

ANNUAL REPORT

2019



Visit
OMAHA™



MISSION

To promote and develop the Omaha metropolitan area as a dynamic tourism destination in order to stimulate economic growth.

ABOUT VISIT OMAHA

Visit Omaha, Omaha's official tourism authority, is a research-based strategic destination marketing and management organization. Visit Omaha's goal is to serve as the destination expert and drive increased visitation and revenue to Omaha through its meeting, event and sports sales, advertising, and promotional efforts.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Initially, 2019 was projected to be a soft tourism year ... flat at best. The catastrophic flooding that caused more than \$1 billion in damage throughout Nebraska, and hampered interstate access to Omaha, added pessimism to that projection. However, thanks to a strong economy, a robust corporate travel climate, a solid youth sports market, a collaborative sales effort focused on short term meeting business, continued advertising and promotion, and an on-going emphasis on development by tourism partners, 2019 exceeded projections. Demand for hotel rooms was up 4%, and hotel revenue was up 3% year-over-year.

A new economic impact study released in 2019 shows Omaha now attracts 13.1 million visitors a year, a 6% increase in two years. Tourism partners throughout the community continued to up their game, creating new experiences that appeal to out-of-town visitors. In 2019, the zoo opened the final phase of Asian Highlands, a 22-acre journey through the animals of

Northern India, Himalayan Mountains, and the forests of China. Joslyn Art Museum's *30 Americans* exhibition was a thought-provoking look at diversity through art. The Durham Museum and Lauritzen Gardens both incorporated inventive dinosaur exhibits into their offerings, which are always a popular draw. In addition, Omaha Children's Museum let kids step into an enchanted kingdom and become part of the magical world of dragons and unicorns. Pink, Ariana Grande, Eric Church, Cher and Elton John performed at CHI Health Center Omaha, and visitors flocked to the city to see Hamilton at the Orpheum Theater. Visit Omaha also unveiled OMAR the Troll, who now sits under the Bob Kerrey Pedestrian Bridge and provides a fun new experience on the riverfront.

This was also a good year for youth sports. Omaha hosted more than 10,000 athletes competing in the Northern Lights Jr. Volleyball tournament and the Asics President's Day Volleyball tournament in the beginning of the year. The Midwest Basketball Showcase attracted 6,500 attendees to the city in May, and the NCAA Men's College World Series and SlumpBuster youth baseball tournament continue to attract thousands to the city each year.

Visit Omaha was involved in hosting 232 groups and events during 2019, including: the Airborne Law Enforcement Association and its 1,000 attendees; more than 750 members of American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators; and the American Philatelic Society, which attracted about 2,500 stamp enthusiasts from across the country. One of the more influential meetings held in 2019 was the ASAE Leadership Retreat, a meeting that not only showcased our city to top association decision makers, but also elevated Omaha as a meeting destination on a national basis.

As we close the books on 2019, our city can feel good about how we came together, worked diligently, and persevered through challenges to end the year on a positive note. We look forward to working with all of you in 2020 to bring even more tourism business to our community.

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Keith". The signature is fluid and includes a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Keith Backsen | Executive Director | Visit Omaha

WHAT OMAHA TOURISM LOOKS LIKE



13.1 MILLION
TOTAL VISITORS
(6% increase over 2016)

7.4 MILLION
DAY VISITORS

5.7 MILLION
OVERNIGHT VISITORS

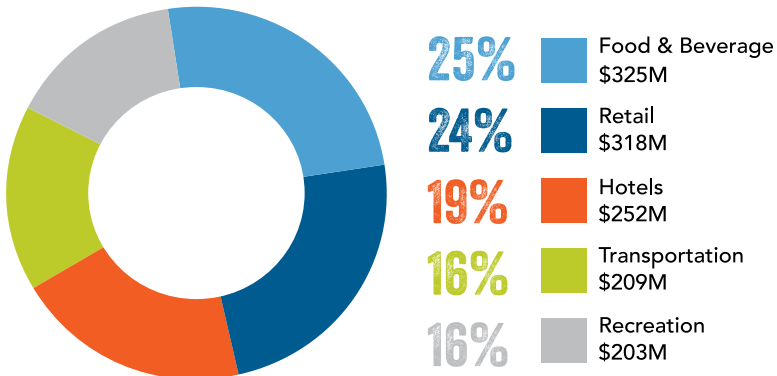
OMAHA VISITORS SPEND
\$1.3 BILLION
(6.5% increase over 2016)



PER YEAR

DAY VISITORS SPEND \$471 MILLION
OVERNIGHT VISITORS SPEND \$836 MILLION

HOW VISITORS SPEND THEIR MONEY



Source: Tourism Economics - An Oxford Economics Company

VISITOR SPENDING
SUSTAINS
17,826 JOBS
(3.2% increase over 2016)

1 IN 17
JOBS
SUPPORTED BY
VISITOR SPENDING

TOTAL TAXES GENERATED
\$286 MILLION



\$122,000,000
FEDERAL

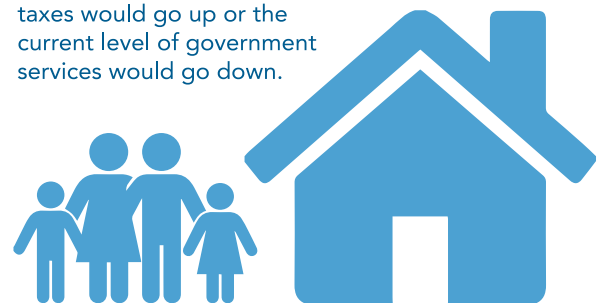
\$83,000,000
STATE

\$81,000,000
LOCAL

Why is tourism important to local residents?

\$750 PER YEAR
TAX RELIEF

Taxes generated by visitor spending save each Douglas County household \$750 per year. Without tourism, your taxes would go up or the current level of government services would go down.



