

2024



WTA

Convention

Holiday Inn Convention Center
1001 Amber Ave., Stevens Point
October 6-8, 2024

Looking for an opportunity to gain more in-depth knowledge about your role as a municipal official? Our annual convention is filled with exciting opportunities to network with your peers, learn from experienced educators, become acquainted with state agency staff, and enjoy some time away. Mark your calendar and come spend some quality time with us this October!

Sunday October 6th

Registration will be open from 1:00 p.m. until 6:00 p.m. The exhibitor area will open at 1:00 p.m. Come meet, learn from, and build relationships with vendors and companies that provide products and services of interest to towns. Highlights of the afternoon will include projection of the Green Bay Packer game on the big screen in the Exhibitor Area along with complimentary beer, soda, and snacks during the game. If you are lucky, you might even win a prize at half-time! Dinner is on your own Sunday evening.

Monday October 7th

There will be a general assembly from 8:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. with key featured speakers whose names will not be released until confirmed. Workshops will begin at 11:00 a.m. and run through 4:45 p.m. with a break for a deli sandwich buffet lunch.

Monday Spouse Activity

Monday afternoon, registered spouses and guests will have the opportunity to board a bus and head over to Amherst to tour Central Waters Brewing Co. Sample some beer and get to know your fellow attendees better while learning about this unique craft brewery.

Monday Afternoon Exhibitor Reception

There will be a reception in the exhibitor area with complimentary beer, soda, and snacks for all registered attendees. Note that the exhibitors will close down at the end of the day Monday and will not be present on Tuesday. Be sure to visit the exhibitors on Sunday and Monday to collect the stamps that you will need to be eligible to enter the prize drawings held on Monday night. Deposit your completed game card into one of the designated boxes in the Exhibitor Area by 5:00 p.m. Winners will be announced after the awards banquet.

Monday Evening Banquet

The annual banquet and awards ceremony will be held on Monday night of the convention with doors opening at 6:00 p.m.

Long standing town officers will be recognized for their service. To receive this recognition, please mark your registration form accordingly and indicate you will be attending the banquet. We will also be awarding the WTA, Scott Construction, and Rural Mutual Insurance Scholarships to the essay contest winners.

The banquet is an optional event which will feature a buffet dinner at a cost of \$ 40 per person and is not included in the general registration fee. The dinner buffet will feature mixed green salad, freshly baked rolls, herb-breaded chicken breast, braised beef tips, pasta salad, coleslaw, whipped potatoes with gravy, wild rice pilaf, seasoned vegetable medley and caramel apple pie. (Spouses and guests are also welcome to attend the banquet at a cost of \$40 per person.)

Monday Night Entertainment

All registered convention attendees are invited to join us for the CJB Rock & Variety Band which will entertain us following the banquet. They play a variety of music including Classic Rock & Roll, Classic Country, Big Band, Swing, Latin, Ballads, and many songs with a unique spin. This band is an updated version of the "Justmann Band" that has been a big hit at past conventions. So, grab a table, share some laughs, and dance to your favorites. Enjoy complimentary beer, soda, and snacks. You won't want to miss out on the FUN!

Visit the exhibitors on Sunday and Monday to collect the stamps that you will need to enter the Monday night prize drawing. Before the music starts, we'll be announcing the winners. Good luck!

Tuesday October 8th

On Tuesday morning breakfast will be served from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 am. as an optional event for \$29.00 per person for those attendees who pre-registered on their convention registration form. The breakfast will consist of assorted fresh pastries, fresh fruit platter, scrambled eggs with cheddar cheese, cold cereals, cinnamon swirl French toast, smoked bacon, homestyle potatoes, coffee, milk, and orange juice. After you have enjoyed some breakfast, get ready to learn with a variety of workshops that begin at 8:30 a.m. and conclude at 12:00 noon in time for a buffet lunch featuring an Italian pasta buffet.

Tuesday BINGO

Registered spouses and guests are invited to join us for BINGO at 10:00am. Cash prizes will be awarded!

Registration Fees

\$200 Full Registration

Includes lunches, exhibitor receptions, all workshops, general assembly, digital materials, Monday night entertainment.

\$120 Single Day Registrations (Monday or Tuesday)

Includes Monday or Tuesday lunch, workshops, General Assembly, digital materials, Monday Exhibitor reception and Monday night entertainment.

\$40 Guest Registration

Includes exhibitor receptions, brewery tour, BINGO, General Assembly, and Monday night entertainment. Meals are not included, but you may purchase them separately on the convention registration form.

Deputy clerks and treasurers, election officials, plan commissioners and others who wish to attend workshops must pay regular full or single day convention registration fees.

Workshop Schedule and Topics

Please Note: There will be a three-hour long election training class provided by the Wisconsin Elections Commission on Tuesday. Please indicate on the registration form if you plan to attend the Election Training so that we can accurately gauge the number of attendees and plan accordingly.

