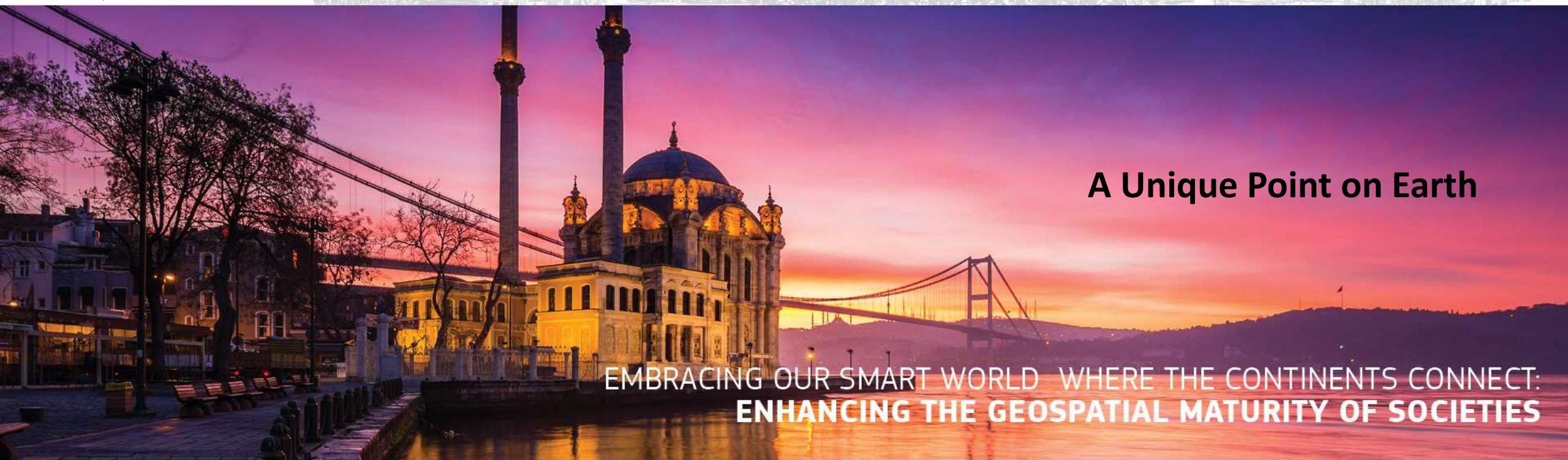


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2018  
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Presented at the FIG Congress 2018  
May 6-11, 2018 in Istanbul, Turkey

# XXVI FIG CONGRESS

8-11 May 2018, İstanbul



**A Unique Point on Earth**

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# A Unique Point on Earth

John HOHOL, USA  
Curtis SUMNER, USA

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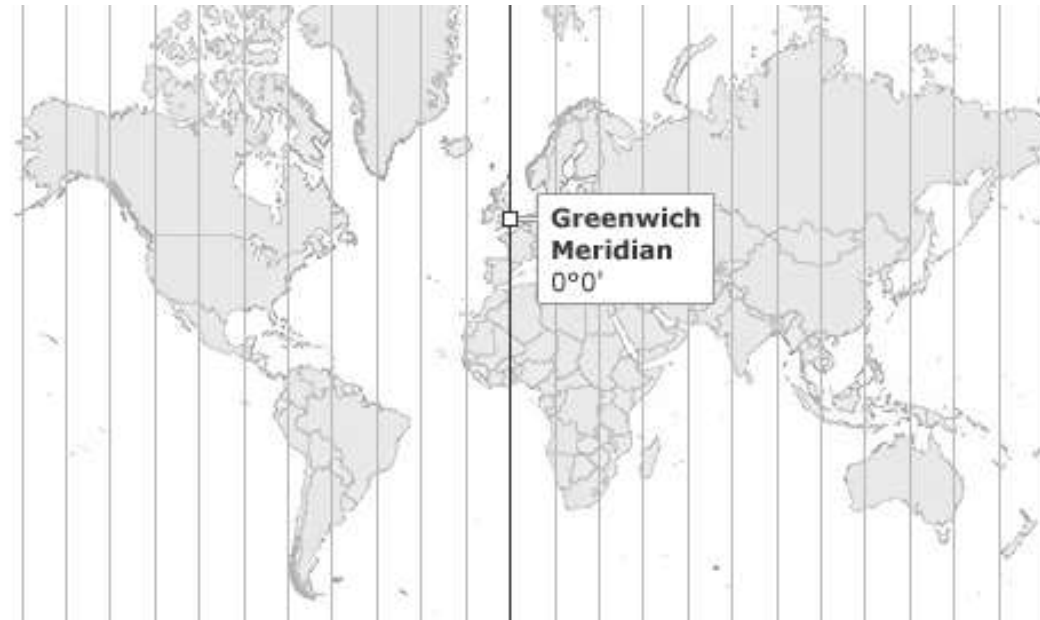
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Most people are aware of the Greenwich Meridian.

