



# WACO

Wisconsin Association of Campground Owners

FEBRUARY 2020

## Giddy on up...Convention is Almost Here!

Round up your partners and be sure to get the best information our industry has to offer from area experts, industry panels, and speakers all available to you! Networking with other campground owners is priceless and there's no better time than convention to ask all the questions you've had in your head this past season. The trade show floor will be filled with vendors offering products and services you've been meaning to check out—or that have been on your “wish list” for a few seasons. Take advantage of their show specials and gets things in place to make your upcoming season less stressful, more profitable, and offer a better experience to your customers!

### A TASTE OF WHAT YOU'LL SEE AT CONVENTION

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#### **The Guiding Principles of Reservation Systems** by Griffin Engel • January 3, 2020

**How you take and manage reservations is one of the most important decisions you make as a campground owner.**

We here at Campspot may be biased, but your chosen reservation system impacts your business at its core. How many people are coming? How are they contacting you? How much money does this bring in? How are you taking and tracking this money? This list goes on, as do the options for how you initially communicate with your guests and manage this information.

There are phone reservations, online bookings, email inquiries, website forms, in-person inquiries, third party marketing websites, campground memberships, and more. As the world gets more digital and more complicated, managing all of this can seem overwhelming.

However, modern technology has entered the game to help in the form of online reservation systems. Slowly but surely, they are taking over the tried and true methods of yesteryear – binders, post-it notes, Excel spreadsheets, physical calendars for each site, etc. You name it, we've probably seen it.

For those new to the industry or new to the idea of reservation systems, we want to share a few of the guiding principles. First and foremost, The Golden Rule...

**Not all reservations (or reservation systems) are created equal.**

At first glance, you might think something along the lines of “A two-night stay is a two-night stay.” However, the difference in context can be immense.

# WHY ATTEND CONVENTION

For example, a two-night stay booked months in advance for a holiday weekend could block a space that another guest may have booked for a week — costing you five nights worth of revenue. Conversely, a two-night stay might be a last minute booking that fits perfectly between two other reservations and maximizes the amount of money you make during that time.

One of these is a good reservation, the other is a bad reservation, and the question is this: How can your reservation system decide between the two?

A quality online reservation system like Campspot can take a lot of the pain out of this process. By using grid optimization to fill your park as much as possible as well as following business rules that you set for things like minimum stays and holiday weekend policies, your reservation software can help you generate revenue and manage a smarter campground.

## Online reservations are more than a convenience.

The world today is online, but for a multitude of reasons, camping has been one of the last industries to adopt online reservations — lagging behind hotels, car rentals, airlines, and even restaurants. For campground owners, online reservations are now a must. They are no longer simply a convenience; they are potentially your biggest source of business and your biggest competitive advantage in the digital economy.



According to the 2019 KOA camping report, 78% of campers are now generation X or younger — people who were either born or raised in the digital generation, and people who expect the accessibility and ease of doing everything online. If you don't cater to this audience's preferences, you will lose three out of four customers to a campground that does. For campgrounds that joined Campspot and previously did not take online reservations, their revenue increased by upwards of 55% year-over-year.

Simply put, online booking for your campground is a MUST. And while it can be a significant business decision, it can also be so much more than a chore. Taking your park management system online is a pathway to new and bigger markets that you wouldn't tap into otherwise, and when done correctly, the results can be immense.



If you want more information like this, [like Campspot on Facebook](#).

## FIRST YEAR? HAVE NO FEAR!

If this is your FIRST convention, CALL LAURIE ADAMS! She is happy to mentor anyone on their first journey to ensure they get everything possible out of convention attendance! CALL OR TEXT 608-434-4980 to set up your mentorship TODAY!

## ARVC TO HOST ONLINE EDUCATION

**ARVC will be hosting online courses for continued education in several areas in the months to come.**

**To learn more, stay tuned for updates from your WACO office, or check online at [www.arvc.org](http://www.arvc.org)**

# WHY ATTEND CONVENTION

## HOW MUCH MONEY DO I “NEED” TO BUY A CAMPGROUND?

As much as possible! The biggest mistake new owners make is not having enough liquid cash for emergency needs or needed repairs or expansion.

