

Tourism WORKS

2019 HAMILTON COUNTY, INDIANA



JUST NORTH
OF INDY



CARMEL | FISHERS | NOBLESVILLE | WESTFIELD | NORTHERN TOWNS



TOURISM IS ABOUT

People



When it comes right down to it, tourism begins with people.

More than 10,000 individuals who work in Hamilton County depend on the more than \$820 million in direct spending by more than 4 million visitors each year to make a living.

People visit. People welcome those who visit.

A friendly face at the hotel desk who checks in that weary business traveler from New York whose flight was delayed and has an early training session to attend in the morning.

A smiling person who sells that couple from Fort Wayne an iced cold beer on a warm summer's evening at Ruoff Home Mortgage Music Center during concert intermission.

A strong but soft-hearted guy who gently helps your slightly nervous 8-year-old son into a canoe as you embark on a two-hour adventure ride together.

A rambunctious group of boys from Chicago that drove down for a must-win baseball tournament and is thrilled to compete at one of America's best places to "play ball!"

When your Aunt Betty visits from Cleveland, that's tourism too. If you take her out for barbecue and an ice cream cone, you become part of the tourism people structure.

Tourism is not as much about facts and figures as it is about the people who make it all work.

TOURISM CONTRIBUTES TO: 10,329 JOBS



TOURISM DIRECT/
INDIRECT PAYROLL



HAMILTON COUNTY'S
TOTAL EMPLOYMENT



LOCAL, STATE
& FEDERAL
EMPLOYMENT TAXES

SOURCE: 2017 ECONOMIC IMPACT OF TOURISM IN HAMILTON COUNTY, ROCKPORT ANALYTICS



TOURISM IS ABOUT

Places



Tourism is about envisioning places where we all want to be.

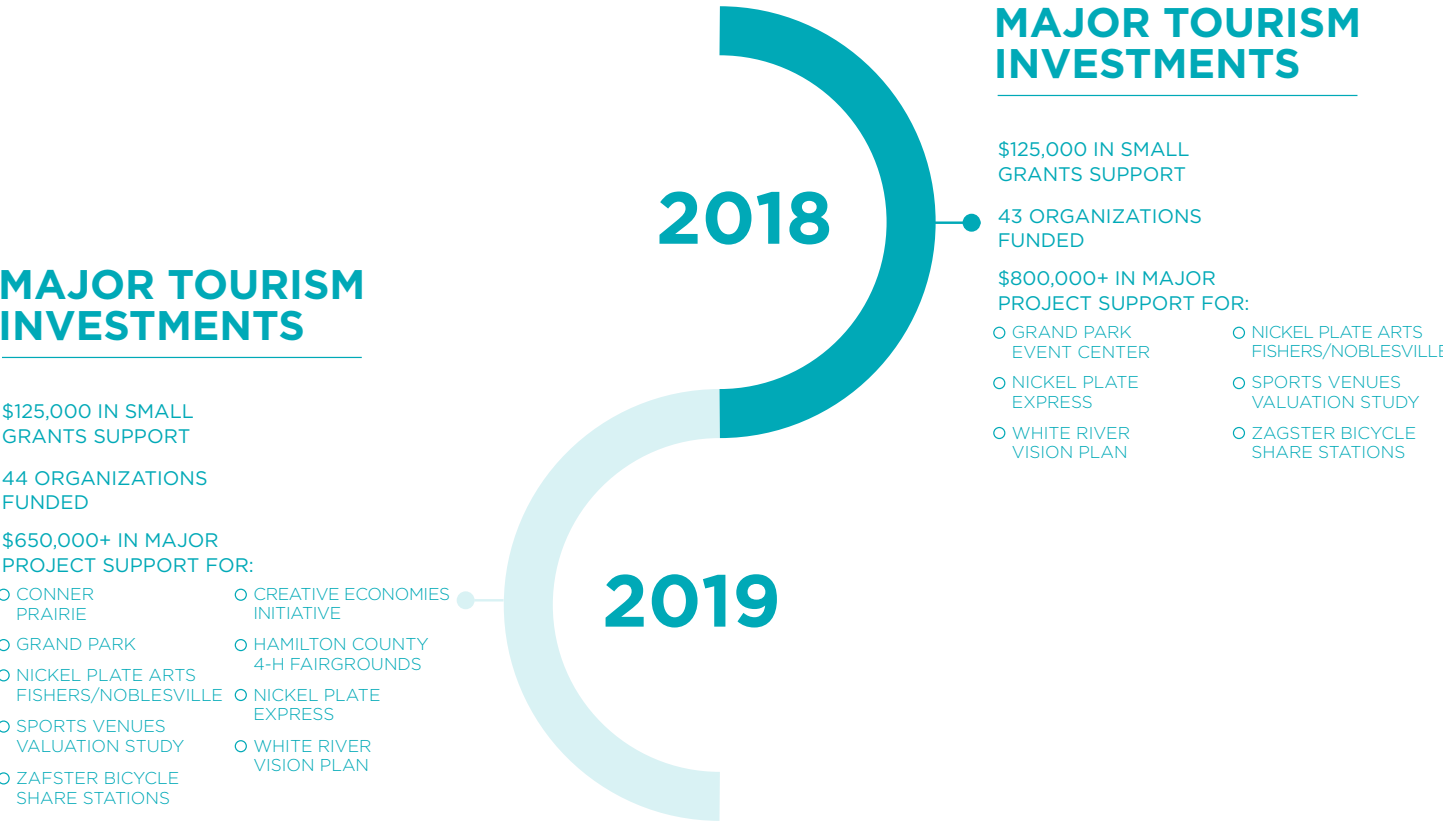
Since 2005, Hamilton County Tourism has re-invested \$10 million into its community through technical assistance, capital and operating grants, marketing support and more.

