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Cape May County Tourism Conference

Developing a Game Plan – Lessons Learned from Sandy

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Developing a game plan – Lessons learned from Sandy

2012 represents 18 straight years of tourism growth for Cape May County

Jersey Strong - For many who were left to clean up the mess left by Superstorm Sandy, the event will become a benchmark for telling time – What happened before Sandy and what happened after Sandy. Reports of changes in the landscape of the Jersey Shore were predicted and as we all move forward we will see some subtle – and many major – differences along the New Jersey coastline. Change for whatever reason is usually good and often unplanned. In the end, the four counties that make up the 127 miles of New Jersey coast and generate $19 Billion in expenditures will be a better place to live and visit. The more noticeable and tangible landscape changes will be north of Atlantic County but new regulations; mandated changes in building codes and revised FEMA flood maps will make a difference in the southern coastal towns as well. The looming changes will have its greatest impact on the real estate market that was beginning to show some positive movement after the recession. Cape May County dodged the bullet, this time. The next storm of the century could be just around the corner. We all need to learn a few lessons from Sandy; it could be us the next time.

Vacation spending is discretionary and the tourism industry is usually the last to recover from a recession. Superstorm Sandy was the double whammy that took many businesses over the edge and unable to recover. We should applaud the small business owners who had the tenacity to get back to business and invest the financial means and time to reopen. Without them, there wouldn't be a $5.2 Billion dollar tourism industry in Cape May County. Business generated during the winter months that depend on special events, especially during the holidays, are reporting loss of revenue upwards to 50%.

Any thoughts that Jersey Shore vacationers, displaced by the damage in the north, will automatically flock to Atlantic and Cape May County, will be the test to be graded after the summer season. Competitive states such as

Delaware, Maryland, Virginia and North and South Carolina were happy to feed on the media frenzy that all 127 miles of the Jersey Shore was devastated.

Within weeks after Sandy, beach competitors from other states were ramping up their advertising efforts and targeting our common audience. Their messages were similar; they could guarantee a great shore vacation with no worries about closed or damaged beaches. Rodney from Ocean City, Maryland was displayed on billboards in Pennsylvania promising to save beachgoers from a Jersey Shore vacation. Southern Delaware is promoting they are the 'Shore Thing', suggesting visitors that vacationed at the Jersey Shore, will get the same experience in Delaware. The images on mainstream and social media portrayed the damage, most real and undeniable, showing actual parts of the Jersey Shore that were devastated. The Jet Star roller coaster in the ocean in Seaside Heights was real; the great white sharks swimming in the flooded Hamilton Mall, not so real.

For months, every time Sandy was mentioned in the media, the same horrific images appeared. Unfortunately, some reports were inaccurate and the images went viral. The footage of the small section of boardwalk in Atlantic City that washed away was continually reported as the entire boardwalk was gone. The truth was that section was damaged long before Sandy hit the shore. Very few news features told of the rebuilding and if they did, it usually ended with images of destruction. Today, we see footage of the damage and we don't know if it was taken immediately after the storm or yesterday. Most clips are identified as the Jersey Shore, which only makes it more difficult to overcome the stigma that every beach town was and still is devastated.

Advertising a positive message and reaching out through a multi-level campaign that included social media immediately after Sandy was key in overcoming the negative message that the Jersey Shore will not be ready for the 2013 season. Sending out photos of recovery was important to get the message out. Cape May and Atlantic County have the most to gain, and growth is ours to win or lose. Most businesses, especially those in the lodging sector should have a data base of customers with email addresses. The "open for business" messages should be

sent to all with current images, date stamped, to show they are open and the area was not impacted by the storm. We need to keep visitors in New Jersey and work to promote a healthy and open Jersey Shore.

There are varying degrees of "open for business", and while being sensitive to the most impacted northern counties, it is important that all marketers understand the global meaning of being open for business. The perception issue is real and based on the truth. The images of the Jersey Shore after Sandy and the images today evoke an emotional reaction in the hearts and minds of the viewer. An incredible amount of progress has been made in the recovery effort along the New Jersey coastline but those images are memorable and will define the Jersey Shore for years to come. The rebuilding has been ongoing and many businesses are open or will be open by Memorial Day weekend. Until all sectors of the industry have recovered, the open for business message has to be clearly defined. The worst that can happen to any business or resort is to over promise and under deliver. Vacations are no longer considered a luxury but a right for most people. They are precious and expectations are high and for the most part, different for each member in the group. Truth in advertising is paramount in the message. After a catastrophe, most visitors will want to go back and support the rebuilding effort. A Jersey Shore vacation is a tradition; visitors love it and want to own it emotionally. They want to be a part of the success story. However, they need to know what to expect when they arrive. They want to rejoice in the recovery, but they still expect the simple amenities and a similar experience. After all, it is still a vacation.

The bottom line is the experience from the first contact with the potential customer until they depart. The most common comment from visitors in the 2012 Department of Tourism Survey is VALUE. Whether is it is perceived or actual, the concept is a big part of the experience and a compelling reason to return. The last thing the industry needs is for displaced Jersey Shore vacationers to go outside of New Jersey and find another vacation destination. Losing customers to other tourism destinations is a real possibility, and once the tradition is broken, it will be costly to win them back. The key in capturing those looking for a Jersey Shore vacation is not in price increases, but in offering value and a similar vacation experience.

With nature a huge part of the Jersey Cape's appeal and an asset that sets us apart from other destinations, we can't leave out the importance in the changes in the environment and eco-system as result of Superstorm Sandy. The ecological disturbances along the Delaware Bay have left a scar along the bay beaches that can and will impact the crucial natural habitat areas that attract a myriad of wildlife during migrations times as well as those species that are indigenous to the region. Nature based tourism generates more than $544 million in direct tourism sales in Cape May County. Eco events and attractions are the biggest international draw for visitors from throughout the world and help to expand the traditional tourism season. Cape May County situated between the Delaware Bay and the Atlantic Ocean is recognized as one of the top birding 'hot spots' in North America.

The Spring 2013 edition of the Wetlands Institute newsletter highlighted the impact from Sandy on the Horseshoe Crab and Shorebird revitalization project. The loss of sand, up to five feet or more, due to strong westerly winds and intense storm surge has left a muddy rubble-laden coastline that is not ideal for horseshoe crab spawning activities. Additionally, and part of the Wetlands Institute recent study conducted by their staff along with Larry Niles, LJ Niles Associates, LLC, Amanda Dey, NJ Division of Fish and Wildlife, and David Mizarhi, NJ Audubon Society, "Second Report: Damage from Superstorm Sandy to Horseshoe Crab Breeding and Shorebird Stopover Habitat on the Delaware Bay", post Sandy, the Delaware Bay spawning beaches saw a reduction of 50% - 70% aerial coverage of ideal horseshoe crab spawning habitat. (Horseshoe Crab and Shorebird Revitalization – by Katie Sellers, Conservation Specialist and Dr. Lenore Tedesco, Director of Research and Conservation; Wetlands Institute www.wetlandsinstitute.org.) As a business owner, tourism marketer or destination manager, the ripple effect of a compromised eco-system should be of great interest and concern to all of us.

