

# EXPERIENCE CHAMPAIGN URBANA



REPORTING FISCAL YEAR FY26

## SECOND QUARTER HIGHLIGHTS

While 2025 started to wind down, our team continued to showcase the Champaign-Urbana region to residents and visitors throughout the second quarter. From selling our community and facilities to sports rights holders, to having our reindeer in the national spotlight, October-December had our team out and about promoting and supporting our area.

### OCTOBER

- FOX Big Noon Halftime Video with Rob Stone featuring Champaign & Urbana destinations.
- Robert attended the **TEAMS Conference & Expo** in Columbus, Ohio with 37 appointments with sports rights holders.
- Jayne, Terri, Gina participated in the fall **Illinois Destinations Association** conference in Danville. Thank you to ECU Foundation Board Chair Lynne Barnes for speaking on generational leadership.
- Christy presented to the **Champaign Lions Club** on the impact that ECU has on the region.
- ECU shared our community story and resources with hundreds at the University of Illinois **All Employee Expo** at State Farm Center.
- ECU team proudly participated in the **Annual CU Pride Fest Parade**, wearing our new Chambana Pride tees!

### NOVEMBER

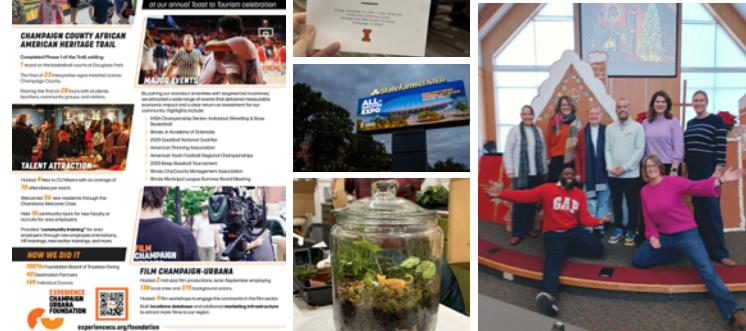
- ECU & EDC hosted a celebration with the **Chambana Welcome Crew** on four years of welcoming new residents.
- Hosted the **One State in the Arts & Humanities Conference**, providing a tour of the African American Heritage Trail and other offsite activities.
- Jayne attended the 40th anniversary of the **University of Illinois Celebration of Diversity**.
- Good Morning America** visits Hardy's Reindeer Ranch, bringing the national spotlight to this popular winter attraction.
- American Youth Football** hosted its first tournament in Rantoul, bringing 1,200 athletes to the region and generating an estimated \$1.8 million in economic impact.

### DECEMBER

- Welcomed new **Digital Content Manager**, Kimberly Keniley-Ashbrook!
- ECU Foundation** thanked our donors on December 2 for financial support throughout the year.
- ECU, ECUF, & EDC hosted a joint **Board Holiday** gathering at Farren's at the Inman celebrating our individual and collaborative successes over the past year.
- ECU team built terrariums at Main St. Botanicals for their holiday party.
- Hosted the winter **New to CU Mixer** at Riggs Beer Company, sponsored by Think Urbana. Over 80 newcomers and ambassadors attended.
- ECU team volunteered to wrap gifts at **Cunningham Children's Home**.

## QUARTERLY REPORT JANUARY 2026

2nd Quarter | October-December 2025



# LODGING + VISITOR DATA

Reporting October-December 2025 | Data provided by Zartico  
Based on 131,235 credit cards and 263,409 mobile devices observed.

HOTELS

SHORT TERM VACATION RENTALS

	TOTAL REVENUE (IN MILLIONS)	AVERAGE OCCUPANCY	AVERAGE LENGTH OF STAY (in days)	DEMAND (in thousands)
Champaign	\$2.9	35%	3.0	20.9
	\$13.1	62%	1.8	100.6
Rockford	\$1.7	42%	4.8	10.4
	\$11.7	64%	1.8	92.8
Peoria	\$2.5	36%	3.0	20.8
	\$14.7	55%	1.9	170
Bloomington	\$1.0	39%	4.3	6.5
Normal	\$14.7	63%	1.8	115.8

