

# CHAMBANA PROUD

FOSTERING PRIDE IN THE GREATER  
CHAMPAIGN-URBANA AREA

As we work on building brand ambassadors, serving our residents and visitors, and telling the community story for recruiting, bolstering pride in the greater Champaign-Urbana area has become a major area of focus.

Through existing promotions and marketing such as the Experience Guide, billboard and busboard advertising, social media, and community engagement, we have been hard at work reminding residents why they live and work here. However, resources were not always available for residents to share their own enthusiasm for the place they call home.

In November, a joint collaboration between Visit Champaign County, the Champaign County Economic Development Corporation, and You're Welcome CU was launched—ChambanaProud.com.

The initial campaign focuses on Champaign-Urbana T-shirts providing a highly visible outlet for sharing what makes this community special. The T-shirts were designed by local artists in a collaboration with 40 North | 88 West, the Champaign County Arts Council. Artists include: Scott Barber (Scobar); Ralph Roether; Madelyn Witruk; and David Michael Moore.

Champaign-Urbana is a hotbed for innovation and we are traditionally so humble in reminding the world where some of today's most celebrated technology was invented. This is another opportunity to brag and showcase that this community makes a difference in lives around the globe.

For example, the T-shirt, "We Made the Internet" by artist Ralph Roether, celebrates the invention of the modern web browser, Mosaic, launched in 1993 from the National Center for Supercomputing Applications led by Marc Andreessen.

"We're Super Sweet", designed by artist Scott Barber aka Scobar, touts the invention of Super Sweetcorn, a hybrid of sweetcorn from University of Illinois professor, John Laughnan, that brought this tasty summer favorite to dinner tables and grocery stores for all to enjoy.

And the sweet tee, "Whipped Cream" also by Barber, is a nod to University of Illinois graduate student, Charles Getz, made whipped cream in a can a possibility.

Beyond these innovation T-shirts, creating designs that simply let the world know that Chambana is the heart of Central Illinois, from artist Madelyn Witruk, to the simple hashtag "#chambana" popular on Twitter and Instagram in the area help brand this growing community. The "Thumbs Up" shirt is a nod to hometown hero, Roger Ebert, for his contribution to popular culture.

The tees are currently sold online through ChambanaProud.com and produced by-hand through Weiskamp Screenprinting. However, in the coming months, the T-shirts will hit local stores. Be on the lookout for announcements on the various locations where you can pick up these shirts for yourself, friends, visitors, staff and new recruits. Long-term, we plan to add more designs available on multiple items from canvas bags to mugs.

Additionally, Chambana Proud will continue to find ways to create community ambassadors, seeking input from what residents love about Chambana, to ultimately creating an ambassador program that helps recruit and welcome newcomers to the area, with the anticipation of launching in summer of 2020.

## SHARE YOUR PRIDE IN THE COMMUNITY.

Order your shirts and share what makes you Chambana Proud.





## FROM OUR CEO

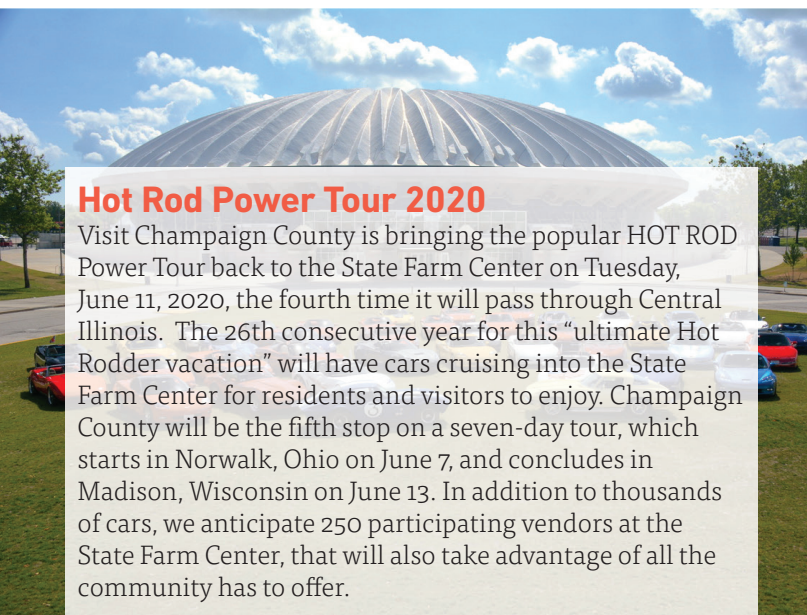
**2020.** A new decade with envisioning destination development opportunities for the future of our community. As our VCC Board finalizes our Destination 2023 strategic plan, the time is now to take that vision and create broadly defined goals and a sequence of steps to achieve them. How exciting!

