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DESTINATION MARKETING &
EVENT MANAGEMENT SERVICES REPORT

APRIL 1 - JUNE 30, 2023



July 14, 2023

Spring was nothing short of spectacular for sports for Visit Knoxville. From the return of the **Visit Knoxville Open**, to the final **USA Cycling Pro Road Championships**, to the **AAU Girls Basketball National Championships**, the fourth quarter of FY2022–2023 was an action-packed affair. These major events often require a full team effort, from everyone on our staff to multiple partnerships across the city, county, and beyond. We truly could not do what we do without the involvement and support of so many in our community.

As an additional source of community pride, the Sunsphere was awarded the **Pauly Award for Tourism Property of the Year** from the Greater Knoxville Hospitality Association. Additionally, Visit Knoxville received a **Pauly Award for Special Event of the Year** for the 2023 Bassmaster Classic. Our own Monica Armstrong, Sr. Director of Visitor & Retail Services, also won a **Pauly Award for Rising Star of the Year**.

There's so much more we accomplished this quarter, and I hope you'll enjoy reading about all the ways we promote this *nature-loving-adventure-seeking-artsy-kinda-town*. As always, we credit these successes, and additional ones detailed in this report, to the strong relationships we maintain with our tourism partners.

On behalf of Visit Knoxville, I proudly submit the April 1 – June 30, 2023 report for Destination Marketing and Event Management Services for Knoxville and Knox County.

Sincerely,

Kim Bumpas, CDME, CMP
President, Visit Knoxville

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HIGHLIGHTS SUMMARY

The following summary details select highlights for April 1 – June 30, 2023, the fourth quarter of fiscal year 2022–2023. These highlights can be used as a quick reference when talking about the activity and progress of Visit Knoxville (VK).

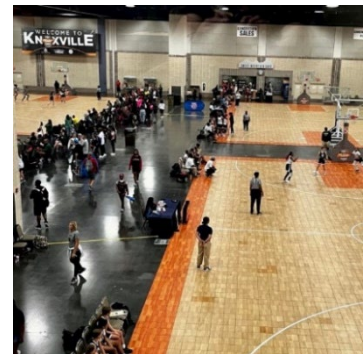
- **Hosting the 2023 Amateur Athletic Union Girls Basketball World Championships** – VK welcomed over 180 teams from 2nd through 8th grades to compete at the Knoxville Convention Center (KCC) and World’s Fair Exhibition Hall across 19 basketball courts



over the week of June 22 – 26. The Visit Knoxville Sports Commission (VKSC) served as the tournament director for the event and partnered with AAU throughout several pre-planning meetings to determine event needs, create timelines, and coordinate with key partners to make the event a success. Prior to game play, the tournament kicked off with a full registration day followed by Opening Ceremonies to welcome the teams to Knoxville and get them excited for their chance to compete for the championship. Held at the Knoxville Civic Coliseum, the

Opening Ceremonies featured an introduction for each team and a motivational keynote speech from University of Tennessee Women’s Athletic Director Emeritus, Joan Cronan.

Teams were welcomed to Knoxville with a greeting on the Visitors Center Reader Board, custom digital signage at the venue, an AAU Basketball magnet for the KNOX letters, directional signage throughout the venues, and several posts on VKSC social media platforms. VKSC designed a custom detailed “Know Before You Go” packet and hosted an in-person pre-event meeting to go over helpful local information and provide guidance to visiting teams. VKSC spearheaded event logistics including ordering event equipment, scheduling medical trainers, managing scorecards, staffing the admission gate, scheduling practice times, coordinating champion award ceremonies, and all other tournament



logistics. Merchandise vendors, photographers and a live stream service were also secured to add value to the athlete experience.

Team Knoxville volunteers staffed the visitor information booth with resources and access to tournament specific discounts that the VKSC set up with partner attractions including the Women’s Basketball Hall of Fame, Main Event,

Dollywood, and Dollywood's Splash Country. VKSC scheduled and coordinated all aspects of set up and tear down of the 19 basketball courts working with HireQuest Direct Labor, ACES, HeavyHaul trailers, and SSE rentals. VK Housing designed a custom booking website for the tournament and provided full reservation management services for all guests, including staff, via the VK Housing System.

"We, the AAU, were extremely fortunate to partner with the Visit Knoxville Sports Commission for this event. The entire team took ownership of the event and truly were dedicated to helping build our brand! Looking forward to 2025 when we can do it again!"
- Jerry Codispoti, Director of Tennessee AAU Girls Basketball

- **Partnering with Tennessee Department of Tourist Development (TDTD) on statewide promotional event** – VK was pleased to take part in “Little Tennessee”, a free 4-day event in Toronto. From June 13–17, attendees enjoyed a little taste of Tennessee’s biggest flavors, including live music, authentic southern eats, and a variety of activities. The event took place alongside North by Northeast Music Festival on a 200-yard footprint outside Allan A. Lamport Stadium in Liberty Village. Chattanooga, Franklin, the Smokies, Memphis, and Nashville also took part in the event. Knoxville’s theme of a dog park coffee shop based was very well received. Along with K Brew Coffee, Knoxville offered hand-stamped leather dog tags by Honeymouth. Knoxville artist Curtis Glover also completed a mural onsite to be donated to a local shelter. A full recap from TDTD will be issued in 1Q.



- **Hosting the USA Cycling Pro Road National Championships** – ‘The Final Ride’ took place in Knoxville June 22–25. The weekend kicked off with the Time Trial Championships in Oak Ridge on Thursday, June 22, followed by the Criterium in the downtown Knoxville on Friday, June 23, and the Pro Road Race from downtown to South Knoxville on Sunday, June 25.

VK served as the Local Organizing Committee and worked directly with USA Cycling, Medalist Sports, Oak Ridge, the City of Knoxville, and Knox County on logistics to ensure a successful finale to the seven-year run in Knoxville. Extensive attention to detail went into managing the logistics of road closures, course development, permitting, venue negotiations, and coordination with Knoxville Police Department, Knoxville Fire Department, COK Public



Works, COK Traffic Engineering, UT Medical, and Oak Ridge Police Department. The VK Team handled the setup of onsite hospitality and beer garden, equipment rentals, meeting space and accommodation requests, citywide marketing efforts, sponsor solicitation, community outreach, event live streaming, and broadcast. VK determined the extensive needs for community involvement and facilitated the recruitment and training of volunteers. A volunteer zoom training was held to properly prepare for the event and volunteer packet pick up was held at DICK'S House of Sport where additional questions were answered. Volunteers who gave their time for each of the seven years or volunteered for each shift this year were presented with a special gift as a 'thank you' for their dedication.



An ancillary event, **Olympic Day**, was held on Saturday, June 24 at Safety City, giving approximately 445 people the opportunity to meet, greet, and get autographs from Olympians, participate in an all-ages bike rodeo, and visit a variety of vendors onsite. The entire event was promoted in the Visitors Guide, on visitknoxville.com event calendar, on the

Visitors Center Reader Board, and usacycleknox.com was regularly updated with all event information. Pole banners were placed on Gay Street and in Market Square for event promotion.



"Thank you to your entire team for being amazing hosts, partners and friends. You guys took the ball and ran with it, making USAC and the sport of cycling better. A sincere thank you, as I was watching from the sidelines. A great set of champions!"

