



2025 MARKETING PLAN



THE MOUNTAINS ARE CALLING

Wrapped in the Great Smoky Mountains, Gatlinburg is the perfect mountain getaway. Named by Tripadvisor as the #1 Trending Destination in the U.S. and #4 in the world, Gatlinburg serves up fine Southern hospitality and welcomes visitors from all over the world.

A walking town in the midst of scenic beauty, visitors find themselves immersed in the great outdoors, whether they are walking the Parkway or exploring the many hiking trails in the national park. Family attractions, great food and shopping, and arts and crafts galleries are just some of the things to do in Gatlinburg. Outdoor enthusiasts will enjoy hiking, fishing, ziplining and rafting in the Great Smoky Mountains.



WELCOME TO GATLINBURG

The Gatlinburg Convention and Visitors Bureau works closely with community stakeholders to maintain the momentum from record-breaking visitation over the last five years. As a gateway community to Great Smoky Mountains National Park, the most visited national park in the U.S., Gatlinburg works hard to create and maintain a welcoming presence for visitors. The Gatlinburg business community continues building on a strong hospitality industry with new and renewed hotels, restaurants and eateries, upscale retail spaces, and new attractions. Gatlinburg prides itself on its walkability amidst mountain heritage and the arts, crafts and shops that reflect that tradition.

Our Strategy

As stakeholders elevate the experience offered to visitors, marketing efforts will be aimed at acquiring a higher-income demographic with more discretionary spending capabilities.

Our Vision

To be the preeminent marketing organization for Gatlinburg, resulting in a vibrant economy, a sense of pride and an enhanced quality of life.

Our Mission

- Successfully identify and market the assets of our community, both internally and externally
- Develop and communicate a readily recognizable brand among our various constituencies
- Establish and reach measurable benchmarks for increasing economic impact
- Become a promotional and marketing resource to the community
- Promote a community-wide team spirit
- Encourage and support entrepreneurial efforts in the tourism industry
- Develop strategic relationships with other community stakeholders
- Recruit, train and retain the best possible talent to achieve our vision



STAFF

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BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Chair

Beau Massey
Collier Food Group

Vice Chair

Mark Adams
Ober Mountain

Treasurer

Gus Floodquist
Smartbank

Secretary

Maggie Bowers
Ole Smoky Candy Kitchen

Elected Directors

Karen Bentz
Anakeesta

Marlee Montgomery
Montgomery Amusements

Mike Fowler
Fowler's Clay Works

Sid Maples
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Dan Booth
The Hayloft

Past Chair

Logan Coykendall
Hospitality Solutions Inc.

Designated Directors

Randy Watson
Attractions Association

Jackie Leatherwood
Hospitality Association

Deidre Faulkner-Williams
Wedding Chapel Association

Amy Overbeck
Great Smoky Arts & Crafts Community

Trudy Hughes
Arrowmont School of Arts & Crafts

Doug Grote
Rocky Top Sports World

Ex-Officio Members

Cassius Cash
Liaison Designated
Great Smoky Mountains National Park

Trudy Hughes
Designated
Arrowmont School of Arts & Crafts

Lori Moore
Designated
Rocky Top Sports World

Robert Montgomery
Appointed
City of Gatlinburg

Mayor

Mike Werner
City of Gatlinburg

Vice Mayor

Mark McCown
City of Gatlinburg

City Manager

Greg Patterson
City of Gatlinburg



ARTICLES & ACCOLADES

The Best Small Towns in the U.S. to See Fall Foliage

Travel + Leisure | July 19, 2024

20 Best Things to Do in Gatlinburg, Tennessee

Southern Living | March 2, 2024

18 Best Things to Do in Gatlinburg and Beyond

Lonely Planet | September 21, 2023

10 Best Mountain Towns in Tennessee, According to Locals

Travel + Leisure | May 21, 2024

14 Affordable Vacation Destinations for Summer

Southern Living | September 29, 2023

Best Place to Visit for Fall: Gatlinburg, Tennessee

USA Today's 10Best | September 15, 2023

GROWTH & SUCCESS

Using longer-term goals as our guide, we measure performance against those goals throughout the year. By carefully tracking metrics along the way, we are able to pivot, persevere or add to our strategies as the results dictate. This flexibility ensures a great level of success, as the results show.

GOALS & SUCCESSES

Statistics are for July 1, 2023—June 30, 2024



Social Media Reach

2023: **165.1 M**
2024: **135.3 M**



Instagram Followers

2023: **247.5 K**
2024: **257 K**



Facebook Engagement

2023: **2 M**
2024: **1.9 M**



YouTube Views

2023: **24 M**
2024: **28 M**



TikTok Followers

2023: **38.7 K**
2024: **46.7 K**



Website Sessions

2023: **6.3 M**
2024: **6.4 M**

Website Pageviews

2023: **12.6 M**
2024: **16.5 M**



Vacation Guides Mailed

2023: **73 K**
2024: **91 K**

Vacation Guide Digital Views

2023: **50 K**
2024: **82 K**



App Sessions

2023: **109 K**
2024: **177 K**

App Users

2023: **36 K**
2024: **115 K**



Email Open Rate

2023: **18.4%**
2024: **23.2%**

Active Subscribers

YTD: **158 K**



Earned Media Impressions

226 M

On-Air Appearances

80

Content Creators

22

On-Air Added Value

2024 Goal:

Maintain consistency in the total number of interviews conducted for each station every quarter, ensuring steady on-air presence.

2024 Results:

Delivered quality on-air segments promoting Gatlinburg's events, businesses and more through over 80 added value opportunities.

Earned Media Placements

2024 Goal:

Secure quarterly earned media in local, regional, and national outlets. Increase media pitching by providing FINN Partners with deeper insights on area businesses and regional destination highlights. Boost destination awareness via social and trade partnerships with relevant content creators, bloggers, and influencers.

2024 Results:

Secured local, regional, and national placements:

Published in CBS News, Travel + Leisure, Southern Living, World Atlas, Romper, and more.

MARKET UPDATE

Statistics are from
July 1, 2023 — June 30, 2024

Hotel Rooms Sold:
1,270,539

Rental Property Rooms Sold:
2,414,475

Hotels

63.8%
Occupancy

\$139.72
Avg. Daily Rate

\$90.29
REVPAR

Rentals (Cabins, Condos, Chalets)

58.8%
Occupancy

\$280.00
Avg. Daily Rate

\$159.00
REVPAR

SHORT-TERM GROWTH

Recognizing that we are a city of 4,000 full-time residents hosting millions of visitors each year, Gatlinburg continued to consider how to add lodging opportunities while preserving our natural beauty.

We attracted new dining options for our diverse visitor base and provided support to build back a strong hospitality-oriented workforce with aspirations of long-term employment and a passion for Gatlinburg.



CREATIVE ASSETS

Video and image assets deliver on inspirational storytelling, create emotional connections and increase aspirational desire among travelers. The GCVB implements a seasonal strategy to procure, create and integrate high-quality visual content that is highly shareable and engaging across all platforms.

CrowdRiff technologies, social influencers, local photographers and community partners continue to provide visitors with authentic, quality content.

More than 2,500 photos and videos produced annually.



Tennessee's premier mountain destination provides exciting adventures and relaxing moments for lifelong memories.

LONG-TERM GOALS

To support an impressive history of long-term economic growth as well as responsibly protect and preserve Gatlinburg's abundance of natural beauty, the city must have strategic goals in planning for the future. Gatlinburg must attract a strong hospitality-oriented workforce and provide opportunities for long-term growth and development as well as consider sustainable lodging options. We must also continue to create new experiences for our ever-growing, diverse visitor base.