## VISITOR % OF TOTAL

**22%**

of all mobile devices observed that were visitors

## VISITOR SPEND OF TOTAL

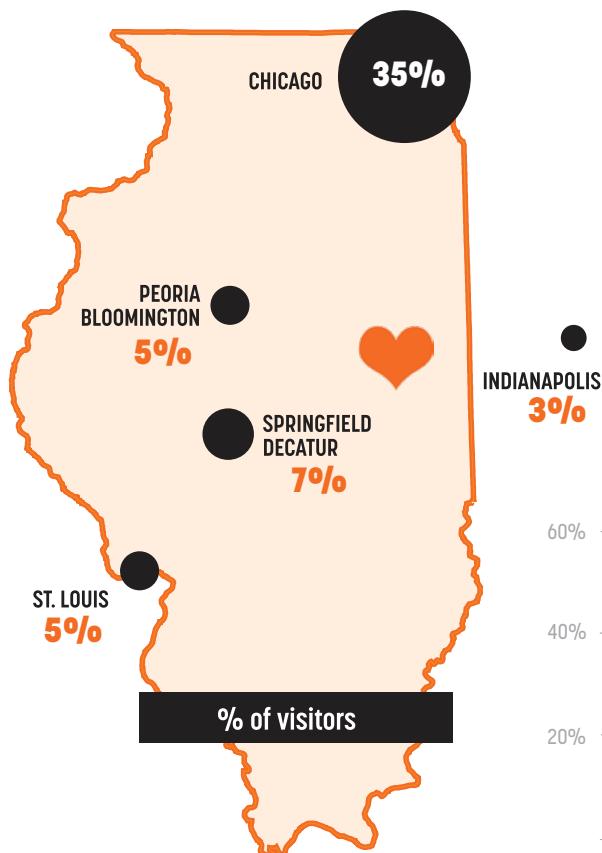
**18%**

of all spend came from visitors

% OF VISITOR SPEND toward local businesses

**27%**

**48%** of visitors were from out-of-state.



## VISITOR IMPACT



**36%**

visitor spend of total

**\$30**

avg. daily visitor spend



**19%**

visitor spend of total

**\$45**

avg. daily visitor spend



**25%**

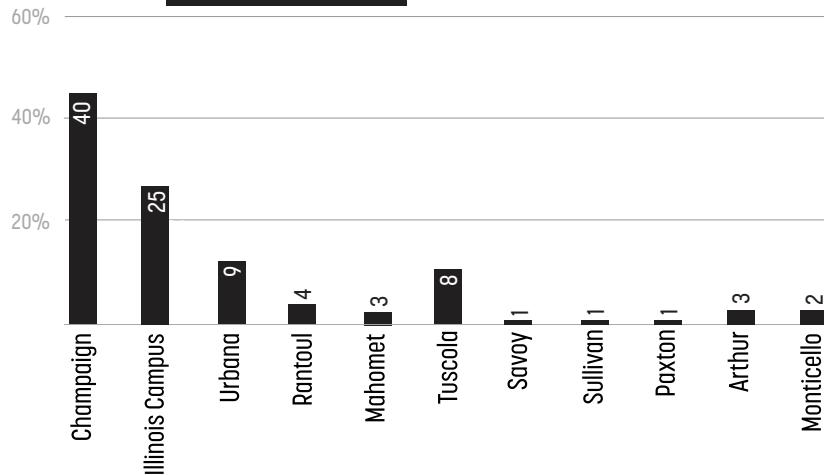
visitor spend of total

**\$27**

avg. daily visitor spend

## VISITATION BY CITY

% of total visitation



# PARTNER SPOTLIGHT



Thank you to **Ameren Illinois** for investing in projects like the Champaign County African American Heritage Trail to amplify culture, spark economic growth, and build a vibrant, inclusive region.



## SPOTTED ON LOCATION

Each month, the ECU Board of Directors meets at a different location, allowing them to learn more about area amenities. We are grateful to hear from each location on their specific offerings available for residents and visitors.



### OCTOBER

ECU Board & ECUF Trustees at Curtis Orchard & Pumpkin Patch with new mural from Jose Vasquez!



A huge and heartfelt thank you for all you and your team did to support what unfolded last week at One State! From deep insight and local guides to that AMAZING tour, warm connections, and your overall lovely energy, we are so very thankful for your guidance, care, and expertise to help root One State in the magic of CU. You and your colleagues' stewardship of such a vibrant community is a really beautiful thing. I can't wait to visit again and again (and again)."

