

Visit
HERSHEY &
HARRISBURG



Annual Report

JULY 2022 - JUNE 2023

ORGANIZATIONAL STRATEGY

Based on input from hundreds of global destination leaders, the Destination NEXT 2023 Futures Study is the most comprehensive analysis available of the trends and forces that affect destination organizations. The 2023 Futures Study shows how destination organizations are increasingly prioritizing destination development, which includes a broad scope of themes through a travel industry lens.

2023 FUTURES STUDY KEY FINDINGS AND TRENDS

- Customers are increasingly seeking a unique, authentic travel experience.
- Communities expect to be more engaged in destination, product and experience development for locals and visitors.
- There's a greater focus on placemaking to benefit both locals and visitors.
- Combined business and leisure travel ("bleisure/ blended travel") is becoming more popular.
- There is greater demand for more dynamic outdoor experiences.
- More destinations are focusing on improving accessibility for travelers of all abilities.
- More destinations are increasing their focus on sports tourism and major cultural events for short and long-term business development.

VHH USED THESE CORE TRENDS AS A GUIDE TO FACILITATE A SUSTAINABLE TOTAL DESTINATION EXPERIENCE FOR TRAVELERS IN ALL MARKET SEGMENTS.

- Highlighted cultural diversity and positioned Dauphin County as an inclusive and welcoming destination.
- Content efforts focused on creating cohesive, impactful, and actionable message and voice strategies to inspire travel to the region.
- Communication strategies engaged local and regional media to amplify VHH initiatives, products, and programs.
- Development and execution of creative and compelling Marketing Campaigns to drive visitation to our region.
- Experience Development identified new tourism assets to grow our unique and experiential programs.
- Utilized User Generated Content (UGC) to showcase authentic visitor content.
- Enhanced sports event service offerings provided to rights holders to ensure customer retention, increased attendance and overall visitor spending.
- Explored initiatives to continue to increase our role in destination and product development as it relates to sports and events.
- Facilitated Partner interactions via multiple in-person Partner events.
- Sales efforts focused on creating more opportunities for partners to connect with planners.
- Sales initiatives highlighting wellness and Bleisure/ blended travel for planners.



DESTINATION ALIGNMENT STRATEGY

In early 2023 VHH engaged with place strategy experts, who have advised destinations, communities, cities, and governments around the world, to assist with development of a Destination Alignment Strategy that will support economic growth and strengthen the overall destination appeal of our region.

Destination alignment is a key factor in improving our competitiveness to attract visitors, talent, and investors to our region. While Dauphin County has overcome many challenges over the last decade to become a leading destination, the region still struggles with a clear identity. We have a unique opportunity to align our economic development, talent attraction and tourism propositions around a common and inspiring platform.

PHASE 1 - SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

Presents a snapshot of “where we are today” and reveals the alignment and gap between the visitor, client, and stakeholder perception and our competitive benchmarking performance.

PERCEPTION: VISITOR, CLIENT, AND STAKEHOLDERS

Two online surveys were developed to collect opinions from
1,278 visitors & 90 clients

A strategic review of Visit Hershey Harrisburg collateral was completed

20+ one-on-one zoom stakeholder interviews were conducted

12 in-person interviews held with external stakeholders in tourism, sports, and business

3-day site visit conducted by the research team

BENCHMARKING

Dauphin County was compared against 13 destinations selected by size of their tourism economy and comparable infrastructure. They were benchmarked across more than 40 indicators grouped into 6 categories.

- **Place:** The quality of the destination’s natural and built environment.
- **Product:** The destination’s key institutions, attractions, and infrastructure.
- **Programming:** The destination’s arts, culture, entertainment, and culinary scene.
- **People:** The destination’s diversity and education of its workforce.
- **Prosperity:** The destination’s wealth and economic well-being.
- **Promotion:** The destination’s reputation and online presence.

The Situational Analysis Report reveals the motivating characteristics and differentiators of Dauphin County that will shape the destination branding, marketing strategy and implementation. This work will be completed in FY23-24.



FISCAL YEAR 22-23

OPERATING FINANCIALS

REVENUE

Hotel Room Tax	\$2,735,293
Grants	\$1,060,082
Partnership/Co-op Marketing	\$102,838
Events/Rentals	\$94,367
Miscellaneous	\$67,938

Total Revenue **\$4,060,518**

EXPENSES

Marketing/Communications	\$1,596,378
Sales/Partnership/Services	\$603,704
Community Relations	\$537,703
Sports & Events Authority	\$502,674
Management & Operations	\$764,345

Total Expenses **\$4,004,804**



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Visit
**HERSHEY &
HARRISBURG**

ASSOCIATIONS & ORGANIZATIONS

VHH actively participates with these associations and organizations:

