ADOPT -A- WELCOME CENTER

PROGRAM HANDBOOK

ADOPT-A-WELCOME CENTER
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RICK SNYDER
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
LANSING

KIRK T. STEUDLE
DIRECTOR

Thank you for your interest in the Michigan Department of Transportation's (MDOT) "Adopt-A-Welcome Center" program. It was developed by MDOT, Travel Michigan, the Michigan Travel Commission, and a group of convention and visitor bureaus (CVB) as a way for travel and tourism-related groups throughout the state to work together to promote tourism and improve the operations of the state's 14 Michigan Welcome Centers. This program allows CVBs and other interested organizations to "adopt" a Welcome Center and share resources to assist in maximizing the efficiency and effectiveness of the center's operation.

This assistance may range from providing plastic literature bags for visitors to providing contacts with local Master Gardener groups who can assist in the planting and maintenance of landscaping beds on the Welcome Center grounds. In some cases, the level of assistance may extend to a CVB providing volunteers to supplement the existing staff of the Welcome Center.

This handbook is designed to provide groups considering adoption with information about the program. Additional information about the Adopt-A-Welcome Center program and Welcome Center operations can be obtained by contacting your local Welcome Center or MDOT Transportation Service Center, or going online to www.michigan.gov/welcomecenters.

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ADOPT -A- WELCOME CENTER

PROGRAM/CONTACT INFORMATION

ADOPT-A-WELCOME CENTER
PROGRAM INFORMATION

What is the Adopt-A-Welcome Center program?

The Adopt-A-Welcome Center program is a collaborative effort between the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT), the Michigan Travel Commission, Travel Michigan, and the state's convention and visitors bureaus. This partnership is aimed at improving the operation and efficiency of the state's 14 Michigan Welcome Centers, and providing travelers with a positive experience.

Who can participate?

Convention and visitors bureau members and other tourism-related businesses are welcome to join.

Can a private business participate?

Yes. The Adopt-A-Welcome Center program is open to businesses, companies and individuals that work to promote tourism and travel in Michigan.

What activities does the program cover?

Adoption activities run the gamut, from providing flowers and supplies to enlisting volunteers to work at the Welcome Center. Potential adoption activities include:

- Providing plastic literature bags
- Providing annual flowers or other landscaping items
- Assisting with planting and maintaining flower and landscape beds
- Providing maps and brochures for local attraction
- Volunteering to assist in day-to-day operations to increase the number of hours a Welcome Center may remain open to visitors

How do I get involved?

Individuals, businesses, or groups interested in getting involved should contact their local Welcome Center or MDOT Transportation Service Center (TSC) to discuss adoption opportunities. A contact list is included in this handbook. Information also is available online at: *www.michigan.gov/welcomecenters*.

What kind of commitment is required?

Adoption activities can take place on either a short-term or a long-term basis, depending on the needs of Welcome Center and the capacity of the adopting group. Before activities begin, the adopting group and the TSC will develop an adoption agreement, detailing the scope of activities, responsibilities of each party, and a time frame for the agreement. Sample adoption agreements are included in this handbook.

What recognition can I receive for adopting a Welcome Center?

Groups adopting a Welcome Center can work with TSC and Welcome Center staff to install a small sign or plaque at the facility. While on duty, volunteers may wear shirts with the sponsor's business or company logo.

How can I get more information?

If you would like more information, please contact your local Welcome Center or TSC, or go online to: *www.michigan.gov/welcomecenters*.

