

Pierce County Tourism Brand Perception Study

2019

Conducted by

the University of Wisconsin La-Crosse Tourism Research Institute



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Executive Summary

This summary provides a brief overview of the research process and key findings that resulted from the collaboration between the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse Tourism Research Institute, the Pierce County Economic Development Corporation, and the supporting Pierce County, Wisconsin municipalities of Bay City, Ellsworth, Prescott, and River Falls to conduct a Pierce County tourism brand perception study.

The project began by working with local Pierce County stakeholders to conduct focus groups and hold open public meetings. The goal was to better understand current perceptions of tourism throughout the county, and identifying a vision for the direction of tourism in the future.

Results from community input sessions and focus groups with local businesses resulted in clear recommendations made by various stakeholders regarding necessary steps in both re-branding Pierce County as a tourism destination and enhancing tourism in the county. These recommendations included the need to build collaboration across tourism destinations in Pierce County, enhancing destination visibility and navigability for visitors, a focused alignment between planned growth and the wants of the community, enhanced investment in tourism, and embracing the strengths and existing resources in Pierce County in any tourism development planning.

The goal of the visitor study was to gather information regarding how visitors were gathering information about Pierce County prior to their visit, what they were doing while visiting, and their perceptions of Pierce County as a travel destination. Data were collected over 9 days from June through September 2019 at locations and events throughout Pierce County. The following summarizes key findings from the data collected.

73.3% of onsite participants surveyed throughout the County identified as a visitor (not a Pierce County resident). On average, visitors were 42 years old and the majority were female (62.4%) (see Table 3).

Visitor participants were asked to identify what information sources they used to plan their current trip to Pierce County, both to assess what sources they are using, and how they are becoming aware of what exists and what is happening in Pierce County.

- Visitors primarily relied on friends and family or their own previous experience when obtaining information about Pierce County. Digital sources, specifically social media pages and local event websites rounded out the top five informational gathering sources (see Figure 6).

The majority of visitors sampled during this study traveled less than 75 miles on a day-trip (86%), with friends and/or family without children (59%), for recreation purposes (e.g., attending an event, vacation/holiday, and outdoor activities). Based on data collected through surveyor visitor counts and from respondents to a follow-up email survey, visitors tended to travel to Pierce County in groups of 2-3. Those staying overnight in Pierce County stayed for 2 nights on average.

Visitors were provided with a list of 23 attributes that could represent Pierce County as a travel destination. Ranked by mean, the top 5 perceived attributes of Pierce County are:

1. Beautiful scenery/natural wonders
2. Beautiful/lovely place
3. Fun
4. Restful and relaxing atmosphere
5. Laid back

Overall, the primary visitor market currently consists of day-trip visitors from the Minneapolis/St. Paul Metropolitan area or from comparable distances elsewhere in Minnesota and Wisconsin, drawn to the area for its beauty and offerings of fun activities, taking advantage of a place that is void of all the big city chaos. Differentiation is especially crucial as nearby by St. Croix County is considered the most comparable destination to Pierce County. Future marketing efforts can highlight the unique ways in which fun experiences are offered throughout Pierce County, and making potential visitors aware of opportunities they are not familiar with right now.

Study Proposal

Study Objective

The objective of this research study is to unearth Pierce County's tourism brand. Currently the county lacks an identifiable brand. The purpose of this research project is to identify and understand the county's brand from a county stakeholder perspective and visitor perspective. This will allow Pierce County representatives to establish their brand and develop marketing materials that better communicate what the communities have to offer with what target markets desire. To do this the research conducted will include three essential parts: (1) identify brand perceptions from local stakeholder perspective (e.g., tourism professionals, residents, etc.), (2) identify perceptions and behaviors of current and/or past visitors, and (3) identify perceptions and behaviors of potential visitors. The process will identify known and unknown tourism assets essential to Pierce County and individual communities within the county, how current brand perceptions align with current marketing efforts, and make additional recommendations related to branding, marketing, collaborative opportunities, and development opportunities. The following work plan outlines the necessary steps to complete the proposed study objectives. It is the strategic plan for collecting both the qualitative and quantitative data regarding the Pierce County tourism brand.

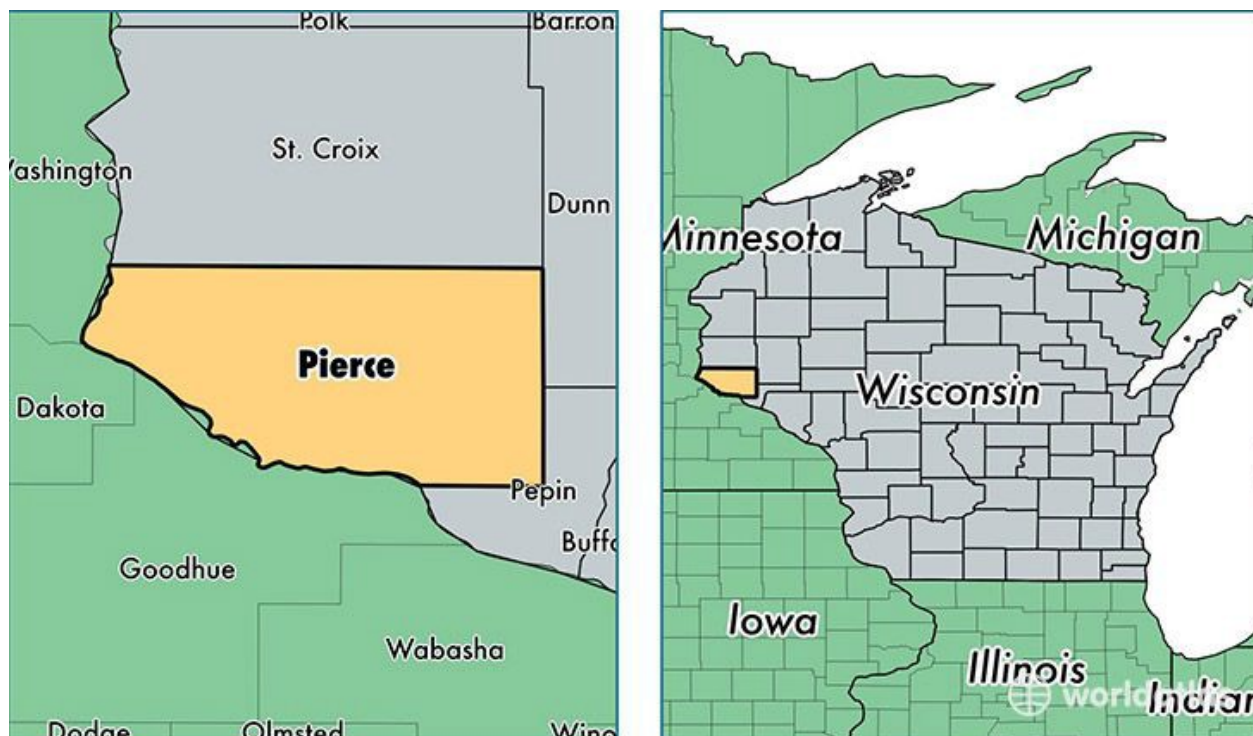
Goal for Study

The primary goal for the study was to collect data that (1) could be used to develop a Pierce County tourism brand, and (2) establish baseline data for future marketing efforts. The data was collected in two separate phases; first through local stakeholder input, and second through a visitor study.

1. Local Stakeholder Input – Data were collected from local Pierce County stakeholders via focus groups and public input sessions to gather information on the following:
 - Identification of tourism assets and destination specific attributes
 - Identification of current marketing efforts
 - Perception of Pierce County as a destination for...recreation, family, etc.

2. Pierce County Visitors – Data were collected from visitors to better understand their current perceptions, and utilize the data as baseline measures for monitoring future visitation and marketing efforts. Data were collected to help obtain baseline information on the following:
- Sources used by current visitors to plan trip to Pierce County
 - Awareness of attractions/facilities in Pierce County
 - Awareness of marketing efforts (e.g., digital or print media)
 - Perception of Pierce County as a destination for...recreation, family, etc.
 - Current visit perceptions of Pierce County specific attributes
 - Current visitor spending and economic impact analysis for the County as a whole and each participating community individually
 - Visitor numbers
 - Demographics

Pierce County Final Report



A Study Completed by the Rec 351 Civic Engagement Class*

Department of Recreation Management

University of Wisconsin - La Crosse

This section of the report and Appendix A content was primarily written and compiled by Hope Read, Recreation Management student.

Background

In the fall of 2018 Pierce County Economic Development Corporation began a research project to help brand Pierce County as a tourist destination. This project is made possible by the Joint Effort Marketing grant from the Wisconsin Department of Tourism. The University of Wisconsin-La Crosse Tourism Research Institute is partnered with the Pierce County Economic Development Corporation to identify and create a marketing objective for Pierce County tourism from both a stakeholder and visitor perspective.

The purpose of this semester's research was to better understand stakeholders' and community members' perceptions regarding tourism in Pierce County. The spring 2019 Recreation Management Civic Engagement students were tasked with holding focus groups and public meetings in four of the cities in Pierce County. These cities were; Prescott, Ellsworth, River Falls, and Bay City. Students were divided into teams of two or three and required to market and run the meetings, as well as analyze the data collected from their specified city.

Following this section of the research process, the next step will be to gather current visitor perceptions of Pierce County. This will begin the summer of 2019 and conclude in the early fall. The final conclusions from the data gathered throughout the research process will be revealed in December of 2019. The results of this spring 2019 portion of the research process will ultimately help Pierce County establish a new brand and create new marketing materials to attract tourists to the area.

Methods

The purpose of this research was to better understand community members' perceptions regarding tourism in Pierce County. The data was collected from March 26th, 2019 through April 10th, 2019. The total number of participants in the data collection was 70. Methods of data collection included; focus groups with specific stakeholders and public meetings. The focus groups were all recorded and transcribed. The public meetings data was collected in a number of different ways.

Small Group Discussions

The small group discussions consisted of asking participants questions that they would answer by filling out notecards, post-it notes, or pieces of paper. Sometimes these answers were filled out individually and then discussed with the group, whereas other times the group brainstormed together.

Flip Chart Questions

The flip charts included five charts each with a different question for participants to answer. Four of the charts were to gather SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) analysis factors of the specified city. The fifth chart asked where participants would like to see more financial resources allocated. Participants were given the opportunity at each meeting to write their responses on the charts.

Mapping Questions

The mapping questions involved two large printed maps of Pierce County. On the first map participants were asked to place a numbered sticker on where they thought Pierce County had strengths for attracting tourists. On the second map participants were asked to place a numbered sticker on where they believed opportunities for tourist attractions were in Pierce County. After placing stickers participants wrote the number of the sticker on a piece of paper with the reason why they selected that area of the county.

Comment Cards

Comment cards were available at each community meeting for anyone who wanted to give anonymous feedback.

Attribute Survey

The destination attribute survey was for participants to choose up to 20 characteristics of what assets Pierce County has.

Online Follow-Up Survey

The online follow-up survey was sent out to each town's contacts and stakeholders in order for them to distribute it to stakeholders or community members that were unable to attend any of the meetings on the dates they were held. The survey consisted of the same questions that were asked in the public meetings.

Stakeholders

Pierce County Economic Development Corporation

The Pierce County Economic Development Corporation is the driving force behind this entire research project. Members of this corporation are some of the most invested in the overall branding of Pierce County. Stakeholders in this corporation will be involved with this project throughout its entire duration. Benefits that this group will receive from this project, include increased economic activity in Pierce County and increased visitor numbers to the county.

University of Wisconsin - La Crosse Tourism Research Institute

The University of Wisconsin - La Crosse Tourism Research Institute was the chosen partner by the Pierce County Economic Development Corporation to help plan, implement, and evaluate this research project. By having stake in this project, multiple groups of students in the Recreation Management Program at the university get to gain real world experience in civic engagement. The Tourism Research Institute benefits through student and faculty experiences in the surrounding counties and communities in the state.

Pierce County Businesses

Businesses in Pierce County, especially those in the agritourism industry, will benefit from the end goal of this project. Creating a cohesive brand throughout the county will hopefully raise visitor numbers to the area and increase economic activity. Businesses in the county were the targeted stakeholders for many of the city focus groups.

Pierce County Community Members

Pierce County community members are very important stakeholders' in the project, and this spring 2019 semester portion especially. Increased visitor numbers will have an impact on residents of the county, it is important to make that impact more positive than negative. Taking the public's input into account is a crucial step in the research project as a whole.

Results

Presentations of data collected in spring 2019 were delivered by students May 2019. The raw data results can be found in Appendix A. Below is a summary of recommendations based on the information collected.

Recommendations

Understanding community member perspective is a key element in avoiding future conflicts with the marketing and increased level of tourism in Pierce County. After reviewing all of the results from the four cities in Pierce County, some general recommendations were concluded. The general recommendations are listed and discussed below.

Build Collaboration in Pierce County

Throughout the data analyzed a common trend that participants in both focus groups and public meetings noticed, was the lack of cooperation between cities and business in Pierce County. Currently it is an "everyone fend for themselves" marketing technique, and cities are not working together to bring visitors to the county as a whole. Leveraging the various strengths county wide would help to offset local weakness that may exist. One idea in line with this opportunity was to create resources that would allow visitors to go throughout the county with the knowledge of what there is to see and do (e.g., a scenic map that would connect various cities throughout the county).

Enhance Visibility/Navigability

Across all of the data collected, one of the main weaknesses that stood out was the lack of signage throughout the county. This connects with the previous recommendation related to city to city collaboration in Pierce County. All of the cities need better promotion and signage that would provide visitors better information on the array of opportunities available in the area and could help motivate them to stay longer or visit again. Additionally, making these resources available both as printed resources and electronically (and easy to locate) would support the whole possible range of visitors from those who may stop in Pierce County unexpectedly to those who are planning their trip in advance. In one of the Ellsworth focus groups, it was stated that “tourists need someone holding their hands.” Tourists are much more likely to remember a frustrating experience at a destination, e.g., not knowing where to go or what to see, and, in turn, tell others about that poor experience. Better signage and more in depth and readily available information could help prevent these types of experiences.

Align Growth with Wants of Community

With any tourism related project, it is important to keep the impact on and, thus, the input of the locals in the community central to the development efforts. In the River Falls data specifically, there was concern about the conservation of Pierce County’s natural resources. The rivers and trout streams can begin to draw in more tourists, but it must be done in a controlled way to preserve what makes the area special in the first place. Thus, it is imperative that any growth and development efforts are carefully planned for and all potential impacts are explored and prepared for. The best way to combat this issue is to have a plan in place prior to the potential natural resource damage, as opposed to playing catch up after the damage is already done.

Keeping the members of the community involved in the branding and future marketing processes may help to increase the community’s knowledge and understanding of how and why tourism developments efforts are moving forward in the direction they are. Ultimately, this may decrease the amount of pushback that may arise with the arrival of additional visitors and

development. Once specific recommendation in achieving this is to allow community members access to the results of the community input and visitor survey process. In addition, ensuring Pierce County residents understand the wide range of benefits that increased tourism to the County will bring along with clear communication that any planned growth will be carefully managed will help ease many of the participants' concerns.

Invest in Tourism

A weakness that was quite consistent with each city was poor infrastructure. This involved roads, storefronts, lodging, parking, and public transportation. Participants felt that improving infrastructure will be a necessary step in attracting more visitors to the county and encouraging them to visit again. Many of the current visitors that come to any of the cities in Pierce County only stay for the day, this is in part due to the lack of lodging in the county. Participants felt strongly that, in order to turn those day-trippers into overnight guests, infrastructure will have to be added and updated. This also connects closely with the previous recommendation that weaknesses in certain parts of the county could be offset by the strengths of other areas in the county. For example, connecting areas of the county with greater lodging resources, such as River Falls, to lodging-poor areas of the county through a more cohesive marketing campaign could boost overnight visitors to areas that have visitor resources/attractions, but lack the overnight accommodations to support multi-day trips.

Participants also indicated that investing in attractions and their promotion across the county will also be crucial in boosting visitor numbers. Having more visitor centers in the county will boost tourist knowledge and hopefully make their time in Pierce County more structured and enjoyable. Additionally, creating and funding tourism development-related community-based committees and initiatives were identified as important in both community buy-in and enhancing tourism marketing. Participants repeatedly identified the need for enhanced electronically available information including a centralized, more navigable, and more robust website as well as a Pierce County visitor app. As recommended by participants, both the website and app should focus on highlighting county events, tours, and attractions. Investing in

tools that will create a more enjoyable tourist experience will keep people coming to Pierce County.

Lean into Strengths and Existing Resources

In some of the data collected, the Twin Cities proximity to the county was seen as a threat that would draw visitors away. This mindset can be turned around to see it for what it actually can be, a great opportunity. A quote from one of the focus groups stated, “We are far enough out that a lot of comments from the MMP’s (Minneapolis Money People) is they don’t like the orchards in Minneapolis because they’re crowded madhouses and they come out here and have their new favorite orchard because it’s a country experience.” One of Pierce County’s greatest strengths is that authentic country experience, the agritourism industry is where the community really has the potential to thrive. Marketing to the people in the Twin Cities to promote that rural experience, will be a large appeal to those who desire a weekend away from the city. Pierce County can offer that experience and needs to use its existing assets to draw the crowds from the city.

