

FOURTH QUARTER HIGHLIGHTS

APRIL

- Jayne participated in **Destinations International CEO Summit** “EXPLORE: The Mindset of Modern Leadership” on March 29-April 1.
- Terri moderated the **I-Engage** panel on the economic growth of Rantoul, attended by 40 faculty across many disciplines.
- As part of **Champaign County First’s** trip to DC, April 15-17, Jayne advocated for nine priority projects, including the Champaign County African American Heritage Trail.
- Ebertfest “The Last Dance”, on April 17-18, sponsored by ECU, showcased locally-filmed **Chili Finger**.
- Terri presented on the Make It CU talent attraction efforts at the international conference, **City Nation Place**, in Vancouver, April 21-23.
- Gina attended the **SportsETA Symposium** in Las Vegas, meeting with 19 sports rights-holders from around the world.
- Over 10,000 participated in the **Christie Clinic IL Race Weekend**, April 23-25, and celebrated at the Meijer 27th Mile Celebration, run by ECU.
- Jayne moderated a fireside chat with **James Beard award-winning** author of “The Bottomless Cup”, Kevin Boehm, April 28 at The Literary.
- Celebrated **Parcadia’s Ribbon “Putting”** on April 30 with Illinois Office of Tourism’s Greg Mihalich

MAY

- Hosted **Toast to Tourism** on May 6, celebrating our Brilliant Spirit Award winners.
- Hosted Dirk Baumgartl, **Spartacus Magazine**, from Germany for an LGBTQ+ media trip, and Juan Martinez, also German, from **The Traveler’s Buddy**, focusing on outdoor and sustainable travel.
- Gina attended the **Sports Illinois Huddle** in Collinsville, May 18-20, where she met with sports right holders specifically interested in hosting events in Illinois.
- A **New to CU Mixer** was held at the Venue CU, sponsored by Christie Clinic and catered by Mo’s Burritos.
- ECU staffed the university’s **new student orientation**, May 26-July 8, to provide community information.
- Picked up our new ECU van, **supported in part by Serra Champaign**.

JUNE

- Hosted content creators, Lydia (Denver) and Cynthia (Minneapolis), June 7-8 as part of a pre-FAM tour prior to the **Midwest Travel Network Conference** in McHenry County, which Cristy attended, June 10-13.
- 6,000 cars and 20,000 attendees for the **Hot Rod Power Tour** in Rantoul.
- Eight teams competed for the **IHSA 1A/2A State Baseball Championships** at Illinois Field.
- Terri attended the **RoleCall Summit** in Buffalo, NY, June 8-10, with Carly, where they announced that C-U will be hosting in 2027.
- Welcomed **YES Program** high school intern, Cadence Wright (Champaign Central, who is assisting in developing social media content and blog posts.
- Presented the **ECU co-branded, Riggs Beer Company Illinois Lager**, designed by local artist Jose Vasquez.
- **Wished Jan farewell** after two brilliant years of service to ECU!



HOTELS **SHORT TERM VACATION RENTALS**

	TOTAL REVENUE (IN MILLIONS)	AVERAGE OCCUPANCY	AVERAGE LENGTH OF STAY (in days)	DEMAND (in thousands)
Champaign	\$0.99 \$15.7	39% 69%	3.1 1.9	15.9 111.9
Rockford	\$0.97 \$15.1	52% 74%	5.6 2.1	13.7 106.8
Peoria	\$0.64 \$18.6	51% 58%	3.9 2.8	11.7 126.3
Bloomington Normal	\$0.46 \$18.4	51% 72%	4.3 1.9	7.6 129.9

