



# Annual Tourism Report

# 2★ 17

— VISIT —  
**V★NCOUVER**  
— USA —

*Discover the Original™*

The official destination marketing organization

## Message from the President & Board Chair

Tourism to Vancouver USA has reached record levels of growth. Since 2009, visitor spending and related economic benefits have consistently trended upward. According to Dean Runyan's 2015 Washington State Travel Impact Report, visitor spending to the area increased by 5.1 percent and local tax receipts increased by 11.6 percent (see pg. 3).

As the lead tourism organization for Vancouver and Clark County, Visit Vancouver USA works closely with local businesses, attractions, and economic development entities to drive increased visitor spending. In 2016, our efforts led to **six million** impressions for our "How to Vancouver" campaign (see pg. 7), more than **27,000 future hotel room nights** booked (see pg. 5) and **120,000 visitor magazines distributed** (see pg. 6).

Our work this past year confirms what many in the community recognize: Vancouver is primed for rapid expansion. Both Gramor Development's "Waterfront Vancouver USA" and the Port of Vancouver USA's Terminal One project will bring new opportunities for tourism marketing and destination development. Existing assets—like Vancouver's reenergized downtown and its continually rotating programming—will complement the waterfront in creating an extremely marketable and desirable tourism destination. Vancouver's Eastside has also shown to be a strong tourism performer, with both athletic tournaments and business travelers driving increased demand for tourism amenities, such as new breweries and restaurants.

Helping fuel this growth, our organization will embark on several exciting new campaigns in 2017. Funded through the City of Vancouver's lodging tax grant program, these broadcast, digital, and transit advertising campaigns will increase Vancouver's tourism presence in tandem with the community's growth. This additional lodging tax funding will allow us to build more robust campaigns and enable us to better compete against similar-sized destinations.

Of course, the quality work we produce is thanks in part to our many great community partners—including stakeholder hotels, supporting municipalities, and local businesses and attractions. Together, we form an umbrella of tourism efforts that enhances our economy and grows our community.



*Kim Bennett*

Kimberly Bennett, President & CEO



*Mike McLeod*

Mike McLeod, Chair of the Board



## About Us

Visit Vancouver USA is a non-profit 501 (c) 6 destination marketing organization. Our objective is to increase the overall economic impact of tourism on the Vancouver/Clark County economy through sustained growth in tourism spending. Our activities result in significant increases in visitor spending, tourism-related earnings, tax collections and jobs.

Our Board of Directors is comprised of hospitality and business professionals, community leaders and City and County representatives. Their volunteer responsibilities include industry advocacy to build community-wide support for tourism, strengthen partnerships, increase productivity, maximize the return on investment and determine the future course of Visit Vancouver USA's mission.

## Funding

Visit Vancouver USA is funded by a Tourism Promotion Area (TPA). This special assessment charges hotel guests in Vancouver and unincorporated Clark County \$2. Total TPA collections in 2016 were **\$1,183,800**.

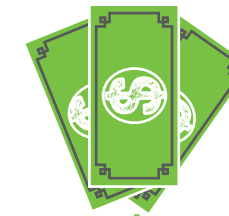


## Tourism Impact

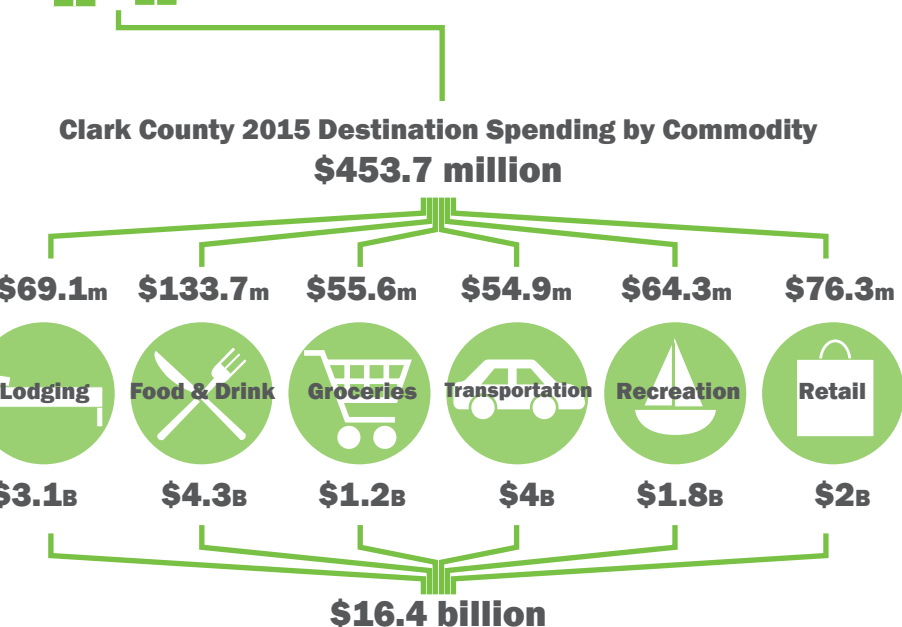
Tourism provides strong benefits to our local economy and creates positive effects that ripple throughout the entire business community.



