

2024 ANNUAL REPORT



A LETTER FROM THE CEO & BOARD OF DIRECTORS PRESIDENT

In 2024, the Steamboat Springs Chamber continued to adapt, evolve, and demonstrate resilience. Reflected in this year's annual report is our commitment to being proactive through rapidly changing times. We also remained dedicated to our vision of economic vitality in Routt County by serving our business community, employees, and visitors, and did so more strategically. Our new three-year strategic plan, finalized this year, guided the way.

The Chamber's strategic work serves over 500 businesses and non-profits, plus committees and councils, local officials, young professionals, and passionate residents all working to make Steamboat Springs an outstanding place to live and do business. To better serve these partners, we established four key initiatives: organizational evolution, business development, financial health, and destination stewardship.

We expanded our communications efforts with more articles, campaigns, and business spotlights, and engaged more with future generation business leaders. Our programming advanced to include a Pastries & Policy advocacy series and a refreshed Empower Summit focusing on organizational culture and workforce retention. For nearly all our events, we surpassed attendance goals. Financially, we approached resource management with creativity and care. And finally, our destination development team launched the next phase of our destination stewardship program which will help ensure Steamboat Springs remains a place people want to visit – and a place we're proud to call home.

These projects and accomplishments are only made possible by you – our members, partners, sponsors, and stakeholders. Your dedication, ideas, and goals fuel our programs and keep us inspired to do more. As we tackle challenges and embrace change together, your continued support is what drives our collective success.

As the saying goes, it takes a village – and that's as true now as ever. Thank you to our Board and staff for their creativity and commitment to our business community, and to our member businesses, partners, and sponsors for their investment in our work.

Looking ahead, we believe we're more prepared, motivated, and energized than ever. We're excited to share our 2024 Annual Report with you and can't wait to see what we accomplish together in the year ahead.



Sarah Leonard, CEO



Soniya Fidler, 2024 Board of Directors President

2024 HIGHLIGHTS





41 new Chamber members



- Finalized and began executing our 2024-2026 Strategic Plan
- Advocated for housing solutions for our community
- Partnered with the Mountain Chamber Alliance to advocate for pro-business state policies
- Transitioned to a new gift card program, Yiftee, to encourage buying local
- Hosted our first year of the Empower Summit, focused on company culture and diversity, equity, and inclusion (DE&I)
- Sold out the Thrive Together Women's Summit
- Hosted six large-scale events, two special events, and three program series (with 4 or more sessions), and had 1,200+ in overall attendance
- Welcomed 41 new members to the Chamber
- Completed Steamboat Springs Destination Stewardship Action Plan
- Launched Do Steamboat Springs Right
- Expanded communications efforts with advocacy alerts, frequent newspaper columns, social media storytelling, and more business highlights







2024 - 2026 STRATEGIC PLAN

The Chamber's three-year Strategic Plan was developed in partnership with the Muntean Leadership Group to improve the focus of our work and better meet member business needs. It was created over several months of staff collaboration, beginning in 2023. Focus areas were presented to our Board of Directors, and it was then refined and adopted by the Board in early 2024. We're proud of how this plan guided our work in its first year and look forward to what we'll accomplish with it over the next two years!

PLAN OVERVIEW

Organizational Evolution

To best meet the current needs of the Routt County business community, we are dedicated to transforming our organizational structure with these three goals:



Regionalization

Increase Chamber membership outside of Steamboat to 91 members.

Communications

Maintain a financial retention rate of 92% or higher.

Future Generations

Develop future generations to have a significant voice, influence & impact on Chamber work, as measured by having at least 3 new "Future Gen" Board Members.

Business Development

Our programs, advocacy work, resources, and community leadership are essential to our local businesses' success. In the next three years, we want to elevate each of these areas to have a greater positive impact than ever before.



Programs

Provide programming that regional businesses consider essential for their employees' personal & professional development.

Advocacy

Define the Chamber's pillars of advocacy and formalize public policy committee structure and communicate policy efforts to membership.

Workforce Attraction & Retention

Define quality jobs for region in ways that can be measured.

Voice of Business

Increase positive perception of the Chamber by both members and non-members as a valuable part of the community by developing & executing a PR plan.

