



A SENSE OF PLACE

2017-2018
ANNUAL REPORT

visit **champaign** county



building **A SENSE OF PLACE**

FROM THE CHAIR

**SHAYLA MAATUKA, DODD & MAATUKA
CHAIR, BOARD OF DIRECTORS, 2017–2018**

A sense of place—the guiding principle this past year for Visit Champaign County who sought to not only promote and sell our Outside of Ordinary destination, but to collaborate with local organizations and individuals to enhance residents’ and visitors’ experiences in the community.

This year brought valuable relationships through community events, such as the Greatest Midwest Food Town Celebration, with pop-up events across Champaign-Urbana, and ELLNORA: The Guitar Festival, where Visit Champaign County helped place artist-decorated guitars in local businesses around the community. Collaborations with the University of Illinois–Carle College of Medicine and the Office of Admissions introduced our Outside of Ordinary community to potential and new students before they ever stepped foot on campus. Internationally, new relationships with the Global Education Training department at the University of Illinois opened doors for additional Chinese travelers and welcomed those already training in our area.

Continuing to build a sense of place, Visit Champaign County’s new promotional video captured community pride, showcasing the attractions, people, and places

that continue to make us a destination. Meanwhile, the new Outside of Ordinary mural on the Champaign County Welcome Center will highlight long-standing attractions while we capture many selfies using our #OutsideOfOrdinary hashtag.

In order to execute these campaigns, to further develop relationships, and educate stakeholders on the importance of visitors, the Visit Champaign County team remains on the cutting edge through continuing education, and obtaining the necessary tools to continue to push our story to visitors and stakeholders.

Through creating a sense of place that invokes happiness, pride, and inspiration, our local communities are enhanced through economic development and job creation, while residents enjoy an enhanced quality of life. The board and staff remain committed to advocating for the support of tourism to stimulate growth locally.

It has been my pleasure to witness what this committed staff has achieved in these areas over the past year. 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.

2017–2018 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Shayla Maatuka, Chair, Dodd & Maatuka
Rob Kowalski, Vice Chair, City of Champaign
Bryan Snodgrass, Treasurer, Busey
Jayne DeLuce, Secretary (ex-officio), Visit Champaign County
Laura Bleill, University of Illinois Research Park
Angie Brix, Champaign City Council
Bob Flider, University of Illinois
Richard Helton, Village of Savoy
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Max Mitchell, Champaign County Board
Annie Murray Easterday, Pear Tree Estate
Derek Peterson, Allerton Park & Retreat Center
Tracey Pettigrew, CU Mass Transit District
Jody Quiram, Gordyville USA
Dennis Robertson, Market Place Shopping Center
Rachel Storm, City of Urbana

VISIT CHAMPAIGN COUNTY TEAM

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



Jayne DeLuce, President & CEO
Terri Reifsteck, Vice President of Marketing
Ryan Reid, Director of Sports & Special Events
Caitlyn Floyd, Director of Sales
Taylor Bauer, Communications Manager
Jen Peddycoart, Office Manager
Brooke Mayer, Customer Service Assistant
Leslie Lundy, Finance Manager

VISIT CHAMPAIGN COUNTY PARTNERS

FOUNDING PARTNERS

City of Champaign

PLATINUM PARTNERS

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

REGIONAL PARTNERS

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

HOTEL PARTNERS

ORANGE PARTNERS: Best Western Monticello Gateway Inn :: Eastland Suites & Conference Center Hawthorn Suites by Wyndham :: Hilton Garden Inn Hyatt Place :: 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 :: 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



THE IMPACT OF TRAVEL

in the Greater Champaign County Area

SUPPORTS

3,140 JOBS

GENERATING

\$87.8 MILLION

in payroll, a 7.4% increase

ILLINOIS RESIDENTS SAVE

\$1300 IN TAXES

due to revenue from visitor spending

VISITORS SPENT

\$404.4 MILLION

locally, a 6.4% increase

BRINGING BACK

\$7.4 MILLION

*in local taxes to our community
a 7.2% increase*

**Economic Impact data provided by the U.S. Travel Association*

CREATING IMPACT

The Visit Champaign County team actively sells and promotes the community as a destination for niche travel. Each market significantly impacts our hotel partners, event facilities, park districts, caterers, city services, transportation, restaurants, retail, attractions and beyond.

