



2018 ANNUAL REPORT



# DENVER 2018 TOURISM BY THE NUMBERS



Denver garnered huge publicity from the LA Times to the New York Times, generating \$86 million in press coverage of Denver around the world.



Dior: From Paris to the World at Denver Art Museum was just one of many wildly popular shows and exhibitions in Denver in 2018.



IPW 2018 in Denver was a smash success. It ended with a spectacular closing concert at Red Rocks Amphitheatre. Denver can expect hundreds of millions of dollars in new international visitor spending as a result.



Outdoor Retailer, the largest booking in Denver's history, had their first full year in The Mile High City, bringing 66,000 attendees and \$110 million of economic activity.

RECORD **\$6.5** BILLION  
VISITOR SPENDING IN 2017  
(LATEST FIGURES)

**399,005**  
DENVER CONVENTION  
DELEGATES IN 2018

RECORD **\$86** MILLION  
ADVERTISING VALUE CREATED BY  
DENVER STORIES AROUND THE WORLD

RECORD **31.7** MILLION  
VISITORS TO DENVER IN 2017  
(LATEST FIGURES)

**65%**  
INCREASE IN DENVER TOURISM  
SINCE 2005

In 2018, Denver had its best tourism and convention year ever. However, it was also a year that presented several challenges.

We shattered all tourism records; we successfully hosted U.S. Travel Association's 50th anniversary of IPW with 1,300 of the world's most influential tour operators and 550 media from nearly 70 countries; we selected an architect for the Colorado Convention Center expansion; we hosted the first three

Delegates conducted more than 100,000 appointments in the Colorado Convention Center and attended events at Larimer Square, the Denver Performing Arts Complex, Broncos Stadium at Mile High and an epic closing night at Red Rocks Park & Amphitheatre.

- To welcome IPW, more than 300 front-line travel industry workers and volunteers attended hospitality training. Feedback was overwhelmingly positive. Based on past studies, Denver can expect to see hundreds of thousands of new international visitors and hundreds of millions of dollars in new international spending over the next three years as a direct result of hosting IPW. That's a larger economic impact than hosting a Super Bowl!

- VISIT DENVER started collecting money from the new Tourism Improvement District (TID), which went into effect January 1, 2018 and will help pay for the \$233 million expansion of the Colorado Convention Center and provide marketing funds which were put to use in 2018 on projects to draw short term meetings and visitors to hotels.

- The Convention Sales Department had one of its best years ever in 2018, booking a total of 1,028 future meetings that will draw 435,414 delegates and generate \$870.3 million in future spending.

- On the tourism side, Denver continued to set records with 2017 as the best year ever with 31.7 million total visitors, including 17.4 million overnight visitors. Most significantly, "marketable visitors" (those who could travel anywhere and chose to visit Denver because of marketing efforts) grew by 8 percent, driving tourism revenue to a record \$6.5 billion.

- Annual marketing campaigns made more than 621 million impressions in 2018, while the website and social media set new records, with 10.1 million web visits and nearly five million social media engagements.



Outdoor Retailer shows (part of the largest booking in Denver's history); and we continued implementing the Denver Tourism Roadmap, using new funds available through the Tourism Improvement District (TID) to help in both leisure and convention marketing.

On the challenging side, we lost the opportunity to bid for the 2030 Winter Olympics, and we experienced a short-term setback in the bidding process for construction of the Colorado Convention Center. In 2018, Denver had 4,100 new hotel rooms recently opened, under construction, or planned – a situation that could temporarily impact average room rates and occupancy.

But overall, it was an outstanding year, with many thanks and much credit to Mayor Michael B. Hancock, the Denver City Council, the Bureau staff, our Board of Directors and our more than 1,300 partners.

## HERE ARE SOME HIGHLIGHTS:

- By all accounts, IPW in Denver was a home run. VISIT DENVER organized nearly 40 different tours showcasing fine dining, the arts, history, shopping, craft beer, neighborhoods, sports and recreation.

Competition remains a considerable challenge, with every city in the nation vying for tourism and convention business. However, the VISIT DENVER team continues to employ proven sales tactics and 21st century marketing techniques to grow Denver's tourism marketing share.

To ensure that you are getting the most direct benefits from your partnership with VISIT DENVER and the tourism and convention business we bring to Denver, please contact MC Genova at [mccgenova@visitdenver.com](mailto:mccgenova@visitdenver.com).

On behalf of the Bureau staff and Board, we wish you continued success in 2019.

**TODD MUNSON, 2018 CHAIR**  
Executive Vice President and Director  
of Commercial Banking  
Vectra Bank Colorado

**RICHARD W. SCHARF**  
President & CEO  
VISIT DENVER

IN 2018,  
DENVER  
HAD ITS  
BEST  
TOURISM  
AND  
CONVENTION  
YEAR EVER.



**HERE ARE SOME OF THE SUCCESSES THAT WERE ACHIEVED IN 2018 WHERE VISIT DENVER EITHER HELPED LEAD, SUPPORTED OR MONITORED:**

**GOAL 1: EXPAND MEETINGS & CONVENTION BUSINESS & INFRASTRUCTURE**

- Fentress Architects was selected to design the CCC expansion with input from 100 meeting professionals

**GOAL 2: ATTRACT VISITOR-DRIVEN EVENTS**

- Denver hosted IPW, the largest international travel trade conference in the U.S.
- VISIT DENVER supported blockbuster arts and culture events, including *Degas: A Passion for Perfection* exhibition at Denver Art Museum and *Dead Sea Scrolls* at Denver Museum of Nature & Science

**GOAL 3: CREATE WORLD-CLASS ATTRACTIONS & SERVICES**

- VISIT DENVER launched the new Denver CityPASS multi-attraction product

**GOAL 4: ENHANCE CONNECTIVITY & MOBILITY**

- Launched three new international nonstop flights in 2018: London Heathrow (United), Zürich (Edelweiss) and Paris (Norwegian)

**GOAL 5: IMPROVE DOWNTOWN VISITOR EXPERIENCES**

- More than 300 front-line tourism employees received destination training before IPW

- VISIT DENVER continues to support the Security Action Plan and the proposed redevelopment of the 16th Street Mall

**GOAL 6: STRENGTHEN DESTINATION BRANDING**

- Denver continued to receive national accolades and millions of dollars of publicity from Bravo's "Top Chef" Season 15
- A new weekend marketing campaign was launched in August using TID funds

**LEARN MORE AT:**  
[DenverTourismRoadmap.com](http://DenverTourismRoadmap.com)

VISIT DENVER is a non-profit trade association, contracted by the City & County of Denver to act as the City's official marketing agency. Tourism is one of the largest industries in Denver, generating 31.7 million total visitors (17.4 million overnight visitors) and \$6.5 billion in annual spending.

In 2018, the Bureau had a budget of \$39.5 million, which comes from a dedicated portion of the Denver Lodger's Tax, and from advertising, private fundraising and partnership fees. In addition, VISIT DENVER contracts with the City & County of Denver to administer marketing funds from the Tourism Improvement District (TID), which began collecting funds on January 1, 2018.

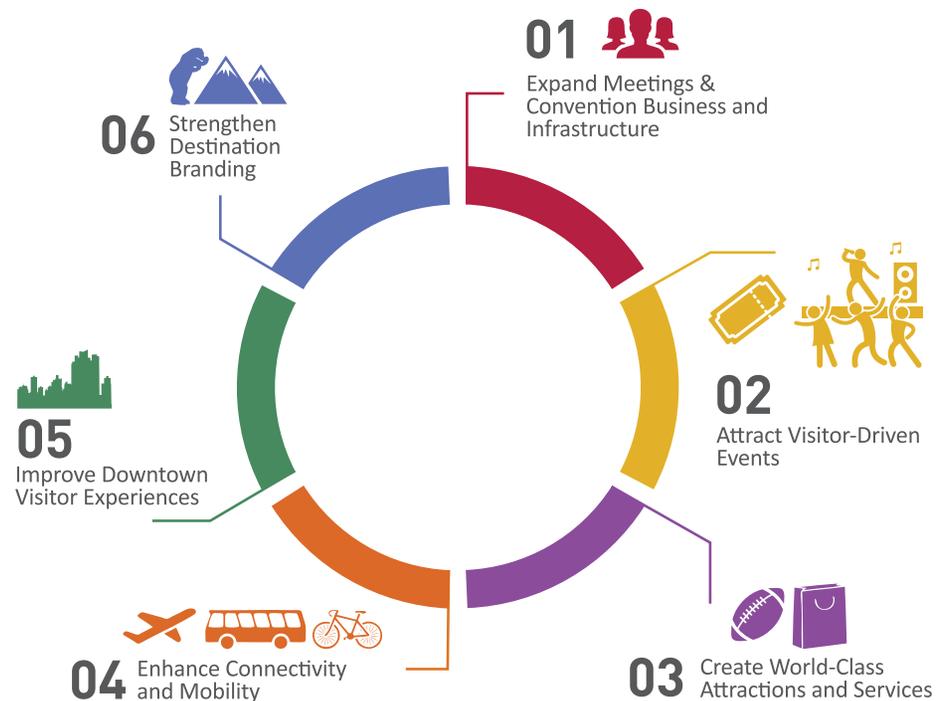
**TOURISM ROADMAP UPDATE 2018**

The Denver Tourism Roadmap was developed in 2016 to maintain responsible tourism growth - and the economic impacts that come with it - in a way that will benefit Bureau partners, visitors and residents through 2025.

