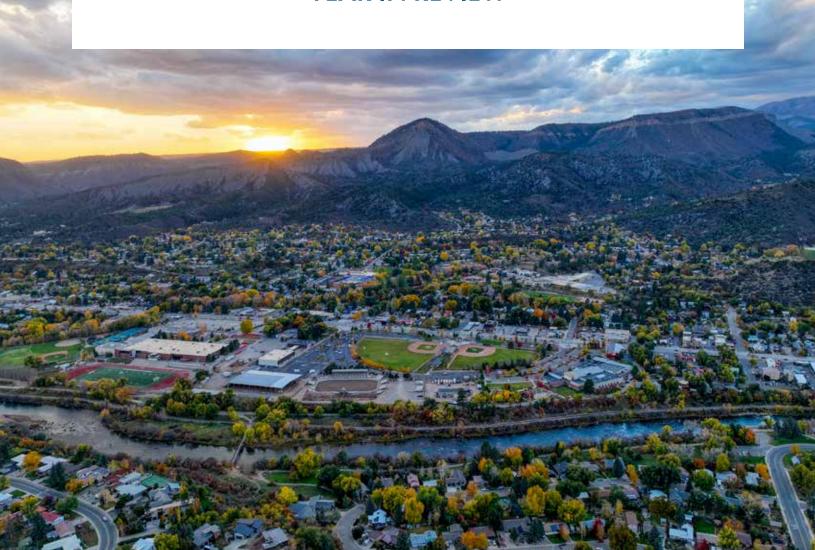


2023

YEAR IN REVIEW



OUR VISION STATEMENT AND BOARD OF DIRECTORS

MISSION STATEMENT

Visit Durango serves La Plata County by channeling the power of visitation.

VISION STATEMENT

Visit Durango inspires our community to find balance and make La Plata County an inviting place to live and visit.

2024 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Name	Company	Board Position	Sector
Jenny Roberts	The Strater Hotel	Chair	Lodging and Hospitality
Ken Stone	Durango Hot Springs + Spa	Vice Chair	At Large
Cristina Della Grave	Twilight Toys and Durango Treasures	Treasurer	Retail Sector
Dr. Cory Pillen	Center of Southwest Studies	Secretary	Arts and Culture
Ted Holteen	La Plata County	Member	County Representative
Tom Sluis	City of Durango	Member	City Representative
Dr. Christian A. Sepulveda	Fort Lewis College	Member	Higher Education
Dave Rathbun	Purgatory Resort	Member	Purgatory Resort
Carrie Whitley	Durango & Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad	Member	Railroad Attractions
Tori Ossola	The Strater Hotel	Member	Restaurant
Lisa Schwantes	Colorado Department of Transportation	Member	Transportation
Emmy GreyEyes	Bears Ranch	Member	Outdoor Recreation
Brian Lundstrom	Sky Ute Casino Resort	Member	Special Events and Entertainment
Andrew Scarborough	Bar D Chuckwagon Suppers	Member	Agritourism and Heritage
Charles Goodman	Gable House Bed and Breakfest	Member	Specialty Lodging Sector

MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



La Plata County's allure as a destination is undeniable, with its breathtaking natural landscapes and rich cultural heritage drawing visitors from far and wide. As our tourism industry flourishes, so does the need for responsible stewardship of our resources and a concerted effort to balance economic growth with the preservation of our community's integrity.

The continued visitor appeal to our region brings both opportunities and challenges. While tourism injects vitality into our local economy and fosters cultural exchange, it also places strains on our environment and can drive up living costs. Finding harmony between the demands of a thriving tourism sector and the well-being of our community is not just desirable—it's essential.

At Visit Durango, we recognize the delicate equilibrium required to sustainably manage our destination. In 2023, our Board of Directors embarked on a significant initiative to redefine our organization's mission and vision, signaling a shift from merely marketing our destination to actively managing its impact. Our new 5-year strategic plan outlines a commitment to prioritize the interests of our residents alongside those of our visitors, aiming to create an environment that is welcoming for both.

The primary goal of our new strategy is to improve the positive impacts and decrease the negative impacts that

visitors and tourism-related businesses have in the following areas: natural environment, economic vitality, and culture and community. Through targeted marketing efforts and educational initiatives, we aim to spread visitation more evenly throughout the year and across our county, reducing pressure on sensitive ecosystems and local infrastructure. We seek to attract visitors who appreciate our unique culture and share our commitment to sustainability, fostering a deeper connection between guests and our community.

By engaging stakeholders, implementing best practices, and promoting responsible behavior among visitors, we believe we can achieve this goal while ensuring La Plata County remains a vibrant and inviting place to live and visit.

As we navigate the opportunities and challenges ahead, we invite your continued support and collaboration.

Together, we can shape a future where tourism enhances the well-being of our community, leaving a legacy of stewardship for generations to come.

Rachel Browns

Rachel Brown
Executive Director, Visit Durango



Check out the 5-Year Strategic
Brief by scanning this QR code

2 2023 — YEAR IN REVIEW

COLORADO'S TOURISM OUTLOOK

Colorado's majestic mountains, rolling hills, and vibrant city life have long made it a desirable destination for travelers from around the world. Recognized for its panoramic landscapes and robust outdoor activities, Colorado offers a unique experience that continues to attract visitors in large numbers.

ANNUAL VISITOR NUMBERS AND ECONOMIC IMPACT

The tourism industry in Colorado has been a significant contributor to the state's economy. With data indicating steady growth in annual visitor numbers, the Centennial State has continually worked to offer a diverse set of attractions.

ANNUAL VISITOR NUMBERS

- Colorado welcomed over 82 million visitors in the last recorded year.
- The influx of visitors peaks during the skiing season from December to March.

ECONOMIC IMPACT

- The state's tourism industry contributed approximately \$22 billion to the economy.
- It's reported that tourism supports an estimated 174,000 jobs statewide.

Tourism not only provides commercial benefits to Colorado but also enhances its cultural identity, allowing for the preservation and promotion of its natural assets and cultural heritage.

KEY TRENDS IN COLORADO TOURISM

Exploring the key trends can provide insights into how Colorado preserves its assets while maintaining demand among travelers.

SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

Colorado is at the forefront of practicing sustainable tourism. Travelers show an increasing interest in eco-friendly and conservation-focused experiences, something Colorado offers through its numerous protected areas and environmental initiatives.

TECHNOLOGICAL INTEGRATION

From online booking systems to virtual tours, technology has become an integral part of enhancing the visitor experience in Colorado.

The accessibility of information and ease of travel planning are central to Colorado's appeal.

CULTURAL EXPERIENCES

Visitors are seeking authentic experiences, leading to growth in cultural tourism. Colorado's range of museums, historic sites, and cultural festivals keeps the state culturally relevant and appealing.

WINTER ACTIVITIES AND SPORTS PARTICIPATION RATES

A significant portion of Colorado's tourism success is attributed to its winter activities, primarily revolving around skiing and snowboarding.

- Colorado ski resorts see an average of 7 million visits each winter.
- The state hosts nearly 20% of all ski trips in the United States.

Activities like ice climbing, snowshoeing, and winter festivals further contribute to the appeal of Colorado winters

The development of infrastructure and amenities around these activities continues to improve, promising growth in this sector.