Hamilton County's communities dream big and deliver on those dreams. They create vibrant downtowns, amazing parks to explore and support new attractions and events. We are big fans.

Feasibility studies become sports parks. Technical assistance becomes an exciting new attraction. Operating grants provide

much-needed funds for a festival or performance season. And that marketing support, that's where we shine the brightest, annually spending almost \$2 million to promote our great places.

In 2019, Hamilton County will inaugurate a Destination Development Team comprised of members of the Hamilton County Council, Hamilton County Visitors and Convention Commission and Hamilton County Tourism. This team will set the course for similar investments in the coming years.





TOURISM IS ABOUT

Stories



Our communities have great stories to tell and Hamilton County Tourism loves to tell them.

The communities of Carmel, Fishers, Noblesville, Westfield and the more rural northern tier of the county have great stories to tell potential visitors.

A strategic and layered marketing platform helped Hamilton County outperform its state peer groups by almost 4:1 in 2017, the last year of economic impact measurement. That was more than 11 percent growth in just one year.

Hamilton County Tourism believes in “tradigital” marketing—a blend of traditional print, radio and television advertising with the use of well-placed promotions on digital platforms. Traditional advertising remains a costly investment, so research and comprehensive analytics help us understand where that advertising will produce the best results.

The marketing team constantly evaluates results for its social, search and paid media campaigns and fine-tunes messages to targeted markets. That produces more than \$300 in spending by visitors for every \$1 spent in advertising.

In 2018, Hamilton County Tourism worked with Turner Public Relations to amplify the many local stories that deserve to be told. As a result, more than 30 national media placements were earned and eight travel writers were hosted in the county this year. The tourism team also visited reporters in New York and Chicago to plant the seeds for future storytelling.

2018 NATIONAL STORY PLACEMENTS

Working with our partners at Turner Public Relations, 2018 was a banner year for travel story placements from blog posts, to national magazines and more. Proof that Hamilton County has a great travel story to tell.

