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akron/summit convention & visitors bureau | john s. knight center | greystone

summer 2022



Gregg M. Mervis

president & ceo's message

Dear friends and colleagues: I'm eager to share a few updates and initiatives that demonstrate the forward trajectory of our local hospitality industry partners and the positive momentum of our organization this year.

In this newsletter, you'll learn about a number of marketing and sales strategies that are being implemented to ensure our community remains an attractive business and leisure travel destination. Additionally, I'm confident that our newly relaunched website and the 2022-2023 Akron-Summit Visitors Guide will each play a major role in introducing (or reintroducing) visitors to our iconic sights, sounds and experiences.

Directed by Tourism Ohio and conducted by Tourism Economics, we recently received the findings of our 2021 Summit County-level economic impact research study. In comparison to the 2020 study, our local hospitality industry made positive strides forward in making up for lost revenue, direct jobs, employee compensation, and resulting federal, state and local tax revenue. This quick comparison shows the amount of direct visitor spending* our community was able to recapture.

* Source: Tourism Economics - July 2022



Direct Visitor Spending:
2019 - \$1.6 billion
2020 - \$1.2 billion
2021 - \$1.4 billion

Visitor expenditures on accommodations, dining, retail, transportation and entertainment, each contributed to the positive growth experienced in 2021. With that said, the number of direct hospitality industry jobs did not rebound as well; we still have nearly 2,000 fewer people working across Greater Akron. I share this fact because it underscores

the resilience and dedication of our workforce currently doing the work - staying the course - and striving for customer service excellence. Their efforts are incredible and make a noticeable impact on the visitor experience.

We received our 24th Top Destination Award from *Facilities & Destinations Magazine*. Dr. Taotao Matsui is examining the Summit Brew Path as part of her research study on the rise of the craft beer industry. A professor of marketing at Risho

University in Tokyo, her work is being funded by the Japanese government. She made her first of several visits to us earlier this year. Finally, I invite you to attend our 19th annual Zenith Awards luncheon on Friday, October 21. Thank you for your continued support and advocacy of this special place we call home. All my best!

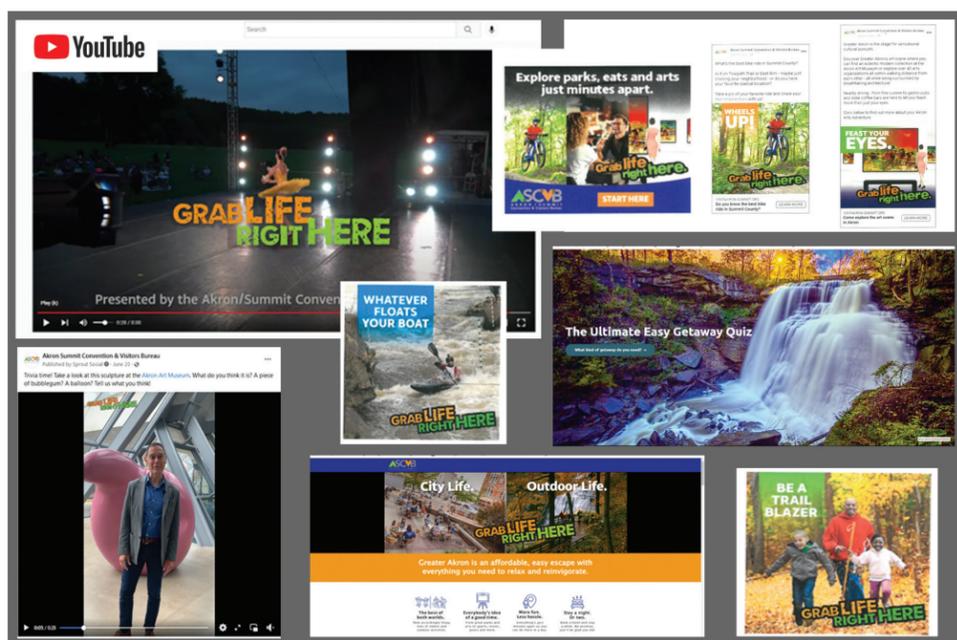
social influence

Content - concise, timely and engaging content - is the most crucial component of any social media outreach strategy. Although traditional posts accumulate and contribute to the overall success of branding and targeted campaigns, discerning consumers expect much more. With this in mind, we are expanding the scope and sources of our social media messages. Short-form videos [shot with our new DJI Pocket 2 camera] will become a regular weekly feature, showcasing our industry partners all across Summit County. We'll be taking behind-the-scenes peeks at what makes each a can't-miss experience for residents and visitors. Additionally, local, regional and national "influencers" are being more aggressively identified to provide their third-party promotion and endorsements of our cultural, historical, culinary recreational, entertainment and retail offerings. It truly takes a diverse cast and chorus to share our wonderful stories.



