



ANNUAL REPORT 2022

Tourism is essential in propelling Milwaukee forward



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VISIT Milwaukee President and CEO

MISSION

VISIT MILWAUKEE CREATES economic impact and supports a stronger, more inclusive community by promoting the Greater Milwaukee area as a premier tourism destination.



"Tourism is vital for the success of Milwaukee. We want to attract young and diverse talent to make Milwaukee successful. We know that Milwaukee has experienced a renaissance, and we want to make sure that everybody gets to see all of the beauty, fun and industry that Milwaukee has to offer, not only to retain local talent but to attract national and international visitors."

- JACOBO LOVO, MANAGING ARTISTIC DIRECTOR, LATINO ARTS



TOURISM CRUISES TO NEW

IN MILWAUKEE COUNTY...

UP
23.5%*

\$2.19 B IN VISITOR
SPENDING

26,673 FULL-TIME
JOBS SUPPORTED
BY TOURISM

16.7% TOURISM GROWTH YEAR OVER YEAR IN MILWAUKEE COUNTY | **\$216.6 M** IN STATE & LOCAL TAXES GENERATED BY TOURISM

\$3,914,000,000
IN TOURISM-BASED ECONOMIC IMPACT

RECORDS IN 2022

IN THE GREATER MILWAUKEE AREA...

\$3.3 B IN VISITOR SPENDING **UP 20.5%***

43,189 FULL-TIME JOBS SUPPORTED BY TOURISM

25.4% OF TOTAL TOURISM ECONOMIC IMPACT TO THE STATE IS FROM THE GREATER MILWAUKEE AREA

\$6,018,000,000 ALL-TIME TOURISM RECORD
IN TOURISM BASED ECONOMIC IMPACT

"Our partnership with VISIT Milwaukee has been tremendous over the past many years. We believe that Milwaukee County has many of the amenities that draw visitors from all across the country. And these are things what we are able to talk about and really showcase to visitors. I truly believe that we would not see the millions of people who come to our Milwaukee County region if it wasn't for VISIT Milwaukee."

— DAVID CROWLEY, MILWAUKEE COUNTY EXECUTIVE



DEAR VISIT MILWAUKEE PARTNERS & SUPPORTERS,

Looking back on the past year, I'm reminded that two things can be true at the same time: We can be fiercely proud of Milwaukee, from the terrific people who live here to our rich culture, amazing amenities and all the other things that we love about our city and want to share with every visitor.

And, we can recognize that we have more work to do.

As VISIT Milwaukee's Board Chair, I want to thank Peggy and the VISIT team for their persistent and successful efforts to use travel and tourism as a vehicle to make a significant economic impact on Milwaukee and elevate its national reputation.

Their efforts clearly worked because Milwaukee tourism realized a full economic rebound from the pandemic and set a new record in 2022 – at least one full year earlier than expected.

Part of this work included VISIT's instrumental role in Milwaukee's successful bid to host the 2024 Republican National Convention, thanks in large part to a cohesive, city-wide coalition that included leaders such as Milwaukee Mayor Cavalier Johnson and County Executive David Crowley, who each put aside potential partisan differences to help secure a transformative opportunity for the entire city.

And I'd like to recognize another important development from 2022: An increasing amount of VISIT's work is focused on making sure that everyone from any background feels welcome here – not by accident, but through intentional planning and execution, as we did when VISIT welcomed a group of prominent Black meeting planners to Milwaukee in partnership with *Black Meetings & Tourism Magazine*.

We know that travel and tourism is one of the best ways to change perceptions. A great example of this is *National Geographic* naming Milwaukee one of its 25 best places to travel to in 2023.

Everybody should know that this kind of national recognition is not a stroke of good luck that just happened to fall into our laps. The VISIT team works every day to increase local, regional and national awareness of Milwaukee and all the great things we offer.

But it's also informative to look at **why** National Geographic chose Milwaukee. Sure, they pointed out some of the top destinations you'd expect to make any such list: the Milwaukee Bucks and Deer District, our great breweries, the Harley-Davidson Museum and the Third Ward.

But they **also** called us “a vibrant Great Lakes city that celebrates its cultural community as much as its breweries” and specifically called out plans for the Bronzeville Center for the Arts and its focus on African-American art.

Stories like this can be the first step in a narrative shift. Milwaukee's history of racial disparities isn't something we should hide from or sweep under the rug. But it also doesn't have to define us.

As the team at VISIT often says, we are united by our uniqueness. I want to thank the team for the work they do every day, and I want to thank VISIT Milwaukee's partners for the support that makes that work possible.