The key to a successful purchase is to expect the unexpected. Something will break – some glaring hole in service will be discovered that you will want to fix quickly. Having cash on hand for these things can make the first year more successful.

### GENERAL RULE:

25% – 30% down is required by most banks. HOWEVER, this is not always the hard and fast rule. With great credit and other assets, many times I can get you financed with 15% down, sometimes less – depending on:

- Seller Financing Help
- Other Assets that can be collateralized
- 401-K (ROBS program can sometime be used to get 401-k money to be used to start up a new business).
- Appraisal of the property
- Strength of the Business Plan (which I can help you develop)

Learn more with John Jaszewski from Campground4Sale at Convention! He will be speaking in a few sessions, including one that discusses spreadsheets and statistics. The more you know, the better off you are in terms of site nights, average occupancy, and fees!



## CAMPSPOT

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# IN THE KNOW

## Campground General Liability - Understanding When A Claim Is Denied

General liability insurance protects the campground for claims alleging bodily injury or property damage to others for which they are legally liable.

*That sentence says a lot.*

First, general liability insurance protects you from claims alleging bodily injury or damage to property of others. Sometimes when clients reports a claim to their insurance agent or company, they express concern that that claim is groundless. They feel that they did nothing wrong. If the insurance company also believes that you are not negligent, the insurance company will deny the claim. But then, sometimes the campground owner panics, thinking that their insurance company just abandoned them!

If there was no negligence on your part, you have no liability. So the insurance company isn't going to pay a claim unless there was negligence. By denying the claim, they shift the burden back to the other party to prove that you were negligent. If you are sued by someone claiming your were negligent and they suffered bodily injury or property damage, your insurance company will still defend you (and ultimately pay any judgements up to the policy limits).

### If A Claim Is Denied, Will My Insurance Company Still Defend Me?

Even if the claim is groundless, the insurance company will still defend you. The insurance company pays all of the legal expenses to defend you from a groundless lawsuit, unless, of course, the lawsuit is alleging you committed an act excluded by the policy. All policies contain exclusions so you should read your policy carefully.

### What Should I Look for When Buying Campground Liability Insurance?

You do not want an insurance company paying groundless claims because it hurts your reputation and it will drive up insurance costs. That is why ***we recommend purchasing your general liability insurance from insurance companies that have experience dealing with claims against campgrounds.***

Because bad things can happen, not only do you want a reputable insurance company but you also need adequate limits of insurance. It is also important that defense costs are in addition to the policy limits. An experienced campground insurance agent will be able to discuss your options.

Source: <http://www.coverrainurance.com/recent-news/campground-general-liability-insurance/>



**To learn more about property insurance, accident insurance, and what specific insurance coverages you should have included in your campground's policy, attend WACO and meet with Coverra Insurance Services!**

# IN THE KNOW

## Safeguards for Public Pools to Prevent Chemical Release Events

Mary Ellen Bruesch, the Recreational Technical Specialist for the Division of Food and Recreational Safety at the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection has our back once again!

There is new information out regarding pool safety in terms of interlock and safeguards specific to chemical release. Many of our members have pools onsite and know the importance of keeping the pools at the right chemical levels, up to code, and most importantly, safe for our customers.

**At the 2020 Convention, Mary will go over these specific Interlock/Chemical Release changes and answer any specific questions you have about your campground's pool.**

For more information, visit the MEMBERS section of the WACO website under [Important Documents and Pool Documents](#).

## SPEAKER SPOTLIGHT: ARVC News & Benefits Panel , Joe Walter



As a park owner, I'd like to live in a world where every employee is a rock star (showing up for every shift, and staying thru Labor Day), and every camper spends as much as they can afford and goes to bed at 10:00pm every night. Sunny and 80° every weekend too! ; )

I've been a small business owner for close to 30 years, in several different industries. My wife, Geri, and I fell in love with O'Neil Creek Campground (Chippewa Falls), and purchased it in early 2012. To say this industry has been good to us, is a real understatement. OCC, and this entire industry, has exceeded every expectation we ever

could've imagined.

