

JOINT CITY/COUNTY TOURISM COMMITTEE AGENDA

DATE: February 10, 2025

TIME: 3:00 p.m.

PLACE: Visitors Center

CALL TO ORDER

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – January 13, 2025

PUBLIC COMMENT – Limit of 3 minutes per person with a maximum public comment of 30 minutes on agenda items only.

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE MOTION

- River Travel Media Proposal

REVIEW BUDGET

- Prepare Resolution for Designation of Continuing Appropriation Account for Donations to all aboard/boxcar program
- Update on Rusk County Comprehensive Plan

REVIEW BUILDING IMPROVEMENTS/OPERATIONAL ISSUES/STAFFING/HOURS OF OPERATIONS

- Visitor Center Update
- Update on Visitor Center Guides / Brochure Updates
- Update on Economic Development/Tourism Report

DISCUSS ADVERTISING/MARKETING ACTIVITIES

- Marketing Activities/Marketing Plan/Advertising
- Marketing the Tony Rail Yard
- Social Media (Photography and Website) – Broadcast Media Review
- Grant Opportunities – Travel Wisconsin Grant Review

PARTNER REPORTS

- NW-ITBEC Report

TOURISM DEVELOPMENT – ISSUES AND EDUCATION

- Programming – experiential events and arts/culture activities
- Arts/Culture/Historic City Tourism Commission – Report
- Upcoming/Completed education opportunities
- WI Governor’s Conference on Tourism Attendees

NEXT MEETING DATE

ADJOURN

At any time, a quorum of another County Committee or of the County Board may be present at the meeting to observe the proceedings, but no action will be taken except by those Committee Members for the stated Committee meeting and only on noticed agenda items.

Please Note: Upon reasonable notice, efforts will be made to accommodate the needs of disabled individuals. For additional information, or to request this service, contact the Rusk County Clerk’s Office; phone (715)532-2100.

JOINT CITY/COUNTY TOURISM
JANUARY 13, 2025
3:00 P.M.

Present County: Tom Hanson, Phil Unterschuetz and Lois Goode. Absent: Sue Vohs

Present City: Sue Moore, Sharon Reynolds and Cheyenne Makinia.

Others Present: J. Buchholz-Jones, M. Kroening, T. Nelson, J. Schostkewitz, C. Price, L. Weinert and R. Kelley.

CALL TO ORDER by Chairman Unterschuetz at 3:00 p.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – December 9, 2024

Motion by Hanson, seconded by Moore to approve the December 9, 2024 minutes. Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENT – None

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE MOTION

Travel NW WI Tourism Rusk County Appointee – Discussed having Economic Development and Tourism Specialist attend the Travel NW WI Tourism meetings with the Appointed County Board Member.

Motion by Reynolds, seconded by Makinia to allow Terri Nelson (Economic Development and Tourism Specialist) to attend the Travel NW WI Tourism meeting on behalf of the county with Sue Vohs (Appointed County Board Member). Motion carried.

REVIEW BUDGET

Prepare Resolution for Designation of Continuing Appropriation Account for Donations to all aboard/boxcar program – Discussed donations for the all aboard/boxcar program. Committee consensus to bring back to next month meeting with amount in 2025 budget and discuss a procedure on using the donated funds.

Update on Rusk County Comprehensive Plan – No update.

2025 Chamber Budget proposal for County Wide Tourism – J. Schostkewitz, C. Price and M. Kroening from the Rusk Area Chamber of Commerce are asking for \$54,000 splits between Rusk County, City of Ladysmith and Industrial Development Corporation to ensure the continuation and growth of the impactful initiatives.

Motion by Moore, seconded by Goode to designate up to \$18,000 from the Tourism Budget for 2025 and have Rich Summerfield Rusk County Legal Counsel draft a 5-year contract with a clause to be able to get out as long as a 90-day annual notice is given to the upcoming budget cycle. Motion carried.

REVIEW BUILDING IMPROVEMENTS/OPERATIONAL ISSUES/STAFFING/HOURS OF OPERATIONS

Visitor Center Update – R. Kelley gave an update on the Visitor Center.

Update on Visitor Center Guides – Chair Unterschuetz reached out to a company about Visitor Center Guides, waiting to hear on a quote.

Update on Economic Development/Tourism Report – Terri Nelson gave a report on content for social media posts, updating Bulletin Board and Event Binder and reaching out to businesses to get updated information.

