



VILLAGE OF MOUNT HOREB

E. Main Street

Mount Horeb, WI 53572

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TOURISM COMMISSION AGENDA
Thursday, April 2, 2026 at 6:30 PM

Third Floor Conference Room
138 E. Main Street
Mount Horeb, WI

- 1) Call to order
- 2) Agenda Items
 - a. Consideration of December 16, 2025 Meeting Minutes
 - b. Report on Room Tax Collections
 - c. Discussion on Possible Mount Horeb-Barneveld Room Tax Zone
 1. Provide an update on Barneveld's actions on our proposal, and discuss where things go from here
- 3) Update from Tourism Entity
 - a. 2025 Tourism Data and Updated Budget
- 4) Set date and agenda items for next meeting
- 5) Meeting adjournment.

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TOURISM COMMISSION AGENDA Tuesday, December 16, 2025 at 5:30 PM

DRAFT MEETING MINUTES

- 1) Call to order
Chair Jones called the meeting to order at 5:32 pm. Members present: Jones, Schuetpelz, Phillip and Grabe. Gauthier-Phillips was absent. Also Present: Mount Horeb Area Chamber of Commerce President/CEO Plumer and Administrator Owen.
- 2) Public Comments on Non-Agenda Items*
None
- 3) Agenda Items
 - a. Introduction of Allison Plumer, Mount Horeb Area Chamber of Commerce President/CEO
New Chamber of Commerce President/CEO Allison Plumer introduced herself to the Committee. Plumer comes to Mount Horeb from the Verona COC where she served as the Tourism Coordinator. The committee welcomed Plumer.
 - b. Consideration of September 16, 2025 Meeting Minutes
Motion by Grabe to recommend approval of the minutes as presented, seconded by Schuetpelz. Motion carried.
 - c. Report on Room Tax Collections
Administrator Owen presented the report on room tax collections, noting that like previous quarters, the 3rd quarter collections were lower than prior years. The committee noted that overall trends for tourism spending were down for the year. Schuetpelz asked if there was any difficulty with 3rd quarter collections. Owen reported that all reports and payments were made on time.
- 4) Update from Tourism Entity
 - a. Draft Budget and Advertising Plan Presentation
Plumer presented preliminary numbers on 2025 marketing spending, the preliminary budget and marketing plan for 2026. She will have more formal numbers and plans for the next meeting. Having just started, she would like more time to analyze data on previous marketing efforts and focus on less expensive, target marketing campaigns that drive overnight

stays. Plumer also presented the idea of creating a marketing reserve for future large advertising campaigns and for items that come up during the year. The consensus of the committee was that they were in favor of the new approach.

5) Set date and agenda items for next meeting

The next meeting was set for Tuesday, March 10th, 2026 at 6:30 p.m. and the following meeting will be on June 16th at 5:30 p.m. Agenda items include the Room Tax Collection Report, Update on the Market Budget and Plan, Long-Term Marketing Planning and Room Tax Zone Expansion.

6) Meeting adjournment.

Motion to adjourn by Jones, seconded by Grabe. Motion carried at 6:14 p.m.



