

2022 *Annual Report*

VisitFortWayne®
INDIANA





Kelly Urdike

Embassy Theatre
Chair, *Visit Fort Wayne* Board of Directors

Visit Fort Wayne, dba the Fort Wayne/Allen County Convention and Visitors Bureau, is a community and economic development organization. We are governed by a board of civic leaders, staffed by 14 professionals, and financed by both public entities and more than 350 businesses - all working together to attract more visitors to our destination.

Our mission is to promote our city as a destination for conventions, trade shows, leisure visitors, and sports tournaments. We do this so that every business and resident can enjoy the economic and social benefits of a prosperous tourism industry. Tourism enhances our quality of life by generating new customers for places that residents enjoy, like attractions, arenas, ballparks, malls, restaurants, and festivals.

2022 was a big year for *Visit Fort Wayne*, as we welcomed a new leader, Jill Boggs, and worked alongside our partners to promote our vibrant tourism community. Please read about many of these successes on the following pages, as you learn about our accomplishments and plans for the future.

2022 Board of Directors | Staff

Kelly Urdike, Embassy Theatre
Board Chair

Mark Luttik, Hilton Fort Wayne at
the Grand Wayne Convention Center
Treasurer

Melissa Schenkel, STAR Financial Bank
Secretary

Board Members

Susan Baier, Allen County Public Library

Tim Beere, DeBrand Fine Chocolates

Therese Brown, Allen County Commissioner

Sheila Curry-Campbell, Allen County Council

Melanie Carney, Memorial Coliseum

Danette Fitzgerald, Parkview Health

Tim Hall, Fort Wayne Outfitters

Russ Jehl, Fort Wayne City Council

Paris McFarthing, Hop River Brewing Co.

Mike Mushett, Turnstone

Mike Nutter, Fort Wayne TinCaps

Mac Parker, Olive B. Cole Foundation

John Perlich, City of Fort Wayne

Rick Schuiteman, Fort Wayne Children's Zoo

Bart Shaw, Grand Wayne Convention Center

Lisa Starks, Barnes & Thornburg

Irene Walters, Civic Leader

Management & Finance

Jill Boggs, President/CEO

Beth Monn, Operations Manager

Marketing

Kristen Guthrie, Vice President of Marketing
and Communications

Jessa Campbell, Marketing and
Communications Manager

Tom Boyer, Digital Marketing Manager

Erin Okeson, Digital Content Manager

Emily Hill, Marketing and
Communications Coordinator

Group Sales

Nicolle Campbell, Director of Sales

Josie O'Donnell, Senior Sales Manager

Jazmin Zavala, Group Sales Manager, Sports

Bethany Sutherland, Group Services Manager

Partner Services/Visitors Center

Emily Stuck, Director of Visitor and
Partner Services

Nancy Niemann, Senior Visitor
Services Specialist

Kaitie Jones, Visitor Services Specialist

Our Vision

Fort Wayne is recognized nationally as a welcoming visitor destination offering unique experiences in an inclusive and hospitable community.

Our Mission

Visit Fort Wayne promotes the community as an exceptional destination, and advocates for the growth and development of its visitor industry.

Our Goals

- Advocate for destination developments to enhance the visitor experience
- Increase the effectiveness and impact of *Visit Fort Wayne*
- Communicate the importance of the visitor economy to the community



Who We Are

VISIT FORT WAYNE IS

- A nonprofit 501 (c) 6 organization
- Committed to marketing Fort Wayne as a premier destination for conventions, meetings, sporting events, and leisure travel
- Directed by a board of 21-23 and staff of 14

Why It's Important

ECONOMIC IMPACT

- Visitors (and their spending) enhance our quality of life, boost our economy, and sustain jobs in our city and county
- Visitors infuse new money into our economy – spending \$803 million in Fort Wayne each year
- The visitor industry provides more than 11,210 jobs in our community
- Visitors save residents money. Visitors pay \$44.5 million in state taxes annually. Without visitor spending, each Allen County household would pay an additional \$606 annually

