

Walk Through WHEDA History

Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority

Communications: Special Event Marketing

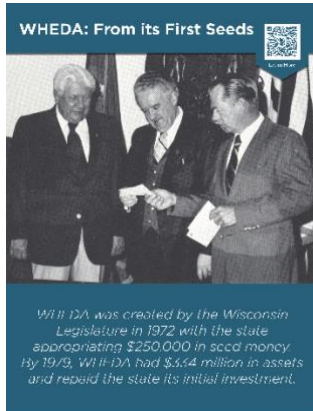
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NCSHA Annual Awards for Program Excellence

Overview



Twelve information boards highlighting WHEDA’s accomplishments over its 50-year history were placed throughout the Marketplace and decorated with numbered balloon bouquets. Each station was hosted by a team member with specific insight into that station’s project. QR codes on each board took participants to expanded stories from our WHEDA stories blog so they could read more about each subject. Station hosts were each given ink stamps.

When attendees entered the Marketplace after the lunch presentation, they were given a “passport” card with 12 spaces corresponding to each station. Our emcee, CEO Elmer Moore, Jr., entertained with a microphone over the loudspeaker, interviewing participants, highlighting the stations, and inviting

people to participate. When a participant visited a station, their passport was stamped. For further motivation, cupcakes and coffee were served in the back of the Marketplace because no celebration is complete without cake!



Once completed, the “passport” cards were brought to the WHEDA booth where they were exchanged for a special anniversary gift—a small, branded Bluetooth speaker that they could use to play a special [WHEDA 2022 Conference playlist](#) consisting of songs with the words “house” or “home” in the titles.

Replicable

What makes this campaign so replicable is that it costs very little and can be handled by a small team. Our communications team of six pulled off planning the event with little spent outside of our normal budget. That’s because we relied on our own people and the stories we had already written. The only costs involved were the printing of information boards and passports, the purchase of balloon bouquets, and procuring the anniversary gift.

Engaging Our Audience

We used this opportunity to engage with our many constituents to teach them more about our history and to share how they can continue getting more positive stories from our WHEDA stories blog. The attendees at our annual conference include developers, syndicators, asset managers, property managers, municipal leaders, state legislators, and housing stakeholders from partner organizations.

Results

“I learned so many new things about WHEDA today. What a great event!”

This and many similar comments were heard at the WHEDA booth—evidence that the experience worked! Likewise, we received feedback on our conference surveys that the event was one of our participants’ favorite parts of the conference. Statistically speaking, 314 speakers were given out to those that participated. WHEDA booth staff also reported that many people handed in cards but opted not to take a speaker.

Benefits that outweigh the costs & effective use of resources

Participants happily visited the stations to learn more about WHEDA’s many accomplishments. Our emcee was entertaining and motivated conference attendees to get involved and visit all stations. All who entered the Marketplace walked away with a better understanding of the many contributions WHEDA has made to housing in Wisconsin.

The only real expenses for this event were the printing of information boards and passports, balloon bouquets, and Bluetooth speakers. We used as many in-house resources as possible. All the marketing and event planning was handled by our six-person communications team. The branding for the campaign was created in-house, including the passport cards and information boards.

Why Walk Through WHEDA History is award-worthy

1. Connection with our audience. People really enjoyed the event as evidenced by the many smiles seen in the photographs taken during the event and the many lines of people waiting to get their chance to learn more about WHEDA’s history. Hits on our website went up significantly during the event and remained high after the event, indicating that participants continued to be interested in the stories.
2. Cost-effective and replicable. Anyone who wants to replicate this event can do so, simply by reading this entry. The budget for this project is scalable to accommodate any spending level. We opted to provide a higher quality anniversary gift with a price point of \$8.99 each, but a high-quality and less expensive gift could be chosen to fall within budget.
3. Employee involvement. Employees were essential to make this event a success. In addition to the marketing team, we had the assistance of 15 employees to carry out the event by staffing the information stations, distributing passport cards, and staffing the WHEDA booth where speakers were given out.

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