

*Little Rock*

CONVENTION &  
VISITORS BUREAU

# 2016 ANNUAL REPORT



FEBRUARY 21, 2017

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2016 was a year for the record books for the Little Rock Convention & Visitors Bureau (LRCVB). Tax collections were at an all-time high, sales bookings continue to grow, national recognition was received and the Robinson Center renovation was substantially completed on time and within budget.

The LRCVB continued to experience significant revenue growth, with total tax collections up 4.47% over 2015, fueled by a strong performance in prepared food sales and consistent performance in lodging.

The sales team had strong annual room night production, securing 140,589 convention room nights, sending 352 leads for future bookings and confirming 264 tourism/motor coach tour bookings. Two significant wins for the sales team in 2016 included hosting the 39th National Bikers Roundup – generating an economic impact of more than \$11 million – and securing the Miss Arkansas Scholarship Pageant, bringing the event to Little Rock for the first time in pageant history. Hotel occupancy, average daily rate (ADR) and RevPAR (revenue per available room) all increased, year-over-year.

In 2016, the Little Rock Advertising & Promotion Commission approved the purchase of the 1970 Cromwell Building, providing a long-term home for the administrative offices of the LRCVB, previously located in Robinson Center since 1971. The purchase was favorable due to the Cromwell Building location in the downtown core, adjacent to the convention facilities, and the strong future financial potential.

The travel and tourism industry continues to be recognized internationally as a major economic driver. It is the second-largest economic industry in the State of Arkansas, and Little Rock not only serves as the state's capital, but as the largest hub for tourism. Pulaski County welcomes approximately 6.2 million visitors annually.

The LRCVB's 2016-2020 Strategic Plan includes research from Destination Marketing Association International (DMAI), and outlines initiatives for the next five years. In 2015, more than 200 Little Rock stakeholders, industry representatives and community leaders were asked to participate in the DestinationNext survey, developed and distributed by DMAI. The combined research data includes consumer travel trends and destination marketing organization (DMO) strategies from 327 tourism bureaus in 36 countries. Little Rock scored above the industry average in destination strength, community support and engagement and was compared on a global scale containing 232 worldwide destinations.

The LRCVB's 2016-2020 plan includes goals and objectives in each of its divisions – Sales & Service, Marketing & Communications, Facility Operations, and Finance & Administration. Specific projects include the continuation of a community wayfinding initiative, a website redesign, the Robinson Center grand re-opening, LRCVB-operated facility capital enhancements and more.

With the exciting additions in 2016, coupled with ongoing destination development and the implementation of strategic initiatives in the future, Little Rock will definitely continue to enjoy significant growth in the travel and tourism sector



GRETCHEN HALL, CDME, CMP  
PRESIDENT & CEO



# 2016

## PERFORMANCE SUMMARY

**\$1.8  
BILLION**

GENERATED IN TRAVEL SPENDING  
IN PULASKI COUNTY



**6.18  
MILLION**

ANNUAL VISITORS  
IN PULASKI COUNTY



**39%  
INCREASE**

IN ADVERTISING & PROMOTION TAX  
OVER 10 YEARS



**183  
EVENTS**

AT STATEHOUSE  
CONVENTION CENTER



**708,706  
ATTENDANCE**

IN LRCVB MANAGED FACILITIES



# ORGANIZATION & LEADERSHIP



## LITTLE ROCK CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU (LRCVB)

The LRCVB is the official destination marketing organization for the City of Little Rock, charged with marketing and selling the city as a meeting, convention and visitor destination. The LRCVB also operates the Statehouse Convention Center, Robinson Center, River Market and multiple parking facilities. The organization is divided into four primary divisions – Finance & Administration, Sales & Services, Marketing & Communications, and Facility Operations.

## LITTLE ROCK ADVERTISING & PROMOTION COMMISSION

The Little Rock Advertising & Promotion Commission is the governing body for the LRCVB. 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.

**Capi Peck, Chair**

**City Director Gene Fortson, Vice Chair**

**Mayor Mark Stodola**

**Larry Carpenter/Rajesh Mehta**

**Warren Simpson**

**Pamela Smith**

**Philip Tappan**

## LRCVB EXECUTIVE TEAM

**Gretchen Hall  
President & CEO**

**Jim Rice  
Sr. Vice President & COO**

**Nikki Parnell  
Sr. Vice President - Finance & Administration**

**Alan Sims  
Vice President - Sales & Services**

**John Mayner  
Vice President - Marketing & Communications**

## LRCVB MANAGEMENT TEAM

**Kim Berry**  
*Executive Assistant to the SVP/COO*

**James "Doc" Doolittle**  
*Senior Director of Facilities Maintenance/Engineering*

**Bobby Green**  
*Security Supervisor*

**Randy Guptill**  
*Director of Technical Services*

**Norman Hale**  
*Parking Manager*

**Ricardo Henderson**  
*Building Services Supervisor*

**Dan Limke**  
*Creative Services Manager*

**Libby Lloyd**  
*Communications Manager*

**Johnny Loney**  
*Auxiliary Services Manager*

**Diana Long**  
*Director of River Market Operations*

**Phyllis Lucas**  
*Senior Director of Event Operations*

**Ionette Neal**  
*Senior Director of Tax Revenue*

**Charlie Oppedisano**  
*Retail Sales Manager*

**Kim Sanders**  
*Human Resources Representative*

**Vicki Spears**  
*Executive Assistant to the President/CEO*

**Gwen Stallings**  
*Building Services Supervisor*

**Jennifer Willis**  
*Convention Services Manager*



## OUR 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.

## OUR PROMISE

Discover the pleasant surprise of Little Rock. Enjoy our charming hospitality, sincere service, genuine people and engaging experiences. Welcome to our brand of new southern style as you experience our history and culture.

## OUR CORE VALUES

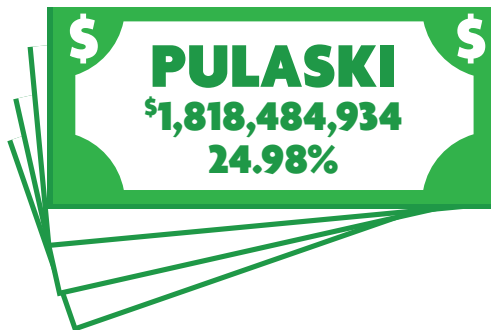
- Be the pleasant surprise – A mix of personality and remarkable customer service.
- Make a positive difference every day – Be present in every moment and aware that even the smallest actions can make the biggest impact.
- Always engage – Sincerely engage in the guest experience.
- Put people first – 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.



# VALUE OF TOURISM



## 2015 TRAVEL SPENDING IN ARKANSAS COUNTIES



GARLAND	\$745,402,730	10.24%
SEBASTIAN	\$454,528,363	6.24%
WASHINGTON	\$437,234,282	6.01%
BENTON	\$319,462,363	4.76%
OTHER 70 ARKANSAS COUNTIES	\$346,646,587	47.77%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$7,280,600,761</b>	

Source: Arkansas Department of Parks & Tourism 2015-2016 Annual Report

## 2015 ANNUAL VISITORS IN ARKANSAS COUNTIES

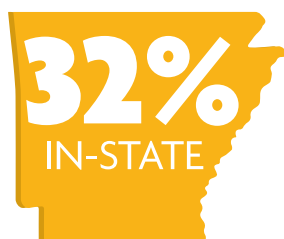


GARLAND	2,975,207	10.58%
WASHINGTON	1,822,218	6.48%
SEBASTIAN	1,519,781	5.41%
BENTON	1,505,490	5.35%
OTHER 70 ARKANSAS COUNTIES	14,112,925	50.19%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>28,117,891</b>	

Source: Arkansas Department of Parks & Tourism 2015-2016 Annual Report

## ARKANSAS VISITOR PROFILE

PRIMARY MARKETS FOR LEISURE VISITORS



TEXAS	12%
MISSOURI	7%
OKLAHOMA	5%
TENNESSEE	3%
LOUISIANA	2%

## TOURISM IMPACT IN ARKANSAS

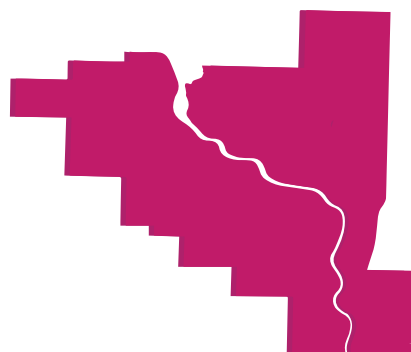


TOURISM IS A **\$7.2 BILLION** INDUSTRY IN ARKANSAS

THE TRAVEL & TOURISM INDUSTRY IS PROJECTED TO BE ONE OF THE FASTEST-GROWING INDUSTRIES IN THE NEXT DECADE

ARKANSAS'S TRAVEL AND TOURISM INDUSTRY TRAVEL GENERATED PAYROLL HAS GROWN FROM **\$240 MILLION IN 1979** TO **\$1.3 BILLION IN 2015**, AN INCREASE OF 447.6% OVER THE LAST 36 YEARS.