Set as 0 degrees longitude, it separates east from west in the same way that the Equator separates north from south. It also sits at the center of our system of time zones



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However, few people are aware of the four unique locations on earth where 45 degrees latitude and 90 degrees longitude intersect

Each is exactly halfway latitudinally ( $90^\circ$ ) between the Greenwich Meridian ( $0^\circ$ ) and the International Date Line ( $180^\circ$ ) while being exactly

halfway longitudinally ( $45^\circ$ ) from the Equator and a Pole (North/South).

Two of these spots lie in the ocean, one in a mountainous area of northern China near Mongolia and one in Marathon County, Wisconsin USA.

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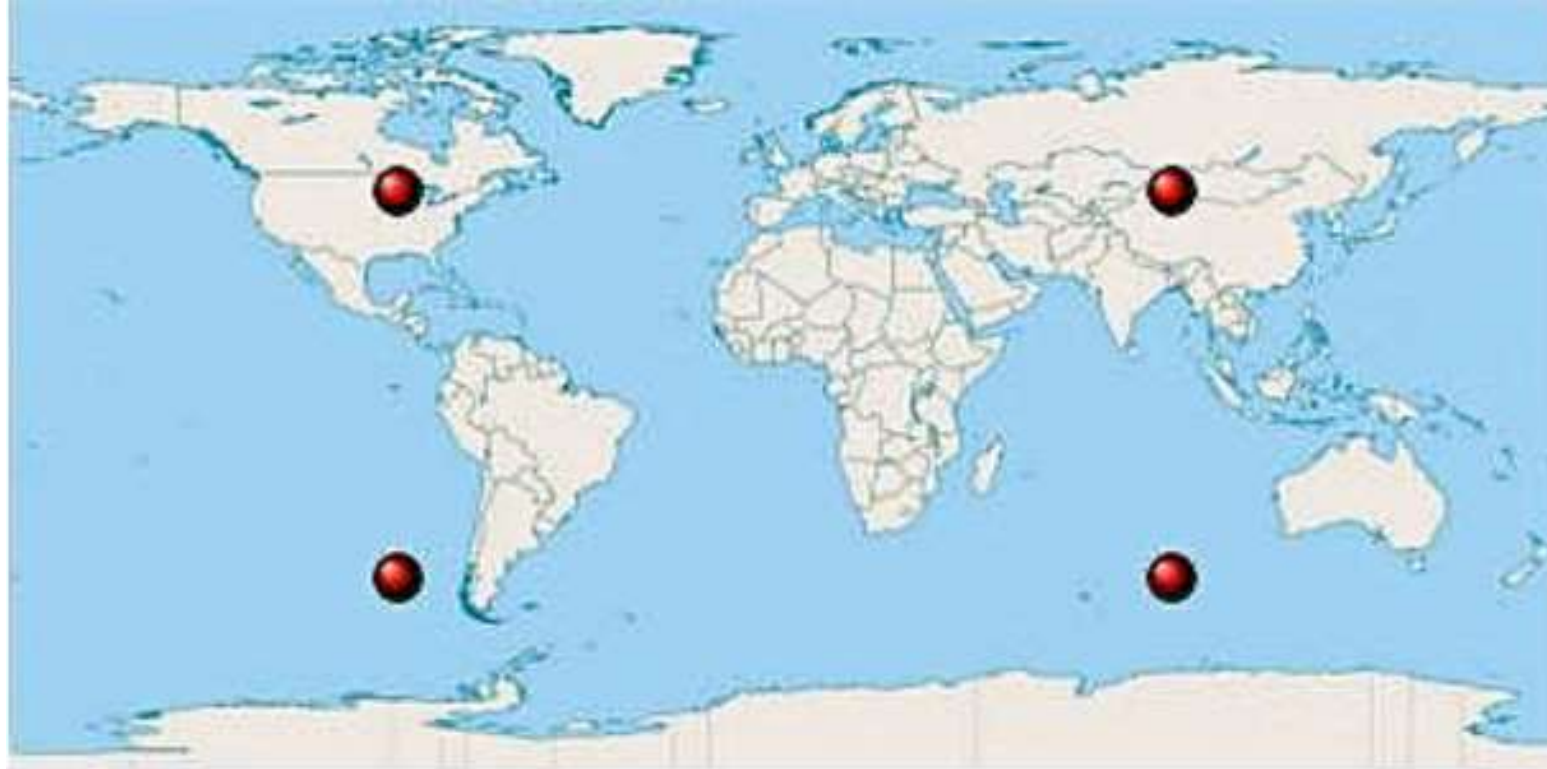


