

SOUTHERN LAKE HURON ASSESSMENT



Charting the Course for the Bluewater Coast

2010-2012

Branding and Marketing

In this presentation:

- Goals and barriers
- Marketing concepts
- Product assessment
- Branding options
- Looking forward: strategies

For more information,
contact:

Dr. Christine Vogt
vogtc@msu.edu



Goals for Marketing and Branding

Goal is to grow the tourism and recreation industry in the Thumb

- Attract more day and overnight tourists to the Thumb area in a sustainable manner
 - Special events
- Develop more locally owned tourism and recreation businesses
- Sustainable use of natural resources, including agriculture
- Sense of place “coastal communities with lots to offer”
- Improving image and position as a regional destination
- Keeping Thumb area full-time and seasonal residents in the area
 - Coastal recreation activities
 - Inviting their friends and family

Barriers for Marketing and Branding

- Economic conditions in local area, state and nationally
- Lack of sufficient funding for tourism marketing
- Marketing activities, but not with necessary coordination and branding harmony
- Paid staff at Thumb CVB

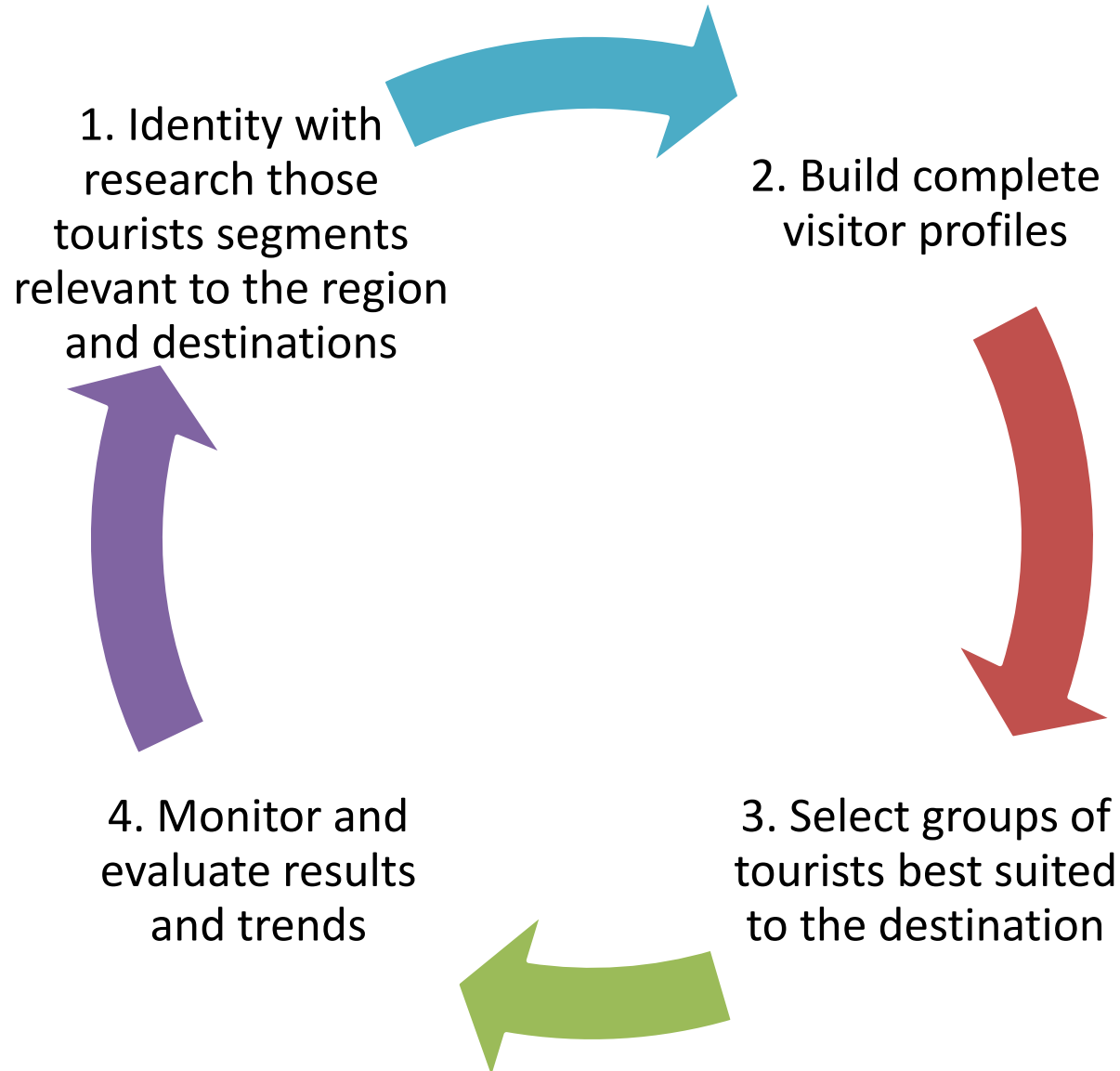
Marketing Concepts

Marketing Mix

- Product – coastal, natural resources, water, shoreline, ports, marinas
- Place – coast line, communities
- Promotions- multiple promoters, guides and brochures, some new media
- Price – affordable
- Partnerships – Discover the Blue, Thumb Area Tourism Council, Chambers, DDA, County Economic Development, Pure Michigan



Who do we want to attract?



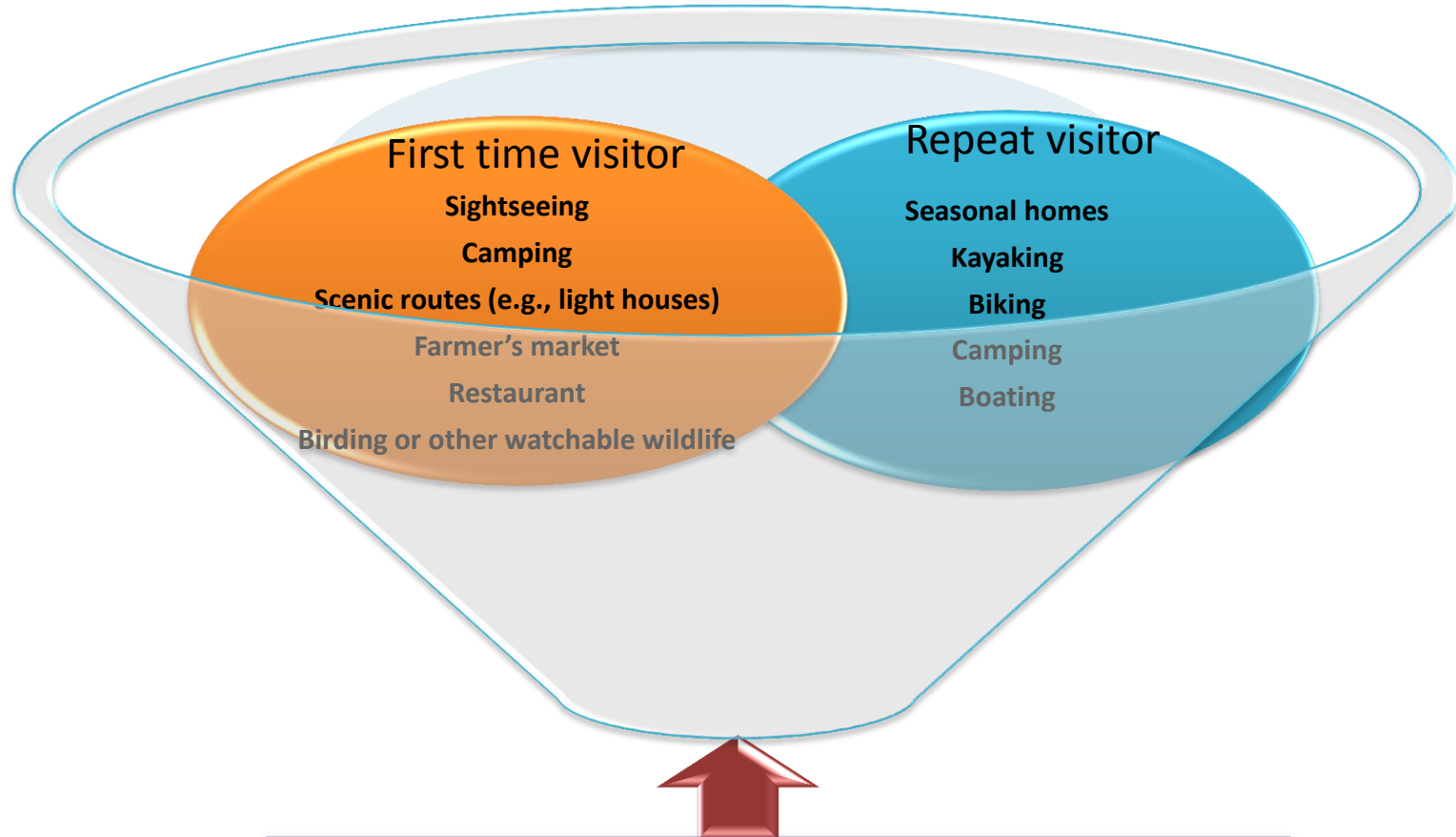
Consumer Research

Marketing Ideas

- Kid focused festivals or activities might attract families to the Thumb overnight
- Capitalize on the idea of the “close up north” in Detroit area
 - Increasing gas prices
 - Less time driving = more time relaxing
 - If they have a reason to stay the night, they will
- Weekend escape itineraries for couples

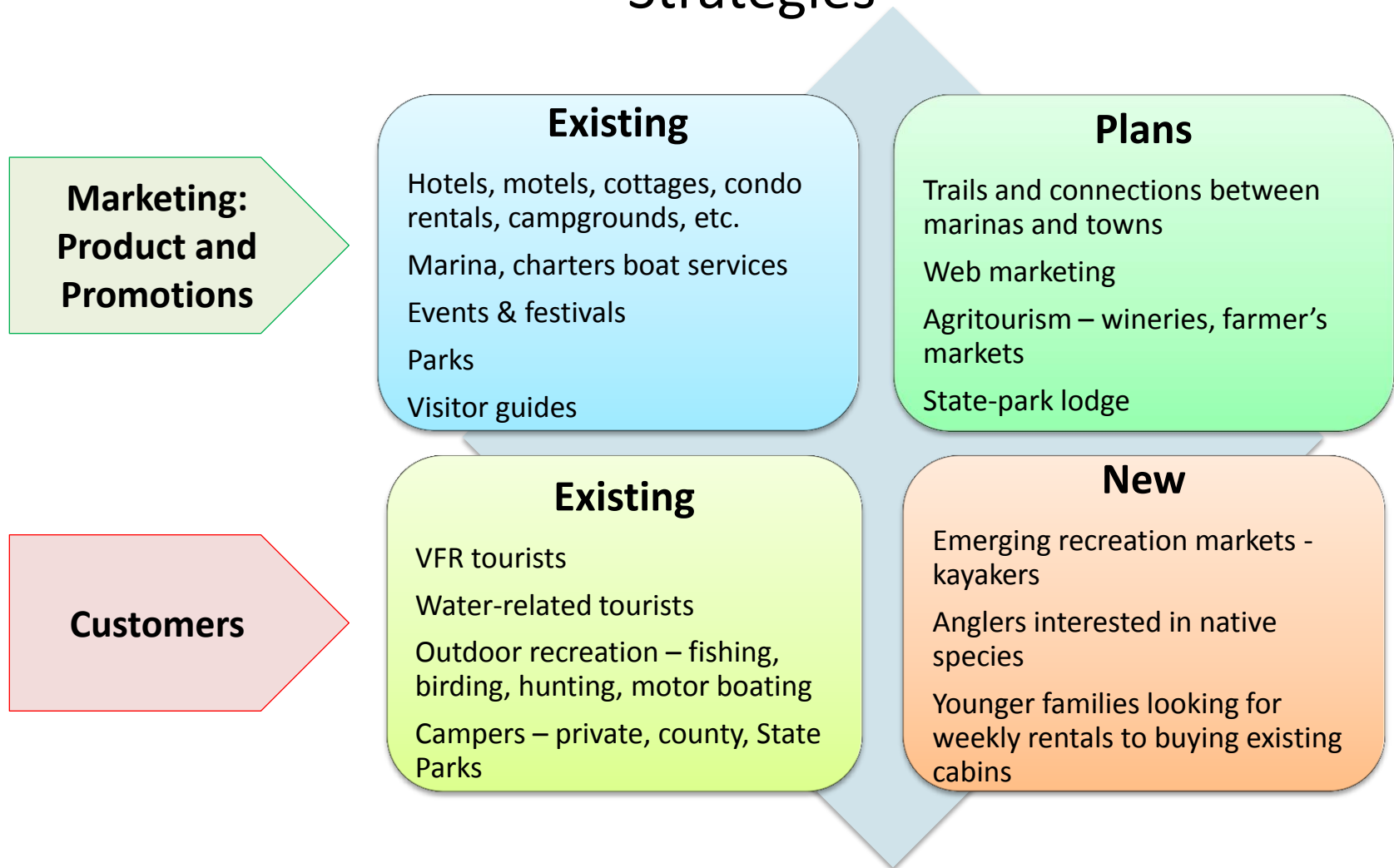
The Thumb: A close escape for Detroit residents; more beach and small towns for Flint-Saginaw residents

