



## Tourism Industry Highlights Culinary Tourism Opportunities

### **A Feature of the Annual Pure Michigan Governor's Tourism Conference**

LANSING, Mich., May 19 /PRNewswire/ -- Travelers with an interest in authentic Michigan food and beverage experiences were the focus at the kick off of the recent Pure Michigan Governor's Conference-Driving Tourism on Mackinac Island. Greg Philby, editor-in-chief of *Midwest Living* magazine kicked off the conference by recognizing the Michigan communities recently featured in the 2010 Best of the Midwest edition of *Midwest Living* magazine. "People have always found places to eat when they travel," said Philby during his presentation. "What's changed recently in our research with our readers is that many people are planning trips around interesting and educational food and beverage experiences." In addition, Philby also announced a new book project featuring many Michigan destinations and recipes.

A panel discussion on the topic of advancing Culinary Tourism offerings to travelers in Michigan was a highlight of the afternoon breakout sessions. Moderated by Linda Jones, executive director of the Michigan Grape and Wine Industry Council and chair of the newly formed Michigan Culinary Tourism Alliance, the panel featured four specific examples of Culinary Tourism in Michigan: Ann Wilson, Culinary Escapes; Brad VanDommelen, Traverse City Convention and Visitors Bureau; Dianna Stampfler of Promote Michigan, representing the Michigan Apple Committee; and Sally Zarafonetis, publisher of the Great Food and Travel Web site. "Many companies in Michigan have been creating fabulous food and beverage experiences for travelers for many years," said Jones citing examples of wineries, cider mills, farm markets and fine dining experiences. "What the Alliance is doing, is organizing the inventory of these tourism assets to better communicate with consumers and travel writers."

Lead partners in the Michigan Culinary Tourism Alliance are the Michigan Department of Agriculture (Grape and Wine Council), Travel Michigan and the Michigan Restaurant Association. Information about the Alliance can be found on the Grape and Wine Council's Web site, [www.michiganwines.com](http://www.michiganwines.com), under Wine and Food. A conference specific to Culinary Tourism is planned for January 2011 in East Lansing, Michigan.

*Travel Michigan, a division of the Michigan Economic Development Corporation, is the State of Michigan's official agency for the promotion of tourism. Travel Michigan markets the state's tourism industry and provides valuable visitor information. For Michigan travel news and updates go to [michigan.org](http://michigan.org).*

Contact: Kirsten Borgstrom, (517) 335-1871  
Jenny Schilp, (248) 225-6744