

# visit knoxville

TENNESSEE



## ANNUAL REPORT

2015-2016



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## A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Dear friends,

Each quarter, as we churn out reports, we're amazed at the amount of work we are able to accomplish alongside our very supportive tourism partners. Attractions, hotels, venues, restaurants and vendors all play major roles in our efforts to increase visitor and convention business in Knoxville and Knox County and accelerate sustainable economic growth and development.

It's this end of year report, however, that really tells the story. While we can't include ALL the highlights of the year (trust me, it's hard to choose), this is where the numbers come together. Among other statistics, you'll note that we...

- Exceeded our booking goal by 15 %
- Exceeded our lead goal by 5 %
- Serviced more than 212 events
- Reached upwards of one-half million people via the #whyknox Instagram Challenge
- Achieved an economic impact of more than \$700,000, through the *Dog Years* film. Additionally, the production invested more than \$600,000 in the community.
- Launched Bike Boat Brew & Bark - a brand new event/initiative promoting Knoxville's bike trails, waterfront, local breweries and pet friendly areas

Bottom line, we are fortunate to have experienced another successful year at Visit Knoxville. You'll read all about it on the following pages. You can also find additional details in the Quarterly Highlight Reports under the Media/Public Notice section of [VisitKnoxville.com](http://VisitKnoxville.com). Please let us know if you have any questions.

Thank you for your continued support.

Kim Bumpas,

President  
Visit Knoxville

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TENNESSEE

VisitKnoxville.com

# Sales & SERVICES

THE VISIT KNOXVILLE SALES & SERVICES TEAM PRODUCED ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL YEAR, EXCEEDING A NUMBER OF BOOKING GOALS AND SERVICING A RECORD NUMBER OF EVENTS. DETAILED INFORMATION ON SALES ACTIVITIES ARE LISTED BELOW FEATURING SITE VISITS, FAM TOURS, SALES BLITZES AND TRADE SHOWS.

**BOOKED >>> 127 EVENTS**

Of the 127 events, 70% were new business; 30% were repeat business. 22 at the Knoxville Convention Center.

**PRODUCING OVER \$125 MILLION OF FUTURE ECONOMIC IMPACT**

**TOTAL LEADS >>> 295**

Over 45% went to the Knoxville Convention Center.

**HOSTED >>> 45 SITE VISITS**

Among them, the Structural Building Components Association and Tennessee Baptist Convention. Both of these groups have since booked Knoxville for future years. Visit Knoxville has currently booked 14 of these 45 groups for future years.



**HOSTED >>> 3 FAMILIARIZATION (FAM) TOURS**

The team hosted a total of 36 planners for FAM events. The Tennessee District Attorney Generals Conference has chosen Knoxville as a result of attending the FAM in February 2016. Visit Knoxville currently has 10 pending bookings resulting from FAM activity.

**CONDUCTED MORE THAN >>> 60 SALES APPOINTMENTS**

These appointments were conducted in the target markets of Washington DC, Nashville, and Atlanta. Notable appointments include Tennessee Municipal League, Lifeway Christian Resources, American Chemical Society, and Tennessee Health Information Management Association.

**ATTENDED >>> 19 TRADE SHOWS**

Over 350 appointments were conducted by Visit Knoxville and attending partners. Shows included Conference Direct Annual Partner Meeting, Connect Association Marketplace, American Society of Association Executives, and DMAI Destinations Showcase. Visit Knoxville currently has 20 pending bookings resulting from the shows and has turned 2 groups definite for future years.

