



# State of Wisconsin

Scott Walker, Governor

Governor's Council on Tourism

Paul Upchurch, Chair

**Governor's Council Minutes  
October 7, 2014  
Department of Tourism  
201 West Washington Avenue  
1<sup>st</sup> Floor Conference Room  
Madison, WI 53703**

Council Roll Call: Council Secretary James Bolen took the Roll Call. Those present and excused were:

**PRESENT:** Deb Archer, Representative Jill Billings, James Bolen, Cindy Burzinski, Paul Cunningham, Allyson Gommer, Pete Helland, Brian Kelsey, Secretary Stephanie Klett, Joe Klimczak, Kathy Kopp, Scott Krause, Lola Roeh, George Tzougros, Council Chair Paul Upchurch, Stacey Watson

**EXCUSED:** Ellsworth Brown, Senator Dave Hansen, Representative Dean Kaufert, Senator Terry Moulton, Ernie Stevens III

**STAFF PRESENT:** Deputy Secretary Sarah Klavas, Jeff Anderson, Amy Bayer, Shane Brossard, Brian Chullino, Abbie Hill, Danielle Johnson, Lisa Marshall, Joellyn Merz, Drew Nussbaum, Patrick Reinsma, David Spiegelberg, Dawn Zanoni

**GUESTS:** Dave Blank (Real Racine), Sara Brish (Stevens Point Area Convention Visitors Bureau), Christine Rebout (Janesville Convention and Visitors Bureau), Julia Hertel (Wisconsin Association of Convention and Visitors Bureau), Representative Rob Swearingen (34<sup>th</sup> Assembly District), Kris Ullmer (WI B&B Association), Chet Gerlach and Eric Knight (Association of Wisconsin Tourism Attractions)

**I. Call Meeting to Order, Welcome and Introductions** **Council Chair Paul Upchurch**  
Council Chair Paul Upchurch called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m.

**II. Approval of May 15, 2014, Minutes** **Council Chair Paul Upchurch**  
Lola Roeh made the motion to approve the Council Minutes from May 15, 2014. Cindy Burzinski seconded the motion. Motion carried. Minutes approved.

**III. Secretary's Report** **Stephanie Klett**

**1. Joint Effort Marketing (JEM) Grant Check Presentations**

- Stephanie presented a check to Cindy Burzinski from Vilas County Tourism for Vilas County Silent Sport Trail-use Promotion. Vilas County Tourism and Publicity is promoting non-motorized trails in Vilas County with the help of a \$39,550 JEM grant.
- Stephanie presented a check to James Bolen from the Cable Area Chamber of Commerce for the International Paralympics Committee (IPC) Nordic World Championships. Cable will be hosting world-renown athletes in 2015. With the help of a \$26,875 JEM grant, the Cable Area Chamber aims to attract thousands of visitors to northern Wisconsin for the event.



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## 2. Introduce New Hires

- Jeff Anderson is the Department's new Regional Tourism Specialist serving Northeast Wisconsin.
- Brian Chullino is the Department's new Publications and Graphic Design Coordinator.

## 3. Meeting Professionals International World Education Council (MPI-WEC)

There were 20-25 representatives from Wisconsin at this year's event in Minneapolis. Stephanie provided opening remarks. Wisconsin had the largest booth with 10 destinations represented. They participated in 120 appointments for meeting planners. The Department and Committee are researching how to leverage this investment at future events.

## 4. 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Governor Tommy Thompson Fish Hatchery

Secretary Stepp and former Governor Thompson also participated in the event. Fish Hatchery staff mentioned the importance of collaboration between DNR and Tourism and are pleased to see that happening.

## 5. Bo Ryan and 2015 Summer Ad

This ad has already earned several million dollars of media coverage. The filming went well. Both Madison and Wisconsin Dells were excellent host destinations. Stephanie offered thanks to Pete Helland and the Wilderness Hotel staff for their attentiveness and professionalism.