The results of the Roadmap were six goals and more than 70 initiatives to help Denver reach its vision statement.

**MISSION:**  
 TO BRING CONVENTIONS AND LEISURE VISITORS TO DENVER FOR THE ECONOMIC BENEFIT OF THE CITY, THE COMMUNITY AND OUR PARTNERS.

**ROADMAP VISION:**  
 DENVER IS AMERICA'S LEADING OUTDOOR CITY, KNOWN TO VISITORS FOR ITS URBAN, ACTIVE AND CULTURAL EXPERIENCES.





of these events, allowing the Bureau and the TID to prioritize, support and pursue events and festivals that increase tourism, especially during need periods across all TID submarkets. In September, the TID supported a buyer education trip for 33 meeting planners who book hundreds of single-hotel meetings. These are business meetings that take place in hotel meeting space rather than the CCC. There was an opportunity for all hotels in the TID to participate and showcase their property and the specific area in which the hotel resides.

TOURISM IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

In 2017, VISIT DENVER, The Convention and Visitors Bureau, with the Colorado Hotel & Lodging Association (CHLA) and the City & County of Denver, worked together to ensure Denver's tourism industry remains competitive through the creation of a Tourism Improvement District (TID). The TID was created to close the funding gap for the expansion of the Colorado Convention Center (CCC) and support additional marketing efforts with the growing hotel supply.

The TID adds a 1 percent tax to the guest folio of hotels with 50 or more rooms in the City & County of Denver. There is no cost to the hotel properties. In November 2017, voting TID-eligible hotels supported creation of the TID with 96 percent

approval (50-2). Collection of the 1 percent tax began on January 1, 2018.

Several programs were launched in the third and fourth quarters of 2018 and will be expanded to full year programming in 2019. The weekend marketing campaign was launched in August 2018 and is designed to encourage short-term travel from regional visitors and serves as a complement to VISIT DENVER's existing regional campaigns. This campaign encourages them to come more frequently, stay longer and visit at different, and especially off-peak, times of the year.

Another use of TID marketing funds is the development of a new festival and event strategy to guide VISIT DENVER's support

TID GOVERNING BOARD

VISIT DENVER thanks the members of the new Tourism Improvement District Governing Board for their time and their commitment to the future success of Denver tourism.

THE TID WAS  
CREATED TO CLOSE  
THE FUNDING GAP  
FOR THE EXPANSION  
OF THE COLORADO  
CONVENTION CENTER  
AND SUPPORT  
ADDITIONAL  
MARKETING EFFORTS  
WITH THE GROWING  
HOTEL SUPPLY.

**NAVIN DIMOND**, (President),  
President & CEO, Stonebridge Companies

**WALTER ISENBERG**, (President-Elect),  
President & CEO, Sage Hospitality

**GREG LEONARD**, (Secretary/Treasurer),  
General Manager, Hyatt Regency Denver  
at Colorado Convention Center

**LAURA LOJAS**, General Manager,  
The Westin Denver International Airport

**TRACY BLAIR**, Director of Sales and Marketing,  
Sheraton Denver Downtown Hotel

**JOHN EVERETT**, General Manager,  
The Westin Denver Downtown

**ALLEN PATY**, General Manager,  
DoubleTree by Hilton Denver

**RICHARD W. SCHARF**, President & CEO,  
VISIT DENVER (ex officio)

# HIGHLIGHTS OF IPW 2018



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The largest international tourism marketing event in Denver's history was staged May 19-23, 2018, when Denver hosted U.S. Travel Association's IPW, which celebrated its 50th anniversary in 2018. The event brought nearly 1,300 international travel buyers and 550 travel media professionals from 70 countries to Denver to experience The Mile High City first-hand. Travel company buyers and media were joined by thousands of suppliers representing destinations, resorts and attractions from around the country.

More than 400 volunteers donated thousands of hours of time and 20 local, statewide and national sponsors contributed. Both Colorado Governor John Hickenlooper and Denver Mayor Michael B. Hancock welcomed the delegates. Hundreds of front-line tourism employees attended hours of hospitality training. Signs, buttons, banners and volunteers in blue vests plastered the city, offering attendees a warm Western welcome, which began with their arrival at Denver International Airport, where bands

were playing and the Blue Bear welcomed delegates. Half of the 6,000 delegates took the University of Colorado A Line train into the city. Events such as the media brunch at Larimer Square, where flags from around the world decorated the historic street, and tours of everything from hiking trails to craft breweries showcased the city.

By every measure, it was one of the best and most popular IPW conventions in the history of the organization. Previous delegate research indicates that a successful IPW convention will result in hundreds of thousands of new international visitors and hundreds of millions of dollars in new international spending to the host city.

"I THOUGHT IT WAS JUST A SENSATIONAL IPW. THE CITY SHOWCASED THE BEST THAT DENVER HAS TO OFFER, AND THE FINAL NIGHT AT RED ROCKS WILL BE TALKED ABOUT FOR YEARS TO COME!"

Roger Dow, President and CEO of the U.S. Travel Association





BY ALL  
ACCOUNTS,  
IPW IN DENVER  
WAS A  
HOME RUN.



2018 IPW SPONSORS



# CONVENTIONS: YEAR IN REVIEW 2018

The Convention Sales Department markets Denver as a meeting destination and is contracted by the City & County of Denver to book the Colorado Convention Center and area hotels for national meetings, conventions and tradeshows. Once a meeting is booked for Denver, the Convention Services Department works with meeting professionals to help with all their local service needs.



VISIT DENVER had an excellent sales year in 2018, booking the largest number of future conventions in the organization's history. In total, the Convention Sales Department booked 1,028 future conventions, which will attract 435,414 delegates and generating \$870.3 million in spending.

As far as hosting conventions, 2018 was also a very strong year with 926 meetings held in the city, attracting 399,005 delegates who spent \$773 million in spending. This included 67 groups that used the Colorado Convention Center and 859 individual hotel groups.

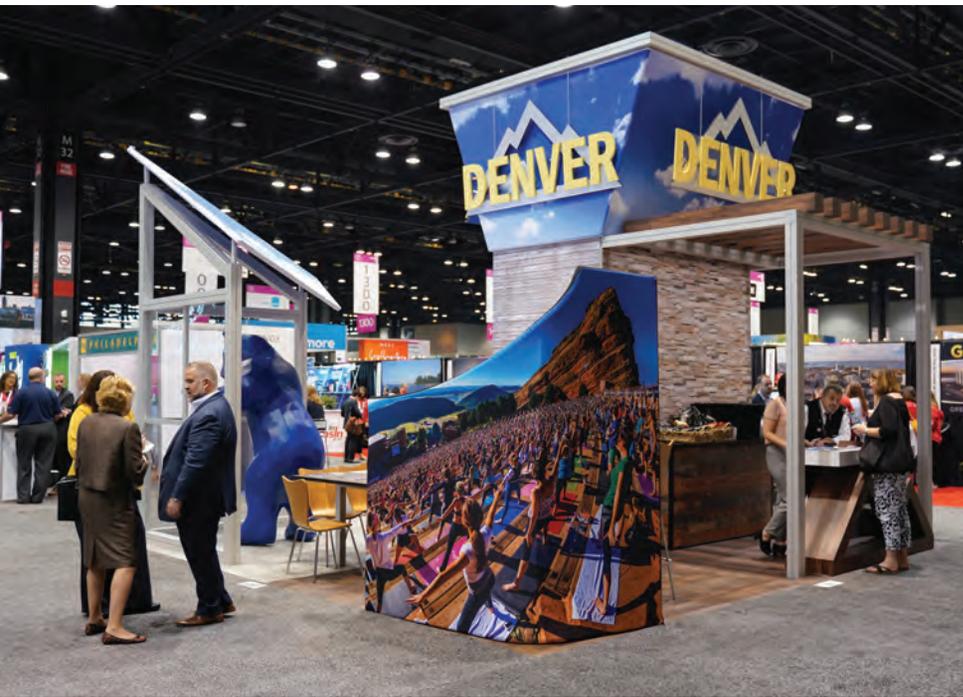
## OUTDOOR RETAILER MAKES BIG SPLASH IN ITS FIRST YEAR

Among the biggest news of 2018 was that Denver hosted its first Outdoor Retailer Snow Show and summer and winter shows, the first of a five-year commitment. This included hosting the first-ever combined January Outdoor Retailer + Snow Show. The three shows will annually bring tens of thousands of delegates to Denver, generating an economic impact of nearly \$110 million.

The shows bring together thousands of leaders in the outdoor recreation industry, representing the most iconic and emerging brands, as well as the latest innovations and ideas, while also providing an opportunity for the industry to gather and discuss important policy initiatives. The booking cements Denver's position as the No. 1 city in the world for the outdoor industry.

According to the Outdoor Industry Association (OIA), outdoor industry in Colorado generates \$28 billion in annual consumer spending and supports 229,000 jobs in the state. It's a four-season industry that involves every corner of Colorado.

The Convention Sales Department attended more than 50 meeting industry trade shows and client events in 2018, selling directly to top clients who represent billions of dollars of potential meeting business for Denver.



### NEW BOOTH DEBUTS!

VISIT DENVER debuted a new tradeshow booth at the ASAE Annual Meeting this past August. The booth incorporates elements of Denver's street art, craft brewing, iconic locations like Larimer Square and, of course, a replica of the Blue Bear!

### WELCOME NEW TEAM MEMBERS

VISIT DENVER maintains sales offices in Washington, D.C. and Chicago due to the overwhelming number of associations headquartered in those two markets, a smart move considering some 70 percent of Denver's convention business comes from associations!

In 2018 VISIT DENVER welcomed new sales directors in both of these markets.

Lester Robinson II joined the Bureau as sales director, Washington, D.C. region, bringing 18 years of proven hotel sales experience. Lester previously worked for Hilton Worldwide, Starwood and Caesars Entertainment. He holds a Bachelor of Arts from Michigan State University.



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VISIT DENVER hosted two Customer Advisory Board (CAB) meetings in 2018. The CAB is comprised of some of the Bureau's top meeting planner clients. These convention professionals donate their time to help the Bureau's marketing efforts, while offering suggestions on how to improve Denver's image as a meeting destination.

VISIT DENVER hired Sheila Provenzano as sales director, midwest region for the Chicago office. Sheila brings 13 years of proven sales experience, including previous work with Visit Baltimore and Hilton Worldwide. She is active in the Greater Midwest Chapter of PCMA and holds a Bachelor of Arts from Roosevelt University in Chicago.



# CONVENTION SALES ACCOMPLISHMENTS 2018



- The Convention Sales Department exceeded all sales 2018 goals, booking 1,028 future conventions that will attract 435,414 delegates, which represents \$870.3 million of future economic impact for Denver.
- A total of 3,604 leads for individual hotel meetings were sent to partners in 2018.
- As of December 31, 2018, there were a total of 1,668 future conventions scheduled to meet in Denver, attracting a total of 1,831,631 delegates for a total projected future economic impact over all future years of \$3.9 billion.

## 2018 WATKINS STUDY

The Watkins study is a survey conducted with top meeting professionals every two years with the latest research coming out in 2018. It surveyed 867 total meeting planners and consultants who represent meeting planners, organizations and corporations about their impressions of the 40 top meeting destinations in the nation.

Association meeting planners rated Denver very well and in the top 10 US cities on several key factors:

- 1st for "overall best fit for their largest meeting," up 3 percent
- 3rd for superior convention and visitors bureau
- 4th for city with the "buzz," up 9 percent
- 3rd for likelihood to recommend
- 4th for most positive overall experience
- 7th for great convention facilities

However, with increasing competition from other U.S. cities, Denver ranked just outside of the top 10 in a number of categories, including:

- 11th for accessibility
- 12th for "all around great convention destination"
- 12th for hotels suited for largest meetings
- 14th for safe and secure
- 13th for easy to get to

Still, Denver scored as excellent or good in all categories from the respondents. When all scores were totaled and factored for importance, Denver finished as the 7th top convention city overall. The full report is available upon request.

		2018 RESULTS				
		FUTURE MEETINGS BOOKED: <b>1,028</b>	FUTURE DELEGATES: <b>435,414</b>	FUTURE ECONOMIC IMPACT: <b>\$870.3</b> MILLION		
DENVER MEETINGS BY YEAR						
	COLORADO CONVENTION CENTER (CCC)	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
# of Groups		76	73	66	84	67
Attendance		289,326	236,828	242,686	235,578	269,417
Rooms		493,437	432,253	440,258	420,697	481,017
Revenue		\$576.3 mil	\$546.6 mil	\$538.5 mil	\$529.1 mil	\$561.7 mil
	NOT USING CCC	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
# of Groups		657	674	792	850	859
Attendance		140,171	138,450	125,773	154,496	129,588
Rooms		233,882	250,943	256,303	300,788	283,823
Revenue		\$159.9 mil	\$226.0 mil	\$205.2 mil	\$252.1 mil	\$211.5 mil
Total Economic Impact		\$736.2 mil	\$772.6 mil	\$743.7 mil	\$781.2 mil	\$773.2 mil
Total Groups		733	747	858	934	926



Establishing and maintaining positive relationships with meeting professional clients is one of VISIT DENVER's primary goals and is accomplished in numerous ways. The Bureau's convention sales and services teams maintain a database of more than 15,000 meeting planners and regularly make phone calls, send emails and take sales trips to keep in contact with these groups, pitching Denver as the perfect site for conventions. Further contacts are established at convention industry trade shows and special events. Some of the convention sales efforts in 2018 included:

## SALES EVENTS

VISIT DENVER staged six out-of-town sales events in 2018 along with four events for local clients. Two events took place in Washington, D.C. where VISIT DENVER and local hotel partners hosted 50 clients who represent more than \$220 million in potential future economic impact. Two events were also staged in Chicago with more than 40 clients in attendance representing more than \$550 million in potential future economic impact. A signature New York City event took place again in October at the James Beard house, highlighting Denver's culinary scene. During this annual event, VISIT DENVER hosted 10 NYC-based clients who represent more than \$100 million in potential future economic impact. VISIT DENVER also hosted an

immersive one day educational experience for 28 local clients that included hotel tours, venue tours and a convention center tour. The clients who attended the event represented nearly \$20 million of future economic impact. Finally, the sales department took advantage of the closing night concert of IPW to host 34 clients worth more than \$122 million in future economic impact. The meeting planners who attended our 2018 client's events represented \$1.3 billion in potential future economic impact to Denver.

## TRADESHOWS & CONFERENCES

In 2018, VISIT DENVER participated in more than 50 meeting and convention tradeshows, marketing The Mile High City as a destination to thousands of influential meeting planners. These shows are also a great way to reach out to niche markets such as government meeting planners, religious meeting planners, etc. Some of the shows attended in 2018 included:

Professional Convention Management Association (PCMA) Convening Leaders, where thousands of meeting professionals – including many Denver citywide clients – gather. The Bureau staged two client events for 25 top customers.

Connect 2018, the premier hosted-buyer event that brings together planners, suppliers and experts in Corporate,

Association, Specialty, Expo and Sports meetings and events for preset appointments, education and networking. The Denver team had 187 appointments over two days and also put Denver messaging on the conference hotel keycards.

Third-party meeting planner shows such as Conference Direct's annual partner meeting and Spring CDX; HelmsBriscoe's Annual Business Conference; and Experient's e4.

Specialty market tradeshows include the Society of Government Meeting Planners National Education Conference; the National Coalition of Black Meeting Planners Annual Conference; and Religious Conference Managers Association Annual Conference.

## MEETING PLANNER SITE INSPECTION TRIPS

Another powerful sales tactic is to bring the meeting planner to Denver so they can see the city in person, tour hotels and meeting venues and dine in Denver restaurants. The sales department conducted 216 site inspection tours of Denver in 2018.

## MARKETING & ADVERTISING

The Bureau conducts a \$1 million trade advertising campaign to develop Denver's brand as a meeting destination and keep the city top-of-mind with meeting planners. Ads in publications such as *Meetings & Conventions*, *Successful Meetings*, *USAE*, *Convene* and others are mixed with web promotions, guerrilla tactics, direct mail pieces and the annual *Destination Planning Guide* to help score millions of impressions.

## CCC EXPANSION UPDATE

In February 2018, the Denver City Council approved Fentress Architects to design the expansion of the Colorado Convention Center (CCC). Fentress designed the original convention center in 1990, as well as the first expansion, which doubled the building's size in 2004.

To help get practical design input from meeting planners, VISIT DENVER and the architects traveled to Washington, D.C. and Chicago to convene with dozens of meeting planners and hear their practical ideas about the possible design and functionality of the new CCC expansion space. In addition, VISIT DENVER staff and the design team from Fentress Architects also brought in national meeting clients to get their input on the initial design concepts. Other trips were taken to Anaheim and San Francisco to look at new, comparable convention center spaces. In total, the team met with nearly 100 convention and meeting experts.

## METRO & DOWNTOWN HOTEL OCCUPANCY & AVG RATES

	2015	2016	2017	2018*
<b>METRO HOTELS</b>				
OCCUPANCY	75.9%	75.0%	74.9%	75.6%
AVERAGE ROOM RATE	\$133.65	\$140.46	\$143.68	\$146.00
<b>DOWNTOWN HOTELS</b>				
OCCUPANCY	77.8%	77.1%	79.0%	78.8%
AVERAGE ROOM RATE	\$179.45	\$183.67	\$186.26	\$190.47

Source: STR \* thru November

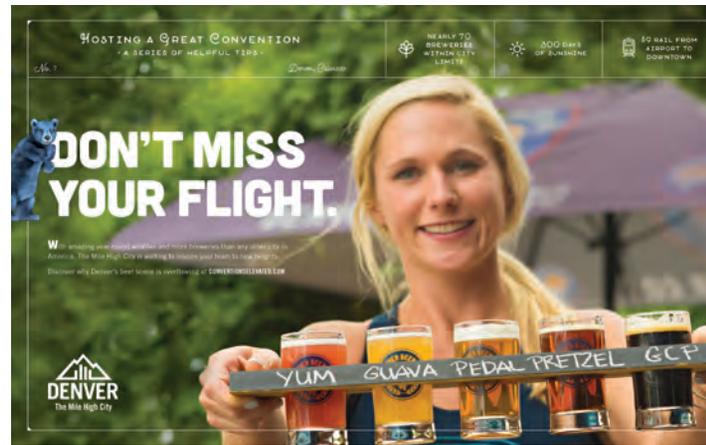
# CONVENTION SERVICES DEPARTMENT



Once a meeting is booked for Denver, the Convention Services Department becomes their local contact to assist them with all their convention needs and help them secure local services. The department worked with 1,430 meetings in 2018.