- Alliance of Independent Meeting Planners
- Amateur Athletic Union
- American Bus Association
- American Society of Association Executives
- Blacks in Travel and Tourism
- Brand USA
- Color & Culture
- Compete Sports Diversity
- Conference Direct
- Connect
- Cvent
- Destinations International
- Diversity & Inclusion Professionals of Central PA
- Harrisburg Regional Chamber & CREDEC
- HelmsBriscoe
- International Inbound Travel Association
- Keystone Business Alliance-Central PA's LGBTQ Chamber of Commerce
- Keystone Regional Volleyball Association
- Latino Connection
- Maryland Motorcoach Association
- Meeting Planners International (Middle PA, Philadelphia and Potomac chapters)
- Mid-Atlantic Tourism Public Relations Alliance
- National Collegiate Athletic Association
- National Tour Association
- PA Esports Coalition
- PA Interscholastic Esports Association
- PA Sports (Statewide Sport Marketing Alliance)
- Pennsylvania Bus Association
- Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association
- Pennsylvania Restaurant & Lodging Association
- Pennsylvania Society for Association Excellence
- Professional Convention Management Association
- Small Market Meetings
- Sports ETA
- Student & Youth Travel Association
- Travel Unity
- US Travel Association

COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Through sponsorship opportunities, VHH and HHSE support a variety of special events that take place annually in Dauphin County. These strategic partnerships enable event promoters the opportunity to enhance their event's ability to operate and attract attendees. Through these partnerships our organizations have the opportunity to strengthen our relationships with the local business community and raise awareness of various VHH and HHSE special programs, initiatives, and experiences.

\$205,000 IN FINANCIAL SUPPORT

37 Events

565,000 ATTENDEES

City of Harrisburg

BIG 26 BASEBALL CLASSIC

BREW FEST

KIPONA JULY 4TH ARTSFEST

Cultural Fest

GREAT AMERICAN OUTDOOR SHOW

PIAA

JAZZ & WINE FESTIVAL

Juneteenth HBG

HISTORIC HARRISBURG CANDLELIGHT TOUR

HU SUMMER CONCERT SERIES

Mecum Dauphin County

MARKETING

More. Bigger. Broader. In FY22-23, the VHH Marketing team focused on extending our reach by significantly increasing creative executions (262 ads created) and complementing digital campaigns with a significant investment in Billboards and Transit advertising. While the majority of our campaign focus is on outer markets, we maintained a healthy presence in local markets promoting trails and experiences such as the Brew Barons Beer Trail. Diversity, Equity & Inclusion continued to be a focus area ensuring that content development and execution reflected the diverse audiences we welcome. This included the launch of Bienvenido, an initiative to reach and attract the ever-growing Latino market. All of these efforts culminated with a 32% percent increase in our website traffic year over year.



OBJECTIVES

- Develop and execute Marketing initiatives that generate awareness to diverse audiences.
- Develop and execute creative and compelling Marketing Campaigns to drive visitation to our region.
- Establish or maintain a competitive marketing advantage over other destinations in our primary markets.
- Drive increased traffic and engagement to VisitHersheyHarrisburg.org.
- Augment internal with external resources to maximize Marketing effectiveness.
- Embrace and utilize multiple data and research resources to develop marketing strategy.
- Utilize User Generated Content to showcase authentic visitor content.
- Be the visual storyteller.

STRATEGIES

- Deployed Broad-spectrum creative via Campaigns in target markets.
- Diversified messaging and content to deliver a broader understanding of destination highlights.
- Contracted with a research firm to evaluate our marketing efforts against competitive destinations.
- Evaluated findings – implemented into future campaign strategies if warranted.
- Contracted with an external media agency to support VHH campaign efforts.
- Captured and distributed content that attracted diverse audiences to our region.
- Managed owned and paid digital channels to maximize website activity (SEO, Paid Search, Email Marketing)
- Utilized a dynamic content calendar to ensure consistent fresh and timely content creation and distribution.
- Implemented User Generated Content (UGC) process for use across appropriate web pages.
- Highlighted Cultural assets and positioned Dauphin County as an inclusive and welcoming destination
- Collaborated with Latino Subject Matter Experts to develop and execute a mobile marketing tour attending events targeting Latino travelers.

WEBSITE STATS

	ALL TRAFFIC	ORGANIC TRAFFIC
Users	689,984	371,756
Sessions	855,840	453,455
Pages Per Session	1.75	2.03
Average Session Duration	1:09	1:33

TOP MARKETS

ALL TRAFFIC	ORGANIC TRAFFIC
Philly	HLLY
HLLY	Philly
NY	NY
DC	DC

PITTSBURGH **Paid Social Media**
 296 Campaign Days
 41 MILLION TRANSIT IMPRESSIONS
 14.6 Million Video Views

WILKES-BARRE SCRANTON
262 Ads Created

473 Transit Boards
 DIGITAL VIDEO

WASHINGTON, DC
541K Clicks
 DIGITAL DISPLAY

7 Campaigns

105 Million Digital Impressions

97 Million Billboard Impressions

PAID SEARCH
 BALTIMORE
 NEW YORK

PHILADELPHIA
31 Billboards in 8 Cities
 HLLY DMA





The Latino market is one of the fastest growing segments in VHH's target market. To educate and engage with this growing market, VHH partnered with The Latino Connection to develop and implement outreach to potential Latino visitors. This included a Mobile Tour conducted during National Hispanic American Heritage month.

