

Minnesota Resorter

Resorters Helping Resorters

The logo for the Congress of Minnesota Resorts (CMRIT) is circular, featuring a stylized landscape with a cabin, trees, and mountains. The text "CONGRESS OF MINNESOTA RESORTS" is written around the perimeter, and "CMRIT RESORT" is in the center.

A GRASS ROOTS
"SNOWBALL"

Spring 2004 Vol. 20 No. 2

MARKETING:
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RESORTER OF THE YEAR

LEGISLATIVE:
CMR DAY ON
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Resorters Helping Resorters



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THE MINNESOTA RESORTER

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FROM YOUR PRESIDENT'S PEN



*Dawn Sullivan
President*

I recently attended the 2004 Governor's Conference on Tourism. What an exciting couple of days! I came out of the conference with more ideas than you can shake a fishing pole at. I am extremely excited about the CMR being included by John Edman in the creation of the new Explore Minnesota Tourism Council.

One of the biggest ah-ha moments for me was this thought. . . . The fastest way to fail is to say, "We've always done it that way." We all have to stay away from complacency and never forget to keep looking ahead.

Here is another fast fact for you. Men will tell an average of 2.6 people about a good experience. Women will tell 21 people about a good experience. HmMMMM.

Now for some more personal thoughts. It looks like we have all made it through another Minnesota winter and no worse for wear, I hope. We are ready to gear up for spring now, and although making to do lists is fun, I would much rather think about the wonderful things that this new season will bring.

One of my favorite rites of spring is the return of the Purple Martins. When I see that first scout bird arrive and check out their newly cleaned birdhouse, I get excited.

Of course, there is that first perfect spring day when the new leaves are just opening up to the warm breeze, casting a faint green aura as I look through the brown winter branches of the trees. I love how the bright sunshine creates unique shadow art on the ground as it shines on the new budding leaves.

Then there is the anticipation of greeting returning guests and meeting the new arrivals for the first time. This is all so exciting! Now I really cannot wait for opening day.

Of course, the Congress of Minnesota Resorts Spring Workshop is always an anticipated event this time of year. This year it was held on April 5th, in St. Cloud. It was my third Spring Workshop and I enjoyed each speaker, as well as visiting with all my resorter friends. Watch for all the details in the summer issue of the Minnesota Resorter Magazine.

So here's a toast to anticipation and the glorious re-awakening of our beautiful Minnesota lands. Bye for now.

GREAT DAY TRIPS FOR YOUR GUESTS!

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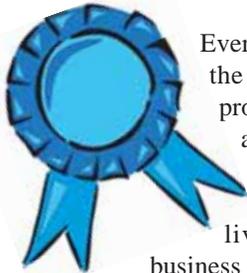
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COMMUNITIES ARE BIG WINNERS WHEN RESORTS SUCCEED

By Jane Reish, Roger Miller Resort Sales



Every resort in existence is going to face the decision sooner or later: sell your property as a resort or sell it off as land and buildings. For some, it will be a cut-and-dried decision and for others - the most gut wrenching of their lives. Whether you are new to the business or a long time resorter - one thing is

certain. If you choose to operate today - AS A RESORT - the county, state and community benefit from your efforts. Your resort is a viable asset to your community. Thanks to you and your hard work - new money (guests) visit your community every week all season long and leave a big chunk of change right there. This of course trickles down to county and state purses also.

So, communities are big winners when resorts and campgrounds are full. Why aren't communities helping these same businesses be successful? In other words, resorts need HELP, not HINDERANCE from the entities that benefit most from their hard work and investment.

Take ABC Resort. It has a nice location on a valuable chunk of lakeshore. With its 10 cabins and 10 RV sites, it puts approximately 20-25 new families into the area with money to spend every week. This resort has a 12 week season. That is 240-300 FAMILIES in the area from ONE resort for ONE season! This is a HUGE benefit to retail, gas, groceries and restaurants in town.

Now, although this resort brings a bounty to the local economy, the resort owner of the average size resort is often struggling to make ends meet. Ten cabins used to easily support a resort property years ago, but very few 10-cabin resorts are highly profitable today. All too often, more cabins are needed, but cannot be built because of density levels. What is a resort owner to do?

Scenario #1: This resorts' Planned Unit Development, PUD, is to sell all of their cabins individually. These new residents usually come up on weekends during the summer and occasionally a whole week for regular vacation. Impact on the local economy - approximately 20% vs. weekly stays.

Scenario #2: The County realizes drastic action is necessary to save resorts and their income flow. They enact more lenient density rules and allow resorts to expand beyond what is currently allowed. Since septic rules are not relaxed, the resort expansion does not affect the water/lake quality. ABC Resort adds four more cabins, more cash flow, and more cash for downtown. A win/win situation.

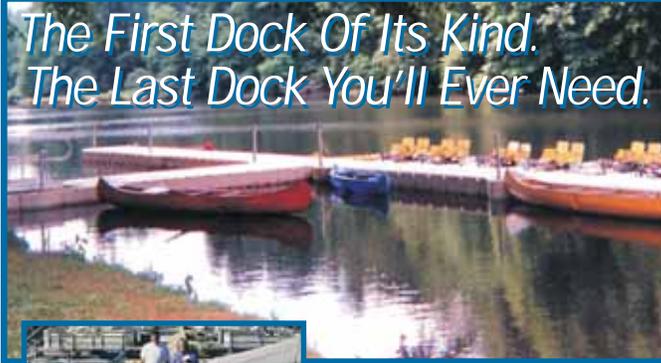
There are a number of things that could help on a state and local level, but I think the most obvious are also the ones that would cost the least.

1. Change the density rules governing resorts.
2. Reinstate the Tourism Loan program.
3. Property tax relief of some kind - this may have an upfront cost, but will surely be "paid for" by continuing revenues from operating resorts.
4. Change attitudes about the value of resorts. Resort and campground businesses put CASH into state and county coffers and local economies. Period.

Hopefully, lakeshore values will continue to rise - we all like to see our investments go up. Some will choose to sell off now. But what about those that want to ride their investment? What about the people that want to continue operating as a resort? This is the chosen lifestyle of hundreds of people today. You should expect help and cooperation from the state and county that benefits from your efforts.

In my opinion, the county that wakes up and says, "**We want resorts in our county to not only survive, but to thrive**". This county will be ahead of the pack, ensuring cash flow and growth for the future. Is that county out there?

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CMR SCHOOL OF RESORTING "CREATIVE IDEAS FOR RESORT WELCOME BOOKS"

by Julie Engle, Edgewild Resort

On April 3, I had the pleasure of hosting a CMR School of Resorting Class. The topic was, "Creative Ideas for Resort Welcome Books." Six women from resorts throughout central Minnesota participated. In addition, course materials were mailed to six more resorters who were unable to attend. The following is what we covered in the class.

"What is a Welcome Book?"

A Welcome Book is a customized collection of useful information about your resort and the surrounding community for guests to use during their stay. In addition to a cover letter welcoming your guests, a Welcome Book usually contains resort rules and regulations, maps to the resort and of the local area, and any other information you choose to include. For example, information on wildlife, golf courses, restaurants and where to buy groceries can be added. One copy of a resort Welcome Book is usually provided in each cabin. Additional copies for the office or lodge come in handy as well.

"Why do I need a Welcome Book in my cabins?"

Here are just a few things a resort Welcome Book can accomplish.

- They create a positive "first impression" and welcome guests to your property.
- They communicate your resort rules, regulations, and expectations.
- They save you time by including answers to frequently asked questions.
- They increase your sales by advertising your resort gift shop, bait, restaurant, or rental items such as boats and motors.
- They reduce liability concerns by clearly defining your policies and addressing safety issues.
- They provide valuable information to enhance your guests' total vacation experience.
- They educate and inform guests on issues important to your resort and the resorting industry. Catch and release information is one example.
- They can generate future repeat and word-of-mouth reservations.
- They help promote your community and other local businesses to your guests.

"What type of binder should I use to begin my Welcome Book?"