## HERE ARE SOME OF THEIR ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- For 26 years straight, the Convention Services Department has helped VISIT DENVER win all major convention industry service awards, including the Northstar Stella Award and *Corporate & Incentive Travel's* Award of Excellence.
- In 2018, the department sent out more than 729 business referrals and 113 service leads to VISIT DENVER partners, representing 9,176 total business opportunities.
- To help boost attendance, the department staged 13 pre-promotion events in 2018 for customers who will be meeting in Denver.
- The department also conducted 106 site tours with clients that have future business booked in Denver, and provided assistance to 67 convention center users and hundreds of meeting groups using single hotels.
- Finally, the department helped arrange many of the Bureau's special meeting planner events such as the "Better Denver" meeting planner Buyer Education Trip (BET), which was held in September 2018 for 33 meeting planners who book hundreds of short-term, single-hotel meetings.



In 2018, VISIT DENVER continued the “Conventions Elevated” campaign, designed to reach meeting planners through print and digital media. The ads were devoted to Denver’s craft beer scene, dining and unique meeting sites, as well as a renewed focus on Denver International Airport.

**KEYCARDS**  
VISIT DENVER sponsored hotel room cards at three tradeshows this year: Professional Convention Management Association (PCMA) Convening Leaders, MPI World Education Conference and Connect. The cards generate “surprise and delight” where clients least expect it!

**COVER WRAPS**  
Once again, VISIT DENVER sent 1,000 key clients three issues of *Food & Wine Magazine* wrapped with six pages Denver content, covering food, wine and spirits.

**THE COLORS OF DENVER**  
At both American Society of Association Executives’ (ASAE) XDP meeting and the annual Connect conference, attendees were presented with a unique Denver ad that turned the city into a coloring book, also providing them markers so they could interact with “the colors of Denver.”

**HOLIDAY BEARS**  
To celebrate the holidays at Chicago Forum’s annual Holiday Showcase, VISIT DENVER produced 10 different versions of the Blue Bear enjoying the holidays!

These convention advertising and marketing programs generated more than 5 million impressions in 2018.

# TOURISM: YEAR IN REVIEW 2018



The Tourism Department is responsible for increasing leisure travel to Denver, increasing the number of domestic and international travel companies that offer Denver as a destination and helping consumers plan their Denver trips.

Once again, Denver experienced an outstanding, record-breaking year in 2018.

## SOME OF THE HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDE:

- Based on third party research, Denver hit record tourism numbers with 31.7 million total visitors in 2017 (latest figures available). This included 17.4 million overnight visitors, a 1 percent year-over-year increase. Additionally, visitor spending hit a new record of \$6.5 billion (up 5 percent), including a record \$5.6 billion spent by overnight visitors. 2018 figures will be available in June.
- U.S. Travel Association's 50th anniversary IPW brought thousands of international travel buyers and media to Denver. Hosting IPW can bring hundreds of thousands of new international visitors and hundreds of millions of dollars in new international spending in the three years after hosting.
- The Tourism Department exceeded all annual goals in 2018, including 463 leads and referrals distributed (167 international and 296 domestic). The department made 2,543 contacts, with 2,385 established at tourism tradeshows including hosting IPW, sales missions and educational seminars and 158 from site inspections. Contacts and leads came from 70 international markets, including Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, Colombia, Denmark, France, Germany, Iceland, India, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Netherlands, Norway, Panama, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Switzerland, Taiwan, the United Kingdom and dozens more.
- The department tracked 69,431 room nights, which were generated by specific marketing efforts, primarily in international markets. 2017 Tourism Economics research reported 1,507,900 international room nights in Denver.
- New nonstop flights to Paris and Zürich combined with publicity from IPW to generate international attention on Denver. The Tourism Department hosted 37 international site inspections and participated in 10 international travel trade shows in Germany, Iceland, Denmark, the U.K. and the U.S. The department represented Denver on four sales missions to Switzerland, France, Japan and a Colorado Tourism Office (CTO) sales mission targeting receptive tour operators based in Los Angeles. The Communications Department also hosted 48 international media FAM trips and generated more than \$23 million in international advertising value.
- A record 64 million travelers went through Denver International Airport (DEN), up from 61 million in 2017, and DEN was named the No. 1 large airport in the U.S. by the *Wall Street Journal*.
- Denver's dining scene continued to grow in national recognition in the first quarter of 2018 with the broadcast of "Top Chef" using Colorado and Denver as the location for their 15th season. Additionally, Slow Food Nations held a three-day global food festival in 2018 with an outdoor culinary stage, family-oriented gardening and cooking activities and author talks.
- The Bureau's four Tourism Information Centers helped 384,000 visitors in 2018 providing them with *Official Visitor Guides* and planning assistance.

The annual Longwoods Visitor Profile Research provides an in-depth look at who is visiting Denver, their demographics, where they come from, how long they stay and what they do while here. This information is valuable in quantifying the success of past marketing efforts and determining future marketing strategies and tactics. The information for 2017 is the latest available; 2018 numbers will be available in June 2019.

## NEW TOURISM RECORDS SET IN 2017 WITH REVENUES TOPPING \$6.5 BILLION

Denver's tourism industry had a very good year in 2017, setting new records across the board led by an 8-percent increase in marketable leisure visitors - the segment of travelers that has the most discretion on where they travel, is most impacted by advertising and is the focus of VISIT DENVER's marketing efforts.

## SOME OF THE 2017 HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDE:

- A record 31.7 million visitors (day and overnight)
- A record 17.4 million overnight visitors (81 percent from out-of-state)
- A record \$6.5 billion total visitor spending (up 5 percent), including a record \$5.6 billion spent by overnight visitors

For the first time ever, "marketable" visitors were the biggest spenders, accounting for \$171 per day, followed by business travelers who spent \$154 a day. Hotels were the largest recipients of visitor dollars, receiving \$1.7 billion, while transportation took in \$1.5 billion and food & beverage \$1 billion. An additional 14.3 million "day visitors" spent \$921 million.

## THE TOP FIVE STATES SENDING VACATIONERS TO DENVER IN 2017, APART FROM COLORADO ITSELF, WERE:

- California
- Illinois
- Texas
- Wyoming
- Florida

## THE TOP SEVEN CITIES FROM OUTSIDE OF COLORADO SENDING LEISURE VISITORS TO DENVER IN 2017 WERE:

- Los Angeles
- Dallas-Fort Worth\*
- New York City
- San Francisco\*
- Chicago\*
- Salt Lake City\*
- Albuquerque-Santa Fe\*
- Houston\*

\*Key advertising market for VISIT DENVER

## TOP SHOPPING/ENTERTAINMENT AREAS

Shopping and entertainment were popular tourist activities in Denver in 2017. The top shopping and entertainment centers were (in order):

- 16th Street Mall
- Cherry Creek
- LoDo "Lower Downtown" Historic District
- Denver Union Station
- Denver Pavilions
- Larimer Square
- Outlets at Castle Rock
- Park Meadows Retail Resort
- FlatIron Crossing Mall
- Belmar



## TOP ATTRACTIONS - PAID ADMISSION

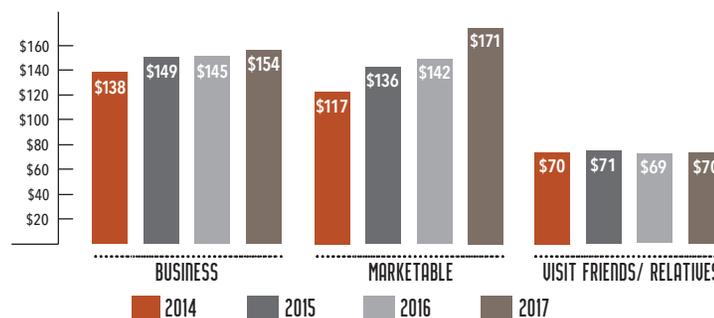
The top paid attractions visited were (in order):

- Denver Zoo
- Denver Botanic Gardens
- Denver Museum of Nature & Science/IMAX
- Denver Art Museum
- Buffalo Bill Museum & Grave
- Colorado Railroad Museum
- Downtown Aquarium
- Dinosaur Ridge
- Children's Museum of Denver at Marsico Campus

