

# DESTINATION DOOR COUNTY

JANUARY 2024

## Community Outreach & Destination Alignment

- A draft of the Stewardship Master Plan was presented and validated on February 5th by 40 members of the stewardship planning committee. The committee was comprised of DDC board members, representatives from the Door County Tourism Zone, non-profits, local citizens and county government to evaluate and develop initiatives based on the community feedback gathered throughout 2023. A public presentation is currently slated for April 24th, location and time to be determined, after the board has approved it.
- In January we wrapped up our [Door County Cares Drive](#). In conjunction with the United Way of Door County, we helped our local community collect over 2,700 personal care items and cleaning supplies to help support our residents and neighbors. Thanks to all who participated!
- To foster our local spirit, we worked with Peninsula Filmworks to highlight local musician Hans Christian in a [video](#) that celebrated his work and a 2024 Grammy Award nomination, ahead of the 66th Annual Grammy Awards on February 4.
- We continued to engage with our residents and stakeholders by implementing a new social media management tool to help us more efficiently execute our partner social media strategies on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [LinkedIn](#). Social media is one of our primary tools for ongoing engagement with the local community.
- In an effort to help support our local businesses, we secured a date for our 2024 J-1 Summer Work Travel Host Employer Forum. The event will take place on Tuesday April 23 and will include representatives from the U.S. Department of State. More details to come.

## Sustainable Development

- 2024 takes us into our second year of providing financial support to community stakeholders for impactful projects that benefit both residents and visitors. The 4th round of [Community Investment Fund](#) grants had an application deadline in early January, and the award recipients for this latest round of CIF grants will be announced in mid-February. To-date, \$828,917 has been invested in 18 local projects during the first three rounds of grant awards.
- As we continue to evaluate and implement eco-conscious initiatives, we said goodbye to our community engagement manager, Morgan Rusnak, who had done great work for DDC the past 4 years and started a new role with a statewide organization. With her departure, we began transitioning staff responsibilities as we gear up for a busy year ahead!



## Values Based Marketing

- The [2024 Destination Guide](#) is now available! The guide is the primary fulfillment piece that was created to increase brand awareness, inspire travel throughout the region and to highlight local businesses. 215,000 guides have been printed for distribution outside and within the county. If you would like guides or niche brochures for your business please email [info@doorcounty.com](mailto:info@doorcounty.com).
- We are currently in the process of revamping our data and research dashboard from Zartico to Rove. The new platform will allow us to better explore and identify growth markets and audience segments through:
  - Geolocation data to track visitor movement (origin market, key points of interest, new vs returning visitors and overnight stays)
  - Spend (spend by DMA and product category)
  - Short Term Rental data (VRBO/AirDNA scraped data to show ADR, RevPar, nights booked)
  - Social listening that allows us to assess traveler sentiment by reviewing data for accommodations, restaurants, and attractions across major global travel review sites such as Trip Advisor, Facebook, Google, Expedia, and more
- According to market trends and stakeholder feedback, we are seeing and hearing that there has been lower visitation compared to previous years. In response, we launched targeted promotions to assist in increasing visitation. The paid media campaign has been going well, with most campaigns surpassing their primary click and view objectives. Additionally, they are meeting or surpassing benchmark goals in terms of click-through and view rates which are all good signs that point to increased traveler interest to the area.
- When it comes to our owned media channels (Social, website, visitor-facing newsletter) we will continue adjusting as needed to address the unusually warm weather and encourage visitation for reasons outside of snow-related activities.
- In the upcoming month, we plan to launch more campaigns including Connected TV, Google Prospecting & Display Ads, Meta Prospecting, and a Workforce Recruitment display campaign in an effort to not only increase visitation during the shoulder season but to also support local businesses with their workforce needs.
- To build awareness that highlights destination offerings and visitor opportunities, we have six media press trips planned in 2024 for our earned media program. To read all the publicity we have earned through this program, view our [online press clips catalog](#).
  - February 22-25 Winter Wonders
  - May 16-19 Cherry Blossoms, Culinary, Wedding
  - June 25-28 Eco, Watersports, Outdoor Recreation
  - July 29-August 1 Cherry and Lavender
  - August 25-28 Summer Arts and Theater
  - October 22-25 Fall Harvest



