

# 2020


## ANNUAL REPORT



*Little Rock*

CONVENTION &  
VISITORS BUREAU

FEBRUARY 16, 2021

 PINNACLE MOUNTAIN STATE PARK

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## BUT FIRST...





# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

For ten weeks, 2020 was on track to be a banner year. We hosted a return three-week engagement of the Broadway mega-hit “Wicked,” and launched a refreshed and reimagined “Big on Little Rock” brand, a campaign that, in its short pre-pandemic time, was met with enthusiasm and excitement from both locals and visitors. We saw a record 13% increase in year-over-year tourism tax collections in January and February. Then, of course, came COVID-19. As a result, the world quit traveling and quickly turned to zoom meetings, virtual happy hours, and working from home.

The tourism industry has undoubtedly been one of the hardest hit economic sectors. The pandemic tested our industry in ways none of us expected, but it also brought out the best in our industry and community. Heroes emerged all over the world, and right here at home acts of kindness and compassion proved that sometimes the best way to be Big on Little Rock was to offer a helping hand.

In a year of extreme challenges, we pivoted, collaborated, and came together to explore new opportunities to sustain growth. Our staff sent weekly industry updates, created COVID resource guides, released stay-home activities, launched a Big on Safety campaign, and attended virtual client tradeshows. Additionally, we managed hundreds of event cancellations, created tax deferment plans, and worked tirelessly through the required furloughs and layoffs of our own team members.

By mid-year we were settling into the reality that significant group business would not return and leisure travel would be reduced thus we turned our focus to things we could control: workplace safety, internal capital projects, training for proper cleaning and disinfecting, investing in technology for hybrid events, working with the Arkansas Department of Health in developing reopening guidelines, and re-tooling our marketing efforts to target resilient travelers, feature safe activities, and inspire future visits.

Though our buildings were virtually empty, they were far from abandoned. The LRCVB operations teams completed many preventative maintenance projects, even with reduced capital funds and skeleton crews. Our facilities look great and stand ready to safely welcome business back.

While the summer saw the arrival of some resilient travelers, community innovations in outdoor dining, and even a few small events, it also saw months of political and social strife and protest. Little Rock is a city well acquainted with the generations-long fight for civil rights and equality for Black Americans. While much progress has been made over the years, there is still so much work to be done in order to make sure that every visitor to, and resident of, Little Rock is truly equal. I am encouraged by the various community efforts that have emerged and the action steps being taken at all levels.

Much of the year was spent working with partners at the national and state level to advocate on behalf of the industry for relief, protection, and stimulus support. Our A&P chairman, Jim Keet, myself, and others in the tourism industry had the opportunity to sit down with Governor Hutchinson and talk about our industry's needs. We also spoke of how tourism will be a key driver of Arkansas's economic recovery once it is safe to lift restrictions and the spread of this virus is controlled. As a result of these efforts and after working with our partners at Arkansas Parks, Heritage and Tourism, multiple programs were developed to provide direct support to businesses in the hospitality industry as well as destination marketing organizations (DMO) like the LRCVB.

Even in a year like 2020, there were reasons to celebrate. We welcomed the state's newest and most advanced mountain biking trails at Pinnacle Mountain State Park. Construction continued on the future Arkansas Museum of Fine Arts, and we added public art and murals throughout the city. We were able to create a safe environment and successfully host multiple events in our facilities, and the sales and operations teams were able to contract new business and retain a significant amount of group business by moving them into future years.

The LRCVB has always been resilient in the face of adversity, and though 2020 tested us in ways we couldn't have imagined, we have emerged stronger and more resilient than ever. I am confident that our city's pandemic recovery will be shorter because of our team's hard work in 2020.

I am looking forward to leaving 2020 in the rear-view mirror but hope we will see this pandemic as the moment a new vision for Little Rock, as a stronger, bolder, and brighter city took hold.



GRETCHEN HALL, CDME  
PRESIDENT & CEO

# ORGANIZATION & LEADERSHIP



## LITTLE ROCK CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU (LRCVB)

The Little Rock Convention and 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, and the pavilions) and multiple parking facilities. LRCVB is primarily funded by a lodging and prepared food tax. The organization is divided into three primary divisions: finance & administration, sales & marketing, and facility operations.

IN LOVING MEMORY OF

**RUSSELL DANIELS**

PT SECURITY OFFICER

8 YEARS AND 9 MONTHS OF SERVICE

1958 - 2020



## LITTLE ROCK ADVERTISING & PROMOTION COMMISSION

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

- **Jim Keet, Chair**
- **City Director Gene Fortson, Vice Chair**
- **Mayor Frank Scott, Jr.**
- **Yogesh Asudani**
- **Rajesh Mehta**
- **Nick Roye**
- **Pamela Smith**

## LRCVB MANAGEMENT TEAM

**Gretchen Hall**, President & CEO

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

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

**Gina Gemberling**, Vice President - Sales & Marketing

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

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

**Jennifer G. Garner** – Assistant Director of Event Operations

**Kasey Summerville** – Senior Director of Tax Revenue

**Chris Phillips** – Controller

**Bobby Green** – Director of Security

**Randy Guptill** – Director of Technical Services

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

**Greg Johnston** – Software Systems Engineer

**Art Edwards** – Facility Maintenance Manager

**Tracy Graham** – Accounting Manager

**Cortez Jackson** – Facility Maintenance Manager

**Christin Byrd** – Creative Services Manager

**Libby Lloyd** – Communications Manager

**Johnny Loney** – Auxiliary Services Manager

**Kim Sanders** – Human Resources Manager

**Gwen Stallings** – Building Service Manager

**Gaby Valentin** – Event Setup Manager

**Katina Brown** – Destination Services Specialist  
(staff representative)



# 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.

### BRAND 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.

### 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.





# Little Rock

CONVENTION &  
VISITORS BUREAU  
1970 - 2020

## BIG ON PROGRESS...



Though 2020 didn't always feel like a year worth celebrating, it did mark the 50th anniversary of the Little Rock Advertising & Promotion Commission (LR A&P) dba the Little Rock Convention & Visitors Bureau (LRCVB). So much about Little Rock has changed in those intervening decades, but even now, as the LRCVB faces some of the tourism industry's gravest challenges in the wake of COVID-19, the organization's commitment to Little Rock's pandemic recovery is unwavering.

LRCVB funds are dedicated to:

- Operating, managing, and maintaining the Statehouse Convention Center (SCC), Robinson Center (RC), First Security Amphitheater, River Market Pavilions & Ottenheimer Hall, the Cromwell Building, and multiple parking facilities.
- Debt service associated with the \$70 million renovation of Robinson Center.
- 2% A&P lodging tax is dedicated to the bonded indebtedness of the Arkansas Museum of Fine Arts renovation.
- Sales & marketing efforts to recruit conventions and visitors to enhance the economy through increased visitor travel into, and throughout, Little Rock.
  - promotions for local restaurants and attractions
  - hosting travel journalists & meeting planners
  - advertising and social media marketing
  - production and sponsorship of community events





# HISTORY OF LR A&P/LRCVB

## THE 1970S

The passage of Ordinance No. 12,353 by the City Board of Directors on May 4, 1970 levied a one percent tax on gross receipts of hotels and restaurants in Little Rock and formally established the LR A&P and later that year, its administrative body, the LRCVB. Throughout the decade, Executive Director Charles E. Rixse and Convention Sales Director Barry Travis promoted initiatives that moved the LRCVB and the City of Little Rock closer to achieving the goal of a new, state-of-the-art downtown convention facility and hotel complex.

- 1973 oversight of Robinson Auditorium moved to the LR A&P from the Municipal Auditorium Board.
- The Camelot Hotel, a private development by Kinark of Tulsa, OK was completed in 1973. A 99-year air rights lease with exclusive catering rights at Robinson was created, and the city then owned the physical structure.
- Ordinance No. 13,527 on November 7, 1978, provided an additional one percent tax on hotel and restaurant receipts.
- These initial investments were the first steps in returning conventions and meetings to downtown Little Rock and paved the way for all future development.

## THE 1980S

The development of the SCC and Excelsior Hotel, along with the improvements to the Robinson Center, helped stimulate the city's economy over the course of the decade.

- Under the leadership of LR A&P Chairman B. Finley Vinson, LRCVB Executive Director Barry Travis, and private developer Doyle Rogers, construction began in 1980 as a public/private venture and opened in November 1982. SCC was financed via public bonds, and the hotel was financed via private capital. A 99-year leasehold that included exclusive catering rights at the SCC was established, and the city retained ownership of the physical structure.

## THE 1990S

By the 1990s, the LRCVB's vision for Little Rock as a top convention city centered around the need for more space.

- The LRCVB enhanced Little Rock through the endorsement of projects like the development of the River Market pavilions, the "I'm Big on Little Rock" promotional campaign, and the small business bidding program implemented during the SCC expansion.
- In 1996, Seymore Logan Co. of Chicago acquired the Camelot Hotel and re-branded it as a DoubleTree in 1997.
- The SCC expansion project began in 1998 and was completed in June 1999. The expansion included: an additional 23,000 sq. ft. exhibit hall, new entrance/atrium, office space, full-service kitchen & the 18,000 sq. ft. Wally Allen Ballroom. Financed via .01 county-wide, 12-month, sunset sales tax passed by the general electorate. The tax paid for the SCC expansion and the development of Alltel Arena in North Little Rock.
- The City and LR A&P purchased Little Rock's oldest non-log home and renovated historic Curran Hall into a visitors' center in 1999.

## THE 2000S

The 2000s continued the momentum created by many of the projects started in the 1990s, most notably was the development of a Presidential Library that catapulted Little Rock to tourism's world stage, and effectively revitalized the downtown convention and entertainment corridor. Barry Travis, whose title changed from Executive Director to Chief Executive Officer (CEO) during this decade, remained in his role, overseeing the earlier projects that he had helped initiate.