Experience Level and Experience Segmentation

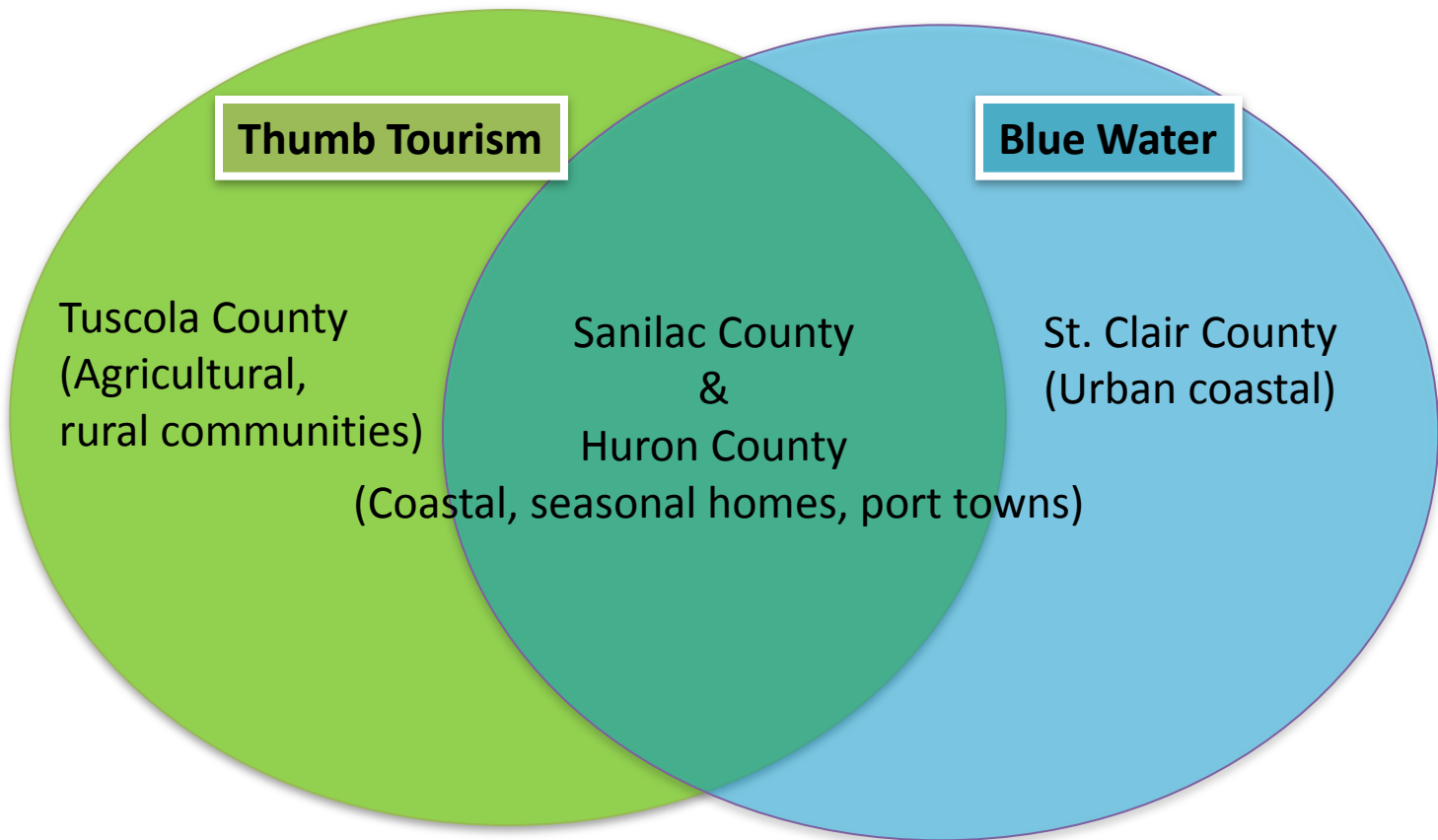


- MI residents (getting beyond Detroit and Saginaw area)
- Canadians: hold passport, Canadian \$ is strong,
- East coast residents like NY or PA: drive through

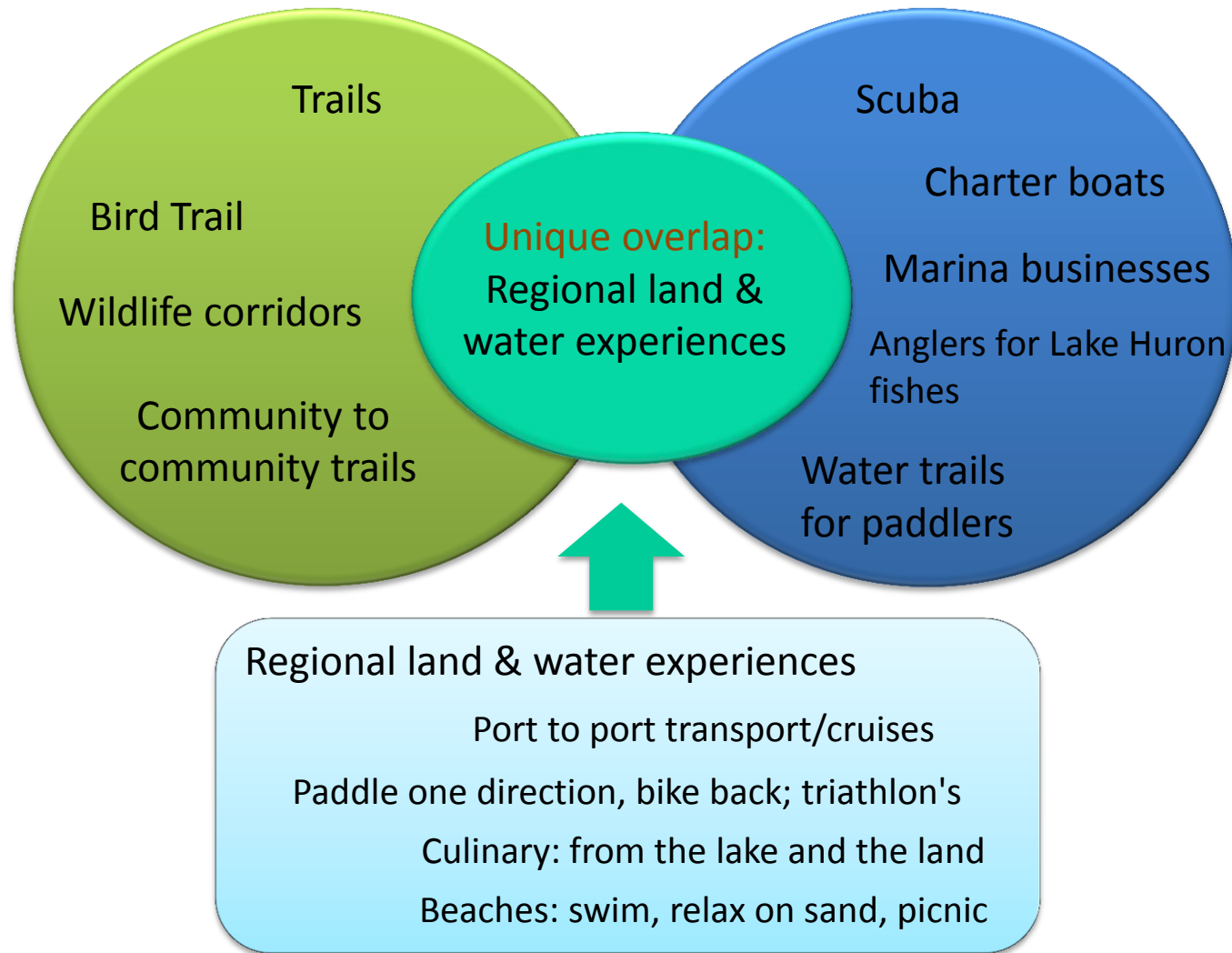
Overview of Destination Marketing Strategies



