



# VISIT KNOXVILLE

T E N N E S S E E

VISIT KNOXVILLE  
**FILM/KNOX**  
FILMKNOXVILLETN.COM

**VISIT  
KNOX  
SPORTS**



**DESTINATION MARKETING &  
EVENT MANAGEMENT SERVICES REPORT**

**APRIL 1 - JUNE 30, 2024**



July 15, 2024

The fourth quarter of FYE24 offered visitors and locals alike a stacked calendar of events to attend and enjoy. May saw the return of the **Visit Knoxville Open** and the **CrossFit® 2024 North America East Semifinal by Syndicate Crown**, followed by the **2024 U.S. Olympic Team Trials – Diving** in June. New programming leading up to this fall's **FILM FEST KNOX** took place in May and June with the start of a free monthly film series held at the Regal Riviera.

The entire team was exceptionally active in promoting Knoxville, from hosting six site visits and a spring familiarization tour to participating in five trade shows. The team also hosted three journalists, connected with 16 Tennessee State Welcome Centers as part of **National Travel and Tourism Week**, and celebrated our dedicated volunteers during **National Volunteer Month**.

Knoxville also received some excellent press this quarter – included in the inaugural *CNN Travel's* **"2024 America's Best Towns to Visit!"**

As always, we credit the above and all additional successes 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, 2024, report for Destination Marketing and Event Management Services for Knoxville and Knox County.

Sincerely,

Kim Bumpas, CDME, CMP  
President, Visit Knoxville

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Highlights Summary</b>	<b><u>Page 4</u></b>
<b>Sales Summary</b>	<b><u>Page 7</u></b>
<b>Convention &amp; Sports Services Summary</b>	<b><u>Page 9</u></b>
<b>Marketing &amp; Communications Summary</b>	<b><u>Page 16</u></b>
<b>Film Office Summary</b>	<b><u>Page 24</u></b>
<b>Visitor Services Summary</b>	<b><u>Page 25 – 32</u></b>
<b>The Sunsphere Observation Deck Summary</b>	<b><u>Page 27</u></b>
<b>K-Town Connect Summary</b>	<b><u>Page 31</u></b>



# HIGHLIGHTS SUMMARY

The following summary details select highlights for April 1 – June 30, 2024, the fourth quarter of fiscal year 2023–2024. These highlights can be used as a quick reference when talking about the activity and progress of Visit Knoxville (VK).

- The **Plant Your Event in Knoxville, Where Meetings Bloom Familiarization (FAM) Tour** was held April 16–18 and the Sales Team hosted nine meeting planners and event organizers. Convention Services played a role in orchestrating the FAM planning, curating an itinerary that delivered a "Wow, I had no idea" experience.

To enhance the sales qualification processes, updates were made through a revamp of the meeting planner qualification form powered by JotForm. Visually appealing itineraries were designed, and details were confirmed with partners through personal visits to secure memorable experiences.

Collaborative efforts were made with the Marketing Team to design and execute attendee and staff name badges with a QR code linking to a digital itinerary. Attendee folders were assembled with helpful information and welcome bags were distributed with goodies from the Visitors Center in collaboration with the Visitor Services Team.



Detailed planning also included crafting additional itineraries for staff and the motorcoach company, as well as the creation of a website featuring a responsive digital itinerary, a new feature for the 2024 FAM.

Transportation arrangements were made, including distributing transportation RFPs, and securing motorcoach services and vehicles for

airport returns.

Following the FAM, VK created and distributed a survey to attendees for feedback on their experiences in Knoxville. As a thank you for completing the survey, VK utilized THANKS to send a personalized e-gift card for a coffee break.



- The road to Paris began in Knoxville as the Visit Knoxville Sports Commission (VKSC) hosted the **2024 U.S. Olympic Team Trials – Diving** at the Allan Jones Aquatic Center from June 17–23. This premier diving event featured America’s top divers competing for a spot at the Olympic Games Paris 2024. VKSC collaborated with USA Diving and the University of Tennessee (UT) to ensure the Trials’ success through detailed planning, robust logistics, and dynamic community engagement. The VKSC Team was instrumental in the event’s planning and execution, managing a detailed event checklist, coordinating tasks across all departments and partners, and overseeing the facility map management.



To welcome athletes and attendees, VKSC decked the host hotel with branded signage throughout the lobby and event spaces, placed pole banners throughout Market Square and on Gay Street, and highlighted the event on digital displays at McGhee Tyson Airport, the Visitors Center Reader Board, and TVs within the VK Network. All these custom creative pieces, along with a digital billboard, Visitors Center promotional window display, concierge handout and *Inside of Knoxville* web banner were designed in collaboration with the VK Marketing Team.



Promotional efforts were highlighted by the **“Rings on the Square”** event in Market Square on June 19, which featured a 20-foot display of the Olympic Rings and athlete profiles on big screens – a perfect photo opportunity for attendees from all over. VKSC worked closely with the Downtown Knoxville Alliance to engage local businesses and distribute promotional materials, amplifying the Olympic spirit in Knoxville. In addition to local promotion, the Trials reached audiences nationwide as the event was broadcast live via NBC channels, attracting 2.9 million primetime viewers. VK enhanced production value with additional lighting, creating a world-class setting for the competition.



VKSC oversaw all ticketing processes, including general attendees, exclusive group pre-sales, and VIP ticketing, ensuring smooth and efficient operations. Event communications were clear and thorough, featuring a detailed landing page on [visitknoxville.com](http://visitknoxville.com), a listing on the Visit Knoxville event calendar, and an informative "Know Before You Go" blast for ticket holders.



VKSC provided essential staffing in multiple areas onsite, including the VIP seating area, hospitality tent, volunteer check-in, and ticket offices. Catering was coordinated for 11 onsite meals, covering event staff, coaches, and VIPs, and food and beverage needs in the judges' and athletes' lounges were accommodated throughout the event. Team Knoxville Volunteers were recruited, trained, and managed and covered various shifts throughout the event. In partnership with Tennessee Aquatics, parking for the event was efficiently managed and sold onsite, providing convenience for attendees.

VKSC's dedication extended to the award ceremonies, where they provided flowers and unique glass-blown awards from Pretentious Glass Co. to honor the Olympians' achievements. Through meticulous planning and community involvement, VKSC ensured the U.S. Olympic Trials - Diving was an outstanding success, highlighting Knoxville's ability to host premier national sporting events.

