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“2013 Governor’s Awards for Innovative Tourism Collaboration Announced”

The 2013 Governor’s Awards for Innovative Tourism Collaboration were presented at the April 14 - 16 Pure Michigan Governor’s Conference on Tourism in Detroit. The awards were presented by the Michigan Travel Commission and the Tourism Industry Coalition of Michigan.

The Governor’s Awards for Innovative Tourism Collaboration were created by the Michigan Travel Commission, in conjunction with the Governor’s Office, to elevate the status of Michigan’s tourism industry and to promote innovative collaboration as an effective, efficient and creative operating principle for the industry. The inaugural awards were presented at the 2009 annual Tourism Conference.

In the Experience Development & Presentation category, The “Michigan Catch & Cook” collaboration took the honors. This collaboration included six partners: the Michigan Charter Boat Association, the Michigan Restaurant Association, the Michigan Department of Agriculture & Rural Development, the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, the Michigan Sea Grant and the Michigan State University Department of Fisheries and Wildlife. Anglers on the Great Lakes can set out on a charter boat in the morning and enjoy their fresh catch at a restaurant in the afternoon as a result of the collaboration of Michigan Catch and Cook. The program is an innovative and compelling experience that brings recreational fishing and the restaurant industry together – expanding the services offered to clients by charter boat fishing companies, generating new business for restaurants and promoting Michigan’s Great Lakes. The concept of lake to plate has enhanced the visitor experience not just with the catch but with the anticipation of a great meal ahead.

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Experience Grand Rapids won in the category of Tourism Marketing & Promotion for their “Cool Brews & Hot Eats” promotion, which included 59 restaurants and breweries for the collaboration. The partnering organizations were creative in their ideas and offered beer pairing events and beer-inspired dishes. The media rallied behind the promotion, blogs detailed the activities, visual stories were created on Instagram, and QR codes were utilized at the breweries for prize giveaways. The promotion ignited a collaborative fire inside the already passionate local chefs and brewers, all in support of Michigan tourism.

The third and final award went to The Henry Ford and the Shanghai Auto Museum in the category of Non-Traditional Partnerships. The Henry Ford’s relationship with the Shanghai Auto Museum began in 2010 with a letter of cooperation between the two museums to strengthen relations to build a new bridge between the cultures and the countries. As a result, the museums have shared best practices which led to a loan agreement that has brought automotive artifacts from the collection of The Henry Ford to Shanghai for display in the Shanghai Auto Museum. Additionally, The Henry Ford has a 12-minute video playing in the museum which invites Chinese museum-goers to visit the United States, Michigan and The Henry Ford. As a result of the collaboration with the Shanghai Auto Museum, The Henry Ford has experienced over a 450% increase in Chinese group/tour operator visits and double digit increases in general visitors to the facility from China.

The Tourism Industry Coalition of Michigan is comprised of more than 40 statewide tourism associations, corporations and convention and visitor bureaus whose mission is to promote Michigan’s travel and tourism industry as a vital component of economic development and quality of life through governmental advocacy, public relations, and other promotional and educational efforts.

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