The Destination Marketing: Geography & Product Themes



Tourism Experiences Mapping



A trip around the coast of the Thumb is a linear journey

Other Possible Linear-Themed Attractions

Backpacking with shoreline campgrounds

Bike rides, runs/marathons, triathlons

Long distance bike and kayak trails

Banners along boulevards

Continuous garage sales

Regional park systems

Motorcycle touring

Wildlife corridors

Heritage routes

Birding trails

Beach walks

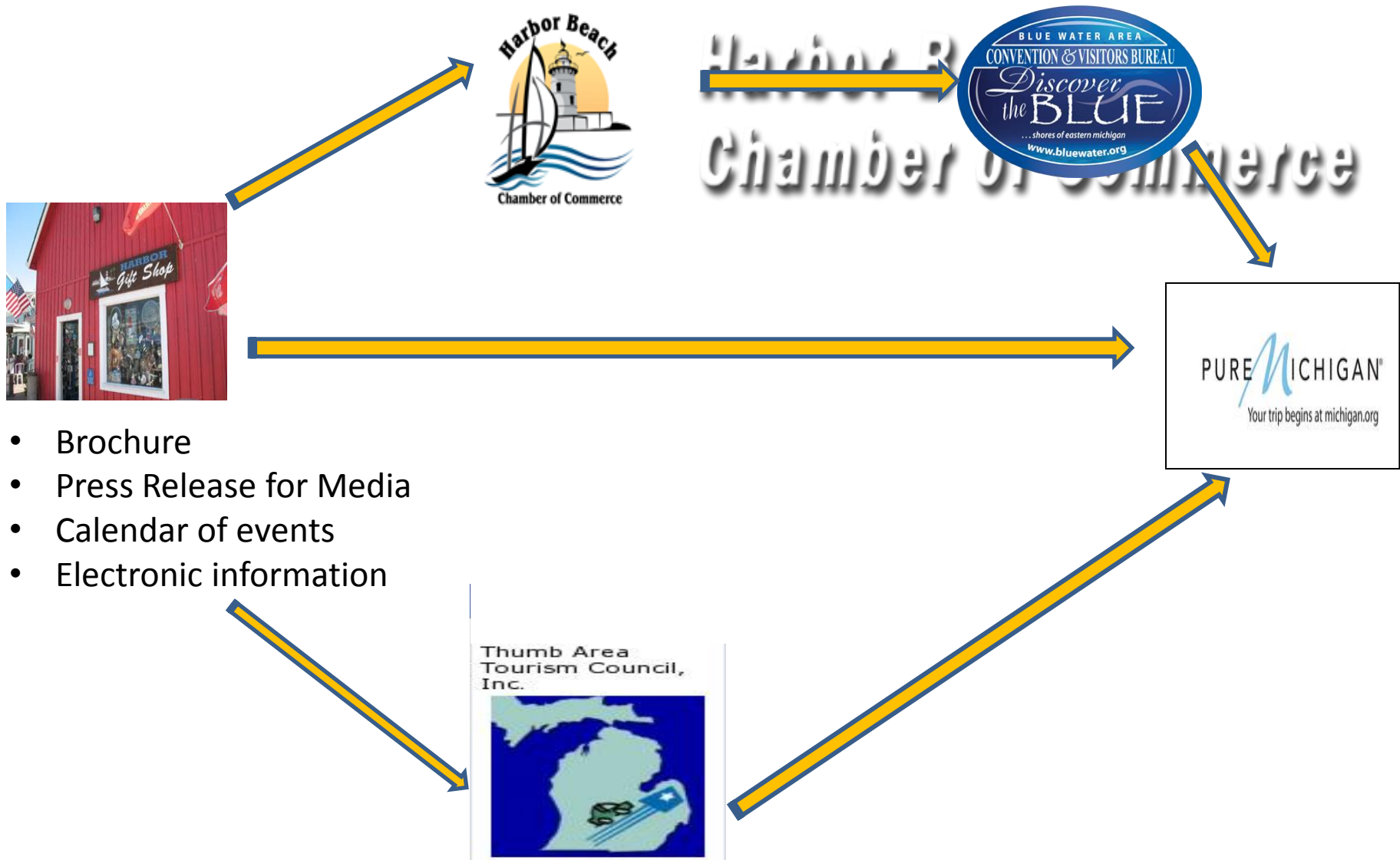
Itineraries

Regattas

Thumb Opportunities

In	Out
Walleye fishing	Chinook Salmon
Festivals	
Camping	
Native plants	Phragmites, muck
Close to home escapes	Long road trips
Fresh local foods	Unhealthy convenience, processed foods
M-25 trail for bicyclists and pedestrians	Old M-25 just for vehicles
Wind farms	Coal produced energy
Great Lakes Restoration	Invasive species; industrial pollution
Renewable energy manufacturing	Auto industry manufacturing
Water trails and paddlers	Big gas guzzling boats
Scuba diving	
Livable communities with recreation	
Promotion through social media	Outdated brochures
Digital photos & video	35 mm.
Facebook and Twitter	Postcards
Smart phones	Pay phones & guide books

Promoting Tourism Businesses & Experiences



Marketing Activities Assessment

New ways of
marketing

Facebook/Twitter	X	X			X	X	X
Listserv -email -Newsletter offer				X	X	X	X
Website	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Marketing research (primary data)						?	X
CVB/DMO		X	X	X		X	
Calendar of events		X	X	X	X	X	X
Coupons	X				X	X	X
Product -hotel -park -recreation -airport	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

Traditional ways of
marketing

Tuscola County	Sanilac County	Huron County	St. Clair County	Thumb Area Tourism Council	Blue Water	Travel Michigan
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Marketing Activities Benchmarking

Facebook/Twitter		X	X	X
Listserv -email -Newsletter offer	X	X	X	X
Website	X	X	X	X
Marketing research (primary data)		?	X	X
CVB		X		X
Calendar of events	X	X	X	X
Coupons	X	X	X	
Product -hotel -park -recreation -airport	X	X	X	X
	Thumb Area Tourism Council	Blue Water	Travel Michigan	Traverse City CVB

Analysis of Marketing Efforts

Facebook
Twitter

X

X

X

X

X

Listserve
-Email
-Newsletter offer

X

X

X

X

Website

X

X

X

X

X

X

X

Marketing
research

X

CVB

X

Information/visitor
center

X

Calendar
of events

X

X

X

X

X

X

Coupons

X

X

Product
-hotel
-park
-recreation
-airport

X

X

X

X

X

X

Tuscola
County

Sanilac
County

Huron
County

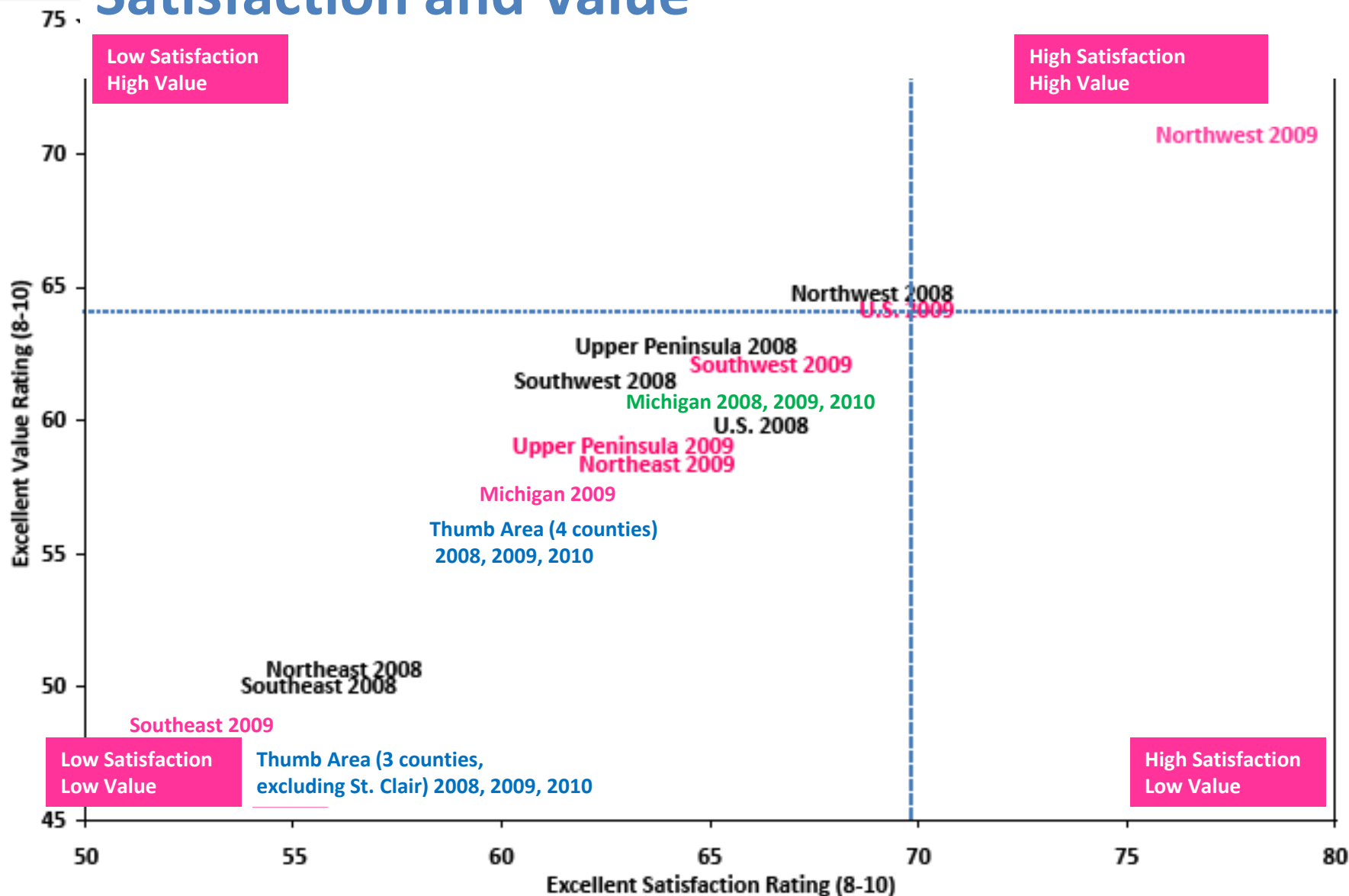
St. Clair
County

Thumb Area
Tourism Council

Blue Water
Area CVB

Travel
Michigan

Positioning Map for Michigan Destination Satisfaction and Value



Social Networks Used to Promote Michigan Lodging Properties



Ways Lodging Sector is Using Social Networks

Posting photos	77%
Posting updates	73%
Monitoring comments	48%
Collecting photos relevant to this property	32%
Posting videos	20%
Search for references to this property	23%
Following others' updates/tweets	21%
"Re-tweeting" or sharing another source's update or comment	13%
Purchasing ads	9%

Source of data: 2010 MI Lodging Survey by McCole

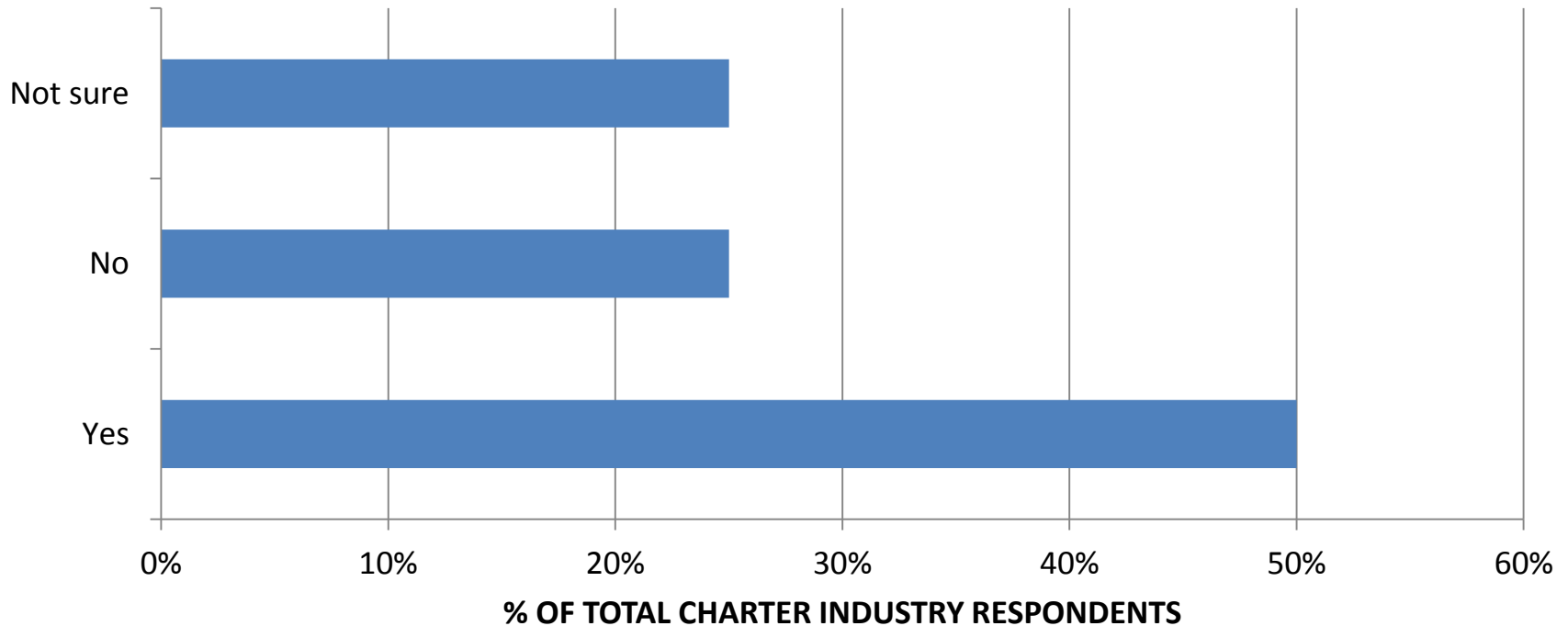
Reasons Lodging Sector is Using Social Networks

Promote or communicate information to guests/potential guests	83%
Show/communicate features of this property	74%
Strengthen relationships/build loyalty with guests	66%
Drive traffic to website	59%
Solicit feedback from guests	48%
Promote tourism in the region	48%
Maintain database/contact list	25%
Network with other businesses	24%
Better identify target markets	21%
Monitor competitors	18%
Promote "non-tourism" causes	10%