- BG Excelsior Limited Partnership led by Marty Belz, acquired the Excelsior Hotel, infused almost \$40M into the property and re-branded it as The Peabody Hotel in 2002. LR A&P continued as the leasehold and operations liaison between the Belz family and the City of Little Rock.
- The construction of the William J. Clinton Presidential Center and Park, completed in 2004, granted the LRCVB an opportunity to promote the Presidential Center as a potential draw for tourists, conventions, and large events.
- The River Market celebrated its tenth anniversary and its positive impact on stimulating downtown Little Rock's growth in 2007. The same year, a new CEO Daniel E. O'Bryne, began his tenure.
- In 2009, the LRCVB took on the management of the River Market and helped to develop an active community and organization that continued to support the economic growth of downtown Little Rock.

## THE 2010S

The next ten years were a period of both change and continued growth for the LRCVB, under the leadership of Gretchen Hall, who was appointed President and Chief Executive Officer in May 2011. The decade saw the LRCVB's \$70M renovation of the 1940 RC as the organization's flagship capital improvement project, as well as the purchase of the Cromwell Building and continued management of multiple downtown facilities. The LRCVB adapted to changing trends in technology, as well as sustainability-oriented policy and increased sales and marketing efforts.

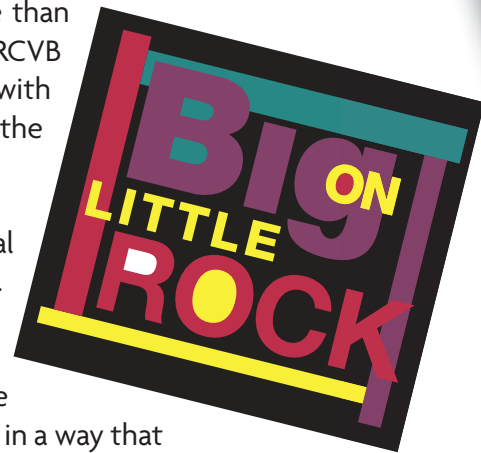
- The Peabody leasehold was acquired by FWHII of Memphis led by Robert Solmson in 2012 and re-flagged into Arkansas's first full-service Marriott.
- River Lights in the Rock debuted December 2013. A \$2 million gift from Entergy Arkansas and the Entergy Charitable Foundation, along with \$400,000 raised by the cities of LR, NLR, Pulaski County, Clinton Foundation and the LRCVB. The LRCVB manages the bridge light operations.
- 2014-2016 – RC closed for a publicly bonded \$70M renovation & expansion, paid via existing LR A&P tax revenue.
- In 2015, the City of Little Rock approved a 2% A&P hotel tax increase and in 2017 the tax was approved to be bonded for an estimated \$37.5M for the renovation and expansion of the Arkansas Museum of Fine Arts. The project is expected to reopen in 2022.

# IF YOU'RE BIG ON FUN, YOU'RE BIG ON LITTLE ROCK.



After running a successful “...Better with a Southern Accent” campaign for more than 6 years, it was time to evolve and elevate Little Rock's brand positioning. The LRCVB enlisted one of its agencies of record, Paradise Advertising & Marketing, to help with the campaign's development. The primary objective was to increase visitation and the number of meetings booked into the destination.

The agency held multiple discovery sessions with industry partners and local stakeholders while simultaneously developing new visitor personas and profiles. Throughout the discovery sessions, the possibility of reviving an older campaign, themed “Big On Little Rock” kept resurfacing. While the clever line was well-liked within the community, it felt more akin to a civic-pride campaign rather than one targeted at visitors. The agency was charged with finding a way to use the phrasing in a way that better reflected the destination's offerings and appeal while still connecting with potential visitors.







**BIG ON  
LITTLE  
ROCK**  
LITTLEROCK.COM

A brand was created that provided the LRCVB a communications structure that enabled them to match each of its targeted interests with the destination: “If you’re big on (target interest), you’re Big on Little Rock.” The new brand not only provides the LRCVB the opportunity to communicate with visitors but also energizes and inspires local pride to increase brand adoption and brand ambassadorship with Little Rock residents.

The youthful, brushstroke-like font Hackney was chosen for the primary wordmark to convey a sense of enthusiasm and the city’s up-for-ananything attitude, while shades of vibrant blue reflected the flowing waters of the Arkansas River and abundant sky as seen from the city’s many parks. The versatility of the tagline provides the perfect opportunity to introduce the many pleasant surprises that Little Rock has to offer.

The campaign was launched at a public event on Friday, February 28, that included the unveiling of advertisements, merchandise featuring the new branding, promotional videos, and a branded vehicle.