Closely related to this is to leverage the underused, existing resources and opportunities available in Pierce County to include golf courses, a lack of tourist-aimed events during the winter season, and converting a portion of the high rate of day trips into overnight trips. Participants also recommended increasing the marketing of family friendly opportunities available in the county. Finally, take advantage of high-volume destinations (e.g., the Great River Road Visitor and Learning Center) to continue collecting feedback from visitors on their wants and needs while visiting Pierce County.

Recommendations for Future Public Engagement Activities

In addition to a continuing conversation with visitors to the county, success enhancing tourism marketing, and ultimately the total number of tourist visits will demand a continued conversation with Pierce County residents. Good connections and marketing techniques are key to having successful public engagement activities. Partnering up with each city’s chamber of commerce was extremely beneficial in the marketing efforts, especially when concerning niche

stakeholder participation in focus groups. For future public meetings, more social media marketing may be useful in addition to more traditional marketing efforts (e.g., flyers/signage in key locations throughout the county. In many of the meetings, school events/activities were listed as strengths the towns had. Marketing public input sessions directly at those events may lead to larger, more diverse turn out at these meetings.

While running the public meetings, encouraging small group discussion was an important way to generate new ideas. People would bounce ideas off one another and create entirely new discussions that provided more useful feedback. Equally important is to ensure that during these brainstorming activities everything is being recorded in some way, so that information will not be lost.

Pierce County Visitor Study

The purpose of the visitor study was to better understand the experience of visitors to Pierce County. The study was designed to gather information regarding visitor trip characteristics, demographics, pre-trip information sources, and perceptions of Pierce County as a travel destination. This information is intended to help stakeholders better understand current visitor perceptions in order to further define the County's tourism brand, development marketing material, and establish baselines to evaluate future efforts. Based on results from local stakeholder focus groups and public meetings, locations were selected to conduct onsite visitor sampling based on known tourism attractions and events. To best utilize available resources locations were selected to give researchers the best opportunity to connect with visitors.

Methods

Data were collected from eight main locations or events throughout Pierce County, Wisconsin from June 2019 to September 2019 (see Table 1). In total, 529 individuals were asked to participate in an onsite survey, and 272 participants agreed to fill out the Pierce County survey.

Locations	Total Contacted	Refusals	Agreed to Participate	Estimated Response Rate	Percent of Sample
Cheese Curd Festival	209	119	90	43.1%	33.1%
Bay City Campground & Boat Launch	11	3	8	72.7%	2.9%
Ellsworth Creamery (including during Applefest)	140	105	35	25.0%	12.9%
Kinnickinnic State Park & Kinnickinnic River Entry Points	48	7	41	85.4%	15.1%
Vino in the Valley	15	5	10	66.7%	3.7%
Nugget Lake County Park	17	3	14	82.4%	5.1%
Pierce County Fair	41	15	26	63.4%	9.6%
Bacon Bash	48	N/A*	48	N/A	17.6%
Total	529	257	272	51.4%	100.0%

*Survey assistants misplaced refusal tally sheet.

All survey participants were asked if they would be willing to answer additional follow-up questions via an online survey (see Appendix B). 109 (40.1%) participants agreed to participate and provided an email address. Those participants were emailed the initial survey, and sent two follow-up reminder emails. In total 35 (32.1%) participants responded to the follow-up survey.

In addition to monitoring refusals and participant, surveyors kept track of total visitors encountered during the sampling timeframe at each location (see Table 2). Events were excluded as it was too difficult for research assistants to accurately keep track of visitor due to high attendance. On average, there were 2 people (2.1) per group sampled.

Locations	Total Contacted	Total Visitor Count During Sampling	Average Group Size
Bay City Campground & Boat Launch	11	27	2.5
Ellsworth Creamery (including during Applefest)	140	302	2.2
Kinnickinnic State Park & Kinni River Entry Points	48	68	1.4
Vino in the Valley	15	45	3.0
Nugget Lake County Park	17	37	2.2
Overall Average			2.1

In the final phase of the visitor study an attempt was made to learn more about visitors, particularly potential visitors. Since the current visitor study identified a larger number of respondents from the Minneapolis/St. Paul Metropolitan area, a Facebook post targeting that market asked Facebook user to answer two question: (1) Have you been to Pierce County before, and (2) which destination attributes enticed you to visit Pierce County or would entice you? The post reached 7,452 Facebook users, but only generated 20 responses.

Limitations – When it comes to the interpretation of the findings several limitations should be noted. First, an attempt was made to sample visitors from around the County to better understand visitation as a whole, but not all locations could be sampled. Sampling days were also not random, but rather chosen to contact a higher number of visitors over a limited timeframe. Finally, data collection took place over the summer, so results cannot be generalized to represent all Pierce County visitors.

Visitor Survey

Participant Demographics

73.3% of participants responding indicated they were visitors to Pierce County (see Figure 1).

Table 3 presents age and gender characteristics. On average participants were 42 years old and identified as female. Compared to the sample as a whole, visitors tended to be slightly younger and identify as female.

**Figure 1:
Pierce County Residency**

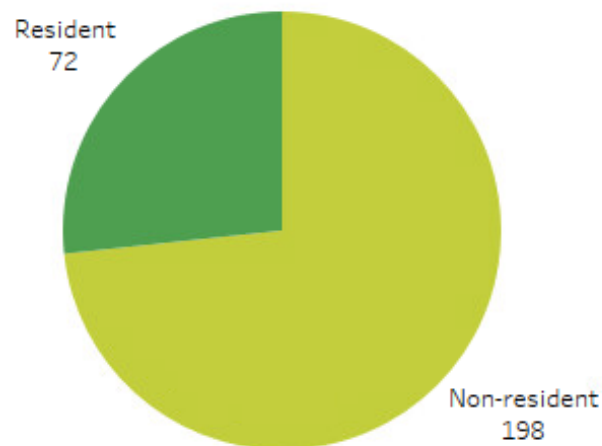


Table 3. Onsite Participant Demographics

	Visitors Only	All Participants
Average Age	42.2 (n=181)	42.5 (n=253)
Age Range		
18-29	30.4%	28.9%
30-39	13.8%	16.2%
40-49	15.5%	16.2%
50-59	29.3%	25.3%
60-69	8.8%	10.7%
70-79	2.2%	2.8%
Gender	(n=181)	(n=254)
Female	62.4%	59.8%
Male	37.0%	39.8%
Other	0.6%	0.4%

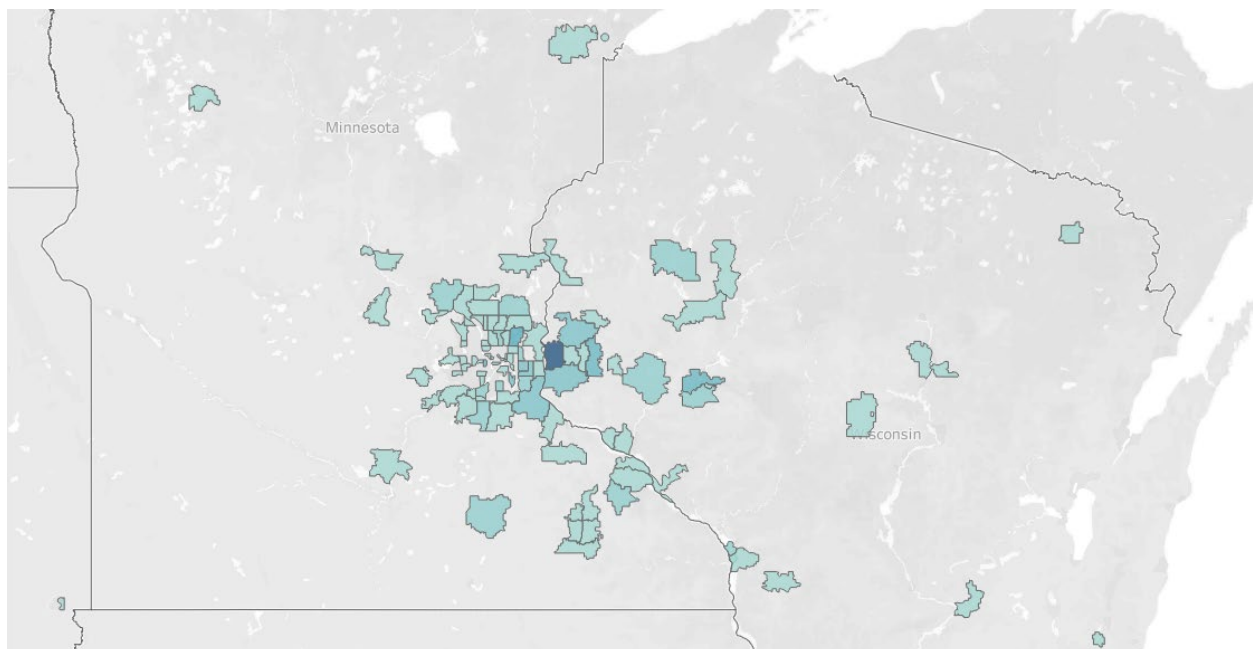
Of the participants identified as visitors, 62% were from Minnesota, and 32% from elsewhere in Wisconsin (see Table 4).

Table 4. Pierce County Visitors		
State (n=198)	N	% of Visitors (Known Zip Code)
Minnesota	105	61.8
Wisconsin	54	31.8
Other	11	6.4
Not Reporting Zip Code	28	

Among Minnesota participants, 75.2% were from the Minneapolis-St. Paul Metro Area, which represents 46.5% of all visitor participants (see Table 5). As shown in Figure 2, the majority of all Pierce County visitors travelled 75 miles or less from home during their trip to the area.

Table 5. Participants from Minneapolis St. Paul Metro Area			
Area	N	% of MN Participants	% of Total Visitors, Known Zip Code (n=170)
MSP Metro Area	79	75.2%	46.5%
Other (MN)	26	24.8%	15.3%

**Figure 2:
Participant Zip Code Location**



Purpose and Length of Stay

Among the survey participants, a majority were visiting for the purpose of vacation or holiday (26%). 106 participants selected “Other” as the purpose of their visit (see Figure 3). 26% of those participants were visiting for the purpose of a festival or fair, 10% were visiting to engage in outdoor activities, and 8% were visiting for the food and drink offerings in Pierce County (see Table 6).

**Figure 3:
Primary Purpose of Visit**

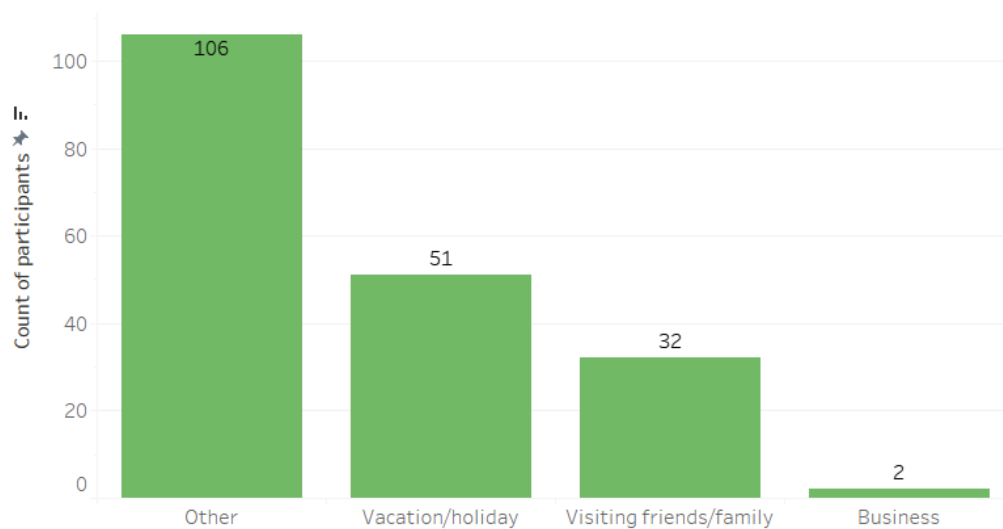


Table 6. Other Purpose of Visit Breakdown

Purpose of Visit	Frequency	Percent of Other Total
Fair/Festival	50	47.2
Outdoor Activities	19	17.9
Food/Drink	16	15.1
Other	21	19.8

Trip Characteristics

86% of participants in the survey were visiting on a day trip (see Figure 4). Among those who were visiting overnight two nights was most common (see Table 7). After removing three outliers (nights stayed indicated as 90 or greater) the average night stayed per overnight visitor was calculated. On average, visitors staying overnight in Pierce County stayed 2-3 nights (mean = 2.21).

**Figure 4:
Type of Trip**

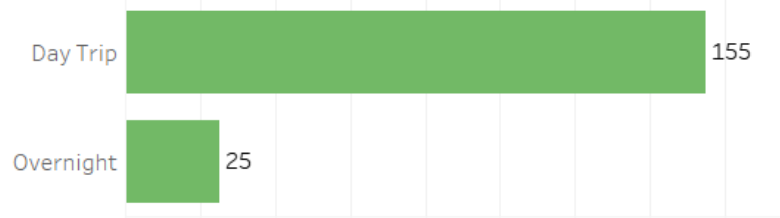
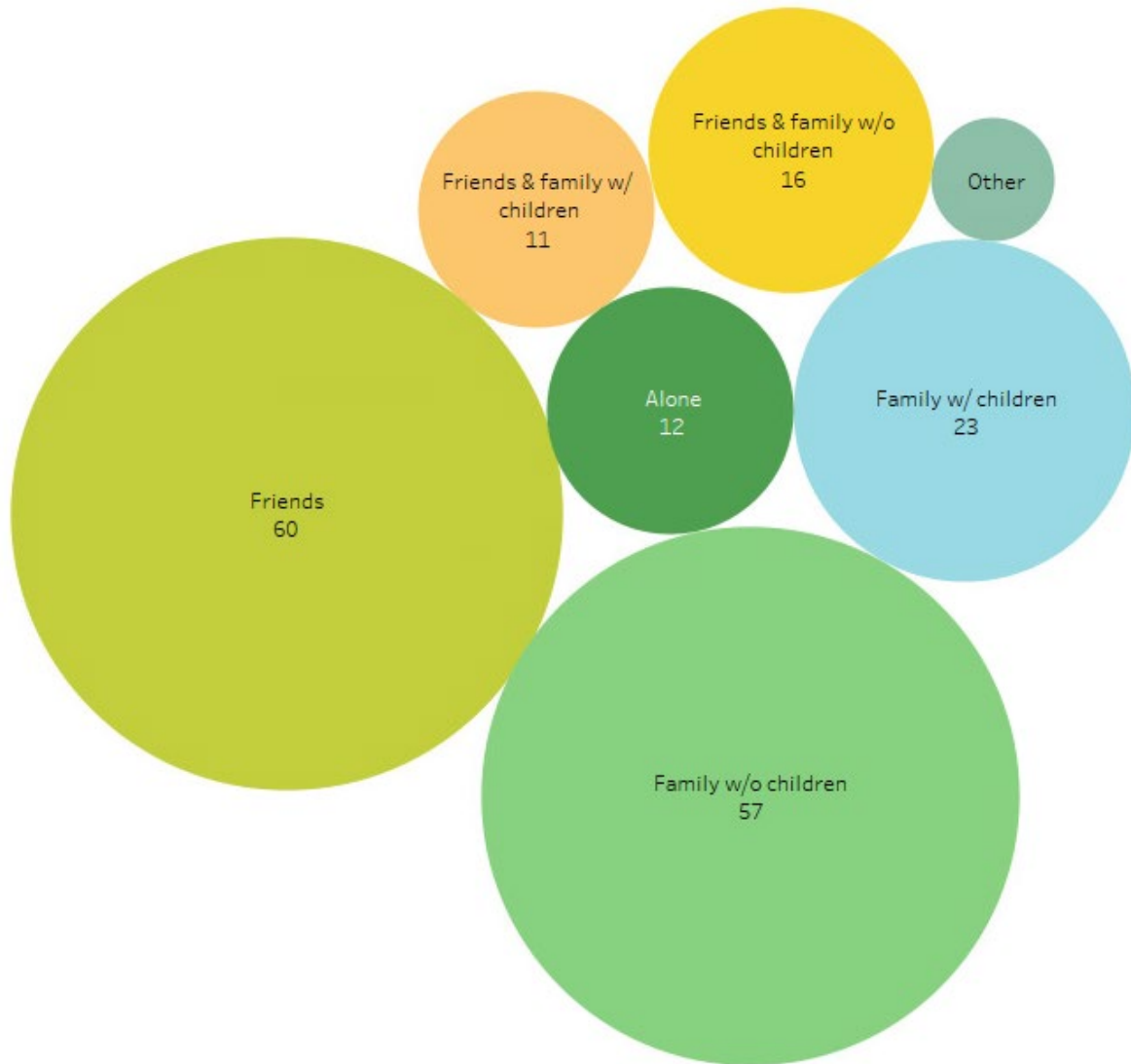


Table 7. Length of Overnight Stay

# of Nights	Frequency
1	5
2	10
3	4
4+	5

The survey participants were predominantly visiting Pierce County with friends and/or family without children (59%). Figure 5 shows a breakdown by frequency of group type.

