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DESTINATION MARKETING &
EVENT MANAGEMENT SERVICES REPORT
JULY 1 - SEPTEMBER 30, 2023



October 13, 2023

As summer turns to fall, we continue to celebrate many successes for Knoxville. In September, Visit Knoxville hosted the Governor's Conference on Hospitality & Tourism. During the event, it was announced that the 2022 Economic Impact of Travel on Tennessee report revealed **tourism in Knox County generated \$1.8 billion in domestic visitor spending**, a 14% increase from 2021. The data shows what we already know – that Knoxville is on the map as a premier destination for leisure travelers, meetings and conventions, film crews, sporting events, and more.

In addition to hosting the highest attended conference (breaking our own record when Knoxville hosted in 2014), we were honored to receive several statewide awards from HospitalityTN which recognize outstanding individuals and businesses within Tennessee's hospitality and tourism industry. The 2023 Bassmaster Classic received the **Purple Iris Award for Special Event of the Year**. Visit Knoxville received the **Purple Iris Award for DMO (Destination Management Organization) of the Year – Large**. Our own Kristen Combs, Director of Communications & Social Strategies, received the **Purple Iris Award for DMO Employee of the Year**.

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 July 1 – September 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 July 1 – September 30, 2023, the first 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).

- **Hosting the 2023 Visit Knoxville Collegiate** – The Visit Knoxville Sports Commission (VKSC) hosted this inaugural tournament September 7–10 at the Tennessee National Golf Club, which showcased 14 NCAA Division I collegiate teams, with the University of Tennessee taking home the title.

The event was featured on Knoxville’s 99.1 ‘The Sports Animal’ radio show and heavily promoted on VKSC and UT Athletics social media channels. The VKSC and VK Team assisted with event planning and logistics leading up to the event and throughout the duration of the tournament. Several pre-planning calls were



hosted in addition to venue visits, which ensured every detail was addressed throughout the planning process. VK designed a sophisticated VIP area and coordinated the setup of fencing and tents with All Occasions Party Rentals. Table flowers added elegance to the space and custom signage was designed and placed throughout the area to provide directions and showcase event sponsors. Golf carts were secured for VIP attendees to easily travel throughout the course, a hospitality tent with seating and tables was placed at the 18th hole offering prime viewing for VIP attendees and Tennessee National Golf Club Members.

The VKSC Team provided event equipment for use throughout the tournament, including beverage coolers to give water access at multiple holes along the course, radios for event staff communication needs, and fans for select seating areas. VKSC partnered with Oakley to provide sunglasses for athletes and coaches as a tournament welcome gift. Trophies for the winning team and winning individual were designed and ordered by the Team. The VKSC Team secured host hotels and provided a custom booking site for incoming teams, staff, and family members. To welcome teams and spectators, a message was displayed on the Visitors Center Reader Board throughout the duration of the event. Digital visitor information was provided, and the event was listed on the [visitknoxville.com](https://www.visitknoxville.com) event calendar.



“Having VKSC as a partner for our inaugural Visit Knoxville Collegiate was extremely beneficial to the success of our event. Their expertise, experience and support running world class events led to rave reviews from all the NCAA teams who participated.”

– Brennan Webb, Men’s Golf Coach, University of Tennessee

- **Partnering with local company LOA Painting to visually enhance the guest experience on Mary Costa Plaza at Knoxville Civic Auditorium and Coliseum** – The concrete support poles leading to the entrance to the Coliseum were painted to mimic the look of a Smoky Mountain sunset. Concert goers, Knoxville Ice Bears fans, and other event attendees will notice the vibrant colors even from a distance. LOA Painting was founded in 2023 by Jonathan Coffield in collaboration with a close-knit family from Honduras, the Romeros. The artwork adds to an ever-expanding portfolio of The Maker City artists’ work that can be seen throughout Knox County.

“As a new company in East Tennessee, we are honored for the opportunity to make a lasting mark on such an iconic building. We hope the mural will reflect the beauty of East Tennessee for patrons for years to come.”

– Leo Romero, Sr.



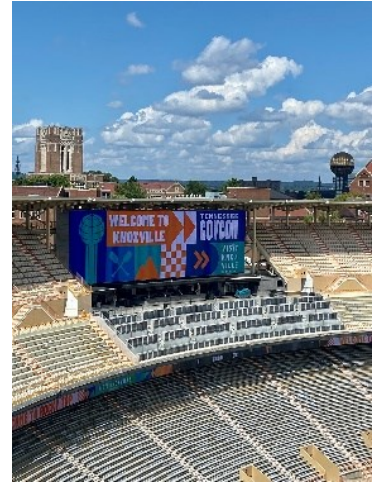
- **Hosting the 2023 Governor's Conference on Hospitality & Tourism** – Knoxville was proud to welcome our partners from across the state, September 13–15, at the KCC. The conference hosted 540 attendees, marking the largest attendance since the event was last held in Knoxville in 2014.





Planning for the event began a year prior with a committee site visit held at KCC to determine space and overall needs. The team returned in August for a final pre-planning meeting to finalize all logistics and details. VK worked closely with HospitalityTN to ensure that every aspect of the event was taken care of, start to finish. Several referrals were made for florists, event décor, signage, and break options. Visitors Guides were provided for all attendee welcome bags. VK staffed an information booth to aid attendees as needed.

