



TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|-----------|----------------------|
| 6 | EXECUTIVE SUMMARY |
| 8 | CONVENTION SALES |
| 12 | CONVENTION SERVICES |
| 14 | MARKETING |
| 18 | COMMUNICATIONS |
| 20 | PARTNERSHIP |
| 22 | FINANCE |
| 24 | AWARDS AND ACCOLADES |
| 26 | BOARD OF DIRECTORS |



**1. VOLUNTEERS AT MILWAUKEE MITCHELL INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT 2. KOHLER FAM TOUR
3. HOLIDAY LIGHTS ME IN MKE 4. NEWAUKEE NIGHT MARKET 5. URBAN LEAGUE 59TH ANNUAL EQUAL OPPORTUNITY DAY 6. GREATER MILWAUKEE HOTEL & LODGING ASSOCIATION VOLLEYBALL TOURNAMENT**



7. RCMA IN GREENSBORO 8. STAFF ACCEPTING U.S. TRAVEL ASSOCIATION'S AWARD FOR BEST DESTINATION WEBSITE 9. MAYOR TOM BARRETT SHOWS OFF THE 2018 VISITORS GUIDE 10. BUBLR BIKES 11. MILWAUKEE LGBT COMMUNITY CENTER'S BIG NIGHT OUT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Thanks to a number of powerful events and big conventions in 2018, total business sales as a result of tourism in Milwaukee County grew by 5.2 percent to **\$3.7 billion**. Direct visitor spending increased by \$115 million to surpass **\$2.1 billion** in 2018 – an increase of nearly \$10 million per month. Visitor spending growth accelerated to 5.8 percent, from 3.1 percent in 2017. This is the **seventh consecutive year with tourism spending growth of well over 3 percent**. The spending increase in 2018 contributed to 32,921 full-time jobs in the tourism industry, a growth of 2.2 percent, with total labor income up 3.7 percent.

In the Greater Milwaukee area, tourism supported 52,357 full-time jobs and had a total **economic impact of \$5.7 billion**, up 5 percent from the previous year. State and local tax revenue generated by tourism was \$246 million, up 3.6 percent over 2017. Without the state and local taxes generated by tourism, each Milwaukee County household would need to pay an additional \$645 to maintain the current level of government services.

In Milwaukee County, spending growth was led by visitor spending on recreational activities, which increased 9.5 percent. Our hotel partners also continue to see a positive revenue growth on their investments. Visitor spending in lodging increased 4.9 percent to \$386 million, and this trend is projected to continue in 2019.

Future years continue to be strong for Milwaukee, with major conventions like American Indian Science and Engineering Society (2019), American Foundry Society (2021), Unitarian Universalist Association (2021), Association of School Business Officials (2021), International Nursing Association for Clinical Simulation and Learning (2022), American Biological Safety Association (2022), American Legion (2022), and of course, the Democratic National Convention (2020) all confirmed.

On the marketing side, our newly redesigned and mobile optimized website hit new records in 2018, particularly on the meetings and

conventions and group tour pages. Highlighting the events, attractions, and places that make Milwaukee wonderfully random, the new website won multiple awards in 2018, including the **U.S. Travel Association's Best Destination Website**. Over 1,500 pages of new content and 5,000 photos and videos were curated for this effort, and new content continues to be updated and added regularly.

Also in 2018, Milwaukee received over **1,500 mentions in earned media**, including the coveted and widely-mentioned VOGUE Magazine story "Why Milwaukee is the Coolest (and most underrated) City in the Midwest." This online media mention was the most read travel story from VOGUE Magazine in 2018, generating millions of earned media impressions.

Looking ahead, VISIT Milwaukee remains dedicated to expanding the current Wisconsin Center footprint to meet the needs of the market. We must remain competitive as a destination for top conventions, and an expanded, modernized convention center is the key to ensuring continued growth in Milwaukee's tourism economy.