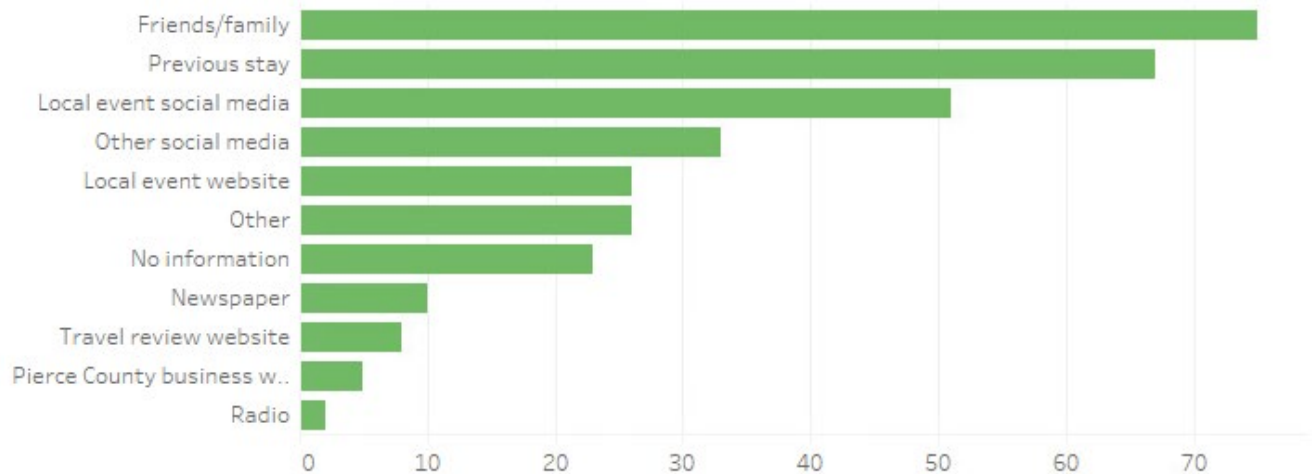
**Figure 5:
Participant Group Type**



Effective Outreach Methods

Visitors found out about Pierce County attractions and events through a variety of different ways. 38% (75) participants cited friends and family as the reason for their visit. 34% (67) participants had visited Pierce County before, therefore prompting this visit. 42% (84) participants had seen information on either the local event social media or other social media in general. 13% (26) participants were prompted to visit by the local event website. Beyond factors out of the control of the county, social media and local event websites appear to have pulled visitors in the most.

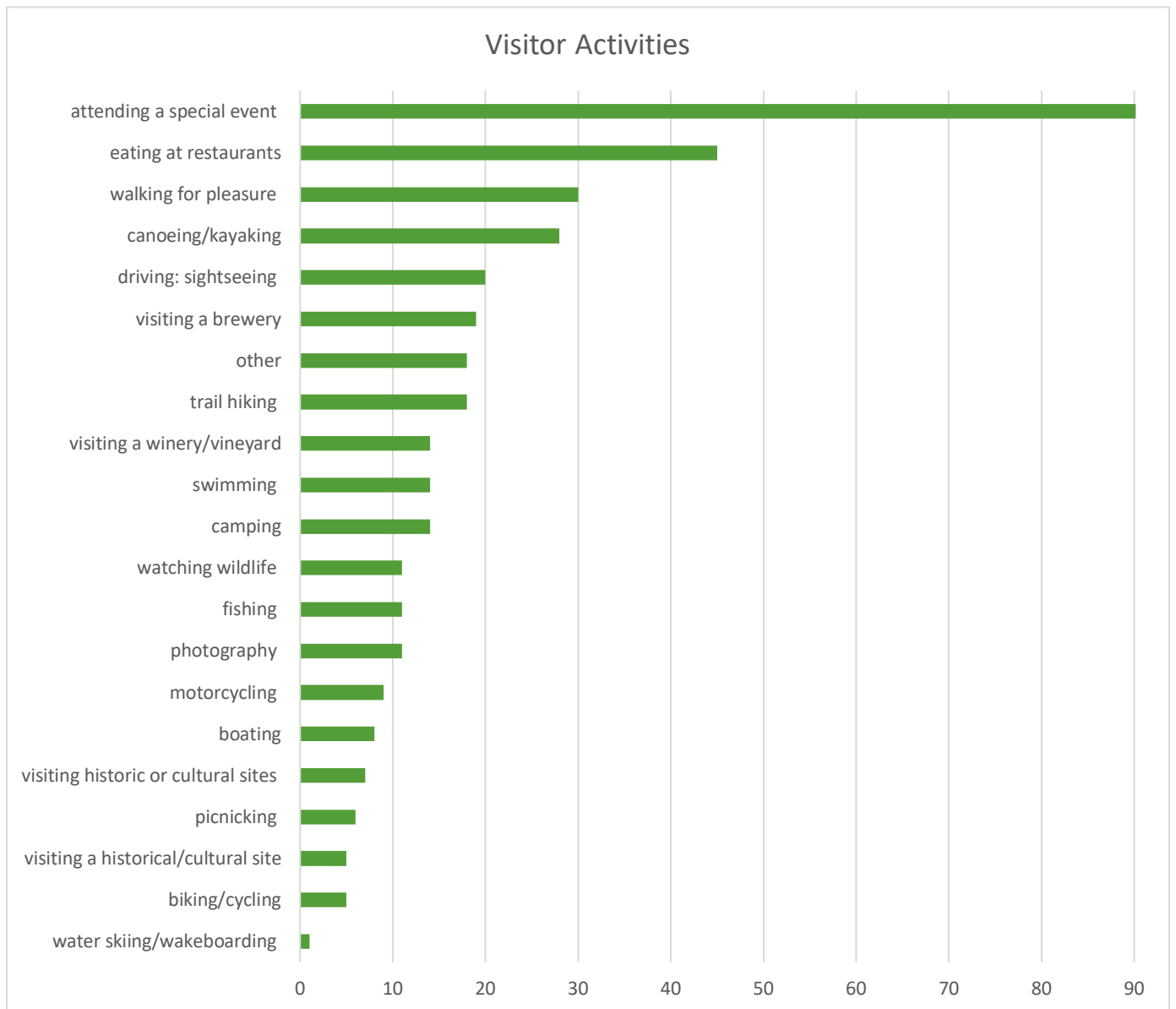
**Figure 6:
Outreach Methods Cited by Participants**



Visitor Activities

Visitors to Pierce County were asked 'On this trip, what specific activities are you participating in?', and could check all that apply. Due to the data collection method 'attending a special event' was the most frequent activity mentioned (see Figure 7).

Figure 7:
Visitor Activities



In total visitors responding to the survey participated in 21 of the 23 activities listed on the questionnaire (see Table 8). Participants listing 'other' activities identified activities such as visiting local business, visiting friends and family, or other recreational activities.

Activity	Frequency	Activity	Frequency	Activity	Frequency
Attending a special event	91	Camping	14	Visiting historic or cultural sites	7
Eating at restaurants	45	Swimming	14	Picnicking	6
Walking for pleasure	30	Visiting a winery/vineyard	14	Biking/cycling	5
Canoeing/kayaking	28	Photography	11	Visiting a historical/cultural site	5
Driving: sightseeing	20	Fishing	11	Water skiing/wakeboarding	1
Visiting a brewery	19	Watching wildlife	11	Horseback Riding	0
Other	18	Motorcycling	9	Visiting a welcome center	0
Trail hiking	18	Boating	8		

Other Activities Listed:

Applefest, bacon, bars, brushstrokes, cheese curds, collecting rocks, crayfish, Crystal Cave, drinking, driving through, Ellsworth Creamery, family, garage sales, Vino in the Valley, visiting home

Attributes

To better understand visitors' perception as a place to visit a list of attributes was created. An initial attribute list of 45 items was developed based on previous destination research literature and knowledge of Pierce County. During focus groups and public meetings Pierce County stakeholders were asked to identify up to 20 attributes that they believed represented Pierce County. Based on these responses the list was narrowed to 27 items and presented to a panel of Pierce County tourism professionals to review wording and narrow the list further. A final list of 23 attributes that represent Pierce County's current or potential attributes was ultimately included on the visitor questionnaire. Non-resident survey participants were asked to rate Pierce County on a scale of 1 Strongly Disagree to 5 Strongly Agree, indicating to what extent they agree that Pierce County is a place that is/has the identified attribute.

Table 9 on the next page presents frequency percent of responses and attributes ranked by mean. Overall, visitors see Pierce County as a beautiful place that is fun yet relaxing. The two lowest ranked attributes were 'cultural, historic, and vintage attractions' and 'agritourism opportunities'. While these were the lowest ranked, based on the responses participants did not disagree that they were attributes representing Pierce County, rather they indicated they 'neither agree nor disagree'. It's likely that participants do not know if these are or are not attributes of Pierce County.

Table 9. Pierce County Attributes

Attributes List	Frequency (%)					Ranked by Mean
	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree	
Beautiful scenery/natural wonders (n=171)	2.9	0.0	4.7	28.1	64.3	4.51
Beautiful/lovely place (n=166)	3.0	0.0	6.0	28.3	62.7	4.48
Fun (n=163)	2.5	0.0	8.6	25.8	63.2	4.47
Restful and relaxing atmosphere (n=163)	1.8	0.0	8.0	33.7	56.4	4.43
Laid back (n=162)	2.5	0.0	9.3	30.9	57.4	4.41
Fabulous scenic drives (n=171)	2.9	0.6	9.4	33.3	53.8	4.35
Safe and secure environment (n=162)	2.5	0.0	12.3	30.9	54.3	4.35
Lots of open space (n=159)	2.7	0.0	15.7	25.8	56.0	4.33
Friendly and helpful local people (n=167)	1.8	0.6	15.6	29.9	52.1	4.30
Easy access to the area (n=167)	1.8	1.2	7.8	44.3	44.9	4.29
Good place for children/family (n=156)	1.3	0.6	17.3	28.8	51.9	4.29
Ease in finding locations (n=159)	2.5	0.6	15.7	30.8	50.3	4.26
A wide variety of outdoor activities (n=157)	2.5	0.6	24.2	28.7	43.9	4.11
Silent sports (hiking, biking, kayaking, fly fishing, etc.) (n=157)	1.3	1.3	26.8	28.0	42.7	4.10
Overall good value for money	3.1	0.6	19.8	38.9	37.7	4.07
Cultural events/festivals (n=158)	3.2	1.3	27.8	27.8	39.9	4.00
Reasonable cost of restaurants (n=156)	2.6	0.0	32.7	31.4	33.3	3.93
Wineries & breweries (n=159)	3.1	1.3	32.1	28.3	35.2	3.91
Great local cuisine (n=155)	2.6	3.2	38.7	25.2	30.3	3.77
Water sports (boating, skiing, fishing etc.) (n=155)	2.6	0.6	43.2	26.5	27.1	3.75
Untapped potential for outdoor recreation opportunities (n=157)	2.5	1.3	39.5	33.1	23.6	3.74
Cultural, historic & vintage attractions (n=155)	2.6	2.6	45.2	25.2	24.5	3.66
Agritourism opportunities (visiting farms, farmers markets) (n=152)	2.0	3.9	48.7	19.1	26.3	3.64

Not all visitors have the same perceptions of Pierce County. To look at how potentially different market segments currently perceive Pierce County visitors were segmented into groups based on the type of activity they were participating in when contacted. The following three groups were created:

1. Event Visitors
 - a. These visitors were sampled during the Cheese Curd Festival, Pierce County Fair, or Bacon Bash.
2. Natural Area Visitors
 - a. These visitors were sampled at Kinnickinnic State Park or Kinni River entry/exit points, Bay City Campground & boat landing, or Nugget Lake County Park.
3. Business Visitors
 - a. These visitors were sampled at the Ellsworth Creamery or Vino in the Valley.

Overall, two attributes were consistently ranked in the top 5 for all groups, ‘beautiful/lovely place’ and ‘fun’ (see Table 10). Visitors in Pierce County for an event see it as a beautiful place that offers fun opportunities and a laid-back atmosphere. Natural area visitors of course enjoy the beauty, but also the safe environment it provides to participate in fun silent sports. Finally, business visitors especially enjoy the laid back, restful and relaxing atmosphere.

Attribute List	Event Visitors (n=85-96)	Natural Area Visitors (n=40-46)	Business Visitors (n=25-29)
Beautiful/lovely place	4.33	4.67	4.65
Fun	4.41	4.51	4.63
Beautiful scenery/natural wonders	4.39	4.47	
Fabulous scenic drives	4.32		
Laid Back	4.36		4.57
Silent sports		4.58	
Safe and secure environment		4.49	4.58
Restful and relaxing atmosphere			4.57

Inspiration

Visitors (not Pierce County residents) were asked “*what inspired them to visit Pierce County on their current trip?*” The following is a summary of the most frequent types of responses listed.

**Figure 8:
Visitor Inspiration**



The majority of survey participants were contact at a Pierce County event. These events are inspiring visitors to make a trip to Pierce County. Additionally, a variety of Pierce County attributes including recreation opportunities, the natural scenery, and unique local businesses inspired participant visits. Friends and family also inspired visits, both to visit friends and family, but also to participate in activities with those friends and family, or learned about from them.

- *Events:* As would be expected based on the sample locations, attending an event was the most frequent response. Events include the Cheese Curd Festival, Bacon Bash, Ellsworth Car Show, a fishing tournament, and attending a wedding. (67 mentions)
- *Cheese & Cheese Curds:* Many who attend the Cheese Curd Festival or visited the Ellsworth Creamery were inspired to visit the County because of cheese and cheese curds. (29 mentions)
- *Recreation:* A variety of recreation activities were listed as inspiration for visiting, including: kayaking, camping, boating, motorcycling, trout fishing, Crystal Cave, and sight-seeing. (21 mentions)
- *Visiting Friends/Family:* Visiting because of friends and/or family was among the most mentioned inspiration for visiting. In addition to visiting friends and/or family some participants indicated visiting specific areas (e.g., kayaking the Kinnikinic River) because friends had been there before. (19 mentions)
- *Beautiful/Scenic Area & the Outdoors:* Several participants were also inspired to visit due to the natural areas and their beauty. (12 mentions)
- *Area Businesses:* Area businesses including the Ellsworth Creamery, wineries (including Vino in the Valley), breweries, and restaurants were mentioned as inspirations for visits. (7 mentions)
- *Proximity to Home:* Various responses for inspiration reference proximity to home, including: living close by, short drive, getting out of the city, and day trip. (7 mentions)
- *The Best Kept Secret:* While only mentioned once, one participant responded to the question by saying, “Western WI is a best kept secret and a luxury”.

Comparable Destinations

Both visitors and Pierce County residents were asked to identify what other destination they thought was comparable to the attributes Pierce County has to offer. Table 11 provides a breakdown of the response received. Responses are shown for Pierce County residents, visitors, and in total. 95 different destination areas were identified. Most frequently respondents compared Pierce County to nearby counties, St. Croix County, WI, followed by Washington County, MN. However, the number most frequently listed comparable destination was Door County, WI.