– Chris Aronhalt, Owner/President, Medalist Sports

- **Partnering with the University of Tennessee's Department of Undergraduate Admissions to produce the UT Visitor Guide** – The partnership provides messaging consistent with the Knoxville Visitors Guide, increased exposure to visitors, and increased distribution for the University. A total of 85,000 guides are distributed at the UT Student Union and Admissions, the Knoxville Visitors Center, the Sunsphere, 15 information centers, and 14 state welcome centers as well as all Knox County hotels.



SALES SUMMARY

- **Trade Shows** – The VK Sales Team attended five trade shows during 4Q:
 - **Connect Spring Marketplace (April 11–13)** – VK along with KCC staff attended the Connect Spring Marketplace in Las Vegas, NV. VK had 97 appointments with groups across the Citywide, Corporate, and Association tracts about bringing their events to Knoxville in future years.
 - **Connect Spring Sports Marketplace (April 11–13)** – VKSC attended Connect Spring Sports Marketplace in Las Vegas, NV. VK had 64 appointments with groups about bringing their events to Knoxville in future years.
 - **HelmsBriscoe Annual Business Conference (May 3–5)** – VK attended HelmsBriscoe Annual Business Conference in Denver, CO. VK had 26 appointments with groups about bringing their events to Knoxville in future years.



- **Sports ETA Symposium (May 8–11)** – VKSC attended the Sports ETA Symposium in Kansas City, MO. VK had 31 appointments with groups about bringing their events to Knoxville in future years.
- **Fraternity Executives Association (May 31–June 3)** – VK attended the Fraternity Executives Association in Palm Desert, CA. VK had a booth and 14 appointments with groups about bringing their events to Knoxville in future years.

VK tracks each sales activity and monitors results throughout the fiscal year. For FYE23, VK received five RFPs resulting from 4Q trade show attendance.

- **Site Visits** – The VK Sales Team hosted seven site visits during 4Q:
 - **Eagle Wings Motorcycle Association** – VK conducted a one-day site visit with the CEO and five board members to look at hosting their 2023 and 2025 event in Knoxville. They toured KCC and downtown hotel properties.
 - **International Association of Equine Dentistry** – VK conducted a two-day site visit with the Executive Event Planner of this group, touring downtown, KCC, and downtown hotel properties. The group is looking at Knoxville for their 2026 Convention and Trade Show.



- **Alpha Chi Honor Society** – VK Sales & Convention Services conducted a one-day site visit with planner Lara Noah, touring the KCC, Marriott, and the Hilton.
- **Association of College Honor Societies** – VK Sales & Convention Services hosted a three-day site visit with Meeting Planner Kindra Bess, touring all downtown properties, and she was very excited about the Hyatt Place and Embassy Suites. The planner enjoyed a Tennessee Riverboat Cruise which she felt would be great for her group.
- **Beef Improvement Federation** – VK hosted the group on a quick site visit, and they want to return when the new UT Ag Building is completed.



- **RDU Sports** – VK hosted Pernell Edwards from this group and toured the UT Rec Sports Complex, Emerald Youth Sansom Complex, Marriott, and then Neyland Stadium for a potential closing party. They are looking at Knoxville for a July 2024 event.

○ **Shield Wall Media** – VK conducted a one-day site visit with the group. They really liked the Marriott and its proximity to KCC. They are looking at Knoxville for a January 2024 event.

- **Scouting Trips** – The VK Sales Team performed two scouting trips during 4Q:

- **CrossFit Regionals** – VK attended the CrossFit East North America Regionals in Orlando, FL. VK is looking to bring the event back to Knoxville in 2024.
- **UNC Health Korn Ferry Tour Stop** – VK attended the UNC Health Korn Ferry Tour event to research best practices to use at our event in Knoxville.



- **Sale Blitz** – The VK Sales Team performed two sales blitzes during 4Q:

- VK Sales Team performed two sales blitzes in Nashville along with partners from KCC, Marriott and Hilton. They were able to meet with 23 potential groups about bringing their events to Knoxville in future years. This was across the Association, Religious, and Fraternal markets. VK received one RFP during the trip.

CONVENTION & SPORTS SERVICES SUMMARY

The **Visit Knoxville Convention & Sports Services Team** provides services for conventions, trade shows, sporting events, and festivals utilizing a consultative approach based on the unique needs, specific goals, and attendee interests of each group. This enhances the overall planner and attendee experience with a focus on services designed to add value, maximize group efforts to grow attendance, and retain group business.

The Convention & Sports Services Team supported 112 events/meetings, 14 festivals, and provided a total of 144 partner referrals. All 144 partner referrals were related to events/meetings and festivals that were supported this quarter. Team Knoxville Volunteers were utilized at three events this quarter, for a total of 1,410 hours provided as a no-cost, service-added benefit to local events.

4Q Goals:

- **Recognize Team Knoxville Volunteers during Volunteer Appreciation Month** – Offered exclusive free opportunities to volunteers via the monthly newsletter, including giving away new Team Knoxville Volunteers stickers at the Visitors Center and Sunsphere, Gotta Know Knoxville tours for current volunteers, and limited tickets to the Sunsphere Observation Deck during Volunteer Appreciation Week.
- **Revamp and include new offerings on Bandwango Experience Knoxville Savings Pass** – Worked with current participants to update experiences and offerings.
- **Update master inventory list of all Convention Services assets to include signage, event pole banners, Knox O magnets, etc.** – Inventoried all signage, pole banners and magnets and will continue to keep inventory updated as new materials are acquired.
- **Attend ESPA Webinar as a team for continuing education** – Participated in “Give Your Clients What They Want! Let’s Talk Gifts, Amenities & More” on April 27.

Highlighted Events (additional items referenced in the Highlights Summary):

- **Tennessee HOSA – Future Health Professionals** hosted their **2023 State Leadership Conference** at the KCC **April 2–7**. The 2023 State Leadership Conference brought in approximately 2,600 future health professional students as well as 275 advisors that oversee those students.



VK hosted a site visit for the planners to scout hotels, meeting space, and the city. Host hotels included the Graduate, Marriott, Cumberland House, Tennessean, Crowne Plaza, Hilton, Hampton Inn & Suites, Embassy Suites, Courtyard, and Hyatt Place with the KCC being selected as the host venue.

Following secured contracts, VK's Convention Services team set up a planning call to discuss the planners' needs for the conference. VK provided the Visitor Info QR Code Handout and Experience

Knoxville Savings Pass QR Code Handout for the 275 Advisor packets as this group is mainly digital. Additionally, VK sent the digital copy of these materials to the planner for their website and app. VK delivered Visitors Guides, Dining & Trolley Maps, and Downtown Maps for their registration desk for anyone requesting a paper copy. For quick transportation shuttles, the planner requested an economical solution for attendees staying at the Graduate as well as folks needing to get around downtown quickly. VK provided information for the K.I.S.S. Caboose and the



trolley for transportation around downtown. To welcome TN HOSA's attendees to Knoxville, VK custom designed, printed and delivered an "O" for the KNOX letters at the KCC which served as a great backdrop for memorable photos. TN HOSA was also welcomed via a custom message on the Visitors Center Reader Board and a custom

message on the VK TV Loop at the KCC and other locations downtown.