FUTURE OUTLOOK FOR TOURISM IN COLORADO

Colorado's tourism industry is poised for continued growth. Investment in infrastructure, such as the expansion of accommodation and transportation options, is underway.

Marketing initiatives focusing on year-round tourism are diversifying the sources of tourism revenue.

PROJECTIONS SHOW

- A potential increase in visitor numbers by up to 5% annually.
- A growing interest in spring and fall tourism, expanding the peak season.

Resilience in the face of economic challenges and the potential for sustainable development will define the future of Colorado tourism.

CONCLUSION

Tourism in Colorado continues to thrive thanks to its innovative approach, dedication to sustainability, and promotion of its unique winter activities. With favorable trends and a positive economic impact, the future of this vibrant industry looks bright.

Stakeholders and policymakers must continue to adapt and evolve to maintain Colorado's status as a leading destination, ensuring that it remains an irresistible draw for visitors year after year.

UNITED STATES TOURISM OUTLOOK

ECONOMIC IMPACT

The U.S. tourism industry significantly boosts the economy with diverse destinations. Over the past five years, tourism has consistently contributed to GDP growth.

- In the last five years, tourism's contribution to the U.S. economy increased, positively impacting GDP annually.
- Domestic travelers drive the majority of tourism revenue compared to international visitors.
- Employment in tourism is growing steadily.

EMERGING DESTINATIONS

Off-the-beaten-path experiences are gaining popularity, diversifying the tourism economy.

- Emerging destinations are experiencing revenue growth, complementing established tourist spots.
- Travelers seek unique experiences, benefiting non-traditional destinations.

SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

Focus on sustainable tourism is stronger than ever, with initiatives reducing environmental impact.

- Waste management programs aim to reduce impact in visitor-heavy areas.
- Community-driven tourism preserves cultural heritage and boosts local economies.
- Positive visitor feedback on eco-friendly travel options and sustainable practices.

VISIT DURANC

LODGING DATA

Hotels and Accommodations

TOTAL PROPERTIES/ROOMS

	2022	2023
Total Properties (Reporting)	64	68
Total Rooms	2,540	2,642

REVENUE PER AVAILABLE ROOM/ACTIVE NIGHT





OCCUPANCY RATE



AVERAGE DAILY RATE



Data sources: Zartico, STR Report, AirDna

Short-Term Rentals

TOTAL PROPERTIES



REVENUE PER AVAILABLE RENTAL



OCCUPANCY RATE

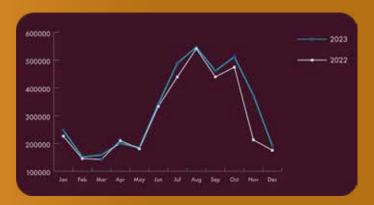


AVERAGE DAILY RATE



Total Lodger's Tax Collected





City Collections Each Month

VISIT DURANGO 7

VISITATION DATA

AVERAGE VISITOR SPENDING



Average Daily Spend of In-State Visitors



Average Daily Spend of Out-of-State Visitors



Visitor Spending Compared to Overall



Total Visitor Spending in 2023

AVERAGE VISITOR SPENDING PER MONTH COMPARED TO LAST YEAR



AVERAGE LENGTH OF STAY AND AVERAGE VISITORS PER DAY

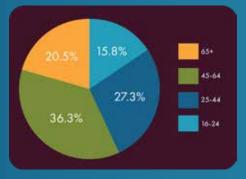


Average Length of Stay

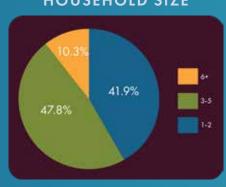


Visitor Characteristics





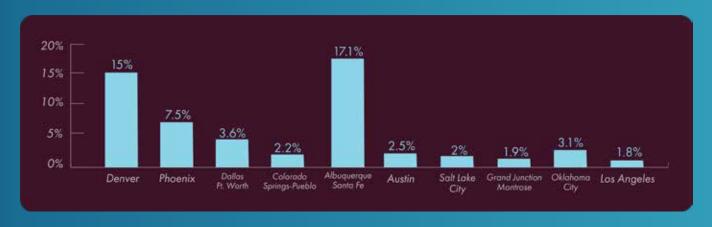
AVERAGE HOUSEHOLD SIZE



AVERAGE VISITOR DEMOGRAPHICS

Out-of-State
45-64
3-5 Household Size
\$150K+ household income
High School Education

VISITORS BY ORIGIN CITY



Data sources: Zartico, Colorado Tourism Office, Datafy

2023 — YEAR IN REVIEW

Overview of Market Analysis

Visit Durango and Zartico analyzed the behavior of three markets: Denver, Phoenix, and Albuquerque. Zartico utilizes visitor geolocation, spending, and website data to better understand the differences and opportunities between key visitor origin markets in order to better reach these potential visitors.

DENVER, PHOENIX, AND ALBUQUERQUE METRICS



Percentage of Overall Visitation



Percentage of Overall Spend



Average Daily
Spend on
Accomodations



Average Daily Spend on Retail



Percentage of Cardholders Ages 25-54



Percentage of Cardholders \$+100K Annual Income

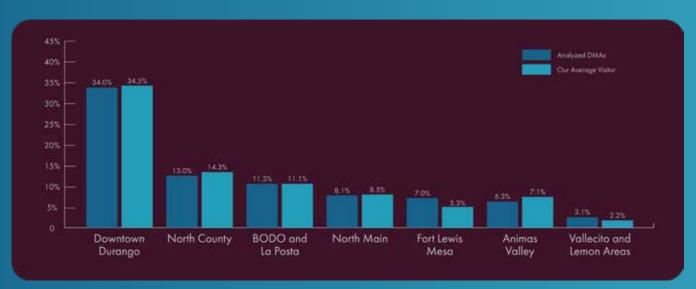


Percentage of Cardholders with Children in Household



View the full report

VISITATION BY REGION



Key Insights

- Visitors from these markets represent 29% of total visitation and 40% of total visitor spend in the destination.
- Visitors from these markets are more likely to visit the Vallecito and Lemon Reservoir Areas and Fort Lewis College regions compared to the average visitor.
- Visitors from these markets are primarily visiting outdoor recreation and accommodation points of interest (POIs) and are more likely to visit Navajo Lake, Vallecito Resort and Vallecito Lake compared to the average visitor.
- Visitors from these markets were more likely to have an average household income greater than \$100K compared to the average visitor.
- Denver had the highest spend in retail of the 3 markets analyzed and was 4% higher than the average visitor.
- Phoenix had the highest average spend in food of the three markets, with 56% of that spend in grocery stores and 31% in restaurants.
- Albuquerque-Santa Fe had the lowest spend in accommodations of the three markets and was -12% lower than the average visitor. Top primary points of interest included Navajo Lake and Vallecito Lake.

VISIT DURANGO

EVENT IMPACT OVERVIEW

CASE STUDIES:

Four Corners Motorcycle Rally

Zartico analyzed the shifts in overall destination insights including visitor movement (geolocation data) and visitor spending during the event dates, August 31 - September 5, 2023, compared to the 4 weeks prior to the event.

