



COLUMBIA, MO
WHAT YOU UNEXPECTED



2018
Annual Report
Convention and
Visitors Bureau

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From the Director...

It seems as though I was just writing this letter to wrap up last year, and it's hard to believe 2018 has already passed.

As always, the CVB had a busy year in 2018. This past summer, we debuted our newest leisure marketing campaign, Meet CoMo, and it was incredibly well received. The local Columbia business owners and residents who took time from their busy schedules to show potential visitors everything our community has to offer cannot be thanked enough.

The CVB also launched its very own retail space in its offices at the Walton Building. Visitors and locals alike are now able to purchase Columbia postcards, apparel, mugs and much more. It's been fantastic to speak with people to come in to pick up their CoMo purchases and hear about their time spent in our area.

We welcomed a new team member this year. Amanda Capua is our new Community Relations Specialist at the CVB. She came to us from Public Works here at the City of Columbia, and her enthusiasm for Columbia and our team is very evident. We are excited to see the great things she is going to accomplish for the CVB in the realms of social media and communications.

As we move into 2019, we're excited to build on our past successes and to continue moving Columbia forward as a destination. It's important to remember what a vital role tourism plays in our area. As the Director, I plan to spend a great deal of my time in the coming year working with local stakeholders, statewide organizations and other partners on advocacy efforts to ensure that tourism remains top of mind both at the local and state level. Now more than ever, tourism means business.

I hope you'll join us in 2019 and beyond as the CVB continues with the important work of destination sales, marketing and management. Columbia and Boone County are wonderful destinations, and I can't think of a better time to raise our tourism profile.

Sincerely,

Amy Schneider, CTA



CVB Overview



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 5% lodging tax collected on hotel and motel rooms in the city of Columbia. This 5% is divided in the following way:

- 1% - Operations and Staff
- 1% - Tourism Development Program
- 2% - Destination Marketing, Sales, Services, etc.
- 1% - New Terminal Project at the Columbia Regional Airport (COU)

The CVB promotes Columbia and Boone County 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 the area. 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 our destination, 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.

Department Alignment

While only a department of 10 team members, the CVB has made an additional effort in recent months to ensure that messaging, initiatives and plans are all aligned to move the organization in the same direction. This includes the new, streamlined Sales and Marketing Plan, increased communication among team members and regular meetings to share goals, ideas and projects. These new tactics have helped make work at the CVB more efficient and effective.



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Your CVB Team



Amy Schneider
Director



Julie Ausmus
*Tourism Administrative
Supervisor*



Megan McConachie
*Strategic Communications
Manager*



Beth Mead
*Tourism Sales
Supervisor*



Andrea Quiroz Jira
*Industry Relations
Specialist*



Sandi Peters
*Senior Administrative
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Amanda Capua
*Community Relations
Specialist*



Terra Crane
*Convention Sales
Manager*



Zach Franklin
*Sports Sales
Manager*

Economic Growth



Sales Update

In 2018, sales managers continued to focus on the leisure aspects of Columbia when meeting with planners, highlighting the types of experiences meeting attendees would have if Columbia was chosen as a meeting site. Conversations with planners indicate that they value the Columbia CVB for the close personal touches and the services provided to the meetings. Planners realize that the tangible items provided are unique to Columbia; a message we heard over and over as we conducted calls.

Meet in CoMo was a new event planned and executed by the sales and service team that provided an interactive education event combined with a lunch presentation and afternoon trade show attended by mid-Missouri event planners and industry partners. The inaugural event was extremely successful and will be repeated in 2019.

Notable new to Columbia events booked in 2018 include the Missouri Governor's Conference on Tourism, the MO Photographers' Association Conference and the North American Sturgeon and Paddlefish Society. Also new to Columbia was the Missouri Public Transportation Association, which had previously rotated between St. Louis and Kansas City. In 2018, MSHSAA awarded the Missouri State High School Football Championships to Columbia for five years.