I recommended many alternatives to the commonly used 3-ring binder, such as a 12" x 12" leather-bound scrapbook, an artist's sketchbook, photo albums, handmade paper or birch bark books, newsletters, and more. I believe that if you go to the time and expense of making a welcome book, you want your guests to actually pick it up and read it. Put something eye catching or warm and welcoming on the cover.

Items such as your welcome letter, or printing your cover letter on decorated paper that features an "up north" or outdoor theme, can be very appealing. Add resort photos, graphics, or splashes of color. Try to create an impression on the cover that represents your resort and attracts your customer.

"What do I include inside my Welcome Book?"

This can be a challenging question. I suggest prioritizing your information. Include your welcome letter, resort rules, regulations, and basic maps. Then add to your books as time permits. Add copies of chamber of commerce guest guides, promotional brochures from local businesses, lake maps and aerial photos from the DNR website. Your book is your resort's. Add what you think is needed, and don't forget to subtract once in awhile, too!

Lastly, we covered the fun, creative ways to liven up the inside contents of a welcome book with color, graphics, stickers, die-cuts, and more. Try adding a campfire sticker or marshmallow background paper if you have a "Campfire Rules" page. Highlight a poem with a frame of colored paper to make it stand out. Be creative and use your imagination. Keep costs down by using things on hand like leftover wallpaper.

Each participant received a colorful packet full of things to take home and use to create their own books. Printed background papers, nature-themed stickers, die-cut fish and fishing poles, summer-themed napkins, campfire songs, nature poems and stamps are just a few of the crafty items they received to get started!

Within a few hours, everyone was inspired to get going on their own welcome books and make them "something special". The class was amazingly enthusiastic! I was encouraged to present the topic again at the Fall Conference in a condensed version to inspire other resorters. Contact the CMR if you are interested in seeing this class offered during the Fall Convention.



Julie with a few of her creative books.

A HANDY TOOL

By Jennifer Bateman, Two Inlets Resort

I use this tool every Saturday when I check cabins after my cleaners complete their work. It is the DirtTamer Cordless Wet/Dry Vacuum and it has saved me time and spared my knees. It comes with a 13" extendible wand/crevice tool that I keep on the end at all times. It gets flies out of light fixtures and windowsills, sand and small pine needles out of corners in screen porches where my cleaners cannot reach. It also picks up dried food and dirt under cabinets or under the dining table where my cleaners might miss, and really just any little "speck" that you might normally have to bend over, pick up and stuff in your pocket. It cost around \$50. Its only downfall is that it is rather heavy. I have seen other cordless vacuums like it, but none with an extendible crevice tool, only stiff ones. Being able to bend and lengthen the crevice tool is a great feature when you need to get into those hard to reach places.



UP NORTH

By Julie Engle, Edgewild Resort

Up North. Much more than a place; it's a state of mind.
 Are we there yet?
 Slow down. There's no need for speed limits, Up North.
 Marvel at the magnificent pine trees.
 Listen. It's quiet up here, but not so quiet. The breeze
 in the trees; the birds; noises the woods make.
 Watch a squirrel navigate from branch to branch on the
 tree-top superhighway.
 Smile a little. An eagle glides effortlessly over your head.
 Breathe deep, really deep. The woods have a smell all
 their own. Fresh, sweet. Let it fill you.
 The loons are calling you to the lake.
 Stroll out on the dock; the waves quietly lap along the
 shore. Skip a rock across the water — three, four, plop! A
 motionless heron watches from his one-legged perch.
 Feel the sun on your face, the sparkles on the water.
 Sit back. Put your feet up. Notice the ripples on the lake
 — a fish jumped.
 Feel a thrumming hummingbird whiz past your lawn chair.
 Watch the clouds roll slowly by and the sky glow pink
 with the sunset.
 Pull on your favorite sweatshirt, the soft comfy one that
 reminds you of the woods.
 Set another log on the crackling campfire. Hold your
 marshmallow stick down near the coals. Puffy, toasted
 golden brown, a wisp of steam escaping: perfect!
 Relax; let your shoulders sag.
 Soon, you too will arrive, Up North.

SHOPPING TIPS FOR LODGE LIGHTING

By Rick & Penny Brynildson, East Silent Resort

After shopping around for lodge lighting here are some tips we have to share.

1. Ask at Home Depot, Lowes, Menards etc. for more choices than what you see at their stores. What you see is only a small percentage of what you can get. They have many catalogs to look through.
2. Go to ebay and type in lodge lighting or any variation - we have found many items there. We've used searches such as "bear lamp", "deer lamp", "pine cone lamp", "antler chandelier", etc. This is great when you have a particular theme or "feel" you are trying to achieve in your buildings.
3. Purchase a log homes magazine and look at the advertisements in the back - many leads.
4. Go to a lighting store and ask if you get the make and model of something you like. Then you can do an internet search and find what you want perhaps a bit less expensive.
5. Cabela's and Wild Wings also have some - again, expensive. We have found from experience, if you are at a sport show where they are set up and have something you want in their display - you may be able to get a great discount if you pick it up at the end of the show - we saved over 50% on a wrought iron bed that way.



Hope this helps!

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RECIPES

RECIPES FOR YOUR RESORT

By Pat Addler, Cedar Rapids Lodge

EASY CAMPFIRE S'MORES

Marshmallows
Fudge-striped cookies

Roast marshmallow and put between 2 cookies. Tasty, easy and no mess!

SHUTTER-UPPERS

Saltine crackers
Kraft caramels
Marshmallows

Put marshmallow on roasting stick, unwrap caramel and put on stick with marshmallow. Caramel has to be at the end of the roasting stick so that you can slip both marshmallow & caramel onto crackers together. It is very difficult for kids to carry on a conversation when eating these, thus the name!

ITALIAN BEEF

3-4 pound beef roast
1 dry packet Italian dressing
1 dry packet onion soup mix

Put roast in crock-pot, cut in pieces to fit in pot. Sprinkle dry packets over meat. Cook on high 6-8 hrs. Remove meat, shred & return to crock-pot. Serve on buns. You can also use pork roast if desired.

SNAPPY PIZZAS

1 pkg. hamburger buns
15 oz. can pizza sauce
Pizza toppings & cheese

Preheat oven to 400. Separate buns and lay on cookie sheet. Spread pizza sauce on buns & add any toppings, then cheese. Brown in oven for 20 minutes. Kids love 'em!

MONKEY BREAD

3 cans refrigerator biscuits
2/3 cup granulated sugar
2 T. cinnamon
1 stick margarine
1-cup brown sugar
1 tsp. cinnamon

Cut biscuits in fourths; mix granulated sugar & cinnamon in a one-gallon plastic bag. Shake biscuit pieces in the mixture in bag. Put coated pieces in a greased bundt pan. Melt butter, brown sugar & 1tsp. cinnamon together: Pour over biscuits in pan. Bake at 350 for 30 min. Invert pan onto plate & serve.

CMR SCHOOL OF RESORTING
"DECORATING ON A SHOESTRING"

By Sheila Niemeyer, Rugged River Resort

If you were not one of the 14 resorters who attended the March 2 class, "Decorating on a Shoestring", you missed an enjoyable day! Ann Moroz hosted the class at Bear Paw Resort in Park Rapids.



Made by Mary Smerling, Paradise Resort - the cut-outs in the panes are "Wallies" - purchased wallpaper cut-outs. Then she dolled up the top left corner.

Several resorters shared some of their favorite decorating ideas including window treatments, creative uses for old photos and decorating old

windows with quilts and cutouts. We shared several ideas for old and new canoe paddles, boat



Sheila Niemeyer, Niemeyer's Rugged River Resort, with a sign she bought and will use for ideas to make her own.

oars, as well as great ways to use left over siding and trim. We enjoyed our bag lunches and the informal cracker barrel discussions from wholesalers to cabin cleaners. We finished off the day with a tour of one of the Moroz's newest cabins and a short walk down the road to Two Inlets Resort to tour the Bateman's newest cabin.

We all went home anxious to start on a project using our new found decorating ideas!



