



2021 ISHA AWARDS OF EXCELLENCE APPLICATION

Entries must be for projects completed by September 1, 2020 through August 31, 2021.

Name: Lexie Mallary Title: Marketing & Communications Coordinator

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City Brookfield State Wisconsin Zip 53005

Phone (262) 782-2851 ext. 15 Fax _____

Entry Category:

Education/Workforce Development – A program or project that introduces new employees, demonstrates an effective training mechanism, or otherwise enhances knowledge of our industry.

Events and Fundraising – A program or project that clearly raised significant funds for a industry related cause and/or an event that experienced a dramatic increase in attendance, industry visibility and/or net profitability.

Governmental Affairs – A program or project that effectively communicates the message of governmental activities, or demonstrates success in championing an industry cause.

Member Programs – A program or project that shows performance results through increases in members or retention of members.

Public Relations – A program or project that positively highlights the activities of the association to external audiences.

Communications – A program or project that positively impacts the association's communication to members and stakeholders.

Please respond to the following questions on a separate piece of paper.

1. Title of Program
2. Goals & Objectives of Program
3. Target Audience
4. Results of Program
5. Evaluation Measures
6. How was the program presented to the Target audience?
7. Addition information

ENTRIES MUST BE RECEIVED NO LATER THAN OCTOBER 13, 2021

1. Title of Program

Website & Member Communication Relaunch

2. Goals & Objectives of Program

After reviewing our website, branding, and online member interaction, WHLA realized a need to update our communication strategy in order to better engage with our members and travelers looking to stay in Wisconsin. The largest portion of this project included an overhaul of our website with an updated Member Portal, easy-to-use navigation structure, and a database transition – all while keeping the front-end of our website traveler-oriented.

With the website overhaul came a new logo for WHLA. The former logo and website were created in 2010 after the Association changed its name from the Wisconsin Innkeepers Association to the Wisconsin Hotel & Lodging Association. Recent conversations with our Board of Directors and other members brought to light the current challenges of an outdated logo and website, including usability concerns and the inability to find the resources they were looking for on our website.

Major concerns highlighted a difficult-to-find member section, a disconnect between our website and member database (members could not update their online listings themselves, event registrations were not tracked in our database and complex forms were used for event sign-ups with manual staff tracking, and more), and a lack of a mobile-friendly site.

The primary goal of the project was to minimize these challenges while updating the look and feel of the site to better represent WHLA's values and outlook for the future – capturing the inclusive and dynamic nature of the lodging industry in Wisconsin and WHLA's ability to adapt over time. Detailed goals and objectives included:

- 1) Provide a better user experience on the site
 - a. Creating an easy-to-use navigation structure
 - b. Bringing the Member Section into the main navigation instead of hidden within the site
 - c. Refining the menu to include topics and fewer hanging pages not included in the menu
- 2) Integrate the website and our new database, ultimately changing the way we interact with our members
 - a. Allowing members to edit their own information for updating their online directory listings and contact information
 - b. Streamlining event registration
 - c. Sending mass emails out of the database to communicate with members
- 3) Launch a Career Center in response to the current staffing shortages
- 4) Update and unify the branding of all our digital & print member communications
- 5) Provide a convenient option for members to easily get in touch with us when they need assistance
- 6) Create a stronger digital presence in order to communicate with our members and prospects, in addition to bringing travelers to our site
- 7) Develop indirect opportunities for increased user engagement and implement technology to track this engagement

3. Target Audience

The primary target audience for this project was WHLA's current members and prospective members (including lodging properties, associate vendors, CVBs/chambers, lodging executives/management companies, educational institutions, and students).

Secondarily, this project targeted travelers and the general public on the front-end of our website with our online directory, *WisconsINN Getaways* travel newsletter, and a new Career Center.

