

Ashland Area Chamber of Commerce

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Come and join us!

The **Ashland Area Chamber of Commerce** serves as a driving force behind promoting tourism, supporting local businesses, and fostering economic development in the Ashland area. Here's a summary of our key activities and goals:

Tourism Promotion

- **Revenue Source:** Tourism is the primary source of income, supported by room tax revenue. The Chamber uses our portion 70% of these funds to market Ashland as a destination.
- **Marketing Efforts:** The Chamber promotes Ashland's outdoor recreation, local businesses, dining, and scenic beauty through digital, social media, TV, radio, and print. We manage 8 websites and organize events to draw visitors.
- **Visitor Guides:** We produce and distribute materials like the Ashland County Visitor Guide, Mural Walk brochures, Waterfalls brochures, Bicycle Map, Auto/Motorcycle Tour and Shopping & Dining Guides to markets in Wisconsin and Minnesota.

Business Support

- **Retention and Collaboration:** The Chamber prioritizes retaining local businesses, offering resources like grants, loans, and collaboration opportunities with city, county, and state entities. We recognize the importance of locally owned businesses in sustaining the area's economy.
- **Downtown Development:** In July of 2024, The Ashland Area Chamber of Commerce became an official Ashland Chamber Main Street. We actively support Ashland's historic downtown, organizing events to attract both locals and visitors and partnering with the city on programs using the National Main Street 4-Point Approach method.

Promotions and Events in Ashland, Wisconsin

Ashland, Wisconsin is not only a gateway to natural beauty but also a hub of year-round celebrations and activities. Whether you're a runner, a nature lover, or a holiday enthusiast, there's something for everyone to enjoy! We love promoting our events & promotions!!

Signature Events

- **Tamarack WhistleStop Marathon & Half-Marathon, 5k & 10k:** This is a premier fall race that attracts runners from across the Midwest. It is also a Boston Qualifier!
- **Apostle Islands Inline Marathon:** Skate along the pristine roads on Madeline Island. Ashland County. This unique event brings inline skaters together for a thrilling competition.

- **Chequamegon Bay Birding & Nature Festival:** This is a paradise for birdwatchers and nature enthusiasts. Join guided hikes, Kayak and canoe trips, and seminars in one of the best birding destinations in the Midwest.
- **Bay Days on Main Festival:** This is a summertime celebration with live music, delicious food, family-friendly activities, and a vibrant marketplace with lots of local vendors.
- **Ashland Field Day:** This golf outing encourages business camaraderie, a bit of competition, and lots of fun.

Creative Celebrations

- **Muralfest and Car Show:** Dive into Ashland's art culture with its famous murals while enjoying a classic car show that brings the community together.
- **Chick-uamegon 1 mile, 5k, 10k, walk-run :** A fun-filled event for girls of all ages. Bring on the Bling and have fun in Ashland. “Girls just wanna have fun”!!!

Holiday Highlights

- **4th of July Parade & Fireworks:** Celebrate Independence Day with a spirited parade down Main Street, followed by a spectacular fireworks display over the bay.
- **Christmas Parade & Festivities:** Ashland transforms into a winter wonderland with a festive parade, holiday lights, and Christmas cheer for the whole family.
- **Easter Egg Hunt:** A springtime tradition where kids can search for eggs. The shortest event on the Ashland Chamber Docket. Months to prepare and over in 23 minutes!
- **Cookie Crawl:** A delicious holiday treat where visitors can stroll downtown and collect cookies from participating businesses. Easter celebration.

Shopping & Community Fun

- **Girl’s Night Out & Witches’ Night Out:** These themed events are perfect for a night of laughter, shopping, and fun with friends.
- **Shop Small, Win Big:** Support local retail businesses during this exciting holiday promotion, where shopping small means big rewards.
- **Christmas Cash Raffle:** A chance to win big during the holiday season while supporting Ashland’s vibrant local community.
- **House to House Garage Sale:** A community event with 30-60 garage sales and hundreds of garage “salers” thrifting through the town.
- **Customer Appreciation:** This event is a way for retailers of all sizes to thank their customers for shopping local and supporting them all year. It is held on the same day as the Garland City of the North Christmas parade.
- **Trolley Tours:** The Ashland trolley runs July to September, two routes on Friday and Saturday and one on Monday, highlighting the murals. Celebrating Ashland as the Historic Mural Capital of Wisconsin.
- **No Snow Snowman & Scarecrow Contest:** A fun contest for retailers to use any type of material except Snow! The creatures are creative and beautiful. The competition is fierce.

Marketing Innovations

- The Chamber adapts to evolving marketing trends, incorporating streaming services, social media, and targeted digital campaigns while continuing traditional advertising like radio, billboard, and print.

