

Visit
HERSHEY &
HARRISBURG



Annual Report

JULY 2023 - JUNE 2024

Friends in Tourism,

We are proud to share this Annual Report highlighting core strategies and successes of our team's comprehensive destination marketing efforts put forth in FY23-24.

Our team inspired travel to Dauphin County through targeted marketing campaigns, the development of new trails & experiences initiatives, collaborative sales missions, specialized attraction, retention, and growth of sports & special events, educational partnership events, and inspiring storytelling to highlight the Hershey Harrisburg Region as THE DESTINATION OF CHOICE for getaways, events, tours, and meetings.

Understanding that VHH could – and should – play a leading role in efforts to rally community stakeholders across all industries to promote our region's assets with a common theme, our team leveraged focus groups and industry experts to begin work on a Destination Alignment strategy. Dauphin County's wealth of entertainment, access to services, and central location makes it a destination where one can "Live Fully." The next anticipated step for this project includes the development of a messaging toolkit.

Embracing the critical importance of how diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility can affect and shape a destination, VHH is working with MMGY Global to set the standard for a more welcoming, inclusive, and safe Dauphin County for visitors of all

backgrounds and abilities. Through a commitment to inclusive storytelling, interactive programming, and community partnerships, our efforts seek to elevate the guest experience.

Tourism brings an estimated \$2.6 Billion in economic impact to Dauphin County annually. Thank you to our team of tourism professionals across Visit Hershey & Harrisburg, Hershey Harrisburg Sports & Events Authority, and ExploreHBG who work every day to build new relationships, reach new visitors, and break new ground in destination marketing and community engagement efforts that drive economic impact to our region.

Thank you to our Partners. To every ride operator, tour guide, chef, server, artist, musician, and event planner – to every travel & tourism professional who helps to make the Hershey Harrisburg Region warm, welcoming, exciting, and inspiring – thank you for your efforts!



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "C. Cullison".

Clinton M. Cullison,
Board Chair



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mary E. Smith".

Mary Smith,
President & CEO

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Dauphin County Office of Community
& Economic Development

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City of Harrisburg

Lynn Day

The Vineyard & Brewery at Hershey

Brewer Lister

Hershey Entertainment & Resorts Company

Jensine Ruscito

Troegs Independent Brewing

Faniel Yemane

Harrisburg HYP

Matthew Kido

Hilton Harrisburg

Rhonda Laing

Capital Blue Cross

COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Visit Hershey & Harrisburg, Hershey Harrisburg Sports & Events Authority, and ExploreHBG are proud to support a variety of community events that showcase diversity, creativity, and the competitive spirit across the Hershey Harrisburg Region. While these events are critical for both local community wellness and as entertainment options for visitors, they are also excellent ways for our teams to highlight tourism initiatives. Support of community events also allows our team to interact with local neighbors and visitors alike to help us better understand what experiences and opportunities are most helpful to them as they travel.

Community support is a way for VHH to highlight various Trails & Experience initiatives. Visibility and promotion of the Harrisburg Arts District is a benefit of our support for City of Harrisburg events like ArtsFest and Kipona. The Brew Barons Beer Trail is promoted during events like the HU Presents Summer Concert Series in Harrisburg's Riverfront Park, Dauphin County Brewfest at Fort Hunter, and

Hershey Brew fest at Englewood Brewing. Hershey Harrisburg Sports & Events Authority's visibility at large events drives awareness among guests and event operators that our region is invested in their experience.

ExploreHBG's support of community events drives awareness of our commitment to highlighting the Capital City's wealth of history, culture, entertainment, and events.

We're appreciative of the opportunity to engage with successful community events that help to shape the Hershey Harrisburg Region not only as a vibrant place to live and play for its residents, but also as a diverse and vibrant destination for visitors looking for entertainment experiences.

In FY23-24, VHH, HHSE, and ExploreHBG contributed over \$429,000 in support of 28 events that drew an estimated 481K attendees to the Hershey Harrisburg Region.

FISCAL YEAR 23-24

OPERATING FINANCIALS

REVENUE

Hotel Room Tax	\$2,764,790
Grants	\$1,116,941
Partnership/Co-op Marketing	\$108,497
Events/Rentals	\$76,839
Miscellaneous	\$82,622

Total Revenue **\$4,149,689**

EXPENSES

Marketing/Communications	\$1,612,560
Sales/Partnership/Services	\$613,833
Community Relations	\$550,721
Sports & Events Authority	\$515,794
Management & Operations	\$773,465

Total Expenses **\$4,066,373**

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Visit
HERSHEY &
HARRISBURG



MARKETING

With our traditional seasonal campaigns and additional efforts to support special initiatives and Trails & Experiences programs, FY23-24 marketing campaigns hit a record level of 10 individual campaigns that ran across 246 days. The number of ads created to fulfill campaign needs increased to 367 ads including 15 video spots. In depth analysis of visitor spend data informed a decision to adjust the VHH spring/summer campaign market targets by moving away from the Pittsburgh market and reallocating funds to a new campaign driving overnights from Baltimore.

The marketing team executed 19 photo and video shoots with particular focus on adding assets to support the Harrisburg Arts District, fall campaign, and adding vertical video content. Through organic content and paid advertising efforts, VisitHersheyHarrisburg.org website traffic rose 18% above FY22-23.



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.
- 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.
- Convert Baltimore day trip visitors to overnight visitors.