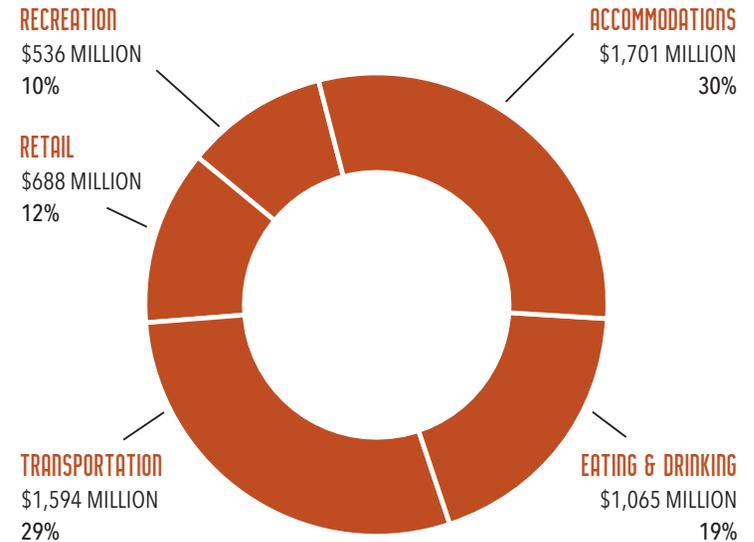
## TOP ATTRACTIONS - FREE ADMISSION

- Red Rocks Park & Amphitheatre
- Coors Brewery
- Colorado State Capitol

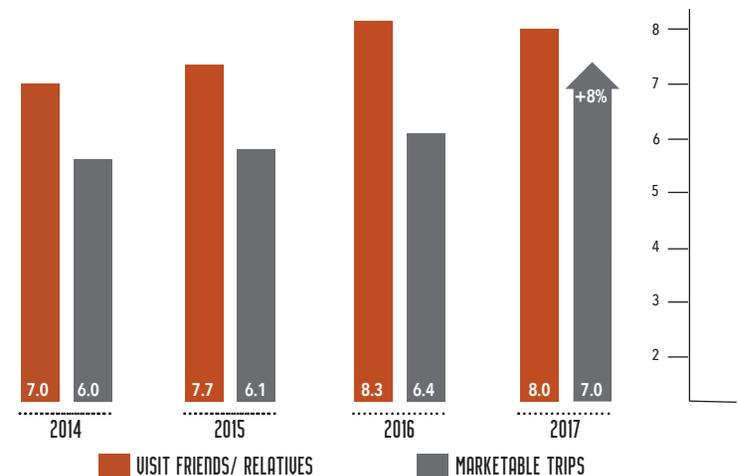
## AVERAGE DAILY EXPENDITURES



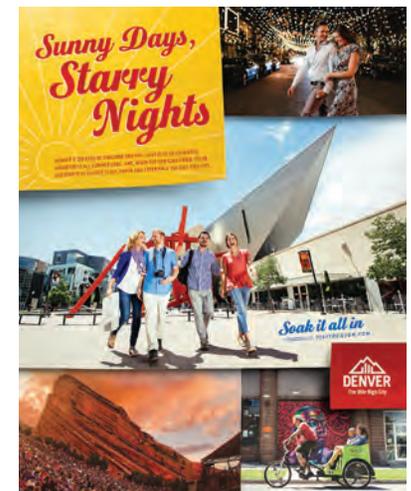
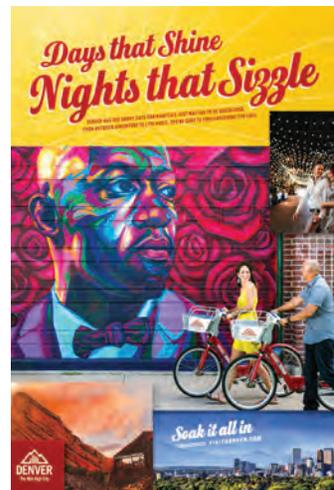
## DENVER OVERNIGHT VISITORS TOTAL SPENDING \$5.6 BILLION TRAVEL SPENDING IN 2017 BY SECTOR



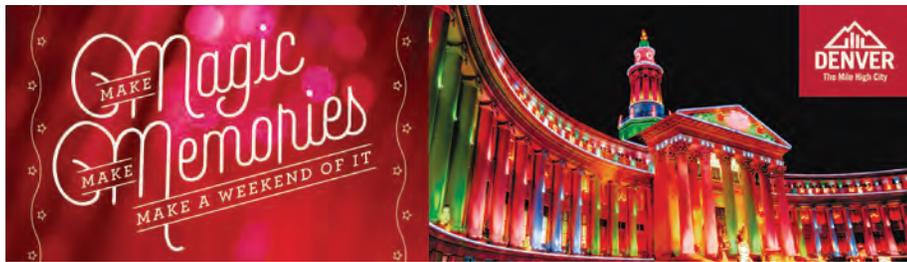
## OVERNIGHT LEISURE TRIPS TO DENVER (MILLIONS)



## TOURISM MARKETING CAMPAIGN HIGHLIGHTS



- For the third straight year, VISIT DENVER ran a winter tourism consumer marketing campaign, targeting key in-state and regional markets, as well as Chicago, Dallas, Houston and San Francisco to encourage visits to The Mile High City in the first quarter of the year.
- The integrated campaign promoted the stellar events taking place in Denver in the early part of 2018, including the *Degas: A Passion for Perfection* exhibition at Denver Art Museum, *Creatures of Light* and *Dead Sea Scrolls* at Denver Museum of Nature & Science and the opening of the renovated Kirkland Museum of Fine & Decorative Art. Denver Restaurant Week and Collaboration Fest were also promoted, as well as the second season of the Winter Park Express Ski Train.
- The largest consumer tourism marketing campaign in Denver's history was created and launched to attract summer business in 2018. The \$6 million tourism consumer campaign targeted markets in Texas (Houston and Dallas), Chicago and San Francisco, as well as expanded the campaign's national presence.
- The new creative, developed with Karsh Hagan, was based on the tagline, "Soak it all in!" Special television commercials were created for targeted audiences of couples/adults and families, with ads promoting the city's sunshine, blue skies, craft beer and spirits, fine dining, outdoor concerts, museums, attractions and events.
- The campaign included television commercials, newspaper inserts, direct mail, radio ads, animated banners and eNewsletters, along with extensive additional promotions such as social media, search marketing and public relations.
- Regional ads were placed to promote Memorial Day weekend, which featured Denver Day of Rock, Colorado Rockies games and the Taylor Swift concert at Broncos Stadium at Mile High. July 4th regional ads included the Cherry Creek Arts Festival, Blues Traveler at Red Rocks Amphitheatre and Independence Eve Fireworks. Labor Day/Summer Finale ads promoted the Colorado Classic bike race, the inaugural Grandoozy music festival, A Taste of Colorado and the Denver Food + Wine Festival.
- Fall and winter campaign ads in 2018 focused on the *Dior: From Paris to the World* exhibition at the Denver Art Museum, the Great American Beer Festival and Denver Arts Week.
- For the first time, using TID money, the Bureau also began a year-round regional campaign focused on filling short-term hotel vacancies by promoting weekend events year-round.
- VISIT DENVER also collaborated on partner advertising campaigns with Denver Art Museum to promote *Degas: A Passion for Perfection* and *Dior: From Paris to the World*; and Denver Museum of Nature & Science to promote *Dead Sea Scrolls*, *Creatures of Light* and *Cuba! The Exhibition*.
- All tourism campaigns combined generated more than 621 million combined impressions in 2018.



**MILE HIGH HOLIDAYS**

The Mile High Holidays campaign, now in its 15th year and valued at more than \$1 million, is designed to increase hotel business at a traditionally slow time of year from Thanksgiving through the National Western Stock Show & Rodeo in January. The campaign showcases holiday events, shows at Denver Center for Performing Arts (such as *A Christmas Carol* and *Irving Berlin's White Christmas*), lighting displays at attractions; and the New Year's Eve fireworks on the 16th Street Mall (which is co-sponsored by VISIT DENVER). In 2018, Mile High Holidays was supported with an integrated ad campaign in regional and select in-state markets and a dedicated website, all promoting the season with special hotel rates that started at \$99. The campaign also included dedicated advertising and public relations efforts for the Hispanic/Latino market.



**DENVER 365 ONLINE EVENT CALENDAR**

In 2018, this comprehensive events calendar generated more than 2 million page views. It is the main cultural resource for Denver and a major component of the City's IMAGINE 2020 citywide cultural plan. Thousands of events are entered into the calendar, providing a great resource for locals and visitors alike. The calendar ensures that all museum and cultural center schedules, upcoming events and shows are centralized for maximum exposure and accessibility.



**DENVER 2-FOR-1 TIX**

This site works to sell last-minute tickets to increase the number of people using arts facilities. A monthly e-blast is sent in cooperation with Denver Arts & Venues and reaches nearly 15,000 subscribers with an average open rate of nearly 18 percent.

**MILE HIGH CULTURE PASS & DENVER CITYPASS**

Adding to the existing Mile High Culture Pass, which offers discounted admissions to the city's top cultural attractions, CityPASS started operations in Denver in 2018, selling a product that offers discounts to three, four or five top attractions. Sales for the Denver CityPASS on VISITDENVER.com totaled 1,762 in 2018. Denver CityPASS features eight Denver attractions: Children's Museum of Denver at Marisco Campus, Denver Art Museum, Denver Botanic Gardens, Denver Museum of Nature & Science, Denver Zoo, Downtown Aquarium, History Colorado Center and Wings Over the Rockies Air & Space Museum.

The Mile High Culture Pass continued in its fifth year in 2018, offering a three-day pass that includes discounted admission to Clyfford Still Museum, Denver Art Museum, Denver Botanic Gardens, Denver Museum of Nature & Science, History Colorado Center, the newly relocated Kirkland Museum of Fine & Decorative Art and Molly Brown House Museum. In 2018, a total of 2,279 Mile High Culture Passes were sold.



