

Peshtigo Wisconsin



PESHTIGO
HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC.
MUSEUM

MUSEUM

Year 49
of the
Peshtigo Historical Society
Fire Museum

A History of Fire - A Future to Inspire



We have it all!

Canoeing

Snowmobiling

Waterskiing

Biking

Camping

Fishing

Boating

Swimming

Hunting

History

www.peshtigochamber.com

Welcome to Peshtigo



The name “**Peshtigo**” (PESH-ti-go) is a native Indian word believed to mean “**snapping turtle**” or “**wild goose.**”

Reborn from the ashes of America’s deadliest fire, the city of Peshtigo is proud of its unique name and heritage.

Peshtigo’s history and surrounding natural beauty, as well as its location on the Peshtigo River and abundance of outdoor recreation, make the area a popular tourist destination. The second largest city in Marinette County, Peshtigo is easy to reach by following Hwy. 41 north from Green Bay.



Our History

On October 8, 1871, a tornado of fire more than 1,000 feet high and five miles wide ripped through the town of Peshtigo, Wisconsin, destroying over 2,400 square miles of forest and killing more than 2,200 people, according to the book *Firestorm at Peshtigo* by Denise Gess and William Lutz.

At the time, Peshtigo was a booming lumber town surrounded by a billion trees, each three to six feet in diameter and towering 120-170 ft. high. The largest woodenware factory in the world was located here, producing pails, tubs, ax handles, clothespins, broom handles, barrel covers, and shingles. Logs were floated downriver to Peshtigo Harbor at the mouth of the Peshtigo River where it meets Green Bay, to be shipped to other ports. Economically, lumber was gold.

After an unusually hot, dry spring and summer, atmospheric conditions and a superheated landscape combined to create a firestorm—nature's nuclear explosion. It is estimated that the heat from the flames was at least 2000 degrees Fahrenheit. The inferno roared to an earth-shaking crescendo, advancing on winds of 110 miles or more per hour.

People survived by staying in the river, lying in trenches, or by a quirk of the unpredictable fire. Many died from fire, of course, but others from hypothermia in the water; some killed their families to spare them from burning, and others killed themselves. More died later from fever and shock.

The only structures in Peshtigo that survived the fire were the framework of an unfinished house and the brick walls of a kiln. With all the businesses, homes, and trees destroyed and the soil severely damaged, recovery was a challenging process.

Ironically, the Great Chicago Fire took place on the same fateful night, overshadowing the death and destruction caused by the Peshtigo Fire.

Peshtigo - Facts & Trivia

- 🔥 The Peshtigo Fire occurred on the same day as the Chicago Fire: October 8, 1871.
- 🔥 The Peshtigo Fire killed about eight times as many people as the Chicago Fire.
- 🔥 The official population of Peshtigo in 1871 was 1,750. Many immigrants, finding work in the local lumber and other industries, swelled the population much higher than the official census.
- 🔥 A man convicted of looting after the fire could not be lynched because all the rope had been destroyed in the fire.
- 🔥 Nineteen survivors attended ceremonies on the 80th anniversary of the fire in 1951. The oldest was 96.
- 🔥 The memorial at the Peshtigo Fire Cemetery was the first official state historical marker authorized by the State Historical Society of Wisconsin.
- 🔥 The Peshtigo Fire Museum is housed in the first church built in Peshtigo after the disaster.
- 🔥 A mass grave in the Peshtigo Fire Cemetery, adjacent to the museum, contains the remains of several hundred unidentified persons.
- 🔥 The City of Peshtigo rebuilt and incorporated in 1903.



Recreation abounds...

Badger Park & Campground

On the Peshtigo River, Badger Park has over 57 acres for recreational use: Badger Boardwalk play area, pavilion, Frisbee Golf, nature trails, beach, trailer and camping sites with electrical hookups, rustic cabins, skateboard park, and modern restroom facilities. Concerts at the bandshell entertain throughout the summer. A boat launch is nearby. For more information and campground or pavilion reservation, call 715-582-4321 or click the Parks and Recreation tab at www.ci.peshtigo.wi.us.

