

TRAVEL  
**TACOMA+**  
PIERCE COUNTY, WA

# ANNUAL REPORT 2015

Thank you to our sponsor partner for their support



## Come explore all that Metro Parks Tacoma has to offer!

Tacoma citizens formed the first independent park district in Washington state more than a century ago. Today, Metro Parks Tacoma is among the elite nationally accredited park systems in our country. Here are just a few of the many unique attractions and amenities you'll find in our parks.



### Northwest Trek Wildlife Park:

Hop aboard an open air tram, zipline through the park's woodlands or explore nature through the eyes of a child in Kids' Trek.

### Tacoma Nature Center:

Explore hiking trails, Discovery Pond adventure playground, nature preschool and year round events in this urban oasis.

### W.W. Seymour Botanical Conservatory:

Drop by for a daily dose of tranquility. Or, join us for dynamic events and programs including live music, children's story hour, yoga, art and plant exhibitions and more.



## POINT DEFIANCE PARK



**Forest and Gardens:** Reconnect with nature amid hundreds of acres of ancient forest and eight botanical gardens.

**Fort Nisqually Living History Museum:** Travel back in time as you discover this home to National Historic Landmarks.

**Marina/Boathouse:** Get on the water and experience Puget Sound! See us for boat and fishing gear rentals.

**Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium:** Move with meerkats or high five a polar bear at the Northwest's only combined zoo & aquarium.



[metroparkstacoma.org](http://metroparkstacoma.org)

# A PLACE FOR FEARLESS EXPLORATION



TRAVEL

**TACOMA+**

PIERCE COUNTY, WA

DuPont | Fife | Gig Harbor | Lakewood | Mount Rainier | Puyallup | Sumner

**TRAVELTACOMA.COM**

Home of Chambers Bay Golf Course,  
site of the 2015 U.S. Open Championship.

# ABOUT US

## Mission: To Deliver Tourism to Pierce County

Travel Tacoma + Pierce County increases visitor spending and overnight stays through strategic sales and marketing initiatives in partnership with our customers, partners and funding 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 the Destination Marketing Organization

Destination marketing organizations [DMO] serve as the focal point of the tourism communities they represent with the goal of enhancing the long-term competitiveness of their destination. Travel Tacoma + Pierce County, a private, non-profit marketing organization, has served as Pierce County's official DMO for more than 20 years. The goals of these marketing efforts are to improve the visitor experience and enhance economic prosperity by bringing meetings and visitors to the region.

## 2015 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

|   |                                     |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| Jeremy Foust, <i>Chair</i>                      | Whittaker Mountaineering            |
| Laurie Beck, <i>Chair Elect</i>                 | Shilo Inn + Suites                  |
| Evan Marques, <i>Treasurer</i>                  | Eisenhower + Carlson PLLC           |
| Becky Newton, <i>Secretary</i>                  | City of Lakewood                    |
| Monique Trudnowski, <i>Immediate Past Chair</i> | Adriatic Grill                      |
| Al Abbott                                       | Carrot Stick Marketing              |
| Brenda Arline                                   | City of Puyallup                    |
| Carmen Palmer                                   | City of Sumner                      |
| Carol Ann McQuade                               | The Swiss Restaurant & Pub          |
| Dean Burke                                      | South Sound Sports Commission       |
| Denise Dyer                                     | Pierce County                       |
| Joanne Selden                                   | Selden Furniture                    |
| Kathy Franklin                                  | The Maritime Inn/City of Gig Harbor |
| Kim Bedier                                      | City of Tacoma                      |
| Laurel McQuade                                  | City of Fife                        |
| Mark Horace                                     | Hampton Inn & Suites                |
| Mike Gommi                                      | Courtyard Marriott [formerly]       |
| Matt Allen                                      | Chambers Bay                        |
| Pat Nagle                                       | Harmon Pub & Brewery                |
| Roshaun Yates                                   | Lifestyle Valet                     |
| Shon Sylvia                                     | Metro Parks Tacoma                  |
| Steve James                                     | Daffodil Festival                   |

## TEAM VALUES

**Visitor First** – We will always consider the primary reason we exist – to be a resource and voice for the visitor.

**Accountability** – We hold ourselves accountable to each other and our community.

**Collaboration** – We actively collaborate with our strongest resources – each other, our community and our destination.

**Creativity** – We strive to be creative dreamers who are not satisfied with following the crowd, and will have fun as we work outside the box.

**Innovation** – We don't accept the status quo but look to what will come, or what can come next.

### Credits

Cover image: *Courtesy of Pierce County and Grit City Photography*  
Editors: *Matt Wakefield and Jaime Vogt*  
Graphic designer: *Jenny Curtiss*



# STATE OF THE INDUSTRY

Dear Tourism Partners,

By nearly every industry metric available, 2015 was a banner year for tourism in Tacoma + Pierce County. Hotel projects that will total more than 1,000 new rooms moved forward. Our partners set records for attendance and occupancy. China's president Xi Jinping included Tacoma in his September visit to the U.S. You could feel the momentum. And when the U.S. Open came to town, the entire tourism community came together to elevate the destination on the world stage.

In 2015, more than 5.9 million visitors and meeting attendees came through the region and added a total of \$1.09 billion to our Pierce County economy. That's an increase of 3.9 percent over 2014, which was the first year that we were officially a billion-dollar industry. Our hotel partners' successes can be seen in terms of occupancy [up 7.7 percent compared to 2014], average daily rate [up 4.7 percent] and revenue per available room [RevPAR] [up 12.8 percent].