65 MEETINGS, SPORTS
& GROUPS BOOKED

132 MEETINGS, SPORTS
& GROUPS LEADS

67 GROUPS &
EVENTS SERVICED

MEETINGS & CONFERENCES

International Rescue & Emergency Care Association :: Illinois Rural Health Association :: Illinois FFA Association :: Woodmen Life Insurance :: Illinois Singles in Agriculture

Tradeshows Attended—ISAE Summer Session :: Small Market Meetings :: Connect Marketplace :: Connect Chicago :: Sales Blitzes in Springfield & Indianapolis

SPORTS

American Cornhole Midwest Regional GameDay USA Baseball :: Illinois Futbol Club Fall/Spring Invites :: IHSA State Wrestling Championships

Tradeshows Attended—National Association of Sports Commissions :: Sports Huddle :: Connect Marketplace

GROUP TOURS & INTERNATIONAL

AgriTours Illinois :: Swiss Farm Tour :: Various Bank Travel, Senior and Student groups

Tradeshows Attended: Circle Wisconsin :: Active America China

SPECIAL EVENTS

Greatest Midwest Food Town Celebration
Champaign County Area Restaurant Week
Christie Clinic Illinois Marathon





HOTEL INFORMATION

54.8% OCCUPANCY RATE

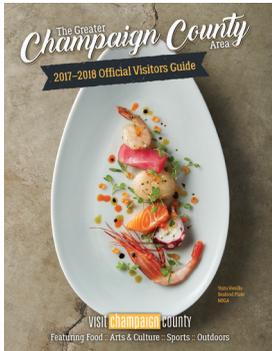
\$87.49 AVERAGE DAILY RATE

MARKETING

Various marketing strategies were utilized throughout the year to ensure a comprehensive campaign telling the stories of the people and the places in the greater Champaign County area that create an Outside of Ordinary destination.

PRINT, DIGITAL & VIDEO

- LEISURE**—Midwest Living, AAA Living, Travel Illinois, Out Chicago, America Journal (German), Essentially America (UK), Brand USA Destinations, Pandora Radio, Google Display Ads, Outside of Ordinary video, 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, Sports Destination Management
- GROUP**—Leisure Group Travel, Group Tour Magazine



70,000
VISITORS GUIDES



VISITOR INQUIRIES
51,245

TOTAL VISITORS GUIDES REQUESTED



5,466
18.8% increase



5,612
6.8% increase



3,106
11.3% increase

2,065

READER RESPONSES TO ADVERTISING

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

243

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

430,356 visits—**128% increase**
 749,624 pageviews—**78% increase**
 82.4% new visitors
 1.74 pages/visit
 01:30 average duration

TOP VISITED PAGES

Event Calendar
 Must-Stop Foodie Spots Blog
 Home of the Cool Music Blog
 Restaurant Week
 All About Arts & Culture Blog



9 days

24 restaurants

14,253 listeners reached on Pandora

10,738 site views on first day of event

41,370 total site views from launch

visit champaign county FOUNDATION

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.

2017–2018 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
 Natalie Kenny-Marquez, Grow Marketing & Communications, LLC
 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



Looking ahead

TO FISCAL YEAR 19

FROM THE CEO

JAYNE DELUCE



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 policy brief by Destinations International, “The New Tourism Lexicon: Rewriting our Industry’s Narrative” indicated that our success starts with a values-based approach. We need to talk with stakeholders in a manner that is simple and emotional, and connects their values to our organization.

In developing a sense of place, we must frame our industry message effectively by keeping it simple and saying it often and sincerely.

We promote this community as a great travel destination and enhance our public image to want to live and work here. These efforts fuel economic growth and provide opportunity for people in this community.

We will use this message moving toward **Destination 2020**, and a key role to our continued success will be through our advocacy and community relations efforts. A plan was created this year to map out what we already do or what we should implement to reflect the voice of the visitor in destination needs and expectations, to educate stakeholders on the value of our work, and to engage connections to ensure our continued success.

Specific advocacy & community relations initiatives for FY19 include:

1. Expand our Advocacy board committee to include non-board members in guiding our strategic involvement in industry issues.
2. Create a community destination brand ambassador program as part of our Visitor Services efforts.
3. Research survey options for stakeholders and residents on further building this area as an outside of ordinary destination.
4. Facilitate efforts to welcome increased number of Chinese travelers.

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.