

# ANNUAL REPORT

COLUMBIA CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU

2022



# Letter from the Director

One of the phrases I've heard throughout my life is "nothing in life is permanent except change." This past year was definitely proof of that and I'm excited about the opportunities ahead of us.

In February 2022, we welcomed our strategic planning consultant to Columbia and introduced her to our stakeholders. She presented her recommendations to the CVB team, CVB advisory board, and the Columbia Sports Commission in June. We are excited to move forward with the recommendations to grow and strengthen our organization.

Last spring our sales team worked with the community on four Missouri State High School Activities Association (MSHSAA) bids; Basketball, Wrestling, Cross Country, and Music. I am extremely proud of the work done to secure these bids both by our team and our community. This was not an easy task, but the partnership and strength of the community were one of the many reasons we were successful in securing all four bids. Well done!

Not only did our sales team secure future bids to help boost Columbia's economy, but they were also busy on many other fronts. Two familiarization tours were held in the fall during which we hosted planners that were either new to Columbia or planners who wanted to reacquaint themselves with our destination. Both tours resulted in follow-up site visits, which we are hopeful will turn into new conventions & meetings.

Our Sports team successfully planned, coordinated, and hosted a successful NCAA Regional Cross Country event. This not only highlights Columbia as a premier destination, but it puts us in a great position to host the NCAA Cross Country Championships in 2025.

Our marketing team is busy working on a refresh of our branding and website, a much-needed and exciting project. We welcomed a new Public Relations firm



in October, which has already brought new media attention to Columbia and our team started working on producing a new visitors guide, which should be ready by spring.

We were excited to be a part of the grand opening of the Columbia Regional Airport (COU) terminal last fall. It is definitely an upgrade to a visitor's first impression of Columbia and it wouldn't have been possible without our hotel partners. We can't wait to see what comes next for COU.

After 21 years of service, Beth Mead retired in November. It was a bittersweet goodbye and we know she is ready for a new chapter in her life; but wow- do we miss her! This did create an opportunity for reorganizing our department, so stay tuned in 2023 for what that looks like!

I believe 2023 will bring continued success not only for the CVB but for our community. We have shown in the past how strong we are when we come together. I believe we can continue building on that.

Here's to Change!  
Amy

Handwritten signature of Amy.

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# 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 ways:

- 1% - Operations and Staff
- 1% - Tourism Development Program
- 2% - Destination Marketing, Sales, Services, etc.
- 1% - Columbia Regional Airport (COU) terminal project

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. Columbia is also a highly desirable destination for meetings, conferences and sporting events. 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 a portion of that spending to continue our destination marketing and sales to bring in more visitors. The remainder of the spending goes to support local businesses, jobs, and quality of life.

## Contacts



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# CVB TEAM



**Amy Schneider**

Director



**Julie Ausmus**

Tourism Administrative  
Supervisor



**Megan McConachie**

Strategic Communications  
Manager



**Terra Crane**

Convention Sales  
Manager



**Zach Waller**

Public Information  
Specialist



**Zach Franklin**

Sports Development  
Supervisor



**Adam Ziervogel**

Sports Event  
Coordinator

# INDUSTRY PARTNERS

## TDP Update

There are five different application categories within the Tourism Development Program: Signature Series, Festivals & Events, Sports Development, Attraction Development and Community Sponsorships. During FY2022, \$425,000 was appropriated for the program and there have been 27 applications received with a funding total amount of \$252,755.

Signature Series events include the True/False Film Fest, Roots N Blues Festival, Show-Me STATE GAMES, Art in the Park, and the We Always Swing Jazz Series. These events were awarded a total of \$91,785. These are Columbia's most established festivals that generate national press coverage and have provided a significant economic impact in the community over the years.

There was one Festivals & Events application for the Unbound Book Festival. They received \$10,000 to assist with the travel costs of authors and poets. Over the last five years, this festival has expanded from two days to four days with over 50 authors and poets featured. In addition to the visiting authors, the festival continues to attract an increasing number of visitors from outside Boone County.

The Columbia Sports Commission reviews all sports event applications and makes recommendations for funding levels to the CVB Advisory Board. During FY22 there were five applications reviewed and a total of \$90,000 was awarded. Events included the American Jr. Golf Association Stan Utley and Mid-America Youth Golf Foundation Junior Championship, the Missouri Basketball Coaches Association Clinic, Showcase and Norm Stewart Classic. Funding also went to support the Missouri State High School Activities Association Cross Country Championships, Boys State Wrestling Champion-

ships and the State Music Festival. These state-wide championship events were awarded through a competitive bid process.

One Attraction Development application was received in August 2022. The Great Rivers Council - Boy Scouts of America requested \$25,000 for the new Scouting Adventure Center. The center will provide place-based learning opportunities for scouts throughout Missouri and surrounding states.

During FY2022, 12 Community Sponsorship applications were received and a total of \$35,970 was awarded. Some of these events were funded through other program categories for three years and now qualify for community sponsorships because they generate hotel room nights. Other events do not necessarily generate overnight stays, but they do have an economic impact on Columbia as a tourism destination. Some of the community sponsorship events include Columbia Swim Club Jim Devine Invitational, Missouri Open Senior Softball, Fire in the Sky, COMO Disc Golf Club Mid America Open Championships, Boone Dawdle, Harvest Hootenanny and MOSY Summer Fest. Tourism development funds are used to support event promotion, marketing and entertainment costs.





# ECONOMIC GROWTH

## Convention & Meeting Sales Update

The Convention and Visitors Bureau sales team had many successes in 2022. The sales team continued to focus on bringing conference business to Columbia by connecting with meeting planners through onsite sales calls, virtual meetings, emails and phone calls. In-person calls were back to normal as planners returned to their offices, although there are still some who will continue to work remotely indefinitely.

In 2022, the CVB conventions & meetings sales team increased hotel site visits, which included conducting two Columbia FAM Tours (familiarization tour). In August, six meeting planners from across Missouri attended a two-day FAM event where 10 conference properties and additional alternate facilities, attractions, and restaurants were showcased. In November, a one-day hotel FAM tour took place with 13 planners from Jefferson City and Columbia in attendance. Through these efforts, several new future pieces of business are pending.

Attendance numbers are still lower on average as compared to meetings booked prior to the pandemic largely due to accessibility to technology and more meetings being conducted hybrid. Meetings continue to book on very short cycles, but planners are starting to consider booking consecutive years of meetings to secure discounted rates. The number of leads sent, meetings booked, and meetings serviced continues to climb. The sales team's booking pace in 2022 has been above target for over three quarters of the year.

New-to-Columbia events that were booked in 2022 include: FBLA (Future Business Leaders of America) Show Me Leadership Conference, Missouri Animal Control Association Fall Certification Class, and Screenwriting Research Network International Conference. Additionally, several corporate retreats, meetings and events have been booked, which

include companies such as Equipment Share, Emery Sapp & Sons and Paytient Technologies.

## Sports & Sports Commission

Fiscal year 2022 proved to be another big year for the sports sales team with an estimated economic impact of \$13 million worth of hosted events in FY22. Future years for Columbia look bright as the sports sales team was able to book an estimated \$28 million worth of events spanning through 2029.

FY22 presented some large opportunities for the Columbia CVB and Sports Commission via four Missouri State High School Activities Association (MSHSAA) State Championship bids. The Championship bids submitted were as follows: MSHSAA State Basketball, Wrestling, Cross Country, and Music. The sports team was successful in securing all four events, but this would not have been possible without facility partners, hotel partners, and the community support dollars the team was able to secure for state basketball and wrestling. The entire community is extremely excited to welcome basketball back to Columbia in 2024 while seeing the other three events stay in the community for another five years.

In regards to events hosted, Columbia had one of its most exciting years to date. Although the event was executed in FY23, the sports team, Mizzou Athletics, and Columbia Parks and Recreation put forth a great effort to host the 2022 NCAA Cross Country Regional Championships. This was a four-month process that tested the department's ability to host an event of the highest caliber with the majority of responsibility falling on the CVB/Sports Commission. The event was successfully executed under budget while receiving rave reviews from the NCAA for the department's effort in putting on a first-class event for the athletes, coaches, and families.

# ECONOMIC GROWTH

## COU Expansion

The Columbia Regional Airport (COU) celebrated the opening of its new \$23 million terminal in the fall. The first flight to the new terminal arrived the night of Tuesday, Oct. 25, and the first flight out of the new terminal departed the morning of Wednesday, Oct. 26.

The new facility, which is now fully operational, will improve air travel for residents and visitors in mid-Missouri and serve as a major economic driver for the region. Not only is the new 52,000-square-foot terminal more than three times the size of its predecessor, it also features four gates with three passenger boarding bridges, more comfortable seating, increased charging outlets, and workstations for business travelers. Additionally, 93 additional parking spaces were added to a new parking lot just south of the new terminal for passenger convenience.

Air service at COU impacts a rapidly expanding catchment area with a population of nearly 520,000. COU's close proximity makes it the best option for air travelers in mid-Missouri and best meets the region's economic needs.



## Sales & Sports Outlook

### Convention Sales:

The meetings and conventions market looks to bring in future opportunities as groups are back to in-person events. The convention sales team anticipates booking many meetings for 2023 and beyond. Currently, the definite bookings report shows room nights above 8,500 and an economic impact in excess of \$9.3 million for meetings that have already been booked in Q1 of FY23.

Based on reports, the meeting's bookings pace is at 126% of the target for 2023. The meeting sales team has seen recent success in the association market, which is a very strong market for Columbia with requests for proposals generated from groups that have booked outside of Columbia in the past along with successful site visits from the association and government markets.

### Sports Sales:

In 2023, the sports team's priority will be to focus on expected MSHSAA bids, NCAA bids, and continuing to execute owned and operated events. The team anticipates receiving bids for MSHSAA State football, track and field, and golf with the hope to partner and bid on all three. Columbia will pursue NCAA Cross Country Championships again and hopes to bid on the NCAA Golf Championships as well. The Missouri State Pickleball Championships will be executed again under the supervision of the CVB/Sports Commission, but the hope is to add one new owned and operated event to the rotation to act as a revenue generator for the department.



# CVB OPERATIONS

## RFP Awards

The Convention and Visitors Bureau went out on bid for its four major marketing and communications vendors in 2022. In order to ensure competitiveness, the CVB used the City's Request for Proposal (RFP) process to communicate requirements and scopes of work. After a review of all submitted proposals, the following vendors were awarded:

- Creative Marketing Firm:
  - Woodruff Communications
- Media Planning & Buying Firm:
  - True Media Services
- Public Relations Firm:
  - Turner Public Relations, Inc.
- Visitor Guide Production:
  - Missouri Life Magazine

These relationships assist the CVB in reaching new visitors, creating compelling marketing campaigns, being efficient and effective with marketing funds, and raising the destination's profile among national and regional media.

## CVB Strategic Plan

In 2022, the Convention and Visitors Bureau partnered with Blue Elephant DMO Solutions to create a new destination-focused strategic plan. Blue Elephant's President, Dawn Pryzstal, worked with the CVB staff, Advisory Board, Sports Commission and other stakeholders to create a comprehensive plan to move the destination and organization forward.

The CVB provided dozens of organizational documents and data points and Pryzstal

completed a destination immersion and nearly 30 stakeholder interviews before presenting her findings. The recommendations were presented under the following subject areas: Diversify the Visitor Base, Broaden University Relationships, Refine Marketing, Product Development, and Increased Advocacy and Industry Engagement.

The CVB staff has committed to short-term and long-term actions to achieve forward momentum in each of these areas with projects and initiatives to help meet the CVB's mission and vision.

## CTA Update

The Convention and Visitors Bureau's Certified Tourism Ambassador© (CTA) Program remained strong in 2022. The CTA Program is a nationally recognized and accredited tourism program that provides participants with the knowledge and resources they need to make every visitor encounter a positive experience.

In 2022, five total CTA classes were held, certifying an additional 23 new tourism ambassadors. There are currently 164 active tourism ambassadors.

CTAs were kept up to date on what is happening in the community and with tourism partners. "Lunch & Learns" were held at Level Up, CoMo Rocks, Tiny Town Play Cafe and the brand new terminal at the Columbia Regional Airport.

The CTA Program has been an asset to help the CVB reach local employees, volunteers and residents on the importance and power of tourism and its impact on the local economy.



# 2022 MEDIA COVERAGE

## [- Love in a Liminal Place: Paste at the 2022 True/False Film Fest](#)

- Published: March 2022
- Outlet: Paste
- Author(s): Tim Grierson and Dom Sinicola

## [- True/False Film Festival 2022: Docs, Drinks, and Deep Dives](#)

- Published: April 2022
- Outlet: Pop Matters
- Author(s): Steve Leftridge

## [- Columbia, the Gem of Missouri](#)

- Published: May 2022
- Outlet: Lavender
- Author(s): Carla Waldemar

## [- City of Columbia awarded multiple upcoming MSHSAA events](#)

- Published: June 2022
- Outlet: KMIZ News
- Author(s): Karl Wehmhoener

## [- MSHSAA State Basketball to return to Columbia in 2023-2024](#)

- Published: June 2022
- Outlet: KRCG News
- Author(s): KRCG Staff

## [- The Best Traditional Restaurant in Every State ft. Ernie's](#)

- Published: July 2022
- Outlet: Reader's Digest/RD.com
- Author(s): Melissa Corbin

## [- The 15 Best Chicken-Fried Dishes in the US - ft. Flyover](#)

- Published: October 2022
- Outlet: Tasting Table
- 9,012,269 unique monthly views
- Author(s): Matt Kirouac

## [- Making the Team](#)

- Published: October 2022
- Outlet: COMO Magazine
- Author(s): Michelle Terhune

## [- New Columbia Regional Airport Terminal Creates Opportunities for Columbia, Missouri and the Central Region](#)

- Published: November 2022
- Outlet: Aviation Pros
- 148,616 unique monthly views
- Author(s): Aviation Pros Staff

## [- New Columbia Regional Airport Terminal Creates Opportunities for the Central Region](#)

- Published: November 2022
- Outlet: Travel Professional News Link
- 8,397 unique monthly views
- Author(s): TPNL Staff

## [Columbia Regional Airport Has a new \\$23 Million Terminal](#)

- Published: November 2022
- Outlet: Meeting Spotlight
- 4,093 unique monthly views
- Author(s): Gaurav Banerji

## [- 6 U.S. Airport Upgrades Making Road Warriors Happy](#)

- Published: November 2022
- Outlet: Meetings Net
- 31,857 unique monthly views
- Author(s): Sue Hatch

## [- NCAA Midwest Regional is largest meet columbia's Gans Creek has seen](#)

- Published: November 2022
- Outlet: 93.9 The Eagle
- Author(s): Brian Hauswirth



# LOOKING AHEAD

## COMO Branding Evolution

Since its launch in 2013, CoMo's What You Unexpected brand has been paired with dynamic marketing campaigns that have brought awareness and visitation to Columbia and Boone County as a destination. In 2023, the Convention and Visitors Bureau will work with its marketing and branding partner, Woodruff Communications, to formulate the next step for the CoMo brand.

While the brand tagline will stay the same, brand attributes, visuals and accompanying marketing campaigns will reflect new brand benefits, target audiences, personality traits and more. The CVB will work closely with stakeholders and industry partners to ensure the What You Unexpected continues to embody the community and how it is presented to potential visitors.

## New Destination Website

In addition to its brand evolution, the CVB will partner with Woodruff Communications and the City of Columbia communications staff on a new website for Columbia as a destination. The CVB's current site is primarily directory-focused and a new story and feature-focused site will allow for fresher content that will motivate potential visitors to choose the Columbia area as their next travel destination. The new site will include a Google API directory interface, custom itineraries, an improved calendar of events and more robust information on what makes Columbia a great place to visit, meet or hold your next sporting event.



# PERFORMANCE MEASURES

## Tourism Stats

	FY19	FY20	FY21	FY22
Hotel Tax Revenues	\$3,180,892	\$2,127,888	\$2,545,362	\$3,548,673
Occupancy	57.27%	43.90%	52.01%	59.20%
Average Daily Rate (ADR)	\$89.84	\$78.51	\$81.76	\$99.80
Revenue per Available Room (RevPAR)	\$53.20	\$35.51	\$43.54	\$61.18
Tourism Related Spending - Boone County (source: MO Division of Tourism)	\$425,607,600	\$386,864,652	\$393,240,010	\$499,400,000
Tourism Related Employment - Boone County (source: MO Division of Tourism)	11,632	10,328	9,348	10,308
TDP (Tourism Development Program) Applications Received	40	33	20	27
TDP Funds Awarded	\$376,000	\$385,000	\$166,000	\$252,755
Special Events Permitted	-	-	-	61

## Website Stats

	FY19	FY20	FY21	FY22
Visits/Sessions	357,741	354,082	240,363	249,750
Users	300,525	298,393	200,696	203,379
Time on Site	1:03	:49	2:41	3:23

## Social Media Stats

	FY19	FY20	FY21	FY22
Facebook fans	8,890	9,774	10,317	11,090
Twitter followers	8,157	8,163	8,094	8,177
Instagram followers	8,058	9,370	10,240	10,710

## Columbia Tourism Ambassadors (CTAs)

	FY19	FY20	FY21	FY22
Certified in 2022	89	16	30	23
Active CTAs	248	156	132	164

## Industry Partner Satisfaction (Scale of 1-5)

	FY19	FY20	FY21	FY22
Sales & Services Team Satisfaction	4.68	N/A	4.73	4.69
Online Initiatives Satisfaction	3.83	N/A	3.97	3.63
CVB Staff Professionalism	4.27	N/A	4.69	4.57
Overall CVB Satisfaction	4.14	N/A	4.45	4.39

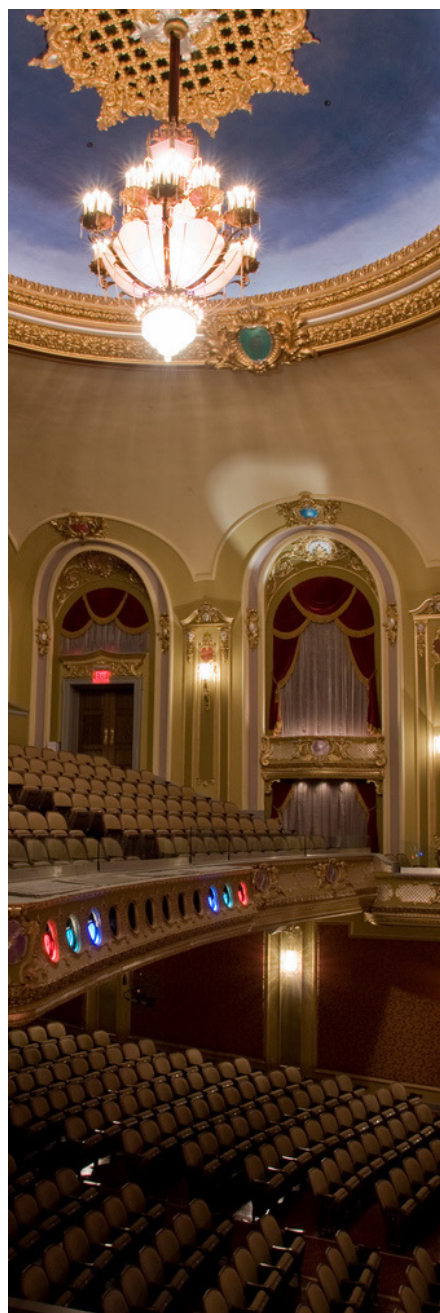


## Meetings & Convention Sales

	FY19	FY20	FY21	FY22
<b>Leads Sent Turned Definite</b>	32	6	22	37
-Attendees	8374	486	3400	60860
-Room Nights	3676	309	2442	11742
-Economic Impact	\$3,121,221.50	\$201,963.07	\$1,134,714.54	\$10,133,008.53
<b>Leads Pending</b>	-	-	2	5
-Attendees	-	-	1,400	1,530
-Room Nights	-	-	400	1,275
-Economic Impact	-	-	452,898	1,109,603
<b>Meetings Serviced</b>	-	-	-	133
<b>Meetings Booked</b>	34	9	16	42
-Room Nights	3,777	886	1,203	12,441
-Attendees	8,047	1,471	1,690	61,745
-Economic Impact	\$2,606,653.90	\$842,829.56	\$582,765.91	\$10,243,152.79
<b>Assists</b>	324	127	145	163
-Room Nights	38,023	12,287	14,959	22,757
-Attendees	49,622	14,963	41,570	27,911
-Economic Impact	\$22,019,046.64	\$6,748,751.61	\$13,444,539.12	\$14,041,711.01
<b>Meetings Lost Due to COVID-19</b>	0	82	35	6
Room Nights Lost due to COVID-19	0	12,901	8,032	1,690
Economic Impact Lost due to COVID-19	\$0.00	\$12,189,931.89	\$10,137,952.43	\$1,001,015.43

## Sports Sales

	FY19	FY20	FY21	FY22
<b>Leads Sent Turned Definite</b>	5	12	29	33
-Attendees	11,760	7,600	50,897	166,268
-Room Nights	1,785	6,100	11,903	30,574
-Economic Impact	\$835,980.67	\$3,942,674.98	\$10,523,394.34	\$30,621,894.76
<b>Sales definite events within FY</b>	6	13	18	20
-Attendees	30,103	31,773	12,777	45,673
-Room Nights	3,468	4,760	7,075	7,047
-Economic Impact	\$2,837,702.69	\$3,893,302.06	\$4,134,377.39	\$5,981,903.89
<b>Sales assists occurred within FY</b>	4	21	25	13
-Room Nights	730	4,095	3,079	11,300
-Attendees	3,900	11,587	48,415	51,060
-Economic Impact	\$577,224.51	\$3,960,492.66	\$6,356,152.07	\$6,551,446.78
<b>Serviced</b>	-	-	-	19
<b>Sports lost due to COVID-19</b>	0	28	6	0
Room Nights Lost due to COVID-19	0	4,284	2,280	0
Economic Impact Lost due to COVID-19	\$0.00	\$8,881,055.38	\$1,666,022.94	\$0.00



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