



***** Cheers to *****
50 YEARS
***** of Tourism *****

ANNUAL REPORT

2016





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September, 1966

Pledge of Support is Unanimous

COMMENTS ON THE APPOINTMENT OF FRED S. DAIGER AS MANAGER OF THE NEWLY CREATED MILWAUKEE CONVENTION AND VISITORS BUREAU, INC. EUGENE BASS, PRESIDENT, HOTEL WISCONSIN, AND PRESIDENT, GREATER MILWAUKEE HOTEL-MOTEL ASSOCIATION:
 "The appointment of Fred S. Daiger to this position emphasizes the high caliber of the new independent Convention Bureau and is a major step in Milwaukee efforts to attain its proper position in the convention and tourism field."
 "The hotel and motel industry is proud to be associated with Mr. Daiger in this new endeavor and our pledge of support is unanimous. Mr. Daiger's past record is impressive, but it is his ability to lead Milwaukee in the future that has encouraged us the most."

1966



***** Cheers to *****
50 YEARS
 ***** of Tourism *****

1967

1968

1978

1987

1996

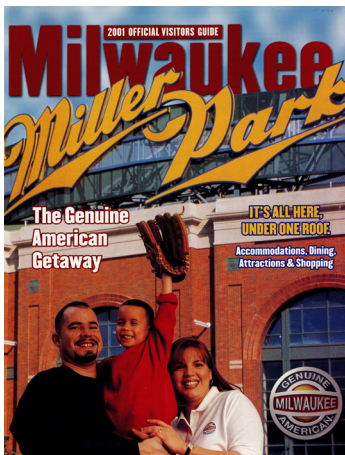
2001

2004

This year, VISIT Milwaukee is celebrating our 50th anniversary. For five decades, we have been your advocate, bringing the world to Milwaukee and taking Milwaukee to the world.

We were founded as the Milwaukee Convention & Visitors Bureau in 1967 as a joint proposal between the Milwaukee Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce, the Milwaukee Hotel-Motel Association and the Wisconsin Restaurant Association to "re-establish Milwaukee as a major convention city." From that beginning, our mission and our reach has flourished.

Today, VISIT Milwaukee markets the Greater Milwaukee area as a top choice for business, convention, and leisure travel to national and international visitors. We work to increase the economic impact of tourism in the community to improve your quality of life because tourism is vital to the success of our community. We are proud to say that the work we do matters. Each year, tourism supports over 50,000 full-time jobs and brings in over \$5 billion to our community. Thank you for your continued support of VISIT Milwaukee, and cheers to 50 years!



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Overall tourism spending in Milwaukee County grew by 3.9 percent in 2016, to \$3.9 billion. This is the fifth consecutive year with tourism spending growth of well over 3 percent. The increase in spending in 2016 contributed to 32,000 full time jobs in the tourism industry, a growth of 1.75 percent, with total labor income up 2.61 percent. In the Greater Milwaukee area, tourism supported nearly 51,000 full time jobs and had a total economic impact of \$5.25 billion.

With consumer confidence and household wealth way up and consumer debt way down, we expect 2017 to be another good year for tourism spending. Visitors are looking for unique experiences worthy of bragging about. With world class arts and culture, endless festivals, unique attractions, and a diverse local food scene, Milwaukee is well-positioned as a top travel destination.

In the Greater Milwaukee area, our hotel partners have seen positive revenue growth since 2010, and this trend is projected to continue in 2017. Over the past three years, the increase in revenue has been driven largely by growth in both rate and supply. In 2016, Milwaukee County hotels experienced a revenue surge of 7.2 percent and Milwaukee Downtown, 6 percent. In 2016, the average daily rate in Milwaukee County rose by 2.8 percent and supply by 3.9 percent. In Milwaukee Downtown, the average daily rate grew by 3.2 percent and supply by 3.7 percent. In 2017, we expect to see continued growth in rate driven

by strong business and leisure demand, and a modest growth in supply, with the Westin Hotel adding 220 rooms to the market in June of 2017. This property will be positioned at top-of-market for average daily rate.

The Wisconsin Center had a very strong year in 2016 in both operating and non-operating revenues. Convention quality was very good with groups like American Society for Quality and Bombardier Recreational Products producing strong revenues. Also, 2017 future bookings saw a significant increase in convention room nights short-term with over 15,000 convention room nights added in the last quarter of 2016. These bookings will have a total economic impact of \$13.2 million. As a result, 2017 will be a good convention year.

In 2017, another convention center expansion study will be done to determine the need for and type of additional space at the Wisconsin Center. There are two proposals for a convention center hotel that are waiting for an expansion to move forward. An expanded modern center with an additional convention center hotel would keep Milwaukee competitive as a convention destination well into the future. This will be an important year as we decide the future of our convention center.



PAUL UPCHURCH
President & CEO
VISIT Milwaukee



OMAR SHAIKH
Chair, Board of Directors
VISIT Milwaukee

CONVENTION SALES

2016 saw the return of legacy conventions such as the Northwestern Mutual Convention, Bead & Button and Anime, as well as new conventions like National Main Street Center, Mothers of Preschoolers International, and American Society for Quality World Conference. Two new hotels were added to the Milwaukee inventory: The Kimpton Journeyman in the Historic Third Ward and the Springhill Suites, connected to the Wisconsin Center. Wauwatosa also added a new property, the Residence Inn Milwaukee West.

Despite ever-increasing leisure demand in the summer months, the VISIT Milwaukee sales team had the second-highest production year for convention center business in the last decade. By focusing on corporate and national association events and the push by the convention sales managers to book short-term business for the convention center paid off in some exciting new business from high impact groups that will have a big economic impact on the region.

The team exceeded its tentative and definite room night goals in 2016 and booked major future conventions, including the National Rifle Association for 2017, LULAC (League of United Latin American Citizens) for 2019 and MOOSE International for 2020, among others.

2016 SALES ECONOMIC IMPACT TO MILWAUKEE



\$132,545,468 BOOKED **\$140,210,875 ACTUALIZED**



"I believe many of our attendees left Milwaukee with a whole new perspective. I wouldn't be surprised to see many return both professionally and personally."

- Angie Ahrens
CMP, Collinson Media & Events

ROOM NIGHTS

Booked tentative = IN FUTURE



Production = IN FUTURE



Actualized = HAPPENED



ATTENDEES BROUGHT TO MILWAUKEE BY THE SALES TEAM IN 2016

SALES TEAM TRAVELED TO

46

TRADESHOWS



HOSTED

90

MEETING PLANNER SITE VISITS



AND BOOKED

418

MEETINGS & CONVENTIONS FOR FUTURE YEARS

CONVENTION SERVICES

The Convention Services team spent another year working tirelessly to ensure that visitors and convention attendees were well taken care of in Milwaukee, thanks to the staff and the army of volunteers who assist at events as greeters, bag stuffers, and ambassadors. The team was very busy with Bombardier Recreational Products' Annual Convention, American Massage Association Annual Convention, National Main Street Center's Annual Conference and American Society for Quality World Conference, which brought thousands of visitors from around the world to Milwaukee.

Finally, the Services team began work on the U.S. Open, which will take place at Erin Hills in June 2017, and will bring over 40,000 people per day to the Greater Milwaukee region. In all, the Services team assisted with over 400 current and future events in 2016.

2016 SERVICES STATS



BIGGEST CONSUMER SHOW

Legofest
30,000
attendees



4.8/5 Stars

SERVICES STAFF RATING BY CLIENTS



160

VOLUNTEERS

at



400+

EVENTS

=



2,228

HOURS VOLUNTEERED



MARKETING

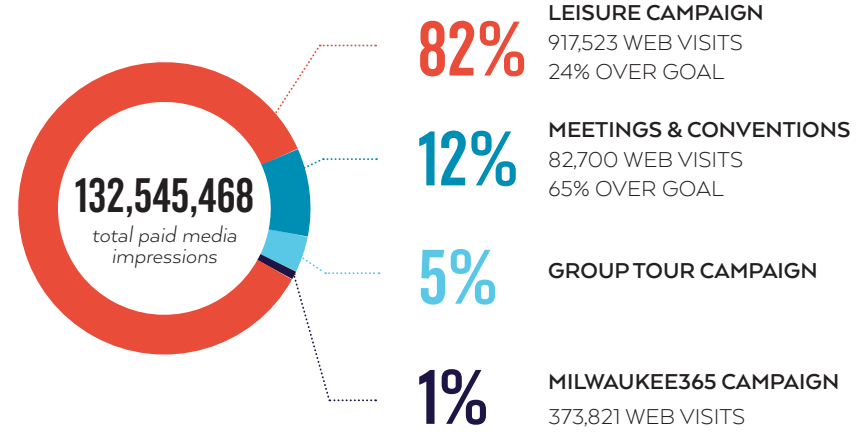
In 2016, marketing continued to showcase the city on a regional, national and international level. The 2016 M&C campaign focused on VISIT Milwaukee's core markets (Association, Corporate, Religious, Sports & Diversity) and reached the highest paid media impressions ever with 15.6 million impressions, tripling the placement of just two years before. This drove a 45 percent increase in traffic to the meetings section of the website. The leisure campaign, targeting families, millennials, empty nesters and several niche audiences, reached 78.4 million paid media impressions and drove 917,523 visits to custom vacation itineraries from May through October. These itineraries generated nearly 11,000 referral clicks to featured partners over the course of the campaign.

New in 2016, the leisure campaign results were tracked using Arrivalist, an analytics platform that allows the marketing team to identify when a potential visitor first sees a VISIT Milwaukee ad, what website tools they use, the content that they seek, the city where they are located and most importantly, when they arrive in Milwaukee. This data has already been useful in shaping the 2017 marketing strategy, including identifying Indianapolis and St. Louis as two highly qualified test markets. Chicago and Northern Illinois continue to be the strongest leisure markets for Milwaukee.

The marketing team continued to develop high-quality, professional resources to brand and market the city, coordinating more than 40 photo shoots and producing 33 videos internally featuring local businesses, attractions and experiences. These assets are extensively used by meeting planners, travel writers, local corporations and more to sell and promote Milwaukee.

2016 MEDIA IMPRESSIONS

 **1,412,797** VISITS TO VISITMILWAUKEE.ORG 



#MEINMKE








IN 6 LOCATIONS DURING SUMMER



NEW WAUWATOSA PROMOTIONAL VIDEO

62,593
Visits to
VISITWAUWATOSA.ORG

2016 PRINTED COLLATERAL HIGHLIGHTS

				
INTERNATIONAL BROCHURES	2016 OFFICIAL BIKERS' GUIDE	2016 GROUP TOUR GUIDE	2017 OFFICIAL VISITORS GUIDE	2017 OFFICIAL VISITORS MAP
36,000 COPIES	23,000 COPIES	5,000 COPIES	200,000 COPIES	250,000 COPIES

@DEARMKE

NUMBER OF SOCIAL MEDIA FOLLOWERS

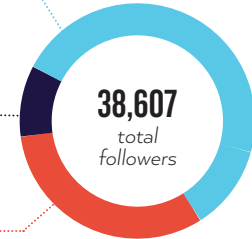
20,874
170% growth in 2016

4,177

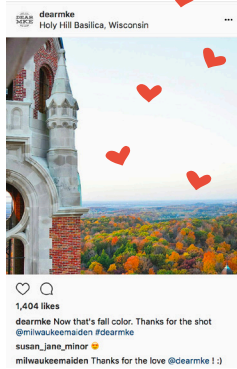
13,556
148% growth in 2016

VISITS TO DEARMKE WEBSITE

7,325



1,404
MOST LIKED IMAGE



373,821

VISITS TO MILWAUKEE365.ORG

to view

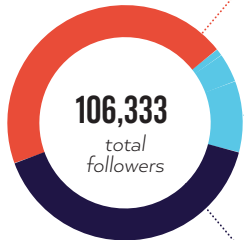
3,300
EVENTS

posted by

1,700+
EVENT ORGANIZERS

@VISITMILWAUKEE

NUMBER OF SOCIAL MEDIA FOLLOWERS



44,298
32% growth in 2016

18,231
188% growth in 2016

43,804
24% growth in 2016



12 International Brochures

GERMAN
RUSSIAN
ITALIAN
SPANISH (MEX)
CHINESE
ITALIAN

JAPANESE
HINDI
POLISH
PORTUGUESE (BRA)
FRENCH (FR/CA)
ARABIC



COMMUNICATIONS

The PR team was able to expand its reach in 2016, hitting national and international media through a variety of story pitches. Three large press trips focusing on golf, urban adventure and James Beard restaurants were big hits on the leisure side, and incoming conventions and events like the presidential debates scored national press coverage on the M&C side of earned media. The Associated Press picked up multiple stories about Milwaukee, garnering national attention for the city. The team also expanded its television reach, appearing over 120 times on TV, both locally and in Chicago.

The team also coordinated 20 social media videos in 2016, covering Milwaukee's neighborhoods, unique festivals such as the Tomato Romp and Mitten Fest, and signature treats like Milwaukee-style pizza and the Old Fashioned.

Additionally, the PR team co-hosted a Chinese media site visit and press trip (with the VISIT Milwaukee sales team) and Communications Director Kristin Settle was featured on Chinese TV.

 **713,476,363** 
MEDIA IMPRESSIONS

BIGGEST STORY PLACEMENTS

CHICAGO TRIBUNE <i>7 times!</i>	HEMISPHERE'S DOSSIER
VOGUE	MIDWEST LIVING
ABC NEWS	UK TELEGRAPH
CNN	TRAVEL + LEISURE
LONELY PLANET	USA TODAY
YAHOO! NEWS	ASSOCIATED PRESS



EIGHTY THREE 
travel writers hosted in 2016

542 EARNED MEDIA PLACEMENTS



APPEARANCES ON TV



GROUP TOUR

The group tour team spent 2016 expanding its reach to the Chinese market, with an emphasis on attracting Chinese visitors through site visits and direct media promotion into the Chinese market. The team hosted more than 10 in-person meetings with Chinese tour operators (a significant potential growth market), and hosted a joint Chinese group tour/media site inspection with the VISIT Milwaukee PR team. They will continue to focus on Chinese market and will hold a “Chinaw Welcome” informational training in summer of 2017.

They attended seven trade shows, including American Bus Association, Chicago Travel & Adventure Show, National Tour Association and International Pow Wow, the travel industry’s premier international marketplace and the largest generator of Visit USA travel. They hosted 10 national and international tour operators, and had 150 individual appointments with group tour operators, exceeding last year’s number by 20 percent. This resulted in over 6,000 room nights booked and 12,000 leads for 2016.

The team also helped groups during the LSU vs. UW-Madison football game held at Lambeau Field in September, securing 2,000 room nights in the Milwaukee market.

2016 EXPLORE MILWAUKEE'S BEST MEETINGS

FEBRUARY

MILWAUKEE ART MUSEUM

APRIL

MILWAUKEE PUBLIC MUSEUM

JUNE

BAVARIAN BIERHAUS

AUGUST

NORTH POINT LIGHTHOUSE + MILWAUKEE FOOD & CITY TOURS

OCTOBER

PALERMO'S PIZZA

DECEMBER

POTAWATOMI HOTEL & CASINO



6,442

ROOM NIGHTS BOOKED
IN 2016

★ *Major win* ★

OUR GROUP TOUR TEAM HELPED GROUPS COME IN FOR THE LSU VS. WISCONSIN GAME HELD AT LAMBEAU FIELD GARNERING OVER **2,000 ROOM NIGHTS** FOR THE MILWAUKEE MARKET.

7 *Tradeshow events attended:*

- AMERICAN BUS ASSOCIATION
- CHICAGO TRAVEL & ADVENTURE SHOW
- NATIONAL TOUR ASSOCIATION
- SELECT TRAVELER
- MIDWEST MARKETPLACE
- IPW
- ONTARIO MOTOR COACH ASSOCIATION.



12,357

ROOM NIGHTS FOR LEADS
ISSUED IN 2016

PARTNERSHIP

The Partnership team welcomed 106 new partners in 2016, including three new corporate partners: Carmex, Medical College of Wisconsin and Milwaukee Sports and Entertainment. Existing partners' retained their relationship at the rate of 92 percent, ending 2016 with 689 partners.