TOURISM BRINGS FAMILIES CLOSER TOGETHER AND HELPS NEIGHBORHOODS GROW

* Visit Omaha commissions an independent economic impact study every two years.
Data for 2020 will be available mid-year 2021.



STR

Independent data from STR, also known as Smith Travel Research, is compiled to track hotel supply, demand and revenue in Omaha.

2,053,753 2019 Hotel Demand (3.9% increase)

3,502,826 2019 Hotel Supply (2.1% increase)

58.6% Hotel Occupancy (1.8% increase)

\$219,206,453 2019 Hotel Revenue (3.1% increase)

Source: STR, aka Smith Travel Research, Inc. Duplication or any re-use of this data without the express written permission of STR is strictly prohibited.

ADMINISTRATION

Lodging Taxes

The majority of Visit Omaha's funding comes from hotel tax paid by visitors. Visitors pay about an 18.16% tax every time they stay in an Omaha/Douglas County hotel – some designated entertainment districts have a higher hotel tax. Visit Omaha receives 2.5% of that lodging tax revenue to fund its operation.

In 2019, Visit Omaha received \$3,970,625, a 1.46% increase over last year.

DMAP

The administration team maintains Visit Omaha's Destination Marketing Accreditation Program (DMAP). The accreditation ensures that Visit Omaha meets the rigorous standards set by the professional destination marketing community.

Destination Marketing Corporation

Visit Omaha manages the Destination Marketing Corporation (DMC), a 501 (c) 6 non-profit organization that allows Visit Omaha to pay incentives to meeting, sports and event groups that have selected Omaha as the location for their event. The DMC paid \$145,858 in incentives to 12 groups that held their events in Omaha in 2019. The economic impact of those 12 groups was \$28,301,853.

For every \$1 the DMC expended in 2019, \$194 was spent by these groups in the Omaha community.

In 2019, the Omaha City Council provided a one-time allocation of \$115,000 to the DMC to establish the Tourism Event Development Project (TED). The project's goal was to help develop new multi-day events that would add to Omaha's appeal as a visitor destination, and create new entertainment options for the community. Organizations could apply to receive up to \$20,000, and once approved and the event held, applicants could then apply for reimbursement. A total of seven organizations were awarded TED dollars in 2019.

- \$114,050 Awarded
- \$78,921.08 Reimbursed
- \$4,790,826 Economic Impact of events that received TED dollars

For every \$1 of TED incentive dollars reimbursed, \$60.70 was spent by event organizers and attendees here in the Omaha community.

2019 City of Omaha Budget

Douglas County Lodging Tax (2%)	\$3,850,129
City of Omaha Occupation Tax (.5%)	\$825,500
City of Omaha	\$1,515,000
OCVB Private Funds	\$190,000
Total Revenue	\$6,380,629

Business Intelligence

Visit Omaha continues to make mobility a priority for its employees so they can work remotely, especially while maintaining a busy travel schedule. In 2019, Visit Omaha upgraded technology to allow staff to easily access all necessary business documents remotely, increasing staff efficiency.

Dashboards

Visit Omaha launched destination dashboards in 2019, a business analytics tool which enables each department to track multiple metrics for key performance indicators. The dashboards provide real-time visual analysis of KPIs and allows departments to easily access data.

Community Relations

Visit Omaha attended seven town hall meetings, one in each city council district, gaining insight into issues that are important to neighborhood residents.

In 2019, Visit Omaha staff personally contributed over \$2,500 to the following community organizations: Angels Among Us; United Way of the Midlands; Table Grace Café; and Toys for Tots. Every Friday, Visit Omaha staff have the opportunity to wear jeans in return for a donation to charity. Each quarter, staff votes and determines where proceeds from these donations go.

Tax Increment Financing (TIF)

Visit Omaha worked with the City of Omaha Planning Department and the TIF Committee to develop new guidelines for hotel development in the downtown convention district. Tax increment financing provides developers with a subsidy for community improvement projects in certain areas of the city.

Douglas County Visitor Improvement Fund

Douglas County receives 2% of the lodging tax collected to award grants for tourism development projects throughout the community. In 2019, Visit Omaha worked with Douglas County officials to develop measurements for tourism grant requests, which now require applicants to provide economic impact data and more robust visitor information.

2019 Actual Expenses

Convention Sales & Services	\$2,360,452
Marketing & Communications	\$2,360,144
Visitor Services	\$203,143
Administration	\$1,403,348
Total Revenue	\$6,327,087

MEETING, SPORTS AND EVENT SALES

In 2019, the Visit Omaha Sales team brought 399 qualified meeting and event opportunities to the table, representing 442,452 hotel room nights, a 41% increase over 2018. The team booked 161 meetings and events, representing 125,332 hotel room nights, a 5% increase year over year. Those 161 bookings will bring more than \$147 million dollars into our local economy.

Highlights

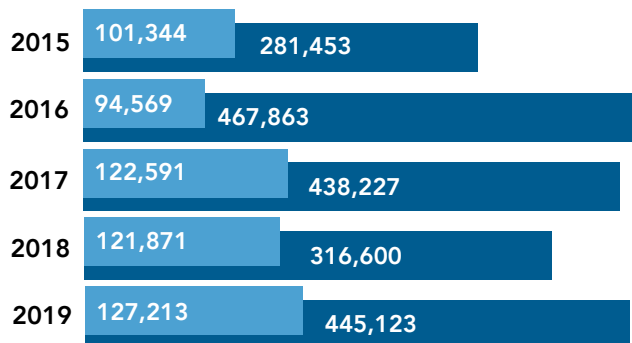
In 2019, Visit Omaha partnered with CHI Health Center, Hilton Omaha, and Marriott Capital District to offer a promotional incentive to groups. If a convention group utilized the convention center and at least 500 hotel rooms, it could receive dollars to offset the cost of its event, a discount at the convention center, and hotel reward points. The campaign resulted in five new convention group bookings that will bring more than \$10 million into our local community.

