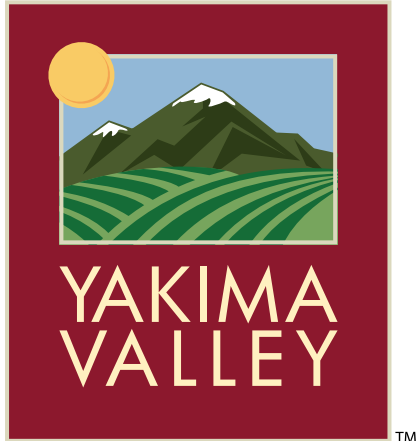


2016

YAKIMA VALLEY TOURISM

ANNUAL REPORT



THE MISSION OF YAKIMA VALLEY TOURISM IS TO STIMULATE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BY MARKETING THE YAKIMA VALLEY FOR CONVENTIONS, GROUPS AND LEISURE TRAVEL.

LEADERSHIP MESSAGE

On behalf of the Board of Directors and staff of Yakima Valley Tourism, we are proud to present our 2016 Annual Report.

Tourism means economic development. It creates jobs and local taxes. It improves our quality of life. Yakima Valley Tourism continually works to enhance our economy by growing all segments of the tourism industry.



Kathleen Goyette
2016 Board Chair



John Cooper
President & CEO

ECONOMIC IMPACT OF TOURISM IN THE YAKIMA VALLEY



*most recent figures

YAKIMA CONVENTION CENTER

The Yakima Convention Center is the premier meeting facility in Central Washington, and is a major generator of economic activity for Downtown Yakima.

CONVENTION & GROUP SALES

A major charge of Yakima Valley Tourism is attracting large conventions and groups to our community. Through a variety of networking events, customer forums and planned sales trips, our sales staff brings a growing number of conferences and tradeshows to the Yakima Valley year after year.

57

CONVENTIONS HELD
(a 12% increase over 2015)

93,789

CONVENTION ATTENDEES,
overnight attendees and
day visitors hosted
(a 5% increase over 2015)

188

LEADS GENERATED

31,350

FUTURE ROOM NIGHTS BOOKED
(a 20% increase over 2015)

\$10

MILLION IN DIRECT ECONOMIC IMPACT FROM CONVENTION ATTENDEES

26%

INCREASE IN FUTURE CONVENTION BOOKINGS, GENERATING AN ADDITIONAL \$6.4 M

95

MEETING PLANNERS HOSTED

LOOKING TOWARDS THE FUTURE

In 2015, the Convention Center conducted a study that evaluated the Center's current feasibility and marketability, as well as that of competing cities. The report found that there is a critical need for expanded exhibit and meeting space, in addition to a new headquarter hotel. In 2016, the Center commissioned an architectural firm to design concepts and cost estimates for a possible expansion, and the initial estimates will be available in early 2017.

VISITOR INFORMATION CENTER

The Yakima Valley Visitor Information Center (VIC) is one of the most highly regarded info centers in Washington State. The VIC staff is well-informed on the lodging, dining, attractions, wineries, craft beverages and events that our visitors are interested in, and they work hard to stay on top of emerging trends and changes to the Yakima Valley's offerings.



11,764
WALK-IN VISITORS

27%

Percentage of people served at the VIC that extended their stay in the Yakima Valley

\$154,605

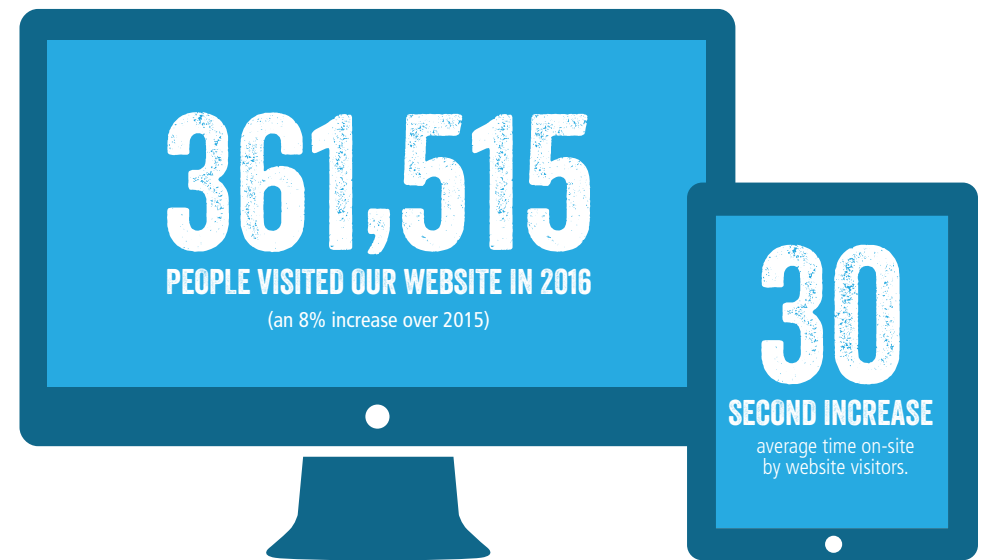
IN NEW VISITOR SPENDING

"I've never written a review for a Visitor Center, but this one deserves a special nod. The employees were as nice as nice can be. And helpful! Apparently this facility was recognized as the best Visitor's Center in the Pacific Northwest." - Meredith R. - Marietta, GA

DESTINATION MARKETING

Through traditional and web-based marketing efforts, the Destination Marketing Department is responsible for attracting general and niche tourism to the Yakima Valley. In 2016, much of our core marketing efforts were redesigned and updated with enhanced graphics, new photography and a newly expanded video library.