VISITOR % OF TOTAL

20%
of all people observed were visitors

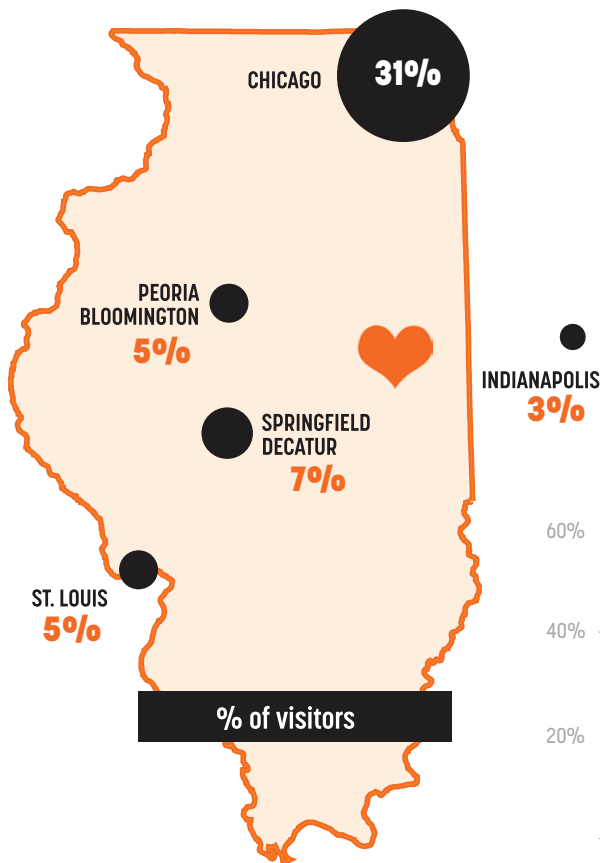
VISITOR SPEND OF TOTAL

19%
of all spend came from visitors

% OF VISITOR SPEND toward local businesses

24%

51% of visitors were from out-of-state.



VISITOR IMPACT



35%

visitor spend of total

\$33

avg. daily visitor spend



15%

visitor spend of total

\$54

avg. daily visitor spend



25%

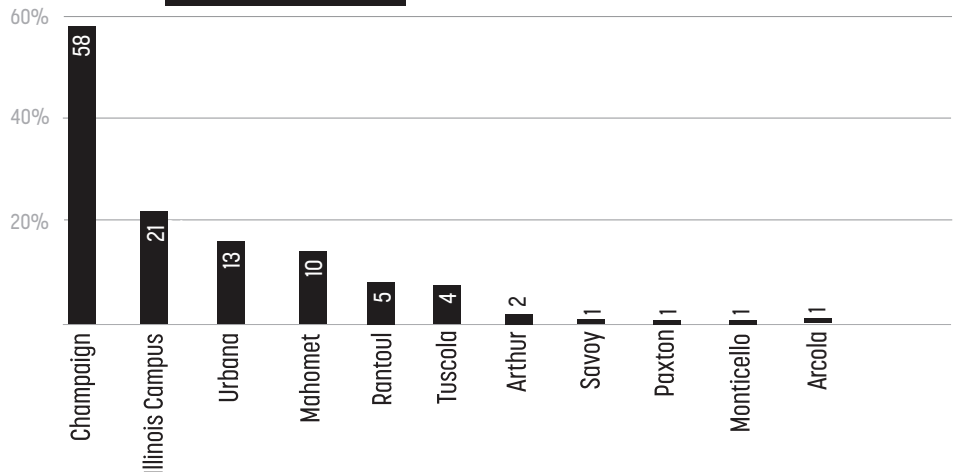
visitor spend of total

\$28

avg. daily visitor spend

VISITATION BY CITY

% of total visitation



PARTNER SPOTLIGHT



The ECU Foundation is proud to partner with the **Champaign Park District**, **Urbana Park District**, and **Champaign County Forest Preserve District**. Together, these organizations have helped shape the **Champaign County African American Heritage Trail** while enhancing our community through exceptional parks, recreational opportunities, natural areas, and public spaces. Their commitment to preserving history and improving quality of life makes the CU area a more vibrant place to **visit, work, and live**.

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.

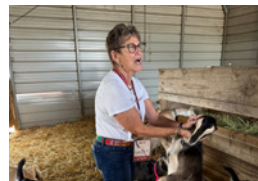
“ I'm sending a huge THANK YOU to you and all of your talented Experience C-U staff your your extra efforts to hout our Baseball State finals. Even with a brief weather delay on Saturday, it was probably the smoothest and easiest State Finals I've supervised in my 10 years at the IHSA. We're extremely grateful to have fantastic teammates at ECU and at the U of I for our State Finals events. Your staff helps create lifetime memories for our teams and fans.” —*Sam Knox, IHSA*



APRIL
Champaign County Association of Realtors



MAY
Champaign County Economic Development Corp.



JUNE
Prairie Fruits Farm & Creamery



Thank you to our outgoing board members, Annie Easterday, Michael McDonald, and Laura Bleill, for their years of service.



HUDDLE UP GROUP SPORTS TOURISM STRATEGIC PLANNING

Throughout the months of March and May, ECU worked with sports tourism consultant, Huddle Up Group, to assess Champaign County's local indoor and outdoor sports venues.



The assessment included an in-person tour of our facilities in Champaign, Urbana, Savoy, and Rantoul, as well as two consultant presentations to local stakeholders on their findings and future recommendations for strengthening sports tourism in our area. The final presentation to stakeholders, held at Lodgic on June 23, showcased data supporting the need for growth in indoor spaces, and need for overall improvement in access to area assets.

