

Tunica County Destination Development Plan

June 30, 2011

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June 30, 2011

Mr. Webster Franklin, President
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Dear Mr. Franklin:

PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP ("PwC") has performed certain services to assist the Tunica Convention & Visitors Bureau ("TCVB," or "you," or "Client"), the Tunica Board of Supervisors, and the Tunica Casino Industry in the development of a destination development plan. Our services were performed and this Deliverable (which is hereafter referred to as "Report") was developed in accordance with our engagement letter dated October 14, 2010 and are subject to the terms and conditions included therein. Our services were performed in accordance with Standards for Consulting Services established by the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants ("AICPA"). The procedures we performed did not constitute an examination or a review in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards or attestation standards. Accordingly, we provide no opinion, attestation or other form of assurance with respect to our work or the information upon which our work was based. We did not audit or otherwise verify the information supplied to us in connection with this engagement, from whatever source, except as may be specified in this Report.

Our work was limited to the specific procedures and analysis described herein and was based only on the information made available through March 1, 2011. Accordingly, changes in circumstances after this date could affect the findings outlined in this Report. This Report has been prepared pursuant to an engagement between PwC and its Client. As to all other parties, it is for general information purposes only, and should not be used as a substitute for consultation with professional advisors.

We appreciate the opportunity to assist you with this matter. If you have any questions or we can be of further assistance, please contact Robert Canton at (813) 218-2917 or via email at robert.canton@us.pwc.com.

Very truly yours,

PricewaterhouseCoopers

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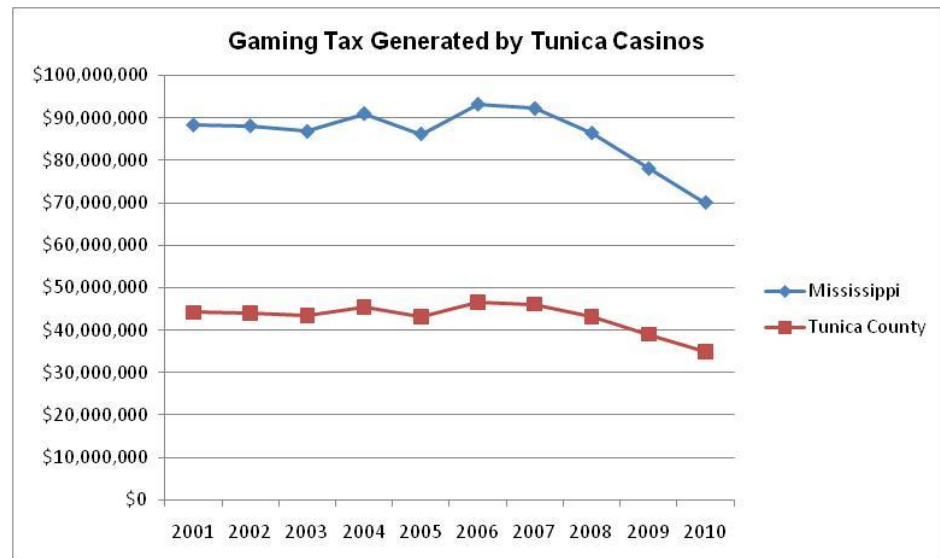
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I. Introduction & Vision for Tourism in Tunica

The Tunica Miracle

Following the Mississippi Legislature’s legalization of gaming as a means to create jobs in the State, public- and private-sector leaders in Tunica County began the process of adopting gaming as an economic development strategy. In 1992, the county’s first gaming establishment opened and within 15 years, according to local officials, over \$3 billion had been invested in Tunica County, creating more than 16,000 new jobs. For a county that, according to its officials, had over half of its households receiving food stamps prior to 1992, the use of gaming as an economic development tool supported what became known as “The Tunica Miracle.”

The success of gaming was evident in the tax revenues generated at both the state and local levels. In 1993, the first full year following the opening of casino gaming, Tunica County realized approximately \$900,000 in gaming tax revenue, while the State of Mississippi realized twice that amount (\$1.8 million) as a result of gaming in Tunica County. By 2006, the county’s gaming tax had grown to nearly \$47 million, while the state’s share grew to over \$93 million. Cumulatively, from 1992 through 2009, the 12 percent gaming revenue tax (four percent Tunica County and eight percent State of Mississippi) has generated \$607 million for Tunica County and \$1.2 billion for the state.



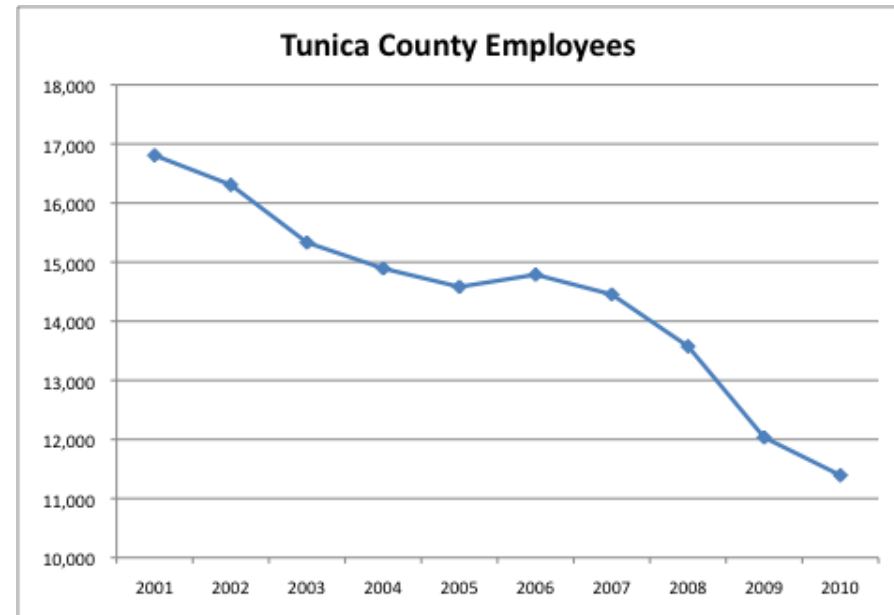
Source: Tunica CVB

From "The Miracle" to "The Perfect Storm"

Over the past several years however, gaming and resultant tax revenues have been experiencing significant declines. Tunica County gaming tax revenue was estimated at 35 million in 2010, a decline of approximately \$12 million (over 25 percent) from 2006 levels. During the same period, state tax revenues generated by Tunica County casinos decreased by approximately \$23 million to \$70 million.

In concert with these declines in gaming revenues, approximately 3,400 jobs have been lost in Tunica County over the past four years—a decline of 23 percent. The adjacent graphic illustrates this alarming trend.

The challenge facing Tunica is the result of what can be described as the "perfect storm." First, national economic conditions have dampened the ability of regional and national visitors to spend money on travel and leisure, including travel to and spending in gaming destinations. Second, Tunica County has significant limitations in terms of local economic and demographic characteristics, whereby there is insufficient local population and economic diversity that might otherwise help offset declines in visitor travel. Third, there has been an increased level of competition from other destinations (both their public- and private-sectors) that have continued to enhance their visitor appeal by offering new, unique and attractive products (including established destinations that have diversified by recently adding or expanding gaming products). Finally, the destination's primary casino companies are spreading their capital investments in more destinations including not only traditional gaming cities such as Las Vegas, Atlantic City, and Reno/Tahoe, but in locations such as Detroit, Philadelphia, Missouri, Kansas, and Macau.



Source: Tunica CVB

Product Development Plan

It has become increasingly clear, given the factors noted, that without significant intervention--from both the public and private sectors--that Tunica's and the State of Mississippi's visitors, tax revenues, and job base could continue to diminish, even if and when there is a robust recovery in the national economic conditions. In an effort to better position Tunica as the economy does recover, and to address the competitive environment for the destination in the longer term, PwC was engaged by the Tunica Convention & Visitors Bureau to present tourism product options that could enhance the appeal of Tunica County as a destination. It should be recognized that the local economic and demographic limitations described will continue to pose a significant challenge for Tunica, particularly in its ability to support non-casino restaurants, retail, and entertainment products. Nonetheless, this study will explore a wide range of development opportunities within the tourism industry as one of multiple economic development strategies needed to build on its early success with gaming and help Tunica County return to growth.

The Tourism Vision for Tunica

The development of a vision for Tunica's tourism future is the culmination of discussions with and input from several of the area's key stakeholders including local public officials, casino/resort management, and those responsible for marketing the destination. Throughout these discussions, there was general consensus in several areas, including the following. It is important to note that these areas do not necessarily represent the findings or opinion of PwC; rather, they represent issues and observations of business and community leaders that were interviewed throughout the study process. Therefore, we have followed each of the stakeholder issues/observations with our own response/observations.

- **Stakeholders:** The national and regional economy has crippled the local tourism industry throughout Tunica. **PwC:** We agree that national and regional economic conditions have had a significant impact on the overall travel and tourism industry, and Tunica tourism industry has not been spared.
- **Stakeholders:** While the development of new tourism products is important, Tunica would benefit by an improved economic environment. As the unemployed throughout the region (Greater Memphis area) return to work, and as confidence in the economy returns, Tunica County's visitation numbers should increase, and gaming revenues should improve. **PwC:** While a rebound in the national and Greater Memphis economy can be expected to result in an increase in gaming in Tunica, it is impossible to ignore the changes (new products) that have occurred within the competitive environment (both in gaming and non-gaming destinations). It is unlikely that an improved economy, on its own, will result in levels of gaming and tax revenues that were experienced in Tunica four to five years ago.

- **Stakeholders:** Many of the major casino companies appear unlikely to invest heavily in Tunica in the foreseeable future, due to the combination of the struggling economy and higher priority interests in other markets. **PwC:** Not only the mega-projects in Macau or Singapore--but new and expanded gaming destinations throughout the U.S. will continue to make it more difficult for Tunica to see significant investment by casino companies, particularly without some type of public-private vehicles to incentivize such investment.
- **Stakeholders:** The future sites/locations of new tourism products should be based on where they can be most successful. **PwC:** In the past, too much emphasis has been placed on developing products without sufficient regard to where they would maximize visitation, or in locations that were intended to be more central or accessible to the entire community (i.e. equally accessible to guests staying at any of the casino properties)—this resulted in products that were not as proximate as they could have been to where the base of existing tourists were located. The "success margins" on tourism products in Tunica are slim, particularly with limited local population to support them. Therefore, we agree that any future developments must be carefully sited to ensure they are leveraging the existing critical mass of visitors to support them.
- **Stakeholders:** Tunica's potential lies in its ability to succeed with its core business, which is adult leisure & entertainment opportunities, rather than to try to re-invent itself as a family-oriented or other type of destination. **PwC:** Gaming in Tunica was an important and successful first step in its development as a destination. However, more mature destinations such as Branson and Myrtle Beach have taken decades to develop and they have succeeded by providing a mix of successful attractions, recreation opportunities, dining, shopping, live entertainment, etc. It is very unlikely to expect any destination other than Las Vegas and Macau to succeed based solely on gaming. This is true not only of Tunica, but of Atlantic City, Detroit, Biloxi, and other locations that offer gaming. We do believe success as a gaming destination is critical to the future of Tunica; however, that success will also rely on its ability to re-invent itself beyond gaming and to appeal to a broader audience, particularly as gaming becomes more widely available "at home" in markets that have been critical to Tunica's past success.

Recognizing that the visioning process is intended to address the question of "where do we want to be as a destination?" for Tunica, the collective vision statement of the tourism industry and its stakeholders should be summarized as follows:

Tourism Vision Statement for Tunica

We envision the continued development of Tunica, by both the public and private sectors, as a destination that further leverages and builds upon its past success as a gaming destination, while providing greater diversity of its tourism products and services, a broadened and increased visitation base, and improved tourism performance as a critical industry fueling economic development throughout Tunica County and the State of Mississippi.

The Tourism Development Plan

To be effective, this tourism development plan should be expected to accomplish two key goals. First, it should lead to decisions and actions that guide the destination's future, improve visitation, and increase related economic activity through both the public and private sectors. Second, it should help to ensure the County's and State's leadership are working towards common goals for the Tunica area, given its importance as a tax generator for both. As with any such plan, it should be re-assessed and reviewed regularly, with adjustments made to the destination's direction in response to changing internal and external environments. Finally, while this development plan will discuss a number of potential products, it is critical to understand that this report is not intended as a substitute for in-depth analyses and due diligence with regard to the market and economic feasibility of any individual developments/products. Feasibility/viability studies exploring market demand, sites/location studies, costs/benefit analyses, etc., are all critical elements of the due-diligence process that should be undertaken prior to any public or private investment in such developments.

Tunica faces significant challenges in its ability to realize this vision and capitalize on the opportunities described throughout this report. Most successful tourist communities, of any size, share at least one common characteristic, which is a long-term plan and commitment to tourism investment and development. Unfortunately, while significant growth and success has been realized in Tunica over the past two decades, its reliance on the casinos and lack of diversity has resulted in other destinations eclipsing Tunica when it comes to the development of their tourism products and infrastructure.

During our interviews with various stakeholders, Tunica was often characterized by the phrase “it is what it is,” referencing that Tunica is a regional gaming destination that will succeed or fail based simply on its ability to attract gamblers. Unfortunately, this study shows that failure too readily becomes the result when the destination has no alternatives other than gaming--with recent history bearing this out. What this study has concluded is the need to continue to diversify the destination, the need to attract new tourism products that could help accomplish the vision, and the need to address other issues and methods by the state and local government to help ensure that private sector is incentivized to once again invest in the Tunica tourism industry.

Acknowledgements

PwC would like to acknowledge a number of individuals and organizations for their assistance during our analysis. In addition to the cooperation by the participants at the kick-off luncheon at the Gold Strike on November 16, 2010, the following is a list of individuals interviewed or that provided assistance during our study process.

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- Eric Konupka, Deputy Airport Director, Tunica County Airport

- Cliff Nash, Executive Director, Tunica County Airport
- William E. Pegram, President, Tunica County Board of Supervisors
- Jeff Strang, Vice President of Marketing, Hollywood Casino
- Brian Sullivan, CS2 Advertising
- Bobby E. Williams, Tunica County Board of Supervisors

II. Tourism Industry Overview

Definition of Travel and Tourism

The terms “tourist,” “visitor,” and “traveler” are often used interchangeably. Tourism is defined as “a stay of one or more nights away from home for holidays, visits to friends or relatives, business conferences, or any other purpose, except such things as boarding, education, or semi-permanent employment” (*Marketing for Hospitality and Tourism*, Kotler, 2006). The term “travel,” as defined by the U.S. Travel Association (formerly the Travel Industry Association of America, or TIA), includes “traveling away from home overnight in paid accommodations or on day trips to places 50 miles or more away from home.”

It is important to recognize that tourism includes not only visitor activities taking place at the visitor’s ultimate destination, but also travel to and from the destination as well as pre- and post-trip activities. For Tunica County and the State of Mississippi, therefore, tourism includes not only those visitors traveling to Tunica casinos and other attractions within the state, but also visitors that stop on their way to other destinations. For example, a tourist that originates in Birmingham and stops in Tunica while driving to Little Rock is considered a tourist in Tunica and the State of Mississippi. The extent to which Tunica is able to capture the tourist for more than simply a meal or fuel along the way or other incidental spending is what defines the level of “impact” of that tourist on the state and its local communities.

Tourism Demand Segments

While tourism is often perceived as a non-resident visiting an area on vacation, tourism actually encompasses a great deal more. Tourism includes non-resident business visitors traveling for purposes of commercial business, often extending their stays to experience local attractions and events. A significant segment of tourism revenue is obtained from group visitors, including meetings, conventions, training sessions, sports teams, organized bus tours, and family reunions. Day trips also represent an important piece of tourism’s overall impact and often result from community festivals and special events, as well as gaming. Finally, transient visitors also spend money while passing through an area en route to their final destination. Each of these segments provides significant opportunity for revenue generation both locally, within Tunica County, and more broadly for the State of Mississippi.

Tourism Industry Components

The tourism industry is directly supported by four primary sectors: suppliers, intermediaries, carriers, and planning/promotional organizations.

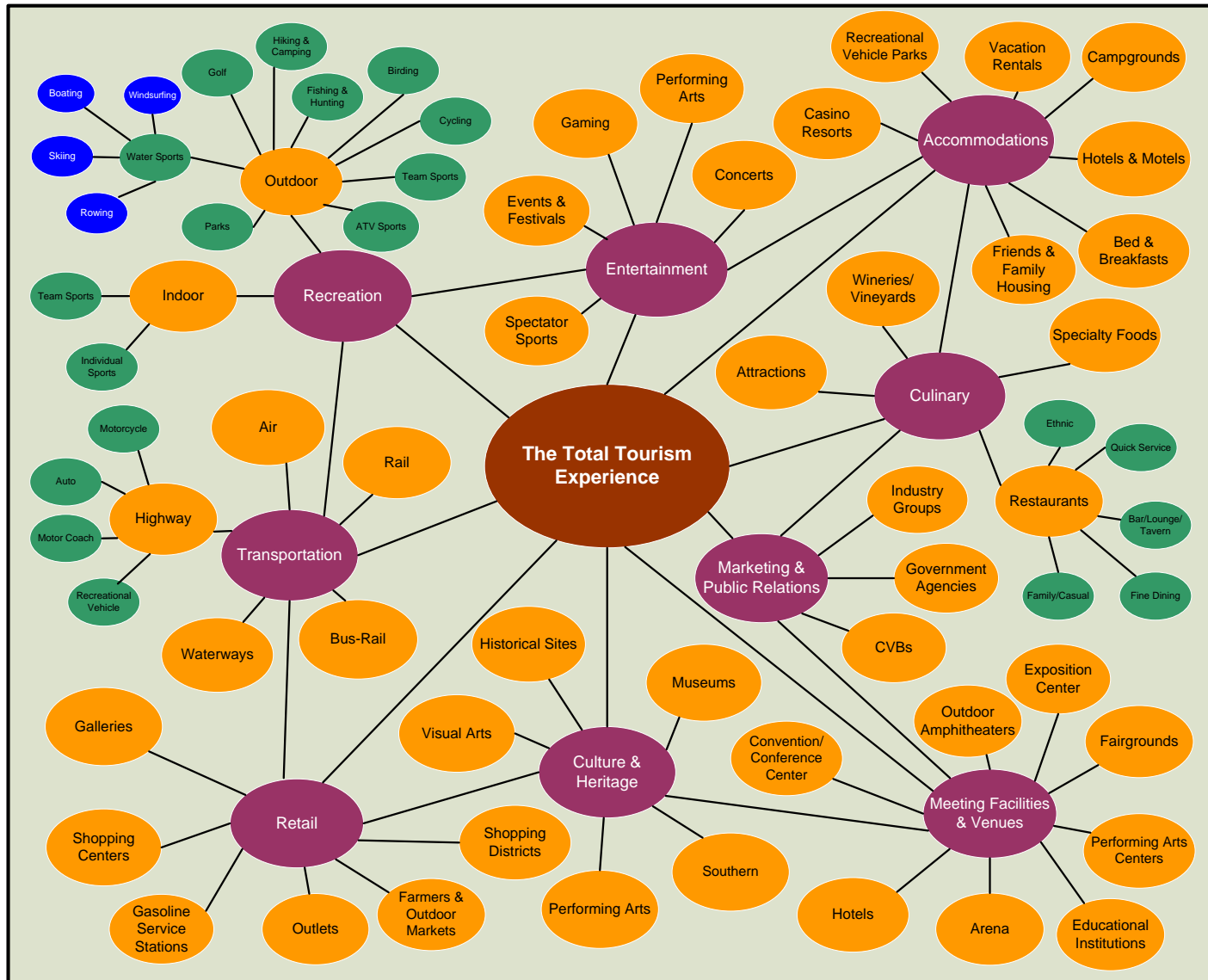
- **Suppliers** provide services and some goods to visitors at or en route to their destination (e.g. casinos, hotels, restaurants, attractions).
- **Carriers** transport visitors to and from the destination (e.g. airlines, motorcoach).
- **Intermediaries** assist visitors in reserving or purchasing the products of suppliers and carriers (e.g. travel agents).
- **Planning/promotional organizations** are public and non-profit organizations that facilitate visitor access to the destination and activities within it (e.g. convention & visitor bureaus, destination marketing organizations, state tourism offices, country and lake associations).

The Breadth of the Tourism Industry

Tunica's tourism stakeholders consist of all parties with an interest in the County's destinations. Stakeholders include representatives of the four primary sectors mentioned above as well as Tunica County's residents and visitors themselves. Stakeholders also include representatives of other sectors such as government organizations, non-profit organizations/associations, and countless secondary businesses that indirectly support the tourism businesses. The graphic on the following page illustrates the breadth of the tourism industry and the interconnectivity among industry stakeholders in both the public and private sectors.

Such an extensive network of tourism stakeholders enhances the impact of tourism on an economy. According to the U.S. Travel Association, direct, indirect, and induced expenditures contribute to the economic impact of travel and account for the tourism “trickle-down” effect. (Induced expenditures account for how many industry employees support local communities by spending their wages.) The rollover and indirect jobs that are caused by travel and tourism have significant impact. “Rollover” is a term applied to money that is spent several times over in a community because of the initial expenditure by the tourist. Various multipliers are applied depending on who is doing the calculation, but it is not unrealistic to assume a rollover of four times for a community, especially knowing how many local services are used to support the industry. The same is applied to indirect and induced employment. From florists to bakers, from vacuum cleaner sales to cleaning solutions, from construction workers

to architects, these are a small sampling of those disciplines that work for the businesses that directly service the traveler. These individuals more than double the direct employment of the travel and tourism industry (The Power of Travel, U.S. Travel Association).



