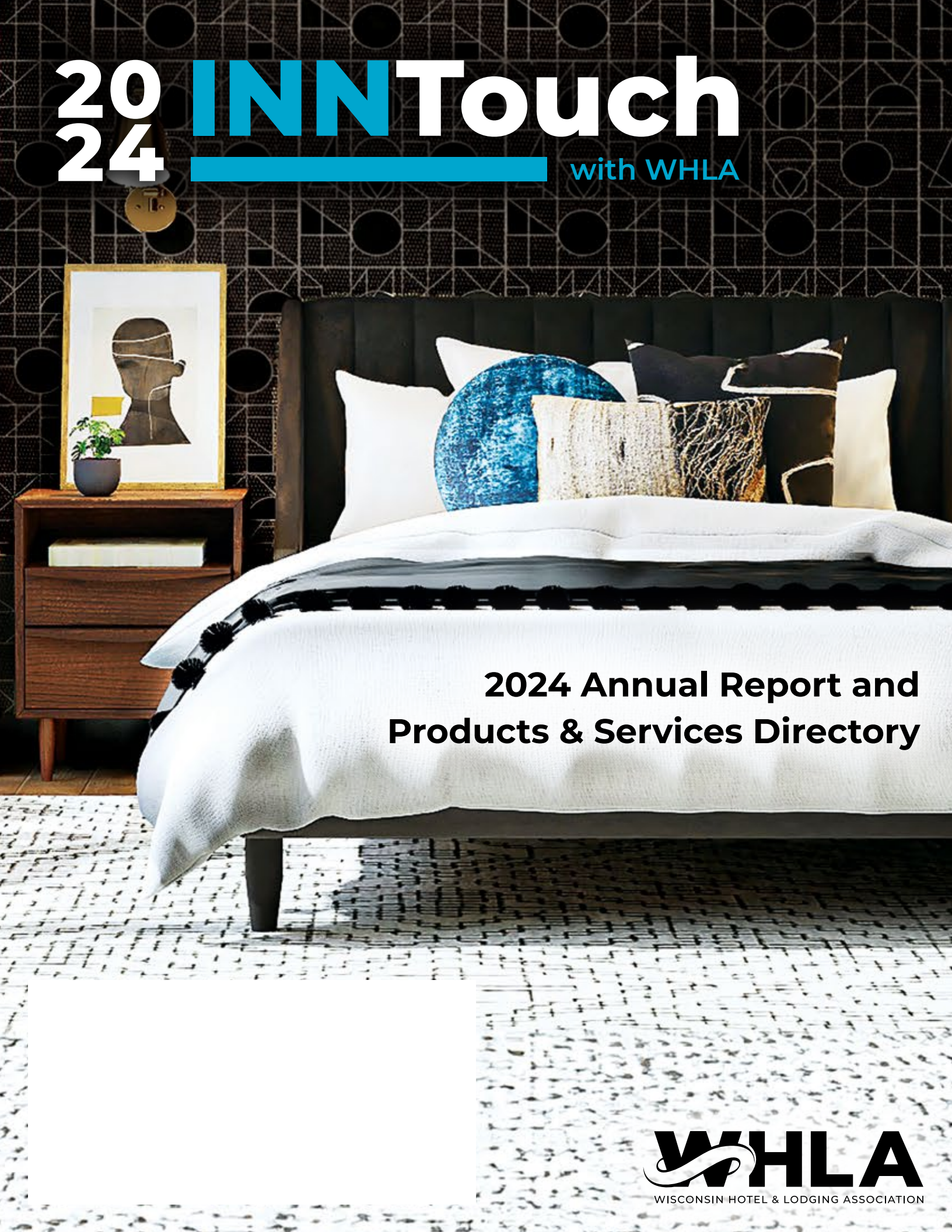


2024 **INN**Touch

with WHLA



2024 Annual Report and Products & Services Directory



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WHEN DISASTER STRIKES, WE ARE YOUR BUSINESS RECOVERY SOLUTION.

ServiceMaster Restore® provides you with peace of mind in the event your business suffers a loss as a result of fire, water or storm-related events. With a network of experts across 600 locations and the backing of the \$3 billion ServiceMaster Company, we can respond quicker, manage more effectively and put you back in business faster.



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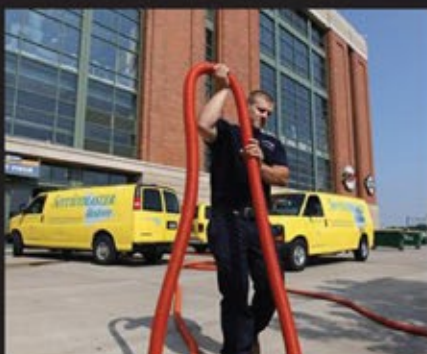
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- Priority Response to Your Loss
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- Unparalleled Resources
- Global Large Loss Experience
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"As a risk manager, I have come to rely on their corporate priority program. I can count on their national and international network to provide consistently excellent service."

- **Michael Curry, VP of Risk Management,**
Rexnord, Milwaukee, WI

"Even though local resources were completely depleted, ServiceMaster had access to and provided adequate supplies and equipment to expedite the recovery process. It is without reservation and hesitation that we recommend ServiceMaster for disaster recovery services."

- **Paul W. Jones, Executive Chairman**
A.O. Smith Corporation, Milwaukee, WI



For immediate disaster cleanup or enrollment in our Preferred Response Program, contact Mark Cyganiak today.