2024 - 2026 STRATEGIC PLAN

Financial Health

As a 501(c)(6) non-profit organization, smart budgeting and allocation of assets are crucial to our long-term success. To attain a sustainable path for serving our business community, we must not only manage our balance sheets extremely well, but we must also always be working on new ways to appropriately fund our work. Here are four ways we plan to do that:



Membership Revenue

Membership dues generate \$360,000 in revenue.

Chamber Foundation

The Foundation generates \$75,000 in revenue.

Physical Assets

Finalize plan for property. Begin sourcing funding.

Destination Stewardship Foundation

3.3% of City general fund collections dedicated to Chamber DS work.

<u>Destination Stewardship</u>

The tourism industry around the world, and in mountain communities especially, has seen drastic changes in recent years. As visitation patterns and our community evolve, we must lead educational and planning efforts to achieve sustainable tourism growth while preserving the unique character of our community.



Industry Leadership

Utilize local and state data to inform community leaders of the value of tourism.

Destination Stewardship Planning

Create the draft destination stewardship plan for Steamboat Springs.

Visitor Excellence

Enhance the visitor experience by increasing positive visitor interactions by 10% YOY.

Community Vitality

Receive approval in the City's 2025 budget for promotional efforts in opportunity areas.

VISION

Economic Vitality in Routt County.

MISSION

We are the catalyst for business growth.

We are the convener of leaders and influencers.

We champion for a thriving community.

2024 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Keriann Beadnell

YPN

Steamboat Ski & Resort Corp.

Kevin Booth

Transportation Yampa Valley Regional Airport

Rex Brice

Food & Beverage Rex's Family of Restaurants

Michael Buccino

Steamboat Springs City Council Ex-Officio

Ted Carey

Professional Services The UPS Store

Morgan Bast

Destination Development Committee Steamboat Ski & Resort Corp.

Stacy Charlton

Lodging Assoc. Steamboat Lodging Co.

Loryn Duke

Mountain Operations Steamboat Ski & Resort Corp.

Kathy Elliott

Shops & Retail Christy Sports

Soniya Fidler

Medical Services Yampa Valley Medical Center

Sarah Fox

Construction Fox Construction

Betse Grassby

Arts & Culture Steamboat Art Museum

Jennifer Grathwohl

At Large Grathwohl Creative and Steamboat Symphony Orchestra

Madison Keeffe

Finance and Banking Mountain Valley Bank

Michael LaMotte

EDC

Steamboat Ski & Resort Corp.

Sonja Macys

Routt County Commissioner Ex-Officio

Steve Muntean

Steamboat Springs City Council Ex-Officio

Sam Nelson

At Large BAR-U-EAT

Ulrich Salzgeber

Real Estate

Steamboat Springs Board of Realtors

Liza Scudder

Main Street Steamboat Overland

Jeff Steck

At Large

Veterans' Center Board Member

Celine Wicks

Steamboat Springs School District Ex-Officio

Adam Wilson

At Large

CarpetPlus Flooring Designs

ADVOCACY

Pastries & Policy Sessions

- The first-ever session featured Representative Meghan Lukens and Senator Dylan Roberts to talk to Chamber members about the recent legislative session and bills presented and passed that affect businesses and workforce in Routt County.
- The second session was held before the election and hosted House District 26 Candidates,
 Representative Meghan Lukens and Nathan Butler, so attendees could get more in-depth information on their policies.

Industry Advocacy Groups

The Chamber hosted our annual industry advocacy group meetings to hear members' successes, challenges, and concerns regarding current and upcoming legal/regulatory issues, and future projections for each industry. These meetings also allowed a space for members to provide our staff with feedback so we can best support each industry through our work.

Meetings with State Leaders

- Joined Governor Polis for two bill signings that we actively advocated for to support rural businesses and childcare in Routt County. The following bill signings took place at Chamber member Bar-U-Eat in Hayden:
 - HB24-1001: Reauthorization of Rural Jump-Start Program
 - HB24-1237: Programs for the Development of Child Care Facilities
- Hosted University of Colorado Regents University of Colorado President Todd
 Saliman, two CU regents, and other CU
 leaders joined us for an economic discussion
 on higher education, how CU can support first generation students, and what support
 communities with a rural workforce need. The
 event was well attended by business leaders
 from a diverse range of industries along with
 Chamber staff and Board members.





ADVOCACY

Housing Solutions

- Brown Ranch Advocacy Survey The Chamber conducted an outreach survey to our members and the
 community asking for feedback on the Brown Ranch Annexation that was scheduled for a public vote on
 March 26, 2024. Survey results were analyzed and sorted by membership, industry, employee type, and
 other factors. The survey generated 450+ responses from across Routt County. The results were shared
 with our Board and used to publish a position statement to our community that represented the Chamber
 member business majority.
- Chamber CEO was appointed to a housing committee that assisted with making recommendations for using STR Tax funds for projects that will deliver near-term housing solutions for the community. The committee, and our CEO, reviewed RFPs submitted by developers and recommended their top choices for fundable projects to City Council. Next, Council will hear from the top choices and make funding recommendations.
- The Innovative Housing Solutions committee met twice in 2024.

Advocacy Alerts

In 2024, we sent out eight Advocacy Alert emails to our members. The goal of these emails was to educate members on current issues that were relevant to our business community and provide them with actionable steps. Topics included the Brown Ranch Annexation election, the legislative session, a property tax ordinance, the 2024 election, and membership survey results.



SIGNATURE PROGRAMS

2024 Chamber programming provided high-quality, accessible professional development and networking opportunities right here in the Yampa Valley. This programming allowed local businesses to invest in and strengthen their teams, while offering a space to network with other business leaders and professionals.



Thrive Together Women's Summit Presenting Sponsor: Alpine Bank

In its 7th year, the sold-out Women's Summit empowered over 270 local women to grow in their careers and personal lives. It included high-impact workshops, three inspiring keynotes, and valuable networking. For businesses, the Women's Summit provided a great opportunity to invest in future-ready women leaders who bring fresh perspectives, strengthen team dynamics, and drive organizational growth.



Empower Yampa Valley Conference

Presenting Sponsor: Steamboat Ski & Resort Corporation In its first year as the Empower Conference, it focused on building strong, supportive workplaces where employees feel valued and engaged. Previously known as the DEI Summit, it gathered nearly 100 local leaders, business owners, and employees to address key topics like company culture, progressive workplace policy, mental health, and practical approaches to inclusivity.



30th Annual Economic Summit

Presenting Sponsor: Colorado Mountain College
Co-Host: Routt County Economic Development Partnership
Celebrating its 30th year, the Economic Summit once again
served as a critical resource for businesses navigating our
region's unique economic landscape. The 2024 event provided
essential insights into economic trends, workforce challenges,
and growth opportunities, equipping attendees to make
informed, strategic decisions for the future.

OTHER PROGRAMS

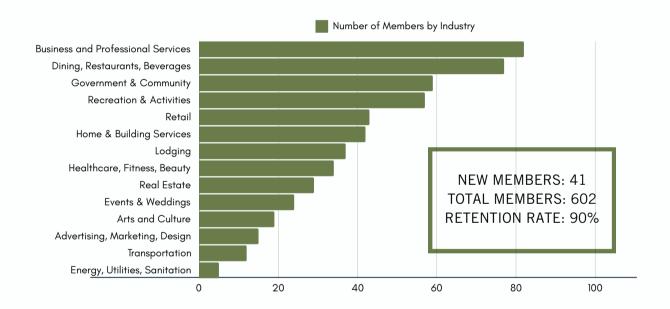
- Navigator Awards
- Summer Business Showcase
 - Hosts: Yampa River Botanic Park & Alpine Insurance Brokers
- Winter Expo
- Business Leadership for Climate Series 4 sessions
 - Host: Yampa Valley Sustainability Council
- Thrive Together Luncheon Series 4 sessions
 - Presenting Sponsor: Alpine Bank
- Business Education Series (BES) 10 sessions
 - Host: Mountain Valley Bank
- 2024 BES session topics included:
 - Pastries & Policy Series (2 sessions)
 - The Power of Budgeting
 - State of the City/County
 - Smart Investing
 - Al for Business
 - Employment Law
 - Using Your Time (& Money) Wisely: Marketing Tips for Busy Businesses
 - Time Management Mastery: Proven Strategies for Peak Productivity
 - Preparing for Peak: Winter Lodging & Business Update



MEMBERSHIP

MEMBERSHIP ENGAGEMENT & SUPPORT

This year, the Chamber continued to deliver exceptional value to our members by fostering meaningful connections, advocating for business-friendly policies, and championing the unique needs of the Yampa Valley. Through innovative programs, regional collaboration, and a commitment to supporting businesses of all sizes, we've strengthened our membership base and amplified the voice of our business community. Whether addressing critical issues like workforce development, housing, and childcare or promoting initiatives that enhance economic growth, our advocacy efforts have ensured that member priorities remain front and center. Together, we're building a vibrant, thriving business ecosystem that empowers our industries to succeed and supports a stronger future for our community.



MEMBER OUTREACH

We released our 2024 membership survey in August. From the survey, we learned that employee retention and attraction due to lack of housing is the biggest concern for our members. We also learned 63% of members consider the Chamber advocating for probusiness policies to be important or very important, and 54% of members consider non-ski season destination promotion to be valuable or very valuable to their business.

We also conducted our annual Member Outreach Week. Member Outreach Week allows us to check in with our members, thank them for their support, and gather feedback on how we can best serve them in the future. We received a lot of positive feedback from our calls and emails, and got ideas for how we can best support them.

MEMBERSHIP

MEMBERSHIP COMMUNICATIONS

Email

Campaigns:

- · Weekly Monday Minute Newsletter
- · Weekly Program Info & Registration / Member Benefits Info
- · Twice Monthly Lodging Report
- Partner Member Promotion
- Advocacy Alerts

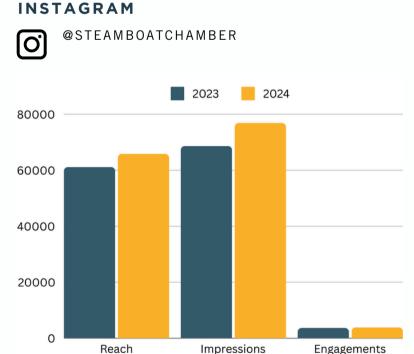




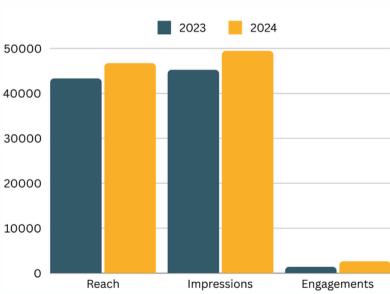


Social

- Primary Channels: Instagram and Facebook
- Content included program and member benefits info, member business spotlights, member Instagram Takeovers, advocacy messages, holiday messages, and educational campaigns.



FACEBOOK



STEAMBOAT SPRINGS CHAMBER

SPECIAL EVENTS

Chamber-hosted special events play a pivotal role in fostering community spirit, promoting local businesses, and attracting visitors to the Yampa Valley. These events not only celebrate our unique heritage, but also provide significant economic benefits to the entire region.



43rd Annual Steamboat Marathon

Presenting Sponsor: Alpine Bank

Each spring, the marathon draws runners from around the country to experience the scenic beauty of Routt County. 1,700+ runners participated in 2024, choosing between three course options along the Hahn's Peak and downtown Steamboat Springs route. We're proud of how this event not only promotes health and wellness, but also boosts local tourism with 4000+ participants and spectators contributing to our local economy throughout the weekend.



Fourth of July Parade

Presenting Sponsor: Yampa Valley Bank

Our iconic Fourth of July Parade is a cherished tradition that brings together locals and visitors to celebrate Independence Day in downtown Steamboat Springs. In 2024, we organized over 40 floats that included businesses, non-profits, first responders, cowboys, local leaders, and church and dance groups to march down our historic Lincoln Avenue. This annual parade was once again a great celebration of our western heritage, patriotic spirit, and close-knit, yet diverse community.





30+



20+

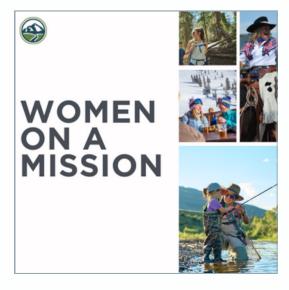
STORYTELLING THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA

In 2024, we expanded our social content with storytelling posts and reels that aligned with the Chamber's mission and vision. We highlighted member businesses, local leaders, and the Yampa Valley's unique history and heritage. Topics included Women on a Mission, Yampa Valley History & Culture, New Generations, and Shop Local.

As part of our member business highlights, we also continued our year-round "Member Minute" social campaign. Through this, we promoted member businesses using pictures, videos, and interviews that provided education on each business.

A new addition was the Thrive Together reels, which we used to spotlight member businesses who empower women within their organizations. We posted three reels leading up to our Thrive Together Women's Summit in August and September.









OOA

CHAMBER BUCKS E-GIFT CARDS

We launched a new Chamber e-gift card program this year called Chamber Bucks, powered by Yiftee.com. This new digital gift card is an evolution of our previous gift card program that locals and visitors alike can purchase to encourage spending at many local participating businesses. Over \$7,500 worth of gift cards that will be spent at local businesses have been purchased through our Yiftee page so far.



YOUNG PROFESSIONALS NETWORK

YPN is an organization of the Chamber that includes 53 professionals of varying ages, backgrounds, and industries. It promotes networking, professional development, and community service, and empowers the next generation of our community to thrive.

The 2023-2024 YPN Board hosted 11 happy hour events and one holiday party in 2024. They also organized their annual fundraiser, Y.E.S. Golf, which raised approximately \$16,000 to fund scholarships for graduating Routt County seniors. YPN also donated \$2,000 worth of scholarships to two nursing students at CMC last year.







LEADERSHIP

The Chamber facilitates the annual Leadership Steamboat program, which is designed to develop informed, committed, and passionate leaders in business and community service. The 2024 Leadership Steamboat class project was the creation of a Leadership Alumni group. This group will bring together Leadership alumni from the past 20+ years for networking, community, and philanthropy. They will also raise money annually to support the next Leadership Steamboat's class project.



COMMITTEES & COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

The Chamber led or provided administrative services to seven committees in 2024, each made up of community stakeholders who rallied behind a unique purpose or to represent a specific industry. These committees met frequently throughout the year to discuss issues and make decisions related to their industry and purpose, with the goal of improving quality of life for community members.

Destination Development Committee

The committee provides direction and oversight to Chamber staff on our destination stewardship efforts. It includes representatives from local small businesses, lodging, restaurants, activities, media and more, and provides perspective and expertise from their member industry.

Lodging Association

The Lodging Association is comprised of nearly 50 lodging industry owners, property managers, and professionals who represent hotels. This group meets to discuss issues such as booking trends, proposed legislation, and other factors impacting the lodging industry.

COMMITTEES & COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Local Marketing District (LMD) Board of Directors

The LMD, approved by voters in 2004, facilitates a 2% lodging tax used to support air service and marketing through the LMD Board and its partners. The Chamber scheduled and ran monthly meetings, processed invoices, and published the LMD's annual report.

Steamboat Mountain Village (SMV) Board of Directors

SMV is comprised of community leaders and Steamboat Resort area businesses. Its purpose is to engage with businesses in the mountain village area. The Chamber provides administrative services.

Public Policy Committee

The Public Policy Committee (PPC) is a subcommittee of the SSC Board of Directors, which monitors public policy issues in order to represent SSC membership interests before the community, elected officials, government staff, and other leaders and to keep SSC members informed about important issues. The PPC engages decision makers and encourages participation in the public policy process in order to strengthen our community.

Mountain Chamber Alliance

The Steamboat Springs Chamber is a founding member of the Mountain Chamber Alliance (MCA) organization created to help advance public policy goals that enhance economic vitality and oppose those with negative impacts to communities across the mountain region. It consists of chambers of commerce in Grand, Summit, Eagle, Routt, Chaffee, Lake, Garfield, Pitkin, Gunnison, and San Miguel counties.

OTHER COMMITTEE INVOLVEMENT

- Northwest Colorado Development Council
- Gondola Transit Center Planning Committee
- Routt County Economic Development Partnership
- Climate Action Plan Economy Working Group
- Colorado Competitive Council Steering Committee
- First Impressions Council
- · Northwest Colorado Broadband Board
- Colorado Tourism Office Destination Stewardship Council
- Colorado Association of DMOs

- · Care for Colorado Coalition
- Economic Development Council of Colorado Board
- Routt Recreation & Conservation Roundtable
- Western Association of Chambers DEI Committee
- Boettcher Foundation Rural Collaborative
- City of Steamboat Springs Community Survey Committee
- Continental Divide Trail Gateway Community
- and more!

In 2024, the Steamboat Springs Chamber created and executed a comprehensive, strategic plan to inform and educate travelers. Per the direction of the Steamboat Springs City Council, the Steamboat Springs Chamber focused our destination efforts on stewardship as we work to balance the visitor experience and the impacts on the local community and its assets. Our messaging focused on respecting the Yampa Valley and its residents, stewardship of the environment, and preserving our unique culture and heritage.



DESTINATION STEWARDSHIP STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN

In 2023 and 2024 the Destination Development Department worked to create the first of its kind Destination Stewardship Action Plan for Steamboat Springs. This three-year plan was developed after extensive research and public input and outlines efforts to advance our Destination Stewardship efforts to:

- Leverage tourism to support a thriving Steamboat Springs economy
- · Encourage responsible and respectful use
- Protect and enhance Steamboat Springs' cultural identity





50+ community workshop attendees

PAID MEDIA CAMPAIGN

In 2024, the Steamboat Springs Chamber launched Do Steamboat Springs Right, a digital-first campaign created in partnership with the Colorado Tourism Office to inform and educate travelers.

Markets:

- Highly targeted prospective visitors
- Visitors already in Steamboat Springs





WEBSITE HIGHLIGHTS

Our website allows us to tell a year-round story through content for every season. Throughout the year we directed visitors to our Do Steamboat Springs Right pages which cover visitor tips and expectations, stewardship principles, education resources, and more.











VISIT STEAMBOAT SPRINGS APP

We continued to utilize our interactive trip-planning app. Visitors can download our free app to their phone or use the desktop version to map out and save every trail, attraction, event, and restaurant they don't want to miss during their visit.









EMAIL MARKETING

Our email campaigns engage with a high-intent audience of past, present, and future travelers to Steamboat Springs. We utilize email to keep visitors engaged and thinking often of Steamboat Springs while providing stewardship messaging.







The Local Link

The Local Link is an email update designed to connect residents with our work in the tourism sector. In this monthly communication, we share our visitor campaigns and communications, lodging occupancy information, tourism statistics, and upcoming events and activities with potential impacts on local roads or open spaces.



SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media is one of the most influential parts of our overall marketing strategy. In 2024, we leveraged social media channels to share destination stewardship as a primary message and keep Steamboat Springs top of mind as a destination. We continued to share inspiring and educational content with our social audience of 120,000+.

2024	FOLLOWER COUNT	REACH	ENGAGEMENT
FACEBOOK	40,737	2,293,489	2.14%
INSTAGRAM	79,119	2,417,687	9.5%

LODGING OCCUPANCY

Overall lodging occupancy trended up slightly over last May-October. The Fourth of July holiday weekend saw the largest YOY gains.

The majority of non-ski season visitors were from Colorado. The top states outside of Colorado sending visitors to Steamboat Springs May-October were:

- Texas
- Utah
- Nebraska
- Missouri
- Illinois

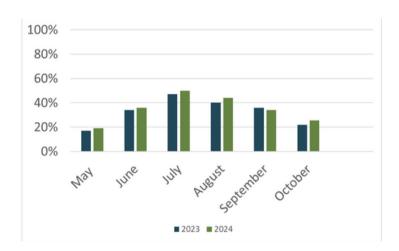
The top cities sending visitors to Steamboat Springs May-October were all in-state:

- Denver
- Littleton
- Fort Collins
- Colorado Springs
- Parker





150,000+
visitors guides
distributed







LEVERAGING PARTNERSHIPS

Colorado Historic Hot Springs Loop

2024 marks the ninth year we've been working with the Colorado Historic Hot Springs Loop, a collection of unique Colorado destinations that boast hot springs and small-town charm. This year's partnership focused on the creation of a video campaign highlighting visitors traveling segments of the loop. The Hot Springs Loop partnership extends our reach and creates unique opportunities to speak to a high-value guest.



The Destination Development Department continues to work with the RRCR, hosting the Dry Lake Webcam on VisitSteamboatSprings.com, working on the Destination Management Subcommittee, and gaining perspectives on recreation and conservation from the group.







CHAMBER STAFF

Sarah Leonard
Chief Executive Officer

Laura Soard
Senior Director of
Destination Development &
Communications

Angelica Salinas Director of Membership & Engagement

Cecilia Morter *Programs Manager* Kenzie Meadows Digital Content Manager Annaleigh Bonds Communications Manager Carol Halik Finance Manager (not pictured)

THANK YOU TO OUR PARTNERS

We want to thank our Partner Members for their continued support of our efforts in 2024. We are also grateful to all the local businesses, government entities, and individuals who sponsored our programs and events throughout the year. We couldn't accomplish this great work without you!











