

S o c i a l M e d i a

Facebook

Followers 1,858

Reach 104,060

Average Reach/post 728

Likes per post 11.8

Followers 72% women



Twitter

Followers 879

Likes 123

Tweets 105

Retweets 49

Following 220



VisitMarionOhio.com

All new web site in 2017

Top 3 page visits: home page, calendar, lodging



Executive Director
Office Coordinator

Mark Holbrook
Paige Merritt

Chairperson
Vice-Chairperson
Secretary
Treasurer

Bev Ford, Palace Theatre
Kathy Wink, Goodwill Industries
Sherry Hall, Harding Presidential Site
Jean Obenour, Custom Professional Accounting

Marion County Commissioners
Andy Applefeller
Kerr Murray
Ken Stiverson

Board members
Hal Clase, All Occasions Catering
Cindy Wood, Marion County Fairgrounds
Mayor Scott Schertzer, City of Marion
Mary Hamby, Fairfiled Inn & Suites
George Lawrence, Lawrence Orchard
Joe Sansotta, Sansotta's Quick Italian
Ellen Messenger, Tri Rivers Career Center

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MARION
AREA CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU

2017 Annual Report

Hickory Grove Campground

MARION
AREA CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU

Making a Move

We referred to 2016 as a year of change. Many of those changes led to a shifting of perspective in 2017. We and many of the community organizations in Marion began to focus our attention on the future. We began to dream a little about what our community can and should be. We envisioned a place where local business thrives, visitors are welcomed, and innovation and entrepreneurship are encouraged.

MarionMade!, a community-wide pride campaign launched on February 14 and the Marion Area CVB was proudly involved in contributing to the planning and implementation of the project. A few months later, along with Downtown Marion Inc., we launched the Marion Cultural Corridor Initiative. The Cultural Corridor has helped to make concrete our desire to revitalize the core of Marion as a means to attract visitors, new business, and as a place for residents to gather in community. The initiative is on-going and continues to inspire local businesses and community leaders in 2018.

And, of course we are all looking forward to the opening of the Harding Presidential Center in 2020. Efforts to attract bus groups and others in 2020 began in 2017 and will continue as the opening approaches. We are also excited about Marion's new Children's museum, the Explor-It-Torium set to open by the end of this year.

On January 26, we launched an all-new web site designed to be more visually attractive and easier to navigate to the areas potential visitors are interested in. The new web site also allows the CVB to make updates and add new pages without relying on a web manager to do the work. This will save money and permit updates to be made in a more timely manner.

2017 also brought a continued increase in lodging tax revenues, clearly an indication that Marion is becoming a more attractive place to visitors. This, combined with an ever-increasing number of new, local business openings, leads us to be optimistic about the future of tourism and the local economy in our community.

Mark Holbrook
Executive Director



Annual Tourism Breakfast

May 12, gathered with almost 100 local business and community leaders to share the importance of tourism to Marion's economy and community wellbeing. Featured speaker was Melinda Huntley, director of the Ohio Travel Association. Customer Service Star award recipients were the box office staff of the Marion Palace Theatre. The Tourism Ambassador Award was presented to recently retired Marion County Fair manager Candy Tripp. Marion Tourism Marketing grant recipients for 2017 were the Harding Home and Marion County Historical Society.



Be a Tourist in Your Own Backyard

The annual event, on May 13 in 2017 is to promote shop local and tourism awareness within Marion County May. The second year of **Be A Tourist in Your Own Backyard** included many business participants and generated much interest through social media.

Local Events - Statewide Appeal

Marion continues to originate great events that attract both residents and visitors. In 2017, 18 local events, including concerts, outdoor events, and the Popcorn Festival attracted an estimated 206,275 visitors.

Partnerships

June, launched the **Marion Cultural Corridor Initiative**. The project, a partnership with Downtown Marion Inc., assessed our city core infrastructure, benchmarked other Ohio city's similar projects, and made recommendations for sustainable growth in Marion's corridor area. Created and distributed a Marion Cultural Corridor Map.

September 26 - 28, in conjunction with CanDo, attended the **Small Market Meetings** trade show in South Bend, Indiana to promote Marion as a destination for meetings, conferences, and events.

June 21, with the Ohio Travel Association, co-hosted a regional **Focus on Tourism** workshop on agri-tourism development.

Visitor Info Packets

Distributed 4,245 packets to visitors, vendors, and event participants resulting in \$1,273,500 in visitor spending. A 20% increase over 2016.

Visitor Guide

30,000 printed, distributed through the Travel Information Centers in Ohio, Travel Plazas on the Ohio Turnpike, Ohio Travel Pavilion, and advertising reader responses.

AAA Travel Show

January 19 – 21, participated in the annual AAA Great Vacations Expo at the Convention Center in Columbus. Distributed visitor guides and other materials to the 25,000 attendees.

Heartland Travel Showcase

March 3 – 5, met with tour operators from the Midwest promoting Marion as a destination for future tours.

Ohio Association of Convention & Visitors Bureaus

September 20 - 21, attended the annual professional development conference. Received a Star Award for the Ohio Magazine print ad featuring Willy & Wade.

Ohio Conference on Travel

October 31 - November 2, attended the annual professional development conference. MACVB received an Award of Merit for the Local Restaurant Guide.



Sports & Recreation

March – Ohio WAY Wrestling tournament
\$110,550 in visitor spending

July - National Girls Fast Pitch Tournament at River Valley Baseball for Youth
\$1.05 million in visitor spending

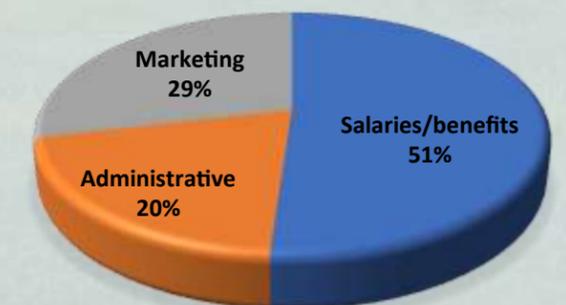
Lodging Tax Revenue

The Marion Area CVB is funded through a 3% tax on hotel rooms within the county.

2017 revenue of \$194,920
An all-time high



11 of the 12 months in 2017 exceeded budget projections for lodging tax revenue and July set a new single-month record of \$23,995.



Marketing as a percentage of budget rose again in 2017. From \$36,375 to \$53,705.