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This year, VISIT Milwaukee is celebrating our 50th anniversary. For five decades, we have been your advocate, bringing the world to Milwaukee and taking Milwaukee to the world.

We were founded as the Milwaukee Convention & Visitors Bureau in 1967 as a joint proposal between the Milwaukee Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce, the Milwaukee Hotel-Motel Association and the Wisconsin Restaurant Association to “re-establish Milwaukee as a major convention city.” From that beginning, our mission and our reach has flourished.

Today, VISIT Milwaukee markets the Greater Milwaukee area as a top choice for business, convention, and leisure travel to national and international visitors. We work to increase the economic impact of tourism in the community to improve your quality of life because tourism is vital to the success of our community. We are proud to say that the work we do matters. Each year, tourism supports over 50,000 full-time jobs and brings in over $5 billion to our community. Thank you for your continued support of VISIT Milwaukee, and cheers to 50 years!
Overall tourism spending in Milwaukee County grew by 3.9 percent in 2016, to $3.9 billion. This is the fifth consecutive year with tourism spending growth of well over 3 percent. The increase in spending in 2016 contributed to 32,000 full time jobs in the tourism industry, a growth of 1.75 percent, with total labor income up 2.61 percent. In the Greater Milwaukee area, tourism supported nearly 51,000 full time jobs and had a total economic impact of $5.25 billion.

With consumer confidence and household wealth way up and consumer debt way down, we expect 2017 to be another good year for tourism spending. Visitors are looking for unique experiences worthy of bragging about. With world class arts and culture, endless festivals, unique attractions, and a diverse local food scene, Milwaukee is well-positioned as a top travel destination.

In the Greater Milwaukee area, our hotel partners have seen positive revenue growth since 2010, and this trend is projected to continue in 2017. Over the past three years, the increase in revenue has been driven largely by growth in both rate and supply. In 2016, Milwaukee County hotels experienced a revenue surge of 7.2 percent and Milwaukee Downtown, 6 percent. In 2016, the average daily rate in Milwaukee County rose by 2.8 percent and supply by 3.9 percent. In Milwaukee Downtown, the average daily rate grew by 3.2 percent and supply by 3.7 percent. In 2017, we expect to see continued growth in rate driven

by strong business and leisure demand, and a modest growth in supply, with the Westin Hotel adding 220 rooms to the market in June of 2017. This property will be positioned at top-of-market for average daily rate.

The Wisconsin Center had a very strong year in 2016 in both operating and non-operating revenues. Convention quality was very good with groups like American Society for Quality and Bombardier Recreational Products producing strong revenues. Also, 2017 future bookings saw a significant increase in convention room nights short-term with over 15,000 convention room nights added in the last quarter of 2016. These bookings will have a total economic impact of $13.2 million. As a result, 2017 will be a good convention year.

In 2017, another convention center expansion study will be done to determine the need for and type of additional space at the Wisconsin Center. There are two proposals for a convention center hotel that are waiting for an expansion to move forward. An expanded modern center with an additional convention center hotel would keep Milwaukee competitive as a convention destination well into the future. This will be an important year as we decide the future of our convention center.
CONVENTION SALES

2016 saw the return of legacy conventions such as the Northwestern Mutual Convention, Bead & Button and Anime, as well as new conventions like National Main Street Center, Mothers of Preschoolers International, and American Society for Quality World Conference. Two new hotels were added to the Milwaukee inventory: The Kimpton Journeyman in the Historic Third Ward and the Springhill Suites, connected to the Wisconsin Center. Wauwatosa also added a new property, the Residence Inn Milwaukee West.

Despite ever-increasing leisure demand in the summer months, the VISIT Milwaukee sales team had the second-highest production year for convention center business in the last decade. By focusing on corporate and national association events and the push by the convention sales managers to book short-term business for the convention center paid off in some exciting new business from high impact groups that will have a big economic impact on the region.

The team exceeded its tentative and definite room night goals in 2016 and booked major future conventions, including the National Rifle Association for 2017, LULAC (League of United Latin American Citizens) for 2019 and MOOSE International for 2020, among others.

“I believe many of our attendees left Milwaukee with a whole new perspective. I wouldn’t be surprised to see many return both professionally and personally.”