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Contact WH&LA Member Mark Cyganiak
President, ServiceMaster Recovery Services

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2024 INNTouch

with WHLA

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InnTouch with WHLA is published annually by the Wisconsin Hotel & Lodging Association (WHLA). Through InnTouch with WHLA and other programs, WHLA provides materials designed to improve members' professionalism. WHLA caters to the educational & professional needs of lodging professionals. A scholarship fund for students pursuing a career in the hospitality industry is sponsored by WHLA. For more information, or to make a donation to WHLA or its scholarship fund, email whla@wisconsinlodging.org.

Nothing contained in this publication shall constitute an endorsement by WHLA or reflect its policy unless so stated. WHLA disclaims any liability with respect to the use of or reliance on any information contained herein. REPRINT PERMISSION: Direct requests for previously published material to the editor and mail to 125 N. Executive Dr., Ste. 206, Brookfield, WI 53005 or email communication@wisconsinlodging.org. Reach us at our website, WisconsinLodging.org.

04	A Chat with the Chair	
05	2024 Board of Directors	
06	President's Corner	
07	Meet Our Team	
08	Member Overview	
10	Member Benefits	
11	Affinity & Member Programs	
12	Creating Connections	
14	WHLA Celebrates Major Achievements in Latest Legislative Session	
16	Forecasting with WHLA Members	
19	2024 Products & Services Directory	
	Business Services	19
	Education	24
	Furniture, Fixtures, & Equipment	26
	Guest Room Products	29
	Property Construction, Maintenance, & Repair	30
	Property Operations	35
	WHLA Chapters	37
38	Index of Suppliers	



A CHAT WITH THE CHAIR

I have the privilege to serve our membership as WHLA's Board Chair in 2024 and I am thrilled with the accomplishments and direction of our organization. I am also humbled to follow in the footsteps of a long line of hospitality leaders whom I respect and am honored to have served with for many years. We are forging ahead on a very positive trajectory.

As you may have read in prior issues of InnTouch, WHLA is guided by their vision, mission and 4 key initiatives outlined in the WHLA Strategic Plan developed in 2022.

INITIATIVE #1: Enhance the value of membership with year-round benefits.

In 2023, we began regional Lodging Insights events in conjunction with WHLA board meetings. Beloit, Eau Claire, and Green Bay were sites of the 2023 Insights. With both the incorporation of WWIL into the Insights and collaboration with our Associate members, WHLA provided education sessions that were very well attended. The Insights program was recognized by AHLA as an innovative approach to providing value to our membership. This continued in 2024 with a session in the Fox Cities, was followed by another in May in Door County, and a third in Milwaukee in September.

WHLA revamped its annual conference in November with more educational tracks and more student involvement via scholarships. Join us in November at the Kalahari Resort in the Wisconsin Dells for the continuation of the new conference format rich in educational offerings.

INITIATIVE #2: Expand our influence as a trusted voice.

WHLA was more active in 2023 than any year with advocacy on behalf of our industry. We had the largest delegation we have ever had in Washington DC for AHLA's Hotels on the Hill. In February of 2024, we had the largest participation at the Capitol in Madison for WHLA Action Day that we have ever had. Our members are becoming more active and our legislators are listening to us!

We saw major wins in 2023 and 2024 with:

- The repeal of Personal Property Tax
- Being consulted and listened to on the recently passed Human Trafficking prevention bill
- The passing of the Opportunity Grant legislation.
- And thus far, we have been able to retain the September 1 school start date legislation with member testimony.

Additionally, WHLA is being called into action more and more often when it comes to protecting our hotel room tax for the defined use to fund tourism promotion.

INITIATIVE #3: Support the development of a prepared and effective future workforce

WHLA's board of directors has leaders in hospitality education in place and utilize their expertise to help develop our direction. We have a student representative seat on the board. Additionally, we have increased scholarships made available for students to attend Insights and the annual conference. Our industry faces the same challenges as many other industries in attracting talent and we know our success hinges on the success of the next generation.

INITIATIVE #4: Improve financial sustainability.

After several challenging years and navigating COVID and post-COVID dynamics, our membership is on the rise and our events are being well attended. We are on a great path forging ahead and can only thank our membership for their involvement and partnership.



2024 is shaping up to be a great year for our industry and our resilience is being rewarded. Thank you again for your dedication and involvement with WHLA. We are truly forging ahead together!

Jay J Schumerth
2024 Board Chair
WHLA Board of Directors

2024 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

WHLA's Board of Directors is made up of leaders from the lodging industry across the state. These elected individuals come from properties of different types and sizes, which gives them unique perspectives to contribute to the association. The WHLA Board of Directors meets quarterly to fulfill the mission of the association and to ensure its policies are meeting the needs of its members.

OFFICERS

CHAIR OF THE BOARD



Jay Schumerth
First Hospitality

CHAIR-ELECT



Rory Madsen
Gordon Lodge

VICE CHAIR



Amy Boston
Aimbridge Hospitality

SECRETARY/ TREASURER



Victor Ravago
Bravo Hospitality Group

PAST CHAIR



Jon Jossart
Ambassador Hotel

ADVOCACY DELEGATE



Krissy Sigmund
Chula Vista Resort

DEI DELEGATE



Jonathan Webster
Geronimo Hospitality Group

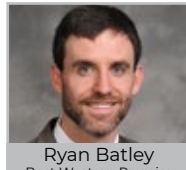
BOARD OF DIRECTORS



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Metropolis Resort



Mike Balistreri
Fox Valley Technical
College



Ryan Batley
Best Western Premier
Bridgewood Resort Hotel &
Conference Center



Tony Beer
DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel
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La Crosse



