

## Recruiting Talent to the Greater Champaign County Area

“If you build a place where people want to **visit**, you’ll build a place where people want to **live**.

If you build a place where people want to **live**, you’ll build a place where people want to **work**.

If you build a place where people want to **work**, you’ll build a place where **business** needs to be.

If you build a place where **business** needs to be, you’ll build a place where people have to **visit**.”

This is the Destination Management Cycle, created by Maura Gast with the Irving Convention and Visitors Bureau, often repeated and used by Destination Management Organizations around the country.

This philosophy drives Visit Champaign County to create local brand ambassadors through outreach and marketing efforts. Whether we are connecting with residents through our Living Outside of Ordinary campaign, social media, advertising on bus boards and billboards, media segments on Q96 or ciLiving, or through events like Restaurant Week, we work to remind residents that the greater Champaign County area is Outside of Ordinary.

Yet there is so much opportunity to reach potential and new residents, so the moment they step foot in our community, they are prepared to explore and make life-long memories. 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.

In FY18, the VCC team took great strides in connecting with local entities that attract new residents. From presentations with the University of Illinois Carle College of Medicine applicants, to daily interactions with incoming freshmen



and their parents during orientation, additional touchpoints were made to talk about our Outside of Ordinary community.

Now, partnerships with the University of Illinois, Carle, and beyond, Visit Champaign County is offering the tools needed to attract talent to our community. Existing materials from our Visitors Guide to our promotional videos go a long way in telling our story, sharing opportunities for individuals and families to enjoy.

Additional collaborations with the Champaign County Chamber of Commerce, the Champaign County Economic Development Corporation, and the You're Welcome CU campaign, offer a one-stop shop for information on Visit Champaign County's website for tools and resources helpful during the recruiting process.

Often though it is the one-on-one interaction that is so helpful in sharing our Outside of Ordinary story. Through presentations, driving tours and group tours, we can help the community come to life for our area employers looking to attract top talent.

Through these efforts, we continue to create brand ambassadors from the very beginning of their time in our community.





## FROM OUR CEO

On this 50-degree day, it feels like fall instead of January looking back on the second quarter!

We work with the best Board of Directors and enjoyed our holiday board meeting celebration on December 5 at Hamilton Walker's. I'd like to thank Tracey

Pettigrew as Vice Chair of the VCC Board, as he and his family made a big move to the east coast. Thank you to Laura Bleill for stepping up as Vice Chair for the remainder of this fiscal year. A huge shout out to Max Mitchell for serving as the Champaign County Board rep since 2013, and we welcome Mike Ingram who is now serving in that role.

As part of our advocacy efforts, one of my favorite activities is giving an annual presentation to our public strategic partners. Presentations were made to Urbana City Council (July 23,) Champaign County Board (August 23,) Village of Rantoul (September 4,) Champaign City Council (September 25,) Village of Savoy (September 26,) Village of Mahomet (November 27,) and Village of St Joseph (November 27.) For the other strategic partners and specific Foundation partners, I enjoyed delivering a personal thank you package on December 17 and mailed a thank you packet to the rest of the foundation partners.

A busy travel quarter, our VCC team met at Everyday Lodgic on October 16 for a ½ day retreat to map our FY19 Destination Management Action Plan. An inspiring atmosphere brought out creative, lively discussions on where we're going to continue promoting the greater Champaign County area as a truly outside of ordinary destination.

Thank you to our destination management partners and hospitality industry job force who support VCC efforts and we look forward to your continued involvement. It takes a unified effort to invest in a destination's economic growth and community well-being. We are making good progress!

Jayne DeLuce

## Connecting with Visitors

Tracking our direct communication with visitors through Welcome Center walk-ins, calls, email, leading to Visitors Guides distributed.

44

walk-ins

62

emails

344

calls

5,907

Visitors Guides distributed



## Thank You

2018 Visit Champaign County  
Foundation Partners

Investment from our partners assisted with the  
funding of the following initiatives:

The Champaign County Film Office

IHSA State Football & Wrestling Championships

Illinois Triathlon Championships

Airsoft Republic Sleeping Giant

Christie Clinic Illinois Marathon

Recruiting Services

We look forward to what's coming in 2019.

[youtu.be/Ep918J0Pylg](https://youtu.be/Ep918J0Pylg)



CHAMPAIGN COUNTY AREA

## RESTAURANT WEEK

### Restaurant Week Preview

While many of us made New Year's resolutions, it's time to toss those out the window. The third annual Champaign County Area Restaurant Week returns January 25–February 2. To date, 27 restaurants are offering prix-fixe menus for lunch and dinner throughout the week so you can try someplace new or experience a new dish at your favorite spots. Check out our website for menus at [ccrestaurantweek.org](http://ccrestaurantweek.org) or visit our Facebook page for more information!



