

## **Connecting Winona: Winona Arts Center**

**March 12, 2024**

### **Visit Winona Update:**

**Visit Winona is moving!** Our offices, currently located within the Winona County History Center building, are scheduled to move at the end of April to a new downtown office front at 123 West 3<sup>rd</sup> Street—formerly The Wedding Planners' location, next to 2 Brothers Sports Bar & Grill. Renovations are underway, and an official announcement and open house will be released in the coming weeks. We look forward to welcoming all partners to this public-facing space and sharing Winona even more in and with our downtown area.

- The office move will not impact the Winona Visitor Center on Huff Street in any way. The Visitor Center between the lakes is currently open Fridays-Saturdays-Sundays from 10am-4pm, and will open seven days a week, 10am-4pm, on April 1.

The **2024 Cruise Ship docking schedule at Winona's Levee Park** has been released, but dates are subject to change due to weather conditions. [Learn more here and download the printable PDF schedule.](#)

[Explore Minnesota launches Star of the North Campaign:](#) As cultural tourism continues to trend, more and more people seek to understand the authentic culture and lifestyle of the people who live in the destinations they visit or are considering a move to. Star of the North answers a new question: "What can I be a part of in Minnesota?" It showcases unscripted, documentary-style advertisements, including a video series where both travelers and new residents engage with the places and people that make Minnesota rich with character and optimism. With elements of surprise, discovery, adventure and joy, this campaign provides a look at what sets Minnesota apart, with a proud (but never boastful) authenticity. [Learn more about Spring/Summer campaigns here.](#)

The [University of Minnesota Tourism Center](#) and the **MN Climate Adaptation Partnership** are co-hosting a **webinar on climate and outdoor recreation** on March 19 from Noon-1:30pm. Join us for a conversation with leaders in outdoor recreation across our region — including organizers of Wisconsin's Birkie ski race — about how outdoor events can plan for and adapt to climate change, and how we can embrace equitable action in climate adaptation. Click here for more information and to register: <https://climate.umn.edu/adaptation-action-webinar-series>.

Governor Walz urges **Small Businesses Impacted by Lack of Snow to [Apply for Business Assistance](#):** Governor's Office to confirm that the Small Business Association (SBA) has opened their drought disaster loans to businesses impacted by the lack of snow in Minnesota this winter. Business owners can learn more about eligibility, apply online and find the application deadlines for their county at the SBA's disaster assistance website which is [Disaster assistance | U.S. Small Business Administration \(sba.gov\)](#).

**\*Keep sending in event information and business updates directly to Visit Winona!** We need your updates and confirmed event dates to better inform visitors and residents alike. View our [Special Events Working Document](#) for information on confirmed events in 2024 and beyond.

Partner Updates:

**Winona Arts Center:** “A Place for People ... A Home for Art”

*About:* After seven women spent the summer of 1956 painting together at the Lake Park Lodge, they formed the Winona Art Group. These women planted the seed that was to grow into the Winona Arts Center, which became a non-profit 501-c3 organization in 1964. The Center’s historic 1864 structure, built when Abraham Lincoln was President was the only non-school facility in the area devoted to the arts. The name was later changed to The Winona Arts Center to signify the inclusion of all art forms.

WAC is committed to increasing community awareness of the arts by featuring work of visual artists, providing space for performances, readings, films and encouraging participation in workshops, demonstrations, and classes, for children and adults in our community.

For the benefit of both art enthusiasts and artists, the upper level of the building contains the Frances Prentiss Lucas Gallery, performance stage and screening area. The Arts Center’s lower level houses a studio for classes including the RiverBed Press print studio, and an administrative office.

Regular programming continues with classes, concerts, drum circles, drawing circles, Free Ink Events quarterly, and more. Check the website for more information and to sign up today.

**The First Ladies Trilogy of plays** by Kay Sebring-Roberts Kuhlmann will be presented at the Winona Arts Center on March 15 and 16. "Wild About Harry" stars Kay Sebring-Roberts Kuhlmann as First Lady Bess Truman. She returns in “Mrs. Ike,” portraying first lady Mamie Doud Eisenhower. Lacey Korb stars as Jackie Kennedy in Kay’s script of “Distant Camelot.” Tickets are available at Music Mart (formerly Hardt's Music) until March 15 at 4 pm, and on Eventbrite. Tickets are \$15 for March 15, \$20 for March 16, or \$30 for a trilogy pass to both nights. All ticket prices increase by \$5 at the door.