Boating

The Upper Peshtigo accommodates fishing boats, motorboats, and pontoons. The Lower Peshtigo is great for canoes and kayaks, and the boat launch is the starting point for the 11-mile Peshtigo River Trail. As the river meanders through upland hardwood forests and marshes to the mouth of the river, you traverse an area rich in local history and nature.

Fishing

The Peshtigo River, which runs through the city, affords some of the finest fishing in Wisconsin. With the spring break-up comes great northern pike fishing near the mouth of the river. At about the same time, a run of rainbow trout start up the river and collect at the dam in the city to spawn and feed. After this come runs of walleye and smallmouth bass. Good populations of fish stay in the river all summer long; in September and October runs of brown trout and Chinook salmon fill the waterway. See map for boat launch sites.

Hemlock Curve Nature Trail

This two-mile walking path leads you through the forest, beside the scenic Peshtigo River, and past a historic grove of hemlocks. Along the way, you are invited to learn about many natural and historic features of this area.

Ski and Snowshoe

The Woods Road Ski Trail is the most unique ski trail around. As you ski, you can also look for wildlife tracks and learn about how these animals endure the winter. The mostly flat landscape and many loop options along this six-mile trail system make it an ideal place for kids and beginners. If snowshoeing is your thing, you can do that here, too.

Bird Watching

Bring your camera and binoculars—or a good book—and enjoy the peaceful sounds of nature at the Peshtigo Harbor Wildlife Area observation deck on Wynegar Pond. Built by the Chappee Rapids Audubon Society, the platform is wheelchair accessible.

Hunting

With the fall come the hunting seasons: archery, small game, trapping, and rifle season for deer. The Peshtigo Harbor Wildlife Area, located just southeast of Peshtigo, contains 4,000 acres and is open to the public for hunting.

And More!

Snowmobiling, cross-country skiing, canoeing, kayaking, ball fields, ATV trails, and a host of other activities keep people coming to the Peshtigo area for all seasons!