The conference began with three events held in Neyland Stadium: Women in Tourism Reception in the 6th Floor Skybox Commons, Commissioner’s Dinner in the Lauricella Center and the Welcome Reception in the Tennessee Terrace. Guests received transportation to and from the KCC compliments of Olympus Car & Coach. Upon arriving at the stadium, attendees were greeted by the Tennessee Spirit Squad and beloved mascot, Smokey. When entering the Terrace, everyone was greeted by VK staff and quickly had many options to explore from activities to food and beverages. UT student artist, Chloe Peterson, was on site completing a Neyland Stadium painting to be part of the event silent auction, “GOV CON KNOX 23” AlphaLit letters served as a great photo



opportunity, while The Knoxville Photo Booth Co. had roaming photo booths to capture digital images with Gov Con and UT themed backdrops. Tailgate themed food stations featured a VK ice sculpture that centered the room. VK was proud to partner with the Tennessee Distillers Guild with twelve distilleries represented, each serving handcrafted cocktail samples for guests’ votes for “best cocktail.” Perfect weather provided the opportunity for all in attendance to enjoy the views of Neyland Stadium. The VK Marketing Team designed

pole banners for Clinch Avenue as well as digital messaging for both jumbotron screens and all digital boards around the stadium. When exiting the stadium, everyone received a custom hand stamped Honeymouth leather keychain.

Overall experiences throughout the week included a Mural Walking Tour led by VK Visitors Center staff. A customized Show Your Badge for free admission was also offered at the Sunsphere, Zoo Knoxville, Women’s Basketball Hall of Fame, McClung Museum of Natural History & Culture, East Tennessee



History Center, Knoxville Botanical Gardens, the Emporium Center for the Arts, Ijams Nature Center, Star of Knoxville Riverboat, Knoxville Museum of Art, Navitat Knoxville, Craft Axe Throwing, Historic House Museums of Knoxville, and the Tennessee Valley Fair.



The conference concluded with the Stars of the Industry Purple Iris Awards with over 600 attendees. While Knoxville was well represented with award winners, Visit Knoxville took home three awards: Destination Marketing Organization of the Year, Special Event of the Year for Bassmaster Classic, and DMO Employee of the Year was awarded to Kristen Combs.

“HospitalityTN’s 2023 Governor’s Conference on Hospitality & Tourism was an incredible experience. Huge shoutout to Visit Knoxville for truly hitting it out of the park! From the fantastic reception at Neyland Stadium to the interactive activities throughout the conference, they made sure every moment was memorable.”

– Mark Ezell, Commissioner at Tennessee Department of Tourist Development

“From the moment I met Pearl, I felt like I was talking to an old friend. She encouraged me to reach out if I needed help with ANYTHING, and she quickly took the initiative to make the appropriate introductions to assist our association with the Marriott’s membership. She was in constant communication from the moment the initial RFP was sent and continued to offer her support and supervision as all contracts were signed and through the duration of the conference. Kelli played a huge role in the overall success of this year’s event. She provided her personal time and expertise as an active member of the Governor’s Conference Planning Committee and offered advice on everything from conference planning and logistics to providing quality vendors for floral arrangements and decorations. Kelli put in a tremendous amount of effort and time to ensure that every off-site detail was taken care of and communicated. She always made herself easily accessible and constantly offered to assist with tasks that were outside of her job duties.”

– Brittany Barragan Director of Education and Events, HospitalityTN

SALES SUMMARY

- **Trade Shows** – The VK Sales Team attended seven trade shows during 1Q:
 - **Meetings Today Live (July 9–12)** – VK Sales Staff attended Meetings Today Live in Nashville, TN. VK had 21 appointments with groups about bringing their events to Knoxville in future years.
 - **Connect Marketplace (August 22–24)** – VK, along with KCC staff, attended the Connect Marketplace in Minneapolis, MN. VK had 49 appointments with groups across the Corporate and Association tracts about bringing their events to Knoxville in future years.
 - **Connect Sports Marketplace (August 22–24)** – VK attended Connect Sports Marketplace in Minneapolis, MN. VK had 41 appointments with groups about bringing their events to Knoxville in future years.
 - **HPN Global Conference (September 7–9)** – VK attended HPN Global Conference in Tampa Bay, FL. VK had 24 appointments with third party planners who source RFPs for all markets about bringing their events to Knoxville in future years.
 - **Professional Fraternity Association (September 7–9)** – VK attended the Professional Fraternity Association in Albuquerque, NM. VK had 30 appointments with groups about bringing their events to Knoxville in future years.
 - **Next Level Events Summit (September 18–19)** – VK attended the Next Level Events Summit in Delray Beach, FL. VK had 24 appointments with groups about bringing their events to Knoxville in future years.
 - **S.P.O.R.T.S. The Relationship Conference (September 19–22)** – VK attended S.P.O.R.T.S. The Relationship Conference in South Bend, IN. VK had 22 appointments with groups about bringing their events to Knoxville in future years, and continued discussions about hosting the S.P.O.R.T.S. The Relationship Conference event in 2025.



VK tracks each sales activity and monitors results throughout the fiscal year. For FYE24, VK received 17 RFPs resulting from 1Q trade show attendance.

- **Site Visits** – The VK Sales Team hosted six site visits during 1Q:
 - **Soaring Society of America** – VK conducted a two-day site visit with the group, spending a majority of the time at KCC to make sure their event is a fit for the space. They also inquired about transportation assistance to and from the airport for attendees. It has since been confirmed that the group chose Knoxville a few weeks after the event for 2024.
 - **Pro Wakeboard Tour** – VK conducted a half-day site visit with Chris Bischoff of the group and toured Volunteer Landing with hopes of bringing their event to Knoxville in 2024.
 - **Makers East** – VK conducted a one-day site visit with the planner from the group, and toured KCC, Hilton and Marriott. She was very interested in the Maker's Exchange and how it related to her group.
 - **USA Sumo** – VK hosted a half-day site visit with Andrew Freund from the group, and toured KCAC to potentially host their event in the coming years.
 - **American Institute of Architects Tennessee** – VK hosted a half-day site visit with the Tennessee Senior Director of Meeting and Conventions, the VP of Public Relations, and the future AIA TN chair who is local, and toured the Crowne Plaza, Marriott, and Hilton. They are looking to host the 2024 Annual Meeting in Knoxville.
 - **TSSAA** – VK hosted Emily Crowell from this group on a half-day site visit, and toured KCC, WFEH, and KCAC. VK is working on opportunities to host multiple TSSAA State High School Championships in the coming years.