***“Congratulations on a successful Olympic Trials event and great work pushing through and making it so special for the divers! I sincerely cannot thank you all enough for your support and efforts during this event.”***

***– Olivia Rosendahl, Director of Operations, USA Diving***

***“Knoxville has consistently proven to be an exceptional partner in hosting events. Their unwavering support, top-notch facilities, and welcoming community make every occasion a resounding success. We are grateful for their commitment to excellence and look forward to many more collaborations in the future.”***

***– Lee Michaud, President, USA Diving***

- Knoxville was included in the inaugural ***CNN Travel's “[2024 America's Best Towns to Visit](#)”*** published at the end of the quarter. Their network of contributors was consulted for nominations, with favorites evaluated and winnowed down to a top 10 finalist list by looking at each town's attractions, food and beverage offerings, nightlife and cultural scene, sense of identity, proximity to other interesting spots and wow factor. The cities range in size from about 50,000 residents to about 225,000. They're spread across the country and serve as a reminder of what's great about the United States: communities committed to making their towns better. *CNN Travel* notes that visitors will see that spirit in revitalized neighborhoods and downtowns and in residents who have put all their passion, creativity, and know-how into endeavors that feed souls and bellies. Further description can be read in this [Knoxville-centric article](#).





# SALES SUMMARY

- **Trade Shows** – The VK Sales Team attended five trade shows during 4Q:
  - **Connect Spring Marketplace (April 2–4)** – VK Sales, along with KCC staff, attended the Connect Spring Marketplace in Las Vegas, NV. VK had 42 appointments with groups across the Corporate and Association tracts about bringing their events to Knoxville in future years.
  - **Connect Spring Sports Marketplace (April 2–4)** – VKSC attended the Connect Spring Sports Marketplace in Las Vegas, NV. VK had 64 appointments with groups about bringing their events to Knoxville in future years.
  - **Sports ETA Symposium (April 22–25)** – VKSC attended the Sports ETA Symposium in Portland, OR. VK had 42 appointments with groups about bringing their events to Knoxville in future years.
  - **HelmsBriscoe Annual Business Conference (May 14–16)** – VK Convention Sales attended HelmsBriscoe Annual Business Conference in Las Vegas, NV. VK had 40 appointments with groups about bringing their events to Knoxville in future years.
  - **Fraternity Executives Association (May 29–June 1)** – VK Sales attended the Fraternity Executives Association in Orlando, FL. VK had a booth and 20 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 FYE24, VK received 17 RFPs resulting from 4Q trade show attendance.

- **Site Visits** – The VK Sales Team hosted six site visits and one familiarization tour (FAM) during 4Q:
  - **Associated Luxury Hotels International** – VK Sales conducted a one-day site visit with Michelle Russell from the group. The KCC, Marriott, TENNESSEAN, and Hilton were toured. The group loved Knoxville and the historic vibe of the city.
  - **International Society for Advancement of Cytometry** – VK Sales hosted their Executive Director and Meetings & Exhibitor Manager. The group toured the KCC, Marriott, Hilton, Hampton Inn & Suites, Hyatt Place, and Embassy Suites. They are looking at Knoxville for their East Coast Conference.



- **National Association of State Energy Officials** – VK Sales hosted their group and



toured the Marriott, Hilton, and Crowne Plaza. The incoming President of the group is a native of Tennessee and wants to bring the group to this state.

- **TSSAA** – VK Sales conducted a two-day site visit with the group. They toured the Marriott and KCC.

- **Regal Cinemas** – VK Sales conducted a site visit with the Regional Director and Vice President of Food and Beverage of the group. The KCC was toured, and they met with M&M Productions about their event needs.

- **Associated Luxury Hotels International** –

VK Sales conducted a second one-day site visit with the group. There were two different representatives on this visit. The KCC, Marriott, and Hilton were toured. The two shared that they work strictly with boutique hotels and will be sending leads due to the TENNESSEAN being a part of the complex.

- **Visit Knoxville Spring Sales FAM** – The VK Sales Team hosted the 2024 VK Spring Sales FAM in April. VK hosted nine planners in Knoxville over four days. See Highlights Summary for details.





# 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. Refer to the Business Held & Services Provided Report included at the end of the report for additional details for each convention and meeting.

The Convention & Sports Services Team supported 95 events/meetings, 13 festivals, and provided a total of 133 partner referrals. Of the 133 partner referrals, 130 were related to the 108 events/meetings and festivals that were supported this quarter. Team Knoxville Volunteers shared and participated in three events and shared three partner opportunities this quarter, recruiting volunteers as a no-cost, service-added benefit to local events.

## 4Q Goals:

- **Recognize Team Knoxville Volunteers during Volunteer Appreciation Month in April** – Celebrated National Volunteer Month in April by offering free Team Knoxville Volunteer stickers at the Visitors Center and Sunsphere Observation Deck, opportunities for free tickets to the Sunsphere Observation Deck and the Gotta Know Knoxville tours.
- **Revamp and include new offerings on Bandwango Experience Knoxville Savings Pass for convention and sports attendees** – Revamped the design of the Experience Knoxville Savings Pass to reflect VK's new brand colors. Communication was sent to partners to update offerings and to attract new offerings, which will begin in 1Q.
- **Update visitor information stand located at Knoxville Convention Center with branded QR code linking to visitor information page** – A new sign was ordered with updated branding that links visitors to digital visitor information.
- **Create a Discover Knox handout with branded QR code linking to the visitor information page, customized for Convention Services. This resource can be distributed by the Convention Services Team during the introduction phase to highlight Visit Knoxville's digital visitor information, used as a Visit Knoxville advertisement in event programs, or included in conference bags as a tool for groups preferring digital materials** – Created the Discover Knox handout to be utilized as mentioned.
- **Attend Event Service Professionals Association (ESPA) Webinar as a team for continuing education** – The team chose to individually attend webinars for continuing



education this quarter. Webinars attended included *What an Event Attendee Wants* (Meetings Today) and ESPA – *Doing More with Less – The Services Flex*.

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

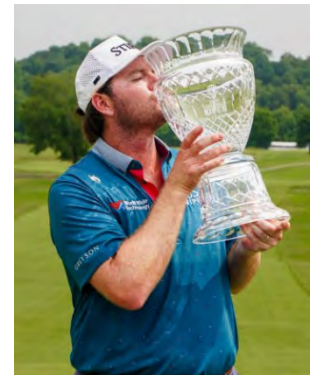
- The **2024 Visit Knoxville Open** returned to Holston Hills Country Club from May 20–26, marking another successful year on the Korn Ferry Tour. VK proudly served as the Title Sponsor, playing a crucial role in organizing and enhancing the event. The VK and VKSC Team were essential members of the Championship Committee, providing support from planning to execution.