**EXECUTED >>> 5 EVENT SCOUTING & PRE-PROMOTE TRIPS**

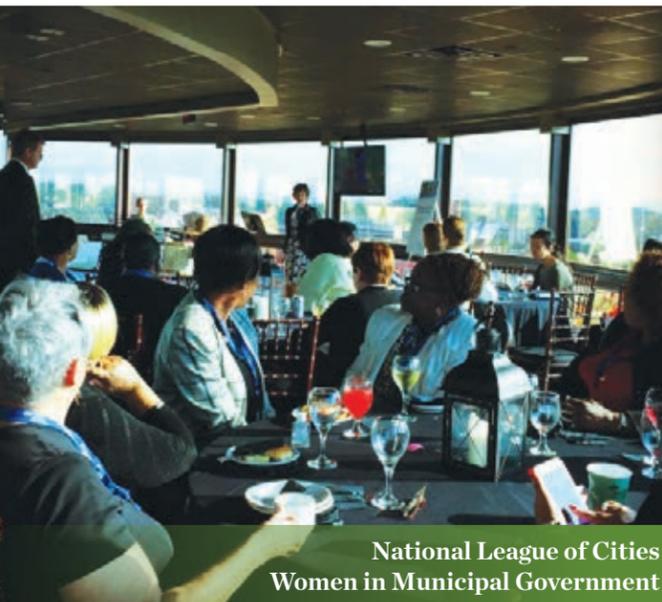
Event scouting trips included Lifeway Christian Resources Women's Abundance Conference in Asheville, National Quartet Convention in Sevierville and Women of Faith in Louisville.

A VK representative also conducted a pre-promote in Covington for the KY/TN Water Professionals Conference that will take place in Knoxville in Summer of 2016 and a pre-promote in Greenville for the American Association of Airport Executives Southeastern Regional Conference that will take place in Knoxville in Spring 2017.





Annual Street Rod Nationals South



National League of Cities Women in Municipal Government



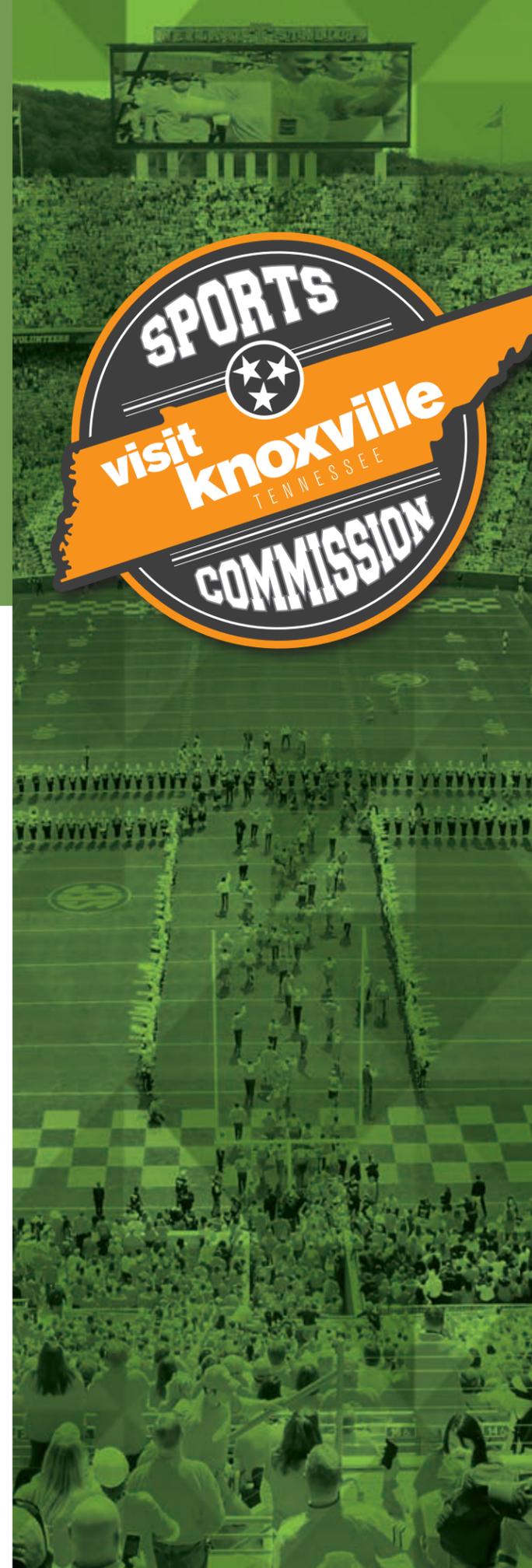
Smoky Mountain Air Show

THE CONVENTION SERVICES TEAM PROVIDES SERVICES FOR CONVENTIONS, TRADE SHOWS, MEETINGS, FESTIVALS AND EVENTS. WE UTILIZE A CONSULTATIVE APPROACH BASED ON THE UNIQUE NEEDS OF EACH GROUP. SERVICES INCLUDE PARTNER REFERRALS, DESTINATION INFORMATION, ITINERARY SUGGESTIONS, PROMOTIONAL MATERIALS, ON-SITE INFORMATION TABLES AND OFF-SITE SPECIAL EVENT ASSISTANCE.

