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Tourism & Retail Development

Attracting Tourists to Local Businesses

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University of Wisconsin Extension
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Preface

Tourism and Retail Development

Retailing in many of our small communities has decreased if not disappeared entirely. In recent years major changes have occurred in how and where consumers shop. Targeting more of the tourist dollar is one strategy that has helped some communities and its retailers as shopping and tourism often go hand in hand. In many small communities successful retailing is often rooted in the growth of innovative businesses that serve both local residents and visitors.

A study examining retail and tourism in various Midwestern communities was conducted in 1998. Case studies highlighting 10 communities and 100 businesses were prepared to identify specific strategies found useful in increasing retail store sales from visitors. The intent of the study was to identify practical tips specific to retail and tourism that would be useful to entrepreneurs, local tourism promoters, and economic development practitioners.

The study resulted in the development of this guidebook. Its purpose is to highlight retail business strategies that have been successful in expanding revenues through sales to both visitors and local residents. This guidebook is intended to help individuals and local groups recognize tourism as a retail development strategy and begin to analyze an area's tourism market from a retail perspective. Community retail development involves asking the following questions:

1. What attractions draw visitors to the community?
2. What types of visitors are drawn to the community?
3. What retail products and services complement local attractions and appeal to the types of visitors that come to the community?

Case studies from selected communities are presented to demonstrate how a sample of retail businesses have worked together to tap into the tourism market. In addition, specific retail business tips are presented to stimulate thinking about service, the shopping experience, products, the retail facility and advertising/promotional strategies.

This guidebook focuses on retail sales to visitors. Other more comprehensive tourism and business planning resources are referenced throughout this guidebook and can supplement its use. (See Appendix B.)

We hope that this material results in improved decision-making by both existing and prospective businesses in communities throughout Wisconsin, the Midwest and beyond.

Section 1

Tourism as a Retail Development Strategy

In many small Midwestern communities, tourism has become an important retail development strategy. Business and community leaders have recognized the spending potential of visitors, whether they are visiting or passing through town. They have realized that shopping is an important part of the tourism experience, and have developed their retail base to complement that experience.

According to Davidson-Peterson Associates, Inc., shopping and food expenditures represented 52% of visitor spending in Wisconsin. A 1997 study of summer visitors to the state by the Wisconsin Department of Tourism reported that shopping and eating at restaurants were the second and third most popular activities enjoyed by visitors (behind swimming).

Retailers that sell to tourists are unique because their potential customer base is often much larger than the traditional trade area of local residents. Many retailers appreciate the importance and potential of the visitor market. Most, however, could benefit from further exploration of the links between the tourism market and their retail businesses. These links can have significant implications for a retailer's operating and marketing decisions.

In this section:

- Economic Impact of Tourism
- How Tourism Impacts Local Retailing
- Retailers that Benefit from Tourism

Economic Impact of Tourism

Tourism generates a significant amount of spending in many small cities and villages. These "imported" dollars often provide the additional revenue needed for local businesses to remain financially viable. They also help generate jobs, incomes, and tax revenues within the community.

For a variety of reasons, tourism continues to be an increasingly attractive alternative for improving the economies of small cities and towns. People travel more today than ever before. Along with an increase in the number of people moving from one place to another comes increased opportunities to serve the unique needs of the traveler. This provides an opportunity for communities to serve these needs and capture a share of traveler spending.

Developing the local tourism industry makes sense for many small communities that are experiencing drastic economic changes. Over the years many small towns have seen more and more of their dollars, and residents, migrate to larger metropolitan areas. The residents that do remain are more mobile, shopping and working in larger neighboring cities. As a result, many small town economies have fallen prey to economic isolation.

With proper planning, tourism can be a *part* of the solution to the economic problems of small communities. Consider the following benefits of targeting the visitor market:

1. By bringing in outside dollars, a community can benefit from a larger and more diverse mix of retail. Residents of small cities and villages can enjoy shopping conveniences and selection such as those offered in larger, more distant places. (See the following section.)
2. Tourists bring in dollars from outside the community. Outside revenue stimulates the local economy and those dollars are often recirculated within the community in the form of wages, purchases of goods, supplies and services, construction contracts, etc.
3. Tourism can provide new entrepreneurial opportunities for community residents. Tourism is an "export" industry in that it sells goods and services to consumers who reside outside the area.
4. For many rural communities, tourism brings customers with comparatively high disposable incomes. These visitors are more likely to buy retail goods that can yield high profits.
5. As an export, tourism brings in outside monies that increase tax revenues. Although some of the revenues will be needed to maintain the community infrastructure utilized by the visitor, residents will benefit from capital improvements as well as any surpluses.
6. In general, tourism enhances the infrastructure, viability, and visibility of the community, increasing its attractiveness as a place to visit, work, or call home.

It is important to realize that there are disadvantages as well as advantages to including tourism in a community's economic development plan. As much as they can be anticipated, the social and environmental costs of advancing tourism have to be balanced against the economic benefits. Community awareness, education, leadership, cooperation, and consensus are necessary for the success of any economic development plan.

How Tourism Impacts Local Retailing

Tourism strengthens a community's retail base. Communities that sell to tourists have significantly more retail establishments and a diverse mix of products and services.

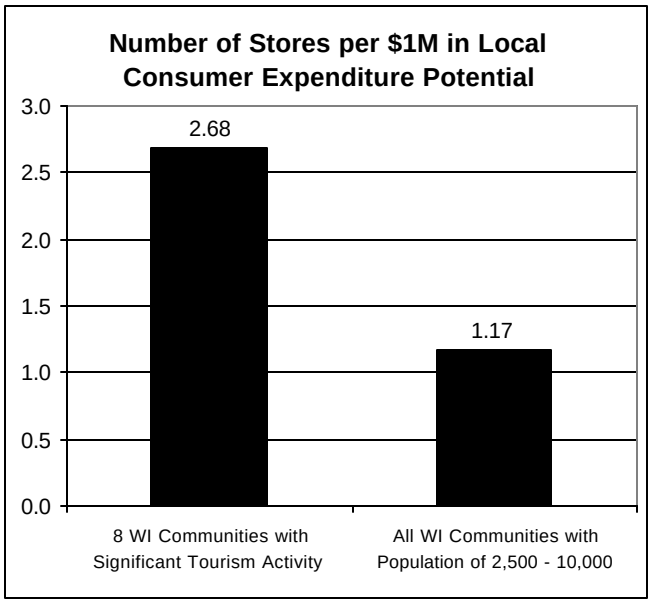
Some argue that most stores in tourism communities provide little to local residents in terms of necessary, day-to-day goods and services. But a review of business establishment data in Wisconsin indicates that there are significantly more retailers in tourism communities and that these businesses represent a broad mix of retail categories.

Retailing in selected tourism communities was compared with retailing in other small Wisconsin communities with similar populations to determine the difference in the number and mix of establishments. Business data from American Business Information, Inc. were used to identify all retail businesses operating in 1998 in these communities and their precise six-digit standard industrial code (SIC) classification.

Eight tourism communities were identified for this analysis including Bayfield, Eagle River, Hayward, Hurley, Lake Geneva, Minocqua, Sturgeon Bay, and Wisconsin Dells. These communities are retail hubs within counties that have high per capita tourist expenditures. The tourism communities were then compared with all 109 small cities and villages in Wisconsin with populations between 2,500 and 10,000.

One measure of a community's retail health is the number of business establishments per $1M (million) in local consumer expenditure potential. The higher this ratio, the more likely it is that the community is capturing more local business and pulling in retail activity from non-residents.

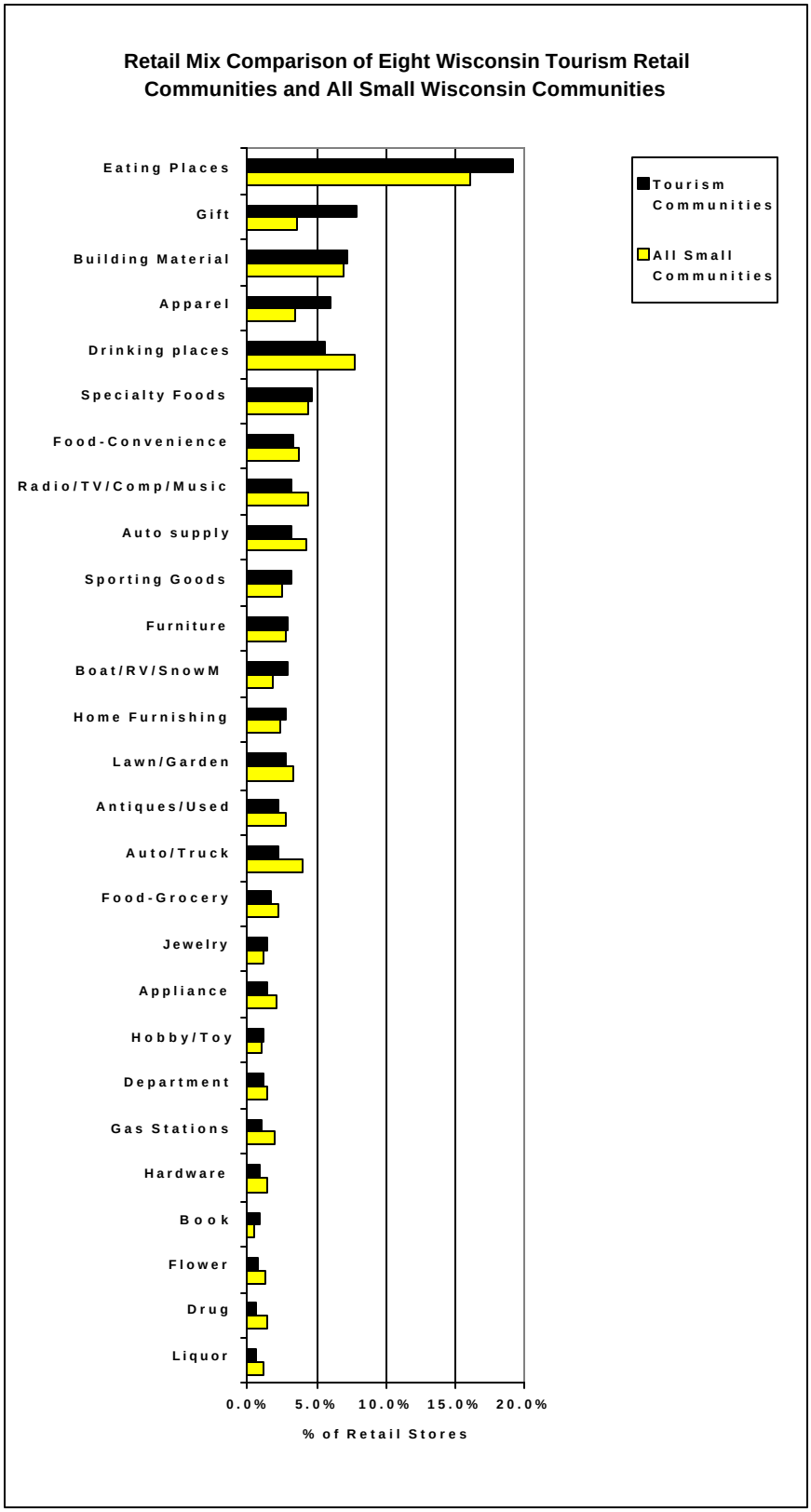
The zip code areas of the eight tourism communities had a combined total of 1,500 businesses with an estimated resident retail spending potential of $566.9M (Claritas, Inc., 1997 estimate). This equals 2.68 stores for each $1M in local resident retail spending potential. The zip code areas of the 109 comparison communities had a combined total of 11,000 businesses with an estimated resident retail spending potential of $9,427M (Claritas, Inc., 1998 estimate). This equals 1.17 stores for each $1M in local resident retail spending potential. The number of stores per $1M in local consumer expenditure potential is presented in the graph below.



Relative to local consumer spending potential, the tourism communities had more than twice as many retail establishments than comparison communities of similar size (2.68 vs. 1.17). This suggests that the tourism communities have a significantly higher concentration of retailing. The implied impact of tourism on local retailing makes sense as shopping and food expenditures represented 52% of visitor spending in Wisconsin (Davidson-Peterson Associates, Inc.).

An equally important measure of a community's retail health is its retail mix. Communities with a diverse mix of retailers are better able to provide local residents with a broad range of goods and services. Mix was analyzed by sorting business establishments in both the tourism and comparison communities into 32 store categories

using 4-digit SIC codes. The number of stores in the tourism communities, as a percent of total retail establishments, is presented on the following graph.



As the graph indicates, tourism communities offer a rich mix of retail. The overall mix of businesses in tourism communities is quite similar to all other small communities. As a percent of the total number of stores, there are more eating places, gift, apparel, sporting goods, and boat/RV/snowmobile stores in the tourism communities. At the same time, there is a slightly lower percent of drinking establishments, radio/TV/computer/ music, auto supply, auto/truck dealers, appliance, gas station, drug, and liquor stores. The remaining categories are quite similar. This challenges the common perception of a limited retail mix in "tourist towns."

Tourism activity impacts the number and variety of stores in a community. Communities with significant tourism visitation may have more than twice the number of retail businesses than other towns with similar resident consumer spending potential. Surprisingly, these tourism communities have a wide variety of retail establishments as indicated by their retail mix. Without the influx of visitor dollars, many small communities would probably not be able to support the number and types of retailers that do exist.

Retailers that Benefit from Tourism

Given that tourism offers a community economic and retail benefits, what types of stores are popular among visitors?

The mix of retail should reflect the needs and interests of the primary resident and tourism market segments. Section 2 provides information on how to analyze your tourism market. Based on the varying needs and preferences of travelers, almost all retail categories can benefit in some way from tourist traffic.

Consider today's tourist destinations that are bustling with retail activity. They typically include a wide variety of retail and services beyond souvenirs and fast food. To the right are examples of specialty retailers often found in economically vibrant resort communities. However, tourists have been known to purchase almost anything while on vacation if it is unique and priced right.

Examples of Retailers in Major Resort Communities

Antiques	Heritage/Ethnic Gifts
Art Gallery	Home Accessories
Baskets	Jewelry
Bakery Products	Leather Items
Bird Houses	Lifestyle Apparel
Books	Liquor and Wines
Candles	Novelty Gifts
Cards	Perfumes/Soaps
Cheese	Pet Supplies
Chocolates/Candy	Photography
Christmas Items	Pottery
Coffee Shop	Quilts
Crafts	Rugs
Dolls	Skin and Health Care
Factory Outlets	T-shirts and Clothing
Flowers	Teddy Bears
Glass	Theme/Historic Restaurant
Golf/Sport/Outdoor Equipment	Toys
Gourmet Foods	Wreaths

Many of these retailers sell products related to health, wellness and feeling good. Such products include small indulgences such as specialty coffees, ice cream, cookies, chocolate, and toys as well as outdoor accessories such as sunglasses, sweaters, and footwear.

Retailers have an opportunity to sell both convenience and specialty items to travelers.

In less tourism-dependent communities, traditional retailers such as general merchandise, drug, grocery and hardware stores also play an important role in serving visitors. They sell many convenience items and essentials that are in high demand by travelers.

The case studies and strategies presented in Sections 3 and 4 illustrate how a wide variety of Midwest communities and their retail businesses have benefited from and capitalized on tourism. The case studies demonstrate that communities of any size can achieve increased retail activity by focusing on the tourist. While their overall level of tourism dependence varies, the principles underlying the tourism market as described in Section 2 are the same.

Section 2

Understanding Your Area's Tourism Market

Businesses that have been successful selling to tourists know what brings people to or through their town. They also know who these people are in terms of demographic, activity and lifestyle characteristics. With this information, successful retailers are able to adjust their products and services to appeal to the "tourist market." This section provides some tools to better understand the tourism market.

First, this section provides worksheets for assembling a tourism attraction inventory. This will help identify what your community has to offer tourists. Second, this section provides suggestions for profiling your visitors to better understand their buying behaviors. Finally, a process is presented that can help pull together your understanding of local attractions and your visitor profiles to identify specific retail expansion and development opportunities.

In this section:

- Attractions Inventory
- Visitor Profile
- Expanding Product Lines and Developing New Stores for Tourists

Attractions Inventory

Retailers that have been successful in selling to tourists understand what attracts people to their community. The first step in understanding the local tourism market is to inventory what currently draws visitors to the community.

Inventory Checklist

The drawing power of a community can be broken down into five categories: natural attractions, cultural/ manmade attractions, general services, transportation, overnight accommodations, and businesses and institutions. Your community does not necessarily have to be a "destination" for travelers. Many retailers have found the market of travelers passing through also very important. (See Section 3, Trego community study.)

The following table provides an abbreviated list of things that attract people to a sample community. See Appendix A for a blank worksheet. Complete and add to this worksheet to describe what your community has to offer its visitors. Record any special comments such as hours of operation, peak utilization periods or types of visitors. Expand and modify this worksheet to fully capture the drawing power of your community.

Finally, when completing the inventory, think of ways retailers in your community can develop partnerships with existing attractions. Working together will strengthen service to the visitor, making your community a place to which visitors will want to return.

Attractions Inventory ***Summer Activities*** ***Middleburg, U.S.A.***		
Attractions	**Names of Existing Attractions**	**Comments**
Natural Attractions:		
Lakes	**Lake Middleburg**	**50-mile lake within 5-min drive. Access from three area parks. Attracts boaters from Metropolis.**
Bird Sanctuary	**State Wildlife Preserve**	**Excellent bird watching opportunities. Guided tours.**
Waterfalls	**Three area state parks**	**Natural wonder. Attracts sightseers, hikers, educators, and students.**
Cultural/Manmade Attractions:		
Museums	**Children's Science Center**	**Regionally recognized programs for children.**
Special Events	**County Farmers Market**	**Operating every Saturday morning.**
Businesses and Institutions		
Colleges and Universities	**Ivy University**	**Summer school sessions and alumni reunions. Located 20 miles north.**

SAMPLE

Visitor Profile

Retailers that have been successful in selling to tourists are aware of travel trends and understand what types of people visit their community. The second step is to profile and analyze your community's predominant visitor market segments. Markets can be defined using geographic and demographic data as well as information on lifestyles/activity sets.

Geographic and Demographic Market Segmentation

Useful Demographic Data

- ✓ Travel party composition (Singles, families, friends, couples, etc.)
- ✓ Trip Purpose (Leisure, business meetings, or combination)
- ✓ Travel periods and length of stay
- ✓ Age
- ✓ Gender
- ✓ Marital Status
- ✓ Number of Children
- ✓ Age of Children
- ✓ Education
- ✓ Income
- ✓ Occupation
- ✓ Ethnicity
- ✓ Disabilities and health considerations

Note: As the types of visitors change by the season, a month-by-month comparison is often helpful.

Sources of Visitor Data

- State offices of tourism
- Local convention and visitor bureaus
- Local chambers of commerce
- Industry associations
- University Extension offices

The place of origin and characteristics of the visitors to your business and community should be examined carefully. Differences in party size, age, travel purpose, and other characteristics will directly affect their purchasing behaviors.