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**The 45 x 90 points on a world map**

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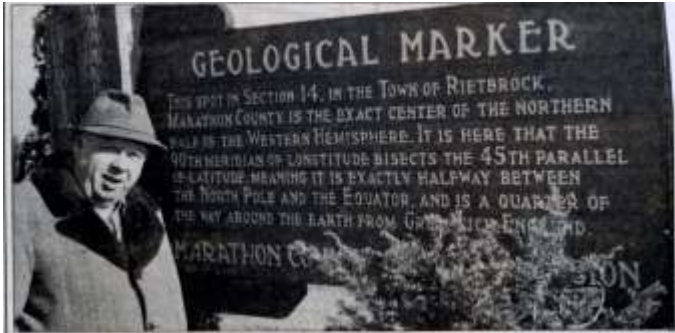


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**In the middle:** John Gesicki stands at the approximate center of the northern half of the Western Hemisphere, northwest of Poniatoski in Marathon County. His persistence and research of U.S. Geological Survey maps resulted in a county marker being placed at the site. He has promoted the geographical point of interest — and his hometown — as a tourist attraction.

## In the center

Location puts Poniatoski on the map

By Diane Pacetti  
Associated Press Writer

**PONIATOWSKI** — John Gesicki has spent years promoting his hometown, population 311, and its claim to fame as the center of the northern half of the Western Hemisphere.

Actually, says Gesicki, the exact geographical center is a half mile west and a quarter mile north of Poniatoski in the town of Rietbrock about 20 miles northwest of Milwaukee — but why split hairs?

"We're just a little community," Gesicki said recently. "We have to promote what we have and that's all we have. That place is a point of interest that we can be proud of."

And no one is prouder than Gesicki, 66, whose persistence was responsible for the site as a field off a county road being located and suitably marked with a large wooden sign in the 1960s. The sign reads:

"This spot is the exact center of the northern half of the Western Hemisphere. It is here that the 90th meridian of longitude bisects the 45th parallel of latitude, meaning it is exactly halfway between the North Pole and the equator, and is a quarter of the way around the earth from Greenwich, England."

Mapmakers and surveyors agree the lines intersect somewhere northwest of Poniatoski, but some question whether Gesicki, who isn't a surveyor, found the exact point.

"First of all, believe it or not, we're still arguing over the exact size and shape of the earth," said state cartographer Art Ziegler of the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

But Ziegler concedes Gesicki may have come within 40 feet of the true spot because he researched the matter with U.S. Geological Survey quadrangle and topographic maps.

"There have been skeptics," conceded Gesicki, "but they all have agreed that this is as close as anyone can possibly get. We did a laugh-in-the-joke project in a straightaway way."

