

# 2020 ANNUAL REPORT



**Wisconsin  
Dello®**

Visitor & Convention Bureau

June 2021

## Hello Bureau Partners,

We are resilient.

In the middle of 2020, nobody really knew how we would come out of this year. How would the year shape us, shape our community? The hospitality & tourism industry was one of the first and hardest hit, and we felt it. We were tested in 2020 and had to make business decisions we never thought possible, and at the same time it also showed our strength as a community, our passion for what we do, and our resiliency to bounce back from adversity.

Before the pandemic really took hold, we were set up for a banner year. Based on economic impact numbers, we saw a 13% increase in direct visitor spending during the winter months (Dec-Feb). That's the largest increase we've seen that time of year for as long as we've been reporting.

Although we'll still feel the effects of 2020 for months – and possibly years – to come, the future looks bright, and research shows that our loyal visitors can't wait to travel. We will be ready to welcome them!

Sincerely,

Jill C. Diehl  
Board Chair



Romy A. Snyder  
President/CEO



## Mission Statement

The WDVCB is the official destination marketing organization for the Wisconsin Dells area whose mission is to grow the economic impact of tourism through marketing, public relations and development efforts that benefit our visitors and members.

## Vision Statement

Our vision is to secure the Wisconsin Dells area as a national year-round tourism destination by providing visitors with a unique and diverse recreational experience unsurpassed in quality, which offers the WDVCB membership and staff a framework for growth and economic opportunity.

WDVCB members understand the commitment and dedication it takes to build a successful destination. In Wisconsin Dells, membership means more than signing a contract and paying membership dues. WDVCB members write bylaws, set policy and give direction to Bureau staff. More importantly, they volunteer their time, talent and resources to contribute to the success of Bureau events and programs. As leaders in the tourism industry, they are also active in statewide tourism issues and policies.

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## Number of WDVCB Members By Division

	2019	2020
Accommodation	89	87
Associate	100	94
Attraction	89	90
Campground	20	19
Restaurant/Bar	106	108
Retail	71	72
Visitor Services	38	29
<b>Total</b>	<b>513</b>	<b>499</b>



# 2020 ECONOMIC IMPACT

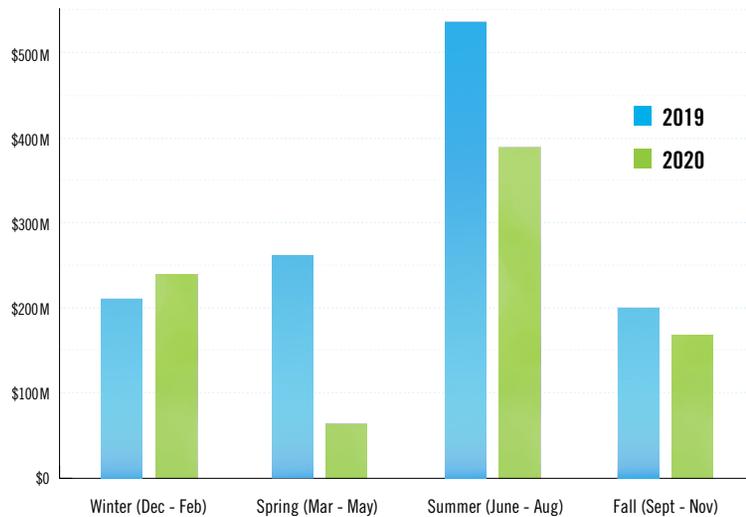
## Est. Visitor Spending

	2019	2020	% Change
<b>Direct Impact*</b>	\$1,208,731,551	\$ 856,618,591	-29.1%
<b>Total Impact**</b>	\$1,664,888,324	\$1,407,090,803	-15.5%

\* Travelers create direct economic value within a discreet group of sectors (e.g. recreation, lodging - details on page 5). This supports a relative proportion of jobs, wages, taxes and GDP within each sector.