Table 11. Comparable Destinations							
Destination	Do you live in Pierce County			Destination	Do you live in Pierce County		
	Yes	No	Total		Yes	No	Total
St. Croix County/Hudson, WI	15	18	33	Iowa	0	1	1
Washington County/Stillwater, MN	4	5	9	Ladysmith, WI	1	0	1
Door County, WI	5	3	8	Lake Superior	0	1	1
Chippewa Falls/Chippewa County, WI	1	4	5	Maine	0	1	1
Bayfield County, WI	3	1	4	Menomonie, WI	0	1	1
Duluth, MN	2	2	4	Minneapolis, MN	0	1	1
La Crosse, WI	1	2	3	Minnehaha Creek, MN	0	1	1
Lanesboro, MN	1	2	3	MN State Fair	0	1	1
Willow River State Park	1	2	3	Monroe County, WI	0	1	1
Wisconsin	0	3	3	Namekagon River	0	1	1
North Shore	0	3	3	Neillsville, WI	0	1	1
Anoka/Anoka County, MN	0	2	2	Nelson, WI	0	1	1
Chetek, WI	2	0	2	New Hampshire	0	1	1
Hayward, WI	0	2	2	North Hudson, WI	0	1	1
Montana	1	1	2	Northern MN	0	1	1
Polk County, WI	2	0	2	Northern WI	0	1	1
Eau Claire/Eau Claire County, WI	0	2	2	Oakdale, MN	0	1	1

Table 11 Continued. Comparable Destinations

	Do you live in Pierce County				Do you live in Pierce County		
Mississippi Valley/Bluff Area	1	1	2	Ortonville, MN	0	1	1
Upper St. Croix River/Valley	0	2	2	Otter Tail County, MN	0	1	1
Winona County, MN	0	2	2	Owatonna, MN	0	1	1
Afton, MN	0	1	1	Pepin County, WI	1	0	1
Alexandria, MN	0	1	1	Polk County	1	0	1
Altoona, WI	1	0	1	Prescott, WI	0	1	1
Great Smokey Mountains	1	0	1	Red Wing, MN	0	1	1
Any county on WI side of Mississippi	1	0	1	Rosemount, MN	0	1	1
Berrien County, MI	0	1	1	Rural, MN	0	1	1
Brookings, SD	0	1	1	Sawyer County, WI	1	0	1
Burnett County, WI	1	0	1	Scott County, MN	0	1	1
Caledonia, MN	0	1	1	Shell Lake, WI	0	1	1
Calumet, MI	1	0	1	Small towns	0	1	1
Cannon Falls, MN	0	1	1	Southeast MN	1	0	1
Cedarburg, WI	0	1	1	Spirit Lake, WI	0	1	1
Summerfest	0	1	1	The Northwoods		1	1
Michigan	1	0	1	Buffalo County, WI	1	0	1
Small towns	0	1	1	Central WI	0	1	1
Cranberry Festival	0	1	1	Dairyland Flowage, WI	1	0	1
Des Moines, IA	1	0	1	Driftless Region	0	1	1
Douglas County, WI	0	1	1	State Parks in MN + WI	0	1	1
Oseola, WI	1	0	1	Taylors Falls, MN	0	1	1
Dunn County, WI	0	1	1	Vernon County, WI	0	1	1
Durand, WI	1	0	1	Vilas County, WI	0	1	1
Durham, NC	1	0	1	Vino over the Valley	0	1	1
Goodhue County, MN	1	0	1	Wabasha, MN	0	1	1
Green Bay, WI	1	0	1	Wausau, WI	0	1	1
Hastings, MN	1	0	1	West Michigan	0	1	1
Holmes County, OH	0	1	1	Western WI	1	0	1
Hudson Pier	1	0	1	Winter Lake	1	0	1
				Wyoming	1	0	1

Visitor Follow-Up Email Survey

Follow-up Respondent Characteristics

Due to the small sample size it is difficult to generalize the findings of the follow-up survey either to the sample as a whole or the population sampled. To get a better sense of how follow-up responds compared to non-respondents several participant characteristics items were compared. The groups were fairly similar in terms of gender, but follow-up respondents tended to be older (see Table 12). Visitors who only participated on the onsite survey and those who completed the follow-up survey were also similar in-terms of how many times they have previously visited Pierce County and the type of trip they were taking.

Onsite Participants Only		Follow-up Email Participants	
Average Age	42.5	Average Age	47.2
Female	60.0%	Female	58.8%
Male	39.5%	Male	41.2%
Previous Visit to Pierce County (yes)	68.2%	Previous Visit to Pierce County (yes)	72.7%
% of Day-Trip Visitors	78.2%	% of Day-Trip Visitors	78.8%

Table 13 presents additional demographics and group characteristics collect from follow-up participants. Participant group sizes ranged from 1 to 11, with an average group size of 3. The majority of respondents had a bachelor's or advanced degree (64.7%), and identified as white.

Average Group Size	3.1
Education (n=34)	Percent
High school diploma or GED	2.9
Some college but no degree	14.7
Associates degree	17.6
Bachelor's degree	29.4
Advanced degree	35.3
Race (n=33)	Percent
White	97.0
Some other race	3.0

Follow-up Participant Experience

Respondents were asked to share a little bit about their experience, including how satisfied they were with their overall visit to Pierce County (see Table 14), how likely they would be to visit Pierce County again in the future, and how likely they would be to recommend friends and relatives visit Pierce County. Overall, visitors responding were very satisfied with their visit (82.4%), would be very likely to return (78.8%), and would recommend others visit (67.7%).

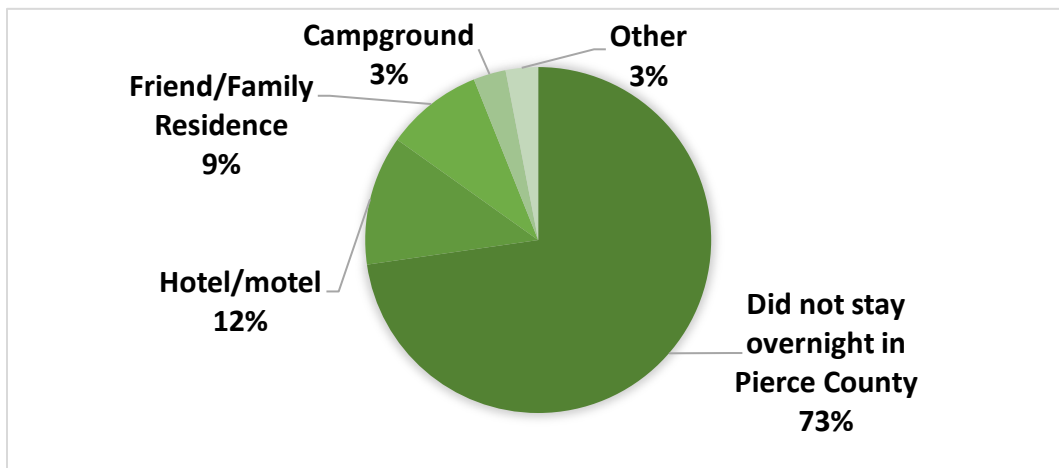
Table 14. Overall Satisfaction					
	Frequency (%)				
(n=34)	Very dissatisfied	Somewhat dissatisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Very Satisfied
Overall satisfaction	5.9	0.0	5.9	5.9	82.4

Table 15. Future Intentions					
	Frequency (%)				
Intentions	Very unlikely	Somewhat unlikely	Not sure	Somewhat likely	Very likely
Visit in the future (n=33)	0.0	0.0	12.1	9.1	78.8
Recommend friends/relatives visit (n=34)	2.9	0.0	11.8	17.6	67.6

Visitor Accommodations

The majority of visitor respondents did not stay overnight in Pierce County (see Figure 9). Of the participants that stayed in paid accommodations, they indicated there were of good (n=2) or excellent (n=4) quality. The majority of day-trip respondents returned home (n=19) after visiting Pierce County, while others stay at a hotel outside the County (n=1), or listed 'other' (n=4).

**Figure 9:
Pierce County Accommodations**



Follow-up Participant Comments

Follow-up participants were provided with an open-ended comment section as asked to provide any additional feedback they had regarding their visit to Pierce County. Below are all unedited comments.

1. Cheese curds!!!
2. Good job promoting
3. Nope...just there for meal at Vino in the Valley. Pretty simple visit!
4. This survey was taken in St. Croix county, Kinnickinnick township, not pierce county, I live here, that is what i told them and that did not matter to them. like most other things in pierce county they are deceptive and not truthful!
5. Very welcoming
6. Vino in the Valley is one of our favorite destinations. We also stop at The Common Man and other places. The car show at the fairgrounds (the Beldenville Show) bring us back every year.
7. We like it because it is a day trip from the cities, a nice way to get out have some fun but also nice to head home at the end of the day

Social Media Survey

An attempt was made to learn more about visitors and potential visitors from the Minneapolis/St. Paul Metropolitan area by promoting a Facebook post asking Facebook user to answer two question: (1) Have you been to Pierce County before, and (2) which destination attributes enticed you to visit Pierce County or would entice you?

Twenty individuals responded. Table 16 shows their past visit experience.

Table 16. Have you been to Pierce County, WI	
Response (n=20)	Frequency
Yes	14
No	2
Not Sure	4

Participants were asked to select all attributes that enticed them to previously visit Pierce County, or that they believe would entice them to visit (see Table 17). Instead of listing all 23 attributes from the visitor survey, the attributes included in this survey were based on top attributes listed by current visitors, and interest in future tourism opportunities indicated by local Pierce County stakeholders. 3 of the 4 participants who were not sure if they have been to Pierce County, and 1 of 2 who said no they have not been to Pierce County selected agritourism as attribute that would entice them to visit. Outdoor recreation opportunities were of interest to all four not sure respondents, and 1 of 2 have not been to Pierce County respondents.

Table 17. Potential Pierce County Attributes	
Attributes (n=20)	Frequency
Beautiful scenery	12
Agritourism (e.g., farm-to-table, farmers markets, farm tours)	9
Outdoor recreation opportunities	8
Fun events	5
Breweries, wineries and/or good food options	4
None of these really interest me	1
Laid back and relaxing atmosphere	0

Appendix A: Local Stakeholder Results

Prescott

The Prescott meeting took place on March 26th, 2019. It was the first meeting that occurred for this project. The focus group and meeting were held in Prescott at the Ptacek's Event Center. The focus group ran from 3:30pm-5:00pm and had 4 attendees. The public meeting ran from 5:30pm-7:00pm and had 11 attendees.

Focus Group

The conversation recorded from the focus group was transcribed and coded to pull out common themes and supporting examples. It was analyzed question by question. The least indented bullet point represents the theme. The supporting examples are represented in the secondary bullet points. The data is shown below.

(Q1) What activities/events are currently offered here in this city and the county?

- Festivals
 - cheese curd festival is huuuuuge- River Falls daze – can't miss that
 - Bacon Bash which is similar to the Pork and Barrel so that something that draws people
 - Budweiser and they talked about the World's longest, biggest brat
 - so that was a big thing ya know and then they had the Clydesdales, the 300ft brat was like 3 Clydesdale wagon horses long

(Q2) What kind of activities that are not annual events?

- Recreational Activities
 - boating, fishing, biking, paddleboarding, kayaking, canoeing
 - trout fishing on the Kinni and the Rush River— anywhere in the county is trout fishing
- Threats
 - I'd say the threats for that are local farmers (4:00) and the local people that don't want people knowing they're there

(Q3) What kind of activities or events would you guys like to see here in the county or the city? More events or different events?

- River activities
 - Fishing competitions actually like more—like a national one
 - If we could get on that Pro Fishermen’s Circuit that would be a big thing— yeah— right
 - I know at one point a guy wanted to try and get the uh windsurfing or sailboat races down there
- Limitations
 - Aging population—exactly—primarily. I think, what is it like 30% of our population is going to be 60+ by 2023
 - Other part is really, how do you communicate what’s happening to folks outside the county
 - Farmer ‘Oh get them damn bikes out of the road, I almost hit one coming around the corner’ which I got to admit, the bikers don’t always follow the stop signs
- Marketing
 - Hey just pick this thing up and cross the River and there’s all this neat stuff that we can do as a family—mhm so kind of different avenues of marketing for all these different activities and events
 - ArtReach St. Croix have a great website called St. Croix Splash so a lot of the events that are happening
- Events
 - Bike Races
 - Stockholm Art Fair

(Q4) So what unique resources do you think can be found here in Pierce County that maybe other counties cannot offer?

- Accesses
 - Prescott is the northern most entry point for the Wisconsin Great River Road
 - How far are you from the cities?— 20 minutes from Minneapolis/St. Paul, 30 minutes from the airport. – So that’s a huge asset
- History
 - We got a great little museum downtown with the story of the Prescott Spinner Company which is a fantastic story actually, that’s something unique to Pierce County
 - Seining War video created by students
- Limitations
 - River is, really in my mind, a great asset but the River is only on one edge of Pierce County that there are some portions of Pierce County that just don’t see tourism as a huge driver—for some that may be getting into why they came here—correct, yeah—and so it disrupts the way of life that provides the reason for living here but I think the other part is the lack of understanding of the value of [tourism] in an economic perspective and that’s the missing piece

- Where things are right now, particularly local units of government, there really is no room to increase revenue other than through increased sales within the County and how can we do that?
- We've got this rural urban tension
- There's a psychological perception that there is a barrier there—state border—and there is a physical barrier! There's water there
- Fishing
 - An avid trout fisherman, he did not know we had trout streams here and I said 'class 1 trout streams' and he was just shaking his head in disbelief—I think we want people to engage with our resources the way we do

(Q5) what do you see people coming to Prescott and/or Pierce County for the most?

- Visitors and Learning Center
 - Just speaking for our visitor and learning center, we tried to help with the destination survey through the WI Department of Tourism so we were able to twisting off arms we got about 50 surveys (17:00) which haven't been summarized yet
 - We spend a lot of our time actually trying to turn people around because they get to our facility and they've driven through downtown Prescott and they don't always necessarily realize that they drove through Prescott so we try and get them back downtown because Prescott has phenomenal restaurants
 - At our facility strictly we will go from 100 people in a month to 2000-2200 people in our busiest months which is usually October believe it or not July—colors
- River Travelers
 - Stop at National Park
 - There are international travelers that fly into the airport and they just want to travel the M-River. Headwaters to the mouth
- Limitations
 - I have been told and Prescott doesn't have a lot of hotels, Pierce County doesn't have a lot of hotels (18:00) so they don't stop and stay

(Q6) What characteristics do you guys feel these people have that come to Prescott or Pierce County? Characteristics of the tourists or the visitors?

- Agritourism
 - Some of them can be classified as cultural tourists, or by National Geographic standards- geotourists
 - From an agritourism perspective one of the great assets we have is MOSES quite honestly they have an incredible amount of information on what the challenges are to small local family farmer
 - Last summer a lady put a bunch of families on a hay rack with a pull and a farm all H took them out in the field and the calves and the cows were licking their fingers and stuff like that and that was a really really neat experience

- My cousin just went to goat yoga and she shared something and I was like 'are you kidding me' this sounds really cool this sounds amazing, I think it was like \$80 for one hour
- Challenges:
- It's about scale though (for farmer) I think and they need access to a food web or a food
- You need to be able to deal with this stuff like if you don't have people who can prepare a bunch of different stuff that is seasonal it is really a challenge and from a business owners' perspective you need a good staff. And we have a good staff and we have great restaurants, but it is still a challenge
- Then I still see in my backyard I don't like people driving to your damn farm to get their vegetables
- It is going to create some challenges zoning and planning for agritourism areas
- Golf
 - They're here for this golf tournament but how what are the other things that they can do and integrate to make this a more complete experience and that's the particular challenge
 - An event where the kids could come and learn for like two months in the summer and it was awesome I don't know they really took their time with the kids and all the staff helped out and who knows they could have created some lifelong love for this stuff—got to hook the younger generation—golf is kind of one of those things that could disappear
 - Now the kids have trap and a million other things that they can do and golf is probably not one

(Q7) Have you guys seen any other trends in Agritourism?

- People are always asking about pizza on the farm—So maybe more events or things like that
 - Wine tastings
 - Brewery tours
 - Vineyards

(Q8) How do you see the local businesses effecting tourism, are they bringing in their own tourists or are they kind of just getting tourists off the Agritourism or off fishing?

- Muddy Waters
 - I think Muddy Waters is voted the number one patio
 - Well see now as a building inspector I can guarantee that half his patios did not meet the building code
- The No Name Saloon and the Monkey bar in Prescott - A lot of that is word of mouth too, like the motorcylces and the boaters that pass through town
- The winter time I tell people about Robert Nelson's ice sculptors.
 - Oh we go out there all the time.—There is this guy, a plumber, that every winter he's got that this Artesian Spring (38:00) With all these pipes, he puts copper pipes in the air and then he puts little holes in the pipes and the water freezes

- 20 to 30 feet tall and gotta be 30 or better

(Q9) So out of all the things we talked about, what do you think brings in the most tourism?

- Ellsworth Creamery
 - On a consistent basis the largest drive is probably Ellsworth coop creamery and its cheese
 - So if you want squeaky cheese curd then you go there on the way back and their ice cream cones are real cream
 - The most common question they get asked after the folks have bought their wine and cheese, because they do sell wine there and a bunch of other things too, is what can we do?
 - We should have some options laid out for them (they don't)
- Butchery shop on Spring Valley (Sylers)
 - Oh the butchery shop on Spring Valley is fantastic, so if you haven't been there—it is very nationally award winning butcher shop. Their bacon is like number one in the nation. — Syler's? — Yeah Syler's

(Q10) So, in ten years what would you guys want the tourism headline to be in Pierce County?

- Brainstorming
 - Yeah uh if you could somehow put trout streams in picturesque rural and a bunch of that stuff in one sentence
 - confluence would be a good one for Prescott but Pierce county I'm still thinking
 - Just across the board in Wisconsin I think St. Croix county is third in philanthropic giving, Pierce county is sixth. So that's not really a tourism thing but just more of a background
- Headlines
 - 'Get Lost in Our Back Roads and Find our Farms and our Trout Streams'
 - Get lost in Pierce county's back roads. See what treasures you can find. Wineries, brewery, a small town, a trout stream, the farms

(Q11) What kind of opportunities would you want to see here in ten years that we don't have now? From an agritourism? From a business perspective?

