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## APRIL 2025

### EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR INSIGHTS



Lori Severson, WACO Executive Director

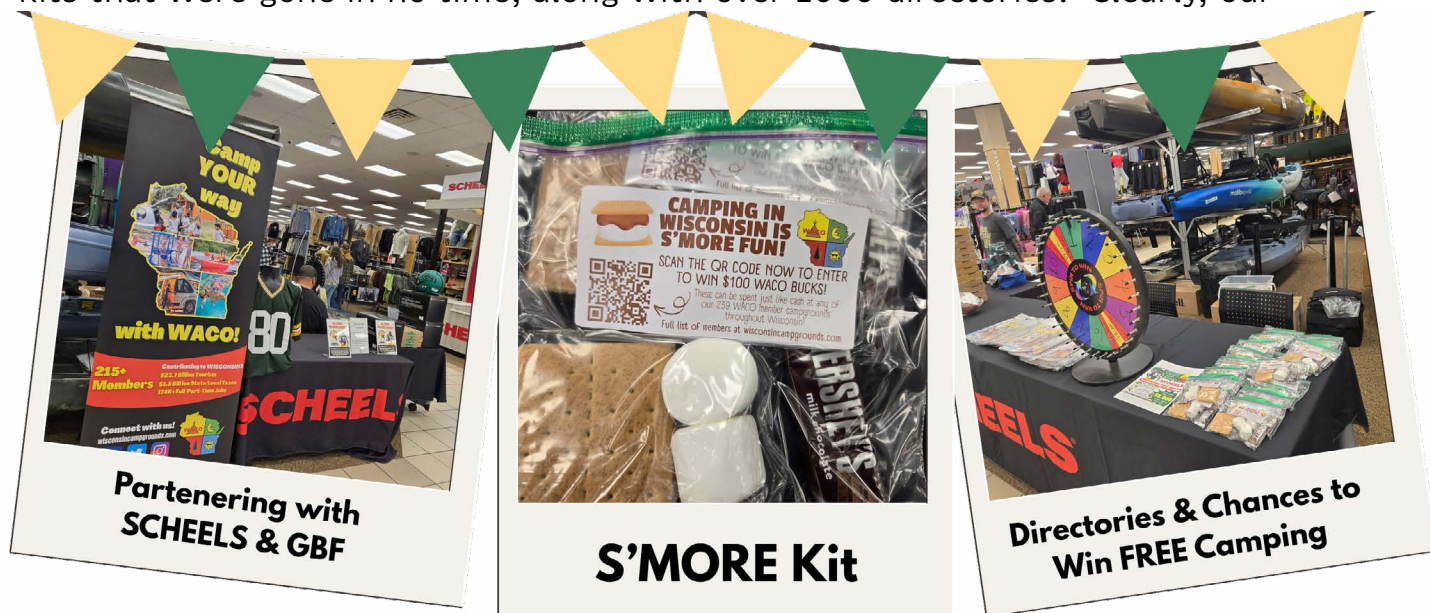
Dear Members,

Thank you for an amazing 62nd WACO convention! We were thrilled to see so many of you take the time to come and contribute to the networking and learning! Seeing how WACO members welcome new campgrounds, old friends, and fresh ideas is always amazing! Your WACO team is on a mission to continue developing new tools and techniques for you to use to make money and be successful in your own right. We learned lessons in business and life. We lost a great trade member - Tommy from Water Wars and two of the finest campground leaders, Scott Grennon & Bud Styer. We celebrated Randy Isacson and his beautiful family, and I hope each of us took away that tomorrow is not a promise. I think that is why WACO will always and forever be my family. My mom, daughter, aunties, brother and sisters, and their children have always supported my WACO efforts. We have made such amazing friendships that no amount of money could ever buy. I will always think of you

all as family and feel so honored to have you in my life. The lessons in life and business that you have shared with me will always be in my heart. It's good to reflect on all the blessings in our lives and our members, how we help each other and fight for what's right for our industry, and how we are memory makers!

## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR INSIGHTS, CONT'D

So, what have we done for you lately? You might ask. Our membership is looking good at 239 members, up from 220. Print media is far from dead. We have 28 boxes of directories left! The numbers are not all in for the convention, but we look great financially! Our CD is growing, along with trade members and member benefits. If you need alcohol, beverage, or food manager training, we have found a new member benefit to save you lots of money. Please watch for information in upcoming emails and on the Facebook page on how to become a proctor for the food course! Our contract with the Holiday Inn goes through 2026, and we are looking at other options for locations that will allow us to grow our convention and still keep things affordable. We had a very successful event with Scheels of EauClaire and are excited to continue these pop-up events! Carla, Gilbert Brown & handed out 1000 adorable little s'mores kits that were gone in no time, along with over 2000 directories! Clearly, our



customers and Scheels are connected. After this trial run, we will look to do more of these in Scheel's other stores. We have established our Scholarship fund, and thanks to our young professionals, we are ready to give those out! We need some takers! If you know of someone going to school that works for you, please encourage them to apply!

The Wisconsin Counties Association will be in the Dells again. We recently spoke to Mark O'Connell, the Executive Director of the Counties Association. He said, "I really think it's making a difference that you bring players and put this event on for us each year. I've heard comments that it educates board members, and they are really starting to know who you are. Tina asked if he could help us with counties like Sawyer, which are struggling to understand the importance of having a cabin with electricity in our parks. Gilbert will stay two extra days in the Dells to help Mark O'Connell with WCA's sports-themed convention keynote - so when you see Gilbert next, please thank him for this!



# EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR INSIGHTS, CONT'D

It will be a year of being sharp and on our toes to ensure we make our numbers. Your marketing plan is going to be more critical than ever. Be sure you are using all the fantastic ideas we collected at the convention, and we treat our customers like they are guests in our homes. I would be remiss if I didn't throw in some good old steps to keep us on track this season! Remember whether you choose this business or it chose you: running a campground is one of the most rewarding – and demanding – businesses out there. From early morning check-ins to late-night campfire calls, the pace can wear you down fast if you don't actively refuel your energy and your team's morale.

**But here's the good news: success often naturally follows when fun is part of the formula.**

Remember the "FISH" training we did for years! Even shoveling fish guts can be fun IF you make it fun! You are the only one that can create this in your campground. You are responsible for keeping your energy high, your team motivated, and your campground thriving all season long. We can do it together. **Here are ten ideas to ponder!**

## 1. START EVERY WEEK WITH PURPOSE (AND POSITIVITY)

Kick-off each week with a quick 15-minute team huddle – if you have a team GREAT. If not, remember how powerful your brain is! Your brain is your most powerful tool – not just for problem-solving or remembering things but for shaping the reality you experience daily. Science shows us that what you focus on, visualize, and believe in influences your actions, energy, and results in the real world.

