



# **The Power of Cultural Tourism**

## **Keynote Presentation**

**Wisconsin Heritage Tourism Conference  
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It is a pleasure to be here to address you on the *Power of Cultural Tourism*. I would like to thank the Wisconsin Federation of Museums and the Wisconsin Department of Tourism for inviting me to speak here today, and would particularly like to thank Michael Zimmer and Lee Ann Merrill for graciously providing me with background information and helping to arrange my travel. I'd also like to compliment the tourism and heritage communities of the State of Wisconsin on the wisdom and creativity of establishing the Heritage Tourism Program - - the only continuously funded program in this vast country. Finally, I would like to compliment you all on this remarkable example of partnership of museums, tourism, heritage, historical preservation, historic sites and Native American museums and cultural centers.

As a museum and cultural professional who has worked with hundreds of museums in America, England, Europe and Asia, I bring a particular perspective to the topic of cultural tourism. As some of you may know, LORD Cultural Resources Planning & Management, which I co-founded with my husband Barry in 1981, is an international firm specializing in all aspects of planning for museums, heritage and culture. Throughout this presentation I'll draw on studies that we have conducted ourselves, such as the 1993 *Strategic Directions for Ontario's Cultural Tourism Product* developed for the Government of Ontario and the 1999 update to this report, and on various other collaborations that we've engaged in - - all of which have convinced me that cultural tourism truly is a powerful force to be reckoned with in the new millennium!

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Tourism is the world's largest industry and it is projected to be the world's largest employer by the year 2000. Tourism is already the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest income-generating industry in Wisconsin. This is good news for those of you here today from the tourism sector in terms of job security and great news for all of us here who are convinced of the need for culture in sustaining the world we live in. This is because the growth in tourism is intrinsically linked to a parallel growth in museums and cultural attractions of all kinds. As people travel more, they don't travel aimlessly - - they travel to get to know a particular place in a meaningful way. The *power* of cultural tourism is in its ability to satisfy this desire.

I'd like to begin this talk in earnest by briefly exploring continuing patterns and recent trends in cultural tourism. Specific trends, such as the increasing influence of the Internet and the impact of blockbusters and special events, present new opportunities to communicate and reach potential cultural tourists. Others, such as the growth of younger and more diverse cultural tourists and the increasing popularity of short "get-away" trips, have an impact on the types of packaging and partnering initiatives that can be presented to cultural tourists in order to strategically capture the market. I will also suggest that while significant opportunities for cultural tourism emerge from identified trends and patterns, opportunities must be considered in the context of expectations held by the cultural tourist; for example, a desire for - and expectation of - *experiences* rather than objects, *authenticity* rather than fabrication, and the desire to contribute to a *sustainable environment*.

But first, we should define exactly what is cultural tourism. Cultural tourism is not new; since ancient times it has been a motivation for travel, although only among a tiny minority of the general public. The "Grand Tour" was once considered an essential part of a "gentleman's" education. Today, it is a worldwide mass trend that people travel to experience other cultures. But it is only since the early 1980s that cultural tourism has been recognized as distinct from recreational tourism.

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A definition for cultural tourism that we have developed at LORD's is as follows: *"Visits by persons from outside the host community motivated wholly or in part by interest in the historical, artistic, scientific or lifestyle/heritage offerings of a community, region, group or institution."* This is very close to the Heritage Tourism Program's definition, *"the practice of traveling to experience historic and cultural attractions to learn about a community's heritage in an enjoyable and educational way"*. The difference in the definitions can help you understand that cultural tourism is a motivation that may be all consuming, applicable to 15% of travelers, or it may be partial, of interest to more than 80% of travelers. That's the power of cultural tourism.

