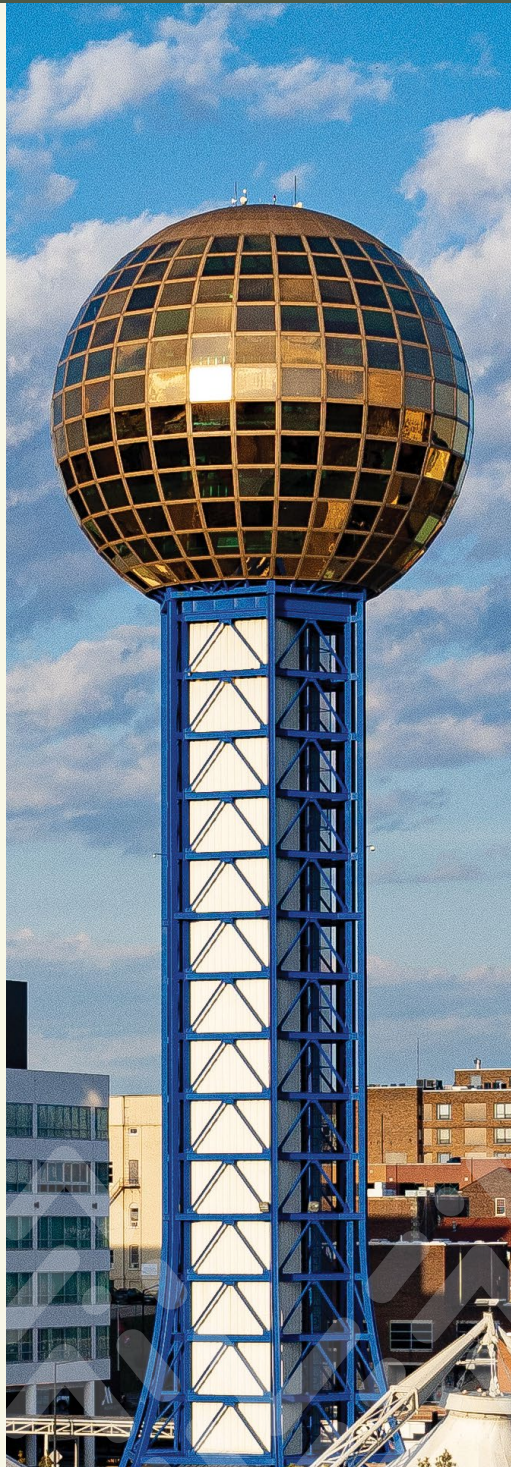


VISIT KNOXVILLE TENNESSEE

2024-2025 SALES & MARKETING ROADMAP



A MESSAGE FROM OUR
PRESIDENT

LOOKING AHEAD AT FISCAL YEAR 2024-2025, I THINK IT'S APPROPRIATE TO SAY THAT THE FUTURE IS AS BRIGHT AS THE GLOW OFF THE SUNSPHERE!

This fall, Visit Knoxville will cut the ribbon on a new Welcome Center at The Sunsphere. This second phase of renovations to Knoxville's beloved skyline icon comes on the heels of the restoration of the base to its original blue. We will also complete improvements to the 4th Floor Observation Deck – all of which will greatly enhance the visitor experience at this popular attraction. You'll find additional details in this Road Map.

These are only a few of the many exciting things “on the horizon.” We look forward to the first pitch at the new Knoxville Smokies Stadium – an event that will reflect the success of our ongoing work with the Knoxville/Knox County Sports Authority.

As always, the team at Visit Knoxville works hard to recruit the best of the best among meeting planners, sports events planners, journalists, influencers, film producers and more. These relationships, alongside the incredible community of stakeholders and partners, help us make an ongoing positive economic impact on the City of Knoxville and Knox County.

In 2024-2025, we will host a full-calendar of conferences and events, highlights of which include the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Incorporated 93rd Southeastern Regional Conference and the AAU Girls Basketball World Championships. The Visit Knoxville Film Office, coming off a highly successful first year, will produce FILM FEST KNOX 2024, and we will gear up to again welcome the holidays with TOUR DE LIGHTS.

