Obtaining a sign

Here is how it works. First, you fill out an application and attach a check for $100 payable to the county in which the sign will be located. (This is the administration fee.) Then, the county will review your application. If you don't qualify for a sign or if there isn't room for the sign at the location you want it, your check will be returned. If you do qualify, you will be furnished with a list of qualified sign manufacturers who can make a sign for you. You may contact as many manufacturers as you wish in order to get the best price. Then bring the sign to your county highway office with a check for $250 made out to the "Wisconsin Department of Transportation". *(This is the installation fee.)* Your county will then install your sign.

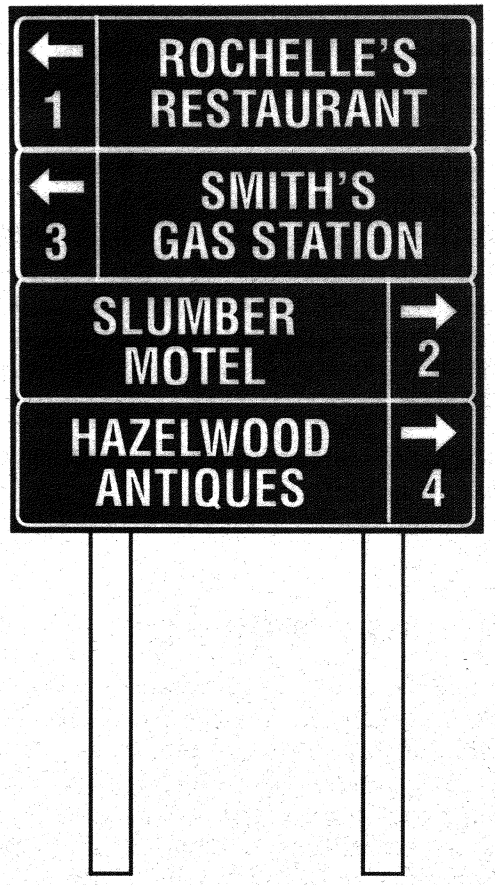
For more information, contact your County Highway Department.

Printed on recycled paper

The TODS Program
Wisconsin Department of Transportation
Room 501 Highway Operations
P.O. Box 7986
Madison, WI 53707-7986
(608) 266-0318

The TODS Program

Tourist Oriented Directional Signs



A signing program brought to you by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation and your County Highway Department.

The TODS Program

Tourism is a thriving industry in Wisconsin. Thousands of small businesses provide food, service, lodging and fun to travelers. These businesses are the economic foundation of many Wisconsin communities.

The Wisconsin Legislature had these businesses in mind when it approved a new highway signing program called TODS, or Tourist Oriented Directional Signs. As directed by the Legislature, the Wisconsin Department of Transportation developed program guidelines following a series of public hearings around the state.

This pamphlet provides information about how your business may qualify for the TODS program.

What is a TODS sign?

A picture of four TODS signs is on the cover of this pamphlet. The signs are reflective blue with reflective white letters. The signs can be erected on most State Highways and U.S. Highways at their intersections with County Trunk Highways or Town Roads. TODS signs provide motorists with directional information for tourist-related businesses, services, or activities.

Qualifying businesses

Businesses qualify for TODS signs under the following five categories...

- ***Gas*** *— Open at least 12 hrs. per day, 7 days per week, with restrooms, drinking water and a telephone available to the public.*
- ***Food*** *— Open 5 days per week, open at least between 10 a.m. and 7 p.m., with at least 50% of gross receipts from food and non-alcoholic beverages.*
- ***Lodging*** *— Hotels, Motels, Resorts, Boarding Houses, or Bed & Breakfast establishments. Must have parking accommodations.*
- ***Camping*** *— Campgrounds with restrooms, drinking water, and public telephone.*
- ***Tourist attractions*** *— Open at least 8 hrs. per day, 5 days per week for at least 3 consecutive months, with public restrooms and drinking water, and be of significant interest to the traveling public as determined by the TODS Advisory Council appointed by the Department. (Examples-Antique Shops, Amusement Parks, Bait Shops, etc.)*

In addition to the above criteria, there are many other rules. Some of these include...

1. The business must be tourist related. Tourist-related businesses are businesses whose major portion of income or visitors is derived from motorists not residing in the immediate area where the business is located.
2. The business must be within five miles of the State or U.S. Highway.
3. The business does not have direct access to the State or U.S. Highway.
4. TODS signs are prohibited in some urban areas. Contact your county for more information.
5. TODS signs are prohibited on "SIS" highways. SIS stands for Specific Information Sign. Most freeways and expressways are SIS highways. You can usually tell which highways are SIS highways by the presence of SIS Signs. SIS Signs are large blue signs with various restaurant, gas station, camping, and lodging logos.
6. Businesses with illegal outdoor advertising signs cannot have a TODS sign.

TODS sign costs

The TODS Program is designed to be self funded. In other words, no state or federal funds will support this program because all of the administration, sign manufacturing, and sign installation costs will be paid by the applicants.

Administration Fee	$100/Sign
Sign Cost (see list of mfgs.)	$ /Sign
Installation Fee	$250/Sign
Total (estimated)	***$450/Sign***

The sign life is estimated to be ten years. The administration fee is for a five year period ($20 per year). After five-years, you will have to pay another $100 administration fee. So it comes out to a total of $550 over a ten-year period. That works out to be $55/year or about ***one dollar*** per week for each sign.