Susan Ferguson, Pine Terrace Resort, with an old multi-paned window that she decorated with handmade quilt squares.

Those who attended were; Keri Ball, Cass Lake Lodge Resort, Darlene Robinson, Cedar Bay Resort, Jennifer Bateman, Two Inlets Resort, Penny Regier, Sunset Bay Resort, Beth Novotny, Hyde-A-Way Bay Resort, Susan Ferguson, Pine Terrace Resort, Susan Ugstad, Balsam Bay Resort, Jackie Novak, Tepee Tonka Resort, Pat Addler, Cedar Rapids Lodge, Lois O'Callaghan, Rose Ridge Resort, Judy Czeck, Hidden Haven Resort, Mary Smerling, Paradise Resort, Ann Moroz, Bear Paw Resort and Sheila Niemeyer, Rugged River Resort.

I encourage anyone to coordinate, host and/or teach a CMR School of Resorting class. It could not be easier or more fun! Contact me, Sheila Niemeyer, Niemeyer's Rugged River Resort at 218-829-4587 or relax@ruggedriverresort.com for more information.

THE CRACKER-BARREL A BARREL FULL OF PROFIT MAKING IDEAS

By Pat Addler, Cedar Rapids Lodge



- ❖ Stain formula for logs or rough lumber. (Makes 5 gallons)
4 gallons Linseed Oil
1 gallon Turpentine
3 pounds of Beeswax
- ❖ Aspirin in minnow tanks prolongs the life of minnows.
- ❖ One bed sheet makes 4 pillow cases.

...AND MUCH, MUCH MORE...

HERE ARE A COUPLE OF TIPS FROM 2004!

To clean oven and grill racks - lay them on the grass overnight. If you get to them early in the morning while still covered with dew, you can easily sponge them clean.

Uses for used dryer sheets:

Dust with a used dryer sheet. Since it is designed to help eliminate static cling, it will help keep dust from resettling. They work especially well on TV and monitor screens.

To clean baked on food from a pan put a sheet in the pan, fill with water, let sit overnight, and sponge clean. The anti-static agents apparently weaken the bond between the food and the pan while the fabric softening agents soften the baked-on food.

This article was originally printed in the first issue of the Minnesota Resort Congressional Log, published in 1984. It is amazing how many of these ideas still hold true today!

- ❖ A "Thank You" note to your guests, sent promptly, thanking them for their visit.
- ❖ Give a brochure to your guests on departure with the suggestion that they give it to a friend.
- ❖ A "Vacation Savings Plan", a printed offer for a discount to your guests when they refer a new customer to your resort.
- ❖ Boat rental and other marina services can raise your annual revenue as much as 20%.
- ❖ Fireplaces extend your rental season.
- ❖ Pop machines in outside traffic areas raise sales volume and bring a higher price.
- ❖ Painting galvanized bait tanks with aluminum paint prolongs the life of your minnows.
- ❖ Restricting bookings to one-week blocks restricts your market.
- ❖ Sign for your bathrooms, "If you didn't eat it first, don't flush it here!"

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To pick up animal hair, even on furniture, rub the area with a used dryer sheet

BOAT AND WATER SAFETY TIPS FOR RESORTS AND CAMPGROUNDS

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of Natural Resources*

NOTE: This article is not intended as a complete summary of laws to boating and/or water safety. Consult the **Minnesota Boating Guide**, **Waters and Watercraft Statutes and Rules** and the Minnesota Department of Health for further information. Or call us toll free at 1-888-MINNDNR and ask for boat and water safety. They can email questions to boatandwater@dnr.state.mn.us. The county sheriff's water patrol deputies and your local DNR conservation officers have a wealth of knowledge as well regarding boating laws affecting your resort or campground. Find us on the Internet at www.dnr.state.mn.us

REGISTRATION (LICENSING)

* Where do I register my boats?

Go to any Deputy Registrar (anyplace you license your car) or the DNR License Bureau at 500 Lafayette Road in St. Paul, and you will receive your boat licenses and decals on the spot. If you apply through the mail, it may take several weeks before you receive your decals and cards.

* What needs to be registered?

All motorized watercraft of any length (including electric) and all non-motorized craft over 9 feet in length. There are other exceptions, but they usually do not affect resorts. Persons bringing boats in from out-of-state **must either register their boat or canoe in their state or in Minnesota**. An out-of-state registration is valid for 90 days. If another state does not require canoes to be registered, as an example, the owner must register it in that state (most states will accept voluntary registration) or register it in Minnesota.

* How much is it going to cost?

LICENSE FEE FOR 3 CALENDAR YEARS for RENTAL BOATS

19 feet or less & used for rent - \$6.00

*Over 19 feet to less than 26 feet - \$30.00**

*Over 19 feet with operator - \$50.00

*Duplicate or Transfer - \$3.00

*except personal watercraft, **\$20.00 until 1/1/2000

See the Minnesota Boating Guide for complete information.

* How do I display my registration numbers and decals?

The license number appearing on the registration card must be displayed in 3-inch high numbers and letters on both sides of the forward half of the boat along with the current validation decals. Non-motorized canoes, sailboats, sailboards and paddleboats need only display the current decals, which have the license number on them. If they have a motor, the 3-inch numbers or letters are required. Remember **ONLY THE CURRENT DECALS SHOULD BE VISIBLE. REMOVE OR COVER ALL EXPIRED DECALS.**

* Any special rules for resorts?

Yes! Resorts and other persons who rent boats (with or without lodging) may keep the license card at the resort if the name of their business is painted or placed near the stern of the boat in 3-inch high letters on both sides.

SAFETY EQUIPMENT

* Personal Flotation Devices (PFDs or life preservers)

Each person on board any watercraft must have Coast Guard approved Type I, II, or III wearable PFD readily accessible or worn. In addition, on boats 16 feet or longer (except canoes and kayaks), there must also be at least one Coast Guard approved Type IV throw able device, such as a buoyant cushion or ring buoy immediately available.

* Lights

Any watercraft used between **sunset** and **sunrise** must be equipped with the proper lights.

* Non-motorized craft need only display a white light (flashlight) in time to avoid a collision.

* Motorboats (electric included) must display a red-green bow light and a white 360° stern light when underway, and a 360° white light when anchored.

* Other Equipment

Equipment requirements vary with the size of the craft, equipment on board and propulsion - see the latest **Minnesota Boating Guide** for details.

* Equipment Responsibility

The rental agent (resort) is required by law to provide the life preservers and other safety equipment required by law. (The rental agent **may** charge a fee for this, except for personal watercraft). The resort operator probably will keep all life preservers or PFDs in the cabin or boathouse. It is highly recommended that each registrant initial or sign a form when they sign in that indicates they were informed about the whereabouts of PFDs, lights, etc. and that they are required to have them on board. Renters may use their own PFDs, but should be made aware of those provided by the resort anyway. Those guests who bring their own boats with them are generally responsible for their own craft.

* Must my rental boats be inspected?

Yes! All rental watercraft **must** be inspected periodically by the county sheriff. Deputies will check your boats to see that they



comply with the appropriate Minnesota safety standards. They will also inspect oars, paddles and PFDs to be sure they are in service-able condition. When it passes inspection, an inspection sticker, valid for one year, will be placed on the boat, usually near the capacity plate. If you have rental boats that have not been inspected, simply call the sheriff's department, and they will send out a deputy to do the inspection.

PERSONAL WATERCRAFT RENTALS

*** What is a personal watercraft?**

Sometimes known as **Jet Skis, Wet Jets, Wave Runners, Sea Doos**, water scooters etc., a personal water-craft is defined by law as a motorboat that 1) is powered by an inboard motor powering a water jet pump or by an outboard or propeller-driven motor; and 2) is designed to be operated by a person or persons sitting, or kneeling on the craft, rather than in the conventional manner of sitting or standing inside a motorboat. There are specific restrictions on personal watercraft regarding speed near shore, anchored boats & docks, wake jumping and hours of operation - see the **Minnesota Boating Guide**.