Approval of Contracting Painting Services for Visitor Center Building Exterior – Discussed talking again to the Facilities Manager once winter is over.

DISCUSS ADVERTISING/MARKETING ACTIVITIES

Marketing Activities/Marketing Plan/Advertising – Channel 300 in Madison and WEAU have reached out about marketing. Committee asked to ask for more details and information.

Marketing Tony Rail Yard – Chair Unterschuetz and A. Health Administrative Coordinator in contact with the LIDC and DNR on marketing the Tony Rail Yard.

Social Media (Photography and Website) – Report was given on new completed social media posts and what is in progress.

Grant Opportunities – No Update

PARTNER REPORTS

NW-ITBEC Report – Discussed contacting NW WI ITBEC to see if we can get the appointed County Board Member access to these meeting.

TOURISM DEVELOPMENT – ISSUES AND EDUCATION

Programming – experiential events and acts/culture activities –

Northland Community Club Member spoke about new event coming to Mardi Gras.

Arts/Culture/Historic City Tourism Commission – Report if any – No update

Upcoming/Completed education opportunities – Discussed upcoming Governors Conference and how many people are in the budget to attend.

Next meeting date: February 10, 2025 at 3:00 p.m. at Visitors Center

Adjourn – *Motion by Makinia, seconded by Hanson to adjourn at 4:42 p.m. Motion carried.*

Minutes by J. Buchholz-Jones, Chief Deputy Clerk



Rusk County Tourism

Greetings,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit a proposal to assist in the ad sales and the design and development of the Rusk County Visitor Guide. We hope to provide your visitors with an engaging and beautiful print piece and to create excitement and buy-in from your local businesses.

We are confident that the following proposal aligns effectively with the information gathered during our conversation.

The team at River Travel Media consists of marketing professionals with a track record of successful regional marketing campaigns; and extensive experience in planning, promoting, implementing, and managing marketing programming in Wisconsin, Minnesota, New Mexico, Oregon, and Iowa.

Please visit our website, rivertravelmedia.com to learn more about our services. The information contained in this submission is accurate and complete as of the date of submission. River Travel Media understands there may be county-specific contractual requirements and is willing to comply with all such requirements.

Sincerely

Amy Gabay & Brent Hanifl



TESTIMONIALS



Our team scales to fit projects of any size, ensuring creativity and impact every time.

Dylan Overhouse Productions

I can't speak highly enough about their expertise and dedication. Their team consistently delivers exceptional work, and they have a deep understanding of the travel industry. From content creation, to marketing strategies, their skills are second to none...

Driftless Wisconsin

Served as our marketing consultants for several very successful advertising campaigns.

Visit Little Falls

Fantastic to work with always super responsive and on top of everything! Highly recommend!

Visit Pepin County

The work they do goes above competitors and is proven to impress.

Tomah Chamber & Visitors Center

We have had wonderful results from working with RTM. Amy and Brent listen to our needs and ideas and work to bring them to life. They have the experience that translates well to our business and are able to adapt to our scope of project size and budget.

OUR TEAM

RIVER TRAVEL MEDIA

KEY PROFILES

River Travel Media (RTM) engages a team whose talents include branding, graphic design, photography, videography, editing, search engine optimization, website development, marketing campaign development, written content creation, social media management, advertising placement, and so much more.



The key personnel, boast more than 45 years of experience in tourism, marketing and promotions.

Amy Gabay, co-owner

Master of Business Administration - University of Wisconsin La Crosse

Bachelor of Science Mass Communication - University of Wisconsin La Crosse

Wisconsin Governor's Tourism Awards - Rising Star (2018)

Experienced marketer with a demonstrated history of working in the tourism and broadcast media industries. Skilled in project management and the creation of marketing plans within client budgetary restraints while meeting promotional goals, also editing (print and audio/visual), content development, website design and development, SEO, analytics, and more.

Brent Hanifl, co-owner

Master of Science Arts Management - University of Oregon

Bachelor of Science Recreation and Tourism - Winona State University

Associate, Adventure Tourism - Winona State University

Results-driven marketing professional with years of experience in the hospitality, travel, and technology industries and a strong record of success in marketing (Including rural and underserved city populations), internet marketing, branding, public relations, strategic alliances, relationship management, event planning, collateral design, and advertising.