**For details and regional recreation offerings, visit
www.therealnorth.com and
www.marinettecounty.com**



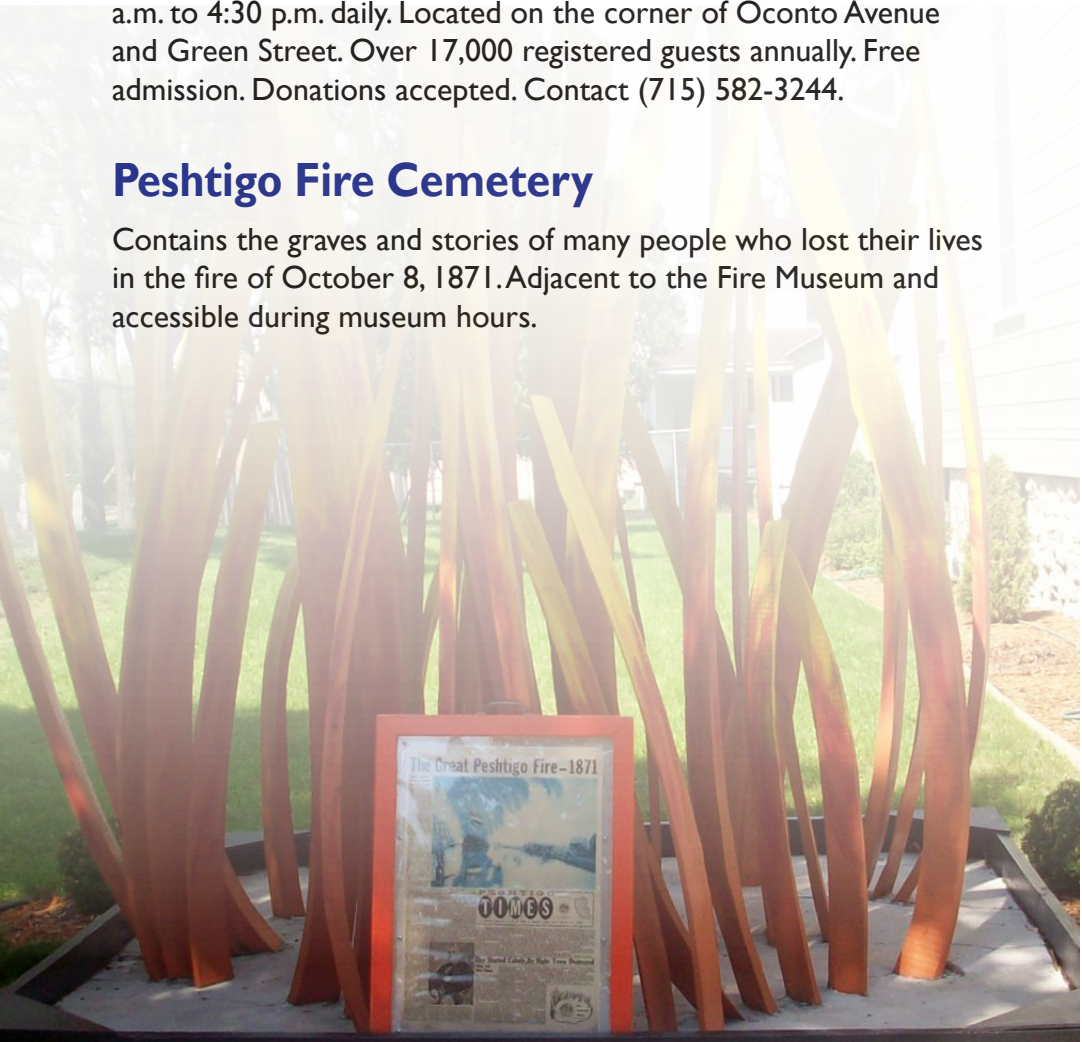
Our Community

Peshtigo Fire Museum

Housed in the first church built in Peshtigo after the fire of October 8, 1871. Exhibits depict the area's past. Guided tours available. Open from Memorial Weekend to October 8 from 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. daily. Located on the corner of Oconto Avenue and Green Street. Over 17,000 registered guests annually. Free admission. Donations accepted. Contact (715) 582-3244.

Peshtigo Fire Cemetery

Contains the graves and stories of many people who lost their lives in the fire of October 8, 1871. Adjacent to the Fire Museum and accessible during museum hours.



Peshtigo  **Fire**

Veterans Memorial

Located at Riverside Cemetery, the memorial honors the brave men and women who fought and sacrificed for freedom.



Veterans Memorial

E.A. Meyer Memorial

Located in Triangle Park on Business Highway 41, it was erected by the workers of Badger Paper Mills to honor the firm's founder.

Peshtigo Harbor

Famous in the annals of Wisconsin logging. The only traces of a once-flourishing settlement are the rows of piles built out into the bay to handle shipping.



Peshtigo Harbor Wildlife Area observation deck on Wynegar Pond

Peshtigo Harbor State Wildlife Area

Contains 4,000 acres purchased for public ownership and hunting. Located six miles southeast of Peshtigo. Public boat landings give access to lower Peshtigo River and Green Bay. The area accommodates birdwatching, walking, paddling, and hunting.

Education

Peshtigo School District

The Peshtigo School District earns its excellent reputation by offering a wide variety of educational, co-curricular, and extracurricular activities that meet the varying needs and interests of the general student population. Composed of an elementary school and a middle/high school, the District's exemplary instructional programming and safe, nurturing environment serve not only resident students but also a high number of non-resident students who choose to attend the District through Open Enrollment.



For more information, visit www.peshtigo.k12.wi.us or call the District administrative office, 715-582-3677.

