MISSION

WE ARE A COMMUNITY ASSET that enhances the prosperity and public image of Milwaukee by developing strategic partnerships, driving impactful promotion and delivering indispensable expertise to companies, hotels and municipalities.
OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES

→ OUR WORK IS BUILT ON HONESTY, INTEGRITY AND UNITY.
→ WE VALUE DIVERSE AND INCLUSIVE PARTNERSHIPS.
→ WE STRIVE TO EXHIBIT A HIGH DEGREE OF ACCOUNTABILITY, STRATEGIC AND ANALYTICAL THINKING, AND TRANSPARENT COMMUNICATIONS IN ALL WE DO.
DEAR PARTNERS,

The change from one year to the next often feels perfunctory. Yet the transition from 2020 to 2021 felt different, like a leap forward rather than a step.

Following a difficult year in 2020, we headed into 2021 with cautious optimism. Loosening Covid restrictions, new flights to Milwaukee, and the improving performance of Milwaukee’s restaurants, hotels and venues were all critical milestones on the path to recovery. It turns out that optimism was well placed. As detailed throughout this report, 2021 was a year of meaningful recovery for the region’s travel and tourism economy, which realized $5.2 billion in total business sales, a figure that is only 11.9% shy of 2019’s record-breaking amount.

On the hotel side, average daily rate in Milwaukee remained among the highest compared to our peer cities in 2021, driven by the leisure travel market, which exceeded expectations. This is even more impressive given our hotel supply has increased 8% since 2019. While 151 events were canceled in 2020, Milwaukee held over 171 events in 2021 and bookings for 2022 and future years are growing by the day. Our restaurants and performing arts venues, which were among the hardest hit during the pandemic, continued to claw back to more normalized sales.

This is thanks to the work of many, including our partners, elected officials, like-minded organizations and the community at large. At VISIT Milwaukee, we are proud to work alongside them and others to rebuild and grow a thriving Milwaukee. We are driven to advocate for our community, innovate new and compelling ways to market our assets, and leverage our collective strengths to make sure the world knows Milwaukee is an amazing place to live, work, and especially to visit.

As part of this work, in 2021, we signed another four-year contract with the Wisconsin Center District, and as part of this, we will be contributing a six-figure sum to the City of Milwaukee in a payment in lieu of taxes arrangement (PILOT). These funds go toward necessary city services that benefit visitors and locals alike.

While the pandemic continued to impact our daily lives in 2021, it did not stop an indomitable Milwaukee. Towards the end of the year, we welcomed a new mayor, Mayor Cavalier Johnson, who understands the economic impact of tourism on the city and our region. We also experienced an abbreviated festival season, with highlights like a massive Juneteenth Day celebration, Irish Fest, and Mexican Fiesta. Wisconsin State Fair saw nearly 900,000 visitors despite poor weather, and Summerfest reopened to a ready audience in September with a new weekend format.

Our very own Milwaukee Bucks brought home the first NBA Championship in 50 years and the entire city celebrated the momentous occasion. Team USA clinched the Ryder Cup along the shores of Lake Michigan bringing fans to our city from all over the world. And to top it all off, we broke ground on the Wisconsin Center expansion, which will help to position Milwaukee as a premier convention destination for years to come.

We ended the year by working with partners across the community to put forth a bid for the 2024 Republican National Convention. As of this report, we are currently still in the running to host the convention that will create an economic impact of $200 million and bring 15,000 journalists to our city, who will undoubtedly help to tell our story to the world.

Among the challenges facing us all, these and other moments remind us that there are “Good Things Brewing” in Milwaukee. This has been our rallying cry over the past couple years, and it aptly applies to years ahead. But we are ever mindful our recovery is far from complete, and for our community to truly thrive we must continue working together to not only stay ahead of the pandemic, but to also address other challenges that face our city.

If the past two years have taught us anything, it is the power of what can be achieved by working together. There really are Good Things Brewing in Milwaukee, and we are thrilled to make that known far and wide.

With gratitude,

Dr. Eve M. Hall,  
VISIT Milwaukee Board Chair

Peggy Williams-Smith,  
President & CEO
ROAD TO RECOVERY

FEW AREAS OF THE national economy have rebounded from the pandemic as strongly as travel and tourism*. Essential to our local and national economy, tourism is a job creator, revenue generator, and reputation builder. But just as – if not more – importantly, tourism is a people connector, joy builder, and memory maker.

The continued recovery gives us high hopes for all that’s possible. Together with our partners, VISIT Milwaukee is harnessing the momentum pushing our travel and tourism industry forward.

RECOVERY STATS

- MILWAUKEE COUNTY 2021
- MILWAUKEE COUNTY 2019
- GREATER MILWAUKEE AREA 2021
- GREATER MILWAUKEE AREA 2019

*Data from Moody’s Analytics and Longwoods International, comparing 2021 TSA, domestic air travel and hotel occupancy data to pre-pandemic levels.
MILWAUKEE COUNTY IMPACT

$188.4 MILLION generated from state and local taxes

-27.5% decrease from 2019

Tourism supported 25,092 full-time jobs

Down 25% from 2019
FROM OUR NBA CHAMPION Milwaukee Bucks to the global excitement of the Ryder Cup to thousands of records and team victories across diverse youth tournaments and events, we know champions compete in Milwaukee.

The economic impact of sporting and athletic events (see Bucks Economic Impact, below) on our travel and tourism industry is immense. There were more than 52,000 hotel room nights spread across 100 sport events we booked in 2021 for future years.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ROUND</th>
<th>OPPONENT</th>
<th>TOTAL ESTIMATED ECONOMIC IMPACT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First Round</td>
<td>Miami Heat</td>
<td>$2.7 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second Round</td>
<td>New Jersey Nets</td>
<td>$12.8 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third Round</td>
<td>Atlanta Hawks</td>
<td>$14.1 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NBA Finals</td>
<td>Phoenix Suns</td>
<td>$28 million</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$57.6 MILLION TOTAL ECONOMIC IMPACT OF PLAYOFFS
IN 2021, VISIT MILWAUKEE launched a new dedicated sports division – Sports Milwaukee – to intentionally focus on helping professional, amateur, recreational and youth sports think of Milwaukee first for their events.

### Major Sports Milwaukee Bookings, 2022-2023

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event Name</th>
<th>Total Attendance</th>
<th>Estimated Economic Impact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2022 US Olympic US Speedskating Team Trails</td>
<td>8,525</td>
<td>$1.06 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2022 NCAA Division 1 Men’s Basketball Championship</td>
<td>18,000</td>
<td>$6.5 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2022 Badger Region Volleyball Championships</td>
<td>17,750</td>
<td>$3.56 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2022 NAIGC National Championships</td>
<td>1,700</td>
<td>$1.6 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2022 Windy City Classic</td>
<td>11,000</td>
<td>$3.3 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2022 USA Ultimate Frisbee College Championships</td>
<td>3,940</td>
<td>$2.2 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2022 Tour of America’s Dairyland</td>
<td>4,500</td>
<td>$137,775</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2022 Redbull Flugtag X Milwaukee</td>
<td>7,000</td>
<td>$1.03 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2022 USA Triathlon Age Group National Championships</td>
<td>15,000</td>
<td>$3.1 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2023 Wisconsin Juniors Winter Classic</td>
<td>6,000</td>
<td>$2.3 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2023 Badger Region Volleyball Championships</td>
<td>13,500</td>
<td>$3.56 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2023 Midwest Twisters Invite</td>
<td>8,000</td>
<td>$547,968</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2023 Midwest Twisters Region 4 Championships</td>
<td>10,500</td>
<td>$536,656</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2022-2023 Baseball Tournaments at The Rock Complex</td>
<td>9,461</td>
<td>$4.55 million</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Milwaukee Bucks’ NBA Championship playoff series resulted in $15,546,762 of direct spending.
"We have always talked about Milwaukee as a well-kept secret, but with the proactive work of the VISIT team, we now are really finding our stride as a city that we promote with some of the finest in the U.S. and the world. It is so important to continue to drive awareness of the offerings we have in event spaces big and small, activities around the city, and our food and beverage scene. They’re as good as any city in the U.S., and not just for the local economy but also as a point of pride."