For our county as a whole, the opportunities presented by the U.S. Open Championship were extraordinary. Before and during the championship, the media were publishing articles as fast as they could churn them out, about the championship, Chambers Bay Golf Course and the region. Visitors descended with golf on their minds. During the championship, hotels saw occupancy up 32 percent from the previous year and RevPAR up 150 percent. It was an event that thrust the region into the international spotlight. While we will strive for more such events [Pierce County has already extended an invitation to host the U.S. Open again], the resulting \$134 million regional economic impact from the championship will be an exception for the near future.

In the meantime, we at Travel Tacoma will continue doing business in the way that's yielded consistent year-over-year growth. Our sales team, who met with more than 150 meeting planners during more than 50 events, will continue to represent Tacoma + Pierce County around the country to bring more meetings and revenue to Pierce County. Our marketing team will continue promoting our destination brand through press trips, strategic partnerships, advertising, our web properties and improving the visitor experience.

As you'll read in the following pages, Travel Tacoma + Pierce County has accomplished a lot on behalf of, and in conjunction with, our partners in the tourism community. As the saying goes, a rising tide lifts all boats. As you read through this report, I hope that you see in no uncertain terms that 2015 was a year of rising tides in regional tourism. We're looking forward to more of the same in 2016!



*Bennish D. Brown*

Bennish Brown  
President + CEO  
Travel Tacoma + Pierce County

[Photo credit: Jason Anglin]

# TOURISM IMPACT

Meetings and tourism bring business opportunities, economic prosperity and jobs to Tacoma, Pierce County and the region. Hotels, retailers, restaurants, attractions and transportation services all benefit from direct visitor spending, and tourism is an increasingly important economic engine for Pierce County.

## Economic Impact

This is the **fourth consecutive year** of strong growth in travel spending and related travel impacts.



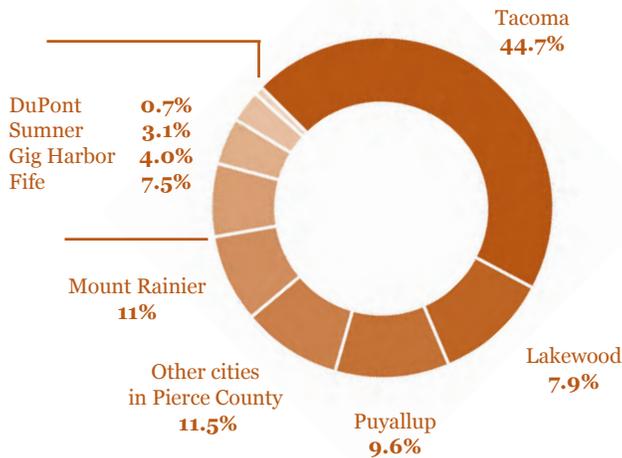
In 2015, there were **11,080 jobs** created by tourism.

“Visitors and conventions choose Tacoma because we are an international waterfront city with a thriving museum district, beautiful parks, an accessible arts scene and breathtaking mountain views. Travel Tacoma + Pierce County is the hub that brings tourism and events to our community, as shown by the success of the U.S. Open coming to Chambers Bay last year.”

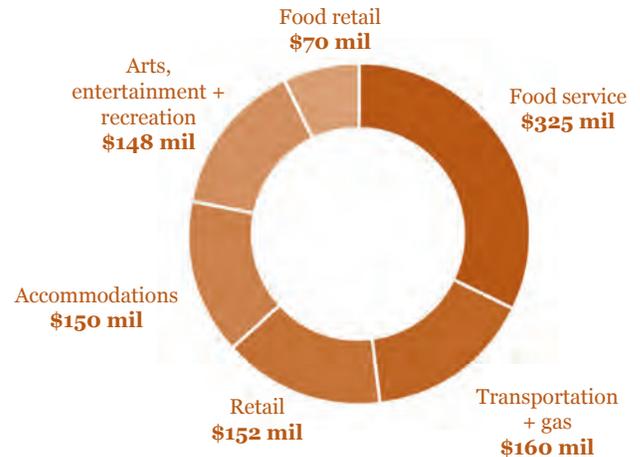
**Marilyn Strickland**  
Tacoma City Mayor



## Where Visitors Spent Their Money



## What Visitors Spent Their Money On



## A Look at the Average Pierce County Visitor

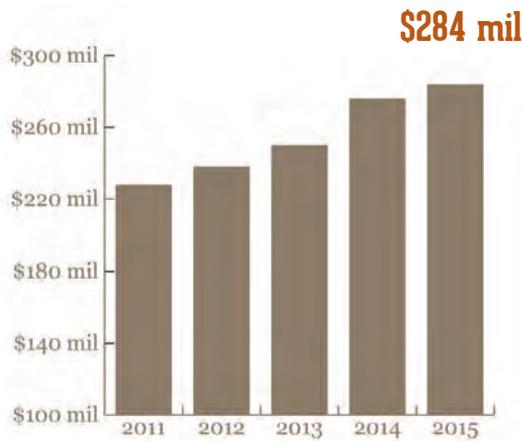
Party size: **2.1**

Length of stay [nights]: **2.1**

Spending: **\$753**



## Tourism Employment Earnings in Pierce County

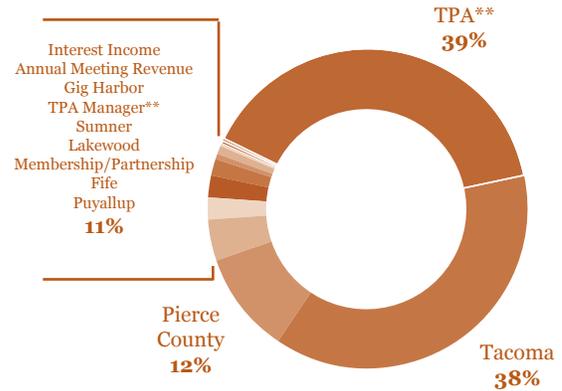


## Travel Tacoma Revenue Sources

The Travel Tacoma 2015 annual operation budget broken down by funding source.‡

‡We are funded by six municipalities plus Pierce County via lodging tax dollars

\*\*TPA — Pierce County Tourism Promotion Area



## U.S. Open Economic Impact to Pierce County

While Pierce County sought out and hosted the U.S. Open at Chambers Bay, the economic impact of the event spread far beyond University Place, the greater Tacoma area and Pierce County.

