

Dept. of Administration: Visit highlights \$10 million state investment for Wausau Main Street businesses

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Wausau, Wis. - Today, Wisconsin Department of Administration (DOA) Secretary-designee Kathy Blumenfeld met with Wausau Mayor Katie Rosenberg and leaders from the Wausau Chamber of Commerce as well as the Wausau Area Visitors and Conventions Bureau to tour downtown businesses as part of a visit to highlight state investments. Governor Tony Evers made a combined \$18 million investment in Wausau as part of overall pandemic relief efforts, with businesses receiving close to a \$10 million investment through American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds, and over \$375,000 going to support local tourism. Marathon County received an overall \$78 million investment.

“Our local economies are bouncing back stronger than ever thanks to Governor Evers’ targeted investments,” said DOA Secretary-designee Kathy Blumenfeld. “It’s wonderful to see how downtown Wausau continues to grow and attract talent and investment to strengthen our communities.”

“The pandemic took a heavy toll on our local main street businesses but I’m excited to share some of Wausau’s success stories with our state leaders,” said Wausau Mayor Katie Rosenberg. “Our businesses were able overcome and even grow thanks to the state and federal relief. We even have some opportunities to collaborate and to further grow our local economy.”

The Secretary-designee participated in a walking tour of several downtown Wausau businesses, including Eboni Fashions, which recently opened thanks in part to a

\$10,000 Main Street Bounceback grant, and the Mint Café, a Wausau institution that received a combined \$25,000 in pandemic relief funding through the Wisconsin Tomorrow Small Business Recovery and “We’re All In” Grants. The Grand Theater received a combined \$618,000 in overall pandemic relief grants, while the Wisconsin Area Conventions and Visitors Bureau received \$375,500 grant through the Destination Marketing Organization grant aimed to support the tourism industry.

“The Wausau area is about creating adventures for visitors with food, culture, unique shopping and memorable outdoor activities,” said Tim White, Executive Director for the Wisconsin Area Conventions and Visitors Bureau. “People in and out of state realize Wausau is their Great Nearby. The support from the Governor Evers shows a commitment to local communities that rely on showing visitors the great places to play, live and work! We are grateful!”

“In a troubling and challenging time for business, ARPA funds being provided to small businesses and not for profits has been instrumental to assist small businesses to address financial challenges and has aided entrepreneurs to build their dreams, especially in downtown Wausau,” said David Eckmann, president and CEO of the Greater Wausau Chamber of Commerce.

“We cannot thank Governor Evers and the Department of Administration enough for their support of The Grand Theater through American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) grants,” said Executive Director, Sean Wright. “The last two years have been challenging for the arts and culture/live entertainment industry and this support allowed us to reopen our doors and get back to the business of providing memorable experiences for patrons across the entire region.”

Visit BadgerBounceback.wi.gov to view pandemic-related assistance information, as well as the latest data and success stories about how COVID-relief investments are making a difference across the state. For updates on other recovery-related grant opportunities, sign up for the [Badger Bounceback update list](#).