

THE TOURISM SECTOR: WORKFORCE NEEDS OF THE FUTURE

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SUMMARY

Projections of workforce needs for Wisconsin's tourism industry are based upon four cornerstone fundamentals. The first: The tourism industry is a major and proven economic growth sector. Travelers spent an estimated 8.7 billion dollars in Wisconsin in 1999, a 51% increase over the past five years. The second: Quality tourism serves as a "pull" factor for all other forms of business development. Every business, community and citizen must have a concern for the continued development of quality tourism in the state. The third fundamental is that the businesses incorporated under the umbrella term "tourism" provide the initial work experience and transferable skills for a significant portion of Wisconsin's youth. The fourth cornerstone fundamental is that contemporary tourism offers unprecedented career opportunities in its own right.

Wisconsin's tourism is rapidly becoming a four-season, year-round revenue generator for the state. Full realization of this potential is largely dependent upon the availability of employees. Full time employment opportunities in tourism will forever change the traditional employment practices to which Wisconsin residents have become accustomed. To be sure, the work environment of a tourism business will pull workers from other facets of the economy. The main point is, however, that full time employment cannot be sustained via the usual strategy of seeking large pools of seasonally available workers, i.e. students off for the summer.

In essence, Wisconsin's tourism industry is a significant partner in the processes by which Wisconsin's economy enters the 21st century. Tourism provides an economic-based catalyst for identifying, preserving and enhancing the natural, cultural and historic resources of the state. Finally, tourism properties and activities enhance the attractiveness of the state for the residents and people moving to the state to fill employment positions in all of our business endeavors.

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Tourism is a major component of world trade and a significant socio-economic factor in virtually every state of the nation including Wisconsin. The underlying constant in tourism is that it is a major industry of phenomenal socio-economic significance. Tourism is a human activity that by its nature draws from many established businesses and disciplines but transcends any one of them.

The varied and increasing number of professionals who recognize tourism as part of their domain (and livelihood) include of course hoteliers, travel agents and restaurateurs but also city planners, insurance actuaries, environmentalists, marketing experts, medical doctors, bankers—the list is endless.

The consumer is rapidly embracing tourism as a vital part of everyday life. The restaurant is fast becoming the family interaction center as meals at home tend to be eaten in schedule-imposed solitude. Hotels offer home-like amenities while homes acquire some of the facilities of resorts. Underlying this complexity of market transformations is the fact that consumers have come to expect more from every business, organization and person in tourism in terms of quality, accuracy, variety, convenience, value and professionalism.

Contemporary tourism is grounded in the fact that people are away from home for much of their economic and social lives. All business travel is part of tourism—businesspersons need accommodations, food, convention centers, meeting rooms, airports, highways, information, etc. to successfully conduct business. Vacation travel is also part of tourism be it long distance travel, an overnight experience near home or the short ride to a restaurant in another town. Indeed one of the fastest growing segments of vacation tourism is of the short stay/short visit/weekend variety.

In order to bring closure to this brief overview consider that virtually every successful significant event at a national or a personal level requires the behind-the-scenes expertise of tourism. This year's presidential campaign utilized hotels, airlines, parades, meals, riverboats; every service imaginable was made available. Be it a family wedding or a 50th anniversary the odds are that tourism expertise was required.

A portion of the UW-System Summit Report will be dedicated to documenting the direct economic significance of tourism to Wisconsin. More important, this report will show that tourism has the effect of enhancing all other socio-economic activities in the state.

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businesses incorporated under the umbrella term “tourism” provide the initial work experience and transferable skills for a significant portion of Wisconsin’s youth. The fourth cornerstone fundamental is that contemporary tourism offers unprecedented career opportunities in its own right.

