



Dear Tourism Partners,

We're all tightening our belts to get through the coming year. And we're all facing challenging times unlike anything we have ever seen. While we know that things may get a little worse before they get better, we also know that recessions always do end.

A January study released on Travel Shopping in Today's Economy by Google indicated that 57% of consumers plan to shop around more before booking because of the economy. Consumers are increasingly price sensitive. The study found that extras or add-ons, free stays for multi night trips and reward points have strong appeal.

In this environment, how can we best weather this storm? **The Indiana Office of Tourism is offering a free opportunity to every hotel, attraction and restaurant in Indiana to post a discount on VisitIndiana.com.** In a recent survey of VisitIndiana.com users, we learned that 70% of participants wanted to receive coupons and discounts from Indiana's tourism industry. As a result, the Indiana Office of Tourism will showcase coupons, discounts and packages on VisitIndiana.com this summer. We're seeking offers such as:

- \$99 hotel rate,
- \$109 hotel packages,
- Buy one get one half off or special fixed price menu offers at restaurants,
- Buy one get one half off or \$2 off at attractions.*

We'll launch Visit Indiana Week with public relations efforts, search engine marketing and consumer emails featuring VisitIndiana.com discounts. Because of the importance of these offers to consumers, we are making it a priority to generate this content for VisitIndiana.com.

All of these discounts may be listed for FREE at the Advertiser Portal on Tourism.IN.gov. We encourage every hotel, attraction and restaurant in Indiana to go to Tourism.IN.gov by April 24 to post your special offers.

The challenges are still here. The U.S. Travel Association released new projections this week forecasting a 3.5 percent decline in leisure travel and a 5.6 percent decline in business travel. USA Today/Gallup recently released a poll which indicated that 58 percent of consumers will shrink or eliminate their vacation this year. Likewise, consumer confidence index numbers released this week hit a record low. But we do have good news.

- The Traveler Sentiment Index, which is measured in a quarterly travelhorizons survey, has increased in February 2009 for the first time since January 2008. According to the report, interest in travel was up 10%, availability of time to travel up 14%, quality of travel services up 14% and perceived affordability up 97%. Overall, there was a 15 % increase in the index from October 2008.
- The U.S. Travel Association attributes suppliers' aggressive promotion of discounted rates to the stimulation in short term demand.
- Travel expert Peter Yesawich predicts that leisure travel is demand-elastic. Consumers expect rates to fall in times of slow demand and understand they will rise in times of increased demand.
- Indiana has an opportunity to benefit from consumers who stay closer to home.
- Indiana is a good value as a destination.
- Gas prices are at a two-year low.

Again, please take advantage of this free opportunity. Visit the Advertiser Portal at Tourism.IN.gov by April 24 to post your special offers. Thanks for all that you do to grow Indiana's tourism industry.

Best Regards,



VISITINDIANA.COM FREE OFFERS

This spring, the Indiana Office of Tourism Development (IOTD) will launch a redesigned VisitIndiana.com homepage including an emphasis on the value Indiana offers visitors. The redesign will prominently feature getaway packages and discount coupons. Don't miss an opportunity to feature the values available in your area and at your location. Please submit your information at Tourism.IN.gov for free. Please allow three weeks for this information to appear online. These opportunities are excellent ways to publicize your attraction, hotel, restaurant, or county to thousands of potential visitors. Information included in the packages, discounts and festival listings can be managed, tracked and updated through the advertiser portal.

2009 ONLINE MARKETING PLAN

IOTD will launch an unprecedented online campaign for the spring and summer of 2009. The multi-pronged online campaign will include:

- Search engine marketing on Google, Yahoo and MSN/Live—March through July
- Geo-targeted display advertising—May and June
- Email advertising (Midwest Living and Adknowledge)—April, May, June
- Local display advertising (Chicago)—April, May, June

The primary goal of the online campaign and its optimization is to raise awareness of Indiana tourism by measuring hits to VisitIndiana.com. The secondary optimization goal will be measured by requests for the Indiana Travel Guide. If you have any questions, please contact Emiley Matherly at ematherly@VisitIndiana.com.

2009 PERMISSION BASED EMAIL PLAN

Receiving targeted email messages is no new experience for visitors looking for a great deal and great value. IOTD plans to utilize its current email database of more than 100,000 addresses more effectively in 2009. IOTD conducted a research survey to all subscribers and requested that they create travel information preferences for future emails received. Users may request to receive information on three different topics:

- Trip ideas (style similar to Trip Advisor)
- Festivals and events
- Discounts and packages

The primary goal of the permission based email program is to provide consumers with the exact information they wish to receive. The emails also will promote the Visit Indiana blogs and allow users to update their preferences with IOTD at any time. If you have any questions, please contact Anicia Richardson at arichardson@VisitIndiana.com.

2010-2011 INDIANA TRAVEL PUBLICATIONS

Advertising opportunities in the 2010-2011 Indiana Travel Guide and Travel Map are available through June 15. Contact your regional account executive for more information. Sales information is also available on Tourism.IN.gov and purchases can be made through the Advertiser Portal. The deadline for advertising placement and free applications is June 15. For additional information regarding advertising opportunities, please contact your regional account executive.

2010 INDIANA STATE FESTIVALS ASSOCIATION FESTIVAL GUIDE

The Indiana State Festivals Association will publish the 2010 edition of the Indiana Festival Guide. Distribution channels will continue through the IOTD for VisitIndiana.com and Indiana Travel Guide requests. Advertising opportunities are available. Please contact Glennas Kueck at g.kueck@verizon.net for additional information.

INDIANA ARTISAN

New artisans are being sought to join the program. Jury sessions are scheduled for May and October (application deadlines are April 28 and October 10 respectively). Artists, crafters and food producers are encouraged to apply. Nearly half of the 85 artisans currently in the program are on display at the Indiana State Museum in the *Off the Walls, the Indiana Artisan Premiere* exhibit. Indiana Artisan has partnered with the Indiana State Museum to create the special exhibit and establish a retail outlet at the gift shop. Through June 14, visitors can learn more about Indiana Artisan and purchase select works of Hoosier art, craft and food off the walls of the exhibit (literally) or in the museum gift shop. For updates, please visit IndianaArtisan.org.