

**WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM
BIENNIAL REPORT**

JULY 1, 2013 - JUNE 30, 2015

INTRODUCTION

Tourism is vital to the health of Wisconsin as an industry that provides economic value to the state. The Wisconsin tourism industry substantiates its significance by contributing to the economy, providing jobs and enhancing the overall quality of life. Therefore, the Wisconsin Department of Tourism aggressively promotes Wisconsin as a year-round travel and tourism destination for fun.

POWER OF TOURISM

The mission of the Wisconsin Department of Tourism is to market the state as the Midwest's premier travel destination for fun. It is the welcome mat to the state and positively brands Wisconsin, not only for tourism, but for the retention and attraction of new business. This work is directed by the department's Secretary and Deputy Secretary with advice and counsel from the Governor's Council on Tourism and its committees. A team of 22 employees and five vendors¹ execute the strategic business and marketing plan.

Governor's Council on Tourism:

<http://industry.travelwisconsin.com/about-the-department/governors-council-on-tourism>

PAID MEDIA

Based on our research, we have identified our primary target audience as six states in the Midwest: Wisconsin, Illinois, Minnesota, Iowa, Michigan and Indiana. We use a layered approach to media placement that includes TV, radio, print, digital, and out-of-home executions in our prime travel seasons of summer, fall and winter. The Department employs a digital strategy to keep the Wisconsin message of fun in front of consumers throughout the entire year.

Notable highlights include the Department's Summer 2015 TV ad starring UW Madison basketball coach Bo Ryan, which aired during the Big Ten and NCAA Championships and received over 6 million impressions. In addition, it has been viewed online over 526,000 times, a record for any ad in the Department's history. The Department received a Gold OBIE Award for its "Camp Wisconsin" outdoor advertising campaign, which transformed Chicago bus shelters and double-decker buses into summer camp themes. The vendor who manufactured the bus wrap was so proud of the final product they produced a Camp Wisconsin double-decker bus that drove the streets of New York City for a month at no charge.

Paid Media Examples: <http://industry.travelwisconsin.com/marketing-overview>

EARNED MEDIA

The Department's earned media strategy tells Wisconsin's story as a premier Midwest travel destination for fun as well as communicates tourism's role as an economic driver for the state. The communications team uses a variety of tactics to reach key media influencers through familiarization tours, in-person meetings, editorial boards, media

¹ Laughlin Constable, Ascedia, Cadmus, Creative Marketing Resources and Longwood's International/Tourism Economic

trade shows, promotions, Joint Effort Marketing grant check presentations, seasonal press releases, story pitching as well as through a statewide media outreach effort in partnership with the tourism industry during National Tourism and Travel Week. Where most states typically earn about \$17 million in annual free press, Wisconsin's earned media topped \$114 million in 2014.

Public relations efforts during the biennium generated over \$184 million in earned media with coverage in *The New York Times*, *Chicago Tribune*, *Singapore Times*, *Miami Herald*, *Japan Times*, *Washington Post*, *LA Times*, the Weather Channel and hundreds of other outlets.

The Department's public relations, social media and marketing efforts have garnered 68 state, regional, national and international awards and recognitions since May 2011.

OWNED MEDIA

TRAVELWISCONSIN.COM

TravelWisconsin.com is the official website of the Wisconsin Department of Tourism and the primary resource for planning a Wisconsin getaway. Each year, the site serves nearly 4 million visitors looking to find fun and a place they can experience the best of Wisconsin. All department marketing initiatives direct new and return visitors to TravelWisconsin.com.

In FY2013, the Department launched a redesigned TravelWisconsin.com, the ultimate resource to find fun in Wisconsin, to great accolades and success. During this biennium (FY2014-FY2015), the Department built on this success by applying a calculated approach to continuous improvement on TravelWisconsin.com. Research and data-driven insights informed new enhancements and strategies that focused on improving the customer experience along with inspirational content. As a result, TravelWisconsin.com helped more people find Wisconsin fun than ever before.

FY2014-15 vs. FY2012-13

- 6.7 million users | up 44%
- 10.7 million sessions | up 41%
- 66.7 million pageviews | up 56%
- 1.9 million partner referrals | up 35%

Following are a few highlights of key initiatives for FY2014 and FY2015 that contributed to this phenomenal growth.

- **Redesigned Cities & Regions:** The fresh new design features interactive maps, larger imagery and video while letting industry partners manage their section and feature the best the area has to offer.
- **Fresh Design for Category Pages & Directories:** Larger imagery, featured content and Pinterest style directories made it easier for users to explore the many things to do and places to stay in Wisconsin. These sections also feature more personalized content based on a user's location or history.
- **New Trip Ideas:** This new section features inspirational content by theme, such as natural wonders, hidden gems, or family getaways. Each section tells a story with rich video, photography, stories and even social curated content.
- **New Videos:** Video is one of the best ways to showcase Wisconsin partners and inspire others to travel. As a result, the Department has undertaken an initiative to produce more video to incorporate throughout the website.
- **More Stories:** The Department produces hundreds of feature articles and blog posts each year featuring industry partners from all over Wisconsin. This content has contributed to record breaking traffic and positive engagement on TravelWisconsin.com. There were more than 7.7 million pageviews of article content (up 134%) and 1.4 million pageviews of blog content (up 114%).

