



Travel & Tourism

May 6, 2025

Executive Brief

Tourism leaders, business owners and state park representatives assessed Sauk County's tourism strengths and ongoing challenges. Natural assets, cultural attractions, and steady visitor demand continue to drive economic growth. However, workforce shortages, infrastructure gaps and safety concerns require coordinated solutions. Participants outlined priorities requiring executive action and executive focus to sustain long-term vitality.

1. Workforce Development

Executive Action:

- Expand training programs for hospitality and tourism workers (soft skills, certifications like ServeSafe, leadership training).
- Develop affordable housing solutions to support seasonal and permanent employees. Expand childcare opportunities, including 2nd shift options.
- Enhance recruitment through youth apprenticeships, career fairs, and targeted campaigns.

Executive Focus:

- Champion stronger partnerships with high schools, colleges and technical institutes to align training with industry needs.
- Promote Sauk County's quality of life to attract and retain workers.

2. Infrastructure & Safety Improvements

Executive Action:

- Fund bike paths/scooter lanes, and offer reliable transport options (shuttles, rideshare).
- Address site capacity and safety at Devil's Lake and Mirror Lake through infrastructure
- maintenance and emergency planning.
- Implement regular emergency drills and comprehensive safety protocols.

Executive Focus:

- Endorse investment in safe, reliable transportation and recreation systems that support tourism
- year-round.
- Support coordinated safety campaigns for visitors and staff.

3. Industry & Policy Collaboration:

Executive Action:

- Convene municipal, business and tourism stakeholders to align on funding, zoning and shared priorities.
- Explore policy adjustments, such as implementing a room tax in Spring Green and zoning flexibility for food trucks.
- Advocate for wage policies and supportive labor practices to stabilize the workforce.

Executive Focus:

- Encourage regional collaboration to pool resources and expand marketing reach.
- Promote a unified countywide voice in tourism-related policy discussions.

4. Market Expansion & Innovation:

Executive Action:

- Invest in customer-focused technologies to enhance experience and streamline operations.
- Develop offerings in emerging markets: sports tourism, meetings and conventions, wellness and outdoor adventure.
- Promote historical and cultural assets in addition to popular attractions.

Executive Focus:

- Support branding that highlights Sauk County's unique blend of recreation, culture and entertainment options.
- Encourage innovation through pilot programs in sports, cultural and eco-tourism.

5. Environmental & Sustainability Initiatives:

Executive Action:

- Develop eco-friendly tourism programs and visitor management strategies to minimize environmental impact.
- Implement sustainable practices across accommodations, attractions and events.
- Collaborate with local tourism organizations to incorporate sustainable language into marketing materials.

Executive Focus:

- Champion sustainability as a core differentiator for Sauk County's tourism industry. Support public education efforts on responsible recreation.