Workshops are scheduled for both Monday and Tuesday. Many have one hour time slots and will be repeated a second time. Some of the workshops will be presented only once, as noted.

Monday: 11:00 a.m. - Noon (Repeated 1:15 p.m. - 2:15 p.m.)

- 1. 2% Fire Dues Self-Certification:** In this session, clerks will learn what the fire dues certification is and receive a live start to finish demo of the complete 2% Fire Dues self-certification process. Presented by Sarah Brown, Operations Program Associate & NFIRS State Program Manager, Wisconsin Department of Safety and Professional Services.
- 2. Wisconsin Department of Revenue Update:** Join the Wisconsin Department of Revenue (DOR) for a dynamic session discussing recent developments on Innovation Grants, insights into Maintenance of Effort reporting, and other relevant State and Local Finance (SLF) matters. This session equips attendees with a deeper understanding of these new programs, actionable strategies, as well as available resources. Presented by DOR's State and Local Finance Team.
- 3. County Zoning: Town Withdrawal Options Following Act 264:** Act 264 creates a new pathway for towns to withdraw from county zoning, positioning towns to better engage in local land use decisions. This presentation will describe the requirements of Act 264, analyze the costs and benefits of town withdrawal from county zoning, and discuss ways to work with county officials to improve existing zoning. Presented by WTA Government Affairs Director, Joe Ruth and Ken Jaworski, Senior Consultant for Cedar Corporation.
- 4. Compensation and Employment Law Basics:** Whether your town has multiple employees or only has town officials and election workers on the payroll, it is important to stay informed about the basics of employment law and compensation procedures. This session will answer common questions about compensation and reimbursement policies for elected officials; job advertisements and recruitment procedures for town employees; residency requirements; distinguishing between employees versus contractors; hiring deputy clerks and treasurers; and more. Presented by WTA Attorney Lara Carlson.
- 5. Plan Commission 101:** Do you have a town plan commission? Can you describe their basic functions and how they work with the town board? Are you struggling to recruit and retain members or questioning if you need a plan commission? Do you want to maximize the effectiveness of your commission or have specific questions? This session is for you. We will cover the basic roles and responsibilities of the plan commission and open the session to audience Q&A. Presented by Becky Roberts, Center for Land Use Education, UW-Stevens Point, College of Natural Resources.

Monday 2:30 p.m. - 3:30 p.m. (Repeated 3:45 p.m. - 4:45 p.m.)

**The workshop on town use of social media has been cancelled.*

- 1. Alcohol Beverage Licensing Update:** Stay up to date with recent changes in the law, current topics, and Wisconsin Department of Revenue resources related to alcohol licensing. Presented by the Wisconsin Department of Revenue, Division of Alcohol Beverages.
- 2. Legal Cracker Barrel:** Join WTA legal staff for an informal question and answer session on any town topic. This is always a popular session with convention attendees and we encourage you to bring your questions!

3. Setting Speed Limits in Wisconsin: Speed limits are essential to traveler safety and mobility. This session will cover how Wisconsin DOT sets speed limits, what should be included in a speed study, and what authority towns have in setting speed limits. Presented by: Tony Kemnitz, PE, PTOE - Wisconsin DOT

4. General Transportation Aids (GTA): Overview and Aid Payment Determinations: In this presentation, WisDOT Program and Policy Supervisor Tim Olusegun will first give a brief overview of various WisDOT Local Programs., followed by GTA Program Manager Megan Feeley, who will then provide in depth information about General Transportation Aids. This presentation will include information regarding how GTA is calculated, the variables used when calculating GTA, and how changes to certain variables can impact a municipality's total GTA.

5. Minimum Salary Thresholds Under Fair Labor Standards Act: On April 26, 2024, the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) announced major changes to the federal minimum salary requirements for exempt employees. While these changes are facing legal challenges, the core provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act apply to most employers, including State and local government employees. This session will provide an overview of the Fair Labor Standards Act, in addition to providing employers recommendations on how to comply with the new changes given levy limits and budget constraints. Presented by members of the KerberRose HR Team and Audit Team.

Monday 3:45 p.m. until conclusion

The Town Advocacy Council (TAC) will hold its Annual Meeting during which it will elect three board members to the TAC Executive Board, review its financial report and discuss other matters related to TAC.

Tuesday 8:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. Election Training (will not be repeated)

2024 Fall Elections Are Coming Up: Are You Ready? Wisconsin Elections Commission staff will offer training in three parts: Back to Basics covering the common things clerks deal with when processing returned absentee ballots and other absentee voting updates; Election Preparedness that will get into pre-election day tasks; as well as a few things to be on top of on Election Day itself. This three-hour session will count for recertification training. Please note on the registration form that you plan to attend this session.