A person that offers personal watercraft for rent must provide: 1) a summary of the laws and rules regarding personal watercraft operation, 2) instruction to the renter on laws, rules and the safe operation of the craft and 3) all required safety equipment, including a USCG approved wearable life preserver (Type I, II, III or V) of the correct size for each rider as well as any other required equipment (fire extinguisher etc.) at no additional charge. In addition, a DNR personal water-craft rules decal must be on the craft where it is visible to the operator.

Rental operations are required to keep track of the dates and names of all persons who rent PWC, (and for those 13-17 years of age - the watercraft operator's permit number) on a log sheet. The log sheet must be available for inspection by DNR conservation officers or county sheriffs for a period of at least six months.

AGEREQUIREMENTS

Motorboats – Except Personal Watercraft

Less than 12 years old

1. 25 hp or less - no restriction,
2. more than 25 thru 75 hp –must have someone at least 21 on board in reach of controls,
3. over 75 hp - cannot operate, even with adult on board

12-17 years old

1. 25 hp or less - no restriction,
2. over 25 hp - must have: a watercraft operator's permit, or someone at least 21 on board in reach of controls.

Personal Watercraft - (PWC, Jet Skis etc.) - regardless of horsepower

Less than 13 years old

Cannot operate, even with adult on board.

13 years old

Must either have: * someone at least 21 on board, *or*

FREE PUBLICATIONS FROM THE DNR

Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

For information on boat and water safety, the DNR has these publications available at no charge.

Call 651-296-3336 or Toll Free 1-888-646-6367.

- * Danger, Thin Ice - ice safety brochure
- * Recommended Ice Thickness Safety Card
- * Boat & Water Safety Publications and Video Loan Catalog
- * Minnesota Boating Guide (laws & rules)
- * Water Safety Coloring Book (ages 3-7)
- * Buoy Identification Sticker
- * Alcohol Estimation Card (shows relationship between number of drinks and alcohol level for men and women)
- * Personal Watercraft Laws
- * Personal Watercraft Laws Decal
- * Hypothermia, the Cold Facts - cold water safety
- * Watercraft Operator Permit Packet – ages 12 - 17
- * H2O Toons (boating safety comic book for ages 7-12)

* a watercraft operator's permit and be in visual supervision by someone at least 21

14-17 years old

Must either have: *watercraft operator's permit, *or* * have someone at least 21 on board

* It is unlawful for the owner of the personal watercraft to permit its operation in violation of the age or permit restrictions.

*Watercraft operator permit materials are available from the MN DNR.

POOLS, DOCKS, STRUCTURES, AND BUOYS

*** Swim Areas**

Public swimming areas (including resorts) must be marked off using the standard Uniform State Water-way System Buoy for "Boats - Keep Out". The buoy is white with orange bands at the top and bottom and an orange diamond with a cross inside. The words "SWIM AREA" appear in black letters. Swim buoys must be a minimum of 9" in diameter, and extend no less than 36" above the water. Cost for manufactured buoys is approximately \$75.00 apiece plus anchor and cable. A permit is required from the county sheriff.

*** Swimming Pools**

Swimming pools at resorts or campgrounds must meet the standards established by the Minnesota Department of Health.

*** Docks**

Docks extending from shore require no permit if they are seasonal and do not interfere with navigation.

*** Floating Structures**

Floating structures (swim rafts, slalom courses, mooring buoys etc.) not extending from shore require a permit from the county sheriff, if left out after sunset.

RACCOON-PROOFING BUILDINGS

Reprinted with permission from the Canadian Federation of Humane Societies

Uncapped chimneys, openings into attics, rotting roofs and loose shingles are all invitations to raccoons seeking a place to den. Being good climbers, they will use nearby trees, television towers or down spouts to gain access onto a roof. Raccoons will also live in chimneys that are uncapped. If this happens, never light a fire in an attempt to smoke them out, as this is inhumane and dangerous. There are a number of things a homeowner can do to discourage raccoons.

Outdoor, movement-activated security floodlights can startle raccoons when they light up. Another outdoor alternative is to hang 100-watt lights at 15 square meter intervals, or floodlighting. A low voltage battery- operated light that does not give off heat can be secured to a rafter in an attic. (Animals may chew the wires of non-battery lights.) However, this will not be effective if the animal can avoid the light source. Some raccoons may become accustomed to outside lights.

Make sure that all eaves are in good condition and that there are no weak areas or holes which would allow access to the attic.

- Check that roof shingles are in good condition, replacing those that are curled, cracked, worn or missing.
- Screen bathroom, stove and other vents and attic openings with heavy, rustproof 1" X 1" wire mesh. (Avoid chicken wire as animals will tear the mesh and sometimes get caught in it.)
- Secure the wire with screws or nails, overlapping the openings by 5-6 cm on all sides..
- Ensure that chimney caps are installed and securely fastened.
- Screen or cover window wells.
- Annually remove debris from eaves troughs to prevent overflow or wood rot and check for damage from ice and snow.
- Trim tree branches that overhang the house and remove unused TV towers.
- Check for possible access to outbuildings and garages using the same methods as for the house.
- Keep pet doors locked at night and keep pets indoors.

Note: Homeowners should not attempt to complete these repairs on their own if conditions on the roof are hazardous or if they are uncomfortable with heights.

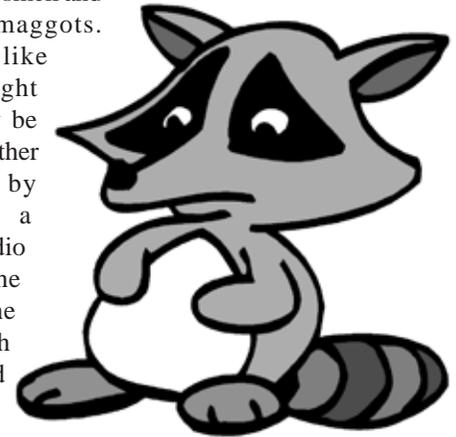
In built-up areas, it would be wise to check with neighbors before installing lights or using other deterrents which may bother other people.

Problem Solving

If raccoons have already set up residence in your house, it is important that they vacate the premises before you complete your raccoon-proofing operations. Not only would the animals die a cruel death of starvation and thirst if locked in, but you would be left with a rotting

carcass which would smell and attract flies and maggots.

Raccoons do not like loud noises or bright lights, so they may be encouraged to find other accommodation by simply placing a battery-operated radio played loudly in the area, or keeping the area brightly lit with battery- operated lights. Eliminate potential fire hazards



of lights in enclosed areas by securing them so that they cannot be knocked over by animals.

Raccoons may be encouraged to move out of the attic, garage or other building by having someone visit them several times a day and shining a light towards the nesting area. This regular disturbance may encourage the mother to move to a quieter location.

Determine Where They Are Getting In.

Begin by inspecting the roof to find all the entry holes and potential areas where animals could enter the roof, attic, overhang, and chimney or under the deck. Once you think you have found the entry hole or holes, try to determine the species of animal you are dealing with. This can be done by placing a meat source (for example sardines) and a bit of peanut butter into the entry hole. Raccoons and skunks will eat both the meat and the peanut butter, whereas squirrels or mice will eat only the peanut butter. Check for raccoon evidence in the morning and squirrel evidence in the afternoon. Raccoon entrance holes can be about the size of a football. Squirrel entrance holes will be much smaller (about the size of a tennis ball), but squirrels will also use the larger holes.

Ensure That All Raccoons Have Left.

This is especially important between late March and July when raccoons have their young. Separating a mother raccoon from her young will result in their slow and inhumane death. A mother separated from her young can do substantial damage trying to get to them. If the raccoon does have a family, the best course of action is to be patient and do nothing until the young are approximately 12 weeks of age. During adverse weather conditions and because of lack of food, raccoons may not leave the den site for three weeks or longer. This should be considered when determining the presence of raccoons.

Before closing the entry hole permanently, be sure you will be available over the next few days (or weeks in winter) to monitor for noises that indicate animals trapped inside. You should also do a food test to determine for sure that all the animals have left. Place a bit of peanut butter inside the hole so that only an animal inside could get it.

