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## **Nation's First Highway Travel Information Center – in New Buffalo, Michigan – Celebrates 75th Anniversary**

(NEW BUFFALO, Mich) – The nation's first Highway Travel Information Center, the New Buffalo Welcome Center, is celebrating its 75th anniversary with a day of family-friendly events, May 27, 2010. Events throughout the day will include entertainment and the opportunity to meet Miss Michigan 2009, Nicole Blaszczyk, enjoy a 'Taste of Michigan' with several local products, and a chance to enter to win special prizes. The event concludes with a dedication and unveiling of a new state historic marker.

"We hope travelers will help us celebrate this milestone anniversary of the nation's first Welcome Center," commented George Zimmermann, vice president of Travel Michigan, a business unit of the Michigan Economic Development Corporation.

The nation's first Highway Travel Information Center opened May 4, 1935, on US-12 at New Buffalo not far from the current location of the current New Buffalo Welcome Center. Other states followed Michigan's lead, and by 1985 there were 251 travel information centers across the nation. The New Buffalo center was established to welcome motorists entering the state via US-12. It was relocated at the current site, with its more modern building, on April 6, 1972, after the I-94 freeway was completed. Michigan's statewide travel information program, which began in 1935, includes staffed welcome centers and interpretive, promotional and informational displays at rest areas and roadside parks across the state.

Michigan's 14 highway Welcome Centers greet more than nine million travelers annually distributing Michigan tourism information and assisting travelers.

The Harbor Country Convention & Visitors Bureau was established in 1990 as the Harbor Country Lodging Association in accordance with the state of Michigan's Community Convention or Tourism Marketing Act 59 of 1984.

The mission of the organization is "to promote its members and the assessment district as a major destination for tourism and conventions in southwest Michigan." The assessment district encompasses the Townships of New Buffalo, Three Oaks, and Chikaming, the city of New Buffalo, the Village of Three Oaks and the Village of Michiana, Michigan.

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*SOURCE: 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).*