STRATEGIES

1 ADVERTISING

- Deployed broad-spectrum creative via campaigns in target markets.
- Gathered and analyzed data from multiple sources and applied to create data driven media strategy.
- Leveraged county and state grants to maximize VHH marketing efforts.

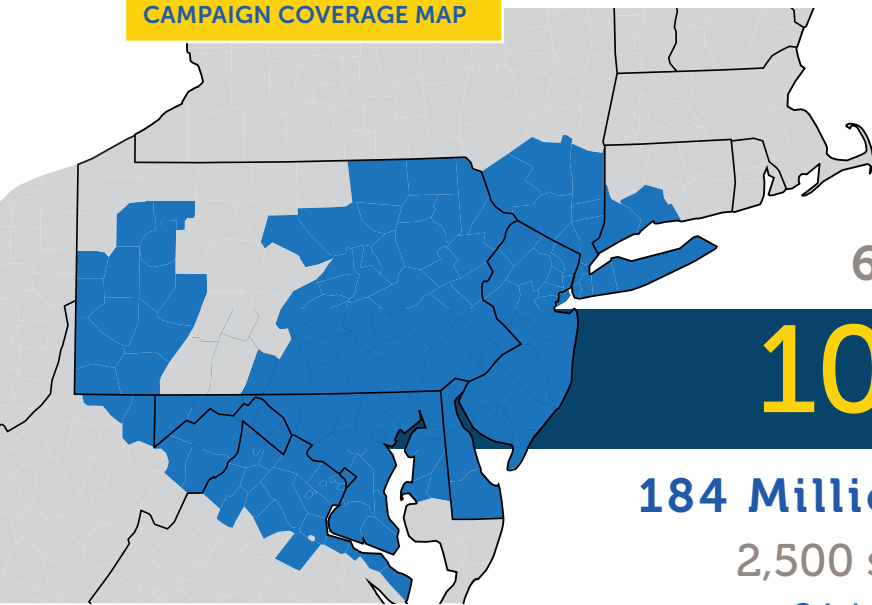
2 OWNED CHANNELS & MESSAGING

- Created diversified messaging and content to create a broader understanding of our destination highlights.
- Maximized website activity (SEO, Paid Search, Email Marketing.)
- Highlighted Cultural assets and positioned Dauphin County as an inclusive and welcoming destination.
- Created and distributed yearly Getaway Guide to inspire travel and assist with trip planning.

3 CONTENT PRODUCTION & CREATION

- Produced and deployed vertical video to optimize usage of VHH social channels.
- Captured, produced, and distributed content to attract diverse audiences to our region.
- Developed and distributed new photo and video assets to promote Arts in Harrisburg.
- Utilized a dynamic content calendar to ensure consistent fresh and timely content creation and distribution.

CAMPAIGN COVERAGE MAP



PAID SEARCH
38 Million
Video Views

Online Video
367 Ads
Created

641K CAMPAIGN CLICKS

10 Campaigns

184 Million Campaign Impressions

2,500 screens on LIRR

21 billboards across
NY, NJ, Philly, HLLY

DIGITAL DISPLAY

Campaigns
running
246 days



Following a successful tour in FY22-23, VHH again collaborated with Latino Connection (Color & Culture) in FY23-24 to bring the Visita Hershey & Harrisburg mobile tour to community events and festivals in Washington, D.C., Maryland, New York, and Pennsylvania.

The events were selected based on research for attendance of the Latino community, creating opportunities for the bilingual team to interact with visitors with our message that the Hershey Harrisburg Region is the perfect destination for their next getaway.