15
EVENTS ATTENDED

7,000
ATTENDEES

3,500
POTENTIAL VISITOR ENGAGED



VHH branded transit
vehicle traveled
2,700 miles
to events in NY, DC,
MD, NJ & PA

Delivered over
1.6M impressions
representing over a
\$1.3M value

COMMUNICATIONS

Communications & Content efforts focused on creating cohesive, impactful, and actionable message and voice strategies to support all departments' objectives of driving increased leisure, sports, special events and meetings guests to Dauphin County.



OBJECTIVES (COMMUNICATIONS & PR)

- Deliver our region's story to the appropriate audiences in the local stakeholder, leisure, meetings & conventions, sports & events, and media markets.

STRATEGIES (COMMUNICATIONS & PR)

- Identified key talking points for the region's assets and VHH initiatives, products, and programs.
- Engaged local and regional media to amplify VHH initiatives, products, and programs via print & digital stories.
- Attended various conferences (Mid-Atlantic Public Relations Alliance, Travel Unity, Content Marketing World) to stay in tune with best practices and emerging themes.
- Hosted travel media (2) and content creators (4) whose social posts, blogs, and articles amplified our region's attractions, events, and experiences.

COMMUNICATIONS & PR HIGHLIGHTS

- Supported the launch of the VHH Latino Marketing Initiative with:
 - a collaborative press event at Hersheypark.
 - updated bilingual text for rack cards and website landing page.
 - bilingual content collaboration social posts featuring authentic Latin American cuisine.
- Led efforts to identify, build, and present a Brew Barons Beer Trail grant proposal to the Pennsylvania Malt and Brewed Beverage Industry Promotion Program.
 - (The proposal to expand our marketing plan into outer markets was accepted at the committee level in FY22-23 with final announcements coming in FY23-24.)
- Led media relations & marketing efforts for HHSE's 2022 Big 26 Baseball Classic. (Social media outreach, media outreach, coordination of appearance on Good Day PA, etc.)



Media Exposure: 20+ clips
(Via TV Clips, Digital Media, Print)



Top story: Latino Initiative
(10+ clips)

OBJECTIVES (CONTENT)

- Inspire travel to the Hershey Harrisburg Region from guests in target drive markets. Engage prospective meetings & events decision makers by highlighting the region's amenities.



STRATEGIES (CONTENT)

- Produced engaging website and marketing campaign copy to reflect the variety of experiences available to travelers.
- Posted timely VHH and user-generated-content (UGC) across multiple social media channels to amplify tourism assets, experiences, and events throughout Dauphin County.
- Implemented a social media Content Collaborator program to leverage a diverse library of creator perspective, influence, reach, and resources.
- Implemented pre-recorded VHH staff and stakeholder interviews to be available in press releases.
- Tested a new photo and video Uploader tool within the UGC platform to streamline content collection from collaborators, Partners, and public. Full implementation coming FY23-24.
- Tested apps and strategies to support increased creation and placement of short-form video.
- Produced all copy for the 2023 VHH Getaway Guide – a printed & online visitor resource focused on seasonal themes and destination travel inspiration.
- Continually assessed and updated website and/or marketing materials copy to reflect appropriate seasonal and operational priorities.
- Developed copy for Bienvenido, a new Cultural Guide focused on inspiring Latino travel.



E-NEWSLETTER COMMUNICATIONS

Internal (Partnership) communications updated VHH Partners on industry trends, marketing opportunities, and community events. Consumer emails highlighted seasonally appropriate planning tools and inspiration for upcoming travel.

External (Consumer) communications to subscribers highlighted potential itineraries for upcoming seasons and events.



E-newsletter Sends

PARTNERSHIP

48

CONSUMER

12

Consumer E-newsletter Data

PARTNERS MENTIONED IN CONSUMER EMAIL TEXT*

58

AVERAGE LIST SIZE

21,577

*Email text acts as an introduction and links to website landing pages that cover many more Partners and experiences.



TOP TOPICS DETERMINED BY NUMBER OF CLICKS

TOPIC

Get your Travel Guide

Chocolate World New Attraction

Romantic Getaways

Sweet Treat Trail (Updated Trail Launch)

Great American Outdoor Show

Hersheypark Halloween

Island season

Farm Show

Sweet Treat Trail (February story)