AGENDA ITEM REPORT

MEETING DATE

April 2, 2026

PREPARED BY

AGENDA ITEM # 2.b

Report on Room Tax Collections

BACKGROUND

RECOMMENDATION

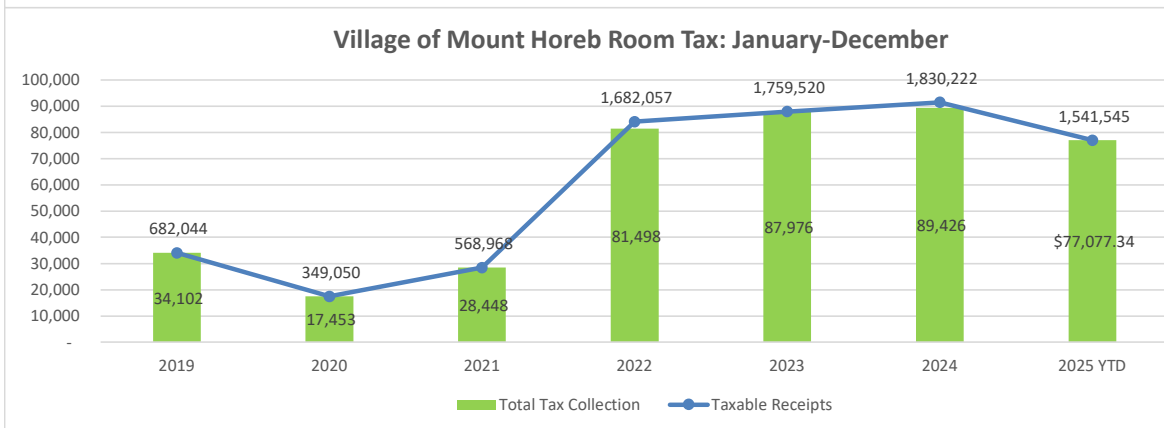
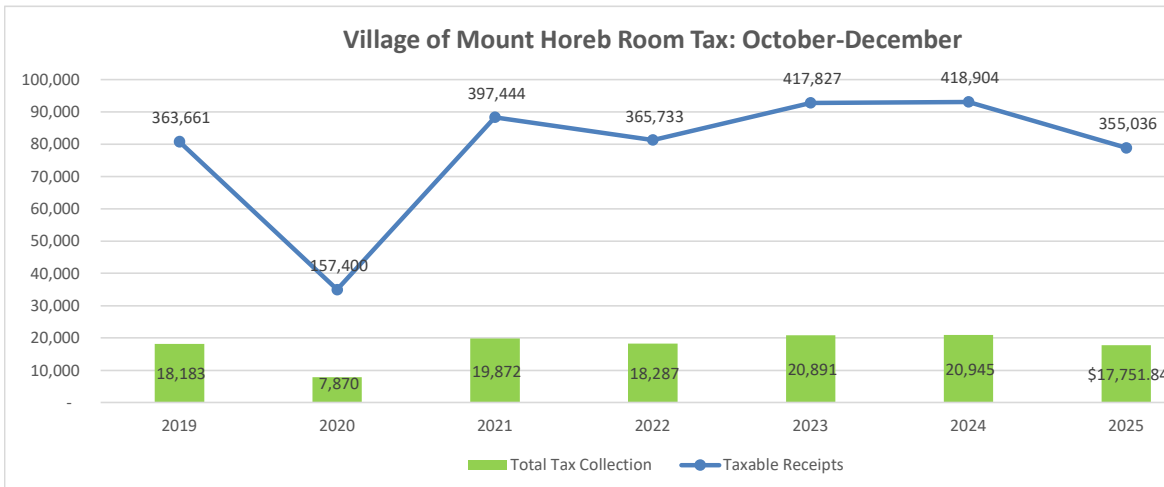
ATTACHMENTS