Other business booked in 2019 includes:

- National Credit Union Administration will bring 400 attendees to Omaha in July of 2020. The group will fill 8,565 hotel room nights, and bring \$6 million into our local economy. Omaha competed against Orlando and Atlanta for this single property piece of business.
- National Indian Education Association and its 2,000 attendees will meet in Omaha in October of 2021. The group will have a \$4 million impact on Omaha, and fill 2,605 hotel room nights.
- Two city-wide conferences in July of 2022 will bring approximately \$5.4 million in economic value to the city. The American Council for the Blind and the Church of the Brethren will attract more than 3,300 attendees combined and fill more than 6,700 hotel room nights.
- Pheasants Forever will be back in the city in 2022. The group will fill 1,564 hotel room nights, and bring \$2.9 million into our local economy.
- Securing the American Jail Association for May of 2023 will bring in 1,700 attendees, 3,506 hotel room nights and will have an economic impact of \$3.3 million.
- American Biological Safety Association will meet in Omaha during October of 2023. The meeting will bring 850 attendees, 2,584 hotel room nights, and have an economic impact of \$1.6 million.

Hotel Room Night Leads Booked vs. Sent

(Meeting Sales & Motorcoach)



Hotel Room Nights Booked

Hotel Room Night Leads Sent

(Qualified business leads sent to partners)

Meeting Sales (Excludes Motorcoach)

399 Hotel Leads Sent

442,452 Room Night Leads

125,332 Room Nights Booked

42 Site Visits

161 Groups Confirmed Definite



2019 Tradeshows and Events

Dates	Location	Organization
January 6-9	Pittsburgh, PA	PCMA Convening Leaders
January 25-29	Louisville, KY	ABA Marketplace
January 29-31	Greensboro, NC	RCMA - Emerge
February 12-13	Washington, DC	DI - Destination Showcase (Spirit of Hospitality)
February 24-27	Kiawah Island, SC	CESSE - Mid-Winter CEO
March 3-7	Atlanta, GA	ConferenceDirect APM
March 11-15	La Vista, NE	Heritage Club International
April 2 & 3	Kansas City, MO & Minneapolis, MN	Destination Celebration
April 11-12	National Harbor, MD	ASAE XDP
April 15-17	Greenville, SC	CMCA
May 6-9	Knoxville, TN	NASC – Sports Event Symposium
May 29-31	Houston, TX	HelmsBriscoe ABC
June 15-18	Toronto, Canada	MPI WEC
July 23-25	Baltimore, MD	CESSE – ACESSE 19
August 10-13	Columbus, OH	ASAE Annual Meeting
August 26-28	Louisville, KY	Connect
September 5	Indianapolis, IN	Destination Celebration
Sept. 10-12	Las Vegas, NV	IMEX
October 15	Lincoln, NE	NHLA Fall Harvest
October 28-30	Grand Rapids, MI	Connect Faith
Nov 11-14	Anaheim, CA	Sports Link & TEAMS
Nov. 21-23	Cleveland, OH	Nursing Alliance
December 7-13	Fort Worth, TX	NTA Travel Exchange
December 9-11	Columbia, SC	US Sports Congress
December 17	Chicago, IL	Holiday Showcase

Sports Highlights

The Visit Omaha team booked more than \$49 million in sports business for the city.

Events include:

- Securing hotel contracts for NCAA Men's College World Series teams for June 2021 through 2024.
- A four year deal with NSAA Wrestling which brings teams from across the state to Omaha.
- 2023 FEI World Cup equestrian event that will bring competitors from all over the world to Omaha in April 2023.
- The American Volleyball Coaches Association Annual Convention will meet in Omaha in December 2020, along with the NCAA Women's Final Four Volleyball Championships.
- 2019 Mid America Youth Basketball Tournament at Union Bank and Trust Sports Complex.
- 2020 Midwest Basketball Showcase in May at CHI Health Center Omaha.

Site Visits

In 2019, Visit Omaha hosted 98 site visits, double the number of visits the year prior. 54 of those were awareness visits – introducing potential clients to the city. The other 44 visits included meeting planners who were in the final decision phase of the process. The sales team closed 28 pieces of business from those visits, a 64.5% conversion rate. In 2018, the conversion rate was 54%.

Sales Missions

In 2019, the Visit Omaha sales team traveled to 34 different tradeshows and events promoting Omaha as a convention and events destination. Along with hotel and venue partners, the team conducted three sales missions to Chicago, Colorado Springs/Denver, and Washington, DC. In an effort to increase the city's presence in the Chicago market, Visit Omaha partnered with Association Forum, a 4,000-member organization of Chicago associations, to sponsor a luncheon for 20 targeted association planners who hold meetings in the Midwest. The luncheon included a moderator who led a discussion on what planners look for when selecting a second-tier city. The content of this discussion will be used by Visit Omaha in building future sales strategies.

Motorcoach Highlights

In preparation for the American Bus Association (ABA) Marketplace 2020 in Omaha, the team developed two new motorcoach tours: the Warren Buffet Tour and the Track and Trains Tour. Visit Omaha also developed 10 sightseeing tours for group tour leaders to enjoy during the ABA convention. Visit Omaha hosted 16 Holiday bus tours in 2019.

2,671 Group Room Night Leads

1,904 Group Room Nights Booked

2 Site Visits

35 Step-on Guide Tours

Partnerships

Visit Omaha strategically partners with organizations that help enhance Omaha's presence on the national stage and heighten awareness of the city as a meeting destination.