WELCOME CENTER AND MDOT TSC
CONTACT INFORMATION

Welcome Center	Managing TSC
Clare Welcome Center Harriet Grzyb - **989-386-7634**	**Mt. Pleasant TSC** Bill Mayhew, Manager - **989-775-6104**
Coldwater Welcome Center Pam Bistel - **517-238-2670**	**Marshall TSC** Mark Dionise, Manager - **269-789-0560**
Detroit Welcome Center Beverly Carney - **313-962-2360**	**Detroit TSC** Rita Screws, Manager - **313-967-5401**
Dundee Welcome Center Jodi Webb - **734-856-6980**	**Brighton TSC** Mark Sweeney, Manager - **810-225-2622**
Iron Mountain Welcome Center Lea Tramontine - **906-774-4201**	**Crystal Falls TSC** Mike Premo, Manager - **906-875-6644**
Ironwood Welcome Center Lisa Spencer - **906-932-3330**	**Crystal Falls TSC** Mike Premo, Manager - **906-875-6644**
Mackinaw City Welcome Center Karrie White - **231-436-5566**	**Gaylord TSC** Jay Gailitis, Manager - **989-731-5090**
Marquette Welcome Center John Collins - **906-249-9066**	**Ishpeming TSC** Andy Sikkema, Manager - **906-485-4270**
Menominee Welcome Center Vivian Haight - **906-863-6496**	**Crystal Falls TSC** Mike Premo, Manager - **906-875-6644**
Monrore Welcome Center Cathy O'Connor - **734-242-1768**	**Brighton TSC** Mark Sweeney, Manager - **810-225-2622**
New Buffalo Welcome Center Debra Gunderson - **269-469-0011**	**Coloma TSC** Pete Pfeiffer, Manager - **269-849-1495**
Port Huron Welcome Center Marsha Mills - **810-395-8597**	**Blue Water Bridge Authority** Mike Szuch, Manager - **810-984-3131**
Sault St. Marie Welcome Center Lisa Laitinen - **906-632-8242**	**Newberry TSC** John Batchelder, Manager - **906-293-3879**
St. Ignace Welcome Center Mike Lilliquist - **906-643-6979**	**Newberry TSC** John Batchelder, Manager - **906-293-3879**

MDOT
Michigan Department of Transportation

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ADOPT -A- WELCOME CENTER

GUIDANCE DOCUMENT

MDOT Michigan Department of Transportation	GUIDANCE DOCUMENT	IDENTIFIER	EFFECTIVE DATE
		10206	2/23/2012
		SUPERSEDES	DATED
		New	

RESPONSIBLE ORGANIZATION:	**Bureau of Field Services**
SUBJECT:	**Adopt A Welcome Center Program Guidelines**

PURPOSE

The Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) supervises the daily operations of the state's Welcome Centers. Together, approximately 9 million travelers annually stop at Michigan's Welcome Centers. The mission of the Welcome Centers is to provide travelers with "tourism-related information…restroom facilities and …assistance to encourage safe driving."

Michigan's Convention and Visitor Bureaus (CVB) and other like tourism organizations are the local providers of tourism information and promote their destinations to visitors.

To optimize the delivery of services to the visitors of Michigan's Welcome Centers, this program has been developed to encourage the department and tourism organizations to work smarter and develop collaborative partnerships that maximize the effectiveness of the resources available to provide visitor information and services.

PROGRAM GOALS

Foster communication and collaboration between MDOT, the Michigan Welcome Centers, and various Convention and Visitor Bureaus and like tourism organizations to maximize the effectiveness of the resources, knowledge, and skills of each organization.

Provide visitors with a positive experience that will make them "raving fans" of Michigan who not only want to return again and again, but also tell others about their experience, encouraging them to visit PureMichigan.org as well.

PROGRAM INFORMATION

This program has been developed to allow/encourage local CVB(s) or like tourism organizations to "Adopt a Welcome Center" and to work with that Welcome Center to identify opportunities to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of their operations.

One or more CVBs may "adopt" each Welcome Center. Under the guidance of the MDOT Transportation Service Center Manager who oversees the Welcome Center, the CVB(s) will meet with the Welcome Center staff to determine how to more efficiently deliver services to visitors, maximizing the use of all available resources, including volunteers, materials, supplies, and local knowledge to support the Welcome Center's delivery of services.

Examples of resources that could be provided by a CVB to a Welcome Center include items such as providing literature bags for visitors, performing flower/landscape plantings and maintenance, or supplementing existing Welcome Center staff with volunteers. All resources provided to a Welcome Center by a CVB must be performed in accordance with all applicable laws, statutes, policies, and labor agreements.

MDOT Michigan Department of Transportation	GUIDANCE DOCUMENT	IDENTIFIER	EFFECTIVE DATE
		10206	2/23/2012
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RESPONSIBLE ORGANIZATION:	**Bureau of Field Services**
SUBJECT:	**Adopt A Welcome Center Program Guidelines**

PARTICIPANT RESPONSIBILITIES

Welcome Centers

1. Identify unmet operational needs.
2. Meet with the local CVB(s) and determine the resources that are available.
3. Develop a work plan that utilizes all available resources to meet operational needs.
4. Develop an agreement with the adopting CVB(s) that details the specific resources to be provided by the CVB(s).
5. Submit the work plan and agreement to the MDOT Welcome Center Steering Committee (WCSC) for review prior to implementation. If the plan involves the CVB(s) providing volunteers to supplement existing staff, than the work plan and agreement shall also be submitted to MDOT Human Resources for review and approval.
6. Report to the WCSC and the Highway Hospitality Committee about programs undertaken and results achieved. These reports will be compiled and shared with other Welcome Centers and "Adoption" groups for information and possible replications.