- **More Search:** The Department's ongoing search engine optimization program, along with all of the new story content, contributed to increased organic search sessions (up 160%).
- **More Social:** TravelWisconsin.com was also more social than ever with single social sign-on, sharing, user-generated photos and commenting tools. Social referrals are up more than 400%. By creating an online community that empowers users to commemorate their Wisconsin experiences on TravelWisconsin.com or their own websites and social networks, they inspire others to travel Wisconsin.
- **More Mobile:** The responsive design and continued user experience improvements of TravelWisconsin.com has supported huge growth with mobile users (up more than 148%). As of June 2015, mobile sessions now represent nearly half of all website sessions.
- **More Email:** The Department revamped its email strategy with a GovDelivery partnership that allows more collaboration with other Wisconsin agencies, as well as more custom subscription options, such as page watch subscriptions. As a result, email referrals to www.TravelWisconsin.com are up 176%.
- **Media Collective:** The Department has created a media collective to manage all of its media assets, including imagery and video. These are available free of charge for the tourism industry, the media and other state agencies to use for their web and publication needs.

Benchmark	FY 2014	FY 2015
Total Website Sessions	4,557,794 (up 49%)	6,184,212 (up 36%)
Website Users	2,853,525 (up 50%)	3,989,431 (up 40%)
Average Time on Site	3 min 42 sec (up 10%)	2 min 47 sec (down 25%)
Click Thru to Partner Sites	786,834 (up 28%)	1,101,766 (up 40%)
Total eNews Subscribers	67,100	83,487 (up 80%)
Facebook Followers	360,000	390,000 (up 8%)
Twitter Followers	63,000	71,000 (up 12%)
Mobile Users	1,262,224 (up 390%)	2,449,783 (up 94%)
Desktop Users	2,686,730 (up 7%)	2,843,161 (up 6%)

ADDITIONAL OWNED MEDIA

Social Media

Our social media objective is to create an engaged social media culture that is focused on building relationships between and among our consumers using our brand of fun. Social media is also used to drive significant traffic to TravelWisconsin.com where travelers can begin their planning. In the last biennium, the Department increased active Facebook members from 360,000 to 390,000 and Twitter followers increased from 63,000 to 71,000. In February 2015, the Department launched an Instagram account to highlight imagery of Wisconsin's stunning landscapes, destinations and scenery. The Travel Wisconsin Instagram account has grown to nearly 3,000 followers and continues to receive engagement rates above industry average.

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/travelwisconsin?ref=ts>

Instagram: <instagram.com/travelwisconsin/>

Twitter: twitter.com/TravelWI?ref_src=twsrc%5Egoogle%7Ctwcamp%5Eserp%7Ctwgr%5Eauthor

Travel Wisconsin Welcome Centers (TWWC)

The Department continued to support the Travel Wisconsin Welcome Centers through a public-private partnership business model. This model includes the Wisconsin Department of Transportation and local tourism organizations for the purpose of staffing and operating eight branded TWWCs. Located at Interstate and state highway gateways these centers served over a quarter of a million visitors with direct customer service. The Department developed displays and promotions that integrated the brand and ongoing campaigns including photo op creative.

Publications

The department publication and customer service team oversee the development, production and distribution of a wide range of content including an annual Travel Guide, Activity Guide, Spring & Summer Events Guide, Fall & Winter Events Guide and Art and Craft Fairs Directory. These publications showcase places and events across the entire state and demand continues to be strong. They are distributed through the Department's call center and website, trade shows, Travel Wisconsin Welcome Centers and local visitor information centers.

Publications: <http://www.travelwisconsin.com/order-guides>

OVERALL IMPACT OF VISITOR SPENDING ON WISCONSIN'S ECONOMY

Tourism had a \$17.5 billion impact on the state's economy in 2013. In 2014, the impact was \$18.5 billion. The 2015 report will be available in May.²

Benchmark	2013	2014
Total Economic Impact	\$17.5 Billion	\$18.5 Billion
State and Local Taxes	\$1.3 Billion	\$1.4 Billion
Jobs	185,495	187,643

² Tourism Economics, 2013/2014 Economic Impact study. All economic impact information is reported as a calendar year.

DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM ORGANIZATION

SECRETARY STEPHANIE KLETT

Appointed by Governor Walker in January 2011, Stephanie Klett has the privilege of spearheading the state's \$18.5 billion tourism industry as the Secretary of the Wisconsin Department of Tourism. The mission of this cabinet level agency is to market the state as the Midwest's premier travel destination for fun.