As a Corporate Partner with ASAE, Omaha is positioned alongside high-profile destinations such as Austin, Salt Lake City and Portland. The partnership provides Omaha with increased access to 21,000 association executives and industry partners.



The partnership with the Professional Convention Management Association provides increased access to more than 7,000 meeting planner members.



The Visit Omaha partnership with Helms Briscoe helps drive short term meeting business into the city. Helms Briscoe is a third-party planning organization that matches meeting planners to destinations.

MEETING, SPORTS AND EVENT SERVICES

The Visit Omaha services team provided assistance to 232 groups meeting in Omaha in 2019. Those groups spent more than \$118 million while they were in the city. The team traveled to Pittsburgh to promote Omaha to the American Volleyball Coaches Association and NCAA Women's Volleyball Championship, both of which will hold their events in Omaha in December of 2020. The team also traveled to Louisville for the American Bus Association (ABA) Marketplace to get ABA members excited about attending the 2020 event in Omaha. That promotion included planning and managing the closing ABA reception for more than 3,500 attendees.

The services team also hosted two small VIP groups. One was ABA Marketplace Advisory Committee, which included 70 group tour leaders, tourism partners, ABA board and staff who came to Omaha to plan and promote ABA Marketplace 2020. The second was ASAE Leadership Retreat, which brought 150 attendees into the city to experience Omaha as a convention destination and retreat location. More than 70 association executive directors were among those visiting; 64% had never been to Omaha.

The team worked closely with the Airborne Public Safety Association during its conference in July of 2019. Police and Medic helicopters flew to Omaha from all over the U.S. to be part of the expo at CHI Health Center Omaha.

The team provided housing services which requires staff to organize and manage blocks of hotel rooms and reservations for teams and attendees for three groups in 2019. The groups included RecruitLook Hoops basketball and Mid America Youth Basketball. Both events were held at the new Union Bank and Trust Sports Complex in Elkhorn. The third group was the Nebraska Association of School Boards, which held its meeting at CHI Health Center Omaha. It was the first time Visit Omaha hosted and provided housing services for this group. The team also launched housing for the American Bus Association and for the U.S. Olympic Swim Trials.

To roll out the red carpet to group attendees, the team successfully launched the new "Show Your Badge" program, creating special discounts at 36 Omaha businesses for group attendees.



American Bus Association Marketplace - Louisville, KY



Airborne Public Safety Association Conference - CHI Health Center Omaha

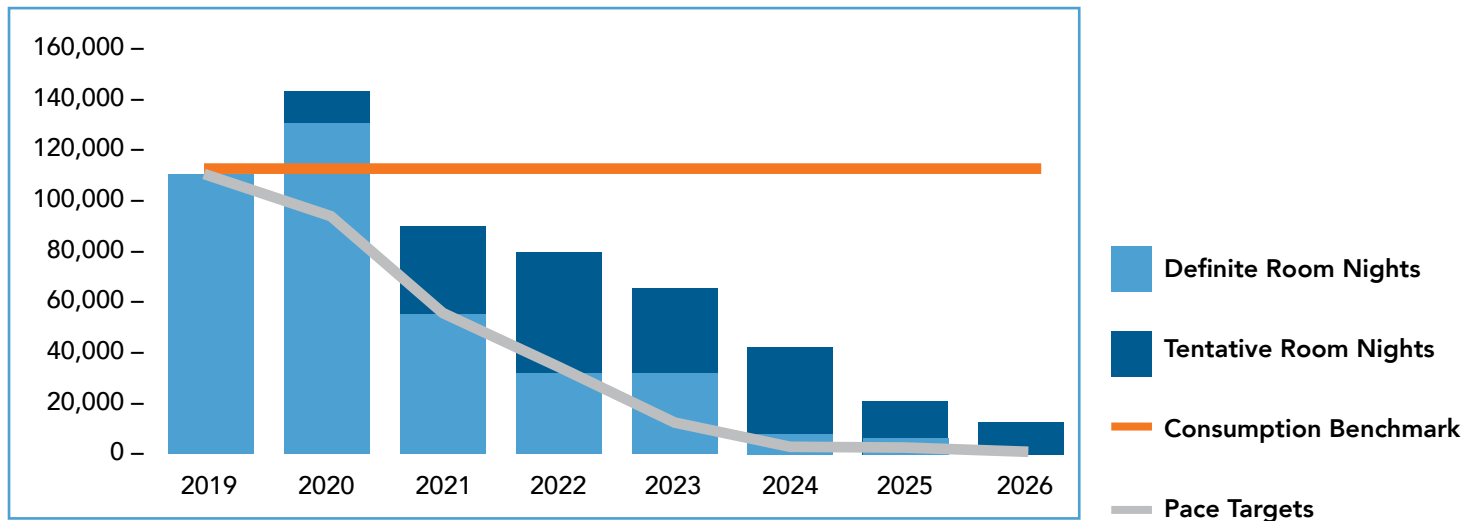
TAP REPORT

The Trends Analysis Projections (TAP) is an 8-year forecasting report that measures the booking pace of the Visit Omaha sales team. The report measures tentative, definite and lost business. The bar graph below shows where the Visit Omaha sales team should be pacing in order to ensure a successful year.

Omaha Room Nights

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	Total
Definite Room Nights	106,292	126,138	52,647	30,048	31,341	6,100	3,399	0	355,965
Pace Targets	107,752	88,517	49,224	31,099	11,529	2,876	1,052	59	292,108
Variance	(1,460)	37,621	3,423	(1,051)	19,812	3,224	2,347	(59)	3,224
Consumption Benchmark	107,752	107,752	107,752	107,752	107,752	107,752	107,752	107,752	862,016
Pace Percentage	99%	143%	107%	97%	272%	212%	323%	0%	122%
Total Demand Room Nights	420,132	422,490	294,649	171,971	95,614	35,559	34,605	0	1,475,020
Lost Room Nights	313,840	296,352	242,002	141,923	64,273	29,459	31,206	0	1,119,055
Conversion Percentage	25%	30%	18%	17%	33%	17%	10%	0%	24%
Tentative Room Nights	0	16,148	38,646	52,616	34,251	35,816	18,293	14,309	210,079

As of December 31, 2019



GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Consumption Benchmark – The average number of definite room nights produced by the bureau for each month and year for the last three twelve month periods. Each month the “oldest” month is dropped from the calculation and the most recent month is added.

