

Many come ... for other reasons

Is Southfield a vacationer's mecca?

By CARL STODDARD

While Southfielders may travel the world in search of perfect vacation spots, more than a few visitors are coming to Southfield for a seasonal sojourn.

Southfield is not a "vacationers' haven." Missing are oversized billboards touting such things as was museums. Old West villages and trolley rides over Indian burial grounds.

Instead, Southfield appears to be luring visitors to the city with an impressive array of hotels, motels and fine restaurants and shops.

In all, Southfield boasts more than 1,300 hotel and motel rooms for visitors. Many of the rooms are filled by couples who get for a weekend in the contained atmosphere of a luxury motel, according to Southfield Community Relations Director Joyce Pak. But many more of the rooms, Mrs. Pak said, are taken over by conventioners.

Conventioners are not the typical tourist. They tend not to arrive in Southfield in stationwagons loaded with kids and camping gear in search of scenic views and other attractions. But if the conventioners' spending is perhaps more limited, their scope is not.

JANE SMITH, director of the Oakland County Tourist and Convention Bureau, has hosted conventions of 120 to 1,800 people into county motels. Other conventions are booked directly by the hotels. "Of course, Southfield hotels and motels get a large number of those conventions because of their proximity and quality," Mrs. Smith said.

Robert Cartwright, of the non-profit Southeast Michigan Travel and Tourist Association, said about \$1.9 billion dollars was spent by tourists in Michigan during a period between 1974 and 1975 in Michigan. During the same period, another \$3 billion was spent by conventioners.

In the nine-county Detroit area, \$1.7 billion was spent in travel and tourism, with \$464 million going to Oakland County, he said. Figures were not available for the amount generated in Southfield

The average visitor in the southeast Michigan area, according to a study, spends more than \$100 a day while visiting, Cartwright said.

More than 83 of that \$100 goes toward hotels and motels, \$12.90 for food provided

by those motels and hotels, and \$12.60 is spent for food outside the hotel.

IN ADDITION, about \$1.90 is spent by visitors for retail purchases, Cartwright said, while \$5.50 for beverages, \$4.00 for

local transportation, \$1.50 for sightseeing and \$1.00 for dealers. Of the remaining portion of the \$100 spent, about \$6 is spent at night clubs and sporting events, \$6 for gasoline, oil and automotive services and another \$6 for miscellaneous items.

The amount spent can be multiplied by the five days the average visitor spends in the nine-county area, Cartwright said.

About 95 per cent of the conventioners and other visitors come to Southfield via automobile. Of all visitors, 58 per cent are native Michiganders.

Michigan is known as a favorite vacation land, but in Southfield, the presence of genuine tourists appears to be as common as snowfall in Miami. In fact, most information and visitor bureaus are hard pressed to recall the last time someone inquired about tourist-type information.

"We don't get many calls for that type of information," Mrs. Pak said. "About 58 per cent of the tourists in Southfield come from our own residents. Southfield has the greatest concentration of first-class hotels and motels in the county, in as good a place to come for the weekend."

ACCORDING to the Southfield Chamber of Commerce, few persons inquire about Southfield tourist information. Most requests for information, a Chamber spokesman said, is from persons or companies considering a move to Southfield.

Cartwright said that when he bureau does receive a request for tourist information, a packet goes out with information ranging from Cranbrook to the Detroit Zoo, to Bob Lo Island to the Detroit Institute of Arts.

Apparently, even among those who decide to vacation in Southfield and the surrounding environs, Southfield attractions do not appear high on the list of vacation agendas.

Museum exhibit accents inventions

The traveling bicentennial exhibit, "Industrial Heritage U.S.A.," has returned for its third summer of display at the Henry Ford Museum in Dearborn, following a nine-month tour of 35 metropolitan areas across the United States.

Developed by Greenfield Village and Henry Ford Museum in cooperation with 26 industrial organizations, "Industrial Heritage U.S.A." illustrates the dramatic changes in American life that have resulted from the ingenious inventions in industry, commerce and agriculture in the 200 years since our nation's birth.

Literally hundreds of artifacts have been selected from the collections of the village and the museum for the exhibit, which traces America's industrial progress by contrasting the products of the past with those of today. Individual showcases center on the evolution of such diverse areas as home entertainment, home lighting, the bath, the kitchen, farm equipment, clothing and electrical power.

"Industrial Heritage U.S.A." was accorded American Revolution Bicentennial Administration approval in Octo-

ber 1974. This official recognition serves to emphasize the exhibit's importance, and focuses national attention on the project.

"INDUSTRIAL Heritage U.S.A." opened to the public for the first time at Henry Ford Museum on July 4, 1974. Since then, the display has brought acclaim to the village and the museum from Congress, state governors and legislators, city officials, and educators at every level.

Following Labor Day, the show will again embark on a nationwide tour, returning to Henry Ford Museum in November and December, 1976.

Whether on tour or at the museum, "Industrial Heritage U.S.A." is a logical extension of the educational purpose of the village and museum, and broadens that function by reaching beyond the physical boundaries of the museum complex itself.

There is no additional charge for "Industrial Heritage U.S.A." beyond the regular museum admission, priced for adults and children, 6-12 Children under six are admitted free of charge.



Southfield has few tourist attractions. (Staff photo by Gary A. Friedman)

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