Economic Impact

The 2012 Jersey Cape tourism story started long before Sandy. Tourism related expenditures were well on the way to another record year, with increases in gross revenue similar to the 4.5% growth in 2011. By the end of the year, and as expected, every sector measured growth; lodging, food and beverage, retail, recreation and

transportation showed an uptick in visitor spending. When all the numbers were counted, the overall increase was 3.6% with a not so shabby $5.248 billion in total expenditures. Lodging experienced the most growth with an increase of $112.8 million over the 2011 number. Occupancy tax started to outpace 2011 in as early as March with a jump in collection of $62,771 in 2012. Within the ten months between March and December each of the four beachfront counties (Monmouth, Ocean, Atlantic and Cape May Counties) showed an increase in occupancy tax collected. The recovery effort after Sandy increased the demand for lodging in 20 of the 21 counties in New Jersey. The total gains in the state for lodging was increased by 21%, gains in Salem, Ocean and Monmouth Counties during the fourth quarter were up over 50% compared to the same period in 2011. *(Stockton – 2013 Tourism Promotion Survey)*

Cape May County has continued to show tourism growth since 1994 when economic impact data was first compiled by the New Jersey Division of Travel and Tourism. At that time, total tourism expenditures reached $2 billion. Over the next 20 years, at times when other counties lost revenue or remained flat; Cape May and Atlantic Counties continued to experience growth each year. Atlantic County remains the leader in generating tourism expenditures and visitors, yet, for the first time in 2012, they registered a loss in revenue of 2.1%. Since 2007, Atlantic City has seen gaming revenue reduced due to competition in nearby states. However, non-gaming expenditures increased by 2.4% in 2012, which served to offset some of the total loss in expenditures last year. According to the latest Cape May County Visitor Survey, 29% of our visitors went to Atlantic City for gaming or entertainment purposes.

Half of all seasonal rental properties in New Jersey are located in Cape May County with more than 48,350 rentals available. Rental income continues to rise with $1.8 Billion in rental income generated in Cape May County in 2012. With 47% of all dwellings in Cape May County considered second or vacation homes, the second homeowner is a visitor segment that is closely watched. Fewer than 50% of second homes are available for rent and used for income purposes, leaving the balance for personal use, and 4% investment only. Rentals are weekly and push the average stay in Cape May County to 6.5 days, beyond the national trend of 3.5 days and the New

Jersey average stay of 5.5 days. Weekly rentals drive the economic engine, turnovers every 7 days bring new vacationers to the county, eager to take advantage of the vacation experience. This brings a new influx of spending at restaurants, retail, attractions and entertainment.

New Jersey and especially Cape May County is a drive destination. The latest data from the Division of Travel and Tourism reported that 95% of visitors to the state come by car. Not surprising, nearly 100% of all visitors to Cape May County come for leisure or vacation with none reporting they were traveling primarily for business or gambling. While many conduct business and nearly 1 in 3 visit Atlantic City while vacationing, none reported that was their primary purpose. (Stockton College 2013 Tourism Promotion Survey)

While Superstorm Sandy impacted fourth quarter revenue projections, New Jersey tourism as a whole, and Cape May County in particular, trended upward with a respectable 3.6% growth. Statewide, Cape May County ranks second, after Atlantic County, in generating tourism revenue with $5.248 Billion in expenditures, representing an increase of $181 million dollars in direct tourism spending over 2011. Another important gain for Cape May County is increase in visitors, registering as the second highest in the state, with 12.4 million visitors, 6.3 million day trip and 6.1 million overnight, bumping the Gateway Region (Essex, Bergen, Hudson, Middlesex, Passaic and Union Counties) which includes inbound traffic at the Newark Liberty Airport. The Southern Shore (Cape May and Cumberland County) represent 17.8% of all overnight leisure visits to the state.

For those keeping a score card, Cape May County has fared well over the years and has competed well against the other beachfront counties. Visits to New Jersey increased by 4.8% exceeding 82 million total visits in 2012. Future growth for the beachfront counties could slow down in 2013 due to housing and infrastructure damage due to Sandy. Concern of loss or stabilized visitor growth in 2013 is a result of more than the impact of Sandy on the Jersey Shore. New Jersey's tourism industry has recovered to the pre-2007 recession level, however, continued financial stress, deepening recession in the Eurozone and U.S. fiscal policy will slow tourism spending growth well into 2014. (Tourism Economics, Adam Sacks, President)

2012 Economic Impact of Tourism in Cape May County

Cape May County generated $5.248 Billion in Direct Tourism Sales
12.4 Million Visitors = 6.1 million Overnight - 6.3 million Daytrips
Data provided by Tourism Economics – The Economic Impact of Tourism in NJ –www.visitnj.org

Breakdown by sector:

Lodging	Food & Beverage	Retail	Recreation	Transportation
$2.233 Billion	$1.130 Billion	$879.9 Million	$588.3 Million	$417.7 Million

Direct Tourism Employment:

2010	2011	2012	% Increase
23,990	23,847	24,463	2.6%

Tourism Employment Impacts:

Tourism Employment Direct Impact	Direct Share of Total Employment	Tourism Employment Total Impact	Total Share of Total Employment
24,463	47.1%	33,509	64.5%

Tourism Tax Impacts: (State and Local Taxes generated by Cape May County Tourism)

2011	2012	Percent Change	Share of State	Occupancy Tax
$473.8	$487.5	2.9%	10.6%	$9.5 million

2012 Economic Impact of Tourism in NEW JERSEY

Direct Tourism Sales in the State $37.739 Billion

Breakdown by sector:

Lodging	Food & Beverage	Retail	Recreation	Transportation (inc.Air)
$11.42 Billion	$8.6 Billion	$6.7 Billion	$4.3 Billion	$6.7 Billion

Tourism industry sales by visitor type

- Leisure tourism represents 86% of industry sales in NJ.
- Overnight visitors to NJ spent $34.6 billion; 92% of the total.
- International visitors to NJ spent $3.2 billion in 2012, comprising 9% of all visitor spending.

Tourism impact summary - Jobs

- Tourism spending directly supported 318,560 jobs in New Jersey in 2012.
- The tourism economy, including direct, indirect and induced impacts, supported 503,000 jobs.
- This is 10% of all jobs in the state.
- Tourism ranks 5th in the state in job creation.

2012 Cape May County Tourism Total Impacts

Impact	% Change	Share of State
❖ $5.248 Billion in Direct Sales	3.6%	13.9%
❖ 24,463 Direct Employment	2.6%	7.6%
❖ 33,509 Indirect Employment	1.6%	6.8%
❖ 48.9% of total Economy		
❖ 47.1% Share of total County Jobs		
❖ 64.5% of total County Employment		
❖ $487.5 million - State & Local Tax	2.9%	10.8%
❖ 45,850 Second Homes		50.3%
❖ $9.43 million Occupancy Tax	8.9%	9.9%
❖ $1,420 – the average NJ homeowner would pay in taxes, per household, without tourism		

(Data from 2012 Economic Impact of Tourism in New Jersey. Tourism Economics – Adam Sacks, President)

Occupancy Tax Comparisons

	2011				2012			
	Cape May	Atlantic	Ocean	Monmouth	Cape May	Atlantic	Ocean	Monmouth
Jan	$65,299	$276,599	$72,778	$259,744	$64,480	$300,351	$89,639	$288,028
Feb	$86,166	$336,183	$88,164	$283,744	$76,639	$387,177	$103,124	$306,510
Mar	$86,166	$366,183	$88,164	$283,744	$148,937	$506,347	$147,953	$352,342
Apr	$254,256	$464,624	$143,450	$409,686	$249,368	$451,276	$187,969	$406,647
May	$547,299	$511,785	$283,487	$567,130	$641,141	$620,692	$318,339	$638,184
Jun	$1,243,279	$643,240	$461,414	$737,965	$1,403,048	$797,362	$520,559	$809,048
Jul	$2,420,456	$895,461	$854,537	$1,054,643	$2,511,930	$901,833	$874,597	$1,006,957
Aug	$2,225,204	$706,701	$732,145	$1,121,783	$2,652,402	$898,841	$791,495	$1,068,636
Sep	$1,014,072	$562.078	$318,517	$701,025	$1,045,304	$624,914	$340,320	$686,127
Oct	$335,637	$420,137	$162,152	$548,495	$ 338,959	$441,752	$167,501	$498,646
Nov	$113,386	$373,493	$107,355	$403,152	$ 135,090	$546,979	$186,990	$709,453
Dec	$144,137	$ 321,461	$ 94,158	$366,809	$ 162,113	$482,574	$219,095	$772,375
TOTAL	**$8,648,743**	**$5,847,945**	**$3,406,321**	**$6,960,098**	**$9,429,411**	**$6,960,098**	**$3,947,581**	**$8,229,589**

