

# BARABOO AREA CHAMBER & TOURISM

## EYEING 2020 IN HINDSIGHT

Darren Hornby  
Executive Director

The Baraboo Area Chamber of Commerce 2021 annual dinner, "Tuxedos & Takeout," was held on Thursday the 18th. It gave us the opportunity to hear about the achievements from 2020 as well as celebrate our plans for 2021. Here is a recap of the evening's year in review:

I would like to begin by thanking our sponsors. Our Partner Package sponsorships are largely what allow the Chamber of Commerce to present the events we do throughout the year to increase business for the Baraboo Area as well as stimulate tourism. Last year we had 20 Partner Package sponsors. Their logos are depicted in the backdrops of many of our board members and ambassadors as table sponsors. A huge thank you goes out to each of them. Last year's Partner Package sponsors were Baraboo State Bank, Ho-Chunk Gaming, SSM Health-St. Clare Hospital, Cell. Plus/US Cellular Agent, Terrytown Plumbing, Max FM, RE/MAX Grand, Pizza Ranch, The Grainery, WCCU, Teel, Anderson Baraboo



Manufacturing, Bank of Wisconsin Dells, MBE CPAs, International Crane Foundation, Dental Associates, Supreme Awards, Seneca Foods and Baraboo Hills Campground. It is with sincere gratitude that I thank each of you for your commitment to the Baraboo Area chamber of Commerce and your community.

A little over a year ago we were at the Baraboo Arts Center celebrating the achievements of 2019. Our momentum was starting off great. We hosted an economic forecast summit at the Chamber that many of our businesses and community partners attended. Planning was already under way for a golf outing in June and Big Top Parade meetings had begun. It looked like we had perfect vision, one might say "20-20."

As March rolled in we experienced the first tastes of the pandemic. We pumped the brakes on events and began paying close attention to what was happening in the world around

us. As we entered the shutdown we moved our offices home, as so many people did. It was during remote operation that so many of our achievements were realized.

The Chamber quickly shifted to an information resource hub. Ben's sole task became - as did mine - the research and understanding of daily changing information. As we both worked to keep our members informed (as well as nonmember businesses) it became apparent that more resources would be necessary.

During the early weeks of the shutdown the four Sauk County Chambers, along with the county, began working on three initiatives. The first was our Small Business Relief Grant. In Baraboo alone we were able to issue 97 grants totaling more than \$47,000. The grants were a joint effort between the county, the city of Baraboo the village of West Baraboo and the Chamber.

The second joint initiative was a Back to Business tool kit. This was created by the four chambers and the county to provide CDC guidelines

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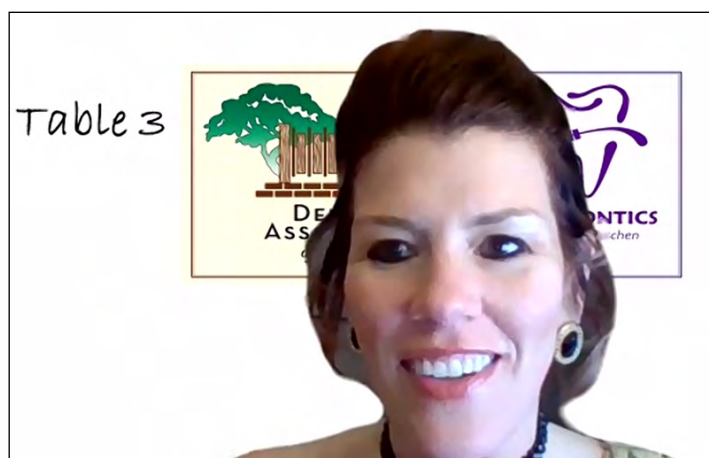


**NEW MEMBERS**  
BaraBrew Wine & Spirits  
American Container



# A ZOOM with a VIEW

Annual Meeting  
goes virtual  
with 'Tuxedos &  
Takeout'