4. Results of Program

Our new website was launched on July 29, 2021, so the program is fairly new and ongoing as we continue to develop new programs to incorporate into the site. The majority of our new communication programs have been implemented. Since launch, we have received only positive feedback about the new updates.

Member and user engagement has increased substantially through ways that were not possible in the old site. We provided new opportunities on the site and were able to add data tracking in locations where that feature was previously unavailable. The new website has also experienced an increase in traffic. Below are a few highlights:

- 1) 7 New [members joined](#) (4 via the website) – was not possible to join on the previous website
- 2) 21 [Contact Us form](#) entries – difficult to locate on the previous website
- 3) 42 job posts in our new [Career Center](#)
- 4) 43 new WisconsINN Getaways [subscribers](#) via the website – not an option before
 - a. Pop-up forms were generated on the homepage
 - b. Embedded form on the WisconsINN Getaways page
- 5) 78 searches on the [Associate Vendor Directory](#) (increase) – no detailed tracking before
- 6) 472 Profile Change Requests (updating property information/contact info) submitted via the new [Member](#) Portal – not possible before
- 7) 556 searches on the [Lodging & Travel Directory](#) (increase) – no detailed tracking before
- 8) 612 Members-Only logins – not trackable before
- 9) 1,208 Pageviews in the new Career Center

Members are also now able to track their own Value Reports in the Member Portal. They can now see how many times their online directory listing was viewed, how their banner ads on the website are performing, if they have been referred to inquirers by WHLA office staff, and more.

Within the first month after the new website launch and newsletter template updates, our average monthly email opens increased by 3%. Within 2 months, our website's users grew by 10.22%, with new users growing 13.87% and sessions at a 39.85% increase. New users entered our website via a mobile device 9.65% more than prior to the website relaunch, indicating greater mobile efficiencies on the site. Our average page load time has considerably decreased, allowing users to view the content faster than they were able to before – keeping users on our site more often. Our users have also increased the average time they spend on our key pages by almost a minute (217.18%), indicating they are taking time to read our content and explore our site much longer than before.

5. Evaluation Measures

This project's success was evaluated through the use of Google Analytics, our database reporting, and our Career Center dashboard. We completed a heightened assessment of member engagement by evaluating new members joining, contact forms submitted, newsletter subscriber sign-ups, members-only logins, online directory searches, and more.

6. How was the program presented to the Target audience?

Before the website and new logo were officially launched to the public, our members were notified that the change was coming. Sneak peeks were sent out via social media and included in our email newsletters. Any time a member sent a message communicating the difficulties they were having with our site, we notified them that a new interface was coming soon that is much easier to navigate.

Since the front-end of our website is traveler-oriented, our members were sent correspondence notifying them to update their property information and add photos to their listings. We did however launch the Member Portal portion of the website before the website itself in order for our members to make these changes to their listings. This correspondence was through stand-alone emails and articles added to our weekly member newsletter. The launch of WHLA's Member Portal included a [PDF tutorial](#) on how to utilize the new self-service site and make the most of their membership.

The [website](#) was announced to the general public on the launch date of July 29, 2021. There was also a [press release](#) sent out, member emails, and social media posts.

WHLA's new branding was incorporated into new email newsletter templates within one week of the website launch (*Weekly Wisconsin Lodging Insider*, *Capitol Insider* email alerts, member alerts, industry alerts, *WisconsINN Getaways* emails, and *InnTouch* magazine).

Since the official launch, other website programs have been rolled out to our members on an ongoing basis. First our members were notified via email, social media posts, and stand-alone conversations of the new [WHLA Career Center](#). This launch came with [a guide on how to post a job](#). Soon after came the [Legislative Action Center](#) where members can reach out directly to their legislators about issues affecting the industry. Each time a new topic was added to the Action Center, members would receive email notices to take action.

WHLA has plans to continue launching new features of our website in addition to providing enhanced trainings on the new user interface for our members through guided videos, detailed PDF guides, online webinars, and more.