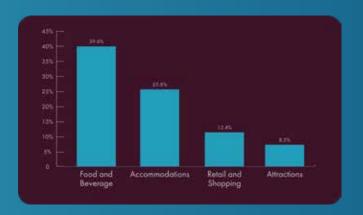
SPENDING METRICS



Change in Total Visitor Spend



Change in Average Visitor Spend Per Day



Snowdown

Zartico analyzed the shifts in overall destination insights including visitor movement (geolocation data) and visitor spending during the event dates, January 27 - February 5, 2023, compared to the 4 weeks prior to the event.

METRICS



Change in Total Visitor Spend



Change in Average Visitor Spend Per Day



Change in Total Occupancy Rate



Change in Average Daily Rate for Lodging

KEY INSIGHTS

- There was an increase in the overall visitor economy during the event, including a 24% increase in total visitor spend.
- Visitors were more likely to be from the Grand Junction-Montrose and the Salt Lake City markets.
- There was a higher share of visitor spend in the food and nightlife categories and a 4% increase in the average visitor spend in the accommodations category during the event.
- There was an increase in the share of visitation to outdoor recreation and accommodations POIs as well as the La Plata Mountains region during the event.
- The Four Corners Motorcycle Rally primarily attracted out-of-state visitors to the region.

KEY INSIGHTS

- There was an increase in the overall visitor economy during the event, including a 5% increase in total visitor spend and a 2% increase in hotel occupancy.
- Visitors were more likely to be from Amarillo and Dallas-Ft.Worth markets.
- There was a higher share of visitor spend in the accommodations, nightlife, attractions, and food
 categories and a 40% increase in the average visitor spend in the accommodation category during the
 event.
- 43% of visitors observed in the downtown region during the event were also observed at an accommodation POI. Event visitors were also observed primarily visiting other POIs in the North Main, North Country, and BODO and La Posta regions.

View the full report



View the full report



EVENT IMPACT OVERVIEW

CASE STUDIES:

San Juan Brewfest

Zartico analyzed the shifts in overall destination insights including visitor movement (geolocation data) and visitor spending during the event dates, August 25 and 26, 2023, compared to the 4 weeks prior to the event.

METRICS



Change in Total Visitor Spend



Change in Average Visitor Spend Per Day



Change in Total Occupancy Rate



Change in Average Daily Rate for Lodging

Fourth of July

Zartico analyzed the shifts in overall destination insights including visitor movement (geolocation data) and visitor spending during the event dates, July 1-5, 2023, compared to the 4 weeks prior to the event.

METRICS



Change in Total Visitor Spend



Change in
Average Visitor
Spend Per Day



Change in Total Occupancy Rate



Change in Average Daily Rate for Lodging

KEY INSIGHTS

- There was an increase in the overall visitor economy during the event, including a 6% increase in total visitor spend and a 5% change in hotel revenue.
- Visitors were more likely to be from the Houston and Los Angeles markets
- There was a higher share of visitor spend in the nightlife and attractions category and a 5% increase in the average visitor spend in the food category during the event.
- 46% of visitors observed in the downtown region during the event were also observed at an accommodation POI. These visitors were also observed primarily visiting other POIs in the North Main, BODO and La Posta, and Animas Valley regions.

KEY INSIGHTS

- There was an increase in the overall visitor economy during the event, including a 26% increase in total visitor spend and a 5% increase in hotel revenue.
- There was a higher share of visitor devices observed in the destination during the holiday weekend and visitors were more likely to be from the Austin and Oklahoma City markets.
- There was a higher share of visitor spend in the gas & service stations, food, and retail categories and a 14% increase in the average visitor spend in the gas & service stations category during the event.
- 42% of visitors observed in the Downtown Durango region during the event were also observed at an accommodation POI. Event visitors were also observed primarily visiting other POIs in the North Country region.

View the full repor



View the full report



OUR DESTINATION MANAGEMENT PHILOSOPHY

In 2023, Visit Durango refocused with clarity, involving the community and Board of Directors in crafting a refined vision: "Inspiring our community to transparency. make La Plata County a welcoming place to live and visit." This evolution emphasizes Sustainable Tourism Marketing and broader Destination Management over traditional marketing approaches.

This pivot reflects our commitment to nurturing a vibrant tourism economy that harmonizes with the well-being of our community—where we, too, call home.

Our ongoing efforts for social and environmental strides are aligned with the Global Sustainable Tourism Council's (GSTC) Destination Criteria. Additionally, we are guided by the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), ensuring our strategies contribute to broader global objectives including sustainable communities, responsible consumption and production. Our work in this field was recognized on the international stage as one of Green Destination's top 6 'Destination Management' stories in the world.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND SUPPORT

In 2023, Visit Durango solidified its commitment to community engagement and support, undertaking several initiatives aimed at enhancing the safety, inclusivity, and well-being of both residents and visitors. Our dedication to ensuring the preparedness to empower local nonprofits and businesses of frontline workers saw the continuation of free Narcan training sessions, an essential response to growing safety concerns within our community. Moreover, our community engagement efforts were furthered through the active promotion of projects

on our dedicated website, which serves as a vital platform for fostering community involvement and

The growth of the Destination Management Department marks a pivotal evolution in our approach to sustainability and community engagement. Transitioning from a single individual managing both social and environmental sustainability projects to a larger, more specialized team has significantly enhanced our operational capacity. The appointment of an Engagement and Inclusion Coordinator, dedicated to addressing the social impacts of tourism, exemplifies our proactive stance on integrating sustainability into the fabric of our community.

As we move into 2024, the bolstered capacity of our Destination Management Department will enable us to undertake more ambitious projects and programs.

BUSINESS AND EVENT IMPACT REDUCTION

Visit Durango remains committed to pursuing Mountain Ideal Certification as a crucial component of our sustainability strategy, highlighting our ongoing efforts to reduce our business's impact on the local environment and community. In 2023, we introduced the Destination Advancement Grant; a significant initiative designed to undertake projects in environmental, social, and workforce development opportunities. This grant facilitates essential investments in lessening environmental impacts and promotion of social wellbeing that might not otherwise be possible.

Moreover, our collaborative approach with the City of Durango and the Town of Bayfield to pursue Dark Sky certification reduces both carbon and light pollution. The certification involves the new lighting policies that are expected to considerably diminish light pollution output of businesses, contributing to the preservation of our night skies and promoting astro-tourism.

Visit Durango is leading by example in the tourism industry through our 2023 initiatives. We've demonstrated how destinations can reduce business impacts on the environment, and foster a more inclusive, equitable community. These initiatives not only enhance the appeal of La Plata County as a sustainable tourism destination but also ensure its long-term resilience and prosperity.

TOURISM EDUCATION

In 2023, Visit Durango made significant strides in promoting responsible tourism through the expansion of our "Care for Durango" campaign. Thanks to the valuable contributions from our dedicated Care for Durango group and new partners, the La Plata County Open Space Conservancy, this initiative, designed to educate visitors on responsible behavior within our region, was redesigned and updated this

The campaign's refreshed approach resonated with our audience, emerging as the most successful campaigns in Visit Durango's history. We integrated our responsible tourism campaign into a variety of community events, including the Fire Department's Being a Safe Driver Event, Clean Commute Week, and Earth Day.

