



DOOR COUNTY TOURISM ZONE COMMISSION
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Dear Door County Tourism Zone Permit Holder and Tourism Partner,

In February of 2019 a footnote was provided on the [year-end 2018 room tax reporting](#) as well as the discussion from the [February 2019 Full Commission meeting minutes](#). This footnote was provided by a software provider that creates reservation software for a number of Door County Lodging providers. The footnote on year end reporting stated:

When looking at data compared from 2017 to 2018. There was large change in the number of nights available in 2018. Towards the end of 2017 a few properties were noticed to be sending all room availability into rooms available even though these properties had large quantities of rooms not in their rental pool. A change was also made to software in 2018 that automatically deducted owner stays and maintenance blocks out of the available room totals. This was to make things easier for users forgetting to deduct those totals from their available nights. The net results of both of these gives 2018 with a more accurate representation of what total available nights truly is. Another contributing factor to incorrect information, were some properties were wrongfully including owner nights into their rented nights data.

What do you need to know?

- The updated programming is not related to room tax operations; rather it is the software that operates local reservations systems.
- The Tourism Zone data is only as good as what is reported to the Tourism Zone by lodging providers.
- The programming that has been in place with the reservation system has been the same since room tax was established, therefore it has been consistent.
- The footnote was discussed openly and thoroughly during the February 2019 Full Commission meeting, published to the Tourism Zone website and provided to our member municipalities and distribution lists.
- The difference of occupied room nights from 2017 for 2018 is 5,233 which is .94% of the 555,735 rented room nights for 2018. The decrease is a very small percentage of the rented room nights and any number of variables can impact both available and occupied room nights.*
- The programming only impacted non-taxable revenue involving maintenance blocked rooms and owner nights.
- All properties are update to date in Door County in regards to the enhancements made to reporting for this reservation system software.
- Most importantly, our track record speaks for itself in our ability to collect room tax. At year end 2018, there was \$1212 in unpaid tax, fees and penalties which is .02% of room tax collections \$4,892,212

** Properties go online and offline regularly, which has the ability to impact and influence available and occupied nights. One year round property with one unit would result in 365 less night available and an unknown number of nights rented lost. There are many variables to consider when analyzing lodging statistics.*

Looking ahead, we know that the upgrade to this particular reservation system is on-going. Moreover, with the very small percentage of decreased rented room nights for 2018 we want to urge caution before drawing any conclusions about the effectiveness of room tax and the associated marketing efforts.

As lodging grows and evolves so does the necessity for programming to be fine-tuned and we applaud the willingness of the software developer to grow with us and the local lodging industry. We have seen a correction with occupied room nights as a result of the update, but in the end we can all agree that continued emphasis on efficiency and accuracy are well worth the explanation and footnote for the short term.

Sincerely,



Josh Van Lieshout
Administrator, City of Sturgeon Bay
Chair, Door County Tourism Zone
Commission



Kim Roberts
Administrator, Door County
Tourism Zone Commission