

An aerial photograph of a mountain range, likely the Cascade Mountains, with a large mountain peak in the center. The sky is a mix of blue and purple, suggesting a sunset or sunrise. The wing of an airplane is visible in the upper right corner, flying over the mountains.

VISIT  
**TACOMA**  
PIERCE COUNTY

2024  
**TOURISM  
IMPACT  
REPORT**

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# LETTER FROM THE CEO

*Dear Tourism Partners,*

In this report, we're talking about two things: *the ecosystem in 2024 – and the work we did inside it.* The ecosystem had mixed results. The work? **We stuck the landing.** Now we see what happens.

**Let's start with the big picture.** Hotel performance across the county and the country in 2024 was as mixed a bag as bags can be mixed. Occupancy and demand numbers in Pierce County—and nationwide—fluctuated throughout the year, finishing flat to slightly down. A shrinking supply of hotel rooms pulled total revenue down locally, but strong room rates meant that, if your hotel didn't convert into apartments, the RevPAR likely said you were doing just fine.

Still, if you're looking for signs of momentum, look no further than our own backyard. In 2024, we broke **185,000 room nights generated**—*an all-time high.* As you'll read in the pages ahead, that result comes from a few converging factors: advances in our ability to track what's always been true; doubling down on the campaigns and platforms that move the needle; and a few major industry shifts where we just happened to have our sails angled to catch the wind.

And a quiet milestone that only deserves passing mention: *2019 is no longer a benchmark.* The industry has evolved, and so have we. In 2024, we surpassed 2019 in many critical ways, and are right up against it in others – so we're saying goodbye to year-over-year comparisons with that era. We're putting the word pandemic on a boat and sending it into the horizon. Hopefully, *forever.*

Looking forward, given policy changes, international ripple effects, and a planeload of macroeconomic uncertainty, we're staying away from bold predictions and putting the hammer down on what works: staying responsive, sharpening our approach, and keeping close to the people and partners who've helped us get this far.

*Thanks for being part of the journey.*

**Dean Burke**  
*President and CEO*  
Visit Tacoma-Pierce County



*Dean Burke*

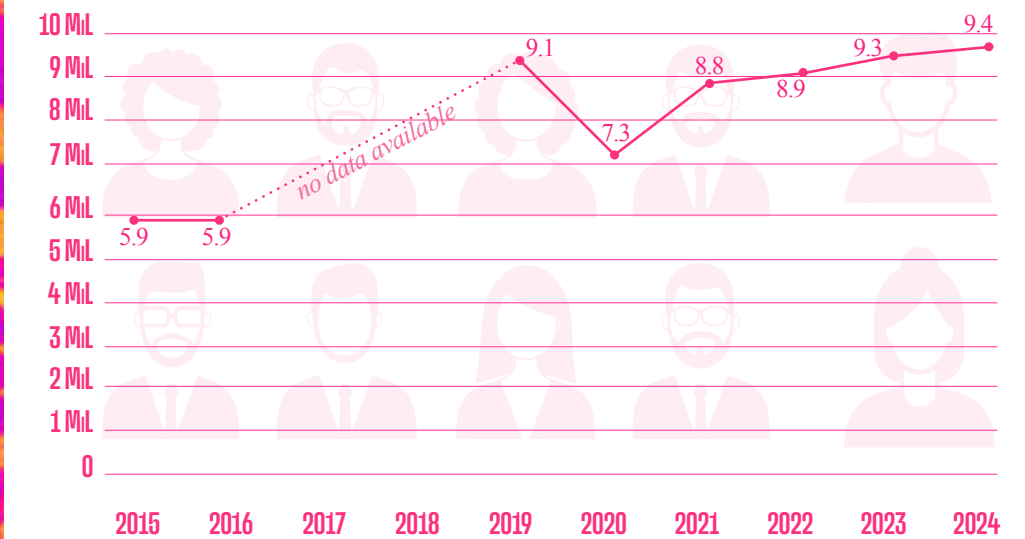
IN 2024, WE BROKE  
**185,000**  
room nights generated  
**12.1% OF ALL**  
PIERCE COUNTY ROOM NIGHTS

# PIERCE COUNTY

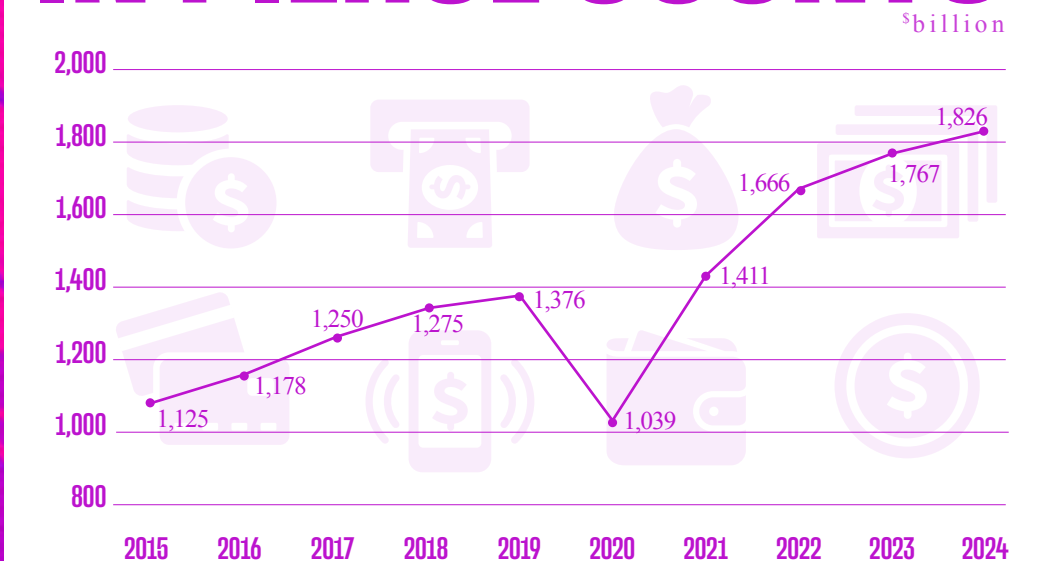
## tourism breakdown

**This is the big bucket.** How many people came to Pierce County from places that aren't Pierce County. It includes overnighters, day-trippers, agritourists, shoppers, business travelers, convention attendees, concert-goers, and every other type of shirt or badge people wear when they travel.

