



# WACO NEWS

## FEBRUARY 2024

### LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Lori Severson, Executive Director of WACO



Dear Members!

Our staff has been working on projects! We have had some fantastic meetings, and to say we face challenging industry topics is an understatement! We have been balancing schedules to get to all the zoning meetings, connect with legislators, and conduct Zoom meetings! Thank goodness we have a multi-level team! Special thanks to Scott Kollock for all his time, especially this month! We have a lot of respect in the industry for doing a great job on the state level. Let me tell you what truly makes a difference – 2 words – THE BOARD.



I have seen this many times, and you guys hear me preach this, but the board makes or breaks the Executive Director's ability to want to do outstanding things for the organization. I can tell you horror stories, and you know, the States that were successful and powerful are now split and struggling. It's about leadership, folks! I do not know how Scott has put up with my constant – "We have

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

LETTER FROM YOUR E.D.	1
A WORD FROM THE PRESIDENT	3
BOARD NOMINEES & 2ND TERM RUNNERS	7,8 & 11
OHI (ARVC) UPDATE	9
SET IT & FORGET IT FOR 2025	10
CONVENTION SPOTLIGHTS	ENTIRE ISSUE
KIDS KAMP HIGHLIGHTS	13
TAX TALK WITH HOLLY	14
KEEPING' IT LEGAL	16
WACO REMEMBERS RANDY ISAACSON	17
WOODALLS HIGHLIGHTS OUR ED!	22
SOCIAL MEDIA & WEBSITE	24
GBF UPDATES	30
BOARD LISTING	31



**CHECK OUT  
THE LATEST  
CONVENTION  
PROGRAM  
DRAFT HERE!**



## CONVENTION SPEAKER SPOTLIGHT

**Watch for this header throughout the newsletter to see who will be speaking at the 2024 Convention!**

an issue” meetings! Any time conflict arises, Scott takes on the role of a true leader. He will step back after listening to my crazy, upset rantings and then calmly state the facts and say here is what we will do. Nine times out of 10, it’s something Scott will handle. He will either talk to the individual, do the leg work, or involve other board members to take this on.

If you never listen to anything I say as an Executive director, listen to this. At my CAMP meetings (Campground Association Management Professionals), my peers spend up to 75 percent of their time justifying why they do something, worrying about what the membership thinks or says, and mainly dealing with negative thinking – warranted or not. That’s a lot of time, folks, and I think it’s what makes Executive Directors burn out – especially those without staff. Scott makes sure I know those issues of explaining why we are doing something, why we didn’t go in another direction, or why adverse reactions are his job. He gets the board to support and help with all these things and frees me up to allow creative thinking, focus on the future, and cool things we can do. Most other organizations do not have this gift. This line of thought has taken us here and will move us to bigger and better things in the future.

Think of your parks and, when you get supported, how much more you can accomplish. It’s the same thing here! We get a lot of credit for being where we are, but a strong board makes or breaks an organization. Please remember how critical this is! Indeed, it does not mean we don’t want to talk to members completely the opposite, but when there are significant conflicts, it’s so amazing to have the board and others step up and keep us all together.

The convention is upon us! Danielle and Tina have worked hard on speakers and presentations this year. Please see which classes will work for you and your business. We have tried to connect with everyone who makes decisions in our industry. DSPS has always been challenging. Specifically because of staffing changes - less turnover, but change in duties. Tina has many areas of DSPS

that deals with campgrounds covered at our convention. Remember, you need to mingle and get to know these folks well before you need them! They are the Supervisors of people you work with for your park’s projects. Our team is doing a great job gathering vital information to run our businesses.

Tina connected with a long list of most licensing departments we need to speak at the convention. Coordinating those speakers takes a load of work and scheduling, and it will be a ton of information so that you can see that. We have upped our anti on how much money you can win to spend with the outstanding trade members this year, so please sign up and be aware of all the goodies! We have thousands of dollars for you, so check it out! I love this win-win program where our vendors can get some sales. It’s so important to “shop locally.” Without the suppliers and their sponsorships, our campground registrations would be close to \$900.00 per person! If there is a comparable product at the show, please buy from these folks. Take just a minute to review your personal supplier list and ask who you buy from if they are WACO trade members.

Then, ask to see their WACO Trade Membership card. This step is essential to our bottom line and making things work budget-wise. So many vendors tell us they do not need to come to the show because our members buy from them anyway! We have great members who are very outspoken about being a WACO trade member. They don’t have to attend the convention, and it’s only \$300 to join our association as a trade member. Everyone we

This card certifies our company's support of the WACO 2024 Trade show. Thanks so much for supporting our show and our members. Please present this card to WACO members when calling on them.



Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

use should be a trade member! If we all did that, we could increase revenue like crazy! Suppliers who come to the show are indeed looking for opportunities to network with you and get to know you. They attend trade shows for product demonstrations and market studies for lead generation and brand awareness. However, the sales at the end of the day are important. They, just like us, have to show a return on their investment. We are known as a “buying show.” They need to show the boss or justify that their investment return has paid off. I also get that you want to have your orders on time, which has become even more of an issue lately. If you can not wait for the show to order, ask your salesperson to bring you a copy of your order to the convention. Make SURE it gets added to that stack of orders from this convention! That is the way to make this all work. Without the suppliers supporting us, we would absolutely not be able to make revenue from the convention. Please help me pay attention to this vital piece of WACO’s budgeting process!

The Tampa RV show was swamped with people and buyers. It was wild seeing how many people from the Midwest were there! Just hanging out at some of the distribution material areas sure proved that. Tampa RV is an electric show with a ton of energy and people genuinely interested in the future of camping! Seeing how many people were looking for our Wisconsin Directory was exciting! I’m looking forward to going to the Mid-Atlantic Conference in Orlando. New Jersey holds their convention in Orlando, and we got a bit of a late start on trying to get a group together. If New Jersey does hold their convention in Orlando again, we would consider possibly doing a Disney tunnel tour. We will have some information by convention.

Please take some time to review our schedule and give us some feedback on the layout. We aim to create a convention that works for you and your employees. We want you to leave excited and motivated so we can make 2024 your best season ever. Remember, this is your convention, and we want you to be sure it works for you! We are excited to see you soon! Thanks to all of you for helping us create our fantastic convention!

*Lori*

Lori Severson, Executive Director, WACO



## A Word from the President

Scott Kollock, WACO Board President



Dear Members,

Well, the Convention is right around the corner. It’s time to reflect on where we are and where we want to be going forward. We worked hard as a board on a strategic plan in 2022.

In almost every strategic plan, the big thing that always comes up is communication.

Communication is a tricky thing to get right! It needs constant attention, and I would say it can single-handedly be the destruction of Associations.

We must pay attention to issues and what people perceive as right or wrong. I am proud to say many people will text, email, or call Lori or myself and say, “I heard this; is this correct?” A little thing like that goes a very





## CONVENTION SPEAKER SPOTLIGHT



long way! At the office, we have worked hard to make sure communication is happening.

### Here are all the ways you can communicate with the WACO office:

- We have a **phone system** that we use called Crexendo. This system allows us to roll calls so they can be answered quickly during business hours and outside of hours if someone is available. It lets us see when we missed a call and at what time. The online portal holds our office accountable so they can quickly see if more people need to answer phones at a particular time. It also creates a log for us to track the number of incoming calls.
- We use **JotForm** to request information from our members, conduct surveys, and compile data.
- Our members can gain information from other members via our **Facebook** page, which creates another way to communicate
- You get information via our **email system**, Constant Contact.
- We send out a comprehensive **newsletter** filled with industry information, any pertinent upcoming dates, previously discussed topics members may have missed, and an update from our leadership.
- You will see the **networking options** at the fall tours and the Convention. The opportunity to talk to people going through exactly what you are or what you have is valuable!  
You can text the office staff and get an answer

very quickly.