FOX 11

## SAVE THE DATE

- APR 9**     **DDC BOARD RETREAT**  
8:30 AM AT BJORKLUNDEN
- APR 23**    **J-1 EMPLOYER HOST FORUM**  
TIME & LOCATION TBD
- APR 24**    **PUBLIC STEWARDSHIP PLAN PRESENTATION**  
TIME & LOCATION TBD

Stay in the know



<https://bit.ly/ddcnews>



# DESTINATION DOOR COUNTY 2023 YEAR IN REVIEW

Destination Door County's strategic plan is the result of a collaborative development process involving board members and professional staff from Destination Door County and commissioners from the Door County Tourism Zone.

## mission

To inspire travel that drives community enhancement. Through innovation and partnerships, we will share stories of Door County's people and places, deliver world-class experiences, strengthen the industry, work to ensure all travelers feel welcome and preserve Door County's way of life and its natural resources.

## vision

A better life for all of Door County through strong, sustainable practices supported by local communities that welcome a diverse group of explorers.

## promise

We will promote travel to Door County in a way that aims to minimize the environmental and social impact while maximizing economic impact. We strive to foster a local sense of place to ensure quality of life for residents that creates a positive impact on the county.

What a year 2023 has been! Destination Door County has executed plans and deliverables focused on Community Outreach and Destination Alignment, Sustainable Development and Values-Based Marketing, delivering results that we continue to measure to accomplish the goals that were set.

We went to work to deliver ongoing, informative communications with all of our stakeholders. Newsletters tailored to specific audiences delivered insights, social media spotlights feature local businesses and their staff, and educational webinars and workshops helped support the growth of our tourism economy.

Travel and tourism play an essential role in stimulating economic growth, cultivating vibrant communities and allowing us to invest in stewardship to elevate the quality of life for all of us. Each and every one of you plays a vital role, and we thank you for going above and beyond to deliver exceptional experiences to everyone who visits our remarkable destination.

*-Julie Gilbert/President & CEO*

### TOP ORIGIN MARKETS

- Milwaukee, WI
- Green Bay/Appleton, WI
- Chicago, IL
- Madison, WI
- Minneapolis/St. Paul, MN

### VISITOR DEMOGRAPHICS

- Average Household Income  
\$41k-\$60k & \$101k-\$150k
- Age  
45-65+, without children
- Top Interests  
Outdoor recreation, dining, and retail

### PEAK VISITATION

- June
- July
- August
- September
- October

• Source: Zartico (NEAR, Affinity)

# community outreach & destination alignment

Listening to and seeking input from residents and stakeholders has become an integral component of Destination Door County's efforts, particularly since destination promotion is done for the benefit and wellbeing of every person in the community. Being driven by the same core values helps determine priorities and provides a roadmap which leads to more authentic promotion of the destination and a more engaged community in the process.

## GOALS

- 1| Cultivate an environment where Door County's tourism industry can lead by example, championing tourism's benefits, helping mitigate its impacts and connecting the community to its regenerative capabilities.
- 2| Foster our local spirit, our values, our sense of place, and the well-being of our community—residents, employers, employees, and visitors alike.

## OBJECTIVES

- 1| Invest in unified community messaging to highlight the demands and opportunities of the visitor economy.
- 2| Increase residential awareness on the benefits of tourism.
- 3| Amplify community and industry partnerships to strengthen destination product offerings and foster entrepreneurial development.
- 4| Collaborate with local stakeholders and organizations to align mutual interests and harness the passion people have for Door County to help make it an even better place.

## OUR STRATEGIES

- 1| Engage with local media to highlight the benefits of the visitor economy to residents.
- 2| Execute an earned media program that highlights destination offerings and visitor opportunities.
- 3| Create opportunities to gain a better understanding of resident sentiment.
- 4| Provide support to community stakeholder groups that have mutual interests and goals.

