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**MORE HIGH MARKS FOR THE WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM
Award winning year brings grand total of awards to 31 since 2011**

MADISON, Wis. (Dec. 6, 2013) –The Wisconsin Department of Tourism closes out 2013 with an impressive list of international and national awards, including four just in the last month. Last week, the Department was recognized by the U.S. Travel Association (USTA) as the Travel Blitz 4th Quarter MVP following its Nov. 16 roundtable discussion with Senator Ron Johnson and 18 leaders from the state’s tourism industry at Lambeau Field in Green Bay. The accolade comes on the heels of marketing awards for the Department’s website TravelWisconsin.com and a new customer service training program. These recent recognitions wraps up an award winning streak of 31 awards since 2011, with 17 honors bestowed in 2013 alone.

“We are absolutely thrilled with these recognitions and accolades that honor the hard work the Department of Tourism has done in the past year,” said Tourism Secretary Stephanie Klett. “The variety of these awards showcases the different ways our Department continues to grow travel in Wisconsin, from meeting with U.S. Senators, to creating a cutting-edge website and offering the best customer service in the country. These awards are something the entire state can be proud of and we’re looking forward to growing this list in 2014.”

USTA’s Travel Blitz campaign is a grassroots initiative that educates Congress on the value of travel in the United States. Thirty Travel Blitz events took place around the country in 2013. Wisconsin’s event was recognized for its outstanding discussion to make the case for the tourism economy and the media interest it generated. Other tourism groups recognized in the previous three quarters include New Orleans Convention & Visitor Bureau, Rhode Island travel industry and Marriott International.

TravelWisconsin.com received two awards for the new redesign that launched earlier this year. The Interactive Media Awards (IMA) honored the website with a “Best in Class Award,” the highest honor from IMA and representing the very best in planning, execution and overall professionalism. Wisconsin was recognized along with other tourism destinations such as Colorado and Hong Kong. In a second award, TravelWisconsin.com was selected from 1,200 entries from around the world for a coveted Adrian Award from the Hospitality Sales and Marketing Association International (HSMAI). Adrian Award entries are judged by experts in hospitality, travel, tourism and media on elements like creative design, content and reaching the goals established as part of the redesign. Milwaukee-based Ascedia is the technology agency of record for the Department of Tourism.

The Department’s Customer Service Training Program was honored with a MarCom Award by the Association of Marketing and Communication Professionals (AMCP). The MarCom Awards is an international creative competition that recognizes outstanding achievement by marketing and communications professionals. With about 6,000 entries per year, it is one of the largest of its kind in the world. Since April 2012, the Customer Service program has trained more that 4,200 people across the state. The program is divided into modules to make it flexible and customizable with an option for a train-



the-trainer workshop. The popularity of the program has led to interest from other sectors such as healthcare and financial to host training workshops.

The Department's other accolades from 2013 included a gold OBIE from the Outdoor Advertising Association of America, four Communicator Awards for the Fall Color Report, and "Best in Show" for the Big Bundle Up charity campaign at the 2013 Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) Paragon Awards of Southeastern Wisconsin.

The mission of the Wisconsin Department of Tourism is to market the state as the Midwest's premier travel destination for fun by executing industry-leading marketing programs and establishing strategic partnerships. The Department plays a significant role in generating greater economic impact and jobs for Wisconsin. The portal for traveler information can be found at www.travelwisconsin.com.

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