Yes, you can still **fax** the office! 608-525-2328 is the fax number - although an email will get you a quicker response.

Another strategic plan piece was helping the membership and creating an engaged board. We talked about the makeup of the board and how important that is. Lori has been preaching this one since she joined us. It's critical to have history, new owners, experienced owners, large and small owners, and our legacy all at the table. The more different the personalities are, the better decisions are made. The challenging part is when you have a lot of different personalities, you have conflict. It's a part of the process, so please understand that it does happen and for good reason, but at the end of the day, we all agree to 100 percent support the organization and the decision.

A solid leadership group willing to work through things and put the time in makes a difference - and we are lucky to have BOTH of those things happening in our Association. After traveling around to see other State and local associations, it gives you something to compare to. We must remember what's working because many things are going our way! In some cases, I am amazed at how organized and successful we are compared to other state associations. Honestly, many of those doing a great job have learned things from us, and that's cool, too.

### OPPORTUNITIES:

- We have worked on programs to educate and grow the membership. The biggest thing we know that works after trying so many other programs is the Free Convention when a new member joins. Getting them to the Convention instantly helps them navigate the most challenging years. We finally found what works!
- Working on more networking opportunities – other conventions, cracker barrels – has undoubtedly been a priority! We are getting great feedback on doing a better job in this area. Stay tuned for the fun opportunity to work with

New Jersey at their Florida convention next year!

- We are keeping an eye on the directory and print. Print is still alive and well, but we are exploring what we will need to do when the transition comes so we are ready. We currently have a program with a flyer and QR codes that works for some people. Last year, we ran out of directories early on, and we had enough complaints from distributors who were hearing from their customers that they still wanted the print, so we understand, for now, that's the way to go. TACO has taken on a survey process that we are participating in that will not only generate leads for directories but ask the consumer questions about the directory, how they use it, where they use it, and would they pay for it so we can gather information for our advertisers and have the data for our records.

some wicked skills for detail and working with regulators and legislators, so this has been a significant improvement area for us and has taken us to the next level.

- We have reviewed our relationship with Severson & Associates – we had these things included in our Strategic Plan.

**STRENGTHS:** (Listed from most important to keep focusing on to least important)

- **Expertise** - Having the #1 Exec. Dir. - getting on RVAI was a homerun.
- **RVIA** – has valuable data for consumers and regulation. This group is a powerhouse of resources and capital. Lori has again been selected to meet with this group on March 5th to determine how we can work better together and attend their conference.
- **Relationships** with KOA, COE, CAMP, GBF,



- We are working hard to create relationships with everyone who regulates our industry. Please check out the convention program to see our success in this area. Almost every agency that governs our industry is listed in the schedule. That is powerful. Tina has

etc., bring a lot to the table. Lori has attended the events listed above and the RV shows where she learned of Industry Day – the Tuesday before the show gets started, all the vendors get together to talk – this would be an excellent opportunity to work with them—going and trying to speak to them.

- Ability to **create unity** with the campgrounds.
- **Directory** - Advertising options -Keeping this a product that doesn't cost us anything – we usually get it paid for.
- **Government Relationships**- Tina is taking this to the next level with representation from DNR, DSPS (several divisions), DATCP, and more – meeting these people can prove invaluable to you down the road. These are the people who your inspectors report to.
- **Conscious Behavior** - thinking through everyone's feelings/views when making decisions- is a never-ending project. Making sure that every member feels heard and appreciated is something we work at every day. When I hear of a problem, I usually get in the car and visit to be sure the facts are communicated. Lori hears many good things about this, so I guess I'll keep it up.
- **Newsletter** - Tina has taken this document to a new level as well. She includes plenty of information and data that our members sure seem to love. Several other states have commented about it and asked to “borrow” our information, so that says something about the quality.
- **Convention & Fall Tours** - we have had record-breaking attendance in this area. It is a benefit members like. If members are unavailable in the winter or for the Convention, this has become an opportunity to get the information and networking accomplished!
- **Teamwork:**
  - » Everyone is very diverse in their skill set
  - » All the volunteers - Lori's large family – were identified as a considerable strength, and the volunteers we get to put this conference on are impressive – we have continued to grow this. Unlike other conferences where they have to pay up to \$20K to put on a Kids Kamp, we can do it cost-effectively, mainly due to the volunteers and their creativity!

When Lori asked members, “Why don't you attend the Convention?” Daycare was the #1 reason. To the people who have kids, this is a very needed resource and immediately boosted our attendance. Our vendors are also using the program - who knows how many of those folks wouldn't be able to attend without this benefit?



» With all the time put in for WACO, there is no doubt that the Severson team puts in the hours. Lori will tell you it's because she fell in love with the industry and the people. She will credit the board for always pitching in wherever needed and giving her room to try new things and be allowed to fail.

- **Vision and Collaboration:** We are ahead of the game mainly because Lori reaches out to many associations and can see the vision for the future. Supporting the staff has allowed us to broaden this even further.

#### WEAKNESSES:

- **Could be hindered by the same things as WACO** (negativity, etc.) I know Lori struggles with this one a lot. It's challenging not to take things personally when you have worked this hard at something for this long. We all struggle when a customer or a coworker says negative things about your park. It's the same for her. I know, and I think most of you know, she always has the best interest of WACO in mind. So many times, people see a little bit of something and draw the wrong conclusion. I am happy to see so many people taking the time to thank her for where she took us. Overall, it's been a cool ride, and we are one of the best, if not the best, state associations!
- **Lack of lower-level task do-ers** – this year, Severson has hired data entry people



and has added to the staff to ensure that all directory requests, stuffing, and mailings go out on time.

Too much paper - This is a hard one as we still have a lot of members who want to take that piece of paper. This one is like the directory. Likely, at some point, the need will get less, but right now, even many techy people still want that paper. We are working to lessen that wherever possible.



- **Too many tasks to do** - This is the truth, but I'm not sure Lori would want it any other way. She has often called her other executive directors (the Bunny Slippers people – these folks walk out of meetings at 4 pm because they have the hours contracted in and only do what they are paid for - no more). It's important to her and her team to keep up on the cutting edge of things and continuously improve because it's so easy to get complacent. The board ensures the projects Severson takes on are valuable and something we want to pay for. We prioritize the tasks that give us the most bang for our buck!
- **Too nice** – this one is tough too. Lori will tell you it's difficult to enforce rules for people she feels are important customers. There has to be a balance between regulations and making too many exceptions. This balance is always a work in progress.

#### Severson & Associates Continues to...

- Create connections with the right people
- Continue to focus on the things you are doing

As you can see, we are accomplishing things and have a strong association from the budget to the members. Thank you for allowing us to continue growing this fantastic organization. Without your support, we could never be where we are today.

See you at the Convention!

Scott

Scott Kollock, WACO Board President,  
Owner at Vista Royale Campground

## Running for a 2nd Term



Scott is a second generation owner of Vista Royale Campground in Bancroft, Wi. The park was built by his family 45 years ago and has been ran by them since day one. Scott has valuable long term experience with all aspects of the camping business. Scott loves camping and looks forward to promoting it and WACO into the future. Scott is now serving as President of the WACO Board of Directors.

