

# WACO

Wisconsin Association of Campground Owners

APRIL 2019

## Spring Into a New Season

As the 2019 season has begun, I think we're all thinking, "Oh man that came up fast!" Every season is different, complete with its own set of unique goals, triumphs and tribulations. In this issue of the WACO newsletter, we'll be focusing on resources that will get you back on track for new employees, upselling reservations, legal information, and of course some recap information from our recent 2019 WACO Convention.

## 2019 Convention Highlights

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Convention Summary P. 1-2

Reservations/Repeat Business P. 3-5

NEC Updates P. 6

DOL Overtime and Sales Tax P. 6

Interview Questions P. 7

Legal Ages to Work in WI P. 7

5 Tips for a Successful Opener P. 8

Reminders, Save the Date and Next Month P. 9

WACO Board Members and Advertising Opportunities P. 10

We say this every year, but could truly not make Convention happen without our Members, Speakers, Sponsor, Vendors, and Volunteers. Thank you to all your hard work and participation last month. We were able, once again, to gather for dedicated time to share our experiences, raise awareness on topics, purchase items at show prices, network, and increase our industry and business knowledge...oh and we had some fun too! This time spent is so important and we've had some great feedback on what we can look at next year, as well as what was much appreciated this year. In true celebratory style, we had several

*~Congrats to Bob Weiss  
on 50 years~*



awards given at convention!

### Celebrating 50 Years

This year, we acknowledged TWO campground with the amazing achievement of making it 50 years in the camping industry. Congratulations again to Crystal Hyland at Silver Springs and Bob Weiss, of Wilderness Campground! Wilderness has had three generations sit on WACO's Board of Directors. Bob credits WACO and Bud Styer for their support in making it to 50 years!



*~Silver  
Springs  
celebrates  
50<sup>th</sup> year in  
industry~*

## THANK YOU TO OUR SHOW SPONSORS:



# 2019 Convention Highlights

## Welcome Hall of Fame Inductees

Congratulations at the crew from Scenic Ridge for being inducted into the WACO Hall of Fame. Pictured here Keith and Julie Michaels & Tom and Michelle Haeft accepting their award from Executive Director, Lori Severson. Julie says, "Scenic Ridge Campground is so honored to be part of an amazing organization. The friendships we have made over the years, along with the knowledge and support we have received has been priceless. Thank you WACO family!"



We are also proud to recognize one amazing lady **as the only volunteer to ever** be entered into the WACO Hall of Fame! She has attended the event for over a decade, assists with your questions and works so hard!

You all may know her as Karen Radomski, but most of us call her "Auntie Karen." Karen stated, "I just love coming here every year and seeing all the smiling faces growing up over the years and helping family is just what we do!"



## Super Board Members and Volunteers

Scott Kollack from Vista Royale Campground and Jim Button from Evergreen (or should we call them Superman and Flash?) helped us all get into the Super Hero theme for this year's convention!

Becky Black has been with WACO for years and continues to organize Kids Kamp —giving parents the ability to attend the Convention and still get some family time at night. We appreciate all you do! THANK YOU!



## Wade Elliot—Our Own Wizard of Watts

Wade Elliot, of Utility Supply Group, was recognized for all his work with the National Electric Code. As the electrical requirements have changed over the years, Wade continues to supply WACO with the necessary information to stay within code and assists as requested with questions our organization may have.



*Jim Button presents Wade Elliot of the Utility Supply Group with Award at WACO Convention. See p.6 for more from Wade!*

## Need Member Specific Information?

Go to the WACO website and head to the [Members Login tab](#). We are here to help!



# Reservations

## Reservations and Repeat Customers

I think it's safe to say we'd all like to see an increase in this season's reservations and repeat customers. Whether you're actively working on the ease of making a reservation, ways to upsell customers once they've entered your campground/resort, or if you're looking to have folks come back again and again, this article will have one little tidbit, if not more for you! Some may seem to be common sense, but in the end, aren't most business tricks and tips just that? Good luck on your upcoming season and here's to success!

