

## TOURISM IN ACTION

### MACKINAC ISLAND

Looking for a summer place to unwind, rest, relax, and recharge your batteries? To experience the hospitality and delights of a true summer resort destination, take a trip back in time to Mackinac Island. Take a look at the home page for Mackinac Island (<http://www.mackinac.com>), and begin preparing for a unique adventure on a picturesque island filled with natural beauty in a setting that brings history to life. This small island in Lake Michigan is a case study in sustainability, charm, and unforgettable memories.

[skiing to horseback riding and sleigh rides] in the area cater to a mix of visitors ranging from “day-trippers” with children to empty-nest couples spending busy weeks in local resort accommodations (p. 27).<sup>11</sup>

Over 3 million visitors a year come to this resort area that is located midway between Chicago and Minneapolis. The total area encompasses two towns, Wisconsin Dells and Lake Delton, which have a year-round population of about 3,500 people. During peak seasons, this population temporarily swells with nearly 6,000 housing units ranging from bed and breakfasts (B&Bs) to condos and luxury hotels plus campsites and recreational vehicle (RV) parks.

Through active support of the Dells Visitor and Convention Bureau, businesses in the area reap the benefits of a coordinated marketing campaign and a five-state employee recruiting effort. Marketing efforts range all the way from responding to requests for information (almost half a million per year) to creating major promotional campaigns. In addition to the recruiting campaign, joint customer-service seminars (area businesses employ about 6,000 seasonal workers) are conducted to prepare employees for the seasonal summer surge in visitors. This high level of cooperation continues to pay off, as can be seen by the astounding number of repeat visitors (78%). Increased marketing efforts have also attracted additional visitors during the secondary fall and winter seasons to enjoy the fall colors, hunting, and winter sporting activities.<sup>9</sup>

## Spotlight on Sporting Activities

In the upper right-hand corner of Figure 10.1 is a group of destinations that not only are affected by seasonal weather patterns but also are highly developed with specific recreational activities. Destinations in this grouping offer recreational activities, primarily participation sports, such as skiing, golf, and tennis.

Destinations that specialize by offering these activities share two things in common. First, they are affected by weather patterns that dictate primary operating seasons. For example, although golf can be played year-round in Arizona, winter and spring are much more attractive than summer, when temperatures soar to well over 100°F for most of the day. Second, these destinations are easily identified by their high levels of commercial development, such as ski lifts, snowmaking equipment, golf courses, tennis courts, and other supporting facilities.

### Snow Holiday Resorts

Wherever they are located, all snow holiday resorts need the same natural wonders (steep slopes and snow) to attract winter snow-sports enthusiasts. And, snow is the most important ingredient for these resorts, as research has shown that early season snowfall has a significant impact on lift ticket sales.<sup>12</sup> Snowmaking is also important for winter resorts as they seek to supplement low natural snowfall levels and extend the length of their seasons. However, research has shown that, as might be expected, low natural