PA Gift Show

Holiday Activities

PAID SOCIAL MEDIA CONTENT CAMPAIGNS

4

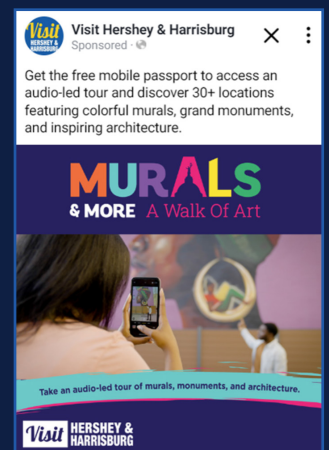
CAMPAIGNS PROMOTING CONTENT PAGES AND/OR TRAILS & EXPERIENCES

4.5 million+

TOTAL PAID IMPRESSIONS

39K+

LANDING PAGE VIEWS



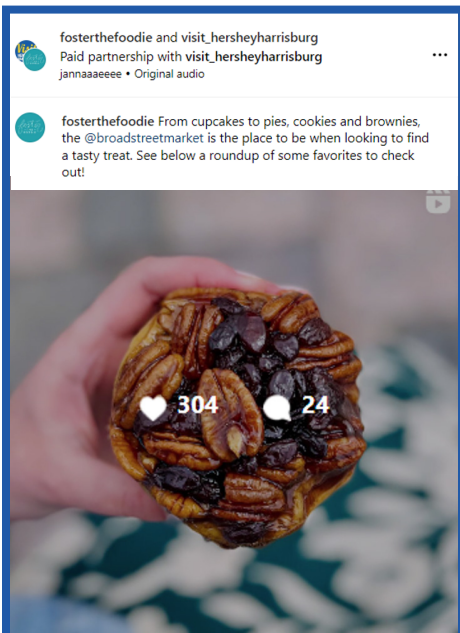
ORGANIC SOCIAL MEDIA

VHH INCREASED CONSISTENCY AND VISIBILITY ACROSS MULTIPLE SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS. ORGANIC (UNPAID) POSTS GENERATED POSITIVE DESTINATION EXPOSURE THROUGH:

- original content.
- user-generated-content (UGC).
- sharing Partner events and experiences.

VHH INCREASED POST REACH TO REGIONAL AUDIENCES THROUGH A NEW CONTENT COLLABORATOR PROGRAM WHERE:

- creators with unique niche interests and diverse backgrounds share content from their visit.
- social posts appear on the social timelines of both VHH and unique content creators.
- VHH receives the rights to reuse and repurpose collaborator content, images and video to supplement VHH content collection efforts.



Instagram
Highlighting experiential & inspirational photography and video and UGC.

FOLLOWERS
7,376
(up 23% from 5,994)

ORGANIC REACH
198,830
(up 234% from 59,362)

BRANDED CONTENT REACH
624,439
(New this fiscal)



Facebook
Highlighting links to VHH content, Partner events, UGC.

FOLLOWERS
52,800
(up 2.26% from 51,266)

REACH
446,263
(up 58.26% from 281,979)

Twitter
The VHH Twitter (now "X") account plays mostly to media and partner followers with some consumer overlap. The feed highlights breaking news, upcoming events, and original VHH content.

FOLLOWERS
567
(up 33.7%)

IMPRESSIONS
110,844
(up 212%)



EXPERIENCE DEVELOPMENT

The fiscal year was full of new seasonal promotions and updates to classic trails and experiences! We launched our first fall-themed Beer Trail promotion (Harvest & Hops), redesigned and relaunched Chocolate & More – The Sweet Treat Trail, and made progress on research and development of future programs! This work, coupled with an increase in local sponsorship opportunities and live event outreach, has helped to grow the userbase and activity on all of our interactive trails.

OBJECTIVES

- Build programs that showcase the region’s unique diversity, culture, and heritage.
- Broaden VHH’s knowledgebase of interactive technologies, experiential strategies, and regional assets.
- Identify resources, assets, and opportunities for new interactive programs.
- Increase visitation and correlating local economic impact.
- Enhance existing engagement programs.

STRATEGIES

- Identified new and existing tourism assets related to our experiential programs.
- Began research and asset identification for the development of the Harrisburg Arts District.
- Evaluated Dauphin County assets that might be viable for new trail consideration.
- Continued to explore and develop a digital Savings Pass.
- Researched industry trends and adapted to the changing visitation landscape.
- Researched additional elements to showcase our region’s diversity and culture.
- Retooled digital, interactive technologies to improve the visitor experience.
- Developed new promotions to maintain and grow our brand through different seasons.

43
Hiking Trails
438 Brew Barons Crowned
400,000 Web Impressions
33 Art Inspired Locations
\$1M in Economic Impact
2,700 Prizes
182 Miles of Kayaking
31 Craft Beer Locations
8 Featured Fishing Locations

2 Miles of Art
28 Sweet Spots
31 Biking Trails
31 Art Inspired Locations
31 Craft Beer Locations
33 Art Inspired Locations

MURALS & MORE A WALK OF ART
SWEET TREAT TRAIL
ADVENTURE TRAIL
Brew Barons Beer Trail



Brew Barons Beer Trail

A mobile passport featuring 30+ local craft brewery and tasting room locations. Guests win prizes as they reach mobile check-in milestones. This program was launched in July 2020.

	2022-2023	SINCE LAUNCH
FIRST TIME USERS	1,539	5,293
CHECK-INS	8,959	16,174
PRIZES EARNED	926	1,490

TOP CHECK-INS (2022-2023)

1. Boneshire Brew Works (499)
2. Wolf Brewing Co. (486)
3. Ever Grain Brewing Co. (434)
4. Troegs Independent Brewing (430)
5. Rubber Soul Brewing Co. (411)

TOP CHECK-INS (SINCE LAUNCH)

1. Troegs Independent Brewing (1,529)
2. Ever Grain Brewing Co. (1,456)
3. Rubber Soul Brewing Co. (1,438)
4. Rotunda Brew Pub (1,202)
5. Englewood Brewing (1,083)

SEASONAL BEER TRAILS

Seasonal promotions gave users a finite window to access themed passports on the Brew Barons Beer Trail app. By offering new prizes annually, these challenges allow us to attract new users, raise awareness of the brand, and re-engage existing players with their favorite brands and locations.



