



2021 Annual Report



VISIT ESTES PARK

[VisitEstesPark.com](https://www.VisitEstesPark.com)

1692 Big Thompson Ave. Ste 101

Estes Park, CO 80517

THE NEW VISIT ESTES PARK

DESTINATION MANAGEMENT & RESPONSIBLE TOURISM

It's a new era for responsible tourism in Estes Park and in 2021 Visit Estes Park (VEP) undertook a significant shift in strategy and approach. VEP has evolved. We are taking a leadership role in being stewards of our destination by not only diversifying visitor markets and seasonality, but by also providing enhanced education about sustainability and conserving our valuable natural resources and small town charm. Our residents and small business owners are the cornerstone of our community and our strategies are designed to support the economic vitality, resiliency, sustainability and quality of life of the community. We believe in a community-driven and transparent approach, and we strive to not only add value to the destination through education and experiences, but also to align with the shared values of the community and leverage a data-driven approach to attract guests who share those values. Internally, we're reorganizing to facilitate effective communication and collaboration, and we're creating more training and development opportunities for staff and partners. And by working with thought-leaders like Destinations International, the Colorado Tourism Office and strategic agency partners, an innovative, informed and holistic people-first destination brand approach is taking shape.

COMMUNITY RELATIONS & ADVOCACY

VEP will play a leading role in advocacy in our community, resulting in three transformational opportunities:

1). Destination alignment, 2). Sustainable development and 3). Values-based marketing. We seek to build confidence, trust and a sense of shared ownership in Visit Estes Park and the Estes Park tourism industry, as well as a shared sense of accomplishment and value in what travel does for the community.

- Visit Estes Park leaders are working closely with the Estes Chamber of Commerce, Estes Park EDC and the Town of Estes Park to collaboratively address shared goals for the benefit of the community.
- We are sending staff into the community to participate in groups tackling tourism-related issues and to develop stronger relationships with stakeholders.
- Staff is partnering with area organizations on projects related to tourism in cases where expertise and resources can be leveraged.
- Marketing messaging is focused on advocating for responsible tourism and how to "Do Estes Right."

Visit Estes Park was awarded a spot in the Colorado Tourism Office's Restart Destinations Program.

Designed to drive faster recovery for Colorado destinations as they emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic, Visit Estes Park is leveraging the expertise provided by the program to support recovery within the context of our evolution to a community-first organization.

DATA-DRIVEN RESEARCH AND TRANSPARENCY

Putting a data-driven approach as the cornerstone for transparency and reporting, Visit Estes Park formed partnerships with several companies including Destinations Analysts and Airdna. Destination Analysts provides us with deep, comprehensive and actionable insights about visitors, using a product that tracks geo-location data. This custom analysis system and online dashboard uses location-based data to deliver a higher and deeper analysis of how visitors experience the destination, enabling us to create better targeting for future marketing campaigns. Through Airdna, we've gained insights into the local vacation rental industry and we are studying trends over the past three years to understand how the short-term rental industry is evolving.

COMMUNITY RELATIONS & STAKEHOLDER SERVICES

LOCAL EVENT & PROJECT SUPPORT

Visit Estes Park introduced a sponsorship program to support local events and projects that benefit and enhance our community while encouraging visitation to the Estes Valley.

SnowyGrass Music Festival, the Estes Park Women's Monument and the Rooftop Rodeo were some of the first recipients of the program. Staff is contributing to the Estes Park Duck Race with an in-kind sponsorship by helping to publicize the race, which not only thrills visitors every year, but provides significant funding for participating Estes Park non-profits. In an effort to extend the season through the winter months, we supported the Town's Tree Lighting Ceremony and the Catch the Glow Parade.



MEETINGS & GROUPS INDUSTRY

Visit Estes Park attended trade shows to develop leads and increase brand awareness for Estes Park as a group destination.

