



*Little Rock*TM

CONVENTION &
VISITORS BUREAU

ANNUAL REPORT 2022

◉ LITTLE ROCK CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

After almost two full years mired by the COVID-19 pandemic, 2022 was a year of recovery and growth for the LRCVB and Little Rock's tourism industry at large. After assuming the role of president & CEO in February, I continued to reshape the Bureau to meet the challenges of a post-pandemic world.

The Sales & Services Division and the Marketing & Communications Division, which were combined during the pandemic, were separated again. An office of community engagement was also established, creating the new Marketing, Communications & Community Engagement Division. We continued to add new faces to the team, finally filling staffing vacancies that had been open since the pandemic.

The year saw our sales efforts return in full force, with our sales team attending a record number of trade shows around the country, resulting in more than 169 future event bookings.

Though the number of events in our facilities remained below their pre-pandemic peaks, Robinson Center was able to set a record for facility user days. In between events, both Robinson Center and the Statehouse Convention Center saw continued capital improvements overseen by our Facility Operations Division members.

Much of the year was spent strengthening our relationship with the surrounding community. These efforts included everything from the publication of our first attractions guide, reimagining the Welcome Packet for new A&P tax permittees, and the creation of the Community Communications Plan, a “buddy system” that pairs individual LRCVB employees with local hotels and attractions for in-depth, quarterly meetings. Even this annual report – reformatted and redesigned from previous iterations – is an effort to better tell the story of how the LRCVB works to improve Little Rock.

As you read deeper into this report, you'll better understand how Little Rock's tourism industry is recovering from the pandemic and how the LRCVB is shepherding this industry toward success for the years to come.

Our newly released Tourism Master Plan is a roadmap for long-term planning that will guide Little Rock's tourism industry over the next 10 years, I believe that we will look back at 2022 as the year the foundation was laid for a new era of growth and vitality for Little Rock's tourism economy.



Gina Gemberling
President & CEO
Gina Gemberling, CDME
Little Rock Convention &
Visitors Bureau

**BIG ON
LITTLE ROCK**



Little Rock™

CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU

MISSION

Improve the quality of life and the local economy in Little Rock by bringing visitors, meetings, conventions, and events to the city; Responsibly manage public funds in its charge; Efficiently operate the facilities it manages; Serve customers, visitors, and delegates with courtesy, knowledge, and skill.

CORE VALUES

BE THE PLEASANT SURPRISE

a mix of both personality and remarkable customer service.

MAKE A POSITIVE DIFFERENCE EVERY DAY

be present in every moment and aware that even the smallest actions can make the biggest impact.

ALWAYS ENGAGE

sincerely engage in the guest experience.

PUT PEOPLE FIRST

treat others better than they expect to be treated.

BE EXTRAORDINARY

anticipate customer needs and deliver personalized service that exceeds expectations.

TAKE OWNERSHIP

produce a result that you can be proud of and take pride in the outcome.



ORGANIZATION & LEADERSHIP

LITTLE ROCK CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU (LRCVB)

The Little Rock Convention & Visitors Bureau (LRCVB) is the official destination marketing organization for the City of Little Rock, charged with promoting the city for convention and leisure travel. The LRCVB also operates the Statehouse Convention Center, Robinson Center, Cromwell Building, River Market Ottenheimer Hall, First Security Amphitheater, the pavilions, and multiple parking facilities. The LRCVB is primarily funded by a lodging and prepared food tax. The organization is divided into four primary divisions: Finance & Administration, Sales & Services, Marketing, Communications & Community Engagement, and Operations.

LITTLE ROCK ADVERTISING & PROMOTION COMMISSION

The Little Rock Advertising & Promotion Commission is the governing body for the Little Rock Convention & Visitors Bureau. It is a volunteer board consisting of seven members – two City of Little Rock elected officials, four business owners within the Little Rock hospitality industry and one at-large position.



Jim Keet, Chair



Mayor Frank Scott, Jr.



**Nick Roye,
Finance Committee Chair**



**City Director
Antwan Phillips**



Rajesh Mehta



Yogesh Asudani



Pamela Smith

THE LITTLE ROCK CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU LEADERSHIP TEAM

Gina Gemberling – President & CEO

Chris Phillips – Senior Vice President of Finance & Administration & CFO

Brian Oaks – Senior Vice President of Operations & COO

Adam Berrios – Vice President of Sales & Services

Kasey Summerville – Vice President of Marketing, Communications & Community Engagement

James ‘Doc’ Doolittle – Senior Director of Facility Maintenance & Engineering

Jennifer Garner – Senior Director of Event Operations

Brian Staggers – Senior Director of Information Technology

Joy Barlogie – Director of Marketing

Libby Doss Lloyd – Director of Communications

Diana Long – Director of Events

Matthew Mills – Controller

Kimberly Sanders – Director of Human Resources

Lisa Spence – Director of Tax Revenue

LRCVB AWARDS & RECOGNITION

BUREAU-WIDE AWARDS

- SILVER ADRIAN AWARD FOR BLACK CONSUMER CAMPAIGN**
– Hospitality Sales and Marketing Association International (HSMAI)
- 2022 READERS' CHOICE AWARD (10X WINNER)**
– ConventionSouth Magazine
- 2022 READERS' CHOICE AWARD**
– Smart Meetings Magazine
- 2022 MOST ADIRED CONVENTION AND VISITORS BUREAU**
– Arkansas Money & Politics Magazine

EMPLOYEE AWARDS

- EMERGING TOURISM STAR, ETOURISM SUMMIT**
Seth Eli Barlow

EMPLOYEE CERTIFICATIONS

EQUITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION LEADERSHIP SERIES, DESTINATIONS INTERNATIONAL
Kristie Johnson

VENUE MANAGEMENT SCHOOL, INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF VENUE MANAGERS
Jennifer Garner

PROFESSIONAL IN DESTINATION MANAGEMENT, DESTINATIONS INTERNATIONAL
Rachel Callahan | Diana Long