- The **Visit Knoxville Open** returned to Holston Hills Country Club as part of the **Korn Ferry Tour May 21–28** with Visit Knoxville once again serving as the Title Sponsor of the event. The VK and VKSC Team served on the Championship Committee and provided a variety of resources and assistance throughout the event planning process. VK staffed the onsite athlete registration and assisted with providing tournament information and welcoming golfers to Knoxville. The VKSC also worked with local industry partners to supply exclusive offers to golfers and caddies as a special welcome. Further assistance was provided by coordinating volunteer ambassadors to greet and direct spectators immediately upon arrival to the course, scheduling food trucks for attendees to enjoy in the vendor zone, and referring a sound engineer to assist with audio needs during the championship award ceremony. The VK team helped elevate the overall VIP hospitality experience by providing custom uplighting



displaying the event logo and contributing recommendations regarding hospitality design, décor, and catering needs.

The event was highlighted on VK and VKSC social media outlets and promoted through a variety of PGA TOUR platforms, on visitknoxville.com calendar of events, in the 2023 Visitors Guide,



at McGhee Tyson Airport, and on the Visitors Center Reader Board. Custom Pole banners were also placed throughout downtown to promote the event, showcase past champions, and welcome attendees to Knoxville.



“The Visit Knoxville Open continues to be one of the best tournaments on the Korn Ferry TOUR and is one of four original events that began playing in 1990. More than 83 percent of the players on the PGA TOUR competed on the Korn Ferry TOUR, with many of them playing in Knoxville along the way. Visit Knoxville’s team plays a significant role in this event for our community.”

– Patrick Nichol, Event Director

- **Bike Boat Brew & Bark** was held June 3 at the Knoxville Adventure Collective (KAC).

The event encouraged tourists and locals to discover what Knoxville has to offer through the Urban Wilderness, waterways, craft brew scene, and pet friendly locations so they can experience it all year long. Activities included SUP and Kayak Open Sessions with instructors as well as guided E-bike tours, and discounted greenway and mountain bike rentals – all with KAC.



Young-Williams Animal Center hosted a “Bark Around Town” Guided Walk, Freedom Boat Club offered pet friendly Captained Rides on the Tennessee River, and Keep the



Tennessee River Beautiful hosted a river cleanup. Historian Jack Neely guided a Riverwalk Tour, Knoxville Urban Guy Alan Sims led a Downtown Knoxville Walk, and Carol Evans with Legacy Parks led a Guided Hike to Morningside Park. Various breweries led round-trip guided Brewery Slow Rides from KAC. Bike Walk Knoxville led a round-trip guided urban bike ride

from UT Gardens. Volunteer Landing Marina offered free pontoon boat shuttles to Suttree Landing. A variety of partners/vendors were also on site, including Young-Williams Animal Center, Knox County Parks & Recreation, and City of Knoxville Parks & Rec. VK staffed an information table with Team Knox volunteers to greet guests. Off-site, attendees enjoyed free admission to the Women's Basketball Hall of Fame, James White's Fort, and Blount Mansion (the latter two in celebration of Tennessee Statehood Day).



Additional planner quotes from 4Q Meetings and Events:

“I wanted to thank you and Visit Knoxville for your assistance in making the HMM-161 Vietnam Era Reunion a great success. The maps of trolley routes and business establishments near our hotel were a big hit, and many of our group spent the daytime hours strolling through Market Square, Gay Street, and nearby areas. The Museum on Gay Street was a big hit. We also hit a home run with the locally sourced chow chow as a gift to spouses and guests. This was our second visit to Knoxville as a group in the last six years and we have thoroughly enjoyed ourselves both times.”

– Ronald Winter, Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 161 (HMM-161) Reunion Coordinator

“The location of our hotel in Knoxville, The Holiday Inn West Cedar Bluff, truly met every single one of our needs - easy access to interstates to get to outstanding restaurants, good restaurants and stores within easy walking distance, meeting rooms that met our many needs, a hotel staff that was always eager to please, and good access to the great twisty roads nearby. Hannah Fuller with Visit Knoxville was superb. I cannot even begin to imagine better or friendlier service. She met every single one of our sometimes-quirky needs. Hannah was super responsive, knowledgeable, helpful, and friendly. She even arranged for a celebrity to welcome our group - the county mayor was a total treat, and many of our group recognized him instantly.”

– Dianne Park, Motorcycle Sport Touring Association (MSTA) PR Director

“I truly appreciate you and everything you are doing to make our conference a success! Thank you for the support!”

– Stacey Payne, Executive Director, Southeastern Crime Stoppers Annual Conference

“Thank you for sending all this great information and for really helping us narrow down our options! You have been so helpful in helping us plan our conference, thank you for that!”

– Kim Hoodin, Event Manager, IACMI - The Composites Institute 2023 Summer Members Meeting

“Visit Knoxville helped us make our conference a great event! They helped us pick the right hotel, lined up transportation for us. Basically, Visit Knoxville took care of the broad strokes for us regarding making the event a success.”

– Michael Ogle, Curator of Herpetology, Zoo Knoxville

“Thanks for everything. Always a pleasure working with Kelli and the VK Team. Let’s make the 50th Annual South event a great one next year!”

– Will Seibel, Special Event Director, Street Rod Nationals South

Team Knoxville Volunteers

A total of 1,410 hours provided by 161 volunteers as a no-cost, service-added benefit to the following:

- Information table assistants and welcome bag preparation for a total of **17** hours during the Street Rod Nationals South, May 3–5.
- Information table assistants for a total of **10** hours during Bike Boat Brew & Bark, June 3.
- Information table assistants for a total of **10** hours during the AAU Girls Basketball World Championships, June 22–23.
- Course marshals for a total of **1,373** hours during the USA Cycling Pro Road, Time Trial, and Criterium National Championships, June 22–25.



Team Knoxville participated in the following additional activities:

- April 16–22 – Celebrated volunteers during National Volunteer Week with the below free opportunities:
 - New Team Knoxville stickers
 - Gotta Know Knoxville tours
 - Free admission (limited) to the Sunsphere
- April 19 – Attended the KUB Spring Volunteer Fair to recruit new volunteer team members and network with other volunteer managers.
- May 18 – Met with Visit Farragut to share best practices on creating and managing a volunteer ambassador program.
- June 4 – Attended Open Streets to help recruit new volunteer team members and promote USA Cycling’s Olympic Day and course marshal volunteer opportunities.
- June 5 – Met with RSVP Knox Seniors to renew our Memorandum of Understanding.
- June 14 – Hosted an in-person orientation for UT Sport Management students participating in USA Cycling as course marshals.