What We Do

SELL FORT WAYNE

- Our destination branding positions Fort Wayne as a world-class, family-friendly leisure destination
- Our group sales efforts attract conventions, meetings, and sporting events to Fort Wayne
- Our integrated marketing campaigns drive visitors to Fort Wayne through advertising, PR, and social media

WELCOME AND CONNECT VISITORS

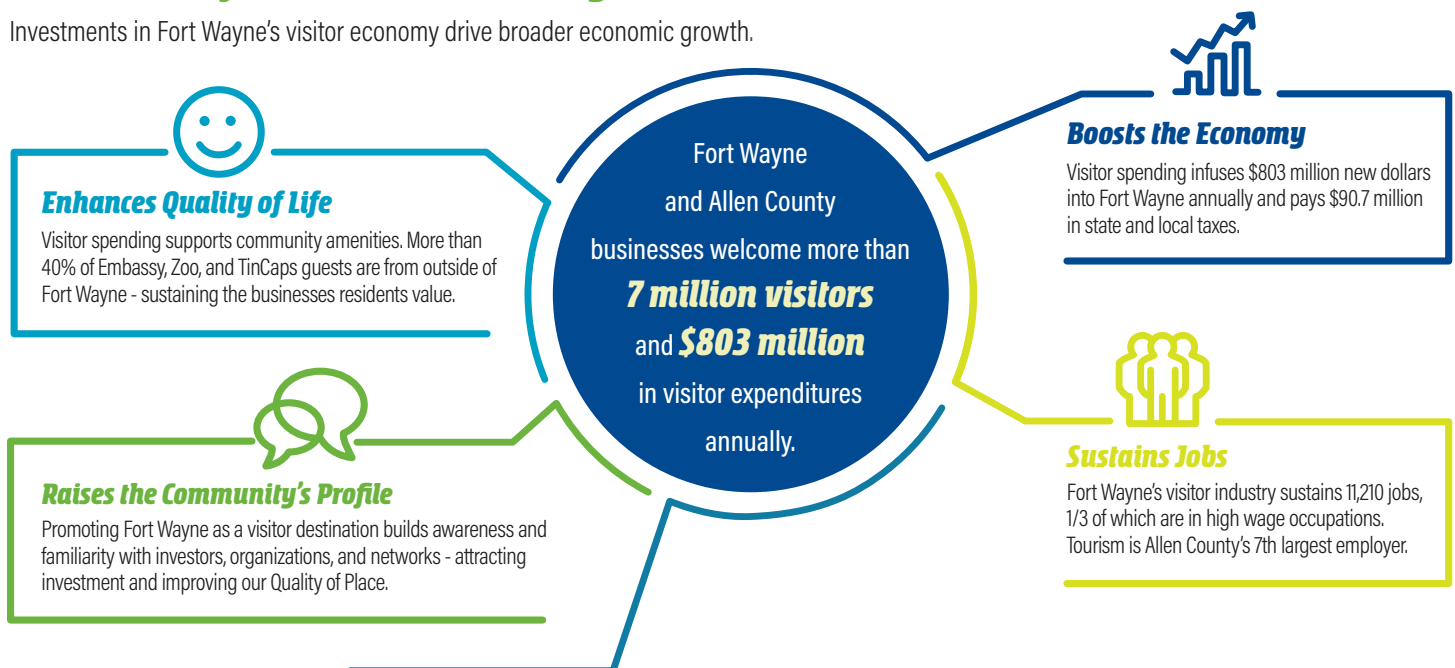
- We assist with the execution of more than 70 meetings and events each year
- Our staff runs a friendly, helpful Visitors Center
- We produce maps, guides, and visitor resources to help visitors discover Fort Wayne

PRODUCE LOCAL EVENTS

We are proud to showcase our attractions and restaurants during events like *Be a Tourist in Your Own Hometown* and *Savor Fort Wayne*

The Value Of Tourism In Fort Wayne, Indiana

Investments in Fort Wayne's visitor economy drive broader economic growth.



Investment in Fort Wayne's tourism marketing generates dividends by attracting groups and leisure visitors.

Tourism promotion improves our quality of life, raises the profile of our city, and attracts business decision makers and organizations – all while fundamentally benefiting economic development.