Should you wish to nominate another owner, send in their picture and bio to [tina@seversonandassocaites.com](mailto:tina@seversonandassocaites.com) just like Ben Stefen and Lea Ann Gieck, mentioned later in the newsletter, along with 2nd term nominees: Kristi Mlodzik, Deneen Pederson, and Sarah Krause.

# Running for a 2nd Term

The following Board Members are willing to run for an additional term in March 2024 - if you have an interest in running for one of the other two board openings, be sure to let the office know!

## KRISTI MLODZIK

### Duck Creek Campground



Kristi Mlodzik, was born and raised on a Dairy Farm in Green Lake County and always involved in 4-H, where she was involved in leadership programs. She loves sewing, doing Crafts and just repurposing things. After High School, she went to Cosmetology School in Green Bay and has been a Hair Stylist for 36 years. Kristi owned a salon for 7 years and managed other salons while raising children and working in another business with her sister-in-law, "Jill's of all Trades". Always staying busy! When Denny and I started to look at a business to buy, we had camped for years with our family and Grandchildren. We had enough of working for someone else. We bought Duck Creek Campground after touring several Campgrounds. I have always been a people person so being in the Campground Industry is just perfect because it is everyone's "Happy Place." I would like to be on the Board of WACO. I am a firm believer of WACO. When we were on the hunt for Campground to buy we could tell the difference in Campgrounds that were WACO Members or not based on the support behind them. WACO is a wonderful organization of support and knowledge.

## DENEEN PEDERSEN

### Stoney Creek RV Resort

I started my campground career in high school working the front desk at Jellystone Park in Warrens, WI. I worked my way up to management. Over my 25+ years at Jellystone, I was the Director of Entertainment and Retail Services. I was monumental in growing the recreational program, developing a large, award-winning retail store, and running the day-to-day operations at the 1,000 site campground. In 2014, along with my husband, Brian, and mother, Joyce, we purchased Stoney Creek RV Resort in Osseo, WI. Stoney Creek has 233 sites with a newly finished expansion, with new RV sites, one-acre swim pond with wrap around beach with Wibits, and a new snack bar/retail space serving homemade pizza, hard scoop ice cream, Island Oasis Drinks, groceries, beach supplies and more. We are approaching our 10 year anniversary at Stoney Creek and can't imagine a better business to run with my family and share with generations to come. I have thoroughly enjoyed my last 3 years on the WACO board, and over 30+ years as a WACO member; I hope to continue to serve this organization and industry that I truly love.



## SARAH KRAUSE

### C&D Hospitality



I am thrilled to be running for my second term on the Waco Board, drawing upon my eight years of invaluable experience at C & D Hospitality. Passionate about the camping industry, I have cultivated a deep appreciation for its intricacies and have been privileged to contribute to its growth.

My journey at C & D Hospitality has not only honed my skills but instilled in me a profound love for the camping sector. Embracing the collaborative spirit of the industry, I find joy in learning from my peers and fostering a sense of community.

As a current member of the board, I have relished the opportunity to actively contribute to shaping the future of the camping industry. Being part of the board allows me to play a pivotal role in creating cherished family memories through the growth and development of our beloved industry.

Join me in this endeavor to continue building a thriving camping community that leaves a lasting impact on families and enthusiasts alike. Your support will propel us towards a future where the camping industry flourishes, making memories for generations to come.





**OHI, your national association, offers numerous member benefits that you should not overlook. Remember the advocacy efforts made on behalf of members. Enjoy exclusive music licensing and take advantage of discounted rates through OHI member discounts to calculate your savings. The more informed you are, the better choices you can make. National schooling is approaching at the end of the month. Don't overlook the advocacy efforts Jeff Sims has outlined in the AHA newsletter. Find me at the conference, and I'll be happy to discuss the benefits and advocacy on a national level. OHI is committed to its members and will always stand united with them.**



**Jim Button**

**Savings Calculator**

## **UPCOMING OHI EVENTS**

- **February 25-March 1, 2024—The George O'Leary National School of Outdoor Hospitality will take place at Oglebay in West Virginia. Expecting another record-breaking attendance.**
- **May 5-7, 2024—Members of the OHI team will be traveling to Washington DC to advocate for the outdoor hospitality industry alongside other members of the Outdoor Recreation Roundtable (ORR).**
- **June 2-6, 2024—Members of the OHI team, alongside selected campground owners/operators, will be traveling to Washington DC to participate in RVs Move America and will host separate meetings with lawmakers on topics specifically important to the outdoor hospitality industry.**
- **November 4-7, 2024—OHCE2024 will take place in Oklahoma City, OK. More than \$50 million in business was done on the tradeshow floor at OHCE2023 in Kansas City, so the OHI team is already planning for an even bigger show this year!**

## **NEW THIS YEAR AT CONVENTION!** **SET IT, AND FORGET IT!**

Stop by the WACO Membership booth at Convention (across from the Lemonade stand) to chat with Danielle or Tina and go through the membership checklist! This list will help to make sure you are taking full advantage of your WACO membership and all of the benefits available to you! Stop by for a quick 10-minute chat to...



**DANIELLE TODD**

- Check your WACO website listing to be sure everything is up-to-date. Be sure to bring photos on a flash drive if you need to update or add photos (up to four) to your listing!
- Sign up for any advertising you want to participate in for the 2025 season.
- Calculate your dues for the 2025 season and schedule your payment date to save you the 3% for the early bird discount!
- Make sure you're in our Members Only Facebook group.
- Be sure you have access to our Members Only section of the website!
- Ask any questions you may have about membership, how certain benefits work, who to contact for certain questions, etc.



**TINA SEVERSON**

**BRING THE QUESTIONS – WE'LL FIND THE ANSWERS!**

**Earn up to \$8000 to spend at  
this year's Trade Show!**



**Earn up to \$3000  
in WACO Bucks!**



**Check out the Convention Program here  
to see how to earn your tickets!**

# 2024-2025 BOARD NOMINEES

**AT THE ANNUAL MEETING,  
SAT. MARCH 16**

I am Ben Stefan and my family has owned and operated Grand Valley Campground since 2005. I grew up working in the campground from a young age. As a second-generation owner I now work full time at the campground with my parents, brother, wife and sister-in-law. I also worked as a Systems Engineer in the IT department at Moraine Park Technical College for 10 years while working at the campground every weekend. WACO has helped my family grow our campground in so many ways. I hope to be on the WACO board to give back and share the knowledge that I have learned from WACO over the past 20 years.



My name is Lea Ann Gieck, and I am writing to express my keen interest in joining the WACO Board of Directors. Having recently "retired" from my role as the Regional Vice President in Human Resources/Staffing, where I managed a team of 70 and oversaw operations across 20+ office locations, I bring a wealth of expertise in developing people, implementing system and process improvements, and leading teams to surpass financial targets.

My professional background is complemented by my current role as co-owner and operator of Skillet Creek Campground, a venture my husband and I purchased in 2021. Over the past three seasons, I have successfully collaborated with government entities, contractors, engineers, and surveyors to expand the campground, adding over 100 RV sites, 9 rental units, and a 1-acre swimming pond. Additionally, I manage the front-end operations, including the camp store, reservations, customer service, and activities. My proficiency in marketing allows me to contribute to the business's success with a keen eye for content and graphics.

I take pride in my ability to excel in execution, consistently delivering high-quality products and services within deadlines. Joining the WACO Board of Directors is an opportunity for me to give back to an organization from which I have gained invaluable information, connected with the right resources and people, and continue to grow in the industry. I firmly believe that my diverse skill set and experiences make me a valuable candidate for the position.