~ Angie Ahrens
CMP, Collinson Media & Events

$132,545,468 BOOKED
$140,210,875 ACTUALIZED

2016 SALES ECONOMIC IMPACT TO MILWAUKEE

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<th>ROOM NIGHTS</th>
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<tr>
<td>Booked tentative</td>
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<tr>
<td>Production</td>
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<td>Actualized</td>
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385,457 ATTENDEES BROUGHT TO MILWAUKEE BY THE SALES TEAM IN 2016

SALES TEAM TRAVELED TO
46 TRADESHOWS
HOSTED
90 MEETING PLANNER SITE VISITS
AND BOOKED
418 MEETINGS & CONVENTIONS FOR FUTURE YEARS
The Convention Services team spent another year working tirelessly to ensure that visitors and convention attendees were well taken care of in Milwaukee, thanks to the staff and the army of volunteers who assist at events as greeters, bag stuffers, and ambassadors. The team was very busy with Bombardier Recreational Products’ Annual Convention, American Massage Association Annual Convention, National Main Street Center’s Annual Conference and American Society for Quality World Conference, which brought thousands of visitors from around the world to Milwaukee.

Finally, the Services team began work on the U.S. Open, which will take place at Erin Hills in June 2017, and will bring over 40,000 people per day to the Greater Milwaukee region. In all, the Services team assisted with over 400 current and future events in 2016.

2016 SERVICES STATS

BIGGEST CONSUMER SHOW
Legofest
30,000 attendees

4.8/5 Stars
SERVICES STAFF RATING BY CLIENTS

30,000
Legofest
BIGGEST CONSUMER SHOW

160
VOLUNTEERS

400+
EVENTS

2,228
HOURS VOLUNTEERED
MARKETING

In 2016, marketing continued to showcase the city on a regional, national and international level. The 2016 M&C campaign focused on VISIT Milwaukee’s core markets (Association, Corporate, Religious, Sports & Diversity) and reached the highest paid media impressions ever with 15.6 million impressions, tripling the placement of just two years before. This drove a 45 percent increase in traffic to the meetings section of the website. The leisure campaign, targeting families, millennials, empty nesters and several niche audiences, reached 78.4 million paid media impressions and drove 917,523 visits to custom vacation itineraries from May through October. These itineraries generated nearly 11,000 referral clicks to featured partners over the course of the campaign.

New in 2016, the leisure campaign results were tracked using Arrivalist, an analytics platform that allows the marketing team to identify when a potential visitor first sees a VISIT Milwaukee ad, what website tools they use, the content that they seek, the city where they are located and most importantly, when they arrive in Milwaukee. This data has already been useful in shaping the 2017 marketing strategy, including identifying Indianapolis and St. Louis as two highly qualified test markets. Chicago and Northern Illinois continue to be the strongest leisure markets for Milwaukee.

The marketing team continued to develop high-quality, professional resources to brand and market the city, coordinating more than 40 photo shoots and producing 33 videos internally featuring local businesses, attractions and experiences. These assets are extensively used by meeting planners, travel writers, local corporations and more to sell and promote Milwaukee.

2016 MEDIA IMPRESSIONS

132,545,468 total paid media impressions

LEISURE CAMPAIGN
917,523 WEB VISITS
24% OVER GOAL

MEETINGS & CONVENTIONS
82,700 WEB VISITS
65% OVER GOAL

GROUP TOUR CAMPAIGN
8,241 WEB VISITS
1% OVER GOAL

MILWAUKEE365 CAMPAIGN
373,821 WEB VISITS
82% OVER GOAL

NEW WAUWATOSA PROMOTIONAL VIDEO
62,593 Visits to VISITWAUWATOSA.ORG

IN 6 LOCATIONS DURING SUMMER

82,000+ VIEWS

2016 PRINTED COLLATERAL HIGHLIGHTS

INTERNATIONAL BROCHURES
36,000 COPIES

2016 OFFICIAL BIKERS’ GUIDE
23,000 COPIES

2016 GROUP TOUR GUIDE
5,000 COPIES

2017 OFFICIAL VISITORS GUIDE
200,000 COPIES

2017 OFFICIAL VISITORS MAP
250,000 COPIES
VISITS TO DEARMKE WEBSITE

@DEARMKE

NUMBER OF SOCIAL MEDIA FOLLOWERS

- 20,874 Instagram followers, 170% growth in 2016
- 4,177 Twitter followers
- 13,556 Facebook followers, 148% growth in 2016

MOST LIKED IMAGE

1,404

VISITS TO MILWAUKEE365.ORG

@VISITMILWAUKEE

NUMBER OF SOCIAL MEDIA FOLLOWERS

- 373,821 visits to Milwaukeee365.org
- 3,300 events posted by 1,700+ event organizers
- 44,298 Facebook followers, 32% growth in 2016
- 18,231 Instagram followers, 188% growth in 2016
- 43,804 Twitter followers, 24% growth in 2016

12 International Brochures

- German
- Russian
- Italian
- Spanish (Mex)
- Chinese
- Italian

- Japanese
- Hindi
- Polish
- Portuguese (BRA)
- French (FR/CA)
- Arabic
The PR team was able to expand its reach in 2016, hitting national and international media through a variety of story pitches. Three large press trips focusing on golf, urban adventure and James Beard restaurants were big hits on the leisure side, and incoming conventions and events like the presidential debates scored national press coverage on the M&C side of earned media. The Associated Press picked up multiple stories about Milwaukee, garnering national attention for the city. The team also expanded its television reach, appearing over 120 times on TV, both locally and in Chicago.