SUPPORTED **»»»** **212**  
**CONVENTIONS,  
 EVENTS, FESTIVALS  
 & MEETINGS**

**Featured groups include:**

- Gardner Business Media Additive Manufacturing Conference
- American Nuclear Society National Nuclear Science Week
- Grassroots Outdoor Alliance Annual Show
- Professional Trail Builders Association Sustainable Trails Conference
- Annual Street Rod Nationals South
- Women in Municipal Government Annual Conference
- Destination Imagination Annual Global Finals
- International Society of Arboriculture Southern Chapter Annual Meeting
- Public Relations Society of America Southeast District Conference



In March 2016, Visit Knoxville formed the Visit Knoxville Sports Commission - a key move to taking Knoxville to the next level as it relates to the quality of its sports bookings. This newly formed commission is well positioned to seize lost opportunities and develop new relationships.

The Sports Commission will work effortlessly to make sure that sports organizations receive the quality of service they have come to expect from Visit Knoxville. This includes building on established events like this past year's American Cornhole World Championships - an event that yielded ESPN2 coverage for Knoxville. The event is returning for a second year in 2016.

**In three short months, the Visit Knoxville Sports Commission has...**



Formed the Visit Knoxville Sports Commission Advisory Council

Hosted United States Trampoline and Tumbling Nationals - their largest event to date with over 2300 athletes



Hosted returning city-wide events including the Ozone Invitational and Battle in Rocky Top Youth Football Championships



Hosted site visits for AAU Basketball and USTA Trampoline & Tumbling



Attended the NCAA Championship Hosting Symposium, which detailed the process for bidding on and hosting future NCAA Championship Events

# NOTABLE EVENTS & accomplishments for the year



««« The VK logo is now on the sleeves of shirts worn by ushers at UT football, basketball, softball, and baseball games.



««« Visit Knoxville provided a fresh look and updated information on the Cradle of Country Music Walking Tour.



««« In the #whyknox Instagram Challenge, a total of 114 15-second videos received nearly 80,000 clicks (66+ hours of views) and 13,000 “likes”. The #whyknox hashtag was used more than 1,300 times. The promotion reached upwards of one-half million people via Instagram.



««« Visit Knoxville created Bike Boat Brew & Bark, an on-going branding initiative that celebrates the outdoor adventurer, the dog lover, the craft beer enthusiast, the local and the tourist looking to discover something unexpected in Knoxville. The launch event June 4-5 featured the Visit Knoxville Powerboat Classic. The race will air multiple times on Fox Sports Southeast, MASN and ROOTSW, producing an estimated \$18,000 of bonus airtime for Knoxville and the partners featured in the broadcast.



««« VK partnered with TN Dept of Tourist Development on a first-of-its-kind promotion - a 3-day concert series streamed live to streets of Chicago. Knoxville closed out the series with Ashley Monroe on stage at the Tennessee Theatre. Stories were reported in SPIN, Rolling Stone and USA Today.



**KNOXVILLE, TENN.**

««« Visit Knoxville helped Knoxville claim the title of Blue Ridge Outdoors Magazine’s 2015 Best City. Blue Ridge Outdoors is the largest outdoor lifestyle magazine in the region.



««« In its first year, The VK Concierge Program received rave reviews from our hotel partners. In addition to ongoing communication, VK Team Members made a total of more than 330 visits to area hotels, delivering Visitors Guides, maps, gifts and more.



««« Visit Knoxville and Scripps Networks Interactive launched Beats and Eats – a branding initiative designed to increase awareness of Knoxville as a destination for spring/weekend travel - celebrating music and food.

««« Visit Knoxville facilitated production and installation of the large format historic images that now grace the exterior walls of the Walnut Street Garage. Plaques providing “then and now” information will be installed on the nearby iron railings.



