



# 2017-2018 ANNUAL REPORT

visit  
**knoxville**  
TENNESSEE

The Grand Prix of Tennessee  
at Bike Boat Brew & Bark

Bruce McCamish Photography



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Dear Friends,

In November 2017, Visit Knoxville celebrated its fifth year as the Official Convention and Visitors Bureau for Knoxville and Knox County. Thank you to all of you who took time to celebrate the special milestone with us. Our five-year highlight reel is filled with a variety of achievements (November until now) and we have added many more including an incredibly successful second year for the USA Cycling Pro Road National Championships.

**We started the year with these organizational goals:**

- Partner with the City of Knoxville and SMG to rebrand and promote the Knoxville Convention and Exhibition Center
- Continue to improve facility infrastructure for Knoxville sporting events
- Timeline the opening of a second staffed visitor center for late FY17-18 or early FY18-19
- Revamp the Outdoor Section of visitknoxville.com to more fully brand and promote Knoxville's Urban Wilderness
- Launch visitknoxville.com's Extranet to improve partner accessibility to listings and community partner access to events
- Secure \$2.5 million in total film production for Knoxville/Knox County through the Visit Knoxville Film Office

For the details of the past fiscal year, please enjoy this annual report. I also encourage you to view the quarterly highlights online under media at visitknoxville.com. Of course, none of this would be possible without the tremendous support of our tourism partners. We are forever grateful for the trust you place in us to tell the amazing story of Knoxville. We believe it gets better every day.

We appreciate you!

Sincerely,



**Kim Bumpas**  
President  
Visit Knoxville

A MESSAGE FROM OUR  
**PRESIDENT**



**visit  
knoxville**  
TENNESSEE



## CONVENTION SALES & SPORTS COMMISSION

PRODUCED OVER \$141 MILLION OF FUTURE ECONOMIC IMPACT

The Visit Knoxville Sales Team once again exceeded several goals in a very exciting and successful year. These numbers include the activities of the Convention Sales team and the Visit Knoxville Sports Commission. Please see page 7 for additional 2017-18 highlights from Convention Sales & the Sports Commission.

### BOOKED EVENTS

# 137

(EXCEEDED GOAL OF 130)

Of the **137** events, **58%** were new business. **35** booked at the Knoxville Convention Center.

### TOTAL LEADS

# 345

(EXCEEDED GOAL OF 320)

More than **40% (139)** went to the Knoxville Convention Center.

### HOSTED SITE VISITS

# 34

Among them, Association of Southeastern Research Libraries, Handweavers Guild of America, Dock Dogs, National Agricultural Aviation Association, National Association of Home Builders, National Association of Sports Commissions, and the Southern Weights & Measures Association.

VK has booked **26** groups as a result.

### HOSTED FAMILIARIZATION (FAM) TOURS:

# 2

The team hosted two FAM tours with a total of **23** meeting planners representing **20** groups. As a result, the Association for Library and Information Science Education and Quality Bicycle Products have chosen Knoxville for future events. Visit Knoxville currently has **11** pending bookings resulting from FAM activity.

### CONDUCTED MORE THAN

# 100

### SALES APPOINTMENTS

These appointments were conducted in the target markets of Indianapolis, Nashville/Chattanooga, Raleigh-Durham, and Washington, DC. Notable appointments include Aerospace Industries Association, Bayer Corporation, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Tennessee, National Panhellenic Conference, National Society of Black Engineers, Tennessee Grocers & Convenience Store Association and The Chlorine Institute.

### ATTENDED TRADE SHOWS:

# 24

Over **550** appointments/meetings were conducted by Visit Knoxville Sales Directors and attending partners.

Shows included TEAMS Conference, Professional Fraternity Association Conference, Connect Association and Sports, Cvent Connect, National Association of Sports Commissions and third party annual sales conferences for ConferenceDirect, Experient, and HelmsBriscoe. Visit Knoxville issued **32** leads resulting from show activity and booked **8** groups for future years.

