

*Visit*   
**LOUDOUN**  
- DC's Wine Country® -



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## About Visit Loudoun

The Loudoun Convention & Visitors Association (Visit Loudoun) is the destination management organization for Loudoun County and its incorporated towns. As the primary programmatic arm for Loudoun's travel and tourism promotion, it leads the Loudoun tourism industry to work together to generate visitor spending by developing and implementing comprehensive destination management programs. It is a self-governing private not-for-profit corporation with a Board of Directors elected by dues paying members.

Visit Loudoun was established in 1995 as the Loudoun Tourism Council to support the preservation, utilization, and enhancement of Loudoun's unique historic, cultural, and natural tourism assets to ensure community well being and sustainable economic returns including tax revenues, employment, business profitability, and return on investment. Today, Visit Loudoun has a signed Memo of Understanding with Loudoun County to perform core tourism services and works with the industry to implement a county-wide Tourism Destination Strategy.

### Vision Statement

To be a "must visit" destination supported by a community that recognizes the economic and quality of life benefits that come from sharing our home with visitors. Loudoun County will be the preferred east coast destination for lovers of artisanal, epicurean, and culturally rich experiences..

### Mission Statement

To stimulate the sustainability and enhancement of Loudoun County's economy and quality of life by advocating for smart destination development and marketing an exceptional experience to travel consumers worldwide

### Internationally Accredited Destination Marketing Organization (DMO)

Visit Loudoun (DMO) is accredited by Destination Marketing Accreditation Program (DMAP) of the Destination Marketing Association International, 2505 M Street, NW, Suite 500, Washington, DC 20036, Phone: 202-296-7888



# FY2018 Marketing and Tourism Trends

## U.S. TRAVEL ASSOCIATION TOURISM OVERVIEW



### CURRENT STATE OF THE ECONOMY AND TRAVEL

While the economy followed a similar pattern of sluggish growth in the first quarter of the year, signs of a pickup in domestic economic activity, led by stronger consumer spending, offers solid evidence that, once again, domestic demand is picking up steam in the second quarter. At the same time, even though the value of the dollar has moderated 4 percent during the first half of the year, U.S. exports, particularly spending by international visitors in the United States, remain subdued. Thus, 2017 will likely follow the pattern of 2016 for the travel industry, with domestic demand being the primary driver of growth.

### CONSUMER CONFIDENCE

The Conference Board Consumer Confidence Index®, which decreased in April, declined slightly in May.

### CONSUMER SPENDING

Recently released economic data suggest consumer spending is resurgent for the second quarter of 2017.

### EXPORTS

The U.S. goods and services trade deficit widened by 5.1 percent in April, according to the Commerce Department.

### STATE OF BUSINESS

The Labor Department recently released its estimate for first quarter labor productivity, measured as total output over hours worked.

### TRAVEL TRENDS INDEX

More international visitors came to the U.S. than expected in April 2017, according to the U.S. Travel Association's latest Travel Trends Index(TTI)—defying expectations of slowed growth or outright decline in reaction to President Trump's controversial executive orders on travel and immigration, first issued January 27.



### LEISURE TRAVEL

The May [U.S. Travel Barometer](#) showed that 75.8 percent of lodging searches by U.S. residents were to locations within the United States. ▶



### LODGING INDUSTRY

Based on a revised forecast from STR and Tourism Economics, the [U.S. hotel industry is projected](#) to report continued modest growth through 2018. ▶



### TRANSPORTATION

#### AIR TRAVEL

A recent study from Indiana University found that [airline mergers have no negative impact](#) on on-time performance and may lead to long-term improvements. ▶

#### ROADS & RAILS

The [U.S. Energy Information Administration reported](#) that U.S. regular gasoline retail



prices are forecast to average \$2.46/gallon, compared with \$2.23/gallon last summer for the 2017 summer driving season (April through September). ➤



**BUSINESS TRAVEL**

A recent Global Business Travel Association study found that [nearly four in 10 business travelers](#) in North America added a leisure leg to their work trip in the past year, similar to prior years. ➤

## Loudoun County Visitor Profile

### Basic Facts and Figures

- There were 1,192,159 million overnight visitors in 2013 – down 3.4 percent from 2012. These visitors spent \$1.5 billion in Loudoun County – unchanged over the previous year.
- Average party size was 2.5 persons (VTC )
- 80% of parties are adult only (VTC)
- Overnight daily spending by visitors: \$941.60
- Day-trip daily spending by visitors: \$484.60 (VTC)

### Visitor Breakdown

- Leisure Visitors 349,303 an increase of 8.4% over 2012.
- Business Travelers 842,856 an decrease of 7.7% over 2012.
- Average age of Loudoun County visitors is 47.6 years old (VTC)
- The most popular overnight travel months to Loudoun County (year range) were May (84.7% occupancy), June (81.6% occupancy), April (80.3% occupancy). Followed by October (75.4% occupancy) and July (75.3% occupancy). (STR)

### Geographic Breakdown

- 49% of Loudoun County visitors in 2013 came from Virginia.
- The top 5 states are:
  - Virginia 49%
  - Maryland 23%
  - Pennsylvania 12%
  - Washington DC 11%
  - New York 6%

	AVERAGE OCCUPANCY	AVERAGE DAILY RATE
2012	62.20%	\$100.74
2013	59.40%	\$97.84
2014	60.00%	\$100.29
2015	65.40%	\$109.25
2016	70.6%	\$112.86
2017-YTD	65.6%	\$115.22

### Visitor Activities and Motivators

- Activity participation of Loudoun County overnight visitors
  - 57.87 percent, dining
  - 55.84 percent, shopping
  - 40.10 percent, driving/sightseeing
  - 34.01 percent, visit towns and villages
  - 30.96 percent, heritage
  - 24.87 percent, attend a festival/fair

**Average Occupancy and Average Daily Rate History**

The following is a summary of the average occupancy and average daily rates for 2017 and for the previous five years in Loudoun County.

## FY2018 Product and Destination Development

New Loudoun County Wineries (now 40+)

New County Craft Breweries (now 20+)

New Cideries and Distilleries (now 4+)

Progress on Dulles and Loudoun Rail

Morven Park Equestrian Development

New International Air Service into Washington Dulles International Airport

Continued International Sister County Support

Implementation of Strategic 2016-2019 Plan

Third Phase Support of Government ProForma on Multi Sport Indoor Facility

Extended Market-driven promotions to Canadian market

Loudoun County Nighttime Economy Initiative

Area Loudoun Restaurant Organizational Initiative

LGBT Market Research and Planning

Dynamic Content Management (website)

Data Driven Tracking and Analysis of Visitation

Adventure Trail Branding and Development

Rideshare Product Development

New Visitor and Wine Visitor Profile Research

## FY2018 Strategic Goals

### Advocate for Destination Enhancing Development

- Serve as the trusted expert and advisor for the tourism industry in the county's comprehensive plan.
- Develop tournament-grade sports complexes to attract regional, national, and international competitions.
- Encourage the development of a public assembly facility for events, meetings, and conferences.
- Encourage destination-enhancing festivals and events.

### Enhance the Destination Experience

- Increase community awareness, appreciation, and support of Visit Loudoun.
- Raise awareness of tourism assets in as well as outside the county.
- Enhance the impact of Visit Loudoun University.
- Develop a platform for creating partner packages.
- Develop a platform for connecting restaurants to growers and producers in a fall marketplace.

### Enhance Organizational Excellence

- Maintain International DMAP accreditation.
- Evolve as a research-based destination marketing organization.
- Dedicate Visit Loudoun to a corporate culture that values creativity, passion, and collaboration.
- Identify opportunities to increase and diversify revenue streams to more effectively compete for the visitor economy.

### Enhance our Position as a Destination for Meetings, Groups, and Events

- Develop Group Sales Storylines: extend the brand identity to include group sales activities.
- Measure group sales performance by segments.
- Explore opportunities in new group sales market segments.
- Engage community business partners to gain greater marketplace visibility and richer content acquisition

### Increase Partner Engagement

- Revamp our committee structure and increase participation.
- Increase partner engagement.
- Increase membership
- Increase level of referrals to Visit Loudoun by partners.
- Increase participation in marketing programs and campaigns
- Increase number of MOUs with partners

## FY2017 Marketing Plan

### Marketing Goals and Objectives

The Marketing Department is responsible for the overall brand strategy and marketing to the Leisure travel segment, as well as within the meetings/conferences, sports/events, and tour and travel verticals. The primary goal of the department is to create accurate and compelling advertising, promotions, digital, social media and partner programs, increasing overall visitation and hotel and sales tax revenue.

#### Marketing Goals

- Position and brand the destination through leisure, lifestyle imagery.
- Continue to establish and protect Visit Loudoun brands while evolving brand strategy by working with industry partners.
- Increase hotel occupancy and revenue through compelling domestic and/or international marketing programs – advertising, digital, packaging, social media, and promotions.
- Establish Loudoun as the meetings/conferences, sports/events domestic/international tour and travel destination of choice through compelling advertising, collateral and marketing communications.
- Encourage visitors to do and spend more by creating accurate, compelling, promotional collateral showcasing all that Loudoun County has to offer and distribute them in all visitor welcome centers and areas with high visitor traffic.
- Utilize existing events, entertainment and venues and convert more day-trips to overnights through hotel packaging, online messaging and incentives.
- Increase website traffic levels (unique visitors, length of visit) via search engine optimization, search engine marketing and other tactics.
- Expand Visit Loudoun advertising impact and reach by offering compelling, comprehensive co-op opportunities to local partners for buy-in.
- Establish VisitLoudoun.org as the single, official source for the area's tourism, restaurant, hotel, attraction, event, meeting, sports, travel media and partner information.
- Continue to participate in local product represented organizations (Civil War Trails, Rural Economic Development Committee, Loudoun Wine Association, Loudoun County Brewers Association) to support and shape tourism opportunities within those segments.
- Leverage industry partnerships with regional organizations including VTC, CRUSA, NVVC and Destination DC to further brand and reach across all marketing segments and platforms.
- Continue support of county product positioning events (Waterford Fair, Middleburg Film Festival) to increase number of visitors.
- Continue to conduct exploratory and meaningful research to identify highest potential revenue audiences and to ensure targeted marketing to the greatest reach. LGBT Market research study to be commissioned.



### **Marketing Objectives, All Verticals**

- Expand the scope of the destination brand strategy and develop a destination influencer education strategy, through a targeted marketing campaign, destination tool kits and the re-launched website, as well as through outreach with local partners.
- Continue tactics leveraging content marketing, social networking, video content marketing, and online packaging, and position Loudoun County competitively among its peer destinations in these areas.
- Management and promotion VisitLoudoun.org enhancing aspirational positioning, integrating user generated content through third party vendors, and integrating social media content. Explore opportunities to translate the website into additional languages.
- Manage and/or participate in Loudoun product development committees to encourage partner input and participation in Visit Loudoun's planning and promotions in all market segments..
- Continue to generate new digital photo and video assets of destination experiences through partnership and innovative sources.
- Explore and secure supportive funding for marketing initiatives through statewide marketing leverage funding programs through Virginia Tourism Corporation, and the Virginia Wine Marketing Office.
- In cooperation with Industry Relations and Media Relations Department, develop a local strategy that will promote and engage Visit Loudoun to Loudoun County businesses and residents.

### **Marketing Objectives, Meeting Sales**

- Collaborate with the Sales department to ensure the sales team has all the marketing tools needed to position and sell the destination.
- Develop new designs and themes with the sales team to supplement tradeshow installations at major shows throughout the year.
- Develop compelling and comprehensive meetings content with the sales team for the website.
- Support the sales team in the encouragement of partner maintenance of venue and attraction digital content and assets on VisitLoudoun.org.
- Manage branding and production of sales collateral.

### **Marketing Objectives, Sports Sales**

- Collaborate to create toolkit content for digital marketing platform uses.
- Manage branding and production of sports venue and attraction collateral for use in selling the destination to sports planners and event rights holders.
- Develop compelling and comprehensive digital sports content with the National Sports Sales Manager for the website.
- Continue to support sports marketing with advertising, promotional brochures, sub-branded development and enhanced website content, tools and assets.

### Marketing Objectives, Client Services & Weddings

- Continue to produce visitors guide for use in servicing meeting/conference delegates, sports/events attendees and wedding guests on site; increase distribution of the guide as budget allows.
- Collaborate with Client Services team to develop servicing tools for groups with special interests and needs.
- Manage all branding and production of marketing collateral used for services.
- Continue to support the wedding market with marketing with advertising, promotional collateral, sub-branded development and enhanced website content, tools and assets.

### Marketing Objectives, International & Travel Trade

- Leverage Brand USA marketing partnership and opportunities.
- In partnership with NVVC and Capital Region USA, cross-promote the region's assets to domestic and international markets.
- Increase visibility for Loudoun in International markets through Sister County and Airport partnership marketing and media opportunities.
- Leverage IPW 2017 in Washington DC through partnership with VTC and NVVC to promote Loudoun and Virginia to International Tour Operators and Media.
- Support development of itinerary content and creation of marketing collateral promoting group tour product in Loudoun County.
- Continued support and development of content for targeted email messaging to existing and potential group and FIT leisure planners.

### Marketing Objectives, Industry

- Support the Industry Relations Manager in the encouragement of partner maintenance of digital content and assets on VisitLoudoun.org, including calendar listing ownership.
- Support the Industry Relations Manager with branding and collateral used for industry marketing purposes including all digital and print distribution.

## PR & Media Relations Goals and Objectives

PR & Media Relations are an integral piece within the Marketing Plan. The Media Relations Manager is responsible for managing all external communication activities, including all public relations and media relations. The 2017 program will continue align with the Visit Loudoun brand and local outreach will focus on ensuring the efforts of Visit Loudoun are illustrated and recognized as supportive and contributing to the economic development of the county. The Out-of-Market PR strategy will focus on travel and lifestyle media outlets reaching high-yield audience with the greatest propensity to travel to Loudoun County, thus providing the greatest return on investment. Outlets will include national and regional in geo-targeted markets and to those with strong development potential and specializing in targeted niche brand aligned segments. We will continue to tailor our efforts around the wine country

and brewery products and brands by generating editorial that speaks to Loudoun as a compelling culinary destination offering a variety of cultural, food & wine, beer & spirits, historic and lifestyle experiences with a focus on overnight stays in Loudoun. This will include emphasis on digital influencer's outlets to create real stories of signature experiences. We will continue to develop traditional media relations assets by developing and expanding important one-on-one relationships with key media in all outlets and partnering with organizations that assist in garnering Loudoun coverage.

### **Media Relations Objectives**

- **Out-of-Market Objectives**
  - Generate positive media coverage on the Loudoun County area as a premier domestic and international leisure, meetings and sports destination, while increasing the quality and quantity of print, broadcast and online coverage.
  - Promote Loudoun County as a desired destination on the East Coast by using brand and product attributes to attract leisure visitors.
  - Pursue qualified media for the Visiting Journalist Program to visit the destination on individual visits or during planned group press trips.
  - Partner with regional tourism organizations including VTC, CRUSA, MATPRA and Destination DC to further reach and leverage additional media opportunities.
- **Local Objectives**
  - Increase Visit Loudoun brand and product awareness to local consumers, media and members of the Loudoun County community.
  - Engage in building strong relationships with local television, print, radio and online media to help build credibility in the local and business community.
  - Enhance relationships with each of Loudoun County's municipalities and public relations staff at area tourism industry partners.
  - Work to develop and discover story ideas, new developments, events and unique publicity angles from local tourism industry.

### **Media Relations Activities**

- Visiting Journalist Program: Pursue qualified domestic and international travel media to visit the destination on individual visits or during planned group press trips.
- Write and distribute press releases and media alerts around new developments, major events as well as updates on current hotel properties and attractions.
- Partner with Virginia Tourism Corporation, Capital Regions USA, MATPRA and Destination DC Media Departments to participate in media visits and events in key markets.
- Develop and regularly update digital press room with press releases, backgrounders, media alerts and industry facts and figures to communicate news and information for easy access to media.
- Pitch in key markets via desk-side visits and events with leading media writing for leisure, lifestyle and meeting and conferences publications.

- Develop public relations campaigns to compliment marketing plan initiatives.
- Encourage a “call to action” (website and social media platforms) in all coverage to drive traffic to website.
- Develop regional media list to assist meeting and sports planners with reaching media for their Loudoun events.
- Retain membership in Society of American Travel Writers and attend regional meetings.
- Retain membership in the Public Relations Society of America and attend the PRSA Travel and Tourism Conference.
- Track the volume of media coverage, audience reached and paid advertising equivalent value.
- Manage Image Library and all digital assets via Cleanpix Digital Asset Management platform.
- Promote Visit Loudoun’s image and video assets by reusing current resources to fulfill media requests with video footage.
- Manage digital media database by maintaining media contacts lists, tracking coverage, and reporting.

## Marketing Tactical Plan

### Agency Strategy and Support

- Two-Six Digital – Destination strategy development, industry trends, social media campaign planning and buying, educational instruction for industry.
- Design – Creative development and conception, brand management, advertising and collateral design and delivery, content creation.
- Simpleview – SEO/SEM strategy development and execution.
- CMI – Community Insights – LGBT Market segment partnership.
- Research agency – To be determined via RFP for visitor and wine visitor profile research.

### Targeted Campaign Planning – Leisure/Consumer

#### Product focused

- Brewery/Ale Trail – VA Craft Beer Month, LoCo Brewfest and FeBREWary
- Winery/Spirits – VA Wine Month, Epicurience Virginia, Spring trail guide
- Culinary/Restaurants/Nightlife – Restaurant program revamp
- Historic – Civil War website, Rural Roads promotion, WWII partnership

#### Market focused

- Loudoun – Locals Campaign
- Washington DC – Destination DC partnership advertising
- Virginia and Virginia’s markets – Virginia Tourism Corporation partnership
- International – CRUSA, NVVC partnerships

## Channels & Platforms

### Social Media and UGC

**Facebook/Social platforms** – Continued account management and supplemental advertising to leverage current audience and reach and build new audience. Includes Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, Instagram, YouTube, SnapChat. Content creation and key demographic and psychographic targeting. Continued leverage of User Generated Content (UGC) from influencers to feature new content.

**CrowdRiff** – Continued web platform software management to highlight UGC content on VisitLoudoun.org.

### Website

**VisitLoudoun.org** – Having converted to a responsive design for mobile device use, continue development of dynamic content to better target audiences. Retain, create and build new content for all sections of the website and both the general calendar and the community calendar.

**DTN** – Co-op partner digital advertising on visitloudoun.org. Featured placements and promoting CTR.

### Advertising and Partnerships

**Broadcast Radio** – Continue with successful targeted product campaigns with regional radio broadcast platforms that deliver above KPI's.

**Destination DC** – Continued partnership to promote Loudoun as a unique asset to the DC region and complementary product to the DC experience. Advertising in printed guide bi-annually, digital ads on Washington.org and inclusion in direct mail lead generation.

**Simpleview SEO** – Continued leverage of Ad Words platform to drive qualified traffic to the website to increase visitation. Keyword ownership in the region and Virginia.

**Arrivalist** – Arrivalist is a Location-Change Attribution Analytics platform that measures the way media moves people. The platform analyzes big data to evaluate which media exposures motivate consumers to travel to the destination, yielding powerful new insights as to how media displays influence travel behaviors.

**CMI** – Community Marketing Intelligence partnership provided valuable LGBT market research and recommended media planning to be developed.



**Trail Guide C&O Canal Biking** – printed publication featuring Loudoun’s stop over through advertising.

**Trip Advisor** – Continued advertising partnership to leverage the #1 travel website globally. Existing product content page, supplemental ads and mobile targeted delivery. Possible co-op partnership opportunities to be explored.

**Edible DC Magazine** – Advertising partnership with DED including through advertorial, digital and social content promotion extension.

**VA Craft Beer Magazine** – Continue promotional partnership featuring Loudoun’s brewery product with this highly targeted and qualified audience.

**Virginia Tourism** – Continued partnership to promote Loudoun as Virginia product through the VTC printed travel guide, digital ads on Virginia.org and social platforms.

**Washington Post** – regional platform with wide reach for culinary content placements for culinary campaigns.

## International Markets

**Brand USA** – leverage content marketing partnership opportunities to drive traffic on the discoveramerica.com site to Loudoun’s foreign language content videos.

**CRUSA** – Continue partnership with Capital Region USA and Virginia Tourism to promote Loudoun to key International markets (UK/Germany/Brazil/France/China). Partnership includes advertising on the CRUSA website, ads in multi-language print guides, participation in IPW, sales missions and hosted Tour Operator and Press trips.

**NVVC** - Partner with the Northern Virginia Visitors Consortium (NVVC) and Virginia Tourism to reach the Canadian market through a comprehensive marketing and PR campaign that includes digital advertising, in-market promotions, sales and media mission and website promotion.

**China** – Display advertising in the Beijing airport through sister airport partnership and the Metropolitan Washington Airport Authority.

**India** – Leverage new air service from India on Air India airlines by hosting Tour Operators, Travel Agents and Press on site tours.

**Korea** – Sister county partnership activations in conjunction with the winter Olympics.

## Sales Support

**Meetings/Corporate** – Identify advertising and partnership opportunities to promote Loudoun in the Corporate, Association and Incentive markets. Includes CVENT and in-market branded promotions for visiting meeting groups.

**CVENT** – Increased advertising partnership with CVENT, the leading meetings industry platform in delivery of qualified leads for Visit Loudoun’s corporate and meetings sales department.

**Sports** – Identify advertising and partnership opportunities to promote Loudoun in the Sport Travel market. Includes in-market branded promotions to visiting sports travel groups.

**Travel Trade** – identify advertising and partnership opportunities to promote Loudoun in the Domestic Group Tour and International markets. CRUSA and IPW 2018 marketing opportunities to be included.

**Weddings** – 2018 Spring Engagement and Wedding season campaign and support through digital advertising, branded content and social promotion.

### **Content Creation and Development**

**Film/Video/Display** – Develop plan to acquire new video content and create opportunities for content promotion. Create new branded display materials for use at tradeshow and events, both in target markets and for local industry events.

**Digital Asset Management** – Cleanpix – Continued use of digital asset management platform to manage images, video, brand and other assets to be able to distribute to media and other outlets.

**Printing and Publications** – Continue production of branded and product focused quality marketing collateral for all departments and target markets, to include: Leisure, Meetings, Sports, Weddings, and culinary travel audiences.

**Promotional Items** – Continue to identify and produce branded marketing giveaways as tools to extend sales and marketing efforts.