

# WISCONSIN SHORT-TERM RENTAL REALITIES



Wisconsin has long been a tourism destination, with generations of families renting cabins to tourists for weeklong stays to enjoy lakes, woods and small-town charm.

Short-term rentals (STRs) play a crucial role in Wisconsin's busiest destination communities: Door County, Lake Geneva, Oneida County and Vilas County.

**90%**

of STRs are individually owned

Owners with large portfolios and multiple properties are rare within the STR market.

## SMALL SEGMENT



**4%** Lake Geneva

**4.9%** Door County

**8%** Oneida and Vilas

STRs account for a small segment of all vacation homes.

**5.5%**

of total housing inventory

**3.5%**

Lake Geneva

**5.5%**

Door County

**2.8%**

Oneida and Vilas

**\$400K**

STRs do not interfere with housing inventory: 37% in Door County and 30% in Oneida and Vilas counties are valued at over \$400,000.

## IF STRs WERE BANNED

- When surveyed, STR owners stated they would leave property vacant or shift to personal use, rather than shift to long-term rental.
- Won't increase housing supply.
- Create an unregulated market.
- The STR market will go underground, removing local government regulations and eliminating economic benefits.

**68%**  
or more

More than two-thirds of STR owners rent their own vacation homes to offset property costs.

## STRs COMPLEMENT HOTELS

STRs don't compete with hotels; instead, they offer different amenities, price points, unit sizes and guest experiences. STRs have lower occupancy rates than hotels but higher average daily rentals often due to the size of the lodging.

Find out more: [www.wra.org/STRrealities](http://www.wra.org/STRrealities)

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Wisconsin's "right to rent" law protects homeowners' ability to offer STRs while allowing reasonable local regulation.

**2,240+**  
jobs created (2022)



**400+**  
Lake Geneva



**800+**  
Oneida and Vilas



**1,040+**  
Door County

**\$19.5M**  
in tax revenue (2023)

**\$4.2M**  
Lake Geneva

**\$5.5M**  
Oneida and Vilas

**\$9.8M**  
Door County

STRs generate millions in tax revenue, highlighting their vital role in supporting local economies through tourism.

**\$223M+** in tourism spending



STRs boost tourism and drive dollars to local restaurants, bars, shops, attractions and entertainment.

## TIMELINE: WISCONSIN'S SECOND-HOME MARKET

Wisconsin's tourism has grown steadily over decades, boosted by better transportation and easy online trip planning, which has increased demand for short-term rentals.

- 1970s: Wisconsin's second-home market grew by **50%**.
- 1980s: More than 50% of Lake Geneva's housing stock is second homes
- 1990: Second homes made up **35%** of Door County's housing inventory.
- 2022: Wisconsin ranked 8th nationally with 192,000 seasonal and recreational homes, equaling 7.1% of all housing units — behind only Florida and Arizona.
- 2022: Second homes made up **36%** of Door County's inventory.
- 2022: Oneida, Vilas and Marinette counties ranked among the **top 100** U.S. counties for seasonal and recreational homes.
- 2023: Almost **20% of housing in 20** Wisconsin counties was seasonal or recreational.

This study was commissioned by the Wisconsin REALTORS® Association (WRA), with support from the National Association of REALTORS® (NAR), and conducted by RRC Associates, based in Boulder, Colorado.

ALL 4 AREAS  
HAVE MORE  
**SECONDARY**  
HOMES THAN  
**PRIMARY**



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