Tourism – It's all about the overnight stays

New Jersey State Occupancy tax was instituted on August 1, 2003 and was established to provide a sustainable source of funding for the Arts – to support cultural projects; Tourism – for advertising and promotion; and, History – to support projects and programs of the Historical Commission and Historic Trust. In Cape May County, the arts and history projects and programs complement the beach and boardwalk. They are a big part of the tourism inventory, offering residents and visitors a rich cultural experience that educates and expands activity options. These activities provide visitors a compelling reason to return to Cape May County. Nearly 65% of the county's economy is supported by tourism. Cape May County ranks second to Atlantic County, in generating tourism expenditures with $5.2 billion generated in 2012. Cape May County also ranks second in the number of visitors with 12.4 million visitors annually, again second to Atlantic County.

Currently the 5% occupancy tax is levied on all hotels, motels and bed and breakfast inns and is basically a user tax. Those who stay overnight pay the tax when they pay for their lodging, in addition to New Jersey sales tax. The tax allows for most municipalities to take a portion, up to 3%, for use by the local government. The Occupancy tax is generated to fund Tourism, the Arts and History. Assembly Bill A3710 and identical Senate Bill S2670 clearly outline how the occupancy tax shall be allocated to each sector. The following is copied from the bill as published on the New Jersey Legislature website: *(New Jersey Legislature –bills between 2001-2003)*

2) of the fees collected for occupancies during State Fiscal Year 2005 and thereafter :
22.68 percent shall be annually allocated for appropriation to the New Jersey State Council on the Arts for cultural projects, provided that the amount allocated shall not be less than $22,680,000; 3.84 percent shall be allocated for appropriation to the New Jersey Historical Commission for the purposes of subsection a. of section 3 of P.L.1999, c.131 (C.18A: 73-22.3), provided that the amount allocated shall not be less than $3,840,000; 12.76 percent shall be allocated for appropriation to the New Jersey Commerce and Economic Growth Commission for tourism advertising and promotion, provided that the amount allocated shall not be less than

$12,760,000; and.72 percent shall be allocated for appropriation to the New Jersey Cultural Trust, provided that the amount allocated shall not be less than $720,000.

The debate on the how and why the appropriations were decided rages on, the reality of the actual allocation of funds should be clear to everyone who reads the bill. However, the appropriations set by the law, have not been met and as the occupancy tax collection rate increases, the percentages set forth by the bill are proportionally reduced. Using the appropriation percentages set by the bill, forty percent of the dollars collected shall be appropriated to support the arts, tourism and history. The other 60% collected goes to support other programs and projects within the State. For those reading the bill, the natural assumption can be made that the amount appropriated from the tax should increase proportionally as the collection rate grows. Unfortunately, the appropriations have never been met and for the past few years the arts, tourism and history funding level has been $16 million for the Arts; $9 million for Tourism and $3.8 million for history, a total of $28.8 million , which represents less than 30% of the money collected. So what happened? The law is in place, the lodging industry is collecting the tax based on the law, and increased overnight stays are producing growth to the state treasury, yet the return on our investment is shrinking.

No matter how you dice the revenue collected by the occupancy tax, the burden of collection is squarely on the backs of the hoteliers. The tax is paid by those renting rooms; growth in occupancy tax is solely dependent on overnight stays in New Jersey. Understanding lodging and extended stays are the key to the funding, it is apparent that it is in our best interest to protect and promote the lodging industry in New Jersey. The mechanism is in place, the proverbial golden goose is the occupancy tax, and the only way to increase overnight stays is spend a larger portion of the money generated by the lodging industry on a comprehensive and targeted advertising campaign to an expanded audience that will stay longer and support the entire tourism industry. As we move forward, more, or at least what, the bill dictates should be spent to market the statewide tourism industry, and we can sit back and watch the collection rate grow. This would not only benefit those in the

tourism industry, but also those who are funded by occupancy tax dollars not necessarily allocated to the Arts, Tourism and History.

According to the New Jersey Treasury monthly figures, in 2012 $86.95 million was collected by the state through the 5% Occupancy Tax. Cape May County Occupancy tax generated $9.4 million in 2012, representing nearly 11% of the total state portion collected. Cape May County receives less than $2 million in grant funding through competitive Cooperative Marketing, Destination Marketing Organization, Arts and History grants. The return is not proportional and other counties that generate less can and do receive more in grant funding for tourism marketing and support of arts and history programs and projects.

After Sandy

While Cape May County didn't face as many challenges as other areas, Superstorm Sandy was a wakeup call for residents and business owners as well as everyone else that owns property along the Jersey Shore. With more than $640 million in infrastructure damage reported in Cape May County alone, the real impact will be measured by the loss of businesses that are not able to reopen. As images of Sandy's destruction appeared, and New Jersey mobilized to help those in need, it was apparent that the landscape of the Jersey Shore had changed overnight. In the aftermath of the storm, and as the days, weeks and months unfolded it was clear that on top of the damage, we were facing an image problem brought on by the media. It can't be stressed enough, the Tourism industry in general is fragile and for the most part, weather dependent. Tourism and a destination's images are always impacted by crisis and natural disasters and no destination is exempt.

We survived Sandy and must learn from this storm, surely, there will be another and we could be in the bull's eye. It is how we react after the crisis that will define us as a destination and get tourism back on track. In studying the reaction to how other destinations handle the public relations and marketing aspect after a disaster is helpful in developing a plan of action for Cape May County. No matter how well prepared a destination

appears, there is no real protection from unpredictable impact of a natural or man-made disaster. Every crisis is different but there must be guidelines and best practices applied to hasten the recovery and get people back to work. With 65% of Cape May County's economy coming from tourism, recovery includes not only getting people back into their homes, but back to work and some degree of normalcy.

The most important factor is the safety of the lives of the residents and visitors. It's a given, evacuations are a must and the safety and protection of human lives come before property and the cha-ching of a cash register. Hurricane season runs from June 1 through November 1, and it's no coincidence that is when billions of travelers are looking for fun in the sun. Simply put, there is no good time for a natural disaster.

The latest and most sophisticated technology can't predict exactly where, when or how catastrophic storm will impact a region. However, we must be heed warnings, prepare for the worst case scenario and respect and adhere to the leadership and guidance of experts for developing and implementing an efficient evacuation and disaster plan. Developing a close working relationship with your businesses and governmental agencies charged with emergency management is key in minimizing the impact on the tourism industry. Ignoring warnings and directives can put you, your visitors and emergency personnel in harm's way.