Gesicki, a former Marathon County Board member, made arrangements with the county for the site marker and had a rock in, transform a swamy area into one habitable visitors. He even struck a deal with the state for "geographical marker" signs on Highway 29, which point the way to Poniatoski.

Gesicki, owner of Gesicki's bar and general store, has "bigger" stickers reading: "We're in heaven in Poniatoski!" "The exact center: Poniatoski, Wis." and "Worldwide center: Poniatoski, Wis."

Gesicki also established the \$9.99 Club, with membership confined to those who visit the geographical marker and stop by the general store to sign a register.

The register has about 6,000 signatures representing, he said, every state in the United States as well as China, New Zealand, Japan, Australia, Italy, Germany, Holland, France, England, Hawaii and Africa.

Gesicki said his interest in the spot began even before he knew where it was and why it was significant. As a youngster, he would hear bar patrons talk nostalgically of something special about the area — but he was too young to know what it was.

"It was nagging me for years (and) as time went by, I got a little bit more sure," he said.

Now, Gesicki gets satisfaction out of knowing that little Poniatoski has parlayed its claim to fame into a tourist attraction.

"What we have done with a small community here is something a lot of people would like to be able to do with a bigger city," he said.



In 1963, John Gesicki began researching the invisible point located in the small community of Poniatoski (Poy-nee-ya-tah-skee). It took him five years to piece together the correct maps to pinpoint the exact center of the Northwest Hemisphere. By the time the U.S. Geological Survey arrived in 1969, Gesicki had the park ready for the marker.

He even erected a sign highlighting the point. Unfortunately, the sign was titled **GEOLOGICAL MARKER**, not **GEOGRAPHICAL MARKER**.

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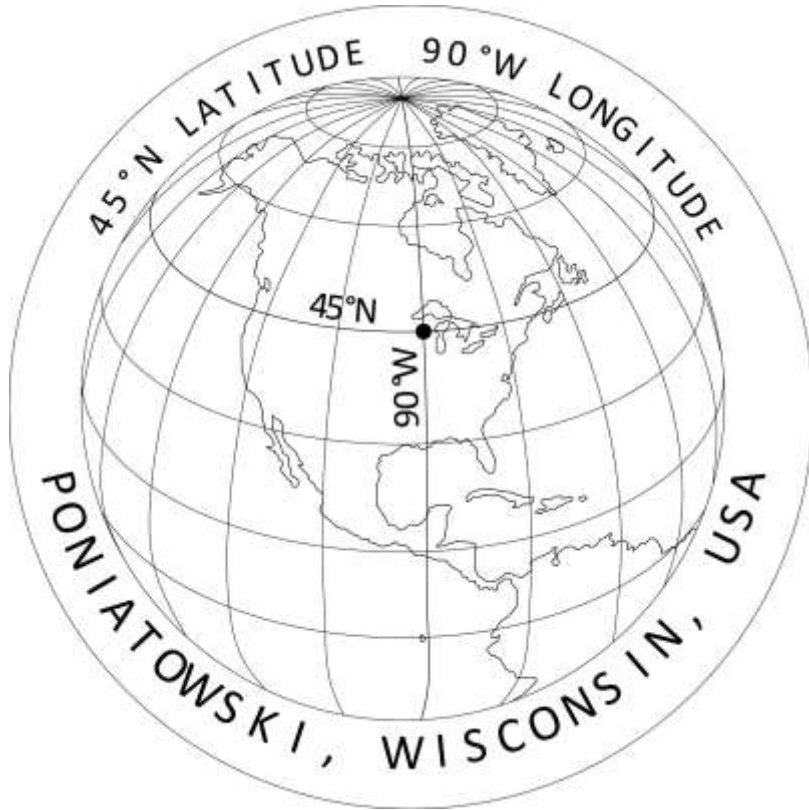


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In rural western Marathon County, Wisconsin (USA), near Poniatowski, a small county park has stood since 1969 marking the intersection of the 45th Parallel North of Latitude and the 90th Meridian West of Longitude.

### Why is this important?

This point in Marathon County is the most accessible as two points are located in oceans (Indian Ocean and Pacific Ocean) and one point is found in a remote location in a mountainous region of China.