GROUP SALES DEPARTMENT

In 2022, the *Visit Fort Wayne* Sales Team helped book **48 conventions/tournaments** with 26 being NEW business to Fort Wayne, totaling **30,239 visitors**, generating **18,292 room nights** with an estimated economic impact of **\$9.7 million**.

During 2022, Fort Wayne hosted **217** conventions, conferences, meetings, sports tournaments, and trade shows in **34 different venues**, bringing more than **331,837 visitors** to Fort Wayne.



Tradeshows are BACK

Our Sales Team was on the road in 2022, connecting with planners and event organizers at **9 different tradeshows** throughout the year. These efforts resulted in more than **115 one-on-one appointments and 25 RFP's**.

First Time Events Booked for Our Community Include:

- 2022 & 2023 Lutheran Basketball Association of America National Tournament
- 2022 USA Curling, U18 National Championships
- 2022 Midwest Energy Association, Electric Operations Technical & Leadership Summit
- 2022 Indiana Dental Association, Midwest Dental Assembly
- 2022 Women's Basketball Hall of Fame, Ladies Ball MW Regional Qualifier
- 2022 American Cornhole Organization, Fort Wayne Major
- 2022 United Methodist Church, North Central Jurisdictional Conference
- 2022 USA Hockey, USA Blind and Special Hockey Classic
- 2022 Collie Club of America, National Specialty Show
- 2023 Championships, United States Collegiate Fencing Clubs
- 2023 International German Genealogy Partnership, International Conference
- 2023 National Fireworks Association, NFA Expo



Our Services Help Us Shine

In 2022, our Groups Services Team serviced **83 events**, providing **more than 50 customized information tables** and **17 customized newsletters** for visiting groups.

In addition, we helped groups find ways to give back to the community. (For example, we organized a community service project for the NCAA DIII Men's Basketball Championship, where athletes assembled 1,000 dental kits and donated them to Vincent Village.)

MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT

The *Visit Fort Wayne* Marketing Department produces marketing and advertising campaigns to invite leisure visitors to enjoy our city's hotels, restaurants, attractions, and entertainment venues.

In 2022, we advertised Fort Wayne getaways in **30 cities** between 50-200 miles from Fort Wayne, to encourage family travel. We produced more than **30 million exposures** using digital, TV, radio, and print advertising.

Media Relations

Visit Fort Wayne hosted 30 travel journalists and content creators in Fort Wayne (and 15 virtually) in 2022, resulting in **44 articles** and more than **120 million media impressions**. A part of that effort included hosting 50 attendees for five days, during the Midwest Travel Journalists Association's Spring Conference!



Top 5 Articles -

Where to Travel in 2022: 5 of the Best Places to Visit This Year - *Better Magazine*

10 Unexpected U.S. Cities with a Surprisingly Good Food Scene - *Fodor's*

Travel: Fort Wayne, Indiana, a weekend destination with vibrant downtown - *The Columbus Dispatch*

Urban-Pop Art, a New Boutique Hotel and More - *Midwest Living*

10 of the Best Things to See and Do During a Getaway to Fort Wayne, Indiana - *USA Today 10 Best*

Fort Wayne, Indiana: Why Anyone Who Loves Art Needs to Visit - *Cleveland Magazine*

Digital Media

Visit Fort Wayne uses social media as one of our primary means of communicating with visitors and sharing trip ideas with them.

- Total **social media impressions** in 2022 (paid + organic): **14,752,171**
- In 2022, **Facebook and Instagram ads** resulted in **115,757 landing page views** on VisitFortWayne.com

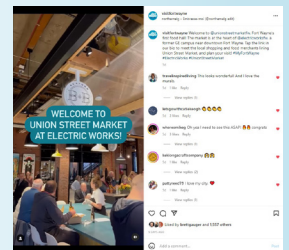
Post with the highest reach on Facebook and Instagram:



Reach: 188,169
Engagements: 8,466



Reach: 27,149
Engagements: 1,932



Google Advertising created more than **10 million ad impressions** and revised targeting resulted in a click-thru-rate that was more than **300% greater** than in 2021!