- **Scouting Trips** – The VK Sales Team performed one scouting trip during 1Q:
 - **Pro Wakeboard Tour** – VK attended the Pro Wakeboard Tour stop in Lenoir City, TN. VK is looking to add a stop in Knoxville in the next couple of years.



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 69 events/meetings, 14 festivals, and provided a total of 87 partner referrals. All 87 partner referrals were related to the 83 events/meetings and festivals that were supported this quarter. Team Knoxville was represented at four community fairs and shared nine events and opportunities this quarter, recruiting volunteers as a no-cost, service-added benefit to local events.

1Q Goals:

- **Update Additional Venues guide with current venues and capacities and include hyperlinks to all venues** – The guide was updated with new venues and all capacities were new and existing venues were confirmed. All venues now include hyperlinks for convenient access to more information.
- **Complete an Event Service Professionals Association webinar as a team for continuing education** – Participated in ESPA Webinar: Emerging Technology Trends: Changing the Way of Servicing on August 16.
- **Participate in National Celebrate Services Week, “You’re a Star! Celebrating Stellar Service Stars” July 31 – August 5 to celebrate the role of the event service professional, to advocate for the event services profession, and to provide a networking opportunity with fellow services peers** – On August 1, the Convention Services Team visited all key venues and delivered treats as a Thank You. See Convention Services for more detail and photos.



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

- **Association of Leadership Programs (ALP) hosted their 2023 National Conference in Knoxville July 24–27** at the KCC. VK Convention Services collaborated closely with the

ALP event planners to assess the scope of services necessary for the successful execution of the National Conference. This collaborative effort was facilitated through two pre-conference meetings, during which a wide range of service items were discussed.

Planning discussion included entertainment and attraction options to enhance the conference experience, transportation referral options for off-site events at venues such as Neyland Stadium to ensure seamless logistics for attendees, visitor information opportunities to provide attendees with valuable insights into the local area, welcome opportunities, marketing assistance and resources to the promote the conference, brainstorming of pre and post-conference regional activities, as well as collaboration on local vendors and Makers for attendee gifts to showcase the area's unique offerings.



To provide inspiration for must-see, must-do things in Knoxville, the Ultimate Attendee Checklist was provided to the planners. To enhance the conference experience further, VK designed customized airport signage to welcome conference attendees at McGhee Tyson



Airport. To ensure easy navigation around the city and region, the digital visitor information link was provided, complete with a discount link for Dollywood, offering

attendees convenient access to key information. Various resources, including Visitors Guides, Downtown Dining & Trolley Maps, Downtown Maps, and laminated copies of the Experience Knoxville Savings Pass, were made available at the registration area.

To extend a warm welcome, VK featured a custom message on the Visitors Center Reader Board and integrated messaging on the VK TV Loop. For three VIP guests, the Team assembled welcome baskets, providing a memorable touch of hospitality, showcasing the region's unique artisans and products. In partnership with ALP, VK provided each attendee with a small gift from a local Maker, Paris Woodhull.



“You are AMAZING! Thanks so much!”

– Sarah Alice Keiser, Director, Events and Marketing, Association of Leadership Programs

“You and your team were HUGE in making this happen. THANK YOU!”

– Tammy White, President/CEO, Leadership Knoxville

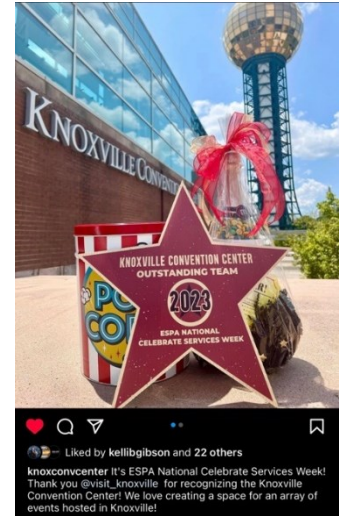
- VK proudly participated in the **Event Service Professionals Association's (ESPA) National Celebrate Services Week**, held July 31 to August 4. This special week was centered around the theme "You're a Star!"

In preparation, the Team collaborated with Proper Popcorn to select a tasty assortment of small-batch craft popcorn, featuring the beloved Neyland & Knoxville Mix, packaged in a festive red and white tin. To align with ESPA's colors, the Team complemented the popcorn with an array of custom-branded



M&Ms in matching hues with the VK logo, presented in a faux champagne bottle and tied with a bow complete with information about ESPA National Celebrate Services Week and a thank you message. To accompany the treats, the Team personalized Hollywood Walk of Fame signs for each key venue.

On August 1, the Team visited each of the key venues and presented the packages, symbolizing appreciation for ongoing partnership in advancing Knoxville as a premier destination for conventions, meetings, and sporting events.



"I just wanted you to know how tickled our entire team was with your super sweet award and treats! You really made everyone's day! Every time someone walks into our break room, I can hear them ranting and raving about how that is the best popcorn they've ever had! You really made our guys feel special and appreciated, and I'm very grateful for that! You all are a pleasure to work with and we appreciate all you do for Knoxville. THANK YOU! Y'all are great!"

– Lisa Allen, Event Coordinator, Public Building Authority, World's Fair Park + Volunteer Landing

- Knoxville welcomed the return of the **2023 Showdown at the Sunsphere** volleyball tournament **August 18–19**. Over 3,200 athletes, coaches, and spectators made their way through the KCC over the course of the two-day high school tournament. VKSC assisted with the venue selection and worked directly with the tournament director on their event needs leading up to the tournament. VKSC facilitated the layout and setup of 21 volleyball courts with the help of partners Empire & Co. Labor, ACES forklift, and Heavy Haul Trailers. Event equipment, including table covers, court signs, scoreboards, and directional

signage was provided by VKSC for the event. VKSC assisted with providing hotel recommendations and contact information for out-of-town teams. Athletes were welcomed with a custom message on the Visitors Center Reader Board. VKSC also designed digital welcome signs for the group, which were displayed on indoor and outdoor screens at the KCC and provided a volleyball magnet to be placed on the KNOX letters for a fun photo opportunity. Helpful visitor information and local attraction discounts were distributed to athletes via an online link and onsite QR code, including exclusive access to VK's discounted Dollywood ticket partnership. VKSC highlighted the event across social media channels.