Cover the hole with galvanized steel screening secured in a way that it can be removed to check the food test or if an animal is locked inside. (Do not use chicken wire as it can stretch and an animal could get its head stuck in it.) Check it every day and if it is untouched for several days, it has been successful. If the food is gone, indicating that an animal is still inside, open the entrance hole, allow time for it to leave and start again.

Composters

The use of composters is on the increase and they are very tempting to raccoons. Besides eating refuse, raccoons can become trapped in composters. To avoid this:

- All composters should be 100% animal-proof or they will attract rats, as well as other animals.
- Make sure that the lid is secure. Use a bungee cord or a heavy weight if necessary.
- Use lighting suggestions to discourage all nocturnal animals.

Note: If a raccoon does become trapped in the composter, make a ramp using a board long enough to extend from the bottom of the composter over the top. Leave the animal alone to allow it to escape. Do not reach in and try to assist the raccoon as they may bite when frightened.

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Owner/Manager _____ Years in resorting _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ No. of rental units _____ No. of bedrooms _____

Resort E-mail Address _____ Resort Website Address _____

Membership investment is only \$9.50 per bedroom (minimum of \$95, maximum of \$475).

Amount of check enclosed _____ Please circle.....New.....Renewal

Send to: CMR, Vicky Krattenmaker, Office Manager, Willow Bay Resort, 5280 - 132nd Ave. NE Spicer, MN 56288

WELCOME OUR NEW CMR MEMBERS!

By Pat Addler, Cedar Rapids Lodge

Mark Weber, North Shore Resort, Spicer
Tom & Joyce Krueger, Sunny Point Resort, Nevis
Al & Michelle Holte, Morris Point Lake View Lodge, Baudette
John & Lisa Mathews, Island View Resort
Associate Members
Versatile Vehicles, Inc., Gaby Accad, President, Bob Besse, Sales Mgr.



WWW.MINNESOTA-RESORTS.COM CMR ADVERTISING UPDATE

By Ed & Joanne Fussy, Pimushe Resort

The marketing leg of the CMR board is working hard to bring more guests to our website, www.minnesota-resorts.com. Here a list of where we are advertising this year.

- The Minnesota 2004 Travel Guide
- A banner ad on the Explore Minnesota website
- A 12-week classified ad in the MN Statewide Classifieds. This ad will run in most Minnesota newspapers
- The DNR 2004 Minnesota Fishing Regulations Book
- The Minnesota Fishing 2004 Guide, which lists all the hot-spot fishing locations.

We have also done some website enhancements and more ads are yet to be placed!

2004 GOVERNOR'S CONFERENCE ON TOURISM

By Dawn Sullivan, Woodland Trails Resort

This was my first trip to a tourism conference and I could never have imagined all the great people I would meet and the quality information I would receive. I also learned a lot more about tourism as a whole in the State of Minnesota. Tourism in our State comprises everything from a northwoods canoe expedition to visits to our lakes, rivers, and parks to the Big City experience. Our great state offers everything a vacationer could want. If we remain diligent, maybe someday soon our Legislators will realize how important the tourism industry is to Minnesota and do their part to help protect it.



Dawn Sullivan, Woodlawn Trails Resort
Ragnar - the MN Vikings mascot
Ann Moroz, Bear Paw Resort

I also learned a lot more about tourism as a whole in the State of Minnesota. Tourism in our State comprises everything from a northwoods canoe expedition to visits to our lakes, rivers, and parks to the Big City experience. Our great state offers everything a vacationer could want. If we remain diligent, maybe someday soon our Legislators will realize how important the tourism industry is to Minnesota and do their part to help protect it.

I ALSO LEARNED A LOT MORE ABOUT TOURISM AS A WHOLE....

The opening speaker was Robert Stevenson, author of the renowned book "How to Soar Like an Eagle in a World Full of Turkeys." Mr. Stevenson discussed leadership. He stressed how to become a leader, respected by your employees and peers, and how to motivate your team.

Mr. Stevenson impressed upon us that everything we do becomes part of our word-of-mouth marketing campaign. We must always strive to keep changing and improving; past success does not mean you will remain successful. You are only as good as your next experience.

Sandra Hughes, Vice-President of Travel Services with AAA, talked to us about a study completed for AAA. One of the facts she discussed is that multi-household leisure travel is on the rise. Ninety percent of consumers with a household income of \$30,000+ have taken a trip 75 miles or more from home that included paid overnight accommodations in the last 5 years. Seventy-seven percent of

them took a trip with extended family or friends. Seventy-five percent of them used the Internet as an information source to plan their trip. She also noted that to reach the auto travel market we need to improve internet access to get the needed information to them, provide packaging options and use targeted marketing to reach them. I think many of us in the Resort Industry can attest to an increase in group rentals.

At the Internet Top Ten Seminar we learned about website creation and maintenance from Mike Swartz from Atomic Playpen, Lisa Paxton from the Brainerd Lakes Area Chamber, and Joan Hummel from the Minnesota Office of Tourism. The hosts of this forum discussed, among other things, how to keep your website fresh. We learned that outdated websites could do more damage than good. You definitely do not want to give out bad information or point customers in the wrong direction. Always develop your website from the consumer's perspective. If you build your site primarily from a business perspective, you might turn off your customers.

I wish I had space to share everything I learned with all of you, but I can say the thing that kept coming up in every seminar and every discussion was, "Think about what your target market wants and find ways to get it directly to them."

Overall, it was a great experience and I was glad to represent the Congress of Minnesota Resorts at the conference.

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Karen Baas, Tom Ethen, & Carol Mick

A STORY ABOUT A GRASS ROOTS "SNOWBALL"

By Bea Purdy, Birchmere Family Resort & Campground

"We don't want to be forced to sell our resort property to big business. People have told us we have a 'gold mine' at our resort. —But there is a big difference between a 'gold mine' and a 'treasure.' We do not need a gold mine. —We just want to go on protecting a treasure— and that treasure, my friends, belongs to YOU!"

It was June of 2003, and those were my closing words in a statement directed to a gathering of about 75 Becker County resorters and local business people. The meeting was requested by the Becker County Board of Commissioners in response to objections to a \$6,000 per cabin "added site value" that the local assessor had arbitrarily placed on the assessments of every resort in the county. It also challenged the County Board to take steps to preserve and protect resorts and tourism in Becker County.

However, the story began long before June of 2003...

IT ALL BEGAN WITH CLOUDY SKIES -

Eleven years earlier, Bill and I had found our real estate assessment had doubled in a single year. We made it a point to learn about reading assessments—and started asking questions. Our point was that if it was wrong, it needed fixing! Admittedly, there were years when our insistence on accuracy got scary—like the year we realized 300 feet of lakeshore that wasn't showing on our assessment. In the name of integrity, we reported that, too—and found, years later, that

integrity would pay off when we addressed issues that affected not only our resort—or the County's resorts—but also the community and, ultimately, the entire state.

In 2001, we became aware of the dwindling numbers of resorts in Minnesota and the attractiveness of lakeshore properties such as ours to developers. The handwriting on the wall was obvious. Resort properties were becoming dramatically more valuable as land than as businesses; and as quickly as they were sold to developers, more resorts forever disappeared from Minnesota's shorelines.

In July of 2002, the Frazee Forum, a small, community-based newspaper, agreed to do a feature story pointing out the value of small resorts to tourism-based communities such as ours and stressing that losing them would mean that Minnesota's lakes (which belong to the people of the state) would become inaccessible to all but the very wealthy. For us, this was the beginning of an awareness-building effort that has grown beyond our wildest imagination!

IT HAD BEGUN TO FLURRY -

Knowledge of the \$6,000 per cabin "added site value" came too late in 2003 for us to alert our fellow resorters. Ours was one of the last township boards of equalization meetings on the schedule, and most other resorts had already missed the boat. We gave it "the old college try", though, and approached the township, then the county board to request having the added site value removed from not only our assessment but also those of all resorts in the County. Deferring a decision until a later date, the County Board requested an open forum for resorters and community members to discuss this and other resort issues.