- Lodging
 - Lodging is a big one I would say
- Maps
 - For us (Visitor and Learning Center) people are always interested in getting a map like they want something physical in their hands
- Bike Trails
 - That would be awesome to get the bike trails. In Prescott they got the big bike trails and bike

system in Dakota county. In Washington it goes to the bridge, go up 35 – The Great River road actually is an on road trail

- o And people will fight the installation of these trails, and as soon as they are there they get used like mad and there is a lot of data to back that up

Public Meeting

The first section of public meeting data was collected via small group discussions. The second section is the flipchart responses. The third section is the map questions and resulting data. See the methods section for full details on each data collection technique.

Small Group Discussion Questions

(Q1) What activities/events are currently offered in this city and county?

- Festivals
 - o Prescott Daze
 - o River Falls Days
 - o Cheese Curd Festival
 - o Bacon Fest
 - o UFO Days Pierce County Fair
 - o Fly Fishing Festival
 - o Dam Days
 - o Flood Run
- Agritourism
 - o Apple Picking/orchards
 - o Pumpkin Picking
 - o Dairy Breakfast
 - o Barn tour
 - o Organic Farming Tower
- Recreational Activities
 - o Fishing
 - o Boating
 - o Sailing
 - o Hiking
 - o Biking
 - o Hunting
 - o Swimming
 - o Snowmobiling
 - o Motorcycling
 - o Sport Leagues
 - o Poker Stroll

- Bird-watching
- Parks and National Parks
- Great River Road
- Art and Music
 - Art Shows at Freedom Park
 - Orange Dragon Art Shows
 - Art on the Kinni
 - Art/plays at Prescott High School
- UW River Falls Events
 - Rodeo

(Q2) What kinds of activities/events would you like to see in Pierce County

- Agritourism
 - Vineyard Vaunt
 - Farm to table tours
- Art and Music
 - Ice Art
 - Outdoor art show
 - Community concerts
- Promoting Current Activities
 - National Parks
- Internet
- Recreation Activities
 - Hot Air Balloon Rides
 - River Boat Rides
- Lodging
- Senior Living
- Fermentation Fest

(Q3) What unique resources can be found in Pierce County?

- Rivers
 - Mississippi
 - Kinne
 - St. Croix
- Recreational Activities
 - Fishing
 - Bluffs
 - Water ski
 - Parks
 - Winter Carnival

- Art Fairs
- Wineries and Breweries
- Restaurants

(Q4) How can Pierce County leverage these resources to leverage more visitors?

- Marketing
 - Social media management
 - Outreach to Minneapolis and St. Paul
- Communication among counties
- Tourism Funds
- Improve Riverfront
 - Dock access
- Information Centers
 - Visiting Centers
 - Chamber of Commerce
- UWRF - Wisconsin Department of Tourism

(Q5) Why do you think visitors come to Prescott?

- River
 - Fishing
 - Boating
- Proximity to the Twin Cities
- Festivals
- Recreational Activities
 - Biking
 - Birding
 - Motorcycling
 - Art Shows
 - Car shows
 - Photography
- Agritourism
 - Pumpkin Picking
 - Farmers Market
 - Apple Orchards
- Restaurants

(Q6) Why do visitors choose other cities in Pierce County over Prescott?

(All listings are poor in Prescott)

- Infrastructure

- Road maintenance
- Public docking
- Local Offerings
 - Festivals
 - Events
 - No family friendly activities
- Visual Appeal
 - Water Front
 - Down town
- Resources Scattered
 - Funding for events
 - Funding for Chamber of Commerce
- Communication within Prescott
- Promotion of Prescott

(Q7) What characteristics do you feel represent the visitors of Prescott?

- Older/ Baby Boomer
- Recreational Activities
 - Birders
 - Anglers
 - Boaters
 - Bikers
 - Swimmers
 - Artists
 - National Parks
- Active/Outdoors People

(Q8) Do you think the City of Prescott displays a welcoming atmosphere for visitors?

Negatives:

- Trail system
- Parking
- Traffic (Seasonal)
- Businesses
 - Empty store fronts
 - Business turnover
 - Diversity
 - Customer service
- Elderly access
- Food selection

Positives:

- Welcomes recreational activities
- Food selection

(Q9) What are some effects of tourism on your business/organization?

- Expansion
 - Jobs
 - Economy
 - Parks
 - Churches
 - Business
- Needs
 - Tourism
 - Parking
 - Variety of Businesses
 - City services
- Local culture against trends and growth
- Influx of residents to area

(Q10) In 10 years, what would you want the tourism headline to be for Pierce County?

- Come join the fun in Prescott
- Come for the views, confluence, roads, and food!
- Come to the Confluence!
- One hour to River Romp
- Thriving Downtown- Turnaround into Beautiful Getaway
- It's soooo clean! Nothing is wasted; it's all GREEN.
- Prescott owns leased marinas. Grand opening for restaurant, event center, and docking boats
- Good food- Good Fun- Good Company
- Experience Life- Prescott is the Place to be
- Grand Opening for Destination Spa, Restaurant, Event Center
- Great River Road Visitor and Learning Center has 200,000th Visitor
- Growth in Tourism-development

Flip Chart Questions

Weaknesses:

- Communication
- Infrastructure
 - Roads

- Parking
- No hotels
- Funding
- Business owner mentality

Strengths:

- Location
 - Ideal proximity to Twin Cities
- Rivers
- History of city
- National Parks

Opportunities:

- Recreational activities
 - Hiking
 - Boating
 - Fishing
 - Kayaking
 - Birding
- National Park Service Partner
- Location to Twin Cities
- Agritourism
 - Farm to table
 - Farm to market

Threats:

- Infrastructure
- Local Philosophy
- Cities relevancy

Allocation of resources:

- Marketing
 - Events/activities
 - Resources available
- Visual of city
 - Downtown area
 - Views capes along river

Mapping Questions

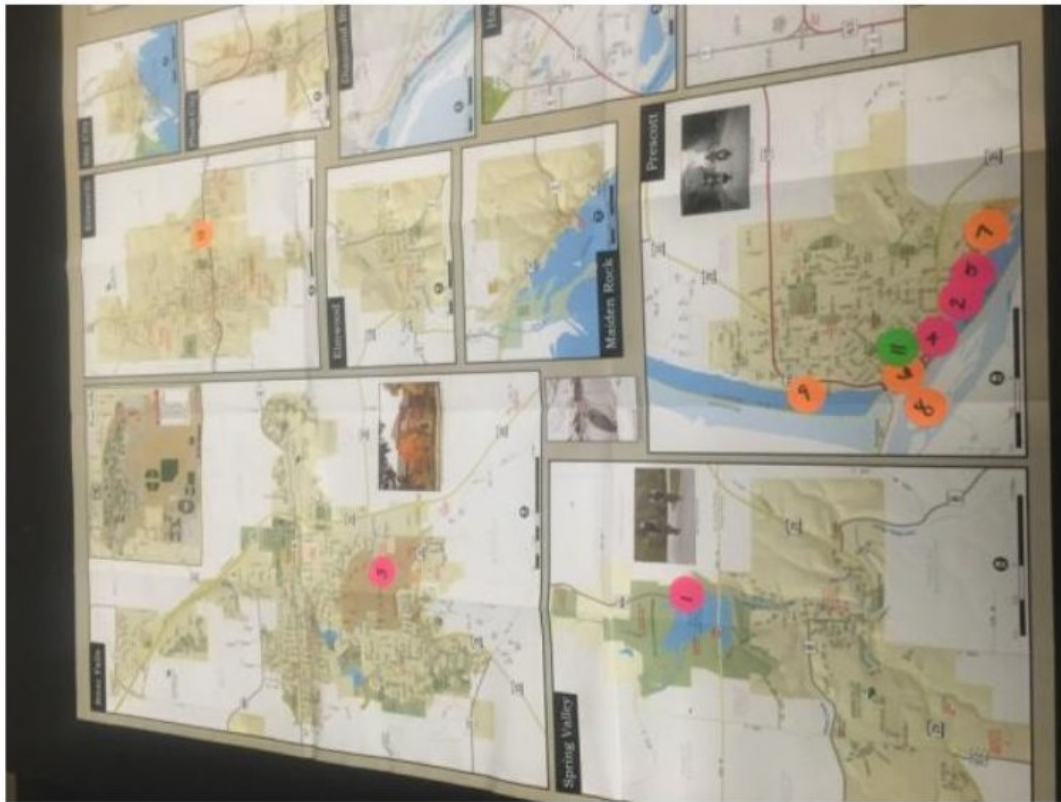
Figure 1. Results from question, "Where are opportunities for tourism growth in Pierce County?"



Opportunities

- Parks
 - Freedom Park
 - Nugget Lake County Park
 - Kinne State Park
- Great River Road
 - Great River Road Visitor and Learning Center
- Prescott downtown
 - Restaurants
- Prescott School

Figure 2. Results from question, “Where do most of the visitors go in Pierce County?”



Most Visitors

- River
 - Confluence
 - Boating
 - Fishing
- Local Businesses
 - Ellsworth Creamery
 - Great River Road Visitor and Learning Center
 - Downtown Prescott restaurants and bars
- Parks

Ellsworth

The Ellsworth meeting took place on April 4th, 2019. It was the second meeting that occurred for this project. The focus groups and meeting all took place at the Ellsworth High School Library.

The first focus group was at 4:30pm-5:15pm and had 11 attendees. The second focus group was from 5:30pm-6:15pm and had one attendee. The public meeting was 6:30pm-8:00pm and had 9 attendees.

Focus Group 1

The invites to the first focus group were sent out to target agritourism business owners. As stated above, 11 people attended the group. Businesses that were represented included; Ellsworth Creamery, Pierce County Fairgrounds, Rush River Orchard/Bakery, and Tiny Trimbelle. The conversation recorded from the focus group was transcribed and coded to pull out common themes and supporting examples. It was analyzed question by question. The themes are listed above each section of supporting quotes. The data is shown below.

(Q1) What activities/events are currently offered in this city?

(Q2) What activities/events are currently offered in this county?

Theme: Summertime/Outdoor Agriculture Activities

Supporting Quotes:

- "Cheese Curd Fest"
- "Pierce County Fair"
- "FFA Tractor Pull"
- "Each town has its own celebration"

(Q3&4) What assets/resources are in the county? How are they leveraged?

Theme: Unique Geographic Area with Recreational Opportunities *Supporting*

Quotes:

- "We don't play enough off the class A trout stream, Rush River"
- "What people don't realize is the hills, we are right next to flat country, they don't get we have hills"
- "We think about it we have 2 major rivers, Scenic River and the major river in the entire U.S. is flowing right next to us and we don't embrace the history at all"
- "Rural Picturesque"

Theme: Tour/Event Potential

Supporting Quotes:

- "They could actually do conservation tours about agriculture"
- "Are you thinking there would be a brochure that would take them on a map of the county and drive to this farm and if you park here you can see an example of this"
- "...for me things that locals want to do will also drive the tourists too. I want to see more a quality of life, things I want to go and do and with that the tourists will come. Show me the breweries, wineries, distilleries, shops, retail, walking paths, bike paths, like the benches"

Theme: Legal & Leadership Constraints

Supporting Quotes:

- "They could actually do conservation tours about agriculture, but you know the weird part, by law they prevent it"
- "But privacy laws prevent them from even posting what they're doing, then they gotta get permission and run it all the way up. It's a bigger project than they want to take"

Q5) How can PC leverage these resources to draw in more visitors?

Theme: Tour/Event Potential

Supporting Quotes:

- “We have a lot of talent, artists in the area like Stockholm but where Stockholm branded the town around the artists”
- “I think about that art tour where they used agriculture as an inspiration”

Theme: Legal & Leadership Constraints

Supporting Quotes:

- “The thing is we need all county, all the units of government in alignment on tourism. They just don’t get it. One of the nice parts about this area is that we have a lot of long term residents, one of the negatives is we have a lot of long term residents that don’t recognize the assets that we have”
- “The more we streamline or have a site that promotes, like the chamber does, or really need to focus attention on what you have to offer, Pierce County what you have to offer”
- “The chamber tries but tourism isn’t our number one thing, but we recognize the value so we do our best to try but that being said, you guys do a really great job creating experiences for people which is what they’re really looking for”

Theme: Pierce County Visitor Characteristics

Supporting Quotes:

- “They like the ride to WI, we need to take advantage, we are within an hour of the Twin Cities and they love coming to the country they like the ambiance”

(Q6) Why do you think visitors come to Ellsworth?

(Q7) Why do you think visitors choose other cities in PC besides Ellsworth?

Theme: Summertime/Outdoor Agriculture Activities

Supporting Quotes:

- “Cheese Curds”
- “The county fair or the tractor pull, I would say that’s a correct answer”
- “Otherwise they might stop because they are driving through on the way to somewhere else because they got off the great river road and are heading to 94 or on the way to Mayo Clinic”

Theme: Competition Characteristics

Supporting Quotes:

- “I look at River Falls, well actually Prescott and obviously the river is the big pull”
- “Plus they have really cool parks and a welcome visitor center there that is really cool”
- “And the river walk and they invested a lot in the downtown, they put a lot of time and effort into restrictions in their downtown to make it cohesive”

(Q8) What characteristics do feel represent the visitors in Ellsworth?

Theme: Pierce County Visitor Characteristics

Supporting Quotes:

- “They have money. MMP’s, do you know what they are? Minneapolis Money People”
- “Probably over ½ that stay with us (Tiny Trimbelle) have dogs and are looking for dog friendly activities to do. High percentage of couples without children they have money to spend, and they want to do experiences and things like that”
- “People traveling to Mayo Clinic, there’s a lot of cross traffic through here because it saves them about a ½ hour or 45 minutes”

Theme: Winter Activities Potential

Supporting Quotes:

- “That brings up a really good point, we don’t do enough to promote winter activities. We go away and squirrel away, and we have a great XC ski area”
- “But I know snowmobiling is a big tourist thing but one of the big things that hurts us is not having enough overnight lodging accommodations”
- “I think snowshoeing and XC skiing, snowmobile trails, ice fishing”

(Q9) How do you see agritourism in Ellsworth and PC?

Theme: Tour/Event Potential

Supporting Quotes:

- “We have talked about doing a bloom deal, some deal in May over Mother’s day weekend”
- “You should see if they can tag a tree blossom, for a kid or something see if they can tag a tree blossom and come back and get their apple”
- “The agritourism that’s what we are really into, we are looking to drive it. People want experiences, Vino in the Valley does that too, its experience I think, that’s what they want. Bring the kids and the family and wow this is where it all happens”
- “Well they figured out they can connect with a group in the Twin Cities that wanted to connect urban folks to rural lands said families could come out and have their faces licked by a cow or a calf or whatever”

Theme: Legal & Leadership Constraints

Supporting Quotes:

- “...again it goes back to, we are just a community that just likes doing what we do. We don’t get out all that much, so when we look at our leadership they don’t get out, they’re nice solid people of the community. And so it’s really hard to move that needle”

Theme: Pierce County Visitor Characteristics

Supporting Quotes:

- “We are far enough out that a lot of comments from the MMP’s is they don’t like the orchards in Minneapolis because they’re crowded madhouses and they come out here and have their new favorite orchard because it’s a country experience”
- “Not a trying to be country in the city”
- “Maybe (they) really value a relaxing, serene, rural kind of experience, over hustle and bustle that they get every

day”

(Q10) In 10 years, if Pierce County Herald wrote an article about tourism what would you like the headline to be?

(Q11) In 10 years what kind of opportunities would you want to experience in Pierce County?

Theme: Future Hopes

Supporting Quotes:

- “I think we’re one of the bottom states, or bottom counties in the state for tourism. I think if the headline was that we were one of the top two in growth in tourism in the state that would be pretty impressive”
- “The crowds flock to Pierce County”
- “Come see what you’re missing”

Theme: Legal & Leadership Constraints

Supporting Quotes:

- “We don’t have free county parks, we don’t have free assets and what’s the one they just developed on the trim val, and they don’t even have restrooms there. So we are over 165 years old and we don’t even have good parks”
- “And that’s where I go, we have very nice people on the county board but they haven’t got out to see what other assets are and it’s pathetic it really is”
- “...the county fair (grounds) because when I went through the first time and I know you guys run it, but when you drive through there and you’re not from this area, it looks like a juvenile prison...”
- “...how they view that asset is it’s for the fair grounds, they don’t view it as a community assets and for centuries, it’s not just the current group, for centuries, and that’s how they view it and that’s how they continue to view it and if they want to change, it has to, not just that but the whole county system has to change on how they look on those assets”

Focus Group 2

The invites to the second focus group were sent out to restaurant and bar owners. There was only 1 attendee at the focus group representing Common Man Brewing Company. The conversation recorded from the focus group was transcribed and coded to pull out common themes and supporting examples. The themes are listed above each section of supporting examples. The data is shown below.