“Running the largest High School Volleyball Tournament in TN is quite an undertaking. One that is made possible by the amazing staff at Visit Knoxville and the KCC. Their preparedness, support and relationship are all keys to us hosting Showdown at the Sunsphere. All the staff represent the heart and soul of the great city of Knoxville. Thank you all!”

– Brent Carter, Tournament Director, K2 Volleyball

- After previously hosting Gold Wing Road Riders Association's Annual Wing Ding, Knoxville was excited to host the first ever **Eagle Wings Annual Ride In**. The event was held at the KCC **August 31 – September 2** with the Crowne Plaza serving as host hotel.

VK hosted the event founders for a site visit in April to determine hotel needs and space requirements. Several planning calls were held, and referrals were provided for off-site parking, a Silent Disco, DJ, and a color guard to present the flags at Opening Ceremonies. At the Opening Ceremonies, VK was on site to welcome the group along with KPD Chief Noel. To ensure a great experience, a digital visitor information link was provided, offering attendees resources, such as Visitors Guides, Downtown Dining & Trolley Maps, Downtown Maps, and access to the Experience Knoxville Savings Pass.



The group was welcomed with a KNOX “O” sign in the KCC and a message on the Visitors Center and KCC Reader Boards. Custom signage was also created and posted in the WFEH to direct guests to designated parking.

Additional planner quotes from 1Q Meetings and Events:

“Kelli was a great help from my lens. When we needed workers – she sent out the information. She also brought over dining and shopping maps, which the attendees really liked having access to, since many are Amish and do not use phones or technology to get around.”

– Jackie Stone, Sr. Meeting & Event Producer, Destination Consultants

“In September of ‘22, I called Visit Knoxville to get some brochures for the reunion that I was hosting. I told Pearl about the problem that I had finding a hotel that would accommodate our needs. Pearl told me that I didn't have to do that, that y'all would. She asked me about our needs and the desired location. In about 30 minutes, I had quite a few hotels sending me emails saying they would be “honored” to have us! I couldn't believe it! I contacted the Hilton Garden Inn Cedar Bluff, and the rest is history. After I spoke with Pearl, I received an email from Christina telling me she would be my contact at Visit Knoxville. We kept in touch, and as we got closer to the event time, she provided me with materials for the visitor's packets. I asked if we could have a representative from Visit Knoxville to discuss activities in the Knoxville area. I told her that Mayor Jacobs would be there as well. She told me she would be the Visit Knoxville representative, and she would introduce the Mayor. Everything went perfectly - she gave a very informative and personable presentation. Everything was great, and some of the attendees said they would like for me to host the event next year.”

– Sergeant Major (Retired) Ron Bruce, Planner, Special Forces Berlin Reunion

Team Knoxville Volunteers

A total of nine opportunities were shared on the Team Knox newsletter and social media outlets, providing a no-cost, service-added benefit to the following local events:

- Began recruiting for these upcoming Team Knoxville opportunities:
 - October 2–4 – ETEBA Business Opportunities & Technical Conference
 - November 7–9 – CBRNe Convergence
- Shared partner volunteer opportunities, including:
 - August 4–6 – Big Machine Music City Grand Prix
 - September 9–10 – USA Ultimate
 - September 27–28 – Shed Builder Expo
 - October 6 – Elevation Nights
 - October 6–8 – Big Orange Brawl
 - Ongoing – One Knoxville SC
 - Ongoing – Volunteer Assisted Transportation



Participated in four community fairs to recruit additional Team Knoxville Volunteers:

- August 18 – UT Graduate School Community Resource and Engagement Fair
- August 24 – UT Student Engagement Fair
- August 29 – UT Part-Time Job Fair
- September 20 – UT Postdoc Appreciation Breakfast and Resource Fair



Additional 1Q Activity:

- **Pre-planning Visits:**
 - **Appalachian College Association** – ACA President, Operations Coordinator, and Director of Library Programs met with and toured contracted space at the KCC. They also met with the staff at Marriott Knoxville Downtown as well as VK to discuss all Convention Services needs for their upcoming 2023 Annual Summit.
 - **Governor’s Conference on Hospitality & Tourism** – Planners visited to finalize all details with the KCC and Marriott. Also toured Neyland Stadium and met with the catering provider to determine arrangements for off-site receptions.
 - **SAVMA 2024** – SAVMA Assistant Director, UTCVM General Manager and Conference Planner met with and toured contracted space at the KCC. They also met with the staff at the Marriott, Cumberland House, and the Hilton.
 - **USA Diving/USOPS** – Members of USA Diving and the USOPC met with VKSC Team to discuss logistics for 2023 Winter Nationals as well as 2024 Olympic Trials.
- **Festival and partnership support** included Grooves in the Garden, Kuumba Festival, Beck Cultural Exchange Center Annual Jubilee, Irish Fest on the Hill, History Hootenanny, International Food Festival, CreepyCon, Knox Asian Festival, GermanFest, Big Kahuna Wing Festival, Innov865 Startup Day, Tennessee Valley Fair, HoLa Festival, and John Sevier Days Living History Weekend.
- **Conducted pre-planning calls and/or meetings** for Visit Knoxville Collegiate, USA Diving Winter Nationals, Ozone Invitational, K2 Volleyball, Grooves in the Garden, FILM FEST KNOX, Eagle Wings, Big Kahuna Wing Fest, and Tour de Lights.
- **Participated in/Assisted with the following partner events:** All Occasions Party Rentals’ 20th Anniversary Celebration, Premier Transportation Client Appreciation Breakfast, Special Forces Berlin Welcome Presentation with Mayor Jacobs, The 9 Group – Lunch & Learn, Spark Cleantech Accelerator’s program (Reserved group seating at the Blue Plate Special, arranged a VK representative to speak about Knoxville at the following luncheon, and donated gift baskets from the VK Visitor Center for each member of the cohort).
- **Participated in the following webinars and virtual events:**
 - VolunteerLocal – Live Group Demo Webinar
 - Simpleview – Events & Meeting Sales Training
 - MeetingMax Webinar
 - ESPA – Emerging Technology Trends: Changing the Way of Servicing Webinar

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.