7. Additional information

See below for detailed site pages and data reports.

Previous Logo



New Logo



New Icon



Old Website Navigation

The screenshot shows a horizontal navigation bar with the following items:

- Lodging Search
- Meeting & Event Sites
- Featured Properties
- Lodging Employment
- Tourism Links

Below this is a secondary navigation bar with the following items:

- Home
- About Us
- Join WH&LA
- Vendors
- Events
- Info Center
- Legislative Center
- Contact Us
- Associates

New Website Navigation Structure

The screenshot shows a header with the WHLA logo and the text "WISCONSIN HOTEL & LODGING ASSOCIATION". To the right are links for "Member Login | Become a Member", "Home", "Find Lodging", "Employment", "About Us", "Membership", and "myWHLA". A large image of a building with a red roof and trees in the background features the text "Getaway in Wisconsin!" at the bottom. On the right side, there is a sidebar with the following links:

- Join Us
- Lodging
- Lodging Executives
- Associate Vendors
- CVB/Chamber
- Educational Institutions
- Students

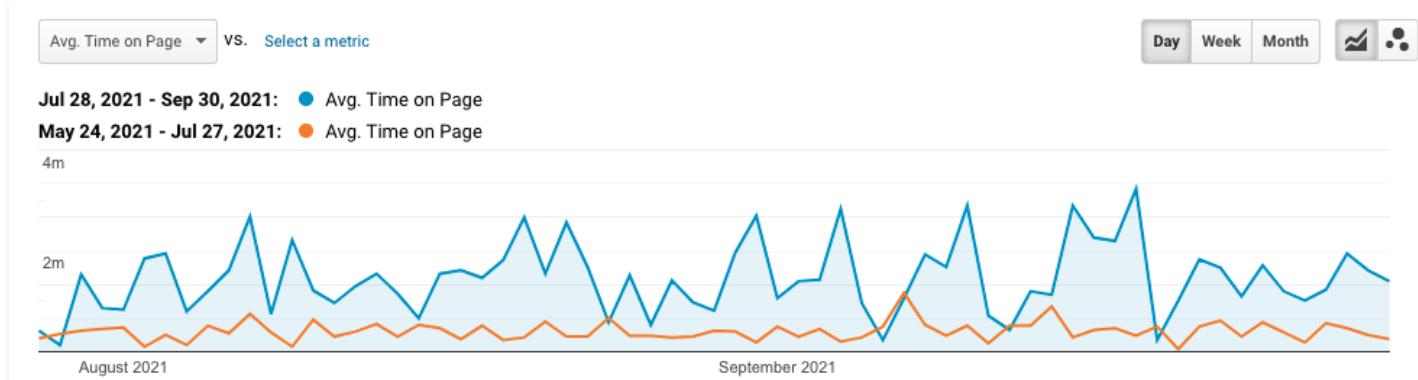
Former Website Homepage

The homepage features a top navigation bar with links for Lodging Search, Meeting & Event Sites, Featured Properties, Lodging Employment, and Tourism Links. Below this is a search bar for "Search Lodging Options" with fields for City/Location and Name of Property, and a "Search" button. A "Advanced Search" link is also present. A "Book Lodging Now" section includes a "Browse Lodging Directory" with a thumbnail of a cabin and three buttons: ABOUT WH&LA, MEMBER SECTION, and JOIN WH&LA. A prominent red "COVID-19 RESOURCES" button is located in the center. To the left is a "Something for Everyone" section with a paragraph about Wisconsin's lodging variety and a thumbnail for "Best Western Plus Milwaukee West". Below this is a "Wisconsin Getaways NEWSLETTER" section with a "Subscribe today!" button. At the bottom is an "ADVOCACY" section featuring the Wisconsin State Capitol building. The footer contains copyright information, a "Log in" link, and social media links for Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.

