



Building
QUALITY
of Place

2018-2019

ANNUAL REPORT

visit **champaign** county



PROMOTING OUR

Outside of Ordinary

COMMUNITY

FROM THE CHAIR

**Rob Kowalski, City of Champaign
Chair, Board of Directors, 2018–2019**

The quality of place sets the backdrop for a memorable experience for residents and visitors alike. Creating and promoting this Outside of Ordinary quality was the driving force this year for Visit Champaign County and the Board of Directors supporting and guiding their efforts.

Determining the quality of place can take many forms, from improvements to infrastructure to diverse programming to friendly and knowledgeable front-line employees. Collaborations with community organizations, local municipalities, stakeholders and the University of Illinois have furthered VCC's efforts in these areas to create a vibrant place to live and visit.

This year saw major shifts and announcements in community development and infrastructure, from future projects like the Neil St. Corridor, Downtown Champaign Plaza, and The Yards. The new Richmond Family Welcome Gallery at the Alumni Center at the University of Illinois also showcases a community gallery highlighting area attractions and festivals. Continued discussions with state and U.S. legislators with the Champaign County First group advocates for transportation improvements that can benefit all.

Recruiting and supporting events that meet the needs of our diverse culture continues to be a priority, whether it's new sporting events such as the National Collegiate Wheelchair Basketball Championships or

hosting conventions such as the Baptist State General Convention.

Finally, creating brand ambassadors on our front lines aid in elevating the visitor experience and generates a sense of pride for those living and working in this community. New recruitment and training efforts for local HR professionals, recruiters, and realtors is instrumental in spreading our Outside of Ordinary story. The VCC team and Board extend their gratitude to those that greatly contribute to creating a vibrant and welcoming community, such as the monthly Cream of the Crop winners for front-line staff in tourism-related businesses, and our most recent Tourism Impact Award winners recognized at Toast to Tourism in May.

By ensuring quality of place that continues to grow and strengthen in development and vibrancy, we are able to continue to welcome all to our Outside of Ordinary community. Our workforce will flourish, and economic development will continue to push new boundaries, 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.

I am thankful to have played a role in guiding the mission of Visit Champaign County this past year, and am proud of this dedicated team for their achievements. 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.

2018-2019 Board of Directors

Rob Kowalski, Chair, City of Champaign
Laura Bleill, Vice Chair, University of Illinois Research Park
Bryan Snodgrass, Treasurer, Busey
Jayne DeLuce, Secretary (ex-officio), Visit Champaign County
Lynne Barnes, Carle
Angie Brix, Champaign City Council
Mac Condill, The Great Pumpkin Patch
Annie Easterday, Pear Tree Estate
Bob Flider, University of Illinois
Richard Helton, Village of Savoy
Jesse Hines, Courtyard by Marriott
Mike Ingram, Champaign County Board
Shayla Maatuka, Maatuka, Al-Heeti, Emkes LLC
Derek Peterson, Allerton Park & Retreat Center
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, Visitor Experience Coordinator
Leslie Lundy, Finance Manager

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 :: Monticello Chamber of Commerce :: Arthur Area Tourism Council :: City of Tuscola

Hotel Partners

ORANGE PARTNERS: Eastland Suites & Conference Center :: Hilton Garden Inn :: Holiday Inn & Conference Center :: 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 :: Holiday Inn Express :: Home2 Suites by Hilton Homewood Suites :: Hampton Inn Champaign Southwest LaQuinta :: Residence Inn by Marriott :: Rodeway Inn 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

BENEFITS OF TOURISM

Saves Residents Money

Supports Workers & Creates New Opportunities

Generates Revenue for Communities

REPRESENTING CHAMPAIGN, DOUGLAS, MOULTRIE, AND PIATT COUNTIES



SUPPORTS

3,150 JOBS

GENERATING A TOTAL PAYROLL OF

\$90.6 MILLION

NON-RESIDENTIAL SPENDING EXCEEDED

\$420.5 MILLION

ADDING

\$7.6 MILLION

IN LOCAL TAXES TO OUR COMMUNITY

ILLINOIS RESIDENTS SAVE

\$1,300 IN TAXES

as a result of \$41.7 Billion in Visitor Spending in Illinois

**Data provided by 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.

48 MEETINGS, SPORTS
& GROUPS BOOKED

113 MEETINGS, SPORTS
& GROUPS LEADS

MEETINGS & CONFERENCES

T.H.E. Conference :: Illinois Farmers Market Association
Illinois Realtors Association :: Illinois Fisheries Conference
U of I Webcon Conference :: Hyperlocal Summit

Tradeshows Attended—ISAE Summer Session and Annual Convention :: Small Market Meetings :: Connect Marketplace, Chicago, and Diversity :: Springfield Sales Mission