## 2018 TOURISM INITIATIVES



16

### TOURIST INFORMATION CENTERS

The VISIT DENVER information desk in Denver Union Station has become a key factor in the visitor services program. The desk, located where travelers arrive by the University of Colorado A Line from Denver International Airport, assisted more than 61,000 visitors in 2018. Combined with the other information centers at Denver International Airport, on California Street and in the Colorado Convention Center, VISIT DENVER provided personal assistance to more than 384,000 travelers in 2018. Approximately 27 percent of the people using the Bureau's information centers are international visitors, who appreciate receiving printed information in their native language as well as planning assistance for restaurants, accommodations and attractions. Studies show that people who use an information center often stay longer in the destination and spend more money.



### GO THE EXTRA MILE

VISIT DENVER's Go the EXTRA Mile Program provided hospitality training to 109 front-line staff from 37 companies in 2018, as well as engaging more than 300 volunteers and front-line employees in the new "Reach the Peak" training in advance of hosting IPW in 2018. The program also gives awards on a monthly basis to front-line employees who have gone the "EXTRA mile" in providing customer service to visitors.



### LGBTQ MARKETING

The LGBTQ Task Force advises VISIT DENVER on marketing efforts to attract LGBTQ travelers. A revised LGBTQ lure brochure was printed in 2018. In addition, expanded generic LGBTQ animated banners and an LGBTQ version of the "Ready to Go" promotional video were produced. VISIT DENVER hosted LGBTQ journalists and influencers during PrideFest weekend, which was also marketed through print and digital advertising.



### HISPANIC/LATINO MARKETING

VISIT DENVER continues to integrate Hispanic/Latino marketing efforts into the spring/summer and Mile High Holidays marketing campaigns with family friendly Spanish-language animated display banners. The Communications Department worked closely with a contracted PR agency to assist in placing travel stories in Houston, Washington, D.C. and other regional markets to increase awareness of all there is to see and do in Denver.



### GROUP TOUR, WEDDINGS & REUNIONS

The Tourism Department attended two domestic group tour tradeshows and sent 296 leads to partners in 2018, including 86 travel trade leads, 113 wedding leads, 58 reunion leads and 39 other small group leads. Weddings and reunions have become a great source for weekend business, and are often held during need periods.



The Tourism Department represented Denver at 10 international tradeshows and four sales missions in 2018. IPW was the biggest international marketing effort for VISIT DENVER, as the city hosted 1,300 international travel company representatives and 550 media from 70 countries for this annual marketplace. The Tourism Department held 210 pre-scheduled appointments with international buyers and the PR team participated in the Media Marketplace appointments. As of December 2018, 13 new international travel programs featuring Denver have been launched as a direct result of clients experiencing the city first-hand during IPW.

In addition to IPW, there were also other major international marketing events and opportunities for Denver in 2018:

- United Airlines launched seasonal service to London Heathrow on March 24. The Boeing 787-8 Dreamliner service continued through October 26, 2018. The service will resume in March 2019.

- Norwegian Airlines launched the first nonstop service between Denver and Paris, France on April 9. VISIT DENVER joined Denver Mayor Michael B. Hancock, the Colorado Tourism Office (CTO) and others on a sales mission to promote Denver and the new flight.
- Edelweiss Air launched the first Denver to Zürich, Switzerland nonstop flight on June 4. In February, VISIT DENVER joined CTO and Denver International Airport (DEN) representatives to host an event for 71 Swiss travel and media representatives to support the new service.
- In 2018, the Tourism Department conducted 37 site inspections of Denver for a total of 157 travel trade representatives from Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Denmark, France, Germany, Iceland, Italy, Japan, Netherlands, Norway, Panama, Sweden, Switzerland, the U.K. and the U.S.

## ADDITIONAL TRADESHOWS & MISSIONS

- **Icelandair Mid-Atlantic Tradeshow (Reykjavik, Iceland):** Appointments were held with the Icelandair sales team and travel companies from Europe and Nordic countries.
- **North American Journeys (NAJ) Summit West (Marina Del Rey, CA):** VISIT DENVER met with 61 receptive travel company contacts based on the West Coast.
- **Go West Summit Tradeshow (Salt Lake City, UT):** This annual tradeshow attracts international tour operators and travel agencies from 19 countries, with 129 contacts established for Denver.
- **USA Travel Show (Copenhagen, Denmark):** VISIT DENVER established contacts with 24 Nordic travel companies and media.
- **ITB Tradeshow (Berlin, Germany):** ITB Berlin is the world's largest annual tourism tradeshow. VISIT DENVER partnered with the CTO to meet with 68 travel company and media representatives.
- **Active America China (Atlanta, GA):** This tradeshow focuses on the key companies building inbound tourism from China to the United States; VISIT DENVER held 30 appointments marketing Denver as a destination and gateway to the American West.
- **Rocky Mountain International (RMI) Round Up (Kalispell, MT):** This annual tradeshow hosts travel trade professionals from Europe, the Nordic region, Australia and New Zealand. VISIT DENVER held 38 appointments as a gateway city partner for this alliance of Wyoming, South Dakota, North Dakota, Montana and Idaho.

- **La Cita De Las Americas (Fort Lauderdale, FL):** Appointments were held with 39 product managers from Latin American travel companies at this annual tradeshow.
- **Asian Market Seminars (Los Angeles, CA):** Trainings, appointments and an evening event were implemented with 134 contacts generated.
- **World Travel Market-WTM (London, England):** Appointments were held with 64 contacts in cooperation with the CTO.
- **CTO Sales Mission (Japan):** VISIT DENVER participated in the mission that included travel company and airline meetings, a client dinner and a media event. A total of 75 travel company and media contacts were generated.

## 2018 COMMUNICATIONS HIGHLIGHTS

The Communications Department works with travel writers, influencers and social media to generate travel stories about Denver around the world. Through press calls, press trips, press releases and press receptions, the department maintains contact with thousands of journalists around the world, inspiring positive travel stories about Denver.

The Communications Department assisted 1,628 journalists with their Denver stories, generating a record 9,429 media placements. If purchased as advertising, these stories would be worth \$86.5 million. Key placements included: *Los Angeles Times*, *New York Times*, *Chicago Tribune*, CBS National Radio - Peter Greenberg, *Afar*, *GQ Magazine* - China, *Rolling Stone Magazine* - France, *National Geographic Magazine*, and *Vogue Magazine*, among others. The team also played a vital role in coordinating the 2018 Denver episodes of Bravo's "Top Chef", the top culinary show in the country, garnering more than \$17 million in media coverage.



### 2018 RESULTS

JOURNALISTS ASSISTED **1,628**

**9,429** MEDIA PLACEMENTS

**\$86.5** MILLION IN AD VALUE EQUIVALENCY

The Communications Department also hosted 609 domestic journalists on 120 different press familiarization trips, organizing accommodations and tours and developing personalized itineraries that showcase the best of everything Denver has to offer.

During IPW, the department hosted 550 international journalists from 70 countries, as well as 87 additional international journalists on 48 separate press trips from 15 countries. These countries included:

Australia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Peru, Spain, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and Venezuela. Due in part to these efforts, the team generated international media coverage exceeding \$23.5 million in value.

This year, the team also distributed 35 press releases to local, regional and national media and hosted nine local press conferences to promote Bureau initiatives

and illustrate the importance of the travel industry to Denver's economy.

The team secured deskside meetings with key media outlets and freelancers in Washington, D.C., Chicago, Houston, Austin, Seattle, Portland and San Francisco, connecting with top travel and trade journalists and editors in these key feeder markets.

Additionally, communications team members attended key industry conferences including IPW and TravMedia International Media Marketplaces in London and Berlin.

The team worked closely with the U.S. Travel Association in 2018 to generate strong media attendance at IPW Denver and to develop media events and activities designed to showcase Denver as a top international tourism destination. These initiatives included a press brunch event

on Larimer Square featuring six James Beard nominated chefs and 14 city tours highlighting Denver's finest attractions and activities.

To develop relationships and share the latest Denver tourism news with local travel writers, the department hosted 10 Travel Writer Receptions with local partners providing an opportunity to meet with the more than 100 travel writers who live in Colorado.

VISIT DENVER HOSTS A NUMBER OF ANNUAL PROGRAMS TO DEVELOP THE CITY'S BRAND, ENCOURAGE LOCAL AND REGIONAL TOURISM AND GENERATE NATIONAL PRESS.

## DENVER RESTAURANT WEEK



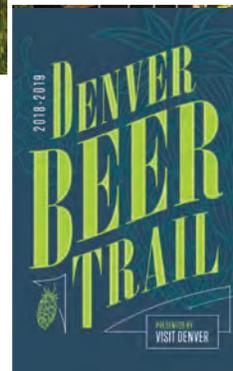
In its 14th year of promoting mile high dining, Denver Restaurant Week 2018 continued the established 10-day long format, spanning two full weekends, from February 23 – March 4.

The three-tiered pricing structure continued as well, offering diners a full, multi-course dinner for either \$25, \$35 or \$45. The pricing tiers, introduced in 2017, allow all restaurants to participate and provide an opportunity for Denver diners to explore different neighborhoods. A total of 238 restaurants participated, serving hundreds of thousands of specially priced meals.

More dining promotion came from Bravo's hit show, "Top Chef", which filmed in Denver and Colorado and was broadcast in 2018. Slow Food Nations followed up their successful 2017 event in Denver by returning July 13-15, 2018 to Larimer Square with three days of free foodie celebrations, 100 exhibitors, an outdoor culinary stage and gardening and cooking lessons.