Superstorm Sandy is a perfect example of how unpredictable Mother Nature is when a slight shift at the moment the storm hits changes everything and, how quickly high tech weather tracking models can be thrown off course. Climate change is considered one of the major threats to the global tourism industry and creating an increase in the number and severity of natural disasters throughout the world. These once so called "storms of the century" are becoming more frequent and more severe. Earthquakes that take place on another continent can and will impact land miles away.

For the tourism industry, after protection of human lives, one of the many challenges facing a destination marketing organization (DMO) is the management of the negative publicity that occurs in the reporting of a natural disaster. Because each incident is different in scope, location and impact, there is not a lot of hard

information available on the exact rules of marketing after a disaster. The issues that faced Cape May County after Sandy are not uncommon. After Katrina, the tsunami in Japan and Indonesia and the California brushfires, the first message from the tourism marketers was "Open for Business" to counteract any misleading impression portrayed by the media. The most important lesson we learned was being identified as the Jersey Shore – all 127 miles of Atlantic Ocean coastline – which created a larger problem in trying to counter the negative media that the entire Jersey Shore was devastated. Every resort community from Sandy Hook to Cape May was identified as the 'Jersey Shore' and it was assumed that every town was equally impacted. in fact, five months after Sandy, we are still being asked at travel shows, email and via telephone calls how we made out and if we have recovered and or rebuilt.

The farther we get away from Cape May County the more we become identified as one destination called, "the Jersey Shore". While it's true we can't deny many horrific images of the damage were accurate, the degree of damage to Cape May County was lessened by the fact that the most damaging impact of the winds of Sandy moved to the north. Media reports, YouTube videos and other viral images shared on Facebook and other social media outlets showed the devastation of the northern beachfront communities, identified globally as the Jersey Shore. The Jet Star roller coaster in the Atlantic Ocean in Seaside Heights became the iconic symbol of the fate of the entire 127 miles of New Jersey coastline. Without a doubt, most beach communities along the Jersey Shore have similar attractions and that image could have been from any boardwalk along the Jersey Shore. For many, the assumption was that was 'their' roller coaster in 'their' Jersey Shore vacation spot. The images were global, but the impression was local. When the media shows devastation along the Jersey Shore, the viewer is focusing on the part they know and what they see becomes the place they visit. The image of the roller coaster was emblazoned on televisions screens across the world and it defined all 127 miles of New Jersey beaches.

Cape May County was truly blessed and spared the level of devastation experienced along the northern New Jersey beaches into North Jersey and New York. Flooding took its toll on many properties in the Cape May County resort communities. In developing a marketing message, it was important to keep in mind that a tourist

destination's image is what makes it a visitor's choice. In preparing the recovery message it was extremely important to preserve the image and not trivialize the extent of the damage to the many homes and businesses in Cape May County. Ocean City and Sea Isle City were the worst hit with the other resort towns dealing with the impact of severe flooding and beach erosion. At the same time, we had to be sensitive to the impact Sandy made on the entire New Jersey tourism industry particularly with our partners in Ocean and Monmouth Counties. We needed to take the time to assess the damage and develop a message that did not over promise what we could deliver to the visitor. With a successful 2012 summer season still in the rear view mirror, Cape May County was gearing up for a lucrative fall and winter special events calendar. Fall events were attracting return visitors and the Holiday season was upon us.

In reviewing the marketing steps taken by other areas hit by natural and man-made disasters, there is a common thread in each that allows us to put together a general marketing game plan. After participating in a Tourism Recovery Peer-to-Peer Workshop conducted by the Christie Administration and the US Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration, we realized how so many of the issues we are facing are similar to those other destinations were faced with after Irene, Sandy and the BP oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico. There were many take-aways from the workshop that helped to reinforce some of the actions Cape May County engaged to keep a positive focus on the tourism needs of the county in terms of media relations and promotion. The biggest question in most disasters in a tourism region is how to establish a clear understanding that the welfare of the residents is always first, however, the economy is equally as important to help restore the economic drivers that will get people back to work. The common question asked in each area hit by disaster was, "How can you spend money to promote tourism when homes have been destroyed and families have been displaced?

New Jersey faces the same dilemma; more than 349,000 homes were destroyed and or damaged as a result of Superstorm Sandy. The restoration and rebuilding effort most pressing for state and local agencies is to get families back in their homes and businesses open. Displaced families are slowly getting back into their homes;

however, there are still more that will never go back to their homes and others that are still living in temporary housing in all four beachfront counties. Cape May County experienced more than $640 million in infrastructure damage. The cost to private homeowners is difficult to measure, but those figures are in the hundreds of millions. As we move north, where the storm did the most damage, the costs are astronomical. The repairs have been ongoing since November and recovery is the word of the day as many businesses reopen or are planning to be open by summer.

The number of years to fully recover seems to be about 5 years. New Orleans is a good barometer for New Jersey to gauge its rebuilding progress. Vermont is still facing issues on a daily basis from Hurricane Irene. The stories that the destination managers tell are very familiar. The common thread is the media reports that portray an expanded damage zone that impacts tourism in other parts of the state. The media coverage during and after the BP oil spill affected all the Gulf coast states and impacted not only tourism, but the regional fisheries as well. The images and reporting during and immediately after a disaster are compelling and accurate. Human interest stories that are part of the disaster make the suffering and loss personal and trigger the generous nature of Americans who want to help those who are most in need. The images are emblazoned in our minds; they are shown time and time again. The result – viewers who are not familiar with the area, believe that the entire state is devastated. The general opinion of many is total loss.

Tourism in New Jersey directly employs 318,721 and provides 495,140 in indirect jobs in 2012, an increase of 2% over the previous year. Additionally, tourism is the fifth largest business sector in New Jersey representing 11.4% of the total jobs. In Cape May County tourism is the number one industry and accounts for 65% of the economy. (Tourism Economics – 2012 NJ Tourism Impact Study)

The Game Plan

The Five R's of effective marketing management after a disaster

Through observation and research, there appears to a be plan of action or series of best practices in place that tourism managers can follow to help minimize or offset some misguided perceptions and costly marketing missteps. After reading, listening and making mistakes, The Cape May County Department of Tourism decided to develop and follow a simple game plan we refer to as the five Rs in marketing after a disaster. Many ideas came from destination marketing managers, who have firsthand experience in dealing with disasters, and some are part of the trial by error method or more commonly known 'on the job training'. These ideas are best practices rather than hard and fast rules and seem to work for most natural occurrences, but understand, not all will fit in every incident.

In the event of a natural disaster, the best hope we have of reducing loss of life and property is when we are forewarned and prepared. In the case of hurricanes or other weather related events, there is often time to prepare and activate emergency plans. The undisputable rule in this case is to have an emergency plan that is well thought out and applicable for all involved. The outcome of the disaster is rarely exactly as predicted, some not as bad, some worse, but all warnings should be taken seriously. When we're told to, "get the hell off the beach", it should be considered a fair warning of imminent danger. If in the end we come out unscathed, don't think that will be the outcome every time a storm hits. Assume there are folks out there with much higher levels of tracking equipment at their disposal and are not using their position to create chaos or fear.

***Readiness* –** involves businesses within the industry being prepared with contingency plans and set of actions to respond to crisis or event before it happens, while it is happening and after it has passed. Keeping in contact with emergency management and following directives is imperative for the safety of human life. Know the evacuation routes, the shelter locations and keep a supply of safety and medical needs updated and handy. The rule of

thumb in any disaster is, “it’s better to be safe than sorry”. Anticipate power outages and other disruptions of services. Have a back up of all business documents that will be necessary to carry on after the incident.