My time as Board Chair of VISIT is coming to an end. But I'll continue to promote Milwaukee, and hope you will, too. I'm excited to pass the baton to our incoming Chair, Milwaukee World Festival, Inc. President Sarah Pancheri, and even more excited to see where she'll take us.

So in 2023, let's resolve to shout it from the rooftops every day: Milwaukee is a great place to be. Now let's work every day to make it even better.

Sincerely,



Dr. Eve M. Hall,
VISIT Milwaukee
Board Chair



"VISIT MILWAUKEE HAS BROUGHT TO LIGHT THE HIDDEN SECRET THAT IS MILWAUKEE."
 - BOBBY WILTGEN, OWNER, CREAM CITY CONCEPTS

TOTAL SOCIAL AUDIENCE INCREASED 6%

TRAFFIC TO VISITMILWAUKEE.COM IN 2022

+26%
SESSIONS

+18%
TOTAL VIEWS

4.1 MILLION PAGE VIEWS

2022 WAS THE BEST YEAR EVER FOR WEB TRAFFIC



"MY GOAL IS TO GET PEOPLE TO TRY THINGS THEY HAVEN'T TRIED BEFORE. IT'S HARD! BECAUSE IT'S EVER-INCREASING. EVERY DAY, A NEW PLACE IS OPENING, SO I TRY TO GET TO AS MANY AS I CAN."

- JUDGE DEREK MOSLEY, DIRECTOR OF MARQUETTE LAW SCHOOL'S LUBAR CENTER AND NOTED MILWAUKEE FOODIE, IN EPISODE 4 OF "GOOD THINGS BREWING"

SPREADING THE GOOD WORD ABOUT THE GOOD LAND

→ IF YOU'RE PLANNING A TRIP

anywhere in the world, Milwaukee should be on your shortlist.

Hey, don't take it from us – that's the final word from one of the biggest names in worldwide exploration.

In October, *National Geographic* named Milwaukee one of its 25 best places to travel to in 2023. Milwaukee was **one of only five U.S. destinations** on the list, and the **only destination in the Midwest**.

National Geographic says Milwaukee “combines a blue-collar, back-thumping energy with a close-knit creative community that’s turning heads beyond the Great Lakes,” celebrating everything from the Bucks to the diverse cultural activities that are blossoming in so many of our neighborhoods.

See? They get us. And that’s not by accident.

Every day, VISIT’s communications team works to show off Milwaukee as a destination, placing stories in publications and pursuing every angle when it comes to promotional opportunities. This consistent effort drives results, creating a snowball effect that elevates our reputation.

IF YOU CAN MAKE IT THERE, YOU CAN MAKE IT ANYWHERE. (WE DID.)

Once the *National Geographic* story came out, VISIT Board Chair Dr. Eve Hall urged us

all to shout it from the rooftops. Agreed! In fact, we see your rooftop shouts — and raise you a billboard.

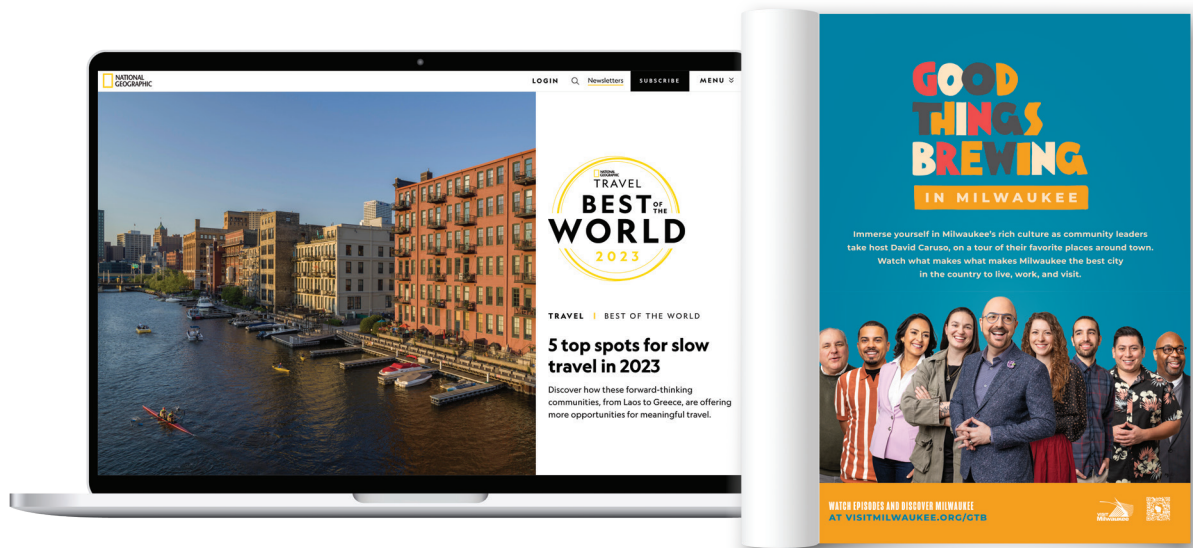
Putting Milwaukee squarely in the middle of the world’s biggest media market, we secured a 35 x 23-foot digital display in New York City’s Times Square.