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This point in the Town of Rietbrock in Marathon County, is the exact center of the Northern half of the Western Hemisphere. It is here that the 90th Meridian of Longitude bisects the 45th Parallel of Latitude meaning it is exactly halfway between the North Pole and the Equator and is a quarter of the way around Earth from the Greenwich Meridian in England.

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Recently the Marathon County Parks Department  
in collaboration with Christopher Fieri, Marathon County Surveyor,  
installed a new marker and information kiosk  
at 45°N and 90°W  
to better publicize the uniqueness of this special location



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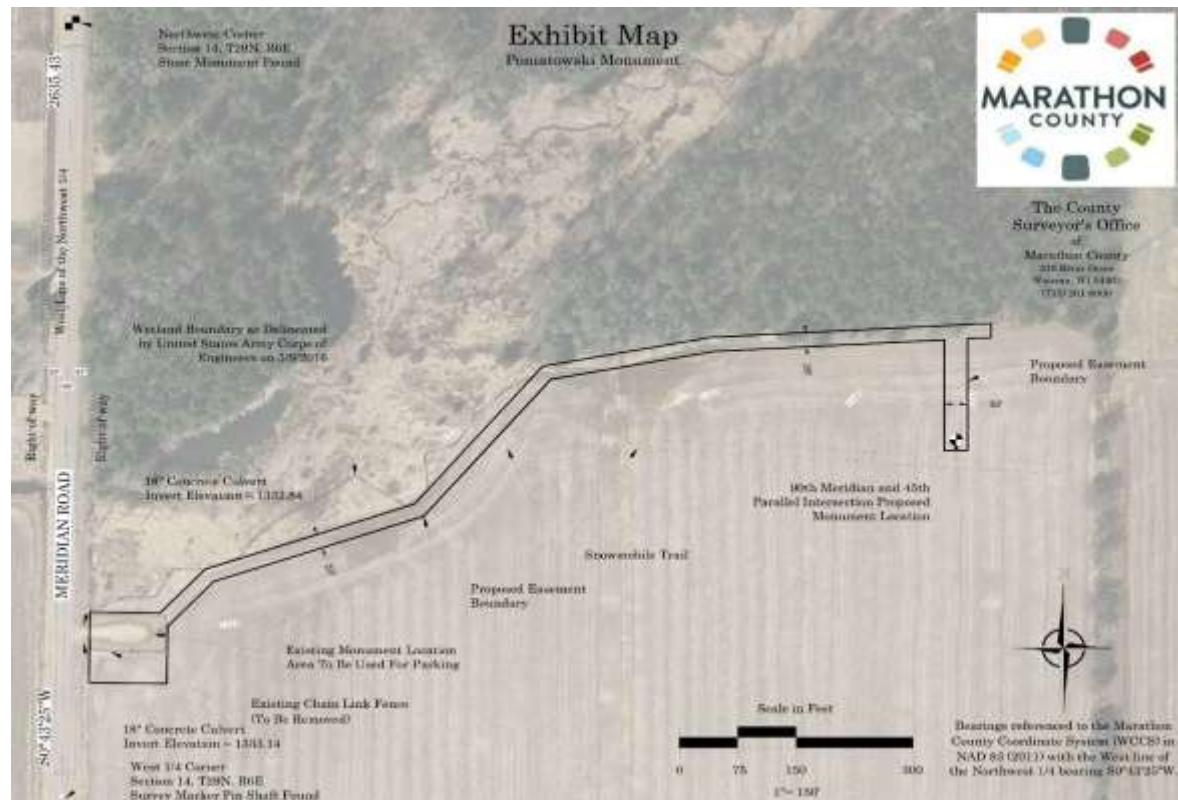


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After you experience the 45 x 90 marker stop by the Wausau/Central Wisconsin Convention and Visitors Bureau to sign their visitor book

and receive a souvenir of your visit



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# Thank You!

## REFERENCES:

Christopher Fieri, Marathon County Surveyor  
Wausau/Central Wisconsin Convention and Visitors Bureau

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