Visitors

Theme: Educated

Examples: “Hennepin and Ramsey County pulls it down a little bit because of some of their more inner city populations. But over 50, 55% of the residents in this area, I’ll have some sort of college degree”

Theme: Wealthy

Examples: “average household income of \$75,000.” “But here we have a level of affluence that allows people who have disposable income to spend.” “willing to spend money for the right experience” “The millennials over the cities are spending more on their dogs than a lot of people spend on their kids. I mean, there’s bars over there, have dog patios and dog nights and stuff.”

Strengths

Theme: Activities/Events

Examples: Cheese Curd festival, County Fair (Horseshow, demolition derby, motocross), High school sports.

Theme: Unique location

Examples: Mississippi River, traditional agricultural farmland, scenic roads, old barns, close to Minneapolis

Weaknesses

Theme: Lack of cooperation

Examples: “me doing my advertising, vino in the valley doing their advertising cheese, the creamery doing theirs, Prescott Chamber doing little, Ellsworth chamber doing a little, River Falls doing a little. Nobody's doing a big picture kind of coordination. And so we're losing business to other counties, either Minnesota or Wisconsin.” “We need to leverage the resources that already exist, to have a more coordinated effort to invite people from the twin cities into our county.” “I think we can make that case, but we just got to get organized and, we need to inspire people”

Opportunities

Theme: Create Experiential Events

Examples: “drive around and do things and so organized tours that are based on experiences” “make sure they get by 10 cool barns that they can take pictures of, and may be along the way pet a cow even though they did it every day when they were a kid and hated them.” vinyl record stores, pick your own orchards, old red barns, dive bars, back road drives, music, food tastings.”

Threats

Theme: Traditional Community Values

Examples: “It's much more farmer, very practical. And one of the resistance to tourism that we're getting is, um, that part of the little bit of the opposition.” “All that hard farm kind of mentality that's permeates the um, you grew up, you did what your dad did and you're happy with it. And that's not exactly what happens, but it's still kind of that you don't, they don't aspire to bigger, cooler things. It's just not what we do.”

Public Meeting

The first section of public meeting data was collected via small group discussions. The second section is the flip chart responses. The third section is the map questions and resulting data. See the methods section for full details on each data collection technique.

Small Group Discussion Questions

Figure 3. Results from question, “What activities/events are offered in Ellsworth?”

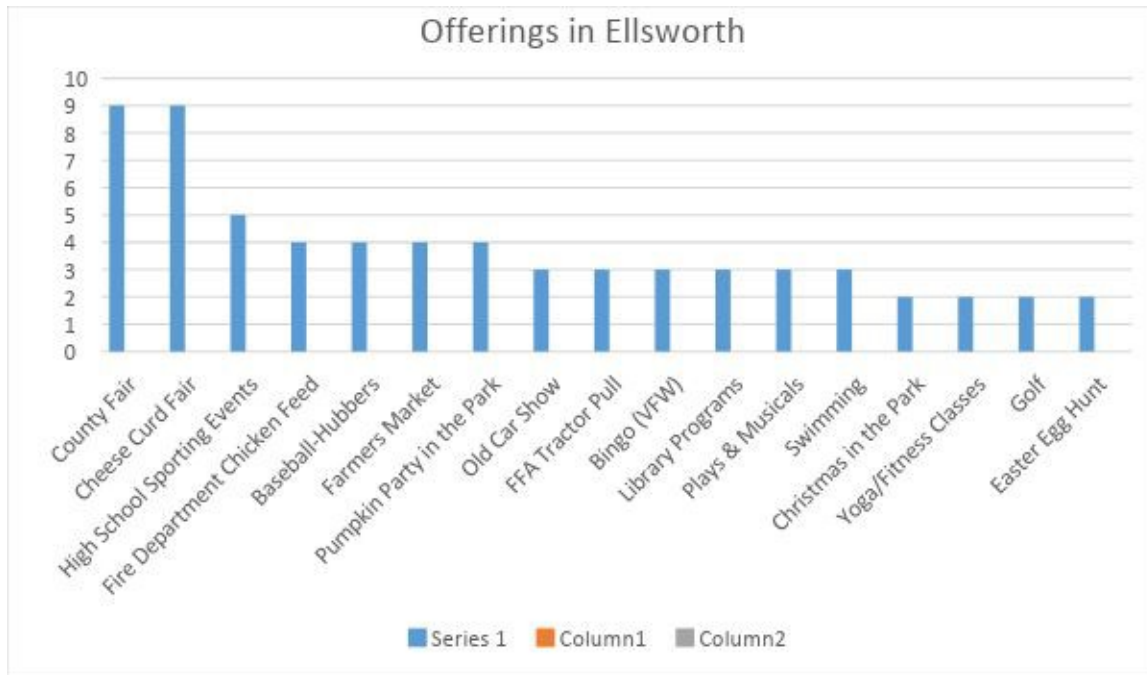


Figure 4. Results from question, “What activities/events are offered in Pierce County?”

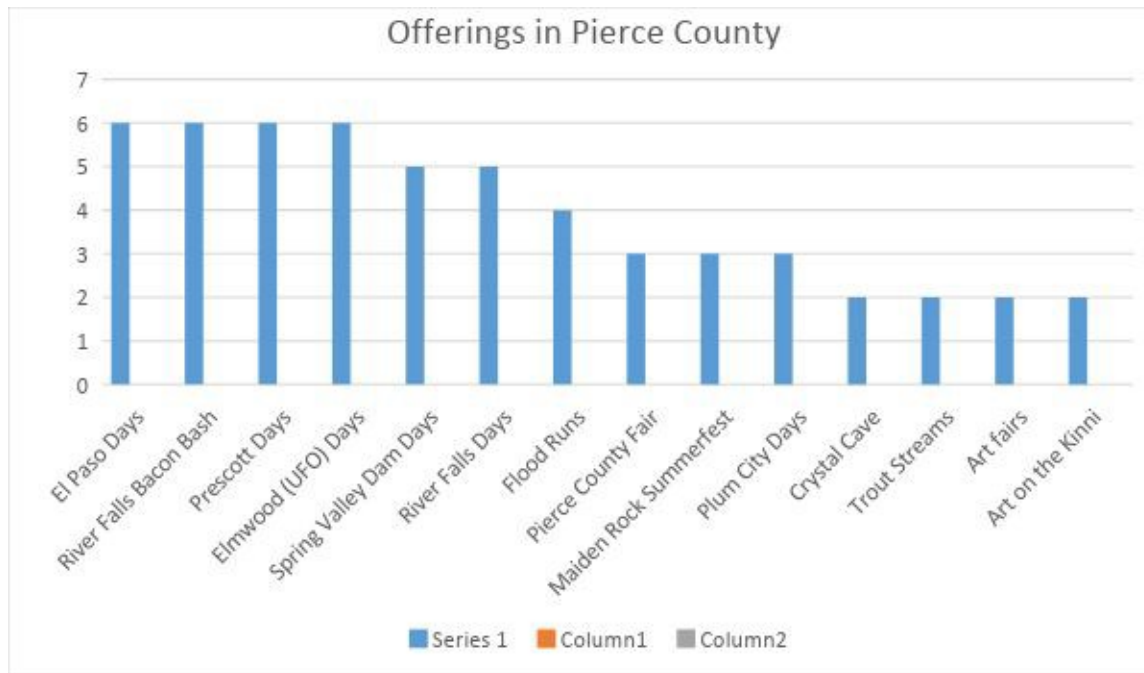
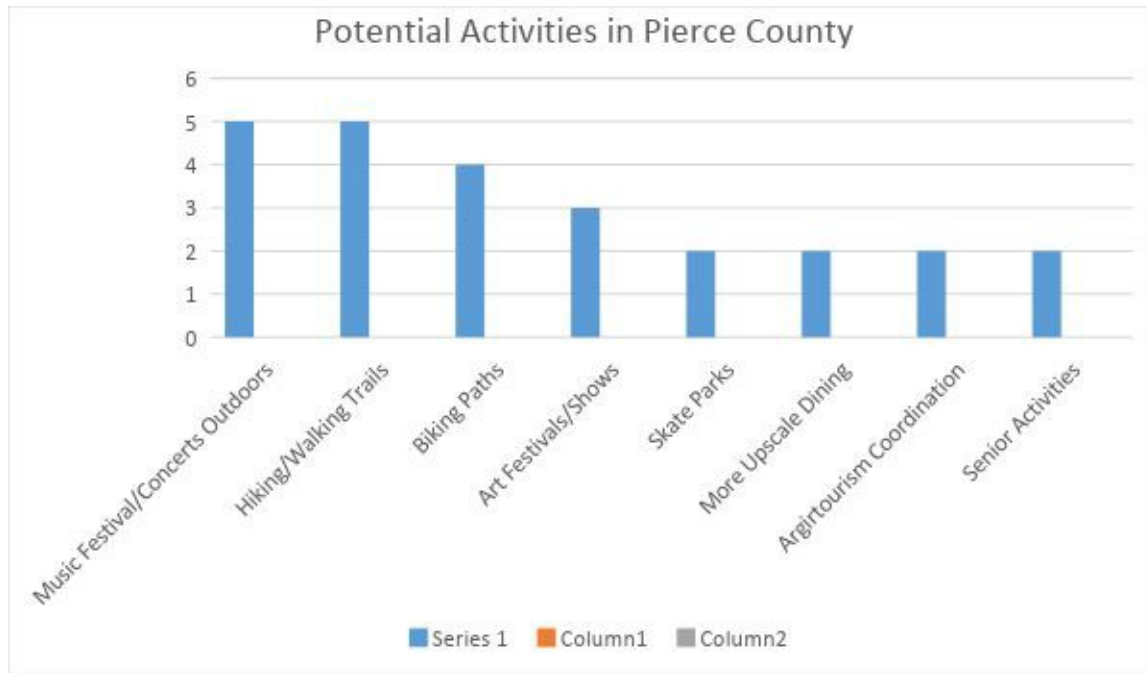


Figure 5. Results from question, “What are potential activity/event opportunities in Pierce County?”



“Why do you think visitors come to Ellsworth?”

Theme: Summertime/Outdoor Agriculture Activities

Examples: Cheese Curd Fest, Creamery, Orchards, PC Fair, Tractor Pull

Theme: Unique Geographic Area with Recreational Opportunities

Examples: Fishing, Camping, Scenery

Theme: Family & Community Events

Examples: Visiting Family, School Activities, on their way up north **“Why do**

visitors choose other cities in Pierce County over Ellsworth?” Theme: Logistics

Examples: Distance (other cities closer to Twin Cities), Lack of hotels/motels, UW River Falls Location, Lack of Promotion/Advertising

Theme: Recreation Opportunities

Examples: Attractions, Large parks, more offered, More Diversity, Retail/Restaurants

“What characteristics do you feel represent the visitors in Ellsworth?” Theme:

Pierce County Visitor Characteristics

Examples: MMP’s, Travelers, Sportsmen, School Activities, Families, Rural Experience Pursuers, Cheese Aficionados

“Do you think Ellsworth displays a welcoming atmosphere to visitors?”

Theme: No Due to Infrastructure

Examples: Bad Streets & Buildings, Need New/Better Signage, No Visitor Center

Theme: Yes Due to Friendly People

Examples: People are welcoming, People in Ellsworth are warm and friendly

“In 10 years, if Pierce County Herald wrote an article about tourism what would you like the headline to be?”

Theme: Newspaper Headlines

Examples: PierceCounty#1TouristDestinationinWI, RecordCrowds, AgritourismDraws

Flip Chart Questions

Theme: Activity/Event Potential

Examples: More music festivals, breweries/wineries/distilleries, craft stores, recreational opportunities, diverse retail shops, great downtown, local produce, ag tours

Theme: Improved Infrastructure Needed

Examples: Road improvements, storefronts being totally revamped, strong economy, lack of hotels/motels, lighting, parking, lack of funding

Theme: Future Hopes

Examples: To invite commercial real estate development to draw in people, open public spaces, public art, advertising and getting the word out

Mapping Questions

Figure 6. Results from question, “Where do you see tourism opportunities in Pierce County?”



Opportunities

- Trails along the Mississippi
- Retail needed in certain areas
- Rush River Valley, scenic with recreational opportunities
- Gardens on Park Hills Ellsworth
- Tourism stops along Great River Road

Figure 7. Results from question, "Where are the strengths in Pierce County?"



Strengths

- Lake Pepin, Waterway, & Scenic Drive
- Near the Twin Cities
- Crystal Cave
- UW-River Falls (Events)
- Creamer/Curds
- Trout Streams/Fishing
- Ag Tours throughout the county

River Falls

The River Falls meeting took place on April 8th, 2019. It was the third meeting that occurred for this project. The focus group and meeting were held at the River Falls City Hall. The focus group ran from 5:00pm-5:45pm and had 3 attendees. The public meeting ran from 6:00pm-7:30pm and had 25 attendees.

Focus Group

The conversation recorded from the focus group was transcribed and coded to pull out common themes and supporting examples. The themes are listed below each section of supporting examples. The data from the focus group was combined with the public meeting data below.

Public Meeting

The first section of public meeting data was collected via small group discussions. The second section is the flipchart responses. The third section is the map questions and resulting data. See the methods section for full details on each data collection technique.

Small Group Discussion Questions

(Q1) What activities/events are currently offered in the River Falls area?

- RF days x8
- st patrick's day x6
- bacon bash x8
- fishing x10
- canoeing-kayaking x10
- concerts x2
- family parks
- winter sledding
- hiking x5
- biking x4
- art on the kinni x3
- river dazzle x3
- roots and blues x3
- UWRF rodeo
- glen and hoffman parks
- horseback riding x2
- cooking out
- sports teams x3
- art/pottery x2
- bird watching x4
- bowls for hope
- bar hopping
- hunting
- green houses
- movie theatre
- UWRF
- car shows
- golf x2
- hockey
- baseball x5

Theme: Fishing, canoeing/kayaking, RF days, and the Bacon Bash are most popular activities in River Falls.

(Q2) What kinds of activities/events would you like to see in Pierce County?

- running/bike clubs
- music festivals
- community gathering/conference center
- civic center for major events
- bike racing
- community flea markets
- one day of total rest per week (silence the noise/traffic/etc.)
- Stay spa/retreat center.

- Fishing trout educational center
- history/museums x2
- history of watershed
- outdoor center
- place to learn about what activities are happening
- sustainable living activities
- activities for young families
- destination recreational sites that are sustainable and natural
- more activities brought to main street x2
- better signage for parking
- directions to uwrf
- more bike lanes
- more fine dining x2
- a different concept restaurant or two
- cross country skiing/snowshoeing
- indoor pool
- auditorium space
- water park
- cultural center
- outside hockey rink
- shoe store
- indoor roller rinks
- coffee shops/drive-thru
- river access
- bigger art gallery and classes x2
- dog sledding
- outside theater
- community gourmet cooking
- quilt shows
- dog shows
- more emphasis on natural beauty
- hastings car show x2
- geocaching
- draw to downtown shops
- more developed music
- kids fest
- introduce a "Taste of River Falls" x2
- Finish the river walk x2
- encourage residents to shop local
- more activities/events to bring in birders

Theme: There are a lot of interests and there is a common theme of using or involvement of the natural resources of the area.

(Q3) What unique resources can be found in Pierce County?

- The Dams and hydros
- confluence of mississippi and st. croix (Prescott)
- River towns
- university x2
- technical college
- st. croix co.
- 2 lakes in river falls
- foster cemetery

- Glen Park/ swingingbridge
- Kinnickinnic state parkx2
- clifton hollows
- South Tork/Kinni/lakes
- Walking paths
- Bike path (Hwy29s)
- Pierce cty fair
- Ellsworth cheese curd (capital :) x2
- Golf courses
- Crystal cave x2
- Kinni River x2
- UWRF x2
- tech school
- Baseball
- Golf
- Soccer tournaments
- UW x2
- Technical learning (can't think of the name)
- kinni river - fishing, birding
- Ellsworth
- Cheese curds x2
- crystal cave
- pierce county fair
- Birdwatching natural beauty
- cheap drinks
- Kayaking x2 and fishing in town
- NOT THE CITY
- Lake George
- Lake Louise
- Kinnickinnic State Park x2
- Ellsworth ShootingRange
- Kinnickinnic River x3
- Sand (mining) AG
- Rivers
- Creeks
- Public Land
- Fishing x2
- Hunting
- Nugget Lake
- Kinni park
- Glen park
- crystal cave
- Bluffs
- Hills & Valleys
- Great river road
- (Lake George)
- Class 1 troutstream
- Driftless area/geology
- Farms (working +Hobby)
- Snowmobile/ATV trails
- Natural areas + state parks
- UWRF - Rodeo + Dairy Activity
- People w/ unique skills + stories

- Libraries
- Riversx2
- scenic views
- Parks
- artists
- Crystal Cave
- Confluence of st. croix and mississippi
- Kinni and rush rivers (trout fishing)
- earthen dam and Si Valley
- agriculture (cheese
- Fishing
- Picturesque paved Countryroads
- Wooded hills, valleys
- Trout streamsx2
- agritourism
- Lakes
- mississippi x2
- Prescott
- State and countyparks
- prairies, forests, county roads along st. croix
- Lake pepin x3
- historical landmarks
- Confluence/freedom park(bird byway)x2
- Rush river
- all water! (our waterways and the land that surrounds them)
- St. Croix River and launches
- winery
- Piercecodevelopment_____center(?)

