



# *Covid-19 Recovery Plan*

JANUARY 2021

VISIT  
**THE WOODLANDS**  
TEXAS





## *Our Mission*

To establish The Woodlands as a beautiful, lively, and welcoming destination recognized regionally, nationally and internationally for first-class business, convention and leisure travel.

## *Who We Are*

The Woodlands Convention and Visitors Bureau (dba: Visit The Woodlands) is the destination marketing organization responsible for promoting The Woodlands to drive demand for both hotel and retail tax collections.

Visit The Woodlands is a 501(c)(6) organization, funded by The Woodlands Township Hotel Occupancy Tax.



# *Board of Directors*



Chairman  
Bruce Rieser



Vice Chairman  
John Anthony Brown



Secretary/Treasurer  
Fred Domenick



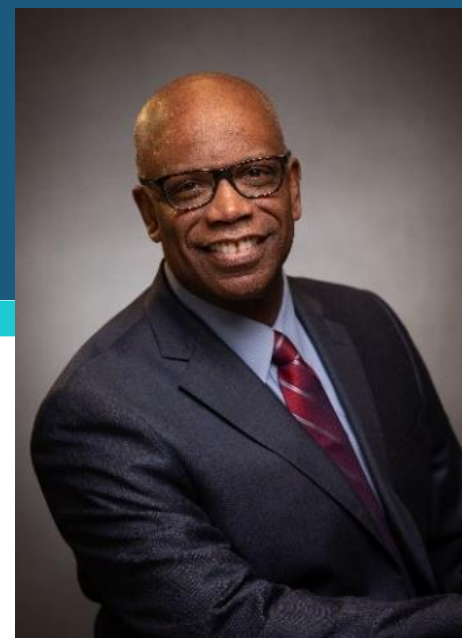
Director  
Dr. Shelley Sekula Gibbs



Director  
Jeff Jones



Director  
Jenny Taylor



Director  
Ted Harris



Director  
Kevin Viteri



Director  
Cameron Klepac



Director  
JJ Hollie



# *Team Members*

---



Nick Wolda  
President



Assistant Director  
Elizabeth Eddins



Marketing Director  
Ashley White



Director of Sales  
Josie Lewis



Administrative Analyst  
Sonia Guerrero



Tourism Specialist  
Laura Haces



Communications Coordinator  
Amber George



Sales & Servicing Specialist  
Ashley Fenner



# *Challenge & Strategy Overview*

---

With travel essentially halted for the near future due to the COVID-19 pandemic and government “stay-at-home” orders, Visit The Woodlands is tasked with responsibly maintaining its role in supporting the local tourism economy while strategically positioning The Woodlands for leisure tourism and business travel success post-crisis.

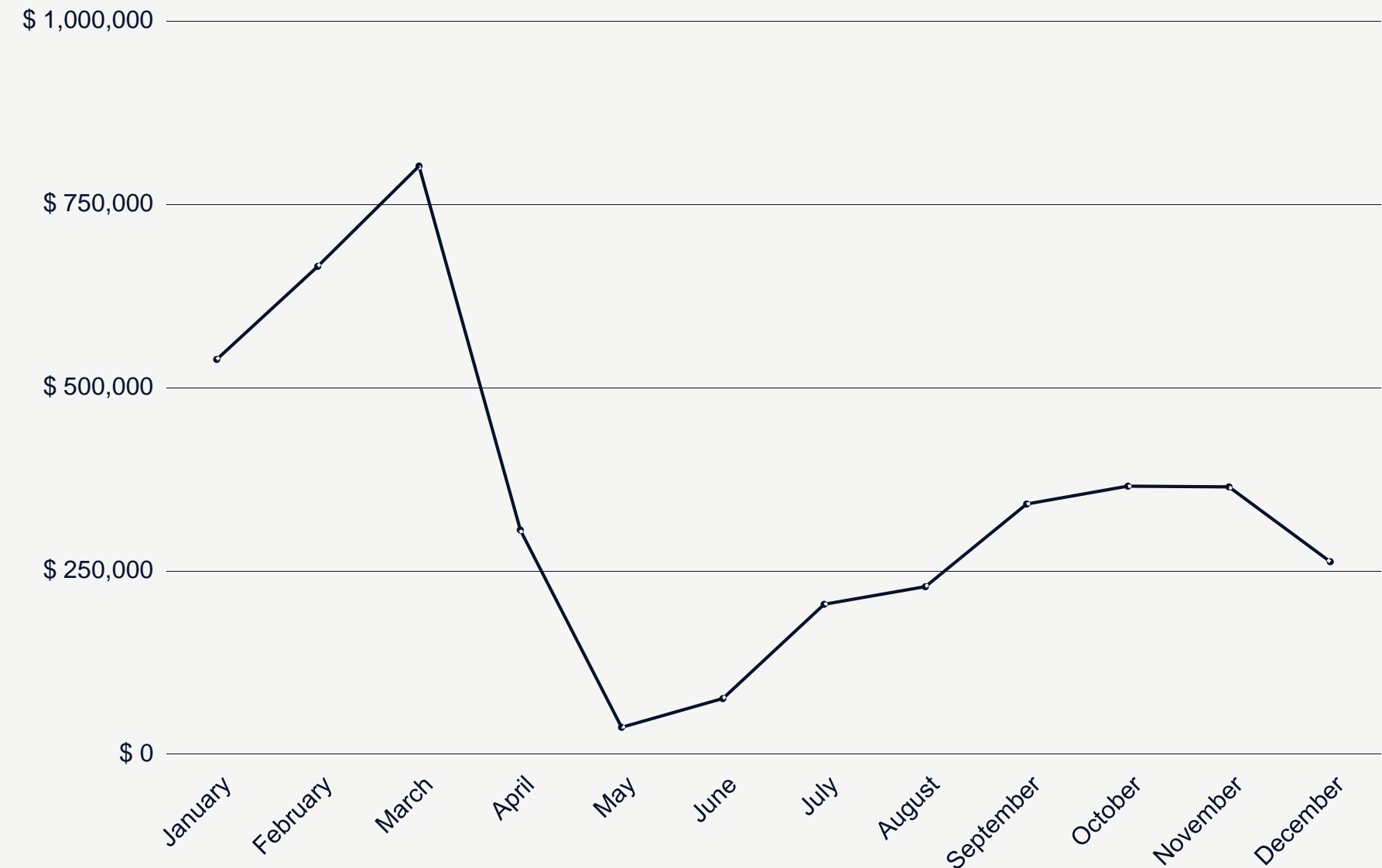
To combat the effects of the COVID-19 crisis on local tourism, Visit The Woodlands will implement a multi-phase strategy to address immediate and future needs of the industry. In the initial phases of this crisis, VTW has transitioned from promoting visitation to promoting community support of local tourism partners.

In the recovery phases of this crisis, VTW will implement additional marketing and sales efforts designed to position The Woodlands as a top-of-mind, close-to-home tourism destination to visit post-social distancing.



# Hotel Tax Collections

THROUGH DECEMBER 2020



Hotel Tax Collections were down 54.5% for the year in 2020. To combat a loss in funding, Visit The Woodlands reduced 2020 expenses by roughly \$1M and adjusted the 2021 budget, with operating budget at 40% less than previous years.





VISIT THE WOODLANDS COVID-19 RECOVERY PLAN | JANUARY 2021

## *Short-Term Goals*

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Visit The Woodlands pivoted to focus on five short-term organizational priorities:

### ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Surviving the crisis so that we can lead the recovery for The Woodlands

### COMPASSION FOR PEOPLE

Putting people first and implementing a strategy focused on compassion for people affected by the crisis

### PARTNER SUPPORT

Continuing to provide resources, communication and support to our partner through the crisis

### TAKE ADVANTAGE OF OPPORTUNITIES

Finding opportunities during the crisis and remaining nimble to take advantage of these where we can

### READINESS TO GEAR BACK UP

Adjusting our strategy, so the team is ready to ramp back up when it is safe to do so, and the market is ready



# *COVID-19*

## *Crisis / Opportunity*

### PHASE 1 RESPONSE

- March - April 2020
- Pandemic Response
- Financial Crisis
- Community Spirit

### PHASE 2 RECOVERY

- Starting May 2020
- Rebuild Visitor Economy
- Preserve Viability of Organization