8
EVENTS
ATTENDED

1,754
MILES

8,348
ATTENDEES

1.05 M
IMPRESSIONS

\$810,301.80
VEHICLE MARKETING
IMPRESSIONS
VALUE

COMMUNICATIONS

COMMUNICATIONS & PR

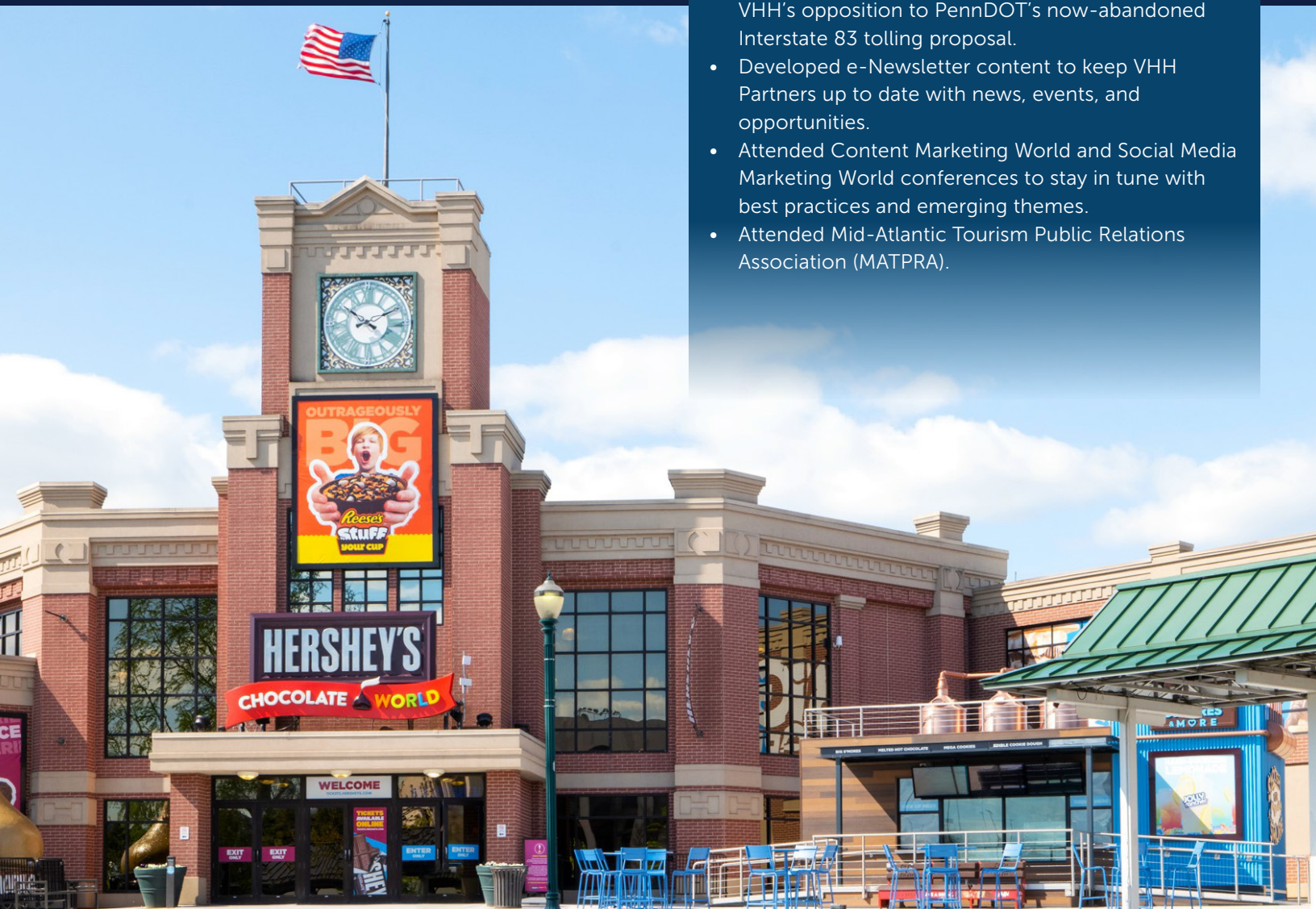
OBJECTIVES

Elevate the following to appropriate stakeholders (Partners, government, media, local residents, and statewide & regional officials & representatives):

- Awareness of VHH's role in positively affecting local economic impact through tourism.
- Awareness of the diversity, variety, accessibility, and flexibility of tourism assets in Dauphin County.
- Awareness of VHH's commitment to leveraging the expertise of diverse community organizations to best facilitate our goals for a destination-wide embrace of diversity, equity, and inclusion.

STRATEGIES

- Engaged local and regional media to amplify VHH initiatives, products, and programs.
- Hosted travel media (2) and content creators (9) whose social media posts, blogs, and articles amplified our region's attractions, events, and experiences.
- Led grant-writing efforts to apply for a PA Malt & Brewed Beverage Industry Promotion grant to support outer market promotions for the Brew Barons Beer Trail and a Pennsylvania Council on the Arts Creative Communities grant to support promotions for the Harrisburg Arts District.
- Led letter of support writing efforts to highlight VHH's opposition to PennDOT's now-abandoned Interstate 83 tolling proposal.
- Developed e-Newsletter content to keep VHH Partners up to date with news, events, and opportunities.
- Attended Content Marketing World and Social Media Marketing World conferences to stay in tune with best practices and emerging themes.
- Attended Mid-Atlantic Tourism Public Relations Association (MATPRA).



CONTENT



OBJECTIVES

- 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.
- Be the region’s storyteller.
- Position the Hershey Harrisburg Region as an overnight getaway destination in key drive markets.
- Increase content diversity.
- Increase social media reach, followers, and engagement across VHH channels.

STRATEGIES

- Developed all copy for the 2024 VHH Getaway Guide.
- Developed engaging website and marketing campaign copy to reflect the variety of experiences available to travelers.
- Expanded social media Content Collaborator program to leverage a diverse library of creator perspective, influence, reach, and resources.
- Worked closely with Marketing team to collect diverse content for use across social, newsletters, and organizational reports.
- Implemented photo and video Uploader tool within the Crowdriff UGC platform to streamline content collection from collaborators, Partners and public.
- Hosted a Spring Photo contest to engage local and regional photographers and build the content library.
- Increased the creation of short-form videos to engage social audiences.
- Supported Visit PA’s Great American Getaway branding initiative by providing updated content assets including copy and itineraries for the Hershey Harrisburg Region.
- Produced new audio files to support the new Harrisburg Arts District mobile app.



E-newsletter

E-newsletter Sends

PARTNERSHIP

56

CONSUMER

13

Consumer E-newsletter Data

PARTNERS MENTIONED IN CONSUMER EMAIL TEXT

81

AVERAGE LIST SIZE

24,543

TOP CONSUMER NEWSLETTER TOPICS DETERMINED BY NUMBER OF CLICKS

TOPIC

Get Your Travel Guide

25+ Things to do on Chocolate Avenue

PA Farm Show Guide

Leprechauns & Lagers

Summer Savings



Organic Social Media

VHH continued efforts to increase consistency and visibility across social media channels through original content, user-generated-content (UGC) and sharing Partner events and experiences.



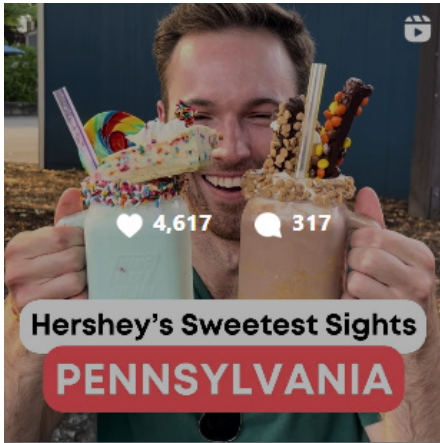
ORGANIC REACH
569K
 (up 24.2%)

FOLLOWERS
55,170
 (up 4.3%)

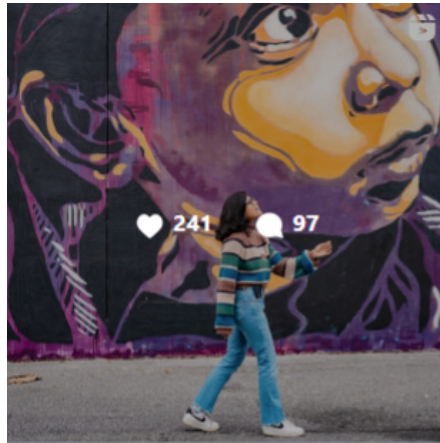


ORGANIC REACH
360,648
 (up 57.8 %)

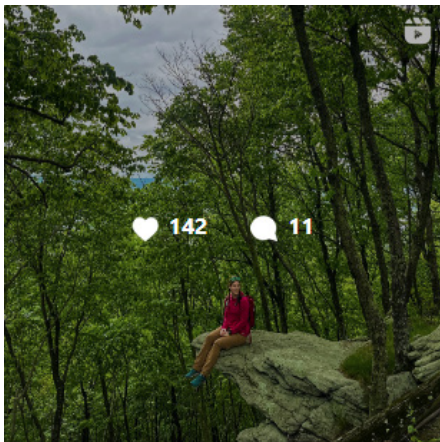
FOLLOWERS
9,650
 (up 26.7%)



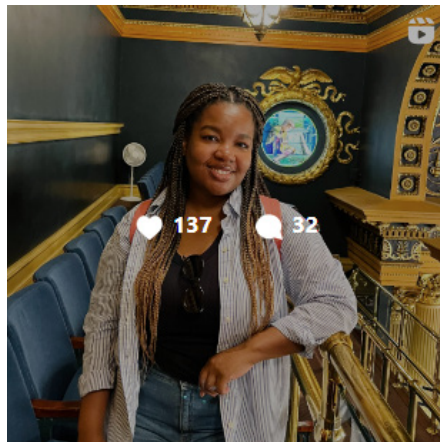
SWEET SIGHTS IN HERSHEY
129K PLAYS



A DAY IN MIDTOWN
10.7K PLAYS



HIKING HAWK ROCK
4.2K PLAYS



HISTORY AND MUSEUMS IN HARRISBURG
3.2K PLAYS

Paid Social Media Content Campaigns

5
CAMPAIGNS

2,333,216
IMPRESSIONS

18,847
LINK CLICKS



Content Creators

VHH increased post reach through the expansion of a content collaborator program. VHH selected creators across a variety of niche interests and diverse backgrounds to offer fresh insights and reviews of our region’s attractions and experiences.



[@brittaroundtown](#)
Small Towns & Unique Gifts



[@fosterthefoodie](#)
Taste & Treats



[@hersheyfoodie](#)
Taste & Treats



[@hunterhulbert](#)
Unique Spaces
(Hershey Itinerary)



[@pennsylvaniajunkie](#)
Solo Travel



[@pustika_samaddar](#)
Couples Travel



[@theglobalghanagirl](#)
Harrisburg Arts District, Midtown



[@torytalkstrails](#)
Outdoors & Hiking



[@sarahjayneexplores](#)
Family Friendly Travel

CONTENT CREATORS
HOSTED
9

PARTNERS OR EXPERIENCES
HIGHLIGHTED
50+

INSTAGRAM POSTS &
REELS CREATED
48

INSTAGRAM REACH
680K
(up 8.5%)

EXPERIENCE DEVELOPMENT

FY23-24 welcomed the addition of two new Trails & Experience initiatives and a significant upgrade to a classic. The new Hershey Harrisburg Savings Pass invited guests to take advantage of deals from participating Partners. The new Harrisburg Arts District Mobile app is a free tool to assist travelers looking to maximize their arts & culture getaway to the Capital City. We also released the Brew Barons Beer Trail app on a new platform to deliver an upgraded user experience. These releases joined a steady stream of local sponsorship and outreach events, seasonal promotions, and the research and development of upcoming programs.



OBJECTIVES

- Fine-tune the outreach/communication strategy to send push notifications, texts, and e-mails to users who signed up but have not checked in.
- Identify potential experiential programs for VHH to develop.
- Utilize in-app messaging as a cost-free method to communicate new features, venues, and upcoming events .
- Maintain good relationships with existing venues and communicate the value that we're bringing to them in terms of marketing awareness, customer check-ins, and brand exposure.
- Continue to research trends in the industry and adapt to the changing visitor preferences.
- Research new digital, interactive technologies as well as updates to current platforms.
- Create and maintain relationships with other DMOs to identify new programs, trends, and technologies.