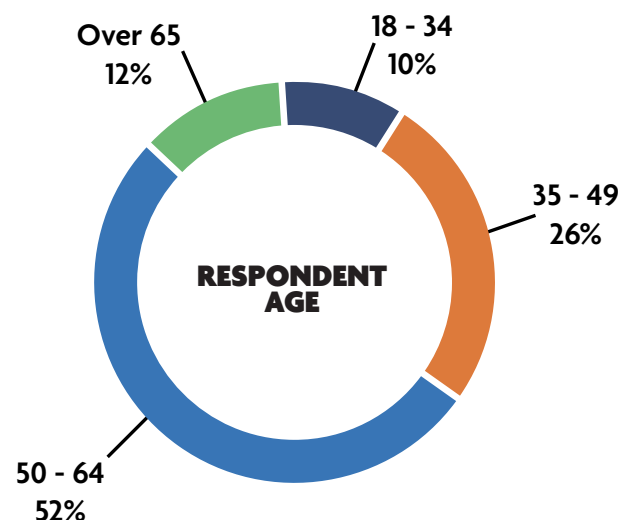
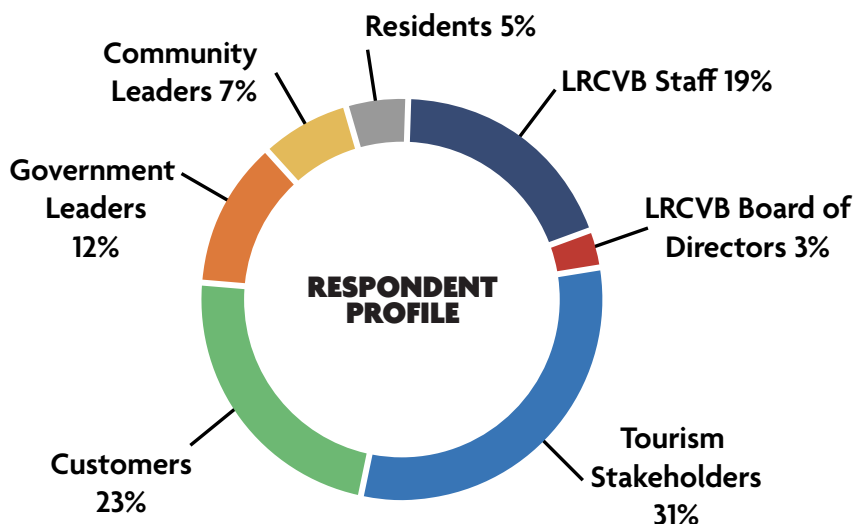
# DESTINATION NEXT

The LRCVB partnered with MMGY NextFactor to conduct the DestinationNEXT Scenario Model and Assessment Tool. This assessment helps stakeholders strategically evaluate their destinations. The diagnostic tool is based on a comprehensive stakeholder survey that measures destination strength and community engagement, based on 20 key variables. DestinationNEXT provides practical actions and strategies for sustainable success in this dramatically changing world.

This assessment is currently the only one of its kind in the tourism and business events industry. It has been recognized as one of the most significant recent developments in the destination management sector for informing overall strategy. More than 200 detailed assessments of destinations around the world have been conducted. LRCVB first conducted the DestinationNEXT assessment in 2015.

## DEMOGRAPHIC BREAKDOWN OF RESPONSES

A total of 186 individuals responded to the survey, as broken down below.