If you're new to the industry, or to WACO, I encourage you to spread your wings at this convention. Don't hesitate to introduce yourself to any WACO member, I promise, you won't be disappointed. WACO and ARVC are both filled with high quality individuals that will be there for you EVERY step of the way.

I'm excited to meet you, and hear your story!  
Thank you, Joe Walter

### DID YOU KNOW?

**56% of employers allow employees to work from home.**  
**[Wisconsinbusinessvoice.org](http://Wisconsinbusinessvoice.org)**

### Need Member Specific Information?

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



# BOARD OF DIRECTOR—Nominations for Positions



## NOMINEE: PETER HAGEN

Our family has owned Pride of America Camping resort since 1974. As a second generation owner I have the unique experience of 46 years of *growing up* with the RV industry. At age 8 I started my career as a “Trash Picker Upper” and moved on to grounds and maintenance to help finance my way through the University of Wisconsin where I earned a BS in Mechanical Engineering.

After 8 years of designing custom machinery, I changed careers and began working for the UW-Madison in Information Technology. In 2001, after we bought out our final partners, I started managing the IT department at the campground as my second full time job. I brought my knowledge of Information Technology to the business just as the industry was moving towards an embrace of technology.

I am retiring from the UW in the near future and looking to become much more involved in growing and improving our industry. I feel my variety of skills and experience can be of great benefit to our organization as we all need to adapt to the ever changing world of technology and the move towards digital marketing.

## NOMINEE: ROB BRINKMEIER, MERRY MAC'S CAMPGROUND

## NOMINEE: SARAH, RIVERS EDGE CAMPGROUND

We look forward to hearing more about the nominee's above, as well as any others that look to join a seat on the WACO Board of Directors. If you are interested, please submit your name, a photo and brief biography to the WACO office.

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# IN THE KNOW

## Keeping up with iGen

As traditional campers coast through retirement and spend less time at campgrounds and RV resorts, a new breed of camping enthusiast is embracing the outdoor lifestyle. Get acquainted with Gen Z – the oldest of whom will be turning 24 this year! Gen Z is currently made up mostly of teens and tweens, they heavily influence their parents, and all of them are about to mature into budding careers with travel budgets of their own.



Here's the great news for WACO members. Did you know that 3 out of every 5 teens say they are VERY enthusiastic about camping<sup>1</sup>? They are also known as the iGen because they grew up with the internet and are considered digital natives. Being environmentally conscious, they want to connect with and conserve nature which, if played right, can lead them right into your campground!



The key to keeping up with the iGen (they are always on the move!) is to be where they are. Already, 70% of travel research is done on mobile devices<sup>2</sup> and 80% of camping reservations are made online<sup>3</sup>. The iGen trust their peer reviews more than any marketing pitch because they are community driven and two times more likely than other generations to watch videos on mobile<sup>4</sup>. With all that said, having a great online and mobile presence for your campground is critical. Whether through an engaging social presence, a simple video, a convenient booking app, or ensuring your website is responsive and open for community reviews, be authentic with this audience and be where they want to be.

You can learn more about the campground market and consumer trends with this infographic:

[www.aspiraconnect.com/WACO-iGen](http://www.aspiraconnect.com/WACO-iGen)

Sources:

1. *The North American Camping Report*, KOA, 2018.
2. Google Data, [www.thinkwithgoogle.com/consumer-insights](http://www.thinkwithgoogle.com/consumer-insights)
3. Google Analytics, [www.ReserveAmerica.com](http://www.ReserveAmerica.com)

Upfront Analytics: [www.visioncritical.com](http://www.visioncritical.com)