\*\* Each directly affected sector also purchases goods and services as inputs (e.g. food wholesalers, utilities) into production. These impacts are called indirect impacts. Lastly, the induced impact is generated when employees whose incomes are generated either directly or indirectly by tourism, spend those incomes in the state economy.

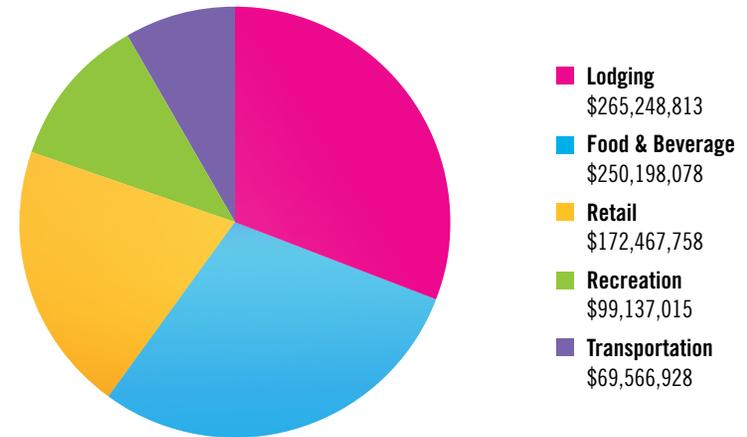
## Est. Visitor Expenditure Comparison By Season



## Total Jobs Supported (Full-time job equivalents)

	2019	2020	% Change
<b>Direct Impact</b>	12,993	9,730	-25.1%
<b>Total Impact</b>	16,391	12,620	-23.0%

## Est. Visitor Expenditures By Category



## Total Government Revenues Generated

	2019	2020	% Change
<b>State</b>	\$46.4 million	\$31.0 million	-33.2%
<b>Local</b>	\$53.5 million	\$45.2 million	-15.5%

The data above is from "The Economic Impact of Tourism in Wisconsin Dells – 2020" and was prepared by Tourism Economics, an Oxford Economics company located in Philadelphia, PA, dedicated to providing high value, robust and relevant analyses of the tourism sector that reflects the dynamics of local and global economics. The research model used for this year's data is an Input-Output (IO) IMPLAN model that profiles an economy by measuring the relationships among industries and consumers. The model calculates three levels of impact – direct, indirect and induced.

**Direct Impact:** Visitor's expenditures on attractions/recreation, lodging, food & beverage, retail and transportation.

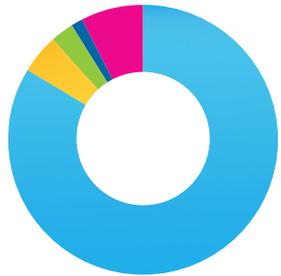
**Indirect Impact\*:** The flow of visitor's expenditures as it is traced to food wholesalers and farmers, utilities, marketing, publishing and so on.

**Induced Impact\*:** The benefits to the economy as tourism employees spend their wages in the local economy, generating additional output, jobs, taxes and wages.

\* The combination of Indirect and Induced Impact creates the Total Impact.

# 2020 BUREAU FINANCIALS

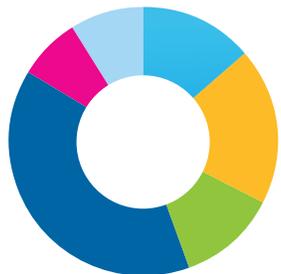
Total Income: \$10,100,792



- Room Tax  
\$8,457,158
- Program Income  
\$475,886
- Membership  
\$297,608
- Development  
\$123,117
- ⊗ Safety Patrol  
\$112
- Other Income  
\$746,911

