

BRAND Manistee County

Creating an image at the mention of Manistee County's name

FACT SHEET



What is **BRAND Manistee County**?

Proactive communities brand themselves to be distinctive and to be destinations of choice for businesses, industry, visitors, residents, families and others. The *BRAND Manistee County* project is a community-driven project with an overarching goal to create a county-wide destination brand that creates an image at the mention of Manistee County's name.

What is a Destination Brand?

A destination brand for Manistee County is not a campaign theme, tag line, or slogan. It's an expression of a compelling, unique experience that all of Manistee County offers. It will exist as a message or promise that is seen and heard through multiple channels of communication.

It is a brand and image for Manistee County that will appeal to visitors, businesses, industry, investments, families, the arts; everything that can help Manistee County and all of its communities and organizations achieve their full potential.

A destination brand for Manistee County will reflect an experience throughout our County and demonstrate our ability to deliver on the promise of that experience.

Why is Destination Branding Important?

By creating a community that is the destination of choice for businesses, industry, visitors, residents, families and others, we will create opportunities for increased economic prosperity and quality of life for those in our County.

Economic Development:

Communities are taking a page from the private sector in developing brands to stand out in the minds of

employers, visitors and residents. Unfortunately, many who start with lofty branding goals end up settling for a slogan and visual identity that falls short of becoming a true *brand*.

When our brand message is backed by real life experience, we will tap into the powerful force of economic development. This is integrated branding—the ability to communicate and keep a branding promise. An effective integrated brand contributes to a stronger economic base, higher property values, diverse and sustainable employers and citizen retention.

Tourism:

Tourism is an economic engine. As more communities awaken to this fact, the competition for *mind share* and *wallet share* is growing more intense. Mobility is king, and travelers are time-programmed and pressured like never before. More long weekends and fewer extended vacations are the trend; and a *been there, done that* attitude is spurring the need for communities to differentiate – brand – themselves in the sea of pick-up brochures, ads, media stories, and Internet portals. Budgets to accomplish this are even more critical. With little money available for marketing or communications, marketers must ensure that every dollar works twice as hard.

What will be the Outcomes from the **Brand Manistee County Project**?

- A shared brand identity for the future of the County among residents, businesses, governments and community groups.
- A consistent and compelling theme and a focused message to create interest in Manistee County as a destination for businesses, industry, visitors, families and events.
- A community web infrastructure and brand tools for everyone to use with a consistent look, feel and message that preserves identities and missions that are unique.

Who are on the **Brand Manistee County Leadership Team**?

- Judy Ball, Executive Director, Manistee County Convention and Visitor's Bureau

- Amy Berry, Corporate Communications Manager, Mariah Power
- Jim Draze, Chair, Village of Kaleva Planning Commission and Small Business Owner/Operator
- Cathy Fairbanks, Executive Assistant, Alliance for Economic Success and Small Business Owner/Operator
- Cyndy Fuller, Mayor of Manistee and Vice President, Harbor Village
- Eileen Duffin, Director of Marketing, Little River Casino and Resort
- Laura Heintzleman, Executive Director, Manistee County Community Foundation
- Ray Schmidt, Owner/Operator, Schmidt Outfitters
- Amy Wojciechowski, Business Division Chair, West Shore Community College, and Board Member, Manistee Area Chamber of Commerce and Alliance for Economic Success
- Facilitator: Tim Ervin, Alliance for Economic Success

One purpose of the Brand Manistee County Leadership Team is to involve all interests in developing our brand: communities, governments, businesses, industry, schools, year-round and seasonal residents, visitors, civic groups – everyone! Interested parties are encouraged to visit www.brandmanisteecounty.com to learn more about the project and to provide their input.

What is the Project Schedule?

Development Phase 1:

June 2009 – November 2009

- Interactive web site
- Situational analysis; review of existing plans and strategies
- Community vision survey; including an on-line survey
- One-on-one meetings and focus groups
- Consultant tours
- Assessment of competitive data
- Perception study

- Communications & media audit
- Reputation assessment and comparison
- Resident and consumer profiles
- Perception studies
- Competitive positioning and opportunity reviews
- Creation of brand platform statement

Development Phase 2:

November 2009 – February 2010

- Development of brand concepts
- Development of options for bringing the brand to life
- Brand action recommendations; segmented by economic development, tourism, people, culture, etc.
- Recommendations for brand leadership and management

Implementation:

February 2010

- Brand implementation and roll out
- Brand web site completion
- Decision on brand ownership
- Marketing and implementation
- Annual branding check up

During implementation, outreach will occur to expose and train everyone in the finely tuned beliefs, behaviors and ways of a destination brand. Total commitment and support are critical. All levels of government, hospitality, economic development, and community service are brand spokespersons.

Visit: www.BrandManisteeCounty.com

Contact Us!

If you would like more information or would like to be involved in this project, contact the Alliance for Economic Success via email at info@allianceforeconomicsuccess.com or by phone at (231) 723-4325.