Under her leadership the Department of Tourism has earned an unprecedented 68 marketing and public relations awards. Television ads featuring celebrities with Wisconsin ties have elevated the state's prominence on the national tourism scene, and earned media efforts have generated an all-time high of \$340 million.

Klett has been promoting Wisconsin more than two decades, logging over one million miles criss-crossing the state during her 20-year career hosting the award-winning Discover Wisconsin Television & Radio series.

Klett has been featured in numerous newspaper, television and radio broadcasts around the country, including the *Chicago Tribune*, *The New York Times*, Good Morning America, The Travel Channel, Peter Greenberg's Worldwide Radio Network and the Rudy Maxa Show.

Klett is a graduate of Beloit College and in 2014 she received Beloit College's highest honor, the Distinguished Alumni Award.

The Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) Southeast Chapter named Klett "Communicator of the Year" in 2015. She also received the YWCA of Rock County 2014 "Women of Distinction" award, which honors outstanding role models who give back to their communities in the spirit of the advancement of other women.



DEPUTY SECRETARY SARAH KLAVAS

Sarah Klavas is the Deputy Secretary of the Wisconsin Department of Tourism. A 26-year veteran with Wisconsin state government, combined with 15 years of private sector marketing management experience, Klavas plays a key role in growing Wisconsin's overall economy. From 1995 through the present, Klavas has been a leader in a tourism industry that has grown from \$5.6 billion to \$18.5 billion in annual expenditures.

During her time at the Department of Tourism, Klavas has served in a variety of management and leadership capacities including Director of Industry Relations, Marketing Director, Communications Director, Director of the Wisconsin Film Office, Wisconsin Welcome Center System Manager and as Wisconsin's first state-wide Brand Manager.

Klavas holds an undergraduate degree in communications and marketing from the University of Northern Iowa and graduated from the Certified Public Manager program at the University of Wisconsin-Madison in December 2008.



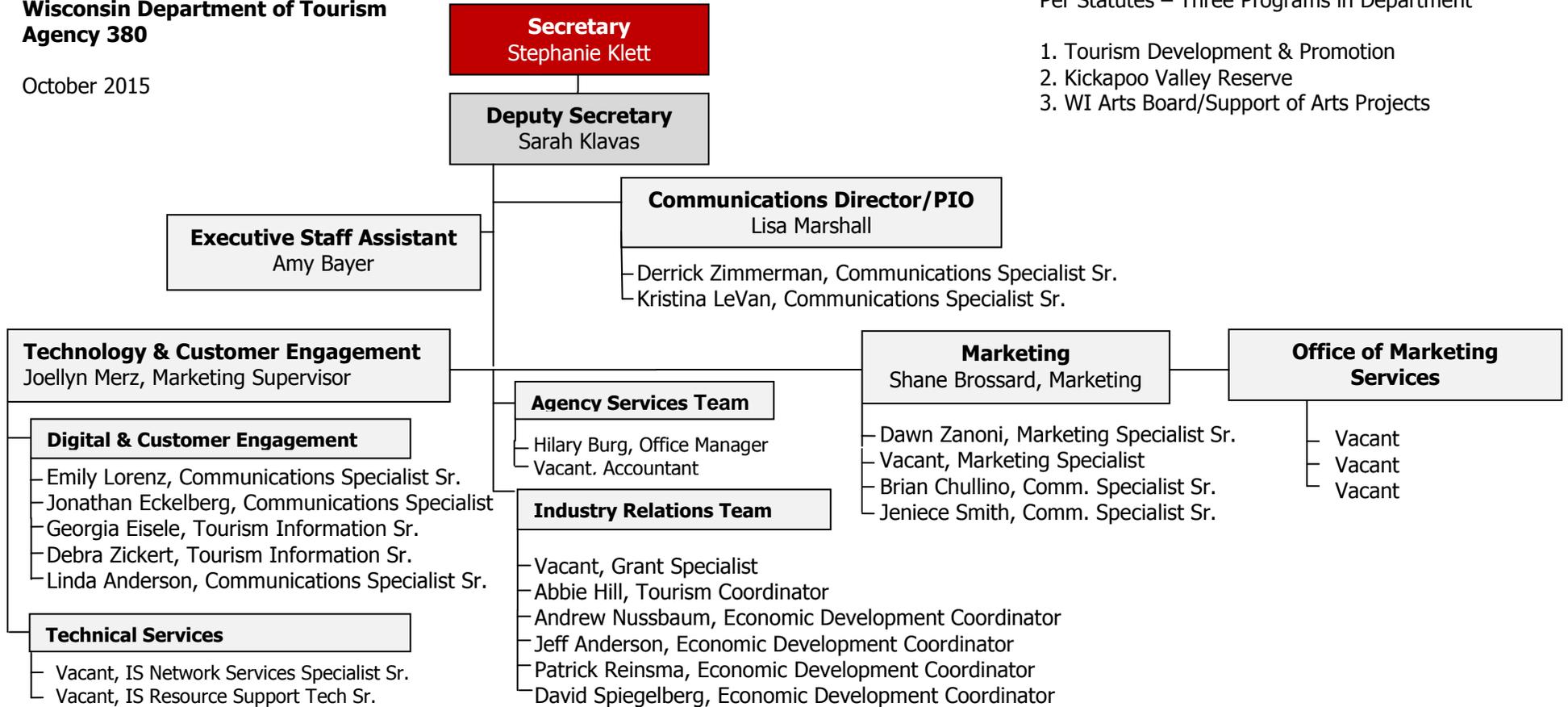
ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Wisconsin Department of Tourism
Agency 380