««« VK Collaborated with local photographer Bruce McCamish to design and install a wall-sized print at the Knoxville Convention Center. The enhanced/artistic image of the quarry at Fort Dickerson promotes the KCC’s proximity to Knoxville’s Urban Wilderness.



THE VISIT KNOXVILLE MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS TEAM HELPED KNOXVILLE MAKE ITS PRESENCE KNOWN IN A VARIETY OF WAYS THIS PAST YEAR.

# MARKETING SUCCESS FOR THE YEAR

## WEBSITE

TOTAL NUMBER OF VISITS: **644,035**  
 ▲ UP 27%

UNIQUE VISITS: **485,681**  
 ▲ UP 28%

PAGE VIEWS: **1,752,627**  
 ▲ UP 29%

PAGES VIEWS PER SESSION: **485,681**  
 ▲ UP 28%

Nearly **65%** of website traffic originated outside of Knoxville. The top feeder markets were Nashville, Atlanta and Charlotte.

## VISITORS GUIDE REQUESTS

Online requests increased by **127%** to almost **4,000** for the year.

## PAID SEARCH

**22,565 CLICKS**  
**1,499 CONVERSIONS**

**7% CONVERSION RATE\***  
 ▲ UP 25% (\*industry standard is 1.45%)

**E-NEWSLETTER SIGNUPS** **4,794**  
 ▲ UP 121%

## ONLINE HOTEL BOOKINGS THROUGH VISITKNOXVILLE.COM

The average value on the bookings engine increased by over **9%**.

**GENERATED OVER \$3.6 MILLION IN EARNED MEDIA**

# VISIT KNOXVILLE KICKED OFF THE YEAR AT THE TENNESSEE HOSPITALITY AND TOURISM ASSOCIATION'S ANNUAL "STARS OF THE INDUSTRY" AWARDS GALA WHERE WE WERE NAMED DESTINATION MARKETING ORGANIZATION OF THE YEAR...

Since that time, we've worked to live up to the title in a variety of ways, beginning with a positioning statement for Knoxville that will be used in upcoming promotional campaigns:

*For the traveler seeking a destination that will deliver "wow, I had no idea" experiences, Knoxville offers a surprisingly real, truly accessible and unexpectedly sophisticated mix of culture, adventure and cuisine rooted in history and genuine Southern hospitality.*

## HIGHLIGHTS FROM THIS YEAR

- Designed and printed 225,000 copies of the Official 2016 Knoxville Visitors & Relocation Guide in partnership with the Knoxville Chamber
- Launched a re-design of VisitKnoxville.com
- Promoted Knoxville to an international audience through partnerships with Brand USA and Lofthouse
- Collaborated with VML and the Tennessee Department of Tourist Development (TDTD) on two co-op programs:
  - #whyknox created buzz throughout the city (see pg 9).
  - MatchMaker delivered personalized digital videos to online consumers. The Knoxville video grouping Beauty-Outdoor/Adventure/History achieved the HIGHEST CLICK-THROUGH RATE of all 16 partner state-wide video pairings: nearly 3x the campaign average.



- Generated a total of 1,055 entries in the "Two for the Shows" sweepstakes with the Tennessee Theatre. The high-impact ads produced results over 8x the national industry average.
- Installed VKTV in 10 hotels - the in-room hotel channel provides information on things to do, places to eat, festivals and more
- Updated the VK Network video loop running at the Downtown Visitors Center, Zoo Knoxville, KAT, Outdoor Adventure Center, Knoxville Museum of Art, SunSphere, UT Visitors Center, Holiday Inn World's Fair Park, Knoxville Hilton, the new Visitors Information Center at Turkey Creek and on a mobile screen at the Knoxville Convention Center
- Created a 2-minute Knoxville video for pre-promotes and a 3.5-minute video specifically geared for the military reunions market
- Worked with the Knoxville Area Brewers Association to create and distribute the Knoxville Ale Trail Map
- Partnered with the Knoxville Mercury on Knoxville's Top Knox Awards to help promote "local favorites" to visitors
- Created and installed new signage in the lobby of the Knoxville Civic Auditorium and Coliseum
- Partnered again with the University of Tennessee on the UT Visitors Guide, therefore increasing distribution
- VK partnered with a number of community organizations to celebrate and promote the City of Knoxville's 225th Anniversary. In addition to a micro site on VisitKnoxville.com, VK created a rack card, pole banners and window displays and collaborated on signature events throughout the year.