- June 19–21 – Hosted an online training and orientation on Zoom Webinar for USA Cycling volunteer course marshals. This was followed by two days of open house style packet pick up at DICK’s House of Sport, where volunteers could pick up their t-shirts, whistles, assignments, enroll in day-of text messages, and ask questions. Volunteers who have given up their time each of the seven years and volunteers who signed up for every shift in 2023 were gifted a pair of Goodr sunglasses.
- Shared partner volunteer opportunities, including:
 - One Knoxville SC, ongoing opportunities
 - May 22–28 – Visit Knoxville Open
 - June 4 – Open Streets
 - June 7–10 – Southern Fried Poetry Slam



Additional 4Q Activity:

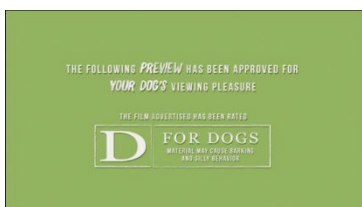
- **Pre-planning Visits:**
 - **Tennessee Association of Chiefs of Police – May 5** – Hosted planner for breakfast and a tour of the Marriott, KCC, and Hilton to discuss event layout and details.
 - **USA Diving – June 15–16** – Representatives from USA Diving toured the host hotel and venue to discuss preliminary plans. A press conference was also held in the Visitors Center to announce the event coming to Knoxville.
- **Festival and partnership support** included Dogwood Arts Chalk Walk, Rossini Festival, Dogwood Arts Festival, Knoshville Jewish Food Festival, Vestival, Southern Skies Music Festival, Children’s Festival of Reading, Our Common Nature: An Appalachian Celebration, Nief-Norf Festival, Rhinestone Fest, Tennessee Statehood Day, Open Streets, Juneteenth Celebration, and Brewfest.
- **Conducted pre-planning calls and/or meetings** for Doll Artisan Guild, Visit Knoxville Open, Bike Boat Brew & Bark, Film Fest Knox, Nisus Corporation, AAU Girls Basketball World Championships, Governor’s Conference on Hospitality and Tourism, USA Cycling Pro Road Championships, USA Cycling Olympic Day, and Grooves in the Garden
- **Toured or visited the following partners:** Windy Hill Farm & Preserve, Tennessee Riverboat, and Regas Square Events Open House.
- **Participated in the following webinars and virtual events:**
 - Volunteer Match – Best Practices for Recruiting and Engaging Volunteers from Zoomers to Boomers
 - Volunteer Pro – Build Back Stronger: 5 Secrets to Recruit & Retain Your Volunteer Dream Team
 - ESPA – Give Your Clients What They Want! Let’s Talk Gifts, Amenities & More
 - Simpleview – An Inside Scoop: How Tourism Ambassadors Can Bridge the Gap Between Locals & Visitors
 - ESPA Leaders Webinar – Cultivating Leaders: Planning for Future Success

MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS SUMMARY

The **Visit Knoxville Marketing Team** produces, approves and places regional, national, and international advertising and social media promoting Knoxville to leisure travelers, conference and event planners, sports events planners and film and television production companies. Creative is based around the *nature-loving-adventure-seeking-artsy-kind-of-town* campaign directing to visitknoxville.com. The Team also recruits and partners with journalists and influencers to share Knoxville's narratives.

4Q Goals:

- **Produce a Knoxville “dogumentary” to assist in the promotion of Knoxville’s pet friendly “Barxville” branding campaign** – Filming took place in May, and production is underway for a Fall premier. More than 18 local partners were involved in the storyline to help tell the dog-friendly story of Knoxville. VK was pleased to share a sneak peek trailer for the short film with attendees at Little Tennessee, a statewide promotional event in Toronto June 15–18 (please reference the Highlights Summary of this report for details). The trailer and short film are slated to debut publicly in 1Q.



- **Provide marketing and PR assistance to VK team for VK Open** – The VK marketing team was pleased to assist in the coordination, execution, and social collaboration of three videos promoting Knoxville and the Visit Knoxville Open. The videos, produced in partnership with the University of Tennessee and the City of Knoxville, were shared on Visit Knoxville, The Korn Ferry and PGA social channels. The videos generated more than 350,000 views on The Korn Ferry Facebook page alone:



Knoxville Hype video

Golf Challenge with Heath Shuler at Neyland Stadium

Golf Challenge at Baker Creek Preserve

- **Host at least two journalists/influencers for editorial content development** – VK hosted seven visits this quarter. Please see the Journalist & Influencer Visits and Assistance section for details.
- **Partner with Tennessee Distillers Guild on content/promotion** – VK coordinated with partners including Knoxville Adventure Collective, Balter Beerworks, Maple Hall and Brother Wolf to create branded content pieces “Waterfalls & Whiskey” and “Just for Foodies” on [TN Whiskey Trail \(@tnwhiskeytrail\)](#) | [Instagram](#).



- **Design and produce the FYE2023 Visit Knoxville Annual Report and FYE24 Sales & Marketing Roadmap** – The FYE24 Sales & Marketing Roadmap is complete and available to view on the Visit Knoxville website under [Public Notices](#) | [Visit Knoxville](#). The FYE23 Annual Report is in production and will be available to view July 31.

Progress Notes (additional items may be referenced in the Highlights Summary):



- VK’s own Kristen Combs (Director of Communications & Social Strategies) authored a book this quarter entitled ***100 Things to Do in Knoxville Before You Die***, published this spring by Reedy Press. The Visitors Center hosted its first book launch party and signing on April 6. The book is available at the [Visitors Center Gift Shop](#).

with VK Sales and Services Teams to create customized **creative materials**. A highlight of this quarter included promotional materials for the USA Cycling Pro Road Championships: website, flyers, signage, billboards, radio commercials and more. Additional materials are referenced throughout this report.



- VK continues to utilize its **e-newsletter**, **Community Corner**, and **VK Network** messaging to communicate events and activities to visitors and the community. To stay in the loop, [sign up](#) for the e-newsletter and/or VK Blog.

- **4Q E-newsletter**

- Sun's Out. Fun's Out – This edition promoted Knoxville as a nature-loving-adventure-seeking-artsy-kind-of-SUMMER-town. It linked to the VK online events calendar and highlighted the following: Bike Boat Brew & Bark, Rhinestone Fest, SoKno Pride, Juneteenth Celebration, USA Cycling Pro Road Championships, Where's Waldo Scavenger Hunt, Festival on the 4th, Fanboy Expo, and Grooves in the Garden and included a link to the 2023 Visitors Guide. NOTE: The opt-in list has increased by 1K over the last email newsletter.

*Current open rate for the e-newsletter is 36.2%**

**Simpleview reports an average open rate of 27.78% for the tourism industry.*

- The **Community Corner** is a newsletter that is produced and distributed weekly by the Visitor Services Team to help keep local partners and establishments aware of the upcoming events that may impact or encourage their business, as well as share information about local events and happenings. A total of 13 Community Corner newsletters were produced in 4Q with an open rate of 37%.
- VK continues to promote tourism partners via the **VK Network**, a loop of partner videos running in 20+ high-traffic areas throughout Knox County.
- The VK **website** continues to perform incredibly well, amassing a total of 1,148,631 pageviews in 4Q. Additionally:
 - Average length of session was 1 minute 39 seconds
 - Pages per session was 1.88
 - Number of clicks to partner sites from VK website was 56,186
 - Top three metros generating traffic were Atlanta, Nashville, and Charlotte
 - 1,827 pageviews to sign up for the e-newsletter

In this quarter, VK created new pages for the website as well as regularly updated content on various pages throughout the site which also feeds into the VK app, keeping everything fresh and up to date. For 4Q, the VK app had 377 downloads with a total of 2,634 sessions. The average engagement time per session spent on the app was 2 minutes 52 seconds.