The unwavering support of our board of directors, committee members and stakeholders continues to serve as the foundation for all we aim and continue to accomplish. On behalf of everyone at Visit Knoxville, thank you for making it an honor and privilege to serve and promote this nature-loving-adventure-seeking-artsy-kinda-town.

With gratitude,



Kim Bumpas
President
Visit Knoxville



VISIT KNOXVILLE IS THE OFFICIAL CONVENTION AND VISITORS BUREAU FOR KNOXVILLE AND KNOX COUNTY.

OUR MISSION: To accelerate sustainable economic growth and development by increasing visitor and convention business to our community. It is our privilege to support community initiatives encompassing art and culture, history, entertainment, and outdoor adventure to promote Knoxville regionally, nationally, and internationally to leisure travelers, conference/event planners, sports events planners, and film/television production companies.

Visit Knoxville is grateful to be governed by a highly supportive and engaged board of community leaders. These individuals willingly commit their time and talents to help us promote Knoxville and generate tourism dollars that benefit our local economy.

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Knox County Parks & Recreation

THE VISIT KNOXVILLE SPORTS COMMISSION IS PROUD TO WORK WITH AN ADVISORY COUNCIL THAT MEETS TWICE A YEAR TO ASSIST THE TEAM WITH RECRUITMENT AND INPUT ON SPORTING EVENTS.



ADVISORY COUNCIL

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University of Tennessee
Athletics Department

BRANDON COULTER
MLF Pro Angler

JIMMY DELANEY
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Athletics Department

SHERYL ELY
City of Knoxville Parks and Recreation

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Sports Management, retired

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Knox County Parks and Recreation

BRANDON PARKS
Vol Network / IMG College

TERRY TURNER
All Occasions Party Rentals

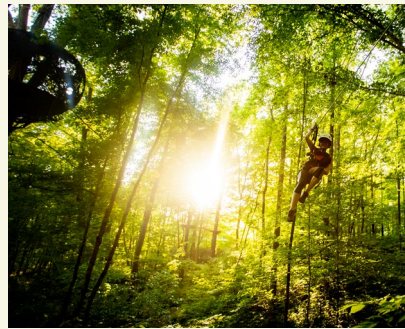
ABOUT THE COVER

From Left to Right

Megan Lingerfelt
River Shores & Skies Mural
Located at Hilton Parking Garage

Sunsphere

Baker Creek Preserve
Devil's Racetrack



CONVENTION SERVICES

THE CONVENTION/SPORTS SERVICES TEAM ANNUALLY SUPPORTS AND SERVICES 300+ CONVENTIONS, MEETINGS, SPORTING EVENTS AND FESTIVALS AS VK BOOKS 150+ EVENTS FOR FUTURE YEARS. IN FYE25, CONVENTION SERVICES WILL CONTINUE TO SUPPORT THESE EVENTS THROUGH THE FOLLOWING:

- Pre-Planning Visits
- Pre-Promotional assistance including attendance building materials, promotional videos and destination photography and copy
- Partner and service provider referrals, such as transportation, equipment, catering, event security and photography
- Recommendations for off-site venues for receptions, dinners and visitor experiences
- Visitor Information including Experience Knoxville Savings Pass, Downtown and Dining map, local area maps, entertainment and attractions information
- Assistance with local permitting
- Resources for guest gifts and giveaway items
- Tour Development
- Welcome speakers and/or letters
- Team Knoxville Volunteers

CONVENTION SALES & SPORTS COMMISSION

THE VISIT KNOXVILLE SALES TEAM AND SPORTS COMMISSION ARE TASKED WITH RECRUITING CONVENTION BUSINESS AND SPORTING GROUPS TO KNOXVILLE. THE OVERARCHING GOAL IS TO CREATE THE HIGHEST POSSIBLE ECONOMIC IMPACT FOR KNOXVILLE'S MEETING, CONVENTION AND SPORTS FACILITIES, INCLUDING THE KNOXVILLE CONVENTION CENTER, THE KNOXVILLE CIVIC AUDITORIUM & COLISEUM, CHILHOWEE PARK & EXPOSITION CENTER AND WORLD'S FAIR EXHIBITION HALL. TO ACCOMPLISH THIS, THE TEAM ACTIVELY PROMOTES KNOXVILLE TO ASSOCIATIONS, ORGANIZATIONS, TRADE INDUSTRIES AND SPORTS EVENT ORGANIZERS AS THE IDEAL DESTINATION FOR MEETINGS AND EVENTS.