— JIM KANTER, CHIEF COMMERCIAL OFFICER OF CENTRAL STANDARD CRAFT DISTILLERY
FOR YEARS, our region has dreamed of and planned for a larger, more flexible convention center. A true destination that highlights the very best of our region and serves as a compelling beacon for large events and conventions.

Today, thanks to the work of so many, this dream is now a reality. With steel, cement, and rebar rising from the ground, the new convention center is taking shape.

The new convention center will be 40% larger than before and able to accommodate an additional 100,000 new out-of-state visitors each year along with multiple overlapping events. Already a destination for events and groups, the new convention center will elevate Milwaukee even further with meeting and event planners as well as attendees.

Once complete, Milwaukee will boast a new, modern, dynamic facility that features:

- **445,000 SQ. FT. TOTAL CONVENTION CENTER SPACE**
- **300,000 SQ. FT. EXHIBIT HALL**
- **100,000 SQ. FT. NEW ROOFTOP BALLROOM AND MEETING SPACE**
- **52 FLEXIBLE BREAKOUT SPACES**
- **11 BALLROOM SPACE DIVISIONS ROOFTOP BALLROOM**
THROUGH SALES, paid advertising, experiential marketing and earned media, VISIT Milwaukee promotes the region as a premier destination for business and leisure travel.

We are the only local organization solely dedicated to marketing Milwaukee on a national and international scale.

We do that by highlighting and promoting our businesses, venues, facilities and family attractions. By telling the story of what our amazing city and region have to offer. By hosting tours and influencer events. And by traveling around the country to bring Milwaukee to meeting and event planners.

Even our little brother in Illinois took notice. As part of our experiential leisure marketing campaign, VISIT Milwaukee took over Amtrak Hiawatha to make sure Chicagrans know the best summer festivals are just a train ride away.

And, as of this writing, we are a finalist for the 2024 Republican National Convention, an event that will bring a global audience and more than $200 million at our hotels, restaurants and bars over the course of a week.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BOOKED IN 2021 FOR FUTURE YEARS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>167,994 HOTEL ROOM NIGHTS</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 BILLION EARNED MEDIA IMPRESSIONS

102 MILLION PAID MEDIA IMPRESSIONS

LEISURE: 54 MILLION • MEETINGS / CONVENTIONS: 48 MILLION

Left, VISIT Milwaukee and DJ Shawna made a splash at Connect 2021. Right, VISIT Milwaukee activates Amtrak.
UNIQUE UNITES CAMPAIGN

Feast like a big winner, wherever you’re sitting.

It’s time you felt the wind in your chest hair.

Pack an appetite and a sense of adventure.

Where every new season brings a whole new to-do list.

A change of scenery can change your perspective.

Feel like a big winner wherever you’re sitting.

It’s time you felt the wind in your chest hair.

Pack an appetite and a sense of adventure.

Where every new season brings a whole new to-do list.

A change of scenery can change your perspective.

WHAT 24 HOURS IN MILWAUKEE LOOKS LIKE

200+ ATTENDEES

50+ ARTICLES GENERATED

100+ PARTNERS INVOLVED

VISIT MILWAUKEE | 13
“Thanks for taking the lead on Museum Week. Beyond the importance to the museums, the attention from VISIT means a lot.”

— MAME McCULLY, PABST MANSION/MILWAUKEE COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
We’ve all asked friends, family or colleagues, “What do you want to do?” VISIT Milwaukee and our partners have created outstanding answers to this question!

