



## **Abstract**

The goal of this marketing plan is to outline the strategies, tactics, and actions that will make the lodging occupancy rate goals outlined in the Tourism Marketing Plan a reality in the year 2013.

Tourism will increase awareness of Onalaska as a worthy tourism destination through a redesigned website, advertising, and participation in expos.

Tourism will become a credible source for information for meeting planners as well as a liaison between planners and area lodging facilities and meeting and convention venues through a strong web presence and the identifying of and building relationships with associations.

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## *Summary and Introduction*

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The City of Onalaska Tourism Marketing Plan will detail the goals of the Center, an analysis of the market including tourism trends and Onalaska's target markets, key tasks aimed at reaching those markets, and how success will be measured.

## *Marketing Objectives*

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The overall objective of the City of Onalaska Tourism Center is to increase public awareness of Onalaska as a worthy tourism destination and to increase visitor traffic. The City of Onalaska has 10 hotels, 40 restaurants, and approximately 70 retail and service merchants that benefit from tourism. The outlook for 2013 is not anticipated to be strong. The LACVB has reported a slump in conventions and meetings for 2013 due to the economic downturn in 2008 and 2009 as event planners often plan four and five years out. The Tourism goal therefore is to hold steady the 2012 lodging occupancy rate or reach the 2013 projected occupancy, whichever number is higher. The 2013 projected occupancy rates are based on a five year weighted moving average, analyzing the historical occupancy rates.

### **2013 Lodging Occupancy Goal**

**Maintain 2012 numbers or the 2013 predictive number, whichever proves highest. Starting 6 months into the year giving new actions time to have an effect.**