Challenges for Destinations

In addition to the tourism trends that will be presented throughout this report, it is also important to recognize other broad trends that have impacted and will likely continue to impact tourism in the future--in particular the challenges faced by those responsible for marketing their destinations. A critical trend, requiring continual monitoring, is the faltering global economy and the resulting negative impacts on tourism. Destination Marketing Association International (DMAI), through its *Futures Study*, has identified eight "super trends" affecting destination marketing organizations in the coming years. These trends are defined as follows:

- **Customer Sector: “Proliferating Preferences”** – The tourism industry has become increasingly diverse and segmented. Tourism professionals must develop targeted value packages in response to a growing range of choices in travel products and experiences.
- **Competitor Sector: “The Battle for Attention”** – The tourism industry is becoming increasingly competitive among destinations and among various segments in addition to competition for consumer attentions from other industries. Destinations must find ways to differentiate themselves and attract attention from consumers.
- **Economic Sector: “Dodging Asteroids”** – Destinations must be prepared for catastrophic contingencies such as terror incidents, international health pandemics, etc. and their resulting impacts on travel and tourism.
- **Technological Sector: “Smart and Friendly Websites”** – The tourism industry must keep pace with advances in website design to maintain visibility.
- **Social Sector: “The Electronic Society”** – Society has seen shifts from traditional communities to virtual communities. The tourism industry needs to embrace the virtual networking trend for marketing purposes, while proactively addressing the potential for virtual experiences preferred over "live" visitor experiences.
- **Political Sector: “The Quest for Relevance”** – The tourism industry is increasingly forced to prove its worth, and the relevance of tourism to a community often questioned.
- **Legal Sector: “Mixed Signals from Government”** – Legislation may be an advantage or disadvantage for tourism.
- **Geophysical Sector (Place and Space): “Going Green”** – There is pressure from consumers to be “seen as green.” Green destinations may emerge as preferred travel destinations, and cost savings should be considered.

National Travel Motivations

At the national level, people are motivated to travel for a variety of reasons. According to U.S. Travel, approximately three quarters of travelers were motivated by personal reasons, while approximately one quarter were motivated for business reasons. As shown to the right, 26 percent of travelers were motivated to visit family and friends, 12 percent were seeking a weekend getaway, 8 percent were on a general vacation, and 28 percent were motivated by other personal/leisure reasons.

In addition, according to the *Futures Study* conducted for Destination Marketing Association International, most people who travel do so for one or more of seven primary reasons, motives, or expectations of value:

- **Personal Necessity** - travel seen as a means to an end such as attending a wedding
- **Business Necessity** - travel required to accomplish a specific objective such as attending a meeting
- **Escape** - seek respite from pressures of life/work (to “unwind”)
- **Indulgence** - seek an “over the top” experience, almost as a gift to themselves such as a European vacation
- **Learning and Renewal** - seek cultural experiences, learn the history, sample the life experiences of another culture, etc.
- **Challenge and Adventure** - seek risk, danger, adventure, and strenuous activity (the “adrenaline rush”)
- **Special Activities** - related to an activity valued such as research, education, humanitarian contributions, etc.

National Motivations for Travel

Purpose	Percent of Person-trips
Visit Friends/Relatives	26%
General Business	16%
Weekend Getaway	12%
Convention, Training, Group Meeting	10%
General Vacation	8%
Other Personal/Leisure	28%
Total	100%

Source: U.S. Travel Association

National Travel Segments

Travelers in the U.S. can be classified in numerous travel segments based on traveler characteristics such as age, ethnicity, interests, and trip purpose. Several of these travel segments are highlighted below.

Generational Travel

- The Boomers - This generation (age 44 to 62) accounts for 26 percent of the U.S. population, and as the baby boomers age, the population in the 44 to 62 age range is expected to grow 6 percent in 20 years. The baby boomers generated the highest travel volume in the U.S. and are the most likely to travel for business.
- Gen X/Y - This generation (age 22 to 43) accounts for 30 percent of the U.S. population, and the population in this age range is expected to increase 13 percent in 20 years. Younger travelers are more likely to seek out entertainment, night life, sightseeing, theme/amusement parks, and national/state parks.
- Silent/GI - This generation (age 63 and older) currently accounts for 15 percent of the U.S. population; however, as the baby boomers age, the population age 63 and older is expected to increase 75 percent in 20 years. These travelers are more likely to gamble and take group tours.
- Millennials - This generation (age 21 and younger) represents the next generation of travelers, and their travel preferences and behaviors will need to continue to be monitored.

Minority Travel

- The Hispanic population, which accounts for 16 percent of the total U.S. population, is expected to increase by 70 percent from 2008 to 2030. Hispanic travel experiences are often centered around the family, and approximately one-third of trips by Hispanic households include children under 18 years old, significantly higher than the U.S. average.
- The Asian-American population, although only 5 percent of the population, is the fastest growing minority group and is expected to increase by 90 percent from 2008 to 2030. This group has an above-average propensity to travel and spends approximately 13 percent more (excluding transportation) than other U.S. travelers.

- The African-American population is 13 percent of the U.S. population and is expected to grow by 28 percent from 2008 to 2030. Group tours are popular among African-Americans with nearly three times as many African-American person-trips involve group tours as compared to the U.S. average.

Geo-tourism

Geo-tourism is defined as tourism that sustains or enhances the geographic character of the place being visited, including its environment, culture, heritage, landmarks, and the well-being of its residents.

Emerging Niches

A number of travel niches have emerged in recent years and some destination marketing organizations have responded by marketing specific travel packages. Emerging niche markets include the following:

- | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| • Destination Weddings | • Travelers with Disabilities |
| • Babymoos | • Medical/Life-Enhancement Travel |
| • Pet Travel | • Girlfriend Getaways |
| • Space Travel | • Mancations |
| • Culinary Travel | • Gay/Lesbian Travel |

Changing Traveler Patterns

Due to shifts in economic, social, and demographic factors, traveler patterns continue to evolve. Recent research conducted by DK Shifflet and Associates identified six shifts in patterns of leisure behavior. As summarized below, Tunica has the resources to respond to each traveler pattern.

- *Americans are traveling closer to home* - Tunica's geographic position and proximity to major population centers makes it well-positioned for the regional drive-in market.
- *Day trips are growing faster than overnight leisure travel* - Tunica is located within a reasonable driving distance of several markets in the regional area.
- *Women are more likely to travel together than men, but spend less per trip (except for shopping)* - Tunica might explore the growth in female travelers and explore potential methods to target this market.
- *On leisure trips, women seek culture while men seek sports* - Tunica currently offers opportunities in hunting, fishing, golf, and tennis areas; however, the greater Memphis area has a multitude of additional cultural experiences, spectator sports events, and recreational sporting activities.
- *Boomers show higher trip activity participation rates than the silent generation and gen X'ers* - The baby boomer generation accounts for a significant share of Tunica's visitors, and it should continue to develop activities most demanded by this generation (dining, shopping, entertainment, and sightseeing).
- *Non-participation rates in activities have risen for all generations* - Although outdoor recreation, visiting historic sites, attending festivals, and nightlife have decreased in popularity among U.S. travelers in the past decade, gaming, performing arts events, dining, entertainment, and shopping have increased in popularity.

State of the Tourism Industry

Similar to many industries in the United States, the travel and tourism industry was impacted by the credit and housing market collapses experienced during the recession the past couple of years. Since the third quarter of 2008, many households altered leisure travel plans, substituting expensive trips with lower cost and shorter trips closer to home, and corporations reduced business travel budgets.

U. S. Travel Trends

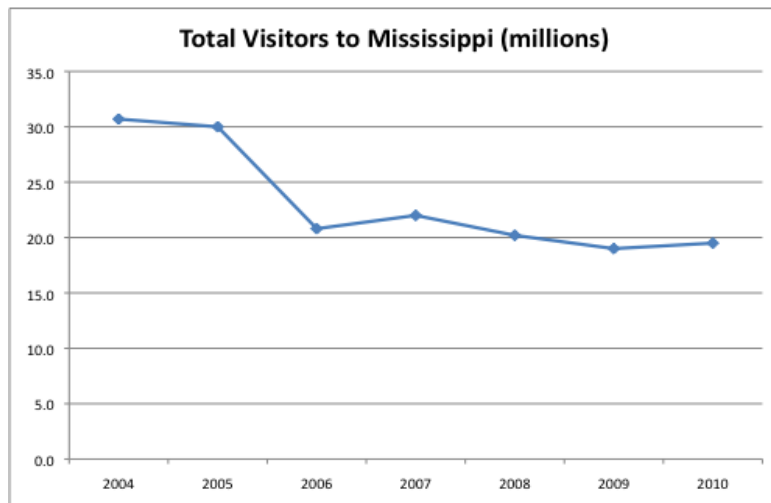
In 2008, total domestic travel in the United States decreased by two percent to nearly two billion person-trips; domestic business travel decreased 6.7 percent and domestic leisure travel decreased .4 percent. However, international visitation increased 3.7 percent to a total of 58 million and international traveler spending within the United States increased 14.2 percent to \$110.5 billion (U.S. Travel Association).

The tourism and travel industry continued to experience declines in 2009. According to the World Travel & Tourism Council ("WTTC"), domestic travel and tourism spending, which include spending within a country by that country's residents for business and leisure trips, decreased 8.1 percent, while spending within the country by international tourists for both business and leisure trips decreased 12.1 percent. Overall, the GDP generated by industries that deal directly with tourists, including hotels, travel agents, airlines and other transport services, as well as the activities of restaurant and leisure industries that deal directly with tourists, decreased six percent.

As the national economy begins to show signs of recovery, so has the travel and tourism industry. The Traveler Sentiment Index, which tracks changes in six travel-related factors over time through the travelhorizons survey (overall interest in travel, demands on time available to travel, personal finance available for travel, affordability of travel, quality of service received, and safety of travel in the United States) rose to its highest level since April 2007 (U.S. Travel Association). Domestic travel and tourism expenditure, as tracked by the WTTC, increased 4.7 percent and is estimated to increase 4.8 percent in 2011 and the travel and tourism direct contribution to GDP increased 5.9 percent.

Mississippi Travel Trends

The State of Mississippi experienced similar tourism trends as the U.S. As illustrated below, the past several years has seen total visitation of approximately 20 million, down from over 30 million just a few years prior. Additionally, while average daily rates have remained stable, hotel occupancy decreased from 69 percent in 2006 to below 53 percent in 2010 (Mississippi Division of Tourism).



Source: Tunica CVB



Source: Tunica CVB

Gaming Trends

The economic recession resulted in declines in gaming revenues in the US in 2008, 2009 and 2010, with the biggest fall being a 3.4 percent decrease in 2009. Improved economic conditions are expected to trigger a recovery from late 2011, but US gaming revenues will not return to 2007 levels until 2012. Mid-single-digit increases are expected for 2013–2014. Total gaming revenues will increase to \$68.3 billion in 2014 from \$57.2 billion in 2009, a 3.6 percent compound annual increase.

Generally speaking, regional casinos held up relatively well in 2009, buoyed by growth in racetrack casinos, and will be the fastest-growing category during the next five years. This growth in regional casinos' revenues will largely result from their gaining market share at the expense of Atlantic City, where we expect revenues in 2014 to be lower than in 2009. Nevada will recover from double-digit declines in 2008 and 2009 to realize growth of 4.1 percent compounded annually during the five years from 2010 to 2014.

Regional casinos will be the fastest growing segment of the US casino gaming market over the next five years, as their investment in new and improved offerings and facilities continue to attract rising visitor numbers and revenues. As a result, regional casinos will continue to gain market share from Atlantic City and, to a lesser degree, from tribal casinos.

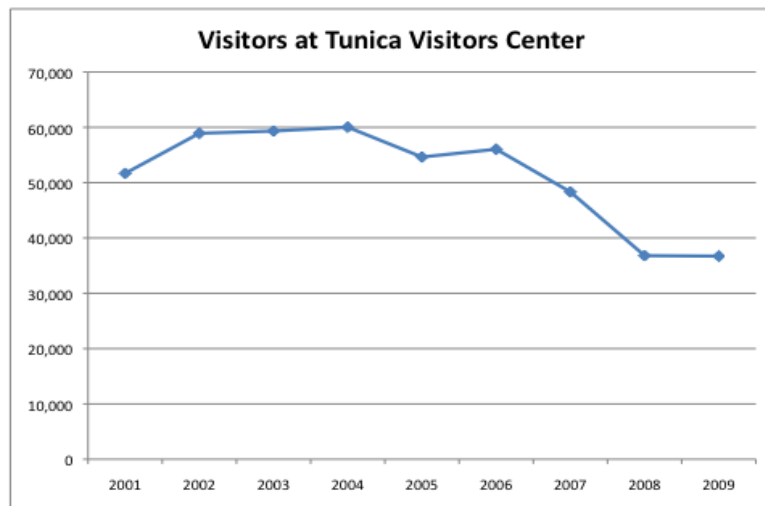
As economic conditions improve, we expect regional casino revenues to increase at rates in excess of 7 percent annually during 2012–2014. For the forecast period as a whole, regional casino revenues will rise to \$22.2 billion in 2014 from \$16.6 billion in 2009, a 6.1 percent compound annual increase. However, regional casinos have not been immune to the wider slowdown. While the launch of racetrack casinos—or “racinos”—and casinos in Pennsylvania led to a double-digit increase in 2007, growth then slowed to 1.2 percent in 2008 and the market was flat in 2009.

However, a resilient market in Pennsylvania, the introduction of slot machines at Yonkers Raceway, and the full-year's operations of two new racetrack casinos in Indiana offset the impact of the recession on regional casino revenues in 2009. Yonkers generated \$540 million in revenues in 2009. Going forward, revenues will be supported by further investment and new openings. September 2010 saw the opening of Maryland's first casino, the \$89 million Hollywood Casino Perryville, with 1,500 video lottery terminals and 1,000 slot machines. In the same month, New York state comptroller Thomas DiNapoli gave the go-ahead for New York City's first casino, a new gambling parlor at the Aqueduct Racetrack in Queens, to be developed by Genting Bhd of Malaysia. The Resorts World New York development is planned to open in the first half of 2011.

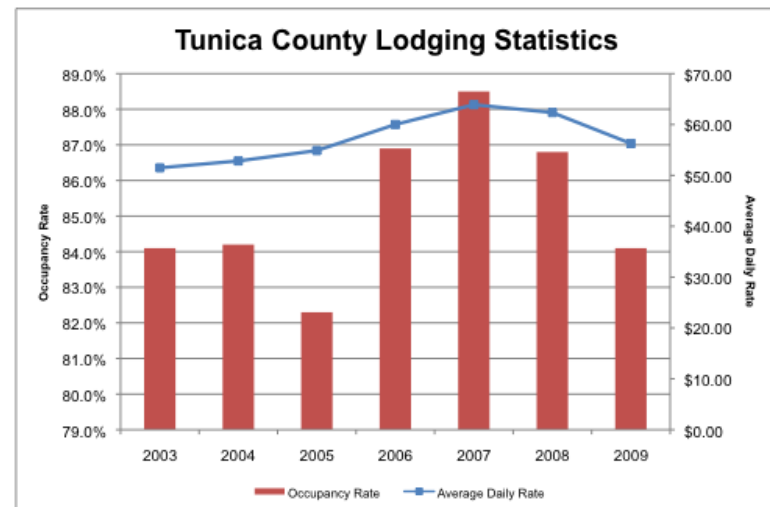
Further market developments include the 2010 introduction of table games at slot-only casinos in Pennsylvania and Delaware, which followed West Virginia where table games were added in 2008, expanding the market. Rhode Island has given approval for two private casinos to open to the public, which should expand its revenues. In addition to New Jersey, Pennsylvania and California also are considering legalizing sports wagering for local residents. It remains to be seen if such legislation moves forward and—if it does—whether it will be allowed to stand.

Tunica Travel Trends

Tunica County encountered similar trends as the U.S. and state, as travel and tourism expenditures decreased from \$1.1 billion in 2007 to \$915 million in 2009—the most recent year for which data was available. Direct travel and tourism employment during the same time period decreased from 13,800 to 11,240 and state and local taxes attributed to travel and tourism fell from \$132 million to \$106 million (Mississippi Division of Tourism). As illustrated in the charts below, activity at the Tunica Visitors Center has declined from approximately 60,000 guests in 2004, to less than 40,000 in recent years. Hotel occupancy and average daily rates have also declined significantly, since peaking in 2007.



Source: Tunica CVB



Source: Tunica CVB

Overall, travel experts forecast that the U.S. travel industry will continue to recover in 2011. Mississippi predicts the total number of visitors to the state will increase from 19.5 million in 2010 to between 20 and 21 million in 2011, total tourist expenditures to increase from \$5.5 billion to between \$5.7 and \$5.9 billion, and the tourism state tax revenues to increase from \$415.4 million to between \$428.4 and \$443.3 million. However, there are still potential factors that can affect the travel industry, including rising oil prices, and increasing hotel rates.

III. Tunica's Existing Tourism Infrastructure

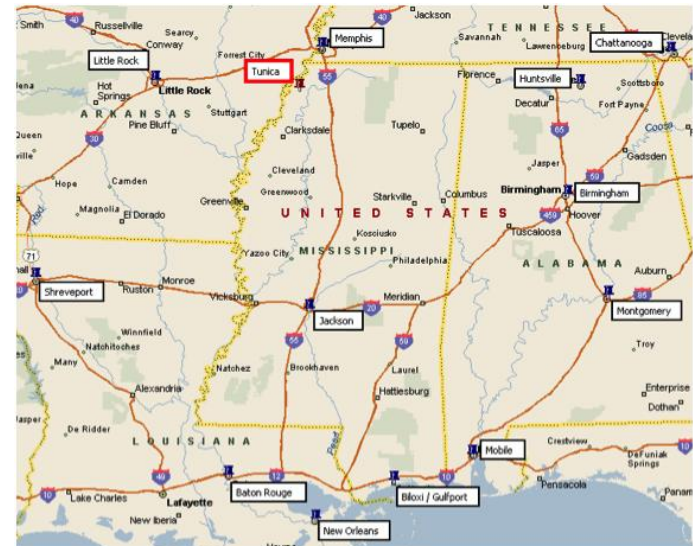
As discussed previously, Tunica County is, first and foremost, a gaming destination. It has, however, expanded its tourism assets over the past decade to include golf, museums, and other attractions. This section provides an overview of Tunica's existing tourism assets.

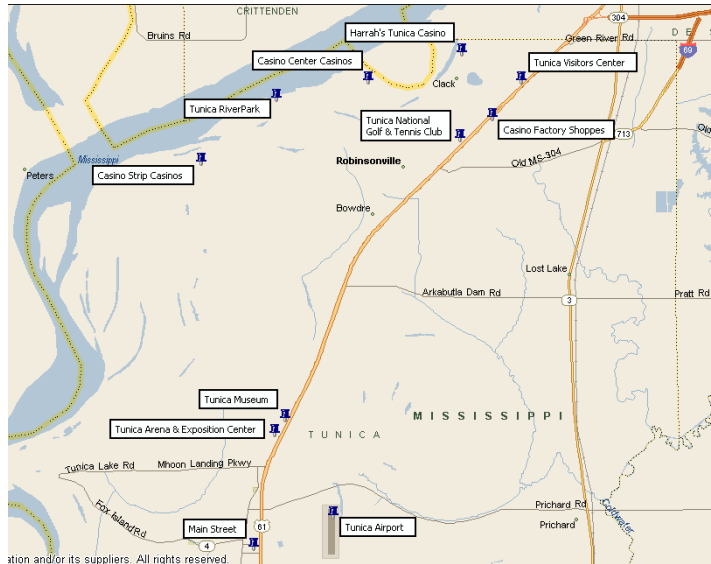
Tunica Overview

Tunica County is located in the northwest corner of Mississippi in the Delta Region. It is approximately 30 miles south of Memphis, 200 miles north of Jackson, 260 miles northwest of Birmingham, and 150 miles east of Little Rock. It is considered part of the Memphis metropolitan statistical area and borders the Mississippi River and Coahoma, Quitman, Panola, Tate, and DeSoto counties.

Tunica is served by U.S. Highway 61, which runs north and south throughout the county. Twenty miles north of Tunica County, U.S. 61 connects with Interstate 40. Interstate 55 is located 18 miles east of Highway 61. Not illustrated in the adjacent map, a portion of Interstate 69 connecting Canada to Mexico connects Tunica County to Interstate 55, providing direct interstate access to the county. State Highways 4, 310, and 315 provide alternate routes into Tunica County from the south, while State Highway 3 intersects with Highway 61 in northern Tunica County and follows a north/south route through the county to the east.

Tunica County covers an area of approximately 454 square miles, with a large amount of undeveloped land. Some of the major sites ready for construction include the 2,221 acre Tunica Metro-Mega Site located at the intersection of Highways 304 and 61 and the 5,000 acre Tunica Airport Industrial Park located adjacent to Tunica Airport and Highway 61.





In 2009, Tunica County's population was estimated at 10,400. There were approximately 4,550 housing units and the median household income was \$30,640. In 2010, there were approximately 11,500 jobs within the county--down from nearly 17,000 in 2001.

Tunica County was incorporated in 1863 and was originally recognized for its cotton industry. However, it has since grown into a tourist destination better-known for its gaming. In addition to its nine casinos, other attractions in the county include Tunica RiverPark Museum, the Tunica Queen riverboat, Tunica Museum, Tunica National Golf & Tennis Club, Willows Sporting Clays & Hunting Center, and the Casino Factory Shoppes. The adjacent map highlights the primary attractions throughout the county.

