



MAY 2024



LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Lori Severson, Executive Director of WACO



Dear Members:

I am writing this with a heart full of gratitude. I have received many awards in my lifetime, but none will ever be more memorable than the one I received at the Convention this past March! I have many wonderful clients, but you guys are family. It's incredible how different it works in this industry versus corporate America. This recognition holds a special place in my heart, as it comes from a group whose opinions and judgment I value deeply—the very members of WACO who are pioneers and leaders in their own right.

Leadership, to me, isn't about titles or accolades but about making a difference. It's about setting a vision, inspiring colleagues to pursue that vision with passion, and standing firm in the face of challenges. This award is a testament to our collective efforts. It takes a village to know everything about our business, and this recognition is not just about me, but about our great staff and members working together. What we can achieve with a shared commitment to excellence and our collective success in making WACO the best organization in the camping industry is incredible.

I want to take this opportunity to extend my thanks to each and every one of you. Your support, your guidance, and your challenges have been invaluable. They have pushed me to strive for better and have taught me more than I could have hoped. Leadership is also a journey of continuous learning, and I am grateful for the lessons I have learned from all of you. I look forward to continuing this journey of growth and bringing back the latest trends for our members.

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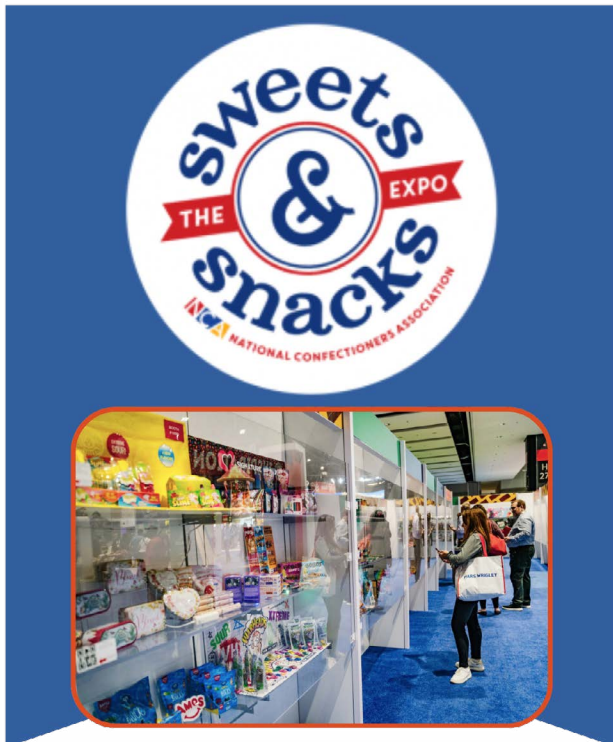
Now, that's what I might have said, lol if I had a clue I was getting this wonderful award. To say I was shocked is an understatement! I so appreciate my girl gang with all the blazers. That was amazing! Honestly, I have never been so surprised and literally speechless in my life. It was kind of scary that my little team could keep secrets from me that well! I truly appreciate each and every member!

I attended the candy show in Indiana and am excited to connect with new vendors for us! I think it's so important to keep us on the latest trends. After Memorial Day, we are heading for RVIA to work on advocacy in Washington! I am so excited about Tina's interest in working with our legislators. Having someone engaged like this in our office will help take us to a whole new level!

I know you are all busy getting ready for the best season ever! Please let us know if you need anything from the staff. We are here to serve you!

Lori

Lori Severson, Executive Director of WACO
Champions Riverside Resort



Lori and Carla attended the Sweets & Snacks National Confectioners Association Expo. While the main focus is distributor-based (a model where you go through a distributor to purchase the product), new companies were looking to gain exposure! We hope you'll get to see some new vendors at the next Convention!

RVs Move America Week

**RVs MOVE AMERICA WEEK EVENT IS SCHEDULED FOR
JUNE 2-6, 2024 IN WASHINGTON, DC.**

The annual event begins with two days of committee meetings where volunteers from across the RV industry collectively work to build a strategic roadmap to help define future growth of the \$140 billion dollar RV industry. In addition to committee meetings, participants will gain insight on the state of the RV industry from association leaders and on the policies of the administration from political speakers. Attendees will rub elbows with federal policymakers and industry innovators, forging relationships beneficial to the future growth of the RV market.

A Word from the President

Scott Kollock, WACO Board President



Dear Members,

I hope this message finds you well. As we move through May and survive our first big holiday weekend, I wanted to update you on the latest conversations from our Board meetings, follow-up from the Convention, and things to think about this season.

1. **REGULATIONS ARE CHANGING:** As I'm sure you've noticed or heard at the Convention (if not before), the codes and regulations we're held accountable to as a licensed campground in the State of Wisconsin continue to push the limits. As you move into the season, be sure you've done the following:

- a. **Registered ALL "Amusement Rides" in your park.** I know, I know - some of the things being labeled as amusements seem silly, but for now, they are required to be registered. We held seminars about this at the Convention, conducted a follow-up webinar with DSPS, and posted tons of information on the website. If you have any questions that you can't find answers to on the Members Only section of the [WACO website](#), the WACO office can help - call 608-525-2327 and ask for Tina, or email her at tina@severson-andassociates.com.

Another point on this topic that did come up at the Convention, but there's always a lot going on there! A member approached the office earlier in the month, asking why our Association would've [submitted a bill for approval \(AB1070\)](#) requesting that campgrounds be excluded from the Amusement Ride code and then pull it from the floor. Two reasons: We were confident the wording wasn't proper for our end goals and were misguided on who was conducting inspections, which would've resulted in more costly inspections and fees for everyone involved. DATCP does not inspect any "amusement rides" other than basic playground equipment. They also felt uncomfortable taking on the increased inspections - that we assumed were covered during our traditional campground licensure an-

nual inspections. This means they would have to bring in a 3rd party - in most cases, DSPS - costing everyone way more in the long run.

When the bill was introduced (which was the fastest any of us have ever seen a bill go from introduction to scheduled committee hearing - ONLY THREE DAYS!) WACO's President, Executive Director, Lobbyist, and Government Liaison, Adam Malsack, WACO's Attorney, Mark Hazelbaker, and Jason Culotta met and reviewed conversations with the DATCP and DSPS. Both state agencies had been asked to provide financial estimate documents, which would've shown that should the bill pass, the DATCP would be taking on those inspections vs. them ultimately going away, resulting in a much more costly registration and inspecting for all of us. Instead, we'll focus on removing the "Jumping Pillows and Pads" from the code language in next year's sessions. We've contacted DSPS and will keep you updated on that progress.

- b. **Approved your POWTS / sewer projects with DSPS or DNR.** Many of us are experiencing suc-



Some of the documents we keep on file seem a little pointless or a big waste of time - and in truth, they may never get used. In other cases, they could save your behind! It's essential to have maintenance logs and standard operating procedures (SOPs) for all your amusements and equipment onsite. If anything comes up during your Amusement Ride inspection or post-injury, your insurance agent and DSPS will expect you to have these logs available for review. [Here is a basic SOP that you could mock-up](#) for your campground as an example for the jumping pillow.



b. **Watch Facebook, your Emails, and this**

Newsletter: I know the season gets really busy, and it's hard to juggle everything. As things come up in the summer from members or the office receives updates, they work hard to get the information out to our membership. Try to schedule just a few minutes every day to take a peek at our available tools so you don't miss out.

As we look ahead to the summer season, please always remember you can reach out to me, anyone on the Board, or the WACO office at any time. We're happy to help you and want to be there for our members!

Thank you for your continued support and membership - let's make this season a successful one!

Scott

Scott Kollock
Vista Royale Campground,
WACO Board President



**Theresa, Rachel, Bridget
and Marley Isaacson**

We want to express our sincere thanks for the bench in memory of Randy.

We are truly blessed to be part of the WACO family. Thank you for all you guys do!

The Scoop on



What you need to know about large septic systems in your park!

Some of our members experienced record growth and very successful seasons in the past years, resulting in expansion projects. As the saying goes, “More people, more poop.” Or is it “problems?” Regardless, most of you know some rules and regulations apply to septic systems within your park. When you want to make a change, you connect with a plumber, create a plan, and head to your local municipality to get the plan approved. In most cases, the DSPS is the next stop on the sewer system checklist. However, there are times when the DNR needs to get involved.

Knowing the difference between the governing body and the requirements that have been in place will save you time and money when completing your project! Our member Bob Weiss from Wilderness shared an “ah-ha” moment during his expansion project, so let’s

take a peek and learn from him!

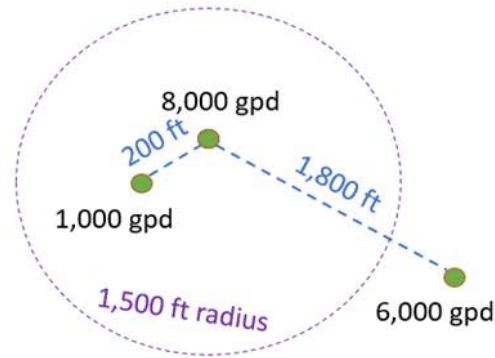
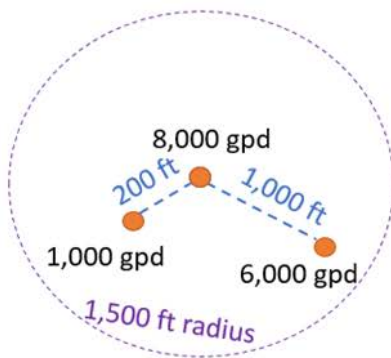
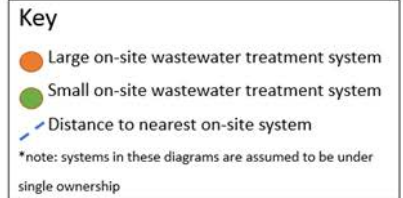
Last year, when we expanded our park to 45 sites, we were delayed and found out that the DNR has rules and Regulations regarding POWTS (private on-site water treatment systems).

My rough understanding was that properties would not be allowed to install standard systems that total over 12,000 gallons of effluent per day; instead, they would have to install sewage treatment facilities. (SEE THE SLIDE TO LEARN THE DISTINCTION HERE—the 12K gallons cannot be in the same 1,500 ft radius.)

For a while, I thought we wouldn’t be able to finish the project. However, we were able to install an infiltrator system, explicitly treating the septic effluent in the tanks, and it was permitted.

There was no data or guidelines regarding numbers, such as the number of BODs or

Clustered Systems Examples



WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES | DNR.WI.GOV

*parts per million nitrates going out in the drain field, to help my septic designer create an effective system. This project ended up costing us almost \$100,000.00 **MORE** than the original standard septic system was going to cost.*

The distinction between the two agencies and when they step in has been around for quite a while, but it is something that many are unaware of; it could become quite an issue, as it did for us.

My designer worked extensively with the DNR last year to resolve the issue for us and finally got the permit. He has been testing the effluent and monitoring usage since the system was installed.

Bob, we appreciate you sharing this experience so that others can learn and be mindful as they contemplate expansions. WACO received this POWTS/Sewer planning information before the Convention and, as such, secured a speaker from the DSPS to shed a little more light and give our members a heads-up!

Unfortunately, the DNR was unable to join us this year. However, they conducted a follow-up meeting in which they shared some flow charts and a slide deck that explained the situation reasonably well. I've included the main slide here; [the entire presentation is available on the Members Only section of our WACO website](#). In addition to the documents, the DNR and DSPS will join us at one (or both) of the upcoming Fall Workshops to conduct a joint panel discussion on this topic!



Members of OHI (formerly National ARVC) leadership, including President and CEO Paul Bambei; Chief Strategy Officer David Basler; and Sr. Director of State Relations and Program Advocacy Jeff Sims, ascended on Capitol Hill in May to advocate for RV parks and campgrounds, meeting with the offices of more than 30 national legislators, as well as two governors.

The meetings focused primarily on legislation that would lower taxes and fees levied on small businesses, including the Credit Card Competition Act, the Main Street Tax Certainty Act and the Death Tax Repeal Act. In addition, the team is working on legislation that would provide a 90-day cure period that would allow small businesses to remedy website-based ADA compliance issues before a lawsuit could be filed.

“These are important issues to OHI because they would save RV parks and campgrounds millions of dollars every year,” says OHI President and CEO Paul Bambei. “As the national organization representing the Outdoor Hospitality Industry, our focus on these trips to DC is to ensure lawmakers know the economic impact our industry has and to move these important pieces of legislation forward.”

While in Washington DC, OHI leaders also participated in The National Outdoor Recreation Executive Forum (NOREF), hosted by the Outdoor Recreation Roundtable (ORR). The inaugural NOREF was an event bringing together leaders from across the industry’s many segments to identify challenges and opportunities facing the \$1.1 trillion outdoor recreation economy and drive collective goals and strategies forward through direct conversation with key legislators.

OHI, as the member of ORR specifically representing Outdoor Hospitality businesses, is well-positioned to strategically tackle these national-topics important to our industry. The OHI public affairs team is constantly on alert watching and acting on legislation impacting RV parks and campgrounds of all sizes across the country, and ORR involvement is a vital part of that process.

While at the Forum, OHI leaders had in-depth conversations specifically on the impact of RV parks and campgrounds with members of Congress, including Sen. John Hickenlooper (Colorado); Sen. Joe Manchin (West Virginia); Rep. Ryan Zinke (Montana); and Rep. Katie Porter (California); as well as Gov. Sarah Huckabee Sanders (Arkansas) and Gov. Doug Burgum (North Dakota).

RV parks and campgrounds across the country make up almost \$35 billion of the Outdoor Recreation economy, and OHI leaders used the national organization’s position at the Forum to represent this awesome impact privately-owned RV parks and campgrounds have on the overall Outdoor Recreation economy.

The OHI team will be returning to DC in June to continue conversations with key members of Congress.

2024 WACO DIRECTORY

AVAILABLE ONLINE & VIA MAIL

Physical copies are available for mailing and pick up! You're welcome to check out the final version online as well - use the appropriate QR code to either view or request boxes of the directories here!



Information for Pool Operators About Pool Emergency Phones

By Mary Ellen Bruesch, Wisconsin Department of Agriculture,
Trade and Consumer Protection

With the recent Chapter ATPC 76 revision, alternative technologies can now be acceptable for pool phones without a variance necessary, as long as they meet a few basic criteria. Some devices continue to require a variance and some situations (such as a telephone more than 25 feet from the pool area entrance) continue to be prohibited. The fact sheet contains more details and examples. It is available at https://datcp.wi.gov/Pages/Programs_Services/WaterRecreation.aspx.

We've also included the fact sheets in the following pages!

Feel free to contact maryellen.bruesch@wisconsin.gov or the Rec Box, DATCPDFRSREC@wisconsin.gov with any questions.

Wisconsin Recreational Facilities FACT SHEET



Acceptable Alternatives to Landline Emergency Telephones in Pool Areas

The following information is intended to provide guidance to public pool operators. The Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection's (DATCP) goal is to protect and promote the health and safety of Wisconsin pool patrons by preventing injuries and accidents at public pools, and to facilitate rapid response when injuries or other emergencies occur. For many years, Wisconsin Administrative Code chapter ATPC 76 has required a landline telephone within the pool area so that emergency responders may be summoned expeditiously. In recent years, DATCP has allowed telephones within 25 feet of the pool enclosure to serve as pool emergency telephones. In addition, the building location and emergency telephone numbers must be posted near the phone to help direct emergency responders to the pool.

What has recently changed related to regulations for emergency telephones at public pools?

With the revisions to chapter ATPC 76, effective September 24, 2023, and to section ATPC 76.26(2) in particular, certain telecommunication technologies that were allowed previously only with a variance can be used now without a variance to summon emergency services to a pool, as long as they meet certain criteria to ensure a reliable way to reach emergency dispatch. Some telecommunication devices or situations still need a variance, and some telecommunication devices or situations remain prohibited. Below are examples of allowable telecommunication technologies and devices as well as some that are prohibited for use at a pool emergency telecommunication device.

Landline telephones within the pool area or within 25 feet of the pool area

These devices continue to be approved as long as they are operational.



Acceptable alternative telecommunication technologies and their devices

Some alternative telecommunication technologies that needed approval through the variance process in the past are now acceptable. A device is acceptable if it meets all of the criteria listed below:

1. Capable of connecting directly to emergency dispatch or emergency medical services.
2. Has a reliable signal that can be verified by the Sanitarian.
3. Protected from weather, vandalism, and theft by a protective enclosure or equivalent.
4. Has connection to permanent power supply at or near the pool area.
5. Has a battery back-up.
6. Device is accessible to patrons for emergency use.

Below are two technologies and devices that are now allowed without a variance, as long as criteria #1-6 (listed on page 1) are met. These are (left) voice-over-internet telephones and (right) cellular emergency pool telephones.



Some telecommunications devices may be approved under a variance

A push button with intercom to 911 or dispatch would need to be reviewed and could be approved. The push button device can use a landline or be any device that meets the criteria for alternative telecommunication devices (for example, voice-over-internet).

Any telecommunications device (including alternative telecommunications devices) that ring the front desk or office instead of 911 or emergency dispatch directly, and is staffed at all times when the pool is accessible to patrons (below, right), could be allowed under a variance.

To be approved for a variance, the technology and device must also meet criteria #1-6 (listed on page 1) for acceptable alternative telecommunication technologies or devices.

Below are examples of push button devices.



Some technologies and devices cannot be approved for use as pool emergency telecommunications devices

Some examples of devices that are not approved are 'cordless' phones that require connection of the base for its detachable receiver to a charger and a 'free-standing' cell phone that does not meet all of the criteria for alternative telecommunication technologies. **Any telecommunications device that is more than 25 feet from the pool enclosures is not approved for use as the pool emergency telephone or device.**



If you have additional questions, please contact datcpdfsrec@wisconsin.gov.



STREAMLINE PAYMENT PROCESSING WITH CAMPLIFE PAY

Respectfully Submitted by our Sponsor, CampLife

END PAYMENT PROCESSING NIGHTMARES WITH CAMPLIFE PAY!

Choosing the right payment processor for your campground is crucial—it's not just about handling transactions; it's about creating seamless experiences for both your staff and your guests. That's why we created CampLife Pay, a payment processor tailored specifically for campground owners like you.

Hear from a fellow campground owner, Eva Beegle of Friendship Village Campground:

"We have been using CampLife Pay for 6 months, and we love it! There have been no technical issues, setup was simple, and both of these are huge for us. Also, the online Payrix portal is user-friendly and vastly informative. We especially loved the reminder email from CampLife's support stating an issue was unresolved on the portal and directives on how to correct the issue. Friendship Village made the right decision to use CampLife Pay as our campground processor."

Is CampLife Pay Right for Your Campground?

- Acceptance of Diverse Payment Methods: In today's digital age, offering flexible payment

options is crucial. CampLife Pay supports multiple forms of electronic payments, ensuring that your guests can pay their way—easily and securely.

- Streamlined Accounting Made Easy: With our efficient journal entry cycle, you can reconcile software reporting with bank deposits effortlessly. This feature ensures that the amounts you see in your system match what hits your bank, reducing discrepancies and simplifying your financial management.
- Transparent and Simple Fee Structure: With CampLife Pay's simple fee structure, estimating transaction costs is straightforward, ensuring no surprises.

**Transactions in the US:
2.7% to 2.9% + \$0.10.**

**Transactions in Canada:
2.7% to 2.9% + \$0.15.**

Passthrough fees: \$0.30 ECheck sale or refund (ACH); \$2.50 ECheck return; \$15.00 chargeback request fee; \$15.00 arbitration fee.

- **Reliable Customer Support:** CampLife Pay is backed by our award-winning Customer Success team. We're dedicated to providing quick, accessible assistance. No more long waits! Help is just a phone call or click away, so you can focus more on your guests and less on backend problems.
- **Quick Onboarding Process:** Setting up CampLife Pay is quick and hassle-free. You can start processing payments in no time, minimizing interruptions to your service and getting your operations running smoothly from the start.
- **Prompt Payment:** Ensuring you have access to your funds when you need them is our priority. With CampLife Pay, enjoy the assurance of daily deposits to keep your cash flow steady and predictable.


LET'S START A CONVERSATION

Understanding the importance of choosing the right payment processor, the CampLife team is here to support you every step of the way. Whether you have questions or want to explore how CampLife Pay can integrate into your operations, we're just a conversation away. Our goal is to find the perfect fit for your needs, ensuring both you and your guests benefit from smoother transactions.

Take the next step toward a payment solution tailored for campgrounds by [scheduling a demo](#) or downloading our [free checklist](#). This guide is packed with essential insights to help you make an informed choice, including key considerations and critical questions every campground owner should ask. Discover why CampLife Pay is the trusted choice for operators like Eva, who have already transformed their payment handling.

Join us in making payment processing a breeze. [Reach out today](#) and let CampLife Pay enhance the way you do business. We're excited to show you how easy and rewarding the right payment system can be.

Your friends at CampLife



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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.

Dealing with the So-Called Repeal of Personal Property Taxes

Respectfully Submitted By Attorney Mark Hazelbaker, WACO Legal Counsel

Campgrounds are learning the so-called “repeal” of personal property taxes, which is, for campgrounds, a shift of liability for the taxes. Assessors around the state are placing values on decks, porches, sheds, and other items on individual campsites and looking for payment from the campground. This article provides an overview of how campgrounds can respond.

The issue arose in 2023 when the Legislature responded to decades-long lobbying from business groups. The Legislature adopted Act 12, which repealed personal property taxes on business property. As a result of the change, you will no longer be sent a tax bill for your copier, office furniture, and other personal property used in your business.

Somewhere in the process, though, the Legislative concluded revenue was to be raised from taxing personal property on campgrounds. As a result, assessors are moving to levy taxes on decks, porches, sheds, and other personal property located on campsites. In this article, I outline how you should ensure any taxes are paid by your campers, not you. I also discussed how to challenge taxes.

First Task: Make Sure Your Seasonal Agreement Shifts Tax Liability to the Guest

WACO's model seasonal agreement states, in lines 366 – 368: “CAMPERS shall be responsible for all charges, fees or taxes which are assessed against the CAMPSITE, the CAMPING UNIT or the CAMPGROUND because of any action or omission of the CAMPERS.” I drafted that broad language to protect campgrounds from this very situation – a new tax or charge from the government.



Eric Haun, CIC
Vice President - Leisure & Hospitality

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I have now drafted a form notice letter politely informing your campers that the personal property taxes are their responsibility, assuming you're using the model agreement. [It will be on the WACO website.](#) When you receive your tax bill, you will need to send a copy of the pertinent portion of the bill to each camper and collect the amount owed. If they do not pay, you can use the remedies the Agreement provides. If you are not using the WACO model agreement, I will draft a sample provision you can include in your next agreement.

However, shifting the tax to the guest does not end the issue. The additional cost the government is collecting makes camping that much more expensive and makes it harder to charge competitive rates for guests. Campgrounds have reasons to challenge the amount of the taxes. Here's a brief overview of how that happens.

STEP ONE – ASSESSMENT

Imposition of property taxes, including personal property taxes, begins with the preparation of a schedule showing the value of all taxable property in the jurisdiction. In Wisconsin, the towns, cities, and villages assess property under guidelines prepared by the Wisconsin Department of Revenue. Each community retains an assessor who is trained in setting values.

Because of the new personal property law, assessors may wish to visit campgrounds to inspect the property involved. Assessors need permission to enter private property for assessment inspections – but if the owner refuses, the assessor can set a value based on their best estimate of value, which is always higher than the real value would be. As a practical matter, it's better to let the assessor in.

We have seen a few proposed tax assessments prepared by assessors. Some of the numbers they are proposing are reasonable, but many are excessive. We saw one list where a shed on a campsite was valued at \$600. Many resin sheds used on campsites sell for that or much less. The

minute any product is sold and assembled; its value goes down. It depreciates more every year.

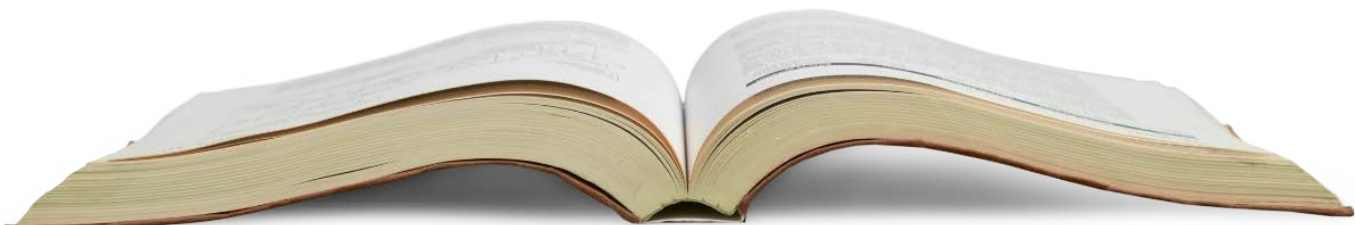
Similarly, some assessors were setting the value of decks at \$1,000. The assessment doesn't describe the deck involved. However, the property's value for assessment purposes is what a willing buyer would pay for the property in an arms-length sale. I'm sure some of the larger decks placed on campsites may have cost more than \$1,000 to build. But what are they worth once they're a few years old?

Assessors are allowed a great deal of latitude in setting assessments – but their leeway is not unlimited. When scrutinizing the assessment, they must explain, as we will see in the next sections.

STEP TWO – NOTICE OF ASSESSMENT AND OPEN BOOK

The assessor compiles all the adjusted property values, which are sent to the property owner with a notice. That notice contains the proposed assessed value and the time to inquire about the assessment and potentially challenge it. The steps are the "Open Book" conference and the appeal hearing.

The Open Book meeting is an informal conference between the taxpayer and the assessor. The assessor is required to explain the basis for their assessment. The taxpayer can offer arguments and facts to support a different value. The assessor is permitted to modify the assessment in response. The Open Book is the only opportunity the taxpayer has to find out how the assessor arrived at the value they have proposed. Needless to say, therefore, it is critical to attend the Open Book.



Keepin' it Legal Cont'd

Dealing with the So-Called Repeal of Personal Property Taxes

It is possible to go to Open Book with nothing more than questions and still persuade the assessor to change values. It's much more likely to be successful if you bring facts that show the figures are wrong. If the assessor valued a 3-year-old resin shed at \$600, an advertisement showing the shed sells for \$499 new would prove the assessor is wrong. You could use the advertisement to argue that the shed cannot be worth more than its sale price and is worth much less. You could argue that a shed depreciates in five years, so a three-year-old shed should be worth 60 percent of its sale price, which would be \$300.

The situation with site-built improvements like decks is more complex. But, use your knowledge to your advantage. If the assessor has valued a 10 x 30-foot deck at \$1,200, you can argue that the deck would have cost \$1,500 to build (as an example) when it was constructed in (hypothetically) 2015. Today, after nine years, that deck is older and has depreciated. You can argue that a 10-year depreciation life would be reasonable for a deck or whatever useful life you feel is reasonable.

The assessor may respond by stating that she or he is not actually putting a market value on the sheds or decks. Instead, the assessor may value them using a formula, such as \$40 per square foot for decks or \$100 per square foot for sheds. In that case, ask them where they came up with the numbers they use. Assessors are allowed to use formula calculations if the numbers are reasonable. But they're not allowed to guess or invent.

At some point in the Open Book discussion, the assessor will indicate that they appreciate your input and announce whether they will change the value or not. Using our example, the assessor might indicate the shed is overvalued and will be dropped to \$300, but he will not change the deck value because he thinks the deck would add \$1,200 to the value of the camping trailer if it were sold. Those revised values go in the final list of all property in the town (or city or village), which is called the "Tax Roll." The values in the Tax Roll become final unless they are modified by the Board of Review – the next step in the process.

The final decision maker on property tax values is the "Board of Review." In towns, the Board of Review is the Town Board plus the Town Clerk. (Villages and cities appoint boards of review according to local ordinances.) The Board of Review is a "quasi-judicial" body that has the authority to decide appeals. It meets after the Open Book has been completed.




If you desire to appeal an assessment to the Board of Review, you must fill out and file a standard form prescribed by the Wisconsin Department of Revenue. If the appeal concerns personal property, you would complete and file Form PA-115bf [<https://www.revenue.wi.gov/DORForms/pa-115bf.pdf>] The form asks for the value you place on the property. Note that it says "as of January 1." All property is value as of January 1 of the year.

In addition to stating your value, the form asks you to state the reason for your objection and the basis for your opinion. You can attach additional papers.

The explanation needs to be detailed and expansive enough to cover what you intend to establish at the Board of Review hearing. You can't just write "Valuing a resin shed at \$600 is ridiculous." However, explaining that a shed is valued at more than its price new, and that the shed should be depreciated over X years, yielding a value of \$X would be sufficient. The best approach probably will be to prepare a schedule of the items you are questioning with your rationale by each item.

The completed and signed form needs to be filed with the municipal clerk not less than 48 hours before the Board of Review. The Department of Revenue has a more detailed overview of the process, “2024 Guide for Property Owners” on its website, <https://www.revenue.wi.gov/DOR%20Publications/pb060.pdf>. At the Board of Review, the taxpayer challenging the assessment has the burden of showing the assessor’s proposed value is erroneous. The assessor’s proposed value is presumed to be correct. The taxpayer must offer evidence and reasons why the assessment is wrong. In the case of challenging personal property, testimony from knowledgeable people may be sufficient; personal property (other than antiques or collectible property) is rarely appraised. ***Indeed, most personal property is worth less than the cost of appraising it. The personal property issue posed for campgrounds is very unusual because the total amount of the property may be worth arguing over.***

After the taxpayer has presented their case, the assessor will have the opportunity to explain their assessment. The taxpayer may ask the assessor questions. The Board of Review will then discuss the issues and make a decision. The Board of Review’s decision may be appealed to the circuit court. We are still early in dealing with the change in the law made by the Legislature. WACO will provide ongoing support and information to campgrounds as matters progress.



Didn't use the WACO Seasonal Model Agreement?

We've got you!
Click here to download an addendum letter you can send your Seasonal Guests!

Dealing with the So-Called Repeal of Personal Property Taxes

TAX TALK



Sales & Income
TAX ADVISORY NETWORK



PARK MODEL TAX TREATMENT WI SALES/USE TAX

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED BY, HOLLY HOFFMAN

Q:

If a park model travel trailer is purchased by a campground for the sole purpose of renting out to customers on site, does sales tax need to be paid at time of purchase of the trailer?

A:

- Park Model is tangible personal property.
- Park Model – travel trailer.
- Purchase of a Park Model is taxable, with 3 exceptions.

EXCEPTION #1: Sales of Used Mobile Homes & Manufactured Homes Are Exempt

- Per sec. [77.54\(31\)](#), Wis. Stats., sales of used mobile homes, as defined in sec. [101.91\(10\)](#), Wis. Stats., and used manufactured homes, as defined in sec. [101.92\(12\)](#), Wis. Stats., are exempt
- WI Dept of Revenue Publication 231, Sales & Use Tax Treatment of Manufactured & Modular Homes
- No exemption certificate is required to claim this exemption – per statute these sales are exempt

EXCEPTION #2: If the seller of the Park Model also installs the park model (i.e., permanently affixes to real estate), it is a nontaxable real property improvement.

- #2 Seller Also Installs Park Model
- Seller of Park Model also installs Park Model – sale is a nontaxable real property improvement.
- Note: Now seller is providing a service instead of selling tangible personal property.
- The seller is permanently affixing the park model to the real estate. (Not just delivering it.)
- No exemption certificate is required – this is a nontaxable service.

EXCEPTION #3: If the Park Model is a mobile unit (e.g., a tent camper) that a camper may rent and then move the the campsite of his or her choice, and the only use of the mobile unit is to rent to customers, the park model may be purchased without tax, for resale.

- #3 Mobile Unit for Rental
- If the Park Model is a mobile unit (e.g., a tent camper) that a camper may rent and then move to the campsite of his or her choice
 - » Camper/renter must be allowed to move to location of his/her choice (take ownership of the Park Model), and
 - » Used solely for rental to customers.
 - » Must be separate and optional from site fee.
- Purchase for resale. Provide fully completed exemption certificate to seller claiming resale.



DIFFERENCE IN TAX BETWEEN FINANCING AND LEASING:

Financing:

- Sales tax is due at the time of purchase.
- If you finance through a bank, you pay sales tax to the seller and the amount financed is determined based upon amount you borrow versus pay in cash/trade-in.
- The seller remits sales tax in the period the sale occurred. It is unrelated to your loan payments to the bank.

Leasing:

- Sales tax is due on amount owed but is broken into amount paid at the time and is required to be collected by whomever is holding the lease.
- Initial sales tax rate due is based upon location of sale, subsequent sales tax rate is based on where the park model is customarily kept.

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR DECKS:

- Affixed- Real property
- Not Affixed – Personal property
- Who is installing?
 - » Materials are taxable, unless for resale
 - » Sales of personal property or services to personal property are taxable.



Holly Hoffman is the owner of Sales Tax Advisory Network where she provides sales tax compliance support and training. Prior to starting her business, she was a former WI Dept of Revenue auditor and head of the Dept of Revenue's Speaker's Bureau. She has presented at WACO conventions for almost 10 years. Contact Holly Hoffman for the Sales Tax Audit Protection Plan to get guidance like this and audit defense protection.

Thank you!

Holly Hoffman
Sales Tax Advisory Network, LLC
holly@salestaxlady.com

Music License Facts At a Glance



We don't have live music in our park, so we don't need a license.

If you play recorded music for your guests, you need a music license. But there are many ways to obtain a license that fits the needs of your park.

FALSE

FALSE

We have to be licensed through all music agencies if we provide live music.

You can control the music your musicians play by letting them know the companies you are licensed with so they can design their set lists accordingly.

The only way I can be licensed to play music is through an association.

If you are only playing music in your camp store, club room, or office you can utilize a music subscription service. The business version of these services come with a license and is typically less costly than a standard license.

FALSE

TRUE

Your membership with Wisconsin Association of Campground Owners offers a discounted license for live music and recorded music, i.e. karaoke, 80's nights, luaus, special events, but you can also go direct to the music organization for a license.

There are many misconceptions surrounding the licensing requirements for music.

Hospitality Connections and Wisconsin Association of Campground Owners are here to help you make the proper licensing decisions to meet your needs. Email or give us a call to-day to renew your license or discover the right one for your park!



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RIGHTS



ascap

Hospitality Connections

care@hospitalityconnections.net | 610-767-5026

Wisconsin Association of Campground Owners

tina@seversonandassociates.com | danielle@seversonandassociates.com

lori@seversonandassociates.com

608-525-2327



Music License Options from WACO

Be sure to take a peek at the fact sheet listed on page 20, as many of you have music at your parks. Sometimes, it's unclear if you need a license or not—or even which license would make the most sense. If you have a music license through OHI (ARVC), you're all set until that expires in 2024.

However, moving into 2025, WACO wanted to be sure we could provide a solution for our members from the State Association level! We've partnered with Hospitality Connections, Creating Alliances of RV Parks, Campgrounds, & Enterprises to ensure you have options in 2025! Be sure to reach out if you are interested starting in January of 2025!



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Respectfully submitted by our
Sponsor, CSAW Associates, LLC

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. At convention during the closing Cracker Barrel gathering I brought up the subject of adding surcharges on credit card transactions. I promised a newsletter article and now that tax season is "over" here it is.

"Follow the rules" might sound like simple enough advice to follow. But staying compliant with all the surcharging regulations out there, on top of everything else you need to do, can be a challenge.

While surcharging might sound straightforward, adding fees to card transactions without violating your merchant agreement is complicated. Along with government regulations, each major credit card has their own set of guidelines, and you need to be familiar with all of them. In the state of Wisconsin, it is legal to charge a surcharge to credit cards as long as the customer is notified in writing prior to checking out. It is against card brand rules to add a surcharge to sales completed by debit card, regardless of using the debit or credit card network. You must also apply the same surcharge amount to all cards and cannot offer a cash discount in conjunction with surcharging. It has to be one or the other across all transactions.

There is a lot of confusion regarding cash discount and surcharge programs. A surcharge is a fee applied to a published price when paying with a card. The published prices are the price paid with cash. A cash discount is a published price when paying with cash. The published prices are the price paid with a card. Some merchants believe that by adding a service fee to all card transactions they are offering a "cash discount program." However, these transactions are not excluded from Visa surcharge rules just because the merchant declared that a service fee is added to all transactions and a discount is applied for cash sales. Robert Johnson, Sr Director, Visa Rules Management states that "Any fee added to a purchase that is levied specifically for the use of a card is a surcharge, regardless of what the merchant calls it, and is governed by Visa's surcharge rules."

SO, WHAT ARE THE RULES?

- Merchants are required to notify their card processor and card brands 30 days prior to surcharging.
- ***Surcharging is limited to credit cards. It is prohibited to surcharge any debit, prepaid or gift card transaction. Even if you run the debit card as a credit, it is still prohibited to surcharge that card. Doing this wrong could result in a big fine.***
- The amount that you surcharge on a credit card cannot exceed the effective merchant discount rate for that credit card. You cannot make a profit on surcharges. The current maximum cap is 3%.



CSAW
Associates, LLC

Coulee Region
Bookkeeping and Tax

- Your main entrance surcharge signage should be a minimum 32-point Arial font but no smaller than any surrounding text.
- Every checkout or payment station needs surcharge signage in a minimum 16-point Arial font.
 - › The notice must include the exact amount or percentage of the credit card surcharge.
 - › A statement that the credit card surcharge is being assessed by the merchant and is only applicable to credit transactions.
 - › A statement that the surcharge amount is no greater than the merchant's discount rate for credit card transactions.
- For restaurants, a notice must be printed on menus and on signage in the customer service area.
- For online transactions, the consumer must also be given the opportunity to cancel the transaction after the credit card surcharge disclosure.
- The surcharge amount must be listed separately on the receipt or invoice.

In Wisconsin, the surcharge amount is taxable.

If you don't display proper signage, you will be violating consumer protection laws and regulations regarding transparency and fair trade which could lead to customer complaints and legal action.



CHRISTINE METCALF

(608) 779-2143

couleebookkeeping@gmail.com



ANDREW METCALF



Examples of Signage Wording

We impose a surcharge of 3% on the transaction amount on credit card products,

which is not greater than our cost of acceptance. We do not surcharge debit cards, prepaid cards or gift cards.

We impose a surcharge of 3% on the transaction amount on [Mastercard, VISA, Discover, Amex] credit card products, not greater than our cost of acceptance.

We impose a surcharge of 3% on credit cards, which is not greater than our cost of acceptance.

To our valued customers,
Instead of raising our prices, your receipt now includes a 3% surcharge to cover the rising cost of credit card acceptance that we pay when cards are used. If you pay cash or with a debit card, you won't get surcharged. Thank you for your continued patronage!

A 3% credit card fee will be applied to all credit card transactions. Cash and debit card transactions are not subject to a surcharge.

2 Places You MUST Post in a Restaurant

1. Point of entry
2. Point of sale

A 3rd Recommendation

3. On your menu

Someone sending you money? You could be a money mule!



Money mules are people who, at someone else's direction, receive and move money obtained from victims of fraud. Some money mules intentionally help fraudsters. Other money mules do not realize they are involved in illegal activity and believe they are following an employer's directions or participating in a legitimate business. These individuals unwittingly enable fraudsters to harm others.

If something sounds too good to be true, it most likely is. To avoid becoming a money mule, ask yourself these questions before exchanging money with someone:

CAUTION

1 Was the offer of earning money too easy?

You received an unsolicited email or contact over social media, which promises easy money for little or no effort. You may be referred to as an "employee."

2

Was getting the job too easy?

You were hired without a formal interview process. You were onboarded through social media.

3

What do I do?

You have no written job description that defines your responsibilities and compensation. You don't have a regular pay schedule or rate.

About the Alliance Consumer Financial Exploitation Project Team

This project team under the [Payments Innovation Alliance](#), creates educational materials, resources and tools to enable the payments industry to fight financial fraud. The group also works with the financial crimes ecosystem, including law enforcement and consumer advocacy groups, to amplify networking and collaboration.

For more information, please visit nacha.org/consumer-financial-project-team



Payments
Innovation Alliance



Nacha

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UPDATES FROM PARTNERS

Who am I sending the money to?

Your online “employer,” whom you have never met in person, asks you to forward the funds you received to them or someone you do not know.

How much can I keep?

You are told to keep a portion of the money you transfer.

STOP
Being a money mule is illegal.

4

Why do I need to deposit money in my account or open a new account?

You are asked to deposit money in:

1. Your existing bank account,
2. A new account in your name or
3. A new account in the name of a company you form. Your “employer” may also request your ID and passcode so they can access the money directly.

6

How am I sending this money?

You are instructed to move the money through a service.

Legitimate payment methods are used by criminals to conduct illegal activities.

Examples include:¹

- Money service businesses (e.g., Western Union, MoneyGram).
- Bank services (e.g., wire transfer, ACH).
- Digital currency/crypto.
- Gift cards.
- Peer-to-peer applications (e.g., PayPal, Venmo, Zelle).
- ATM cash outs.

7

You can be prosecuted and incarcerated as part of a criminal laundering conspiracy, even if you are unaware you are committing a crime.

UPDATES FROM PARTNERS

The RV Women's Alliance (RVWA) has opened nominations for its annual awards, set to recognize individuals and companies that elevate, educate, and promote women in the RV industry. The awards will be presented during the Awards Dinner on October 17, a highlight of the RVWA Education Symposium at The Westin Chicago (North Shore).

This year, the Alliance will present four awards: the Trailblazer Award for Lifetime Achievement, the Leader of Tomorrow Award, and the Champion of Women Awards for both an individual and a company. These awards aim to celebrate significant contributions to the RV industry and support for women within it, as per the News & Insights report of the [RV Industry Association](#) (RVIA).

"Recognizing the contributions and achievements of the incredible women in the RV industry is a core part of the RV Women's Alliance mission," said [Susan Carpenter](#), president of the RVWA, as said in the RVIA report.

"For the past two years, these awards have highlighted not only our winners but also the impressive roster of finalists. We are excited to again recognize our emerging leaders, industry icons, and those championing women in our industry."

Tracy Anglemeyer, chair-elect of the Alliance and a previous Trailblazer Award recipient, emphasized the personal and professional impact of these awards. "The RVWA emulates my ideals in elevating, inspiring, and educating its members. The symposium encompasses all these areas while also recognizing leaders who empower others in the RV industry," Anglemeyer said. The Trailblazer Award for Lifetime Achievement honors women who have significantly contributed to the RV industry over a minimum of 20 years.

The Leader of Tomorrow Award recognizes women making substantial impacts in the early stages of their careers, specifically those who have worked in the RV industry for less than five years.

The Champion of Women Awards celebrate both an individual and a company that actively promote and support women in the RV industry.

Nominations are open until August 1, 2024, inviting the RV community to recognize and celebrate those who have made outstanding contributions. Detailed information on each award and the nomination process is available on the [RV Women's Alliance website](#).



UPDATES FROM PARTNERS

On behalf of the Wisconsin Hotel and Lodging Association, it has come to our attention that an out-of-state individual may be filing hundreds of Equal Rights Division discrimination complaints against Wisconsin businesses, including the hotel and lodging community. This individual appears to be scouring Wisconsin job postings and filing complaints against any business that has restrictions on employing people with criminal records—from requiring a “clean driving record” for a shuttle driver to restrictions on drug use history and many others. If you have received one of these letters from DWD, we kindly ask you to let us know so we can track how widespread the issue is. Any reports you provide to WHLA will remain confidential.

Please send them to belliott@wisconsinlodging.org or call Bill Elliott, President & CEO of Wisconsin Hotel & Lodging Association at (262) 782.2851 ext. 10.



INDUSTRY TRENDS



Results for the RV Industry Association's April 2024 survey of manufacturers found that total RV shipments ended the month with 34,197 units, an increase of 9.5% compared to the 31,216 units shipped in April 2023.

READ MORE



“We are encouraged by the continue incremental increases we have been seeing in RV shipments over the past six months,” said Craig Kirby, RV Industry Association President & CEO. “In this budget conscious environment, consumers are looking for more affordable travel options for their summer trips. RVing is the choice for over 45 million Americans this summer because they can create lifelong memories with family and friends while [also saving up to 60%](#) compared to traditional air/hotel vacation.”

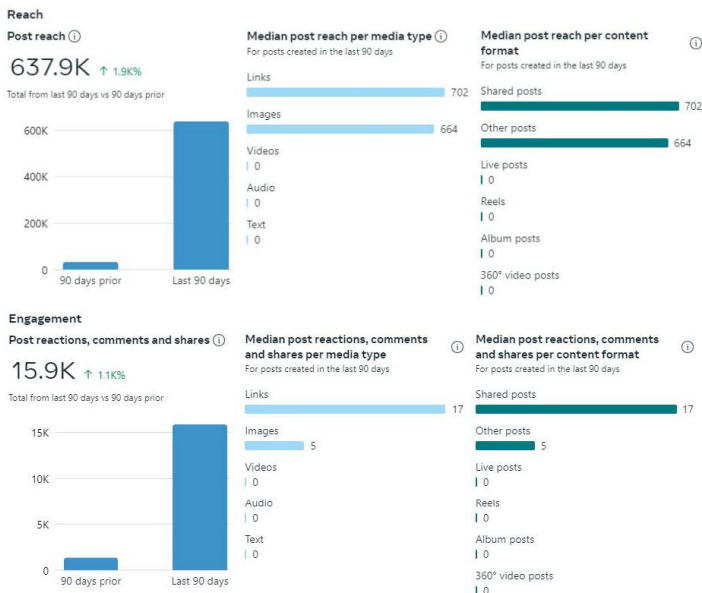
WACO Web Stats & Social Media Trends



Facebook/Instagram Insights - MARCH
Total FB current likes: 10,409 (+17 from February)
Total IG current followers: 592 (+5 from February)

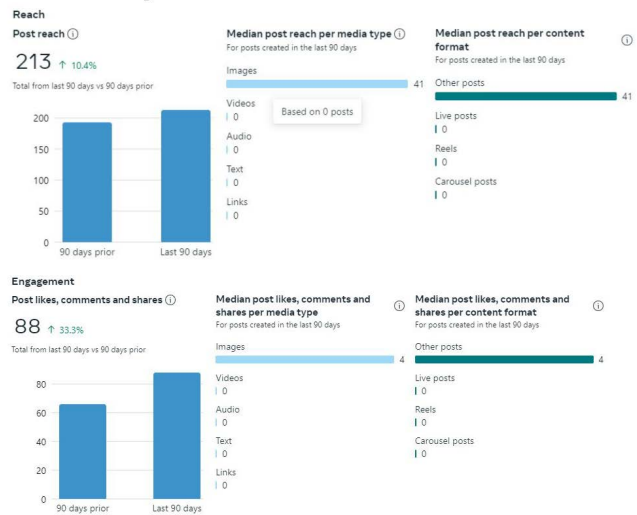
MARCH FB

Content Overview - Facebook Last 90 Days



MARCH IG

Content Overview - Instagram Last 90 Days



Top Posts in March 2024

March FB

March IG



WACO Web Stats & Social Media Trends



Facebook/Instagram Insights

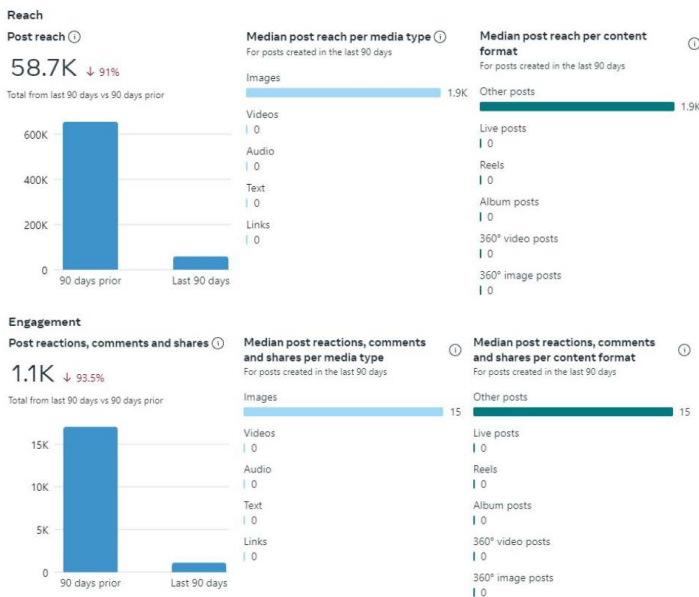
Total FB current likes: 10,423 (+14 from March)

Total IG current followers: 595 (+3 from March)

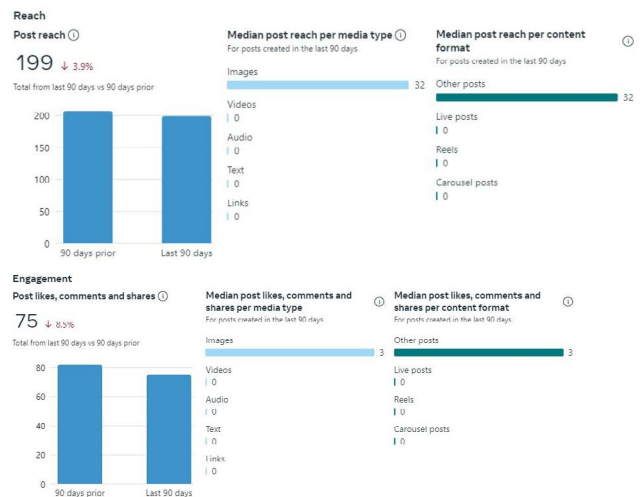
April/Last 90 Days IG

April/Last 90 Days Facebook

Content Overview - Facebook Last 90 Days



Content Overview - Instagram Last 90 Days



Top Posts in April 2024

April FB

April IG



Impressions ①
54,263
Higher than typical

Interactions ①
859
Higher than typical

Link clicks ①
3
Typical



Overview

Reach ①
45
Typical

Impressions ①
47
Typical

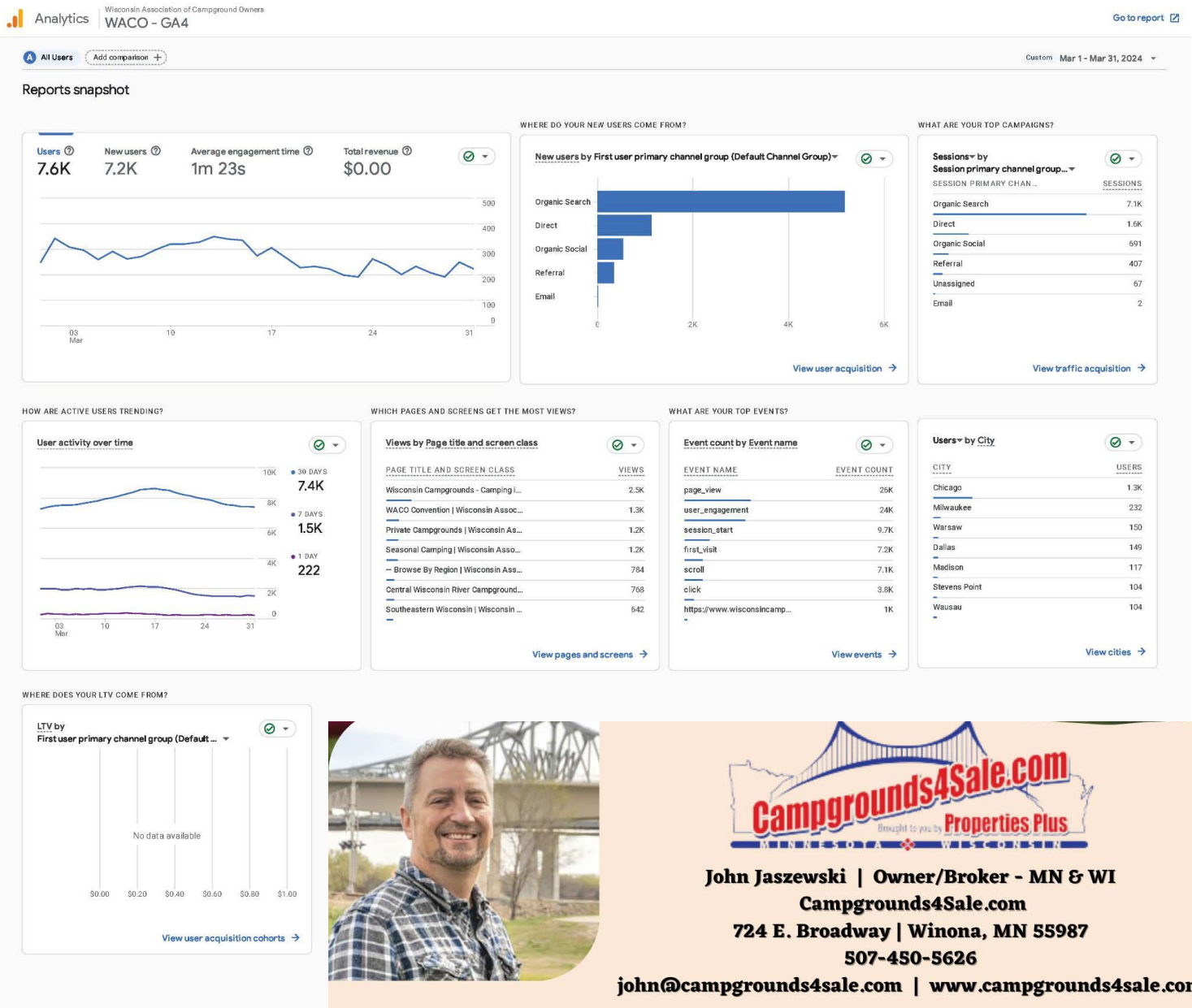
Interactions ①
2
Typical

WACO Web Stats & Social Media Trends



March 2024

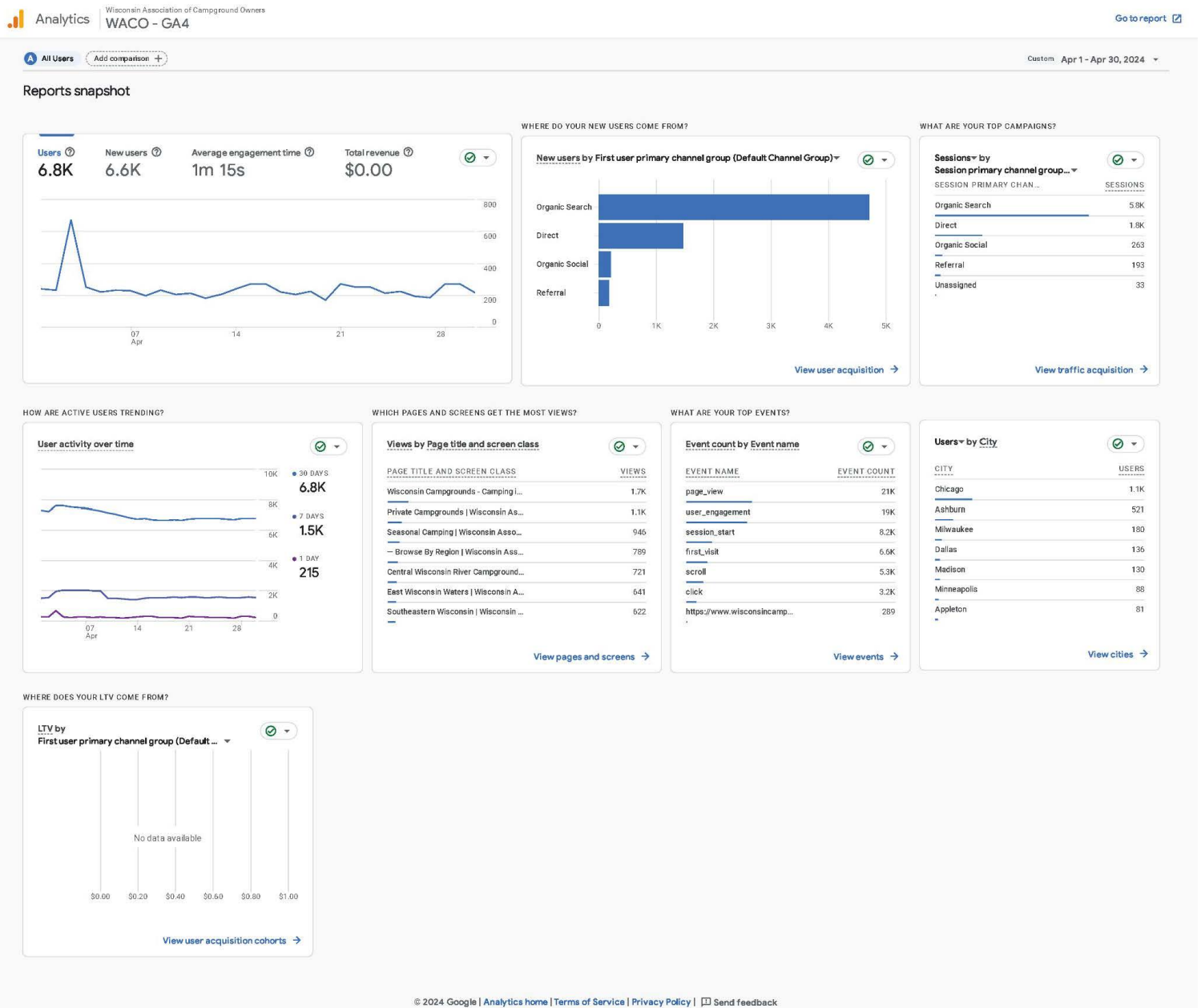
WEB MONTHLY SNAPSHOT

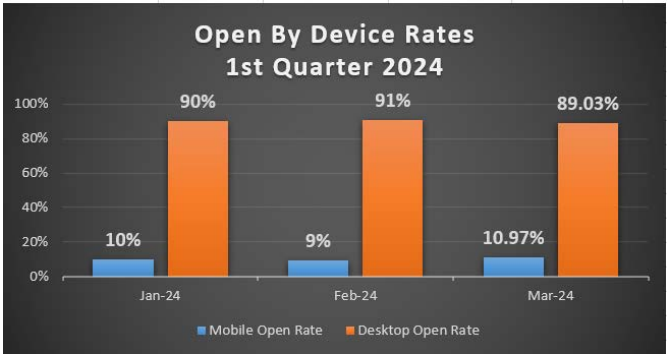
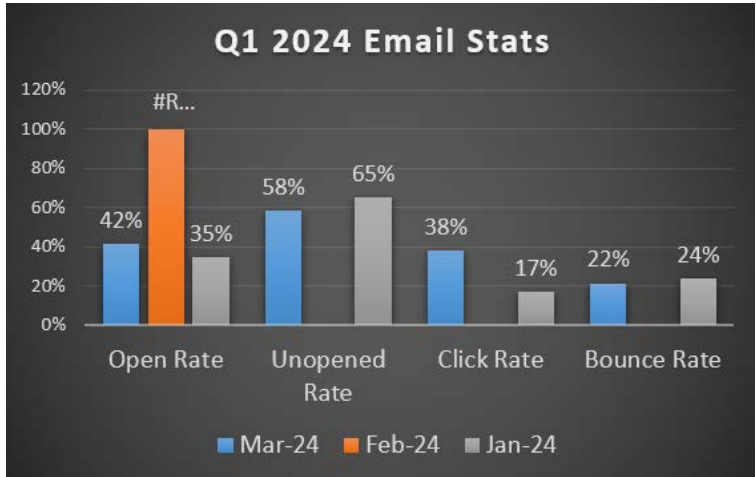
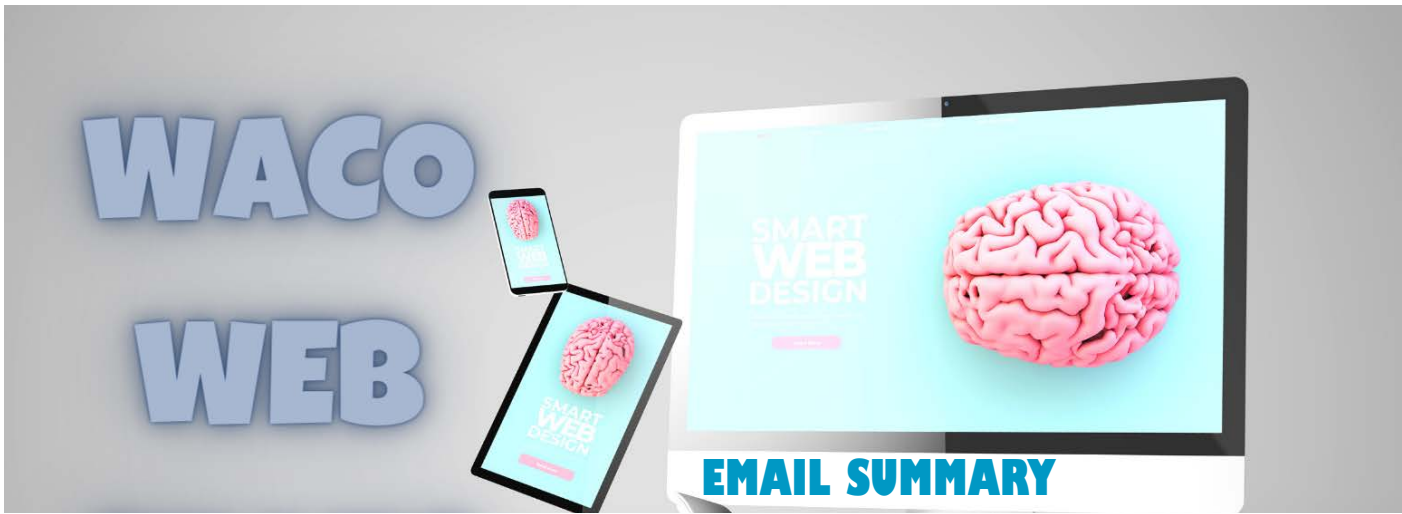


WACO Web Stats & Social Media Trends



April 2024 WEB MONTHLY SNAPSHOT





Top Emails by Open Rate for March 2024

Campaign Name	Sends	Opens	Open Rate	Mobile Open Rate	Desktop Open Rate	Clicks	Click Rate
WACO Convention 2024 - Campground Survey	100	76	81.70%	10.90%	89.10%	35	37.60%
WACO Convention 2024 - Vendor Survey	142	104	77.00%	4.60%	95.40%	65	48.10%
Final Convention Update	142	98	73.10%	18.90%	81.10%	71	53.00%
Amusement Ride Registration & Inspections	261	161	68.80%	9.20%	90.80%	48	20.50%
WACO 2024 - Post-Show Sponsor Email: CampLife	274	143	58.10%	7.40%	92.60%	26	10.60%

Top Emails by Open Rate for April 2024

Campaign Name	Sends	Opens	Open Rate	Mobile Open Rate	Desktop Open Rate	Clicks	Click Rate
Emergency Telephones in Pool Areas	260	153	65.10%	9.00%	91.00%	31	13.20%
March 2024-Post Convention- WACO Newsletter	508	264	57.10%	10.70%	89.30%	97	21.00%
First National Bank Benefit	260	123	52.30%	6.50%	93.50%	0	0.00%



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Information for Pool Operators About New VGBA Requirements and Drain Cover Replacement

By Mary Ellen Bruesch, Wisconsin Department
of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer
Protection



In 2021, manufacture of drain covers meeting the 2008 VGBA standard stopped and '2017' drain cover manufacture began. The '2017' standard is intended to improve the safety of the drain covers and will have more specific instructions about their installation when replacing drain covers.

'2008' covers may still be used until their supply runs out and may stay in place until expired. However, when you install a '2017' cover, **you are required to follow those specific instructions for installation and may not use any 2008 instructions.** Also, please note that a '2017' replacement for a '2008' drain cover may have a lower rating than the cover it is replacing. Please refer to the instructions that come with the cover to determine the rating.

It is the pool operator's responsibility to make sure the drain cover rating of the replacement cover is high enough for the peak flow of the recirculation pump and that any cover is installed according to manufacturer instructions. Your Sanitarian will be looking for an installation date and signature on the specifications sheet that accompanies the drain cover, an affidavit from the pool service contractor that installed the drain cover, or on the VGBA Logbook (DFRS-BFRB-014).

New versions of the logbook and a fact sheet are available at https://datcp.wi.gov/Pages/Programs_Services/WaterRecreation.aspx.

Please consult with your pool professional with any questions you may have or contact the DATCP Recreational Mailbox at DATCPDFRSREC@wisconsin.gov.



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Check out the following articles and YouTube video on this topic, which you may find helpful:

[The VGBA Standard Just Changed: What Your Company Needs to Know \(linkedin.com\)](#)

[The Drain Cover Law Has Changed | AQUA Magazine](#)

[VGBA 2017 - WHAT'S CHANGING IN 2021? - CMP \(c-m-p.com\)](#)

[Industry Adapts to Changes in National Pool Drain Cover Standard \(horizonpoolsupply.com\)](#)

[VGB Updates with Aquastar](#)

Please feel free to let us know if you have any questions about how DATCP and agent Sanitarians will be enforcing VGBA requirements. Email Maryellen.bruesch@wisconsin.gov or DATCPDFRS@wisconsin.gov.





GBF Member Donations 2024

TOTALS FOR YEAR

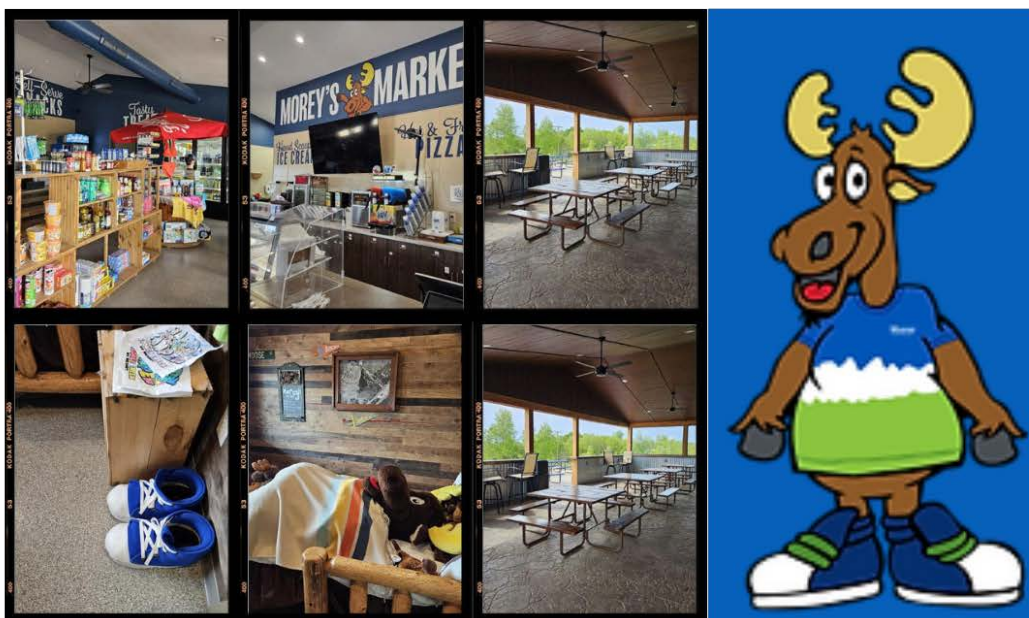
(As of 5/10/24)



Campground	Total Funds Raised
Duck Creek	\$23,500
Huckleberry Acres	\$10,429
Evergreen Campsites	\$1,125
Timber Trail	\$800
Dells Camping Resort	\$355
Grand Total	\$36,209

Thank you to all the members that
continue to raise funds for the
Gilbert Brown Foundation!

WACO Out & About



Stoney Creek has the cutest set up for their mascot, Morey the Moose when its time to rest - check out his digs!



Board of Directors

CONGRATULATIONS to your 2024-2025 Board of Directors! This dedicated group of members spend time and energy making decisions for your Association. If you have ideas, questions, or want to get more involved, reach out to one of them or the WACO office.



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2024-2025



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2020-2025 2nd Term



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2021-2024 1st Term



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2021-2024 1st Term



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2022-2025 1st Term



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2021-2024 1st Term



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2022-2025 2nd Term



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2023-2025 1st Term



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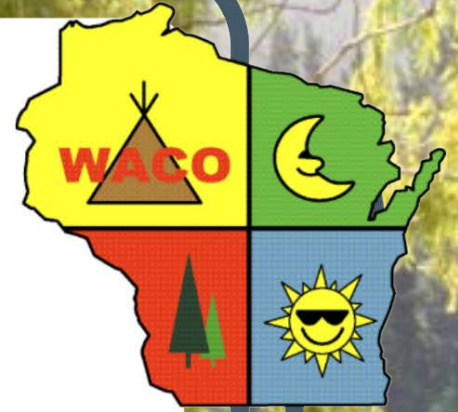
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