

HAMILTON COUNTY TOURISM YEAR IN REVIEW 2025



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A NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT & CEO

Before diving into the new year, I wanted to take a moment to reflect on the remarkable resiliency and ingenuity I witnessed throughout 2025.

In Q1 2025, our local hospitality industry faced daunting projections. Future bookings indicated significant declines in demand, driven by a three-year 20% surge in new hotel development, overall market uncertainty, and challenging year-over-year comparisons against record-setting events in Central Indiana in 2024. We stared with dread at charts revealing April's looming -15% projections and June's -28% pacing for future bookings. Never mind November's -76% forecasted abyss. We had a remarkable data visualization tool to project these numbers, but did we really want to see what it told us? The answer, a resolved yes.

Like so many sectors in Hamilton County, our hospitality industry is led by smart, caring and dedicated professionals. The staff at HCT match those qualities, and we all dug in to address the year ahead. When I opened my data visualizer this past December, I could see that we cut April's negatives in half, sliced June's deficit to single digits and TKO'd November's red by 84%.

So, how did we do it? We got back to basics with informed advertising strategies that leaned into markets we knew would perform. We packaged and positioned what I truly believe is the nation's best urban trail system into the HamCo Hubway to develop a fall travel market. Our sales team incentivized meeting planners to book during soft months and landed last minute groups for our meeting facilities and hotels. The Hamilton County Sports Authority delivered a 70% YOY increase in economic activity through major sporting events. We did all that and still kept watch over our community's best interests in ecological sustainability, workforce, culture, accessibility, and smart and inspiring tourism development.

The momentum continues into 2026 as we gear up for major attraction openings, new hotels and a slate of top-tier events.

As you look through this report, I hope you are inspired by all the activity happening throughout the county. The information shared throughout shines a spotlight on some of the top highlights of the year but is truly only a small percentage of the work happening within this organization and throughout the community.

While 2025 provided countless milestone moments, it's only the beginning. Our team is committed to making a positive impact on our community and the experience for all who visit it. Thank you for being a part of this mission!



**PRESIDENT/CEO
HAMILTON COUNTY TOURISM**



HAMILTON COUNTY TOURISM: YEAR IN REVIEW



Elevating Hamilton County's Offerings Through Strategic Packaging

- Ran a successful incentive campaign that boosted short-term bookings in forecasted slow periods resulting in 20,580 room nights and generating \$7.6 million in economic activity.
- Launched the HamCo Hubway campaign and landing page with parks, bike shops, and trailside businesses to elevate the community's trail system. The two-month campaign distributed 19,000 trail maps and generated 4.3 million digital impressions.

Driving Impact Through Partnerships

- Supported the opening of 329 hotel rooms at new properties throughout the county, including the Residence Inn (Noblesville), The Tallison (Carmel) and the Holiday Inn Express (Westfield).
- Celebrated the 16th anniversary of Tenderloin Tuesdays. The five-week campaign supported 52 local restaurants and drove 5,720 tenderloin deal redemptions, a 27% YoY increase.
- Partnered with Visit Indy for the second year on the Holiday Adventure Pass, which encouraged visitation to 20+ holiday attractions throughout Hamilton and Marion counties.

4.3 MILLION

DIGITAL IMPRESSIONS FROM HAMCO HUBWAY

↑ 27% YoY

5,720 TENDERLOIN DEAL REDEMPTIONS

↑ 15.2% YoY

VISITHAMILTONCOUNTY.COM WEBSITE SESSIONS

19,000

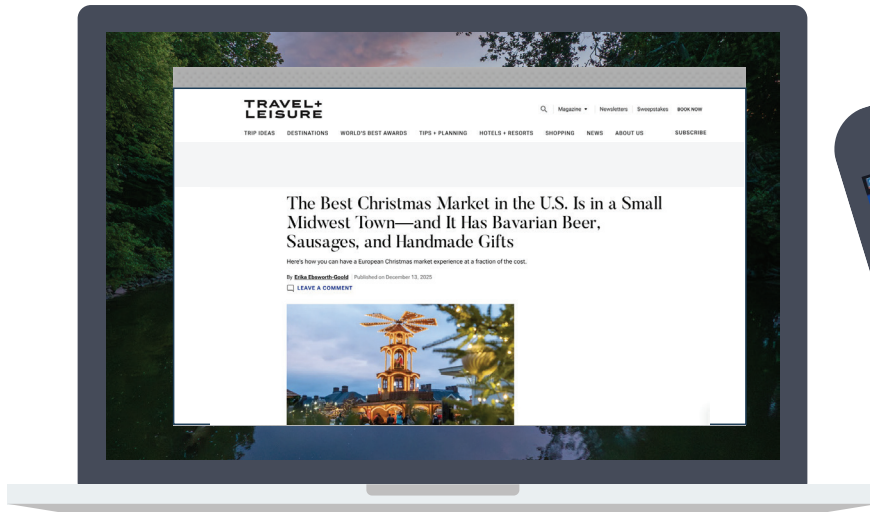
TRAIL MAPS DISTRIBUTED OVER 2 MONTHS

HAMILTON COUNTY TOURISM: YEAR IN REVIEW

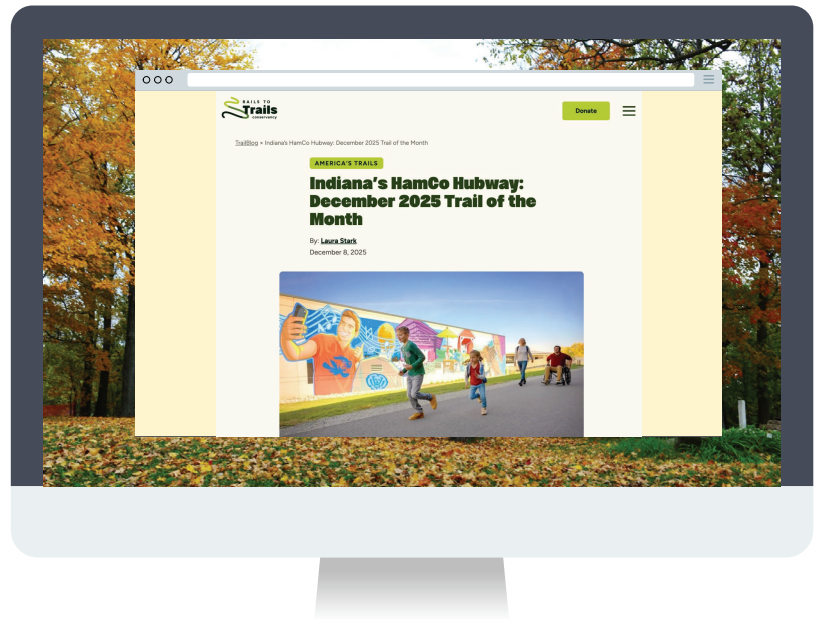
Shining a Spotlight on Hamilton County Through Local, Regional, and National Media

Secured **70+ placements** throughout the year that featured positive recognition for Hamilton County businesses, events and attractions.

Value: \$8.1 million



- AAA
- Better Homes & Gardens
- Food & Wine
- Forbes
- HGTV.com
- Midwest Living
- MSN
- Rails to Trails Magazine
- The Points Guy
- Time Out
- Travel + Leisure
- Travel Awaits
- U.S. News and World Report
- USA TODAY
- Yahoo!



HAMILTON COUNTY TOURISM: YEAR IN REVIEW

Supporting the Region Through Sustainability, Accessibility, and Philanthropy

- Facilitated waste audits at five county events to support conservation efforts.
- Planted a pollinator garden at Ruoff Music Center and trees at Droplight Grand Park Sports Campus to beautify these spaces while supporting the environment.
- Led a county-wide initiative to encourage Closed Captioning on all public television screens, serving as a liaison amongst county organizations, and supporting the Deaf and Hard of Hearing communities.



SUPPORTING THE ENVIRONMENT

THROUGH
BEAUTIFICATION
AND WASTE AUDITS

.....

LEADING THE WAY

THROUGH A COUNTY-WIDE
CLOSED CAPTIONING
INITIATIVE AND AN
ACCESSIBILITY AUDIT

.....