### PHASE 3 RESILIENCE

- Long Term Strategic Plan
- Deal with New Normal
- Reimagined Organization





# *Response Strategies*

## DURING RESPONSE WHEN GOVERNMENT MANDATED SOCIAL DISTANCING & SHUTDOWNS HAPPENED

- Ensure Visit The Woodlands and the local industry is included in the recovery planning conversations and efforts in The Woodlands
- Engage industry stakeholders, Visit The Woodlands Board of Directors, Marketing Committee and the Sales Advisory Committee to build a unified process and protocols for reopening visitor economy.
- Call upon support from strategic relationships with elected and appointed officials
- Align more closely with the economic development organizations and private sector companies
- Play an enhanced role in building and amplifying community spirit
- Promote the value of tourism within the community
- Share guidelines of approved health and cleanliness standards and certifications for the hotel, restaurant, public venues and community
- Serve locals partners by offering education and training materials to the industry
- Work with relevant and targeted stakeholders to address economic, social and environmental sustainability



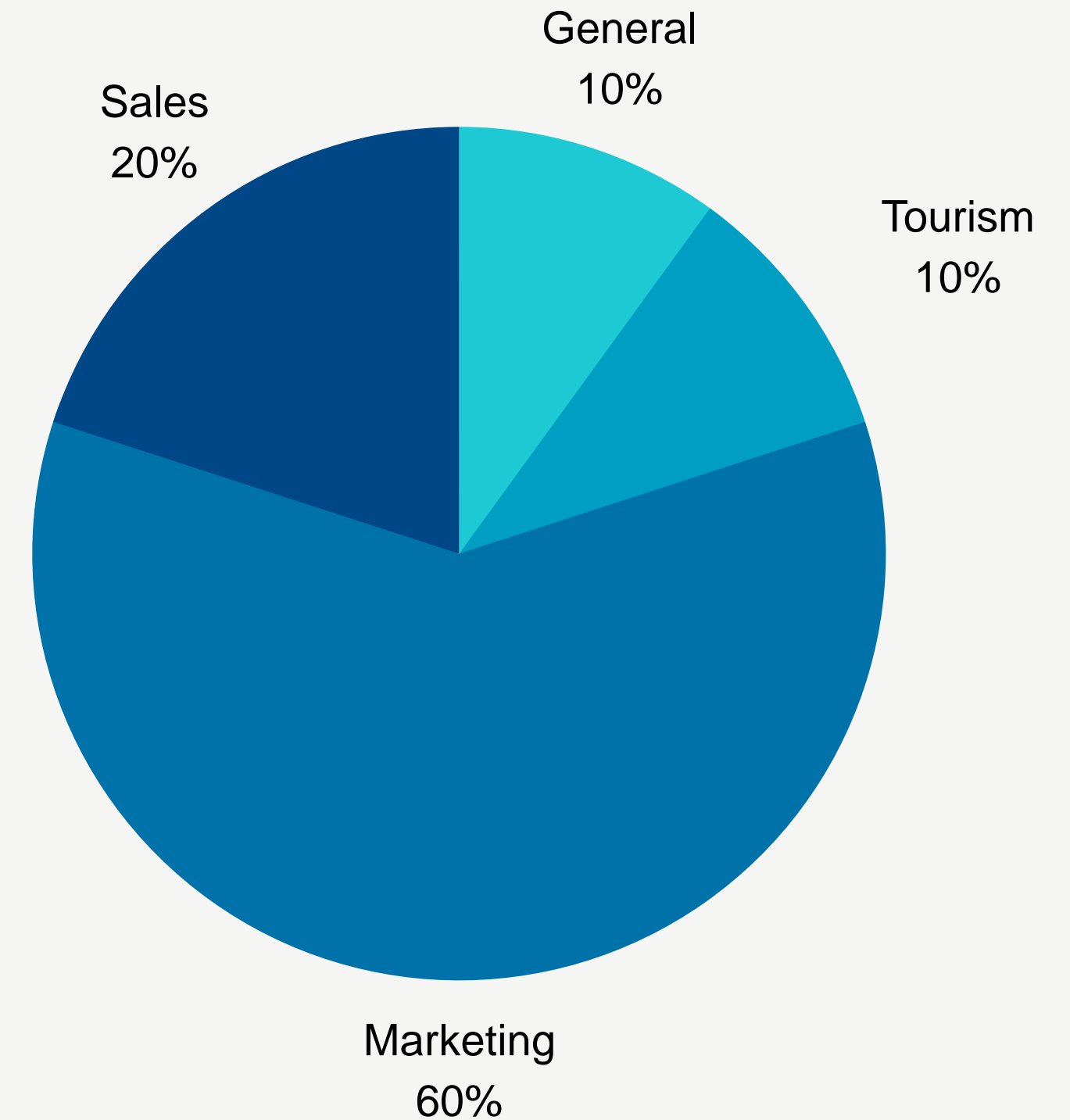
# 2020 Budget Reductions

## IMMEDIATE ACTIONS IN MARCH 2020

- Halted All Production & Projects with Agency of Record
- Cancelled or Postponed Advertising
- Stopped Projects with All Vendors
- Made Cuts in All Departments
- Ceased All Staff Travel

## ADDITIONAL CUTS FOLLOWING APRIL 2020 BOARD MEETING

- Advertising
- Travel
- Event Sponsorships
- Totaling \$1 Million

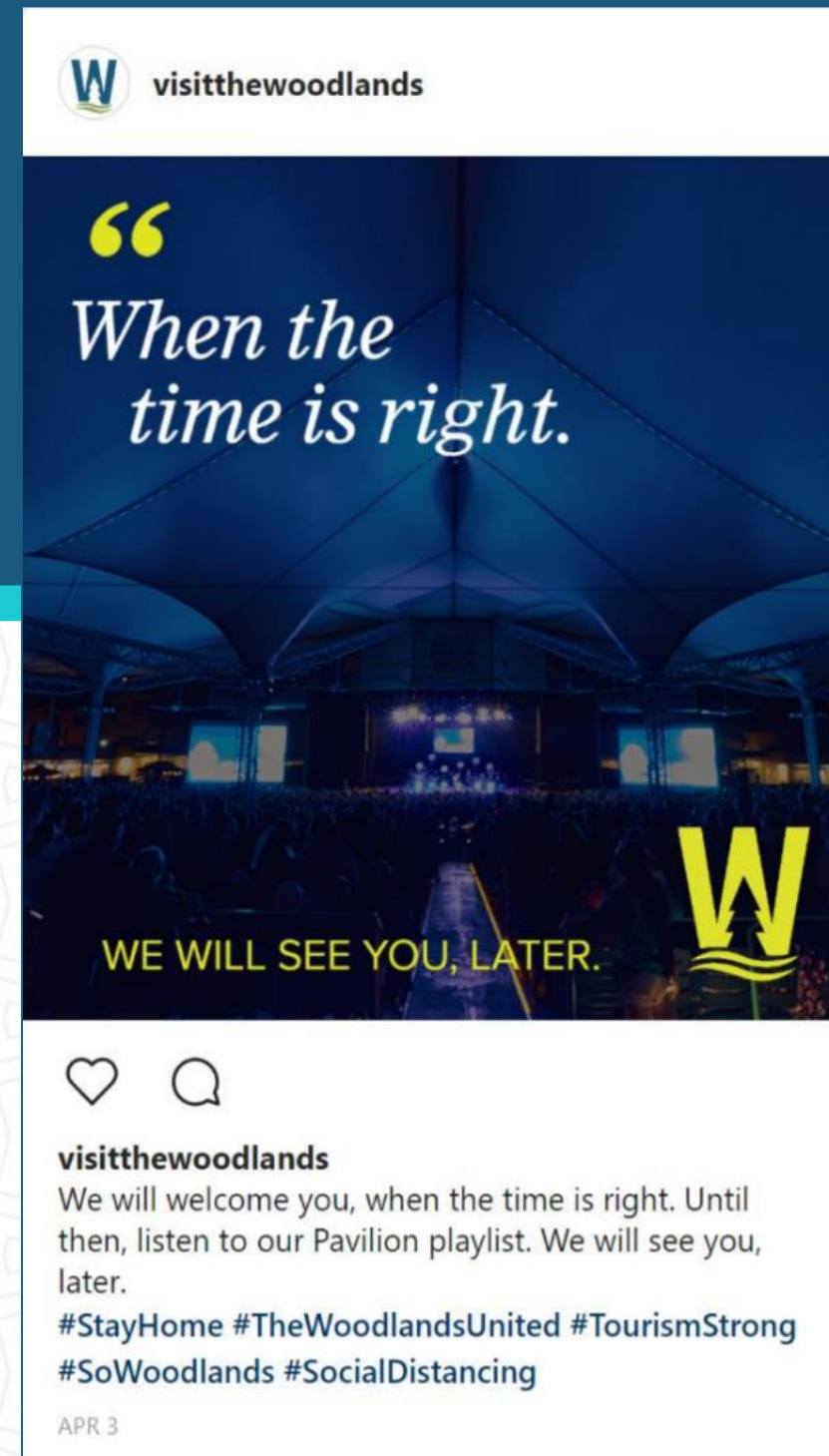




# Covid-19 Recap

## RESPONSE & RECOVERY

- Website: Dining & Shopping Guides
- Social Content: Supporting All Partners
- Board & Partner Weekly Emails
- Three-Phase COVID Recovery Plan