Harvest & Hops

Promotion length: 8 weeks (Oct. 6 – Nov. 30)

TOTAL USERS

840

CHECK-INS

2,669

TOTAL PRIZES

157

TOP CHECK-INS (2022)

1. Ever Grain Brewing Co. (202)
2. Troegs Independent Brewing (154)
3. Mellow Mink Brewing Co. (149)
4. Rubber Soul Brewing Co (145)
5. Englewood Brewing (131)



Leprechauns & Lagers – Limited Beer Trail

Promotion length: 6 weeks (Feb. 16 – April 30)

TOTAL USERS

1,171

CHECK-INS

4,108

TOTAL PRIZES

339

TOP CHECK-INS (2023)

1. Ever Grain Brewing Co. (416)
2. Troegs Independent Brewing (365)
3. Rubber Soul Brewing Co. (354)
4. Iron Hill (335)
5. Rotunda Brew Pub (290)

HERSHEY & HARRISBURG

Chocolate & More Sweet Treat Trail

SIGN-UPS
629
(1,414 since launch)

CHECK-INS
430
(846 since launch)

PRIZES EARNED
37
(55 since launch)

Chocolate & More - The Sweet Treat Trail

The Sweet Treat Trail received a redesign and relaunch in late April of 2023. Guests check-in with a digital PIN after making a qualified purchase at any of the 28 participating sweet spots featured in this trail.

TOP CHECK-INS (2022-2023)

1. Duck Donuts (40)
2. Desserts, Etc. (35)
3. Cubby's Ice Cream (30)
4. Cherry Blossom Creamery (27)
- 5a. Grove's Brittle Works (25)
- 5b. Hershey's Chocolate World (25)

TOP CHECK-INS (SINCE LAUNCH)

1. Cubby's Ice Cream (65)
2. Desserts, Etc. (64)
3. Duck Donuts (60)
4. Strite's Orchards (48)
5. Hershey's Chocolate World (44)



MURALS & MORE

A Walk Of Art

VISIT HERSHEY & HARRISBURG

SIGN-UPS
639
(973 since launch)

CHECK-INS
1,106
(1,880 since launch)

PRIZES EARNED
51
(63 since launch)

Murals & More – A Walk of Art

This program is an audio tour of over 35 murals, monuments, and public art locations along two paths in Harrisburg. Guests check-in with a free mobile passport and receive an art-inspired prize.

TOP CHECK-INS (2022-2023)

1. Harrisburg Mural (52)
- 2a. Transformation Mural (47)
- 2b. Ampersand Mural (47)
- 2c. Wonder Mural (47)
- 5a. Eye on 3rd St Mural (45)
- 5b. Bioforms (45)

TOP CHECK-INS (SINCE LAUNCH)

1. Harrisburg Mural (92)
2. Wonder Mural (81)
3. Transformation Mural (80)
4. Ampersand Mural (78)
5. Mothra (74)





WEB PAGE VIEWS
70,076
 (119,731 since launch)

Adventure Trail

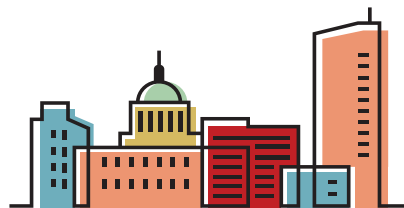
An extensive web-based guide featuring trails, parks, waterways, and attractions suited for adventures of all ages.

TOP CATEGORIES AND LOCATIONS (2022-2023)

1. Hiking (14,545) | Hawk Rock (3,218)
2. Kayaking (9,158) | Swatara - Boathouse Run (2,565)
3. Fishing (7,656) | Clark's Creek (1,091)
4. Biking (7,384) | Stony Valley Rail Trail (843)
5. Family Fun (2,845) | Hershey Gardens (322)

TOP CATEGORIES (SINCE LAUNCH)

1. Hiking (28,848) | Hawk Rock (6,086)
2. Kayaking (17,353) | Swatara - Boathouse Run (4,989)
3. Biking (13,975) | Stony Valley Rail Trail (1,801)
4. Fishing (13,649) | Clark's Creek (1,668)
5. Family Fun (6,375) | City Island (589)



HARRISBURG ARTS DISTRICT

The Harrisburg Arts District is a new VHH Trails & Experiences initiative set for rollout in fall 2023. In FY22-23 we researched a variety of existing arts districts across the country, identified the physical footprint of the Arts District, created a draft framework for the website, partnered with Harristown Enterprises to acquire grant funding, collaborated with local arts community, and developed an advertising plan for FY23-24.



PARTNERSHIP

OBJECTIVES

- Build upon/diversify VHH's current Hospitality Partner base.
- Ensure Partner retention through increased engagement/outreach & education.
- Develop sustainable process for identification and outreach to prospective investing Partners.
- Broaden scope of partnership prospects and benefits to attract strategic and diverse tourism partnerships.
- Increase awareness of VHH and our role in the local community.
- Broaden knowledge/understanding of current conditions affecting the Tourism industry.