Casino Products

As illustrated below, Tunica County is home to nine casinos comprising over 5,400 guest rooms and 522,000 square feet of gaming area. The nine casinos are essentially the same physical properties that existed during the 1999 study (some have been sold and/or re-named). The only significant change occurring during the past 12 years is the opening and closing of Isle of Capri in 1999 and 2002, respectively.

Casino	Guest Rooms	Employees	Gaming Area (sf)	Other Area (sf)	Total Area (sf)	Slots	Table Games	Poker Games
Bally's Casino Tunica	240	515	46,536	153,543	200,079	1,185	16	0
Fitz Casino & Hotel	507	750	38,088	522,912	561,000	1,252	40	0
Gold Strike Casino Resort	1,160	1,286	50,486	1,347,597	1,398,083	1,362	58	16
Harrah's Tunica	1,356	1,457	136,000	204,000	340,000	1,434	54	14
Hollywood Casino Tunica	494	714	54,000	337,613	391,613	1,267	31	6
Horseshoe Casino & Hotel	506	1,732	63,000	222,500	285,500	1,618	65	16
Resorts Tunica Casino	201	524	35,000	151,924	186,924	1,065	13	0
Sam's Town Hotel & Gambling Hall	842	766	66,000	30,000	96,000	1,288	32	16
Tunica Roadhouse Casino Hotel	130	519	32,800	121,000	153,800	809	22	0
Total	5,436	8,263	521,910	3,091,089	3,612,999	11,280	331	68

Source: Tunica CVB

Meeting Facilities

As illustrated below, the 26,000 square feet of conference/meeting space at Harrah's Tunica is the largest space that is suitable for hosting corporate or association meetings and conferences. Unlike Las Vegas and Atlantic City--gaming destinations that have invested heavily (both publicly and privately) in meeting facilities, Tunica's meeting venues are limited.

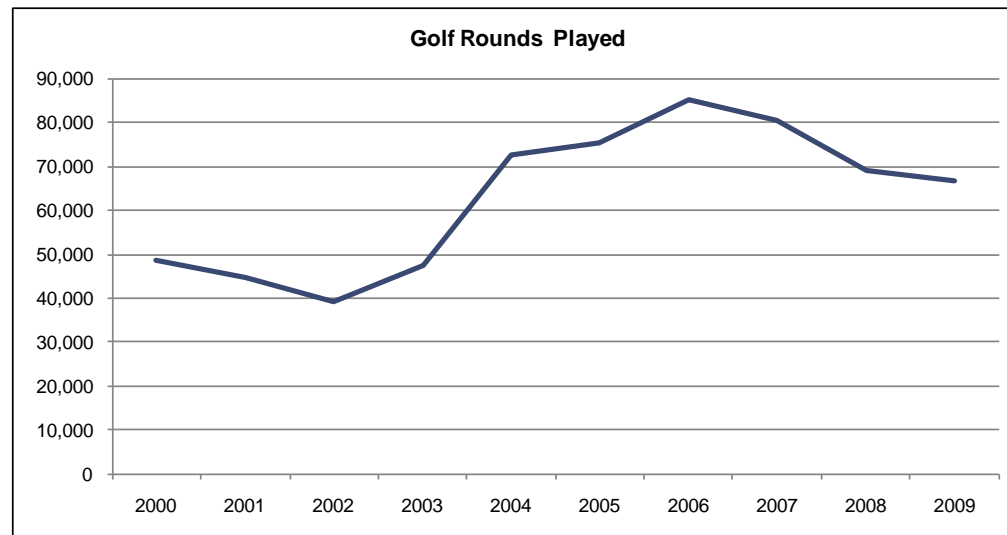
Facility	Exhibit Space (sf)	Ballroom Space (sf)	Breakout Space (sf)	Total Function (sf)	Other (sf)	Hotel Rooms On Site
Tunica Arena & Exposition Center	48,000	-	1,176	49,176	-	-
Harrah's Tunica	-	16,264	10,224	26,488	-	1,356
Gold Strike Casino Resort	-	-	12,066	12,066	18,250	1,160
Hollywood Casino Tunica	-	9,394	-	9,394	-	494
Fitz Casino & Hotel	-	7,800	1,200	9,000	-	507
Sam's Town Hotel & Gambling Hall	-	-	7,140	7,140	11,000	842
Tunica Roadhouse Casino Hotel	-	-	3,300	3,300	-	130
Americas Best Value Inn	-	-	2,452	2,452	-	107
G.W. Henderson Sr. Recreation Center	-	-	2,000	2,000	-	-
Horseshoe Casino & Hotel	-	-	1,900	1,900	10,000	506
Tunica Museum	-	-	1,579	1,579	-	-
Tunica Riverpark & Museum	-	-	1,331	1,331	-	-
Bally's Casino Tunica	-	-	506	506	-	240
Resorts Tunica Casino	-	-	-	-	-	201

Source: Tunica CVB and Individual Properties

Golf

Tunica County is home to three 18-hole golf courses, providing year-round playing opportunities. This includes Tunica National Golf and Tennis, which features a tournament-level, 18-hole championship course. Tunica National hosts amateur and professional golf and tennis events and tournaments. The Links at Cottonwoods Golf Course was voted Best Golf by the 2007 Casino Player Awards, while River Bend Links is a Scottish links-style course featuring lakes, sand, and grass bunkers. As illustrated, golf rounds played in Tunica spiked with the 2004 opening of Tunica National, but have since declined in concert with the overall declines in travel.

Course	Holes Ownership
River Bend Links	18 Private (Resorts Tunica, Hollywood and Sam's Town casinos)
The Links at Cottonwoods	18 Private (Harrah's Casino)
Tunica National Golf and Tennis	18 Public
Total	54



Source: Tunica CVB

Attractions

Tunica County is home to several attractions that have been developed since the 1999 study. These include the following:

- **Tunica RiverPark** provides an understanding of the history of the Mississippi River. The RiverPark includes a museum and interpretive center, with aquariums, interactive exhibits and dioramas. The 168-acre facility includes nature trails, outdoor exhibits, an observation deck and veranda offering views of the Mississippi River. Tickets are \$5.00 for adults and \$4.00 for children and seniors.
- Docked at the Tunica RiverPark, the 250-passenger **Tunica Queen** provides seasonal cruises on the Mississippi. Fares for sightseeing cruises are \$15.00 for adults, \$14.00 for seniors, and \$7.50 for children ages 5 to 12. Dinner/dancing cruises are also provided.
- The **Tunica Museum**, located just south of the casinos on Highway 61, includes artifacts and pieces of agricultural, military and political history indigenous to the area. Admission is free.
- The **Tunica Arena and Exposition Center** accommodates a wide variety of events including rodeos, horse shows, motor sports, concerts, family shows, exhibits and trade shows. The arena can seat over 2,000 and has 48,000 square feet of exhibit space, as well as an adjacent outdoor covered pavilion for additional activities and events.
- The **Mississippi Blues Trail** involves a journey of over 120 historical markers scattered throughout the state that tell the story of the birth of the blues in Mississippi. Five Blues Trail markers are located in Tunica. In addition to the America's Blues Highway marker at the Visitors Center, Tunica's Blues Markers feature Eddie James "Son" House, Abbay & Leatherman Plantation, James Cotton and Harold "Hardface" Clanton.

Other Entertainment and Activities

In addition to the tourism assets described, Tunica County is home to a limited inventory of dining, shopping, spa, and outdoor activities. While several of these activities are located within the casino resorts, few others are available outside the casinos. For example, the Casino Factory Shoppes is a 30-store outlet mall located near the resort area. About 10 miles south of the resort area is Tunica's downtown/main street, an area that is trying to be marketed for its antique shops and boutiques, as well as several annual festivals.

Update on Products Identified in 1999 Study

Based on the 1999 Strategic Action Plan for Tourism in Tunica County, Mississippi, conducted by PwC, a number of potential tourism developments/enhancements were recommended as high, medium, and low priorities for immediate action and/or further analysis. These are summarized in the table below (developments that have been implemented to some degree since 1999 are highlighted in yellow), and discussed further in the pages that follow. Each project update will present the action steps described in the 1999 study (*in italics*), followed by the current status of the project.

<u>High Priority</u>	<u>Medium Priority</u>	<u>Low Priority</u>
Shuttle Service to Memphis Intl Airport	Rail Access to Tunica	Tunica Airport Expansion
Highway Access to Tunica	Golf	Monorail
Shuttle Linkage Within Tunica	Convention Center	Live Performance Theater
Factory Outlet Shopping	Riverfront Development	Professional Sports
"Main Street" Historic District Renovation	Outdoor Amphitheater	
Cinema	Delta Blues Train	
History Museum	Theme Park	
County & City Festivals	Motor Speedway	

Air Service: Additional Tunica Airport Expansion

A low priority in the 1999 study, the following action steps were recommended: *A detailed cost-benefit analysis accompanied by a targeted marketing plan should be developed before proposing any additional expansion of the local airport beyond the \$10 million plan which has been committed by the County." While identified as a low-priority development in the 1999 study, development proceeded and the Tunica Airport opened in 2003 as a single-terminal airport with an 8,500-foot runway. The airport offers charter and commercial flights from three air service providers. In 2008, it was the nation's busiest non-commercial service airport and in 2009, the facility ranked 225th out of more than 380 primary airports. It is currently the third largest airfield in Mississippi.*

The first Boeing 737 aircraft landed at Tunica in 2005, which began a series of charter flights. From 2006 to 2007 there was a 35 percent growth in charter flights and in 2009 to 2010 there was six percent growth. Between January and September 2010, there were 443 charter flights from 33 states.

In May 2010, Harrah's Entertainment partnered with AirTran to offer commercial flights to Atlanta four times per week. In order to meet the current airport demand, the Tunica Board of Supervisors committed \$2.1 million in an effort to expedite construction of the commercial terminal, which opened in August 2010. The 184-passenger complex can accommodate up to four simultaneous flight operations. In 2009, there were 61,720 enplanements at Tunica Airport with a load factor for all air service providers between 85 and 91 percent. Enplanements increased to approximately 65,000 in 2010, while maintaining a load factor greater than 80 percent.

Given the investment already made in the Tunica Airport and commercial, it is recommended that the region continue to explore opportunities to bring regularly-scheduled air service (e.g. Southwest Airlines) to Tunica, as this would significantly enhance the County's tourism infrastructure.

Shuttle Service to Memphis International Airport

A high priority in the 1999 study, the following action steps were recommended: *In addition to improved signage along the main Highway 61 and Interstate 55 corridors, immediate action should be taken to increase access between the Memphis International Airport and Tunica through a regularly scheduled, well marketed, and affordable shuttle service. First, however, an open and productive dialogue must be established with the authorities and agencies overseeing Memphis International Airport.*

The primary airport bringing visitors to Tunica County is Memphis International Airport ("MEM"), located approximately 26 miles north of the casinos. Tunica's proximity to MEM is a significant strength for the area, and in the 1999 study, it was recommended as a High Priority that this advantage should be leveraged through improved transportation links between the Airport and Tunica. While no formal shuttle service has yet been developed (individual casino properties provide transportation to/from MEM), the opening of the section of Interstate 69 from U.S. 61 near Tunica to Interstate 55 south of Memphis opened in October 2006, providing improved road service between the Memphis airport and Tunica County.

Highway Access to Tunica

A high priority in the 1999 study, the following action steps were recommended: *Tunica County must encourage the present initiatives aimed at increasing highway access such as the new 304 and the improved 61. This along with better shuttle service would greatly improve the linkage issues present today. The inauguration of a new visitor center on Highway 61 last month can help to provide a "gateway" to familiarize passing travelers with the attractions within Tunica.*

Tunica is served by U.S. Highway 61, which runs north and south throughout the county and state. Twenty miles north of Tunica County, U.S. 61 connects with Interstate 40. Interstate 55 is located 18 miles east of Highway 61. As described previously, a portion of Interstate 69 connecting Tunica County to Interstate 55, opened in October 2006, providing direct interstate access to the county. While the I-69 access provides easy access to Memphis (and MEM), the Interstate highway signage available to travelers between Memphis and the casino district could and should be enhanced. For example, current signage provides driving distance remaining to "Tunica." While this may be accurate, visitors may confuse Tunica with Tunica County and its resorts and negatively perceive the distance remaining before reaching the nearest Tunica County resort. Moreover, the existing highway signage, directionally, seems more focused on getting travelers to the City of Tunica, rather than providing a more direct and faster guidance to the resort district. In other words, clear signage (and mileage) directing drivers on I-55 south, to I-69 south (MS 304 westbound), to the point where I-69/MS 304 intersects with U.S. Highway 61, just north of the Harrah's Parkway and the northern end of the Tunica resort area, would provide visitors with a more direct route to the resort areas and would help to better leverage the region's proximity to Memphis.

Rail Access to Tunica

A medium priority in the 1999 study, the following action steps were recommended: *Tunica County should once again approach Amtrak and Illinois Central officials to discuss better rail service into Tunica including a new depot, and shuttle service linkage to casinos as well as new major developments proposed such as Main Street in the Town of Tunica...*

While no such development has taken place, and development costs could be significant and prohibitive, it remains a potentially impactful tourist development as an element of a Delta Blues Train, which will be discussed in more detail later in this report.

Shuttle Linkage within Tunica

A high priority in the 1999 study, the following action steps were recommended: *Tunica County should consider creating a surface transportation system to link the areas of current development and foster additional private investment in the region.*

A shuttle service within Tunica opened in April 2001, but was later shut down. Currently, there is not a shuttle offered within Tunica. Similarly, a monorail/light rail was also explored as part of the 1999 study; however, it was identified as a low priority, given the significant investment involved and potentially limited ridership.

Golf

A medium priority in the 1999 study, the following is a summary of the action steps recommended: *The County should conduct a detailed study to estimate demand based on regional golfer demographic profiles, regional demographic data, market surveys, and visitor characteristics. In addition to potential public sector development, consideration might be given to providing incentives (land, utilities/water, tax, etc.) to private sector development. Tunica County's economic development representatives should consider contacting a private developer/operator such as Family Golf Centers. Family Golf Centers has become a leading owner/operator of golf and family entertainment centers in the United States. The company was founded in 1992 with one golf center. Today, Family Golf Centers owns, operates or has under construction 121 golf practice centers in 23 states and Canada; however, they do not own/operate a facility in Mississippi. In addition to the development of additional golf courses, another way to enhance Tunica County's appeal as a golf destination would be to fund a "Golf Tunica" organization. Other destinations throughout the country develop and fund a marketing arm of their respective convention and visitor bureaus, providing annual golf marketing budgets which could range from \$200,000 to well over \$2 million.*

The Cottonwoods and River Bend Links private courses were in existence during the 1999 study; however, that study identified the development of a new, more affordable golf course as a Medium Priority development that would provide golf as an amenity to all Tunica visitors. The Tunica National Golf and Tennis Complex opened in May 2004. As described previously, it offers an 18-hole public golf course designed by Mark McCumber and four climate-controlled indoor tennis courts.

Convention Center

A medium priority in the 1999 study, the following is a summary of the action steps recommended: *The Tunica CVB, in conjunction with the Chamber of Commerce, should continue to accelerate its marketing of existing meeting space in Tunica County. As the market for larger meeting develops as a result of growing hotel rooms supply, new attractions, and strong marketing, Tunica County should conduct a detailed market analysis to determine the appropriate building size, location and potential utilization/demand. The process of conducting a detailed market and economic analysis, site analysis, architectural designs, financing plans, actual construction time, and start-up/marketing often requires three to five years. During this period, the lodging supply and destination appeal of Tunica County could be further enhanced.*

In 2004, Tunica County engaged PwC to conduct a demand and economic analysis of a proposed new convention center to serve Tunica. The report concluded that, while some demand existed for such a venue, it was limited--the center was estimated to perform at an occupancy rate towards the low end of the range of the competitive set. The center was also expected to require an annual operating subsidy of approximately \$1 million, excluding the costs associated with funding construction (debt service) and the additional costs that the Tunica CVB would likely need to incur in marketing the facility to corporate and association meetings.

Consistent with the 2004 study findings, no public convention center development has taken place. Since then, there has been a significant increase in the supply of convention facilities in the U.S., coupled with an equally significant decline in demand.

Factory Outlet Shopping Center

A high priority in the 1999 study, the following action steps were recommended: *Tunica County should encourage development of outlet retail in the area, continue support of existing developers, provide necessary infrastructure improvements, provide marketing support, and ensure transportation (i.e., trolley service) is available between the centers and casinos.*

The Casino Factory Shoppes opened in 2000 and is a 30-store outlet mall located on Highway 61 in the Tunica Resorts area that includes retailers such as Nautica, Gap, Reebok, Sunglass World, Van Heusen, and Zales. Since its completion, the outlets have provided a shopping experience for tourists and locals, attracting shoppers from around the region.

"Main Street" Historic Renovation

A high priority in the 1999 study, the following action steps were recommended: *The revitalization of Downtown Tunica could include festive/specialty retail, restaurants, entertainment, etc. Tunica County could assist by improving infrastructure (i.e., public transportation trolley service, signage, roads, parking, etc.), providing incentives to certain visitor-oriented businesses to locate along Main Street, providing other support for private development of retail and restaurants, and assisting in marketing of downtown Tunica to tourists.*

While some Main Street and Downtown improvements have taken place, this remains an area of potential development.

History Museum

A high priority in the 1999 study (due to the fact the Tunica Museum was already in development), the following action steps were recommended: *Since the development of the Tunica County Museum is already in progress, it is critical that Tunica County take an active role immediately in the planning including determining the appropriate site, size, and nature of the exhibits before construction begins. Although a site for this project near the new Exposition Center is being considered, it may be more beneficial for the area to incorporate the History Museum as part of the Main Street developments. The location of the museum will be one of the most important factors to its success. The site must feature substantial drive-by or walk-by traffic, therefore heightening the museum's exposure to both the visitor and regional resident markets.*

In June 2002, the Tunica Museum opened across from the Tunica Expo Center. The museum interprets the history of Tunica County through exhibits, education programs, research, and collections. Topics include the natural setting, Native American history, early European exploration and settlement, and 19th and 20th century social, agricultural, institutional, political, military and commercial history.

The Gateway to the Blues Visitors Center and Museum is currently under construction at the Tunica Convention & Visitors Bureau Welcome Center. A renovated train depot built in the 1800s will become the new visitor center, house a gift shop, and be the entrance to the museum. Once complete, the museum will contain artifacts that were previously displayed at the Blues & Legends Hall of Fame Museum in Horseshoe Casino before it was closed and will provide a stage for concerts on its patio. Preliminary exhibit concepts include The Nature of the Delta, A Hidden Nation, Saturday Night Sunday Morning, Evolution of an American Musical Form, The British Embrace the Blues, 100 Years of Blues...and Counting, and Blues Interactive. The project is being funded through grants from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and the Mississippi Department of Transportation, in addition to funding provided by the Tunica County Board of Supervisors and the Tunica CVB. The museum and visitor center are scheduled to open in fall 2011.

Tunica County and City Festivals

Identified as a high priority in the 1999 study, the following action steps were recommended: *Consideration should be given to developing and expanding the marketing efforts of the Convention and Visitors Bureau, in conjunction with the Chamber of Commerce, or establishing a completely separate marketing board solely dedicated to the promotion of specific themed festivals.*

There are currently two main festivals offered annually in Tunica, the Tunica Rivergate Music Festival and Delta Day Festival. Other smaller festivals include the Fourth of July Children's Parade and the Christmas Open House. The Tunica Rivergate Music Festival will be held downtown Tunica on April 15th and 16th. It will focus on all the music genres of the south, including blues, country, blues grass, and southern rock. Festivities will include a karaoke contest, parades, and "Crawfish Alley" which includes children's activities, back yard BBQ, arts and crafts, Tunica Idol, and a Studebaker car show.

This year, the Delta Day Festival will be held in the third week in October at Main Street. Children's entertainment include a tractor pull, petting zoo, kiddie train, face painting, balloon artist, moon bounce, a giant slide, and costume contest. There will also be arts and crafts vendors, an antique car show, a 5k race, a scarecrow contest, and food vendors.

Given the investment in the Tunica RiverPark (as described below), and its beautiful riverfront setting, it is our understanding that there may be an opportunity to target this area for weekend, week-long, or even month-long festivals. The "Boardwalk Development" described later in this report may also contribute to a festival atmosphere and represent an opportunity to expand and enhance the RiverPark.

Riverfront Development

Identified as a medium priority in the 1999 study, the following is a summary of the action steps recommended: *Tunica County should evaluate potential sites along the river for park development. Given the unique allure of the Mississippi River and the barriers to commercial development, a public park with nature trails should be considered. A public park could provide visitors with access to the river in a natural setting. While development of a park would not generate significant levels of new visitation to Tunica County, it would provide a unique amenity to the area that cannot be duplicated in other destinations.*

While much more than a public park, In October 2001, Tunica broke ground on a \$22 million, 168-acre eco-park, museum, and interpretive center along the Mississippi River. In March 2004, the Tunica RiverPark & Museum opened, which features the Mississippi River Museum, riverboat cruises, a nature trail, a 48-foot river overlook, and a gift shop. The museum is loaded with authentic artifacts and exhibits, and provides an extensive, interactive showcase of history, nature, and culture.

Given the significant investment in the Tunica RiverPark, and its beautiful riverfront setting, it is our understanding that there may be an opportunity to target this area for weekend, week-long, or even month-long festivals. The "Boardwalk Development" described later in this report may also contribute to a festival atmosphere and represent an opportunity to expand and enhance the RiverPark.