In 2024, we are excited to further expand sustainability and responsibility among visitors and residents alike. Through local, expert partnerships and engaging educational displays, our commitment to education will sustain for years to come.







DESTINATION MANAGEMENT

Tactics

- Stakeholder engagement and working groups
- Organic social media
- Content writing and blogging
- Reputation management
- Website design/development
- Collateral
- Photography/videography
- Consumer emails
- Social sentiment listening

Major Projects

- Pursuing Dark Sky Certification in Durango (2022) and Bayfield (2023)
- Pursuing Mountain Ideal Certification
- Coordination and collaboration on Destination Master Management Plan
- Reviewing and distributing the Destination Advancement Grants via the Destination Management Committee

Platforms

- Engage.Durango.org platform
- Destination Management Committee
- Inclusive Tourism Working Group
- Stewardship Working Group
- Instagram
- TikTok
- Pinterest
- Twitter / X
- YouTube
- Facebook
- LinkedInEmail
- Surveying

Accomplishments

- Top 100 Selected to be presented in Tallinn by Green Destinations. Selected as 1 of 6 Stories to be presented at ITB Berlin among all destinations worldwide
- Achieved 4CORE Durango Green Business Silver Certification
- Awarded Colorado Tourism Office Grant to help hire the Town of Bayfield a mentor for Dark Sky Certification
- Developed and built dark sky kits to be available at the Welcome Center for rental in 2024
- Developed the Destination Advancement Grant and awarded over \$200,000 in funding
- Integrated social sustainability into our marketing content

Plans for 2024

- Develop specialized training programs for business owners to enhance their grant writing skills, enabling them to effectively compete for our grants and apply for state and federal opportunities
- Foster deeper collaborations with businesses to co-create impaction programs aimed at reducing their environmental and social impacts
- Broaden the reach of our Stewardship/"Care for Durango" campaign by diversifying beyond traditional marketing channels, and exploring innovative platforms and community engagement methods



Award for a destination management approach by Green Destinations

Finalist award for our destination management approach (1 of 6 destinations in the world)



18 2023 — YEAR IN REVIEW

DESTINATION ADVANCEMENT GRANT AWARDS

The goal of the Destination Advancement Grant is to promote La Plata County as a socially and environmentally sustainable destination to live and visit.

Grant recipients are using their funds to lessen environmental impact, develop new tourism businesses, sustain our local food production, uplift the community and tackle our housing crisis.

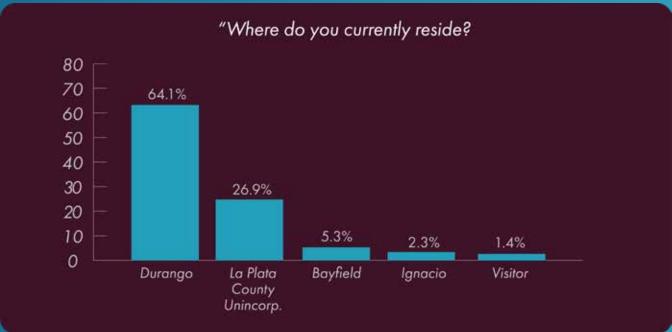
2023 AWARD RECIPIENTS

Organization	Project Name	Region	Amount Awarded
Durango Trails	"Trail Strike Force"	Durango	\$15, <i>7</i> 19
Lola's Place	Walk-in cooler upgrade	Durango	\$10,000
Manna Soup Kitchen	Creation of culinary program	Durango	\$10,000
The Powerhouse	Upgrade to back garden turf	Durango	\$5,000
Durango Adult Education Center	Classroom laptop upgrades	Durango	\$7,500
Avantaggio Properties	Building gas and heating upgrades	Durango	\$7,500
Dancing Spirit Center for the Arts	Building of sustainable arts space	Ignacio	\$ 1 <i>7,</i> 900
Good Food Collective	Inclusive business education trainings and resource development	Durango	\$11,861
In the Weeds	Needs assessment for Spanish- speaking hospitality workers	Durango	\$9,000
Pine River Shares	Creation of community food farm	Bayfield	\$10,000
San Juan Mountains Association	Support for Nature Center	Durango	\$8,000
Southwest Homeshare	Creation of homeshare program	Durango	\$7,500
Table-to-Farm	Business compost fee offset	Durango	\$15,000

RESIDENT SURVEYING

Annual resident surveys in tourism destinations are crucial for sustainable tourism. These surveys help understand residents' views on tourism development and its impacts. Engaging residents is vital for inclusive and sustainable destination management. Conducting these surveys is crucial for aligning tourism with the community's needs, fostering a vibrant destination.



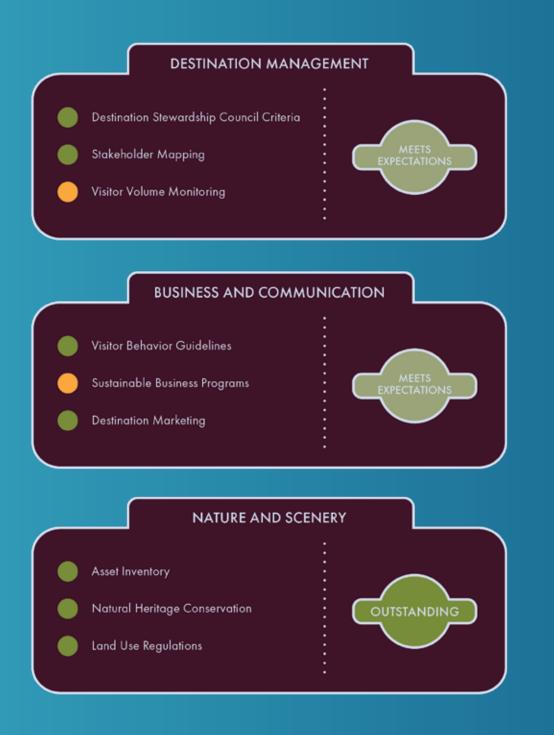




2023 — YEAR IN REVIEW
VISIT DURANGO

DESTINATION SUSTAINABILITY SCORECARD

Calculated by Green Destinations and Good Travel Guide, the "Destination Sustainability Scorecard" is a measurement of sustainability efforts across the destination in 30 core criteria. These criteria are determined and defined by Mountain IDEAL Standard and cover a variety of sectors in a destination.





VISIT DURANGO | 1

Destination Management Committee

Our community led Destination Management Committee is composed of local experts in sustainability, business, real estate, law, and nonprofit work. The committee supports a balance between quality of life for residents and quality of experience for visitors, while enhancing our environment and communities. Our members shared recommendations, feedback, and concerns with the Destination Management Department. The sub-committee allocated the Destination Advancement Grant funds totaling \$236,834 in 2023.

Inclusive Tourism Working Groups

A significant highlight of the year was the launch of the "All Are Welcome" pilot program. In collaboration with a few partner businesses, we focused on training owners, managers, and frontline staff on best practices for serving individuals from various underserved communities. The valuable feedback gathered from this pilot will inform the release of a revised program in 2024, aimed at extending these best practices to all businesses within La Plata County.

