



BARABOO AREA CHAMBER & TOURISM

SIGNS OF THINGS TO COME IN 2020

By Darren Hornby, Executive Director
Baraboo Area Chamber of Commerce

I wrote last month that 2019 was a year of significant change for the Chamber. We introduced a new community brand and brought in new staff. The year to come will also bring some changes, ones we're excited about!

The first change you'll notice will be the revamping of our website at baraboo.com. As part of the Discover Real Baraboo branding campaign, designed to stimulate tourism, the Chamber website is being redesigned to make it more friendly to mobile users and visitors. When people search "Baraboo" on their smartphones, we want them to find immediate answers to the questions they're asking: "What is there to do? Where should we eat? Where can we stay? Where might we shop? The website will retain its current functionalities for Chamber members, but some will be tucked under tabs to ensure the home page serves the visitors we're looking to attract. [Skillet Creek Media](#) is working to retool the website, with completion planned for the first quarter of 2020.

Another aspect of the branding campaign you'll notice around the community this year will be new roadside signage depicting the Baraboo "B" logo. I'm working



with our partners - the village of West Baraboo, city of Baraboo, and Downtown Baraboo Inc. - to replace existing signs with new signage that will

incorporate the brand and better direct visitors to our community's many amenities. Whether they're on our roads or the information superhighway, we want to make it easy for visitors to find what they're looking for!

We're organizing a new event for this spring, an outing to a Milwaukee Brewers game. We want to give our members an opportunity to enjoy big-league baseball together before the bustling summer tourism season begins. Stay tuned for details!

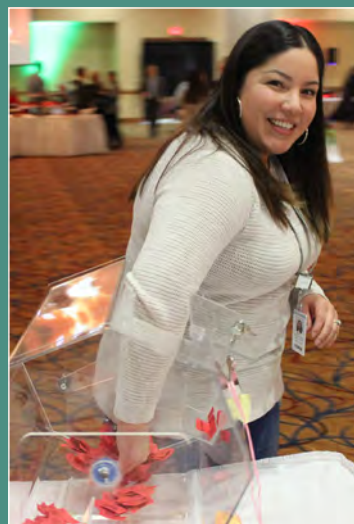
We'll cap the tourism season with a major new event, Oktoberfest, on Saturday, September 26 at the Al. Ringling Mansion. I'm confident an authentic ethnic festival featuring live music and a beer garden will draw visitors from across south central Wisconsin!

You can learn more about these and other plans for the coming year at our [Annual Dinner](#) on January 16 at Baraboo Arts Banquet Hall. [Register](#) today, and [vote](#) in the Chamber awards contest!

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Register now for Annual Dinner

Today marks last day to vote on '19 awards

The Chamber will hold its Annual Dinner and present its 2019 awards on Thursday, January 16 at Baraboo Arts Center.

This "Champagne Toast"-themed event will begin with a cocktail hour at 6 p.m. featuring live music by [Shawndell Marks](#), followed by delicious appetizers. A 7:30 p.m. program will feature Darren Hornby's address on his vision for the Chamber in 2020 and our annual award presentations.

Then we'll raise a glass to a successful 2019 and toast to all that is to come in 2020 before enjoying another round of live music presented by the [Hoot Owls!](#)

[Online registration](#) is open. Reserve your spot today and join in the fun!

As long as you're online, don't



forget to vote on this year's awards. Voting ends today!

After receiving dozens of responses, the Nominating Committee narrowed down the list of nominees to four finalists in each of four categories:

Business of the Year: Baraboo Motors Group, Coffee Bean Connection, Just Imagine Toys, RE/MAX Grand

Tourism: Baraboo Tours, Big Top Parade, Devil's Lake State

Park, Fox Hill RV Park & Campground

Community Service: Baraboo Young Professionals, Mike and Bonnie Palm, St. Clare Auxiliary, Tom Williams

Rising Star: Balanced Rock Winery, Baraboo Social Club, Tennille O'Leary, Tumbled Rock Brewery

Vote [HERE!](#)

To see a list of past winners, click [here](#).

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AMBASSADORS CHRISTMAS PARTY



[Ringling House Bed & Breakfast](#) hosted the Ambassadors Club's annual Christmas party December 16. Cathy Sperl organized a delicious meal and white elephant gift exchange, with help from Julie Hearley and Stu Koehler. There was furious competition for the most appealing gifts, with steals galore!