“The Best Place to go Wine Tasting in All 50 States”
– Matador Network

“Meet the Amazing Women Entrepreneurs & Makers of Hamilton County Indiana” – Livability

“Best Breakfast in Every State” – Food & Wine

“30 Destinations with Beautiful Fall Leaves”
– U.S. News & World Report

“9 Best Food & Drink Trails in the United States”
– Trips to Discover

“Lots of Lights: Christmas Markets Close to Home & More Midwest Holiday Happenings”
– Chicago Tribune

“Your Next Epic Family Adventure” – Red Tricycle

“Amazing Hike: The Monon Trail in Indiana” – Insider

“Eat Pie: The Best Fall Activities in Every State”
– Reader’s Digest

“Ride the Rails: The 15 Best Fall Weekend Getaways”
– Reader’s Digest

“National Bike Month: How to Celebrate this May”
– Fox news Channel

“Travel to Hamilton County for Pedal Perks”
– Chicago Tribune

“America’s 25 Cutest Main Streets in Small(er) Towns”
– Fodor’s Travel

“15 Labor Day Weekend Getaways for When You’re Not Ready for Summer to End” – Best Products

“20 Terrific Train Trips” – Travel Channel

“41 Mini Family Vacations that Won’t Break the Bank”
– Reader’s Digest

“Go Floating” – She Knows

“5 Wonderful Weekend Getaways for Families”
– Chicago Parent

FOOD & WINE

U.S. News
A WORLD REPORT

Chicago Tribune

Reader’s Digest

FOX NEWS
channel

Fodor’s

Economics

TOURISM IS ABOUT



The year 2018 is one for the record books.

This is measured by hotel room demand growth and attendance at many of our key venues, as well as advertising effectiveness response.

A record return on investment for spring and fall advertising campaigns in Chicago attracted leisure travelers to more than 120,000 room nights looking for a quick getaway. Other regional advertising drove additional visitation.

More than one million hotel rooms were sold in Hamilton County in 2018, a seven percent increase in room demand over 2017.

Lodging sales have increased significantly since 2015. Hamilton County now sells about 250,000 more rooms each year now than it did just three years ago.

On weekends, hotels remain full for about two-thirds of the year thanks to a vibrant sports, concerts and leisure market. Weekday room sales are highly dependent on the business and transient markets and remain remarkably strong but have struggled to fill the more than 1,000 in additional hotel rooms available each night.

ECONOMICS OF TOURISM

VISITORS SPEND:
\$820
MILLION

SUPPORTING:
\$26.6
MILLION
PROPERTY TAXES

**DIRECTLY CONTRIBUTING
TO AREA GDP:**
\$453
MILLION

SAVING
LOCAL TAXPAYERS:
\$779
**PER HOUSEHOLD
EACH YEAR**

SOURCES: 2017 ECONOMIC IMPACT OF TOURISM IN HAMILTON COUNTY, ROCKPORT ANALYTICS; STR;
2018 ADVERTISING EFFECTIVENESS STUDY



The rapid growth in our tourism economy comes with a responsibility.

Responsibility to ensure that tourism products are the right fit for the right community. That tourism offerings have longevity and sustainability. And that quality of life for residents is not impacted.

Responsibility means fiscal responsibility for managing lodging tax dollars generated through this increase, now generating more than \$5 million.

In 2018, Hamilton County Tourism completed its accreditation with distinction renewal from Destinations International, the trade association that leads the tourism industry globally. While HCT has long been accredited, new standards encouraged the organization to stretch and grow.

Because Hamilton County Tourism is indeed a countywide tourism agency, understanding how it can partner with its communities is important to its success. In addition to funding special projects, the organization also provides marketing and graphic design assistance, and works to welcome groups that come to stay and learn in their communities.

Through the Hamilton County Tourism Vision 2025 Plan, which was updated for 2019, the organization listened and will expand its work in building strategic alliances and advocacy for tourism in the community.

