



VISIT  
**AMARILO**<sup>®</sup>  
2025 STRATEGIC PLAN



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## ABOUT US

Visit Amarillo is a non-profit organization and the official tourism office for the city, dedicated to making Amarillo a vibrant, year-round destination for culture, adventure, and community. Powered by Hotel Occupancy Tax (HOT) funds, decades of expertise, and Panhandle pride, we work to strengthen the local economy through innovative marketing, strategic partnerships, and hands-on hospitality. From hosting major events like the Texas Route 66 Festival and Amarillo International Film Festival to supporting arts, group tourism, and driving room bookings through our dedicated sales team, our "Boots on the Ground" approach ensures unforgettable visitor experiences while fostering collaboration and growth for the Amarillo community.

## MISSION

Hosting guests with "Boots on the Ground" to ensure unique experiences and lifelong memories.

## VISION

Make Amarillo a top travel destination for those looking for diverse opportunities in lifestyles, leisure, and conventions.

## MOTIVATION

Tourism is a vital driver of Amarillo's economy, generating over \$1 billion in visitor spending annually, which supports local businesses, creates jobs, and funds community initiatives. It enhances the quality of life for locals by sustaining vibrant cultural, dining, and entertainment options while showcasing Amarillo's unique attractions and events to visitors. By fostering economic growth and inspiring pride in the city's character, tourism benefits both residents and travelers alike.



# \$1 BILLION

Visitors spent over \$1 billion in Amarillo in 2023. That equates to:

**\$19.2 MILLION  
PER WEEK**



**\$2.74 MILLION  
PER DAY**



**\$1,903  
PER MINUTE**



# MEET THE TEAM



**Kashion Smith**  
Executive Director



**Braley Beck**  
Director of Finance



**Alexis Gunter**  
Executive Assistant



**Luz Aguilar**  
Tourism Manager



**Sherman Bass**  
Film Commissioner



**Hope Stokes**  
Director of Marketing



**Jackie Phommahaxay-Murguia**  
Marketing Manager



**Stephanie Andrews**  
Director of Client Services



**Amy Tarr**  
Director of Sales





# STRATEGIC TOURISM INITIATIVES

- **Assess Current Tourism Assets:** Evaluate existing tourism infrastructure, attractions, and services identifying strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.
- **Market Analysis:** Analyze current tourism trends and market conditions identifying key target markets and demographic profiles.
- **Strategic Development:** Develop strategic initiatives to enhance new tourism offerings. Propose new attractions, events, and services. Recommend improvements to existing infrastructure.
- **Marketing and Promotion:** Develop marketing strategies to attract visitors. Identify potential partnerships and collaborations. Propose digital and traditional marketing strategies.
- **Sustainability and Community Impact:** Ensure recommendations align with sustainable tourism practices by evaluating the social, economic, and environmental impacts on the community.
- **Implementation Plan:** Provide a detailed action plan with timelines, responsibilities, and budget estimates as well as identifying potential funding sources and grant opportunities.

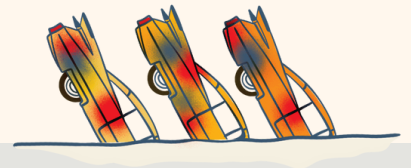


# FINANCE DEPARTMENT

Visit Amarillo's Finance Department is committed to being responsible stewards of Hotel Occupancy Tax (HOT) revenue, ensuring that funds are used effectively to support tourism growth and economic impact. By managing the budget with transparency, diversifying income sources, and aligning financial strategies with Visit Amarillo's mission, the team fosters accountability and sustainability.

## Key 2025 goals:

- **Establish the "Stand Tall Foundation"**
  - Create a fund to support tourism workforce growth and local business improvement initiatives.
- **Diversify Revenue Streams**
  - Identify and develop new income sources to reduce reliance on Hotel Occupancy Tax (HOT).
- **Streamline Financial Reporting**
  - Enhance transparency and efficiency through improved reporting processes.
- **Optimize Donor & Sponsorship Database**
  - Build a comprehensive system to manage and grow partnerships effectively.
- **Align Budget with Strategic Priorities**
  - Revise and optimize the budget to ensure financial stability and support key initiatives.
- **Strengthen Financial Controls**
  - Meet audit and compliance requirements with robust internal systems.
- **Explore Investment Opportunities**
  - Develop strategies to grow long-term financial reserves.
- **Legislative Support**
  - Pursue \$3 million in Texas legislative appropriations for Route 66 initiatives.