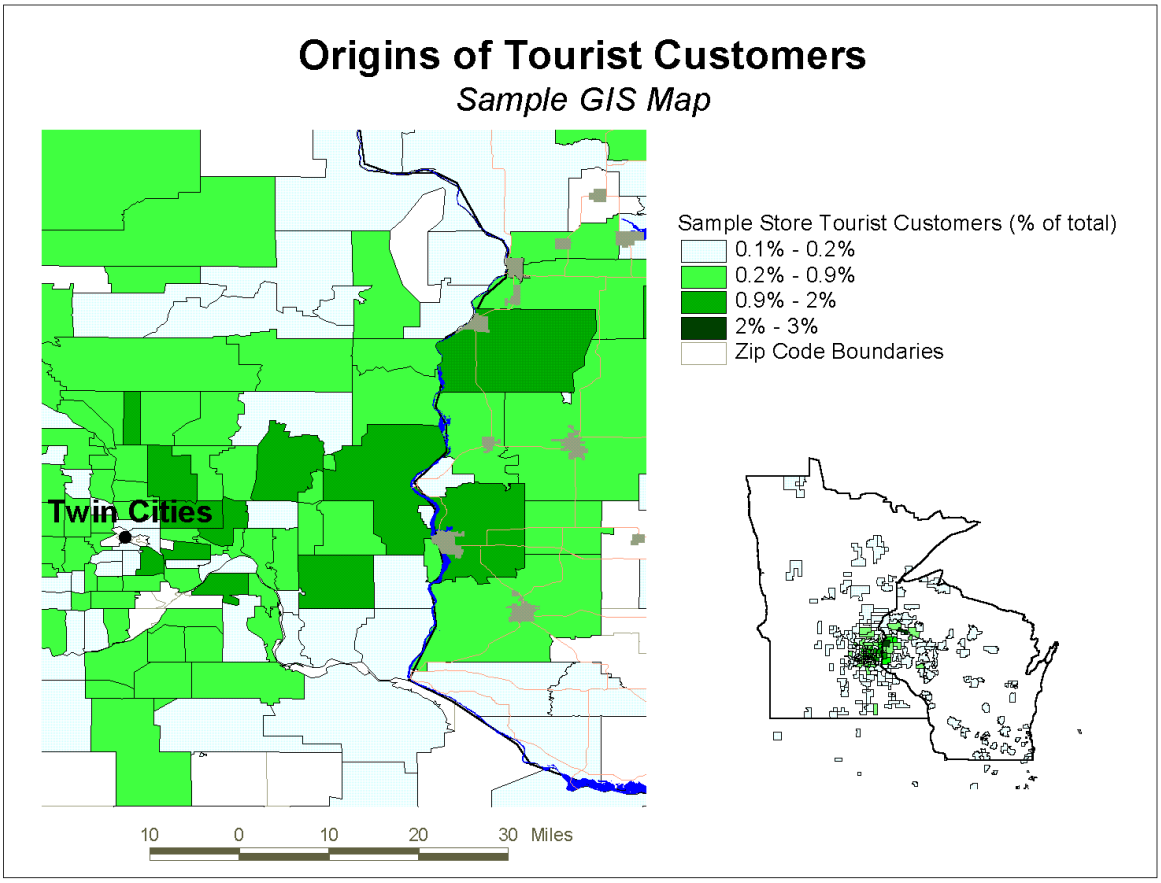
The most basic information about your out-of-town customers is their place of origin. Various methods can be used to assess where these travelers come from. Methods include license plate surveys, visitor sign-in books, personal checks, zip code tracking and surveys.

The more demographic data that can be compiled, the more information you will have with which to base your product and service decisions. Useful demographic data on your visitors and customers are listed on the left.

To learn about their customers, a growing number of retailers use a new technology called Geographic Information Systems (GIS). With GIS, a retailer can enter local and out-of-town customer addresses into a database, then examine the profile of the residents in the neighborhoods surrounding those addresses. These profiles provide demographic characteristics that can be used to help identify retail goods and services that make market sense. GIS software has become a powerful market analysis tool and is available at various levels of sophistication and price.

Whether GIS or spreadsheets are used to analyze geographic and demographic data, the purpose is to better understand the customers, who they are, what they do in the area, and how they spend their money in your store. This will help identify your most significant customer segments and discover new opportunities to expand your service to these segments. A customer demographic profile can be combined with consumer expenditure data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics or other data sources to begin to understand the overall spending patterns of your customers at or away from their homes. However, the activities and lifestyles of your out-of-town visitors will provide more useful information on their spending patterns in your community. A sample GIS map appears on the following page.

Visitors to your community represent different market segments, such as children. Photo credit: Rick Ritter



Lifestyle and Activity Market Segmentation

In the *American Demographics* (February 1995) article "Birds of a Feather," Susan Mitchell explains how marketing professionals are using geodemographic segmentation systems to learn more about their current customers, identify new potential customers, and make better marketing decisions. She relates how marketing data firms can provide detailed customer profiles that can help you better focus your product mix, the services you offer, and your marketing efforts to target specific high potential customer segments.

Segmentation systems are based on the premise that "birds of a feather tend to flock together." Ever notice that the homes and cars in any particular neighborhood are usually similar in size and value? If you could look inside the homes, you'd find many of the same products. Neighbors also tend to participate in similar leisure, social, and cultural activities.

Segmentation systems use these tendencies to redefine neighborhoods into smaller similar groups. The segments are based on demographic similarities (income, education, and household type) and the groups' common lifestyle and expenditure patterns (attitudes, product preferences, and buying behaviors).

Several private data firms offer segmentation systems. The firms use data from the U.S. Census and other sources to separate neighborhoods throughout the U.S. into distinct segments. They utilize state-of-the-art statistical models to combine several primary and secondary data sources to create their own unique segmentation profiles. Most systems begin with data from census block groups that contain about 340 households. In more rural areas, the data is more typically divided by zip code.

To use these valuable marketing resources you need to know your customers' home addresses or zip codes. Then, you can purchase data that provides a detailed description of the predominant segments in these areas. The data is easy to obtain and reasonably priced. Once you receive the information, you can make product or service marketing decisions that are based on your visitors' consumer profiles.

Sample Customer Segment: Small Town Working Families

"Small Town Working Families" is one particular segment used by one of the major marketing data firms. The firm provides data to compare this segment's lifestyle and spending with the demand of all U.S. consumers. The index value of 100 equals the average U.S. demand.

The data reveals that households in this sample cluster spend more visiting zoos ($1.26 versus the U.S. average of $1.00) but, spend only $.66 gambling at casinos versus the $1.00 national average per household.

Sample Category	Index
Visit Zoo	126
Play Board Games	116
Go Casino Gambling	66
Attend Movies	88
Buy Lottery Tickets	78

Knowing how different consumer clusters spend their money is very important to retailers serving those markets as it provides data to support operations and marketing decisions.

The quality of the customer segmentation system is directly related to the data used. High quality and useful systems allow you to predict consumer behavior. When used by a retail business to target tourists, the system should allow you to identify products and services that might appeal to a market segment. Its effectiveness depends on incorporating data on lifestyle choices, media use, and purchase behavior into the basic demographic mix. This supplemental data comes from various sources such as automobile registrations, magazine subscription lists, and consumer product-usage surveys.

Lifestyle and consumer segmentation systems can provide a broad overview of your out-of-town customers. While there are limitations to these systems (no system can perfectly describe consumers), they do offer a first step in analyzing the diversity and market potential of tourists.

Visitor Profile Summary

The table that follows provides an example of how to assemble a profile of visitors to your community. Using demographic, geographic and lifestyle segmentation data, a consumer profile can be developed for each market segment. Appendix A includes a sample worksheet for summarizing geographic, demographic, and lifestyle segmentation data for targeted visitors to your community.

Visitor Profile by Market Segment
Middletown, U.S.A.
Summer Season

	1) **Middle Income Suburban Families**	2) **College Students**
Demographics		
Travel Party	**Parents and 2 kids**	**3-4 students**
Trip Purpose	**Family vacation, 3-day wkends**	***Outdoor Rec, parties***
Age	**Parents 25-35**	**18-22**
Gender M-F	**50-50%**	**50-50%**
Marital Status	**Married**	**Single**
No. of Children	**2.5**	**0**
Education	**High School**	**Some college**
Income	**$40,000-50,000**	**$10,000-20,000**
Occupation	**Manuf., Retail and Service**	**Part-time service**
Cultural	**Metropolitan inner-suburbs**	**Diverse, international**
Disability/Health	**None**	**None**
Geographic Origin		
Primary	**Metropolis area**	**Ivy Univ. approx. 20 miles north**
Lifestyle or Activity Description		
	Moderate income families with active lifestyles. Have two incomes in metropolitan area. Like bowling and boating. Spend their money on home and family oriented activities and goods.	**Live on or near campus. Take weekend trips to area parks. Purchase a lot of fast food. phone cards, music CDs, etc.**

SAMPLE

Segmenting Wisconsin Tourists by Their Activities

Visitors don't necessarily come to an area for dining or shopping; they do, however, use these services while recreating in the area. Retailers can be most effective selling to tourists when they offer products and services that complement various visitor activities.

According to a Wisconsin Department of Tourism*, summer 1997 survey, visitors to many rural and resort areas of Wisconsin typically fall into one of the following groupings:

- Rock 'n' River. These are visitors interested in visiting attractions, rafting, swimming, and watching wildlife.
- Outdoor Adventures. These active visitors are most interested in active sports such as bicycling, canoeing, hiking, swimming, kayaking, fishing, rafting, and motorboating.
- Live and Learn. Included are people who visit museums, antique stores, historic sites, state parks, dine out, and watch wildlife.
- Woodsman Experience. These travelers seek a rural experience including rural festivals and watching wildlife.
- Resort Land and Water. This group enjoys golfing, gambling, motorboating, playing tennis, and water-skiing.
- Do-It-All Resort Package. These travelers seek a diverse mix of activities including motorcycling, bicycling, canoeing, fishing, golfing, riding personal watercraft, rafting, sailing, swimming, and water-skiing.
- Browsers Delight. Included are visitors who enjoy shopping, antiquing, dining out, and swimming.
- Keep in Touch. These travelers typically visit friends and relatives, but also dine out, gamble, and visit state parks.

Each community will have a different mix of activity groups. Further, activities change by season. Each group will have different shopping and dining needs and preferences based on how they spend their leisure time. It is important to determine which are the dominant clusters in your community so that businesses can work together to develop cooperative promotions that effectively target the visitor.

As part of business and community promotions, it is advantageous to concentrate on existing activity clusters. Tie in your shopping or dining activities to the popular leisure offerings of your area. For example, if you own a restaurant in an area that features some or all of the activities in the Live and Learn category, highlight the fact that customers can also go on a nature walk, shop at nearby antique stores or visit the local historical museum. This may present an opportunity to partner with other community businesses and share advertising costs.

**In Wisconsin, retailers can access activity set data, by season, through the Wisconsin Department of Tourism.*

Expanding Product Lines and Developing New Stores for Tourists

The third step is to review both the local attractions and the profiles of your visitors to identify new retail products and/or stores that make market sense.

After identifying features that attract tourists to your area and profiling those tourists, the next step is to estimate what items they might buy while in town. This requires asking yourself what purchases would enhance their trip, as well as the memories of their trip when they return home. In general, these purchases can be divided into two categories: souvenirs/crafts/collectibles and convenience/household items.

Souvenirs/crafts/collectibles are products that tourists purchase as a reminder of their vacation or visit to a different place. These are often non-essential items and are purchased for the tourists' own enjoyment or as gifts for others. Researchers in Iowa, Minnesota and Nebraska studied tourist buying behaviors and found they generally buy the following (% of tourists buying): postcards and booklets (72%), T-shirts, sweatshirts, other clothes (68%), crafts (61%), local food products excluding meals (52%), books (40%), items to add to a collection (35%), mementos of a location or attraction such as bumper stickers (32%) and antiques (26%).

Convenience/household items typically include both essential vacation items that consumers need to make their trip and return home more comfortable. These products can include food, health and beauty aids, gasoline, maps, automotive supplies, ice, suntan lotion, fire wood and other items typically found at a convenience food store/gas station. In addition, an increasing number of travelers are using their travel time to stock up on regular household purchases for use when they return home. Increasingly hectic lifestyles and shrinking free time have forced many consumers to purchase apparel, furniture, home decorating items, electronics, toys, and other items while on the road.

Assessing Purchasing Preferences of Your Visitors

While geographic/demographic and lifestyles segmentation provides general information to help you understand your consumer, you may want to supplement your study with information on the actual tourists that visit your community. Specifically, what types of souvenirs/crafts/collectibles and convenience/household items might they purchase in the community?

To find out more about their visit and purchasing potential, you may want to conduct focus group or survey research (telephone, mail or sidewalk "intercept" questionnaires). Possible questions to ask follow. Questions 1 - 3 address the attractions that draw the visitor to the community. Questions 4 - 5 address the specific retail products that might appeal to the traveler. As it is often difficult to obtain useful information from busy travelers, you may want to consult with a consumer research expert.

1. What is the main purpose of your visit to our community?

   ___Pleasure/Vacation
   ___Business
   ___Conference
   ___School
   ___Visiting friends or relatives
   ___Shopping
   ___Passing through
   ___Other

2. Which of the following activities have you participated in during the past year in the area?

___Outdoor recreation (specify activity_____)
___Special events (specify event_____)
___Museums and historical sites (specify_____)
___Casino gaming
___Other (specify_____)

3. What three things did you like most about visiting our community?

_____

4. If available, what types of convenience items could have made your visit here more enjoyable?

_____

5. If available, what types of specialty products would you consider purchasing as a memento of your visit to our community?

___Antiques
___Art
___Baskets
___Bakery Products
___Bird Houses
___Books
___Candles
___Cards
___Cheese
___Chocolates/Candy
___Christmas Items
___Coffee Shop
___Crafts
___Dolls
___Factory Outlets
___Flowers
___Sport/Outdoor Equipment
___Gourmet Foods
___Heritage/Ethnic Gifts
___Home Accessories
___Jewelry
___Leather Items
___Lifestyle Apparel
___Liquor and Wines
___Novelty Gifts
___Perfumes/Soaps
___Pet Supplies
___Photography
___Pottery
___Quilts
___Rugs
___Skin and Health Care
___T-shirts and Clothing
___Teddy Bears
___Toys
___Wreaths
___Other:_____
_____
_____

6. Respondent's zip code:_____

Questions 1-3 adapted from a sample survey from Rural Tourism: Marketing Small Communities by Arlene Hetherington. n.d.

Evaluating Retail Opportunities

A community can capture a greater share of the visitor's potential spending by encouraging existing businesses to expand their product lines, or to encourage the development of new retail businesses to fill retail gaps and complement other retailers in the community. Business and community leaders can more effectively evaluate retail expansion and development opportunities that focus on tourism by answering the following basic questions:

1. Does the expansion of a product line or development of a new store complement the attractions that draw visitors to the area?
2. Would the new products or store appeal to the interests and shopping behavior of the targeted visitor?

These questions should be asked repeatedly as new retail ideas are generated. The attractions inventory and visitor profile discussed earlier in this section can be used as references when answering these questions. Appendix A provides a worksheet to help you evaluate the tourist market for various products or services. Existing businesses can use this worksheet to evaluate potential new products to sell as illustrated in the following example.

Retail Products and Services Worksheet **Middleburg Grocery Store**			
	Targeted Visitor	***Related to Area Attraction***	***Comments***
Souvenirs/Crafts/Collectibles			
Ivy Univ. Sweatshirts	**Students, parents and alumni**	**Ivy Univ.**	**Include kid sizes for family travelers**
Books about areas natural features	**Family Vacationers, expecially those hiking and camping**	**Three area state parks**	**Inclde books about area points of interest including waterfalls**
Wines from Area Vineyards	**"Empty-nesters" visiting area on weekends**	**Area wineries**	**Coop promotion by also offering brochures and maps to wineries**
Convenience/Household Items			
Trail Maps	**Active outdoor enthusiasts including college students**	**Area park trails and designated bike routes**	**Include both hiking and bicycle trail maps**
Flashlights, batteries and other camping supplies	**Family vacationers who are camping**	**Three area state parks**	**Focus on tent-camper market**
Convenience packaged "gourmet" box lunches	**"Young Urban Professionals" and "Empty nesters" visiting area on weekends**	**Concerts by the Lake performances. Lake Middleburg Marina**	**Increase inventory during special events. Not price sensitive**

SAMPLE

The worksheet can also be used to evaluate potential store categories that could be added to the community. But before new retailers are recruited, community leaders may want to consider how existing businesses can more effectively sell to the tourism market. Questions to ask include:

- Are local retailers effectively reaching the visitor market?
- Do local businesses complement area attractions and the overall appeal of the community?
- Are there tourists looking for products that are not offered locally?
- Are there too many of the same businesses in the community?
- Are there opportunities for retailers to work together and cross-sell more effectively?
- Are retailers doing all they can to promote return visits?

These questions coupled with the above worksheet should help to stimulate practical thinking at the community level about opportunities to capture more retail sales from tourists. Section 3 will provide examples of how various communities have effectively expanded retail activity by focusing on their attractions, their visitor profiles, and the purchasing behavior of those visitors.

Group Activity to Evaluate Retail Opportunities

The following exercise, adapted from the *Community Tourism Assessment Handbook*, can be used to identify new product lines and stores for your community. It is intended for use by the local chambers of commerce, convention and visitors bureaus, and Main Street or Business Improvement District groups. Participants should review the Attractions Inventory, Visitor Profile, and other related worksheets prior to this exercise.

Time required: 45 minutes

Materials needed: Large pad, easel, index cards, and marker pens for each group.

Instructions:

1. Divide the group into several small groups. Ideally, you want to have at least 4 people in each break-out group. Each group will need a facilitator. Groups can either come up with responses together or fill out individual cards and then post them on one big sheet.

2. Ask each group to pretend that they are a particular tourist market group, such as Families with Children, Generation X, Baby Boomers, Seniors, Domestic Business Travelers, Eco or Nature Tourists, Heritage Tourists, or Outdoor Enthusiasts. These traveler types can be obtained from your completed Visitor Profile worksheets. If you have some information about who comprises that market, you could also include them in this activity.

   Give the groups 5 minutes to read through the profile of their tourist market group, discuss it, and make their own observations about how they see themselves as members of this group. Then, have each group spend 10 minutes brainstorming in response to the following questions:

   - ✓ What kinds of convenience items do you require during your stay in this community? What household items might you purchase here for use back home?

   - ✓ What kinds of souvenirs, crafts, or collectibles that relate to the area would serve as a valuable memento of your stay?

   Write group ideas on the flipchart.

3. Next, give each small group 3-5 minutes to explain to the large group their traveler profiles, what they would like to do while visiting this area, and what retail products they may purchase.

4. Finally, a facilitator can go through the material presented and ask participants to identify whether there are certain groups that might offer more purchasing potential than others. The facilitator might also highlight common needs and interests across groups and point out needs and interests that make each group unique.

Adapted from Community Tourism Assessment Handbook*, page 5-6, Western Rural Development Center, 1996.*

Purchasing Behaviors of Tourists

Researchers in Iowa, Minnesota, and Nebraska* gathered information from more than 1,400 individuals on ways to improve the marketing of products to tourists. They identified four general categories of tourists. People in each tourism category enjoyed similar travel activities and shopping opportunities. Tourists might fit into more than one of these categories depending on where they are traveling and what's available.

Ethnic, Arts, and People

Ethnic, Arts, and People tourists are actively involved in their tourism. They immerse themselves in the community. For them, tourism is an opportunity for education and personal development. It's a time for experiencing a community and its way of life. They actively visit ethnic communities, participate in community festivals, visit art galleries and museums, attend concerts and the theater, and Interact with local residents. Products they buy include crafts, local food products (does not include meals), antiques, and books about the area they are visiting.