Source of data: 2010 MI Lodging Survey by McCole

Linkages between Charter Businesses and Pure MI Marketing

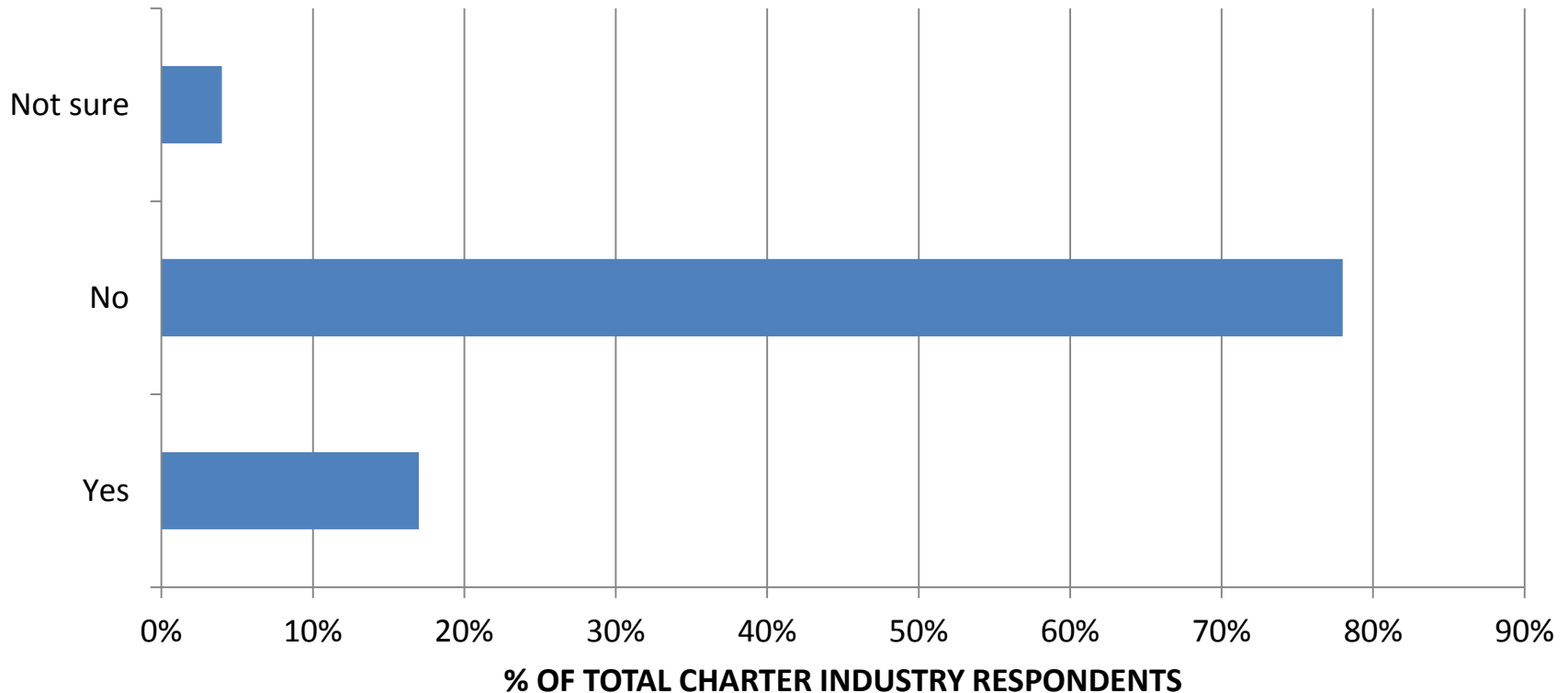
2011 Lake Huron Regional Fisheries Workshops
Charter Industry's Belief that "Pure MI" Promotion Campaign will
Generate New Customers (n=28)



Charter Businesses Linking with Pure MI Marketing

2011 Lake Huron Regional Fisheries Workshops

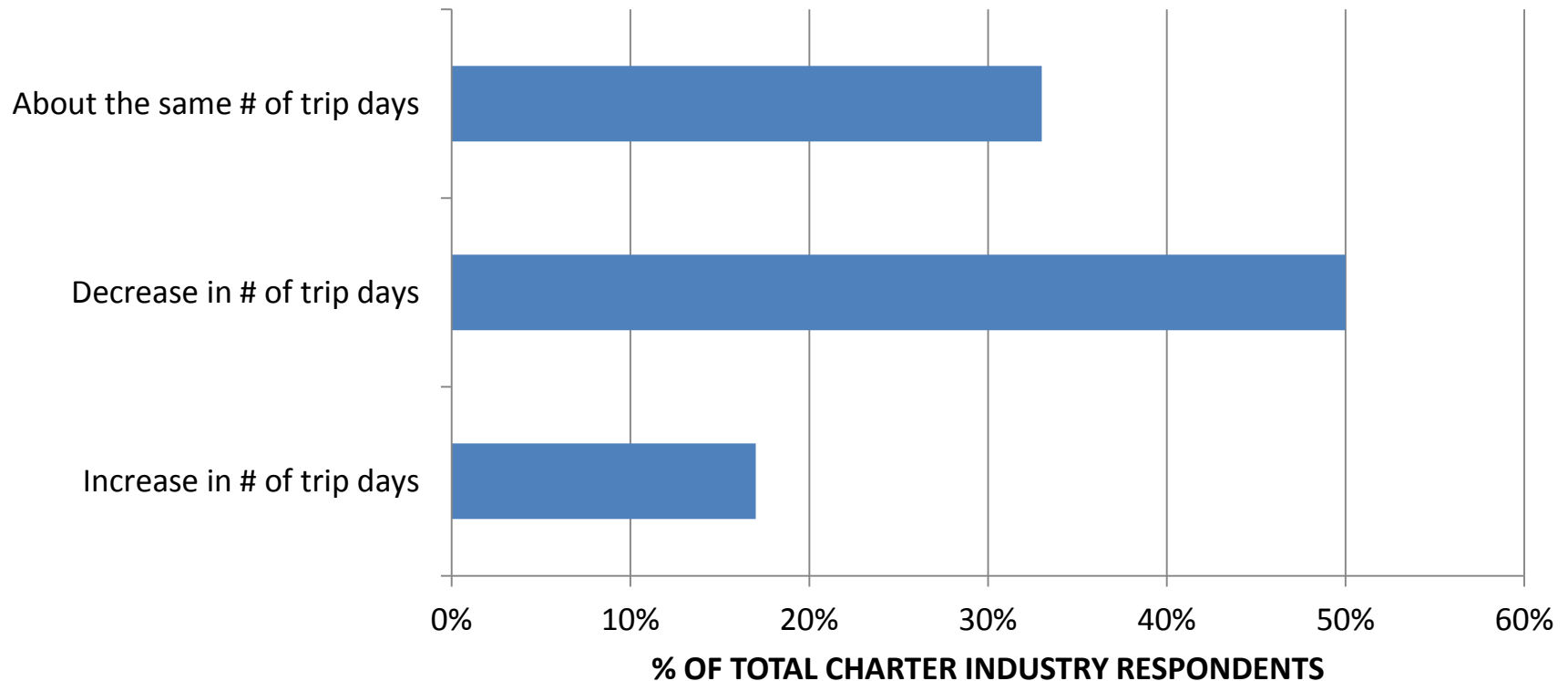
Charter Industry Who Have Page on 'Pure Michigan' Website (n=23)



Estimation of Charter Demand in 2011

2011 Lake Huron Regional Fisheries Workshops

Charter Industry's Prediction of 2011 Trip Days Compared to 2010 (n=18)

