

The image features a scenic background of a stone building with a covered porch overlooking a valley with rolling hills and trees. A group of five people is walking on the stone steps of the porch. The Wisconsin Department of Tourism logo is centered at the top, with the word 'WISCONSIN' in a large, bold, blue font. The letter 'O' in 'WISCONSIN' is replaced by a white silhouette of the state of Wisconsin. Below the logo, the text '— DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM —' is written in a smaller, blue, sans-serif font. The background image is framed by a dark blue border at the top and bottom, and a vertical bar on the right side with yellow, red, and blue segments.

WISCONSIN
— DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM —

ANNUAL REPORT

FISCAL YEAR 2022

SURGING BACK



VISION: We believe in the **power of exploration and travel**

MISSION: **Inspire travelers** to experience Wisconsin

View the full strategic plan [here](#).

ABOUT US

Wisconsin Council on Tourism

The 21 members of the Wisconsin Council on Tourism advise the Secretary of the Department on matters related to tourism. For a full list of current members of the Wisconsin Council on Tourism, please visit [our website](#).

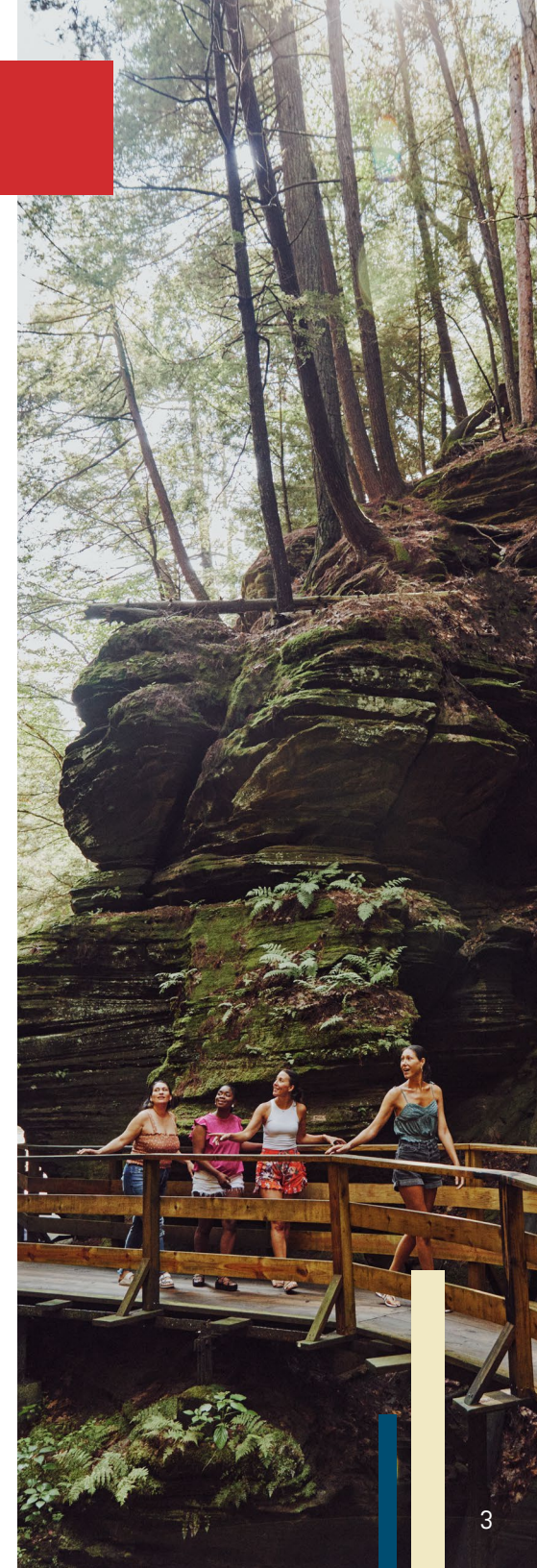
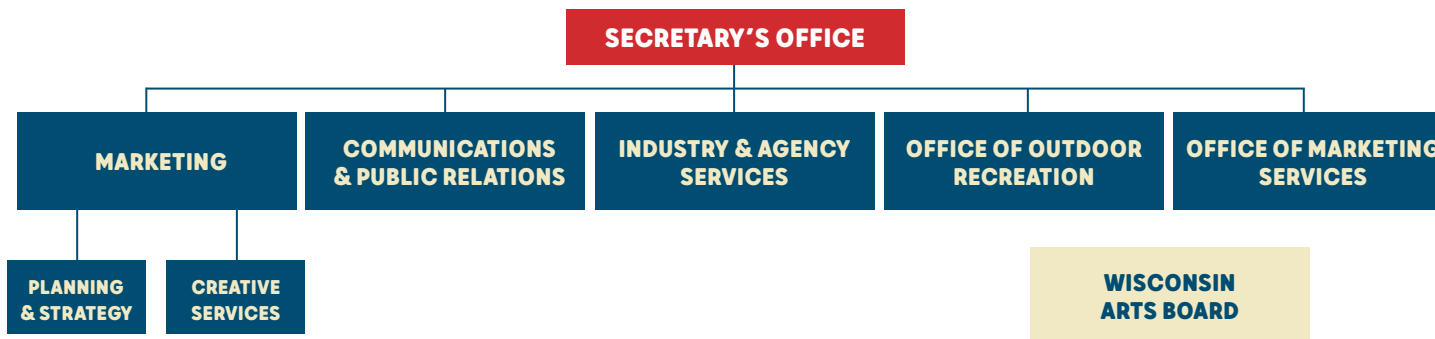
Tourism Committees

Seven committees advise the agency in supporting the Wisconsin Department of Tourism's strategic plan.

