

04/17/06

Greetings WCM Vendors and Partners!

The web statistics for the month of March are in - 12,558 unique visitors shopped the Wisconsin Common Market last month! That is the highest number of unique visitors ever! The more we each work to optimize our WCM online stores for search engine cataloging, the more visitors we can expect - and hopefully, the more sales!

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CUSTOMIZING YOUR WCM ONLINE STORE

Some recent site changes now allow for ALL WCM vendors to upload "extra" photos that will help customize the look of each WCM online store. These extra photos will display below your contact information and above your store description. This is a good place to upload photos of your workshop, farm, physical store or production process. To upload extra photos, log in at <http://www.wisconsincommonmarket.com/>. At the Member Administration page, click "Edit My Member Information." Scroll to the bottom of the screen and upload extra photos in the same fashion you upload product photos. Please note, there is also room to upload a business card image, a downloadable coupon and a file attachment.

SUBCATEGORIES ABOUND

As the variety of WCM vendors expands, so must the array of product categories. I have recently been adding and editing the subcategories listed within the ten primary categories on the Wisconsin Common Market. If you are unable to find an adequate subcategory for a particular product, please let me know!

INTERNATIONAL ORDERS

It definitely is a World Wide Web! Recently, a WCM vendor received an order from Morocco! Unfortunately, the \$1 shipping fee was not sufficient. Please consider adding wording to your product listings that specifies the rate for "DOMESTIC" shipping and requests that individuals who wish to ship outside the United States contact you.

3RD ANNUAL WOMEN'S BUSINESS RESOURCE FAIR

To further promote the Wisconsin Common Market, I will be hosting a booth at the 3rd Annual Women's Business Resource Fair on May 18, 2006 at the Plaza Hotel & Suites in Eau Claire, WI. I will have a couple of laptops with internet connection for attendees to directly view the WCM site. At this time, I am putting together a gift basket of WCM vendor products that will be used as a door prize for the attendees. If you would like to contribute products and/or promotional materials to the gift basket, please contact me at kbriggs@wisconsincommonmarket.com or simply ship the products to my attention at 418 Wisconsin St, Eau Claire WI 54702. Any items for the gift basket need to be received by May 2, 2006. For more information about the Women's Business Resource Fair, go to <http://www.WomensBusinessResourceFair.com/>

NEED CASH?

Wisconsin Women's Business Initiative Corporation (WWBIC) has partnered with WCM to provide loans SPECIFICALLY for WCM vendors. WWBIC, one of the state's largest microlenders, provides business loans up to \$50,000. They have solid experience in assisting businesses launch or expand by providing access to the capital they need. They have loaned more than \$6.5 million to more than 570 men and women since 1989 ... and now they can assist you! For more information, please go to <http://www.wisconsincommonmarket.com/wwbicfaq.pdf>.

WORKSHOP HELPS FOOD ENTREPRENEURS CREATE EFFECTIVE FOOD LABELS

Food safety and food marketing experts will share their expertise on how to market food products through effective, legally compliant food packaging at a "Keys to Packaging and Labeling" seminar next week. "Food Marketing Essentials: Keys to Packaging and Labeling" will be held 9:30 a.m.- 4 p.m. on April 19 at the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade & Consumer Protection at, 2811 Agriculture Drive, Madison. Participants in this fast-paced, hands-on seminar will learn the basics of regulatory food label compliance and how to develop packaging that increases consumer awareness and sales. In addition to the structured seminar, entrepreneurs may register for individualized counseling to review specific product labels or labeling concerns. Space is limited and registration is required. To register, call 608-224-5129, or email Shirley.Schultz@datcp.state.wi.us. The \$25 fee includes seminar sessions, take-home reference materials, networking, one on one label counseling and lunch. For Something Special from Wisconsin members, the \$25 fee is waived. The workshop is co-sponsored by Something Special from Wisconsin, the state's brand program, and Savorwisconsin.com, the most complete online source for Wisconsin food and agricultural products and services. Both programs are coordinated by the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection. For more information visit <http://www.datcp.state.wi.us/mktg/business/gifts/pdf/LabelSeminarApril19.pdf>

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