And so they came that day—resorters from all over the county—and business people, too—bankers, accountants, real estate agents, retailers, wholesalers—even our mechanic who smiled and greeted the Commissioners as they filed in and whispered, "I've worked on all their cars!" The community cared!

And along with affirming the unfairness of the \$6,000 "added site value", they supported our request that the County appoint a Task Force to study resort issues and what can be done to preserve tourism in Becker County.

Due to the protocol of the appeal process, we were unsuccessful at getting a countywide change in the

The Minnesota Resorter Magazine is mailed to resorts and related businesses. It is published four times a year.

The next issue will be Summer 2004.

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“added site value” (which we will re-address this year)—but the Commissioners recognized looming problems and established the Becker County Resort Preservation Task Force in mid-July.

FLURRIES TURN TO SNOW -

“Bill and I were asked to choose members of the Task Force. Within 24 hours, we had surrounded ourselves with a group of the most intelligent thinking people we could find, representing resorts, county government, the Detroit Lakes Chamber of Commerce, and the business community. The director of the Pelican Rapids Chamber and another resorter who asked to participate would later join us. Others within the community offered to lend any support and expertise they could. I believe our first words were, “O.K. Here we are—now what?”

Therefore, we did what all “think-out-of-the-box” people do: We brainstormed!

In addition, we educated ourselves—on the tax system, on how our situation compared to other resort communities, on how to approach the State Legislature, on old and new issues for resorts and tourism in general, etc., etc. Pete McEwen (Whaley’s Resort) had marketing research experience and gathered hard numbers on the economic effect of resorts on Becker County and statewide—and we learned just how devastating the “trickle” effect of resort loss would be. We examined a myriad of possible solutions. We constantly defined, prioritized and re-prioritized our objectives. Near the end of the year, David Burd (Fair Hills Resort) and Dan Berg (Lakecrest Resort) consolidated our findings and proposals into a two-page article entitled, “Losing Resorts—We All Lose”, which became the basis of an awareness-building campaign to be directed throughout the State.

We had built our “snowball.”

AND THE SNOWBALL ROLLS -

We shared “Losing Resorts” at every available opportunity. Dave Hochhalter (D.L. Chamber) and Cleone Stewart (Chamber Tourism Director) contacted the Minnesota Chamber and Chambers in other tourism areas, urging them to support us and organize their areas. Copies were given to dozens of local business people. Jane Aschnewitz (Pelican Rapids Chamber) took copies home to Otter Tail County. “Losing Resorts” was shared with the CMR and the MRCA, as well as our local legislators. Rep. Dean Simpson and former Rep. Roxann Daggett educated us on the process of writing a bill—and our own Dave Thompson and the MRCA’s Tom Day added their input. The wonderful kind of support that keeps you going was coming from every direction!

In addition, no one was saying, “You guys are nuts!”

We took our findings to the Becker County Board of Commissioners, and they voted unanimously to sign a cover letter for “Losing Resorts.” A week later, the Detroit Lakes City

Council gave us a similar letter of support. Adding a letter from a prominent retailer and an article written by a local resort real estate agent, we now had a “packet” together that we mailed to every legislator on the House and Senate Tax Committees. Resorters from other counties began to call to find out how they could get something going in their own communities—and several have! The awareness level was growing—and the CMR Day on the Hill affirmed that things were happening in Becker County!



AND ROLLS -

At this writing, we are waiting for a final draft of a bill. As soon as we have a bill number, our “packets” will be on their way to every other Legislator in both the House and Senate, as well as to a long list of state trade organizations, more of our local business communities, and resorts county wide—all asking for support. By the time this article is published, I will have spoken with the Chairman of the County Board, seeking yet another letter—this one to all County Boards in Minnesota, asking them to listen to their resorters, their communities, and their constituents and to get involved.

AND WHERE IT STOPS -

Who knows? The support of local government is very powerful. Rep. Simpson told us that early in the game, and other legislators seem to agree. Additionally, Bill and I feel strongly that a unified resort industry approach could only strengthen the impact of our dealings with State government. One thing is sure—every Minnesota resorter needs to get involved in his/her own county. We will help you!

It is possible that proposed legislation from the CMR, MRCA, and the Becker County Resort Preservation Task Force will not pass in this legislative session. There is always next year—and if resorters like you and us work together and with our counties, our “snowball” could very well become an “avalanche”!

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CONGRESS OF MINNESOTA
RESORTS LEGISLATIVE DAY ON
THE HILL 2004

By Dave Thompson, CMR Legislative Chairperson, Fisherman's Village Resort

Well, we have completed another very successful Day on the Hill



The CMR Legislative Team
 Connie Filley, Cedar Point Resort
 Ed Becker, In-We-Go Resort
 Joel Carlson, CMR lobbyist
 Dave Thompson, Fisherman's Village Resort
 Mark Novotny, Hyde-A-Way Bay Resort

event. Our legislative committee spent many hours planning this year's event and it all went very well. This year we provided a 40 passenger tour bus that started a free pick-up route in Park Rapids on February 24th and stopped in Wadena, Motley, Little Falls and St. Cloud on its way to our destination at the Capitol. This year we had 43 that planned to attend the

event. We had 33 who made the trip, with some new resort babies born at the last minute and some family emergencies. Our final numbers were very impressive and a new high.

We again used the Sheraton Midway in St. Paul for our base of operations. On Tuesday afternoon after checking in at the hotel our event started off with a visit from John Edman of the Minnesota Office of Tourism. John brought us up to speed on the new bill that the Office is proposing that will change how the Office will be managed inside the state's government.

Then we made our initial trip to the Capitol and met with Senate Minority Leader Dick Day at the State Office Building. Senator Day expressed lots of interest in this year's agenda and, in particular, our Post Labor Day School Start Bill. Next we headed to the Capitol itself for a special meeting with the Governor's Chief of Staff Dan McElroy in the very impressive Governor's Reception Room. Mr. McElroy met with us in the Governor's absence. Connie Filley highlighted our legislative agenda, Pete McEwen highlighted the fiscal impact research he has done on the declining number of Resorts and I gave a brief presentation on the Fire Marshal Task Force conclusions and the CMR's position to fund the department.

We then headed out the Capitol grand entrance for a quick group photo and then back to the hotel for our evening meal. We completed the evening by meeting with our Government Affairs/Lobbyist Joel Carlson in our hospitality suite. Joel handed out our member packets with the big day's agenda. Then we handed out legislator packets

and assigned a legislator presenter for each of the 30 legislator meetings we had planned. Joel and his professional assistant, Tami LeFavor, did a tremendous job of putting together this year's packets. They were filled with the bills we were either sponsoring or opposing and tourism data sheets for each legislator to use for reference.

Day 2 began with a 7:45 am bus ride to the State Office Building and our welcome room stocked with coffee and donuts. We started the day with a meeting with the House Leadership, Majority Leader Erik Paulson and Speaker Steve Sviggum. Then it was off to all of our scheduled meetings for the day. Around noon we had a box lunch served and then off again to afternoon meetings. Here is a list of the 31 Legislators we met with:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Speaker of the House Steve Sviggum | Sen. Cal Larson |
| Senate Majority Leader Dick Day | Rep. Irv Anderson |
| House Majority Leader Erik Paulson | Rep. Greg Blaine |
| House Minority Leader Matt Entenza | Rep. Bud Nornes |
| Senate Majority Leader Dean Johnson | Sen. Carrie Ruud |
| Rep. Bud Heidgerken | Rep. Mary Ellen Otremba |
| Rep. Kent Eken | Sen. Tom Saxhaug |
| Rep. Larry Howes | Rep. Al Juhnke |
| Rep. Tom Rukavina | Sen. Rod Skoe |
| Rep. Tony Sertich | Sen. Tom Bakk |
| Rep. Maxine Penas | Rep. Dale Waltz |
| Rep. Doug Lingren | Rep. Torrey Westrom |
| Rep. David Dill | Sen. Dallas Sams |
| Sen. LeRoy Stumpf | |
| Rep. Doug Fuller | |
| Sen. Paul Koering | |
| Rep. Loren Solberg | |
| Sen. David Tomassoni | |
| Rep. Dean Simpson | |



Many of the CMR Day on the Hill 2004 Attendees.