October 1995 marked the convening of the White House Conference on Travel and Tourism held in Washington, D. C. It was the first time industry leaders and government officials met together to explore a common future with regard to the tourism industry. Even at this early date, Wisconsin was “ahead of the curve” with regard to public/private cooperation. The White House Conference struggled with the concept of such partnerships. Wisconsin’s tourism industry and government agency leadership have been working together for years. The White House Conference delegates from Wisconsin were organized, focused and productive. They addressed each of the nine topics identified by the White House Conference organizers. The significance of the White House Conference and Wisconsin’s approach to this challenge is twofold: First, as recent as five years ago no one at the national or state level specifically anticipated or addressed the current shortage of qualified tourism industry employees. At best the industry pleaded for a “level playing field” in the competition for employees. Second, in 1995 and well before then, Wisconsin tourism was accustomed to approaching all industry issues from the perspective of public/private partnerships.

The report for the October, 1995 White House Conference on Travel and Tourism included a statement which holds true today: “Travel and tourism is recognized within the industry as the largest industry in the world and most international economists agree that travel and tourism is, at least, one of the largest. The U.S. travel and tourism industry is the country’s largest export earner, second largest employer and third largest retail industry.”

The White House Conference report went on to state that “myths abound defining the industry as low paying . . . [that] unlike other export industries, travel and tourism have not captured the attention of policymakers in the international trade area . . . [that] travel and tourism, like other service economies, is a victim of an antiquated . . . economic accounting system biased toward the manufacturing sector. Service industries, including the travel and tourism industry, are now providing most of the jobs for middle Americans as jobs in manufacturing, mining and construction (and agriculture) continue to decline. As leading author John Nesbitt points out in his best seller book Global Paradox, “travel and tourism is one of the three industries that will drive the service led economy of the 21st Century—along with telecommunications and information technology.”

UW-System Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs, David J. Ward, recently reported to the UW Board of Regents “ . . . the national and global economy is rapidly changing. What this means for Wisconsin is that our traditional reliance on manufacturing and agriculture must be supplemented by opportunities that are knowledge-based, global in scope, electronically interwoven and entrepreneurial in nature.”

This statement represents a welcome challenge for the state’s educational institutions to cooperate with industry in the creation of a seamless approach to workforce development. Note, however, that the most popular “examples” of this challenge, that of computer science and

management information systems, represent tools that must be applied in some economic transaction environment. From this perspective David Ward's statement clearly incorporates tourism into its purview. Tourism is at the top of the global service economy. The airline and hotel reservation systems have served as prototypes for all information system applications. Indeed, there may be no better example than the tourism industry in previewing the accessibility of electronic communication as when a briefly trained new employee can efficiently schedule a tourist any where around the world!

This Summit was called by a premier educational system. Correctly, education is recognized as an agent of change. Indeed our common objective is to identify ways to stimulate purposeful change for the benefit of Wisconsin's citizens and economy. Change, however, is rarely painless. Change necessitates a revision in our thinking and systems. In this light it may be best to recall that any changes we propose are up against centuries of educational "dogma." Formal education has purposefully and/or inadvertently been a stellar advocate of linear career preparation, which is increasingly myopic, and often at cross-purposes with real lives of employed professionals.

If the state is to successfully address the workforce needs of Wisconsin's tourism industry there will need to be a fundamental change in how career options are presented by the education system's career counselors. To be sure, the high school counselor is already overworked but it is their responsibility to know and accurately communicate the full array of 21st century career possibilities to the youth of the state. They must reaffirm their vital role as facilitators in an era of almost unlimited possibilities.

Perhaps the most significant perspective to utilize when envisioning tourism's future workforce needs is that the State has not yet come close to achieving its tourism potential. Wisconsin is rich in geographic variety, natural phenomena and cultures. The world-class natural wonders of two of the Great Lakes and the Mississippi River remain virtual secrets in the world's marketplace. Wisconsin's location next to the affluent population centers of Chicago and Minneapolis/St. Paul offers unprecedented potential. Closer to home, many counties of the state continue to have employment problems partially and demonstratively because tourism has not yet served as a catalyst to celebrate the beauty of the area to visitor and investor alike.

For our purposes, let's start at the beginning. The multitudes of businesses which comprise tourism are the first-time work experiences for millions of teenagers. Something in the area of 50% of all American young adults have worked in the fast food industry alone. Are these quality jobs? Where else were these teenagers going to find employment? Where else would they have their often first-time experiences with time cards, customer service, schedule responsibility, teamwork and making money change. To be sure, first job memories stick with us but as we move up the career ladder the lessons learned also come along.

Tourism is an important facet of the service industries. Any new economy for Wisconsin will need to address that worldwide trend and the accompanying trend toward knowledge work. Tourism is dynamic; within a very short time the successful entry-level tourism employee is "moved

up” to greater responsibility. Be it a crew chief, front desk employee, tour guide or restaurant host, human relations skills, problem solving and attention to detail for guest satisfaction come to the forefront. Again, it might be at this point that these young adults leave tourism for other careers, but they have learned and internalized skills which will advance their career in whatever may be their chosen profession.

Lower level managers in tourism are generally in their early 20's; mid level managers are not much older. In short, individuals who choose a career in tourism have the potential—and indeed should have the expectation—that they will have a rapidly advancing career. This dynamic potential is due in part to the nature of contemporary tourism. This industry needs managers for motels, restaurants, attractions, indeed for all of the facets of the business. Due in part to the “invention” of the smaller, computer assisted property a person can expect to be given a high level of responsibility at an early age. It must be noted there are very few other opportunities for a person in their mid 20's to be the general manager of a multimillion dollar property.

Beyond this level the possibilities explode, ranging from district management to property ownership. Some manager’s move to employment with suppliers, some move up to the corporate level. Lifelong lessons, learning and opportunities continue.

There is a second approach to the topic of “building quality jobs” which must be addressed. Blatantly stated, tourism by its nature requires every expertise: Wisconsin tourism needs tourism attorneys, construction expertise, architects, chefs, medical professionals, environmentalists, city planners, historians, accountants and every other specialist, including attorneys. Tourism is a major industry which provides the opportunities for other professionals to apply their skills.

In conclusion to this section, tourism’s strength is that it offers entry-level employment at properties throughout the state. Advancement is rapid and the skills learned are transferable. Moreover, tourism offers the application of skills of a vast array of other career professionals.

Tourism is more than the hotels and resorts we readily see. Tourism includes some portion of the sales activities and experiences of everything that the traveler comes in contact with during their travels—restaurants, shopping, festivals, nightlife, gasoline and taxis, to name but a few. Moreover, the needs of the tourist generate business activity for a much broader spectrum of our economy—food service, linen supply, telecommunications, power companies, insurance, banking; again the list is virtually endless.

The issue of tourism workforce needs is therefore an issue which impacts the very core of Wisconsin’s economy. Virtually every business in the State is touched by tourism. The data for 1996 shows that tourism total expenditures in the State exceeded \$6.5 billion dollars; that over 182,000 jobs (full time job equivalent) were created; that a total resident income of just under 4 billion dollars was generated and that total government revenues totaled \$638,870,000 for the State and \$461,040,000 in local taxes and fees.

Travelers in Wisconsin spent \$6.7 billion in 1997 generating \$1.1 billion dollars for State and local governments and supporting nearly 204,000 full time equivalent jobs.

According to a 1998 Department of Tourism report, **Tourism Works for Wisconsin**, travelers spent an estimated 7.7 billion dollars in Wisconsin in 1998. These expenditures resulted in more than 1.3 billion dollars in tax revenues and fees for State and local governments. In 1998, the industry generated nearly 230,000 full time equivalent jobs. Most important, the industry is growing. The 7.7 billion dollars estimated for 1998 represented a 13% increase over 1997 and a 45% increase since 1993.

The 1999 data evidenced a continued upward trend. Travelers spent an estimated \$8.7 billion dollars in Wisconsin in 1999. This represents a 7.8% increase over 1998 and a 51% increase in the past five years. Tourism dollars generated \$4.8 billion in resident income and supported 248,681 full time jobs. Taxes and other revenues for state and local governments totaled \$1.4 billion dollars, a 7.75% increase over 1998.

Tourism's present economic impact can be demonstrated in many ways. For our purposes it may be sufficient to note each Wisconsin family would need to pay an additional \$680.00 in taxes to maintain state services at their present level if the State did not receive tax revenue from existing tourism-related businesses.