## ISSS Community Award

Visit Champaign County was honored to receive the Outstanding Community Organization Award from the University of Illinois International Student and Scholar Services on December 5. Terri attended the award ceremony where multiple individuals and departments at the University were recognized for their efforts in working with the international community. Visit Champaign County continues to partner with ISSS to promote the annual Follow the Farmstead tour and offer additional opportunities for students, faculty, and their families to enjoy their time in our Outside of Ordinary community!

## 40 North Update—ACE Awards

40 North hosted their annual ACE Awards on Wednesday, November 8, at the City Center. Over 200 people attended to celebrate those that create impact on the arts & culture of our community. This years winners include: Advocate—Kelly Hieronymus; Artist—Peg Shaw; Volunteer—Jim O'Brien; Business—Exile on Main Street; Teacher—Brandon T. Washington; Student—Natalie Wakefield; Lifetime—Dorothy Martirano.



# OUT & ABOUT

## U of I All Employee Expo

Brooke and Taylor attended the annual U of I All Employee Expo on October 18 at the Illini Union. Over 90 signed up to our newsletter and connections with a lot of great people who shared that they look to VCC for local events. Many felt like they wanted to get out and see more, so they were directed to the Living Outside of Ordinary blogs and campaign!

## Sapora Symposium

On November 1-2, over 250 Recreation, Sport & Tourism students, along with other majors, engaged with alumni speakers including Josh Whitman, Dennis Swanson, as well as representation from the Chicago Blackhawks, Niagra Falls, and 8 Hospitality Group. Jayne served on the planning committee to engage these students about working in the industry and the importance of networking starting in their college years.

## Advocacy Summit

Jayne participated in the Destinations International Advocacy Summit in Philadelphia, November 7--9. Outstanding speakers and content included tourism master planning, over-tourism, working with economic development partners, short-term rental regulation, hunger and homelessness, and advocacy in the digital age.

## Hyperlocal Summit

Caitlyn and Terri worked closely with Laura Bleill and ChambanaMoms.com on hosting the Hyperlocal Summit, November 8-10. This summit hosted over thirty community bloggers from across the country, and Australia. Visit Champaign County sponsored their luncheon on Friday where Terri presented on best practices for working with a DMO. Caitlyn also assisted with setting up networking and social events throughout the conference to ensure all visitors experienced what makes us Outside of Ordinary!

## ICCVB Fall Meeting

Caitlyn, Ryan and Terri traveled to Elgin, November 12-13, to attend the ICCVB Fall Meeting. Several keynote speakers presented during the conference, discussing place making, reinventing empty big box stores for events, and much more. They also attended their niche committee meetings in Market, Meet, Sports and Tour to network and learn from colleagues across the state.



## IHSA State Football Championships

Visit Champaign County and Illinois Athletics hosted the Illinois High School Association's Football Championships over Thanksgiving weekend, welcoming over 20,000 visitors during the two-day competition at Memorial Stadium. Throughout the competition VCC and the Champaign Urbana Hotel and Lodging Association hosted a tailgate party called "Tent City" where each team is given a large tent for their own personal use, along with an activities tent that included bull rides, games and activities, live-stream of the games, and snacks compliments of the host. VCC would also like to thank the volunteers that served as community hosts; assisting each team with various needs during their visit.



## China Readiness Seminar

Caitlyn and Terri attended the second China Readiness Seminar, hosted by Great Lakes USA and ChinaPro Partners on December 4. The program showcased attractions around the country that have made accommodations to succeed with the Chinese travel market, such as ways to make the travelers feel more welcome, things to avoid, and some ideas to get them to spend more money that will be shared with VCC partners. Speakers also highlighted new and important marketing initiatives to target Chinese visitors. One interesting fact was 60% of China outbound travel is being booked by millennials who are looking to "get past the gateways" and being immersed in a more genuine, authentic, American experience.



## SALES & MARKETING EFFORTS

### NEW YOUTH DEVELOPMENT CAMPS

CAMPUS LOCATIONS

SOUTH REGION	MIDWEST REGION	EAST REGION	WEST REGION
UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON HOUSTON, TX	UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS URBANA-CHAMPAIGN, IL	UNIVERSITY OF CONNECTICUT STORRS, CT	GRAND CANYON UNIVERSITY PHOENIX, AZ

SESSION 1: JULY 23-25    SESSION 2: JULY 26-28

MORE CAMP INFORMATION TO BE ANNOUNCED THIS SPRING

## NCAA Basketball Camp

Illinois Athletics won the bid to host the NCAA's first Midwest Basketball Camp. VCC consulted with them and area hotels on how to best host players, their supporters, and coaches from visiting college programs. VCC also attended a site visit with the members of Illinois Athletics and a representative of the NCAA to showcase the community, facilities, and hotels. The camp will take place in late July for two sessions and estimates over \$700,000 in economic impact.

