



# As we reflect upon the achievements of the past year, Visit Frederick is *proud* to present our Annual Report for FY23.

This report summarizes a year of innovation and collaboration as we showcase the vibrancy and appeal of Frederick County to the world. In the face of continued challenges in the tourism industry, our organization's unwavering commitment to promoting Frederick County has yielded remarkable results, fostering economic growth, enhancing community engagement, and solidifying our position as a top-notch travel destination in Maryland.

This year saw Visit Frederick complete several major projects to improve how we promote the County, including a newly redesigned website, a new Wineries, Breweries, and Distilleries Guide, and creating a brand new orientation film for the Frederick Visitor Center.

Collaboration with our members and partners, the dedication of our team, and the continued vibrancy of Frederick County have converged to create another year of growth and impact. As we look ahead, we remain steadfast in our commitment to advancing Frederick County's prominence as a visitor destination. With the insights gained from this report, we embark on another year of inspiration, aspiration, and achievement in sharing what makes Frederick County a special place for visitors to experience and enjoy.

Frederick

**Frederick Visitor Center** 

151 S. East Street · Frederick, Maryland 301-600-4047 · www.visitfrederick.org

**⊕ ⊕ ⊕ ⊕** #visitfrederick

Dave Ziedelis

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

2 VISIT FREDERICK ANNUAL REPORT

### **Board of Directors**

## Rob Judge President

NATIONAL SHRINE OF SAINT ELIZABETH ANN SETON

# Elizabeth DeRose 1st Vice President

FREDERICK COMMUNITY COLLEGE

# Barbara Liccione 2nd Vice President

HOLIDAY INN EXPRESS & SUITES BRUNSWICK

# Ashly Wright Secretary

PROSPECT PANTRY

## Michael Henningsen Treasurer

PLAMONDON HOSPITALITY PARTNERS

# Phil Bowers Past President

FOUNTAIN ROCK MANAGEMENT

### **Scott Wisnom**

WHISKEY CREEK GOLF CLUB

## **Robert Brenengen**

THE MAIN CUP

## **Mike Irons**

OLE MINK FARM

## **Randy Jones**

**CAFE 611** 

## **Louise Kennelly**

FREDERICK ARTS COUNCIL

## **Monique Pasquale**

10 CLARKE PLACE

### **Monica Pearce**

TENTH WARD
DISTILLING COMPANY

### **David Price**

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF CIVIL WAR MEDICINE

## **Amie St. Angelo**

SPRINGFIELD MANOR/ STONE MANOR

## **Abby Brusco**

SOUTH MOUNTAIN CREAMERY

## **Christopher Clemons**

WOODSBORO BANK

## County Executive lessica Fitzwater

FREDERICK COUNTY GOVERNMENT

## **Angel White**

CITY OF BRUNSWICK/ MARYLAND MUNICIPAL LEAGUE

## **Mayor Michael O'Connor**

CITY OF FREDERICK

## Non-Voting Community Liaisons

#### Kara Norman

DOWNTOWN FREDERICK PARTNERSHIP

### **Rick Slade**

CATOCTIN MOUNTAIN PARK

### Barbara Hiller

WEINBERG CENTER FOR THE ARTS

## **Robert Black**

CATOCTIN MOUNTAIN ORCHARD

### Staff

### **Dave Ziedelis**

**Executive Director** 

## **Becky Bickerton**

**Assistant Director** 

### **Katie Reichard**

**Operations Director** 

## Jake Wynn

Senior Marketing and Communications Manager

### John Lustrea

Visitor Services Manager

## **Marie Greenbank**

Contract Accountant

## Visitor Services Specialists

Dave Catlin
Debbie Ciechoski
Wendy Duke
Melissa Gregory
Maria F. Lane
Debbie Culler
Fred Genau
Jack Spinnler

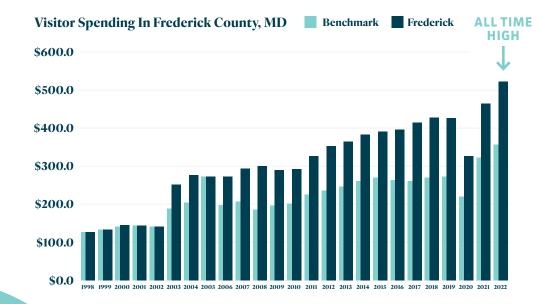
Noel Samorai

# **Visitor Spending**

# Over the last 25 years, Frederick County has strategically developed into a top visitor destination with a thriving tourism industry.

