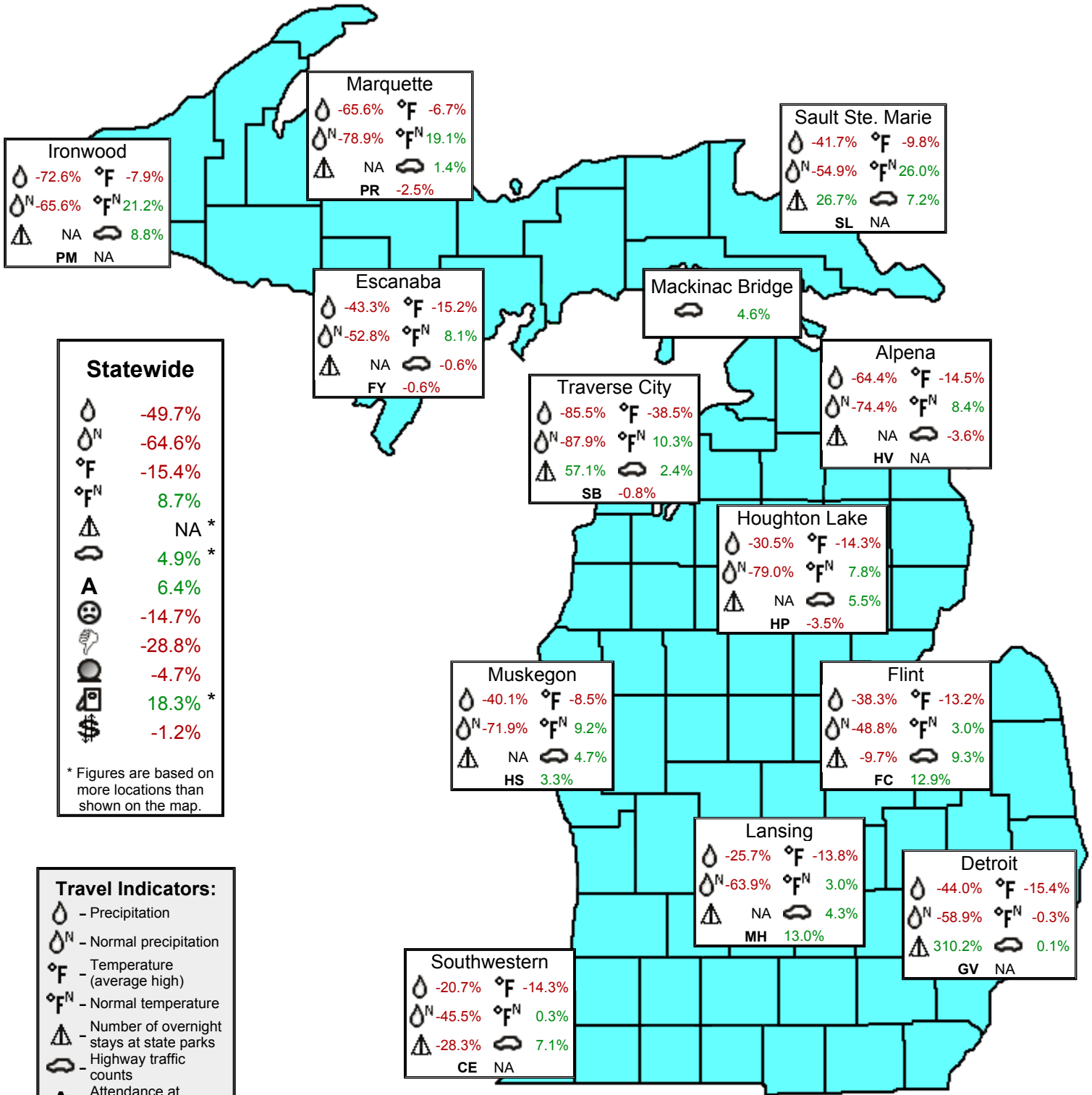




# MICHIGAN TRAVEL INDICATORS

## December 2002 vs. December 2001 - Report #77



**Statewide**

☔	-49.7%
☔ <sup>N</sup>	-64.6%
°F	-15.4%
°F <sup>N</sup>	8.7%
⚠	NA *
🛣	4.9% *
A	6.4%
☹	-14.7%
👉	-28.8%
🌐	-4.7%
📷	18.3% *
💰	-1.2%

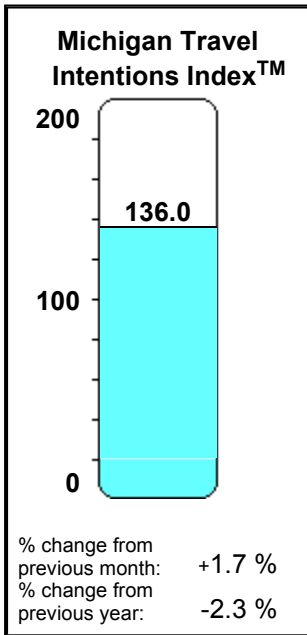
\* Figures are based on more locations than shown on the map.