1Q Goals:

- **Host at least three journalists/influencers for editorial content development** – VK hosted two journalists in 1Q and assisted with an additional four visits. The third hosted journalist visit was scheduled for September, however had a conflict and is hoping to reschedule his visit to spring, likely beginning of 4Q. See Journalist & Influencer Visits and Assistance section for additional details.
- **Complete mid-year update of digital version of 2023 Knoxville Visitors Guide** – The VK Marketing Team updated the digital version of the guide to reflect openings and closings as well as event dates not previously available at the time of printing. The guide can be viewed [here](#).
- **Refresh look and functionality of Meetings and Sports Commission sections of visitknoxville.com** – The Meetings section of the site has a new look. Improved functionality has been achieved by altering the navigation to meet the needs of meeting planners more directly. The same refresh is underway for the VKSC section of the site, to be completed early 2Q.
- **Partner with the Visitors Services Team to brand the new Visitor Information Center at Baker Creek Bottoms** – During 4Q of FYE23, two brochure racks and a TV were added to Bear Paw Bikes at Baker Creek Bottoms in South Knoxville. This quarter, branding with Visit Knoxville was completed. The VK Marketing Team is providing ongoing updates for the video loop running on the TV at this location, and the Visitors Services Team is providing monthly collateral deliveries.



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**. A highlight of this quarter included promotional materials for the Governor's Conference on Hospitality & Tourism. 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.

- **1Q E-newsletter**

More to Do this Summer – This edition promoted family friendly fun, multi-cultural experiences and more in this nature-loving-adventure-seeking-artsy-kinda-town. Highlights included performances and events at the Clarence Brown Theatre, Theatre Knoxville, East Tennessee History Center, and Knox Adventure Collective as well as the Where's Waldo Scavenger Hunt, CreepyCon, Kuumba Festival, Irish Fest on the Hill, GermanFest, and Knox Asian Festival.

*Current open rate for the e-newsletter is 41%**

**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 1Q 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 1.5 million pageviews in 1Q. Each quarter, VK creates new pages for the website and regularly updates content throughout. Additionally:
 - Average length of session was 1 minute 12 seconds
 - Pages per session was 2.96

- Number of clicks to partner sites from VK website was 60K
- Top three metros generating traffic were Atlanta, Nashville, and Chicago
- 2,029 pageviews to sign up for the e-newsletter

The **VK Online Event Calendar** is managed by the Visitor Services Team. In 1Q, 209 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 First Friday – Off the Beaten Path](#)
- [Four Ways to Explore Knoxville During Innov865 Week 2023](#)
- [Haunted Places 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:

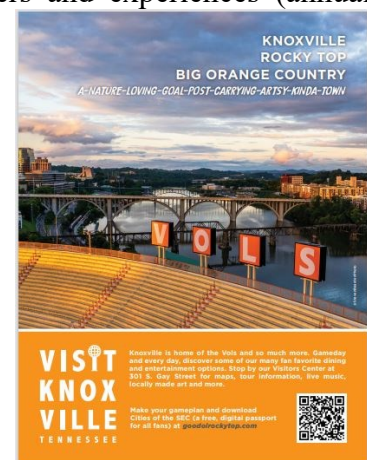
- Promoting various events, exhibits, and attractions including Where's Waldo Scavenger Hunt, the International Food Festival, Knox Asian Festival, Big Kahuna Wing Fest, Zoo Knoxville's 75th anniversary, One Knoxville SC, and more.
- Instagram story series including a revisit of Visitors Guide stories, events including Innov865's Start Up Day and The Maker City's 2023 Summit, Ale trail beer releases, and more.



- **Additional Partner Promotion & Involvement** – VK continues to provide support to our tourism partners. Highlights include:
 - Promoting a Knoxville Getaway with the *Nashville Scene*. The prize pack included a two-night stay at the Graduate Knoxville and dinner at Saloon 16 plus tickets to

the Sunsphere and Women’s Basketball Hall of Fame. Of the 539 total entries (noted as on par with those offered by other DMOs), nearly 45% opted in to receive communications from Visit Knoxville.

- Ongoing partnership on the Appalachia Sessions Live Taping at the Bijou Theatre, presented by the East Tennessee Historical Society. Season One episodes can be viewed [here](#). More details at appysessions.com.
- Partnering with WDVX on the return of Tennessee Shines – a concert series at the Bijou Theatre highlighting up-and-coming artists. The first event of 2023 was held August 2, hosted by Grammy-winning songwriter Jim Lauderdale. Willi Carlisle, Tommy Prine, The Local Honeys, and more played to a full house.
- Ongoing collaboration on Cities of the SEC – this includes 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 VK’s Gameday page: goodolrockytop.com. This quarter, VK also provided a blog post to Experience Columbia SC for South Carolina fans traveling to the game in Knoxville and posted a blog from Visit Gainesville for Tennessee fans traveling to The Swamp. For more information, visit visittheseec.com.
- Partnering with the Tennessee RiverLine on “Paddle Tales”. The first episode was released online in June and now has more than 17,250 views. “Facing Waves” featuring the Tennessee RiverLine premiered August 19 and had several airings across the Bally Sports regional networks. VK’s “artsy-town” commercial is included in the national broadcast series.
- Partnering on the Tennessee Theatre’s Broadway season (includes ad placement in playbills).
- Partnering with/speaking at Introduction Knoxville’s “Quality of Life” session in September to highlight a variety of tourism partners and experiences (annual partnership includes three sessions).
- Collaborating with the City of Knoxville’s Urban Wilderness Coordinator to update maps and information on knoxurbanwilderness.com, hosted on the VK website.
- Placing an ad in the Official 2023 Tennessee Football Souvenir Program. This includes a two-page spread of the downtown Knoxville map with walking routes to campus and a full-page ad with QR code linking to goodolrockytop.com on the VK website. The full partnership also includes banner ads, interstitial ads, and kick-off push notifications on the Tennessee Game Day app.