20+ YEAR EMPLOYEES

LORETTA MITCHELL
Custodian | 35 years

GWENDOLYN STALLINGS
Building Services Manager | 34 years

SHIRLEY WITHERS
Receptionist | 34 years

JOHNNY LONEY
Auxiliary Services Manager | 33 years

DEEJAY RUSSELL
Parking Assistant Manager | 32 years

JAMES WILLIAMS
Part Time Safety Security Officer | 28 years

KEITH WINFREY
Custodian | 28 years

RANDY GUPTILL
Director of Technical Services | 28 years

KATINA BROWN
Event Manager | 25 years

SHERYL COLCLOUGH
Part Time Receptionist | 24 years

MICA FARMER
Information Technology Business Specialist | 23 years

LEE COULTER
Safety Security Officer | 23 years

JOY COGSHELL
Part Time Receptionist | 23 years

MARVIN TAYLOR
Part Time Safety Security Officer | 22 years

PENNY NAGEL
Destination Services Specialist | 21 years

2022 RETIREES

- PHYLLIS LUCAS** Senior Director of Event Operations | 48 years
- DAVID RUSSELL** Senior Sales Director | 38 years
- HUGH THOMAS** Safety Security Officer | 16 years
- PAT FARRELL** Audio-Visual Technician | 10 years

IN MEMORIAM

- In loving memory of
- PHILLIP PAGE**
Parking Assistant Manager



VALUE OF TOURISM

TOURISM IMPACT IN PULASKI COUNTY

	2019	2020	2021	2020-2021 YEAR OVER YEAR VARIANCE	YEAR OVER YEAR % CHANGE
Visitor Expenditures	\$1,873,006,872	\$1,178,903,632	\$1,677,021,114	\$498,117,481	42.3%
Income (Wages)	\$437,783,601	\$291,443,912	\$395,160,831	\$103,716,919	35.6%
State Tax	\$78,327,055	\$52,792,738	\$71,400,000	\$18,607,262	35.2%
Local Tax	\$34,405,245	\$25,869,865	\$35,900,000	\$10,030,135	38.8%
Employment (Jobs)	12,765	8,418	10,810	2,392	28.4%
2% Tax Collections	\$3,821,685	\$2,499,448	\$3,962,101	\$1,462,653	58.5%

Source: 2021 Arkansas Tourism Economic Impact



2022 BY THE NUMBERS



429 EVENTS
HELD IN LRCVB
MANAGED FACILITIES



569,052 ATTENDEES
IN LRCVB MANAGED FACILITIES



OCCUPANCY

-0.3% ↓ OVER
2021
-5.9% ↓ COMPARED
TO 2019



REVPAR

13% ↑ OVER
2021
5.3% ↑ COMPARED
TO 2019

SHORT TERM RENTAL



UNITS GREW
53%
WITH A 9.6%
DECREASE IN REVPAR



223
MEETINGS, CONVENTIONS
AND SPORTING EVENTS SERVICED
IN 2022 ATTRACTED
148,687 ATTENDEES
AND GENERATED



\$48,336,242
IN DIRECT SPENDING



169
FUTURE MEETINGS,
CONVENTIONS AND SPORTING
EVENTS SECURED REPRESENTING
69,680 ROOM NIGHTS AND
142,268 ATTENDEES WITH AN
ESTIMATED



\$36,871,730
IN DIRECT SPENDING

77
SITE TOURS



27
TRADE SHOWS
ATTENDED

24
JOURNALISTS, WRITERS
AND INFLUENCERS
HOSTED/ASSISTED



147
TOTAL MEDIA STORIES
AND ARTICLES



1.7 MILLION
WEBSITE PAGE VIEWS

796,000+
UNIQUE WEBSITE VISITORS



8,683
NEW SOCIAL MEDIA FANS
AND FOLLOWERS



36.7+ MILLION
IMPRESSIONS ON ALL
SOCIAL MEDIA NETWORKS

LITTLE ROCK STATISTICS

HOTEL DATA (2022, 2021, 2020)

	Occ %			ADR			RevPAR		
	2022	2021	2020	2022	2021	2020	2022	2021	2020
Little Rock	55.8	55.9	40.9	99.29	87.65	75.62	55.38	49.02	30.94
Downtown Convention District	66.1	55.9	36.7	135.55	118.61	110.98	89.56	66.32	40.68
Downtown Little Rock	63.3	56.5	40.7	125.68	109.32	97.09	79.58	61.79	39.50
Little Rock Airport Area	55.6	51.6	38.2	88.24	84.14	74.47	49.11	43.40	28.44
North Little Rock, AR	56.6	58.8	44.0	85.98	78.38	69.28	48.71	46.11	30.51
Hot Springs, AR	47.5	45.4	36.0	116.50	106.53	92.35	55.39	48.32	33.25
Northwest Arkansas	61.8	53.3	39.8	108.90	87.90	77.14	67.35	46.89	30.69
Oklahoma City, OK	56.6	54.3	42.5	90.71	81.40	70.74	51.33	44.19	30.07
Omaha, NE	59.6	55.5	40.0	109.85	97.01	76.99	65.50	53.85	30.77
Louisville, KY	57.8	50.4	36.7	123.58	99.73	82.78	71.49	50.23	30.38
Birmingham, AL	63.0	60.8	48.5	110.82	96.31	79.84	69.86	58.55	38.72
Baton Rouge, LA	59.4	64.2	49.9	100.56	92.85	77.45	59.78	59.64	38.68
Albuquerque, NM	65.1	62.4	45.6	108.22	91.48	71.30	70.43	57.10	32.48
Memphis, TN	64.0	61.9	49.2	111.39	97.02	78.12	71.30	60.01	38.43

