

# VISIT ROCHESTER

## 2021 ANNUAL REPORT



*Photo courteous of Jim Montanus*

VISIT  
**ROCHESTER**  
LIMITLESS

## LETTER FROM THE BOARD CHAIR AND PRESIDENT & CEO

Dear Friends:

**We are pleased to share with you our 2021 Annual Report, presenting the economic impact figures and visitation data for 2021, representing our first full year of data since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.**

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The figures presented throughout this report help to tell the story of our continued recovery from the devastating impact of the pandemic on the travel and tourism industry. While this report will detail data from 2021, all indicators for the current year (2022) are positive and point to even more growth and a full recovery from the pandemic.

In addition to the 2021 economic impact figures, this report will highlight a few programs of note from the current year. You can also view a summary of Visit Rochester's areas of endeavor – showcasing the depth and breadth of the staff's work in our community.

One of our greatest metrics for success are the dynamic relationships we have fostered within our community and our industry. We value the many contributions of the more than 450 member organizations who choose to invest their time and resources with Visit Rochester.

**If the past two years have taught us anything, it is that we are stronger and better together in partnership.**

**Thank you for your continued partnership and support of Visit Rochester.**



**K. William Gunther**  
Chairman of the Board



**Don Jeffries**  
President & CEO

# MISSION & VISION

## **ORGANIZATIONAL MISSION**

Visit Rochester aggressively sells and markets Greater Rochester as a preferred destination in order to grow and maximize visitor spending and to enhance the economy. To this end, Visit Rochester also advocates for appropriate destination development, investment and increased community awareness, appreciation and support for the visitor industry.

## **ORGANIZATIONAL VISION**

Visit Rochester will be the respected leader in successfully positioning the Greater Rochester Area as a preferred travel destination thereby contributing to a vibrant, diversified economy and an enhanced quality of life for all residents.

## **DESTINATION VISION**

The Greater Rochester Area will be widely respected as a fascinating destination, offering a mix of unique arts, culture, recreation, sports, entertainment and first class visitor amenities.



## Visit Rochester Board of Directors & Staff

### Board of Directors

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**Bill Gunther (Chair)**

Gunther & Associates, LLC

**Fran Antonelli (Vice-Chair)**

Antonelli Development, LLC

**John Urlaub (Treasurer)**

Rohrbach Brewing Company

**Hon. Adam Bello**

Monroe County Executive

**Craig F. Curran (Director)**

DePrez Travel Bureau

**Corey Dooley**

Woodcliff Hotel and Spa

**Steve Dubnik**

The Strong National Museum of Play

**Bob Duffy**

Greater Rochester Chamber of Commerce

**Hon. Malik Evans**

Mayor, City of Rochester

**Steve Hausmann**

Rochester Sports Commission Advisory Board

**Hon. Sabrina LaMar**

President, Monroe County Legislature

**Jett Mehta**

Indus Hospitality Group

**Rob Norris**

Seabreeze Park

**Hillary Olson**

Rochester Museum & Science Center

**Joseph Rulison**

three+one Advisors

**Gregory Smith**

Jay Advertising

**Bill Strassburg**

Wegmans Food Markets (retired)