History and Parks

The History and Parks tourists are introspective. They devote time to enjoying scenery, contemplating a sense of place, reflecting on the past, and photographing the experience. They take time to plan their trips. They visit historic sites and homes, museums, recreated villages that depict a past way of life, gardens, and state and national parks. Products they buy include crafts, postcards, books about the area and its history, local food products, and items to add to their collections.

Active Outdoor

Active Outdoor tourists are outdoor enthusiasts who vigorously enjoy parks and nature areas. They hike and backpack, camp, fish, sail and boat, hunt, swim, ski, and play tennis or golf. Products they buy include T-shirts and sweatshirts with a name or design related to the location.

Urban Entertainment

Urban Entertainment Tourists visit cities where they are on the go, day and night. Social interaction is important to these travelers. Many use packaged tours. These are young men and women with higher incomes. They travel extensively in the U.S. They enthusiastically "shop 'til they drop," attend professional sports events, visit recreational theme parks, and go dancing and nightclubbing. They buy goods with the name or design representing their vacation location including T-shirts and sweatshirts, souvenir items such as pens, bumper stickers, key chains, and crafts.

**Drawn from:* Marketing Crafts and Other Products to Tourists*, North Central Regional Extension Publication 445, 1992.*

How to Further Explore and Develop Your Tourism Business Ideas

Starting (or expanding) a business is challenging. Community business development groups can do a great deal to encourage individuals and help them through evaluating the feasibility of a business idea. The following ideas can help individuals develop and evaluate tourism business concepts.

- Visit communities with a tourism industry to observe businesses that serve travelers.
- Talk with business trade associations to obtain information on their markets and business opportunities.
- Meet with individual business owners to review the opportunities and pitfalls of a particular business opportunity.
- Talk to a trusted friend to explore potential business ideas.
- Take small business management classes that include how to develop a business plan.
- Check with libraries, universities, government organizations, and private organizations to obtain information on the business that you are considering.
- Talk with bankers and small business instructors to obtain information on managing a small business.
- Conduct surveys or interviews with visitors to determine if a service is needed. (If you are an existing business, listen to your customer' inquiries, compliments, and complaints.)
- Check with suppliers to see what goods to sell.
- Talk with your family to determine their willingness to go through the rigors of managing a small business.
- Develop a business plan. A plan is important to help you identify key components of a successful business development and to help communicate the business idea to bankers and other important investors.

Source: Rural Tourism Development, *Minnesota Extension Service, 1991.*

Section 3

Community Case Studies

This section highlights ten communities in the Midwest and the ways they increased retail activity by targeting the visitor market. In each case, community leaders and business operators identified attractions that draw visitors to their community. They also studied their visitors to assess purchasing preferences and potential. With a good sense of their local tourism market, local entrepreneurs were able to expand or develop their businesses to provide an appealing mix of products and services for these customers.

Each case study provides information and ideas that may be transferable to other communities. While the communities selected represent different levels of tourism development, they all have benefited from increased retail activity from visitors. These case studies can serve as catalysts to stimulate new ideas for your community.

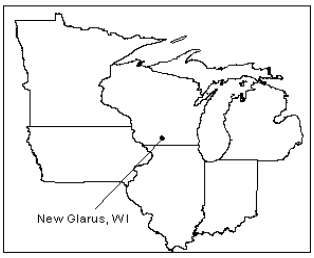
In this section:

- Offering Heritage and History to Travelers: New Glarus, WI
- Serving Golf Enthusiasts: Gaylord, MI
- Enticing Anglers and Outdoor Enthusiasts: Boulder Junction, WI
- Sharing History with Travelers: Galena, IL
- Celebrating German Heritage with Visitors: Germantown, WI
- Experiencing Agriculture: Farm Trails of Southwestern Wisconsin
- Escaping the City: Hudson, WI
- Sharing the Great Outdoors with Bicyclists, Canoeists, and Rafters: Lanesboro, MN
- Beckoning Travelers: Trego, WI
- Serving Campers and Second Home Owners: Sublette, IL
- Additional Tips from Major Resort Destinations

Offering Heritage and History to Travelers: New Glarus, Wisconsin

New Glarus offers a history rich in Swiss culture evidenced in the local architecture, farming and businesses. Visitors to the area include retirees, working-age couples, and small groups seeking an authentic cultural experience. Retailers serve the daily needs of local residents as well as providing authentic Swiss culture, foods and gift items for visitors.

New Glarus (population 2,000), located in a southern Wisconsin area of rolling hills, farms, and grazing cattle, was settled in 1845 by a colony of immigrants from Glarus, Switzerland. Today, the people of New Glarus continue to celebrate their heritage in their lifestyles and the way they conduct business.



Retail storefronts can help celebrate the heritage of a community.

The streets are decorated with Swiss flags and banners, geranium-filled flower boxes and buildings influenced by Swiss architecture. Visitors are welcomed with Old World charm and hospitality. The people of New Glarus share their Swiss traditions with visitors through numerous festivals and events recreating an authentic European experience close to home. Visitors to New Glarus come from all over the United States and Europe. They include a large number of retirees that extend the "tourist season" well into the Christmas season. European and Swiss goods include chocolates, cheese, bells and chimes, crystal, fondue pots, scherenschnitte (scissors cutting), clocks, wood carvings, nutcrackers, nesting dolls, Christmas ornaments and lace. Products from local artists and crafts people are also sold in local stores. Local retailers are especially effective in offering these specialty products in stores that also provide the day-to-day goods important to residents of any small town.

New Glarus has a mix of retail businesses that appeal to tourists seeking a Swiss experience. Included are meat markets, gift shops, bakeries and restaurants. Descriptions of some of the local businesses that are effectively selling to tourists follow.

Roberts Drug Store

Roberts Drug Store is a combination of two businesses under one roof: a European gift shop and a small town drug store/coffee shop. The gift shop specializes in Swiss, German, Austrian, Norwegian, and Russian imports, often directly from artists and crafts people.

The imports include china, fondue pots, nutcrackers, cuckoo clocks, shoes and clothing, pewter goblets, beer steins, calendars, earthenware, music, and more. The gift shop grew over time as the Roberts family listened and learned from their visitors. One of the big sellers is an authentic Swiss cowbell, an idea presented to the Roberts by a farmer visiting from Switzerland. The Roberts have since focused on authentic Swiss goods, making trips to Switzerland to stay current with the market. According to owner Jack Roberts, it is important to offer authentic and artistic products.

While tourists typically do not frequent the store's pharmacy, it provides an important service to the residents of New Glarus. The coffee shop serves as a convenience for the visitor; it is also a meeting place for local residents. Tourist spending in the gift shop coupled with resident spending in the drug store/coffee shop make this a vibrant downtown anchor.

Anderson's Kaufhaus

Anderson's Kaufhaus is an old fashioned general store with lots of country charm. It has offered New Glarus friendly service in a personalized atmosphere for over 20 years.

For both local residents and visitors, it is a place where customers always find the unexpected treasure and leave with wonderful memories of the past. It also provides visitors with gifts and convenience items while away from home. The name and building architecture complement the heritage and theme of downtown New Glarus.

Brenda's Blumenladen Floral and Garden

Brenda's Blumenladen Floral and Garden shop has become an attraction in New Glarus for both residents and visitors. Silk and dried flowers, gifts, afghans, pillows, wall hangings, and candles are among the offerings as well as a full-service garden shop and nursery. Most business is local, but visitors supplement sales through gift purchases. According to Brenda Siegenthaler, reliance on local business reduces seasonality.

Brenda pays close attention to her product line. She keeps up with trends by attending regional gift trade shows. She believes that travelers to her town often have the same tastes and preferences as the locals and thereby maintains an inventory that appeals to all of her customers. Brenda recommends carefully planned growth each year. By slowly increasing the gift business year-by-year, she has gradually fine-tuned her product line.

New Glarus Bakery and Tea Room

New Glarus Bakery is known for crunchy Swiss hearth breads, cakes, cookies, and doughnuts. The tea room above the bakery serves cappuccino, breakfast pastries, soups, sandwiches and desserts in a simple, bright and fresh European dining area.

The bakery has extended both its season and its scope with mail orders. Catalogs are mailed based on a mailing list from the guest registry and computer database. Their famous stollen is shipped nationwide during the holiday season. While the customer mix is half tourist, the bakery is committed to serving the local resident. As many locals seek a simple American breakfast, the display shelves have fresh doughnuts next to elegant European tortes.

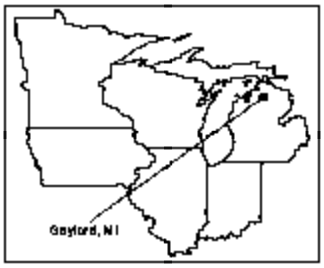
The bakery also encourages reciprocal promotions with other businesses and visitor attractions. For example, it makes a Toasty Wheat Beer Bread mix for the local New Glarus Brewery visitor center.

What we can learn from New Glarus:

- ✓ Local retailers should not focus exclusively on the tourist market. Instead, they should look for opportunities to serve both tourists and local residents.
- ✓ Small town business districts should capitalize on their unique heritage, charm, and hospitality as an alternative to today's shopping malls and "big box" retailers.
- ✓ Community retailers should work together to create a unified theme for shoppers.
- ✓ Businesses should work together to promote each other and keep the shopper in town longer.

Serving Golf Enthusiasts: Gaylord, Michigan

Gaylord is a small town with Alpine charm and a wealth of top quality golf courses. Visitors to the area include upper to middle-income, middle-aged males from the Detroit metropolitan area, often accompanied by their non-golfing spouses. Businesses offer unique products to avoid competing with large retail discount stores. Upscale merchandise and specialized services cater to the visiting golfers and spouses.



Two key factors that transformed Gaylord, Michigan (population 3,300) from a village in decline to a booming community were the construction of the interstate highway and the adoption of an Alpine motif throughout the downtown business district. More recently, major investments have been made by the golfing industry. Now touted as the "Golf Mecca," Gaylord boasts 22 championship courses at 13 area properties.

An estimated 371,000 rounds of golf were played during 1997, generating over $14 million in greens and cart fees. An additional $5 million was spent at these properties for related products and services, making the direct expenditures from golfing related activities nearly $20 million.

The Gaylord Area Convention and Tourism Bureau found that the typical golfer is a resident of Michigan, male, aged 35 to 54, with an income of $75,000. A 1997 Eastern Michigan University study as well as a report by the National Golf Foundation also supports this description. Eighty-five percent of the golfers coming to Gaylord are from Michigan, primarily the Detroit metropolitan area. Secondary points of origin include Ohio, Illinois, and Ontario, Canada.

Golf has provided significant economic benefits to Gaylord, MI.

Retail stores tap into this lucrative visitor market by balancing their marketing strategies to serve local residents and out-of-town golfers. One strategy shared by local businesses is to offer a unique product line to avoid competing with Wal-Mart and other discount chains. Upscale merchandise and specialized service caters to golfers and offers local residents and travelers higher quality goods and services than a town of this size might normally provide.

The Alpine motif, variety of quality retail shops, friendly customer service, and a non-mall atmosphere contributes to the success of Gaylord's retail businesses. Spin-off effects with other downtown businesses such as restaurants and clothing stores are also important to the community's economic health.

Gaylord has over 200 retail businesses that serve local residents as well as visitors. The community has both major discount department stores and a large number of small specialty retailers such as sporting goods, apparel, and gift shops. As a golf destination with an interstate location, the community is also served by a large number of restaurants, grocery stores, and gas stations. Some of the local businesses that are effectively selling to tourists are described as follows.

Alpine Chocolat Haus

Bruce Brown manages the Alpine Chocolat Haus. He bought an existing business, expanded the product line, moved to a new location, and now makes candy on the premises. According to Bruce, he started his shop after a candymaker in a nearby town taught him everything he needed to know about the business.

Products at the Alpine include homemade chocolate, caramel corn, fudge, brittles, and ice cream. Bruce stresses the importance of appealing to the visual and aromatic side of marketing when promoting your specialty food business.

Since the Alpine Chocolat Haus is a seasonal business, Bruce has implemented strategies to accommodate his sales cycles. Because chocolate sales drop in the summer months, ice cream was added. His customer profile also varies with the season. In the summer, 80 percent of his customers are tourists. In the winter, only 30 percent are tourists. Ninety-five percent of the candy sales are to women, who account for 70 percent of total sales. Golfers and their spouses make up a significant portion of the market.

Alphorn Sport Shop

Fred and Dotty Snook purchased the Alphorn Sport Shop in 1977. Their key to success rests in their personal knowledge of hunting and sports equipment as well as their knowledge of where to fish and hunt. Hosting a 5-minute spot every weekday morning on the local radio station has proven to be an effective marketing strategy for Fred and Dotty.

Their product mix is constantly being reviewed and modified. When they realized there was too much variety, ("you can't be all things to all people"), they eliminated golfing equipment ("Let the pro shops handle it"), downhill skis, and any sporting line carried by Wal-Mart and K-Mart. The Alphorn Sport Shop's strategies includes carrying higher quality products and offering "polite" service (personal attention without hovering, remembering customers' names, free gift-wrapping, shipping, and stocking special order items).

On an annual basis, tourists constitute about 30 percent of sales. An increase of foreign visitors has also been evident. Customers are predominately male (80 percent) between the ages of 30 and 50, and are upper middle-class professionals. Women are another strong market segment because the Alphorn Sport Shop is a good place to find gifts for men. This family business now includes sons Duane and Jim. Each brings a unique set of skills and expertise that are necessary to remain successful in a competitive and fast-changing industry.

Sue's Shops

Sue's Shops are located in a former hardware store that has been converted into a quasi mini-mall. Sue Ballantyne operates all but two of the seven shops. The majority of her customers are women, especially spouses of golfers and convention attendees. Her summer sales are mainly to tourists while her winter business is predominately local.

Her diversified product line includes dried and silk flowers, furniture, home accessories, collectible bears, and "higher end" gifts. She also does commercial decorating for area resorts and rents wedding supplies. Her inventory continuously changes to stay ahead of the competition. Stamping and scrapbooking supplies and classes are the newest additions and they expand daily. In-store demonstrations increase sales greatly. Sue also offers hands-on-workshops for visiting spouses. She tells them how her business has evolved and invites them all to visit her stores, sometimes offering a discount.

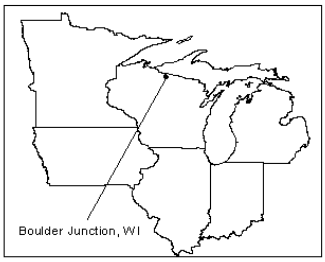
What we can learn from Gaylord:

- ✓ Local retailers should fully understand what draws visitors to their community and the economic opportunity those tourists provide.
- ✓ Business operators can foster local tourism development by offering products, services and information to make visitors' stays more enjoyable.
- ✓ Local retailers should attend to everyone in traveling parties, including spouses and family members.

Enticing Anglers and Outdoor Enthusiasts: Boulder Junction, Wisconsin

Boulder Junction offers relaxation and outdoor recreation in a pristine North woods environment surrounded by 240,000 acres of state forest and lakes. Visitors to the area include outdoor enthusiasts and nature lovers seeking fishing, boating, camping, biking and other outdoor activities. The large influx of outdoor recreation enthusiasts permits a full service array of sporting goods, shops, taverns, and restaurants, allowing residents and travelers alike convenient access to serve their needs.

Boulder Junction (population 900) occupies an enviable location in northeastern Wisconsin. Nestled among 240,000 acres of state forest and hundreds of angler-enticing lakes, Boulder Junction has tremendous appeal to outdoor enthusiasts, from snowmobilers and cross-country skiers to hunters and nature lovers. Boulder Junction area is well known for fishing as its trademarked nickname, "Musky Capital of the World," implies. A new paved bicycle trail, linking the town with state forest campgrounds and picnic areas, is also a highlight for many families and other vacationers as well as local permanent and seasonal residents.



In testimony to its visitor appeal, *Wisconsin Trails* magazine voted Boulder Junction "The Friendliest Small Town in Wisconsin," and *Sports Afield* magazine named it one of the "Top 50 Sports Towns in America." "Life in the Slow Lane," as Vilas County portrays a visitor's experience, requires hard work and commitment on the part of the businesses that serve the vacationer.

Businesses can serve the needs of outdoor recreationalists while maintaining a North woods atmosphere.

Photo: Bruce Greenhill

The business district is well known for its North woods atmosphere. Business owners have taken it upon themselves to design and construct buildings that feature rustic natural-wood exteriors, enhanced landscaping and tasteful signage that give Boulder Junction its unique, "up North" character. Each business thus adds to the overall appeal of the town, and receives the benefits of attracting greater numbers of visitors. The local town government, Chamber of Commerce, and business owners all work cooperatively to develop recreational resources (such as the paved bike trail), enhance the community aesthetics, and host special events to draw visitors to the area to stay and shop.

Boulder Junction has a mix of retail businesses that complement the outdoor experience of the area. Various gift, craft, apparel and sporting goods stores carry products consistent with the outdoor recreational lifestyle. Some of the local businesses that are effectively selling to tourists are described in the following paragraphs.

George's Bar, Supper Club, and Supermarket

George's Bar, Supper Club, and Supermarket occupy the first structure built in Boulder Junction and is owned and operated by Ken Zima and Linda and Mike Hogue. Tourists are treated to local flavors of walleye and pan-fried crappies, and the bakery makes desserts on the premises. Ken cooks the food for the restaurant and stocks the supermarket deli with ready-to-eat items such as pizzas, rotisserie chicken, and reheatable meals. These meals work well for busy residents and vacationers with limited cooking facilities. The full liquor bar is in the original part of the historic building. Clothing items imprinted with the business name and logo are popular. George's status as a historical fixture within the town adds to the memento's appeal.

Coontail Sports

Evolving from a gas station, Lisa and Steve Coon's convenience store and outdoor sport outfitters offers sports and casual wear, snowshoes, kayaks, canoes, cross-country and water skis, bicycles, and sport equipment accessories and rentals. The product line clearly mirrors the recreational interests of many visitors. Coontail Sports benefits from the strong demand for outdoor gear generated by the area's ample supply of trails and numerous lakes. Although Coontail Sports is open year round, business fluctuates seasonally with July being the busiest month.

Wooden Creations

Wooden Creations handcrafts custom furniture, kitchen cabinets, and roll-top desks. Cathy and Rodney Singleton's business occupies an uncommon niche in the retail industry for they often begin by selling one item to a customer and end up providing the furnishings for an entire home. While purchasing rustic pine items for a North woods residence, customers learn that Cathy and Rodney also design and produce more formal, finished hardwood creations. The nature of their business is such that the retail showroom acts as more of an introduction to their products and skills than a cash-and-carry shop. Customers can see the quality of the merchandise in the showroom and observe the products under construction. Second-home owners with a primary residence in Chicago, Milwaukee, Madison, or Minneapolis/St. Paul make up a large segment of their customer base and are especially devoted fans of the rustic furniture and Cathy's North woods artwork.

Knitt's Hardware Hank

Knitt's Hardware Hank has been in downtown Boulder Junction for twelve years and is open year round. Manager Dennis Maurer says that even though most of their customers are from the local area, the products vary according to seasonal recreational activities. In the winter they stock basic outdoor goods for the winter enthusiast such as hats and gloves and ice fishing accessories. In the summer they substitute open water lures and camping goods. Fall brings clean-up merchandise for the people closing their cabins, along with hunting merchandise. Spring items include hardware for all of the fix-up jobs in preparation for lake and trail activities. Increases in summer revenue are a result of a larger number of vacationers combined with an increase in local resident and business spending.

