

TRAVEL

TACOMA+

PIERCE COUNTY, WA

ANNUAL REPORT
2013



TRAVEL

TACOMA+

PIERCE COUNTY, WA

MISSION

To deliver tourism to Pierce County

– The TRCVB increases visitor expenditures and overnight stays through strategic sales, marketing and services to our customers, members and communities.

– We promote and package our destination to attract and meet the needs of meetings and conventions, group tours, special interest groups and leisure travelers.

ROLE OF A CONVENTION + VISITOR BUREAU [CVB]

What is a Destination Marketing Organization [DMO] ?

The terms CVB or DMO are often used interchangeably in the industry. The Tacoma Regional Convention + Visitor Bureau [TRCVB] has served as the official destination marketing organization of Tacoma + Pierce County for 25 years. The TRCVB executes marketing and sales initiative to deliver tourism to Pierce County.

We market and sell the destination by targeting the visitor with a strong brand and stellar sales teams.

We value innovation and strive to be industry leaders. In 2013, we adopted a visitor focused approach to all facets of

We inform and educate visitors through our social media channels, website, visitor guides, tradeshow participation and sales

We deliver services to the visitor through our Visitor Information Center and innovative Visitor Experience

We develop our destination through collaboration with industry and funding partners and continued support

LETTER FROM OUR LEADERS

Dear Tourism Partners,

The stars aligned in 2013 to bring a renewed purpose and vision to the Tacoma Regional Convention + Visitor Bureau. We streamlined staff roles to be organizationally more efficient and effective, we implemented a new brand identity that distinguished us as a unique destination and we changed the way we do business through a visitor-focused approach and a long-overdue partnership with the Greater Tacoma Convention + Trade Center.

In February 2013, we welcomed the Destination Marketing Association International [DMAI] President & CEO, Michael Gehrisch, to our annual board retreat. We left that meeting invigorated and enthusiastic about committing to a visitor-focused organizational philosophy. The guiding principles of a visitor-focused destination led us to change the way we do business to better deliver tourism to Pierce County.

In 2013, we said goodbye to “where art + nature meet” and hello to “fearless exploration.” Our new brand identity is more reflective of the resilient and adventurous spirit of Tacoma and the unadulterated beauty of the region. We chose to distinguish ourselves by focusing on our unique assets and cultural icons: glass art, collector vehicles and Mount Rainier. This brand will drive marketing efforts in 2014 as we expand our marketing reach to new target markets.

We welcomed a new partnership with the City of Tacoma and the Greater Tacoma Convention + Trade Center. A new sales team was hired, and achieved all contracted goals and helped to drive more than \$7 million of economic impact to the community through future year bookings.

2013 was a year of economic rebound for the tourism industry in Tacoma + Pierce County. Some hotels reported record numbers, and on average there were higher occupancy rates than the previous two years. We continue to see a steady increase in visitor spending, which in turn helped support our restaurants, tour and transportation providers, attractions and countless other businesses throughout the year.

As we look to 2014 and beyond, we are confident that we have a strong roadmap that will lead to even greater success as we take more bold steps in this new year. We will continue to build off the successes of 2013, and help maintain best practices for a visitor-focused destination as we prepare for the 2015 U.S. Open.

We look forward to taking many more bold steps with you in 2014.

