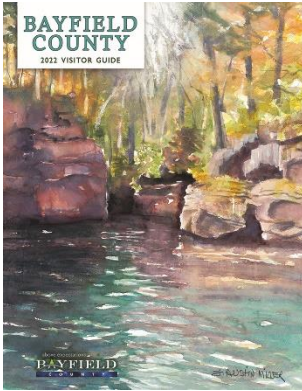


# TOURISM DEPARTMENT-23



*2022 Visitor Guide Cover  
Featuring Local Artist  
France Austin Miller*



*Kids Power Wheels Race  
At the Fair*

## BUDGET SUMMARY AND HIGHLIGHTS:

The proposed 2023 budget for the Tourism Department, including the fair is \$427,419, up 5.4% from 2022. Revenues are estimated at \$165,350. The proposed levy is \$262,069 an 8.5% increase.

## FUNCTION:

- Strengthen the economic well-being of the County by actively promoting responsible year-round tourism
- Facilitate communication amongst tourism entities both within the county and statewide
- Plan, coordinate and carry out the Bayfield County Fair

## MAIN RESPONSIBILITIES:

### MARKETING

Increase visitor expenditures in Bayfield County and continue to grow a strong and healthy, year-round tourism economy through development of a brand strategy, media relations, travel publications, website, social media and response to direct inquiries. This department also supports and encourages sustainable economic tourism development through regional partnerships within the industry and coordinates travel writer visits to the area. Staff includes a .6 FTE assistant.

### FAIR

Plan and coordinate all aspects of the Bayfield County Fair including entertainment, exhibitors, judges, volunteers, gate workers, parking, sponsors, vendors and other details. Prepare and submit reports to the State Fair Coordinator per state statute. Carry out Capital Improvement plans for the fairgrounds. Staff includes a .62 FTE Fair Coordinator and seasonal maintenance staff. Coordinate use and rental of fairgrounds for events and Winter Storage. Participate in District meetings of the WI Association of Fairs (WAF) and attend the annual WAF Convention.

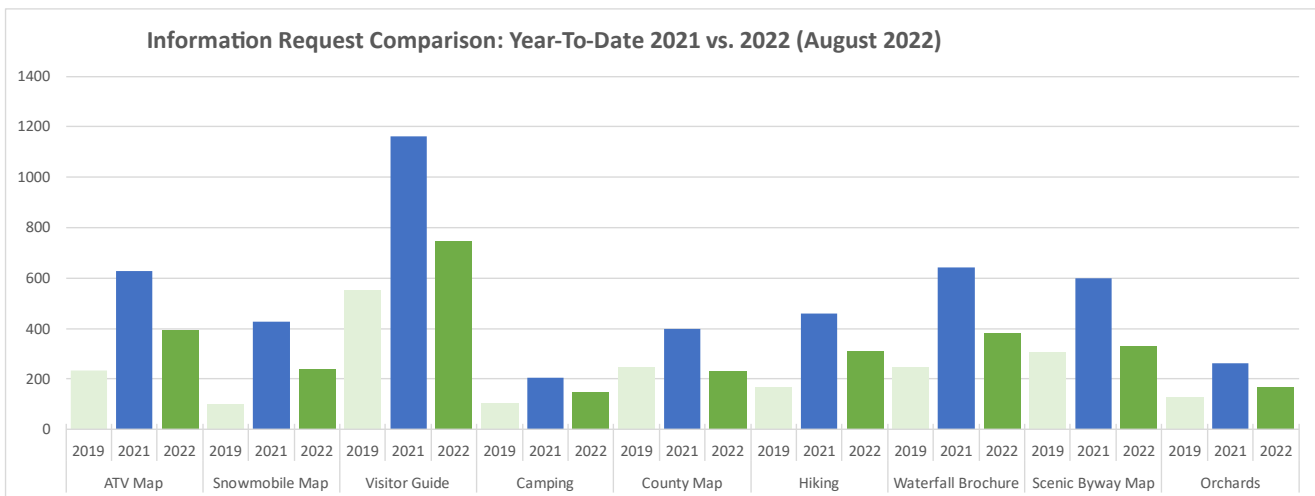
# 2022 ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

