

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
September 17, 2009

Contact: Noreen Rueckert, 608.328.1838, tourism@greencounty.org

BOUNTY OF GREEN COUNTY – FEAST ON THE HILLTOP New tourism event showcases local foods and boosts local economy

Last Saturday's BOUNTY OF GREEN COUNTY FEAST ON THE HILLTOP event attracted more than 1000 visitors to the New Glarus Brewing Company's new hilltop site.

Green County is famous for cheese and beer, a palate-pleasing pair that clearly played a starring role as visitors lined up in the brewery tasting room and sampled cheese from several local factories.

However, since Green County offers a diversity of artisan foods, a major goal of the event was to offer both visitors and local residents the chance to experience some tastes they might not have expected - Emu sausage, Goose brats, Elk jerky, Blackberry buttercream fudge, homestead yogurt, freshly picked juicy apples, and much more.

Throughout the day at the "Meet Your Maker" Vendor Showcase, attendees sampled locally sourced products from throughout the county. Booths included: Sugar River Dairy - Albany, Ruegsegger Farms – Blanchardville, Goose Chaser Farm - Blanchardville, Kurt Kline Cheesecakes and Pies – Monroe, Barb Newcomer Potato Salad and Barb's Kitchen – Monroe, Edelweiss Creamery – Monticello, Brennan's Water – Monroe, Minhas Craft Brewery's Blumers Root beer – Monroe, Roth Kase – Monroe, Hawks Hill Elk Farm – Monticello, Yodeling Baker – Monticello, Inn Serendipity – Browntown, New Glarus Primrose Winery, New Glarus Bakery, Hoesly Meats – New Glarus, Maple Leaf Cheese and Chocolate Haus – New Glarus, Bratzeli by volunteers from Turner Hall of Monroe, Ten Eyck Orchard – Brodhead, Chalet Cheese – Monroe, and the Wisconsin Milk Marketing Board.

In addition to the foods and beverages available for tasting, guests also took part in cheese and beer pairings led by Sara Hill of Wisconsin Milk Marketing Board and brewmaster Randy Thiel of New Glarus Brewing Company. Other tasting sessions included a ravioli and spaetzle demonstration by Stef Culberson of Goose Chaser Farm, cheese fondue demonstration by Chef Roland Everest of the New Glarus Hotel, and a Cheese Hors d'oeuvres demonstration by Art Bartsch of The Swiss Colony.

The evening dinner feast sold out with 100 reservations. The five-course menu (each course paired with a different New Glarus beer) featured locally sourced foods prepared by local chefs – Mike Nevil of Chalet Landhaus, and Stef Culberson of Goose Chaser Farm.

The flavor of each course was enhanced as master of ceremonies Pam Jahnke spoke to each of the "makers" responsible for raising the meat, baking the bread, preparing the dinner, and brewing the beer. The enthusiasm and passion these individuals expressed for their work was apparent, and it was clear that the Bounty of Green County event was not only a celebration of food, but also a celebration of the people and quality of life in the county.

Extensive public relations efforts and an advertising budget supported by a Wisconsin Department of Tourism Joint Effort Marketing grant awarded to Green County Tourism attracted tourists from twelve states.

“We drove up from Chicago – it was well worth the 200-mile drive; a wonderful day and well organized, I hope it will be an annual event,” said Jim Konik from Arlington Heights, IL.

A zip code survey showed that 30% of the attendees were from surrounding states including Illinois, Iowa, and Minnesota, 12% were Green County residents, and 57% were from other areas throughout Wisconsin.

Green County Tourism Director Noreen Rueckert estimates the economic impact generated by out-of-county visitors to be more than \$62,000, noting a boost to local lodging, dining, shopping, and sales tax revenue.

Bounty of Green County was presented under the leadership of Noreen Rueckert, Susie Weiss of the New Glarus Chamber, and Deb Carey, co-owner of New Glarus Brewing Company.

Sponsors and partners for the event included New Glarus Brewing Company, Wisconsin Milk Marketing Board, BIG Radio, New Glarus Kinderchor, New Glarus Hotel, Chalet Landhaus, Ten Eyck Orchard, PDC – Precision Drive Control, Monroe Main Street, Green County Development, Green County UWEX, Minhas Craft Brewery, and a funding grant through profits from Green County’s hosting of Wisconsin Farm Technology Days in 2007.