



A LETTER FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Dennis Robertson, Market Place Shopping Center Chair of the Board of Directors, 2013–2014

The 2014 fiscal year kicked off with a flurry of activity and visitors discovering our area from all over the world. Between hundreds of internationals visiting for AgriTours Illinois in conjunction with the Farm Progress Show, countless conferences and meeting delegates, sports events happening every weekend and incredible entertainment options drawing in regional visitors, Champaign County was hopping. All activity fell in line with Visit Champaign County's mission to market Champaign County and a diverse set of events, in collaboration with community stakeholders, to attract and serve visitors, and to positively impact the local economy and quality of life.

To help carry out their mission and vision, Visit Champaign County relies on their Tourism Development Fund for recruiting and retaining county-wide events. We appreciate the following Tourism Industry partners: City of Champaign, University of Illinois, Champaign County, Village of Savoy, Illinois American Water, Allerton Park & Retreat Center, Village of Rantoul, Busey, The News-Gazette, Carle, City of Urbana, McDonald's, Robeson Family Benefit Fund, University of Illinois Employees Credit Union, Village of Mahomet and Village of St Joseph. We appreciate the many in the area that recognize the benefits of tourism in our community and invest in its future.

These investments allow Visit Champaign County to take the necessary steps to bring in major events, whether it's continuing to support the Bloomington Gold Corvette Show, IHSA State Championships, hosting tour operators or travel writers. In the end, it all leads back to significant economic impact to our community that not only makes Champaign County a better place to live, but it puts tax dollars back into our pockets.

Generating impact is a community effort. The Visit Champaign County Board of Directors is a dedicated group that helps guide the efforts of the organization along with input from the community teams (Sales, Sports, Tourism Councils). Countless volunteers and hospitality staff also serve as community ambassadors for countywide events. Thank you to all that support travel and tourism and positively impact the local economy and quality of life.

As Board President for FY14, I was truly honored to have worked closely with a hard working staff, engaged board of directors, and numerous funding partners to further Visit Champaign County's mission. I look forward to seeing these efforts continue to make a difference in this community!

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BOARD OF DIRECTORS

July 1, 2013-June 30, 2014

OFFICERS:

Dennis Robertson, Chair, Market Place Shopping Center Rich Thomas, Vice Chair, Village of Rantoul Teri Legner/Rob Kowalski, Treasurer, City of Champaign Jayne DeLuce, Secretary (ex-officio), Visit Champaign County

DIRECTORS:

Rachel Coventry, Curtis Orchard & Pumpkin Patch
Mike DeLorenzo, University of Illinois
Marci Dodds, Champaign City Council
Victor Fuentes, El Toro Restaurants
Lisa Gengelbach, Eastland Suites
Richard Helton, Village of Savoy
Greg Knott, Parkland College
Dave Krchak, Thomas, Mamer & Haughey, LLP
Max Mitchell, Champaign County Board
Dan Waldinger, Village of Mahomet
Sorita Wilson, Hilton Garden Inn & Conference Center
Nick Zazal, Krannert Center for the Performing Arts
Crystal Womble, Krannert Center for the Performing Arts



STAFF DIRECTORY

Jayne DeLuce, President & CEO
Cory Hatfield, Sales & Sports Director
Angela Bradford, Leisure Sales & Tourism Director
Terri Reifsteck, Marketing & Business Development Director
Angie Poe, Office Manager
Clark Sorenson, Customer Service Assistant
Leslie Lundy, Finance Manager

Mission

To market Champaign County and a diverse set of events, in collaboration with community stakeholders, to attract and serve visitors, and to positively impact the local economy and quality of life.

Vision

To establish and promote Champaign County as a premier destination.

COMMUNITY TEAMS

Visit Champaign County works together with members of our community to serve our mission of promoting Champaign County as a premier destination. Through our Community Teams—Sales Council, Tourism Council and Sports Council—we're able to collaborate on new ideas for bringing in visitors whether it's for business, leisure or sports. Thank you to all individuals who worked with us in FY14 to further our mission.