## **Definitions of Cultural Tourism**

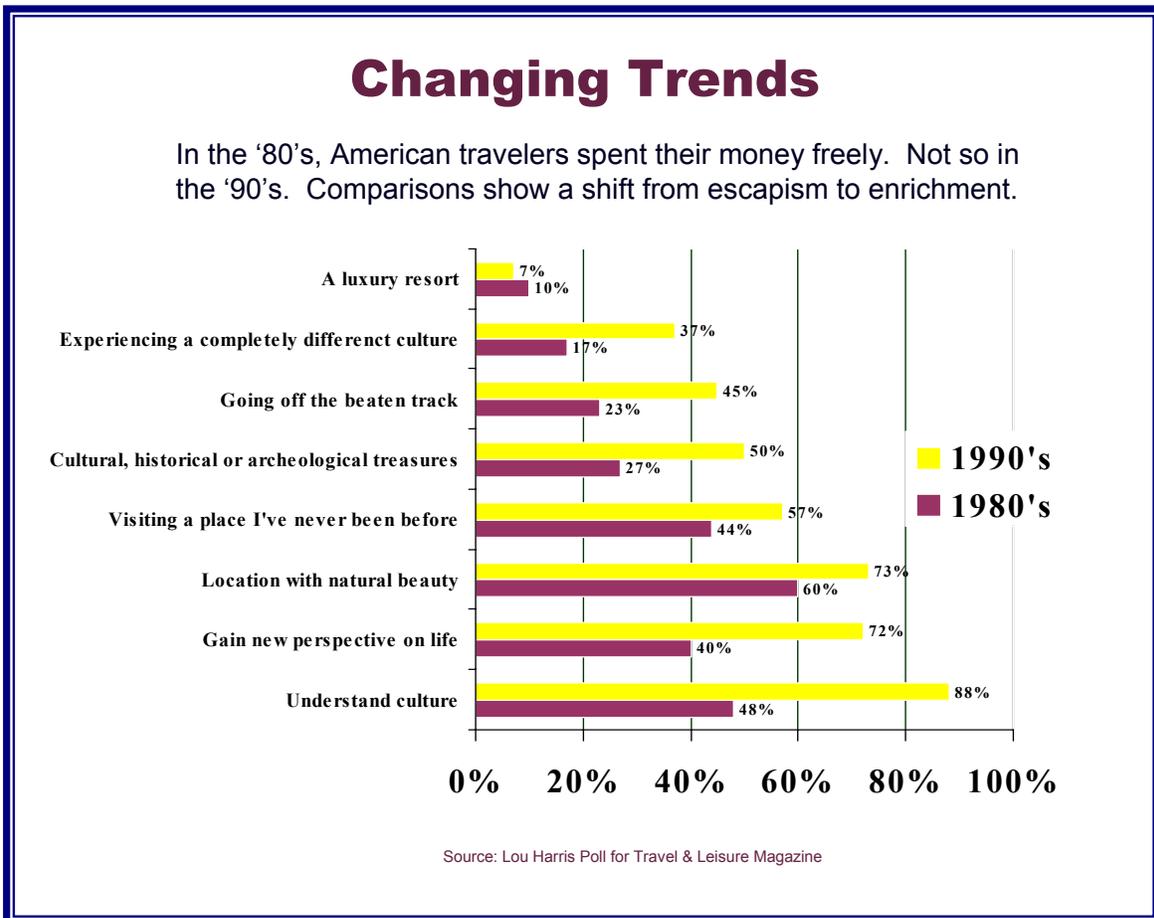
### **Wisconsin Heritage Tourism Program:**

*"The practice of traveling to experience historic and cultural attractions to learn about a community's heritage in an enjoyable and educational way"*

### **LORD Cultural Resources:**

*"Visits by persons from outside the host community motivated wholly or in part by interest in the historical, artistic, scientific or lifestyle/heritage offerings of a community, region, group or institution"*

The full potential of cultural tourism leapt off the page with a Lou Harris poll conducted in the early 1990s, about the same time that the Wisconsin Heritage Tourism Program was begun. One of the questions the survey asked was "what is very important when planning trips?" The results were staggering. In the 1980s, less than a third of people indicated that "*visiting cultural, historical and archeological treasures*" was a key motivator. In the 90's, it was important to a full half of respondents. Even more stunning was the proportion of persons noting that "*to understand culture*" was a primary travel motive; in the 1980's, it was important to just less than half, in the 1990's - - an overwhelming 88%! This is a paradigm shift from "*escapism*" to "*enrichment*" and the Harris organization predicted, correctly, that it would have far-reaching effects on the travel industry as a whole. A recent survey by the Travel Industry Association of America proves them right - - 46% of the almost 200 million total US travelers in 1998 included a cultural, arts, heritage or historic activity while on a trip during the past year. This is the power of cultural tourism!



