



Ashland Area Chamber of Commerce

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www.visitashland.com

Come and join us!

Enclosed please find a membership packet for 2013. The cooperative support of our members has made our past success possible. Investing in the Ashland Area Chamber of Commerce means you understand the importance of supporting an organization that works solely to make your business more profitable both for you and your community.

What does the Ashland Area Chamber of Commerce do?

We sell Ashland... in so many ways... through multiple marketing promotions, events, and programs, we target a diverse market segment of travelers, and niche sports enthusiasts.

In 2011 we underwent a strategic planning session in order to **create a three year marketing plan.**

Overall consensus was the Ashland brand "Lake Superior's Hometown" is an appropriate and effective brand identity. The brand's emphasis on our greatest tourism asset (proximity to Lake Superior), and the focus on community ("Hometown"), conveys the central features of Ashland's tourism appeal. We also highlighted some of our local flavors such as the very sustainable crisp, clean, clear, cool Artesian Wells in Ashland. "Open 24/7 - 365 days a year for the traveler's convenience". How many places offer a hometown market with over 40 different flavors of brats or a hometown Chocolate Shoppe, or lovely public art in various locations all over town offering an entire day of history in all types of weather? South Shore brewery was pitched and picked up in several media's for a local favorite and the Plaza Park featuring an underground walkway to the lake is a great way to promote the beautiful scenic waterfront trail.... A real hit with travelers AND residents alike. And last but never least.. a town where people say hi and wave and just plain talk to strangers. That is the brand. That is the Hometown message of warmth and a welcome, friendly, atmosphere.

We have created several pieces to highlight and promote both downtown events and the evolving retail thrift marketing. Our latest piece is headlined, "Ready for some Retail Thrift Therapy", and is placed in the Northern Great Lakes Visitor Center and hotel properties throughout the Ashland area.

In addition, we have created a new economic development piece that is funky and cool. A smaller version of a two-pocket folder and two pieced designed jointly with the City of Ashland planning department and some insight from Ashland Area Development Corporation highlighting the diverse business types that make up Ashland's economic inventory. We are fortunate to NOT have our eggs in one basket, but several from education to manufacturing to retail & tourism and construction with many many in between. This piece offers a sampling of the services Ashland has to offer. A sample of business categories and housing. Our website also has a video that was created to showcase Ashland and shows the beauty of Ashland even in the winter months. The video highlights our independent business climate, excellent medical facilities, great schools, and a quality of life that is second to none.

Special Events is clearly a high priority for the Ashland Area Chamber of Commerce. We know that events not only draw overnight rooms, they also create awareness of the area that would be hard-pressed to purchase media that could cover such a broad base of travelers.

Participants in our events tell us that they are so glad they were able to see our beautiful area and would come back at another time to vacation. Our newest event in 2012 was the Chick-uamegon Women's 5k/10k and was a huge success. This year during the Bay Days festival we introduced a children's triathlon, "The Little Minnow" which drew more than 60 children from age 5 to 11. The triathlon incorporated swim, bicycle, and running disciplines and it was a super fun event to watch and cheer the kids on from start to finish!

Other new promotions in 2013 include the execution of an awarded Joint Effort Marketing (JEM) Grant from the Wisconsin Department of Tourism for a Mural Tour promotion in Ashland County, from Butternut to Madeline Island. The promotion will run in the fall and target mid-week traffic and empty nesters and include the Muralfest and Car Show in September. "Follow the Mural Brick Road is a \$20,000.00 promotion that highlights the over 20 Historic Murals of Ashland County. The promotion includes a fun treasure hunt that participants can win one of three \$1,000.00 drawings. The promotion includes the www.muralbrickroad.com website and marketing through print, online, television, radio, and direct mail advertising. Follow the Mural Brick road starts September 1st and runs through November 30th.

The Ashland Area Chamber of Commerce offers so much to our members. Please review the many chamber benefits listed below. The Ashland Area Chamber of Commerce is a full-time, fully staffed chamber. The Board of Directors are dedicated to keeping you informed on programs and issues that are important to your business, community, and region.

The Ashland Area Chamber of Commerce Mission Statement:
"We Sell Ashland"

The Ashland Area Chamber of Commerce exists to identify, highlight and promote Ashland and the surrounding area. We accomplish this through:

Sponsoring special events and promotions designed to emphasize the diverse recreational, educational and tourism opportunities in our area.

Supporting a solid diversified economic base-one that ensures a healthy business climate and a prosperous, progressive community.

Collaborating with public and private sectors aimed at improving the quality of life in the Ashland Area.

