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Metro Detroit Visitors, Spending Up at Highest Level since September 11 According to Detroit Metro Convention & Visitors Bureau Report

Detroit, Mich.—A bright spot in Michigan's struggling economy is the number of visitors to metro Detroit in 2006, which edged up to its highest level since Sept. 11, 2001, according to a report released today by the Detroit Metro Convention & Visitors Bureau (DMCVB). The study defines metro Detroit as Wayne, Oakland and Macomb counties.

According to the study, conducted for the DMCVB by CIC Research, Inc., metro Detroit's tourism industry began to rebound in 2006 with 15.9 million visitors and \$4.8 billion in visitor spending. This represents a 2.6 percent increase in volume from 2004 (the last year the study was conducted) and an 8.6 percent increase in visitor spending.

"The metro Detroit tourism industry has not completely recovered from September 11," said Larry Alexander, DMCVB president & CEO. "Visitors and spending peaked in 2000, with 17.6 million visitors and \$5.1 billion in visitor spending. However, we are beginning a noteworthy rebound—hopefully a trend that will continue with the new tourism product emerging in our region, such as the revitalized riverfront, new luxury hotels, distinctive cultural exhibits and the renovation, expansion and transformation of the Detroit Institute of Arts to be completed this fall."

Alexander said that hosting the Super Bowl in February 2006 boosted the number of out-of-town visitors by 65,000, and in total, visitation over 2004 climbed by 400,000. Visitor spending by Super Bowl guests totaled \$53.1 million of the \$4.8 billion in total visitor spending. Spending at casinos also accounted for a considerable portion of the total visitor spending last year. Casino spending was calculated at \$529 million, a 47 percent increase from the \$361 million in 2004.

Although there was an uptick in the number of visitors and spending, the volume of hotel and motel visitors shrank by about 300,000 from 2004. These trends were driven by decreased corporate travel to the metro Detroit area, largely in the auto industry.

Leisure travelers on vacation or visiting family/friends accounted for 77 percent of all visits to metro Detroit and 70 percent of spending in 2006. Business travelers and convention delegates accounted for 13 percent. Day visitors represented almost 40 percent of visitation to the metro Detroit area but were responsible for only nine percent of total visitor spending. Overnight visitors accounted for 60 percent of all visitors and 49 percent of spending.

More than half of all visitors to the metro area came from the Midwest, including other parts of Michigan, Illinois and Ohio, according to the study. Almost two-thirds arrived in a personal vehicle while 27 percent arrived by air.

The 2006 Detroit Metropolitan Area Tourism Market Profile includes data collected by independent face-to-face and telephone surveys with more than 3,500 respondents and hotel statistics from Smith Travel Research.

The Detroit Metro Convention & Visitors Bureau is a private, not-for-profit organization whose mission is to market and sell the metropolitan Detroit area on a worldwide basis as a destination for leisure and business travel including conventions, trade shows, corporate meetings, tours and incentive travel as well as a film location to maximize additional visitors, visitor expenditures, state and local tax revenues, and job opportunities. More than 800 businesses are represented in the DMCVB's membership. The DMCVB was founded in 1896 as the world's first convention and visitors bureau. For details, go to www.visitdetroit.com.



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