

WISCONSIN DELLS VISITOR & CONVENTION BUREAU

2018 ANNUAL REPORT



June 2019

HELLO BUREAU PARTNERS:

Some things never get old.

A stunning orangey-pink sunset over the Wisconsin River framed by the sandstone bluffs. A scream-inducing ride down a waterslide. A dinner out with friends at a supper club. The spectacle of a pyramid of skiers. A new pair of comfy moccasins. A generous piece of homemade fudge made with real Wisconsin butter.

While we have the advantage of being able to experience all those things on a regular basis, there's a real joy in seeing visitors experience those things for the first time too. We're lucky in that regard.

Something else that never gets old and that we never take for granted is the continued growth of the tourism economy in Wisconsin Dells. In 2018, the total economic impact on the Wisconsin Dells area was \$1.64 billion.

Your hard work and dedication have paid off again. Thank you for that. Now go treat yourself to any one of the little luxuries right in our own backyard. You've earned it!

Sincerely,



Jill C. Diehl
President



Romy A. Snyder
Executive Director



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

	2017	2018
Accommodation	91	94
Attraction	87	94
Associate	106	100
Campground	21	18
Restaurant	104	100
Shopping	67	71
Visitor Services	33	34
TOTAL	509	511



2018 ECONOMIC IMPACT

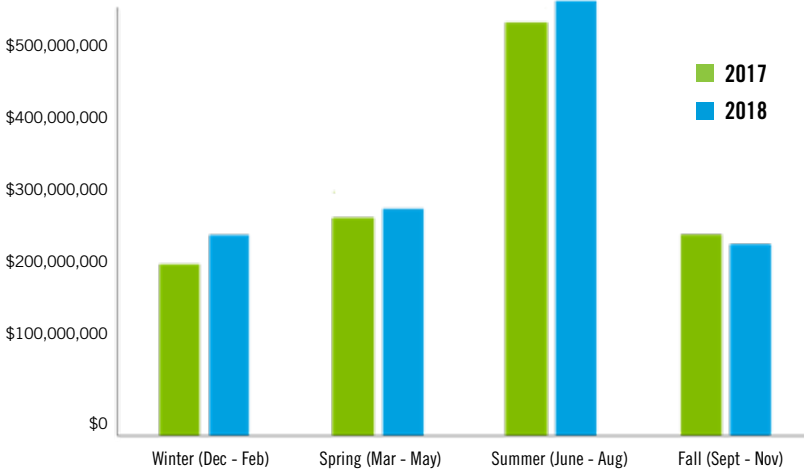
EST. VISITOR SPENDING

	2017	2018	% Change
Direct Impact*	\$1,164,081,413	\$1,202,674,037	3.3%
Total Impact**	\$1,575,238,453	\$1,637,856,989	4.0%

* 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)

	2017	2018	% Change
Direct Impact	12,568	12,788	1.8%
Total Impact	16,020	16,199	1.1%

EST. VISITOR EXPENDITURES BY CATEGORY



- **Lodging**
\$426,441,186
- **Food & Beverage**
\$315,303,705
- **Retail**
\$219,395,109
- **Recreation**
\$153,739,106
- **Transportation**
\$87,794,932

TOTAL GOVERNMENT REVENUES GENERATED

	2017	2018	% Change
State	\$44.9 million	\$46.7 million	4.0%
Local	\$54.3 million	\$56.5 million	4.1%

The data above is from “The Economic Impact of Tourism in Wisconsin Dells – 2018” 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.

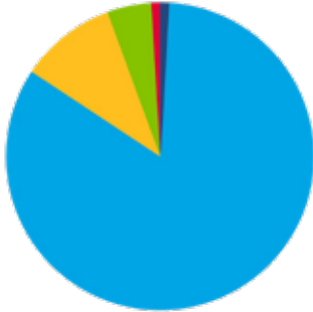
Indirect Impact*: The flow of visitor’s expenditures as it is traced to food wholesalers and farmers, utilities, marketing, publishing and so on.

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.