Ashland Area Chamber of Commerce Benefits

Business After Hours

A great way to showcase your business for any reason. Use this venue as a way to thank the business community, introduce new management, or promote a new business. The Ashland Chamber of Commerce is a partner with you in this event to create awareness of your business to our membership.

Business Retention and Expansion

The Ashland Area Chamber of Commerce is committed to growing the Ashland economy and consistently looks for programs that will help grow and sustain our economic condition. The Ashland Chamber of Commerce focuses on promoting the Ashland Area in the areas of marketing, financial opportunities & expansion of our business community. The Chamber Revolving Loan Fund differs from current programs available through the Ashland Area Development Corporation. Loans are available from \$5,000-\$15,000 and considers job quality equal to job creation meaning an independent business owners equates to one job created.

Membership Benefits Continued

Mailing Lists

Our membership list is available **ONLY to members** at no cost. (Mailing Labels available at a charge of \$15.00)

Chamber Dollars

Service, Professional, Retail, Food, Beverage, Lodging.... It doesn't matter..

The Ashland Area Chamber of Commerce distributes up to \$45,000.00 a year in Chamber Dollars. Chamber Dollars are spent at member businesses and redeemable for full value from the Chamber. This is an excellent way to **promote local spending**. Your name will appear on the Gift Certificate List, which is enclosed with each Chamber Dollar sale. ***Chamber Dollars Promote local spending!!***

Monthly Newsletter

This monthly publication highlights topics most pertinent to our Chamber and its members. The newsletter is sent via email and snail mail. A great place to send in **FREE** news tidbits about your business under "Business News".

Website Listing

As a membership benefit, all members receive a **FREE** listing and hyperlink on the Ashland Area Chamber of Commerce Web Site. In 2012 we launched our new website and are excited for some of the bells and whistles we have to offer. With this new site you have the opportunity to have up to 4 photos on your page and to have a map available to your business through Google maps or MapQuest. Websites, facebook accounts and e-mail addresses are highlighted on the web, allowing visitors to link directly to your site. We will also highlight the business of the week on our website and our facebook page in conjunction with the radio promotion. **Our new website is another great way to promote our area and another excellent efficient way to promote your business.** www.visitashland.com

Newsletter Advertising Opportunities

For only \$75.00 and 470 copies, a Chamber member can place an advertising insert in our monthly newsletter. This is a great economical way to reach potential customers. (some restrictions apply)

Bulk Mailing Permit

Direct mail to potential customers is one of the best forms of advertising. The Chamber has a bulk mailing permit, which is available to our members for use **FREE** on large mailings of 200 or more. Using the permit can save up to .18 per piece.

Display your Brochures

Promote your business by displaying your brochures in our reception area racks.

The Chamber Map

City of Ashland maps are available at the office free of charge to Members.

Visitors Guide

Ashland County Visitor Guides are available free of charge. Ask about advertising opportunities in the visitor guide. 35,000 copies are printed and the guide is the main fulfillment piece for the Ashland County Marketing campaign.

The Experience

Members receive a **FREE** listing & description in the area Shopping & Dining Guide, which is distributed throughout the community, in locations such as the Hospital & Clinics, as well as to the many visitors who travel to our area. Another **FREE** advertising opportunity for your business.

Business Directory

The Chamber Business Directory lists **all** Chamber Member Businesses with a description. Another **FREE** advertising opportunity.

Membership Benefits Continued

Wedding Planner Brochure

A brochure listing Chamber Member Businesses to help couples make plans for their wedding. This is also a great piece to promote larger meetings spaces and businesses that cater food and beverage.

Business Referral System

Chamber staff gives referrals to chamber business in response to the thousands of telephone, personal, and written inquiries each year.

Business Recruitment Tours

We offer personal tours for business recruitment. Whether a new physician or C.E.O. of a company, we will tour the potential candidate through the area and familiarize them to our community with excitement and professionalism.

Chamber Annual Dinner and Person of the Year

The annual event highlights the past year's accomplishments and the upcoming year's priorities of the Chamber. The event also recognizes the Person of the Year. This person is nominated and voted on by the Chamber Members.

Ashland County Photo Library

The Ashland Area Chamber of Commerce created a photo library for Ashland County. Digital photos are available **FREE** of charge to any Chamber Member.

Weekly Business Spotlight – “Business of the Week”

A 30-second commercial spot is created by Heartland Communications and played throughout the week. Businesses are drawn from our pool of members. This is an excellent way of creating awareness for your business and is heard throughout the region... An excellent value of over \$150.00 for **FREE**. The Ashland Chamber partners with Heartland Communications to feature 52 businesses throughout the year.