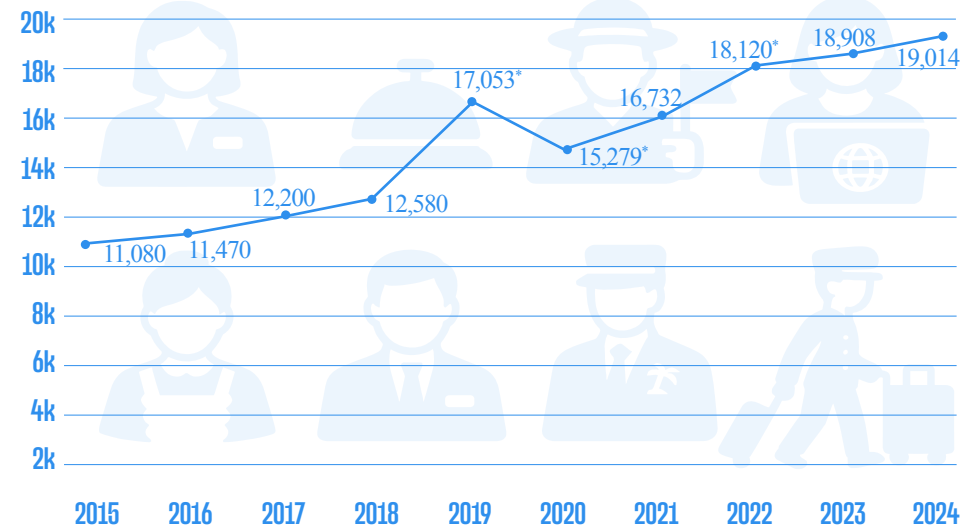
## HOW MANY FOLKS VISITED PIERCE COUNTY



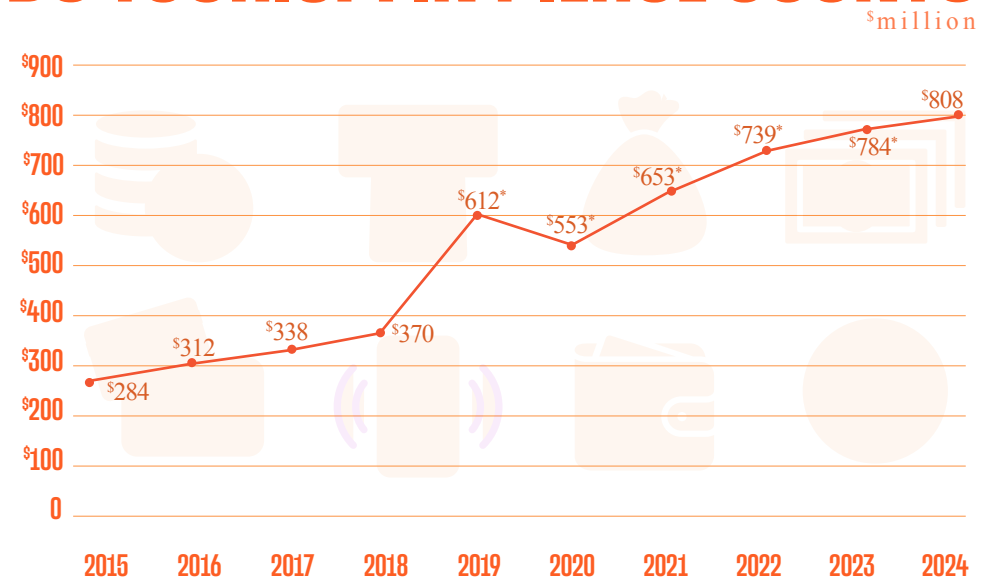
## WHAT DID THEY SPEND IN PIERCE COUNTY



# JOBS CREATED BY TOURISM IN PIERCE COUNTY



# EARNINGS CREATED BY TOURISM IN PIERCE COUNTY



Visitor volume visitor-based economic data is provided by State of Washington Tourism and Tourism Economics. It originates with the Department of Revenue.

