

# AMARILLO

Convention & Visitors Bureau

## Strategic Plan



2021 - 2022

Prepared and presented by

KASHION SMITH  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



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# Meet the team

People behind the brand



**Kashion Smith**  
Executive  
Director



**Braley Beck**  
Director of  
Finance



**Mary Ramirez**  
Executive  
Assistant



**Christy King**  
Director of  
Tourism



**Hope Stokes**  
Director of  
Marketing



**Jackie  
Phommahaxay**  
Marketing  
Manager



**Stephanie Andrews**  
Director of Client  
Services



**Amy Tarr**  
Director of Sales





# Executive SUMMARY

"In the Panhandle of Texas, you'll find a community with true strength. When times are hard, we come together, we aren't afraid to make the tough choices, and we persevere. This is just one of the things that makes me proud to call Amarillo my hometown.

When the pandemic began in early 2020, it brought with it a lot of uncertainty. In true Panhandle spirit, the community came together with a smile and showed an amazing amount of support to those in need. The strength shown by Amarillo citizens gave our office the courage to make scary decisions – decisions we weren't sure what the outcome would be, but that we knew needed to be made to help us move forward and continue serving the community that we love. Amarillo, we are your boots on the ground.

When I became the CVB (Convention & Visitors Bureau) Executive Director in January 2021, I asked our staff to create a strategic plan for our future in light of our changing world. We took a hard look at programs we had managed or been a part of in the past and determined what made sense, what didn't, and how they fit in our vision for the future of Amarillo tourism. COVID-19 may have changed the way we travel and come together, but we do still come together. The CVB is committed to ensuring that Amarillo – with its wide-open spaces, amazingly talented artists, western heritage, Americana treasures, and unexpected culinary masterpieces – is showcased to the world as a destination where people can create lasting memories together."



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

KASHION SMITH

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# Department Summaries



## Travel & Tourism

Leisure travel provides the highest opportunity for local growth in our industry. With this in mind, the ACVB is highly focused on increasing the average length of stay for leisure travelers. Amarillo should become the destination, not just a step in the journey. Pass-through travel, comprised of one-night stops as people travel to and from other locations on I-40, has always supported the Amarillo economy during declines in the tourism industry. Our location and distance from other major markets make us an obvious waypoint when traveling between DFW and western destinations. We must take advantage of the opportunity that pass-through travel presents and let everyone know Amarillo is so much more than a place to stay on your way to another city.

To achieve this, we are creating new ways to disperse information about the exciting attractions and events Amarillo and the surrounding Panhandle have to offer. Throughout the year we will focus on creating events that showcase our community and can be enjoyed by citizens of Amarillo and out-of-town visitors. Packaging between hotels, attractions, and restaurants is critical in creating and supporting these events. The ACVB will help find the right partners and will work with them to develop attractive packages we can then market to our neighbors outside the Panhandle. We will accompany these tourism efforts with outreach and education programs to show our local citizens how important tourism, especially its effect on direct spending and sales tax collection, is to our local economy.

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## Arts

The ACVB is a strong supporter of the arts. Amarillo's non-profit arts organizations are leading the charge in bringing culture to the cowboys. The arts committee's mission is to create and cultivate partnerships within our local non-profit arts organizations to provide unique, cultural experiences to our visitors. Through our marketing co-op opportunities and annual grants program, we are striving to grow attendance and the economic impact the arts have on our city while also enhancing the visitor experience.

## Finance & HR

The Finance and HR department of the Amarillo CVB provides financial management, planning, research, and support to the CVB in an effort to meet goals set out within this strategic plan. This department was created in 2021 for the purpose of gaining stability and independence regarding the CVB's finances and human resources. This department is responsible for functions including, but not limited to, financial reporting, budgeting, accounts receivable and payable, new hire onboarding, and monitoring of various financial activities.

## Marketing

The ACVB marketing department is Amarillo's tourism advertising agency. Our marketing team works hard to showcase all the incredible travel opportunities and memorable leisure activities Amarillo has to offer. This year, the ACVB staff is focused on strengthening our brand awareness both locally and outside the

Panhandle region through traditional and innovative marketing tactics. When people see our trademarked red boots we want them to immediately think of Amarillo.