2018 BUREAU FINANCIALS

TOTAL INCOME: \$14,704,870



- **Room Tax**
\$12,498,290
- **Membership**
\$1,399,013
- **Program Income**
\$543,064
- **Safety Patrol**
\$61,005
- **Other Income**
\$203,498

ROOM TAX INCOME: \$12,498,290



- **Nov/Dec - Prior Year**
\$1,189,422
- **1st Quarter (Jan - Mar)**
\$2,237,313
- **2nd Quarter (Apr - Jun)**
\$2,648,019
- **3rd Quarter (Jul - Sep)**
\$4,467,806
- **Oct & Nov - Current Year**
\$850,437
- **Room Tax - Development Fund**
\$1,105,293

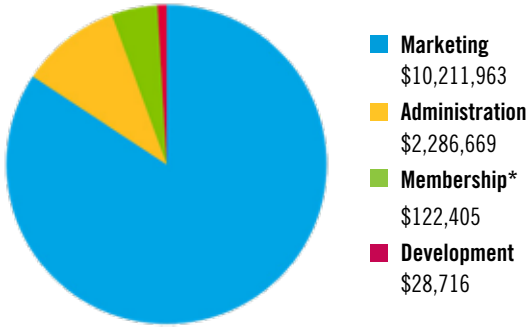
MEMBERSHIP INCOME: \$1,399,013



- **Attraction Division**
\$566,300
- **Accommodation Division**
\$380,255
- **Restaurant Division**
\$306,918
- **Associate Division**
\$63,700
- **Campground Division**
\$28,100
- **Shopping Division**
\$38,740
- **Visitor Services Division**
\$15,000

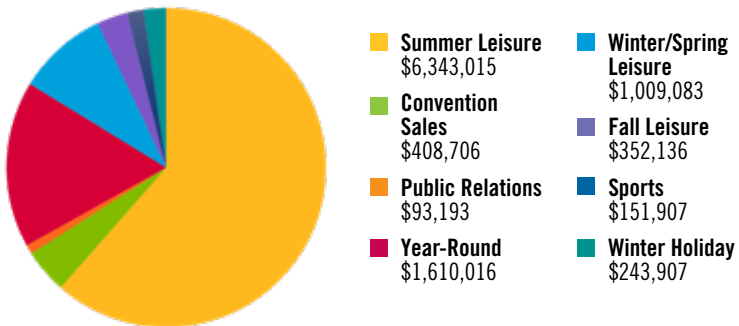


TOTAL EXPENSES: \$12,649,762



*Annual meeting, seminars, member directory, etc.

MARKETING EXPENSES: \$10,211,963



2018 PERFORMANCE REPORT

wisdells.com	2017	2018
Total Site Visits	3,090,606	3,051,901
Unique Visits	2,363,218	2,193,715

Facebook	2017	2018
Users Reached	22,450,665	31,123,608
Engagements	178,203	60,223
Link Clicks	143,302	134,705
Current Total Fans	335,876	341,420

Twitter	2017	2018
Impressions	356,830	470,968
Engagements	6,746	7,159

Instagram	2017	2018
Engagements	19,582	40,568

Visitor Inquiries/Contacts	2017	2018
Calls	9,098	8,630
Emails (info@wisdells.com)	1,816	1,362
Chat Sessions	874	798
Walk-ins Downtown	37,247	30,313
Walk-ins Lake Delton	4,932	2,826

Vacation Guide Distribution	2017	2018
1-24 Guides/order	40,891	38,372
25+ Guides/order	49,154	50,149
Racks (In-area)	80,350	87,720
Racks (Out-of-area)	37,500	21,660
Direct Mail	50,000	0
Total	257,895	197,901

2018 MARKETING HIGHLIGHTS

It's the research we do that leads the way for our Wisconsin Dells marketing initiatives that are as big as our waterparks, as thrilling as our live shows, as creative as our most unique attractions, and as captivating as the natural beauty that surrounds it all. Here are a few highlights from our 2018 marketing initiatives:

- Our research program is an important component of our marketing initiatives as the results shape our plans and creative. Results for the 2018 Conversion Study showed a conversion rate at 68% - steady from the previous 2016 study. The Ad Awareness/Effectiveness Study supported our mature/growth/emerging market strategy, and showed an overall advertising recall of 76%. It also showed the highest visitor spending to date with our 2018 advertising campaign generating \$311 million in visitor spending, for an ROI of \$81.
- In 2018, we launched a lead generation program to refresh and build our database of consumers we can tap into for research which resulted in a database of over 100,000 contacts.
- We once again took over Miller Park for the Cubs vs. Brewers game. We had our Tubie-wearing brand ambassadors engaging tailgaters throughout the parking lot distributing sunglasses and Vacation Guides as well as in-stadium creative. New in 2018 we included a coupon book for the first 25,000 fans to enter Miller Park.
- Our Summer Season Opener program reached over \$1 million in promotional value in 2018!
- We took over Union Station in June of 2018 with full saturation of the station prompting riders to plan their Wisconsin Dells summer vacation. The creative execution received an OBIE Award for excellence in out-of-home creative.
- We implemented an "always on" strategy for interactive in 2018 so our display ads run all year long. Along with our general leisure messaging we tailored messaging for each season and segment with separate messages for grown-ups, multi-gen and Hispanic audiences.
- Wisdells.com continues to perform with over 3 million visitors to the site in 2018.
- Social continues to be social: Wisconsin Dells is definitely Instagram-worthy with a 29% increase in followers and over 100% increase in engagements with @waterparkcapital in 2018. Facebook video views increased dramatically with over 3 million video views.
- In 2018, we earned 40,000 media mentions totaling an earned media value of over \$18 million. That is an increase of over \$2 million from 2017.



2018 MARKETING CAMPAIGN COLLATERAL



Vacation Guide

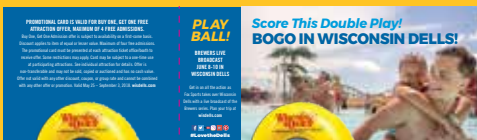


Planning Guide

Meetings, Reunions & Groups



Sports Planning Guide



Dells Brewers Day



Season Opener

2018 STANDOUT MOMENTS IN PR

The 4 million visitors to Wisconsin Dells annually are not the only ones that #LovetheDells. Media loves the Dells too as is evident in the over 40,000 mentions across traditional and non-traditional outlets. Those mentions, combined with the efforts of the WDVCB public relations team, we surpassed \$18 million in earned media coverage, up \$2 million from 2017.

Our public relations efforts are just another channel in which we execute strategic, consumer-facing initiatives. The objective is to nurture relationships with those deemed “influential” in order to increase the awareness and shape potential visitors’ perceptions of the Wisconsin Dells area. This strategy involves cultivating relationships with traditional media outlets as well as social influencers to share the experience and tell the story of why Wisconsin Dells is a top-rated vacation destination.

Here is a sampling of some top media mentions from 2018:

- Chicago Parent – Four Reasons You Should Visit WI Dells in the Off Season
- Family Vacation Critic - Top Family Summer Destinations 2018
- Leisure Group Travel - Music, Magic and Making Memories in Wisconsin Dells
- Midwest Living - 10 New Experiences in the Wisconsin Dells
- Milwaukee Journal Sentinel - Wisconsin Bucket List: 20 Things You Have to Do
- Milwaukee Magazine - Our Kind of Town: 40 Years of Vacationing in Wisconsin Dells
- Today Show - 40 Great Places to Take Your Kids Before They're Grown
- Travel Leisure - Every New Theme Park Attraction You'll Need to Experience in 2018
- Travel Channel - 10 Budget-Friendly Family Summer Vacation Ideas
- U.S. News + World Report - 30 Top Indoor Waterparks Around the World
- USA Today - 50 State Bucket List Destinations Top Waterpark in the Midwest
- Expedia - The Top Destinations for Creating Vacation Memories, According to Travelers
- Milwaukee Magazine - A Weekend Getaway in Wisconsin Dells: Your Cold Weather Itinerary



2018 MEETINGS & CONVENTIONS, SPORTS AND GROUPS

In addition to being a top tourism destination, Wisconsin Dells has quickly risen to become a top Midwest meeting destination, hosting more than 5,600 meetings and conventions each year. It is the mission of the WDVCB sales team to continue to promote our destination to event professionals, group tour operators and sporting event organizers to generate overnight stays and economic growth.