### VK CONCIERGE VISITS

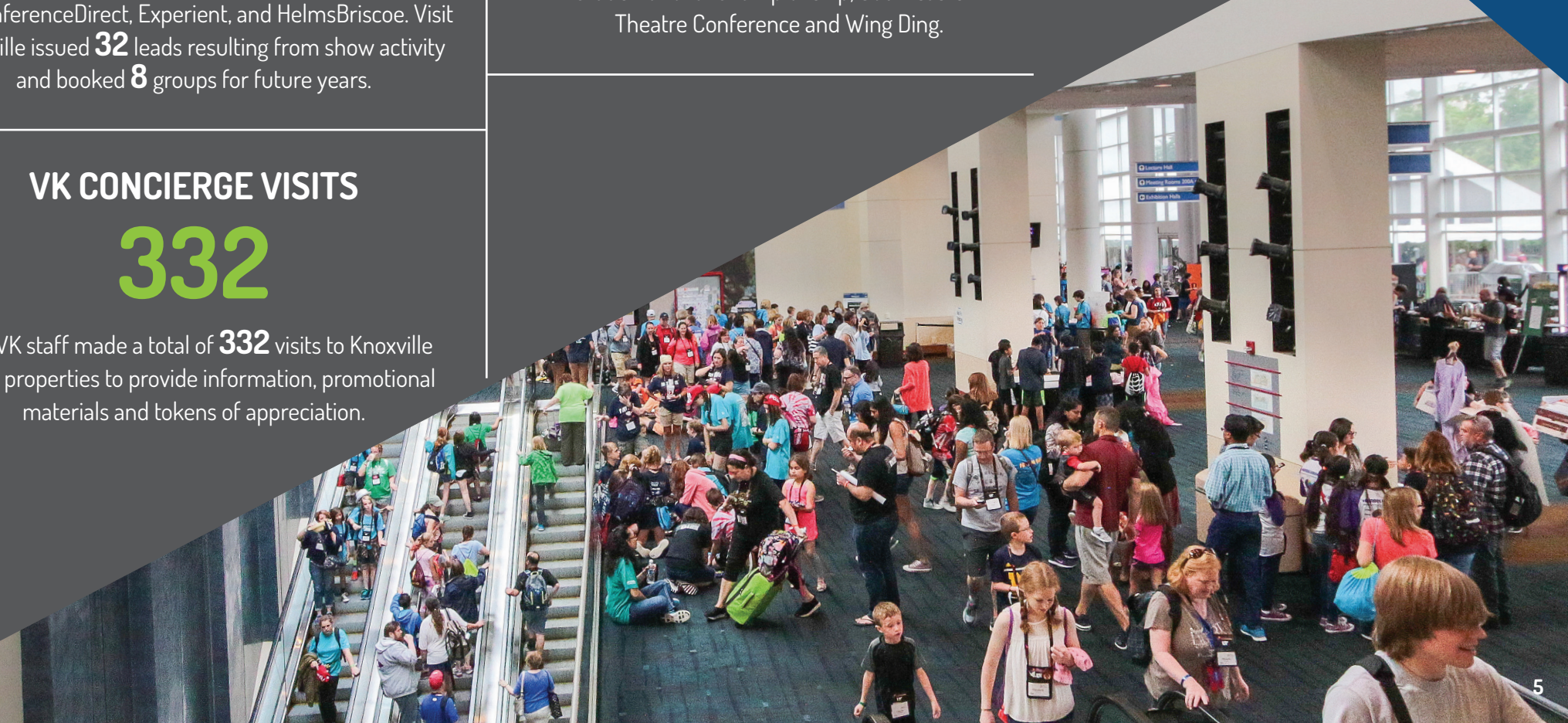
# 332

The VK staff made a total of **332** visits to Knoxville hotel properties to provide information, promotional materials and tokens of appreciation.

### EXECUTED EVENT SCOUTING & PRE-PROMOTE TRIPS:

# 10

**6** event scouting trips included Bassmaster Classic, BMX World Championship and AAU Cross Country. VK representatives also conducted **4** pre-promotes for American Baptist Association, AAU Girls Basketball 7th Grade National Championship, Southeastern Theatre Conference and Wing Ding.







## CONVENTION & SPORTS SERVICES

The Convention and Sports Services Team provides services for conventions, trade shows, meetings, festivals and sporting events. The team works with each individual group to customize solutions and services to meet their needs. Services include (but are not limited to) partner referrals, destination information, itinerary suggestions, promotional material production, on-site information tables and off-site special event assistance.