## Occupancy Rate

Reporting September–November 2018

Champaign **61.6%**

Bloomington **53.1%**

Peoria **58.0%**

Springfield/Decatur **55.9%**

## Average Daily Rate

Reporting September–November 2018

Champaign **\$95.30**

Bloomington **\$80.64**

Peoria **\$99.69**

Springfield/Decatur **\$86.03**

This data is collected and reported by STR®.



## BiG Conference

Caitlyn attended the BiG (Boomers in Groups) Conference held in French Lick, IN, October 26– 28, which provides destination and tourism information to motor coach and group travel directors. While at the conference, Caitlyn met with 36 operators from around the country who were interested in finding unique and affordable destinations to add to their itineraries. Caitlyn had a wonderful time selling our Outside of Ordinary community to the travel leaders. Some of the main draws were Amish country, our award-winning food scene, Allerton Park and Retreat Center, and the amazing technology at the University of Illinois. A highlight included the networking tour where they took the group to an animal encounter adventure with elephants and giraffes!

## ISAE Convention

Caitlyn attended the ISAE Winter Convention held in Springfield, December 5–6. This year, the event encompassed the group's Christmas party which was held at the ISAE office in downtown Springfield. Caitlyn had the opportunity to network with a number of association members as well as connect with many of the planners that are coming to our area in 2019, specifically representatives from the Illinois Beer Distributors Association, Illinois Realtors Association, and the Illinois State Dental Society.

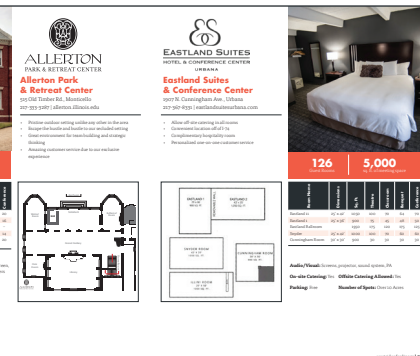
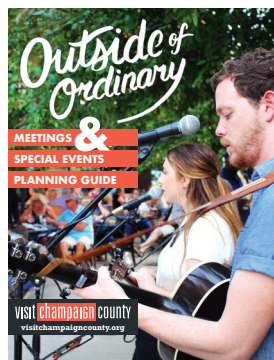
## Springfield Sales Blitz

Caitlyn and Ryan took a team of hotel partners on a full-day Springfield Blitz on December 18 to gain more visitors in business and leisure travel. They broke into two teams and hit over 30 associations and businesses located in the area to wish the clients a happy holiday season and to invite them to enjoy the “bubbly city” in the coming new year! Thank you to the wonderful partners who participated with us (in their festive Christmas wear no less!)—Hampton Inn, Hyatt Place, Hilton Garden Inn, and Eastland Suites.

*“Thank you so much for everything you and your organization was able to do for us! The banners and signs are amazing! The welcome bags and “swag” are perfect! And Visit CU has just been divine to work with!”*

—Heidi Hewkin, Illinois Probation & Court Services Association

*“I really enjoyed working with you and thought that you did a phenomenal job supporting the hoteliers in Champaign-Urbana. I have worked in a lot of markets throughout the country and this was one of the most active, involved CVBs that I have had the pleasure to work with.”* —Tiffany Dziadaszek, General Manager, Drury Inn & Suites



## Meeting Planner Guide

To better promote our Outside of Ordinary offerings to meetings and events planners, Caitlyn and Terri created a new Meeting Planner Guide. This digital marketing piece highlights the many reasons why planners should host their event in the greater Champaign County area. It also showcases conference-venue hotel partners and non-traditional venues with selling points, information on available space and floor plans. This will be the primary tool utilized to sell to planners through tradeshow and sales blitzes, starting in February 2019.

## SPORTS & EVENTS

12 leads | 4 tentative | 4 definite

1,800  
estimated room nights

## CONFERENCES

10 leads | 7 tentative | 3 definite

1,528  
estimated room nights

## GROUP TOUR

2 leads | 0 tentative | 1 definite

**LEAD:** Potential business distributed to hotels

**TENTATIVE LEAD:** Potential business, no commitment yet

**DEFINITE LEAD:** Business secured



10K+  
views  
98  
shares



12K+  
views  
93  
shares

## Outside of Ordinary Maker Videos

Continuing to promote our Outside of Ordinary Makers beyond the Visitors Guide, VCC launched the first two videos in its series of five in collaboration with Five Foot Productions. The first video, launched in October, highlighted the Great Pumpkin Patch and Mac Condill, sharing the Outside of Ordinary experience on their farm. In December, the second video highlighting Riggs Beer Company launched. Terri worked with Darin, Matt and Carolyn Riggs to capture what makes their brewing process unique. Stay tuned for additional videos to be released in 2019!



