



MINUTES

Date/Time: May 15, 2025

Location: The BlueJay – 644 Bridge Street NW

MISSION

Our mission is to provide Kent County hospitality related businesses an opportunity to meet professionally with a common interest to better serve our industry and community while furthering the overall tourism landscape of our region.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Welcome & Introductions: Lisa Calhoun, KCHA President

Approval of March 2025 minutes (Motion: Jane Lovett, 2nd: Sarah Berry. Approved)

Treasurer's Report & Membership Report – David Jibson, KCHA Treasurer

- Starting Balance: \$7,178.49
- Ending Balance: \$7,215.99

Featured Topic: AI in the Hospitality Industry – Amy Dorey, Ferris State University

Iceberg Effect

- 10% is guest facing (front of house). Still trial and error for many.
- 90% behind the scenes for operational activities (scheduling, purchasing). Steady growth in the industry.

Venues:

- Stadiums were first to have guest-facing AI.
- Restaurants are using it for streamlining operations.
 - Wendy's top in the fast-food industry to utilize, upselling based on ordering. Still have a person to process payment.
- Hotels to optimize guest services from check-in to concierge.
 - Hilton was the first one to use digital keys.

Increase speed, generate revenue, create a personal touch.

Concerns:

- Data Privacy Concerns
 - Geolocation Tracking (available currently in billboards)
 - Facial authentication (MLB, Airports) & facial analysis (Snapsite to track reactions from audience, not recorded)
 - Hotel key cards can track where you are on property.
 - Permissions are in the small print.
- Bias Awareness
 - You can use AI to check your AI bias
- Over-reliance risks
 - Guardrails
 - Trust factor issues
 - Discrimination

Some places are using it but aren't promoting it.

Monthly Reports

- Experience Grand Rapids – Jaylyn:
 - Toast the Town Luncheon with a focus on accessibility.
 - Heather Emmons, GM at the Holiday Inn Downtown, was presented the 2025 Joe Tomaselli Hotelier of the Year Award.
 - Grand Rapids Tourism Development video in the works highlighting as a world class venue (soccer, GVSU expansion, amphitheater).
- Grand Rapids Diversity & Inclusion –
 - Local Academies of Hospitality & Tourism w/ 6 new launching in the fall in West Michigan.
 - Discover Tourism Grant Program – funded 16 projects.
- West Michigan Sports Commission
 - Summer is in full swing.
- West Michigan Tourist Association (WMTA)
 - NA
- Women in Hospitality Leadership-Grand Rapids
 - Tuesday, November 18 @ JW
- Grand Valley State University – Kristy
 - Summer vacation. Interns are off doing cool things.
- Ferris State University
 - Summer vacation. Interns are off doing cool things.
- Grand Rapids Community College
 - NA
- Pure Michigan (MEDC)
 - Tourism Conference was a success in April in Novi
 - 2026 Conference is in Traverse City in April 7-9, 2026.
- Michigan Restaurant & Lodging Association
 - Reinstated their Restaurant Show in conjunction with the Pure Michigan Governor's Conference on Tourism at Suburban Collection Showplace in Novi.
 - Stars of the Industry Awards included Sustainability Recognition Star of the Year - Karly Aldridge, JW Marriott Grand Rapids. For the list of all winners:
<https://www.mrla.org/stars.html#:~:text=CVB%20Star%20of%20the%20Year,Mission%20Point%20Resort%E2%80%8B%E2%80%8B>
- Michigan Cares for Tourism (MC4T)
 - April mini clean up at Detroit Zoo – tied to the Pure Michigan Governor's Conference on Tourism – was a success with about 100 volunteers.
 - Tawas Point State Park registration is open.

Upcoming Meetings & Events

- Thursday, June 19 – Social Networking at BattleGR (a kick-off to summer...bring your staff. Note 4pm start time).
- September 14-15 – Michigan Cares for Tourism, East Tawas (Registration Open Now)
- September 18-October 4 – ArtPrize
- Thursday, October 23 – KCHA Monthly Membership Meeting
- November 7-15 – GR Restaurant Week
- Thursday, November 21 – KCHA Monthly Membership Meeting

Note: No membership meetings in July, August or September (the latter due to overlapping with MC4T which is 9/14-15).

Round Table Discussion

Adjournment: Jaylyn & Melissa

Kent County Hospitality Association
P.O. Box 1046 — Grand Rapids, MI 49501

www.KentCountyHospitality.org
www.facebook.com/groups/KentCountyHospitality