The team also coordinated 20 social media videos in 2016, covering Milwaukee’s neighborhoods, unique festivals such as the Tomato Romp and Mitten Fest, and signature treats like Milwaukee-style pizza and the Old Fashioned.

Additionally, the PR team co-hosted a Chinese media site visit and press trip (with the VISIT Milwaukee sales team) and Communications Director Kristin Settle was featured on Chinese TV.
The group tour team spent 2016 expanding its reach to the Chinese market, with an emphasis on attracting Chinese visitors through site visits and direct media promotion into the Chinese market. The team hosted more than 10 in-person meetings with Chinese tour operators (a significant potential growth market), and hosted a joint Chinese group tour/media site inspection with the VISIT Milwaukee PR team. They will continue to focus on Chinese market and will hold a “Chinaw Welcome” informational training in summer of 2017.

They attended seven trade shows, including American Bus Association, Chicago Travel & Adventure Show, National Tour Association and International Pow Wow, the travel industry’s premier international marketplace and the largest generator of Visit USA travel. They hosted 10 national and international tour operators, and had 150 individual appointments with group tour operators, exceeding last year’s number by 20 percent. This resulted in over 6,000 room nights booked and 12,000 leads for 2016.

The team also helped groups during the LSU vs. UW-Madison football game held at Lambeau Field in September, securing 2,000 room nights in the Milwaukee market.
The Partnership team welcomed 106 new partners in 2016, including three new corporate partners: Carmex, Medical College of Wisconsin and Milwaukee Sports and Entertainment. Existing partners’ retained their relationship at the rate of 92 percent, ending 2016 with 689 partners.

Filling a key void in the community, the partnership team hosted its 3rd annual Marketing Milwaukee Summit in February, 2016 to lead collaborative discussions with regional corporate leaders, business non-profits, and companies and employees that call Milwaukee home. VISIT Milwaukee shared its expertise about Milwaukee’s quality of life for the purposes of attracting and retaining talent to the Greater Milwaukee area and to help corporate partners tell the story of the place they make their business home.

The team also hosted Customer Service in a Diverse World, a customer service training program to coincide with the Midwest Food Service Expo. Over 430 people registered for the event, including representatives from 58 partners. The team is looking ahead to add new education programs to its 2017 agenda, including a Tourism Insider Education for frontline hospitality staff, Nighttime Economy Safety seminar and China Welcome training.
**FINANCE**

VISIT Milwaukee, a private, non-profit corporation, was incorporated in 1967 as a 501(c)(6) tax-exempt organization. Governed by an independent board of directors, the President/CEO leads a full-time staff of 38, as well as additional part-time and seasonal staff members.

VISIT Milwaukee had annual budgeted revenues of $8.9 million in 2016, of which 84 percent was derived from the occupancy tax and other public funding. Occupancy taxes in Milwaukee are comprised of a 7 percent City of Milwaukee occupancy tax and a 2.5 percent Milwaukee County occupancy tax. In 2016, total City of Milwaukee occupancy taxes were $13.7 million, and Milwaukee County occupancy taxes were $6.4 million. VISIT Milwaukee receives a portion of the City of Milwaukee occupancy tax only, which represented approximately 42 percent of the total city taxes collected in 2016. The remainder of the occupancy taxes is retained by the Wisconsin Center District in order to pay the bond debt on convention facilities and the Milwaukee Theatre. VISIT Milwaukee also receives a portion of the city of Wauwatosa occupancy taxes.

VISIT Milwaukee’s financial operations are reviewed by a six member Audit/Finance Committee of the Board of Directors, led by the Secretary/Treasurer. In addition, VISIT Milwaukee retains an independent audit firm, Ritz Holman CPAs, to conduct an annual financial audit of the organization’s financial operations and internal controls.

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**2016 FUNDING SOURCES**

- **Hotel Occupancy Taxes & Public Funding**: 84%
- **Partner Dues & Programs**: 6%
- **Program & Service Revenue**: 6%
- **Marketing Sponsors & Ad Sales**: 4%
- **State of Wisconsin Tourism Grants**: <1%

**2016 PROGRAM EXPENDITURES**

- **Contention Sales & Destination Marketing**: 78%
- **Convention Services**: 11%
- **Partnership Program**: 8%
- **Administration Department**: 3%
In 2016, VISIT Milwaukee received 15 awards and accolades for its work in the meetings, conventions, digital, sales, and PR realms.

The numerous recognitions among its peers makes the organization and its staff both appreciative and proud.
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