Convention and Visitors Bureau(s) and like tourism organization

1. Meet with Welcome Center staff and provide support as resources will permit.
2. Work with the Welcome Center staff to identify visitor needs and possible enhanced services and develop a program to deliver those services.
3. Work within MDOT guidelines and procedures.
4. Complete all required documents and agreements.
5. Assist in preparing reports on the effectiveness of the program.

REQUIRED REPORTING

The TSC Manager overseeing each Welcome Center will forward to the WCSC and the Highway Hospitality Committee the agreement they have reached with the CVB(s). On a quarterly basis, the TSC Manager will send a report to the WCSC and the Highway Hospitality Committee on "adoption" activities and results. These reports will be shared with other Welcome Centers and "Adoption" programs to identify best practices and successes.

Approved: _____Gregory C. Johnson_____ Date: __2/23/2012_____

Chief Operations Officer

ADOPT -A- WELCOME CENTER

SAMPLE AGREEMENTS

Adopt-a-Welcome Center Agreement and Work Plan
Marquette Welcome Center

This agreement is between the Marquette County Convention and Visitors Bureau (MCVB) and the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) to establish the working requirements for the MCVB to provide volunteer staff to supplement the assigned MDOT staff operating the Marquette Welcome Center (MWC).

The MCVB desires to provide volunteer assistance in the operation of the Welcome Center. MCVB would provide supplemental help to perform special events, activities, promotions, displays and tourist-related information. The MCVB volunteer assistance would be a supplement to the normal MDOT staff assigned to the Welcome Center.

MCVB workers shall perform according to the following work standards, skills and procedures:

1) The volunteers must be knowledgeable of local, regional and statewide tourist opportunities and have the willingness to interact with visitors to the Welcome Center.
2) The volunteers must assist customers on tourist-related questions which may be outside of the Marquette county area.
3) The volunteers shall in no way work to convince or coerce tourists to forgo their plans to visit regional areas outside of the Marquette County area.
4) The volunteers must adhere to reasonable work standards for timeliness, attendance, work performance, politeness, safety and appearance.
5) The volunteers will be held to the State of Michigan standards for work place safety and conduct.
6) The volunteers will not sell merchandise or services on the Welcome Center premises.
7) The volunteers will be required to sign a hold harmless agreement with the State of Michigan.
8) The volunteers will receive no reimbursement form the State of Michigan for any services performed at the Welcome Center.
9) The volunteer staff may wear MCVB-branded clothing and badges that are similar to clothing provided by MDOT to the Welcome Center employees. At a minimum, the MCVB volunteer staff shall wear a name badge with indication that they are a staff person of the MCVB.
10) The MCVB volunteers shall conduct themselves in a manner which assures the safety and security of the Welcome Center facility, Welcome Center employees and visitors.
11) The MCVB volunteer can in no way replace the work of a welcome center employee and shall not operate the facility without the presence of an MDOT employee.

MCVB requirements as part of this agreement will include:

1) The MCVB will present the proposal to the adjacent county tourism bureaus in Alger County and Baraga County to receive the formal support/acceptance. The MCVB will resolve any concerns of the other CVBs or other state and regional tourism organizations.
2) The MCVB will assure that volunteers are available for scheduled shifts during the Welcome Center adoption period. Absences shall be kept to a minimum and replacement staff will be required for any scheduled extended absence of the assigned volunteer staff.
3) The MCVB will follow appropriate state and federal laws for the assigned volunteer staff in terms of work hours, insurances, taxes, pay and other employer-related requirements.
4) The MCVB will hold harmless MDOT for incidents and injuries related to the assignment of MCVB volunteer staff at the Marquette Welcome Center.

MDOT will be responsible for the following:

1) MDOT will provide training and guidance as to the work procedures and appropriate conduct for the assigned MCVB volunteer staff.
2) MDOT will make available the employee break and rest facilities at the Welcome Center for use of the MCVB volunteer staff.

This agreement will be in effect as of May 1, 2012. During the agreement period the MWC will be open seven days a week during peak travel seasons and five days per week during non-peak seasons. MDOT and MCVB will agree to the travel periods that require seven-day-per-week operation. MCVB volunteer staff will be assigned to volunteer shifts, including weekends, as agreed to in a jointly developed volunteer work schedule. The agreement will be reviewed annually by both parties and revisions can be requested by either party.

Either party may terminate this agreement at any time upon notification of the other party.

