



Connection

the monthly newsletter

Chamber on top with best practices in tourism

CHAMBER BULLETIN BOARD

Save 10% on 2006 Guide advertising

Membership committee chair, Patty Prino, wants members to know that the Chamber is listening. "Many asked if they could reserve space in the annual Harbor Country Guide when their cash flow was better," she said in a letter to the membership. "We're not only making that opportunity available, but we're adding an extra incentive."

Those who reserve their ad space and pay for their ad no later than **Friday, September 2** will be able to take 10% off last year's prices for the same size ad. Last year 65,000 guides were printed and made available in numerous high-traffic locations. The guide is also mailed to those who request one via e-mail. The guide itself is promoted on the Chamber's award-winning web site and as part of the almost \$100,000 promotional budget of the Lodging Association and the Chamber.

All members were sent an Early, Early Advertising form in June. If you have misplaced yours please contact the chamber office for an additional form. Based on current Guide committee policy, only member businesses within Harbor Country may advertise in the guide. Neighbors of Harbor Country may advertise if they have been continuous advertisers since January 20, 1998. If you have any questions contact the chamber office at 269-469-5409.

Three Michigan tourism organizations have been recognized in the second volume of the *Guide to Best Practices in Tourism and Destination Management*, published by the Lansing-based Educational Institute of the American Hotel and Lodging Association. Written by Rich Harrill, Ph.D, director of the Institute for Tourism Research at the University of South Carolina's School of Hotel, Restaurant, and Tourism Management, the book spotlights successful approaches in the areas of tourism and destination management research, funding, professional development, web marketing and sustainable tourism. Michigan was the only area to have three winners featured in the guide.

Best practice winners from Michigan were the Harbor Country Chamber of Commerce, Mackinac State Historic Parks, and Travel Michigan.

The Harbor Country Chamber of

Commerce was recognized for being a "Best Practice Adapter." That's an organization that took a best practice featured in the first volume of Harrill's book and made it work for them.

"Our chamber made a commitment to upgrade our web site to include online booking and availability functions, as well as advanced search and navigation functions," explained Ray Vasquez who heads the Internet Committee.

The chamber was cited for its "commitment to excellence despite limited resources." The chamber and lodging groups combine their resources to support an extensive web presence at www.harborcountry.org.

According to Harrill, "Harbor Country's web site has become the focal point for the community, resulting in increased chamber membership and a new sense of enthusiasm (especially)

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A MIXER AT SKIP'S RESTAURANT and Antique Shoppe on June 2, provided a perfect opportunity to present checks for \$3,103.94 to the Southwest Michigan Symphony Orchestra and New Buffalo Fine Arts Council as part of their share in the HarborCountryopoly fundraiser. (See page 3 for the complete story.) Participants included Patty Prino, HarborCountryopoly chairperson for the Chamber; Lee DeLorme, VP Operations of SWMSO; Sue Rue, Office Manager SWMSO; Janet Hays, NB Fine Arts Council; Karen Gear, Chamber President; Mike Lindley, NB Fine Arts Council; and Sue Harsch, Chamber Office Manager.

l e a d e r s h i p



Harbor Country®
Chamber of Commerce

**Officers of the
Board of Directors:**

Karen Gear, President

Diane Botica, Vice-President
Serves on the Marketing Committee

John Nelson, Treasurer
Business Watch Coordinator

Board Members:

Tim Gulley

Jackie Sexton

Janet Clark

A.J. Boggio
Former President
Serves on Internet
Committee

Ray Vasquez
Chair of Internet/Online Services

Elise Mauro
Newly Installed

Chuck Garasic
Chair of Community Development
Co-chair of Guide Committee

Patty Prino
Chair of Member Services

Mike Hojnacki
Immediate Past President
Chair of the Marketing Committee

**Harbor Country®
Chamber of Commerce**
530 South Whittaker Street, Suite F
New Buffalo, Michigan 49117
269-469-5409; fax 269-469-2257
email: sue@harborcountry.org
website: www.harborcountry.org

i n s i d e y o u r c h a m b e r

Six Board of Directors sought

The Harbor Country Chamber of Commerce will need to replace six of their twelve board members this year because of ending terms and attrition. Former presidents A.J. Boggio and Michael Hojnacki have reached their term limit of two consecutive three-year terms. Ray Vasquez has concluded his first three-year term.