VISIT TACOMA - PIERCE COUNTY



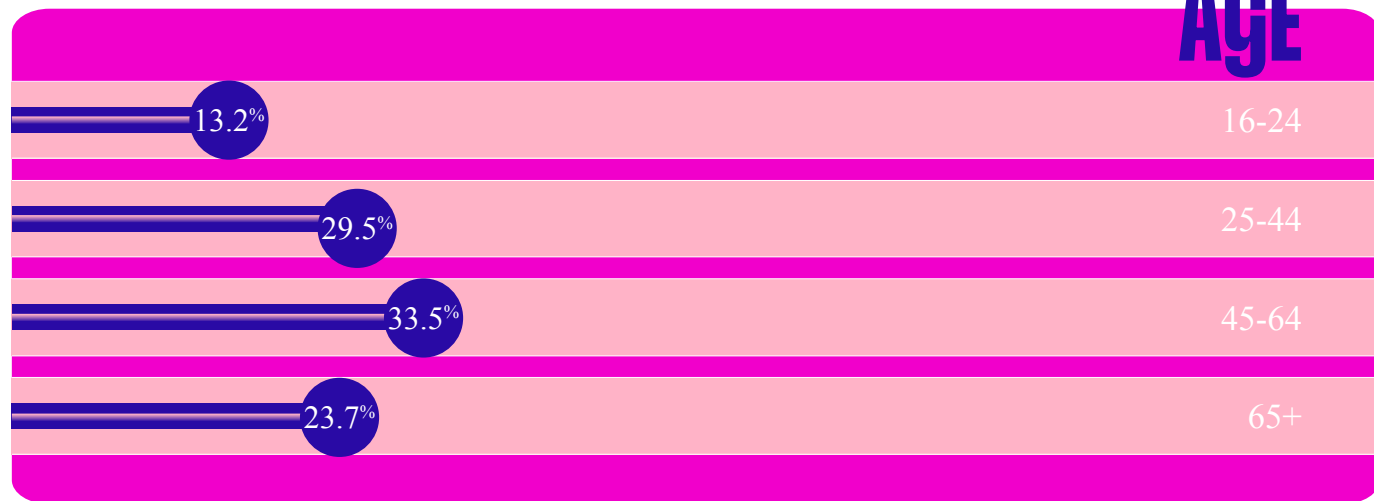
**9.5** million  
visitors

**3.46** million  
overnight  
visitors

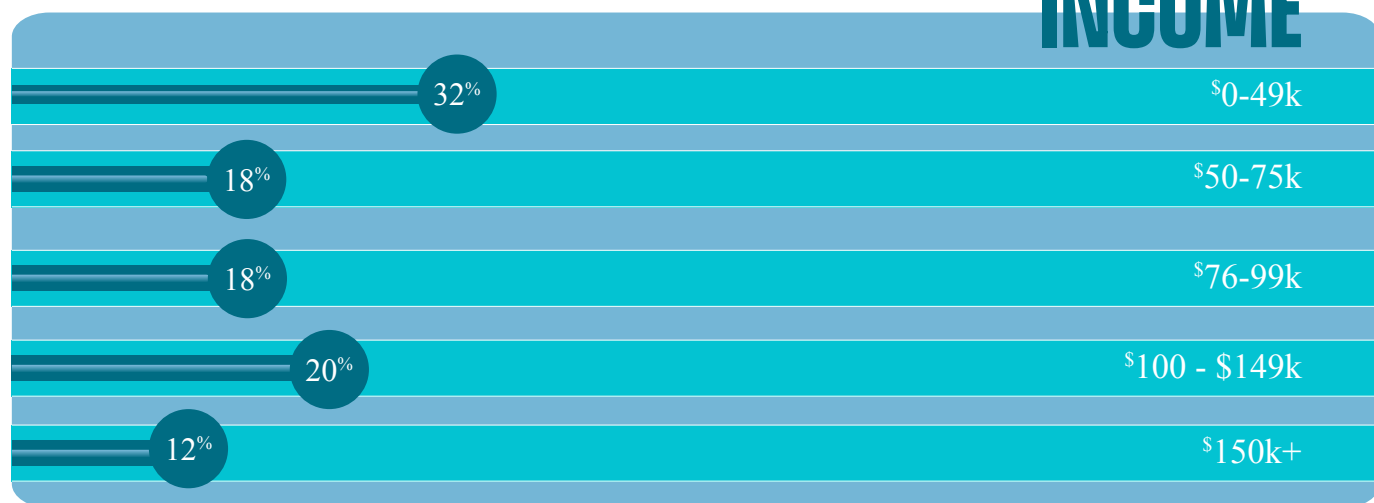
**\$1.826** BILLION  
visitor spending

**\$808** million  
earnings **19k**  
JOBS

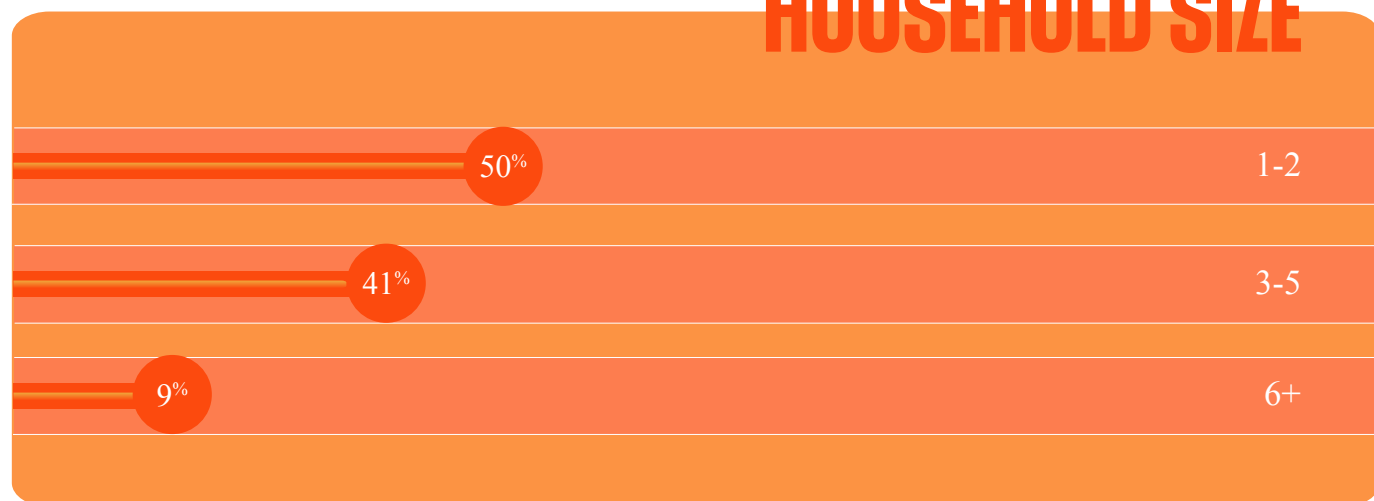
## AGE



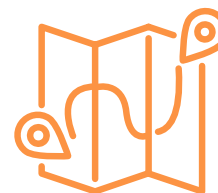
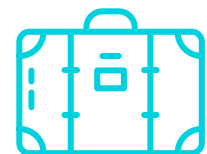
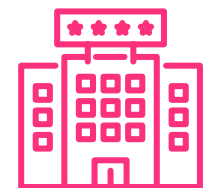
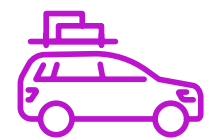
## INCOME



## HOUSEHOLD SIZE



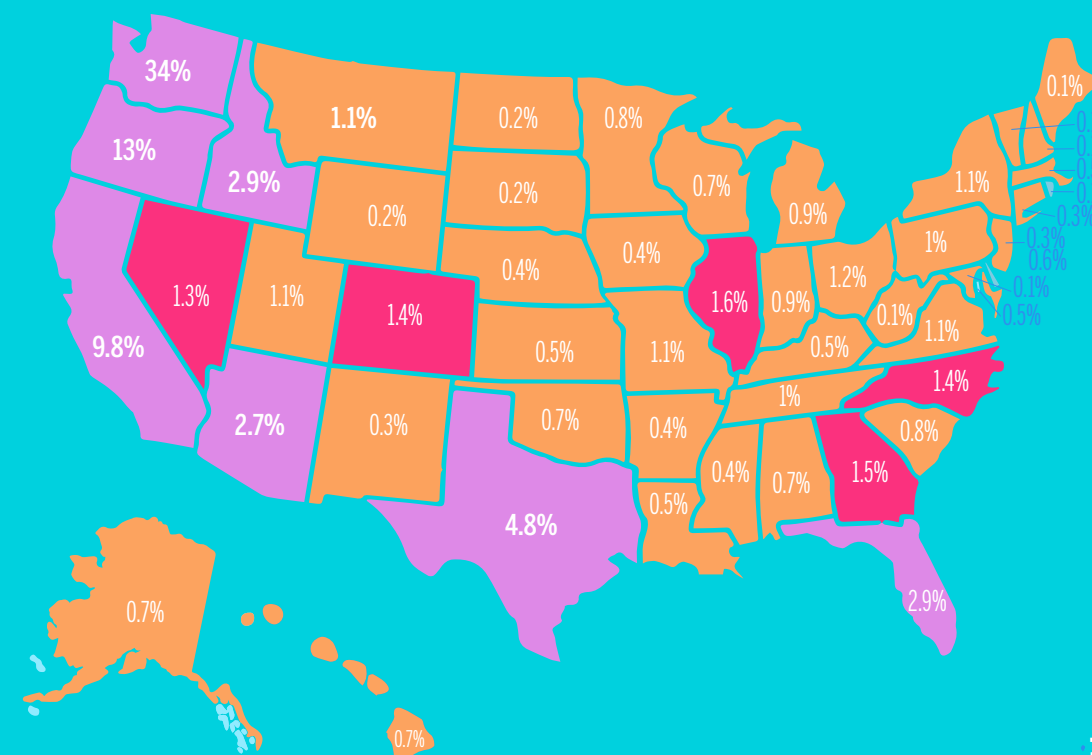
Geolocation data is collected and anonymized from mobile apps where the user has opted-in to provide location data. This data represents a statistical model based on a sample size of devices. The model was developed and optimized to report on audiences, trends, spending, demographics, and key markets for visitors from 50+ miles outside of the destination.



# WHERE ARE THEY COMING FROM?

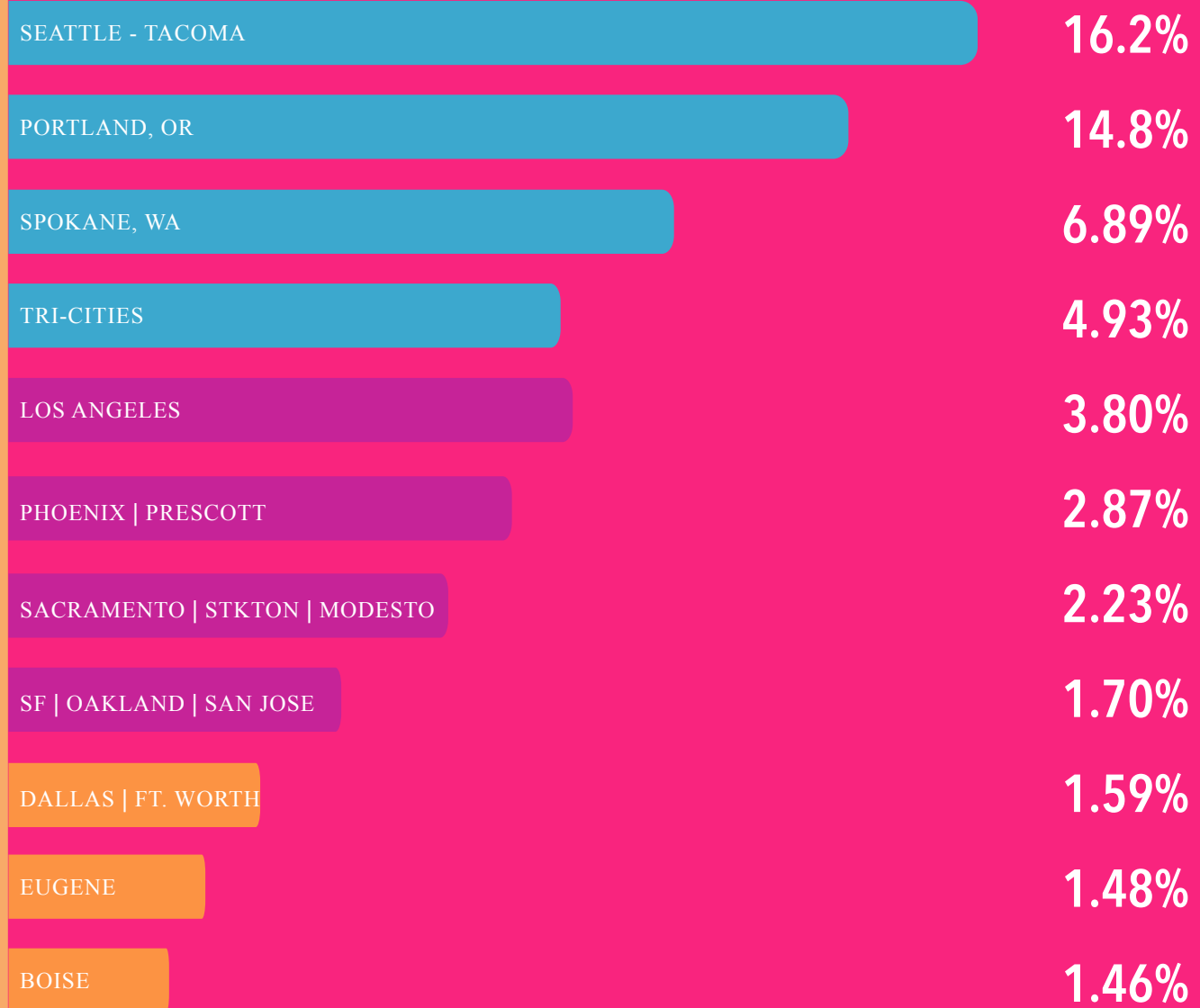


Where Pierce County's visitors come from isn't just a stagnant fact that we keep in our back pocket to impress people at parties. It informs how we market. Not just where people come from, but how far they come from. Maybe this is inside baseball, but sometimes it makes sense to target potential visitors from farther away, if visitors from a specific place spend more time and money when they're here. It costs more to convert that visitor – it's harder to convince someone to get on a plane than to get into a car – but if the math pencils out, we go after them with our marketing, and measure the success of the campaigns by how many made the trip.