PAUL UPCHURCH
President & CEO
VISIT Milwaukee



OMAR SHAIKH
Chair, Board of Directors
VISIT Milwaukee

CONVENTION SALES

The convention sales team had another strong year. They continue to **see the trend of short-term bookings along with larger conventions booking further out.** Big win conventions that were booked in 2018 for future years include American Indian Science and Engineering Society (2019), Democratic National Convention (2020), American Foundry Society (2021), Unitarian Universalist Association (2021), Association of School Business Officials (2021), International Nursing Association for Clinical Simulation and Learning (2022), and the American Biological Safety Association (2022).

A few of the larger 2018 conventions and events held in Milwaukee included the Northwestern Mutual Annual Meeting (10,000 attendees), Society of Women Engineers (500 attendees), National Association of Insurance Commissioners (2,700 attendees), International Cheese Technology Exposition (3,800 attendees), Church of God In Christ, Women's International Convention & Crusade (10,200 attendees), Structural Building Components Association (1,500 attendees), the Harley-Davidson 115th Anniversary (150,000 attendees), and National Tour Association (1,000 attendees).

The group tour efforts in 2018 included several new tactics, including attending a **tradeshow in China** where VISIT Milwaukee – the only North American city represented – met with potential tour operators interested in what Milwaukee and our region has to offer. This first-time opportunity was done in partnership with the National Tour Association (NTA).



ROOM NIGHTS

192,186

DEFINITE ROOM NIGHTS

787,649

TENTATIVE ROOM NIGHTS

secured for future years

ECONOMIC IMPACT OF
HOTEL ROOMS IN 2018

\$225,403,126



\$168,183,161 BOOKED
for future

442

MEETINGS AND CONVENTIONS
BOOKED FOR 2018-2024



650+

BLOODY MARYS
SERVED TO MEETING
PLANNERS AT ASAE
(AMERICAN SOCIETY
OF ASSOCIATION
EXECUTIVES) IN 2018



490,000

ATTENDEES BROUGHT TO MILWAUKEE BY THE SALES TEAM

58

SITE VISITS HOSTED
FOR CLIENTS

BY VISIT MILWAUKEE



57 CONFERENCES ATTENDED

TO MARKET MILWAUKEE AS A HOST CITY



117,200+

MILES TRAVELED BY THE SALES
TEAM TO PROMOTE MILWAUKEE





DNC SITE VISIT



VISIT MILWAUKEE SALES TEAM

CONVENTION SERVICES

The convention services team had a very busy year in 2018, hosting over **490,000 attendees** at 354 events.

The services team launched a **new activation booth at Milwaukee Mitchell International Airport** just ahead of the Harley-Davidson 115th Anniversary. Volunteers are assigned to staff the booth during peak convention events, and information is available at the booth year-round for business and leisure visitors.

The biggest event of the year for the team (and the city) was the Harley-Davidson 115th anniversary celebration. Over 150,000 fans “rode home” for the five-day festival, where all of VISIT Milwaukee’s staff and volunteers stepped up and stepped in to roll out the orange carpet, including stuffing bags, providing wayfinding assistance, and working at the multiple events throughout the city.

Our volunteer team also launched a **new volunteer database** to assist in recruiting and maintaining volunteers, thus allowing for a more streamlined process.

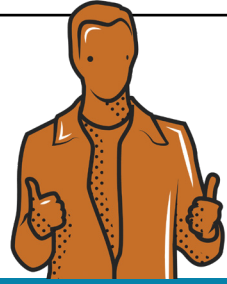
The convention services team also spearheaded VISIT Milwaukee’s participation in the NEWaukee Night Market, creating four different activation booths throughout the summer and organizing staff to work at these events. Activations included Milwaukee-themed postcards that could be filled out and mailed from the Night Market as well as interactive cut-outs for photo opportunities and social media.

2018 CONVENTION SERVICES HIGHLIGHTS

210
VOLUNTEERS

AT

354
EVENTS



VISIT MILWAUKEE VOLUNTEERS WORKED
2,725 HOURS

BIGGEST EVENT
**HARLEY-DAVIDSON
115TH ANNIVERSARY**
150,000 ATTENDEES



4.8 / 5 STARS

CONVENTION SERVICES STAFF
RATING BY CLIENTS

5 PRE-PROMOTES
ATTENDED IN 2018
FOR UPCOMING
CONVENTIONS



1,900+

PIECES OF COLLATERAL
SHIPPED INTERNATIONALLY TO

63 COUNTRIES



"VISIT Milwaukee's event planning services are second to none. All personnel are both helpful and knowledgeable about the city of Milwaukee. They are a pleasure to work with!" - **WISCONSIN STATE READING ASSOCIATION**

MARKETING

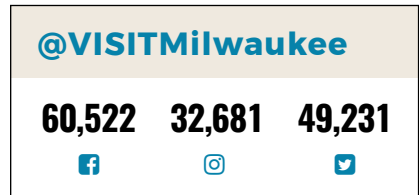
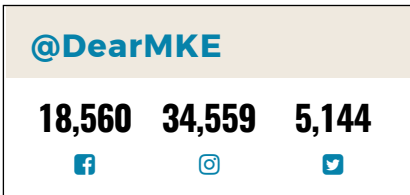
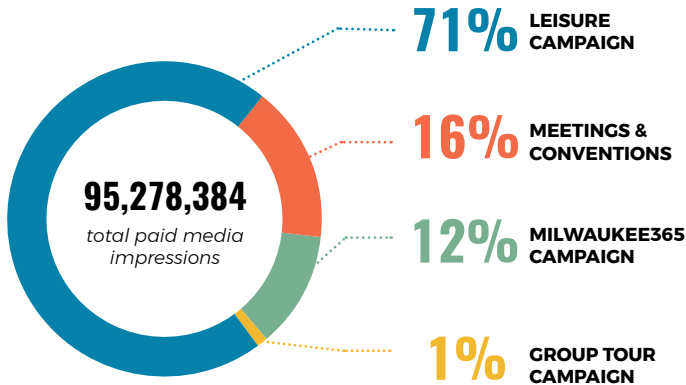
The 2018 advertising campaign yielded great results. The leisure campaign saw extremely strong digital results including reaching over 11 million impressions on Facebook alone, with traffic to the website from paid social campaigns up nearly 1.5 times over 2017. The meetings and conventions campaign reached more than **double the impressions in 2018 compared to 2017**. Highlights include an email series targeting meeting planners that **generated 300,000 clicks back to the website, with open rates five times the industry average**. Additionally, unique marketing tactics were used in Chicago over the American Society of Association Executives (ASAE) show dates, including a **mobile billboard circling around downtown Chicago** featuring Milwaukee's wonderfully random messages and videos.

The team also produced and launched the **new Original Brew City Beer Map**. This fully inclusive map features 62 beer-related businesses plotted out on a custom illustration covering Milwaukee, Wauwatosa, Waukesha, Greendale, and Whitefish Bay areas. A robust distribution strategy was developed to get the 500,000 maps out (including drops in both Chicago and Madison) and within paid brochure racks in Wisconsin.

For the first time, VISIT Milwaukee sent a team to the 2018 Great American Beer Festival in Denver to promote Milwaukee as a beer destination. The booth was extremely active, and included representatives from Third Space Brewing and Best Place at the Historic Pabst Brewery.

The team ended the year by selecting a **new agency of record, Hanson Dodge**, who will work with VISIT Milwaukee's marketing team on rolling out new advertising campaigns in 2019 to support the new "wonderfully random" branding.

2018 MARKETING HIGHLIGHTS

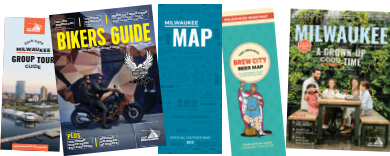


EVENTS ON MILWAUKEE365

3,468

MOST CLICKED EVENTS

CHRISTKINDLMARKET, IRISH FEST, WALKER'S POINT 5TH STREET FEST



PRINT COLLATERAL

- OFFICIAL VISITORS GUIDE 200,000
- OFFICIAL VISITORS MAP 200,000
- OFFICIAL BIKERS GUIDE 160,000
- BREW CITY BEER MAP 500,000
- GROUP TOUR BROCHURE 32,000
- INTERNATIONAL BROCHURES 13 LANGUAGES



MOST POPULAR SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS

CHRISTKINDLMARKET

Reached
56,851 PEOPLE
with 7,519 engaged.

VOGUE ARTICLE

Reached
48,562 PEOPLE
with 6,526 engaged.

70% OF THAT WAS ORGANIC REACH

12

NEW VIDEOS PRODUCED



1 MEETINGS & CONVENTION

6 NEIGHBORHOODS SERIES

5 DEAR MKE

After extensive research and a survey of key stakeholders, VISIT Milwaukee **launched a new website on March 17, 2018** designed to be both appealing and informative to business and leisure visitors, as well as an informational resource for locals, partner businesses, and more. The new website has technical features that consumers have come to expect from retail sites, such as powerful filterable categories, live mapping tools, and a seamless mobile experience. VISIT Milwaukee added **5,000 photos and video assets**, including 360-degree photography of meeting and event venues, and created over **1,500 pages** of content to highlight the best of the city. The new website invites users to virtually explore Milwaukee through a new, expanded neighborhoods section, as well as interactive elements like the slot machine style “randomizer” on the homepage that suggests Milwaukee experiences based on mood and budget. Using the new “My Trip” tool, visitors can save attractions and businesses, articles, lists, and more to a virtual shopping cart. Voted 2018 **Best Destination Website** by the U.S. Travel Association, and receiving additional recognitions from CommArts, MarCom Awards, Hermes Creative Awards, W3 Awards, Davey Awards, and AVA Digital Awards, the website has garnered much acclaim. VISIT Milwaukee is proud to receive the outpouring of support, especially from locals, who have commented on how much the website “feels” like Milwaukee.

1,706,915

VISITS TO VISITMILWAUKEE.ORG

WEBSITE USERS FROM ALL 50 STATES AND OVER 70 COUNTRIES

34%

INCREASE IN SESSIONS

24%

DECREASE IN BOUNCE RATE

78%

INCREASE IN TIME ON SITE

8%

INCREASE IN ORGANIC TRAFFIC

14%

INCREASE IN VISITS TO MEETINGS SECTION

374%

INCREASE IN VISITS TO GROUPS SECTION

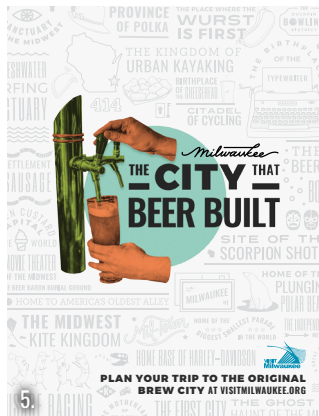
MOST VISITED PAGES

- 1. HOMEPAGE
- 2. EVENTS PAGE
- 3. MAJOR EVENTS CALENDAR



TOP PARTNER REFERRALS FROM WEBSITE

- 1. SLICE OF ICE AT RED ARROW PARK
- 2. NEWAUKEE NIGHT MARKET
- 3. MILWAUKEE COUNTY PARKS



1. VISITMILWAUKEE.ORG
2. MOBILE BILLBOARD IN CHICAGO
3. ORIGINAL BREW CITY BEER MAP
4. WONDERFULLY RANDOM BUTTONS
5. EXAMPLE OF LEISURE AD
6. WONDERFULLY RANDOM POSTCARDS

COMMUNICATIONS

In 2018, the communications team hosted the **Midwest Travel Journalists Association (MTJA) Spring Conference**, with 70 attendees. The team also hosted a familiarization trip (FAM) in partnership with the Milwaukee Film Festival, bringing in four national writers to cover the festival's 10-year anniversary.

The team hosted over 70 individual writers throughout the year as well, including representatives from Chicago Tribune, The New York Times, Los Angeles Times, The Times (United Kingdom), Worth Magazine, Hadassah Magazine, VOX, Bon Appétit, Travel + Leisure, Reader's Digest, and USA Today.

For the first time, the team attended TravMedia's International Media Marketplace in New York, connecting with over 25 media members for brief desk side visits. As a result, the team hosted four of those writers in the city throughout 2018.

Good pitching and good relationships led to one of the best stories of the year. "**Why Milwaukee is the Midwest's Coolest (and most underrated) City**" ran on VOGUE magazine's website in July. This was VOGUE's most popular online travel story of the year and received much local acclaim.

Communications partnered with marketing on the launch of the new website in March as well as the launch of the Original Brew City Beer Map in June to garner media coverage for these events.

The team continued its efforts to promote Sculpture Milwaukee, Summerfest, the launch of The Hop streetcar, and the Harley-Davidson 115th Anniversary, earning a combined 401 stories for these events alone.

Awards were a big part of 2018, and VISIT Milwaukee earned a total of **29 awards** for its marketing, public relations, and professional accomplishments.

2018 COMMUNICATIONS HIGHLIGHTS



742,304,030
EARNED MEDIA IMPRESSIONS

100
TV
APPEARANCES

INDEPENDENT
TRAVEL WRITERS
HOSTED

146

LEISURE-FOCUSED
STORIES

829

INTERNATIONAL
STORIES

20

TOURISM TRADE
STORIES

55

CONVENTION
STORIES

259



1,502

EARNED MEDIA
PLACEMENTS



2018 BIGGEST PLACEMENTS

VOGUE

CHICAGO TRIBUNE

**TRAVEL CHANNEL'S
"EXPEDITION
UNKNOWN"**

USA TODAY

TRAVEL + LEISURE

FOODNETWORK.COM

**NEW YORK
DAILY NEWS**

KANSAS CITY STAR

MIDWEST LIVING

TRAVEL BABBO
*(Forbes' No. 4
travel influencer
in the world)*

PARTNERSHIP

The annual goals of the partnership department are to grow its partnerships, retain its current partners, expand its program offerings, and increase its sponsorships and program revenue. To this end, the partnership department **added two new corporate partners** and expanded its event offerings.

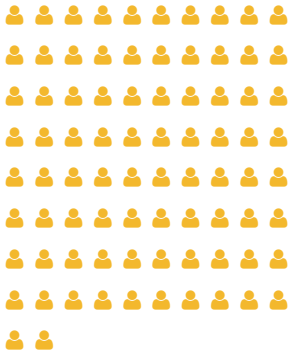
Two traditional events, the annual meeting and golf outing, attracted a record numbers of sponsors. Revenue for the annual meeting was up nearly 19 percent and attendance topped 535. Revenue for the golf outing increased nearly **21 percent**, with 33 foursomes hitting the links at Brown Deer Golf Course. The Marketing Milwaukee Summit in February was a success, with 20 panelists teaching our corporate partners new ways to recruit and retain talent within the region.

A new program, **Social Media Education**, was held in July and was designed to educate partners on best practices around digital platforms and social media. In December, The 42 played host to new meeting **Meetings Up MKE**, which was designed to help meeting planners learn new and innovative ways to engage meetings audiences. The event attracted 82 attendees.

In addition, the team spent 2018 focused on renewing and strengthening partner relationships and, based on the results of this effort, made a strategic plan for 2019 to continue this practice.



2018 PARTNERSHIP HIGHLIGHTS



678 BUSINESS PARTNERS

25 CORPORATE PARTNERS



**NEW EVENTS
IN 2018:**

MEETINGS UP MKE AND
SOCIAL MEDIA EDUCATION

20 EVENTS
IN 2018



82 NEW PARTNERS

90%

partner retention rate

2 NEW
CORPORATE
PARTNERS

535 ATTENDED VISIT
MILWAUKEE'S ANNUAL
MEETING, MAKING IT THE
LARGEST EVENT IN 2018



FINANCE

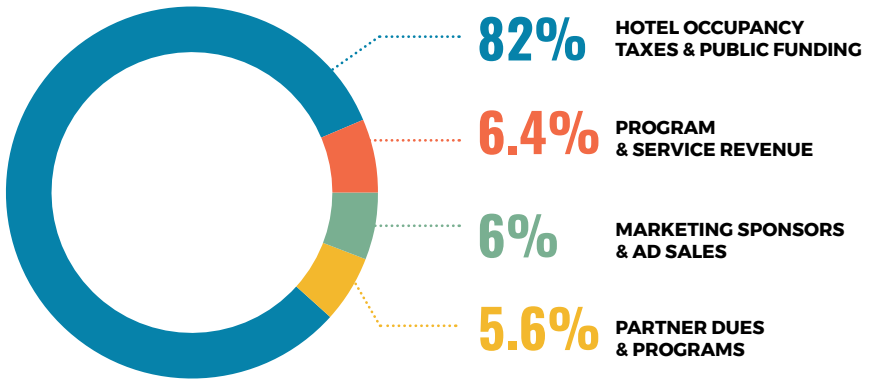
VISIT Milwaukee, a private, nonprofit corporation, was incorporated in 1967 as a 501(c)(6) tax-exempt organization. Governed by an independent board of directors, the President/CEO leads a **full-time staff of 38**, as well as additional part-time and seasonal staff members.

VISIT Milwaukee had annual budgeted revenues of \$10.1 million in 2018, of which 82 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 2018, total City of Milwaukee occupancy taxes were **\$15.1 million**, and Milwaukee County occupancy taxes were **\$7.2 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 2018. The remainder of the occupancy taxes are retained by the Wisconsin Center District in order to pay the bond debt on convention facilities and the Miller High Life Theatre. VISIT Milwaukee also receives a portion of the City of Wauwatosa and City of New Berlin occupancy taxes.

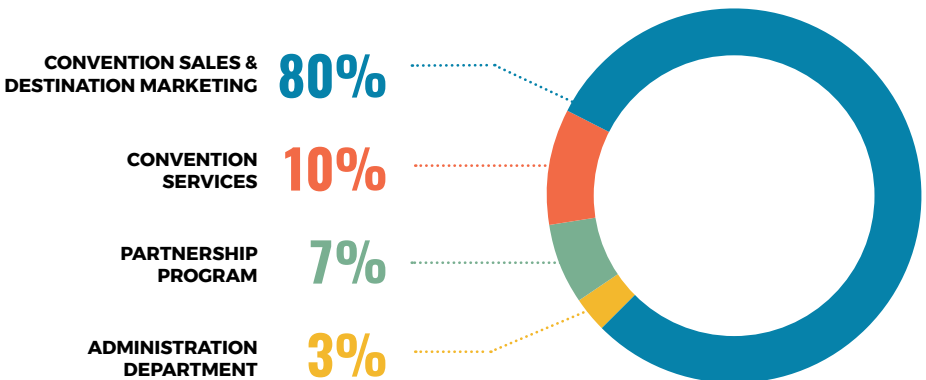
VISIT Milwaukee's financial operations are reviewed by a five-member Audit/Finance Committee of the Board of Directors, led by the Secretary/Treasurer. In addition, VISIT Milwaukee retains an independent audit firm, Ritz Holman CPAs, to conduct an annual financial audit of the organization's financial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



2018 FUNDING SOURCES



2018 PROGRAM EXPENDITURES



AWARDS AND ACCOLADES

In 2018, VISIT Milwaukee received **29 awards** and accolades for its work. This recognition among its peers makes the organization and its staff both appreciative and proud.

VISIT MILWAUKEE WEBSITE

BEST DESTINATION WEBSITE

U.S. Travel Association's Destiny Award

GOLD AWARD

Hermes Creative Award

- Website Overall: Tourism

PLATINUM AWARD

dotCOMM Award

- Website: Travel

GOLD AWARD

W3 Awards

- Website Features:
 - User Experience
- General Website Categories: Tourism

SILVER AWARD

W3 Awards

- Branded Content Tourism & Leisure for Marketing
- Website features – Video or Motion Graphics for Websites

PLATINUM AWARD

MarCom Awards

- Digital Media: Website

GOLD AWARD

Davey Awards

- Best Visual Appeal – Aesthetic for Websites

2018 OFFICIAL BIKERS GUIDE

GOLD AWARD

Davey Awards

- Consumer Magazine for Design/Print

"MEET MILWAUKEE" VIDEO

AWARD OF EXCELLENCE

Communicator Award

- Online video: Travel
- Online video: Branded Content

2018 OFFICIAL VISITORS GUIDE

AWARD OF DISTINCTION

Communicator Award

- Design: Marketing/Promotion: Features-Overall Design
- Design: Marketing/Promotion Features-Copy/Writing

PLATINUM AWARD

MarCom Awards

- Print Media Publications: Guide
- Print Media Publications: Industry/Trade

GOLD AWARD

Davey Awards

- Individual Achievement in Art Direction/Graphic Design for Design/Print
- Consumer Magazine for Design Print

SILVER AWARD

Davey Awards

- Individual Achievement in Copywriting for Design/Print

MILWAUKEE POSTCARDS

HONORABLE MENTION

MarCom Awards

- Print Media Publications: Postcard

MILWAUKEE NEIGHBORHOOD VIDEOS

SILVER AWARD

W3 Awards

- Online Video Travel For Video

ORIGINAL BREW CITY BEER MAP

GOLD AWARD

MarCom Awards

- Print Media Publications: Guide

GOLD AWARD

Davey Awards

- Design & Print Collateral

DEARMKE

AWARD OF EXCELLENCE

Communicator Award

- Social: Content & Marketing: Community Building & Engagement
- Social: Content & Marketing- Social Page by a Brand
- Social: Features: Use of Photography / Images

ANNUAL REPORT WINNER

PR Daily Nonprofit

PR Awards

- Creative PR Assets

GOLD AWARD

MarCom Awards

- Print Media Publications: Associations

SILVER AWARD

Davey Awards

- Design/Print



1. MILWAUKEE NIGHT MARKET 2. GREAT AMERICAN BEER FESTIVAL 3. GREATER MILWAUKEE HOSPITALITY OPEN 4. STAFFER RECEIVES CITY OF MILWAUKEE PROCLAMATION 5. NEW COMPANY CAR WRAP 6. CONNECT MARKETPLACE

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

BOARD MEMBERS

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Steve Baas

Metropolitan Milwaukee
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Bartolotta Restaurant Group

Alderwoman

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City of Wauwatosa

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Kathleen O'Leary

Wisconsin State Fair Park

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Partnership

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Milwaukee World Festival, Inc.

Howard Snyder

Northwest Side Community
Development Corporation

John Steinmiller*

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& Office Parks

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VISIT Milwaukee

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Assistant Secretary

VISIT Milwaukee

*Executive Committee

THANK YOU TO OUR CORPORATE PARTNERS



We are   AdvocateAuroraHealth





THE FIRST CITY
OF
FISH FRY

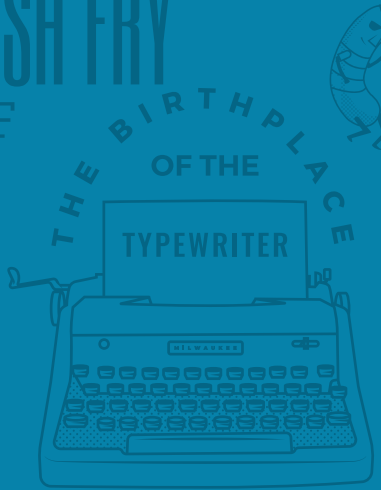
A OF THE
BREWERY
BRUISED



THE KINGDOM OF
URBAN KAYAKING



BIRTHPLACE
OF THE
CHEESEHEAD



FRESHWATER
SURFING
HAVEN

CITADEL
OF CYCLING



THE CITY WHERE
BEER FLOWS BENEATH

BOROUGH OF BEERMOSAS

TOWN OF
'50s DAYS'



AMERICA'S
HEART OF
OUTDOOR
ART



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HOME
OF

THE
MIDWEST
MEDIEVAL
MARKET

   
VISITMilwaukee.org
@VISITMilwaukee



414

BEER
GARDEN

BOOM TOWN

GREAT PLACE ON A GREAT DAY