The Team helped manage the athlete check-in process, assisted with the coordination and run-of-show of ancillary events, and provided onsite staff to assist athletes during scheduled meals. VKSC set up hotel accommodations for athletes, caddies, and spectators. VK served as onsite ambassadors to greet spectators as they arrived at the venue and happily assisted with any event questions that arose. In the hospitality area, VKSC enhanced the experience with custom marquee letters and balloon décor and provided expert guidance on venue design and catering, helping to elevate the event. The Team also helped coordinate food trucks for the vendor zone.



The event received extensive promotion through VK and VKSC's social media platforms, PGA TOUR channels, and local outlets such as the *visitknoxville.com* event calendar, 2024 Visitors Guide, McGhee Tyson Airport digital displays, the VK Network, and the Visitors Center Reader Board. The VK Marketing Team created and designed custom pole banners, digital billboards, golf clinic poster, web banner, and VK TV loop video. The pole banners were placed throughout downtown Knoxville that celebrated past champions and welcomed attendees, contributing to a festive citywide atmosphere. Through meticulous planning, dedicated service, and effective promotion, VK and VKSC ensured a memorable and successful tournament that showcased Knoxville as a vibrant destination for golf fans.



***“Another great Visit Knoxville Open. It’s always a pleasure working with the VK staff – more and more individuals keep getting involved making the event bigger and better each year. We look forward to working with the VK staff each year providing an outstanding professional golf tournament to our community.”***

***– Patrick Nichol, Tournament Director, Visit Knoxville Open***

- The VKSC hosted the **2024 North America East CrossFit® Semifinal by Syndicate Crown** at the Knoxville Civic Coliseum May 31–June 2. The top 40 men, 40 women, and 30 teams competed at this final qualifying stage for their spot at the 2024 CrossFit® Games.



The VKSC Team collaborated closely with the



event planner through multiple pre-planning calls and site visits leading up to the event, ensuring logistical needs were met for seamless operations. VKSC assisted in securing the venue and finalizing event dates, laying the foundation for the Semifinals' success. VKSC managed hotel accommodations via the VK Housing System, securing rooms at the host hotel for staff and arranging accommodations for athletes, spectators, volunteers, and event partners through a tailored booking site. To enhance the participant and spectator experience, VKSC developed a custom local guide tailored to the interests of the CrossFit® community in addition to providing digital visitor information.

The Marketing Team executed a collaborative promotional campaign across social media platforms and highlighted the event on the *visitknoxville.com* calendar of events, maximizing visibility and attracting attendees from across the region. A custom welcome message was displayed at McGhee Tyson Airport and on the Visitors Center Reader Board. Event-branded pole banners were hung outside the venue and in Market Square. During the event, athletes were welcomed with custom workout towels commemorating their participation in the event. VK contributed video content for the jumbotron and provided engaging verbiage for the event MC to highlight the local area throughout the event production. VKSC staff served onsite as needed throughout the event.



***"The 2024 Syndicate Crown was truly memorable. It drew a record crowd and the energy inside the Knoxville Civic Coliseum was electric. This event would not have been possible without the support of the Visit Knoxville Sports Commission. The City of Knoxville has a special place in the hearts of the CrossFit® Community."***

***– Wilson Pak, Founder and Event Director, CrossFit® Games***



- Approximately 900 attendees participated in the **National Association of Teachers of Singing 58<sup>th</sup> National Conference** June 28–July 2 at the KCC. VK has collaborated with the NATS planning team since 2019 to prepare for the 2020 conference, which was rescheduled to 2024. VK played a pivotal role in securing Knoxville as the host city by providing key convention services and hosting the NATS Site Selection Team for a visit to showcase hotel and venue options. During that visit, VK organized a reception featuring former Mayor Rogero and representatives from key venues and host hotels, including UT and Carson Newman. After Knoxville was selected as the host city for 2020, and subsequently for 2024, VK began preparations, including coordinating a pre-planning visit for the NATS planning committee and arranging airport transportation and hotel accommodations.



VK conducted pre-planning calls and hosted an additional visit to familiarize the new NATS Planning Team with the contracted venues and hotels. VK provided them with the Ultimate Attendee Checklist, Discover Knox Handout, and access to digital visitor information. VK provided information on local attractions and activities and facilitated the planning of an off-site excursion in the Urban Wilderness at Navitat and Ijams Nature Center. VK provided transportation referrals, Knoxville photos, and options for live entertainment and a photo booth.

VK staffed an on-site information booth with Team Knoxville Volunteers to assist attendees with local information, distributing Visitors Guides, Experience Knoxville Savings Passes, Downtown Dining and Trolley Maps, and branded plastic bags.

The Marketing Team coordinated a welcome post on social media tagging NATS which they shared. To welcome VIPs, VK curated and delivered welcome bags to host hotels. VK displayed a welcome message on the Visitors Center Reader Board and VKTV Network.

***“THANK YOU for everything! We had a wonderful time in Knoxville. I was grateful to you and your team. Thank you for brainstorming with me pre-conference for ways to get our group exploring all that Knoxville has to offer. Thank you for sending volunteers to meet with our members throughout the registration process. Little touches like this make a HUGE difference and I know our attendees appreciated the warm welcome.”***

***– Kelly Balmaceda, Director of Events and Programs, National Association of Teachers of Singing***

**Additional planner quotes from 4Q meetings and events:**

*“Well, the 50th annual South event is in the books. The weather did us no favors, but we survived. THANK YOU all from Visit Knoxville that helped make the show possible. The letters in the lobby were great and lots of pictures were taken with them. It is impossible to list all the things you do for the NSRA. Just know we are very grateful for all the help and support. THANK YOU AGAIN!!!!!!”*

*– Will Seibel, Special Event Director, National Street Rod Association*



*“Everyone associated with hosting our event made us feel welcomed from the time we arrived until the time we departed.”*

*– Mike Ellson, Executive Director, Tennessee Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association (TIAAA)*

*“Yahoo! THANK YOU SO MUCH!!!!!! Sorry for the late asks. Please know that sometimes I am just a message carrier!!! As a meeting planner, you get it! Thank you!! We had a blast, and the food was awesome! Also, wow. Dinner at Emilia...amazing. Beautiful city. Amazing service. Really great. Thank you so much!”*

*– Alyssa Kolat, Meeting & Events Coordinator, Bechtel Customer-Based Leadership*

*“I am very grateful for the details you provided. Thank you so very much, Christina! This is great!”*

*– Paul D. Simoneau, Vice Chancellor for Administration, 2024 Roman Catholic Diocese of Knoxville*

*“Thank you to you and your team at Visit Knoxville for helping us make Rossini Festival 2024 such a success! Your support is greatly appreciated, and we could not have done it without you. Thank you!”*

*– Katie Spencer, Director of Advancement, Knoxville Opera*

## Team Knoxville Volunteers

A total of 684 hours was provided by 157 volunteers as a no-cost, service-added benefit to the following local events:

- May 1–3 – **Street Rod Nationals South** – Team Knoxville assisted with preparing welcome packets and answering attendee questions at the visitor information table for a total of 22 hours by eight volunteers.
- June 17–23 – **U.S. Olympic Team Trials – Diving** – Team Knoxville assisted with managing athletes, judges and coaches hospitality lounges and VIP areas, medical team needs, registration, credential checking, parking, USADA anti-doping chaperoning, media, greeting, policing section barriers in the stands, and providing ambassadorship for the event at Rings on the Square for a total of 651 hours by 145 volunteers.
- June 27–28 – **National Association of Teachers of Singing** – Team Knoxville assisted with answering attendee questions at the visitor information table for a total of 11 hours by four volunteers.



Team Knoxville participated in the following additional activities:

- Celebrated National Volunteer Month during April by offering free Team Knoxville Volunteer stickers at the Visitors Center and Sunsphere Observation Deck, as well as opportunities for free tickets to the Sunsphere Observation Deck and the Gotta Know Knoxville tours.
- Recruited volunteers for the upcoming event, Tennessee Municipal League, July 20–22.
- Participated in volunteer recruitment opportunities, including:
  - April 2 – KUB Volunteer Fair
  - May 31 – RSVP Volunteer Recognition Luncheon
- Shared partner volunteer opportunities, including:
  - April 6–7 – Covenant Health Knoxville Marathon
  - April 13 – Holleroo
  - May 19–26 – Visit Knoxville Open





## Additional 4Q Activity:

- **Pre-planning Visits:**

- **Tennessee Municipal League (TML)** – May 3 – TML’s Senior Director of Conference and Meeting Planning, along with two other staff members toured the KCC, Marriott, and Hilton and met with staff to determine the final layout and needs for their conference in July.
- **National Frame Building Association** – May 21 – Planners toured KCC to determine space, AV, and catering needs for April 2025 Conference.
- **Alpha Kappa Alpha (AKA)** – May 23–24 – VK was pleased to host AKA’s Southeastern Region Director, her Chief Administrator, two Conference Planning Liaisons, and AKA’s transportation professionals. VK coordinated the pre-planning visit by arranging flights, hotel accommodations, and transportation. Additionally, VK collaborated with various partners to offer tours of their contracted hotels and meeting spaces, greeting the group with touches of pink and green through small gifts, festive outfits, as well as a special mocktail.



- **Festival and partnership support** included Dogwood Arts Chalk Walk, Knoxville Jewish Food Festival, Rossini Festival, Dogwood Arts Festival, Vestival, Southern Skies Music Festival, Children’s Festival of Reading, Open Streets, Tennessee Statehood Day, Nief-Norf Summer Festival, Rhinestone Fest, MLK Parade & Juneteenth Celebration, and Knoxville Brewfest.
- **Conducted pre-planning calls and/or meetings** for Visit Knoxville Open, North America East Semifinal by Syndicate Crown, Film Fest Knox, Alpha Kappa Alpha South Eastern Region, U.S. Olympic Team Trials – Diving, Bechtel Customer Based Leadership Meeting, International Society for Nuclear Air Treatment Conference, Tennessee Miracle Classic, Tennessee Miracle US Amateur Regionals, Tennessee Miracle US Amateur Girls Nationals, and Tennessee Miracle US Amateur Boys Regionals.
- **Participated in the following conferences, webinars, and virtual events:**
  - Destinations International Sales & Services Summit
  - Meetingmax Unconvention
  - On Demand – ESPA – Doing More with Less – The Services Flex
  - Meetings Today – What an Event Attendee Wants through Meetings Today

# 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](http://visitknoxville.com). The Team also recruits and partners with journalists and influencers to share Knoxville's narratives.

## 4Q Goals:

- **Provide marketing and PR assistance to create digital content 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 UT and the City of Knoxville, were shared on Visit Knoxville, The Korn Ferry, and PGA social channels. The videos generated more than 231,000 views on The Korn Ferry Facebook and Instagram:
  - [All Eyes on Knoxville](#)
  - [Higgs is back in Rocky Top](#)
  - [Korn Ferry Tour players take on a chipping challenge in Ancient Lore Village](#)

See the Convention and Sports Services Summary for additional details.

- **Host at least two journalists/influencers for editorial content development** – VK hosted three journalist visits this quarter. Please see the Journalist & Influencer Visits and Assistance section for details.
- **Partner with Tennessee Distillers Guild on content/promotion for Tennessee Whiskey Month (May), a celebration of Tennessee's signature spirits, destinations and experiences** – East Tennessee's Whiskey Week took place May 3–11 and VK partnered with the Tennessee Distillers Guild to promote the celebration which included events like distillery tours, live music, and local cocktail and food specials at participating restaurants. Local partners for chef x spirit paired dinners included PostModern Spirits and Babalu; events included the Southern Skies Music & Whiskey Festival; and drink/cocktail specials included Oliver Royale, Balter Beerworks, Tern Club, Boyd's Jig & Reel, 71 South, Fly by Night, Oak Room by Abridged, Harvest, PostModern Spirits, and Knox Whiskey Works. Additionally, VK assisted the Tennessee Whiskey Trail by coordinating a "Tails on the Trail" film shoot to promote pet-friendly distilleries and experiences. Learn more about the Tennessee Whiskey Trail at [tnwhiskeytrail.com](http://tnwhiskeytrail.com).



- **Design and produce the FYE2024 Visit Knoxville Annual Report and FYE2025 Sales & Marketing Roadmap** – The FYE25 Sales & Marketing Roadmap is complete and available to view on the Visit Knoxville website under [Public Notices | Visit Knoxville](#). The FYE24 Annual Report is in production and will be available to view on July 31.
- **Launch a new dog-friendly themed digital passport** – VK continues to follow travel trends and other research to effectively achieve this goal. The dog-friendly campaign was based in part on the knowledge that approximately 78% of Americans who have pets choose to bring them along on their vacations. With this information, a free, pet-friendly mobile pass was launched to showcase some of Knoxville’s many pet-friendly offerings and provide “treats” for check-ins at stops listed on the pass. Promotion will continue in future quarters, please see the [Barxville Dog-Friendly Pass](#) on [visitknoxville.com](#).

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

- VK’s Marketing Team continues to work closely with VK Sales and Services Teams to create customized **creative materials**. Highlights of this quarter included promotional materials for the U.S. Olympic Team Trials – Diving, the Market Square water fountain wrap, and the WBHOF Inductee Ceremony. 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-newsletters**

See Team USA and CrossFit® Champs Compete in Knoxville – This edition promoted upcoming sporting events including the Visit Knoxville Open, CrossFit® North America East Semifinal by Syndicate Crown, 2024 U.S. Olympic Team Trials – Diving, Pickleball Championships, UT Baseball, One Knox Soccer, and Vintage Base Ball.

*Current open rate for the e-newsletter is 32.3%\**

*\*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 12 Community Corner newsletters were produced in 4Q with an open rate of 33%.



- 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 1.8 million pageviews in 4Q. Each quarter, VK creates new pages for the website and regularly updates content throughout. Additionally:
  - Average length of session was 1 minute 04 seconds.
  - Pages per session was 3.22.
  - Number of clicks to partner sites from VK website was 106K.
  - Top three metros generating traffic were Atlanta, Nashville, and Chicago
  - 1,935 pageviews to sign up for the e-newsletter.

The **VK Online Event Calendar** is managed by the Visitor Services Team. In 4Q, 71 events were added to the calendar.

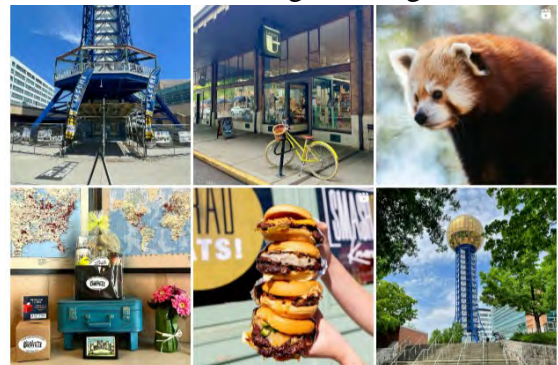
- VK promotes local partners in the **VK Blog** with a mix of contributors in addition to VK staff. Current partner writers include Jack Neely of Knoxville History Project, The Maker City, Arts & Culture Alliance organizations, and Legacy Parks. Read [more and subscribe](#). [Post highlights include:](#)



- [Guide to Things to Do in Knoxville's Outdoors](#)
- [Guide to Things to Do in Knoxville's Music Scene](#)
- [Guide to Things to Do in the Maker City](#)

- 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 the Dogwood Arts Festival, Annual Street Rod Nationals South at Chilhowee Park, the Market Square Farmers' Market, events at Knoxville's Historic House Museums, and more.



- Instagram reels included a series of collaborations with Syndicate Crown to promote Knoxville's Ale Trail, burger joints, coffee shops, and things to do only in Knoxville. Additional reel highlights included features of Baker Creek Preserve, Movies under the Stars at Ijams, and a multi-way collaboration between @visitknoxville, @vol\_sports, @vol\_baseball, and @downtownknox in celebration of UT Baseball's College World Series Championship win.

- **Additional Partner Promotion & Involvement** – VK continues to provide support to our tourism partners. Highlights include:
  - Partnering with WDVX on Tennessee Shines – a concert series at the Bijou Theatre highlighting up-and-coming artists and the magic of live radio from one of Knoxville’s most historic and storied venues. EmiSunshine hosted the May 8 event with guests Chatham County Line, Dori Freeman, and The Kody Norris Show.
  - Partnering on the Tennessee Theatre’s Broadway season (includes ad placement in playbills *Beetlejuice* and *To Kill a Mockingbird*).
  - Partnering with ExploreTRV on a journalist visit with Somm in the City; see Journalist & Influencer Visits and Assistance for details.
  - Partnering with the UT’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 VK Visitors Center, the Sunsphere, 15 information centers, 16 state welcome centers, and all Knox County hotels.
  - Partnering with the 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 May 16. The Committee discussed budget highlights, lodging data, earned media highlights, rural tourism and outreach, and received updates regarding state parks, the Playcation campaign, the media schedule, renovations and modernization of welcome centers, and the TN Sports Hall of Fame. The President of Visit Knoxville remains Chair of the Knowledge Driven Sub-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 8,911 hotel bookings. These numbers will continue to increase up to 60 days



post-campaign. Additionally, organic website traffic in 4Q contributed to 5,130 hotel bookings.

**Dog-Friendly\* (Pet-friendly campaign VK launched February 2023) 4Q Highlights**

- Dog-Friendly media generated 1,205 hotel bookings and 69 flight bookings, tracked by ADARA.
- Estimated number of travelers was 1,988, equating to 1.6 travelers per booking.
- ADR (average daily rate) averaged \$143.09, above average for the quarter.
- Average stay length was 1.7 nights.

**Welcome to Barxville, A Knoxville Dogumentary (Released February 2024) 4Q Highlights**

- Dogumentary media generated 503 hotel bookings and 23 flight bookings, tracked by ADARA.
- Estimated number of travelers was 714, equating to 1.4 travelers per booking.
- ADR averaged \$174.61, above average for the quarter.
- Average stay length was 1.4 nights.

*\*Dog-Friendly media includes Dogumentary, so they cannot be added together. Dogumentary should be considered a subset of Dog-Friendly.*

VK continues to pull insights from our Arrivalist partnership: For 2024, 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 1.8 nights. \*

- |                     |   |
|---------------------|---|
| 1. Nashville        | 6. Chicago                                    |
| 2. Atlanta          | 7. Charlotte                                  |
| 3. Chattanooga      | 8. Los Angeles                                |
| 4. Tri-Cities-TN-VA | 9. New York                                   |
| 5. Knoxville**      | 10. Greenville/Spartanburg/Asheville/Anderson |

*\*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.*

The 4Q VK Tourism Dashboard will be available to view alongside the 4Q Highlights Report on Wednesday, July 31 on the [VK website](#).



