



COLUMBIA, MO
WHAT YOU UNEXPECTED

2015 Annual Report

From the director...

The old adage, “Time flies when you’re having fun” rings very true for 2015. It is hard to believe that we’ve reached the end of an extraordinary year here at the Convention and Visitors Bureau. 2015 was full of growth and change that our team will use to move forward into the new year.

One of those most impressive accomplishments of the year came in July, when the Columbia CVB received the Destination Marketing Accreditation Program seal from Destination Marketing Association International. This year marks the first time our CVB has been accredited, and the entire CVB team worked together to achieve this milestone. It was an honor to accept our designation at the DMAI annual conference in Austin, Texas.



The CVB welcomed two new team members this spring. Andrea Quiroz Jira joined us as a Convention Sales Manager in March and Nicole Johnston as Senior Administrative Assistant in April. Being fully staffed has been instrumental in the progress our department was able to make this year.

This fall, we were able to come together as a team to update the CVB’s three-year strategic plan. In addition to selecting new strategic priorities, which you’ll see reflected throughout this report, the project included reviewing our mission and our vision. The mission and vision were updated to represent the direction we see ourselves moving as an organization and a destination:

Mission: To generate economic growth and promote Columbia as a tourism destination that creates memorable experiences.

Vision: Columbia is the top destination in the Midwest

As we move into the new year, we’re excited to hit the ground running with this new mission and vision. As you read through this report, you’ll learn more about our successes over the past year and how we plan to build on them in 2016. The CVB looks forward to continuing to be a driver of economic growth for our community and also to working with our partners in the tourism industry along the way. As always, it will be What You Unexpect!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Amy Schneider".

Amy Schneider, CTA



COLUMBIA, MO

WHAT YOU UNEXPECT

Your CVB Team



Julie Ausmus, CTA
Tourism Development Program
Manager



Rachel Grant, CTA
Public Information Specialist



Nicole Johnston, CTA
Administrative Assistant



Andrea Q. Jira, CTA
Convention Sales Manager



Megan McConachie, CTA
Marketing &
Communications Manager



Terra Crane, CTA
Convention Services Manager



Beth Mead, CTA, CHSP
Convention Sales Manager

What is the CVB?

The Columbia Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB) is a department of the City of Columbia and serves as the official Destination Marketing Organization (DMO) for Boone County.

The CVB is solely funded by the 4% lodging tax collected on hotel and motel rooms in the city of Columbia. This 4% is divided in the following way:

1% - Operations and Staff

1% - Tourism Development Program

2% - Destination Marketing, Sales, Services, etc.

The CVB promotes Columbia as an entire tourism product. This includes dining, outdoor recreation, festivals and events, sports, shopping, arts and culture, history, and anything else that might persuade a visitor to travel to Columbia.

Once a visitor chooses Columbia, we depend on our tourism industry partners to give them an exceptional experience. This is vital in creating new and repeat visitorship.

During their time in Columbia, visitors spend money staying in hotels, eating in our restaurants, shopping in our stores, using our airport, fueling at our gas stations and more.

The CVB uses the small portion of that spending to continue our destination marketing and sales to bring in more visitors. The rest of the spending goes to support local businesses, jobs and quality of life.

What We Stand For

Mission

To generate economic growth and promote Columbia as a tourism destination that creates memorable experiences.

Vision

Columbia is the top destination in the Midwest.

Values

- Service:** We exist to provide the best possible service to all.
- Communication:** We listen and respond with clear, compassionate and timely communication.
- Continuous Improvement:** We value excellence through planning, learning and innovative practices.
- Integrity:** Our employees are ethical, fair, honest and responsible.
- Teamwork:** We achieve results by valuing diversity and partnerships within our own organization and the community.
- Stewardship:** We are responsible with the resources the community entrusts to us.
- Passion:** We are enthusiastic about tourism, our destination and our team.

Our Strategic Priorities

CVB Operations

PR & Marketing

Economic Growth

Industry Partnerships

Destination & Tourism Awareness

2015

In

Review...

CVB Operations

How can we grow in ways that improve our performance?