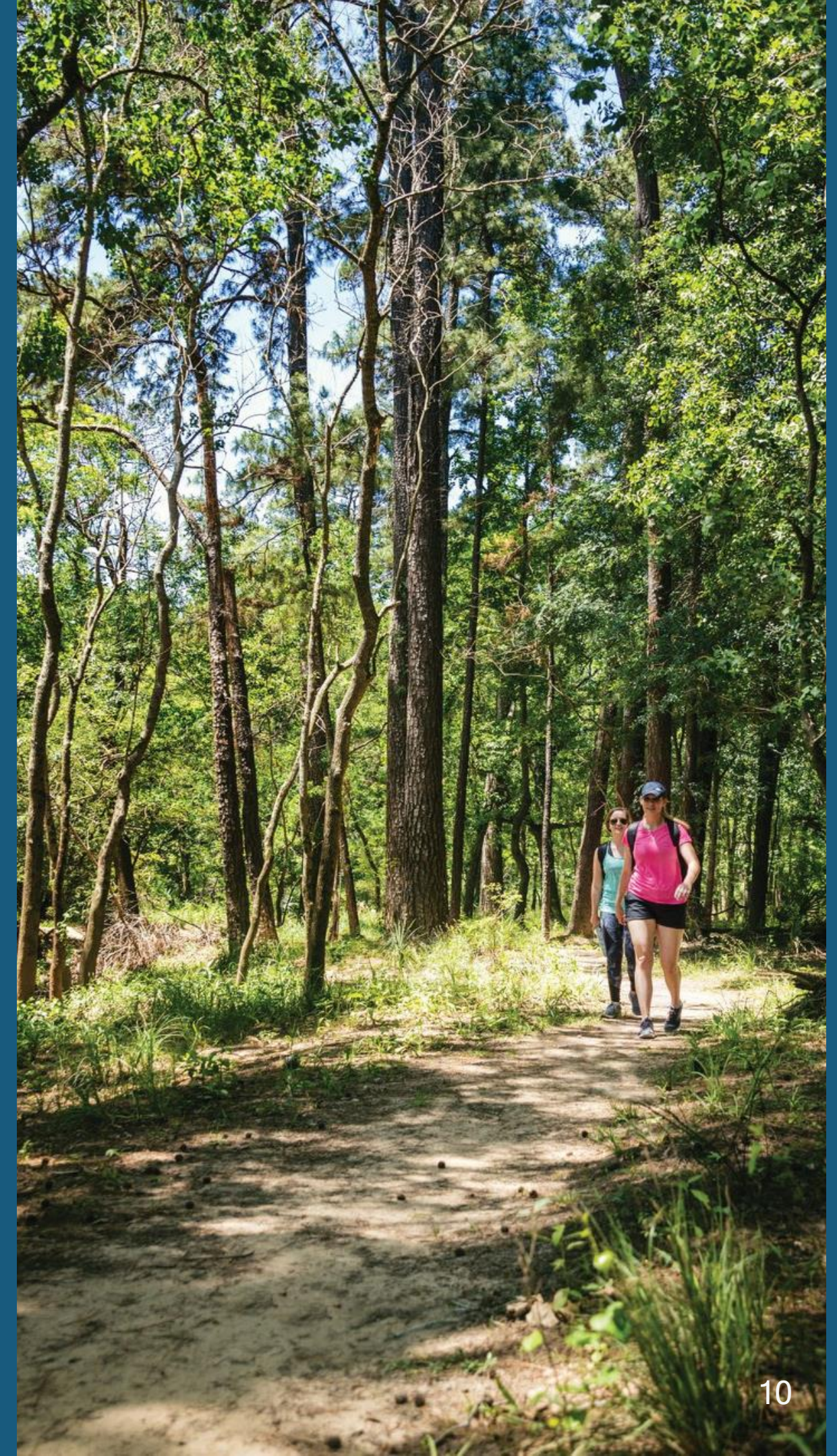




# *Recovery Strategies*

## DURING RECOVERY AS SOCIAL DISTANCING MANDATES ARE LIFTED & TRAVEL ACTIVITY BEGINS TO NORMALIZE

- Utilize client input, monitor data signals and trends to inform recovery messaging and timing
- Launch new website and use this, in addition to other virtual experiences, to inspire future visitation for business and leisure travel
- Promote and highlight nature, parks, and outdoor experiences
- Collaborate with other industry organizations to expand audience reach
- Expand marketing outreach and campaigns to target local audience
- Adapt destination imagery to incorporate visuals with fewer people/crowds
- Evaluate target markets and evolve marketing strategies to attract more resilient travelers
- Focus marketing strategies on generating earned media in lieu of paying for media exposure
- Develop a content strategy to showcase local heroes, makers, and influencers
- Develop messaging related to health and safety to reassure visitors
- Reassess business events market and target new groups - smaller, regional
- Repackage current content relevant to new audience and demands

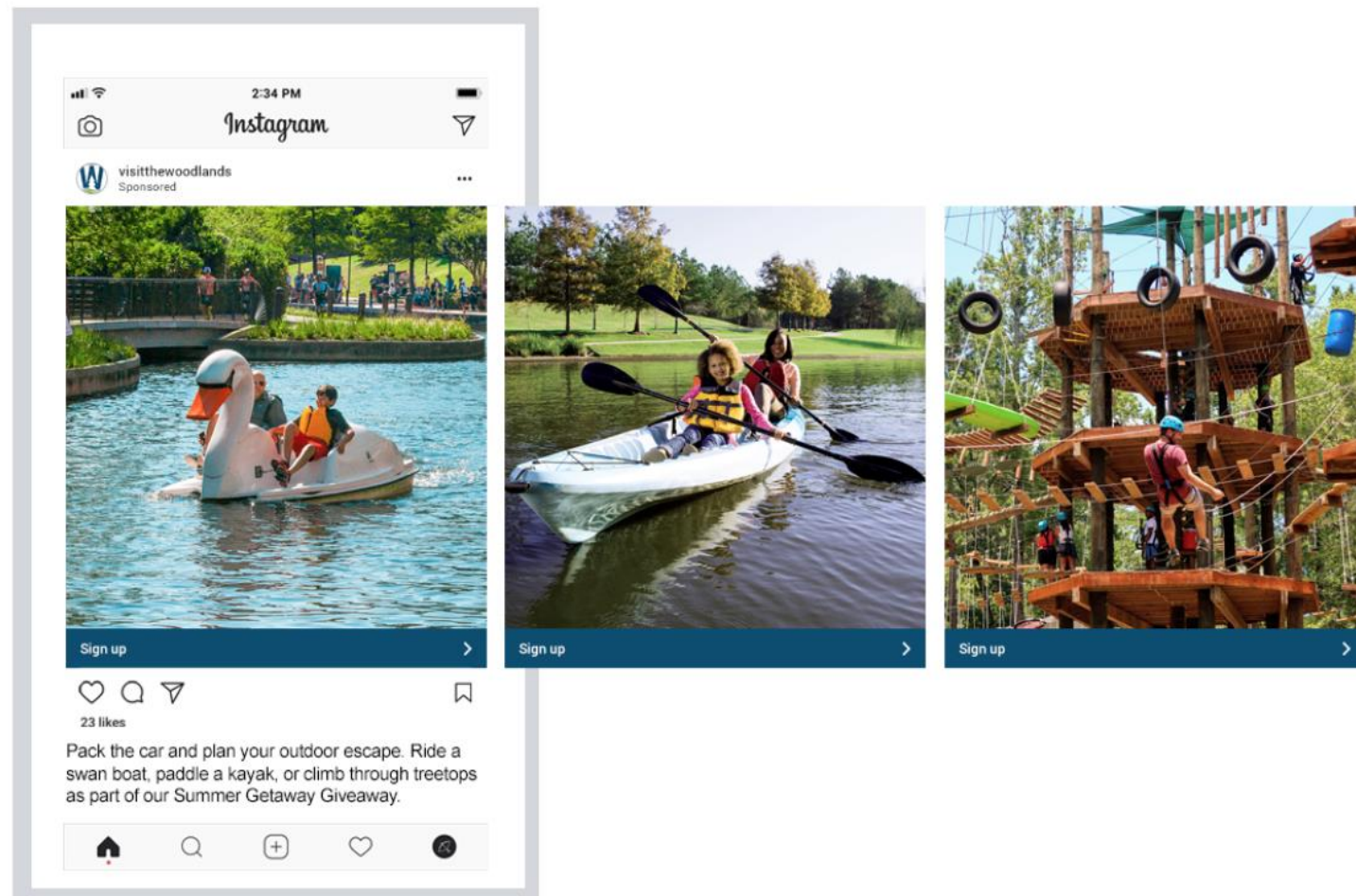




# Advertising

## 2020 HIGHLIGHTS

In March, Visit The Woodlands halted all advertising in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Efforts were reactivated in June with post-COVID messaging in alignment with our three-phase COVID Recovery Plan.