Theme: The landmarks, scenic drives, lakes, caves, rivers, and the abundance natural resources make this area special.

(Q4)How can Pierce County leverage these resources to draw in more visitors?

- Encourage more farm to table restaurant
- agritainment=destination and promotion
- collaborative group to create/development market assets
- EDC or other funding to promote
 - eg. 5 orchard=harvest/pick& activities for one or two day event
- appropriate management of waterways/healthy/clean
 - protection of rivers/streams
- communications
 - use better marketing
 - regional promotion
 - more cooperation among municipalities
- manage resources to control growth
- promote awareness
 - greater reach
 - how are we promoting?
- social networking
- leverage athletics
- UWRF events
 - so many people here, how drawn downtown, what's happening?
- history/"treasure hunt"/geocaching

Theme: The use of better marketing, focusing on eating food from the area/agritourism, and linking with University and athletics.

(Q5) Why do you think visitors come to River Falls?

- Events and festivals x2
 - RF days
 - art on the Kinni x2
 - Bacon Bash x2
 - Roots and BlueGrass
 - Tractor pulls
- fishing and kayaking on Kinnix 2
- Movie theater
- Golfing x2
- university and tech school x3
- ballpark
- car shows
- 2nd hand & antique shops x3
- breweries & wineries x2
 - rush river and sunning* bridge
- tax breaks for businesses
- family ties x2
- parks
- birdwatching
- Music fest
- rodeo
- falcon sports
- Whitetail bike event
- Fishing x2
- Sports/recreation
 - baseball
 - hockey
 - football
 - college sports
 - biking/hiking
 - paddle
- Hospital/medical services
- jobs/employment
- conferences at UWRF

Theme: For the festivals, the university/athletics, and the outdoor recreation opportunities in the area.

(Q6) Why do visitors choose other cities in Pierce County over River Falls?

- big river/st. croix-bigger boat
- cheese curds and county fair (Ellsworth) x3
- crystal cave - spring valley x3
- scenic overlooks/bluffs
- better restaurants/gourmet x3
- cities on the Mississippi river
- water craft recreation
- lake pepin x2
- kinni state park
- nugget lake/earthen dam, spring valley

- great river roadcenter
- county forests
- apple/fruit orchards and events
- rush river and tributaries
- air shows/railroad/dam/locks
- events like stockholm art fair
- el paso days x2
- buffalo/bison farm
- paintball park
- UFO days
- prescott daze
- vino in the valley-toward maiden rock
- historical landmarks/art tours
- clifton- golf course

Theme: (when first asked question, a lot of people said, "they do?.") The reasons stated were all in conjunction with festivals, landmarks, or outdoor recreation in other cities that offered those opportunities.

(Q7) What characteristics do you feel represent the visitors in River Falls?

- Shoppers/garage salers
- day trippers x2
- visiting family/friends x3
 - uwrfx2
- sport watchers x2
- outdoor enthusiasts x3
- cookie "monsters"
 - Best Maid
 - Mei Mei- sweet 16 competition)
- Repeat visitors
- people who want to get away but don't want to go too far
- Looking for a unique experience or novelty seeker
 - Ex. Bacon Bash
- Bargain shopper/2nd hand stores
- Craft beer/winery visitors
- artists and photographers
- fisher people
- Music lovers
- barhoppers

Theme: Family members, outdoor recreation participants, day trippers to visit local businesses.

(Q8) Do you think the City of River Falls displays a welcoming atmosphere for visitors?

Why Welcoming:

- Friendly/helpful people x4
- Building(heritage)-kept up
- Small town/community x6
- Corner garden/art murals x2/ boardwalk
- main street
- public parks x3
- local businesses x4
- free parking

- ease of navigation
- public events are inclusive
- good schools
- jobs for a variety of skills
- walkable/bikeable
 - ease of access to downtown
- good city services
- on the river x2
- Hotel space
- Natural beauty
- health promotion through staying active

Theme: Small-town feel in a larger city, great downtown for jobs and businesses, helpful residents, beautiful open landscape.

Why Not welcoming

- Garbage-litter x2
- large group of youth unwelcoming to others on sidewalks
- need more parking x4
- need more wayfinding signage x3
- Riverwalk (alley)
- lack of residential walking
- townie mindset
 - "you're not from around here?"
- Hard to meet people unless you have kids in school or join an org/volunteer
- Housing not affordable and hard to find.
- Not enough options
 - theater/museum
- lack of good restaurants
- the appearance that it is separate entirely from rest of county
 - non-regional thinking

Theme: Lack of parking and signage downtown, not enough innovative attractions.

(Q9) In 10 years, what would you want the tourism headline to be for Pierce County?

- Jewel of a city on the Kinni with a unique film festival
- kayaking and fishing still drive tourism downtown
- Riverfront museum and sculpture park 10 year anniversary
- award for eco-tourism to river falls draws money and visitors
- Carbon-free tourist mecca of America
- that numbers of visitors have grown, as has the economy, but the natural wonders have been preserved
- state of the art park- Kinni over park hits the river
- best art show in the state
- tourism has brought in 300% more revenue per year since 2019
- Kinnickinnic trout fishing thrives after kayaks are banned from the river
- River Falls opens its heritage museum, honoring our past
- thousands of birders visit the Lake Louise Bird Sanctuary each month
- City earns regional destination award for its lakes and river- so much to see and do
- activity is booming on the riverwalk
- river falls named "best place to visit in the county"
- Kinnickinnic river ranked the #1 destination in WI and it's the cleanest
- River Falls is #1 stop in Wisconsin
- 101 things to do in River Falls
- River Falls dam removal results in award-winning riverfront park

Theme: Residents want the emphasis to be on the natural environment.

(Q10) In 10 years, what kind of opportunities would you want to experience in Pierce County?

- Great retirement home affordable and multilevel cope
- kayaking through downtown river falls followed by lunch in a thai restaurant
- More camping, park activities, beach for family fun...
- awesome, unique food destinations
- kinni/lakemecca (art/history activities)
- Rural internet access available co wide
- making work at home easier
- recreation and tourism viable
- Kinni designated part of nation scinci waters nature/state parks system
- more fine dining options
- all nature related
- all experiential
- Thriving film festival, environmental preservation and education on the kinni
- destination and logery and reasonable co _____ for fly fishing
- I can't have any idea of what will be happening in ten years, but hopefully it will be great
- Improved downtown business environment strengthens small town feel
- Vibrant local economy
- National log rolling championship held in lake george!
- More hiking
- staying on a sustainable farm
- Tourism sustainable communities and natural habitats
- farm to fork dining
- outdoor theater
- Children's museum/nature based
- farm school k-12
- riverfront park at clark/cedar in RF
- Integrated nature learning and sustainable development
- Zero crime
- zero pollution (as close as possible)
- everyone fed and housed
- empty jail
- Light rail to the twin cities and vice versa
- Restoration of the kinni (less the dams)
- I would like to experience a major event of music- outdoor stadium type of concert

Theme: More outdoor recreation opportunities available, social justice issues solved, emphasis on sustainable practices, renovation/improvement of downtown businesses and community events.

Flip Chart Questions

Resource Allocation

- Along the river downtown
- Development of the riverwalk
- No more downtown housing
- City green-space purchase
- River corridor development
- River protection
 - Water run-off

- Limit utilization
 - Fisherman even days
 - Kayaks odd days
- Protect nature spaces from development
- Museum teaching our heritage
- Improvement of lakes

Theme: preservation of community green space, renovation along the river and on lakes, historical and environmental education opportunities(museums, nature centers).

Strengths

- Natural beauty**
- Nice people
- Proximity
- Anchor Businesses - theater - pizza - shops
- Riverside natural access
- Lots of events: Bacon Bash; Art on Kinni; Blue Grass; Off Road Cycling+Baseball
- Unique Main street theatre, Lowest price point in the country

Theme: Businesses, community events, natural landscapes.

Opportunities

- Expan Birding +agrotourism
- Collaboration between (seemingly) unlike activities - eg. baseball + arts + (music film, etc) + biking + Birding
- Bundled Experiences
- Kayak and fishing downtown
- Public green space/learning areas
- Future appreciation of open areas
- Making the alley along river only pedestrian, with more business facing river
- Improve attractions in lake, fountains, trails, etc
- More lake related activities to use unique feature
- More established car events (ie: Hasting Cruise)

Theme: Improving greenspace/natural landscape, bundling experiences, collaboration of different businesses/sectors, more events.

Weaknesses

- Lack of knowledge to what we offer
- Beauty of natural environment should be in the forefront
- We do not invest enough in history- we are raising buildings and polluting our river
- Lack of great food and lodging
- Transportation
- Parking/signage
- Lack of access along the river for kayak
- Lack of children activity- museum visitor /community center.

Theme: Need for more visitor attractions(museums, visitor/community centers, lodging) depredation of the natural environment, difficult to navigate and park downtown.

Threats

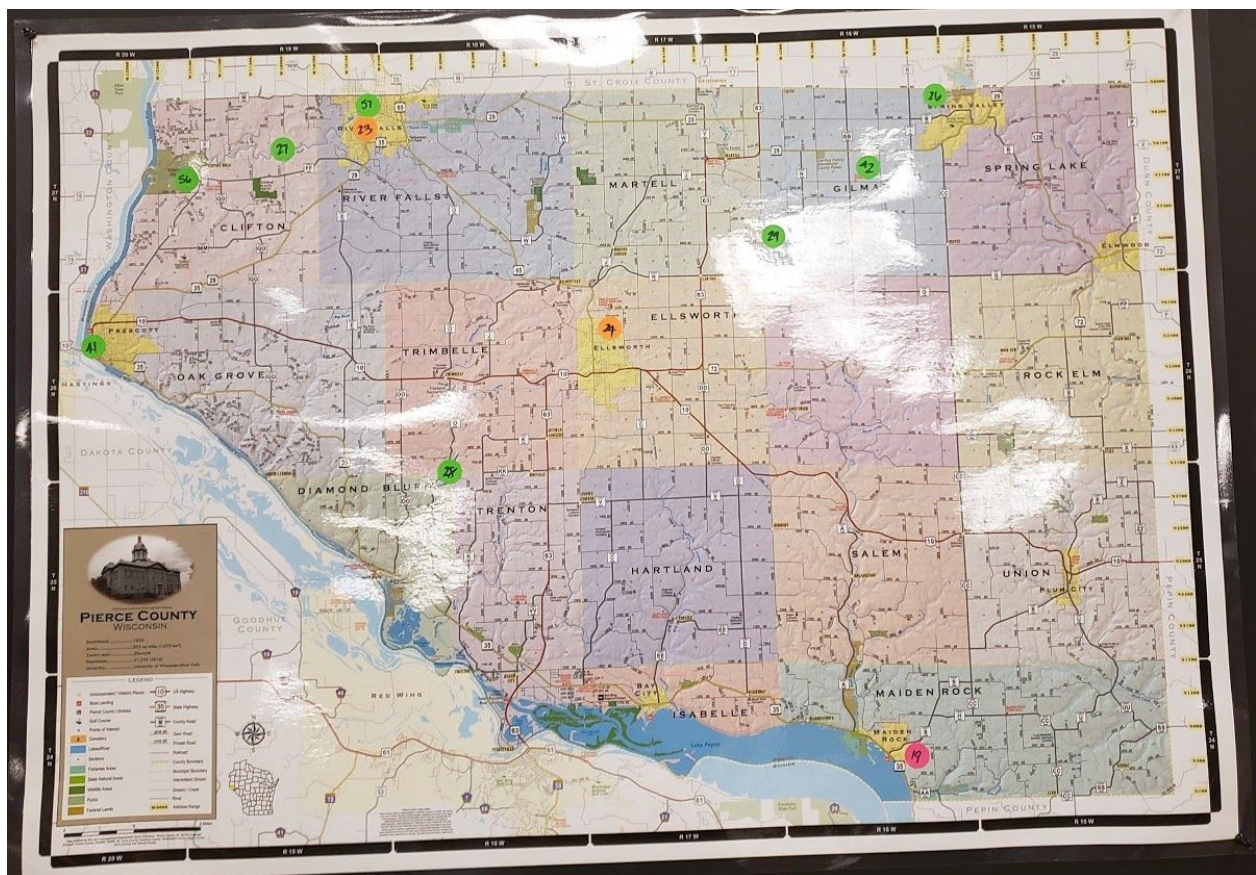
- Kayaking and fishing are conflicting activities. Too much of either damage both.
- Housing developments in downtown
- Green spaces
- Possible destruction of our rivers water protection is key to our success!

- Vehicle/parking limits pedestrian/bike.
- Proximity to other attractions in Hudson Stillwater, Red Wing.
- Climate change and all associated items- transportation/fuel

Theme: Destruction/overuse of the natural environment, proximity to other cities with more attractions.

Mapping Questions

Figure 8. Results from question, "Where are the strengths in Pierce County?"



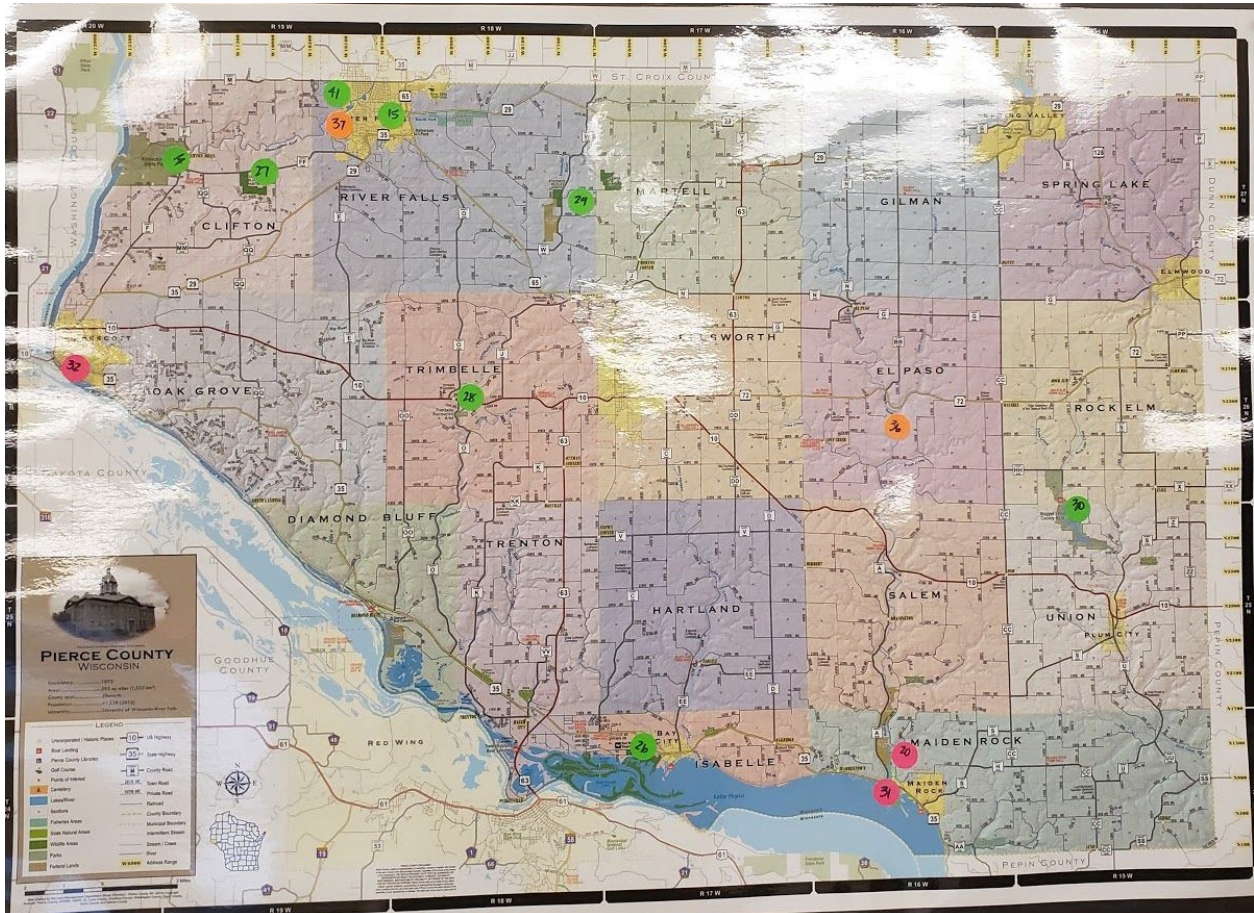
Strengths

- #9-maiden rock, beautiful full drive
- #26-dam and eau galle rec area
- #23-RF area events
- #24- Ellsworth cheese curd factory/fest
- #56-state park
- #41-the confluence
- #7-trout streams
- trout trifecta
 - #42-crystal cave
 - #27-kinnickinnic river

- #28-tribelle river
- #29-rush river

Natural environment attracts people, and areas that put on large popular community events

Figure 9. Results from question, “Where are opportunities for tourism growth in Pierce County?”