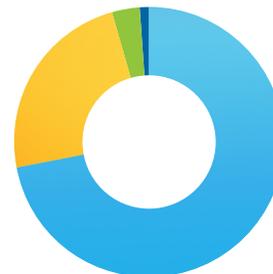


Room Tax Income: \$8,457,158



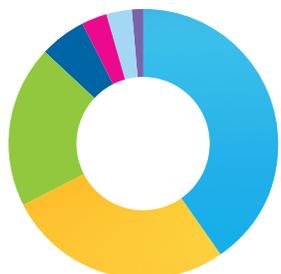
- Nov/Dec - Prior Year  
\$1,159,283
- 1st Quarter (Jan - Mar)  
\$1,599,123
- 2nd Quarter (Apr - Jun)  
\$1,009,992
- 3rd Quarter (Jul - Sep)  
\$3,325,375
- 4th Quarter (Oct Only)  
\$618,608
- Room Tax - Development Fund  
\$744,777

Total Expenses: \$8,837,571



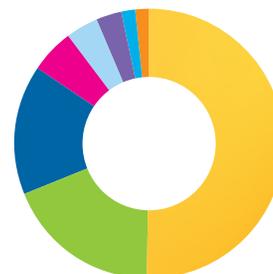
- Marketing  
\$6,363,164
- Administration  
\$2,097,677
- Development  
\$290,404
- Membership\*  
\$85,955
- ⊗ Safety Patrol  
\$371

Membership Income: \$297,608



- Attraction Division  
\$120,213
- Restaurant/Bar Division  
\$81,459
- Accommodation Division  
\$57,268
- Associate Division  
\$16,405
- Campground Division  
\$9,238
- Retail Division  
\$9,025
- Visitor Services Division  
\$4,000

Marketing Expenses: \$6,363,164



- Summer  
\$3,213,587
- Year-Round  
\$1,181,202
- Winter/Spring  
\$980,638
- Fall  
\$343,806
- Holiday  
\$239,996
- Meeting & Convention  
\$191,934
- Public Relations  
\$120,681
- Sports  
\$91,321

\* Annual meeting, seminars, member directory, etc.

## 2020 PERFORMANCE REPORT

wisdells.com	2019	2020
Total Site Visits	2,990,824	2,304,074
Unique Visits	2,243,083	1,786,144

Facebook	2019	2020
Engagements	395,139	657,682
Link Clicks	359,005	380,360
Current Total Fans	346,455	350,044

Twitter	2019	2020
Engagements	4,162	4,434

Instagram	2019	2020
Engagements	31,476	29,637

Visitor Inquiries/Contacts	2019	2020
Calls	7,899	8,249
Emails (info@wisdells.com)	896	751
Chat Sessions	962	1,208
Downtown Welcome Center Walk-ins	32,101	15,156

Vacation Guide Distribution	2019	2020
1-24 Guides/order	34,741	30,408
25+ Guides/order	32,419	20,513
Racks (In-area)	74,860	37,800
Racks (Out-of-area)	32,900	15,610
Total	174,920	104,332

## 2020 MARKETING HIGHLIGHTS

In 2020, the WDVBC quickly modified our marketing tactics due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Throughout 2020, we relied on regional, national and our own traveler surveys to shape our messaging as well as our target markets. At the onset of COVID-19 we ran limited display interactive with supportive and empathetic messaging as well as hopeful messages for the future. Various business representatives filmed heartfelt messages about coming together and supporting each other which was compiled into a short video that was shared socially. Once state and local restrictions were lifted, we were able to launch a “welcome back” campaign letting people know we were open and ready for visitation. We expanded our messaging to the known motivators for our travelers – namely the close proximity to our target markets and the motivation of traveling somewhere that is known or familiar.

### TELEVISION

- In 2020, we ran two of our newly created television spots with minimal edits to be conscious of social distancing and the travel climate.
- We continued to shift our television buys from traditional to non-skippable streaming to capture our target audiences at the right time and place such as HULU, Sling, and YouTube.

### RADIO

- Our radio messaging followed the format of our television, allowing a large variety of attractions to be represented while being conscious to the travel climate and traveler sentiment.
- Our radio campaigns were limited in 2020, due to radio listenership being greatly reduced during the COVID-19 pandemic.

