

# 2020 BUSINESS PLAN



*Visit*  
**OMAHA**™

VISIT OMAHA - OMAHA'S TOURISM AUTHORITY - [VISITOMAHA.COM](http://VISITOMAHA.COM)







---

**OMAHA TOURISM BRINGS FAMILIES CLOSER TOGETHER AND HELPS NEIGHBORHOODS GROW**

---







# VISIT OMAHA

VISION	MISSION	VALUE PROPOSITION
Visit Omaha aspires to be the Omaha metropolitan area’s tourism expert and a major contributor to the local economy, supporting job creation and new product development that enhances Omaha’s appeal to visitors.	To promote and develop the Omaha metropolitan area as a dynamic tourism community in order to stimulate economic growth.	Visit Omaha creates sustainable demand for the community through meeting, event, sports and leisure marketing; collaborative relationships; broad industry experience; and unprecedented product knowledge.

## OUR KEY OBJECTIVES

- 1 Stimulate economic growth for our community by increasing visitation**

---
- 2 Influence tourism development to ensure future destination success**

---
- 3 Deliver a positive and memorable customer experience**

---
- 4 Collaborate and enhance relationships with local organizations, businesses and stakeholders**

---
- 5 Operate as an efficient, high performing organization**

# TRAVEL AND TOURISM TRENDS FOR 2020

## US TRAVEL ASSOCIATION

Based on the 2020 US Travel Association (USTA) forecast, both domestic leisure travel, and domestic business travel will grow by 1.4 percent in 2020 – virtually the same growth rate in total as forecasted nationwide for 2019. Travel expenditures to the U.S. will increase by 3.3 percent in 2020 (compared to 3.2 percent forecasted for 2019).

## STR (FORMERLY SMITH TRAVEL RESEARCH)

STR projects that hotel room supply will increase 4.9% and hotel room night demand will increase 4.6% in the local Omaha metro area in 2020, while occupancy will decrease slightly from 58.4% to 58.3%. For the downtown area STR is predicting a slight increase in occupancy from 65.7% in 2019 to 66.5% in 2020. Average daily rate and revenue per room are each expected to inch up by 1.0 percent and .6% respectively for 2020.

## AIRPORT EXPANSION

Within five years, the Omaha airport (OMA) will undergo a \$500 million expansion that will modernize and reshape how the airport looks and operates. The project is in response to steady passenger growth and airline expansion. The airport surpassed five million passengers in 2018 – a record. Since 2013, airlines have doubled the number of nonstop flights from Omaha to 34.





## GROUP DEMAND FORECAST

The demand for group rooms arriving in 2020 has surpassed the high, established in 2016, and group bookings for 2020 continue to grow. Omaha will host the American Bus Association in January, the first and second rounds of the NCAA Basketball Tournament in March, followed by Home Instead and Berkshire Hathaway. Major League Baseball comes to town in June for the MLB Draft right before the NCAA College World Series (CWS). Slumpbusters, the largest little league tournament in the country, brings more than 800 teams to the city during CWS. The 2020 US Olympic Swim trials overlaps with CWS providing an extra punch of summer business, and then the city ends the year with the American Society of Agricultural and Biological Engineers, NE Association of School Boards and the NCAA Volleyball Final Four. If leisure and corporate demand remain strong, this will be a record year for lodging in the Omaha Metro Area.

## THE NEXT GENERATION

According to Sage Policy Group, U.S. Travel, and Tourism Economics, the biggest impact on travel over the next five years will be the aging population – not Baby Boomers, but the aging Millennials. There are more 27-year olds in the county right now than any other age group, followed by 28 year olds and 26 year olds respectively. These younger millennials are the most educated in history, and value work/life balance – vacations and weekend getaways are important to them. For the most part this group hasn't started their families yet, so right now they have more freedom to travel. But in five years, the likelihood of this group having children increases, thus the younger millennial's travel decisions will likely change as well. This bodes well for Omaha in 2020 and in the future. Our destination offers a vibrant music, food and craft beer scene that's affordable and appealing for the 20-something crowd now, and as they add children to the mix, they will be familiar with Omaha and its world-class family experiences.



# MEETING, SPORTS AND EVENT SALES

## DEPARTMENT OVERVIEW

Visit Omaha's sales team is responsible for bringing convention, sports and event business to Omaha, in order to increase revenue for local meeting and sports facilities, hotels, attractions, restaurants, vendors, and retail shops. The sales team focuses on selling Omaha as a viable destination for state, regional, national and international conventions, meetings, sporting events, and motorcoach groups. The team's efforts contribute to the economic health of our local community by increasing business revenue and tax revenue, which in turn helps provide jobs for our friends, family and neighbors.