PAID MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS

visitgatlinsburg
Sponsored

Take in the beauty of the underwater realm. All the colors of the rainbow are waiting for you at Ripley's.



gatlinsburg.com
Make a Spectacular Splash
Plan Your Visit

Learn More

visitgatlinsburg
Sponsored

Escape to the wonders of the Smokies. Explore the trails, follow a stream, and find a beautiful view. The Mountains Are Calling.



gatlinsburg.com
Summer Is for Exploration
Chart Your Path

Learn More

visitgatlinsburg
Sponsored

Create cherished memories in Gatlinburg. Enjoy family fun and exciting attractions, all surrounded by stunning fall colors.



gatlinsburg.com
Feel the Joy of Fall Fun
Plan Your Family Trip

Learn More

visitgatlinsburg
Sponsored

Enjoy mountain views, downtown attractions, arts, and restaurants for an unforgettable escape.



gatlinsburg.com
It All Begins With Beauty
Plan Your Getaway

Learn More



Cherish Every Moment
Visit Gatlinburg



Find Fun Under a Smokies Sky
Visit Gatlinburg



**GATLINBURG
TENNESSEE**

**CALLING ALL
MOONSHINE
TASTERS**



**GATLINBURG
TENNESSEE**

**THE MOUNTAINS
ARE CALLING**

visitgatlinsburg
Sponsored

KICK OFF THE
4TH OF JULY
WITH CONNER SMITH
MEET & GREET • CONCERT • PARADE



PLAN YOUR TRIP →

**GATLINBURG
TENNESSEE**

CALLING ALL WHO
WANDER



PLAN YOUR TRIP →

**GATLINBURG
TENNESSEE**

CALLING ALL
**FAMILY
FISHERMAN**



PLAN YOUR TRIP →



**GATLINBURG
TENNESSEE**

HUNDREDS OF
**SWEET-TOOTH
SATISFIERS**



ONE OF THE MOST
**BEAUTIFUL
CITIES IN AMERICA**
BIGNEWSNETWORK.COM

**GATLINBURG
TENNESSEE**

CALLING ALL
**WILDERNESS
WANDERERS**



PLAN YOUR TRIP →

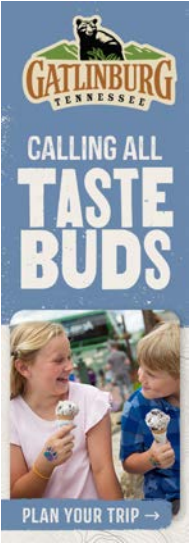


**GATLINBURG
TENNESSEE**

**CALLING ALL
NATURE
LOVERS**


**GATLINBURG
TENNESSEE**

CALLING ALL
**TASTE
BUDS**



PLAN YOUR TRIP →


visitgatlinsburg
Sponsored



SUMMER IS FOR
RELAXING

visitgatlinsburg
Sponsored


**#1 BEST
U.S. SPOT FOR A
FALL GETAWAY**
— USA TODAY



Learn More

**GATLINBURG
TENNESSEE**


WE'RE
**STACKING UP
FLAVOR**



MEET US FOR BREAKFAST →

**GATLINBURG
TENNESSEE**

CALLING ALL
WANDERERS



ADDED VALUE HIGHLIGHTS

Through added value opportunities, the Gatlinburg Public Relations team interviewed quarterly with stations in targeted DMAs, via Zoom or on-air. These interviews were broadcast in surrounding regional markets such as Lexington, KY, Birmingham, AL, Cincinnati, OH, Nashville, TN, and more. The purpose of these interviews is to showcase Gatlinburg's scenic beauty seasonally, as well as promote relevant upcoming events, happenings and area business highlights.

2024 Goal

To continue to increase visibility in target markets with quality segments highlighting Gatlinburg’s local businesses, seasonality, events, and happenings.

\$654K

Estimated Added Dollar Value

+30%

Estimated Increase in Added Value



Winter Trip Planning With Gatlinburg (Winter 2023)



Spring Break in Gatlinburg (Spring 2024)



Gatlinburg Toursim Opportunities (Summer 2024)



Fall Events in Gatlinburg (Fall 2023)

EARNED MEDIA & NATIONAL SPOTLIGHT

To secure earned media and increase unique and diverse perspectives of the travel landscape in Gatlinburg, the Gatlinburg Convention and Visitors Bureau continued to collaborate with travel writers, social media influencers and publications at the local, regional and national level.

The Gatlinburg CVB partnered with the Tennessee Department of Tourist Development to host both domestic and international travel writers, bloggers, and influencers. This collaboration was instrumental in promoting Gatlinburg’s businesses and events.

Additionally, the bureau secured valuable editorial content through both paid and earned media in several prominent national publications, including USA Today, Blue Ridge Outdoors, Pioneer Woman, Smoky Mountain Living, and Southern Living.

Gatlinburg also received notable mentions in several high-profile digital publications, including StyleBlueprint, Travel + Leisure, Romper, and Southern Living.



PRINT MEDIA DISTRIBUTION

Blue Ridge Country	100K
Blue Ridge Outdoors	300K
Evansville Living	50K
Garden & Gun	1.6M
Kentucky Monthly	126K
Smoky Mountain Living	60K
Southern Living	12.3M
USA Today	2.5M
Pioneer Woman	4.9M



MARKETING PROMOTIONS & EVENTS



Smoky Mountains Giveaway
Featuring Conner Smith

The Smoky Mountains Giveaway campaign garnered significant attention across platforms such as Gatlinburg.com, social media, and public relations efforts. The prize package featured a two-night stay, an attractions pass, dinner, VIP access to the parade, and a meet-and-greet with Conner Smith.

400K Social Reach **9,689** Entries **26.5K** Pageviews



Gatlinburg Fantasy of Lights
Christmas Parade

The Gatlinburg Fantasy of Lights Christmas Parade is a winter highlight, drawing up to 80,000 visitors who plan their vacations around this award-winning event. Broadcasted to over 150 million households through a partnership with Nexstar, the parade showcases Gatlinburg's businesses, attractions, and organizations through on-air announcements. This beloved event has also been featured in publications such as USA Today 10Best, StyleBlueprint, Southern Living, TravelAwaits, and more.

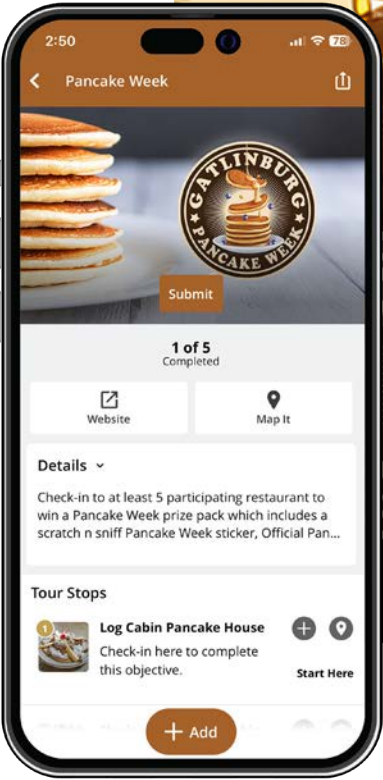


Pancake Week

Gatlinburg successfully stacked another year with a week-long celebration featuring the town’s rich tradition of the flapjack. Participating restaurants were highlighted on the Visit Gatlinburg app and Gatlinburg.com, as well as Visit Gatlinburg's social media platforms and local broadcast media.

New for 2023, pancake lovers could use the Visit Gatlinburg app to complete the Pancake Week challenge by checking in at five or more locations to join the Gatlinburg Breakfast Club and win prizes. The event led to over 13,000 visits to Gatlinburg.com, a 212% increase from the previous year, along with 191 app check-ins and 24 Pancake Challenge winners.

191 App Check-ins **13K** Site Visits **24** Winners



Eggo House Activation

In collaboration with Eggo’s Media Activation campaign, Gatlinburg gained national attention during the grand finale of Pancake Week. The event featured a fully renovated cabin, decorated to celebrate one of America’s favorite breakfast treats, Eggo.