“With an economic benefit of more than \$134 million, [the U.S. Open] was the most successful sporting event in the history of our region.”

**Pat McCarthy**  
Pierce County Executive



[Photo courtesy of Pierce County and Grit City Photography]

| Economic impact measure                         | Four-county region* | Washington state [not including four-county region] |
|---|---------------------|---|
| Output  | \$134,524,000       | \$110,045,000                                       |
| Earnings  | \$40,803,000        | \$35,167,000  |
| Employment (part and full-time job-equivalents) | 1,323               | 1,118   |

Source: U.S.G.A. — 2015 U.S. Open Economic Impacts Report

\*Pierce, King, Kitsap, and Thurston counties

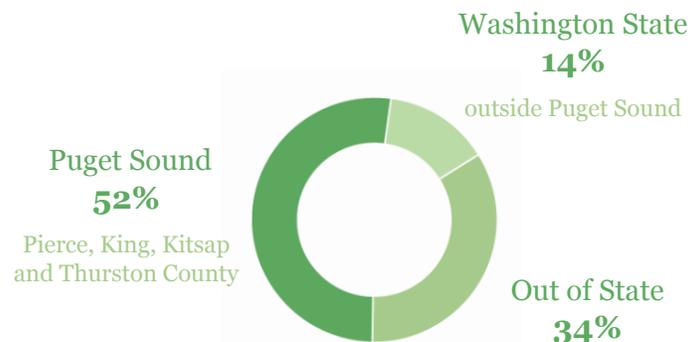
# ANATOMY + ECONOMICS OF A SEAMLESS VISITOR EXPERIENCE



In 2015, the U.S. Open Golf Championship – one of the largest sporting events in the world – was held for the first time in the Pacific Northwest. The location of the Championship: the local upstart and former gravel quarry – Chambers Bay Golf Course in University Place, Washington.

In keeping with Travel Tacoma’s “visitor-first” emphasis, the organization took a leading role in preparing the area to welcome the estimated 235,000 guests to the region for the championship and related events. To ensure visitors had a seamless experience from the moment they arrived until they departed, Travel Tacoma activated the tourism community, focusing on two key missions: destination readiness and destination exposure.

## U.S. OPEN ATTENDEES



### Destination readiness:

-  Travel Tacoma President + CEO Bennish Brown led the Destination Readiness Committee, in partnership with the hospitality and tourism communities.
-  Visitors at Seattle-Tacoma International Airport were greeted by custom-made posters for the U.S. Open, as well as diorama and LCD screen signage. Specially trained ambassadors were stationed at the airport and area hotels.
-  Frontline hospitality staff learned to “talk golf” with hands-on experience at Chambers Bay.
-  Travel Tacoma conducted information and training sessions with downtown Tacoma security personnel.
-  Destination videos and frontline training packets provided tools for the tourism community to better serve the area’s golf-focused visitors.

### Destination exposure:

-  Social media ads targeted a select group of golf fans on the heels of the 2014 U.S. Open.
-  The U.S. Open microsite on TravelTacoma.com was shared in tournament ticket confirmation emails, netting more than 21,000 sessions.
-  TripAdvisor pages and ads helped U.S. Open visitors explore the entire region. TripAdvisor activities generated more than 800 referrals to TravelTacoma.com for more detailed information.
-  Travel Tacoma partnered with the U.S.G.A. and Pierce County to pitch visiting golf media, encouraging them and offering assistance on writing destination articles.
-  Local and international golf media joined Pierce County VIPs for a night out and a warm introduction to the museum district in the Museum of Glass Hot Shop.

# THE RESULTS

## DURING THE CHAMPIONSHIP

### Television Coverage\*



**35** million viewers

### Hotel Bookings Increase†

Revenue Per Available Room **150%** ↑  
 Revenue **145%** ↑  
 Average Daily Rate **97%** ↑  
 Occupancy **32%** ↑

[peak percentage increase over same period previous year]

### Online Presence°



The new TripAdvisor pages garnered 19,894 page views and exceeded 800 referrals to TravelTacoma.com during and after the championship.

## SINCE THE CHAMPIONSHIP

### Published Articles◇



The articles have a total circulation of 50.7 billion which equals \$35.7 million estimated value.

### Online Traffic\*\*



Website use has skyrocketed.

|   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| 2014 June/July<br><b>8,732 visitors</b> | → | 2015 June/July<br><b>24,854 visitors</b> |
|---|---|--|