1. Room Tax Collections Summary Q4
2. Room Tax-Q4 Graph Data

**Village of Mount Horeb
Summary of Overnight Lodging Collections
For the year ending December 31, 2025**

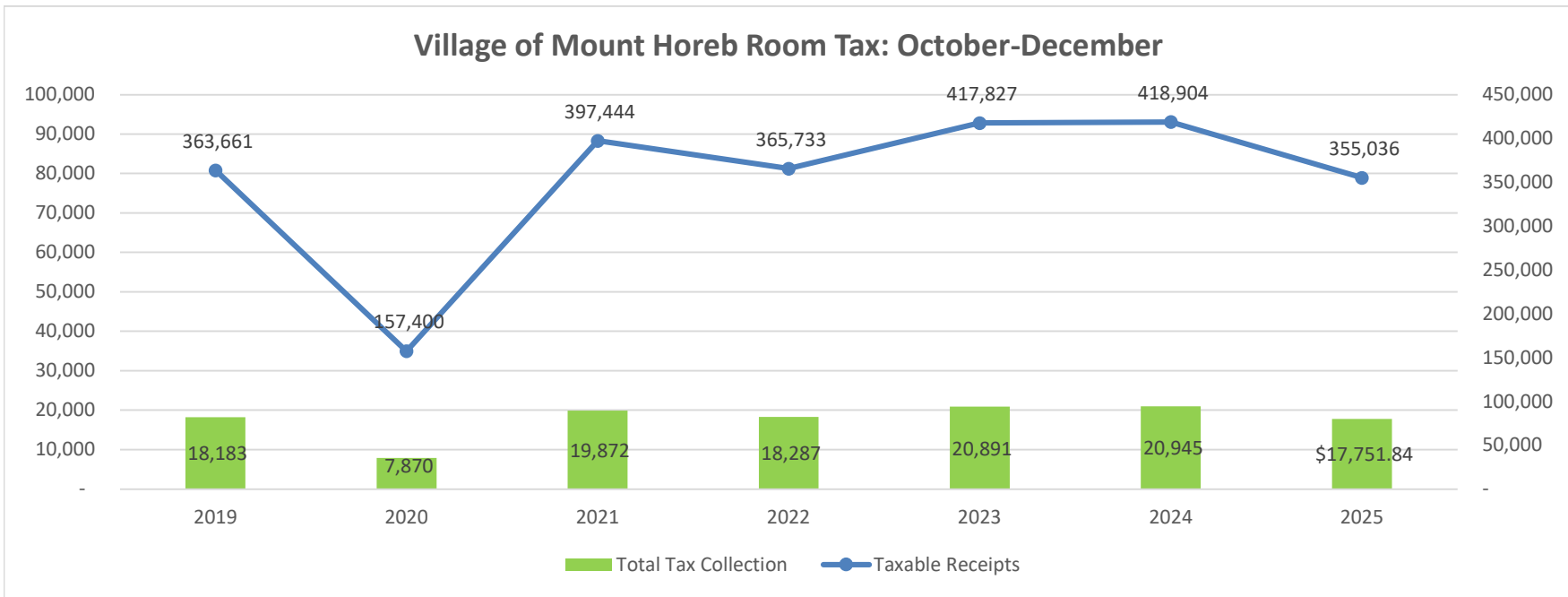
Quarter	Gross Room Receipts	Exempt Room Receipts	Net Taxable Receipts	Total Tax Collections	Allocation	
					Mount Horeb Chamber of Commerce (88%)	Village Admin Fee (12%)
1st	\$ 297,880.99	\$ 57,857.17	\$ 240,023.82	\$ 12,001.20	\$ 10,561.06	\$ 1,440.14
2nd	\$ 506,525.54	\$ 85,446.41	\$ 421,079.13	\$ 21,053.96	\$ 18,527.48	\$ 2,526.48
3rd	\$ 635,291.09	\$ 109,884.71	\$ 525,406.38	\$ 26,270.34	\$ 23,117.90	\$ 3,152.44
4th	\$ 442,226.54	\$ 87,190.40	\$ 355,036.14	\$ 17,751.81	\$ 15,621.59	\$ 2,130.22
Total	\$ 1,881,924.16	\$ 340,378.69	\$ 1,541,545.47	\$ 77,077.31	\$ 67,828.03	\$ 9,249.28

	Already Pd/AJE	77,077.31
Due to Chamber	\$ 67,828.03	67,828.03
VILL AJE	\$ 9,249.28	9,249.28
		9,249.28



**Village of Mount Horeb
Room Tax Graph data - Q4**

	October-December						
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Taxable Receipts	363,661	157,400	397,444	365,733	417,827	418,904	355,036
Total Tax Collection	18,183	7,870	19,872	18,287	20,891	20,945	\$ 17,751.84
Gross Room Receipts	424,098	217,935	451,076	388,901	474,810	505,295	\$ 442,226.54
Exempt Room Receipts	60,437	60,535	53,632	23,168	56,983	86,391	\$ 87,190.40





2025 TOURISM SUMMARY

Placer Data • Social Media • Attraction Partners • Retail Traffic

ESTIMATED OVERNIGHT TRIPS

73.2K ▼ 10.5% YoY

ESTIMATED MONTHLY VISITORS

4.3K ▼ 3.3% YoY

TOTAL TRIPS

59.8K ▼ 4.2% YoY

Day vs Overnight: 32% Day (19.2K)
/ 68% Overnight (40.6K)