it's easy to play here

We're pleased to announce our partnership with Playeasy, an online marketplace designed to match sporting event rights holders with destinations like ours. With a proven track record of securing and hosting world-class youth, amateur and professional athletic events throughout Greater Akron, the new sales platform provides us with the opportunity to bid on events that may not have been on our radar. Simply put, Playeasy will greatly expand our ability to research, bid on, and eventually host athletes pursuing a wide array of sports. Actually, the list of potential events is pretty amazing! playakron.com



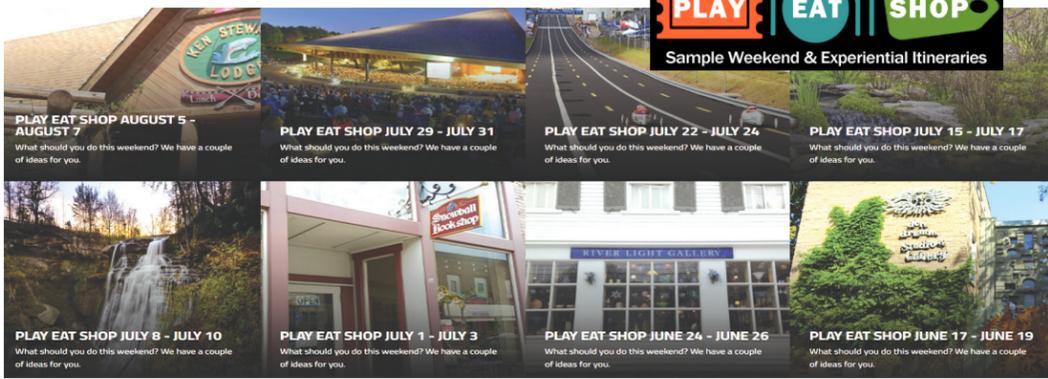
update: grab life right here

Launched in August 2021, as the third phase of our initial akronREIbound pandemic response, the **Grab Life Right Here** campaign has achieved impressive results throughout its official ten month schedule.

- Display Ads: **5,179,970** total impressions
- Facebook: **7,086,728** total impressions across multiple elements
- Streaming :30 Video Platforms: **57,522** full views {98% completion rate}

Several elements of the program will continue, including: branded social media posts, promotion of the :30 video, and hospitality industry partner features. While the outreach will remain focused beyond a radius that requires visitors to spend the night in Greater Akron, local and regional audiences will begin seeing a wider variety of posts, interactive contests, and ways to amplify their own content when it celebrates our community's assets. For more information, visit grabliferighthere.com or contact Jim Mahon at 330.374.8945 or jmahon@visitakron-summit.org to learn more about ways to promote your tourism business or experience.

weekend plans?



Curating engaging weekend itineraries provides residents and visitors the perfect way to explore our communities' cool places to play, eat and shop! Each week, two themed experiences are posted on our website featuring suggestions for a fun weekend of activities. Cities and towns throughout Summit County, along with iconic sites and secret finds will be featured. Make sure you bookmark and visit, playeatshop.org and check out your favorite places and new discoveries.



holiday flair for all

Enjoy the holiday season with colleagues, family and friends by planning your party today. The Center and Greystone offer exceptional service, personalized menus and grand spaces for gatherings both large and small.

Select a date during the season or into the new year for a memorable lunch or dinner. Either way, you'll be providing your guests with an event they won't soon forget.

Call Dirk Breiding, V.P. of Sales at 330.374.8900 to schedule a tour and private consultation.

sales | marketing | branding

Whether virtual or in-person, representation at national and regional tradeshows, and promotional initiatives allow the Bureau, Center and Greystone to market the area as a viable destination for meetings, conventions, sports events and group tours.