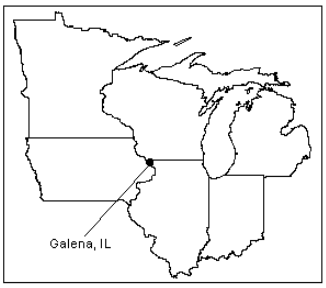
What we can learn from Boulder Junction:

- ✓ Retailers can capitalize on as well as preserve the unique recreational drawing power and image of their community.
- ✓ Retailers should examine each other's products and services to identify gaps that should be filled to improve the quality of the guest's stay.
- ✓ As tourism varies by season, local retailers need to modify their products and services accordingly.
- ✓ Individual business-owner decisions on building architecture, colors, exterior materials, landscaping, and signage can positively impact the overall appeal of a community, which leads to overall increased visitor numbers and profitable business.
- ✓ Special events and community recreational resources sponsored cooperatively by the business owners, Chamber of Commerce and local government help draw visitors (customers) to the area.

Sharing History with Travelers: Galena, Illinois

Galena provides big city residents a refreshing contrast to the hustle and bustle of a large metropolitan area. The retail shops celebrate the town's charming historic character. Galena is frequented by day-trippers and short-term vacationers attracted by its history, shopping and charm. Retailers offer products that appeal to visitors seeking a quiet get-away from the city. A retail community hosting businesses with vintage facades creates a quaint atmosphere in this charming river town.

Galena, Illinois (population 3,600), untouched by glaciers thousands of years ago, was called "God's Country" by Native Americans for its natural beauty. Rich lead mine deposits brought European settlers in the early 19th century. Galena prospered, providing its inhabitants the means to build quality brick homes and places of commerce. Its ascendancy left a legacy of architecture and accomplishment producing nine Civil War generals, including our 18th President, Ulysses S. Grant, and many stately mansions. The city lay dormant for nearly a century, existing as a small farming community until the 1960's, at which time it was promoted for its inherent splendor and history.



A community's nostalgic character appeals to visitors and promotes retail spending. Photo: Galena/JoDaviess County Convention & Visitors Bureau.

Galena possesses a natural charm. Business owners have supported the town's historic character by preserving its storefronts. Galena has evolved into a popular get-away destination with much to offer residents and travelers alike. The growth in tourism has provided the traffic necessary to allow a healthy downtown business community resulting in increased employment opportunities and local consumer convenience. While some commercial retail development has occurred on the outskirts of town, it has not altered the charm of downtown Galena.

Galena has more than 140 retail businesses that serve visitors. With its historic appeal and market orientation, Galena has a large number of restaurants, antique and gift stores. However, it also has a large number of apparel stores, particularly women's clothing. Some local businesses that are effectively selling to tourists are described in the following paragraphs.

The Palette and Chisel Gallery

The Palette and Chisel Gallery is owned by Marie-Luise and Nikolaus Miesing. Original fine art and sculpture by regional artists and Nikolaus himself are displayed in a creative and inviting atmosphere. The Palette and Chisel is remarkable for its original art at prices comparable to those charged by other galleries for prints. The gallery also sells one-of-a-kind woodcarvings, stone sculpture, pottery, and original paintings in all types of media.

Most customers come from the larger metropolitan areas of Dubuque, Milwaukee and Chicago and the majority of sales are to tourists. The community's setting was a significant factor in the Miesings' decision to set up shop in Galena. They felt the town's history, architectural style, river location, and European feel made it perfect for a fine art gallery.

Karen's Neat Stuff

Karen's Neat Stuff is managed by Tracy Kumbera-Fox and occupies two floors of two buildings in downtown Galena. It's packed with wonderful gifts and collectibles, year-round Christmas, home accents, bath and body products, linens and kitchenware, gardening and outdoor accessories, toys and games. Karen's Neat Stuff specializes in lighted houses and exclusive collectibles. It also utilizes mail orders and the world wide web. Tracy's customers are made up of temporary residents, visitors, and local residents. She says most of her customers are from Chicago, the Quad Cities, Minneapolis, and Madison. People staying at one of the many bed and breakfasts (B&Bs) in town and dining at the fine restaurants are important customers for this business.

Rocky Mountain Chocolate Factory

Chuck Henle and his wife opened The Rocky Mountain Chocolate Factory in 1990. His daughter, Carole Shutts, now manages the store. Management utilizes several on-site promotions to bring customers in the door. Preparation areas are positioned where passers-by can see the product being made. A large stuffed bear sits near the entryway with a hidden wireless microphone for Chuck to surprise and amuse people on the sidewalk. Chuck's magic tricks further entertain the customers, and once they are inside and see and smell the chocolate, they're sold. Chuck advertises on a web site, by word-of-mouth, brochures and a catalog but agrees there are many reasons customers stop in the store. Most customers happen to be in Galena to sightsee, stay at a B&B, to shop at other businesses, to ski, or to buy apples, and just stop in on an impulse for something chocolate.

Galena River Wine & Cheese

Galena River Wine & Cheese, owned and operated by Ken and Sandy Winge, sells wines, beer, cheese, sausage, coffee/tea, and specialty foods on premises and by mail order.

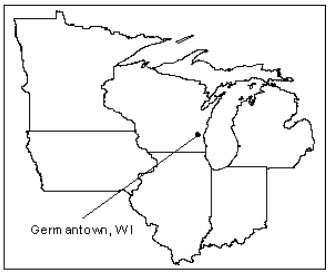
Sandy describes the customer mix as about 60 percent visitor and 40 percent local, even though the business is very seasonal, and open year round. Although Galena is a small town, it has many of the cultural activities found only in larger cities. Sandy cites this as not only one of the factors that made her and Ken decide to move there, but also why so many people come to visit.

What we can learn from Galena:

- ✓ Business district retailers should work together to support the character of the town, including its culture and history.
- ✓ The business mix in a town should provide a critical mass of retail products and services that are of particular interest to its visitors.
- ✓ Local retailers should work cooperatively with local lodging establishments and others in the tourism industry.

Celebrating German Heritage with Visitors: Germantown, Wisconsin

Germantown offers German heritage, history and culture in a friendly and charming village just outside of Milwaukee. Visitors to the area include bus tours and day-trippers drawn by the name of the community, its reputation and events that celebrate its ethnic heritage. Retailers serve the market by making shopping a cultural experience, with authentic products in buildings reminiscent of those in Germany.



Germantown (population 16,858), a community settled by German immigrants offers its history and culture to tourists through a decidedly old town feel. Germantown's pride in its heritage is evident in its authenticity and sincere hospitality. Grocery stores still maintain bilingual signs and the shopkeepers' last names readily reveal their roots.

Originally, Jerry Grosenick and a group of volunteers were interested in creating an attractive identity for downtown Germantown. The residents and village government have embraced the ethnic/cultural theme initiated by the private property owners. The new village hall is a beautiful facility patterned after traditional German buildings. As renovation continues, new lampposts and cobblestone streets are scheduled. German architectural themes have been voluntarily adopted by many businesses throughout the village.

Businesses can offer a cultural/ethnic theme to attract customers.

This entrepreneurial community spirit has been manifested in the events the community hosts as well. Germantown has established itself as a four-season destination: spring is celebrated with a Mai Fest, held the third weekend in May; motorcoach tours of Germantown on the Fourth of July; Sommer Fest on the second weekend in July, and the Dheinsville Dash Walk/Run on the third Saturday in August; Oktoberfest sets the festival mood for fall; and, Christmas in Dheinsville highlights the holiday season.

The National Trust for Historic Preservation chose Wisconsin as one of the four pilot states for a program to promote the indigenous heritage of individual regions. Germantown is part of the heritage tourism ethnic settlement trail that resulted from those efforts.

Jerry's Old Town Inn and the Von Rothenburg Bier Stube and Bier Garden

Jerry Grosenick owns and operates both Jerry's Old Town Inn and the Von Rothenburg Bier Stube and Bier Garden. Jerry is recognized as the catalyst in promoting the area's ethnic heritage that has made Germantown the tourism destination that it is today.

A visit to the Von Rothenburg Bier Stube is like a trip to a pub in Germany. Jerry serves authentic imported beer (or bier) in traditional European surroundings, both indoors and out. Jerry's restaurant follows the same German theme. Visitors can easily imagine that they are actually in Germany as they enjoy German foods

and beverages at Jerry's restaurant.

Sinter Klausen Christmas Markt

The Sinter Klausen Christmas Markt is located in an 1879 quarry worker's house on Old World Main Street and has been operated by Irene Blau since 1989. The Markt offers European Christmas collectibles and gifts, such as German mouth-blown glass ornaments, collector exclusives, advent wreaths, calendars, candles; and Christmas pyramids.

Irene has successfully capitalized upon an ethnic image. A trip to the Markt is an international shopping experience. The shop's name brings to mind alpine snow, fireplace stockings and a European legacy. What makes her particular business and much of Germantown special is the fact that the culture they celebrate is an authentic part of the area's history.

Apple Works/Germantown Orchards

As many visitors to Germantown are interested in the culture and history of the area, Dr. Dudley Johnson, the owner and originator of the orchard, and Dennis Mackey, the manager, have combined orchard tours with rural and historical attractions. Interesting weekly activities associated with the cultivation and harvest of apples are offered. Visitors tour the apple packaging and cider processing facilities, as well as the orchard itself.

Antique farm equipment and 19th century buildings capture sightseers' interest and satisfy their inclination to learn about the history and German heritage of the area. The business provides visitors with a memorable outing, including a free wagon ride out to the orchards to pick apples and pumpkins. On returning, they offer lunch plates along with apple treats and desserts.

German Glass and Gifts and Christmas Chalet

Christa and Heinz Scherzer emigrated from Germany, lending ethnic authenticity to their 4,000 square foot retail gift and collectibles shop as well as to the community of Germantown. One of the regular stops on bus tours to Germantown, German Glass and Gifts is a wonderful place to buy a gift or souvenir and enjoy a cultural/heritage experience.

Shopping at the Christmas Chalet nearly transports the visitor to another time and place. Walking through the aisles of European items is more than just browsing; it is akin to touring the actual shops in Germany and Bavaria. Christa and Heinz Scherzer utilize their genuine ethnic heritage in their marketing efforts. They share their culture with many visitors to Germantown, and contribute to the success of the overall Germantown ethnic theme.

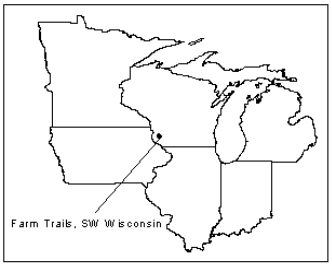
What we can learn from Germantown:

- ✓ Entrepreneurial creativity, private investment, and public-private cooperation should be encouraged to help create an identity for the community and its retail sector.
- ✓ Local retailers should celebrate their community and its unique heritage and authenticity.
- ✓ Visitors increasingly view shopping as a travel experience.
- ✓ Communities that design facilities, signs, and services to fit the community's character benefit from greater power to attract tourists.

Experiencing Agriculture: Farm Trails of Southwestern Wisconsin

Farm Trails of Southwestern Wisconsin links numerous agricultural communities. Rich farmland with rolling hills and picturesque homesteads introduce visitors to a rural experience by offering farm products in the setting from which they originate. People of all ages and backgrounds visit Farm Trails, with the majority being retired couples who seek an agricultural experience. Using their rural homes as their "stores," businesses sell fresh agricultural products, most of which come directly from the farms they also operate.

Farm markets, roadside produce stands and egg signs hanging from mail-boxes all indicate that some shoppers would rather buy fresh produce from a farmer's market than a supermarket. Among the reasons may be that the produce is fresher, prices are lower or people simply want to support the local economy. A product that is marketed by its producer lends authenticity to the product and possibly nostalgia for a simpler time when farm goods were sold by the farmer and crafts were sold by the craftsperson.



Retailers in southwest Wisconsin offer a rural experience with their crafts and agricultural products.

A closer view of cows in a field, corn sprouting in the spring and rolling hills covered with bright green alfalfa is a major change of scenery for many. Activities such as farm breakfasts, picking pumpkins and apples, hayrides, staying at a farm bed and breakfast or even performing a little hands-on work can make for a novel experience. Farmers are inventing numerous ways of participating in the agricultural tourism industry as a way to improve profitability.

Farm Trails in Southwestern Wisconsin arranges bus tours of rural businesses periodically through the summer. Shoppers can ride in comfort to more than 20 selected cottage industries that sell agricultural products including cheese, honey, apples, flowers and plants, syrup, buffalo meat, mustard, wines, and more. The following cross-section of businesses illustrates the rural tourism concept and demonstrates how it can expand the opportunities of small farm-based retailers.

Rural Route 1 Popcorn

Rural Route 1 Popcorn, an offshoot of the Trelay Seed Company in Livingston grows, packages, markets, distributes, researches and retails popcorn. It utilizes a variety of promotional approaches and advertising media to advance the enterprise. Potential customers are reached through brochures, the world wide web, newspapers, magazines, and of course, word-of-mouth. Even though most of the customers at Rural Route 1 Popcorn are day-trippers, some travel from as far away as Minneapolis, Milwaukee, or Madison. Everybody likes popcorn and that fairly accurately describes the demographics of Route 1 customers.

Manager Peggy Biddick refers to popcorn's convenience and nutrition when examining her products' rise in popularity. Rural Route 1 Popcorn is successful because it offers a quality product personally produced and sold. Shoppers experience rural flavor in a personalized and welcoming atmosphere.

Rural Treasures

Rural Treasures, near Lancaster, is owned and operated by Barb Reuter and Sue Rech. This gift shop offers custom-order floral products, candles, and gifts. Housed in a historic barn, the unique atmosphere and rural setting offers an enticing destination for a scenic country drive.

Barb and Sue say the Farm Trails tours have directed many customers their way. They also rely on a well-designed brochure and word-of-mouth to encourage people to stop in. Individual mailings to businesses soliciting commercial planting and caretaking have proved quite successful, attracting twice as many jobs as they expected. Many of their customers are friends and relatives of people that live in the area.

Hickory Acres Farm Gift Shop

Hickory Acres Farm Gift Shop, near Potosi, specializes in Katahdin sheep and Ukrainian eggs. Marilyn Hauth, manager of the gift shop, hand-etches farm-produced chicken eggs in the Ukrainian style. Along with gifts, the Hauth's sell their hybrid sheep for meat.

A large portion of the business is baking and candy making. The specialties are homemade breads, pies, and cakes. Hickory Acres Farm Gift Shop is an excellent example of rural retail ingenuity. Customers are fascinated by the fact that the crafts are products of the farm. Buying something that has been hand-made from the ground up makes it more special and personalized to the customer.

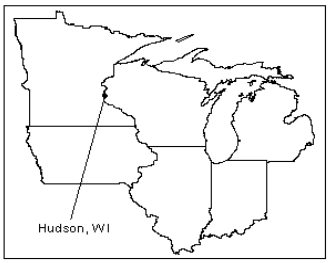
Marilyn says her customers are referred to her by the Farm Trails tours, word-of-mouth, and newspaper and magazine articles. She finds that the newspaper articles have been the most effective in bringing customers to her door, perhaps because readers view the articles as being more objective than advertising.

What we can learn from Farm Trails:

- ✓ Retailers do not have to be located in a particular business district to work together to serve tourists. Instead, they need to share a common market and work cooperatively to serve that market.
- ✓ Individual entrepreneurs should carefully evaluate their operation and personal talents to identify opportunities to diversify their business through tourism.
- ✓ Retailers find that customers value being able to buy directly from the producer and have recognized the opportunity to link agriculture with tourism..

Escaping the City: Hudson, Wisconsin

Hudson provides city dwellers with a refreshing contrast to the hustle and bustle of a large metropolitan area. The retail shops celebrate the town's charming historic character. Hudson is frequented by day-trippers from Minneapolis/St. Paul, often couples or women, usually working professionals. Restaurants, gift and antique shops offer up-scale products in a small town atmosphere augmented by picturesque old mansions, some of which have been made into bed and breakfasts.



Hudson, Wisconsin (population 7,850) is located across the St. Croix River from Minnesota, just minutes from the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area. Cradled in the scenic St. Croix River valley, Hudson has a strong identity based on its historical character as one of Wisconsin's early river communities. Hudson offers historic charm as well as many outdoor recreational activities associated with the St. Croix River and beautiful countryside.

Geographically, Highway 94 and the St. Croix River have guided much of Hudson's retail development. The logging businesses that established Hudson on the river are long-gone, but some of the historic buildings that housed the businesses and lumber barons of that time still remain. Just as early water transportation routes dictated the location of the first settlements and their businesses, modern highway routes determine the location of travel-oriented retail establishments. As a consequence, the chain stores have found a home "on the hill" as it is described in Hudson, clustered in an area along I-94 to the south and east of downtown Hudson. This tends to insulate downtown Hudson from the commercial area as well as the major brunt of the highway traffic and protects their yesteryear character.

Main Street personality and character provides an alternative to mall shopping.

Downtown Hudson retailers do not try to sell products that are available in a typical mall. The retailers realize it is senseless to try to compete with major malls and national chains that are less than an hour away. In contrast, downtown Hudson retailers possess what large malls can never duplicate, an authentic natural setting in a small town rich with history and charm.

Hudson has more than 140 retail businesses that serve local visitors as well as day-trippers from the Twin Cities. As much as 40 percent of the customers of some of the businesses come from out-of-town. A large number of eating and drinking places coupled with an attractive mix of gift shops and galleries provide urban visitors with a convenient small town escape. Some local businesses that are effectively selling to tourists are described next.

Et Cetera

Et Cetera is an attractive gift and home accessory business that is very inviting. Proprietor Kathy Strand offers a wide variety of merchandise including furniture, candles and candle holders, selected artwork, outdoor seasonal items such as birdhouses, jute and loop-weave rugs, vases, jewelry and picture frames, along with many other items.

Kathy stocks her store with eclectic art and gifts. She chose downtown Hudson because it just seemed like the right place to locate a store with an innovative product line. Kathy has found moderately priced and tasteful items and arranged them in a fashion that is both warm and artistic. The scents are subtle and the atmosphere inviting.

Kathy attributes her success to the unique products she sells, the artistic atmosphere of her shop, and her location in Hudson. Kathy has relied primarily on word-of-mouth advertising and has many repeat customers, both local and out-of-town.

Mickey Finns

Mickey Finns in downtown Hudson offers many appealing items for the local and visiting customer alike. Owner/operator Mary Morgan offers handmade pine furniture, watercolor prints, framed art, cookie stamps and presses, antiques, and fresh potted herbs. She also has a complete selection of Christmas items in a room devoted entirely to that theme.

Mickey Finns has a loyal resident and visitor customer base with many frequenting the store more than once a week. Mary estimates that 75 percent of the customers are local residents. The product line appeals to a variety of customers and Mary believes that introducing new items at least once every month is important.

Like most other retailers in Hudson, Mary is quick to point out the value of Hudson's small town historic charm. She believes being located in Hudson is in and of itself a positive quality for many reasons. Because of its location, Hudson's charm can be brought to a large market of consumers. Recreational river traffic also increases the number of visitors to Hudson.