October 2015

Per Statutes – Three Programs in Department

1. Tourism Development & Promotion
2. Kickapoo Valley Reserve
3. WI Arts Board/Support of Arts Projects



ATTACHED PROGRAMS

Kickapoo Valley Reserve
Marcy West, Executive Director

- Frances Campbell, Program Assistant NTE
- Jason Leis, Program Assistant NTE
- Jonel Kiesau, Non-ESG Executive (0.75)
- Vacant, Non-ESG Executive (0.25)

WI Arts Board
George Tzougros, Executive Director

- Karen Goeschko, Community Services Supervisor
- Anne Pryor, Community Services Specialist Sr.
- Dale Johnson, IS Resource Support Tech Sr.

ALTERNATIVE WORK PATTERNS AND FLEXIBLE WORK SCHEDULE

Department of Tourism staff members have the flexibility to choose an alternative arrival and departure time from work along with a preferred lunch and break schedule. The decision must take into account the operational needs of the Department and is subject to approval by the immediate supervisor.

Tourism in Wisconsin is a 24/7 industry open 365 days a year. Some staff members are required to operate within alternative work pattern assignments to accommodate events and commercial television or photography shoots that take place in the field, or involve participation at travel industry trade shows that run over a weekend. Staff works directly with their supervisors to develop alternative schedules that meet the needs of the Department, the tourism industry and their personal needs to create an appropriate work-life balance. The Department currently has one full-time employee working a temporarily reduced schedule to accommodate family circumstances.

PERMANENT PART-TIME POSITIONS

The Department does not currently have staff working in permanent part-time employment status.

MARKETING RESOURCES

GRANT PROGRAMS

- **Joint Effort Marketing (JEM):** If industry partners have original ideas, tourism would like to consider helping with funding. Our grant programs could be the key to getting that idea off the ground. Categories include new and existing events, sales promotion, and destination marketing.
- **Ready, Set, Go! (RSG) Sports Marketing:** There is a serious economic impact to be made in attracting sports events to a community. In fact, this is one of the fastest growing tourism niches around. This grant program helps destinations with up-front funds to secure competitive events.
- **Tourism Information Center (TIC):** Serving guests while they are on the road is core to Wisconsin's warm hospitality. This grant program is designed to assist non-profits in this role with their operating expenses.
- **Meetings Mean Business (MMB):** Meetings and conventions are a competitive niche tourism market with significant growth potential. This grant program is designed to assist Wisconsin destinations with financial assistance for facility costs or host destination expenses and to help Wisconsin destinations in their efforts to attract regional and national meetings or conventions.

Grant Programs: <http://industry.travelwisconsin.com/grants>

COMMUNICATION SERVICES

Communications staff works with the media, general public, diverse and niche audiences to promote Wisconsin travel opportunity and reinforce the state's brand of fun. The communications team provides public relations and marketing guidance and media lists to the tourism industry.

WEB MARKETING

The tourism database (also known as the Extranet) is a free marketing resource for tourism industry partners. The data feeds content on TravelWisconsin.com and the iPhone and Android apps. It is the source of the Fall Color and Snow Conditions reports. The data is considered when planning publications, weekly radio spots, PR/news stories and speaking to visitors who call 800-432-TRIP.

Extranet: <http://industry.travelwisconsin.com/marketing-opportunities/travel-wisconsin-website-and-database/travel-wisconsin-database>

PUBLICATIONS DEVELOPMENT

All Department publications (printed and online) are generated from current data in the Department's database. To be sure that businesses or destinations are included in these publications partners are asked to verify their information is complete and accurate in the database. Partners can add to or update that database at any time by contacting their chamber of commerce or convention and visitor's bureau, or by contacting the Department via tourinfo@travelwisconsin.com.

RESEARCH

The Department coordinates a variety of marketing and economic impact research programs. This body of work includes primary research and the interpretation/ application of pertinent secondary data.