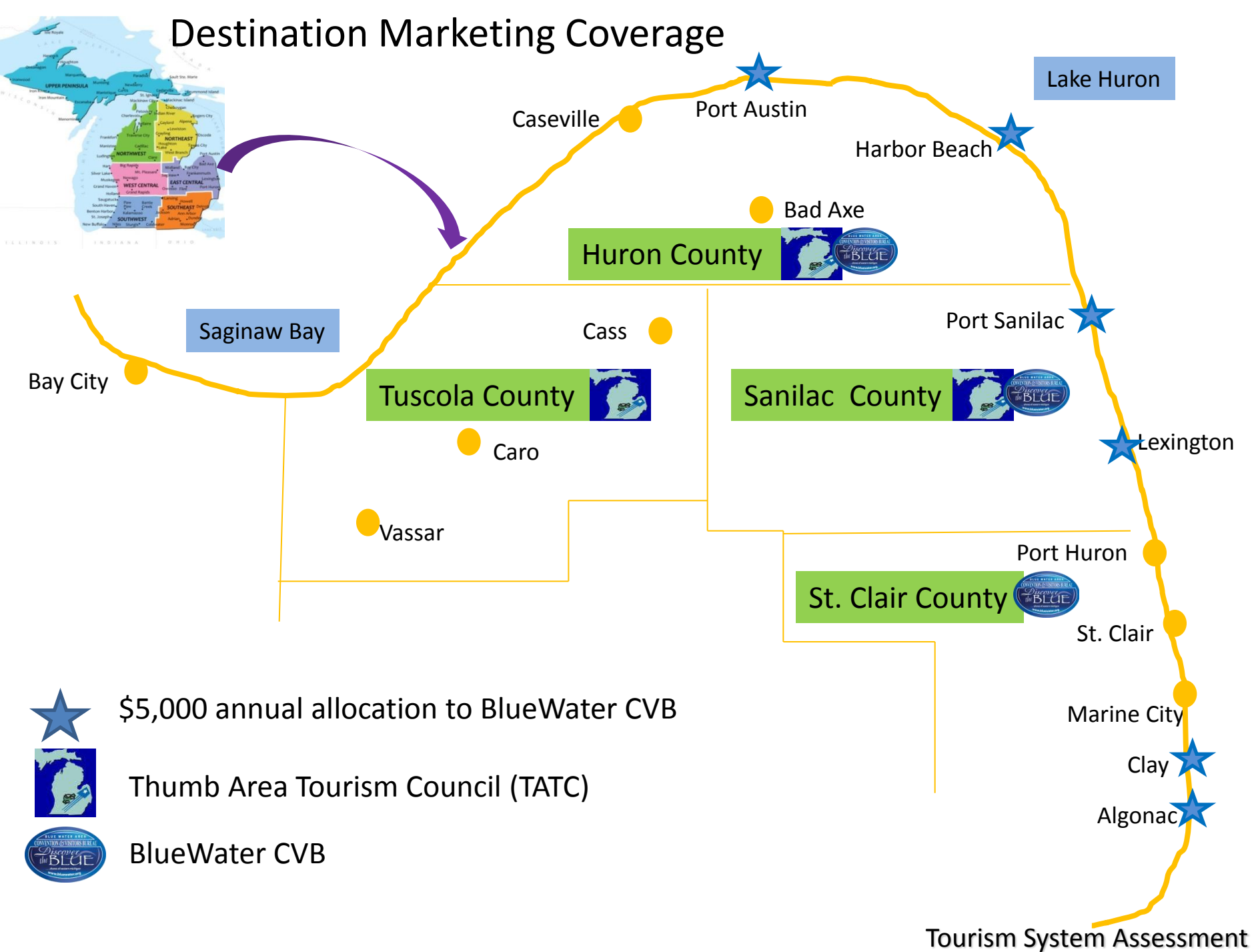


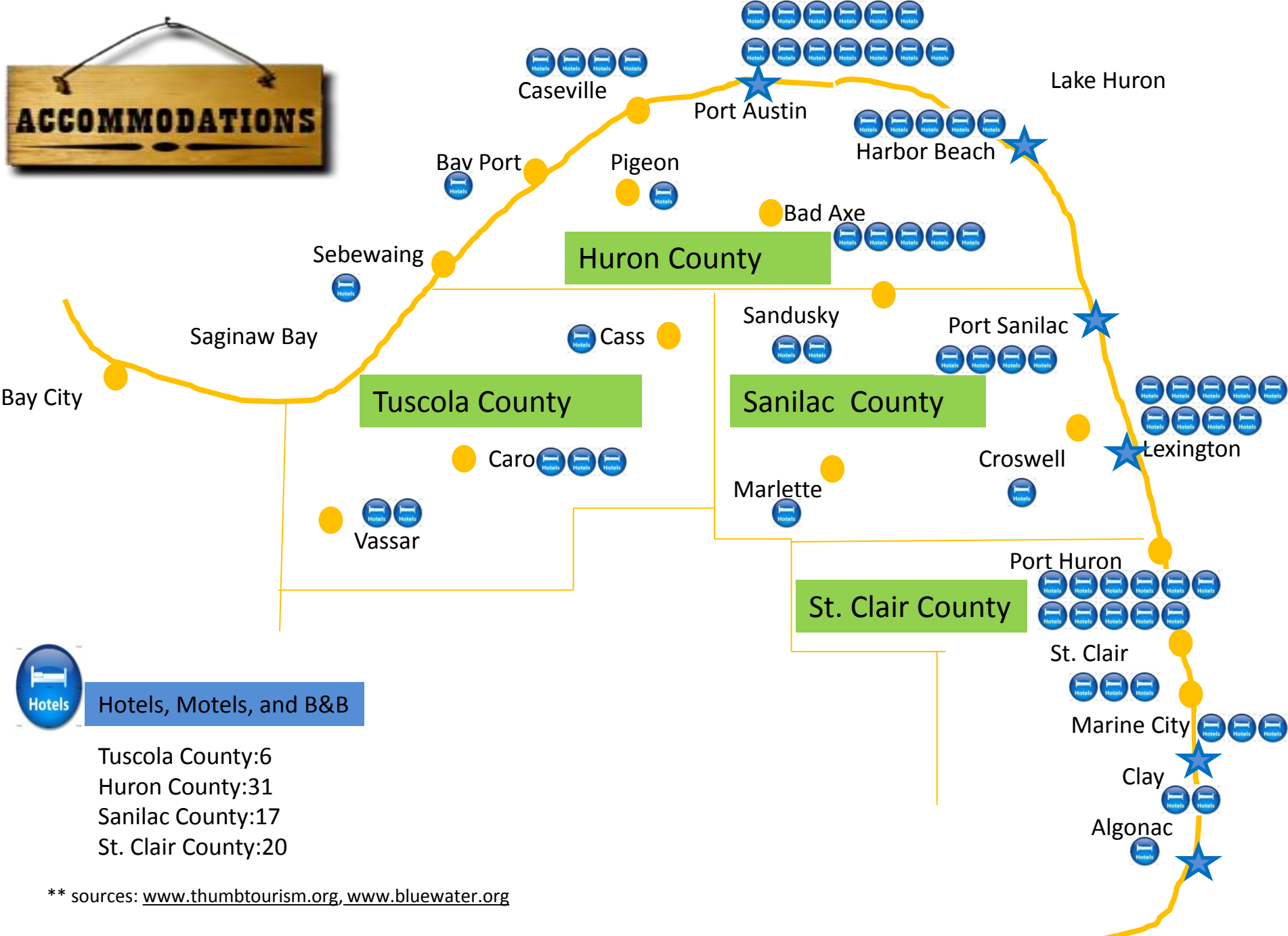
Product Assessment



- Inventoried based on brochures, guides, websites
- Visited and assessed
- Reviewed secondary research – Travel Michigan and other sources
- Product ideas focused on linking existing linear/corridor ideas that fit with the coastline, communities, and nearby land resources