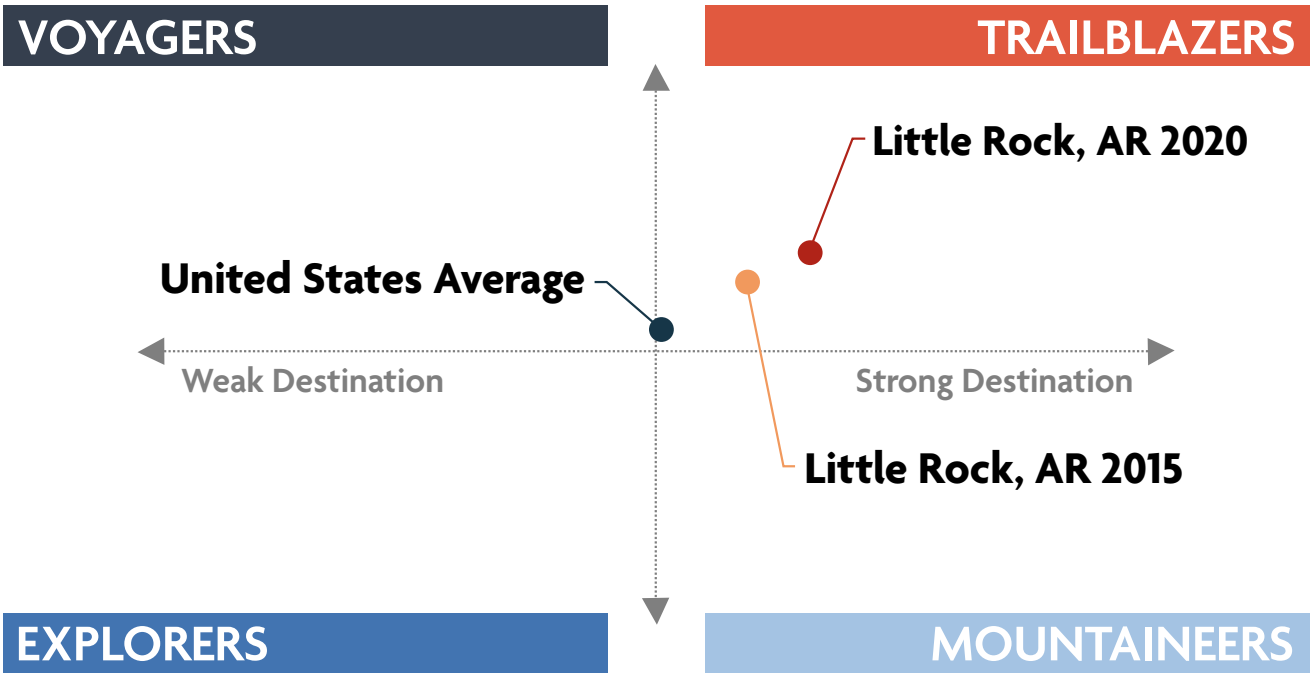






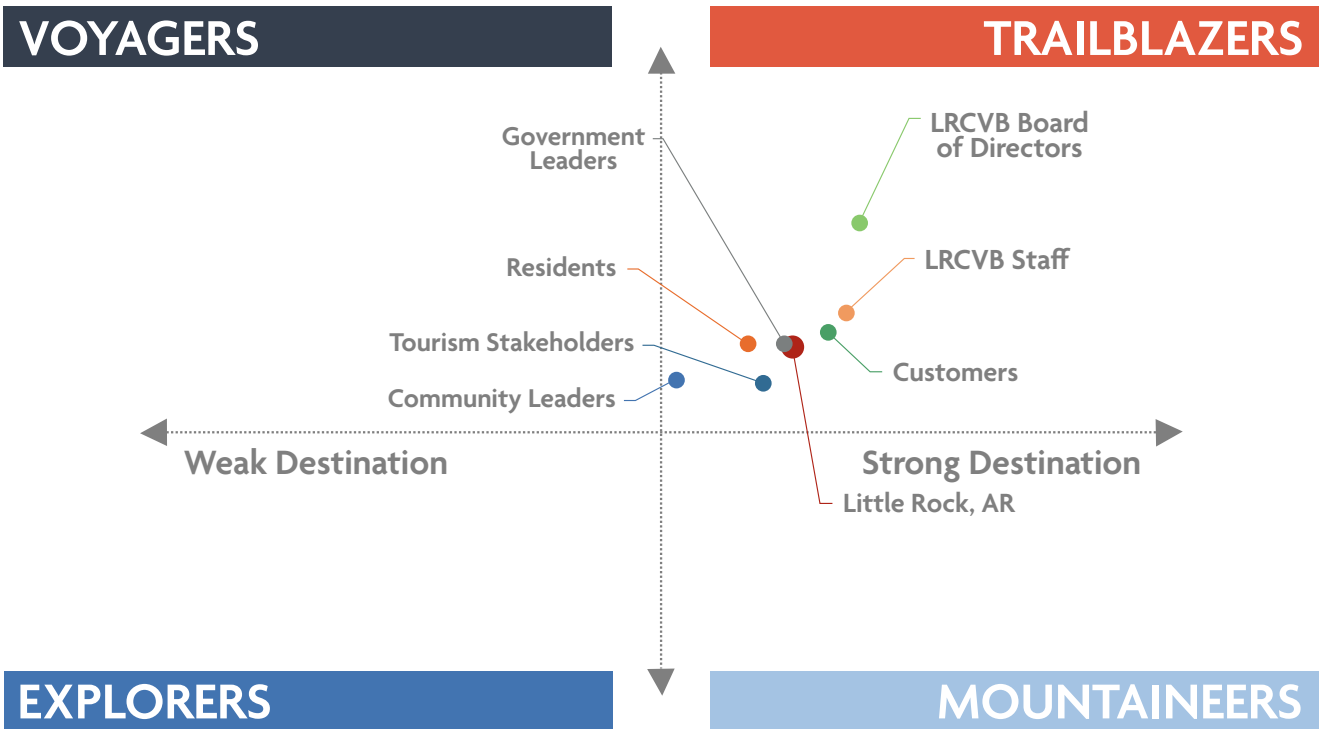
# OVERALL ASSESSMENT

Strong Community Alignment



# STAKEHOLDER GROUPS

Strong Community Alignment



# DESTINATION STRENGTH – REPORT CARD

Variable	Relative Importance (0-100%)		Perceived Performance (1-5 scale)			2015 Assessment Scores			Δ
	Industry Average	Little Rock, AR	Industry Average	Little Rock, AR	Standard Division	Industry Average	Little Rock, AR	Standard Deviation	
Convention & Meeting Facilities	9.8%	10.9%	3.1	3.7	0.6	3.09	3.66	0.95	↑
Attractions & Entertainment	10.8%	10.9%	3.6	3.9	0.6	3.73	3.91	0.87	↓
Communication & Internet Infrastructure	10.0%	10.0%	3.2	3.4	0.7	3.33	3.46	0.85	↓
Accommodation	10.5%	10.0%	3.5	4.1	0.5	3.43	3.96	0.81	↑
Outdoor Recreation & Sports Facilities	9.5%	10.0%	3.2	3.8	0.4	3.27	3.12	1.09	↓
Events	9.8%	9.9%	3.6	4.1	0.5	3.81	3.78	0.80	↑
Mobility & Access	10.1%	9.9%	3.0	3.5	0.5	2.85	3.38	1.00	↑
Air Access	9.1%	9.9%	3.1	3.4	0.6	2.97	2.78	1.19	↑
Brand	10.4%	9.9%	3.5	3.7	0.6	3.18	3.49	1.01	↑
International Readiness	10.0%	8.8%	3.1	3.5	0.5	n/a	n/a	n/a	↑

COMMUNITY STRENGTH - LITTLE ROCK, AR	3.70
INDUSTRY AVERAGE DESTINATION ALIGNMENT	3.36

RESULTING SCENARIO	TRAILBLAZERS
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Note  
Green signifies overperforming by greater than 0.2.

# COMMUNITY ALIGNMENT – REPORT CARD

Variable	Relative Importance (0-100%)		Perceived Performance (1-5 scale)			2015 Assessment Scores			Δ
	Industry Average	Little Rock, AR	Industry Average	Little Rock, AR	Standard Division	Industry Average	Little Rock, AR	Standard Deviation	
Hospitality Culture	10.3%	10.1%	3.6	4.0	0.7	3.55	3.96	0.79	↑
Funding Support & Certainty	10.1%	10.1%	3.2	3.2	0.6	3.08	3.71	0.92	↓
Industry Support	10.0%	10.1%	3.7	4.2	0.7	3.70	3.90	0.79	↑
Organization Governance Model	9.5%	10.1%	3.7	4.2	0.6	3.74	4.12	0.85	↑
Economic Development	10.3%	10.1%	3.9	4.0	0.5	3.92	4.15	0.84	↓
Workforce	10.2%	10.1%	3.2	3.5	0.7	3.16	3.18	1.08	↑
Local Community Support	10.3%	10.1%	3.5	3.9	0.6	3.60	3.94	0.80	↓