SALES GOALS FOR CONVENTION SALES & SPORTS COMMISSION

Total Booking Goal - 200 Groups* (115 by Sports Commission)

- Knoxville Convention Center - 50 bookings
- Chilhowee Park - 4 bookings
- Knoxville Civic Auditorium & Coliseum - 6 bookings
- Hotels & Other Venues - 140 bookings

Total Lead Goal - 550 Leads* (275 by Sports Commission)

*Over 50% of all bookings and leads will be new

ADDITIONAL GOALS

- Attend 25 trade shows
- Host one convention sales FAM tour
- Host a minimum of 28 site visits
- Host four meeting sales blitzes to target markets like Indianapolis, Nashville and Washington, D.C.
- Execute four sport scouting trips

The [Team Knoxville Volunteer](#) program is housed within Convention Services and will continue providing a no cost, value-added service to upcoming groups and events. Team Knox Volunteers serve at information tables, conference registrations, welcome bag preparation days, sporting events and other community event needs. Team Knox is equipped annually with Knoxville knowledge through opportunities such as Gotta Know Knoxville and monthly e-newsletters. Volunteers are recognized at the annual Visitors Guide launch party.

Convention Services will continue to be a member of Event Service Professionals Association (ESPA), an organization that advocates for the role and impact event service professionals have on the success of events and of destinations, hotels and convention centers. Through education and networking, members learn skills to be more effective service managers, gain a better understanding of the breadth of their role, learn about planners' expectations and build career-long connections. Additionally, the Team will participate locally in National Celebrate Services Week July 29 - August 2 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.



FACE-TO-FACE INTERACTION WITH MEETING PLANNERS AND SPORTING EVENT ORGANIZERS THROUGH TRADE SHOW PARTICIPATION IS AN ESSENTIAL COMPONENT TO VK'S ANNUAL SALES STRATEGY. THESE IN-PERSON TRADE SHOW EVENTS ALLOW VK TO STRENGTHEN EXISTING RELATIONSHIPS, IDENTIFY NEW OPPORTUNITIES, AND GAIN FUTURE BUSINESS.

CONVENTION SALES*

August 2024

Connect Marketplace & Mega Tradeshow

September 2024

Professional Fraternities Association

September 2024

Small Market Meetings Conference

October 2024

IMEX America

October 2024

Destination East

November 2024

Meetings Today Live! South

November 2024

HPN Global Conference

November 2024

TN Society of Association Executives

November 2024

Connect DC

January 2025

ESPA

January 2025

RCMA Emerge

February 2025

Rendezvous South

March 2025

DI Convention Sales and Services Summit

March 2025

Conference Direct Annual Partner Meeting

April 2025

Connect Spring Marketplace

May 2025

HelmsBriscoe Annual Business Conference

May 2025

MeetingMax Unconvention

May 2025

Fraternity Executives Association

SPORTS COMMISSION*

August 2024

Connect Sports Marketplace & Mega Tradeshow

September 2024

S.P.O.R.T.S. The Relationship Conference

October 2024

TEAMS Conference

October 2024

Sports ETA 4S Summit

October 2024

AAU National Leadership Conference

January 2025

Sports ETA Chief Executive Summit

April 2025

Sports ETA Women's Summit

April 2025

Connect Sports Spring Marketplace

April 2025

Sports ETA Symposium

*Schedules subject to change

VK CONCIERGE

The VK Concierge program gives VK staff the opportunity to engage with our hotel partners, providing updated information through personal contact. Scheduled visits take place quarterly; ongoing contact is provided for additional needs and requests.

MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS

VISIT KNOXVILLE SHARES THE UNIQUE NARRATIVE OF KNOXVILLE WITH AN EVER-EXPANDING GEOGRAPHIC AND DEMOGRAPHIC AUDIENCE OF LEISURE TRAVELERS. PROFILES INCLUDE GENERATIONS OF FAMILIES, MUSIC LOVERS, FOOD AFICIONADOS, OUTDOOR ENTHUSIASTS - AND, OF COURSE, DOG OWNERS.

THE OVERARCHING MARKETING GOAL IS TO COMMUNICATE THE STORY OF THIS NATURE-LOVING-ADVENTURE-SEEKING-ARTSY-KINDA-TOWN TO THESE AUDIENCES THROUGH PLACEMENT AND PARTNERSHIPS THAT DRIVE TRAFFIC TO [VISITKNOXVILLE.COM](https://www.visitknoxville.com) AND GENERATE EXTENDED HOTEL STAYS.

TRENDS & RESEARCH

We continue to follow travels trends and other research to most effectively achieve this goal. Our 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, additional tools including a free, pet-friendly mobile pass are being launched to showcase some of Knoxville's many pet-friendly offerings and provide "treats" for check-ins at stops listed on the pass.

Additional trends expected to continue to influence travel include the desire for peace and quiet. People reportedly want to escape the busyness of their everyday lives and spend their vacations in a more relaxed setting, allowing time for silence, thoughtfulness and introspection.

Whether travelers are looking for quiet walks or serene views of nature, the "quest for quietude" has become the travel trend everyone is obsessed with, as *Condé Nast Traveler* and others have reported.

MARKETS & PLACEMENT

In addition to in-state markets (which continue to perform very well), VK will continue to target the following drive markets:

- Atlanta, GA
- Birmingham, AL
- Charlotte, NC
- Cincinnati, OH
- Greensboro, NC
- Greenville, SC
- Indianapolis, IN
- Lexington, KY
- Louisville, KY
- Raleigh, NC
- Washington, D.C.

Along with several of the destinations listed above, the Tennessee Department of Tourist Development markets also include Austin, Baltimore, Boston, Charleston, Chicago, Dallas, Denver, Detroit, Evansville, Jackson MS, Jacksonville, Little Rock, Minneapolis, New Orleans, Orlando, St. Louis, Raleigh-Durham, and Tampa. Statewide support includes Alabama, Illinois, Kentucky, Missouri, and Ohio. International branding efforts are in place in Toronto, Canada as well as other markets via Brand USA.

Visit Knoxville also has exciting new partnerships in place with Allegiant and Avelo to market visitation from Jacksonville, St. Louis, South Bend, and New Haven.

Placement includes paid social, paid search, connected TV and programmatic video and display ads.

Additional marketing tools include VK social media, the Knoxville Blog, the Official Knoxville Visitors Guide (225,000 printed copies plus digital), the University of Tennessee Visitor Guide, and the VK Network - a loop of partner videos running in 20+ high-traffic areas throughout Knox County.

VISIT KNOXVILLE FILM OFFICE

THE VISIT KNOXVILLE FILM OFFICE ACTIVELY PROMOTES KNOXVILLE AND KNOX COUNTY AS A PREMIERE FILMING LOCATION. THE FILM OFFICE OVERSEES A STRONG LOCAL INCENTIVE PROGRAM THAT HAS PROVEN TO ITSELF TO BE AN ATTRACTIVE BENEFIT TO PRODUCERS ACROSS THE COUNTRY. IN ADDITION TO THIS, OUR ABILITY TO PROVIDE TOP-NOTCH ASSISTANCE WITH LOCATIONS, CREWS, TALENT, LODGING, PERMITS AND CITY SERVICES HAS LED TO US CURRENTLY ENJOYING OUR PLACE ON MOVIE MAKER MAGAZINE'S, "BEST PLACES TO LIVE & WORK AS A FILMMAKER" FOR THE FOURTH TIME.

The Film Office continues to recruit great projects to Knoxville and Knox County with FYE25 shaping up to be one of the busiest to date.