Destination Marketing Coverage

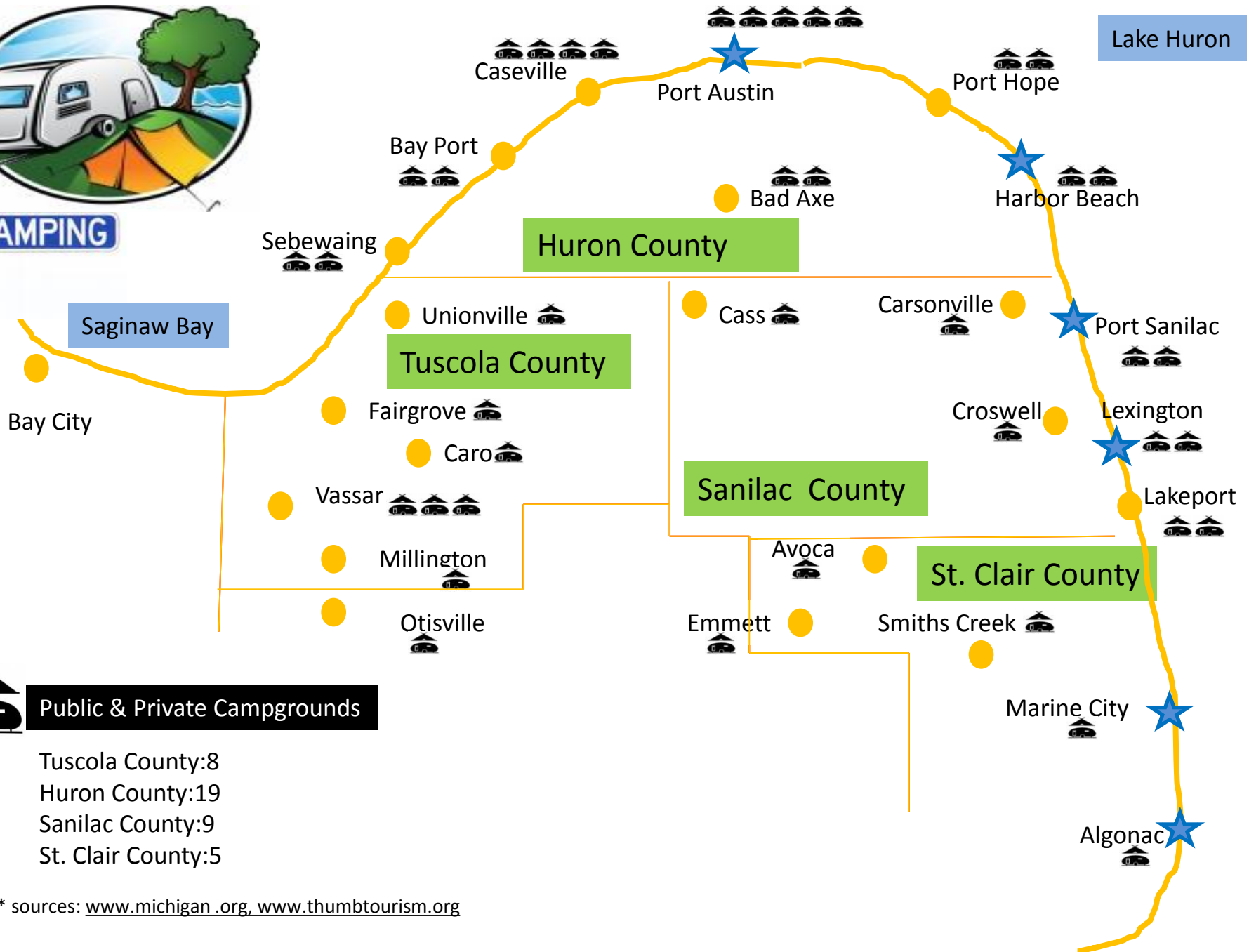




** sources: www.thumbtourism.org, www.bluewater.org



CAMPING

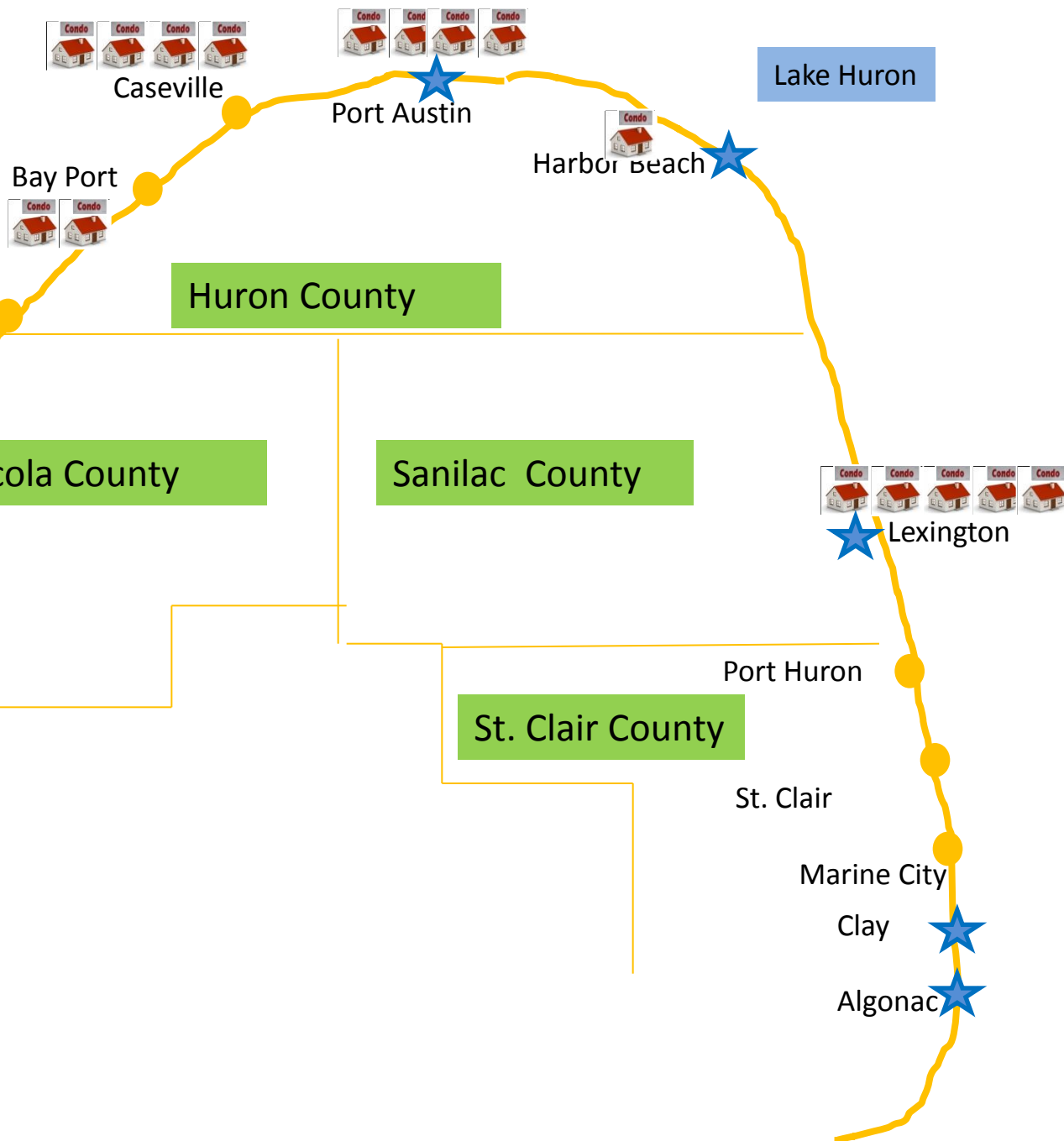


Public & Private Campgrounds

Tuscola County:8
 Huron County:19
 Sanilac County:9
 St. Clair County:5

** sources: www.michigan.org, www.thumbtourism.org

Cottages & Condominium Rentals

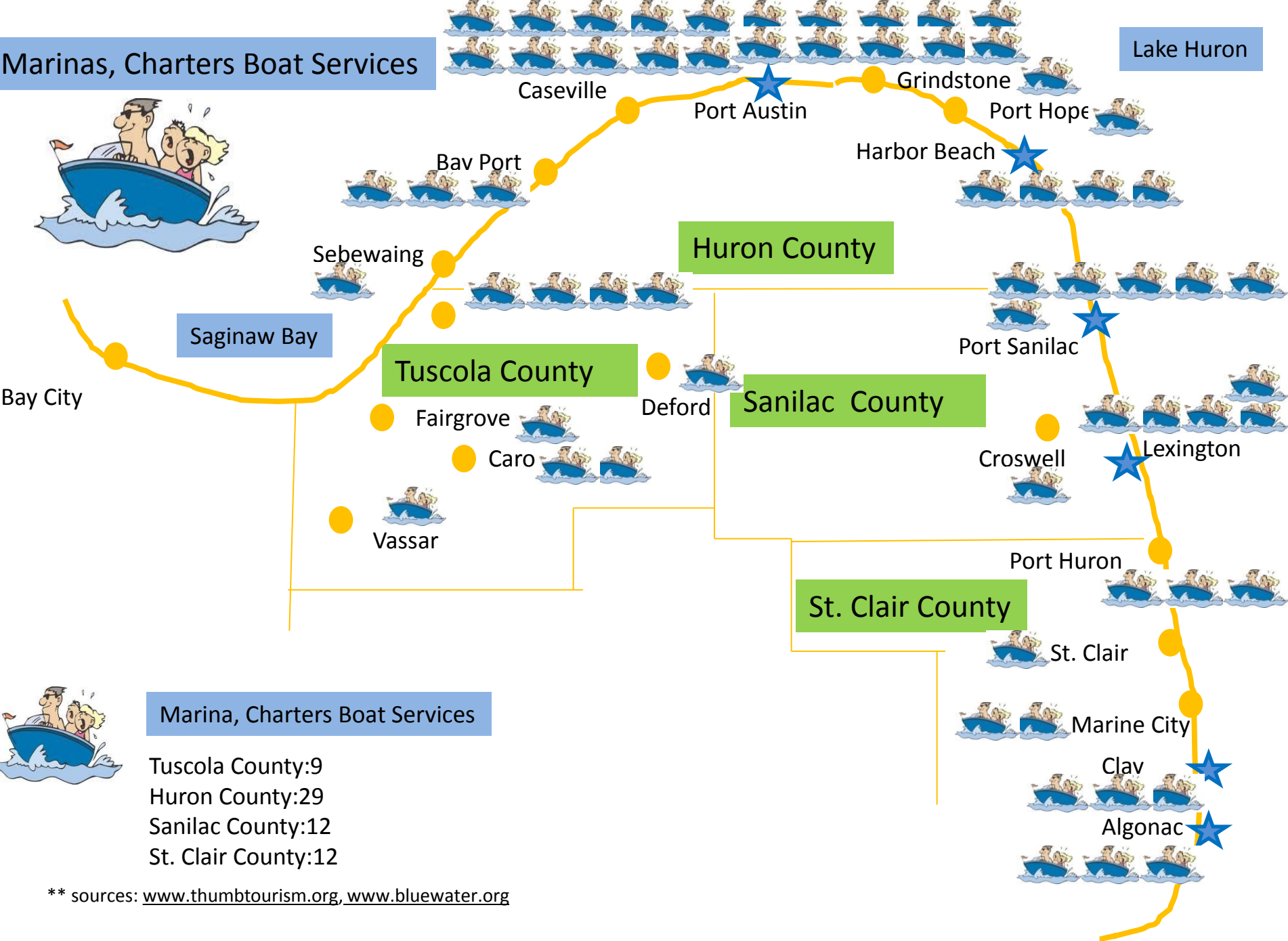


Cottages & Condominium Rentals

St. Clair County: 0
Huron County: 11
Sanilac County: 5
Tuscola County: 0

** source: www.michigan.org

Marinas, Charters Boat Services

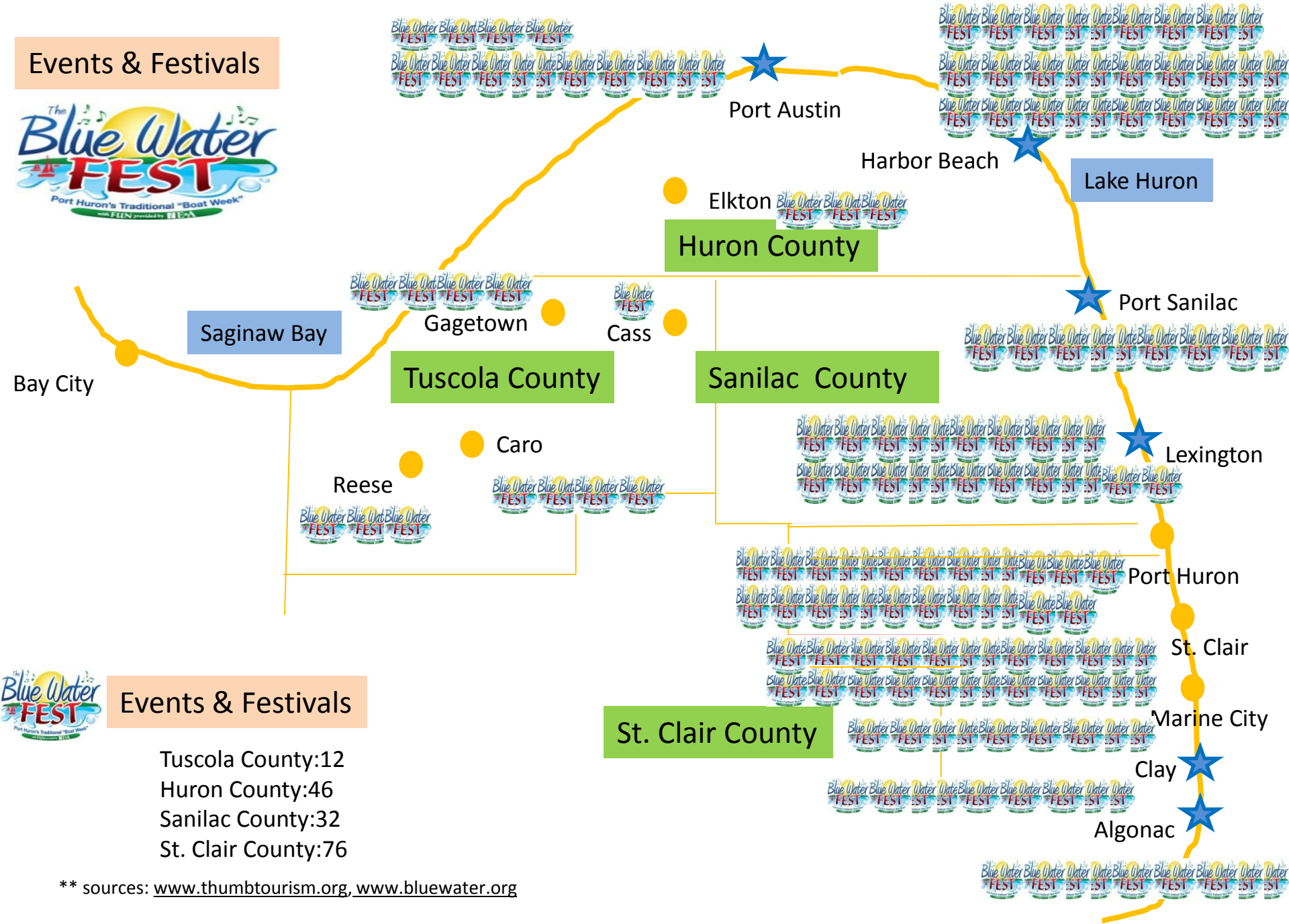


Marina, Charters Boat Services

Tuscola County:9
Huron County:29
Sanilac County:12
St. Clair County:12

** sources: www.thumbtourism.org, www.bluewater.org

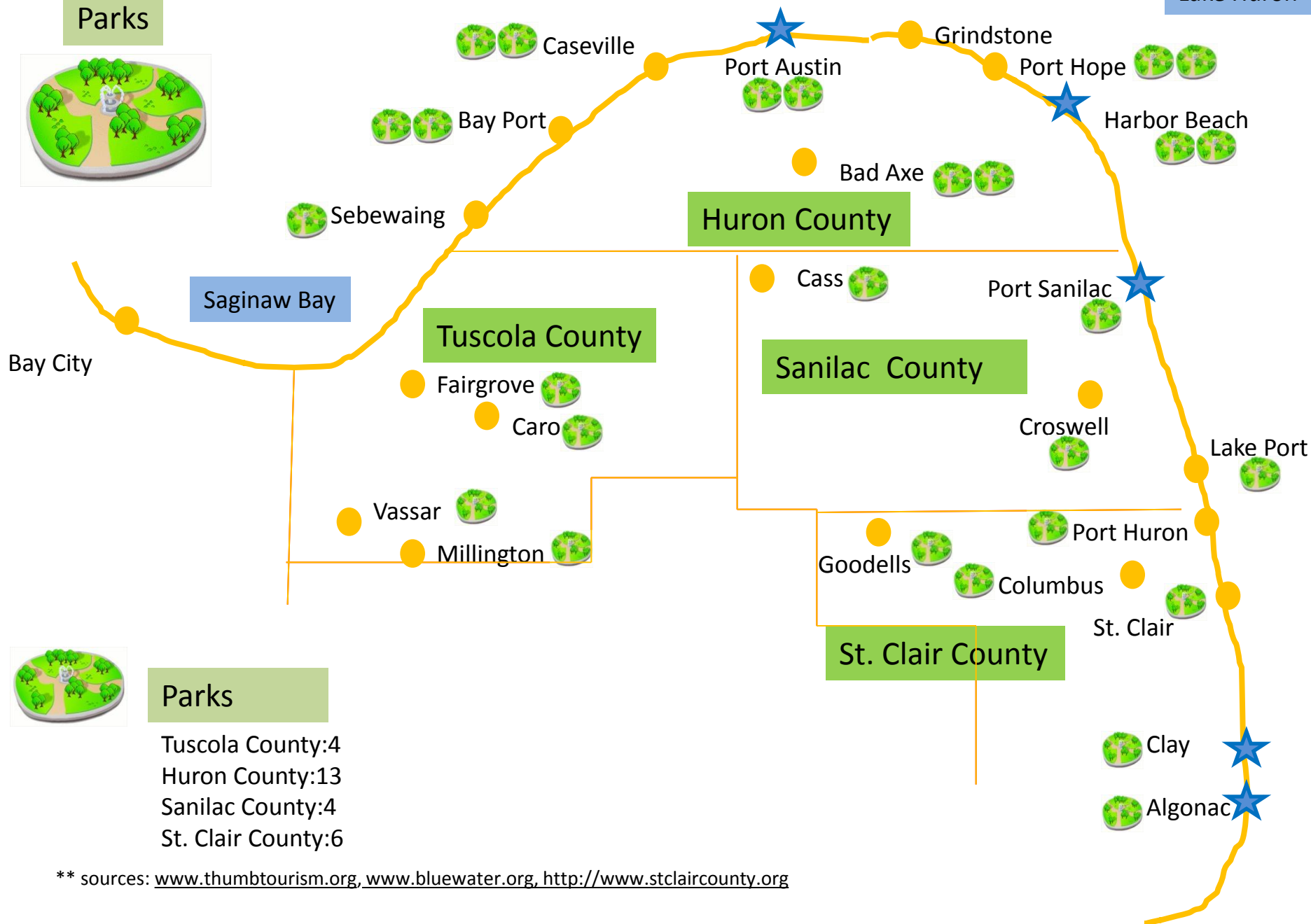
Events & Festivals



Parks



Lake Huron



Parks

Tuscola County:4
Huron County:13
Sanilac County:4
St. Clair County:6

** sources: www.thumbtourism.org, www.bluewater.org, <http://www.stclaircounty.org>

Sightseeing Drive



This coastal drive affords the opportunity to take photos and enjoy the natural beauty in one of the many roadside parks, appreciate the functionality of the lighthouses or paw through the many antique stores on your journey.