### Visitors to Chambers Bay□



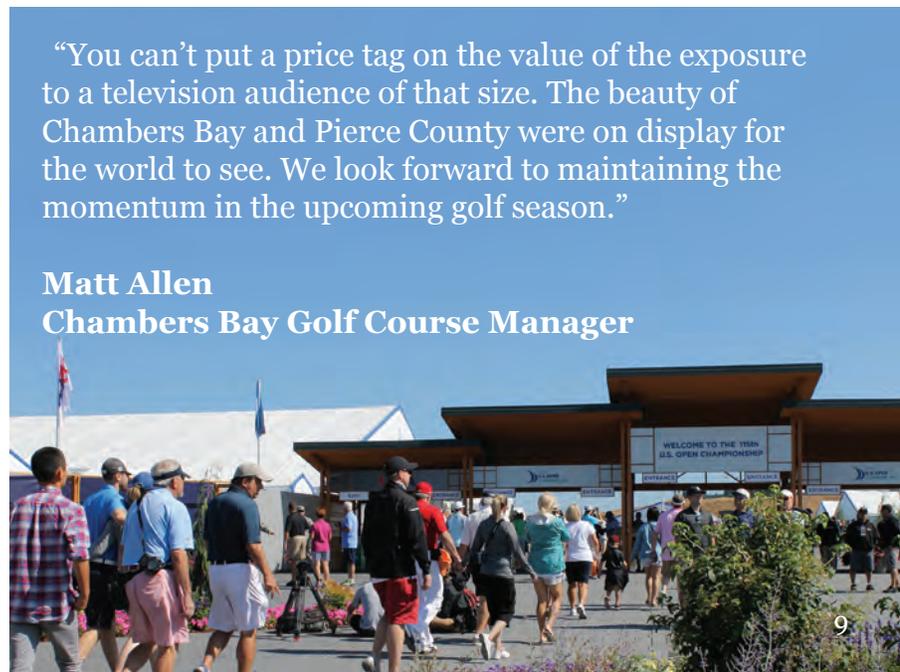
Chambers Bay has since seen golfers from 48 states and 12 countries.



[Staff members at the Hampton Inn welcome U.S. Open attendees]



[Volunteering at the Sea-Tac Airport]



“You can’t put a price tag on the value of the exposure to a television audience of that size. The beauty of Chambers Bay and Pierce County were on display for the world to see. We look forward to maintaining the momentum in the upcoming golf season.”

**Matt Allen**  
Chambers Bay Golf Course Manager

# SALES

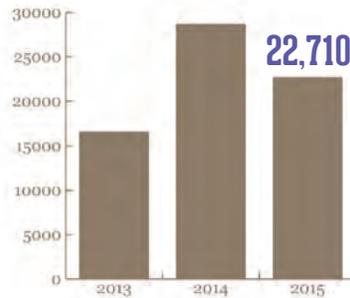
Travel Tacoma + Pierce County increases tourism's economic impact throughout the county by improving destination awareness and delivering room nights. The sales team promotes the Tacoma + Pierce County brand to meeting planners through advertising, event websites, industry associations, tradeshows, conferences, sales calls, client events and familiarization site tours. These activities enable the team to secure meetings and events for the area.

## Meeting + Events Estimated Economic Impact\*

[2015-2019]

**\$30.19 MIL**

## Booked Room Nights\*\*

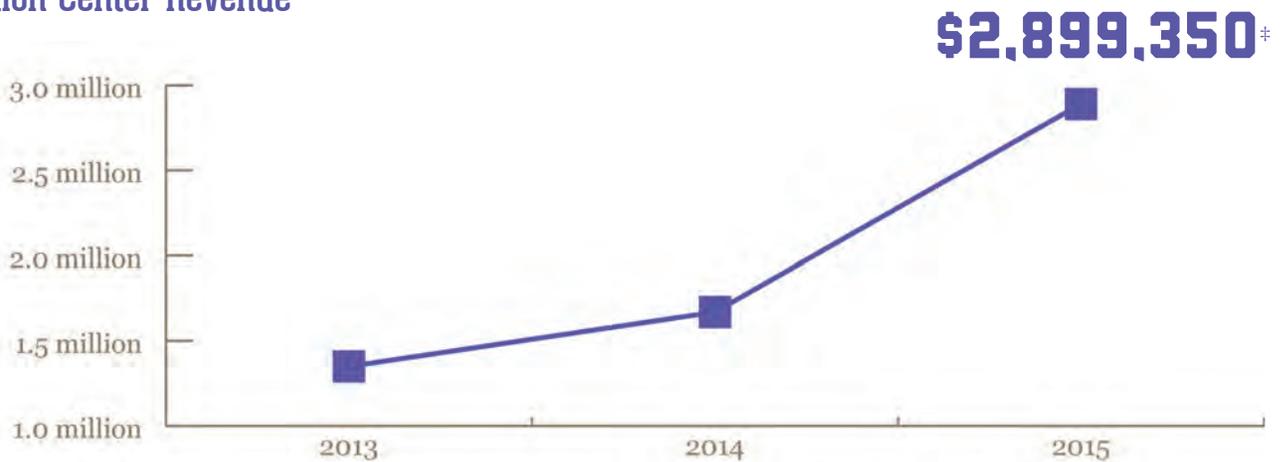


“Travel Tacoma plays a key role in the future of our area, and we truly appreciate the affect their efforts have had on our economy.”

**Carol Pica, Director of Sales  
Courtyard Marriott  
Tacoma Downtown**



## Convention Center Revenue



## Booked Business into the Future

|              |           |
|--------------|-----------|
| 2016         | 15        |
| 2017         | 15        |
| 2018         | 12        |
| 2019         | 2         |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>44</b> |

## Meetings + Events Exposure

Tradeshow presence in major markets



## By the Numbers

- 412 Networking hours
- 154 Sales appointments
- 53 Industry events
- 206 FAM + site tours [destination or convention center]
- 19 Industry tradeshows + conferences
- 23 Sales team philanthropy

\*Collective estimate utilizing the DMAI Event Impact Calculator \*\*Numbers are reported through the CVB Simpleview and City of Tacoma Delphi software systems ‡2015 represented the first year that Travel Tacoma + Pierce County was responsible for the short-term meetings market.

# OUTBOUND SALES



## Meeting Professionals International [MPI] - Arizona, Take Me Out to the Ballgame

In March, the Travel Tacoma + Pierce County team made the trek to Arizona to connect with MPI's Arizona Sunbelt Chapter in a day of pre-season baseball with the Mariners facing the Oakland Athletics. The Mariners lost the game, but Travel Tacoma knocked it out of the park, connecting with 26 meeting planners representing organizations throughout the region. The team is looking to capitalize on these new relationships in the Grand Canyon State when booking business in the coming years.