I am excited about the prospect of contributing to the success and growth of WACO, and I am confident that my background aligns well with the organization's mission. I appreciate your time and consideration and look forward to the possibility of discussing how I can contribute to the Board further.



CONVENTION  
ENTERTAINMENT  
BEGINS WEDNESDAY  
NIGHT WITH OUR  
**BIG TOP  
RECEPTION**



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Vice President - Leisure & Hospitality

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Cell: 608-343-6563



Serving Iowa, Illinois, Nebraska & Wisconsin

**ZACH KAPLER**

OPERATIONS MANAGER  
zkapler@harrisgolfcars.com

155 N. Crescent Ridge  
Dubuque, IA 52003

Sales Direct: 563-538-6331

Store: 563-582-7390

Office: 563-538-6650

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Mead Park  
WEDNESDAY



NEW

NEW

Dino Encounters  
Wed/Thurs/Sat



Skate City  
Roller Rink  
FRIDAY



NEW



Food + Farm  
Exploration  
Center  
WEDNESDAY

BOWL

NEW



Skipp's  
Bowling Center  
THURSDAY

NEW

Sawmill Adventure  
Park



Trampoline  
Park  
THURSDAY



Pallets &  
Planks  
FRIDAY  
PM



# TAX TALK



**Sales & Income**  
TAX ADVISORY NETWORK



## FOR THE LOVE OF CREDIT CARD “SWIPE” FEES

**RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED BY, HOLLY HOFFMAN**

This month I am bringing to your attention Wisconsin Department of Revenue's Wisconsin Tax Bulletin #224, January 2024, article reminding retailers that credit card fees you pass on to customers are included in the taxable sales price of the item you are selling. If the item/service you are selling is taxable, the credit card 3% or 4% fee you add on is also going to be taxable.

Your POS systems can make taxing the fee difficult if the fee is added AFTER tax is calculated. You will need to plan for this in your invoicing/reporting and determine which way you will address it so you remit the correct amount of tax to the State. During an audit, you will be liable for tax on the credit card fees so it's worth formulating a solid taxation plan to avoid risk.

Remember – if the Department of Revenue is writing about it, they are seeing significant issues. It also means they are not going to accept excuses because they published guidance.

### **Sales Tax Treatment of Credit Card "Swipe" Fees**

A retailer may charge a "swipe" fee to a

customer using certain credit cards for payment.

A "swipe fee" is included in the sales price, as defined in sec. 77.51(15b), Wis. Stats. Therefore, if the product or service being sold is taxable and the retailer chooses to charge a "swipe" fee, sales or use tax applies to the total amount charged by the retailer for the product or service, which includes the amount charged for the "swipe" fee.

Example: Individual purchases a new television for \$599 at Retailer's store. Individual pays using a credit card. Retailer charges Individual a 3% "swipe" fee on the \$599 selling price.

Retailer's taxable receipts from the sale of the television are computed as follows:

Selling price of television
\$599.00
"Swipe" fee charged by Retailer
$(\$599.00 \times .03) = \$17.97$
Taxable receipts
\$616.97

If the credit card is used to pay for both taxable and nontaxable products or services, the retailer may



allocate the "swipe" fee between the taxable and nontaxable purchases. In this case, the sales tax applies to the total amount charged for the taxable products or services, which includes the "swipe" fee charged on the taxable products or services.

Example: Individual goes to Grocery Store and purchases exempt food items in the amount of \$65 and taxable items in the amount of \$28. Individual pays using credit card. Grocery Store charges Individual a 3% "swipe" fee on the \$93 (\$65 + \$28) total selling price. Grocery Store's taxable receipts are determined as follows:

Selling price of taxable items : \$28.00  
"Swipe" fee on taxable items charged by Retailer ( $\$28.00 \times .03$ ) = \$0.84  
Taxable receipts \$28.84

For more help, turn to Holly Hoffman at Sales Tax Advisory Network to get the Sales Tax Audit Protection Plan! Contact: [holly@salestaxlady.com](mailto:holly@salestaxlady.com)

## Stevens Point Area CVB SPEAKERS

### THURSDAY

#### THE ABCs of SEO:

This beginner's workshop equips you with strategies to improve your SEO ranking to stay ahead in today's competitive digital landscape.

#### SOCIAL MEDIA BASICS:

Through a hands-on activity, you will leave equipped with a plan to leverage social media effectively for the upcoming season!



MEGAN  
VRUWINK



TAYLOR  
GREENHECK



TESSA  
NIEBERLE



CONVENTION  
SPEAKER SPOTLIGHT

# 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, available for 15-min free consultations once we've gathered your information.*

*We've created a form specific to legal questions: <https://form.jotform.com/240223765436051> to help gather the information and upload any documents related to the question!*

## SEASONAL SITUATIONS & EMPLOYEE LAW YOU SHOULD KNOW

### Watch for these Topics & More at Convention!



**MARK  
HAZELBAKER**

**WACO  
ATTORNEY**

#### THURSDAY

**FOR THE LOVE OF  
ALL THINGS  
SEASONAL:**

Everything you need  
to get through your  
season, with the  
Seasonals!

#### FRIDAY

**HOW UP TO DATE IS  
YOUR HIRING  
PROCESS?**

Resident Managers,  
employee agreements,  
job descriptions, onsite  
housing and the new  
Verification forms



### CONVENTION SPEAKER SPOTLIGHT

### ALL LEGAL QUESTIONS SHOULD COME TO THE OFFICE FIRST!

This step ensures we're capturing data for **ALL OUR MEMBERS** to benefit from and the point of having a legal hotline. If you go to Mark directly, **YOU WILL BE CHARGED** accordingly! Even anonymous information is still fantastic information to help your fellow members, so please use the

### NEW LEGAL HOTLINE JOTFORM

### LEGAL HOTLINE JOTFORM

As a member, once you've submitted your information, you're entitled to a 15-minute free consultation with Mark if we don't have the answer in our files - but in most cases, your questions are similar to those from other members!

Want to talk through your question before completing the form? Call us at 608-525-2327 or email



[tina@seversonandassociates.com](mailto:tina@seversonandassociates.com)!

## WE ARE HERE TO HELP



# **Randy Isaacson,** **Industry Leader & WACO Member** **Remembered**

By: Jeff Crider | [Published on: Feb 22, 2024](#)



Randy Craig Isaacson, a longtime campground industry lender who worked with his family to build the Jellystone Park Camp-Resort in Caledonia, Wis., to become one of the most celebrated locations in the Yogi Bear-themed network, has died after a courageous battle with cancer. He was 69.

“Randy was a banker who fell in love with the camping industry. He was very instrumental in helping shape the Jellystone Park system of today,” said Rob Schutter, Jr., president of Camp Jellystone, the Southfield, Mich.-based company that franchises Jellystone Park Camp-Resorts across North America.

“Randy not only worked with his family to build the Caledonia location into one of the most successful, award-winning Jellystone Park locations in the franchise, but he also regularly shared his insights with other park operators across the country. Randy was truly one of a kind, a good friend and he will be greatly missed by all of us,” Schutter said.

Isaacson was born April 18, 1954, in Madison, Wis., growing up on the Pine Knoll farm in Drammen Township just outside of Mondovi, where he loved riding his pony, Rowdy. After graduating from Mondovi High School in 1972, Isaacson graduated from LeTourneau University in Longview, Texas. During his college years, Isaacson met his wife, Theresa, whom he married in 1978. They soon had three daughters, Rachel, Bridget and Marley, who would later work with them in the campground business in Wisconsin.