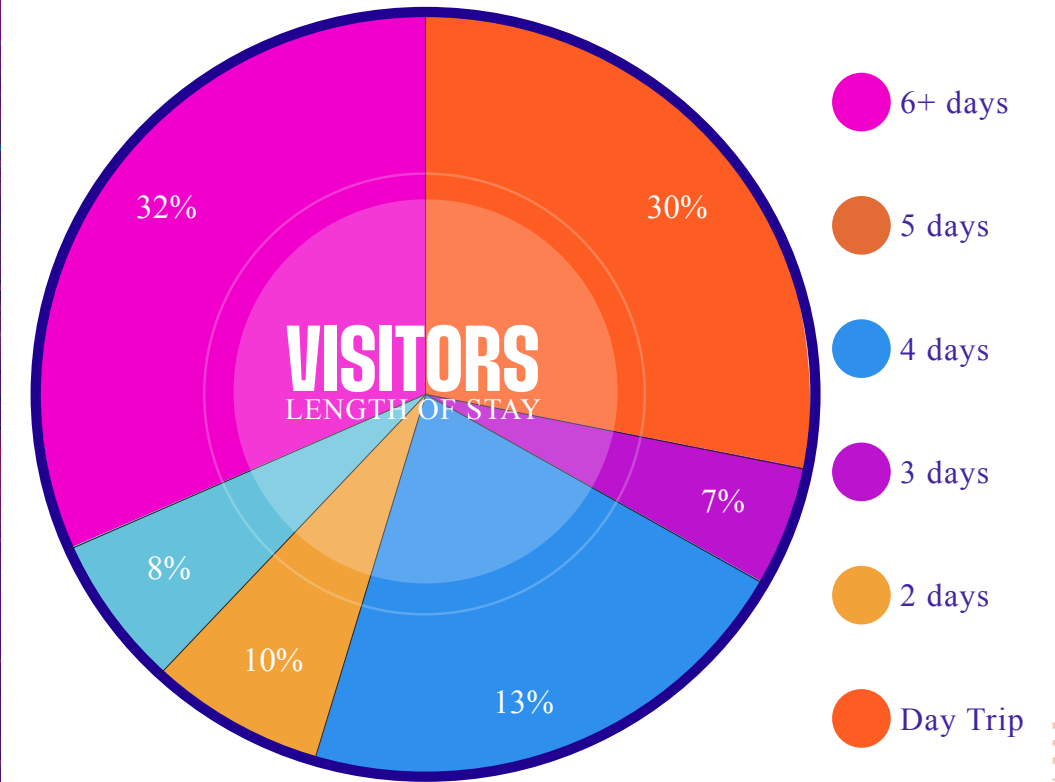


# TOP MARKETS

## TOP MARKETS (50+ MILES)



Geolocation data is collected and anonymized from mobile apps where the user has opted-in to provide location data. This data represents a statistical model based on a sample size of devices. The model was developed and optimized to report on audiences, trends, spending, demographics, and key markets for visitors from 50+ miles outside of the destination.



## VISITORS BY DAY

### WEEKDAY vs. WEEKEND



# PIERCE COUNTY HOTEL INDUSTRY PERFORMANCE

Hotels in Pierce County recorded **\$207.3 million** in revenue in 2024, falling 1.1% from 2023.

Occupancy and demand both dropped year over year, but were offset by all-time-record ADR – both in Pierce County and nationally – which also pushed RevPAR to record levels here and across the country.

Hotel demand has been impacted by explosive growth in short-term rentals opening in Pierce County, as well as hotel closures and conversions to various forms of housing.