**KNOW YOUR CAMPGROUND:** It seems so simple and as an owner, I'm sure you know your business front to back. How well do your employees though? And, how long has it been since you updated your cheat sheets? A quick reference binder with a map, commonly asked questions and some quick resources/direction is really helpful when someone hits you with "How far is your campground from the Bluegrass Festival?" Know what you offer for site spaces, what sites are closest to the pool or the shower house, what events are happening that week/season that may be of interest. Be ready to answer all these questions and more based on the responses you get from asking questions when someone calls.



**ASK GREAT QUESTIONS:** Be that person! Ask questions that lead your potential camper to say, "Wow, that's a great question!" This will ensure you're referring a customer to the right site/area in your campground or that your spot is even a good fit (and yes, we should be honest about that—it does come back around and gains a ton of TRUST). The more you know, the more you can sell your campground and the amenities within it! Simply stating, "We are so excited that you're interested in staying with us, let me ask a few questions to make sure I get you the right spot!"

### ***Sample questions might include:***

- Size/type of rig, tent, etc to ensure you can find a site that fits their unit and ease for entry/exit of the campground. Or, will you be staying in one of our lodging options?
- How long do you plan to stay with us? If this is a shorter trip, then offering activities offsite in the area don't make as much sense, as you'd like to keep the money spent at your business. But, if they are staying for a longer timeframe, the more they have to do in the area will keep them coming back to your campground time and time again.
- Looking to relax further away from the crowd or get involved with all the festivities
- Family trip or adults only – explain activities or amenities based on response



# Reservations

**SURROUNDING COMMUNITIES EXPERT:** Become an expert on your local surroundings. This is especially important if you don't have the ability to offer a lot of events/activities onsite. Let's say you have a ton to offer onsite—the information becomes great selling point for long-term stays and seasonal visitors. What else is there to do around your neck of the woods? Think of local shops that offer unique items or festival/activities that are popular within the season. You may also want to think about partnering with a local company – for example, if you don't have access to water, but nearby is a company renting canoes, coordinate trips with a split fee or transportation offers. If you have an onsite restaurant and activities offering plenty to do in a weekend, simply know your towns because visitors will ask how long it takes to get to them often! And again, if you have long term visitors, the more they have to do onsite AND offsite, the



more memories they'll make.

**CREATE AN EXPERIENCE:** Speaking of memories, remember this - people aren't buying a site for the season or the weekend, they are buying an experience, so be sure you're giving them an amazing one! You don't have to have a million activities, because we can't make everyone happy and you'll overextend



yourself trying to do so. Get good at ONE thing. Then add to it and branch out on others. Soon, your campground will be known for that ONE thing and more as you add to the list. The stay, no matter how long, is never permanent really – but the experience – that lasts a lifetime. So be sure to give them a GREAT experience.

**THE WELCOME SAYS IT ALL:** The proverbial, "The first impression is the most lasting" could never be truer with visits at campgrounds, hotels, resorts, wherever. When someone checks in, have their information readily available, confirm their details and be ready to show them where to find their site. If you've stepped into the electronic era, be sure every customer receives a confirmation email with the same details above included. Give them a breakdown of the activities happening or food specials – a basic lay of the land with a smile and friendly face.



Let's break this one down a bit and get real...You may be stressed and we get it! Its Friday night, the reservation desk is crazy and the restaurant/bar is packed...KEEP YOUR SMILE ON! They are checking in for an amazing weekend with their family. Campers don't want to see you frazzled and ready to flip—they want to see you SMILE!

# Reservations

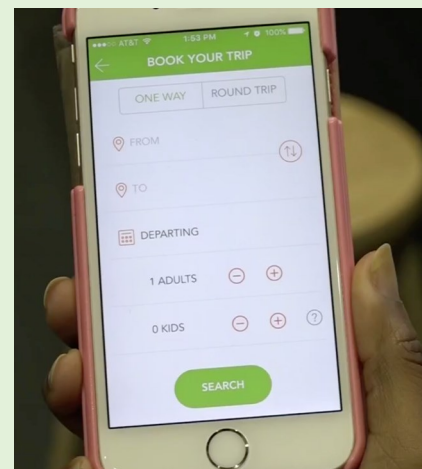


**CUSTOMER SERVICE:** Well, we could write an entire newsletter on this topic alone couldn't we? Every camper's ability to enjoy their trip can be broken down into three main areas:

1. Customer Service—overall at the welcome, at the bar/restaurant, in the pool area, etc.
2. Presentation of the Activities—ability to find scheduled events, timeliness of event, and inclusion
3. Cleanliness of the Facilities—yes, its camping, we get that things are going to get muddy and that's part of the fun right? But not when you enter a lodge for your first night or when you head to the shower house to clean up.

