



2026 BUSINESS PLAN

VISITOMAHA™

VISIT OMAHA - OMAHA'S TOURISM AUTHORITY - [VISITOMAHA.COM](https://www.visitomaha.com)

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



VISIT OMAHA

MISSION

To stimulate economic growth for our community by increasing visitation.

KEY OBJECTIVES

- Successfully sell and promote our community as a desirable visitor destination.
- Influence tourism development to ensure future destination success.
- Deliver a positive and memorable customer experience.
- Collaborate and enhance relationships with local organizations, businesses and stakeholders.
- Operate as an efficient, high-performing organization.

ORGANIZATION DESCRIPTION

Visit Omaha creates sustainable visitor demand for the community through: meeting, event, sport and leisure marketing; collaborative relationships; broad industry experience; and unprecedented product knowledge. Visit Omaha's efforts result in economic growth and job creation for our community.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Relevance:

We are committed to being consistent, accountable, transparent, perseverant and dedicated to excellence.

Innovation:

We are committed to being creative, pioneering, collaborative and problem-solving.

Gratitude:

We are committed to being appreciative of both the big and small contributions that make our organization and industry valuable to our community.

TRAVEL AND TOURISM TRENDS FOR 2026

LEISURE TRAVEL TRENDS

After record-breaking growth in the post-pandemic years, Omaha's tourism continues to normalize heading into 2026. This trend mirrors broader domestic leisure travel projections. Two major national events are expected to positively impact the local tourism community. America 250 is anticipated to increase travel to historic sites and cultural attractions in Omaha, and the FIFA World Cup 2026 has the potential to boost interest in Omaha due to the city's proximity to Kansas City, one of the host cities.

Economic concerns remain a key factor shaping travel in 2026. A Longwoods International tracking study of American travelers found that 39% cite economic uncertainty as the primary barrier to leisure travel, while 64% say travel is becoming too expensive. Despite these sentiments, Americans continue to prioritize travel, increasingly seeking affordable destinations and value-driven experiences. Spending remains strong—particularly on accommodations, restaurants, and experiences—as travelers focus their dollars on trips that feel worth the cost. Many are planning shorter getaways, or "micro-cations," and favoring regional trips over long-haul journeys. Road trips continue their upward trajectory; Miles Partnership research shows a 28% increase over pre-pandemic levels. "Slow travel," a more relaxed and immersive way to explore a destination, is trending toward tranquil, more meaningful, and budget-conscious getaways.

U.S. travelers are increasingly turning to digital sources to discover, book and experience trips. According to a recent Amadeus global study, which included 2,000 U.S. travelers, 34% of U.S. travelers use social media to find ideas and inspiration for trips, flights and hotels. Generative AI is the fastest-growing tool, rising 30% year over year, with 17% of U.S. travelers now consulting AI platforms for travel ideas—a number expected to grow. Many travelers are also combining multiple platforms and technologies to plan trips in a trend referred to as "travel mixology," which integrates human judgment with AI recommendations. Visit Omaha works to be a traveler's preferred "bartender," mixing the right resources so travelers can spend less time planning and focus more on anticipating and enjoying the trip.

SALES FORECAST

Nationally, group business—including conventions, meetings and motorcoach travel—is expected to continue its recovery toward pre-pandemic levels in 2026. In Omaha, group business reached full recovery in 2023. Factors such as inflation, higher travel and lodging costs, and broader economic uncertainties are anticipated to moderate growth, particularly for cost-sensitive organizations and attendees.

These financial pressures are reflected in a survey of more than 600 meeting professionals by Amex Global Business Travel. While optimism among planners is at a five-year high, rising costs remain a concern. Among respondents, 88% reported budget increases, yet 38% identified cost as their top challenge. In 2026, planners are likely to prioritize value, efficient budgeting and flexibility, and consider smaller events, hybrid formats and second-tier cities or venues.