### OUTDOOR

- In 2020, we used digital outdoor throughout the summer to welcome visitors to the area, ensuring our visitors knew we were open and ready and to speak directly to the travel motivators of our target audiences.
- Digital boards allowed us to showcase a variety of attractions and experiences, as well as remain flexible and timely in our messaging.

### INTERACTIVE

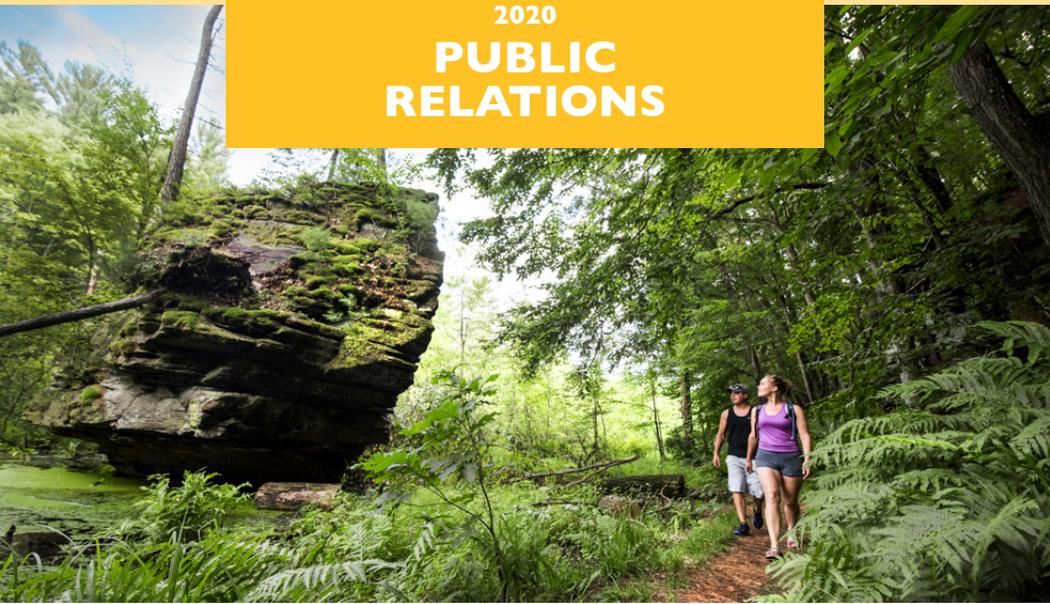
- In 2020, digital advertising was an important part of our marketing campaigns. Our interactive tactics included display ads, native advertising, high impact mobile such as mobile branded canvas video, streaming audio, streaming video, paid social and search advertising. Social advertising included Facebook and Instagram.
- In spring of 2020, we communicated an “in this together” message through our always-on display interactive until we were able to launch our “welcome back” campaign messaging.

### PROMOTIONS

- The Summer Season Opener promotion, which encourages summer travel and promotes the Wisconsin Dells area to first-time visitors, was not executed in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.



# 2020 PUBLIC RELATIONS



- Fox Sports Weekend which encompasses in-area live broadcasts, plus pre-game and in-game promotion during Brewers and Twins games, was not held in 2020 due to the modified Major League Baseball schedule.
- Our annual Waterslide-athon charity event that raises funds for the Ronald McDonald House Charities® of Madison was also not executed in 2020.

## RESEARCH

- In 2020, we followed national research studies as well as regional research studies on visitor perception and traveler sentiment.
- We also took a deeper dive into traveler sentiment and traveler motivations by connecting with the WDCB database. Findings indicated convenience, proximity and familiarity as top travel motivators for 2020.

## WEBSITE

- Wisdells.com remained our number one resource in assisting visitors and potential visitors in planning their future visit to Wisconsin Dells. Website visitation exceeded 2.3 million visits in 2020.
- We added COVID-19 local and state resources, as well as local business hours and service updates to wisdells.com to better assist visitors in their trip planning.