Source: STR

SHORT-TERM RENTAL DATA AND ANALYTICS 2021 VS 2022

	Available Listings			Booked Listings			Occupancy Rate			Average Daily Rate			RevPAR		
	2021	2022	% Chg	2021	2022	% Chg	2021	2022	% Chg	2021	2022	% Chg	2021	2022	% Chg
Kansas City	2,670	3,454	29.4%	2,397	3,070	28.1%	60%	55%	-7.6%	169	184	8.9%	101	101	0.6%
Tulsa	1,186	2,139	80.4%	1,062	1,933	82.0%	64%	53%	-16.8%	141	181	27.9%	90	96	6.4%
Shreveport	318	480	50.9%	288	462	60.4%	58%	52%	-11.0%	149	161	8.1%	87	84	-3.8%
Baton Rouge	824	1,067	29.5%	712	996	39.9%	59%	50%	-15.0%	166	188	13.0%	98	94	-4.0%
Louisville	2,842	3,720	30.9%	2,487	3,284	32.0%	56%	56%	-0.5%	234	284	21.2%	131	158	20.6%
Memphis	1,902	2,480	30.4%	1,733	2,349	35.5%	62%	57%	-7.6%	173	192	10.9%	107	110	2.5%
Oklahoma City	1,873	2,897	54.7%	1,657	2,532	52.8%	63%	55%	-13.2%	133	147	10.4%	85	81	-4.2%
Birmingham	1,372	1,916	39.7%	1,198	1,801	50.3%	58%	55%	-5.2%	161	182	13.1%	93	100	7.3%
Little Rock	628	962	53.2%	559	878	57.1%	59%	53%	-9.6%	138	138	0.0%	81	73	-9.6%
Omaha	1,355	1,986	46.6%	1,236	1,870	51.3%	57%	55%	-4.1%	156	179	15.1%	89	99	10.4%

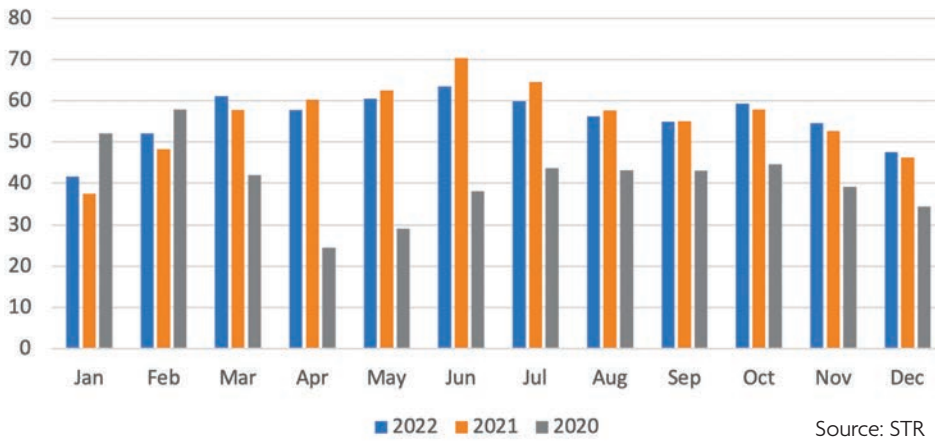
Source: AirDNA - data reflects all property types - entire place, private room and shared room

SHORT-TERM RENTAL DATA AND ANALYTICS IN ARKANSAS 2021 VS 2022

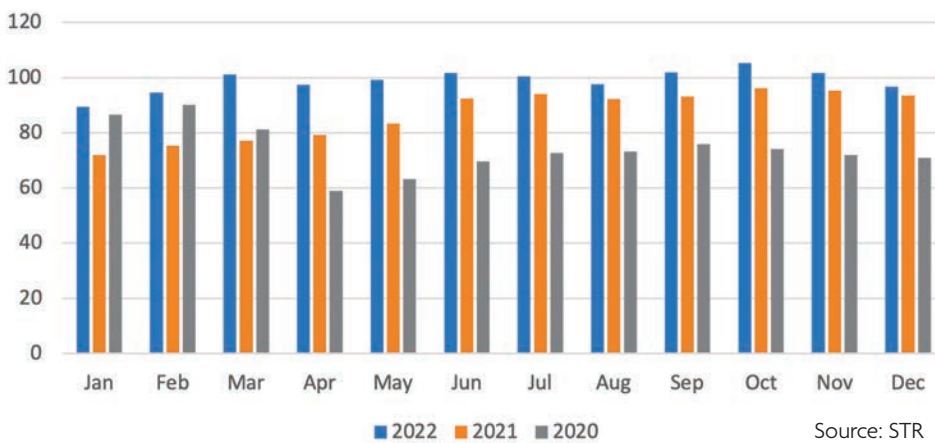
	Available Listings			Booked Listings			Occupancy Rate			Average Daily Rate			RevPAR		
	2021	2022	% Chg	2021	2022	% Chg	2021	2022	% Chg	2021	2022	% Chg	2021	2022	% Chg
Fayetteville	836	1,061	26.9%	792	1,031	30.2%	55%	50%	-9.6%	222	248	11.7%	122	123	1.1%
Rogers	322	483	50.0%	307	464	51.1%	59%	53%	-8.8%	267	278	3.9%	157	149	-5.2%
Hot Springs	1,729	2,226	28.7%	1,669	2,178	30.5%	60%	54%	-9.8%	260	261	0.3%	155	141	-9.5%
Arkansas	10,213	13,849	35.6%	9,699	13,399	38.1%	59%	54%	-9.5%	218	223	2.6%	129	120	-7.1%
North Little Rock	95	143	50.5%	83	130	56.6%	58%	51%	-11.7%	150	148	-1.4%	87	76	-12.9%
Bentonville	636	930	46.2%	608	904	48.7%	63%	56%	-10.6%	193	209	8.3%	121	117	-3.2%
Little Rock	510	820	60.8%	454	756	66.5%	61%	53%	-12.7%	152	150	-1.4%	93	80	-13.9%