**10** DAYS  
**239** PARTICIPATING RESTAURANTS  
**HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS**  
 OF MEALS SERVED

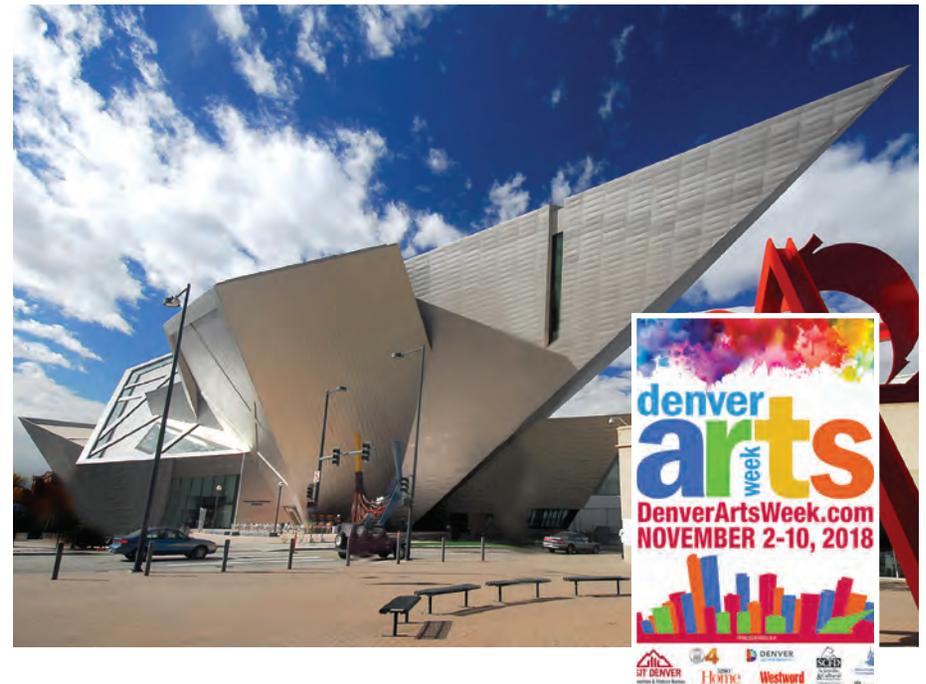
## DENVER BEER FEST



Denver Beer Fest was created to position Denver as America's craft beer capital. It is staged around the Great American Beer Festival (GABF), the largest beer competition in the world. Denver Beer Fest includes a regional campaign promoting all the beer-related events that happen around GABF. In 2018, Beer Fest again broke records with nearly 250 events. As part of Denver Beer Fest, the popular Denver Beer Trail guide was expanded to include all of VISIT DENVER's nearly 40 craft brewery partners. Media efforts associated with Denver Beer Fest generated more than \$2.4 million in earned media coverage and involved hosting a Denver Beer Trail tour for 57 beer journalists.

**250** EVENTS  
**\$2.4** MILLION IN AD VALUE  
**57** WRITERS ON BREWERY TOURS

## DENVER ARTS WEEK



Denver Arts Week was created to promote Denver's vibrant arts scene to both a local and regional audience. In its 12th year in 2018, Denver Arts Week once again offered a nine-day celebration of "all things art" in The Mile High City. There were more than 150 participating organizations, 400 cultural events, making it one of Denver's largest arts festivals.

### EVENT HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDE:

- The popular "Night at the Museums" attracted 23,000 visitors to 17 area museums, which stayed open on a Saturday night for free until 10 p.m. This has become the biggest night of the year for many of the city's museums, and Denver's First Lady Mary Louise Lee serves as Honorary Chair for the evening.

- The opening weekend also featured "First Friday Art Walks" with more than 100 galleries and organizations participating in six neighborhood art districts.
- Denver Center for the Performing Arts' *Breakin' Convention*, a hip hop dance theater festival, showcased the very best of local and international talent.
- In spirit of Denver's Cultural Plan IMAGINE 2020, City Council districts implemented projects to infuse arts and culture into their respective neighborhoods during Denver Arts Week.

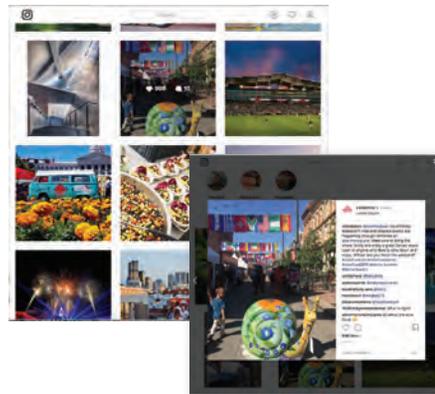
**400** CULTURAL EVENTS  
**150** PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS  
**23,000** VISITORS AT NIGHT AT THE MUSEUMS

# SOCIAL MEDIA, INTERACTIVE & PUBLICATIONS 2018

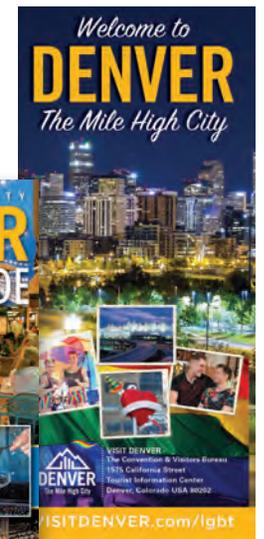


## SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media continues to have a tremendous impact on tourism and in 2018, VISIT DENVER set new social media records with nearly 5 million social media engagements on Facebook and Instagram. An expanded social video marketing program generated more than 3 million views!



Traffic to VISITDENVER.com set records in 2018, topping 10 million visits for the first time ever, an increase of a whopping 24 percent. Aiding this growth was the VISIT DENVER blog, which continues to make the site more engaging. A total of 60 new stories were added to the blog, many of them written by local travel writers. The blog includes a popular weekly events post and "Only in Denver" posts that highlight unique things across the city.



## PUBLICATIONS 2018

Print still makes a major impression with visitors. The Bureau prints 510,000 copies of the *Official Visitors Guide* in two editions: Spring/Summer and Fall/Winter editions. The guide is distributed at the Bureau's four tourist information centers, as well as inside nearly 20,000 hotel rooms.

The Bureau also printed 16,000 copies of the 2018 *Destination Planning Guide* (DPG), which is distributed directly to a list of key meeting planners, tour operators and international travel professionals.

In addition, VISIT DENVER continually updates and prints brochures to the city in Chinese, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Portuguese, Spanish and English. The Denver Dining Guide catalogs all partner restaurants by neighborhood, while the Denver Beer Trail guide does the same for breweries. The Bureau also produces special niche guides for the African-American, Hispanic, Multi-Cultural and LGBTQ markets and maintains the VISIT DENVER TV channel in more than 19,000 hotel rooms across the city.





*The Denver Sports Commission, an affiliate of VISIT DENVER, had a busy year in 2018 working to pursue new sports events for Denver, while preparing for major international sporting events coming to the city.*

**WINTER OLYMPICS**

Unfortunately, the United States Olympic Committee (USOC) selected Salt Lake City to be America's potential host for 2030 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games, two years earlier than tradition. However, through the bidding process, the USOC became extremely familiar with the facilities that Denver and Colorado offer, as well as the ability for Denver to host high-profile global events. The Mile High City has a great sporting event reputation, and will be in consideration for various other winter games and sporting events as a result.

**COLORADO CLASSIC**

In its second year in August 2018, the Colorado Classic professional bike race brought more than 100 professional men and women cyclists competing in circuit races in Vail and Denver's RiNo (River North) neighborhood. The four-day international cycling race, also included the Velorama Music Festival in Denver featuring big-name acts like The Growlers and Cold

War Kids. In August 2019, the event will continue as the only UCI women's standalone stage race in the Western Hemisphere. With the elimination of the men's race, the Colorado Classic now showcases women exclusively and has big plans for its 2019 race, including quadrupling its prize purses and team stipends, introducing free live streaming and offering more challenging routes, thus empowering female athletes on a global stage.

**RUGBY**

Denver hosted two international matches this past summer: the U.S. Eagles vs the Russian National Team at Dick's Sporting Goods Park and the Rugby League International Challenge with New Zealand and England playing at Broncos Stadium at Mile High. The Golden Oldies Rugby Festival has also been booked for June 2020 featuring nearly 3,000 rugby enthusiasts from all over the world.

**WORLD CUP 2026**

On June 13, 2018, the United States, along with Canada and Mexico, won the rights to host the World Cup in 2026. Denver made the list of 23 cities to possibly host some of the games; official host cities will be announced in spring 2021.

**USA TAEKWONDO**

Denver hosted the National Team Trials February 28 – March 3, 2018 at the Colorado Convention Center. Multiple divisions competed, from juniors to adults. Athletes vied to get a step closer in making the U.S. National team.

**SPORTS TRADE SHOWS**

Denver Sports also represented Denver at annual sports conferences, including SportAccord in Thailand, NASC Sports Symposium in Minneapolis and US Sports Congress' Sports Industry eXchange in Colorado Springs, promoting Denver as the perfect destination for sporting events.