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Why is cultural tourism so prevalent? There are several supporting trends influencing the market place for cultural tourism in the US as a whole and in Wisconsin:

- **Rising education levels.** Education is the single most significant factor that influences cultural participation, affluence and travel, and educational attainment levels are rising. In the past two decades, the percentage of US adults with college education has risen from 15% to 30%.
- **Aging Population.** We know that participation in cultural activities tends to increase through middle age, peak between 45 and 65 and subsequently fall off. People in that age range between 45 and 65 are typically in their peak learning years and have the highest discretionary income and time to spend on cultural related activities and travel.
- **Increasing economic role of women.** Statistics tell us that women participate in more cultural activities than men. Now, women control more income, are in positions of leadership and continue to make decisions regarding children's leisure activities and family vacations. Women are also likely to be tour group planners and promoters.

## **Continuing Patterns Impacting Cultural Tourism**

- **Rising education levels**
- **Aging population**
- **Increasing economic role of women**

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There are some new trends for you to maximize the power of cultural tourism:

- There is a dramatic **increase in short, get-away trips**, which means that people are trying to pack more activities into more frequent trips of shorter duration. Higher education and income folks, they lack time. So convenience and quality is key. Hiking plus heritage - - on the run with candlelight dinners on the side! These travelers want value for time spent.
- While the aging baby-boomer market is still critical, younger **“Gen-X” tourists**, the 40 million Americans born between 1965 and 1977, increasingly impact cultural tourism, accounting for 40% of cultural tourism overall and 50% in cities. These are independent travelers, mobile, highly educated and looking for authenticity and adventure.
- People are searching for **meaning**. Many will find it in nature, heritage and culture. Tourism is the means, not the end. This is one of the key things that differentiates cultural activities from “theme park” type of activities.
- At the same time, the success of **theme parks has created high expectations** for cultural tourism. Tourists expect and demand good service, convenience, an impressive experience, safety and, yes, predictability in terms of what is offered.
- The surge in **millennium events** also increases expectations as well as opportunities for cultural tourism.
- Concern about the environment among more educated people means that cultural tourists expect and demand the tourism industry to contribute to **sustainability** of communities and the natural environment.

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- Most important, the major trend that will have an increasing impact is the **Internet**. Some \$3.1 billion in leisure travel was booked on the Net in 1998 and it is predicted that \$30 billion will be booked on-line in 2003. A tenfold growth in 5 short years. This is a trend that appears to be well understood by Wisconsin. Much of the information on Wisconsin that I have used in preparation for this speech came off the excellent Department of Tourism web site. It is highly significant that your heritage tourism brochure is one of the most ordered from the website - - not surprising because Internet users reflect the high education demographics of cultural tourists. It is crucial that heritage and cultural players have good websites with links to the main State website and that these websites respond to the trends: experience, authenticity and convenience. Websites cannot be *product-driven*, isolating all experiences that are available to tourists, but must be *consumer-driven*, allowing visitors to explore and find integrated experiences that are meaningful to them. You must think of your websites not as “lists” but as gateways to a virtual visit of your area.

## **Emerging Trends Impacting Cultural Tourism**

- **Increase in get-away trips**
- **Impact of “Gen-x” tourists**
- **Emphasis on meaning**
- **Increasing expectations**
- **Desire for sustainability**
- **Millennium events**
- **Impact of the Internet**

To make cultural tourism work long-term requires investment of time, energy and money. But it's worth it. Cultural tourists earn more money and spend more money while on vacation; they're more likely to stay at hotels or motels, increasing your bed tax; they're more likely to shop; and they spend more time in an area while on vacation. The Travel Association of America survey I mentioned earlier reports that of the 46% of American travelers who included a cultural activity while on a trip, a third of them added extra time to their trip to accommodate more cultural activity. This translated to 26.8 million adults adding some 14 million additional nights. The power of cultural tourism! But it gets even better! Those who extended their trips for cultural activities had higher household incomes than other travelers (\$48,000 vs. \$37,000), higher levels of education (41% completed college vs. 32%) and were more likely to be in a managerial or professional position (31% vs. 24%). This is the power of cultural tourism!