## OUR MEASUREMENTS

- ▶ Conduct 20 media outreach activities
- ▶ Host 50 travel journalists
- ▶ Work with at least 12 Door County non-profits
- ▶ Host 3 Bridge USA events
- ▶ Municipality engagements
- ▶ Benchmark resident sentiment

## 2023 successes & accomplishments

### KPI

### RESULTS

20 Media Outreach Activities

249

Host 50 Travel Journalists

53

Work with at least 12 Door County non-profits

18

Host 3 Bridge USA Events

3

Municipality Engagements

58

Benchmark Resident Sentiment

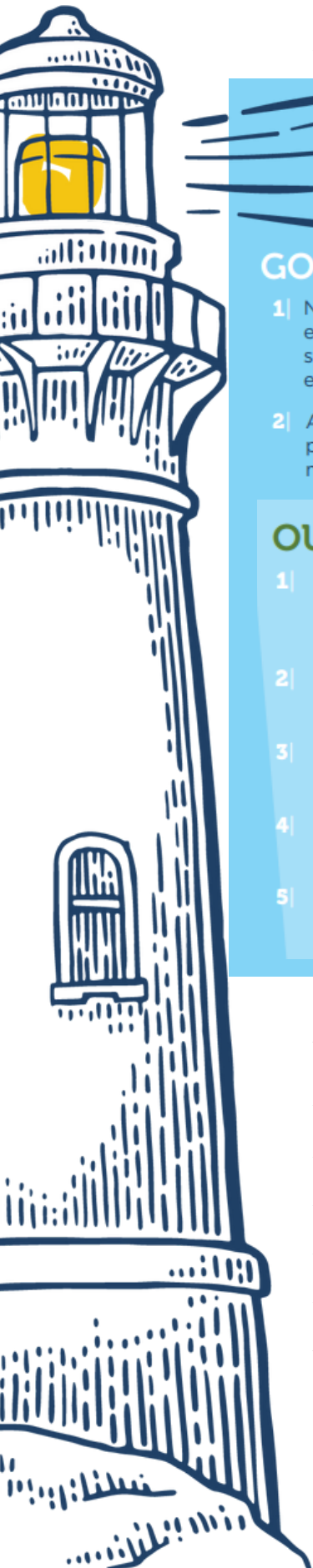
✓

- We welcomed 53 journalists between February and December on group editorial press trips to experience first-hand the many wonderful things to see, sample and explore in Door County.
- Between in-person presentations, meetings and our new [Destination Connection](#) municipal newsletter, we had 58 engagements with municipalities and local elected officials.
- For even more information, view our [2023 Year-In-Review video](#) and peruse a [printed summary](#) highlighting 2023 DDC activities.

# sustainable development



By supporting the development of a more sustainable and equitable visitor economy, we can prioritize sustainable development that includes environmental, sociocultural and economic resilience.



## GOALS

- 1| Nurture social, cultural, and economic resilience for a more sustainable, balanced, and equitable visitor economy.
- 2| Advocate for the preservation and protection of our environment and natural resources.

## OUR STRATEGIES

- 1| Explore eco-conscious initiatives to encourage greater sustainability among tourism and community stakeholders.
- 2| Intensify environmental stewardship activities to broaden community impact.
- 3| Engage in activities that positively impact the environment in Door County.
- 4| Financially support community stakeholders for impactful projects benefiting visitors and residents.
- 5| Utilize geo-technology to target visitors, boost pledge sign-ups, and recommend activities for better dispersion.

## OBJECTIVES

- 1| Work with groups, organizations, and local government to advocate for investments which preserve the shore, land, and forests, and encourage responsible development.
- 2| Maximize environmental resources to help maintain essential ecosystems and conserve biodiversity.
- 3| Accentuate tourism's benefits and pursue the reduction of tourism's negative impacts.
- 4| Support the well-being of our people and local culture.