Former resort owner Terry Duhn (Hunt's Resort), our bus driver, picked us up on the Capitol steps at the end of the day. We headed back to our drop off points with a short stop for an evening meal on the way. This year's attendees deserve a big thank you from all resorters for their

commitment and sacrifice of two full days and some personal expenses on behalf of all resorters. Here is a list of the attendees:

- | | |
|---------------------------|-------------------|
| Jennifer Bateman | Two Inlets Resort |
| Ann Moroz | Bear Paw Resort |
| Dave and Mary Jane Keller | Brookside Resort |
| Shiela Blandford | Tamarac Resort |

Al Shallbetter
 Pete and Marge MeEwen
 Bill and Bea Purdy
 Mark and Collin Novotny
 Ed Becker
 Connie and Dennis Filley
 Warren and Linda Anderson
 Jim and Karen Springsteel
 Ed and Joanne Fussy
 Alan and Jane Gunsbury
 Corby Niemeyer and Jim Larson
 Sherm Anderson
 Tom and Jeanne Pingel
 Paul and Becky Jensen
 Terry Duhn
 Sue Paradeis
 Dave Thompson

Whipporwill Resort
 Whaley's Resort
 Birchmere Resort
 Hyde-A-Way Bay Resort
 In-We-Go Resort
 Cedar Point Resort
 Northland Lodge
 Chippewa Lodge
 Pimushe Resort
 Quarterdeck Resort
 Niemeyer's Rugged River Resort
 Starlight Bay Resort
 Thunder Lake Lodge
 Weslake Resort
 Former Owner Hunt's Resort
 Shing Wako Resort
 Fisherman's Village Resort

Thanks also go to your CMR Board of Directors. This year we approved a very aggressive plan for the event. Special thanks go to your legislative committee members, Connie Filley, Ed Becker, Mark Novotny, and Joel Carlson. We decided the CMR would again this year, provide:

FREE transportation from out-state to the Capitol
 FREE hospitality suite with snacks and refreshments
 FREE Wednesday morning coffee and donuts
 FREE box lunch
 FREE attendee legislative packets
 FREE special legislative CMR badge and neck lanyard

As in the CMR motto, "Resorters Helping Resorters", the CMR provides this opportunity on behalf of all resorters in the state to benefit from our legislative effort. This is what a portion of your membership dues and the fall conference silent auction proceeds go towards. Resorters that are not CMR members, please be aware that everything the CMR does benefits us all. Please consider becoming a member of the CMR and be a participant with us at the Day on the Hill next year!



Paul Jensen, Weslake Resort, talking to Representative Nornes in his office.

TIME TO NOMINATE A CONGRESS OF MINNESOTA RESORTS 2004 RESORTERS OF THE YEAR!!

The Congress of Minnesota Resorts selects, through nomination by its members, one resort and resort owner that has shown a dedication to the improvement of the Minnesota Resort Industry by adopting and carrying out business policies and practices that reflect a personal pride in the industry as a whole. They also live up to the organization's motto of "Resorters Helping Resorters" by involvement in community activities and by displaying a willingness to help other resort owners in successfully operating Minnesota resorts.

To this end, any member of the Congress of Minnesota Resorts can submit a nomination for this prestigious award. Nominations must be received by June 1st each year. The nominating member is not required to verify the eligibility criteria. In the event none of the resorts nominated meet all the eligibility requirements, the awards committee will make a selection based on the resort most closely meeting the criteria and notify the winner. The winner will be asked to be present at the Annual Congress of Minnesota Resorts Fall Conference where the formal announcement and presentation will be made.

The awards committee in making their selection considers the following criteria:

- CMR member in good standing for the previous three consecutive years under the same ownership.
- Ability to maintain a successful and progressive resort.
- Involvement in community activities.
- History of helping and mentoring other resort owners/operators.
- At least five years between awards.
- Not a current member of the Awards Committee.

A nomination form was sent out with the February "Resorter Reporter", if not received or need a new form please contact the Congress of Minnesota Resorts office at 888-761-4245 or email: resorter@minnesota-resorts.com .

IF THE WALLS HAD EARS

By Ann Moroz, Bear Paw Resort

This is what they would have heard about our CMR lobbyist, Joel Carlson, at the Day on the Hill, 2004.

Majority Leader Erik Paulson, "Joel is one of the more respected lobbyists here."

Senate Minority Leader Dick Day, "You've got a good one."

Rep. Steve Smith, "He's one of the best lobbyists on the Hill."

Sen. Dean Johnson, "Joel's a hard worker. He serves you well and I trust him."

Governor's Chief of Staff Dan McElroy, "Joel's a fixture here, a well respected voice."

ASSESSMENT STATEMENT "FLOW CHART"

By Bea and Bill Purdy, Birchmere Family Resort & Campground

The subject of property tax assessments comes up repeatedly and now it is that time of year too. Over the years, we have made it a point to learn how to read and understand assessment statements, as well as the appeal process. We think this is important for EVERYONE to know, even if you currently do not have any questions about your own assessments.

With that in mind, we worked up a "Flow Chart" last year to help people educate themselves about assessments. The assessment appeal procedure is determined by the State statute and should be the same in every county.

Did You Know?

Mistakes CAN and DO happen on assessments!
Your County Assessor's office depends on YOU to find errors on your assessment!

What You Can Do and When to Do It.

Your "postcard" or some sort of notification shows your most recent assessed value. This notification must be mailed to you at least 10 days before your township Board of Equalization meeting.

If you do not feel comfortable with your assessed value or if you wonder if there might be errors try the following.

1. Get your "Field Card" ASAP! Your Field Card or computer printout is a very detailed breakdown of your assessment and shows the values placed on all of your land and buildings. This is FREE at the County Assessor's office.
2. Talk to your County Assessor. Have him or her explain your Field Card details to you. Remember: He or she is not hired to be "the enemy"! Part of the job is to help you understand.
3. Ask for copies of your township's "Schedule of Land Values" and the "Building Assessment Codes for Your County." These will help you check the details and values of your land and buildings. The assessor's office may charge you for these, but you cannot accurately read your "Field Card" without seeing them!
4. KEEP ASKING QUESTIONS! Remember: There are no dumb questions, only dumb answers!
5. BE SURE to go to your Township Board of Equalization if you suspect an error or inconsistency on your assessment! NOTE: This is very important! If you fail to present your case at the township level, you will not be allowed to address it at the county level later! On your "postcard", you will find the date and time of the meeting and how to make an appointment.
6. If unsuccessful, take your case to the County Board of Equalization. You must also have an appointment for this meeting.
7. There is also, as a last ditch effort, a State level you can appeal to.

We hope you will find this useful. If you choose to follow up on this, NOW is the time to begin. At the very least, DO get a copy of last year's "Field Card" now so you can familiarize yourselves with the format and have prior numbers to use for comparison to this years.

One more thing: We are not professionals at this, just people like you who have learned by "reinventing the wheel". It is also not our objective

to convince you that the county assessor is a "bad person" or that the government is "out to get you". Anything that sounds like an opinion is just that, an opinion. These are things we have learned in our county and want to share. If we can be of any more help, you let us know.

RESORTERS HELPING RESORTERS

Dave Thompson, Fisherman's Village Resort

Just a quick note to recognize how hard a few individuals are working on resort preservation and getting the word out. In a recent issue of Outdoor News, there is an article on the declining resorts in Minnesota. This article was originally printed in the Park Rapids newspaper. Thank you to Ann Moroz, Bear Paw Resort for getting that piece in print. If you subscribe to this, cut it out and save it in your records to use in local zoning issues that affect your building and taxation plans.