**Tax revenue collected from Clark County visitors in 2015 totaled \$14 million in local taxes & \$31.9 million in state taxes**



**Clark County tourism created \$135.3 million in job earnings**



Source: Dean Runyan Associates, Inc. on behalf of the Washington State Department of Commerce, Olympia  
All figures are from 2015, the most recent at the time of printing.

## Board of Directors

Jan Bader\*  
City of Vancouver

Jordan Boldt  
Vancouver Farmers Market

Mike Bomar  
Columbia River Economic Development Council

Steve Bowers  
Hampton Inn & Suites

Melinda Capen\*  
DoubleTree by Hilton

John Gush  
Candlewood Suites

Kari Jonassen\*  
Homewood Suites by Hilton

Brian McClary\*  
The Heathman Lodge

Mike McLeod\*  
Hilton Vancouver WA

John Morrison  
Clark County Event Center & Fairgrounds

Carla Rise  
Residence Inn by Marriott

To Be Appointed\*  
Clark County Council

Kimberly Bennett\*  
Visit Vancouver USA

\* Denotes Executive Committee Member



# VANCOUVER USA SPORTS

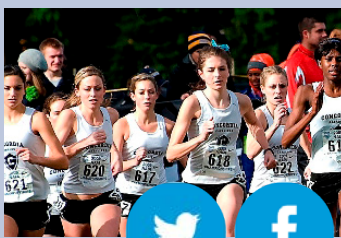
## Brand Overview

Vancouver USA Sports promotes Vancouver USA and Clark County as a sports event destination. Our sports development efforts bring numerous youth, amateur, collegiate and professional sports events to the community.

The Sports Development team here at Visit Vancouver USA serves as the on-the-ground, driving force responsible for recruiting sports events to Vancouver USA. Their focus is to foster relationships with area sports groups and to continue growing existing sports events in the community. Athletes and attendees from these events create a positive economic footprint by dining in area restaurants, shopping in the community and staying in Clark County hotels.



## Sports Spotlight



In 2017 and 2019, the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) will bring the Men's and Women's Cross Country National Championships back to Fort Vancouver National Historic Site.

Fort Vancouver boasts a rich history as a site for intercollegiate athletic events, last serving as home to the NAIA championship races in 2012. Visit Vancouver USA's business development team worked closely with the National Park Service and the Cascade Collegiate Conference to showcase Vancouver as the ideal sports destination for the event. Athletes will travel from as far as the East Coast and Canada, and stay at multiple hotels throughout the region.

[www.VancouverUSASports.com](http://www.VancouverUSASports.com)

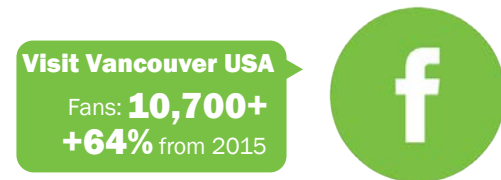


## Let's Get Social

There's a conversation going on about Vancouver USA! The Visit Vancouver USA social media fan base grew exponentially across multiple platforms in 2016. Our social media efforts have increased user engagement and have made over a million impressions on potential visitors. Share what you love about Vancouver USA by tagging your posts with #DiscoverVanUSA!



@Vancouver\_USA  
Followers: **3,900+**  
**+21%** from 2015



Visit Vancouver USA  
Fans: **10,700+**  
**+64%** from 2015



@Vancouver\_USA  
Followers: **4,100+**  
**+95%** from 2015



## Convention & Group Business

The business development team at Visit Vancouver USA regularly attends meetings, conferences and reverse tradeshows around the region and U.S. to assist in soliciting business from the following markets:

- Association - State/Regional/National
- Fraternal & Ethnic
- Educational
- Entertainment
- Government/Military
- Environmental
- Religious/Faith-Based
- Sports
- Social & Special Interests

## Convention Business Conversion Report

	2015	2016	% Change
Leads Generated	298	333	+12%
Definite Room Nights	28,006	27,699*	-1%

\*2016 definite room nights affected by the closure of the Red Lion at the Quay

## Convention Business Impact

2016 was an eventful year for Visit Vancouver USA, with the booking and hosting of a multitude of conferences, conventions, tournaments and meetings.

Below is a select list of groups that Visit Vancouver USA assisted in influencing to meet here, rather than another destination. The estimated economic impact to the Vancouver USA region from all 2016 bookings is more than \$11.5 million.

- WA Home Brewers Association - 2017
- Administrative Office of the Courts - 2017
- Altrusa International - 2017
- National Association of Intercollegiate Athletes 2017 & 2019
- NW Ministry Network - 2018
- American Association of Critical Care Nurses - 2018
- American Queen Steamboat Company - 2018
- Affordable Housing Mng, Assoc/Affordable Rural Housing Council - 2019
- WA Community Mental Health Council - 2019
- Southwest Washington Synod - 2019
- WA State Recycling - 2020
- Association of Washington Cities 2017, 2022, 2024

## 2016 Convention & Group Business Highlights

- Assisted the hospitality community in booking **27,699 guest rooms nights** for conventions and meeting delegates, teams, vendors and event attendees in 2016
- Confirmed more than **40,500 room nights** in the Vancouver USA region from 2017 to 2020 and beyond
- Prospected **115,751 potential room nights** for the Vancouver USA region from various markets for all future years

## Trade Association Memberships

Visit Vancouver USA actively participates in a variety of associations for business development, marketing and educational opportunities.

- American Society of Association Executives
- Destination Marketing Association International
- Destination Marketing Association of the West
- Hospitality Sales & Marketing Association International
- Meeting Professionals International Washington & Oregon Chapters
- Oregon Society of Association Management
- Oregon Sports Authority
- Pacific Northwest Society of Government Meeting Professionals
- Professional Convention Management Association
- Religious Conference Management Association
- Reunion Friendly Network
- The Alliance of Military Reunions
- Travel Portland
- US Travel Association
- Washington Society of Association Executives
- Washington Tourism Alliance



## Visitors Guide



**95,000 copies distributed annually +  
25,000 polybagged with Portland Monthly**

## Thank You Community Partners

Visit Vancouver USA would like to thank the following organizations who work with us to positively influence the region's economy.



## Media & Public Relations

Visit Vancouver USA works regularly with travel writers to influence positive stories about the area. A hot topic in 2016 was Clark County's burgeoning craft beer scene. Thrillist called Vancouver "the next beer town" to watch and Travel + Leisure named Vancouver, in conjunction with the Portland metro area, as the country's best beer city.

The Washington Beer Blog also paid a visit to "Brewcouver," as part of a tour hosted by Visit Vancouver USA and its community partners. The article found that "beautiful beer blossoms in Portland's shadow" and dubbed Vancouver worthy of multiple visits for craft brew tasting. The tour included Loowit Brewing, Trusty Brewery, Trap Door Brewing, Heathen Brewing, Doomsday Brewing and Fortside Brewing among others. Other publications highlighting the beer scene in 2016 included BREWPUBLIC, SeattlePI.com, Brewbound, The Not So Professional Beer Blog and New School Beer.

## Marketing Campaigns

The How to Vancouver campaign drove awareness of Vancouver as a travel destination, promoting the area as a vibrant place to visit for foodies, explorers, and festival-seekers. Multiple video advertisements, including a two-minute anthem video, promoted the area's restaurants, retail, parks, historical attractions, events, and wineries and breweries.

The lively videos showed viewers why "to Vancouver" is a verb, and ran for four months in the Portland, Beaverton, Tigard, Gresham and Hillsboro markets. In total, the campaign achieved more than six million impressions across cable spots, digital radio, online video and social media.

**Digital Radio  
2,129,252**

**Cable Spots  
1,150,483**

**6,104,670  
Total Impressions**

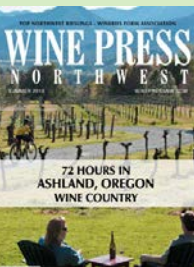
**Social Media  
1,507,624**

**Online Video  
1,317,311**

## Vancouver USA in the News

In 2016, Vancouver USA appeared in a variety of media publications including:

- Alaska Airlines Beyond
- Association News
- The Bellingham Herald
- Culture Trip
- The Daily Meal
- Eater PDX
- FOX 12 Oregon
- KATU
- KGW
- Meetings Today
- NBC News
- NW Travel & Life Magazine
- Northwest Meetings + Events
- Only in Your State
- The Oregonian
- Portland Monthly
- The Seattle Times
- Smart Meetings
- Thrillist
- Travel + Leisure
- USA Today Travel
- The Washington Beer Blog
- Washington State Visitors Guide
- Washington State Wine Guide
- Wine Press Northwest



## Marketing & Communications Highlights

- Produced print advertising campaigns for travel and lifestyle publications such as Portland Monthly, Seattle Met, OnTrak and Northwest Meetings + Events. Full page advertisements and accompanying editorial ran in June and October editions of Alaska Airlines Beyond Magazine, reaching an estimated **2.6 million passengers**.
- Promoted local businesses via the Vancouver USA Originals social media campaign. The campaign videos had a combined reach of more than a half-million, and garnered more than **290,000 views and 3,200 likes on Facebook**. Some of the businesses highlighted included CouveCycle, Craft Beer and Wine Fest, GLAMbeauty bar, Heathen Brewing and Kiggins Theatre.
- Authored articles and influenced positive media coverage of the region through targeted media pitches, which resulted in Vancouver USA being featured in over **100 print and online pieces**.

## Destination Promotions

In 2016, Visit Vancouver USA launched Vancouver's first annual dining month, **Dine the Couve**. The promotion offered 3 for \$23 pricing at participating restaurants and \$3 drink specials at select breweries and tasting rooms. An estimated 2,000+ diners attended the event, dining at one or multiple restaurants throughout the month of October. The webpage hosting menus for the event attracted more than 60,000 total page views.

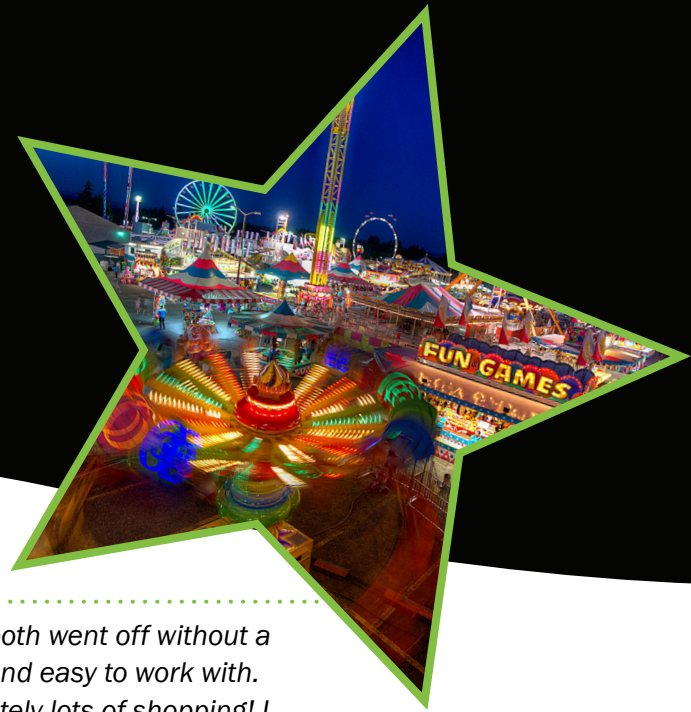
For meeting and convention attendees, Visit Vancouver USA launched the **Show Your Badge** program. The program invited businesses near the Vancouver Convention Center to increase their exposure to attendees through offering business specials, such as half-price admission or purchase discounts. For the first six months of the promotion, more than 2,045 conference attendees were offered deals featuring a dozen downtown businesses.

## Visit Vancouver USA

Business Development & Marketing Office  
1220 Main Street, Suite 220  
Vancouver, Washington 98660  
www.VisitVancouverUSA.com

## Visitor Information Center

Operated by the National Park Service  
1501 E Evergreen Blvd.  
Vancouver, Washington 98661



## What Our Clients Are Saying

*I have had two different meetings in Vancouver in the last year and both went off without a hitch! The Visit Vancouver USA office was very helpful, professional and easy to work with. There are plenty of good restaurants and pubs in the area and definitely lots of shopping! I would highly recommend holding a meeting in Vancouver USA!*

*Washington Public Ports Association*

*Our conference attendees were thrilled with the Visitors Guide, and the many options for meals and entertainment within walking distance of the Hilton. Many attendees took advantage of the riverfront park to jog or walk, and the Farmers Market was a big hit.*

*Washington State Bar Association*

*We love working with the staff of Vancouver USA to help us in planning our meetings. They made planning so easy!*

*Washington State Recycling Association*

*The Vancouver USA staff was friendly, helpful, accommodating, and eager to make my event planning experience as stress-free as possible. I look forward to working with them again when opportunity comes to plan future events in the Vancouver area.*

*DSHS/ Children's Administration*

*Vancouver, Washington is a charming location to explore and enjoy. They have a lot to offer, from a truly magnificent farmer's market to a variety of shopping opportunities, good restaurants and more. Add to that the close proximity to Portland, and you've got a great destination for a holiday or conference.*

*Washington State Podiatric Medical Association*

## Visit Vancouver USA Office Staff

**Kimberly Bennett**, President & CEO

**Rosemary Cooke**, Director of Business Development

**Kelsey Chappelle**, Senior Business Development Manager

**Christine Whitney**, Business Development Manager

**Michelle Hensler**, Business Development Coordinator

**Jacob Schmidt**, Director of Marketing & Communications

**Erica Thompson**, Content Coordinator

**Taylor Pulsipher**, Digital Media Coordinator

**Debra Ingram**, Office Administrator

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