We continued to put a heavy focus on Yakima's craft beverage scene with our marketing efforts. Through extended partnerships with our advertising vendors, we were able to promote the Yakima Valley in a variety of unique and successful ways.



15%
INCREASE IN LODGING REFERRALS

2,073
NEW INSTAGRAM FOLLOWERS

MEDIA & TRADE RELATIONS

The Media & Trade Relations Department is tasked with attracting and securing regional and national media attention to the Yakima Valley, in addition to attending a number of industry, consumer and media trade shows. These efforts are designed to secure future media stories, along with increased leisure and group travel.

MEDIA TRADE SHOWS

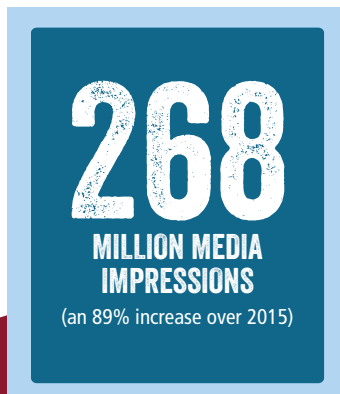
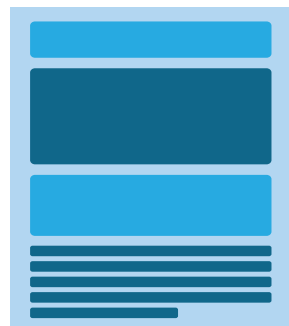
Staff participated in five major media trade shows this year. Ranging from large-scale industry trade shows, down to intimate gatherings with local writers and bloggers, these events go a long way in helping the Yakima Valley become a well-known tourism destination.

FAMILIARIZATION TOURS

Several times a year, we invite and host a large variety of travel and trade representatives for tours of the Yakima Valley. These tours are centered on everything from wine to hops to farm fresh produce.

MEDIA EXPOSURE

Our staff secured exceptional media coverage for our region throughout 2016. Our efforts resulted in more than 268 million impressions in print, radio, broadcast and online channels. The Yakima Valley was featured on The Travel Channel, USA Today, Better Homes & Gardens, Craft Beer & Brewing, The Food Network, Edible Seattle, 425 Magazine, Northwest Travel & Life Magazine and many more.



MEMBERSHIP SERVICES

More than 335 businesses and organizations are members of Yakima Valley Tourism, contributing close to \$134,000 in dues to support our efforts to advance tourism. In return for their support, we provide our members with a number of unique promotional opportunities designed to get their businesses in front of our visitors. We also assist them with continuing education opportunities, marketing support and industry insight, helping them to stay prominent and relevant with our visitors.

In addition to the support generated by membership dues, we also host the Holiday Reception & Silent Auction, our annual fundraiser. Now in its 27th year, we welcomed more than 500 guests with a "down home Western" theme this year.



YAKIMA VALLEY SPORTS COMMISSION

The sports event market continues to be a driving force behind growing the Yakima Valley, providing tremendous economic benefits and positive exposure for the community. The Yakima Valley Sports Commission staff works hard to enhance existing sporting events and tournaments, attract new events and promote the Yakima Valley as a premier sports destination in the Northwest.

\$46.6

**MILLION IN ESTIMATED
ECONOMIC IMPACT**
(a 7% increase over 2015)

535

SPORTING EVENTS HELD
(an 8% increase over 2015)

SIGNATURE EVENTS



Yakima Valley Sports Awards Luncheon (early June) - Awards were given in 20 high school sports for athletes, coaches and teams at the 2016 Sports Awards Luncheon, attended by almost 600 people.



Pirate Plunder Adventure Race (late July) - Started in 2012, the Pirate Plunder Adventure Race is the Sports Commission's newest event. The obstacle race/mud run had 930 runners in 2016.



Yakima Hot Shots 3-On-3 Basketball Tourney (late August) - More than 1,700 players participated in the 2016 Hot Shots 3-On-3 Basketball Tourney, held on the streets of Downtown Yakima.



SunDome Volleyball Festival (mid-September) - 80 high school teams came to the Yakima Valley for the 14th annual SunDome Volleyball Festival, held at the Yakima Valley SunDome and East Valley High School.

WHAT'S NEW IN 2017

As we move into 2017, Yakima Valley Tourism will be broadening its horizons, undertaking new challenges designed to keep us competitive and engaging. Here is a sample of some of the new initiatives we are working on for 2017.



CONVENTION CENTER

Continuing to pursue the expansion of the Convention Center and headquarter hotel, and broadening sales outreach efforts.



VISITOR INFORMATION CENTER

Expanding their offerings of products made in the Yakima Valley, and continuing to highlight local craft beverage producers.



MARKETING

Establishing a partnership with the Washington State Beer Commission in order to better reach Pacific Northwest craft beer enthusiasts.



MEDIA RELATIONS

Exploring new options for FAM tours that will attract a diverse set of media representatives.



MEMBER SERVICES

Offering educational opportunities for our membership, including workshops, classes and tips.



SPORTS COMMISSION

Strengthening the relationship with the SOZO Sports Complex to bring high-caliber events into the Yakima Valley.



Yakima Valley Tourism

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