## Journalist & Influencer Visits and Assistance:

- VK assisted **Courtney Gervais**, influencer of **@courneylopezgervais** on Instagram in partnership with THE TENNESSEAN. Based in Chattanooga, her visit highlighted the hotel's Mothers' Day Tea event. VK provided a curated list of itinerary suggestions including the UT Gardens and Knoxville Botanical Garden and Arboretum, Dogwood



Arts-related events and activities, and gluten-free and vegan restaurants based on request. She has since posted the following on Instagram:

- [Preview of Mothers' Day Tea](#)
- [Mothers' Day Tea](#)
- [Roadtrip to Knoxville Reel](#)
- [Pinned Knoxville Highlight](#)

- VK hosted **Ale Sharpton**, freelance writer and influencer of **@realalesharpton** on Instagram in partnership with TDTD. His visit focused on Black history and Black-owned businesses. His custom itinerary included visits to Marc Nelson Denim, Beck Cultural Exchange Center, Jackie's Dream, Kianga's Kitchen, The Bottom, Ebony & Ivory Brewing, and more. He has since posted a reel on Instagram and Ebony & Ivory featured his visit on their Instagram as well:

- [Instagram reel – #alecollections Roundup Episode](#)
- [Instagram reel – Knoxville's Diverse Beer Scene](#)



- VK hosted **Sara Jimenez**, freelance writer and influencer of **Somm in the City** in partnership with ExploreTRV. Her visit focused on Knoxville's hub-and-spoke concept, visiting Knox Brew Hub, Pretentious Craft Co., and other food and beverage stops followed by an excursion to Mossy Creek in Jefferson City. She has since published an article on Somm in the City as well as two reels to her Instagram @somminthecity:

- [A Perfect Weekend Getaway: Knoxville Tennessee](#)
- [Instagram reel – One Weekend in Knoxville](#)
- [Instagram reel – Knoxville Round Up](#)



*"Thank you so much again for the amazing visit. I have not stopped thinking about the amazing businesses and have you to thank for that. Knoxville is now one of my favorite cities thanks to you and I know there is still so much more to explore!"*

*– Sara Jimenez*

- VK hosted **Jenn and Ed Coleman**, freelance writers of **Coleman Concierge**. Their visit focused on Knoxville as the perfect destination for professional adults interested in adventure, experiencing paddling on the Tennessee River with Knoxville Adventure Collective, Navitat at Night, and hikes at Ijams Nature Center. They have since published an extensive article complete with a custom-created interactive map on Coleman Concierge, which has been syndicated to *MSN.com*. Their visit has also been promoted on Instagram via @coleman\_concierge and @conciergecorner:



- [Things to Do in Knoxville TN](#)
- [Find Out Why This Town Was Named CNN Travel's America's Best Towns to Visit in 2024](#)
- [Instagram reel – Dreaming of Your Next Adventure?](#)
- [Instagram reel – Knoxville photo dump](#)
- [Instagram reel – Discovering Vibrant Street Art in Knoxville](#)
- [Instagram reel – Biking Knoxville's Greenways](#)
- [Instagram reel/story series – Knoxville Highlight](#)
- [Coleman Concierge on Facebook](#)

*“Thank you so much for working with us and being a wonderful host!”*  
 – Jenn Coleman

## Publication Updates from Previous Visits:

- **Tim Wild** has had an article published in **Wired for Adventure**. Only hard copy available.

*“Some riding locations are great because they’re natural phenomena. Some are famous because of the races they stage. But Knoxville is great because the people who live there and love to ride their bikes never seem to stop thinking about how to make it greater. For them and for everyone else, they can be truly proud of what they’ve created. Thanks for having me, y’all.”*

– Tim Wild, UK Based Travel Writer



- **Selena Asphall** with **The City and Beyond** had a vlog published on [YouTube](#).

## 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, HGTV.com, ConventionSouth Magazine, CNN Travel, PCMA Convene, Pride Journeys, AAA Living Magazine, TTM, The Local Palate, Group Travel, 5 Reasons to Visit Media Group, Woodshed, Midwestern Traveler, Southern Living, Blue Ridge Outdoors Magazine, Wanderlust, Roadside America, Time Out USA, and various freelancers.

Published pieces (both earned and paid placement) include:

- *Pride Journeys* – [Southern Skies Music & Whiskey Festival Comes to Knoxville](#)
- *The Local Palate* – [9 Tennessee Restaurants](#)
- *Travel and Leisure* – [Best Places to Retire in Tennessee](#)
- *Outdoors Adventures Podcast* – [Green Spaces, Artistic Flair, Hidden Gems](#)
- *CNN Travel* – [America's Best Towns to Visit 2024](#)
- *CNN Travel* – [Knoxville Tennessee Best Towns](#)
- *MSN* – [19 Dog Friendly Hotels That Will Spoil Your Pup Rotten](#)
- *PCMA Convene* – [A Maker Economy](#)



- **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 – 1,483
  - Total Publicity Value for Earned Media – \$77,048,503\*

*\* The U.S. Olympic Trials – Diving ran over its timeslot and ran up to two minutes into the primetime television programs, resulting in an earned media value of nearly \$58.8 million.*

## Additional Marketing Activities:

- VK sponsored and spoke at the April Quality of Life session of **Introduction Knoxville**, highlighting how to experience Knoxville like a visitor.
- VK attended the **SimpleView Summit** in Milwaukee, WI. SimpleView is VK's tourism software partner for customer relationship management (CRM) and content management system (CMS). The Summit provided an opportunity to learn more about SimpleView's product offerings, network with other DMOs, learn best practices, and more.

## 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 provided many different production companies with location scouting services, permit assistance and served as a liaison between city and federal governments for a variety of productions. Companies requesting services included many of our talented local production companies such as Jupiter Entertainment, Streetcar Entertainment, Tombras, and Big Slate Media. Popular crime shows such as *Payback* and *American Detective*, Documentary shows such as *Famously Haunted – Hollywood*, and marketing campaigns for KUB were included in these productions. These productions air on networks like Tubi, Oxygen, and Discovery ID.

Several out-of-town production companies were also supported by the VK Film Office in 4Q, including Lenzworks from Utah as they were in Knoxville filming an episode of a family game show titled *Relative Race* in May. *Relative Race* airs on BYUtv. Left/Right Productions was also in town this spring filming for a documentary show titled *Accident, Suicide, or Murder*, airing on the Oxygen Channel.

In May, the VK Film Office assisted with locations, city services, and other needs for Owepar Entertainment out of Nashville. The filming was for a documentary about Dolly Parton's family from the 19<sup>th</sup> century to today. Musical performances were filmed at the Bijou Theatre and interviews were shot around downtown Knoxville. The show will air on a major network yet to be determined.

In June, the VK Film Office produced a scripted short film that will be used to market our area as a premier filming destination. This will also be part of a rebranding to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the founding of the Film Office.