Since all campers have different needs, how do you know what aspect is most important? Answer: ALL OF THEM. Every aspect listed needs to be on point to ensure the experience is great no matter what getaway was desired when the camper booked their site. Assign a leader for each of those areas and it's their responsibility to ensure that all those areas are at the level in which you'd want should you be visiting a campground. Review at the end of the weekend, week, month, season – keep it consistent and put in steps for continuous improvement.

**USE YOUR RESOURCES:** How effectively do you use your reservation software and more importantly, is it doing what you want? There are so many brands and options available for reservation systems and the options available are somewhat overwhelming. Take some time to jot down a list of what you want to be able to do with your reservation information. Determine what is a “MUST HAVE”—as in, we aren't going to bother doing this online if we can't perform the following tasks. And then in another list, jot down the “WOULDN'T IT BE GREAT IF” tasks—reports, time savers, things that may not be necessary to operate, but would sure make life easier. Sometimes just this list alone let's you see how important having effective resources can be. If you're struggling to find the right software, [here is a site for comparing campground software](#).



**WISCONSIN**  
—DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM—

## Letter from the State Secretary of Tourism, Sara Meaney

In a recent letter, Secretary Meaney is asking for your [input in a survey](#) specific to strategic planning. Now, more than ever, is a great time to be heard, so include your thoughts, as a stakeholder in the Tourism efforts for Wisconsin. [Click here to view the bulletin](#) in its entirety and review the subjects that the Tourism Department is currently focusing on, some of which include upcoming shows and marketing spotlights.

# IN THE KNOW

## NEC 2020 CODE CHANGES



The Wizard of Watts presents more updates from the 2020 NEC Code Changes. In this issue, he discusses the safety issues around reverse polarity, as well as some safety problems to keep in mind specific to amp receptacles and the cords allowed to be used. One point to mention, and I quote, “A recent article in the press had recommended replacing the 30 amp receptacle in a pedestal to allow two 50 amp cords to an RV. This violates the NEC in at least two ways:

1. If a 50 amp receptacle is present, a 30 amp receptacle must be present.
2. Two cords feeding an RV are prohibited.”

To see more about the 2020 Code Changes, check out the latest article from the Wizard of Watts.

## KEEP IT ALL LEGAL

### Department of Labor—OT Rule Revisited

The overtime debate is back on with a proposed rule from the Department of Labor (DOL) suggesting that the salary-level threshold would be increased to \$35,308 from the original \$23,660. About 1 million workers could find themselves affected. Companies would be required to classify those employees as nonexempt and pay them OT after 40 hours...unless given raises to put them over the threshold amount. At this time, the DOL is not suggesting or any changes to the “duties test.” To learn more, visit the Wage and Hour Division on the [DOL website](#) or check out this information provided by [MBE and SHRM](#).



### State Tax Reminder Q & A

**Q:** Do we need to collect sales tax for stays over 30+ nights?

**A:** Admissions to Campgrounds Receipts from admissions to campgrounds are subject to Wisconsin sales tax, regardless of whether the fees are collected on a daily, weekly, annual, or other basis.

**Exception:** Campground fees in Wisconsin state parks are not taxable. 2. Lodging Services Charges to stay in camping cabins, trailers, or recreational vehicles that are already set up on campsites are subject to Wisconsin sales tax (see Part IV.B.1.b. for information about a campground's purchase of camping cabins, trailers and recreational vehicles) as both a sale of lodging and admission to a recreational facility. **Caution:** While lodging services are exempt from tax if the lodging is provided for a continuous period of one month or more, the tax on admissions to a campground does not have this same limitation.

Therefore, when a customer rents a cabin, trailer, or recreational vehicle already set up at a campground site, the charge is both lodging and admission and is subject to tax, regardless of the length of time it is rented for.

Thank you to CSAW Associates for pricing this insightful Q&A!

