

TRAVEL

New marketing campaign developed for metro area

DETROIT/PRNewswire -- The Metropolitan Detroit Convention & Visitors Bureau (MDCVB) has completed the development of a new marketing message for metropolitan Detroit -- part of a long-term brand identity strategy that will be used to market and sell the region worldwide as a travel destination and business investment.

The positioning focuses on communicating positive change happening in the Detroit area and is summed up in the theme line: "It's a great time in Detroit," which is intended to help establish the city and region as a revitalized area offering much of what travelers and investors desire.

The Bureau is still working on marketing materials, including a graphic design for the theme line. But Bureau president and CEO Rick Binford emphasized that the theme line "It's a great time in Detroit" is only a shorthand description of a very well thought-out plan.

The brand identity was developed using the results of multiple research efforts that indicated it best represents the feeling that the area is undergoing: tremendous positive change," he

said.

The project began in 1996 with the goal of developing a community-wide marketing strategy for the entire Detroit region, one that could be endorsed and adopted by many stakeholders. Plog Research, Inc., one of the travel industry's top research and brand consultants, conducted a nationwide survey of potential visitors on behalf of the Bureau.

More than 3,500 consumer and 1,000 meeting planners were asked how they viewed metro Detroit as a destination to visit, what visitors seek in a tourism destination and how Detroit compared with other cities.

According to Binford, the research findings indicated that metropolitan Detroit offers much of what travelers look for in a destination but those tourism assets are largely unknown to potential visitors.

"The strongest areas of interest by travelers were found to be nightlife, culture and recreation, assets that are abundant in Detroit," Binford said. "However, awareness that Detroit offers these opportunities is very low among potential visitors."

The research also found that while the perception of social

and urban problems in Detroit is widespread among potential travelers, a significant number, 25 percent, believe the city is on the comeback trail. A similar survey also conducted for the Bureau by EPIC-MRA in Lansing showed that among residents of Wayne, Oakland and Macomb counties, 74 percent said Detroit is a "good" destination for travel and tourism.

Most importantly, the Plog study found that perceived social problems such as crime and drugs do not keep tourists away if the city has enough positive attributes to offer. For example, survey respondents characterized Chicago as having many social problems but also tremendous tourism appeal because of its vast array of culture, entertainment and other visitor options.

"We are telling the world that Detroit is a surprisingly sophisticated community of hard-working, fun-loving people who are excited about the present and optimistic about the future," said Bureau vice president of marketing Kim Fitzgerald.

Potential positioning lines were tested in the marketplace. The results indicated that "It's a

great time in Detroit" contained the messages and positioning consistent with the objective of creating a perception that metro Detroit is undergoing tremendous positive change, and, as a result, is becoming an increasingly more desirable place to live, work and do business.

Fitzgerald added that the new brand message will provide members of our community with a common understanding and frame of reference for communicating a consistent message about what metro Detroit has to offer visitors and investors alike.

"This new brand positioning is far more than an slogan or an advertising campaign," she said. "It offers a consistent communications message and tone that we can all use in doing business with the outside world. It allows us to develop an emotional connection with visitors. Its success will be incremental over time as more and more organizations and individuals in our community commit to it."

The entire brand development phase, with costs estimated at \$400,000, has been funded by the MDCVB.

The new brand identity will be used in all marketing materials

developed by the Bureau and in public- and private-sector organizations throughout Wayne, Oakland and Macomb counties. The Bureau is currently working to secure partners among the corporate community and area governments. Their support will include commitments to use the brand identity in their own communications and advertising efforts.

The Bureau plans a public unveiling of the brand identity creative materials, including a logo, advertisements and first-phase communication plans at a briefing for community partners and media Nov. 18.

Christina Lovio-George, chairman of the MDCVB Board of Directors, said the brand identity program will expand each year to include more audiences and marketing partners as Detroit's development continues.

"Obviously, this must be a community-wide effort," Lovio-George emphasized. "Our hope is that the brand identity message will be supported and extended by businesses, governments and residents alike. But we are very much aware that we have to continue to improve our product -- from the quality of our

service and hospitality, to the selection of attractions available, to the appearance of our streets and highways. Our research tells us that potential visitors and our own community are all ready to help Detroit complete its comeback story."

