



Stevens Point Area

Annual Report

Stevens Point Area 2021 Annual Report



A LETTER FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

In many ways 2021 was a challenging year. It is not surprising that visitor spending was still down, impacted by COVID-19. But, we saw a glimmer of hope as tourism began to rebound. Nationally, travel intent and demand are trending up. Focusing on the road ahead, tourism is ready to help with the economic recovery for 2022 and beyond.



"It has been a tough year, but there is a lot to look forward to with events, tournaments, and conferences returning to the region. We continue to focus on the road ahead, supporting local businesses and encouraging visitors to join the recovery through the power of travel."

Sara Brish, Executive Director
Stevens Point Area Convention & Visitors Bureau

Despite the challenges, 2021 saw many developments and openings. Notably the Sentry Curling Center, a \$3 million project in Plover opened, offering 4 sheets of ice for play. Artists & Fare in Plover opened their doors to a handful of businesses repurposing 91,000-square feet of the former Plover Shopko building, and the construction on phase 2 for the Lake Pacawa Project - slated to be complete by July 2022. The Inn at SentryWorld neared completion, a boutique hotel at the state's first destination golf course.

2021 also included; the grand opening for the Green Circle Trailhead project at the Schmeeckle Reserve, construction underway at the Opera House, celebrating 50 years of the American Suzuki Institute at UWSP - the first outside Japan, new sculptures at Cultural Commons, and additional mountain biking trails completed at Standing Rocks County Park.

For decades meetings, conventions, tradeshow, and sports events have been hosted in the Stevens Point Area, because of our central location and our exceptional facilities. While COVID has deeply impacted group business in the region, we have worked to remain top-of-mind. In 2020 & 2021 we secured 107 additional groups (that were lost due to COVID), garnering more than 23,000 room nights, more than 30,000 attendees and generating more than \$6.5 million.

Together forward,

Sara Brish, Executive Director

MEET THE STAFF

Sara Brish
Executive Director

Melissa Sabel
Director of Marketing

Baily Kruzan
Visitor Experience Manager

Hannah Klein
Director of Partnerships

Taylor Greenheck
Group Sales & Services

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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TOURISM MAKES AN IMPACT

Tourism means big business in Portage County and is at the heart of what we do. As the chief storytellers for the Stevens Point Area, we strategically market the region and work to build relationships with visitors, meeting & sporting event planners and industry professionals.

2021 Visitor Spending

(in millions)

118.5

2021 Pageviews

StevensPointArea.com

453,746

743,925

#

total # of Partner
listing views since
January 2012



17,296

total # of inquiries to the Visitor Center in 2021

3,585

followers
as of 12.31.21



20,946

page likes
as of 12.31.21



Email Stats

2021 YTD averages*

46.63% Open Rate

*industry average is 25.43%

22.73% Click Rate

*industry average is 1%

Top DMAs

by web traffic

- 1 Rhinelander
- 2 Chicago
- 3 Milwaukee
- 4 Madison
- 5 Minneapolis

Top DMAs

by inquiries

- 1 Rhinelander
- 2 Milwaukee
- 3 Green Bay
- 4 Chicago
- 5 Madison

WHAT'S NEW IN 2021

Artists & Fare Development

→ Artists & Fare, reimagining the 91,000-square foot building (formerly Shopko) welcoming businesses and the public in 2021 during the first phase; including O'so Brewing and Mission Coffee. The location will serve as a community hub, with courtyard.



Central City Market

→ A cooperative of local makers imagining a historic building as a space for local businesses to collaborate and create a indoor market and food enterprise center.

Opera House Complex

→ Originally commissioned in 1893, the space is being reimagined as an event venue and Biergarten, blending historic charm with a modern touch.



Inn at SentryWorld

→ The project will see the addition of a boutique hotel to SentryWorld. Built just off the course's 18th fairway, it will offer on-site lodging for golfers, weddings and meetings. The facility is set to host the U.S. Senior Open in July 2023.



Green Circle Trailhead

→ The trailhead the Schmeeckle Reserve, serves as the public gateway to the popular 27 mile trail. The trailhead features a 50-person open air shelter, year round restroom, and overflow parking lot. An estimated 125,000 people use the trail annually.



Stevens Point Area Brand Framework

Since 2017, the Stevens Point Area CVB has been working to paint a data-driven picture of the Stevens Point Area brand, as part of a long-range brand development process. In 2019, years of research resulted in the creation of the brand framework.

Brand Promise

The Stevens Point Area is a community of makers and innovators who respect the natural world while seeking to inspire, make a difference and build connections.

Perhaps it's the influence of one of the University of Wisconsin System's most storied campuses or the pioneering spirit of farmers who worked the land, but regardless of the origin, the Stevens Point Area has a history of developing new products, earning national acclaim ahead of larger peers and cultivating loyalty from locals and out-of-market fans alike.

It's that spunky spirit that makes the Stevens Point Area special. It's that drive that's led to a new distillery that utilizes the area's potato castoffs to make premium vodka. It's that drive that lets an award-winning brewery harness the sun's energy to create a sustainable beer with a passionate following. It's that drive that fortifies the survival of the nation's third oldest continuously operating brewery—one that locals would not allow to be sold to larger companies in times of financial hardship. And those are just examples from the local beer and spirits industry. The Stevens Point Area boasts a bevy of entrepreneurs who've combined their expertise with their passion—and had fun doing it, often to national accolades.

Regardless of the demographic—millennials to empty nesters—the Stevens Point Area is positioned to welcome travelers interested in quality, locally made products with a focus on regional storytelling and a connection to the land. Whether you choose to travel the Green Circle Trail or bike from brewery to brewery, recreational activities are easily accessible and artfully constructed. In the Stevens Point Area the process is as important as the product.

Brand Position

From exploring the Green Circle Trail, tasting new foods, and sampling special release craft beers – adventure does not only exist by trekking outside of Wisconsin. It is crafting the perfect adventure within every day.

The Stevens Point Area is ready to introduce the crafted everyday adventures through our brand assets. Through first-hand stories, the new brand will feature people who embody the brand. From family farmers to world renown brewers, from dedicated park stewards to passionate regional artists, these stories will shed light on the spirit that makes the Stevens Point Area special.

Collecting these stories will be the centerpiece of our brand. Travelers will have opportunities to meet the locals as they serve as tour guides and trusted sources of travel information. Using visits to their workshops and businesses, we will allow our local makers the chance to share their passion for the area they call home.

Regardless of age or other demographic features, all you need is an interest in the ways our area makers find influence and inspiration and infuse it into their creations. Whether taking a classic Wisconsin brewery tour or a learning more about the process from potato to potent potable, we're ready with crafted travel experiences. Visitors can extend their exploration on bikes for a ride taking them through the region's best trails including the Green Circle Trail, Tomorrow River State Trail, and the Sculpture Park, before exploring the Craft Collective.

Brand Assets

Ask an average person you meet to identify the first thing that comes to mind when you mention the Stevens Point Area, and odds are the **Stevens Point Brewery** will be the answer. With its rich history and award-winning products, Point Brewery is one of the area's most iconic attractions.

Gateway to: Central Wisconsin Craft Collective, events, local flavor (farmers market/restaurants), visual, performing and culinary arts, recreation.



The University of Wisconsin–Stevens Point

Point is one of Wisconsin's premier campuses, and its brand extends into the larger community. Principles that form the UWSP brand are recognized not only by the engaged alumni community but by most of the local residents.. **Gateway to:** MREA, National Suzuki Institute, Trivia, (Planetarium and Observatory), Schmeeckle Reserve, arts & culture, Museum of Natural History, sporting events and tournaments, as well as regionally hosted events.

SentryWorld is Wisconsin's first destination golf course and continues to set the standard for excellence, including its meeting and event space, and restaurants - PJ's & Muse.

Gateway to: Recreational opportunities, elite facilities, Sentry Insurance national headquarters, arts, national events, meeting and group options.

Emblematic of the region's strong commitment to conservancy, outdoor recreation and the arts stands the **Green Circle Trail**. The 27-mile trail, with its breadth of recreational options linking to more than 30 miles of trails and the Stevens Point Sculpture Park makes this a truly special asset.

Gateway to: Schmeeckle Reserve/ Lake Joanis, Lake Dubai, Wisconsin River, Standing Rock Dog Park, KASH playground, Mead Wildlife Area, Tomorrow River State Trail, area parks, eleven state natural areas.



Our Mission

To lead the region's tourism industry and aggressively market the Stevens Point Area as an attractive destination for leisure and business travel in order to create a positive economic impact and, thus, enhance the area's quality of life.

What we mean by the Stevens Point Area

We represent and promote all of Portage County, Wisconsin, including the communities of Stevens Point, Plover, Park Ridge, Whiting, Almond, Amherst, Amherst Junction, Junction City, Nelsonville, Rosholt and the Lake DuBay area.