

EAST CENTRAL ITBEC BOARD

Wednesday, May 13, 2015

Calumet County Courthouse
Chilton, WI

MINUTES

ALL AGENDA ITEMS ARE ASSUMED TO BE ACTION ITEMS

CALL TO ORDER: East Central ITBEC Board Chair Paul Sundquist called the meeting to order at 1:02 p.m.

ROLL CALL: Paul Sundquist, Winnebago County; Lisa Pauly and Brenda Schneider, Fond du Lac County; Dena Mooney and Ralph Prescott, Calumet County. **EXCUSED:** Ken Tebon, Kewaunee County. **ABSENT:** Wendy Hielsberg, Winnebago County. **STAFF:** Bill Korrer, Wisconsin Counties Association (WCA) Field Services Representative. **OTHERS:** Matt Payette, Director of Calumet County Planning, Zoning, and Land Information Department; Lyn Pilch, Pilch & Barnet.

APPROVAL OF MARCH 4, 2015 MINUTES: Motion by PRESCOTT, second by SCHNEIDER, to approve the March 4, 2015 Minutes as printed. Motion carried.

CHAIR'S REMARKS: East Central ITBEC Chair Sundquist stated that today's objective is to try and determine how to get the consumer to view the East Central ITBEC region as a destination. Chair Sundquist also thanked Matt Payette, Calumet County's new Planning, Zoning, and Land Information Department Director for attending today's strategic planning session. He said that Matt's experiences in Kewaunee County will be valuable in crafting a vision for the East Central ITBEC and the road map to get there.

STRATEGIC PLANNING SESSION: Lyn Pilch led the group in a strategic planning session. Her hope for the day is to identify the product the East Central ITBEC has to offer; identify target markets; review marketing techniques; identify goals, objectives, and actions; and have a summary of today's actions. The final ten list of what the East Central ITBEC has to offer included the Big Waters (Lake Winnebago and Lake Michigan), the EAA (Museum & AirVenture), the Niagara Escarpment (the Ledge), supper clubs, ag tourism, heritage, music events, the "bang for the buck" (competitive family oriented prices), natural areas, and the urban/rural landscape mix without having to travel great distances. Ms. Pilch will create the session summary with related comments for the Board.

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ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDA: Review of Strategic Planning Session Results.

SET NEXT MEETING DATE: June 10, 2015 in Fond du Lac starting at 1:00 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT: With all business being conducted, Chair Sundquist declared the meeting adjourned at 5:03 p.m.

**East Central ITBEC
Strategic Planning Session
June 10, 2015**

- Review the first day's planning session notes for changes and additions
- Confirm demographics
- Review list of goals/discussion items
 - What additions need to be made?
 - What factors contribute to the ability to reach these goals? Economy? Competition? Organizational challenges? Environment factors? etc. What strategies need to be put in place to counteract these contributing factors?
 - Prioritize the list of goals based on the contributing factors
 - What strategies need to be employed to achieve the prioritized goals?
 - Create a realistic timeline to reach your goals and include what resources (financial, volunteers, locations, etc.) are necessary to succeed.
- Discuss budget options

East Central ITBEC

Strategic Planning Session Notes

May 13, 2015

Instructions: Rank East Central ITBEC top ten assets using the following criteria:

- Are they unique to the area?
- Are there restrictions/seasonal hours?
- How do they represent the area?

Are travelers aware of these options?

How would travelers rank these options?

Top 10 Assets—by groups

1. Big waters (Lake Winnebago, Lake Michigan)	Big waters (Lake Winnebago, Lake Michigan)
2. Niagara escarpment	EAA
3. EAA	Niagara escarpment
4. Fishing: big waters, sturgeon, lake trout, salmon	Ag tourism
5. Super clubs	Music events including performing arts centers and other arts assets
6. Churches/holy land	Museums, cultural centers
7. Agricultural/ag tourism (wineries, cheese, you picks, honey, corn mazes)	Urban/rural cultural to rural transistion
8. Quality of life	Bang for the buck
9. Natural areas (Horicon Marsh, Killsnake, Brillion)	Safety
10. Urban/rural landscape mix	Non-commercialization