One of the ACVB's major marketing priorities this year is to boost partnerships between hotels, attractions, restaurants, and other tourism organizations throughout our community. These partnerships will allow organizations of all sizes to better spread their message so visitors mark Amarillo as a destination on their itinerary. Creating these partnerships allows for mutual marketing opportunities and tourism packaging. These packages help entice longer stays from visitors and make planning their vacation easier.

## Meetings & Conventions

The ACVB has always been creative in finding ways to attract large conventions. Without the updates to the Civic Center, we will place increased emphasis on the Leader Program. The Leader Program is an opportunity for Amarilloans to provide the ACVB with information about the organizations they participate in so our office can present those organizations with a plan showcasing how Amarillo is the perfect location for their conventions, trade shows, and events. This renewed effort will identify and attract conventions and events that fit within our existing infrastructure.

The ability of our sales and servicing department to book meetings and conventions during the pandemic continues to be an incredible feat.

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# Goals & Tactics

Year  
one

2021-2022

Year  
two

2022-2023





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# Goals & Tactics

OFFICE • Year 1

## Improve Partner Relations

- Restart ACVB staff visits to hotels and attractions so we can keep a current list of tourism partner contacts and provide a clear view of all improvements and upcoming events. Each staff member will visit 5 partners per month.
- Report quarterly to hotel and attraction owners and the City Councils. Report to the ACVB Board of Directors at each monthly meeting.
- Support tourism partner events through staff attendance and marketing assistance. (See information in Marketing Department Goals & Tactics).
- ACVB staff will take a leadership role in conversations that encourage partner to partner relationships. The ACVB staff will create 2 opportunities per year for hotels and attractions to partner on tourism packages or events.
- Strengthen relationships within the ACVB committees. (Create a film committee).
- Utilize active committee members to act as ambassadors within their profession and throughout the community.

## Advocacy with Local, State and National Leaders

- Continue conversations with our elected leaders to ensure the ACVB has a voice in tourism policy.
- Retain memberships that provide the ACVB with legislative updates and access so we may act to protect and strengthen the tourism industry.
- Work with the City of Amarillo to set a collection system for short-term rental property occupancy taxes.

## Ongoing

- Keep ACVB and Amarillo brand recognition top of mind.
- Ensure all efforts, locally and to the visitor, tie back to the brand.
- Work with the Tourism Public Improvement District board, if created, to ensure unified brand and marketing for Amarillo.
- Take advantage of local groups to market the ACVB within the community.
- Minimize memberships, keeping only those that provide the ACVB staff mentorship and educational opportunities that position our office to outperform competitors.