From December 26 to January 1, the billboard highlighted our stunning lakefront, James Beard award-winning cuisine and diverse attractions to tens of millions of viewers.

GOOD THINGS BREWING? YOU BET YOUR CULTURAL ASSETS.

VISIT Milwaukee partnered with Plum Media and Events by David Caruso to produce “Good Things Brewing,” a television show dedicated to sharing the unique experiences and perspectives of community leaders as they tour the businesses, restaurants and attractions that make Milwaukee a remarkable place to live, work – and visit. The show debuted in February 2023, with four episodes in 15 different Midwestern TV markets. It featured over 50 VISIT Milwaukee partner businesses.

All episodes are available on VISIT Milwaukee’s YouTube channel as well youtube.com/visitmilwaukee.



SELLING MILWAUKEE AS THE 'IT' CITY FOR MEETINGS

→ WITH NEW REASONS TO VISIT

coming virtually every day – and increased national recognition for everything we have to offer — there perhaps has never been a better time to sell Milwaukee.

And sell we did.

We beat our hotel booking projection by nearly 100,000 room nights in 2022.

We increased our meetings and convention advertising spending by 19 percent — and given that the Baird Center expansion is well on its way to completion, and the increased activity we're seeing around convention booking inquiries, you can expect more of that in the future.

It helps, of course, to have something authentic to sell. And as we continue to shed the “hidden gem” label on our journey to a top-flight destination, Milwaukee clears that bar consistently.

ADDITIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

In 2022, the sales team realized 106% of its bookings goal, with major bookings like the National Guard Association of the United States, which selected Milwaukee as the host city for its 2025 General Conference & Exhibition. The conference is expected to bring over 4,000 attendees to Milwaukee and have an estimated economic impact of over \$6.5 million. Our sales team was supported by the launch of our new tradeshow booth, which was designed by the marketing team and debuted at Connect Detroit.

VISIT hosted its second annual Hotel Month in January 2022, partnering with more than 20 hotels throughout the Milwaukee area to offer enticing stay packages at price points of \$100, \$125 and \$150. Perks included restaurant and store

New tradeshow booth debut at Connect Detroit, Museum Days Committee and Aloft windows





EVENT EXPERIENCE GARNERED A MEETING PLANNER RATING OF 4.8 OUT OF 5 IN 2022, AND HAPPY PLANNERS BECOME REPEAT CUSTOMERS.

gift cards, food and drink vouchers, free or reduced overnight parking, late checkout, room upgrades and more.

To complement Hotel Month, VISIT also hosted its inaugural Museum Days in January 2022, with more than 20 Milwaukee area museums offering either free, \$1, \$5, \$10 or \$15 admission.

JUST CHEW IT

Where does the signature squeak of a sneaker on the court meet the similar squeak of a (non-fried) cheese curd? In Milwaukee, of course.

VISIT commissioned artist Noel Alvarado, a Milwaukee native, to produce a custom, hand-painted version of Nike's Air Force 1s featuring a cheese-themed design. These limited-edition Cream City Kicks found their way to feet around Milwaukee, with a slice of the cheddar going to the VISIT Milwaukee Foundation to help fund scholarships and other initiatives that support and grow Milwaukee's hospitality community.

Don't they look ... sharp?

ROAD TRIP!

For those who haven't yet visited Milwaukee, now we can bring it to you first.

Thanks to the hard work of the event

experience team, in 2022 VISIT Milwaukee received a \$112,050 grant from the State of Wisconsin to create a mobile visitor kiosk. The easily transportable welcome center allows VISIT to have a more substantial presence at both regional and local events.

The kiosk serves as a space to share information and experiences through interactive screens and printed materials. (And, of course, we're giving away swag to lure in unsuspecting future visitors.)

Visitor Experience Mobile Kiosk and Cream City Kicks



"The world-class venues of the Wisconsin Center District, including the Miller High Life Theatre, UW-M Panther Arena, and Baird Center, are dedicated to being Bold, Proud, and Experience Obsessed. The VISIT Milwaukee team embodies those values when promoting our spectacular city to clients from around the world. The \$456 million expansion of the Baird Center is a game-changer for Milwaukee, and the VISIT team is in lockstep with us to promote the city we all love."

