

TOURISM NEWS

By Kathleen Galas, President
Manitowoc Area Visitor & Convention Bureau

Did you know?? A report released last week stated the total number of outbound Chinese travelers in 2009 was 47.66 million. And by 2011, the total Chinese travel market opportunity is expected to be more than US\$65 billion.

With the Chamber Business Expo coming up and the WACVB Wisconsin Fall Tourism Convention right around the corner, it's a good time to bring up an economic stimulus idea that doesn't cost extra and could go a long way in strengthening our local economy. It's called "*Meetings Mean Business for Wisconsin*". The idea is to encourage CEOs of companies headquartered in Wisconsin or with substantial operations here in Manitowoc County to choose Wisconsin as the place to hold their meetings. It could be an annual conference or convention, a trade show, employee training session, even a board meeting. The premise is to "Think Wisconsin" first rather than head out of state.

This joint initiative of the state's Tourism and Commerce Departments, a great pairing, comes with the full backing of Governor Jim Doyle. Here in Manitowoc County we should be doing all we can to make this program a success. After all, we have top-notch meeting facilities like the newly renovated Holiday Inn of Manitowoc and Best Western Lakefront Hotel, Fox Hills Golf Resort and Lighthouse Inn.

What is the return on investment? Oxford Economics, a global research firm recently released a study that showed for every dollar invested in business travel, companies realize \$12.50 in incremental revenue. A positive return for local companies means a positive return for our county. Prior to the recession, meetings and convention travel was the fastest growing segment of the state's tourism sector. It's time to get that back on track. We encourage our local CEOs to choose Manitowoc County and the state of Wisconsin for their meetings. The MAVCB offers a wide variety of convention services to meeting planners. Call us here at 686-3070 if you need our help.

Plan now to attend the Wisconsin Association of Convention & Visitor Bureaus 15th annual Wisconsin Fall Tourism Convention, November 4 & 5, at the Holiday Inn. The Fall Tourism Convention is hosted by the Manitowoc Area Visitor & Convention Bureau. An exceptional educational agenda begins with our keynote presentation on "Capitalizing on the Recovery!?!?" by renowned tourism industry expert and educator Lalia Rach. Breakout sessions include topics on social media, mobile marketing, the Wisconsin political landscape and more. Other convention highlights are the Thursday evening Marketplace and Reception and the Wisconsin Trailblazer Awards presentation. Register online at www.escapetowisconsin.com.

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