## 2. THOUGHTS BECOME BLUEPRINTS

When you think positive, clear, and confident thoughts, your brain:

- Releases dopamine and other feel-good chemicals
- Activates your focus and motivation centers
- It helps you spot opportunities (instead of problems)

Your brain literally filters what you see in the world based on your mindset. Expect a great day, and you're more likely to find one. Expect frustration, and you'll probably find that, too. Remember the bad reviews or customers; soon, all your customers will be nasty! Remember the customer whose

day you made, and you will see more opportunities to do that with more guests. People remember the little things.

## 3. WHAT YOU SEE, YOU STRENGTHEN

If I've learned anything from the many football players I've worked with, it's this: Athletes use mental rehearsal to visualize winning before stepping on the field. Why? Because your brain doesn't fully distinguish between real and imagined experiences.

**The same is true for you:**

- Visualize a smooth check-in process. You're more likely to stay calm and confident during it.
- Picture your team working with joy, laughter, and synergy. You'll show up more open and collaborative.

The more clearly you can see success, the more your brain and body begin to work together to make it happen. Pick something to try every day!

- Share a motivational quote or camper story
- Celebrate last week's wins (like a great

# EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR INSIGHTS, CONT'D

review or happy guest)

- Set one simple focus (e.g., "Let's surprise 3 guests with random acts of kindness this week.")
- Use a visual for yourself and your staff to track wins, goals, shoutouts, and fun themes for the week!



## 4. SET A "FUN-FOCUS" FOR THE SEASON

What makes your campground special? Is it s'mores nights? Silly hat Fridays? A scavenger hunt for kids?

**Make your core identity playful and team-led by:**

- Creating a season-long "fun calendar" Letting staff take turns suggesting theme days
- Giving guests "Campground Crew Choice" surprise perks – like free ice cream or early check-in
- Surprise a seasonal – let someone else do it so they get that feel-good experience!

This fun focus keeps staff and guests looking forward to what's next.

## 5. RECOGNIZE & REWARD YOUR TEAM OFTEN

It doesn't have to be big. It just has to be genuine and regular. Try:

- "Camper Compliment of the Week" wall
- A rotating trophy for the team member who went above and beyond
- Small rewards (gift cards, extra break time, or picking the playlist for the day) etc.
- Announce something about a team member during a crazy event!
- Leave them a "gold Brick." Remember these from a couple of conventions ago. Spread that feel-good feeling!

Gratitude is the fuel of excellent service.

## 6. MAKE SPACE FOR MICRO-MOMENTS OF JOY

A long shift feels shorter when little sparkles of fun pop up!

Ideas:

- A 5-minute midday dance break
- Team "camp name" badges (think "Trailblazer Tina" or "Bug-Zapper Ben")
- Hide silly rubber ducks around the campground for guests AND staff to find
- Create mystery trash
- When your staff is laughing, guests notice – and love it.

## 7. PRIORITIZE REST AND BOUNDARIES

Fun can't thrive in burnout. Help your team stay energized by:

- Respecting days off – no texts unless truly urgent (except for me – I need to know you still need me!)
- Providing shaded rest spaces or a "cool down" corner
- Rotating challenging tasks like trash pickup or late shifts
- Give a 10-minute time out and jump in and help a teammate.

Think of it this way: a rested team gives the best guest experience.



# EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR INSIGHTS, CONT'D

## 8. GET INSPIRED TOGETHER

Bring in new energy throughout the season with:

- Quick 10-minute team sessions to discuss what's good and working.
- Weekly "campfire learning" topics – one team member teaches a short skill

Learning fuels morale – and keeps everyone invested in the bigger mission.

## 9. CELEBRATE THE JOURNEY (NOT JUST THE END)

Don't wait until the end of the season to celebrate. Try mid-season cookouts, pizza nights, or a campfire party just for staff. Create a shared photo wall of funny moments and guest selfies.

When people feel like they're part of something special, they bring their best to work.

## 10. FINAL THOUGHT: CULTURE IS YOUR HIDDEN ADVANTAGE

You can't control the weather or camper complaints – but you can control your campground culture.

The most successful campgrounds aren't just clean or well-run – they have teams that laugh together, care deeply, and stay energized through even the busiest weekends. Just like strong associations! So build the place your team is proud to work at – and your campers will feel it, too. Start there if you have time for a note, a Facebook compliment, or a smile! You got this!

*Lori*

Lori Severson, Executive Director of WACO  
Owner Champions Riverside Resort  
Owner Severson & Associates

**A positive culture in the workplace refers to an environment where people feel valued, respected, supported, and motivated. It promotes well-being, productivity, and collaboration.**

**Key features of a positive culture include:**

1. **Trust and Transparency – Open communication and honesty are encouraged and rewarded.**
  2. **Respect and Inclusion – Everyone's contributions are acknowledged regardless of background or role.**
  3. **Support and Empowerment – People feel safe to take risks, learn from mistakes, and grow.**
  4. **Recognition and Appreciation – Achievements, both big and small, are celebrated.**
- Shared Purpose and Values – There's a clear mission and a sense of unity toward common goals.**

## A WORD FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Scott Kollock, WACO Board President



Dear Members:

We have just got off the high of having a great convention. WACO is not taking any time off. Legislation leading to business regulation is going quite wild, and we are on top of it. We understand the importance of strategically and continuously educating local governments, state representatives, and our members about campgrounds and who we are and getting them factual information. We are doing several things in this area:

- We work with WMC – the largest lobbying firm in Wisconsin.
- Our contact with Jason Culotta continues, and we continue to benefit from his relationships and introductions.
- We have two forms of software that keep the WACO office apprised of upcoming bills.
- Mark Hazelbaker continues to assist in writing local letters and helping with local boards.
- At our last meeting, we voted to bring on two lobbyist firms to help us work on a couple of significant bills that our office already had in the works with Senator Jacque's office.
  - Criminal Trespass at a Campground and Providing a Penalty-LRB-1161-P1: The campground one (LRB 1166/1) is still out for co-sponsorship. It closes on Monday, May 5th, and so far, we have Jacque & Nass from the Senate, along with Dallman, Dittrich, Green & Penterman from the Assembly.
  - LRB-0444-P2\_AmusementRides: Jacque from the Senate and the Assembly, we have Callahan & Knodl.
- The group opted to run with Knight Public Affairs and The Welch Group, offering WACO different benefits. The strategic advantage of hiring both is ensuring we have coverage on both sides of the aisle and both sets of relationships. They have agreed to work together, and this is the best way to make things happen quickly. With the challenges we have with regulations and running our businesses, this is an excellent use of funds we have appropriated for these specific projects.

Campground owners face unique challenges related to zoning, property taxes, environmental regulations, and permitting. So many of us have faced tremendous challenges trying to expand and add to our businesses, primarily due to zoning restrictions.

