

A N N U A L R E P O R T

the
Fort Worth
Story

2 0 1 7

VISIT
FORT
WORTH



IMPACT *of* TOURISM 2017

9.1 Million
visitors

23,000+
jobs

\$2.4 Billion
annual economic impact
direct & indirect spending

\$116 Million
local tax revenues

\$598
tax relief per household

Source: 2017 Study by Tourism Economics,
An Oxford Economics Company

the Fort Worth Story

Record numbers of visitors are discovering our city.

Now we must work together to share this with all who seek
an exceptional city for business, fun and more.

WE ALL MAKE UP THE FORT WORTH STORY.





VOLUMES OF TASTE

Our culinary scene has blossomed, from traditional Texan to globally inspired. Visitors give high marks to Fort Worth dining.



PHOTO CREDIT: NEAR SOUTH STUDIOS

PLOT TWIST

Filmmakers are returning to Fort Worth, bringing hundreds of commercials, shows and other moving-image projects. The Fort Worth Film Commission is working to continue this momentum.



SOUND TRACKS

Recognized as the first music-friendly city in Texas,

Fort Worth is embracing creative talent and

celebrating new sounds.



PAGE TURNER

Investment in attractions is helping write Fort Worth's next chapter in tourism. The Fort Worth Zoo – number four in the nation – is preparing to open the first phase of a \$100 million project in new and expanded animal exhibits.



PHOTO CREDIT: SUNDANCE SQUARE

SHOPPING COVERED

With new boutiques, outlets and luxury options from north to south, Fort Worth has more shopping than ever before to satisfy this top activity visitors crave.

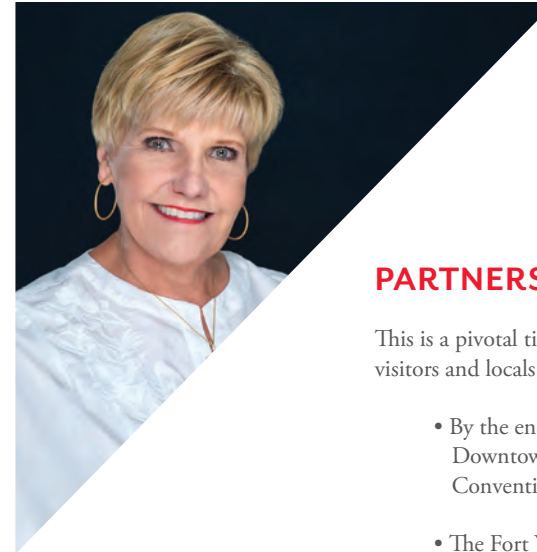


HOME PAGE

*New hotels are emerging at the strongest pace
in a decade, reflecting the growing demand for
visiting Fort Worth.*

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PARTNERS IN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

This is a pivotal time for tourism in Fort Worth, with many developments that will benefit visitors and locals alike.

- By the end of 2018, TEXRail will connect DFW International Airport with Downtown Fort Worth. The commuter rail's proximity to the Fort Worth Convention Center and hotels makes Fort Worth an even greater meeting package.
- The Fort Worth Zoo – number four in the nation – has undertaken a \$100 million expansion of exhibits. The Zoo is already ranked one of our top attractions, and this new development will only enhance its profile.
- Dickies Arena is marching toward completion in late 2019 and will change the way we think about entertainment here. Not only will Dickies Arena offer 14,000 seats for concerts, sporting events, and even the rodeo, it will serve as the perfect complement to Will Rogers Coliseum and the Convention Center downtown.
- The \$200 million renovation of the Fort Worth Stockyards is taking visible shape, bringing a breath of fresh air to one of the most historic parts of Fort Worth.
- And developments from Tanger Outlets to Sundance Square to Clearfork are giving visitors more options for shopping and dining – two top activities for tourism.

Amid this growth, we also must work on the challenges facing our city. This includes tackling the transportation needs of a rapidly growing city, as well as maintaining our culture of friendliness and inclusivity.

I am excited about the future because now, more than ever, we are all working together toward a better Fort Worth.

In 2017, the City of Fort Worth and Chamber of Commerce each completed landmark strategic plans for economic development, working closely together on goals and strategies.

I am excited that these will be joined by Visit Fort Worth's Destination Master Plan. When we invest in tourism, we support jobs and local business. We also raise our profile by introducing our city to new visitors coming here for fun, business or both.

With more than 9 million visitors per year and a \$2.4 billion economic impact, it's clear that our city is not only represented by industries such as aviation and logistics – we are also in the tourism business.

BETSY PRICE

Mayor, City of Fort Worth

2017 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

JULIE H. WILSON, Chairman*
Reasons Group Inc.

ROSA NAVEJAR, Vice Chairman*
The Rios Group

RANDY GIDEON
Immediate Past Chairman*
Gideon Holdings, LLC

DAVE FULTON, Secretary/Treasurer*
Fort Worth Hilton Hotel

SUSAN ALANIS**
City of Fort Worth

LARRY ANFIN
Community Volunteer

BRAD BARNES**
Fort Worth Stock Show & Rodeo

HENRY BORBOLLA
Ciera Bank

JESSICA BRANDRUP**
Marketing Committee Chair
Kimbell Art Museum

JENNIFER BROOKS
Brooks Educational Consultants

DAVID COOKE*
City of Fort Worth

JULIE FAVER-DYLLA**
Hotel Association of Tarrant County

MAE FERGUSON**
Fort Worth Sister Cities International

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Firestone & Robertson Distilling Company

TRACY GILMOUR
Sundance Square

MATT HOMAN**
Dickies Arena Fort Worth

JOSH HEIDENREICH*
Omni Hotel Fort Worth

JOHN HERNANDEZ**
Hispanic Chamber of Commerce

DEVOYD JENNINGS**
Metropolitan Black Chamber of Commerce

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Del Frisco's Double Eagle Steak House

DIONE KENNEDY**
Performing Arts Fort Worth

BRENDA KOSTHORYZ
Hickman Investments

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Reata Restaurant/
JMK Holdings Management

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Texas Motor Speedway

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Near Southside, Inc.

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Bureau of Engraving & Printing

BRANT RINGLER**
ESPN Events/Lockheed Martin
Armed Forces Bowl

VAN ROMANS**
Fort Worth Museum of
Science & History

RED SANDERS**
Red Productions

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Sales Committee Chair
Embassy Suites Fort Worth

DENNIS SHINGLETON*
Fort Worth City Council
District 7

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City of Fort Worth

ANDY TAFT*
Downtown Fort Worth, Inc.

MICHAEL TOTHE**
Dean & DeLuca Invitational
at Colonial

JERRE TRACY**
Historic Fort Worth, Inc.