STRATEGIES

- Identified and evaluated Dauphin County assets that might be viable for new trail consideration or enhancement of existing programs.
- Collaborated with VHH team to develop The Harrisburg Arts District website.
- Researched and began development of the Harrisburg Arts District mobile app.
- Researched industry trends and adapted to the changing visitation landscape.
- Researched, assessed, and tested other regional Trails and Experiences.
- Interviewed other DMOs and non-profits that manage cultural experiences and art districts.
- Rebuilt and enhanced interactive technologies to improve the visitor experience.
- Explored, tested and implemented new platform for the Brew Barons App.





Brew Barons Beer Trail

A mobile passport featuring 28 local craft brewery and tasting room locations. Guests win prizes as they reach mobile check-in milestones. This program was launched in July 2020 and was rebuilt with a brand-new interface in February, 2024.

	2023-2024	SINCE LAUNCH
FIRST TIME USERS	848	6,141
CHECK-INS	4,359	20,533
PRIZES EARNED	503	1,993

TOP CHECK-INS (2023-2024)

1. YAH Brew
2. Ever Grain Brewing Co.
3. Boneshire Brew Works
4. Englewood Brewing
5. Rotunda Brew Pub

TOP CHECK-INS (SINCE LAUNCH)

1. Ever Grain Brewing Co.
2. Troegs Independent Brewing
3. Rubber Soul Brewing Co.
4. Boneshire Brew Works
5. Rotunda Brew Pub

SEASONAL BEER TRAILS

Seasonal promotions give users a finite window to access themed passports on the Brew Barons Beer Trail app. By offering new prizes seasonally, 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. 5 – Nov. 30)

TOTAL USERS

881

CHECK-INS

2,806

TOTAL PRIZES

233

TOP CHECK-INS (2023)

1. Troegs Independent Brewing
2. YAH Brew
3. Iron Hill Brewing Co.
4. Rubber Soul Brewing Co.
5. Ever Grain Brewing Co.



Leprechauns & Lagers – Limited Beer Trail

Promotion length: 6 weeks (Feb. 15 – April 30)

TOTAL USERS

2,073

CHECK-INS

3,380

TOTAL PRIZES

332

TOP CHECK-INS (2024)

1. YAH Brew
2. Ever Grain Brewing Co.
3. Troegs Independent Brewing
4. Rotunda Brew Pub
5. Englewood Brewing

HERSHEY & HARRISBURG

Chocolate & More Sweet Treat Trail

SIGN-UPS
872
(2,286 since launch)

CHECK-INS
448
(1,294 since launch)

PRIZES EARNED
60
(115 since launch)

Chocolate & More - The Sweet Treat Trail

The Sweet Treat Trail showcases 27 participating sweet spots featured in our region. Guests check-in with a digital PIN after making a qualified purchase at any of these locations.

TOP CHECK-INS (2023-2024)

1. Desserts, Etc.
2. The Hershey Story Museum
3. Cherry Blossom Creamery
4. HERSHEY's Chocolate World
5. Taylor Chip Cookies & Coffee

TOP CHECK-INS (SINCE LAUNCH)

1. Desserts, Etc.
2. Cubby's Ice Cream
3. Duck Donuts
4. HERSHEY's Chocolate World
5. Strite's Orchards



MURALS & MORE

A Walk Of Art

VISIT HERSHEY & HARRISBURG

SIGN-UPS
267
(1,240 since launch)

CHECK-INS
738
(2,618 since launch)

PRIZES EARNED
19
(82 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 upon completion.

TOP CHECK-INS (2023-2024)

1. Harrisburg Mural
2. Arise Mural
3. Eye on 3rd St Mural
4. Peace Mural
5. Community Conversation Mural





Adventure Trail

An extensive web-based guide featuring trails, parks, waterways, and attractions to customize your outdoor adventures in the region.

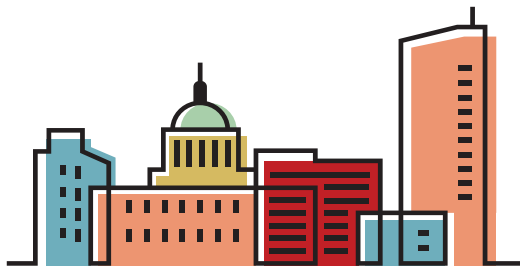
TOP CATEGORIES AND LOCATIONS (2023-2024)

1. Hiking | Hawk Rock
2. Fishing | Yellow Breeches
3. Kayaking | Swatara Creek
4. Biking | Stony Valley Rail Trail
5. Bird Watching | Wildwood Park

ADVENTURE TRAIL COLLECTIVE PAGES (2023-2024)

28,600
USERS

51,908
VIEWS



HARRISBURG ARTS DISTRICT

The Harrisburg Arts District was added to our Trails & Experiences lineup in fall 2023 as a way to highlight the extensive variety of arts & culture opportunities in the Capital City. Our team developed a comprehensive website with business, venue, and events listings, and began work on an interactive mobile app that would launch in early FY 24-25. By promoting the Arts District as a whole, we can reach a wider audience with our message of, "Let Us Entertain You!"

A WALKABLE FOOTPRINT

The core of the Arts District centers around 3rd Street from Midtown to the SoMa neighborhood, along with parts of the downtown and riverfront.