SALES COUNCIL

Lisa Gengelbach, Eastland Suites (Board Liaison);
Brian Alcorn, Baymont Inn & Suites; Carol Bain, Illini Union
Hotel; Thai Caston and Katelyn Massey, Hilton Garden Inn;
Caitlyn Mooney, Hyatt Place; Molly Mooney and Erin Hosch,
Homewood Suites; Matt Pavelski and Nicole Kingery, Hawthorn
Suites by Wyndham; Janna Sartini, Candlewood Suites; Kevin
Shah, Residence Inn by Marriott; Steven Steinhauer and Calita
Sterling, Courtyard by Marriott; Julie Irvin, Country Inn & Suites;
Omie NIvens and Susan Sestergard, I Hotel & Conference
Center; Pinkesh Patel, Red Roof Inn

TOURISM COUNCIL

Rachel Coventry, Curtis Orchard & Pumpkin Patch (Board Liaison); Scott Clanin, JSM Development; Judy Elmore and Susan Elmore, Jane Addams Book Shop; Vanessa Faurie, University of Illinois Alumni Association; Dave Leake, William M. Staerkel Planetarium; Chance McDade, The Art Party Studio; Dick McGuire, Champaign County Ambassador; Amy Riha, Larry Kanfer Photography Gallery; Erik Riha, University of Illinois Campus Recreation; Kim Sheahan, Spurlock Museum; Lisa Sprinkle, Champaign County Forest Preserves; Robb Tobias, Pekara Bakery; Kelly White, 40 North | 88 West

SPORTS COUNCIL

Dan Waldinger, Mahomet Parks & Recreation (Board Liaison); Zach Acton, Division of Intercollegiate Athletics; Graham Berry, Soccer Planet; Darren Clare, Mike Cunnigham and Judy Reynolds, Gill Athletics/Porter Athletic; Joe DeLuce, Joe Kearfott, Hsiung Marler and Tony Oligney-Estill,, Champaign Park District; Ian Dennehy, Champaign Gymnastics Academy; Tiffany DeSpain, Savoy Recreation Center; Amanda Drawve and Terry Elmore, Campus Recreation; Daniel Dudley, Champaign County Lacrosse Club; Bryant Evans, Champaign County Table Tennis Club; Don Flynn, First Pitch Events; Andy Graham, Rantoul Recreation Department; Yoshi Hayasaki, Hayasaki Gymnastics Center; Mike Lindemann, Christie Clinic Illinois Marathon; Kevin Love, Illinois Futbol Club; Rod Lovett, Parkland College; , John Marquardt, Kevin Ullestad and Sue Walker, State Farm Center; Kyle Mills, Urbana Park District; Brian Moline, WDWS/ WHMS; Rick Pontious, Midwest Athletic Complex;, Jim Rossow, The News-Gazette/IlliniHQ; Jan Seeley, Christie Clinic Illinois Marathon; Holly Stalcup, Division of Intercollegiate Athletics; Orlando Thomas, Champaign Unit 4 School District; , State Farm Center; Mike Wilson, Illinois Futbol Club

TOURISM INDUSTRY PARTNERS 2013–2014

Visit Champaign County would like to thank our Tourism Industry Partners. Through their generous contributions, we are able to attract visitors to our community for business, sports and leisure travel while also bringing significant economic impact to our county. For information on our Tourism Industry Partner Program and how you can support our mission visit www.visitchampaigncounty.org/partners.

FOUNDING PARTNERS



PLATINUM PARTNERS



GOLD PARTNERS





Champaign County

SILVER PARTNERS











BRONZE PARTNERS

Carle

McDonald's

University of Illinois Employees Credit Union

Village of St. Joseph

City of Urbana Robeson Family Benefit Fund Village of Mahomet

ECONOMIC IMPACT of travel & tourism

2013

IN CHAMPAIGN COUNTY

in 2013 visitor's spent

\$306.59

million in Champaign County FOR THE FIRST TIME

THAT'S A 2.7%
INCREASE FROM
2012 AND

AN 8.3% INCREASE FROM 2011 \$5.07
million in local
tax receipts
a 2.1% increase

\$34.5 BILLION IN REVENUE GENERATED IN ILLINOIS

\$19.44 MILLION

in state tax receipts

TOURISM CREATES

2520 JOBS
IN CHAMPAIGN COUNTY

and generates

\$63.04

million in payroll

That's a savings of \$1100

on taxes each year for the average family







According to the U.S. Travel Association,

ONE ADDITIONAL DAY

of earned leave each year would

\$73 BILLION
TO THE US GDP



Celebrating Tourism Leaders

INTERNATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Drawing in international delegates continues to be an integral component to Visit Champaign County's mission. Various opportunities in FY14 allowed Champaign County to shine to an international audience.

