

**For immediate release:**

**Contact:** Susanne Thiede-Barnet, 608-242-8895

**Don't Tell the Kids It's Good For You**

*Easy, affordable, kid-friendly—these Wisconsin attractions are perfect for kids of every age*

**(April 27, 2010)**—Researchers have found that family memories—particularly memories of family vacations—are an important facet of psychological well-being throughout our lives.

Make the most of your vacation time with the family this summer. Here are some outstanding travel opportunities for families looking to create lifelong memories and have some fun. Best of all, these are affordable, easy travel ideas that both kids and grown-ups will enjoy.

**Wyalusing State Park**

What's the best view in Wisconsin? Well, there are arguably several great views—and most of them are in Wyalusing State Park on the [Wisconsin Great River Road](#). The park overlooks the confluence of the Wisconsin and Mississippi rivers and the vast river-bottom forests and wetlands between Wisconsin and Iowa.

More than 20 miles of trails loop their way through the park, providing a variety of views of the visually stunning mosaic forested islands, weedy sloughs and open water. The landscape you're seeing at Wyalusing State Park is the same view the French explorers Marquette and Joliet saw when they first saw the area more than 300 years ago.

**Old Courthouse Museum**

One of the best local history museums in the Midwest is located in [West Bend](#). The Old Courthouse Museum tells the story of West Bend through exhibits and artifacts. It is housed in a building that dates to 1889 and is an excellent example of the Romanesque Revival architecture being built in the late 19<sup>th</sup>-century. Inside, you'll find hands-on activities and interactivities that tell the story of the region from the time of the glaciers to the Industrial Age.

Next door to the Old Courthouse Museum, you'll find the Old Sheriff's Residence & Jail. This free museum is in one of the last remaining Sheriff's residence and Jails in the United States. Built to be "escape proof" in 1886, this facility served as the county jail until 1962 when Washington County turned the use of the building over to the Washington County Historical Society. This museum is a favorite with young and old alike.

**Paddling the Rock and Crawfish Rivers**

Paddling can be a fun family activity, full of healthy exercise and great opportunities for seeing wildlife. But many families are daunted by the potential dangers of rapids, unpredictable currents and having to coordinate two vehicles—one at the put-in spot and one at the take-out spot. The Rock and Crawfish rivers, located in [Dodge County](#), allow paddlers to avoid these obstacles.

The Rock and Crawfish rivers are typical of rivers in southeast Wisconsin—slow moving, lined with hardwood forests and teeming with fish and other wildlife. Because so many paddlers tend to seek out whitewater and rapids, these two rivers are often overlooked. But birdwatchers, anglers and wildlife photographers treasure these rivers' gentle currents, varied scenery and close proximity to amenities.

These features also make the rivers ideal destinations for families who are paddling with young children. Launches are available at several points throughout Dodge County, including excellent launches at Astico Park and Harnischfeger Park on the Rock River. Canoe rentals are available in both of these county-run parks.

At most times of the summer, the currents on the Rock and Crawfish rivers are slow enough that paddling upstream against the current is no problem—which means families can put in and take out at the same location—no shuttling necessary.

### **Hiking the Land of the Glaciers**

The Barron County portions of the The Ice Age Trail, located just north of [Rice Lake](#), offer some of the best views of Wisconsin's glacier-sculpted landscape. Informational signage and visual variety make these sections of the Ice Age Trail great for hiking with kids.

The trails feature the Blue Hills, which date back more than one and a half billion years. West of the Blue Hills, hikers will find the “Superior Lobe end moraine,” which is typified by lakes left behind by the receding glaciers. At various points along the Ice Age Trail, hikers will see sedge meadow wetlands, dense forests and small lakes. The various Barron County trail sections average about five miles, which is a good length for a morning or afternoon hike with kids.

Additional hiking is available near Rice Lake in the Blue Hills Trail System and the Cedar Side Trail, which runs for 4 miles along the Red Cedar River. Get out and enjoy the handiwork of the glaciers!

### **Northwoods Railroad History**

Ladysmith, located in [Rusk County](#) is a Northwoods community that was built by two industries: logging and the railroads.

Luckily, the community has retained remnants of that history in a series of railroad exhibits located throughout the town. Visit Old Smoky, located on Lake Avenue and Highway 8, next to the IGA Grocery store. A Soo Line Diesel locomotive, Post Office Express Car, Passenger Baggage Car, First-Class Coach and a caboose can be found on Highway 27, two blocks south of Highway 8.

Other interesting historic sites in the area include the Rusk County Historical Society, open Memorial Day through Labor Day, and the Bruce Historical Society Museum, open during the summer on Monday and Wednesday mornings and Friday afternoons.

Get trip planning information for visiting Wyalusing State Park and other attractions on the Wisconsin Great River Road by visiting [www.wigreatriverroad.org](http://www.wigreatriverroad.org).

Find out more about West Bend at [www.wbachamber.org](http://www.wbachamber.org).

Learn more about Dodge County paddling opportunities at [www.dodgecounty.com](http://www.dodgecounty.com).

For more Rice Lake trail opportunities, visit [www.ricelaketourism.com](http://www.ricelaketourism.com).

And for information about Rusk County, visit [www.ruskcountywi.com](http://www.ruskcountywi.com).

For more information on family-friendly travel options and other great Wisconsin family destinations, contact Susanne Thiede-Barnet at 608-242-8895 or [Susanne@pilchbarnet.com](mailto:Susanne@pilchbarnet.com).