



WACO NEWS

MAY 2023



MAY 2023

We all hope you survived the Memorial Day craziness and were successful with excellent customer service in your parks! There is so much happening in the upcoming months - a virtual pool code review (watch your emails!), continued efforts for zoning ordinances in favor of campgrounds, and of course, just being incredibly busy! Let us know if there is anything WACO can do to help during your peak season.

Letter from the Executive Director

Lori Severson, Executive Director of WACO

Dear Members,

We are full-swing into your busy season! Everyone is gearing up for a money-making time! Travel opportunities continue to open for the WACO office to learn and grow our association business. I just got back from CAMP, and it's interesting how various associations like us are doing business. One of the things to note is Wisconsin truly offers a vast variety of benefits for our members. It's also interesting to see where there are differences. For instance, Florida, Texas, Indiana, New York, and New Jersey have minimal difficulty obtaining RV and outside sales to support their directory. We struggle with that. The RV dealers in Wisconsin never purchase a full page in our directory; in other states, that is the norm. Granted, we would need to have a much larger book if we did get more attractions and RV places, but to date, we haven't had a lot of luck. If members have an "in" or connection - maybe someone they work with - we'd really appreciate the help! We are seeing the other states continue with the number of directories printing, although Wisconsin is in the top 3 of the number of directories. As you all heard at the annual meeting,



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ZONING UPDATES

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Got an Abandoned RV? Let us help!

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we printed less this year due to the high printing costs. We continue to get requests for the printed directory from consumers and our other partners. We are experimenting with rack cards with QR codes to see if this is another option. We shall see if this works! The CAMP group – Campground Association of Management Professionals all states a flat or slightly reduced number of members.



Many attribute this flatline to the high sales volume and attitude that business is great. Everyone also commented that the number of consumers attending RV shows is record-breaking. There is a movement on more ‘all-inclusive’ training – we listened to a speaker, Kavita Sawh from the University of Central Florida, who encourages us to use diverse pictures in our marketing materials. Nothing new, but she talked about how different cultures like to recreate and how we can better understand and cater to various demographics.

One individual who is interested in talking with more associations is Earl B. Hunter, Jr., who is the founder of Blackfolkscamptoo. Check out their website to learn more:

<https://www.blackfolkscamptoo.com/about/>

I think it’s important we all try to be aware of different cultures in general and how we can become accommodating, whether it is space and activities for kids with Autism or other diverse demographics. It’s surely exciting to see how the pandemic has created more educational opportunities for our owners. The big takeaway is to be sure you survey your customers and pay attention to different demographics and why they choose to camp with you.

We also learned a lot from Wendy Sellers - an HR Lady who is truly a camper. She spoke about using



CAMP Executive Board

AI and ChatGPT and how it’s a fantastic tool to help write handbooks, policy manuals, etc, for your campground. The considerable caution is to check your facts as she is an attorney who found it can make errors! It’s a time saver – just don’t forget to check. The good news is it can get you started on letters, handbooks, and anything you need to write to get your brain working and started down a great path! CAMP also had a great strategic online marketing speaker in Wendy Taylor and our own Mark Hazelbaker.

Baby boomers are looking for winter spaces – For Wisconsin, this means Florida, Arizona, etc. And in the summer, they are looking to camp here! Our idea of marketing to these customers seems to be paying off, and we need to continue that focus. Scott Bahr, who works with Cairn Consulting Group, speaks a lot about the trends of both Baby Boomers and how generation demographics relate to camping. Scott presented at the Florida and Alabama outdoor hospitality conference. He assists with the surveys from many campers, including KOA’s camping survey.

He has 30 years of experience in surveying campers and was quite interesting to listen to, especially if you want to learn more about the industry’s data.

Here is some additional information on what Generation Z is looking for in a camping experience:

- **Generation Z, or Gen Z, refers to individuals born between the mid-1990s and the early 2010s.** This generation has grown up in a world that is increasingly digital and fast-paced, and as a result, they often seek

ADVENTURE

unique and authentic experiences that allow them to connect with nature and disconnect from technology.

- **Regarding camping, Gen Zers are looking for experiences that offer adventure, sustainability, and community.**
- **Gen Zers are known for their love of adventure and trying new things, which is no different when it comes to camping.** They want to explore new places, challenge themselves, and make memories that they can share on social media. Camping experiences that offer hiking, rock climbing, kayaking, and mountain biking are beautiful to this generation.



- **Gen Zers are passionate about protecting the environment and preserving natural resources, and they often seek out camping experiences that align with these values.** They are looking for eco-friendly and sustainable campsites that minimize their environmental impact. Campsites with recycling programs, composting, and green energy sources are examples. They also prefer to use sustainable camping gear, such as reusable water bottles, solar-powered chargers, and biodegradable toiletries. What an opportunity to carry items like this in your store!
- **Gen Zers value community and connection and often seek camping experiences that**

allow them to connect with others. This includes group camping trips with friends or family and camping festivals or retreats where they can meet like-minded individuals. It's essential to tie in what festivals, fairs, and events are happening in your area. They also appreciate campsites that offer communal spaces, such as shared fire pits or picnic areas, where they can socialize and make new friends.

- **In addition to these experiences, Gen Zers also value diversity and inclusivity in their camping experiences.** They want to feel welcome and represented, regardless of their background or identity. They appreciate campsites that are welcoming to all and offer facilities that cater to different needs and preferences.

Please watch for your membership renewals – remember, there is power in everything we do, and we need your numbers. We have worked hard to ensure that we have what you need! If you genuinely don't understand the value of membership, I would love to talk to you.

Thanks so much for all you do! I was so proud to represent WACO at our CAMP meeting! You guys make us the best!

Lori

Lori Severson,
Executive Director, WACO

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From the Office of the President

Scott Kollock, WACO Board President

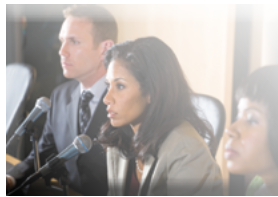


Dear Members,

It's exciting to see everyone off to a busy start. Mother nature moved slowly, but that hasn't stopped the work it took to get open. I know it's a tough time of year, but if you couldn't get to the new pool code training earlier in May, please attend one of the in-person events or one in Zoom coming up.

Again, the biggest issue everyone has right now is zoning for people who want to expand. The Tavern League of Wisconsin knows precisely how this works, and we need to take a page from that book. You get members to run for office – they have several legislators that understand their business. We must ensure we have folks that get camping and our industry. Be sure to support and get to know everyone in your area so we provide them with all the correct information - economics, tourism, etc for their county.

The Towns and Counties have been an area where people are simply not educated about what a campground is and is not. Your board is working hard to help fix some of these educational gaps. Please check out some of these sites and links if you haven't already!



<https://www.kare11.com/article/news/local/kare11-extras/lake-preservation-groups-fight-explosion-of-rv-campground-sites/89-b6161c7a-6a32-4090-bcdb-9e45e9a50730>

This website will blow your mind!