AVG LENGTH OF STAY

2.8 days

PEAK MONTHS

June, July

VISITOR SPEND

\$865.8K ▼ 20.9%

TOP VISITOR ORIGINS

Milwaukee, WI
La Crosse-Eau Claire, WI
Green Bay-Appleton, WI

WEB TRAFFIC SUMMARY

mounthorebchamber.com
Active users: 50.3K -27.6%
Sessions: 71.1K -24%
New users: 49.9K -28.6%

trollway.com
Active users: 40.1K -24.2%
Sessions: 53K -22.2%
New users: 40.3K -22.7%

SOCIAL MEDIA PERFORMANCE

Facebook Views +528%
Facebook Visits +8.3%
Instagram Views +60.5%
Instagram Reach +29.2%
Instagram Follows +73%

LOCAL ATTRACTION TRENDS

Heritage Attraction 10.4K visitors -3.3%
Regional Natural Attraction 100K avg. visitors -1.5%
Local Retailer 68,920 visitors -5.2%

LOCAL RETAIL TRAFFIC & EVENT IMPACT

Art Fair Weekend -7.9%
Fall Village Market +39.2%
Spring Promotion +36.7%
Scandihoovian Fest -28.4%

DANE COUNTY TOURISM (FEB '25—JAN '26)

Total Trips 7.7M +4.6%
Avg Monthly Visitors 522.3K +9.9%
Visit Nights 10.4M +7.9%
Visitor Spend \$1.1B +4.9%

LOCAL RETAIL TRAFFIC & EVENT IMPACT

Occupancy 60.8% -0.4%
ADR \$117 +3.2%
RevPAR \$71 +2.8%
Total Rooms (32 hotels) 3,237

KEY INSIGHT: Mount Horeb's tourism decline is a capture problem, not a demand problem. The regional market is growing, but 12.9K overnight visitor-nights are leaking to Madison (32%), Verona (18%), and Middleton (8%) — where 3,200+ hotel rooms (at 60.8% occupancy) sit within a 20-minute drive. A new 100-room property under construction in the Verona/Fitchburg corridor will intensify this competition by spring 2026.



MOUNT HOREB
AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

2025 TOURISM SUMMARY

What the Numbers Show

Mount Horeb's tourism metrics declined across the board in 2025. Total visitor trips fell 4.2% to 59.8K, average monthly visitors dropped 3.3%, visit nights were down 10.5%, and total visitor spend took the biggest hit at -20.9% (from \$1.1M to \$865.8K). That spending decline is especially notable – visitors aren't just coming less often, they're spending significantly less when they do.

The concerning part isn't the decline itself – it's that the broader region is moving in the opposite direction. Dane County tourism grew 4–10% across every metric during the same period: trips up 4.6%, monthly visitors up 9.9%, visit nights up 7.9%, and visitor spend up 4.9% to \$1.1 billion. The demand is there. Mount Horeb just isn't capturing its share.

The overnight leakage data tells much of the story. An estimated 12.9K visitor-nights leaked to other markets in 2025, a 16.7% increase year over year. The leakage rate climbed to 15%, up 10.8%. The top destinations are exactly where you'd expect: Madison absorbs 32% of leaked nights, Verona takes 18%, and Middleton gets 8%. The CoStar lodging report explains why – the Madison West submarket has 3,200+ hotel rooms across 32 properties sitting at just 60.8% occupancy, all within a 20-minute drive. Those hotels have capacity to spare, and a new 100-room SpringHill Suites under construction in the Fitchburg/Verona corridor will add even more competition by spring 2026.

On the local business side, partner data reflects the same softness. A heritage attraction saw attendance dip 3.3% to roughly 10,400 visitors. A regional natural attraction averaging about 100,000 annual visitors was down 1.5% overall, with public attendance falling around 5% – though their events programming was a bright spot, with doubled event offerings driving doubled event attendance. A downtown retailer logged 68,920 visitors across the fiscal year, with community events showing mixed results: Fall Village Market traffic surged 39% and a spring promotion was up 37%, but Art Fair weekend dipped 8% and Scandihoovian Festival traffic dropped 28%.