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The Stella Hotel &
Ballroom



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Spectrum Enterprises



John Chastan
Kalahari Resort



Kevin Gallagher
Marcus Hotels &
Resorts



Jason Hager, CHA
Tundra Lodge
Resort & Waterpark



Nick Johnson
First Hospitality
Group



Randy Kliment
Aileron Management



Cindy Lapidakis
Royal Basket Trucks



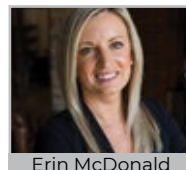
Cory Latourell, CHA
Hotel Marshfield



Missy LeBelle
High Point Inn



Brian Lee
Revelation PR, Advertising
& Social Media



Erin McDonald
Geronimo
Hospitality Group



Katie Neufeld
Kimpton
Journeyman Hotel



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Quality Inn



Mike Patel
MoveMent
Hospitality



Larry Robe
The Knickerbocker
on the Lake Hotel



Carmen Smalley
MATC - Milwaukee



Amy Supple
The Edgewater



Randee Talwar
Best Western West
Towne Suites



Sheryl Tharman
Red Crown Lodge



Aaron Wolf, CHA
Comfort Suites
Green Bay



Bailey Jacque
Student Director
UW - Stout

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

We are thrilled to unveil our revamped InnTouch with WHLA annual publication! Over the past year, we've been hard at work reshaping our communications to be more timely and efficient. While we've streamlined our print magazines from four issues annually to one, we've also bolstered our digital content to enhance our weekly Insider email newsletters. This annual edition stands as our flagship member publication, and we're excited for you to explore its contents.

Within the pages of this magazine, you'll delve into not only the essence of WHLA as an organization but also the extensive range of initiatives WHLA undertakes to bolster your success as a lodging operator. From our traditional offerings like our marketing programs, to our impactful legislative advocacy work, such as the successful repeal of the unfair personal property tax in Wisconsin, to the introduction of our award-winning Wisconsin Lodging Insights program, WHLA is dedicated to supporting property owners and operators of all scales and types. Additionally, don't miss our "Products & Services Directory" section, spotlighting the companies that staunchly support WHLA through membership. Next time you require their services, consider reaching out to these partners who are committed to our industry.

Before the bustling travel season commences, we urge you to contemplate how you can actively engage with WHLA and the broader lodging community. Here are five ways you can contribute to the future of our industry:

- **Volunteer** to serve on one of WHLA's diverse committees, ranging from Legislative/Tourism to Education/Conference to Membership. Sign up online at www.wisconsinlodging.org/volunteer.
- **Join your WHLA peers** in Washington DC from September 24-25 for AHLA's Hotels on the Hill event! Connect with federal officials and advocate for our industry's needs. Email me at belliot@wisconsinlodging.org for more information on joining our delegation.
- **Save the dates** for our flagship event, the 2024 Wisconsin Lodging Conference & Trade Show, taking place from November 3-5 at the Kalahari Resort in the Wisconsin Dells.
- **Contribute** to the WHLA Political Action Committee, supporting legislative candidates statewide who demonstrate a commitment to understanding and championing the lodging industry's interests. Donate at www.wisconsinlodging.org/whla-pac.
- **Participate** in one of our Wisconsin Lodging Insights events, hosted in collaboration with local hoteliers, lodging operators, and the WHLA Board of Directors, held at various locations across the state.

Before you start exploring the rest of this great magazine, I'd like to express my heartfelt gratitude to our Board of Directors, volunteers, members, sponsors, and staff for your unwavering dedication and service to Wisconsin's lodging community over the past several transformative years. We truly appreciate your commitment.

Kind regards,

Bill Elliott, CAE
WHLA President & CEO



MEET OUR TEAM

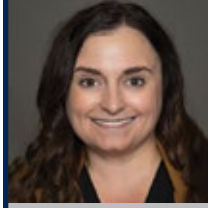
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Wisconsin Lodging Conference & Trade Show

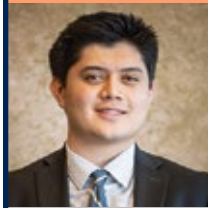
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InnTouch with WHLA Magazine

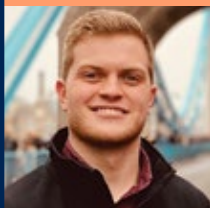
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Membership Questions & Recruitment
Member Engagement Programs

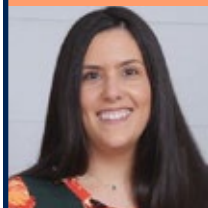
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Wisconsin Lodging Insider Sales
Trade Show Sales | Sponsorship Opportunities

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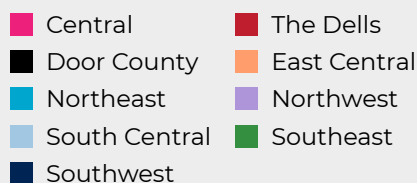
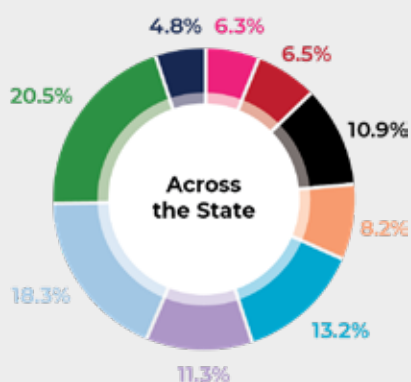
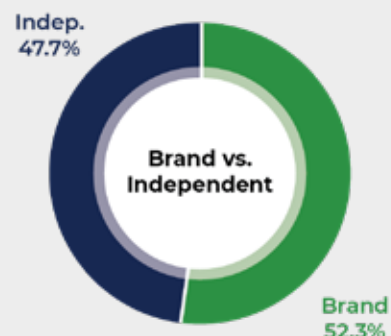
Consolidated Construction Company, Inc.