TOURISM WORKS FOCUS AREAS

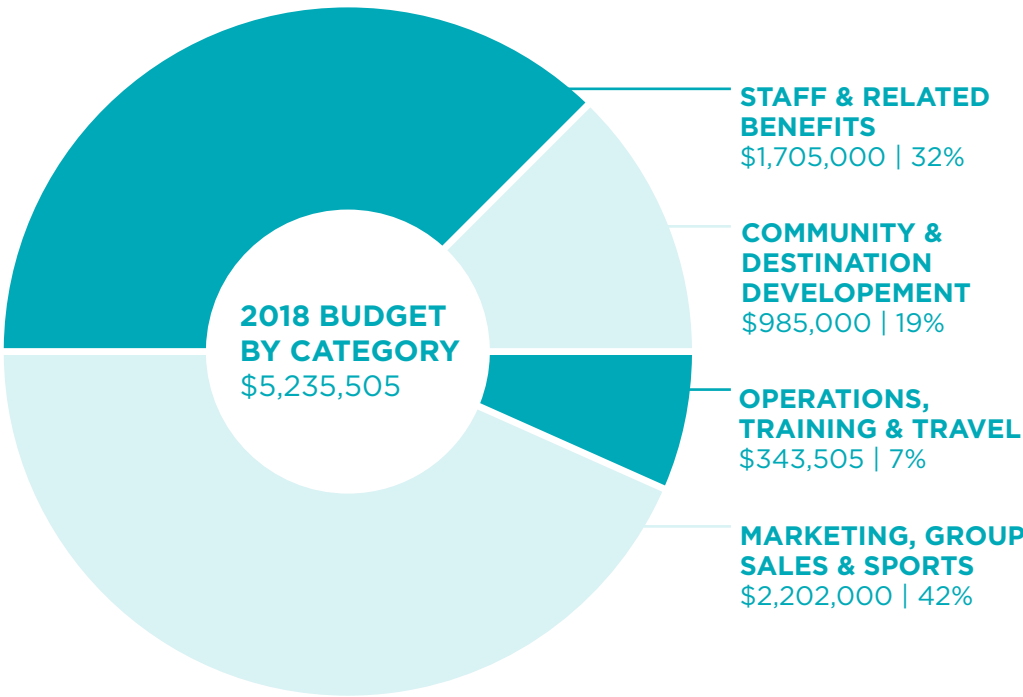
COMMUNITY &
PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

GROUPS & THE
VISITOR EXPERIENCE

MARKETING
INTELLIGENCE

STRATEGIC ALLIANCES
& ADVOCACY

WISE INVESTMENTS
& FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY



2019 Organizational Goals

1. 85 percent or more of all dashboard KPIs achieved
2. Create a broad-based advocacy plan with goals

2019 Department Goals

Marketing

1. Launch new website to include new blog and engagement strategies
2. Conduct email user audit to re-engage audiences
3. Activate 30 partners in Google travel products
4. Execute a publicity strategy with Turner PR

Sales

1. Improve identity in group marketplace by executing creative touch point campaign
2. Target regional chapters of MPI and ASAE for business development
3. Execute relationship building strategy with third-party meeting planners
4. Create a strategic blueprint for the future of HCSA

Visitor Experience

1. Expand Ambassador trainings, increase communications and improve online training content
2. Formalize internal event support program
3. Formalize hospitality activation with Visit Indy's city-wide events
4. Support partnership efforts through prospect partner visits, B2B connections and hosted events

Destination Development

1. Create implementation plan for White River Vision Plan 2.0
2. Launch creative economies initiative
3. Support Hamilton County 4-H Fairgrounds improvement plan
4. Help Nickel Plate Heritage Railroad to independence

Operations

1. Contract and orient a new auditor
2. Research and implement IT project management and password solution software
3. Prioritize Intacct Individual Business Review findings and execute at least three of the top recommendations
4. Prioritize MacAdmins Operations Report Card findings and implement at least three of the top recommendations

Human Resources

1. Investigate industry and job-specific certifications for staff and create a plan
2. Conduct benefits review and recommend value-added benefit offerings
3. Implement Predictive Index program and integrate into performance management and employee engagement
4. Create a standard operating procedures manual