### **1998 Travel Industry Association of America Survey**

- The total number of US travelers in 1998: 199.8 million.
- Total number participating in a cultural activity: 92.4 million (46%)
- Most popular cultural activities among travelers:

<b>Any Cultural Event</b>	<b>46%</b>
<b>Historic Site or Community</b>	<b>31%</b>
<b>Museum</b>	<b>24%</b>
<b>Art Gallery</b>	<b>15%</b>
<b>Live Theatre</b>	<b>14%</b>
<b>Heritage/Ethnic Festival</b>	<b>13%</b>
<b>Opera/Classical Concert</b>	<b>7%</b>
<b>Dance Performance</b>	<b>5%</b>
<b>Film Festival</b>	<b>3%</b>
<b>Poetry/Literary Reading</b>	<b>2%</b>
<b>Other Concert</b>	<b>15%</b>
<b>Other Cultural Activity</b>	<b>10%</b>

### **1998 Travel Industry Association of America Survey**

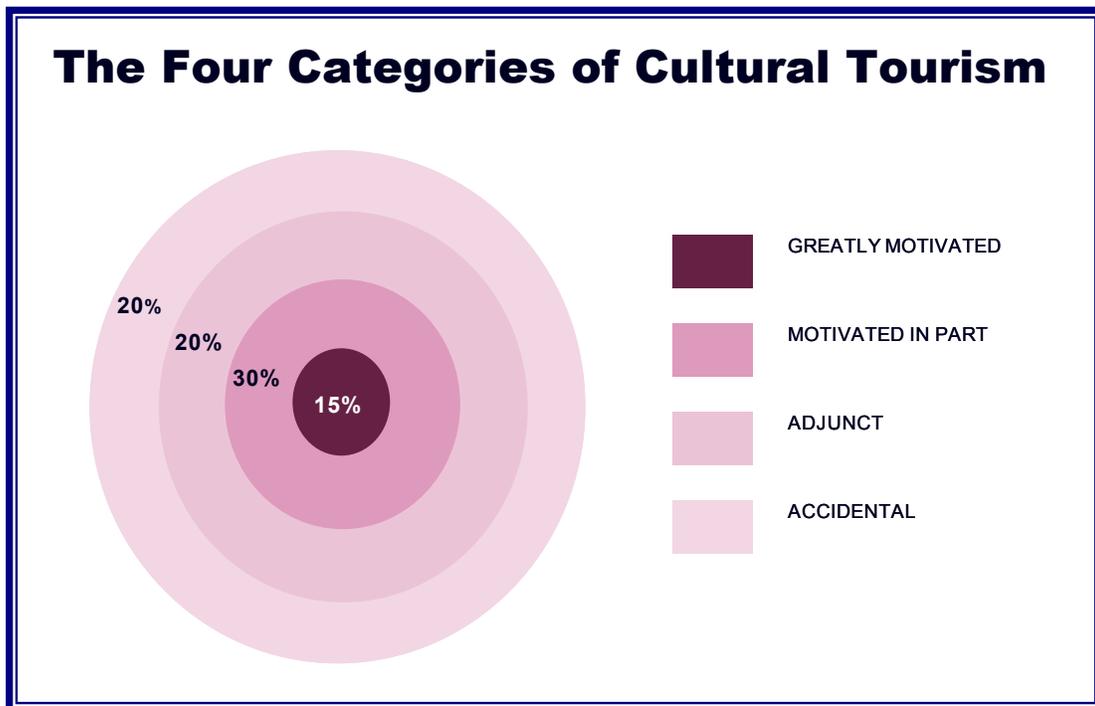
#### **Characteristics of Cultural Tourists:**

- Higher household income: \$48,000 vs. \$37,000
- More likely to have completed college: 41% vs. 32%
- More likely to be in managerial or professional occupation: 31% vs. 24%