Visitor spending in Frederick County surpassed \$500 million for the first time in history in 2022 according to Tourism Economics data released in September 2023.

Frederick County now sees the 7th highest visitor spending of counties in the State of Maryland, a figure that has seen the region rise from 10th in the 1990s. Since 1998, visitors have spent more than \$7.7 billion in Frederick County.



**\$518.4 million** 

**VISITOR SPENDING** 

12.4% ↑ 21.8% ABOVE 2019

# **Visitation Data**

# Visitation to Frederick County continued to recover from the decrease experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic that began in 2020.

According to the September 2023 Tourism Economics report, almost 2 million visitors came to Frederick County in 2022, bringing us close to pre-pandemic visitation.

Visitors are classified as those traveling at least 50 miles to their destination. Frederick County visitation has been steadily increasing, including the percentage of overnight visitors, over the years since the establishment of the local hotel rental tax in 2004.

1.98 million

**VISITORS IN 2022** 

**7.2% GROWTH OVER 2021** 

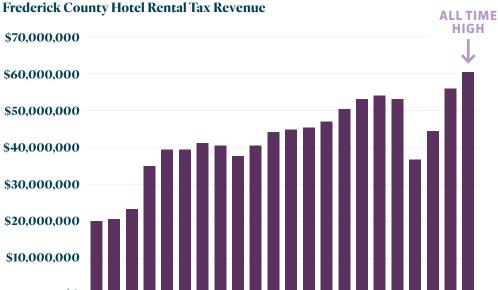
**REACHED 93%** 

OF PRE-PANDEMIC VISITATION

778,000 **OVERNIGHT VISITORS** 

**DAYTRIP VISITORS** 





\$60.4 million **HOTEL RENTAL TAX REVENUE IN 2023**  **ABOVE 2022** 

# **Hotel Rental Tax Revenue**

Hotel rental tax revenues eclipsed an all-time high in 2022, marking the first time in Frederick County history that hotels reported more than \$60 million in tax revenue.

Frederick County hotel rental tax revenues have steadily increased over the last two decades, despite economic challenges dating back to the Great Recession (2008) and the recent COVID-19 pandemic. In response to the most devastating crisis to strike the tourism and hospitality industries in history, Frederick County has bounced back in dramatic fashion over the last three years, demonstrating the region's continued attraction as a visitor destination.

# **Economic Impact**

Tourism has become an increasingly vital element in Frederick County's economic development, illustrated by the continued growth of visitation and visitor spending in the region.

The success of Frederick County's tourism sector can be seen through the number of jobs directly supported by visitor spending, which in 2022 rose to more than 6,000. Visitors also supported the local economy through the payment of local, state, and Federal taxes during their visits.

Tourism continues to be an essential part of Frederick County's economic matrix, fostering continued growth and economic vitality.



**JOBS** 

6,115

VISITOR SUPPORTED JOBS IN FREDERICK COUNTY

VISITOR SUPPORTED JOBS ACCOUNT FOR

**5.9%** 

OF TOTAL FREDERICK COUNTY EMPLOYMENT



**SPENDING** 



WAS SPENT IN LOCAL RETAIL BUSINESSES



WAS SPENT ON RECREATION ACTIVITIES



WAS SPENT BY VISITORS IN LOCAL RESTAURANTS & CRAFT BEVERAGE BUSINESSES

# **Investing in the Future of** Frederick County Tourism

The growth of the tourism industry in Frederick County can be traced to the commitment of a dedicated revenue source—funding from the county hotel rental tax.

As per a Memorandum of Understanding with Frederick County Government, and after the removal of necessary administrative fees, 10% of our local hotel rental tax is directed towards the bonds and capital improvements of the Frederick Visitor Center located on East Street.

37.5% is dedicated to three tourism-related initiatives that directly fund non-profit organizations and governmental agencies: Tourism Reinvestment in Promotion and Product Program (TRIPP), Main Street Communities Cooperative Program, and the Destination Development Fund.

On an annual basis, Visit Frederick directly commits approximately 20% of expenditures to advertising and marketing with the goal to increase out-of-county visitation to Frederick County.



# **TRIPP** Success in FY23

**Grants through the TRIPP** program went to support a variety of Frederick County projects that will continue to benefit tourism attractions and initiatives into the future.

