

# Dept. of Tourism: Gov. Evers names four to Wisconsin Council on Tourism

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**MADISON, Wis. (July 29, 2021)** - As Wisconsin tourism surges back, Governor Tony Evers today announced four appointments to the Wisconsin Council on Tourism.

“We’re working to make sure our state and our economy continue to recover from the coronavirus pandemic, and the Wisconsin Council on Tourism will play an important role in advising the Secretary of the Department of Tourism in the weeks and months ahead,” said Governor Evers. “Our tourism industry and workforce are a critical part of our state’s economy, and I’m proud of the work we’ve done through my first two budgets and targeted federal assistance to help support tourism in Wisconsin and ensure this industry can bounce back from this pandemic.”

As described in Wisconsin State Statute 41.12, the Council’s primary mission is to advise the Secretary of the Department of Tourism on matters related to tourism.

“Tourism is a diverse group of industry sectors that come together to drive Wisconsin’s economy,” said Acting Tourism Secretary Anne Sayers. “Our council members play an important role in advising the Department on moving Wisconsin tourism forward.”

The four appointments to the Wisconsin Council on Tourism include:

- **Mary McPhetridge (Reappointment)** is the Executive Director of the Ashland Area Chamber of Commerce. A pillar of the Wisconsin tourism industry for more than 20 years, she serves in multiple leadership roles locally and with the state. In addition to serving on the Council on Tourism, she currently serves on the state’s marketing committee. Prior to her current role, Mary

taught Hospitality Management classes for technical college and high school students and served as Executive Rooms Director at the Madison Concourse Hotel and Governor's Club.

- **Dr. Robert "Bert" Davis, DVM (Reappointment)** is the President and CEO of America's Black Holocaust Museum in Milwaukee and serves as a board member at the Association of African American Museums. Davis also serves as the principal of DRMD Strategies LLC, a nonprofit strategic consulting firm with expertise in the areas of diversity, equity, collaborative alliances, communications, animal health and diversity, inclusion planning and implementation, and is the former President and CEO of the Zoological Society of Milwaukee. Dr. Davis is a co-chair of the Department's Diversity, Equity, Accessibility and Inclusion committee.
- **Dr. Natalie Chin (New Member)** is the Climate and Tourism Outreach Specialist for the University of Wisconsin Sea Grant Institute, based out of their Lake Superior Field Office in Superior, Wisconsin. She works on issues related to climate change, tourism and outdoor recreation within the context of the sustainable use of the Great Lakes. She also serves as one of the North Central Region representatives for the National Extension Tourism (NET) Network; is co-leading the Tourism and Outdoor Recreation Working Group for the Wisconsin Initiative on Climate Change Impacts; and is a member of the Wisconsin Department of Tourism's Diversity, Equity, Accessibility and Inclusion Committee.
- **Denise Stillman (New Member)** is the co-owner of Foremost Management Services, Inc., a hospitality consulting firm in Door County, and the co-owner/operator of Parkwood Lodge in Fish Creek. Denise has been active in Door County tourism for over 30 years. She is a past Chair and Board member of the Wisconsin Hotel & Lodging Association and currently serves as the Board President of Visit Fish Creek.

The 21-member council, which includes 14 gubernatorial appointees and 7 ex-officio members, aims to represent varied geography and wide-ranging expertise that includes, but is not limited to, recreation and attraction business owners, hospitality and service industry business owners, convention and visitor bureaus, economic development specialists, industry thought leaders, legislators and leaders of arts, historic and cultural destinations. Despite the pandemic, the tourism industry supported more than 157,000 jobs and drove \$17.3 billion in total business sales in 2020.