Economic Development*

1. Develop a comprehensive marketing and communications plan
2. Establish KPIs and measurement metrics
3. Lead development of an Innovative Tourism package to attract groups, entrepreneurs and innovators
4. Create a strategic two year plan to present to board of directors by year-end 2019

*Partnership with Hamilton County Economic Development Corporation

HAMILTON COUNTY TOURISM

Vision 2025



JUST NORTH
OF INDY

2019 PROGRESS REPORT

visit
hamilton
county
indiana



HAMILTON COUNTY TOURISM, INC
**LEADERS IN
DESTINATION
MANAGEMENT**

\$300

Hamilton County Tourism marketing efforts return over \$300 in visitor spending for every advertising dollar spent

2019 Best Places to Work in Indiana



\$10M

Almost \$10 million invested in grants & community projects

Hamilton County welcomes visitors in 36 hotel properties with just over 4,300 rooms

37



21

Market Watch:
40% more hotel rooms since 2013. An additional 800 rooms possible by early 2021

Challenge

Grand Park Sports Campus, Westfield

HAMILTON COUNTY GREAT PLACES TO LIVE, WORK, PLAY & VISIT

TRANSFORMING THE LANDSCAPE

In this fast-paced world, if you aren't moving forward you are moving backward.

Hamilton County Tourism has always been a progressive organization leaping into the future, and in 2015 it made a deliberate decision to vision strategically by identifying six areas of focus. In 2016, Hamilton County Tourism adopted a 10-year Vision 2025 plan designed to propel the organization toward a national standard of operating excellence while supporting visionary place-making in our communities.

The organization dug deeper to recruit and train an exceptional staff, established performance goals guaranteeing success, and concentrated on the six areas of focus that aligned with other strategic planning efforts in the region. All while keeping an eye open for opportunities that would continually enhance our product or gain market share.

What does it mean to strive for national standards in tourism development and marketing?

For us it means a destination and an organization known for **innovative** strategies and design; a **diversity** of product, people and thought; a **vibrant** lifestyle rich in culture; and the ability to **attract** a large market share.



**Best Places
to Live** 
**Money Magazine, Best Places to Live*



**WISE
INVESTMENTS
& FISCAL
RESPONSIBILITY**

**DIGITAL
MARKETING &
CONNECTIVITY**

**GROUPS &
THE VISITOR
EXPERIENCE**

**COMMUNITY
& PRODUCT
DEVELOPMENT**

B I G W I N S C O M P L E T E D

- | | | | |
|---|---|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adopted robust financial software system • Renewed accreditation with distinction • Best Places to Work designation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Year-round digital marketing • \$338 ROI for advertising • National leader in Google Travel Products activation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprehensive sales and service departments • Welcome program for hotels and events • At-your-door ambassador training program | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nickel Plate Express train experience • US Bicycle Routes 35, 50 and Monon Trail experiences • Zagster bike share support • Noblesville alley activation plan |
|---|---|--|--|

N E X T U P

- | | | | |
|---|---|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hamilton County Economic Development Corporation talent attraction management contract • Sponsorship sales program • Standard operating procedures for all departments • Destination development investment team | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share marketing assets with local efforts • Local top 10 list creation • Positioning and packaging around trails and nightlife • Visitor information kiosks • Experiential storytelling | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HC Sports Authority strategic plan • Regional co-operative lead generation and sales strategy • Countywide volunteer website and recruiting • Group incentive funding | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • White River regional master plan • Expanded bike routes in central Indiana • 4-H Fairgrounds brand enhancements • Creative economy collaboration |
|---|---|--|---|

H O W D O Y O U F I T I N ?

- | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workforce attraction leadership • Board and committee work • Sponsorship | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HCT partnership through the PIN network • Subscribe to newsletter and social media • Kiosk installations • PR and Marketing Power Hour | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteer ambassador training • Sales missions and tradeshow participation • Hotel Power Hour | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grants participation • Collaboration on community development projects • Identify community investment partners |
|--|---|---|---|

MARKETING INTELLIGENCE

NEW* STRATEGIC ALLIANCES & ADVOCACY

BIG WINS COMPLETED

- Digital marketing and research office
- Biannual future events and monthly major events calendars
- Biannual Hotel Power Hour
- Market valuation of sports facilities
- Study trips for best practice and inspirational planning
- Sports Summit
- High School tourism hospitality certificate

NEXT UP

- Event survey program
- Event transportation cost analysis
- Regular published reports, infographics and presentations
- Summit events and learning labs
- Staff certifications
- Marketing assistance and co-operative

HOW DO YOU FIT IN?