## 6. WTMJ4 Carole Meekins Interview

This was first time Stephanie interviewed on air with this station. She was given over 4 minutes of TV time in primetime. Carole let her know that if there are any tourism stories the department wants to pitch they will help us make that happen.

## 7. 2014 Tribal Consultation

The annual Tribal Consultations are an opportunity for State Departments and Tribes to communicate directly on challenges and opportunities. The Department made a presentation that included Department's earned media efforts that benefit the Tribes, discussed the marketing partnership with NATOW (Native American Tourism of Wisconsin) and how research is the basis for a good promotional plan. As part of the follow-up to the Tribal Consultation, the Department compiled research for the Tribes with an explanation of how to use it.

## 8. 2014 Wisconsin State Fair

- This is the second year in a row over one million people attended the fair. The Department has a premier spot in the Wisconsin Products Pavilion and a new trade show booth. Twenty-two tourism organizations from around the state participated as partners.
- George Tzougros attended on behalf of the Arts Board. He and his team had suggestions for improvement including lowering tables to better serve people who use wheelchairs. He emphasized the booth as an opportunity for Council Members to participate at the Fair.



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## **9. Budget Meeting with Governor Update**

The Department met with the Governor's Office to discuss the budget. They discussed cost-effective ideas for the Department including hiring an in-house photographer/ videographer, an in house Social Media Director and a fifth Regional Tourism Specialist who would focus on special/premier state events and associations.

## **10. Cheese Days Promotions/Chicago Tribune Article**

The coverage of the event and Stephanie's role as Limburger Queen exceeded expectations. There was over \$1 million of earned media, including a full page article with color photos in the Chicago Tribune, a mention in the New York Times, a feature article in the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, and a radio interview with Peter Greenberg. Over 100,000 people attended the event.

## **11. Beef-A-Rama, Minocqua**

Stephanie attended the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the event and served as a judge. There were numerous public and local officials in attendance that Stephanie was able to greet.

## **12. Warrens Cranfest**

This was the 42<sup>nd</sup> year of the event. Stephanie attended during the preview day and staff were able to attend opening day to understand the magnitude of this international event. Vendors come from 25 states and several countries to participate in this 3-day festival.

## **13. 2014 TTRA Annual Conference, Atlanta**

Stephanie and Patrick Reinsma will be attending this research-based conference. Information from the event will be shared with the Tribes and others in the tourism industry.

## **14. Governor's Small Business Summit, Racine**

This was the largest small business summit to date. Stephanie was on a panel with other Cabinet Secretaries including DNR, DFI, OIC, and DATCP. Attendees were appreciative to learn about the Department resources available for businesses.

## **15. Chilimania 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Commendation**

Stephanie presented a Governor's Commendation for the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.

## **16. Manure Spraying Correspondence**

Community members from Rock River Trail area, Kewaunee, Saratoga and Rome have raised concerns regarding manure spraying that is used by large farms for irrigation. Research is currently being done by UWEX and a definitive solution has not been determined yet.

## **17. Awards**

The Department has won 50 Awards in the past three and a half years. The most recent awards honor the TravelWisconsin.com website.



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## IV. Committee Reports

### 1. Sports

**James Bolen & Dawn Zanoni**

- The Sports Committee is reviewing the next steps regarding their website including emphasizing the importance of destination images.
- Next year's National Association of Sports Commissions (NASC) will be in Milwaukee. Wisconsin is a platinum sponsor.
- The Committee would like to approach state universities to host sports events.
- The strategic focus will remain on tradeshow participation since 1-on-1 meetings with sports planners make the highest budget impact.

### 2. Meetings and Convention

**Deb Archer & Dawn Zanoni**

- Deb recognized the Department as supportive and successful in growing the meetings and conventions market segment. This was accomplished with the 3-year relationship with Connect Marketplace. The Committee will examine next steps with Connect. As Connect has grown, so has the costs of their sponsorships.
- The Professional Convention Management Association (PCMA) will be held in Chicago January 2015. The Committee recommends that Wisconsin has a presence at this conference and continue to analyze options. Also under consideration is IMEX America. This is a hosted tradeshow for incentive travel, meetings and events sector.
- The Committee is using Wisconsin cheese as a trademark for events.

