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Tourism Industry Comes Together to Create Mega Conference

“Driving Tourism 2006”

*Combining conferences of the Michigan Hotel, Motel & Resort Association,
Travel Michigan and Michigan State University*

LANSING, Mich. — The Michigan Hotel, Motel & Resort Association (MHMRA), in conjunction with Travel Michigan and Michigan State University announced a newly merged, industry-wide event to be called the Michigan Lodging & Tourism Conference “Driving Tourism 2006.” This exciting new event will be held on March 28-29, 2006 at the Soaring Eagle Casino & Resort in Mt. Pleasant, Michigan.

“Driving Tourism 2006” will combine MHMRA’s annual convention, Travel Michigan’s annual Tourism Conference and Michigan State University’s annual Michigan Tourism Outlook Conference. The event will become the largest, most diverse and comprehensive gathering of attendees from all segments of this state’s second largest industry.

“There will be a variety of seminars that will be appealing to all sectors of the Michigan’s tourism industry,” said Leonard Williams, MHMRA Chairman and General Manager of the Hotel Baronette, Novi. “Our industry is an important economic engine in our state, and this event will provide additional fuel to drive positive results.”

“Driving Tourism 2006” will feature prominent state newsmakers, with Governor Jennifer M. Granholm and her likely November opponent Dick DeVos, both invited to speak. Travel Michigan will also unveil its marketing plans for 2006 and, importantly, how it intends to spend additional promotion monies made available by legislators in 2005.

“We now have the means to promote this state as the premiere Great Lakes destination it has always been,” said George Zimmerman, Vice President of Travel Michigan. “That means increased visits from out-of-state tourists, and a real boon to an industry that plays an increasingly important role in Michigan’s economy.”

During the conference, attendees will learn about Michigan tourism industry’s performance in 2005 and how it compares to the prior year. Projections will also be made for Michigan’s tourism industry for 2006 within a larger context of the U.S. outlook for travel and tourism and overall economic conditions. In addition, MSU Professor Chris Peterson will discuss efforts, currently underway, to develop a strategic plan for Michigan’s tourism industry.

“The more we know about what worked last year, the better we can drive our success in the future,” said Professor Don Holecek, Director of MSU’s Tourism Resource Center. “Ours is a broad and diverse industry. The more we collaborate, develop and share ideas, the stronger our industry’s results in 2006 will be.”

The Michigan Hotel, Motel & Resort Association is a 100 year old trade association which represents, promotes and educates Michigan’s lodging industry. For more information on this exciting event, please visit <http://www.michiganhotels.org> or call (517) 267-8989.

Travel Michigan, a division of the Michigan Economic Development Corporation, is the State of Michigan's official agency for the promotion of tourism. Travel Michigan markets the tourism industry and provides valuable visitor information services. For more information on Michigan travel, visit www.travelmichigannews.org

For the past 20 years, Michigan State University's Tourism Resource Center has conducted research in travel, tourism and recreation, and served Michigan’s tourism industry through outreach services. For additional information visit <http://www.tourismcenter.msu.edu/>

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