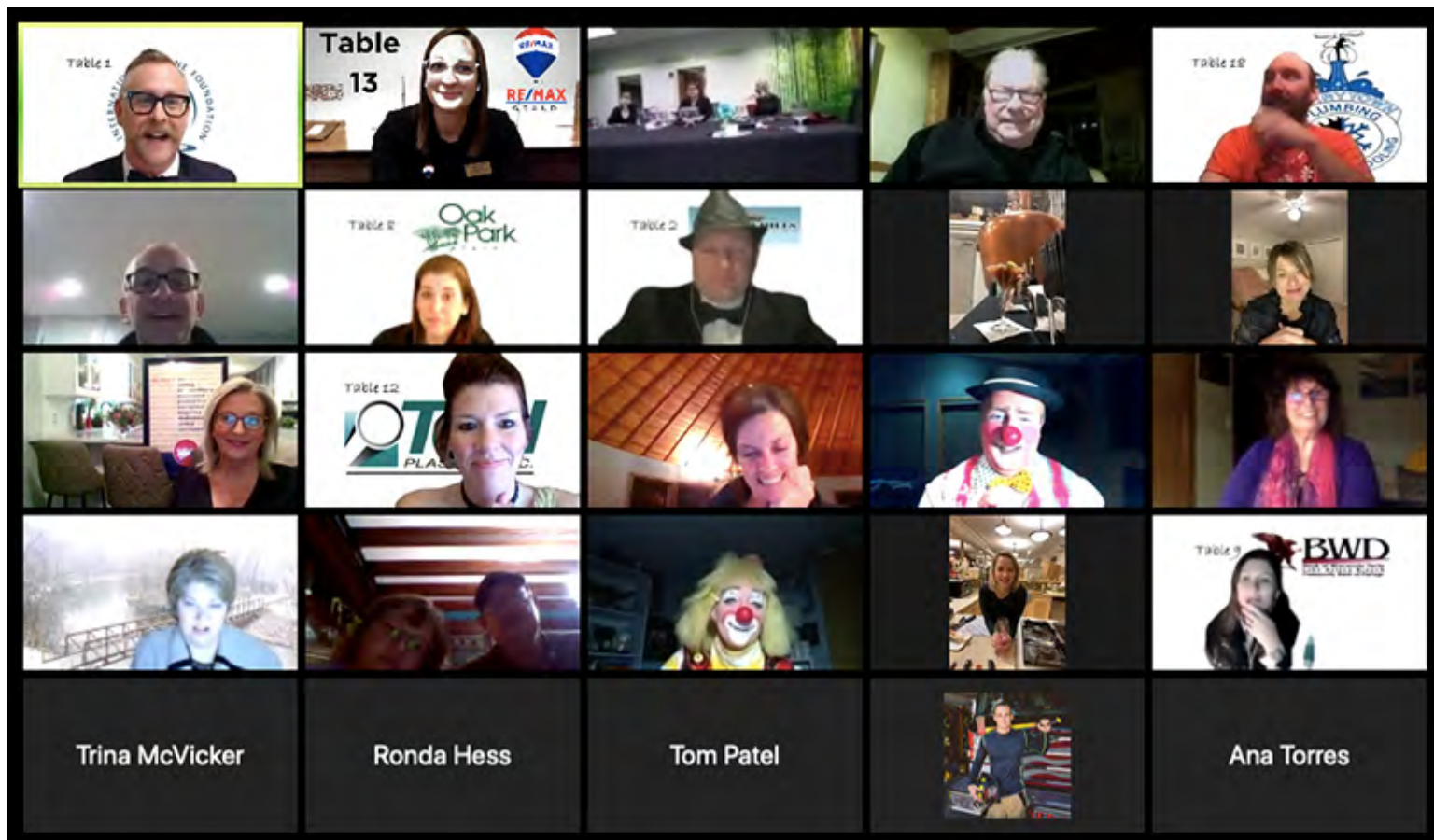
The COVID-19 pandemic prevented us from holding our Annual Meeting and Celebration this year, but we still endeavored to close the year in style with a virtual gathering we called Tuxedos & Takeout.

Rather than getting together at the Baraboo Arts Center for a dinner and awards program, we met via Zoom to hear Darren's annual update on Chamber activities and to watch as Jake Franzen officially turned over the presidency to Shawna Marquardt. Before doing that, Jake bestowed the President's Award - with delivery help from Mike Marquardt - upon Mary Dressen of Pizza Ranch, a devoted Chamber board member and volunteer.

The event also featured entertaining and educational break-out sessions on cooking, cocktail mixing, local history and the creation of Mad Libs!







About 40 Chamber members participated in the February 18 festivities. Some dressed to fit the theme ... at least from the waist up, as we learned when Darren walked away from his camera as the event ended. Scott O'Donnell and Karen DeSanto challenged participants with trivia questions about Baraboo and circus history. Bekah Stelling led a demonstration from the kitchen at Bekah Kate's. Driftless Glen staff taught how to make craft cocktails. Shawna led groups in the creation of MadLibs.