## TOURISM IMPACT IN PULASKI COUNTY



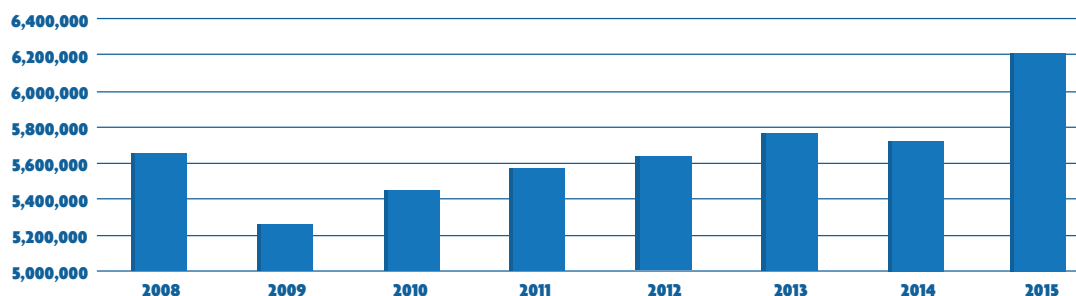
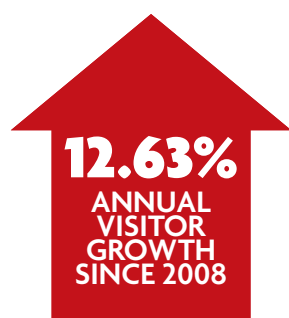
TRAVEL GENERATED:			
EMPLOYMENT	PAYROLL	STATE TAX	LOCAL TAX
<b>13,538 JOBS</b>	<b>\$344,038,347</b>	<b>\$69,314,347</b>	<b>\$31,092,926</b>

### PULASKI COUNTY ACCOUNTS FOR

- 22%** OF THE TOTAL VISITORS TO ARKANSAS
- 25%** OF THE TOTAL TRAVEL EXPENDITURES IN ARKANSAS
- 21%** OF THE TOTAL TRAVEL RELATED EMPLOYMENT IN ARKANSAS

Source: Arkansas Department of Parks & Tourism 2015-2016 Annual Report

## ANNUAL PULASKI COUNTY VISITORS





# 2016 TOP IMPACT EVENTS

ECONOMIC IMPACT

**\$11,554,269**

39TH NATIONAL  
BIKERS ROUNDUP



ECONOMIC IMPACT

**\$5,066,917**

ATA INTERNATIONAL  
WORLD EXPO



ECONOMIC IMPACT

**\$3,467,156**

REAL DEAL  
IN THE ROCK



ECONOMIC IMPACT

**\$2,991,558**

VOLLEY  
IN THE ROCK



ECONOMIC IMPACT

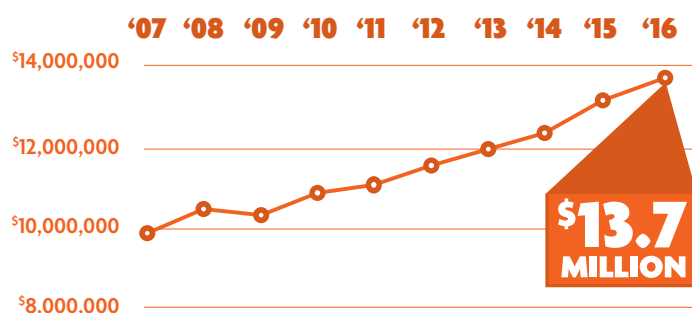
**\$2,810,615**

SOUTH CENTRAL REGION  
OF ALPHA KAPPA ALPHA

# FINANCE & ADMINISTRATION

The tax department within the Finance & Administration division collects the advertising and promotion tax, which is collected on gross receipts of Little Rock lodging and prepared food establishments. The LRCVB collected a record \$13.7 million in tax revenue in 2016. The LRCVB also began collecting an additional 2% on lodging receipts, enacted by the city and publicly approved for a dedicated bond issue for future improvements to the Arkansas Arts Center, MacArthur Military Museum and MacArthur Park. The Finance & Administration Division manages accounting, human resources, purchasing and information technology.

## 2% A&P TAX COLLECTIONS 2007-2016



## 2016 TAX AUDIT RESULTS

**36%**  
NO ADJUSTMENTS

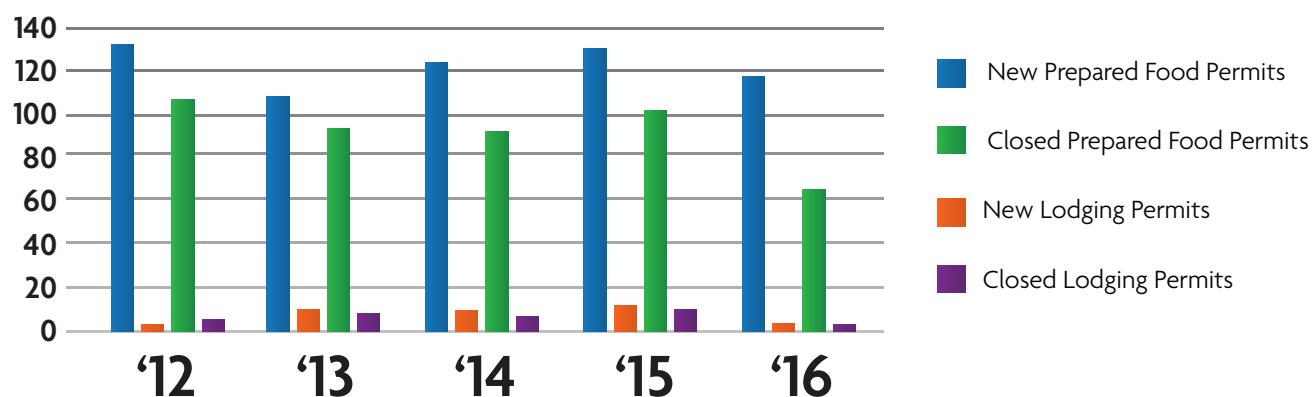
**23%**  
REFUND DUE TO PERMITEE

**41%**  
ADDITIONAL TAX DUE

## 2016 TAX COLLECTIONS BY TYPE

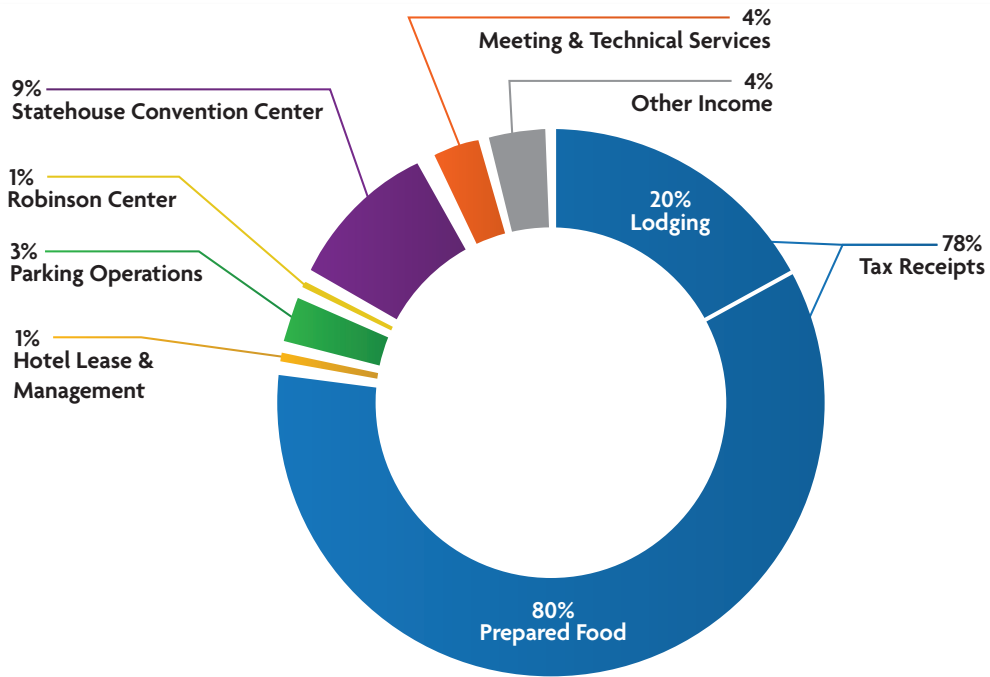
<b>\$6,509,000</b> FULL SERVICE RESTAURANTS	<b>\$794,000</b> LIMITED SERVICE HOTELS
<b>\$3,268,000</b> FAST FOOD RESTAURANTS	<b>\$145,000</b> CATERERS
<b>\$1,986,000</b> FULL SERVICE HOTELS	<b>\$117,000</b> PRIVATE CLUBS
<b>\$876,000</b> CONCESSIONAIRES	<b>\$46,000</b> MOBILE UNITS