Visits to Website: **1.6 Million**

Unique Users: **1.2 Million**

Pageviews: **3.2 Million**



These numbers represent an 8-13% increase over 2021, our highest traffic to date.

77% of our traffic is from mobile devices.

VISITORS CENTER AND INDUSTRY PARTNERS

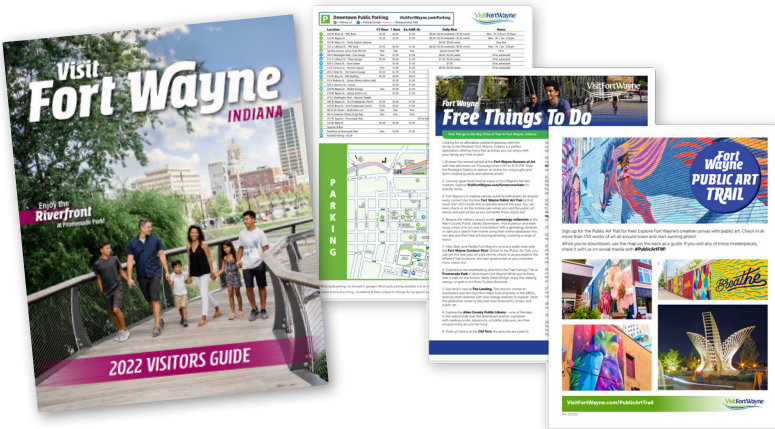
In 2022, the Visitors Center welcomed more than **5,000 people in person** and assisted more than **19,000 more via phone and email requests**.

We distributed more than **50,000 total print pieces** from the Visitors Center and sold thousands of souvenirs and gifts!

Shopping the Visitors Center

Our Visitors Center store added more than **100 new items** in 2022, many from local and regional vendors. Our most popular items are traditional souvenirs like magnets, keychains, flags, and postcards.

Our online store shipped to customers in 26 states – including Alaska and Washington!



Publications Promote Fort Wayne

In 2022, we produced and distributed 70,000 copies of the Visitors Guide to potential visitors and guests to our city. In addition, we produce dozens of maps and brochures to aide visitors – and residents – as they explore our great community! A few favorites include the Public Art Map, Free Things to Do List, Downtown Parking Map, and more.

Local Events Promote Community Pride

Our two major events, **Savor Fort Wayne** and **Be a Tourist in Your Own Hometown**, share Fort Wayne's visitor favorites with our residents!



In January 2022, the 9th Annual *Savor Fort Wayne* offered special meal deals at 67 participating restaurants over 12 delicious days!

And in September, 21 museums and attractions opened their doors for free during the 23rd Annual *Be a Tourist in Your Own Hometown*!



VISITOR AND TRAVEL CHARACTERISTICS

Number of Annual Visitors

Fort Wayne Visitors7 million

Visitor Expenditures

Visitor Expenditures in
Allen County\$803 million

Total Employment

Direct Jobs (sustained by visitors)11,210

Wages and Salaries

Direct Wages and Salaries\$322 million

Where Visitors Come From

According to VisitFortWayne.com visits, Visitors Center inquiries and ad responses, visitors come to Fort Wayne from the following states:

Indiana 44%
Ohio 8%
Illinois7.5%
Michigan 8%
Other 32.5%

Local Taxes Generated

State and Local Tax.....\$90.7 million

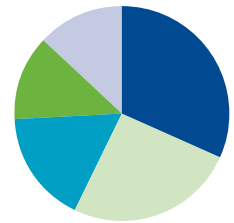
If Tourism Did Not Exist in Allen County..

If tourism didn't exist, each of the 149,751 households in Allen County would have to pay an additional \$606 per year in taxes to maintain current levels of services.



Expenditures by Type

 Food & Beverage.....	32%
 Shopping.....	26%
 Transportation.....	17%
 Lodging.....	13%
 Attractions/Entertainment.....	13%



Ranking

- Allen County ranks #4 of 92 Indiana counties in tourism spending.
- Tourism is Allen County's 11th largest employer.

Source: Rockport Analytics 2021 Economic Impact of Tourism on Allen County





927 S. Harrison Street, Suite 101

Fort Wayne, IN 46802

260-424-3700

VisitFortWayne.com

