

AMARILLO[®]

Convention & Visitors Bureau

2023 STRATEGIC PLAN



Meet the Team



Kashion Smith
Executive
Director



Braley Beck
Director of
Finance



Mary Ramirez
Executive
Assistant



Christy King
Director of
Tourism



Sherman Bass
Film
Commissioner



Hope Stokes
Director of
Marketing



**Jackie
Phommahaxay**
Marketing
Manager



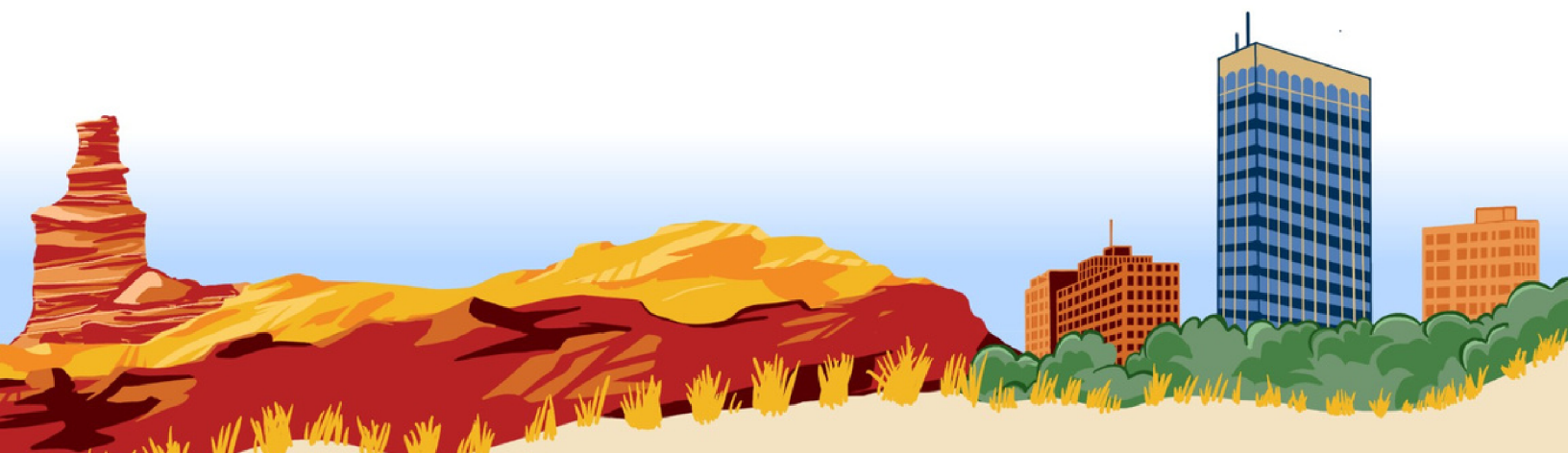
Stephanie Andrews
Director of Client
Services



Sal Gutierrez
Tourism
Coordinator



Amy Tarr
Director of Sales



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As we move into our third year as a stand-alone organization, I am encouraged by the dedication our staff, Board of Directors, and partners have shown in the process of building our future. The accomplishments of the ACVB staff in the last two years have set us on a new trajectory with a secure structure that will carry us well into the future.

Looking to 2023, it is unclear what trends will hold and what new challenges still await our industry. It is essential that we plan in a way that is adaptable to the changes that may still be to come, while also setting strong goals that will challenge the staff and our partners. This year, I will be looking at the need for a long-term tourism plan and what organizations would benefit from taking part in that plan. It is vital that we stay on a path that continues to grow our visitation.

Starting this year, we will plan and support celebrations that speak to the many milestones and partner anniversaries that are on the horizon. Texas State Parks turns 100 years old this year, Amarillo Tri-State Exposition Center also turns 100 in 2023, The Amarillo Symphony Orchestra will celebrate 100 years in 2024, and Cadillac Ranch will celebrate 50 years in 2024. Starting this year, we are excited to kick off the celebrations leading up to the Route 66 Centennial in 2026! There are so many great experiences for visitors wrapped into these everlasting attractions, and we will be inviting the world to come and celebrate them all with us.