Source: AirDNA - data reflects entire place properties only

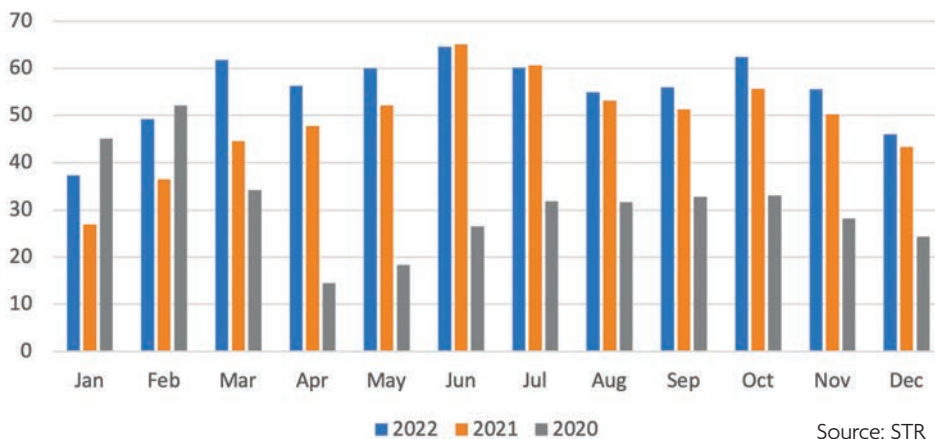
2022 LITTLE ROCK HOTEL OCCUPANCY



2022 LITTLE ROCK HOTEL ADR



2022 LITTLE ROCK HOTEL REVPAR



CLINTON
NATIONAL AIRPORT

LIT STATS

**TOTAL
PASSENGERS**

2022
2,021,040

2021
1,695,061

2020
977,742

2019
2,241,716



ROBINSON CENTER	2022	2021	2020	2019
FACILITY USER DAYS	262	190	256	249
TOTAL EVENTS	239	185	78	243
TOTAL ATTENDANCE	191,334	80,523	89,703	194,014



STATEHOUSE CONVENTION CENTER

STATEHOUSE CONVENTION CENTER	2022	2021	2020	2019
FACILITY USER DAYS	265	199	81	275
TOTAL EVENTS	122	85	35	160
TOTAL ATTENDANCE	268,740	113,777	52,157	273,893



RIVER MARKET

RIVER MARKET	2022	2021	2020	2019
FACILITY USER DAYS	99	94	37	239
TOTAL EVENTS	68	81	36	139
TOTAL ATTENDANCE	108,978	100,827	14,742	154,082

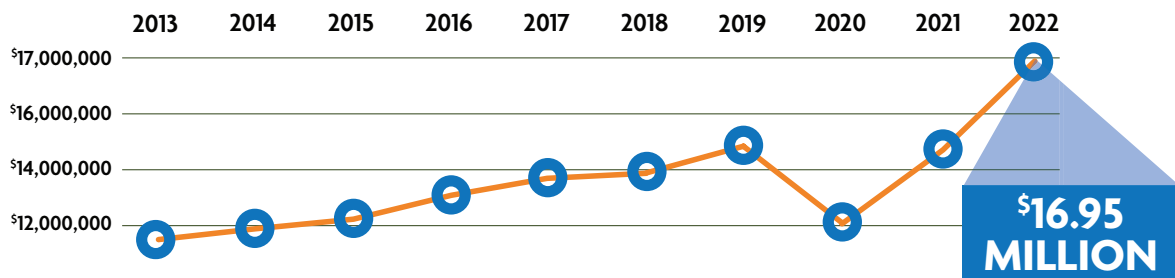


FOCUS

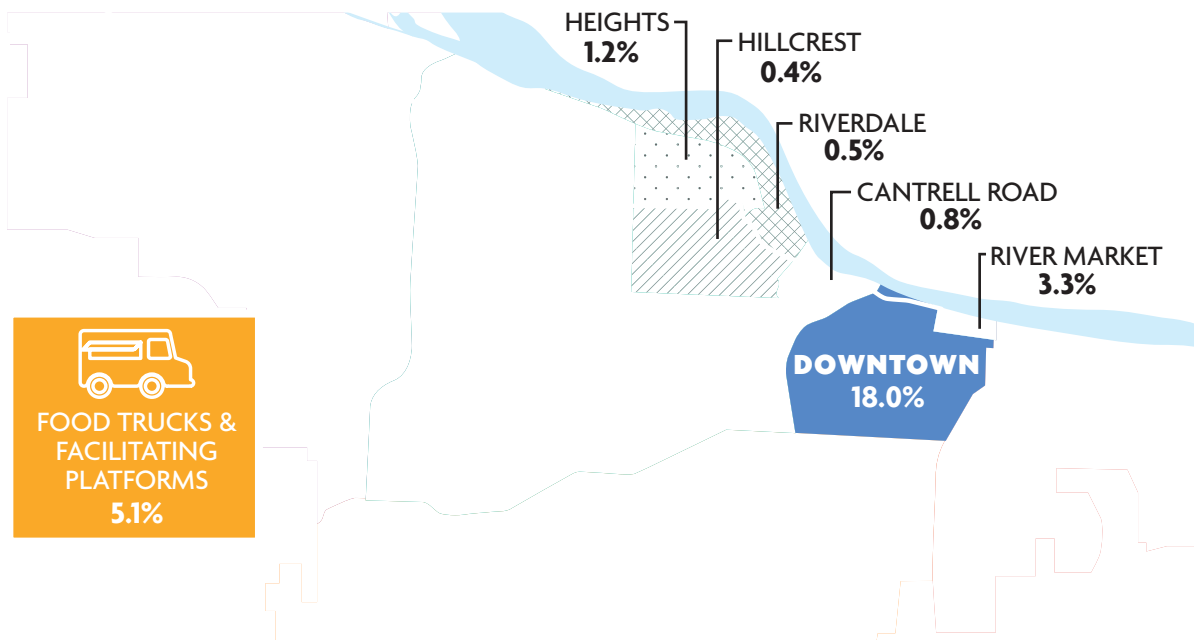
ARKANSAS YOUTH CONFERENCE

FINANCES

2% A&P TAX COLLECTIONS 2013-2022

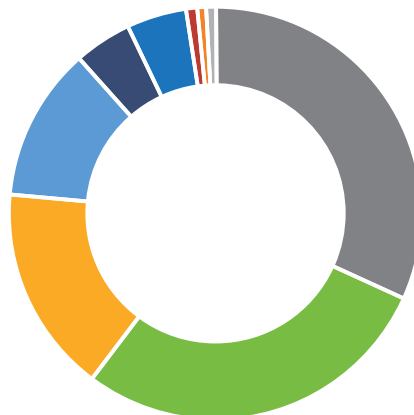


TAX COLLECTIONS BY REGION



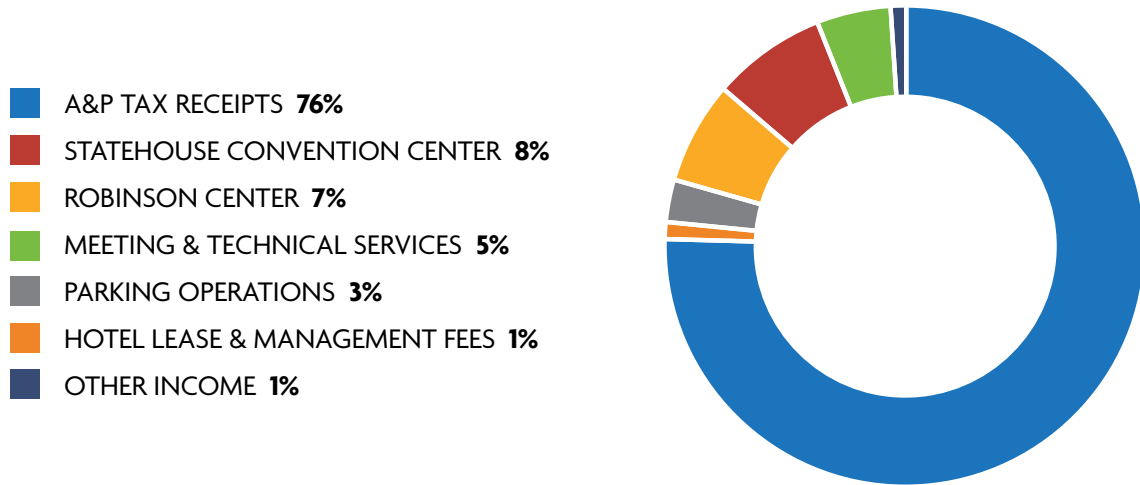
TAX COLLECTIONS BY BUSINESS TYPE

- FAST FOOD/LIMITED SERVICE **38.2%**
- FULL SERVICE RESTAURANT **31.9%**
- LODGING WITH FOOD SALES **16.4%**
- LODGING **12.1%**
- FACILITATING PLATFORM* **4.8%**
- CONCESSIONAIRE **4.5%**
- CATERER **0.8%**
- FOOD TRUCK **0.8%**
- PRIVATE CLUB **0.6%**

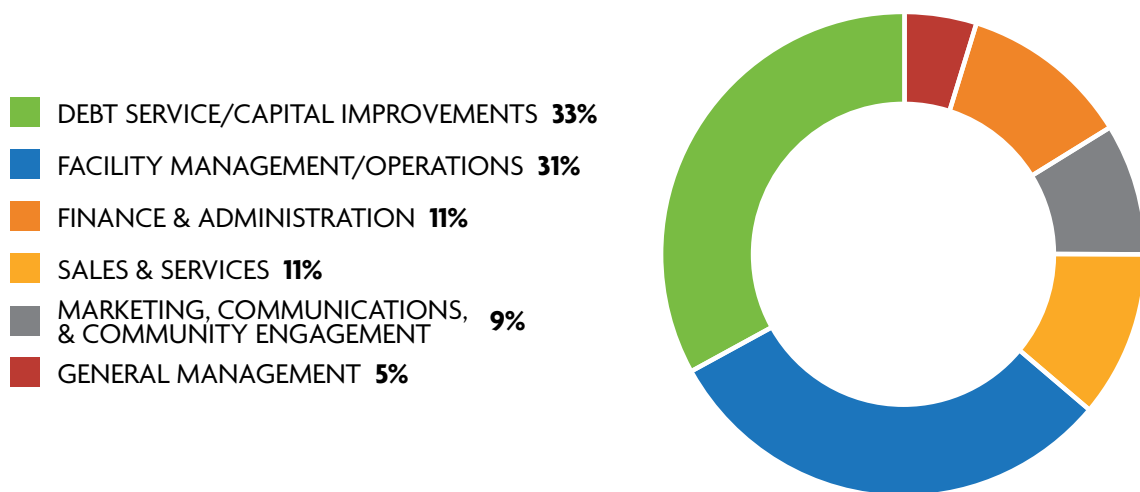


*Facilitating platform includes online purveyors such as Airbnb, Priceline/Agoda, Bite Squad, Grubhub, etc.

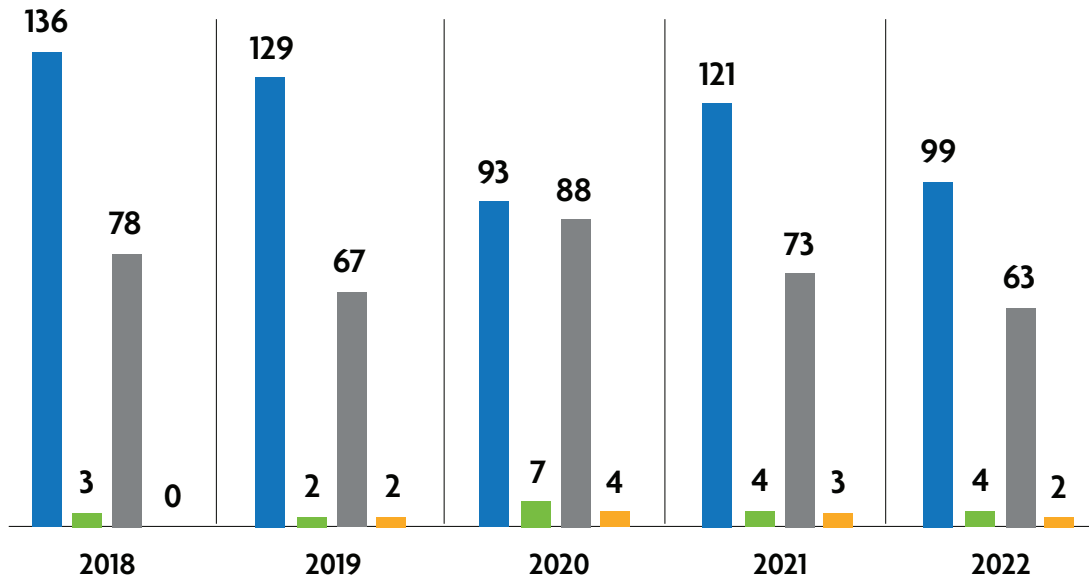
2022 TOTAL REVENUE \$22.5 MILLION



2022 TOTAL EXPENDITURES



2018-2022 NEW AND CLOSED PERMITS



*Includes changes in ownership

■ NEW PREPARED FOOD PERMITS
■ NEW LODGING PERMITS

■ CLOSED PREPARED FOOD PERMITS
■ CLOSED LODGING PERMITS





RAISING THE CURTAIN AT ROBINSON CENTER

Though the pandemic had an outsized impact on events, 2022 saw **record-breaking facility user days** at Robinson Center. A combined 239 events brought more than 191,000 guests through the facility's doors. The year also marked a record number of facility usage days, eclipsing the previous all-time high established in 2019.

The year also continued **facility enhancements**, including completing the second phase of a lighting upgrade in the performance hall.

It marked the first full year of the LRCVB's **management of the Robinson Center box office**, having assumed operational responsibility from Celebrity Attractions in

November 2021. The Bureau continues its partnership with Ticketmaster, which allows for greater data reporting and customer insights, as well as greater flexibility and additional client benefits.

The LRCVB's **marketing and social media** teams played a major role in promoting the facility's many events by sending marketing emails and managing the official Robinson Center social media channels.

Without a doubt, Robinson Center's standout event in 2022 was a 16-performance run of the Broadway hit ***Hamilton***. It grossed more than \$3.7 million in sales and was seen by more than 34,000 patrons.

34,286

TOTAL ATTENDEES
FOR HAMILTON



\$3,717,128

GROSS TICKET SALES
FOR HAMILTON



\$12 MILLION

ESTIMATED ECONOMIC IMPACT
OF HAMILTON IN LITTLE ROCK



THE MARKETING
DEPARTMENT SENT

61

PROMOTIONAL EBLASTS
TO ALMOST



36,000

SUBSCRIBERS



262

FACILITY USER DAYS



239

TOTAL EVENTS



191,334

TOTAL ATTENDANCE



105,829

TICKETS SOLD THROUGH
THE BOX OFFICE



704

SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS ACROSS ROBINSON
CENTER'S SOCIAL MEDIA CHANNELS LED TO



708,485

TOTAL ENGAGEMENTS



11,199,272

TOTAL IMPRESSIONS



A full-page background image of Lin-Manuel Miranda in a detailed 18th-century military costume from the musical Hamilton. He is standing on a wooden stage set, looking off to the side. The costume includes a blue tailcoat, a white waistcoat with gold buttons, a white ruffled shirt, and white breeches with red and black boots. Other cast members in similar costumes are visible in the background.

TOP 5 SHOWS

HAMILTON

34,286

MISS ARKANSAS
PAGEANT

11,314

BALLET ARKANSAS'S
THE NUTCRACKER
SPECTACULAR

8,484

HAIRSPRAY

8,321

CATS

7,848

Based on attendance

WELCOMING THE WORLD AT THE STATEHOUSE CONVENTION CENTER

As national and regional meetings are still recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic, local events were key to the Statehouse Convention Center's success in 2022. The year saw steady growth in the number of facility user days and total attendance, welcoming more than 268,000 people through its doors, an increase of 136% from 2021.

The Facility Operations Division spent the year **upgrading the building** to keep it competitive with similar convention centers in comparable markets. Upgrades included new furniture for the atrium and lobbies, paint touchups, new lighting fixtures, and – thanks to the IT department – enhanced Wi-Fi throughout the building. Perhaps the largest facility upgrade was the addition of 8,000 new chairs, replacing a set that was nearly 40 years old.

265

FACILITY USER DAYS



38

LOCAL, NONPROFIT,
AND PUBLIC EVENTS



122

TOTAL EVENTS



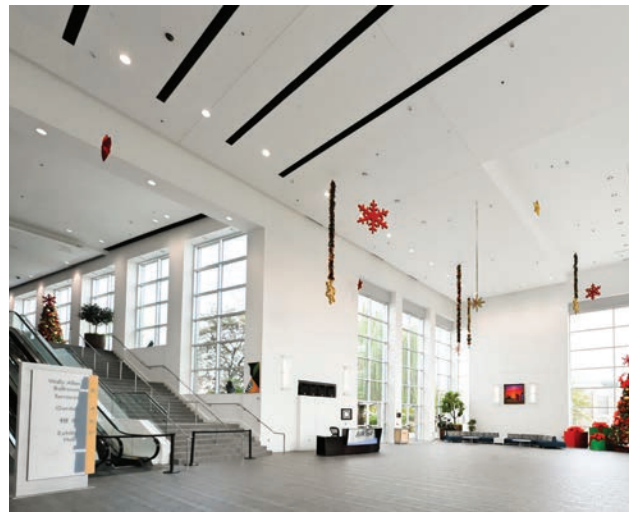
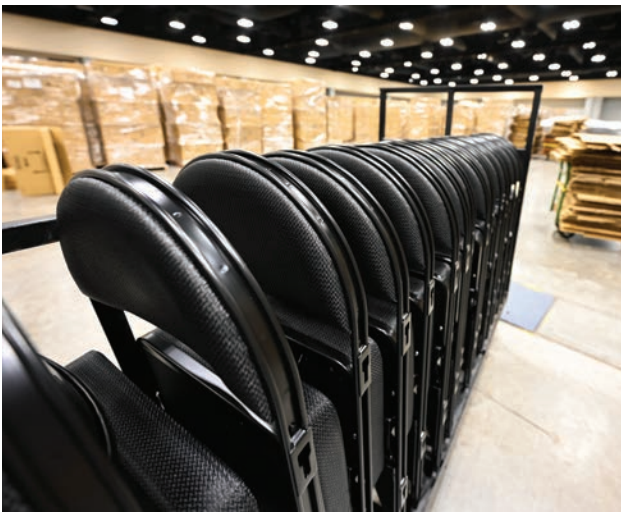
268,740