Delta Blues Train

Identified as a medium priority in the 1999 study, the following action steps were recommended: *Given the strong association of the Memphis/Tunica region, Tunica County should consider the development of a Delta Blues Train. The train could link the Delta Blues Museum to the south and Beale Street to the north and draw patrons from the region by providing an opportunity for incremental day-trip or overnight visits to Tunica. Prior to proceeding, given the significant range in potential development and operating costs, a detailed cost/benefit analysis should be conducted. Tunica County could also consider looking to both regions for potential joint venture partners.*

To date, no detailed cost/benefit analysis has been conducted, nor has any development taken place. However, development is currently underway for a blues-themed visitor center / museum at the current Tunica Visitor Center, which will be housed in a restored railroad car. The concept of a Delta Blues Train will be discussed further later in this report.

Other Developments Identified in 1999 Study

Other low- to medium-priority developments were identified in the 1999 study, including a motor speedway, live performance theater, outdoor amphitheater, monorail, cinema, and professional sports. None of these venues have been developed and they do not appear to represent high priority development opportunities at this time.

IV. Comparison to Other Destinations

One method of gauging the relative strength of a destination's tourism assets is to compare them to the assets of other destinations. In this section, we will compare certain attributes of Tunica to a number of its peers including both gaming and non-gaming destinations. Included are non-gaming destinations such as Branson, Missouri; Gatlinburg/Pigeon Forge, Tennessee; Knoxville, Tennessee; and Myrtle Beach, South Carolina; as well as gaming destinations such as Atlantic City, New Jersey; Biloxi/Gulfport, Mississippi; Detroit, Michigan; Las Vegas and Reno/Tahoe, Nevada; and Shreveport, Louisiana.

Population Characteristics

Though a large population is not an essential characteristic to support destination visitation, a destination's population can be used as a measure of the local resident's potential to support attractions and tends to be correlated with corporate activity, the presence of attractions and activities, accessibility, and other factors that support tourism. Restaurants, retail, sports, cultural, and entertainment venues often rely heavily on resident population, particularly in regions with a high degree of seasonality. As illustrated in the adjacent table, Tunica County's metropolitan area population of 1.3 million ranks highest among the 22 regional markets presented; however, this is due to the county being part of the Memphis metropolitan area. If county population is compared, Tunica falls to the opposite end of the ranking (22nd), with a population of only 11,000. This low population contributes significantly to Tunica's challenge in attracting not only restaurants and cultural facilities, but even the most basic community facilities such as grocery stores and pharmacies.

This competitive challenge is also seen in Tunica's comparison relative to other gaming destinations.

Market	MSA Population	County Population
REGIONAL DESTINATIONS:		
Tunica, MS	1,311,900	11,100
Memphis, TN	1,311,900	915,500
Birmingham, AL	1,144,500	662,900
New Orleans, LA	1,071,200	242,800
Baton Rouge, LA	804,500	445,800
Knoxville, TN	713,500	441,600
Little Rock, AR	684,700	375,700
Chattanooga, TN	522,300	332,500
Mobile, AL	411,000	411,000
Huntsville, AL	406,600	329,000
Shreveport, LA	394,300	254,000
Montgomery, AL	376,500	228,200
Savannah, GA	341,200	253,800
Myrtle Beach, SC	269,100	269,100
Biloxi / Gulfport, MS	240,300	182,300
Destin, FL	193,100	193,100
Panama City Beach, FL	170,800	170,800
Hattiesburg, MS	143,200	80,000
Hot Springs, AR	99,600	99,600
Orange Beach / Point Clear, AL	N/A	182,800
Gatlinburg, TN	N/A	92,100
Vicksburg, MS	N/A	49,200
Average, excluding Tunica	516,600	295,800
Tunica Rank (of 22 markets)	1st	22nd
GAMING DESTINATIONS:		
Detroit, MI	4,483,400	1,953,200
Las Vegas, NV	1,984,400	1,984,400
Tunica, MS	1,311,900	11,100
Reno / Tahoe, NV	437,400	432,600
Atlantic City, NJ	277,900	277,900
Ledyard / Uncasville, CT	269,000	269,000
Biloxi / Gulfport, MS	240,300	182,300
Average, excluding Tunica	1,282,100	849,900
Tunica Rank (of 7 markets)	3rd	7th

1 Orange Beach / Point Clear, Gatlinburg, and Vicksburg are not included in an MSA as defined by Smith Travel Research.

Source: Woods and Poole

It is also helpful to compare population to other gaming destinations based on their 25-, 50-, and 75-mile drive radius. As illustrated, while the 50 mile radius is much more competitive from Tunica's perspective, so is the availability of tourism products. In other words, cities like Atlantic City, Detroit, St. Louis, Biloxi, and Reno remain the population and commerce centers even as these radii expand; however, in the case of Tunica County having Shelby County (Memphis) less than 20 miles away, Memphis attractions are obviously part of the greater market area. With its hundreds of tourism and leisure/entertainment products such as professional and collegiate sports, numerous cultural/performing arts venues, Graceland, Peabody Place, and Beale Street Historic District, the ability to attract the resident population of greater Memphis to Tunica for non-gaming leisure activities will require unique and strong attractions. (Note that the Ledyard/Uncasville market is home to Foxwoods and Mohegan Sun casinos.)

**Drive-Radius Population
Tunica vs Select Gaming Markets**

Market	25-Mile Radius	50-Mile Radius	75-Mile Radius
Detroit, Michigan	3,390,000	4,877,000	6,599,000
St. Louis, Missouri	2,032,000	2,783,000	3,204,000
Ledyard/Uncasville, Connecticut	509,000	3,871,000	8,233,000
Reno/Tahoe, Nevada	499,000	676,000	860,000
Tunica, Mississippi	395,000	1,435,000	1,780,000
Atlantic City, New Jersey	335,000	1,732,000	7,617,000
Biloxi/Gulfport, Mississippi	307,000	696,000	1,600,000

Source: ERSI

Destination Marketing Characteristics

The budget of a destination marketing organization ("DMO" or "CVB") is a relative measure of the region's ability to market itself through travel and promotion, advertising, trade shows, and other mediums. As illustrated in this table, Tunica ranks at the bottom of the regional destinations, and also lowest among gaming destinations.

The table also provides a comparison of DMO budgets relative to the number of hotel rooms within the region. Among regional destinations, Tunica ranks in the middle of the group, but still below average, with \$371 dollars per hotel room. Similarly, compared to other gaming destinations, Tunica ranks significantly below average.

There are a couple of key observations here. First, the Tunica CVB would require a budget of \$3.4 million simply to reach the average budget-to-room ratio of regional destinations. However, even this would still be significantly below the average regional destination budget of \$6.3 million, and approximately equal to Tupelo, Mississippi, which has significantly fewer rooms. Relative to other gaming destinations, Tunica would require \$3.6 million to reach the average relative to room inventories--a budget level that would still be significantly below Biloxi/Gulfport and the rest of the gaming destinations. Second, many of the destinations shown in this analysis generate a significant portion of their visitors (overnight guests) through corporate/business travel--most of which requires no DMO marketing. Unfortunately, due to Tunica's lack of significant corporate/business demand

Market	DMO Budget	MSA Hotel Supply	DMO Budget Per Hotel Room
REGIONAL DESTINATIONS:			
New Orleans, LA	\$12,844,700	35,000	\$367
Myrtle Beach, SC	\$8,900,000	29,500	\$302
Little Rock, AR	\$8,600,000	12,000	\$717
Panama City Beach, FL	\$8,500,000	8,900	\$955
Memphis, TN	\$8,203,000	29,600	\$277
Birmingham, AL	\$7,600,000	17,700	\$429
Biloxi / Gulfport, MS	\$5,717,200	10,700	\$534
Savannah, GA	\$3,897,700	14,900	\$262
Mobile, AL	\$3,804,900	7,100	\$536
Baton Rouge, LA	\$3,784,800	10,400	\$364
Knoxville, TN	\$3,200,000	12,400	\$258
Tupelo, MS ¹	\$3,114,200	1,800	\$1,730
Tunica, MS²	\$2,263,700	6,100	\$371
Average, excluding Tunica	\$6,513,900	15,800	\$561
Tunica Rank (of 13 markets)	13th	12th	7th
GAMING DESTINATIONS:			
Las Vegas, NV	\$181,558,000	160,000	\$1,135
Reno / Tahoe, NV	\$33,574,700	20,600	\$1,630
Detroit, MI	\$12,455,400	41,100	\$303
Atlantic City, NJ	\$11,011,700	24,600	\$448
Biloxi / Gulfport, MS	\$5,717,200	10,700	\$534
Tunica, MS²	\$2,263,700	6,100	\$371
Average, excluding Tunica	\$48,863,400	51,400	\$598
Tunica Rank (of 6 markets)	6th	6th	5th
¹ Tupelo is not included in an MSA as defined by Smith Travel Research. The number of hotel rooms in Tupelo is presented. ² Tunica is part of the Memphis MSA. The number of hotel rooms in Tunica County is presented.			

Source: Individual Bureaus & Tunica CVB

generators, the destination is even more reliant on marketing to the leisure traveler. This can be seen in the much higher budget-to-rooms ratios in Las Vegas and Reno--destinations that similarly have a disproportionate reliance on the leisure traveler.

Based on these observations, and given the importance of destination marketing to the success of Tunica, the public (state and local government) and private (casinos) sectors should explore ways to immediately bring Tunica's DMO budget more in-line with the regional and national competition. At a minimum, this should immediately target a budget of \$3.5 million, with continued exploration of methods to increase this to \$5 million. The greater levels of marketing efforts that could result from an increased DMO budget include more effective marketing to leisure travelers from existing and new target markets, as well sales and marketing associated with group meetings. More effective partnerships in the marketing of existing meeting space offered by Tunica's resorts could begin to better establish Tunica as a viable meetings destination, which is critical in supporting future development of/investment in private and public convention facilities.

Relative Comparison of Key Attractions

The tables on the following pages provide a comparison of Tunica's key attractions relative to a select group of destinations (chosen for their market characteristics), including Branson, Gatlinburg, Knoxville, Biloxi/Gulfport, Myrtle Beach, Niagara Falls, Panama City, and Pigeon Forge. The key takeaway from these comparisons is the simple fact that Tunica's list of attractions is significantly smaller than these other, more mature/established destinations. This reflects not only the reliance of the destination on the gaming market, but the competitive disadvantage relative to other destinations that offer more diverse options to attract visitors and entice them to stay longer.

The information presented, by destination, was gathered directly from the websites of each destination's DMO. It is not intended to be a complete inventory of tourism products; rather, it is simply a relative comparison of each destination's product diversity.

Convention Center	Tunica	Branson	Gatlinburg
Leasable Space	No	Yes	Yes
Golf Courses	N/A	100,000 square feet	96,900 square feet
Attractions	3	12	2
	Arkabutla Lake	Amazing Pets at Grand Country Music Hall	A Walk in the Woods
	Austin Park	Amusement centers	Amazing Mirror Maze
	Bally's Casino Tunica	An Old Time Christmas	Arcadia - Planet Fun
	Boatline Park	Andy Williams Moon River Theatre	Biking
	Casino Factory Shoppes	Baldknobber Jamboree	Bird watching
	Delta Day Festival	Biking	Camping
	Dubbs Park	Bluegrass & BBQ Festival	Christ in the Smokies Museum and Gardens
	Fishing	Bonniebrook Historical Society Museum	Circus Golf...in 3d
	Fitz Casino & Hotel	Branson Auto Museum	Climb Works Canopy
	Flower Lake	Branson Balknocker	Cooter's Place in the Smokies
	G.W. Henderson Recreation Complex	Branson Family Fun Factory	Earthquake - The Ride
	Gold Strike Casino Resort	Branson Hills	Fannie Finkle's
	Hamblick Park	Branson IMAX	Fishing
	Hannah's Tunica	Branson Landing	Fort Fun
	Hollywood Casino Tunica	Branson Mall	Gatlinburg Aerial Tramway
	Horseshoe Casino & Hotel	Branson Mill Craft Village	Gatlinburg Castle Tours
	Hunting	Branson Scenic Railway	Gatlinburg Craftmen Fair
	Kids Quest	Branson Star Theatre	Gatlinburg Fine Arts Festival
	Kimble Park	Branson Variety Theatre	Gatlinburg Heritage Museum
	McConnell Park	Branson's Circle B Supper Show	Gatlinburg Scenic Overlook
	Mhoon Landing Park	Branson's Dinosaur Museum	Gatlinburg Scottish Festival & Games
	Mississippi Blues Trail	Branson's IMAX	Gatlinburg Screenfest
	North Park	Bull Shoals Lake	Gatlinburg Sky Lift
	Old Sub Park	Bumper boats	Gatlinburg Trolley
	Resorts Tunica Casino	Camping	Gatlinburg Ziplines Family Adventures
	Sam's Town Hotel & Gambling Hall	Canoeing	Gatlinburg's Fine Arts Festival
	Sledge Park	Castle of Chaos	Ghost & Haunt Tours
	Tunica Arena & Exposition Center	Clay Cooper Theatre	Great Smoky Mountains National Park
	Tunica Cut-off Lake	Coffelt Country Crossroads	Guinness World Records Museum
	Tunica Main Street	College of the Ozarks	Hauntings - A Live Ghost Show
	Tunica Museum	Dick Clark's American Band Theatre	Herbert Holt Park
	Tunica Queen	Dixie Stampede Dinner Attraction	Hiking
	Tunica Rivergate Festival	Dogwood Canyon	Hillbilly Golf
	Tunica RiverPark & Museum	Dutton Family Theatre	Historic Olge Log Cabin
	Tunica Roadhouse Casino Hotel	Factory Merchants	Hollywood Star Cars Museum
	Tunica Sports Complex	Fishing	Hollywood Wax Museum
	Tunica's Blues Markers	Fun Spot at Grand Country	Jon Dee's Hypnotized Comedy Show
	Verner Park	Geocaching	Linbergers Plaza Observation Deck
	Veteran's Memorial and Rivergate Park	Go-cart tracks	Mills Park
	White Oak Park	God & Country Theatre	Motion Ride Movie Theater
	Willows Sporting Clays & Hunting Center	Grand Country Indoor Mini Golf	Mynatt Park
		Grand Country Music Hall	Mysterious Mansion of Gatlinburg
		Grand Country Square	Nantahala Outdoor Center
		Grand Village	NOC's Great Outpost
		Greatest Adventures Mini Golf	Ober Gatlinburg Aerial Tramway
		Hammer Barber Theater	Ober Gatlinburg Amusement Park
		Hannah's Maze of Mirrors	Ober Gatlinburg Ski Resort
		Helicopter rides	Off Road Voyages
		Hiking	Old Gatlinburg Golf & Games
		Historic Downtown	Old Smoky Distillery
		Hollywood Entertainment Center	Old Smoky Moonshine Distillery
		Hollywood Wax Museum	Rafting in the Smokies
		Horseback rides	Ripley's Aquarium of the Smokies
		Hughes Brothers Theatre	Ripley's Believe It or Not Museum
		Hunting	Ripley's Davy Crockett Mini Golf
		Inspiration Tower	Ripley's Haunted Adventure
		IronMan 70.3	Ripley's Marvellous Mirror Maze & Candy Factory
		Island Oasis	Ripley's Moving Theater
		Jim Stafford Theatre	Ripley's Penguin Playhouse
		Joseph Hall's Eras of the King	Ripley's Super Fun Zone
		Kayaking	Segways of the Smokies
		KidsFest	Smoky Mountain Brewery
		Kirby VanBurch Theatre	Smoky Mountain Outdoors
		Lake Taneycomo	Smoky Mountain Outfitters
		Little Ory Theatre	Smoky Mountain Riding Stables
		Mansion Theatre	Smoky Mountain Stables
		Mount Pleasant Winery	Smoky Mountain Winery
		National Harvest Festival	Space Needle
		New Shanghai Theatre	Superland's Riding Stables
		Ozark Medieval Fortress	Sweet Fanny Adams Theatre
		Pierce Arrow Theatre	That Scooter Place
		Presley's Country Jubilee	The Salt & Pepper Shaker Museum
		Ralph Foster Museum at College of the Ozarks	Treasure Quest Golf
		Ride the Ducks	Westgate Wild Bear Falls Water Park
		Ripley's Believe It or Not	Wild Bear Falls Indoor Waterpark
		Rock climbing	Wildwater LTD Rafting
		Roller skating rinks	World of Humans
		Scenic Railway	
		Segway tours	
		Shoji Tabuchi Theatre	
		Shoppes at Branson Meadows	
		Showboat Branson Belle	
		Sight & Sounds Theatres	
		Silver Dollar City	
		Southern Gospel Picnic	
		Spelunking	
		Splash Country indoors	
		Starline Theatre	
		Stone Hill Winery	
		Table Rock Lake	
		Table Rock Lakeshore Trail	
		Tanger Outlet Center	
		The Hughes Brothers Show	
		The Splash-A-Torium	
		The Titanic	
		The Track Family Fun Park	
		The White House Theatre	
		Titanic: The Worlds Largest Museum Attraction	
		Tom & Huck's Riverblast	
		Tractor Museum at College of the Ozarks	
		Trap and skeet shooting	
		Veterans Memorial Museum	
		White Water	
		Wineries	
		World-Fest	
		World's Largest Toy Museum	
		Yakov's Theatre	

Convention Center
Leasable Space
Golf Courses
Attractions

Tunica
No
N/A
3
Arkabutla Lake
Austin Park
Bally's Casino Tunica
Bardine Park
Casino Factory Shoppes
Delta Day Festival
Dubbs Park
Fishing
Fitz Casino & Hotel
Flower Lake
G.W. Henderson Recreation Complex
Gold Strike Casino Resort
Hambrick Park
Hansh's Tunica
Hollywood Casino Tunica
Horsehoe Casino & Hotel
Hunting
Kids Quail
Kimble Park
McConnell Park
Whoon Landing Park
Mississippi Blues Trail
North Park
Old Sub Park
Resorts Tunica Casino
Sam's Town Hotel & Gambling Hall
Sledge Park
Tunica Arena & Exposition Center
Tunica Out-of-Lake
Tunica Main Street
Tunica Museum
Tunica Queen
Tunica Rivergate Festival
Tunica RiverPark & Museum
Tunica Roadhouse Casino Hotel
Tunica Sports Complex
Tunica's Blues Markers
Vernor Park
Veteran's Memorial and Rivergate Park
White Oak Park
Willows Sporting Clays & Hunting Center

Knoxville
Yes
168,200 square feet
15
Abode
Actor's Co-Op
Adair Park
Alex Haley Statue at Haley Heritage Statue
Armstrong-Lockett House & W.P. Tombs Memorial Gardens
Art Market Gallery
Bearden - The District in Bearden
Bearden Banquet Hall
Beck Cultural Exchange Center
Bennet Galleries & Company
Big Dan Costumer
Bloss Theatre
Bloss Home
Blount Mansion
Charter E. Doyle Park
Chilhowee Park & Exposition Center
Christmas in the City
Chrysler Jeep Boomerang Festival
Clarence Brown Theatre
Confederate Memorial Hall (Bleak House)
Conference Center at Water's Edge
Dora's Garden
Dogwood Arts Festival
Downtown Gallery
Earth to Old City
East Tennessee Discovery Center
East Tennessee History Center
East Tennessee Irish Festival
Emporium Center for Arts & Culture
Ewing Gallery
Farmington Folklife Museum
Festival on the Fourth
Fort Dickerson Park
Frank H. McClurg Museum
Gallery 1010
Hanson Gallery
Harvest Park Shopping Center
Hata Festival
Holston River Park
Hornberg Area
Jama Nature Center
James White's Fort
John H. Daniel Co-Hunter & Lands
Joseph B. Wolfe Collection
Julius Benquet Facility
Keener Lighting Company
Knoxville Art and Fine Craft Center
Knoxville Botanical Gardens & Arboretum
Knoxville Center Mall
Knoxville Civic Coliseum & Auditorium
Knoxville Dragon Boat Festival
Knoxville Expo Center
Knoxville Ice Bears
Knoxville Jazz Festival
Knoxville Museum of Art
Knoxville Opera
Knoxville Sightseeing Tour
Knoxville Symphony Orchestra
Knoxville Visitor Center Gift Shop
Knoxville Zoo
Kumba Festival
Lakeshore Park
Laver Quail
Laurel Theater
Legacy Vintage Clothing
Liz-Beth & Company Gallery
Mabry-Hazen House Museum & Civil War "Bethel Cemetery"
Martie Springs State Historic Farmstead
Mast General Store
Middlebrook Gardens
New Harvest Park
Old Gray Cemetery
OP Jenkins Furniture
Pelissippi State Hot-Air Balloon Festival
Plaza News Stand
Ramsey House Plantation
Renaissance
Rossini Festival
Rothchild's Catering and Conference Center
Sequoyah Park
South's Finest Chocolate Factory
Sundown in the City
Sunshine
Tennessee Riverboat Company
Tennessee Stage Company
Tennessee Theatre
The Art Gallery of Knoxville
The Basement Gallery
The Big Ears Festival
The Carpetbag Theatre
The Foundry on the Fair Site
The Gallery in West Knoxville
The General Store
The Shops at Franklin Square
Thompson-Boling Arena
Three Rights Up Gallery
Three Rivers Rambler
Turkey Creek Area
Tyson Park & Knoxville Skate Park
University of Tennessee Athletics
University of Tennessee Football Hall of Fame
University of Tennessee Gardens
UT Conference Center
Vagabondia
Victor Ashe Park
Village Marketplace
Vine Avenue Furniture Co.
Volunteer Landing & Marina
Volunteer Princess Cruises
WOVX Blue Plate Special
West Town Mall
Women's Basketball Hall of Fame
World's Fair Park
Yee Hwe Industries
Zuma Fun Center