SUPPORTED  
**231**

## CONVENTIONS, SPORTING EVENTS, FESTIVALS & MEETINGS

### FEATURED GROUPS INCLUDE:

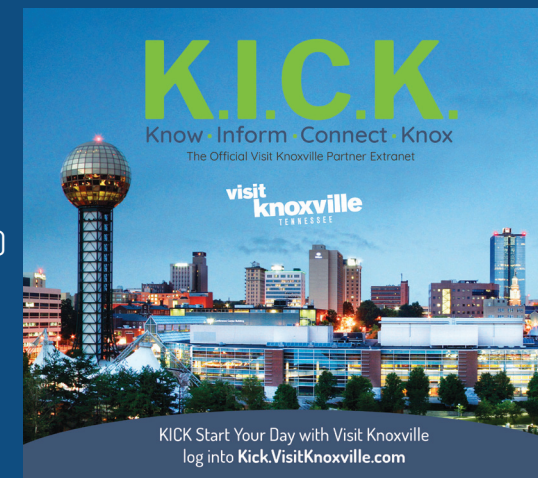
- Academic Games League of America
- American Dairy Science Association
- Annual Street Rod Nationals South
- Bike Boat Brew & Bark with Powerboat Nationals
- Destination Imagination Global Finals
- DockDogs World Championships
- Geological Society of America
- Grassroots Outdoor Alliance
- K2 Club Clash
- KIVA Volleyball Showdown in the Smokies
- Knox Hoops Spring Fling Basketball
- North American Society for Bat Research Annual Symposium
- Ozone Invitational
- Speedo Winter Junior Championships-East
- Tennessee Municipal League Annual Conference
- USA Cycling Pro Road, Time Trial & Criterium National Championships

## CONVENTION SALES & SPORTS COMMISSION HIGHLIGHTS OF THE YEAR

### CONVENTION SALES HIGHLIGHTS

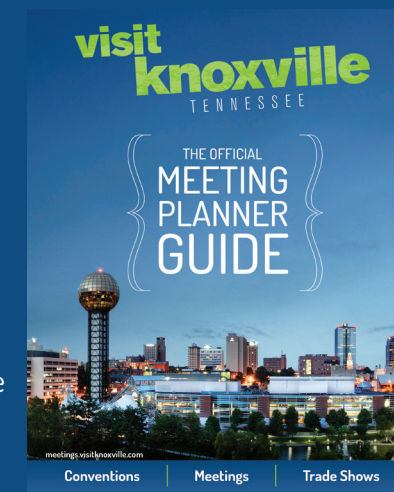
#### Launch of VK Partner Extranet

VK officially launched the new partner extranet, KICK (Know, Inform, Connect, Knox), on December 1, 2017. The portal, created specifically for Destination Management Organizations (DMOs) to improve DMO and community partner productivity, provides a more informed partnership, and assists in overall improvement of sales efforts and hotel/DMO relations. KICK specifically allows hotel Sales Teams to stay current on account details and more efficiently manage sales leads within the platform. VK hosted four live trainings the first week of December 2017, where nearly 60 hotel and venue partners were present. The platform is now in use by a wide range of hotel and community partners.



#### Continued Updates to the Knoxville Meeting Planner Guide

Complete updates were made to the digital Meeting Planner Guide including content and the comprehensive countywide hotel grid which contains details such as region, total number of guest rooms and meeting rooms, plus a breakdown of hotel amenities such as on-site fitness center, pool, and free breakfast. This continues to be a valuable tool as we communicate the overall convention package and offering in the destination.