# Goals & Tactics

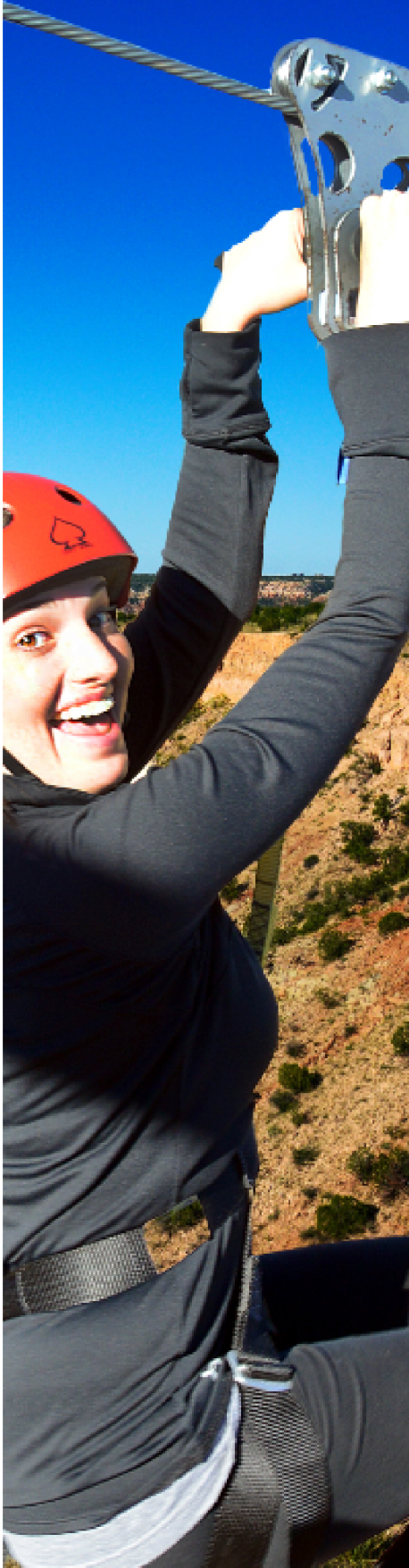
## OFFICE • Year 2

- Position the ACVB as an imperative, cost-effective resource through collective marketing. (See information in Marketing Department Goals & Tactics).
- Create packages that fit our tourism partners' services in a way that highlights the heritage and strengths of our community.
- Offer affordable, omnichannel co-op opportunities that are available to all partners.
- Utilize 501(c)3 status to obtain grants that will help our budget recovery efforts and kick start events.
- Work with city and arts organizations to implement a plan for welcome signage.

## Years 2 - 5

### Rebuild CVB staff

- Build a strong tourism department focused on leisure travel, event building, volunteer programs, and partner engagement.
- Focus convention sales efforts on the Leader Program, utilizing our local leaders to gain leads and definite bookings.
- Refine finance position to ensure proper oversight of the budget and revenue gained through events and grants.
- Create an intern program utilizing local colleges.
- Work with local colleges to create marketing programs that are integrated into their curriculums.





# Goals & Tactics

## Marketing

### Influencer Program

- Develop Visa pay or similar payment program for influencers.
- Make sure all tourism partners are aware when they have been included in a story through partner benefits summary.
- Create return on investment calculation and defined selection process.

### Social & Earned Media

- Facebook :
  - Reach - 1.6 million
  - Followers - 40,000
- Instagram:
  - Reach - 500,000
  - Followers - 4,200
- TikTok
  - Followers - 500
- Newsletter
  - Click Rate - 3%
  - Open Rate - 20%

### Website Metrics

- Users - 15% increase (285,314)
- Sessions - 15% increase (340,285)



### 2021/22 ACVB Partner Co-op – available October 1, 2021

Two campaigns with four spots available in each campaign tactic (16 spots total).

#### Display:

- 4 partner spots available on a first-come, first-served basis per campaign.
- \$2,250 per partner per campaign + \$2,250 match per partner per campaign from ACVB = \$4,500 total.
- 818,182 est. impressions per partner.
- Each partner will have access to their individual performance report which will be available via a dashboard.
- Visitation Report: 30 days post-campaign and 90 days post-campaign.

#### Digital Out of Home (DOOH):

- 4 partner spots available on a first-come, first-served basis per campaign.
- \$2,250 per partner per campaign + \$2,250 match per partner per campaign from Visit Amarillo = \$4,500 total.
- 275,000 est. impressions per partner.
- Each partner will have access to their individual performance report which will be available via a dashboard.
- Visitation Report: 30 days post-campaign and 90 days post-campaign.

### Fairy Tales Arts Co-op – available January 1, 2022.

- No cap on partner entries.
- Artwork and campaign execution managed by ACVB.
- Tactic breakdown:
  - Facebook & Instagram Single Image Ad - \$100 Minimum Buy.
  - Facebook & Instagram Carousel Ad - \$200 Minimum Buy.
  - Facebook & Instagram Video - \$250 Minimum Buy.



