

## Meeting Notice

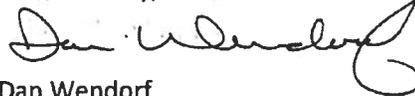
The Merrill Tourism Commission will meet on **Friday, January 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2015, at 12:00 p.m.**, at the Merrill Area Chamber of Commerce, 705 North Center Avenue, Merrill, WI 54452.

Voting members of Commission: Dan Wendorf, Chris Malm, Lauren O'Day, Jim Arndt, Russ Grefe, Steve Wendland

The following items will be included on the agenda:

1. Roll Call
2. Review/approve minutes from previous meeting
3. Review and discuss Department of Tourism report for Lincoln County
4. Discuss Local Marketing Impact
5. Discuss status of grants
6. Discuss Lincoln County Fairgrounds information
7. Discuss Snowmobile and ATV access

Submitted by,



Dan Wendorf  
Chairperson – Tourism Commission  
City of Merrill

Date and time agenda was posted: \_\_\_\_\_ Posted by: \_\_\_\_\_

The Merrill Area Chamber of Commerce is accessible to the physically disadvantaged. If special accommodations are required, please contact the Chamber at 715-536-9474.

**Tourism Commission**  
April 12, 2014  
Merrill Chamber Office

**Attending:** Dan Wendorf, Lauree O'Day, Russ Grefe, Chris Malm Mayor Bill Bialecki, Debbe Kinsey  
**Absent:** Jim Arndt

**Called to Order:** 12:05pm

**Public Comment:** No public was in attendance.

**Review of Minutes:** A motion to approve the minutes from April and June 2013 meetings was made by Malm, seconded by Grefe, voted and carried.

**Budget Review:** Overview of 2013/14 budget. Prior to review of applications the fund administrator went over the current budget. We are currently under budget and had a couple of good quarters with increased overnight stays. Part of this was due to the construction that was taking place during the summer and fall. We discussed the upcoming events in Merrill for the next cycle/year and with continued construction occurring this summer, we should see a couple of large quarters of room tax again. Based on events and construction the budget would increase for the 2014-15 funding cycle.

**Funding Application:** Fund administrator went over the applications with the committee and gave brief overview of how they spent prior year funding. Also reviewed the number of overnight stays that each applicant indicated their events drew. Our hotel member gave indication of accuracy based on previous year's overnight stays. Committee reviewed and discussed each applicant event. One application was submitted but was not completed. They were given the opportunity to complete the application and did not follow through.

**Applicants for 2014/15 Cycle:**

1. Merrill Lion's Labor Day Car Show requested amount - \$1,800; reviewed and amount granted - \$1,350. *Discussion – big event, but not a lot of overnight stays.*
2. Lincoln County Fair requested amount - \$1,500; reviewed and amount granted- \$1,500. *Discussion- big draw, mostly regional, some overnight stays due to workers.*
3. Merrill Airport Days requested amount - \$2,000; reviewed and amount granted - \$900. *Discussion-committee would like to see them advertise in a larger radius outside the Merrill area. There is a potential for larger crowds with the new runways and new terminal.*
4. Pork in the Park RibFest requested amount - \$1,500; reviewed and amount granted - \$1,500. *Discussion- very well attended event regionally with 1500 attendees. Advertised in 16 print areas, along with Harley ads/maps and television. If attendance continues to be largely regionally rather than cyclists from the Fall Ride, committee would like to see them move the event to the weekend prior to draw more room tax potential.*
5. WI River Pro Rodeo requested amount \$4,500; reviewed and amount granted \$4,500. *Discussion – this is the 2<sup>nd</sup> biggest event based on overnight stays. Do a good job advertising to draw visitors into community.*
6. Ice Drags requested amount - \$5,000; reviewed and amount granted \$1,800. *Discussion- This is a weather permitted event. Overnight stays are limited as most attendees seem to be regional.*
7. Dog Sled Race requested amount- \$1,000; reviewed and amount granted \$900. *Discussion- mushers do stay overnight as they come from all over the Midwest and Canada. This is a weather permitted event.*
8. Barleyfest requested amount - \$2,500; reviewed and amount granted \$2,500. *Discussion- works with the hotels offering Bed & Brew overnight packages. There are no other Merrill events competing that weekend (like Homecoming) this year and Wausau's event is the weekend before.*
9. Ladies Lifestyle Expo requested amount - \$1,000; reviewed and amount granted \$450. *Discussion- good local event but they do not advertise outside of the area. Grant dollars are to be used outside of Merrill. To grow they must advertise regionally. Organizers also did not include the mandated visitor's information on their advertising, per the grant guidelines. In order to be funded in the future, all guidelines must be followed.*
10. Concertina Festival requested amount - \$380; reviewed and amount granted - \$380

**2014/15 Budget:**

Committee reviewed the administrative portion of the budget. Fund administrator reviewed line items with committee and explained what bills were outstanding and will be paid when the 1<sup>st</sup> Q funds arrive in June. Based on new cycle spending some line item funding was moved around to cover all proposed current and new expenditures without increasing the 2014/15 administrative budget. Following discussion based on average annual overnight stays and the increase of stays from the ongoing summer and fall construction seasons, the committee was comfortable in granting additional funds to the grant applicant events. Committee approved an additional \$2682 in event funding for a total of \$15,780.

The administrative budget was funded as followed: Other Promotions \$3,000, Contingency \$1,500, Conferences \$3,000, Additional Advertising \$15,000, Administration & Rent \$7,000 and Marketing Support \$4,700 for a total of \$34,200. The total budget for 2014/15 cycle is \$49,980. A motion to approve the budget and funding of the grant applications was made by O'Day, and seconded by Malm, voted and carried.

No public comment.

Mayor Bill Bialecki thanked Lauree O'Day, Russ Grefe, and Jim Arndt for continuing their roles on the Commission.

Fund administrator will submit a report on the 2013/14 budget cycle following the release of the Lincoln County tourism report by the WI Dept. of Tourism.

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made at 1:30pm by Grefe, and seconded by Malm.  
Next meeting will be planned via email at a later date.

# THE POWER OF WISCONSIN TOURISM

## ECONOMIC IMPACT FACT SHEET



### THE POWER OF TRAVEL

Tourism plays a significant role in Wisconsin's economy and is a source of both employment and tax revenue.

- Tourism had a \$17.5 billion impact on the state's economy in 2013, up 4% from \$16.8 billion in 2012.
- The total three year growth of tourism activity is over \$2.7 billion, up from \$14.8 billion in 2010, an 18% growth.
- For every \$1 the Department spent on summer and fall advertising in 2013, \$6 was returned to the state in additional tax revenue.
- Wisconsin had nearly 100 million visits from travelers in 2013 up a fourth year in a row.
- International travel (Overseas and Canada) was \$700 million in 2013, up \$100 million from the previous year, and accounted for 6% of all travel last year.
- Visitors generated \$1.35 billion in state and local taxes in 2013, saving Wisconsin taxpayers nearly \$590 per household.
- 1 in nearly 13 jobs in the state is sustained by tourism activity.

Sources:  
 Longwoods International. *Tourism Advertising Evaluation and Image Study*  
 Tourism Economics. *The Economic Impact of Tourism in Wisconsin*



### LINCOLN COUNTY

Lincoln County is conveniently located off of I-39/51: only 150 miles of Madison, Wisconsin. Merrill and Tomahawk offer small town charm and an abundance of outdoor opportunities. The Wisconsin River flows throughout the county where fishing, canoeing, kayaking, boating and water skiing can be enjoyed. Be sure to keep your eye on your surroundings, as you may catch a glimpse of a deer, bear, bald eagle or even a timber wolf. Lincoln County because of its diverse land and water features, offers a wide variety of public hunting opportunities. Wildlife available during open seasons includes deer, bear, grouse, squirrel, rabbit, turkey and waterfowl. The outstanding beauty of Lincoln County can be observed via its trails and many county roads. Hiking, bicycling, horseback riding, snowmobiling, atving and motor-biking are favorite ways to enjoy the sites. The Hiawatha Trail goes north from Tomahawk and is used by snowmobilers in the winter months and hikers and bikers the rest of the year. Council Grounds State Park is located on the Wisconsin River in Merrill and offers rustic and modern sites. There are over 101,000 acres of public lands in Lincoln County. Come for a visit and experience the peace and quiet in "our Northwoods".

### VISITOR SPENDING

- Visitor spending in Lincoln County was \$50.72 million in 2013, a change of 4.01% from 2012.

### JOBS

- 685 jobs with a total personal income of \$13.35 million were supported by visitors to Lincoln County last year.
- Visitor spending sustained approximately 1 in nearly 13 of all jobs in the state.
- Largely comprised of small businesses, travel and hospitality jobs can't be outsourced or exported.
- The tourism industry provides work across the spectrum of employment from entry level and part-time jobs to management, executive and entrepreneurial positions.

### TAX REVENUE

- Visitors to Lincoln County generated \$5.3 Million in state and local taxes during 2013.

	<u>Budget</u> <u>May 2013/14</u>	<u>Actual</u> <u>May 2013/14</u>	<u>% of</u> <u>Total</u>	<u>Budget</u> <u>May 2014/15</u>	<u>Actual</u> <u>May 2014/15</u>	1st	16-Jun	8,310.53
<b>Room Tax Collected</b>	\$47,250.00	34,687.10		\$49,980.00	8,310.53	2nd		
<b>Promote Festivals &amp; Events</b>	<b>\$13,050.00</b>	<b>\$11,639.73</b>	<b>32%</b>	<b>\$15,780.00</b>	<b>\$5,731.76</b>	3rd		
Ladies Lifestyle Expo	\$450.00	\$0.00	1%	\$450.00	\$0.00	3rd		8,310.53
Merrill Ice Drags	\$1,800.00	\$1,699.85	4%	\$1,800.00	\$0.00	4th		
Labor Day Classic Car Show	\$1,350.00	\$1,082.29	3%	\$1,350.00	\$1,192.76		x	
Lincoln Lager Barleyfest	\$2,250.00	\$2,189.26	5%	\$2,500.00	\$0.00			
Lincoln County Fair	\$675.00	\$675.00	3%	\$1,500.00	\$0.00			
Concertina Festival	\$360.00	\$310.49	1%	\$380.00	\$0.00			
Merrill Airport Days	\$900.00	\$822.84	2%	\$900.00	\$900.00		x	
Merrill Riders - Gymkhana Shows	\$270.00	\$270.00	0%	\$0.00	\$0.00		x	
Wisconsin River Pro Rodeo	\$2,700.00	\$2,700.00	9%	\$4,500.00	\$2,250.00			
Gleason Heritage Days	\$180.00	\$0.00	0%	\$0.00	\$0.00		x	
Winterfest Dog Sled Race	\$810.00	\$810.00	2%	\$900.00	\$0.00			
Pork in the Park Ribfest	\$900.00	\$900.00	3%	\$1,500.00	\$1,389.00		x	
Run United	\$225.00	\$0.00	0%	\$0.00	\$0.00		x	
Gazebo Nights at Normal Park	\$180.00	\$180.00	0%	\$0.00	\$0.00		x	
Other	\$0.00	\$0.00	0%		\$0.00		x	
<b>Other Promotions</b>	<b>\$2,000.00</b>	<b>\$408.25</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>\$3,000.00</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>			
Other Promotions	\$1,000.00	\$0.00	2%	\$1,000.00	\$0.00			
Tradeshows	\$500.00	\$250.00	1%	\$500.00	\$0.00			
Visitor's Literature Display	\$500.00	\$158.25	3%	\$1,500.00	\$0.00			
Discover Wisconsin	\$0.00	\$0.00	0%	\$0.00	\$0.00			
<b>Contingency</b>	<b>\$1,000.00</b>	<b>\$109.33</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>\$1,500.00</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>			

<b>Conferences</b>	<b>\$2,200.00</b>	<b>\$116.05</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>\$3,000.00</b>	<b>\$1,681.02</b>
<b>Additional Advertising</b>	<b>\$19,000.00</b>	<b>\$10,108.59</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>\$15,000.00</b>	<b>\$10,797.50</b>
<b>Administration &amp; Rent</b>	<b>\$7,000.00</b>	<b>\$7,000.00</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>\$7,000.00</b>	<b>\$3,500.00</b>
<b>Marketing Support</b>	<b>\$3,000.00</b>	<b>\$1,809.92</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>\$4,700.00</b>	<b>\$2,290.08</b>
Telephone (800#)	\$1,500.00	\$921.67	3%	\$1,500.00	\$477.05
Postage	\$1,500.00	\$388.25	3%	\$1,500.00	\$489.03
Website/Computers	\$0.00	\$500.00	3%	\$1,700.00	\$1,324.00
<b>GRAND TOTALS</b>	<b>\$47,250.00</b>	<b>\$31,075.82</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>\$49,980.00</b>	<b>\$22,319.34</b>