167
Leads

26,699
Requested Room Nights

\$4,191,450
Estimated Economic Value

WEBSITE SALES & VISITORS GUIDE

\$298,346 2021 Website Sales (amplified listings and display ads on VisitEstesPark.com)

To eliminate duplicative efforts and support a local small business, Visit Estes Park partnered with Vacationland to produce one print guide for the area that helps visitors both plan trips and find things to do while in town. Continued distribution by Visit Estes Park will allow advertisers to purchase one print ad to reach the same audiences.

REGIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

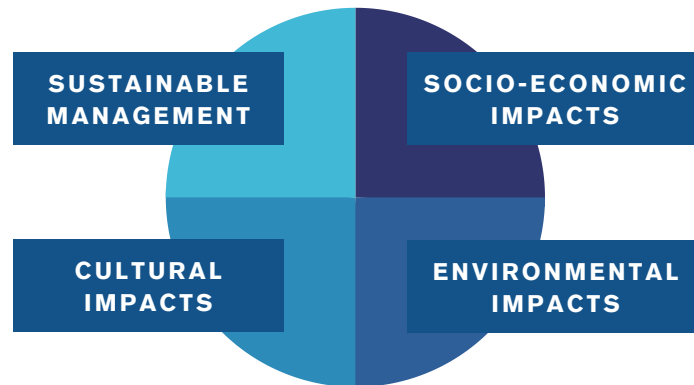
Visit Estes Park has strengthened our partnerships with regional counterparts including Visit Fort Collins, Visit Loveland and the Northern Colorado Regional Airport. Known collectively as NoCo, we are working toward regional prosperity by appealing to travelers who tend to visit more than one destination in a vacation, as well as supporting the addition of commercial flights.



SUSTAINABILITY

Sustainability is our cornerstone. Our work directly impacts the character of our town and the natural lands that surround us. And it is our responsibility to ensure these impacts are positive. A new staff position in 2021, the Senior Manager of Community Relations & Sustainability is responsible for advocating for the components of stewardship, sustainable and responsible tourism within the organization and to contribute to organizations working on these issues within the community.

PILLARS OF SUSTAINABLE TOURISM



Guest messaging now includes messages of sustainability. A matching grant awarded by the Colorado Tourism Office is funding a project to produce educational videos built around Leave No Trace and Care for Colorado principles. The videos will live on a page dedicated to responsible tourism on VisitEstesPark.com. The page will include actionable content and a pledge or badge program dedicated to garnering commitments from visitors to “Do Estes Right” and will be promoted regularly.



DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION

Staff created a DEI & Sustainability Task Force to ensure that the organization is aware of and is considering the latest data and thoughts related to these topics. The task force will make related policy and procedure recommendations to Visit Estes Park leadership, recommend and host trainings and workshops for the staff and board of directors, and facilitate integration and consistency of messaging in guest and community communications. And importantly, participate with Estes-area organizations working on these issues.

MARKETING PERFORMANCE

PAID MEDIA: DISPLAY & SOCIAL MEDIA

Targeted email blasts, paid search, paid social media and digital display efforts delivered a high number of impressions, resulting in increased brand awareness and conversions to the website.

126,464,791
Impressions

956,845
Clicks to Website

354,999
Email Newsletter Opens

2,521,719
Print Circulation

PUBLIC RELATIONS

Public relations efforts generated significant coverage in top media outlets.

This coverage accomplished the goals of:

- Driving traffic to VisitEstesPark.com or stakeholder websites
- Reaching target markets
- Promoting need periods by extending the season
- Painting the full picture of the destination by highlighting two or more Estes Park businesses

We secured media in The New York Times, Conde Nast Traveler, Reader's Digest, Forbes, USA Today, The Washington Post and Travel + Leisure.

131
Articles
Generated

2,000,813,766
Impressions

\$5,068,764
Ad Value
Equivalency



Key Coverage: Estes Park in The New York Times "52 Places For a Changed World"

Visit Estes Park was recognized by The New York Times in their annual 52 Places to Go article. For the 2022 list, the newsroom took a new tack, focusing on destinations that are doing it right in the way of focusing on responsible tourism.