Metro Detroit's new brand identity strategy was developed by the Bureau in conjunction with a team of research, marketing and communications experts whose experience includes extensive destination branding, tourism industry marketing and public relations experience.

Plog Research of Redwood, Calif., a leading travel industry consulting firm, conducted the primary research and analysis. Irma S. Mann, Strategic Marketing, Inc., a Boston-based marketing firm specializing in destination marketing and brand identity programs, developed the positioning line and creative executions. Margo E. Williams and Associates, a Detroit public relations firm, is coordinating the community awareness and support effort for the launch. In addition, several Detroit-area suppliers will be tapped to assist in the development of brand identity materials and programs.

Boyer offers ski passes to 10-year-olds

BOYNE FALLS, Mich. -- Boyne USA Resorts announced that for the 1997-1998 ski season, a complimentary gold season pass will be extended to every 10-year-old child. This season pass affords the children unlimited skiing or snowboarding at both Boyne Mountain and

Boyne Highlands Resorts.

To start the kids off on the right foot, a specialized "learn to ski" program has been implemented. 10-year-olds will receive three one hour on hill ski or snowboard lessons, and rental equipment for just \$19 per lesson. Also, ski and snowboard

equipment can be purchased for a discount of 20 percent, then returned the following year (provided it will fit equipment that can be used) for 50 percent. The actual Season Pass will be mailed directly to the child. Call 800-GO-BOYNE or 616-549-6816 for more details.

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For information and register, call (313) 421-6600.

BACH FESTIVAL

Guitarist and composer Allen Krantz has written a new composition which will receive its world premiere at the 1997 Village Bach Festival, 8:15 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 29 at the First Presbyterian Church in Cass City.

For tickets, call 1-517-872-3309.

The SOLAR Club is offering a winter backpacking class beginning in December. The five classes are held 6-9 p.m. Dec. 3 and Jan. 7, 14, 21 and 28 in Farmington Hills. Two overnight trips are planned to the Waterloo Recreation Area on Jan. 17-18 and Pigeon River State Forest on Jan. 31 to Feb. 1. Techniques for keeping warm and dry in cold temperatures, cross country skiing and snowshoeing with a backpack and building snow shelters will be discussed. For more information, call Douglas Lanyk at (248)634-4551.

FLORIDA HOLIDAY

The Palm Coast Resort on central Florida's East Coast is offering families a Sunshine State alternative complete with mild winter temperatures, several sports options and access the Christmas Extravaganza in St. Augustine with a Holiday Getaway Package. Not starting at \$109 a night, through Dec. 30.

The package includes waterfront accommodations, a Christmas buffet for two, and two coupons for golf, kids camp, bike rentals, fishing rod rentals and court fee. For more information, call (800)654-6538.

TRAVEL FEE

Kirby Travel Services, Michigan's oldest travel agency, has instituted a fee for some of the services it provides to corporate and individual clients, effective immediately.

The fees are the result of commission cuts, decreasing air fares and increasing business costs.

Filip Khan said service fees are not a new concept in the travel industry or even at Kirby, which was founded in 1919.

Kirby Travel is in the lobby of One Kennedy Square Building in downtown Detroit.

ONE DAY SHOPPING

Hamilton, Miller, Hudson & Foye Travel in Southfield is offering two holiday season one-day shopping trips. The 10th annual New York City Day Trip includes air travel from Detroit or Flint, bus transfers from the airport to Manhattan, a canvas tote bag with your first purchase of \$25 or more at Macy's. Prices are from \$164.90. The fourth annual Mall of America Day Trip will take tourists to Minneapolis' famous mall and includes a coupon book worth more than \$1000 in value, a Mall of America shopping bag and more. Prices begin at \$142.90. To book an HMMF tour, travelers can call any local travel agent.

WINTER BACKPACKING

WINTER GETAWAYS

Travel writer Mary Quinley discusses Tampa Treasures at Livonia's Alfred Noble Library, 10 a.m. Monday, Nov. 10.

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