The one area of unambiguous growth is social media. Facebook views exploded from 34.1K to 214.2K (+528%), page visits rose to 9.1K, and new follows jumped to 431. Instagram followed the same trajectory – views up 60% to 85.2K, reach up 29% to 19.9K, and new follows nearly doubled from 248 to 429. The Small Business Feature Series was the standout campaign, generating 55.9K views and reaching 37,900 unique viewers across 9 local business spotlights.

The overall picture: Mount Horeb has a growing digital audience and strong community event momentum in some areas, but it's losing the overnight conversion battle to nearby markets with more lodging capacity. The strategic opportunity is clear – converting the growing social media audience and regional day-trip demand into actual overnight stays before those visitors default to Madison or Verona.

*This overview combines anonymized location analytics, local foot traffic counts, lodging demand data, and digital engagement metrics to provide a holistic picture of visitation to Mount Horeb.

2025 *Tourism* budget to actual

Mount Horeb Area Chamber of Commerce

Budget vs. Actuals: 2025 Budget - FY25 P&L Classes

January - December 2025

	ROOM TAX				TOTAL			
	ACTUAL	BUDGET	OVER BUDGET	% OF BUDGET	ACTUAL	BUDGET	OVER BUDGET	% OF BUDGET
Revenue								
4000 Contributions					\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	0.00%
4030 Room Tax Income	67,584.94	78,000.00	-10,415.06	86.65 %	\$67,584.94	\$78,000.00	\$ -10,415.06	86.65 %
Total 4000 Contributions	67,584.94	78,000.00	-10,415.06	86.65 %	\$67,584.94	\$78,000.00	\$ -10,415.06	86.65 %
4300 Programs & Events Income					\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	0.00%
4260 Ad Income	16,819.93	13,200.00	3,619.93	127.42 %	\$16,819.93	\$13,200.00	\$3,619.93	127.42 %
Total 4300 Programs & Events Income	16,819.93	13,200.00	3,619.93	127.42 %	\$16,819.93	\$13,200.00	\$3,619.93	127.42 %
Total Revenue	\$84,404.87	\$91,200.00	\$ -6,795.13	92.55 %	\$84,404.87	\$91,200.00	\$ -6,795.13	92.55 %
GROSS PROFIT	\$84,404.87	\$91,200.00	\$ -6,795.13	92.55 %	\$84,404.87	\$91,200.00	\$ -6,795.13	92.55 %
Expenditures								
6000 Personnel					\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	0.00%
6110 Wages & Salaries	37,209.00	37,500.00	-291.00	99.22 %	\$37,209.00	\$37,500.00	\$ -291.00	99.22 %
6150 Payroll Tax Expense		2,868.75	-2,868.75		\$0.00	\$2,868.75	\$ -2,868.75	0.00%
Total 6000 Personnel	37,209.00	40,368.75	-3,159.75	92.17 %	\$37,209.00	\$40,368.75	\$ -3,159.75	92.17 %
6500 Program and Event Expenses					\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	0.00%
6550 Analytic Tools	2,500.00	2,385.00	115.00	104.82 %	\$2,500.00	\$2,385.00	\$115.00	104.82 %
Total 6500 Program and Event Expenses	2,500.00	2,385.00	115.00	104.82 %	\$2,500.00	\$2,385.00	\$115.00	104.82 %
6600 Marketing & Promotion					\$13,833.85	\$15,000.00	\$ -1,166.15	0.00%
6630 Digital Marketing	13,833.85	15,000.00	-1,166.15	92.23 %	\$3,534.03	\$0.00	\$3,534.03	92.23 %
6670 Outdoor Advertising	3,534.03		3,534.03		\$3,000.00	\$3,000.00	\$0.00	0.00%
6680 Regional Marketing Expenses	3,000.00	3,000.00	0.00	100.00 %	\$21,733.00	\$16,800.00	\$4,933.00	100.00 %
6690 Print Media	21,733.00	16,800.00	4,933.00	129.36 %	\$100.00	\$1,200.00	\$ -1,100.00	129.36 %
6770 Visitors' Guide	100.00	1,200.00	-1,100.00	8.33 %	\$430.50	\$600.00	\$ -169.50	8.33 %
6890 Other Marketing & Promo Expense	430.50	600.00	-169.50	71.75 %	\$999.52	\$3,000.00	\$ -2,000.48	71.75 %
7650 Website Expense	999.52	3,000.00	-2,000.48	33.32 %	\$43,630.90	\$39,600.00	\$4,030.90	33.32 %
Total 6600 Marketing & Promotion	43,630.90	39,600.00	4,030.90	110.18 %	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	110.18 %
7000 Facilities					\$514.16	\$0.00	\$514.16	0.00%
7430 Copier Maintenance	514.16		514.16		\$514.16	\$0.00	\$514.16	0.00%
Total 7000 Facilities	514.16		514.16		\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	0.00%
7500 General & Admin					\$1,528.73	\$1,200.00	\$328.73	0.00%
7630 Postage Expense	1,528.73	1,200.00	328.73	127.39 %	\$785.00	\$600.00	\$185.00	127.39 %
7730 Association Dues & Memberships	785.00	600.00	185.00	130.83 %	\$161.36	\$0.00	\$161.36	130.83 %
7750 Dues and Subscriptions	161.36		161.36		\$2,475.09	\$1,800.00	\$675.09	0.00%
Total 7500 General & Admin	2,475.09	1,800.00	675.09	137.51 %	\$86,329.15	\$84,153.75	\$2,175.40	137.51 %
Total Expenditures	\$86,329.15	\$84,153.75	\$2,175.40	102.59 %	\$ -1,924.28	\$7,046.25	\$ -8,970.53	102.59 %
NET OPERATING REVENUE	\$ -1,924.28	\$7,046.25	\$ -8,970.53	-27.31 %	\$ -1,924.28	\$7,046.25	\$ -8,970.53	-27.31 %
NET REVENUE	\$ -1,924.28	\$7,046.25	\$ -8,970.53	-27.31 %				-27.31 %