## OUR MEASUREMENTS

- ▶ Generate a plan for new environmental awareness programs in 2024.
- ▶ Execute 'Leave No Trace' Spotlight program
- ▶ Facilitate 'Leave No Trace' Master Educator program
- ▶ Generate 120 hours of community volunteer time
- ▶ Award grant dollars in 2023

## 2023 successes & accomplishments

### KPI

### RESULTS

**Generate a plan for new environmental awareness programs in 2024**

✓

**Execute 'Leave No Trace' Spotlight Program**

✓

**Facilitate 'LNT' Master Educator Program**

✓

**Generate 120 hours of community volunteer time**

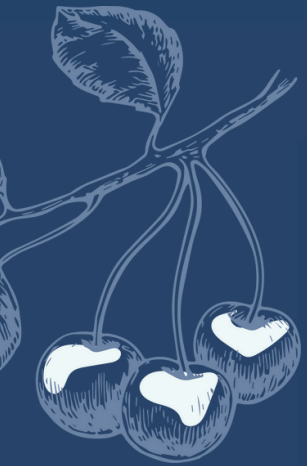
126

**Award grant dollars in 2023**

\$837,917

- The first year of our Community Investment Fund program was well received by the community and gave DDC the opportunity to provide \$828,917 in grant awards to 18 different community projects.
- The Leave No Trace spotlight program in June at Peninsula State Park was a big success and allowed us to reach over 530 people directly and thousands more through social and regular media.
- 9 EV mini-grants were awarded to publicly accessible EV Chargers.

# values-based marketing



The overall quality of a destination’s visitor experience includes what local communities value, and how residents are striving to achieve their collective goals.

Repeat visitors return to the same destinations because they want to be part of a community where the local cultural DNA aligns with their own identity and priorities. Communicating that subjective quality represents the next evolution of destination marketing.

## GOALS

- 1| Be bold, creative, and action-focused, supporting transparency and measurable outcomes.
- 2| Encourage stewardship by elevating Door County and its communities’ authentic character, creative energy, and brand.

## OBJECTIVES

- 1| Create incremental growth for the local economy by developing, expanding, and promoting a united visitor economy.
- 2| Implement targeted promotions to disperse visitation and optimize economic impact by considering visitor capacity, passions, and market trends.
- 3| Execute integrated efforts to generate economic benefits for Door County through research, marketing, communications, and sales.
- 4| Tell authentic, honest stories that accurately reflect both the past and present, intersecting our community’s identities, cultures, and shared values.

## OUR STRATEGIES

- 1| Develop a core market plan highlighting lesser-known experiences, communities, and responsible travel messaging.
- 2| Utilize digital platforms as core values-based awareness platforms to reach targeted audiences with a unique message.
- 3| Build destination awareness and grow engaged audiences through organic efforts that align with core values on select social media platforms.
- 4| Test growth audience segments and markets that align with Door County core values to bring awareness to new audiences.

## OUR MEASUREMENTS

- ▶ Increase visitation to historically underserved areas of Door County
- ▶ Increase non-resident engagement and advocacy on brand channels that specifically promote DDC values
- ▶ Increase visitation during shoulder season
- ▶ Room Tax Collections

# 2023 successes & accomplishments

### KPI

### RESULTS

Increase visitation to historically underserved areas of Door County



Increase non-resident engagement and advocacy on brand channels that specifically promote DDC values



Increase visitation during shoulder season



Room Tax Collections



- Launched a new mobile digital experience highlighting the unique attributes of our communities throughout the county through an interactive ad experience. This received 5 million impressions and drove 12.5K users to DoorCounty.com.
- Launched several new programs and initiatives including: Art in the Door, Parks Challenge Program, brand partnership activation with Lands’ End, social contests centered around Newport State Park’s Dark Sky and the Ice Age Trail, and shared accessibility offerings through an influencer activation.
- Utilized seasonal SEM campaigns and targeting with seasonal keywords and phrases, seasonal digital campaigns with tailored messaging, seasonal reports to keep visitors up-to-date to help plan their visit and leverage eNewsletter as a seasonal planning tool.
- We launched our brand new ‘feelings’ campaign as part of our year-round media execution. This multi-channel media campaign focused on strengthening brand awareness, inspiring travel to Door County, and encouraging bookings. We ended the year with nearly 100 million impressions and 1 million users to Door County.com through paid media.