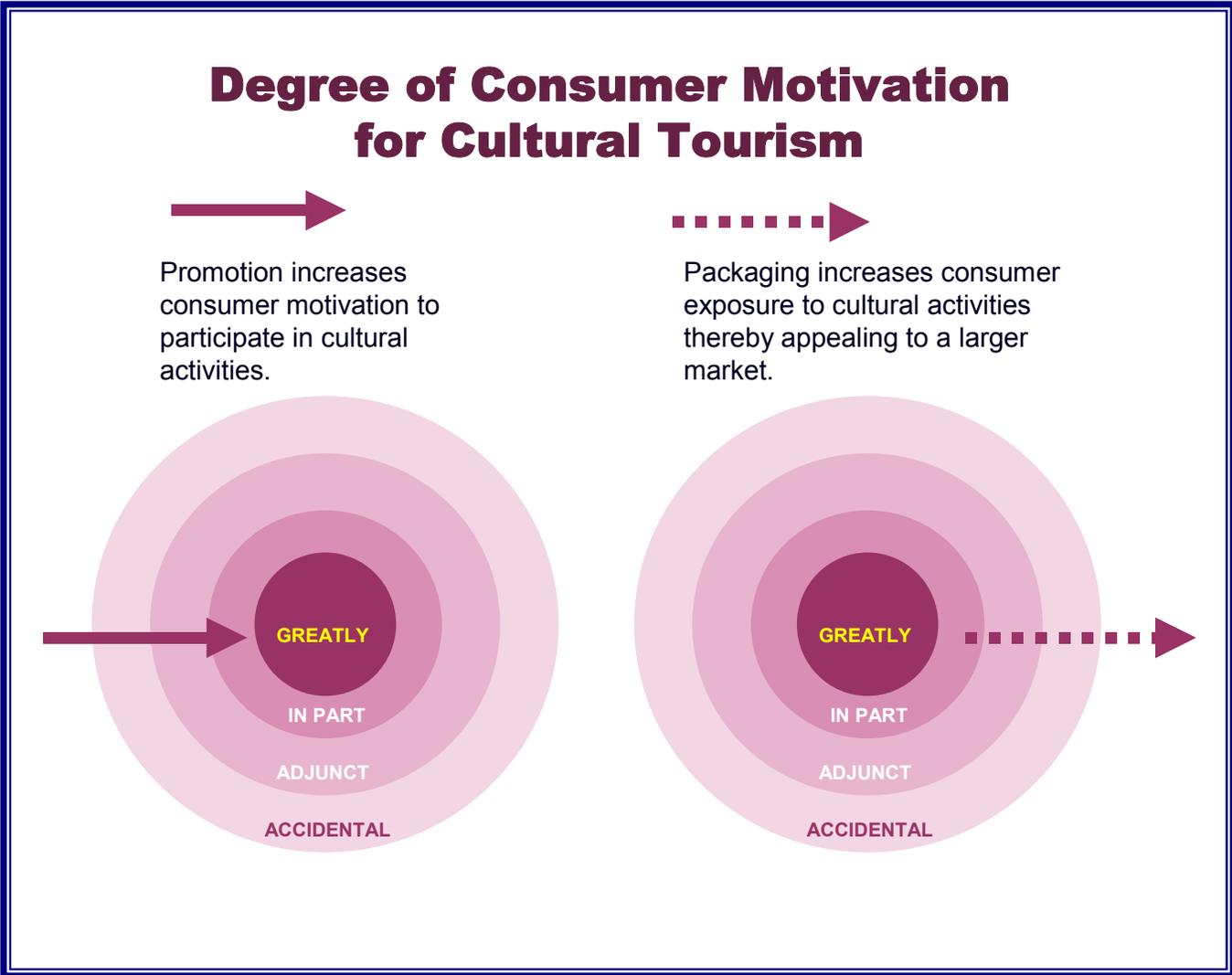
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To maximize growth, you will have to broaden your understanding of cultural tourism and attract tourists from all along the motivation continuum. You will need to use the Web to market outside your traditional near-by markets. You will need to invest in quality facilities and maintain them. The Museum and Cultural Center here at Lac du Flambeau is an outstanding example. It appeals to local, national and international markets and it is packaged with a resort, outdoor experiences, a conference center and a casino.