## INFLUENCERS

- In 2020, we worked both directly with influencers and through a state co-op influencer program. This allowed us to bring a total of 8 influencers to the area in late summer, fall and early winter.
- We had a mix of both micro and macro influencers reaching moms, families and adults traveling without children.
- The estimated media value is approximately \$360,000. Deliverables included photo, video, in-feed posts, stories, Tik-Tok and blogs. One Tik-Tok post resulted in 441,000 views and 53,000 engagements.

Our public relations team was busier than ever in 2020, and successfully pivoted from sensitive pandemic messaging that embraced socially distant activities to highlighting the great outdoor recreation and natural beauty of the Wisconsin Dells area. Keeping a pulse on traveler sentiment throughout the year, our public relations efforts continued to position Wisconsin Dells as an adult vacation destination, as well as a familiar, family-friendly destination with a focus on outdoor activities.

- The public relations team executed an editorial outreach campaign that resulted in a total publicity value of just over \$91,000 consisting of a total audience reach of 230,000 and 267 million unique online views.
- Our public relation efforts in total resulted in 150 direct media requests fulfilled, 32,932 media mentions for an earned media value of \$32 million, which is an increase of over 35% from 2019.

Here is a sampling of some top media mentions from 2020:

- ‘Pandemic Pampering’ has Become the Latest Trend in Tourism for People Seeking a Safe, Luxury Escape – **MSN Travel**
- Drivable Destinations that Will Warm Your Bones – **Minneapolis Star Tribune**
- The Top 10 Resort Hotels in the Midwest – **Travel + Leisure**
- 21 Best Places to See Fall Foliage in the United States – **Travel + Leisure**
- 15 Top Romantic Getaways in Wisconsin – **US News & World Reports**
- Golf Leads a List of Great Autumn Outdoor Experiences in the Wisconsin Dells Area – **Midwest Golf Magazine**
- 25 Budget-Friendly US Cities – **Travel Pulse**



# 2020 MEETINGS & CONVENTIONS, SPORTS AND GROUPS

2020 was an especially difficult year for the meetings & convention, group and sports segments due to the world-wide pandemic. Even though our sales team could not meet in-person throughout most of the year, they found creative and fun ways, such as creating custom postcards and wellness gift boxes, to reach out to meeting planners and continue to cultivate important relationships.

- While the many planned National Tradeshows were cancelled in 2020, the Bureau sales team attended 2 in-person national events in January, as well as 6 virtual events that included appointments with 32 meeting planners.
- The Wisconsin Dells Visitor & Convention Bureau sales team was awarded the Smart Meetings Platinum Choice Award in 2020. This recognition is awarded to hotels and destinations that *"consistently exceed expectations and help planners deliver their goals."* We were the only destination in the state to receive this honor in 2020.



# 2020 WISCONSIN DELLS FESTIVALS, INC.

**AUTOMOTION CLASSIC CAR SHOW** - The Automotion Classic Car Show, originally planned for May 15-16, was rescheduled for September 12-13, 2020 and held at the new location of Mt. Olympus Water & Theme Park parking lot. 500 show cars participated.

**FALL WINE WALK** - The third annual Fall Wine Walk in downtown Wisconsin Dells was separated into two events to encourage and allow for social distancing between patrons. The event was held on October 2 & 3, 2020.