VISITERSHEYHARRISBURG.ORG WEBSITE ADVERTISING

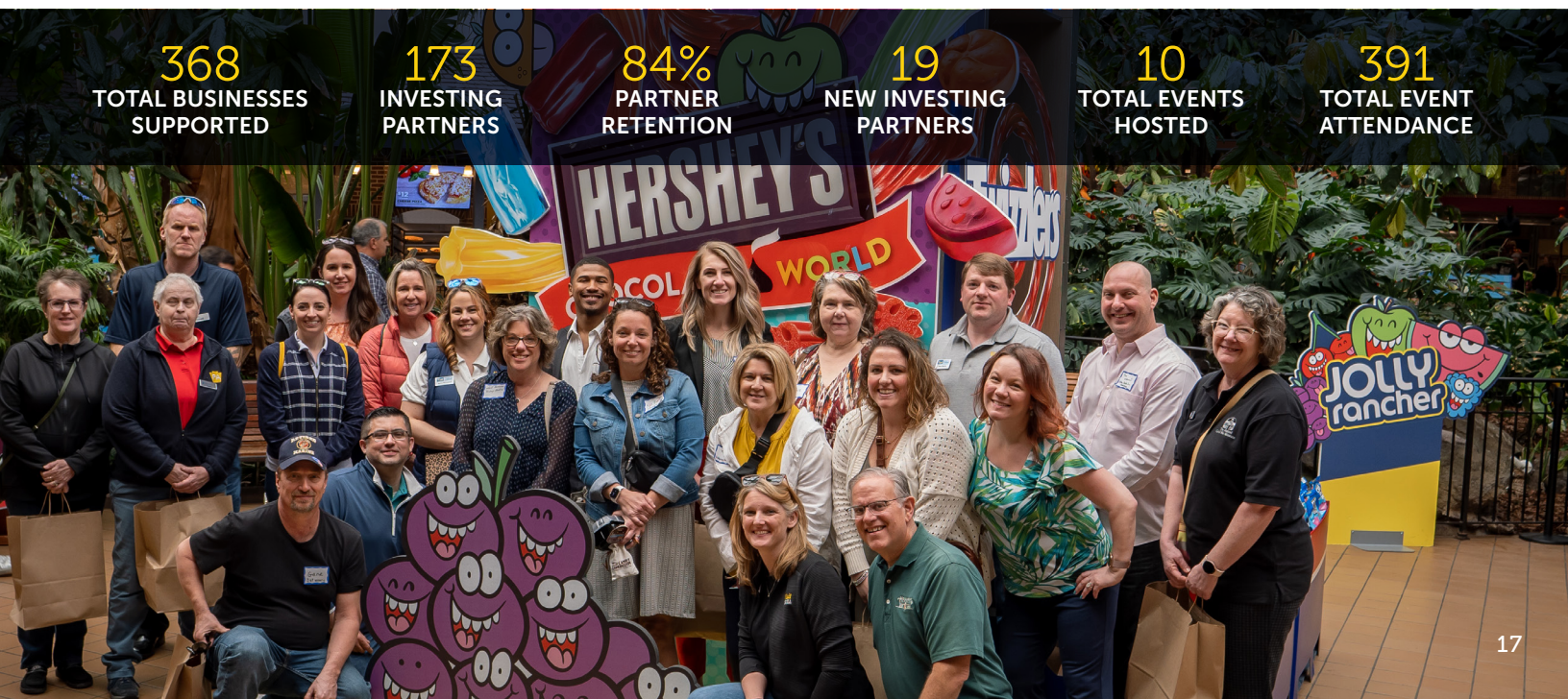
Participating Partners	9
Total Website Ad Revenue	\$7,875
Total Impressions	2.5M
Click Through Rate (CTR)	.525

GETAWAY GUIDE

Ad Revenue	\$3,863
# of Advertisers / # of Ads	43/50

STRATEGIES

- Increased engagement with current Partners through in person meetings.
- Conducted surveys to determine preferred networking and educational opportunities
- Facilitated Partner interactions via multiple in-person Partner events such as:
 - Learn over Lunch Networking
 - Partners On The Road FAM
 - Partner Portal Training
 - Partnership Appreciation with The Harrisburg Senators
- Reintroduced the updated Billboard Co-Op and Marketing Assistance Programs.
- Broadened Partnership benefits with introduction of a Pilot Training Program to address workforce situation.
- Met with former Partners to identify new contacts/prospects.
- Attended regional PRLA meetings and Statewide DMO Roundtable to enhance visibility of VHH and identify Partner prospects.
- Conducted outreach to prospective Partners to bolster our hospitality Partner base and increase community awareness of VHH.
- Worked with internal VHH team to identify and develop potential new Partner benefits (savings pass).



SALES

The Sales Department promotes the Hershey Harrisburg Region to the travel trade as a destination to host their business and to serve as a conduit to facilitate client – partner sales and promotional opportunities.

TARGET MARKETS



Meetings & Conventions/
SMERF



Tour & Travel/
International



MEETINGS & CONVENTIONS

OBJECTIVES

- Increase meetings hotel room nights by increasing our lead-to-definite booking ratio.
- Increase total leads generated
- Strengthen existing relationships with meeting planners to identify new expectations for growth and future meetings.
- Create more opportunities for partners to connect with planners.
- Research the importance of DEI, Green meetings, hybrid events, and other emerging trends and their potential impact on planners that source our region.
- Position the Hershey Harrisburg region as an ideal destination for meetings and conventions.

STRATEGIES

- Attended local MPI & PASAE networking events.
- Attended trade shows with one-on-one appointments, including Connect DC, HelmsBriscoe, ConferenceDirect and C-Vent Connect.
- Hosted VHH sponsored events, inviting both partners and meeting planners to connect. This included a holiday Mingle & Jingle & a Philadelphia-based planner event.
- Worked with Destinations Analysts to survey meeting planners on perceived destination strengths and weaknesses. Utilized the feedback to update marketing materials and messaging to better highlight our location and destination assets.
- Update website and marketing materials to highlight regional assets and attributes
- Research and develop two meetings sales-specific videos for launch in FY23-24
- Collaborate with Partnership Department to identify prospects to help meet planner needs and expectations.

TOUR & TRAVEL/ INTERNATIONAL

OBJECTIVES

- Maintain active presence at key industry gatherings.
- Shift resources to returning markets.
- Strengthen client relationships.
- Increase group and international room night bookings.
- Increase total leads generated.
- Maximize efforts through regional and statewide partnerships.
- Educate prospective clients on the diverse and attractive attributes of the Hershey Harrisburg Region.

STRATEGIES

- Leveraged new Keystone Crossroads Region partnership with Discover Lancaster and Destination Gettysburg for sales and marketing initiatives that included trade show attendance, print advertising, marketing collateral and website development.
- A Group Tour Marketing grant was secured to supported PA Tourism’s efforts with statewide initiatives aligning with our primary objectives. VHH is the lead facilitator on administering grant funds for statewide events and projects.
- Attended trade shows, marketplaces and client events for face-to-face selling opportunities with key clients.
- Collaborate with key local stakeholders to showcase regional assets.

Total Leads Distributed	252
Total Lead Room Nights Distributed	92,503
Trade Shows Attended	31
Client FAM Tours Hosted	8
Client Events Attended and Hosted	10
One on one appointments conducted	404



TOTAL ROOM NIGHTS BOOKED
27,061



TOTAL BOOKINGS
120

VHH PARTNER SUPPORT

- Workforce Development – Continued to have discussions with VHH partners to identify and elevate awareness of the workforce challenges they continue to experience.
- Began initial discussions with PRLA to explore ways our two organizations can assist in developing solutions and offering support to actualize potential long-term results.
- Conducted Sales Update Meetings for VHH sales partners that included relevant market updates and past and future sales initiative reporting.





HERSHEY HARRISBURG SPORTS & EVENTS AUTHORITY

The Hershey Harrisburg Sports & Events Authority (HHSE) leads efforts to promote sports tourism and special events initiatives in the Hershey Harrisburg Region. FY 22-23 featured positive growth for numerous annual events, the return of several events that stopped or downsized during the Pandemic, and the addition of new clients coming to the region.

HHSE now boasts a full staff of three for the first time since 2020 with the addition of an Events & Marketing Manager position.

OBJECTIVES

- Increase economic impact of sports and events business by 10% over 2021-22 levels.
- Raise destination's MEI index score to 90+.
- Target trending markets like pickleball, esports and Compete Sports Diversity clients.

STRATEGIES

- Deployed new prospecting tools such as membership with Compete Sports Diversity to identify prospective minority groups such as LGBTQ+ and adaptive sporting events.
- Explored our second owned-event that will provide an opportunity for increased visibility of HHSE to the local community. We are considering a model similar to Big 26 for high school softball and high school hockey.
- Enhanced sports event service offerings provided to rights holders to ensure customer retention, increased attendance and overall visitor spending. This included on-site assistance and special branded giveaways to key personnel.
- Continued to increase our role in destination and product development (i.e. pickleball facility, esports combine, swimming venue).
- Increased use of incentives to attract events, including financial, multi-year discounts, etc. to generate new sports business opportunities and grow key events.