We work with the best Board of Directors and Foundation Board of Directors and enjoyed our holiday joint board meeting celebration on December 4 at Lodgic. Thank you to VCC Board Chair, Laura Bleill, and VCC Foundation Board Chair, Dennis Robertson, for guiding our direction into the new decade.

As part of our advocacy efforts, one of my favorite activities is giving an annual presentation to our public strategic partners. Presentations were made to Urbana City Council (June 3,) Village of Savoy (October 16,) Village of Mahomet (October 22,) Village of St Joseph (October 22,) Village of Rantoul (November 5,) Champaign City Council (November 26,) and Champaign County Board (December 10.)

### Rantoul Sports Complex

On October 1, the Village of Rantoul approved the plan for a \$20 million sports complex. This new space will be integral to bringing new sports tourism to the county, with eight baseball and softball turf fields, two t-ball challenger baseball fields, and eight soccer / football / rugby /lacrosse turf fields. The complex will also boast a new splashpad and playground, alongside concessions and restrooms with over 800 parking spaces. The complex will be conveniently located right off of I-57 and is expected to open in 2021. Visit Champaign County worked closely with the Village of Rantoul on the facility plans and feasibility studies.



### Hot Rod Power Tour 2020

Visit Champaign County is bringing the popular HOT ROD Power Tour back to the State Farm Center on Tuesday, June 11, 2020, the fourth time it will pass through Central Illinois. The 26th consecutive year for this "ultimate Hot Rodder vacation" will have cars cruising into the State Farm Center for residents and visitors to enjoy. Champaign County will be the fifth stop on a seven-day tour, which starts in Norwalk, Ohio on June 7, and concludes in Madison, Wisconsin on June 13. In addition to thousands of cars, we anticipate 250 participating vendors at the State Farm Center, that will also take advantage of all the community has to offer.



For other strategic partners and media partners, I enjoyed delivering a personal thank you package on December 18 to: Busey, Carle, Illinois American Water, Parkland College, Urbana Park District, University of Illinois, and Adams Outdoor, CUMTD, News-Gazette Media, and WCIA.

Thank you to our partners and work force who support destination promotion, which benefits the well-being of every person in our community. As a public good, it is an essential community investment to develop opportunities and build quality of life for the people of our community. Everything starts from that point.

Jayne DeLuce



### Welcome Mike Koon

Visit Champaign County welcomes Mike Koon as the new Director of Sports, Special Events, and Film. Mike spent over 20 years at the University of Illinois, from public relations within the Division of Intercollegiate Athletics and most recently, the Grainger College of Engineering. Mike is also the public address announcer for Illini softball and volleyball, and radio play-by-play voice for Illini women's basketball. He will be responsible for retaining and recruiting sports and special events to the community, as well as overseeing the Champaign County Film Office.

## Connecting with Visitors

Tracking our direct communication with visitors through Welcome Center walk-ins, calls, email, leading to Experience Guides distributed.

42  
walk-ins

29  
emails

307  
calls

3,655

Experience Guides distributed





## 40 North Update—ACE Awards

Annually, 40 North celebrates the champions of art & culture in the community. The public is invited to submit nominations for artists, teachers, businesses, and more who make an impact. This year, the ACE Awards, held at the City Center on November 8, honored the following winners: Advocate: Jason Finkelman; Artist: EKAH; Volunteer: Susan Curtis; Business: Dixon Graphics; Teacher: John Currey; Student: Kennan Dailey; Lifetime: Bea Nettles.

## OUT & ABOUT

### Marriott Aloft & I Hotel & Conference Center Groundbreakings

The Champaign County area continues to grow, with additional and expanded properties. On October 18, VCC Board Member, Rob Kowalski, led the groundbreaking of the new Marriott Aloft in downtown Champaign. Developer Doug Altenberger plans to have the 132-room property open by the end of 2020.

On November 25, the I Hotel & Conference Center held their groundbreaking for the expanded conference center. The expansion will include an additional 32,500 sq. ft. with a 12,500 sq. ft. exhibit hall allowing for groups of over 600. The expansion is expected to be complete by September 2020.



### Advocacy Summit

Jayne participated in the Destinations International Advocacy Summit on November 12–14, in Madison with an intense three days of education on research, becoming a community-shared value, the new industry lexicon, and much more. Advocacy is a core value in what we do every day.



### ICCVB Fall Meeting

Jayne, Terri, and Caitlyn met with their colleagues from across the state in Galena, October 2–3, to connect and learn on the latest trends in travel and tourism. Meetings, Sports, Tour and Market Illinois met individually to discuss collaborations and issues facing our industry. General sessions covered agritourism, AirBNBs, and what's new in Illinois tourism.

### Catalyze

Terri attended the fall Catalyze networking event at Research Park on October 23. The event brings together area employers alongside students and individuals seeking to learn more about employment opportunities. Terri talked with several employers about our recruiting materials, as well as sharing with many individuals why they should live and work in Champaign County.

### All Employee Expo

Every year, the University of Illinois hosts an expo for all University employees featuring local businesses, organizations, and attractions. Taylor coordinated a table at the Expo on October 17 and attended with Brooke to help provide resources to over 900 attendees. On top of the new Experience Guide, employees were able to grab a copy of the Fall Checklist that highlights seasonal events and opportunities, as well as ideas for taking advantage of all our Outside of Ordinary area has to offer.

### RailTec Conference

The RailTEC Conference, October 22–23, put on by the Civil Engineering Department at the University of Illinois, is hosted annually at the Illini Union. It features presentations by railroaders, consulting engineers, academics and others involved in all aspects of railroad environmental topics from across the globe. VCC assisted with registration for over 400 attendees in addition to facilitating overflow hotel rooms for the guests.

# SALES & MARKETING EFFORTS

## Sports Illinois Sales Mission

Colorado Springs, also known as “Olympic City USA” and the surrounding area is home to over 200 sports planners, including the United States Olympic and Paralympic Organizations. After hosting the Sports Huddle in Champaign during spring of 2019, Sports Illinois used their remaining funds to sponsor a sales mission to Colorado Springs that Ryan attended. Eight DMOs and the Illinois Office of Tourism represented the state as the premiere destination for Olympic sponsored events. The two-day trip included 14 scheduled visits and a reception that included 20+ sports planners. Some of the visits included USA Hockey, USA Basketball, USA Softball, USA Raquetball, and many more. The trip also included a visit to the Olympic Training Facility in Colorado Springs.



## Boomers in Groups

Caitlyn attended the Boomers in Groups Conference in Franklin, TN, October 25– 27. The tradeshow specializes in connecting destinations with group and tour companies from across the United States. During the show, Caitlyn met with 30 tour operators and showcased Amish country, Rantoul, and Allerton as exciting options to bring their groups along with many other Outside of Ordinary experiences in Champaign County!

## Connect Midwest

Caitlyn also attended a new tradeshow, Connect Midwest, in Grand Rapids, MI, October 28– 30. The event brought together planners, suppliers and experts in association, corporate and specialty meetings and events based in the Midwest. During the show, Caitlyn met with 29 planners, many of them 3rd party representatives.

## UMCVB Bid

VCC won the bid to host the 2021 Upper Midwest CVB (UMCVB) Conference, September 12– 14 at the iHotel and Conference Center. The conference will bring in CVB representatives from seven states including Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Wisconsin. Approximately 200 attendees, and our peers from across the Midwest, will come to our area for education on the latest topics in the travel and tourism market.

## Occupancy Rate

Reporting September–November 2019

Champaign **62.9%**

Bloomington **58.8%**

Peoria **54.4%**

Springfield/Decatur **56.2%**

## Average Daily Rate

Reporting September–November 2019

Champaign **\$96.97**

Bloomington **\$84.04**

Peoria **\$99.65**

Springfield/Decatur **\$88.87**

This data is collected and reported by STR®.

## SPORTS & EVENTS

8 leads | 3 tentative | 5 definite

**1,565**  
estimated room nights

## CONFERENCES

14 leads | 5 tentative | 9 definite

**3,322**  
estimated room nights

## GROUP TOUR

6 leads | 0 tentative | 6 definite

**LEAD:** Potential business distributed to hotels

**TENTATIVE LEAD:** Potential business, no commitment yet

**DEFINITE LEAD:** Business secured





## US Airtours FAM

The Illinois Office of Tourism brought a group of six travel agents from the United Kingdom to the state to learn about the different offerings available. Terri hosted this lively group of women for 24 hours, taking them to fall attractions Curtis Orchard and Hardy's Reindeer Ranch before a special dinner at Prairie Fruits Farm & Creamery. A quick breakfast at the Courier Café and a walking tour of downtown Urbana ended the tour before they returned home. The agents greatly enjoyed their time in our area, especially the reindeer kisses at Hardy's!