Policy & Regulatory Environment	10.1%	10.1%	3.5	4.0	0.5	n/a	n/a	n/a	↓
Partnership Strength	9.1%	10.1%	3.5	4.2	0.7	3.42	3.79	0.65	↑
Regional Cooperation	10.1%	9.1%	3.6	4.0	0.6	3.57	3.54	0.91	↑

COMMUNITY ALIGNMENT - LITTLE ROCK, AR	3.92
INDUSTRY AVERAGE COMMUNITY ALIGNMENT	3.55

RESULTING SCENARIO	TRAILBLAZERS
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Note  
Green signifies overperforming by greater than 0.2.



# KEY TAKEAWAYS

1

**CURRENTLY IN TRAILBLAZERS QUADRANT WITH ABOVE INDUSTRY AVERAGE DESTINATION STRENGTH AND COMMUNITY ALIGNMENT**

2

**IMPROVEMENTS SINCE 2015 ASSESSMENT**

3

**STAKEHOLDERS ARE ALIGNED ON PERCEPTIONS ABOUT DESTINATION**

## **DESTINATION STRENGTH - OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT**

- Long-term meeting capacity
- Parking for meeting facilities
- Public Wi-Fi
- Amateur sports facilities
- Dining & shopping
- Mobility
- Public transportation
- Road infrastructure
- Parking
- Wayfinding
- Accessibility for disabled
- Air access
- Brand
- Public safety/cleanliness

## **COMMUNITY ALIGNMENT - OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT**

- Funding for infrastructure needs & improvements
- Destination master plan
- Workforce
- Resident support





# EDI

## EQUITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

Little Rock is no stranger to the changing tide of history and its power to shape a community. In the summer of 2020, when a new wave of marches for social justice and protests against police brutality swept the nation, the LRCVB responded both publicly and internally.

### BLACK LIVES MATTER

In solidarity with the Black Lives Matter movement and in conjunction with #BlackOutTuesday, the LRCVB's social media feeds featured a statement of support.

### EQUITY STATEMENT

Developed in 2019, and officially published in 2020, the LRCVB's official equity statement reads:

The Little Rock Convention & Visitors Bureau is committed to ensuring that Little Rock is a destination that is welcoming and open to all who seek to come here.