Elise Mauro, who was serving the balance of the term of Joan Zonka, has decided not to seek another term. Janet Clark, is serving the balance of the term of Brenda Stellema, has indicated she will seek another term. The newly revised board policy now states that a director shall fill a vacated seat until the next regular election. At such time, that director may seek election to the seat.

Tim Gulley has resigned his post because his job with Travel America has taken him to Ohio. His seat could be appointed, but since petitions are due by August first, that seat must also file for a petition.

This means that the Chamber Board of Directors is seeking the election of four three-year seats, one two-year seat, and one one-year seat. Candidates will have to indicate which seat they are seeking on their petition.

A nominating committee will be appointed at the July board meeting. That committee consists of the immediate past president, another past president, two current board members and two general members. The nominating committee must validate the signatures on the petitions, and if less than five petitions are received, seek candidates to fill the necessary positions. The current president designates the nominating committee chairperson. At the August board meeting, the nominating committee will present its slate to the Board of Directors.

A candidate for the Board of Directors

must be a member of good standing for at least one year. As a board member they will be expected to attend ten out of twelve board meetings unless excused, attend Chamber functions including 50% of the mixers, and serve on one of the standing committees.

All candidates interested in serving on the Board of Directors must have petitions signed. This includes those slated by the nominating committee, those seeking a second term, and those seeking their first term. Petitions may be picked up starting July 15 and must be returned by 5 p.m. August 1. When a petition is picked up the candidate must read and sign a Letter of Intent that reviews the directors job description. They will also receive a copy of the Chambers by-laws. Each candidate must have their petition signed by 20 members who are in good standing (their dues are paid).

If only the required number of candidates apply for the specific openings, then the nominated slate of candidates shall be declared elected by the board at their regular meeting in September. If more than four petitions are submitted for the three-year terms, and/or more than one petition is filed for either the one-year or two-year terms, the names of those candidates on the affected seats shall be placed on a ballot for election by the general membership. Ballots must be returned to the Chamber office within 14 days of the mailing date. The candidate with the greatest number of votes is elected to fill the seat. All new directors are officially seated at the October meeting and are participating members thereafter.

The directors are responsible for formulating the policies of the organization, its committees and divisions. Policies must be presented and approved by the Board of Directors.

Harbor Country®
Connection
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Artistic Energy Group, Inc.
P.O. Box 6, Three Oaks, MI 49128
Fax: 269-756-9071 • Voice: 269-756-9070
email ~ artenergy@triton.net
Michael & Marisue Hojnacki, Editors

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Best Practices winner

We wish to thank the Harbor Country Chamber of Commerce and the Harbor Country Lodging Association for supporting the Internet Committee in its ongoing research, site development, and project financing to have achieved this level of site quality and recognition.

We also thank the many members who have provided valuable feedback and suggestions for our continuous improvement.

To view our award-winning site go to www.harborcountry.org

HarborCountryopoly fundraiser proves to be a huge success

A combined fundraising effort of the Chamber of Commerce, New Buffalo Fine Arts Council, and the Southwest Michigan Symphony Orchestra has proven to be quite a success. Most of that success is attributed to the unfailing effort of Patty Prino who took control of the project from the very beginning and never let go.

The project, selling a game board similar to Monopoly but with local squares, was the idea of the Southwest Michigan Symphony Orchestra that had just completed a successful campaign in St. Joseph, Michigan. The symphony partners with the New Buffalo Fine Arts Council in providing local programming and felt that the match would lead to another success. The chamber was asked to lend its name and membership to contribute to the organizational and selling effort.

A majority of the squares were sold

at an auction/mixer held at the Harbor Grand Hotel earlier this year. Prino sold the remaining squares. Revenues from board space sales totaled \$24,525. After expenses, that produced a net of \$9,311.82. In the first round of this effort each group received \$3,103.94. Game sales of 750 games at \$15 account for \$11,250. At almost 100% (just a few

games left), the three beneficiaries will receive an additional \$3,750. Each group will benefit from this one fundraiser to the tune of \$6,853.94 each.