**Travel Indicators:**

- ☔ - Precipitation
- ☔<sup>N</sup> - Normal precipitation
- °F - Temperature (average high)
- °F<sup>N</sup> - Normal temperature
- ⚠ - Number of overnight stays at state parks
- 🛣 - Highway traffic counts
- A - Attendance at attractions
- ☹ - Consumer Confidence
- 👉 - Present Situation
- 🌐 - Expectations
- 📷 - Gasoline prices
- 💰 - Exchange rate (US\$/CAN\$)

**Selected Attractions:**

CE - Cook Energy Information Center	MH - Michigan Historical Museum
FC - Flint Cultural Center	PM - Porcupine Mountains Wilderness State Park
GV - Greenfield Village & Henry Ford Museum	PR - Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore
HP - Hartwick Pines State Park	SB - Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore
HS - P.J. Hoffmaster State Park	SL - Soo Locks
FY - Fayette State Park	HV - Harrisville State Park



**TRAFFIC:** Statewide highway traffic volume in December 2002 increased nearly 5% compared to December 2001. Among the twelve areas we monitor, only Alpena (-4%) and Escanaba (-1%) experienced decreases in traffic counts this month. The highest percent increase was registered in the Flint area (+9%). The number of vehicles crossing the Mackinac Bridge this month also increased by nearly 5%.

**WEATHER:** Overall precipitation in December 2002 decreased significantly, by 60% from December 2001 and by 72% from the normal level. The average statewide high temperature decreased by 12% as compared to last December but increased 14% as compared to normal.

**ATTRACTIONS ATTENDANCE:** Aggregate attendance at seven of the tourist attractions we monitor increased by 6% in December 2002 as compared to the same month last year. Both the Michigan Historical Museum and Flint Cultural Center experienced an increase of 13% in visitation. The Soo Locks are closed for the season, the Cook Energy Information Center remains closed to visitors, and Greenfield Village is still undergoing renovations and is closed to the public.

**STATE PARKS CAMPING:** Since state parks in only five of the areas we monitor reported their numbers of overnight camps this month, we cannot accurately report the statewide camping trend for December 2002. This large percent increase in the Detroit area was due to the small number of campers registered during this off-peak camping season.

**ECONOMIC INDICATORS:** All of the Conference Board's three economic indices, the Consumer Confidence Index, the Present Situation Index, and the Expectations Index, declined this month, by 15%, 29%, and 5%, respectively as compared to the same month last year. The Michigan Travel Intentions Index™ this month stood at 136.0, a 1.7% increase from November 2002 but a 2.3% decrease from December 2001. Statewide average gas prices were 18% higher than during the same month last year, primarily due to the fear of war in the Middle East. The U.S. dollar this December was 1% weaker than it was last December as compared to the Canadian dollar; however, the U.S. dollar remained strong, bringing \$1.56 Canadian per U.S. dollar in exchange.

**FORECAST:** Despite an anemic economic recovery, flagging consumer confidence, and higher gasoline prices, traffic this December increased by 5% compared to December of 2001. A combination of favorable weather conditions, which supported shopping related travel prior to Christmas and snow sports over the holiday seasons, plus people's continuing tendency to avoid long distance travel by plane appear to have boosted highway traffic this month. The forward indicators that we track continue to trend downward suggesting the early months in 2003 will be challenging for Michigan's tourism industry.

**Methodology:**

The **Michigan Travel Intentions Index™** is derived from the data generated by a monthly phone survey of 400 households, selected at random, from Michigan, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Ontario and Wisconsin. The index is a measure of the difference between respondents who expect to take "more" versus "fewer" pleasure trips to Michigan in the next twelve months. Comparisons are made to the last month and the last twelve months. Contact [Charles Shih](#) or [Lori A. Martin](#) with questions regarding the methodology employed in producing this report.

**Acknowledgments:**

We would like to acknowledge the assistance of Chang Huh and Joe Deming in preparing this report. We would also like to acknowledge the financial support of the [Michigan Agricultural Experiment Station](#) and [Michigan State University Extension](#).

**Data Sources:**

Michigan Departments of Transportation and Natural Resources (Parks and Recreation Bureau); managers of selected tourist attractions in Michigan; Conference Board; Federal Reserve Bank of New York; Mackinac Bridge Authority; Michigan AAA; Midwestern Regional Climate Center.