Lavender Thymes

Jean Iverson has owned Lavender Thymes in downtown Hudson since 1987. Jean pioneered the idea of gift baskets in the area, and her interest and success in that product propelled her into the retail market. The enlarged shop offers coffee, drinks, and food items such as salsa, teas and pasta; home decorating accessories including wind chimes and candles; and personal items such as jewelry, clothing, and bath/aromatherapy products.

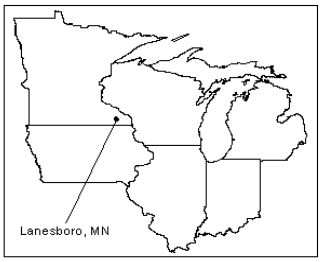
Jean has believed in cross-merchandising since it first became popular years ago. She believes that many customers are looking for a shopping experience in addition to specific products. Further, the type of shopper that visits Hudson has often picked the town because of its special small town feel and is looking for more than a quick trip to the store. Lavender Thymes is arranged in a manner that accommodates those types of shoppers.

What we can learn from Hudson:

- ✓ Downtown retailers in small towns can be successful by not trying to copy all of the products and services of regional malls. Out-of-town visitors are more attracted by unique shopping experiences they can't find back home.
- ✓ Close proximity to a major metropolitan area can provide a community with significant tourism volume and spending potential from day-trippers.
- ✓ Community retailers should look for opportunities to complement and not compete with each other. They should analyze their products and services from the customer's point of view.

Sharing The Great Outdoors with Bicyclists, Canoeists, and Rafters: Lanesboro, Minnestoa

Lanesboro provides city dwellers with river and trail activities amidst beautiful natural surroundings and a rural town atmosphere. Visitors to the area include day-trippers from Minneapolis/St. Paul, and Iowa and Wisconsin as groups, families and couples seeking active outdoor sports. While a few businesses serve only tourists, many have modified their product lines or services to serve both visitors and residents, particularly those who are outdoor sport enthusiasts.



Lanesboro, Minnesota, (population 900) is located in the Root River Valley, a beautiful region of bluffs and limestone outcroppings. In Lanesboro tourists find a town that offers many outdoor activities in an area rich in heritage, natural resources, charm, and rural nostalgia. Visitors come to Lanesboro to bike, canoe, hike, tube, trout fish, sightsee, learn, shop and sometimes just walk around. As one resident amusingly put it, Lanesboro did not have to establish a yesteryear theme; it never left the past. But this did not prevent the residents from recognizing the value of their town's historic look and feel. The town and its businesses have capitalized on the heritage of their community as well as the surrounding area's natural and human resources.

Business product lines such as bicycles can serve both residents and visitors.

Lanesboro has approximately 25 retail businesses serving local outdoor enthusiasts and other visitors. While many are restaurants, there are gift, antiques, grocery, and hardware stores. Some local businesses that are effectively selling to tourists are described in the following paragraphs.

Das Wurst Haus

Das Wurst Haus ("The Sausage House") has been owned and operated by the Fabian family (Arv, Jan and their son John) since 1984. Arv makes all of his own mustard, sausage, root beer and sauerkraut from original recipes and the buns are baked on the premises. The sausage is made with a process adapted from a recipe handed down from Arv's German father.

A visitor is lured to Das Wurst Haus by the sounds of old time music coming from the shop. Once inside, the friendliness of the staff, the festive atmosphere, and the homemade menu selections impress visitors. In mid-summer, Arv estimates that 40 percent of his customers are first-timers, an indication that most of his visitors are from out of town. Arv relies primarily on word-of-mouth advertising but recognizes that many feature articles in city newspapers have been beneficial. What started as a hobby for Arv has become a profitable business for his family and a creative attraction for the community.

Down Home

Dorothy Graskamp and her daughter Linda own and operate the Down Home shop. Open seven days a week from April through December, their merchandise line has evolved to include a wide selection of greeting cards, good books, antiques, Amish stars and t-shirts within a comfortable range of prices. Both visitors and locals are

customers, with summer weekends bringing the most traffic. Dorothy says the shop's bread and butter is selling t-shirts to the tourists.

Scenic Valley Winery

The Scenic Valley Winery was established in 1984 and produces and sells fruit wines and related merchandise such as hand-made wooden boxes, corkscrews and coolers. Wine tasting adds to the overall tourism experience, especially when the wines are made on the premises with local ingredients. As the only local winery, Scenic Valley Winery adds to an attractive business mix and supplements the economy by its use of local products, such as apples, plums and wine crates.

Since bikers or water sports enthusiasts are often not able to carry bottles of wine, the winery accommodates this market by shipping goods to their homes and finds that tourists tend to remember the service during the holiday season. Many of their customers are friends and relatives of people that live in the Lanesboro area. Karrie Ristau compliments the community by citing its charm as one of the biggest reasons her family started their business in Lanesboro.

Root River Outfitters

Mike Charliebois has owned and operated Root River Outfitters for two years and says his business success has exceeded his expectations. Root River Outfitters is conveniently located in town on the river and bike trail, enjoying the best location possible for its type of business. Rental bikes are replenished with new on a yearly basis and tubes are upgraded often.

Mike recognizes that his business provides a way for visitors to enjoy the natural beauty of the area, and is careful to remind his customers that whatever they bring to the river must come back out with them. His business, as well as others, depends on maintaining the natural beauty everyone comes to enjoy.

Capron Hardware

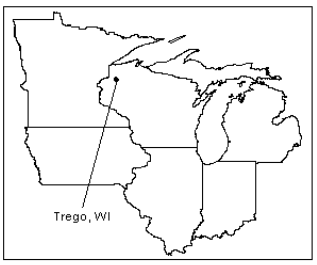
Capron Hardware has been a family-run business since the 1920's. It has been owned and run by John and Diana Capron (third generation of ownership) since 1983. The business has a general store feel, selling just about everything but lumber and major appliances. Capron Hardware is the base of operations for Winborn Bicycle Rentals, which has seven outlets in southern and central Minnesota. Anticipating a trend, Capron hardware was the first business in Lanesboro to offer bicycle rentals, even before the Root River Trail was opened. Each year brand new bicycles are put into service as part of the customer satisfaction program for which the Capron's are known.

What we can learn from Lanesboro:

- ✓ Community citizens and business operators should work to preserve the natural, historic and cultural qualities of their community. Capitalizing on tourism does not necessarily mean a loss of community character or identity.
- ✓ Even traditional retail businesses like hardware stores can find numerous opportunities to expand their product lines to sell to tourists.
- ✓ Businesses should expand their products around the activities and interests of visitors to the area.
- ✓ Personalized service remains an important element of success in a community serving tourists.

Beckoning Travelers: Trego, Wisconsin

Trego is a gateway location to the North woods with small town charm and history. Visitors to the area include travelers taking a break from the road, history and railroad buffs, couples on a romantic outing, second-home owners and family vacationers. Retailers serve the market by offering gifts, collectibles, antiques, food, convenience items and train rides.



Trego (population 700) is a convenient and attractive wayside for visitors traveling on Highways 53 and 63 in Wisconsin. For many decades, a popular stop for a meal or gas, Trego eventually became one of the only places on the highway to stop for food or a fill between Superior and Eau Claire without taking an off-ramp. Under the direction of a few insightful entrepreneurs, the retail businesses in Trego have capitalized on location and expanded their appeal. Through organization and innovation, the Trego retail community has evolved from a convenience stop to a cohesive destination benefiting the traveler and both the seasonal and year-round resident.

Originally, Trego was a whistle stop for the Great Northern Railroad until advances in highway systems and the popularity of automobiles led to the decline of the railways. Drawing on its roots as a railroad whistle stop, Trego is fortunate to have an excursion train that still takes passengers for scenic tours. Several gift and antique shops have thrived on the tendency of travelers to look around and shop while stretching their legs, and most have subscribed to a "North woods" look.

Travelers are entertained by Trego's history as a railroad whistle stop.

Trego's businesses have benefited from and capitalized on their proximity to the St. Croix National Scenic Riverway. As one of the first in the nation, this riverway attracts permanent and seasonal residents, travelers, and their friends and relatives. Even though its location provides a steady supply of customers, many of Trego's businesses contribute to the unique niche the retail community offers by catering to specific needs and desires of the traveler and resident using a consistent and attractive theme the town has established as its trademark brand. While Trego is a very small community, a number of businesses have effectively capitalized on its highway and gateway location. Examples follow.

Wisconsin Great Northern Railroad

The Wisconsin Great Northern Railroad is an historic excursion train that offers roundtrip sightseeing rides from Spooner to Trego, April through December. Operating on the former Chicago and Northwestern tracks, the train carries passengers on beautifully restored and rebuilt cars that date back to the early 20th century. Drinks, snacks, souvenirs and meals are available on the 14-mile round trip that takes about an hour and a half. The train hosts special excursion events such as a hobo night, the Family Picnic Train, Fall Colors Special, Great Pumpkin Train, and the North Pole Express.

It is significant to note that the train excursions are not only a secondary tourist activity for visitors who come to enjoy nature, they also are a primary attraction for train and history enthusiasts. During the train ride, a captive audience can translate to ready-made retail consumers. The festive atmosphere and unique experience create a mood conducive to selling souvenirs, gifts, and convenience foods.

In addition, passengers are allowed to get off the train in Trego to eat or shop. They can then get on a later train back to Spooner. By offering this extended stopover, visitors can stay longer and spend more money in the community. This demonstrates the railroad's interest in working together with and supporting other area businesses.

Dinner Bell Restaurant

Rick and Sue Coquillette have owned and operated the Dinner Bell Restaurant for more than five years. Starting at 6 a.m. every day, they serve breakfast, lunch, and dinner with homemade pies and desserts. Rick and Sue have strategically placed their homemade, fresh-baked muffins and bakery items in a showcase immediately inside the front door. Although the Dinner Bell is a clean, modern facility with an efficient design, its historical roots are evident. Rick and Sue have incorporated the original Dinner Bell character into their restaurant and have harmonized with the retail theme of the community by emphasizing its historical railroad roots. They also added a glass-enclosed addition providing the feel of a sunroom at a lake home.

In the summer months, up to 75 percent of the Dinner Bell's clientele is made up of tourists including summer residents, campers, and day-trippers enjoying the lakes and rivers. Because of the nature of the restaurant and the visitor demographics, most of the people who stop at the Dinner Bell are in a family group. If they are from out of the area, they generally come from the Chicago or Minneapolis/St. Paul metropolitan area.

Windmill Crafts and Gifts

John and Cheryl Rand have owned and operated Windmill Crafts and Gifts in Trego, Wisconsin, since May of 1995. Windmill Crafts and Gifts is open seven days a week from April 1 to December 31 and specializes in unique gifts, woodcarvings, home and cabin decor, specialty foods and goodies, and Christmas items. Their business's look and feel fits well with the other businesses in town, in product type and exterior building design.

John said it was not difficult to recognize the retail potential of the area and he picked the location because of the type and number of potential customers passing through Trego on a daily basis. The Trego area is in itself a popular retreat for city dwellers that own a second home, stay in a cabin, resort or campground or visit somebody who does. People enjoy browsing at gift shops during their travel rest periods and often base purchase decisions on convenience and impulse. Because most of their clientele visit the area for the natural resources, most of their merchandise is chosen for its appeal to the cabin owner or vacationer. Local artists craft much of their merchandise.

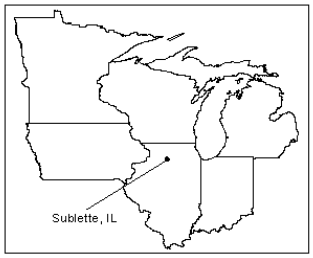
Windmill Crafts and Gifts now sells a teddy bear called "Treego" and share an interesting story about that bear. It's designer, from Duluth, MN, would periodically meet his mother, from Stone Lake Wisconsin, in convenient Trego at the Dinner Bell Restaurant. The story goes on to describe this bear's preference for "singing pie," a blackberry cream pie served at the Dinner Bell. Shoppers at the gift store have been entertained by the bear story and his desire for the special pie. As a result, the Dinner Bell now serves slices of "singing pie," satisfying visitors' curiosity as well as their sweet tooth.

What we can learn from Trego:

- ✓ A community does not have to be a major destination to benefit from tourism spending. Even communities that are rest areas or highway stops can capture a significant amount of traveler dollars.
- ✓ Once travelers are off the highway, retail and tourism leaders should market their attractions and services around a distinct community theme to encourage extended visits to their town.
- ✓ Businesses have many opportunities to promote each other and extend the visitor's stay in the town.

Serving Campers and Second Home Owners: Sublette, Illinois

Sublette, Illinois, offers visitors a weekend camping and second-home retreat surrounded by rich farmland and rural Midwestern heritage. Visitors to the area includes families and retirees, many from suburban Chicago. They enjoy recreation and camping in tents, recreational vehicles and park-model second homes. Dedicated community leaders and retailers recognize the benefits of tourism and offer products, services, and relationships to make visitors feel like year-round residents.



The Village of Sublette (population 500) in north central Illinois sets an example of cooperation, leadership, and community pride. As a postcard image of a classic Midwest farm village, its skyline is defined by church spires and grain elevator silos. In the heart of Illinois's richest farmland, Sublette serves as an agricultural center.

After efforts failed to diversify the economy through industrial recruitment, community leaders discovered the economic opportunities of tourism. In the early 1970's, Woodhaven Lakes, a 1,600-acre camping resort, consisting of over 6,100 individually owned lots, was developed just outside of town. Four other campgrounds as well as a Bible camp have also contributed to the growth in tourism activity. Kevin O'Connell of the Yogi Bear Jellystone Park Camp Resort estimates that the 8,500 campsites have now made the Sublette area one of the largest camping destinations in the Midwest. Today, summer weekends could see the arrival of up to 10,000 people, many of whom own semi-permanent park-model second homes.

Dedicated community leaders can promote successful retail ideas.

Recognizing the significant economic potential of the visitor market, Sublette Bank Chairman Don Dinges, Village President Larry Leffelman and other community leaders view their seasonal visitors as important neighbors who contribute to and share the resources of their town. Their community pride and ability to orchestrate major community efforts in a town of only 500 are demonstrated by the following examples.

A community beautification effort has continued since 1972 when the University of Illinois began a technical assistance program. Many beautification projects have been completed including a "green corridor" which welcomes visitors to the community.

Known as the "The Little Town with the Big Toy Show," Sublette hosts the Annual Farm Toy Show and Antique Tractor Display. This major event, attracting people from throughout the Midwest, requires 150 volunteers ranging from volunteer firefighters at the pancake breakfast to 4-H youth operating the food stands.

Community leaders constructed tongue-in-cheek road signs, denoting "Sublette - Next 4 Exits," to alert travelers to their tiny town. A series of signs reminiscent of the Burma-Shave style were placed along Illinois 52 to share a bit of American roadside history while distinguishing Sublette from other rural Illinois communities.

According to Don Dinges, the one percent of state sales tax that is rebated back to the village amounts to almost $60,000 per year, approximately three times more per capita than the county average. Some of the businesses that have capitalized on the influx of the tourism dollar are not tourism businesses (auto dealer, building supplies yard). The Sublette business people have used their entrepreneurial talents and the support of community leaders to offer products in a town of 500 that they may not otherwise have been able to offer.

While Sublette is a very small community, a number of businesses have effectively capitalized on its weekend and second-home draw.

Vaessen Brothers Chevrolet

Retail sales from tourists can include big-ticket items such as new automobiles. Neil Vaessen of Vaessen Brothers Chevrolet, Inc. recognizes the potential of tourism in the area. He realizes that travelers often need service on their vehicles and provides extended evening and Saturday morning hours to accommodate their schedules. Many of Neil's customers are from the Chicago area. They prefer to deal with Vaessen because of the excellent service and value they receive. As a result, 20 percent of Vaessen's sales are from out-of-town visitors. They in turn tell their neighbors, helping this business maintain profitability in a small town.

Sublette Fast Stop Convenience Store

The Fast Stop in Sublette offers gas, diesel, LP exchange tanks, and other conveniences and small town specialties including their very popular broasted chicken. Campers stop in to pick up a chicken dinner on their way to their campground and often on their return trip home to the Chicago area. Another popular business within this convenience store is the small town ice cream counter. A special attraction for many of its customers is its entire wall of cigars. The wide variety of cigars is very popular with many of the store's visitors as they can either pick their favorite or experiment with something new. According to store manager Jane McCoy, having many different enterprises under one roof is a key to success for this store.

Jones-Berry Lumber

Jones-Berry Lumber is an established building materials store located in Amboy, not far from Sublette. It serves the residential and agriculture needs of the community while effectively capitalizing on the influx of visitors to the area's campgrounds and second-home retreats.

Store owner Dan Welty looks at products and services from the visitors' perspective. Many visitors are coming to their second homes and want picnic tables, park benches, decks and small utility buildings to make their stay more enjoyable. Dan and his staff not only supply the materials but also have extended their services to include building and assembly of utility buildings and decks. Jones-Berry Lumber became so successful at this that they sold over 3,000 utility buildings and are now taking orders from out-of-state. Tool rentals are available as well, important to second-home residents and campers who can't travel with their own equipment. Dan ensures repeat business by offering visitors a small town personal experience by remembering names, taking an interest in families, and going the extra step to make sure a problem is solved.

What we can learn from Sublette:

- ✓ To fully capture visitor spending, key business and community leaders must embrace tourism as an economic development strategy and communicate its importance to local retailers.
- ✓ Community pride and cooperation is essential to orchestrate successful events and activities that draw shoppers.
- ✓ Visitors to a community should be welcomed and treated no differently than year-round residents.
- ✓ Wise retailers recognize travelers purchase a variety of goods, even items readily available at home.
- ✓ First impressions are critical and can be addressed through a community beautification effort.

What We Can Learn from Major Resort Destinations

For a community to effectively capture its share of visitor spending, it must balance its natural, historic and cultural resources with the right combination of manufactured attractions including the retail businesses. An article in *Urban Land* (August 1996) provides ideas from successful retail centers located in major North American resort communities. Five general principles can be a starting point to help retailers in a community recognize what is needed to successfully tap into the tourist market.

1. **Build on the attributes of the surrounding area.** Tourism destinations depend on the special attributes of their locations. These attributes might include unique natural attractions such as a spectacular river or lake front setting. They can also include unique historic and cultural characteristics of the community. The retail center should build on these special elements to achieve a unified and authentic theme that complements the surrounding area. Many business districts, including smaller ones, often have their own attributes that can serve to draw tourists by offering a unique and authentic theme. Downtowns offer more locally created shops, restaurants, entertainment, museums, and other attractions, that provide an alternative to chain restaurants, multiplex cinemas, and the strip commercial development of American suburbs.

2. **Have year round and diverse appeal.** Successful tourism related retailers appeal to more than one market segment. They look at the various types of visitors by season to identify opportunities to increase year-round sales. For example, a shop that sells and services bicycles in the summer may be able to sell ski equipment in the winter. Successful retailers also try to appeal to a diverse mix of customers including overnight visitors, day-trippers, conference attendees, local residents and employees. Ongoing special events and activities often strengthen this appeal.

3. **Cluster and coordinate retail activity.** While often lacking traditional anchor tenants, the appeal of tourism-based retail is increased when a wide variety of shops are clustered around each other and near local services. Local services can include visitor information, post office, library, medical center, banks, realtors, conference, and lodging facilities. These services provide spin-off for local retailers.