Mississippi Gulf Coast
Yes
253,000 square feet
20
Arts Under the Dome
Beau Rivage Resort & Casino
Beauvoir, The Jefferson Davis Home
Bella Bleu Art Studio and Gallery
Big Play Family Fun Park
Biloxi Bay Charter & Nature Tours
Biloxi City Cemetery
Biloxi Lighthouse
Biloxi Little Theatre
Biloxi Schooners
Biloxi Seafood Festival
Biloxi Shopping Trip
Biloxi Tour Train
Breeding of the Fleet and Pats DeDo
Boomtown Casino
Bridge Mosaic Mural
Cajun, Country, Swamp Pop Music Festival
Center for Marine Education & Research
Centers Stage
Christmas in the Pass & Boat Parade
Christmas on the Bayou
Coast Community Concert Association
Cool Breeze Aviation, LLC
Crossroads Mall
Cruisin' The Coast
Deep Sea Fishing Rodeo
Deer Island Fishing & Tours - Mr. Biggy
Diamondhead Performing Arts Society
Eco-Tours of South Mississippi
Edgewater Mall
Edgewater Village Shopping Center
G.I. Museum
Gallery 782 Co-Art
Grand Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve
Grand Biloxi Casino Hotel & Spa
Griller on the Green
Gulf Coast Blues & Heritage Festival
Gulf Coast Gator Ranch & Airboat Tours
Gulf Coast Kite Festival
Gulf Coast Symphony Orchestra
Gulf Coast Winter Classic
Gulf Islands National Seashore
Gulf Islands Waterpark
Gulfport Gallery of Fine Art
Gulfport Little Theatre
Hard Rock Hotel & Casino
Hollywood Casino
Hurricane Katrina Memorial
Hurricane Camille Memorial
Hurricane Katrina Tree Sculptures
IP Casino Resort Spa
Island View Casino Resort
Idle Casino Hotel Biloxi
Kala Lobano House
Katrina Blue Lines
KNS Theatre
Lucky Magnolia Brewing Company
Lynn Meadows Discovery Center
Maritime Seafood Museum & Gift Shop
Mary C. O'Keefe Cultural Center of Arts & Education
McCoy's River and Marsh Tours
Mississippi Gulf Coast Jazz Society
Mississippi Sandhill Crane National Wildlife Refuge
Mississippi Surge Professional Hockey
MS Coast Coliseum Crawfish Festival
MS Coast Coliseum Summer Fair
MS Vietnam Veterans Memorial
NASA Space Center - Stennis Space
Naval Construction Battalion Center Seabee Heritage Center
Negro's Gallery
North Star Sailing Charters
Ole-Okeefe Museum of Art
Palace Casino Resort
Pascagoula River Audubon Center
Peter Anderson Arts & Crafts Festival
Prime Outlets - Gulfport
Promenade at Oceanville and Lakeside Village
Proudest Monkey
Rockin' the Globe
Ron Meyers Christmas City Gift Show
Sanger Theatre
School & Carnival Factory Tour
Scottish Games & Celtic Festival
Scranton Nature Center
Shearwater Pottery
Ship Island Excursions
Silver Slipper Casino
Singing River Art Gallery
Singing River Mall
Smokin' the Sound & Smokin' the Lake
South Coast Paddling Company
St. Patrick's Day Festivities
St. Paul's Seafood Festival
St. Rose de Lima Catholic Church
Swat Paintball Park
The Art House
Treasure Bay Casino & Hotel
USS Mississippi CGN 40 Main Mast
W. Railroad Merchants Mall
Water Anderson Museum of Art
Water Anderson Players
West End Home Company No. 3 Museum
Wolf River Canoe & Kayak & Natural Adventures LTD
WWII/USF Tullibee Memorial

Convention Center	Tunica	Myrtle Beach	Niagara Falls
Leasable Space	No	Yes	Yes
Golf Courses	N/A	131,900 square feet	102,900 square feet
Attractions	3	17	N/A
	Arkabutla Lake	Alabama Theatre	Adventure City
	Austin Park	Alabama Theatre Christmas Show	African Lion Safari
	Bally's Casino Tunica	Alligator Adventure	Aquarium of Niagara
	Beadline Park	Ash Myrtle Beach ATV Tours	Biking
	Casino Factory Shoppes	Atlantic Stage	Bird Kingdom
	Delta Day Festival	Banana Boat Express	Bird watching
	Dubba Park	Barefoot Landing	Brasa Brazilian Steakhouse and Wine Bar
	Fishing	BattleShip NORTH CAROLINA	Brick City
	Fitz Casino & Hotel	Beach	Bronto's Adventure Playland
	Flower Lake	Beach Boogie & BBQ Festival	Butterfly Conservatory
	G.W. Henderson Recreation Complex	Big "M" Casino	Canada One Factory Outlets
	Gold Strike Casino Resort	Bi-Lo Myrtle Beach Marathon	Casino Niagara
	Hambrick Park	Blessing of the Inlet	Cave of the Winds
	Hamra's Tunica	Blue Wave Adventures Dolphin Watch Tour	Chateau des Chances
	Hollywood Casino Tunica	Bowling	Cheeky Monkeys' Indoor Playland
	Horseshoe Casino & Hotel	Broadway at the Beach	Clifton Hill Attractions
	Hunting	Brookgreen Gardens	Criminals Hall of Fame Wax Museum
	Kids Quest	Canadian-American Days Festival	Daredevil Gallery & IMAX Theatre
	Kimble Park	Capt. Dick's Deep Sea Fishing	Daredevil Museum
	McConnell Park	Charleston Adventures	Deceaux Woods State Park
	Mhoon Landing Park	Children's Museum of S.C.	Devil's Hole State Park
	Mississippi Blues Trail	Coastal Grand Mall	Dinosaur Park Miniature Golf
	North Park	Darlington Raceway	Fallview Casino
	Old Sub Park	Dolly Parton's Dixie Stampede Dinner Attraction	Fallview Indoor Waterpark
	Resorts Tunica Casino	Downwind Sails	Fashion Outlets of Niagara Falls
	Sam's Town Hotel & Gambling Hall	Express Watersports	Fishing
	Sledge Park	Fabulous 50s Festival	Fort George
	Tunica Arena & Exposition Center	Family Kingdom Amusement Park	Galaxy Golf
	Tunica Cut-off Lake	Family Kingdom Oceanfront Water Park	Goat Island
	Tunica Main Street	Franklin G. Burroughs - Simeon B. Chapin Art Museum	Great Canadian Midway
	Tunica Museum	Freestyle Music Park	Great Lakes Garden
	Tunica Queen	Garden City Pavilion Arcade	Greg Frowin Theatre
	Tunica Rivergate Festival	Good Vibrations	Guinness World Records Museum
	Tunica RiverPark & Museum	Grand Strand Fishing Rodeo	Hard Rock Club
	Tunica Roadhouse Casino Hotel	Hopewee Plantation	Haunted House of Wax
	Tunica Sports Complex	Horry County Museum Quilt Gala	Hiking
	Tunica's Blues Markers	Horseback Riding of Myrtle Beach	Hillebrand Estates Winery
	Verner Park	Huntington Beach State Park	Horse Play Niagara
	Veteran's Memorial and Rivergate Park	IMAX 3D Theatre at Broadway at the Beach	House of Frankenstein
	White Oak Park	Island Water Adventures	IMAX Theatre
	Wilkes Sporting Clays & Hunting Center	Kart Trax Formula Racing	Inniskillin Wineries
		Kayak Express	iTheatre - Mystery on the Lake Productions
		Legends in Concert	Journey Behind the Falls
		MagQuest	LaSalle Waterfront Park
		Magnolia Plantation and Its Gardens	Legends of Niagara Falls 3D/4D Movie
		Market Common Myrtle Beach	Legends on the Niagara Golf Complex
		Medieval Times	Louis Tussaud's Waxworks
		Miniature Golf	Luna Island
		Movie Theaters	Lundy's Lane Historical Museum
		Myrtle Beach Boardwalk & Promenade	Magnolia Winery
		Myrtle Beach Factory Stores	Maid of the Mist Steamboat Company
		Myrtle Beach Family Golf	Marineland of Canada
		Myrtle Beach Indoor Shooting Range	MGM Studio Experience
		Myrtle Beach Pelicans Baseball	Movieland Wax Museum of the Stars
		Myrtle Beach Segway	Mystery Maze
		Myrtle Beach State Park	National Helicopters
		Myrtle Waves Water Park	Niagara Adventure Theater
		NASCAR SpeedPark	Niagara Arts & Cultural Center
		Nightmare Haunted House	Niagara Falls International Marathon
		Nostalgia City & Museum	Niagara Falls State Park
		Ocean Watersports	Niagara Falls State Park Visitor Center
		Palace Theatre	Niagara Freefall & Interactive Centre
		Parasail Express	Niagara Fury
		Pavilion Nostalgia Park	Niagara Go-Karts
		Preservation Station Preserve	Niagara Gorge Discovery Center
		Ragtop & Roadsters	Niagara Helicopters
		Ripley's Aquarium	Niagara Parks Commission
		Ripley's Believe It or Not Museum	Niagara Scenic Trolley
		Ripley's Mirror Maze	Niagara Science Museum
		Ripley's Moving Theater	Niagara Scuba Center
		Run to the Sun	Niagara Sky/Wheel
		Shoreline Watersports	Niagara's Wax Museum of History
		South Beach Adventure	Nightmares Fear Factory
		St. Patrick's Parade & Festival	Observation Tower
		Sun Fun Festival	Oh Canada Eh? Dinner Show
		SunCruz Aquasino	Old Fort Erie
		Tanger Outlets	Old Fort Niagara
		The Bowery	Oppenheim County Park
		The Carolina Opry	Pen Centre
		The Rice Museum	Prospect Point
		Thomas Outdoors Watersports	Rainbow Helicopter Tours
		Thrill Rides on 12th -National Amusement Rides	Ride Over the Niagara
		Wheels of Yesteryear	Ripley's Believe It or Not
		Wild Water & Wheels	Ripley's Moving Theatre
		Wild West Old Times Photos	Rock Legends Wax Museum
		WonderWorks	Ross Glass
			Rumours Night Club
			Safari Niagara
			Serena Niagara Casino
			Skyline Tower
			Skyquest
			Snow Park Niagara Falls
			Souvenir City Headquarters
			Strike Rock N Bowl
			Super Putt
			TerraPin Point
			The Crystal Caves - A Mirror Maze Adventure
			The Fun House
			The Haunted House
			The House of Frankenstein
			The Krow's Nest Family Fun Center
			The Rapids Theatre
			Three Sisters Islands
			Thunder Theater
			Welland Canals Centre @ Lock 3
			Whirlpool Jet Boat Tours
			Whirlpool State Park
			Wine Rack Outlet Store
			Winter Festival of Lights
			World Wrestling Niagara Ride

Convention Center	Tunica	Panama City	Pigeon Forge
Leasable Space	No	No	No
Golf Courses	N/A	N/A	N/A
Attractions	3	4	N/A
	Arkabutla Lake	"Sea Dragon" Pirate Cruise	A Mountain Outfest
	Austin Park	Adventures at Sea	Adventure Golf
	Bally's Casino Tunica	Airboat Adventures	Adventure Quest
	Beeline Park	Alvin's Big Island Magic Mountain	Adventure Raceway
	Casino Factory Shoppes	Aquatic Adventures	American Oldies Theater
	Delta Day Festival	Barley's Bike Rentals	Antiques, Crafts, Gifts, & Specialty Shops
	Dubbs Park	Barnacle Bay	Art Galleries
	Fishing	Bay Point Dofun Tours	Baskin Robbins Fun Center
	Fliz Casino & Hotel	Bay Point Water Sports	Belz Outlets
	Flower Lake	Beach	Big Rock Dude Ranch at Ponderosa
	G.W. Henderson Recreation Complex	Betsy Ann Riverboat	Black Bear Jamboree Dinner & Show
	Gold Strike Casino Resort	Biking	Blackwood Breakfast Variety Show
	Hambrick Park	Bird watching	Bluff Mountain Adventures
	Hannah's Tunica	Blue Dolphin Tours	Candy Making Shops
	Hollywood Casino Tunica	Boating	Cedar Creek Complex
	Horseshoe Casino & Hotel	Camp Helen State Park	Christmas Place
	Hunting	Canceing	Comedy Barn Theater
	Kids Quest	Capt. Anderson III	Country Tonite Theatre
	Kimble Park	Capt. Linda's Kayak	Dinosaur Walk Museum
	McConnell Park	City of Panama City Marina Civic Center	Dixie Stampede Dinner & Show
	Whoon Landing Park	Classic Rentals	Dolly Parton's Dixie Stampede Dinner & Show
	Mississippi Blues Trail	Coastal Parasail	Dolly's Homecoming Parade
	North Park	Cobra Adventure Park	Dollywood
	Old Sub Park	Coconut Creek Fun Park/The Gran Maze	Dollywood's Splash Country
	Resorts Tunica Casino	Duck Adventures	Elvis Museum & Gift Shops
	Sam's Town Hotel & Gambling Hall	Ebro Greyhound Park	Fantasy Golf
	Sledge Park	Econline Creek Cance Livery	Fast Tracks
	Tunica Arena & Exposition Center	Emerald Coast Bingo	Firehouse Golf
	Tunica Cut-off Lake	Emerald Coast Family Recreation Center	Flyaway Indoor Skydiving
	Tunica Main Street	Emerald Coast Kiteboarding	Fun Time Trolley
	Tunica Museum	Emerald Coast Mirror Maze & Laser Craze	Grand Majestic Theater
	Tunica Queen	Emerald Falls Recreation Center	Great Smoky Mountain Murder Mystery Dinner Show
	Tunica Rivergate Festival	Fish Tales Art Gallery	Great Smoky Mountains National Park
	Tunica RiverPark & Museum	Fishing	Hillbilly Village & Craft Center
	Tunica Roadhouse Casino Hotel	Flippers	Hoot N' Holler Dinner Show at WonderWorks
	Tunica Sports Complex	Frank Brown Park	Hummer Tours
	Tunica's Blues Markers	Fun Land Arcade & Snack Bar	Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat
	Verner Park	Gayle's Trails	Jurassic Jungle Boat Ride
	Wetland's Memorial and Rivergate Park	Glass Bottom Cruiser to Shell Island	Kick n' Country
	White Oak Park	Goofy Golf	Kid's Country
	Willows Sporting Clays & Hunting Center	Greenways and trails	LazerPort
		Gulf World Marine Park	Magic Beyond Belief
		Hidden Lagoon Race Track	MagiQuest
		Hidden Lagoon Super Golf	Memories Theatre
		Hiking	Miracle Theatre
		Indy Speedway	Mountain Memory Tours
		Island Air Express	Mountain Valley Winery
		Island Time Sailing Adventures	Nash's Ark Animal Park
		Island Waterunner Tours	NCC Whitewater Rafting
		Kaleidoscope Theatre	Ogle's Mall
		Kayaking	Old Mill
		Kriller Inc.	Old Mill Craft Area
		Lagoon Pontoons	Old Mill Village
		Lord's Gym Dive Center	Outdoor Adventures of the Smokies
		Martin Theatre	Parrot Mountain & Gardens
		Miracle Strip at Pier Park	Patriot Festival
		Museum of Man in the Sea	Patriot Park
		Nature photography	Patty Wazak Show
		Panama City Airboat	Pigeon Forge Bowling Center
		Panama City Beach Winery	Pigeon Forge City Park
		Panama City Dunes Dune Buggy Adventure Park	Pigeon Forge Community Chorus Holiday Concert
		Panama City Parasail	Pigeon Forge Factory Outlet Stores
		Parhandle Helicopter	Pigeon Forge Fun Time Trolley
		Paul Brent Gallery	Pigeon Forge Gem Mine
		PCB Sand Sports	Pigeon Forge Harvestfest
		Pine Log State Forest	Pigeon River
		Pirates Island Adventure Golf	Pine Mountain Village
		Pirate's Quest Laser Tag	Professor Hackers Lost Treasure Golf
		Point Washington State Forest	Rafting in the Smokies
		Ripley's Believe It or Not! Museum	River Rage Tube & Kayak Rentals
		Rock'n' Lanes	River Vista Outlet Mall
		Rosemary Beach	Riverview Outlet Mall
		Russell-Fields Pier	Rockin' Raceway
		Safari Boat Tours	Rocky Top Tours
		Sea Dragon Pirate Cruise	Saddle Up!
		Sea Screamer	Safe Halloween Celebration
		Seabreeze Winery	Sandpike Plaza
		Seaplane tours	Scenic Helicopter Tours
		Senior Center at Panama City Beach	Scream N Shout Interactive Family Show
		Shell Island	Settler's Village
		Shell Island Boat Rentals	Sky Scraper
		Shell Island Shuttle Boats	Smith Family Dinner Theater
		Shipwreck Island Water Park	Smoky Mountain Car Museum
		St. Andrews Bay Ferry	Smoky Mountain Speed Park
		St. Andrews State Recreation Area	Smoky Mountain Theater
		State Park Boat Rentals	Smoky Mountains Storytelling Festival
		Sunjammer's Watersports	Southern Gospel Music Fair
		Super Speed Fun Park	Speed Zone Fun Park
		Swimming	Spin City Skate Center & Go Karts
		The Grand Theatre	Star Tracks
		The Junior Museum of Bay County	Teaster Crossing
		Tubing	Tennessee Express Tours
		Visual Arts Aqua Gallery	Tennessee Shindig
		Visual Arts Center	The Edge Indoor Skateboard & BMX Park
		Water Demon	The Forge Cinemas
		Water Planet - Swim with Dolphins	The Grand Majestic
		Water Sports PC Jet Skis	The Miracle
		Water Sports PC Shell Island Tours	The Shoppes of Pigeon Forge
		Wildern World 4 Kids	The Shops at Patriot Mill
		WonderWorks	The Track & Super Track
		ZooWorld Zoological and Botanical Park	Titanic - Pigeon Forge
			Ultrazone
			Walden's Landing
			Walden's Landing Firehouse Golf
			Western Jamboree
			Wilderness Wildlife Walk
			Wildwater Rafting
			Winterfest
			WonderWorks
			Wynns Mountain Village
			Z Buda Outlet Mall
			Ziplines of the Smokies
			Zorb Smoky Mountains

V. Environmental Scan / SWOT Analysis

The Environmental Scan involves an analysis of the internal and external environments that impact Tunica's potential growth as a tourist destination. This analysis identifies Tunica County's internal strengths and weaknesses and external threats and opportunities. The objective of this "SWOT" analysis is to understand the areas that should be leveraged and capitalized, versus challenges that must be addressed or mitigated.

S.W.O.T. Analysis

Strengths <ul style="list-style-type: none">1) Well-established as a gaming destination2) Proximity to Memphis3) Existence of a "Main Street"4) Supportive local business and public sector5) Freeway access6) International and regional airports7) Natural Resources	Weaknesses <ul style="list-style-type: none">1) Small local population2) Lack of widely-recognized brand / image beyond gaming3) Limited attractions beyond gaming4) Limited historical sites5) Limited arts / cultural facilities6) Limited basic services including public education7) Local economy / limited economic diversity
Opportunities <ul style="list-style-type: none">1) Blues music heritage2) Mississippi River / waterfront3) Ample land for development4) Downtown Tunica's potential5) Clean slate	Threats <ul style="list-style-type: none">1) Growth in other gaming markets2) Nearby communities have a significant head-start3) National, regional, and local economies4) Online gaming5) Competition from other destinations

Strengths

	Drivers	Primary Impact	Secondary Impact
Well-established as a gaming destination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nine casinos that provide more than 5,400 hotel rooms • More than 11,250 slot machines, 330 table games, and 65 poker games 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generates revenue for Tunica County • Attracts visitors to the area • Provides local jobs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generates revenue for the State of Mississippi • Gamblers spend money on non-gaming items
Locations proximate to Memphis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Located in Memphis MSA • Located 30 miles south of Memphis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Memphis provides additional attractions for Tunica tourists • Locals and tourists from Memphis visit Tunica 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides an incentive for companies to invest in Tunica • Attracts visitors to Memphis
Existence of a “Main Street”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Main Street offers boutique shops and restaurants • Well-situated to host festivals and events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attracts visitors to the shops, restaurants, and events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduces the image that Tunica is only known as a gaming destination
Supportive local business and public sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small, close-knit community • Business and public sector have the community in mind when making decisions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allows for greater communication amongst key stakeholders • Allows for more efficient decision making 	
Freeway access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Served by U.S. Highway 61 • Interstates 55 and 69 also provide access • State Highways 4, 310, and 315 provide alternate routes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides easy access for visitors coming from many locations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides an incentive for companies to invest in Tunica
International and regional airports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Memphis International Airport • Tunica Airport 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allows national and international tourists to easily visit Tunica • Allows casinos to fly in high-rollers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides an incentive for companies to invest in Tunica

Weaknesses

	Drivers	Primary Impact	Secondary Impact
Limited local population	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Population less than 11,000 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limits the basics services offered in the area Reduces the incentive for businesses to invest in Tunica 	
Lack of widely-recognized brand / image beyond gaming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited number of attractions with brand names or established images 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deters families and non-gamers from visiting Tunica 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contributes to the image that Tunica is only known as a gaming destination
Limited attractions beyond gaming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited number of attractions not related to gaming 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creates an image that Tunica is only a gaming destination Deters families and non-gamers from visiting Tunica 	
Limited historical sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Tunica Museum, the Tunica RiverPark & Museum, and Tunica's Blues Markers are the only historical sites 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deters families and non-gamers from visiting Tunica 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contributes to the image that Tunica is only known as a gaming destination
Limited arts / cultural facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited number of arts and cultural facilities in Tunica 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deters families and non-gamers from visiting Tunica 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contributes to the image that Tunica is only known as a gaming destination
Limited basic services including public education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited number of basic services, including public education, grocery stores, convenience stores, etc... offered in Tunica 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deters families, including those that work in Tunica, from living in the county 	

Opportunities

	Drivers	Primary Impact	Secondary Impact
Blues music heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gateway to the Blues Visitors Center and Museum • Tunica's Blues Markers • Proximity to Yazoo and Mississippi Valley Railroad • Proximity to Clarksdale, the historic center for blues music 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educates visitors about blues music and local musicians • Provides historical and cultural attractions for tourists • Sparks investment for additional blues related attractions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attracts tourists to Clarksdale and other destinations known for the blues • Reduces the image that Tunica is only known as a gaming destination
Mississippi River	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tunica RiverPark & Museum • Tunica Queen 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educates visitors about the history of the Mississippi River • Provides historical and cultural attractions for tourists • Allows visitors to experience the Mississippi River first hand 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduces the image that Tunica is only known as a gaming destination
Ample land for development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 14 industrial and commercial land sites available for development • Proven economic development team 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attracts companies to invest in and move to Tunica 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increases the population base • Increases the number of jobs • Improves the basic services

Threats

	Drivers	Primary Impact	Secondary Impact
Growth in other gaming markets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recession caused numerous states to legalize gaming • Growth in convenience gaming 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduces the number of gamblers traveling to Tunica • Reduces the amount of capital that national gaming companies invest in Tunica 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tunica casinos become outdated
Nearby communities have a significant head-start	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Memphis, DeSoto County, and other nearby communities have established basic services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draws families that work in Tunica County to live in nearby communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduces the incentive for companies to invest in Tunica
National, regional, local economies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recession hurt national, regional, and local economies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduces the number of travelers to Tunica • Reduces revenue generated by Tunica County 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduces the amount of money reinvested into the community
Online gaming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential legalization of online gaming 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduces the number of gamblers traveling to Tunica • Reduces the amount of capital national gaming companies invest in Tunica 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tunica casinos become outdated

Closing the "Gap"

As illustrated throughout this report, there exists a significant gap between Tunica stakeholders' future vision of a destination with greater diversity in its tourism products and services capable of increasing visitation, and its current state as a gaming destination that has only begun to develop additional tourist attributes.