The Winona Arts Center can also be **rented by the public**, based on availability. The gallery seats up to 80 in a lecture-style format. The lower level can seat up to 35 at tables.

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**Winona Creative Commission:** View the **full City of Winona Arts & Culture Plan here** for more information.

The Creative Winona Commission exists to advise the City Council on the implementation of the Winona Arts & Culture Strategic Plan, and to advance Arts & Culture to foster the growth of: Entrepreneurialism, Outdoor Recreation and Arts & Culture within the City.

The Commission’s focus shall be on Arts Creativity to assist in the growth of the economy, attract and retain a talented workforce, and enhance the quality of life for residents and visitors.

An overwhelming majority of Winona residents consider arts and culture to be important to their community: 94%. The Arts represent a larger share of the nation’s economy (4.2% of GDP) than Transportation, Tourism & Agriculture. Arts & Culture drive tourism and revenue to local businesses: \$31.47 per person in county and \$47.57 per person outside county in event-related spending.

*What's next?* City Council has appointed 9 members to the commission to begin this work with broad representation from across Winona's Creative Economy. This group will dive into what's possible right now, create a road map to work towards the other goals detailed in the plan. The group will hold the City accountable for implementation, as the plan reflects what the community wants and needs for our future. Please support upcoming Creative Winona Commission initiatives and reach out with questions.

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**[Maria W. Faust Sonnet Contest](#)**: Annual sonnet contest hosted in Winona that welcomes entries and participation internationally—In 2023, entries were submitted from 43 U.S. states and 16 other countries. The entry period is open now through June 1, 2024.

**[Yarnology](#)**: Boutique shop in the heart of downtown on Third Street, keeping hearts cozy and hands busy since 2010. Owner Gaby encouraged the group to visit Winona's newest retailer—[Winona Hatchery](#)—right next door. Their outdoor apparel, gear and accessories will delight all and the shop fits beautifully into Winona's love of recreation. The exterior façade of the building will undergo renovation this summer, but both businesses will remain open. Stop in!

**[Iron Bluff Fitness](#) / [Vintage & Glam](#)**: Stacy and her husband own both businesses located just off Vila Street across from the Gunderson building in Winona. Their portion of the large building connected to the Winona Mall is separately and independently owned. Vintage & Glam has new home décor, floral and gift items for all. Gift Certificates are also available. Watch for Spring specials and sales coming soon.

**[Cotter Schools](#)**: Cotter has been offering boarding services for international and domestic students for over 20 years. This summer, in collaboration with the National Target USA Cup Youth Soccer Tournament in Blaine, buses with players and family members will visit Winona and the Cotter campus. More details to come.

**[National Eagle Center](#)**: Located in downtown Wabasha just 25 minutes from Winona along the Mississippi River. The annual Soar with the Eagles festival now takes place throughout the year: One weekend each in March, June and September. They are bringing in a flying raptor program for special programming and are offering exclusive behind-the-scenes tours for groups of up to 6 to meet the eagles up close and learn about daily care and training. The Summer Eagle Viewing Cruise schedule is available and launches from Winona's Levee Park on board the Cal Fremling.

**[Sandbar Storytelling Festival](#)**: Oct 10-12, 2024—A three-day storytelling event, now in its 3<sup>rd</sup> year. The public festival includes food, workshops, competitions, concerts, and storytelling at Saint Mary's University. Multiple other events are also planned throughout Winona, including storyteller visits to area schools. There will be an April 23 fundraising dinner at Blue Heron Coffeehouse with a Paris theme. The Business & Immigrant Stories Series continues this year with featured presentations by Bloedow Bakery, Peerless Chain, Wenonah Canoe and Project FINE.

**[Perception Body and Pole](#)**: New studio in Winona on Mankato Avenue that welcomes everyone to try fitness in a new, fun and unique way—through pole dancing. No experience is necessary and it is a judgement-free zone. Occasional seasonal classes are held as well as special events like sound baths and light yoga classes.

**[Great River Shakespeare Festival](#)**: Celebrating its 21<sup>st</sup> year in 2024 with two productions to be held on the Winona State University campus this summer: Hamlet and Much Ado About Nothing. There will be seven performances each week, June 27-July 28. Season tickets are available online, and gift certificates are available for purchase. GRSF is also assisting with a Scouting Merit Badge event on April 12.

**[WSU College of Business](#)**: Liz is interested in connecting with area businesses that may want assistance with student internships or marketing/accounting projects. Faculty and staff are always looking for partners.

**[Two Fathoms Brewing Company](#)**: Formerly Island City Brewing Company, under new ownership! Soft-launching the new brand and vision—stop out this weekend to learn more. There are four new beers on tap created by the new owners/brewers, Brook and Graham.

**[Theatre du Mississippi](#)**: Theatre du Mississippi is holding auditions for its May show: Wednesday, March 13 and Thursday, March 14 from 6-8 pm at Curiosi-Tea House, 901 W 5th St. The show is an original work by a regional playwright exploring modern themes and the experience of life in the Midwest. Non-performing roles are also needed; please inquire at [theatredumiss@gmail.com](mailto:theatredumiss@gmail.com). Auditions are open to people of any gender, race, and ethnicity. Their one-act festival also recently wrapped and new play submissions for the 2025 performances are being accepted.

**[Pillbox Bat Company](#)**: Artisan-made wood bats created here in Winona. Stop by the shop to view products and receive a tour. The company has grown quickly and holds professional licenses with MLB, National Baseball Hall of Fame and more. Pillbox will also host a Barnstorm Sandlot Baseball Tournament that brings teams from across the country, August 23-25.

**[Frozen River Film Festival](#)**: The annual documentary film festival celebrated its 19<sup>th</sup> year in February 2024. The festival is getting closer to pre-pandemic in-person attendance numbers. Summer programming has launched and children ages 10-18 have opportunities to learn about filmmaking. \*UMWR and the Will Dilg Chapter of the Izaak Walton League are planning a centennial celebration for this summer and have partnered with FRFF to host a Youth Film Contest about "What the River Means to Me". Youth ages 10 to 25 are invited to submit short films (5 minutes or less). The winning films will be screened at the Centennial Celebration on June 8, 2024. [Contest information and submission forms can be found here](#). Cash prizes and trophies available to the winners of each age group.

**[River City Dancers and Breitlow Ballroom](#)**: Two indoor dances remain this season before turning to summer's outdoor, downtown Winona dance events. This nonprofit encourages dancers of all abilities to try ballroom, latin, swing and more. There has been additional collaboration between Main Street, Chamber, festivals/events—let's continue this and find other ways to help one another. Stan also works at [Watlow](#), and recognizes the importance of art in recruiting new professionals to move to Winona. [View the new Winona Area Chamber of Commerce "Welcome Home" video here](#).

**[Minnesota Marine Art Museum](#)**: In 2024, MMAM is presenting a year-long suite of exhibitions and programs that explores bold and often under-told narratives, examines fresh new perspectives of water, and features game-changing artists who help us better our relationship to this precious resource. Five of their six galleries switched over in January, so there are lots of new exhibits to see. *Mustafah Abdulaziz: Water* runs through June 23, 2024. *Aabijjiwan / Ukeyat yanalleh, It Flows Continuously*: Karen Goulet and Monique Verdin runs through July 7, 2024. *Across a Wide Ocean: Remarkable Stories about the*

*Origins of Identity* runs through January 5, 2025. *Reflective Impressions: The American Society of Marine Artists 19th National Exhibition* runs through May 5, 2024.

MMAM's annual Mississippi Sippin' series announcements are coming soon.

**[Sanborn Canoe Co:](#)** Join Sanborn Canoe and the Recreation Alliance of Winona June 21-23 at Prairie Island Campground for their annual BaseCamp Festival. BaseCamp is your invitation to the outdoors. Take advantage of free canoe, kayak, and SUP rentals to spend some time on the water. Enjoy live music, workshops and classes, activities for kids, and more. Last year brought in 250 attendees as a ticketed event, and with Free Admission in 2024, the group hopes to raise significant funds for the Rec Alliance's goal of creating an ADA accessibility dock at Prairie Island.

**[Sprint Graphics:](#)** Sprint offers a large suite of promotional products, branded merchandise, apparel, trade show signage, giveaways, and more. There are now sustainable and carbon zero product lines available for customization. Stop in to visit Cory at his new office in the Merchants Bank Plaza building on Third Street downtown.

**[Pizza Ranch Winona:](#)** Pizza Ranch serves legendary pizza, chicken and salad in 200+ buffet restaurants in 14 Midwest states. This locally-owned, faith-based restaurant group focuses on community, and will offer Community Impact Nights where organizations can assist with busing tables to receive a portion of the proceeds and tips from the night. Watch for more sign-up details coming soon. There is no official opening date of the Winona location on Highway 14, but they are estimating about three months to open. There will be a full "Fun Zone" Arcade in the Winona location.