Lobbyists play a pivotal role in shaping laws and regulations that affect campgrounds. Through direct communication with lawmakers and participation in legislative processes, lobbyists ensure that the interests of campground owners are represented. For example, WACO's lobbying efforts have included addressing issues related to amusement ride regulations at campgrounds and property tax assessments, and we need people who know people who can sign on to these bills now. Our member



## A WORD FROM THE PRESIDENT, CONT'D

Campground owners have faced challenges related to unfair tax assessments and regulatory issues with DSPS and the DNR. So much of what goes on today gets added to the budget and passed before you even know about it. We know we need boots on the ground and think these actions will help us not only with issues currently on the table but learning about issues early enough to battle WACO's commitment to strategically support our members for long-term business sustainability.

These two choices will allow us to address the regulatory problems, the tourism side of things, and guidance that aligns with the long-term goals of campground owners. By staying abreast of legislative developments and advocating for favorable policies, lobbyists help ensure that campgrounds can operate sustainably and continue contributing to Wisconsin's economy and the health and well-being of our membership. Hiring a professional lobbyist is a proactive step toward safeguarding our member's interests and promoting a favorable business environment. Campground owners can navigate the complexities of state and local regulations effectively by leveraging expert advocacy, influencing policy decisions, protecting against unfair taxation, accessing industry resources, and receiving strategic support.

Please feel free to share any ideas or thoughts you have on the direction WACO is taking. I am always available to talk to you and share information. You are always welcome to come to the board meetings and share your thoughts. As always, I am committed to getting you the answer – it might not be all you were hoping for, but I will get the answer!

*Scott*

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



**MONK'S**  
Bar & Grill  
33 Hillman Rd,  
Lake Delton, WI  
53940

**BOARD MEETING**  
**MAY 12 | 10 AM**

IF YOU PLAN TO ATTEND, PLEASE EMAIL  
[OFFICE@WISCONSINCAMPGROUNDS.COM](mailto:OFFICE@WISCONSINCAMPGROUNDS.COM) SO WE CAN CREATE A PACKET!

Attending events hosted by our partners strengthens relationships and gets our directories into the hands of more campers. We are lucky to attend some of these events along with GBF!





**WISCONSIN  
TAVERN LEAGUE  
FOUNDATION**

*Join Us*

**September 8, 2025**  
**Turtleback Golf Course**  
1985 18 1/2 Street Rice Lake, WI 54686

Hosted by the Barron County Tavern League

*27<sup>th</sup> Annual*

**GOLF OUTING**

*Sponsorship Opportunities*

**Hole Sponsors \$100**

We'll print a sign and post it at a hole and list you in our program to show your support!

**Premium Hole Sponsors \$500**

Bring a pop-up tent and a table and start a conversation with every foursome on the course. Food and beverage samples welcome! (Your logo is displayed on signage at the hole.)

**Hole Sponsors**

Wilson Golf Group, The Golf Club at Cedar Creek, The Boneyard, Captain Jack's Saloon, Oneida County Tavern League, Dugout 54, Door County Tavern League, Clark County Tavern League, Trempealeau/Buffalo County Tavern League, Ready Randy's Bar & Grill, Kelly's Bleachers Big Bend, Columbia County Tavern League, Nick's, JPK Plumbing, Wason's Supper Club, Trempealeau/Buffalo County Tavern League, Tugs Bar & Grill, Kelly's Bleachers II, Hummers Rendezvous, Strikes, Spares & Spirits LLC

**Golf Cart • Beverages • Lunch • Dinner • Awards**

Registration begins at 9:00 am, shotgun start at 11:00 am

**Hotel Accommodations**

Microtel Inn & Suites by Wyndham Rice Lake  
2771 Decker Drive Rice Lake, WI 54868

**OUR MISSION**

Each year, the Wisconsin Tavern League Foundation (WTLF), the 501c3 non-profit charitable arm of the Tavern League of Wisconsin, provides financial support for thousands of Wisconsin charities. In 2021, the Tavern League of Wisconsin (TLW) members were proud to contribute \$17 million to support nearly 16,000 charities across the state.

**Spots are limited! Register online at [tlw.org](http://tlw.org) to secure yours!**

# WACO & GBF at the TAVERN LEAGUE CONVENTION

*Major Sponsor*

**BADGERliquor**  
wine and spirits

Unable to attend?

Please consider a tax-deductible donation to the Wisconsin Tavern League Foundation. Contact the TLW Office at 608-270-8591 or [info@tlw.org](mailto:info@tlw.org) for more information.

*Register Today!*







*fly high*  
**BUD  
STYER**

Our industry lost a leader with the passing of Bud Styer on April 11th, doing what he did best - working at his campground. Seeing so many members at his funeral demonstrated the relationships Bud built over the decades of his involvement in the campground world. We were lucky to have his ideas, passion, excitement, and experience in our Association, and he will be missed. If you have any pictures you'd like to share of Bud or stories that are near and dear to your heart, [please send them here](#). Our WACO staff is putting together something in his memory for the upcoming 2026 Convention.

View Bud's [full obituary here](#).

View [Woodall's article here](#).



# BACKGROUND *checks*

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## DO I NEED BACKGROUND CHECKS AT MY PARK?

Camping can be a fun and enriching way to enjoy time in the great outdoors and operating a successful campground is dependent on keeping things safe. You want every camper to have a great experience at your campground, which is why it's crucial to consider the safety and security of your guests and staff above all else. You're doing your best to protect your campers and your business. You have a well-trained staff. You have emergency procedures in place. But there may be a gap in your business plan! [READ FULL ARTICLE HERE.](#)

FOR GUEST SCREENING: [visit TenantAlert.com/hospitality](https://tenantalert.com/hospitality)

FOR EMPLOYEE SCREENING: [visit aGoodEmployee.com/Hospitality](https://agoodemployee.com/Hospitality)

- [Background Check Info Flyer](#)
- [Employee Background Checks Are Essential](#)
- [Should Campgrounds Require a Background Check?](#)
- [Why Should I Run a Background Check on a camper?](#)
- [About Background Checks \(info article\)](#)

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GUESTS  
WITH YOUR  
WATERFRONT!



COMMERCIAL  
RECREATION  
SPECIALISTS

Ask us  
"What's New?"  
at WACO





## MEMBER BENEFITS & DISCOUNTS WITH HOSPITALITY CONNECTIONS

Members of the **Wisconsin Association of Campground Owners**, your association is working for **YOU!**

Saving on products and services from a variety of companies are available for you through **WACO's** affiliation with **Hospitality Connections**. See the participating providers below and click the links for more information or enrollment.

