

Fox Cities Convention & Visitors Bureau 2015 Annual Report



FOX CITIES
GREATER APPLETON WISCONSIN

SUCCESS!

Success certainly sums up 2015 for the Bureau and tourism in the Fox Cities. Bolstered by an unprecedented year in group business, hotel room tax collections increased nearly 10% and occupancy grew 4.8%. **Our forecasts pointed to an excellent year in 2015 and we exceeded all of our expectations and then some.**

The Fox Cities welcomed back the US Youth Region II Soccer Championships for a third time and the event generated 9,491 room nights and \$1.3 million in direct visitor spending. While this signature event was the “big” event everyone noticed, there were be thousands of other visitors to the area as we realized a record-breaking year in tourism.

We built upon our reputation as the home of NCAA Division III Baseball Championships, creating a youth baseball tournament on the same weekend. A number of our local soccer clubs hosted some very successful tournaments and we welcomed the State Legion Baseball Championships to Kaukauna in August.

Solid convention group business also ensured consistent business through the winter and spring. The Bureau focused on generating new convention group leads and revisited several niches in the small group markets. Both efforts generated new business and interest in the Fox Cities.

Another success came at the end of the year, when 10 municipalities in the Fox Cities voted to increase the hotel room tax to support construction of an exhibition center and also allocate additional funds to the development of amateur sports facilities in the Fox Cities. We are grateful for the support and confidence our municipalities put in the Bureau and its efforts during this process. The Bureau will now move from advocacy to supporting the sales and marketing of the exhibition center to ensure the full economic impact potential is realized and to **advancing a plan for development and funding for future sports tourism facility projects.**

Financially, the Bureau’s philosophy is to be exceptional stewards of the room tax funds we receive. **We continue to be in excellent financial health** with a reserve fund to backstop us in tough times.

Our sales, marketing and destination development efforts have paid off. Visitor spending in the Fox Cities **increased 5.65%**, to more than **\$434 million in 2014** and this spending **generated \$558 million** in total business sales, **sustained 6,000 jobs** in the tourism industry and **\$93.6 million in income** for Fox Cities residents.

We look to 2016 with great anticipation and excitement. The development of an exhibition center and new sports facilities provides us with the venues we need to grow tourism in the Fox Cities. Private investment in the form of renovations of several of our hotels will also help us showcase the area as a dynamic destination poised to serve the visitors of the 21st century.

We would like to thank the Bureau’s Board of Directors, committees and staff, along with our municipal, hotel and other tourism business partners. **Together we have had much success in 2015 and we look forward to building on these successes to ensure a strong tourism economy well into the future.**



Chris Haese

Chris Haese, Board Chair



Pam Seidl

Pam Seidl, Executive Director

MISSION

The Fox Cities Convention & Visitors Bureau is an economic development organization that strengthens the Fox Cities by attracting visitors in the convention, sports and leisure markets through sales, marketing and destination development.

2016 BUREAU OBJECTIVES

Each year the Bureau Board of Directors and staff participate in a planning retreat where key strategic initiatives are identified. The Bureau Staff then takes this input and develops action items and objectives to advance these strategies.

Two significant tourism-related developments: the development of an expo center in the Fox Cities and additional room tax dollars allocated to the Bureau’s Tourism Development Fund for sports facilities will provide increased opportunity as well as additional work for the Bureau in 2016 and beyond.

Key strategic initiatives for the organization in 2016 will be:

- Support the sales and marketing of the expo center to ensure the full economic impact potential is realized.
- Recommend and advance a plan for development and funding for future sports tourism facility projects.
- Navigate the transition to a zone/commission model to ensure the Bureau’s relevancy with key stakeholder groups remains solid and that excellent relationships with all municipalities are maintained.
- Ensure the relevancy of the Bureau for the long-term, adopting and implementing industry best practices.
- Update our long-term strategic plan.
- Participate in the Destination Marketing Association International (DMAI) DestinationNEXT initiative as a precursor to strategic planning.
- Participate in appropriate industry organizations and events to ensure the Bureau is well represented in the industry.
- Invest in our people. Give each staff member the opportunity to develop their understanding of the “business” of Destination Marketing by providing appropriate professional development opportunities.