SPORTS

Illinois Triathlon Championships :: National Collegiate Wheelchair Basketball Tournament :: Airsoft Republic :: IHSA State Football & Wrestling :: NCAA Basketball Academy

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

GROUP TOURS & INTERNATIONAL

Tradeshows Attended—Circle Wisconsin :: Boomers in Groups Active America China :: RTO Summit West

SPECIAL EVENTS

Champaign County Area Restaurant Week :: Christie Clinic Illinois Marathon :: Illinois Bicentennial Celebration
Chamber of Commerce After Hours :: Illinois Made Fall Market



ATTRACTING TALENT

As we continue to promote the greater Champaign County area to visitors as an Outside of Ordinary destination, we recognize the importance of showcasing the community to potential residents. To be relevant in all parts of the destination management cycle, Visit Champaign County now offers various services and promotional materials to help during the recruiting process. Community tours for employers, high-level recruits, roundtable discussions, and training sessions for HR professionals and realtors all advanced our efforts in recruiting top talent.



Hotel Information

57.6%

OCCUPANCY RATE

\$87.39

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.



70,000

VISITORS GUIDES

PRINT & DIGITAL ADVERTISING

LEISURE—Midwest Living, AAA Living, Travel Illinois, Out Chicago, America Journal (German), Essentially America (UK), Brand USA Destinations, Pandora Radio, Google Display Ads + Content Marketing, 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, Great Lakes Planner Guide



MAKER VIDEO SERIES

Great Pumpkin Patch—9,209 Reach

Riggs Beer Company—16,501 Reach

Prairie Fire Glass—12,275 Reach

Hopscotch Bakery—6,506 Reach

Wood N' Hog BBQ—14,094 Reach

Reach through Facebook advertising.



6,125

12% increase



5,952

6% increase



4,383

41% increase

Living Outside of Ordinary

Visit Champaign County launched their living “Outside of Ordinary” campaign, featuring seven ideas each week, from large to small, to inspire individuals to discover something new and break out of the norm. Each week, we offer seven ideas to undertake, such as trying a new cuisine, shopping at a local boutique, or simply finding a new trail for an evening walk that is shared through a weekly blog post, social media, and Instagram stories, to help followers create more memories in the greater Champaign County area. Using the hashtag, #OutsideOfOrdinary, Visit Champaign County tracks usage and showcases the user-generated content on our website.



Web Stats

237,933 visits
 536,729 pageviews
 98% new visitors
 1.38 pages/visit
 01:52 average duration

Top Visited Pages

Event Calendar
 Restaurant Week
 Champaign County Fair
 Engineering Open House
 Food & Drink



9 days

31 restaurants

77,091 listeners reached on Pandora

11,000 site views on first day of event

42,543 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.

2018-2019 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, Willow Creek Farm
 Natalie Kenny-Marquez, Grow Marketing & Communications, LLC
 Max Mitchell, ReMax
 Jody Quiram, Gordyville
 Rich Thomas, Retired, Rantoul Recreation
 Dan Waldinger, Mahomet Recreation

Thank you Foundation Partners

- Adams Outdoor Advertising*
- Don & Suzi Armstrong of Northwestern Mutual*
- BankChampaign*
- BPC*
- Carter's Furniture*
- 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, Friese & Associates*
- 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*
- Hank's Table/Willow Creek Farm*

*Charter partner
 established in 2016



Looking Ahead

TO FISCAL YEAR 20

FROM THE CEO
JAYNE DELUCE



Visit Champaign County positions ourselves as a community connector, whether it's providing a portal of promotional resources or willingness to create and implement new ideas. We continually seek opportunities to engage the community that will collectively promote this area as an **outside of ordinary destination** to visit, work and live.

We take our jobs seriously as stewards of public financial support, as well, as the opportunity to enhance that public support with private business support. Advocacy is one of our core values in educating stakeholders and residents our role within the community to **strengthen economic growth** and truly **improve the quality of life** living here. It's always a work in progress!

Every day, we create or build on new relationships that make doing business in this community that much better and that people see themselves a part of what we do.

As we map out **Destination 2023**, the Visit Champaign County Board approved an agreement with Bill Geist, DMOproz, based out of Madison, WI. We've been actively seeking engagement through staging conversations and discussions with key community influencers, governmental leaders and industry stakeholders and partners along with our leadership and team.

Our goal is that this community will move successfully to pursue destination-defining projects, as well as connect the dots on infrastructure upgrades and make our community more attractive for residents and visitors alike.

In the end, supporting destination promotion 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 outside of ordinary community. Everything starts from that point.

visitchampaigncounty.org
#outsideofordinary