Reliable Water Services

OVERVIEW

At WHLA, we strive to strengthen the lodging industry in Wisconsin by providing our members with valuable educational resources, networking opportunities, and innovative solutions. Our members play a vital role in keeping the industry vibrant and healthy across the state.

Hotel and Lodging Properties



WHO ARE OUR MEMBERS?



Lodging Properties

Hotels, motels, resorts, inns, B&Bs, and vacation rentals from one room to 1000+



Lodging Executives

Management companies and ownership groups that have all their properties as members of WHLA



Associate Vendors

Vendors who provide products and services to hotel and lodging properties in Wisconsin



CVBs/Chambers

Convention & Visitor Bureaus, Chambers of Commerce, and other destination marketing organizations in Wisconsin



Educational Institutions

Colleges and universities that offer certificate, two-year, or four-year programs specifically related to hospitality or lodging management



Students

Students attending a certificate, two-year, or four-year program specifically related to hospitality or lodging management in Wisconsin



Membership Growth (2021 to 2023)

13% lodging members
22% associate vendors
31% chamber/cvb
71% educational institutions
87% students

Members say...



“WHLA is important because of its wealth of information on industry issues. Networking with others in the hospitality sector is also invaluable. Small and big properties can benefit significantly by being a member of WHLA.”

Sheryl Tharman

General Manager, Red Crown Lodge, Arbor Vitae

“WHLA is a great organization that every lodging property should be a member of. All members can benefit from industry updates from different publications, state and federal representation when lobbying in Washington DC and locally, as well as legal advice.”

Mike Patel

President, MoveMent Hospitality



“WHLA is a one-stop resource center for the latest information that hoteliers need to be successful. We are constantly communicating on items such as the latest trends, state and national industry news, legislative updates, and much more!”

Brandon McConnell

Delavan Lake Management LLC

“WHLA is a great organization with fantastic members that are passionate about improving the Wisconsin lodging industry.”

Kevin Gallagher

Marcus Hotels & Resorts, Milwaukee



Member BENEFITS

WHLA members have access to powerful resources and support for their property operations. From advocacy and compliance to events, education, training, and cost-saving programs, our focus is on making your job easier and helping you grow your business.



/capitol-insider

Capitol Insider

Stay up-to-date on the latest government, legislative, & regulatory updates with Capitol Insider e-news alerts. Our alerts are timely and sent as needed, so you can stay on top of important information without missing a beat.



/insider

Lodging Insider

Wisconsin Lodging Insider is the definitive source of information for members every Wednesday, delivering the latest local, state, and national lodging news and information about WHLA services and events.



/STR

STR Reports

The monthly STR report provides a comprehensive quantitative analysis, including regional and state-level breakdowns, and is emailed to all lodging and chamber/cvb members. Data includes Occupancy percent, ADR, and RevPAR.



/lodging-resources

Operational Resources

Membership provides convenient access to content you can use immediately, such as on-site signage, regulatory guidance, checklists, & more.

- Human Trafficking Prevention
- Room Rate Card
- State and Federal Per Diem Info
- Short-Term Rentals Guidance



/marketing

Marketing Services

WHLA provides marketing for members and public relations on behalf of the industry. All WHLA members receive a complimentary listing on our website. Lodging & Chamber/CVB members can further enhance their exposure by participating in WisconsinINN Getaways, website advertising, and our highway digital billboard program.



/coupons

Member-to-Member Discounts

WHLA Associate Members offer discounts on a wide range of products and services for hotel and lodging properties to give our members special savings. Visit web.wisconsinlodging.org/coupons and on the Associate Vendor Directory "Coupons and Discounts" tab.



/LD

Wisconsin Lodging Directory

The Wisconsin Lodging Directory is published annually with print copies distributed across the midwest and includes all lodging properties and destination marketing organizations in membership with WHLA. The directory is split into regions, each with a spread highlighting unique aspects of the area. Members may enhance their lists by purchasing ad space in the publication.



/call-for-entries

Website & LD Cover Contest

The Website & Wisconsin Lodging Directory Cover Contest selects the cover of the Lodging Directory. Participants can submit photos & compete for the most votes. WHLA promotes these properties & encourages them to engage with their loyal guests and followers. The winner of the contest is featured on the cover of all copies of the following year's directory and WHLA's homepage for one year.

Learn more at WisconsinLodging.org

PROGRAMS

While our members are busy taking care of guests, WHLA is here to help! We've teamed up with a number of hospitality industry partners to provide exclusive discounts and cost-saving solutions for members to help with your operations.

Legal Support

NextGen Legal

Predictable Pricing. Reliable Service.
Exceptional Results.

NextGen Legal

In February, we announced our new partnership with NextGen Legal and officially introduced Robert Sanders, legal counsel for WHLA. With this announcement, WHLA gained access to free legal education on a specific issue through WHLA's INNstant Legal Line. Contact us at 262-782-2851, and we'll connect you with Robert Sanders at NextGen Legal. For more complex legal matters, WHLA members enjoy discounted rates on NextGen Legal's services. Explore the new WHLA Legal Corner to view legal guidance & regulatory updates from WHLA's legal counsel.

