

Appreciating the gifts of Ozaukee County

Submitted by the
Ozaukee County Tourism
Council

Thanksgiving marks the beginning of the holiday season, and represents the importance of family, togetherness and our communities. It is a time for sharing that for which we are grateful. This year, as we continue to find our way to a new normal, it feels particularly fitting for the members of the Ozaukee County Tourism Council to share the things that we are most thankful for here in Ozaukee County!

OCTC Director Kathy Meulemans and her family are thankful to be living in a small county that offers so many big and wonderful opportunities to learn about and experience local art and history in such unique ways, through organizations like museums and community historical and cultural societies.

Board President and Grafton Area Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Pam King is thankful to live, work and play in a county that offers such a rich history, lots of great outdoor activities, terrific restaurants, and a wide variety of shops and attractions.

Vice President and Mequon Thiensville Chamber Executive Director Tina Schwantes said, "One of the many things I am grateful for is the abundance of beautiful natural resources that surround us in Ozaukee County. How fortunate we are to be located along Lake Michigan and have the Milwaukee River flow through our County as well as having ample woods and trails to enjoy. Our amazing natural areas here provide great opportunities for restorative and recreational activities."

Secretary and Cedarburg Chamber Director Maggie Dobson said, "I'm so thankful that I live in a place



Submitted photo

Back row, from left: Maggie Dobson, Kathy Meulemans, Cori Rice, Tara Williams, Pam King, Kathy Tank, Tina Schwantes, Mackenzie Neumann and Irene Buechler.

Front Row: Kimber DeMoya and Andrew Struck.

Not pictured: Kathleen Cady Schilling, Sean Dineen and Melissa Wralstaad.

where I can take a short drive in any direction to admire a Great Lake from a picturesque bluff or beach, dine at a first-class restaurant, or spend time in any number of distinctive shopping districts. In a county-wide community that supports its local businesses, it's no wonder why tourists from out of the area love to mingle with local residents who are just exploring their own hometowns time and time again."

Treasurer and Ozaukee County Director of Parks and Planning Andrew Struck is thankful for the opportunity to oversee all of the parks in the county. Struck says it is fantastic to be able to offer so many year-round amenities, including golf, biking, hiking, fishing, camping, cross country skiing, sledding, ice skating and snow shoeing!

Past president and Port Washington Tourism Executive Director Kathy Tank is

thankful for the people who have an ethic of preservation and accessibility — whether it is of nature preserves and parks, or of the many buildings and places that house and preserve our history. It makes Ozaukee County "naturally" and culturally rich!

Board members share why they're thankful

The OCTC Board Members have a lot to be thankful for as well!

As a lifelong Ozaukee County resident, Irene Buechler, owner of Buechler Farms in Belgium, is especially thankful to be able to share the simple pleasures of farm life with visitors and members of the community by hosting seasonal activities and events at their hobby farm.

Kathleen Cady Schilling, Ozaukee Economic Development executive director, is most thankful for Ozaukee

County's wonderful natural resources. "Everywhere you look, you can find something breathtaking to enjoy," she said. "From wildlife on the bike trail to the views from Concordia's Campus, from my simple drive in to work every morning to watching the sun rise over Lake Michigan in Port Washington...there is so much to see and do here in our county."

Kimber De Moya, director of Sales at the Hampton Inn and Suites and Towne Place Suites in Grafton, said, "My family and I have enjoyed many afternoons walking & biking the trails, listening to all the amazing outdoor concerts at any number of venues or just enjoying a meal at one of the many dining options in the county. Living adjacent to 25 miles of the Lake Michigan shoreline isn't so bad either!"

Sean Dineen, general manager of Inventors Brewpub, appreciates the overall

pride each city, town or village takes in its community. Each destination is welcoming and inviting to visitors, whether it's their first time passing through, they are regular vacationers, or they are lifetime residents.

Mackenzie Neumann, Cedarburg tourism coordinator, believes that "there is so much to be thankful for in Ozaukee County! I am most thankful for all of the wonderful destinations in our county — from businesses to parks, I have made most of my favorite memories with friends and family in Ozaukee County!"

Cori Rice, owner of White Rice Advertising, said, "I'm thankful to live in a vibrant community where my family can spend a day or evening 'downtown' and still be within walking distance of home. I'm thankful to live among neighbors I consider friends, where a quick stop can turn into an unplanned afternoon of stories and laughter on a patio or in a cozy bar. I'm thankful to have a hometown that really feels like home."

Marjie Tomter, Treasurers of Oz, is most thankful for Lake Michigan.

"It gets us a little closer to dark skies, at least on one side of the county," Tomter said. "It is the best noise machine ever for falling asleep at night. It tempers our weather and provides some amazing lake-effect snowfalls. It holds so much

history, especially now that our shipwreck coast has become a national marine sanctuary. It is a beautiful place to kayak, surf and sail, and of course, a great source of fresh water."

Tara Williams, Belgium Area Chamber of Commerce and Tourism executive director, stated, "I'm thankful for the people of Ozaukee County. My family is on our own out here — the rest of our family lives quite far away. I am always so grateful to live in a friendly community where everyone cares for each other like family. You can't get that just anywhere. Ozaukee is truly special!"

Wisconsin Museum of Quilts & Fiber Arts Executive Director Melissa Wralstaad said, "I'm so thankful for the arts in our communities. Ozaukee County truly embraces art in all its many forms. From great museums to public art pieces to performances, Ozaukee County is full of art that engages and inspires."

We hope that you will take the time to acknowledge what you are grateful for this holiday season. For more information and details about some of the places that we have mentioned, make sure to visit the Ozaukee County Tourism website at www.ozaukeetourism.com. From all of us, have a happy, healthy holiday season!