In 2018, the sales team represented our destination at 12 national tradeshow, 2 pre-promote events and 14 statewide/regional meetings or events. The team logged 37 flights, 30,514 miles, and an impressive 1,026 cups of coffee while making the rounds promoting Wisconsin Dells.

MEETINGS & CONVENTIONS

- There were 73 meeting & convention leads issued in 2018.
- The WDVCB sales team hosted 28 HelmsBriscoe Associates from Minnesota, Wisconsin and Illinois in September. HelmsBriscoe is a third-party booking organization, their associates work with global corporate, association and sports clients, sourcing locations for events. Associates experienced large meeting venues, fine dining and signature attractions in Wisconsin Dells.

SPORTS

- There were eight leads issued in the sports segment in 2018.
- Wisconsin Dells hosted the 2018 USA Jump Rope National Jump Rope Competition at the Woodside Wisconsin Dells Center in June. This event welcomed over 600 competitors from all over the United States.

LEISURE GROUP TRAVEL

- There were 36 leads issued in the leisure group segment in 2018.
- In August, the WDVCB sales team hosted a familiarization trip for motorcoach tour operators. This provided an opportunity for qualified tour operators to experience Wisconsin Dells, inspiring them to schedule future tours in our destination.



2018 WISCONSIN DELLS FESTIVALS, INC.



For over 30 years, we've been bringing travelers here to play in a different way - at festivals. Research showed these special events are the primary motivation for attendees to visit which, in many cases, translates to another overnight stay in Wisconsin Dells that might not otherwise have happened.

AUTOMOTION: MAY 19-20, 2018

FALL WINE WALK: OCTOBER 6, 2018

DELLS ON TAP WEEKEND: OCTOBER 12-13, 2018

KILBOURN CITY LIVE MUSIC & ARTS FESTIVAL: SEPTEMBER 28-29, 2018

2018 FESTIVALS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Jill C. Diehl, President

Tommy Bartlett Exploratory
- Interactive Science Center

Jesse DeFosse, Vice President

Showboat Saloon

Dan Gavinski, Secretary/ Treasurer

Original Wisconsin Ducks®

John Chastan

Kalahari Resorts & Conventions

Tom Diehl

Tommy Bartlett Show

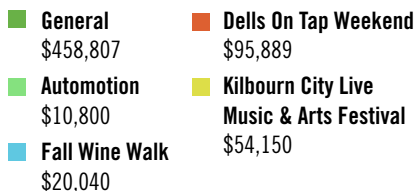
Mark Whitfield

Noah's Ark Waterpark

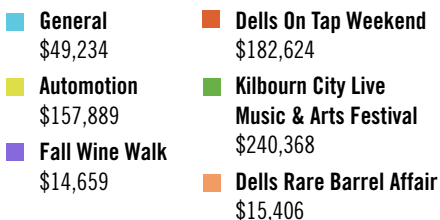
Romy Snyder

Wisconsin Dells Visitor & Convention Bureau

INCOME: \$639,686



EXPENSES: \$660,180



2018 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

2018 BOARD OF DIRECTORS*

Accommodation:

John Chastan
Kalahari Resorts & Conventions
300+ units

Joe Eck
Wilderness Hotel & Golf Resort
300+ units

Patti Fichter
Chula Vista Resort
71-299 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
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, President
Tommy Bartlett Exploratory –
Interactive Science Center
Director-at-Large

Tom Diehl
Tommy Bartlett Show
Director-at-Large

Dan Gavinski, Vice President
Dells Boat Tours®
Guaranteed Seat

JJ Gissal
Original Wisconsin Ducks®
Guaranteed Seat

Kevin Gruber
Knuckleheads Trampoline Park •
Rides • Bowling
Guaranteed Seat

Nick Laskaris
Mt. Olympus Water & Theme Park
Guaranteed Seat

Travis Nelson
Kalahari Indoor Theme Park
Guaranteed Seat

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

Pete Tollaksen
Wisconsin Deer Park
Director-at-Large

Mark Whitfield
Noah's Ark Waterpark
Guaranteed Seat

Campground:

Becky Gussel
Sherwood Forest Camping
& RV Park

Dells River District:

Brian Landers (Nov - April)
Ed Wojnicz (May-Oct)

Restaurant:

Jackie Morse
MACS - Macaroni and Cheese Shop

Mark Schmitz
Moosejaw Pizza & Dells Brewing Co.