In the fall of 2013, a Japanese travel writer, working with the Illinois Office of Tourism, visited the area to gather information for a travel guide geared towards student groups

visiting the United States. Focusing on agriculture, the writer explored a high-tech farm, the University of Illinois College of ACES, Hardy's Reindeer Ranch and Prairie Fruits Farm. The guide was printed and distributed in the spring of 2014 to the Japanese tour market.

Also in the spring of 2014, Angela Ingerson attended IPW in Chicago—the largest tradeshow for international tour operators—to promote AgriTours Illinois. Following the show, five areas in Illinois had the opportunity to host a post-familiarization tour (FAM) for buyers and travel media, including Champaign County.

April 10–11, sixteen tour operators and 8 media, representing numerous countries including Brazil, Costa Rica, Argentina, Russia, Norway, Taiwan, Spain and China, descended upon Champaign County to discover what their groups would experience with AgriTours Illinois. The group visited Prairie Fruits Farm & Creamery, Big Grove Tavern, the University of Illinois College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environment Studies (ACES), Wood & Wood Farm and Hardy's Reindeer Ranch. The following day included stops at Anderson Grain Elevator, Jeff Fisher's Farm in Tolono and J.T. Walker's in Mahomet for lunch before heading to the Quad Cities, Visit Champaign County's partner in AgriTours Illinois. During their stay, the tour operators were joined by local community leaders at various meals. The FAM tour was a complete success, with everyone in attendance amazed at the offerings.

Between these two major marketing opportunities, Visit Champaign County expects to see significant increases to international travel.

The Second Annual Toast to Tourism, May 7, 2014, held at Spurlock Museum, honored the impact of travel and tourism in Champaign County as well as those that make a difference in the industry.

Held in conjunction with National Travel & Tourism Week—a week-long celebration sponsored by the U.S. Travel Association—the event featured keynote speaker Chancellor Phyllis Wise with the University of Illinois. After welcoming over 150 guests, Wise spoke on her shared vision of the role of the University of Illinois in Tourism.

President & CEO, Jayne DeLuce, highlighted the efforts of Visit Champaign County staff, board and volunteers throughout the year and celebrated the numerous successes in FY14.

During the event, Visit Champaign County honored five individuals who have greatly contributed to travel and tourism in Champaign County with a Tourism Impact Award. The 2014 winners include Joyce Curtis, Curtis Orchard & Pumpkin Patch; Scott Friedlein, Retired Champaign Police Officer/Reynold's Towing; Jenese Harris, WICD TV; Michael Johnson, Big Grove Tavern; and Ed Scharlau, Busey.

Closing the event, each guest received a complimentary bottle of soda from the Homer Soda Company.

VISITOR INQUIRIES

We collect data on how many information requests we receive via our various methods of communication: web, mail, email, phone and Welcome Center walk-ins.

TICs & Local Bus.* Grand Total	64,678 68,120
Welcome Center	931
Phone	2,294
Web, Mail, Email	217
	FY14

*TICs (Illinois Interstates, Market Place Mall, Willard Airport, Illinois Terminal) are off-site locations where we distribute Visitor's Guides. This number reflects the combined amount of Visitor's Guides distributed.

HOTEL/MOTEL INFORMATION

	FY13
Occupancy Rate	58.05%
Average Daily Rate	\$79.94

This data is collected and reported by STR®.

Events Making An Impact



YOUTH SPORTS OF ALL SORTS

Throughout the year, a variety of sports tournaments are held across Champaign County. Soccer fields in the spring are taken over by the Illinois Futbol Club, who host their fall and spring invites bringing in over 300 teams over the course of the two weekends.

Baseball and softball tournaments can be seen every weekend in the summer as First Pitch Events hosts six tournaments in Champaign and Rantoul. Over 350 teams played in FY14.

