

Guernsey County Tourism, Recreation & Parks Sector

Why Is This Important?

As citizens become more comfortable with the Internet, they typically continue to find more uses for it. One of the industries benefiting from this trend is the tourism industry. Increasingly, people are using the Internet to research, book and pay for airline tickets, hotels and rental cars and to make other logistical arrangements for their vacations and business travel. In light of this fact, hotels, travel agents, restaurants, attractions and other support businesses in the tourism industry are taking advantage of this trend and making their information and services available on the Internet.

Additionally, with the help of high-speed Internet and computer technology, the leisure time planned and purchased over the Internet can also be used more efficiently, allowing for a more enjoyable experience. Whether it is vacation, recreation or a visit to a local park, high-speed Internet is making the travel experience more enjoyable and more convenient. Already, a number of innovative tourism attractions are using high-speed Internet to improve services and meet the changing demands of their guests.

A few of Ohio's major attractions are:

- National Museum of the Air Force
- Amusement Parks Cedar Point and Kings Island
- Center of Science and Industry (COSI)
- Lake Erie
- Rock and Roll Hall of Fame

Located in Guernsey County are:

- Salt Fork State Park

Guernsey County Tourism, Recreation & Parks

- Visitors & Convention Bureau, www.Guernseycountyohio.com
- Ohio Tourism, www.ohio.gov/tourism
- Travel Ohio, www.travelohio.com
- Ohio Travel, www.ohiotravel.org
- Ohio Traveler, www.ohiotraveler.com
- Our Ohio, ouohio.org/index.php?page=travel-ohio
- Ohio Tourism & Recreation, www.ohio.gov/tourism
- Appalachian Ohio Tourism, www.firstohio.com/Tourism/default.aspx
- Ohio Tourism, [/consumer.discoverohio.com](http://consumer.discoverohio.com)
- Ohio Tourism Toolbox, ohiotourism.osu.edu

- Byesville Scenic Railway
- Salt Fork Golf Course
- Dickens Victorian Village

Where Are We Today?

The Guernsey County tourism website is active with good information available online at www.Guernseyohio.com.

The Ohio Department of Development, Division of Tourism, consumer.discoverohio.com, promotes travel to and within Ohio and develops programs to encourage and support the growth of the state's tourism industry and to encourage visitors to extend their stay. They also offer incentives on their site with a monthly contest that includes prizes for overnight getaways to distinct locations and there is a custom Ohio eNewsletter that maintains a database of those interested in further information for travel and recreation to Ohio. The free online publications are an added bonus for web surfers quickly looking to book R & R.

The State of Ohio's Division of Parks was created as a division of ODNR in 1949 with the statutory obligation to create, supervise, operate and maintain a system of state parks and to promote their use by the public. Through land acquisition and transfer, the park system has grown from 30 to 74 state parks, in 60 counties, with over 174,000 acres of land and water resources. Facilities include nine resort lodges, three dining lodges, six golf courses, more than 9,000 campsites in 57 family campgrounds, 518 cottages, 36 visitor and nature centers, 80 swimming beaches and 19 swimming pools, 188 boat ramps, 7,583 boat docks, 463 picnic areas, and 1,167 miles of trails. Each year 55 million visitors enjoy Ohio's state parks.

The ODNR is currently operating under their second five year strategic growth plan; a plan designed to foster Customer Service, Resource Management, Human Resource Development, Infrastructure, and Stable Funding. Strategy 6, in the Customer Service Issue 1 section, specifically addresses emerging technologies such as Broadband.

All of this contributes to the state's economic growth, thereby enriching the quality of life for every Ohioan. Ohio is full of splendor and majesty, charm and hospitality. From the Ohio River to the Great Lakes, Ohio

is home to some of the country's premier vacation destinations.

Tourism Recreation & Parks Sector Assessment Overview			
Category	Current Assessment	Future Vision	Additional Comments
Networked Places	3	5	
Applications & Services	3	5	
Leadership	2	5	

The Guernsey County eCommunity Leadership Team found that the tourism, recreation & parks sector is starting to use technology to its advantage, and would like to implement additional applications.

- **Networked Places** – In the category of Networked Places, Guernsey County's tourism, recreation & parks sector is currently at stage 3 on a 0 to 5 scale. Most office employees have always-on connections to the Internet at their desks. Some mobile workers have laptop computers and can access the office remotely. Affordable videoconferencing facilities are available in the community. .
- **Applications & Services** – In the category of technology Applications & Services, the tourism, recreation & parks sector is currently at stage 3 on a 0 to 5 scale. Most facilities have an informational website. Some websites can accept credit card purchases. Some facilities participate in the electronic supply chain.
- **Leadership** – In terms of technology Leadership within the tourism, recreation & parks community, Guernsey County is currently at stage 2 on a 0 to 5 scale. The Internet is seen as essential to business operations. Employees are trained on basic applications.

Where Do We Need To Be?

The Guernsey County eCommunity Leadership Team sees great potential for the use of technology in the tourism, recreation & parks sector, but understands the industry is limited in its resources and ability to implement changes within a brief period. Better internal connections between tourism organizations would be a plus as well as interactive websites with videos for users. The team has set goals to move Networked Places, Applications & Services, and Leadership to stage 5 all on a 0 to 5 scale.

- Affordable broadband service is available to all residents and businesses in the county and most have adopted the service.

- Some facilities use VoIP to save money. Some office workers have converted from desktop computers to portable devices with wireless connections. Some office computers have webcams for videoconferencing.
- Some facilities send and receive video mail. Most facilities outsource most of their computing services. Some facilities routinely use multiparty videoconferencing to coordinate operations.
- Some facilities have restructured to focus on their core contribution and outsource nonessential functions. New hires are required to have experience using new technology in business applications.

How Do We Get There?

Project Ideas

- Place webcams at various locations and events so people can see what is happening without leaving home.
- Establish online kiosks at parks and attractions that do not have a staffed visitor information booth. The kiosk can play video clips of attractions, recreation, shopping, restaurants and events in the county. It should also have a touch screen so visitors can easily print information sheets on various points of interest that includes driving directions from their current location, hours of operation, pricing, etc.
- Use technology to market county attractions to potential in-state and out-of-state tourists.
- Enable ability to accept online credit card donation and other transactions.
- Encourage local hotels to provide always-on access to their occupants as well as devices with which to connect.

The eCommunity Leaders within the Tourism sector include:

Debbie Robinson, Cambridge/Guernsey County Visitors and Convention Bureau

In working toward the implementation of the sector-specific goals, Connect Ohio will recommend specific additional participants be brought into the process, who may include technology providers, subject matter experts, other community organizations, funding sources, government agencies, and the resources of agencies and commercial providers of products and services to the tourism sector.



Don Shirley, Southeast Field Director for Connect Ohio will continue to work with the sector leaders to advance selected projects toward their completion. By leveraging Connect Ohio's project management process, its research information, and its partners, projects will be defined, developed, and reviewed to help assure that the local teams are equipped to execute them. Connect Ohio will assist in the identification of funding sources, introducing technical resources, and helping to define the measurable goals and timelines that will ensure that the projects are actionable, measurable, and valuable.