TOTAL ATTENDANCE



1982

THE YEAR THE CONVENTION CENTER'S
PREVIOUS SET OF CHAIRS WAS PURCHASED





TOP 10 EVENTS

VOLLEY IN THE ROCK

45.000

DELTA WATERFOWL
FOUNDATION'S
DUCK HUNTERS EXPO

22.586

ARKANSAS COMIC CON

18.000

LITTLE ROCK
MARATHON

12.684

JUNIOR LEAGUE
OF LITTLE ROCK'S
HOLIDAY HOUSE

10.000

THE GREAT ARKANSAS
BEER FESTIVAL

5.000

FBLA STATE LEADERSHIP
CONVENTION

3.500

ACADEMIES
OF CENTRAL ARKANSAS
CAREER EXPO

3.225

BIG DAM BRIDGE 100 EXPO

3.000

PHILANDER SMITH COLLEGE
COMMENCEMENT

2.500

Based on attendance

THE OUTDOORS: LITTLE ROCK'S MOST NATURAL RESOURCE

Touting Little Rock's outdoor offerings was a major focus in 2022.

The spring saw the LRCVB's communications team partner with a range of **social media influencers** like Arkansas's ArkieTravels, NOMADasaurus, Australia's top travel bloggers, and Andrea Cannon to promote the city's outdoor attractions. From road cycling to hiking, kayaking and mountain biking, they showed their followers the best of the city.

In August, members of the communications and destination services teams traveled to Wichita Falls, Texas, to promote Little Rock's 1,200+ miles of cycling trails at the **Hotter' N Hell 100**, a 100-mile bike tour that draws more than 13,000 cyclists annually. They collected email

addresses, handed out t-shirts, and encouraged riders to participate in Little Rock's Big Dam Bridge 100. Targeted social media ads supported this message, highlighting Little Rock's unique blend of urban and natural settings and its unique road cycling and mountain biking options.

In September, the communications team hosted members of the media for an outdoor-themed **familiarization tour** of the city. It allowed journalists to experience the city's outdoor and cycling amenities first-hand. The journalists kayaked on the Little Maumelle River, biked the Arkansas River Trail, and had the chance to ride in the Big Dam Bridge 100. The journalists also met five of the surviving members of the Little Rock Nine at celebrations surrounding the 65th anniversary of the desegregation of Little Rock Central High School.

183,300

COMBINED @ FOLLOWERS
OF OUTDOOR INFLUENCERS



1,422

MILES OF CYCLING TRAILS MAPPED

Little Rock.com/Cycling

2,911

BIG DAM BRIDGE 100
CYCLISTS





EMBRACING OUR COMMUNITY

The LRCVB has always worked to be a good steward of its community, and 2022 was about strengthening those bonds and embracing Little Rock on a deeper level.

January saw the launch of the Bureau's first **attractions guide**. It features all 36 of Little Rock's tourist attractions and offers expert insight into the city's must-see and -do activities. The guide will be refreshed and reprinted each year.

The Bureau celebrated National Travel and Tourism Week in May by launching its new **Community Communications Plan**. This initiative pairs individual members of the Bureau's sales, services, marketing, communications, and community engagement teams with specific local hotels and attractions. These pairs hold quarterly meetings to ensure these partners are always abreast of what the Bureau is doing, discuss any changes impacting the tourism industry across the city, and to see how business is going for the partners.

At the same time, LRCVB employees chose to give back to Little Rock by **adopting four streets** across the city. Streets were selected to impact visitor perception in

Downtown, Midtown, West Little Rock, and Southwest Little Rock.

Quarterly **Tourism Industry Mixers** and the Bureau's monthly **Tourism Talk** industry-facing newsletter continued in 2022, providing even more opportunities for connecting the LRCVB and the industry it serves.

The Bureau's work couldn't happen without the remittances of A&P tax permittees across Little Rock. That's why the marketing, communications, and community engagement teams collaborated with the tax department to create an **improved Welcome Packet for new A&P permittees** that better acquaints them with their role in the tourism industry and gives clear direction on how best to align with the Bureau's marketing and communications efforts.

The LRCVB also continued to manage its **Signature Community Events**: The Little Rock Farmers' Market; Think Big, Shop Small; The Big Boo!seum Bash, and the semi-annual Jazz in the Park concert series, which saw record-setting attendance in September.





ALWAYS FORWARD: CHAMPIONING EDI INITIATIVES

Advancing the causes of equity, diversity, and inclusion has long been important to the LRCVB and will continue to be a central theme of the organization's work in 2023.

In January, while the Miss Gay America Pageant celebrated its 50th anniversary on stage at Robinson Center, the Bureau's communications team was working on a surprise for one Little Rock resident. The LRCVB worked with **Good Morning America** to kick off GMA's Black History Month celebrations by surprising Annie Abrams, a local civil rights activist, with a donation to her scholarship and the renaming of a street in her honor.

The summer began with marketing support for **Juneteenth in Da Rock**. The Mosaic Templars Cultural Center organized an entire week of programming surrounding the holiday, and the LRCVB turned to a new social media network – **TikTok** – to spread the word. The ad took the form of the platform's popular "get ready with me" videos and garnered more than 200,000 engagements.

The Bureau also worked with a broad range of **social media influencers** to penetrate more diverse market segments than ever before. Social media stars like The Elle Aesthetic of Memphis and Little Rock's own Tabitha Nicole Taylor shared the best of the city with their followers.