Final Top 10 Assets

1. Big waters (Lake Winnebago, Lake Michigan)

- Region has access to both waters—no others have connection to both lakes
- Wisconsin's great lake and a Great Lake
- Provides all the lake activities associated with lakes but even more and bigger like boating—large body of water means larger boats can be accommodated
- Number of public access points, easily accessible
- Top windsurfing lakes in the country, top in Wisconsin
- Large boats, yachts, sailboats
- Great fishing lake, often referred to as a fish factory with a number of types of fish
- Sturgeon fishing: only two lakes in the country you can spear on but this is the only one people know about with the most stable population in the world
- Ice boating
- Kiting on ice and water
- Snowmobiling—even without snow it happens on the lakes because of the ice
- Lake Michigan has fishing options unique to the state including salmon and trout
- Tournament fishing on Lake Winnebago
- Adventure going from lake to lake
- Fox WI Heritage Parkway—historical tourism route
- Offers river access too
 - People know the area surrounds Lake Winnebago and people know it surrounds Lake Michigan—but people don't know it surrounds both
 - People know about boating but it could be known better
 - Awareness is building on the region being a top in the country for windsurfing and kiting but it needs to keep being pushed
 - People know the area as a great fishing destination but not the whole spectrum of fishing that's available
 - The number of public access points and easy accessibility is not well known
 - If there is snow, people come snowmobiling. People will not travel for snowmobiling on the lake with the ice so it isn't a top draw to drive travelers to region
 - Tournament fishing is known but not the number of tournaments

2. EAA (Air Venture, museum, events and attractions)

- Number of events
- Impact touches the whole region
- Number of visitors—domestic and international
- Largest event of its kind
- Variety of planes not seen in other shows, in the same numbers
- Trainings for pilots
- Not just an airshow
 - So well-known it's better known than Oshkosh
 - But they don't know it's a year-round destination, both as a museum attraction and as a host for other events

3. Niagara escarpment (aka "The Ledge" exposed rock and down slope, Cuesta)

- Unique geological formation
- Only place in Wisconsin that has it but goes all the way to Niagara Falls
- Gives the wind for windsurfing, gives the area wind farms
- Native American history
- Caves that are public with tours
- Kiekhoefer Park—120+ acre park with beautiful views, biking, hiking, horseback riding, cross country skiing, mountain biking, sledding, geocaching
- High Cliff State Park—best swimming area in Lake Winnebago
- Calumet County Park with hiking
- Columbia Park—bottom of the ledge meets the lake
- Grape growing and wineries because of the cool temperatures, including WI Ledge Winery
 - People know the parks but not that they are tied together because of the escarpment
 - Fragmented asset
 - Branding needs to be done and is being worked on through an interpretive center and walking trail

4. Supper Clubs

- Calumet County = “Supper club capitol of the Midwest”
- Breadth of establishments in the area makes it unique
- Long family histories—multi-generational ownership
- Long running establishments
- Food is well-known but more known for their atmosphere and the overall experience
- Give the history of the area, not just a meal
- Bloody marys, old fashions, grasshoppers
- Bar/restaurant mix
- All counties share this asset
- Family friendly establishments
- Really tied to the communities they are located
- Fish fries, prime rib/steaks
- Local tradition
 - Known but not well known
 - Might not have website or promotions like Facebook—it’s a mixed bag with the establishments’ use of technology
 - Some view themselves as tourism destinations, other do not and just see themselves as local establishments

5. Ag tourism (farm markets, wineries, goat farm, cheese, meat markets, ice cream, horseback riding—variety of options)

- Onsite farm with tours
- WI Agtourism Business of the Year
- Seasonal with a few options that are year-round
- No inventory exists yet but in the works by Fond du Lac
- First cheese factory in the state in Fond du Lac
 - Up and coming options mixed with established options like Little Farmer which has been a destination for years
 - Agricultural travel awareness is high, but ag tourism as a segment of travel is still not recognized yet—but will be soon
 - The passing of the agtourism liability bill makes this segment a viable travel option
 - Many people go to ag tourism assets but don’t identify it as agtourism—they are more aware of the individual business

6. Heritage travel assets: Holy Land, Native American history, museums, French and German ancestry, cemeteries, logging
 - Churches—architectural tour, driving tour
 - Malone area heritage museum
 - Blakely museum
 - High Cliff Park
 - Cul du sacs at Lake Butte des Morts
 - Lots of museums in the ITBEC region, no inventory yet
 - Oshkosh has logging represented in the Public Museum along with The Paine Art Center and Gardens but each community has lots of logging history
 - Oshkosh and New Holstein has a cemetery tour
 - Genealogical and historical societies are found through the region
 - Downtowns are huge heritage areas
 - Not well known by travelers
 - Missing some interpretation of these items
 - Could be turned into event to open the churches and do a tour

