

**FINAL PERFORMANCE REPORT**

Michigan Festivals and Events Association Foundation

**Grant Number**

791N1300085

**Date Report is Submitted**

March 23, 2012

## PROJECT TITLE

Michigan Wine Trails Billboard Promotion

## PROJECT SUMMARY

It was the goal of the Michigan Festivals and Events Association (MFEA) to promote the Michigan Wine Trails through a targeted billboard campaign during the peak summer and early fall of 2011.

The campaign was inclusive of Michigan's four wine trails:

- Leelanau Peninsula Wine Trail
- Wineries of Old Mission Peninsula
- Lake Michigan Shore Wine Trail
- Southeast Michigan Pioneer Wine Trail

Production of Michigan wine is a burgeoning industry. Vineyard area has increased over 60% in recent years and Michigan's wineries are producing over one million gallons of wine each year. With nearly 80 wineries, Michigan is the 13<sup>th</sup> largest wine producing state in the country.

Through the Michigan Department of Agriculture's Specialty Crop Block Grant program, MFEA sought to enhance the marketing of Michigan's Wine Trails. Michigan relies heavily on tourism and Michigan's wine trails are significant to what the state can offer. Michigan Wines has published that wineries attract more than 800,000 visitors annually and contribute \$300 million annually to Michigan's economy.

The economic downturn was a significant blow to state tourism. However, the increasingly popular "staycation" expanded the number of Michigan residents looking for an economic alternative to an expensive, out of state vacation. While out-of-state tourism dollars are vital, the tourism dollars of Michigan residents cannot be underestimated. Through this campaign, we sought to keep Michigan dollars in Michigan.

The following timeline was followed for project implementation:

Task: Submit Specialty Crop Block Grant application

*Completion Date:* April 22, 2010

Task: Refine theme and develop branding for campaign

*Completion Date:* November 2010

Task: Complete design and printing of accompanying materials

*Completion Date:* March 2011

Task: Publish billboards

*Completion Date:* June 1, 2011

Task: Support services

*Completion Date:* Ongoing throughout campaign

## PROJECT APPROACH

MFEA promoted the Michigan Wine Trails through a targeted billboard campaign. The campaign is inclusive of Michigan's four wine trails: Leelanau Peninsula Wine Trail, Wineries of Old Mission Peninsula, Lake Michigan Shore Wine Trail, and Southeast Michigan Pioneer Wine

Trail. The project included billboard throughout the state, advertising in regional publications and radio coverage through Citadel broadcasting's family of stations. Quantitative results are included in the next section, detailing the location and duration of project components.

## GOALS AND OUTCOMES ACHIEVED

With the support of the Michigan Department of Agriculture's Specialty Crop Block Grant program, MFEA was able to create the "Oh...MI Goodness" wine trails advertising campaign. This campaign was implemented with:

- 10 billboards for 3 months (August 1 to October 31, 2011)
- 322,000 printed brochures, distributed statewide
- Ad placement by Detroit Media Partners (circulation of 100,000)
- Ad placement by Grand Rapids Press (circulation of 120,000)
- Ad placement by Great Lakes Bay Regional Lifestyle Magazine
- 4 Radio interviews with Citadel Broadcasting's WJIM, Lansing

Additionally, the "Oh...MI Goodness" campaign has been, and will continue to be, promoted at MFEA conferences, conventions, and events, without further expense.

Due to availability of the boards, CBS Outdoor and Adams Outdoor Advertising (billboard contractors) the "Oh...MI Goodness" campaign boards will remain up until the space is re-sold. This will extend the campaign for an estimated 2 months or more per board.

14 boards were purchased, at the following locations:

- I-94: 700 ft W/O Renton Rd. SS
- US-131: 2 mi N/O US-10 Reed City ES
- US-131: 50 ft N/O Cowling Rd. WS
- US-131: 0.4 mi S/O 129<sup>th</sup> Ave. Bradley Exit WS
- I-94: 0.6 mi W/O SR 140 SS
- US-127: 8.2 mi N/O M-61 (N/O Harrison) ES
- I-94: 0.5 mi W/O Pipestone Rd. SS F/E
- I-94: 1.6 mi E/O 28 Mile Rd. (W/O Jackson Co. Line) NS
- I-69: 0.4 N/O US-12 ES
- I-94: 0.8 mi E/O M-40 (Paw Paw Exit) SS
- I-94: 1.3 mi W/O Columbia Ave. SS
- US-27: 528 ft S/O Taft Rd. ES
- I-96 1500 ft E/O Cedar St. NS
- I-69 3 mi N/O Charlotte ES

The funds used to match the grant were provided by Citadel Broadcasting, through generous media coverage which enhanced the campaign through:

- MFEA/Department of Agriculture as co-sponsor of "Grow in Michigan"
- 960 (:30) commercials which aired, weekdays, on The Michigan Talk Network, with an approximate average of 50,232 listeners per month per station. Stations included:
  - Petoskey, WJML 1110
  - Traverse City, WJNL 1210
  - Muskegon, WKLQ 1490
  - Grand Rapids, WJRW 1340
  - St. Joseph, WSJM 1400
  - Benton Harbor, WSJM FM 94.9
  - Mt. Pleasant, WMMI 830
  - Saginaw, WNEM 1250

- Lansing, WJIM 1240
- Hastings, WBCH 1220
- 4 on-air (radio/television) interviews with Sue Bila (transcripts attached)
- Fox 47 television segment
- Homepage exposure on wjrwam.com and wjimam.com for 4 consecutive months. Homepage views on wjrwam.com totaled 912,593 and views on wjimam.com totaled 223,056

With the addition of radio segments in the "Oh...MI Goodness" campaign, MFEA was able to highlight additional specialty crops. While Michigan's wine trails and grape industry remained the primary focus of all publicity, the radio interviews presented the opportunity for secondary benefit to other crops. Each interview focused on a different wine trail, and within each segment, mention was made of specialty crops within that region. These crops included pumpkins, peaches, beans, blueberries, apples, and cherries. As a result, the impact of the "Oh...MI Goodness" campaign had a greater reach than first reported.

MFEA's project partners in this campaign have been Citadel Broadcasting, CBS Outdoor and Adams Outdoor. These partners provided outstanding support, going above and beyond contracted work and in excess of expected donated services. Additionally, the billboard vendors have not yet removed the posted boards, so additional time is essentially donated by CBS Outdoor and Adams Outdoor. In some markets, the boards remained posted, further extending the campaign at no additional expense.

The primary outcome measure for the project was short-term – the posting of billboards throughout the state. However, MFEA is optimistic that tourism dollars generated as a part of this campaign will be ongoing through return visits and referrals.

The immediate goal of posting billboards throughout Michigan promoting the Wine Trails has been met. Additionally, the ad placements and radio segments have also been completed based on established goals.

Additionally, the Wine Trails and the "Oh...MI Goodness" campaign, received coverage within the Metro Detroit, Grand Rapids, and Great Lakes Bay Region through print ads running in each market.

The goal of printing business card sized versions of the billboards is the only item not accomplished. This decision was made based on the lack of matching cash gifts toward the project.

Michigan ranks 13<sup>th</sup> in wine production in the country, contributing an estimated \$300 million to the State's economy each year. Vineyard area has increased more than 60% over the last 10 years.

As a billboard campaign, it is difficult to quantify the number of individuals impacted by the campaign. However, it can be projected, based on traffic, that 19,969.360 people viewed the billboards.

Print advertising included a QR code, driving individuals to the MFEA website for more information. Unique visits of the "Oh...MI Goodness" campaign page totaled 80,891 during the three months of the campaign:

- August page visits – 36,046
- September page visits – 24,984

- October page visits – 19,861

## BENEFICIARIES

The immediate beneficiaries of the campaign include 4 wine trails, 71 wineries and 465 vineyards across the state. However, the benefit of promoting Michigan's wine trails has a far greater reach as the industry supports vendors and suppliers across the state. It is estimated that over 5,000 jobs statewide can be attributed to the industry. Local governments and the state benefit as well, as each of these businesses creates licensing and tax revenue for local services resulting in \$42 million in tax revenue.

In the 2006 paper "Growth of the Michigan Wine Industry", the new investment in new vineyards and wineries in Michigan over the next 17 year is projected to exceed \$125,000,000.

In addition to direct suppliers, increased promotion of the wine trails extends the benefit of tourism dollars to local restaurants, hotels and retail establishments. For example, the cost for 2 adults to take a weekend wine tour could be estimated as follows:

- \$140 meals (\$10 breakfast, \$20 lunch, \$40 dinner for 2 adults for 2 days)
- \$100 lodging at local hotel/motel/bed and breakfast
- \$35 for fuel/transportation (based on current gas prices and average car model)
- \$100 (minimum) in additional purchases
- Total spent for weekend: \$375 at local businesses

Based on this estimate of \$375 in revenue, the investment in the wine trails billboard campaign would "pay for itself" in just 200 such visits.

Through this project, MFEA and Michigan's Wine Trails will reach beyond the west side of the State and take the campaign shore to shore and border to border. As a result, the increase in wine country tourism can be projected to be significantly more than the 200 weekend visits needed for an equivalent return on investment.

## LESSONS LEARNED

At the beginning of the billboard campaign, MFEA did not have radio shows built in. Once Citadel (now Cumulus) was onboard, the radio shows brought a larger awareness of the Michigan wineries, commodities and their events.

The wineries were unable to provide financial support due to the economy. However, they did support the project.

In reviewing measurable outcomes, MFEA believes that the work plan outlined in the application was realistic.

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## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION