

ANNUAL REPORT

2017

2017 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

MIKE LOGAN, CHAIR
Granada, Abe & Jakes, Lucia

DEREK FELCH, VICE-CHAIR
Hampton Inn

CHARLIE PERSINGER, TREASURER
University of Kansas

DOUG BANKS
Kansas Athletics

RACHEL BLACK
Americana Music Academy

STUART BOLEY
City Commission

STEPHEN HORTON
DoubleTree by Hilton

LARRY McELWAIN, EX OFFICIO
Lawrence Chamber

SALLY ZOGRY, EX OFFICIO
Downtown Lawrence Inc.

STAFF

MICHAEL DAVIDSON
Executive Director

KIM ANSPACH
Director of Community Relations

KEITH MANIES
Visitor Center Manager

JUDY RILING
Director of Sales

ANDREA JOHNSON
Director of Marketing & Communications

VICTORIA PURVIS
Director of Visitor Services

MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD

We, staff and board members, of eXplore Lawrence are pleased to present our 2017 Annual Report.

This report showcases our accomplishments and provides goals that we will be working towards in 2018. eXplore Lawrence is a not-for-profit organization that is dedicated to promoting Lawrence and Douglas County as a premier tourism destination. Funding for our organization is a portion of the transient guest tax (TGT) collected at hotels, bed & breakfast and short-term rentals located within the city of Lawrence.

Lawrence took center stage when the 2017 USA Track & Field Junior Olympics came to Rock Chalk Park in late July. For one week this event brought thousands of visitors from around US and Canada to hotels, restaurants, and attractions in Northeast Kansas. Special shout-out to the Lawrence Sports Corporation, Downtown Lawrence Inc., City of Lawrence staff, local businesses and the hundreds of volunteers who showed the world that Lawrence knows how to run and host a world-class event.

The 2016 Economic Impact in Douglas County issued by Tourism Economics highlights the significant role tourism plays in the local economy. Visitors spent \$248.5 million in 2016 which ranks Douglas County 5th among all counties in the state. Visitors spending supported 2,772 local jobs in addition to generating \$40.7 million in tax revenues, with \$24 million accruing to state and local governments.

In 2017 we saw a record year in terms of TGT revenue, one of the key indicators of the health of the local tourism industry. The \$1,731,209 represents an increase of more than 8% from 2016.

Our long-term Director of Visitors Services, Debbie McCarthy, has retired after twenty-one years of welcoming visitors to our community, replacing Debbie is Victoria Purvis, who first came to eXplore Lawrence as a University of Kansas intern.

We are committed to being a data-driven destination management organization that assures the greatest possible return on investment.

Looking forward, we will continue to employ best practices in marketing and sales as we work together to grow tourism in Lawrence and Douglas County.



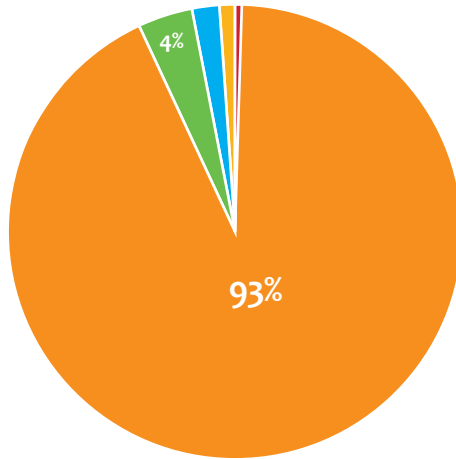
DEREK FELCH
2018 Board Chair



MICHAEL DAVIDSON
Executive Director

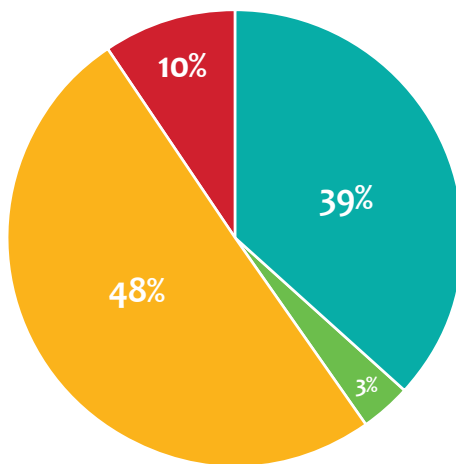
INCOME & EXPENSES

» **\$1,062,349** total revenue » **\$968,434** total expenses



2017 INCOME

GUEST TAX (93%)
VISITORS GUIDE (4%)
CO-OP MARKETING (1.5%)
DMI (1%)
MISCELLANEOUS INCOME (0.5%)