# 2018 PARTNERSHIP HIGHLIGHTS

THE VISIT DENVER FOUNDATION HAS AWARDED MORE THAN \$1 MILLION IN SCHOLARSHIPS TO COLORADO STUDENTS PURSUING A DEGREE IN TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY.

The Partnership Department is responsible for generating private revenue for VISIT DENVER's marketing efforts – more than \$3.4 million in 2018 – and for ensuring that VISIT DENVER partners receive full value from their partnership investment. The Government & Community Affairs Department works to establish positive relationships between VISIT DENVER and elected government officials, local communities, and neighborhoods. The Finance & Administration Department works to assist all other VISIT DENVER departments and to provide an efficient work environment.

The Partnership Department hosted 47 partner events in 2018, including New Partner Orientations to help partners learn more about how VISIT DENVER markets and sells Denver and how to get the most from their benefits. Other events included the monthly Spotlight, which allows partners to showcase their product and services to other partners and VISIT DENVER staff; and C.H.A.T., a monthly networking opportunity held at different venues throughout Denver, and included two Industry Updates that combined presentations from executive staff with a reception. The department also staged various workshops to help partners learn more about how to market their business and stay connected to VISIT DENVER staff and other partners.

## VISIT DENVER FOUNDATION

More than 500 partners turned out for VISIT DENVER's 19th Annual Tourism Hall of Fame Dinner on March 14, 2018 at the Seawell Ballroom at the Denver Performing Arts Complex. Inducted into the Hall of Fame were Stephen Bartolin, the 24-year president and current Chairman of the Broadmoor; Charlie Brown, retired longtime Denver City Councilman; and Gary DeFrage, immediate past president of Winter Park Resort. A special posthumous award went to Barney Ford, one of the most famous figures of Colorado's hospitality industry, who as an escaped slave came to Colorado in the gold rush and struck it rich by opening a series of restaurants and hotels.

Ten "Tourism Star" awards were presented to organizations, attractions and events that had a significant impact on Denver's tourism industry during the preceding year. Winning "Tourism Stars" for their contributions in 2017 in the areas of art & culture



were five of Denver's cultural attractions: Denver Art Museum, Denver Botanic Gardens, Denver Center for the Performing Arts, Denver Museum of Nature & Science and Denver Zoo.

In the area of sports, two major events brought worldwide attention to Denver in 2018: The Colorado Classic and Velorama Festival and CONCACAF Gold Cup.

Denver International Airport was recognized for its success in the international arena for several new nonstop flights including, Norwegian's nonstop flight to London, Gatwick, U.K.; Copa Airlines' nonstop flight to Panama City, Panama; United's nonstop flight from London Heathrow, U.K.; Norwegian Air from Paris, France; and Edelweiss, from Zürich, Switzerland.

Denver's growing reputation as a great culinary center was highlighted in 2018 by two special events recognized as Tourism Stars: Slow Food Nations and Bravo's "Top Chef" TV show, which filmed the most recent season in Denver and Colorado.

Event sponsors were EKS&H, Cherry Creek Shopping Center, Brownstein Hyatt Farber Schreck, Johnson & Wales University, Molson Coors, Colorado Tourism Office, Impact Productions, Seawell Ballroom and Epicurean Group. Event Partners included 9News, Bouquets, CEAVCO Audio Visual, The Curtis, kiMotion, Kinser Studios, Lyft and OneTouchPoint.

## TOURISM HALL OF FAME INDUCTEES



*Breckenridge Heritage Alliance accepted the posthumous award for Barney Ford, hotelier and restaurateur.*



*Steve Bartolin, Chairman, The Broadmoor*



*Charlie Brown, Denver City Councilman*



*Gary DeFrage, Winter Park Ski Resort*

## GOLF TOURNAMENT

The 32nd Annual VISIT DENVER Chairman's Cup and Partnership Open Golf Tournament attracted 123 golfers to Arrowhead Golf Club on June 13, 2018. The team from FREEMAN took first place. Tournament sponsors included: Sage Hospitality, Denver International Airport, Stonebridge Companies, Hertz, Otra Vez, Karsh Hagan, Denver Broncos Football Club, Molson Coors and OneTouchPoint. The event raised nearly \$27,000 in scholarship funds for students pursuing higher education in the tourism industry.



## SCHOLARSHIPS

Since 2000, the VISIT DENVER Foundation has awarded more than \$1 million in scholarships to Colorado students pursuing a degree in tourism and hospitality. Fundraising comes from two VISIT DENVER Foundation events: The Denver & Colorado Tourism Hall of Fame Dinner and the Chairman's Cup & Partnership Open. In addition, since 2007, the VISIT DENVER Foundation has donated a total of \$110,000 to Denver's Road Home and \$10,000 to Junior Achievement.

To date, a total of 362 students have received scholarships to five Colorado colleges that offer a degree in tourism and hospitality: Colorado State University, Johnson & Wales University, Metropolitan State University of Denver, University of Denver and the University of Northern Colorado.





## LOCAL LEVEL

VISIT DENVER participated in the Downtown Denver Partnership's Urban Exploration trip to downtown Los Angeles. Participants learned from local leaders about transportation, homelessness, the Olympics and other topics that are also important in Denver.

For the 14th consecutive year, VISIT DENVER was proud to be the Presenting Sponsor for the annual Inter-Neighborhood Cooperation (INC) dinner, which drew several hundred neighborhood association representatives as well as elected officials.

In the November election, VISIT DENVER supported Denver Initiative 301, Caring 4 Denver, to support needed mental health services, suicide prevention, substance abuse prevention and other services and programs.

## STATE LEVEL

Six members of the state legislature are newly elected Representatives and Senators representing Denver. VISIT DENVER has met with these newly elected officials to discuss the benefits of the city and state's tourism industry.

In the November election, VISIT DENVER supported state Proposition 110, Let's Go Colorado, to generate new resources for statewide transportation and mobility issues. While the measure was defeated by Colorado voters, infrastructure continues to be an important issue for residents as well as visitors.

## FEDERAL LEVEL

The U.S. Travel Association held its annual legislative fly-in in Washington, D.C. with several hundred travel industry partners from across the country attending. VISIT DENVER participated with fellow Colorado tourism representatives to meet with the Colorado delegation and share details

about the state's strong tourism economy, need for airport modernization and importance of international travel.

The U.S. Travel Association hosted U.S. Representative Ed Perlmutter (D-7th) for a local meeting with VISIT DENVER and several Denver metro area travel and tourism partners. Topics included international travel, infrastructure investment, national security and workforce development.

The Government and Community Affairs department keeps members informed on these activities and more through the quarterly *Policy Perspectives* e-newsletter, which has an open rate of nearly 30 percent.

## PROUD MEMBERS & PARTNERS 2018

- Asian Chamber of Commerce
- Association of Chief Executives for Sport
- Brand USA
- C3: Colorado Competitive Council
- City Club Denver
- Colorado Association of Destination Marketing Organization Board (CADMO)
- Colorado Black Chamber of Commerce
- Colorado Business Committee for the Arts (CBCA)
- Colorado Concern
- Colorado Hotel and Lodging Association/ Metro Denver Lodging Council
- Colorado Restaurant Association
- Colorado Ski Country
- Colorado Sports Hall of Fame
- Colorado Springs Conventions & Visitors Bureau
- Colorado Tourism Office (CTO)
- Colorado Women's Chamber of Commerce
- Conifer Area Chamber of Commerce
- ConnectSports
- Denver Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce
- Denver Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
- Denver Metro Chamber of Commerce
- Denver Theater District
- Denver Urban League
- Destination Colorado
- Destinations International
- Downtown Denver Partnership
- Event Services Professional Association
- Evergreen Area Chamber of Commerce
- Girl Scouts of America
- Greater Brighton Chamber of Commerce
- Greater Glendale Chamber of Commerce
- Healthcare Convention and Exhibitors Association
- Historic Denver, Inc.
- Hospitality Sales and Marketing Association International
- Japan America Society of Colorado
- Kellen Foundation
- Kiwanis Club of Denver
- LoDo District, Inc.
- Metro Denver Economic Development Corporation (MDEC)
- Metro Mayors Caucus
- Meetings Industry Council (MIC)
- National and Rocky Mountain Chapters of ASAE, MPI, PCMA, IAAE
- National Association of Sports Commissions (NASC)
- National Coalition of Black Meeting Planners
- Religious Conference Management Association
- Rocky Mountain Business Travel Association
- Rocky Mountain International
- Scientific & Cultural Facilities District (SCFD)
- Denver County Cultural Council
- Society for Government Meeting Professionals
- South Metro Denver Chamber
- Tour Colorado
- Tourism Industry Association of Colorado (TIAC)
- U.S. Olympic Committee
- U.S. Travel Association (USTA)
- West Chamber Serving Jefferson County

## COMMUNITY SERVICE & PARTICIPATION

The Bureau actively supports the following community efforts and programs:

- Biennial of the Americas
- Cherry Creek Arts Festival
- Colfax Marathon
- Concerts for Kids
- Civic Center Conservatory
- Denver Day of Rock
- Denver Film Festival
- Denver's Road Home
- Doors Open Denver
- Downtown Denver Partnership Ambassador Program and Security Action Plan
- The Greenway Foundation
- Inter Neighborhood Cooperation
- Latinas First Foundation
- Martin Luther King, Jr. Business Awards
- Mizel Institute
- National Western Center Citizen Advisory Committee
- PrideFest
- University programs - local and regional

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