WisconsinLodging.org/legal-corner

Financial Services

Adesso

Adesso Capital

Our partner, Adesso Capital, is now offering lending solutions that get you the money you need. Adesso's easy-to-use lending network connects you 1:1 with financial experts who will work diligently to find you the best solution that gets you preferred rates to fit your business. And with Tip Tax Credit by Adesso, employers can get tax credits for tips your employees earn. Since it's not a loan or grant, there are no restrictions on how you can use it to grow your business.

adessocapital.com/partner/wvla

Staffing Solutions

Whether you're looking to be inspired on how to build the dream team, could use some resources on how to hire better, or are a continual learner that just appreciates staying in touch with how to be a preferred employer—please pick your path below and explore how you can put "Now Hiring" signs in your past.

SEASONAL CONNECT

Seasonal Connect

Seasonal Connect is an all-in-one recruiting tool for seasonal hiring, along with providing a community for employers to collaborate. You'll find a robust community of hospitality employers and workers ready to hire.

seasonalconnect.com/wvla

Employee Travel Benefits



hotel employee rate

Hotel Employee Rate

Hotel Employee Rate is a global hotel employee travel platform allowing hotel employees all over the world the ability to travel at hotel employee rates. To join, hotels in the program contribute a minimal amount of their inventory over their low-demand periods at hotel employee rates. In exchange, the hotels' employees gain access to employee rates/preferred rates at a worldwide portfolio of hotels and resorts in over 100 countries. WHLA lodging members receive complimentary access to the Hotel Employee Rate Travel Program (a \$500–1,000 value per hotel).

hotelemployeerate.com/welcome-wisconsin-hotel-lodging-association



Career Center

WHLA Career Center

WHLA is meeting the needs of employers and job seekers through the new WHLA Career Center. This job board connects employers with candidates of all skill and experience levels. Applicants may post their resume at no cost and search thousands of opportunities statewide, ranging from line-level to management positions. There is no cost to posting job openings for WHLA members.

WisconsinLodging.mcjobboard.net/jobs





Creating CONNECTIONS

By Monica Goeke, CAE, WHLA Vice President

There are a plethora of ways to connect with members and staff. Make the most out of your membership by taking advantage of opportunities to volunteer, join chapter and affiliate groups, and attend events in-person and online.

Chapters and Affiliate Groups

WHLA members are invited to join their local chapter! A local board runs each chapter and hosts several events and meetings to discuss region-specific needs & issues and to promote industry engagement and comradery.

WisconsinLodging.org/chapters



**Greater Green Bay Area
Hotel & Lodging Association**
See page 37 for more information



**Greater Madison
Hotel & Lodging Association**
See page 37 for more information



**Greater Milwaukee
Hotel & Lodging Association**
See page 37 for more information

Wisconsin Women in Lodging (WWIL)

The Wisconsin Women in Lodging is a female-based organization, a chapter of WHLA, and a state affiliate of the American Hotel & Lodging Association.

Established in 2013, WWIL membership continues to grow, now boasting over 200 members, and gives female hoteliers and their allies the opportunity to connect with industry leaders, gain career momentum, and be inspired to contribute to the Wisconsin lodging industry! Membership is free to anyone employed at a WHLA member property, company, or CVB/chamber, as well as students and instructors at WHLA member colleges and universities.



Committees & Task Forces

By providing valuable input to the WHLA Board of Directors, committees and task forces help establish the policies, priorities, and objectives of the association throughout the year. Committees meet as needed and are led by a Chair elected by the Board and a staff liaison. Individuals employed at a member property, organization, or company are invited to get involved by joining an open committee.

This volunteering opportunity provides connections with other industry professionals, builds leadership skills, and contributes to the success of the association. Service on a committee can be a pathway to additional leadership opportunities, such as being elected to serve on the Board of Directors.

WisconsinLodging.org/committees

Social Media | Stay connected online by following us on social media!



Events

Events are core to the WHLA membership experience. Our events afford the opportunity to network, build relationships, and learn about the issues impacting the industry. The Wisconsin Hotel & Lodging Association has a proud tradition of providing the knowledge and resources lodging professionals need to be successful. Members have access to multiple avenues for education & professional development. Our board emphasizes moving the events to different areas of the state.

LODGING INNSIGHTS

Across the State

Lodging Insights

Lodging Insights is an award-winning live event series that was launched in January 2023. Each quarter, the leadership and members of WHLA gather at a different member hotel or lodging property for an afternoon of education, followed by dinner and an evening reception. Attending a Lodging Insights day is a great way to stay up-to-date with the latest trends and network with like-minded professionals in the industry.



Stars of the Industry Awards

The WHLA Stars of the Industry Awards recognize and celebrate exemplary performance and qualities that set the benchmark for the entire industry to strive towards. Awards are presented each fall to individuals who are making a difference in our organization and the Wisconsin lodging industry. Award categories include Spirit of Hospitality, Associate, Corporate Champion, Innkeeper, and Wisconsin Lodging Hall of Fame.



WHLA Action Day

WHLA Action Day provides Wisconsin hoteliers and industry supporters with an opportunity to not only hear an inside view on the latest proposals and plans impacting our industry at the state level of government, but also to meet afterward with your state elected officials or their key staff so that they can better understand the concerns of Wisconsin's lodging properties.

While the WHLA staff is always advocating for the industry in Madison, sharing your personal stories directly with legislators can be an incredibly constructive exercise. It provides essential context to the issues we lobby for, and since these legislators represent the same cities and towns as you, they are more likely to take note of your concerns.