<https://preserveburnettcounty.org/>

We finally got a booth at WCA – Wisconsin County Association by approaching them in several ways. A little history – this is the first year after Lori &

Mark Hazelbaker working on this, we have FINALLY gained admission to this convention. We had not been able to attend until this year, regardless of any money we offered to pay. It turns out Gilbert works with Mark O'Connell, the WCA ED, on "Angel on My Shoulder, a charity Gilbert has worked with for over 20 years. We just never made the connection until this year at the convention when Mark came to speak at our Legislative Luncheon. We are having a FREE booth and will be spending some of our reserve budget to put together a hospitality room to educate board members around the state on campgrounds.

Your WACO staff has worked hard to assemble some excellent materials for this. Thanks to RVIA, we have an outstanding drilled-down economic impact report specifically for each county. In the end, this opportunity all happened because we got Lori to the strategic planning session for RVIA – those alliances and the ability to pull the trigger on essential things make a difference. Thank you to the members who recognize these issues are important to our industry.

HERE IS WHAT WE NEED YOU TO DO!

- Know who is on your local and county boards.
- We need names and want you to invite them personally.
- If we can't get them to our convention, Lori's team may want to go to them for a visit.

Tina is interested in the political side of this business and will start to learn the inside workings of all of this, so we need your help in making this happen. Board members are elected officials who serve their communities by making decisions on behalf of their constituents. That's why getting to know your town and county board members is as important as running for the open position yourself. Lori did just that and is quite surprised by everything you learn

as a board member. Last year at the Counties association – she walked by a session and heard a board member ask why campgrounds can upcharge for electricity and the counties cannot! Crazy education needs to happen now!

These decisions can significantly impact the lives of association members, making it essential to know who is representing them and get involved in the political process. Show up, get to know them, or things will happen that don't necessarily work for your industry and business. Be aware that just because it isn't happening in your town or county now doesn't mean it's not coming. Lori tells me that so many counties copy and paste from other counties and states.

Why Know Your Board Members?

Knowing your local and county board members is important for several reasons.

- Firstly, board members make decisions that affect the quality of life in their communities. By knowing who makes these decisions, association members can stay informed about issues affecting their lives and advocate for their interests
- Secondly, association members who know their board members can provide valuable feedback on issues that matter to them. Board members rely on input from their constituents to make

informed decisions, and association members who engage with their board members can influence these decisions.

- Thirdly, knowing your board members can help you build relationships with community people. By attending board meetings and getting involved in local politics, association members can meet others who share their interests and concerns. This involvement can lead to new friendships and networking opportunities.

Guys, this is important to our industry – please take some time to invite those board members over to see your business and understand that people do not use this as housing for people without homes, trailer parks, sending their children to school, etc.

I hope you know how hard your association works behind the scenes on these issues. It's impressive to listen to other state directors, and it makes me pretty proud of where our state is! We all appreciate your membership and the energy you devote to making us great!

Scott Kollock,
WACO Board President

TOOLS AVAILABLE!



If you need any of the following, WACO can help!

- Economic Data by County, including tax information
- Economic Data by State
- What WACO provides and what our members look like
- General Campground Industry Data

Check out these links in Members-Only!

[Economic Impact – WACO 4-3-23](#)

[County Specific Economic Impact - RVIA, 2022](#)

[2023 North America Camping Report](#)

THANK YOU TO THOSE WHO ATTENDED THE WASHBURN COUNTY ZONING HEARING!

While the result was not what we hoped for, it was for lack of effort! The County Zoning Committee hearing included 21 total speakers, and we had about half of those from WACO, campground owners, and others who supported the growth of the campgrounds.



THE OPPONENTS OF CAMPGROUNDS ARE CONCERNED WITH THE FOLLOWING TOPICS:

- Taxes (thinking we don't pay any)
- Septic Systems (don't feel we're held to any standards or that the code in place with DSPS isn't valid/accurate)
- Numbers / Population (concerned about the "instant sub-division" campgrounds create during their seasons/busy months and how that can impact a variety of things)
- Protecting the Natural Waterways (boating - too many people on the lakes; concerns re: groundwater and our waste being dumped into the waterways)

Unfortunately, they are ill-informed, even with the decades of experience that spoke in the room on behalf of Campground Owners - including Lori Severson (WACO/Campground Owner), Jim Button (ARVC, 3rd District Rep/Campground Owner), Bud Styer (Multi-Park Campground Owner), Gwen Walters (Ad Hoc Committee Member / Campground Owner) and Jamie Morales (Campground Owner). We also heard from Tina Severson (WACO) regarding economics, the impact of having little to no growth in the local counties, and the legality issues from veteran legal advisors Attorney Mark Hazelbaker and Anders Helquist, Attorney.

We could all tell the group walked in with the ordinances ready to be approved, making modifications to the grammar and some wording, but for the most part, keeping things as is - if not making them even more stringent. While the Zoning Committee approved the ordinance, it will still need to be approved by the Executive Committee and the Full Board. Those meetings will happen in June and July, respectively.

Continued on next page!

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WHAT IS WACO DOING ABOUT THIS?

- We will obtain the final zoning document sent to the Executive Committee and confirm our concerns.
- We will continue to request assistance from the Membership regarding letters, meeting appearances, etc.
- We are connecting with WCA's Mark O'Connell (President/CEO) and Daniel Bahr (Government Affairs Associate) to educate the Counties better.
- We've asked Mike Knowles, Wisconsin Towns Association Executive Director, to join us at the same meeting with the WCA.
- Our attorney, Mark Hazelbaker, continues to draft documents to combat the illegalities of zoning proposals and how they are more stringent than the current WI Code.
- We will continue to keep you all informed on this issue. As we all know, once ordinances like this pass, they filter into the other surrounding counties.



WE STILL NEED YOUR HELP!

If you have any information on the following that you're willing to share with WACO, specifically for this purpose, PLEASE email it in to: tina@seversonandassociates.com!

- How much you pay in taxes - property, employee payroll, etc.
- How much you donate to, or other things you organize, for your local services such as police, fire department, etc.
- How often (number of days in the year, months, whatever you can send us) you are completely full and what that number looks like.
- Information on the gallons of water you're using, how your septic is metered, etc.
- If you have access to waterways:
 - » What you do to keep them safe/clean?
 - » The total number of boats your campground brings in annually (estimates even)?



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Keepin' it Legal

Let's be honest. No one loves legal concerns, but we sure do love having access to a 27-year veteran like Mark Hazelbaker, our WACO Attorney, when those pesky legal troubles rear their head. We've created an email specifically for your legal questions at wacolegal@gmail.com. Give the WACO office a call first to vet your question, and Lori can provide direction on the next steps.

SERVICE ANIMALS, RENEWAL CLAUSES, TRANSFER-RING A LICENSE, COLLECTION LETTERS & MORE! MAY 2023 LEGAL UPDATES!

SERVICE ANIMAL REFORM – A BEGINNING

The airline industry has successfully lobbied to end misuse of service and emotional support animals on airlines. The airlines' success may open the door for further reform.

In late 2021, the US Department of Transportation adopted major changes in the regulations governing airlines. Those changes are now being applied by the airlines. The USDOT acted because widespread abuse of its prior rules had turned airliners into a zoo. Everything from miniature horses to snakes were being foisted on the airlines as "emotional support" or "service animals."

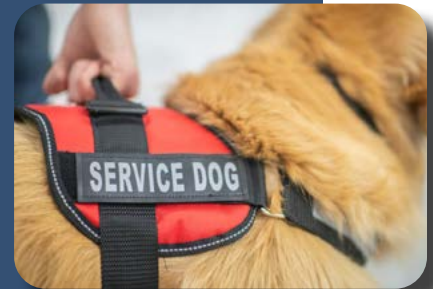
Under the revised rules, the airlines are required to accept only certified, trained service dogs. The airlines can require owners to fill out an application which details the dog's training and qualifications. The airlines do not have to accept any emotional support animals.

This is a good example of belatedly coming to the point that common sense should have dictated all along. Now, it's time for business owners in every other public accommodation business to demand the same treatment.

Folks, I love my dog and other dogs. But I don't know how we got to this point, where anyone who wants to bring their dogs and cats wherever they want to. If they are challenged, they produce a worn printout from an internet site whose "expert opinion" verifies that the person needs an emotional support animal.

This is not to question the propriety of service dogs. They have decades of distinguished service to people behind them. It is those who have grossly abused the system who are demeaning service dogs.

It's time to let your representatives know that the reforms granted the airline industry need to be extended across the board. WACO will have a model letter for you on the website. Please send this off to your representative and reach out to other business owners and ask them to do the same.



BEWARE OF AUTOMATIC RENEWAL CLAUSES

I've been asked many times about automatic renewal clauses. These are a recurring problem for businesses. Vendors like to sneak automatic renewals into contracts. I have commented automatic renewal contracts before. But recently, I've been asked whether campgrounds can include automatic renewal clauses in seasonal camping agreements. My answer is that you can, but I recommend strongly against doing so.

An auto renewal clause might seem to afford stability and convenience for the campground. Automatic renewal avoids the need to sign a new contract every year. It gives the campground the knowledge that campers will remain unless they try to terminate the agreement. These alleged virtues though are actually vices.

Stability would be great if it existed. It doesn't. Laws, business methods and practices change all the time. Agreements which made sense in 1995 are hopelessly outdated today; so are agreements made in 2017. It is healthy to update agreements every year. Nor is the expectation that a camper will stay forever necessarily healthy. Campgrounds should review their campers every year and decide

whether to renew the agreement. There's nothing wrong with declining to renew agreements with campers who are troublesome or not a positive contribution to the campground.

There is some inconvenience in needing to prepare and send a new agreement every year. But there is also a great deal of value in that process. Giving a camper an agreement that continues indefinitely may send exactly the wrong message – it may communicate that they are not being scrutinized and need not fear the campground. That leads to complacency or arrogance, and that leads to real trouble.

So, I recommend against including automatic renewal clauses in campground agreements for the same reason I recommend against signing them with vendors.

Indeed, one of the more vexing problems I see in some business contracts are these kinds of "ever-green" clauses which keep extending the contract unless the customer gives notice of cancellation. Every campground is free to decide what it wishes to do, of course, but I strongly recommend against automatic renewals.

TRANSFERRING LICENSES WHEN CAMPGROUNDS ARE SOLD



When a campground is sold, the license from the State of Wisconsin needs to be in the name of the new owner. In many cases, that means the new owner needs to apply for a license to be issued to them. The WACO website has a guide to that process:

<https://www.wisconsincampgrounds.com/licensing-a-campground/>

If a campground is owned by a limited liability company or an LLC, the license may be issued in the name of the LLC or the Corporation. If a campground's buyer is willing to buy the corporation or the LLC, the license is one of the assets that is sold with the company. However, the new owner will need to update the license record with the State. There are pluses and minuses to buying a corporate entity. If the corporate entity has title to the real estate, selling the corporation avoids a sale of the real estate. In turn, not selling the land avoids the real estate transfer tax. If a campground sold for \$2 million, though, the tax is \$6,000. There is a major downside to buying a corporation or LLC – the liabilities go with it. The Seller can agree to hold the Buyer harmless. The risk of a surprise claim usually is enough to lead most buyers to purchase the assets of the campground.

The licensing process is not so onerous that a buyer should choose to purchase the corporate entity just to avoid going through a new license process.



COLLECTION LETTERS

Clients have been sharing experiences of receiving surprising collection letters or calls. Collections are always part of the economy, but they run in cycles. The pandemic led to a wave of business failures. When there's a serious downturn in the economy, debts begin to pile up. Business owners often struggle to stay afloat as long as they can, resulting in unpaid bills of all kinds. Eventually, unpaid bills get turned over to collectors. Often, creditors sell thousands of unpaid bills to collection agencies for pennies on the dollar. Those agencies are the ones which, years after the debt was incurred, reach out. Of course, in the interim, people move, businesses close and times change. That leads to people being wrongfully targeted by collectors.

Add to that the gradual increase in fraudulent activity of all kinds, and you have the ingredients for lots of phony collection attempts.

If you receive a collection letter or contact that you don't recognize, you should promptly demand information about the alleged debt. The U.S. Consumer Financial Protection Bureau recommends that you demand the following information:

- Identity of the debt collector, including name, address, and phone number
- The amount of the debt, including any fees such as interest or collection costs
- What the debt is for and when the debt was incurred
- The name of the original creditor
- Information about whether you or someone else may owe the debt

It is advisable to respond to a collection letter or demand within 30 days. Some legal rights under credit reporting laws require that you dispute a debt within 30 days.

PLEASE SEND REQUESTS FOR NEW FORMS AND COMMENTS ON CURRENT FORMS

WACO is constantly working to make sure the forms we provide are up to date and meet your needs. Please let me know if you suggest any new forms would be useful.

The 2024 Seasonal Agreement will be released in late June. I appreciate your comments about any changes or modifications you recommend.



Mark Hazelbaker, SC
WACO Attorney

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Is your park committed to making an environmental impact? Do you prioritize sustainable practices throughout your park?

If so, your park may be eligible to participate in the ARVC Plan-It Green Friendly Park Program based on a simple evaluation of your park's current green practices. To earn this designation, your park must meet at least nine of 16 eco-friendly criteria that relate to conservation and recycling. Once you earn this designation, you can use the National ARVC Plan-It Green Friendly logo on your website and in your marketing materials to let prospective campers know that you employ the kinds of sustainable practices that are important to them. Learn more and view the criteria for Plan-it-Green designation through the link below.