Other area schools

- Peshtigo-Marinette Head Start 715-582-3609
- Zion Lutheran Preschool and Day Care 715-582-2800
- St. John's Lutheran School (Preschool - 8th grade) 715-582-4565
- St. Thomas Aquinas Academy 715-735-7481
- The Wisconsin Academy (Paul Mitchell Partner School). 715-582-4104

Economic Opportunities

Peshtigo Area Economic Development Corporation

Formed to aid local industry and business expansion as well as secure new industry. Over 40 acres of industrial sites located with trackage and highway. For information, contact local banks or city hall.

Peshtigo Industrial Park

Peshtigo has one industrial park located within a T.I.F. District. This park, owned and developed by the City of Peshtigo, consists of 240 acres fronting U.S. Business Highway 41 and the northeast city limits. Sewer, water, and paved streets are furnished. Three-phase electricity and natural gas are already installed. Peshtigo has two revolving loan funds at very reasonable rates to help qualifying businesses start or expand within the City of Peshtigo.

For more information about the industrial parks, contact:

Mayor's Office

331 French Street, P.O. Box 100
Peshtigo, WI 54157-0100
Phone: (715) 582-3041

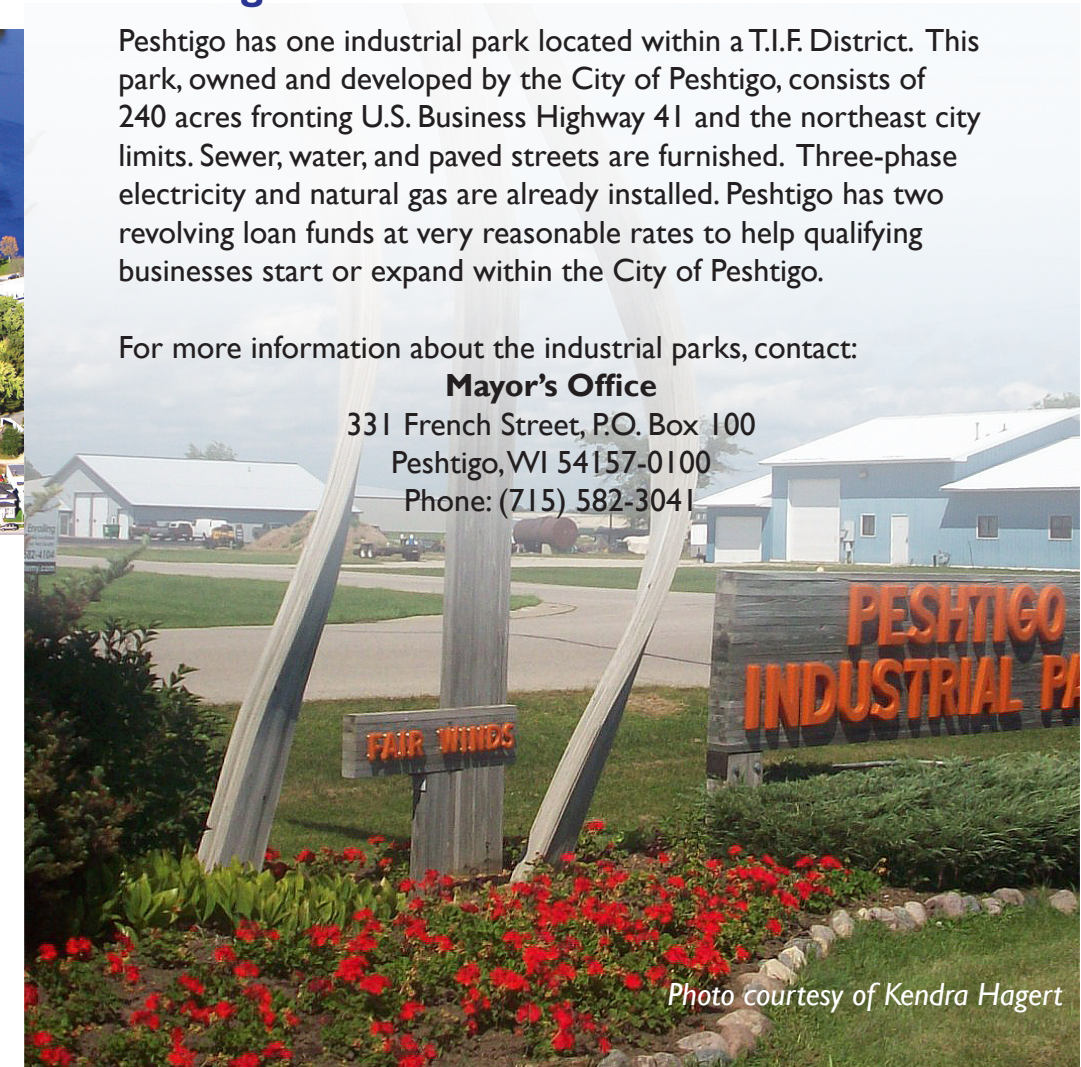


Photo courtesy of Kendra Hagert

Events

Bands at Badger (715) 582-1141

Six free concerts throughout the summer, Wednesday evenings
Badger Park Band Shell, Concessions available
Sponsored by Peshtigo Woman's Club

Peshtigo River Trail Paddle . . (715) 732-7784

First Saturday after Labor Day
Sponsored by Marinette County Land and Water Conservation Dept.

Historical Day Parade (715) 582-0327

Mid to late September
Sponsored by Peshtigo Chamber of Commerce

Churches

Faith Baptist Church	715-582-3655
Good Shepherd Lutheran Church	715-582-3595
Grover Community Church	715-582-4347
Harmony United Methodist Church	715-789-3113
Pentecostal Apostolic Church UPC	715-582-9944