# Stages & Phases

## Daycation

- June // 0-100 mile radius
- Day-trippers

## Staycation

- Mid-late summer // 100-200 mile radius
- Overnights + weekenders

## Yay-cation

- Fall + holiday // 200+ mile radius
- Vacationers (return to pre-COVID activity)







# Themes

The following themes may be developed individually or as a multifaceted approach to support an overarching theme for a new travel campaign.

## Rediscover

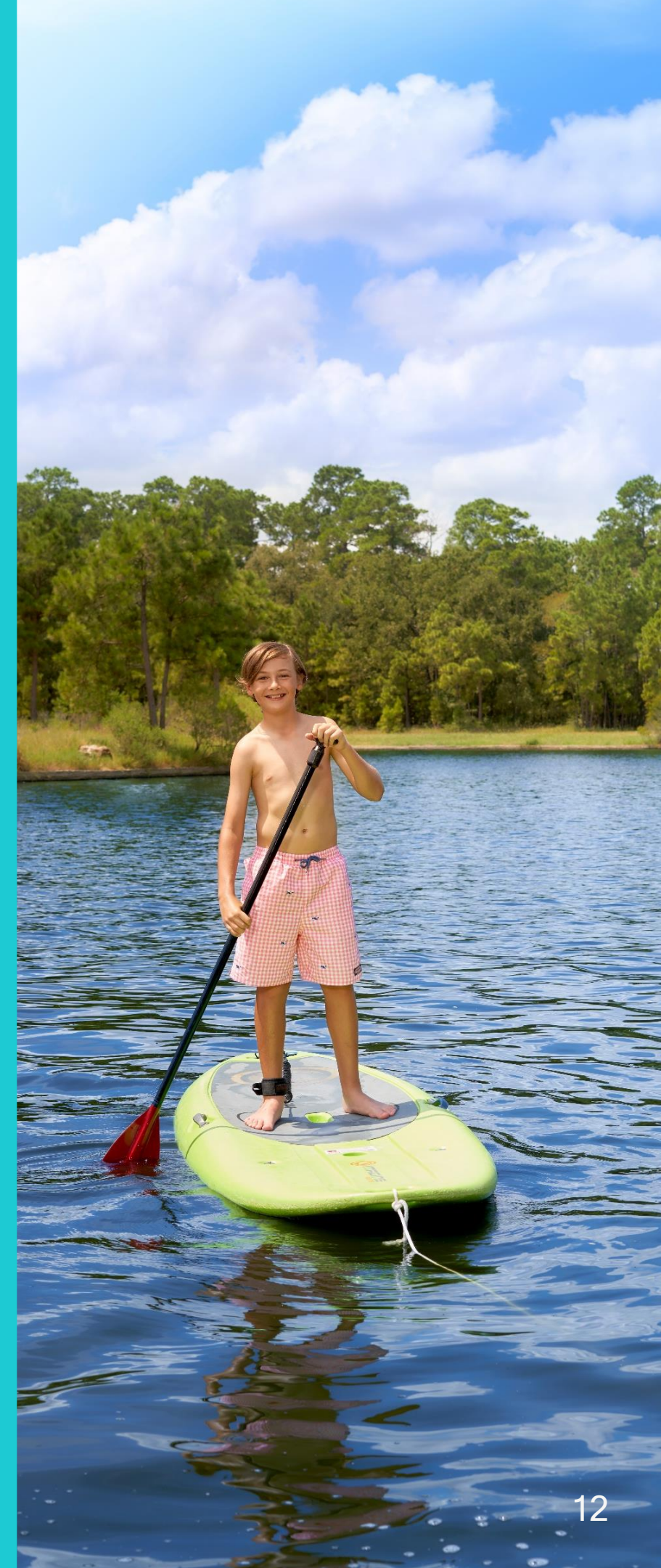
- Rediscover the natural beauty and allure of outdoor adventure in The Woodlands after an extended time at home.
- Rediscover a favorite pastime. Kayaking, golfing, and hiking through our towering pine forests bring new appeal to social distancing.
- Rediscover the enjoyment of dining out, window shopping, and sipping on a cocktail on the pool deck at sunset.

## Reconnect

- Reconnect with the people, places, and experiences you love the most — in the safe and spacious setting of The Woodlands.
- Reconnect with friends and family during a safe escape from screen time and the tired, sameness of home.
- Reconnect with cherished memories during past visits to The Woodlands. Relive a perfect date night, wedding, or special occasion enjoyed here.

## Recharge

- Recharge the soul and the senses with a calm escape to The Woodlands. It's the perfect antidote for the stress of forced isolation.
- Recharge your mind on a float in a resort-style swimming pool. Recharge your body on our hike and bike trails.
- Recharge your tastebuds with the perfectly mixed cocktail and world-class dining at our large selection of award-winning restaurants.





# Social Media

## 2020 CAMPAIGNS

- National Travel & Tourism Week Promotion
- Launch of Facebook Live Videos
- Summer Getaway Giveaway
- Dine The Woodlands Video Mini Series
- Launch of Instagram Guides
- Shopping & Dining Passport
- Experience The Woodlands From Home
- U.S. Travel “Let’s Go There” Campaign
- Art in The Woodlands Video Mini Series
- Houston Restaurant Weeks Promotion
- Launch of Instagram Reels
- 12 Days of Christmas Giveaway & more...

### Dine The Woodlands · 8

[See All](#)

From alfresco views of The Woodlands Waterway to dining indoors at one of our family or specialty restaurants. Dine The Woodlands: <https://www.visitthewoodlands.com/restaurants/>



Dine The Woodlands | Sweet Paris

3 weeks ago · 164 Views



Dine The Woodlands | Gumbo

7 weeks ago · 388 Views



Dine The Woodlands | Avanti Italian Kitchen & Wine Bar

12 weeks ago · 4.9K Views



### Art in The Woodlands · 4

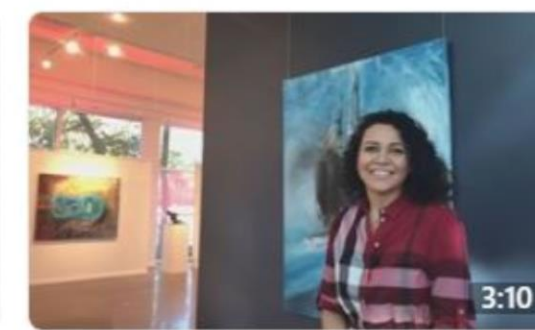
[See All](#)

The Woodlands art and culture scene is one of the main reasons visitors travel from all across the globe to spend their vacations here. The Woodlands is home to one of the largest and most dynamic collections of public art in Texas, including more than 50 outdoor sculptures. The expansive collection of art in The Woodlands continues to grow.



