



## CITIZENS FOR A SCENIC WISCONSIN

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### Year End Report

December 5, 2019

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The year 2019 has been especially active for Citizens for a Scenic Wisconsin.

The Billboard Reform Act was introduced into the state legislature, intended to stop construction of any more billboards along major highways in Wisconsin.

Scenic Wisconsin officers and board members were instrumental in drafting a bill sponsored by Representative Amanda Stuck of Appleton. The new bill was announced by Rep. Stuck as the Billboard Reform Act in a press conference in July. It is Assembly Bill 421 and is assigned to the Assembly Transportation Committee. The Billboard Reform Act would prohibit new off-premises advertising signs known as billboards along state and federal highways. No billboards would come down right away, but it would stop new assaults on our scenery.

The Act would also strengthen regulation of existing billboards, many of them not conforming to present laws, in the spirit of the 1965 Federal Highway Beautification Act. And it would end the removal of trees and vegetation solely for billboard visibility.

The Scenic Wisconsin Leadership Conference was held October 4 with prominent people advancing scenic values to a receptive audience.

Interesting new light was shed on the importance of a scenic environment at a conference of scenery-minded people at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Wauwatosa on October 4th. At the day-long conference produced by Citizens for a Scenic Wisconsin, prominent state and local government and business leaders spoke to an audience of about 50 attentive people on a range of topics relevant to protecting and enjoying the scenic assets of Wisconsin.

Department of Tourism Deputy Secretary Anne Sayers told of new efforts to promote the unique and varied charm of Wisconsin. UW Extension Professor Chuck Law talked about their program to preserve iconic old barns by re-use, with examples given by Steve Nagy, wedding-barn owner. Rep. Stuck said that there is a row of billboards so close together along Hwy. 41 that you can't see the real Appleton behind them. Jim Zellmer of Amuz pitched their new travel-planning apps as making billboards for directions to destinations unnecessary. Mark Falzone, President of Scenic America, provided a national perspective and he cited their efforts to control billboards along highways. Scenic Wisconsin President Gary Goyke told about the Billboard Reform Act.

A new cooperative relationship is being established with Scenic America which will strengthen our ability to accomplish our scenic mission.

A new strategic plan whereby Scenic America will make organizational techniques and fund-raising expertise available to Scenic Wisconsin (and other state Scenics) was announced by Scenic America President Mark Falzone at the October 4 Scenic Wisconsin board meeting. The plan envisions a template for sustaining an informative and interesting web site, the most efficient computer programs for all business records, and effective research and proposals to charitable foundations. Initiating the plan will be the main subject of the January 11, 2020, board meeting.

Scenic Wisconsin leadership is engaged in the tough job of trying to get the Billboard Reform Act passed in the state legislature, while also advancing our other priorities such as historic barn preservation and Scenic Byways.

It takes financial support to carry on. Please contribute as much as you are willing and able to, however much fits into your budget. Fill out the card and put your check in the enclosed envelope.

Thank you and happy holidays.



Gary Goyke, president



Charlie Mitchell, founder

The mission of Citizens for a Scenic Wisconsin is to preserve and enhance the visual character of Wisconsin. We believe that America's scenic heritage is fundamentally important to individual and collective well-being, to economic prosperity, to a healthy ecology, and to the quality of everyday life. Our objectives are to support and promote programs and policies that protect natural beauty in our environment, preserve landscapes and streetscapes, protect historic and cultural symbols such as barns, conserve trees, and improve the appearance of communities.