**Here are direct links to learn and directly enroll in a few of the more popular companies and programs including the HC Member Savings Program.**

[Click here for ALL participating companies!](#)

### AT A GLANCE:



[Ferrellgas](#)

[Batteries Plus](#)

[Exxon](#)

[Discount Tire](#)

[Ace Hardware](#)

[UPS](#)

[Waste Focus](#)

[Staples](#)

[Alliant Business Insurance](#)

[Credit Card Processing](#)

We all need to send our guests emails, social ads, & use SMS marketing. Why not collect the data in one location that gives you reporting information, open stats and gives your campers the option to opt-out, keeping you in line with the CAN-SPAM act?

**Constant Contact is available to our WACO members at a 25% discount!**

### CLICK THE LINKS BELOW FOR MORE INFORMATION

- [Constant Contact Info Flyer](#)
- [Constant Contact Services at a Glance](#)
- [Info for learning about Constant Contact \(with link to webinar\)](#)
- [Info on Plan Offerings](#)
- [Return on Investment \(ROI\) with links to product tours, how to create an email, and how to grow your email list](#)



**John Jaszewski | Owner/Broker - MN & WI**

**Campgrounds4Sale.com**

**724 E. Broadway | Winona, MN 55987**

**507-450-5626**

**john@campgrounds4sale.com | www.campgrounds4sale.com**

# SAVE THE DATE

## 2025 FALL WORKSHOPS

September: 16<sup>th</sup>/17<sup>th</sup> (Northern Region)

October: 7<sup>th</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> (Central/South Region)



*Now  
accepting  
applications!*



## SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITY

The WACO Board of Directors, with the assistance of the Young Professionals, is proud to announce the launch of our 2025 Scholarship Program!

**CLICK HERE FOR  
MORE DETAILS**

**APPLY BY NOVEMBER 1**

**SCAN QR CODE  
FOR ONLINE  
APPLICATION**



- ✓ **CONTACT INFO**
- ✓ **EDUCATION**
- ✓ **WORK EXPERIENCE**
- ✓ **REFLECTION QUESTIONS**



# KIM LANTTA JOINS LAKE RIDGE BANK WITH AS VP-TREASURY MANGAGEMENT BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT OFFICER

*Respectfully submitted by WACO Sponsor, Lake Ridge Bank*

Kimberly Lantta has joined the [Lake Ridge Bank Treasury Management](#) team as a Vice President-Business Development Officer. Working out of the bank's [Evansville location](#), she will serve clients throughout the Midwest, with her primary focus on the Evansville and Janesville areas within South Central Wisconsin.

Lantta has been in banking for 25 years, gaining experience in various roles from personal banker to commercial lender, with the last nine years dedicated to Treasury Management. She specializes in helping businesses of all sizes, municipalities, school districts, and nonprofits securely and efficiently manage their financial assets. Growing up in a family business has given Lantta a unique perspective on the challenges and triumphs business owners go through because she went through those same types of highs and lows with her family's floral shop and greenhouse over the years.



***"I feel a real connection with the clients I work with and sincerely want to help make running a business easier by introducing banking tools that are simple to set up and efficient to use," Lantta explains. "One of the big reasons I was drawn to Lake Ridge Bank is because Lake Ridge values the customer experience in the same way I do. It's invigorating to represent a bank that puts so much energy into strengthening the communities we serve."***

True to her priorities, Lantta serves on the Board of Directors at Southwest Wisconsin Workforce Development and the UW-Whitewater Rock County-Dean's Advisory Board. In addition, she volunteers for Agrace Hospice community events.

With a Bachelor of Business Administration from University of Wisconsin-Whitewater, Lantta has also completed the Graduate School of Banking and earned an Executive Leadership Certificate from University of Wisconsin-Madison. She has continued to grow her knowledge and skillset with coursework in commercial lending through WBA and ongoing education through the Risk Management Association. Furthermore, Lantta holds her license to sell Life, Accident & Health and Credit Insurance in Wisconsin.

For more information on how Lake Ridge Bank can help your business thrive, contact Kim Lantta at [klantta@lakeridge.bank](mailto:klantta@lakeridge.bank) or call (608) 882-1545.



**Lake Ridge  
Bank™**

# EMPOWER YOUR CAMPGROUND'S FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT WITH LAKE RIDGE BANK'S BUSINESS CREDIT CARD SOLUTIONS

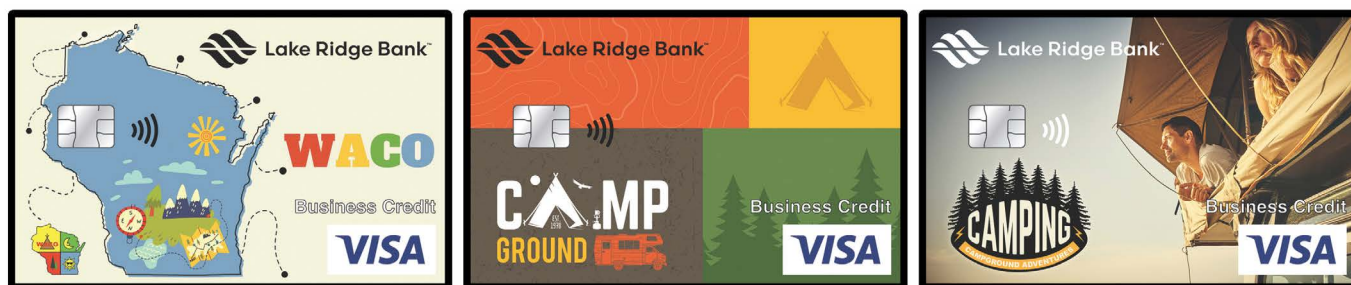
*Respectfully submitted by WACO Sponsor, Lake Ridge Bank*



Lake Ridge  
Bank™

Running a successful campground is no small feat. Between managing day-to-day operations, maintaining your facilities, and creating unforgettable experiences for your guests, there's a lot to keep track of — and your finances shouldn't add to the stress. As a proud supporter of WACO, Lake Ridge Bank offers business credit card solutions that make managing your campground's expenses easier, more efficient, and tailored specifically for businesses like yours.

Unlike big national banks, Lake Ridge Bank keeps it local. Our credit card program is managed right here in Wisconsin. Approvals, underwriting, servicing — it's all handled by a dedicated team that understands the unique needs of campground owners. You won't be routed through distant call centers or wait endlessly for decisions. Instead, you'll work directly with local experts who know your business and your community.



## BENEFITS TAILORED FOR YOU

Our credit card program was built with businesses like yours in mind and offers several standout features that make expense management not just easier but smarter:

- **Local Decision-Making & Personalized Support:** Fast approvals and dedicated service from people who understand your business — because we're your neighbors.
- **Internal Underwriting:** Our in-house underwriting ensures quick, personalized evaluations of your application, giving you faster access to the funds and flexibility you need.
- **Personalized Employee Cards:** Equip your trusted team members with customized cards featuring your business name and logo. Set appropriate spending limits to empower your staff while keeping expenses under control.
- **Integrated Online Access:** View card history and transactions directly within your Lake Ridge Bank online banking account. Monitor spending in real time, simplify bookkeeping, and stay on top of your finances effortlessly.
- **Flexible Rewards Options:** Earn rewards that work for your business, whether that's cash back or travel perks. Put your everyday expenses to work for you!