Conversion Percentage – The percentage of Total Demand Room Nights that the convention bureau converts to Definite Room Nights for each month and year at the time the report is published.

Definite Room Nights – Number of definite room nights, confirmed by the convention bureau for each month and year at the time the report is published.

Pace Percentage – The percentage of Definite Room Nights compared to the Pace Target. If a given bureau continues to book at current trends the same percentage can be applied to the Consumption Benchmark when each month and year passes.

Pace Target – Number of definite room nights that should be confirmed for each month and year at the time the report is published (updated every month). Pace targets are determined by analyzing a minimum of the last three years definite room nights and all definite room nights confirmed for the future. The analysis is completed by comparing the date a booking was confirmed to that of the arrival date for each confirmed booking and computing the number of months in advance of arrival that each booking was confirmed.

Lost Room Nights – The number of room nights, both definite and tentative, that have been lost for each month and year at the time the report is published.

Tentative Room Nights – The number of tentative room nights pending for each future month and year at the time the report is published.

Total Demand Room Nights – Number of total lead room nights issued by the convention bureau for each month and year at the time the report is published.

Source: Trends Analysis Projects LLC

MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

In 2019, Visit Omaha focused on promoting and advertising to traditional drive markets including Kansas City, Des Moines and Sioux Falls. Minneapolis and St. Louis were included as emerging markets. Targeting mainly women 25-54 years of age, Visit Omaha utilized television, radio, digital, social media, print and train advertising to reach these key travel decision makers.



Minneapolis Train Wrap

With the 2019 NCAA Men's Final Four taking place in Minneapolis, Visit Omaha once again took to the rails, wrapping two Minneapolis metro trains with larger-than-life invitations to plan a weekend getaway to Omaha. The ads were placed on the Metro Blue line, which runs from Mall of America to U.S. Bank Stadium, the site where the Final Four and Championship games were played, and on the Metro Green Line, which runs between St. Paul, MN and the downtown sports district. In addition to the eye-catching photography on the outside, the inside of one train was filled with ads promoting the city's attractions, craft brew scene, and the NCAA Men's College World Series. The rolling billboards were seen by an estimated 8.6 million people from January through April 2019.

Quirky Videos

Visit Omaha created 24 short (15-seconds or less) videos featuring unique Omaha experiences. The videos were produced using creative editing techniques and quirky copy such as, "The Reuben. Born and Bred in Omaha," and "11,000 works of Art. All Free," describing the Joslyn Art Museum. The videos ran on television, online and on Facebook, Twitter, Youtube and Pinterest throughout the year. In addition to featuring major attractions like the Henry Doorly Zoo & Aquarium, Joslyn Art Museum, The Durham Museum, Lauritzen Gardens, and Omaha Children's Museum, the videos also highlight smaller locations such as Bob's Donuts, Coneflower Creamery, Rally Coffee, Whisk and Measure, Amateur Coffee, Grae Clothing, Over Easy and Tannenbaum.

3.7 MILLION Video Views

255,438 Click Throughs to VisitOmaha.com

BRAND POSITION

Omaha is the Midwest destination for memorable weekends because Omaha lets the traveler focus on creating new experiences instead of the hassles of travel.

BRAND PROMISE

To provide a weekend of memorable experiences.

Holiday Campaign

Visit Omaha decided to take a different approach to promoting Omaha during the holidays. In partnership with Midwest Living and its three million readers, Visit Omaha created a two-page advertisement that ran in the Nov/Dec issue, and was promoted on MidwestLiving.com. The ad not only promoted holiday happenings in Omaha, but it also promoted a contest readers could enter to win a trip to Omaha. This lead generation campaign resulted in 6,231 names added to the Visit Omaha database for future promotion.

Bleisure

For the last two years, Visit Omaha has partnered with Sojern, an Omaha-based travel data company, to track Bleisure visitation – business travelers who bring their families and/or add days to their stay to enjoy the city for leisure, hence Bleisure. In 2018, Sojern determined that 7.2% of business travelers to Omaha were categorized as Bleisure visitors. In 2019, Visit Omaha produced advertising specifically targeting business travelers, inviting them to extend their stay. According to Sojern, the percentage of business travelers now considered Bleisure travelers has doubled.

7.2% Business Travelers Converted to Bleisure in 2018

14.4% Business Travelers Converted to Bleisure in 2019

PARTNERSHIPS



Omaha Savings Pack

The Omaha Savings Pack is a partnership between Visit Omaha and 10 Omaha area attractions to provide exclusive discounts to out-of-town visitors as an incentive to visit. Through radio, digital, and social media advertising, consumers are invited to download the Omaha Savings Pack to receive more than \$300 in discounts. In 2019, Visit Omaha utilized a digital advertising company, Simpli.fi, to serve video ads directly to specific customers who use streaming television platforms. The company is also able to track to see if consumers who were served the Visit Omaha ads actually visited the city.

2019 Savings Pack Partners:

Omaha's Henry Doorly Zoo & Aquarium, The Durham Museum, Joslyn Art Museum, Lauritzen Gardens, Omaha Children's Museum, Strategic Air Command & Aerospace Museum, Lee G. Simmons Conservation Park and Wildlife Safari, Village Pointe, The Amazing Pizza Machine, and TreeRush at Fontenelle Forest

7,993

Savings Pack Downloads
(62% increase over 2018)

9,753

Savings Pack Coupon Redemptions
(Redemption tracking was changed in 2019, so percentage change is not available)

14,700

Physical Conversions
(Physical conversions track consumers who saw a Visit Omaha ad, and visited a partner location)

Omaha Penny Pack Campaign

The Omaha Craft Brew Penny Pack is a partnership between Visit Omaha and 12 Omaha area craft breweries to provide buy-one-get-one for a penny discounts to out-of-town visitors as a way to entice them to visit Omaha. Visit Omaha ran advertising in Kansas City, Minneapolis, Des Moines, Sioux Falls and St. Louis inviting consumers to download the Penny Pack and enjoy a pint for a penny. The Penny Pack was also featured onboard a Minneapolis Metro train from January through April, during the NCAA Men's Final Four basketball championships. Through the partnership, local breweries received regional promotion and enjoyed an increase in out-of-town customers to their establishments.

4,659

Downloads
(38% increase over 2018)

4,491

Redemptions
(74% increase over 2018)



2019 Penny Pack Partners:

Benson Brewery, Brickway Brewing and Distillery, Farnam House Brewing Company, Infusion Brewing Company, Kros Strain Brewing, Lucky Bucket Brewery, Nebraska Brewing Company, Pint Nine Brewing, Scriptown Brewing Company, Soaring Wings Vineyard and Brewery, Upstream Brewing Company, and Vis Major Brewing.

MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS



Now Serving Omaha Dining Videos

Omaha's dining scene sizzles with innovative culinary creations and the *Now Serving Omaha* webisodes showcase a variety of local flavor.



Now Serving Omaha Campaign

Now Serving Omaha is an ongoing promotional campaign that began in 2014 to promote Omaha as a travel-worthy dining destination. Visit Omaha produces videos featuring locally owned Omaha restaurants. The videos are promoted on Visit Omaha's social media network, on VisitOmaha.com, and through paid marketing campaigns.

In addition, Visit Omaha has a partnership with KETV to feature local restaurants on a weekly segment during the television station's noon broadcast.

151 Now Serving Omaha Videos

140,702 Video Views in 2019

796,891 Total Video Views

868,400 Estimated Audience for all 52 KETV Television Segments in 2019

OMAHA VISITORS GUIDE

Visit Omaha creates and distributes the official Omaha Visitors Guide annually. The 72-page magazine features beautiful photography and helpful information aimed at inspiring readers to visit Omaha and its local attractions, events, restaurants, and hotels.

8,930 Requested Online or by Phone

31,600 Distributed through Brochure Racks

199,270 Distributed through Visitor Services
(Includes distribution to the Omaha Visitors Center, airport kiosks, and convention groups)

TOTAL 2019 GUIDES DISTRIBUTED = 239,800



SOCIAL MEDIA

Visit Omaha's social media network consists of Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Pinterest, YouTube and LinkedIn. The Visit Omaha team also manages social media accounts for Bob T. Bridge and Omaha Restaurant Week.

The team's social strategy includes sharing original content and unique experiences to inspire engagement and visitation. Thanks in part to increased in-house content creation, specifically with video, the social media audience increased by 5.2%.

166,462 **Total Social Media Followers** (5.2% increase)

121,377 **Facebook Fans** (1% increase)

20,715 **Twitter Followers** (6.4% increase)

22,038 **Instagram Followers** (35% increase)

568 **YouTube Followers** (11% increase)

419 **Pinterest Followers** (39% increase)

1,345 **LinkedIn Followers** (20% increase)



Book Direct

Book Direct is a feature on VisitOmaha.com that provides consumers with an easy way to research hotel rooms, compare rates, and click through to make a reservation directly with a hotel. A total of 10,377 people used this referral feature in 2019. According to Book Direct, 9,139 of those people clicked through to a hotel, 374 made a reservation for an average of 4 nights, creating approximately \$223,624 in revenue for local hotels.

WEBSITE

The VisitOmaha.com website is a premiere inspirational and planning tool for visitors. In 2019, Visit Omaha focused on implementing Conversion Rate Optimization (CRO) to create a customized web experience that serves users specific content based on their interests, and increases engagement on the site.

Committed to being proactive and privacy friendly, Visit Omaha focused on utilizing General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) standards for its email database collection. GDPR, passed by the European Union, is a data privacy law that requires consent and transparency when collecting and using names for email promotional efforts. California passed a similar law that went into effect January 2020. Voluntarily adhering to GDPR standards meant Visit Omaha would lose a large portion of its existing email database since the majority of names were collected prior to the existence of GDPR. In 2018, the Visit Omaha email database went from 23,735 names down to 4,176. The team made a concerted effort in 2019 to rebuild the database by creating content that users would want to opt in to receive.

1,394,035 **Website Sessions** (7% increase)

132,640 **Sessions from Target Markets** (up 47%)

288,441 **Pageviews from Target Markets** (up 29%)

8,111 **GDPR Compliant Database** (111% increase)

MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

PUBLIC RELATIONS

Media Visits

In 2019, Visit Omaha hosted 33 members of the media from 11 different states including Missouri, Florida, Colorado, Minnesota, Iowa, New York, and Kansas. These writers shared stories about Omaha's world-class zoo, art scene, and the city's talented chefs in publications such as *AM New York* (a popular subway newspaper), *USAToday.com*, *TravelChannel.com*, and *ThriftyMinnesota.com*.

Special thanks to the hotels, restaurants and attractions that created a VIP experience for these writers, bloggers and influencers.

Visit Omaha also worked with radio, television and print reporters on stories promoting the city's riverfront development, OMAR the Troll, Omaha's craft beer scene, SlumpBuster youth baseball tournament, and things to do in Omaha during the NCAA Men's College World Series.



577 Earned Media Stories

351,224,271 Audience Reached

Convention Trade Publications

Visit Omaha also made a concerted effort to increase PR-generated stories in targeted convention trade publications. This effort resulted in a 55% increase in the number of stories featuring Omaha as a convention, group tour and sports destination. The stories were published in *Meetings Today*, *Midwest Meetings*, *Exhibitor Magazine*, *Group Tour Travel*, and *Sports Event Magazine*, among others.

28 Earned Media Stories

825,961 Audience Reached

Omaha Media Newsroom

Visit Omaha launched a new online media newsroom in July 2019. The new site has an expanded photo and video library that makes it easy for influencers, editors, and reporters to quickly access professional images of the city. In the first five months, 87 images were requested by media writing stories about Omaha's attractions, culinary scene, and the city's art and music culture.

2019 OVERNIGHT VISITATION

The goal of all of the advertising and promotional tactics described in this section is to increase the number of people visiting Omaha. Independent research conducted by Scarborough Inc. illustrates how visitation has changed in the cities targeted by Visit Omaha's marketing efforts.

For a second year in a row, the largest increase in visitation came from Minneapolis, where the greatest amount of advertising dollars were spent. The largest decline came from Sioux Falls, where the least amount of advertising dollars were spent. However, research also indicates that overall travel by Sioux Falls residents was down in 2019; a contributing factor may have been flooding that closed major interstate access during the peak travel season. It may also have been a contributing factor with overall drive travel to Omaha.

CITY	2019	2018	CHANGE
Minneapolis	142,558	119,685	UP 19%
Kansas City	185,984	182,501	UP 2%
Des Moines	133,057	128,717	UP 3%
Sioux Falls	111,162	137,876	DOWN 19%
St. Louis*	35,430	35,355	UP .2%

*Scarborough deems sample size too low for accurate measurement



Omaha Riverfront

MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS



Bob Kerrey Pedestrian Bridge

Bob the Bridge Campaign

Developing and promoting new visitor-worthy experiences is key to keeping a destination fresh and top-of-mind with potential customers. The goal of the Bob the Bridge project is to continually build and solidify the Bob Kerrey Pedestrian Bridge's brand as an iconic Omaha visitor attraction. Through creative promotional videos, along with dedicated Twitter and Instagram accounts filled with quirky content, Visit Omaha lets Bob do the talking – and it's working. Independent research by Young Strategies, Inc. shows Bob is the third most popular destination among overnight visitors to Omaha.

BobWalking

In 2019, Visit Omaha created a new video series entitled "BobWalking." The videos feature fun ways to walk on Bob, such as Moonwalking, Zombie Walking, Mom Walking, and Christopher Walken Walking. Produced to stimulate conversation and excitement about Bob, the videos were shared on Bob's Twitter and Instagram accounts, and on Visit Omaha's social media network.

3,001

Social Media Followers
(33.7% increase)

190,134

Bob Video Views in 2019
(1.46 million total video views)

119,855

BobWalking Video Views in 2019

OMAR

To keep the momentum going and to add to Bob's appeal, in September 2019 Visit Omaha introduced the newest and bluest addition to the bridge, OMAR the Troll (because every bridge needs a troll). A bronze OMAR the Troll statue, created by local artist John Lajba, is now situated on a tree branch-enhanced hut strategically located so when visitors take photos with OMAR they will also capture the underbelly of the bridge. Visit Omaha also created ways for visitors to interact with OMAR on the bridge. QR coded signs were installed at three locations on the bridge; scan the code with a mobile phone camera and OMAR comes to life in fun, interactive videos. Visitors can even turn themselves into OMAR with a special Snapchat filter that's available on the bridge. A paid social media campaign featuring an OMAR video was used to promote this new attraction.

In addition, Visit Omaha published a book, *OMAR finds a home*. It follows OMAR as he visits different Omaha attractions searching for where he belongs. Visit Omaha donated the book to more than 600 third grade classes throughout the Omaha metropolitan area. As students study Omaha, the book teaches them about local tourism assets and aims to inspire civic pride and encourage students to be brand ambassadors for the city. The books can be purchased online, at the Omaha Visitors Center, and in area attraction gift shops.

September through December 2019

309,925 Social Media Video Views

6,031 OMAR Web Pageviews

3,300 Snapchat Photo Shares

1,795 Bridge Video Views

356 Books Purchased



OMAR the Troll at the Bob Kerrey Pedestrian Bridge



MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

Omaha Restaurant Week

Year three of organizing and managing Omaha Restaurant Week continued to be a prime opportunity for Visit Omaha to promote the local dining scene to visitors and residents. Promoted as the “10 Tastiest Days of the Year,” participating restaurants offer unique multi-course menus at a fixed price of \$20, \$30, \$40 or \$50 per diner. Restaurants agree to donate 5% of Restaurant Week menu sales to the Food Bank for the Heartland. In 2019, Omaha Restaurant Week saw its most diverse group of participating restaurants. Everything from vegan and steak to casual and upscale options gave diners a wide variety of options.

Visit Omaha creates and manages OmahaRestaurantWeek.com and the project’s Facebook, Twitter and Instagram pages. The team is also responsible for the paid promotional campaign for Omaha Restaurant Week, which includes radio, digital, social and billboard advertising. In 2019, iHeart Radio became a new media sponsor, helping to strengthen promotional efforts. The sponsorship included live radio broadcasts from the Food Bank for the Heartland and two participating restaurants. KFAB radio hosts Scott Voorhees and Chris Baker each hosted their live radio shows on-site.