The LRCVB worked with **Passport Magazine**, an LGBTQ+ travel publication, on an article highlighting LGBTQ+ members of Little Rock's restaurant industry, including restaurateurs and workers at Ciao Baci, El Sur, The Fold, and Raduno.

Internally, the LRCVB's employee-led **Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Committee** worked to establish goals and priorities. The committee focused on finding new ways to communicate with part-time Bureau employees and to make them feel like a more integral part of the organization. It also participated in Destinations International's EDI Assessment Tool, which will create baselines and metrics to track the progress of future goals and initiatives.





SELLING LITTLE ROCK

2022 saw continued recovery in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. For the first time since 2019, the LRCVB's sales team could attend a **full schedule of trade shows**, traveling more than 19,000 miles to sell Little Rock to meeting planners.

All that travel resulted in major wins for Little Rock, with 169 pieces of **new business** booked across the city. These meetings, events, and conventions represent more than a \$36 million future economic impact.

The marketing team supported these sales efforts by creating dozens of sales **emails, postcards, and special**

projects touting Little Rock's unique ability to host meetings, conventions, and sporting events.

While the sales team is busy acquiring new clients, the LRCVB's **services team** members are helping these clients deliver flawless events. When you host an event in Little Rock, the Bureau's services team acts as your boots-on-the-ground guide to all things local, assisting with everything from hotel and venue bookings to arranging entertainment and registration services. Their work is essential to growing repeat business.

223

MEETINGS, CONVENTIONS,
AND SPORTING EVENTS SERVICED



148,687

MEETINGS, CONVENTIONS,
AND SPORTING ATTENDEES



\$48,336,242

TOTAL ECONOMIC IMPACT OF ALL MEETINGS,
CONVENTIONS, AND SPORTING EVENTS



169

FUTURE MEETINGS, CONVENTIONS,
AND SPORTING EVENTS BOOKED



77

SITES TOURS, SITE VISITS, AND
PLANNING TOURS CONDUCTED



27

TRADE SHOWS
ATTENDED



3,890

NEW SALES CONTACTS MADE



324

RFP/RFQS SUBMITTED



19,602

MILES TRAVELED BY THE SALES TEAM



NEW CONVENTIONS COMING IN 2023

NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL
MOCK TRIAL 2023 CHAMPIONSHIP

MAY 15-17

500

EXPECTED ATTENDANCE

SOUTHEASTERN ASSOCIATION
OF TAX ADMINISTRATORS
2023 ANNUAL CONVENTION

JULY 15-19

350

EXPECTED ATTENDANCE

THE POULTRY FEDERATION
2023 NUTRITION CONFERENCE

AUGUST 13-16

350

EXPECTED ATTENDANCE

NATIONAL HOSPICE AND
PALLIATIVE CARE ORGANIZATION
2023 ANNUAL LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

SEPTEMBER 29-OCTOBER 3

1,000

EXPECTED ATTENDANCE

DESTINATIONS INTERNATIONAL
ADVOCACY SUMMIT

OCTOBER 3-6

300

EXPECTED ATTENDANCE

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR
INTERPRETATION ANNUAL CONFERENCE

NOVEMBER 6-11

800

EXPECTED ATTENDANCE

BIG CONNECTIONS IN LITTLE ROCK

In October, the LRCVB had the chance to prove firsthand just how great hosting a meeting or convention in Little Rock can be when it hosted **Connect Faith** and **Connect Southeast** at the Statehouse Convention Center. These events brought nearly 100 meeting planners and 200 hospitality professionals from around the country to Little Rock for an in-depth look at what the city has to offer as a host site for meetings, conventions, and conferences.

Each of the LRCVB's four divisions played a role in the success of these events, with the Facility Operations Division receiving a special distinction. The Operations staff worked tirelessly to ensure the Bureau's facilities were in tip-top shape, doing everything from landscaping

work and repainting to transforming the River Market pavilions into Little Rock's chicest nightclub for visiting attendees.

Hosting these events involved more than just the LRCVB's staff. The Bureau partnered with the Bill and Hillary Clinton National Airport to run shuttles to the Little Rock Marriott, and with the City of Little Rock to make numerous cosmetic improvements to downtown, ensuring that the city was truly putting its best foot forward.

Meeting planners left Little Rock with memories that will last a lifetime, and all of Little Rock will reap the benefits of hosting these events for years to come.



FUTURE OUTLOOK

In January, just before this report's publication, the LRCVB released its Tourism Master Plan. That plan will prepare Little Rock for a future of growth, success, and sustainability. It will guide the city's tourism industry and economy over the next decade. It contains nine key recommendations that will ensure success for years to come.

The LRCVB also released its 2023 Business Plan. It is a clear guide to the first year of the implementation phase of the Tourism Master Plan, outlining the organization's first steps to achieving the goals of the longer-term plan. The business plan has seven identified goals, each with comprehensive, detailed steps for execution.

**Scan the QR code to view
the Tourism Master Plan
and Business Plan**



2023 will also see additional capital improvements across the LRCVB's managed facilities and the delivery of the Mobile Marketing Vehicle. This branded van will be a

destination outreach tool to give potential visitors a hands-on experience of what it means to be Big on Little Rock. The Destination Services team will manage the vehicle as it travels to key events across Arkansas and visits important target markets across the region.

Little Rock will garner national attention in April when the Arkansas Museum of Fine Arts reopens after a \$155 million renovation. This major investment will be a major tourism draw for the state and region and will be a major factor in the LRCVB's 2023 marketing plans. Likewise, the LRCVB will continue its preparations for the total solar eclipse on April 8, 2024.

In May, the LRCVB will also launch a new website full of information and insight travelers need when making their planning decisions.

As the tourism industry continues to recover from the global pandemic, the LRCVB affirms its role as the steward of Little Rock's tourism industry, supporting almost 11,000 industry jobs and influencing direct tourism spending of more than \$1.7 billion in Pulaski County.



Little Rock[™]
CONVENTION &
VISITORS BUREAU

LittleRock.com
501.376.4781 | info@LittleRock.com
@LittleRockCVB