For those looking to escape the winter and pandemic “blahs,” we kicked the year off with Museum Week. Twenty-two museum partners offered free or discounted admission and special events.

Interested in our outstanding local breweries, bars and pubs? The Brew City Beer Pass, launched in September, offers visitors and locals the perfect opportunity to have great beer next to a great lake. This free pass allows users to redeem ‘buy one, get one’ (BOGO) beer from some of the best breweries in the Greater Milwaukee area.

And for those looking for activities, the Milwaukee Deals Pass, also launched last summer, helps visitors and locals with dozens of ways to save on restaurants, breweries, museums, theaters, boutiques, tours and fun activities, all while supporting more than 70 local businesses. These passes have been downloaded by over 6,200 deal-loving locals and visitors alike.

For the out-of-towners and staycationers alike, we brought back Milwaukee Hotel Month better than ever. We partnered with over 20 hotels to offer enticing packages. Perks included restaurant and store gift cards, food and drink vouchers, free or reduced overnight parking, late checkout, room upgrades and more.
As vaccines became more widely available, VISIT Milwaukee made it easier for our front-line hospitality employees to feel safer at work and to give them – and our tourism economy – a shot in the arm by hosting Hospitality Vaccination Days at the Wisconsin Center in May.

Despite the difficulties of doing business during a pandemic, we’re proud to have retained 91% of our partners, welcomed 44 new diverse businesses, and brought on two new corporate partners in 2021. Together we work to achieve our common goal of making Milwaukee an amazing place to live, work, and, of course, visit.

No matter who you are, you are welcome in Milwaukee. From the largest events to intimate community gatherings, across our great city there truly is something for everyone to experience and enjoy.

In Milwaukee, unique truly unites. In 2021, this theme was central to our marketing and communication initiatives. But it also captures how we work and live. From one of the country’s most accessible beaches, to festivals that celebrate a multitude of heritages, to being among the most LGBTQ+ friendly communities*, Milwaukee is where everyone can be their most authentic self.

At VISIT Milwaukee, we know that to represent a diverse community our team must be representative of those we work to support. Simply put, we’re better together.

*Human Rights Campaign
"Becoming a member of VISIT Milwaukee has been one of the best decisions we made as a new business to the area! They introduced us to many key personnel and helped guide us in the best direction to exploring the city and everything that it has to offer. I cannot thank the team enough."

— JESSICA BROCKWAY, SALES & EVENTS MANAGER AT HOWL AT THE MOON
"Thank you for your support and advocacy of travel and tourism! The insights into the city’s events, upcoming groups, and partner information is so appreciated! Having a source of all of this info in one place, along with knowing I can call on any of the VM Sales Team with any question is awesome. I feel supported and encouraged by VISIT Milwaukee!"

— KIMBERLEE CURTIS, CROWNE PLAZA MILWAUKEE SOUTH
FINANCIALS

TOTAL 2021 OPERATING BUDGET

$5,924,757

-46% % CHANGE IN OPERATING BUDGET VS 2020

2021 FUNDING

- 50% 2020 Hotel occupancy taxes & public funding
- 17% Destination Marketing Grant
- 10% Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) Loan Forgiveness
- 8% Employee Tax Credits
- 8% Partner Dues & Programs
- 4% Program & Service Revenue
- 2% Marketing Sponsors & Ad Sales
- 1% Grants & Other

2021 SPENDING

- 66% Convention Sales, Marketing & Communications
- 25% Administrative
- 6% Event experience
- 3% Partnerships
OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS

OFFICERS

Dr. Eve M. Hall
Incoming Chair
Milwaukee Urban League

Steve Baas
Vice Chair
Metropolitan Milwaukee Association of Commerce (MMAC)

Jim Villa
Treasurer/Secretary
National Association for Industrial & Office Parks (NAIOP)

Peggy Williams-Smith
President & CEO
VISIT Milwaukee

Luis Ayala
Assistant Secretary
VISIT Milwaukee

Rafael Acevedo
City of Milwaukee

Danielle Bergner
J. Jeffers & Co.