- Heartland Travel Showcase
- American Bus Association Marketplace
- Today's Bride Wedding Show & Expo
- Playeasy - Sporting Events Lead Generation
- Sports ETA Symposium
- Cvent Connect Conference
- SPORTS: The Relationship Conference
- Going On Faith Conference
- Exhibitor LIVE
- Destinations International
- Partnerships in Motion Networking Receptions
- Adventures in Northeast Ohio Marketing Consortium/Facebook campaign
- Ohio H.S. Athletic Association Softball & Baseball Championships Meetings
- Double Play Akron
- Facilities & Destinations Magazine* - Top Destination Award
- National Travel & Tourism Week & Ohio Tourism Day
- Ohio Society of Association Professionals Annual Conference
- KidsLinked - Central Ohio Outreach Campaign
- HARO (Help A Reporter Out) - Media Outreach Portal
- Pride Journeys & *Crossings Magazine*
- TourismOhio Cooperative Marketing Program
- Ohio Has It! Statewide Group Travel Initiative/*Group Travel Leader*
- Ohio Sports Association - Statewide Marketing Initiative
- Akron-Canton Airport Travel Advisory Board

a few words from our clients

"Our event at Greystone was amazing, everything went according to plan & met our expectations & then some. Everyone we worked with was very nice and helpful throughout the whole process."
Jessica S. - July 2022 Wedding



"I can't say enough about the efficiency of the Center staff. From the first contact with Jill, to the team meeting with Chuck and everyone. I'd like to give Bob a special shout out as he was amazing throughout both days. Very quick to solve any problem and very polite and accommodating."
Diana J. - Erie Insurance Co.

Excellent services, website & collateral materials."
 Mary & the entire CVB team were AWESOME to work with!"
Mike S. - Pro Bowlers Association

surroundings

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pim x 10



Creating opportunities for Summit County's hospitality industry partners to connect and collaborate remains a key goal. Now in its tenth year, **Partnerships in Motion** receptions continue to allow us to achieve just that. Hosted at partner locations throughout Greater Akron, each venue has provided an inviting and interesting backdrop for this important exchange of ideas. Most recently, we welcomed nearly 70 partners to the newly-designed Himelright Lodge - a reclaimed 1800s-era barn in the Cascade Valley Summit Metro Parks.

seeing 330

March 30 was another way for the CVB to encourage 330 pride throughout our area. The annual Shirt Day social media campaign created 17,000 impressions, 50+ posts and allowed us to award a \$330 grand prize, along with a \$100 donation to the Akron-Canton Regional Foodbank on behalf of group photo post winner, The City of Cuyahoga Falls.



jsk rewind/jsk fast-forward

The following list is a sample of events held at the Center between January 1 & August 28, 2022:

- Today's Bride Wedding Show & Expo; The Ohio State University; Titans of Dance; Andrea Rose Teodosio Foundation; U.S. Cheer Production; HBA Home & Flower Show; Fortis College; Akron-Canton Regional Foodbank; Carter Lumber Company; Royal Events/Ultimate Cheer; Addiction Dance; Torchbearers; Akron/Canton CSI; Environmental Design Group; Sewing & Quilt Expo; Northern Ohio Teachers Education Day; Jobs for Ohio's Graduates; Applause Talent Dance; Akron Public Schools; Mayors' Association of Portage, Stark & Summit; Community Legal Aid; Adventures In Stamping; United Way of Summit & Medina; Heart to Heart; Akron Early College; KW Chervenik Realty; Mogadore High School; Greater Akron



Akron-Canton Regional Foodbank



Carter Lumber Company

- Chamber; STEM High School; Northeastern Ohio Synod; APS Teacher of Year Awards; Herzing University; Manchester High School; Coventry High School; A.O.H. Akron Feis; Kenmore/Garfield High School; North High School; Firestone High School; Buchtel CLC High School; East CLC High School; East Ohio Conference of United Methodist Church; Girl Scouts of NE Ohio; Erie Indemnity Company; City of Akron Police Testing; John Edward Live;

Akron Children's Hospital Back to School; Inaugural Rubber City Tattoo Invitational; Akron Urban League; and Oddmall.

The following "public events" are scheduled for the remainder of 2022 at the Center:

Akron Marathon Health & Fitness Expo; Bridal & Wedding Expo; and Akron Children's Hospital Holiday Tree Festival. View our current public event list at johnsknightcenter.org.