Sports Update

The Sports market in Columbia has seen considerable growth due to the development of new partnerships with sports event planners as well as growing partnerships with local stakeholders. The CVB partnered with the Columbia Rugby Club to host the city's first USA Rugby event. The CVB and Columbia Rugby Club were also able to secure the 2019 Frontier Conference Fifteens Championship and win its first Professional Disc Golf Association event. In 2020, Columbia will host the PDGA Tim Selinske U.S. Masters Championship. This is one of the most prestigious disc golf events a city can host.

With the new cross country course coming on board, the CVB is excited about the opportunities it will bring. Columbia is already slated to host the MSHSAA State Cross Country Championships and the 2021 SEC Cross Country Championships. Beyond these events, the CVB is excited to host a plethora of other organizations and tournaments and to continue to support local organizations with their existing events.

Short-Term Rental Project

Over the past five years, Short-Term Rentals have become an increasingly popular way for travelers to find their home away from home. Online platforms such as AirBnB and VRBO allow people to list their homes as temporary rentals for all types of visitors. In 2018, the CVB began to research the process of adding the local lodging tax, which funds the CVB, to these online platforms.

This project is now one that involves multiple City of Columbia departments to reach equitable decisions regarding taxation and regulations. In 2019, the community discussions will continue, and it is anticipated that the Columbia City Council will begin making decisions regarding the Short-Term Rental environment in Columbia.

CoMo Retail

Over the years the CVB has had several inquiries from visitors, as well as local residents, as to where they could buy a postcard, a pen, a magnet or Columbia hat. In January 2018, the CVB launched CoMo tourism related retail items to help meet that need.

CVB retail offers apparel, hats, postcards, magnets, mugs and even CoMo socks. One of the year's most successful items was a Christmas ornament that brought in dozens of customers after it was promoted on social media. The first year of CoMo retail has been a success, and the CVB is looking forward to expanding items and locations in 2019.

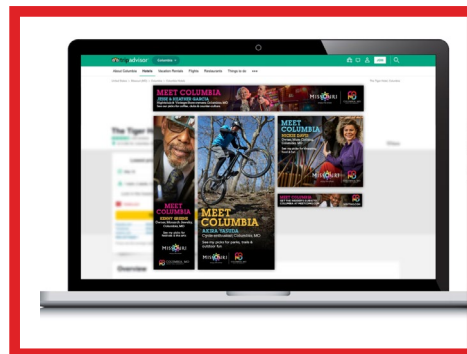


Public Relations & Marketing



New Leisure Campaign

In May 2018, the CVB was thrilled to launch its new leisure marketing campaign, Meet CoMo, during a luncheon to celebrate National Travel and Tourism Week. The new campaign focuses on seven local business owners and residents to learn more about their daily lives and what Columbia means to them. Visitors get to explore Columbia through their eyes, visiting tattoo parlors, vintage shops, a record store, local restaurants, art galleries, outdoor trails and much more. The locals in the campaign, Jesse & Heather Garcia, Jina Yoo, Kenny Greene, Nickie Davis, Kyle Cook and Akira Yasuda, all graciously gave their time to show off their authentic views of Columbia. The campaign has components for digital, traditional print, billboard and social media tactics, and the new advertisements began running in July.



Combined Sales & Marketing Plan

In years past, the CVB's communications and sales teams have each produced operational plans for the upcoming year. For the 2019 fiscal year, the two teams joined to create the CVB's first joint Sales and Marketing Plan. The new plan highlights research findings, product analysis, objectives and initiatives. Additionally, the two teams prioritized and selected joint projects to help the efforts of both teams in achieving their objectives. These projects include designing new sales collateral and ensuring sales and sports information is promoted more regularly on the CVB's social media channels. This new plan helps to streamline both the communications and sales teams to create success for the entire CVB organization.

Destination & Tourism Awareness



CTA Update

Columbia is currently the only city in the state of Missouri that is an accredited Certified Tourism Ambassador™ (CTA) program provider. The goal for this national certification program is to train ambassadors to possess a strong knowledge of the area and have a better understanding of the importance of tourism and what it brings to the community.