## HOTEL OCCUPANCY

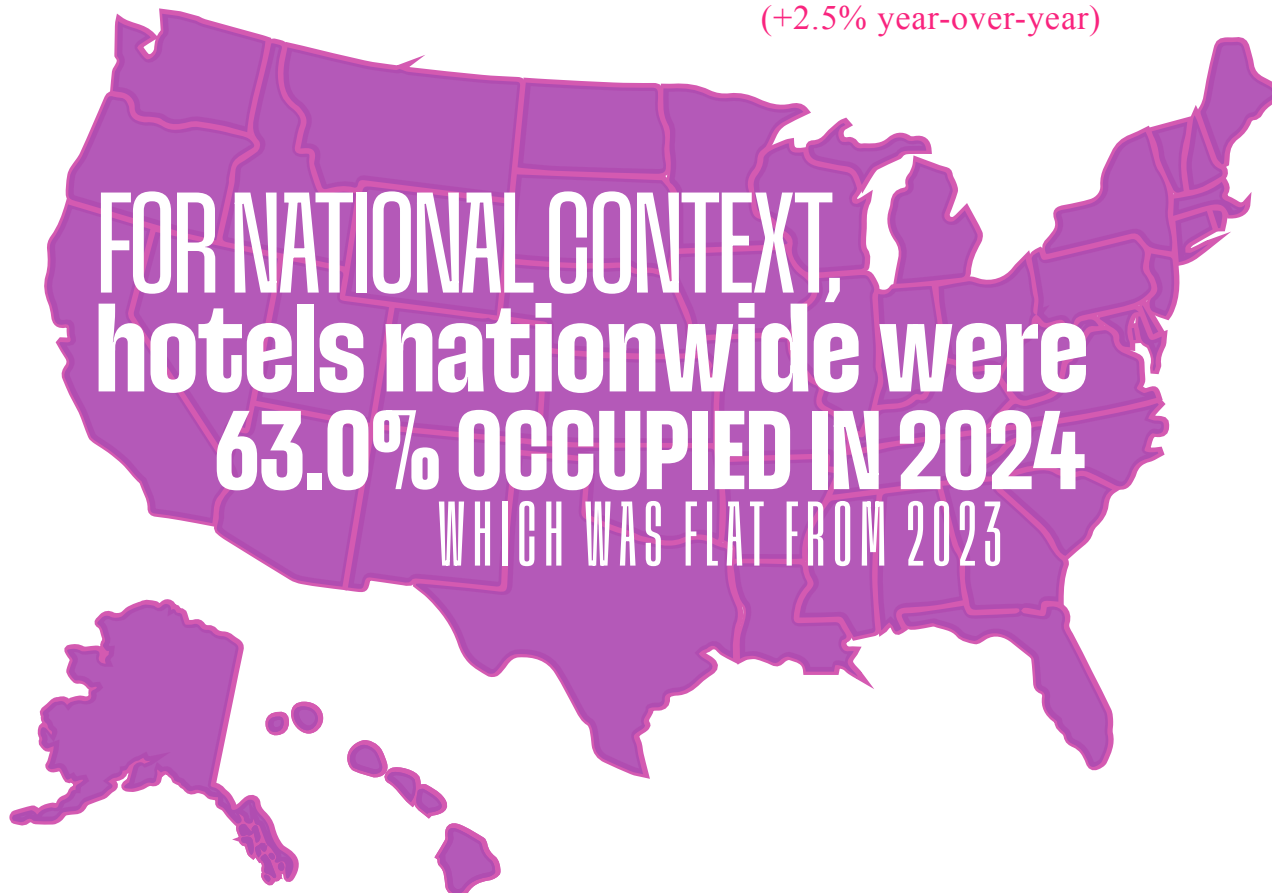
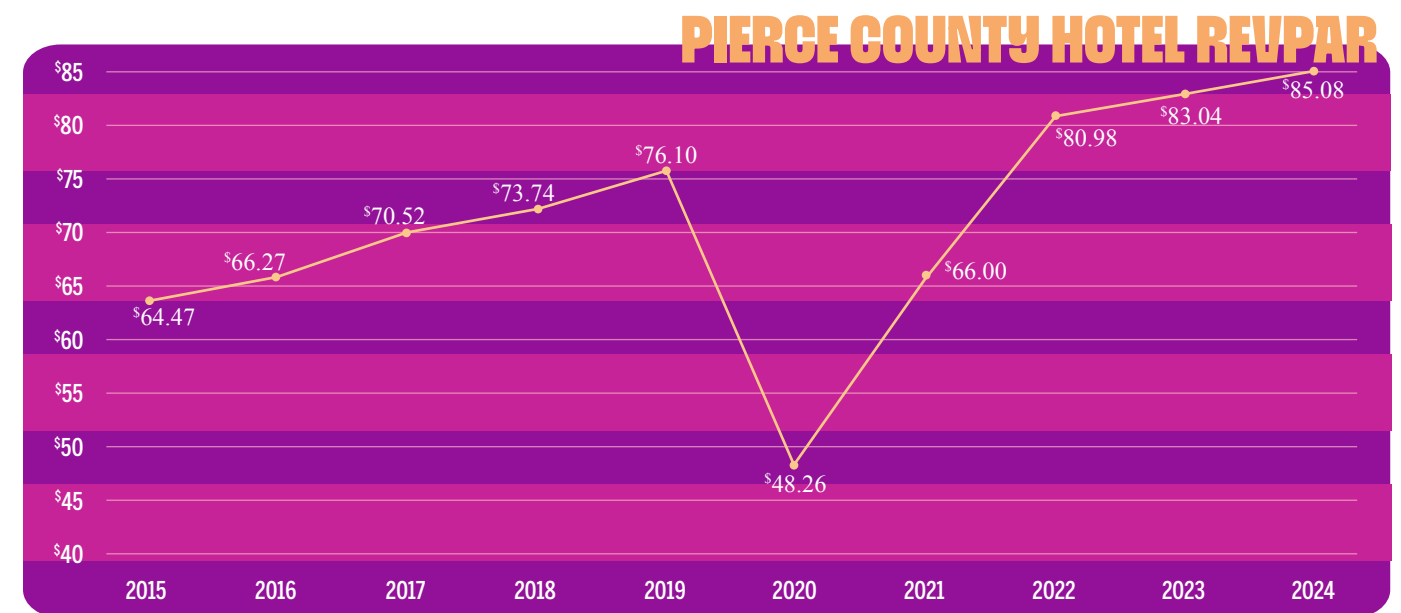
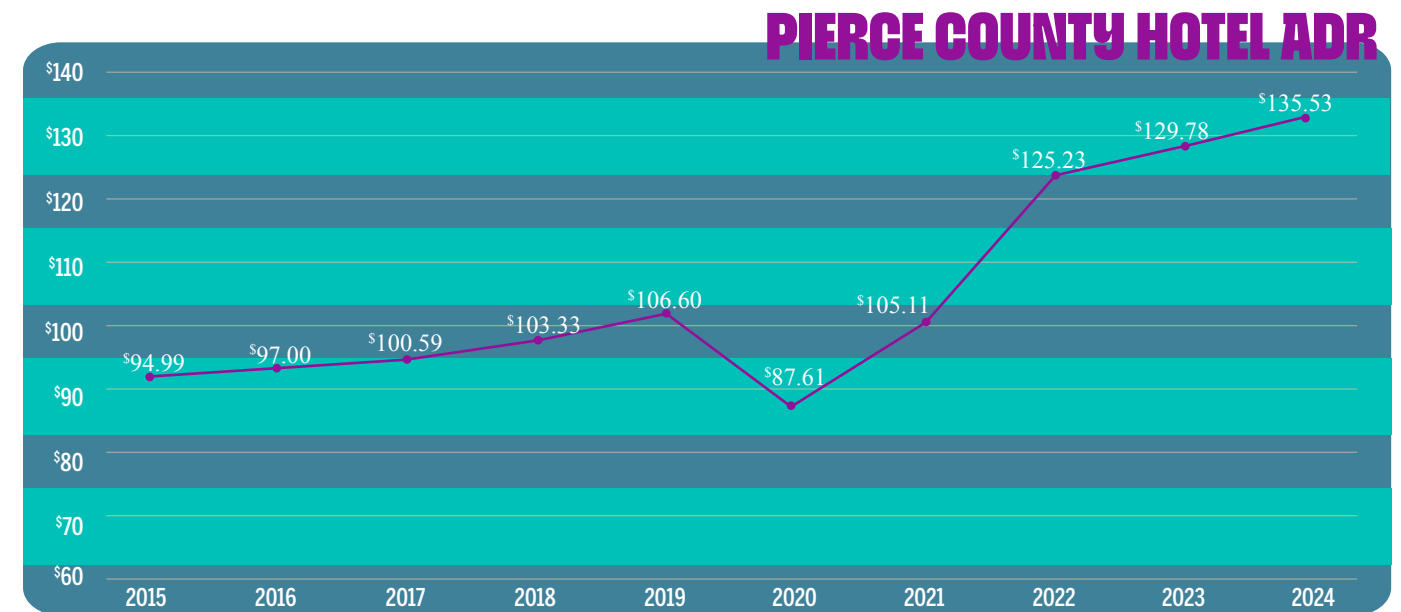
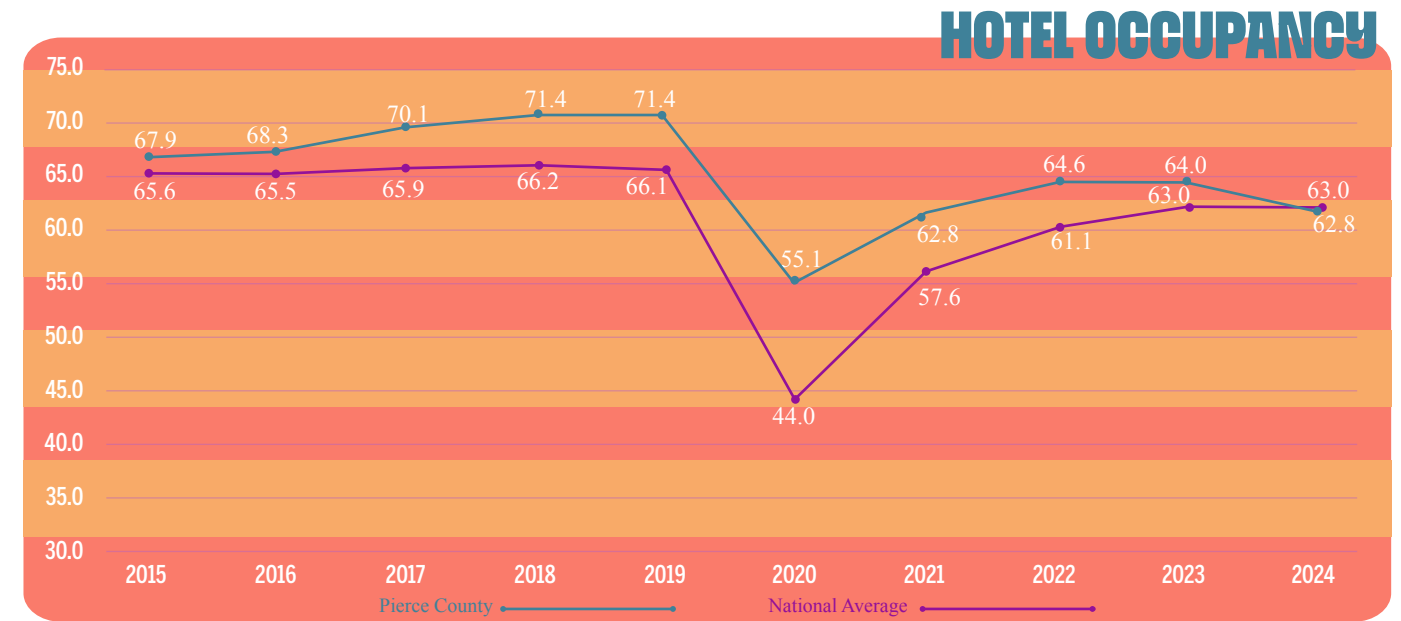
**62.8%**  
(-1.9% year-over-year)

## HOTEL AVERAGE DAILY RATE

**\$135.53**  
(+4.4% year-over-year)

## HOTEL REVPAR

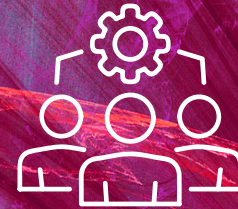
**\$85.08**  
(+2.5% year-over-year)