Hosted by Visit Knoxville and the Visit Knoxville Film Office in partnership with Regal and The Public Cinema, FILM FEST KNOX, will be held November 14-17, 2024 at Regal Riviera in downtown Knoxville. This will be the follow-up to a highly successful first year for the festival in 2023. In its first year, FILM FEST KNOX impressed several well-known trade publications and critics including *Filmmaker Magazine*, *The Film Stage*, and *In Review Online*, who stated, "If future years maintain this pace and quality, FILM FEST KNOX stands to become one of the Southeast's premiere cinephile destinations and celebrations."

In year two, the Film Festival will add two new events, a Red-Carpet Opening Night film event and a closing night party along with the return of great films, workshops, and networking opportunities. A major component of the festival will once again be the Feature Competition. Out of the many films screened during the festival, six of the feature films will be curated to compete against each other for the title of best feature.

FILM FEST KNOX will also provide an exclusive opportunity and an unheard-of prize for the winning filmmaker, compliments of Regal. The winner of the Feature Competition will receive an Oscar qualifying theatrical release at Regal theater locations to be determined. FILM FEST KNOX will also follow up the very popular year one event, the "Elev8or Pitch" as part of the festival's year two events. A jury of film industry professionals will evaluate team submissions of an eight-minute standalone short. This short will represent a proof-of-concept for the full-length production. The top teams will have their films screened in a block during the festival.

Awards for various categories will be presented on the final night of the festival. The Feature Competition and the Elev8or Pitch of FILM FEST KNOX have been designed to support the festival's guiding artistic mission, which is to advocate for the production and exhibition of ambitious regional American filmmaking. FILM FEST KNOX will be a gathering spot for directors and producers who tell stories that can't be told in Los Angeles and New York City, films that have a particular sense of place and a localized voice. FILM FEST KNOX will be a celebration of contemporary regional cinema and a workshop for discovering new ways to promote and distribute it. In addition to its focus on regional work, FILM FEST KNOX will showcase critically acclaimed new films and film restorations from around the world. The program will range from family-friendly movies to prestige dramas, experimental work, and all points in between.

For updates, visit filmfestknox.com

ADDITIONAL PROJECTS & GOALS FOR FYE25

In honor of 2024 being the 10 Year Anniversary of the Visit Knoxville Film Office, a new promotional video will be produced and used as a marketing and recruitment tool when luring film productions to Knoxville. There will also be a new logo design revealed in 2024 for the Film Office.

VISITOR SERVICES

THE VISITOR SERVICES TEAM PRIORITIZES GUEST ENGAGEMENT AND CURATING SPECIALIZED EXPERIENCES FOR VISITORS IN A VARIETY OF WAYS. MANY VISITORS' FIRST STOP IS THE [THE KNOXVILLE VISITORS CENTER](#), WHERE THEY WILL BE EQUIPPED WITH RESOURCES, IMMERSSED IN THE LOCAL MAKER COMMUNITY, AND EVEN CATCH A FREE LIVE RADIO SHOW - [WDVX BLUE PLATE SPECIAL](#). OUR KNOWLEDGEABLE STAFF IS ALWAYS READY TO ASSIST WITH DIRECTIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND OTHER NEEDS.

TOURS & INFORMATION

[Gotta Know Knoxville](#) is a two-hour guided walking tour of Downtown Knoxville, offered twice a month (April-October). This program is free to all local hospitality personnel (hotels, restaurants, attractions, etc.) and \$20 per person for the public. GKK partners with local attractions along the tour footprint where attendees learn firsthand about a handful of staples in our community.

The [Downtown Knoxville Audio Walking Tour](#) is available for purchase through the Voicemap App for \$5.99. The app uses GPS location to play the correct audio at the right time.

[Private Sunsphere Tours](#) of the Observation Deck enhance the visitor experience reviewing World's Fair History.

[Step On Tours](#) help our Visitor Services Team with motorcoach groups and field trips. A guide steps onto privately coordinated transportation to guide a one-hour tour throughout Downtown Knoxville and The University of Tennessee for a \$150 fee.