MELONYE WHITSON**
Fort Worth Chamber of Commerce

KAREN WILEY**
Arts Council of Fort Worth
& Tarrant County

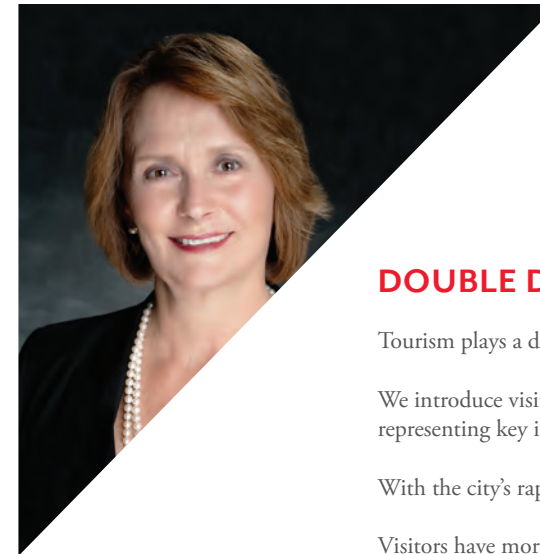
ALEXIS WILSON**
Fort Worth Zoo

JOHN YEUNG
Sheraton Fort Worth
Hotel Downtown

ANN ZADEH
Fort Worth City Council
District 9

*Executive Committee
**Ex Officio

as of September 30, 2017



DOUBLE DOWN ON TOURISM

Tourism plays a distinct and vital role in the economic development of our city.

We introduce visitors to the city. We bring tourists, meetings and conventions, many representing key industries such as aviation, energy, education and health care.

With the city's rapid growth, now is the time to double down on tourism.

Visitors have more things to do than ever. The developments along the Trinity River are redefining our city. We are seeing the first wave of hotel development in a decade.

Our western heritage remains a calling card for conventions and international visitors. In addition, Fort Worth's funky town vibe is feeding innovation in food, music and film.

Now is the time to increase our investment in drivers for tourism:

- expansion of the convention center
- a new convention headquarters hotel
- transportation solutions for visitors and locals
- unique attractions and experiences

The work is underway. Sundance Square's investment in downtown is returning dividends in convention bookings. Dickies Arena, now more than a third complete, will redefine entertainment. The new Whiskey Ranch has already become a must-see attraction.

The Fort Worth Zoo's national reputation will be enhanced even more by its \$100 million in new and expanded animal exhibits. The Stockyards' \$175 million makeover will help preserve and enhance that district. And entrepreneurs are developing hip and memorable dining experiences across the city.

Working together, we can make Fort Worth a must-visit destination for visitors from around Texas and the world.

JULIE H. WILSON
Chairman, Visit Fort Worth Board of Directors

2017 FORT WORTH CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU STAFF

ROBERT L. JAMESON
President & CEO

LINDA JINGLES
Executive Assistant

MEETING SALES

JOHN CYCHOL
Vice President of Meeting Sales

MELANIE HOOVER
Assistant Vice President of Meeting Sales

JUANA BARBA-ADAME
Convention Sales Assistant

VELEDA DEWBERRY
Director of Sales –
Southeast Region

JASON SANDS
Director of Sports Marketing

DOUGLAS J. DVORAK
Director of Sales –
Midwest Region

ROGER FREEMAN
Director of Sales –
Eastern Region

JULIE GORMAN
Director of Sales –
Western Region

CARRIE HUFF
Senior National Sales Director

CASSIE POSS
Sports Coordinator

ALEX REDLIN
National Sales Manager –
Executive Business Meetings

MELISSA RITCHIE
Director of Sales –
Mid-Atlantic Region

STEFANIE SCHAFNER
National Sales Manager –
Executive Business Meetings

ELIZABETH STORY
Convention Sales Assistant

ANDREA TIMBES
CRM Analyst

MARY WILSON
Director of Sales –
Central Texas Region

MARKETING

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Vice President of Marketing

IRENE CHASE
Tourism Sales & Marketing Coordinator

JESSICA CHRISTOPHERSON
Director of Marketing
& Film Commissioner

SARAH COVINGTON
Assistant Director of Public Relations

HILLARY DUPRIEST
Content Coordinator

TAYLOR HARDY
Marketing & Film Coordinator

DENISE HAWKINS
Director of Visitor Services

TOM MARTENS
Creative Director

ESTELA MARTINEZ-STUART
Director of Tourism

CISSY NIXON
Marketing Coordinator

DRU OLIVER
General Services Assistant

MEGHAN RIDDLESBURGER
Main Street Visitor Center Manager

CONVENTION SERVICES

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Director of Convention Services

STEPHANIE GARCIA
Convention Services Manager

HEATHER HUHN
Convention Services Manager

APRIL MONTEZ
Convention Services Manager

PAOLA BOWMAN
Convention Services Manager

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Vice President of Finance
& Administration

CHERYL WILSON
Finance & Human Resource
Manager

FRAN COLLINS
Receptionist

CATHERINE LOCSIN
Administrative Assistant, Finance & HR

THE FORT WORTH HERD

KRISTIN JAWORSKI
Trail Boss

DEWAYNE WALDRUP
Herd Operations Supervisor

AMY WEATHERHOLTZ
Herd Coordinator

as of September 30, 2017



VISIT FORT WORTH

It's a new day for tourism in Fort Worth.

To take advantage of the opportunities before us, we have a lot of work to do. But we have a sturdy foundation upon which to build.

For the first time, the number of visitors has surpassed 9 million, continuing an upward trend in tourism for the past decade.

And tourism delivers great results for our city:

- a \$2.4 billion economic impact each year
- support for more than 23,000 jobs
- revenue that offsets the average homeowner's tax bill by about \$598

As I begin my sixth year in this role, we find ourselves embarking on new endeavors.

The Fort Worth hotel community initiated the creation of a Tourism Public Improvement District to increase our ability to secure conventions and expand the marketing reach for our city.

We have developed a Destination Master Plan, informed by thousands of community voices, to increase the impact of tourism.

We recognize that visitors come for more reasons than ever before – for conventions and meetings, for sports, music, film, family fun, amazing art and architecture, for weekends and of course for our unique brand of western heritage.

To reflect this expansive mission, we are changing our name.

Our legal name will remain the Fort Worth Convention & Visitors Bureau. But our customers will know us as Visit Fort Worth.

This is easier to remember and keeps us in line with the growing number of tourism offices that have moved away from the old, longer names.

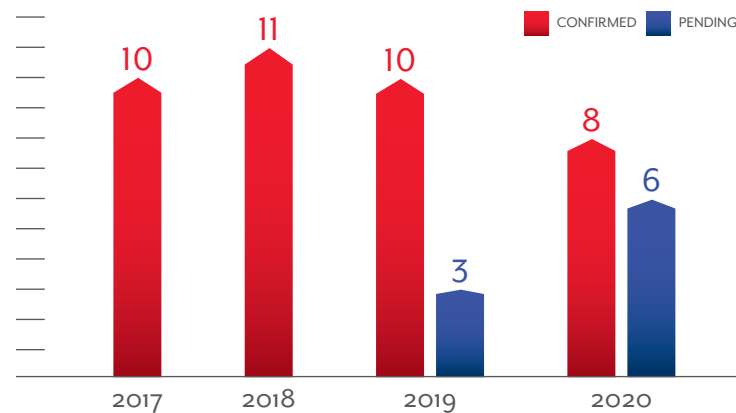
Most of all, our greatest calling card remains the achievements of our incredible partners, who are creating memorable experiences for our visitors. We are proud to share the Fort Worth story around the world.

BOB JAMESON
President & CEO

MEETINGS & CONVENTIONS



BIG CONVENTIONS ON PACE



Visit Fort Worth continues to book citywide conventions at a strong pace. These large meetings, with 1,100+ rooms on peak night, reflect the strong demand of the city as a destination. One of the largest such events, Kenneth Copeland's annual Southwest Believers Convention, marked its 50th anniversary in 2017.

INTERNATIONAL SCIENCE

Fort Worth welcomed the International Geoscience and Remote Sensing Symposium (IGARSS) international convention in 2017. Visit Fort Worth won a successful bid for the convention over Washington D.C and Los Angeles, and promoted attendance at the 2016 meeting in China. More than 2,000 attendees from 49 countries attended in 2017, delivering a \$5 million economic impact to Fort Worth.



Airports Council International – North American chose Fort Worth for its 2017 annual conference, hosted by DFW International Airport. Speakers included Doug Parker, CEO of Fort Worth-based American Airlines and Mayor Betsy Price (above).



HONORING SERVICE

The legacy of a theater pioneer and long-serving educators were honored at the annual Bring Meetings Home luncheon, co-hosted by the Fort Worth Metropolitan Black Chamber of Commerce and Visit Fort Worth. Legacy Award winners were the Reverend Nehemiah Davis, presented shortly before his death, and historian Reby Cary. Reby Cary, below center with Tarrant County Commissioner Roy C. Brooks (left) and emcee Bob Ray Sanders. Bring Meetings Home Recipients were Artie Jackson, for her work with The Drifters, and educator Harnell Williams, (above) for her work with Top Ladies of Distinction.



NEW WAYS TO WELCOME CONVENTIONS

Visit Fort Worth is creating experiences to welcome conventions as meeting planners seek more entertainment-driven elements and unique venues.

For example, attendees at the 2017 National Conference on Race and Ethnicity in American Higher Education (NCORE) were greeted with a welcome reception featuring Funkytown Donuts and a DJ. Sidewalk clings, buttons and t-shirts featured the branded message "Fort Worth Welcomes All." (top and middle)

The American Council of Learned Societies selected the Kimbell Art Museum for its opening reception. Fort Worth-based Musicbed hosted several hundred guests from the film and music industry at the Community Arts Center. And the Texas Association of Convention and Visitor Bureaus opened with a River Ranch concert featuring Fort Worth's Austin Allsup (below).



FY17 RESULTS: MEETINGS MEAN BUSINESS

EVENTS	304	+1%
ROOM ATTENDANCE	143,576	+5%
SHOW ATTENDANCE	279,223	+11%
ROOM NIGHTS	279,181	+13%

OCCUPANCY	2017	2016	2015
FORT WORTH	71.5%	70.7%	68.1%
DOWNTOWN	75.7%	72.5%	75.7%

ROOM RATE	2017	2016	2015
FORT WORTH	\$103.00	\$100.31	\$99.18
DOWNTOWN	\$165.58	\$166.30	\$165.12

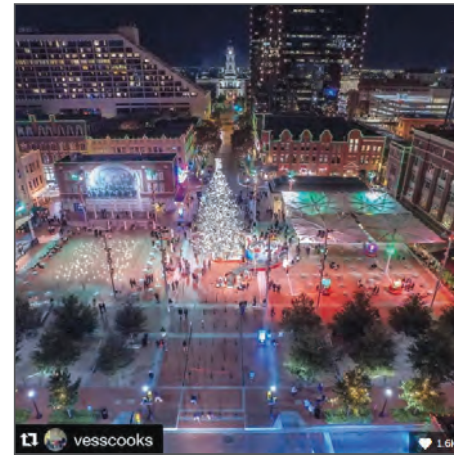
RevPAR*	2017	2016	2015
FORT WORTH	\$73.63	\$70.90	\$65.75
DOWNTOWN	\$125.38	\$120.56	\$117.17

*Revenue Per Available Room Source: Smith Travel Research

MARKETING

SOCIAL MEDIA

Visit Fort Worth's social media puts the spotlight on districts and attractions across the city.



Most Shared Facebook Post

THINGS TO DO VIDEO

- Post Reach: **433,466**
- Video Views: **145,406**
- Total Reactions, Comments & Shares: **11,240**

Most Liked Instagram

SUNDANCE SQUARE TREE

- Likes: **1,600**

Most Engaging Tweet

SUNDANCE SQUARE CHRISTMAS TREE HAS ARRIVED!

- Impressions: **18,693**
- Engagements: **1,684**

	Impressions	18,693
	Total engagements	1,684
	Media engagements	1,167
	Detail expands	195



Top Domestic Media Hits

1. American Way – The Cowboy Rides Away
2. Conde Nast Traveler – Top 6 Destinations to Watch
3. Travel Channel – BBT New Year's Eve; 8 Irresistible Sleepovers For Adults
4. Travel + Leisure – BBT Most Instagrammed Restaurants in America, Celebrating International Women's Day
5. Texas Monthly – Near Southside
6. CNN “Off the Clock” Fort Worth Herd
7. Redbook Print – This country is incredible: Bureau of Engraving and Printing
8. CountryLiving.com – 20 Unexpected Weekend Getaways to Plan This Summer
9. Dujour Online – Behind the Exhibit: Louis Kahn and The Power of Architecture
10. Southern Living – Tourism Jobs We're Totally Jealous Of

Fort Worth was named one of “6 U.S. Cities to Watch” by the prestigious *Condé Nast Traveler* magazine in 2017. Editors cited museums “that rival Houston and Dallas” and “a music scene on the verge of competing with Austin.” Also, “just because Fort Worth is evolving doesn't mean its rodeo roots aren't worth exploring.”



LEON BRIDGES HONORED

GRAMMY®-nominated recording artist Leon Bridges was honored by Visit Fort Worth in 2017 for promoting his hometown on his international tour through social media, interviews and staging during his meteoric rise.

“People travel to destinations where there is a vibrant cultural scene, and music is an important part of Fort Worth's story. Leon has helped put the spotlight back on Fort Worth music and share our story around the world. We are excited to honor him in his hometown.” said Brendon Anthony, director of Texas Music Office in the Office of the Governor, presenting the award to Bridges, who attended with his mother, Lisa Sawyer (below).