*2019 ASAE Leadership Retreat in Omaha*

## KEY AREAS OF WORK

- Research, develop and bring qualified convention, meeting, sports and event business to local hotels, and convention and sports facilities, resulting in successful completion of agreed-upon annual measurements.
- Partner with national organizations such as, ASAE, Association Forum, Helms Briscoe, and C-Vent to increase awareness of Omaha as a Midwest meeting destination.
- Expand sales efforts into key markets throughout the country.
- Collaborate with the Omaha Sports Commission, and SPORTS Nebraska to attract sporting events to Omaha.
- Engage and build relationships with local board members of national organizations to gain support for Omaha as a location for that organizations annual or regional meeting.
- Complete a minimum of 15 sales trips, including at least three multi-city programs. Meet with 200 qualified meeting planners and organizers to solicit new and repeat meeting business for Omaha.
- Arrange and conduct 80 site visits and two familiarization tours for meeting and event planners who are considering Omaha as their destination.
- Ensure a professional, cohesive citywide sales effort by developing and maintaining a high level of trust and camaraderie with the local hospitality community.
- Enhance ongoing research programs to identify new meeting, sports and event business for the local community.
- Qualify, develop and generate motorcoach leads for local hotels, attractions and performing arts facilities.



# NEW INITIATIVES

- Establish a 3-year premier partnership with Professional Convention Management Association (PCMA) to increase awareness of Omaha among meeting planners in targeted markets.
- Collaborate with local universities to attract NCAA Division I, II, III and National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) events to Omaha.
- Generate new leads from hosting the American Bus Association Marketplace in Omaha.
- Partner with the Omaha Sports Commission, the Metropolitan Hospitality Association and the HUDL Group to study Omaha's outdoor facilities, and determine demand needs for the sports market.
- Establish Omaha as a second tier meeting destination through our partnership with the Association Forum of Chicago.
- Host quarterly strategy meetings with convention partners to analyze and collaborate on targeted city-wide meeting business.
- Partner with Gallup to host an Omaha experience for up to 10 association executives with potential meeting business.
- Conduct site visit destination training to convert more qualified leads into booked business.



ASAE Annual Meeting – Columbus, OH

# TARGET GOALS

129,000	Definite Room Nights
200,000	Attendees
475,000	Room Nights Lead Generation
80	Site Visits
2	Familiarization Tours



Holiday Showcase – Chicago, IL



# MEETING, SPORTS, EVENT SERVICES & HOUSING

## DEPARTMENT OVERVIEW

Once a meeting or event is confirmed, the Visit Omaha services team is responsible for working with organizers to coordinate details before, during and after the event to increase attendance and satisfaction. Their efforts generate business for local vendors who are hired by meeting and event planners. The team also manages housing services, which provides clients with an easy way to manage blocks of hotel rooms. The team quantifies success by measuring the event organizers' satisfaction, attendance, the number of referrals sent to local businesses, hotel room nights utilized, and the economic impact the group has on the local community.



*2019 Airborne Public Safety Conference in Omaha*

## KEY AREAS OF WORK

- Support the sales team's efforts throughout the sales process, and establish relationships with event organizers to enhance Omaha's ability to close business.
- Provide exceptional service and support to event organizers by providing planning assistance, site visit coordination, pre-attendance promotional materials, and registration support.
- Manage the "Show Your Badge" program to provide attendee discounts that increase business referrals to local businesses and restaurants.
- Serve as the destination expert to connect meeting and event planners with local businesses, speakers and community resources in order to leverage Omaha's assets.
- Coordinate with the hospitality community to ensure a positive experience for event organizers and attendees.
- Provide housing services to event organizers who utilize a local venue, and two or more hotel properties.
- Solicit and capture event organizer and attendee feedback, both formally and informally, and share the results with key industry stakeholders.