Isaacson worked as a campground lending coordinator with CCF Bank (formerly United Bank), eventually originating \$150 million worth of campground loans in 23 states. He regularly shared his insights with current and aspiring park operators on how to apply for campground financing in general as well as how to obtain financing for campground expansions and improvements.





Isaacson also helped park operators understand the complexities of the loan process, the terminology lenders use as well as the impact of weather on construction projects and park revenues.

He found his way into campground lending after a friendly chat with the son of the owner of the Jellystone Park in Warrens, Wis., where he loved to camp. "This encounter paved the way for

Randy to pioneer campground financing, leading him to lend for many campgrounds across the U.S., which enhanced his love for the industry and commitment to helping other owners become successful," the Isaacson family said in a statement.

In 2005, Isaacson joined a business partner in becoming part owner of the Jellystone Park in Caledonia, which he worked to improve over the years with his family's help.

"Over the years, all three daughters, along with several grandchildren, became integral to the family business," the Isaacson family said in a statement, adding, "The campground became a fully family-owned venture with the Isaacson family, a source of immense pride for Randy."

Randy Isaacson and his family turned the Jellystone Park Camp-Resort in Caledonia, Wis., into one of the most celebrated parks in the Camp Jellystone system.

In 2022, the Jellystone Park Camp-Resort in Caledonia was ranked among the 10Best Luxury RV Resorts in USA Today's 10Best 2022 Readers' Choice competition. That same year, Isaacson received Camp Jellystone's Jim Webb Spirit Award. The award, named after Jim Webb, who played a major role in the success of the Jellystone Park franchise network during its formative years and beyond, is awarded to the franchisee who best embodies the same

tireless spirit, enthusiasm and commitment to the Jellystone Park brand that Mr. Webb displayed.



In 2021, the Caledonia park received the highest level of recognition in the Jellystone Park franchise network when it was named Camp Resort of the Year.

"Randy was a big kid at heart, finding joy in building a dream for his kids and grandkids, as well as creating something for families like yours to enjoy," the Isaacson family said in their statement, adding, "This past summer, Randy took 11 of his 12 grandkids

on a trip across states in a motorhome, allowing them the opportunity to enjoy camping, learn about history and spend quality time together. He loved teaching them about giving back and serving others."

In addition to working in campground and finance industries, Isaacson served on the Mondovi School Board for 18 years and Mondovi Ambulance Service for 30 years.

A celebration of Isaacson's life will take place from 1 to 4 p.m. Sunday, March 10, at the Marten Center in Mondovi.

"Randy had a passion for helping people in need, including those suffering in Ukraine," his family stated. "In lieu of flowers, the family will be directing memorials to organizations he was passionate about."

**Join us at the Convention  
in celebrating our member  
since 2009, as we present  
Randy's family with the  
2024 WACO Hall of Fame  
Award Saturday night.**



## 2024 WACO DIRECTORY NOW AVAILABLE ONLINE

Physical copies are available for mailing and pick up! You're welcome to check out the final version online as well - Click on the QR Code to the left to check it out today! **DON'T FORGET TO PICK UP YOUR DIRECTORIES AT CONVENTION TO EARN MORE TICKETS!!**







# CONVENTION SPEAKER SPOTLIGHT

## THURSDAY

**Food Safety:**  
**Keep Your Snack  
Shacks Up to Code**



**JAMES KAPLANEK**

**DATCP Panel**  
**If you miss a DATCP  
Session, attend this Q&A!**



**REED MC ROBERTS,  
JAMES, MARY ELLEN  
& TED**

**Pool Code  
Conversations**



**MARY ELLEN  
BRUESCH**

**LEGIONALLA:**  
**What you Need to Know!**



**TED TUCHALSKI**



**BRUCE MEINERS,  
GUEST FROM DHS**

### DATCP

**Department of  
Agriculture, Trade and  
Consumer Protection**

The DATCP, one of WACO's long-time standing state partners, will be available Wednesday and Thursday for several sessions to ensure all our members know codes and requirements for a successful season and avoid issues on your inspections!







# CONVENTION SPEAKER SPOTLIGHT

## DSPS

Department of  
Safety &  
Professional  
Services

WACO knows who you need to connect with for a successful season and many of those contacts are from DSPS! This convention, we've got **FOUR** sessions of seminars presented by DSPS Representatives in Amusement Rides, Camping Units, Electrical and POWTS!

**YOU ASKED, WE ARE DELIVERING!**

### THURSDAY

#### AMUSEMENT RIDES

Yes, a Jumping Pillow is an "Amusement Ride!"



ANDREW AMACHER  
& TIM CONDON

### POWTS

KATIE  
PETZEL



ELECTRICAL  
CRAIG MULDER



CAMPING UNITS  
JACK WORTRUBA



ANDERS  
HELQUIST



### FRIDAY

Hot 3 Legal Issues: Zoning,  
Waivers, and Reviews



JASON  
CULOTTA

### THURSDAY

Legislation Today: What happens  
on the hill impacts your business!

# LORI SEVERSON SET TO SPEAK AT 3 EVENTS, 'GIVING BACK'

[\*Woodalls Campground Magazine\*](#) | Published on: Feb 21, 2024

Lori Severson is one of the few campground association executives who owns and operates a campground, according to a press release.

Severson has been the executive director of the Wisconsin Association of Campground Owners (WACO) for 27 years, but she's also owned and operated Champions Riverside Resort in Galesville, Wis. for the past 13 years, an experience that has prompted her to learn as much as she can to improve her park because her livelihood is at stake as well as that of her daughter, Tina, and Goddaughter, Danielle, who also help her with her responsibilities at WACO, as well as their family campground business.

In recent years, however, Severson has increasingly recognized the value in giving back to the private park industry, not only in her home state of Wisconsin but in states across the country.

"I like to give seminars and share some of the best tips I've learned along the way with other campground operators," said Severson, who will lead a seminar today (Feb. 21), the final day of the Mid Atlantic Conference and Tradeshow, which is taking place this week in Lake Buena Vista, Fla.

Severson's presentation is titled "Campground Victory: Energizing, Empowering, Excelling and Boosting Your Business." She will make the same presentation at the annual Spring Meeting and Trade Show of the Texas Association of Campground Owners (TACO), which is scheduled for April 30-May 1 in Conroe, Texas, and at the annual Campground Owners Expo (COE), which is slated for Dec. 4-7 in Branson, Mo.

Severson and longtime campground owner and industry consultant Bud Styer have been organizing the annual COE every December since 2021.

Severson sees COE not only as another opportunity to provide education and networking opportunities for park operators but as an opportunity for campground operators in states that do not have an association to meet with one another and take

steps to form state associations of their own.

"We're trying to meet the needs of the park owners and operators," Severson said, adding that she likes to help those with an interest in developing their own state associations.

Of course, the conventions are also a time for park operators to network with one another and simply have fun. This year's COE includes a comedy show for the first time.

Sarah Krause, a campground owner who serves on WACO's board, said she never misses a chance to hear Severson speak.

"I've learned so much from her," she said. "I've learned how to manage my employees better. How to deal with customers better. How to plan, organize and train better."



Lori Severson (middle) works on giving back to the industry, including her work with the Campground Association of Management Professionals (C.A.M.P)

Severson has also helped WACO board members communicate better with one another.