## WANT MORE SPECIFIC INFORMATION CUSTOMIZED FOR YOUR CAMPGROUND?

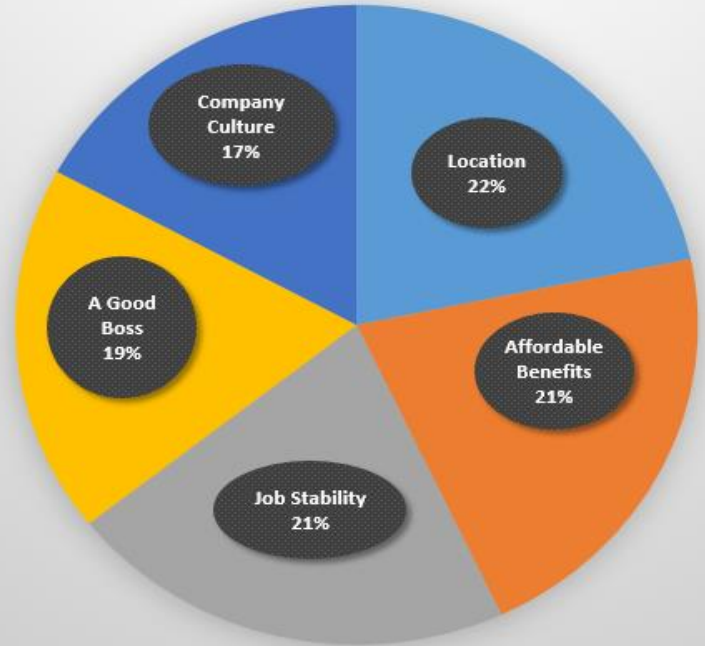
Aspira, Astra, and Mission Management as well as John Jaszewski of Campgrounds4Sale will all be at WACO Convention to answer questions you might have on how to stay current with various generations. Want to learn more about the value of your campground—or maybe you're ready to add on another location? John can help you with both! Make sure your technology is where it should be for your demographic, and that the value of your campground is accurate at the 2020 Convention!

# 2020 RV SHOWS

2020 RV SHOW	DATES	LOCATION
Milwaukee RV Show	February 27th – March 1st, 2020	Wisconsin Exposition Center
RV & Boat Show Main Event	February 28th – March 1st, 2020	EAA Grounds, Oshkosh
Wausau Central Wisconsin RV & Camping Show	March 13th – 15th, 2020	Central Wisconsin Convention & Expo Center
Rockford RV Camping & Travel Show	March 20th – 22nd, 2020	Indoor Sports Center
Wisconsin Sport Show	March 20th – 22nd, 2020	Chippewa Valley Expo Center, Eau Claire

## DID YOU KNOW?

According to CareerBuilder.com, some employees rank other factors higher than salary when reviewing a potential job opportunity!



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# AUCTION ITEM UPDATES

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Campgrounds4Sale can help you find the latest listed campground properties for sale plus their amenities. Contact us today to look into these properties! We hope you find a campground for sale to suit your needs.



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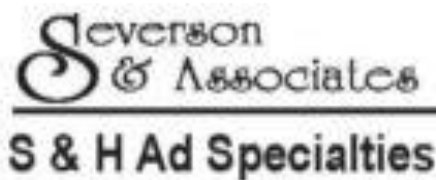


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**All the sponsors you see here will have a presence at the 2020 WACO Convention! Be sure to stop by their booths, check out a seminar they are speaking at, or join them for some networking during our evening events. Get the information straight from the horse's mouth!**

### **A LEGAL UPDATE FROM MARK HAZELABKER, Attorney at Law, Kasieta Legal Group, LLC**

At the end of last month, Bud Styer and I appeared before the Portage County Planning and Zoning Committee to address the floodplain issue, the question of whether every camping unit has to be moved for 24 hours once every 180 days. The Committee decided to remove that language, as requested.



It is worth noting that the Committee was genuinely interested in what the industry had to say. They were polite, attentive and responsive. I had as good an experience as I have had with local government. Bud was excellent as always. And Mike Langlois and his local counsel were great.

**What would the Wild West be without the Law to keep it in order? Mark will be speaking at several sessions during convention and onsite to answer your specific legal questions!**

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WEBSITE: <https://mousemix.us/>



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WEBSITE: [www.crs4rec.com](http://www.crs4rec.com)

PHONE: (608) 848-8781

Commercial Recreation Specialists provides recreation solutions ideal for campgrounds, including Inflatables for the Pool or Waterfront, Kayaks, Pedal Boats, Miniature Golf, Portable Skateparks, Indoor & Outdoor Play Equipment, Shade Structures, and much more. CRS is serious about fun!