WISCONSIN LODGING CONFERENCE & TRADE SHOW

Wisconsin Lodging Conference & Trade Show

The Wisconsin Lodging Conference & Trade Show is our largest annual event, bringing together professionals in the hotel and hospitality industry. This event offers timely educational sessions and provides a platform for industry peers and suppliers to interact. Hoteliers, hospitality vendors, educators, and students come together for a period of just over two days to engage in the exchange of cutting-edge educational content.

The Conference schedule is designed to accommodate and educate lodging industry professionals with varying levels of expertise. The programming is hand-picked each year by our Education/Conference Committee volunteers to ensure that the content is both relevant and practical. At the Conference, attendees can learn from industry experts on a range of topics, including marketing, legal, leadership, human resources, sales, and more.

The Wisconsin Lodging Trade Show, held annually during the conference, is the state's only lodging-specific trade show. It is a premier destination for hotel and lodging owners to shop, learn, and connect with industry peers and suppliers. The event provides industry suppliers with a great opportunity to broaden their network. Attendees eagerly anticipate the Trade Show as it affords them the chance to connect with valued suppliers and learn about new products and services for their businesses. The Wisconsin Lodging Conference is a great platform to meet with industry peers, converse with experts, and forge lasting connections.

WisconsinLodging.org/events



WHLA Celebrates Major Achievements in Latest Legislative Session

By Bill Elliott, WHLA President & CEO & Kathi Kilgore, WHLA Contract Lobbyist

Wisconsin's '23-'24 legislative session is over, and we're proud of WHLA's work to serve as the trusted voice for advancing Wisconsin's hotel and lodging industry. Each session, WHLA tracks a plethora of issues that could impact lodging owners, operators, and employees. Through our Legislative/Tourism Committee, our Board of Directors, and our Executive Committee, we work to ensure that our priorities are aligned and that we are working on the issues that matter most to our industry.

We're not going to bog you down with some of the smaller issues that we watch; we wanted to give you a good sampling of the advocacy successes that we've had over the session. Through your membership with WHLA, we've been able to accomplish quite a bit in the last two years.

Repeal of Personal Property Tax

WHLA Position: Support
Status: Signed

This legislation eliminated the personal property tax (PPT) and was a major success for Wisconsin's lodging industry, as hotels were unfairly targeted under the archaic PPT system. While this tax varied significantly from municipality to municipality, many hotels throughout the state paid tens or hundreds of thousands of dollars in PPT. This change is effective for 2024 assessments.

State Employee Per Diems

WHLA Position: Support
Status: Passed

This action, taken by a joint committee of the legislature, increased lodging per diem rates by \$8, effective Nov. 1, 2023. It also included an overall raise in the meal per diems of \$5 per day.

Business Development Tax Credit (workforce housing)

WHLA Position: Support
Status: Signed

Act 143 made several adjustments to the business development tax credit. It provides that a person may claim tax benefits up to 15 percent of an investment in workforce housing for eligible employees and up to 15 percent of an investment in establishing a childcare program for eligible employees.

The changes apply to taxable years beginning after December 31, 2023. Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) may certify a person who operates a business to receive credits against state income and franchise taxes (tax benefits). These credits are refundable, which means that if the credit exceeds the person's tax liability, the person will receive the excess as a refund check.

Consumer Data Protection

WHLA Position: Oppose
Status: Failed

This legislation would have significantly affected companies involved in the collection of "Personal Data," which encompasses any information directly or indirectly linked to an individual (such as email addresses, phone numbers, etc.). WHLA expressed opposition to this legislation due to its potential to impose heavy burdens on businesses, particularly those of small and medium sizes. As the bill progressed, amendments were introduced that would prevent businesses from rectifying any errors 2 years after the law's implementation, alongside the establishment of fines reaching up to \$10,000 per violation.

Eliminating Tipped Minimum Wage

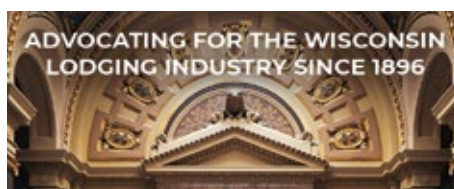
WHLA Position: Oppose
Status: Failed

This bill would have eliminated the tipped minimum wage for all employees.

Enactment of Local Minimum Wage Ordinances

WHLA Position: Oppose
Status: Failed

Under this bill, a municipality could have enacted an ordinance to establish a minimum wage.



Funding for Baseball Park Facilities

WHLA Position: Support
Status: Signed

This legislation provided approximately \$500 million in public funds to keep the Milwaukee Brewers in the state through at least 2050. The state will contribute up to \$387 million, and \$135 million will come from the City of Milwaukee and Milwaukee County. The renovation project will winterize the stadium to host year-round concerts and significant sporting events.



Opportunity Grant Program

WHLA Position: Support
Status: Signed

This bill granted the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) the ability to administer a grant program to attract major opportunities and events in Wisconsin. The funds must be used to attract a major opportunity or event open to the public, whether or not free of charge.

Specifically, the funds may be used to:

- 1) Bid against other states or jurisdictions outside Wisconsin to attract an opportunity or event that will draw national exposure and drive economic development and visitors to Wisconsin.
- 2) Host an opportunity or event to attract national exposure and drive economic development & visitors to Wisconsin that the eligible applicant has secured through a competitive bid against other states or jurisdictions outside WI.

Before WEDC awards each grant under the bill, an eligible applicant must provide a project cost-benefit analysis to WEDC and secure, from non-state sources, an amount equal to the proposed grant. We anticipate funding for this program will be cut to \$5 million after the legislature took nearly a year to pass this bill.