I am up for re-election this Fall for National ARVC Board of Directors and would love your support again. Voting details will be out this upcoming summer.



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Growing Your Business' Website: Should You Use AI-Generated Content to Boost SEO?

Respectfully Submitted by our Sponsor, Blackhawk Bank

One way you can grow your business' online presence is through Search Engine Optimization (SEO), which centers around improving organic traffic to your website by increasing your visibility to search engines, such as Google and Bing.

To increase SEO rankings, many owners write web content that includes target keywords. The hope is that your website will rank higher for searches that include those keywords, which means more people will find your website.

However, business owners have recently turned to artificial intelligence (AI) to help them write copy with the purpose of increasing SEO rankings, creating a lot of buzz in the SEO world. We wanted to provide some background on AI-generated content, what is currently available on the market, and the pros and cons of using AI to boost your SEO.

WHAT IS ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE?

Generally speaking, artificial intelligence is the programming of computers to complete tasks and solve problems that typically require human input. It is supposed to mimic human intelligence by learning and adapting to new information.

AI has been developed over the years to help people become more efficient. Because of this, it has been adopted by many industries and trades, including marketing.

WHAT IS AI-GENERATED CONTENT?

AI-generated content is exactly how it sounds: content, such as web copy or an article, that was

written by AI. Many are utilizing AI chatbots to write fresh, relevant content that will boost engagement among readers, and be noticed by search engines.

Currently, there are two AI chatbots that are making headlines: [Microsoft's ChatGPT](#) and [Google's Bard](#). If you have not had the opportunity to try either of these out, the idea is simple: ask the chatbot a question or type a command, and it will supply an answer. These chatbots can handle a wide range of tasks, including writing copy, drafting emails, explaining computer code in different programming languages, and much more.

So, instead of a human hand at the helm of writing copy, you can ask either of these tools to write about a topic or product for you, and like magic, it appears within seconds. This is what makes AI chatbots so attractive to business owners. If you don't have time to write fresh content for your website (which has been proven to boost SEO rankings) then why not take advantage of an AI tool to write the copy for you? **However, before you begin down this track, there are some things to consider in order to ensure you are using these AI tools the best way possible.**

CONCERNS WITH USING AI-GENERATED CONTENT

Algorithms Don't Like AI Content

There are mixed responses from search engines about promoting content written by AI. Google has said that "Using automation – including AI – to generate content with the primary purpose of manipulating ranking in search results is a violation of our spam policies." In other words, Google knows what

content has been written by an AI tool and which has been written by a human, and using content written by AI to improve your SEO ranking will not fly with them.

However, for Microsoft's Bing, this appears to be a gray area. There's isn't a lot of information available regarding Bing's rules on AI generated content yet. Since they have a stake in the success of ChatGPT, owning significant shares in the parent company of ChatGPT, it makes sense that the search engine company would encourage folks to utilize the tool. However, keep in mind that folks are more concerned about SEO rankings in Google, as it continues to be the dominant search engine.

Lack of Authenticity and Creativity

Google likes content written by humans, for humans. An AI chatbot can help you deliver content that is packed full of keywords, however, it can also lead to your copy sounding robotic and unnatural, which readers could find awkward to read and perhaps disengage. So, while Google does encourage you to use keywords that you wish to rank for, the search engine promotes content that is written with a human touch.

Editing Required

While the AI chatbots are incredibly smart, they certainly are not error-proof. The content provided by the AI chatbots often needs heavy editing, which can take time. This is something that business owners need to be aware of if they wish to use the ChatGPT or Bard.

HOW AI-GENERATED CONTENT CAN HELP BUSINESS OWNERS

Taking these concerns into consideration, there are viable ways for business owners to use AI-generated content so that they can be more efficient and continue to push new copy to their website.

Here are some of our suggestions:

Research

One of the most time-consuming parts of the writing process is the research, and this is where ChatGPT or Bard may come in handy. Because the chatbots take information from across the

internet and bring it together in a cohesive way, you can save time doing upfront research about a topic. Simply ask the chatbot to provide information or articles, and you will be able to see results all in one place.

Use it as a Starting Point

Another obstacle to overcome in the writing process is creating an outline and first draft, and this is yet another great opportunity to use an AI chatbot. You can ask the AI chatbot to pull together a blog, article, or web copy on any given topic, even going as far as asking it to include specific keywords, and you can use it as a starting point.

Once you have information provided by the AI, this is where you come in to add your own knowledge and human touch. Once you're satisfied with where the draft is at, go through the normal editing and proofing process, and you have your website-ready content! Now you have copy for your website, but it will not be downgraded by Google for being strictly AI-generated content.

Social Media Posts

Another way you can utilize an AI chatbot is for social media. Having a presence on social media platforms is important, but many owners get stuck on writing copy for a post. Using a chatbot to come up with copy for a social media post can help you cut out the time it takes to draft up posts, and is an easy solution to keep engaging with your audience.

Remember: Your Customers Want to Hear from You

Yes, your customers want to hear from you, the expert in your field! There are some amazing things that AI chatbots can do to help your business grow, but nothing can replace your voice and connection with your customers.

One way that we support our clients is by helping them strengthen their online presence with SEO tactics and best practices, all so they can succeed. No matter the season you are in, Blackhawk Bank wants to help you create a solid foundation and help you achieve your goals. If you are ready to take the leap and see how we can help your business grow, our bankers can help. Contact a business banker today to learn more.

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FINANCIAL FORTE

Financial strategy, insurance, legal, and HR are the four most common pain points business owners wrestle with every day. The WACO Association is here to provide helpful tidbits wherever we can. Fortunately, we have Christine Metcalf and her staff at CSAW Associates to assist with our accounting concerns! Her last seven years of experience, specific to the campground industry, gives her a lot of insight, which translates to a lot of help for you.

Happy May from your friends at CSAW Associates, LLC! As spring turns into summer, many WACO members are opening their doors to guests for the year. As owners get closer to opening weekends, quite a few have been wondering how to make things easier, better, and faster when it comes to their books. One step owners can take is to look at their point of sale system and make sure it aligns with their Chart of Accounts and their sales tracking in their accounting.

Sound daunting? It can be, but we here at CSAW Associates are ready and willing to demystify the process and give you tips to get your books back in line and save you time and money!

KNOW YOUR POINT-OF-SALE (POS) SYSTEM

Your point of sales system is the backbone of your customer facing process. This holds all the items and services you provide and the costs. This system tracks individual item purchases and will report those sales. However, as many campground owners have learned there are numerous products out there to choose from and each has their own capabilities and quirks. Learning the capabilities of your point of sales system can save you significant time and headaches later.

Some questions to consider:

- How does your POS handle reporting?
- Does it report individual items?
- Are sales summaries available?
- How does it report sales tax, discounts, gift certificates and sales?
- Does it link up to your bookkeeping software?