Our work reinforces what we know to be true about our city: that Little Rock is a place where all people should have an equal access to the opportunity and promise of our city. We want every visitor to Little Rock, independent of where they come from or the length of their stay, to have equal access to our city and the joy that visit to it brings.

#### We are committed to the following shared values:

Understanding what equity is and acknowledging that not all people have the same starting point.

Being open to new ideas and information in regard to equity and to what we as an organization must do when we make a mistake.

Working to make sure that our intent is in lockstep with our impacts.

The Little Rock Convention & Visitors Bureau is in a near constant state of growth when it comes to understanding the complex and intersectional identities of our visitors. We seek to remove all barriers to travel from the path of anyone who would like to visit Little Rock. Through this we're able to build a stronger, more diverse and more welcoming destination. Little Rock is a city made of people of a myriad of ages, races, ethnicities, levels of ability, sexual orientations, gender identities, religions and socio-economic statuses, and we are at our best when these diversities are given light to show the full spectrum of our home.







## INTERNAL INITIATIVES

Throughout the year, LRCVB leadership began implementing a set of policies that focused on the goals of equity, diversity, and inclusion. These policies included:

- Schedule mandatory unconscious/implicit bias training for all employees.
- Distribute an equity, diversity and inclusion staff survey to better understand our employees' thoughts and feelings related to these topics and identify areas of needed improvement.
- Expand the LRCVB's recruitment practices.
- Create a workforce development plan to expose more minority communities to the career possibilities and leadership roles within our industry.
- Promote the importance of voting to all staff and provide additional paid time off on primary and general election days to allow individuals enough time to exercise this right.
- Increase LRCVB marketing assets and direct messaging efforts to minority travelers.
- Expand the LRCVB's work with national minority travel groups and meeting professionals on convention marketing efforts.



## CEO OP ED

In August, Gretchen Hall penned an open letter to Arkansas's business community that was published in Arkansas Business as well as City & Town Magazine. The letter concludes:

“

I want to remind my white colleagues both that we are lucky for not being the victim of racism ourselves and that we cannot expect our Black contemporaries to do all the work of making systemic change. I challenge these same colleagues, especially those in leadership roles; get outside of your comfort zone and find ways to make a positive difference. By working together toward inclusion and diversity within our workplaces, we will create meaningful social change on a multitude of levels.

”

## GENDER EQUITY SCORECARD

The LRCVB was among the first Arkansas businesses to be measured by the Women's Foundation of Arkansas's Gender Equity Scorecard. The Foundation's scorecard was created in partnership with students from the Clinton School of Public Service with the goal of allowing Arkansas businesses the chance to evaluate the current state of gender equity in their workplaces.

**WOMEN'S  
FOUNDATION**  
ARKANSAS

## DESTINATIONS INTERNATIONAL CEO PLEDGE

In December, LRCVB CEO Gretchen Hall joined more than 250 other tourism industry leaders in taking Destinations International's Equity, Diversity & Inclusion CEO Pledge. Pledges promise to build and sustain equitable workforces, support local community actions that seek to achieve equality, and to be invested and committed to equity, diversity and inclusion.