## 2012-2016 NEW AND CLOSED PERMITS

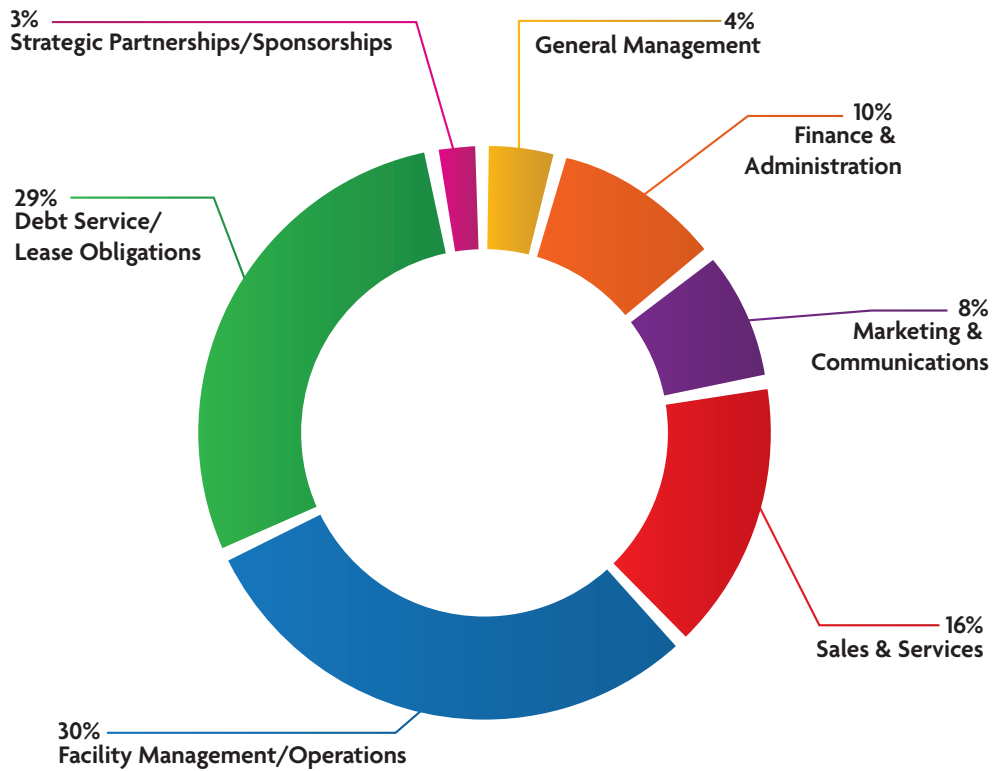




## 2016 TOTAL REVENUE - \$16.56 MILLION



## 2016 TOTAL EXPENDITURES



# FACILITY OPERATIONS

The Facility Operations division, under agreement with the City of Little Rock, is responsible for the operation of Statehouse Convention Center, Robinson Center, the municipal parking garage at Robinson Center, the parking decks at 2nd and Main Streets and at 2nd and River Market Avenue. Under a memorandum of understanding with the city, the LRCVB is also the management entity of River Market facilities, including Ottenheimer Market Hall, two outdoor pavilions, First Security Amphitheater and all surface parking within Riverfront Park. The division has direct operational responsibility, and serves as contract liaison, between the city-owned hotel properties (Marriott-Little Rock and DoubleTree by Hilton) and the Little Rock Advertising & Promotion Commission. The Facility Operations division also manages the commission-owned parking lot at Block 2, directly across from the Statehouse Convention Center.



## 2016 CAPITAL PROJECTS

### Robinson Center

- Completed major structural steel repairs in parking garage
- Installed new parking equipment
- Installed new garage cashier booth

### Statehouse Convention Center

- Replaced three 1982 escalators
- LED lighting conversion completed in the Governors' Halls
- Governor's Hall floor repairs completed

### River Market

- Addition of a seating annex building on the east end of Ottenheimer Hall, financed by David's Burgers, Inc.
- HVAC chiller/compressor replaced
- LED lighting conversion completed

## SUSTAINABILITY EFFORTS

The LRCVB implemented single-stream recycling in the administrative offices at all facilities and single-stream recycling in all public and back-of-house spaces at Robinson Center and the Statehouse Convention Center. Since June, more than 2,000 pounds of waste has been diverted from local landfills. Recycling at the Marriott-Little Rock and event recycling is planned for 2017.

ACEC (American Council of Engineering Companies) Arkansas awarded the LRCVB an Engineering Excellence Award for the Statehouse Convention Center chiller replacement project, which improved the energy efficiency of the new system.

## BY THE NUMBERS

### STATEHOUSE CONVENTION CENTER

- 100% of exhibition hall lighting has been converted to LED
- CO<sub>2</sub>e (measure of greenhouse gases) is down 571.5 metric tons
- Energy usage in 2016 is down 8.7% for a total savings of \$148,107
- Water usage is down 33.5%

### RIVER MARKET

- Energy usage is down 11.5%
- Water usage is down 28.5%



### ROBINSON CENTER

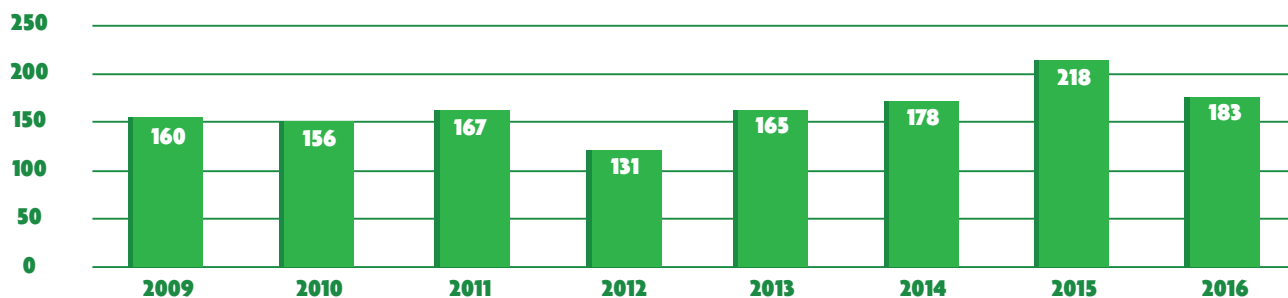
- Energy usage is down 24.1% since reopening in November, for a total savings of \$31,447
- Water usage is down 11.4 % since reopening in November
- CO<sub>2</sub>e (measure of greenhouse gases) is down 277.8 Metric tons since reopening

*Little Rock*  
CONVENTION &  
VISITORS BUREAU  
**SUSTAINABILITY**

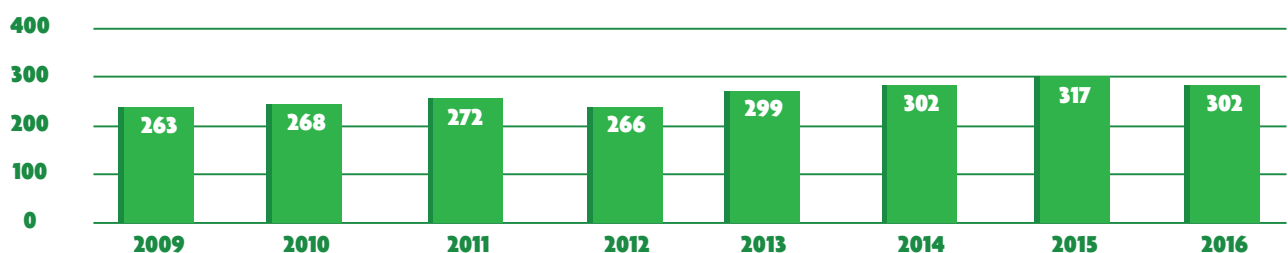
*Savings based on comparison to baseline year of 2012*



### TOTAL EVENTS STATEHOUSE CONVENTIONS CENTER



### FACILITY USER DAYS STATEHOUSE CONVENTIONS CENTER



#### STATEHOUSE CONVENTION CENTER 2016

EVENT TYPE	# OF EVENTS	PATRON DAYS
Convention	43	163,188
Shows	4	850
Dance/Party	4	2,060
Banquets, Receptions & Luncheons	47	34,637
Meeting	44	17,648
Consumer Show	17	59,432
Sports	5	13,850
Graduation	7	8,875
Recital/Competitions	8	7,605
Exams	4	786
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>183</b>	<b>308,931</b>