- **Advanced Expense Reporting:** Take the headache out of budgeting and tax preparation with detailed reporting tools that give you clear insights into your spending.
- **Enhanced Security:** Enjoy zero liability fraud protection for your peace of mind. You can spend confidently, knowing your business is protected.
- **Efficient Expense Management:** Assign cards to key employees for purchasing supplies, handling maintenance needs, or managing event expenses — all while maintaining full control over spending limits.

With Lake Ridge Bank, you're not just signing up for a credit card; you're gaining a financial partner dedicated to your campground's success. We're here to help you streamline your operations, empower your team, and keep your finances running smoothly, season after season.

Whether you're investing in upgrades, managing day-to-day expenses, or simply looking for better control over your business spending, Lake Ridge Bank's credit card solutions are designed to support your growth.

Discover how our locally managed credit card program can benefit your campground by visiting [Lake Ridge Bank's Business Credit Card page](#). At Lake Ridge Bank, we're proud to serve Wisconsin's campground community — let's build your success together.

For a personalized consultation or more information about our credit cards, please contact Kim Latta, VP Treasury Management Business Development Office, at [klantta@lakeridge.bank](mailto:klantta@lakeridge.bank) or (608) 882-1545.

**Member FDIC | Equal Housing Lender | Lake Ridge Bank. Go Far. Go Together!**



**WACO is working on a member benefit that would give us all access to discounted ServSafe and Bartending training courses!**

**Be on the look out as we develop a plan - watch your emails and the members only Facebook group for more details!**

# SALES TAX SNIPPETS

*Navigating sales tax with Holly Hoffman,  
Owner of Sales Tax Advisory Network*



## CREDIT CARD FEES IN FULL BLOOM

At the WACO convention, we discussed credit card fees. It is important that you look closely at the details of your specific situation. What we are discussing here is any credit card fees added to what is invoiced/charged to your customer in addition to your normal camping fees. Considering each campground uses different vendors and has different payment setups, you cannot assume you are seeing the same transaction scenario. So please, this is one of the areas that requires an extra review to get the facts and identify proper treatment for your business.

Wisconsin Department of Revenue's [Wisconsin Tax Bulletin #224](#), January 2024, article reminds 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.

### **Collects Fee Directly From Your Customer**

The merchant servicer may collect the fee from your customer on your behalf instead of collecting it from you. The merchant servicer is invoicing your customer on your behalf, meaning the credit card fee is part of your taxable sale. You are simply skipping a step of collecting the money from your customer and then paying the merchant service company. Per an agreement, you have given the merchant servicer permission to withhold their agreed upon fees before passing on your sales.

In this scenario, let's walk through how you would record the transaction. When you record your revenue, you would record 100% of the sales invoiced (including the credit card fee). If the sale was a seasonal campsite and the credit card fee, then the entire sale amount invoiced would be reported on line 1 of the sales tax return and it is all subject to sales tax (no deductions on lines 2-5). The amount the merchant servicer retained is a business expense, that is the fee for their services (income tax).

### **Automatically Adds Fee After Transaction**

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 SNIPPETS, CONT'D

## 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.

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 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

**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	$(\$28.00 \times .03) = .84$
Taxable receipts	\$28.84



**Sales Tax**  
Advisory Network

Contact **Holly Hoffman**, Owner of Sales Tax Advisory Network at our new office: 1052 Main St Ste 201, Stevens Point WI 54481  
Ph: 715-883-1299 | [holly@salestaxlady.com](mailto:holly@salestaxlady.com)





# 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 [office@wisconsincampgrounds.com](mailto:office@wisconsincampgrounds.com). Give the WACO office a call first to vet your question, and Lori can provide direction on the next steps.

## Service Animals, Legislation & Immigration Initiatives

Respectfully Submitted By Attorney Mark Hazelbaker, WACO Legal Counsel

### Yet More Wrinkles About Service Animals

Campgrounds and other businesses can limit service animals to a defined area of the business to avoid injuring guests who are allergic to dogs or miniature horses. However, the campground needs to make a reasonable number of units or spaces available to service animals. Here are the details.

A campground noted that admitting service animals to accommodate disabled patrons risks causing allergic reactions in other guests, whose allergies may also be a disability. How's a campground to choose? The answer is – reasonably.

The campground which called indicated they set aside 45 percent of their cabins and units for guests with service dogs. [This limit would not apply to campsites because people occupy their own trailers on campsites]. Those units are available to any guest on a first-come, first-served basis.

It is legal to refuse admission to guests with service dogs if the units reserved for dogs are full. The law requires reasonable accommodation, not unlimited accommodation. But – be prepared to explain your policy. So here's what I advise:

**KNOW THE RULES.** You can ask two questions when a person shows up with a service animal:

1. Is the dog a service animal required because of a disability?
2. What work or task has the dog been trained to perform?

#### Key points:

- Emotional support animals are NOT service animals. Campgrounds are NOT required to admit emotional support animals.
- Service animals are not certified or required to be certified, nor are they required to wear any vest or patch
- Service animals are allowed to go anywhere a person may go – subject to the limits I am discussing.
- You cannot require pet deposits for service animals, but their owners are responsible for damage they cause.





- **Be Prepared.** If you're going to limit access to some cabins, have a statement prepared to explain why there are only limited numbers of units available for service animals.

**Our Campground must balance the needs of people with service animals and others who are allergic to animals. We want to reasonably accommodate both of these guests' needs. Therefore, we will set aside (half) of our cabins for guests with service animals. The other half are reserved for guests who do not have animals. We will offer these cabins to people on a first-come, first-served basis. We have concluded this policy is a reasonable accommodation of these conflicting needs.**



## Time for Legislative Action

Wisconsin is one of a decreasing minority of states which do not make it a crime to misrepresent the status of an animal. Even Minnesota and Michigan have adopted laws to crack down on fraudulent service animal claims. The Wisconsin Legislature needs to move on this issue.

Congress needs to step in as well. Businesses across the nation are being victimized by spurious claims that pets are "service animals." The regulations on service animals simply go too far. Service animals are given extraordinary protection under the regulations adopted to implement the Americans with Disabilities Act. There should be a certification and registration process to assure service animals are legitimate.

## Immigration Enforcement - Things to Know

Heightened enforcement of immigration laws may affect all businesses, including campgrounds. This is a broader subject than can be covered by this column. But, here are a few things to be aware of. Student Visas Are Not Affected (So Far)

The student visa programs which many campgrounds use for seasonal help have not been eliminated or suspended. There have been some visible enforcement actions directed against university student visa holders, which are a different classification of visa. We are not aware of any issues with the visa programs campgrounds use.