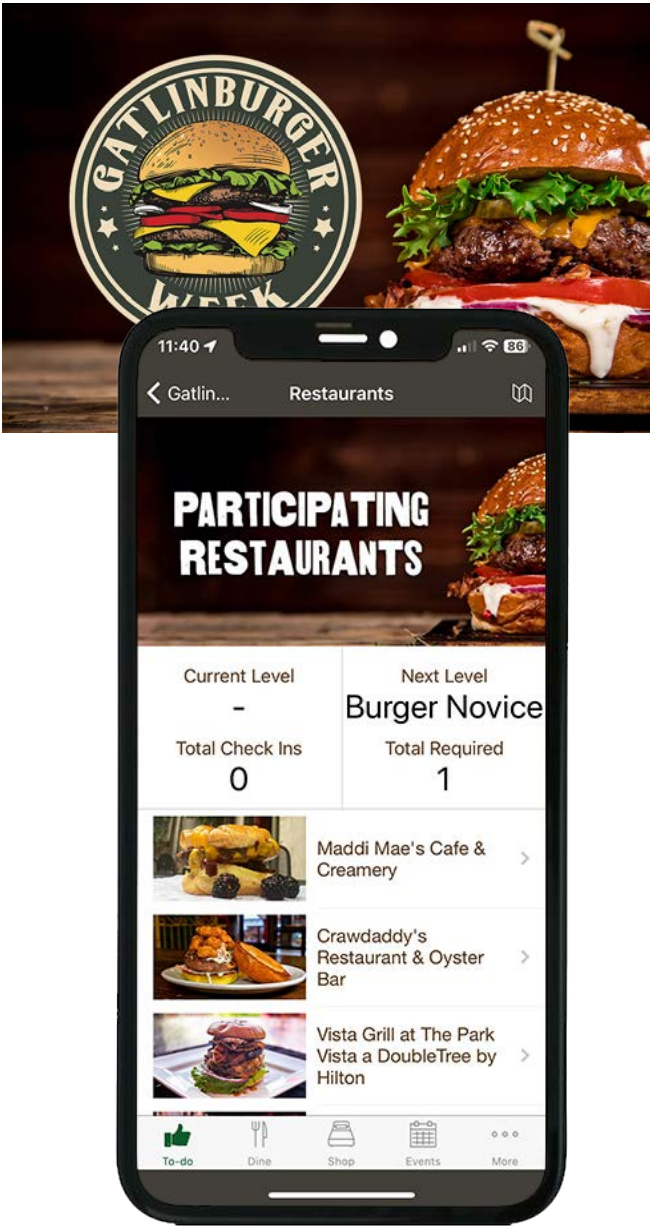
Gatlinburg and Eggo Impressions
January 1—March 18, 2024

1,520 Mentions **1.58B** Potential Reach **52K** Web Visits

GatlinBURGER Week

Record-breaking participation marked the 4th annual GatlinBURGER Week’s success. During this week, 19 restaurants offered a different specialty burger, with over 2500 burgers sold during that week. For the second year in a row, Boudicca’s Celtic Pub took home the coveted trophy for GatlinBURGER Meister with the most votes for favorite burger.

Burger-lovers also joined in on the foodie fun by participating to win prizes using the Visit Gatlinburg App. Newly added in 2023, users could use the app to check-in at each location under the GatlinBURGER Passport to level up and win prizes. Adding to a record-breaking year, participation increased over 400% with 325 check-ins on the app, 184 votes and over 27,000 visits to Gatlinburg.com.



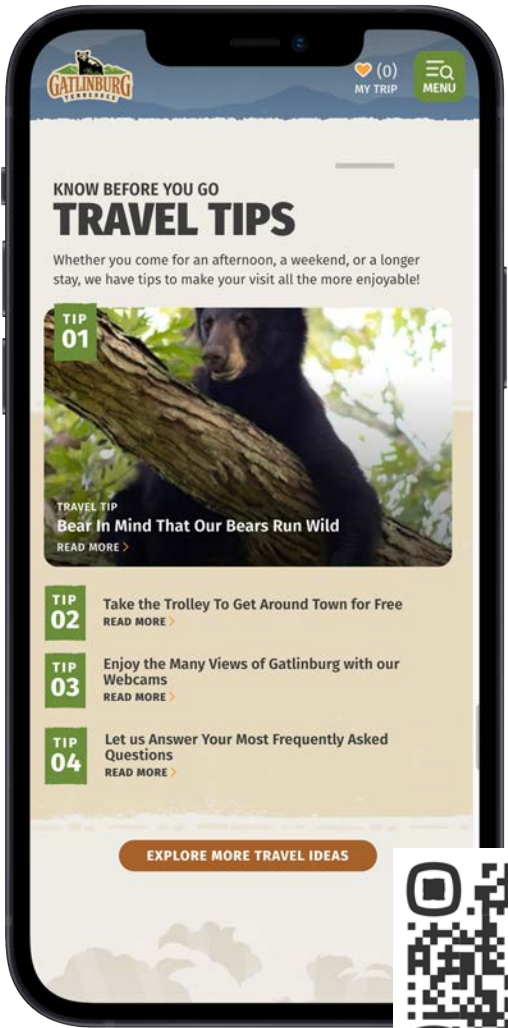
On the Road With Steve Hartman

Gatlinburg welcomed CBS News' "On the Road with Steve Hartman," marking Steve's first visit to Gatlinburg's Hillbilly Golf. Covering a story about places people longed to visit as children but never had the chance to, Gatlinburg helped Steve fulfill this childhood dream. The segment aired nationally on CBS News during the Friday evening broadcast and on CBS Sunday Morning.



WEBSITE REDESIGN

To improve search rankings, increase web traffic, and enhance the user experience while maintaining consistent branding, Gatlinburg.com underwent a full redesign in partnership with Simpleview. The redesign focused on a mobile-first approach with modern colors and layouts, creating a personalized experience that aligns with the new brand style guide. Key improvements include a refreshed aesthetic, enhanced UX across mobile and desktop with updated navigation and color strategies, better screen real estate use, prominent placement of the Vacation Guide to boost interest, and earlier delivery of relevant content to build more qualified leads.



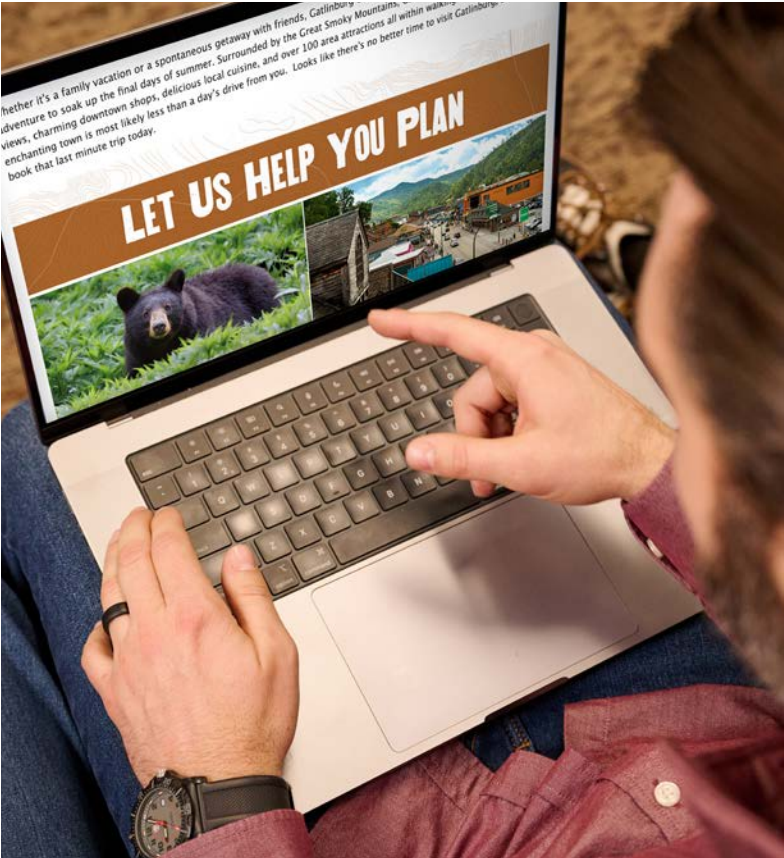
Scan to view website



EMAIL MARKETING

In partnership with Act-on, the Gatlinburg CVB redesigned and reformatted the Gatlinburg visitor emails to enhance the user experience. The new design features a style and formatting layout that aligns with the updated Gatlinburg Style Guide and broader marketing efforts.

Improvements include better mobile responsiveness with a wider width display to accommodate various screen sizes, and strategically placed KPIs and callouts throughout the email to increase click-through rates.