# 2020

From the front page

and helpful strategies for reopening businesses during the pandemic.

The last item that we collaborated on was our Safer in Sauk campaign. We developed a campaign that allowed businesses to identify that were following the CDC guidelines by displaying the Safer in Sauk seal in their business. This could be used by the business in their marketing. Plus we used it at the Chamber to encourage shopping local as well as bringing people in from surrounding communities to support Baraboo Area businesses.

During these early months of COVID-19, in addition to these initiatives, we were able to accomplish a great deal of slated projects. The first area of focus was our wayfinding signs. As June rolled around the new branded signs popped up everywhere.

We also launched our revamped website. The new site is more user-friendly and tourism-focused. With the launch of our website came the launch of our new Visit Baraboo! app. This app was created to integrate into the new website and provide travelers a mobile resource guide for their stay in the Baraboo Area.

With some of our main projects under way, we began looking at events: When, where and how would we achieve them? It was decided that our golf outing would be moved from June to August, while sad announcements went out that the Big Top Parade would be canceled. Given that our Golf Classic was delayed, we started our Cash Raffle early and turned our focus back to some educational opportunities. The Chamber hosted a Restart, Rebuild Series of webinars to provide businesses



with information to better serve them in the pandemic.

Midsummer, as you all know, brought difficult decisions and cutbacks at the Chamber. 2020 had proven to a difficult year for staffing for so many, and we were not excluded. With the elimination of our part-time Visitor Center staff at the beginning of the year and then our Office and Operations coordinator in July, Ben quickly coined the term "Chamber Fitness Program." With two of us left doing the work of four the job became... well, athletic.

As August approached we were prepared for the Golf Classic. Twice the work went into planning and hosting a smaller-scale event, but did it ever feel good to see so many half faces out on the course enjoying what had to be the most beautiful day of the summer.

Not only was our golf outing a huge success, an opportunity arose with the county. They reached out to the Chambers and offered a grant opportunity to each of us that could develop a new event to spur business. Hearing this news, I quickly reached out to our friends at Downtown Baraboo Inc., and Maxwell

Street Days/Made In Baraboo Market was born. While it was challenging to plan and execute an event with restrictions in a very short window, I am happy to say that only the BACC took advantage of this grant opportunity. A huge thank you to DBI for collaborating on this event that brought thousands out into their community to support commerce. I am happy to say that this new event is here to stay and is on the calendar for 2021.

With August events accomplished and the raffle well under way, it became obvious that an event that was supposed to be the Chamber's new big tourism driver would see significant changes. With 2020 supposed to be our first Oktoberfest, we began reinventing the event. Last September we hosted a Tapping of the Golden Keg Event in lieu of a large-scale festival. We capped the number of tickets to ensure proper capacity, and on opening night at the Al. Ringling Brewery a new event was born. Come this September 25th, when we will host our first full-on Oktoberfest.

As we approached the end of the year we began to promote "shop local" as well as "come to Baraboo and experience the holidays." We also shifted some focus to grant writing and a final big push of the Cash Raffle. I am happy to say that our efforts during a very challenging year were rewarded in the end by us finishing the year on track without a deficit. While the organization's budget showed a \$50,000 decrease we were able to control spending, reallocate resources, find sources of grant funding and prove that we will be around for the next 70 years being the champion of the Baraboo community, a resource for our businesses and a voice to those who are looking to experience one of the most wonderful places on Earth.



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# FEBRUARY HIGHLIGHTS

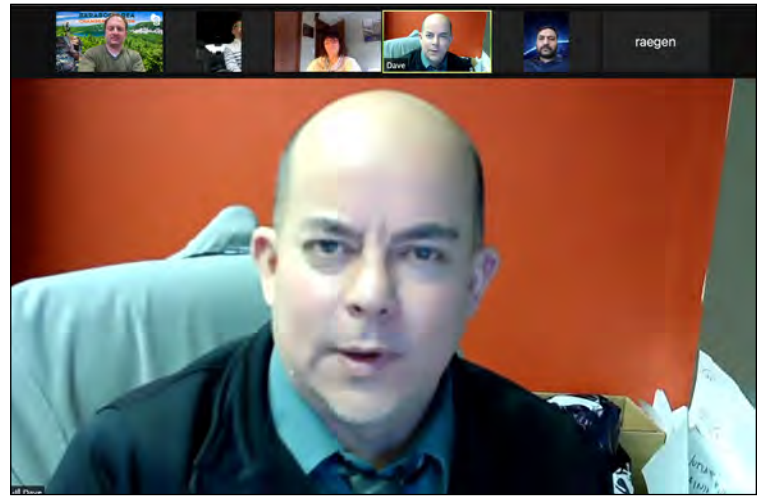


## **AMBASSADORS MEETING • FEBRUARY 15 • BARABOO BURGER COMPANY**

We had a great turnout and welcomed a familiar face as a "new" Ambassador!