Accomplishments

- Established internal policies to enhance inclusivity and equity including:
 - Implemented policies on "Professionalism and Sustainable Practices" for Visit Durango contractors
 - Implemented policies on "Diversity and Local Procurement" for Visit Durango suppliers and vendors
- Sponsored "Durango Pride" and "Boys and Girls Club" events
- Built and launched the inclusive tourism pilot program "All Are Welcome" for La Plata County businesses
- Developed a "Community Engagement Index" and started measuring 11 KPIs including:
 - Number of engaged users in online community outreach program
 - Number of projects in the pipeline for non-profit partners
 - Overall resident sentiment score and number of responses

Plans for 2024

- Start building a comprehensive community relations strategy
- Continue educating the community on Visit Durango's Destination Management and community engagement initiatives and projects
- Continue tracking process of projects from outside organizations
- Continue reframing Visit Durango's image to represent the entire county
- Outreach to businesses and organizations to embrace holistic thinking beyond profit
- Continue outreach and strengthening collaboration with community land managers



VISIT DURANGO

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND EVENTS

Visit Durango is present at events throughout the community. From training sessions, to tabling at events, our team makes a strong effort to be present throughout the County.



Tabling at Durango Arts Week



Tabling at Winter Bike to Work Day



Accepting Award for Winter Clean Commute Week



Networking at the Visit Durango Holiday Party



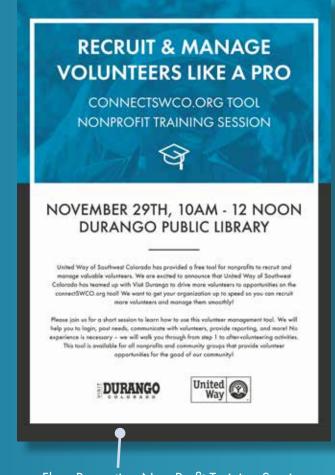
Community Engagement for Share the Love Cycle



Volunteering at the Manna Soup Kitchen



Noel Night Flyer Promoting "Boomerang Bags"



Flyer Promoting Non-Profit Training Session



Sustainability Alliance of Southwest Colorado



Tabling at Bike to Work Day

VISIT DURANGO

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

The organizations below either work directly with Visit Durango or through our committees, on specific projects, by reviewing and providing suggestions, or represent a group we consider to be a stakeholder within the community.





































































SAN JUAN BASIN **public health**

Your Lodger's Tax Dollars at Work

97 GRANTS AWARDED = \$265,000 FUNDED

The City of Durango and Visit Durango understand the important role that special events play in improving the quality of life for residents and in attracting visitors to the area. In early 2022 the City of Durango City Council earmarked a portion of the new lodger's tax funds for the support of local event marketing.

Visit Durango's Board of Directors formed the Events Committee to create a process for systematically and strategically distributing this funding.

Consideration Criteria

- Non-peak season
- Promotion of diversity, equity, and inclusion
- Sustainability and low environmental impact
- Multi-generational, family friendly
- Accessible to the disabled
- Appeal to Durango residents

- Robust event marketing strategy
- Growth potential or longevity
- Educational elements
- Lodging partnerships and tourism appeal

YOUR GENEROUS SUPPORT HAS HELPED US A LOT IN KEEPING THESE FREE-TO-THE-PUBLIC COMMUNITY-BASED BALLOON RALLIES GOING STRONG. THANKS AGAIN FOR SUPPORTING US AND THE

COMMUNITY."

DOUG LENBURG

Sample of Marketing Grant Recipients

- Mind Body Spirit Fair
- 2023 Snowdown
- Durango Winter Pride
- DHS Black Student Alliance Soul Food Dinner
- Durango Independent Film Festival
- Power to Act Annual Fundraiser
- Durango Youth Wrestling Club Tournament
- VFW Post 4031 Vietnam Veterans Dinner
- Envisioning a Changing DurangoScape
- 20MOONS Dance Theater
- Durango Bluegrass Meltdown

- Durango Earth Day Festival 2023
- Durango Wine Experience
- Southwest Wedding Bazaar
- San Juan Symphony Youth Orchestra
- Durango Wildlife Museum Opening Day
- Iron Horse Bicycle Classic
- Opening Celebration @ The Bar D Chuckwagon
- The Powerhouse Summer Kick-Off
- Dandelion Festival 2023
- Concert Series at Hermosa
- And more!

Send It Like a Local Film

"Send It Like A Local" - A love story between snow sliders and the San Juan Mountains. Filmed by local cinematographers in Durango, La Plata County, and the immediate surrounding area, the film featured local legends and visiting pros at Chapman Hill, Purgatory Mountain Resort, and all over the San Juan backcountry.

The one-of-a-kind snowboard and ski film showcased the visiting Never Summer Snowboards pro team including a night session at Durango Harley Davidson, Chapman Hill, and multiple shoots at Purgatory, including a guided tour of Mark's Park by none other than the legend himself, Mark Daley.

Over 150 people attended the film premiere.



Watch the film



11

OUR PILLARS OF PROMOTION

When we build any content, in any department, our team promotes the following pillars. These pillars include within them specific areas, attractions, attributes, and/or businesses.





























VISIT DURANGO'S EVENT CAMPAIGNS

Visit Durango assisted with event coordination, stakeholder engagement, and execution of specific events of the following programmatic events throughout 2023.

Durango Restaurant Week

April 12 - 21

During Durango Restaurant Week local establishments create carefully curated pairings available exclusively for the event throughout La Plata County, this includes the eateries that line downtown Durango, North Main Avenue in Durango, Igancio, Bayfield, Hesperus, the fun local neighborhood spots, and more!

In 2023 Durango Restaurant Week partnered with 24 restaurants from April 1st through Sunday, April 9th.



Spoketober

Hosted by Visit Durango, the City of Durango, and various other organizations throughout the community, Spoketober was a celebration of all things cycling. The celebration included mountain biking, road biking, e-biking, gravel biking, BMXing, bike commuting, and everything in between.

This annual event lasted throughout the month of October: the 1st through the 31st, and includes group rides, bike swaps, parades, prizes, specials, sweepstakes, and more hosted throughout Durango.

October 1 - 31



"Costume Group Ride" event

Durango Arts Week

Durango Arts Week seeks to showcase the amazing artistic talent in Southwest Colorado and further develop a vibrant arts culture within Durango. This was accomplished by providing an engaging and memorable experience for all participants by uniting the community through art and celebrating diversity and accessibility.

Arts week promoted the mission throughout our community to experience art in Durango, foster relationships with artists, sponsors, and partner organizations, and created broad appeal for all ages and walks of life. In 2023, Durango Arts Week over 75 events featuring workshops, gallery walks, art shows and more from September 15th to the 24th.



"Urban Sketch Crawl" event

Holiday Station

Holiday Station was a celebration throughout the holiday season in 2023. It was a local community-driven event series that showcased the many festivals, cultures, and activities that make the holidays in La Plata County so magical. Holiday Station was started to showcase the local community, its many cultures, and the festivities that bring joy to the Animas Valley. In 2023 The Holiday Station Hosted 54 unique events (compared to 37 the previous year) and had 32 local partners between Friday, November 24th to Saturday December 31 st.