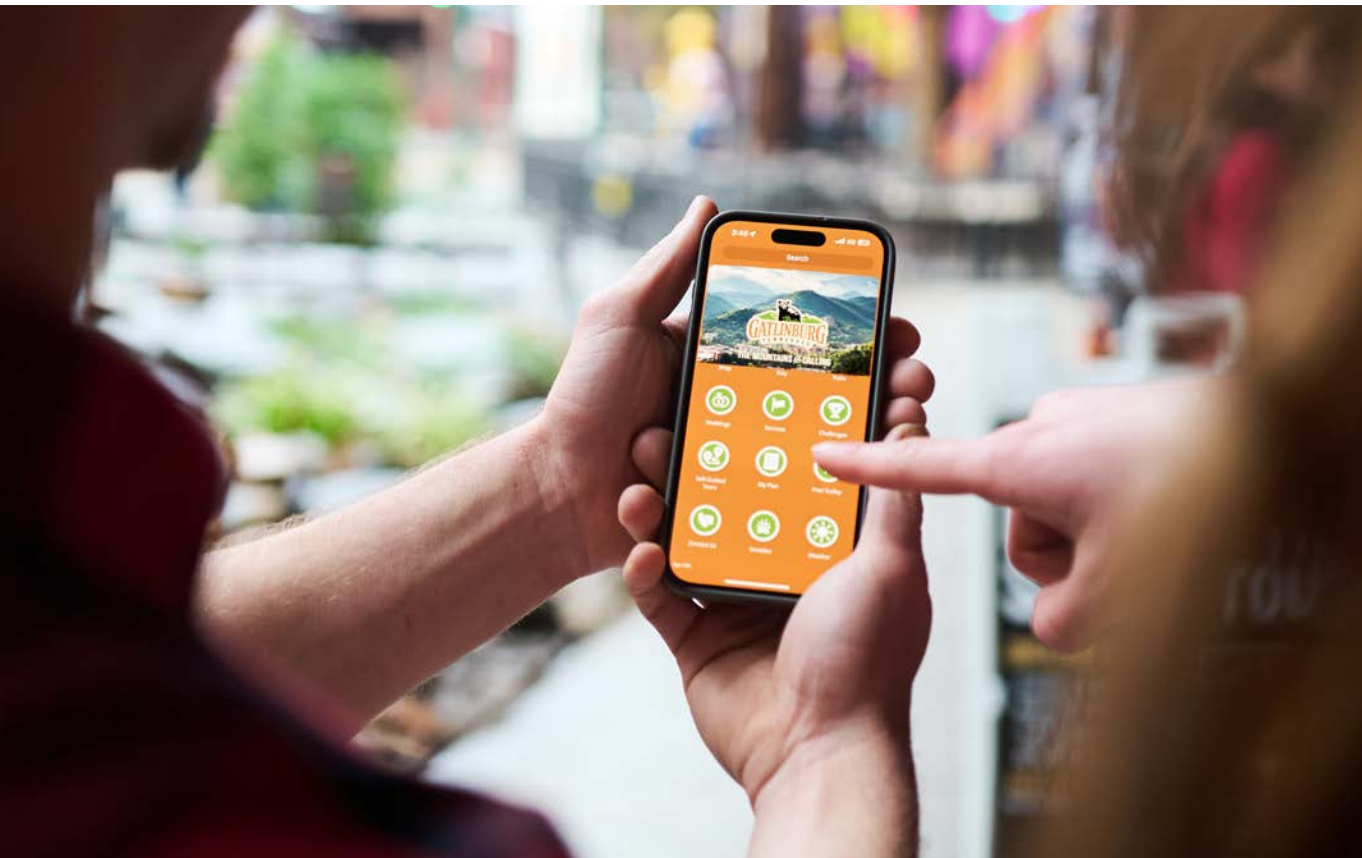


VISIT GATLINBURG APP

To improve the usability of the app, the Gatlinburg CVB partnered with Visit Widget to move the Visit Gatlinburg app to a new platform. The app focuses on creating a simplified and engaging experience, offering easy and inspiring trip planning, and providing valuable resources for on-location travelers.

The updated app now features interactive mapping for both mobile and Gatlinburg.com, along with enhanced capabilities like featured trails, engaging challenges, and self-guided tours. Members' listings are more prominently displayed and include advanced features such as multiple photos, a like button, and a trip builder with mapping functionality.

- Additional goals included:
- Increasing engagement using dynamic mobile tools like gamification challenges
 - Pairing down content and creating a more simplified interface to make it relevant for mobile users
 - Increasing vacation guide and email database requests and downloads with strategic ad placements throughout the app
 - Fostering deeper member/partner support and satisfaction

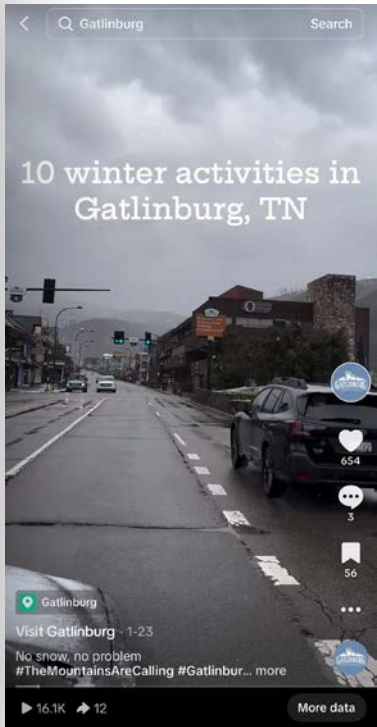


SOCIAL MEDIA

By hiring a social media and content manager, Visit Gatlinburg was able to create and post more content across all platforms to reach new visitors and connect with existing followers.

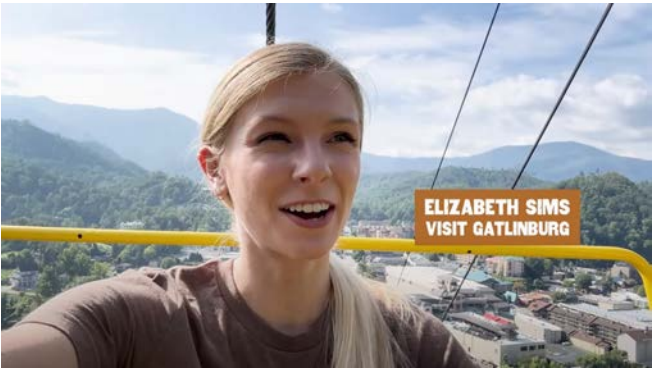
This year, Visit Gatlinburg placed an emphasis on vertical video content, as it has quickly emerged as the preferred format across platforms. The greatest success was achieved by adding a unique Gatlinburg twist to current trends, offering real-time glimpses of downtown, and creating comprehensive itineraries for events and activities.

To support increased content needs, Visit Gatlinburg partnered with CrowdRiff Creator Studio, assigning 50 requests to local creators for vertical video and photo stories. These assets, totaling nearly 300, have been used across Google Stories, Reels, TikToks, and other projects to reach new audiences.



Exploring with Elizabeth

Exploring with Elizabeth is a new YouTube series created and hosted by social media and content manager Elizabeth Sims. Each episode serves as a guide for visitors and gives them a chance to experience what makes Gatlinburg special before they arrive. The series also introduces viewers to community members and partners and allows them to share their part of the city's story from bear safety tips with TWRA/BearWise to a fly fishing excursion with Smoky Mountain Guides and more.