## Quarterly Goals:

- Q1**
  - Develop a roadmap for launching the "Stand Tall Foundation" including legal setup and operational planning.
  - Award the contract for the Tourism Master Plan and begin work with selected consultants.
  - Allocate initial funding for the Tourism Master Plan.
- Q2**
  - Launch the "Stand Tall Foundation" and begin initial fundraising efforts
  - Submit for sponsorships for key 2025 events including the TX RT 66 Festival and Amarillo International Film Festival.
  - Evaluate TX RT 66 Festival funding and expenses.
- Q3**
  - Monitor progress and expenditures of the Tourism Master Plan and provide updates to stakeholders.
  - Complete a financial analysis to assess the performance of the year's events and initiatives.
  - Review and refine funding strategies for multi-year tourism projects and initiatives.
- Q4**
  - Evaluate the impact of the "Stand Tall Foundation" and the Tourism Master Plan to guide future planning and investment.
  - Begin preparing asks for Stand Tall funding for FY 2025.26

By fostering innovation, improving processes, and aligning financial strategies with long-term goals, the Finance Department ensures that Visit Amarillo remains a leader in tourism growth and community support.



# HR DEPARTMENT

Visit Amarillo's Human Resources team is dedicated to creating an environment that prioritizes the well-being, growth, and success of its employees. By focusing on professional development, compliance, and team engagement, HR ensures that staff members feel supported and empowered to thrive in their roles.

## Key 2025 goals:

- **Hire Key Personnel**
  - Recruit and onboard a Visitor Services Coordinator to enhance team capabilities.
- **Develop Performance Evaluation System**
  - Create a system aligned with Visit Amarillo's strategic goals to support staff development and accountability.
- **Ensure Compliance**
  - Maintain adherence to labor laws and HR best practices.
- **Support Professional Growth**
  - Provide access to workshops, certifications, and conferences to encourage employee development.
- **Prioritize Employee Well-Being**
  - Foster a culture that values and supports the physical, mental, and emotional well-being of all team members.
- **Expand Volunteer Program**
  - Build a robust program to support major events like the Texas Route 66 Festival Finale and Amarillo International Film Festival.

## Quarterly Goals:

### Q1:

- Evaluate resumes, conduct interviews, and hire the ideal candidate for the Visitor Services Coordinator position.
- Review and update the employee handbook to reflect current policies.
- Host a team-building event to strengthen workplace relationships and morale.

### Q2:

- Establish a formal volunteer recruitment and management program, focusing on upcoming events like the TX Route 66 Festival Finale.
- Organize an inventory cleanout day to streamline resources and improve workplace efficiency.

### Q3:

- Review volunteer engagement and satisfaction metrics to enhance the program.
- Assist with preparing performance evaluations to align staff goals with strategic priorities.
- Recognize outstanding contributions from staff members and volunteers to encourage motivation and appreciation.

### Q4:

- Host another team-building event to celebrate achievements and foster camaraderie.
- Evaluate the Tourism Master Plan's staffing-related goals and incorporate findings into the HR structure.

By fostering a culture of care, supporting well-being, expanding volunteer opportunities, and providing growth pathways, HR ensures Visit Amarillo employees and volunteers feel valued and equipped to contribute meaningfully to the organization's mission.



# MARKETING & PR DEPARTMENT

Visit Amarillo's Marketing Team is dedicated to showcasing Amarillo as a vibrant, year-round destination for culture, adventure, and community. Using innovative campaigns, strategic partnerships, and iconic branding like the trademarked red boots, the team inspires visitors to create lasting memories and extend their stays.