PARTNERSHIP

OBJECTIVES

- Reengage and reintroduce former Partners to the benefits of partnering with VHH.
- Increase Partner awareness of the Value of the Marketing Assistance and Co-Op Billboard programs.
- Utilize existing lists of tourism related businesses to identify key target prospects.
- Identify local business prospects with diverse offerings to strengthen the regions value to a broader audience.
- Work with Partners to position our destination as inclusive and welcoming to all visitors.
- Promote workforce development programs.
- Collaborate with local community organizations to enhance visibility.
- Generate incremental revenue through Partnership sales to support Partner-related initiatives.

STRATEGIES

- Increased site visits with current and prospective Partners by 10%.
- Visited and reconnected with previous VHH partners to outline current VHH Partnership benefits.
- Presented the Co-op Billboard and Marketing Assistance programs to a larger number of Partners and increased participation in both programs.
- Introduced the Savings Pass benefit for Partners designed to bring more visitors, sports teams, eventgoers, and business meeting attendees to our Partners' doors.
- Collaborated with internal departments to identify new Partner prospects.
- Promoted Partner interactions through a robust calendar of educational and networking Partner events.
- Identified diverse tourism businesses to expand options for visitors to our Region.
- Co-hosted a VHH and PRLA Workforce Development Webinar to promote the benefits and details of the pilot training program to Partners.
- Established a Partner-exclusive Hospitality Jobs Board on our website to help Partners address staffing needs.
- Served on the PRLA central chapter board to strengthen strategic partnerships and bolster awareness of VHH.
- Attended national DMO PACE (Partnership and Community Engagement) Forum to exchange ideas and knowledge with industry colleagues.

VISITERSHEYHARRISBURG.ORG WEBSITE ADVERTISING

Participating Partners	9
Total Impressions	2.2 M
Revenue	\$6,207.67

GETAWAY GUIDE

Total Ad Sales	\$78,037.50
# Of Advertisers	46



195
TOTAL INVESTING PARTNERS

22
NEW INVESTING PARTNERS

425
TOTAL BUSINESSES SUPPORTED

10
TOTAL EVENTS HOSTED

221
TOTAL EVENT ATTENDANCE

93%
PARTNER RETENTION

SALES

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

TARGET MARKETS



Meetings & Conventions



Tour & Travel/ International

Total Leads Distributed	212
Total Lead Room Nights Distributed	92,026
Trade Shows Attended	13
Client FAM Tours Hosted	9
Client Events Attended and Hosted	31
One on one appointments conducted	548



TOTAL ROOM NIGHTS BOOKED
39,534



TOTAL BOOKINGS
119

MEETINGS & CONVENTIONS

OBJECTIVES

- Increase meeting hotel room nights by increasing overnight sales leads and partner sales and promotional opportunities.
- Create more opportunities for partners to connect with planners.
- Strengthen relationships with meeting planners to understand and meet their expectations.
- Position Hershey & Harrisburg as a welcoming environment to attract diverse meetings and audiences to our region.
- Utilize findings of stakeholder surveys to develop sales initiatives.

STRATEGIES

- Implemented feedback from the Destination Analyst Meeting Planner survey into marketing and sales initiatives.
- Capitalized on trending destination strengths by promoting the popularity of second-tier destination appeal and Bleisure travel.
- Demonstrated VHH’s commitment to Diversity & Inclusion by researching and attending the Connect Diversity trade show to strengthen our knowledge and relationships with diverse audiences and decision-makers.
- Continued targeted trade show attendance, hosted client site tours, and organized client events.
- Maintained involvement with our regional MPI chapter and PASAE by attending monthly events, serving on the MPI board of Directors, and PASAE’s Education Committee.
- Developed two destination sales videos to enhance our Meeting Planner’s Toolkit.
- Secured the American Bus Association’s Board of Director’s Meeting for Fall 2024.

TRAVEL TRADE SALES DOMESTIC & INTERNATIONAL

OBJECTIVES

- Increase group and FIT hotel room nights by increasing overnight sales leads and partner sales and promotion opportunities.
- Maintain active presence at key industry trade shows and marketplaces.
- Maximize participation in regional, statewide and national partnership sales and marketing partnership opportunities.
- Facilitate in person sales and educational opportunities with the travel trade and travel media through sales missions and sponsored events.
- Stay abreast of industry trends and forecasts.

STRATEGIES

- Supported key domestic and receptive tour operator partners with regional overnight itineraries through online and print advertising, and staff training.
- Completed Brand USA International trade video for travel trade training.
- Attended Brand USA India Sales Mission.
- Sponsored S'mores Booth activation at IPW Registration
- Maintained active client engagement designed to foster and strengthen relationships with key domestic and receptive operators during sales missions, sponsorship events, trade marketing and domestic and international industry trade shows.



STRATEGIC ALLIANCES



OBJECTIVES

- Continue to leverage Keystone Crossroads partnership (Lancaster and Gettysburg) to collectively showcase regional assets to group tour and international planners.
- Elevate and expand sales initiatives through increased PA Tourism grant funding to target domestic group tour and international inbound receptive tour operators.
- Support statewide or regional partner initiatives when they align with our markets through active engagement in industry client events, trade show partnerships, sales missions, and trade marketing.
- Activate partnership with the Great Lakes of North America initiative.

STRATEGIES

- Participated in PA Tourism sponsorship of Sweet Suite at NTA.
- Attended PA Tourism Domestic Trade Sales Missions in NY/NJ and VA/NC.
- Participated in PA Tourism sponsored Tour Operator reception at ABA.
- Participated in PA Tourism Sponsored Sales Missions including: RTO South, RTO NYC, Germany & UK/ Ireland Travel Trade and Media and the Travel Trade and Media reception at IPW.
- Launched Keystone Crossroads Bus Wrap with Starr Tours traveling the I-95 corridor.
- Participated in Keystone Crossroads sponsored Accent East Trade Show.
- Full page itinerary feature in Group Tour Magazine.