**CRAFT BEER WALK & DELLS ON TAP** – This event was postponed until 2021.

**RARE BARREL AFFAIR** – This event was cancelled in 2020.

## 2020 Festivals Board of Directors

**Jill C. Diehl, Board Chair**  
Tommy Bartlett Exploratory  
- Interactive Science Center

**Jesse DeFosse, Board Vice Chair**  
Showboat Saloon

**Dan Gavinski, Secretary/Treasurer**  
Original Wisconsin Ducks®

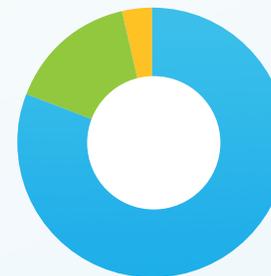
**John Chastan**  
Kalahari Resorts & Conventions

**Tom Diehl**  
Tommy Bartlett Show

**Romy Snyder**  
Wisconsin Dells Visitor & Convention Bureau

**Mark Whitfield (Nov-Jul)**  
Noah's Ark Waterpark

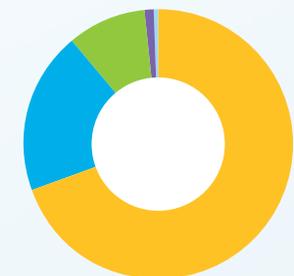
Income: \$148,055



- General \$120,015
- Fall Wine Walk \$22,840
- Automotion \$5,200

- ⊗ Dells On Tap Weekend \$0
- ⊗ Dells Rare Barrel Affair \$0

Expenses: \$131,904



- Automotion \$91,926
- General \$25,621
- Fall Wine Walk \$12,247
- Dells On Tap Weekend \$1,412
- Dells Rare Barrel Affair \$698

## 2020 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

### 2020 Board of Directors\*

#### Accommodation:

John Chastan  
Kalahari Resorts & Conventions  
300+ units

Joe Eck  
Wilderness Hotel & Golf Resort  
300+ units

John Koscielniak  
Grand Marquis Waterpark Hotel  
& Suites  
71-299 units

Dana Krueger  
Sand County Service Company  
70 units or less

Brad Preissel  
Black Hawk Motel & Suites  
71-299 units

Krissy Sigmund  
AmericInn by Wyndham  
71-299 units

Bernadette Starzyk  
Shamrock Motel  
70 units or less

#### Associate/Visitor Services:

Jon Bernander, Secretary/Treasurer  
Bank of Wisconsin Dells

#### Attraction:

Beth Anacker  
Ho-Chunk Gaming, Wisconsin Dells  
Guaranteed Seat

Jill C. Diehl, Board Chair  
Tommy Bartlett Exploratory –  
Interactive Science Center  
Director-at-Large

Tom Diehl  
Tommy Bartlett Show  
Director-at-Large

Dan Gavinski, Board Vice Chair  
Dells Boat Tours®  
Guaranteed Seat

JJ Gissal (Nov-Apr)  
Original Wisconsin Ducks®  
Guaranteed Seat

Nick Laskaris  
Mt. Olympus Water & Theme Park  
Guaranteed Seat

Travis Nelson  
Tom Foolerys Adventure Park  
Guaranteed Seat

Amy Palmer  
Knuckleheads Trampoline Park •  
Rides • Bowling  
Guaranteed Seat

Kevin Ricks  
Ripley's Believe It or Not! Museum  
Director-at-Large

Pete Tollaksen (Nov-Mar)  
Wisconsin Deer Park  
Director-at-Large

Mark Whitfield (Nov-Jul)  
Noah's Ark Waterpark  
Guaranteed Seat

#### Campground:

Becky Gussel  
Sherwood Forest Camping &  
RV Park

#### Dells River District:

Ed Wojnicz

#### Restaurant/Bar:

Adam Makowski  
Hot Rocks – Sear. Sizzle. Savor.

Mark Schmitz  
Moosejaw Pizza & Dells Brewing Co.