Hotel Tax Revenues

FY13

\$2,154,762

FY14

\$2,362,399

FY15

\$2,486,333

Calendar Year 2015

Occupancy: 56.3%

Average Daily Rate (ADR): \$86.73

Revenue per Available Room (RevPAR): \$48.84

Restricted Fund Balance

\$2,205,552

Tourism Development Program

24 TDP applications received in FY14

\$144,200 in TDP funds awarded

8 Signature Series: \$82,500

1 Festivals & Events: \$7,400

2 Sports Events: \$17,400

13 Community Sponsorships: \$36,900

Public Relations and Marketing

How can we turn engagement and awareness into economic growth?

New Campaign Launched

In July 2015, the Columbia CVB launched a new marketing campaign to promote the destination. These new advertisements are used for both traditional and digital purposes and feature beautiful photography of our area combined with innovative design.

Website Stats

Visits/Sessions: 243,085 (up 45.7%)

Users: 191,973 (up 46.9%)

Pageviews: 687,918 (up 42.6%)

Time on Site: 1:58

Top Pages: Events, Homepage, Request Visitor Guide, What To Do, Where to Stay

Mobile Use: 37.8%

Social Media Stats

Facebook: 5,483 fans (an 87.5% increase), reach of 845,044

Twitter: 6,554 followers (a 13.3% increase)

Instagram: 1,660 followers (a 178% increase)

Ad Effectiveness Results

Campaign Awareness: 26%

Campaign ROI: \$76

Households Reached: 1,700,000

Incremental Trips Generated: 39,800

Incremental Spending Generated: \$18.4 million

Incremental Room Nights: 105,000

Average Party Spend: \$463

Promote Missouri Fund

The Columbia CVB applies for the Missouri Division of Tourism's Promote Missouri Fund each year. This matching grant program allows a greater reach for the CVB's marketing initiatives. For FY16, Columbia was awarded:

\$82,265

Columbia Visitor Guide

80,000

Visitor guides printed for distribution to walk-ins, visitor centers and other requestors.

Press Trips Hosted

The Columbia CVB hosted over a dozen travel, film and music writers throughout the year in 2015. The largest scale press trips took place during the True/False Film Fest and the Roots 'n Blues 'n BBQ Festival. These writers were published in a wide variety of traditional and online publications, generating a great deal of earned media for our destination.

Economic Growth

How can we stimulate Columbia's economy?

Convention Sales Stats

61 Leads Sent

41,168 Attendees

21,367 Room Nights

\$3,828,880 Economic Impact

Shoulder Season Bookings

A sales priority for 2015 was to increase shoulder season bookings. Shoulder seasons have been identified as mid-May through mid-September and November through February.

6% Increase in shoulder season bookings over FY2014

Sports Event Bookings

Another sales priority for 2015 was to increase sports event bookings.

-30% Decrease in sports event bookings over FY2014. Result of two FY14 events moving to new locations based on event rotations

Convention Services

265 Meetings serviced by the CVB

151 Repeat meetings serviced by the CVB

Tradeshow Attendance

The CVB team prides itself on representing Columbia at multiple events across the country. Here's where the team promoted our destination in 2015:

- American Bus Association:** Bus Tours
- CONNECT:** Sports, Associations, Religious
- Missouri Bank Travel:** Bank Travel Groups
- Rejuvenate:** Religious
- Travel Media Showcase:** Travel Writers and Journalists
- Select Traveler:** Group Tour (Banks & Chambers)
- Small Market Meetings:** Corporate, Religious, Association, Sports
- Travel South:** Group Travel, Travel Agents

Industry Partner Rating

4.65

/5: The rating the sales and service team earned for satisfaction from our industry Partners. Up from 4.38 last year.

Industry Partnerships

How can we strengthen relationships with our tourism partners?

Industry Partner Survey

Satisfaction - Online Initiatives: 4.2/5 (From 3.9)

CVB Professionalism: 4.70/5 (From 4.56)

Satisfaction - Overall CVB: 4.58/5 (From 4.39)

Star Night

Over 30 local hospitality employees were recognized at the annual Star Night in winter 2015. Star winners go above and beyond in serving our visitors and giving them memorable Columbia experiences.