- Serving on the Tennessee Tourism Committee (TTC). TTC met on August 31. The Committee received updates on research and economic impact, rural tourism and outreach, and an overview of the marketing team as well as a marketing update. Domestic and international sales were reviewed. Updates about communications and public relations, welcome centers, and administration were also discussed. 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 1Q contributed to 2,408 hotel bookings. These numbers will continue to increase up to 60 days post-campaign. Additionally, organic website traffic in 1Q contributed to 4,843 hotel bookings. VK continues to pull insights from our Arrivalist partnership: For 2023 through September, 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 two nights. *

- | | |
|--|---------------------|
| 1. Nashville | 6. Knoxville** |
| 2. Chattanooga | 7. Memphis |
| 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 1Q VK Tourism Dashboard will be available to view alongside the 1Q Highlights Report on Friday, October 27 on the VK website.

Journalist & Influencer Visits and Assistance:

- VK hosted **Eva Morreale**, the Assignments Editor for **Fodor's Travel**. Her visit to Knoxville was a family affair, with multiple generations involved. Her itinerary focused on exactly that: how to enjoy a trip to Knoxville with various age groups. The itinerary included the Sunsphere, Maple Hall, stops on the Tennessee Whiskey Trail, and local dining like Potchke and Cruze Farm.



- VK assisted **Rosemary Palmer**, a Chattanooga-based writer of **My Home and Travels**. Her focus was on “Visiting SEC School Towns” to include notes about the University of Tennessee and the local places for travelers to visit. She toured the Women’s Basketball Hall of Fame, visited the Sunsphere, and her itinerary included several restaurants and local retail suggestions. She has since posted on her blog:

- [My Home and Travels](#)

- VK assisted **Selena Asphall** and her family of **The City & Beyond**. Her itinerary was family-focused, with Zoo Knoxville being a major highlight.

- VK assisted THE TENNESSEAN with two visits: **Melissa Mahanes**, Editor and Owner of **Sophisticated Living Nashville**, and Nashville-based micro-influencer **Asia Blake** of **@xxasiablake** on Instagram. VK assisted with arranging complimentary drinks and tastings at Knox Brew Hub and Tern Club, alongside additional itinerary recommendations.



- VK hosted **Alanna Koritzke** of **Periodic Adventures**. A recent transplant to the Knoxville area, she has lived in several states and her followers are primarily in north Georgia. Her Knoxville itinerary focused on arts and culture, with a special interest in the history of minorities. Working around First Friday, she had tours at Mabry Hazen House, Historic Westwood, the Beck Cultural Exchange Center, and the Women’s Basketball Hall of Fame. She has since posted on her Instagram and TikTok as well as a blog post on her site:

- [Instagram stories](#) (pinned Knoxville highlight) & [Instagram reel](#)
 - [TikTok](#)
 - [Periodic Adventures](#)



“This was such a fun trip and wonderfully curated itinerary. I felt like I walked away with a much better understanding of Knoxville's history and role as part of the greater TN area.”

– *Alanna Koritzke*

Publication Updates from Previous Visits:

- **Mike and Anne Howard** posted their Tennessee road trip on honeytrek.com.
- **Kristin Luna** has had several more articles published:
 - [Southern Living](#)
 - [WKRN](#)
 - [Garden and Gun](#)
- **Chris and Will Antie**, hosts of iHeart Radio's "What About Our Life?" podcast, have posted two episodes that can be streamed through various podcast providers including Apple Podcasts, Chrisandwill.com, Spotify, and Amazon.
 - [Apple Podcasts – Episode 1](#)
 - [Apple Podcasts – Episode 2](#)

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, ConventionSouth, HospitalityTN, Vision Zero, Garden & Gun Magazine, The McNamara Group, Meetings Today, HGTV, Mud & Magnolias, Blue Ridge Country Magazine, AAA Inc., WUOT, University Anesthesiologists, The Local Palate Magazine, and various freelancers.

Published pieces (both earned and paid placement) include:

- *TNVacation.com* – [Dog Friendly Knoxville from a Dog's Perspective](#)
 - *Pride Journeys* – [Celebrate Autumn in Knoxville Tennessee](#)
 - *Meetings Today* – [East Tennessee: A Natural Choice](#)
 - *HGTV* – [Best Hiking Cities in the US](#)
 - *Mud & Magnolias* – [SEC Sojourns: Knoxville, Tennessee](#)
- **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 – 340
 - Total Publicity Value for Earned Media – \$390,182

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 first quarter, the Visit Knoxville Film Office was busy assisting our great local production companies like Jupiter Entertainment, Streetcar Entertainment, Tombras, PopFizz, and others with location needs, permit processing, and city services. These productions included true crime shows such as *Storms of Suspicion*, *American Detective*, *Payback*, *Killer Couples*, *Sins of the City*, and *Fatal Attraction*, and air on networks like TV ONE, The Weather Channel, Discovery ID, and Tubi.