The Visitors Center is stocked with over 100 different brochures/collateral to educate and entertain visitors. Activities range from [mural exploration](#) to [brewery passports](#), highlight topics like [Women's Suffrage](#) and the [1982 World's Fair](#), and equip visitors with maps and information to explore the city/county. A Weekend Events Newsletter is produced weekly to educate partners about Knoxville happenings.

In FYE25, the Visitor Services Team will continue to explore new ways to bring visitors together to explore Knoxville.

VISIT KNOXVILLE GIFT SHOPS & INFORMATION CENTERS

The Visitors Center and Sunsphere Gift Shops, open 361 days per year, feature more than 80 local makers. This coming year, we will grow these relationships and introduce new products/partnerships. All items, excluding some Sunsphere exclusives, are available online and at festivals and events throughout Knoxville. The Visitors Center & WDVX also participate in [First Friday Live](#) to offer free live music and a featured Maker each month.



Gift Baskets are a popular offering among visiting groups and local companies. In FYE25, we will explore outreach opportunities and streamline bulk buying process for prospective consumers.

Our 15 Visitor Information Centers throughout Knox County are supplied monthly with Visitors Guides, maps, and attraction brochures.

K-TOWN CONNECT

Our partnership with [K-Town Connect Ambassador Program](#) has been a wonderful asset to Downtown Knoxville and the UT Campus. Ambassadors provide visitor information, aid in discouraging solicitation/prohibited behaviors, address critical issues, and connect Knoxville's vulnerable population with assistance. In FYE25, Visit Knoxville will continue to work with K-Town Connect to provide visitor resources and information.



THE SUNSPHERE

THE SUNSPHERE OBSERVATION DECK CONTINUES TO SERVE KNOXVILLE AS A WELL SOUGHT-AFTER HISTORIC ATTRACTION. ALL TICKET SALES BENEFIT THE SUNSPHERE FUND CREATED TO ENHANCE THE STRUCTURE AND OVERALL EXPERIENCE FOR YEARS TO COME. AS THE FUND GROWS, IMPROVEMENTS ARE MADE WITH NEW DEVELOPMENTS ON THE HORIZON.

SUNSPHERE WELCOME CENTER

Construction is underway for the Sunsphere Welcome Center, with projected completion in FYE25. The Welcome Center will have a handful of unique features, including a circular skylight, floor-to-ceiling windows overlooking World's Fair Park, an entry canopy lined with a solar array and more! This project is made possible with partnership from The Christman Company, McCarty Holsaple McCarty, the City of Knoxville, Knox County, Chroma Energy, and East Tennessee Community Design Center.

The Sunsphere Welcome Center will transform the visitor experience and serve guests in a way the unique structure has never been able to before. Transitioning off a QR code reservation-based system to a staffed experience on the 3rd level will promote walk-in visitation—a customer base that was less engaged under the current operating model. The retail store and brochures/collateral will now reside in the Welcome Center, allowing anyone (ticketholders/non-ticketholders) to gather information and explore retail products without visiting the Observation Deck.

Improvements to the 4th Floor Observation Deck will also be made during FYE25, including updated graphics, memorabilia from the 1982 World's Fair, a video wall, interactive screens, and updated exhibits. Prioritizing the guest experience and growing the Sunsphere Fund to continue these developments remains at the forefront of growth as this historic attraction evolves. Admission to the Sunsphere (main funding source) is subject to increase as other developments are introduced.

ADDITIONAL PROJECTS & GOALS FOR FYE25

Exposure of the Sunsphere Observation Deck and heightened awareness of the Sunsphere Fund is an ongoing marketing effort. During FYE25, social media engagement, press releases, media coverage, and an official ribbon cutting at the new Welcome Center will drive publicity, and in turn, visitation to the attraction. The Sunsphere will continue to participate in digital partnerships/collaborations with local businesses.

The Visitor Services Team continues to focus on guest engagement by introducing special activities and experiences for our visitors.

- Santa at the Sunsphere
- Sunsphere Sunsets
- Holiday Offerings
- Scavenger Hunt/Tour Development
- First Friday Events
- Downtown Visitor Center Improvements



VISIT KNOXVILLE TENNESSEE



TENNESSEE
SOUNDS PERFECT

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



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visitknoxville.com