4. **Offer the appropriate retail mix and products.** Today's tourist destinations provide a variety of retail and services beyond souvenirs and fast food. Many successful retailers sell products related to health, wellness and feeling good. Such products include small indulgences such as specialty coffees, ice cream, cookies and chocolate, toys as well as outdoor accessories such as sunglasses, sweaters, and footwear. Locally produced products are also appealing to tourists as well as products with memorative or iconic appeal. While shopping for unusual items is recognized as part of the recreational experience, convenience products must also be available. Retailers should adjust their merchandise seasonally and carry products that also appeal to the local resident market. A variety of eating places that create a social ambience should also be included in the retail mix.

5. **Strengthen the appearance and amenities of the business district.** Appearance of the retail district can strengthen the area's identity and sales. Public spaces should feature landscaping and amenities such as fountains or pleasant seating in a distinctive context. The public environment must also be clean and attractive. Flowers, shrubs, and trees are helpful and must be well maintained. Buildings must be clean, with awnings and signs well designed for the community and properly maintained. Activities must be within a comfortable and attractive walking distance of each other, with an abundance of visitor information visible from the sidewalk. A pedestrian character should be created through the use of kiosks, outdoor entertainment, and inviting storefronts, window displays, entrances, awnings, umbrellas, and signage. If transportation is needed, it must be frequent and comfortable. Parking must be convenient and easy to identify.

Drawn from: Matheusik, Mick, "Resort Retailing: Finding the Right Mix", Urban Land*, August 1996, p. 68 "What Downtowns Should Do to Make their CBDs More Visitor Friendly," Downtown Idea Exchange, March 15, 1999, pg. 1-2.*

Section 4

Retail Business Strategies to Capture Tourism Dollars

This section summarizes many of the strategies used by successful retailers selling to tourists. These strategies were identified through interviews with over 100 successful retail business operators in the Midwest. They reflect business operations in a variety of small communities, with varying levels of tourism activity.

For most of the businesses interviewed, local resident demand generated the lion's share of sales. However, the marginal amount generated from tourists was critical in maintaining profitability. One business reported that the incremental eight percent of sales from tourists "kept their doors open."

As a starting point, retail strategies are broken into six general categories: customers and prospects, products and pricing, place, shopping experience, service and hospitality, and promotion. These ideas specifically relate to the tourist market and illustrate the creativity of entrepreneurs in tapping into the visitor market.

Many other important strategies can and should be adopted to help small independent retailers survive. Specifically, *Competing with the Retail Giants* by Kenneth Stone and *Up Against the Wal-Marts* by Don Taylor and Jeanne Smalling Archer offer useful survival strategies to help a small retailer co-exist with the large mass-merchandisers. These books should be required reading for any small retailer competing in today's market.

In this section:

- Knowing Your Customer
- Targeting the Visitor
- Location
- Store Appearance
- Atmosphere
- Experience
- Products
- Pricing
- Inventory Management
- Convenience
- Hospitality
- Delivery
- Stand behind Your Products
- Reaching the Visitor
- Strengthen Ties with Your Community
- Encouraging Repeat Business

Knowing Your Customer

1. **Research your tourist market.** Obtain data and consumer profiles of visitors to your area from state tourism offices and local organizations such as the Chamber of Commerce. Businesses should continuously monitor the profile of visitors to the community to identify products and services that fit their needs and preferences.

2. **Get to know your customers.** It is important to know more than names and addresses. Demographics refers to gender, age, income, origin, and family size. Further, lifestyle information is important to understand their leisure activities and how they spend their retail dollars as tourists. For more information, see Section 2.

3. **Know what attractions draw visitors to your community.** The tourism attraction inventory in Section 2 can help you understand what draws visitors to your community. Use this inventory to identify the busiest seasons, days, and hours of these attractions.

4. **Recognize that tourist and local resident preferences are often very similar.** Brenda Siegenthaler of Brenda's Blumenladen Floral and Garden in New Glarus, WI, focuses on the preferences and needs of local residents. Brenda has found that travelers to her town often have tastes similar to those of local residents. Instead of trying to create a separate product line for visitors, she maintains an inventory that appeals to all of her customers.

5. **Remember your customer's names.** In the best selling book titled *How to Win Friends and Influence People*, Dale Carnegie reminds us that a person's name is to him or her the sweetest and most important sound in any language.

6. **Research retail activity in larger metropolitan areas.** The purchasing preferences of many tourists from metropolitan areas are often reflected in the retail stores near their homes. Jean Iverson of Lavender Thymes, a popular gift shop in Hudson, WI, makes periodic trips to the larger metropolitan centers to shop other stores and assess the latest in retail purchasing trends.

7. **Talk to each person that comes in the door.** At the Coffee Company in the Hurley, WI, Dan Loden makes sure he greets each visitor to his restaurant. He tries to find out something about his visitors, even if it's only where they are from. This makes each visitor feel welcome while providing Dan with knowledge of his customers.

8. **Tap into growing market segments.** Gather market research and visitation statistics for your area to identify growing market segments to target. For example, the growth of mountain biking in northwest Wisconsin has provided many new selling opportunities for local retailers.

9. **Understand your visitors' lifestyles.** Various lifestyle segmentation systems are available from marketing data firms to help you better understand the buying behaviors of your visitors. If your store is serving a large number of visiting golfers, these systems can help you understand what these consumers like to do with their free time and money (play tennis, drink wines, enjoy boating, etc.). See Section 2 for more information.

Buying behaviors are often tied to customer activities. Photo: Inter-County Leader, Frederic, WI

10. **Become a regular stop for bus tours.** German Glass and Gifts and Christmas Chalet in Germantown, WI, has become a regular stop for bus tours through the area. Owners Christa and Heinz Scherzer devote extra effort to accommodate these groups, making the stop a memorable experience.

11. **Identify specific market segments**. Barbara Smith, owner of the Vintage Shoppe in Ripon, WI, focuses her marketing efforts on specific segments of the tourism market. Examples include foreign exchange students, families going on bus tours, convention attendees, and students at nearby Ripon College.

12. **Market to visitors already in town**. Karen's Neat Stuff is a gift shop in downtown Galena, IL, packed with fine collectibles, Christmas items, home accents, bath and body products, linens, kitchenware, gardening and outdoor accessories, and toys and games. While manager Tracy Kumbera-Fox does target out-of-towners using the Internet and Chicago newspapers, she feels that the community's overall tourism promotion is best left in the very capable hands of the Chamber of Commerce and Convention and Visitors Bureau. Instead, she focuses on the visitors once they are in the area.

Germantown Glass and Gifts and Christmas Chalet has become a regular stop for bus tours through the area.

13. **Recognize that local residents also enjoy shopping like a tourist.** Fudge, ice cream, gourmet coffees, candles and other gifts are often the types of purchases made while away from home. But at the Main Street Marketplace in Waupaca, WI, store owners Bernadette and Kent Pegorsch have found that these items are also popular among local residents. Having opened the store in 1987, they originally thought their business would cater to tourists visiting the nearby Chain of Lakes. Instead, the business grew into one of the main downtown anchors by serving locals.

14. **Recognize that tourists are not necessarily "vacationers."** Freeman Sports in Yorkville, IL, carries all sorts of fishing and hunting gear as well as canoes. It is also in the canoe rental business. While owner Greg Freeman serves many family parties, he has also targeted corporate outings as another important market segment.

15. **Recognize the market of friends and relatives**. According to Karrie Ristau of the Scenic Valley Winery in Lanesboro, MN, friends and relatives of local residents are an important market segment. The winery has become one of the "must-sees" when visitors are given a tour of the town. Retailers should remember that visiting friends and relatives is one of the most important reasons people travel to a community.

16. **Recognize the market of second-home owners**. While not necessarily "tourists," second-home owners in an area are often from out of town and take products back to their permanent residence. Cathy and Rodney Singleton, owners of Wooden Creations in Boulder Junction, WI, find that much of their handcrafted custom furniture sold to second-home owners in the area is actually shipped out to their permanent residences in distant cities.

Location

17. **Benefit from traffic congestion.** A busy street teeming with people and activity is usually more interesting and exciting than an empty street where you can park anywhere. Use traffic congestion as an opportunity, not a problem to be solved. If you are going into business, look for a site in a high traffic area.

18. **Locate business near other tourist-oriented retailers.** The Dinner Bell Restaurant in Trego, WI, generates customer traffic from and refers business to nearby shops. According to owners Rick and Sue Coquillette, proximity, accessibility, and visibility are important factors in creating an effective cluster of complementary businesses. Stores grouped together are convenient for visitors and provide a critical mass of activity to draw travelers to a community.

19. **Locate near tourist attractions.** Antiques of Anamosa, IA, is located next to a historical museum. According to manager Cecilia Hatcher, proximity to visitor activities and events is important for a retailer to effectively reach this market .

Proximity to visitor activities and events is important for retailers.

20. **Location, location, location**. The three most important characteristics in real estate development also apply to many retailers. The Main Street Marketplace in downtown Waupaca, WI, relocated to a prominent street corner. According to owners Bernadette and Kent Pegorsch, high street exposure to their interesting and attractive gift store has prompted many motorists to stop and shop. Once out of their cars, visitors find a variety of stores in this attractive "Main Street" community.

21. **Provide parking for buses.** According to managers of the successful Farm Market in Wautoma, WI, it is important to provide adequate parking for buses and motor homes. This is especially important at locations near major highways.

Store Appearance

22. **Examine the first impressions visitors may have of your business.** As visitors may not know your store, they may be quick judge your operation and whether they will do business with you. Consider what are the first things you see, hear, smell, or feel upon approaching your store.

23. **Have a window show to grab the attention of pedestrians.** Chocolate preparation areas at the Rocky Mountain Chocolate Factory in Galena, IL, are located on the street side of the store where people passing by can watch. Owner Chuck Henle schedules preparation times during peak business periods of the day.

24. **Reflect the architecture of the community in the building.** Scott Stocker, Shullsburg, WI, Brewster Café and Cheese Store and Gifts, believes retailers should be sensitive to their building's appearance. His buildings tastefully reflect the historic architecture of the town, making visits a lesson in history.

25. **Use sidewalk displays**. Ollie Burmeister of the Flower Bucket Treasure Chest in Shawano, WI, has been successful attracting traffic to his store by using creative sidewalk and window displays. Knowing traffic patterns in town, he opens his store at 8:00 a.m. to capture early morning traveler demand.

26. **Windows, windows, windows**. Displays in windows can be one of your most effective advertising strategies. For some businesses, simply washing the windows should be a first step.

Atmosphere

27. **Appeal to the senses of sight, smell and sound.** Bruce Brown, manager of the Alpine Chocolat Haus in Gaylord, MI, makes candy on the premises. He attracts many customers by allowing them to watch his work. The aroma of the cooking chocolate helps sales. Similarly, Das Wurst Haus in Lanesboro, MN, sells great German food and entertainment. Owners Arv, Jan and son John lure customers with the sounds of live accordion music heard from the sidewalk.

Sight, smell and sound can be very effective in drawing customers.

28. **Building interior décor should reflect area theme.** The Duck Shanty on the pier in Sheboygan, WI, provides restaurant guests with the feeling that they are in a sea-faring atmosphere. According to owner Pat Elmer, the décor and menu make visitors feel they are on a Mississippi delta or ocean wharf.

29. **Design your store to accommodate the leisure traveler.** Serendipity Cards and Gifts in Port Washington, WI, is designed with traffic flow in mind. Aisles are wide enough for parents with strollers or those in wheelchairs. The store is aesthetically pleasing and encourages people to browse and stay longer.

30. **Make shopping easy for parents.** Ruth Bruegger, owner of Stubli-Haus gifts in Rockton, IL, greets customers with coffee, a table for children to play games, and soothing background music. Similarly**,** Serendipity Cards and Gifts in Port Washington, WI, provides a play area in the back of the store for small children. According to owner Bette Langford, parents feel much more at ease when they don't have to constantly worry about their children.

31. **Create an atmosphere that takes the customer to a different place**. According to Wes Cornett, marketing manager of Burnstad's European Village and Café in Tomah, WI, visitors to their operation feel as though they are in Germany. Cobblestone streets, gates, lanterns, trees, gazebo, and a player piano add to the atmosphere.

32. **Combine an unusual mix of attractions within your store.** Randy Malom of the Bear Paw in Rice Lake, WI, operates one of the Midwest's most unique sporting goods stores. The store combines an animal museum with a specialty gift shop and archery and dart gun range. It offers a unique shopping environment for the entire family.

33. **Take a step back in time.** Freeman Sports in Yorkville, IL, displays antique hunting equipment, classic Evinrude boat motors, and a collection of antique lures. Owner Greg Freemen says these displays make a trip to his store similar to a museum visit.

34. **Celebrate your visitors.** The walls of Jack Colwitz's Convenience Store in Shiocton, WI, are decorated with photographs of sportsmen and their trophy game taken from the area. Visitors receiving this recognition are likely to return to the area and the store.

35. **Change your promotional strategies throughout the year**. Popeye's Galley and Grog in Lake Geneva, WI, constantly changes its themes and menus in an ongoing effort to "wow" patrons to the restaurant. According to Bill Ledger, general manager, the restaurant is constantly changing its themes, which range from summer barbecues to Octoberfest and Winterfest celebrations.

36. **Choose a name for your business that will make travelers stop.** Your business name should suggest what type of business it is and the niche it occupies. It should sound friendly and tie into the reasons why visitors are in the area. Anderson's Kaufhaus in New Glarus carries the Swiss name for a department store. This builds on the visitor's interest in a Swiss experience in their travels. Similarly, the name Sinter Klausen Markt in Germantown, WI, conjures up an image of a snow covered alpine village. Operator Irene Blau lives up to that image by offering a large selection of glass ornaments, advent wreaths, calendars, candles and other authentic German gifts.

The business name "Sinter Klausen Markt" conveys the German heritage and products sold in the store.

37. **Extend tourist season into shoulder periods**. Mike Charliebois operates Root River Outfitters, a successful canoe and tube rental business in Lanesboro, MN. Because of the limited season for water activities, Mike also rents bicycles, extending the tourist season well into the spring and fall.

38. **Offer an authentic experience**. A visit to the Von Rothenburg Bier Stube in Germantown, WI, is like a trip to a beer garden in Germany. Owner Jerry Grosenick serves authentic imported beer, indoors or outdoors, in surroundings much like one would find in Germany.

39. **Conduct different weekly events.** Appleworks/ Germantown Orchards in Germantown, WI, plans different activities every weekend. This encourages repeat visits from customers who are attracted by new and different events.

40. **Offer tours of your community.** Kathy Kuderer, owner of Down a Country Road craft store in rural Cashton, WI, sells furniture, quilts, and rugs as well as country crafts and gifts. As a special service to her customers, she offers an hour-and-a-half tour of the nearby Amish community. For a fee, she rides with the customers in their vehicles, making various stops to talk about Amish history, traditions, and customs.

41. **Give customers a hands-on experience.** The Antique Market in Watertown, WI, is an old lumberyard that has been renovated into several specialty shops and an antique mall. Each day, different artisans set up shop and provide an interactive environment where customers can gain hands-on experience.

42. **Provide an educational experience.** Alpine Gardens and Calico Shop in Stitzer, WI, offers customers an opportunity to tour and learn about its large selection of alpine plants. Operators Charlotte and Tim Nelson accommodate many tour groups including school and garden clubs.

43. **Provide an entertaining and fun experience.** Downtown Mount Horeb, WI, has become a draw to many visitors in part because of a shop that sells mustards and offers a lot of humor. Owner Barry Levenson of the Mustard Museum fills visits to this store with laughter and entertainment through products such as "Evaporate Your Eyeballs Hotsauce" and collegiate T-shirts carrying the name "POUPON U."

44. **Provide samples.** Richard Miller, owner of Miller's Cheese House in Rice Lake, WI, offers his customers cheese samples. Customers are more likely to buy if they can sample the quality products offered.

45. **Talk to your visitors about your products.** Peggy Biddick of Rural Route 1 Popcorn takes time to meet and talk with customers about her specialty popcorn business. She shares information on the development, production, packaging , and distribution of her products. Similarly, Bette Langford of Serendipity Cards and Gifts in Port Washington, WI, believes that people want to know where and how a product was made. Interesting facts about a product often influence the customer's decision to buy.

Products

46. **Ask and listen to the customer for product ideas**. Roberts Drug Store in downtown New Glarus, WI, is a combination European gift shop and small town drug store with coffee shop. Owner Jack Roberts began selling authentic Swiss cowbells a few years ago as suggested by a visiting farmer from Switzerland. Today, cowbells are one of the biggest sellers in this store.

47. **Ask the visitors what products they need**. Many retailers practice simple and effective market research. On a regular basis, they ask their customers what they need and would like to see in the store. Having the right products is frequently cited as the key to success.

48. **Continually seek new suppliers**. Dorothy and Linda Graskamp of the Down Home gift shop in Lanesboro, MN, have found a niche by offering a wide selection of greeting cards, books, Amish crafts, T-shirts, and other items of interest to the tourist. By continuously seeking new suppliers, their inventory is constantly being refreshed with new and interesting products. Trade shows and related magazines can help identify possible suppliers.

49. **Offer products for kids**. Serendipity Cards and Gifts in Port Washington, WI carries a variety of "travel packs" for children that includes activity books, cards, crayons, games, and other items. Attending to the interests of kids will lengthen customer time in the store and make a more pleasant shopping experience for the entire family. Pine Line Sports in Medford, WI, specializes in "silent sport" items like snowshoes and cross-country skis. As many of their customers are family travelers, they also stock products of interest to kids.

Retailers selling to tourists should recognize the importance of children as consumers.

50. **Listen to your current and potential customers and study national trends to identify products and services that could complement your business**. Since 1990, Marilyn Chesnik and Jerry Dorff of Wild River Outfitters in Grantsburg, WI, have operated a canoe rental business. About four years into the business they started getting customer calls requesting kayaks. After listening to these occasional requests and researching national paddling trends, they added recreational kayaks to their rental fleet. They also included kayak rental information in all of their advertising. Kayaks have proven to be extremely popular, helped expand their customer base, and increase sales in their convenience store/gift shop.

51. **Offer convenience products to make visitor stays more enjoyable**. The Sublette, IL, Fast Stop Convenience Store does big business selling broasted chicken dinners to campers arriving from the Chicago area. Manager Jane McCoy reports that this small town specialty is so convenient and popular that many visitors pick up dinner after their stay for their return trip to Chicago.

52. **Personalize products**. Christmas in Port in Port Washington, WI, sells all types of ornaments. Owner Pat Hackett understands that visitors appreciate personalized gifts for friends and coworkers. Accordingly, she offers a service to personalize products with names and/or occupations.

53. **Provide products that describe or reflect the local area.** Owner Tom Lowrey of Lowrey's Bookstore in Three Rivers, MI, maintains a selection of regional travel and history books of interest to out-of-towners.

54. **Sell authentic products**. From hand-carved cuckoo clocks to smoker men (incense burners), from Hummel figurines to beer boots, from hand painted pewter to mouth-blown glass, German Glass and Gifts and Christmas Chalet in Germantown, WI, has many authentic German items that may not be found anywhere else in the United States. Owner Christa Scherzer says that shopping at her store is like shopping in Bavaria.