A mutual respect for law and emergency agencies is the start. They are trained professionals that make decisions based on information the average resident or business owner does not have readily available. Following a pre-determined disaster plan should be part of the business management strategy. Key personnel should know and understand their role and be capable to react in the event of a disaster. Training and drills will help in the preparation and implementation of a safety plan.

***Reduction* – i**nvolves establishing the spatial context of the location of the problem or issue. It is important to identify the exact location of the incident and explain the relationship to your location. In the case of the Jersey Shore, there are 127 miles of shoreline from Sandy Hook to Cape May Point, the full brunt of the storm was felt more than sixty miles north of Cape May County. In terms of most weather events, sixty miles makes a huge difference when it comes to full force impact. The national and international media reported the impact of the Superstorm was the Jersey Shore which painted us all with the same brush. The farther away from New Jersey the more we became identified as one destination – the Jersey Shore – and were identified in all reports as being equally devastated. The iconic image of the roller coaster in the ocean defined all beach towns along the Jersey Shore. Any and all reporting on Superstorm Sandy either started or ended with that image.

The first message for Cape May and Atlantic County was to define the area most impacted and show the distance away from the center of the devastation. In our context, it was easier to report that most of the damage was concentrated above milepost 65 on the Garden State Parkway. That gave those familiar with the region a better idea that the greatest impact was 60 miles north of Cape May County. Flooding and beach erosion was an issue in Cape May County causing infrastructure and property damage in all towns with communities north of Stone Harbor experiencing flooding from the bay and ocean causing an estimated $640 million in damage to public property. Several days of flooding destroyed businesses with many unable to recover. We relied on the Office of

Emergency Management (OEM) and local authorities to report on the damage and referred all calls in that direction. It was not the Department of Tourism's function to report on damage.

Response – how you respond after a disaster helps in restoring confidence in visitors that the destination is safe and their memories are secure. Cape May County, as well as all the Jersey Shore, is built on tradition and memories. Generations of families make the annual trek 'down the shore' year after year. With an 80% return rate, families have made the Jersey Shore part of their history. The stories we hear are endless and told with such love and devotion. The memories are passed down and for many recreated. First loves, marriages, babies, reunions and childhood memories are the lures that bring families back. Understandably, it is important that we keep our visitors informed and updated on the condition and progress because the Jersey Shore holds a special place in their hearts. They want to see images that represent their lives and are part of their vacation experience. They want to help in the restoration.

The key element of response is speed, accuracy and verifiability. Determine first if your property, customers and employees are safe and unharmed. In the case of Cape May County, once we were able to establish the extent of the damage, we were able to get the message out that Cape May County did not receive permanent damage. It was also important that we didn't minimize the impact on communities that were dealing with damage from severe flooding and beach erosion. Additionally, we had be sensitive to those areas in northern New Jersey and New York that were dealing with major challenges well after Superstorm Sandy passed.

The power of Social media is incredible, it was the first outlet that we used to get the message out about the full impact and the extent of the damage. There are pros and cons of social media to market the health and welfare of a destination in a communications crisis, and it is difficult to keep up, but it is a way to reach millions of potential visitors. Social Media allowed us to create content and it encouraged readers to share it within their own network for friends. Interestingly, in a world where people are bombarded with thousands of marketing messages every day and most viewers are skeptical about product advertising, social media messages like those

on Facebook, YouTube and Twitter seem to be generally accepted as the truth. There is no controlling those messages either; millions of users spend countless hours on social media sites and share posts and messages with no verification that they are accurate. Images, real or not go viral within hours. On the plus side, in the case of trying to get out an accurate message, social media will expand the reach quickly and often. Dated and positive images and messages served Cape May County as way of getting updated and accurate information to stakeholders regarding the damage as well as show the progress of recovery. All along the Jersey Shore there were daily open for business updates. Social media was also used as a way to outpace the negative and inaccurate images that went viral; albeit, they didn't move throughout the social networks as quickly.

Recovery – in this instance, we use the term recovery as the process to restore the reputation of the business and destination and assure stakeholders when visitation and business can resume. It is at this stage that sensitivity toward and about the crisis is most important and appreciated by those who have been impacted and those who receive your message. While on one side of the crisis, we want to separate and identify ourselves in the media's eye that we were a far distance from the brunt of the storm damage; on the other side of the crisis, we are all still the Jersey Shore. It is easy to imagine how we would have felt had Sandy hit as predicted with Cape May County in the center of the storm. As the days passed after Sandy and the images of destruction were sorted out it was apparent that Cape May County was blessed and would recuperate quickly from the damage left by the storm. It would serve no purpose to point out the damage in other areas and compare it to Cape May County. We are the Jersey Shore and when one town along the 127 mile stretch hurts, we all hurt. We all benefit by keeping visitors in New Jersey. Occupancy Tax generated by hoteliers is dependent on overnight stays. Media comments and messages from the Cape May County Department of Tourism always ended with a report of the progress in the northern beach communities.

The "open for business" message was used after hurricane Katrina and Irene, after the BP oil spill, and most recently, within days after the Boston bombings. The message has many meanings for those who were impacted and to those who are concerned about the health and well-being of a favorite destination. Getting back to

business is a show of strength and spirit. Rebuilding and reopening is part of the American spirit and part of the healing process.

Beyond Facebook updates, the Department of Tourism launched a public relations campaign within a week to explain the full impact on the destination and reassure visitors that we were in good shape. The timing of Sandy did not create the same financial concern that the tourism industry felt with Hurricane Irene. There was genuine concern from the media and calls came into the office from all over the country. Our message was positive and accurate; we concentrated on business openings and projections about future events and attractions.

Over the years we have developed many relationships with the media. From journalists and reporters to advertising sales representatives, we have found that we have many friends in the media who were willing to step up and help us get the "Open for Business", message out to their customers. Our campaign had to start much earlier and while we were offered reduced and expanded ad space, the costs to get the message out has taken a bite out of our marketing budget. The fact that Cape May County appeals to a wide audience, it was important to ensure we were using the preferred media outlet. Today, that means using a multi-media campaign that includes television, print and internet. Photos were very important in the marketing efforts. As our customers are becoming more visual and less content driven, our marketing efforts have to be more imaged based in order to appeal to the wider audience. At the end of February, we resumed our ad campaign promoting the summer season.

Reality – comes well after the disaster passes. In our terms, the reality is what part of the vacation experience was salvaged and will it bring visitors back to the county for extended overnight stays and what is the perception. We were very fortunate that our visitors can return and see basically the same sights they left behind prior to Sandy. The timing of the storm allowed for most of the repairs to be completed in time for the start of the 2013 season. The timing, at the end of October, also helped in the fact that many seasonal businesses were closed for the winter.

Marketers must understand what attracts visitors and recognize the difference between an “attraction” and an “attractor”. The attraction is the activity that keeps them busy while on vacation. The attractor is what brings them to the destination. For the most part, vacation planners are not building an overnight itinerary based on the reopening of a restaurant or ice cream parlor, they are part of the experience, but not the reason for an overnight or extended visit. If the visitor is coming for the beach, that is the attractor and the purpose of the vacation. If you are “open for business” you want to make sure the attractors are open and able to offer the visitor the experience they expect.

Each year, the Department of Tourism conducts a visitor survey. A visitor profile is established and visitor preferences are determined. This data does not change much over the years, but does give us a glance of what is trending, visitor preferences and attractors versus attractions. This also gives us the chance to see what no longer has the same appeal and more importantly, what is the perception of the area after the storm.The survey allows for comments that give us antidotal information regarding what the visitors likes or dislikes.

