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.

Embassy Theatre
Chair, Visit Fort Wayne Board of Directors

Kelly Updike

2022 Board of Directors

Kelly Updike, 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
Investments in Fort Wayne’s visitor economy drive broader economic growth.

**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

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**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*

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**The Value Of Tourism In Fort Wayne, Indiana**

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

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**Enhances Quality of Life**

Visitor spending supports community amenities. More than 40% of Embassy, Zoo, and TinCaps guests are from outside of Fort Wayne - sustaining the businesses residents value.

**Raises the Community’s Profile**

Promoting Fort Wayne as a visitor destination builds awareness and familiarity with investors, organizations, and networks - attracting investment and improving our Quality of Place.

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**Fort Wayne**

and Allen County businesses welcome more than **7 million visitors** and **$803 million** in visitor expenditures annually.

**Boosts the Economy**

Visitor spending infuses $803 million new dollars into Fort Wayne annually and pays $90.7 million in state and local taxes.

**Sustains Jobs**

Fort Wayne’s visitor industry sustains 11,210 jobs, 1/3 of which are in high wage occupations. Tourism is Allen County’s 7th largest employer.

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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.

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Source: Rockport Analytics
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.

**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

**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**.

**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.)
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!

**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

**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

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.
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 Visitors ................................................................. 7 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%
- Illinois ................................................................. 7.5%
- 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