The answer to these questions can have an important impact on how it will be fed back into your accounting.

KNOW YOUR CHART OF ACCOUNTS (COA)

Your Chart of Accounts is the backbone of your accounting system. It forms the structure of how your expenses and income will be organized and reported. While there are some general accounts you will see in almost any set of books from any industry, WACO owners generally have specific accounts set up in their COA to track items specific to their business. Ensuring your chart of accounts is set up correctly is critical to tax filings and ensuring you are getting the data you need from your financial reporting. Some questions to ask:

- Does your chart of account include items for anything specific you want to track?
- Do you have the accounts you need for tax filings and the general flow of your financial transactions?
- Do you have unused or duplicate accounts?

The goal when setting up your COA is to make sure you have all the accounts you need in place and then focus on what accounts you might want.

PUT THE TWO TOGETHER

Now that you know what your POS can do and what you need, and more importantly, want in your chart of accounts you can begin planning how to bring them together. Does your POS offer reporting by item? Then you may not need to duplicate this in your chart of accounts. For example, while it may be beneficial to know that on a certain day you sold 3 pairs of sunglasses, 2 cans of bug spray, and one orange



FINANCIAL FORTE

foam novelty visor, do you also need that information entered into your books or do you instead only need to know that your retail sales were \$98.36 for the day?

More details into your accounting software via entries and additional accounts in your COA can be great, but keep in mind that for them to be useful they must be used, which generally translates to higher complexities and time requirements. Many POS systems allow you to map your products to a financial account for reporting summaries. We highly recommend this option as it can summarize your daily sales directly into the correct accounts for bookkeeping. Some POS will even integrate with your bookkeeping software and do the entries for you.

Here's an example of a POS sales items tying to financial accounts in the COA:

Point of Sales	Chart of Accounts	Reporting
25 Pack Stickers	Retail Sales	
Sunglasses		
Insect Repellant		
Pizza	Food Sales	Income
Cheese Curds		
Burger		
Tent Site	Overnight Camping	
Pull through site		
Tent Site - Water		



Ultimately, you want to find a good balance of what information you can get from both your POS and bookkeeping software and the complexity you are comfortable with. Remember, keeping numerous accounts to track transactions is great for data, but comes at the cost of time and effort.



CSAW Associates
Christine & Andrew Metcalf



CSAW ASSOCIATES, LLC
COULEE REGION BOOKKEEPING & TAX

Looking for help getting your business ready for a successful 2023? We here at CSAW Associates have a wealth of experience helping new owners get their books set for success as well as helping veteran owners get their books back on track. If you're interested in learning more about how you can set your books up for success or have any other bookkeeping or payroll questions don't hesitate to reach out to us at 608-779-2143 or by email at couleebokkeeping@gmail.com. We love meeting new business owners and working with them to grow their business!

Abandoned RVs - The Next Steps

Jason Culotta (Midwest Food Products Association and formerly WMC) and Tina Severson from our WACO office met with the DOT and State Senators regarding SB-225 RV Manufacturers. They asked that we give the current forms they have in place a shot by issuing the complaint as a "Self-Storage" claim on their mv2881 Form, found here: <https://wisconsindot.gov/documents/formdocs/mv2881.pdf>.

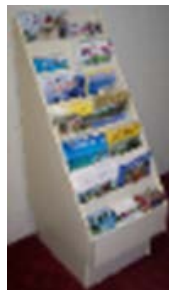


We know that the form refers to landlord/tenant language and know how hard we all worked to get that kind of language out of our Seasonal/Long-Term Stay agreements. That being said, the DOT rep asked that we do a trial run using this form to confirm whether it would work. Our next step is to ask for a guinea pig or two - either proving our point when the request is denied - or getting the property transferred to the campground owner so they can dispose of / sell the abandoned unit properly. Either way is a step in the right direction!

If you are currently experiencing issues with an abandoned RV and wish to give this a shot, we'd surely appreciate it! Send your information to tina@seversonandassociates.com so we can get you set up in our trial process! Fingers crossed, this works for our group; if not, we'll continue working on things.

WACO OUT & ABOUT

Hey, hey! That's our 2023 WACO Directories flying off the racks Travel Guides located in Michigan. Another great use of our DMO funds. Let the WACO office know if you see an uptick in out-of-state visitors to your park this year!



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WACO IN THE NEWS

Jeff Crider's articles continue to make headlines!

Check out this article from WOODALLS, featuring those of our Members who sent in their information: [WOODALLS](#)

Jeff also sent us this amazing update!

The Chicago Tribune has referenced our water activity release and included a link to WisconsinCampgrounds.com in a report highlighting trends and opportunities in camping across the country. The writer, referenced the types of water activities in Wisconsin, using wording from our release, (thanks Jeff!) and when you click on lakefront water activities in her report it will take you to your website!

This is a syndicated column so it will get picked up by newspapers in different media markets around the country.

[CHICAGO TRIBUNE](#)

<https://www.chicagotribune.com/travel/ct-taking-the-kids-camping-20230518-5eh-7gtt47nevtafmmkuofb45om-story.html>

Check out the press releases already picked up by several media outlets and below that, topics he plans to cover in this year:

Articles so far:

- [Wausau Daily Herald](#)
- [Modern Campground](#)
- [Industry e-News](#)
- [Sun Cruiser Media](#)
- [Milwaukee Journal Sentinel](#)



TOPICS:

- Wisconsin Parks that are Open in Winter
- Wisconsin's Best Parks for Canoeing, Kayaking and White Water Rafting
- Wisconsin's Newest Campgrounds
- Wisconsin Park Improvements and Expansions for the 2023 Camping Season
- Unique Accommodations at Wisconsin Parks
- Newest Activities at Wisconsin's Family Parks
- Green Bay Packer Appearances at WACO-Member Parks
- Fun Fall Activities at Wisconsin Campgrounds
- Wisconsin Parks that have or are planning to add EV charging stations this year.
- Wisconsin Parks that believe they offer some of the most affordable camping opportunities

3 Low-Cost Perks You Can Add Today

Are you looking for creative ways to enhance your customers' experience? Providing extra amenities or services can help differentiate your campground from competitors, and make your guests feel appreciated and valued. Add these three perks and you'll really stand out from the crowd!

1. **Early Check-ins:** By providing RVers with the chance to check in early, you are going to make a lot of campers very happy! After driving for multiple hours, those campers will feel mentally fatigued. The last thing they want to do is waste time in a congested parking lot waiting to check in.
2. **Late Check-Outs:** Likewise, late check-outs are great too. By offering late check-outs, you allow your guests to actually enjoy their last night on the grounds. It will create a positive last impression on them, rather than a stressful experience of trying to hurry up and meet the check-out deadline.
3. **Offer Firewood:** While some campgrounds may sell firewood, others do not. If you're looking to simplify the process of providing firewood, there are options to consider. Outsource firewood delivery to a local vendor who can provide daily deliveries to your RVers. Another option is to partner with a tree trimming company, offering them the opportunity to sell firewood at your campground in exchange for their tree trimming services.