KASHION SMITH
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Department Summaries

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 Department is dedicated to the effective and efficient execution of the ACVB's financial responsibilities. HR is committed to creating, encouraging, and maintaining an environment that supports, develops, and sustains the well-being of Amarillo Convention and Visitors Bureau employees, partners, and tourism community.

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 domestically and internationally through traditional and innovative marketing tactics that will help to extend visitor length of stay. When people see our trademarked red boots, we want them to immediately think of Amarillo.

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. As new facilities break ground and come on line, Sales will focus on relationships with planners and trade shows that support the appropriate market segment.

Film

With the successful completion of several recent projects and the opening of Sharpened Iron Studios, the Greater Amarillo Film Commission is poised to make a significant impact over the next few years.

Tourism

Leisure travel provides the highest opportunity for local growth in our industry. The tourism department nurtures leisure travel through strong partner relations, events, and education. Throughout 2023, the tourism department is dedicated to educating the community on the value of tourism, being a reliable resource for group tours, developing lasting, tourism-friendly events, and serving as the hive for partner and community relationships.





Partner Relationships

- 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. Continue to strengthen the 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.
- Take advantage of local groups to market the ACVB within the community
- 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

Goals & Tactics

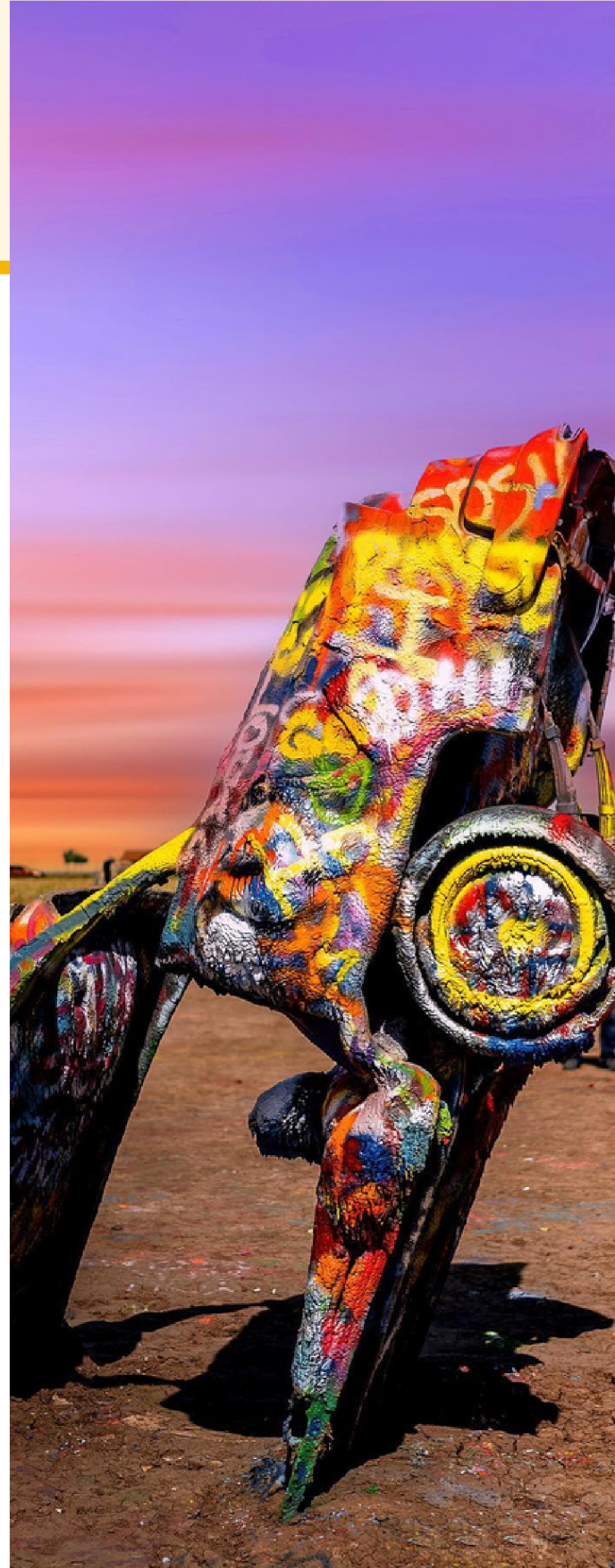
HUMAN RESOURCES

General Goals

- Create conscious hiring practices incorporating DEI concepts reflective of the Amarillo Community and the partners we serve
 - Participate in DEI evaluation opportunities within various ACVB memberships as available
- Q2 - Put together a transparent salary scale for existing and future employees
- Invest in employee development by evaluating opportunities for employees to grow through new training and education
- Enhance employee experience through a culture of employee engagement, wellness, diversity, and inclusion, that continues overall employee well-being, productivity, and retention
- Develop ways to consistently measure:
 - Employee satisfaction
 - Employee productivity
 - Education and training engagement
 - Compensation