The Film Office also helped many production companies from outside of Knoxville with various productions. Companies like Brand New World producing campaigns for Greg Lemond bikes, and Spearhead Creative creating content for Sugarland's Moonshine received location, permit, and city services assistance from the Film Office.

In September, the feature film, *Love in the Great Smoky Mountains: A National Park Romance* aired on the Hallmark Channel. This film was produced by Shadowboxer Films out of Los Angeles and was successfully recruited to partially film in Knox County. The Film Office is also working with Shadowboxer Films to bring several more projects to Knoxville soon.

The Visit Knoxville Film Office continues to work with its partners at Regal and Public Cinema to put the finishing touches on our inaugural film festival, FILM FEST KNOX, taking place November 9–12, 2023. The full schedule will be announced at the beginning of 2Q for the different components of the festival, including the 6 feature films in the American Regional Film Competition, the Made in Tennessee films Competition, the International Currents and Revival film blocks, the Elev8or Pitch Live Pitch Competition, and panels that include “Filming in Tennessee” with Executive Director of the Tennessee Entertainment Commission, Bob Raines, and VK Film Office Director, Curt Willis, as well as “The Art of the Pitch” panel with the CEO of Seed & Spark. Full festival and VIP passes for FILM FEST KNOX are now on sale at filmfestknox.com.



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 first quarter brought many exciting projects to life, including the announcement and kick off of Sunsphere Renovations (Phase I), a new Visit Knoxville Gift Shop Ecommerce Platform, and a handful of new partnerships. The VK Gift Shops completed over \$55,000 in sales, welcoming new Makers and curated Knoxville products. Private tours via Gotta Know Knoxville, Downtown Knoxville Audio Walking Tour: The Birthplace of Tennessee, and the Sunsphere Tours have continued to be a popular offering among visitors, completing over 40 this quarter.

1Q Goals:

- **Launch iSPY Interactive Game at the Sunsphere** – Custom illustrations of Knoxville Landmarks were created for an interactive iSPY game guests can play while visiting the Observation Deck of the Sunsphere. Each cardinal direction has sites listed in order of difficulty: color coded from green-easy, yellow-challenging, red-difficult. The piece was designed to follow the natural pathway of visitors, beginning with west upon exiting the elevators, followed by south, left of the elevators. Copies of the game are handed out to guests during their experience and returned before returning to the ground level.



- **Update Visit Knoxville Shop Ecommerce Platform** – During 1Q, the VK Gift Shop Ecommerce Platform transitioned to a new website template, updated product pictures, and reorganized collections to make product exploration easier for customers. The banner photo will soon be replaced with a video to display all the offerings of the Visitors Center Gift Shop, Blue Plate Special, Brochures & Information, etc.



- **Create Visitor Resource Materials for K-Town Connect** – VK partnered with K-Town Connect to provide a Pointers and Pro Tips QR Code pass to each Ambassador. This pass provides visitors with maps, places to go, parking information, and even a family friendly weekend guide.

- **Host six Gotta Knox Knoxville Sessions** – Each month during 1Q two sessions were hosted, in addition to private tour requests from: Tech Stars, Innov865, Knox Asian Festival, and a specialized Mural Tour for Governor’s Conference on Hospitality & Tourism. Total attendees serviced for 1Q was 71 people.
- **Recruit New Products for the Visitors Center/Sunsphere Gift Shops** – During 1Q, three new partnerships initiated were: Bradley’s Knoxville Chocolate Company (Knoxville Map Bars, Sunsphere Bars, TN State Chocolates), DKR Jewelry (Silver Necklaces: Tri Star and TN State), and City Crews Apparel (Custom Knoxville Embroidered Sweatshirt). Existing partnerships continued to grow, bringing in **14** new items this quarter.



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

- **Visitors Center Traffic** – Over 8,600 guests were greeted in person. Top 10 states (in addition to Tennessee) of visitors checking into the Visitors Center were:

○ Florida	○ Michigan
○ New York	○ Texas
○ Illinois	○ Virginia
○ Ohio	○ New Jersey
○ Georgia	○ North Carolina
- **Visit Knoxville Gift Shops** – VK’s Visitors Center and Sunsphere Gift Shops completed over \$55,000 in sales during 1Q, averaging around \$600 for daily sales. The Visitor Services Team 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. During 1Q, VK merchandise was sold at Knox Asian Festival. A few additions introduced this quarter include: Sunsphere Kid’s Baseball Shirt (Meghan McCrary), Sunsphere Glitter Earrings & Holographic Sticker (Owltopus), and Cookie Tubes (Watanut). Tax Free weekend was observed this quarter on apparel from July 28–30, while the Grocery Tax Holiday is being observed from August 1–October 31.



THE SUNSPHERE OBSERVATION DECK



The Sunsphere Observation Deck & Visitors Center, managed by Visit Knoxville, is a paid 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 91,000 guests from all 50 states and 52 countries, including Portugal, Guatemala, and New Zealand.

The first quarter brought many exciting projects, partnerships, and announcements for the Sunsphere. A press release was issued early September to announce the Sunsphere will be painted back to its original PANTONE® “Classic Blue” this fall as Phase I of structural updates. Phase II will be the construction of a new Sunsphere Visitors Center on the existing third floor. These projects would not be possible without the partnership and



support from the City of Knoxville, Knox County, the Public Building Authority, East Tennessee Community Design Center, McCarty Holsaple McCarty, The Christman Company, and CertaPro Painters. Phase I will officially kick off and is projected to be completed during 2Q, however, the PANTONE® paint was tested on the structure to ensure quality, color, and receive a stamp of approval during 1Q. With the anticipated three-month timeline for the paint job, VK has partnered with RBA Marketing & Media to complete a time-lapse of the Sunsphere being painted back to its original blue. Access to the timelapse will be available once painting commences at sunspherecam.com.



