

Beaver Island Chamber of Commerce

Updates on Summer 2021



Summer 2021

Paul Cole Chamber Director

It has been a busy season so far on Beaver Island this year and I wanted to take a moment and thank you for your membership and highlight some of our accomplishments in 2021. I officially moved into the Beaver Island Community Center in July. It has been great to set up a one-stop-shop for our Island visitors with lots of information and a friendly greeting. Many visitors comment on the friendliness of our Island business owners and staff. Your kindness and professionalism are hallmarks of our Island community and it's noticed daily.

Attached is our annual membership form and we are having a 5% reduction on membership fees which for the next 30 days. Your membership makes these wonderful things happen to support Beaver Island and it's growing opportunities. The Chamber of Commerce relies on your support to continue our mission and the goals in our strategic plan. Thank you so much for your ongoing support. Please feel free to call me at (231) 448- 2505 or email anytime with questions. Below are some of the highlights this year so far.

WHAT'S NEW

BI PROMOTION

Highlights of recent marketing opportunities

COMMUNITY

The Chamber's participation in Community events

BI ECONOMY UPDATE

New faces...new businesses

Promoting Beaver Island

During 2021 the Chamber has accomplished the following:

- Produced and distributed 12,000 BI Visitor's guides with increased information on maps, trails, birding, nature preserves, dark sky viewing sites, and businesses. Distributed in print and online to local businesses, websites, Northern Michigan outlets, Michigan welcome centers, and nationwide direct mailings.
- Maintained social media sites and boosted businesses, events, and recreational options. Chamber Facebook page FRIENDS OF BEAVER ISLAND now has over 10,000 followers. Average monthly reach is 48,800 views.
- Updated chamber website showcasing local businesses and visitor information. Viewership this year has reached 318,865 with over 92,000 new visitors in 2021. That is an increase of 33% from 2020.
- Mailed over 850 maps, guides, and business information nationwide to interested visitors.
- Phone advocacy- provided daily communications and trip planning to new and returning visitors on housing options, events, and general Island information. Over 1000 calls yearly.
- Coordinated with nationwide media on such as Detroit Free Press, Chicago Tribune, Sarasota Sun, Michigan Outdoors, Chicago Magazine, and Pure Michigan travel writers on articles or shows on Beaver Island and its archipelago.
- Launched a Beaver Island app in July of 2020.



Community

Continued work with Island colleagues and associations on planning events, grant writing, developing programs to increase visitor information on Island history and recreation opportunities while building a unified voice. Working as a community leader to strengthen partnerships with business stakeholders and community leaders.

Worked with Beaver Island Association and committee members to submit a Dark Sky Sanctuary application to the International Dark Sky Association. Approval likely to be granted in November of 2021.

Obtained a grant from Great lakes Energy to increase trail signage and assist in printing of materials on trails

Obtained grant from Networks Northwest for off-set cost of design and production costs of the new visitor guide

Assisted/co-wrote a grant to Michigan Department of Agriculture with Director of Beaver Island Historical Society for an Infrastructure Development grant of \$31,800. Which was awarded in February of 2020 for 25 interpretive signs on the Islands history, Heritage Park upgrades, Buffalo Camp trail improvements with safety beacons, development of a Beaver Island Tourism app, and printing costs for a comprehensive trail map.

Coordinated and supported community events with sponsorships: BI Birding weekend, Lilacs and Lyrics, BI Sustainability Fair, Dark Sky Viewing at Donegal Bay, 4th of July activities, BI Music Festival, Baroque, Homecoming, Bocce Ball Tournament, Labor Day 5K, and the BI Boodle / walk.

Advocacy

- Helped new Island businesses become established and move forward supporting commerce and providing leadership with promotions, housing, transportation and connecting to other community leaders.
- Attended webinars and calls hosted by Department of Labor, Department of Agriculture, Networks Northwest, and U.S. Chamber of Commerce.
- Assisted in areas of housing development and economic planning with township planning commissions.
- Supported new ideas for business growth like social zones.