CO-OP ADVERTISING

The Co-op Advertising Program is based on industry input coupled with the latest trends in advertising. The Department regularly reviews and adds print and online advertising offerings to the mix. In addition, industry partners can promote their latest events, packages and deals through the co-op email program.

Co-op Advertising: <http://industry.travelwisconsin.com/marketing-opportunities/co-op-advertising>

TRAVEL GREEN WISCONSIN

Travel Green Wisconsin certifies tourism businesses that have made a commitment to reducing their environmental impact. Travel Green Wisconsin can provide a point of differentiation that aligns with the state's overall tourism promise of stewardship.

Travel Green Wisconsin: <http://industry.travelwisconsin.com/travel-green-wisconsin>



ATTACHED BOARDS

The Department has administrative responsibilities for the Lower Wisconsin State Riverway Board, the Kickapoo Reserve Management Board, Wisconsin Arts Board and State Fair Park Board. The Kickapoo Reserve Management Board and Arts Board are currently budgeted under Tourism, while the Lower Wisconsin State Riverway and State Fair Park Board are attached for administrative purposes only.

RESEARCH SPOTLIGHT

The Wisconsin Department of Tourism, through Longwoods International as our research vendor, conducts a series of primary research projects that provide a complete overview of the travel and tourism market in the state. This detailed profile of the state's visitors and their impact on the economy is conducted for each calendar year and is an exceptional gathering of information. This data compiles day trip and overnight travel patterns of a representative sample including:

- The U.S. overnight travel market (pleasure and business)
- Total U.S. trip volume; national, regional and segment year-to-year trends
- Wisconsin's visitor numbers, in total and segmented by day trips vs. overnight stays
- Wisconsin's competitive position, visitor volumes of our Midwest competitors and year-to-year trends, market share, and ranking vs. other states
- Wisconsin visitor profile including demographics, travel party characteristics, estimates of travel and tourism expenditures in the state broken out by accommodations, food and beverage, recreation and sightseeing, transportation and retail purchases

Department staff, our marketing vendors and the Wisconsin Tourism Industry use this data to make research-based decisions which is the stimulus for excellent marketing.

Research Link: <http://industry.travelwisconsin.com/research>

TOURISM IS WINNING THE GAME

It's no secret there's competition among Midwest states to attract travelers. Our out-of-state visitors have a very high opinion of Wisconsin — in fact, when compared to our Midwest neighbors, Wisconsin ranks #1 in:

- **Affordability:** Wisconsin is seen as more affordable than Michigan, Illinois, Minnesota and Iowa.
- **Family Atmosphere:** Travelers view Wisconsin as the most family friendly, a good place for adults and kids to vacation.
- **Sports and Recreation:** Our State Parks, trails, fishing, natural beauty, outdoor recreation, as well as professional sports beat the competition.
- **Worry Free:** Visitors think Wisconsin is the most worry free; our guests feel welcome and safe here.
- **Uniqueness:** When it comes to showcasing different cultures, local and ethnic foods, and interesting accommodations, Wisconsin rises above other Midwest states.

INDUSTRY RELATIONS ACCOMPLISHMENTS

CUSTOMER SERVICE TRAINING

Providing good customer service is a key contributor to our success. Marketing communicates to the consumer why they should choose us over the competition; customer service demonstrates why they should keep coming back. At the Department of Tourism, we spend millions to invite visitors to Wisconsin, but if people visit here and have poor service, all of the money in the world will not bring them back. And in today's social world, an unsatisfied visitor will let everyone know about their experience within seconds.

Nearly 68% of visitors determine that they won't be a return customer because they experienced an attitude of indifference or rudeness by the owner, manager or employee. Not in Wisconsin — we are determined that isn't going to happen here. To be sure, we created a customer service training program and in the last 2 ½ years have presented it to 12,500 people across the state. This training includes a segment on service in the digital age. Now with Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube to name a few, customer service isn't only face-to-face interaction. The program also deals with accessibility and addresses providing great service to those who have special needs.

This is a free service and we will customize it to fit the needs and schedules of our stakeholders. In Wisconsin's tourism industry customer service isn't an after-thought, it is as important as the product.

Customer Service Series: <http://industry.travelwisconsin.com/industry-outreach/customer-service-series>

TRAVEL WISCONSIN NEWS

The Department distributes Travel Wisconsin News, a monthly electronic newsletter, to keep the tourism industry and others informed of its marketing efforts, program updates, upcoming events, trends and research. The current distribution list is over 7,000 subscribers, up from 2,200 in 2013.

Travel Wisconsin News: <http://industry.travelwisconsin.com/industry-news>

DESTINATION ASSESSMENTS

In terms of job growth, the Travel and Tourism industry is one of the most important industries in the nation, with an economic impact of \$2.2 trillion. Wisconsin communities are committed to developing a vision to diversify their economies to leverage this growth.

The Wisconsin Department of Tourism offers industry partners a process designed to find the best path for maximizing strengths, appeal to visitors, and the development necessary to increase the impact of visitor spending on the local economy and grow jobs.

- **Assessments completed:** Evansville, Muscoda, Rusk County, Mercer, Platteville, Viroqua, Manitowish Waters, Grantsburg, Shell Lake, Luck, Ho-Chunk Nation, Mercer, Oconto County, Wittenberg, Tomah, Viroqua, Horicon-Mayville and Belgium
- **Assessments in progress:** Osceola, Lake Mills, Beaver Dam, Burlington, Hurley, Lac du Flambeau, Shawano, Boulder Junction, Eagle River and Park Falls

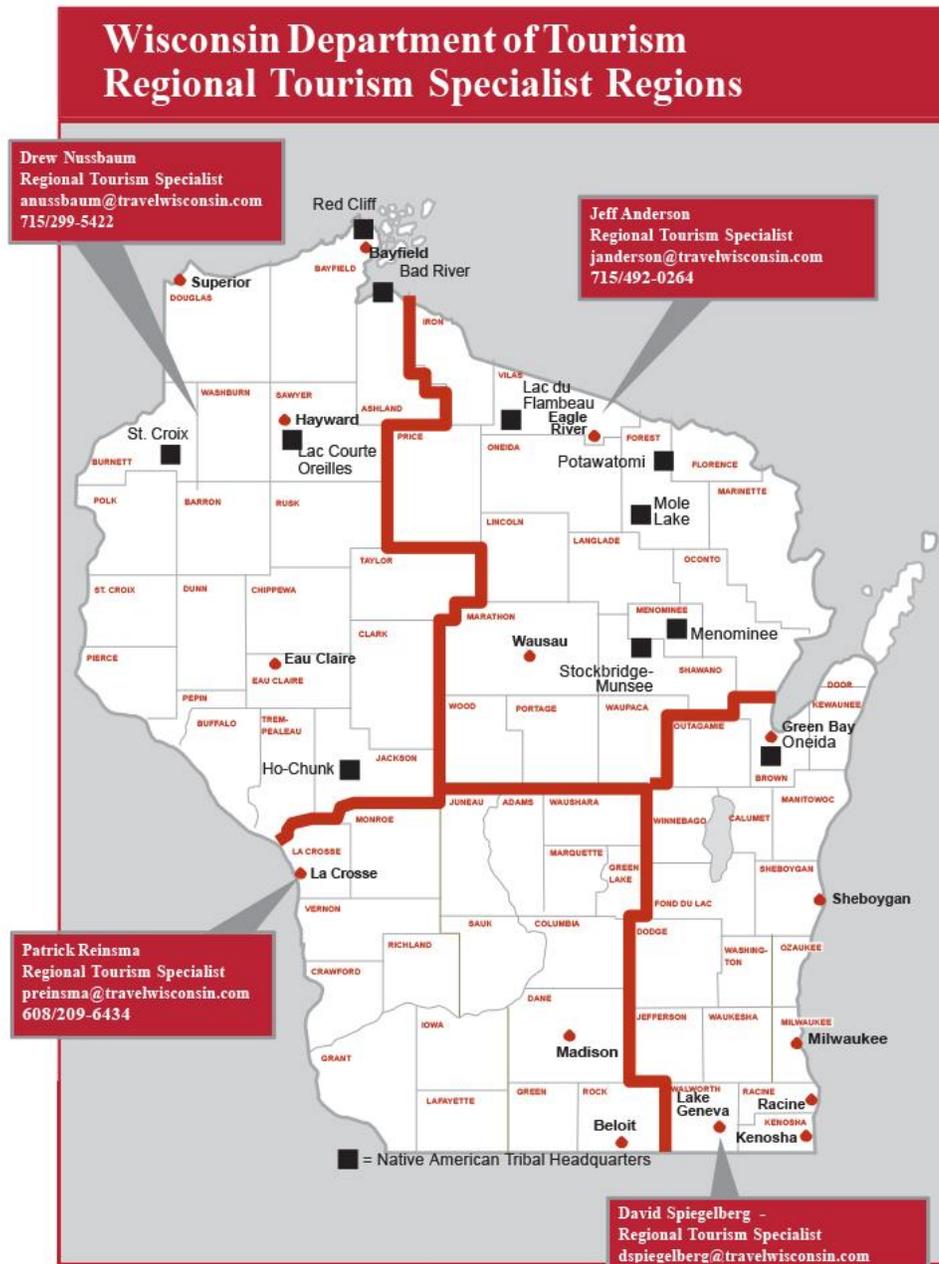
Tourism Assessment: <http://industry.travelwisconsin.com/industry-outreach/tourism-assessment->

ENGAGEMENT WITH ASSOCIATIONS

Wisconsin is fortunate to have a very active travel and hospitality industry that bands together to form associations for advocacy, education, legislative and promotional purposes. On an annual basis, these associations hold their sector meetings with Marketplaces or trade shows. Over the biennium, the Department has focused on its engagement with state-wide associations, considering them key accounts and attending/speaking at association annual meetings, presenting educational seminars and supporting advocacy and outreach.