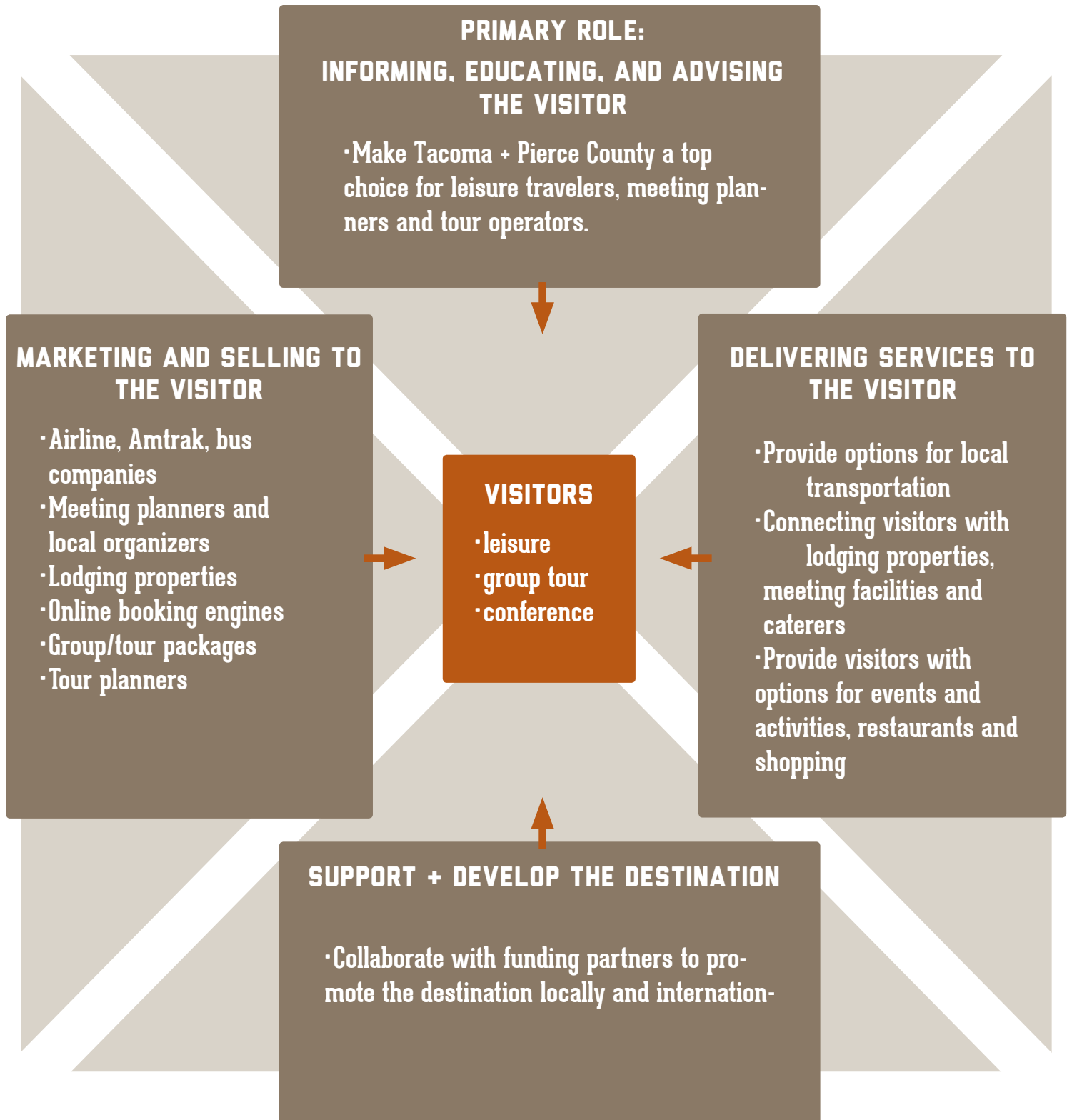
Sincerely,

Bennish Brown
President + CEO

Dan O’Leary
Board Chair



OUR ROAD MAP TO PROVIDE THE BEST TO VISITORS OF PIERCE COUNTY:



In 2013 the TRCVB adopted this 4-point metric to guide our decision-making across all departments within the organization. A consistent visitor-focused approach leads to a more authentic visitor experience.

HOW WE INFORM, EDUCATE + ADVISE THE VISITOR

DEVELOPING A BEAUTIFUL VISITOR GUIDE

The TRCVB worked with SagaCity Media to publish the 2013-2014 Visitor Guide. SagaCity is known as the Northwest leader in publishing and brought a fresh, new twist to TRCVB publications, incorporating new design, dynamic storytelling and content strategies for print, online and mobile formats.

The full-color, magazine-like visitor guide is a resource for visitors and locals to plan trips and discover each of the communities in the region, including Tacoma, Puyallup, Sumner, Fife, Lakewood, Gig Harbor, Mt. Rainier, waterfront getaways and mountain neighbors. The 48-page guide includes stories by locals on everything from the independent art scene in Tacoma to the craft beer revival across Pierce County to an insider's scoop on Mt. Rainier.