Opportunities

- #14- Kinnickinnic State Park
 - Clifton Hollow
 - Carpenter nature center
 - All for camping, nature activities, and outdoor activities
- #15- RF- Glen Park
 - New park experience, day destination, maximize time here
- #31- Lake Pepin
 - Recreation, festivals, art
- #29-30
 - Are meant to form a joint function with our city/cites, state parks, and experiential learning programs that have potential to distribute funds to communities in need, morality, and purpose for tourists and communities alike.

- #41 Diversity of 2 lakes and river
 - Birds and fishing right in town
- #32- Prescott
 - confluence
- #36- The Rush River
- #37- Kinni River
 - Development and preservation

Investing in natural areas for recreation purposes, developing and promoting events in smaller towns and cities.

Bay City

The Bay City meeting took place on April 10th, 2019. It was the fourth meeting that occurred for this project. The focus group and meeting were held in Bay City at the American Legion 357. The focus group was scheduled from 4:00pm-6:00pm and had 0 attendees. The public meeting ran from 6:00pm-8:00pm and had 4 attendees.

Public Meeting

The first section of public meeting data was collected via small group discussions. The second section is the flipchart responses. The third section is the map questions and resulting data. See the methods section for full details on each data collection technique.

Small Group Discussion Questions

(Q1) What activities/events are currently offered in this city and county?

- Cheese Curd Festival 2
- Bacon Fest 2
- Heritage Days 4
- Legion Events 2
- Boy/Cub Scouts 2
- Winery's 1
- Prescott Days 1
- Fall/Spring Run 1
- Tour De Pepin 3
- Ragnar 3
- Fishing/Fishing Tourney 3
- Chili Feed 2
- Plum City Days 2
- Elmwood UFO Days 2
- El Paso Days 2
- Snowmobile/ATV 1
- Bay City Bombers 1
- Ellsworth Chix Feed 2

- Spring Valley Days 2
- Pierce County Fair 2
- Bicycling 1
- Kayaking 3
- Polka Fest 2
- Winery 2
- Chef Shack Dining 3
- Mike's Baytown 3
- Camping 3

of activities/ events would you like to see in Pierce County?

- Snack Shack 1
- Kid Friendly Things 1

(Q3) What unique resources can be found in Pierce County?

- Heritage/History Center 2
- Historic Rest Areas 2 Veterans Court 1

(Q4) Why do you think visitors come to Bay City?

- Pass through mostly Camping/ beach Fishing/ kayaking/ canoeing 1
- Most people pass through stop occasionally to see the river 1

(Q5) Why do visitors choose other cities in Pierce County over Bay City?

- More places to shop, look at 1
- More family things to do 1
- Places to eat vs a bar with kids or are sober 1
- The town needs to be cleaned up 1
- Junk cars 1
- Speed limit (to fast) 1

(Q6) In 10 years, what would you want the tourism headline to be for Pierce County?

- "The Great River Road Stands Here"
- "Most visitors to one county in one year. The most local events within a county in the United States!"
- "Come tour the new and updated river and beach scenery! Camping, fishing, kayaking, nature walks along river."
- "Pierce County has it all, Have you experienced great camping fishing local cuisine and friendly people. Gateway to Lake Pepin."

(Q7) In 10 years, what kind of opportunities would you want to experience in Pierce County?

- Farmers market, more things for children to do
- Memorial for our soldiers
- More biking trails/walking trails (Blacktop) Than winter cross country ski Rock climbing / play park
- Day care center
- Improve out backroads = sightseeing
- Family activity oriented things
- Easy river access on the Mississippi
- Accessibility to rent boats, kayaks

(Q8) Where would you like to see more financial resources dedicated to areas that attract visitation?

- Campgrounds 4
- Riverside 4
- Beach 4
- Water activities 4

Flip Chart Questions

Allocated Resources

- River access and campgrounds
- Activities for kids
- Improving sidewalks/ roads

Strengths

- Food stops
- History center
- American Legion
- Campground
- River/wildlife

Opportunities

- Day Care
- Walking trails
- Environmental tourism (eagles and pelicans)
- Restaurants
- Kayak canoe rentals
- Snack Shack

Weaknesses

- Neatness/cleanliness

- Not enough entertainment for families

Threats

- Not enough activities for people to do

Mapping Questions

Figure 10. Results from question, "Where are the strengths in Pierce County?"



Strengths

- Clean Beaches/ Easy Access Boating/ Clean/Good Size Fishing
- River Falls Days/ Baconfest- Well known and brings in people
- Cheese Curd Days - Everyone wants curds
- Beach Boating Bar - Always Busy
- UFO Days - Everyone wants to see an UFO
- St. Croix./ mississippi access/ beaches/ shops
- Trout Pond
- Scenic roads
- Wildlife or river

Figure 11. Results from question, "Where do you think Pierce County's tourism opportunities are?"



Opportunities

- Plum City Days/ American Legion
- Naughty Hawg (floodrun)
- Shops/food/river/beach
- Cheese curd shop
- Campground
- Hiking /Snowshoeing
- ATV Trails

Conflicts

There are a couple conflicts between different groups of people that may arise as the development of this research project continues and the branding of Pierce County begins. These include conflicts between business/agritourism business owners and county leadership, and community members and business owners.

Businesses/Agritourism Businesses & County Leadership

Throughout many of public meetings, a recurring theme of county leadership being “set in their ways” was heard. Business owners, especially those in the agritourism industry, crave the

economic success that could be had if Pierce County is properly marketed. There was a repeated frustration from those business owners that leadership in the county is quite hesitant toward change and increasing visitor numbers. As this project progresses, there may be debate over the “right way” to market the county, or if the county should be marketed at all.

Community Members & Businesses

Similar to the conflict above, community members may differentiate from business owners on the need for bringing in more tourists. A quote from an agritourism business owner states, “...One of the nice parts about this area is that we have a lot of long-term residents, one of the negatives is we have a lot of long-term residents that don’t recognize the assets that we have.” People can be extremely wary of change, which is why it will be important going forward to keep the community involved so they do not feel blindsided by future development.

Appendix B: Visitor Study Questionnaires

Pierce County Visitor Survey Study Information

Thank you for participating in this visitor study being conducted by the University of Wisconsin – La Crosse Tourism Research Institute.

The purpose of this study is to gather information on visitor perceptions of Pierce County. My participation will involve answering survey questions regarding my perceptions of the Pierce County and information related to your visit. Participation is expected to last approximately 5 minutes for filling out the questionnaire here today. If you are willing to complete an additional follow-up email survey that will take up to 2 minutes to fill out.

There are no anticipated risks to participating in this study.

All participants will receive a 10% discount coupon good for one stay at Country Inn River Falls, WI.

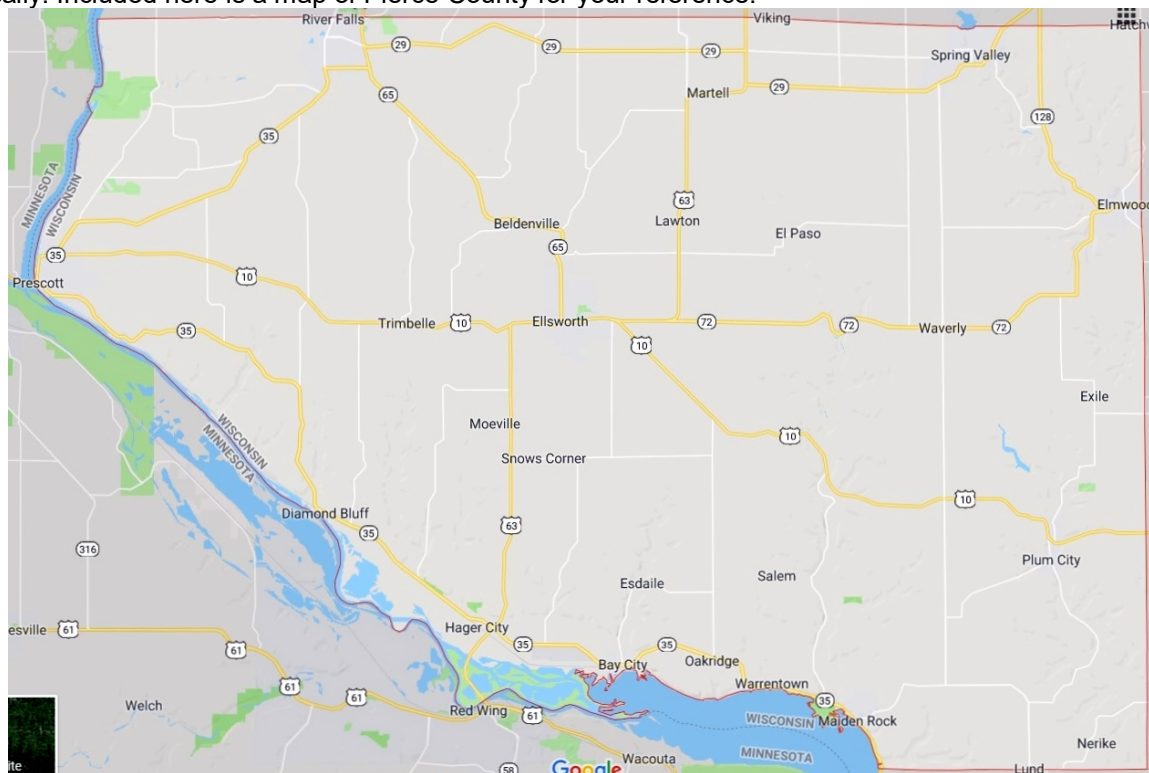
The results of this study may be published in literature or presented at professional meetings using grouped data only. A final report will be provided to Pierce County representatives. Your answers to the survey will not be linked with personally identifiable information. Your email will not be provided to any Pierce County representatives or any other third parties. It will only be used to send you a few additional follow-up questions about your visit, and notifying the winner of the free hotel night stay at Country Inn River Falls, WI.

Your participation is voluntary. You can withdraw or refuse to answer any question without consequences at any time.

Questions regarding study procedures may be directed to the principal investigator, Daniel Plunkett, Director, UW-La Crosse Tourism Research Institute, (608-785-8204) or dplunkett@uwlax.edu. Questions regarding the protection of human subjects may be addressed to irb@uwlax.edu.

By continuing I understand these terms and conditions and agree to participate in the study.

Upon continuing, **please respond based on your participation and perceptions regarding Pierce County specifically.** Included here is a map of Pierce County for your reference.



Pierce County Visitor Survey

ID _____

1. Do you live in Pierce County? ___ No ___ Yes (If Yes, skip to question #11 on back→)

2. Have you been to Pierce County before this current trip? (√ *one box*) Yes No

3. What is the primary purpose of your visit today? (√ *one*)

- ___ Vacation/Holiday ___ Business
 ___ Visiting friends and relatives ___ Other (please specify) _____

4. During this visit, how long are you staying in Pierce County?

- _____ Number of nights, **if overnight**
 _____ Check (√) here **if only staying for the day** (not overnight)

5. What is your home zip code or name of country (if other than U.S.)? _____

6. **Prior to this visit**, how did you and your group obtain information about your Pierce County Visit? Please check (√) all that apply in the left column.

√	Sources of information
	Obtained no planning information
	Previous visits
	Friends/relatives/word of mouth
	Local event social media pages (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, etc.)
	Other social media page (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, etc.)
	Local event websites
	A Pierce County business website
	Travel review sites (TripAdvisor, Yelp, etc.)
	Newspaper/magazine articles
	Radio advertisement
	Other sources: (<i>specify</i>) _____

7. On this visit, what kind of personal group (not guided tour / educational / organized group) are you with? Please check (√) one.

- ___ Alone ___ Family with children ___ Organized group (tour or education group)
 ___ Friends ___ Family & Friends without children
 ___ Family without children ___ Family & Friends with children ___ Other _____
(please specify)

8. On this trip, what specific activities are you participating in? (Check all that apply)

- | | | |
|--------------------------|---|---|
| ___ trail hiking | ___ camping | ___ attending a special event |
| ___ walking for pleasure | ___ canoeing/kayaking | ___ eating at restaurants |
| ___ horseback riding | ___ boating | ___ visiting a welcome center |
| ___ biking/cycling | ___ swimming | ___ visiting a historical/cultural site |
| ___ photography | ___ fishing | ___ visiting a winery/vineyard |
| ___ driving: sightseeing | ___ water skiing/wakeboarding | ___ visiting a brewery |
| ___ motorcycling | ___ visiting historic or cultural sites | ___ Other (please specify) _____ |
| ___ picnicking | ___ watching wildlife | _____ |

9. What inspired you to visit Pierce County on this trip? _____ **BACK →**

10. Rate Pierce County as a travel destination on each of the attributes listed below. On a scale of 1 Strongly Disagree to 5 Strongly Agree, to what extent do you agree that Pierce County is a place that is/has:

Attribute	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
Beautiful scenery/natural wonders	1	2	3	4	5
Fabulous scenic drives	1	2	3	4	5
Water sports (boating, skiing, fishing etc.)	1	2	3	4	5
Untapped potential for outdoor recreation opportunities	1	2	3	4	5
Friendly and helpful local people	1	2	3	4	5
Silent sports (hiking, biking, kayaking, fly fishing, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5
Easy access to the area	1	2	3	4	5
Restful and relaxing atmosphere	1	2	3	4	5
Beautiful/lovely place	1	2	3	4	5
Safe and secure environment	1	2	3	4	5
Agritourism opportunities (visiting farms, farmers markets)	1	2	3	4	5
Good place for children/family	1	2	3	4	5
Cultural events/festivals	1	2	3	4	5
Wineries & breweries	1	2	3	4	5
A wide variety of outdoor activities	1	2	3	4	5
Reasonable cost of restaurants	1	2	3	4	5
Overall good value for money	1	2	3	4	5
Lots of open space	1	2	3	4	5
Laid back	1	2	3	4	5
Great local cuisine	1	2	3	4	5
Ease in finding locations	1	2	3	4	5
Cultural, historic & vintage attractions	1	2	3	4	5
Fun	1	2	3	4	5

11. Thinking of the attributes Pierce County offers, what other destination do you think is comparable to

Pierce County? _____

12. What is your age as of today? _____ years

13. Do you identify as: ___ female ___ male ___ other ___ prefer not to say

THANK YOU for participating in this visitor study being conducted by the University of Wisconsin – La Crosse Tourism Research Institute.

WIN a FREE Hotel Stay! If you are willing to participate in a brief follow-up survey (takes less than 2 minutes!) please provide your email address. All email survey participants will be entered into a drawing to win a one night stay at the County Inn River Falls, WI. Email addresses will only be used for the purpose of sending the survey link, and notifying the one winner. Your email address will not be shared with anyone or used for any other purpose.

Email address: _____

Onsite Follow-up Survey

ID _____

1a. If you stayed overnight in Pierce County, what type of accommodation are you staying in?

- Did not stay overnight in Pierce County
 Hotel/motel
 Bed & Breakfast
 Friend/Family's place
 Campground
 Airbnb
 Other

1b. How would you rate the quality of your accommodation? (If staying at a paid accommodation)

- Poor
 Fair
 Good
 Excellent

2. If you did not stay in Pierce County, where did you stay while traveling today?

- Home (permanent residence)
 Hotel/motel or other lodging outside Pierce County
 Friends/family residence outside Pierce County
 Campground outside Pierce County
 Other

3. How many people in your group, including yourself, traveled to Pierce County on your most recent visit? _____

4. Overall, how satisfied are you with your visit to Pierce County? (Please circle one)

- Very dissatisfied
 Somewhat dissatisfied
 Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
 Somewhat satisfied
 Very satisfied

5. Circle how likely you would be to visit Pierce County in the future:

- Very Unlikely
 Somewhat Unlikely
 Not Sure
 Somewhat Likely
 Very Likely

6. Circle how likely you would be to recommend visiting Pierce County to your friends/relatives:

- Very Unlikely
 Somewhat Unlikely
 Not Sure
 Somewhat Likely
 Very Likely

7. What is the highest level of education you have completed?

- Less than a high school diploma
 High school diploma or GED
 Some college but no degree
 Associates degree
 Bachelor's degree
 Advanced degree

8. What statement best describes your annual household income for the last calendar year?

- Less than \$25,000
 \$100,000-\$124,999
 \$25,000 to \$49,999
 \$125,000-149,999
 \$50,000 to \$74,999
 \$150,000-\$174,999
 \$75,000-\$99,999
 \$175,000 or more

9. What is your race?

- American Indian or Alaska Native
 Black or African American
 Asian
 Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
 White
 Some other race

10. Are you of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin? (Select all that apply)

- Yes, Mexican, Mexican Am., Chicano
 Yes, Puerto Rican
 Yes, Cuban
 Yes, another Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin