

**OZAUKEE COUNTY TOURISM COUNCIL
P.O. BOX 143
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The Ozaukee County Tourism Council consists of 14 talented and spirited members representing business, government, chamber and tourism interests throughout the county. The Council meets bi-monthly on the first Monday of each month. The mission of the Council is promoting Ozaukee County tourism through community partnerships.

In 2009, the Council had 104 member businesses and organizations that pay dues of \$75 to \$150, depending on the size of the organization. Additional businesses continue to be solicited for membership in 2010. The Council's part-time membership coordinator/administrative assistant is responsible for membership recruitment. An additional job duty for that position, is selling the ads for the annually produced Visitor Guide. We believe that this responsibility goes well with the membership recruitment, and allows us the possibility of some non-dues revenue through commissions. The salary for that position is partly funded by a percentage formula of bringing in new members, as well as a percentage of ad sales. Her activities allow the volunteer board to concentrate on promotion of the county, production of the Visitor Guide, and distribution of this guide in response to advertising. (As the promotional activities of the Board become more successful, these associated duties and responsibilities require more time.)

The most visible product of the Tourism Council, for residents and visitors, is the annual Visitor Guide. Due to the elimination of the state Visitor Centers, in 2010 we will be publishing 35,000 guides versus 50,000 in the few years prior. Once again, advertising revenue pays for the guides. The guides are distributed to all members, local Chamber offices, and acting Visitor Centers, as well as other key distribution points in the county and surrounding areas. Guides are also mailed in response to visitors' requests prompted by our print advertising and website presence and sent to other Chamber offices in the state. The Council is currently reviewing the viability and funding of establishing a local visitor center at a key location in Ozaukee County to continue promoting tourism in the area.

In addition to the Visitor Guides, 20,000 advertising 'teaser pieces' were produced. The teaser piece was printed with the Ozaukee County Interurban Trail map as part of the brochure. It is distributed to Chamber and tourism offices for Interurban Trail riders, as well as to lodging facilities, bike shops, and other locations. The purpose of this brochure is to prompt people to call our toll-free number or visit our website to receive a complete Visitor Guide and Calendar of Events as well as encouraging use of the Ozaukee County Interurban Trail.

The Council operates a toll-free number or tourism information out of the Port Washington Chamber/Visitor Center. In 2009, the number of requests received for information on the county, was again over 3,000. (This number includes mail, email and phone requests.) Annual telephone cost in 2009 was \$808 and postage expenses were \$2467. Telephone expenses remained stable, however, postage costs doubled from 2008 due to the closing of state Visitor Centers and a repeat mailing to members who had not renewed in 2009.

The Council runs advertising to promote tourism in the county, as well as the Interurban Trail, in major publications in Chicago, Madison, Milwaukee and the Fox Valley area. Ads are also run in specialty publications such as Key Milwaukee Magazine, Silent Sports and Wisconsin Trails that have a multi-state circulation. Advertising has been expanded to promote the Interurban Trail, both within existing ads, as well as on its own. These ads generate the calls we receive on our toll-free number. In 2009, \$20,568 was spent on advertising.

From January 2009 through December 2009, the tourism main page of the website had over 6,247 hits for the year with a monthly average of 521. The Interurban Trail main page of the website had over 12,636 hits with a monthly average of 1,053 per month. And, trail map directs hits for the year totaled 15,065. Web traffic to both the trail and tourism sites continues to increase. Website addresses for both tourism and the trail are included in all of the ads placed by the Council.

The Council operates informational booths at the Ozaukee County Fair and is represented at the Wisconsin State Fair, annually. Though we are not in a position to create and staff events ourselves, due to the volunteer nature of the board, we do take advantage of opportunities to promote the County and its amenities when presented. In 2009 we had a presence at the information booths at the annual Strawberry Fest and Wine & Harvest Fest in Cedarburg. During the past few years these popular festivals attract almost 100,000 people, many from out of state.

Tourism is a grand industry for the state of Wisconsin--\$13 billion in 2008 (the latest annual figures available). The Wisconsin Department of Tourism reported that for 2008, tourism in Ozaukee County resulted in almost \$107 million in sales revenues. Tourism spending in the county has increased each year since 1993. Tourism spending in 2008 resulted in slightly over \$5.5 million in county tax revenues. What a **great** revenue source for our county! And out of the 72 counties in the state, Ozaukee County continues to rank 35th in tourist expenditures. The Tourism Council believes that their ongoing activities have a significant impact on generating additional revenue for the county and its businesses.

In 2007, the Council produced an updated Discover Wisconsin program segment, with funding received from the County. This segment has a county-wide scope, focusing on: historic sites, recreational opportunities such as the Interurban Trail, events & festivals, the arts, shopping. The show encompasses all four seasons and we are currently reviewing various media renewal packages offered by Discover Wisconsin for 2010. The program did raise the profile of Ozaukee County as mentioned by tourists from North Dakota who visited the county due to viewing the segment on their local cable network.

Currently, we continued to work on a long-range plan for the organization. This involves an ongoing review of our committees, with the goals of utilizing the talents of all Board Members and helping to develop board leadership.

The Council has continued to hold a conservative stance for 2010 budgeted expenses. However, ongoing increases in the cost of advertising and postage, the responsibility of promoting the Interurban Trail, along with rising fulfillment expenses have resulted in the Council approving a deficit budget. Aside from the Council's part-time staff person, all of the Council's expenses continue to reflect only the cost of materials, services, etc. of its activities. Funds received, either from the County or membership dues, are allocated to these expenses. The labor continues to be donated by the volunteer board members, with much appreciated assistance of local Chambers and businesses.

The Ozaukee County Tourism Council Board looks forward to continuing its mission in 2010 to maximize and strengthen the wonderful tourism gem that we have here in Ozaukee County.

Lynn Weis
OCTC President
2009 - 2010
Brother John's Art World
Cedarburg, WI