"She has taken the time to train us on how to communicate better with each other, and to understand how each of us learns, listens and reacts," noted Krause.

Of course, these are also skills that private park operators can use as they communicate with park managers, staff members and customers.



Even longtime campground industry officials find they can learn something from Severson.

“The first training session in which I experienced Lori’s skills was so long ago I still had brown hair. Yet, I still remember every bit of it,” said Mary Arlington, who serves as executive director for campground industry associations in Colorado, South Dakota and Kansas. “I was astonished at the lengthy list of tips, insights and Ah Ha revelations she added to my management tools.”



## CONVENTION SPEAKER SPOTLIGHT



**LORI  
SEVERSON  
WACO  
Executive  
Director**

### **WEDNESDAY**

**PERSONALITY STYLES**

**CAMPGROUND  
VICTORY**

### **THURSDAY**

**FINDING GREAT HELP**

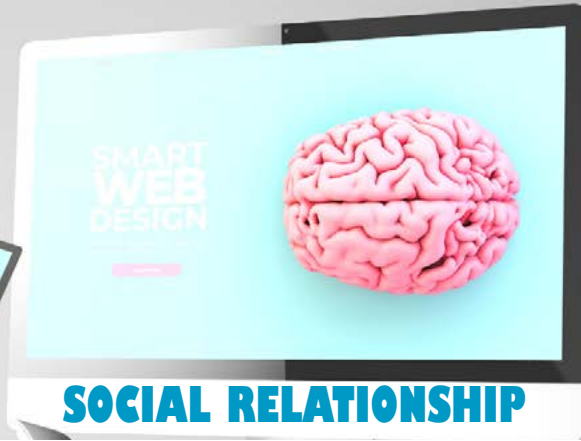
### **FRIDAY**

**STRATEGIES OF THE  
MOUSE**

**THINGS SUCCESSFUL  
PEOPLE DO**



# WACO WEB



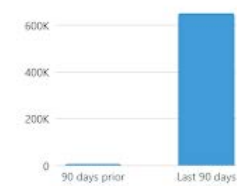
## SOCIAL RELATIONSHIP

### Reach

#### Post reach

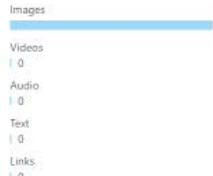
651.1K ↑ 8.1K%

Total from last 90 days vs 90 days prior



#### Median post reach per media type

For posts created in the last 90 days



#### Median post reach per content format

For posts created in the last 90 days



## LAST 90 Facebook



## LAST 90 IG

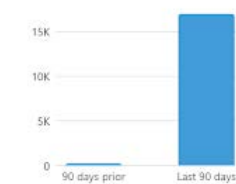


### Engagement

#### Post reactions, comments and shares

17K ↑ 7.0K%

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



#### Median post reactions, comments and shares per content format

For posts created in the last 90 days

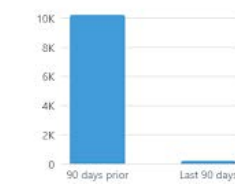


### Reach

#### Post reach

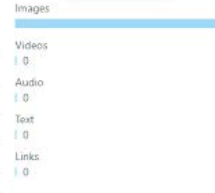
206 ↓ 98%

Total from last 90 days vs 90 days prior



#### Median post reach per media type

For posts created in the last 90 days



#### Median post reach per content format

For posts created in the last 90 days



### Engagement

#### Post likes, comments and shares

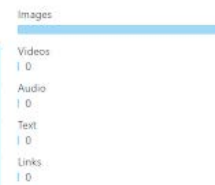
82 ↑ 3.8%

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



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## Facebook/Instagram Insights

Total FB current likes: 10,381 (+135 from December)

Total IG current followers: 580 (+2 from December)