While the destination has realized a number of important and impressive developments and success of the "Tunica Miracle" should not be overlooked, as suggested throughout this report, the ability for Tunica to close the gap between its desired vision and the current state is by providing diverse tourism products that stand out among other products throughout the region. Two of the biggest challenges facing Tunica and its ability to enhance and increase tourism is the lack of destination marketing and the lack of products beyond its gaming assets. While developments such as the Tunica RiverPark, Tunica Queen, and Tunica National Golf & Tennis are certainly valuable tourism amenities, further development and marketing of significant tourist attractions is important to the future success of Tunica as a destination.

As referenced previously, a more appropriate destination marketing budget (\$3.5 million in the short term, increasing to \$5 million over the next several years) is important in helping the county to compete with many gaming- and non-gaming-destinations throughout the U.S. Private sector investment in Tunica tourism assets will necessitate that private investors/developers have a high degree in confidence that the state and local government is supportive of growing the destination and its long-term success. Ensuring the DMO budget is appropriate for the destination is but one step to accomplish this. Recent public sector roles in Atlantic City (case study presented later in this report) are examples of the type of leadership that may be necessary for Tunica's future. As will be discussed in the next section, House Bill 1107, updating the state's original Tourism Incentive Program, could represent an important step towards this goal.

The following section is intended to identify tourism products that could help Tunica achieve its destination development goals. As with the 1999 PwC study, these individual products have not been studied in-depth. A high level of due-diligence regarding each project's potential costs and benefits must be conducted prior to any public or private investment.

VI. Destination Development Plan

Implementation of any segment of this product development plan will likely involve the cooperation of several key parties including local stakeholders (casino owners/management, other local businesses and local government), as well as cooperation from the State of Mississippi. As referenced previously, the Tunica resort area is at a significant disadvantage with regard to its marketing and products.

As has been the case in other destination developments throughout the country, success often is dependent on a strong public-private partnership. New private sector investment will be challenging without clear leadership at the state and local government level, including but not limited to investment in the area's infrastructure--particularly the public education system. While a turnaround in national and regional economic conditions could have a positive impact on existing attractions in Tunica, it is clear that the ability to attract new investment, whether in tourism products, or other industries, will depend largely on the state and local government continuing to have a significant leadership role in these areas.

The following sections describe action steps that should be considered to address Tunica's product challenges.

Tourism Incentive Program

The Tourism Incentive Program, Sections 57-26-1 through 57-26-5 of the Mississippi Code of 1972, originally approved project costs for a variety of "tourism projects." Theme parks, water parks, entertainment of outdoor adventure parks, cultural or historical interpretive education centers or museums, motor speedways, indoor or outdoor entertainment centers, convention centers, professional sports facilities, spas, attractions created around a natural phenomenon or scenic landscape, and marinas open to the public with a minimum private investment of not less than ten million dollars were all considered tourism projects. The program also included golf courses with a minimum private investment of \$10 million and a hotel with a minimum private investment of \$40 million. However, it does not include licensed gaming establishment owned, leased, or controlled by a business, corporation, or entity having a gaming license or any facility whose primary business is retail sales.

The State Treasury has a special fund known as the "Tourism Project Sales Tax Incentive Fund" where all money raised in the program is deposited. These funds are used for the incentive payments made by the Mississippi Development Authority to the approved program participants. The payments shall be for 80 percent of the amount of sales tax revenue collected from the operation of the tourism project, after making the diversions required in Section 27-65-75(7) and (8). The aggregate amount of incentive payments that a participant may receive shall not exceed 30 percent of the approved project costs and will cease ten years after the tourism project opens for operation, if the 30 percent is not reached at that time.

House Bill 1107 is updating the original Tourism Incentive Program in an effort to provide more use by creating "entertainment districts" in counties. An "entertainment district," which is an area designated by a county or municipality in which entertainment services are centered, is open to the public, has seating to accommodate at least 40 people, is open at least five days per weeks, serves food and beverages, and provides live entertainment at least three days per week. Additionally, a full service hotel with a minimum private investment of \$15 million and having a minimum private investment of \$200,000 per guest room which amount is included within the \$15 million minimum investment is also being added to the bill.

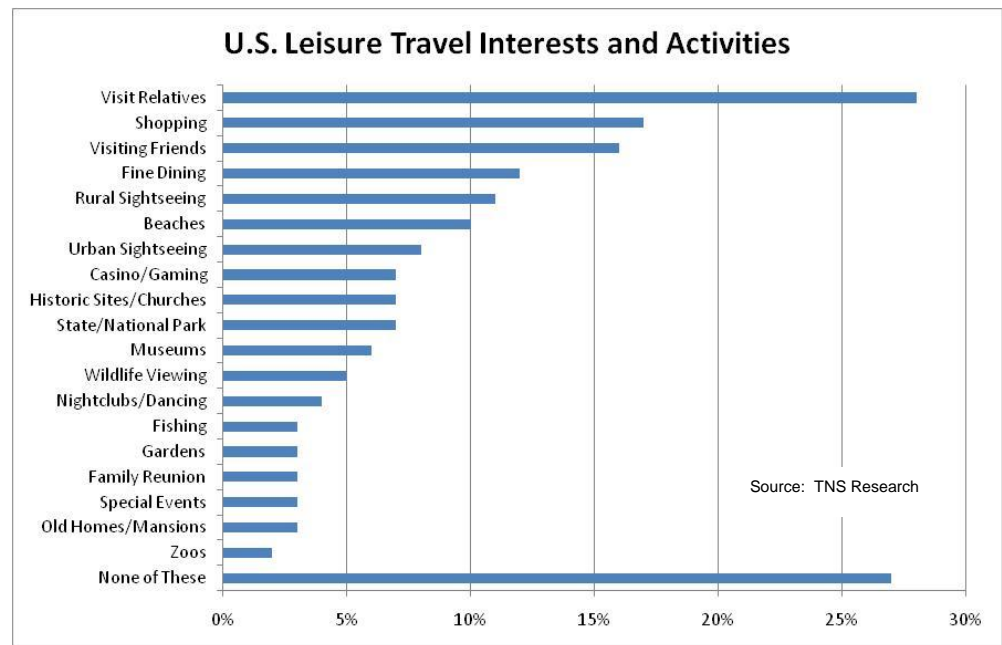
While it is not the intent of this study to endorse or evaluate the potential effectiveness of HB 1107, it certainly appears to be a program that could positively impact the ability of Tunica County to attract additional private-sector investment in tourism assets.

Product Development Opportunities for Consideration

The graphic on this page illustrates the overall activities/attractions that U.S. leisure travelers participated in or visited in 2009. This information is relevant to the State of Mississippi, with one major exception being the expectation that the casino/gaming category would be expected to be noticeably higher. In Louisiana, for example, with its multiple casinos in Baton Rouge, Lake Charles, New Orleans, and Shreveport/Bossier City, a similar study by TNS indicated that casino/gaming comprised 16 percent of traveler's activities.

This information helps to highlight the importance of tourism products focused on shopping, dining, sightseeing, historic sites, and cultural facilities. The products described in this Destination Product Plan are consistent with those leisure activities frequented by U.S. travelers.

While categories such as visiting friends and relatives are a significant challenge locally, with such a limited Tunica County population base, Tunica activities should continue to be



targeted to the larger population in the greater Memphis area. As discussed previously, its limited population base requires Tunica County to market itself as a destination for individuals visiting Memphis for either leisure or business travel.

Based on the analyses contained within this report, as well as our experience with other destinations, we have developed a list of products that should be considered to assist in Tunica's tourism development goals. In the product descriptions that follow, we have assigned a priority grade of high, medium, and low for each, defined as follows:

- **High Priority:** Project should be considered for immediate action. Preliminary analysis suggests that the specified project appears to warrant immediate consideration given current market conditions in Tunica County. Action could involve development/investment, additional analysis to refine scope of development, change or enhancement in County's strategy, etc. As stated previously, this report is not intended to replace project-specific feasibility/viability analysis, which would involve a much more in-depth analysis of the demand and economic factors specific to individual developments. Such due diligence is critical to determine whether or not public or private funds should be invested.
- **Medium Priority:** Project/Use should be considered, and potentially moved to the high-priority category over the next several years. Changes in market conditions could prompt a priority change. Development of other projects/uses could prompt a priority change. It is important to understand that most of the projects/uses discussed throughout this report could impact the marketability and success of one another. For example, development of a convention center could impact the viability of additional retail and restaurants.
- **Low Priority:** Project is not presently appropriate for action given current market conditions.

Finally, in the Action Steps section, PwC provides support for our priority grade and makes suggestions for next steps. We believe some of the uses, particularly those ranked as high priority, can effect immediate change in Tunica County's performance as a visitor destination, subject to their successful financing, development, and position implementation.

The following tables provide a summary of each product development option, followed by a more detailed description in the pages that follow.

Project (Priority)	Description	Critical Success Factors	Action Steps
Water Park (High)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Popular attraction amongst children and young adults • Included in many major and mid-tier amusement parks, but can succeed as an independent venture • Can be indoor or outdoor • Common elements include water slides, wave pools, flume rides, surfing rides, and rafting on white-water rapids 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generally 75,000 square feet • Cost between \$200 and \$600 per square foot • Large target customer base • Recognized tourist destination • Highly visible and large site • Drive-to destination with a minimum of five million target customers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication with water park developers/operators and potential private developers • Detailed market and economic analysis
Entertainment Museum (High)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides experiences designed to appeal to a broad range of audiences with less importance on learning and education • Examples include wax museums and Ripley's Believe It or Not! Museums • Usually located in cluster of attractions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primarily built in established tourism destinations and are used to complement other attractions • Offer half-day or less entertainment options to families at an affordable rate • Generally located close to a large population base 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication with entertainment developers and potential private developers • Detailed market and economic analysis
Family Entertainment Center (High)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small amusement park (3.5 to ten acres) with a variety of activities, games, and entertainment geared towards children and families • Outdoor activities include mini golf, go-kart tracks, bumper boats, ground level kiddie rides, batting cages, and laser tag • Indoor activities include arcade games, playgrounds, bowling alleys, and snack bars • Consolidate a number of attractions in one location 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Located within a 20 to 60 minute drive of a large population with a considerable number of children • Families visit an amusement center 4.6 times per year and spend \$12 to \$22 per visit • Costs can greatly vary for attractions ranging from smaller ticket items that range from \$10,000 to \$80,000 per attraction to larger ticket items, such as batting cages, mini golf courses, and go-kart tracks that can cost over \$100,000 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication with family entertainment center developers and potential private developers • Detailed market and economic analysis
Outdoor Activities (High)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tunica County and the Mississippi Delta region offers hunting, fishing, and bird watching • Situated in the heart of the Mississippi flyway • Beaver Dam Hunting Services & Delta Duck Hunts offer ducking hunting tours, and Willows Sporting Clays Center provides a simulated hunting experience • Tunica Cutoff & Flower Lake are popular for fishing • Fishing Adventure Guide Services at Tunica Cutoff and four fishing charters on the Mississippi River 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The combination of the Mississippi River, the Mississippi Flyway, and the Mississippi Delta makes Tunica an ideal location for outdoor activities • The creation of additional hunting tours and fishing charters, boat rentals, fishing piers, fishing tournaments, and outdoor oriented retail stores can attract more outdoorsman, as there are a limited number of these items currently offered 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication with the Mississippi Wildlife, Fisheries, & Parks Department, the Mississippi Outfitters, hunting guides, fishing charters, local fisherman and hunters, and others to discuss potential investment as a public-private partnership

Project (Priority)	Description	Critical Success Factors	Action Steps
Destination Retail (High)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The 30 store Casino Factory Shoppes currently provides a shopping experience for tourists and locals Downtown Tunica has local antique shops and boutiques and each of the casinos offers a gift shop Potential expansion into a retail destination where tourists come primarily for the shopping experience Cabela's and Bass Pro Shops are examples of destination retail stores 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The number of sporting licenses sold in an area, customer demand, catalog orders generated, and Outdoor opportunities afforded by the locale are critical success factors Nearly half of Bass Pro Shop Customers come from over 50 miles away With a Bass Pro Shops located within 50 miles, Cabela's might be a better alternative, which has a smaller presence in the Southeastern United States 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communication with destination retail developers, such as Cabela's Explore the potential range of public/private partnership necessary to effect such a development
Blues Museum (High)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Gateway to the Blues Visitors Center and Museum is under construction and scheduled to open in fall 2011 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Music museums are generally situated in locations with a rich musical heritage and culture Music museums provide education and community events including concert series, classes, battle of the bands, and lectures/interviews with artists, in addition to typical exhibits Music museums also offer interactive opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Once the Gateway to the Blues Visitors Center and Museum opens, a continuous effort should be undertaken to identify opportunities to enhance value Consideration should be given to incorporating a blues-themed dinner train
Delta Blues Train (Medium)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are several tourists trains currently operating through the United States including the Napa Valley Wine Train, the Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad, the Branson Scenic Railway, and the Durango & Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad, most of which are privately owned and operated There may be an opportunity to develop a historic rail attraction between Tunica and Clarksdale that has a blues theme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trains are successful in tourist destinations or areas with high visitation Shorter is better Dinner trains can be profitable The capital investment for laying tracks is significant 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Detailed cost/benefit analysis should be conducted Tunica County could consider looking to Memphis and Clarksdale for potential joint venture partners
Amateur Sports (Low)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Until the Amateur Sports Act was passed in 1978, amateur sports in the United States were dependent upon grass root efforts Amateur sports organizations are not-for-profit corporations, associations, or other groups that sponsor or arrange an athletic competition at the amateur level Large scale sports complexes with indoor and outdoor components that can host tournaments are gaining popularity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Successful amateur sports facilities are usually located in areas with developed support amenities, such as hotel rooms, entertainment/attractions, restaurants, retail, and that are easily accessible via land or air Cost to develop an indoor amateur venue could range from \$25 to \$38 million Amateur sport events can attract thousands of visitors to a region 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Detailed market and economic analysis should be considered given the lack of available hotel rooms on weekends and limited youth entertainment options Reach out to private sector investors to evaluate opportunities

Project (Priority)	Description	Critical Success Factors	Action Steps
Professional Sports (Low)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The term “professional sports” typically refers to major and minor league organized sports teams Success depends on local population characteristics, presence of major corporations, and, in some sense, financial commitment from local governments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adequate level of local population within a 30 minute drive Adequate corporate presence for sale of sponsorship, advertising, luxury suites, etc. Availability of public subsidiaries for stadium/arena development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Given the limited population, and the existence of major and minor league sports in Memphis and DeSoto County, bringing a professional sports team to Tunica does not appear to be warranted at this time
Motor Speedway (Medium)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The region currently has 10 speedways, including Memphis Motorsports Park, Bristol Motor Speedway, Talladega Superspeedway, and Atlanta Motor Speedway Major motorsports events draw visitors from within a 200 to 300 mile radius Development of a major speedway could generate significant visitation, but has been unsuccessful in the past with the Delta Bowl Speedway 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The primary critical success factor is the ability to secure races dates In most cases, a new or existing track would not be awarded an event unless it is at the expense of another track 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communication with casino owners, NASCAR, and potential speedway developers to gauge interest Detailed market and economic analysis
Convention Center (Medium)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A convention center contains one or more exhibition halls and a large number of meeting or “breakout” rooms Convention centers host conventions, conferences, trade shows, consumer shows, and other large assembly events Tunica County meeting facilities are currently limited to the space available in casino/hotels, the exposition center, and the two museums 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A growing economy is critical for maintaining the integrity of existing destination amenities and for the viability of future developments supporting the meeting industry Gaming destinations remain attractive to meetings and conventions as they provide large hotel room supplies, meeting facilities, along with gaming and other entertainment options Critical factors include hotel room supply, air access, and retail/restaurants/entertainment available in the area Local governments are typically willing to subsidize convention centers because of the economic impact 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Tunica CVB and Chamber of Commerce should continue to accelerate its marketing of existing meeting space Tunica County should periodically consider conducting a market analysis to determine the appropriate building size, location, and potential utilization/demand

Project (Priority)	Description	Critical Success Factors	Action Steps
Boardwalk (High)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Boardwalks are located throughout the United States and are commonly used as a connector between attractions Common boardwalk attractions include shops, restaurants, street performers, artists, food stands, arcades and other games Ferris wheels, merry-go-rounds, or other amusement rides are also offered at some boardwalks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Anchor developments along or at either end of the boardwalk Not all boardwalks are located on the beach or shore line; similar attractions have been created inland May provide unique retail & entertainment Safety & security are critical Synergies with adjacent uses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Detailed market and economic analysis Explore opportunity to integrate with Tunica RiverPark, including the development of festivals at a boardwalk and/or RiverPark location
Higher Education Campus (High)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The development of a satellite campus of a university or community college can attribute to the revitalization of a downtown area by attracting local residents and residents from nearby communities An increase in employees and students can help stimulate the development of supporting restaurants and entertainment facilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tidewater Community College's Downtown Norfolk campus is an impressive example of strategic thought, community partnership, political will, creative financing, and the power of collective determination 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communication with Mississippi's public universities should be considered in an attempt to explore the interest in a hospitality industry program satellite campus in Downtown Tunica

Water Park

Throughout the United States water parks have emerged as popular attractions among children and young adults. According to the Themed Entertainment Association, combined visitation at the top 15 water parks reached 12.5 million in 2008, up 1.8 percent from 2007. The top 20 water parks worldwide generated 19.9 million in attendance last year, which was up 1.4 percent from 2007 (Source: TEA/ERA).

Many major and mid-tier amusement parks have added water parks to their other activities; however, their allure is strong enough for independent water park ventures (e.g., Wet & Wild) to succeed on their own. Water parks are particularly effective in warm-weather environments with heavy tourist traffic, the potential for nearly year-round patronage. However, more recently, indoor water park resorts, which consist of a hotel and water park, have gained popularity and according to the World Waterpark Association are the fastest-growing segments of the water park industry in North America. Great Wolf Resorts, North America's largest family of indoor water park resorts, has opened a new facility each year from 2003 to 2009. Common water park elements include water slides, wave pools, flume rides, surfing rides, and rafting on white-water rapids. The Memphis area had been served by "Wet 'n Wild", a water theme park located east of the city. However, that facility has since closed.

Critical Success Factors

Given Tunica's seasonality, an indoor water park might be more viable. Indoor water parks generally are 75,000 square feet and cost between \$200 and \$600 per square foot to develop. For planning purposes, a total construction cost estimate of between \$15 and \$45 million can be expected.

According to Great Wolf Resorts, the critical success factors for developing an indoor water park resort include a large target customer base, a recognized tourist destination, and a highly visible and large site. Generally, the development sites have a minimum of five million target customers within a convenient driving distance. The company focuses on drive-to destinations that attract a large number of tourists, as they feel they can charge premium rates due to the high quality of the resorts. These areas also tend to have active and effective convention and visitor bureaus that complement Great Wolf Resorts marketing and advertising efforts at little to no cost. Finally, the resorts are developed in highly visible locations along major roadways, which enhance drive-to access and provide marketing benefits.

PRIORITY: High

Action Steps

Should the County wish to pursue the development of a \$15 to \$45 million indoor water park, a detailed market and economic analysis should be considered. This analysis would include contacting water park developers/operators to discuss the potential investment as a possible public-private venture. Alternatively, there may be an opportunity for a private development, either through a company such as Great Wolf Resorts or a local casino resort adding such a development to one of their properties. Public, private, and public/private partnership options should be explored.