OUT-OF-HOME PLACEMENTS

East Tennessee

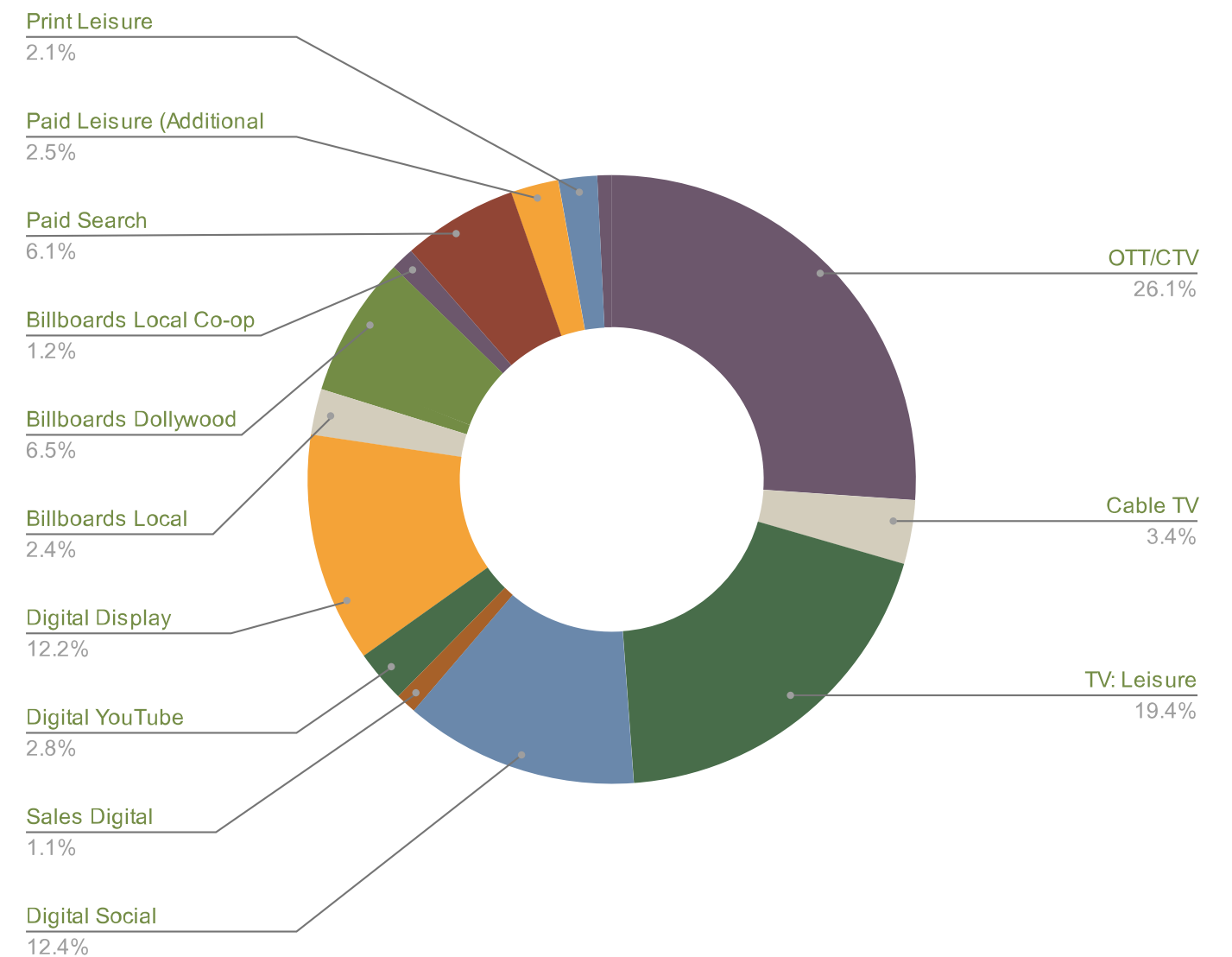
Out-of-home boards were placed in East Tennessee and Ohio. The CVB also maintained 35 additional boards in Atlanta, Nashville, and Charlotte through the Dollywood co-op program. Artwork was updated seasonally to represent the seasonal changes of the destination.



PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

To sustain the growth seen over the past 5 years, Gatlinburg must be strategic in its planning. With measurable long-term goals in mind, we can use past performance and sophisticated strategies and analytics to set a realistic budget for future work.

PAID MEDIA PLACEMENTS



2.8%

VISITOR PROFILE



Gen Z

HHI \$32,500
Age 18-25
No Children



Millennials

HHI \$60k+
Age 25-40
No Children



Families

HHI \$75k+
Age 25-60
One or More Children



Couples

HHI \$100k+
Age 25-60
Primarily Women



Affinity Target

Travel Buffs
Family Vacationers
Outdoor Enthusiasts



Gatlinburg Was Named as One of the Top Places to Visit in the USA.

U.S. News & World Report

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS & METRICS

ADVERTISING

Monitor each individual media channel’s performance, using Designsensory Dashboard and Google Analytics to complete the picture.

PUBLIC RELATIONS

Measure using media value, impressions and audience reached. Measure website traffic spikes aligned with publicity coverage dates.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Monitor and evaluate using social metrics of impressions, website referrals, engagements, reach and shared media value.

WEBSITE & APP

Drive traffic to Gatlinburg.com, increase total unique visitors, organic search traffic, page views, user interaction and engagement. Use Google Analytics and Simpleview's monthly SEO reports for insights to help create content that reflects visitors' needs.

ADDITIONAL METRICS

- Visitors Guide Downloads and Requests
- App Downloads
- Email Subscribers
- Increases in Tax Revenue
- STR Report
- Area Visitation Monitoring Platforms
- Datafy
- Flock Report (Car Tag Reader)

MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS GOALS

Destination Messaging

Messaging will showcase the ultimate leisure traveler experience by illuminating the vibrancy, diversity and depth of Gatlinburg’s cultural and natural attributes, along with the immense variety of over 50 unique attractions and plentiful dining and shopping opportunities.

Dynamic storytelling, expanded content creation, social media outreach, strategic public relations and integrated advertising strategies will share the messages.

Key marketing plan points will further the destination’s appeal as a legacy, a familiar and welcoming place that is focused on safety and cleanliness for both residents and visitors and is also filled with new treasures to discover.



Walkable Outdoor Activities



Attractions



Arts & Culture



Shopping



Diverse & Inclusive



Safe & Clean

UNIQUE DIFFERENTIATORS

Located adjacent to Great Smoky Mountains National Park, Gatlinburg is a mountain playground like no other. A variety of opportunities and activities provide for many magical moments and unforgettable experiences. Gatlinburg is built on a passionate and welcoming community.

"Domestic travel is set to exceed pre-pandemic levels by 2025, driven by a renewed appreciation for local experiences. Americans are rediscovering the beauty of their own country, with a growing interest in exploring untouched landscapes and natural wonders."

IGES

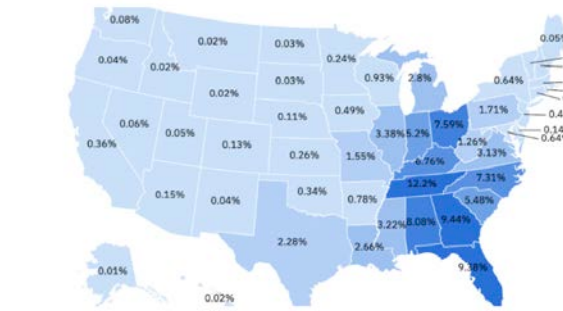


ANALYTICS & DATA OPTIMIZATION

The strategy and tactics will be built on robust analytics, using data to optimize efforts. Sophisticated targeting and retargeting will ensure the right audience is reached with the right message at the right time, showcasing additional messages to the widest potential visitor base. Digital messaging and delivery will be optimized with analytical tools to maximize performance, goal conversion, and KPI achievement.

Tools & Tracking

- Use insights and measurement tools to identify PR and social media opportunities, gauge effectiveness, and adjust as needed.
- Continue to track media relations ROI with news clip services, media touchpoints, site visits, proactive pitches, and performance assessments of placements.
- Refine best practices for deploying destination news content to enhance SEO, keyword share, backlinks, and Gatlinburg.com's online and social authority.
- Use Google Analytics to measure traffic and engagement from placements, influencer content, and online stories.



Datify: Visitors from July 1, 2023 thru July 30, 2024

Creative messaging will be tested across various audience segments in digital and paid social channels to understand nuances and responsiveness, highlighting the most engaging messaging. Additionally, available visitation data will be utilized to adjust media spending across tactics, partners, and channels, ensuring the most effective allocation of resources based on insights and data analysis.

- Develop strategies to leverage media coverage insights, including high-impact targeting, trending promotions, media influencer outreach, keyword pitching, and competitor analysis and optimization of back-linked content.
- Maximize added value with paid media placements.
- Use CrowdRiff for user-generated content and to track visitor preferences.