## Key 2025 goals:

- **Reporting & Partnerships**
  - Send quarterly updates on co-op opportunities and content requests.
  - Provide comprehensive benefit summaries to partners at year-end.
- **Social Media**
  - Facebook: Achieve 4% engagement rate and 15 million impressions.
  - Instagram: Reach 2% engagement rate and 2.4 million impressions.
  - TikTok: Grow to 5K followers with a 3% engagement rate.
  - Pinterest: Reach 5K monthly views and 1,000 followers.
  - YouTube: Create two long-form videos, achieve a 25% view rate, and grow to 450 subscribers.
- **Newsletter Performance**
  - Maintain a bounce rate under 2%, increase open rates to 36%, and retain a 98% delivery rate.
- **Blog Content**
  - Publish four blogs per quarter with an average view time of 45 seconds.
- **LinkedIn Engagement**
  - Collaborate with the Sales Team to highlight sales travel and activity through professional posts.
- **Content Creator Hosting**
  - Host two IPW leads (goals vary by type).
  - Host three vetted content creators, generating 100K engagements and sharing content with participating partners.
- **Paid Media & Website Metrics**
  - Website Goals:
    - Engage 550,000 users with a 55% engagement rate.
    - Increase returning users to 17%.
  - Paid Media: Targets to be determined in alignment with campaign priorities. Campaign success will be measured against industry benchmarks to ensure competitiveness and optimal performance.

With a commitment to creativity, consistency, and collaboration, Visit Amarillo's Marketing Team will continue to enhance the city's brand and inspire tourism growth throughout 2025.





# SALES DEPARTMENT

Visit Amarillo's Sales Team is focused on driving room bookings, expanding partnerships, and positioning Amarillo as a premier destination for meetings, events, and sports.

## Key 2025 goals:

- **Increase Room Night Bookings**
  - Target leisure, association, sports, and religious markets by attending strategic conferences, trade shows, and generating leads.
- **Strengthen Planner Relationships**
  - Engage planners through conferences, site visits, and the Local Leaders Program to secure future business and multi-year agreements.
- **Boost Sports Marketing**
  - Use Playeasy to bid for sports events, and promote Amarillo as a top sports destination.
- **Expand SMERF Opportunities**
  - Deliver presentations to local organizations to generate 15 qualified leads, grow small association business, and build awareness.
- **Partner Collaboration**
  - Conduct quarterly visits to 30 hotels and attractions to enhance communication, maintain accurate information, and foster long-term partnerships.
- **Enhanced Social Media Efforts**
  - Collaborate with Marketing to highlight events, partnerships, and attendee experiences with live updates and professional visuals.
- **Focus on Equestrian Retention**
  - Provide tailored support to equestrian events, ensuring a seamless experience to encourage repeat business.
- **Deliver Exceptional Hospitality**
  - Maintain a strong presence at large events hosted in Amarillo, supporting attendees and reinforcing our commitment to excellent service.

These goals aim to grow Amarillo's visibility and economic impact while ensuring memorable experiences for visitors and partners.





# SERVICING DEPARTMENT

Visit Amarillo's Servicing Team is committed to delivering exceptional support for conventions, events, and leisure travelers, ensuring unforgettable experiences in Amarillo. With a hands-on, "boots-on-the-ground" approach, the team works closely with planners, attendees, and local businesses to provide seamless coordination and outstanding service.

## Key 2025 goals:

- **Retain Groups & Secure Multi-Year Agreements**
  - Build trust and loyalty through proactive, in-person support during event planning and execution, encouraging repeat business.
- **Increase Length-of-Stay & Economic Impact**
  - Promote Amarillo as a multi-night destination by highlighting suggested itineraries and events that extend visitor stays and boost local spending.
- **Enhance Website Content**
  - Collaborate with Marketing to keep the Meetings and Servicing webpage fresh, engaging, and user-friendly, featuring client testimonials to attract planners.
- **Expand LinkedIn Presence**
  - Share tailored content for meeting planners and associations to increase Amarillo's visibility and highlight events, conferences, and educational opportunities.
- **Strengthen Partner Relationships**
  - Conduct quarterly visits with 30 hotels and attractions to enhance communication, ensure accuracy of contact information, and foster collaboration.
- **Market the Leaders Program**
  - Partner with local businesses to generate 15 qualified leads annually, focusing on SMERF groups and small associations to grow these key segments.
- **Promote Hospitality Careers**
  - Inspire the next generation of tourism professionals by partnering with schools and organizations to showcase career opportunities through tours and presentations.