- Q2 - Create a training similar to the Yellow City Certified Program to be utilized by partners for staff onboarding

Quarterly Activities

- Engage in community outreach exploring opportunities in Amarillo and surrounding area
 - Staff participation in one community volunteer effort
- Plan and execute one training applicable to partners
 - Tripadvisor
 - Extranet
 - ACVB practices and processes
 - What is a DMO and why are they important
- Plan and execute a full staff participation event
 - Annual staff appreciation
 - Inventory cleanouts/updates
 - Trainings



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Goals & Tactics

FINANCE

General Goals:

- Pull financial processes closer to ACVB handling, thus increasing financial independence
 - Open separate bank accounts for projects, fundraising, and sponsorships
 - Evaluate need for 501c(6)
 - Find and potentially select accounting service provider
- Streamline reporting for interested parties making them informative and easy to understand at a glance
- Q3 - Evaluate 2023 Route 66 events for financial feasibility and growth opportunities
- Amarillo I-40 Gateway
 - Q3 - Receive proposals and prepare
 - Q4 - Put together committee of interested parties
 - Find and apply for funding opportunities
- Create clear concise system for Partner Benefits that give a dollar amount to all ACVB services
- See Route 66 initiatives on page 13

Quarterly Activities

- Apply for one grant per quarter for purposes of:
 - Route 66 Initiatives:
 - Events
 - Restoration
 - Education
- 1000 S Polk sign updates
- Amarillo I-40 Gateways
- Meet with ACVB staff to:
 - Ensure that financial goals and being met in a timely manner
 - Evaluate status of departmental budget
 - Evaluate need for budgeting shifts to be presented to the Board of Directors



Goals & Tactics

MARKETING

Reporting:

- Refine existing Voyage dashboards
- Create dashboards for sales & tourism
- Send monthly links to co-op partner dashboards

Accessibility & SEO:

- ADA - achieve 80% compliance
- SEO - achieve 90% compliance

Social Media:

- Fb - Reach - 1.6 million (10% increase)
- Instagram - Reach - 517,646 (4% increase)
- Tiktok - Followers - 5k
- Pinterest
 - Audit existing content
 - Develop content strategy and posting schedule
- Youtube
 - Audit existing content
 - Develop content strategy and posting schedule
- Newsletter
 - Clean up distribution list to reduce and unsubscribe rates
 - Lower bounce rate to >2%
 - Increase open rate to 30%
- Blogs
 - Create two blogs a quarter based on the suggested content provided by Propellic
 - Achieve 30k pageviews across all blogs (GA4)
- LinkedIn
 - Work with sales to develop posts promoting sales travel and activity

Partner Relations:

- Partner visits
 - Hope - visit with four PR contacts per quarter
 - Jackie - visit five partners per month
- Media lunch
 - Host annual media lunch to grow relations with local news outlets and inform the community of upcoming events
- Roundup
 - Post two bulletins per quarter
- CRM/CMS
 - Input all partner benefits
 - Clean up Media/ PR
 - Provide benefit summaries at the end of the year

Content Creators

- Host two paid content creators (at least one international)
- Assist eligible content creators on a trade basis
- Track deliverables using Klear - gauge success using reach

Paid media goals:

- Execute all partner co-op camping with = or < benchmark goals
- Maintain 90% above benchmark on all ads

Website:

- Engaged Users - 300,000
- Engagement Rate - 65%

* Website goals flexible due to new reporting measurements through GA4

Goals & Tactics

SALES

- Increase room night bookings year over year in SMERF segment
- Increase room night bookings in Corporate and Convention segment for future year bookings
- Increase room night bookings in Sports segment for future year bookings
- Market Leader's program by presenting to five groups locally and gain eight qualified Leads from this program while building local awareness and increasing SMERF related groups and small association business
- Sign three new letters of agreement to secure future business
- Complete two 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 2023
- Visit 30 partners (hotels/attractions) per quarter in order to strengthen relationships and increase communication, meanwhile keeping contact information up to date
- Work with the Marketing team to update the meetings page on our website to make it more attractive, current and user-friendly
- Increase activity on LinkedIn to create content for meeting planners
- Add testimonials from planners who have had meetings in Amarillo and create a more visible online presence



Goals & Tactics

SERVICING

- Complete two 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
- Work with the Marketing team to update the Meetings page on our website to make it more attractive, current, and user-friendly
- Increase activity on LinkedIn to create content for meeting planners. Add testimonials from planners who have had meetings in Amarillo and create a more visible online presence
- Focus on group retention by providing a client benefit summary of the value of the services they were provided through our office upon completion of the event
- 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 five groups locally and gain eight qualified leads from this program while building local awareness and increasing SMERF-related groups and small association business
- Increase length-of-stay and economic impact by encouraging shoulder room nights for group blocks by building out excursions for three groups throughout the year
- After serving on an industry committee, make efforts to secure a chair position on the committee that may later lead to a board seat, in an effort to influence education and build relationships with industry peers
- Create and execute a community give-back project that encompasses education and local knowledge of the hospitality & tourism industry



Goals & Tactics

TOURISM

- Ensure all events are added to the events calendar
- Complete ten 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 two educational opportunities per month
- Expand the Door Cling program
- Launch one Bandwango pass per quarter
- Make contact with ten 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-site
 - 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



TEXAS ROUTE 66 INITIATIVES

To kick off the celebrations leading up to the Route 66 Centennial in 2026, the ACVB has worked in tangent with leaders across the Texas 66 route to devise cohesive branding and events.

The ACVB marketing team launched the "100 Years in the Headlights" initiative in 2022 to cohesively brand Texas Route 66 as a single experience. Moving forward, all Texas Route 66 events across the Panhandle will have the "Headlights" logo to signify a Texas Route 66 Centennial celebration event. ACVB marketing will strategically launch domestic & international marketing campaigns throughout 2023 to invite visitors to experience Texas Route 66.

The ACVB Tourism Department is devoted to building strong partner relationships along Texas Route 66 as they build events and itineraries to promote Texas Route 66.

The Tourism Department will debut the Texas Route 66 Festival in June 2023 in tangent with partners across the Panhandle.

The Finance Department will be seeking the following to support the Route 66 initiatives:

- \$100,000 for 2023 through sponsorships
- \$3 million for 2024 and 2025 (\$1.5 million respectively) through Texas legislative appropriations request
- Apply for matching grant from the National Parks Service Route 66 Corridor Preservation program (awaiting additional information).
- Evaluate opportunities for using ARPA funds for Route 66 goals using Oklahoma example
- Assist Tourism in sponsorship and financial structure for Route 66 events



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

