

2014 ANNUAL REPORT



FOX CITIES

GREATER APPLETON WISCONSIN

FOX CITIES CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU

GAME ON!

2014 was a winning year for the Fox Cities tourism industry. Hotel room tax collections increased 6.7%, fueled primarily by rate as well as a 5% increase in occupancy. We are now ahead of our “pre-great recession” occupancy and room tax collections. Input from our hotel partners is that they expect this trend to continue which is great news for our local tourism economy.

Financially, the Bureau’s philosophy is to be exceptional stewards of the room tax funds we receive. We are pleased to report that we are in excellent financial health with an emergency fund to backstop us in tough times.

However, the need to invest in our tourism product, especially sports and convention facilities, will require significant funds. The Bureau’s current room tax income sustains a high-quality sales and marketing effort, but is not enough to keep our tourism facilities competitive in our core markets of small meetings and conventions, sports tournaments and leisure travel.

Our recent sports tourism facility assessment indicated a need for more indoor hard court space and increased investment in our existing ice and outdoor soccer facilities. **We have begun our game plan to ensure adequate resources to develop our sports tourism facilities in the future.**

Convention center improvements in several competing markets have shown us the game is on and we cannot be complacent in the meetings and convention market. **We need to enhance our convention and meeting facility offerings or risk losing what has been the core of our local tourism economy.**

To this end, the Bureau funded an update to the market analysis portion of the Fox Cities Exposition Center feasibility study. The results, based on current economic data and a more refined Expo Center concept, identified the potential for \$6.5 million annually in increased visitor spending.

Development of the Expo Center would provide us with the ability to regain large conventions that have been lost due to space needs, retain conventions that are expanding in size and attract conventions that have had space needs we couldn’t previously accommodate. **We believe the Expo Center would have a positive economic impact on the Fox Cities and the Bureau will continue to be a catalyst in the development of this project as it moves forward.**

Operationally, we evaluated how we deliver information to the visitor and, while we will continue to operate a Visitor Center, we will put more resources into enhancing our online presence and bringing information to visitors vs. them coming to us.

Our sales, marketing and destination development efforts have paid off. **Visitor spending in the Fox Cities increased 5.4%, to more than \$411 million in 2013**



and this spending generated **\$527 million in total business sales, sustained 7,244 jobs in the tourism industry and \$134.5 million in income for Fox Cities residents.**

We look to 2015 with great anticipation and excitement. **The Fox Cities will once again host the US Youth Region II Soccer Championships in June**, an event that brings 14,000 people and nearly \$3.9 million in visitor spending. It will be the “big” event you will notice, but there will be thousands of other visitors to the area as we are on pace for a record-breaking year in tourism.

WE ARE ON PACE FOR A RECORD-BREAKING YEAR IN TOURISM.

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 built a strong team to support our local tourism economy and we look forward to competing at the highest level to build a winning tourism economy with you. **Game On!**

Randy Kliment, Board Chair

Pam Seidl, Executive Director

VISION

The Fox Cities Convention & Visitors Bureau:

- Is the independent expert source for tourism information on the Fox Cities
- Is a catalyst for initiatives that have a positive impact on tourism
- Works with other organizations to accomplish mutually beneficial goals
- Embraces new ideas, best practices, creative thinking and technology that add value to our work

2015 GOALS

- Create a long-term destination development strategy
- Develop a business plan, feasibility study and funding mechanism for future sporting tourism facility projects
- Tell our “story” more locally to grow awareness of tourism as an important economic engine
- Ensure the relevancy of the Bureau for the long-term, adopting and implementing industry best practices

LONG RANGE GOALS

- Lead the development of the Fox Cities as a tourism destination
- Collaborate with other economic development partners in the development of a destination strategy
- Strengthen our competitiveness in the sports and convention markets
- Grow the leisure travel market, making it a significant part of the community’s tourism mix
- Build our tourism infrastructure via the Tourism Development Fund
- Be a good steward of room tax dollars, accomplishing the greatest amount possible with them

2014 IN REVIEW

CONVENTION SALES

- Booked 119 meetings and convention events
- Booked 17,520 future room nights
- Catalyst in booking three large conventions with a total of 1,500+ room nights
- Completed 1,226 sales calls to current or potential clients
- Renewed focus on convention tradeshows, both traditional and reverse formats

SPORTS SALES

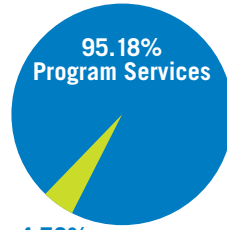
- Booked 187 future sporting events that will draw an estimated 19,005 hotel room nights and generate \$6,157,620 worth of estimated direct visitor spending
- Completed 850 sales calls to current or potential clients
- Finalized an agreement with Triple Crown Sports to host the Dream Big Baseball Shindig over Memorial Day Weekend in 2015, 2016 and 2017. Won bids to host the ASA Men's Fastpitch Softball National Championship, American Legion State Baseball Tournament and the Wisconsin Youth Soccer Association Spring State Cup
- Worked with the Phoenix-based Huddle Up Group to complete an independent assessment of sports facilities in the Fox Cities. The study laid the foundation for a plan to improve the area's indoor hardwood, ice and outdoor turf facilities