Public Art in The Woodlands | Market Street

4 days ago · 191 Views



LIVE from Glade Gallery in The Woodlands

11 weeks ago · 301 Views



LIVE at Glade Gallery

10 weeks ago · 899 Views

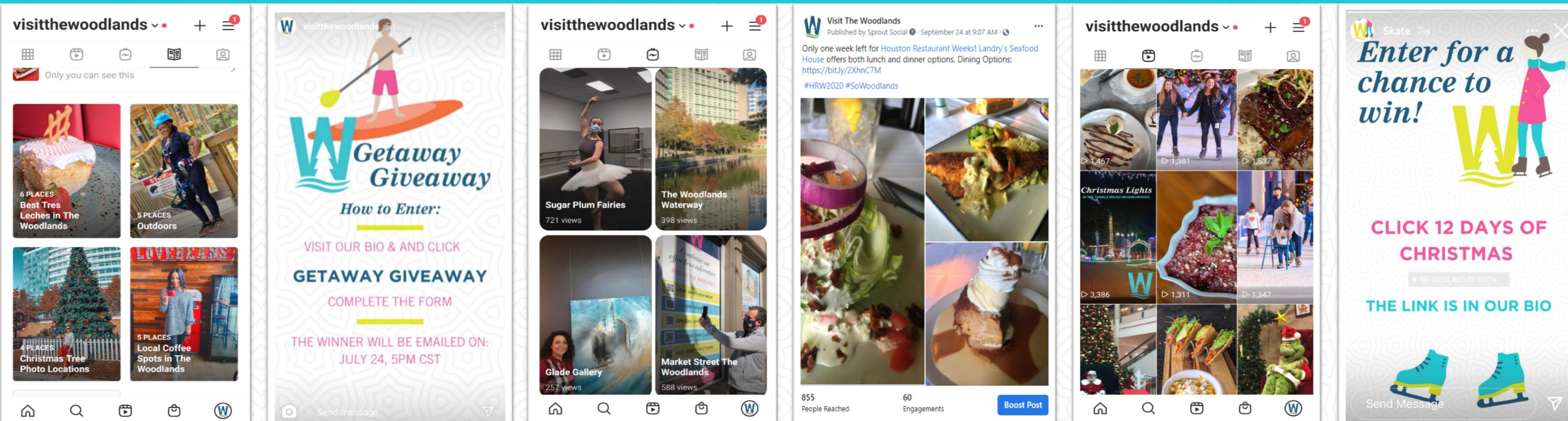




# Social Media

## STATS, Q4 COMPARED TO Q3

- 2.3 million impressions – Up 83%
- 91,000 engagements – Up 96%
- 30,000 conversions – Up 134%
- 2,055 total audience growth – Up 23%





# Website

## VISITTHEWOODLANDS.COM

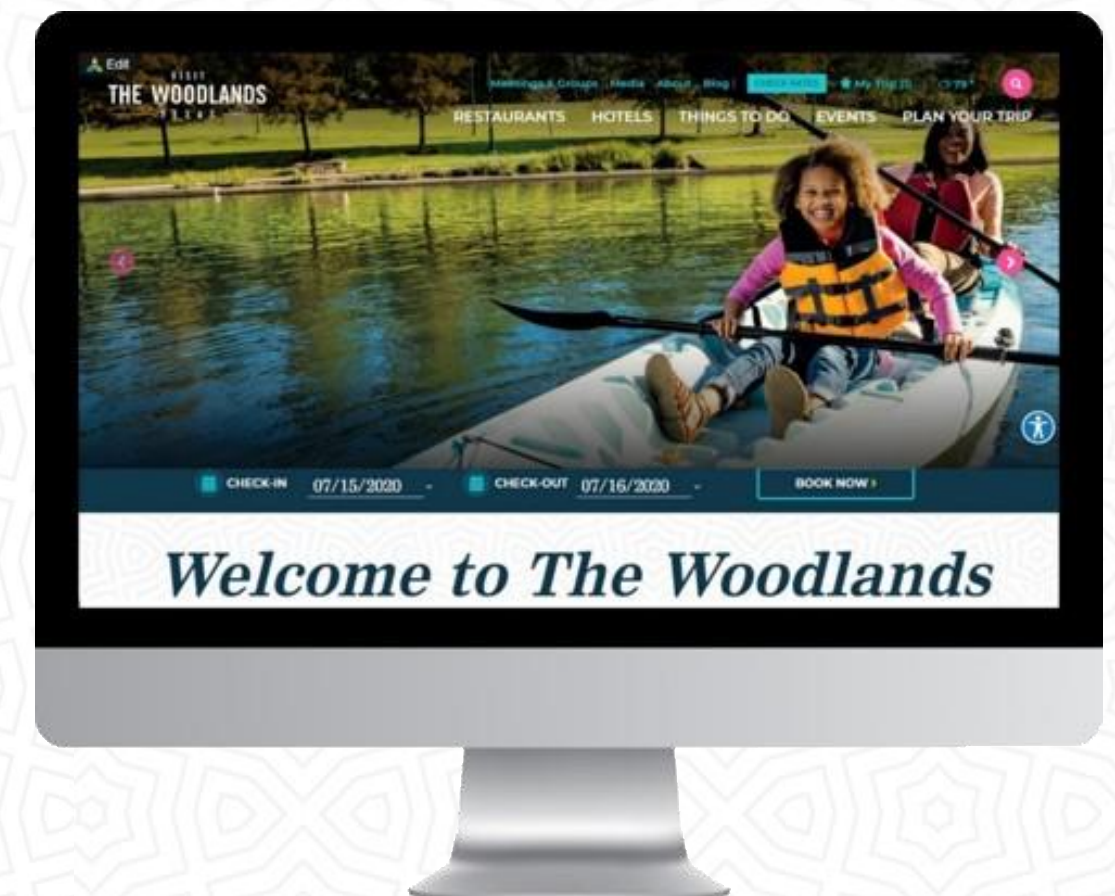
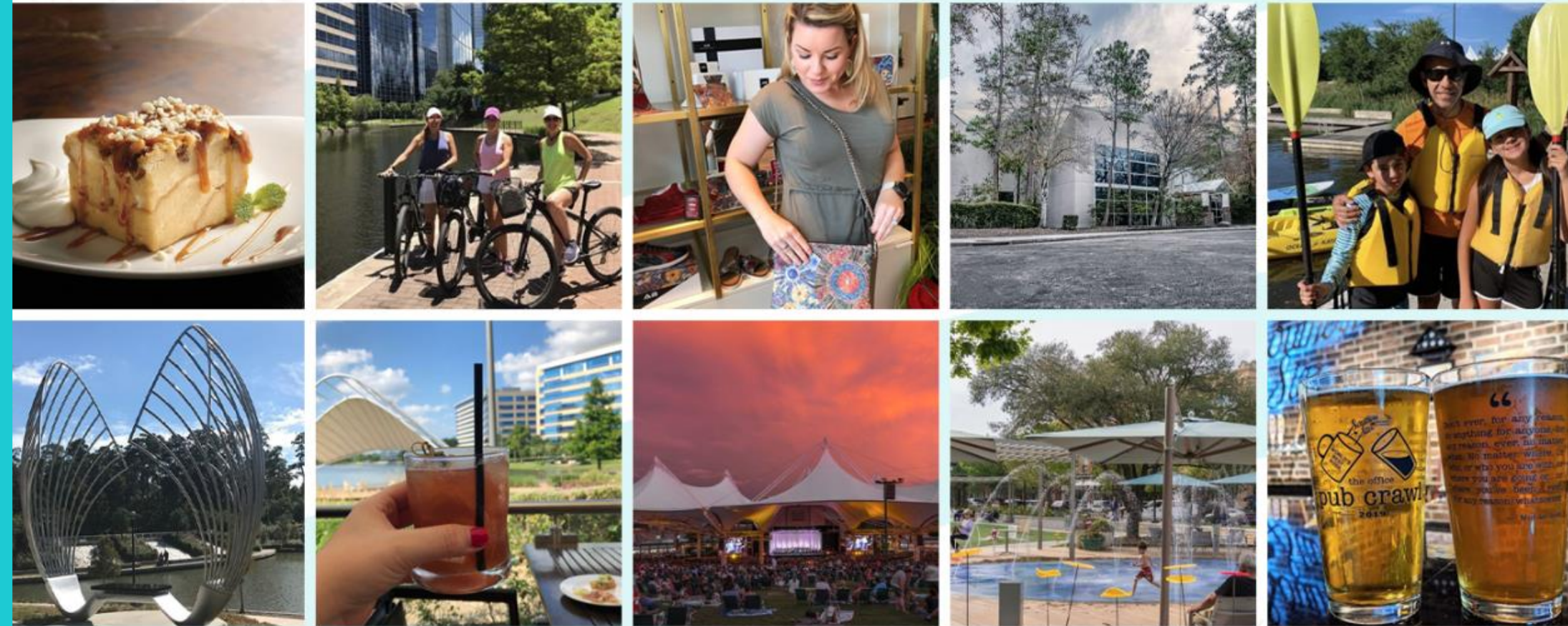
Visit The Woodlands launched its new destination website, as an “open-for-business tactic” to help bolster summer travel following quarantine from COVID-19.