November 24 - December 31

September 15 - 24



"Sparkling Lights" event

VISIT DURANGO

SUMMARY OF MARKETING CAMPAIGNS

Below is a quick breakdown of the organic marketing and paid advertising campaigns that ran throughout 2023. The samples provided are a small representation of all the content that ran.

Spring/Summer Content

ORGANIC CONTENT





PAID CONTENT







Fall Content



PAID CONTENT



2023 — YEAR IN REVIEW

SUMMARY OF MARKETING CAMPAIGNS

Winter Content

ORGANIC CONTENT





PAID CONTENT





Sponsored Content Ad



Stewardship Content

ORGANIC CONTENT





Street and Business Signage

PAID CONTENT







BE AVALANCHE AWARE, RESPECT LAND CLOSURES, &

FOLLOW PROPER TRAIL ETIQUETTE.

Pay-Per-Click Ads via Google Ads

SUMMARY OF MARKETING CAMPAIGNS

Sweepstakes Content

ORGANIC CONTENT



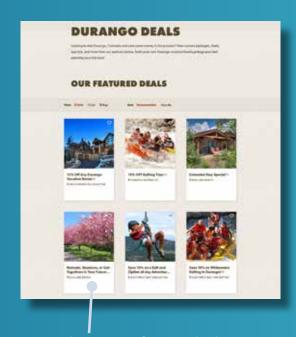


Sweepstakes Entry Forms

"Durango Deals" Content

ORGANIC CONTENT

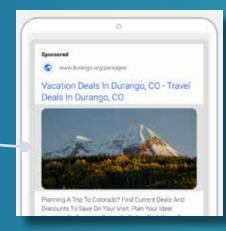


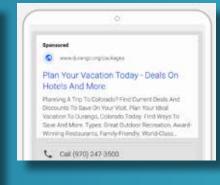


Landing page of spring deals

PAID CONTENT

Pay-Per-Click Ads
via Google Ads —





2023 — YEAR IN REVIEW

SUMMARY OF MARKETING CAMPAIGNS

"Durango Restaurant Week" Content

ORGANIC CONTENT





Participating business decal

PAID CONTENT





"Durango Arts Week" Content

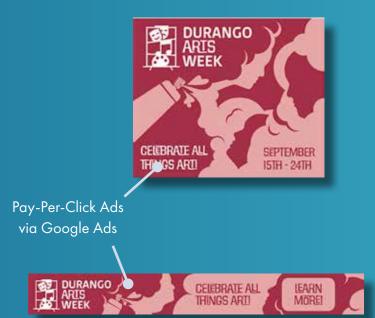
ORGANIC CONTENT





PAID CONTENT





2023 — YEAR IN REVIEW

VISIT DURANG

SUMMARY OF MARKETING CAMPAIGNS

"Spoketober" Content

ORGANIC CONTENT



PAID CONTENT



"Holiday Station" Content



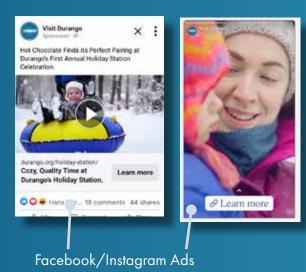




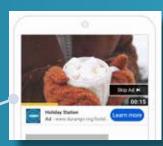
Aldiday 🚭 Station

Facebook/Instagram Posts

PAID CONTENT



Pay-Per-Click Ads via Google Ads







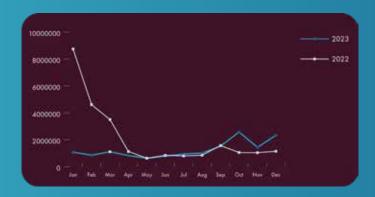


PERFORMANCE RECAP: MARKETING AND ADVERTISING

A look into the key performance indicators (KPIs), and metrics for all of the paid and organic marketing and advertising content and campaigns.

Organic Marketing

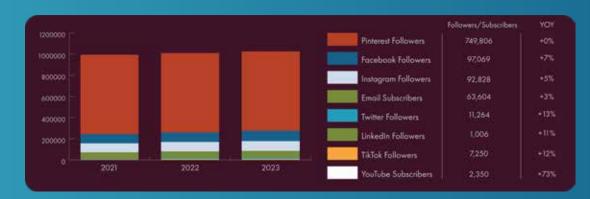
YOY: Year over Year



50000 40000 30000 20000 10000 0 jam Feli Mar Apr May Jan Jul Aug Sap Out Now Eyes

Social Media Impressions: 15,105,761 (-42% YOY)

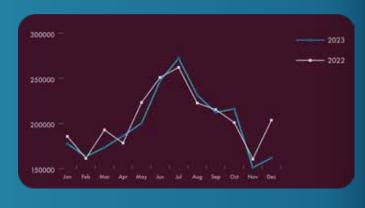
Social Media Engagements: 297,031 (-16% YOY)



Social Media Followers: 1,025,177 (+2% YOY)





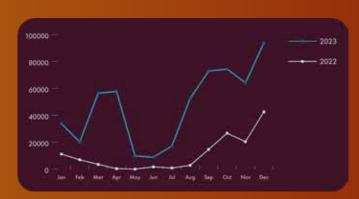


Website Pageviews: 2,393,817 (-3% YOY)

Paid Marketing

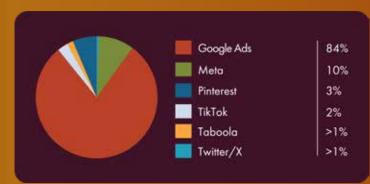


Impressions: 67,845,686 (+70% YOY)

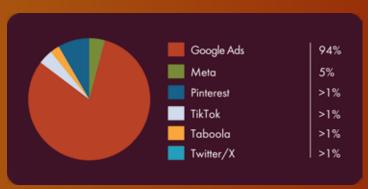


YOY: Year over Year

Engagements: 561,686 (+78% YOY)







Engagements by Platform

Data sources: Meta, Twitter/X, Pinterest, TikTok, Taboola, Outbrain, Google Ads, Google Analytics, Sprout Social

2023 — YEAR IN REVIEW
VISIT DURANGO

PERFORMANCE RECAP: MARKETING: ORGANIC MEDIA

Defined as non-paid marketing content. It was the main approach for Visit Durango's marketing in 2023.

Tactics

- Organic social media
- Content writing and blogging
- Reputation management
- Website design/development
- On-page SEO
- Collateral including itineraries, posters, flyers, and rack cards
- Photography
- Long form and short form videography
- Consumer emails
- Social sentiment listening
- Influencer marketing and partnerships

Platforms

- Instagram
- TikTok
- Pinterest
- Twitter/X
- YouTube
- Facebook
- LinkedIn
- Google My Business
- Reddit
- Internal blog writing
- Guest posting
- Email

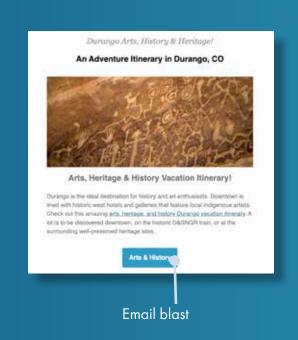
Accomplishments

- Launched organic marketing campaigns for the inaugural Durango Restaurant Week and Durango Arts Week event campaigns.
- Executed 11 off-peak giveaway sweepstakes during fall, winter, and spring seasons as well as during programmatic events.
- Held over 60 marketing consultations with local businesses to improve their marketing efforts.
- Updated up over 100 pages of content on Durango.org
- Expanded content creation and publication for off-peak season during fall, winter, and spring.
- Expanded promotion of off-peak attractions and less trafficked areas.
- Expanded use of video content across all platforms and tactics.
- Hosted 10 social media influencers.
- Integrated history and heritage content into the monthly social media calendar.
- Scheduled all photo and video shoots for the entire year with our contractors.
- Expanded on long-form video usage across platforms including creating an hour long sports film: "Send It Like a Local."