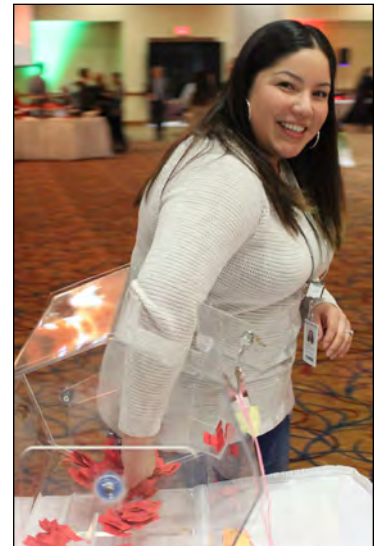
With sweet loot like this changing hands, how can you NOT have fun?



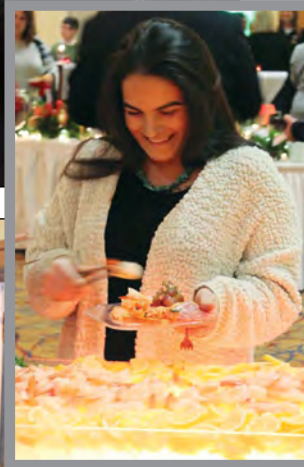
BUSINESS AFTER 5 HO-CHUNK GAMING



[Ho-Chunk Gaming-Wisconsin Dells](#) hosted a Business After 5 event December 9. The festivities included a boffo buffet, door prizes and donations to several area food pantries. The event drew more than 150 people.



The 2020 Business After 5 calendar will kick off January 20th with an event hosted by [Balanced Rock Winery](#). Come [check out](#) what the new winery has in store for the future!



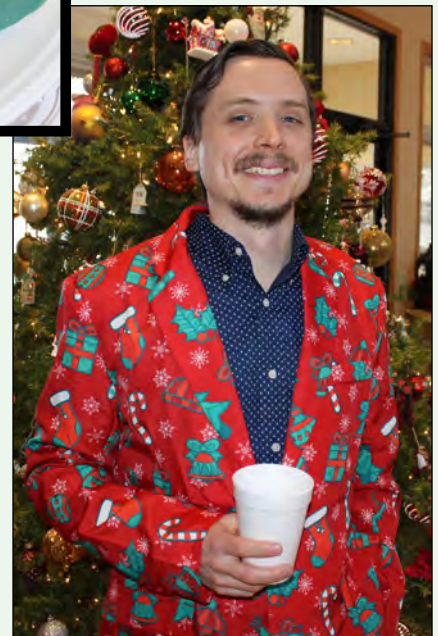
HOLIDAY OPEN HOUSE



Hey, is that Bing Crosby? No, it's Ben in a cheap fedora and a woman's sweater. Just another day at the Chamber!



Our December 18 Holiday Open House featured refreshments, merriment and breathtaking views of the Visitor Center, which was bursting with Christmas decorations from Darren's collection. Many thanks to [Neato's Bake Shoppe](#) for providing cookies - some featuring the Baraboo "B!" - and to [Ski Hi Fruit Farm](#) for delivering apple cider and to [Coffee Bean Connection](#) for providing java. Thanks also to [99.7 MAX FM](#) for broadcasting from the Visitor Center that morning, and to Christian Herrild for sporting his most festive blazer!



NIGHT MARKET & DATE NIGHT



Unseasonably warm weather made Dec. 20 ideal for the [Baraboo Young Professionals' Night Market](#). Crowds filled the downtown square to visit Santa, meet Buddy the Elf, sample Ski Hi cider, pose for photos and buy Chamber Bucks!





UPCOMING EVENTS

**Sit
Down
with
Sandy**



Sit Down with Sandy
Thursday, January 9th, Noon-1 p.m.
Visitor Center

Learn more about the online Member Information Center (MIC), set up your login and learn more about maximizing your online membership benefits. Please bring a laptop.

[Register here](#)



Annual Chamber Dinner and Meeting
6 p.m. Thursday, January 16
Baraboo Arts Center

Celebrate a banner 2019, enjoy delicious food and learn about what the Chamber leadership has in store for 2020 during this "Champagne Toast" event!

[Register here](#)



**BALANCED ROCK
WINERY**

Business After 5
Balanced Rock Winery
Monday, January 20th from 5-7 p.m.

Take part in the first Business After 5 event of the year at Baraboo's newest winery! Socialize with fellow Chamber members and find out what Balanced Rock has in store for this year!

[Register here](#)



New Member Orientation
Thursday, February 6th, Noon-1 p.m.
Visitor Center

We will be covering: Mission, Membership, Services, Events, Tourism, Communication, and How to Get Involved. Open to new and not-so-new members!

[Register here](#)

BOARD LUNCH

Thank you to Trisha's Cottage Kitchen and Catering for providing lunch for the December Board of Directors meeting!



**Be sure to welcome
our new member!**



**Baraboo
Children's
Museum**

[Baraboo Children's Museum](#)