

QUARTERLY REPORT—JANUARY 2023

Reporting Fiscal Year 2023 | 2nd Quarter | October–December 2022

Coming in 2023*

El=Economic Impact

FEBRUARY

16-18 | IHSA State Wrestling Tournament
El: \$5.8 million
33,000 spectators, 672 wrestlers

MARCH

9-11 | IHSA Boys State Basketball Tournament
El: \$6 million
34,500 fans, 16 teams

17-19 | Illinois Middle School Basketball Championships
El: \$1.7 million | 1,250 participants

31-2 | Illini Esports Invitational
El: \$400K | 800 competitors

APRIL

22-23 | Illinois Kids Wrestling Federation (IKWF) Freestyle Championships
El: \$1.1 million | 1,000 participants

28-29 | Chrisite Clinic Illinois Race Weekend
El: \$6.4 million | 12,000 runners

MAY

5-7 | Illini Futbol Club Spring Cup
El: \$2.5 million | 2,100 players

10-13 | Big Ten Softball Tournament
El: \$685K | 12 teams

20-21 | United States Flag Football Big Dreams Illinois Invitational
El: \$785K | 600 adult athletes

JULY

8-9 | Beep Baseball
4 teams

AUGUST

11-13 | Rank-up Football
El: \$2 million
55 teams / 1,500 competitors

NOVEMBER

18-19 | U.S. Quadball Midwest Championships
El: \$300K | 315 competitors

*events listed are those that VCC is involved in either bringing to the community or playing a major role during the event.

The Impact of Sports Tourism

At some point in our lives, we have all traveled for sports. Whether it was when we were children, for our own kids' sports tournaments, to watch our favorite collegiate (Fighting Illini!) or professional sport, each of us have hit the road for the thrill of the game. It is the mass appeal and participation in sports that makes sports tourism so critical to the economy nationwide and locally.

According to the Sports Events & Tourism Association's 2021 State of the Industry Report, the sports tourism sector had a \$91.8 billion impact on the US economy, generating \$12.9 billion in tax revenues, supporting 635,000 jobs. These numbers exclude collegiate and professional sports. The average person traveling spends \$206 per day, approximately \$75 per day if they are a day-tripper (46%) and \$317 if they stay overnight (54%).

Let's think about what happens during a typical sports tournament. On average, at least one parent or guardian is traveling with the athlete, often times more. Depending on length of stay or timing of competition, a hotel room is secured. Meals are enjoyed pre- and/or post-play supporting our area restaurants and helping maintain or grow jobs in the community. Cars are filled up with gas. Someone stops at a convenience store for a forgotten item. Area shops get additional traffic in the downtime between games. That adds up to a significant impact for a weekend tournament.

Locally, the importance of sports tourism to our economy continues to grow. The recent addition of the Rantoul Family Sports Complex, named the 2022 Best Multi-Field Facility by the American Sports Builders Association, has brought countless athletes and fans to the area in their first two years in business, bringing significant dollars to our communities post-pandemic. The success of the facility has not

only generated dollars that are re-invested in the community, but it is also spurring economic growth. The Village of Rantoul reports that as a direct result of the business generated from the sports complex, they are opening a Starbucks, Jersey Mike's, Little Caesar's Pizza, and a Hampton Inn & Suites. Additional projects on the horizon include more restaurants from sit-down to fast food, retail, accommodations, and professional service facilities.

To help attract additional sports tourism to the area, Mike attends numerous trade shows throughout the year with one-on-one appointments with qualified sports planners looking for a home for their event. Most recently, Mike attended the TEAMS Conference in Oklahoma City, October 24-27, with 30 appointments, including several USOC organizations. Among the leads developed, you'll find everything from cheerleading, youth bowling, flag football, BMX, slow pitch softball, baseball, soccer, eSports, college club sports, and a vintage car show. 2023 will bring additional opportunities to meet with sports planners including Sports Huddle Illinois in Chicago and Connect Marketplace in Detroit.

With the hopeful addition of these potential events to what is already coming up in 2023 (see sidebar), the greater Champaign County area will continue to see growth in revenues generated in our communities. From putting tips into the pockets of our hospitality workers, to providing opportunities for ancillary services like porta-potties and event rentals, to generating new jobs through economic development, sports tourism is a critical component to Visit Champaign County's mission to promote a welcoming destination experience for visitors to strengthen economic opportunity and enhance the lives of residents.



From Our CEO



Looking back on the second quarter, “on the road” is all that comes to mind with community outreach, our Illinois Governor’s Conference on Tourism in Chicago, plus the Destinations International Board meetings in Baltimore (and being a tourist during other times this fall!)

We appreciated the opportunity to present to our destination partners including Urbana (October 3); Rantoul (October 4); Mahomet (October 18); Savoy (November 2); St. Joseph (November 8); and Champaign (December 13); and Champaign County (January 2023) on the horizon.

We celebrated alongside the community, including the CU Pride Parade (Oct 1); Martens Center opening (Oct 1); Those Who Teach Can Art Show (Oct 7); Black on Black on Black on Black Art Exhibit at Krannert Art Museum (Oct 10); Speaking to the Champaign County Community Coalition about the African American Heritage Trail (Oct 12); Flannel Fest (Oct 15); CU International Film Festival at Spurlock Museum (Oct 29); Champaign Co Chamber of Commerce Annual Meeting (Nov 4); University of Illinois Celebration of Diversity (Nov 11); Champaign Center Partnership Parade of Lights (Nov 26); Mistletoe Market (Dec 3); Holiday Showcase at Allerton Park (Dec 4.) The list goes on and on – fall/holiday season is hopping in our outside of ordinary community!

A shout out to Savoy Recreation Center hosting our October board meeting, to Courtyard by Marriott for hosting our November board meeting, and to Big Grove Tavern for hosting our December holiday joint board meeting, in conjunction with the Champaign County Economic Development Corporation Board.

On a personal note, our community celebrated Joe DeLuce’s retirement on December 16 after 43 years (25 with Champaign Park District) of service with the simple mission of making people happy through parks & recreation.

I’m grateful for our board leadership, our partners, and our workforce who support a community-based mission to promote a welcoming destination experience for visitors to strengthen economic opportunity and enhance the lives of residents. Everything starts from that point.

Jayne DeLuce



Giving Back

As part of Visit Champaign County’s team desire to give back to the community, staff participated in gift wrapping at Cunningham Children’s Home before the holidays. This team of (mostly) exceptional wrappers managed to get dozens of bags worth of gifts wrapped for members of our community.



The Art of Soap-Making

The VCC team learned that making soap is truly an art form thanks to a workshop with Jackie Wright from the Wright Soapery. Held at the Urbana-Champaign Independent Media Center, Jackie and her team walked the staff through the process before they embarked on their own creations. Regardless of how beautiful the soaps turned out, the scents are currently all being enjoyed in our teams’ homes and we’ll continue to leave this to the experts. Pick up Wright Soapery in Visit Champaign County’s store!

VCC Foundation Update

The VCC Foundation generates resources that support the destination experiences of people who visit, work, and live in the greater Champaign County area. Current initiatives include supporting the Champaign County African American Heritage Trail, the Champaign County Welcome Crew program, the Champaign County Regional Film Office, plus major events, including: IHSA State Football (November 25-26); Illinois High School Theatre Festival (January 12-14); IHSA State Wrestling (February 16-18); IHSA State Boys Basketball (March 9-11); Illinois Middle School Basketball Championships (March 18-20); Illini Esports (Spring 2023); Christie Clinic Illinois Race Weekend (April 27-29); and Teen Masters Bowling (May 2023); among other events under review.



Restaurant Week Preview

The 7th Annual Champaign County Area Restaurant Week returns January 27-February 4. On track to be the biggest event yet, nearly 40 locally-owned restaurants are offering special menus during this nine day celebration. Get out and support our award-winning culinary scene for breakfast, lunch, and dinner, and use #ccrestaurantweek to share your meals! Get planning at ccrestaurantweek.org.



CCAAHT Updates

As 2022 came to a close, Visit Champaign County worked hard on planning for an expansion of the African American Heritage Trail in 2023. We submitted two grant applications to support goals for murals, interactive technology, educational materials, and community programming. We also continued meeting with the Champaign Park District and strategic partners about the transformation of Skelton Park into a space that celebrates local African American musicians, featuring a sculpture by artist Preston Jackson, a plaza and performance area, interactive musical instruments, play areas, walking paths, and more. We look forward to construction of the upgraded park beginning in late spring or summer. We concluded the year with a meeting of the full Heritage Trail committee, where we reviewed the year's highlights and discussed goals for murals, programs, signage, website updates, and other opportunities.

Out & About

Illinois Homecoming

In recent years, the University of Illinois Homecoming Week has expanded to put a broader focus on the greater Champaign-Urbana community. Terri serves on the Homecoming Committee to foster these connections with area businesses. For 2022, area businesses took advantage of promotional materials such as yard signs and coasters to show their Illini spirit. Additionally, Terri worked with 40 North to get 10 artist-created Block I's into downtown Champaign businesses. The weekend closed with a special Homecoming Night Live hosted by 40 North in downtown Champaign, with kids activities and numerous local bands.

Governor's Conference Wrap-Up

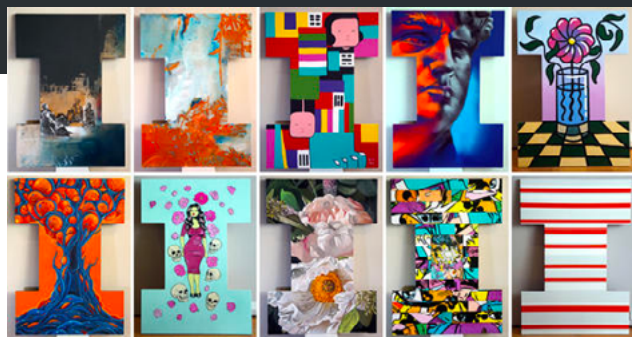
The VCC team attended the annual Governor's Conference on Travel & Tourism at Navy Pier, December 5-7. The conference brings together Illinois DMOs, attractions, and sales and marketing professionals together to learn about the latest trends and opportunities. This year's highlights include topics on workforce development, accessibility, sports tourism, and DEI efforts. The event opened with the annual Illinois Excellence in Tourism Awards with a variety of categories amongst two budget ranges. Visit Champaign County was thrilled to bring home the award for Best Printed Collateral for the annual Champaign County Area Experience Guide. The award was especially deserved as the piece is written and designed entirely in-house by Terri, while most in Illinois utilize ad agencies. Thanks also to Marcus for the stunning photography that helped make it a stand-out piece.

Destinations International Board Meeting

Jayne participated in the Destinations International (DI) Winter Board meetings, December 7-9 in Baltimore. As a combined meeting between both the DI Board & the DI Foundation Board, there was great synergy and dialogue around topics such as: sustainable tourism, workforce development, travel boycotts, role of Destination Organizations, etc.

New to CU Mixer

Continuing to welcome new residents to the area, the third New to CU Mixer was held on October 19 at the Rose Bowl Tavern. Over 60 new residents and members of the Champaign Welcome Crew attended to foster connections and learn more about the community. New Souls performed and engaged with attendees, sparking conversation amongst all those that attended. Numerous attendees have reported back that they've returned to the Rose Bowl several times since the event. The next event will be in February at Triptych Brewing and will be sponsored by the Village of Savoy.



SALES & MARKETING EFFORTS



IHSA Football Wrap Up

For the first time since 2018, the IHSA State Football Championships returned to Memorial Stadium, November 25-26, with sixteen teams competing and eight champions crowned. A crowd of more than 19,000 fans flocked Memorial with perfect weather. VCC hosted Tent City, which included the Entertainment Tent and a tent for each team to be used for tailgating. The Entertainment Tent, located in the Stadium Terrace Lot across the street from Grange Grove, included jousting, a mechanical bull, cornhole, a lounge area with live TV coverage of the games, and free coffee, cocoa, popcorn, and candy. Thank you to our many supporters and in-kind donors including the Champaign-Urbana Hotel and Lodging Association (CUHLA), Copper Creek Church, Good Vibes, Habitat for Humanity Restore, Illinois American

Water, Savoy Methodist Church, and Q96.



Team CU vs. UC Contest

One of the top questions received at Visit Champaign County is, "Is it Champaign-Urbana or Urbana-Champaign?" Playing off this question, VCC hired local artist, Ralph

Roether, to design t-shirts expressing what side of Wright Street they're on. Mayor Deb Feinen (Champaign) and Mayor Diane Marlin (Urbana) helped kick off the campaign, posing in their respective shirts on Wright St. this October. The initial kickoff generated significant press both within Champaign County and in Chicago with other mentions in fellow Big Ten states like a local CBS affiliate in Iowa. T-shirt sales were monitored weekly with results posted on social media to spur the competition. As part of the contest, the Champaign County History Museum shared an **enlightening article** from 1906 on how it became named the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. Proceeds from the t-shirt sales through 2022 will be donated to the museum. In the waning days of 2022, Urbana pulled ahead of Champaign and came away with the unofficial title. Over \$700 was raised for the museum, and the contest helped get our community in front of thousands thanks to the many press mentions over the course of the past three months.

Occupancy Rate

Reporting September-November 2022

Champaign County 62.9%

Bloomington 63.4%

Peoria 53.4%

Springfield/Decatur 55.1%

Average Daily Rate

Reporting September-November 2022

Champaign County \$112.56

Bloomington \$107.56

Peoria \$105.90

Springfield/Decatur \$94.50

This data is collected and reported by STR®.

SPORTS, EVENTS, & FILM

5

leads

3

tentative

2

definite

575

estimated room nights

CONFERENCES

4

leads

3

tentative

1

definite

265

estimated room nights

GROUP TOUR

0

leads

0

tentative

0

definite

LEAD: Potential business distributed to hotels

TENTATIVE LEAD: Potential business, no commitment yet

DEFINITE LEAD: Business secured



Chambana Proud Podcast

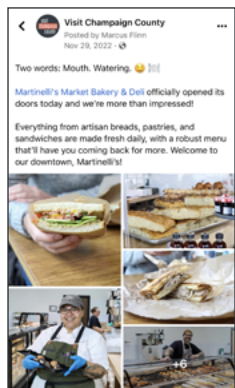
On October 20, Visit Champaign County and the Champaign County Economic Development Corporation launched their podcast, Chambana Proud. Hosted by Terri (VCC) and Carly (EDC), the podcast features the duo sharing their experiences in the community, highlighting upcoming community events, and an interview of local personalities that contribute to making the greater Champaign County area a destination to live, work, and visit. Every other week features a 5-minute podcast highlighting what's coming up in the community. Guests in 2022 included: Laura Bleill, ChambanaMoms.com; Xander Hazel, Champaign Center Partnership; Julie Pryde, Champaign-Urbana Public Health District; Matt Riggs, Riggs Beer Company; and Mayor Feinen and Mayor Marlin. In 2023, expect enlightening interviews with Erez Cohen, Illini Hillel; Chancellor Robert J. Jones, Athletic Director Josh Whitman; co-chairs of the Champaign County African American Heritage Trail Barbara Suggs-Mason and Angela Rivers, 40 North Executive Director Kelly White; and many more. Sponsorships from local organizations help offset the costs to produce the podcast, with Krannert Center for the Performing Arts serving as the main sponsor for 2023. Listen wherever you podcast or at chambanaproud.com.



Travel Writers

Following the Midwest Travel Network Conference in June 2022, Terri brought several travel content creators to the community. Two Chicago-based bloggers, Bisa Myles (Myles to Travel), and Cassandra Washington (Sustah Girl Chronicles) visited the weekend of October 21-23. Both with audiences consisting of middle-aged Black women looking for adventures visited destinations like Allerton Park & Retreat Center, the Market at the Square, Prairie Fruits Farm & Creamery, downtown Champaign, and stops at the Folk & Roots Festival. The perfect weather enhanced their trips and they shared their experiences on their websites and social media channels.

Social Media & Web Stats



Facebook

Martinelli's
13,626 Reach
326 Reactions
12 Shares

10,120

Followers

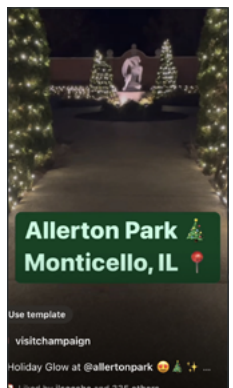


Twitter

Trouble Chasin' at
Ludacris
763 Views
37 Engagements

6,292

Followers

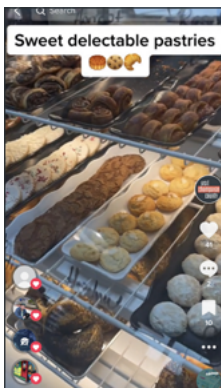


Instagram

Allerton GLOW
3,952 Views
336 Likes
94 Shares

6,495

Followers



TikTok

Martinelli's
813 Views
31 Likes
10 Shares

1,511

Followers

Website Report

61,616 Sessions
96,351 Page Views
51,138 New Visits
1.56 Pages/Session

Top Visited Pages

Calendar of Events
Five Must-Do Fall Activities
Orange & Blue Weekend
Bring on the Beer
UI Bucket List

81.9%

of website traffic is from outside the greater Champaign County area

49.5%

is from outside of Illinois

Our Mission

We promote a welcoming destination experience for visitors to strengthen economic opportunity and enhance the lives of residents.

Visit Champaign County Partners

Destination Founder

Illinois Office of Tourism
City of Champaign
University of Illinois
Champaign Rotary Club

Destination Leader

Busey
Carle
City of Urbana

Destination Builder

Ameren	OSF Healthcare
Champaign County	University of Illinois
Community Foundation of East Central Illinois	Community Credit Union
Hyatt Hotel	Village of Rantoul
	Village of Savoy

Destination Backer

Lynne & Dick Barnes	Village of Mahomet
Copper Creek Church	Janet & Doug Nelson
CU Public Health District	Randall & Marcia Nelson
D&V Farms	Parkland College
First State Bank	Robeson Family Benefit Fund
Gies College of Business	City of Tuscola
I Hotel & Conference Center	Urbana Park District
Illinois American Water	Village of St. Joseph
Sarah Laufenberg	

Regional Partners

Amish Country of Illinois
City of Tuscola
Monticello Chamber of Commerce

For information on our Tourism Industry Partner Program and how you can support our mission visit:
visitchampaigncounty.org/partners



2022-2023 Board of Directors

Bryan Snodgrass, Chair, Busey
Annie Easterday, Vice Chair, Pear Tree Estate
Nathan Escue, Treasurer, Hamilton Walker's
Jayne DeLuce, Secretary (ex-officio), Visit Champaign County
Laura Bleill, Past Chair, University of Illinois Research Park
Bridget Broihahn, City of Urbana
Bob Flider, University of Illinois
Rob Kowalski, City of Champaign
Shayla Maatuka, Matuuka Al-Heeti Emkes, LLC
Michael McDonald, Wood N' Hog Barbecue
Caleb Miller, Carle
Jacob Paul, Champaign County Board
Vanna Pianfetti, Champaign City Council
Sam Santhanam, I Hotel & Illinois Conference Center
Katie Simpson, Village of Savoy
Charles Smith, Village of Rantoul

Visit Champaign County Team

217.351.4133 | 17 E. Taylor St., Champaign, IL 61820



Jayne DeLuce, President & CEO
Terri Reifsteck, Vice President of Marketing & Community Engagement
Caitlyn Floyd, Director of Sales & International Travel
Mike Koon, Director of Sports, Special Events & Film
Marcus Flinn, Communications Manager
Tim Oravec, Community Development Manager
Brooke Gordon, Director of Administrative Services
Estella Samii, Visitor Experience Coordinator
Leslie Lundy, Finance Manager (contracted)



2022-2023 Visit Champaign County Foundation Board of Directors

Lynne Barnes, Chair, Carle
Rachel Coventry, Vice Chair, Curtis Orchard & Pumpkin Patch
Jesse Hines, Treasurer, Courtyard by Marriott
Jayne DeLuce, Secretary, Visit Champaign County
Curt Anderson, Busey
Laura Bleill, University of Illinois Research Park
Matt Buchi, Men's Wheelchair Basketball, University of Illinois
John Hammond, Hampton Inn & Suites

Max Mitchell, ReMax
Katie Miller, Busey
Susan Muirhead, University of Illinois Brand Hub
Lowa Mwilambwe, University of Illinois Student Affairs
Jon Salvani, University of Illinois, College of Fine & Applied Arts
Dan Waldinger, Mahomet Recreation
Leslie Lundy, Asst. Treasurer (ex-officio)