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 the fourth quarter:

- A feature film about a sports legend is secured for Flyover Film Studios.
- The film *Chili Finger* premiered locally at Ebertfest.
- Fox dating show *Farmer Wants a Wife* featured a Homer farmer and scenes from the area, including Curtis Orchard.
- Additional locations have been added to our location database for filmmakers.



HEARD ON CHAMBANA PROUD

Maddie & Aparna, Engineering Open House

Scott & Mike Champaign Agave Fest

Jacquelyn, The Land Connection

Elli, University of Illinois Meat & Egg Sales Room

Julianne, Krannert Center for the Performing Arts

TJ, Champaign County History Museum

Tune in at chambanaproud.com or wherever you podcast every Thursday!



MARKETING MATTERS



Spring kicked off a series of digital ad campaigns focusing on agritourism, outdoors, food & drink, events, and arts & culture.

Our agritourism campaign includes a fast-paced yet heartwarming look into a year of agriculture, from planting to harvest. Placements include Google display ads, Sojern, and Adara. Results are still pending from Sojern and Adara, but here's an early look.

APRIL-MAY

Google Search: 3 search ads (events, food & drink, outdoors)
2,090 clicks, 26,571 impressions

Click Thru Rate (CTR): 8.21% | **Cost Per Click (CPC):** \$0.77

Most impressions: food & drink | **Most clicks:** events

Google Display: 4 campaigns (events, outdoors, food & drink, agritourism)
10,815 clicks, 290,784 impressions

CTR: 3.72% | CPC is \$0.22

Most impressions: food & drink | **Most clicks:** agritourism

Top 3 cities for these ads were Chicago, Indianapolis, and Louisville.



14,174

followers

483.9K views | 154.1 viewers
7.6K interactions



10.1

followers

202.2K views | 371 reach
4.8K content interactions

HOT TOPIC

Facebook: Chili Finger screening at Ebertfest

56.1K views on Facebook & 7.1K views on Instagram

HERITAGE TRAIL HAPPENINGS

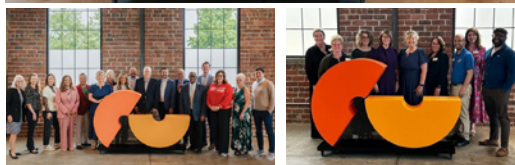
This quarter, CCAHT's work was mainly centered on four areas:

Touring and Public Engagement: The Black Gaze Exhibit, the Untold Stories Tour, Central High School tour, RISE Center tour, Healing America tours, and additional tour planning with groups such as Jack and Jill, the National Council of Negro Women's Clubs, Clark Lindsey, and the League of Women Voters.

Funding Opportunities: Grant proposal materials were drafted for the NEA Our Town and NEH Programs opportunities, the Landmarks Illinois grant submission was finalized, and Illinois Arts Council grantee updates were completed.

Interpretive and Cultural Development: Supported public art conversations through the Urbana Arts & Culture Team, the Urbana Park Board presentation, Jettie Rhodes mural collaboration, Jettie Rhodes Day and Juneteenth Celebration outreach, and mural-focused storytelling opportunities.

Project Advancement: The Tuskegee Airmen Mural Project selected Dwight White as the mural artist and the project continues toward implementation. Partnership development through collaborations and programming continued with the Urbana Free Library, Good Trouble Lives On, NAACP partners, America 250 representatives, and community arts stakeholders.



TOAST TO TOURISM

The Experience Champaign-Urbana Foundation celebrated our **Brilliant Spirit Award** winners at the annual Toast to Tourism, presented by CRS Hospitality with nearly 300 in attendance.

Congratulations to Mark & Julie Hardy, Hardy's Reindeer Ranch; Steven Bentz, The Virginia Theatre; Lauren & Jeffrey Brokish, Salt Fork Food Works; Wayne Lam, 83 Vietnamese; Chris & Anne Lukeman, CU Adventures & Parcadia. Thank you to our PechaKucha presenters, Jake Pinholster, Shaundra Summerville, and Armando Sandoval.

Finally, thank you to the support of our sponsors, Cozad Asset Management, Fairlawn, Hickory Point Bank, Jersey Mike's, KEC Design, Nothing Bundt Cakes, Trautman Real Estate Agency & Appraisal, Busey Bank, Clark Dietz, Farnsworth Group, First Federal, First State Bank & Trust, Hamilton Walker's, MH, Serra Champaign, Sterling Wealth Management, and Surface 51.



OUR MISSION

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

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City of Champaign
University of Illinois

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DESTINATION BUILDER

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EXPERIENCE CHAMPAIGN URBANA FOUNDATION



2025-2026

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