#### RIVER MARKET 2016

EVENT TYPE	# OF EVENTS	PATRON DAYS
Convention	4	1,500
Shows	28	222,694
Banquets, Receptions & Luncheons	64	22,222
Meeting	18	5,419
Trade Show/Exhibits (including Farmers' Market)	42	105,786
Sports/Hobby	30	5,767
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>186</b>	<b>363,388</b>

## STATEHOUSE CONVENTION CENTER USAGE COMPARED TO NATIONAL AVERAGES

WALLY ALLEN BALLROOM  
UTILIZED**50%**NATIONAL AVERAGE FOR  
REGIONAL CONVENTION CENTERS 45%EXHIBIT HALLS  
UTILIZED**45%**NATIONAL AVERAGE FOR  
REGIONAL CONVENTION CENTERS AND  
CENTERS WITH LESS THAN 100,000 SQ. FT.  
OF EXHIBITION SPACE 42%

## EVENT VOLUME

**302  
USER DAYS**NATIONAL AVERAGE FOR  
REGIONAL CONVENTION CENTERS - 327  
CENTERS WITH LESS THAN 100,000 SQ. FT.  
OF EXHIBITION SPACE - 309

## ANNUAL ATTENDANCE

**308,931**NATIONAL AVERAGE FOR REGIONAL CONVENTION CENTERS - 247,900  
CENTERS WITH LESS THAN 100,000 SQ. FT. OF EXHIBITION SPACE - 211,900

Occupancy is calculated as the ratio of occupied square foot days (OSFD) to available square foot days (ASFD). These two terms refer to the gross square feet of space occupied or rented during the year as a percent of the total amount of space available for rent.

The "practical" maximum exhibit hall occupancy rate is approximately 70% and the "efficient" range is considered approximately 50%. Occupancy levels less than 50% generally suggest the existence of marketable opportunities or open dates, while an occupancy rate above 60% increases the potential for lost business or "turn-aways."





# ROBINSON CENTER SECOND ACT



Construction of the Joseph T. Robinson Memorial Auditorium began in 1937 and officially opened in December 1939. The structure was a WPA (Works Progress Administration) project, and is an excellent example of the art deco-style architecture of the time. The building was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 2007. The facility is owned by the City of Little Rock and managed by the LRCVB.

2016 marked the grand re-opening of Robinson Center. Closing out a 28-month, \$70 million renovation and expansion, the facility raised its curtain again November 10, 2016, on time and within budget.

The project's design takes advantage of the building's unique site overlooking the Arkansas River. The exterior envelope of the original building was restored and is now visible in multiple areas inside the new conference center addition.





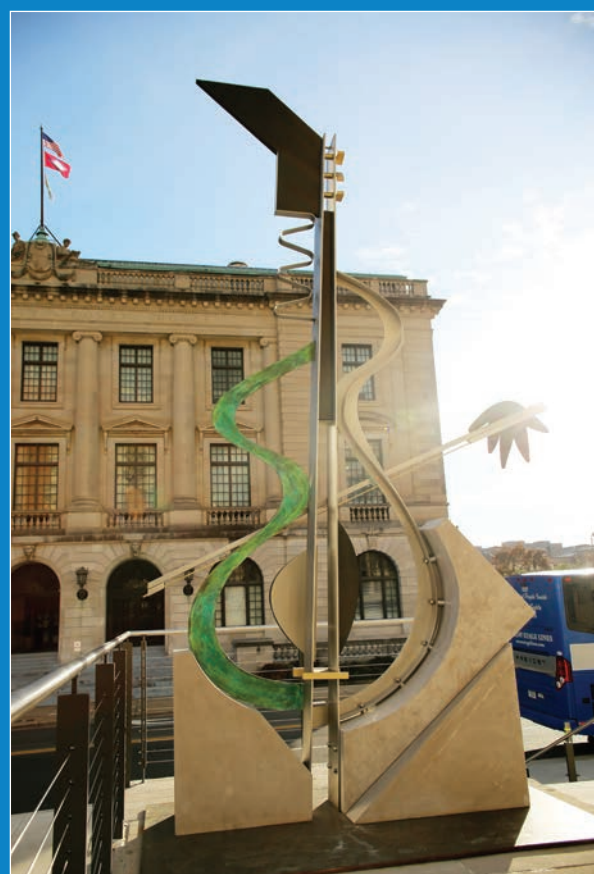


The 1939 structure received major interior upgrades within the performance hall. The stage was dropped more than 31 feet to create additional vertical volume for improved acoustics; and the addition of two balconies; theatrical upgrades; improved sight lines for all patrons; increased lobby spaces and restroom facilities; improved ADA accessibility, and new box seating along the side walls, creating a more intimate feel in the hall. A complete reorganization of back-of-house support areas included increased loading capacity; all-new electrical and mechanical systems; improved and enhanced staging and lighting systems and increased dressing and chorus room capacity at stage level. An enhanced modern ballroom and conference center was added to the north side of the building. Robinson Center now utilizes the latest in wireless technology, providing seamless coverage throughout the facility. Additional technology, LEED certification, mechanical systems, and parking garage entrances into the facility were included in the project.

The grand stairs of Robinson Center's south entrance received two sculpture donations from the Stella Boyle Smith Trust and Mrs. Margaret Clark. "Let the Music Play" and "In the Wings" are beautiful additions to the performance hall entrance. The pieces feature a 16' tall abstract musical instrument and two ballerinas, both very appropriate for the venue.

To complement the new Robinson Center, the adjacent DoubleTree Hotel completed a multi-million dollar renovation. The interior space now gives guests a new experience in a casual, stylish atmosphere. The renovation included lobby, restaurant and guestroom upgrades and aesthetic improvements. The new seamless connection with the hotel adds tremendous ease and convenience for Robinson Center patrons.

Resident companies were excited to return home for their 2016-2017 season. Broadway season ticket sales have exploded, more than doubling in comparison to the 2013-2014 season, prior to closing for renovations. Ballet Arkansas reported a 12% increase in ticket sales for their annual performance of *The Nutcracker*, and the Arkansas Symphony Orchestra is experiencing increases in both season and individual ticket sales.





## ROBINSON CENTER NAMING

The historic structure was named after the 23rd Governor of Arkansas, Joseph Taylor Robinson. Gov. Robinson was also a recognized U.S. Representative and U.S. Senator, and served as both the Senate Minority and Majority Leader, three-time Chair of Democratic National Committee, and the first southern Democrat to be on a major party presidential ticket since the Civil War.

The new conference center honors several Little Rock residents that made a lasting impression through their contributions to the performing arts. The meeting rooms in the new conference center are named after the following individuals:

**Stella Boyle Smith** - Legendary Arkansas philanthropist and founder of the Arkansas Symphony Orchestra & the Arkansas Youth Orchestra. Smith served with distinction as an honorary life member of the Arkansas Symphony Orchestra Board of Trustees, and continues to provide music scholarships to students across Arkansas through her charitable trust.

**Dr. William Grant Still** - The first African-American conductor of a major American symphony orchestra in the United States. Still was also the first African-American composer to have an opera produced by a major opera company. He composed more than 150 works, including five symphonies and eight operas, and received two Guggenheim Fellowships.

**Gail Davis** - Known as the legendary sharpshooter in the groundbreaking television series *Annie Oakley*. Davis appeared in thirty-two feature films, and had guest appearances on numerous television shows. She received a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame, and was inducted into the National Cowgirl Hall of Fame.

**Lawrence Hamilton** - Renowned Broadway performer, music director, vocal coach, arranger and talented vocalist, Hamilton was a member of the Southern Ballet Theater, Brooklyn Dance Theater, Ballet Tap USA, directed the Philander Smith College Choir and performed with the Arkansas Repertory Theatre and Arkansas Symphony Orchestra. He also performed at the White House for President Ronald Reagan and at the Vatican for Pope John Paul II.

**Arthur Lee (Art) Porter Sr.** - Pianist, composer, conductor, and music teacher. Porter Sr. performed classical piano with the Arkansas Symphony Orchestra, founded the Art Porter Singers, and performed at festivities in Washington DC for the Presidential Inauguration of his friend Bill Clinton.



**Arthur Lee (Art) Porter Jr.** - A jazz musician, Porter Jr. was proficient on drums, saxophone and piano. Though classically trained, his performances ranged across jazz, rhythm and blues, funk, and ballads. Porter Jr. was the inspiration for Act 321 "Art Porter Bill" enacted by the Arkansas General Assembly, which allowed minors to perform in clubs while under adult supervision.

**Ben Piazza** - An award-winning actor, director, author, and playwright, Piazza was a key member of the small group of Broadway stars who established "Off Broadway" as an entity in itself. His acting career spanned all mediums – silver screen, Broadway, regional and repertory theater and television.