## Q4 STATS, YEAR-OVER YEAR COMPARISON

- Over 75,000 unique users – Down 4%
- Over 186,000 pageviews – Up 28%
- 2.09 Pages per Session – Up 31%
- 1:23 Average Time on Site – Up 55%
- Bounce Rate – Down 23%
- 1,039 Hotel Booking Referrals

**NOTE:** Stats are for Q4 2020, compared to Q4 2019. Total number of users was down for Q4 of 2020, compared to the same time last year. This is due to a lack of advertising in market driving traffic to the website.

follow our social **#sowoodlands**





# Video

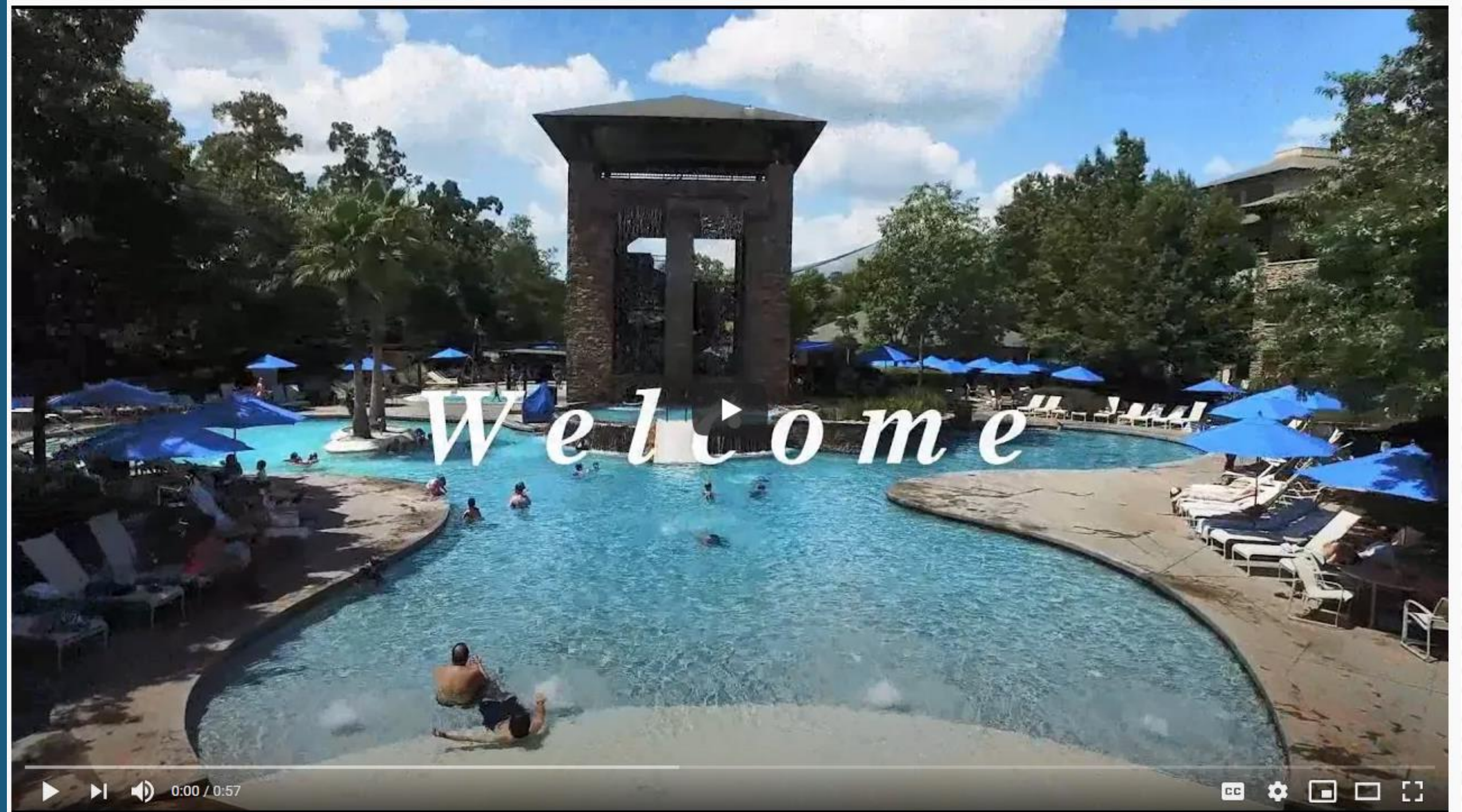
## DESTINATION VIDEO

Visit The Woodlands released a new destination video to help drive summer travel and inspire visitors to plan future vacations.

## VIRTUAL HOTEL TOURS

Visit The Woodlands launched virtual hotel tours to showcase properties in The Woodlands that have meeting space. These videos act as a sales tool to help book future meeting business in The Woodlands.

- The Woodlands Resort
- The Woodlands Waterway Marriott
- The Westin





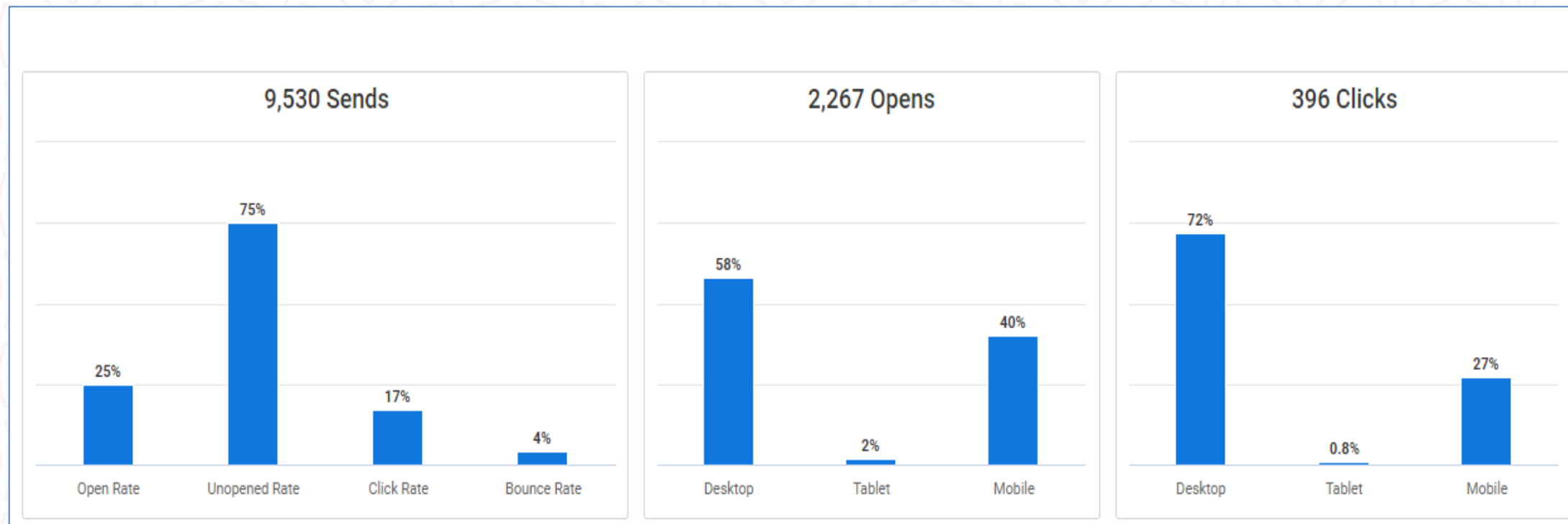
# Email Marketing

## LEISURE CAMPAIGNS

- Summer in The Woodlands
- Fall in The Woodlands
- Plan Your Holiday Getaway

## MEETING CAMPAIGNS

- Safe Meetings
- Top Reasons to Book a Meeting in The Woodlands
- Successful Meetings



## STATS, Q4 2020

- 21% Open Rate - Compared to 13% Industry Average
- 20% Click Rate - Compared to 5% Industry Average





# *Resilience Strategies*

## DURING RESILIENCE AS TRAVELERS BECOME ACCUSTOMED TO THE “NEW NORMAL” & THE ECONOMY STARTS TO REBOUND

- Review organization mission, vision and values to guide organizing through response, recovery and resilience phases
- Reassess organization roles and activities to identify priorities and potential adjustments
- Identify potential reopening and recovery scenarios to guide strategy and priorities
- Assess reserve funding requirements and policies
- Expand advocacy and education role to protect funding sources and relevance
- Pursue emergency government financial assistance funding
- Collaborate with other organizations to determine opportunities for shared resources and efficiencies
- Use lessons learned from remote working to examine office flexibilities and efficiencies
- Assess KPIs related to economic development, visitor satisfaction, community and advocacy, sustainability
- Work strategically with hotel partners to ensure industry recovery and resilience



# *2021 Budget Overview*

## SALES INITIATIVES

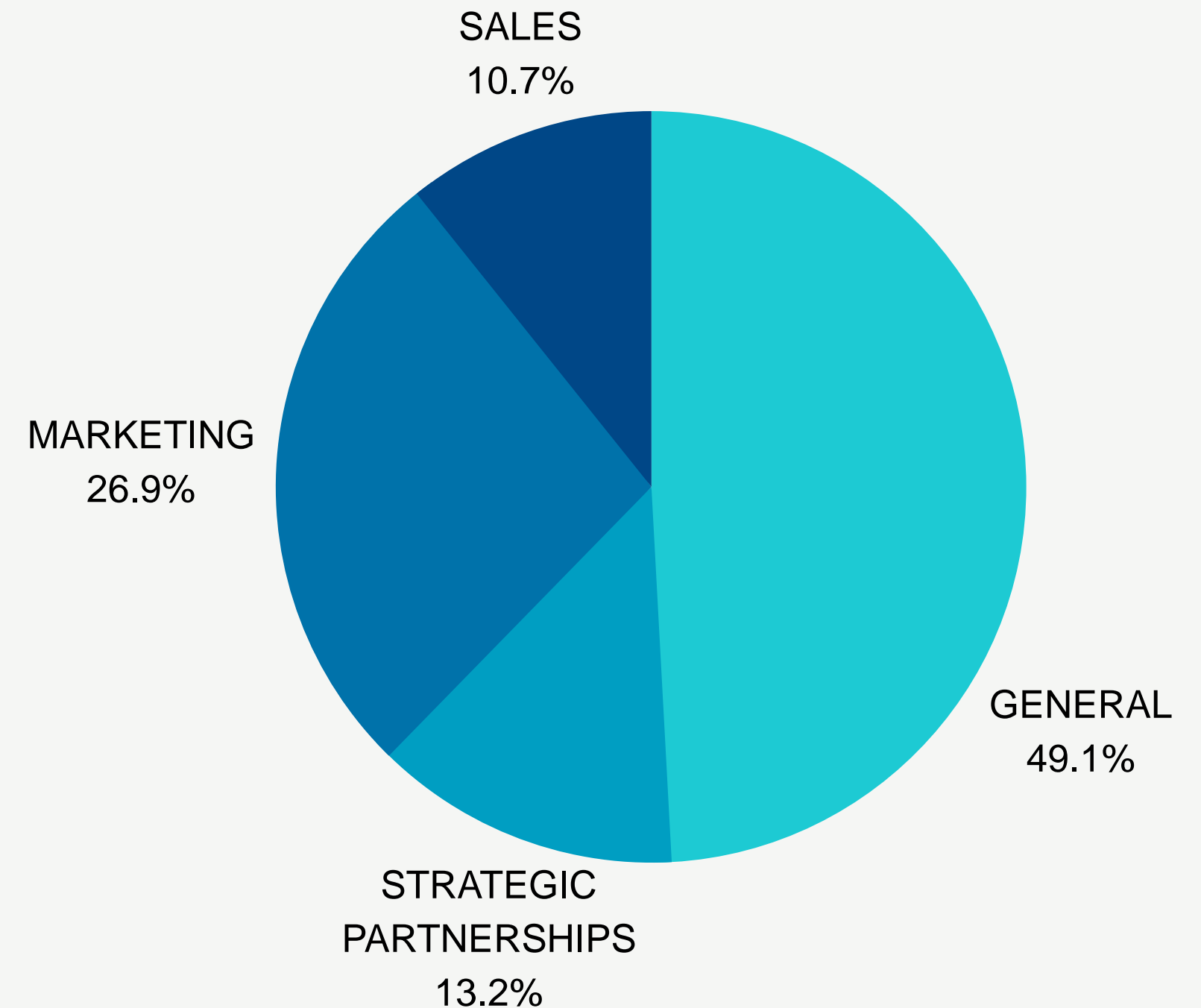
- Sales Missions & Tradeshow
- Incentives & Tradeshow Sponsorships
- RFP Bid Proposals & Fulfillment
- Site & FAM Tours
- CRM Support

## MARKETING INITIATIVES

- Website
- Advertising
- Content Development
- Public Relations
- Marketing Collateral

## STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

- Visitor Services
- Special Events
- Tourism Initiatives
- Advocacy & Business Development
- Market Research





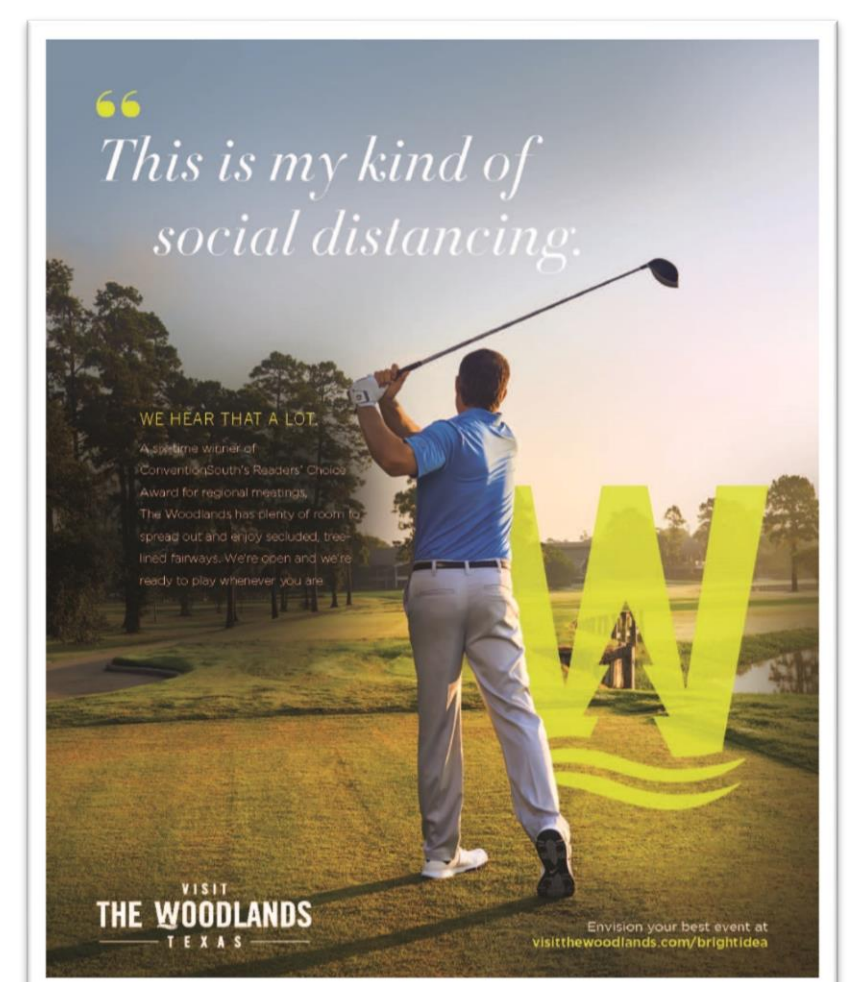
# 2021 Advertising Placements

## LEISURE PLACEMENTS

- Texas Monthly
- Texas State Travel Guide
- Texas Highways
- Tour Texas & more...

## MEETING PLACEMENTS

- Convention South
- Texas Meetings+Events
- Connect Meetings Guide
- Meet Texas & more...