Travel Tacoma + Pierce County
Visitor Guide distribution

125,000

Top three states for distribution:
WA, CA, OR

PARTNERING WITH SAGACITY GAVE US INCREASED DISTRIBUTION



MEETING PLANNER GUIDE DISTRIBUTION



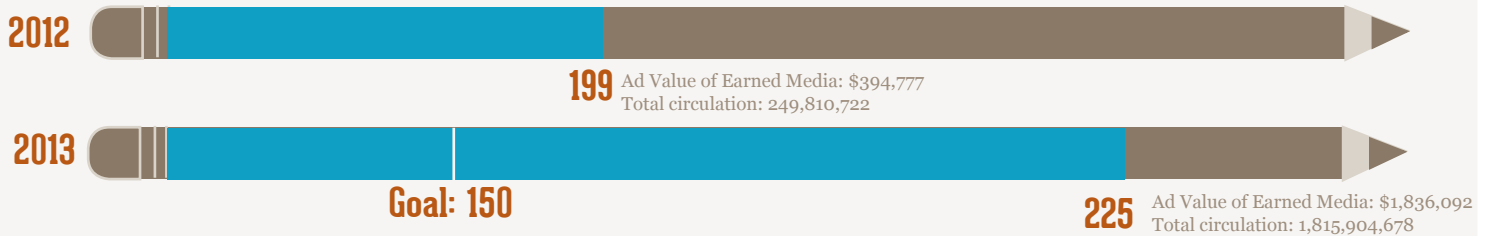
2,500



HOSTING FAM TOURS

We hosted 17 FAM Tours, short for Familiarization Tours. The TRCVB brings travel writers from around the world and familiarizes them with a particular area such as Mount Rainier or the Tacoma museum district.

Number of articles published about Pierce County:

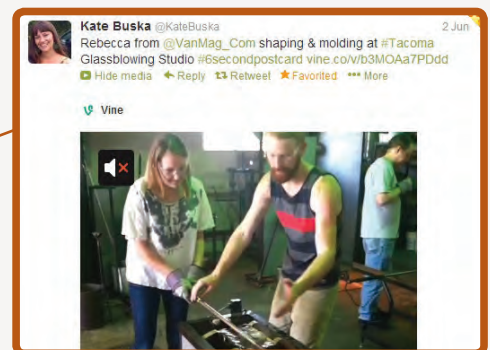


17



Travel Writers

- Alaska Airlines Magazine
- USA Today
- Vancouver Magazine [Canada]
- Western Living [Canada]
- New York Post
- AAA Journey
- Forbes Travel Guide



HOW WE MARKET AND SELL TO THE VISITOR



In addition to a new visitor-focused logo, which now includes the word “travel”, the TRCVB also boasts a new marketing campaign, “Fearless Exploration”. This campaign reflects the brand promise:

Pierce County inspires transformation. It is a place to fearlessly explore a fusion of natural beauty and an accessible arts culture. Experiencing this place leaves those who come different from when they came. Perspectives changed. Challenges accomplished. Stories created.

The logo for Fearless Exploration, featuring the words "FEARLESS" and "EXPLORATION" in white, bold, sans-serif font, stacked vertically on a dark background with a stylized orange and white graphic element.

Inspired transformation through fearless exploration

We proudly launched our new brand identity for Tacoma + Pierce County in July 2013. More than 200 guests took part in the event, which was hosted at the newly-renovated Foss Waterway Seaport. Excitement during the event was shared on Facebook and Twitter at #toughspirits.



Getting ready for the big reveal of the new @TravelTacoma branding. #tacoma #traveltacoma #toughspirits @EthanDChung

MOUNT RAINIER. GLASS ART. COLLECTOR VEHICLES.



Through a storytelling approach, the TRCVB promotes travel to Tacoma + Pierce County, focusing on three iconic images—Mount Rainier, glass art and collector vehicles.

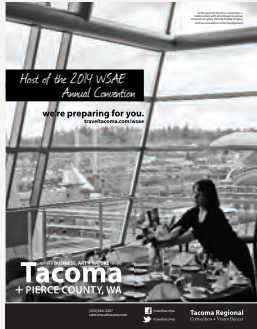
“Brands must be unique to stand out. We can’t be all things to all people. In order to be memorable, we must focus on a few key messages that will capture the hearts and minds of our customers.”

- Bennish Brown



HOW WE MARKET AND SELL TO THE VISITOR

Meetings Market



WSAE [Washington Society of Assoc. Executives]
- 1,000 circulation



Connect Magazine [1/2 page ad and editorial]
- 8,500 circulation



Connect Magazine [web ad]



Smart Meetings Magazine - 43,000 circulation



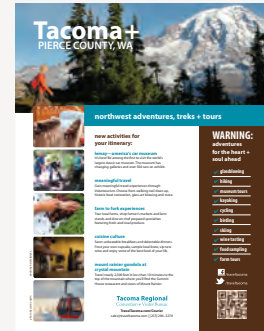
Collaborate Magazine - 8,500 circulation

SmartMeetings.com [hyperlink to view on Youtube]
- 44,000 impressions



Connect Magazine [web banner]

Tour + Travel Market



NTA [National Tour Assoc.]; Courier Magazine
- 6,000 circulation



Seattle Travel Planner Guide
- 7,500 circulation

2013 AD PLACEMENTS

Leisure Market



Vancouver Magazine
- 55,000 circulation



Vancouver Magazine Online
- 60,000 impressions



Washington State Visitor Guide
- 375,000 impressions

International Market



Full page ad distributed by izi in China - 55,000 circulation



Seattle Visitor Guide
- 175,000 circulation



HOW WE MARKET AND SELL TO THE VISITOR

TRADE SHOW PRESENCE



Meetings Market

- American Society of Assoc. Executives [ASAE] Springtime Expo
- ASAE Annual Meeting + Expo
- ASAE Leadership Retreat
- Meeting Professionals International [MPI] World Education Congress
- MPI Cascadia Educational Conference
- Washington Society of Assoc. Executives [WSAE] Annual Conference



Leisure Market

- Clipper Vacations' Two Nation Vacation Travel Show



Tour + Travel Market

- Go West Summit
- National Tour Assoc. [NTA] Travel Exchange

BOOKED ROOM NIGHTS

2012  10,778 room nights

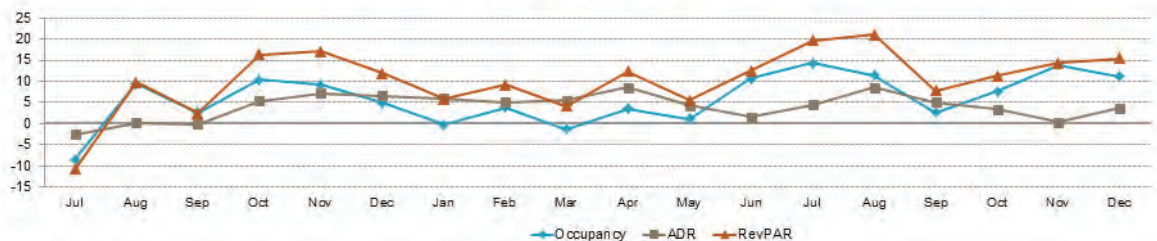
2013  16,570 room nights

“We’ve been open since 2002, this was our highest year for occupancy.”
- Dan O’Leary, Silver Cloud Inn

REBOUND YEAR FOR HOTELS



Monthly Percent Change



*Courtesy of the 2013 STR STAR Report [str.com]

HOW WE MARKET AND SELL TO THE VISITOR

ONLINE PRESENCE



TravelTacoma.com had

326,295

page views in 2013

TOP 10 PAGES:

- Home
- What To Do – Attractions
- What To Do – Dining + Nightlife
- What To Do – Tacoma Museum District
- What To Do
- Where To Stay – Hotels, Motels, Inns
- Places To See
- Places To See – Tacoma
- Events Calendar
- What To Do – Recreation



+15.6%

Dec 31, 2012 :
1,784 followers

Dec 31, 2013 :
2,062 followers



+25.9%

Dec 31, 2012 :
2,711 likes

Dec 31, 2013 :
3,414 likes



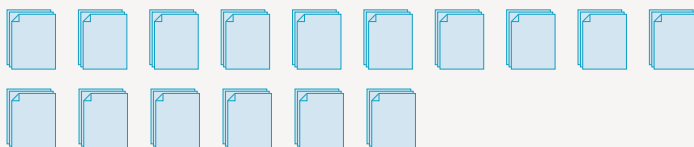
TOUR + TRAVEL MARKET

Developed 16 new itineraries with overnight room nights for tour and group travel operators.

2012



2013



Won the bid to host the 2014
Go West Summit in Tacoma +
Pierce County

HOW WE MARKET AND SELL TO THE VISITOR

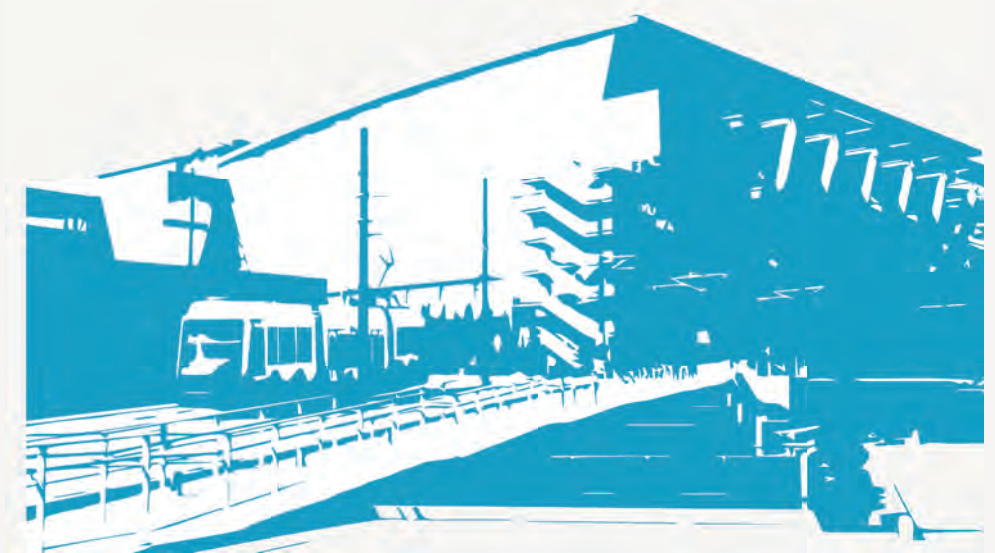
BETTER TOGETHER

The TRCVB took strategic steps and contracted with the Greater Tacoma Convention and Trade Center [GTCTC] in 2013 to sell and book meetings and events that are at least 14 months away and include hotel room nights. The GTCTC team outperformed previous sales goals in less than a year.

Greater
**Tacoma Convention
& Trade Center**

TRAVEL

TACOMA +
PIERCE COUNTY, WA



“It’s a natural fit for convention and visitor bureaus to directly secure new and recurring long-term business for convention centers”

- Kim Bedier, City of Tacoma

**TOTAL CONVENTION
CENTER REVENUE
IN 2013:**



\$1,358,712

Goal: \$451,000

HOW WE SUPPORT + DEVELOP THE DESTINATION

DESTINATION ADVOCACY

A key part of delivering tourism is supporting and developing the destination for a better visitor experience.

In 2013 we hosted

Michael Gehrisch

CEO of the Destination Marketing Association International [DMAI] at the annual TRCVB board retreat to stay at the top of the industry and implement a visitor-focused approach.



The Safe Lodging program launched in 2013. A collaborate effort with Businesses Ending Slavery + Trafficking Alliance and local hotels, the Safe Lodging program will put best practices in place aimed to eliminate sex trafficking in Pierce County and Washington state.



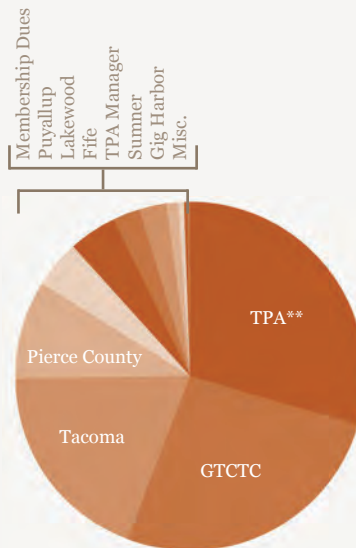
We work with Washington State Tourism Alliance [WTA] and Washington State Destination Marketing Organizations [WSDMO] to share information and bring visitors to the region.

HOW WE'RE SUPPORTED

The TRCVB 2013 annual operating budget broken down by funding source. *

*The TRCVB is funded by seven municipalities via lodging tax dollars

**TPA — Pierce County Tourism Promotion Assessment



\$1.7 million



30 Under 30

In 2013, DMAI named Marcus Carney one of 30 emerging leaders under the age of 30. Marcus was recognized for his work planning successful community events, working to develop community programs and building a positive visitor experience to ensure repeat business.

HOW WE DELIVER SERVICES TO THE VISITOR

FRONTLINE TRAINING

This year we launched an innovative frontline training program. The Visual Awareness Tour was a fundamental step in reaching our goal of delivering the best visitor experience possible. On May 10, 2013, 30 customer service professionals gathered for an interactive day of customer service training and fearless exploration. By making frontline customer service a priority, we are making the visitor experience a priority in our daily operations.



“I worked down the street from the Tacoma Art Museum for eight years, and had never stepped foot in it.”
-Frontline Visual Awareness participant

VISITOR INFORMATION CENTER

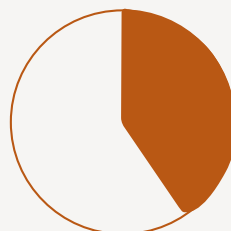
Visitors helped through the Visitor Information Center



Hours donated by volunteers

1,841

that's an average of five hours a day



We offer dining guides and make dinner reservations



HOW WE DELIVER SERVICES TO THE VISITOR

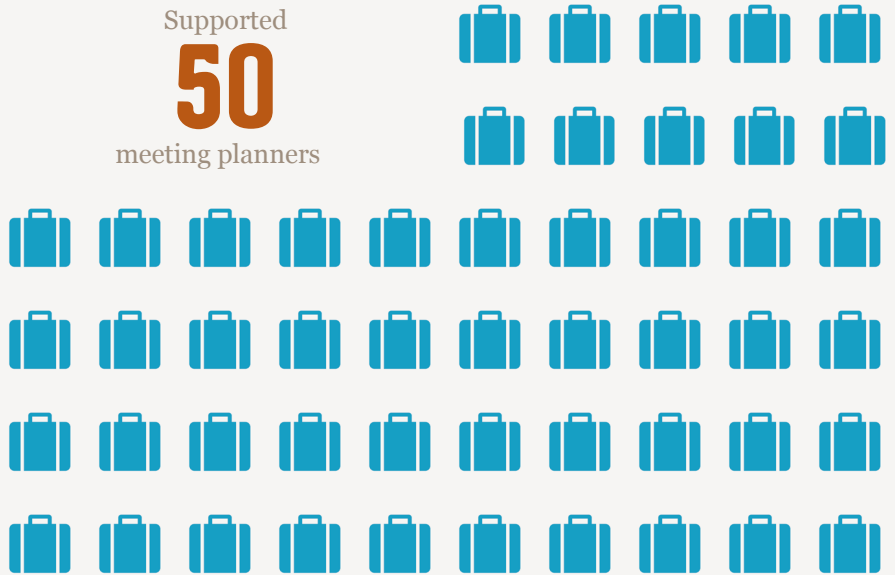
CONFERENCE SERVICES

In 2013, the TRCVB welcomed 41 meetings to the area. The TRCVB regularly works with meeting planners to help plan pre- and post-conference events and activities, facilitate transportation and provide one-sheets and other print media such as visitor guides and brochures. Ultimately, the TRCVB makes sure that conferences and events utilize Pierce County, whether meeting planners are looking for audio/visual and catering companies or activities for their group.

Services we provide:

- Hotel room block management through Meeting Max
- Customized conference webpage
- Event listing on calendar
- Providing photos of Tacoma + Pierce County for conference marketing collateral
- Pre + post conference itineraries
- Onsite concierge services
- Registration bags
- Tour + excursion arrangements
- Welcome letters
- Visitor Guides
- Brochures and maps

Supported
50
meeting planners



GROUPS SERVED IN 2013

- NWACUHO Conference [NW Assoc. of College and University Housing Officers]
- NW Family Expo
- WCMA [WA Municipal Clerks Assoc.]
- Working Waterfronts Symposium
- Society of Mosaic Artists
- National Association of Residential Property Managers
- 29th Annual Philippine Scouts Annual Reunion
- Washington State Medical Group Management Association
- Washington Farm Forestry Association
- Rhododendron Society
- Infant and Early Childhood Conference
- Geiger Elementary
- Civilian Army Couples
- Lesley University Group
- Washington Association of Landscape Architects
- PNWD-IAI [Pacific NW Division-International Assoc. for Identification]
- American Society of Womens Accountants
- WASPC [WA Assoc. of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs]
- City of Tacoma
- Graham Car Club
- Church groups
- Mother Earth News Fair
- Iris Society
- Forrest Yoga
- MATE International Under Water Robotics
- Street Scramble
- Sanger Fest
- International Association for Conflict Management
- Villanueva Wedding
- Cruise Oregon
- Reunions
- American International/ Embassy School of New Delhi West Coast Reunion
- T-Town Sailing Championships
- Emerging Filmmakers
- Pacific West Quilt Show
- Tacoma Maritime Festival
- Softball Coaches
- Governor's Industrial Safety Conference
- Tacoma Film Festival
- Farmers Insurance Group
- Council for Secular Humanism

VISITOR SPENDING

ECONOMIC IMPACT + JOBS

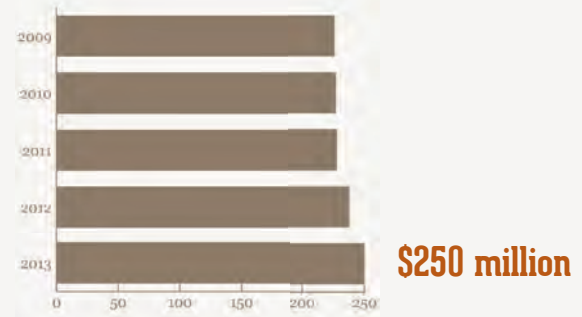
By the Numbers

Direct visitor spending benefits hotels, retailers, restaurants, attractions, transportation services and supports jobs in Tacoma, Pierce County and the Puget Sound Region. Tourism is a powerful economic generator for Pierce County. Few other investments can provide an ROI as strong as tourism promotion. When a destination is marketed consistently and effectively, the entire region experiences the economic benefits.

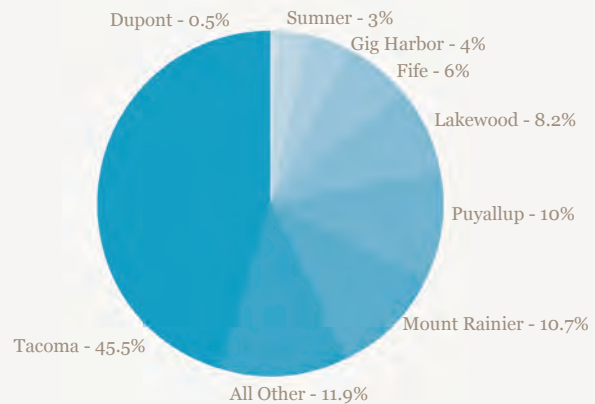
Visitor Spending in Pierce County:



Tourism Earnings in Pierce County:



WHERE VISITORS SPENT THEIR MONEY IN PIERCE COUNTY



10,550 jobs in Pierce County associated with travel earnings

*Courtesy of Dean Runyan reports 2013

2013 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Monique Trudnowski, Adriatic Grill
Dan O'Leary, Silver Cloud Inn
Ellie Chambers-Grady, City of Lakewood
Ralph Pease, Argosy Cruises
Laurie Beck, Shilo Inns
Kim Bedier, City of Tacoma
Trudy Cofchin, LeMay Family Collection
Denise Dyer, Pierce County
Jeremy Foust, Whittaker Mountaineering
Kathy Franklin, City of Gig Harbor
Mike Gommi, Courtyard Marriott
Stan Kott, Hotel Murano

Evan Marques, Eisenhower + Carlson Law
Bill McDonald, City of Puyallup
Carmen Palmer, City of Sumner
Laurel Potter, City of Fife
Joanne Selden, Museum of Glass
Skip Smith, Smith-Western Co.
Stephanie Walsh, Lakewold Gardens
Anna Sullivan, Joint Base Lewis-McChord
Kathy McGoldrick
Matt Allen, Chambers Bay Golf
Shon Sylvia, Metro Parks
Mark Horace, Hampton Inn + Suite DuPont

FEARLESS
EXPLORATION