2026 Tourism

budget

ITEM	BUDGET
Projected Room Tax Revenue	\$103,000
PERSONNEL	\$40,000
*MARKETING	\$41,500
WELCOME CENTER/FACILITIES	\$12,000
GENERAL & ADMIN	\$1,500
RESERVE	\$8,000
<hr/>	
*MARKETING	\$41,500
Digital	\$18,000
Blog & Newsletter	\$3,000
Photo & Video	\$3,000
Social Media	\$12,000
Outdoor	\$1,000
Regional	\$4,500
Sugar River Valley	\$1,000
Destination Madison	\$2,000
Community & Asset Cross-Promotion	\$1,500
Print	\$7,400
Close Publications	\$3,385
Driftless Explorer	\$1,215
Troll Maps	\$1,500
Other Print	\$1,300
Other Marketing	\$4,600
Conferences	\$1,500
Meetings (Meals & Mileage)	\$1,500
Troll Capital Trademark	\$600
Data & Analytics	\$1,000
Website	\$6,000



Marketing Strategy

The 2026 strategy targets Millennial and Gen X families from Madison, Milwaukee, and Chicago through six content pillars: Trolls & Heritage, Local Artisans & Shopping, Food & Drink, Outdoor Recreation, Events, and Small Town Charm. The 2025 data validates the approach while highlighting where to focus.

What's working: Social media is growing. Facebook views surged 528% to 214.2K, Instagram follows nearly doubled, and the Small Business Feature Series reached 37,900 viewers. The brand voice is resonating and the audience is building.

What needs work: Website traffic declined 22–28% on both sites, with referrals dropping sharply. The one bright spot: trollway.com organic search grew 8% which validates the SEO blog strategy targeting searches like "Best Day Trips from Madison" and "Military Ridge State Trail."

The biggest opportunity: Overnight conversion. Dane County tourism grew 4–10%, but Mount Horeb's trips fell 4.2% and visitor spend dropped 20.9%. An estimated 12,900 visitor-nights leaked to Madison, Verona, and Middleton, where 3,200+ hotel rooms compete for our potential guests.

The email marketing strategy (quarterly lodging partner spotlights with direct booking links, lead magnets, and seasonal campaign bursts) is built to close this gap.

Everything funnels toward converting Mount Horeb's growing digital audience into overnight guests. Through SEO content that captures search demand, social media that builds emotional connection, email marketing that nurtures intent, and lodging partnerships that all make booking easy before those visitors default to a Madison hotel 20 minutes away.