New Website Homepage

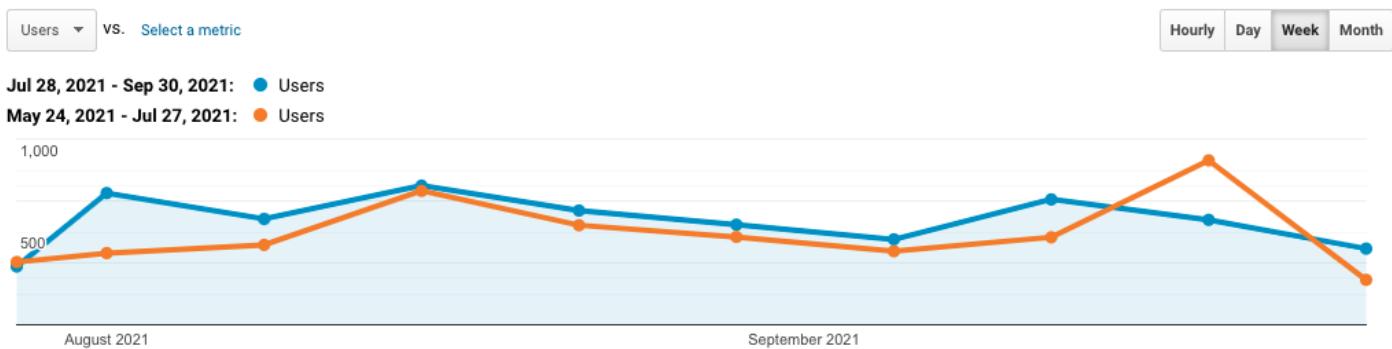
The homepage features a top navigation bar with links for Home, Find Lodging, Employment, About Us, Membership, and myWH&LA. A "Member Login | Become a Member" link is in the top right. A large banner at the top says "Getaway in Wisconsin!" over a night photograph of a lakefront resort. Below the banner are three buttons: "Find a Place to Stay", "Receive Travel Deals", and "Member Login". The main content area has a "Welcome to Wisconsin!" heading with a paragraph about the state's lodging opportunities and a thumbnail of a white house with a red roof. A "Plan Your Getaway" button and a "Sign up for travel deals" button are located below this. A "Featured Properties" section shows three images: "Best Western Plus Milwaukee West", "Landmark Resort (Big Harbor, WI)", and "Berkshire Inn & Restaurant (West Bend, WI)".