— Martin Matsuyuki Krause, Manager, Special Initiatives, Illinois Humanities



### NOVEMBER

Carle at the Fields

### DECEMBER

Farren's at the Inman with the ECU Board, ECUF Trustees and the Champaign County EDC Board



Experience C-U, thank you so much for the bags you prepared for our Illinois Probation & Court Services Association Conference last week. I think our attendees appreciated them. We were able to have a very successful event, in part, thanks to your efforts. You all are doing great work to promote our amazing community. Thank you!

—Shannon Siders, Director, Champaign County Probation & Court Services



## WELCOME KIMBERLY

Kimberly came to Experience CU from Carle Health, where she worked on the Corporate Communications team in social media for over four years, creating organic and paid social content for over 20 platforms, social strategy, as well as monitoring channels with social listening for brand and reputational management. A longtime resident of the Chambana area, Kimberly is a proud U of I alum, local school board member, and Director of the Illini Division for the Illinois Association of School Boards. She's a passionate advocate for the communities represented by Experience CU and she's looking forward to telling the stories that make our area special.

## WHAT'S NEW IN FILM

Film CU, the official film office for the Champaign County area, continues to support efforts to bring production to the region. Over second quarter:

- Feature film *Moses the Black* was filmed in Champaign County and Paxton. A national release is set for January 30, 2026.
- CU film location database continues to expand, with many Savoy locations added.
- Fox dating show *Farmer Wants a Wife* filmed in Homer and at Curtis Orchard in November.
- Developed a comprehensive social media plan with Flyover Film Studios to enhance our online presence.

## HEARD ON CHAMBANA PROUD

**Judy Elmore**, Jane Addams Bookstore

**Derek Peterson**, Illinois Arboretum

**Dallas Glazik**, Silver Tree Spirits

**Callie Jo McFarland**, Monticello Mercantile

**Alyssa Buckley**, Smile Politely

Tune in at [chambanaproud.com](http://chambanaproud.com) or wherever you podcast every Thursday!



# BOOKED BUSINESS

## NATIONAL ORDER OF THE ARROW CONVENTION

ECU continues to work closely with the University of Illinois and Scouting America's planning committee on programming details for the upcoming 2027 conference.

## ROLECALL SUMMIT

June 2027, 70 attendees

## TOWNSHIP OFFICIALS OF ILLINOIS ANNUAL CONFERENCE

November 2027, 300 attendees

## TOWNSHIP OFFICIALS OF ILLINOIS ANNUAL CONFERENCE

November 2028, 300 attendees

## IFAB TECH HUB BIOMANUFACTURING SUMMIT

April 2026, 50 attendees

## ILLINOIS COMMUNITY COLLEGE STEM CONSORTIUM

September 2026, 100 attendees

## HEALTH SCIENCE LIBRARIANS OF ILLINOIS ANNUAL CONFERENCE

November 2026, 50 attendees

## U OF I COLLEGE OF LAS, OFFICE OF ADVANCEMENT CONFERENCE

April 2026, 35 Rooms, 15 attendees

## NEXT LEVEL 7 V 7 FOOTBALL

May 2026, 15-25 teams



## MARKETING MATTERS

Experience CU participated in the Illinois Office of Tourism Fall Co-op campaign with ADARA, a digital ad solution that provides comprehensive results on bookings. As part of the co-op, the state matches the dollars we spend, thereby doubling the effectiveness of the campaign. Overall, the campaign performed very strongly.

**Creative strategy**—Local flavors, autumn adventures, fall festivals leading up to holidays

**Duration**—September-first week of December

### BOOKINGS (ENRICHED)

**ROI**: \$90.58 per \$1 spent

**Revenue generated**: \$838,281

**Hotel bookings**: 3,204 | **Hotel searches**: 34,167

**ADR**: \$170.27

**Top markets**: Chicago (55.2%), St. Louis (12%), Milwaukee (6%), Peoria/Bloomington (3.8%), Washington DC (3.3%)



**13,393**

followers

360.5K views | 87.5 viewers  
3.2K interactions



**9,724**

followers

205.3K views | 14.5 reach  
4.1K content interactions

## HOT TOPICS

Can't Miss Holiday Markets  
**23.4K views on Facebook**

Six Places to Check Out on Campus  
when Students are Away  
**15.5K views on Instagram**