**July – 76.03%**

**August – 75.49%**

**September – 72.83%**

**October – 77.06%**

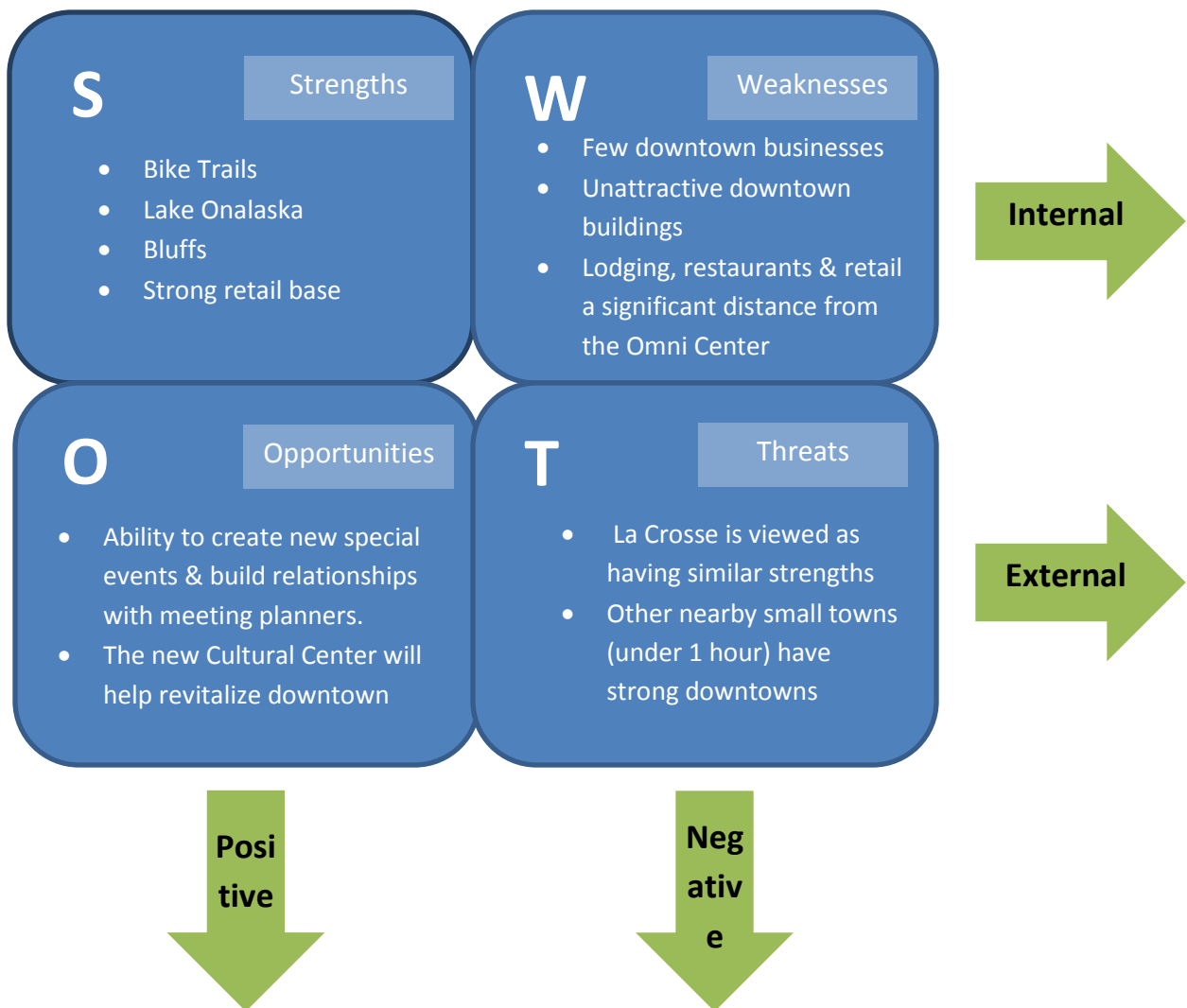
**November – 49.94%**

**December – 43.99%**

- Bring ten additional events to Onalaska. Present the OmniCenter with 5 potential events and expo ideas, and bring in 5 conventions or meetings to Onalaska.
- Maximize limited advertising dollars by leveraging through the Wisconsin Best Bets program, as well as partnering with other tourism groups in participating in expos throughout the tri-state area.
- Grow the credibility of Onalaska as a tourism choice through the revamping of the discoveronalaska.com website and the utilization of visitor testimonials.
- Increase the online presence of Onalaska Tourism as a meeting planner servicer through a strong presence on cvent.com and by strengthening the website portion on meeting planners.
- Increase support of lodging facilities through the creation of one package per season, increasing the transfer rate from the Tourism website to lodging websites, and collecting visitor information in a tourism survey whose findings will be shared with the lodging facilities.
- Increase Onalaska's visibility through social media by expanding visibility on YouTube, Flickr, Pinterest, Google +, Twitter and Facebook.

## Situation Analysis

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## Trends

- More than 10 years after 9/11 and people are still taking shorter trips, closer to home. Rising gasoline prices may be affecting this trend.
- Gen X travelers are settling into career and family and typically making short-haul trips into neighboring states. They do not spend as much money or travel as far, as Baby Boomers.
- As Boomers turn 60 they are gaining more leisure time for travel.

- Wellness Travel is a growing U.S. trend. Spas and outdoor recreation are important aspects of this trend.
- More and more travelers are turning to the internet for information on travel destinations.
- Active grandparents traveling with their grandchildren are a growing national trend.

### **Target Market**

Demographics: Female, employed, Gen X and Boomer age groups.

Psychographics: Environmentally conscious, healthy living is important.

Residence: Chicago, Madison, Milwaukee and the Twin Cities (overnight market). Onalaska is located conveniently on Interstate 90 making travel easy. Finding overnight accommodations is very easy as many hotels are viewable from the interstate. Chippewa Valley, Winona, Sparta, Tomah, Northern Iowa and Rochester (day trip market).

Social Group: Families with children, Boomers traveling with or without grandchildren.

Activities: Shopping and silent sports are both strong activities to draw visitors to Onalaska. Events are strong generators of day trips. The Cultural Center will be a strong draw for Boomers as well as families traveling with children. Visitors travel by automobile arriving either through the interstate or the Great River Road.

### **Competition Analysis**

La Crosse is our main competitor for tourism dollars. La Crosse offers a historic downtown, attractive riverfront and bluff parks. La Crosse also boasts an event center that is centrally located to restaurants, hotels, and activities. We differentiate from La Crosse as an affordable destination, ease of access from the interstate, the largest shopping district in a 9 county region, the natural beauty of Lake Onalaska and the confluence of two state bike trails.

It is important to consider La Crosse as a complimentary community to our own. Visitors who stay, shop, and dine in Onalaska will be able to enhance their visit to the Coulee Region by the experiences available in La Crosse.





## Key Tasks

### Meeting Planners

Onalaska Tourism will be increasing efforts to build relationships with meeting planners. Research has shown that associations are much more likely to look for meeting space than corporate meeting planners. 50 associations that meet in the Midwest on at least an annual or bi-annual basis will be discovered. Of those the 25 strongest possibilities will be discerned and the Tourism office will work to build relationships with these leads.

The online presence of Onalaska Tourism as a meeting planner servicer will be increased through a strong page on cvent.com as well as strengthening the redesigned website portion on meeting planners. The Tourism office will offer services similar to those offered by CVBs; within the scope of staffing and budget capabilities.

## **Events**

Events will be researched that would fit well with the Onalaska demographic. Ease of implementation, large appeal, and suitability for the OmniCenter or other area venue will be determining aspects. Events will then be presented to the OmniCenter or other outside groups for possible implementation.

## **Expos**

Marketing efforts for 2013 will include the attendance at five expos throughout Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Iowa. Dollars will be leveraged by partnering with non-profit organizations, the LACVB, and other nearby municipalities. The expos will be an additional avenue to get the Onalaska Visitor's Guide into the hands of potential visitors.

Two giveaways will be created to encourage the collection of lead information from expo attendees. The leads will be followed up through a direct mailing and inclusion in an e-newsletter to be built through Constant Contact webmail software.

## **Visitor Guide**

The Onalaska Visitor Guide will be created to promote the region. The partnership with Pilch & Barnett has yielded a mailing list of over 4,500 potential visitors each year. The Visitor Guide will also be placed at statewide visitors centers. The guide will be a break-even endeavor with advertising costs aimed at covering printing costs.

A postcard will be created to send as a follow up to those who are mailed a visitor guide three to four weeks after they have received the magazine.

## **Website**

It is imperative that Onalaska has a usable, attractive, website that functions well with organic searches and smart phone applications. The website must be updatable with a content management system which allows ease of use and complete accessibility by an in-house webmaster.

The new site map must be built by analyzing current searches/page views to determine what visitors want from the website. We will work in conjunction with a web designer to build a site map that caters to these viewing patterns as well as to highlight content that we believe would be of interest if it was more accessible.

The website will go further in supporting Onalaska lodging. The site will allow for the tracking of outbound links to lodging facilities and for the lodging facilities to easily update their own discounts and packages.

## **Social Media**

We will begin to utilize staff to photograph events as well as the natural beauty of Onalaska. The photographs will aid in keeping the new website fresh and timely, as well as telling the story of Onalaska visually within social media.

We will build a You Tube channel to link to our website that will highlight videos uploaded by visitors; allowing those who have enjoyed our area to be our advocates. A Pinterest page will be created to showcase Onalaska. Maintaining our tag-line, photos can be placed in categories of On the Bluffs, On the Trails, and On the Water. The Onalaska Facebook page will continue to grow through consistent and engaging posts. Onalaska's online exposure will also be enhanced through the utilization of Flickr, Twitter, and Google +.

A new Facebook page will be created to follow the construction of the Cultural Center. The page will help engage the Onalaska community in the project and build excitement for its completion.

## **Packages**

Onalaska Tourism will work with lodging and community partners to build seasonal packages. One per season will be promoted on the website and through social media.

## **Survey**

Visitor information will be collected throughout all four quarters. Lodging facilities will be asked to gain 15 completed surveys from their clientele per quarter. Three to four events per quarter will also be attended to solicit visitors to complete the survey. The survey information will be statistically analyzed for the year, by the quarter, and with the capability of analyzing by hotel and event venue. The information garnered will be shared with the lodging facilities.

## **Cultural Center**

The primary information piece for the cultural center is the organization brochure, which details the benefits of visiting the Cultural Center, museum information, and group tours information. This will be a visitor focused brochure which must be printed inexpensively, yet in full-color. These will be given to Wisconsin and local visitor centers, libraries, and other places where brochures can be placed without cost within a two to three hour driving radius. The brochure will direct potential visitors to visit the [discoveronalaska.com](http://discoveronalaska.com) website to peruse additional material.

It will be important to create a separate branding strategy for the new Cultural Center. Logo - color - font - heading choices. A visit to MVAC may help in making color and design choices based on artifacts that will be exhibited at the Center. These standards must be maintained on all Cultural Center letterhead, advertising, promotional materials, etc.

Educational curriculum will be created to combine the archeological and natural aspects of the region which will be showcased at the Cultural Center. Cooperation with MVAC and local teachers to help build programs that best enhance local educators' curriculum will aid in developing partnerships with educators that can grow into yearly visits from that educator's class and help sustain the Center's programming.

## **Advertising**

Ads will be created within the Tourism office as opportunities arise to reach our target markets, as well as expected yearly advertising (ex. Oktoberfest race publication, Miss Onalaska publication). Following is the online, TV, direct mail, print ads, and other costs of advertising in the 2013 budget from Pilch & Barnet.



## Tracking

Website analytics will aid in the tracking of visitor growth on the website as well as social media outlets. The number of leads from Pilch & Barnet will be counted as well as the number of Visitor Guides given away at expos to determine growth in Visitor Guide exposure. Leads from expo participants will also be counted. The growth rate of the Tourism e-newsletter will be tracked from infancy. The e-newsletter will also be tracked by analytics such as the open rate, click-through rate, and social media sharing capabilities.

## Evaluation

In combination with tracking methods, reaching the lodging occupancy goals will aid in evaluating if we have reached our marketing goal of increasing visitor traffic to Onalaska and promoting the city as a viable tourist destination.

## Onalaska 2013 Budget

	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October
300.00			\$2,800.00			\$2,800.00			\$2,800.00	
			\$2,500.00		\$2,500.00			\$2,500.00		
150.00		\$150.00	\$150.00	\$1,750.00	\$150.00	\$1,750.00	\$150.00	\$150.00	\$1,750.00	\$150.00
100.00		\$100.00	\$100.00	\$100.00	\$100.00	\$100.00	\$100.00	\$100.00	\$100.00	\$100.00
				\$1,500.00	\$1,500.00	\$1,500.00		\$1,500.00	\$1,750.00	\$1,750.00
				\$2,000.00	\$2,000.00	\$2,000.00		\$2,000.00	\$2,000.00	\$2,000.00
					\$4,500.00			\$4,500.00		
			\$9,000.00	\$2,500.00						
				\$450.00		\$450.00		\$450.00		
300.00			\$3,000.00					\$1,500.00		
500.00										
500.00										
350.00	\$250.00	\$17,550.00	\$8,450.00	\$10,750.00	\$8,750.00	\$250.00	\$12,700.00	\$8,550.00	\$4,000.00	\$4,000.00