Remember that there are several categories of cultural tourists. One group, the smallest, consists of persons **"greatly motivated"** by culture - - people who travel to a city or region specifically because of its cultural opportunities, such as museums, cultural festivals and theatre, representing perhaps 15% of the total non-resident pleasure travel market. The second group is persons motivated **"in part"** by culture, persons who travel both because of the cultural opportunities and, say, to visit friends or relatives or to relax by a lake. This group represents about 30% of the market. The third group, representing about 20% of the market, is people for whom culture is an **"adjunct"** to another more important motivation. That is, the main motivation for choosing to visit might be for hiking, but while there, visitors will plan to include cultural opportunities in evenings. The fourth group, also about 20% of the market, is what we refer to as the **"accidental cultural tourist"** - - people traveling to the region who do not intend to go to a cultural attraction or event but find, for example, that the friends or relatives they have visited bring them along, or that the cultural opportunity is close to their hotel, or that they “stumble” into an arts festival. About 15% of tourists, are persons who **wouldn't attend a cultural attraction** or event under any circumstances, so don't market to them!



Your goal is to reach not just the 15% “greatly motivated” cultural tourists but to reach the whole range – the 85% of non-resident pleasure travelers who have the potential to participate in cultural/heritage activities along with other things! The cultural tourism market is very large - - but the issue is one of degree. Successful promotion and packaging can expand the market substantially by attracting travelers interested in culture to a lesser degree. Promotional activities increase consumer *motivation* to participate in cultural activities, while packaging increases *exposure* to cultural activities on behalf of a broader group of visitors. Effectively using promotional and packaging opportunities helps you to reach that 85% of travelers - - it helps you to harness the power of cultural tourism!



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I want to make a distinction between promotion of culture and packaging with culture. There are **three types of partnership and packaging opportunities**. The most common is among cultural products of the “same type” because it is the easiest to accomplish. For example, the Milwaukee Art Museum partnering with the Milwaukee Public Museum. A common strategy here is the passport promotion. While there are benefits to this type of packaging - - reduced competition among cultural products, extended length of stay and spending - - packages such as the passport concept appeal to the 15% of pleasure travelers who are already “greatly motivated” cultural tourists. The reality is that most people seek greater variety when they travel. A passport type of package is not going to motivate an “adjunct” cultural tourist so much as benefit those who were “greatly motivated” in the first place. Also, it is risky if your cultural product is not as strong as say, Chicago’s, which is a destination for this market.

The second form of partnership and packaging involves cultural products of different types. For example: festivals and arts districts. Advantages of these approaches are: they create a wider level of appeal to more people, they reduce competition among cultural products, increase efficiency of product delivery by concentrating the products, and increase perceived value for time and money spent. These strategies help to reach market segments that are motivated only in part by cultural tourism. The *Wisconsin Event & Recreation* publication, including Wisconsin events as well as schedules for the performing arts and museum exhibits, is a good example of this approach.

But by far the most important form of partnering and packaging is among cultural and non-cultural products. Only through this strategy can you maximize the high-end benefits of cultural tourism without incurring huge marketing costs. Examples of this might be packaging based on the day of the week such as a weekend package where a resort or camping grounds include free or discounted tickets to cultural attractions or events. Or packages based on the time of day whereby an afternoon sports game is packaged with an evening musical performance, extending visitor stay by a few hours or even a night. What we see here today is an outstanding example. Museums make excellent partners in these packages because they can be flexible in opening hours, can be the focal point of themed festivals and often provide theater and auditorium facilities in communities and gift shops which can be outlets for local artists and craftspersons. Cultural and non-cultural packaging is particularly critical is Wisconsin, where your tourism officials have identified a strong link between market seasonality and the role of cultural tourism and where sports and nature is your “brand”.

## Partnering and Packaging Model

	Among Cultural Products of the Same Type	Among Different Cultural Product Types	Among Cultural and Non-Cultural Products
<b>Examples</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Passport packages</li> <li>• Themed packages</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Festivals and special events</li> <li>• Arts districts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Day of the week</li> <li>• Weather</li> <li>• Time of day</li> <li>• Specific market segments</li> </ul>
<b>Benefits</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduces competition</li> <li>• Extends length of stay and spending</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduces competition</li> <li>• Increases efficiency of delivery</li> <li>• Increases perceived value</li> <li>• Extends the Market</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reaches the broadest market</li> <li>• Extends tourism season</li> <li>• Benefits tourism operators</li> </ul>
<b>Impact</b>	Limited – appeals to “greatly motivated” tourists	Moderate – attracts “motivated in part” and “adjunct” tourists	Broad – reaches “motivated in part”, “adjunct” and “accidental” cultural tourists

