



# State of Wisconsin

Scott Walker, Governor

Governor's Council on Tourism

Paul Upchurch, Chair

**Governor's Council Minutes  
January 15, 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: Representative Jill Billings, James Bolen, Dr. Ellsworth Brown, Cindy Burzinski, Paul Cunningham, Allyson Gommer, Pete Helland, Secretary Stephanie Klett, Joe Klimczak, Kathy Kopp, Scott Krause, Senator Terry Moulton, Lola Roeh, Ernie Stevens III, George Tzougros, Council Chair Paul Upchurch, Stacey Watson

EXCUSED: Deb Archer, Brian Kelsey

STAFF PRESENT: Deputy Secretary Sarah Klavas, Jeff Anderson, Amy Bayer, Shane Brossard, Abbie Hill, Lisa Marshall, Joellyn Merz, Dawn Zaroni

GUESTS: Chet Gerlach and Eric Knight (Association of Wisconsin Tourism Attractions), Colin Price (Ho-Chunk Nation), Joe Hoey (Senator Bewley's Office), and Trisha Pugal (WH&LA)

**I. Call Meeting to Order, Welcome and Introductions** **Council Chair Paul Upchurch**

The meeting was called to order at 10:05 a.m. Senator Bewley was welcomed to the Council.

**II. Approval of October 7, 2014, Minutes** **Council Chair Paul Upchurch**

Lola Roeh made the motion to approve the Council Minutes from October 7, 2014. Cindy Burzinski seconded the motion. Motion carried. Minutes approved.

**III. Open Election** **All**

**1. Council Chair**

James Bolen nominated Paul Upchurch to remain the Council Chair. Cindy Bursinski seconded the nomination. The Council held a vote and Paul Upchurch was unanimously re-elected as Council Chair.

**2. Vice-Chair**

Cindy Burzinski nominated Brian Kelsey to remain the Council Vice-Chair. Scott Krause seconded the nomination. The Council held a vote and Brian Kelsey was unanimously re-elected as Council Vice-Chair.

**3. Council Secretary**

Cindy Burzinski nominated James Bolen to remain the Council Secretary. Joe Klimczak seconded the nomination. The Council held a vote and James Bolen was unanimously re-elected as Council Secretary.

Paul Upchurch encouraged the Council to review the year-end Council report that had been distributed.



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## IV. Secretary's Report

Stephanie Klett

### 1. Introduction of new Marketing Director

Shane Brossard provided a brief introduction of his background and plans for his position.

### 2. Secretary Appearances Highlights

Stephanie provided event highlights since the last time the Council met.

### 3. China & U.S. Tourism Summit

Brand USA and TTRA met in Chicago with key leaders in the industry from China and U.S. Chicago tourism is going after the Chinese market and Wisconsin will look into working on this initiative. Steps for our industry to take include creating signs and maps in Mandarin, as well as offering GPS in rental cars that have Mandarin settings. Stephanie will be sending PDF's from the summit presentation to industry partners.

### 4. 2015-2018 Strategic Plan

- The Secretary met with the Governor to hear his vision. He mentioned the Council and his appreciation for the work being done. The Department is going to continue doing what we're doing, because it is working. In addition we're going to work on our advertising efforts to minority groups and investigate international travel opportunities.
- Stephanie reviewed the Department of Tourism Success Scorecard that is a highlight summary from the past four years. Although Wisconsin tourism has a smaller budget than our neighboring states, our earned media is stronger.
- Secretary shared comments received from state senators about the work we're doing. Feedback is extremely positive. Some issues in their districts include lake stocking, room tax, and signage.

### 5. Travel Wisconsin Newsletter

Department is working on refreshing the Travel Wisconsin Newsletter and Industry website.

## V. Public Relations

Lisa Marshall

### 1. 2014 Earned Media

Earned media totaled \$114 million. This record-breaking number is in part because of the launch of Airplane! ads, the fall TV spot with Jordy Nelson, the Bo Ryan press conference, National Tourism Week, Snow Conditions Report, and Fall Conditions Report. There were also several articles written in large publications about Wisconsin destinations like the *New York Times*. Lisa has a document of all the media clips that mentions Travel Wisconsin.

### 2. Travel Writers Coming to Wisconsin

We hosted 70 travel writers around Wisconsin. The Department invites them, and the destinations coordinate the visits and host the writers.

### 3. Snowball Delivery

To promote the Snow Conditions Report, Dieter Sturm (from Lake Geneva) made snowballs which were delivered to morning news stations in Chicago, Milwaukee, and Minneapolis. The response was extremely positive.

### 4. Social Media

Laughlin Constable used to handle our Social Media account. However, the Department is hiring an in-house social media coordinator. This will allow the Department to save money, which can be used for ad buys.



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## VI. Technology and Customer Service

Joellyn Merz

### 1. Website Design and Development Contract

Ascedia will continue as our vendor.

### 2. Site Metrics

Travel Wisconsin has had 5.3 million sessions in 2014 (146% increase in sessions since 2011).

### 3. Redesigned Cities & Regions Section of Website

The redesigned website launched in December and received positive feedback. Joellyn encourages Council members to review their destinations on the website and provide feedback.

### 4. New Features

- International Section - International Committee has been working on this section of the website with the Department. Itineraries are being translated for a flipbook. First translations are in German and Japanese.
- Content for people with mobility restrictions – Department is going to make it easier to find outdoor recreational activities for people with mobility restrictions. Businesses could indicate if they have tools/opportunities available for individuals with mobility restrictions

### 5. Stylized Collections

Department has put together a collection of 40 free photos that partners can use on social media, as well as a video with tips on how to use the photo collection. The link to the collection was sent in the December Travel Wisconsin News. Council has been asked to review and provide feedback. There was a discussion regarding the use of mobile devices - 50% of the individuals on Travel Wisconsin access the site from mobile devices.

## VII. Marketing

Shane Brossard

### 1. Winter Campaign Elements

The Winter Campaign launched on January 10. It is the final installment of the Airplane! ad trilogy. Shane reviewed the television spot, radio ad, print ads, and the Fun Times which is a free-standing insert in the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*. Tourism's PR team writes the articles which cover the entire state.

### 2. Bo Ryan Commercial/Leverage PR/Big 10 Piece

The 2015 Summer Television spot will be aired at WIGCOT in La Crosse. It will launch in April. The Big 10 Network took footage during the filming of the ad for a documentary that will air during the NCAA Championship.

### 3. Strengthening Digital Campaign

Shane discussed Pay-Per-Click advertising. He has reviewed the paid words and removed several as well as made significant changes to plan in order to minimize waste.

### 4. Multicultural Strategy

Planning for a revised multicultural strategy is under way. Department is going to tie multicultural elements into the main campaign. CMR, tourism's multicultural firm, will assist with bringing attention to the elements of the campaigns that need to be adjusted to make ads relevant to minority populations. We would like to have CMR staff meet with the Council.

### 5. Event Guide

The 2015 Spring/Summer Event Guide was just printed.



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## VIII. Meetings

**Dawn Zanoni**

### 1. Northwoods Summit

An attendance record was set with over 200 participants. Attendees would like to continue the summit on an annual basis. In his presentation, the Governor highlighted tourism in the state.

### 2. 2015 WIGCOT Update (La Crosse, March 15-17)

There is a new website which is cleaner and more streamlined. Everyone will need to register as a new user. Governor's Tourism Award Nominees are due by the end of January. The Council Meeting will be Sunday, March 15. The Governor, Secretary, and Connie Podesta will be speaking on Monday. On Tuesday, Shawn Achor will be presenting, and there will also be the VIP Reception and Banquet. Sponsorship is at 70% of our goal for \$130K. The conference typically costs between \$200-210K. Department is hoping for 1,000 attendees. Dawn and the Secretary will be doing a site visit in late January.

## IX. Deputy Secretary Report

**Sarah Klavas**

### 1. Realigned Operations

Sarah provided an overview of her responsibilities as Deputy Secretary. She is responsible for day-to-day operations, managing internal staff, working on the budget, and facilitating and implementing the strategic plan. The Secretary will focus on industry relations, working with the Cabinet and the Governor, as well as performing media interviews and industry activities.

### 2. Legislative Liaison & Outreach

Sarah is the legislative liaison for the Department and ensures that we report legislator meetings to the Governor's Office every week. She serves as link between industry and legislators. The Department is working on creating a channel of communication with the legislators once a month to provide highlights/updates with tourism.

### 3. Internal Staff/Operational Strategy

- Strategic Plan – Our entire Department meets every other week to discuss projects.
- Publications Analysis – Department has put together a committee to review our publications and determine if we need to make any changes to the type, content, and/or quantity.
- Sarah also provides leadership to the staff.

## X. Committee Reports

### 1. Sports

**James Bolen & Dawn Zanoni**

- Website analytics from 2014 will be arriving shortly. Early estimates are that website use is up. A more thorough report will be provided at the next Council Meeting.
- Milwaukee is hosting National Association of Sports Commissions in April. The committee is working on creative ideas for food and beverage carts that Wisconsin will sponsor.
- Connect Sports partnership has continued and committee is looking at how to position WI as a sports destination for competitive sports.
- The RFP process through the website is working well. People can view the facilities on the website and put together an RFP from there.



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- There will be a Breakout Session on WIGCOT to educate partners about the sports marketing website, including a round table discussion about sports marketing.

- Meetings & Convention Committee and Sports Committee will have a joint meeting in April.

## 2. Meetings and Convention

**Deb Archer & Dawn Zanoni**

- Committee has approved the continued sponsorship with Connect Marketplace, and is looking for a unique sponsorship opportunity.
- Like the Sports website the Meetings and Convention website is doing well. The committee is looking for ways to continue to be fresh and relevant.
- Committee wants to continue working with MPI-WEC. The next show is in San Francisco.

## 3. Grants

**Paul Upchurch & Abbie Hill**

- JEM Committee met 5 times in 2014, awarded 59 grants totaling \$1.4 million, with a return on investment totaling \$34 million. There is \$500,000 left in budget for two more grant deadlines.
- Travel Information Center grants – 25 applications totaling \$175,000 in requests. Committee will meet later this month. There is only \$80,000 in budget to award. Smaller organizations have learned about the grant so more are coming in.
- There were 4 Meetings Mean Business grants awarded in December.
- We received 8 applications for Ready, Set, Go! Grants. Committee will meet later in January.
- Working on an online application for the grants.

## 4. Marketing

**Stacey Watson & Stephanie Klett/Shane Brossard**

- Committee and Department are staying on the brand of "FUN". Other Midwest states are now trying to imitate our brand.
- Department is looking to re-air the Jordy Nelson ads this fall.
- Stephanie discussed a Representative who didn't like our advertising, however, after meeting with Stephanie and learning about our strategy he is now on board and understands the success of our efforts.

## 5. Travel Green

**Joe Klimczak & Sarah Klavas**

- Committee is working on making the program more mainstream instead of an add-on. They are also planning on a reception for Travel Green members, as well as creating a strategic plan for the program. The foundation is the certification program but also needs to encompass the total look of "responsibility."

## XI. Round Robin Updates

**Council Members**

- **Paul Cunningham** – The Trinity Restaurant which hosted the May Council Meeting in Fond du Lac has closed, in large part because of poor social media feedback. The property will re-open under new ownership and name. Stacey Watson encouraged industry partners to have a strategy for negative social media.
- **James Bolen** – The IPC Nordic Skiing World Championship is starting January 23 in Cable. Council Members are invited. Planning to showcase to the world what Wisconsin is all about. Volunteers from 12 countries will be assisting. Press is coming from all over the world. NATOW and Forest County Potawatomi are major sponsors. Ernie Stevens III will carry the IPC flag and Stephanie will light the torch



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in the Opening Ceremony. This is a Travel Green Wisconsin certified event. Ernie Stevens thanked James for the opportunity to partner with the IPC.

- **Cindy Burzinski** – Vilas County had the busiest holiday season in years. A JEM grant was awarded for a multi-county triathlon. The first one is in May and they already have people registered.
- **Paul Upchurch** – The Bucks owners are looking at a new arena in downtown. Real estate developers are investigating a complex that's larger. They'll have an announcement soon.
- **Lola Roeh** – The Osthoff Resort and American Club partnered with Lakeland College to offer students the opportunity to internships at their properties. Hotel reservations for the summer are already coming in strong, partly because of the Ryder Cup.
- **Allyson Gommer** – The Blue Angels are coming to Chippewa Valley Regional County Airport. Community is working on an all-accessible canoe/kayak launch and fishing pier. Visitor Center is moving next Friday as a part of a downtown redevelopment project. A new microbrewery and distillery will be joining the riverfront area.
- **Representative Jill Billings** – Onalaska and La Crosse are considering combining the two tourism agencies. Representatives were sworn in last week and there is a desire to get the budget done early. Representative Tranel has replaced Rep Kaufert on the Assembly Tourism Committee.

## XII. Old Business

None reported.

**Council Chair Paul Upchurch**

## XIII. New Business

None reported.

**Council Chair Paul Upchurch**

## XIV. Adjournment

Kathy Kopp made the motion to adjourn. Lola Roeh seconded. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 1:45 p.m.

**Council Chair Paul Upchurch**

Respectfully Submitted:

James Bolen, Council Secretary  
February 3, 2015

Approved by Paul Upchurch, Chair  
February 3, 2015