The Itinerary: M25 Coast

- Stop 1 – Lexington
 - Take in a musical performance during Music at the Harbor
- Stop 2 – Port Sanilac
 - Take picture of the Lighthouse – it has a distinguished design of a white tower and red roof
- Stop 3 – Harbor Beach
 - Stop at the Corner Store to look for gifts & quilting supplies or Toy Crossing where none of the toys require a battery
- Stop 4 – Huron City
 - Stretch your legs with a guided tour of the House of Seven Gables and other historic buildings in this quaint village
- Stop 5 – Caseville
 - Walk through town looking at the various murals



‘Foodies’



The Itinerary: M25 Coast

- Stop 1 – Port Sanilac
 - Visit the Blue Water Winery & Vineyard
- Stop 2 – Grindstone City
 - Share a meal at Captain Morgan’s Restaurant where you can watch the charter boats coming in and grab some ice cream for dessert
- Stop 3 – Port Austin
 - Attend the Farmer’s Market on Saturday in downtown with over 100 vendors you are sure to find something. Afterwards enjoy a drink at the Farm Restaurant or the Bank Restaurant while sitting outside at the café tables
- Stop 4 – Caseville
 - Create dinner on the beach with Farmer’s Market finds

Adventurer/Active Recreation



The Itinerary: M25 Coast – the coastal edge for outdoor recreation

- Option 1 – Lexington
 - Try your luck by fishing off the pier
- Option 2 – Port Sanilac
 - Scuba dive in the Sanilac Shores Underwater Preserve to discover shipwrecks
- Option 3 – Port Hope
 - Charter fishing or bass fishing off the rocky shoreline
- Option 4 – Port Austin
 - Rent a kayak to explore the coastline, sea caves and a sea stack called Turnip Rock

Marketing Checklist

For Businesses, Government, and Community Organizations

SOUTHERN
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Contact: Christine Vogt, Ph.D., MSU, vogtc@msu.edu

The goal of marketing is to attract the right customers at the right time. So who are the right customers? When is the right time? Marketing research, customer information, personal ties to customers, and experience can help marketing efforts be more successful.

A checklist of marketing activities, including product, pricing, place and promotions, can help a business or organization identify marketing activities needing attention and investments.

Product Checklist

- ☐ Inventory offerings – goods, services, experiences
- ☐ What is new?
- ☐ What is unique?
- ☐ What is not demanded by customers? Consider dropping products.

Pricing Checklist

- ☐ Is the price competitive? Too high? Too low?
- ☐ Can price be lowered on certain seasons/days/times to stimulate demand?
- ☐ Should I offer a coupon? How to distribute – in advertising; online?

Place Checklist

- ☐ Is my location attracting the right customers? Can a new sign help?
- ☐ Can interior or exterior benefit from painting, planting flowers, lighting?
- ☐ Are nearby or regional attractions and services promoted at my location to keep tourists in area longer?

Promotion Checklist

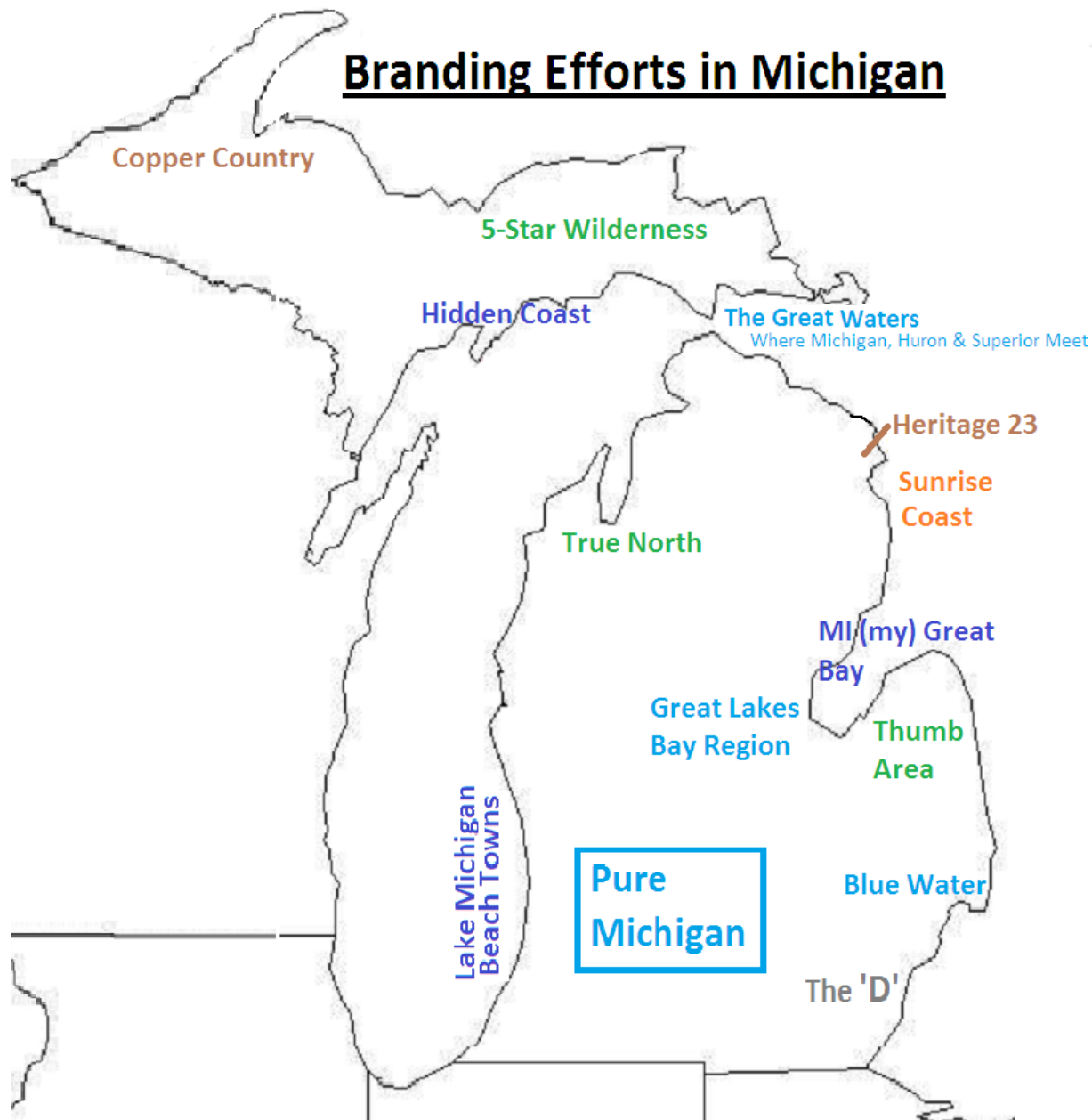
- ☐ Updated printed brochure
 - Distribute locally and regionally to tourist information centers
 - Distribute to Travel Michigan's Welcome Centers
- ☐ Onsite signage – “open” sign, welcome, hours, name of business,
- ☐ Updated website? With reservation and purchase capabilities? Search engine? Map? Discount or coupons?
 - Linked to local chamber or county website?
 - Linked to regional or destination marketing organization?
 - Thumb Area Tourism Council www.thumbtourism.org
 - BlueWater Area CVB www.bluewater.org
 - Travel Michigan www.michigan.org
- ☐ Customer's emails for newsletter or special promotions?
- ☐ Social Networks? Facebook? Twitter? Blogs? Need to think often about interesting, useful, and visual information and stories to share with others.
- ☐ Media
 - Purchasing advertising that targets local and tourist markets
 - Listings in calendar of events
 - Press releases to promote upcoming events and other news

Other

- ☐ Marketing research – where are your customers coming from? Collect zip codes and count using Excel.

Branding Options

Branding Efforts in Michigan





Past Names for the Thumb

(elicited at January 2012 workshop)

- Thumb
- Discover the Blue
- Blue Water Area
- East Michigan
- Tip of the Thumb
- Mid Michigan
- Where the countryside meets the shore
- The road less traveled
- The Close up North
- Huron shores
- Saginaw Bay-Lake Huron
- My Green Thumb (Huron County)
- The First Resort North (Lexington)
- Simply Sanilac



Current Marketing Funding

- Blue Water Area— St. Clair hotel tax with annual fees
- Thumb Area Tourism Council – originally grant funded, businesses currently pay for listing
- Each community continues to have their own marketing efforts. Chamber, festivals, County
- Simply Sanilac—Sanilac Tourism Council
- State and county parks – Passport Program for MI



Target Market: Illinois, Ohio, Kentucky, Canada, Michigan. Heavily advertised in Grand Rapids.

Budget: 2012 \$500,000 budget that has grown from \$50,000 in 2008. Funding comes from a 5% hotel assessment and partner agreements.

Goal: Attract visitors from places far enough away where they'll spend the night. Gain out-of-state interest in the region.



Room Assessment “Bed Tax”

- History of room assessments in Michigan
- Review of public acts
- Why doesn't it fit for this area?
 - Minimum number of hotel rooms.
 - Camping and private houses are never included.
 - It would be necessary to hire a staff and implement a board of directors.



Great Lakes Bay Region

- Steps in to manage marketing efforts for the Thumb.
- Focuses on business, economic development and education, not specifically the coast.
- Has established domain in Midland, Saginaw, and Bay City.



“East Ports”

- Create something that could be compared to the Hamptons to bring outsiders to the area.
- Potentially splitting the Thumb in two areas – north side and east side.
- Select businesses using brand/logo.
- Early stages of marketing, no apparent funding stream.



New Brand

- Need new geographic representation
- Themed around the “new” Thumb recreation and tourism experience
- Generate a logo
- To be successful, people from a variety of backgrounds must get involved.
 - Marketing, business, governmental
 - Champion(s)



Stakeholder Reactions

Nine (9) respondents indicated would add the logo or tag line to their place of work website or print materials. Same respondents would contribute time or money to help promote the area in new parts of the state or country.

How would a regional brand be helpful?

A change in the mindset often comes with the label. I support a different regional approach.

The brand (East Ports) will in fact give identity, as well as promote private businesses, public municipalities, and real estate sales.

I don't think the region needs a new brand, we just need to reach new people with the current marketing effort.

We don't want to waste resources and overlap.

Another new brand may confuse the public.

Discover Blue is successful.



Stakeholder Reactions: Other Feedback

“The East Ports” says nothing to me as a potential visitor—what is it? Is it just for boaters? This brand says nothing about the thumb that makes them unique, different from the rest of the state—we have ports all around the state. I would spend more time reviewing the assets of the area and the unique elements and come up with a brand that hits on those.”

“I do not mind the branding but think they need to come up with something that says this area. I personally like the Thumb but St. Clair will not use it and neither will Sanilac. They say is has a negative connotation. They must know something that I do not. **We need to come up with just the right name.**”

“My suggestion is ‘The Hurons.’ It’s all inclusive and not exclusive of the cultures and riches of the Thumb! A logo I was thinking about... picture a lighthouse, shores with the coloration of a sunrise, a life preserver moving right to the viewer, then wind turbines and farmland.”



Summary: Marketing and Branding Strategies

- Layers of Integrated Marketing
 - Local, state-wide, nation-wide, international
- Possibly a new brand concept.
- Strengthening partnerships with more frequent and productive communications.
- Product packaging along trail, corridor, itinerary concepts, weaving together natural and cultural resources.
- Markets – in Michigan: Lansing, Grand Rapids, Ann Arbor; nearby Canada; pass-through.
- Overnight development that can lead to hotel tax and destination marketing funding.



Looking Forward: Marketing and Branding Strategies

- Link with state
 - Attractive brand that will show up in more parts of state's developments.
 - Multi-million, award winning campaign.
 - Reach out-of-state and country markets.
 - Your tax money.
 - Web-based linkages, as well as the people side, including being more involved in regional and state tourism meetings and initiatives.

