

PRESSRELEASE

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City Websites Bring Gains In Visibility

Michigan City, IN (February 20, 2003) – Mayor Sheila Brillson announced that the new entry pages for the Washington Park Zoo and the Parks & Recreation Department as well as the entire Michigan City website have met and exceeded expectations for website traffic.

“Gaining visibility through our websites is part of Michigan City’s overall marketing strategy,” Mayor Brillson said. “We implemented a stand-alone entry page for the Washington Park Zoo last April in an effort to help potential visitors find our zoo on the Internet easily and quickly. We then created a stand-alone entry page for the Parks & Recreation Department that went online at the beginning of this year. The decision to create www.washingtonparkzoo.com and www.michigancityparks.com has proven to be even more beneficial than we’d hoped.”

The Zoo’s web site had 6769 hits in May, 8547 in June, 10505 in July, 9483 in August, 6593 in September, 8224 in October, 5574 in November and 7337 in December.

The Michigan City website received 457,936 hits in May, 491,924 in June, 684,542 in July, 549,925 in August, 1,128,755 in September, 544,993 in October, 516,882 hits in November, and 460,102 hits in December.

The new entry page for the Michigan City Parks & Recreation Department received 6,243 hits in January, 2003, the first month the site was online.

“The number of hits our websites are receiving are phenomenal,” Mayor Brillson commented. “This is essentially a government website for a community of 32,900 people, and we are getting more traffic than we ever expected. Obviously, the Michigan City website contains information that is important and interesting to people around the world.”

Mayor Brillson continued, “Our marketing research indicated that people using search engines to look for information about zoos in Indiana could not find Washington Park Zoo on the Internet unless they looked for our zoo by name. It was also difficult for people to find information about National Softball Association championships and other exciting events held in Michigan City parks. The best and most cost effective means of resolving that issue was to

create an entry page for the zoo and the park system. That action gave us the opportunity to create the meta tags and keywords that are registered with search engines. Now, people who search for information about visiting a zoo while they're traveling in Indiana or about softball and family parks will get information about Michigan City."

The Michigan City website (www.emichigancity.com) is accessed through a number of search engines as well as through other local, regional and national websites. "Michigan City's website is accessed through the Michigan City Library's website as well as websites for the Port Authority, Zoo, News Dispatch, MCTV, Parks & Recreation Department, Michigan City Chamber of Commerce, Michigan City Economic Development Corporation, the LaPorte County Convention & Visitors Bureau and Long Beach," said Mayor Brillson. "We've also received website visitors through websites of Access LaPorte County, the LaPorte County Sheriff's Department, Indiana Digital County Network, Indiana Association of Cities & Towns, Ball State University, Valparaiso University, and from www.ejobs.org, www.visitindiana.net, the National Softball Association, the Baseball Players Association, www.eteamz.com and www.statelocalgov.net.

"Through the efforts of Jan Kostielney of JK Enterprises and Scott Wills of Catalyst Marketing, the city team has been able to "showcase" our projects, city facilities and special events. I am pleased that our community is gaining visibility in a broad spectrum of organizations and communities," said Mayor Brillson. "This visibility translates into increased tourism and ultimately into increased economic development."

Check the Michigan City websites often to discover the events scheduled for our community, view photo scrapbooks of past events, and to get information about city departments.

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