CVB 101

Dozens of local tourism employees participated in the CVB101 program in 2015. This program brings in tourism partners to learn more about what the CVB does and how we can work together to make Columbia a desired destination.

CVB Earns Accreditation

The Columbia Convention and Visitors Bureau (CCVB) was awarded with the Destination Marketing Accreditation Program (DMAP) seal by Destination Marketing Association International (DMAI), in recognition of the destination marketing organization's (DMO) commitment to industry excellence and meeting the industry standard for performance and accountability of DMOs around the world.

Since its inception in January 2007, the accreditation program requires a DMO to successfully comply with a multitude of mandatory and voluntary standards that span a variety of performance areas to gain this momentous achievement. The standards cover nearly all aspects related to the management and marketing of a DMO including governance, finance, human resources, sales, communications, destination development and research.

CCVB joins the ranks of over 200 DMOs that have obtained DMAP recognition that demonstrate compliance across 16 disciplines, composed of 53 mandatory standards and is globally recognized by the destination marketing industry as the highest achievement in destination excellence.



Tourism & Destination Awareness

How can we increase tourism knowledge and favorably improve the perception of Columbia as a travel destination?

Columbia Tourism Ambassadors

During FY2015, we held seven CTA classes and certified 153 Ambassadors, including 87 Mizzou Hospitality & Restaurant Management and Parks, Recreation & Tourism students. We currently have 258 active Columbia Tourism Ambassadors.

There were 183 ambassadors eligible to renew in 2015. We had a renewal rate of 45%. All ambassadors certified in 2015 will not have to renew until the end of 2016.

We held several networking events throughout the year, including a tour of the Stephens College Costume Gallery, the Museum & Research Gallery, and the Firestone Baars Chapel. We held the first annual CTA Scavenger Hunt, sponsored by The Broadway. CTAs were given an hour to collect snapshots of their team members at various locations throughout the District. The event ended with prizes and food and beverage on The Roof. CTAs also were a part of the annual CVB sponsored hotel tour, where we visited 12 lodging properties all of which have had recent renovations and updates.

Our Tourism Ambassadors assisted the CVB throughout the year at conference/meeting registration tables & information booths. They volunteered at MSHSAA State Basketball, State Wrestling and at the Chamber Business Expo.

We look forward to continue our growth of this important program as we move forward into the new year!

Visitor Profile Information

Top Five Columbia Activities: Dining, Shopping, Nightlife, Sporting Events, Historical Sites

Percent of Visitors Who Stayed Overnight: 88%

Percent of Visitors Who Stayed in a Hotel: 73%

Average Nights Stayed: 2.4 nights

Overall Satisfaction with Columbia: 4.1/5

Average Household Age: 35 years old

Average Household Income: \$70,300

Tourism Talk

This year, the CVB reached out to David Lile at 1400AM-KFRU to propose a monthly tourism-related segment during Lile's weekday radio show.

You can now tune in the second Thursday of each month at 8:45 a.m. to hear Megan McConachie and David discuss upcoming events, projects at the Convention and Visitors Bureau and the importance of the tourism industry in our community.

Looking
Ahead to
2016...

Simpleview

In 2016, the CVB will install, learn and implement a new Customer Relationship Management system. This updated system will allow the CVB sales and services team to better organize information, track leads and communicate with hotels.

Partner Education Series

In order to continue building close relationships with our tourism partners, the CVB will be executing a Partner Education Series in early 2016. These monthly sessions will cover a variety of topics important to the local tourism industry.

Eclipse 2017

On August 21, 2017, Columbia will be in the path of totality for a total solar eclipse. This rare and important celestial event will result in a large influx of visitors to our community and will require community-wide planning and cooperation. The CVB is excited to participate in the planning process for this once-in-a-lifetime occurrence.

New Strategic Plan

In the fall of 2015, the entire CVB worked together to create a strategic plan to carry the organization through 2018. This project included the adoption of a new mission and vision, along with a plethora of new initiatives that will help move the CVB and our destination forward in the coming years.