Average Time on Page 2 Month Comparison



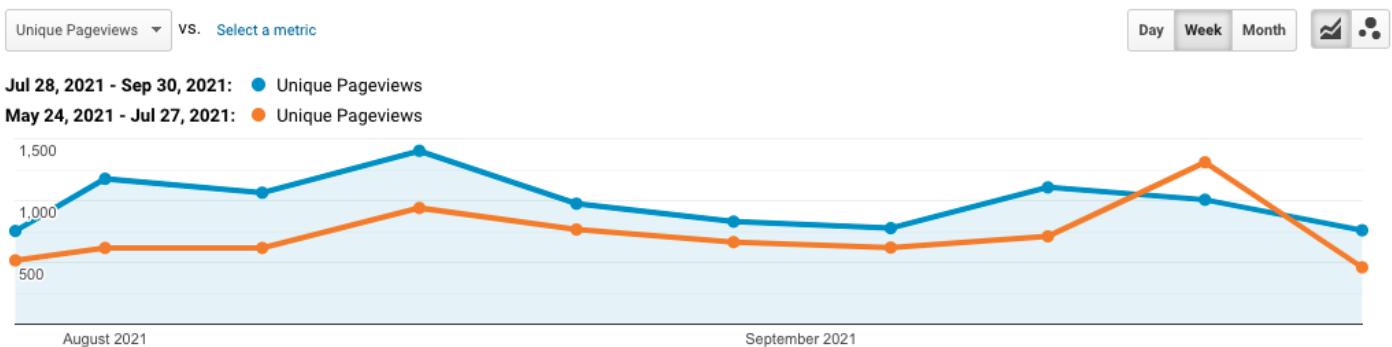
Users

2 Month Comparison



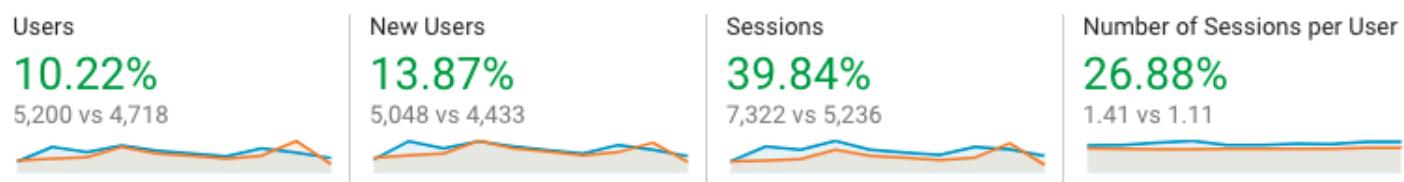
Unique Pageviews

2 Month Comparison



Overall Site Usage

2 Month Comparison





Members Only

REGISTER NOW!

November 7-9, 2021 | Brookfield Conference Center



Welcome to myWHLA!

Welcome to the WHLA members-only section! As a member of the Wisconsin Hotel & Lodging Association, you have exclusive access to the resources in this area via your member login. Access valuable information including operational resources, property signage, guides, and FAQ's.

We appreciate your membership with WHLA and encourage you to explore our website. Please contact us with any questions you have.

[Access Member Resources](#)[View Our Events](#)

Upcoming Events

125th Anniversary Wisconsin Lodging Conference & Trade Show**Nov 07, 2021****19:00 - 00:00****WHLA Action Day****Jan 26, 2022**[View All Events](#)

FEATURED ASSOCIATE

Rural Mutual Insurance Company

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Mike Lubahn | mlubahn@ruralins.com | (608) 416-0300 | www.RuralMutual.com

Lodging & Travel Search



Member Login | Become a Member

WHLA
WISCONSIN HOTEL & LODGING ASSOCIATION

Home Find Lodging Employment About Us Membership myWHLA

Search Results



Home

[Search](#) | [Advanced Search](#) | [New Members](#) | [All Categories](#)

Sort alphabetically by... ▾

1 2

La Quinta by Wyndham Stevens Point

4917 Main St.
Stevens Point, WI 54481
[\(715\) 344-1900](tel:(715)344-1900)
[\(877\) 999-3223](tel:(877)999-3223)

[Learn More](#) | [Visit Site](#) | [View on Google Maps](#)



Cottage Keeper Vacation Rental Homes

970 Mansfield Court
Nekoosa, WI 54457
[\(888\) 404-2688](tel:(888)404-2688)

[Learn More](#) | [Visit Site](#) | [View on Google Maps](#)

Jefferson Street Inn

201 Jefferson Street
Wausau, WI 54403
[\(715\) 845-6500](tel:(715)845-6500)

[Learn More](#) | [Visit Site](#) | [View on Google Maps](#)



Apple Tree Lane B&B

E3192 Apple Tree Lane
Waupaca, WI 54981
[\(715\) 258-3107](tel:(715)258-3107)

[Learn More](#) | [Visit Site](#) | [View on Google Maps](#)



FairBridge Inn & Suites Thorp

1000 N. 1st Street
Thorop, WI 54496
[\(715\) 258-3107](tel:(715)258-3107)

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REGISTER NOW!

November 7-9, 2021 | Brookfield Conference Center



WHLA CAREER CENTER

Your source
for hospitality
job openings.