- [Marketing Committee](#)
- [Tourist Information Center Grant Committee](#)
- [Joint Effort Marketing Grant Committee](#)
- [Outdoor Recreation Committee](#)
- [Meetings & Conventions Committee](#)
- [Diversity, Equity, Accessibility & Inclusion Committee](#)
- [Sports Marketing Committee](#)

Staff

The Wisconsin Department of Tourism has position authority for 27 full-time staff, in addition to varying numbers of project positions and LTEs. The Wisconsin Arts Board employs 4 full-time staff. For a full list of current staff members, please visit our [staff directory](#).



AWARDS

Top 25 Most Extraordinary Minds in Hospitality Sales, Marketing and Revenue Optimization

Hospitality Sales and Marketing Association International (HSMAI)

Mary Monroe Brown, Director of the Wisconsin Office of Outdoor Recreation

Gold Award, PR - Special Event category

HSMAI Adrian Awards

Travel Wisconsin and TURNER for Wonder of Wisconsin Media Experience

Gold Award, PR - Feature Placement Online category

HSMAI Adrian Awards

Travel Wisconsin and TURNER for online feature in [Condé Nast Traveler](#)

Silver Award, PR - Feature Placement Print - Consumer Magazine/ Newspaper category

HSMAI Adrian Awards

Travel Wisconsin and TURNER for print feature in [The Washington Post](#)

Bronze Award, PR - Influencer Marketing category

HSMAI Adrian Awards

Travel Wisconsin and TURNER for Wonder of Wisconsin Ambassador Challenge



FROM TOURISM SECRETARY-DESIGNEE ANNE SAYERS



Despite ongoing uncertainties around the pandemic and economy, travel sentiment remained strong throughout the year. The Wisconsin Department of Tourism seized the moment using smart, data-driven campaigns powered by deep investment to reach more travelers than ever before. Historic investments were amplified with world-class public relations, the entrepreneurial advancements of the Office of Outdoor Recreation and unwavering attention to leveraging our industry's shared voice through partner relations.

Positive travel intentions met head on by our strategic marketing efforts translated to real trips and dollars in our economy. Tourism surged back during 2021 with double-digit economic impact growth in every single one of Wisconsin's 72 counties.

While we are encouraged by the tremendous growth in fiscal year 2022, we remain mindful that tourism's ongoing recovery will act as a dial, not a switch. That is to say - we are recovering, but we have not yet fully recovered. Hotels and restaurants still grapple with slim profit margins and workforce challenges, urban areas that depend on large events still strive to bounce back, and the slow recovery of the arts continues.

Nevertheless, I can safely say that our partners are more determined than ever. Wisconsin's tourism industry is tough as nails, never wavering from our commitment to innovation and hospitality. It's a winning formula that buoyed us through the choppiest of waters. With the worst of it now behind us, we are laser focused on doing what we do best: showing travelers that we have exactly what they want - opportunities to share moments of joy with friends and family in the perfect place for making lasting memories. We will deliver on that promise for our travelers, and as we do, we are pleased to deliver economic benefits to all sectors of the tourism industry that have ripple effects beyond tourism in every corner of the state. Thank you for supporting this critical driver of Wisconsin's economy.

Safe travels and happy trails,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Anne N. Sayers". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Secretary-designee Anne Sayers

ECONOMIC IMPACT

The Department of Tourism is Wisconsin's smallest cabinet agency, making up just one half of one percent of the state budget and one half of one percent of the state workforce, yet its economic impact is tremendous. In 2021, Wisconsin hosted more than 102.3 million visitor trips, resulting in \$20.9 billion total business sales and supported more than 169,000 jobs. Every Wisconsin county saw double-digit growth in economic impact over 2020, showcasing the power of tourism as a major economic driver.