## HERITAGE TRAIL HAPPENINGS

**One State Arts & Humanities Conference**  
Mural-focused tour in partnership with 40 North

### Booker T. Washington School

Professional development Heritage Trail tour for school staff integrating local history into how teachers engage with students and residents

### Monticello High School

Guided tour completed featuring key Trail sites and themes

### Unit 4 Social Studies Teachers

Guided tour completed with education-aligned talking points and classroom relevance

### UIUC Graduate History Class Presentation

Presented Heritage Trail history specific to the University of Illinois

### Parkland College Critical Thinking Class (with Ghetto Genius)

Co-presented on Douglass Park Library and Drum Corps and their impact on the North End community

The traveling **Underground Railroad Exhibit** at the Urbana Free Library featuring local archival stories January 15-March 31; includes two Trail tours in March as part of the programming.



# OUR MISSION

We promote a welcoming destination experience for visitors to strengthen economic opportunity and enhance the lives of residents.

## PARTNERS

### DESTINATION FOUNDER

Illinois Office of Tourism  
City of Champaign  
University of Illinois

### DESTINATION LEADER

Busey • Village of Rantoul • City of Urbana

### DESTINATION BUILDER

Carle Health • Champaign County • Village of Savoy

### DESTINATION BACKER

Ameren Illinois • Parkland College • Champaign Park District  
Urbana Park District • Illinois American Water  
Champaign County Forest Preserves • Village of Mahomet  
Village of St. Joseph • Robeson Family Benefit Fund  
Lynne Barnes • Zach Sehy • Max Mitchell • Jayne DeLuce

### REGIONAL PARTNERS

Arcola Chamber of Commerce • Simply Arthur • City of Tuscola  
Sullivan Chamber & Economic Development  
Make It Monticello • City of Paxton



### 2025-2026 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**Nathan Escue**, Chair, Hamilton Walker's  
**Caleb Miller**, Vice Chair, Carle  
**Sam Santhanam**, Treasurer, I Hotel & Illinois Conference Center  
**Jayne DeLuce**, Secretary (ex-officio), Experience Champaign-Urbana  
**Annie Easterday**, Past Chair, Pear Tree Estate  
**TJ Blakeman**, City of Champaign  
**Laura Bleill**, University of Illinois Research Park  
**John Brown**, Village of Savoy  
**Bob Flider**, University of Illinois  
**Sam Hall**, Village of Rantoul  
**Jennifer Lokshin**, Champaign County Board  
**Shayla Maatuka**, Maatuka Al-Heeti Emkes, LLC  
**Michael McDonald**, Wood N' Hog Barbecue  
**Vanna Pianfetti**, Champaign City Council  
**Emily Scherzer**, Busey  
**Darius White**, City of Urbana

### EXPERIENCE CHAMPAIGN-URBANA TEAM

**Jayne DeLuce**, President & CEO  
**Terri Reifsteck**, Vice President of Destination Branding & Development  
**Gina Scarpetta**, Vice President of Sales  
**Jan Troutt**, Director of Administration  
**Mark Brown**, Director of Event Services & Film  
**Cristy Gillespie**, Director of Marketing  
**Kimberly Keniley-Ashbrook**, Digital Content Manager  
**Clarissa Amundsen**, Visitor Experience Coordinator  
**Robert White**, Heritage Trail Manager  
**Leslie Lundy**, Finance Manager (contracted)



## EXPERIENCE CHAMPAIGN URBANA FOUNDATION



2025-2026

### EXPERIENCE CHAMPAIGN-URBANA FOUNDATION BOARD OF TRUSTEES

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**Jesse Hines**, Treasurer, Hilton Garden Inn  
**Jayne DeLuce**, Secretary, Experience Champaign-Urbana  
**Curt Anderson**, Busey  
**Annie Easterday**, Pear Tree Estate, ECU Board Liason  
**John Hammond**, Urbana School District 116  
**Jeff Kurtz**, University of Illinois Gies College of Business

**Max Mitchell**, ReMax  
**Katie Miller**, MH  
**Susan Muirhead**, University of Illinois Informatics Program  
**Lowa Mwilambwe**, University of Illinois  
**Jami Painter**, University of Illinois System  
**Jon Salvani**, University of Illinois, College of Fine & Applied Arts  
**Zach Sehy**, Christie Clinic  
**Leslie Lundy**, Asst. Treasurer (ex-officio)