### 3. Grants

**Paul Upchurch & Abbie Hill**

The JEM Committee awarded 60 grants with a return on investment (ROI) of \$30 million during FY 2014. In September, three Meetings Mean Business (MMB) grants and three Ready, Set, Go! (RSG) grants were awarded, each with an ROI of 2.1 million.

### 4. Marketing

**Stacey Watson & Stephanie Klett**

- Stacey reported on the successful integration of staff and vendors to advance the brand of Fun. Given the subjective nature of marketing, getting input from the industry via the Committee provides a necessary perspective.
- Working a year in advance has paid off for the Department's seasonal campaigns by allowing enough lead time to fine tune and maximize investments in assets.

### 5. Travel Green

**Joe Klimczak & Sarah Klavas**

- Since 2007, the Committee has used a vendor for Travel Green Wisconsin certifications whose core competency is in environmental programming. New this year, the certification vendor is a subcontractor of the primary marketing agency. This will achieve greater integration between program administration and marketing.
- Next week Laughlin Constable, CADMUS, and the Travel Green Committee will meet to develop a strategic plan.



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- James Bolen asked about the renewal process for travel green certifications and the necessity to remind certified businesses when they must renew. This process has been simplified and can be done online. The renewal costs have decreased per industry input. Lola Roeh requested having the Travel Green program show business owners steps to be green and save money. Program Coordinator Christina Torkelson sends an e-newsletter containing relevant information in this regard.

## V. Special Travel Green Presentation

**Sarah Klavas**

Sarah provided a Travel Green presentation and discussed feedback received while giving the presentation during an international conference. Attendees were astounded that Wisconsin had a program of this kind. Travel Green honors a variety of positive environmental practices. It is not just a sustainability program, but instead about intrinsic responsibility to protect the earth's resources.

## VI. Public Relations

**Lisa Marshall & Danielle Johnson**

### 1. Fall Update

Wisconsin received extraordinary media coverage for fall. Stephanie did over a dozen radio interviews in a 2-day span. The Chicago Tribune wrote an article on scenic drives, Midwest Living covered the cranberry harvest, and the NY Times sent a writer to "Running of the Llamas" to cover Wisconsin's unique events.

### 2. Otto Update – Industry Use, EAA/State Fair, ATV-UTV Ride, TV Appearances

Otto Pilot is a popular mascot that has participated in several media opportunities. Industry partners have also been borrowing it for events around the state.

### 3. Geiger Tours – Bayfield, Lake Geneva, Sheboygan County

The Bayfield Geiger tour hosted 19 journalists, the Lake Geneva tour will be next week and Sheboygan County will have a tour in spring 2015. There will also be a second Cranberry Press tour hosted by the Wisconsin Cranberry Growers. Their first tour received a lot of coverage.

### 4. Bo Ryan Earned Media Update

Many Council Members were able to attend the Press Conference held in conjunction with filming the ad in Madison. There was \$8 million in earned media from two days of filming.

### 5. Earned Media

Since August, the earned media for the Department has reached \$74 million, a new record.

### 6. Big Bundle Up

Danielle will be reaching out to industry partners soon regarding the upcoming Big Bundle Up.

## VII. Technology and Customer Service

**Joellyn Merz & Shane Brossard**

This fall broke records for traffic to the Tourism website with over 1 million pageviews. Increased traffic is due to a combination of marketing and PR, creative content, and successful organic traffic.



# State of Wisconsin

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## 1. **Cities and Regions Refresh on TravelWisconsin.com**

Results from a research study performed last year with focus groups in Chicago, Minneapolis, and Milwaukee indicated that consumers would like a more visual website with additional spatial information and recommendations on where to go and what to do. Shane provided examples of the new website design, which incorporates scenic videos. The site is designed to be more fun and user friendly. In the features sections, different areas can be promoted; however, destinations will have to provide photos. The new design will transfer into an app mode. Half the visitors access the site through mobile devices.