## NEW INITIATIVES

- Coordinate the American Bus Association (ABA) 2020 Marketplace to showcase Omaha to 3,500 group tour leaders and vendors.
- Manage services for the NCAA Division I Men's Basketball Championship – First and Second Rounds.
- Manage services for the Adidas Gauntlet Tournament, an elite youth basketball event.
- Partner with the Omaha Sports Commission to create an engagement experience for U.S. Olympic Swim Trials attendees.
- Create a community gives-back experience for the NCAA Division I Women's Volleyball Championship athletes
- Develop a new post-event survey program



*American Bus Association Marketplace – Louisville, KY*



*American Bus Association Marketplace – Louisville, KY*

## TARGET GOALS

**850** Leads and Referrals

**2** Housing Contracts

**30** Post-event Surveys with a 75% Completion Rate



# MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

## DEPARTMENT OVERVIEW

The Visit Omaha marketing and communications team is responsible for convincing leisure travelers to visit the community, in order to increase revenue for local attractions, restaurants, bars, hotels, retail shops and other businesses. The team crafts and articulates the destination's brand; leads the organization's direct to consumer advertising and promotion efforts; and executes advertising programs to support the meetings, sports and events sales team. The team strategically plans and implements all advertising and promotional efforts for Visit Omaha.

The team also manages Visit Omaha's network of social media channels, the consumer and partner e-newsletters, the Omaha Visitors Guide, and the VisitOmaha.com website. The Visit Omaha communication efforts focus on securing media coverage for Omaha, which in turn raises awareness of the city regionally and nationally. Increased visitation from targeted markets, social media engagement, and number of people reached through promotional and advertising efforts, are the main metrics used to gauge success.



**OMAR the Troll unveiling**

## KEY AREAS OF WORK

- Execute a multi-media leisure advertising and promotion strategy to inspire visitation from core Midwest drive markets such as; Kansas City, Des Moines, Sioux Falls, and Minneapolis, while researching and cultivating new fly markets to increase awareness of unique experiences that visitors can only enjoy in Omaha.
- Produce and maintain a high quality destination guide and an online network of platforms that provide inspirational content.
- Build upon the brand position that Omaha is the Midwest destination for memorable weekends because Omaha lets the traveler focus on creating new experiences instead of the hassles of travel.
- Enhance awareness of Omaha as a unique food destination creating multi-media content for distribution through Visit Omaha's online social media network, through media partnerships, with paid advertising campaigns, and by managing Omaha Restaurant Week, which supports local restaurants and builds local brand advocates.
- Inspire new product development with initiatives that focus on creating unique travel-worthy experiences in neighborhoods and at existing attractions.
- Implement an ongoing local advocacy plan focused on educating residents and decision makers on how tourism brings families closer together and helps neighborhoods grow, value sentiments research shows Omaha residents strongly embrace.
- Generate positive, inspirational and topical media coverage of Omaha as a desirable travel, meeting and sports destination by working with targeted travel writers, editors, bloggers, online media and other influencers.

# NEW INITIATIVES

- Increase reach and frequency of year-round advertising by utilizing innovative media tactics in new larger fly markets including Chicago and Dallas, cities that would otherwise be too expensive to target.
- Employ digital media technology that customizes ads based on consumer preferences. This technology will also be used to track actual visitation to the city, and spending by those customers reached by Visit Omaha advertising.
- Measure online peer-to-peer conversations to determine how consumers feel about Omaha’s tourism attributes and what they are sharing online. The information will be used to create benchmarks for Omaha, and used to further develop content and advertising strategy.
- In partnership with convention sales, increase awareness of Omaha as an event destination by creating a six month long, high impact, direct mail campaign that targets 250 meeting, event and sports decision makers.
- Use gamification to increase engagement on the Visit Omaha website and provide a customized experience for website visitors.
- Create new multi-media digital content to increase engagement on Visit Omaha’s social media platforms. New content to include 24 videos and webisodes highlighting weekend experiences, travel-worthy food, and Bob the Bridge.
- Research and develop web content focused on showcasing Omaha as a diverse and inclusive destination.
- Create an Omaha Restaurant Advisory Committee to increase engagement with the dining community, and better understand how Omaha Restaurant Week can support their business growth.
- Develop, organize and implement quarterly local blogger outreach events to further relationships and influence content.
- Work with the Omaha Mayor’s Youth Council to provide students a hands-on opportunity to learn the value of tourism in their community.



2019 ESTO Award for Best Printed Collateral Materials

# TARGET GOALS

- 20% increase in VisitOmaha.com pageviews from target markets
- 10% increase in visitation from targeted markets
- 25% increase in GDPR compliant consumer data base.
- 20% increase in audience reached through earned media
- 10% increase in social media engagement
- 10% increase in the number of restaurants participating in Omaha Restaurant Week
- 72 average Barcelona score on all earned media (Barcelona measures the efficiency and effectiveness of earned media efforts)



# VISITOR INFORMATION SERVICES

## DEPARTMENT OVERVIEW

The Visitor Information team is responsible for educating and encouraging visitors to experience Omaha area attractions, restaurants, bars and retail shops, which increases the amount of money visitors spend in our local community. The team staffs the downtown Omaha Visitors Center near the Old Market, and manages two visitor information kiosks at Omaha's airport, which are staffed by volunteers from the Kiwanis Club of Omaha Golden K.