Overwhelmingly, our visitors come for the beach, after that we determine what they do to keep they coming and most importantly, keep them longer. Using research conducted by Roger Brooks, CEO of Destination Development, International, vacationers are active 14 hours per day. They spend 4-6 hours in pursuit of the activity that brought them, in our case it is the beach. It is especially important that we know what they do and can provide them with that experience in order to keep them coming back. We cannot assume that because their favorite pizza shop has reopened, that will be enough to have them book an extended vacation. This is where the “Open for Business” message can get tricky. Overnight visitors tend to spend more money and the longer they stay the higher the per person expenditure. We have to be honest and let them know before they book what to expect. There is also a time to move away from the “open for business” message and promote the new and exciting experiences that await the visitor.

Booming at the Jersey Cape

Who is Our Customer and why are they Coming?
The undisputable fact, which may come as a surprise for many, is the average age of our visitors is trending up. Baby Boomers are still making a tremendous impact on the travel patterns and habits in both the domestic and international markets. Additionally, in the 2013 Department of Tourism visitor survey, we found the breakdown of those that travel with children is about the same as those who travel as a couple, with 40% traveling with traditional family makeup (spouse and children) and 40% traveling as a couple. The number of extended families vacationing together is also growing, which includes grandparents. Boomers are taking grandchildren on vacation and for many they want to relive the memories of vacations with their children.

This makes a big difference in how we target and who we market to in order to ensure our message appeals to both groups. We cannot be all things to all people, but need to make sure we continue to reinvent our message. The message must speak to those 83% return visitors, and to grow interest in the 17% in the new customer base. Travelers don't want to go on vacation because it has something for everyone. They choose a vacation based on what is available for them and if you don't know what they want, just ask them. Surveying your customer is one way to understand their wants and needs and to let them know you are interested in making their vacation experience rewarding and memorable. Developing a survey can be as easy as five questions. You can leave a survey in their room, attach one to their bill or email them after they leave. Knowing your customer is the only way to optimize your marketing efforts and improve customer service.

Niche marketing is effective, but expensive, when we are dealing with today's shrinking advertising budgets. Overwhelmingly, beaches are the draw; we need to better understand what each visitor segment is looking for in a beach vacation, and more importantly, what they are looking for to keep them active and interested in the region. An image of children playing on the beach does not have the same affect on a couple looking for a difference beach experience. Knowing the demographics and reach of the media buy is equally as important as

knowing the profile of your customer. Each year the data from the Tourism Department Survey is analyzed and shifts in visitor interest and trends are noted and incorporated in our marketing message. The constant visitor request that comes out on top in every survey is "value". Visitors want and expect to get what they pay for in a vacation experience. It's all about the experience for most, they are willing to pay for it but want something that is memorable and exciting.

The "been there – done that" attitude is deeply rooted in the minds of the traveler who is looking for the next *new* vacation experience. Economic factors have contributed to the rise and fall of the high adventure vacation seeker. At the top of the vacation "deal maker" list, and in line with cost and value, is the vacation "experience." Businesses need to understand, they are not only selling their product, but also how and where it fits into the full experience. Consumers are behaving differently with respect to their attitudes toward value and loyalty. What was considered a great deal pre-recession could be totally off the table today. In the age of DIY, planners want the 'do it yourself' vacation itinerary that fits their lifestyle, and they want it within a few clicks on your website. "It is not necessarily so much about the location as it is about the experience offered. Expect that your customer is working with a smaller budget and looking for larger than life vacation experiences." *Roger A. Brooks, Destination Development International (DDI)*

In 2011, the top age of the Baby Boomer group, those born in 1946 turned 65. That means those born at the end of the boomer period are turning 50. Don't think the Baby Boomers are fast and loose with their money either. They are living longer than their 401K will last. Medical costs are biting into their disposable dollars along with mortgage and credit card debt. Many boomers are finding themselves supporting their children and helping with parents as care givers and living costs.

Most noticeable is what boomers and NOT spending more on. Boomers have not increased their spending on entertainment or dining out and have in fact cut back on the following categories from 1990 to 2010:

- *Food* purchases (including restaurant spending) fell 18 percent for 45 to 54 year olds and 20 percent for 55 to 64 year olds.
- *Household furnishings* fell nearly one-third for 45 to 54 year olds and one-fourth for 55 to 64 year olds.
- *Clothing* expenses showed the steepest decline, falling 42 percent for 45 to 54 year olds and 70 percent for 55 to 64 year olds. (*Forbes.com – Baby Boomer Spending Habits, Halah Touryalia 10/15/12)*

Furthermore, any thought that the 20 or 30 -somethings would make a difference in your customer base have been dashed by the incredible amount of debt they struggle with as they graduate from college, pay off student loans, look for jobs and start families. The stressed job market and deflated starting salary levels are throwing off the business plans of those entering the work force. Salaries and the cost of living are not jiving.

The age of first time home buyers has also shifted to well into the thirties, and some are still paying college debt after that age. Student loan debt is at an all time high, with total outstanding loans exceeded $1 trillion for the first time in 2011. Compared to credit card and automobile debt combined in the U.S., which stands at about $798 billion, students loans are becoming a huge concern as the next big financial crisis. Two thirds of student loan debt is held by those under 40. Credit scores for those unable to repay will haunt them in later years when they attempt to purchase automobiles and homes. This age group is not taking extended vacations and won't be for a while.

Close to home vacations remains an important factor in vacation planning. With 30 million people living within a 300 mile radius of Cape May County, our "tank of gas away" marketing campaign continues to give us the best results with a limited budget. The 2013 visitor survey found that 29% or nearly one in three visitors chose the Jersey Cape because it was "close to home". Our top three visitor markets support that theory with New Jersey, Pennsylvania and New York making up three quarters of our visitor base.

What's hot?

Culinary Tourism is one of the fast growing fads in vacation travel. From foodies to wine connoisseurs vacation planners want to know all about the food they eat and the beverages they drink. New Jersey – the Garden State and more specifically, Cape May County is a perfect fit for the development of culinary tourism as a way to develop new customers, extend the season and fill mid-week vacancies. The goal of culinary tourism is to educate and inspire food, wine and beer enthusiasts, while giving them a chance to explore the local area and learn about local food trends, cooking techniques and food history. The increased interest in food channels, travel shows featuring local and regional cuisine, food documentaries and online culinary travel shows are creating more consumer interest in traveling to various destinations just to enjoy a new food and wine experiences.

The increase in the number of vineyards and wineries, breweries on the Jersey Cape, added to the existing commercial and aquaculture fisheries and a renewed interest in home grown and organic foods make culinary tourism a perfect fit in Cape May County. Fresh fish, fruits and vegetables, wine, beer and honey are part of the countywide effort to bring the gardens back to the Garden State. Jersey Fresh adds a softer dimension to the state image that has taken a beaten from the crass Jersey Shore personalities of Snooki and the Situation. Visitors are looking for a different experience that complements the environment and keeps them green.

Restaurants that feature locally grown food products on their menus will continue to appeal to visitors as we move forward. Special events that are centered on food and local specialties are trending throughout the country and developing a huge following. Event planners need only to add food and stir up interest, to create the recipe for success.

Culinary tourism appeals to travelers of all ages and offers a great way for couples, families (including younger family members in programs designed for kids,) girlfriends and guy friends to enjoy spending time together

during vacations in any season. Bed and Breakfast Inns lend themselves to a great opportunity to develop multi-day cooking classes during the shoulder season. Wine tasting and pairing added to cooking demonstrations using regional specialties will attract a new clientele as well as extend vacation options beyond the beach.

