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## TICKET TO WRITE Promotions aim to ease gas pains

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BY **STEVE STEPHENS**

Is \$50 worth of gasoline more valuable than \$50 in other commodities, including Federal Reserve notes?

That might seem like a dumb question, but in the world of travel marketing, the answer might be yes.

Dozens of hotels, vacation destinations and tourist attractions are offering gasoline cards or gas rebates to visitors this summer.

Saving money on gasoline can help travelers feel better about taking a summer vacation in difficult economic times, said Steve Mogck, an executive vice president with Carlson Hotels Worldwide.

But why gasoline in particular?

"Some of it is psychological," Mogck admitted. "In my family, we budget in categories. If you're now spending \$20 more on gasoline to get somewhere, a \$20 gas rebate might help you feel better about taking the trip."

Carlson's Park Inn chain has a gasoline promotion this summer, which Mogck said is proving popular.

"Research shows the American consumer really wants to take that summer vacation," he said.

"Traveling with their family is important. They don't want to

give that up even with higher gas prices."

Close to home, Cherry Valley Lodge in Newark has seen a big jump in the number of guests arriving from 60 miles away or less, said Beth Kelly, the resort's director of marketing.

This year, 80 percent of guests are from close to home, compared with 60 percent last year, she said.

"People are really watching their dollars," Kelly said. "They know they're going to spend more to get here, so they want a good deal when they arrive."

Cherry Valley's AAA Gas and Go package, which includes a \$25 Speedway Gas Card, has been popular this summer, Kelly said. (That \$25 should more than pay for the gas from Columbus, unless you're driving a behemoth.)

Here are some other gasoline giveaways that travelers might want to check out.

### National

- Many of the Park Inn hotels, including Park Inn Toledo, are offering a \$20 gasoline mail-in rebate to guests who stay two consecutive nights through September. Call 1-888-201-1801 or visit [www.parkinn.com](http://www.parkinn.com).

- The online travel site Expedia

.com is offering free gas cards for customers who book a room through the site for stays at many hotels in the United States, Canada and Mexico through September. Guests get \$25 in free gas for a two-night stay and \$50 for a stay of three or more nights. Visit [www.expedia.com](http://www.expedia.com).



FILE PHOTO

Cherry Valley Lodge's lobby has twin stone fireplaces.

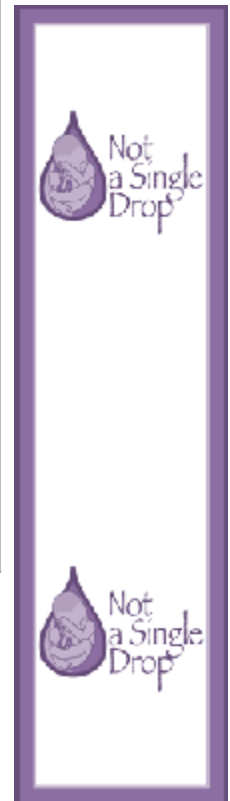


### Bizarro Ohio Travel



Look out below! The Chalet Toboggan Chutes at the Mill Stream Run Metro Park in Strongsville, Ohio are the only public ice chutes in Ohio. It is open through February whether or not there's snow!

OhioTraveler video: [Inventors Hall of Fame](http://www.ohiotraveler.com) Provided by [www.ohiotraveler.com](http://www.ohiotraveler.com)



**SHOPPING COLUMBUS**

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- Hotels.com is offering a gasoline rebate in the form of a \$50 prepaid MasterCard (which, technically, can be used wherever MasterCard is accepted -- not just at gas stations). Customers must book a stay of three nights or longer by Sept. 15 for stays through Oct. 5. Call 1-800-246-8357 or visit [www.hotels.com](http://www.hotels.com).

- The Internet bed-and-breakfast sites [BedandBreakfast.com](http://BedandBreakfast.com) and [BnBfinder.com](http://BnBfinder.com) both list dozens of bed-and-breakfasts and small inns across the United States offering gasoline rebates this summer. Visit [www.bedandbreakfast.com](http://www.bedandbreakfast.com) or [www.bnbfinder.com](http://www.bnbfinder.com).

### Ohio and region

- Hocking Hills Cabins near Logan is offering gas cards with midweek stays in August. Three-night stays qualify for a \$30 card, four-night stays get a \$50 card and five nights, a \$70 card. Call 1-800-385-4161 or visit [www.hhcabins.com](http://www.hhcabins.com).

- Kalahari water park in Sandusky is offering a special package through September for four-night stays beginning on a Sunday or Monday. The package includes \$40 off the regular room rate and a \$40 Speedway SuperAmerica gas card. Call 1-877-525-2427 or visit [www.kalahariresorts.com/oh/deals](http://www.kalahariresorts.com/oh/deals).

- Maplevale Farm Bed and Breakfast in Oxford is offering a \$50 gas card to guests staying three or more nights in certain rooms through Aug. 14. Mention "Heat Wave" when making your reservation. Call 1-877-506-2753 or visit [www.maplevale.com](http://www.maplevale.com).

- The Mansfield and Richland County Convention and Visitors Bureau is sponsoring a contest for Richland County visitors who upload photos and a story about their trip to [www.mansfieldtourism.com](http://www.mansfieldtourism.com). Winners, to be selected weekly, will receive a \$50 gas card.

- The Barn Inn in Millersburg has a special "Tanks a Lot" offer for car-poolers. When two or more couples arrive in the same vehicle, each couple gets a \$25 gas card. The offer is good for stays of two or more nights, Sundays through Thursdays. Call 1-877-674-7600 or visit [www.thebarninn.com](http://www.thebarninn.com).

- Cherry Valley Lodge in Newark is offering a AAA Gas & Go package that starts at \$199. The package includes overnight accommodations, a \$25 Speedway gas card, four CoCo Key water park passes, two \$10 arcade cards, two CoCo Key T-shirts and a AAA U.S. road map. The package can be booked through any AAA Ohio Auto Club office by calling 1-800-788-8008 or by visiting [www.cherryvalleylodge.com](http://www.cherryvalleylodge.com). Use the promotional code SUMMERAAA.

- Three Charleston, W.Va., hotels -- the Ramada Charleston, Wingate by Wyndham and Hampton Inn Southridge -- are offering a \$20 gas card for a two-night stay or a \$50 card for a five-night stay through Aug. 15. Visit [www.discovercharlestonwv.com/gasup.php](http://www.discovercharlestonwv.com/gasup.php).

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