92,862
Total Room
Nights Booked

110,742
Room Night
Leads Distributed

6
Trade Shows
Attended

10
Site Visits
Hosted



TOP 10 EVENTS

TOTAL ATTENDANCE
300,000+ VISITORS

TOTAL ECONOMIC IMPACT
\$104.8 MILLION

Top 10 Events
(SECURED, HOSTED, SPONSORED,
OR SUPPORTED BY HHSE)

1. Great American Outdoor Show
2. PA National Horse Show
3. PIAA State High School Championships **
4. Hershey Soccer Memorial Day Challenge
5. Reflections Synchronized Skating Invitational
6. Marquee Hoops Hershey Spring Clash
7. Perfect Game Hershey Baseball *
8. Hogan's Hershey Lacrosse
9. OneHockey Hershey *
10. Firecracker Baseball Sweet Spot Classic

*includes four separate event weekends

**PIAA includes tennis, cross country, basketball, wrestling & spirit

TOP NEW EVENTS

ATTENDEES

ECONOMIC IMPACT

Marquee Hoops Hershey Spring Clash	7,000	\$2.8M
Regional Dance America Northeast Festival	750	\$300K
3ICE Hershey	3,000	\$200K



**TOTAL ECONOMIC
IMPACT**

\$3.3M

TOTAL ATTENDANCE

10,750

MARKETING & PR

In a staffing transition period, we outlined ways to expand HHSE’s social media presence and identified areas to build new and impactful website content. We discussed a rollout for a media calendar to craft press releases on events that will help position our destination as a key market for sporting events, and leveraged marketing and communication outreach through messaging to the community, local media and national industry publications.

With the Events & Marketing Manager position re-hired in June 2022, this is an exciting area for future growth opportunity.

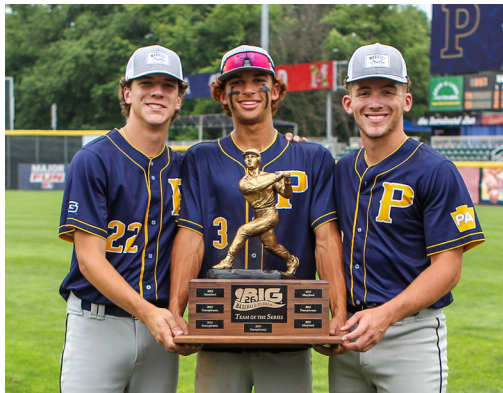
MUNICIPAL EQUALITY INDEX

HHSE engaged the Harrisburg Regional Chamber and City of Harrisburg to submit updated information to improve the Municipal Equality Index (MEI) score for the city. A new MEI scorecard will be released in November.

A positive MEI score sends a message to the city’s visitors, residents, and work force that Harrisburg is diverse, inclusive, and welcoming. Sports & Events stakeholders also watch this number closely when deciding where to host events.

THE BIG 26 BASEBALL CLASSIC®

The 2022 Big 26 Baseball Classic (July 2022) marked HHSE’s fourth year as owner/operator of this special event. The 2022 event featured a successful “return to normal” in many aspects after the Pandemic forced a cancellation in 2020 and altered operations in 2021. 2022 saw record registration numbers for both player tryouts and the Buddy Program.



2022 BIG 26 GAME STATS

	PA	MD
GAME 1	7	6
GAME 2	7	2
GAME 3	6	7

133
Try out participation numbers in advance of 2023 event

31
Coaches/scouts in attendance

44
Special needs athletes registered



BIG 26 PLAYER

The Big 26 Classic is the best way to connect with other players from your state while competing for your state. I would recommend this event to anyone interested in engaging in new and fulfilling experiences and creating new relationships along with competitive baseball.

SEAN FOSTER,
BIG 26 MD ALUM, 2021

COLLEGE COACH

We find good value in attending the Big 26 tryouts annually, as we’re able to see a large number of players at a well-organized event.

KYLE SASALA,
ASSOCIATE BASEBALL COACH
GROVE CITY COLLEGE

ABOUT THE BUDDY GAME

We’re here for the Buddy Game, we have players from Big 26 helping some kids play baseball. They all look really happy and it’s beautiful to see.

COLIN BASEHORE,
BIG 26 PA PLAYER, 2023



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& Resorts Company

Kara Luzik Canale
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Chamber & CREDC

Jensine Ruscito
Tröegs Independent
Brewing

Faniel Yemane
iDrive Interactive

Meet Our Team

Mary Smith
President & CEO

Sue Kunisky
Vice President of
Operations

Jason Brown
Director of Marketing

Allison Rohrbaugh
Director of
Communications &
Content

Audrey Bialas
Director of Sales

Sports & Events Authority
Gregg Cook, CSEE
Executive Director

Danielle Vincenti, STS
Director of Business
Development

Tyler Petroski
Events & Marketing
Manager

Jason Meckes
Experience Development
Director

Steve Cruz
Director of Strategic
Partnerships

Heather Novack
Manager Digital Marketing
& Tech

Jenny McConnell
Sales Manager

ExploreHGB
Syeda Tayyeba
Director of Marketing
& Communications



WHO WE ARE

Visit Hershey & Harrisburg is the official non-profit partnership-based Destination Marketing Organization serving Dauphin County. Visit Hershey & Harrisburg is responsible for developing and executing comprehensive sales, marketing, and communication programs to compete for leisure, business, group, and sporting event travel market segments among leading and national destinations.

OUR MISSION

The mission of Visit Hershey & Harrisburg is to generate economic growth and stability through the marketing and promotion of travel to the Hershey Harrisburg Region and to coalesce, develop, and expand its hospitality industry, products, and workforce.

Visit

**HERSHEY &
HARRISBURG**

3211 North Front Street, Suite 301-A, Harrisburg, PA 17110 | (717) 231-7788

VisitHersheyHarrisburg.org