

Walk in My Shoes  
Brad Toll, CDME  
President/CEO  
Greater Green Bay Convention & Visitors Bureau

It is a privilege to serve the De Pere Area Chamber of Commerce as the 2014 Chair of the Board. I've enjoyed my time over the past 4 years as a board member and volunteer and look forward to another exciting year with the Chamber.

I like to tell people my job is all about FUN because travel is all about FUN! Truth be known, the travel industry is one of the largest industries in Wisconsin. Total tourism business sales of \$16.8 billion in 2012 sustained 184,000 jobs. In Brown County, visitor spending exceeded \$550 million and sustained 11,385 jobs, ranking us 5<sup>th</sup> out of Wisconsin's 72 counties. Most importantly, tourism generates tax revenue for local and state governments that doesn't come out of the pockets of local residents, in fact, visitor spending in Brown County generated \$83 million in 2012!

I'm thrilled to be responsible for the work of the Greater Green Bay Convention & Visitors Bureau. We have a terrific staff of hard working professionals that are dedicated to telling the world why Greater Green Bay is the perfect place to bring a convention, sports tournament, motorcoach tour or family vacation.

My primary responsibilities are CEO for the Board of Directors, chief spokesperson and the oversight of daily operations. Our experienced staff makes oversight of the operation a real joy. We are also fortunate to have an engaged board that is committed to growing the economic impact of the tourism industry for Brown County. Much of my time is spent advocating and working within the tourism industry and community.

I am very active with our national association, Destination Marketing Association International, serving as the Chair of their Membership Committee and am seated on their Advocacy Committee. I recently set up a meeting with US Travel, Brand USA, Wisconsin's Secretary of Tourism and several industry leaders to discuss national tourism issues with US Senator Ron Johnson. Improved infrastructure and more efficient arrival and Visa processing is critical to the growth on international tourism to America. Did you know that we spoke to visitors from 26 different countries at our Mobile Visitor Center at Green Bay Packers Training Camp last summer?

On the state level I serve the Department of Tourism on their International Committee and the Wisconsin Association of Convention and Visitor Bureaus as

the Board Secretary. Locally, in addition to serving on the De Pere Area Chamber Board, I serve the Green Bay Area Chamber of Commerce Board, Better by The Bay Board, Downtown Green Bay, Inc. Board, Mosaic Arts Board, Fire Over the Fox Board and the Airport Service Development Committee.

A typical day often includes work for one of the many organizations I'm actively involved with as well as the daily activities at the CVB. We often talk about the "number of balls we have in the air" at the same time. A given day might include providing a tour for the Cabela's National Team Championship Walleye Fishing Tournament organizers (coming May 29-31, 2014) of the Lambeau and Cabela's parking lots along with our vision of how to lay out their weigh-in event, work on elevator door decals and hotel room key cards for the WIAA State Girls Basketball Championships, with a late afternoon meeting to discuss bringing Pope Francis to Greater Green Bay. If it is something that has the potential to bring visitors to our community, the CVB is, most likely, involved! What I love most about my job and the tourism industry, in general, is that every day is different and brings new challenges. The events we work hard to bring to our community provide prosperity for local businesses and local government and add to the quality of life of our residents. By the way, don't miss out on this year's Restaurant Week, July 10-17!!