2017 EXPENSES

PAYROLL EXPENSES (39%)
RETIREMENT PLAN (3%)
SALES & MARKETING (48%)
ADMINISTRATION (10%)

volunteers

AUTUMN WHITT

BARB COPPLE

BETH REIBER

CON HENDERSON

JACKIE KENNEDY

JAMES DUNN

JONI HUGHES

MARY HOPE

NANCY HAUSE

SUSIE NIGHTINGALE

TERRY MANIES

WILMA RIFE

VOLUNTEER HOURS

624

VISITORS SERVED

4,848

VISITORS GUIDES SENT

407

INTERNS

VICTORIA PURVIS

KATE HARLAND



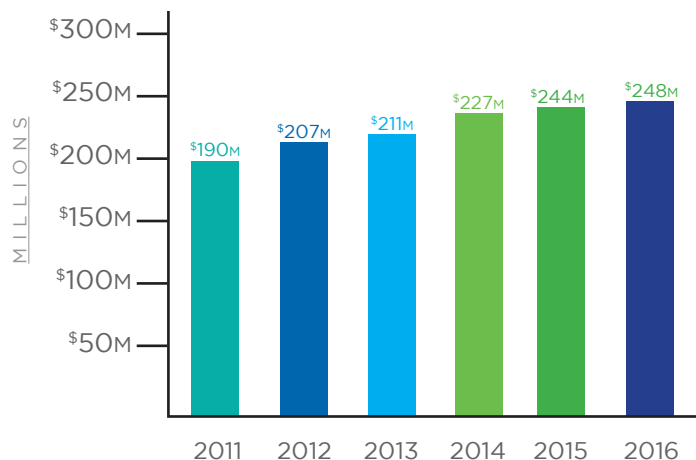
ECONOMIC IMPACT

» **VISITORS SPENT** nearly **\$250 million** in Douglas County with visitor spending having increased more than **30%** since 2011. Visitors spend an average of **\$680,000** in Douglas County each day of the year.

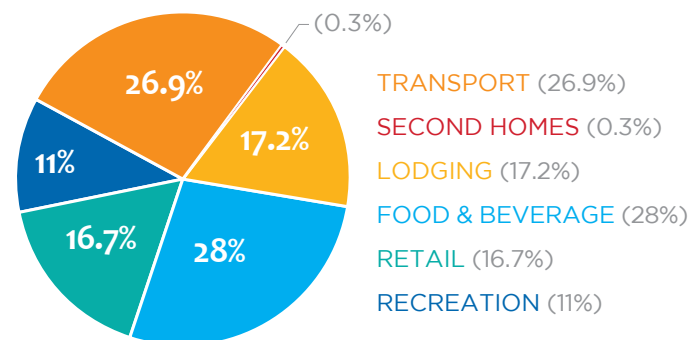
» **VISITOR SPENDING** in Douglas County ranks **5th** among all counties in the state.

» **VISITOR SPENDING** directly supports **2,733** jobs.

» **TOURISM** in Douglas County generated **\$40.7 million** in tax revenues in 2016, with **\$24.0 million** accruing to state and local governments.



DOUGLAS COUNTY VISITOR SPENDING



DOUGLAS COUNTY VISITOR SPENDING BY CATEGORY

2017 USA TRACK & FIELD JUNIOR OLYMPICS

- » 8,129 youth athletes
- » 41,026 room nights in Northeast Kansas
- » Visitor Spending: \$17,768,960
- » Provided 257 full-time equivalent jobs
- » 273% ROI (return on investment)



PARTNERSHIPS

- » Final Fridays
- » Lawrence Loop
- » Douglas County History & Heritage
- » Giving Tuesday
- » Farmers Markets of Kaw Valley



ADVERTISING

print

AAA Living
Best of the Midwest
Evel Knievel Museum Program
KANSAS! Magazine
Kansas Travel Guide
Kansas Men's Basketball
Kansas Society of Association Executives
Magazine & Membership Directory
KU Today
Midwest Meetings Magazine & Membership
Directory
Midwest Traveler

digital advertising

Digital Display
E-Newsletters
Mobile Display
Mobile Geofencing
Pandora
Search Engine Marketing (Google & Bing)
Search Engine Optimization
Social Media
TripAdvisor
TrueWest Magazine Online



MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS

WEBSITE, USER-GENERATED CONTENT, & SOCIAL MEDIA

- » **131,729** individuals visited UnmistakablyLawrence.com
161,152 times
- » **5,200** user-generated photos & videos
published to UnmistakablyLawrence.com
- » **3,346,785** social media impressions
- » **4,028** new social media fans



ARRIVALS*

- » **1,426** arrivals
- » **14,260** estimated arrivals
- » **\$4,948,220** estimated revenue generated
- » **Top 5** Origin States
 - Kansas
 - Missouri
 - Texas
 - Colorado
 - California

**Tracking actual arrivals to Lawrence after exposure to digital ads*

AWARDS

» Travel Industry Association of Kansas Marketing Awards

- 1st place: 2017 Visitors Guide – Outsourced
- 2nd place: Community Awareness Campaign

» Visit KC Visitor Choice Awards

- Favorite Day Trip

2018 MARKETING INITIATIVES

- » Native Advertising/Artificial Intelligence
- » Podcasts
- » Weekly Social Media Videos
- » Foodie Vlog
- » Kansas Athletics partnership
- » University of Kansas J-School project:
Block-by-Block





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THE MISSION OF
EXPLORE LAWRENCE
IS TO BROADLY
MARKET THE AREA
AS A YEAR-ROUND
VISITOR DESTINATION
THEREBY POSITIVELY
IMPACTING THE
REGION'S ECONOMY
BY RETAINING AND
ATTRACTING VISITORS
TO THE CITY OF
LAWRENCE AND
DOUGLAS COUNTY