

# A Look Back



2009

ANNUAL REPORT







Al Schaefer, 2008 Board Chair



Lynn R. Peters, Executive Director

## 2009 - A CHALLENGING YEAR

2009 was a difficult year — hotel occupancy plummeted, room tax revenues fell and convention bookings were slow to materialize.

Challenged to make hard decisions and achieve our economic development mission with less, the Bureau's board members and staff truly rose to the task.

It would have been easy to balance the budget by cutting advertising; but committed to doing everything possible to attract visitors, we did the opposite. Not only did we maintain the previous year's advertising levels, the board allocated funds for a special promotion. Within 10 days of that decision, "The Fun's On Us" was up and running, with significant incentives for leisure visitors to book overnight stays at Fox Cities hotels. Support from the Fox River Mall, Heart of the Valley Chamber, Appleton Downtown, Inc., Future Neenah and the Department of Tourism helped make the promotion a success.

Two major events, the H.O.G. Rally and the American Family Badger State Games happened early in the summer. Although attendance was smaller than anticipated, both events went flawlessly, and we thank the many individuals and organizations that provided assistance.

Four years invested in developing a regional wayfinding signage program paid off in 2009 when Kaukauna and Appleton installed their signs. Kimberly, Grand Chute and Town of Menasha's signs were fabricated as well, and should be installed as soon as weather allows in 2010.

Tough as it's been, the Fox Cities have weathered the storm better than many other communities. We appreciate your support of the Bureau's work and look forward to an improving economic climate.

## MISSION

*The Fox Cities Convention & Visitors Bureau is an economic development organization that strengthens the Fox Cities by attracting visitors in the convention, sports and leisure markets through sales, marketing and destination development.*

## ORGANIZATION

The Fox Cities Convention & Visitors Bureau, Inc., is a private, non-stock corporation with a 19-member board of directors. The board consists of an equal number of municipal representatives, hotel managers and owners and community leaders who review and approve Bureau policy, program and budget.

The Bureau staff includes: Lynn Peters, executive director; Chris Church, bureau services manager; Tami Hoff, group sales representative; Mae Ibe, director of convention sales; Kim Kozak, operations director; Ginny Rochon, visitor services coordinator; Pete Scheuppert, sports sales manager; Pam Seidl, director of marketing & community relations; Karen Trembl, office assistant; and two weekend visitor aides. Dozens of volunteers also help the Bureau with its work.

The Bureau is funded primarily with room tax collected by 18 municipalities in the Fox Cities.

## Fox Cities Convention & Visitors Bureau, Inc. 2009 Board of Directors

### Ted Bauer

CTB Consulting

### Michelle Bauer

Johnson Bank

### Lori Bayer

Country Inn & Suites  
Little Chute

### Terry Bergman

Fox Cities Chamber of Commerce  
& Industry

### Bob Buckingham

City of Neenah

### John Burgland

Fox River Mall

### Bob Dove

Best Western Bridgewood Resort  
Hotel & Conf. Center

### Randy Kliment

Hampton Inn

### Mike Kriegl

Culver's Frozen Custard

### John Lambie

Appleton Parks & Rec. Dept.

### Jeff Nooyen

Jeff Nooyen Photography

### Al Schaefer

Village of Kimberly

### Jay Schumerth

Radisson Paper Valley Hotel

### Jan Smith

Bergstrom-Mahler Museum

### Char Stankowski

Wingate Inn

### Mike VanAsten

Liberty Hall/Hilton  
Garden Inn

### Janet Versteegen

Village of Little Chute

### Cheryl Zaug Casey

## 2009 IN REVIEW

Poor economic conditions had a strong impact on hotel occupancy as businesses limited travel. The poor economy also impacted attendance at conventions and sports tournaments causing a decline in hotel usage. Still, the Fox Cities ended 2009 with occupancy down 7% compared to a state average of roughly 10%.

Despite these negatives, the Bureau accomplished many things in 2009:

### BUREAU SUCCESSES

- Appleton and Kaukauna installed wayfinding signs; Kimberly, Grand Chute, Town of Menasha and Neenah had their signs fabricated for installation early in 2010.
- The Bureau, in partnership with the Fox Cities Chamber of Commerce, completed the final phase of the Convention Center Feasibility Study.
- Despite a downturn in room tax, the Bureau maintained a solid commitment to sales and marketing, drawing upon financial reserves to fill revenue gaps.
- Dramatically improved recycling and energy savings efforts, meriting a higher "Travel Green Wisconsin" rating.

### CONVENTION SALES

- Booked 13,714 future room nights.
- Organized and executed two sales blitzes, calling on more than 570 meeting planners.
- Exhibited at five tradeshows.
- Hosted a national conference/familiarization tour for military reunion planners, resulting in the booking of three future events to-date.

### SPORTS SALES

- Led successful bids for 2010 and 2011 NCAA Division III Baseball, 2010 Wisconsin State Invitational Basketball Tournament and 2011 Wisconsin Women's Bowling Association State Tournament
- Booked 18,450 future room nights.
- Attended the National Association of Sports Commissions Annual Symposium in Denver, CO.
- Hosted two sports planner meetings for the purpose of networking and sharing knowledge with local sports planners.