As you can see, the **key** to widening the market in Wisconsin is partnerships between cultural and non-cultural attractions or travel motivators. You must identify existing resources in your area and develop packages highlighting natural and cultural heritage with products such as sports, recreation events, restaurants, hotels and retail areas as active partners. And for museum and culture professionals, you must reposition your relationship to other tourism operators to move beyond “what can you do for me” with sponsorships, memberships and donations, to also include “what can I do for you” and “what can we do together.” Invite restaurant owners, hotel operators and others in the industry to tour your facility and make them aware of what you can offer so that they can pass this information on to their guests. You must constantly remember that while we may make a distinction between visits to restaurants and sports events, and visits to museums and other cultural attractions, tourists do not - - they seek a total experience that helps them understand a location and its people. Partnerships can make this happen.

However, partnerships should not be entered into lightly - - you really have to think about what's in it for each partner. I like to say that each partner should come to the table with an equal amount to contribute and to gain. The cultural sector brings the product to the table in terms of the experiences that cultural tourists are looking for. In Wisconsin, total attendance at museums alone is over 6 million. But, the cultural sector often lacks financial and human resources, as well as marketing, business development and customer service expertise.

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I would like to conclude this presentation by briefly talking about some recent cultural tourism initiatives introduced in other States:

- The *Illinois and Michigan Canal National Heritage Corridor* is the first in a series of ‘partnership parks’ supported by federal, state and local partnerships. The Corridor encompasses state and local parks, historic sites, museums and recreation attractions surrounding the Illinois and Michigan Canal. The emphasis is on outdoor activity and recreation. In 1998, nearly 5.5 million people visited the various sites on the Corridor, significantly contributing to tourism in both states.
- The *California Cultural Tourism Coalition*, formed by statewide arts and culture institutions, promotes the cultural diversity of the State. The coalition has organized adventure-oriented itineraries that include attractions, events, restaurants and entertainment venues and has published these in a guidebook entitled “California: Culture’s Edge.” A wide range of project partners were involved in this initiative including arts organizations, tourism operators and private industry such as Hyatt Hotels and American Express Corporation. An excellent website recreates each of the cultural adventures.
- In 1998, the *Vermont Arts Council* hosted a series of workshops on Cultural Heritage Tourism, aiming to bring a variety of groups together to form Cultural Tourism plans at the local and regional level. Communities were encouraged to send diverse teams to the workshops consisting of tourism professionals, members of local chambers of commerce, political leaders, arts organizations, downtown merchant associations, major employers and any others with an interest in cultural and economic development. More than 150 people attended this event and the Council now offers grants to help the communities implement plans developed during the workshops.

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- The *Virginia Commission for the Arts* and Foundation for the Humanities, the *North Carolina Arts Council* and the *Tennessee Arts Commission* jointly initiated a Blue Ridge Music Trails Project throughout Southern Appalachian communities. Funded by a National Endowment for the Arts grant of \$225,000, the coalition plans a heritage trail highlighting the music traditions of the region. Using the Blue Ridge Parkway as the backbone of the trail, the objective is to draw visitors into surrounding communities to visit music sites and events as well as local commercial establishments. Highlighted venues are broad: ranging from informal bluegrass jam sessions at local halls and gospel quartets in local churches.
  - Also in *Virginia*, an initiative was developed in 1998 to help Virginia arts organizations with expenses for tourism promotion efforts. The twist here is that arts organizations must apply with a minimum of two other community-based partner organizations. Participation by private businesses, non-profit institutions and tourism professionals are encouraged. Examples of projects funding in 1998/99 are: joint web sites, television commercials, marketing campaigns for community events, development of a “product package” of events and services, and development of a cultural/heritage weekend package.

As you can see, the power of cultural tourism is real - - it’s growing and it’s yours to harness. Careful planning, creative partnerships and strategic alliances will help you use the power of cultural tourism to benefit cultural, heritage and tourism operators throughout Wisconsin. I wish you the very best of luck, and thank you again for the privilege of being here today.