But nonetheless, be prepared to answer questions about visa holders. Have their visas and work documents available for inspection if need be. Your workers should have ready access to their passports and other identity documents. They should know the number of the closest embassy or consulate in case they need assistance.

## CAMPGROUND EMPLOYEES

In the case of employees, campgrounds are required to have applicants complete the I-9 form, which requires proof of the employee's identity and their eligibility to work. You are required to keep a legible copy of all the documents you review. Make sure that file is accessible.

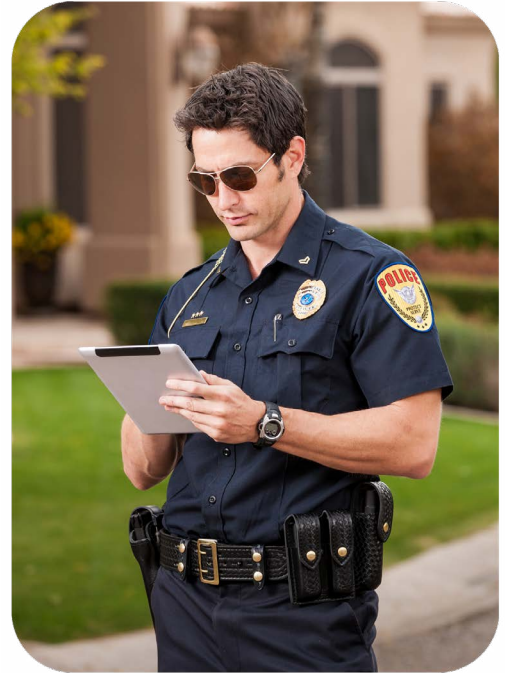
Federal law penalizes employers who "knowingly" hire ineligible employees. Under the law, "knowingly" means awareness that a reasonable inquiry would lead a person to conclude the individual is not eligible to work. If someone tells you they aren't eligible to work, that's enough to constitute "knowing." If you are given documents which do not look genuine and hire them anyway, that might be knowing. If you have questions, ask for more documentation.

## DEALING WITH IMMIGRATION ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES

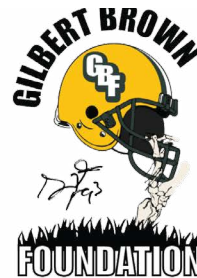
Campgrounds are private property. You are not required to allow any government agency on to your Campground unless they have a warrant. Many Campgrounds, however, want to have a cooperative relationship with law enforcement. It is up to you to decide what you want to do. But it is certainly better to have any issues which arise dealt with in a less visible and confrontational way than would result from agencies showing up with a task force to serve a warrant.

If you are contacted by any law enforcement agency, please remember a basic fact. You do not have to talk to the police. But if you do talk to them, it is a crime to lie to them. Interestingly, though, it is not a crime for the police to lie to you. So if you are going to talk to the police or immigration, don't say anything that isn't true.

You can ask law enforcement agencies to let you contact a lawyer. Even if the lawyers can't get to the campground, get them on speaker to listen to what is being said. The police and immigration agencies are not required to allow you to have a lawyer unless you are in custody. However, you are not required to speak to them. Usually, if you explain that you just feel more comfortable with your lawyer listening in, they will allow you to have a lawyer.



**Use our online form to send legal questions to Mark!** *Our legal hotline is one of your best WACO member benefits!* By submitting your questions to the WACO office first, we are best able to track and report on Mark's answers to questions that may be an issue for many members and put that data in one central place for you to refer to anytime! ***Should you choose to NOT use the hotline and contact Mark Hazelbaker directly, you will incur costs to your campground.***



### DON'T FORGET!

**In 2025, if you need to use the GBF raffle license, be sure to complete the JotForm below and Carla or Lori will connect with you on next steps! They will also follow up with the appropriate documentation to keep you out of jail if its determined that you are able to utilize the Raffle License!**





[Read full story and Q1 2025 Advocacy Updates on OHI's website!](#)

This year marks a new chapter in OHI's advocacy work. After 13 years of tireless dedication, Jeff Sims, who led OHI's government affairs efforts, retired in January. Jeff's legacy of passionate representation laid the foundation for everything we do to advance the interests of privately owned outdoor hospitality businesses across the country.

Succeeding him is David Basler, OHI's Senior Vice President of Government Affairs. David brings years of leadership experience within the organization and a strong commitment to building on Jeff's work. Under his direction, OHI is expanding its advocacy team and deepening its presence in Washington, D.C.

To that end, we're excited to introduce . . .

Andrew Mills, who has joined OHI as our lead lobbyist in the nation's capital. Andrew will be our voice on the Hill, working to ensure policymakers understand the unique contributions and challenges of RV parks, campgrounds, glamping resorts, and other outdoor hospitality businesses.

Andrew is the President of Lone Tree Strategies, a Washington, D.C.-based consulting firm. With nearly two decades of grassroots, political, and legislative experience, he has a proven track record of running impactful advocacy campaigns and building bipartisan coalitions on complex national issues. His six years on Capitol Hill with Senator Richard G. Lugar cemented his belief in collaboration across the aisle, and he has since served in senior leadership roles in both industry and nonprofit spaces, including the National Audubon Society and the Audubon Action Fund. An Indiana native and Purdue alum, Andrew brings a thoughtful, strategic approach to our policy work—and we're thrilled to have him on the team. If you need anything from our advocacy team, you can reach them at [ohi-advocacy@ohi.org](mailto:ohi-advocacy@ohi.org).

With Andrew on board, we're charging ahead with an ambitious 2025 legislative agenda that reflects your business priorities:

- The Credit Card Competition Act – Promoting transparency and competition in the credit card processing market to help reduce your credit card swipe fees by an average of 15% each year. With our coalition partners, we're also actively supporting companion bills introduced in 24 states.
- The Main Street Tax Certainty Act – Making the 20% qualified business income (QBI) deduction permanent for small businesses, including those in outdoor hospitality. Our goal here is to save you money on your taxes so you can reinvest in your business and your people.
- The Online Accessibility Act – Seeking the reintroduction of this bill to create a 90-day cure period for businesses addressing Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) website accessibility claims. In the true spirit of the ADA, this bill will help businesses like yours be more accessible to those with disabilities and will make our industry more welcoming to campers of all abilities.

With a growing team and a focused agenda, we're ready to take OHI's advocacy work to the next level. Since November, the OHI team has been on Capitol Hill three times and almost 100 of you from more than 70 OHI-member businesses have joined us. Thank you for your continued engagement and support—together, we're making a difference.

**DAVID**

SVP, Government Affairs  
Centennial, CO



**ANDREW**

Government Affairs Strategist/ Lobbyist  
Washington, DC





## THE TROUBLE WITH TARIFFS

Companies big and small continue to deal with the uncertainty surrounding the latest round of financial results and forecasts. The global trade system is severely shaken by a shift in U.S. policy, [according to an Associated Press report](#). What does that mean for your business?