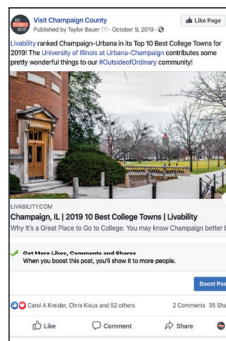
## Tuesday Trails

In an effort to showcase the many outdoor opportunities available in the greater Champaign County area, Terri began a new campaign—Tuesday Trails. Every Tuesday, Terri heads to a different park, trail, or part of the community to run the area and snap photos to show the beauty of the area. She begins each run with a video talking about the area, and shares photos and information about the trail on the VCC website. Terri completed in the fall and winter, highlighting stops like Lake of the Woods, Boulware Trail in Champaign, and Meadowbrook Park in Urbana. Stay tuned every Tuesday for more to come!

## Weibo Account Launch

To better reach the Chinese market, and to prepare for an upcoming Chinese influencer visit, VCC launched a Weibo account. Crescent Marketing, a local Chinese agency, assisted in setting up the account through the rigorous standards, and assists in posting and engaging with followers in Mandarin. We will continue to grow engagement on this platform as we market to this demographic.

# TOP SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS

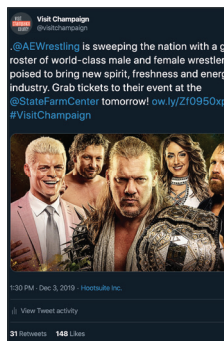


### Facebook

Livability Top College Town  
212 Likes  
35 Shares  
4,196 Reach



**6,904**  
Followers

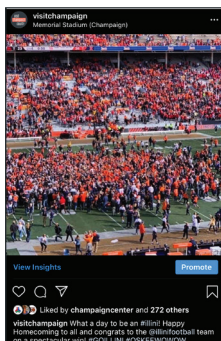


### Twitter

AEW Promotion  
31 Retweets  
148 Likes  
48.1K impressions



**6,065**  
Followers



### Instagram

Illini Homecoming  
Win  
273 Likes  
3,066 impressions



**4,866**  
Followers



## Ads Placed in Q2

### LEISURE

Expedia  
Facebook | Fighting Illini

### MEETINGS

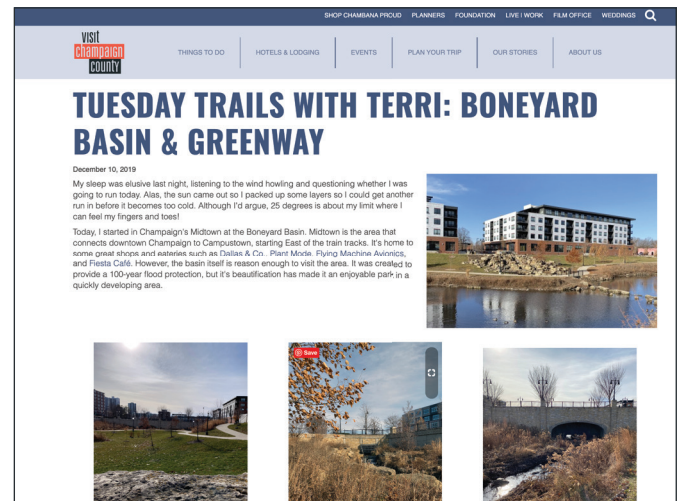
Small Market Meetings

### SPORTS

Sports Destination Magazine  
Sports Planning Guide

**2** press releases resulting  
in **56** media placements.

**487**  
reader responses



## Website Report

67,864 Visits  
186,632 Page Views  
33,500 New Visits  
1.90 Pages/Session  
01:28 Avg. Length of Visit

## Top Visited Pages

Calendar of Events  
Game Day  
Must-Attend Festivals  
Sounds of C-U  
Food & Drink

**65.48%**

of website traffic is from outside the greater Champaign County area

**32.22%**

is from Chicago

**67**

events submitted on our website

## Our Mission

Advance the overall visitor destination experience for the greater Champaign County area, in collaboration with community stakeholders, to strengthen the local economy and quality of life.