## Interview Questions for Campground Employees

As you start the search for new employees to take on the busy season, you may find yourself forgetting what constitutes as a “good interview.” Tina Severson, from ABR Employment Services tells us, “The talent market has never been more tight, with fewer and fewer of those ‘hardworking, solid employees who truly care about their company’ available to hire. While you may find yourself settling, be sure to hold true to your campgrounds values and that this person will fit in well with your culture—in all honestly, the rest is truly coachable!” Asking open ended questions, encouraging the applicant to do most of the talking is really the best approach. In most cases, you’ll get more information than you bargained for. Here are some interview reminders to set you up for hiring success and be sure to check the full listing on the [Members Resource page](#).

### GENERAL QUESTIONS:

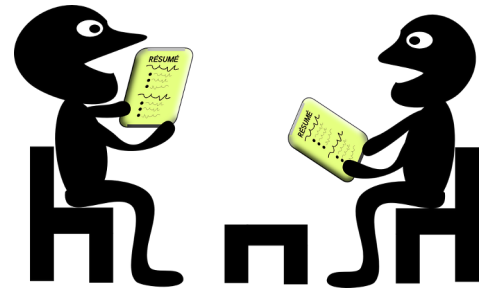
- Describe how you would handle a situation with an irate customer.
- What would you do if you “ran out of work?”
- How many days per month is acceptable to be absent?

### FOR MAINTENANCE POSITIONS:

- What tools are you familiar with for plumbing projects?
- What is the most difficult thing for you to remember when using a Skid Steer?
- Describe the largest, or most difficult, landscaping project you’ve ever worked on.

### KITCHEN POSITIONS:

- What would you do if you were asked to prepare a sauce you had never prepared before?
- How would you ensure our kitchen is ready with adequate supplies for a rush?



## LEGAL AGES TO WORK IN WISCONSIN:

Another thing to keep in mind that is different for restaurants and bars, is the legal age of your employees. CSAW Associates gave us a great Quick Reference Guide that has been added to the [Members Resource Page](#), but below are a couple of specifics to keep in mind!

AGE	SUMMARY OF REQUIREMENTS
14-15	Work permit required. Cannot work more than 18 hours per week or more than 4 hours per day when school is in session. 24 hours for a partial school week. Cannot work before 7:00am or after 11:00pm.
16-17	Cannot work more than 26 hours per week or more than 5 hours per day when school is in session. 32 hours for a partial school week. Cannot work before 5:00am or after 11:00pm.
18-20	Must be 18 to work in establishments that sell or serve alcohol for consumption
21+	Able to serve alcohol for consumption. No restrictions



# 5 TIPS to a SUCCESSFUL



Every season with campground ownership is different depending on the weather most importantly—and this year is no different between the crazy amounts of snow and recent flooding as we pop into Spring. I'm guessing we've all been running around like crazy in an effort to get our parks opened up for the season...if you haven't, please send us your strategies ASAP haha! Here are some great tips from WACO and [ARVC](#) to keep yourself organized and "hit the high spots" so to speak:



**1. Reality Check—1st Impression:** Enter your park with a fresh set of eyes—either with an outsider or attempt to see your park for the first time. What are your honest first impressions? How does your signage look— easy to read and well-maintained? How about the grass, bushes, plants—are they looking their best or do they need some love? Next check the registration/office/store/restaurant entrances. Are they all sending a clear message of: WELCOME? Now is the time to make adjustments and get those first impressions to be solid!

**2. Utility Check:** Get out your map and literally check off every building for the following to test the following, suggested by ARVC, "every faucet, hose bib, electrical connection and outlet to ensure they're in good working order. While you're at it, check your wi-fi strength and coverage, cable or satellite TV service and any equipment guests may use such as washers and dryers."

**3. Pedestal Check:** If you don't know what reserved polarity is, there is a great article from the [Wizard of Watts](#). This dangerous situation occurs when the hot and neutral wires in an electrical circuit become switched and can create a shock hazard. Guests RVs can contribute to this problem, but if the pedestals are good are OK, you'll be able to troubleshoot for problems much easier.

**4. Negativity Check:** All successful businesses compile and review feedback—both positive and negative. Make a list of all the negative feedback you received in the last year, and maybe those you didn't get to the season before. Prioritize them, and address the areas that are 1. most important and 2. realistic to address. ARVC says, "Returning guests will notice these changes and appreciate your efforts."