Any issues arising from this agreement should be immediately reported to the other party. Issues will be promptly addressed by the MDOT Ishpeming Transportation Service Center manager and the MCVB director.

Work plan:

1) The MCVB will propose and enact special events and displays to be conducted at the Welcome Center to enhance the promotion of tourism in the local area and region.
2) The MCVB will assist MDOT in gaining great community involvement at the Welcome Center potentially including promotional displays, cultural displays, historical displays and beautification of the facility.
3) The MCVB will make the volunteer staff available for two days per week during the agreement period to allow for seven-day-per-week operations.

Agreed to by the

Pat Black	5-3-12
Marquette County Convention and Visitor Bureau Director	Date

Andy Sikkema	5-15-12
MDOT Ishpeming TSC Manager	Date

Adopt-A-Welcome Center Agreement and Work Plan
New Buffalo Welcome Center

This agreement is between the Southwestern Michigan Tourist Council (SWMTC) and the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) to establish the working requirements for SWMTC to provide volunteer staff to supplement the assigned MDOT staff operating the New Buffalo Welcome Center (NBWC) and to provide other products and services to enhance tourism opportunities at the Welcome Center and in greater Michigan.

SWMTC desires to provide volunteer assistance in the operation of the Welcome Center. SWMTC will coordinate efforts to provide supplemental help to perform/provide special events, activities, promotions, fill display racks in the vestibule areas, and distribute tourist-related information. SWMTC volunteer assistance will be a supplement to the normal MDOT staff assigned to operate and maintain the NBWC.

SWMTC coordinated volunteer workers shall perform their activities according to the following work standards, practices, and procedures:

1) The volunteers should be knowledgeable of local, regional and statewide tourist opportunities and have the willingness to interact with visitors at the Welcome Center.
2) The volunteers shall assist customers with local tourist-related questions which may be outside of the southwest Michigan area.
3) The volunteers shall in no way convince or coerce tourists to forgo their plans to visit regional areas outside of southwest Michigan.
4) The volunteers must adhere to reasonable work standards for timeliness, attendance, work performance, politeness, safety, and appearance.
5) The volunteers will be held to State of Michigan standards for work place safety and conduct.
6) The volunteers shall not sell merchandise or services on the Welcome Center premises.
7) The volunteers will be required to sign a hold harmless agreement with the State of Michigan.
8) The volunteers will receive no reimbursement from the State of Michigan for any services performed at the Welcome Center.
9) The volunteers may wear SWMTC-branded clothing and badges that are similar to clothing provided by MDOT to the Welcome Center employees. At a minimum, the volunteers shall wear a name badge with indication that they are a volunteer of SWMTC.
10) The volunteers shall conduct themselves in a manner which assures the safety and security of the Welcome Center facility, Welcome Center employees, and visitors.
11) The SWMTC volunteers can in no way replace the work of a Welcome Center employee and shall not work at/in the facility without the presence of an MDOT employee.

SWMTC requirements as part of this agreement includes:

1) SWMTC will coordinate the reinstatement of the Michigan Pick Program whereby local produce growers shall provide free local samples of in-season produce to visitors of the Welcome Center on weekends.
2) SWMTC will ensure that volunteers are available for scheduled shifts during the Welcome Center adoption period. Absences shall be kept to a minimum and replacement staff will be required for any scheduled extended absence of the assigned volunteer staff.
3) SWMTC will adhere to appropriate state and federal laws for the assigned volunteer staff in terms of work hours, insurances, taxes, payment, and other employer-related requirements.
4) SWMTC will hold MDOT harmless for incidents and injuries related to the assignment of volunteer staff at the Welcome Center.

MDOT will be responsible for the following:

1) MDOT will provide training and guidance as to the work procedures and appropriate conduct of the assigned SWMTC volunteers.
2) MDOT will make available the employee break and rest facilities at the Welcome Center for use of SWMTC volunteer staff.

This agreement is effective beginning the date noted on signature lines below. This agreement will be reviewed annually in December by both parties.

Either party may terminate this agreement at any time upon notification of the other party.

Any issues arising from this agreement shall be immediately reported to the other party. Issues will be promptly addressed by the MDOT Coloma Transportation Service Center manager and the SWMTC president.

Work plan:

1) SWMTC will propose and enact the Michigan Pick Program conducted at NBWC to enhance the promotion of tourism in the local area and region.
2) SWMTC will assist MDOT in gaining community involvement at the Welcome Center, potentially including providing brochure bags, procuring and planting flowers, cultural displays, historical displays, and beautification of the facility.
3) SWMTC will provide to the NBWC supervisor the volunteer work schedule at least one week in advance of the planned volunteer work period.