Predictable Work Schedule & Right to Request/Receive Work Schedule Changes

WHLA Position: Oppose
Status: Failed

This bill would have provided that an employee has the right to request and receive changes to the employee's work schedule under certain circumstances.

Requirement to Accept Cash

WHLA Position: Oppose
Status: Failed

This legislation would have required businesses to accept cash as payment in a transaction amounting to \$2,000 or less during a face-to-face sale with a consumer. As many lodging facilities now require payments and deposits through credit cards, this could have been a significant obstacle for many operators.

RNC Bar Time

WHLA Position: Support
Status: Signed

This legislation allows municipalities in 14 Wisconsin counties to delay closing time for bars and restaurants to 4 a.m. during the week of the Republican National Convention in Milwaukee this summer.

State preemption of local employment regulations

WHLA Position: Oppose
Status: Failed

Current law preempts local governments from creating laws for higher minimum wages and local hour and overtime provisions. Had it passed, this legislation would have repealed these preemptions and created a mishmash of wage ordinances throughout the state.

Third-Party Food Delivery Services

WHLA Position: Support
Status: Signed

This bill created requirements and restrictions for third-party food delivery apps. One provision requires these apps to allow a restaurant to request its removal from the app, which must take place within three business days. Also, app companies may not solicit requests from consumers to add a restaurant to their digital network.

Join the Legislative/Tourism Committee!

This committee monitors legislation in collaboration with WHLA staff and the contract lobbyist.

WisconsinLodging.org/committees





FORECASTING with WHLA Members

By Matthew Wells,
WHLA Membership Manager

Wisconsin's lodging industry is united on many fronts, and wins or losses for the travel industry affect properties of all types. This upcoming 2024 travel season is one that Wisconsin hoteliers across the state are looking forward to. Rising inflation and slower winter travel has many hoteliers hopeful for Summer months, and many properties report an increase in advanced bookings at this point in the year from previous years.

Each year removed from the pandemic has been a steady rebound back to normalcy, and the lodging industry looks to balance out closer to historical standards. Advanced bookings, rising costs, low winter travel, and upcoming Summer events are all major factors that will impact this travel season.

WHLA Members have noted this year's tourism season is previewed with advanced bookings and an increase of in-state guests. Rising inflation has Wisconsin families looking for vacation options closer to home, and within driving distance.

After a hard winter with limited snowfall, Wisconsin Northwoods properties hope for a Summer rebound. No snow trails open meant no snowmobile trips or cross country skiers. Some hoteliers hope to see these families pivot their trips to local getaways.

"We have seen an increase in local travelers booking for this upcoming season. Rising costs have Wisconsin families seeking more affordable alternatives to expensive out of state vacations."

– Leana Schlicht
The Pointe Hotel & Suites
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Lake Geneva properties have also noted an increase in bookings at this point in the season from last year. Families have had time to adjust to rising inflation, and are planning ahead for local travel. Lake Geneva has historically been a hotspot for Illinois travelers, but this season properties are seeing an increase in Wisconsin residents looking for local getaways. Couples and families looking to celebrate a special occasion have looked to this local tourist destination.

"Demand continues to rise exponentially keeping with the trends that began with the significant rebound in 2021. All projections are up year over year in both ADR and Occupancy across all transient segments."

– Brandon McConnell
Lake Lawn Resort

Another region looking forward to the Summer season is the Dells. This area has seen similar booking trends, with more advanced bookings than previous years. Although prices have increased over the last few years, there has been some stability recently which is encouraging for the upcoming travel season.

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WisconsinLodging.org/committees

"As some of our temperamental variables stabilize, such as staffing and cost of goods, we are looking forward to strong projections and forecasts this year. There are a lot of people out there who are traveling, and we see healthy signs of pre-summer bookings and pre-fall meeting/business travel already."

– Krissy Sigmund
Chula Vista Resort

Summertime is always a hot time of year for Milwaukee travel, but this 2024 season projects to be even higher than normal. The 2024 Republican National Convention is in Milwaukee & will give the city a national spotlight. Additional events that are bringing travelers to Wisconsin are the annual Harley Davidson Homecoming, Summerfest, the Air & Water show, and the Wisconsin State Fair.

Wisconsin's rich natural resources provide a destination for travelers to escape the day to day congestion of daily life. People come from out of state to take advantage of these resources, and this year we are seeing Wisconsin residents seeking new experiences in their home state. The upcoming travel season is expected to be an improvement from previous years, fueled by Wisconsinites keeping their money within the state.

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The Products & Services Directory is a great resource to keep throughout the year for all of your service and supplier-related needs. You can also find all WHLA Associate Members online at web.wisconsinlodging.org/associate/search.



