





FROM THE CHAIRMAN

**MIKE DELORENZO, UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS
CHAIR, BOARD OF DIRECTORS, 2016–2017**

As technology evolves and visitors' needs change, Visit Champaign County continues to find ways to connect with their audience through an inclusive community approach. Fiscal year 2017 was the year of Destination Management for the organization, allowing them the opportunity to partner with area stakeholders to strengthen the "Outside of Ordinary" brand for the greater Champaign County area.

The inaugural Tourism Summit in August 2016 at the Hyatt Place, kicked off these efforts. The summit brought together area businesses, hoteliers, non-profits and stakeholders to realize that together, our individual voices combine to speak to one Outside of Ordinary experience. Through this hospitality network, Visit Champaign County offers joint marketing efforts, customer service training, and outreach that strengthens this community.

FY17 also brought a new vision for connecting with visitors. While walk-in traffic to the Welcome Center remains consistent, there are many other touch points to welcome visitors as they enter our community. Partnerships with Willard Airport, the Illinois Terminal and Market Place Shopping Center allowed Visit Champaign to create eye-catching welcome centers to those arriving by air, train, and bus, while also capturing visitors at a popular destination. The welcome center also hit the road with the branded Visit Champaign County vehicle, "Victoria." This heightens visibility throughout the community on a daily basis and provides a home-base during major events such as the Christie Clinic Illinois Marathon and the Hot Rod Power Tour.

The most significant shift for Visit Champaign County during the fiscal year was a relocation to a well-trafficked area in downtown Champaign. In June, the VCC team took over 17 E. Taylor St., located in the pedestrian walkway in the heart of the downtown. The space allows VCC to further promote their Outside of Ordinary brand to a greater number residents and visitors that patron the many businesses in the area.

Despite continuing challenges with state funding, Visit Champaign County rose to the challenge in creatively marketing and selling the greater Champaign County Area as a destination. From new events like the Champaign County Area Restaurant Week showcasing local flavors, to targeting Chinese tour operators bringing student groups, the sales and marketing plan aggressively targets visitors through a diverse mix of mediums to generate economic impact.

An aggressive marketing campaign led to a title that Champaign-Urbana will prominently boast—*Midwest Living's* Greatest Midwest Food Town. The win provides exposure of CU's thriving culinary scene to over 3 million readers across the Midwest. We

anxiously await the growth in foodie tourism to the community as a result.

As we continue to draw in visitors, solid relationships with area hotels are key. The first year of the Hotel Partnership Program proved successful, with over 80 new leads generating over 16,000 room nights. Regional partnerships with Allerton Park & Retreat Center, the Monticello Chamber of Commerce, and the Arthur Area Tourism Office remain strong, with new business from group and leisure travelers discovering these unique destinations.

The Visit Champaign County Foundation continues to engage with over 30 partners, allowing for bids on events such as the Hot Rod Power Tour which took place in June. Meanwhile, the Champaign County Film Office continues to work with local filmmakers, as well as national productions that film in the community, allowing for an additional avenue for revenue for the community.

With the support of Strategic Partners, Visit Champaign County is able to continue its mission to advance the overall visitor destination experience. We appreciate the continued support from: City of Champaign, University of Illinois, Busey, Champaign County, Village of Savoy, City of Urbana, Illinois American Water, Village of Rantoul, Parkland College, Carle, Urbana Park District, Village of Mahomet and Village of St. Joseph. We appreciate all in the area that recognize the benefits of tourism in our community and invest in its future.

A dedicated Board of Directors guides the efforts of the Visit Champaign County team, ensuring success for the community. Countless volunteers and hospitality staff also serve as ambassadors daily in addition to countywide events. Thank you to all that support travel and tourism, and positively impact the local economy and quality of life.

As Board Chair for FY17, I was grateful to work together with a dedicated staff, an 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!

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.

vision

Champion the greater Champaign County area as a memorable, extraordinary destination.

Board of Directors 2016–2017

OFFICERS:

Mike DeLorenzo, Chair, University of Illinois
Shayla Maatuka, Vice Chair, Dodd & Maatuka
Rob Kowalski, Treasurer, City of Champaign
Jayne DeLuce, Secretary (ex-officio), Visit Champaign County

DIRECTORS:

Laura Weisskopf Bleill, University of Illinois Research Park
Rachel Coventry, Curtis Orchard
Richard Helton, Village of Savoy
Jesse Hines, Horve Hospitality
Natalie Kenny-Marquez, City of Urbana
Max Mitchell, Champaign County Board
Annie Murray, Pear Tree Estate
Tracey Pettigrew, Champaign Urbana Mass Transit District
Jody Quiram, Gordyville USA
Dennis Robertson, Market Place Shopping Center
Bryan Snodgrass, Busey
Greg Stock, Champaign City Council

Visit Champaign County Team



Jayne DeLuce, President & CEO :: Terri Reifsteck, Vice President of Marketing
Leah Longueville, Director of Sales :: Ryan Reid, Assistant Director of Sales
Cody Dees, Community Relations Manager :: Jen Peddycoart, Office Manager
Brooke Mayer, Customer Service Assistant :: Leslie Lundy, Accountant



Visit Champaign County would like to thank our Partners in Tourism. 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 region.

Strategic Partners

FOUNDING PARTNER

City of Champaign

PLATINUM PARTNER

University of Illinois

GOLD PARTNERS

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

SILVER PARTNERS

Illinois American Water :: Parkland College
Village of Rantoul

BRONZE PARTNERS

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

Regional Marketing Partners

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

Hotel Partners

ORANGE PARTNERS

Best Western Monticello Gateway
Inn :: Eastland Suites & Conference
Center :: Hawthorn Suites by
Wyndham :: Hilton Garden Inn
Hyatt Place Champaign/Urbana
I Hotel & Conference Center
Illini Union Hotel

BLUE PARTNERS

Best Western Paradise Inn
Candlewood Suites :: Comfort
Suites :: Country Inn & Suites
Courtyard by Marriott :: Drury Inn
& Suites :: Fairfield Inn & Suites
Hampton Inn :: Holiday Inn Express
Home2 Suites by Hilton
Homewood Suites :: LaQuinta
Ramada Urbana :: Residence Inn
by Marriott :: TownePlace Suites by
Marriott :: Wingate by Wyndham

ECONOMIC IMPACT OF TRAVEL & TOURISM IN 2016



DIRECT SPENDING

\$380.1

MILLION IN VISITOR SPENDING

\$6.9

MILLION IN LOCAL
TAX RECEIPTS
REINVESTED IN
THE COMMUNITY

**LOCAL TAX
RECEIPTS**

JOBS

2990

CHAMPAIGN
COUNTY AREA JOBS
DEPENDENT ON
TRAVEL & TOURISM

\$81.7

MILLION IN WAGES
EARNED IN THE
TRAVEL INDUSTRY

PAYROLL

IMPACT OF TRAVEL IN CHAMPAIGN, DOUGLAS, MOULTRIE, AND PIATT COUNTIES

In Illinois, travel and tourism account for
\$37.9 BILLION in expenditures. An
increase of **\$571 MILLION.**

IN THE UNITED STATES

Every **\$1** million in sales of travel goods and
services directly generates **NINE JOBS** for the
industry.

EVENTS GENERATING IMPACT IN FY17



ISAE SUMMER SESSION

Champaign County was showcased to over 100 members of the Illinois Society for Association Executives in July 2016. These decision-makers can generate \$219 per person per day when hosting their event in a community.



IHSA FOOTBALL CHAMPIONSHIPS

The IHSA State Football Championships returned to Champaign County in 2016, with 16 teams competing in 8 games over two days. Visit Champaign County hosted Tent City, offering hospitality to football fans across the state.



ILLINOIS MARATHON

In its eighth year, the Christie Clinic Illinois Marathon continues to draw thousands to participate in one of the fastest courses in the country. Over the course of two days, the marathon generates over \$10 million in economic impact.



HOT ROD POWER TOUR

For the third time, the Hot Rod Power Tour selected Champaign as a stop on their 7-day, 7-city tour. Hosted at the State Farm Center, Champaign welcomed over 3,000 hot rodders generating over \$1.5 million in economic impact in one day.



The New Welcome Center

As technology continues to infiltrate our daily habits, Visit Champaign County has evolved to meet visitor needs. Visitors want their information conveniently, whether it's through social media or sitting in their hotel room when they arrive. New welcome centers opened at Willard Airport and Illinois Terminal, as well as an updated center at Market Place Mall. Materials are regularly distributed in these centers and restocked twice a week.

Visit Champaign County unveiled "Victoria", our mobile Visitor Information Center. Our newly branded vehicle gives us a visual presence as we cross the community day to day and serves as the backdrop at key area events such as the Hot Rod Power Tour.

Lastly, after six years at the Atkinson Monument Building, Visit Champaign County relocated to a new location at 17 E. Taylor St., in the pedestrian walkway in the heart of downtown Champaign. Surrounded by local businesses such as Blind Pig Brewery, Cowboy Monkey, Radio Maria, Nando Milano Trattoria, and Christopher's Fine Jewelry, this area draws significant foot traffic providing a heightened awareness for our organization.



SALES & MARKETING EFFORTS



TRADESHOWS

Visit Champaign County's presence at industry tradeshows is pertinent to recruiting and retaining business. The following shows provided our sales team the opportunity to meet with new and existing clients to discuss how Visit Champaign County can meet their needs.



International Travel

Active America China
IPW



Sports

National Association of Sports
Commissions
Connect Sports
Illinois Sports Huddle



Meetings & Conventions

Fraternity Executives Association
ISAE Summer Session
Small Market Meetings
Connect Specialty



Group Travel

NTA Travel Exchange
Circle Wisconsin Midwest
Marketplace

66 MEETINGS &
SPORTS BOOKED

138 MEETINGS &
SPORTS LEADS

43 MOTORCOACH
GROUPS BOOKED

564 TOTAL SALES
CONTACTS

79 GROUPS & EVENTS
SERVICED

MARKETING

Various marketing strategies were utilized throughout the year to ensure a comprehensive campaign promoting the greater Champaign County area as an Outside of Ordinary destination. The following were employed in FY17:

Print, Digital & Video

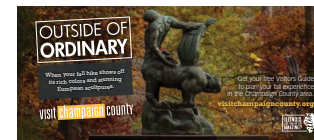
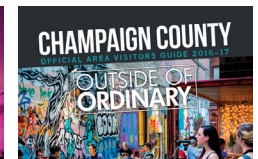
LEISURE—Midwest Living, AAA Living, Travel Illinois, Golf Time, Out Chicago, America Journal (German), Brand USA Destinations, Billboards, Bus boards, Facebook campaigns & Live Video, WCIA, Smile Politely, ChambanaMoms.com

MEETINGS—Small Market Meetings, Illinois Meetings + Events

SPORTS—Sports Events Magazine, Sports Planning Guide

GROUP—Leisure Group Travel

Three digital content activations targeting 150 miles surrounding Champaign County brought **7.85 MILLION** impressions and **14,063** clicks.



70,000
VISITORS GUIDES



Greatest Midwest Food Town

During the month of May 2017, regional publisher *Midwest Living*, held a contest to determine the Greatest Midwest Food Town. Champaign-Urbana was among the twelve nominees, and after a month of voting from readers and the public, was named the winner. The win guarantees coverage for Champaign-Urbana's food scene in the September/October issue, reaching over 3 million readers. The title and editorial coverage is expected to significantly impact food tourism in the greater Champaign County area.



Visit Champaign County hosted the inaugural Champaign County Area Restaurant Week January 29–February 5, 2017. The first year was a big success with 18 local restaurants participating, offering special menus throughout the week. Look for its return in January 2018!