**5. Equipment Check:** Some common areas include equipment that get beat up on during a season, and others, your guesting are paying an upcharge to utilize. How would you feel if you rented something broken? Make sure all of the balls, nets and any other equipment your guests have access to are in good shape. If you rent bikes or canoes, check them over for inflated tires, safety gear, etc. If you need to repair or replace them, now is a better time than the busy summer months!

*Jim Button, OHE, has owned ARVC member-park **Evergreen Campsites & Resort** in Wild Rose, Wis. for more than 20 years, so he's been through a lot of opening seasons. "The single most important lesson is that getting ready for the season is equivalent to getting your home ready for a special event," he says. "We put in the time to make the campground look pristine and well maintained so we can focus our energies during the summer on our camper experience."*

## SHOUTOUT:

Jim Button has been a busy man! Not only was he quoted in the article from ARVC mentioned above, but he was also featured in [Woodall's Campground Management—March 2019 issue](#).





## GRINS AND GIGGLES

**Q:** What did the father do to his daughter when her marshmallows kept falling into the campfire?

**A:** Stick with it.

**Q:** Where do sharks go camping?

**A:** Finland.



These are actual comments left on U. S. Forest Service registration sheets and comment cards by backpackers completing wilderness camping trips. I think someone needs to tell them about “glamping!”

- “A small deer came into my camp and stole my bag of pickles. Is there a way I can get reimbursed? Please call.”
- “Escalators would help on steep uphill sections.”
- “Trails need to be wider so people can walk while holding hands.”

## SAVE THE DATES:

Below are the future **WACO Convention Dates**, to be held in Stevens Point, WI. Be sure to mark your cal-

- **March 11—15, 2020**
- **March 17—21, 2021**



## WACO FACEBOOK MEMBERS PAGE



WACO has a Campground Member Facebook group for members to stay current with important information, receive updates on deadlines, and network easily with our members.

To join this group visit <https://www.facebook.com/groups/wacomembers/>.

A white arrow-shaped sign pointing right with the text 'Next Month' in black, mounted on a metal pole against a blue sky with clouds.

**Next Month**

**WATCH FOR THESE STORIES NEXT MONTH!**

**Upselling Reservations**

**Employee Theft**

# WACO 2019 Advertising

## WEBSITE AD SIZES

Banner Ad: 1200 x 120

Side Ad: 200 x 200

## PLEASE NOTE!

All Photoshop work should be actual size with a resolution of at least 300 and saved as a layered .tiff in CMYK. It can also be saved as a PDF.

## WACO MEMBER LOGIN

**Username:** member

**Password:** born2camp



Lori Severson,  
Executive Director

PO Box 228

Ettrick, WI 54627

WACO Phone (608) 525-2327

Severson & Associates

Phone (608) 525-2323

Fax (608) 525-2328

lori@seversonandassociates.com

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

SCOTT KOLLOCK	President
Vista Royale Campground	(715) 498-8204
BUD STYER	Director
Smokey Hollow Campground	(608) 592-2128
BERT DAVIS	ARVC Representative
Badgerland Campground	(608) 873-5800
JIM BUTTON	Director
Evergreen Campsites, LLC	(920) 622-3498
JULIE MICHAELS	Director
Scenic Ridge Campground	(608) 883-2920
PAT REHWINKEL	Director
Merry Mac's Campground	(608) 493-2367
JOYCE STENKLYFT	Director
Stoney Creek RV Resort	(715) 597-2102
ADAM MALSACK	Director
Lake Arrowhead	920-229-1616
LAURIE ADAMS	Director
Baraboo Hills	(608) 356-8505
MIKE DRICKEN	Director
Lake Lenwood Beach and Campground	(262) 334-1335
JIM TRACY	Director
Al's Fox Hill	(608) 356-5890
ASHLEY WEISS-WEGNER	Director
Wilderness Campground	(608) 297-2002
MARK STEFAN	Director
Grand Valley Campground	(920-) 394-3643

## TEXT CLUB

Are you a part of the WACO Member Text Club? If you are not, consider joining! The WACO office uses the text club as a way to communicate urgent messages, deadlines, important information and more. To join the text club, text the word "WACO" to 25827 and your number will automatically be added. After adding, you are able to stop the messages at any time by texting "STOP" in reply to a text.