### Staff

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**Don Jeffries**

President & CEO

**Holly Avino**

Marketing & Events Coordinator

**Jeanine Battermann**

VP, Finance, HR & Administration

**Amber Brewer**

Event Services Specialist

**Libby Craig**

Sports Sales Manager

**Amanda Fox**

CMP, Director of Event Services

**Alicia Gazda**

Convention Sales Manager

**Tim James**

Senior Sales Manager

**Diana Keating**

Director of Tourism & Marketing

**Erin Kivel**

Administrative Assistant/Sales & Sports Coordinator

**Rachel Laber Pulvino**

Director of Market Communications & Public Relations

**Gregory LaDuca**

VP, Industry Relations & Visitor Experience

**Rich Mackey**

Sports Sales Manager

**Wendy O'Duffy**

Director of Sales

**Elena Oyer**

Partnership Manager

**Emma Quinn**

Visitor Services & Accounting Specialist

**Dave Samentello**

Convention Sales Manager

**Regan Wagner**

Digital Communications Specialist

# 2021 Economic Impact of Tourism

*\*Financial figures are in millions*

## Travelers Spending

**\$299.1**

Lodging

**\$167.2**

Retail

**\$361.3**

Food & Beverage

**\$50.0**

Recreation

**\$109.7**

Transportation

**\$6.8**

Second Homes

**\$994.2**

Total Spend/Economic Impact

## Local Financial Impact of Tourism

**\$53.1**

State Taxes

**\$543.9**

Total Labor Income

**\$81.5**

Local Taxes

**15,240**

Tourism Employment

### 2021 Resource Allocation

#### 2021 Areas of Support (% of Total Budget)

Membership, Grant & Other Income - 8%  
In Kind Member & Partner Support - 3%  
Monroe County Hotel Tax - 89%

### 2021 Resource Allocation

#### 2021 Resource Allocations (% of Total Budget)

Convention/Meeting Sales & Services - 22%  
Tourism/Leisure Marketing - 20%  
Visit Rochester Operations, Facilities & Overhead - 15%  
Visitor Services & Information Center Operations - 7%  
PR, Communications & Publication Development - 11%  
Rochester/Finger Lakes Film Commission - 4%  
Membership Services - 9%  
Sports Commission - 11%  
Community Partnership Marketing - 1%

*Source: Tourism Economics*



# 2021 Visitor Profile

# 1.24 million daily arrivals

*Cumulative visitation*

## Top Origin Markets in New York State:

Buffalo  
Syracuse  
New York City  
Elmira  
Albany  
Schenectady  
Troy

## Top Origin Markets outside New York State:

Philadelphia  
Boston  
Washington, D.C.  
Pittsburgh  
Chicago

- Visitors from NYS Origin Markets spent an average of 1.009 days in Monroe County
- Visitors from outside of NYS origin markets spent an average of 2.025 days in Monroe County

*Source: Arrivalist*



# Areas of Endeavor

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**Visit Rochester's full scope of responsibilities encompass the following departments and tactics. They accomplish the organizational mission to aggressively sell and market Greater Rochester as a destination in order to grow and maximize visitor spending, and to enhance the economy.**

## **Convention Sales**

- Direct sales presentations and lead management
- Familiarization tours and site visits
- Local contact cultivation
- Trade show presence

## **Sports Sales**

- Attendance building and tournament development
- Trade show presence
- Building community brand recognition

## **Event Services and Promotional Assistance**

- Planning assistance for host organizations
- Promotional assistance programs
- Stay-extension programs
- Special assistance programs
- Housing system and partner oversight
- Information services and collateral distribution
- Welcome signage and displays
- Publicity assistance
- Visit Rochester member referrals and liaison

## **Convention and Sports Sales Marketing**

- Convention trade and affinity market publicity
- Advertising and direct marketing programs

## **Consumer Tourism Marketing**

- Mass market and special interest advertising
- Publicity and media coverage
- Product and package development
- Promotional program development and implementation
- Collateral development and distribution
- Travel show marketing

## **Travel Trade Marketing and Consumer Development**

- Direct sales presentations
- Program and product development
- Cooperative sales programs targeted at consumers
- Site visits and familiarization tours
- Publicity and media development
- Distribution partner cultivation
- Collateral development and distribution
- Promotional program development and implementation

## **Media Relations and Publicity Development**

- Market-relevant information collection
- Proactive media information dissemination to members and affiliates
- Media tool development
- Media support and response
- Individual media contacts and presentations
- Visit Rochester corporate communications
- Earned media cultivation

## **Website and Digital Resources**

- Coordination and administration of visitrochester.com
- Repository for film, video and image collections
- Content development and promotion for website and social media

## **Visitor Services, Information Centers, and Training Programs**

- Information center administration and development
- Hospitality training and information services
- Stay-extension/stay enhancement programs
- Visitor experience enhancement
- Promotional program development and implementation
- Service personnel administration