Non-traditional sports are also growing in Champaign County, such as the first Illini Archery Invitational held at the University of Illinois Armory. Teams from around Illinois and Indiana traveled to Champaign County to compete at the elementary and junior high level.

The Shootout at the Hall also returned to the State Farm Center, hosted by Champaign Centennial High School with 12 teams competing.

Combined, youth sports make a tremendous impact on Champaign County, filling hotel rooms, restaurants and our shops on weekends throughout the year.

IHSA STATE WRESTLING CHAMPIONSHIPS

Visit Champaign County welcomed over 37,000 people to the community for the 2014 Illinois High School Association (IHSA) Individual State Wrestling Championships. Wrestlers, families and fans brought their enthusiasm and school spirit to the State Farm Center for three fun-filled days. The event creates an estimated economic impact of \$5.5 million for our area, with restaurants seeing significant traffic as wrestlers devour as much as possible after making weight.

Thanks for your help in getting hotel reservations. Our math team did well, and enjoyed staying at La Quinta. I really appreciate your help." – Beth MacDuff, Barrington High School



CORVETTE TAKEOVER

The Bloomington Gold Corvette Show returned to the State Farm Center, June 27–29, 2014, bringing thousands of Corvette owners and enthusiasts worldwide. With a new setup, Corvette owners were able to easily see the entire show, from visiting with vendors in the Gold Market to seeing the large display of Gold Year cars, the 1964 Corvette.

The highlight of the show continues to be the GoldTour, where 1,110 Corvettes headed west through Champaign and into Monticello. Corvettes returned to Downtown Champaign where they where hundreds gathered to welcome them and the owners were able to enjoy the nightlife and the Blues, Brews and BBQ Festival.

The Bloomington Gold Corvette Show offers Champaign County a multi-million dollar economic impact. Planning for 2015 and the next four years are already underway.

CHRISTIE CLINIC ILLINOIS MARATHON & AMERICAN FAMILY INSURANCE 27TH MILE

The Christie Clinic Illinois Marathon continues to be one of the largest events in Champaign County, with over 21,000 runners and walkers participating in one or more of the various races throughout the weekend. Despite a cold winter, with little training time, runners came out in full-force to take advantage of the flat and fast course. Following their run Saturday morning, participants celebrated at the American Family Insurance 27th Mile Celebrate Victory Bash, hosted by Visit Champaign County. 2014 was our largest celebration yet, serving over

2,100 complimentary beers and showcasing 13 street vendors from Chester's BBQ to the Homer Soda Company. The 27th Mile featured local band, Decadents, who provided hours of entertainment to the crown. The Christie Clinic Illinois Marathon brings in over \$10 million in economic impact to the community.

SALES NUMBERS

	FY14
Meetings, Conventions, Sports BOOKED	24
Meetings, Conventions, Sports LEADS	47
Inbound Motorcoach & Other Leisure Groups BOOKED	34
Total Sales Contacts (Sports, Meetings & Leisure)	8,401
Events, Groups & Leisure Serviced	123
Trade Shows/Meetings Attended	17

Important note: These sales numbers reflect business generated by Visit Champaign County and are not representative of the entire Champaign County community.

LEISURE & INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL OVERVIEW

Angela Bradford, Leisure Sales and Tourism Director, attended several tradeshows in FY14 to promote Champaign County as a premiere destination to domestic and international groups. Angela met with tour planners in one-on-one appointments at The American Bus Association, National Tour Association, Ontario Motor Coach Association and Select Traveler exhibitions. She also attended one of the largest international travel tradeshows in the United States, IPW14 in Chicago, to promote AgriTours Illinois with the Quad Cities Convention & Visitors Bureau. Visit Champaign County saw a record number of international agricultural groups visiting farms, the University of Illinois College of ACES and other agricultural sites throughout the county.

Additionally, numerous advertisements were placed to attract leisure and group travelers to Champaign County, including ads in AAA Living, Canadian Traveler, Leisure Group Travel, WMBD, Illinois Travel Guide and Summer Getaway Guide, the IPW Dailies and an online interactive campaign with Madden Media.