Consumer [and business confidence](#) remains shaky due to tariffs and big swings in policy. [Woodall's noted](#), "The U.S. economy shrank during the first quarter of the year, its first drop in three years." [Consumer spending](#) did crank up in March, likely an effort to get ahead of tariffs and price increases, but fell for the entire quarter.

Meanwhile, companies have been pulling back on hiring, and about half of the companies in the S&P 500 have reported their latest quarterly financial results. However, the focus has been on how they will adjust to tariffs and any change in consumers' behavior.

**So what will YOU do to ensure your campground isn't negatively impacted? Focus on the things you can control, like:**

- Expenses - cutting them and budgeting more
- Planning for inventory - buy in bulk when it makes sense and cut back where you can
- Stay rate-conscious - if the consumer feels the trickle-down impacts, you want to remain price-attractive!
- Create marketing campaigns focusing on savings, promotions, and good price points.

Here's what companies (Caterpillar, Stanley Black & Decker, Newell Brands, Barclays, GSK, Sysco, and First Solar) are saying about tariffs and the potential impact ... [Read the full Associated Press report](#).





# The Easiest Solution For RV Park Management



Availability

POS

Reports



## Availability

RV Site 3		Condo 3		Cabin 3		Seasonal 0	
		Fri 02	Sat 03	Sun 04	Mon 05	Tue 06	Wed 07
RV1000	54ft						
RV1000	54ft		Smith, John				
RV1000	54ft					Myers, TJ	
RV1000	54ft						
RV1000	54ft					Johnson, Jim	
RV1000	54ft						
RV1000	54ft					Collins, Mary	
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# WACO Web Stats & Social Media Trends



## Top Posts in March 2025

### Facebook/Instagram Insights - March

FB Lifetime Followers: 10,330 (-9 from February)

IG Lifetime Followers: 615 (+10 from February)

## Last 90 Days (March) FB

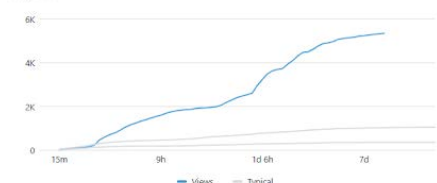


#### Overview

Views 5,373 Reach 3,103 Interactions 29 Link clicks --

This post received more views compared to your recent Facebook posts.

Views 5,373



From followers 23%  
From non-followers 77%

This post received more interactions compared to your recent Facebook posts.

Interactions 29

Reactions 3 Comments 1 Shares 25 Saves 0

## March '25 IG

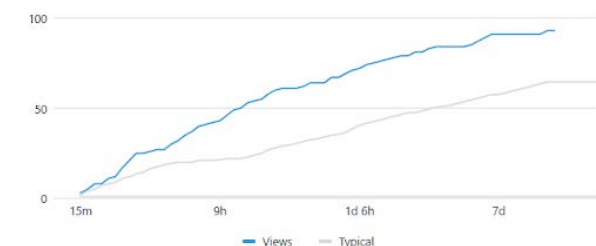


#### Overview

Views 93 Reach 82 Interactions 4

This post received more views compared to your recent Instagram posts.

Views 93



#### Followers breakdown

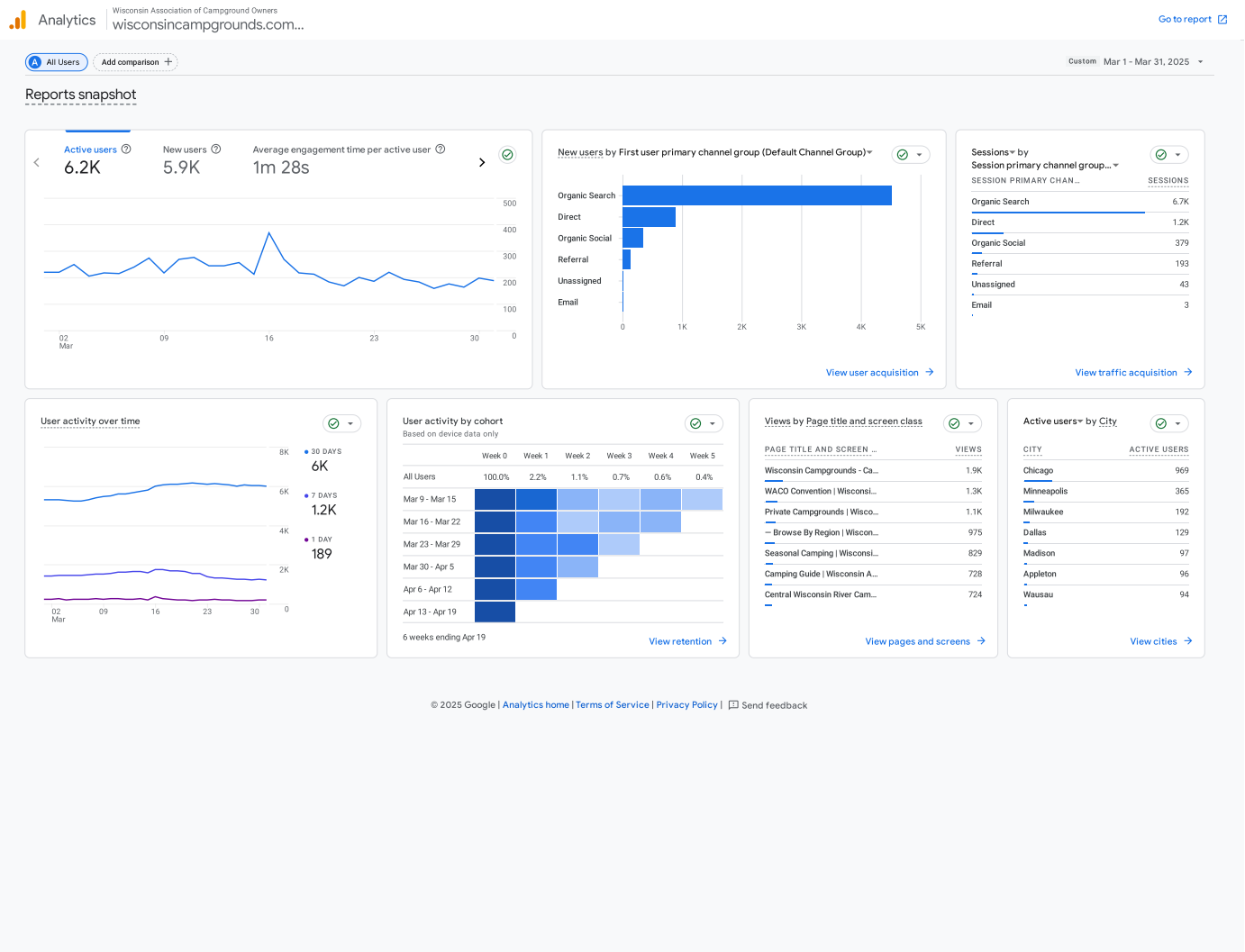
From followers 75%  
From non-followers 25%