"I just want to thank all of those involved, especially the advertisers and those who bought the game," Prino said at a mixer hosted by Skip's Restaurant and Antique Shoppe. She also thanked the symphony and fine arts council for their supportive effort. Symphony staff carried out the logistics and layout of the game board. The fine arts council delivered the game from the manufacturer.



HarborCountryopoly on display at Skip's

Local agency offers discount for Chamber members

Members of the Harbor Country Chamber of Commerce can receive a nice break on the rising cost of insurance. Harbor Country Insurance Agency, 11 N. Elm Street, Three Oaks, in conjunction with the Chamber of Commerce, is proud to announce a group discount program available only to members in good standing. This discount is available on both personal and business insurance accounts and it could save members up to 12% on their current insurance.

"Harbor Country Insurance Agency tailors the best insurance protection, such as that offered by Auto-Owners Insurance Company, with competitive prices," says business partner Greg Bubb. The Three Oaks agency carries on an 80-year tradition of handling local insurance needs.

Bubb, Jason Heckathorn, and their staff are ready to answer your questions about saving money on insurance at 269-756-9564 or by e-mail at hcinsurance@hcwi.net.

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among lodging association members."

Harrill visited Harbor Country in June, 2003 when he made a presentation at the annual Harbor Country Lodging Association meeting. At that time he told those in attendance that this area had the building blocks in place to be a great tourist destination.

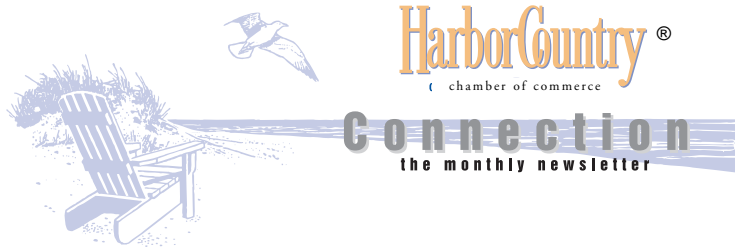
He also said that the Chamber should never lose sight of the local community. "Along the way we have to protect the community for local residents, but develop tourism as an economic development tool. Tourism is economic development!"

Mackinaw State Historic Parks earned recognition in the area of research for its commitment to developing visitor profiles and related marketing for a type of organization not known for investing in such research. The organization was also commended for demonstrating the value of partnerships, citing

its long-term relationship with Michigan State University's Tourism and Recreation Resource Center

Travel Michigan earned recognition in the area of web marketing for its web site www.michigan.org, the official state of Michigan travel web site. Over the past three years the web site has become the primary vehicle for consumers planning a Michigan vacation. Over 90% of all inquiries to Travel Michigan are made through the web. Harrill noted that "the Travel Michigan web site is a best practice because of its ability to engage in one-to-one marketing, reach results through research, and generate more business leads."

Guide to Best Practice in Tourism and Destination Management, Volume 2 is available for \$35 for AH&LA members and \$40 for nonmembers. To order call 800-752-4567 or visit www.ei-ahla.org and order online.



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Maureen
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Union Pier MI 49129*

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Get ready for the "next" season with advance planning

Are we wondering how we're going to promote our business after Labor Day? Dedicated volunteers have been putting the finishing touches on two very important events that anchor our "next" season (post summer season): Harvest Days and Country Christmas-Magical Saturdays.

Patty Prino and her committee have sent out the applications for participation in the October 7, 8 and 9 Harvest Days. She said that this year the

brochure and map will make it easier for shoppers to get around.

Then Harbor Country will gear up for the Holiday season with Country Christmas-Magical Saturdays. On five consecutive Saturdays-- Nov. 19, 26, Dec. 3, 10 and 17-- events will be planned throughout the area. Applications for this event will be sent out soon and are due by August 15.

"We create these events to encourage participation and cooperation

between retailers, restaurants and lodging to generate traffic and create memorable moments for both residents and visitors alike," says Ellen Block, co-chair of Magical Saturdays. "Let your imagination run wild in how you participate. It can be artistic, culinary, entertaining, or recreational. Let's have fun with this!"

The Chamber has earmarked \$1,000 in regional advertising funds for each of these events.