In its 1999 Industry Overview report, the American Hotel and Motel Association reported that tourism was second in employment, nation wide, behind health services and that tourism was the first, second or third largest employer in 32 states. According to recent data from the National Restaurant Association Americans spent \$519 billion dollars on tourism in 1999, up almost \$90 billion from 1998.

Wisconsin's tourism is rapidly becoming a four-season, year-round revenue generator for the state. Full realization of this potential is largely dependent upon the availability of employees. Full time employment opportunities in tourism will forever change the traditional employment practices to which Wisconsin residents have become accustomed. To be sure, the work environment of a tourism business will pull workers from other facets of the economy. The main point is, however, that full time employment cannot be sustained via the usual strategy of seeking large pools of seasonally available workers, i.e. students off for the summer.

As the demand for tourism related experiences increases and as the industry matures, there is a steadily increasing demand for professional level employees. Job placement rates for two and four year degree graduates has been in the high 90% for many years. A graduate can expect a salary of \$25-40,000.00 their first year.

Wisconsin's workforce crisis impacts far more than its tourism industry. On May 11, 2000, Gene Kussart, Wisconsin Department of Transportation, and Dean Amhaus, Forward Wisconsin, presented "Bring Them Home, A Workforce Crisis Strategy" to the Governor's Council on Tourism.

By every measure, including population trends, resident age composition, high school graduation rates and labor market availability, Wisconsin is experiencing a workforce crisis. Most significant was the fact that Forward Wisconsin, once dedicated solely to the goal of attracting businesses to relocate into Wisconsin, now recognizes that the shortage of available workers has become a major part of their challenge.

The presentation included a plea: “The challenge is to make career education K-12 (and then ongoing)-- not just a career fair or a once-a-year career planning exercise.” Their presentation included the proposal that Youth Apprenticeship be expanded and adequately funded, continued effort to make 2+2+2 a seamless process and that we actively recruit people to move to the state.

Finally, their presentation included these estimates of labor needs in Wisconsin:

2000	–	80,000 additional workers needed
2006	–	311,000 additional workers needed
2010	–	350,000 additional workers needed
2020	–	450,000 additional workers needed

The socio-cultural and economic future of Wisconsin is too important to just let it “happen.” Every predictor indicates that Wisconsin does not have the workforce population necessary to meet the needs of our current economic environment. Indeed industry could not wait for a coordinated plan. Individual strategies were used by individual businesses. The crisis even fostered unprecedented levels of cooperation and creativity. Some businesses reduced services and/or hours of operation. New levels of employee salaries, benefits and training were initiated to increase productivity and retention.

The tourism businesses of Wisconsin addressed the employee shortage crisis in many ways, one of which is particularly appropriate for this Summit. The tourism business operators in several communities grouped together to invite students from other nations to work in Wisconsin. Thousands of international students were welcomed, housed and employed. The summer of 2000 marked the first time in many years that these tourism areas did not have an employee crisis. Most important, reports confirm that the experience was positive for everyone concerned. The tourists, the students and the local employees valued the experience. Wisconsin could benefit from a public/private initiative to welcome immigrants—not merely students—to the state. Every industry in the state is in need of employees. Without immigration these businesses are stealing employees from each other.

Recommendation I: A public/private partnership needs to be created to identify, coordinate and publicize the strategies addressing the work force needs of Wisconsin’s tourism industry.

The partners in this effort would include representatives of Wisconsin’s tourism industry Associations, the Department of Tourism, appropriate academic departments in the UW-System and the Technical College System, and the Department of Workforce Development among others.

In common with most Wisconsin employees, the tourism industry is facing a shortage of employees, particularly in such popular tourism destinations as Wisconsin Dells, Minoqua and Door County. The industry's strategic objective of developing a true four-season tourism economy has been successful and will continue to develop. This incentive has provided a higher quality and sustainable employment environment, diminishing the negative impacts of seasonal employee turnover and rehiring.

The tourism businesses of the state have addressed the current labor shortage in several ways. The industry is looking to both retired and older first-time entrants into the labor pool as a resource for part and full time employment. In addition, the industry supports the effort to assist those moving from welfare programs into gainful employment. Finally, the industry is exploring ways to develop and coordinate its relationship with the Youth Apprenticeship Program, the school to work programs, the degree programs offered by UW-Stout and several of the technical colleges as well as the programs offered through the industry trade associations.

The Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development launched a new Internet site in the spring of 2000. This Wisconsin Summer Jobs site was designed to connect summer job seekers with employers—at no cost to the seekers of full and part time employment. The web site is a supplement to Wisconsin's Job Net. It is the result of a partnership of the Department of Workforce Development, the Departments of Tourism, Commerce and Public Instruction, Wisconsin Manufacturers and Commerce and the Wisconsin Education and Training Association.

Recommendation II: Facilitate substantial partnerships between tourism entities and educational institutions in the form of school-to-work programs, credit for experience and apprenticeship programs.

Wisconsin's tourism businesses are a valuable resource in the process of educating our youth. Real work experience in a setting agreed upon by the educators as well as the business owners clearly has advantages over the artificial confines of a classroom. Tourism businesses offer a "living laboratory" for an array of academic subjects.

As with all other industries in the state, we will come a long way in addressing the workforce needs of tourism if we address the need for truly accessible educational opportunities. Once the University's mainstay, the four-year, on-campus student is now but one market segment. To be sure Wisconsin is a leader in access to education but significant "glitches" remain.

- (A) Articulation agreements facilitating the true transfer of course credits from one institution to another need to become commonplace as well as publicized.
- (B) School-to-work programs and apprenticeship programs have to be, blatantly stated, "fed or shot." Addressing only the Tourism Youth Apprenticeship program, it is poorly understood by counselors, entails additional work for counselors and has not been promoted as an option to students. Perhaps most important, the tourism business partners find it impossible to adhere to the structure of experiences now mandated by the "paperwork."

- (C) There is an impressive and increasing array of for credit, certificate and career enhancing courses offered by universities, colleges and trade associations throughout the State. Web-based courses are a new and promising venue for education. Nevertheless, these opportunities for lifelong learning are diminished in utility by the lack of any effort to promote their existence via one source. At present each provider promotes its own limited offerings.

Recommendation III: Develop a world-class 2+2+2 tourism educational program which reflects the needs of the students, the educational institutions and the employers involved in the process.

Many facets of this educational program already exist. A tourism Youth Apprenticeship Program exists, the UW-System and Technical College System have recently reaffirmed their commitment. Employers and industry Associations applaud the concept. The high school students recognize the value of work experience. The problem, however, is that these willing partners remain separate entities. In essence, all of the “parts” have been created—we need to commit the expertise to operationalize the program.

The long sought 2+2 programs are now a reality. The agreement signed on April 6, 2000, makes it possible for students to more easily transfer credits between the Wisconsin Technical College System and the University of Wisconsin System. This historic event marked the end of decades of frustration as Technical College students “discovered” that many of their credits did not count toward a higher degree. As noted by WTCS State Director Edward Chin, “Most people who attend a technical college do so to obtain employment skills . . . but once students enter the labor market, their career goals may change and achieving a baccalaureate degree may help them further their goals.” Governor Thompson applauded this action but also inferred a challenge in his comment: “This unprecedented action is an excellent start toward our ultimate goal of a seamless system of secondary and post-secondary options for Wisconsin’s students and families.”

Recommendation IV: Permit and facilitate the establishment of substantial school/business partnerships which create long term, multi-career “living laboratories” for our youth.

Informal one-student-at-a-time school/work cooperation agreements are valuable and will continue to be a vital part of any career preparation system. Nevertheless, Wisconsin has a large and growing number of tourism businesses, which could offer many students a wide variety of career perspectives. The educational instructor, the business and the students could plan ahead and increase the depth of experience if formal agreements, i.e. partnership contracts, detailed the responsibilities of all concerned. UW-System institutions have benefited from this form of partnership for many years. It is time to extend this option to tourism.

Recommendation V: Develop a tourism apprenticeship program for older adults who would combine their current tourism employment with credit for past experience and accessible educational course work leading to a degree.