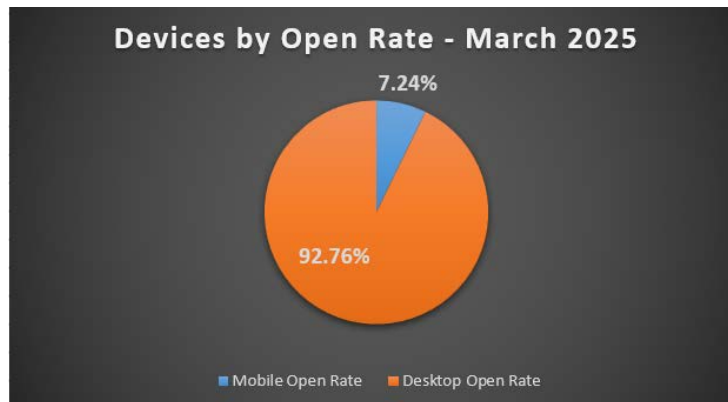
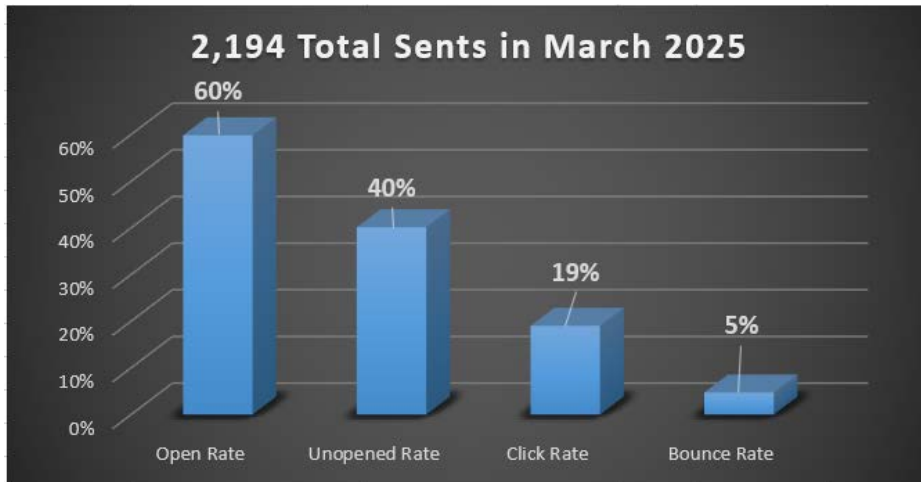
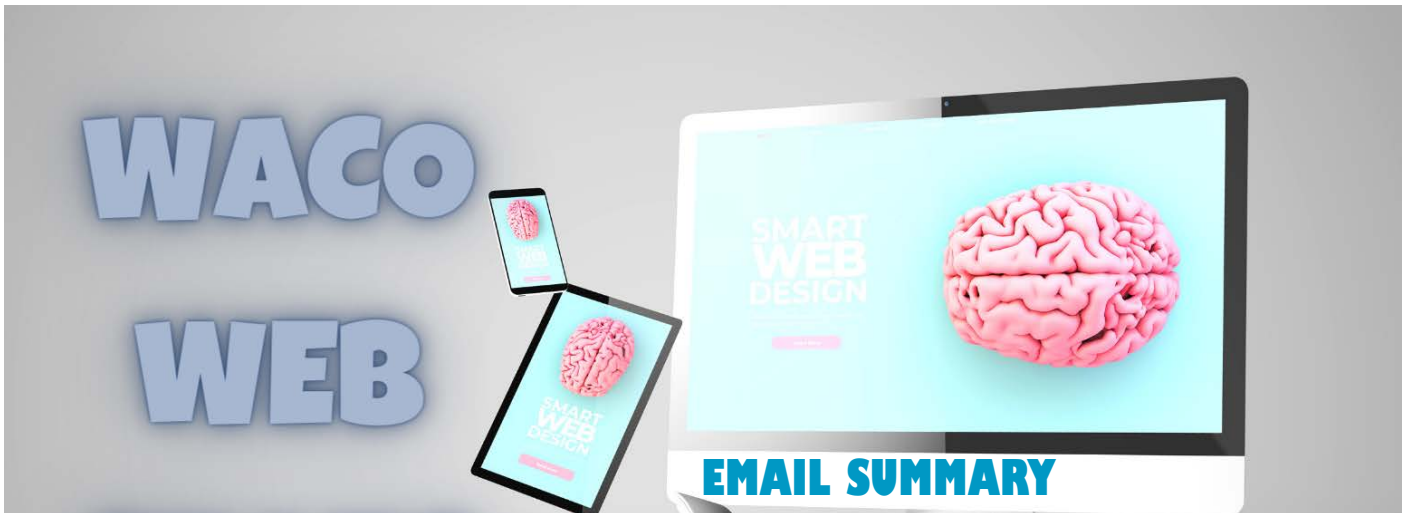


# WACO Web Stats & Social Media Trends



## March 2025 WEB MONTHLY SNAPSHOT





## Top Emails by Open Rate for March 2025

Campaign Name	Sends	Opens	Open Rate	Mobile Open Rate	Desktop Open Rate	Clicks	Click Rate
WACO Convention 2025 - Vendor Survey	141	103	77.40%	3.20%	96.80%	62	46.60%
WACO Convention 2025 - Campground Survey	137	100	75.80%	6.20%	93.80%	31	23.50%
WACO Members - New at convention in 2025! Part 2	258	185	75.80%	14.00%	86.00%	73	29.90%
Amusement Ride Registration & Renewal Reminder	236	156	70.00%	8.20%	91.80%	13	5.80%
March 2025 WACO Newsletter	237	150	66.70%	9.70%	90.30%	46	20.40%





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# MEMBER UPDATES

## GBF Member Donations 2025



**TOTALS AS OF**

**4/28/25**



<b>Campground</b>	<b>Total Funds Raised</b>
Duck Creek	\$30,000
Emrick Lake Campground & Resort	\$4,940
Pineland Camping Park	\$4,650
Backyard Campground	\$2,400
River's Edge Campground (Birchwood)	\$1,860
Lakeside Fire Campground	\$945
Grand Valley Campground	\$650
Hixton/Alma Center KOA Holiday	\$650
Huckleberry Acres	\$650
Indian Trails Campground	\$650
River Bend RV Resort	\$650
Lake Arrowhead	\$500
Snug Harbor	\$500
Buffalo Lake Camping Resort	\$295
<b>TOTAL FUNDS RAISED</b>	<b>\$49,340</b>





## 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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