These low-cost perks can generate positive reviews and word-of-mouth recommendations, leading to increased bookings and revenue!

This article is sponsored by **CampersCard** – a free marketing platform to give your campground exposure to 800,000 RVers.

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WACO OUT & ABOUT



Visting Baraboo RV Resort, Edge O'Dells, and Skillet Creek earlier this month. What beautiful parks! The landscaping and scenery at Skillet Creek are impeccable. The lodging options at Baraboo are located at the entrance - great marketing! And the Main lodge/office at Edge O'Dells looks like iStock photos - it's simply beautiful!



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Facebook/Instagram Insights

Total FB current likes: 9,693 (+59 from March)

Total IG current followers: 541 (+6 from March)

Top Facebook Posts in April 2023

Top-performing organic posts

Here are posts that have performed well over the last 90 days. Understanding what's working can help you decide what to create and share next, so you can keep up the great work.

Highest reach on a post



This post reached 739% more Accounts Center accounts (4,566 Accounts Center accounts) than your median post (546 Accounts Center accounts) on Facebook.

Highest reactions on a post



This post received 1,833% more reactions (58 reactions) than your median post (3 reactions) on Facebook.

Highest comments on a post



This post received 27 comments compared to your median post (3 comments) on Facebook.



Engagement for FB & IG April 2023

Engagement

Post reactions, comments and shares

330 ↓ 48.1%

Total from last 90 days vs 90 days prior



Median post reactions, comments and shares per media type

For posts created in the last 90 days

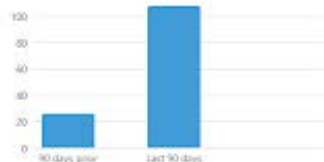


Engagement

Post likes, comments and shares

108 ↑ 315.4%

Total from last 90 days vs 90 days prior



Median post likes, comments and shares per media type

For posts created in the last 90 days



Median post likes, comments and shares per content format

For posts created in the last 90 days





15000
Lakes



300
Campgrounds



92
Days of Summer



1
Wisconsin

SOCIAL RELATIONSHIP

Top Instagram Posts in April 2023 & Last 90 Days

Top-performing organic posts

Here are posts that have performed well over the last 90 days. Understanding what's working can help you decide what to create and share next, so you can keep up the great work.

Highest reach on a post



Instagram post
All weekend long we are at the Ultimate RV Show in Minneapolis, MN! Stop by our booth and pick up your...
Feb 3, 2023, 5:05 AM

This post reached 74,356 more Accounts Center accounts (33% Accounts Center accounts) than your median post (47 Accounts Center accounts) on Instagram.

Highest likes on a post



Instagram post
All weekend long we are at the Ultimate RV Show in Minneapolis, MN! Stop by our booth and pick up your...
Feb 3, 2023, 5:05 AM

This post received 8 likes.

Highest comments on a post



Instagram post
Happy St. Patrick's Day Campers!
Mar 17, 2023, 7:03 AM

This post received 2 comments compared to your median post (0 comments) on Instagram.



April 2023 Social Media Referrals to Website



Sessions: **1,551**



Sessions via Social Referral: **497**



Conversions: **0**



Contributed Social Conversions: **0**

Social Network	Sessions	% Sessions
1. Facebook	496	99.60%
2. Twitter	1	0.20%

Jan - Apr 2023

Social Network	Sessions	% Sessions
1. Facebook	1,928	99.79%
2. Instagram	3	0.16%
3. Twitter	1	0.05%