55. **Sell products that display the name of your store.** George's Bar, Supper Club, and Supermarket in Boulder Junction, WI, sells shirts, sweaters and jackets imprinted with the business name and logo. According to co-owner Mike Hogue, visitors value clothing that reminds them of the good times they had while on vacation. At the same time, it advertises the business in targeted geographic market areas.

56. **Sell products that the visitors can take with them**. The Creamery Restaurant & Inn in Downsville, WI, has a variety of gift items for visitors using the nearby bicycle trail. Richard Thomas, owner of The Creamery, makes sure these customers can find small items such as hats and T-shirts that they can take with them when they get back on the trail.

57. **Sell products that tie the visitor to the community**. The paintings, prints, and lithographs of Roger Lahm Art and Design provide a lasting memory for visitors to Sheboygan, WI. Roger often personalizes his art by adding a particular name to a boat or mailbox within a Sheboygan scene. This has special significance to a new owner and is an excellent means of promoting the community.

58. **Sell products that are made locally**. Mike and Julie Diesterhoff of the Parkview General Store in Campbellsport, WI, make and sell homemade fudge. They also market their fudge to grocery stores, craft stores, flea markets, and auction houses. They find that labeling the different types of fudge with various local names has been an effective way to market the products.

59. **Stock items that the traveler may have forgotten**. The Wal-Mart in Saukville, WI, makes sure they stock items the tourist may have forgotten, including sporting goods, rain gear, coolers, and clothing.

Stock items the tourist may have forgotten, including sporting goods, rain gear, coolers, and clothing.

60. **Sell truly unique products**. Kathy Strand of Et Cetera home accessories and gifts in Hudson, WI, finds that unusual items often sell faster than more conventional merchandise. She has followed that philosophy by stocking uncommon gifts such as beautiful stone waterfalls, rustic one-of-a-kind furniture and interesting artwork. Similarly, Joanne Hadland of Joanne's Scandinavian in Bayfield, WI, has found that unique items are big hits with her customers. Her store is stocked with unique books, crystal, sweaters, kitchen items, and greeting cards.

Pricing

61. **Don't compete strictly on price.** Seldom do we relate to our friends how little we spent for a meal, gift or anything else while on vacation. Rather, we talk about the best ice cream or steak, or the most beautiful vase. It is important to focus on giving visitors value for their dollars, not necessarily the lowest price.

62. **If you sell "cheap" merchandise, don't disguise it.** Many visitors are looking for a $3 snow-globe or other inexpensive souvenir as a reminder of their stay. There is absolutely nothing wrong with selling such items as long as the customer is not misled to believe that the item has some greater value.

63. **Offer something for free.** Tourists always remember when they are treated well and receive something for free. At Appleworks/ Germantown Orchards, free wagon rides make the visit interesting and memorable.

64. **Recognize that many visitors are seeking good deals**. Neal Vaessen recognizes that many out-of-town customers of his Sublette, IL, Chevrolet dealership believe they get better deals in small towns. By taking care of these out-of-town customers, his business has grown in popularity in many suburban Chicago neighborhoods as satisfied customers recommend Vaessen to their neighbors.

Many out-of-town customers seek value and are willing to purchase "big-ticket" items while away from home.

65. **Sell some affordable products in all stores.** While the majority of gallery visitors would love to purchase a $1,500 blown glass bowl, only a small number would be able to afford such a purchase. For every expensive bowl, you might sell 200 bud vases at $35 each made in the same shop under the supervision of the same artist.

66. **Products should be reasonably priced.** Many tourists perceive that souvenir stores, and other stores selling to out-of-town visitors are overpriced. At the same time, underpricing can lead to business failure.

Inventory Management

67. **Introduce new inventory on a regular basis**. Joann Evans of the Cannery in Prairie du Chien, WI, operates a gift and antique store in a restored canning facility. The store carries a wide range of products including pottery, candles, dolls, and teddy bears. She attributes her success in part to introducing new, different, and exciting merchandise on a daily basis.

68. **Adjust inventory on a seasonal basis**. With a close eye on the market, Dennis and Krista Maurer, managers of Knitt's Hardware Hank in Boulder Junction, WI, change their inventory throughout the year. In the winter they stock ice fishing accessories; in the spring they sell supplies for fixing up cabins; in the summer they offer fishing and camping goods and in the fall, they stock hunting merchandise.

69. **Keep stocking items that sell**. Obviously, if something is selling like hotcakes to tourists, keep selling it. Don't discontinue something just because you are tired of it.

70. **Consider a point-of-sale computer system to track inventory.** Because of the complexity of effectively managing inventory, Diana Capron of Capron Hardware in Lanesboro, MN uses a point-of-sale (POS) system to help order, reorder and control pricing. These systems are especially useful in a store selling to tourists because of the seasonality of visitor demand.

71. **Don't get buried in old inventory**. Be sure to move your old inventory, especially when you are introducing new suppliers and products.

Businesses selling to tourists should respond to seasonal market changes.

Convenience

72. **Accept advance orders.** Hickory Acres Farm Gift Shop near Potosi, WI, bakes many of its homemade breads, pies, and cakes to order. Visitors can make a trip to the store knowing that their desired selection will be waiting for them.

73. **Accept credit cards and traveler's checks.** Credit card sales are expected to increase to one-half of all retail sales by the year 2000. In addition, travelers often prefer to use charge cards or traveler's checks so that they don't have to carry excess cash.

74. **Accept foreign currency.** If you are located near the US border, accept foreign currency from the adjacent country.

75. **Be a source for recreational licenses.** Colwitz's Convenience store in Shiocton, WI, is the only store in town that registers deer hunters. As a result, it typically registers up to 1,500 hunters each year, increasing customer traffic substantially.

76. **Keep regular hours.** Bob and Barb Leffingwell of Carriage Haus Collectibles in Mayville, WI, stress the importance of keeping regular hours. Last minute changes or erratic hours of operation are not acceptable to out-of-town customers. To the extent possible, operating hours should be coordinated among businesses and based on what is most convenient for the customer.

77. **Offer facilities for recreationists.** The Elroy Commons Trail Shop in Elroy, WI, serves as a convenient and refreshing stop for bicyclists along the Elroy-Sparta Trail. Restrooms, water fountains, and showers are amenities greatly appreciated by many of the customers at this store.

78. **Offer free gift-wrapping**. According to Ruth Bruegger of the Stubli-Haus, many of the purchases made by tourists are gifts for friends and relatives they are visiting. Accordingly, free gift-wrapping is an important service when they are away from home.

79. **Offer rentals**. Dan Welty of Jones-Berry Lumber Company in Amboy, IL, understood that second-home owners in nearby recreational areas often needed power tools for work on their summer residences. By offering tool rentals, he was also able to increase his sales of building materials. Similarly, Mike and Julie Diesterhoff of the Parkview General Store in Campbellsport, WI, rent boats, cross country skis, snow shoes, and tandem bikes. They find that by offering the appropriate rental equipment for area recreational opportunities, the store has enjoyed increased traffic and sales.

80. **Provide clean restrooms**. Clean restrooms are important as they make a positive statement about your business. They can also draw customers into your store. One Wisconsin variety store has become a

stop for bus groups and older travelers due to its reputation for having clean restrooms. Once visitors are in the store, they also purchase gifts and convenience items.

81. **Provide repair services to visitors**. Many of the travelers through Sublette, IL, are motor home owners visiting the area's camping facilities. Accordingly, Neal Vaessen of Vaessen Chevrolet provides Saturday morning service hours when these people are most likely to be in town.

82. **Provide special ordering capability.** As many tourists prefer to have their purchases shipped to their homes, retailers have an opportunity to sell items not in stock, but available through special orders.

83. **Set hours of operation in relation to area attractions.** The Log Cabin Store in Danbury, WI, provides a convenient place to buy groceries, supplies, souvenirs, sporting goods, furs and moccasins. According to Holly Macke, the store is able to sell these products to nearby casino visitors by maintaining the same hours as the gaming operation.

Hospitality

84. **Set quality service standards.** Retailers should set standards for their staff such as greeting each customer, serving within a set time period, and offering tourists information to make their visit more enjoyable.

85. **Develop a mission statement that recognizes hospitality**. According to June Brandow, sales director of The Fireside dinner theater in Fort Atkinson, WI, staff and management should be reminded of the importance of service and hospitality. The Fireside's mission statement reads "People will come where they are invited, where they have been made to feel welcome, and where they have been asked to return."

86. **Help your business and community develop a visitor friendly image**. Bob and Barbara Leffingwell of Carriage Haus Collectibles in Mayville, WI, work hard to set an example of visitor hospitality in their community. They talk to other businesses and citizens about the importance of tourism to their business and the economic health of their community.

87. **Hire and take care of good employees**. Jerry Bechard, owner the Norske Nook restaurants in Osseo, Rice Lake, and Hayward, WI, believes that it is very important to attract and retain a high quality staff. Unlike some businesses, Jerry pays top wages to his staff and offers them health insurance and retirement programs. As a result, he is able to retain high quality staff who are experienced in exceptional customer service.

88. **Know other languages.** The Wal-Mart in Saukville, WI, is able to accommodate non-English speaking visitors by knowing which store associates can speak another language. General manager, Lori Dallaire, reports that they were able to accommodate a large group of visitors from Germany seeking many items, from phone cards to jeans.

89. **Post road maps.** Many hospitality oriented businesses post state and local road maps just inside their doors. Local attractions and point of interest can be added to encourage the traveler to stay in town longer.

90. **Provide visitor information.** Bill Zarak, manager of the Pamida discount store in Neillsville, WI, provides tourists with county maps, brochures and calendars free of charge. He listens carefully to his customers and provides convenience items they may have forgotten.

91. **Put yourself in your guest's shoes**. Richard Thomas, manager of the Creamery, a combination inn, restaurant, bar, and giftshop in Downsville, WI, pays particular attention to the unique needs of his customers. For example, he recently accommodated a group of bicyclists arriving for dinner who had been drenched by a sudden downpour. Recognizing their needs, he gave them a place to shower and don dry clothes. They then dined comfortably while their own clothes were being laundered by inn staff.

92. **Set an example for your employees.** Don't expect your employees to treat tourists well if you don't. Set high guest service standards for yourself and treat your employees like partners in living up to these standards. Management and staff must develop excellent interpersonal skills.

93. **Smile and practice effective human relations.** Holly Macke, manager of the Log Cabin Store in Danbury, WI, advises other retailers to be courteous, kind, and patient with tourists. Holly believes this is what brings them back.

94. **Teach employees about the area**. John Huber, owner of Baumgartner's Cheese Store in Monroe, WI, believes in helping visitors in their travels. He makes sure that his employees know area visitor highlights in order to give advice and directions to out-of-towners. Similarly, Mike Charliebois of Root River Outfitters in Lanesboro, MN, hires employees that are knowledgeable about canoeing, rafting, and bicycling activities in the area. He also makes sure his new hires enjoy teaching visitors about these activities.

Friendly employees are an important element of successful retail service. Photo: Wisconsin Department of Tourism.

Delivery

95. **Deliver items to local hotels**. Bette Langford of Serendipity Cards and Gifts in Port Washington, WI, occasionally has customers who buy items that are awkward to carry while shopping in town. Bette offers to deliver the items to their hotel or ship them to their home. If you offer delivery, post a sign in your store informing customers of this service.

96. **Offer shipping**. Finishing Touch, an antique furniture store at the Farm Market in Wautoma, WI, offers free delivery to customers in Wisconsin and northern Illinois, encouraging people to buy larger items. Today's delivery options enable a retailer to ship something for arrival by the time the visitor returns home.

Stand behind Your Products

97. **Guarantee your products and services.** Offer a "no questions asked" policy. Typically, only a few people will take advantage of this guarantee. While we often want to focus on the rare customer who may abuse this policy, we often forget about the new business that is generated by this offer.

98. **Improve your out-of-town return policy**. Visitors are sometimes reluctant to purchase merchandise while traveling because it is more difficult to make returns if there is a problem. As tourists often reside far away, a convenient return by mail policy should be established.

99. **Sell products that you know and trust.** Lisa and Steve Coon of Coontail Sports in Boulder Junction, WI, find it easier to sell products that they know and trust. By having an interest in outdoor sports, they are able to more effectively communicate product benefits and appropriateness for the consumer.

Reaching the Visitor

100. **Develop a marketing plan.** A marketing plan should be developed annually to assess what the market is today, and what it could be in the future. To reach those goals, a detailed promotional strategy and budget should be established.

101. **Use a combination of promotional strategies.** Tourists can be reached through a combination of advertising methods including direct mail, brochures, magazines, radio/TV, yellow pages, newspapers, regional promotional materials, kiosks, and the Internet. Each method must be evaluated carefully as each has strengths and weaknesses.

102. **Consider a toll-free phone number**. Recognizing that 75 percent of its customers are tourists, the Cedar Creek, WI, Winery offers an 800 number. Connie Niebauer, general manager, uses this service as a way to provide visitor information and updates on special events throughout the year.

103. **Consider outdoor advertising on key highways**. Judy O'Betts, owner of the Cheddar Box Cheese House in Shawano, WI, carefully plans her advertising budget. She finds outdoor advertising effective when placed on key routes leading to her store.

Retailers that are successful in selling to tourists are especially careful in managing their advertising and promotion budgets.

104. **Develop a mailing list**. Start capturing the names and addresses of your customers. This list will become extremely valuable in your direct mail campaigns to existing customers. One business in southwest Wisconsin purchased a list of turkey hunters from the state's Department of Natural Resources. In a direct mail campaign, this list helped the business increase sales significantly during the hunting season.

105. **Develop an effective Yellow Pages listing.** Successful Yellow Pages advertising requires capturing and keeping the reader's attention. A successful design accomplishes this with a flow that moves the reader through the entire ad right through the phone number, a headline that attracts the reader's eye, copy that is succinct and to the point, use of the company's logo, and illustrations, colors, and borders.

106. **Develop an Internet web site.** The Rocky Mountain Chocolate Factory in Galena, IL, has a very attractive web site that invites tourists to be customers year round. They are also able to tap into corporate sales when the vacationer is home and back to work.

107. **Develop and distribute an effective brochure**. Design the content to include products, services, and uniqueness. Add graphics that specifically reinforce what you are trying to get across in the copy. Be sure to stock brochure racks that are readily available to travelers. Consider hiring a service to distribute your brochures to area racks.

108. **Offer catalog sales**. Mason Shoe Outlet Store in Chippewa Falls, WI, has over 75,000 pair of shoes in stock. But according to Rich Johnson, vice president of human resources, the biggest marketing strategy is selling shoes via catalogs nationwide. Mason Shoes catalogs offer a wide range of sizes targeted to consumers seeking quality, name brand, and value.

109. **Reach guests at local lodging facilities**. The Cedar Creek Winery in Cedar Creek, WI, attracts many couples from Chicago or Milwaukee staying at local bed and breakfast operations. General Manager Connie Niebauer is able to reach this market by networking with local lodging operators. Similarly, Bob and Barbara Leffingwell of Carriage Haus Collectibles in Mayville, WI, team up with the local Chamber of Commerce and an historic inn to develop tourist and bus group packages for overnight visitors.

110. **Reach tourists at their home via e-mail**. John and Cheryl Rand of Windmill Crafts and Gifts in Trego, WI, sell unusual gifts, woodcarvings, home and cabin furnishings, and various food and Christmas items. As an outlet for more that 50 local craftspeople and artists, they are able to instantly promote new products and services with customers at a distance with e-mail.

The Norske Nook Restaurant has established a regional reputation with the tourism market.

111. **Seek opportunities for free publicity**. The Norske Nook in Osseo, WI, has developed national recognition for its homemade pies. Feature articles in newspapers such as the *New York Times* and *Los Angeles Times* have made the restaurant a destination for travelers through the Midwest. It has even landed orders for overnight air delivery of pies.

112. **Use a sign-in book.** The M&M Café in Monticello, WI, keeps a guest book by the cash register so that all visitors can sign it. This provides an interesting reference for guests as they are always interested in where others tourists are from. According to owners Mary and Michael Davis, people have signed in from all around the world, including some "regulars" from Chicago.

113. **Use media to be a source of information for visitors**. Fred and Dotty Snook of the Alphorn Sport Shop in Gaylord, MI, have been successful by sharing their knowledge of hunting and fishing. They have been effective reaching both visitors and local residents by hosting a five-minute radio spot every weekday morning and sharing tips on where to fish and hunt. Similarly, Sue Ballantyne of Sue's Shops in Gaylord, hosts a two-minute radio spot twice a week to inform visitors of new products, services and upcoming classes at her craft and gift shop.

114. **Word-of-mouth referrals.** Word-of-mouth referrals are not only important among locals, but also among visitors. Visitors have friends and relatives in their hometowns that are excellent markets. Cathy and Rodney Singleton of Wooden Creations in Boulder Junction, WI, have found these referrals very important. Word-of-mouth is the cheapest and perhaps most effective form of advertising.

115. **Write press releases**. Marilyn Hauth of Hickory Acres Farm Gift Shop in Potosi, WI, has found that writing press releases for newspapers/articles has been very effective in bringing customers to her door. Customers look to these articles as being objective and honest.

Strengthen Ties with Your Community

116. **Become active in the Chamber of Commerce, Main Street, business improvement district and local and regional tourism promotion groups.** Collectively, a group of businesses can market more effectively than a single business. Work with local groups to develop events, joint advertising, brochures, and other activities to bring in the visitors.

117. **Participate in a market analysis and business retention/expansion programs.** These programs are designed to help a community's existing businesses survive and grow. By bringing local leaders and development groups together with University Extension educators, they can help communities explore options for strengthening local businesses.

118. **Coordinate displays with local events.** The Wal-Mart in Saukville, WI, has a front display of fishing items during the community's "Fish Days" event. According to manager Lori Dallaire, timing of local events must be considered in her merchandising strategies.

119. **Conduct reciprocal promotions with other businesses.** The New Glarus Bakery prepares a "brewers bread" for the nearby New Glarus Brewery visitor center. Brewery visitors that have been given samples of this product are more likely to visit the bakery.

Product exchanges among businesses are an effective way for retailers to promote each other.

120. **Encourage development of other complementary businesses.** Businesses in Rockton, IL, draw a large number of visitors because they have a critical mass of complementary businesses. Ruth Bruegger, owner of Stubli-Haus gifts, specializes in miniature dollhouses. Her store benefits from the presence of nearby antique, stained glass, and other retailers of interest to her target market.

121. **Maintain a good relationship with other businesses.** Greg Vreeland of the Wisconsin Great Northern Railroad in Trego, WI, believes in maintaining a good working relationship with other businesses in his community. As a result, Greg finds that these businesses are very willing to distribute his brochures and refer business his way.

122. **Participate in community-wide promotions.** Ruth Bruegger, owner of Stubli-Haus gifts in Rockton, IL, is active in promoting events in her town. One event, "Moonlight Madness," attracts visitors to downtown stores as retailers dress in costumes and give treats to customers. Another event, Christmas Walk, is a community-wide effort involving local churches, historians, artists, the Lions Club, and others.

123. **Relate your products to a famous local or regional personality.** The Mason Shoe Outlet store in Chippewa Falls, WI, displays the type of boots worn by actor Leonardo DeCapprio. He was given a pair of boots after starring in the movie *Titanic.* Chippewa Falls is his hometown.

124. **Seek opportunities to promote your business through community service.** Barry Levenson of the Mount Horeb, WI, Mustard Museum teamed up with a major Chicago radio station personality to promote a charitable campaign for needy kids in which $1 would be donated for each mustard jar sold.