The Visit Knoxville Film Office has had a busy year. We continue to work to make Knoxville more film friendly and develop in to a premiere filming location for feature films. The big feather in our cap this year was landing a film starring Burt Reynolds, Ariel Winter, and Chevy Chase. The production filmed the entire month of June and is now in post-production with the hopes of a release in late 2016. Below is a list of some of the other things we were busy with in the past year.



Worked with Whitener Entertainment Group and TN State Film Commissioner, Bob Raines, to land a \$2 million feature film starring Burt Reynolds, Ariel Winter and Chevy Chase - filming wrapped July 1

Facilitated the hire of local crew members and vendors for the filming of an episode of OUTCAST, a Cinemax original series, at Brushy Mountain State Penitentiary



VK sponsored the 2015 Knoxville Film Festival and provided \$15,000 of the \$20,000 Grand Prize to the winner of the 7 Day Shoot Out. The film, shot in Knoxville, will premiere opening night of the 2016 Knoxville Film Festival.

Collaborated with VK Marketing Team and local talent to produce a Visit Knoxville PSA



Assisted CMT with permits and location access for a surprise free concert with Dierks Bentley at the International in Downtown Knoxville- the concert aired May 28 on CMT

Assisted with permits, locations and crews for shows appearing on CMT, Oxygen, National Geographic, MTV, Investigation Discovery and TV One



The VK Film Office worked with Paul Harril and Darren Hughes of Public Cinema to sponsor the film portion of the Big Ears Festival. VK is also a major sponsor of the Big Ears Documentary being produced by Rock Fish Stew



# DOG YEARS

## Behind the Scenes



"...WHEN A CREW PARKS A MOVIE PRODUCTION ON A STREET IN LOS ANGELES, LOCALS WILL CALL THE POLICE. HERE IN KNOXVILLE, PEOPLE BRING YOU PIES."

NEIL MANDT  
PRODUCER

# Visitors SERVICES

UTILIZING A WEALTH OF TOOLS AND KNOWLEDGE, THE VISITOR SERVICES DEPARTMENT FOCUSES ON THE END EXPERIENCE OF VISITORS IN KNOXVILLE. THE TEAM'S PRIORITY IS TO ENGAGE THE KNOXVILLE COMMUNITY WITH THE TRAVELERS AND ENSURE THE EXPERIENCES OF VISITORS ARE BOTH MEMORABLE AND POSITIVE.



THIS YEAR'S NUMBERS CLEARLY REFLECT THE VALUE OF VISITORS SERVICES.

DISTRIBUTED  
»» 125,771  
VISITORS GUIDES

VISITORS GUIDE REQUESTS ARE RECEIVED FROM AROUND THE WORLD. THE MOST REQUESTS FOR THE YEAR CAME FROM:

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

GREETED  
»» 21,312  
WALK-IN VISITORS  
FROM AROUND THE WORLD

In addition to the visitors who stopped by the downtown Visitors Center, over 2,200 callers were provided with Knoxville information.

FACILITATED »» 96  
GROUP RESERVATIONS  
FOR BLUE PLATE SPECIAL

The live radio concert is hosted by WDVX and takes place Monday-Saturday at noon at the Visitors Center.

HANDED OUT  
»» 45,394  
BROCHURES

The Knoxville Visitors Center is a distribution hub for information and visitors. We feature an array of brochures to help with their experience!

DISTRIBUTED  
»» 40,600  
BROCHURES

The Knoxville Ride Along Program is a sure way to get your information to visitors along with the Visitors and Relocation Guide.

TRAINED »» 201  
TOURISM  
AMBASSADORS

Training took place in our year-long Gotta Know Knoxville program.

LOGGED »» 791  
VOLUNTEER  
HOURS

Visit Knoxville Volunteers (formerly TEAM Knoxville) provide a no-cost, service-added benefit to VK's clients.



# visit knoxville

TENNESSEE

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



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**VisitKnoxville.com**