## 2. **Video Projects Update**

Four story videos were produced for next summer. Tourism is also working on short videos (5-15 seconds long) that are being inserted into stories on the website. Tourism is looking for industry partners to help collect videos. Council members shared their own positive experiences with the use of videos for their websites. Representative Billings indicated that La Crosse is member of the Outdoor Recreational Alliance, which could assist with providing videos.

## 3. **Digital Communications Progress Report**

There are 70,000 Wisconsin tourism subscribers through the GovDelivery system, which has sent over 1 million individual emails since launch. The Department is looking at next steps to maximize this tool.

## 4. **Travel Wisconsin's Digital Assets website**

This is a tool that is available to industry partners. There are thousands of images for people to download and this is offered as a free service. Department would like new images from destinations for the new Cities & Regions website pages. Council discussed tactics for getting better photos from the industry. One option is to host a photography breakout session at WIGCOT.

## 5. **Social Media**

There is currently an opportunity to win Packer tickets through Travel Wisconsin's facebook campaign. During last year's Packers Sweepstakes there were 20,000 signups, and Travel Wisconsin facebook fans increased by an additional 19,000 individuals.

## VIII. **Meetings**

**Dawn Zanoni**

### 1. **2015 WIGCOT Update**

- Shawn Achor, author of "The Happiness Advantage," will be presenting at WIGCOT.
- There will be an arts, digital media, and social engagement focus during breakout sessions.
- The Conference will be held March 15-17 in La Crosse at the Convention Center. Dawn will participate in a site visit and connect with potential sponsors at that time.
- The Opening Reception will have a Camp Wisconsin theme.



# State of Wisconsin

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- The Department has purchased a new event management system to assist with conference registrations and management.

## 2. **ESTO/DMAI/Connect Marketplace**

Dawn and other staff participated in various tradeshows and conferences over the past several months to analyze new educational programming. These include DMAI (Destination Marketing Association International), ESTO (Educational Seminar for Tourism Organizations) and Connect Marketplace.

## 3. **Walk with Walker**

The next Walk will be on October 16 in Prairie du Chien, followed by a Walk on November 12 at Parfrey's Glen outside of Baraboo. This will be the 12<sup>th</sup> Walk With Walker of the year.

## 4. **Northwoods Summit**

The Northwoods Summit will be held December 4-5 at the Waters of Minocqua.

## IX. **Industry Relations and Services**

**Sarah Klavas**

### 1. **Recruitments & Open Positions**

- The Department will be hiring a Marketing Director, who will supervise leisure marketing, market segments of Meetings & Conventions and Sports. In addition, this position will oversee publications and WIGCOT. The position will close on October 10.
- The Department will be hiring a Social Media Coordinator. This position will be posted soon.

### 2. **International Marketing**

- We are currently hosting 16 travel agents and tour operators from Germany and Japan.
- Developing the Canadian market is evolving with the partnership with Brand USA. Department will launch winter campaign in Canada, staff is participating in a sports show in Toronto and desk-side visits are planned for early summer 2015.
- The Department is refining metrics on international travelers to the state. In addition to Longwoods International tracking, Tourism is able to determine caller origins and track distributed publications.
- Joe Klimczak discussed how International Tourism is a part of the export industry. If approximately 5-10% of visitors are coming from outside the U.S., then Tourism is one of the largest export industries in Wisconsin.