Trade show attendees increasingly expect active, engaging experiences rather than passive observation, a shift that reflects broader trends in group business. According to BizBash, key factors driving trade show success include playful discovery, tech-powered shareable takeaways and future-infused nostalgia, which blends retro fun with modern technology to create new but familiar interactions.

The Visit Omaha sales team is currently outpacing the 2026 pace target. The Future Pace reporting tool utilizes historical data along with definite and tentative business to provide a booking pace for the Visit Omaha sales team. This information helps in strategizing and updating sales goals based on market conditions. The Pace Target graph on page 4 shows Omaha's booking pace.

LOCAL STR PROJECTIONS

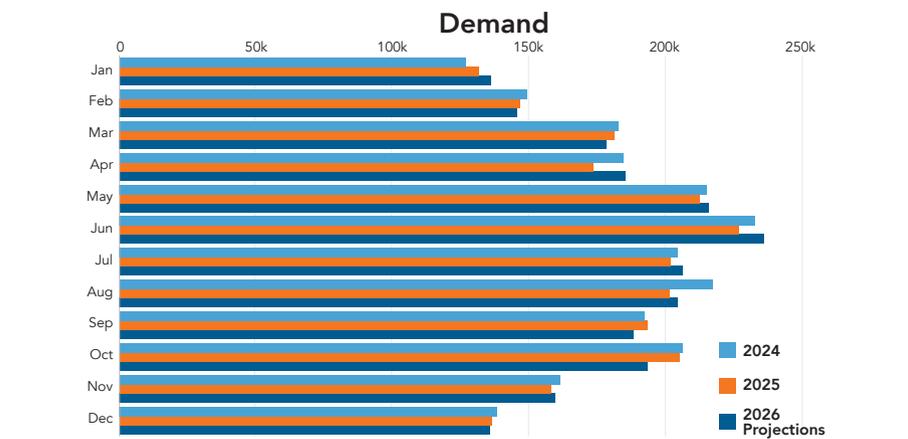
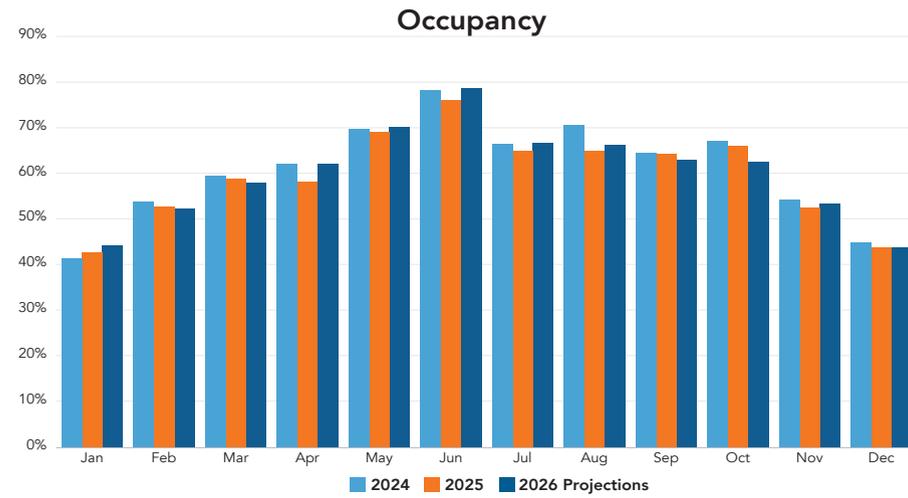
The most recent STR forecast for Douglas County hotels estimates 2026 will show slight increases over 2025. Occupancy is expected to average 60.3%, a 0.88% increase over 2025. All key metrics are expected to see a year-over-year increase as well, with hotel demand increasing by 0.75% and revenue increasing by 1.3%. Revenue in 2026 is expected to reach \$279 million.

STR is a global research firm that tracks, reports and projects hotel data.