Unless otherwise noted, such actions are consistent throughout these product development options. For example, in the next option, consideration should be given to commencing discussions among Tunica County officials and potential entertainment developers, such as Ripley's Entertainment, to gauge the private-sector interest in developing an entertainment museum in Tunica. If such interest does exist, a detailed economic analysis should be conducted in order to evaluate demand, costs, and benefits to both the private-sector developer/owner, and Tunica County. Similar to the water park option, there may be an opportunity for a private development, either through a company such as Ripley's or a local casino resort adding such a development to one of their properties. Public, private, and public/private partnership options should be explored.

Entertainment Museum

Museums are typically an educational or learning establishment; hence the abundant number of art, history, and science museums. Although these museums have an entertainment factor, it is not the primary focus. More recently, there has been an emphasis on establishing entertainment museums, which provide experiences designed to appeal to a broad range of audiences and boost visitor numbers, while less importance may be given to learning and education.

There are numerous types of entertainment museums ranging from wax museums, where spectators can take pictures with their favorite celebrities, sports figures, or politicians, to Ripley's Believe It or Not! Museums, which shows oddities and other astonishing and unusual artifacts collected from the far-corners of the world. These types of museums normally are located in a cluster of attractions, as they are marketed towards tourists and usually endure a shorter visit than a typical educational museum. For example, many Ripley Believe It or Not! Museums are adjacent to a wax museum, mirror maze, Guinness Book of World Record's Museum, mini-golf course, movie theater, or other type of entertainment attraction. Despite having a wide array of museums, the Memphis area is not currently served by an entertainment museum.

Critical Success Factors

Entertainment museums are primarily built in established tourism destinations. Although these museums are not the main draw to the area, they complement other attractions and are well attended. For example, Ripley's Believe It or Not! Museums are located in destinations such as Branson, Gatlinburg, Myrtle Beach, Panama City Beach, and Atlantic City, amongst others, and have an annual average attendance in excess of 175,000 visitors.

Entertainment museums generally offer half-day or less entertainment options to families at an affordable rate and are therefore a good option for families that do not have the time or resources to commit to a major theme park or that would like to visit multiple attractions. In addition to being built in a tourist destination, entertainment museums are generally located close to a large population base. For example, more than 50 percent of the U.S. population lives within a half tank of gas of one of the Ripley Entertainment attractions located within the U.S.

PRIORITY: High

Family Entertainment Center

A Family Entertainment Center ("FEC") is a small amusement park with a wide variety of activities, games, and entertainment geared towards children and families. These indoor and/or outdoor entertainment centers range in size, generally from 3.5 to ten acres or more, and by type and quantity of attractions. Common outdoor attractions include miniature golf courses, go-kart tracks, bumper boats, ground level kiddie rides, batting cages, and laser tag. Indoor attractions include arcade games, indoor playgrounds, bowling alleys, and snack bars. Other attractions which can make it more conducive for teenagers include a rock climbing wall, zipline, and ropes course. FEC'S consolidate numerous activities in one location, which can be beneficial for an adult oriented destination such as Tunica that has a scarce number of attractions marketed towards children and families.

Critical Success Factors

Industry representatives suggest that the average distance people will travel in order to take their children to a FEC is 20 to 30 minutes. However, in less populated rural areas where people are accustomed to longer commutes, the average travel time can increase to 45 minutes to an hour. Therefore, it is important that an FEC be located within a 20 to 60 minute drive of a large population base with a considerable number of children.

According to the International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions ("IAAPA"), North American families visit an amusement center 4.6 times per year and spend \$12 to \$22 per visit at family fun centers. Additionally, a 2007 U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Consumer Expenditure Survey reveals a difference in annual entertainment spending based on income. Households with annual incomes of \$30,000 to \$39,999 spent 76 percent less than households with annual incomes of \$50,000 to \$69,999 and four times less than households with annual incomes exceeding \$70,000 on out-of-home entertainment.

Depending on the size and type of attractions offered at the FEC, costs can vary greatly. Some of the larger ticket items, such as a batting cage, bumper boats, miniature golf course, and go-kart track can cost over \$100,000 each. Additionally, a small snack bar will cost at least \$20,000 and many smaller attractions can cost anywhere from \$10,000 to more than \$80,000 each.

PRIORITY: High

Outdoors Activities

Tunica County and the entire Mississippi Delta region provide numerous outdoor activities including hunting, fishing, and bird watching. Situated in the heart of the Mississippi Flyway, one of four major North American flyways, the area is a prime location for duck hunting as a high concentration of waterfowl migrates through the region each year. Deer, turkey, quail, rabbit, and other game are also hunted. Beaver Dam Hunting Services and Delta Duck Hunts offer guided and unguided duck hunting tours and Willows Sporting Clays Center simulates a realistic hunting experience in a controlled environment. Tunica Cutoff, also known as Tunica Lake, and Flower Lake are popular fishing locations in Tunica County. Tunica Cutoff, located five miles west of downtown Tunica, started as a bend in the Mississippi River, but in 1942 was dynamited into its current configuration by the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers as part of a flood control plan. The lake is home to bass, bream, and crappie, in addition to other fish. Fishing Adventure Guide Services offers fishing charters on Tunica Cutoff. There are also four fishing charters on the Mississippi River, although they are further south than Tunica.

Critical Success Factors

The combination of the Mississippi River, the Mississippi Flyway, and the fertile flood plains of the Mississippi Delta makes Tunica an ideal environment for fishing and hunting and a potential draw for tourists interested in outdoor activities. However, there are a limited number of guided hunting tours and fishing charters available to outdoorsman. Furthermore, there are no boat rentals or fishing piers available for those seeking to fish in the area. These factors might deter a hunter or fisherman from visiting Tunica. The creation of additional hunting tours and fishing charters, boat rentals, fishing piers, fishing tournaments, and other elements such as bait & tackle shops and outdoor orientated retail stores can potentially draws tourists and make Tunica known for its outdoor activities.

PRIORITY: High

Action Steps

Tunica County should consider creating additional hunting and fishing charters, a boat rental service, fishing tournaments, fishing piers, and an outdoor oriented retail store (refer to the "Destination Retail" section) to enhance the tourist experience and exploit the regions natural resources. Should the county wish to pursue these attractions, additional analyses should be considered. Such analyses would involve contacting the Mississippi Wildlife, Fisheries, & Parks Department, the Mississippi Outfitters, hunting guides, fishing charters, local fisherman and hunters, and others to discuss the potential investment as a possible public-private venture.

Destination Retail

The Casino Factory Shoppes is a 30 store outlet mall on Highway 61 in the Resorts area that includes retailers such as Nautica, Gap, Reebok, and Zales. Since its completion in 2000, the outlets have provided a shopping experience for tourists and locals, attracting shoppers from around the region. Additionally, downtown Tunica has local antique shops and boutiques and each of the casinos offers a gift shop. Despite offering an outlet mall and local shops in downtown, Tunica can potentially expand into a retail destination where tourists come primarily for the shopping experience. Stores such as Cabela's and Bass Pro Shops can exploit the outdoor appeal of Tunica while creating a retail destination. Cabela's, a leading specialty retailer of hunting, fishing, camping, and related outdoor merchandise, has stores that range in size from 35,000 square feet to 247,000 square feet. The large format destination retail stores, which are 150,000 square feet or larger, feature wildlife displays and aquariums and provide an exciting tourist and entertainment shopping experience. These stores can be major tourist attractions, as is the case with the Cabela's in Kansas City, Kansas and Owatonna, Minnesota which rank among the top tourist attractions in their respective states.

Critical Success Factors

There are numerous factors in determining if a market would be viable for a retail destination such as a Cabela's or Bass Pro Shops. According to Bass Pro Shops, the number of sporting licenses sold in an area, customer demand, catalog orders generated, and the outdoor opportunities afforded by the locale are all critical success factors for a retail destination. Approximately 40 to 45 percent of all Bass Pro Shops customers come from beyond 50 miles. With Tunica being located within 50 miles of the closest Bass Pro Shop in Memphis, it might not be viable for a Bass Pro Shops to open in Tunica. However, Cabela's has a limited number of stores in the southeastern United States, the closest located over 330 miles north in Hazelwood, Missouri.

Cabela's future retail expansion entails building a next-generation format of 80,000-, 100,000-, and 125,000-square foot stores in trafficked retail areas. Its goal is to increase its presence across the United States, which is lacking in the southeast, and Canada while taking into consideration both the site location and the appropriate size of the store in the given market.

PRIORITY: High

Action Steps

Consideration should be given to commencing discussions among Tunica County officials and destination retail developers, such as Cabela's, to gauge the interest in developing a destination retail store in Tunica. As evidenced by the recent lease between the City of Memphis and Bass Pro Shops regarding the location in The Pyramid, public sector investment could comprise a significant element of attracting such a store. In Memphis, it is understood that the city will utilize \$41.5 million in federal recovery zone facility bonds for retrofit and public improvements surrounding The Pyramid. \$30 million was committed by the city in construction costs and expenses related to the building itself.

Blues Museum

The Gateway to the Blues Visitors Center and Museum is currently under construction at the Tunica Convention & Visitors Bureau Welcome Center. A renovated train depot built in the 1800s will become the new visitor center, house a gift shop, and be the entrance to the museum. Once complete, the museum will contain artifacts that were previously displayed at the Blues & Legends Hall of Fame Museum in Horseshoe Casino before it was closed and will provide a stage for concerts on its patio. Preliminary exhibit concepts include The Nature of the Delta, A Hidden Nation, Saturday Night Sunday Morning, Evolution of an American Musical Form, The British Embrace the Blues, 100 Years of Blues...and Counting, and Blues Interactive. The project is being funded through grants from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and the Mississippi Department of Transportation, in addition to funding provided by the Tunica County Board of Supervisors and the Tunica CVB. The museum and visitor center are scheduled to open in fall 2011.

Critical Success Factors

Music museums are generally situated in locations with a rich musical heritage and culture. For example, the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum is located in Nashville and a Jazz Museum is located in Harlem. With the abundance of Blues history and culture in the Mississippi Delta Region, Tunica is a logical location for a Blues museum. Additionally, it can act as a "Gateway" to other popular Blues attractions further south in Clarksdale, Cleveland, Rosedale, Leland, and Greenville. In addition to the typical museum exhibits, other music museums provide educational and community events including concert series, classes, battle of the bands, and lectures/interviews with artists. The National Jazz Museum offers Saturday Panels once a month which provides attendees with a fun, in depth, multi-media approach to knowledge and learning, where they will hear jazz live and on audio and see examples on DVD. It also includes the chance to interact with jazz artists and scholars.

Music museums also offer interactive opportunities. Similar to Blues Interactive, the Grammy Museum in Los Angeles has Roland Live which presents the chance for individuals to participate in the music-making process and think critically about how today's music is crafted.

PRIORITY: High

Action Steps

Once the Gateway to the Blues Visitors Center and Museum is open, a continuous effort should be undertaken to identify opportunities to enhance value and attract additional visitors. Consideration should be given, as discussed in the next section, to incorporating a blues-themed dinner train into the Visitors Center/Museum attraction.

Delta Blues Train

There are several tourist trains currently operating throughout the United States. Sources interviewed by PwC indicated that most tourist trains are owned and operated by the private sector. The following list highlights some examples currently operating in California, Florida, Colorado, and New Mexico:

- The Napa Valley Wine Train, a 3-hour, 36 mile, excursion from the historic town of Napa through one of the world's most famous wine valleys to the quaint village of St. Helena features fine cuisine served aboard an elegant rail car. The Napa Valley Railroad Company was founded in 1864 by Samuel Brannan. In 1885 the Southern Pacific Railroad Company purchased the line and it continued in operation for the next 102 years until sold to the Napa Valley Wine Train, Inc. in 1987.
- The Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad provides a 64-mile trip from Chama, New Mexico to Antonito, Colorado. The train is unique in that it is owned jointly by the State of New Mexico and State of Colorado. Adult tickets range from \$75 to \$165.
- The Branson Scenic Railway is a one hour and 45 minute trip through the scenic Ozark Mountains. The tour includes a lively narration that points out landmarks such as tunnels, trestles, and extinct communities, describes wildlife and landscape, and outlines the railroad's role in shaping the Ozarks. Both the northern and southern routes originate in downtown Branson and provide an approximately 40 mile round trip that is offered three to four times per day depending on the season. On Saturdays from May through December a dinner train is offered which includes a traditional style four-course candlelight dinner. Adult tickets for the regular excursion and dinner train cost \$24.50 and \$54.25, respectively.
- The Durango & Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad travels 45.4 miles each way from Durango to Silverton during the summer season and 26 miles each way to Cascade Station during the winter season. Approximately 207,000 riders per year travel aboard the legendary tourist train, which is unique in that it is far from a tourist area; 336 miles from Denver and 168 miles from an interstate. The train produces \$8.3 million in revenue per year.
- In June 2010, the California Transportation Commission approved the Santa Cruz Regional Transportation Commission's application to purchase the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line for \$14.2 million with a commitment to make \$5 million in improvements. The 32-mile coastal rail corridor will provide transportation services along the scenic north coast between the main beach area in Santa Cruz and the historic town of Davenport. Once completed, the train is planned to offer excursion and dinner trains, in addition to providing transportation for locals and visitors.

In a Business and Management Plan Analysis conducted by the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission (RTC), the RTC forecasted that by year five, 11,000 dinner train passengers and 19,000 excursion train passengers will ride the train annually, which runs from May to September. Assuming revenue of \$76 and \$35 for each dinner and excursion passenger, respectively, the annual tourist train revenue will be approximately \$1.5 million. This exceeds the projected operating expenses which are approximately \$1.25 million.

Similar to the Napa Valley Wine Train, there may be an opportunity to develop a historic rail attraction between Tunica and Clarksdale, particularly with the current development of the Gateway to the Blues Visitors Center and Museum that is currently under construction at the Tunica Convention & Visitors Bureau Welcome Center and incorporates a renovated train depot built in the 1800s. Lounge and dining cars could provide an extensive blues "experience," treating visitors to authentic regional food, history and, of course, blues performances. Any opportunities to incorporate a Blues Train with the Yazoo and Mississippi Valley Railroad (formerly Yazoo Delta Railway), would add further historic significance, given the former railroad's prominence in a number of blues songs as the "Yellow Dog Railroad."

Clarksdale, Mississippi enjoys recognition as a historic center for blues music. Home of the Delta Blues Museum (housed in a Historic Railroad Depot), Clarksdale is often referred to as the original home of the blues, given its location at the intersection of Highways 61 and 49—"The Crossroads" (although other locations throughout the Delta lay similar claims within their municipalities). It is hometown of legendary bluesmen Muddy Waters, Ike Turner, John Lee Hooker, and many others. Robert Johnson, one of the most celebrated of the Delta Bluesmen, grew up in Tunica. Clarksdale Station is significant to the history of the blues, as this is where many famous blues musicians such as Muddy Waters bought their tickets and boarded the train to Chicago, seeking jobs and a potential career in music.

Critical Success Factors

Following is a list of critical success factors for train attractions of the type proposed for Tunica:

- Trains of this type are successful either in tourist destinations or areas with high visitation.
- Shorter is better. One to three hour "excursions" are often preferred by tourists, since they have limited time availability;
- Dinner trains can be quite profitable. As is the case with the highly successful Napa Valley Wine Train, meal trains typically last about three hours.
- The capital investment for laying tracks is significant if and where it does not already exist. Costs include not only laying tracks, but could also involve bridges, earthwork, etc., as well as the cost for the cars. In addition, the County would need to clear the necessary track right-of-way and could require the co-operation of related municipal authorities and existing rail owners in order to achieve such a project.

PRIORITY: Medium

Action Steps

Given the strong association of the Memphis/Tunica region, Tunica County should consider the development of a Delta Blues Train. The train could link the Delta Blues Museum to the South and/or Beale Street to the North and draw patrons from region by providing an opportunity for incremental day-trip or overnight visits to Tunica. Prior to proceeding, given the significant range in potential development and operating costs, a detailed cost/benefit analysis should be conducted. Tunica County could also consider looking to both regions for potential joint venture partners.

Amateur Sports

Until the Amateur Sports Act was passed in 1978, amateur sports in the United States were generally dependent upon efforts at the grass roots level. This disorganization of amateur sports contributed to an overall decline of American achievement in Olympic competition, thus prompting the creation of the Act. It required the United States Olympic Committee (USOC) to coordinate national management and oversight of amateur sports and called for the recognition of one national governing body for each sport included in the Olympic Games. Although this Act is not the sole catalyst for organization of amateur sports, it was a key factor in the growth of the amateur sports market. As national governing bodies became more established and other amateur sports organizations such as the Amateur Athletic Union (AAU) grew, amateur sports in the U.S. no longer relied only on grass roots efforts. While community efforts continue to be integral to the development of amateur sports, the growth of regional and national tournaments has contributed to the creation of amateur sports as an important niche in the tourism industry.

Amateur sports organizations are not-for-profit corporations, associations, or other groups that sponsor or arrange an athletic competition at the amateur level. While there are many amateur sports organizations in the United States, this section highlights the leading organizations that promote multiple sports, some of which are ideal for an indoor multi-purpose facility. The following organizations were identified.

- Amateur Athletic Union

The AAU is generally considered to be the largest multi-sport amateur sports organization. It is a non-profit organization that promotes and develops amateur sporting opportunities for youth and adults across the United States. The AAU is operated by volunteers and relies on the community and community leaders to organize teams. As such, the presence and strength of a particular sport in a given community is determined by the volunteer base in that community. The AAU divides the United States into 57 districts, including five in the state of Texas (one of which is combined with New Mexico).

The AAU is membership based, which requires all athletes and non-athletes (coaches, team managers, officials, tournament directors, volunteers, etc.) to be members of the organization. The AAU sanctions events in 34 sports, 20 of which are typically conducted indoors. The AAU sanctions approximately 30,000 age-division events and 250 national championships each year. National championships are organized by AAU, whereas district events must be sanctioned by the AAU through an application process. The AAU is headquartered in Orlando, Florida, near Disney's Wide World of Sports.

- United States Specialty Sports Association

The USSSA is an amateur athletics association that governs 13 sports, including baseball, basketball, golf, volleyball, gymnastics, taekwondo, and flag football. Founded as the United States Slow-Pitch Softball Association, the organization's primary sports continue to be softball and baseball, though other USSSA sports have become more prevalent since the organization adopted a multi-sport approach in the late 1990s. Similar to AAU, the USSSA is a volunteer, non-profit organization that is membership-based.

- United States Olympic Committee

The USOC is a federally chartered non-profit organization that represents the United States for the Olympic Games. The Committee supports American athletes, particularly Olympic athletes, and selects and enters athletes for the Olympic Games. The USOC authorizes one National Governing Body (NGB) to govern each specific sport.

- Youth Basketball of America

Youth Basketball of America is an international governing body which promotes youth basketball worldwide. YBOA is a non-profit organization located in Orlando, Florida, which offers league development and tournaments.

Gaining popularity is the development of large-scale sports complexes, often with both indoor and outdoor components, that can host tournaments requiring multiple games simultaneously. Several of these large sports complexes attract a relatively large share of national tournaments and have contributed to sports tourism in their respective destinations. Provided below is an overview of three leading sports complexes.

- ESPN Wide World of Sports Complex (Orlando, FL)

ESPN Wide World of Sports Complex as Disney World is generally considered to be the leading destination for amateur sports tournaments. Its location proximate to theme parks, attractions and numerous family-oriented hotel options make it an ideal destination for national youth tournaments. The 220-acre sports complex hosts over 170 amateur and professional sports events annually, 40 of which are AAU national tournaments.

Outdoor space consists of a 9,500-seat ballpark, a baseball quadraplex (four fields), a baseball diamondplex (six fields), eight sports fields, a track and field complex, and 10 tennis courts. Indoor space consists of the Milk House, which has 30,000 square-foot of floor space that

accommodates up to six full-size basketball courts and the Jostens Center, which is 44,800 square feet of competition space able to accommodate basketball, volleyball, and inline hockey.

- National Sports Center (Blaine, MN)

Blaine, Minnesota established itself as a leading amateur sports destination with the opening of the National Sports Center in 1990, which followed creation of the Minnesota Amateur Sports Commission several years earlier. Spread across 600 acres, the complex contains facilities for soccer, hockey, golf, track cycling, track and field, figure skating, lacrosse, ultimate, broomball, football, and rugby. Outdoor facilities include 52 grass soccer fields, an 18-hole golf course, a 12,000-seat stadium, and velodrome. In addition to an indoor ice rink with eight sheets of ice, the complex contains a 58,000 square-foot multi-purpose Sports Hall that hosts sports tournaments, conventions, and exhibits.

- American Sports Center (Anaheim, CA)

Opened in 2004, the American Sports Center is among the newest large-scale amateur sports centers. It contains 100,000 square feet of court space, which can be configured to accommodate 22 volleyball courts, 16 basketball courts, or eight indoor soccer fields. The center hosts regional and national tournaments, and league/club basketball, volleyball and soccer games. Permanent tenants include National Junior Basketball and the Southern California Volleyball Association.

Critical Success Factors

Successful amateur sports facilities are often those that are located in areas that have successfully developed support amenities, such as hotel rooms, entertainment/attractions, restaurants, retail, and that are easily accessible via land or air. Amateur facilities built in suburban areas may offer more-cost effective options for event organizers and attendees due to the availability of more affordable hotels and free parking compared to some facilities in larger metropolitan locations.

The cost to develop an indoor amateur sports venue would likely range from \$25 million to \$38 million depending on the specific details of the facility. It should be noted that similar facilities developed in other markets by private entities have been built for substantially less than \$25 million in some cases.

An amateur sports event can attract thousands of visitors to a region. For example, in Dayton, Ohio a regional youth soccer tournament attracted 12,000 visitors over a five day period, while another soccer tournament attracted 22,000 visitors. As most amateur sports events are played on weekends, it might be difficult for Tunica to have a sufficient room supply available, as the hotels are filled with gamblers during the weekends.