Plans for 2024

- Slowly phase out of Twitter/X and Pinterest usage as a platform.
- Expand use of long-form video production and publication across social media platforms.
- Rebuild and execute a new strategy for organic social media, blog, and website content.
- Incorporate more sustainability, history and heritage, and stewardship messaging in monthly content deliverables.
- Expand on Visit Durango's brand ambassador program.
- Further incorporate AI into brand messaging, monthly content deliverables, and initial brainstrorming.

Additional Content





Facebook reel

VISIT DURANGO | 49

PERFORMANCE RECAP: MARKETING: PAID MEDIA

Outlined below, these are the highlights of Visit Durango's advertising efforts in 2023.

Tactics

- Paid social media
- Print and traditional publications
- Digital publications
- Display banner ads
- Pay-per-click advertising
- Sponsored articles/blogs

Platforms

- Facebook
- Pinterest
- Instagram
- Twitter/X
- TikTok
- YouTube
- Google Ads
- Outbrain
- Taboola
- Miles Partnership
- MMGY
- Colorado.com
- Durango Magazine
- Durango Herald
- Durango Telegraph

Additional Content



APRIL 1-9

EAT NOW



Display ad in spring season



Sponsored content ad in spring season



YouTube ad in fall season



Display ad in fall season

Accomplishments

- Built and launched ad campaigns for events
- Discontinued use of traditional advertising tactics like out-of-home, sponsored content, and specific partners that did not yield a high return on investment and/or return on ad spend
- Utilized internal first-party data audiences for remarketing
- Utilized segmentation of ads based on activity and consumer's preference
- Increased reach and performance of off-peak season ad campaigns by 15-25% (depending on tactic/platform)

Plans for 2024

- Expand on and utilize internal first-party data audiences for remarketing
- Expand segmentation of ads based on activity and consumer's preference-specifically for the fall and winter seasons
- Discontinue all sponsored content advertising platforms

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PERFORMANCE RECAP: **ASSET COLLECTION**

Below is a small sampling of the assets Visit Durango collected in 2023. Our asset (photography and videography) collection now contains more than 22,000 items.

























Besides our in-house photo/video team, we worked with the following partners for assets:

Colorado Tourism Office Fort Lewis College City of Durango Purgatory Resort Durango Creative District Over six local, Durango photographers Social media influencers

Tactics

- Host domestic and international travel media with personalized itineraries
- Attend national PR conferences and international PR missions where we pitch travel journalists
- Partner with local businesses, personalities and stakeholders to create custom experiences for visiting media
- Media outreach via targeted media pitches, press releases, and in-person networking
- Coordination with print publications, broadcast media, and online publications

Secured Coverage Pla

- USA Today
- New York Post
- Wall Street Journal
- Le Figaro
- Travel + Leisure
- The Independent UK
- Outside Magazine
- Condé Nast Traveler
- Men's Journal
- AFAR
- Trail Run Magazine
- Explore Magazine, Australia
- Women's Health
- Matador Network
- New Zealand Herald
- Bicycling Magazine
- 300+ more

Accomplishments

- Hosted 23 media FAMs in 2023, 7 of which were international media FAMs (both individual and group tours)
- Attended and presented at 3 Colorado Tourism Office PR & Sales Missions (Mexico City, Australia, and New Zealand)
- The missions resulted in 200+ new international media contacts, media coverage and Durango press trips
- Coordinated media efforts with local businesses, organizations and PR firms to generate press for programmatic events: Holiday Station, Spoketober, Durango Arts Week and Durango Restaurant Week

Plans for 2024

- Continue to build upon relationships with fellow Southwest Colorado DMOs to cross promote programmatic events and seek insight on visitor trends
- Provide partners with more tools to better capitalize on PR and media opportunities.
- Partner with local producers to create gifts for media that highlight local artisans and locally sourced goods
- Send international media pitches with a focus on the old west and cultural heritage. We found it to be one of the main areas that set us apart from other Colorado/US destinations, and a top interest for international media specifically
- Collaborate with local organizations to create more agritourism and voluntourism activities to incorporate into visiting media's itineraries

Performance Highlights



Total Reach



Total FAM (Familiarization) Tours



Total PR-Specific Media Tours



Total Advertising Equivalent Value



Total Placements

TOP 10 COVERAGE BY READERSHIP

USA Today Sunday | Paper | 68,417,680

New York Post | Online and Print | 59,000,000

Wall Street Journal | 29,517,193

Le Figaro | 26,665,623

Travel + Leisure | 10,945,628

The Independent UK + syndication | 6,370,087

Outside Magazine | 3,725,942

Condé Nast Traveler | 3,424,249

Men's Journal | 2,940,473

AFAR | 994,805

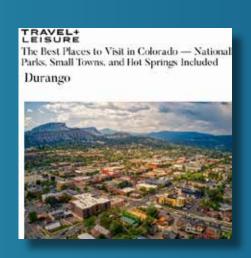
EARNED MEDIA AND PR COVERAGE SAMPLES

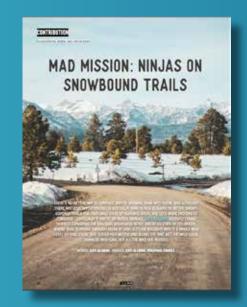




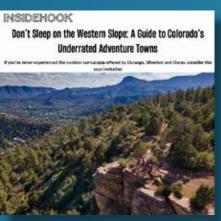


THE WALL STREET JOURNAL. Colorado's Western Slope Offers Gems That Travelers Often Overlook





















2023 — YEAR IN REVIEW
VISIT DURANGO

PERFORMANCE RECAP: GROUPS & EVENTS

Outlined below, these are the highlights of Visit Durango's group and event sales efforts in 2023.

Meeting and group sales for Visit Durango encompass the process of attracting and facilitating conferences, events, and group travel bookings within the Durango, Colorado area. This involves promoting Durango as an ideal destination for corporate meetings, conventions, weddings, reunions, and other group gatherings, while also providing support and assistance to event planners and organizers in coordinating accommodations, venues, and local activities.