STR GROWTH

These graphs show Douglas County hotel data for 2024, 2025 and projections for 2026. The key metrics highlighted are occupancy (the percentage of available hotel rooms occupied), demand (the number of hotel rooms sold during a given period) and revenue (the total hotel room revenue generated from bookings).

This data is based on actualized data through November 2025.



PACE TARGET

This graph compares definite business on the books (OTB) for the specified year with pace targets, which indicate where sales bookings should be at any given time to ensure the year-end goal is met.



The Pace Target chart above only includes definite business that has been secured as of December 15, 2025. It does not include some annual events which are expected to go definite closer to their actual event dates. Those hotel room nights are considered tentative.

CURRENT TENTATIVE ROOM NIGHTS BY YEAR

2026	26,894
2027	86,243
2028	78,996
2029	58,474
2030	37,349
2031	5,702
2032	1,800

KEY EVENTS IN TENTATIVE OR DEFINITE STATUS

- Asics Presidents' Day Volleyball – Definite for 2026; Tentative for 2027-2029
- Berkshire Hathaway – Definite for 2026; Tentative for 2027-2030
- IRONMAN 70.3 Omaha – Definite for 2026; Tentative for 2027 and 2028
- NCAA Men's College World Series – Definite for 2026, 2027 and 2028
- NSAA State Wrestling – Definite for 2026; Tentative for 2027-2029
- Triple Crown Sports SlumpBuster® – Definite for 2026; Tentative for 2027

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 help provide jobs for our friends, family and neighbors.

KEY AREAS OF WORK

- Identify and pursue citywide and single hotel meeting and event business for Omaha based on predetermined goals.
- Evaluate and review sales efforts in key markets to ensure sales team efficiencies.
- Continue to partner with national organizations, including American Society of Associate Executives (ASAE), Association Forum, Conference Direct, CONNECT, Cvent, HelmsBriscoe, Northstar Meetings Group, Maritz and Professional Convention Management Association (PCMA), to increase awareness of Omaha as a Midwest meeting destination.
- Collaborate with local sports facilities, organizations 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 their annual or regional meetings.
- 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

- Develop and execute a targeted prospecting campaign to generate new leads for Omaha hotel partners, with an emphasis on the June–December 2027 need period.
- Initiate a comprehensive outreach campaign to attract groups needing 16+ breakout rooms and 500+ peak-night hotel rooms for 2028 and future years.
- Introduce a new prospecting program aimed at engaging local meeting planners and organizations to increase sales efforts in Omaha and Lincoln.
- Organize and lead sales missions in Washington, D.C. and Chicago with Omaha tourism partners, to strengthen relationships and generate new business opportunities from each of these markets.
- Launch a new annual program with the American Society of Association Executives (ASAE) and Gallup. This program will focus on new CEOs who have been in their roles for fewer than three years, providing valuable leadership education while elevating Omaha's visibility among national association leaders.
- Participate as an exhibitor at the TEAMS Conference to increase Omaha's profile as a premier sports destination.
- Collaborate with the City of Omaha Parks Department and new sports facilities to develop scheduling guidelines and establish a unified events calendar.
- Partner with state and local soccer clubs to build a comprehensive Tranquility Park scheduling plan that aids in securing national and regional soccer events.

TARGET GOALS

525,000

Room night leads

Includes in the year for the year (ITYFTY) and future year business.

165,000

Definite room nights

Includes in the year for the year (ITYFTY) and future year business.

75

Site visits

MEETING, SPORTS, AND EVENT SERVICES

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. The team's efforts generate business for local vendors who are hired by meeting and event planners.

The team quantifies success by measuring the event organizer's satisfaction, attendance, the number of referrals sent to local businesses, hotel room nights utilized and the group's economic impact on the local community.

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.
- Solicit and capture event organizer and attendee feedback, both formally and informally, and share the results with key industry stakeholders.