## **Membership Sales and Service**

- Visit Rochester membership administration
- New member sales and orientation
- Membership assistance and information dissemination
- Visitor Industry Council (VIC) administration
- Member-to-member promotions and partnership development

## **Rochester/Finger Lakes Film and Video Office**

- Location scout management and support
- Locations image collection, management and distribution
- Producer and production assistance
- Liaison to NYS/Empire State Development Film Office
- Coordination with local, regional and state agencies/services
- Production community contacts and facilitation
- Cost environment analysis

# Highlighted Initiatives

**Building on the growth of the tourism industry in 2021, Visit Rochester launched and deepened its work on the following new and notable initiatives over the past year.**

## **Recommend Rochester**

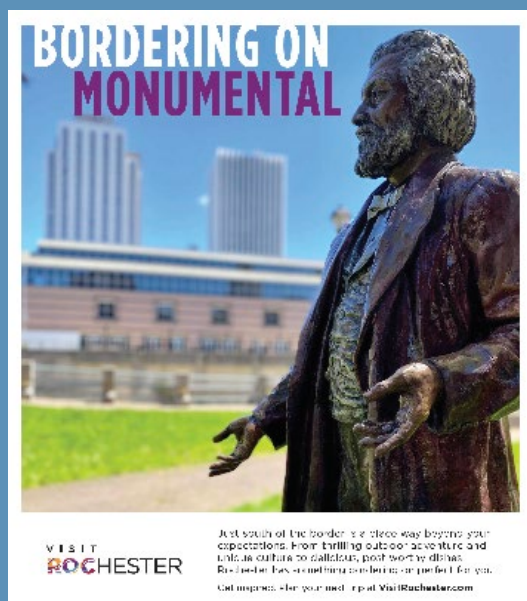
Recommend Rochester is Visit Rochester's local ambassador program designed to bring new meetings and events to Monroe County through the referrals of local residents. After being put on pause during the pandemic, the Recommend Rochester program has been reimagined and continues to evolve. Beginning in 2021, the Visit Rochester meeting sales team has hosted an annual signature event inviting influential local residents who are involved in professional associations and social organizations with the potential to bring a new event to Rochester. The first Recommend Rochester event resulted in 60 new leads for the team to pursue, while the most recent event held in October 2022 brought nearly 100 guests together and produced even more leads than the previous year.

## **Bordering on Canadian Tourism Campaign**

With the long-awaited reopening of the U.S.-Canadian border, Visit Rochester had the opportunity to reintroduce the destination to a Canadian audience with new messaging, bold creative and a Rochester-centric campaign (previous campaigns were co-op efforts focused on the broader Upstate New York region). Work began on the campaign in spring 2021, with campaign elements and tactics ready to be deployed the moment the border finally reopened.

The creative theme for the new campaign was "Bordering On," speaking to the idea that just south of the U.S.-Canadian border is a destination filled with art, culture, outdoor experiences, award-winning food, drink and so much more – just waiting to be discovered.

The Bordering On campaign is award-winning, receiving recognition for Excellence in Marketing through a New York State Tourism Industry Association (NYSTIA), Tourism Excellence Award and a PRSA Rochester Prism Award.





**Over the past two years, Visit Rochester has prioritized efforts related to diversity, equity and inclusion organization wide. The organization continues to seek ways to train staff and promote the destination in a way that is inclusive of the county and communities which we represent.**

## **Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Efforts**

### **Initiatives have included:**

- BIPOC Membership initiative. As part of its ongoing diversity, equity and inclusion efforts, in 2021 Visit Rochester launched a new BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, Person of Color) business membership initiative. With financial underwriting from a local corporation, this initiative allowed Visit Rochester to offer complimentary memberships for BIPOC-owned businesses in Monroe County. This initiative was launched because it is critical for Visit Rochester's member businesses, and the tourism industry as a whole, to mirror the fabric of the Greater Rochester community. The initiative has resulted in greater diversity amongst the Visit Rochester membership base.
- DEI masterclass training for staff through tourism governing body, Destinations International.
- Participation in the Travel Unity Pilot Program, which focuses on increasing diversity in the world of travel through individual and community empowerment.
- Creation of a corporate DEI statement, adopted by staff and leadership.
- Creation and leadership of a membership committee through the Visitor Industry Council focused on Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility (IDEA).
- Engagement and collaboration with local community groups with a focus on DEI including REDCO and SEAC (Southeast Area Coalition).
- In Partnership with MCC, Visit Rochester applied for a grant with the plan to research and partner with community entities who work on DEI initiatives. The result of this research will be used to develop a DEI Training specific to Hotels and other hospitality establishments.
- Concentrated efforts to invest program resources with MWBE and BIPOC-owned businesses.

## Virtual Tours for Visit Rochester Member Businesses

### Highlighted Initiatives - *Continued*

When the pandemic brought an immediate pause to in-person site visits for meeting and event planners, Visit Rochester quickly identified a solution that would provide virtual tours of its member locations. Beginning in 2021, Visit Rochester partnered with Threshold 360 to provide Virtual Tours for member businesses. These virtual tours are used for a number of different audiences, including meeting and event planners, event attendees and general leisure visitors. The tours are linked to Visit Rochester member listings on the website, and appear on member Google listings.

Since launching the tool, Threshold 360 virtual tours have garnered nearly **400,000 views** on VisitRochester.com for the 98 member locations that have been filmed. These virtual tours received more than 8 million views on member Google listings.

### Celebrate More - Monroe County Bicentennial

Visit Rochester proudly collaborated with Monroe County on the celebration of Monroe County's Bicentennial throughout 2022, under the banner of "Celebrate More!" The celebration of the Monroe County Bicentennial recognized the proud history and the promising future of Monroe County.

This celebration included the return of existing events, several of which had not taken place since 2019, alongside exciting new events and activities, including festivals, concerts, parades and educational programming.

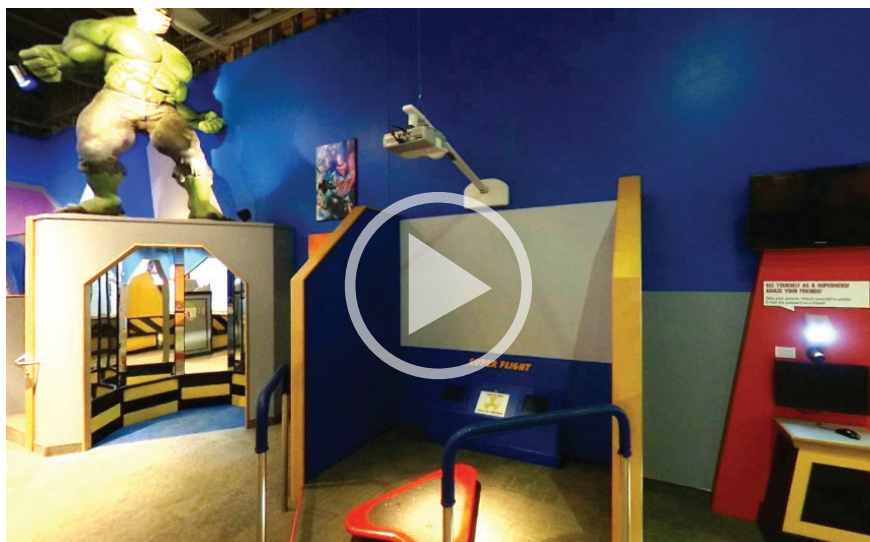


Image from virtual tour





# LOOKING AHEAD

The next several years will see multiple high impact events that will have a significant influence on the tourism industry in Monroe County.

*Visit Rochester will be taking an active role in promoting and helping to foster hospitality community collaboration around these, and many other, events.*

- 2023 PGA Championship (May 15-21, 2023)
- 2023 DIII Track & Field Championships (May 25-27, 2023)
- 2023 Drum Corps Associates World Championships (September 1-3, 2023)
- 2024 Total Solar Eclipse (April 8, 2024)