During FY2018, there were six CTA classes held and 52 new ambassadors trained. There are currently 216 'active' Columbia Tourism Ambassadors. Of those 216 CTAs, 195 (or 76%), have renewed their certification for another year. (Ambassadors certified in 2018 are not required to renew until the end of 2019). Since the program launched in 2013, there have been over 60 CTA classes and over 745 individuals certified including tourism professionals, volunteers, community members, business owners, students, retirees, Realtors, and employees from the City, County, the University of Missouri and Chamber of Commerce. Having the community on board has helped us to build the destination product and create a stronger brand.

Columbia CTAs not only learn about Boone County, but they are also invited to go explore it. The CTA Program hosts monthly networking events and educational tours around the county, where CTAs have the opportunity to meet other CTAs, visit places they've never been and get one-of-a-kind personalized experiences. During FY2018, our ambassadors toured and learned more about Logboat Brewing Company, Silverball Bar, Fuzzy's Tacos, Missouri Theatre, and experienced Confetti Craft Co. and CoMo Axe Attack. We also had Lunch & Learns at We Always Swing Jazz Series and the University Concert Series.

CTAs are also offered opportunities to assist the CVB and volunteer throughout the community. In FY2018 they volunteered at Missouri State High School State Music Festival, Missouri State High School State Wrestling Championships, Roots & Blues & BBQ Festival, True/False Film Fest and the South East Craft Beer Fest, as well as assisted at several conference/meeting registration & information tables.

A destination can only truly succeed when the entire community works together. When visitors have a positive experience, they are more likely to return in the future and to share their experience with others. Everyone benefits – the visitor, the industry and the local economy.

National Travel and Tourism Week

For National Travel and Tourism Week, the CVB hosted an Industry Partner Luncheon, a CTA evening networking event and an Industry Partner Social. Nearly 100 community leaders and industry partners attended our first luncheon, which was held at the Holiday Inn Executive Center. The luncheon also celebrated the fifth year anniversary of the Columbia Tourism Ambassador program with featured speaker Mickey Schaefer, founder of the International Certified Tourism Ambassador program. It was a festive week celebrating the tourism industry with over 40 CTAs attending a private happy hour and nearly 50 Industry Partners celebrating tourism at Logboat Brewing Co.

Performance Measures



Tourism Stats

	FY17	FY18
Hotel Tax Revenues**	\$3,107,578	\$3,141,377
Occupancy	60.77%	55.78%
Average Daily Rate (ADR)	\$88.42	\$88.49
Revenue per Available Room (RevPAR)	\$54.08	\$49.63
Tourism Related Spending - Boone County	\$420,784,514	\$412,889,202
Tourism Related Employment - Boone County	12,272	11,582
TDP Applications Received	25	34
TDP Funds Awarded	\$149,108	\$277,474
Promote Missouri Funds Awarded	\$61,575	\$92,141
Visitor Guides Printed	80,000	95,000

**Note: Lodging Tax Rate increased to 5% on Jan. 1, 2017.
Additional 1% goes to Airport Terminal Project.

Social Media Stats

	FY17	FY18
Facebook Fans	7,113	8,225
Twitter Followers	7,803	7,991
Instagram Followers	6,005	6,992

Website Stats

	FY17	FY18
Visits/Sessions	425,685	406,881
Users	335,624	330,307
Page Views	971,494	870,310
Time on Site	1:27	1:15
Top Pages	Events, Request Visitor Guide, Home Page, Eclipse Event Page, What to Do	Events, Home Page, Request Visitor Guide, What to Do, Family Fun, Dining

Advertising Effectiveness Study

	FY17	FY18
Awareness	32%	34%
Campaign ROI (includes PR)	\$92	\$96
Households Reached	2,300,000	2,400,000
Incremental Trips	46,600	59,500
Incremental Spending	23,200,000	30,500,000
Incremental Room Nights	100,000	183,000
Average Party Spend	\$498	\$512

Convention Sales and Services		
	FY17	FY18
Leads Sent	123	105
Attendees	207,910	164,817
Room Nights	48,477	25,725
Economic Impact	\$55,064,213	\$20,418,561
Meetings Serviced	285	209

Visitor Profile		
	FY17	FY18
Columbia Activities	Dining, Shopping, Sporting Events, Festivals & Special Events, Nightlife	Dining, Shopping, Sporting Events, Festivals & Special Events, Nightlife
Overnight Visitors	80%	86%
Stayed in a Hotel	65%	64%
Average Nights Stayed	1.8	2.9
Overall Satisfaction	4.14/5	4.09/5
Feel Safe in Columbia	4.10/5	3.94/5
Columbia is Welcoming	4.10/5	3.99/5
Average HH Age	30	31
Average HH Income	\$63,100	\$90,300

Meeting Planner Conversion Study		
	FY17	FY18
Sales Staff Converted Attendees	149,000	180,000
Incremental Travel Revenue (Staff & Ads)	\$20.2 million	\$16 million
Convention Marketing Converted Attendees	150,000	180,000
Convention Marketing ROI - Future Meetings	\$327	\$401

Columbia Tourism Ambassadors		
	FY17	FY18
Certified in the Year	134	52
Active CTAs	253	216

Industry Partner Survey		
	FY17	FY18
Sales & Services Team Satisfaction	4.64	4.61
Online Initiatives Satisfaction	4.14	4.2
CVB Staff Professionalism	4.59	4.69
Overall CVB Satisfaction	4.4	4.4

Industry Partnerships



Star Night

Star Night was held in March at the Hilton Garden Inn. Over 140 members of the local hospitality community attended the celebration that featured the hard work and effort of 13 properties.



Star Performer of the Year:

Jesus Mendez

- Hampton Inn & Suites



Rising Star of the Year:

Rachael Howser

- TownePlace Suites



Salesperson of the Year:

Jean Chambers

- Hampton Inn & Suites



General Manager of the Year:

Steve Bales

- Wingate Inn

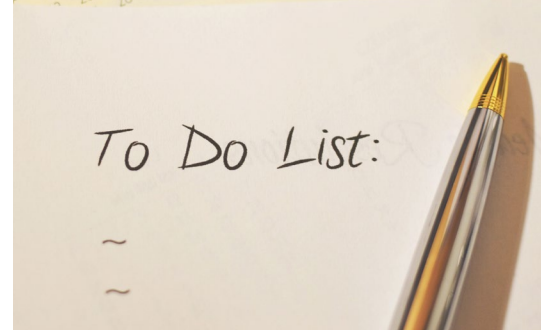


Hospitality of the Year:

Mike Griggs

- City of Columbia Parks and Recreation

Coming in 2019



New Strategic Plan

After an additional year was added to the CVB's existing plan, the department is preparing to undergo its regular strategic planning process during the 2019 fiscal year. Before it can commence strategic planning, the CVB will first look to the City organization to complete its strategic plan to ensure alignment. The strategic plan is a vital document to help propel the CVB and destination into the future and focuses on needs and growths in all areas of the department and tourism community.

Local Tourism Advocacy

In addition to its work to promote Columbia as a destination, it is also very important for the CVB to ensure that the local tourism industry is strong. In 2019, the entire team will work to continue building and maintaining relationships with industry partners, advocating for the tourism industry in state government, and creating awareness among citizens and businesses about the role tourism plays in the area economy. When a destination and its residents are excited about tourism, the welcoming experiences visitors have make that community a more popular destination each year. The CVB is excited to work locally to make a positive impact on the community for years to come.

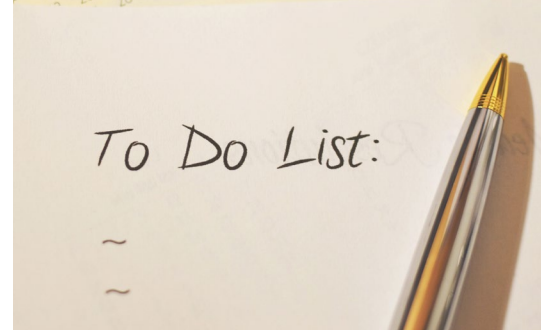
DestinationNEXT Assessment

As part of its membership in Destinations International and in anticipation of becoming reaccredited through the Destination Marketing Accreditation Program, the Columbia CVB plans to conduct a DestinationNEXT assessment during the 2019 fiscal year. According to Destinations International, "the vision of DestinationNEXT is to provide destination organizations with practical actions and strategies for sustainable success in a dramatically changing world." DestinationNEXT provides both background research and a diagnostic tool to help a destination assess its current state and help determine where it should focus for the future. By using the diagnostic tool and partnering with the community, the CVB will be better positioned to lay a foundation that will take Columbia to the next level as a destination.

Forecasting and Revenue Generation

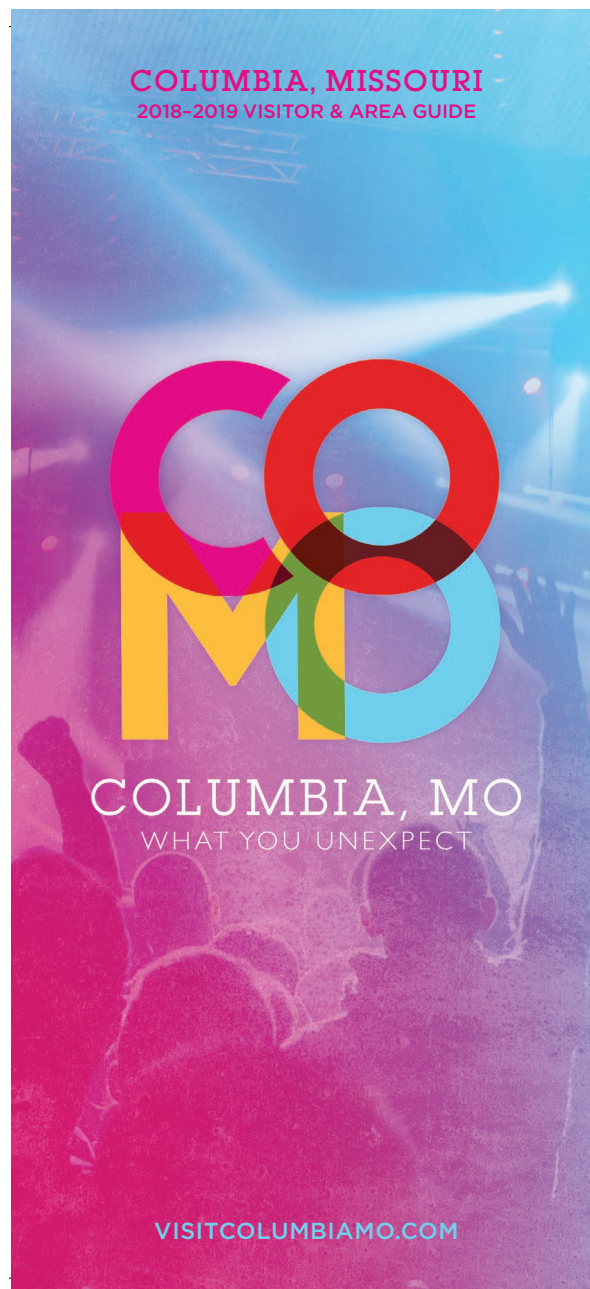
The Sales and Service Team has been working on a three-part report for forecasting. This report will include two reports that were created by the CVB's CRM software company, Simpleview, and the Smith Travel Research (STR) Destination reports. The Simple Pace Report and Simple Pace Report with Assists will provide an analysis of future bookings and pipeline for future years by analyzing historical booking trends within the destination, including assists from meeting sales and group tours. These will analyze between three and eight years of historical booking data and use that data to project numbers that will allow the CVB to determine whether the bureau is on target for future years. These reports combined with the STR Destination reports can help the CVB to see the overall picture of trends and to utilize the data to fill in gaps for future bookings and revenue generation.

Coming in 2019



Visitor Guide

For over 10 years, the Columbia Visitors Guide has remained much the same in its design and contents. In late 2018, a Request for Proposal was issued for a new partner in creating this very important pieces of tourism collateral. In 2019, a new vendor will be selected and the Visitor Guide will undergo a complete reconceiving and redesign for distribution beginning in January 2020. The CVB is excited for this printed piece to evolve and reflect the CoMo brand for its visitors.



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