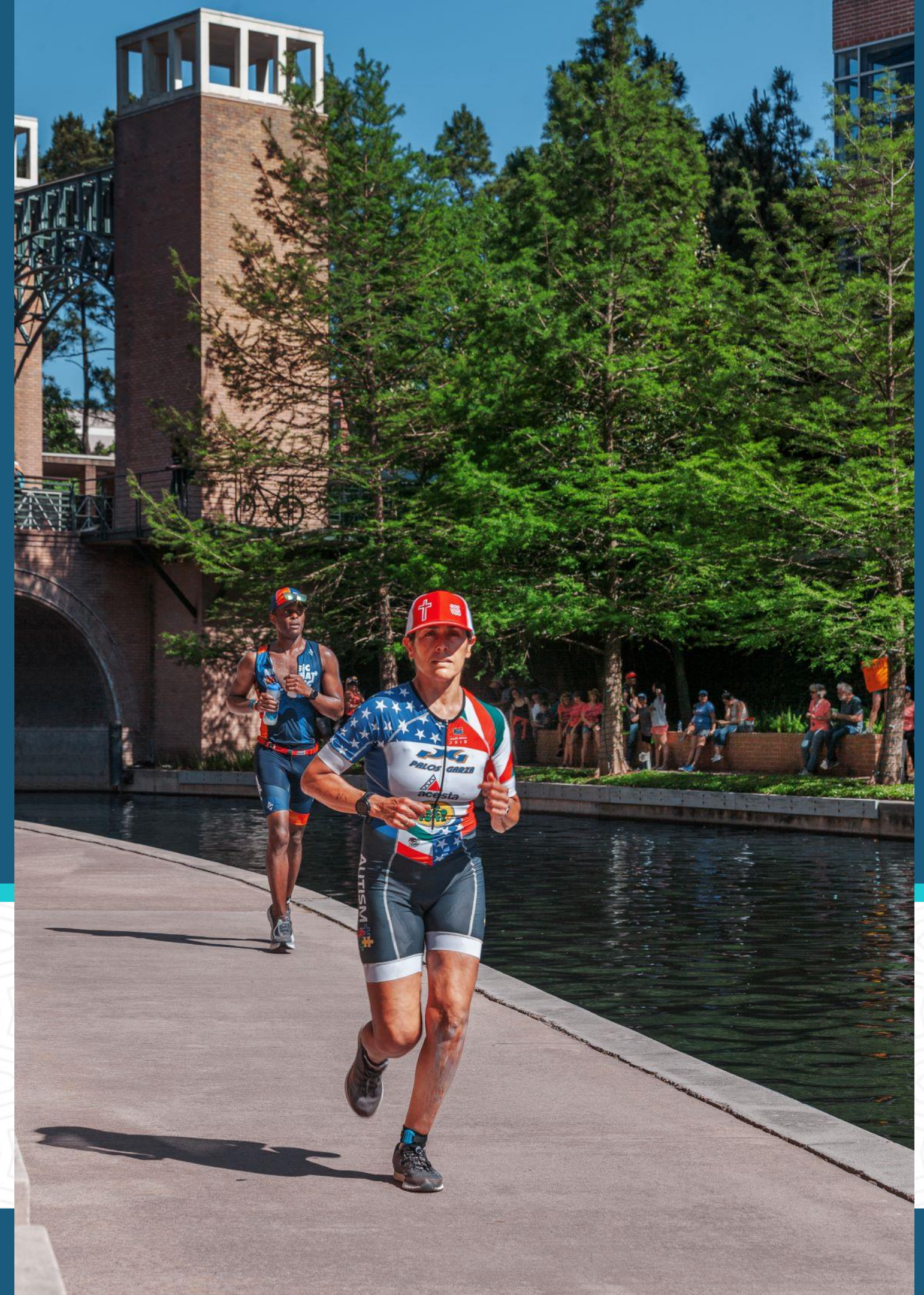


# *Long Term Goals*

## DEPARTMENT INITIATIVES

- Sales Conferences & Tradeshows
- Host Destination for Meeting Planner Tradeshows
- Media Missions & Outreach
- Advertising & Marketing Campaigns
- Local Awareness & Outreach
- Visitor Services Partnership
- IRONMAN
- The Woodlands Film Commission

**THE WOODLANDS**  
**FILM COMMISSION**





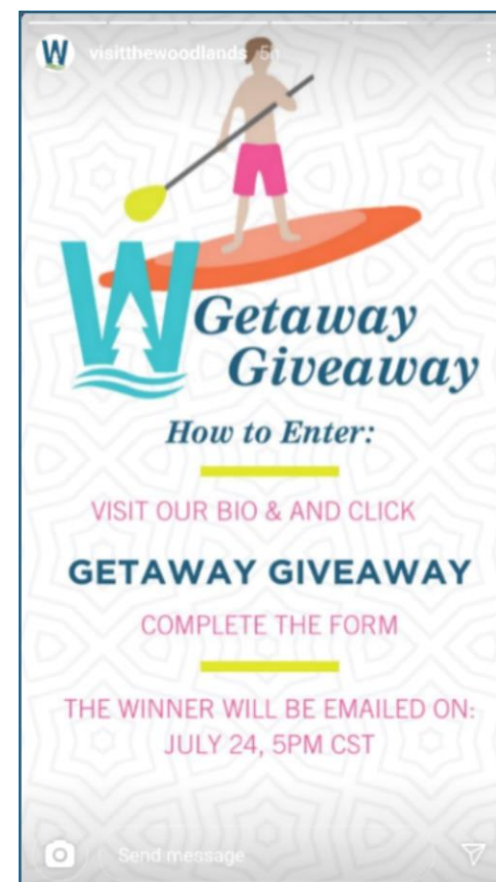
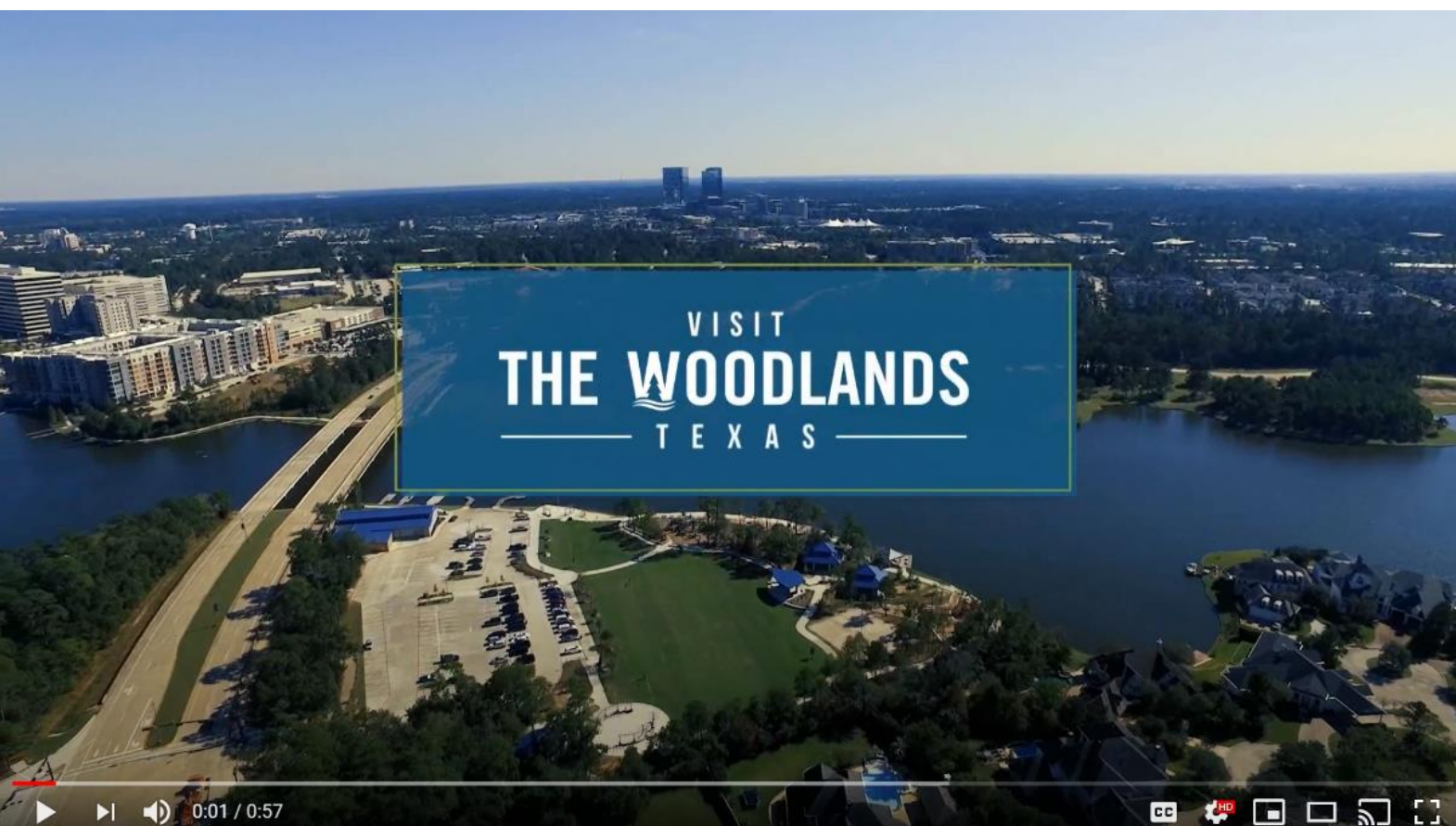
# Awards & Accolades

## MARCOM AWARDS

- Platinum – Summer Getaway Giveaway
- Gold – The Woodlands Resort Virtual Hotel Tour
- Gold – The Woodlands Destination Video

## TACVB AWARDS

- 1st – Website
- 2nd – Cooperative Marketing
- 2nd – Tourism Branding & Advertising
- 3rd – Local Awareness
- 3rd – Video





# VISIT THE WOODLANDS — TEXAS —

2801 Technology Forest Blvd  
The Woodlands, TX 77382  
(281) 363-2447  
[www.visitthewoodlands.com](http://www.visitthewoodlands.com)