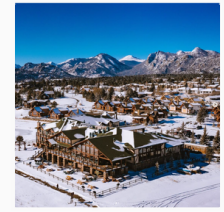
The article says: 'In the past, the list has often focused on things like a newly hot restaurant scene, an exciting new museum or the opening of a fabulous beachfront resort. This list, instead, highlights places where change is actually happening—where endangered wild lands are being preserved, threatened species are being protected, historical wrongs are being acknowledged, fragile communities are being bolstered—and where travelers can be part of the change.'

AGENCY EVALUATIONS

The organization executed a marketing audit to evaluate its agencies of record. Based on the findings, an RFP process was initiated to hire a new marketing agency and BVK won the contract. BVK is slated to kick-off their services in 2022.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media channels saw increased reach and follower growth, as we educated our audience on sustainable travel, put the spotlight on local businesses and inspired responsible visitation to the area.



15,825,614

**Facebook
Reach**

5,296,336

**Instagram
Reach**

14,296,790

**Paid Social
Reach**

10,223

**New Facebook
Page Likes**

10,004

**New Instagram
Followers**

WEBSITE

In 2021, VisitEstesPark.com achieved a new high for website users in a year. Users stayed on the site longer and visited more pages resulting in increased engagement metrics.

2,340,842
Sessions

1,750,217
Users

4,695,999
Page Views

2 min 27 sec
Average Session Duration

LODGING REFERRAL ENGINE

Visit Estes Park's lodging referral engine, Book>Direct, sent over a half-million users to local lodgers.

432,373

Searches within Visit Estes Park's engine

501,891

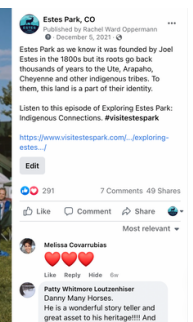
Referrals sent to stakeholder booking engines

\$8,555,441

Estimated booking revenue referred, based on a global conversion rate, referrals sent, average daily rate and the average length of stay

CONTENT

We revamped our strategic approach to creating social media and website content to showcase the destination as a whole. To keep sustainability top of mind for visitors, we used the platforms to share important information on visiting Estes Park responsibly. Additionally, we created new inclusive content to reflect the diverse communities served by Estes Park, as well as appeal to diverse audiences.



EXTEND THE SEASON CAMPAIGN

We launched an "Extend the Season" campaign to encourage travel to Estes Park beyond summer and fall. The campaign positioned Estes Park as a winter wonderland filled with snowy sights, twinkling lights and winter activities for all, including a special spotlight on the holiday season. To garner awareness of these offerings, Visit Estes Park hosted 15 individual media trips to a holiday-themed cabin to provide a firsthand destination experience for journalist research. This resulted in several media placements in December 2021 and January 2022, with more coverage expected prior to the 2022 holidays.

ORGANIZATIONAL FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

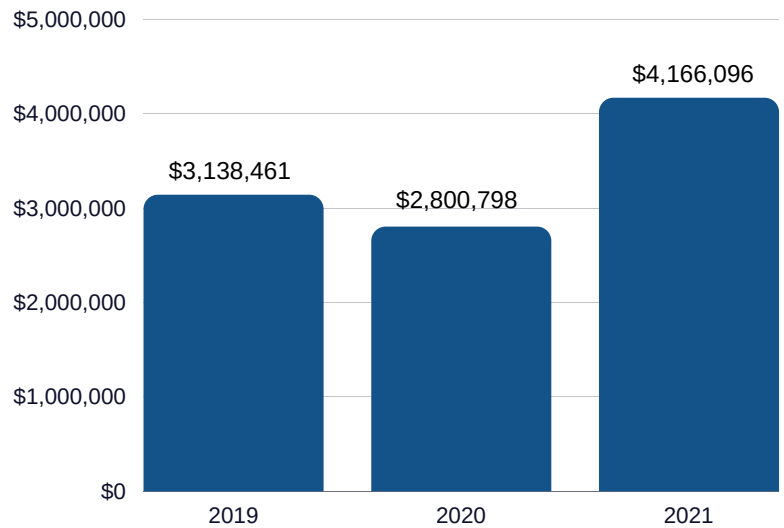
FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