NAMED A BEST PLACE TO WORK IN INDIANA

- INDIANA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
6TH TIME IN 2025

Executing Best Practices Internally for Organized Success

- Named a “Best Place to Work” by the Indiana Chamber of Commerce.
- Conducted an accessibility audit for the Hamilton County Tourism office.
- Initiated company-wide AI training and hosted a free AI Summit for hospitality partners.
- Introduced a Charitable Giving Program to support employee’s investments to local non-profit organizations.

HAMILTON COUNTY SPORTS AUTHORITY: YEAR IN REVIEW

Celebrating 20 Years of Hamilton County Sports Authority

Developed a 20th anniversary logo and promoted the story of HCSA's development and growth.

Generating a Record-Breaking \$70M+ in Economic Activity

Supported 47 sporting events throughout the year, including three first-time, international events that featured milestone moments and records broken.

WORLD FITNESS PROJECT

May 9-11, 2025

The event made its debut appearance at Droplight Grand Park Sports Campus, featuring the top 30 professional fitness athletes from around the globe.

LIV GOLF INDIANAPOLIS

Aug. 15-17, 2025

The three-day tournament at The Club at Chatham Hills set a U.S. attendance record for the league and generated more than \$200 million in media exposure value for the region.

Source: LIV Golf

WORLD AQUATICS SWIMMING WORLD CUP

Oct. 10-12, 2025

The first stop of the Swimming World Cup tour brought elite international competition to the Carmel Natatorium, with NBC broadcasting the event to millions of viewers. Athletes from 44 countries competed, and a world record was broken during the competition.



47 SPORTS
EVENTS
SUPPORTED

3 INTERNATIONAL
EVENTS HOSTED



INVEST HAMILTON COUNTY: SUPPORTING TOURISM WORKFORCE



Invest Hamilton County empowers the economic vitality of the residents, businesses and communities of Hamilton County. As tourism continues to grow throughout Hamilton County, so does the need for a strong hospitality workforce. Invest Hamilton County, with support from Hamilton County Tourism, works closely with local businesses to attract, retain, and support workers.

Initiatives

- Launched a Building and Property Maintenance Program with Ivy Tech Community College. Hotel partners were instrumental in building of the curriculum and serving within this program.
- Provided training to nearly 700 business representatives on disability employment over the past two years through partnerships with local chambers and Hamilton County Leadership Academy.
- Supported the Bee Free Training launch that featured a hospitality component at Holiday Inn - Carmel with Dora Hospitality.

Collaboration

- Published the Childcare Action & Investment Plan and created a Childcare Collaborative with community partners including Hamilton County Community Foundation, United Way of Central Indiana, Ivy Tech Community College, Child Care Answers, and Indiana Association for the Education of Young Children. This directly impacts the workforce available to the hospitality industry.
- Invest Hamilton County President and CEO Mike Thibideau presented Hospitality workforce data at the Hotel Data Summit, presented by Hamilton County Tourism, to inform industry members on current trends and outlooks.
- Coordinated work-based learning cohort training opportunities for students to learn important workforce skills, which included opportunities for students at Westfield schools at Wyndham Westfield and students at Noblesville Schools at BRU Burger.



THE YEAR AHEAD: 2026



International Events Returning

LIV GOLF INDIANAPOLIS
Aug. 20-23, 2026

WORLD FITNESS PROJECT
Aug. 28-30, 2026

New Attractions Opening

**CONNER PRAIRIE'S MUSEUM
EXPERIENCE CENTER**
Spring 2026

SKYLAKE ADVENTURE PARK
Summer 2026

New International Event Scheduled

NFL FLAG FOOTBALL CHAMPIONSHIPS
July 23-26, 2026

Hotel Openings

**HOME2SUITES BY HILTON,
INDIANAPOLIS/NOBLESVILLE**

FAIRFIELD/TOWNE PLACE, WESTFIELD

AC MARRIOTT, FISHERS

Milestone Anniversaries

AMERICA'S 250th

CARMEL'S 50th ANNIVERSARY AS A CITY

**THE ARENA AT INNOVATION MILE'S
ONE YEAR ANNIVERSARY**

**HAMILTON COUNTY TOURISM'S
35th ANNIVERSARY**



HAMILTON COUNTY TOURISM, INC.

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Hamilton County Tourism, Inc. is a nonprofit destination management organization that promotes tourism growth through strategic marketing, hospitality and development initiatives, welcoming more than five million visitors to Hamilton County, Indiana, each year.

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