2015 IN REVIEW

CONVENTION SALES

- Hosted 113 meeting and convention events that generated 19,749 room nights and \$4,986,167 in direct visitor spending.
- Booked 131 future meeting and convention events that will draw an estimated 22,100 room nights and generate \$5,547,100 worth of estimated direct visitor spending.
- Exhibited in four trade shows and participated in two conferences with reverse trade shows.
- Hosted two FAM tours involving a total of 28 meeting planners.
- Re-launched the Bring It Home Fox Cities program with 19 presentations given to local clubs, associations and organizations.

SPORTS MARKETING

- Hosted 163 events that generated a record 35,120 hotel room nights and \$11,378,880 in direct visitor spending, including the prestigious 2015 US Youth Soccer Midwest Region Championships.
- Booked 193 future sporting events that will draw an estimated 18,695 hotel room nights and generate \$6,057,180 worth of estimated direct visitor spending.
- Completed 969 sales calls to current or potential clients.
- Worked with Convention, Sports & Leisure, Intl to complete a feasibility study for potential indoor sports venues in the Fox Cities.
- Awarded \$10,000 worth of grants to five local non-profit organizations to assist with startup costs of new sporting events.
- Finalized an agreement with SBD Event Management to host a large regional soccer showcase annually in Appleton.

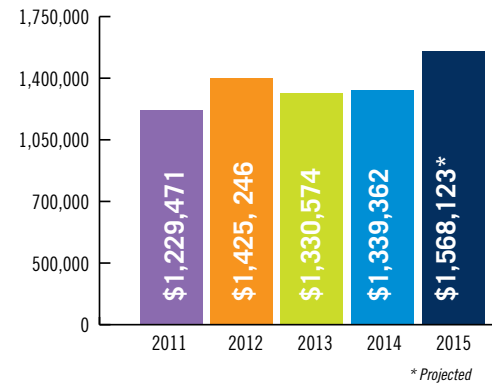
CONVENTION/GROUP/SPORTS SERVICES

- Provided services to 96 groups.
- Provided more than 507 volunteer hours, an increase of 67 hours over 2014, for EAA welcome booths, convention and sports tournament groups.
- Initiated a Volunteer Ambassador program. Ambassadors provide a higher level of service and local knowledge and are utilized for conventions or events that request a visitor information booth.

MARKETING

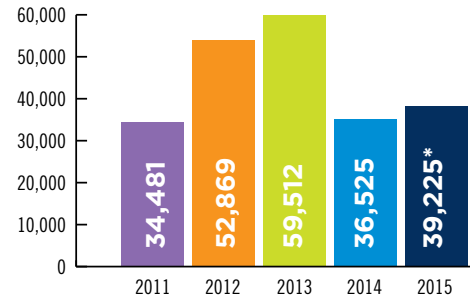
- Conducted three press tours with 23 professional travel journalists.
- Continued to market the Wisconsin's Shopping Place brand in leisure ads throughout Wisconsin and upper Michigan with a continued focus on the Madison market.
- Highlighted our Tourism Development Grant awards with public check presentations for grants ranging from \$6,000 to \$100,000.
- The newly-designed visitor kiosk at Appleton International Airport was installed in January and features a larger display case, new brochure racks, larger visitor map, new signage and ipad technology.
- Took advertising sales efforts for the 2016 Destination Guide in-house and produced record number of new advertisers and overall gross sales.