In all locations the staff interacts directly with visitors, answering questions and providing an insider's perspective on Omaha metro area points of interest such as: attractions, tours, hotels, restaurants and local businesses.

The visitor centers provide visitors and local residents a wide variety of metro area maps, visitor guides, recreational information and promotional brochures from Visit Omaha partners. The team also coordinates Visit Omaha's brochure program distributing Omaha promotional material across the state of Nebraska.



## KEY AREAS OF WORK

- Year-round operation of the Omaha Visitors Center and the airport information kiosks.
- Provide visitors with engaging information and excellent customer service to ensure a memorable experience, which maximizes their satisfaction and increases visitation to, and spending with, our local tourism partners.
- Educate local residents on things to do with visiting friends and family, which in turn will increase local awareness and appreciation of Omaha as a tourism destination.
- Partner with the Council Bluffs Convention & Visitors Bureau and Sarpy County Tourism on the annual Omaha Metropolitan Area (OMA) Tourism Awards. This awards program recognizes volunteers and front line staff from hotels, attractions and restaurants who exemplify excellent customer service.

## NEW INITIATIVES

- In partnership with local hospitality and transportation partners, research and implement new visitor outreach programs.
- Research opportunities to distribute visitor information materials at Omaha area venues and arenas.
- Collaborate with local colleges and universities to recruit additional volunteers for the Omaha Visitors Center, and develop outreach programs for incoming students and their families.



## TARGET GOALS

Coordinate **10** "Experience the Destination" tours for volunteer ambassadors and staff

Recruit, train and retain **75** volunteer ambassadors

Partner with the Visit Omaha Marketing team to create a targeted social media campaign that promotes the value of the Omaha Visitors Center to local residents



# ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE

## DEPARTMENT OVERVIEW

Visit Omaha's administration manages the daily operational needs of the office, executes the long-term strategic direction of the organization, forges relationships with community partners and secures funding sources. The finance team is responsible for the organization's financial strategy, manages the technology needs of the operation, and acts as the administrator for the Omaha Destination Marketing Corporation, which is responsible for the management of the Strategic Marketing Fund used to incentivize meeting and event business.



***Destination International Finance Summit – Colorado Springs, CO***

## KEY AREAS OF WORK

- Achieve revenue and expense goals for Visit Omaha.
- Manage advocacy efforts to educate local decision makers on tourism development needs.
- Engage with community groups and decision-making organizations to influence outcomes that support local tourism.
- Serve as a resource to Douglas County Visitor Improvement Fund applicants.
- Work with regional partners to increase awareness of the Omaha metro area as a tourism destination.
- Manage the Destination Marketing Corporation and the Strategic Marketing Fund to provide a mechanism to offer incentives to meeting and event groups.
- Lead efforts to accomplish Visit Omaha's five-year strategic plan initiatives.
- Maintain Destination Marketing Accreditation Program (DMAP) certification to ensure Visit Omaha continues to meet and exceed industry standards.
- Manage website provider to ensure the Visit Omaha team has an effective and usable Content Management System (CMS) and Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system.
- Provide staff training on existing technologies and office equipment.

## NEW INITIATIVES

- Secure a sustainable funding source for the Destination Marketing Corporation.
- Provide executive team with real-time revenue and expense data to improve efficiency and decision making abilities.
- Research ways to effectively implement business intelligence that will integrate multiple data sources to provide staff with a cohesive understanding of trends, opportunities and risks.
- Audit and cleanse data in the current Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system for conversion to the new Destination Management System (DMS), and manage the conversion process with our contracted CRM provider.

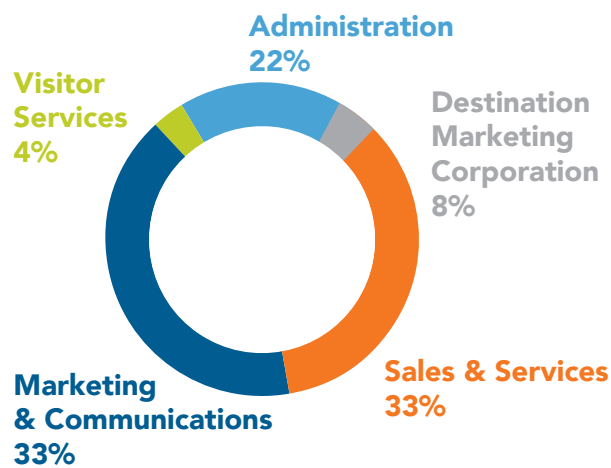


***Destination International Finance Summit – Colorado Springs, CO***

# BUDGET

The majority of Visit Omaha’s funding comes from hotel tax paid by visitors. In general, visitors pay 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 revenue to fund its operation – 2% from the County’s share, and .5% from the City’s share of the tax. In addition, in 2020 the City of Omaha will contribute \$1.6 million from its general fund to invest in tourism sales and promotion efforts. Visit Omaha also brings in private revenue by selling advertising on its website and its visitor guide, and through promotional and tradeshow partnerships with local hotels, attractions and restaurants.

## 2020 BUDGET BY DEPARTMENT



# DESTINATION MARKETING CORPORATION

To remain competitive, Visit Omaha created the Destination Marketing Corporation (DMC), a 501(c) 6 non-profit arm of Visit Omaha. The DMC is funded through Visit Omaha’s portion of the lodging tax paid by visitors. Every year Visit Omaha calculates how much hotel tax it will receive based on visitation projections, and sets its operational budget. When visitation exceeds projections, those dollars are saved in a reserve fund. The corporation allows Visit Omaha to take those reserve funds and use them as incentives to convince meeting, sports and event groups to select Omaha. For example, the funds may be used to offset the cost of renting the convention center, or for attendee transportation. Since the majority of meeting, sports and event business is booked 3-5 years in advance, the corporation allows Visit Omaha to earmark these funds and hold them until it’s time to pay for a specific meeting or event. Fund disbursement is approved by the Destination Marketing Corporation Board and the Omaha City Council.

## 2020 REVENUE

	Projected
Lodging Tax - County (2%)	\$3,982,452
Occupation Tax - City (.5%)	\$826,664
General Fund - City	\$1,600,000
Private Dollars	\$177,500
Destination Marketing Corporation	\$571,811
<b>Total revenues</b>	<b>\$7,158,427</b>

## 2020 EXPENSES

	%	Projected
Administration	22%	\$1,547,212
Meeting Sales & Services	33%	\$2,389,916
Marketing & Communications	33%	\$2,390,955
Visitor Information	4%	\$258,533
Destination Marketing Corporation	8%	\$571,811
<b>Total expenses by dept</b>		<b>\$7,158,427</b>



# STAFF

## ADMINISTRATION

Keith Backsen, CDME  
*EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR / PRESIDENT*

Dean Miller  
*VICE PRESIDENT OF OPERATIONS*

Jodie Jordon  
*ACCOUNTING CLERK*

Cindy Brickey  
*EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT*

## MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

Deborah Ward  
*VICE PRESIDENT OF MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS*

Jasmyn Goodwin  
*DIRECTOR OF MARKETING & CONTENT*

Tracie McPherson, APR  
*DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS*

Erin O'Brien  
*SOCIAL MEDIA MANAGER*

Amy Cunningham  
*GRAPHIC DESIGNER*

Lynn Mace  
*MARKETING COORDINATOR*

## VISITORS CENTER

Michele Hayes, PHR, SHRM-CP  
*DIRECTOR OF VISITOR SERVICES*

## MEETING, SPORTS AND EVENT SALES

Cathy Keller  
*VICE PRESIDENT OF SALES & SERVICES*

Mark Rath, CSEE  
*DIRECTOR OF SALES*

Matt Heck  
*NATIONAL SALES MANAGER*

Mattie Scheeter, CMP  
*NATIONAL SALES MANAGER*

Lindsey Holmes  
*NATIONAL SALES MANAGER*

Jessica Weishahn  
*TOURISM SALES MANAGER*

Sue Chevalier  
*RESEARCH ANALYST*

Kristin Beglin  
*NATIONAL SALES COORDINATOR*

## MEETING, SPORTS AND EVENT SERVICES

Erin Brungardt  
*DIRECTOR OF CONVENTION SERVICES*

Maddie Miller  
*CONVENTION SERVICES COORDINATOR*







*Visit*  
**OMAHA**™  
VisitOmaha.com

Visit Omaha  
1620 Dodge Street  
Suite 1900  
Omaha, NE 68102

Phone: 402.444.4660  
Toll Free: 866.937.6624