## Washington D.C. Client Event - A Night Out in the Capital

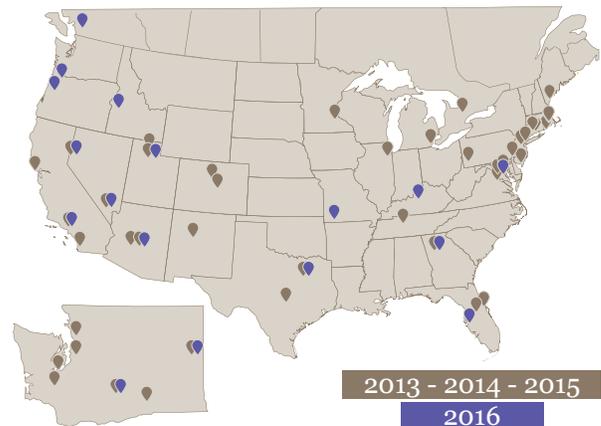
Following on the 2014 Washington D.C. event success, Travel Tacoma + Pierce County hosted its second annual Washington D.C. client event in October. In all, 22 professional meeting planners and association executives attended. This event continues to be a platform for the sales team to drive destination awareness, develop stronger relationships and deliver results back to Pierce County.



## Meeting Professionals International [MPI] - Southern California, Golf Tournament & Wellness Day

In March, the Travel Tacoma + Pierce County team ventured down to Buena Park, California to sponsor the MPI Southern California Golf Tournament, 5K & Wellness Day at Los Coyotes Country Club. This provided a great opportunity to network with more than 30 planners and industry partners to identify potential business for Pierce County.

## Sales Calls and Tradeshows



[Greater Tacoma Convention & Trade Center]

# MARKETING

Travel Tacoma + Pierce County markets the region to visitors and potential visitors by maintaining a strong print and web presence, and reaching out through activities such as public relations, direct marketing, brand marketing, social media and visitor information. Through these channels, the organization increases awareness of Pierce County as a destination, and ensures visitors have a rewarding, unique experience when they visit by connecting them to local businesses.

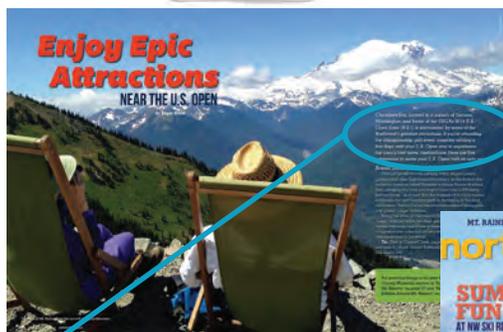
## Public Relations

Travel Tacoma + Pierce County works with reporters from across the country and around the world to ensure that travel journalists have what they need to write positive stories about the destination. The Travel Tacoma marketing team creates custom itineraries and makes arrangements for incoming media, and provides photography and information to reporters who can't make it to the area in person. The team works with all niches and levels of media to showcase Pierce County's greatest assets.

Hosted **21** Familiarization Tours



Tacoma named one of 13 Art Trips You Need to Take in *Forbes Travel Guide*



Article in *NW Travel + Life Magazine*

“Chambers Bay, located in a suburb of Tacoma, Washington, and home of the USGA’s 2015 U.S. Open (June 18-21), is surrounded by some of the Northwest’s greatest attractions. If you’re attending the championship golf event, consider adding a few days onto your U.S. Open stay to experience the area’s best travel destinations. Here are five adventures to make your U.S. Open visit an epic one.”

### Golf Media in the Museum District

## Media Attention

In 2015, more than 28,000 articles<sup>o</sup> [online and print] mentioned Pierce County. Travel Tacoma + Pierce County works closely with media to ensure higher-level stories about the region as a destination for visitors and meetings are continually being published.

|              | Articles      | Circulation           | Influenced |
|--------------|---------------|-----------------------|------------|
| Jan          | 41            | 236,553,082           | 3          |
| Feb          | 72            | 302,025,273           | 16         |
| Ma           | 88            | 131,310,175           | 26         |
| Apr          | 153           | 548,793,825           | 21         |
| May          | 231           | 635,993,854           | 28         |
| <b>June</b>  | <b>26,548</b> | <b>50,704,684,832</b> | <b>25</b>  |
| July         | 398           | 821,800,368           | 8          |
| Aug          | 277           | 360,512,566           | 12         |
| Sept         | 207           | 281,940,112           | 16         |
| Oct          | 79            | 54,895,623            | 13         |
| Nov          | 140           | 143,510,433           | 19         |
| Dec          | 62            | 16,906,048            | 12         |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>28,296</b> | <b>54,238,926,191</b> | <b>199</b> |

<sup>o</sup>Article totals provided by JayRay and Cision

# PORTLAND TAKEOVER

Travel Tacoma + Pierce County conducted a month-long marketing and public relations campaign in Portland to promote Tacoma + Pierce County as an overnight and weekend destination. The campaign included a glass-art scavenger hunt and a pop-up information booth, as well as outdoor and digital advertising.

As part of the effort, Travel Tacoma hid 100 glass coasters that were hand made by the Tacoma Glassblowing Studio and inscribed with: "Made with love, in Tacoma, Pierce County, WA." Those who found the coasters were entered to win overnight packages. In addition, Travel Tacoma set up a pop-up information booth in popular Pioneer Courthouse Square [often called Portland's living room], where more than 350 curious Portlanders stopped by to learn about this region.