Link to Statewide Promotions

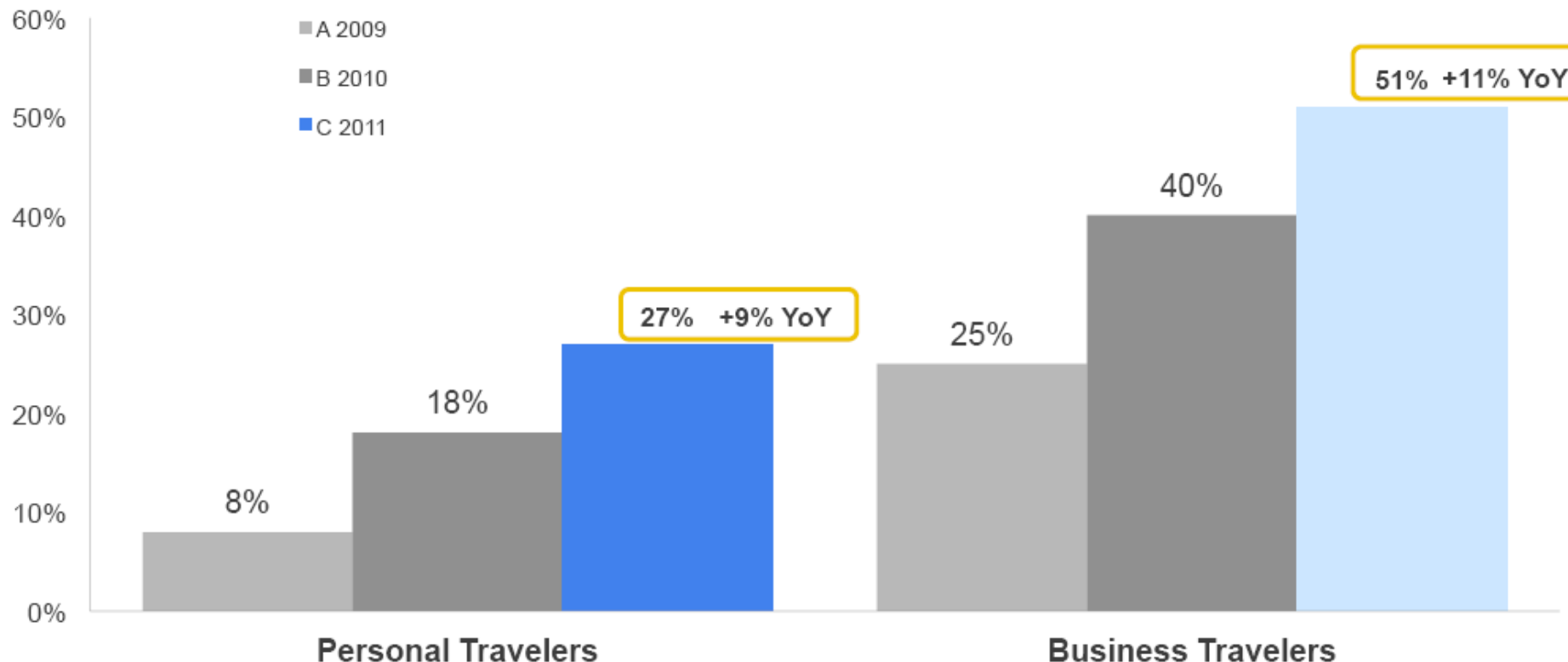
No matter what option is best for the area, the final product must be linked with the state's tourism campaign.



Use of Mobile Phones for Travel Info Is Growing Significantly Year Over Year

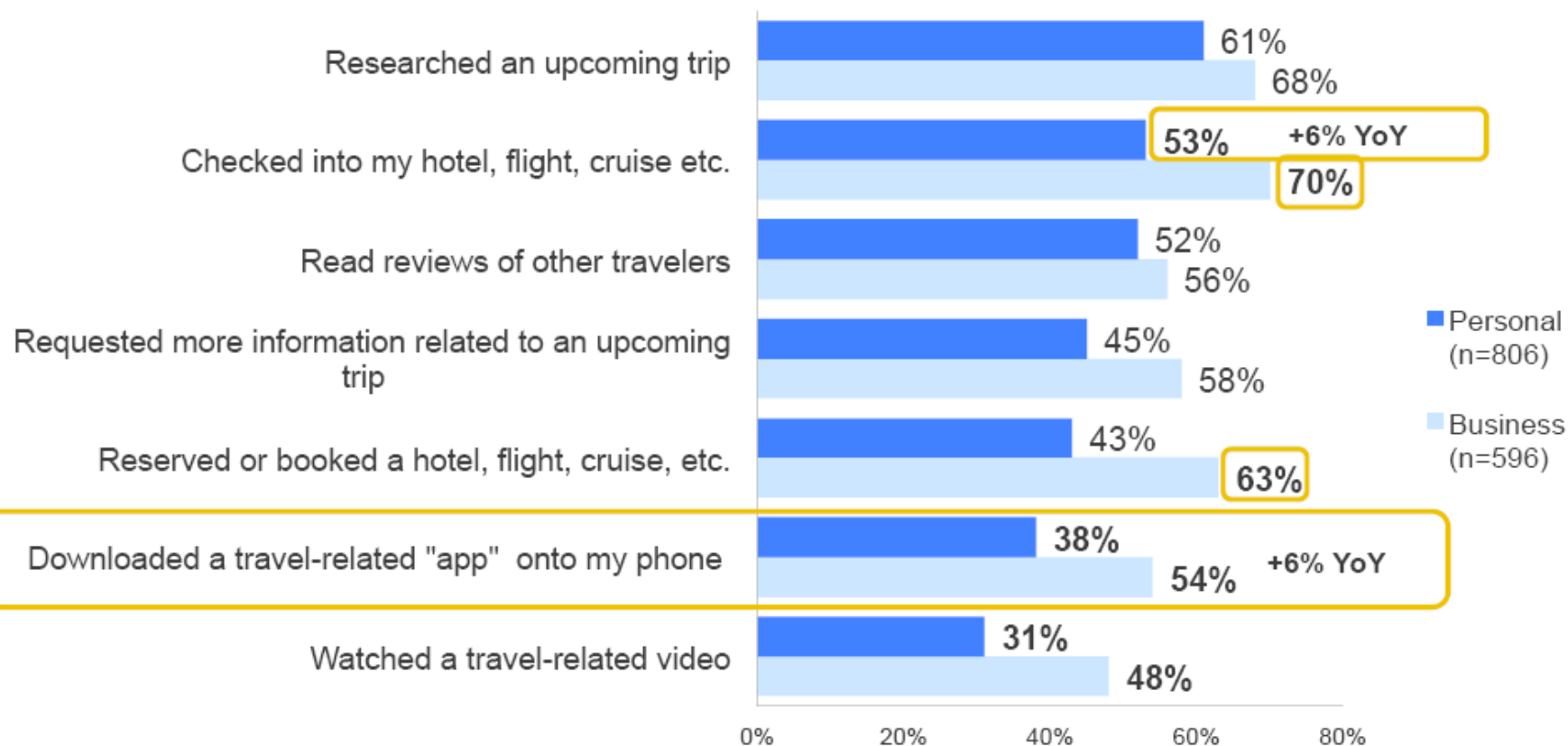
APPS!!!!

Use Mobile Phone To Access Internet For Travel Info



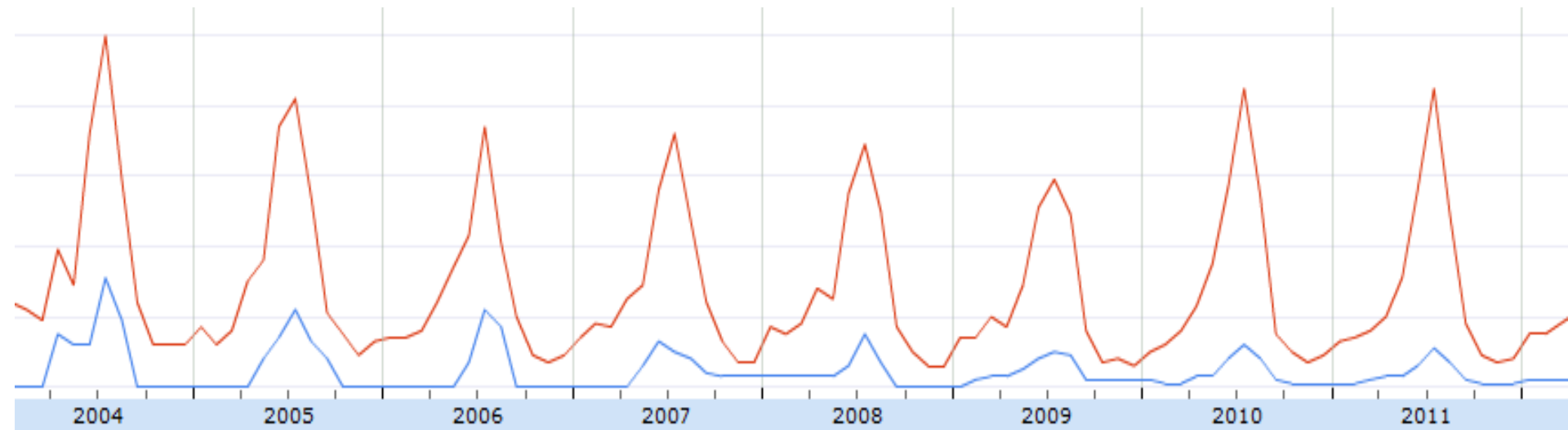
Travelers Rely on Mobile Devices to Research Travel Information Online

Travel-Related Activities Done Using Mobile Device

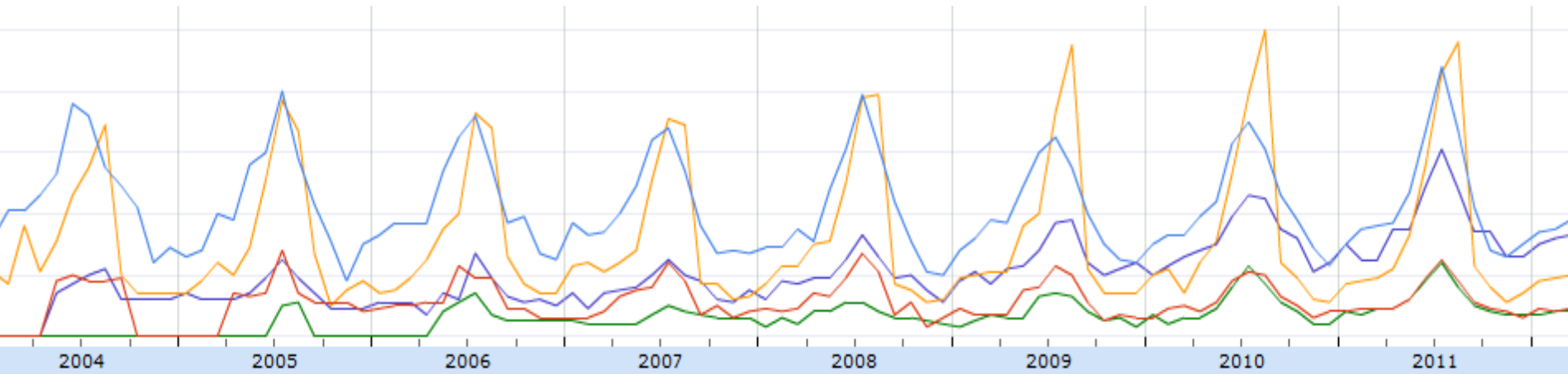


Market Research: insight into the Google search database

Lake Michigan Beach (red)
Lake Huron Beach (blue)



Thumb Towns



Yellow: Caseville

Blue: Port Austin

Red: Port Sanilac

Purple: Lexington

Green: Harbor Beach

There is a 5 search limit;

Sebewaing had less volume than any of these