The Servicing Team's efforts aim to create memorable, impactful experiences for every visitor, while strengthening Amarillo's reputation as a welcoming, vibrant destination.





# TOURISM DEPARTMENT

Visit Amarillo's Tourism Team is focused on growing leisure travel, the cornerstone of local economic growth. By fostering strong partnerships, developing engaging events, and educating the community about tourism's value, the team serves as a trusted resource for group tours and a catalyst for sustainable tourism development.

## Key 2025 goals:

- **Strengthen Partner Relationships**
  - Conduct 10 partner visits each month and ensure all website listings are accurate and up-to-date to support seamless visitor experiences.
- **Engage Group Tour Operators**
  - Make contact with 10 group tour operators monthly and distribute quarterly group itineraries through newsletters to inspire future visits.
- **Enhance Training & Education**
  - Host two hotel training sessions annually to improve visitor services.
  - Reintroduce the Yellow City Certified program for hotels and attractions.
  - Pursue one educational opportunity per month to expand industry knowledge.
- **Streamline Operations**
  - Perform daily reviews of site traffic and respond promptly to inquiries.
  - Implement a streamlined follow-up process for group tours to build long-term relationships.
- **Build Regional Partnerships:**
  - Start collaborations with Oklahoma City and Albuquerque to create multi-city group tour itineraries.
- **Launch ACVB Merchandise**
  - Partner with the Marketing Team to introduce branded merchandise, strengthening Amarillo's identity as a travel destination.
- **Deepen Industry Engagement**
  - Serve on a Texas Association of Convention and Visitors Bureaus (TACVB) committee and explore a critical tourism subject to enhance departmental expertise.

The Tourism Team's efforts aim to position Amarillo as a vibrant destination for leisure travelers while fostering a strong, tourism-driven community.



# ARTS & MUSIC

Visit Amarillo is proud to support and celebrate the arts, fostering partnerships with local non-profit arts organizations to create unique cultural experiences for visitors. Through marketing co-ops, annual grants, and strategic initiatives, the team aims to grow attendance, enhance economic impact, and enrich Amarillo's visitor experience.

## Key 2025 goals:

- **Strengthen Arts Partnerships**
  - Hold monthly Arts Committee meetings from September to May.
  - Meet individually with executive directors or staff as needed to nurture relationships.
- **Annual Arts Marketing Assistance Grants**
  - Organize and execute the grants program.
  - Collaborate with staff on the application process and improvements.
  - Recruit an anonymous jury to score applications and present recommendations to the board.
  - Assist applicants in refining their reporting and applications.
- **Promote Annual Arts Theme**
  - Encourage participation from arts organizations in themed events.
  - Work with staff to market the theme and associated events effectively.
  - Collaborate with the City to refine policies for art donations.
- **Reestablish Airport Art Committee**
  - Issue calls for artwork for airport displays.
  - Partner with airport administration to improve the rotunda room and expand art displays.
  - Collaborate with the City to refine donation policies for art display.
- **Engage the Music Friendly Advisory Committee**
  - Highlight Amarillo's designation as a Texas Music Friendly Community in November 2023 to strengthen its music initiatives.
  - Maintain a manageable membership and meet biannually.
  - Gather feedback for community music projects and branding.
- **Foster Networking & Collaboration**
  - Host at least one arts social hour, one music social hour, and one combined arts, music, and film social hour to encourage connection and partnership.

By championing the arts and music through collaboration, grants, and innovative programs, Visit Amarillo continues to position the city as a cultural hub where creativity meets community.