# TRIPP Program

The Tourism Reinvestment in **Promotion & Product Program** (TRIPP) provides an opportunity for Frederick County's nonprofit organizations to apply for advertising awards and development grants.

\$280,000

**NON-PROFITS & GOVERNMENT** AGENCIES DURING FY23

The goal of the program is to increase the number of visitors to Frederick County, encouraging them to stay longer, increasing the number of overnight stays in Frederick County hotels, and enhancing the overall marketability of Frederick as a destination. This program provides an opportunity for tourismrelated nonprofits and government agencies to further their initiatives and create a more vibrant experience for visitors and residents.

During FY23 the TRIPP program invested over \$280,000 in Frederick County non-profits and government agencies. The funding supplements local marketing budgets, allowing organizations to reach their target audience in new ways and represent Frederick County in a variety of digital and print media.

#### **GRANT INITIATIVE**

## **Weinberg Center** for the Arts **New Marquee**

This year also saw the completion of a FY19 development grant with the Weinberg Center for the Arts new marquee, designed to honor the Tivoli theater's original 1926 marquee.



### **GRANT INITIATIVE**

## The Great Frederick Fair's Harvest **Memories**

The Great Frederick Fair received grant funding for the film and photography initiative "Harvest Memories." The content created will be used to enhance future advertising campaigns, social media content, and the Fair's website.



### **GRANT INITIATIVE**

## **National Shrine of** Saint Elizabeth Ann **Seton's New Visitor Center & Museum**

TRIPP helped support the National Shrine of Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton's new visitor center and museum. This project incorporates advanced technology and engaging storytelling to share Mother Seton's story in vibrant detail. Creating a robust visitor experience for the over 60,0000 visitors the Shrine welcomes each year.



# **Main Street Communities Cooperative Program**

Frederick County is home to 5 designated Main Streets: Frederick, Brunswick, Middletown, Thurmont, and New Market.

These Main Streets are a testament to the community's commitment to preserving the charm and character of Frederick County's historic municipalities. The Frederick County Main Street Communities Cooperative Fund was developed in partnership with Frederick County Government to support the development and promotion of the Main Street program.

Through this fund, over \$300,000 was distributed to Frederick County's 5 designated Main Streets in FY23. Since the fund's inception in 2016, over \$1.4 million has been invested into the Main Streets.

**Thurmont COUNTY'S MAIN STREETS SINCE 2016** Middletown **Downtown Frederick** New Market \$300,000 **Brunswick DISTRIBUTED TO** THE 5 MAIN STREETS IN FY 2023





# **Destination Development** in Frederick County

Destination Development funding provides sponsorship opportunities for outdoor recreation, agritourism, heritage tourism, workforce development, and visitor-oriented events in Frederick County.

This initiative provides an opportunity to develop, grow, and evolve current visitor experiences to strengthen and support tourism throughout Frederick County. The programs supported are beloved by locals and visitors alike, creating a shared sense of value and community commitment.

\$286,000

DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT FUNDS DISTRIBUTED

\$1.5 million

DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT FUNDS DISTRIBUTED SINCE PROGRAM'S INCEPTION IN 2017

# Destination Development Successes

Destination Development funds have supported the Sailing Through the Winter Solstice project on Carroll Creek Park in Downtown Frederick. —

This winter light-show, unique to Frederick County, has become a visitor attraction bringing thousands of visitors to Frederick County during the holidays and throughout the winter months.





This program provides an educational opportunity for hospitality staff to become English fluent and literate, creating a better environment for employees to work and live in Frederick County.

14 VISIT FREDERICK ANNUAL REPORT

# **Destination Marketing**

As the designated Destination Marketing Organization for Frederick County, Visit Frederick plays a pivotal role in promoting unique attractions and cultural experiences. By crafting compelling content and strategic campaigns, Visit Frederick drives tourism, supports local businesses, and fosters economic growth. Our marketing team completed key projects in FY23 to enhance the visitor experience for Frederick County.