HERSHEY HARRISBURG SPORTS & EVENTS AUTHORITY

Hershey Harrisburg Sports & Events Authority welcomed several new events in FY23-24 and saw continued growth of many annual events. Our team worked collaboratively with clients, Partners, and community stakeholders to ensure athletes, attendees, organizers, and families have a world-class experience during their event. These positive experiences lead to future business that drives local economic impact and promote overall community wellness.

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

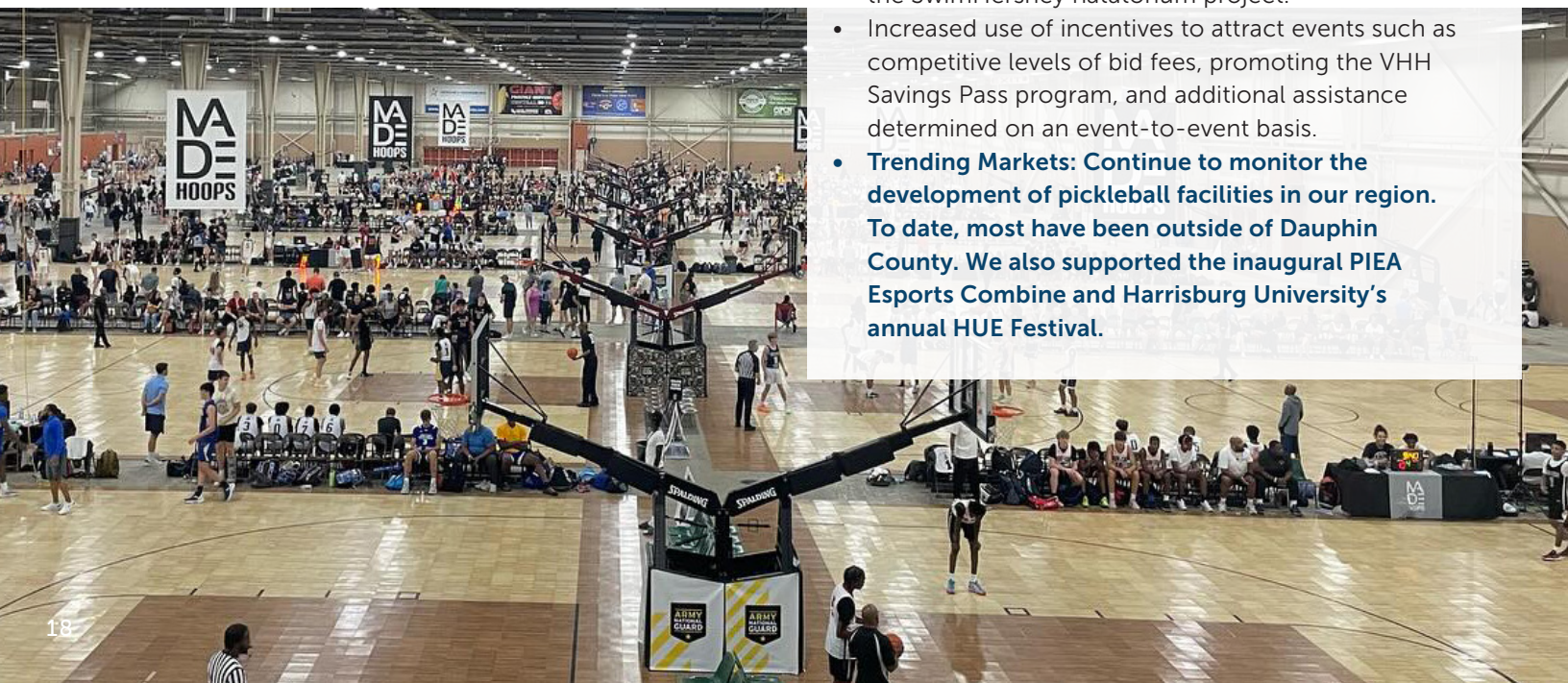


OBJECTIVES

- Enhance sports servicing and incentives for new and existing clients.
- Coordinate with Partners on upcoming PIAA and NCAA bid cycles and identify the best-fit options for our market.
- Examine options on a second HHSE-owned event with considerations to timing, expense, venues, and facilities needed.
- Leverage our role with the statewide sports alliance (PA Sports) by expanding our reach at national trade shows and educational symposiums.
- Increase measurable results of estimated economic impact, room nights generated, and earned media of all events recruited, supported, and sponsored by HHSE by 10% over previous year.

