

Job openings cause bumpy ride for some companies

Lancaster County, PA — Local tourism is seeing a major boom.

Some agencies are predicting a historic year, even eclipsing the numbers pre pandemic.

But with worker shortages, can some of these places handle the influx of guests?

Some attractions are offering more money just trying to get people in the door.

Ed Harris from Discover Lancaster says tourism is soaring to new heights.

“We are experiencing record demand, record amount of revenue in our hotel community”

Harris explains the pain at the gas pump combined with skyrocketing airfare is giving local tourism a shot in the arm.

“There is a chance we could see a benefit, believe it or not from some of these inflationary pressures.”

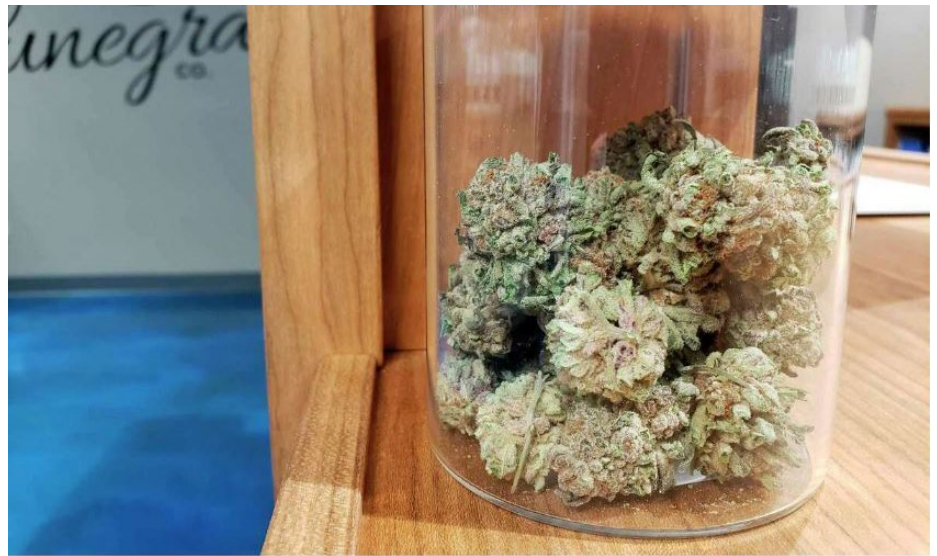
Destinations like Dutch Wonderland are already noticing an influx of visitors.

Jeff Eisenberg says season passes are selling fast and website traffic is blowing up. “We are seeing a lot of interest in the park in some ways even more so than pre COVID.”

But with business booming, worker shortages are causing a bumpy ride.

“It’s a challenging hiring environment, we certainly haven’t been immune from it.” Eisenberg said.

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Bigrapidsnews.com file photo

Michigan was the first state in the Midwest to legalize recreational marijuana. The law passed in 2018.

Northern Michigan cannabis retailer launches 'canna-tourism' campaign

A family-owned cannabis retailer in northern Michigan has launched a campaign promoting “cannabis tourism” for residents and visitors coming to the region for the “up north” experience.

The company, Dunegrass Co., has six locations across northern Michigan in Big Rapids, Cadillac, Manistee, Beulah, Gaylord and Marquette. And it has designs to build several more shops, according to CEO Nick Piedmonte in a press release issued by the company.

“It’s widely understood that tourism is a long-standing economic engine for northern Michigan,” DuneGrass Co. stated in the release. “Cannabis is now an industry emerging alongside tourism in the region. We’re in the infancy of understanding how these two economies interact and what the long-term force multipliers are between the two.”

Piedmonte lives in Traverse City and claims to understand the region’s deep relationship with tourism.

“We’re heavily involved in the communities we serve, so developing our brand to promote canna-tourism is a natural fit for us,” Piedmonte said in the release.

Part of the company’s “canna-tourism” campaign is a local guide to up north activities, like hiking and watersports, near its retail cannabis locations available on its website.

“We want to be the top-of-mind dispensary for visitors when coming to the region,” Piedmonte said in the release. “It’s our hope that our new website will help them find the hotspots and local activities that elevate their up north experience. We have also formed supporting relationships with the West Michigan Tourist Association.”

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Bigrapids news file photo

Cannabis involvement complicates funding

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Additionally, Dunegrass Co. launched a social media campaign called A Higher Latitude to promote northern Michigan.

The account is expected to share “Michi-Facts” to teach people about recreational opportunities unique to the region, according to the release.

For instance, the account plans to share events like the Hoxeyville Music Festival, which, in partnership with Dunegrass Co. will be the first existing music festival offering onsite cannabis sales and consumption.

Because many organizations designed to promote Michigan’s tourism have

some level of federal funding, cannabis messaging or membership of cannabis companies could complicate things, according to the release.

Piedmonte stated, “One of our goals with our marketing efforts is to fill the void and promote the normalization of cannabis as a part of visiting ‘Michigan’s Higher Latitude.’ ”

Michigan was the first state in the Midwest to legalize recreational marijuana. In 2018, the Michigan Regulation and Taxation of Marijuana Act was passed, legalizing recreational marijuana for adults over the age of 21, according to the Marijuana Policy Project.

– *bigrapidsnews.com*

Consumers notice lack of service and complain

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Even wages at the park are climbing up the tracks. Eisenberg says the theme park is dishing out more money to get people in the door. “Over the past two seasons, we have increased our seasonal rates quite significantly, in some cases up to 3 dollars per hour.”

While not fully staffed, Eisenberg says all rides at the park will remain open and hours won’t be scaled back. “For where we are right now, we are on pace of where we want to be at this point in the year.”

But it’s been a rollercoaster for attractions like Hershey Park.

Social media has been blowing up with visitor complaints like this.

“Anybody heard anything about Stormrunner? It hasn’t run all day.”

“Just looked at the hours for the season and I’m disappointed even the water park closes at 5.

Although staffing is a concern, many destinations like Hershey are banking on students graduating high school and coming home from college to fill those open positions.

– *local21news.com*

Chicago launches new campaign in the hope you’ll go

Looking to draw back visitors after the pandemic sent Chicago’s tourism industry plummeting, the city’s official tourism arm has rolled out a new marketing campaign.

Late last month, the “When You Go You Know” campaign hit social media and advertising displays across the region and country.

In an example of the advertising, block letters on an animated billboard spell out the question, “Is it really just a 20-minute water taxi ride to China?” The next frame includes an image of Chicago’s Chinatown behind the word “Chicago” and the campaign catchphrase: “When you go you know.”

The new marketing campaign comes as Chicago looks to rebuild its image as a tourist and business destination, and to overcome concerns about crime, whether perceived or real. It is intended to highlight more than just things visitors can do in the city, said Lynn Osmond, president and CEO of Choose Chicago.

She cited research that she said showed travelers want “unique, authentic and personally enriching experiences.” Rather than simply getting out of town, many tourists want to learn about a place and themselves during a trip, she said.

The campaign covers a range of topics, and shines a spotlight on city neighborhoods, she said.

– *Chicago Tribune via Yahoo.com*