**[Kashubian Cultural Institute and Polish Museum:](#)** Stop in to see updated exhibits as well as a new art exhibit debuting this summer. Programming includes an expanding history and genealogy lecture series, celebratory dinners and more. The Polish Consulate in Chicago will be collaborating with our Winona KCIPM on a new festival this fall.

**[Leighton Media:](#)** As of January 1, 2024, the business has been rebranded to Leighton Media, as they assist local entities with all forms of communication: Digital advertising, social media, and website marketing in addition to broadcasting 5 Winona stations. Station Manager Brian Sines moved to Winona in July of last year and has been impressed by the arts scene in the area. Leighton wants to continue to be a good partner—reach out with ideas or upcoming event information.

**[Winona State University Student Union:](#)** Many open-to-the-public events remain this school year, including [An Evening with Aly Raisman](#), USA Olympic gymnast, this Thursday. There will be two large new student registration days on campus this Friday, March 15 and next week Friday, March 22 with 1,000+ students and family members coming to Winona to prepare for next school year and sign up for classes. WSU Kryzsko Commons also has many meeting spaces to rent for area organizations and businesses.

**[Bluffview Quilt Shop:](#)** According to owner Cindy Sue, "We are not just a quilt shop, but a creative sewing shop!" There are many project ideas to get anyone's creative juices flowing, including a stained glass piece made with fabric.

**[Paperbacks & Pieces:](#)** "Used, Cheap and Available"! #BookstoresAreDestinations. Shannon is organizing "That Spring Thing", promoting special events/sales for Winona area retailers and restaurants April 5-7,

2024. Reach out to Shannon if your business would like to participate; there is a small buy-in that will be used for marketing. Saturday, April 27 is the annual Independent Bookstore Day—watch for more details and three author visits to celebrate. Paperbacks & Pieces will also sell books during the [Friends of the Winona Public Library Speaker Series](#) events this year.

**[A-Z Collectibles](#)**: Downtown Winona antiques store below street level on the corner of Main and 3<sup>rd</sup>. Celebrating 31 years in 2024.

**[Mélange Resale & Boutique](#)**: Heather's clothing and gift boutique downtown on 2<sup>nd</sup> Street carries all sizes of women's apparel, accessories and more. Now accepting spring/summer apparel consignment: Check the website for details. Get tickets for an upcoming Habitat for Humanity Winona County fundraiser Fashion Show on Saturday, March 23 at Wesley United Methodist Church. Food and refreshments included, and many local shops will be featured, including Mélange, The Loft on Third, La Boutique and more. Heather will be launching a new line at the show.

**[City of Winona Park & Recreation](#)**: The Bluffside Park trail system added four new trails equaling five additional miles as part of the Bluffs Traverse Project. The City helps maintain and grow the Winona Ice Park, Lake Lodge and trails in collaboration with many organizations like the Winona Area Mountain Bikers. Programming is ramping up at East End Recreation Center, and two free programs highlight positive youth development and leadership skills: EPIC Youth and Leaders in Training. Youth and adult sports are also open for registration. An adult volleyball tournament will be held April 27. Youth Baseball 8U and 10U returns this year. The City is working on a banner program for fields to be implemented next year, allowing area businesses to sponsor/advertise.

**[River City Grill](#)**: Now open Sundays—featuring a breakfast buffet. Also new is the Hot Wings Challenge: Eat 10 wings tossed in a ghost pepper sauce in 5 minutes and endure an additional 5 minutes without any refreshments to receive your wings for free, plus a t-shirt!

**[River Arts Alliance](#)**: The band Patina will perform at Café Congo at First Congregational Church of Winona on March 12 at 7:00 pm. A freewill donation will be accepted with proceeds going to River Arts Alliance. The 2024 RAA Member exhibit will be at the Blue Heron Coffeehouse and run June 19-August 18.

**[Minnesota Conservatory for the Arts](#)**: On April 6 there will be a jazz event with 10-12 regional schools participating. Several Winona Arts Camps, programs and a Summer Dance Intensive residential program (June 16-29) will keep MCA busy this summer.

**[Winona State University Tourism Department](#)**: Dr. Violet Yoon is working on a research project that captures the economic impact of a visitor coming to town for an event. Surveys are being conducted and information to be shared in the coming weeks.

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