VISITOR INQUIRIES

54,008

TOTAL VISITORS GUIDES REQUESTED



4,601

31.4% increase



5,252

15.8% increase



2,790

48.9% increase

2,257

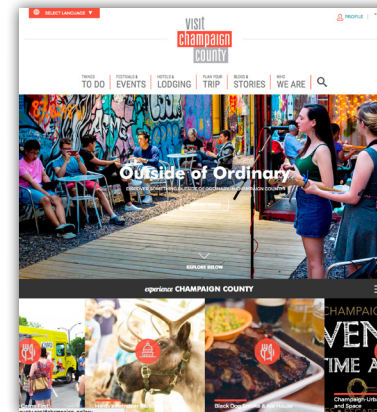
READER RESPONSES TO ADVERTISING

Visit Champaign County advertised to thousands regionally, where requests for Visitors Guides were received in response to the ads.

239

STORIES COVERED

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



WEB STATS

188,372 visits—**39% increase**
420,326 pageviews—**20% increase**
110,022 mobile views—**68% increase**
72.71% new visits
2.23 pages/visit

TOP VISITED PAGES

Event Calendar
Restaurant Week
Must-Stop Foodie Spots Blog
Things to Do
Food & Drink



TOP FACEBOOK POST
Greatest Midwest Food Town Win
45,000 Reach



TOP INSTAGRAM POST
Great Pumpkin Patch in Chicago
183 Likes

HOTEL INFORMATION

This data is collected and reported by STR®.

53.4%

OCCUPANCY RATE

\$85.22

AVERAGE DAILY RATE



FROM THE CEO

JAYNE DELUCE

LOOKING AHEAD TO FY18

Our purpose is simple: be a champion for travel and tourism in our destination. How we get there can be complex. We work in a world of advanced technology, funding challenges, politics, generational travel needs and competition.

In a recent study by Destinations International, the research identified five key roles (see image) for destination organizations to focus on in the future.

These roles are: Curators; Adopters; Catalysts; Activists; and Collaborators. Organizations need to develop plans for not only what they intend to do (strategy) but how they will do it (structure).

This model is based on two critical success factors:

- 1) Strength of destination
- 2) Level of community support and engagement



During the last year, the Visit Champaign County Board of Directors and team have guided our direction with **Destination 2020**, a strategic plan focused on the mission to advance the overall destination experience for the greater Champaign County area, in collaboration with community stakeholders, to strengthen the local economy and quality of life.

The key priorities that were established:

- 1) Choreograph a strategic destination management framework.
- 2) Expand reputation for excellence and credibility.
- 3) Drive business in our target visitor markets.
- 4) Build a sustainable funding model.

Specific initiatives for FY18 include:

- 1) Secure adequate and stable funding for all strategic plan initiatives.
- 2) Be internationally recognized for experiential opportunities with food, cultural, and sports tourism.
- 3) Focus on the Chinese, LGBTQ and African-American group markets.
- 4) Expand the new regional film office.
- 5) Grow and strengthen partnership programs, especially within the hospitality industry to strengthen our place brand.

We're excited about the future with our vision to champion the greater Champaign County area as a memorable, extraordinary destination. Join us for this journey. Thank you.

Champaign County Film Office

In its first full year, the Champaign County Film Office continued working with productions of all sizes taking place in the community. The Film Office assisted with eight productions this fiscal year, from Pens to Lens films to productions from BBC, Square and The Voice. As it continues to grow, the Film Office will focus on raising awareness for locations in the Champaign County area to attract new productions that will generate impact.



The Visit Champaign County Foundation, aspires to develop philanthropic support for Visit Champaign County in order to provide resources for recruiting and retaining countywide events and activities which drive economic growth and improve the quality of life, positively impacting the community.

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
Rachel Coventry, Curtis Orchard & Pumpkin Patch
Victor Fuentes, V. Picasso/Willow Creek Farm
Rich Thomas, Retired, Rantoul Recreation
Dan Waldinger, Mahomet Recreation

THANK YOU FOUNDATION PARTNERS

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

*Charter Partner established in 2016