Source: STR

# VISIT TACOMA PIERCE COUNTY

by the numbers



## GOALS AND ACTUALS

Throughout the year, Visit Tacoma-Pierce County works to achieve contracted goals, and regularly track and report on our progress against those goals. These are the results for 2024:

## SALES AND SERVICING

### MEETINGS AND EVENTS

	2024 ACTUAL	2024 GOAL
Sales Actualized Room Nights	26,772	NA
Sales Future Booked Room Nights	45,065	19,570
Future Booked Combined Economic Impact	\$35.4 million	NA

### SALES SERVICING

	2024 ACTUAL	2024 GOAL
Average Customer Service Survey Rating ( <i>out of 5</i> )	4.84	4.625

## SPORTS

	2024 ACTUAL	2024 GOAL
Room Nights	68,186	50,425
Visitors	183,916	136,010
Direct Spending	\$40.9 million	NA

## MARKETING

	2024 ACTUAL	2024 GOAL
Room Nights	90,243	39,551
New Website Visitors	706,137	705,899
Total Social Media Followers	48,144	46,530
Published Articles	2,516	1,875

# THE BUSINESS OF GENERATING room nights

Visit Tacoma-Pierce County does a lot of things. But all of it — from story pitching and itinerary building to bid packets and sponsorships — points back to one outcome: *generating trackable, paid room nights in Pierce County.*

That's the common thread. The throughline. The metric that makes sense to hotels, to business owners, and to elected leaders. Room nights are where destination marketing becomes measurable impact — not just buzz, but beds.

Some DMOs use softer success metrics. We don't. **Room nights are our language. And in 2024, it was one worth speaking.**

And those are just the room nights we can confidently track. They don't include leisure travelers who booked off-platform after seeing a social ad, or attendees who came in under the radar. Those visits happened — we just can't count them. This is the bare minimum we know we delivered.

This section breaks down exactly how we delivered those room nights, pillar by pillar — because while the work varies, the goal doesn't.

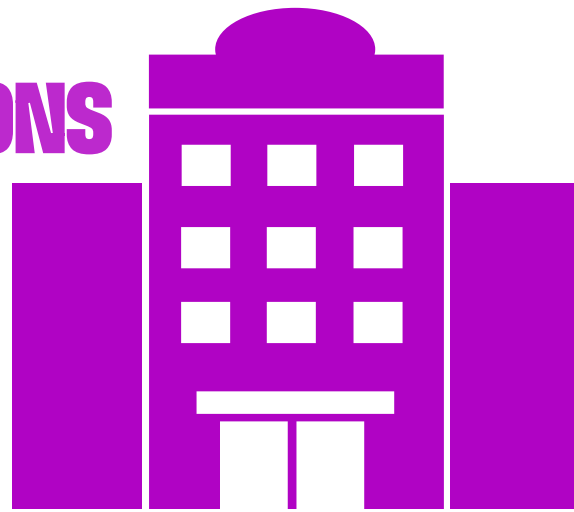
**185,201**  
ROOM NIGHTS GENERATED  
**OUR HIGHEST TOTAL TO DATE**



EACH OF OUR THREE BUSINESS PILLARS HIT NEW PERSONAL BESTS:



THE BUSINESS OF GENERATING ROOM NIGHTS  
**MEETINGS & CONVENTIONS**



**THE WHAT:  
 RESULTS**

**BUSINESS ACTUALIZED IN 2024**

- Room nights: **26,772**
- Meetings and events: **169**
- Attendees: **119,224**
- Economic impact: **\$26.5 million**

**FUTURE BUSINESS BOOKED IN 2024 FOR 2024-2028**

- Room nights: **45,065**
- Meetings and events: **185**
- Projected attendees: **129,704**
- Projected economic impact: **\$35.5 million**

**THE HOW:  
 MEETINGS & CONVENTIONS  
 PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS**

**FAM TOURS**

Hosted regional familiarization tours and site visits with planners at the Greater Tacoma Convention Center and with local industry partners to recruit and persuade business decisions.

**MEETINGS AND TRADE SHOWS**

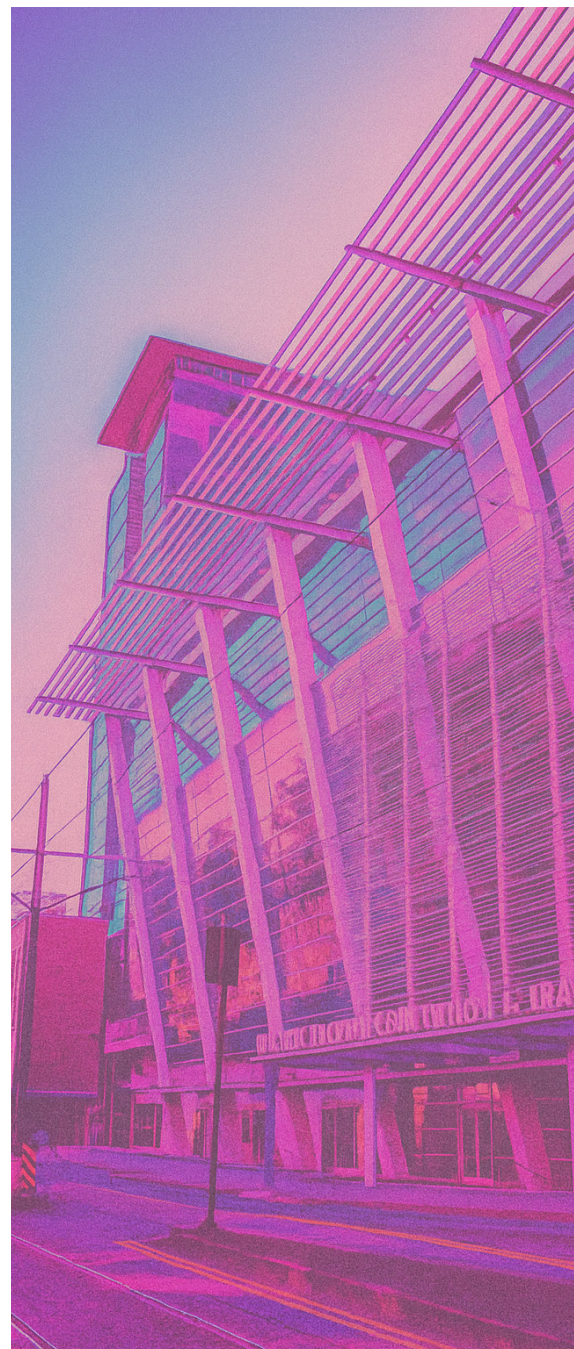
Participated in one-on-one appointments with meeting planners and showcased the destination at more industry conferences.

**CLIENT EVENTS**

Outbound sales efforts including sales calls and hosted client events, engaging planners from across the U.S. both in person and virtually.

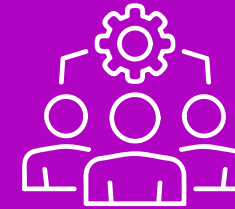
**SPONSORSHIPS**

Sponsored industry events and conferences to build destination exposure and interest.



**WHY IT MATTERS**

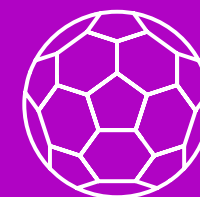
This year was all about doubling down on our strategic goal of booking fewer events at the Greater Tacoma Convention Center (GTCC), but more impactful ones, with more attendees and room nights – and hence greater economic impact - attached to them. As our sales team fills the venue calendar faster and fuller than ever before, we’re living in a reality and preparing for a future where we can be more selective about which opportunities we pursue for GTCC, and which we work to place at other venues in Pierce County (*ideally*) or beyond (*if necessary*).



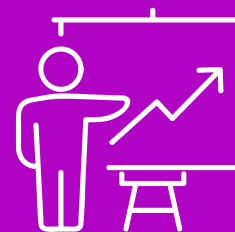
Put simply, 2024 saw increases in both the numbers of attendees and room nights vs. 2023, over fewer events. This falls in line with our goals to continue booking fewer, more impactful events. The sales team booked more rooms for future events in 2024 than any other year on record. To put that in a single number, we booked **45,065** room nights for future events. In 2023 – *a record year at the time* – we booked 27,996.