## Marketing

- Maintained an active Facebook Page with 7,300 “Follows” (6% increase over last year)
- Continued to partner with Sawyer, Washburn and Burnett Counties to promote the Namekagon River (see [www.namekagonriver.org](http://www.namekagonriver.org) and [Namekagon River Facebook page](#))
- Produced a 40-page Visitor & Recreation Guide; distributed 40,000 copies to the surrounding area as well as to over 300 locations in Minnesota and Wisconsin; self-supporting through advertising sales
- Produced and distributed 30,000 copies of an updated ATV/UTV Trail Map; self-supporting through advertising
- Continued to partner with Ashland County Tourism on various projects/promotions including:
  - 2-county recreation map on tear-off pads for use by area information centers when giving directions
  - 2-county bike map
  - 4-county waterfall brochure
- Participated in monthly meetings of the NW ITBEC Tourism Committee for regional tourism promotion
- Worked with the Viking Cruise Ship staff on excursion planning
- Represented our area along with the Wisconsin Department of Tourism at the IPW international travel conference with 4,800 attendees from around the world
- Interviewed multiple times by regional media for tourism-related topics
- Contributed photos and editorial for numerous articles and media requests; arranged travel writer visits/planned itineraries
- Engaged with federal partners and tourism professionals on a number of issues including accessibility by people with mobility challenges to recreational resources and visitor amenities
- Worked with Scenic Byway Council to promote the WI Lake Superior National Scenic Byway and applied for \$1.4 million grant through the Federal Highway Administration for projects along the Byway
- Started utilizing a new platform called Shrpa to promote half day and full day itineraries in Bayfield County
- Updated the Tourism department and visitor pages on the county website ([www.travelbayfieldcounty.com](http://www.travelbayfieldcounty.com)); also updated Bayfield County Tourism information on other websites including [www.travelwisconsin.com](http://www.travelwisconsin.com).
- Met regularly with the WI Dept. of Tourism Regional Tourism Specialist and the Department’s Marketing team
- Met with legislators and staff of various state and federal agencies to discuss tourism-related issues
- Assisted other departments with website issues/procedures and ordering business cards

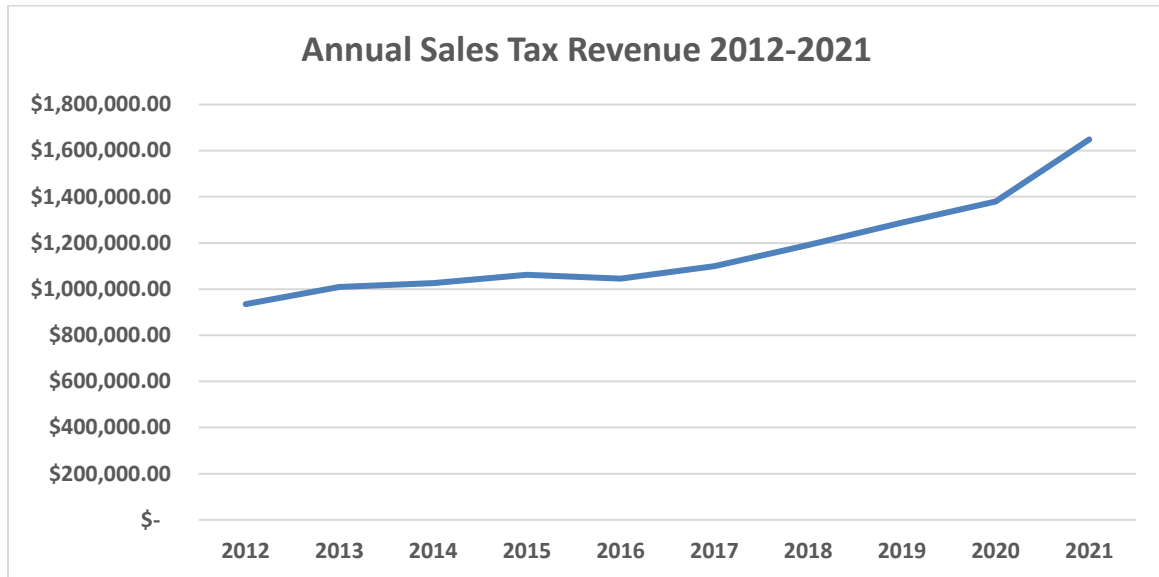
## Information Requests

2022 requests for visitor information are slightly down from 2021, but still higher than pre-pandemic numbers.



## Sales Tax

Sales tax YTD in 2022 is up 8% over the previous year, which was a record year. The overall trend continues, and sales tax revenues are over \$1 million for the 9<sup>th</sup> year in a row.



## Fair

- Secured volunteers, superintendents, judges, entertainment, vendors, advertising, and temporary staff needed to put on the 2022 Bayfield County Fair, which was a great success
- Hosted winter storage items for a total of \$12,157 in revenue
- Submitted content for the 4H newsletter periodically throughout the year
- Communicated with fairgoers via the Bayfield County Fair Facebook page (2,751 “Likes” – a 10% increase over last year at this time) and Instagram

## Additional

- Currently serve as President of the Friends of the Center Alliance, Ltd (FOCAL), member of the Board of Directors of the Northern Great Lakes Visitor Center (NGLVC), and a member of the Wisconsin Lake Superior Scenic Byway Council

## 2023 GOALS:

- Increase annual Sales Tax Revenue by 5%
- Provide leadership and guidance to Bayfield County’s tourism industry
- Develop a positive image of the tourism industry and highlight the industry’s impact on the local economy and quality of life
- Adapt marketing plan to optimize tourism trends and opportunities
- Increase attendance at the Bayfield County Fair
- Increase use of the facilities at the fairgrounds by groups throughout the summer