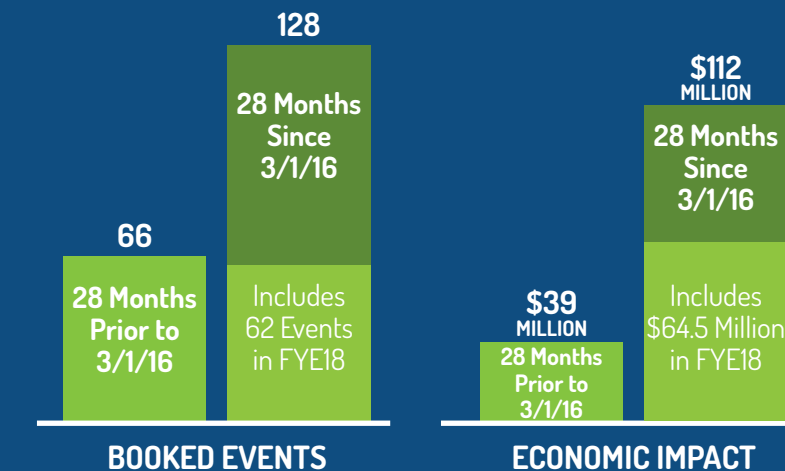


### SPORTS COMMISSION HIGHLIGHTS

The VK Sports Commission formed on March 1, 2016. Since then, we have worked diligently to establish Knoxville as a viable regional leader for a variety of sporting events. Achievements are reflected below.

**Addition of USA Cycling Criterium National Championships** - Knoxville is now home to six USAC national championships. This includes the men's and women's Pro Road, Time Trial and Criterium Championships. This past year marked the first time USA Cycling placed all three championships in the same city on the same weekend. We look forward to a great third year in 2019.

**Secured the rights to two Marquee Events: National Association of Sports Commissions (NASC) & Bassmaster Classic** - The 2019 NASC Symposium is the top trade show for the sports industry and will bring more than **1,000** sports tourism professionals to Knoxville, including more than **125** event rights holders. As announced in April, Knoxville also reeled in the 2019 Bassmaster Classic. Support from the City, County, and State played a major role in landing these events.





## NOTABLE EVENTS & ACCOMPLISHMENTS



### Sights & Sounds of Tennessee Experience

Partnered with Tennessee Department of Tourist Development to promote Knoxville at Waterloo Station in London alongside Nashville and Memphis



### "The Last Movie Star" Premier

Partnered with the Tennessee Theatre and Hyatt Place Knoxville on movie premier and VIP pre-show reception



### PACE Bike Share Program

Partnered with Zagster and the City of Knoxville to launch the Pace Bike Share Program  
Ongoing promotion has resulted in **6,500** members and **11,000** rides to date.



### USA Cycling

Hosted the 2018 USA Cycling Pro Road, Time Trial and CRIT National Championships



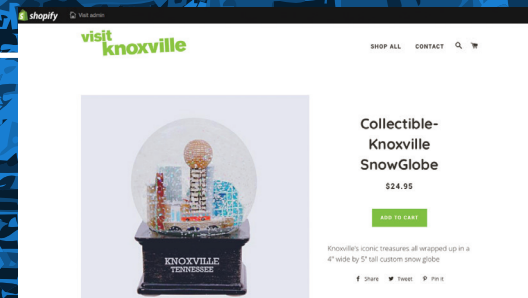
### World's Fair Exhibition Hall

Designed and coordinated installation of graphics at World's Fair Exhibition Hall (formerly KCEC), including window and door designs, welcome elements, and pole banners based on the new logo design



### Shop Knoxville

Launched "Shop Knoxville" – an ecommerce solution for our visitors center gift shop, where visitors, as well as locals, can shop for items from the comfort of their own home



### 2019 Bassmaster Classic

Announced Knoxville as host city for the 2019 Bassmaster Classic



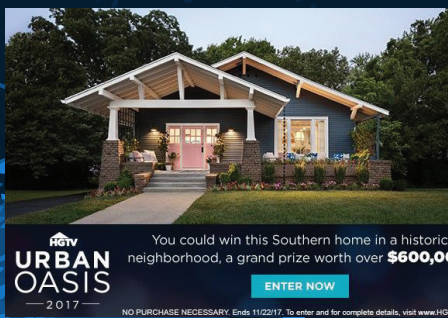
### Destination Imagination

In our 19th year with Destination Imagination, Visit Knoxville welcomed **17,000** attendees including over **1,400** teams from **18** countries. For a second year, VK coordinated, sold and staffed all off-campus tours, handled family room blocks, executed a full city-wide welcome and provided a variety of additional services.