As a result, traffic to Travel Tacoma's website originating in Oregon was up more than 100 percent during the campaign, and website search results have shown a sustained significant increase in demand from the Portland metro market.

**100**  
glass coasters



**350**  
participants

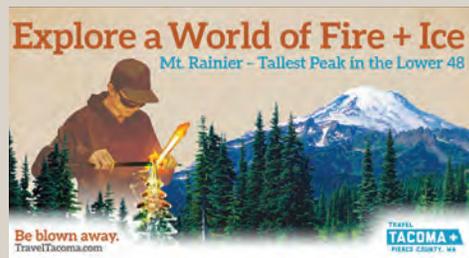


**100%**

increase in traffic to  
TravelTacoma.com from  
people in Oregon



#BlownAwayTacoma

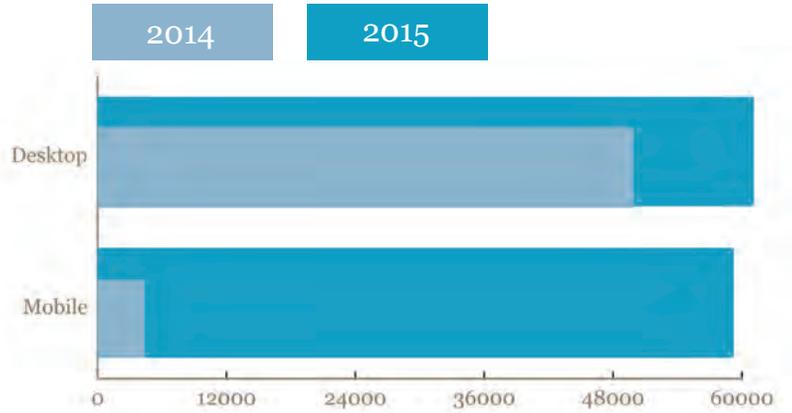


# DIGITAL PRESENCE

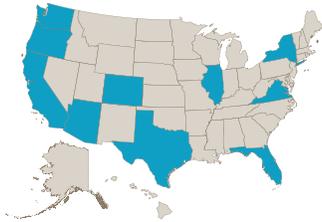
2015 was a turning point in Travel Tacoma + Pierce County's web presence, as the organization took the opportunity to redesign its website in anticipation of the traffic generated by interest in the U.S. Open. This redesign enabled Travel Tacoma to customize the new layout to benefit from the skyrocketing number of users who browse on their mobile devices.



## Sessions

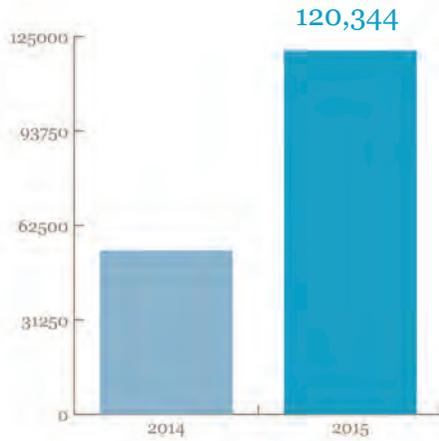


## Top 10 States with Web Traffic to TravelTacoma.com



1. Washington
2. California
3. Oregon
4. Texas
5. Arizona
6. Florida
7. Illinois
8. New York
9. Virginia
10. Colorado

## Sessions



## Top 5 Pages on TravelTacoma.com

1. Home
2. Events page
3. 25 Free Things To Do
4. Things To Do
5. Regions [Tacoma]

## Visitors to TravelTacoma.com

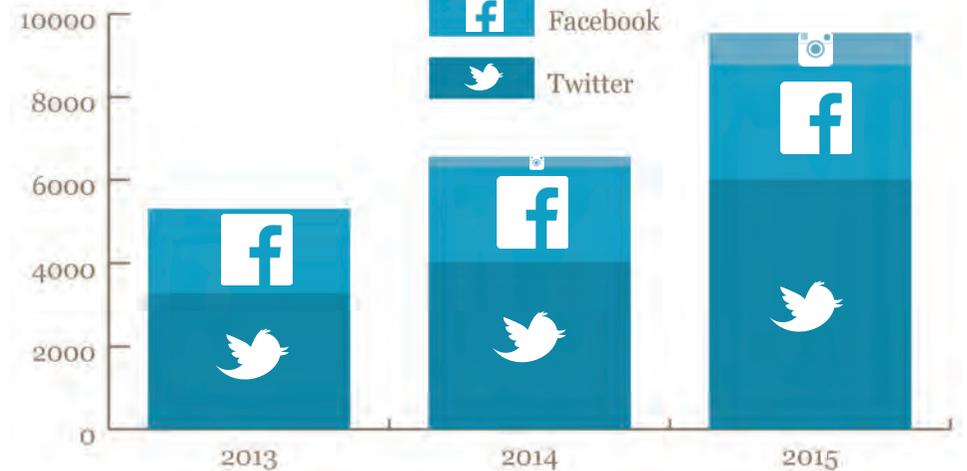
### New Web Visitors

81.2%



Returning Visitors  
18.8%

## Social Media Followers



# PRINT PRESENCE

Through ads in consumer and meeting industry publications, Travel Tacoma reaches travelers during the planning process and during their visit. In preparation for the U.S. Open, Travel Tacoma introduced its first annual Dining Guide to help visitors find the restaurant that suits their needs. The publications below serve as a go-to resource for those coming to the region.

## Leisure Market Ads

| Publication              | Circulation      |
|--------------------------|------------------|
| Alaska Airlines Magazine | 200,000          |
| WA State Visitor Guide   | 357,000          |
| Western Journey Magazine | 658,000          |
| WA State Scenic Byways   | 200,000          |
| Seattle Visitor Guide    | 770,000          |
| <b>Total</b>             | <b>2,185,000</b> |



## Meetings Market Ads

| Publication                    | Circulation   |
|--------------------------------|---------------|
| WA Society of Assoc. Exec.     | 1,000         |
| Connect Magazine               | 8,500         |
| Meeting Planners International | 30,000        |
| <b>Total</b>                   | <b>39,500</b> |

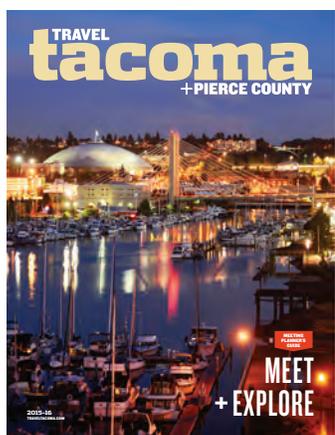


## Visitor Guide Distribution



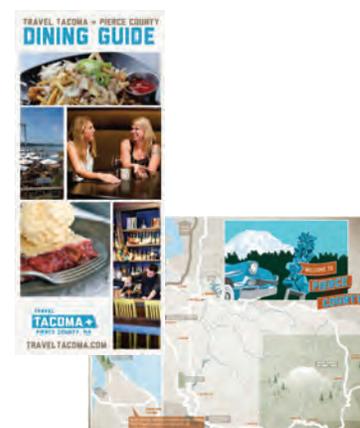
- Hotels, tourist activities + information centers in Tacoma, Olympia, Seattle and Seattle Southside at 290 sites
- Portland Metro area visitor information centers
- Bundled with May issue of *Portland Monthly Magazine*
- Seattle-Tacoma International Airport
- Seattle ferry and cruise ship terminals
- Amtrak stations
- Joint Base Lewis-McChord
- Boeing Tour Center
- By request through website and ad leads
- Web downloads at [TravelTacoma.com](http://TravelTacoma.com)
- Conference services

## Meeting Planner Guide Distribution



- Tradeshows
- Mailings
- Web downloads at [TravelTacoma.com](http://TravelTacoma.com)
- Thumbdrives

## Dining Guide Distribution



- 30 hotels in Pierce County
- U.S. Open Championship
- Tacoma + partner visitor information centers
- Conferences at the Greater Tacoma Convention & Trade Center

## Hotel Report

| ADR            | Year to Date |       |       |
|----------------|--------------|-------|-------|
|                | 2013         | 2014  | 2015  |
| This Year      | 87.91        | 90.32 | 94.58 |
| Last Year      | 83.97        | 87.91 | 90.32 |
| Percent Change | 4.7          | 2.7   | 4.7   |

| RevPAR         | Year to Date |       |       |
|----------------|--------------|-------|-------|
|                | 2013         | 2014  | 2015  |
| This Year      | 53.73        | 57.06 | 64.34 |
| Last Year      | 48.24        | 53.73 | 57.06 |
| Percent Change | 11.4         | 6.2   | 12.8  |

| Revenue        | Year To Date |             |             |
|----------------|--------------|-------------|-------------|
|                | 2013         | 2014        | 2015        |
| This Year      | 111,897,545  | 119,343,789 | 133,403,041 |
| Last Year      | 97,946,443   | 111,897,545 | 119,343,789 |
| Percent Change | 14.2         | 6.7         | 11.8        |

## South Sound Craft Crawl

With Wingman Brewers's Ken Thoburn leading a collaboration of the region's craft brewing community, Travel Tacoma + Pierce County, Visit Olympia and JayRay developed a "liquid tourism" experience that inspires visitors to enjoy the area's top craft beers. The South Sound Craft Crawl program provides participants with a passport that lists 15 local craft breweries, offering a total of more than 100 beers to choose from. The passport holder then receives a stamp at each craft brewery they visit. Those who collect nine stamps from the various breweries are eligible to redeem their passport for a specially made South Sound Craft Crawl pint glass as a reward. In its inaugural year, more than 15,000 passports were printed and approximately 750 pint glasses given out.



## Tacoma + Pierce County Destination Video

In keeping with Travel Tacoma + Pierce County's "fearless exploration" brand, the organization released its latest destination video in May 2015, encouraging visitors to explore the city of Tacoma and greater Pierce County area as the summer travel season kicked off.

The video featured attractions such as the Washington State Fair, LeMay — America's Car Museum, Point Defiance Park, University Place's Chambers Bay Golf Course, Tacoma Art Museum, the Washington State History Museum and the Museum of Glass. The video also explored Northwest Trek Wildlife Park in Eatonville, the Mount Rainier Railroad in Elbe and introduced other regions of Greater Pierce County, including the cities of Sumner, Puyallup, Fife, Lakewood and Gig Harbor.

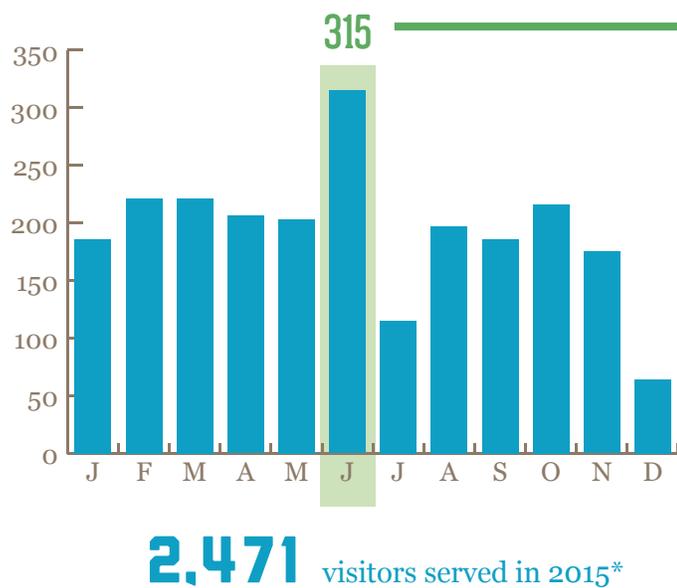
More than 100,000 people watched the video on YouTube and other social media channels since it was released. A 15-second clip aired in May on KCTS-9 and Northwest Cable News and was featured next to *Travel with Rick Steves* and other travel-related programming.



# VISITOR INFORMATION CENTER - VIC

The Visitor Information Center [VIC] is a key resource for visitors when they arrive in Tacoma + Pierce County. As such, our volunteer staff serve as ambassadors to the city and region, welcoming visitors with information, local insights, brochures from our partners and a quiet place to rest and recharge themselves and their phones. Travel Tacoma would like to give a special thanks to the Greater Tacoma Convention & Trade Center for hosting our VIC.

## Visitors Served Through Our VIC



### Serving Visitors During the U.S. Open at the VIC

|                            | June 2014  | June 2015  |
|----------------------------|------------|------------|
| Avg # of Visitors in Party | 1.61       | 1.99       |
| Total # of Parties         | 62         | 103        |
| Tacoma VIC Foot Traffic    | 100        | 205        |
| Phone Inquiries            | 51         | 107        |
| Electronic Inquiries       | 7          | 3          |
| <b>TOTAL</b>               | <b>158</b> | <b>315</b> |

## The Hunt for Awareness

In August, Travel Tacoma + Pierce County conducted a scavenger hunt promotion to increase awareness of the VIC among locals. It is important that people in Pierce County know about the VIC as a resource, because last year 1.7 million visitors stayed with a local friend or family member.

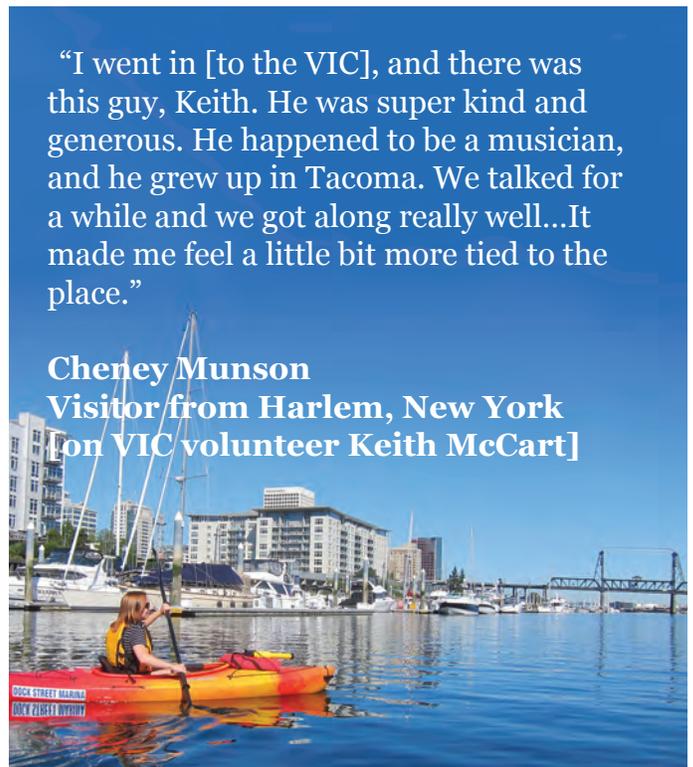
Travel Tacoma used social media, e-newsletters and printed fliers to promote the event and draw a crowd of more than 60 participants to the VIC hoping to win cash prizes and gift cards from the organization's partners.



## Outstanding Customer Service

“I went in [to the VIC], and there was this guy, Keith. He was super kind and generous. He happened to be a musician, and he grew up in Tacoma. We talked for a while and we got along really well...It made me feel a little bit more tied to the place.”

**Cheney Munson**  
**Visitor from Harlem, New York**  
**[on VIC volunteer Keith McCart]**



\* The number of visitors served is determined by a tally at the front desk of the VIC, in addition to phone inquiries and electronic inquiries

# TEAM MEMBERS

## Administrative



**Bennish Brown**  
President + CEO

*travel style:*  
cultural adventurer



**Claire Vilk**  
Partner Relations  
Manager

*travel style:*  
off the beaten path



**Melinda Lowe**  
Business Development  
Manager

*travel style:*  
sun + fun seeker



**Sharon McCormick**  
Accounting + HR

*travel style:*  
free + easy

## Marketing



**Jaime Vogt**  
Vice President  
of Marketing

*travel style:*  
urban trekker



**Jenny Curtiss**  
Marketing  
Manager

*travel style:*  
photo geek



**Matt Wakefield**  
Communications  
Manager

*travel style:*  
indie backpacker



**Lisa Barker**  
Visitor Experience  
Manager

*travel style:*  
adrenaline adventurer



**Calista Klein**  
Visitor Experience  
Coordinator

*travel style:*  
cultural backpacker

## Sales



**Chelene Potvin-Bird**  
Vice President  
of Sales + Servicing

*travel style:*  
weekend zealot



**Leanne Looney**  
Senior Sales Manager

*travel style:*  
island hopper



**Miles Eaton**  
Senior Sales Manager

*travel style:*  
urban extraordinaire



**Rachel Johnson**  
Sales Manager

*travel style:*  
budget luxury



**Nicole Smith**  
Sales Manager

*travel style:*  
spontaneous adventurer



**Lexi Ames**  
Sales Manager

*travel style:*  
leisure boater



**Karissa Colledge**  
Sales Assistant

*travel style:*  
ocean adventurer

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