REVENUES*

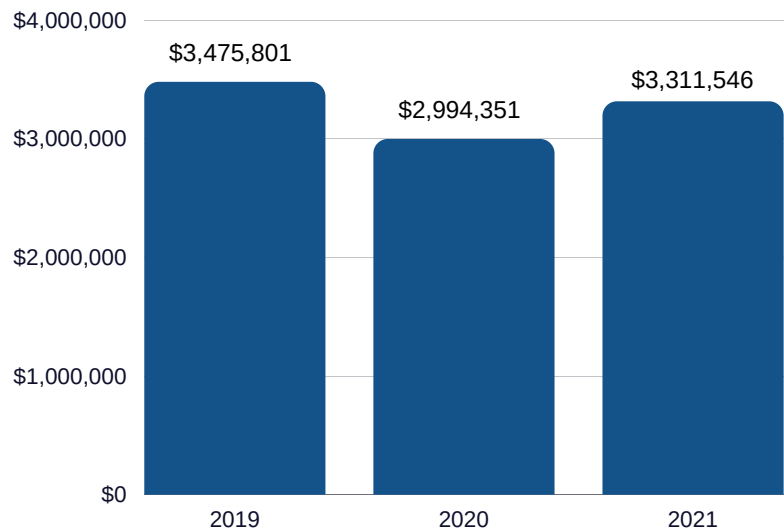
48.9% — % change 2021 over 2020

32.8% — % change 2021 over 2019

*All revenues received, not just lodging taxes

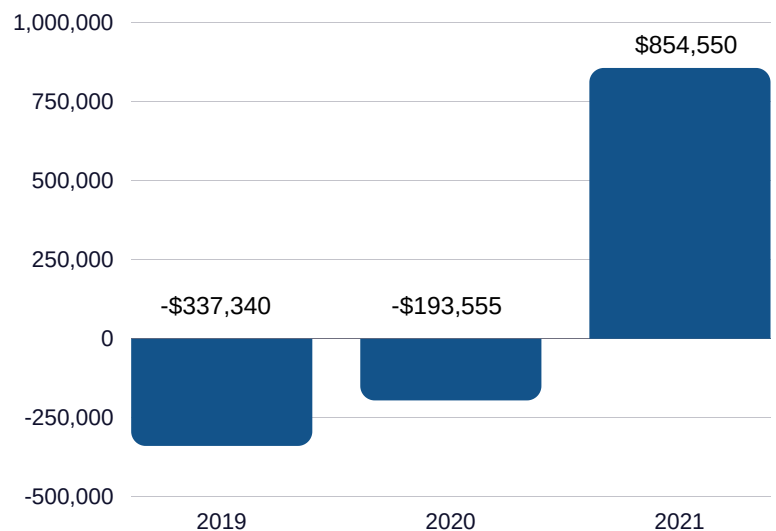


EXPENSES



NET INCOME*

* Figures exclude Net Pension Expense adjustments & calculations from auditors



\$3,473,368

LODGING TAX REVENUES

UP \$1.26M, OR ALMOST 57% OVER 2020.
UP \$920K, OR 36% OVER 2019.

\$5,053,143

SALES TAXES

RECEIVED BY THE TOWN FROM LODGING
ESTABLISHMENTS WITHIN THE TOWN
OF ESTES PARK

FINANCIAL & INTERNAL AUDITS

Visit Estes Park completed its annual financial audit in June 2021, and received a clean independent auditor's report from Haynie & Company. Additionally, we performed an internal audit of all vendor contracts, which resulted in corrections to institute industry best practices.

ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

We implemented new online software systems to increase organizational effectiveness.

