

NEWS RELEASE

June 1, 2018

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Walworth County Visitors Bureau Honors Local Businesses

Walworth County, WI (June 1, 2018) – The Walworth County Visitors Bureau honored and recognized local businesses on May 10, at the organization’s Annual Meeting & Dinner, held this year at The Grand Geneva Resort & Spa in Lake Geneva. Always held during National Travel & Tourism Week, the Annual Meeting & Dinner provides the Walworth County Visitors Bureau the opportunity to report the annual Wisconsin and Walworth County tourism statistics of the previous year to the attending area businesses and organizations, as well as offering a networking opportunity to attendees.

The Walworth County Visitors Bureau also took time at the event to recognize local businesses and individuals with three awards: the Member of the Year Award, the Friend of Tourism Award, and the Heart of Hospitality Award. Kathy Seeberg, Executive Director of the Walworth County Visitors Bureau, and Nancy Douglass, WLKG Lake 961 and Walworth County Visitors Bureau Board of Directors’ President, presented the awards.

The Member of the Year Award is given to a business that demonstrates dedication to the Walworth County Visitors Bureau through participation, contributions, and volunteerism. East Troy Electric Railroad was chosen for Member of the Year for their support and participation in the activities of the Walworth County Visitors Bureau. East Troy Electric Railroad participated in the Illinois Association of Park Districts Conference as one of our partners and also participated in the Opening Reception of the Circle Wisconsin’s Midwest Marketplace with a table. They annually participate in the Brochure Distribution Program and provide event information in a timely manner without being asked. East Troy Electric Railroad is active in the Group Services program and are currently working with our Group Sales Manager on creating group tour itineraries for Christmas. They donate every time they are asked for things, advertise in the annual Travel Guide, and attend most, if not all, of the events the Walworth County Visitors Bureau hosts. What’s most impressive is that all of this is being done as a non-profit and run by volunteers. The award was accepted by Steve Thomas, Officer of East Troy Electric Railroad and himself a volunteer.

The Friend of Tourism Award is given to an individual or organization who shows dedication to the Walworth County Visitors Bureau through support and promotion of tourism in Walworth County.

Nancy Waspi with Santa Cause was chosen for the award. Nancy's nomination read: "As a volunteer for the past 2 years supporting Santa Causes in Williams Bay, I would like to nominate Nancy Waspi for the Friend of Tourism Award. Nancy has worked tirelessly developing this wonderful program to raise funds for Walworth County charities. She has single handedly brought together the charities, local businesses, significant donors, the village support, plus all the community volunteers to decorate Williams Bay. Our small community is now a place to look forward to visiting between Thanksgiving and New Year to see the lights, decorations in the village or enjoy a winter Santa Cruise on Lake Geneva viewing the shore line animated decorations plus Santa at the North Pole. While selling raffle tickets to raise money for the charities, I met families from Illinois, Iowa and Minnesota that now visit Williams Bay to see the decorations, donate and enjoy the Santa Cruise. The cruise is so unique and enjoyable, especially for the children, that I now use it as our family gathering between the holidays. Besides being a great fundraiser for our local charities, Santa Cause has brought new people to our businesses, plus added so much joy during this Holiday Season. Nancy Waspi is the inspiration, coordinator and manager that made all this Winter Wonderland possible for our little village, which is now the envy of the surrounding communities during the holiday season."

The final award, Heart of Hospitality Award, is very special to the Walworth County Visitors Bureau. The award was created three years ago to recognize individuals who are considered a foundation of their business or organization, working tirelessly behind the scenes to better tourism in Walworth County. Nominees were: Todd Griffin, Rooms Manager, Lake Lawn Resort; Beth Gruber, Reservationist, Lake Geneva Cruise Line; Sandi McGough, Reservationist, Lazy Cloud Inn; Shannon McGuire, Performer/Box Office Manager/Janitor/Popcorn Maker, Tristan Crist Magic Theatre; Juan Ramirez, Rooms Division Manager, The Cove of Lake Geneva; and KariJo Wysocki, Group Rooms Coordinator, The Ridge Hotel. It was a difficult decision, as all the nominees deserve this recognition for their dedication and commitment in then being recognized by their employer as an asset to the company and to tourism in Walworth County. The winner of the Heart of Hospitality Award was Beth Gruber, Reservationist with the Lake Geneva Cruise Line. Beth's nomination read: "It is with great enthusiasm that I nominate Beth Gruber for the 2018 Heart of Tourism Award. Beth has worked for Lake Geneva Cruise Line for just over six years as a member of our office staff. Beth works in the office during our tour season, which is now almost a year round position with our Santa Cruises. Her duties primarily involve answering phone calls from customers but what she does and the impact she has goes far beyond that. Beth has the most positive, polite and professional manner when dealing with the public. Her tone of voice and overall demeanor provide the customer with assurance that they are getting the most accurate and reliable information and best customer service possible. Even after working several long stressful days in a row, Beth always remains calm and courteous and never loses her cool with the never ending questions that bombard her every day. She treats every customer as if they are the most important person in the world. In addition to being our primary reservationist Beth eagerly takes on any extra duties and responsibilities that are asked of her. She is the primary contact at our office for communicating with all the local hotels and resorts to make sure they have our tour schedule every week. She is conscientious and thorough in her work and can be relied on to do any task to perfection. She is always on top of every need that arises and typically catches things before they ever become an issue. She has great ideas and offers valuable input on any decisions that need to be made. Beth is simply indispensable to the operation of our office. Beth has a wonderful sense of humor, is sensitive to the needs of others and treats every person whether they are a fellow employee or a customer with utmost kindness. She is

loved and valued very highly by every person at Lake Geneva Cruise Line. I can't think of a more deserving person to receive this award. Beth exemplifies customer service and basic human kindness."

The Walworth County Visitors Bureau also recognized David Desimone with Black Point Estate & Gardens. David is an outgoing Board member who has completed his term and is not running for re-election. We thank him for his dedication and commitment to the Walworth County Visitors Bureau, being presented with a gift as well.

About Walworth County Visitors Bureau

Located in Delavan, WI, the Walworth County Visitors Bureau is a non-profit 501(c)(6) organization dedicated to promoting tourism throughout the Lake Geneva area and beyond. With more than 300 members and growing, the Walworth County Visitors Bureau is the official destination marketing organization for Walworth County. The goal of the organization is to market Walworth County as the destination of choice for group and leisure travel, thereby increasing the economic impact of tourism. The Walworth County Visitors Bureau is a Certified Destination Marketing Organization, as declared by the Wisconsin Association of Convention and Visitors Bureaus. The Bureau's Travel Information Center is open seven days a week from 8:30am to 4:30pm. For additional information call 262-728-6000 or go to www.VisitWalworthCounty.com.

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