Agreed to by:

Steve Wells 9/19/12

Southwestern Michigan Tourism Council President Date

Pete Pfeiffer 10/18/12

MDOT Coloma TSC Manager Date

ADOPT -A- WELCOME CENTER

NEWS RELEASES

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE **TUESDAY, MAY 22, 2012**

CONTACT: Bob Felt, MDOT Office of Communications, 989-731-5090,
feltb@michigan.gov

New Adopt-A-Welcome Center program enhances visitor services in Michigan

Fast Facts:
- Tourism groups can now "adopt" a Welcome Center, similar to Adopt-A-Highway.
- The new program provides enhanced visitor service without increasing operational costs.
- There are 14 Welcome Centers in Michigan.

May 22, 2012 -- In partnership with the Michigan Travel Commission (MTC) and the Highway Hospitality Committee (HHC), the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) today announced a new statewide program that allows tourism groups across the state to "adopt" Welcome Centers in their community. This new program is designed to enhance operations and leverage the resources of all organizations involved.

"Similar to MDOT's Adopt-A-Highway program, this is a cost-effective way to provide enhanced services with a limited budget," said MDOT Southwest Region Engineer and HHC Co-Chair Bobbi Welke.

The Marquette Convention and Visitor Bureau (CVB) is the first to take advantage of this new program, adopting the Marquette Welcome Center located in Michigan's Upper Peninsula. The Marquette CVB is reassigning staff during the peak summer travel months to the Welcome Center to better utilize staff at both agencies and offer coverage seven days a week. This is just one example of the kind of cost-effective activities adopting groups can do when adopting a Welcome Center.

This Adopt-A-Welcome Center program, developed by the HHC, is intended to provide tourism groups across Michigan with opportunities to provide high-quality experiences to visitors while simultaneously providing another channel for promotion of local tourism. Adoption activities could include providing bags for visitors to place brochures in, maintaining

flower beds, providing local expertise, and supplementing the current Welcome Center staffing levels.

MTC Commissioner and HHC Co-Chair Jerry Preston added, "Our goal is to have visitors who are so pleased with their trip to Michigan that they become raving fans of the state and not only come back again, but tell their friends and acquaintances about their outstanding experience and encourage them to take their own trip to Michigan."

There are 14 Welcome Centers located throughout Michigan, including Clare, Coldwater, Detroit, Dundee, Iron Mountain, Ironwood, Mackinaw City, Marquette, Menominee, Monroe, New Buffalo, Port Huron, Sault Ste. Marie, and St. Ignace.

The HHC is a joint committee comprised of MDOT staff, the Michigan Travel Commission, and various convention and visitor bureaus.

Groups interested in the new Adopt-A-Welcome Center program should contact their local Welcome Center facility about adoption opportunities. For contact information, visit: http://ref.michigan.org/mtr/welcomecenters/.

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www.michigan.gov/drive | **www.twitter.com/MichiganDOT** | **www.facebook.com/MichiganDOT**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE **WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 2012**

CONTACT: James Lake, MDOT Office of Communications, 906-786-1830, ext. 311, lakej1@michigan.gov

MDOT Director Steudle to thank two Marquette County organizations Oct. 2

WHAT: Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) Director Kirk T. Steudle will offer his appreciation to the Marquette County Convention and Visitors Bureau for adopting the Marquette Welcome Center, and the Iron Ore Heritage Recreation Authority for its work on the trails in Marquette County.

WHO: MDOT Director Steudle
Pat Black, Director of the Marquette County Convention and Visitors Bureau
Carol Fulsher, Administrator of the Iron Ore Heritage Recreation Authority

WHEN: 3:45 p.m.
Tuesday, Oct. 2, 2012

WHERE: Marquette Welcome Center
US-41
Marquette

Special accommodations: 906-485-4270

BACKGROUND: In May 2012, the Marquette County Convention and Visitors Bureau became the first tourism organization in Michigan to participate in the Adopt-A-Welcome Center program, providing a volunteer to expand operations at the Marquette Welcome Center to seven days each week. The arrangement will allow MDOT to keep the center open seven days a week throughout the year.

Also in May, MDOT and the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) provided funding to the Iron Ore Heritage Recreation Authority to expand the existing trail by 12 miles, to a total of 48 miles. The latest round of funding included $777,800 in

Transportation Enhancement funds, $460,000 from the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund, and $202,200 in matching funds from the Recreation Authority.

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