# Goals & Tactics

## Tourism

- Ensure all events are added to the events calendar.
- Complete 10 partner visits per month.
- Ensure all website listings are current.
- Perform daily review of site traffic and responses needed.
- Build out traces to better ensure an organized calendar.
- Take advantage of 2 educational opportunities per month.
- Expand the Door Cling program.
- Launch one Bandwango pass per quarter.
- Make contact with 10 group tour operators per month.
- One suggested group itinerary sent out every quarter in newsletter form.
- Follow up with all groups after their tour.
- Implement a streamlined process for all tour groups.
- Set up hotel training on greeting groups twice a year.
- Expand the Yellow City Certified program for hotels that will welcome in-house training.
  - Create Yellow City Certified Orientation video to use on-sight.
  - Create incentive and certification programs for hotel staff.
- Re-initiate West Texas Trips and Team Texas Partnerships to build extra overnight stays with all groups.
- Start building partnerships with Oklahoma City and Albuquerque for group tour itineraries.
- Pioneer brand Ambassador program.
- Acquire music-friendly designation.



## Events

- Get input from partners and other cities.
- Plan 2 revenue-generating events per year, starting with FY 2021.
- Site visit with city or county visitors bureaus that operate revenue-generating events (Examples: Grapevine or Tyler).
- Plan 1 revenue-generating event for FY 2023.
- Identify and implement revenue and expense goals.

## Film

- Strengthen CVB partnership with Sharpened Iron Studios.
- Attend one film festival tradeshow annually.
- Become actively involved with the Texas Film Association.
- Identify more service providers to add to our directory and website.
- Keep the film web page updated with relevant content.
- Identify and attend training opportunities.
- Utilize attractions to create marketing opportunities.

## Finance

- Work in tandem with the Tourism Department on creating revenue-generating events that will be held in FY 2023.
- Research grants and other funding opportunities as we await our 501C(3) designation.
- Putting together a committee of interested parties for the purpose of placing gateways at the I-40 east and west city limits.
- Research and apply for grants in order to fund the Gateway project.
- Streamline communications with the City of Amarillo staff.



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# Goals & Tactics

## Sales

- Book 300 Room nights in SMERF business in the year for the year.
- Book 200 Room nights in Corporate and Association in the year for the year.
- Book 500 Room nights in SMERF business for future years.
- Book 400 Room nights in Corporate or Association for future years.
- Book 300 Room nights in Sports/Equestrian events for future years.
- Market Leader's program by presenting to 5 groups locally and gain 6 qualified Leads from this program while building local awareness and increasing SMERF related groups and small association business.
- Rebook 3 groups with a Letter of Agreement by tiering down Activity Funds on future incentives.
- Complete 2 educational opportunities per month throughout the year to increase knowledge in CVB Sales and industry-related information.
- Help to grow Occupancy for Amarillo by at least 2% and ADR by 2% year over year for 2021-2022.
- Visit 30 partners (hotels/attractions) per quarter in order to strengthen relationships and increase communication, meanwhile keeping contact information up to date.



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# Goals & Tactics

## Servicing

- Complete 2 educational opportunities per month throughout the year to increase knowledge in CVB and meeting planning servicing in order to stay current in industry-related information.
- Retain 3 groups by tiering down financial assistance or not offering financial assistance, while still providing and showing value to the client for the services they receive.
- Assign a value to servicing and marketing items provided through the CVB office and track items in Simpleview.
- Provide a client recap of the value of the services they are provided through our office.
- Visit 30 partners (hotels/attractions) per quarter in order to strengthen relationships and increase communication, while keeping contact information up to date.
- Market Leader Program by presenting to 5 groups locally.
- Secure at least 6 qualified leads from the Leader program.
- Build local awareness and increase SMERF related groups and small association business through Leader Program.
- Increase length-of-stay and economic impact by encouraging shoulder room nights for group blocks by building out excursions for 3 groups throughout the year.
- Recruit 2 attraction/offsite venue partners for each welcome or registration table to increase knowledge of the local area to out-of-town visitors.
- As a meeting planner servicing tool, build on the digital welcome packet for convention attendees by adding event schedules and other related information that helps the planner communicate with conference attendees.





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# Closing Remarks



"We are forever grateful to the community that we serve, our Board of Directors, the City of Amarillo, the Amarillo Chamber of Commerce, and our many partners in the travel and tourism industry. Amarillo embodies the West Texas Spirit, and without you, the Amarillo Convention and Visitors Bureau would not be able to share our beautiful home with the world."

*Kashian Smith*