### HGTV Urban Oasis Giveaway

Promoted Knoxville via the HGTV Urban Oasis® 2017 Giveaway





MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS

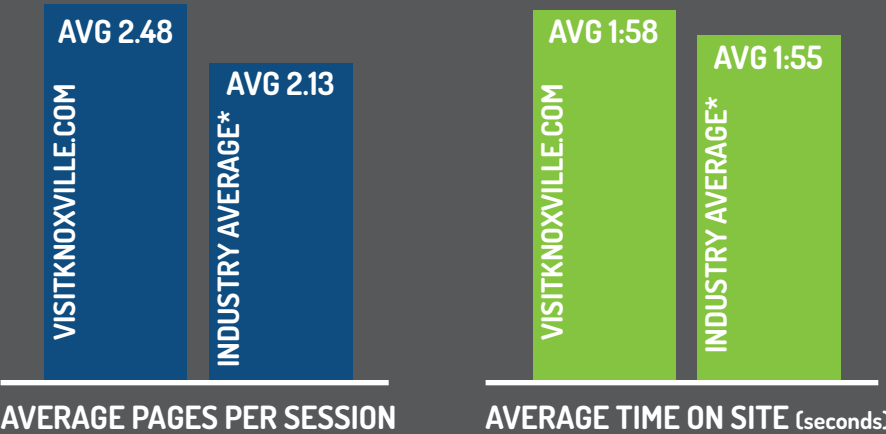
The Marketing and Communications Team continues to utilize traditional and digital strategies to direct people to VisitKnoxville.com

The success of this year’s efforts are reflected in part by the numbers below. While paid search traffic improved **71%** over last year, organic search made up **67%** of all site traffic and increased more than **37%** over last year. This shows how Knoxville continues to be viewed as a top of mind travel destination.

TOTAL NUMBER OF WEBSITE VISITS:  
**1,034,214 (up 36%)**

UNIQUE VISITS:  
**752,721 (up 26%)**

PAGE VIEWS:  
**2,567,131 (up 26%)**



TOP TEN LANDING PAGES

- |                      |                                   |
|----------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1. Events            | 6. Dragon Lights Lantern Festival |
| 2. Home Page         | 7. Live Music                     |
| 3. Things to Do      | 8. Zoo Knoxville                  |
| 4. USA Cycle Knox    | 9. Outdoors                       |
| 5. Free Things to Do | 10. Festivals-Events              |

ONLINE VISITORS GUIDE REQUESTS:  
**4,086 (up 186.5%)**

ADDITIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

VISIT KNOXVILLE APP:  
**1,719 Downloads**  
**11,824 Sessions**

ENEWSLETTER SIGNUPS:  
**1,552 (up 10.5%)**

AVERAGE VALUE OF  
HOTEL BOOKINGS VIA WEBSITE:  
**\$261.74 (up 21.6%)**

EARNED/UNPAID MEDIA  
RELATED TO PR EFFORTS:  
**\$2,254,906**

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE YEAR

Collaborated with the Tennessee Department of Tourist Development (TDTD) on several projects including:

- The HGTV Urban Oasis® 2017 Giveaway
- Travel Mindset promotion of Knoxville’s Music & Outdoor Experiences with two top-tiered social media influencers
- The Tennessee Music Pathway Roadshow at WDVX
- Big Ears Festival Kick off Brunch for visiting media, dignitaries and guests
- Media Tour with visitors from Travel + Leisure China for the launch of an online leisure travel video show
- Sights & Sounds of Tennessee Experience at Waterloo Station: To capitalize on British Airways’ new nonstop service from Heathrow to Nashville, Knoxville partnered with the TDTD and BrandUSA to create and promote an innovative multisensory experience that featured a map of TN and with headphones overhead playing the sounds of Tennessee. Local partners included the Bijou Theatre, Boyd’s Jig and Reel, Market Square, the Tennessee Theatre, WDVX and Big Ears.

Partnered with Horizon Travel and Lifestyle to promote Knoxville on the ABC Good Morning America screen in Times Square and The PATH, Toronto’s 18-mile underground walkway

Designed and installed interior and exterior graphics to enhance the visitor experience at Knoxville Civic Auditorium & Coliseum

Partnered with SMG to create “image fencing” for Chilhowee Park to be used during (and after) the Dragon Lights Festival.