451  
reader responses

4 press releases resulting in 49 media placements.

## Ads Placed in Q2

### LEISURE

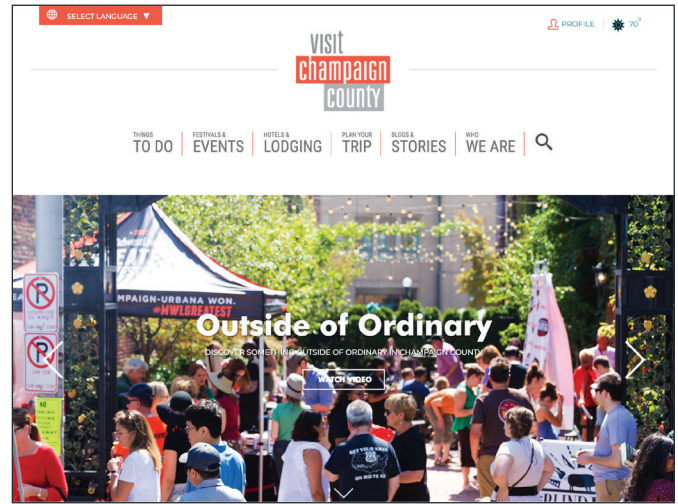
Billboards & Bus Boards | Essentially America

### GROUP

Leisure Group Travel  
Group Tour Media

### MEETINGS

Small Market Meetings



## Website Report

48,362 Visits  
99,104 Page Views  
35,237 New Visits  
2.05 Pages/Session  
01:44 Avg. Length of Visit

## Top Visited Pages

Calendar of Events  
Top 10 Must-Attend Festivals  
Food & Drink  
Things to Do  
Haunted Houses

54.06%

of website traffic is from outside the greater Champaign County area

27.12%

is from Chicago

# TOP SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS



### Facebook

Wright Soapery  
120 Likes  
13 Shares  
2,591 Reach



5,768  
Followers

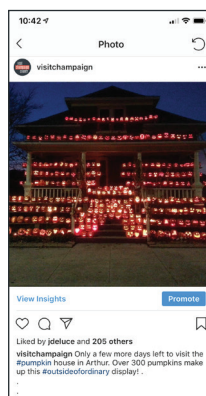


### Twitter

Nnedi Okorafor  
2 Retweets  
11 likes  
7K impressions



5,751  
Followers



### Instagram

Arthur's Pumpkin House  
208 likes  
2,110 impressions



3,641  
Followers

## Our 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.

## 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 :: Arthur Area Tourism

Council :: City of Tuscola :: Monticello Chamber of

Commerce

### Hotel Partners

**ORANGE PARTNERS:** Eastland Suites & Conference Center :: Hawthorn Suites by Wyndham :: Hilton Garden Inn 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 Hampton Inn Champaign Southwest :: Holiday Inn Express Holiday Inn Express Rantoul :: 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](http://visitchampaigncounty.org/partners)



### 2018-2019 Board of Directors

**Rob Kowalski**, Chair, City of Champaign

**Laura Weisskopf 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

**Bob Flider**, University of Illinois

**Richard Helton**, Village of Savoy

**Jesse Hines**, Hiltons of Champaign

**Shayla Maatuka**, Dodd & Maatuka

**Max Mitchell**, Champaign County Board

**Annie Murray Easterday**, Pear Tree Estate

**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

**Caitlyn Floyd**, Director of Sales

**Ryan Reid**, Director of Sports & Special Events

**Taylor Bauer**, Communications Manager

**Jen Peddycoart**, Office Manager

**Leslie Lundy**, Finance Manager

**Brooke Mayer**, Visitor Experience Coordinator

### Visit Champaign County Foundation 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 :: Victor Fuentes, V. Picasso/Willow

Creek Farm :: Rich Thomas, Retired, Rantoul Recreation :: Dan Waldinger, Mahomet Recreation :: Rachel Coventry, Curtis Orchard &

Pumpkin Patch :: Natalie Kenny-Marquez, Grow Marketing & Communications LLC :: Jody Quiram, Gordyville USA

### Visit Champaign County Foundation Charter Partners

Adams Outdoor Advertising :: Don & Suzi Armstrong of Northwestern Mutual\* :: BankChampaign\* :: BPC :: Carter's Furniture\* :: Champaign Park District :: 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\* :: V. Picasso/Willow Creek Farm\*

\*2016 Charter Partner