Today's older adults desire options. Many of them want to be employed for both the added income and the social activity. Many of these people would also value the opportunity to work toward a degree at the two year or four year level. Wisconsin's educational institutions could readily provide the flexibility to accommodate this desire by a proven segment of the state's population.

Recommendation VI: Develop and fund a coordinated team of community economic development and tourism specialists to assist Wisconsin communities and counties in identifying a sustainable mix of business to alleviate relatively high rates of unemployment and underemployment.

For all of its aggregate impact and potential, Wisconsin's tourism industry is overwhelmingly small business operated. Wisconsin does not have a "core" or "giant" such as Disney or Boeing. Our state's premier vacation areas are comprised of individually owned properties evidencing all of the vulnerabilities associated with small businesses.

This fact, that small businesses comprise most of Wisconsin's tourism, must be recognized and appreciated in this Summit's economic decision making. If Wisconsin tourism is to be community based, owned and operated by local Wisconsin residents, financed by local Wisconsin financial institutions, utilize local products and all else local, the problems facing all small business people must be addressed. This author has followed the tourism history of Hawaii. Suffice it to note that the major hotels in Waikiki and throughout the state are owned by corporations based in other nations—not merely other states. Be assured that the visitors don't notice any difference, the employees are well paid but the profits leave the state as well as the country.

Wisconsin has a relatively good track record in fostering venture capital investment in our cities. We need a comparable initiative in the rural resort areas. As of this date many of the so-called resort areas have no other economic base. Indeed, tourism is the cornerstone of the entire economy for many areas.

Additional investment is also fundamental if we are to respond to the growing demand for year-round facilities and attractions, activities and events. This need for capital is all the more urgent because the market for year-round tourism is blatantly obvious. Moreover, year-round operation would greatly assist the economies of the host communities.

Closely related to the need for access to capital is the need for expertise in detailing the possibilities of what to do with that capital. Some years ago UW Cooperative Extension included the Recreation Resources Center. That small group of agents was later reorganized as the Travel and

Tourism Resources Center. At present no such source of tourism expertise exists. The Department of Tourism has three field agents for the entire state. While degree granting educational programs exist at UW-Stout, MATC, WCTC, Fox Valley and a network of other schools, specific property projects are usually beyond the scope of students.

Finally, the tourism-related associations such as Wisconsin Indian Head Country, Wisconsin Innkeepers, Wisconsin Restaurant Association and the Wisconsin Association of Convention and Visitors Bureaus do what they can to inform their members but the need far exceeds the resources.

Tourism's future is largely dependent upon the provision of adequate venture capital and the provision of the expertise to secure and optimally invest that capital. This latter need may take the form of increased numbers of "field staff". It could also take the form of educating those in positions of fiscal responsibility regarding the economic/operational realities of tourism businesses.

Recommendation VII: Establish a public/private relationship to invite and to assist new immigrants to Wisconsin in becoming productive citizens of the state.

Wisconsin demographics will continue to be influenced by two national trends, the aging of the baby boom generation and the increasing numbers of new immigrants. It is generally agreed that the baby boomers will be leaving employment **and** that they will become an even greater consumer of tourism products. In effect, we will be losing an important segment of our employee base at the same time when demand for tourism products is expected to increase.

Some portion of the new immigrants will find their way to Wisconsin. Several states are already committed to the challenge of attracting these immigrants. We may wish to do likewise so as to expand our labor force. Of importance here, it is vital that Wisconsin recognize the advantages of anticipating the need to assist in the process of acculturating the new immigrants thereby accelerating the process by which they become productive citizens of the State.

Recommendation VIII: Initiate ongoing methods to inform our youth and all citizens as to the impact of business development, including tourism.

The residents of Wisconsin are vital partners in the state's economic activities. The residents serve every industry as an embodiment of what attracts economic investment as well as visitors to an area.

While this report is focused on tourism, every business would benefit from an environment of citizens who accurately know and appreciate the socio-economic impact of business development. Research has shown that many citizens of the nation have little knowledge as to how a given business operates or impacts the area.