#### Retail:

Brian Holzem  
Original Wisconsin Dells Fudge

#### Immediate Past President:

Mike Kaminski  
Chula Vista Resort

#### Restaurant/Bar:

Merije Ajvazi  
B-LUX Grill & Bar

#### Retail:

Tara Anchor  
Winnebago Gift Shop

Chris Fearing  
St. Vincent de Paul Society  
Thrift Store

### Alternate Directors\*

#### Accommodation:

Matt Hehl (Nov-Feb)  
Flamingo Motel & Suites

Scott Kalcik  
Meadowbrook Resort

Mary Macina  
SpringHill Suites by Marriott

#### Associate/Visitor Services:

Kyler Royston  
Sports Impressions

#### Attraction:

Tracy Fuller (Nov-May)  
Wild Rock Golf Club at the  
Wilderness

Amanda McGowan (Nov-Jan)  
Dells Boat Tours®

#### Campground:

Brent Gasser  
Yogi Bear™ Camp-Resort &  
Water Playground

## 2020 COMMITTEES & STAFF

### 2020 Committees\*

#### Board Nominating:

Dan Gavinski, Chair  
Jon Bernander  
Jill C. Diehl  
Tom Diehl

#### Executive Committee:

Jill C. Diehl, Chair  
Jon Bernander  
Tom Diehl  
Dan Gavinski  
Mike Kaminski

#### Marketing Committee:

Tom Diehl, Chair  
Merije Ajvazi  
Jill C. Diehl

Joe Eck  
Adam Fisk  
Brent Gasser  
Dan Gavinski  
Brian Holzem  
Mike Kaminski  
Nick Laskaris  
Mark Schmitz  
Mark Whitfield (Nov-Jul)

#### Meeting & Convention:

Kevin Shanley, Chair  
Brian Decorah  
Ann Kerian (Nov-Jul)  
Shirley Lewandowski  
Renata Prellwitz  
Shannon Timmerman

#### Sports Committee:

Dan Gavinski, Chair  
Mickey Fadness  
Jeff Kaminski  
Adam Makowski  
Kyler Royston  
Kevin Shanley

#### Tourism Economic Development:

Jill C. Diehl, Chair  
John Chastan  
Tom Diehl  
Joe Eck  
Dan Gavinski  
Adam Makowski  
Romy Snyder  
John Webb  
Ed Wojnicz

### Current Staff

#### Executive Office:

Romy Snyder  
President/CEO

Wendy Fischer  
Executive Assistant

#### Finance & Operations:

Nichole Kocovsky  
Director of Finance & Operations

Felipe Garcia, Jr.  
Distribution Coordinator

Toby Golden  
Maintenance Associate

Nicki Robinson  
Assistant Director of Finance

Burnis Turner  
Associate Director of Operations

Lynne Weister  
Accounting Clerk

Bev Wolter  
Office Manager

#### Membership & Destination Information:

Vicky Galitz  
Director of Member &  
External Relations

Cindie Baken  
Destination Information Specialist

Jacquelyn Ikonov  
Destination Information Manager

Deb Schwartz  
Assistant Director of Membership

Penny Turner  
Membership Services Coordinator

Kaitlin Wagner  
Destination Information Specialist

Susan Winstead  
Destination Information Specialist

#### Sales & Marketing:

Sarah Hudzinski  
Director of Sales & Marketing

Heidi Aalto  
Multimedia/Graphic Specialist

Katelyn Bartz  
Marketing Manager

Natalja Deduna  
Group Sales & Services Manager

Leah Hauck-Mills  
Communications Manager

Rhonda Parchem  
Assistant Director of Marketing &  
Communications

Jessica Riefflin  
Senior Sales Manager

#### Wisconsin Dells Festivals, Inc.:

Jennifer Dobbs  
Managing Director of Festivals  
& Events

Briana Faber  
Festivals & Events Coordinator

Lucas Killick  
Event Assistant

\* Term Served – November 2019 through October 2020.

\* Term Served – November 2019 through October 2020. The Bureau's President/CEO is a non-voting member on all committees and a voting member if specifically listed.



# Wisconsin Dells®

Visitor & Convention Bureau

701 Superior Street | P.O. Box 390 | Wisconsin Dells, WI 53965  
(608) 254-8088 | [wisdells.com](http://wisdells.com)