NEW INITIATIVES

- Partner with downtown restaurants and businesses to elevate the 2026 IRONMAN 70.3 event through exclusive athlete and spectator discounts.
- Plan and host four familiarization tours to showcase Omaha's meeting, event and hospitality offerings and strengthen its position as a premier meeting destination.
- Develop and publish a sustainability toolkit to help clients easily identify and engage with Omaha businesses that prioritize environmentally responsible practices.
- Curate a list of local volunteer opportunities to help visiting groups give back to the Omaha community during their stay.
- Distribute a services guide outlining various offerings to assist event meeting professionals during the planning and execution of their events.
- Conduct regular engagement meetings with industry partners to reinforce relationships, improve communication and enhance coordination in delivering exceptional client service.

TARGET GOALS

35
Post-event survey testimonials

550
Leads and/or referrals

20%
Increase in the "Show Your Badge" program participants

MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

DEPARTMENT OVERVIEW

The Visit Omaha marketing and communications team is responsible for persuading leisure travelers to visit the community 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 all sales efforts. 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, consumer and partner email newsletters, the Omaha Visitors Guide and the VisitOmaha.com website. Visit Omaha's communication efforts focus on securing media coverage for Omaha, which in turn raises awareness of the city on a regional and national level.

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.

KEY AREAS OF WORK

- Execute a multimedia leisure advertising and promotion strategy to inspire visitation from core Midwest drive markets such as Kansas City, Des Moines, Sioux Falls, Minneapolis and Chicago, 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 by creating multimedia 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, values that 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 creators.
- Assist with the annual Omaha Metropolitan Area (OMA) Tourism Awards to recognize frontline staff who exemplify excellent customer service.

NEW INITIATIVES

- Initiate a local campaign encouraging residents to partner with Visit Omaha in bringing their national and regional meetings to the city.
- Optimize VisitOmaha.com through expert, keyword-driven content to position the website as the leading AI search source on Omaha.
- Use visitor interests and behavior insights to guide targeted advertising that improves efficiency and ROI.
- Organize an Omaha Restaurant Week kick-off event to engage participating restaurants and generate enthusiasm for Omaha's 10 Tastiest Days.
- Partner with the Omaha Chamber for a regional pilot campaign to stimulate the economy by increasing visitation and strengthening the workforce.
- Develop a targeted campaign using Spanish-language content to attract a Latino audience.
- Create a high-impact, short-form social media video campaign to highlight authentic, visual moments that make Omaha stand out.
- Launch a campaign highlighting Omaha as a budget-friendly destination to increase visitation.
- Generate promotional activations targeting FIFA World Cup 2026 attendees to highlight Omaha and its proximity to Kansas City.
- Execute a targeted marketing campaign to highlight Omaha's new and enhanced sports facilities.
- Produce a promotional video providing meeting planners with a tool to build excitement among future event attendees.

TARGET GOALS

7%
Increase in visitation from targeted markets

25%
Increase in overall engaged sessions on VisitOmaha.com

25%
Increase in GDPR-compliant consumer database

20%
Increase in social media engagement

65
Participating restaurants in Omaha Restaurant Week

10
Hosted media trips

VISITOR INFORMATION SERVICES

DEPARTMENT OVERVIEW

The visitor information team is responsible for welcoming visitors into the city and providing helpful, inspirational information that encourages exploration and enjoyment, which translates into increased visitor spending throughout the community.

The team is dedicated to engaging and collaborating with local tourism partners, staying informed about available experiences and providing exceptional customer service.

With the help of experienced and dedicated volunteers, the team manages the downtown Omaha Visitors Center at 10th and Farnam Streets, and two visitor information kiosks at the Omaha airport. Serving as the city's official resource for visitor information, each location provides personalized service, engaging visuals, area maps, brochures, special offers and insider tips on what to see and do while visiting Omaha.