Kate Braasch
Marquette University

Marty Brooks
Wisconsin Center District

Starr Butler
Milwaukee Bucks

Kathy Causier
Wauwatosa Common Council

Grady L. Crosby
Johnson Controls

William J. Davidson
Harley-Davidson Museum

William J. Davidson
Harley-Davidson Museum

Brian Dranzik
Milwaukee Mitchell International Airport

Michael Evans
Marcus Hotels & Resorts

Mark Flaherty
Jackson Street Holdings

Kristine Hillmer
Wisconsin Restaurant Association

Tracy Johnson
Commercial Association of REALTORS® Wisconsin

James Kanter
Central Standard Craft Distilling

Curt Kluh
Saz’s Hospitality Group

Lynda Kohler
SHARP Literacy

Jeremy Lucas
Milwaukee County Parks

Tom Malloy
Potawatomi Hotel & Casino

Dennis McBride
Mayor of Wauwatosa

Arilisa E. McHenry
City of Milwaukee

Rose Murack
Radisson Hotel Milwaukee West

Kevin Newell
Royal Capital

Kathleen O’Leary
Wisconsin State Fair Park

Jason Rae
Wisconsin LGBT Chamber of Commerce

Jim Villa
Treasurer/Secretary
National Association for Industrial & Office Parks (NAIOP)

Dr. Eve M. Hall
Incoming Chair
Milwaukee Urban League

Steve Baas
Vice Chair
Metropolitan Milwaukee Association of Commerce (MMAC)

Jim Villa
Treasurer/Secretary
National Association for Industrial & Office Parks (NAIOP)

Peggy Williams-Smith
President & CEO
VISIT Milwaukee

Luis Ayala
Assistant Secretary
VISIT Milwaukee

Rafael Acevedo
City of Milwaukee

Danielle Bergner
J. Jeffers & Co.

Kate Braasch
Marquette University

Marty Brooks
Wisconsin Center District

Starr Butler
Milwaukee Bucks

Kathy Causier
Wauwatosa Common Council

Grady L. Crosby
Johnson Controls

William J. Davidson
Harley-Davidson Museum

Brian Dranzik
Milwaukee Mitchell International Airport

Michael Evans
Marcus Hotels & Resorts

Mark Flaherty
Jackson Street Holdings

Kristine Hillmer
Wisconsin Restaurant Association

Tracy Johnson
Commercial Association of REALTORS® Wisconsin

James Kanter
Central Standard Craft Distilling

Curt Kluh
Saz’s Hospitality Group

Lynda Kohler
SHARP Literacy

Jeremy Lucas
Milwaukee County Parks

Tom Malloy
Potawatomi Hotel & Casino

Dennis McBride
Mayor of Wauwatosa

Arilisa E. McHenry
City of Milwaukee

Rose Murack
Radisson Hotel Milwaukee West

Kevin Newell
Royal Capital

Kathleen O’Leary
Wisconsin State Fair Park

Jason Rae
Wisconsin LGBT Chamber of Commerce

Gerard A. Randell, Jr.
Milwaukee Partnership Academy

Maxx Rodriguez
Milwaukee Brewers

Sarah Smith
Pancheri

Omar Shaikh
Ex Officio

Howard Snyder
Northwest Side Community Development Co

Beth Weirick
Milwaukee Downtown, Bid 21

Melissa Weiss
City of Wauwatosa

Visit Milwaukee | 21
OUR PARTNERS

FROM HOTELS, restaurants, bars, retailers, event services, and so much more, VISIT Milwaukee’s 700+ partners believe in the power of tourism. And our corporate partners believe that making Milwaukee an amazing place to visit can help create an even more amazing place to live and work. Together with our partners, we’re working to make a better Milwaukee every day.