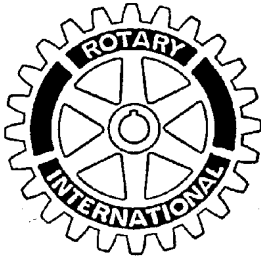


Check our web site – www.waunakeerotary.org



Waunakee Rotary Club

Feb. 16, 2012
Vol. 46 No. 23

The Great Recession has left many victims in its wake, while other business have struggled to strive.

But somehow, Great Wolf Resort, which relies on families' discretionary funds, has managed to thrive, and the development of another resort in California is on the horizon.

Kim Schafer, CEO of that company, shared some of the strategies for Great Wolf's success at the Feb. 9 Waunakee Rotary meeting.

The closest Great Wolf Resort is in Wisconsin Dells, but it is the largest indoor water park company in the world. It got that way by following these four principals, Kim said.

- Establish your brand.
- Know your guest.
- Create an environment for employees to succeed.
- Define your company's brand of leadership.

At the end of 2008, Great Wolf's management began wondering how to maintain the company's success. In 2004, Great Wolf Resort went public and stock could be traded on NASDAQ. That became a challenge because the market is influenced by the global economy. Realizing they couldn't control all the economic forces, Great Wolf's leaders then focused on what it could control.

One important guideline was to build a brand, mainly of bringing families together. The water park needed to continue to be safe and clean and a wonderful experience for families. The experience is more than just a water park and has many other activities for children and adults, as well.

To know their guests, management used tools to measure success. They realized that many of their

families returned for their vacations, so they cut back on advertising and focused on those repeat customers, Kim said. Guest surveys also helped to guide the business.

They learned families have changed, and are now more thoughtful about how they're spending their money. They have a higher expectation of service and value, but they are still 100 percent committed to family time, Kim said.

The company also spent more time focusing on its own employees and the impact of the recession on those families. They began to take the time to celebrate the employees and has been more charitable in the last three years than in the 15 years prior.

Finally, the company defined its brand of leadership and which desirable qualities Great Wolf's leaders should have. Schafer used the example from Howard Schultz's book "Onward," about how the former CEO from Walmart was hired at Starbucks and the match didn't work out because the two corporate philosophies were so different.

By establishing a leadership brand, companies can define how they will represent themselves, how they will interact with customers and what is needed from its leaders, Kim said.

Other News:

• Craig Larson has organized a ski/hike/snowshoe event at Indian Lake Park at 4:30 p.m. March 8. If none of those activities sound fun, there's the Whippoorwill nearby.

• President John Cullen asked members to step as as point persons for four events coming up – the Easter Egg Hunt, the collection spot for sporting goods at the Health Fair, the Kids Marathon May 5 and

OFFICERS

JOHN CULLEN, PRESIDENT • SHELLEY MOFFATT, PRESIDENT ELECT
PHIL WILLEMS, CLUB SECRETARY
BOB PULVERMACHER, RECORDING SECRETARY • JOY MCMERTY, TREASURER

DIRECTORS

ELLEN SCHAAF • LINDA OLSON • SEAN WAYNE • GORDON MEFFERT

Calendar of Events:

- Feb. 21, *Whitetails at Rex's Innkeeper*
- March 7, *Super Raffle*
- March 8, *Winter fun event, 4:30 p.m., Indian Lake*
- April 28, *Rotary Work Day*
- June 8-9, *Rotary District Conference, The La Crosse Center on the Mississippi.*
- May 5, *Kids Triathlon*

Relay for Life.

Guests: Mick Holm, guest of Linda Olson; Mike Millard, guest of Richard Brewster; Mike Wenzel, guest of Gordon Meffert; Randy Guttenberg, guest of the club; Rachel Rodriguez, guest of John Cullen.

Visiting Rotarians: Mike Millard.

Birthdays: None.

Anniversaries: None.

Prayers: Feb. 16, Pat Durden; Feb. 23, Leonard Allen; March 1, Susan Vergeront.

Programs: Feb. 16, Katie Gruber, Teen Challenge (recovery program for young people); Feb. 23, Mark McFarland, classification talk.

Greeters: Feb. 16, Jonny Buroker and Kathy Cefalu; Feb. 23, Scott Cochems and Allan Dassow; March 1, Lori Derauf and Patrick Durden; March 8, Fritz Durst and Rex Endres.