The tourism industry shares with all other businesses in Wisconsin the belief that increasing the basic business, marketing and customer service skills of our high school student population is vital. Integration of elective courses in these areas into our high school curriculum will prepare our youth for higher quality employment opportunities as well as provide the overall Wisconsin business community with employees in possession of a stronger set of applicable skills. Most important, possession of these basic skills will enhance the career growth of our youth in an age of expanded and competitive opportunity.

This need for accurate information in our schools and via the media is all the more important for tourism as the public is generally unfamiliar with the economic processes of the industry. However inadequate, we tend to have some idea of how a manufacturing plant in an industrial park benefits the community. Many citizens do not realize that a resort, hotel, restaurant and state park also have beneficial economic consequences for a community. Stated in another way, while we may appreciate that farm products or toasters produced in Wisconsin and sold out-of-state benefit us, many do not realize that the money spent here by out-of-state visitors is also a form of export economy.

Recommendation IX: Develop reliable techniques of economic measurement for Wisconsin's tourism industry by adopting uniform public and private sector data reporting techniques.

It may be satisfactory in some cases simply to state that Wisconsin's tourism industry economic impact is "significant." Governmental bodies and indeed the industry itself are in need of more precise measures. At present there exists no agreed upon selection of SIC classifications for representing tourism. Even when a partial, "working" agreement exists, no computerized method is in place to extract the data.

Concise agreed-upon data articulating the economic significant of tourism would result in a greater awareness of the industry as the generator of employment, tax revenues and career opportunities. This information would go a long way in attracting employees and career professionals.

Recommendation X: Foster partnerships at every level between educational, institutional and government services and business, utilizing the latest distance learning technology.

Formal education must now include employment and life enhancing skills and certification as well as degree granting programs. To the broadest extent possible, these diverse educational opportunities must be recognized and accepted by other institutions as reflected in transfer credits.

It is common knowledge that the traditional on-campus student is at best a segment in a much broader market of individuals who desire and need access to the educational system. Internet delivery of courses and entire degree and certification programs are a reality. For example,

University of Wisconsin-Stout offers a totally on-line Master's Degree program in Hospitality and Tourism. UW-Stout is also partnering with the Baraboo Salk County campus in the offering of a Hospitality certification series of courses for mid-level managers.

Funding and expertise must be made available to expand and coordinate the now often isolated efforts of providing industry relevant courses via the Internet and other remote-access formats. Success in this endeavor will require research to identify industry and employee needs as well as a true partnership with the numerous State Associations in tourism (Wisconsin Innkeepers, Wisconsin Restaurant Association, Wisconsin Association of Convention and Visitors Bureaus, etc.) Finally, the network of UW, Technical College and private educational institutions are also natural partners in the system.

The need to address the workforce requirements of Wisconsin's tourism industry is made all the more crucial given the fact that the State must compete for its share of the worldwide services economy. Agricultural and manufacturing employment is important but all predictions indicate that services are the growth sector. Tourism is the embodiment of the service economy. More important, tourism can and will provide the state with the pool of service-oriented, i.e. service skilled employees, who move into other facets of the service economy.

In essence, Wisconsin's tourism industry is a significant partner in the processes by which Wisconsin's economy enters the 21st century. Tourism provides an economic-based catalyst for identifying, preserving and enhancing the natural, cultural and historic resources of the state. Finally, tourism properties and activities enhance the attractiveness of the state for the residents and people moving to the state to fill employment positions in all of our business endeavors.

Charles Metelka is a tourism sociologist. He teaches hospitality and tourism courses at the University of Wisconsin-Stout. Dr. Metelka is the author of *The Dictionary of Hospitality, Travel and Tourism*. He has served as a consultant for private industry as well as community organizations interested in tourism development, employee motivation and quality of service.

Dr. Metelka was one of nine delegates representing the State of Wisconsin at the White House Conference on Travel and Tourism, held in Washington, D. C. in October 1995. He is a member of the Board of Directors of the Wisconsin Festivals and Events Association, serving as President in 1999. In April 1997, The Governor of the State of Wisconsin appointed him to the Governor's Council on Tourism.

Dr. Metelka is recognized as a tourism researcher and workshop speaker. His expertise focuses on the creation of tourism experiences, visitor expectations and the challenge of providing quality service by area residents and employees alike.