The booking window continued to be relatively short, with most conventions booking around a year and a half in advance. This continues to be the new state of the industry, and not a phenomenon specific to Pierce County.



The fastest growing market segment has been our competition segment, particularly placing weekend events in the first quarter. This checks a lot of boxes for the health of Pierce County: *Activating the convention center space, multiple-day event, long geographic draw, and all of it happening during a shoulder season.*

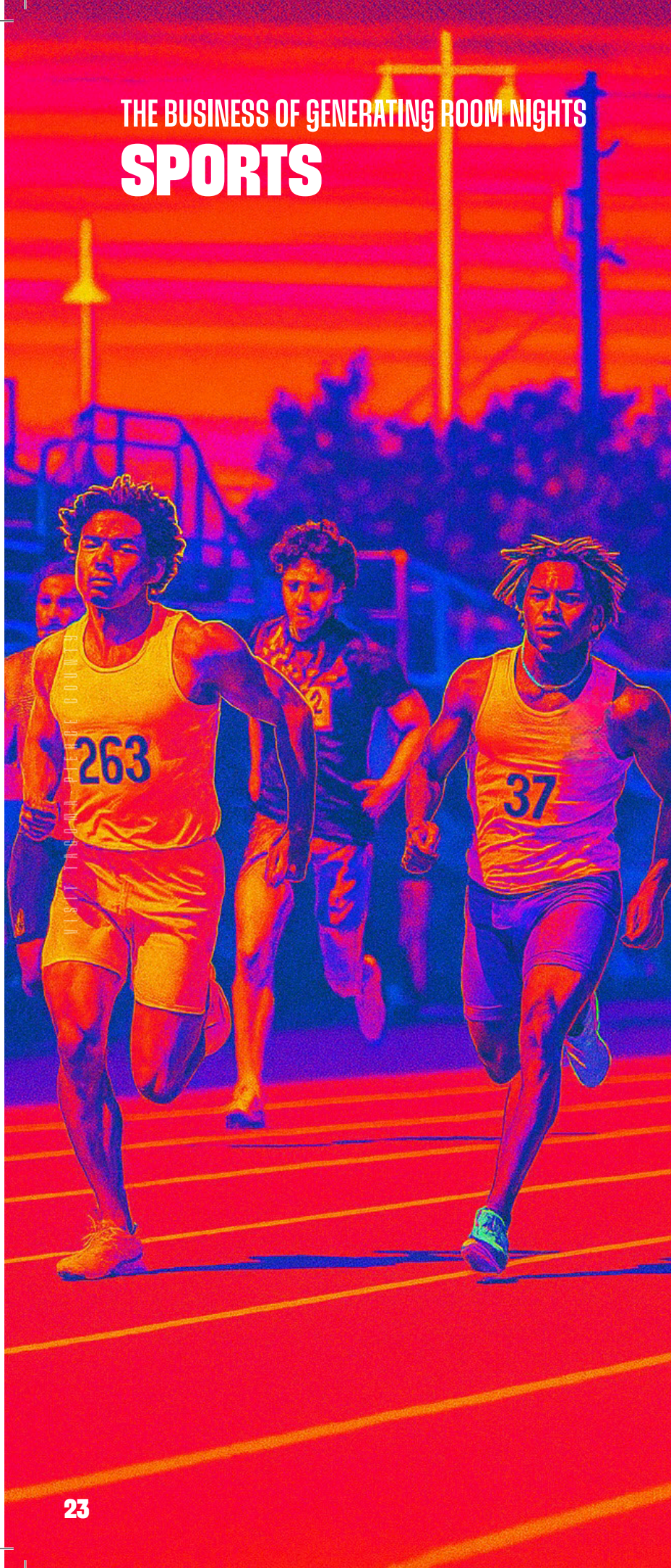


THE SALES TEAM BOOKED  
**45,065**  
 room nights for  
**FUTURE EVENTS**

BREAKING THE 2023 RECORD OF 27,996 BOOKED

## THE BUSINESS OF GENERATING ROOM NIGHTS

# SPORTS



## THE WHAT: RESULTS

### BUSINESS DELIVERED IN 2024

Room nights: **68,186**

Number of events: **47**

Attendees: **183,916**

Estimated direct spending: **\$40.9 million**

## THE HOW: SPORTS PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

### ORGANIZERS AND GOVERNING BODIES

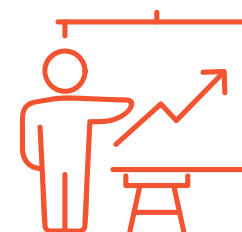
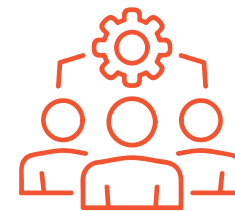
Worked with event organizers and national governing bodies (*WIAA, NCAA* and *others*) to identify ideal locations, venues, and timing for upcoming events. This included working with public and private partners to organize site tours.

### BIDS

Submitted bids to targeted events, reviewing and assessing each for sustainability, ability to generate a target number of room nights, potential growth, and return on investment.

### REGIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

Continued a multi-venue, multi-agency regional partnership that seeks to attract high-level NCAA, high school, and amateur events by highlighting the combined assets of the entire South Sound area.



# WHY IT MATTERS

In 2024, Pierce County's sports tourism game went from strong to standout. With rising participation, expanded event calendars, a county-wide footprint, and a growing national spotlight, three disciplines—gymnastics, judo, and cross-country—helped define a banner year and laid the groundwork for even bigger wins ahead.

Gymnastics is flipping expectations. Participation has more than doubled in the past decade, with over 3,200 athletes competing in 2024—up from just 1,800 in 2013. What started as a regional meet—**Charity Choice**—is now a four-day showcase drawing talent from across the country. The momentum is real, and so is the ambition: a bid for USA Gymnastics Nationals is next on the mat.

Judo continues to pack a punch. From 240 competitors in 2013 to *more than 1,100 in 2023*, the sport has seen a major local lift—thanks in large part to Lakewood's Ippon Judo Dojo. It's where Olympic silver medalist *Travis Stevens* got his start, and it's now a proving ground for the next generation of elite athletes. A bid for USA Judo Nationals in 2026 or 2027 is the natural next move.

Cross-country is running strong. Since 2021, we have consistently drawn national-caliber races, attracted by the region's scenic courses and logistical strengths, both of which Visit Tacoma-Pierce County has carefully curated. In 2024, the **USATF Club Nationals** at Chambers Creek Regional Park became the highest room night generator of any local cross-country event to date. With successful NCAA and PAC-12 meets in the rearview, eyes are now set on hosting the **NCAA Division I Cross Country Championships** and **USATF Nationals**.

IN 2024, THE USATF CLUB NATIONALS  
AT CHAMBERS CREEK REGIONAL PARK  
became the highest  
ROOM NIGHT GENERATOR  
OF ANY LOCAL CROSS-COUNTRY EVENT TO DATE

**THE BUSINESS OF GENERATING ROOM NIGHTS**  
**INDIVIDUAL LEISURE**

**THE WHAT:**  
**RESULTS**

**BUSINESS DELIVERED IN 2024**

- Room nights: **90,243**
- Individual campaigns: **14**
- Visitor days generated: **1,431,733**

**THE HOW:**  
**MARKETING PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS**

VISIT TACOMA - PIERCE COUNTY

**ADVERTISING**

Targeted digital and print ad campaigns to audiences by past behavior, and reported on how many room nights the ads generated.

**SOCIAL MEDIA ENGAGEMENT**

Grew our social media following by posting inspiring content and engaging followers and influencers.