Partnered with the UT Tennessee Athletics Department and IMG on Game Day App, Presenting Status of the Digital Fan Guide and VK logos on all usher shirts. The Fan Guide is also promoted in UT emails.

Completed a high-end, animated sales video for Visit Knoxville Sales and Convention Services. The video can be viewed at meetings.visitknoxville.com.



Recruited and hosted a variety of notable journalists and social media influencers that produced great stories for publications, including but not limited to the following:

CNNTravel.com, Eater.com, GQ.com, Tasting Table.com, Garden & Gun, Paula Deen Magazine

VK also hosted bloggers including Wegan (UK), Suburban Turmoil, Those Crazy Nelsons and Greta Hollar

Partnered with Knox History Project and the Knoxville Museum of Art on the Downtown Art Wraps, a public arts collection of traffic engineering boxes graphically wrapped showcasing locally significant artwork from Knoxville’s past.



Contributed monthly stories (11) with photos for Wing World magazine to promote Wing Ding 40 in Knoxville August 28-Sept 1

Produced 20+ custom videos for VK-TV (airing locally on 2300 Knoxville hotel rooms) and VK Network (video screens at 27 high-traffic areas throughout Knox County)

Assisted CBID in the coordination and promotion of the only Community-Wide The Elf on the Shelf® Scavenger Hunt in the Country

Increased promotion and attendance for third annual Bike Boat Brew & Bark



Promoted four of Knoxville’s top chefs and the overall culinary scene in the Knockouts of Knoxville at James Beard House

Partnered with members of the Outdoor Alliance to create knoxurbanwilderness.com (including a new Urban Wilderness video created locally by Frame Theory)

Continued to improve, enhance and promote the VK App

Added online ticket purchasing options for tours and attractions on the VK website



VISITOR  
SERVICES

The Visitor Services Team serves as the face of Knoxville, helping visitors and locals find information as well as souvenirs and gifts. Our commitment is to provide the best possible experience for everyone we encounter.

DISTRIBUTED  
**180,628**  
VISITORS GUIDES

VISITORS GUIDE  
REQUESTED STATES

Visitors Guide requests are received from around the world. Within the U.S., the most requests came from the following states:

- |                   |                 |
|-------------------|-----------------|
| 1. Florida        | 6. Illinois     |
| 2. Tennessee      | 7. Ohio         |
| 3. North Carolina | 8. Pennsylvania |
| 4. Texas          | 9. New York     |
| 5. Georgia        | 10. Missouri    |