[SEARCH JOBS >](#)



Related Categories

[Local Traveler Information](#)

[Lodging](#)

[Meeting & Event Sites](#)

WHLA Career Center

[POST A JOB](#)[EMPLOYERS ▾](#)[JOB SEEKERS ▾](#)[MANAGE ▾](#)[LOG OUT](#)

Welcome to the WHLA Career Center!

The Wisconsin Hotel & Lodging Association (WHLA) is a nonprofit trade association representing the interests of Wisconsin lodging properties since 1896.

Search for career opportunities

50 Miles

[SEARCH](#)

Listings

Filter search criteria

[APPLY FILTERS](#)[Clear Filters](#)**FEATURED Sales & Catering Coordinator**

Comfort Suites Johnson Creek - Johnson Creek, WI
 Full-time

Posted: Sep 26, 2021

Salary: \$15.00 - \$20.00
Hourly
Application Deadline: N/A

**FEATURED Catering Sales Manager**

Comfort Suites Johnson Creek - Johnson Creek, WI
 Full-time

Posted: Sep 26, 2021

Salary: \$50,000.00 - \$60,000.00
Other
Application Deadline: N/A

**FEATURED Hotel General Manager**

Best Western Plus Milwaukee West - Milwaukee, WI
 Full-time

Posted: Sep 26, 2021

Salary: \$45,000.00 - \$60,000.00
Other
Application Deadline: N/A

[QUICK APPLY](#)**Events Manager**

Grand Geneva Resort & Spa - Lake Geneva, WI
 Full-time

Posted: Sep 29, 2021

Salary: Annually

How is my job board doing?

Total Sessions i

502

Page Views

1,208

Bounce Rate i

59.56%

● Returning Visitors

● New Visitors

Paid Posts

1

Total Posts

42

Job Alerts

Sign up for job alerts

You'll receive an email when a new job is posted.

[SIGN UP](#)

Prices

30 Day Listing

Non-member: \$100.00
Member: \$0.00

60 Day Listing

Non-member: \$150.00
Member: \$0.00

90 Day Listing

Non-member: \$200.00
Member: \$0.00

Upgrade your listing!

FEATURED

Non-member: +\$200.00
Member: +\$50.00

Why upgrade to a Featured Listing?

Your job posting will be:

Promoted at the top of the board



WHLA Legislative Action Center

Member Login | Become a Member

WHLA
WISCONSIN HOTEL & LODGING ASSOCIATION

Home Find Lodging Employment About Us Membership myWHLA



Action Center

Home Directory

End the Unfair Fees for Sales & Room Tax Collection

WHLA is working to pass legislation that would prohibit credit card providers from charging swipe fees on the tax portion of a guest's receipt. This includes the state sales tax and any portion of a transaction that is a fee imposed by a city, village, town or county (i.e. Room Tax).



[TAKE ACTION](#) [LEARN MORE](#)

Enter Your Address

GO

Outreach Options

Your outreach options will appear here for your review after you enter your address.

Wisconsin Lodging Insider emails



Wisconsin Lodging

INSIDER

Your weekly member briefing

October 6, 2021

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WHLA Updates



Upcoming Events

[125th Anniversary Wisconsin Lodging Conference & Trade Show](#)

November 7-9, 2021
Brookfield Conference Center

Last Chance - Early Registration Deadline

Conference Schedule WHLA

The full schedule for the 125th Anniversary Wisconsin Lodging Conference is available online now. Visit the [event webpage](#) to learn more or view the [schedule here](#).

[Read More](#)

2022 Website & LD Cover Contest WHLA

Voting for the 2022 WHLA Website and Lodging Directory Cover Contest begins Monday! Be sure to review the finalists choices and vote



CAPITOL INSIDER

End the Unfair Fees for Sales & Room Tax Collection

August 25, 2021

Dear WHLA Member,

WHLA is a member of a coalition with other business trade associations that is trying to pass legislation that would prohibit credit card providers from charging swipe fees on the tax portion of a guest's receipt. This includes the state sales tax and any portion of a transaction that is a fee imposed by a city, village, town or county (i.e. Room Tax). The coalition has been working behind the scenes on this for a while, and now it's [time to take action!](#)

According to 2019 sales tax records for Accommodations (hotels/motels), the state portion alone brought in more than \$117 million in tax revenue. If all of those sales were made using credit cards, that means the lodging industry was on the hook for somewhere between \$1.4 million and \$4.7 million in swipe fees for the year - not including county sales and municipal room taxes. This is money that we pay to the banks and credit card companies just for collecting taxes.