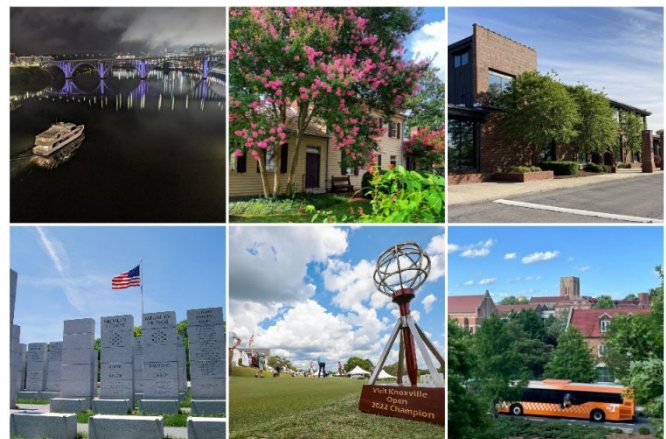
The **VK Online Event Calendar** is managed by the Visitor Services Team. In 4Q, 151 events were added to the calendar.

- VK promotes local partners in the **VK Blog** with a mix of contributors in addition to VK staff. Current partner writers include Jack Neely of Knoxville History Project, The Maker City, Arts & Culture Alliance organizations, and Legacy Parks. Read [more](#) and [subscribe](#). Post highlights include:



- [Places to Find Wildflowers](#)
 - [Knoxville: America's Underwear Capital?](#)
 - [Memorial Day Weekend in Knoxville](#)
- VK's **social media channels** serve as key elements in VK's marketing mix, focused on directing traffic to blog posts and other sections of the VK website, sharing tourism partner information, and engaging with the community. Highlights include:

- Promoting various events, exhibits, and attractions including Street Rod Nationals South at Chilhowee Park, Roam Fest in the Urban Wilderness, AAPI Night Market at Hi-Wire Brewing, the Tennessee Theatre's 2023-2024 Broadway season, celebrating 20 years for the Market Square Farmers'



- Market, Bike Boat Brew & Bark, Juneteenth celebrations at the Beck Cultural Exchange Center, and more.
 - Instagram story series including the "In the Neighborhood" blog series with a coordinating pinned highlight, Dogwood Arts Festival and related April events, and promotion of other festivals and events like the Children's Festival of Reading, several spring Maker markets, Our Common Nature: Yo-Yo Ma and Friends, and more.

- **Additional Partner Promotion & Involvement** – VK continues to provide support to our tourism partners. Highlights include:
 - Partnering on Appalachia Sessions Live Taping at the Bijou Theatre, presented by the East Tennessee Historical Society. Chris Blue & The Crockett Band were joined by musical guests Sierra Hull & Justin Moses, Brit Taylor, and Allie Colleen on May 1 at the Bijou Theatre. The live taping was cut down to a one-hour TV show broadcast in Knoxville, Tri-Cities, Roanoke, and Lexington. Appalachia Sessions is a social impact and purpose-driven initiative to bring the history of Appalachian music, culture, and education to students who are directly impacted by its history. At each live taping, students from the inner cities and rural Appalachia tour the Museum of East Tennessee History and attend each concert. 100% of the net proceeds from the concert series benefit the Appalachia Sessions Fund to support student literacy and education in Appalachia. More details at appysessions.com.
 - Ongoing collaboration on [Cities of the SEC](#) – a free, digital passport partnership between the destinations that are home to the schools in the Southeastern Conference. This partnership is born from the idea that college football fans are familiar with the teams, coaches, and rivalries within the conference, but perhaps not as much regarding the places each of these teams call home. The passport is on Visit Knoxville's Gameday page: goodolrockytop.com.
 - Partnering with the Tennessee RiverLine on "Paddle Tales". The first episode was released on June 26 and has more than 8.7K views. The Tennessee River is 652 miles long, from Knoxville Tennessee to Paducah Kentucky. This episode explores the first section around Knoxville.
 - Partnering on the Tennessee Theatre's Broadway season (includes ad placement in playbills).
 - Working with Knox Heritage and Robin Easter Design to update the Historic Downtown Walking Tour brochure.
 - Partnering with/speaking at Introduction Knoxville's "Quality of Life" session highlighting a variety of tourism partners and experiences.
 - Partnering on Big Ears Presents Our Common Nature: An Appalachian Celebration with Yo-Yo Ma & Friends, May 26 at World's Fair Park. Conceived and curated by Yo-Yo Ma, the celebration featured special musical guests, storytellers, poets, puppets, and dancers from throughout the Appalachian region. CBS Mornings aired a feature on Yo-Yo Ma's Our Common Nature that highlighted the pop-up performances in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park and at Knoxville's Lakeshore Park that led up to the all-star Friday evening celebration.
 - Producing a :30 version of VK's "artsy-town" video, including footage from the Women's Basketball Hall of Fame which celebrates Knoxville as a nature-loving-adventure-seeking-HALL OF FAME-kind town. The :30 aired nationally during broadcast of the Induction Ceremony live on ESPN+ (digital and CTV) on April 29

and on ESPNU (broadcast) on May 2, 4, 6, and 7. VK also provided an ad for the program and street clings for the Ceremony.

- Middle East Tennessee Tourism Council (METTC) – VK continues to work closely with METTC through an appointed board member. The focus is on initiatives that include 9 Lakes of East Tennessee, the Long and Winding Road, the Tennessee River Valley Geotourism Mapguide and other initiatives to promote awareness of the 9 Lakes region including Knoxville information and materials. This quarter VK attended the METTC Board of Directors retreat to discuss projects from the year, current and future budget plans, and future projects.
- Serving on the Tennessee Tourism Committee (TTC). TTC met virtually on April 12. The Committee welcomed three new members and discussed the Tourism Economics Program, tourism exchange, international sales, the Tennessee Sports Hall of Fame, and Welcome Centers. Updates were provided on marketing, rural, outreach, communications, and labor and workforce legislation. The President of Visit Knoxville remains Chair of the Research Committee at the state level.
- VK continues to **track marketing efforts** that contribute to hotel bookings and website traffic via ADARA and Arrivalist. According to ADARA, digital marketing in 4Q contributed to 4,590 hotel bookings. These numbers will continue to increase up to 60 days post-campaign. Additionally, organic website traffic in 4Q contributed to 6,909 hotel bookings. VK continues to pull insights from our Arrivalist partnership: For April – June 2023, the top ten origin Designated Market Areas (DMA) of overnight visitors for the period by volume are listed below. These markets stayed an average of 1.7 nights. *

- | | |
|--|---------------------|
| 1. Nashville | 6. Memphis |
| 2. Chattanooga | 7. Knoxville** |
| 3. Tri-Cities-TN-VA | 8. Charlotte |
| 4. Atlanta | 9. Lexington |
| 5. Greenville/Spartanburg/Asheville/Anderson | 10. Washington D.C. |

**It is important to note that we are still inside the travel window, which means travelers exposed to ads in June may not have traveled yet, which may influence the top markets.*

***The Knoxville DMA consists of 22 counties within East Tennessee and Southeast Kentucky.*

Note: Stay-lift is currently being updated by Arrivalist to bring their data in line with new privacy guidelines.

The 4Q VK Tourism Dashboard will be available to view alongside the 4Q Highlights Report on Friday, July 28 on the VK website.