**Florence Price** - The first African-American woman to have a symphonic composition performed by a major American symphony orchestra. Price composed more than 300 works and was honored on multiple occasions by the Rodman Wanamaker Foundation for her major symphonic compositions.

The patron's lounge, adjacent to the historic lobby and the performance hall, was named in honor of **Barry L. Travis**. It features the original 1939 pine stage floor, as well as historic photographs of the original structure and features. Travis is recognized as a respected leader and visionary in the hospitality industry. He completed a 35-year career with Little Rock Convention & Visitors Bureau, was named the Arkansas Tourism Person of the Year in 1989, was inducted into the Arkansas Hospitality Association's Tourism Hall of Fame in 2002 and is a recipient of the Maurice Lewis Lifetime Achievement Award.





**SECOND ACT RENOVATION FACTS (JULY, 2014 – NOVEMBER, 2016)**

- 11,300 sq. ft. of automated acoustic drapes
- 11,716 tons of material removed, 10,317 tons recycled
- 1,800 craftspeople have worked on the project
- 520,000 total man hours worked, to date
- 35 of 46 subcontracts are local
- Height from stage to grid: 100'-9"
- 1,871 tons of structural steel
- 2,300 cubic yards of concrete
- Distance stage dropped 31' from the original location
- Back row of the new Grand Tier is 20' closer to the stage compared to the back row of the previous mezzanine section
- Previous seats in the orchestra level were 20" wide - new seat widths vary from 19" to 21"
- Previous row spacing varied from 34" to 43" - new row spacing varies from 38" to 41"

**PROJECT TEAM**

The design team was led by Polk Stanley Wilcox Architects of Little Rock and Ennead Architects of New York. CDI/Hunt Joint Venture served as the General Contractor and Construction Manager.

**CONSULTANTS**

Acoustics/Audiovisual/ I.T. – Jaffe Holden Acoustics, Inc.  
 Theater – Schuler Shook  
 Structural – Engineering Consultants, Inc., Zahl-Ford, Inc.  
 MEP/ Security/ Telecomm / Data – TME, Inc.  
 Civil – McClelland Consulting Engineers  
 Lighting – Tillotson Design Associates  
 Landscape – Landscape Architecture, Inc.  
 Cost Estimating – Venue Consulting

**OWNERS REPRESENTATIVES**

**Mark Stodola**, Mayor, City of Little Rock  
**Gretchen Hall**, President & CEO, Little Rock Convention & Visitors Bureau  
**Jim Rice**, Sr. Vice President & COO, Little Rock Convention & Visitors Bureau  
**Mike Steelman**, AIA

**PROJECT TIMELINE:**

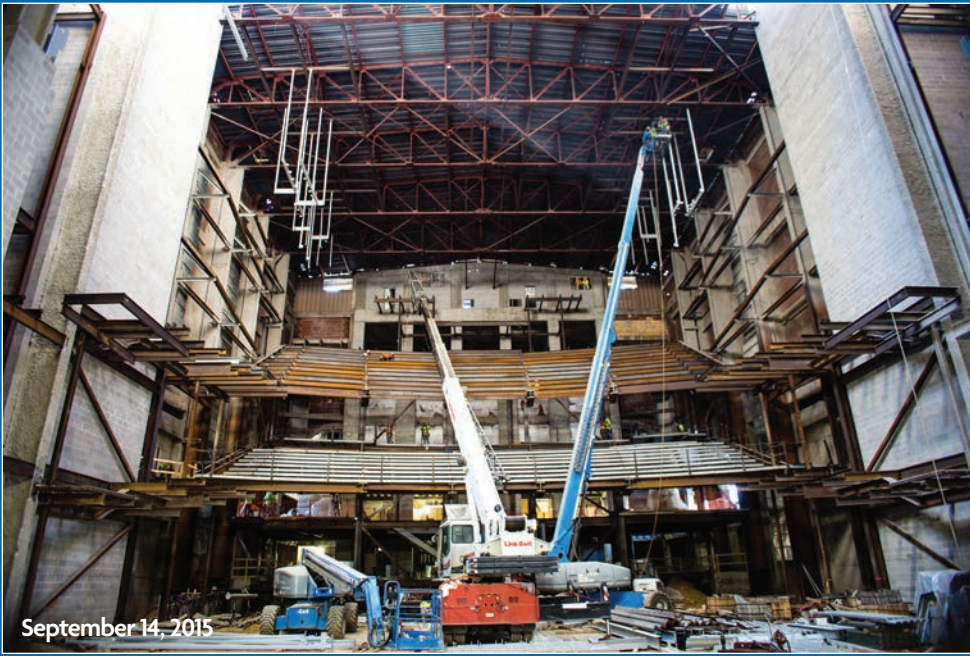
- **October 3, 2011** - Initial Robinson Center concept study empaneled by Little Rock A&P Commission
- **June 15, 2012** - Concept study presented to LR A&P Commission
- **January 8, 2013** - Polk Stanley Wilcox Architects and Ennead Architects selected to lead design efforts
- **March 28, 2013** - CDI/Hunt Joint Venture selected as General Contractor & Construction Manager
- **December 10, 2013** - Successful public bond election
- **January – June, 2014** - Final design preparation and construction documents
- **July 1, 2014** - Closes for construction
- **July 1, 2015** - Topping out event
- **November 10, 2016** - Grand re-opening

**ROBINSON MEDIA ATTENTION**

- Since closing on July 1, 2014, there have been nearly 900 stories covering the renovation, with a total reach of nearly 340 million impressions, and a publicity value of more than \$1.5 million
- The grand re-opening secured nearly 500 media mentions/stories about the project, locally, regionally, nationally and internationally, with a publicity value of approximately \$1 million
- Outlets included more than 40 business journals nationally, more than 25 major daily newspaper websites, and a variety of online outlets such as BroadwayWorld.com
- Media placement and attention will be ongoing throughout this inaugural season
- RobinsonCenterSecondAct.com was created to highlight the project and RobinsonCenter.com will continue to provide facility information for booking, history and ticket information







September 14, 2015



April 4, 2016



April 30, 2015



July 1, 2015



June 6, 2016



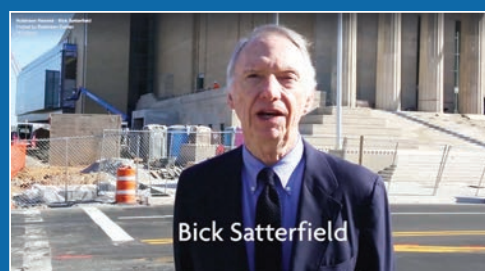
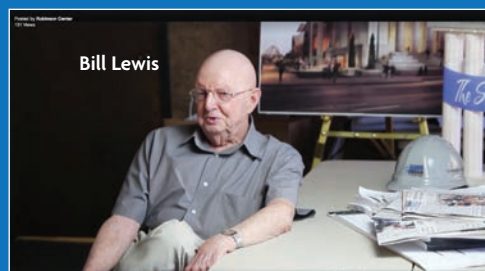
June 6, 2016



## ROBINSON REWIND

To pay tribute to the history and significance of the Robinson Center throughout the years, the LRCVB created a miniseries called "Robinson Rewind" that highlights interesting stories told by notable locals. Episodes include:

- **Wayne Cranford** - Advertising visionary and industry leader for more than fifty years, Wayne Cranford recalls Elvis Presley's historic May 16, 1956 performance at Robinson Auditorium. Mr. Cranford spent time backstage with the legendary superstar. The event was Presley's first live recording of his hit "Hound Dog".
- **Marilyn Weinstein** - From the 1970s through the 1990s, Gene and Marilyn Weinstein booked touring shows at Robinson, bringing world-class Broadway musicals and other concerts to Little Rock. In this interview, Marilyn remembers the beginnings of the family business, along with some of the highlights and challenges.
- **Jimmy Moses** - Little Rock native, real estate developer and downtown visionary, Jimmy Moses shares his Robinson Center memories. He tells of days spent at his family's popular record store, Moses Melody Shop, and its Robinson connection. He also recalls the many Robinson events he attended over the years.
- **Bill Lewis** - For 33 years, Bill Lewis reviewed performances at Robinson for the *Arkansas Gazette* newspaper. In this interview, Mr. Lewis recalls some of the highlights of his career.
- **Phil Kaplan** - Attorney for the production company that brought 'Hair' to Little Rock in 1971, recalling the drama that accompanied bringing the musical to Robinson.
- The Robinson Rewind series concluded with a special two-part visit with **Grady Miller**, the nephew of Joseph T. Robinson. Mr. Miller recounted spending time with his uncle and meeting U.S. Presidents, as well as the early days of the Robinson Center.