125. **Sell items that complement, not duplicate, other stores in town.** Mary Morgan, owner of Mickey Finns gift shop in downtown Hudson, WI, believes that it is very important to have a complementary relationship with other businesses in the community. Instead of competing with others, she makes sure that her pine furniture, watercolor prints, antiques and other gift items are truly unique and add to the variety and critical mass of retail products available in Hudson.

126. **Sell products and services to local tourism businesses.** Sue Ballantyne of Sue's Shops in Gaylord, MI sells a variety of products for the home such as dried and silk flowers, furniture, and home accessories. Sue has expanded her market by offering interior decorating services to area resorts.

127. **Support local producers, artists and craftspeople.** Bob and Barbara Leffingwell, owners of Carriage Haus Collectibles in Mayville, WI, know many of the local artisans that sell to their shop. The store has gained a very good reputation in the local area for paying consignees on time and often generates referrals by other craft vendors in the area.

128. **Work with other businesses to develop a common theme and positive image.** Using the techniques in Section 2 and the examples in Section 3, work with other retailers to define and distinguish your retail community. Always consider the attractions your community offers and the visitors it draws.

Encouraging Repeat Business

129. **Become a fond tradition for visitors**. Judy O'Betts, owner of the Cheddar Box Cheese House in Shawano, WI, has worked hard to maintain her cheese store as a tradition where generations of families return year after year. Tourists return to the store to relive their own childhood vacation memories and offer a similar experience to their children.

130. **Focus on building repeat business.** Tourists are not necessarily one-time visitors to a store. Dan Welty of Jones-Berry Lumber in Amboy, IL, encourages repeat business from tourists by getting to know their names and taking a sincere interest in their family and visit. Many retailers find that an annual thank you, reminder or invitation letter can significantly increase repeat business from tourists.

131. **Provide incentives to taxi drivers**. Mary Anne Collins-Svoboda of Amish Country Quilts & Furniture in Stockholm, WI, gives limousine drivers a healthy tip for bringing tourists to her store and community. She has been successful in attracting some important customers to her unique store.

Retailers can build repeat business by getting to know their customers and extending hospitality to them.

132. **Take care of tour bus drivers and guides**. Ruth Bruegger, owner of Stubli-Haus works with other businesses to extend hospitality to tour bus drivers and guides by providing free meals.

133. **Be sensitive to the visitor's schedule**. Carol Buhlman, manager of the Gift Shop at Eau Galle Cheese Factory in Durand, WI, recognizes tour groups must adhere to tight schedules and accommodates their strict timetables. This encourages repeat visits.

Appendix A

Worksheets

Attractions Inventory

Visitor Profile

Retail Products and Services

Attractions Inventory Season _____ Community _____	
Names of Existing Attractions	**Comments**
Natural Attractions	
Cultural/Manmade Attractions	
General Services	
Transportation	
Overnight Accommodations	
Businesses and Institutions	

Excerpts drawn from the Wisconsin Department of Tourism, *Tourism Development Manual.*

Visitor Profile
Community _____
Month of _____ Year _____

	Market Segment Descriptions		
	1)_____	**2)_____**	**3)_____**
Demographics			
Travel Party			
Trip Purpose			
Age			
Gender			
Marital Status			
Number of Children			
Education			
Income			
Occupation			
Ethnicity			
Disability/Health			
Geographic Origin			
Primary			
Secondary			
Lifestyle or Activity Description			

Retail Products and Services			
	Targeted Visitor	Related to Area Attraction	Comments
Souvenirs/Crafts/Collectibles			
Convenience/Household Items			

Appendix B

Additional Resources for Tourism Business Development

Publications:

Community Image: Managing the Face of Change, Metekla, C. 1996. Cooperative Extension, University of Wisconsin – Extension. Provides practical techniques for communities to develop a complete image with a result that residents and visitors alike recognize the community as a good place to live and visit.

Community Tourism Assessment Handbook. 1997. Corvallis, OR: Oregon State University, Western Rural Development Center. A step-by-step guide to facilitate the process of determining whether tourism development is right for your community.

Competing with the Retail Giants: How to Survive in the Retail Landscape, Kenneth Stone. Includes an excellent summary of the author's extensive research on the impact of Wal-Marts on smaller communities. The research results are presented in a practical user-friendly manner.

Marketing Crafts and Other Products to Tourists, Gahring S.; Niemeyer, S.; Reilly, R.; Stout, Jane Ann. North Central Regional Extension Publication 445, 1992. Provides information on what types of products appeal to different categories of tourists. Includes strategies for marketing to tourists.

Marketing the Uniqueness of Small Towns, Dunn, D. & Hogg, D. H. 1995. (Publication WRDC 41). Corvallis, OR: Oregon State University, Western Rural Development Center. Discussion of specific useful strategies in community promotion.

Rural Tourism Development Training Guide. Koth, B.; Kreig, G.; Sem, J. 1991. University of Minnesota Extension Tourism Center. Describes how to develop successful tourism resources in rural areas or communities of less than 25,000. For rural community leaders, volunteers, and general public interested in rural tourism development.

Tourism Business Entrepreneurial Handbook, Sem, J. (Ed.). 1995. Denver, CO: US West Foundation, University of Colorado at Denver, Western Entrepreneurial Network. Practical and readable overview of retail tourism designed with the individual business owner in mind.

Tourism Development, Principles, Processes, and Policies. Gartner, W. C. 1996. New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold. Community tourism development chapter examines resource, political, and social requirements for successful tourism development.

Tourism Planning: an integrated and sustainable development approach. Inskeep, E. 1991. New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold. A comprehensive planning guide for sustainable world-class retail tourism developments.

Tourism USA, Guidelines for Tourism Development, The University of Missouri Department of Recreation and Park Administration, University Extension. 1986. United States Department of Commerce-United States Travel and Tourism Administration, Economic Development Administration. The book is organized to follow a general planning process to assist local communities in assessing and developing their tourism potential as a component of their economic development plan.

Up Against the Wal-Marts: How Your Business Can Prosper in the Shadow of the Retail Giants, Taylor, John and Smaling Archer, Jeanne. 1994. AMACOM. This is a good practical basic retail-marketing book that provides simple strategies that work in any retail situation, i.e., knowing your customer, customer service, managing your business.

Wisconsin Tourism Development Manual, Wisconsin Department of Tourism. 1990. Madison, WI: Moose Speros, Secretary. A good region-specific reference for communities seeking to increase tourism including referrals to additional sources.

Other Resources:

University of Wisconsin – Extension

The Wisconsin Small Business Development Center (WSBDC) exists to serve the people of the State of Wisconsin. It helps ensure the state's economic health and stability through formative business education by counseling, technology and information transfer, and instruction. The Wisconsin SBDC consists of the Lead Center or State Office, which is administered by the unit of Business and Manufacturing Extension, and a network of service centers located at 11 of the four-year UW institutions. They are a unique partnership between the University of Wisconsin-Extension and the business schools and departments of the UW System. Working together, they provide an array of programs, counseling, special initiatives, research and publications. Business management education programs are offered at an affordable fee. Counseling, to address individual business needs, is available without cost to the small business client.

The University of Wisconsin – Extension programs in Community, Natural Resource and Economic Development (CNRED) help Wisconsin communities deal with their own unique challenges – resource constraints, guiding businesses and community leaders to help people identify their most critical local concerns, set goals and work on solutions to problems. One of its goals is to enhance community and business development, including both the tourism and retail sectors. CNRED educators are located at the Extension offices in most of Wisconsin's counties.

Wisconsin Department of Tourism

The Wisconsin Department of Tourism provides a series of easy-to-use marketing and customer service educational courses. Courses include:

Getting to Know Your Customers Better – A Guide to Market Research
Developing Your Advertising Plan
Creating and Buying Advertising – How to Put Your Advertising Plan into Action
A Guide to Public Relations
Enhance Your Competitive Edge through Customer Service

The Department is making these tools available to all Wisconsin businesses, chambers of commerce, convention and visitors bureaus, statewide tourism associations and educational institutions.

The courses are available at no charge in PowerPoint presentation format. Copies can be obtained and training is available through the Department of Tourism's field consultants. Call 608/266-7621.

Appendix C

Business Participants

The following is a list of the businesses that contributed to this publication. We extend our deepest appreciation to those who took the time to share their knowledge and experience for all of our benefit. We encourage our readers to use this list as a networking opportunity. Feel free to share ideas, ask questions and learn from each other.

Store Type	Store Name	Contact	Address	Phone
Building	Capron Hardware	John and Diana Capron	119 Parkway N. Lanesboro, MN 55949	507-467-3714
	Jones-Berry Lumber	Dan Welty	1 S. Commercial Ave Amboy, IL 61310	815-857-2525
	Knitt's Hardware Hank	Dennis and Krista Maurer	10359 Main Boulder Junction, WI 54512	715-385-2300
Lawn/Garden	The Farm Market	Holly M. Heath	P O Box 249 Wautoma, WI 54982-0249	920-787-2464
Department Stores	Anderson's Kaufhaus	Tina Graber	523 1st Street New Glarus, WI 53574	608-527-2714
	Pamida Store	Bill Zarak	1008 E. Division Street PO Box 385 Neillsville, WI 54456	715-743-6568
	Wal-Mart	Lori Dallaire	825 E. Green Bay Avenue Saukville, WI 53080	414-284-9616
Food-Convenience	Colwitz's Convenience Store	Jack Colwitz	W7832 State Rd 54 Shiocton, WI 54170	920-986-3638
	Parkview General Store	Mike and Julie Diesterhoff	N1527 County GGG Campbellsport, WI 53010	414-626-8287
	Sublette Fast Stop Convenience Store	Jane McCoy	431 US Route 52 Sublette, IL 61367	815-849-9013
	The Log Cabin Store	Heather Chapman	30217 5th 35 Danburg, WI 54830	715-656-3116
Specialty Foods	Alpine Chocolat Haus	Bruce Brown	208 W. Main Street Gaylord, MI 49735	517-732-1077
	Apple Works/ Germantown Orchards	Deborah Riemer	Box 616 Germantown, WI 53022	414-677-1888
	Baumgartner's Cheese Store	John Huber	1023 16th Avenue Monroe, WI 53566	608-325-6157
	Cedar Creek Winery	Connie Niebauer	N70 W6340 Bridge Rd. Cedarburg, WI 53012	414-377-8020
	Cheddar Box Cheese House	Judy O'Betts	1415 E Green Bay Street Shawano, WI 54166	715-526-5411
	Cheese Store and Gifts	Scott Stocker	210 Water Street Shullsburg, WI 53586	608-965-4485
	Eau Galle Cheese Factory and Gift Shop	Carol Buhlman	N6765 State Hwy 25 Durand, WI 54736	715-283-4211
	Galena River Wine & Cheese	Ken and Sandy Winge	420 South Main Street Galena, IL 61036	815-777-9430
	Miller's Cheese House	Richard Miller	2248 Hammond Ave Rice Lake, WI 54868	715-234-4144
	New Glarus Bakery & Tea Room	Nancy Potter	534 1st Street New Glarus, WI 53574	608-527-2916

Store Type	Store Name	Contact	Address	Phone
Specialty Foods (continued)	Rocky Mountain Chocolate Factory	Chuck Henle and Carole Shutts	207 South Main Street Galena, IL 61036	800-235-8160
	Rural Route 1 Popcorn	Peggy Biddick	Hwy. 80 Livingston, WI 53554	608-943-8283
	Scenic Valley Winery	Karrie Ristau	101 Coffee Street Lanesboro, MN 55949	888-965-0250
	The Mount Horeb Mustard Museum	Barry Levenson	109 E Main Street Mt. Horeb, WI 53572	608-437-3986
Auto/Truck	Vaessen Brothers Chevrolet	C. 'Neal' Vaessen	Highway 52 Sublette, IL 61367	800-227-5203 815-849-5232
Shoe Stores	Mason Shoe Outlet	Rich Johnson	301 N. Bridge St. Chippewa Falls, WI 54729	800-247-7657 715-723-4323
Furniture	Amish Country Quilts and Furniture	Mary Ann Collins-Svoboda	N2030 Spring Street Stockholm, WI 54769	800-247-7657 715-442-2015
	Wooden Creations	Cathy and Rodney Singleton	10439 Highland Drive Boulder Junction, WI 54512	715-385-2877
Eating Places	Brewster Café	Scott Stocker	210 Water Street Shullsburg, WI 53586	608-965-4485
	Das Wurst Haus	Arv, Jan, and John Fabian	Parkway N. Lanesboro, MN 55949	507-467-2902
	Dinner Bell Restaurant	Rick and Sue Coquillette	Hwy 53/63 & County Rd. E Trego, WI 54888	715-635-3271
	George's Bar, Supper Club, and Supermarket	Ken Zima and Linda and Mike Hogue	Main Street Boulder Junction, WI 54512	715-385-2350
	M & M Cafe	Mary and Michael Davis	126 N. Main Street Monticello, WI 53570	608-938-4890
	Norske Nook	Jerry Bechard	207 West 7th Street Osseo, WI 54758	715-597-3069
	Popeye's Galley & Grog	Bill Ledger	811 Wrigley Drive Lake Geneva, WI 53147	414-248-4381
	The Creamery Restaurant and Inn	Richard Thomas	E4620 County Road C Downsville, WI 54735	715-664-8354
	The Fireside	June Brandow	Hwy. 26 South, PO Box 7 Fort Atkinson, WI 53538	800-477-9505 920-563-9505
	The Hurley Coffee Company	Dan Loden	122 Silver Street Hurley, WI 54534	715-561-5500
	The Mucky Duck Shanty Restaurant	Pat Emmer	Riverfront Drive Sheboygan, WI 53081	414-457-5577
Drinking Places	Jerry's Old Town Inn and Van Rothenburg Bier Stube and Bier Garden	Jerry Grosenick	N116 W15841 Main Street Germantown, WI 53022	414-251-4455
Drug Store	Roberts Drug Store	Jack Roberts	102 5th Avenue Belleville, WI 53508	608-527-2517
Antiques/ Used	Antiques of Anamosa	Cecilia Hatcher	122 E. Main Street Anamosa, IA 52205	319-462-4195
Sporting Goods	Alphorn Sport Shop	Fred and Dotty Snook	137 W. Main Street Gaylord, MI 49735	517-732-5616
	Bear Paw	Randy Malom	1725 W. Knapp Street Rice Lake, WI 54868	715-236-7300

Store Type	Store Name	Contact	Address	Phone
Sporting Goods (continued)	Elroy Commons Trail Shop	Debra Dub	303 Railroad Street Elroy, WI 53929	888-606-2453
	Freeman Sports	Greg Freeman	129 E Hydraulic Yorkville, IL 60560	630-553-0515
	Pine Line Sports	Gary Czarnezki	351 Highway 13 N Medford, WI 54451	715-748-3400
	Root River Outfitters	Mike Charliebois	Box 162 Lanesboro, MN 55949	507-467-3400
	Wild River Outfitters	Jerry Dorff	15177 State Road 70 Grantsburg, WI 54840	715-463-2254
Book	Lowry's Bookstore	Tom Lowry	22 North Main Street Three Rivers, MI 49093	616-273-7323
Gift Shops	Burnstad's European Village and Café	Wes Cornett	Hwy 12 and 16 East Tomah, WI 54660	608-372-6335
	Carriage Haus Collectibles	Bob and Barbara Leffingwell	6 South Main Street Mayville, WI 53050	800-665-1375 920-387-4099
	Christmas in Port	Pat Hackett	201 N. Franklin Street Port Washington, WI 53074	414-284-6000
	Down a Country Road	Kathy Kuderer	Rte 3 Box 166 State Hwy 33 Cashton, WI 54619	608-654-5318
	Down Home	Dorothy Graskamp	Box 123 Lanesboro, MN 55949	507-467-2555
	Et Cetera	Kathy Strand	509 Second Street Hudson, WI 54016	715-381-3434
	German Glass and Gifts and Christmas Chalet	Christa and Heinz Scherzer	W200 10290 Lannon Rd Box 663 Germantown, WI 53022	414-253-0226
	Hickory Acres Farm Gift Shop	Lyle and Marilyn Hauth	5051 Happy Lane Potosi, WI 53820	608-763-2539
	Joanne's Scandinavian	Joanne Hadland	223 Rittenhouse Avenue Bayfield, WI 54814	715-779-5772
	Karen's Neat Stuff	Tracy Kumbera-Fox	209 South Main Street Galena, IL 61036	815-777-0911
	Lavender Thymes	Jean Iverson	512 Second Street Hudson, WI 54016	715-386-3866
	Main Street Marketplace	Bernadette and Kent Pegorsch	103 N. Main Street Waupaca, WI 54981	715-258-9160
	Rural Treasures	Barb Reuter and Sue Rech	10713 Borah Road Lancaster, WI 53813	608-723-7395
	Schroeder's Country Corner	Mary Banczak	734 S. Superior Street Antigo, WI 54409	715-623-3429
	Serendipity Cards and Gifts	Bette Langford	221 N. Franklin Street Port Washington, WI 53074	414-284-0075
	Sinter Klausen Christmas Market	Irene Blau	N116 W15909 Main Street Germantown, WI 53022	414-251-2121
	Stubli-Haus	Ruth Bruegger	112 W Main Street Rockton, IL 61072	815-624-6585
	Sue's Shops	Sue Ballantyne	132 W. Main Street Gaylord, MI 49735	517-732-1400

Store Type	Store Name	Contact	Address	Phone
	Coontail Sports	Lisa and Steve Coon	5466 Park Street Boulder Junction, WI 54512	715-385-0250
Gift Shops (continued)	The Antique Market	Barb Nettesheim	210 South Water Watertown, WI 53094	920-206-0097
	The Cannery	Joann Evans	300 N Marquette Road Prairie du Chien, WI 53821	608-326-6518
	The Vintage Shoppe	Barbara Smith	124 W Jackson Street Ripon, WI 54971	920-748-7487
	Windmill Crafts and Gifts	John and Cheryl Rand	Box 60 Trego, WI 54888	715-635-9571
Flower	Brenda's Blumenladen Floral and Garden	Brenda Siegenthaler	17 6th Avenue New Glarus, WI 53574	608-527-2230
	The Flower Bucket/ Treasure Chest	Ollie Burmeister	113 S Main Street Shawano, WI 54166	715-524-4700
Art Galleries	The Palette & Chisel Gallery	Marie-Luise and Nikolaus Miesing	421 South Main Street Galena, IL 61036	815-777-1842
	Roger Lahm Art and Design	Roger Lahm	1111 North 7th Sheboygan, WI 53081	414-458-9033
Miscellaneous Services	English Manor Bed and Breakfast	Susan Hundley	632 Michigan Avenue Sheboygan, WI 53081	920-457-9491
	Wisconsin Great Northern Railroad	Greg Vreeland	424 Front Street Spooner, WI 54801	715-635-3200

Appendix D

Nomination of Other Communities or Businesses

For future updates to this publication, please let us know of any community or individual retailers have been especially effective in tapping into the tourism market.

Community: _____ Or Business: _____

Why it has been successful selling to tourists:_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Submitted by: _____

Business or Organization: _____

Street: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Fax: _____

Email: _____

Please mail to: Center for Community Economic Development
University of Wisconsin Extension
1327 University Avenue
Madison WI 53715

Phone: 608-265-8136 Fax: 608-263-4999
Web site: http://www.uwex.edu/ces/cced
E-mail: cced@aae.wisc.edu

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