

## Wayne 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
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Located in Wayne County are:

- The Wilderness Center, Inc.

#### Wayne County Tourism, Recreation & Parks

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

- Mohican Reservation Campground and Canoeing
- The College of Wooster Art Museum
- The Ohio Light Opera
- Smithville Community Historical Society
- Wayne County Historical Society

### Where Are We Today?

The Wayne County tourism website is active with good information available online at [www.waynecountycvb.org](http://www.waynecountycvb.org).

The Ohio Department of Development, Division of Tourism, [consumer.discoverohio.com](http://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 some R & R.

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.

There is great disparity in the sector with large organizations generally having greater technology resources, while many small organizations have very limited capabilities. Funding and education/knowledge are the biggest barriers for most small organizations. Broadband and cellular phone coverage is very limited in certain areas of the county. Online marketing is vital to the travel & tourism industry, however many small businesses still do not have websites.

Tourism, Recreation & Parks Sector Assessment Overview			
Category	Current Assessment	Future Vision	Additional Comments
Networked Places	3	4	
Applications & Services	3	4	
Leadership	3	4	

The Wayne 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, Wayne 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, Wayne County is currently at stage 3 on a 0 to 5 scale. Some facilities permit some employees periodically to telework. Some facilities encourage employees to take work-related classes offline. Employee training on new technology is a priority.

### Where Do We Need To Be?

The Wayne 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 from stage 3 to stage 4, all on a 0 to 5 scale. The team’s vision includes:

- Affordable broadband is available throughout the county.
- Many businesses in the sector have an effective online presence.

- Businesses have funding for technology purchases including operating systems, hardware and software.
- There is a significant improvement in broadband knowledge and use of broadband services by members of the sector.
- 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 outsource most of their computing services. Some facilities market themselves out of state or internationally. Some employees work remotely.
- Some facilities permit some employees to telework one or two days a week. Some facilities encourage employees to take work-related courses online. Facilities work with educational partners to raise workforce skill levels.

## How Do We Get There?

### Project Ideas

- Find provider(s) to extend coverage to all un-served and under served areas of the county,
- Explore education and training opportunities in the areas of broadband and broadband applications, specifically targeting those small operations that have limited resources.
- Explore ways to enable more businesses in the sector to have an online presence.

### Other Potential Projects

- Place webcams at various locations and events so people can see what is happening without leaving home.
- Use technology to market county attractions to potential in-state and out-of-state tourists.
- Encourage local hotels to provide always-on access to their occupants.

The eCommunity Leaders within the Tourism sector include:

Martha Starkey, Wayne County Convention and Visitors 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.

Dave Davidson State Operations Manager 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.