## X. **Round Robin Updates**

**Council Members**

1. Joe Klimczak – There has been increased attendance and revenue this past year. This year was the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the discovery and opening of the cave. Cave owners will be coming to Cave of the Mounds for the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the National Cave Association in 2015.
2. Paul Cunningham – The Wisconsin Restaurants Association (WRA) will be meeting next week. They will be discussing tourism promotion, as well as the school season start date issue. Dogs



# State of Wisconsin

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are now allowed on patios at dining establishments; however, some insurance companies will no longer provide coverage for these restaurants. The Fond du Lac Area CVB indicated they have had a lot of earned media over the past year, and suggested a grant to assist with earned media efforts for local CVB's and chambers; however, the more earned media there is the less likely legislators would feel communities would need financial assistance.

3. Cindy Burzinski – Land-o-Lakes will be hosting the Midwest American Championship sled dog races. This will be the first time in Wisconsin. The area was asked to host by the sponsors of the competition because of the area's positive reputation for hosting other sled dog events.
4. Kathy Kopp – Platteville area appreciates the Department's promotional assistance following the tornado damage on June 16. The Department put together a media campaign to encourage visitors to travel to the area. As a small community, they wouldn't have been able to fund this campaign on their own. Kathy asked how Platteville could provide visitor numbers as opposed to county economic impact numbers, because tourism groups in Dubuque and Galena tout how many visitors come to their specific areas. The Council was reminded that counting people is subjective unless there is a tollway or gated entryway.
5. Lola Roeh – More businesses, specifically restaurants, are coming to Sheboygan County. There will be a grand opening event on November 1 for the new addition built to hold conferences and weddings at the Osthoff Resort. All Council Members are invited to attend. 2015 will be great year for community because of PGA happening in nearby Kohler.
6. Pete Helland – A group Pete is involved with is developing a Hampton Inn in West Allis across from State Fair grounds. This is a great example of how the private and public sectors can work together on a project. He is also working on developing an indoor water park in Pennsylvania, and using Wisconsin businesses to do the work, calling it the "largest water park in the world."
7. James Bolen – The Food Network's "Diners, Drive-Ins, and Dives" was filmed at the Brick House. James is assisting with VISA issues associated with the upcoming International Paralympic World Championships. This will be the largest Nordic World Championship event in several years. Five countries are sending volunteers to assist with the event, including Brazil.
8. Allyson Gommer – The area hosted GMC Motorhomes International Fall Rally. Over 140 motorhomes were at the rally. This was the first time the rally was held in Wisconsin. The Chamber and Visitor Center is moving to a new building this winter.
9. Representative Jill Billings – Jill is on a committee talking about year-round school with staggered breaks and mentioned some of the advantages to this program and how it could help the tourism industry. La Crosse just hosted a fantastic Oktoberfest. A new tourism information center is going to be constructed in La Crosse.



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## **XI. Old Business**

**Council Chair Paul Upchurch**

1. Stephanie announced the reauthorization of Brand USA. She reached out to U.S. legislators to thank them for their support. In the process she learned that U.S. legislators are unfamiliar with many projects the Department works on for the state, so Stephanie has implemented a process to keep them informed.
2. Stephanie asked for recommendations on getting the word out to state legislators regarding the work the Department does. The Secretary and staff already meets with state legislators, sends newsletters and email updates, as well as sends department information via posted mail. Is there even more we could do as a department? Representative Billings reminded the Council that there is a large turnover with legislators and recommended hosting an annual event at the capital for the legislative staff. Kathy Kopp asked about a former event called "Tourism on the Square" where DMO's could set up booths on the square with music, food, awards and giveaways. This event would need to work around the calendar of the staff, which would mean holding the event on a Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday.
3. Council discussed a strategic effort to communicate with legislators asking themselves "what is the goal and what tactics do we use and how do we achieve those goals?" This will require a planning session and work with industry to develop strategy.

## **XII. New Business**

**Council Chair Paul Upchurch**

No new business was noted.

## **XIII. Adjournment**

**Council Chair Paul Upchurch**

Joe Klimczak made the motion to adjourn the meeting. Lola Roeh seconded the motion. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 2:15 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

James Bolen, Council Secretary  
October 21, 2014

Approved by Paul Upchurch, Council Chair  
October 21, 2014