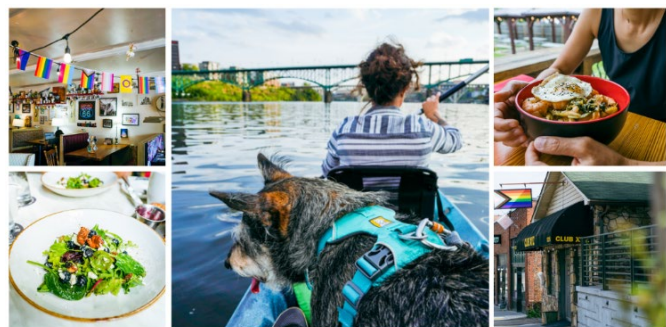
Journalist & Influencer Visits and Assistance:

- VK hosted **Kristin Luna**, a Nashville-based freelance writer. She has been to Knoxville several times and this visit was an all-encompassing look at The Maker City to showcase Knoxville's art scene, First Friday, the Maker Exchange, and more. She has since published this helpful guide on her high-traffic blog, Camels & Chocolate:
 - [Visit The Maker City: Exploring the Knoxville Art Scene in Depth](#)
- VK hosted **Stratton Lawrence**, freelance writer on assignment to update the **Fodor's Guide to the Smoky Mountains** which includes a section on Knoxville to include updated restaurants and other attractions.
- VK assisted **Laura Holmes**, freelance writer of **contentqueens.net**. Her visit was centered around Roam Fest in Knoxville's Urban Wilderness, particularly focused on women mountain bikers. She documented her visit on Instagram and had an article published:
 - [contentqueens.net](#)



- VK hosted **Frederick Murphy**, writer, influencer, and filmmaker of **History Before Us**. Frederick is a Black historian originally from Tennessee and is currently based out of Charlotte. His itinerary included several items of interest pertaining to Black history and beyond, including a visit to the Beck Cultural Exchange Center where he was able to meet with Renee Kesler and Robert Booker, the Women's Basketball Hall of Fame, the Tennessee Riverboat, and other attractions. He documented his visit via Instagram:
 - [History Before Us](#)

- VK hosted **Erin McGrady** and **Caroline Whatley** of Authentic Asheville on assignment for **dapperQ**, an LGBTQ+ publication. Their visit showcased Knoxville as a pet-friendly and artsy town with inclusions of the Uptown North/Emory Place area, South Press, and the Landing House as part of their itinerary. They have since had their article published:
 - [dapperQ](#)



- VK hosted **Tyler Glass**, photographer and influencer, in partnership with TDTD. His visit was a hub-and-spoke concept for Knoxville and surrounding outdoor recreation areas such as Big South Fork and Cumberland Gap. His visit to Knoxville included Navitat at Night, paddling the Tennessee River via Knoxville Adventure Collective, and paddling Mead's Quarry at Ijams Nature Center via RiverSports. He documented his visit via Instagram:
 - [@tylerwayneglass](#)
- VK hosted **Chris and Will Antie**, podcasters of iHeart Radio's "**What About Our Life?**" **podcast**, which explores their continuous adventures with the life they've experienced together as an LGBTQ couple. It's a show that allows listeners to relate to their adventures and enjoy some of the greatest moments in life, allowing everyone to experience incredible moments with people from across the globe with personal at-home feelings. Their visit allowed them to experience Knoxville as an inclusive and welcoming destination. VK arranged several interviews for their podcast, including representation from the Bijou Theatre, Dogwood Arts, Knox Brew Hub, and South Press. Their itinerary included Dogwood Arts' Southern Skies music festival, Zoo Knoxville, the Market Square Farmers Market, and several other family-friendly attractions.

"You guys are amazing!!!! Loved every minute of it. The planning and organization is exactly the way we like our team to handle our business and all bookings. Thank you!"

– Chris Antie

- VK assisted THE TENNESSEAN with Nashville-based influencer **Olivia Dixon** of [@livviedix](#) on Instagram. VK arranged visits to Maple Hall, Historic Westwood, and provided additional itinerary suggestions.
- VK hosted **Mike and Anne Howard** of **honeytrek.com** in partnership with TDTD, who connected with them at TravMedia's International Media Marketplace (IMM). Their 10-day journey through Tennessee included two days in Knoxville, focused primarily on outdoor recreation. VK arranged an itinerary to include paddling at Seven Islands State Birding Park, Navitat, and other dining and live music suggestions to round out their visit.

Publication Updates from Previous Visits:

- **Penny Zibula** has had an article published in **Foodie Flashpacker**.
- **Kristin Luna** has had an article published in **Bourbon + Magazine**. (print only)
- The editorial team at **Lure Magazine Japan** have published three online articles and a cover feature with a six-page spread for their April edition. Additional promotion on Instagram:

- Interview with Tetsuo Tanabe and Rick Clunn
- The Future of Bass Fishing that Transcends National Borders
- Let's Go See Bassmaster Classic!
- **Caroline Eubanks** has had an article published in **Bon Appetit**.
- **Detlef Berg** has had an article syndicated to 76 regional and local newspapers in Germany, e.g., **Hessische Allgemeine HNA**, **Gießener Anzeiger**, and **Der Patriot**. (print only)



Media:

- **Media Assistance Provided** – VK has standing appearances on WBIR and WATE. Additional assistance (content, photography, itinerary suggestions, quotes, interviews, partner referrals, etc.) was provided to the following:

Knoxville News Sentinel, TDTD, AAA Living Magazine, GOBankingRates.com, Blue Ridge Outdoors Magazine, Knox County Senior Services, ExploreTRV, INDUSTRY Magazine, HMM-161 Reunion, Edible Nashville, Hilton Knoxville, Green Living, Southern Living, and various freelancers.

Published pieces (both earned and paid placement) include:

- *PubClub.com* – Knoxville's Popular Bike Boat Brew & Bark 2023
- *Pride Journeys* – 5 Reasons to Visit Knoxville this Summer
- **Earned/Unpaid Media Report** – Earned media is publicity gained through non-advertising news stories. Stories written by VK hosted travel writers are included. Values and advertising equivalency (\$) determined by Cision.
 - Total Number of Placements – 1,569
 - Total Publicity Value for Earned Media – \$1,426,989

VISIT KNOXVILLE FILM OFFICE

The **Visit Knoxville Film Office** actively promotes Knoxville and Knox County as a premiere filming location. Recruiting motion media companies through the marketing of locations, accommodations, services, crew, and talent fosters the creation of jobs in the area, stimulates business opportunities, and generates exposure. The VK Film Office also mediates the permitting process between federal, state, and local agencies and the film industry.

In the fourth quarter, the Visit Knoxville Film Office helped local production companies such as Jupiter Entertainment, Tombras, and others with permits, locations, city services and other resources. Projects included marketing videos, commercials, and television shows such as Payback, Storms of Suspicion, Killer Couple, Snapped, and Fatal Attraction. These shows air on networks like Oxygen, Investigation Discovery, TV One, and The Weather Channel. The Film Office also assisted several out-of-town production companies like Heliconia Press, Raycom Sports, Circle the Globe, and Shadowboxer Films on projects ranging from social media content to shows for ESPN to commercials.

The VK Film Office successfully recruited another feature film from Shadowboxer Films out of Los Angeles. *Smoky Mountains Romance* began principal photography in May and wrapped the second week of June. Several locations in Knoxville and the Knoxville area were utilized for the film. The current goal is for distribution on the Hallmark Channel. Assistance provided included locations, crew, lodging, city services, permits, and film incentives.