Google Analytics - Total Visitations from July 1, 2023 through July 30, 2024

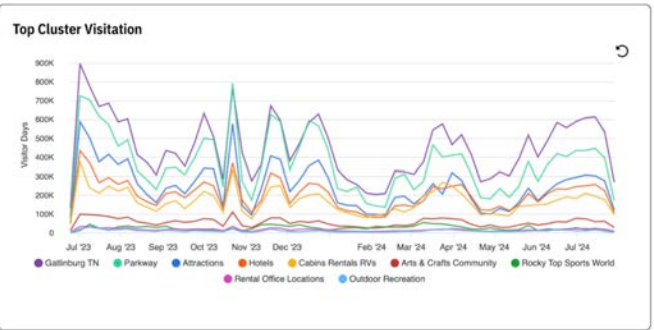
SHORT-TERM GOALS

Gatlinburg CVB Staff established the following goals for 2025 to reflect the strategic creation and implementation of quality messaging, information and positive rapport for the city of Gatlinburg. These goals are established to increase awareness of the city's many physical and natural attributes, to enhance the overall visitor experience and to provide pertinent information regarding our great destination through various platforms including strategic campaigns, PR efforts and digital and social media.

PUBLIC RELATIONS ADDED VALUE

Earned Media Goals for 2025

- Secure editorial opportunities for earned media in local, regional, and national publications by continuing to increase awareness through media pitching and hosting travel writers, influencers, and other media.
- Increase quality by providing FINN Partners with increased knowledge of area businesses, regional attributes and destination highlights.
- Increase destination awareness through social and online media platforms through trade partnerships with relevant content creators, bloggers and influencers.
- Continue to work alongside FINN Partners to build and strengthen relationships with media through relevant pitching and unique storytelling.



Broadcast Placement Goals for 2025

- Quarterly appearances in top drive markets to promote seasonal interests and events.
- Keep consistency with the total amount of interviews for each station each quarter.
- Strive for quality, interactive interviews featuring Gatlinburg-made products, local businesses, and members, when relevant.

Google Analytics - Peak Visitations July 1, 2023 through July 31, 2024

Peak Visitation - Month & Day

This visual estimates peak visitation by month and day based on the filter panel date ranges 7/1/2023 to 7/31/2024. The box showing 100% represents the day with the highest average number of daily devices per day during this time range. All other percentages are in comparison to the peak time (Saturdays in Jul).

Monday	33%	21%	30%	29%	30%	34%	44%	34%	27%	33%	31%	31%
Tuesday	21%	19%	28%	24%	25%	30%	39%	22%	20%	25%	23%	29%
Wednesday	18%	14%	29%	25%	21%	36%	43%	19%	18%	23%	19%	29%
Thursday	18%	14%	31%	23%	24%	39%	47%	23%	25%	28%	28%	34%
Friday	34%	28%	45%	42%	38%	62%	68%	43%	40%	54%	48%	51%
Saturday	59%	50%	80%	84%	72%	96%	100%	72%	58%	89%	82%	89%
Sunday	38%	32%	56%	53%	51%	67%	82%	62%	48%	61%	63%	66%
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec

WEBSITE

Boosting Engagement

Continue to increase the number of users, sessions and engagement rate with the following strategies:

- Optimize online experience and social media channels to provide personalized information.
- Drive advertising and social communications to Gatlinburg.com content and landing pages; measure click-through actions.
- Maintain an editorial calendar to update Gatlinburg.com with seasonal and user-relevant content.
- Analyze findings and implement technical and content recommendations from Simpleview's SEO team to improve organic performance and SERP ranking.
- Apply SEO best practices in new content development and updates to existing and seasonal pages.
- Engage and retain web users by balancing detailed, practical destination insights and resources with aspirational content, incorporating dynamic functionality and impactful visuals to inspire and enhance online travel planning.
- Use Gatlinburg.com to inspire visitation, promote content sharing, and encourage vacation bookings.
- Continue to create new and curated content based on Simpleview's SEO data and trending keywords as well as optimizing the website to meet ADA compliance.



Top Cities

Atlanta
Chicago
Nashville
Ashburn
Charlotte

Top Pages

Home page
Attractions
Cabins & Chalets
Things to Do
Things to Do with Kids

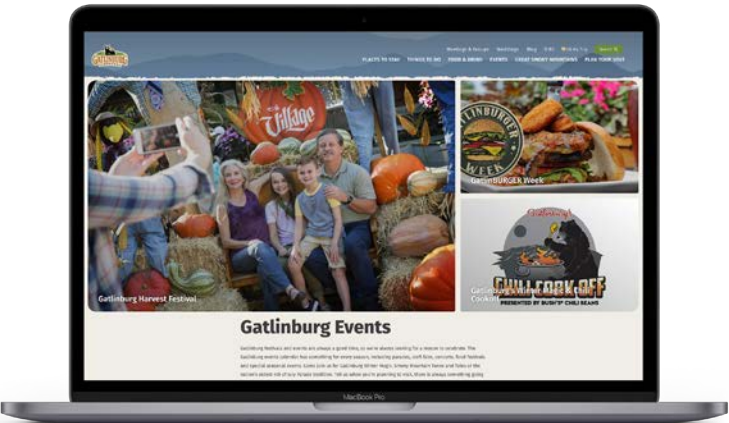
Goals for 2025

- Increase new users & sessions year over year.
- Boost average engagement time on the site annually.
- Implement AudioEye to enhance ADA compliance.

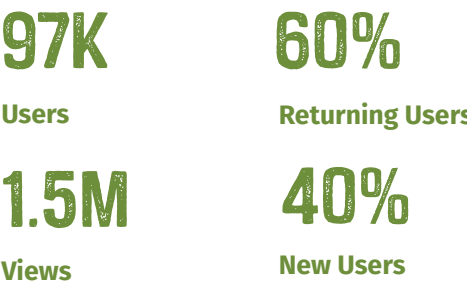


SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION

- Develop, curate and promote world-class content through dynamic and diverse storytelling.
- Develop creative that integrates with paid media campaigns and keeps the traveler engaged on Gatlinburg.com.
- Draw on data from Simpleview, Google Analytics and input from local partners to determine editorial coverage based on consumer interest, news value and search trends.
- Continue to work in partnership with Simpleview, Finn and Designsensory to develop written and visual content with destination authority.
- Create marketing campaigns that utilize contests and giveaways to help grow databases in collecting first-party data.
- Build custom landing pages that speak specifically to hyper-targeted markets.
- Create and build custom pages for specific content based on popular Google searches to increase engagement and visitation of website.
- Optimize and structure landing pages and blogs for a better user experience and to be more user friendly for Google crawlers.



VISIT GATLINBURG APP



Goals for 2025

- The goal for the Visit Gatlinburg app in 2025 will be to continue to increase sessions, active users and user engagement.
- Incorporate new features such as challenges and self-guided tours to increase user engagement and app downloads.
- Partner with Visit Widget to implement new features to continually improve the user experience.



SOCIAL MEDIA

Continue producing monthly Exploring with Elizabeth content to grow YouTube subscribers. Place an emphasis on creating more vertical shorts to increase viewership.

Grow engagement on Facebook and Instagram using more vertical video for reels and collaborations with CrowdRiff content creators and influencers. The emphasis will be on highly shareable content such as listicles and trends that tell Gatlinburg's story. This will help us reach our goal of 50k followers on TikTok by the end of the year.

Increase responsiveness with social media community by replying to more comments and posting content that encourages people to share their experiences.

EMAIL MARKETING

Optimize an online outreach program that leverages email newsletters to consumers and to the local industry.

Send monthly destination emails to inspire travelers to plan and drive traffic to Gatlinburg.com with an annual goal to increase open and click-thru rate.

Create a retargeting campaign specifically targeted to unengaged subscribers to optimize Gatlinburg's email database with a goal of sending to qualified leads.

In partnership with Act-On, utilize features like automated emails and A/B testing to increase subscriber engagement.

VACATION GUIDE

The Vacation Guide contains detailed information about attractions, events, lodging, restaurants and shopping. It caters to traveling families, as well as travel agents, AAA offices and state visitor centers. It is also available online as a downloadable PDF. The Visitors Guide is also a resource for the lodging businesses to provide information to guests regarding the city activities.