Shopping:

Brian Holzem
Original Wisconsin Dells Fudge

Immediate Past President:

Mike Kaminski
Chula Vista Resort

ALTERNATE DIRECTORS*

Accommodation:

Scott Kalcik
Meadowbrook Resort

Mary Macina
SpringHill Suites by Marriott
Wisconsin Dells

Associate/Visitor Services:

Dave Schultz
First Weber Group

Attraction:

Amanda McGowan
Dells Boat Tours®

Campground:

Brent Gasser
Yogi Bear™ Camp-Resort &
Water Playground

Restaurant:

Adam Makowski
Crabby's - Seafood, Steaks & Hot Rocks

Shopping:

Tara Anchor
Winnebago Gift Shop

Chris Fearing
St. Vincent de Paul Society
Thrift Store

* Term Served - November 2017 to October 2018

2018 COMMITTEES & STAFF

2018 COMMITTEES*

Board Nominating:

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

Downtown Tourism Development:

Tom Diehl, Chair
Dan Gavinski, Vice Chair
Jesse DeFosse
Justin Draper
Brian Holzem
Nancy Holzem
Brian Landers (Nov-Apr)
Kevin Ricks
Romy Snyder
Chris Tollaksen
Kelli Trumble
Ed Wojnicz (May-Oct)

Executive Committee:

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

Marketing Committee:

Tom Diehl, Chair
Jill C. Diehl
Joe Eck
Adam Fisk
Brent Gasser
Dan Gavinski
Kevin Gruber
Mike Kaminski
Dana Krueger
Nick Laskaris
Mary Macina
Mark Schmitz
Mark Whitfield

Meeting & Convention:

Kevin Shanley, Chair
Brian Decorah
Ann Kerian
Shirley Lewandowski
Renata Prellwitz
Shannon Timmerman

Sports Committee:

Dan Gavinski, Chair
Jeff Kaminski
Adam Makowski
Lance Massey
Kyler Royston
Kevin Shanley

Tourism Economic Development:

Jill C. Diehl, Chair
John Chastan
Tom Diehl
Joe Eck
Dan Gavinski
Brian Landers (Nov-Apr)
Adam Makowski
Romy Snyder
John Webb
Ed Wojnicz (May-Oct)

(The Bureau's Executive Director is a non-voting member on all committees and a voting member if specifically listed.)

CURRENT STAFF

Executive Office:

Romy Snyder
Executive Director

Wendy Fischer
Executive Assistant

Alexandra Harjung, CMP
Membership Sales &
Engagement Manager

Penny Turner
Membership Services
Coordinator

Finance & Operations:

Nichole Kocovsky
Director of Finance & Operations

Cindie Baken
Visitor Services Representative

Patty Bennett
Lead Visitor Services
Representative

Dan Bratkowski
Facilities Coordinator

Felipe Garcia, Jr.
Mailroom Assistant / Visitor
Services Representative

Tim Gilles
Network Systems Manager

Brian Metke
Accountant

Amanda Rinaldi
Mailroom Manager

Nicki Robinson
Assistant Director of Finance

Burnie Turner
Associate Director of Operations

Trent Uselmann
A/R & A/P Specialist

Bev Wolter
Office Manager

Sales & Marketing:

Sarah Hudzinski
Director of Sales & Marketing

Katelyn Czupryno
Marketing Manager

Natalja Deduna
Group Sales & Services Manager

Leah Hauck
Communications Manager

Kate Jordan
Web & Design Manager

Dominique Madland
Communications Coordinator

Rhonda Parchem
Assistant Director of Marketing
& Communications

Kyra Popp
Assistant Director of Sales

Jessica Rieflin
Sales Manager

Wisconsin Dells Festivals, Inc.:

Jenifer Dobbs
Managing Director of Festivals
& Events

Katie Fermanich
Festivals & Events Assistant

Lucas Killick
Event Assistant



Wisconsin Dells

Visitor & Convention Bureau

WISCONSIN DELLS VISITOR & CONVENTION BUREAU
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