BUREAU ROOM TAX REVENUE



* Projected

HOTEL ROOMS BOOKED



* Projected

2015 OPERATIONS REVENUES & EXPENSES

REVENUES

	2015 YEAR-END PROJECTED
Room Tax Income - Oper	\$1,186,901.72
Interest Income - Oper	4,482.76
Grants Income	9,000.00
Sponsorship/Incidental Income	11,0220.67
Visitor Guide Income	59,654.50
Tourism Development Admin Reimb	20,000.00

TOTAL REVENUES

\$1,390,259.65

EXPENSES

	2015 YEAR-END PROJECTED
Salaries & Wages	423,171.37
Employee Benefits	107,834.04
Professional Development	7,825.97
Convention Event Services	5,351.37
Trade Shows	14,175.92
Selling Expenses	146,092.14
Marketing	263,352.36
Visitor Guide	49,322.97
Research	55,111.02
Rent/Utilities/Taxes	84,142.62
Capital Equip Expenses	27,501.19
Equipment Leases	3,424.92
Automobile Expenses	6,581.08
Local Meetings	10,190.73
Office Supplies	5,565.25
Postage & Shipping	8,429.39
Telephone	6,346.15
Property/Casualty Insurance	6,185.21
Professional Services	26,759.02
Memberships	8,607.00

TOTAL EXPENSES

\$1,265,969.72



ACCOLADES

- ✓ **Appleton #7 on Top 10 Best Cities for Holiday Shopping**
Source: *SmartAsset.com*
- ✓ **Appleton #9 on Top 10 Best Cities for Children**
Source: *SmartAsset.com*
- ✓ **Fox Cities Trestle Trail Bridge #4 on Top 11 Unique WI Bridges You Have to See**
Source: *TravelWisconsin.com*
- ✓ **Fox Cities Stadium named one of Top 10 Minor League Ballparks**
Source: *Livability.com*
- ✓ **Appleton #5 on 2015 Best Affordable Places to Live**
Source: *Liveability.com*
- ✓ **Appleton named one of 6 cities to explore after hours**
Source: *StevensPointJournal.com*
- ✓ **Appleton #6 on 2015 Best Towns to Live In in Wisconsin**
Source: *Local.Niche.com*
- ✓ **Appleton named one of 7 WI Cities with Can't Miss Shopping Experiences**
Source: *TravelWisconsin.com*
- ✓ **Fox Cities CVB named 'Most Helpful Convention & Visitors Bureau'**
Source: *Wisconsin Meetings Magazine reader survey, Winter issue*

OUR 2015 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Chris Haese, Chair
City of Neenah

Deb Johnson, Vice-Chair
Copperleaf Boutique Hotel & Spa

Adam Hammatt, Secretary
Village of Kimberly

John Burgland, Treasurer
Fox River Mall

Randy Kliment, Past Chair
Hampton Inn Appleton

Matt Carpenter
History Museum at the Castle

Laura Dietz
Country Inn & Suites Appleton

Bob Dove
*Best Western Premier Bridgewood Resort
Hotel & Conference Center*

James Fenlon
Village of Little Chute

Karen Harkness
City of Appleton

Jeff Nooyen
Town of Grand Chute

Dana Reader
Reader Restaurant Group

Jay Schumerth
Radisson Paper Valley Hotel

Jan Smith
Bergstrom-Mahler Museum of Glass

Char Stankowski
Country Inn & Suites of Little Chute.

John Van Drunen
City of Kaukauna

Maria VanLaanen
Fox Cities Performing Arts Center

BUREAU STAFF

Pam Seidl
Executive Director

Kim Tisler
Director of Operations

Karen Tremi
Visitor Services Coordinator

Jennifer Strom
Marketing & Visitor Services Coordinator

Mary Rhode
Marketing & Communications Manager

Matt Ten Haken
Director of Sports Marketing

Adam Schanke
Sports Marketing Manager

Amy Karas
Convention Sales & Marketing Manager

Alison Hutchinson
Convention Sales & Marketing Representative

Jennifer Hecht
Convention Services Coordinator



FOX CITIES
GREATER APPLETON WISCONSIN

Appleton | Clayton | Combined Locks | Buchanan | Freedom | Grand Chute | Greenville | Harrison | Hortonville | Kaukauna
Kimberly | Little Chute | Menasha | Neenah | Sherwood | Town of Menasha | Town of Neenah | Vandenbroek | Woodville

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