The Film Office also continues to work on developing our new film festival, FILM FEST KNOX. In June, the VK Film Office partnered with Knox Media to produce one of its primary components: the Elev8or Pitch competition. This competition will take place from August to October as film teams will compete against each other by

producing 7-minute short films that are “proof-of-concept” films for a feature production. The films will be preceded by a one-minute video pitch outlining the larger vision of the project. The top 20 films will screen during the festival in November and eight of the teams will be selected to take part in a pitch session in front of a live audience and a panel of producers, directors, and other industry professionals. FILM FEST KNOX will take place November 9–12, 2023.



VISITOR SERVICES SUMMARY

The **Visitor Services Team** serves as the face of Visit Knoxville welcoming and assisting visitors and locals at the Visit Knoxville Visitors Center located at 301 S. Gay Street and the 4th Floor Observation Deck of the Sunsphere at World's Fair Park. The Team works with more than 80 local Makers to provide a variety of quality retail items in the Gift Shops at both locations.

The Visitors Center and Sunsphere Observation Deck were home to memorable activations this quarter, including Big Ears Panels, ESPN Filming, and our first ever book signing. The VK Gift Shops completed over \$61,000 in sales, welcoming new Makers and curated Knoxville products. Sunsphere social media platforms have gained a following, engaging more visitors to visit the attraction. Since reopening (Feb 2022), the Sunsphere has welcomed over 76,000 guests from all 50 states and 49 different countries.

4Q Goals:

- **Participate in National Travel and Tourism Week Celebration** – For NTTW this year, VK celebrated in a variety of ways. During the week of May 7–13, visitors were able to redeem code NTTW23 at checkout to receive half-off Sunsphere Tickets. Banners were added to both the Visitors Center and Sunsphere front desks to spread the word of the weeklong celebration. To increase foot traffic to the Visitors Center, a Knoxville Maker-inspired gift basket giveaway was on display and promoted on social media, gathering over 50 submissions. VK also engaged with all 16 State Welcome Centers wishing them a busy NTTW and gifting them tabbed Visitors Guides, custom locally made Sunsphere notepads, and VK pens.



- **Grow following and engagement with newly launched Sunsphere Instagram and Facebook page** – During 4Q, both Sunsphere platforms hit over 1,000 combined followers. This quarter, there have been 24 posts, 7 reels, and 97 stories to drive engagement to the accounts. Tyree Trivia proves to still be a crowd favorite where followers can place their votes each week surrounding questions about the 1982 World's Fair delivered via story from former Mayor Randy Tyree.
- **Conduct three off-site retail booths** – VK organized and staffed retail booths for Rossini Festival (April 22), Bike Boat



Brew & Bark (June 3), and USA Cycling Criterium/Pro Road National Championship (June 23/25).

- **Initiate new partnerships with three local makers to sell merchandise in the Visitors Center/Sunsphere Gift Shops** – During 4Q, three new maker partnerships initiated were: West Knox Pots (KNOX Mugs, TN State Mugs), Esther Sitver (custom Sunsphere postcard), and Saw This Did That (custom artwork, *100 Things to Do in Knoxville Before You Die* book).



- **Host six Gotta Know Knoxville (GKK) Sessions** – Each month during 4Q, two sessions were hosted, servicing 83 tour attendees. GKK has partnered with a few staple businesses along the tour where the group will pop in for a quick overview of each place. Partners include: The Emporium, Maple Hall, The Tennessee Theatre, and Blount Mansion. GKK “swag” was also updated this quarter, supplying attendees with a VK fan, sunglasses, and water bottle koozies equipped with carabiners.

Progress Notes (additional items may be referenced in the Highlights Summary):

- **Visitors Center Traffic** – Over 8,400 guests were greeted in person. Top 10 states (in addition to Tennessee) of visitors checking into the Visitors Center were:
 - Florida
 - California
 - Ohio
 - Virginia
 - Illinois
 - New York
 - Georgia
 - Pennsylvania
 - North Carolina
 - Texas



- **Visit Knoxville Gift Shop** – VK’s Visitors Center and Sunsphere Gift Shops completed over \$61,000 in sales during 4Q, averaging around \$650 for daily sales. VK continues to support Knoxville’s Maker community and artists with over 80 existing partnerships. In addition to the Visitors Center and Sunsphere, these products can also be found at VK retail booths at community events and festivals. A few additions introduced this quarter include: Pridebites (Sunsphere plush dog toy), The DW Designs (coaster sets & hats), and Vagabond (Sunsphere Lapel Pin). More items can be found in the Visitor Services Goals section of the report.

- **Special Events & Partnerships** – In 4Q, the Visitors Center served as a venue for the Big Ears Festival, hosting a series of panels over the weekend. Attendees heard from Morton Subotnick & Carl Stone (Electronic Music Panel), along with Ann Powers, Xerxes Fussell, Tarta Relena, Aurora Nealand, and Eblis Alvarez (Roots Rethought Panel). Both sessions were free to the public and well attended by visitors.



Partnership with Real Knoxville Music in the Sunsphere, introduced last quarter, continues, airing 13 segments during 4Q. VK also collaborated with WVLZ in the Sunsphere (Loud Media Knoxville) to coordinate a ticket pickup for their radio giveaway via the Observation Deck. In exchange, VK received Sunsphere Ticket advertising on WVLZ, WKCE, and LAKE FM for a two-week flight.

- The **Visitors Center Reader Board** located on the face of the building provides messages which are procured and maintained monthly. This includes welcomes for visiting groups, local announcements, and upcoming events. During 4Q, 86 custom welcome messages and highlighted events were featured.
- **The Sunsphere** – During 4Q, the Sunsphere was awarded the Pauly Award for Tourism Property of the Year from the Greater Knoxville Hospitality Association. Since reopening in February 2022, we have welcomed over 76,000 guests from all 50 states and 49 countries, including Poland, Bermuda, and Germany. The 4th Floor Observation Deck takes great pride in being a sought-after attraction for visitors and locals alike. As visitation increases and the Sunsphere Fund grows, improvement projects are in the early stages of receiving quotes and schematic designs that will upgrade the structure and maximize the guests' experience.



Private Tours & Filming – Private tours of the 4th Floor Observation Deck have increased in popularity. During 4Q, there were 15 private tours with over 400 attendees. In June, there were nine private tour bookings, which is the most per month the Observation Deck has seen thus far. Tour offerings range from field trips, family reunions, tour groups, familiarization tours, private receptions, filming contracts, and even proposals. Former Mayor Randy Tyree is very popular among school groups, sharing stories about the 1982 World's Fair and the impact it had on the city of Knoxville.

During 4Q, ESPN Network came into town to shoot footage for a segment they are conducting about Josh Heupel, the Head Coach for the University of Tennessee Football Team. Video was captured all over Knoxville for the piece, a portion of which was filmed on the Observation Deck. The footage will be shared on the Sunsphere's official social media once it has been broadcasted later this year.



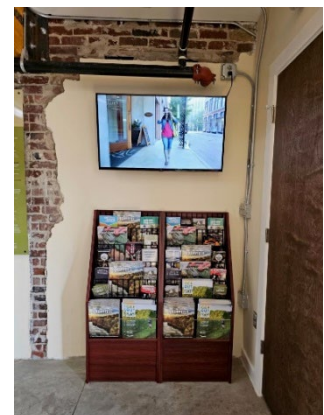
Sunsphere Structure Updates – Regular meetings have been set between VK and McCarty Holesaple McCarty to create a timeline and renovation plan for Sunsphere improvements. Quotes have been requested for the paint color change of the structure back to its original blue. Continuing to grow the Sunsphere as an attraction and implementing special activations listed through this report will bring these plans to fruition via The Sunsphere Fund.

