

Grant County **Tourism**: Economics, Investments, & Impacts

Executive Summary

October 1, 2013

Background

This agent has prepared this report as part of an ongoing program to develop and realize a shared vision for tourism in Grant County. The purpose of this report is to provide decision makers with information necessary to evaluate Grant County's ongoing investments in the tourism industry. The report features contributions from the Wisconsin Department of Tourism, the University of Wisconsin Department of Agricultural & Applied Economics, and the University of Wisconsin Extension-Grant County.

Key Points

- Tourism in Wisconsin and in Grant County is doing well. Grant County ranks within the "middle of the pack" among all counties and within the top (3) among those in the "Driftless Area".
- Tourism is not a primary contributor to Grant County's economy. Agriculture and government dominate the current economic landscape. There may be opportunities to expand tourism into areas such as agri-tourism and outdoor recreation.
- The Grant County Tourism Grant Program generates roughly three times the amount it distributes.
- Grant County Economic Development Corporation has partnered with the Grant County Tourism Council to promote individual communities along with their attractions and events with its website and through direct mailings.
- Hidden Valleys of Southwest Wisconsin distributes 80,000 – 82,000 copies annually of its travel guide through various venues and at a competitive rate.
- The Grant County Fair has consistently grossed profits from year to year. A much deeper analysis of the Fair could help illustrate its secondary economic impacts as well.

Conclusions

The tourism industry in Wisconsin and in Grant County is growing. In fact, Grant County's tourism industry is growing faster than the state average and ranks near the top for counties in the "Driftless Area". This growth has been supported directly by the county's investments in local organizations, distribution of publications, and the Grant County Fair. While tourism may not be the strongest industry of Grant County's economy, with strategic investments, it may have potential to become more significant over time.

This executive summary was prepared by:
Todd Johnson, University of Wisconsin Extension-Grant County
Community Resource Development Agent/Assistant Professor