MEETINGS & SPORTS OVERVIEW

Visit Champaign County invested in attending more industry-specific tradeshows to meet both sports and meeting planners in FY14 to grow our markets to more of a regional destination. Among the shows Cory Hatfield, Sports & Sales Director, attended include: Connect Marketplace, SPORTS The Relationship Conference, Small Market Meetings, Rejuvenate Marketplace, Illinois Society of Association Executives, National Association of Sports Commissions and Sports Illinois Huddle. These shows resulted in hundreds of new contacts and relationships, as well as an introduction to the many resources Champaign County has to offer to planners.

On the local front, our sales council hosted an event for meeting planners in Springfield at Obed and Isaacs as our relationship with our state association, ISAE, is very strong. This event solidified our relationship with existing clients while also bringing in renewed interest from those that have not been to our community in some time.

The sports market also continues to grow in Champaign County. In the upcoming years, Cory is looking at growing our nontraditional sports market by utilizing our amazing facilities to planners who might enjoy something different.

Ads placed for these markets included Sports Events Magazine, Illinois Meetings & Events and Midwest Meetings.

READER RESPONSE TO ADVERTISING

Visit Champaign County devertises to incosance regions, where requests for Visitor's Guides are received in response to the ads. Visit Champaign County advertises to thousands regionally,

STORY COVERAGE

stories ran about Visit Champaign County in regards to tourism efforts. Media includes newspaper, radio, TV and online in and out of Champaign County.







4,537 Pageviews on Friday of Bloomington Gold

WEB REPORT

Sessions 3.000

> 168,548 Visits—17.3% increase over FY13 556,563 Pageviews—**11.0% increase** 47,660 Mobile Views—48.9% increase 76.68% New Visits 3.30 pages/visit

TOP VISITED PAGES

Event Calendar Things to To Accommodations Attractions Bloomington Gold Dining



2,723 FOLLOWERS 52.0% increase

2,495 LIKES 16.4% increase



A significant marketing initiative in FY14 was increasing editorial coverage of Champaign County. To start these efforts, Terri Reifsteck, Marketing & **Business Development** Director, attended Travel Media Showcase in

Rockford, Illinois. She held 30 one-on-one appointments with journalists and bloggers to sell story ideas. Immediately after the

show, editorial covering the Pygmalion Music Festival to Hardy's Reindeer Ranch began to appear online and in print. A variety of writers from all over the country, in addition to a Japenese writer and a group of Candaian bloggers visited the area to see first-hand what makes Champaign County special. Editorial is an important component to market our offerings, as it provides an unbiased opinion of the writer's expeerience and is viewed as trustworthy from their audience. Bringing in writers will continue to

be a focus in FY15.

Awards & Accolades

In FY14, Visit Champaign County, Prairie Fruits Farm & Creamery and the Christie Clinic Illinois Marathon were all recognized for their efforts by the State of Illinois. At the Illinois State Fair, Illinois Comptroller, Judy Baar Topinka saluted Prairie Fruits Farm & Creamery as one of the Illinois Agriculture Agri-Tourism Leaders of the Year.

The Illinois Office of Tourism annually honors innovative tourism marketing initiatives that promote the outstanding destinations, attractions and events with the Illinois Excellence in Tourism Awards at the Governor's Conference on Travel & Tourism. Visit Champaign County took home the awards for Best Branding for AgriTours Illinois and Best Cooperative Partnership for Triple D Galore Along 1-74.

Also during the Awards Gala at the conference, Christie Clinic Illinois Marathon Race Directors, Jan Seeley and Mike Lindemann, were recognized for their incredible efforts in boosting tourism in Champaign County.





























Jayne DeLuce President & CEO

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MINI ABE VISITS CHAMPAIGN COUNTY

Building on the success of Enjoy Illinois' Mini Abe campaign, the Illinois Office of Tourism sent the Ken-sized doll in Abraham Lincoln's likeness on a whirlwind trip around the state to visit a variety of local sites. Mini Abe spent some time in Champaign County the week of October 14, where he spent time on the University of Illinois campus, dining in Downtown Champaign, visiting area attractions and much more. The campaign brought a tremendous amount of awareness to Champaign County. By utilizing #MiniAbe in all Twitter and instagram posts, as well as tagging Enjoy Illinois, we saw a siginificant boost in views, with a total of 21,995 impressions on Facebook and 244,298 impressions on Twitter. Mini Abe's pep talk with Coach Groce was the most viral photo of his time in our area.