Filling a key void in the community, the partnership team hosted its 3rd annual Marketing Milwaukee Summit in February, 2016 to lead collaborative discussions with regional corporate leaders, business non-profits, and companies and employees that call Milwaukee home. VISIT Milwaukee shared its expertise about Milwaukee's quality of life for the purposes of attracting and retaining talent to the Greater Milwaukee area and to help corporate partners tell the story of the place they make their business home.

The team also hosted Customer Service in a Diverse World, a customer service training program to coincide with the Midwest Food Service Expo. Over 430 people registered for the event, including representatives from 58 partners. The team is looking ahead to add new education programs to its 2017 agenda, including a Tourism Insider Education for frontline hospitality staff, Nighttime Economy Safety seminar and China Welcome training.



106
New Partners

↑ 6.2%

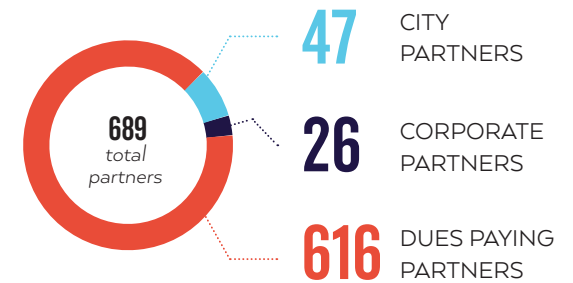
PARTNERSHIP
INCREASE OVER 2015

92%

PARTNER
RETENTION RATE

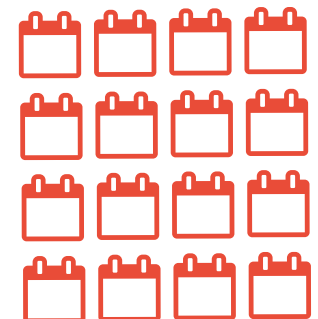


2016 PARTNER BREAKDOWN



2 new events

MARKETING TO THE GROUP TOUR PLANNER + CORPORATE FAM



17
EVENTS
HOSTED

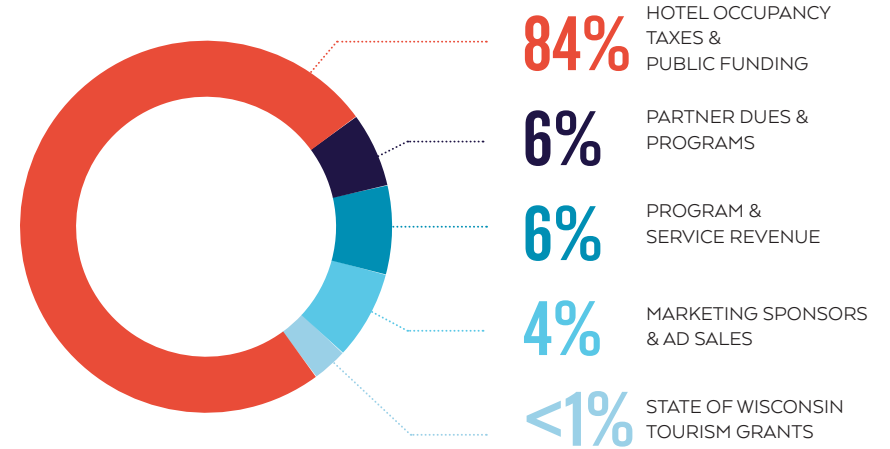
FINANCE

VISIT Milwaukee, a private, non-profit corporation, was incorporated in 1967 as a 501(c)(6) tax-exempt organization. Governed by an independent board of directors, the President/CEO leads a full-time staff of 38, as well as additional part-time and seasonal staff members.

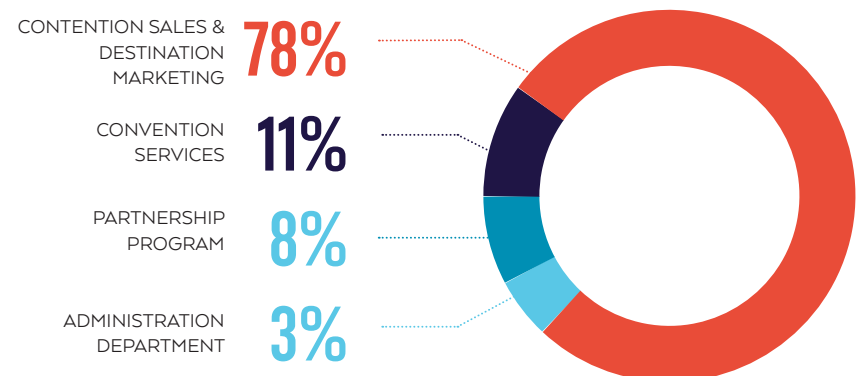
VISIT Milwaukee had annual budgeted revenues of \$8.9 million in 2016, of which 84 percent was derived from the occupancy tax and other public funding. Occupancy taxes in Milwaukee are comprised of a 7 percent City of Milwaukee occupancy tax and a 2.5 percent Milwaukee County occupancy tax. In 2016, total City of Milwaukee occupancy taxes were \$13.7 million, and Milwaukee County occupancy taxes were \$6.4 million. VISIT Milwaukee receives a portion of the City of Milwaukee occupancy tax only, which represented approximately 42 percent of the total city taxes collected in 2016. The remainder of the occupancy taxes is retained by the Wisconsin Center District in order to pay the bond debt on convention facilities and the Milwaukee Theatre. VISIT Milwaukee also receives a portion of the city of Wauwatosa occupancy taxes.

VISIT Milwaukee's financial operations are reviewed by a six member Audit/Finance Committee of the Board of Directors, led by the Secretary/Treasurer. In addition, VISIT Milwaukee retains an independent audit firm, Ritz Holman CPAs, to conduct an annual financial audit of the organization's financial operations and internal controls.

2016 FUNDING SOURCES



2016 PROGRAM EXPENDITURES



AWARDS & ACCOLADES

In 2016, VISIT Milwaukee received 15 awards and accolades for its work in the meetings, conventions, digital, sales, and PR realms.

The numerous recognitions among its peers makes the organization and its staff both appreciative and proud.

MEET MILWAUKEE VIDEO BY KRIS MARTINEZ

- SILVER**
Davey Awards
- PLATINUM**
Marcomm Awards
- VIDEOPHOTOGRAPHER AWARD
OF DISTINCTION**
AMCP



VISIT MILWAUKEE TRADESHOW BOOTH

2ND PLACE, BEST IN SHOW
ASAE 2016

*Sports Events "Readers' Choice Award"
for excellence in sports events planning*



DEAR MKE INSTAGRAM

GOLD
Marcomm Awards



OFFICIAL VISITORS GUIDE 2016

GOLD
Marcomm Awards
PEWTER
Gold Ink Awards

*2016 Champions of Economic Impact on Sports Tourism
by Sports Destination Management*



**MARISSA
WERNER**

**GAME
CHANGER**
Connect
Sports



**MEGAN
HUSBAND**

**AGENT OF
CHANGE**
Connect
Faith



**LAUREN
HYPs**

**INDUSTRY
LEADER**
Connect
Assoc.



**LAURA
LUTTER COLE**

**INDUSTRY
LEADER**
Connect
Assoc.



**CATHY
KREITER**

**SOCIAL
MEDIA TEAM
OF THE YEAR**
MPI Wisconsin



**KATY
DEARDORFF**

**30 UNDER
30**
PR News

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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SURG Restaurant Group

Joseph Khairallah*
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Danceworks

Jeremy Fojut
Newaukee

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Beer Capitol Inc.

John Steinmiller*
Northwest Side Community
Development Center

Teig Whaley-Smith*
Milwaukee County

Rick Wiegand
Ambassador Hotel

Chuck Wikenhauser
Milwaukee County Zoo

*Executive Committee

Thank You TO OUR PARTNERS

• REGIONAL PARTNERS •



• STRATEGIC PARTNERS •



• CORPORATE PARTNERS •

• FINANCIAL •



• HIGHER EDUCATION •



• SPORTS •



• MANUFACTURING •



• TRAVEL & TOURISM •





******Cheers to******
50 YEARS
******of Tourism******

648 N. Plankinton Ave., Suite 220
Milwaukee, WI 53203
(800) 554-1448

   
VISITMilwaukee.org
@VISITMilwaukee