97K

Distribution Goals for Vacation Guide

1.5M

Distribution Goals for Room Guide

LONG-TERM GOALS

To support an impressive history of long-term economic growth as well as responsibly protect and preserve Gatlinburg's abundance of natural beauty, the city must have strategic goals in planning for the future. Gatlinburg must attract a strong hospitality-oriented workforce while providing opportunities for long-term growth and development as well as consider sustainable lodging options. We must also continue to create new experiences for our ever-growing diverse visitor base.



CREATIVE RECOMMENDATIONS

As our destination evolves, so should our messaging and visual approach. Our choice of photography should inspire the viewer with new perspectives. Our compositions striving for an authentic tone will provide our potential guests with a taste of what their experiences can be in our destination.

CAPTURING & LEVERAGING CREATIVE ASSETS

A seasonal strategy will be implemented to create and integrate high-quality visual content that drives sharability and engagement across digital platforms. CrowdRiff, social influencers, local photographers, and community partners will provide authentic, quality content for visitors.

Video and image assets will deliver on inspirational storytelling, create emotional connections and increase aspirational desire among travelers using the channels best suited for reaching target audiences.

These assets should:

- Engage visitors in dynamic experiences.
- Showcase the diversity of experiences.
- Include integrated video assets for cross-channel units, maximizing views and increasing click-throughs to Gatlinburg.com.
- Include new, tailored videos to individual markets based on insights and interests.

Content capture strategy:

- Collaborate with Designsensory to implement recommendations for organizing and updating assets in Photoshelter.
- Partner with travel writers and influencers to gather relatable content, enriching the current photo and video asset libraries.
- Develop a seasonal series of 30-second, 15-second, and 6-second spots focusing on family and generational experiences in Gatlinburg, distributed across digital media, YouTube, OTT/CTV, and streaming television.
- Leverage in-house staff and production equipment to capture vertical videos for TikTok and other social platforms.
- Expand the Community Stakeholder Co-Op Programs by collecting experiential visual assets in collaboration with area attractions.
- Enhance traveler desire through content tailored to the channels best suited for reaching target audiences.



AUDIENCE TARGETING

Reach the right audience, at the right time, with the right message through sophisticated targeting and retargeting. Optimize digital messaging and delivery using analytical tools that deliver on KPIs to maximize performance and goal conversion.

DESIGNATED MARKET AREAS

DYNAMIC DIGITAL

General DMAs

We are hitting 200+ additional DMAs each quarter based on user demand.

Birmingham, AL
Bowling Green, KY
Charleston-Huntington, WV
Chattanooga, TN
Columbus, OH
Dayton, OH
Evansville, IN
Greensboro-High Point, Winston-Salem, NC
Greenville-Spartanburg-Asheville, NC-SC
Huntsville, AL
Indianapolis, IN
Johnson City-Kingsport, TN
Bristol, TN-VA (Tri-Cities)
Lexington, KY
Louisville, KY
Raleigh-Durham, NC

Targeted DMAs

Atlanta, GA
Charlotte, NC
Knoxville, TN
Nashville, TN
Cincinnati, OH

TRADITIONAL

Broadcast

Charlotte, NC
Chattanooga, TN
Greenville-Spartanburg-Asheville, NC-SC
Johnson City-Kingsport, TN
Bristol, TN-VA (Tri-Cities)
Louisville, KY
Knoxville, TN
Nashville, TN
Cincinnati, OH
Lexington, KY
Birmingham, AL

Cable

Nashville, TN
Knoxville, TN
Chattanooga, TN
Charlotte, NC

Trending DMA Watch List

Central to South Florida
Charlotte, NC
Raleigh, NC

Generation Z, who are entering adulthood with more discretionary income and a hunger for outdoor experiences, as well as outdoor enthusiasts.

TACTICS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Overall Paid Media Plan

Move Birmingham, Huntsville, and Lexington DMAs into the General market; use these budgets to help the General market absorb the extra locations, and layer out the rest in other hot markets like Nashville & Atlanta.

Digital Media Tactics & Recommendations

Overall

- Continue contextual & behavioral prospecting and retargeting

Paid Social

- Expand interests & behavior prospecting (family, couples, singles, multigenerational) and retargeting efforts
- Utilize Social Competitive Conquesting by setting a geofence location target on competitors, like Dollywood, and serve ads with specific messaging
- Include one social proof ad and one seasonal itinerary ad in each set

Paid Search

- Continue moving campaign focus into general, Tennessee, and Smoky Mountain vacation searches vs. keywords containing “Gatlinburg,” keeping brand spend under 15% of our total for 2025
- Run a Google Play App campaign to encourage app downloads and usage with a small portion of our overall search budget (1-2% of total search budget)

YouTube

- Increase the investment in YouTube, as this accessible platform is becoming an increasingly popular choice for all audiences, particularly the 18-44 age group
- Run bumper & in-stream ads
- Utilize contextual & behavioral prospecting and retargeting

OTT/CTV

- Shift to focus on premium inventory only (i.e. premium is Hulu, Netflix, Amazon vs non-premium lesser known channels). While this will incur a higher CPM, overall we believe the impact of limiting our OTT/CTV presence to premium domains only will bring about a positive bottom-line shift when looking at conversions delivered and other valuable actions (will yield lower traffic but higher conversions)
- Continue contextual & behavioral prospecting and retargeting

Added Value

- Creative Studio Support for HTML5 animations - up to \$180K in added value
- Footfall attribution analysis (separate from Datafy)
- Tennessee Dept of Tourism 3-1 Match for Programmatic Display with Sojern - estimated \$60K in added value
- Tennessee Dept of Tourism 2-1 Match for YouTube Ads with Strike Social - estimated \$20K in added value

Programmatic Display

- Switch to premium inventory only
- Heavy up the focus on retargeting, in addition to contextual & behavioral audience targeting

Traditional Broadcast Media Tactics & Recommendations

Overall

- Traditional to OTT/CTV ratio is roughly 47%/53% split overall (may vary by market)
- Drop from 12 to 9 DMAs, removing Dayton, Huntsville, and Louisville
- No traditional media is planned in Atlanta GA, Bowling Green KY, Columbus OH, Charleston WV, Dayton OH, Evansville IN, Greensboro-Winston-Salem NC, Huntsville AL, Indianapolis IN, Louisville KY, or Raleigh NC

Broadcast TV

- Recommend running 20 weeks at 180 GRPs per week for all markets except Charlotte and GSA, which would be off in Q1-Q2 due to residual effects from Hurricane Helene
- Charlotte and GSA have around 1325 GRPs planned and will have fewer weeks as explained above - each would run 7.5 weeks at approximately 180 GRPs
- For TV, our scheduling patterns would be similar to 2024, starting in early February and running on for 2-3 weeks then off for a couple of weeks in between flights, then back on, etc. We'll plan 3-week flights in the spring and fall, and cut back to 2-week flights during the summer months.

Cable TV

- Cable markets would remain the same in Charlotte (Q3-Q4 only), Chattanooga, Knoxville, and Nashville. For cable, we'll be on consistently every week as budget allows throughout the spring and fall. Then for the summer months, we'll mirror the TV schedule.

Seasonality

- Market spend will be flighted according to seasonality and trip & vacation planning windows. We'll stagger flights based on each market's trip planning window:
 - Group 1: Birmingham, Cincinnati, and GSA will start first for 3-4 week planning
 - Group 2: Charlotte, Lexington, and Nashville will start one week later for 2-3 week planning
 - Group 3: Chattanooga, Knoxville, and Tri-Cities will start two weeks later for 1-2 week planning
- Dark in January, November & December due to limited budget and seasonality; reflects board request to start broadcast first of February
- Suggested traffic dates for TV spots:
 - Group 1: Spring 2/10; Summer 5/26; Fall 8/19
 - Group 2: Spring 2/17; Summer 5/26; Fall 8/25
 - Group 3: Spring 2/24; Summer 5/26; Fall 9/1

Added Value

- 25% negotiated with TV buys (per board directive, interviews are preferred, plus a few contests; followed by bonus spots; sponsorships/news tickers/etc. also considered)
- 10% bonus impressions included with cable if the buy is secured in Q1

MEDIA ACTIVATIONS

Activations will center around community-wide partnering opportunities to promote Gatlinburg with the goal of boosting engagement, driving awareness and encouraging patronage.