— MARTY BROOKS, PRESIDENT & CEO, WISCONSIN CENTER DISTRICT



CONVENTIONAL WISDOM: MKE GOES BIG WITH BAIRD CENTER EXPANSION

→ **A YEAR FROM NOW**, we'll all have the chance to celebrate a significant step forward for Milwaukee — and a huge boost to our value proposition for convention and big event planners. The Baird Center expansion is well underway and on track to open in May 2024.

Once the \$456 million project is complete, the north and south buildings will house a combined 52 meeting rooms, an exhibit hall featuring 300,000 contiguous square feet of space, 22 loading docks and a 400-stall parking garage. And then

there's the showstopper: A rooftop ballroom with seating for 2,000 guests and outdoor terraces with stunning views.

It'll feature a familiar name, as Baird has signed on as title sponsor.

One of the biggest advantages of the expanded Baird Center is in logistics: With more available space, an upcoming convention can be unloading and setting up while another convention is still underway — giving VISIT Milwaukee the ability to pile up back-to-back bookings and bring in even more visitors.

Renderings of the Baird Center Expansion



"Achieving the DNC and being a host city followed up by the RNC is just a testament to how VISIT Milwaukee can really market on a national basis and really attract the largest, most lucrative conventions that exist."

— PETER FEIGIN, PRESIDENT, MILWAUKEE BUCKS



THE RNC: ANOTHER BIG MOMENT FOR MILWAUKEE

→ **WHEN MILWAUKEE HOSTS** the 2024 Republican National Convention, we'll become the first city to host back-to-back major U.S. political party nominating conventions since New York hosted the Democratic National Convention in 1976 and 1980.

It's a monumental opportunity to bring thousands of attendees and millions of dollars in economic impact to Milwaukee – not just during the convention on July 15-18, 2024, but also during the buildup to the event.

And while the 2020 Democratic National Convention didn't turn out to be the opportunity it was supposed to be for Milwaukee because of the pandemic, it's important to remember that we beat out

Miami and Houston for the honor to host. For the RNC this time around, we went toe-to-toe with Salt Lake City and Nashville.

And we won.

Again.

Now we're getting ready to welcome 45,000 people and realize approximately \$200 million in economic impact. But the real benefit from the RNC will be long-term, making us even more prominent in the minds of convention planners and tourists for years to come.

We can't wait for all those new visitors to experience what we already know: Milwaukee is a remarkable place to be.

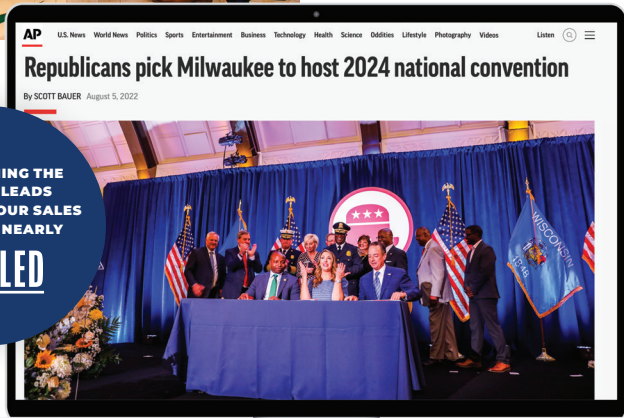


Clockwise:

The RNC tours Fiserv Forum, Peggy speaks to media in Chicago, and AP announces Milwaukee as host destination for the 2024 convention.



SINCE WINNING THE 2024 RNC, LEADS RECEIVED BY OUR SALES TEAM HAVE NEARLY **DOUBLED**



"VISIT Milwaukee has been critical, frankly, to our success over the last 18 years since I've been with the team. Bringing people into Milwaukee, sharing Milwaukee, and at the same time, giving us easy messaging when we're out trying to sign free agents about what Milwaukee is all about. VISIT Milwaukee is able to really make that pitch much, much easier by all the great things that come to our town."

- JON GREENBERG, PRESIDENT, MILWAUKEE ADMIRALS



MKE BECOMES SPORTS TOURISM HUB

NCAA Men's basketball tournament and the 2022 USA Triathlon draws athletes from all over the world to compete along Milwaukee's lakefront.

→ **ALREADY A FOLK HERO** among Bucks fans for his trademark intensity as a forward on the court, we were thrilled when Bobby Portis agreed to play another position off the court: Milwaukee's ultimate hype man.

Portis starred in a video showcasing his love of Milwaukee in a variety of settings, from serving as a barista to playing beach volleyball and enjoying Bloody Marys. VISIT supported the video with a robust marketing campaign targeting visitors in markets within a six-hour drive of Milwaukee.

The results? Bobby was a hit with both leisure and planner audiences alike.

This partnership aligns with the mission of Sports Milwaukee, a separate division of VISIT that markets Milwaukee as the ideal destination for sports events, driving more economic impact to the region. With Milwaukee growing as a destination for everything from USA Triathlon to youth sports tournaments, Sports Milwaukee booked more rooms than ever before in 2022 – with 64,000 room nights booked into future years.



SPORTS MAKE AN IMPACT

Several sports events made their mark in MKE in 2022:

Hosted the NCAA men's basketball tournament first and second rounds

The Brewers drew 2.4 million fans from throughout Wisconsin and beyond in 2022, finishing in the upper half of Major League Baseball in attendance.

VISIT is supporting their efforts to modernize American Family Field for long-term success.

Hosted USA Triathlon for the second year in a row and fifth overall event

Bucks made the NBA playoffs (again!)

Supported the first-ever MKE eSports summit

Supported pro-am cycling series Tour of America's Dairyland, which made stops around the region including Wauwatosa



"Working with VISIT Milwaukee has been great because they truly embody the mission of wanting to become an asset to the community. And you can really tell by their work with inclusive, diverse partners."

— JESUS GONZALEZ, OWNER, ZÓCALO FOOD TRUCK PARK



IN 2022, VISIT
MILWAUKEE DOUBLED ITS
SPENDING AT WOMEN AND
MINORITY-OWNED BUSINESSES
YEAR-OVER-YEAR

UNIQUE AND UNITED

VISIT MILWAUKEE IS
A RECORD SETTING

811

PARTNERS STRONG

A DIVERSE DESTINATION

→ If you've heard us say this before, that's because we truly believe it and will continue to repeat it: Milwaukee's uniqueness is what unites us.

But it's one thing to say that to each other as Milwaukeeans. To make it to the next level as a destination for everyone, we had to bring people in to see it for themselves.

So we did.

In September, VISIT brought in 14 Black meeting planners for a three-day tour of Milwaukee venues, restaurants, hotels, and attractions. The tour was hosted in partnership with *Black Meetings & Tourism*, an award-winning trade publication for the \$40 billion African American group, leisure and meetings market.

Planning a FAM like this was easy, thanks to the work of the partnership team that has brought on more partners from diverse backgrounds than ever before. In 2022, our diverse partnership base grew 59% from 64 to 102, a much-improved representation of our community. The partnership team didn't stop there. **In 2022, they broke their own records by bringing our total partner count to 811.**

This is one of the latest steps in VISIT's intentional efforts to bring more visitors from diverse backgrounds to Milwaukee – and bring together Milwaukee residents from different communities in welcoming environments.

CELEBRATING DIVERSE BUSINESSES: CREAM CITY PRINT LOUNGE

→ VISIT Milwaukee partnered with Cream City Print Lounge & Bar on a collection of T-shirts and tote bags that celebrate the Brew City's love for beer and cheese. Cream City Print Lounge unifies the city through fun activities such as T-shirt printing parties, T-shirt printing pop-up events and other activities. Rachaad Howard, owner and founder of Cream City Print Lounge, was named one of *Milwaukee Business Journal's* 40 under 40 in 2021.

Every VISIT Milwaukee + Cream City Print Lounge collaboration T-Shirt or tote bag sold included a 10% donation to the



VISIT Milwaukee Foundation, a 501(c)(3). VISIT Milwaukee is reinvigorating this foundation so that it can fund scholarships and other initiatives that support and grow Milwaukee's hospitality community.

Top:
Black Meetings & Tourism visits Summerfest

MKE'S NEW SPACE TO FOCUS ON BLACK HISTORY

→ In February 2022, VISIT helped celebrate the reimagining of America's Black Holocaust Museum, in Milwaukee's historic Bronzeville neighborhood.

The museum educates visitors on the history of Black people in America, promoting education, critical conversations, reconciliation, and healing from the wounds caused by centuries of atrocities forced upon America's Black population. The relaunched museum also serves as an anchor institution for a neighborhood that serves as an economic and social center of Milwaukee's Black community.

Thanks to information from the VISIT communications team, the *New York Times* featured Bronzeville and highlighted the museum's reopening in its "52 Places for a Changed World" story in 2022.

Bottom:
Cream City Print Lounge & Bar owner, Rachaad Howard

CULTURAL MAGNET

WHATEVER FLOATS YOUR CRUISE SHIP, YOU'LL FIND IT HERE IN MKE

→ How do you characterize a place that welcomes Harley-Davidson riders, artists, foodies, political convention attendees, ethnic festival revelers, kite enthusiasts, proud LGBTQ community members and allies and fans of every style of music imaginable?

The through line that connects each of these seemingly random events is unique people seeking unique experiences. When we say “unique unites,” we mean it – because we see it every day.

And now, there’s a new way to get people here to see and experience it all.

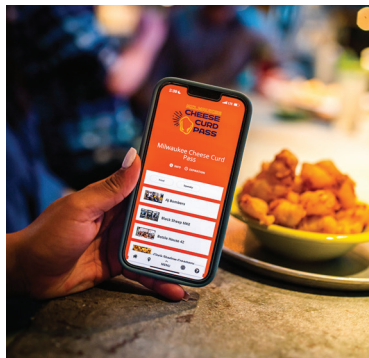
VISIT partners with Port Milwaukee through the Milwaukee Cruise Collaborative, an effort to create a world-class tourism experience for thousands of cruise passengers visiting Milwaukee. And it’s working: In 2022, Milwaukee welcomed a total of 13,610 passengers on 33 stops by eight cruise ships that travel through Milwaukee on Great Lakes cruises.

LAUNCHING THE MILWAUKEE THEATER DISTRICT

→ In November, VISIT partnered with local performing arts and live entertainment organizations to launch the Milwaukee Theater District – an effort to bring in more visitors by creating more awareness of Milwaukee’s live entertainment scene.

A strong case can be made that Milwaukee’s live entertainment scene is among the nation’s best: With a combined total of 15,000 theater seats, the **Milwaukee Theater District ranks No. 1 in the U.S. for theater seats per capita**. The district has no formal borders, but participating venues are all located in a safe, convenient and walkable cluster in the heart of downtown Milwaukee.

Venues within MTD host a combined 2,100 annual performances, attracting 2 million attendees each year, employing more than 1,000 people, and offering volunteer opportunities to many more. This represents a significant portion of the estimated \$400 million in visitor spending that Milwaukee’s overall entertainment industry generates per year, according to Tourism Economics.



MAXIMIZE YOUR APPETIZER

→ For new visitors to Milwaukee, the transformation from “what’s a cheese curd?” to “where can I find more of these?” typically is measured in minutes. But we can always make it easier to enjoy one of Wisconsin’s signature snacks.

VISIT launched the Milwaukee Cheese Curd Pass, a free ticket that allows both residents and visitors to access exclusive deals from more than 20 local cheese curd purveyors.

It’s the latest in a series of VISIT-sponsored passes to encourage both visitors and residents to explore new businesses. VISIT also relaunched its popular Brew City Beer Pass, sponsored by Potawatomi Casino | Hotel, offering specials at a wide range of local breweries.

And let’s not forget dessert! The Treat Yourself Pass, launched by VISIT and also sponsored by Potawatomi, features deals on MKE sweets and treats.

The salad pass is coming soon. We promise.

Maybe.

Clockwise:

The Milwaukee Cheese Curd Pass, Treat yourself at Delicious Bites, and the Milwaukee Theater District launch event

"VISIT Milwaukee has really been helpful in helping us to understand how to coordinate our operations and work with the different businesses in the community so that we can give those passengers a great experience and we can continue to grow that business for the Port of Milwaukee and the city."

— JACKIE Q. CARTER, MUNICIPAL PORT DIRECTOR, PORT MILWAUKEE



"We had a recent campaign with VISIT Milwaukee that garnered entries from 37 different states to elevate the profile of the arts in Milwaukee and the Milwaukee Theater District. That's something that a lot of cities overlook—the impact of the arts. We have over 2 million visitors a year, and the economic impact that the arts bring is really important and VISIT is there to help us tell that story."

—LAURIE BOWMAN, VICE PRESIDENT, MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS,
THE MARCUS PERFORMING ARTS CENTER



FINANCIALS

→ **IN 2022**, the VISIT Milwaukee Board of Directors voted to allow the company to operate in a deficit in order to maximize destination marketing and secure a full recovery from the pandemic.

TOTAL 2022 REVENUE

\$8,109,222

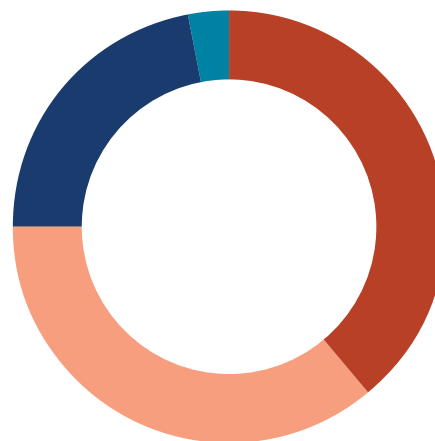
TOTAL 2022 EXPENSES

\$10,474,002



2022 FUNDING

- 81% 2021 Hotel Occupancy Taxes & Public Funding
- 5% Program & Service Revenue
- 5% Partner Dues & Programs
- 4% Marketing Sponsors & Ad Sales
- 3% Other
- 2% Grants



2022 EXPENSES

- 39% Marketing & Communications
- 36% Convention Sales, Sports Milwaukee, and Event Experience
- 22% Administrative*
- 3% Partnerships

*One percent of the 2022 administrative budget includes a \$125,000 payment to the City of Milwaukee as part of its PILOT program

VISIT MILWAUKEE TEAM



Peggy Williams-Smith
President & CEO



Joshua Albrecht
Vice President of Marketing & Communications



Leslie Johnson
Vice President of Sales and Event Experience



Charlotte Hayslett
Vice President of Human Resources



Meg McKenna
Senior Director of Strategic and Community Partnerships



Claire Koenig
Senior Director of Communications and Public Affairs



Michelle Haider
Director of Event Experience

SALES



Chad Chappell
National Account Executive



Laura Lutter Cole
National Account Executive



Lauren Hyps
Associate Director of Sales



Megan Husband
National Account and Tourism Sales Executive



Shaylynn Libby
Convention Sales Coordinator



Katie Pfankuch
Account Executive



Maaike Rheinfrank
Convention Sales Coordinator



Raymond Valles
National Account Executive

SPORTS MILWAUKEE



Christina Fox
Senior Convention Sales Coordinator



Connie Kopecky
Account Executive



Marissa Werner
Director of Sports Milwaukee



Bryan Kubel
Partnership Sales Manager



Maria Strand
Partnership Services Specialist



John Blust
Copywriter



Ina Li
Social Media Coordinator



Ian Thompson
Senior Communication Manager

PARTNERSHIP

COMMUNICATIONS

MARKETING



Miranda Allison
Digital Marketing Manager



Chris Ammon
Marketing Coordinator



Amira Ennis
Marketing Project Manager



Hallie Hayes
Marketing Manager



Kathryn Lavey
Senior Creative Manager



Alex Zimdars
Creative Marketing Manager

EVENT EXPERIENCE



Nicole Bedner
Event Experience Specialist



Teresa Benson
Visitor Experience Associate



Emily Boulden
Event Experience Coordinator



Andrew Knuth
Event Experience Manager



Shannon Richmond
Senior Event Experience Manager



Tony Snell
Visitor Experience Manager

ADMINISTRATION & FINANCE



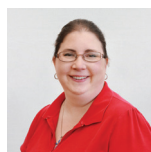
Abeer Bazar
Executive Assistant



Lesa Edwards
Finance Manager



Aaron Kosma
Administrative Coordinator



Ann-Marie Parker
Staff Accountant



Der Vang
Human Resources Specialist

OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2022-2023

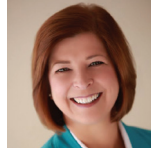
OFFICERS



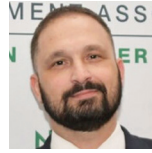
Dr. Eve M. Hall
Chair
Milwaukee Urban League



Sarah Pancheri
Vice Chair,
Milwaukee World Festival, Inc.



Kristine Hillmer
Incoming Vice Chair, Wisconsin Restaurant Association



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



Peggy Williams-Smith
President & CEO
VISIT Milwaukee



Rafael Acevedo
City of Milwaukee



Steve Baas
Wisconsin Transportation Builders Association



Paul Bartolotta
The Bartolotta Restaurants



Danielle Bergner
Hall & Render



Shari Black
Wisconsin State Fair



Kate Braasch
Marquette University



Marty Brooks
Wisconsin Center District



Grady L. Crosby
Northwestern Mutual



Clifton Crump
Milwaukee College Preparatory School



William J. Davidson
Harley-Davidson Museum



Brian Dranzik
Milwaukee Mitchell International Airport



Michael Evans
Marcus Hotels & Resorts



Mark Flaherty
Jackson Street Holdings



Tami Garrison
Generac



Tracy Johnson
Commercial Association of REALTORS® Wisconsin



James Kanter
Central Standard Craft Distillery



Curt Kluth
Saz's Hospitality Group



Lynda Kohler
SHARP Literacy



Jeremy Lucas
Milwaukee County Parks



Samantha Maldonado
Chaska Consulting



Dennis McBride
Mayor of Wauwatosa



Arlisia E. McHenry
City of Milwaukee



Kevin Newell
Royal Capital



Kathleen O'Leary
KO'Leary LLC



Meagan O'Reilly
City of Wauwatosa



Jason Rae
Wisconsin LGBT Chamber of Commerce



Gerard A. Randall, Jr.
Milwaukee Partnership Academy



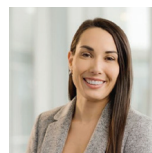
Howard Snyder
Northwest Side Community Development Co.