Visit Fort Worth presents the annual Hospitality Award each year at its annual meeting for contributions to the city's growth as a tourism destination. Previous honorees include Holt Hickman and the museums of the Cultural District.



SPOTLIGHT ON MUSIC

Visit Fort Worth teamed with the non-profit advocacy group Hear Fort Worth to promote the city's growing music scene. For the second time Fort Worth music was showcased at SXSW with a Fort Worth House, a day-long lineup hosted by Visit Fort Worth to promote the city. Performers included Gollay, Luke Wade, Summer Dean, Grady Spencer and the Work, Cale Tyson, Chet Stevens, and Josh Halverson. In October, Visit Fort Worth went to the UK with 14 artists – featuring Fort Worth's own Pat Green, Casey Donahew, Wade Bowen, Austin Allsup, Abraham Alexander, Luke Wade and Grady Spencer – to perform more than eight shows. Fort Worth was also able to promote at IndexFest in Fort Worth and Dallas where they provided screen printing Fort Worth t-shirts provided by Dickies.



VISITOR CENTER TRAFFIC

The Main Street Visitor Center celebrated its first full year of operation in Sundance Square. The Center features helpful information about the city, a timeline of Fort Worth history and rotating exhibits curated by the Fort Worth Museum of Science and History.

VISITOR CENTERS IN ACTION

- Main Street: **14,573**
- Stockyards: **170,024**
- Will Rogers Memorial Coliseum: **10,772**

BLOG READERS UP
66%

Readers love seeing the latest on Fort Worth. There have been more than 62 rooms booked this year directly from FortWorth.com blogs.

Top 5 Blogs in 2017

1. Local Love for Local Made: 15 stores for gifts made by locals – 12,579
2. Fort Worth Murals – 12,450
3. Top 10 Free Things to do in Fort Worth – 11,324
4. 15 Fort Worth Must Dos – 10,375
5. What to do with your Teens in Fort Worth – 9,720

TOURISM BOOKINGS JUMP

9%
2017 **34,023** FIT travelers
2016 31,169

FIT = free independent travelers to Fort Worth – people who book their own travel instead of through a group.

INTERNATIONAL



INCREASING CANADA TOURISM

A comprehensive marketing campaign in Canada helped increase room-night bookings in Fort Worth from the state's second largest source of international visitors. The campaign, celebrating Canada's 150th birthday, offered travelers with a Canadian passport hotel deals and attraction discounts. Visit Fort Worth collaborated with local musicians on the video "O, Canada" that was promoted on many social media platforms. The video featured personalities from around Fort Worth, including Cliburn CEO and Canadian Jacques Marquis (right). Fort Worth participated in two missions to Canada: with Texas Tourism and with DFW International Airport and Mayor Betsy Price.



Canada Campaign Highlights

- Expedia
- 1,370 airline tickets
- 179 Room nights
- Room night bookings up 48% YoY

Social Reach

- Unique Social Reach: 773,403
- Total Post Engagement: 213,550

Web Traffic

- 28,451 (as of July 31, 2017)

Placements in *Zoomer Magazine*, *Toronto Star*, and *Air Canada's* in flight magazine, *enRoute*



AUSTRALIA

Visit Fort Worth partnered with VisitDallas for the third year in a row on a mission to Australia and New Zealand. Fort Worth was prominently showcased at high-profile media and trade events in Sydney, Melbourne and Auckland, with more than 100 top tour operator and travel journalists in attendance. Firestone & Robertson's TX Whiskey was showcased at each event and Fort Worth musician Austin Allsup entertained, providing a sample of the music scene back home. During the mission Visit Fort Worth President and CEO Bob Jameson and Allsup were featured on Radio NZ. *Sunrise on 7*, the top national morning show in Australia, also featured Fort Worth.



MEXICO

Visit Fort Worth led a two-day mission to Mexico City to promote tourism from this top source of international visitors. Led by Mayor Betsy Price and Francisco de la Torre, consul general of Mexico for Dallas-Fort Worth, (middle right) the trip included Fort Worth Opera's announcement of "The Last Dream of Frida and Diego" about the legendary artists Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera. The Visita Fort Worth social media campaign reached more than 1.1 million Mexicans, with a 65 percent jump in page followers. Mission sponsors included DFW International Airport, where Mexico represents about a third of its 57 direct international routes; Kimbell Art Museum, which launched its *Nuestro Kimbell* dual-language program this year; and Cook Children's Health Care System, which is increasing its service to international families. Mexico is the No. 1 source of visitors to Texas.

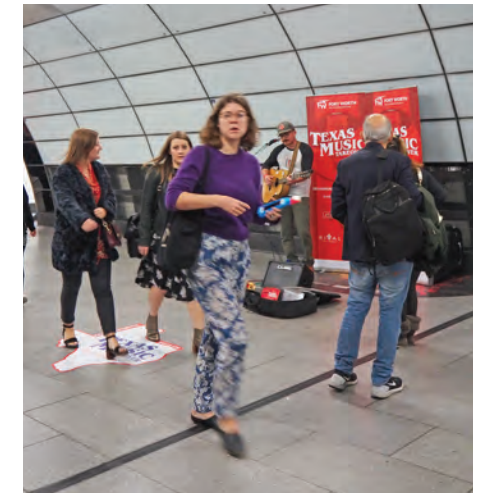
International at a Glance

5%
International visitors share of total tourism to Fort Worth

15%
International visitor spending as share of total tourism spend in Fort Worth

Top International Markets

1. Mexico
2. Canada
3. United Kingdom
4. Australia
5. China



UNITED KINGDOM

Visit Fort Worth increased marketing in the U.K. to boost tourism in the No. 1 source for overseas visitors. Fort Worth partnered with Rival Entertainment to present the second annual Texas Music Takeover in London, a six-day concert series featuring Pat Green, Casey Donahew, Austin Allsup, Abraham Alexander, Luke Wade, Joey Green, Grady Spencer and others.

Visit Fort Worth also partnered with VisitDallas to reach a younger demographic of travelers at Grillstock, a meat-and-music festival held each summer in Bristol, west of London. The organizations sponsored the grilling competition, a mechanical bull and a football video game booth.



Top International Media Hits

- Toronto Star* (Canada)
- Sunrise on 7* (Australia)
- Nylon Magazine* (Mexico)
- enRoute Magazine* (Canada)
- Travel OZ* (Australia)

SPORTS



DICKIES ARENA

The new 14,000-seat, multi-purpose Dickies Arena – set to open in November 2019 – will help further cement Fort Worth’s standing as a premier sports destination. With several NCAA and other high profile collegiate championships already booked, Dickies Arena is making waves in the sports tourism world.

Currently Booked at Dickies Arena:

- NCAA Women’s Gymnastics Championship (2020 - 2022). Fort Worth received national acclaim from hosting 2015 and 2016 Championships and the NCAA will be back for four straight years starting in 2019. Eight of the nation’s top women’s gymnastics programs will compete for the national championship live on ESPN.
- American Athletic Conference Men’s Basketball Championship (2020 - 2022). Twelve of the nation’s best men’s basketball programs will converge on Fort Worth to battle for a conference championship and a berth in the Big Dance. All games will be televised on ESPN, giving Fort Worth and Dickies Arena national visibility.
- NCAA Division I Men’s Basketball First and Second Rounds (2022). The world’s most watched basketball tournament will call Fort Worth and Dickies Arena home in 2022. Thousands of fans from across the country will converge on our city and millions will be watching at home.
- Fort Worth Stock Show and Rodeo (2020 and beyond). This 122-year staple of Fort Worth will call the new Dickies Arena home.

In addition to great sports, Dickies Arena will host high-profile concerts and other spectator events.



EQUESTRIAN STRENGTH

Fort Worth added a prominent event to the already impressive equestrian line-up at Will Rogers Memorial Center. The National Reined Cow Horse Association held its Snaffle Bit Futurity in October, its first outside the Western U.S. since its inception in 1970. The show generated an estimated \$7 million in economic impact and brought 55,000 visitors to Fort Worth. The NRCHA Snaffle Bit Futurity is contracted through 2019 with two option years beyond that.

The Appaloosa Horse Club’s board has approved returning to Fort Worth for both of their premier shows, National Appaloosa Show & World Championship Appaloosa Youth Show (June/July) and the World Championship Appaloosa Show (October/November), for 2018 – 2020 with five additional option years. Will Rogers has hosted the World Championship Appaloosa Show since 1989 and the National Appaloosa Show & World Championship Appaloosa Youth Show since 2013. The combined annual economic impact for the two shows is more than \$6.7 million.

TRI FORT WORTH

More than 500 triathletes competed in the inaugural Tri Fort Worth, the only such event in May in Texas. The event was held May 21, 2017 and included full- and half-distance races beginning at Marine Creek Lake and finishing in the heart of downtown Fort Worth. Texas is a leading state for the triathlon industry. The second annual race is scheduled for May 20, 2018.



SPORTS HUDDLE: TEXAS RANGERS

Fort Worth Sports featured Texas Rangers President & General Manager Jon Daniels with journalist Jim Reeves (top) at the second annual Sports Huddle. The new ballpark under construction in Arlington is expected to be a major asset to Tarrant County, including Fort Worth. At the event, updates on the city’s growing sports scene were announced and new Sports Director Jason Sands (middle) was introduced.

HERD HIGHLIGHTS



MAKING WAY FOR GROWTH

To make way for renovation of the historic Stockyards, the Fort Worth Herd relocated its horse barn and training facility from Mule Alley to North Houston. The new home was formerly occupied by Fort Worth Police Mounted Patrol. Renovations to the facility were made possible by the Friends of the Fort Worth Herd and the City of Fort Worth.

HONORING A LEGEND

The annual American Cowboy Gala honored U.S. Rep. Kay Granger for her lifetime dedication to making Fort Worth a better place to live and work. Also honored was Pat O'Neal for her longtime promotion and support of the Fort Worth Stockyards. At the historic Cowtown Coliseum, the event also featured tastings from more than 10 local chefs. The gala, held each summer, benefits the Friends of the Fort Worth Herd and the Coliseum.

Pictured l to r: Trail Boss Kristin Jaworski, Friends Chair Pam Minick, U.S. Representative Kay Granger, Pat O'Neal.



AMBASSADORS ON HORSEBACK

JOSE HERNANDEZ III Drover	KRISTIN JAWORSKI Trail Boss	CHRIS MACON Drover	AMY WEATHERHOLTZ Herd Coordinator	DEWAYNE WALDRUP Herd Operations Supervisor
WAYNE HICKMAN Drover	DONALD LEE Drover	DAVID MANGOLD Drover	DOUG SINGER Drover	
JEFF HOFFMAN Drover	ROBERT LITTLE Drover	TYLER PETERSON Drover	BRENDA TAYLOR Drover	



RIDE FOR THE BRAND

More than 600,000 people travel to Fort Worth each year to watch the twice-daily cattle drive. Now they can take a part of the experience home. Last summer, the Fort Worth Herd introduced a new line of shirts on FortWorth.com/The-Herd and at Stockyards-area merchants. All proceeds from merchandise sales benefit Friends of the Fort Worth Herd, a 501(c)3.

CATTLE DRIVE ATTENDANCE

653,570

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM ATTENDANCE

15,792

FUNDS RAISED BY FRIENDS OF THE FORT WORTH HERD

\$88,792

MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS

- CNN "Off the Clock" Fort Worth Herd
- The Southern Weekend
- Southern Living – Tourism Jobs We're Totally Jealous Of

FILM COMMISSION

2016-17 Project Highlights

- *The Old Man and the Gun*
- *Never Goin' Back*
- *Flip or Flop Fort Worth*
- *Sunrise on 7 Australia*
- Japan Airlines
- Toyota

Theatrical Debuts

- *A Bad Idea Gone Wrong*
- *A Ghost Story*

TEXAS FLIP & MOVE DAY

City Manager David Cooke (middle) presented a proclamation to the cast and crew of *Texas Flip N Move* recognizing February 24, 2017 as Texas Flip N Move Day. Now in its 7th season, the show has created over 1,200 jobs since its inception.

FLIP OR FLOP LAUNCH PARTY

The FWFC, HGTV and Stockyards Heritage partnered to launch of *Flip or Flop Fort Worth* with a watch party in the Stockyards in October, including comments from Ashley and Andy Williams and Mayor Betsy Price. (top)



PROJECTS ASSISTED

173

PROJECTS FILMED IN FORT WORTH

66

PITCHED PROJECTS

32

CONNECTING WITH FILMMAKERS

Working with the Texas Association of Film Commissions, the FWFC has promoted Fort Worth as a film-friendly location at high-profile film festivals and tradeshow. The Film Commission also sponsored Lone Star Film Festival filmmakers lounge for the second year.

- Sundance Film Festival
- Austin Film Festival
- SXSW
- Austin TV Festival
- Dallas International Film Festival
- Dallas Videofest
- TXAFC Los Angeles Filmmakers Brunch
- AFCI Locations Tradeshow
- ReelScreen Summit
- Lone Star Film Festival



The Fort Worth Film Commission (FWFC) celebrated its second anniversary in 2017 and reported an \$11.9 economic impact from film, television and commercial productions. The total was determined using an industry formula as recognized by the Association of Film Commissions International. In the first two years as an operating commission, FWFC assisted 323 projects, pitched 57 and tracked 136 that filmed in Fort Worth.



REDFORD FILMS IN FORT WORTH

The Fort Worth Film Commission had the opportunity to work with David Lowery's *Old Man and the Gun*, starring Robert Redford and Casey Affleck. The film shot scenes throughout Fort Worth including Downtown, Near Southside, Sundance Square, T&P Station, the Stockyards, Tarrant County College NW Campus, Tarrant County Belknap Facility, Thistle Hill, Firestone & Robertson, Frost Bank, Worthington Bank, HealthSouth and more.

The film *Never Goin' Back* filmed throughout Fort Worth during the summer and premiered at the Sundance Film Festival in January 2018.

Photo credit: Near South Studios

LEADERSHIP & CHAMPION PARTNERS



FRIENDS OF THE FORT WORTH HERD



SPECIAL PARTNERS

Visit Fort Worth extends its appreciation to these regional, national and international partners for their generous contributions and support.



For more information contact Mitch Whitten, Vice President of Marketing, MitchWhitten@FortWorth.com or 817.698.7841.

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VISIT FORT WORTH
FISCAL YEAR 2018 MARKETING PLAN

Fort Worth continues to experience record numbers of visitors for business and leisure travel. Significant enhancements to city districts were completed and further plans for attractions, infrastructure and hotels continue to be announced. The strategies in this report anticipate and support increased demand, advocate for enhancements to our city, promote Fort Worth around the world and manage the incredible opportunities ahead.

VISION

Sharing the Fort Worth welcome with the world.

MISSION

Increase the economic impact of meetings and leisure tourism by enhancing Fort Worth's hospitality industry.

HIGHLIGHTS OF VISITOR IMPACT

Leisure, Business and Convention

- \$2.4 billion in economic impact
- 9.1 million visitors to our city
- 23,000+ hospitality jobs
- \$116 million in local sales taxes
- \$598 per household saved per year in taxes generated by tourism

Source: *Tourism Economics*



ADMINISTRATION

Visit Fort Worth has established processes for strategic planning that will ensure that the organization meets yearly goals and plans for long-term growth, needs and success. These programs will continue to play a key role in FY18.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Initiate programs to enhance the destination and motivate community organizations to develop products and infrastructure that increase visitor spending and the city's quality of life.

Destination Architecture: Support and advocate for enhancements to the Fort Worth experience that attract visitors and contribute to the city's quality of life.

Customer Engagement: Increase connections with meeting customers and prospective leisure visitors through personal outreach, engaging events, social media and other tools that foster strong relationships.

Organizational Sustainability: Ensure long-term strategic planning and the commitment of resources to supporting the organization's goals.

Community Awareness: Educate and engage stakeholders and business about the benefits of tourism, conventions, visitor spending and the impact of successful destination marketing.



PLANNING AND COMMUNICATION OPPORTUNITIES

Board of Directors Retreat: Held annually to review Visit Fort Worth long- and short-term goals and plans.

Staff Leadership Retreat: Held annually with the CEO, vice presidents and directors to plan for the year ahead and review long-term needs.

Destination Advisory Boards: Convened annually with travel, tourism and convention experts and customers to provide feedback about our destination and growth opportunities.

Sales Committee: A monthly meeting of downtown hotel sales directors who coordinate efforts to secure convention-related site visits and bookings.

Marketing Committee: A quarterly meeting of marketing directors from area partners who provide feedback on Visit Fort Worth outreach strategies.

Services Update for Hospitality Partners: Quarterly meeting with hotel and hospitality partners to update on new venues, events and developments.

Film Commission Executive Committee and Advisory Board: These groups help direct efforts to increase production of TV, film and commercials in the city, bringing economic impact with them.

Annual Meeting and Annual Report: Annual event and publication to report progress and plans to stakeholders and encourage their involvement.

MEETINGS AND CONVENTIONS

CONVENTION SALES

MISSION

Promote Fort Worth as a top convention destination and ensure outstanding meeting experiences to drive demand for facilities, room nights and local businesses.

SALES OVERVIEW

The Visit Fort Worth Convention Sales Team promotes Fort Worth as one of the foremost meeting and convention destinations in the nation. Meeting planners give Fort Worth high marks for its local flavor and accessible downtown, factors that help keep demand high.

The Convention Sales Team supports bookings for hotels and event facilities through a dedicated presence based in Fort Worth with full-time representation in five key markets: Washington, D.C., Austin, Chicago, the Northeast and the Western United States.

The forecast for major conventions in 2018 is not as strong as recent years, but favorable economic conditions will generate growth in year-over-year demand and create revenue from midsize and smaller meetings.

Hotel bookings continue to reflect strong demand. As of June 1, 2017*:

OCCUPANCY	AVERAGE	DAILY RATE
City of Fort Worth	70.9%	\$102.35
Downtown Properties	73.9%	\$167.53

Substantial short-term bookings are no longer uncommon. Short-term needs for 2017-18 will require different strategies than efforts dedicated to long-term booking opportunities in 2019 and beyond. Bookings for 2018-19 are on pace.

Fort Worth is losing bids for larger conventions because there are not enough hotel rooms in proximity to the convention center to accommodate these meetings and the high demand for downtown accommodations.

Despite the loss of certain meeting bids, the long-term forecast is favorable and will likely sustain or even surpass the current growth rate.

In response to the 2014 Market & Feasibility Study, the City of Fort Worth aims to develop a 1,000-room hotel on the east side of the Convention Center. The Study called for adding 1,400 hotel rooms to the downtown hotel package. In addition to downtown, there is product development interest in other areas of the city, including the Cultural District and Alliance. Fort Worth is experiencing new hotel development, primarily select service, with 3 downtown properties to open in 2017 and additional out into the future in the northern, southwest and airport sectors.

A second convention hotel would complement the Omni Fort Worth Hotel on the west side of the convention facility. It could also be adjacent to TexRail commuter rail service from DFW International Airport to downtown, planned to arrive in 2018.

STRATEGY: Pursue short-term bookings to address needs and opportunities in 2017-18.

TACTICS

- Offer meeting planners a “you stay, we pay” room rebate program, limited to select new bookings and offering financial incentives based on occupancy, up to 1,000 total room nights.
- Encourage local groups to book a meeting here and promote the benefits and importance of bringing meetings home.
- Reach meeting planners through targeted digital marketing and social media.

STRATEGY: Pursue long-term bookings to address needs and opportunities in 2019-20.

TACTICS

- Offer meeting planners an adapted “you stay, we pay” room rebate program, limited to larger new bookings at the Fort Worth Convention Center for 2019-20, that provides financial incentives based on occupancy. Building a strong group base of business is critical to the destination’s success in those years.
- Encourage local groups to book a meeting here and promote the benefits and importance of bringing meetings home.
- Reach meeting planners through targeted digital marketing and social media.



STRATEGY: Identify new accounts to enhance future sales.

TACTICS

- Shift emphasis in destination education programs from quantity of events and attendees to fewer, more specialized opportunities for meeting planners to draw the best prospective customers.
- Identify new prospects by enhancing our partnership with a specialized meetings industry marketing vendor.
- Host customer entertainment events in key markets: Austin, Washington, D.C., Chicago and New York.
- Enhance the “Bring Meetings Home” program to identify new business from companies with Fort Worth headquarters or a significant local presence.
- Host an annual recognition event for local businesses, community members and customers who help bring meetings business to Fort Worth.



STRATEGY: Develop a yearly, integrated marketing plan to reach event management, logistics and meeting resource companies.

TACTICS

- Increase targeted advertising and promotions through trade partners.
- Work closely with Fort Worth Convention Center staff to identify weeks and months when bookings are needed most.
- Research and identify accounts that are a good fit for Fort Worth and work proactively with hotels to produce bids for submittal.
- Conduct monthly Sales Committee Meetings with key members of the city’s hospitality industry to discuss business development strategies such as reviewing target periods and key accounts.

STRATEGY: Continue efforts in the sports market and leverage the city’s facilities to secure more sports-related meetings and events.

TACTICS

- Continue to implement sports consultant’s recommendations.
- Enhance Visit Fort Worth’s voice in sports marketing through personal outreach by the sales manager, targeted marketing and online engagement.
- Partner with TCU and other local higher education institutions on potential NCAA and Big 12 Conference championship events and business meeting opportunities.
- Partner with the City of Fort Worth Parks and Community Services to evaluate bidding opportunities and the ability to use facilities for such events.

- Identify future event opportunities with the University Interscholastic League.
- Identify key need periods and facilities to generate new business.

TRADE SHOWS AND CONFERENCES

The following is a list of trade shows, conferences and client networking events that members of the Visit Fort Worth sales team will attend in 2017-18.

- IMEX America
- Connect Faith
- American Express INTER[action]
- ConferenceDirect CEO Summit
- MPI Hill Country Chapter Texas Education Conference
- National Coalition of Black Meeting Planners Education Conference
- Society of Government Meeting Planners Annual Conference
- Nursing Organizations Alliance Fall Summit
- U.S. Sports Congress Annual Conference
- IAEE Annual Meeting & Exhibition EXPO
- Association Forum Holiday Showcase
- Professional Convention Management Association Convene
- PBR Customer Event in NYC
- Connect Specialty
- Southwest Showcase
- Connect Diversity
- International Franchise Association Annual Conference
- Meeting Professionals International WEC
- DMAI Destinations Showcase
- ASAE Xperience Design Project
- Georgia MPI Annual Customer Event
- IMEX Frankfurt
- IMEX America
- DFW Association Executives Association Day 2017
- ConferenceDirect Annual Partners Meeting
- National Association of Sports Commissions Sports Event Symposium
- U.S. Sports Congress Sponsor Forum
- TSAE Summer Event
- IAEE Central Texas Chapter Summer Event
- Helms Briscoe Annual Business Conference
- Direct Selling Association Annual Meeting
- Professional Conference Managers Association Education Conference
- CESSE Annual Meeting
- DMAI Annual Convention
- ASAE Annual Meeting
- Connect Sports
- HPN Partner Conference
- Texas Society of Association Executives Annual Meeting
- Congressional Black Caucus Annual Legislative Conference



CONVENTION SERVICES

MISSION

Convention Services is a highly productive team that serves as a liaison to over 300 meeting planners annually to ensure overall customer satisfaction. The team strategically works in collaboration with Fort Worth hospitality partners to support the meeting planner/event organizer and enhance the convention/event attendee experience, increasing economic impact as a result.

OVERVIEW

In a city known for warm and friendly hospitality, the team aims to be a reliable source of information from the time of confirmation through completion of a meeting or event in the city. Meeting planners rely on the expertise of the Convention Services Team to provide creative ways to connect partners and showcase local flavor to enhance their events and attract prospective attendees. The department has earned numerous awards, including *Meetings & Conventions* magazine's Gold Service Award.

STRATEGY: Provide meeting planners and event organizers innovative tools to engage their audiences and boost attendance.

TACTICS

- Leverage the new FortWorth.com meeting planner toolkit, which includes self-service resources like photography, video, logos, suggested itineraries and more.
- Offer digital marketing tools and content to promote Fort Worth.
- Employ social media strategies to engage attendees before and during their event.
- Engage partners to ensure we provide the best resources and newest venues to meeting and event customers.
- Provide Destination Education opportunities for qualified planners showcasing unique and diverse opportunities in Fort Worth.
- Develop promotional and attendance-building materials that engage attendees.

- Promote housing services for increased room night actualization.
- Provide community resources including sustainability and community service/volunteer information, as well as health and wellness initiatives.
- Facilitate a customer satisfaction survey with a goal of 97 percent satisfaction rating.
- Conduct quarterly meeting with Convention Center and full-service hotels to network and discuss upcoming conventions and opportunities.

ACTION CALENDAR

- Event Service Professionals Association Annual Conference
- Professional Convention Management Association (PCMA) – Convening Leaders
- Valentine's Dinner in Austin, Texas
- DMAI
- TACVB Annual Conference
- Simpleview Summit
- CMP Conclave
- TxACOM
- MPI
- PartyFest
- Celebrate Fort Worth
- Fort Worth Initiative
- Steer FW
- Connect Meetings



ATTENDANCE-BUILDING TRIPS

The Convention Services Team will promote Fort Worth to build future attendance at conventions and meetings in Fort Worth, especially:

- Texas Municipal League – Houston, TX
- Science Teachers Association of Texas – Houston, TX
- National Tour Association – San Antonio, TX
- Texas Speech-Language-Hearing Association – Houston, TX
- National Wood Flooring Association – Tampa, FL

MARKETING

MISSION

Promote and enhance the value of the Fort Worth brand so that it offers a compelling experience for conventions and tourism. Promote business through aggressive public relations, advertising, social media and further online engagement, visitor services and activities with area partners.

OVERVIEW

Building on recent staff alignments, the Marketing Department is working to coordinate messaging and outreach to consumers, meeting planners, travel trade, media and visitors in town. This integrated approach enables outreach to both domestic and international markets with multi-channel support from business-to-business, media and consumer marketing.

Visit Fort Worth has modernized the Fort Worth brand with a marketing campaign that builds on the city's Western heritage and at the same time reflects the many new offerings for visitors. Marketing efforts promote the wide selection of experiences in arts, culture, Western heritage, sports, shopping, recreation and more.

We will continue to create a sense of urgency to plan travel to Fort Worth, especially through promotions and online engagement.



PUBLIC RELATIONS & ADVERTISING

STRATEGY: Engage prospective visitors, media and travel trade through owned media online channels.

TACTICS

- Leverage the website FortWorth.com to engage customers in travel planning and encourage them to explore our city. Strong content development and integration of social media into the website increased conversion from Facebook to FortWorth.com in FY17.
- Increase social media engagement with more use of video, images and best practices recommended by a FY17 study.
- Analyze web data to leverage popular pages and update or consolidate lower performing pages to create a more user-friendly site.
- Integrate social media content produced by local influencers and direct it to prospective visitors. Engage these locals as an extension of our content team.

STRATEGY: Engage audiences through targeted paid advertising, including paid social media, that reaches prospects in the right place and at the right time.

TACTICS

- Deploy substantial digital advertising to reach the most likely travelers to Fort Worth specifically focused in Texas and surrounding states.
- Prioritize customer segments based on ongoing market research, including new information from Buxton, Arrivalist, Sojern and TripAdvisor.
- Drive traffic to FortWorth.com through advertising and social media. Using data from the website, focus advertising to grow engagement to specific audiences.
- Focus our message on experiences most relevant to those likely to travel here and meet in Fort Worth, especially in the categories of Western heritage, arts and culture, culinary and recreation.

STRATEGY: Engage audiences through earned media (i.e., public relations), particularly to influencers and leading journalists..

TACTICS

- Engage domestic and international travel writers, photographers, bloggers and social media influencers to produce positive comment about visiting Fort Worth.
- Increase engagement with partners such as the State of Texas and DFW International Airport to take advantage of and share costs for media mission opportunities to Fort Worth.
- Leverage our New York-based PR agency, which specializes in travel and tourism, to reach high-profile publications, travel and consumer writers, editors and TV producers, including *The New York Times* and *American Way*.
- Monitor PR effectiveness with a sophisticated dashboard that measures the impact and tone of articles distributed online, via social media channels and in print publications.

STRATEGY: Execute a tightly defined international strategy focused on top countries that send travelers to Texas. While 70 percent of our visitors come from within 300 miles of Fort Worth, international visitors are increasing, stay longer and spend more.

TACTICS

- Partner with the VisitDallas in Australia, UK, Germany and China, sharing costs for missions, advertising, market research, public relations and product development with the travel trade.
- Focus efforts on top markets: Mexico, Canada, UK, Germany, Brazil, China and Australia.
- Attend New York event for nation's top travel media.
- Increase outreach with Spanish-language media (traditional and online), including multicultural familiarization trips.
- Leverage strategic partnerships including Texas Tourism in the Office of the Governor's Economic Impact and Tourism Department, Brand USA, DFW International Airport and VisitDallas to extend our efforts.



TOURISM

STRATEGY: Increase the production of tourism hotel leads and partner referrals by promoting Fort Worth, with our partners, as a premier destination for group, incentive and leisure travel.

TACTICS

- Continue to conduct training and presentations to the travel trade in key domestic and international markets. Though international visitors account for 5% of the total market, they account for 15% of the spending total.
- Identify travel promotion opportunities with key partners, airlines and the travel trade market.
- Use online destination experiences platforms to market and reach new consumers, also as content tour operators can sell.
- Develop and promote Fort Worth outreach and education in key languages.

STRATEGY: Increase bookings from domestic and international customers.

TACTICS

- Partner with Brand USA, receptive operators, tour operators and airlines on co-op promotion and advertising opportunities.
- Use Online Travel Agencies (OTAs) like Expedia and Orbitz to increase awareness of Fort Worth hotel offerings, special events and attractions.
- Host educational familiarization trips for the trade.
- Develop opportunities in emerging markets.
- Increase visibility and use of the booking engine on FortWorth.com to increase room night production.
- Develop dynamic package offerings with hotel and attraction partners.
- Work with Visit Fort Worth Community Grant recipients to maximize room nights.

- Work with the new Visit DFW regional tourism coalition.

STRATEGY: Increase tourism related to multicultural markets.

TACTICS

- Leverage partnerships with local organizations, especially Chamber of Commerce, the Fort Worth Hispanic Chamber, Fort Worth Sister Cities International, the Fort Worth Metropolitan Black Chamber and the North Texas LGBT chamber.
- Create co-op advertising and promotion opportunities for these markets.

FILM COMMISSION

STRATEGY: Increase economic impact by securing productions of television, film, video games and more through the Fort Worth Film Commission.

TACTICS

- Work with productions to identify Fort Worth locations and crew.
- Represent Fort Worth city and district filming regulations to help productions do business here.
- Cultivate visibility and appreciation for film productions to create a film-friendly environment and, long-term, support growth of the city's creative class.



VISITOR SERVICES

STRATEGY: Explore and identify locations and concepts for the relocation of the Stockyards Visitor Center.

TACTICS

- Identify methods, processes and staffing for Stockyards Visitor Center retail.
- Review staffing and volunteer shifts to ensure adequate coverage during high traffic times in Visitor Center.

- Research mobile visitor opportunities to reach the visitors during high season and special events.

STRATEGY: Leverage the enhanced downtown visitor center.

TACTICS

- Use the newly redesigned space to create a must-stop destination for visitors, to lure pedestrian traffic.
- Continue to expand retail operation and evaluate results for first year.
- Activate the visitor center during major downtown festivals and events.

STRATEGY: Research current trends to develop and expand a retail component for all Visitor Centers.

TACTICS

- Expand the current retail offerings to include local flare of Fort Worth and Texas.
- Research best practices for staffing.



THE FORT WORTH HERD

MISSION

Enhance the distinctive Western heritage of the Stockyards National Historic District through an authentic experience appealing to visitors of all ages. In its 18-year history, more than 7 million people have watched the twice-daily cattle drive and participated in Herd educational programs.

OVERVIEW

The Fort Worth Herd provides a unique and engaging experience for visitors to the Stockyards National Historic District. The Herd cattle drive operates twice daily on historic Exchange Avenue.

STRATEGY: Ensure on-time daily operations.

TACTICS

- Conduct twice-daily cattle drive at 11:30 a.m. and 4p.m. on Exchange Avenue in the Stockyards National Historic District.
- Serve as ambassadors on horseback, engaging with audiences from around the world and answering questions about Fort Worth's Western heritage.

- Ensure well-being and care of livestock and horses.

STRATEGY: Expand educational programming and visitor experience.

TACTICS

- Ensure educational program is current with Texas Essential Knowledge & Skills (TEKS) state requirements.
- Distribute evaluation survey to participating teachers to assist in maintaining excellent rating and incorporate improvement suggestions.
- Perform Cow Camp during events and peak weekends to engage audiences.
- Participate in the Stockyards Adventure Pass, by reservation.

STRATEGY: Enhance Herd awareness and fundraising.

TACTICS

- Continue to engage and leverage the expertise of Friends of the Fort Worth Herd, the nonprofit organization supporting special needs of The Herd.
- Expand trading card initiative to increase brand awareness and drive traffic to The Herd webpage and social media sites.
- Boost webpage and social media awareness through co-op promotions.
- Increase financial support in the form of corporate sponsorships and grants and in-kind donations.
- Use special-event steer to maximize special appearance opportunities with corporate groups, events and meetings.
- Host annual fundraising gala to raise profits to support education program and marketing efforts.
- Launch GoFundMe account to initiate new fundraising campaigns.

- Create and implement Herd merchandising program to increase revenue and support for Friends of the Fort Worth Herd and to create brand awareness.





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