Representative Tyler Vorpagel (R-Plymouth) and Senator Dan Feyen (R-Fond du Lac) are circulating legislation for co-sponsorship that would eliminate the imposition of credit card fees on the tax portion of a sales transaction. Please use the new [WHLA Action Center](#) to contact your elected officials to let them know that you support eliminating these unfair fees!

[Take Action](#)

Kind Regards,

Bill Elliott, CAE
WHLA President & CEO

WHLA Member Alert email



Introducing... the WHLA Career Center!

9/7/2021

Dear Lexie,

The number one issue we hear about from members continues to be the struggle to recruit more people into the hospitality workforce. That's why we're excited to connect lodging property members with employees through our new WHLA Career Center!

As a WHLA Lodging Member, **you're invited to post job openings for no charge** on the WHLA Career Center. Enjoy complimentary 30, 60, or 90 day postings now through November 30, 2021, with the option to upgrade to a Featured Listing.

There are 3 ways you can access the WHLA Career Center:

1. On WisconsinLodging.org, navigate to Employment > Career Center.
2. Login to the WHLA Member Portal at web.wisconsinlodging.org/portal. Navigate to Additional Resources > Post a Job to the Career Center.
3. In your internet browser, visit wisconsinlodging.mcjobboard.net/jobs.

Creating and updating job listing is easy - be sure to refer to our [How to Post a Job Guide](#) for step-by-step instructions. When you post a job, you also gain access to the resume bank, allowing you to search through qualified candidates who may be a great fit for your property.

We hope you take advantage of the new WHLA Career Center for your next job opening!

Kind Regards,



Bill Elliott, CAE

President & CEO

Wisconsin Hotel & Lodging Association

(262) 782-2851 | belliott@wisconsinlodging.org



Wisconsin Hotel & Lodging Association

INDUSTRY ALERT

Advocacy

Education

Networking

Marketing

Resources

Insert Headline Here

Subheading here (if applicable)

Dear *IFNAMEI*,

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed do eiusmod tempor incididunt ut labore et dolore magna aliqua. Ut enim ad minim veniam, quis nostrud exercitation ullamco laboris nisi ut aliquip ex ea commodo consequat. Duis aute irure dolor in reprehenderit in voluptate velit esse cillum dolore eu fugiat nulla pariatur. Excepteur sint occaecat cupidatat non proident, sunt in culpa qui officia deserunt mollit anim id est laborum.

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed do eiusmod tempor incididunt ut labore et dolore magna aliqua. Ut enim ad minim veniam, quis nostrud exercitation ullamco laboris nisi ut aliquip ex ea commodo consequat. Duis aute irure dolor in reprehenderit in voluptate velit esse cillum dolore eu fugiat nulla pariatur. Excepteur sint occaecat cupidatat non proident, sunt in culpa qui officia deserunt mollit anim id est laborum.

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed do eiusmod tempor incididunt ut labore et dolore magna aliqua. Ut enim ad minim veniam, quis nostrud exercitation ullamco laboris nisi ut aliquip ex ea commodo consequat. Duis aute irure dolor in reprehenderit in voluptate velit esse cillum dolore eu fugiat nulla pariatur. Excepteur sint occaecat cupidatat non proident, sunt in culpa qui officia deserunt mollit anim id est laborum.

Kind Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bill".

Bill Elliott, CAE

WHLA President & CEO