What's trending? Multigenerational Family Vacations

Call them Boomers or Vacationers of a certain age…grandparents or grandparent-age parents continue to be a force to be reckoned with in tourism circles. Making up 26% of the population, every aspect of the aging process of Baby Boomers has created major changes in everything they do from banking to vacations. The "me generation" is becoming the "us generation" as Boomers are financing vacations for their children and grandchildren. If you want to attract this group, who by the way controls a major portion of the wealth in this country, you need to pay attention to their needs. Boomers are looking for the option to customize their vacation that will offer something for children and also cater to their tastes and wants. They are looking for hotels with connecting rooms, kitchenettes and activities for children. Websites need to be easy and have links to attractions that appeal to both children and grandparents. Attractions need to provide seating for waiting grandparents, shade and programming that allows for all ages to participate and enjoy.

In the 2013 Department of Tourism Visitor Survey, the number of families traveling with grandparents is 30%. That number has more than doubled since 2005 when 14% of the vacation parties included grandparents. Traveling with an extended family has it's trials and tribulations, but for most it makes vacations more affordable. Rentals seem to be the route many take since it allows for most of the comforts of home, easy meal planning and some privacy.

Boomer grandparents are working longer and living longer and find summer vacation a good time to spend with children and grandchildren. In planning family vacations they want to engage in experiences that will bring extended families together and are memorable. For many, a Jersey Cape vacation is a tradition and considered a family reunion of sorts that is affordable and diverse enough to keep all ages active and happy.

Value Vacations are a trend that is here to stay.

The key word today is "value", in purchases from automobiles to vacations everyone is looking for value and are not afraid to ask for discounts and coupons. Packages and deals are going to bring attention to your business. Be aware, there is a huge difference between price and value and your customer will know the difference. Value is what you get, compared to what you pay. The vacations planners of today consider value a significant factor in making decisions. Bargain shopping for vacations remains a key element in the hunt for a great family vacation. The value conscience traveler to Cape May County can find a myriad of arts, cultural and historic attractions that will keep them entertained and on budget. Lodging, restaurants, retail and attractions should maintain a brochure rack to pique the interest of the visitors. The more they have to do while on vacation the longer they will stay and the greater chance they will return.

Customers and their perceptions about price have changed as consumers move from credit buying to debit buying as they attempt to reduce personal debt. With most purchases, consumers are resistant to paying more and understandably prefer to get more for less. Coupons, discounts and other incentives are game changers and push loyalty out the window when making purchasing decision. Paying down consumer debt is a priority and top of mind when making vacation plans. If they don't think they are getting value they will move on to the next vacation option.

The national economy is still struggling with high unemployment and low growth. The marketplace continues to evolve as consumers have sharpened their focus on wanting real value for their dollar. This continued focus is forcing smart destination planners to continually rethink what they offer in terms of what consumers need and want. We are still watching the prices at the pumps and anticipating how those costs are impacting the disposable income of potential visitors. The discretionary dollars available for vacation spending begin and end with the ability to save money over the year. Fuel and energy costs impact the family budget from every angle. Value is key to attracting customers. We know the charge customer is gone forever, replaced with a more frugal cost conscious debit spender.

Value added incentives that will not increase price but will enhance the quality of the experience, include the following: size, design, cleanliness and comfort of the guest room; relaxing and landscaped public space with special guest amenities; friendly, attentive and professional service; high quality food and beverage service; functional and flexible check in and checkout service.

Fall for the Jersey Cape

A newly designed Cape May County Department of Tourism website, supported through funding from a New Jersey Division of Travel and Tourism cooperative marketing grant will give countywide businesses an opportunity to list deals, discounts and coupons options to promote the fall. The website; www.fallforthejerseycape.com is advertised through the tourism marketing campaign and was developed to market fall getaways to visitors, while they are vacationing during July and August. All businesses are invited to participate by sending special events, overnight packages and other deals and discount for the fall season. The campaign will be advertised on local radio and via posters and other marketing material to promote the fall. The concept is to make those on vacation during the summer aware of the special events and post season rates available during the fall into winter and book before they leave. For more information, call the Cape May County Department of Tourism at (609)463-6415

Oh Canada

The Cape May County Department of Tourism has been aggressively marketing in Canada for more than forty years. The county maintained a part time office in Montreal in 1968 and opened a fulltime office on Drummond Street in downtown Montreal from 1970 until 1995. The operation of the office became cost prohibitive due to the implementation of the Goods and Service Tax. The unfavorable exchange rate on the Canadian dollar lead to a 20% decrease in visitors from Canada. The Department of Tourism continued to have a presence in Montreal through a contract with a Public Relations Consultant.

Conversely, the favorable exchange rate over the past four years has worked toward growing visitors from Canada with a growth rate of 18% in 2011. New duty free regulations instituted in June 2012, increased the amount of goods Canadians can bring back from $50 per person to $200 per person. This will impact the retail sectors as Canadians shop for sales tax free clothing and household items that are now also duty free.

Visitors from Quebec have been vacationing in Cape May County for two and three generations. What started as a quest to find wide sandy beaches and warm water in the late 1960s has grown into one of Cape May County's fourth largest visitor market. Two years ago the Department of Tourism expanded the marketing reach to include Quebec City, two hours north of Montreal. That effort has paid off with an increase in visitors from that region. Through a print, television and radio campaign we are tracking through email request and Google analytics an increased interest from the Quebec City region.

The trek from the greater Montreal region takes less than nine hours with travel along a few roads. They travel the length of the Garden State Parkway and make stops along the way for fuel, food and rest. Those from Quebec enjoy driving and the one day trip to Cape May County is not a problem. Canadians stay on average seven to ten days and are not just campers any longer. Today the influence of the Canadian visitor is felt from

Ocean City to Cape May. Canadians have extended their vacation time from the last two weeks in July to all of July through August.

Over the years, the Cape May County Department of Tourism has developed a relationship with the Canadian Automobile Association (CAA) that has allowed for greater exposure in the CAA agencies within the greater Quebec region. Concern over the impact of Superstorm Sandy resulted in CAA running a contest open to travelers who are looking for a vacation in Cape May County. The CAA marketing includes complementary brochure distribution and signage in the window of 16 CAA agencies. The contest is being managed and promoted by CAA and will serve to attract more visitors to the county. The CAA marketing campaign highlighting Cape May County as a summer getaway for the Quebecois is at no charge to the Department of Tourism but is priceless and is only open to more exotic locales such as Europe, Cuba and the Middle East.

Through an expended advertising campaign, Cape May County Department of Tourism is running television and radio ads beyond Montreal and into Quebec City. A Press Conference was held in late February with Lieutenant Governor Kim Guadgano taking the lead in letting Canadians know Cape May County is "Open for Business". P PR coverage on the weather channel on Metro Media in Quebec, as well as 15 and 30 second commercial spots let Canadians know Cape May County was ready to welcome them back in 2013. In June, three journalists from French media outlets will be in the area to write about Cape May County.

Breakdown of Canadian visitors to New Jersey (Source: 2011 Statistics Canada)

Overnight visits to New Jersey

Province	VISITS	SPENDING IN STATE	NIGHTS
Atlantic	29,300	$8,062,200	86,300
Quebec	219,700	$82,120,900	935,800

Ontario	146,900	$55,631,100	514,800
Manitoba	700	$77,100	4,100
Saskatchewan	1,100	$10,800	4,200
Alberta	9,200	$5,523,000	55,300
BC	23,500	$17,237,700	114,100
Total	**430,500**	**$168,662,900**	**1,714,700**

Cape May County is the choice vacation destination for Quebecois

- An estimated 70% of the 430,500 Canadian visitors to New Jersey in 2011 went to Cape May County. A favorable exchange rate has spurred inbound visitors from Canada into the U.S., with 2011 recorded as the highest growth since 1995. All indicators point to 2012 being another record year for Canadian visitors and 2013 will also experience growth.
- Duty Free imports increased from $50 to $200 per person, allowing each family member to bring more tax free goods into Canada.