- **Visitors Guide Distribution** is a key focus. Top 10 states requesting Visitors Guides:
 - Tennessee
 - North Carolina
 - Florida
 - Illinois
 - Ohio
 - Kentucky
 - Georgia
 - Indiana
 - Virginia
 - Texas

During this quarter, there were 3,106 pageviews to the View Digital Visitors Guide page. VK distributed 3,079 printed guides based on online/phone requests.

Bulk Visitors Guide requests come from a multitude of places (e.g., events, local groups, weddings, state welcome centers, regional distribution, etc.). In 4Q, a total of 31,189 Visitors Guides were distributed via outlets including the following:

- 6,950 through State Welcome Centers
- 14,708 through brochure racks within the region, including attractions and hotels.
- 9,531 distributed through other locations including the Visitors Center, satellite centers, UT, and airport.



- **Visitor Information Centers** located within attractions, shops, and restaurants throughout Knoxville are supplied with visitor materials such as Visitors Guides, maps, and attraction brochures. VK connects with these partners monthly to gather input about resource needs and requests. VK provides and maintains visitor materials for displays at the Sunsphere, Knoxville Museum of Art, THE TENNESSEAN Hotel, KCC, Tommy Trent's, Outdoor Knoxville, The Pinnacle at Turkey Creek, Tennessee Theatre,

Knox Brew Hub, UT Visitors Center, World's Fair Park Security Office, and the Farragut Community Center. During 4Q two brochure racks and a TV were added to Bear Paw Bikes in South Knoxville. They have been added to the Visitor Information Centers list and will be stocked monthly.

- **VK Concierge Program** is a way for VK to engage our hotel properties, bring any new or updated information, and provide additional awareness of VK and its offerings, all through personal direct contact with a VK staff member. While the visits are planned quarterly, each VK Concierge relationship varies in the frequency of additional visits, based on need/request from our industry partners.

During this quarter's concierge visits, VK spread the word about some of the exciting events happening this Spring and Summer. Each member of the concierge team provided their assigned properties with a bag of Starburst candies, two National Travel & Tourism Week Flyers, five National Travel & Tourism Week Ribbons, two Visit Knoxville Open flyers, two Bike Boat Brew and Bark flyers, and two USA Cycling Event and Volunteer flyers. Selected hotels also received a Street Rod Nationals poster. VK continues to receive wonderful feedback on this program and can see the return on our efforts through increased participation and engagement from our industry partners.



- Additional **distribution materials** include:
 - 1,895 Downtown Pad Maps
 - 2,860 Dining/Trolley Maps
 - 9,064 UT Visitor Guides
- **Brochure additions** allow the Visitors Center to stay up to date with available attractions and activities. This quarter, additions include:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Dogwood Arts Booklet ○ Downtown Foldable Map ○ Knoxville Watercolor Society ○ Downtown Art Wraps Info Map ○ Tennessee Smokies Magazine ○ Drop Zone Distilling ○ TN State Parks Dark Skies Viewing ○ Bijou Theatre ○ Vintage Geek Computing and Gaming Museum ○ Dogwood Trail/Festival Schedule 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Hip to be Square ○ TVA Knox County Water Way Pad Map ○ Knox Loves Bikes
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- **Local Donations** – VK’s Visitors Center Gift Shop promotes its Makers and supports the Knoxville community by creating personalized gift bags and baskets showcasing locally-made merchandise for philanthropic fundraisers, special events, and non-profit organizations. During 4Q, over a dozen gift basket donation requests were fulfilled, including Covenant Health GAME ON event, UTK Facilities Services Employee Appreciation Day, Parker Foundation for Pancreatic Cancer Purple Tie Gala, and many more.

- **VK loaned assets** (e.g., radios, coolers, ice chests, tables, tents, etc.) to Dirty Birds Events, Tennessee Miracle, and S.T.A.R.

Partner Projects & Special Initiatives:

- **WDVX Radio** – VK partners with radio station WDVX (89.9fm) which broadcasts live from the Visitors Center. Programs include Blue Plate Special, KidStuff Live, and First Friday’s Taps N Tunes. This quarter a total of 3,042 people attended these events. Of those polled, the geographical attendance breakdown was as follows:
 - 2,281 Knox County
 - 282 Regional
 - 479 Out of Region – International guests included those from Taiwan, UK, Bulgaria, France, Germany, Spain, Switzerland, Australia, Japan, Finland, and South Africa.

Taps N Tunes – In addition to live music, First Fridays at the Visitors Center feature a “Maker Moment”. Local Makers are interviewed on-air during the show and given the opportunity to sell merchandise. 4Q Makers include:

- **April** – N/A (Good Friday)
- **May** – Kristen Combs – Saw This Did That
- **June** – Emily Gallardo – EJ Clay Co.

During 4Q, partnership with WDVX resumed for the Visit Knoxville Community Corner segment. This segment, previously paused during COVID-19, educates listeners about local events and updates going on each week. Segments air on WDVX around 9:00 AM each Thursday.



- **TDTD National Travel & Tourism Week** – VK was invited to attend a celebration conducted by TDTD for NTTW, with the promise of an exciting announcement. As partners from across the state of Tennessee gathered at the LeConte Center in Pigeon Forge, Governor Lee and Commissioner Ezell revealed that Tennessee has been the fastest-growing state in travel spending since 2018, jumping in rank from 14th to 11th in the nation for travel spending.



- **K-Town Connect** – The K-Town Connect Ambassadors have applied best practices to enhance growth and development in downtown Knoxville. Ambassadors are dedicated daily to the mission of making Knoxville a great place to live and visit. This quarter, Ambassadors have achieved the following:
 - Hospitality assistance: This includes but is not limited to helping others use parking meters, suggesting places to eat or shop, and answering questions about events, etc. Assisted 4,025 people.
 - Business Contact: Ambassadors make it a point to reach out to businesses within the district. Over the last quarter, 505 business contacts have been made.
 - Graffiti/Sticker/Bill Removal: Graffiti, stickers, or bills on a public fixture do not remain up for long. Ambassadors removed 375 of these.
 - Litter collection: Teamwork makes the dream work. Ambassadors assisted with picking up 2,977 pieces of litter around downtown.
 - Welfare check: Rain or shine, the Ambassador program checks on the vulnerable populations throughout the day. 1,303 individuals were approached to ensure their well-being. Referrals and further assistance are provided as needed.
 - Directions Provided: Ambassadors helped 1,265 people get where they need to be.
 - Scooter relocation: Ambassadors have moved 641 scooters to a safe location.
 - Ordinance Violation: Safety is our number one priority! Ambassadors are trained to politely ask those participating in an unsafe act to put safety first. Over the last three months Ambassadors have witnessed 217 ordinance violations.



The K-Town Connect team is a fantastic source of information and assistance in the downtown footprint. When you see their friendly team, feel free to ask for directions on where to park, eat, and have fun. The K-Town Connect Ambassador Program operates from 7am to 3:30pm Sunday through Saturday. Additional hours have extended to 3:30pm to 11:30pm Wednesday through Sunday.