## **CITY COUNCIL MEETING • FEBRUARY 23**



## **TOURISM COMMITTEE MEETING • FEBRUARY 23**

# CALENDAR OF EVENTS



## **March Board of Directors meeting**

*Monday, February 15th from noon to 1 p.m.  
Zoom conference*

Board members, please mark your calendars for the 15th if you haven't already, as President Shawna will lead our March Board of Directors meeting via Zoom.



## **March Ambassadors Club meeting**

*Monday, February 15th at 5:30 p.m.  
Thunderbird Lanes*

Join us at T-Bird Lanes as members of the Ambassadors Club brainstorm about potential Chamber members, discuss upcoming events and devise ways to keep members engaged with the organization. All while enjoying tasty food and beverages!



# E-COMMERCE TUNEUP:

FIX THESE 5 COMMON E-COMMERCE MISTAKES

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**MARCH 3, 2021**

**8:30-10:00a.m.**

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*Program Partners:*



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• **CLICK HERE TO REGISTER** •



# FAIRFIELD HILLS

• GOLF COURSE - RANGE •

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**SIGNUPWIC.COM**

**1-800-642-7837**



State of Wisconsin  
Department of Health Services  
Division of Public Health  
P-44158 (09/2019)

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

## WHAT'S WIC ALL ABOUT?

The Women, Infants and Children Nutrition Program is about creating healthy Wisconsin families. We're here for income-eligible moms who are pregnant, have an infant or a child under 5 – as well as dads, grandparents and foster parents. WIC provides:

- Help buying healthy foods.
- Education on nutrition, planning healthy meals, and shopping on a budget.
- Breastfeeding education and support.
- Referrals to doctors, dentists, and other community resources.

**Stronger families make a stronger Wisconsin!**





**MONDAY, MARCH 15TH, 2021**

# **π HAPPY PI(E) DAY! π**

In honor of Pi Day, Oak Park Place is selling cream pies to support the Alzheimer's and Dementia Alliance!

Banana Cream, Coconut cream, Chocolate Cream, Strawberry Cream, and Lemon Cream flavors Available  
\$10 Donation requested per pie

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**Schedule a tour in March for a free pie!**

**Please order your pie in advance. Pick up times 11am-1pm, 2:30-6pm or by appointment. Pickup under the front lobby vestibule**

RSVP by 3/8/21 to confirm flavors and pick-up time.  
608-355-4111, [sdavenport@oakparkplace.com](mailto:sdavenport@oakparkplace.com)



# Linen Virtual Fundraiser

**Now** thru Monday, **March 8<sup>th</sup>**

**BUY ONLINE** & support SSM Health St Clare Hospital Auxiliary

[www.genevadistributing.com/buy-now](http://www.genevadistributing.com/buy-now)

Shop and add items to Cart at [www.genevadistributing.com/buy-now](http://www.genevadistributing.com/buy-now)

Open Cart & select Fulfillment Method:

Option to select 'Ship Order' to pay for direct shipping to doorstep

Option to select 'Pick Up in Store' to pick up items at SSM Baraboo for **FREE** after March 17th

Pay with credit or debit card.

**IMPORTANT** Under Submit & Review, type **SSM Baraboo** in the 'Note to Seller' box to direct purchase to fundraiser.  
Submit order. Receipt sent instantly. Pick up instructions to follow.

Proceeds from this event benefit the SSM Health St. Clare Hospital Auxiliary to continue to support St. Clare Hospital by purchasing needed equipment for the hospital and to continue to award scholarships for students pursuing degrees in the medical field.



## Comfort & Luxury

Quilt Sets  
Sherpa Throws  
Bamboo Memory Foam Pillows  
Baby Blankets

## New Items

**new** Glow-in-the-Dark Throws  
**new** Hooded Throws  
**new** Ultra Plush Blankets  
**new** Phone Cords (iPhone, C-cord, Android)

## 1200 Series Bed Sheets

6 pc set- Extra Pillow Cases  
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Bonus Straps to Secure Fitted Sheet

\*Online prices already include sales tax