Melissa Weiss
City of Wauwatosa



Dennis Williams
Fiserv Forum



Alex Zawada
Potawatomi Casino | Hotel



Craig Kammholz
Ex Officio
MMAC



Beth Weirick
Ex Officio
Milwaukee Downtown BID #21

DIRECTORS

OUR PARTNERS

→ **SOME OF OUR PROUDEST ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2022** were the relationships we built, including an all-time high number of partners at 811. To all our partners: Thank you. The work we do on behalf of Milwaukee would never be possible without your support. And to anyone who is interested in partnering with us, don't hesitate to reach out to MMcKenna@milwaukee.org.

REGIONAL



STRATEGIC



CORPORATE



LOOKING AHEAD TO MORE SUCCESS IN 2023

DEAR VISIT MILWAUKEE PARTNERS AND MILWAUKEE SUPPORTERS,

→ If the last few years have shown us anything, it's the impact that travel and tourism have on Milwaukee's economy – and how that work goes hand-in-hand with building Milwaukee's national reputation. When travel and tourism nearly evaporated during the pandemic, it tore a hole in the soul of our community and created an existential crisis in our entertainment and hospitality industries.

But today feels different, in the best way possible: Like the snarling rumble of a Harley-Davidson when the light turns green, tourism roared back in 2022 and we expect continued acceleration in 2023.

The sales team achieved 106 percent of its bookings goal in 2022, thanks, in part, to a significant 19 percent increase in meetings and convention marketing. And thanks to the combination of our RNC victory and a Baird Center expansion that becomes more real every day, you can expect even more of that in the future. Traffic to VISIT's website surged in 2022.

VISIT was proud to lead Milwaukee's bid for the 2024 Republican National Convention – and even prouder to win it. We don't have to wait until 2024 to start experiencing the impact: We're thrilled to host the first Republican presidential primary debate and meeting in August 2023.

Now, it would be classic Milwaukee modesty to say that we saw a healthy increase in leads to host future conventions after we won the RNC. But as the Baird Center expansion goes from renderings to reality, with cranes in the air and concrete in the ground, let's break character and brag for once: Our convention leads **doubled**.

Midwestern modesty aside, it turns out that bragging actually feels OK – as long as you can back it up. And we can.

Look no further than Foo Fighters and Green Day celebrating 120 years of Harley-Davidson at the forthcoming Homecoming Festival, Summerfest's 55th anniversary, Mexican Fiesta's 50th, the 30th anniversary of Bartolotta Restaurants, an award-winning virtual reality Gorilla Trek Experience at the Milwaukee County Zoo, the forthcoming

Wisconsin State Fair, whose Cream Puff Pavillion might soon receive major upgrades, and a \$100 million renovation project at Potawatomi Casino | Hotel.

At VISIT, we're spreading the good word about the Good Land on every platform we can find. We've launched a TV show, "Good Things Brewing;" we continue to promote Milwaukee every day, from Cathedral Square to a giant billboard in Times Square; and *National Geographic* named Milwaukee as one of its 25 best places to travel to in 2023. We're partnering with Milwaukee's ultimate hype man and Milwaukee Bucks star Bobby Portis, yet again. Sales, hotel room nights and website traffic? All pointing upward.

VISIT Milwaukee is an industry leader that shows up in every possible way for the city, whether it's contributing our voice to the conversation around new revenue streams for the City and County, advocating to ensure that the Brewers have a modern American Family Field to remain to keep delighting millions of fans every year, helping to ensure that the unhoused find shelter – and, above all else, through our industry-specific work to make sure Milwaukee shines.

I want to thank our terrific team that makes this possible through their relentless, strategic work every day. The work we do is in the name of bringing more people to Milwaukee to generate an even larger economic impact and, ultimately, making our city a better place to live, work and visit.

But we don't serve the food or make the cocktails. We're fortunate to represent a city filled with amazing things to do, eat, see, learn, grow – and amazing people who make our travel and tourism industry run.

Finally, I'm so thankful for our partners. None of the work we do would be possible without you. The work you do and the support you provide makes a difference in moving Milwaukee forward.

Sincerely,



Peggy Williams-Smith
President and CEO
VISIT Milwaukee



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@VISITMilwaukee | @DearMKE