Tuesday 8:30 a.m. - 9:30 a.m. (Repeated 9:45 a.m. - 10:45 a.m.)

1. Grant Basics – Really? There are Grants for Towns?: So — you are a town. What grants are out there for towns? Learn about the variety of grants at your disposal, who is eligible to receive them, and how you can best position yourself for the opportunities at hand. Presented by Art Bahr, Senior Community Development Administrator at MSA Professional Services, Inc.

2. Starting Right/Navigating the Pre-Construction Process for Facility Improvement: This session will guide attendees through the essential pre-construction stages of municipal facility improvements, using the Town of Genesee's 14,000 sq. ft. public works facility as a case study. The discussion will begin with effective strategies for initiating board discussions, emphasizing the importance of aligning project proposals with community and board expectations. We'll explore rigorous methods for identifying and documenting project needs, including how to conduct comprehensive needs assessments and leverage community feedback. The presentation will also cover the financial planning necessary for initial assessments and studies, detailing how to budget for these critical early steps and manage financial stakeholder expectations. Vendor selection processes will be dissected to ensure the right fit for project values and goals, and we'll discuss creating a detailed game plan that outlines project scope and milestones. Additionally, the presenter will delve into integrating project budgeting within a Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), demonstrating how to align project objectives with broader municipal financial strategies. This session aims to equip attendees with practical tools and insights for navigating the complexities of project initiation, ensuring they are well-prepared to manage successful facility upgrades in their communities. Presented by Devin Flanigan, Construction Manager/Co-Owner, Keller, Inc.

3. Developing Sustainable Funding for Fire/EMS response in Rural Communities: Towns are required to provide Fire Service and Ambulance response (if others are not providing ambulance service). As volunteer availability has declined, costs to provide reliable service have exploded. This program discusses the different ways Fire/EMS services can be delivered and methods to fund them. Presented by: James Small, Rural EMS Outreach Program Manager, Wisconsin Office of Rural Health

4. Demystifying the Cybersecurity Journey for Local governments: Join us as we break down the complexities of safeguarding municipal systems. This session will highlight the top three cybersecurity threats facing local governments today and provide actionable guidance on implementing baseline security controls, as recommended by the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA). By understanding and applying these critical protections, local governments can significantly enhance their cyber resilience and protect their communities from emerging digital threats. Presented by Brad Johnson, Fortinet Public Sector and Micheal Lauer, Director- SLED Capture Program.

Tuesday 11:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. (will not be repeated)

1. Wisconsin Agricultural Tourism - An Economic Engine for Rural Economies: Hundreds of farmers welcome visitors to their land every year to add much needed revenue to their operations. Many more are considering agricultural tourism, but they have questions about start-up costs, how to attract visitors, what to charge, zoning, insurance, and more. A panel of experienced farmers will bring practical know-how about: farm-stays, planning for success, effective marketing and creative events, tapping the trends, the benefits of collaborating with other farmers, and what's being done to promote agricultural tourism across the region and locally. Presented by: Kris Marion, Circle M Farms; Jean Bahn, Farmview Event Barn; Shawn Lehman, Bon Sens Media; Sylvia Burgos Toftness, Bull Brook Keep; Clara Hedrich, LaClare Creamery; and Sheila Everhart, Executive Director of the Wisconsin Agricultural Tourism Association.

2. Did I hear the C-Word? Navigating Local Consolidation of EMS Services: As small rural ambulance services are increasingly moving from failing to failed, local government is left with the challenge of trying to secure reliable service at a reasonable cost. This presentation includes a panel of elected officials and a consultant who implemented the Northwoods EMS district. Come and learn strategies to navigate the community politics, economics, and other challenges to successfully consolidate services and provide affordable response to the community. Presented by James Small, Rural EMS Outreach Program Manager, Wisconsin Office of Rural Health.

3. Soliciting Your Opinion on State Solid Waste Rules: The DNR is starting a rewrite of certain solid waste rules for the first time since 2006 and we want your feedback! In this session background will be provided on the current solid waste regulations that have high impact on Wisconsin Towns including open burning regulations, burying demolition waste materials as fill, and operating compost and woodburning sites. It will also include several poll questions about how effective these rules are and the type of changes you may want to see to them. Finally, the session will include a brief overview of the rule writing process and other times and opportunities for public comments. Presented by: Casey Krausensky, Solid Waste Coordinator with the Department of Natural Resources.

4. Insect, Disease and Invasive Plant Management in Towns: Flooding, drought and storm damage in recent years are leading to a variety of insect and disease issues. We'll discuss the status of the spongy moth outbreak, oak mortality, bark beetles and some new invasive plants, insects and diseases to watch for. Presented by Mike Hillstrom, Forest Health Specialist, Wisconsin DNR.