Tactics

- Partnered with vendors like Hotelbeds, Amadeus, and Visit USA Parks for digital conversion campaigns to targeted audiences
- Conducted 20+ property tours in La Plata County, updating the customer resource management (CRM) system with notes on amenities, capacities, and contacts
- Refreshed the "Event Rental Space Primary List" with key info for meeting planners and tour operators.
- Promoted off-season as a viable alternative to summer in Durango to clients
- Consulted the Destination Management Department for 2024 trade shows alignment
- Compiled a list of party rental services, restaurants, transportation, and caterers for meetings and tours

What We're Promoting

- Longer stays during mid-week and shoulder season dates to assist with congestion in the peak seasons.
- Less visited areas, attractions, and businesses
- Providing educational materials to attract responsible and respectful visitors in a sustainable and regenerative way
- Utilizing La Plata County as a "basecamp to adventure" encourages longer stays as visitors explore our region
- Encouraging tours/groups/travel agents to include La Plata County in itineraries with the Grand Canyon (Grand Circle), Utah, and New Mexico, not just those visiting Colorado

MEETINGS





TOUR/RECEPTIVE/FIT



Total Number of Tour Planners Worked With



Total Number of Requested Rooms

Plans for 2024

Total Number of

Meeting Planners

Worked With

- Building and implementing an email campaign tailored to various types of tour operators, providing targeted content and incentives to showcase the diverse attractions and experiences Durango has to offer
- Enhancing sales FAM (familiarization) strategy by offering immersive experiences tailored specifically for meeting planners and tour operators
- Prioritizing relationship-building with local lodgers in 2024 through DAHLA (Durango Area Hospitality and Lodging Association) to strengthen collaboration and enhance administrative infrastructure, ensuring improved capacity to efficiently handle Requests for Proposals (RFPs) and meeting and event business

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PERFORMANCE RECAP: ADVERTISING SALES

Outlined below, these are the highlights of Visit Durango's internal advertising sales efforts in 2023.

The revenue collected from ad sales allows us to bolster our mission and ability to management and marketing Durango and La Plata County. These opportunities include advertising space in various marketing channels such as websites, social media platforms, online publications, and physical displays. The goal of our advertising sales is to help businesses effectively showcase their products or services to tourists and travelers in a cost-effective manner, thereby driving tourism and economic growth in the Durango region.

Available Channels

- Durango.org business website listing
- Durango.org business website event listing
- Participation in the "Durango Deals" program
- Participation in seasonal sweepstakes
- Marketing and sales consultations
- Advertising in the Durango Welcome Center's window spaces
- Brochure display in the Durango Welcome Center
- Wall plaques in the Durango Welcome Center
- Video ads in the Durango Welcome Center
- Run-of-site and mobile banner ads on Durango.org
- Featured business listing on Durango.org
- Featured page slider or images for businesses on Durango.org
- Instagram video feature
- Sponsored email placement
- Dedicated email blast
- Dedicated blog post on Durango.org
- Photography and videography services
- Graphic design services

Accomplishments





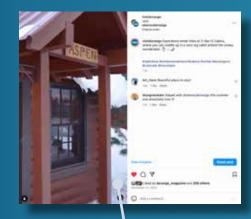


Total Number of Advertising Partners

Total Number of New Insertion Orders

Total Sales Revenue

Samples of Ads





Blue Lake Ranch >>
② 16919 HWY 140
Visit Website >>

P& P P



Featured listing 🗸

VISIT DURANGO

PERFORMANCE RECAP: DURANGO WELCOME CENTER

Outlined below are the accomplishments and highlights of the Durango Welcome Center over the 2023 year.

Tactics

- Welcome Center visitor tracking and counting
- Distribution of stakeholder business information
- Reputation management of Facebook, Google My Business, Yelp, and Trip Advisor reviews
- Phone and online chat assistance
- In-person assistance for visitors
- Local training on marketing, DEI and customer service
- Travel planners and maps

Tech Used

- SimpleView
- Square
- Sling
- Google My Business
- TripAdvisor
- Yelp
- Facebook

Partnerships

- Durango Business Improvement District
- Fort Lewis College
- San Juan Mountain Association
- Durango Trails
- City of Durango
- Local First
- Durango Chamber of Commerce

Accomplishments

- Assisted and participated in many community events including: Durango Wine Experience, Clean Commute Week, Downtown Trick or Treating, and Noel Night
- Increased the merchandise available for sale at the front desk
- Created and implemented a seasonal avalanche and fire awareness sign to better educate visitors
- Created new contracts for Durango Welcome Center advertisers
- Awarded a Silver Sustainability Certification from 4CORE
- Installed energy-saving devices for increased sustainability and resource conservation
- Became a stop for Colorado Trail finishers and gave away complimentary SWAG

Performance Highlights





Total Visitors Assisted by Staff

Door Count: 28,310

Plans for 2024

- Continue installing resource-saving systems for increased sustainability
- Create QR code system to decrease paper collateral usage in the Durango Welcome Center
- Upgrade Durango Welcome Center decor with current photography assets
- Install new digital mapping system with Wander Maps

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Financial Best Practices

- Annual financial audits through outside party: TaylorRoth Auditor
- Payroll and AR/AP through a third party bookkeeper
- Treasurer of the Board of Directors reviews every staff expense
- Two authorizations are required for charges over \$5.000
- An 18% reserve is kept in Visit Durango's bank
- Invoices, receipts, and/or documentation is required for all payments and expenses
- A multi-level approval process is established for payroll, expense reports, financial reporting, etc.
- Financial policies are in place for employee business expenses, conflict of interest, credit card use, etc.
- Board of Directors has fiduciary responsibilities to the organization
- Overall commitment to transparency throughout the organization

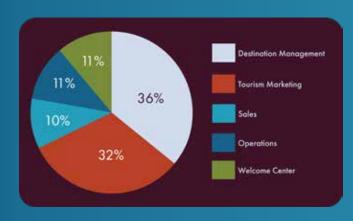
Contractors

- Essential Operations HR
- TaylorRoth Auditor
- Fox Law Group
- Quayla Allen, Inclusivity Consultant
- Connie Wian, bookkeeping

Plans for 2024

- Update the Employee Business Expense Policy to fit better with our larger team and budget
- Work with staff to better understand finance policies and chart-of-accounts
- Ensure that W-9's are received prior to any payment from Visit Durango

Budget Recap for 2023 and Approved 2024





2023 Budget: \$2,657,248

2024 Budget: \$3,190,622

2024 Organizational Chart



Platforms

- Budgyt
- Sling
- Quickbooks
- Expensify
- Google Drive
- Slack
- Zoom

2023 — YEAR IN REVIEW VISIT DURAN

2024 DESTINATION MARKETING AND MANAGEMENT TEAM

2024 DURANGO WELCOME CENTER TEAM



RACHEL BROWN

Executive Director



JOHN RAGOZZINO

Marketing & Sales Director



WEYLIN RYAN
Sustainability & Policy
Manager



KAY ROTTENBERGVisitor Services Administrator



CLAUDIA MURPHY
FOLEY
Visitor Services



IZABELA RYDZ
Visitor Services



CHANDRA STUBBS

Finance & Operations

Manager



PR & Communications
Manager



NICK KOGOS

Marketing Manager



KATE BLAKELY
Visitor Services



NORA STAFFORD

Visitor Services



RENEE SEBESTYEN
Visitor Services



BENJAMIN BREWER

Destination Services

Coordinator



KAT BRAIL
Engagement & Inclusion
Coordinator



PETE JOHNSON

Content Coordinator



STEPHANIE HERBST
Visitor Services



GEORGE JOHNSON

Visitor Services

2023

YEAR IN REVIEW