## Top Facebook Posts in Past 90 Days - Jan 2024

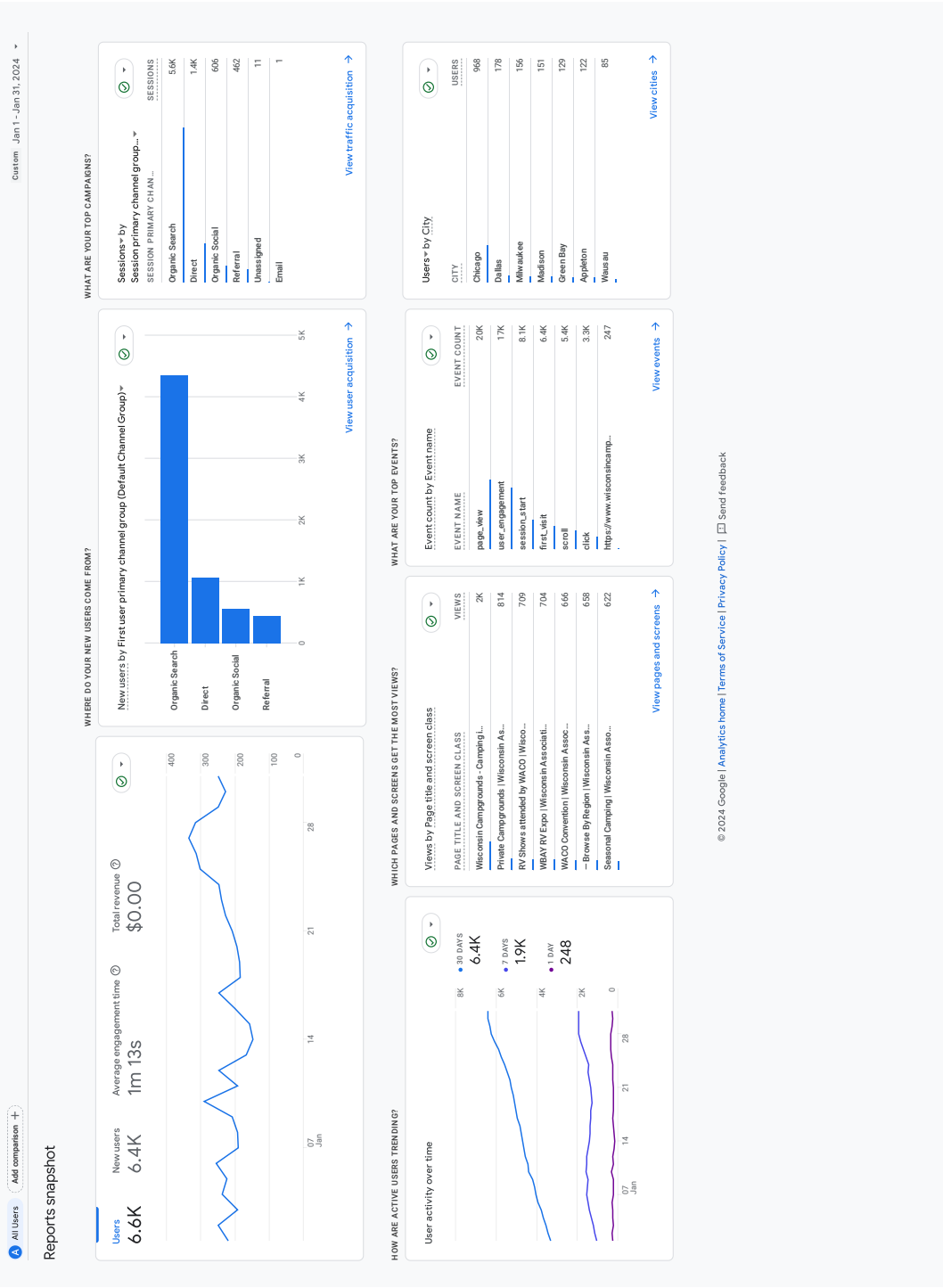


## Top Instagram Posts in Last 90 Days / Jan

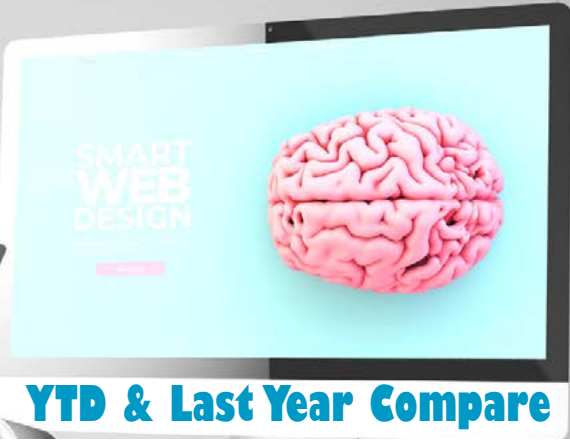


Jan 2024

Go to report



# WACO WEB



## YTD & Last Year Compare

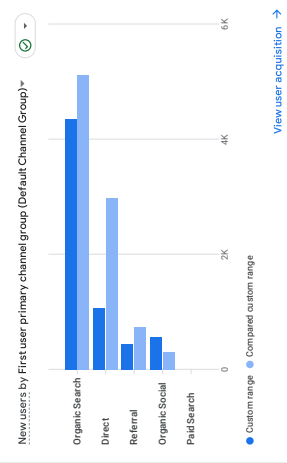
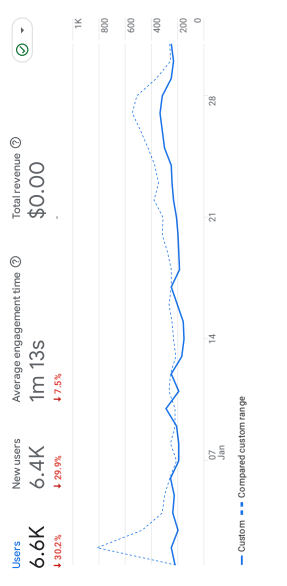
[Go to report](#)

Analytics | Wisconsin Association of Campground Owners | WACO - GA4

Custom Jan 1 - Jan 31, 2024  
Compare Jan 1 - Jan 31, 2023

All Users Add comparison

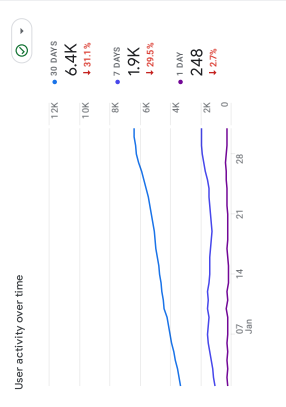
### Reports snapshot



**Sessions\* by Session primary channel group...**

Session Primary Channel	Sessions
Organic Search	5.6K
Direct	1.4K
Referral	462
Organic Social	606
Unassigned	11
Email	1
Paid Search	0

### HOW ARE ACTIVE USERS TRENDING?



### WHICH PAGES AND SCREENS GET THE MOST VIEWS?

**Views by Page title and screen class**

Page Title and Screen Class	Views
Wisconsin Campgrounds - Camping L...	2K
WISCONSIN Campgrounds - Camping L...	704
WISCONSIN Campgrounds - Camping L...	523
Private Campgrounds   Wisconsin As...	814
Central Wisconsin River Campground...	617
Browse By Region   Wisconsin As...	658
Seasonal Camping   Wisconsin Asso...	622

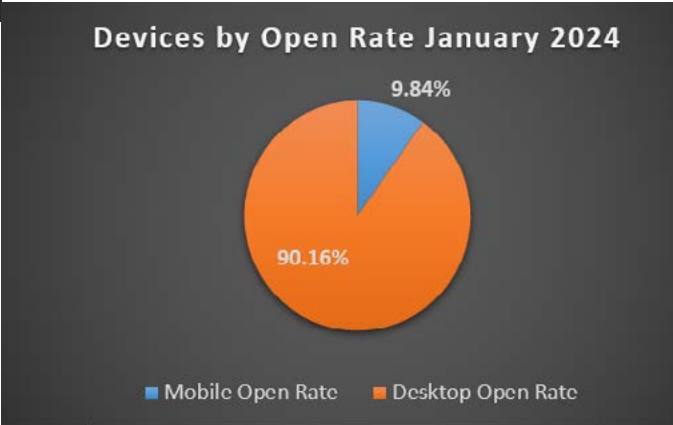
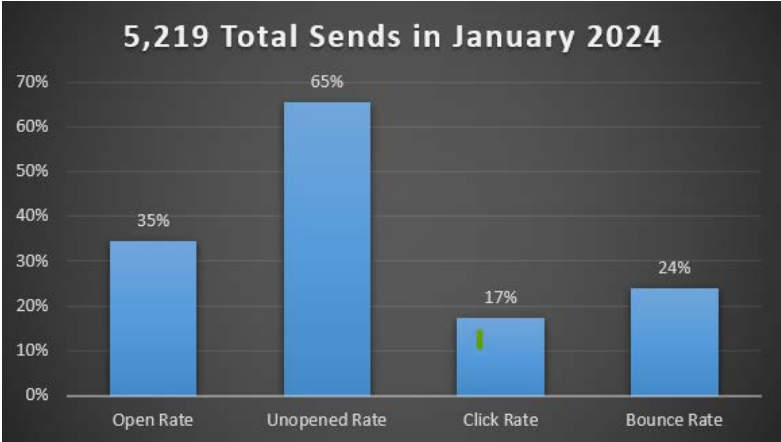
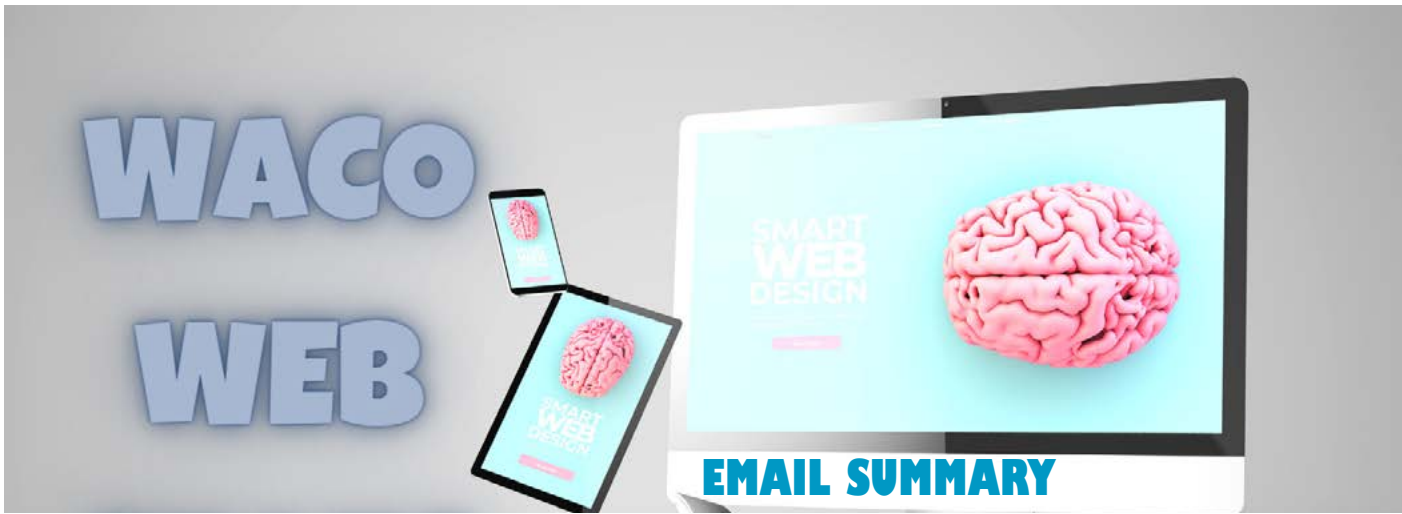
### WHAT ARE YOUR TOP EVENTS?

**Event count by Event name**

Event Name	Event Count
page_view	20K
user_engagement	17K
session_start	8.1K
first_visit	6.4K
scroll	5.4K
click	3.3K
https://www.wisconsinlincamp...	2.47

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### Top Emails by Open Rate for January 2024

Campaign Name	Sends	Opens	Open Rate	Mobile Open Rate	Desktop Open Rate	Clicks	Click Rate
January 2024 WACO Newsletter	251	147	65.00%	14.00%	86.00%	67	29.60%
January 2024 WACO Florida Meet Up	250	136	59.60%	14.60%	85.40%	26	11.40%
CPO Pool School Registration Reminder	250	131	58.00%	5.50%	94.50%	9	4.00%
Madison Show Information	251	115	50.90%	10.20%	89.80%	17	7.50%
2024 Convention Draft - First release	1351	446	44.10%	11.50%	88.50%	107	10.60%



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**If you see any errors, email Tina at [tina@seversonandassociates.com](mailto:tina@seversonandassociates.com) to make sure we have the proper totals for your park!**

<div>  <div> <b>GBF Member Donations 2023</b>  <b>TOTALS FOR YEAR</b>  <i>(as of 2-5-24 for 2023 Calendar Year)</i> </div>  </div>	
<b>Campground</b>	<b>Total Funds Raised</b>
Great River Harbor	\$52,216
Champions Riverside Resort	\$42,450
Backyard Campground	\$30,750
Duck Creek	\$21,880
River Bend RV Resort	\$15,214
Rustic Ridge Resort	\$10,370
Grand Valley Campground	\$8,410
Wilderness Campground	\$8,325
Rivers Edge	\$7,061
Kinney Lake Campground	\$6,939
Stoney Creek	\$6,050
Chapparal Campground	\$5,565
Vista Royale Campground	\$5,000
TJ's Timberline	\$4,230
Yukon Trails / ELS	\$3,518
Scenic Ridge	\$3,500
Buckhorn Campground & Resort	\$3,395
Harbor Village	\$3,000
Chetek River Campground	\$2,975
Pride of America	\$2,745
Glacier Valley Campground	\$2,500
Hickory Hills Campground	\$2,375
O'Neil Creek Campground	\$2,155
Smokey Hollow	\$2,128
Hitts Wildwood Resort	\$2,065
Buffalo Lake	\$2,048
Spur of the Moment	\$2,000
Stand Rock Campground	\$2,000
Jellystone Park Warrens	\$1,840
Badgerland Campground	\$1,800
Maple View Campsites	\$1,731
Lake Arrowhead	\$1,404
Snug Harbor	\$800
Rock Lake Resort & Campground	\$585
Oakdale KOA	\$450
Camping in the Clouds	\$365
Neshonoc Lake / ELS	\$358
McSweet RV Resort	\$300
River's Edge Campground (Birchwood)	\$295
Evergreen Campsites	\$255
Lake Lenwood Beach and Campground	\$250
Blue Bird Family Campground	\$175
Whiskey Creek Family RV Park	\$126
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$271,598</b>

**2024**

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# 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](mailto:skollock@uniontel.net)  
715-335-6860  
2021-2021st Term



Bud Styer, Past President  
Red Barn Campground  
[mrbud@budstyerassociates.com](mailto:mrbud@budstyerassociates.com)  
608-592-2128  
2023-2024



Ashley Weiss-Wegner,  
1st Vice President  
Wilderness Campground  
[awegner@wildernesscampground.com](mailto:awegner@wildernesscampground.com)  
608-297-2002  
2018-2024 2nd Term



Patricia Lombardo,  
2nd Vice President  
Jenkins Org/Jellystone Park Warrens  
[Tricia@Jenkinsorg.com](mailto:Tricia@Jenkinsorg.com)  
773-294-3364  
2022-2025 2<sup>nd</sup> Term



Rob Brinkmeier, 3rd Vice President  
Merry Macs Campground  
[camp@merrymacscampground.com](mailto:camp@merrymacscampground.com)  
815-541-4934  
2020-2025 2nd Term



Julie Michaels, Treasurer  
Scenic Ridge Campground  
[jmsrc@gmail.com](mailto:jmsrc@gmail.com)  
608-883-2920  
2022-2025 1st Term



Deneen Pedersen, Secretary  
Stoney Creek RV Resort  
[deneen@stoneycreekrvresort.com](mailto:deneen@stoneycreekrvresort.com)  
715-597-2102  
2021-2024 1st Term



Mike Dricken, Director  
Lake Lenwood Beach &  
Campground  
[mmdricken@gmail.com](mailto:mmdricken@gmail.com)  
262-334-1335  
2023-2025 1st Term



Christina Kornetzke, Director  
ELS/Lake of the Woods  
[Christina\\_Kornetzke@equitylifestyle.com](mailto:Christina_Kornetzke@equitylifestyle.com)  
602-339-0698  
2023-2025 1st Term



Sarah Krause, Director  
River's Edge Campground  
[camp@riversedgewisconsin.com](mailto:camp@riversedgewisconsin.com)  
715-344-8058  
2021-2024 1st Term



Kristi Mlodzik, Director  
Duck Creek Campground  
[camp@duckcreekcampground.com](mailto:camp@duckcreekcampground.com)  
608-429-2425  
2021-2024 1st Term



Tiffany Pargman Director  
Indian Trails Campground  
[camp@indiantrailscampground.com](mailto:camp@indiantrailscampground.com)  
608-429-3244  
2022-2025 1st Term



Mark Stefan, Director  
Grand Valley Campground  
[info@grandvalleycampground.com](mailto:info@grandvalleycampground.com)  
920-394-3643  
2018-2024 2nd Term



Jim Button, OH Representative  
Evergreen Campsites and Resort  
[evergreencampsites@gmail.com](mailto:evergreencampsites@gmail.com)  
920-622-3498



Adam Malsack, Chair Elect  
Legislative  
Lake Arrowhead Campground  
[adam@lakearrowheadcampground.com](mailto:adam@lakearrowheadcampground.com)  
920-295-3000  
Appointed Term 2016-2023



Lori Severson, Executive Director  
Severson & Associates  
[lori@seversonandassociates.com](mailto:lori@seversonandassociates.com)  
608-792-5915



## WACO OFFICE

PO Box 228

Ettrick, WI 54627

WACO Phone (608) 525-2327

[wisconsincampgrounds.com](http://wisconsincampgrounds.com)



## SEVERSON & ASSOCIATES

Phone (608) 525-2323

[lori@seversonandassociates.com](mailto:lori@seversonandassociates.com)

[tina@seversonandassociates.com](mailto:tina@seversonandassociates.com)

[danielle@seversonandassociates.com](mailto:danielle@seversonandassociates.com)

