

PRESS RELEASE

PORTAGE COUNTY TOURISM POSTS RECORD-BREAKING YEAR IN 2022 Tourism generated \$245.9 million in total economic impact in 2022 in the Stevens Point Area, helping Wisconsin break an economic impact record

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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STEVENS POINT, Wis. (June 6, 2023) – Tourism generated \$245.9 million in total economic impact in Portage County during 2022, according to figures released today by the Wisconsin Department of Tourism. These dollars are part of a \$23.7 billion total economic impact, directly tied to tourism in Wisconsin.

Portage County saw an increase of 13 percent from 2021, helping Wisconsin reach a record-breaking economic impact record for tourism. Ranked 22 out of all 72 counties in the state, Portage County has seen growth in visitor spending incrementally since 2012. Dollars brought to the community through tourism are an important part of the economy, supporting local businesses and supporting jobs.

“Tourism is a key economic driver in our local economy,” said Sara Brish, executive director of the Stevens Point Area Convention & Visitors Bureau. “Not only does travel create fun and lasting memories for visitors, tourism creates positive impacts in our communities.”

Brish said the increase in visitor spending locally can be attributed to several factors, including the return of meetings and conventions, hosting numerous sports events and tournaments, in addition to successful marketing campaigns generating in-market visitation. 2022 also marked the return of one-of-a-kind local events including the Energy Fair and the opening of the newest hotel in the region, the boutique Inn at SentryWorld. 2023 is on pace to be another strong year in tourism for central Wisconsin, including the return of the Portage County Cultural Festival, hosting the U.S. Senior Open at SentryWorld, as well as the opening of Great Northern Distilling’s new location.

Statewide, 2022 was a record-breaking year. Wisconsin tourism generated \$23.7 billion in total economic impact, surpassing the previous record of \$22.2 billion set in 2019. All 72 counties experienced an increase in total tourism economic impact compared to 2021. Additionally, Wisconsin hosted 111.1 million visits and tourism contributed over \$1.5 billion in state and local taxes. Without the tax revenue generated by tourism, each Wisconsin household would pay an additional \$620 to maintain the current level of government services. Tourism also supported more than 174,600 jobs, which is 1 in every 21 jobs in the state. This is why tourism is so essential to our hard-working families in Wisconsin. To learn more about Wisconsin tourism’s record-breaking year, view the 2022 economic impact data, including a county-by-county breakdown, at industry.travelwisconsin.com/research.

“Tourism is both big fun and big business. I’m so grateful for the innovation and dedication of the folks who make up Wisconsin’s tourism industry. Each one of them played a role in setting this record,” said Wisconsin Department of Tourism Secretary Anne Sayers. “Aided by strategic marketing, Wisconsin convinced more visitors to stay longer so they could add more activities to their itinerary, delivering a deeper economic impact. I congratulate the entire industry on an incredible record-breaking year.”

The Stevens Point Area Convention & Visitors Bureau is an economic and community development organization whose purpose is to expand Portage County's economy by attracting conventions, sporting events and leisure tourists to Portage County. Millions of dollars from visitor spending and increased tax revenues are generated to increase commerce, sustain jobs and to create a desirable destination.

For more information about the Stevens Point Area, visit StevensPointArea.com The SPACVB can also be found on Facebook (facebook.com/StevensPointArea), Instagram (instagram.com/stevenspointarea), and Pinterest (pinterest.com/StevensPtArea).

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