Long-Term Goals

- Our objectives include attracting visitors, encouraging them to spend locally, and inspiring them to return, move to Ashland, or start businesses here.

Through these efforts, the Chamber positions Ashland as a vibrant, attractive destination while supporting the growth and sustainability of its local economy and community.

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 Area 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 Area Chamber of Commerce focuses on promoting the Ashland area in the fields of marketing, financial opportunities, and expansion of our business community. The Chamber Revolving Loan Fund compliments already existing programs available through the Ashland Area Development Corporation. Loans are available from \$5,000-\$15,000 and job quality is considered equal to job creation, meaning an independent business owner equates to one job created.

Chamber Dollars - Service, professional, retail, food, beverage, lodging ... it doesn't matter.

The Ashland Area Chamber of Commerce distributes over \$65,000 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!!

Weekly E-Blasts...and more if needed to communicate with our Chamber Member Businesses. Weekly E-Blasts highlights topics most pertinent to our Chamber and its members. A great place to send in FREE news tidbits about your business under "Business News." (Some restrictions apply.)

Website Listing

As a membership benefit, all members receive a FREE listing and a link to their website on the Ashland Area Chamber of Commerce website. Our website allows you the opportunity to have up to 4 images on your page and to have a map available to your business through Google maps. Websites, Facebook and/or Instagram accounts and e-mail addresses are highlighted, allowing visitors to link directly to your site. We also highlight the Business of the Week on our website and our Facebook page in conjunction with the radio promotion. Our website is another great way to promote our area and another excellent, efficient way to promote your business: www.visitashland.com

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 .35 per piece. Please call our office for more information.

Mailing Lists

Our membership list is available ONLY to members at no cost. (Mailing labels are available at a charge of \$20.)

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 Chamber office free of charge to members.

Visitor Guide

Ashland County Area Activity & 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 Chamber & County marketing Campaign.

The Experience/Ashland Shopping & Dining Guide

Retail storefront and dining members receive a FREE listing and description in the area Shopping & Dining Guide, which is distributed throughout the community, in locations such as the hospital and clinics, as well as to the many visitors who travel to our area. Another FREE advertising opportunity for your business.

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 meeting spaces and businesses that cater food and beverage.

Business Recruitment Tours

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

Business Referral System

Chamber staff gives referrals to Chamber businesses in response to the thousands of telephones, personal, and written inquiries each year.

Weekly Business Spotlight – “Business of the Week”

A 30-second commercial spot is created by Heartland Communications Group 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 \$200.00 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

Relocation packets include specific information about the community and Chamber members.

Ashland County Affiliation

The Ashland Area Chamber of Commerce is the administrator for the Ashland County tourism budget. The website www.travelashlandcounty.com is provided by the county and accessed by thousands of interested persons.

Northwest Wisconsin Regional Tourism

The Ashland Area Chamber of Commerce continues to partner with the Northwest Wisconsin division of the state’s International Trade, Business and Economic Development Council (ITBEC) to promote tourism opportunities within our region. We market to all segments from silent to motorized sports and with a focus on the many trail systems throughout northwest Wisconsin. Check out the website at www.northwestwisconsin.com.

Board Representation

Mary McPhetridge recently ended two terms on the Governor’s Council on Tourism & the state marketing committee. She currently is the Chair Person for the NW Wisconsin Tourism Committee, Past President & current Board Member on the Wisconsin Downtown Action council (WDAC), and Commissioner representing the Lake Superior Region on the Governors Wisconsin Waterways Commission.

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. www.wisconsinharbortowns.net.

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. 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!

Please return with:

- Membership Application Form
- Website form
- Payment of dues

Ashland Area Chamber of Commerce staff:
Executive Director – Mary McPhetridge
Office Manager – JoAnn Erickson
Customer Service Specialist – Heidi Radtke-Luehring

Ashland Area Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors:

Executive Board Members:

Matt Crowell – Chippewa Valley Bank – President
Rick Forsythe, Northern Clearing, Vice-President
John Beirl, Northern State Bank, Past-President
Laurie Gregor – Choice Title
Jessica Nuutinen, Tamarack Health - Ashland Medical Center

At-Large Members:

Todd Chingo, AmericInn Conference Center
Lisa Gervais, Cobblestone Inn & Suites
Mari Kay-Nabozny, Northwest Workforce Investment Board
Tim King, Quality Inn
Wendy Phillips, Best Western/Hotel Chequamegon
Ben Martinsen, Edward Jones
Tina Miller – Inn at Timber Cove

Ex Officio Members:

Brant Kucera, City of Ashland
Carver Harries, Ashland Area Development Corporation
Rob Prater, School District of Ashland