In 4Q, the Film Office, in partnership with Public Cinema, began a free film screening series that took place at the downtown Regal Riviera. The series will serve as a marketing strategy for FILM FEST KNOX, with the idea of keeping the festival in the minds of the public year-round. The series started in May with the screening of *A Perfect Day for Caribou*, directed by Jeff Rutherford. In June, *In Our Day*, directed by Hong Sang-soo screened. The films in the series give Knoxville film fans a chance to see great films that would otherwise not be shown in this city.



## 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 4<sup>th</sup> Floor Observation Deck of the [Sunsphere at World's Fair Park](#). The Team works with more than 80 local artisans, known as Makers, to provide a variety of quality retail items in the [Gift Shops](#) at both locations. Additionally, they organize tours, monitor and maintain the Events Calendar & Weekly Newsletter, and develop maps and brochures to enhance visitor experiences in Knoxville.

### 4Q Goals:

- **Participate in National Travel and Tourism Week Celebration**

– To celebrate the power of travel during National Travel and Tourism Week (NTTW) which takes place May 19–25, VK mailed each of the 16 Tennessee State Welcome Centers Knoxville bundles to show appreciation for all they do to help promote our destination. Included in these packages were: *Welcome to Barxville*, *A Knoxville Documentary* handouts highlighting information on pet-friendly travel in Knoxville, Visit Barxville tennis balls and dog bandanas, copies of book *100 Things To Do In Knoxville Before You Die*, tabbed Visitors Guides, Sunsphere bookmarks announcing the new Sunsphere Welcome Center coming fall 2024, complimentary Sunsphere tickets for staff use, and a thank you note from the Visit Knoxville Team. To peak local and visitor interest, kids (12 & under) could visit the Sunsphere for free during NTTW. Two giveaway baskets were created and placed at the Visitors Center and Sunsphere to help drive visitation, with over 70 submissions between both locations.



- **Break ground on the Sunsphere Welcome Center**

– Demolition has been completed on the third floor of the Sunsphere with a temporary wood railing put up as a safety precaution. Heavy steelwork to support the new Welcome Center is being installed as the new frame comes to fruition. Please reference the Sunsphere section for details.

- **Host Six Gotta Know Knoxville (GKK) Sessions**

– Each month during 4Q, two sessions were hosted, servicing over 40 participants. GKK continues its partnership with a few staple businesses along the tour where groups will pop in for a quick overview of each place. Partners include The Emporium, Maple Hall, the Tennessee Theatre, and Blount Mansion. Tour scripts were updated this quarter, staying current with the growing downtown.



- **Recruit New Products for the Visitors Center/Sunsphere Gift Shops** – During 4Q, six new vendors were introduced to the gift shops: Karen Schipper (Knoxville Matchbook Postcard & Print), 5801 Print House (Tennessee Map T-Shirt), ILikeMaps (Knoxville Postcard), Lantern Press (Tennessee/Smoky Mountains Postcards & Prints), Masterpiece Puzzles (Vols Panoramic Puzzle & Playing Cards), and Sunset Hill Stoneware (Police Mugs). Existing partnerships continued to grow, bringing in over 25 new items this quarter.

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

- **Visitors Center Traffic** – Over 7,500 guests were greeted in person. Top 10 states (in addition to Tennessee) of visitors checking into the Visitors Center were:
  - California                      ○ North Carolina
  - Florida                            ○ Pennsylvania
  - New York                         ○ Ohio
  - Texas                              ○ South Carolina
  - Georgia                         ○ Illinois
- **Visit Knoxville Gift Shops** – VK continues to support Knoxville's Maker community and artists with over 80 existing partnerships. A few local/regional additions introduced this quarter



include Sunsphere T-Shirt & Knoxville Map T-Shirt (Paris Woodhull), Kids Sunsphere T-Shirt (Knox Paper Scissors & One Knox), Tri-Star Caps (Volunteer Traditions), and more. The Visitor Services Team is expanding its vendor pool to secure Knoxville-centric items, exploring creators outside the region. In addition to the Knoxville photo canvases in the Visitors Center, there is now a local artist wall showcasing paintings. VK partnered with the City of Knoxville Police Department to create coffee mugs displaying their new crest. With the success of this product and its high popularity, other merchandise opportunities are being researched.

## THE SUNSPHERE OBSERVATION DECK



The Sunsphere Observation Deck, managed by Visit Knoxville, is a historic attraction that was built for the 1982 World's Fair. In 2022, Visit Knoxville reopened the Observation Deck as a paid attraction and established the Sunsphere Fund, a fund created to enhance the structure for the enjoyment of generations to come. Since reopening, the Sunsphere Observation Deck has welcomed over 130,000 guests from all 50 states and 58 countries.

As referenced in the Visitor Services goals, the Sunsphere Welcome Center is under construction and the framing stages have begun. In early June, the Observation Deck was closed to the public for two weeks due to heavy steelwork around the front elevators, the access point for all Sunsphere guests. Upon reopening around a construction site, VK installed large flags around the temporary entrance, lit the scaffolding with solar string lights, and placed street clings leading visitors to the temporary entrance.



Design elements for the inside of the Welcome Center are being worked on with MHM Architects, including finishes, millwork, and storage solutions. Chroma Energy group proposed a preliminary design to line the new entry canopy with solar panels; the proposal is currently under review. Improvements to the Observation Deck are being made to bring more of a museum feel to the 4<sup>th</sup> Floor. Upgrades include a video wall, interactive touchscreens, World's Fair memorabilia, updated graphics, and more.

During 4Q, the requested Historic Overlay Status was presented to the City Council and approved. VK is thrilled to have the Sunsphere achieve this status. Once the structure is 50 years old (currently the Sunsphere is 42), VK looks forward to applying for Historic Landmark status.

Promoting the Sunsphere Fund to continue Sunsphere remains a focus. A PBS East Tennessee segment regarding the Sunsphere and its renovation project was filmed during 4Q. Phase I (painting blue) was discussed highlighting the Sunsphere Fund, and renderings were shared of Phase II (Welcome Center build). Kim Bumpas was joined on this interview by an MHM architect assigned to this project which is scheduled to air later this year. Other media coverage of the Sunsphere included interviews by Pop Fizz, Roadside of America, and WBIR's affordable things to do in Knoxville.



Private tours of the Observation Deck exceeded over 200 people during 4Q, including tours for Haslam College of Business, Pugh CPA, GoCroswell, Primrose Academy, and more.