Ribbon Cuttings/Grand Openings/Ambassadors

New and existing businesses receive ribbon cutting photo opportunities and community wide exposure for grand openings, groundbreaking ceremonies or special anniversaries.

Ambassadors get a chance to see new businesses. Businesses get the chance to receive great **FREE** publicity for new things happening in their business.

Relocation Packets

Relocate packets include specific information about the community and members.

Ashland County Affiliation

The Ashland Area Chamber of Commerce is the administrator for the Ashland County Tourism Budget. travelashlandcounty.com is the website provided by the county and accessed by thousands of interested persons. You can now order a free copy of the very popular *Ashland County Sportsman's Map* at www.travelashlandcounty.com OR www.visitashland.com

Northwest Regional ITBEC

The Ashland Area Chamber of Commerce continues to partner with the Northwest Region to promote tourism and economic development opportunities within our region. Programs include several Discover Wisconsin Television productions, Seasonal Planners, Buy Local Buy Wisconsin and Winter Trails brochure. Check out the downtowns as destinations at www.northwestwisconsin.com.

Membership Benefits Continued

Harbor Towns

Wisconsin Harbor Towns Association is a partnership of 18 Wisconsin Great Lakes Harbor Communities, formed to enhance their image and develop economic impact by promoting tourism through water based, land and cruise ship recreation to the Wisconsin Harbor Towns. Ashland has a two page spread in the Harbor Towns Guide which is distributed throughout the State of Wisconsin. Harbor Towns was recently awarded the prestigious State of Wisconsin, Wisconsin Trailblazers award in the "Outstanding Partnership Initiative" Category. Check out the website at www.wisconsinharbortowns.org.

CO-OP Advertising

You are entitled to participate in the State of Wisconsin Department of Tourism co-op advertising programs. The Department has negotiated special discounts with media in the Midwest. Some examples include Pioneer Press, Chicago Tribune, Madison Newspapers, and Minneapolis Star Tribune.

Your investment helps the Chamber support a variety of Chamber sponsored functions and events in the community. The Chamber also works with other local organizations on community issues and acts as the destination and tourism liaison for Ashland and the surrounding area. Our office receives hundreds of phone calls pertaining to area information and destination services. **Chamber members are always promoted and referred over non-members.**

As you can see there are many great benefits that come with your membership.

Our membership dues **continue** to remain among the **lowest** in the region. We will continue to support and promote our chamber members statewide, regionally, countywide and locally.

After reviewing the enclosed materials, please:

- * Return your payment of dues.
- * Complete and Return Membership Application Form.
- * Complete and return your Website information form. ***Please be sure to include your website, facebook and email address. Also email us up to 4 photos to place on your business page.***

If you have any questions about our dues, the direction of the Chamber, or any of our programs and projects, please feel free to give us a call. We hope you will see that membership in the Ashland Area Chamber of Commerce is an excellent investment in your business and your community. We welcome you!

Ashland Area Chamber of Commerce Staff:

Executive Director - Mary McPhetridge
Office Manager - JoAnn Erickson
Public Relations - Maribeth Monroe
Office Assistant - Miranda Provost
Office Assistant - Katy Zart

Ashland Area Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors:

Executive Board Members:

Mike BeBeau, Xcel Energy, President
Jeff Moravchik, Prudential Financial, Past President & Treasurer
Mike Hines, Hines & Lewis Law Office, Vice-President
Gail Fox-Anderson, New England Store, Secretary

Members at Large:

Rick Forsythe, Chippewa Valley Bank
Lisa Gervais, Super 8 Motel
David Martin, Ondossogon Enterprises
Larry Nelson, Nelson Surveying
Tina Miller, Inn at Timber Cove

Ad Hoc Members:

Pete Mann, City of Ashland Administrator
Keith Hilts, Ashland School District
Dale Kupczyk, Ashland Area Development Corporation

Special Events promoted, sponsored and/or coordinated
by the Ashland Area Chamber of Commerce:

The WhistleStop Marathon & Half Marathon, Apostle Islands Inline Marathon, Chequamegon Bay Sprint Triathlon, Chequamegon Bay Birding & Nature Festival, Maxwell Street Days, Ashland Bay Days Festival, Customer Appreciation Day, Garland City of the North Christmas Parade, 4th of July Parade, Ice Cream Social, Girls Night Out, Witches Night Out, The Easter Egg Hunt, Book across the Bay, Superior Vistas Bicycle Tour, House to House Garage Sale, Chamber Night at ABC Raceway, Diamond Detective, Citywide Scarecrow Contest, and MarketFest. New in 2012: Chick-uamegon Women's 5K & 10K.