9 Sponsors

48 Restaurant Participants

\$20,750 Revenue Generated

\$10,123 Donated to the Food Bank for the Heartland
(\$32,067 since 2017)

2.9 MILLION Advertising Impressions
(Number of times an ad is displayed)

256,281 Website Pageviews

13,224 Social Media Followers

What Tourism Looks Like

This campaign focuses on educating the local community about the value of tourism and its impact on local residents. Independent research shows that tourism is a \$2 billion industry in Omaha and supports 17,826 local jobs for our friends, family and neighbors. Visit Omaha created a series of videos focusing on local residents whose livelihoods depend on tourism. The videos were distributed through a paid social media campaign. Viewers could click through the post to learn more about tourism on the VisitOmaha.com website.

204,225 Video Views

4,142 Click Throughs to VisitOmaha.com



AWARD-WINNING PROMOTION

At U.S. Travel's 2019 ESTO conference in Austin, Texas, Visit Omaha won a Destiny Award for "Best Printed Collateral Materials." The winning entry, "Meet Your Match" stretched beyond the traditional print ad, and used socks as a canvas to promote Omaha as a convention destination to meeting planners.

Capitalizing on the crazy sock trend, Visit Omaha wanted to capture the attention of meeting planners prior to one of the industry's largest trade shows; 200 meeting planners with business that would be a good fit in Omaha were targeted. Each meeting planner was mailed a single sock designed with colorful infographics touting Omaha's attributes. Each sock was attached to a card that read, "Meet Your Match. Bring your sock to the Omaha tradeshow booth to find its match ... and meet yours."

The purpose of the mailer was to give planners a reason to stop by the Omaha booth, and more than 800 attendees did just that – a record. The campaign also won a 2019 Nebraska Tourism Award for best marketing campaign.



OMAHA VISITORS CENTER



Airport Visitor Kiosk

Visit Omaha operates three visitor information centers and manages 68 volunteer ambassadors who staff the centers. The main Omaha Visitors Center is located downtown at 306 S. 10th Street, and the two visitor information kiosks are at Omaha's airport – one in the north terminal and one in the south. All three received a makeover in 2019.

Remodeling and restructuring of the main visitors center was completed to create a more intimate, welcoming atmosphere for visitors. Large eye-catching visuals, three video monitors, and knowledgeable ambassadors support Visit Omaha's vision of providing regional information in an engaging way.

In partnership with the Council Bluffs Convention & Visitors Bureau and Sarpy County Tourism, Visit Omaha completely redesigned the two airport visitor kiosks, developing them into regional information centers complete with video monitors and print materials featuring three communities and two states. Members of the Omaha Golden K – Kiwanis staff the airport kiosks.

The three Omaha Visitors Centers welcomed travelers from all 50 states and 35 countries in 2019.

31,591 Welcomed at
Visitors Centers

68 Volunteer
Ambassadors

11,668 Partner
Referrals



Downtown Omaha Visitors Center - 306 S. 10th Street



Downtown Omaha Visitors Center - 306 S. 10th Street

OMA TOURISM AWARDS



Omaha Metropolitan Area **TOURISM AWARDS**

3 COUNTIES · 2 STATES · 1 DESTINATION

On May 8, 2019, Visit Omaha, Sarpy County Tourism and the Council Bluffs Convention and Visitors Bureau partnered again to present the 3rd Annual Omaha Metropolitan Area (OMA) Tourism Awards at the Mid America Center in Council Bluffs. A total of 347 people attended to celebrate front line employees and volunteers who go above and beyond to make the Omaha metro area a great tourism destination. The goal of the OMA Tourism Awards is to highlight the substantial contribution tourism and tourism partners make to the metro area.

Local attractions, hotels, restaurants, and retail shops submitted 85 nominations for the nine awards honoring the best of the best in customer service and operations. In 2019, Dennis Pate was the recipient of the "Tourism Hero of the Year" award. Pate is the Executive Director of Omaha's Henry Doorly Zoo & Aquarium. As Executive Director, Dennis Pate oversees a \$43 million budget, more than 1,000 staff members, and a full-time school where children from eight local schools have the opportunity to attend classes at the zoo. Pate was honored for his leadership in creating and sustaining a lasting tourism legacy for our community.

2019 Award Winners

- Outstanding Service in Hotel Operations - Raymelle Buxton Johnson, Doubletree Hotel
- Outstanding Manager of the Year - Christine Patterson, Microtel Inn & Suites
- Outstanding Customer Service in a Retail Outlet - Danette Van Epps with Chocolaterie Stam
- Restaurant/Catering – Best Front of House - Loretta Ashley, Liberty Tavern at Hilton Omaha
- Outstanding Guest Service at an Attraction - Cindy Vanek, Omaha Performing Arts
- Outstanding Guest Services at a Hotel - Christian Hiltbrunner, Courtyard by Marriott at the Beardmore Event Center
- Restaurant/Catering – Best Heart of House - Zead Basbos, Embassy Suites
- Outstanding Volunteer - Gayle Strickland, Community Volunteer
- Outstanding Service in Attraction Operations - Brittany Thornton, MECA

Thanks to the 2019 Sponsors

Metropolitan Hospitality Association (MHA), Pottawattamie County Tourism, Mid-America Center, Omaha Magazine

The 4th Annual OMA Tourism Awards is scheduled for May 7, 2020 at Hilton Omaha.

STAFF

Visit Omaha creates sustainable demand for the destination through meeting, event, sports and leisure marketing, collaborative relationships, broad industry experience and unprecedented product knowledge.

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An aerial night photograph of Omaha, Nebraska. The city is illuminated with warm yellow and orange lights from buildings and streets. A large, modern stadium with a blue roof is prominent in the center-right. A multi-lane highway with glowing orange light trails from traffic runs diagonally across the lower half of the image. The background shows a dark sky with a hint of sunset or sunrise colors.

OMAHA TOURISM BRINGS FAMILIES CLOSER TOGETHER AND HELPS NEIGHBORHOODS GROW



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