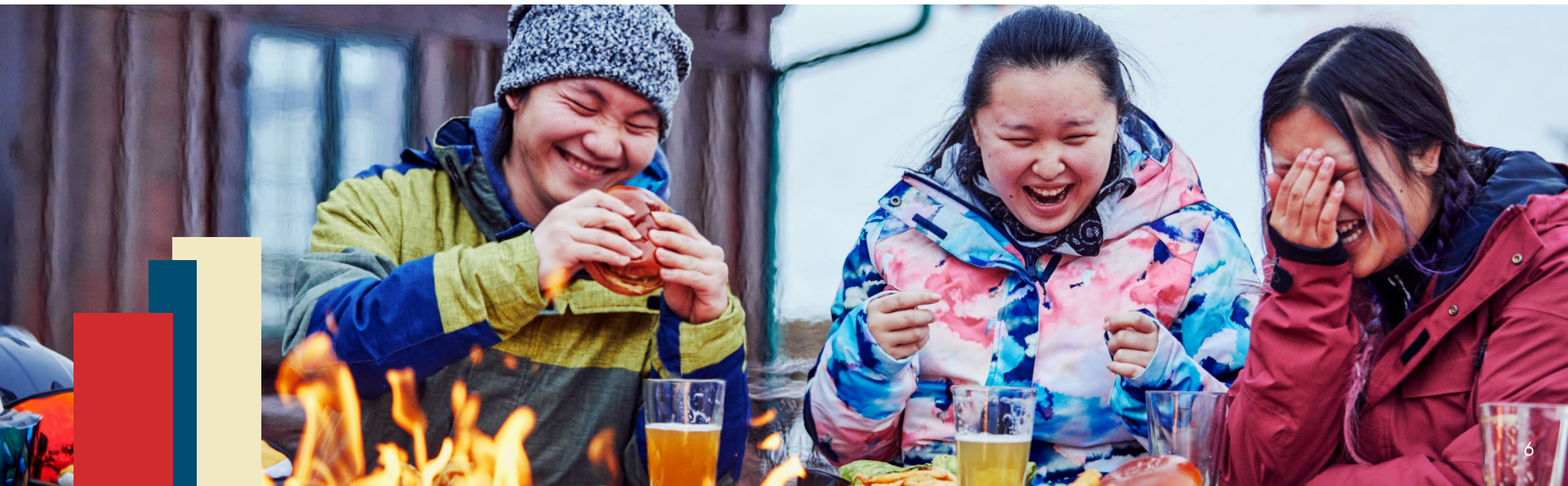
\$20.9 billion
total business sales



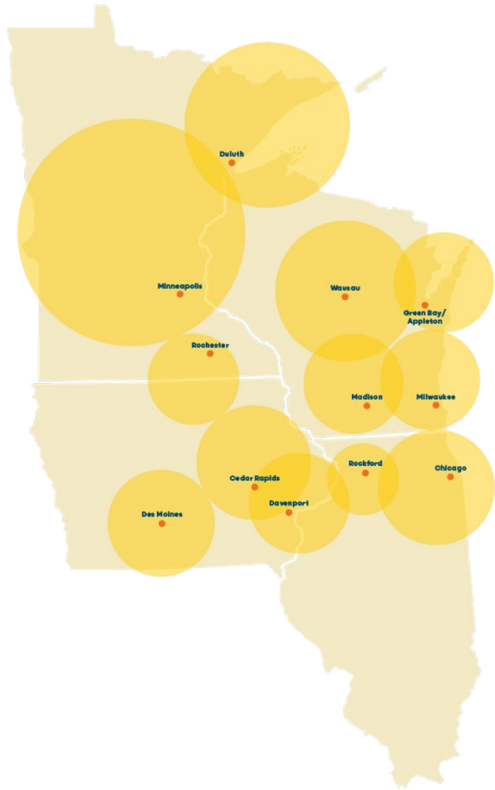
102.3 million
visitor trips



169,000
jobs



MARKETING

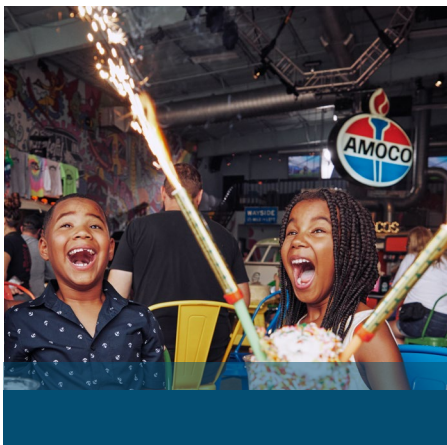


Data continues to inform every aspect of the Travel Wisconsin marketing strategy. Again, the Department of Tourism selected advertising audiences and markets based on the [Propensity to Visit Model](#). This proprietary model evaluates the highest value of visit by considering demographic and geographic attributes, prior travel behavior, psychographic measures related to travel and personal values from consumers nationwide. The model guided the advertising strategy to reach 12 markets (twice as many as Wisconsin tourism’s record-setting year of 2019), including Chicago, Minneapolis, Milwaukee, Madison, Green Bay, Cedar Rapids, Duluth, Rochester, Davenport, Des Moines, Rockford and Wausau. Additionally, a deeper investment translated to a deeper reach season after season. In fact, the advertising spend for the 2022 winter campaign was more than the last six winters combined!

The 2022 campaign took Travel Wisconsin’s data-driven approach to new heights by using groundbreaking neuroscience research to observe the attentional, emotional and cognitive responses of travelers towards the summer TV commercial. This research revealed how motivating the ad was, if audiences processed the information and whether the ad was emotionally engaging. This extra layer of insight helps ensure advertising dollars are working as hard as possible to make the most impact.

In addition to seasonal campaigns, special campaigns based on short-term initiatives captivated travelers throughout the year. The popular Fall Color Report and Wisconsin Snow Report continued to serve as valuable resources to help travelers plan their adventures. The “Crown the Curd” competition engaged fans while uplifting the restaurant industry with nominations spotlighting restaurants from every corner of the state. Fans voted for the best curds, inspiring travelers to go taste for themselves. And with more than 1,800 events on TravelWisconsin.com, a special summer events campaign showed off Wisconsin’s spirited nature while playing a key role in providing the information event-seekers need to do their planning.

Travel Wisconsin also capitalized on big moments by running its 30-second television commercial in key markets during the 2021 NBA Finals and NFL playoffs. Professional sports play an integral role in driving economic impact and using the moments when all eyes are on Wisconsin raises awareness and creates a positive perception of Wisconsin - beyond our world-class sports - in the mind of potential travelers.



MARKETING KEY METRICS

FY 2022

659.5 million

Advertising impressions

9.25 million

Web sessions

7.33 million

Social media reach
(Facebook and Instagram)



CO-OP PROGRAM

The Travel Wisconsin co-op continues to evolve annually to elevate the Wisconsin brand and engage partners big and small across the state in shared vision and goals. This collaborative approach provides strategic and affordable opportunities to help industry partners engage and attract more visitors in order to drive economic impact. Options range in cost from free to \$10,000-plus, depending on the partner's budget. The 2022 co-op included 151 partnerships with a spend of \$373,200 by partners.



Travel Wisconsin with Hayward Lakes Visitor and Convention Bureau, Sawyer County, WI USA. Sponsored · Keepin' it reel in Hayward Lakes!

Fishing at Hayward Lakes – Hayward Lakes [Learn more](#)

Fishing in the Hayward Lakes Area The Hayward ...

HAYWARDLAKES.COM

A Facebook post featuring a woman in a blue cap and white jacket holding a large fish on a boat. The boat has 'SHIMANO' written on it. The background shows a lake and trees.

[View this email in your browser >](#)



EXPERIENCE WINTER MAGIC IN THE FOX CITIES

Step by step. Snowy crunch by crunch. Getting out in winter brings people together, and the Appleton area does winter refreshingly well. While here, spark cozy hot cocoa moments, explore the outdoors and discover unexpected treasures along the way. The Fox Cities invites you — enjoy before winter melts away!

[EXPLORE WINTER IN FOX CITIES](#)



EXPLORE A WINTER WONDERLAND

First stop: the [Heckrodt Wetland Reserve](#). In winter, this place is transformed into a snowy playground. When snow conditions are good, rent snowshoes from the Nature Center — staff will even help get first-timers started. The deer in the reserve are used to people, so there's a good chance you'll see some!



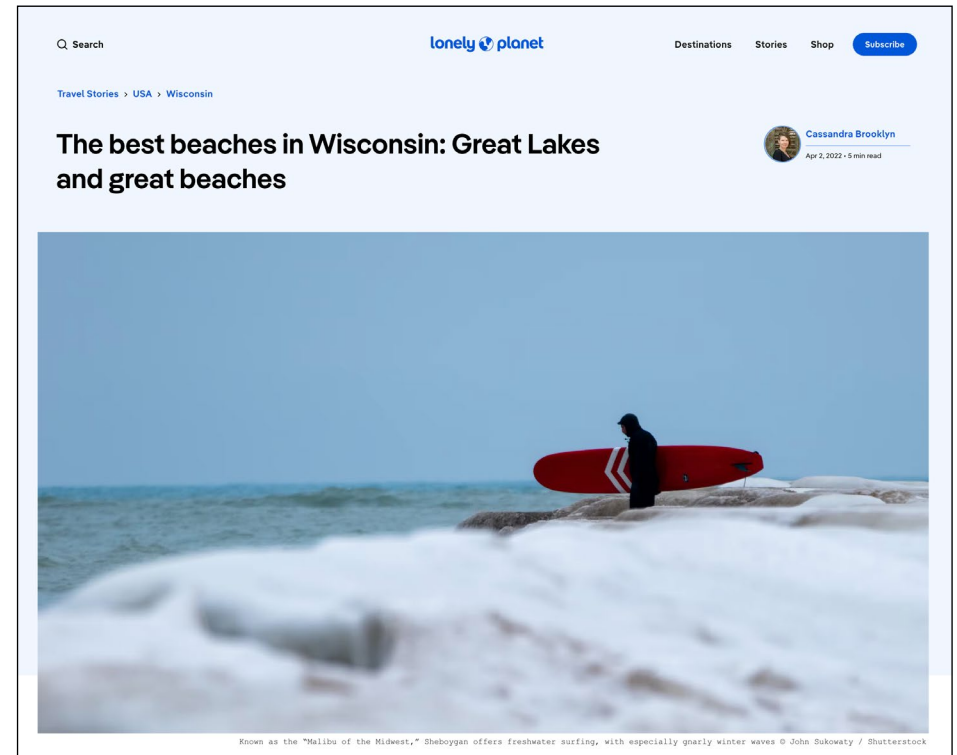
DISCOVER UNEXPECTED BEAUTY

Head indoors to explore the awe-inspiring [Bergstrom-Mahler Museum of Glass](#). Marvel at intricate art, including including the world's largest collection of luxury glass paperweights. Each is like a small window to another world. And if the timing's right, sign the family up for a glass craft-making class — they're designed for all ages, toddlers and up.

PUBLIC RELATIONS

Travel Wisconsin's public relations campaigns complement marketing by bringing the Wisconsin brand promise to life while reaching new audiences. The third-party validation made possible by public relations builds brand awareness, improves perception and extends the brand's reach, beyond what's feasible within the advertising budget. This happens through a continuous cycle of identifying key media contacts, building relationships and proactively pitching unique Wisconsin stories. This fiscal year coverage included *Forbes*, *Food & Wine*, *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *Travel + Leisure*, *Chicago Magazine*, *Condé Nast Traveler* and more. Small group familiarization trips returned, while Wisconsin continued to host individual journalist trips as well. During the fiscal year, Milwaukee hosted North America's largest network of freelance travel writers, and Travel Wisconsin worked with our partners to host many of those writers on group media trips. The team also attended both in-person and virtual deskside visits to engage with writers, keep Wisconsin top-of-mind for future stories and inspire travel writers to visit Wisconsin to uncover additional story ideas.

In addition to working with in-state, regional and national media, Travel Wisconsin continued to capitalize on the growing value of content creators as an effective way to leverage third-party credibility and tell authentic stories. A recommendation from a well-vetted content creator is like a recommendation from a trusted friend. Consistent engagement with our creator content shows people are learning something new about Wisconsin that makes them want to plan a trip here.



PUBLIC RELATIONS KEY METRICS

FY 2022 KEY PR METRICS

548
stories

4.2 billion
impressions

42
virtual or in-market
media engaged (desk
sides, hosting)



THE WALL STREET JOURNAL. *The New York Times*
Forbes **FOOD & WINE** TRAVEL+LEISURE
CHICAGO ^{Condé Nast} **Traveler**



PUBLIC RELATIONS KEY METRICS

FY 2022 KEY CONTENT CREATOR METRICS

Regional and national content creators

17

content creator visits

1.7 million

content creator impressions

7%

engagement rate
(2% industry standard)

In-state campaign

26

content creator visits

290,000

content creator impressions

29.71%

engagement rate
(2% industry standard)



INDUSTRY RELATIONS

Travel Wisconsin is pleased to serve as extended teammates to our many tourism partners through industry relations programs. These programs provide the two-way street needed for the industry to share their on-the-ground experience with Travel Wisconsin and for the Travel Wisconsin team, in turn, to provide relevant support to partners. That powerful feedback loop informed the variety of resources and tools provided to the industry, including economic impact data, travel sentiment research, customized trainings and assessments, access to state and federal grant opportunities and more. In fiscal year 2022 alone, the team of four Regional Tourism Specialists completed nearly 2,000 engagements, both virtually and in-person.

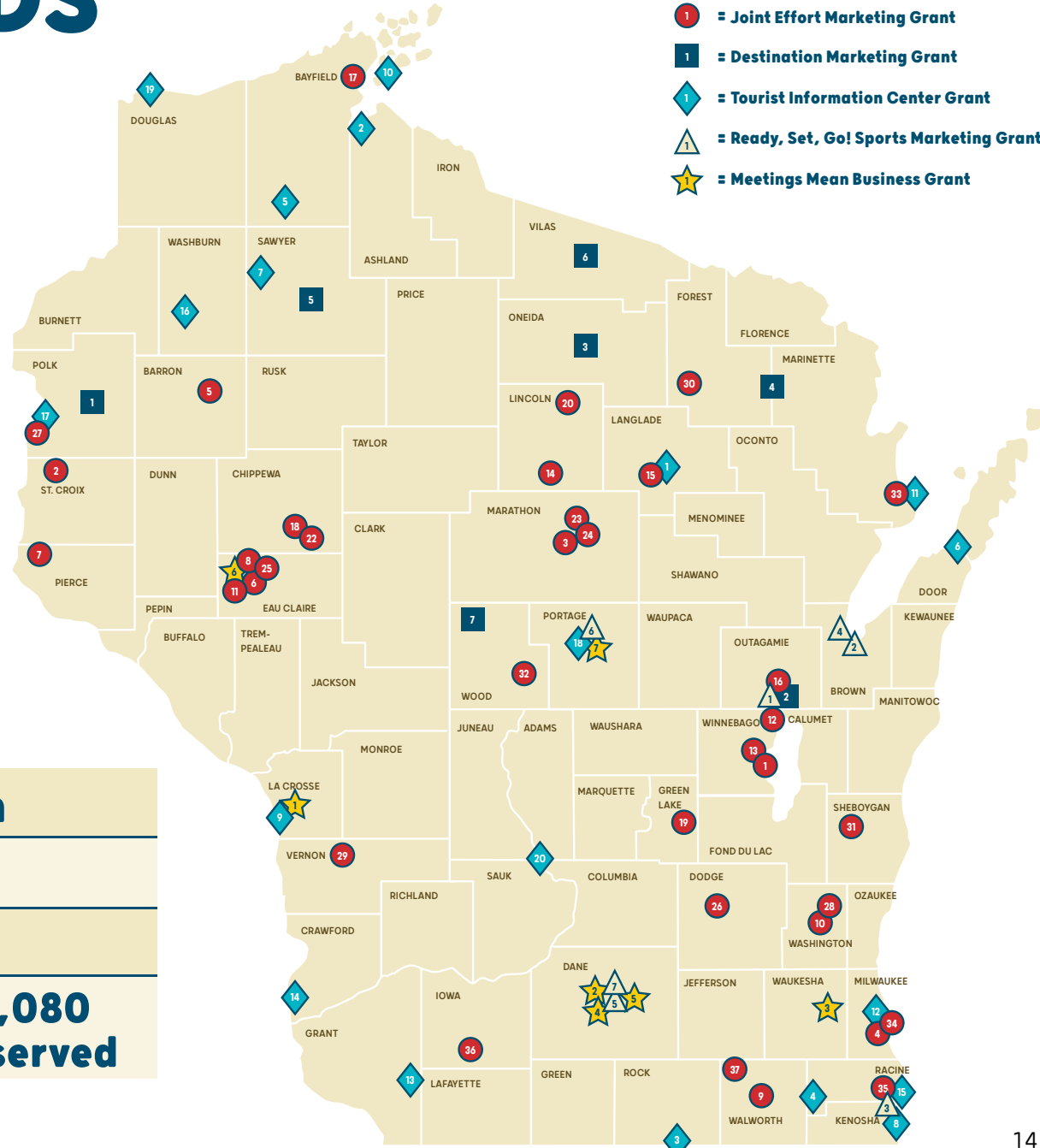


The Wisconsin Governor's Conference on Tourism (WIGCOT) is a marquee annual event that connects industry partners, provides expert-led training and shares the excitement (and strategy) of the Travel Wisconsin campaigns. This fiscal year saw the return of the in-person conference at the Monona Terrace in Madison with more than 450 attendees.

FY 2022 GRANT AWARDS

Click [here](#) to view all grant reports in detail.

- 1 = Joint Effort Marketing Grant
- 1 = Destination Marketing Grant
- 1 = Tourist Information Center Grant
- 1 = Ready, Set, Go! Sports Marketing Grant
- ★ = Meetings Mean Business Grant



	GRANTS AWARDED	ESTIMATED ROI
JEM	\$1,130,000	\$39 million
RSG	\$102,762	\$14 million
MMB	\$117,238	\$5 million
TIC	\$160,000	Around 224,080 customers served

WISCONSIN OFFICE OF OUTDOOR RECREATION

Outdoor recreation is not only one of the top reasons for visiting Wisconsin, it's also big business. As the central hub for the state's \$7.8 billion outdoor industry, the Wisconsin Office of Outdoor Recreation is drawing essential links between the places, activities and the business of outdoor recreation to advance the industry.

The instrumental work of the Office provides resources, tools and connections to support the efforts of partners - destinations, businesses, manufacturers, guides and nonprofits.

Toolkits and collaborative activations

Bringing cross-industry and agency partners together to collaborate resulted in the [#AdventureWithCare campaign poster](#), the [WiBike Community Toolkit](#) and the [Look-for-Local initiative](#) at Canoecopia.

Outdoor Business Directory

A first of its kind resource, the directory grew its listings by 17%, proving it's a valuable tool for businesses and organizations to connect.

Educational webinars and panels

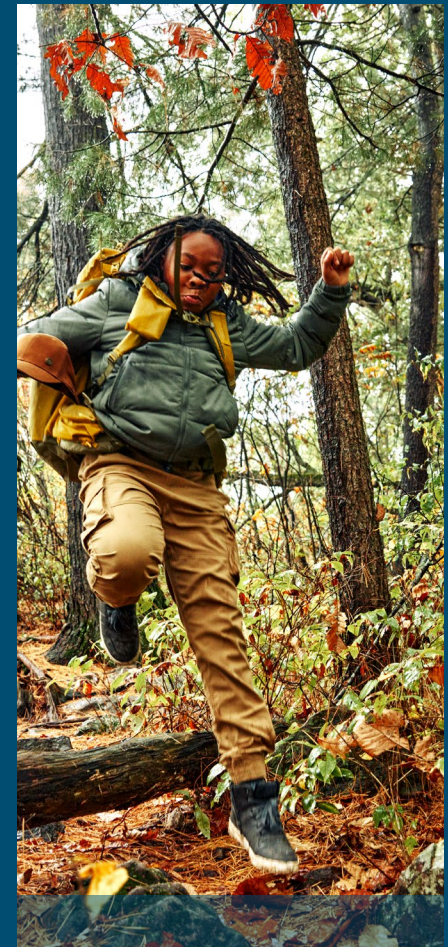
Reaching the industry through on-demand webinars, conference panels and speaking engagements, the Office brings relevant education to stakeholders.

Wisconsin Trail Report

In just its second season, the report had a 56% increase in pageviews, confirming that the tool is helping residents and visitors plan out time on the trails.

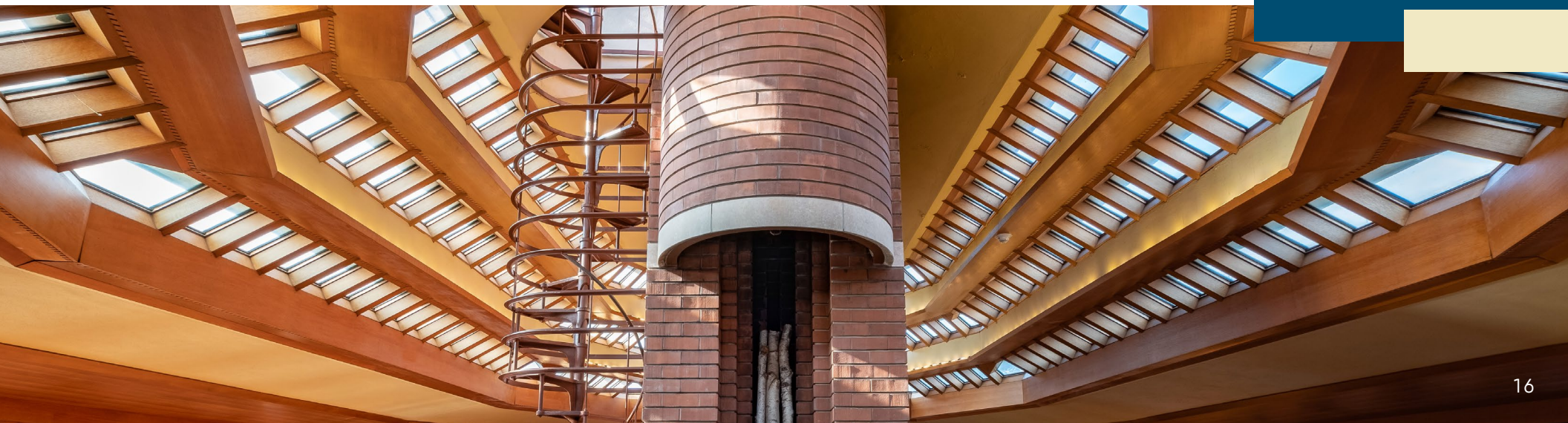
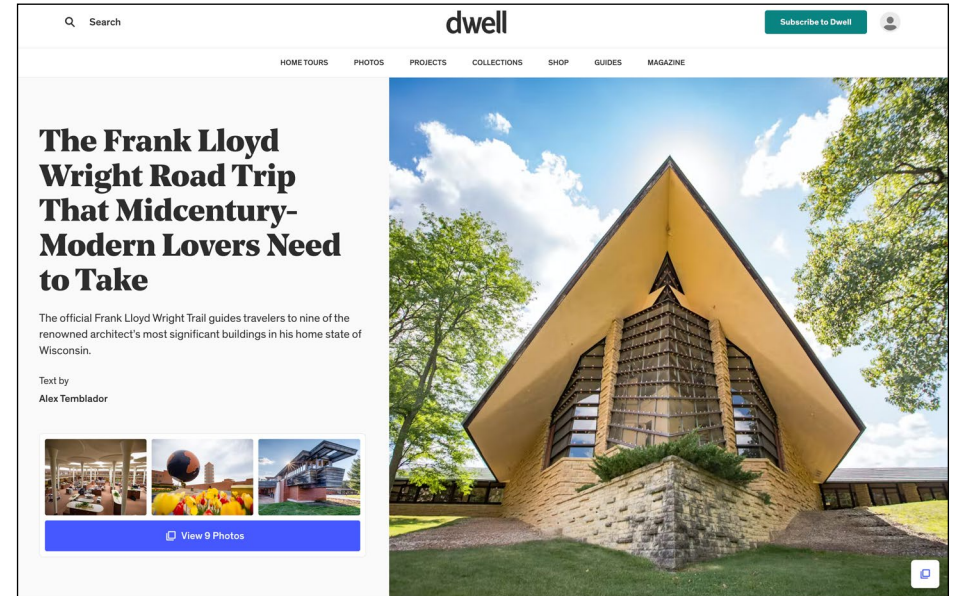
Backpacker Get Out More TV

For a second year, a Wisconsin episode was the only Midwest location and a top performer in the series, featuring tourism partners and outdoor businesses to highlight the state as a top outdoor recreation destination.



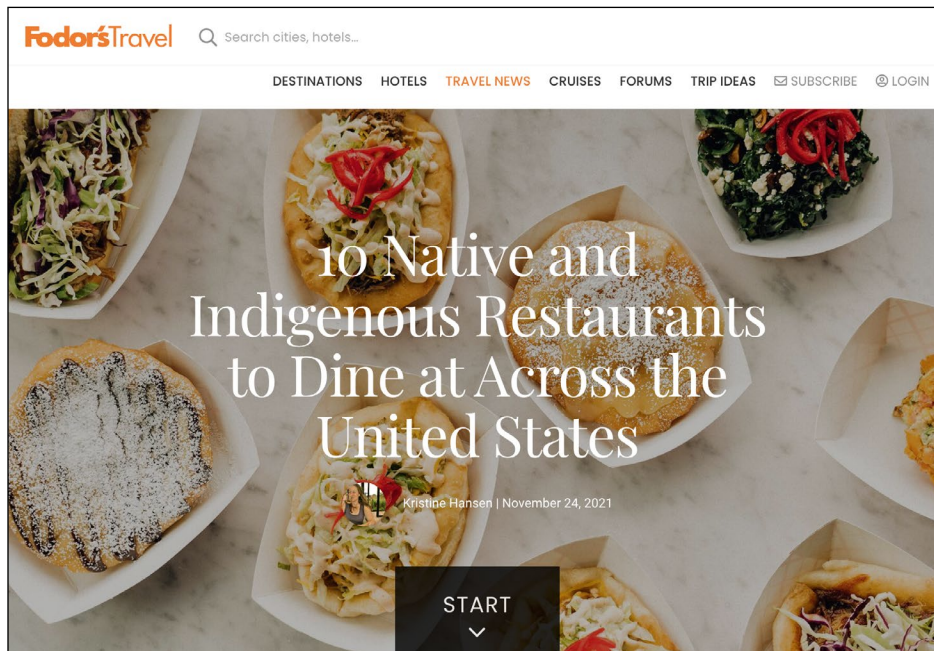
FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT TRAIL

Since its launch in 2017, the Frank Lloyd Wright Trail has garnered worldwide media coverage and drawn travelers from near and far. The Frank Lloyd Wright Trail is a valuable storytelling opportunity for Travel Wisconsin. This year, it was featured in four social media posts, our official travel guide, four TravelWisconsin.com articles and 10 earned media placements in outlets including [Dwell](#), [Thrillist](#), [TripSavvy](#), [Condé Nast Traveler](#) and more.



TRIBAL TOURISM

The Department of Tourism is proud to help travelers experience the distinct traditions and learn about the cultural heritage of Wisconsin's 11 federally recognized tribal nations. Native culture is woven into the fabric of our state and provides incredible experiences for travelers to enjoy. A few promotion examples include, eight social media posts, inclusion in our official travel guide, four TravelWisconsin.com articles and 10 earned media placements in outlets including [Fortune](#), [Fodors](#) and [Madison Magazine](#).



OFFICE OF MARKETING SERVICES



The Office of Marketing Services provides marketing consultation services to other agencies, councils, commissions and boards in Wisconsin state government. Through the office, agencies can access skilled staff and resources to help bring big ideas to life, whether the event includes hundreds of in-person attendees or the technology needed for a virtual conference.

Projects supported by the Office of Marketing Services in FY 2022 included:

2021 Society of American Travel Writers Reception

2021 & 2022 Governor's Cyber Security Summit

2021 & 2022 Governor's Conference on Highway Safety

2021 Statewide Procurement Virtual Conference

2021 & 2022 Wisconsin Fall Conference on Tourism

Department of Tourism Co-op Advertising Program

Department of Tourism Meetings & Conventions Marketing Project Management

Department of Tourism Sports Marketing Project Management

2022 & 2023 Wisconsin Governor's Conference on Tourism

2022 & 2023 Governor's Conference on Emergency Management & Homeland Security

Department of Safety & Professional Services LicenseE logo & Digital Media Kit



DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM BUDGET



In FY2022, the Department of Tourism had \$12,827,335.11 of receipts, \$6,004,446.10 of authorized General-Purpose Revenue (GPR), and \$1,603,500.00 of authorized Segregated Fund Revenue (SEG) for a total available amount to spend of \$20,435,281.21.

In FY2022, Tourism had total expenses of \$20,237,954.20, which included \$4,507,366.22 of Federal expenses.

CONTACT INFORMATION



Wisconsin Department of Tourism

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Madison, WI 53708-8690

(800) 432-8747

Travel Wisconsin Social Media



[Instagram.com/TravelWisconsin](https://www.instagram.com/TravelWisconsin)



[Twitter.com/TravelWI](https://twitter.com/TravelWI)



[Facebook.com/TravelWisconsin](https://www.facebook.com/TravelWisconsin)



[Pinterest.com/TravelWisconsin](https://www.pinterest.com/TravelWisconsin)

Tourism Industry Social Media



[Facebook.com/WIDeptTourism](https://www.facebook.com/WIDeptTourism)



[LinkedIn.com/TravelWisconsin](https://www.linkedin.com/TravelWisconsin)



[Twitter.com/WIDeptTourism](https://twitter.com/WIDeptTourism)

The Wisconsin Department of Tourism would like to thank decision makers, agency partners, members of the Wisconsin Council on Tourism, committee members and industry stakeholders for supporting our mission to inspire travelers to experience Wisconsin.