FIELD TERRITORIES

The Department restructured the territories for the work of our four Regional Tourism Specialists (RTS). The RTS's spend their time working one-on-one with business owners, tourism organizations and local officials to help map out plans for growing local tourism economies. They manage the assessments and the customer service training while serving as a frontline information resource for all the Department's programs and services.



PARTNERSHIPS

NATIVE AMERICAN TOURISM OF WISCONSIN (NATOW)

The Wisconsin Department of Tourism and the 11 Tribes of Wisconsin have a strategic partnership to market the state's tribal assets. Together we are telling the world about unique culture and history and unmatched hospitality in Wisconsin.

SUCCESS HIGHLIGHTS

- \$200,000 financial commitment to marketing tribal assets annually
- Facilitation of strategic planning session and development of NATOW Strategic Marketing and Business Plan
- Dedicated staff person to NATOW who attends numerous events, oversees marketing plans and provides strategic consultation
- NATOW Executive Director serves on Governor's Council on Tourism
- Reciprocal conference support including financial and educational content inclusion
- Native Wisconsin cultural and physical assets are featured in media kits on TravelWisconsin.com and in numerous articles and blogs on TravelWisconsin.com

PUBLICATION DEVELOPMENT

- Produced 60,000 Native Wisconsin Travel Guides
- Department of Tourism distributes the 2015 NATOW Travel Guide to all of the state welcome centers, as well as handles fulfillment of online and over-the-phone requests for the guide

WISCONSIN ARTS BOARD (WAB)

One of the roles of the WAB is grant making, and over the biennium, WAB has provided approximately \$1,000,000 to artists and nonprofit arts and community organizations through these programs: Arts Challenge Initiative, Creative Communities (project grants), Creation and Presentation (season grants), Folk Arts Apprenticeship Program, Wisconsin Regranting Program, and the Woodland Indian Arts Initiative. Other WAB accomplishments of note include:

- Hosted technical assistance meetings in support of Milwaukee's Black Arts Think Tank, made up of the African American Children's Theatre, Hansberry-Sands Theatre Company, and the Ko-Thi Dance Company, and the Wormfarm Institute of Reedsburg.
- Produced the "Here at Home Culture Tours" with partners in the Wisconsin Teachers of Local Culture
- Formed a Creative Industries Committee to guide its work to serve and promote Wisconsin's creative industries.

Wisconsin Arts Board: <http://artsboard.wisconsin.gov/>

OTHER PARTNERSHIPS

INTERNATIONAL

International marketing and promotion focuses on four primary markets: United Kingdom, Germany, Japan and Canada. In conjunction with other area states through Great Lakes USA we reach the UK and Germany; through Mississippi River Country, a group of the 10 states bordering the Mississippi River we reach Japan; and in partnership with Brand USA to reach Eastern and Central Canada. An advisory group of Wisconsin industry partners work with Department staff to develop and execute these marketing programs.

MOTORCOACH

The Department partners with a motorcoach marketing organization, Circle Wisconsin, to support public relations and direct marketing efforts to domestic and international tour operators who may be interested in bringing visitors to Wisconsin.

SPORTS AND MEETINGS AND CONVENTIONS

Through a very important partnership with the Wisconsin Association of Convention and Visitor Bureaus (WACVB) and member destinations, the Department of Tourism works aggressively to promote the state as an ideal destination to host sports events, and meetings and conventions. Many destinations have invested heavily in creating new venues or redeveloping existing space to accommodate the growth of these market segments. The multi-faceted marketing strategy includes paid advertising, earned media, direct marketing through a presence at highly targeted trade shows and a grant program. The Department invests about \$500,000 annually in these two markets and the WACVB matches that with a combination of cash and in-kind work.

Sports in Wisconsin: <http://www.sportswisconsin.com/>

Meet in Wisconsin: <http://www.meetinwisconsin.com/>



DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM PREMIERE EVENTS

WISCONSIN GOVERNOR'S CONFERENCE ON TOURISM

Always in March, the Department of Tourism produces an annual three-day educational and networking event for Wisconsin innkeepers, restaurateurs, community tourism officials, tourism attraction operators, state agency officials, tourism educators and other representatives of the hospitality industry. One of the largest of its kind in the country, attendance over the past two years reached nearly 1,000.