Also, take the time to express your appreciation to the members of the Becker County Task Force on preserving resorts. Pete McEwen, Bill and Bea Purdy, and David Burd worked on the article, "Losing Resorts, We All Lose", that many associations have been re-printing and using at the capitol. In addition, Pete McEwen has done a state-wide study to show what the economic impacts will be from a projected loss of resorts for the next 10 years. These reports are very valuable in showing the gravity of the loss of resorts to Minnesota's economy.

These are fine examples of "Resorters Helping Resorters"!

Planning for next summer
is your business . . .



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your resort's future is ours.



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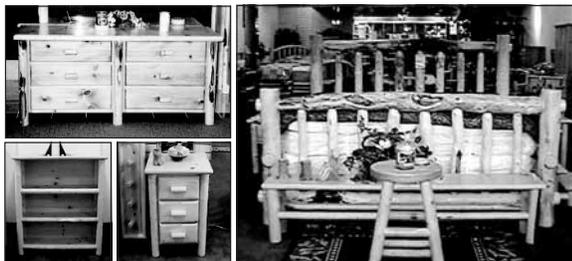
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APPEALING PROPERTY TAXES POSSIBLE, BUT REQUIRES HOMEWORK

By State Representative Mary Ellen Otremba

The property tax is perhaps the single most burdensome tax borne by Minnesotans. Every year, thousands of people find the burden rising - and it's probably going to get worse as cuts in state aid to cities, counties and schools kick in.

I encourage taxpayers to make sure they are taking advantage of the various forms of property tax relief provided by the state, including the regular and special property tax refund, the Senior Property Tax Deferral, the "Green Acres" program for farmland, the Sustainable Forest Incentive for timberlands and discounted rates for homesteads owned by disabled individuals.

While many factors go into calculating your property tax bill, two of the most important are the value and classification assigned by local assessors. Property owners dissatisfied with the value or classification of their homes, businesses or land for property tax purposes have significant rights to appeal those decisions. Unfortunately, the burden falls on the taxpayer to prove the assessor wrong. But it is possible to successfully challenge these decisions -if you do your homework.

Every property tax-payer receives a "Valuation of Real Property Notice" detailing the value and classification (residential homestead, apartments, commercial, seasonal-recreational, etc.) every spring. State law provides three grounds for appealing a property tax assessment: Improper classification, valuation above market, or valuation different from similar property in the area. You cannot file an appeal to protest a levy increase passed by your city, county, township or school board.

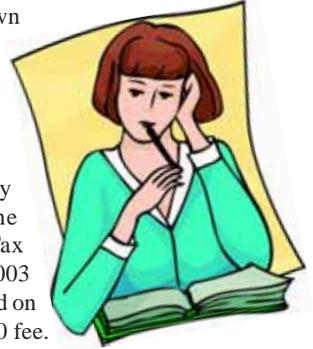
The recommended first step is to visit your local assessor's office and verify the information they hold about your property is correct. It may be possible to win a change without going through a formal appeal process, simply by having a friendly discussion with your local assessor.

The market value of your property is determined by the local assessor based on his or her estimate of how much it would sell for. So to challenge a valuation, the protesting taxpayer should accumulate information of recent sales of similar homes, businesses or farms in the immediate area. This information can be found at the county recorder's office, where certificates of real estate value (CRV's) are publicly available. A formal report by an independent appraiser, newspaper real estate advertisements and real estate listings can also provide useful data.

Challenging the classification is usually less useful, simply because the categories are fairly broad. But in cases where a property has a dual use - for example, a building with stores and apartments - or a non-homestead residential property, it may be worth discussing the issue with the assessor.

Taxpayers who choose to file a formal appeal start the process with the local Boards of Appeal and Equalization. These usually meet in Spring. Your valuation notice will have information on whom to contact to file the appeal. Usually the board is at the city or township level, and you must begin your appeal there. If you are unsatisfied with their decision, you can appeal to the county-level board. However, in some areas

cities and townships do not have their own board and the process begins at the county level. Check your valuation notice for information on your specific city or township.



Again, if you are not satisfied with the county board's decision, you can appeal to the Minnesota Tax Court. Appeals to the Tax Court carry an April 30 deadline (your 2003 valuation and classification must be appealed on or before April 30, 2004) and require a \$150 fee. Also, if you are relying on a report by an appraiser, the appraiser must appear in court with you.

Most homeowners and farmers can go to the Tax Court's Small Claims Division without hiring an attorney. If you have a single-family home or farm homestead valued at less than \$300,000, this is where to go. Judges of the division travel throughout Minnesota, holding their hearings in county seats. These are conducted like other court proceedings, with the county represented by the county attorney, opening and closing statements and cross-examination of witnesses. Decisions made by the Small Claims Division are final.

Owners of commercial property and larger homes or cabins have to go through the Tax Court's Regular Division, which requires representation by an attorney. At this level, decisions can be appealed to the Minnesota Supreme Court - which is as final as it gets.

For a full fact sheet about appealing your property taxes, go to the Minnesota Revenue website at www.taxes.state.mn.us and click on the links for "Property Tax," and then "Fact Sheets." Information on appealing to the Tax Court is available at www.taxcourt.state.mn.us/ProSePPY.htm. People without Internet access can request one through my Capitol office by calling toll-free 1-800-709-0796.

SMALL RESORT PRESERVATION

SF 322- Senator Sams / HF 331 – Representative Howes

Legislation targeted at the growing problem of rising property values of lakeshore property has been introduced and received favorable support from many legislators and candidates. Currently, County Assessors must utilize the estimated market value "EMV" approach when setting property valuations for small resorts. Lakeshore land values are being driven even higher by the demands of residential development. This increase in valuation forces up the property taxes for small resorts. The property taxes can become impossible to carry given the short season to rent your resort units to guests. The proposed legislation would allow assessors to determine alternate values using resort income, or other approved methods of appraisal, to determine the value of the resort. If a resort property is sold for residential or other development and no longer operates as a resort, the new law would require a recapture of the reduced tax for the past three years. This law is in place currently for certain agricultural property, called "green acres" and has provided a great relief to farm operations that have seen surrounding property values increase by commercial and residential development. The same dynamic is being felt by small resorts. There is no cost to the state for this proposal, as resorts are not in the statewide business assessment.

The Senate passed this proposal again last session. The County Assessors sought a delay of the legislation so that an alternative may be presented that would accomplish this goal, albeit with different language. Representative Howes has continued to press his Assessor to complete this promised task.

WHAT THE CONGRESS OF MINNESOTA RESORTS IS ALL ABOUT

MARKETING

As a member, your resort is listed on our web site www.minnesota-resorts.com, and you have password protected access to your listing. This means you can make any changes to your listing anytime you want. It's easy and it gets results!

EDUCATION, EDUCATION, EDUCATION

This is something that the Congress of Minnesota Resorts is really good at! Every year we hold a one day Spring Workshop and a 2 1/2 day Fall Conference. We also sponsor the School of Resorting. These are all ways for resorters to get together, learn from one another about resorting issues and just plain have fun! We also sponsor the on line "chat room" that you've probably heard so much about.

LEGISLATIVE EFFORTS

The Congress of Minnesota Resorts assures you of having your voice heard as a resort at the state capitol. The Congress of Minnesota Resorts hires a lobbyist to represent resorts at the state level. Also, our legislative committee keeps members abreast of legislation affecting the resort industry.

GUEST APPROVED RESORT PROGRAM

Available to members, this program allows resorts to survey their guests anonymously. This is a great way to receive valuable feedback and can also be used as a marketing tool.

ALL THE OTHER STUFF

Every year we offer scholarships to member's children and grandchildren, and award our "Resorters of the Year Award" to a deserving resort member. We also get our members hooked up with low long distance phone rates, competitive Visa/Mastercard rates and a free subscription to the DNR's Volunteer magazine..

OUR MOTTO

The Congress of Minnesota Resort's motto is "Resorters Helping Resorters". We believe that none of us is as smart as all of us.

OUR MISSION

The Congress of Minnesota Resorts exists to help family owned and operated resorts in Minnesota to continue as a viable segment of the Minnesota tourism industry.

What are you waiting for? Join the Congress of Minnesota Resorts today!

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