- · Redesigned the Wineries, Breweries, Distilleries brochure, in partnership with the Frederick County Office of **Economic Development**
- Produced a newly redesigned 2023 Frederick Visitor Guide, in partnership with Postern Agency
- · Completed the production of a new orientation film for the Frederick Visitor Center
- Produced a fall/winter and spring Calendar of Events
- Launched a new Visit Frederick website with expanded blog content and an interactive map

# **Destination Advertising**

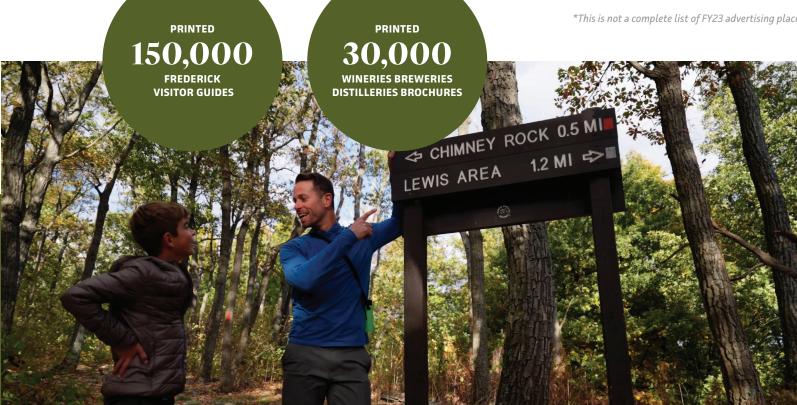
In FY23, Visit Frederick maintained a healthy mix of various advertising mediums including, print, digital, radio, and social media. Stunning images and compelling content target specific audiences with advertising themes focused on promoting the top reasons people visit Frederick County: history, outdoor recreation, craft beverages, the arts, and shopping & dining.

Visit Frederick placed more than \$900,000 in advertising during FY23, which included a marketing grant from the Maryland Office of Tourism Development in the amount of \$463,819.

## FY23 Advertising Placements\*:

Newsday **Better Homes & Gardens** Philadelphia Magazine **Southern Living** Expedia Comcast **Real Simple Magazine Trip Advisor** WUSA9 Travel & Leisure Magazine **Washington Post** Maryland **Road Trips** Garden & Gun Magazine **Blue Ridge Outdoors** Pittsburgh Magazine

<sup>\*</sup>This is not a complete list of FY23 advertising placements.



Our Print Advertisements

12,051

**Travel Packet Requests** THAT WERE SENT TO **FUTURE VISITORS.** 

16 VISIT FREDERICK ANNUAL REPORT VISITEREDERICK.ORG 17

# **Media Relations**

## In FY23, we saw the return of travel writers and media to the region following the COVID-19 pandemic.

Visit Frederick worked with dozens of journalists and media outlets in FY23, including several familiarization tours in collaboration with our partners.

The resulting earned media coverage highlighted a cross-section of Frederick County's visitor attractions and events to audiences ranging from regional, to national, and international media outlets. In particular, through Capital Region USA (CRUSA), Visit Frederick has placed a focus on increasing awareness of Frederick in the German-speaking market. Jake Wynn traveled to Austria and Germany in May 2023 with CRUSA, meeting with more than 20 journalists, including two who subsequently visited Frederick County on a media FAM.

Looking ahead to FY24, our team is placing new emphasis on pitching Frederick stories to regional and national outlets.

The following are among the outlets that we've worked with in FY23 to share stories about visitor experiences in Frederick County.

Washingtonian

Magazine **Baltimore Banner** 

WTOP

FOX5

WJLA

**Washington Post** 

(Monthly Column)

**New York** 

WUSA9

**Southern Living** 

Touristik aktuell

Der Mobilitäts

TourEXPI (Germany)

Manager (Germany)

(Germany)

NBC4

Frederick Magazine

Chesapeake **Bay Magazine** 

**Family Magazine** 



# Visit Frederick invested significantly in updating its website in FY23.

**Everyday** 

Working in collaboration with web developer Simpleview and Postern, our team redesigned VisitFrederick.org to improve user experience, develop new content, integrate video, and encourage visitors to discover what makes Frederick County a destination worth exploring. The new website launched in April 2023. The website continues to be the primary source visitors use to plan their visits to our region.

Where Hip Meets Historic

Get your Get your
NEWSLETTER > TRAVEL PACKET

Frederick

leighten

Where Hip Meets

Historic Everyday

**MORE THAN** 

805,000

Individual Users Accessed **VISITFREDERICK.ORG IN FY23\*** 

VisitFrederick.org

**PAGE VIEWS IN FY23\*** 









# **Social Media**

**Facebook** 

14,344

**FOLLOWERS** 

Instagram

13,722

**FOLLOWERS** 

Social Media **REACH IN FY23** 3.9 million **USERS** 

Social Media **ENGAGEMENT IN FY23** 136,000 **ENGAGED USERS** 



# **Conferences & Trade Shows**

Visit Frederick staff members attend trade shows throughout the year to promote Frederick County to specific market segments and also attend conferences to pursue professional development opportunities.