EXPENSE REPORTING

Our new expense reporting program, Concur, allows for online processing of employee's expense reports. A data feed of credit card transactions is received from our bank, electronic copies of invoices can be matched up to those transactions, employee reimbursements process as direct deposits, accounting coding is handled via dropdown menus, and online approval routing provides for streamlined processing of all reports.

ACCOUNTING SYSTEM

Our new accounting system, Financial Edge by Blackbaud, provides electronic processing of vendor invoices to be entered by each staff member, with online approval routing. Electronic payments to vendors wishing to be paid via ACH are available. Project costing has been incorporated so we can easily track total costs for each event, tradeshow, etc. Auditors will have easy access to view all information during the annual auditing process.

HUMAN RESOURCES SYSTEM

Our new Human Resources system, BambooHR, lets employees see their PTO activity, request PTO time online (via computer or mobile app) and submit the request to their supervisor for approval. Payroll is integrated with BambooHR, allowing staff to access their paystubs and W2s online, make changes to their W4 tax withholding and direct deposit information. Additionally, the system can track candidates applying for open positions, has onboarding and offboarding task lists to ensure nothing gets missed when there is a personnel change, and it has a feedback area allowing managers to log all employment documentation to assist with performance evaluations.

THE FUTURE LOOKS BRIGHT

ESTES INSPIRED

Manifesto: We are Estes Inspired. We live a purposeful life with a shared passion for our mountainous surroundings. We strive to create a thoughtful guest experience where mindfulness and respect are practiced every day. We treat our guests as we do our neighbors, just as we ask them to treat the local wildlife: with awareness and appreciation. Together we are supporting community. Promoting sustainability. Focusing on social, economic and environmental impacts. Because ours is a common goal for an uncommon land. To preserve, to teach and above all, to inspire.

Estes Inspired Objectives and Tactics:

- Change the narrative in tourism discussions and generate excitement between locals and visitors alike.
- Host an Estes Inspired Day on May 3, 2022 to celebrate the place we hold dear and the members of the hospitality workforce who make it a special place for guests.
- Find unique ways to have locals feel "Estes Inspired" in the destination's success and convert them to ambassadors who can educate visitors on sustainability practices and how to "Do Estes Right."

EXTEND THE SEASON

In furthering one of our top goals of extending the season to boost a robust year-round economy, Visit Estes Park is advocating for Ice Castles, a winter season attraction, to come to Estes Park. Expected to bring in between \$500k to \$1 million economic impact over approximately three months, the attraction is currently located in five cities across North America and attracts 80k to 100k visitors. Ice artists build the interactive experience using hundreds of thousands of icicles, LED lights, frozen thrones, ice-carved tunnels, slides, fountains and more. VEP staff recently hosted the CEO and his team to showcase why Estes Park would be the perfect location for the winter attraction. Additionally, we are brainstorming ways to expand Estes Park's signature winter events into months-long celebrations and festivals. For example, we seek to position the destination as the ultimate place to snowshoe in Colorado by creating a Rocky Mountain Snowshoe Festival. Bigfoot Days is a popular weekend in April and we are analyzing ways to expand the quirky weekend and attract visitors for a longer season.

DIVERSITY EQUITY INCLUSION & SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVES

Looking ahead to 2022, we plan to embody DEI and sustainability. With a growth mindset, we strive to:

- Collaborate with like-minded organizations to support and amplify efforts already undertaken in the community, including making Estes Park feel welcoming to all.
- Distribute materials and resources ahead of special heritage events for use in local businesses to signify to guests that they are welcome.
- Communicate sustainable and responsible travel expectations to guests.
- Provide equity across communications through Spanish translations of key stakeholder and guest messaging, as well as support Hispanic-led events and find avenues to connect in a more impactful way.
- Continue to recognize indigenous populations who were the original inhabitants of the land we hold dear.
- Champion green businesses through storytelling.
- Foster projects that make it easier for people to be less wasteful.
- Support new bike lanes and walking paths.
- Start the conversation about earning the Mountain IDEAL standard certification.