- **Special Events & Collaborations** – During 4Q, the Visitor Services Team staffed two booths at the City Mayor’s Budget Address and the U.S. Olympic Team Trials – Diving Rings on the Square. At the budget address, attendees could sign up for a complimentary visit to the Sunsphere Observation Deck while also seeing a sneak peek of renderings for the new Sunsphere Welcome Center. At the Rings on the Square event, the Team sold Knoxville merchandise, handed out information surrounding the U.S. Olympic Team Trials – Diving, and gave directions and recommendations on parking at the Allan Jones Aquatic Center.



The VK Visitors Center was home to the first Rossini Festival Kickoff on April 19. Two Opera singers gave a one-hour preview to visitors of the type of entertainment folks could anticipate at the two-day festival that the following weekend. Knoxville Opera set up an information booth handing out schedules, ticketing information, flyers, and other useful tips about the event. WVLT and WATE both covered the event. The Visitors Center continues to look for ways to engage with local events and festivals to educate visitors about happenings around Knoxville.

- **Local Donations** – The VK 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 Arc of Knox County: Over the Edge, Our Place: Spring Gala, Sertoma Club: Annual Golf Benefit, and more.
- The **VK 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, 79 custom welcome messages and highlighted events were featured.
- **VK loaned assets** (e.g., radios, coolers, ice chests, tables, tents, etc.) to TIAAA, Childhelp Inc., Open Streets Knoxville, Bijou Theatre, Great Smoky Mountains Curling Club, and Dirty Bird Events during 4Q.
- **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 amazing events happening this season. Each member of the concierge team provided their assigned properties with a bag of Starburst Candies, five National Tourism Week Ribbons, two VK Calendar of Events Flyers, two Visit Knoxville Open flyers, two U.S. Olympic Trials – Diving flyers, and two CrossFit 2024 North America East Semifinal by Syndicate Crown flyers. Selected hotels also received a Street Rod Nationals poster, two Barxville flyers, and a Barxville sticker. 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.



- **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, Farragut Community Center, and Bear Paw Bikes. Options for new brochure racks are being explored for high-traffic areas.
- **Brochure additions** allow the Visitors Center to stay up to date with available attractions and activities. This quarter 13 new brochures were added:
  - Norris Dam
  - Blount Mansion
  - Block By Block Info Card
  - Tennessee RiverLine Planning Guide
  - Visit Farragut Visitors Guide
  - Hard Knox Roller Derby
  - Bike Tennessee
  - Contra Dance Knoxville
  - Smoky Mountain Outdoor Rafting
  - Appalachian Backroads
  - Johnson City Outdoor Guide
  - Artist Open House (seasonal event)
  - Videogame Tatts (seasonal event)



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

During this quarter, there were 2,995 pageviews to the View Digital Visitors Guide page. VK distributed 3,571 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 38,285 Visitors Guides were distributed via outlets including the following:

- 10,500 through State Welcome Centers
- 11,868 through brochure racks within the region, including attractions and hotels.
- 15,917 distributed through other locations including the Visitors Center, satellite centers, UT, and airport.
- Additional **distribution materials** include:
  - **3,920** Downtown & Dining Pad Maps
  - **2,920** Trolley & Interstate Maps
  - **7,375** UT Visitor Guides

## Ongoing 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 Live. This quarter a total of 3,416 people attended these events. Of those polled, the geographical attendance breakdown was as follows:
  - 2,531 Knox County
  - 377 Regional
  - 508 Out of Region – International guests included those from England, Australia, Canada, Spain, Scotland, Türkiye, Japan, Brazil, France, Hong Kong, New Zealand, Denmark, Germany, and Finland.

**First Friday Live** – During 4Q, Taps N Tunes was rebranded to First Friday Live, introducing a new booking agent and host of the show, Daniel Fluitt. 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** – Abby Ryan Phillips of Knox, Paper, Scissors
- **May** – Logan Wise of CarveBright Laser Etching
- **June** – Mellisa Hale of Earth + Strings

- **K-Town Connect** – The [K-Town Connect](#) Ambassadors have applied best practices to enhance growth and development in downtown Knoxville and the University of Tennessee. Ambassadors are dedicated daily to making Knoxville a cleaner, safer, and friendly place for all locals and visitors to enjoy. In 4Q, 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 3,804 people.
- Graffiti/Sticker/Bill Removal: Graffiti, stickers, or bills on a public fixture do not remain up for long. Ambassadors removed 1,346 of these.
- Litter collection: Teamwork makes the dream work. Ambassadors assisted with picking up 19,735 pieces of litter around downtown and UT.
- Welfare check: Ambassadors build relationships with the unhoused street population, conduct welfare checks, and provide referrals to local resources specializing in assisting homeless individuals. Rain or shine, the Ambassador program checks on vulnerable populations throughout the day. During 4Q, over 900 individuals were approached to ensure their well-being.
- Directions Provided: Ambassadors helped 992 people get where they needed to be.
- Scooter relocation: Ambassadors have moved 782 scooters to a safe location.
- Ordinance Violation: Safety is the 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 over 46 ordinance violations.



*“I just wanted to reach out to you and let you know that the ambassador program that you are directing has done an outstanding job! I work downtown Monday through Friday and I regularly see the ambassadors. They are out walking around, engaging with people in the downtown area. I see them talk with the homeless, downtown residents, tourists, businesspeople, and visitors, and all get the same enthusiasm and courtesy. I've seen the positive impact*

*they are making and truly appreciate their help. You have a great team and I look forward to seeing them out and about. Thanks again.”*

*– Joseph Shackelford, Knoxville Police Department*

*“I work at a hotel on Cumberland Ave and almost every shift I work, Justin will come by and check on how things are going around the hotel. I have seen him help out my guests all the time. He is able to answer questions professionally and in a respectful manner similar to our expectations at the hotel. He's able to provide additional information and help guests locate attractions that meet their needs during their stay with us in Knoxville or on the UT campus. I appreciate Justin's hospitality and all of the other evening ambassadors on the Cumberland Ave team!”*

*– Kenzie Kandetzki, Graduate Knoxville*



The K-Town Connect team is a fantastic source of information and assistance in the downtown and UT 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 in Downtown Knoxville operates from 7 AM to 3:30 PM Sunday through Saturday with extended hours of 3:30 PM to 11:30 PM Tuesday through Saturday. The UT extension operates from 11 AM to 7:30 PM on Sundays, 7 AM to 3:30 PM Monday through Saturday with extended hours of 3:30 PM to 11:30 PM Wednesday through Saturday.