IN THE FIRST SEVEN WEEKS,  
ROBINSON CENTER HOSTED  
**35 EVENTS**  
AND WELCOMED MORE THAN  
**36,000 PATRONS.**

# SALES & SERVICES



The mission of the Sales & Services division is to bring visitors to the City of Little Rock. The team is divided by market segment, focused on:

**Sports**  
**Government**  
**State Association**

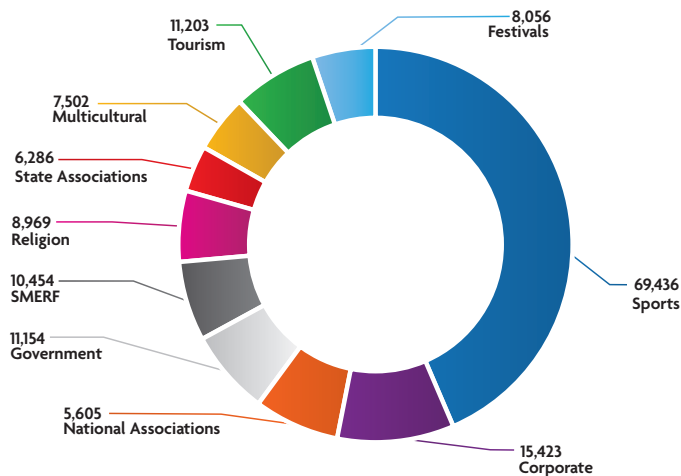
**Multicultural**  
**Religion**  
**National Association**  
**Corporate**

**Tourism**  
**Festivals**  
**SMERF**  
(Social/Military/Educational/Regional/Fraternal)

The division also has a team of convention service professionals that provide a variety of services for groups.

## 2016 PRODUCTIVITY & BUSINESS MIX

### ROOM NIGHTS BY MARKET SEGMENT



**2016 BIG WIN**  
**THE MISS ARKANSAS**  
**SCHOLARSHIP PAGEANT**  
**RELOCATES TO**  
**LITTLE ROCK**  
**FOR THE FIRST TIME IN**  
**80 YEAR HISTORY!**

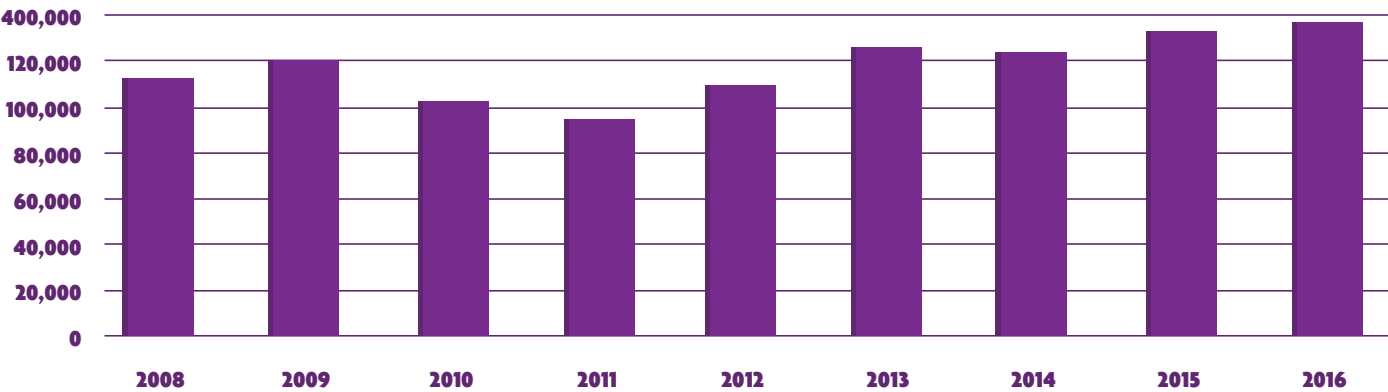
### LRCVB 2016 BOOKING PACE REPORT DECEMBER YEAR-END PERFORMANCE 5 YEAR COMPARISON

YEAR	ITYFTY RM NTS	FOLLOWING YR RM NTS	2 YEAR RM NTS	3 YEAR RM NTS	4 YEAR RM NTS	5 YEAR RM NTS	6 YEAR RM NTS	7 YEAR RM NTS	TOTAL RM NTS
2012	58,100	33,148	19,691	1,096	349	0	0	3,278	115,662
2013	86,151	23,857	8,129	5,234	1,382	0	2,745	0	127,498
2014	93,038	31,533	2,303	582	380	245	245	0	128,326
2015	123,820	9,838	3,891	0	0	0	0	0	137,549
2016	126,588	11,350	991	1,084	288	0	288	0	140,589
5 YR AVG	97,539	21,945	7,001	1,599	480	49	656	656	129,925

(ITYFTY = In The Year For The Year)



DEFINITE ROOM NIGHT BOOKINGS



ECONOMIC IMPACT OF ACTUALIZED BUSINESS

JANUARY	\$4,952,163
FEBRUARY	\$3,853,940
MARCH	\$12,667,544
APRIL	\$16,510,289
MAY	\$5,116,629
JUNE	\$11,545,697
JULY	\$12,705,174
AUGUST	\$15,575,498
SEPTEMBER	\$8,993,623
OCTOBER	\$3,597,345
NOVEMBER	\$2,485,653
DECEMBER	\$5,485,653
TOTALS	\$103,489,208

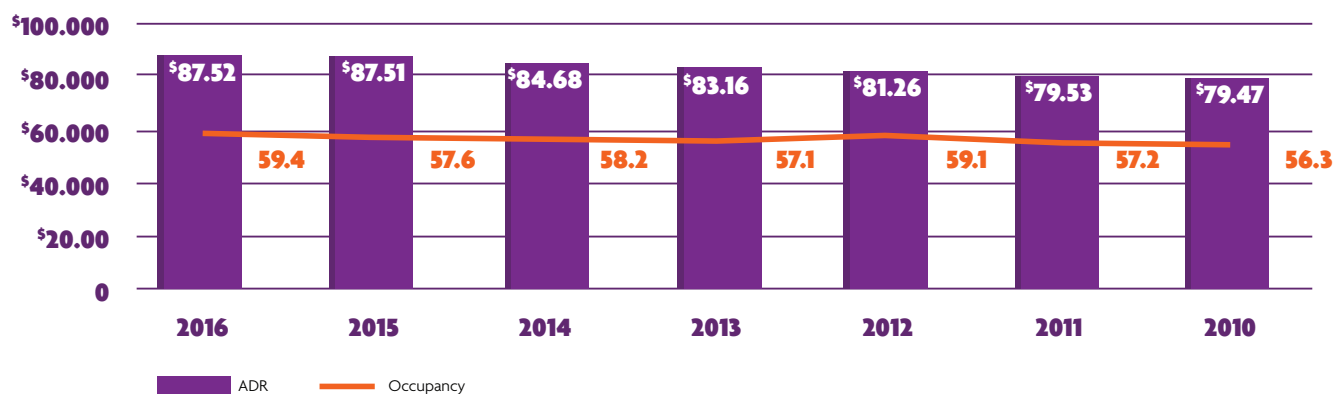


SMITH TRAVEL RESEARCH

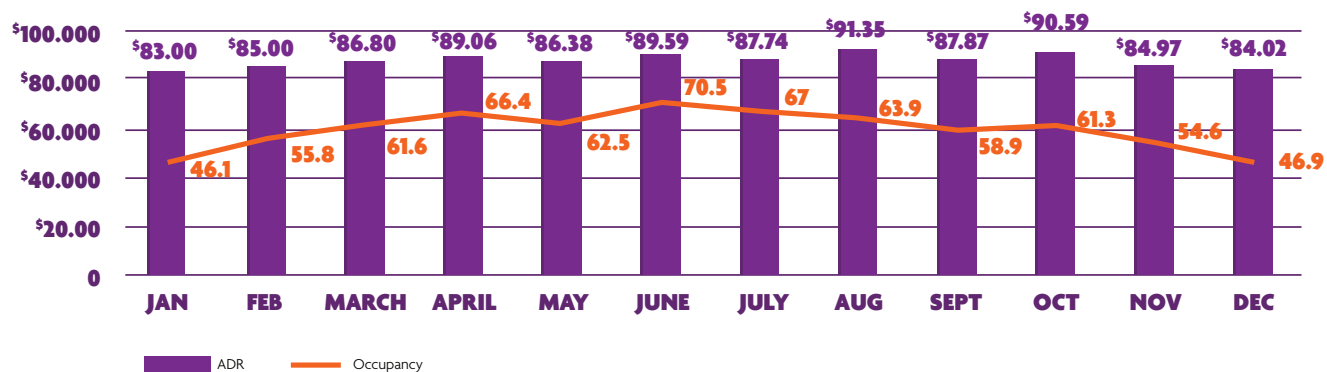
2016 COMPETITIVE MARKET HOTEL INFORMATION