## VISIT CHAMPAIGN COUNTY PARTNERS

### Founding Partners

City of Champaign

### Platinum Partners

University of Illinois

### Gold Partners

Busey :: Carle :: Champaign County  
City of Urbana :: Village of Savoy

### Silver Partners

Illinois American Water :: Parkland College  
Village of Rantoul

### Bronze Partners

Village of Mahomet :: Village of St. Joseph  
Urbana Park District

### Regional Partners

Allerton Park & Retreat Center :: Arthur Area Tourism  
Council :: City of Tuscola :: Monticello Chamber of  
Commerce

### Hotel Partners

**ORANGE PARTNERS:** Eastland Suites & Conference  
Center :: Hilton Garden Inn :: Holiday Inn :: Hyatt Place  
I Hotel & Conference Center :: Illini Union Hotel

**BLUE PARTNERS:** Candlewood Suites :: Comfort Suites  
Country Inn & Suites :: Courtyard by Marriott :: Drury Inn  
& Suites :: Fairfield Inn & Suites :: Hampton Inn Urbana  
Hampton Inn Champaign Southwest :: Holiday Inn Express  
Holiday Inn Express Rantoul :: Home2 Suites by Hilton  
Homewood Suites :: LaQuinta :: Residence Inn by Marriott  
TownePlace Suites by Marriott :: Wingate by Wyndham

For information on our Tourism Industry Partner Program  
and how you can support our mission visit:  
[visitchampaigncounty.org/partners](http://visitchampaigncounty.org/partners)



### 2019-2020 Board of Directors

**Laura Bleill**, Chair, University of Illinois Research Park

**Bryan Snodgrass**, Vice Chair, Busey

**Rob Kowalski**, Treasurer, City of Champaign

**Jayne DeLuce**, Secretary (ex-officio), Visit Champaign County

**Lynne Barnes**, Carle

**Angie Brix**, Champaign City Council

**Bridget Broihahn**, City of Urbana

**Annie Easterday**, Pear Tree Estate

**Nathan Escue**, Hamilton Walker's

**Bob Flider**, University of Illinois

**John Hammond**, Candlewood Suites

**Richard Helton**, Village of Savoy

**Mike Ingram**, Champaign County Board

**Shayla Maatuka**, Matuuka Al-Heeti Emkes, LLC

**Dennis Robertson**, Market Place Shopping Center

### Visit Champaign County Team

217.351.4133 | 17 E. Taylor St., Champaign, IL 61820



**Jayne DeLuce**, President & CEO

**Terri Reifsteck**, Vice President of Marketing & Community Engagement

**Caitlyn Floyd**, Director of Sales & International Travel

**Mike Koon**, Director of Sports, Special Events & Film

**Taylor Bauer**, Communications Manager

**Jen Peddycoart**, Office Manager

**Brooke Mayer**, Visitor Experience Coordinator

**Leslie Lundy**, Finance Manager

### Visit Champaign County Foundation Board of Directors

Dennis Robertson, Chair, Market Place Shopping Center :: Orlando Thomas, Vice Chair, Champaign School District Unit 4  
Rob Kowalski, Treasurer, City of Champaign :: Jayne DeLuce, Secretary, Visit Champaign County :: Victor Fuentes, V. Picasso/Willow Creek Farm  
Rich Thomas, Retired, Rantoul Recreation :: Dan Waldinger, Mahomet Recreation :: Rachel Coventry, Curtis Orchard & Pumpkin Patch :: Natalie Kenny-  
Marquez, Grow Marketing & Communications LLC :: Max Mitchell, ReMax :: Jody Quiram, Gordyville USA :: Jesse Hines, Courtyard by Marriott

### Visit Champaign County Foundation Charter Partners

Adams Outdoor Advertising :: Don & Suzi Armstrong of Northwestern Mutual\* :: BankChampaign\* :: BPC :: Carter's Furniture\* :: Champaign Park  
District :: Champaign-Urbana Mass Transit District\* :: ciLiving from WCIA\* :: Clifton Larson Allen\* :: Cozad Asset Management\* :: Jayne & Joe  
DeLuce\* :: Farnsworth Group\* :: First State Bank\* :: FRASCA International\* :: Gordyville USA\* :: Grow Marketing & Communications :: Hickory Point  
Bank & Trust\* :: Rob & Jennifer Kowalski :: Market Place Shopping Center :: Martin Hood LLC\* :: Martin One Source\* :: Midland States Bank\* :: The  
News-Gazette, Inc.\* :: Pear Tree Estate :: RE/MAX Realty Associates\* :: Dennis Robertson :: Robeson Family Benefit Fund\* :: David B. Sholem of Meyer  
Capel Law Offices\* :: University of Illinois Community Credit Union\* :: UpClose Marketing & Printing\* :: V. Picasso/Willow Creek Farm\*

\*2016 Charter Partner