The Greater Amarillo Film Commission is driving the city's film industry growth, highlighted by the success of the inaugural Amarillo International Film Festival (AiFF) in October 2025. With plans to expand the festival and strengthen industry connections, the commission is committed to making Amarillo a premier destination for filmmakers.

Key 2025 goals:

- **Build and Strengthen Partnerships**
  - Hold quarterly Film Committee meetings and engage stakeholders like AC, SIS, and COA as needed.
  - Host annual Film-Friendly Communities workshops to enhance collaboration.
  - Organize at least three social hours for local filmmakers to network and share ideas.
  - Attend at least one film festival tradeshow annually to promote Amarillo's film industry.
- **Streamline Permitting Processes**
  - Work with COA officials to solidify consistent permitting systems.
  - Engage Film-Friendly Communities to refine permitting processes across the region.
- **Enhance Industry Engagement**
  - Actively participate in Texas Film Commission, TXAFC, and AFCL activities through online and in-person meetings.
  - Leverage cooperative advertising and sponsorship opportunities to elevate Amarillo's visibility.
- **Expand Digital Resources**
  - Collaborate with Marketing to maintain and improve the Film Commission website.
  - Add service providers and vetted vendors monthly to the directory.
  - Build a robust locations directory by vetting and adding new sites each month.
- **Grow the Amarillo International Film Festival (AiFF)**
  - Form a dedicated planning committee and partner with the Amarillo Film Society to expand the festival.
  - Research and attend other film festivals for insights and best practices.
  - Host the AiFF annually, using feedback to enhance future events.
- **Leverage Marketing Opportunities**
  - Promote directories to locations and service providers at partner events.
  - Utilize partners to identify new marketing initiatives.
- **Professional Development & Tracking**
  - Complete AFCL certification for enhanced industry expertise.
  - Use software to track leads, assists, and partner benefits for effective performance measurement.

With a focus on collaboration, innovation, and professional growth, the Greater Amarillo Film Commission aims to cement Amarillo's reputation as a dynamic hub for filmmaking and creative storytelling.





# TX ROUTE 66 INITIATIVES

Visit Amarillo is proud to celebrate the rich history of Texas Route 66 through the "100 Years in the Headlights" initiative, which unites events across the Panhandle under one cohesive brand for the upcoming Centennial celebration. This effort invites travelers from around the world to experience the charm and legacy of Texas Route 66.

## Key 2025 goals:

- **Expand the Texas Route 66 Festival:** Partner with communities across the Panhandle to grow the June 2025 festival, with a goal of raising \$100,000 through sponsorships to support and enhance the event.
- **Strengthen Partner Relationships:** Collaborate with businesses and organizations along Texas Route 66 to develop tourism-friendly events and itineraries, ensuring a unified and memorable visitor experience.
- **Boost Domestic & International Awareness:** Work with the Marketing Team to launch strategic campaigns that highlight Texas Route 66's Centennial celebration, attracting visitors from around the globe.
- **Promote the "Headlights" Brand:** Use the "100 Years in the Headlights" logo as the official mark for all Texas Route 66 events, reinforcing the Centennial celebration as a signature experience.

These initiatives celebrate Texas Route 66's legacy while positioning Amarillo and the Panhandle as must-visit destinations for history enthusiasts, road trippers, and international travelers.





# CLOSING REMARKS

“Visit Amarillo is committed to establishing our city as a premier destination for travelers, event organizers, and residents alike. While the 2025 Strategic Plan focuses on each department’s goals for the current year, our staff will dive into long-term master planning to ensure sustainable growth, economic vitality, and a consistently exceptional visitor experience. This plan will leverage Amarillo’s unique assets—its Western heritage, contemporary charm, and open spaces—to drive tourism and enhance our community’s quality of life.”

## **Our Vision for the Future:**

“By 2026, Amarillo will emerge as a dynamic and sustainable travel destination, known for its rich heritage, breathtaking landscapes, and innovative approach to tourism. Through strategic investments, thoughtful planning, and a focus on inclusivity, we will create a lasting impact on the local economy while fostering a sense of pride among Amarillo’s residents.”

*Kashian Smith*



