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[FY19 Data](#)

[FY19 Highlight Video](#)

[2019 Annual Meeting](#)



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## Visit Albuquerque Highlights Achievements, Celebrates Impact of Tourism Industry at 2019 Annual Meeting

*Organization announces another year of record-breaking industry statistics*

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. – (Aug. 29, 2019) – During its Annual Meeting held at the Embassy Suites by Hilton Albuquerque this afternoon, [Visit Albuquerque](#) celebrated one of the strongest years of marketing Albuquerque as a premier visitor, convention and sports destination in its 39-year history. The organization announced an all-time high for local employment in the tourism industry, the most citywide meetings and events occurring in a single year, and a new record for lodgers' tax collections, topping \$14.4 million for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2019—a 10.8 percent increase over FY18.

Visit Albuquerque President & CEO Tania Armenta and Board of Directors Chair Jim Gay welcomed nearly 300 tourism and business professionals to the event to hear remarks from City of Albuquerque Chief Administrative Officer Sarita Nair, City Councilor Isaac Benton and Visit Albuquerque leadership.

"Tourism continues to be such a bright spot for our community. The growth this past year has been phenomenal, and it has definitely raised Albuquerque's profile across the country. We are benefitting from recent public and private investments, and the substantial job growth along with the increase of new money coming from outside the city enhances the quality of life for our residents," said Tania Armenta, President & CEO of Visit Albuquerque.

“We consider tourism to be one of the six key pillars in the economic strategy for the city, and expect to see the positive growth in tourism revenue continue,” said Sarita Nair, Chief Administrative Officer for the City of Albuquerque.

Today’s program touted the overall success of the travel and tourism industry in Albuquerque, as well as its role as a leading contributor to the city’s economy. As one of the largest private industries in the city, the tourism industry in Albuquerque:

- Generates more than \$2 billion annually.
- Employs over 44,000 people in Albuquerque, the highest employment ever for the leisure and hospitality industry.
- Brings approximately 6.2 million visitors to the city each year, which generates about \$69 million in local taxes.

Increases were reported in overall hotel performance, with hotel occupancy up 5.8 percent and average daily rate up 5.9 percent calendar year-to-date through June 2019, according to STR (formerly known as Smith Travel Research). The Albuquerque International Sunport welcomed over 5.4 million visitors in FY19, a 2.9 percent increase over FY18.

Visit Albuquerque also saw successes through dedicated marketing efforts over the past fiscal year. The organization’s PR team generated over 1,220 positive articles about the city with the potential to reach more than 1.7 billion people and an estimated publicity value of over \$3.7 million. Visit ABQ’s digital and social media efforts continue to pay off with an increased Instagram following of 55 percent and a 16.3 percent increase in web traffic to VisitABQ.org. Visit Albuquerque’s advertising campaigns generated nearly 85 million impressions across seven different channels.

Additional key visitor data for FY19 included successes in bookings and service:

- Meetings, conventions and sporting events occurring in FY19 generated 237,323 room nights, up 26.1 percent over FY18.
  - Overall business occurring also resulted in record-breaking attendance at 335,526 attendees.
- The organization hosted a record number of citywide events occurring in FY19 at 58, representing 151,961 room nights and 209,450 attendees—the highest number of attendees ever recorded for these events.
- More citywides were booked in FY19 than ever before (some occurring in FY19 as well as future years), and overall FY19 bookings represent \$91.6 million in future estimated direct spend.

- Visit Albuquerque's sales team hosted 81 meeting planner site visits and 29 prospective group tour clients.
- Meeting planners rated Visit Albuquerque's overall service 4.72 on a 5-point scale.
- With the opening of the new Visitor Information Center at the Sunport, the organization welcomed 14,368 visitors in June 2019—more than double the visitors welcomed in June 2018.

The collective effort surrounding the 2019 National Senior Games resulted in specific successes over the 12-day event. STR reported more than 23,800 additional rooms filled compared to the typical demand for that period. In partnership with the City of Albuquerque and the New Mexico Senior Olympics, Visit Albuquerque dedicated over 1,770 hours to help ensure the success of this event, which resulted in an estimated \$17 million in direct spending in the city generated by an estimated 25,000 athletes and spectators.

In addition to highlighting the successes of the past year, Visit Albuquerque also celebrated recent achievements and announced plans for the future. Following the opening of the remodeled Visitor Information Center at the Sunport in June, the organization's Visitor Information Center in Old Town will hold a soft opening this weekend at its new location—within the city's historic heart and adjacent to the up-and-coming Sawmill District—in order to better serve visitors and residents.

Kristin McGrath, Vice President of Sales, Services & Sports for Visit Albuquerque, described the department's focuses for the coming fiscal year, including capitalizing on the amateur sports market and reaching association, corporate and third-party meeting planners through an increased presence at industry tradeshows.

The organization's marketing, public relations and advertising efforts will continue to highlight cultural attractions, food and drink, and outdoor experiences over the next 12 months, boosting total ad impressions to more than 160 million. Vice President Ceela McElveny previewed additional marketing initiatives on the horizon, including adding 360-degree photos to hotels, restaurants and attractions featured on Visit Albuquerque's website and participating in the Google DMO Partnership Program, which will increase the visibility of the city and local businesses through Google rankings and referrals.

The annual meeting program also included election of new board leadership and members. Cainan Harris, general manager of Hyatt Regency Albuquerque, was named Board Chair for FY20 and Jim Gay, regional director of New Mexico Sports & Wellness; Steve Grant, owner of

the Downtown Historic Bed & Breakfast; and Damen Kompanowski, general manager of Sheraton Albuquerque Uptown, were all elected to a second term. (Please reach out to the media contact for the full list of the Board of Directors.)

In addition, the program included recognizing Visit Albuquerque volunteers—a base of over 90 individuals who serve at the organization’s Visitor Information Centers, trade conferences and local events. Two long-standing volunteers were highlighted during the program: Pat Wittman for 19 years and Tom Grasser for 17 years of service.

Armenta closed by thanking attendees and emphasizing the real impact the tourism industry has on Albuquerque, adding that none of these successes would be possible without the support of the community and the industry. “Our city is a premium and authentic destination, and Visit Albuquerque looks forward to an exciting and even stronger year ahead,” said Armenta.

#### **About Visit Albuquerque**

Visit Albuquerque is an accredited destination marketing organization (DMO), and a private, not-for-profit organization [501(c)(6)]. The mission of Visit Albuquerque is to stimulate economic growth by marketing Albuquerque as a convention, sports and visitor destination. For more information, go to [www.VisitABQ.org](http://www.VisitABQ.org).

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