

Dept. of Tourism: Gov. Evers honors five for excellence in tourism industry at annual conference

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GOVERNOR EVERS HONORS FIVE FOR EXCELLENCE IN TOURISM INDUSTRY AT ANNUAL CONFERENCE

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MADISON, Wis. (March 20, 2019) – Governor Tony Evers presented five recipients with the Governor’s Tourism Award for their outstanding contributions to the state’s hospitality and travel industry. The awardees were recognized during the closing dinner at the annual Wisconsin Governor’s Conference on Tourism at Kalahari Resorts and Conventions in the Wisconsin Dells.

“Talent is what drives success and these five honorees are examples of Wisconsin’s biggest tourism assets – the hardworking people in our hospitality industry,” said Governor Evers. “While Wisconsin’s scenic beauty and iconic attractions continue to bring travelers to the state, it’s the hospitality industry and the way they treat our visitors that keeps people returning here year after year.”

Sponsored by the Governor’s Council on Tourism, the Governor’s Tourism Awards recognize individuals, organizations and businesses for their excellence, dedication and impact on Wisconsin’s travel and hospitality industry.

“We congratulate this year’s nominees on their enthusiasm, creativity and determination in promoting Wisconsin as a top tourism destination,” said Tourism Secretary-designee Sara Meaney. “We appreciate and acknowledge each and every nominee’s contribution to our state’s tourism industry. Tonight’s five honorees should be proud to have been selected from such a strong pool of talent.”

The five recipients are as follows:

Rising Star Award Winner

Cambria Mueller, Door County Visitor Bureau

Cambria joined the Door County Visitor Bureau in 2018. With a unique ability to understand the needs of the 11 county communities, Cambria jumped into her new role with an impressive level of professionalism and leadership. She is always willing to assist with marketing plans, make suggestions on industry practices and arrange meetings to clarify uncertainties. She has spearheaded a project that involves working with each individual community to create a county-wide wayfinding design program. With Cambria’s support, the brands of Door County’s communities have been enhanced and each community organization has grown stronger.

Governor’s Tourism Stewardship Award Winner

Frog Bay Tribal National Park, Bayfield

Located on Lake Superior, Frog Bay Tribal National Park is the first tribal national park in the U.S. It was created with the goal to permanently protect the area, which has ecological and cultural importance, for future generations of Red Cliff tribal members and visitors alike. Frog Bay Tribal National Park is within a conservation management area that protects the headwaters of the Frog Creek and conserves a stretch of Lake Superior shoreline. The park is also part of a larger effort to restore original reservation lands back to tribal ownership. The creation of the park sends the message that Native Wisconsin is open for business and invites the world to explore its lands.

Governor’s Tourism Award for Arts, Culture & Heritage Nominees

Peninsula School of Art, Fish Creek

For over half a century, Peninsula School of Art in Door County has been dedicated to the belief that everyone deserves access to the arts. PenArt’s education programs, exhibits and events open doors for curious minds of all ages and abilities to learn, discover and explore through the visual arts. Recently, PenArt has focused on increasing the reach and quality of its programs. Among them are PenArt’s annual Door County Plein Art Festival which attracts nearly 10,000 attendees for free, family-centered events, and the Family Art Days outreach program which provides accessible art experiences to residents and visitors of all backgrounds, serving more than 3,000 people each year. PenArt’s history, reputation and unique programming have enhanced Door County’s economic and cultural life and put Wisconsin on the map as an arts destination.

Service Excellence Award Winner

Lars Johnson, Al Johnson’s Swedish Restaurant & Butik

Now in its 70th year of business, Al Johnson’s is Door County’s famous goats-on-the-roof restaurant and a top restaurant destination in Wisconsin. From his earliest days as a businessman, Al recognized the importance of service to customers, employees and the local community. Al never asked his employees to do anything he wasn’t willing to do himself, and was often found serving food, clearing tables and washing dishes when needed. When Al’s grandson passed away from a blood ailment, the restaurant created a nonprofit organization to fundraise for medical research, which has raised over \$220,000 since 2013. Every year, Al Johnson’s also donates to individuals in need, nonprofits and youth organizations.

Governor’s Tourism Legacy Award Winner

Trisha Pugal, Wisconsin Hotel and Lodging Association

Since 1994, Trisha has served as the president and CEO of Wisconsin Hotel and Lodging Association. Tricia is totally committed to Association members and their concerns and is always willing to lend a helping hand no matter the size of the property or the position of the person asking. Her work moving forward hotel room tax reform and legislation has positively impacted tourism marketing budgets throughout the state, with the end goal of providing these communities with the money they earned through tax dollars generated from overnight stays. Trisha is recognized locally and nationally and is often called upon to speak on tourism related topics and issues both in Wisconsin and across the country.

About the Wisconsin Department of Tourism

The mission of the Wisconsin Department of Tourism is to market the State as the Midwest’s premier travel destination for fun by executing industry-leading marketing programs and establishing strategic partnerships. The Department plays a significant role in generating greater economic impact and jobs for Wisconsin. The portal for traveler information can be found at: www.TravelWisconsin.com.