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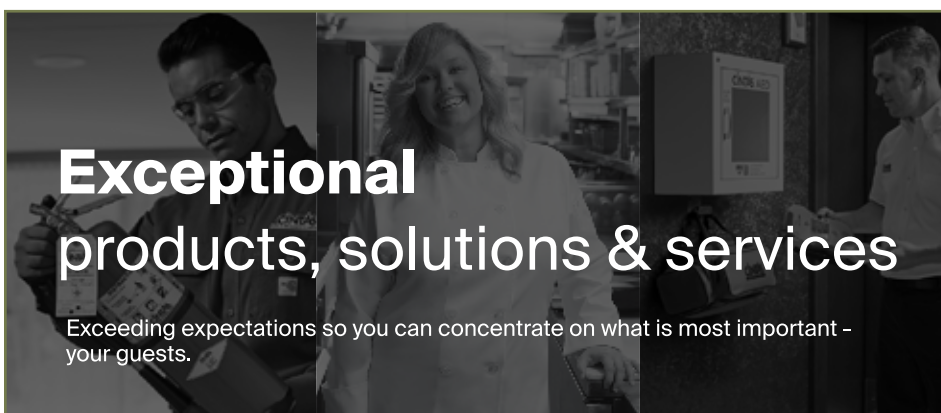
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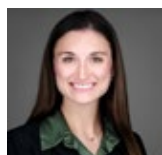
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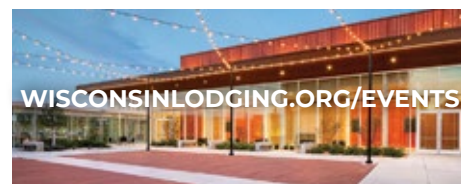
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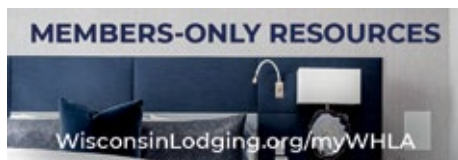
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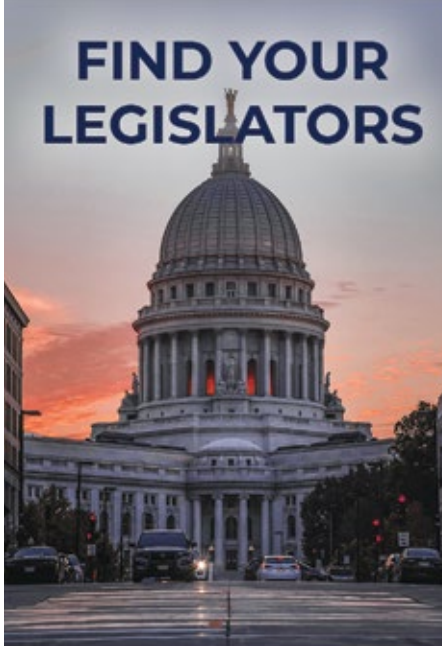
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INDEX OF SUPPLIERS

Acuity Insurance.....19	Greater Milwaukee Hotel & Lodging Association.....37	ServiceMaster Recovery Services.....32
Adesso Capital.....19	Guest Supply.....29	SERVPRO Cleaning. Restoration. Construction.....32
Amish Craftsmen Guild.....26	Gunderson Family Companies.....29	Sid Grinker Restoration.....32
Amplify Technologies, Inc.....35	HUB International.....20	Silver Leaf Signs & Graphics.....36
Architectural Design Consultants Inc. (ADCI).....30	Hydro-Flo Products, Inc.....31	Skyline Services, Inc.....36
Badger Laundry Machinery.....35	IDEaS.....35	Skytouch Technology.....36
Baker Tilly US, LLP.....19	The Insurance Center.....20	SONIFI Solutions Inc.....36
Balanced Environments Inc.....30	Johnson Block & Company, Inc.....20	Spectrum Enterprise.....36
Batzner Pest Control Inc.....35	Johnson Commercial Fitness.....26	Standard Textile.....29
Bay Towel.....29	JWC Building Specialties, Inc.....31	Steinhafels Bedding Inc.....27
Bayland Buildings, Inc.....30	Keller, Inc.....31	Stevens Equipment Supply.....27
BMS Cat Of Wisconsin LLC.....30	KLB Insurance.....20	Stone Innovations Inc.....32
Buffalo Media Group.....19	Laundry Systems of Wisconsin.....26	STR.....22
CBRE Hotels.....19	Lodge HDTV.....35	TDM.....22
Century Laundry Distributing, Division of Dexter Laundry Inc.....35	LodgeVision.....36	Tri-North Builders.....33
CertaPro Painters of NE Wisconsin.....30	Madison College/Madison Area Technical College.....24	University of WI – Stout School of Hospitality.....24
Chadsworth & Haig.....29	MATC – Milwaukee Campus.....24	USI Insurance Services.....22
Chyla Consulting – Hospitality Payments and Payroll.....19	Mid-State Technical College.....24	Vector & Ink.....22
Cintas.....20	MPI–Wisconsin Chapter.....21	VEER Consulting Group.....22
Connect Hospitality Solutions.....20	NameBadges.com.....36	Waukesha County Technical College.....24
Consolidated Construction Co., Inc.....31	National Purity.....36	Weathershield LLC.....33
DeVere Chemical.....35	Neuman Pools Inc.....32	Weiners, LTD Travel Size Products.....36
DI, LLC.....29	NextGen Legal.....21	WG&R Furniture, Comfort Sleep Products.....27
Ecolab.....29	Northcentral Technical College.....24	Wisconsin Hospitality Linen Service.....29
The Firm LLC.....35	On Track Tech Solutions.....21	Wisconsin Logos.....33
First MainStreet Insurance Hospitality.....20	One Community Bank.....22	Zucchetti North America LLC.....36
Foodbuy Hospitality.....35	Patek Hospitality Consultants Inc.....22	
Fox Valley Technical College.....24	Pineapple Hospitality Inc.....29	
Furniture Industries Inc.....26	Pool Envy, LLC.....32	
The Glacier Group.....26	Ramaker.....32	
Great Lakes Finishing Solutions.....31	Reliable Water Services.....26	
Greater Green Bay Area Lodging Association.....37	Revelation PR, Advertising & Social Media.....22	
Greater Madison Hotel & Lodging Association.....37	Robertson Ryan & Associates.....22	
	Royal Basket Trucks.....36	
	Rural Mutual Insurance Company.....22	

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