Maeve Miller, content writer & social media coordinator

B.A. English / Prof. and Technical Writing Minor - University of Wisconsin La Crosse

Driven and hardworking professional with a proven track record of working successfully with clients, designing digital marketing products and formats, and operating independently in a deadline driven field.

Visitor Guide Design Deliverables

- River Travel Media will deliver the design for a visitor guide with a maximum of 36 pages (including cover).
- Rusk County will provide the content and images needed for the visitor guide.
 - RTM will suggest content topics they believe may be impactful for the guide.
- The guide will have a fresh and modern design that can be used for multiple years.
- The guide will be designed with the end-user in mind with easy-to-find and well-organized content.
- RTM will work with Rusk County's chosen printer to deliver print-ready files.

Advertising Sales

- RTM will create ad sales sheets with ad sizes, pricing, and specifications.
 - RTM will work with Rusk County to determine pricing and sizes.
- Rusk County will provide RTM with a list of businesses with emails, phone numbers, and contact persons.
- Both print and digital sales forms will be created.
 - The digital ad sales form will be given to Rusk County for embedding into its travel website.
- RTM will create invoices payable to Rusk County for each advertising sale and submit them electronically to each business. (Rusk County staff will be :cc'd in each invoice submission)
 - Rusk County will be responsible for pursuing any delinquent payments.

Ownership

The designs developed by RTM for Rusk County will be the property of Rusk County and RTM will provide the original files. This may allow for base templates to be used for ease of editing in future years.

Step One | Information Gathering and Sales Sheet Design

River Travel Media (RTM) will work with relevant staff to determine visitor guide design needs and ad sale form information. Rusk County staff/committee members would be asked to provide RTM with Visitor Guides they like and the reasons they enjoy them. The sales sheets will be approved by Rusk County staff prior to RTM beginning sales.

Step Two | Sales (3 months)

RTM will begin sales outreach through engaging and visual mass emails and individualized personal emails to businesses. After several email touches, RTM will call sales leads.

- During the sales phase, RTM will provide Rusk County with suggestions on potential content for the Visitor Guide, and all content and images necessary will be delivered to RTM
- RTM will gather the advertisements from the sales.
- Any business that needs help in developing an ad will be directed to the RTM designer for ad design at an additional cost to the business.

Step Three | Design Phase

RTM will craft page layouts for review by the client. The client will have the ability to edit the design layouts before the visitor guide build begins.

Step Four | Edits

The visitor guide will be submitted electronically to Rusk County staff for review for edits. Three rounds of edits can be completed.

Step Five | Sent to Printer

In the final step, RTM will work with the Rusk County printer to deliver the visitor guide to them per the printer's specifications.

*The project timeline will be determined during the initial information gathering sessions. The completion of each phase may vary based on the timely delivery of essential materials, including content, photography, feedback, and edits. Based on our experience, we recommend allocating a minimum of 3 months for advertising sales to ensure optimal results.

At RTM, we value clear communication and respect our clients' time. Our team is readily available via phone, email, video chat, and text, ensuring a smooth and efficient process every step of the way.

Advertisement Sales

RTM charges a 20% commission on all advertising sales.

Visitor Guide Design

RTM assumes a 36 page visitor guide. At \$150 per page, the design equals a total of \$5,400.

Advertisement Design

Businesses that purchase ads in the visitor guide may submit their own ad, but if they require assistance, they will have the option of working directly with our designer. Ad design fees are 1/2 page or smaller = \$180 or a full page design = \$240.

Free Add-On

As part of your purchase, RTM will create one state-wide Press Release (PR) for the promotion of the new Visitor Guide once it is released.

Note: We provide clients the opportunity to showcase their collateral at our booths during events like the Wisconsin Governor's Conference on Tourism and Destinations Wisconsin Fall Tourism Conference, offering direct exposure to industry professionals and visitors.

Billing: The total cost due will be divided into monthly invoices during the length of the project, or in a manner that is most helpful for our client. Invoices are emailed. Net 30 days.

River Travel Media Inc

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Brent Hanifl: brent@rivertravel.org, 608-461-2485

Company Overview and History

River Travel Media (RTM) was officially established in November 2017 by Brent Hanifl and Amy Gabay, both seasoned marketing experts. RTM is registered as an S-corporation in the state of Wisconsin. Our firm provides top-notch services rooted in a profound comprehension of the industry. As a comprehensive marketing company, RTM offers a wide range of services. You can learn more about our services by visiting rivertravelmedia.com.