On the Observation Deck, a new sound system has been installed, upgrading background music on the Deck. This offers a better tour experience for large groups, ensuring everyone can hear the tour director. Private tours of the Observation Deck continue to be a popular offering. During 1Q, 14 private tours were conducted with over 350 attendees. A few groups hosted include Lionel Operating Train Society, BGC Dumplin Valley, Burke Christian Tours, University of Tennessee, Friendship Force, Innov865 and more. A private proposal also took place during 1Q – she said yes! Around the beginning of this fiscal year (July 21), the Observation Deck increased the price for children 12 and under from free admission to \$1 per child. This lines up with the private tour Field Trip rate and ensures children are registered for reservations.



- **Special Events & Collaborations** – This quarter, the Visitor Center was a participating location for the Where’s Waldo Scavenger Hunt (July 1–31) and The Maker City Scavenger Hunt (September 3–10). This was the first year the Visitor Center Gift Shop was selected for The Maker City Scavenger Hunt due to the high number of Maker products offered. Both activities drove traffic to the Visitors Center with guests acquiring a stamp to complete each hunt.



VK also partnered with the Knox County Public Library to include the Sunsphere Observation Deck on the Read City Explorer Pass. This pass allows Knox County Public Library cardholders to book a visit to local museums or attractions at a discounted rate. VK extended half-off Sunsphere admission in participation of this program.

Mentioned in the previous report, ESPN2 filmed an episode of their *Portraits* series, highlighting Josh Heupel, here in Knoxville. A short clip of this episode was filmed on the Observation Deck and aired on ESPN2 during August.

VK partnered with the Knoxville Symphony Orchestra this quarter to host the Sunsphere Observation Deck’s first external reception. The Symphony used the Observation Deck as a hub on July 4 to mingle, eat, drink, and prepare for their performance at Festival on the 4th. The Sunsphere Observation Deck was also utilized for the 9/11 Memorial Stair Climb. Firefighters climb the Sunsphere stairs twice to match the equivalent of the 110 stories of the World Trade Center. Participants reach the Observation Deck, then walk to the other staircase to venture back down to the base.



- **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 1Q, over a dozen gift basket donation requests were fulfilled, including the Governor’s Conference on Hospitality & Tourism, Irish Fest on the Hill, Meals on Wheels, River Swing Clean Water, Habitat for Humanity, and many more.



- 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 1Q, 65 custom welcome messages and highlighted events were featured.

- **VK loaned assets** (e.g., radios, coolers, ice chests, tables, tents, etc.) to Tennessee Miracle, Turn Up Knox, The DW Designs, and Personal Best Racing.
- **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.

VK highlighted the brand-new UT Visitor Guide during this quarter's concierge visits. Each member of the concierge team provided their assigned hotels with one box of UT Visitors Guides, a bag of Orange Mint Life Savers, a flyer highlighting upcoming festivals, the UT Football schedule flyer, a flyer highlighting VK Visitors Services and the Sunsphere, and a laminated UT Game Day Parking Map/UT Football Permit Parking Map. Information was also provided on RAEV (zero-emissions low-speed electric vehicles) as well as the Governor's Conference on Hospitality & Tourism. VK continues to receive amazing 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.
- **Brochure additions** allow the Visitors Center to stay up to date with available attractions and activities. This quarter over 30 new brochures were added. A few of these additions include the Vol Shop Vol Guide, Walnut Springs Winery, Addison's Tea Bar, Ancient Lore Village Map/Activity Guide, Clarence Brown Theatre, Yoga Central, Knox Area Map, Fred Beans and Rice, Lilienthal Gallery, Smoky



Mountain Handmade Creations, Knoxville Bus Maps, McClung Museum, and the Change Center.

- **Visitors Guide Distribution** is a key focus. Top 10 states requesting Visitors Guides:
 - Tennessee
 - Florida
 - North Carolina
 - Illinois
 - Texas
 - California
 - Virginia
 - Georgia
 - Michigan
 - New York

During this quarter, there were 2,717 pageviews to the View Digital Visitors Guide page. VK distributed 2,023 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 1Q, a total of 42,249 Visitors Guides were distributed via outlets including the following:

- 8,950 through State Welcome Centers
 - 13,414 through brochure racks within the region, including attractions and hotels.
 - 19,885 distributed through other locations including the Visitors Center, satellite centers, UT, and airport.
- Additional **distribution materials** include:
 - **700** Downtown Pad Maps
 - **1,250** Dining/Trolley Maps
 - **51,839** 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's Taps N Tunes. This quarter a total of 3,016 people attended these events. Of those polled, the geographical attendance breakdown was as follows:
 - 2,304 Knox County
 - 344 Regional
 - 417 Out of Region – International guests included those from Belgium, Egypt, England, Australia, Germany, Costa Rica, India, Kenya, Italy, Singapore, Canada, and France.

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. 1Q Makers include:

- **July** – Alexa Corbett of West Knox Pots
- **August** – Esther Sitver of Esther Sitver Artworks
- **September** – Chloe Walker-Oliva of Owltopus



- **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 6,096 people.
- Business contact: Ambassadors make it a point to reach out to businesses within the district. Over the last quarter, 644 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 366 of these.
- Litter collection: Teamwork makes the dream work. Ambassadors assisted with picking up 4,933 pieces of litter around downtown.
- Welfare check: Rain or shine, the Ambassador program checks on the vulnerable populations throughout the day. Ambassadors approached 747 individuals to ensure their well-being. Referrals and further assistance are provided as needed.
- Directions provided: Ambassadors helped 1,310 people get where they needed to be.
- Scooter relocation: Ambassadors have moved 1,219 scooters to a preferred 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 158 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 7 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Sunday through Saturday, with extended hours 3:30p.m. to 11:30p.m. Wednesday through Sunday. This quarter, it was announced that K-Town Connect will expand their coverage area to include the University of Tennessee Campus and Cumberland Avenue.