Sessions: **4,819**



Sessions via Social Referral: **1,932**



Conversions: **0**



Contributed Social Conversions: **0**



Last Interaction Social Conversions: **0**





April 2023 Monthly Audience Overview

Continent ▾

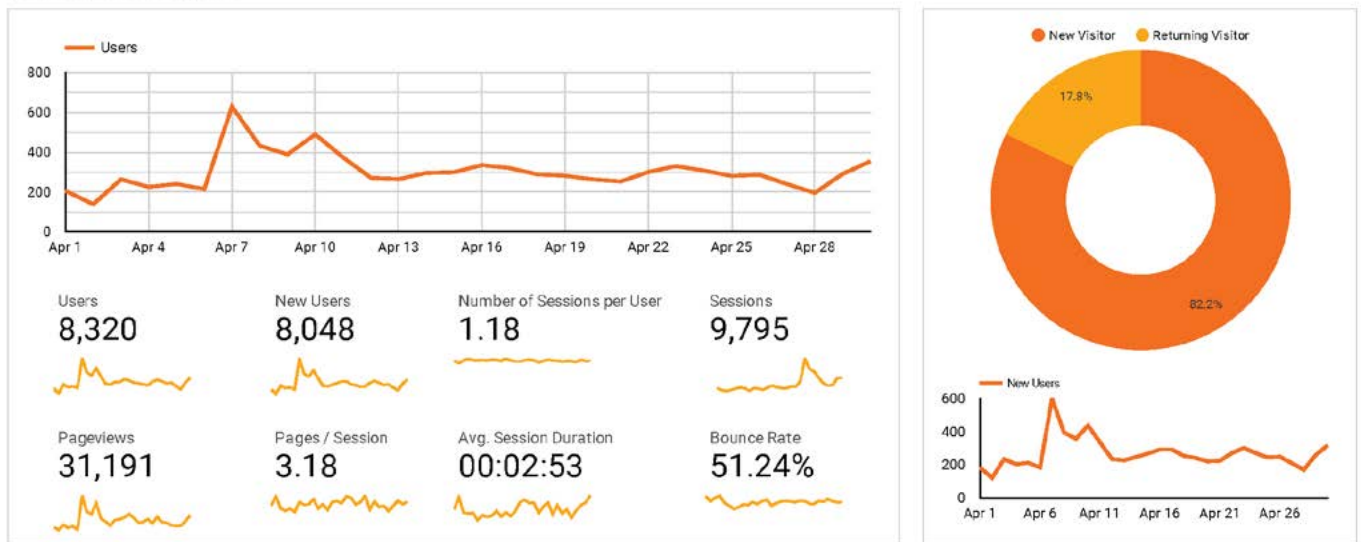
Region ▾

Channel ▾

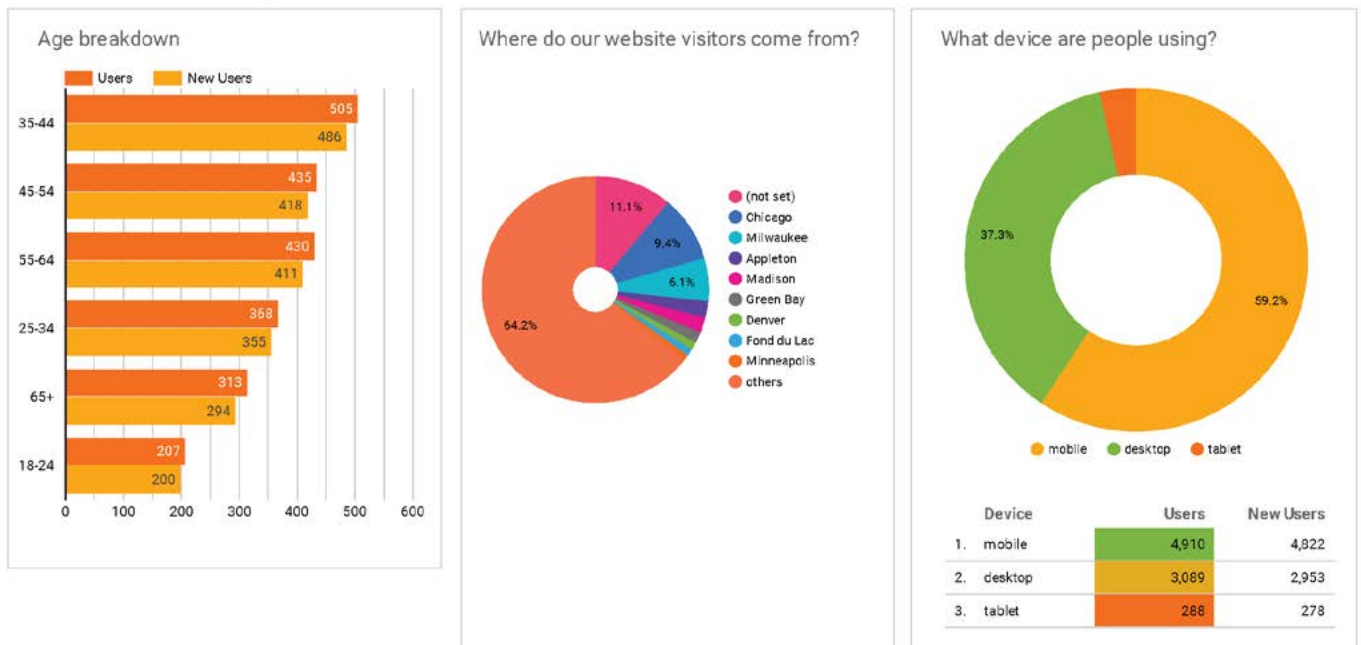
Device ▾

Apr 1, 2023 - Apr 30, 2023 ▾

Your audience at a glance



Let's learn a bit more about your users!





JAN-APR 2023 WEBSITE STATS

YTD (Jan-Apr) 2023 Audience Overview

Continent ▼

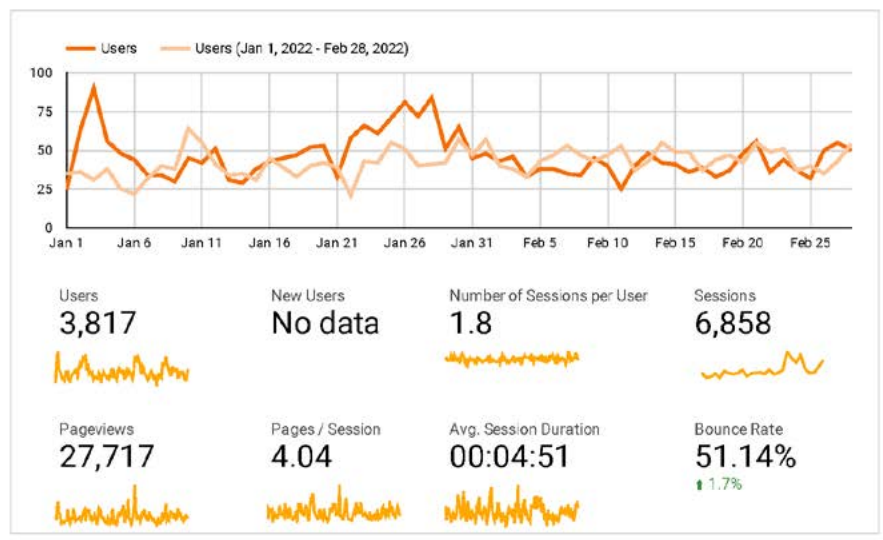
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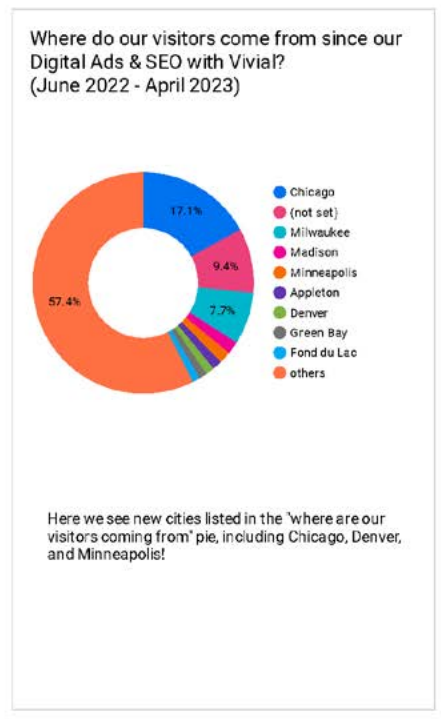
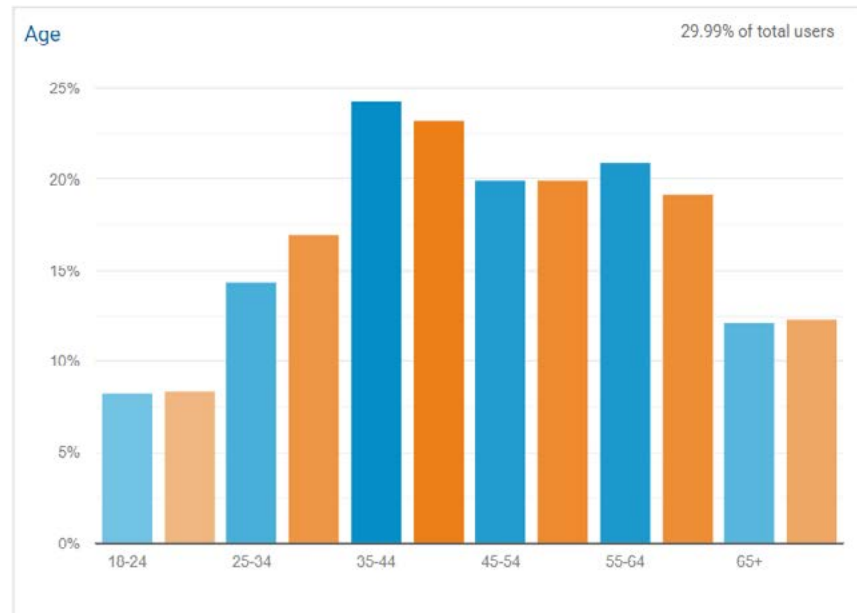
Jan 1, 2023 - Apr 30, 2023 ▼