DESTINATION MESSAGING

- Differentiate Gatlinburg by promoting its diverse and distinctive offerings to elevate the destination's visitor appeal and encourage increased patronage by residents of what is in their own backyards.
- Continue to build on community communications to welcome new partners, including restaurants, boutiques and custom tour providers for destination visits and storytelling subjects.
- Collaborate with all local hospitality partners for cooperative media visits to demonstrate the depth and scope of the destination's quality tourism product.
- Engage established content creators with followings as traditional media or influencers to create story, video and photo assets to promote key activities, including fishing, GSMNP outdoor adventures, dining, cultural activities and more.
- Continue to utilize print media, online publications (sponsored content) and influencer marketing to enhance other paid media efforts.



TRADITIONAL/BROADCAST MEDIA FLOW CHART

Allocations may fluctuate due to market conditions.

[illegible]

DIGITAL MEDIA FLOW CHART

2025	January				February				March					April				May				June					July				August					September					October				November				December									
	6	13	20	27	3	10	17	24	3	10	17	24	31	7	14	21	28	5	12	19	26	2	9	16	23	30	7	14	21	28	4	11	18	25	1	8	15	22	29	6	13	20	27	3	10	17	24	1	8	15	22	29						
General																																																										
Paid Social - Single Image, Carousel, Video + Dynamic Ads, Retargeting																																																										
Paid Search - Responsive Text Ads (Google & Bing) - Competitive Conquesting Included																																																										
Programmatic - Desktop + Mobile // Display, Native & Video																																																										
Alternative Destination Intercepting																																																										
OTT / Connected - TV :30, :15																																																										
YouTube - TDTD match program // :30, :15, :06 and companion banner																																																										
Ripley's																																																										
Ripley's - Paid Social - Single Image, Carousel, Video + Dynamic Ads; Retargeting																																																										
Ripley's - Programmatic - Desktop + Mobile / Display, Native & Video																																																										
Ripley's OTT / Connected TV - :30, :15																																																										
Ripley's - YouTube																																																										
Knoxville																																																										
Paid Social - Single Image, Carousel, Video																																																										
Paid Search - Responsive Text Ads																																																										
Programmatic - Desktop + Mobile // Display, Native & Video																																																										
OTT / Connected TV - :30, :15																																																										
YouTube - TDTD match program // :30, :15, :06 and companion banner																																																										
Nashville																																																										
Paid Social - Single Image, Carousel, Video + Dynamic Ads																																																										
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OTT / Connected TV - :30, :15																																																										
YouTube - TDTD match program // :30, :15, :06 and companion banner																																																										
Atlanta																																																										
Paid Social - Single Image, Carousel, Video + Dynamic Ads																																																										
Paid Search - Responsive Text Ads																																																										
Programmatic - Desktop + Mobile // Display, Native & Video																																																										
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YouTube - TDTD match program // :30, :15, :06 and companion banner																																																										
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Programmatic - Desktop + Mobile // Display, Native & Video																																																										
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Paid Social - Single Image, Carousel, Video + Dynamic Ads																																																										
Paid Search - Responsive Text Ads																																																										
Programmatic - Desktop + Mobile // Display, Native & Video																																																										
OTT / Connected TV																																																										
									PRE SPRING BREAK					PRE MEMORIAL DAY										SUMMER VACATION								LEAF PEEPER SEASON																										

PRINT MEDIA FLOW CHART

Allocations may fluctuate due to market conditions.

JANUARY	FEBRUARY	MARCH	APRIL	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUGUST	SEPTEMBER	OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER
BR Country Gateway Annual Travel Guide Issue		BR Country BR Parkway Guide Great Smoky MTNS Intro				BR Country 2024 Annual Blue Issue		BR Country 2024 Annual Fall Festival			1/4 Page
											1/2 Page
			BR Outdoors			BR Outdoors				BR Outdoors	
											Full Page
	Garden & Gun (co-op section)				Garden & Gun (co-op section)						
					Good Grit - Summer Travel Issue						
			Home & Farm (Spring Issue)								
		KY Monthly			KY Monthly				KY Monthly		
		Outside (Spring Issue)									
		Smoky Mountain Living							Smoky Mountain Living		
Southern Living (co-op section)											
					USA Today Southeast Travel			USA Today National Parks			
								Pioneer Woman			

ANNUAL GATLINBURG EVENTS

Gatlinburg is a year-round destination with a variety of seasonal events for guests to enjoy. Below are some of the city’s annual staple events and festivities. For more details, visit [Gatlinburg.com/events](https://gatlinburg.com/events).



Gatlinburg St. Patrick’s Day Celebration

The city comes alive with a fun-filled, family-friendly festival of Irish culture. Decorated in Shamrock Green with the official Irish flag throughout the city, Gatlinburg celebrates the Celtic holiday with traditional Irish food, music and more.



Gatlinburg Pancake Week

Highlighting the rich history of the sweet breakfast treat in Gatlinburg, the city showcases its famous pancake stacks for an entire week at various participating restaurants. During this week, visitors and locals are encouraged to download the Visit Gatlinburg app to check-in at participating locations to win prizes.



GatlinBURGER Week

Competing for the title of “GatlinBURGER Meister,” participating Gatlinburg restaurants create a special burger to sell for one week only. Visitors and locals are invited to order and vote for their favorite burger plus download the Visit Gatlinburg app to complete the GatlinBURGER Challenge to win prizes.



Gatlinburg Independence Day Celebration

The 4th of July Midnight Parade is coined as the “First Independence Day Celebration in the Nation.” Patriotic floats, performers, marching bands and more line the Parkway as the parade kicks off at midnight. The festivities continue with performances and the annual River Raft Regatta, with a spectacular Fireworks Finale to mark the end of the holiday.



Winter Magic Celebration

The Gatlinburg Winter Magic Celebration kicks off the beginning of the holiday season in Gatlinburg and the Smokies. Over 1 million LED twinkling lights decorate the city, turning Gatlinburg into a magical winter wonderland.



Gatlinburg’s Fantasy of Lights Christmas Parade

The parade is recognized as one of the “Top 20 Events in the Southeast” featuring lighted floats, marching bands, performers and balloons. Led by the Budweiser Clydesdales in 2021, the parade was streamed into over 150 million households through a collaborative partnership with Nexstar.



Gatlinburg New Year’s Eve Ball Drop and Fireworks Show

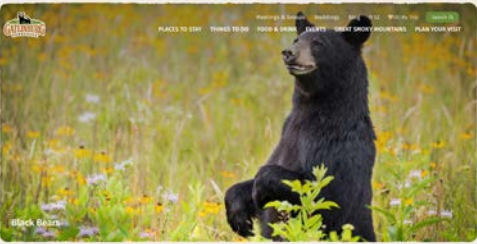
A decades-old tradition sparks excitement for the new year with an annual fireworks show and ball drop at the Gatlinburg Space Needle. The celebration has been coined the “Best New Year’s Eve Show in the South.”

BEARWISE

Visit Gatlinburg partnered with BearWise in 2024 to educate visitors and the local community about bear safety by providing resources on [Gatlinburg.com](https://gatlinburg.com) and social channels.

Our Efforts:

- We repurposed the 2016 Bear Facts campaign on YouTube for a vertical format on Reels, TikTok, and YouTube Shorts to emphasize different aspects of BearWise and shared them weekly.
- We collaborated with TWRA black bear support biologist Janelle Musser for a YouTube video demonstrating and explaining BearWise tips for visitors. This was also condensed and converted to a vertical format for TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube Shorts.
- We shared videos of bears in the wild paired with BearWise tips.
- We shared photos of bears in the wild with blog posts from our website written by BearWise.
- We promoted Bear Safety Tips in a callout section on the home page of gatlinburg.com
- We have a black bear landing page on gatlinburg.com which gives more indepth information about black bears and information from BearWise.org



See for Yourself:

We continually share updated articles & logs from BearWise about bear safety.



Avoiding Bears



Bear Safety Tips



Bear Fall Tips



Bear Vacation Tips



Gatlinburg Convention & Visitors Bureau

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