WIGCOT: <http://wigcot.org/>

GOVERNOR'S NORTHERN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SUMMIT

Typically held in the late fall/early winter, the Governor's Northern Economic Development Summit is the combined work of several state agencies and meant to stimulate discussion of key issues specific to northern Wisconsin including growing the economy, jobs and workforce development, technology, transportation, clean and renewable energy, small business development and natural resources. The Department of Tourism takes the lead role in producing this event and attendance grows each year.

Northwoods Summit: <http://northwoodssummit.com>

NATIONAL TRAVEL & TOURISM WEEK (NATIONWIDE AND STATEWIDE)

National Travel and Tourism Week, always the first full week of May, is when communities across the country hold events as a way to put the spotlight on the contributions travel makes to the nation's economy and quality of life. During National Travel and Tourism Week, the Department of Tourism distributes its annual economic impact research that shows how the tourism economy makes a positive impact on the state of Wisconsin. Appearances by the Governor, Lt. Governor, Secretary, Deputy Secretary and Tourism Department staff take place around the state.

WALK WITH WALKER

Partnering with First Lady Tonette Walker, this initiative invites the people of Wisconsin to join her as she visits some of Wisconsin's most picturesque trails, parks and landscapes. Since the program started in 2011, we've worked together on over 40 walks around the state.

Destinations from July 2013-June 2015: Wyalusing State Park (Bagley), Naga-Waukeez Park (Pewaukee), Devil's Lake State Park (Baraboo), Robert W. Monk Gardens (Wausau), Timm's Hill County Park (Ogema), Cofrin Arboretum (Green Bay), Racine Civic Center (Racine), Deland Park (Sheboygan), Snake Creek Wetlands Trail (Princeton), Dorothy Carnes Park (Fort Atkinson), MacKenzie Center (Poynette), Petit National Ice Center (Milwaukee), Rotary Botanical Gardens (Janesville), Perrot State Park (Trempealeau), Horicon Marsh International Education Center (Horicon), Schlitz Audubon Nature Center (Milwaukee), Heritage Hill (Green Bay)

DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM GRANT PROGRAMS

The Wisconsin Department of Tourism offers several grant programs to help destinations market including 5 types of Joint Effort Marketing (JEM) grants, the Ready, Set, Go! (RSG) sports marketing grant, a Meetings Mean Business (MMB) meetings and convention grant and the Travel Information Center (TIC) grant.

Grant	Available Budget	Overview
<p>Joint Effort Marketing</p> <p>Awarded FY2015: 59 grants totaling \$1.162 million drove \$31 million in visitor expenditures</p> <p>Awarded FY2014: 60 grants totaling \$1.135 million drove over \$28 million in visitor expenditures</p>	\$1.13 million per fiscal year	<p>Projects must show they'll generate an increase in number of visitors and dollars brought into the local area. Categories: Destination Marketing; New Event; Sales Promotion; Existing Event; and One-Time, One-of-a-Kind.</p> <p>State statute allows reimbursement up to 75% of a project's first year promotional costs. There is grant support during subsequent years - up to 50% of the promotional costs for the second year and 25% for the third year.</p>
<p>Ready, Set, Go! (Sports)</p> <p>Awarded FY2015: 13 grants totaling \$128,121 and will bring destination over \$7.4 million in direct marketing</p> <p>Awarded FY2014: 15 grants totaling \$114,108</p>	\$110,000 per fiscal year	<p>Secure competitive sport events that require an upfront cash or financial commitment. The goal of the fund is to generate visitor spending from sports tourism in Wisconsin. Amount available per destination/per request is 50% of a Bid Fee or 50% of other allowable site/venue/municipal fees, up to a maximum \$20,000 during the fiscal year.</p>
<p>Meetings Mean Business (Meetings & Convention)</p> <p>Awarded FY2015: 8 grants totaling \$71,250 with estimated future expenditures of \$5.8 million</p> <p>Awarded FY2014: 9 grants totaling \$58,344</p>	\$Est.110,000 per fiscal year	<p>Attract national or Midwest regional meetings and conventions. Destinations may apply for 50% of the costs for convention facility rental, in-community convention transportation or host costs, up to a maximum of \$20,000 during the fiscal year.</p>
<p>TIC (Travel Information Center)</p> <p>Awarded FY2015: 21 centers received grants totaling \$165,000</p> <p>Awarded FY2014: 20 centers received grants totaling \$161,806</p>	\$160,000 per fiscal year	<p>For non-profit tourism organizations, municipalities or Native American tribes who operate a regional tourist information center, providing information on cultural, recreational and other tourism businesses. Must be in a key location for travelers, have trained staff, be able to track visitors and provide information on the region and state. Reimburse up to 50% of eligible expenses 15,000 per organization per year.</p>

**DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM
CONTACT INFORMATION:**

Mail: 201 W. Washington Avenue, Madison, WI 53703

Phone: 608/266-2161

Email: tourinfo@travelwisconsin.com

Consumer Website: www.travelwisconsin.com

Industry Website: <http://industry.travelwisconsin.com>