- iPad survey loan program
- Subscribe to Major Events calendar
- Facility valuation program
- Share visitor information and attendance
- Attend learning events
- Be a partner and engage in projects and programs

**A previous focus area on Nightlife has been incorporated into a number of areas including marketing and development by adding a new Creative Economies program. In its place, we'll focus on Strategic Alliances and Advocacy.*

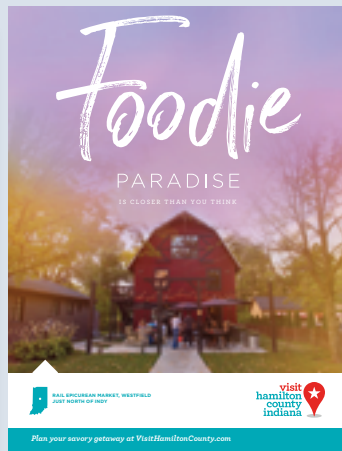
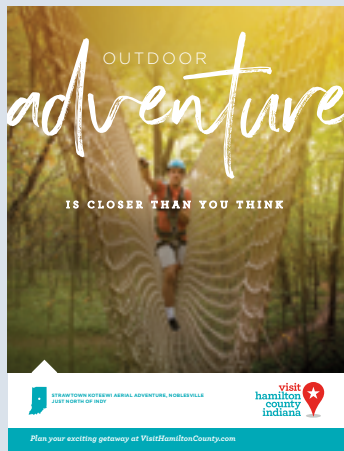
WE DON'T ASK **WHY.**

WE ASK
why not

Ruoff Home Mortgage Music Center, Noblesville



THE Brand



HAMILTON COUNTY MARKETING INNOVATING FOR BUSINESS



Truly 360 recognizes HCT marketing team as a top Google Travel performer in the nation



An average 102% increase YOY for seven digital marketing KPIs

Over 400,000 impressions in national stories valued at \$600,000 in just six months in 2018



\$15M

Over 200 direct sales opportunities with clients each year leading to over \$15M in potential business



100,000 travel guides & calendars distributed annually



TOP ROW:

Chicago 2018 Fall Ad campaign Print Advertisements

BOTTOM ROW:

Winter Calendar of Events, 2018 Travel Guide, Tourism Works





BOARD OF DIRECTORS

JEFFREY BROWN

Director at Large
Schahet Hotels

NORMAN BURNS

Secretary/Treasurer
Conner Prairie

BOB DUBOIS

Chairman
Noblesville Chamber of Commerce

JEREMY GEISENDORFF

Vice Chairman
Cambria Suites - Noblesville

JOHN HUGHEY

Immediate Past President
Fishers Arts Council

JUDI JOHNSON

City of Noblesville

GARY MILLER

Staybridge Suites - Fishers

ANDREW NEWPORT

Director at Large
Ruoff Home Mortgage Music Center/Live Nation

AL PATTERSON

Hamilton County Parks & Recreation

JIMIA SMITH

Pedcor Companies/Carmel City Center

ANGIE SMITHERMAN

City of Westfield

SCOTT SPILLMAN

HSE S.P.O.R.T.S.

MARK TRUETT

Center for the Performing Arts/Palladium

EX-OFFICIO:

FRED GLYNN

Hamilton County Council

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ROBYN PAUKER

DONNA PRATHER

CHRIS RENNER

BILL SMYTHE

HOWARD STEVENSON

BRENDA TOLSON

PERRY WILLIAMS

*Tourism Commission appointed members as of press time 3/2019. Additional appointments pending.

