

He said Mackinac State Historic Parks is willing to participate in package discounts to draw new faces to the area, stimulate attendance, and increase market share. His park facilities include Fort Mackinac on Mackinac Island and Colonial Michilimackinac, Historic Mill Creek, and Old Mackinac Point Lighthouse in Mackinaw City.

One such package is billed as "The Mackinac Island Experience Package." The day trip to Mackinac Island includes online ordering and a nearly 20% savings. It is administered by Mackinac Island Carriage Tours and includes ferry travel to the Island, a carriage tour, and admissions to Fort Mackinac and Grand Hotel. The price is \$59 for adults, \$55 for teens, and \$28 for children older than five.

The Family Value Package offered by the St. Ignace Visitors Bureau includes day trips from St. Ignace and requires a minimum two-day stay at a participating St. Ignace

area hotel.

"Our market is with so many families who are looking for an affordable vacation, and we put this package together just for them," said Lynne Piippo, executive director of the St. Ignace Visitors Bureau. "We have great attractions around here."

For \$149.50 for two adults and two children, a family can climb Castle Rock, visit Totem Village and the Wildlife Zoo, Deer Ranch, the soon-to-open Weird Michigan Wax Museum, the Mystery Spot, the Museum of Ojibwa Culture, and the Fort De Buade Museum, all in St. Ignace. The ticket also includes ferry tickets to Mackinac Island and the Great Lakes Shipwreck Museum in Paradise.

"We want to encourage people to go to the dunes and see the natural beauty of the area, including the great forests and nature of the Upper Peninsula," she said. "Because we've added the Great Lakes Shipwreck Museum, they will see three of the five Great Lakes on this trip alone."

The bureau also is developing a couple's package that will be available this fall, said Mrs. Piippo.

A new combination ticket offered by the Mackinaw Area Visitors Bureau in Mackinaw City allows vacationers to see six area attractions over three days, for one price.

The Mackinaw Infinity Package offers unlimited visits to four Mackinaw City attractions, including Colonial Michilimackinac, Historic Mill Creek, Old Mackinac Point Lighthouse, and Thunder Falls Family Water Park. Also included in the package is admission to Fort Mackinac on Mackinac Island and ferry transportation on either Arnold Transit, Star Line, or Shepler's boats.

Visitors must book at least two nights' lodging at a participating Mackinaw City hotel. Unlimited admission to the six attractions is valid for three days.

Package prices are \$79.95 for adults, \$69.95 for teens, and \$54.95 for children older than four.

Walter North Receives Honorary Doctorate Degree From LSSU



Walter North of St. Ignace (center) is hooded to symbolize his honorary degree by Lake Superior State University Provost Dr. Bruce Harger (left) and LSSU Board Chair Chuck Schmidt, while LSSU President Dr. Betty Youngblood observes. (Lake Superior State University photograph)

Retired State Senator Walter North of St. Ignace received an honorary doctorate degree from Lake Superior State University (LSSU) during its 44th annual commencement Saturday, May 5. Mr. North was honored for his support of LSSU over the years. An honorary doctorate was also bestowed upon dentist Louis B. Lukenda of Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, the chairman of Tendercare-Michigan.

Graduates and families attended a reception before commencement.

As the Michigan State Senator from District 37, Senator North helped secure state funding for several projects, including the renovation and expansion of the Crawford Hall of Science, Kenneth J. Shouldice Library, and the Arts Center.

Mr. North was elected to the state senate in 1994 and served two terms. He served on the Appropriations subcommittees for Corrections, which he chaired, the Environmental Quality Judiciary, State Police and Military Affairs, Human Resources and Labor, Transportation and Tourism,

and Great Lakes Conservation Task Force.

Mr. North chairs the LSSU Foundation's board of directors and has served on the board since the late 1980s. In October 2003, he received LSSU's Donald and Catherine Finlayson Award, presented annually to a friend of the university who has made it a better place to live and learn. He has always been a supporter of the annual Lake State Classic Golf Tournament that raises funds for Laker Club student-athlete financial aid, and twice has been the primary sponsor of the tournament.

Mr. North began his career in state service as assistant to state treasurer Allison Green. He was appointed comptroller of the Mackinac Bridge Authority in 1966, a position he held until 1982, when he was promoted to executive secretary, the chief executive of the bridge. He was a driving force behind establishing the annual Labor Day Bridge Walk that has become a tradition for thousands.


A U.S. Air Force veteran who served in the Korean War, he grew up in Battle Creek and was graduated from Western Michigan University in 1959 with a degree in business administration.

He serves on the boards of the St. Ignace, Mackinac Island, and Sault Ste. Marie community foundations.

Mr. North and his wife, Sally, have four sons, Tom, Dave, Jim, and Mike, and seven grandchildren.

Main Street INN & SUITES

www.mainstreetinnandsuites.com



P.O. Box 178
Mackinac Island
906.847.6530

BEAUTIFULLY APPOINTED DELUXE GUEST ROOMS AND SUITES
CONVENIENTLY LOCATED IN THE HEART OF HISTORIC MAIN STREET

Featured Amenities:

- Air-Conditioning • Elevator • Private Baths
- Handicap Accessibility • Secure Bike Storage
- Ceiling Fans • Daily Newspaper • Pillow Top Mattresses
- Cable Television • Internet Access • Pool Table & Games
- Refrigerator • Microwave • Coffee Maker • Telephone
- Deposit Box • Turn Down Service • 24 Hour Front Desk

MARSHALL BUILDERS, Inc.



COMPLETE
Residential & Commercial
CONSTRUCTION

- ★ Remodeling
- ★ Roofing

- ★ Siding
- ★ Painting

Licensed
&
Insured

Rick - 643-9491

Wade - 643-7410



Join Us For A Good Time!

Fun will be had by all!



BAR • GRILLE & RISTORANTE

Located in the LAKE VIEW HOTEL

Main Street 847-0270

Stop in for a famous
Tommy Hawker Bloody Mary

Daily Dining Specials

Breakfast • Jumbo Crabs Legs • Lobster • Prime Steak • Great Lakes Fish • Pizza & Pasta

3 Qualify for U.P. Finals Track Meet

Three Mackinac Island Lakers placed in the top four at the Division 3 Track Regionals in Pickford Friday, May 18, and qualify for the Upper Peninsula Finals to be held Saturday, June 2, in Kingsford.

Robert Chambers will compete in two events after placing third in the 200-meter dash and fourth in the 100, Michi Mullings took fourth in the long jump and 200, and Woody Beardsley placed fourth in the discus.

The Lakers are coached by Jeff Graham.