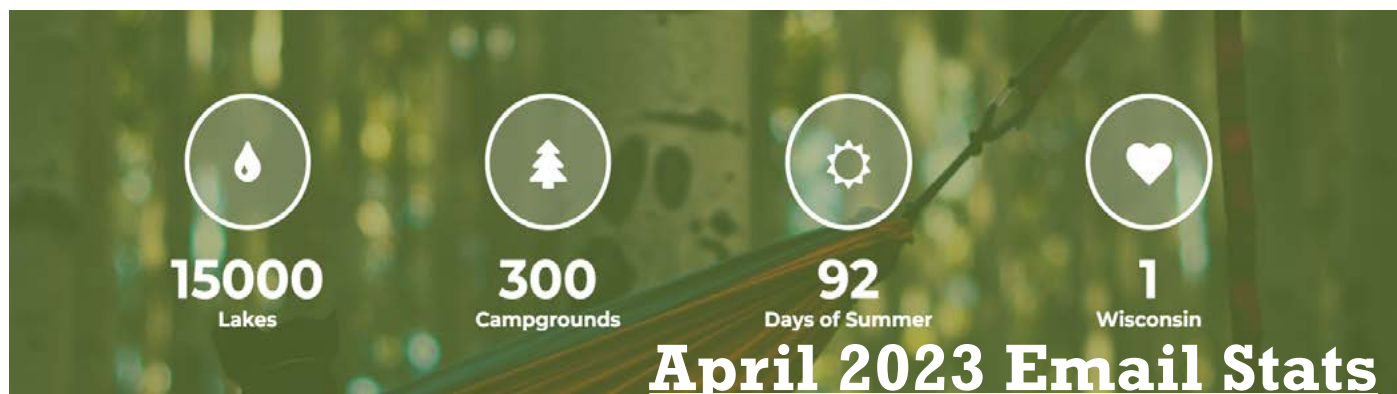
Your audience at a glance



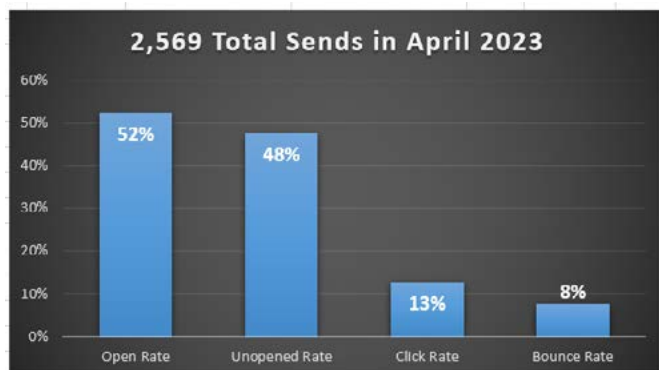
User Type	Sessions	% Δ
1. New Visitor	21,512	24.5% ↑
2. Returning Visitor	5,116	2.5% ↓

Note the increase of NEW visitors in Jan-April YTD 2023 vs 2022 - 24.5% increase in traffic!

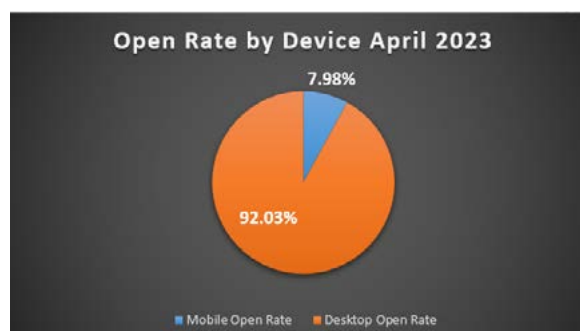




April 2023 Email Stats



April 2023 Open by Device



Top Emails by Open Rate for April 2023

Campaign Name	Sends	Opens	Open Rate	Mobile Open Rate	Desktop Open Rate	Clicks	Click Rate
Send in your Overnight Agreements	233	149	67.70%	7.00%	93.00%	0	0.00%
Abandoned RVs & Units	233	129	58.60%	5.60%	94.40%	5	2.30%
WACO Press Releases - Be in the News - 2nd Update!	233	128	58.20%	6.70%	93.30%	7	3.20%
GBF Fundraising Events	233	124	56.40%	7.70%	92.30%	14	6.40%
April 2023 Newsletter	452	236	56.20%	12.30%	87.70%	98	23.30%



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GBF Starts off 2023 **STRONG** with the **support of WACO** **MEMBERS**

We are set for a great schedule, connecting with a lot of members in the months to come! Looking forward to adjusting this chart tons and seeing all the support for GBF roll in!

Remember to check this listing for accuracy, and email tina@severso-nandassociates.com if something doesn't look right.

CAMPGROUND	Total Funds Raised
Duck Creek	\$21,000
Harbor Village	\$3,000
Smokey Hollow	\$2,128
Grand Total	\$26,128



Board of Directors

The WACO Board of Directors consists of dedicated members focused on determining the best options for your association. If you have ideas, questions, or want to get more involved, reach out to one of them or the WACO office.

 Scott Kollock, President Vista Royale Campground skollock@uniontel.net 715-335-6860 2021-2024 1st Term	 Bud Styer, Past President Jellystone Park™ Fort Atkinson mrbud@budstyerassociates.com 608-592-2128 2023-2024
 Ashley Weiss-Wegner, 1st Vice President Wilderness Campground awegner@wildernesscampground.com 608-297-2002 2018-2024 2nd Term	 Patricia Lombardo, 2nd Vice President Jenkins Org/Jellystone Park - Warrens Tricia@Jenkinsorg.com 773-294-3364 2022-2025 2 nd Term
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 Deneen Pedersen, Secretary Stoney Creek RV Resort deneen@stoneycreekrvresort.com 715-597-2102 2021-2024 1st Term	 Mike Dricken, Director Lake Lenwood Beach & Campground mmdricken@gmail.com 262-334-1335 2023-2025 1st Term
 Christina Kornetzke, Director ELS/Lake of the Woods Christina_Kornetzke@equitylifestyle.com 602-339-0698 2023-2025 1st Term	 Sarah Krause, Director River's Edge Campground camp@riversedgewisconsin.com 715-344-8058 2021-2024 1st Term
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 Mark Stefan, Director Grand Valley Campground info@grandvalleycampground.com 920-394-3643 2018-2024 2nd Term	 Jim Button, 2022 ARVC Representative Evergreen Campsites and Resort evergreencampsites@gmail.com 920-622-3498
 Adam Malsack, Chair Elect – Legislative Lake Arrowhead Campground adam@lakearrowheadcampground.com 920-295-3000 Appointed Term 2016-2023	 Lori Severson, Executive Director Severson & Associates lori@seversonandassociates.com 608-792-5915



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