PRIORITY: Medium

Action Steps

Despite the lack of hotel room on weekends and youth entertainment options, Tunica may want to consider exploring the potential for an amateur sports venue. Currently, the G.W. Henderson Recreation Complex hosts amateur swimming events, which can help promote Tunica as an amateur sports market. If an amateur sports facility is pursued for development, a detailed market and economic analysis should be considered. There are several privately developed amateur sports facilities throughout the country, and one step should involve reaching out to the private sector to evaluate opportunities.

Professional Sports

The term "professional sports" typically refers to major and minor league organized sports teams such as basketball, football, arena football, and hockey. The success of professional sports depends on local population characteristics, presence of major corporations, and, in some sense, financial commitment from local governments.

Professional sports franchises, such as minor league baseball, have proven to be very popular in many destinations throughout the United States. However, given the limited population of Tunica County, the existence of minor league baseball and other sports in Memphis, and the presence of minor league hockey in DeSoto County, bringing a professional sports team to Tunica does not appear to be warranted at this time.

Critical Success Factors

The economic viability and success of a professional sports franchise is highly dependent on the following characteristics:

- Adequate level of local population within a thirty minute drive;
- Adequate corporate presence for sale of sponsorships, advertising, luxury suites, etc.; and
- Availability of public subsidies for stadium/arena development.

PRIORITY: Low

Action Steps

Tunica County does not currently have the necessary population base to support most professional sports teams to compete against those available in nearby Memphis. However, further consideration for a sports franchise such as arena football, which currently has franchises in "smaller" communities such as Des Moines, Iowa; Duluth, Georgia; Spokane, Washington; and West Valley City, Utah, should be given.

Motor Speedway

In recent years, speedways have been developed in regions such as Chicago (Joliet), Des Moines (Newton), Kansas City, Louisville (Sparta), and Nashville. Other NASCAR tracks currently operating throughout the region include Memphis Motorsports Park, Bristol Motor Speedway, Talladega Superspeedway, Atlanta Motor Speedway, and Texas Motor Speedway in Dallas/Fort Worth. Major motorsports events generally draw visitors from within a radius of approximately 200 to 300 miles.

The development and successful operation of a major motor speedway could generate significant visitation over two or more major "race weekends" each year. These major events, which draw 100,000 or more visitors are often nationally televised. Therefore, they could provide Tunica County with significant exposure for other area attractions, including the casino/hotels. However, a speedway deemed unsuccessful in the past. The Delta Bowl Speedway, a 1/3 mile high banked clay oval, was constructed near Tunica and operated intermittently during parts of 2003 and 2004 before shutting down for good.

Critical Success Factors

NASCAR events including Sprint Cup Series, Nationwide Series, and Camping World Truck Series have the potential to draw significant visitation to a region, particularly given these events' historical success throughout the South. However, the primary critical success factor for a successful track is its ability to secure race dates. It is important to note that the existing NASCAR format provides a very limited number of potential race dates, particularly for the most popular Sprint Cup events. In most cases, a new or existing track would not be awarded an event unless it is at the expense of another track.

PRIORITY: Medium

Action Steps

Consideration should be given to commencing discussions among Tunica County officials, casino owners, NASCAR, and potential speedway developers such as International Speedway Corporation or Speedway Motorsports, Inc. to gauge the interest in developing a motor sports facility in Tunica. If such interest does exist, a detailed economic analysis should be conducted in order to evaluate demand, costs, and benefits to Tunica County and/or the private sector.

Convention Center

A convention center contains one or more exhibition halls and a large number of meeting or “breakout” rooms. Total meeting room and ballroom space is typically one-third to one-half the size of the center’s exhibition space. Space is also generally provided to accommodate a kitchen, a separate ballroom, and, occasionally, a theater-style assembly center. Entry lobbies are usually sized to accommodate attendee registration. Interior lobbies, for entry into ballrooms, often serve as pre-function areas and are sized to host receptions for guests before an event.

Convention centers host conventions, conferences, trade shows, consumer shows, and other large assembly events. Following is a brief synopsis of the characteristics which differentiate these event types along with a discussion of how the selection of a venue or destination is influenced by the requirements of each group.

Tunica County meeting facilities are currently limited to the space available in and marketed by casino/hotels, the exposition center, and the two museums.

Critical Success Factors

The success of a convention center and destination in attracting regional and national events is dependent on several factors that are directly impacted by an area’s economy and the health of its visitor industry. A growing economy is critical for maintaining the integrity of existing destination amenities and for viability of future developments supporting the meetings industry including additional hotel rooms, increased air service, retail establishments, and overall attractiveness of the destination.

Gaming cities remain attractive to meetings and conventions as these destinations provide large hotel room supplies, meeting facilities, along with gaming and other entertainment/attractions at affordable prices.

Critical factors that influence the decision of convention organizers while selecting a site include hotel room supply, air access, and retail/restaurants/entertainment available in the area. If Tunica’s hotel room supply continues to grow at a high rate and if the area begins to offer more diverse leisure activities, it is expected that Tunica County could offer the destination characteristics necessary to support a stand-alone convention center (consisting of 60,000 to 100,000 square feet of rentable space) within the next five to ten years. The final size of the convention center would ultimately be dependent on hotel room availability and market demand.

Local governments are typically willing to subsidize convention centers because of the economic impact these facilities bring to the area. Convention centers attract out-of-town attendees who in turn spend dollars on area hotels, restaurants, and other attractions. The level of economic impact is dependent on a variety of factors including the booking policy of the convention centers (e.g., those that give first priority to conventions and trade shows tend to receive a greater impact than those that give priority to community events).

PRIORITY: Medium

Action Steps

The Tunica CVB, in conjunction with the Chamber of Commerce, should continue to accelerate its marketing of existing meeting space in Tunica County. As the market for larger meeting develops as a result of growing hotel rooms supply, new attractions, and strong marketing, the private sector, including existing casinos resorts, may implement the development of additional meeting/convention space within their facilities. Otherwise, Tunica County should periodically consider conducting a market analysis to determine the appropriate building size, location and potential utilization/demand.

Boardwalk

Description

Boardwalks are located throughout the United States from Maine to California and are commonly used as a connector between attractions. The majority of boardwalks include entertainment options such as shops, restaurants, street performers, artists, food stands, arcades, and other games. Additionally, about 25 percent of the 60 beach boardwalks in the United States have Ferris wheels, merry-go-rounds, or other amusement rides. Many people also enjoy running, biking, and walking along the boardwalk. However, not all boardwalks are entertainment oriented. Long Beach boardwalk in Washington is a half-mile wooden boardwalk built along dunes that allows individuals the opportunity to spend time in a natural setting and to look for bald eagles, red-backed pipers, and the rare snowy plovers.

Critical Success Factors

Some of the most well known boardwalks include Coney Island, Atlantic City, Santa Cruz, Ocean City, and Virginia Beach. Many of these have gone through good and bad stages. Coney Island, known as the world's largest and premier amusement area during the first half of the 20th century, featured three amusement parks, in addition to other attractions. However, fires, regulatory issues, safety issues related to both the rides and the community in general, and other problems, caused the area to deteriorate and to close certain attractions and shops. It was not until recently that the boardwalk received \$30 million for renovations. New rides, games, restaurants, and nearby housing opportunities will be constructed during the much needed facelift.

Not all boardwalks are located on the beach or shore line; similar attractions have been created inland. For example, Universal Studios CityWalk is a 30-acre entertainment complex that offers nightclubs, restaurants, shops, and cinemas. It also hosts a variety of concerts and special events, including the Mardi Gras concert series.

PRIORITY: High

Action Steps

If a boardwalk with restaurants, shops, and other entertainment options is pursued for development, a detailed market and economic analysis should be considered to determine the appropriate location and other factors. Even without restaurants/shops/retail, potential synergies between

a boardwalk development, festivals, and the RiverPark should all be explored--particularly given the significant investment already made in the Tunica RiverPark. Any outdoor boardwalk development should consider climate and insects (mosquitoes) and any mitigation efforts required.

Higher Education Campus

Description

The development of a satellite campus of a university or community college can contribute to the revitalization of a downtown area by attracting local residents and residents from nearby communities. An increase in employees and students can help stimulate the development of supporting restaurants and entertainment facilities. Examples of campuses contributing to downtown revitalization country include Mesa Community College in Mesa, Arizona, Arizona State University in Phoenix, Arizona, Three Rivers Community College in Norwich, Connecticut, and Tidewater Community College in Norfolk Virginia. Because of the wide range of issues and critical success factors surrounding the development of a college campus, we have provided more detailed information specific to the experience in Norfolk, Virginia. The following is a case study developed and provided by the International Downtown Association.

Norfolk's Tidewater Community College Example

Norfolk has a successful tradition of using physical planning as a primary tool for economic development. Synergism, using every project to create another, and strategic use of public investment to catalyze private development have been the driving forces for a series of ten-year Downtown Plans. This disciplined, methodical planning approach has resulted in a total transformation of what was once a crumbling Navy town.

In 1990, downtown Norfolk's ten-year plan envisioned Granby Street as an "Urban Village." Once the region's shopping hub, Granby Street had become an avenue of decaying buildings, boarded up department stores and diminishing value. The community's goal for the Urban Village was to restore faith in Granby Street as a community asset by developing an eclectic mix of retail, office, cultural, arts-oriented, entertainment and educational uses. The urban design strategy recommended creating more open public spaces and finding adaptive reuses for heritage buildings, some of which were community icons of a time gone by.

In light of these goals for the Granby Street area, Tidewater Community College, which has three suburban campuses, expressed an interest in developing a new campus in Downtown, and a public/private corporation was established to develop the project. Tidewater Community College became the anchor for the "Urban Village" that exists today. Long vacant, department stores and a beautiful theater have been reclaimed, new and dramatic public spaces have been created, new buildings have been built, new markets have spurred new business, and downtown's life has been extended well into the night. In addition to being a place where people work, live and play, Downtown Norfolk is now also a place where people learn. Restoring the memories of yesterday has brought new promise to many.

Tidewater Community College's Downtown Norfolk campus is an impressive example of strategic thought, community partnership, political will, creative financing and the power of collective determination. The Campus has served as a dynamic catalyst for the revitalization of Granby Street. It is a replicable model project and a fascinating downtown revitalization laboratory.

PRIORITY: High

Action Steps

Discussions with Mississippi's public universities should be considered in an attempt to explore the interest in a hospitality industry program satellite campus in Downtown Tunica. With its casino properties, Tunica County may be well positioned to provide adjunct professors and internship / job opportunities to students and graduates.

VII. Destination Case Studies

A number of other destinations in the U.S. have faced challenges related to their tourism performance and attempts to develop additional tourism products. This section provides a profile of three such destinations, including Atlantic City, Louisville, and Indianapolis, in hopes that their experiences might yield suggestions for the Tunica County situation.

Atlantic City, New Jersey

Atlantic City has been the second largest gaming destination in the United States since the late 1970s when New Jersey became the second state, after Nevada, to legalize gambling. However, recently, due to the economic recession and increased competition from neighboring states such as Pennsylvania and Delaware, gaming revenue drastically decreased from approximately \$5.2 billion in 2006 to approximately \$3.6 billion in 2010. Consequently, the state of New Jersey and Atlantic City devised a plan to revitalize the gaming industry.

Gaming was legalized in Atlantic City in 1976 as a tool for urban revitalization and to generate revenue for programs benefiting disabled residents and senior citizens. The Casino Control Act required each casino licensee to reinvest two percent of its gross gaming revenue in the community, but by 1984, not one casino made the required reinvestment. Consequently, the Casino Reinvestment Development Authority ("CRDA") was created to establish guidelines. It immediately enacted a law which gave the casinos the option to pay 2.5 percent of its gaming revenue to the State or to reinvest 1.25 percent through the CRDA. The casinos chose to reinvest.

Currently, the CRDA's mission is to provide capital investment funds for economic development and community projects that respond to the changing economic and social needs for Atlantic City and the State of New Jersey. It encourages business development and permanent job creation, promotes opportunities for business expansions, and commits to facilitating a vibrant economic investment and employment environment for New Jersey.

An example of a recent project undertaken by the CRDA, in conjunction with the Cordish Company, is "The Walk", a dynamic urban retail and entertainment project, featuring nationally recognized factory outlet retailers, interactive entertainment and restaurants that strongly links the Atlantic City Convention Center with the Boardwalk and casino district. Phase III of the project, which commenced in April 2010, will add approximately 45,000 square feet of factory outlet retail at a cost of \$15 million, \$9 million of which will be provided by the CRDA. In the 25 years of its existence, the CRDA has invested over \$1.8 billion in 400 projects statewide.

The substantial decrease in Atlantic City gaming revenue due to the economic recession and the emergence of new convenience gaming options in neighboring states, caused New Jersey Governor Chris Christie to take action. In October 2009, a consultant was retained to examine the current state of the gaming industry and provide recommendations on how to revitalize Atlantic City. Additionally, in February 2010, the Governor created an Advisory Commission to develop "recommendations for...a comprehensive, statewide approach regarding the issues and financial needs of New Jersey's gaming, professional sports, and entertainment industries and making proposals for the implementation of its recommendations." These studies revealed that Atlantic City is perceived as unclean and unsafe, lacks non-gaming amenities, and needs better hotel facilities suitable for meetings and recreational activities. In order to resolve these problems and fulfill other goals listed in the studies, it was recommended in the "Report of the Governor's Advisory Commission on New Jersey Gaming, Sports and Entertainment" to perform the following actions:

- Create an Atlantic City Tourism District;
- Establish a structure for a public-private partnership with representation from the state and local government, the casino industry, and the greater Atlantic City community;
- Coordinate marketing, Boardwalk Hall and convention business between the Atlantic City Convention and Visitors Authority and the public-private partnership;
- Restructure regulatory measures focused on all regulatory, law enforcement, and day-to-day activities; and
- Establish a joint Atlantic City marketing fund.

In February 2011, Governor Christie signed a package of bills designed to revitalize Atlantic City based on the studies recommendations. The bills created a new tourism district overseen by the CRDA, eased numerous regulations on state casinos, and transferred various regulatory powers from the Casino Control Commission to the state Division of Gaming Enforcement. Additionally, it was announced that the construction of Revel casino will resume after it was halted due to funding issues.

Although it might take years to implement these actions and determine if they are successful in revitalizing Atlantic City, both the public and private stakeholders identified the need to work together. The studies and recently signed bills are a significant initial step in reviving Atlantic City as a tourism destination.

Louisville, Kentucky

Louisville, best known for the Kentucky Derby, the Louisville Slugger, and bourbon, has significantly increased tourism investment in the past decade to create a more diversified tourism destination. In addition to expanding its meeting space and constructing new sports venues, Louisville created tourism assets related to the arts and culture. These public and private investments helped to establish Louisville as a tourism destination, with still more projects in the pipeline.

Fourth Street Live!, opened in 2004, is a 350,000 square foot dining, entertainment, and retail destination located in the heart of downtown Louisville. Restaurants include Hard Rock Café, Maker's Mark Bourbon House & Lounge, Red Star Tavern, and a food court, in addition to others. Nightlife and entertainment options include IMPROV Comedy Club and Dinner Theater, Howl at the Moon, Wet Willies, Angel's Rock Bar, and others. Events include Halloween and New Year's Eve celebrations, concerts, and Hot Country Nights, a free country music concert series.

Since 2000, Louisville Slugger Field, home of the Cincinnati Reds Triple-A affiliate Louisville Bats, and KFC YUM! Center, home of University of Louisville basketball, both opened. The KFC Yum! Center, a \$238 million multipurpose arena owned by the Louisville Arena Authority, opened in October 2010. The 22,000 seat arena hosts a variety of events including basketball, wrestling, swimming, volleyball, concerts, circus, boxing, and ice shows. The arena is projected to make a profit in its first year.

The Muhammad Ali Center, located in downtown Louisville, is a cultural attraction and an international education center built as a tribute to Ali and his values. Its mission is to preserve and share the legacy and ideals of Muhammad Ali, to promote respect, hope, and understanding, and to inspire adults and children everywhere to be as great as they can be. The interactive exhibits explore Ali's life through the six core values by which he lives: respect, confidence, conviction, dedication, giving, and spirituality. The center opened in 2005 at a cost of \$80 million.

The Urban Bourbon Trail was created in May 2008 as a marketing initiative to help establish Louisville as the gateway to Bourbon Country and to ultimately increase tourism. The trail includes nine restaurants/bars, each offering more than 50 different bourbon labels. A passport, which can be obtained at the Visitors Center, one of the participating establishments, or downloaded via an app, encourages individuals to visit all nine locations in a fun and rewarding way. Once all restaurants/bars are stamped in the passport, a t-shirt and premium giveaway can be redeemed at the Visitors Center.

Other recently completed projects include the downtown Marriott hotel, Glassworks, Louisville Mega Cavern, Whiskey Row Development, expansion of the Kentucky Expo Center, and renovation of the Galt House and Louisville Slugger Museum & Factory.

Projects in the pipeline include Botanica, the \$250 million Center City District, the \$50 million Iron Quarter, the \$490 million Museum Plaza, and the completion of the 100-mile Louisville Loop.

Indianapolis, Indiana

Indianapolis is often associated with sports, whether it is the Indianapolis 500, the Indianapolis Colts, the Indiana Pacers, or NCAA March Madness basketball. Despite building Lucas Oil Stadium, public and private entities made substantial investments in attractions not related to sports during the past decade. These attractions helped to diversify tourism options for visitors while establishing Indianapolis as a tourism destination.

The Indiana Convention Center completed a \$275 million expansion in January 2011, its fourth since opening in 1972. The project increased meeting and event space to nearly 750,000 square feet by adding 254,000 square feet of exhibit space and 63,000 square feet of meeting space. The expansion was financed with funds raised jointly by the State of Indiana and the City of Indianapolis through special taxes.

The RCA Dome opened in 1984 at a cost of \$82 million. The multipurpose venue was not built specifically as a sports stadium, although it attracted the Colts to Indianapolis, but as an expansion to the convention center. Before it was imploded in December 2008, the facility was located on the current site of the expanded portion of the convention center.

At a cost of \$720 million, Lucas Oil Stadium opened in 2008 as a replacement for the RCA Dome. The 63,000 seat retractable roof multipurpose stadium is home to the Indianapolis Colts and features 182,500 square feet of exhibit space. In addition to NFL games, the venue also hosts NCAA Final Four basketball games, major conventions, trade shows, local and national sports events, and is preparing for Super Bowl XLVI in 2012. It was financed with funds raised jointly by the State of Indiana and the City of Indianapolis, with the Indianapolis Colts providing \$100 million.

The Indiana Convention Center and Lucas Oil Stadium are managed by the Capital Improvement Board of Managers ("CIB"). The CIB was created in 1965 by the Indiana General Assembly to finance and manage capital improvement projects.

The JW Marriott opened in February 2011 and is the crown jewel of the \$450 million Marriott Place, a collection of five Marriott hotels all connected to the Indiana Convention Center. The 1,005 room hotel is the largest JW Marriott in the world and the tallest hotel in Indiana. It offers 104,000 square feet of event space, including a 40,500 square feet ballroom, and a skybridge with direct connection to the convention center.

In June 2010, the Indianapolis Museum of Art opened 100 Acres: The Virginia B. Fairbanks Art & Nature Park. It "presents art projects, exhibitions and discussions designed to strengthen the public's understanding of the unique, reciprocal relationships between contemporary art and the natural world." There are currently eight commissions of temporary, site-specific art work, which are the first in a series of ongoing commissions. The park is located on 100 acres of woodlands, wetlands, meadows, and a lake adjacent to the museum.

Indianapolis also invested in infrastructure to increase tourism. In 2008, a new airport terminal opened at a cost of \$1.1 billion. The project was the largest civic development in the city's history. The Indianapolis Cultural Trail: A Legacy of Gene & Marilyn Glick is an eight mile bike and pedestrian path that connects neighborhoods, cultural districts, and entertainment amenities. The \$55 million trail is scheduled for completion at the end of 2012.

VIII. Next Steps

As illustrated throughout this report, Tunica is facing a number of challenges that will require a collaborative and sustained effort involving both the public and private sectors. A number of issues and recommendations have been discussed throughout this report. The following is a summary of the primary next steps that should be taken as part of the implementation process.

1. Assemble an implementation team that would meet regularly and ensure the public and private sectors remain engaged and working towards improving Tunica's performance as an economic engine. Such a team should involve local stakeholders (Tunica CVB, County officials, casino management, Levee Board, etc.) as well as statewide and regional representation including but not necessarily limited to the Mississippi Development Authority and Mississippi Economic Council (it is important that Tunica's tourism industry be properly represented within MEC's Blueprint Mississippi).
2. Engage Mississippi Department of Transportation officials in an effort to improve the I-55 and I-69 signage to help direct visitors to the Tunica resort district.
3. Explore methods and potential public and private sources to immediately enhance Tunica County's DMO (Tunica CVB) Budget in an effort to introduce new markets to Tunica and expand existing marketing efforts.
4. Engage leadership outside of Tunica. It is important to educate political and business leaders on the importance of the Tunica County tourism industry and its value as an economic development engine for the State of Mississippi.
5. Identify and engage in discussions with private sector developers of the high priority developments identified in this report. Where appropriate, collaborate with the public and private sector to undertake any additional due diligence efforts necessary to identify and analyze their critical success factors.
6. Explore methods to leverage "the Blues" both as a key brand and product within Tunica County.
7. Continue and expand discussions and explore methods of bringing commercial, scheduled air service (e.g. Southwest Airlines) to Tunica Airport.