CONVENTION/GROUP/SPORTS SERVICES

- Provided services to 98 groups
- Provided more than 440 volunteer hours of work for convention and sports tournament groups
- Implemented the *Be a Tourist in Your Own Town* program which allows front-end staff to experience attractions in the Fox Cities so they can better inform guests of what there is to do in the area

MARKETING HIGHLIGHTS

- Conducted three tours with 24 professional travel writers that resulted in 31 story placements with an advertising equivalence of \$67,836.28
- Continued to market the Wisconsin's Shopping Place brand in leisure ads throughout Wisconsin and Upper Michigan, with a more intense focus on the Madison market
- Launched a newly designed website in August which incorporates new photos, better navigation and new pages of information for convention and sports planners
- Continued growth of our Marketing Advisory Committee to include more attractions and other new businesses
- Digital wrap-up:
 - 4,430 new Facebook followers
 - Gained 467 new Twitter followers
 - Bureau blog had 1,114 views, an increase of 1.2% from 2013
 - Distributed 12 E-Newsletters with open rates of 20%-26%

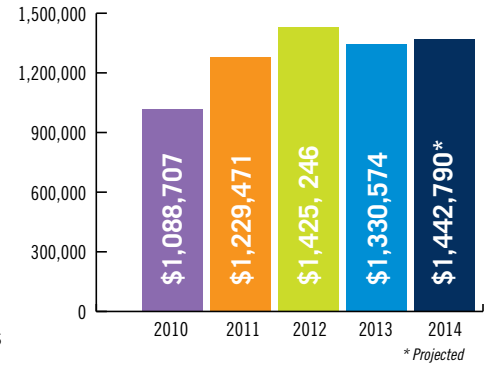


4.73%
Management/General

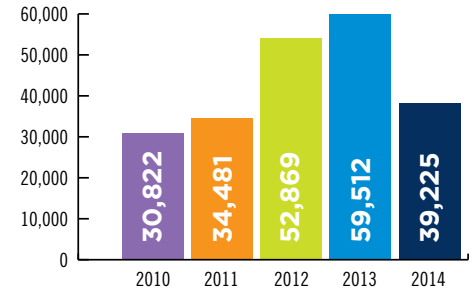
MANAGEMENT & GENERAL

Our 2013 audit showed management/general expenses to be 4.73% of the Bureau's total operating budget.

BUREAU ROOM TAX REVENUE



HOTEL ROOMS BOOKED



2014 OPERATIONS REVENUES & EXPENSES

REVENUES	2014 YEAR-END ACTUAL	2015 BUDGET
Room Tax Income - Oper	\$1,057,677.28	\$1,073,560.00
Interest Income - Oper	3,815.28	4,000.00
Grants Income	28,364.00	4,500.00
Sponsorship/Incidental Income	5,391.00	143,392.00
Visitor Guide Income	51,748.93	50,000.00
Tourism Development Admin Reimb	26,700.00	20,000.00
TOTAL REVENUES	\$1,173,696.49	\$1,295,452.00
EXPENSES	2014 YEAR-END ACTUAL	2015 BUDGET
Salaries & Wages	388,178.22	419,794.00
Employee Benefits	96,131.77	110,551.00
Professional Development	12,087.27	13,000.00
Convention Event Services	3,432.24	9,740.00
Trade Shows	12,652.72	11,243.00
Selling Expenses	49,422.82	164,958.00
Marketing	294,228.75	300,500.00
Visitor Guide	42,551.53	40,000.00
Research	68,928.49	50,500.00
Rent/Utilities/Taxes	87,103.30	92,000.00
Capital Equip Expenses	12,782.81	29,799.00
Equipment Leases	3,424.92	3,425.00
Automobile Expenses	6,740.93	7,000.00
Local Meetings	6,302.63	8,350.00
Office Supplies	6,241.16	6,600.00
Postage & Shipping	6,742.24	8,000.00
Telephone	6,207.12	6,540.00
Property/Casualty Insurance	6,735.49	5,425.00
Professional Services	15,879.77	29,226.00
Memberships	7,804.00	8,600.00
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$1,133,578.18	\$1,325,251.00

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.



OUR 2014 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Randy Kliment, Chair
Hampton Inn Appleton

Chris Haese, Vice-Chair
City of Neenah

John Burgland, Treasurer
Fox River Mall

Deb Johnson, Secretary
Copperleaf Boutique Hotel & Spa

Jeff Nooyen, Past Chair
Town of Grand Chute

Laura Dietz
Country Inn & Suites Appleton

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

James Fenlon
Village of Little Chute

Adam Hammatt
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Karen Harkness
City of Appleton

Dana Reader
Reader Restaurant Group

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

Cheryl Zaug Casey
Business at Large

BUREAU STAFF

Pam Seidl
Executive Director

Kim Tisler
Director of Operations

Karen Tremi
Visitor Services Coordinator

Jennifer Strom
Group 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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