**VIDEOGRAPHY**

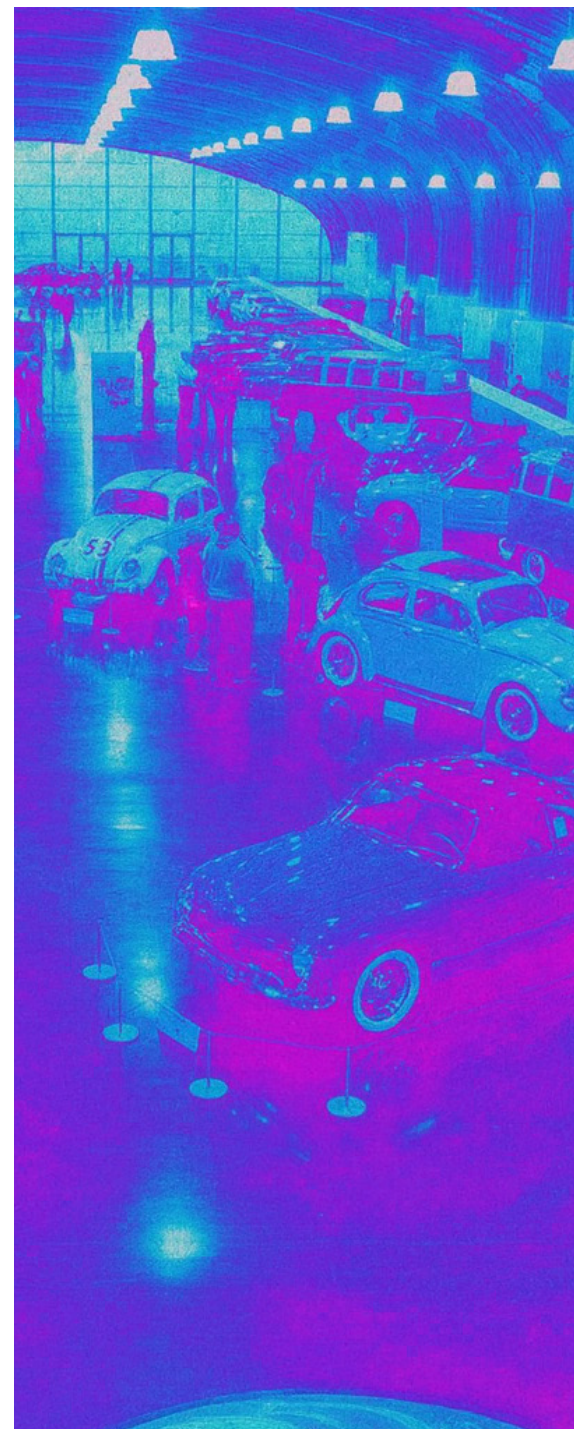
Shot and marketed 13 promotional videos, including itinerary videos, event videos, and one-off video projects to promote Pierce County in shoulder seasons. *The videos were watched in total more than 61,200 hours*

**MEDIA AND INFLUENCER RELATIONS**

Hosted travel media and social media influencers working on travel stories and content featuring Pierce County as a travel destination. Including hosting Travel & Words, a regional travel-writer conference that drew 55 writers to Tacoma and Pierce County.

**PUBLICATIONS**

Designed, printed, and distributed maps, visitor guides, rack cards, and a first-of-its-kind Tacoma Museum District brochure to hotels, museums, and other attractions.



**WHY IT MATTERS**

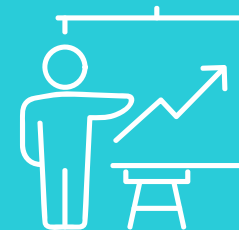
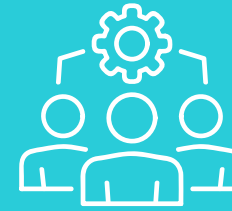
Room nights remain the most meaningful metric, and in 2024, Pierce County’s marketing efforts continued to be built around generating them with precision and purpose.

In 2024, we added a parallel ad targeting and attribution system that uses anonymized spending data to identify high-value travelers based on real-world spending behavior. Running alongside our other attribution method, these two distinct, best-in-class systems now form a powerful one-two approach: Each independently tracks how marketing converts into overnight stays, and together offers a comprehensive view of campaign performance. We adjust the dials based on what the tracking shows.

It’s a system well suited to today’s travelers, who are staying a bit longer (*the average stay in Pierce County increased from 2.6 to 2.9 days*), spending with more intention, and selecting destinations that offer personalization and depth. We’ve met this new breed of visitor where they are, continuing to grow our catalog of seasonal, theme- and persona-based itineraries. From food-focused weekends to outdoor escapes to family-friendly adventures, each itinerary is designed to help the right visitor connect with the right experience at the right time of year.

We’ve also invested in producing and distributing publications that make exploring the destination easier and more engaging... while making our tourism and hospitality partners’ jobs a little easier. Our refreshed visitor guide and newly launched Tacoma visitor map have been in high demand, snapped up by hotels, attractions, and visitor-facing businesses. Next, we’ll roll out district-specific print pieces to further personalize the in-market experience.

For Pierce County, staying state of the industry isn’t about trend-chasing. It’s about watching what’s changing, testing what’s promising, and building a marketing program that evolves intelligently—alongside the travelers we’re trying to reach.



2024 TOURISM IMPACT REPORT

THE MARKETING TEAM HAD OVER  
**61,200**  
 hours of watch  
 TIME OF MARKETING  
 PROMOTIONAL VIDEOS

# THE THUMB STOPPED HERE

VISIT TACOMA-PIERCE COUNTY'S DIGITAL FOOTPRINT

In today's media landscape, attention is the currency of the realm. Pixel by pixel, people fell in love with Tacoma and Pierce County from a digital distance. Through the stories, experiences, and places we shared, Visit Tacoma-Pierce County turned that attention into room nights, adventures, and memories.

THESE RESULTS ARE AS HUMAN AS THEY COME; VERIFIED FREE OF BOTS, CLICK FARMS, GHOST TRAFFIC, AND THE USUAL BAND OF SCRIPTED CRAWLERS.

## IN A WORLD OVERFLOWING WITH CONTENT, WINNING ATTENTION MEANS WINNING HEARTS

VISIT TACOMA-PIERCE COUNTY



HOURS WE STOLE THEIR ATTENTION:

### 61,216 HOURS

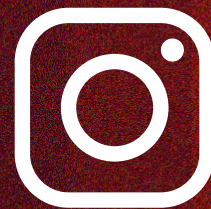
*NEARLY 7 YEARS OF BINGE-WORTHY CONTENT*



TIME VISITORS HAVE SPENT ON OUR PAGE:

### 17 DAYS, 5 HOURS

*THAT IS THE LENGTH OF A CROSS-COUNTRY ROAD TRIP (WITH SNACK BREAKS)*



HALF A MILLION SCROLLERS COULDN'T RESIST

### 538,005

*THAT'S LIKE FILLING THE TACOMA DOME 25 TIMES*

### 821,330 VIEWS

*THAT'S LIKE FILLING THE WASHINGTON STATE FAIR GRANDSTAND MORE THAN 80 TIMES*



ALMOST A MILLION REASONS TO CLICK 'VISIT'

### 947,369 SESSIONS

*OUR DIGITAL VISITORS COULD FILL PARADISE LODGE EVERY NIGHT FOR A CENTURY*



2024 TOURISM IMPACT REPORT



# 2024

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**NIGEL ENGLISH | BOARD CHAIR**  
COMMENCEMENT BANK

**JEFF WOODWORTH | VICE CHAIR**  
WOODWORTH CAPITOL

**BECKY NEWTON | SECRETARY**  
CITY OF LAKEWOOD

**TOM PAVLIK | TREASURER**  
HOTEL MURANO

**ADAM COOK | TACOMA VENUES & EVENTS**

**TED DANEK | ACE HARDWARE**

**HUNTER GEORGE | METRO PARKS TACOMA**

**MIKE GOMMI | PIERCE COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

**ZAC KEENER | KEMPER SPORTS**

**MEREDITH NEAL | CITY OF PUYALLUP**

**GARMEN PALMER | CITY OF SUMNER**

**ALAN VARSIK | METRO PARKS TACOMA**

**ROSHAUN YATES | LIFESTYLE VALET**

# GRATITUDE FROM THE CREW

SURE, WE LOVE BIG NUMBERS – BUT WE LOVE OUR PARTNERS MORE. THANKS FOR THE BRAINSTORMS, THE BOLD IDEAS, AND FOR MAKING TOURISM IN PIERCE COUNTY LOOK THIS GOOD.



VISIT  
**TACOMA**  
PIERCE COUNTY