STRATEGIES

- Expanded efforts in the growing diversity market to include membership in Compete Sports Diversity (prospecting for LGBTQ+ and adaptive sporting events), development of a DEI sports statement for bid presentations, and attendance at the Compete Sports Diversity Education Conference.
- Explored development steps and timelines to facilitate the anticipated rollout of HHSE's next owned event. (Working name: Big 20 Girls Softball.)
- Provided personalized sports event service offerings to rights holders to increase event attendance, client retention, and overall visitor spending, realized by the expansion of the Marquee Hoops July event.
- Continued to advocate for future sports product development and infrastructural improvements; one highlight includes active involvement in meetings for the SwimHershey natatorium project.
- Increased use of incentives to attract events such as competitive levels of bid fees, promoting the VHH Savings Pass program, and additional assistance determined on an event-to-event basis.
- **Trending Markets: Continue to monitor the development of pickleball facilities in our region. To date, most have been outside of Dauphin County. We also supported the inaugural PIEA Esports Combine and Harrisburg University's annual HUE Festival.**



TOTAL ROOM NIGHTS
BOOKED

116,650

(26% increase from previous year)

LEAD ROOM NIGHTS
DISTRIBUTED

127,215

(15% increase from previous year)

TRADE SHOWS
ATTENDED

12

SITE VISITS
HOSTED

11



TOP NEW EVENTS HOSTED IN 2023-24

- **Marquee Hoops Hershey Jump Off**
July 5-8 | PA Farm Show Complex & Expo Center
- **PIEA Esports Combine**
August 18-19 | Whitaker Center
- **Alpha Hockey Bar Down in Chocolatetown**
November 10-12 | various rinks
- **Tier 1 Hockey Federation Showcase**
December 7-11 | various rinks
- **Sikumi Figure Skating Club Philadelphia Championships**
March 22-23 | Twin Ponds
- **PA Field Hockey Senior Cup**
March 22-23 | Lower Dauphin Schools
- **Ultimate Club Duals Girls Tournament**
May 1-4 | PA Farm Show Complex & Expo Center

TOTAL ECONOMIC IMPACT

\$7.7 MILLION

TOTAL ATTENDANCE

26,350

NEW EVENTS SECURED IN 2023-24 FOR FUTURE

- NIRCA XC National Championships | November 2024
- US Figure Skating Eastern Synchronized Skating Championships – January 2025
- National Girls Hockey League Futures Championships – February 2025
- PA State Bowling Association Women’s Tournament – April-June 2025
- Air Dot Show Central PA (featuring the US Navy Blue Angels) – May 2025
- National Gymnastics Association Regional Zone Championships – May 2025
- Professional Bowlers Association Greater Hershey Open – July 2024



TOTAL PROJECTED ECONOMIC IMPACT

\$6.25 MILLION

TOTAL PROJECTED ATTENDANCE

47,100

MARKETING & PR



OBJECTIVES

- Expand social media presence.
- Amplify brand awareness through compelling website and social media content development.
- Position our destination as a key market for sporting events.
- Leverage marketing and communication outreach through messaging to the community, local media, and national industry publications.

STRATEGIES

- Increased our marketing and visibility through PA Sports' 20th Anniversary campaign via press release, Facebook activations, and Connect Sports article.
- Distributed press releases announcing US Figure Skating and Professional Bowlers Association events.
- Participated in SportsETA's "SEEN" Podcast.



SOCIAL MEDIA FACTS AND FIGURES



- 7.5K accounts reached (Instagram & Facebook)
- 2K profile visits (Instagram & Facebook)
- 123 new followers (Instagram, Facebook, X/Twitter)



- 119.1K accounts reached (Organic: Instagram & Facebook)
- 173.1K accounts reached (Paid advertising: Instagram & Facebook)
- 21.1K profile visits (Instagram & Facebook)
- 584 new followers (Instagram, Facebook, X/Twitter)



MUNICIPAL EQUALITY INDEX

HHSE collaborated with Harrisburg Regional Chamber and the City of Harrisburg on initiatives to improve the city's MEI score. These efforts were reflected in the Human Rights Campaign's latest score of 96, which was boosted to 109 with "flex points" taken into account. Harrisburg's previous score was 71. A high MEI score is a key element in attracting business from event operators who want to host events in a safe and welcoming environment.

THE BIG 26 BASEBALL CLASSIC®

The 2023 Big 26 Baseball Classic at FNB Field on City Island marked HHSE's 5th year as owner/operator of this special event drawing top high school athletes from Pennsylvania and Maryland. Players get a glimpse of the big-league experience playing in this incredible facility as they showcase their talents for college and pro scouts. The event also includes the Buddy Program with player/buddy activities throughout the weekend.

In spring 2024, the process for the 2025 event began with tryouts that saw record participation numbers.

Thank you to the Harrisburg Senators, Penn State Harrisburg, and Elite Coach for playing key roles in helping to maintain the highest quality experience in all aspects of the event.



151
Spring 2024 tryout
participants

30
Coaches/scouts
in attendance

44
Special needs
athletes registered

SPRING 2024 TRYOUTS SAW THE HIGHEST NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS UNDER HHSE OPERATIONS



KADEN BARMER, MARYLAND, WITH HIS BUDDY. POSTED BY MRS. BARMER.



PLAYER TESTIMONIAL

Love the baseball brotherhood! Thank you to Big 26 Baseball Classic for a rewarding weekend. It was an honor to represent Team Maryland.

DIXON MONK (MD)

MLB SCOUT FEEDBACK

This is an excellent event from both a scouting and player standpoint and one that I circle on my calendar every year. It is very well organized, the playing talent is good, and it is always a productive few days.

BRIAN MATTHEWS, TEXAS RANGERS



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
- 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

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

Jason Meckes

Experience Development Director

Steve Cruz

Director of Strategic Partnerships

Heather Novack

Manager Digital Marketing & Tech

Jenny McConnell

Sales Manager

Sports & Events Authority

Gregg Cook, CSEE

Executive Director

Danielle Vincenti, STS

Director of Business Development

Tyler Petroski

Events & Marketing Manager

ExploreHBG

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**

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