TOTAL NUMBER OF  
WALK IN VISITORS  
**39,420**

- 9,863 PARKING PERMITS -

TOTAL NUMBER OF  
ASSISTED CALLERS  
**2,446**



TOTAL NUMBER OF  
BROCHURES PICKED UP  
AT VISITORS CENTER  
**35,480**

TOTAL NUMBER OF  
UNIQUE BROCHURES OFFERED  
IN THE VISITORS CENTER  
**110**

TOTAL NUMBER OF  
RIDE ALONG PIECES  
SENT THIS YEAR  
**60,788**

TOTAL NUMBER OF  
GKK AMBASSADORS  
THAT WERE TRAINED  
**254**

TOTAL NUMBER OF  
VOLUNTEER HOURS  
**2,476**



## VISITOR PROFILE

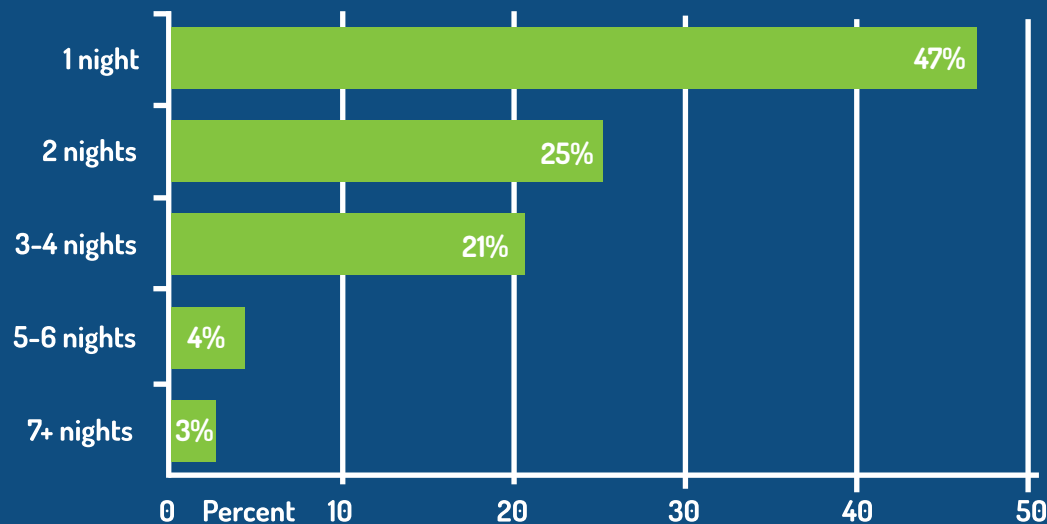
VK's Department of Market Research collects the following information from Longwoods Travel USA® report, the largest ongoing study conducted of American travelers.

### TOTAL OVERNIGHT VISITORS

# 6.3 Million

Methodology: Knoxville's share of Total US volume compared against Smith Travel Research (STR) paid room nights.