Pennsylvania Bus **Association Marketplace** 

**American Bus Association Marketplace** 

**Global Travel Exchange** 

**IPW** 

Capital Region USA -**UK Sales Mission** 

Capital Region USA -**Germany Media Mission** 

Mid-Atlantic Tourism **Public Relations Alliance** Media Marketplace

**Public Relations Society** of America Travel and **Tourism Conference** 

**Simpleview Summit** 

Destinations International **Annual Convention** 

**Destinations** International Marketing & Communications Summit

**Maryland Tourism** & Travel Summit





# **Visitor Services**

Our excellent Visitor Services team is proud to welcome thousands of visitors from around the world to Frederick County each year.

Their work connects visitors with experiences they can enjoy throughout the region, an invaluable opportunity for Visit Frederick staff to interact face-to-face with our visitors. The Frederick Visitor Center remains an essential resource to the City of Frederick and Frederick County.

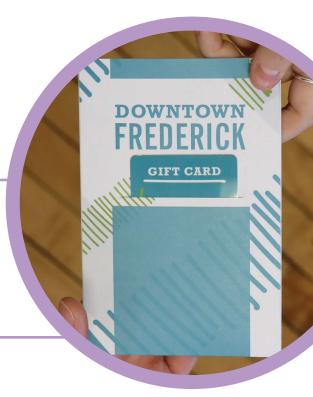
23,068

**FY23 TOTAL VISITORS** TO THE FREDERICK VISITOR CENTER **DOWNTOWN FREDERICK GIFT CARD TOTAL SALES** 

\$353,495

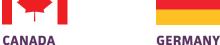
**VISITOR CENTER RETAIL TOTAL SALES** 

\$27,418.39



# **Top 5 Visitor Countries**

















**PENNSYLVANIA** 



**VIRGINIA** 





# Membership

## **Membership Program**

Partnering with Visit Frederick means making an investment in the future of Frederick County. Membership is open to businesses and individuals interested in promoting tourism in Frederick County, an industry that generates hundreds of millions of dollars for the region's economy each year. Visit Frederick members receive benefits such as custom listings in the official Frederick County Visitor Guide and on visitfrederick.org, access to Marketing Committee meetings, and invitations to Downtown Frederick and Frederick County familiarization tours.



## **Membership Events**

Visit Frederick Members are invited to participate in annual networking events which provide the opportunity to network and socialize with industry professionals from other Frederick County businesses and organizations. In October 2022, we held our Fall Annual Meeting and Networking Breakfast at Cannon's in Brunswick. In May 2023, we hosted a Spring Social at Citizens Ballroom in Downtown Frederick.

## 35 New Members

IN 2022-2023:

Attain Sports and Entertainment

Chocolates and Tomatoes

Citizens Ballroom

**Fetch Thrift Shop** 

Frederick Fit Body Boot Camp

Frederick Sedan Service

Frederick Social

Glen Ellen Farm

Guided Outdoor Travels

Habitat for Humanity

Happy Cow Creamery

Imagination Center, Inc.

M4 Studios

Magnolia Meadow Farms

Myersville-Wolfsville Area Historical Society

New Market Plains Vineyard

Partners in Care Frederick Upscale Resale Boutique

**Prospect Pantry** 

PVI Office Furniture Plus

Re/Max Results

Selfie Mode

Sleep Inn

Spire City Ghost Hounds

SpringHill Suites by Marriott

Sweet Clover

The Big Slide Mount Tabor Park at Rocky Ridge

The Farmhouse at Magnolia Meadow Farms

The Forgeman's House

Tsunami Ramen

UNESCO Body and Mind Wellness

Union Mills Public House

Upcycle Vintage Home Decor

Vino 301 Wine Concierge

Whispering Meadows Alpaca

**Wormald Homes** 



Visit Frederick (The Tourism Council of Frederick County) is a publicprivate partnership dedicated to enhancing the economic benefit of tourism for Frederick County's businesses, attractions, local governments, and residents. Membership is open to businesses and individuals interested in promoting tourism in Frederick County.