7. Music events/performing arts centers/arts/ visual arts
 - Lots of representations and offerings throughout the region
 - Vary in sizes from small to very big
 - High quality arts and events
 - Mix of offerings
 - Lots of different venue options with different sizes
 - Lots of styles of music
 - Many festivals that include music , arts and culture
 - Lots of variety that could be pulled together for tours/events calendars
 - Not regionally recognized as an arts/music/culture destination by travelers come for the specific events
 - Oshkosh is known for their music events and its starting to spread throughout the area

8. Bang for the buck vacations/value
 - Pricing is for the locals and is competitive for travelers
 - Hotels have value pricing due to local weddings
 - Working cities in the region, not tourism-specific towns
 - Packaging exists to give more value options
 - Travelers who have been to the area know it is a value

9. Natural areas

- Lots of parks (Brillion, Killsnake, etc)
- Caves/escarpment
- Trail system including state trails, rails to trails
- Connecting and starting to connect between counties
- Horicon Marsh, Kettle Moraine State Forest, Kiehl, Lakeside Park—400 acres, Riggs Park in Rippon, Eisenbahn State Trail, Prairie Trail
- Lots of back roads that are good for biking
- Races around the area
- “Race the lake”
 - Biking is considered an add-on to trip to the area, people don’t travel to the area for biking as it isn’t strong as a destination
 - Work in progress
 - Know the trails, parks but don’t pull it together as a regional attraction

10. Urban/rural mix

- 10 minutes farm to PAC to words to art museum
- Considered an urban area for this region but has a mix
- Shopping/fishing mix is easy
 - Based on where they are traveling (151 vs 41) travelers can recognize it’s a mix—but if they are only in one area they might only see the urban or rural parts of the region
 - Depends on where the traveler is coming from—if they are from Chicago, the area seems rural, if they are coming from northern Wisconsin, the area seems rural. Most will see it as a mix.

Demographics

- Kewaunee = Twin Cities
- Rest of the area = Chicagoland
- Milwaukee = day trip for all but Kewanee
- Madison = day trip, Kewanee is unsure
- Quad Cities = overnight market for all but Calumet

Interest segments

- Big waters = high travel but can always be more
- EAA = could bring more year-round travel but it does bring travelers
- Niagara escarpment brings some travelers but they don't know that's what it is and that's why they are traveling there
- Supper clubs is an add on once travelers are in the area but they haven't been marketing them as a destination
- Ag tourism = travelers haven't connected the dots that it's an attribute of the region, but they currently come for the area's attractions
- Heritage travel = not much of a draw, similar to the escarpment
- Music events = YES!
- Arts as a whole is more of an add-on at this point but could be more if they were tied together with the music events

Discussion related to the current brand

- Place you drive through
- Enjoy their visits to the area
- Midwest hospitality
- Some concern of crime by locals, urban travelers think it's safe
- Travelers perception is different based on sides of the lake they travel to on their trips
- Lake Winnebago is the tie that is branded for the region but Kewaunee County is a little more removed
- Don't use ITBEC as a branding tool
- Need to update the website to take out the ITBEC's prominent reference
- Travel the Lakes is the current brand—doesn't necessarily specify what lakes it is referring to and may have travelers thinking it refers to quantity of lakes and not two big lakes
- Travel the Lakes could stay as the brand but there would need to be an education process once they arrive at the website to let travelers know what lakes are being referenced

Goals/Items for further discussion

- Need to promote the assets
- Finding the focus of what to do next with the information
- Inventory the assets included in the top 10
- Finding the synergy between the items
- Website update in a format that is accessible to partners to edit
- Facebook redo
- Marketing plan with a focus
- Create awareness of the connection the area has to both Lake Winnebago and Lake Michigan
- Bring additional attention to the boating opportunities
- Capitalize on the building awareness as the nation's top windsurfing and kiting destination
- Educate travelers on the whole spectrum of fishing that's available in the region
- Showcase the number of public access points and easy accessibility for the lakes
- Draw attention to the number of fishing tournaments hosted in the region
- Highlight EAA as a year-round destination, both as a museum and as a host for other events
- Tie the parks into the escarpment by branding it's attributes
- Support escarpment branding efforts including an interpretive center and walking trail
- Inventory the region's supper clubs to show the breadth of establishments that makes it unique
- Capitalize on growing agricultural travel trend by educating travelers on the region's offering and its connection as an ag tourism destination
- Consider ways to provide interpretation of the area's churches/holy land including a possible event to open the churches and do a tour
- Utilize the strong music events to bring attention to the other arts options for possible tours/events calendars
- Include the region's exciting travel packages to give more value options
- Inventory the trails and parks to create a regional attraction
- Create itineraries that showcase the urban/rural mix