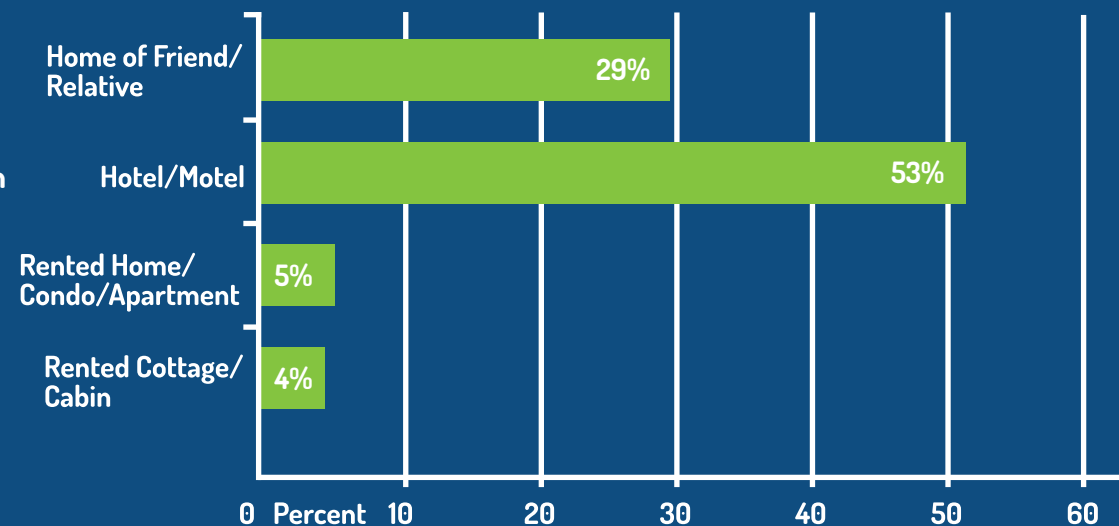
### Number of Nights Spent in Knoxville



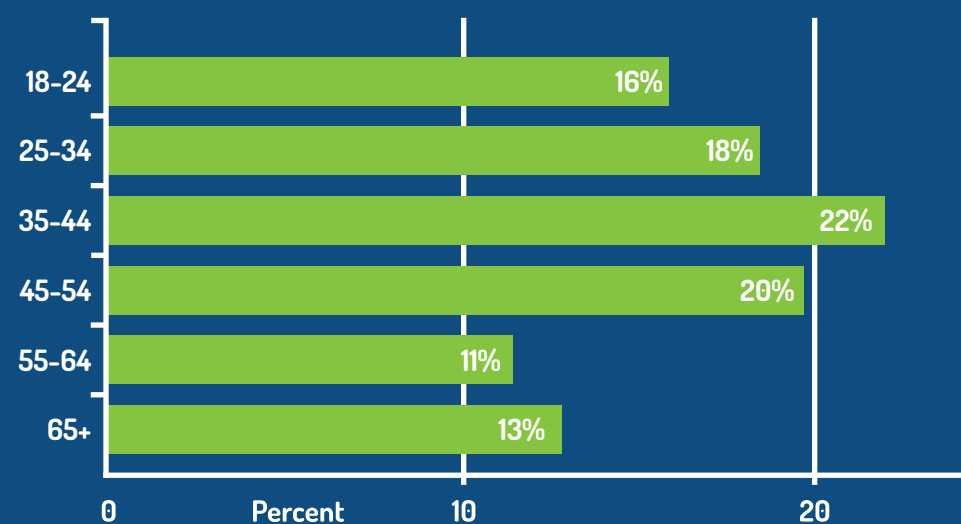
### TOP STATES OF ORIGIN

1. Tennessee
2. Florida
3. Kentucky
4. Georgia
5. North Carolina

## Accommodations



## Age



### TOP ACTIVITIES

1. Shopping
2. National/State Park
3. Landmark/Historic Site
4. Fine Dining
5. Hiking & Backpacking

## FILM OFFICE

The Visit Knoxville Film Office continued to promote Knoxville and Knox County as a premiere filming location for feature films, TV shows, and commercials. The Film Office is poised to move Knoxville forward in the feature film production world.

- Co-chaired the Tennessee Entertainment Alliance whose mission is to increase and make recurring state film and television incentives. This positively impacts thousands of jobs that sustain families state-wide and contributes to human capital development through workforce training and focused educational curricula. Additionally this creates opportunities for students after they graduate. This mission benefits all communities by increasing tourism driven by entertainment content and increasing resources to grow all of the above.



- Hosted a premiere for the movie, The Last Movie Star (formerly known as Dog Years) starring Burt Reynolds. The premiere took place in front of a sold-out audience at the Tennessee Theatre. Burt Reynolds was in attendance and participated in a Q&A session before the film. The Film Office also hosted a VIP reception and pre-party on the roof of the Hyatt Place hotel.



- Assisted in bringing a screening of the film, The Tiger Hunter, starring Danny Pudi and Jon Heder ( Napoleon Dynamite) to the Regal Riviera theater in downtown Knoxville. Jon Heder and other cast members were in attendance.
- Continued conversations with Stargazer Films, a Kentucky based film production company to open a location in Knoxville and bring a slate of several films to our area. The first to potentially be shot in Summer of 2018.
- Worked closely with producers of Paul Harril's feature film, Light from Light, which is being produced by Sailor Bear Entertainment. Sailor Bear is the company behind the film, Ghost Story, starring Casey Affleck and Rooney Mara. The film is also being Executive Produced by Emmy winner, Elizabeth Moss and will take place in July of 2018.
- Continued to work closely with LA based New Film Group on a Civil War themed feature film which will take place in September of 2018.
- Held a reception sponsored by the TEA for legislators in Nashville in March. The purpose was to provide information regarding the ECD / TN Entertainment Commission bill -- HB 1812 / SB 2236 -- for the growth of Tennessee's entertainment industries, which employ 17,000 professionals, and are a primary driver of our tourism & hospitality industry, constituting 165,000 jobs, \$16 billion a year in economic impact, and over \$1 billion per year in tax revenues back to the State of Tennessee.



## TOP KEYWORDS FOR ONLINE SEARCHES DIRECTING TO VISITKNOXVILLE.COM

things to do in knoxville tn this weekend knoxville tennessee  
things to do in knoxville this weekend **usa cycling knoxville**  
knoxville things to do in knoxville **knoxville concerts** things to do in knoxville tn  
**visit knoxville** **knoxville tn** chinese lantern festival knoxville  
knoxville tn events events in knoxville **market square**  
knoxville tn upcoming events knoxville farmers market **knoxville bike race**  
**meads quarry** **downtown knoxville** free things to do in knoxville  
market square knoxville knoxville, tn **knoxville events** market square knoxville tn  
**things to do in knoxville today**



The Official Destination Marketing Organization for  
the City of Knoxville and Knox County, Tennessee

**#KNOXROCKS**

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