	Occ %		ADR		RevPAR		Percent Change from YTD 2015					
	2016	2015	2016	2015	2016	2015	Occ	ADR	RevPAR	Room Rev	Room Avail	Room Sold
Memphis, TN	64.4	64.8	92.74	89.53	59.75	57.14	1.0	3.6	4.6	5.9	1.3	2.2
Oklahoma City, OK	60.0	62.3	83.18	84.65	49.88	52.13	-3.8	-0.6	-4.3	-3.3	1.0	-2.8
Tulsa, OK	56.4	58.3	79.03	78.76	44.60	45.95	-3.3	0.3	-2.9	0.5	3.5	0.1
Wichita, KS	58.0	60.4	83.17	81.85	48.27	49.40	-3.8	1.6	-2.3	-1.8	0.5	-3.3
Northwest AR	65.7	64.3	89.41	84.47	58.77	54.30	2.3	5.8	8.2	7.0	-1.1	1.1
Birmingham, AL	62.5	63.2	85.84	83.49	53.65	52.75	-1.1	2.8	1.7	2.6	0.9	-0.2
Montgomery, AL	64.4	63.8	76.77	74.32	49.41	47.40	0.9	3.3	4.2	7.1	2.8	3.7
Little Rock, AR	59.4	57.6	87.52	87.39	51.99	50.34	3.1	0.1	3.3	4.6	1.3	4.5
Jackson, MS	60.1	61.9	78.30	75.32	47.08	46.43	-2.5	4.0	1.4	1.4	0	-2.4
North Little Rock, AR	54.3	56.6	74.37	72.91	40.39	41.25	-4.0	2.0	-2.1	0.6	2.8	-1.4
Hot Springs, AR	45.4	45.4	98.58	93.46	44.78	43.47	-0.1	5.5	5.4	5.5	0.1	-0
Little Rock Downtown	69.5	71.3	126.51	125.56	87.86	89.52	-2.6	0.8	-1.9	1.4	3.3	0.7

## OCCUPANCY &amp; ADR BY YEAR



## 2016 OCCUPANCY &amp; ADR BY MONTH



## 2016

## LITTLE ROCK VS. NATIONAL AVERAGE

OCCUPANCY %	3.1%	-0.3%
ADR %	0.1%	2.8%
REVPAR %	3.3%	2.5%

SALES HOSTED

**70**  
**SITE VISITS**  
 TOTALING  
**113**  
**PARTICIPANTS**



REPRESENTING A POTENTIAL

**53,695**  
**ROOM NIGHTS**  
**74,581**  
**ATTENDEES**



HOSTED  
 SELECT TRAVELER CONFERENCE

**368**  
**REGISTERED**  
**ATTENDEES**

REPRESENTING DECISION MAKERS  
 IN THE TOURISM MARKET SEGMENT



2016 ACTUALIZED BUSINESS FROM  
 SALES BOOKINGS CREATED  
 AN ECONOMIC IMPACT OF

**\$103**  
**MILLION**

\*ACCORDING TO THE DMAI  
 ECONOMIC IMPACT CALCULATOR



**140,589**  
**ROOM NIGHTS**  
 BOOKED IN 2016





# MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS DIVISION



The Marketing & Communications division of the LRCVB is responsible for all destination marketing, advertising, special event promotions and sponsorships, public relations, collateral distribution and the management of visitor information centers. The division works to increase the city's profile and awareness as a travel destination by promoting unique features, awards, and continued development.

## MEDIA ATTENTION & SIGNIFICANT ACCOLADES

Little Rock, and industry partners, were fortunate to continue earning considerable amounts of positive press and accolades. Some highlights included travel features in the following publications and outlets:

**LITTLE ROCK RANKED #10 DESTINATION IN U.S.** BY RESONANCE CONSULTANCY IN THE PROMOTION CATEGORY FOR 2015. THE DESIGNATION WAS A PART OF THEIR 2015 U.S. PLACE EQUITY INDEX REPORT.

RANKED BY **TRIVAGO.COM** AS A 2016 "BEST VALUE DESTINATION"

**BIG DAM BRIDGE** INCLUDED IN *BICYCLING'S* LIST OF "THE COOLEST BIKE AND PEDESTRIAN BRIDGES IN THE U.S." - FEBRUARY 2016

**MOSAIC TEMPLARS CULTURAL CENTER** HOSTED PIECES FROM **THE KINSEY COLLECTION**

*NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC* WRITES "TEN THINGS TO LOVE ABOUT LITTLE ROCK" - MARCH 2016

"TRAVELS WITH DARLEY" AIRS AN ENTIRE EPISODE ON **LITTLE ROCK** ON **PBS** AND **LIFESTYLE NETWORK CREATE TV**

**RIVER LIGHTS IN THE ROCK** FEATURED ON THE COVER OF *AAA SOUTHERN TRAVELER* MAGAZINE, JULY/AUGUST EDITION

**LRCVB HONORED** WITH *CONVENTIONSOUTH'S* **ANNUAL READERS' CHOICE AWARD**

**LRCVB NAMED** A 2016 **PLATINUM CHOICE AWARD WINNER** BY *SMART MEETINGS*

*SPORTSEVENTS* ANNOUNCES **LRCVB** AS A 2017 **READERS' CHOICE AWARD WINNER**

*WALL STREET JOURNAL* DOCUMENTS **THE HISTORY OF CHEESE DIP** AND **ARKANSAS'S CLAIM TO ITS ORIGIN**



## PRESS TOURS AND HOSTED TRAVEL JOURNALISTS:

- Darley Newman and crew for "Travels with Darley" on PBS
- Geiger Press Tour with Arkansas Parks & Tourism hosted 18 journalists from around the country
- Robinson Center grand re-opening in-bound media tours with staff from Convene, ConventionSouth and MPI's The Meeting Planner



## PARTNERS IN THE NEWS

- Trios named by *Travel + Leisure* as Arkansas's Best "Farm-to-Table" restaurant (June 2016);
- Lassis Inn named by *New York Post's TimeOut* magazine as one of the Best 21 Seafood Restaurants in America (April 2016).
- Big Orange Midtown named by *Craftbeer.com* as a "Great American Beer Bar"
- Capital Hotel makes *TripAdvisor.com's* list of Top 25 Luxury Hotels in the U.S. for 3rd consecutive year - Jan. 2016
- Rock Town Distillery mentioned in Top Ten U.S. Distillery Tours in *Americanprofile.com* – Jan. 2016, and receives another huge score in Jim Murray's *Whiskey Bible*
- Clinton Presidential Center mentioned in *U.S. News & World Report* travel article "8 Presidential Libraries & Museums to visit this Election Year" - Feb. 2016
- Museum of Discovery's Kevin Delaney continues to appear on the Tonight Show with Jimmy Fallon, and on a new show on the Science Channel. "Street Science" features Delaney performing unique demonstrations combining scientific method with curiosity and ingenuity.
- ACANSA Arts Festival named "Best New Festival" by Arkansas Festivals & Events Association
- Big Dam Bridge 100 named "Best Sporting Event" by Arkansas Festivals & Events Association

## WEBSITE MARKETING

Growing dependency on the internet makes the destination website the most valuable marketing asset for the overall success of destination marketing organizations. The department is constantly seeking enhancements and micro sites or landing pages for niche audiences. Currently, the division manages the following websites:

- LittleRock.com
- RiverMarket.info
- LittleRockMeetings.com
- DineLR.com
- ShopTheRock.com
- RiverLightsintheRock.com
- RobinsonCenterSecondAct.com





## Top Website Traffic

Arkansas	46%
Texas	21%
Tennessee	10%
Illinois	3%
Missouri	2%

**2.4  
MILLION**  
PAGE VIEWS

**56%**  
OF TRAFFIC COMES  
FROM MOBILE DEVICES

**97%**  
OF VISITOR  
SESSIONS  
ORIGINATE IN THE  
UNITED STATES

## SOCIAL MEDIA



**89K**  
SOCIAL MEDIA  
FANS & FOLLOWERS

## VISITOR INFORMATION CENTERS & COLLATERAL DISTRIBUTION

The LRCVB strives to provide exceptional visitor experiences with a focus on true hospitality by enhancing the visitor experience through helpful destination representatives at visitor centers. Although the number of guests utilizing Little Rock visitor centers continues to decrease, the centers assisted more than 60,000 guests. The LRCVB staffs locations at the Bill and Hillary Clinton National Airport, Shop the Rock in the River Market District, the Statehouse Convention Center, and provides support for the visitor information center at the Historic Curran Hall.

**MORE THAN 289,000**

PIECES OF COLLATERAL WERE DISTRIBUTED IN 2016  
TO ASSIST VISITORS WITH PLANNING TRIPS, OR SERVING  
AS HELPFUL GUIDES, WHILE VISITING THE DESTINATION.





