

# 2023 ANNUAL REPORT

## Significant Achievements and Forward Momentum

The year 2023 stands as a milestone for Destination Ann Arbor, marked by significant achievements and forward momentum. We launched an ambitious three-year strategic plan, envisioning the Ann Arbor area as an unforgettable destination that celebrates curiosity and inspires discovery. We also began a comprehensive brand refresh project to ensure that our brand accurately represents the diverse and inclusive spirit of every community in Washtenaw County, making it a premier destination for visitors, meetings, and sports groups.

Moreover, the Ann Arbor Sports Commission led efforts to secure funding and align partnerships with Ann Arbor Marriott Ypsilanti at Eagle Crest, Eastern Michigan University and Ypsilanti Township to lay the foundational stones for the development of a premier rowing venue at Ford Lake, marking a significant milestone in bringing national championship-level rowing competitions and to the area once the course is completed in 2024.

As we look ahead, Destination Ann Arbor remains committed to innovating and investing in the future, ensuring that our vibrant community continues to thrive and attract visitors from around the globe.

### VISION

An unforgettable destination that celebrates curiosity and inspires discovery.

### MISSION

Elevating economic vitality and connecting our communities through the power of travel.

## Integrated Media

Our marketing efforts, in partnership with the award-winning ad agency MMGY, showcased the entire county's attractions, resulting in some impressive metrics. Our integrated marketing strategy, spanning print, email, social media, search engines, and digital ads, effectively engaged our target audiences in the Midwest and nationwide.

- Delivered 55.2 million impressions, a 6% year-over-year increase.
- Generated 5.6 million brand engagements, translating to over 28,000 hours of engagement with content about the Ann Arbor area, up 13% from prior year.
- Attributed 4.7 million inquiries to our paid media efforts, marking a 3% increase year-over-year.

## Website Performance

In 2023, AnnArbor.org and YpsiReal.com set a new record with 3.1 million page views, a 63% increase from the prior year. The majority of our website traffic came from Michigan, Ohio, Virginia, Illinois and Indiana, underscoring our wide-reaching appeal across those regions.

- Attracted 1.48 million web users.
- AnnArbor.org and YpsiReal.com had 1.25 million and 228,000 web users respectively.
- The most popular blog post was "Explore the Border to Border Trail".
- The most visited pages included Events, Things to Do, and Dining sections.

## Social Media Growth

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Our presence on LinkedIn and TikTok grew substantially, and we saw a significant increase in website referrals through social media. The launch of an influencer marketing program marked a key milestone in our digital outreach. Our social networks boast 156,000 followers, an 18% increase year-over-year.

- 708,000 people engaged
- 47.6M total impressions
- 352,000 visitors driven to our websites from social media

## Sales Highlights

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Our sales and sports commission teams exceeded their goals, significantly boosting business in Washtenaw County. A key factor in enhancing our ability to quantify and communicate our economic contributions was the adoption of the industry-standard Economic Impact Calculator. Our efforts have been recognized, with Destination Ann Arbor named the Best MidAmerican DMO by Meetings Today.

- Bookings Achievements
  - Contributed an estimated economic impact of \$30.68 million
  - Secured 151 group bookings
  - Generated 70,000 contracted hotel room nights
  - Achieved a 33% increase over 2022
- Occupancy: 60% in 2023 versus 59.3% in 2022 = 1% increase
- ADR: \$149.91 in 2023 versus \$141.99 in 2022 = 5.6% increase
- RevPar: \$89.93 in 2023 versus \$84.16 in 2022 = 6.9% increase
- Generated 111,000 room night leads

## Sponsorships and Community Support

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We continued our commitment to enhancing the arts and creative communities, as well as supporting tourism-related projects through the Community Tourism Action Plan (CTAP), finding new ways to uplift Washtenaw County.

- Sponsored 46 events, providing \$142,525 in support
- Awarded \$80,000 in total to 7 communities through the CTAP Grant Program

## Financials at a Glance

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Destination Ann Arbor's revenues are generated through the Washtenaw County accommodations tax, membership dues, and revenue from special events. The travel and tourism industry continues to recover from the pandemic, and 2023 marked a positive step toward reaching pre-pandemic levels. Notably, Destination Ann Arbor continues to focus the majority of its financial resources toward marketing activities, allocating over 8% more than the industry average.

### 2023 Revenue: \$8,038,204\*

- Accommodations Tax \$7,757,906 (97%)
- Member Dues/Events/Other \$280,298 (3%)

### 2023 Expenses: \$7,014,436\*

- Marketing, Sales and Sports Programming \$3,656,271 (53%)
- Personnel \$2,344,598 (33%)
- Operations Expense \$1,013,567 (14%)

*Industry averages 45%, 40% and 15% respectively*

\*Numbers are unaudited at the time of the report.

Any gain realized from 2023 will be used in furtherance of Destination Ann Arbor's mission.