



### COLUMBIA COUNTY TOURISM COMMITTEE (CCTC)

Tourism is a critical component of the economy and economic development in Columbia County. It affects employment, revenue for the County and the livelihood of many residents.

The tourism industry has the potential for significant growth. The Columbia County Board of Supervisors created an independent tourism committee to support the tourism industry, originally promoted by the Columbia County Economic Development Corporation (CCEDC).

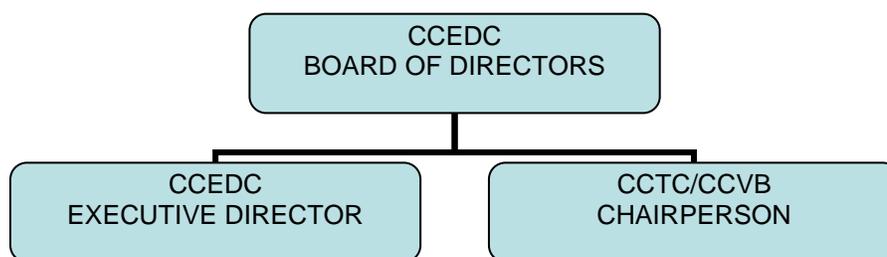
The Columbia County Tourism Committee (CCTC) is responsible for the coordination and promotion of tourism within Columbia County. Tourism Committee Members may be from an organization, group, community, or tourism-oriented businesses, or any individuals with an interest in tourism from Columbia County.

A Columbia County Visitor’s Bureau (CCVB) has also been formed, with the same committee members that serve on the CCTC. The move to create the CCVB was suggested in the Columbia County Tourism Diversification Plan. This Plan was created with funds from a Department of Tourism grant with assistance from Columbia County Comptroller Lois Schepp.

Both the CCTC and the CCVB have a close working relationship with CCEDC, who is their fiscal agent. Both develop plans for the advancement of tourism within Columbia County.

Columbia County Economic Development Corporation (CCEDC) has responsibility to oversee the operation of CCTC. The CCEDC Executive Board must approve of any expenditure of funds budgeted by the Columbia County Board of Supervisors. In 2019 and 2020 no funds from Columbia County will be received to support tourism. CCEDC will continue to fund the new tourism website and produce the 2019/2020 Columbia County Travel Guide. Should Columbia County continue to provide no funds for tourism, CCEDC will need to determine how to fund or not fund tourism in Columbia County.

#### Organizational Chart



## Statistical Performance

In this budget year, the CCTC/CCVB moved ahead to further the goal of a sustainable tourism industry in Columbia County. The Tourism industry provides sales tax to the county and this amount is growing each year.

- Held three (3) meetings of CCTC/CCVB in 2019 – meet as needed.
- CCTC/CCVB Executive Board Members Robert Becker (deceased), Stan Stofflet and Cheryl Fahrner both provide many volunteer hours for this effort.
- Advertised in Our Wisconsin Magazine for summer April/May and Aug/Sept issue. This publication is a paid subscription with a distribution list of over 100,000 subscribers.
- Continued updates to the new CCVB 10-page website with Portage Daily Register through their company Amplified Digital. Pages reflect community listings, places to stay, local foods, shopping, things to experience, maps along with photographs to attract tourists to our county.
- The Tourism Committee has a google calendar to use on the website. Communities in the county list their own events on the website whenever they want. Tourists can now see in real time what is happening in our community, so they can plan for their trips accordingly. It was suggested that one person be the administrator for the calendar and each community have one individual that can add their own events to the calendar so that we can keep it updated every year. This calendar can also be used at the end of the year to export all the events needed for the Travel Planner.
- Capital Newspapers delivers 35,000 Columbia County Travel Planners
- 2019 CCTC/CCVB Awards Banquet on March 27, 2019 at Savanna Oaks in Fall River was cancelled due to low attendance and will be combined with our CCEDC Annual Banquet moving forward.

### **2019 WINNERS (No event held in 2018 – held every other year)**

TOURISM AWARD:

EVENT AWARD:

VOLUNTEER AWARD:

- 2019 Columbia County Map – was incorporated into the fold of the travel guide to save dollars.
- 2018/2019 Columbia County Bicycle Loop Maps new updates to the map during the year to prepare for new printing in 2018. Update map is included on new website.
- Attended meetings consisting of members from Columbia, Sauk and Dodge Counties involved in Tourism, Economic Development, Chambers, etc. to promote regional tourism.
- Columbia County Silent Sports Trails Committee
  - Chair Stan Stofflet is working with Rio Library and others to provide a repair station for cyclists on-the-go. Will need to update the information with the County to include on interactive map additional repair stations.
- Responsible for collecting and updating information on events and pages put into the Tourism Travel Planner each year. Many volunteer hours are utilized. Proofs were then reviewed before going to printers.

- New marketing opportunity with Discover WI had Lisa Beck do a presentation on the benefits of TV program on Columbia County and how \$40,000.00 promotion could be split between four partners/entities/communities over three years to feature everything in Columbia County. This effort initiated by CCEDC has encouraged communities and businesses to participate and feature Columbia County – without having to contribute funds from CCEDC.

### **According to Wisconsin Department of Tourism –**

Tourism activity in the state was up \$1 billion, from \$20.6 billion in 2017 to \$21.6 billion in 2018 according to research conducted by Tourism Economics and Longwoods International. The most recent numbers for this report are from 2018. 2019 numbers are not available from the State of Wisconsin until spring of 2020.

- Tourism directly and indirectly supports 199,000 jobs in Wisconsin.
- The Tourism economy generated 1.6 billion in state and local tax revenue and 1.2 billion in federal taxes. Without tourism, each Wisconsin household would pay an additional \$680 to maintain existing services.
- Visitors topped 112 million in 2018.
- Visitors to Columbia County generated 16.3 million in state and local taxes during 2018.
- In 2018, Columbia County saw a 4.86% increase in direct visitor spending.

### **Summary**

In 2019, the committee achieved many goals to promote a strong, vibrant and growing tourism industry but due to limited funds only essential items will be sustained. In 2020, the plan is to continue moving ahead to further the goal of a sustainable tourism industry in Columbia County bringing more sales tax revenue to Columbia County. We hope to build collaborative partnerships to help sustain our efforts by continuing to provide a website and travel guide for our communities.

APPROVED:

02/12/20 - CCEDC President – Carl Vander Galien