# LRCVB SIGNATURE EVENTS

The LRCVB supports a variety of local festivals and events to enhance the economy through increased visitor travel into and throughout the City of Little Rock. The LRCVB directly manages several signature events.

## LITTLE ROCK RESTAURANT MONTH

Celebrating dining in the city each August.

## LOCALLY LABELED PASSPORT PROGRAM

Focused on the local adult beverage scene, the passport highlights the growing popularity of local breweries, wineries and our distillery.

## LITTLE ROCK DOWNTOWN NAVIGATORS TOUR

Free guided walking and streetcar tours provide guests with fun facts and an overview of all that Little Rock has to offer.

## HOSPITALITY MARKETING MIXERS

Quarterly meetings for area hospitality partners to discuss what's happening in Little Rock, destination development initiatives, co-op and packaging opportunities and industry news.

## NATIONAL TRAVEL AND TOURISM WEEK

Celebrated the first week of May, promoting the value of travel in the tourism industry.

## LITTLE ROCK FARMERS' MARKET

The state's largest outdoor market, hosted annually at the River Market pavilions.

## MOVIES IN THE PARK

This free family event provides a variety of movies from animated favorites to comedy and acclaimed dramas.

## JAZZ IN THE PARK

Free weekly concerts featuring local jazz artists performing in Riverfront Park's History Pavilion each Wednesday evening in April and September.

## BIG BOO-SEUM BASH

Hosted by the Greater Little Rock Museum and Cultural Attractions Consortium and the LRCVB, the free event provides a safe environment for families to enjoy Halloween activities and treats, while experiencing the wonderful downtown museums and cultural attractions.

## BIG JINGLE JUBILEE HOLIDAY PARADE

Free community event hosted each year in conjunction with the lighting of the Arkansas State Capitol and fireworks display.



# DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT IN 2016



## NEW WAYFINDING SIGNAGE

Phase one of a comprehensive vehicular and pedestrian directional signage system was installed in the downtown area. The project included approximately 75 new sign installations, including exit ramp signage off I-630, vehicular signage, parking directional signs, pedestrian signs, visitor information center identifiers and information kiosks with area maps. The signs highlight nearby attractions and public event facilities.

## ARTS + HISTORY BOND ISSUE

In February 2016, Little Rock voters approved a bond issue to fund a redesign of the Arkansas Arts Center – as well as improvements to MacArthur Park and the MacArthur Museum of Arkansas Military History – utilizing a new 2% lodging tax, enacted by the Little Rock Board of Directors. The project will provide much-needed mechanical and electrical improvements at the Arts Center, and addresses the overall building design and expanded auxiliary capabilities. The project will also include enhancements to MacArthur Park, and structural repairs at the MacArthur Museum of Arkansas Military History. Private funds are also being raised to assist all of the project needs. A timeline has not been finalized, though the selection of a design team is underway.

## RIVER MARKET TURNS 20!

For two decades, the River Market has brought families and friends of all ages together through the Little Rock Farmers Market, Movies in the Park, Ottenheimer Market Hall vendors, and so much more.

## NEW ATA INTERNATIONAL WORLD HEADQUARTERS

Arkansas's own ATA International celebrated the completion of their new global headquarters at 1800 Riverfront Drive on November 29. ATA currently hosts the city's largest annual convention with its World Expo. The new 45,300 sq. ft. campus-style headquarters is a reflection of ATA's focus, which is providing students the highest quality martial arts instruction available for all ages. The facility includes water features, a training facility, and the international museum, which provides a first-class experience to tell the story of Eternal Grand Master H.U. Lee and the history of the ATA.

## CIVIL RIGHTS LANDMARKS PROPOSED FOR WORLD HERITAGE STATUS: LITTLE ROCK CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL SITE INCLUDED

Leaders in several southern states are working together to nominate a civil rights trail for consideration of a World Heritage destination from UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization). Churches, schools, museums, a bus station and an iconic bridge will be reviewed, along with the Little Rock Central High School National Historic Site. The goal is to have all of the sites reviewed for a group or "serial" nomination to UNESCO. The nomination process may take several years, but if successful, this initiative would provide Arkansas its first UNESCO World Heritage designation.

## FIREHOUSE HOSTEL AND MUSEUM OPENS

In September, Little Rock welcomed its first hostel, accredited by Hosteling International. After nearly 10 years of renovation efforts by the nonprofit Hosteling Arkansas Inc. and the City of Little Rock, the 1917 craftsman-style building in MacArthur Park known as Fire Station 2 officially opened as the Firehouse Hostel and Museum. The building houses 36 twin-size bunk beds. An overnight stay includes free continental breakfast, off-street parking, bedding and towels, storage lockers, Wi-Fi, a guest computer and a fully-equipped kitchen.





## CLINTON NATIONAL AIRPORT BEGINS CONCOURSE RENOVATION

This \$20.6 million project is set to improve passenger experience. In November, the airport announced guest Wi-Fi at LIT was ranked the fastest in the world. The concourse renovation will continue widespread customer service enhancements, including a digital antenna system to boost cell phone connectivity, a modernized interior, new seating with in-seat recharge, new jet bridges, restroom upgrades and larger arrival and departure monitors.

## HOTEL DEVELOPMENTS

The Four Points by Sheraton Little Rock Midtown completed a multi-million dollar renovation and flag change from Clarion, giving Little Rock its first Starwood property.

## LITTLE ROCK BUCKET LIST BOOK PUBLISHED

Little Rock native, published author and LRCVB Sales Director Celia Anderson wrote *100 Things To Do in Little Rock Before You Die*, a guidebook citing local historic landmarks, attractions, shops, restaurants and more that every visitor and resident should experience.

## PUBLIC SCULPTURE ADDITIONS

In 2016, 13 public sculptures, valued at nearly \$1 million, were added to the destination, including five sculptures in the Vogel Schwartz Sculpture Garden - the largest collection of public sculpture in Little Rock - as well as "In the Wings" and "Let the Music Play", which adorn the entrance to the reinvigorated Robinson Center. "Straight Lines on a Round World, First Survey of the American West", was placed in front of the convention center, along with five other sculptures placed throughout the city.

## WEST CENTRAL SPORTS COMPLEX

This new facility opened in November 2016 and offers a community center and sports complex to serve the community with special programs such as athletics, senior and adult programs, special events and a radio station.

## FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS TAKE PLACE AT THE GROVE AT GATEWAY TOWN CENTER

The addition of Dave & Buster's, Cavendars, a Movie Tavern, and several restaurants were added to the Gateway Town Center. A hotel is also in the works, along with additional retail space.

## 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE NATIONAL PARKS SERVICE

As part of the National Park Service (NPS) Centennial Celebration, the LRCVB worked with Little Rock Central High National Historic Site, and others, to host a town hall meeting, titled Arkansas's Past-N-Motion. NPS Agency Director Jonathon Jarvis discussed NPS's role in preserving and sharing our nation's history for future generations.



# FUTURE OUTLOOK



Recent years in Little Rock have been full of growth for the tourism industry. The reopening of Robinson Center is already elevating the level – and quality – of live entertainment options, and attracting more people to the destination.

Looking ahead, major highway infrastructure projects will certainly have an effect on the downtown area with the completion of the Broadway Bridge, and the continued discussions surrounding a possible I-30 expansion. The Little Rock Tech Park is scheduled for completion in early 2017, and design plans for improvements to the Arkansas Arts Center, Arkansas Military Museum and MacArthur Park are expected to begin in earnest in 2017.

In 2017, the city will commemorate the 60th anniversary of the integration of Little Rock Central High School, with events offered citywide. Performances at Robinson Center will provide new music, arts and cultural experiences that will enhance Little Rock's existing cultural assets. More hotels are scheduled for completion by mid-year, and with the continued growth of the sharing economy, the LRCVB has worked to establish an agreement with AirBnB to collect local lodging taxes.

Amateur sports continue to be the largest sales-producing market for Little Rock. The market presents a tremendous opportunity for growth if the proper facilities are developed. Central Arkansas is lacking both indoor and outdoor sports facilities to recruit regional and national tournaments. Research shows that millions of sports participants travel each year for competitions, and this demand represents significant potential for both recreational play and competitive level tournaments. Funding options for infrastructure and upgrades to existing facilities need to be explored.

For the LRCVB, 2017 will be the first year operating the new Robinson Center, with continued focus on initiatives outlined in the multiyear strategic plan. We will continue to leverage sales relationships with third-party meeting professionals and look for opportunities to identify local leadership that can assist in convention bookings. Focus will be placed on the rollout of a fully responsive website and other digital marketing efforts, the continued implementation of our brand strategy, and hospitality brand training. Visitors desire authentic and unique experiences and Little Rock is fortunate to have the product, people, and talent to capitalize on both new and existing travel markets.



LIFE  
IS BETTER  
— WITH A —  
SOUTHERN  
ACCENT.<sup>SM</sup>