Outdoors Unlimited has been providing innovative products to our customers for over 70 years. Our buyers search the globe to find you the very best in outdoor living products. If you're looking for the latest trends in outdoor heating, lighting or entertainment, Outdoors Unlimited has the answers.



**FLEMING SALES**

WEBSITE: [www.ouioutdoors.com](http://www.ouioutdoors.com)

PHONE: (630) 561-9002

## BRONZE—\$200



**WOODALL'S**  
**CAMPGROUND MANAGEMENT**  
The Independent Voice Of The North American Campground Business

# THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS

## REFRESHMENT SPONSORS—\$200

Coffee, Soda, Donuts



## DATES & DEADLINES

### BOARD DIRECTORS MEETING:

Wednesday, February 26th at 10 am

Monk's Bar and Grill, Lake Delton

### 2020 WACO Convention & Trade Show

**March 11-15, 2020**

**Stevens Point, Wisc.**

SEE MORE INFORMATION ON ALL WACO CONVENTION  
REGISTRATION RATES, AS WELL AS FORMS TO  
PARTICIPATE, LOCATED ON THE WACO WEBSITE:

- [CONVENTION REGISTRATION FORM](#)
- [Check out the shows at which directories and your brochures will be distributed](#)





# WACO OUT AND ABOUT



## GREEN BAY RV SHOW

It was great to see the following campgrounds and members at the Green Bay RV Show!

Bear Lake | Buffalo Lake | Camping in the Clouds

Deerhaven | Dells Camping Resort | Door County Jellystone

Evergreen Campsites | Farmer Genes | Freemont Jellystone

Grand Valley Campground | Harbor Village

Huckleberry Acres | Indian Shores | Lake Arrowhead Campground

Oakwood Campground | Pelican Campground | Pineland Campground

River's Edge Campground | Tileda Falls | Vista Royale

Westward Ho | WACO Staff | Gilbert Brown Foundation



# WACO OUT AND ABOUT





# WACO OUT AND ABOUT

## GREEN BAY RV SHOW

A few more images from the Green Bay RV Show



**PICS  
FROM  
MADISON  
RV SHOW**



# WACO OUT AND ABOUT

## PICS FROM MADISON RV SHOW

Shout out to the  
WACO Members  
we saw at the  
Madison RV  
Show!

Fox Hill  
Campground  
Glacier Valley  
Jellystone Warrens

Shangri-La  
Campground  
Wilderness  
Campground



# 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

### Bud Styer- President

Smokey Hollow Campground

Email

608-592-2128

### Scott Kollock – Past President

Vista Royale Campground

Email

715-335-6860

### Adam Malsack– 1st Vice President

Lake Arrowhead Campground

Email

Phone: 920-295-3000

### Jim Button-2nd Vice President

Evergreen Campsites and Resort

Email

Phone: 920-622-3498

### Mike Dricken –3rd Vice President

Lake Lenwood Beach and  
Campground

Email

262-334-1335

### Joyce Stenklyft- Secretary

Stoney Creek RV Resort

Email

715-597-2102

### Bert Davis – ARVC Representative

Dells Camping Resort

Email

608 -305-8404

### Julie Michaels- Treasurer

Scenic Ridge Campground

Email

608-883-2920

### Pat Rehwinkel - Director

Merry Mac's Campground

Email

608-493-2367

### Ashley Weiss - Director

Wilderness Campground

Email

608-297-2002

### Mark Stefan - Director

Grand Valley Campground

Email

920-394-3643

### Laurie Adams - Director

Baraboo Hills Campground

Email

608-356-8505

### Jim Tracy - Director

Fox Hill RV Park & Campground

Email

608-356-5890

### Patricia Lombardo - Director

Equity Lifestyle

Email

312-533-7255

### Scott Grenon - Director

Tunnel Trail Campground

Email | 608-435-6829

## 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.