New International Trade Crossing

Michigan is approaching a crucial point in time with regards to international trade. The Ambassador Bridge, Michigan's main international crossing, is approaching capacity, as well as the end of its life span. For Michigan to continue to be a key player in U.S./Canada trade, a new crossing needs to be built.

The New International Trade Crossing (NITC) is the proposed answer to this problem. The NITC enjoys a critical improvement in location over the existing Ambassador Bridge, allowing for a highway-to-highway connection between I-75 and the 401 Expressway. The distance between the NITC and the Ambassador Bridge will also provide a layer of security in case of disaster, making it unlikely that both bridges would be incapacitated simultaneously. Trade between the U.S. and Canada is projected to rise in the future; the NITC will capture a large portion of this increased trade, allowing for Michigan to benefit economically from the increased traffic flow.

Despite all opposition to the construction of the NITC, its opponents have provided contradictory evidence to support their claims, and plan to build a second crossing themselves. This would take years of planning and negotiating with the Canadian federal government, whereas the NITC has already cleared all procedures and is ready to begin.

The NITC will provide a critical boost to the Michigan economy, capturing millions of dollars in trade, and it will do so without putting the cost of implementation on the Michigan taxpayers. The Canadian government, along with federal matching funds, will cover all expenses associated with the construction of the new crossing. The NITC benefits from a significant amount of political and business support.

Problem 3

Lack of efficient transportation from out-of-state metropolitan regions to major Michigan tourist destinations.

Proposed Solutions:
1. Expanded airline service from major out-of-state metropolitan regions to Michigan's regional airports.
2. The development of a limited-access toll road from Michigan's regional airports to major tourist destinations.

Introduction

Over the past thirty years, the tourism industry in Michigan has continued to become a larger, fundamental piece of the Michigan economy. Most recently, the "Pure Michigan" advertising campaign has been publicized in places like Times Square (Schneider, 2009). According to a study provided by Longwood Consulting, 681 thousand non-residents visited Michigan during the 2009 year and spent an estimated total of $250 million, generating an estimated $15 million in tax revenue. In 2010, this number increased to 838 thousand visitors and they spent $372 million (Siegel, 2011).

If the State of Michigan strategically placed Pure Michigan advertisements in major out-of-state metropolitan regions, developed agreements with regional airports and major airlines to expand non-stop flights, and constructed a four-lane limited access parkway to Pure Michigan destinations, the Pure Michigan campaign would increase non-resident weekend visitors and thereby generate more revenue in the tourist industry for the State. This would be accomplished while allowing travelers that come to visit to reach their travel destinations within six hours of leaving their homes.

Limited Access Toll Road

Because of the access and efficiencies that would be created by offering an effective port of entry and more efficient modes of transportation to travel destinations, the non-residents who make the trip to Pure Michigan will also positively impact the agricultural industries (wineries, cider mills, cherry farms), along with the many Pure Michigan tourist industries of northern Michigan. This new market of tourists would undoubtedly increase the amount of tax revenue generated.