### BUREAU CONVENTION & SPORTS SERVICES

- Worked with 158 convention and sports groups.
- Organized 750 hours of volunteer staffing to support convention and sports groups.
- Provided significant services to two major first-time events in the Fox Cities, the H.O.G.(Harley Owners Group) Rally and the American Family Badger State Summer Games.
- Coordinated two Fox Cities familiarization tours for hotel staff and Bureau volunteers.

### VISITOR SERVICES

- Served 6,505 visitors at the Visitor Center and EAA welcome stations.
- Served 65,145 unique visitors on our Web site.

### MARKETING

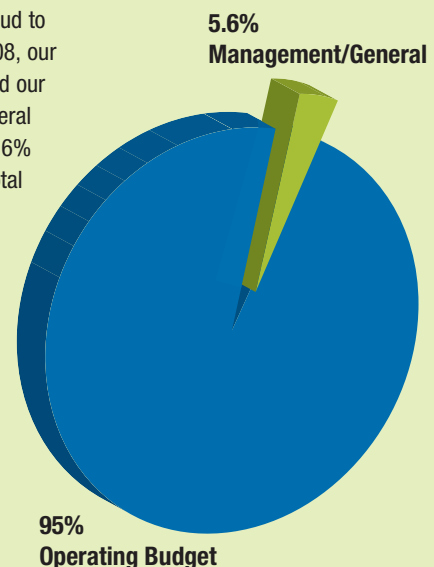
- Implemented "The Fun's on Us" promotion to increase overnight hotel stays.
- Became actively involved in social media to promote Fox Cities events and the "Wisconsin's Shopping Place" brand.
- Secured two Joint Effort Marketing Grants and a Ready, Set, Go Grant from the Department of Tourism.

## 2009 OPERATING BUDGET

	2009 Year-End Actual	2010 Budget
<b>REVENUES</b>		
Room Tax Income - Oper	\$815,762	\$878,089
Interest Income - Oper	5,713	3,500
Grants Income	25,681	3,900
Sponsorship/Incidental	19,863	18,000
Cap Devel Admin Reimb	23,750	24,700
<b>TOTAL REVENUES</b>	<b>\$890,769</b>	<b>\$928,189</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>		
<b>Personnel Expenses</b>		
Salaries & Wages	\$359,104	\$359,510
Employee Benefits	100,033	107,200
Professional Development	5,123	6,500
Convention/Event Services	4,125	4,700
Tradeshows	2,554	4,500
Selling Expenses	50,961	47,879
Marketing	224,122	225,000
Research	2,250	2,300
Wayfinding Signage	0	0
Rent/Utilities/Tax	88,546	98,200
Capital Equipment Expense	0	3,000
Equipment Leases	8,755	9,100
Automobile Expenses	6,923	8,600
Local Meetings	5,682	6,500
Office Supplies	5,275	7,000
Postage & Shipping	8,203	10,500
Telephone	5,667	6,200
Property/Casualty Insurance	5,695	6,300
Professional Services	8,040	8,800
Memberships/Subscriptions	6,908	6,400
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$897,966</b>	<b>\$928,189</b>

## MANAGEMENT & GENERAL

The Bureau is proud to report that, in 2008, our auditors calculated our management/general costs to be just 5.6% of the Bureau's total operating budget.



## 2009 GRANTS

Truly original in concept, the Capital Development Fund was built into the Bureau's structure at its inception. We are the only CVB in the state to have an ongoing formal process for capital grant making. A portion of room tax dollars collected by the Bureau is invested in the Fund.

The Fox Cities Convention & Visitors Bureau made its first Capital Development Grant in 1987. Since that time, the Bureau has made grants of nearly \$6 million, helping build and expand Fox Cities visitor attractions. In 2009, the Bureau made \$49,155 in grants:

Bergstrom-Mahler Visitor Information Kiosk .....	\$3,229
Gardens of the Fox Cities Visitor Information Kiosk .....	\$5,250
Convention Center Feasibility Phase II.....	\$7,555
Fox River Lock Historical Markers.....	\$4,800
Wayfinding Signage Community Grants .....	\$28,321



## 2010 GOALS

- Fill the gap left by the closing of the Wisconsin Welcome Centers by providing visitors with Wisconsin tourism publications at our visitor center.
- Encourage walk-in traffic at the Visitor Center by communicating the large variety of information that we have.
- Develop new and improved ads for the leisure and convention markets.
- Redesign of the Bureau Web site to improve its ability to serve as a virtual visitor center and to accommodate the latest Web technology.
- Continue work toward a consistent system of wayfinding signs.
- Continue to develop niche meeting and convention markets.
- Explore the contemporary motorcoach market and determine whether it has the power to generate a significant number of room nights.
- Secure the financial support necessary to host the 2010 PGI convention.

## LONG-RANGE GOALS

- Cement the "Wisconsin's Shopping Place" brand in the minds of all kinds of travelers.
- Continually strengthen our competitiveness in sports and convention markets, and develop niche markets well-suited to our community.
- Actively develop the leisure travel market, making it a significant part of the community's tourism mix.
- Be a leader in the development of the Fox Cities as a tourism destination.
- Consistently "tell the story" of the Fox Cities Convention & Visitors Bureau and its importance to economic development.
- Be a good steward of room tax dollars, accomplishing the greatest amount possible with them.