Peshtigo United Methodist Church	715-582-4388
St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church	715-582-3439
St. Mary's Catholic Church	715-582-4897
Zion Lutheran Church	715-582-3680

Information

Peshtigo Zip Code: 54157

Badger Park Campground

Reservations(715) 582-3041
or (715) 582-4321

City of Peshtigo

Municipal Building

331 French Street . . .(715) 582-3041
ci.peshtigo.wi.us

Information Center

590 Maple Street
(Business 41, under the water tower)

Peshtigo Chamber of Commerce

P.O. Box 36(715) 582-0327

Peshtigo Fire Museum

400 Oconto Avenue . .(715) 582-3244

Peshtigo Post Office

201 W. Front Street. . .(715) 582-3330

Peshtigo Library

331 French Street . . .(715) 582-4905
Monday, Wednesday, Friday 8:00 – 6:00

DMV

(Department of Motor Vehicles)

101 N. Ogden Road . .(800) 924-3570
Monday & Wednesday 7:00 – 5:00

**DNR (Department of
Natural Resources)**

101 N. Ogden Road . .(715) 582-5000
Monday – Friday 11:00 – 2:00

Town of Peshtigo

W2435 Old Peshtigo Road
(715) 582-4332

Tuesdays and Thursdays 10:00 – 2:00
Townofpeshtigo.org



Information Center

Chamber Info

This publication is produced by the
Peshtigo Chamber of Commerce

For more information, please contact us at:

Peshtigo Chamber of Commerce

P.O. Box 36

Peshtigo WI 54157

(715) 582-0327

Email: peshtigochamber@centurytel.net

Website: peshtigochamber.com

Member Benefits

- Promote business in our quarterly newsletter, The Changing Times
- Business Listing on Peshtigo Chamber of Commerce website—option to include a link to your business
- Business exposure on Chamber website and in Information Center



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Mission

The purpose of the Peshtigo Chamber of Commerce is to advance the economic, recreational, industrial, professional, agricultural, cultural, educational and civic welfare of the Peshtigo community and vicinity.