Canadian overnight visits to New Jersey (Statistics Canada – 2012 data will be available in August 2013)

	VISITS	**SPENDING IN STATE**	**NIGHTS**
2010	353,500	$121,579,500	1,335,600
2011	430,500	$168,662,900	1,714,700
Increase	77,000	$47,083,404	379,100
%	18%	28%	23%

Cape May County Visitor Profile

Top 5 Visitor Markets

Pennsylvania	34%
New Jersey	32%
New York	12%
Canada	9%
Maryland	6%

83% are Return Visitors

approximately 1 in 5 are first time visitors

26% stay 7 days - the national trend is 3.5 days

14% stay longer than one week

12.4 Million Visitors came to Cape May County in 2012

- 6.3 million Day trips
- 6.1 million Overnight trips

88% went to the beach

77% will spend the same as in 2013

41.8 % travel with Family – Spouse and Children

39% will travel as a couple – With Spouse

29.9% will travel with Grandparents – extended family

81% went to the boardwalk

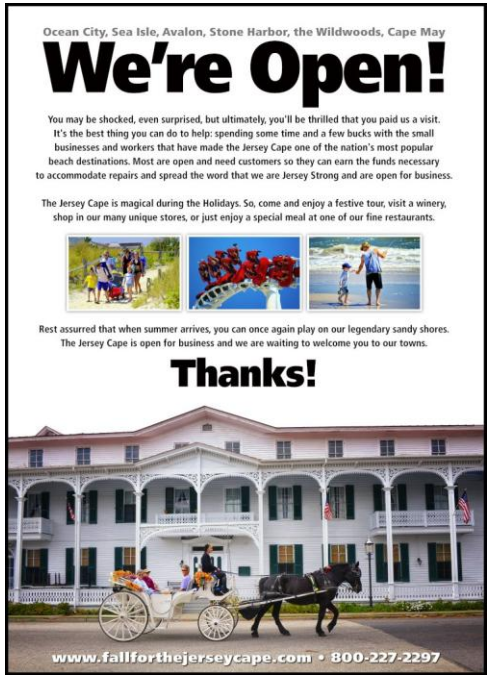
38% have a combined household income of between $75K - $125K

36% went to a special event

44% visited historic/cultural attractions

43% of vacation planners are women

23% will spend more in 2013


Ocean City, Sea Isle, Avalon, Stone Harbor, the Wildwoods, Cape May
We're Open!
You may be shocked, even surprised, but ultimately, you'll be thrilled that you paid us a visit. It's the best thing you can do to help: spending some time and a few bucks with the small businesses and workers that have made the Jersey Cape one of the nation's most popular beach destinations. Most are open and need customers so they can earn the funds necessary to accommodate repairs and spread the word that we are Jersey Strong and are open for business.
The Jersey Cape is magical during the Holidays. So, come and enjoy a festive tour, visit a winery, shop in our many unique stores, or just enjoy a special meal at one of our fine restaurants.
Rest assurred that when summer arrives, you can once again play on our legendary sandy shores. The Jersey Cape is open for business and we are waiting to welcome you to our towns.
Thanks!
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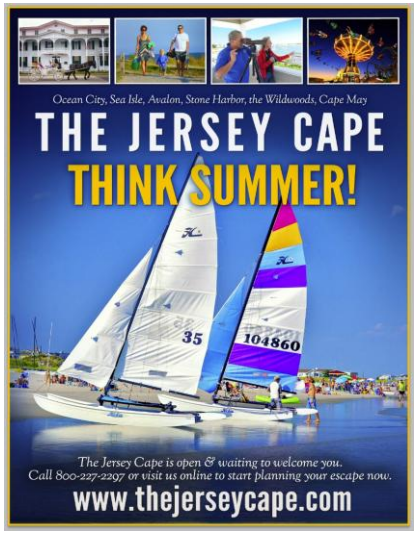
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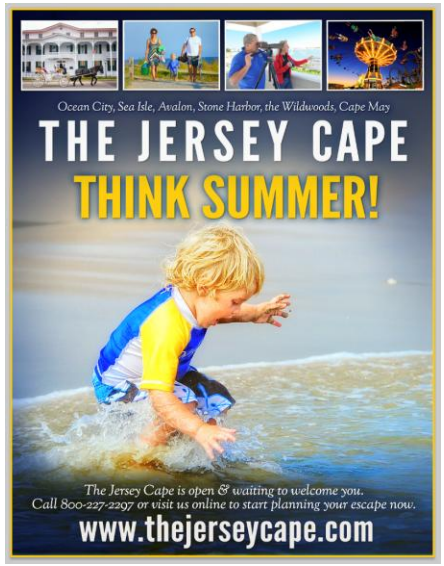
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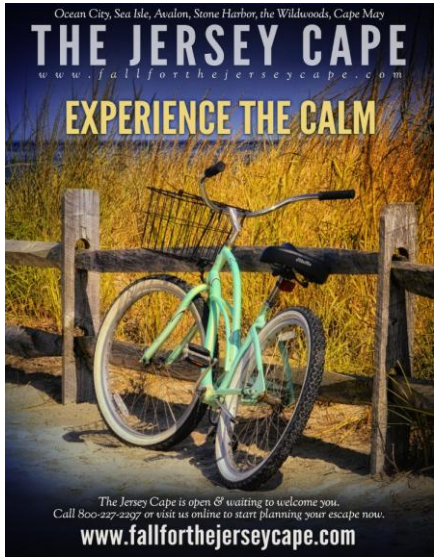
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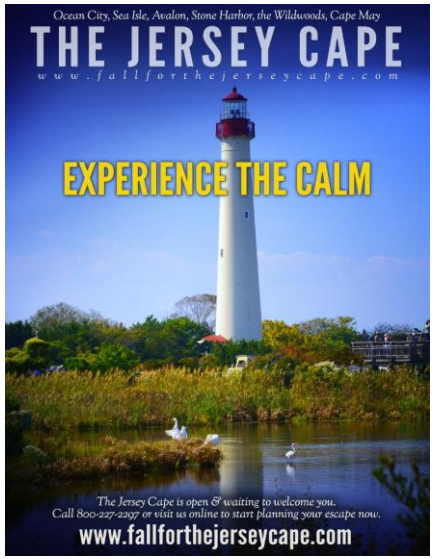
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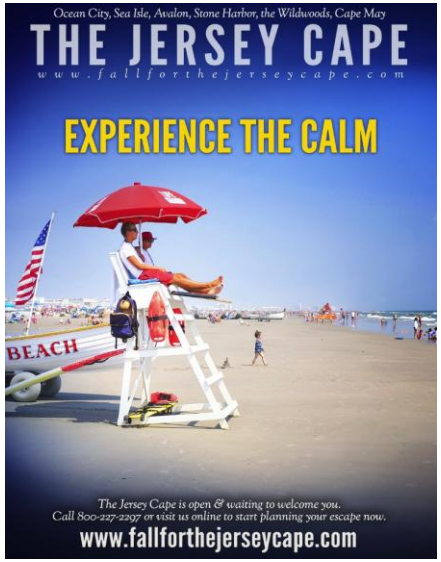
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