

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Merri Oxley
The Communication Team, LLC
608-877-0528
moxley@thecommunicationteam.net

Historic Stoughton Launches Marketing Conference ***Lt. Governor Barbara Lawton to Address Businesses and Residents***

Stoughton, WI, February 11, 2009 -- Lt. Governor Barbara Lawton, Stoughton's Mayor Jim Griffin, Sarah Klavas, Brand Manager and Director, Bureau of Integrated Communications and Marketing for the WI Dept. of Tourism, retail marketing experts from UW-Whitewater and industry marketing professionals, will present at a public marketing conference to be held in Stoughton on **Thursday, Feb. 26, 2009 from 8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.** The morning presentations will be held at the historic Stoughton Opera House followed by a strategic planning and work session in the afternoon at the new fire house in Stoughton. The event is co-sponsored by the City of Stoughton, the Stoughton Chamber of Commerce and the Historic Stoughton Business Alliance.

Area businesses, service organizations, government, education representatives and the general public are invited to participate in developing a strategic marketing plan and new branding messages that will tell the story about Stoughton's unique historic and cultural assets, and be used in creating a long-term regional promotional effort. The conference will also provide an opportunity to unite community stakeholders around a common vision and encourage them to pool strengths and resources to support the new marketing efforts to lead to sustainable economic growth.

Lt. Governor Barbara Lawton, will kick off the day's event with a keynote speech at 9:15 a.m., addressing how small communities can attract economic growth by promoting their heritage and cultural assets. Following her speech, Dave Phillips, Executive Director of the Stoughton Chamber of Commerce will discuss the importance of heritage tourism and local festivals and their local economic impact. Ms Klavas will speak about Wisconsin's brand strategy and how it can be leveraged to help Stoughton's historic tourism efforts. Gary Walker will report for the Historic Stoughton Business Alliance on its ongoing Historic Stoughton campaign, as well as provide an update on Stoughton's Preserve America grant initiative. Dr. Carol Scovotti, UW-Whitewater, will provide market research

findings from Stoughton's retail surveys. Also, from UW-Whitewater, Dr. Marilyn Lavin will present examples of existing applications that show how small businesses can use the Web to maximize visibility and outreach for their businesses. **(See Agenda attached.)**

The afternoon's Strategic Planning Session will be facilitated by Mary Boeding, retired Director of Innovation at Kraft Foods. The purpose of this session will be to begin development of branding messaging and formation of teams to take on future marketing projects. The event will wrap up with a social hour for participants to share further insights.

According to Gary Walker, chair of the Preserve America Committee, "In today's economy, small towns like Stoughton face extreme risks to their economic viability. We have a special story to tell about our historic attributes, and it's critical for us to work together to get that message out to a broader audience. This marketing conference will pull together the best of our community to make sure that happens."

The Stoughton Chamber of Commerce is coordinating the registration for the event. To register contact: Dave Phillips, Executive Director at: administrator@stoughtonwi.com or call: (608) 873-7912. The cost for the morning General Session is: \$15 and \$25 for the afternoon Planning Session. (Early registration is only \$30 total.) On-site registration is \$25 for the morning, plus \$40 for the afternoon or \$55 for the day. For general information about the conference, contact Ross Scovotti, Event Coordinator at: ross@scovotticentral.com or call 608-873-6268.

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