KEY AREAS OF WORK

- Year-round operation of the Omaha Visitors Center, airport information kiosks and satellite information locations throughout Douglas County.
- Provide visitors with engaging information and excellent customer service to ensure a memorable experience, which maximizes guest satisfaction and increases visitation to, and spending with, local tourism partners.
- Collaborate with tourism partners to educate frontline staff on tourism offerings throughout the community, providing a full-city approach to visitor hospitality.
- Educate local residents on things to do with visiting friends and family, which in turn increases local awareness and appreciation of Omaha as a tourism destination.
- Develop new programs to increase traffic at the Omaha Visitors Center and increase its relevancy with visitors and local residents.
- Recruit and retain Omaha Visitors Center volunteer ambassadors and provide continuing education opportunities through training and tours.
- Distribute Omaha promotional materials across the state in partnership with the Nebraska Tourism Commission.

NEW INITIATIVES

- Refresh the Omaha airport visitor information kiosks to provide a more engaging customer experience.
- Launch a free Omaha postcard program that encourages visitors to share their Omaha experiences with friends and families while further promoting the city.
- Develop a self-guided walking tour brochure to encourage exploration of key areas in the city.
- Expand community outreach initiatives to strengthen local partnerships and increase awareness of the Omaha Visitors Center.
- Increase the selection of retail items at the Omaha Visitors Center to drive revenue.
- Boost retention of volunteer ambassadors by developing eight Omaha neighborhood familiarization tours to increase product knowledge and build camaraderie among volunteers.



TARGET GOALS

Assist **14,300** visitors at the Omaha Visitors Center

Recruit, train & retain a staff of **80** volunteer Ambassadors

ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE

DEPARTMENT OVERVIEW

The Visit Omaha administration team develops and executes the strategic direction of the organization, manages daily operations and technology needs, ensures financial accountability and stability, leads community partnership and engagement efforts, and serves as administrator for the City of Omaha Destination Marketing Corporation (DMC). The DMC is a 501(c) (6) nonprofit entity that is responsible for the management of the Strategic Marketing Fund used to incentivize meeting and event business.

KEY AREAS OF WORK

- Achieve revenue and expense goals.
- Lead advocacy efforts to promote and educate community leaders on the value of tourism.
- Collaborate with local, state and regional organizations to increase awareness of Omaha as a tourism destination.
- Manage the Omaha Destination Marketing Corporation and the Strategic Marketing Fund to offer incentives to attract meeting and event business to our community.
- Serve as a resource to Douglas County Visitor Improvement Fund applicants.
- Maintain Destination Marketing Accreditation Program (DMAP) certification to ensure Visit Omaha continues to meet and exceed industry standards.
- Ensure the organization has leading-edge technology to maximize efficiency and productivity.
- Provide staff training to increase employee performance and job satisfaction.

NEW INITIATIVES

- Explore the realignment of Visit Omaha’s organizational structure to increase efficiency and better serve clients and stakeholders.
- Review and modernize existing job descriptions to aid in recruitment and retention.
- Utilize Gallup CliftonStrengths to create a leadership enhancement program customized to meet the needs of Visit Omaha’s staff, increase overall team satisfaction and cultivate a high-performance culture.
- Collaborate with Visit Omaha department heads to reorganize, update and reassess Visit Omaha’s master procedure documents to streamline workflows, establish clear operating standards, and build a cross-trained team capable of supporting all key functions.
- Develop an office sustainability plan to reduce the team’s environmental footprint through decreased paper usage, recycling programs and the adoption of other eco-friendly practices.
- Explore AI options that will provide staff with an automated tool to access operational guidelines and City of Omaha policies and procedures.

OMAHA DESTINATION MARKETING CORPORATION

To remain competitive, Visit Omaha created the Omaha Destination Marketing Corporation (DMC), a 501(c) (6) nonprofit organization. The DMC is funded through Visit Omaha’s portion of the lodging tax paid by visitors. Each year, Visit Omaha sets its operational budget after calculating how much hotel tax revenue it will receive based on visitation projections. When that revenue 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 entice meeting, sports and event groups to select Omaha. Since the majority of meeting, sports and event business is booked three to five years in advance, the corporation allows Visit Omaha to earmark these funds and hold them until it is time to pay for a specific meeting or event. The Destination Marketing Corporation Board and the Omaha City Council approve fund disbursement.

2026 BUDGET BY DEPARTMENT



BUDGET

The majority of Visit Omaha’s funding comes from hotel tax paid by visitors. The state collects a 5% lodging tax on each Douglas County hotel room booked: 1% is for the state’s tourism promotion efforts; 2% goes to the county for tourism development; and the remaining 2% funds Visit Omaha’s sales and marketing efforts. In addition, the City of Omaha collects a 5.5% occupation tax on hotel rooms; 0.5% goes to Visit Omaha. In 2026, the city will contribute \$2.5 million from its general fund to invest in tourism sales and promotion. Visit Omaha also generates private revenue selling advertising on its website and in its visitor guide, selling branded souvenirs at the Omaha Visitors Center, and through promotional and trade show partnerships with local hotels, attractions and restaurants.

2026 REVENUE

	Projected
Lodging Tax - County (2%)	\$6,178,800
Occupation Tax - City (0.5%)	\$1,321,750
General Fund - City	\$2,500,000
Private Dollars	\$133,000
Destination Marketing Corporation	\$417,341
Reserve Account	\$1,500,000

Total revenues \$12,050,891

2026 EXPENSES

	%	Projected
Administration	11%	\$1,291,729
Sales, Services & Sports	43%	\$5,234,781
Marketing & Communications	38%	\$4,480,826
Visitor Information	4%	\$458,024
Destination Marketing Corporation	4%	\$417,341

Total expenses by department \$11,882,701

**Adopted city budget*

VISIT OMAHA STAFF

ADMINISTRATION

Jasmyn Goodwin
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dean Miller
VICE PRESIDENT OF OPERATIONS

Jodie Jordon
OFFICE MANAGER

Kelly Thomsen
ACCOUNTING CLERK

MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

Erin O'Brien
VICE PRESIDENT OF
MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS

Megan Feeney
MARKETING CONTENT MANAGER

Noelle Agenor
SOCIAL MEDIA MANAGER

Lynn Mace
MARKETING RESEARCH ANALYST

Suleyma Garcia Mendez
MARKETING COORDINATOR

Amy Cunningham
GRAPHIC DESIGNER

MEETING, SPORTS AND EVENT SALES

Mattie Scheeter, CMP
VICE PRESIDENT OF SALES & SERVICES

Mark Rath, STS
DIRECTOR OF SPORTS

Matt Heck
DIRECTOR OF SALES

Megan Dickinson
NATIONAL SALES MANAGER

Holli Vesely
NATIONAL SALES MANAGER

Noah Huber
SPORTS SALES MANAGER

Jen Swanson
NATIONAL SALES ACCOUNT MANAGER

Bryan Schlotterbeck
RESEARCH ANALYST

Cassie Schriener
SALES AND MARKETING COORDINATOR - SALES

MEETING, SPORTS AND EVENT SERVICES

Erin Brungardt
DIRECTOR OF CONVENTION & EVENT SERVICES

Madonna Bosanek
CONVENTION & EVENT SERVICES MANAGER

Sophie Grabowski
SALES AND MARKETING COORDINATOR - SERVICES

VISITOR SERVICES

Shannon Wiig
DIRECTOR OF VISITOR SERVICES

Christine Eipperle
VISITOR SERVICES MANAGER



VISITOMAHA™

Administrative Office · 120 S 31st Ave, Suite 5107 · Omaha, NE 68131 · 402.444.4660
Omaha Visitors Center · 306 S 10th St, Omaha, NE 68102 · 402.444.7762 · VisitOmaha.com