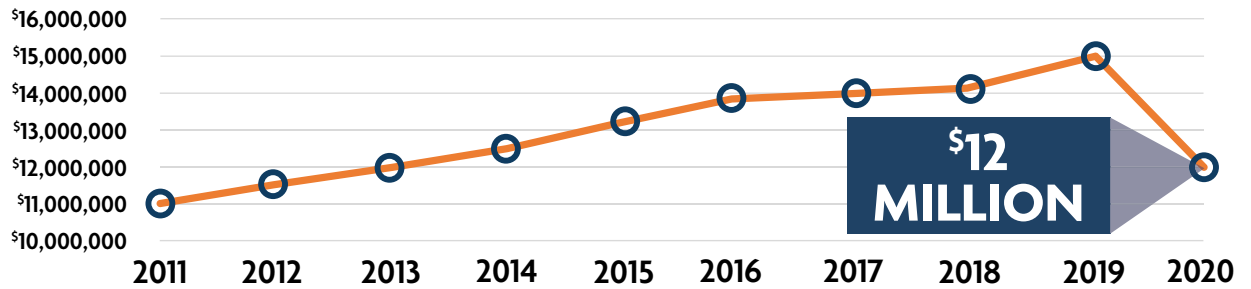


# FINANCE & ADMINISTRATION

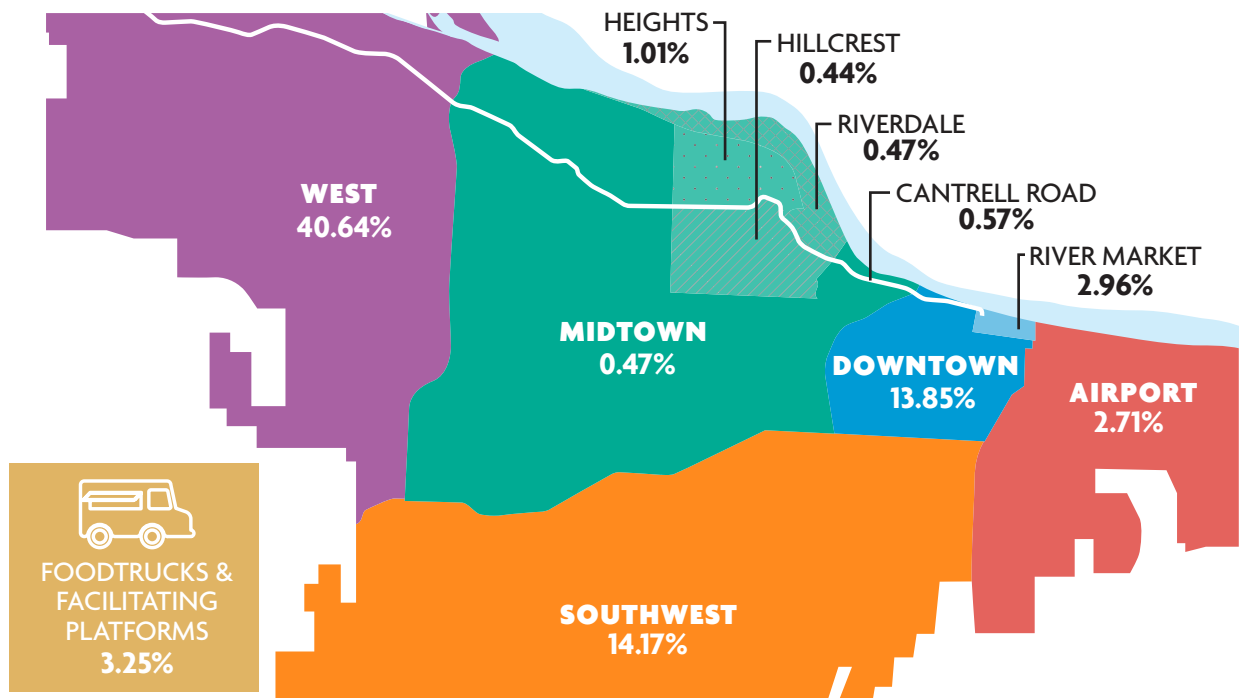
The Finance and Administration Division is comprised of the tax, accounting, information technology, and human resource departments. With the onset of COVID-19, much of 2020 was dedicated to ensuring our organization's financial stability, including bond obligations, while also working to provide support and flexibility to our industry partners, taxpayers, and employees.

The LRCVB offered deferred tax payment plans for the months of March through June to assist taxpayers during the initial economic challenges arising from COVID-19. In June, the tax department introduced a new comprehensive online tax system, which provided tax permittees with more options for paying their A&P tax and more information regarding their accounts. The system provided staff with additional reporting and management functionality as well.

## 2011-2020 A&P TAX COLLECTIONS

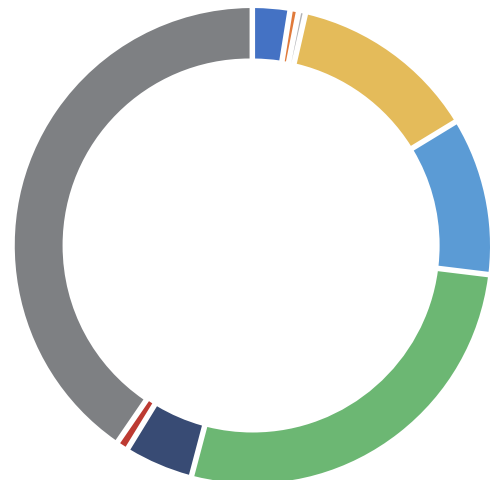


## TAX COLLECTIONS BY REGION



## TAX COLLECTIONS BY BUSINESS TYPE

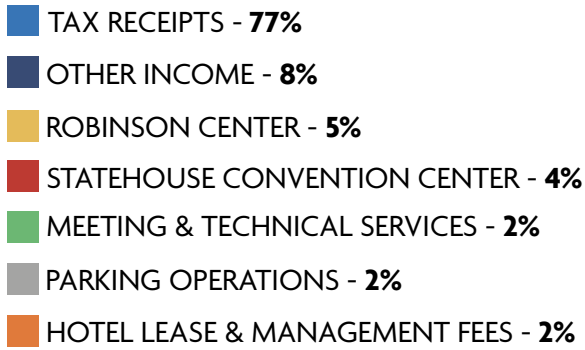
- FACILITATING PLATFORM\* - 2.54%
- LODGING WITH FOOD SALES - 12.71%
- CONCESSIONAIRE - 4.65%
- PRIVATE CLUB - 0.57%
- LODGING - 10.65%
- CATERER - 0.81%
- FOOD TRUCK - 0.47%
- FAST FOOD/LIMITED SERVICE - 27.18%
- FULL SERVICE RESTAURANT - 40.42%



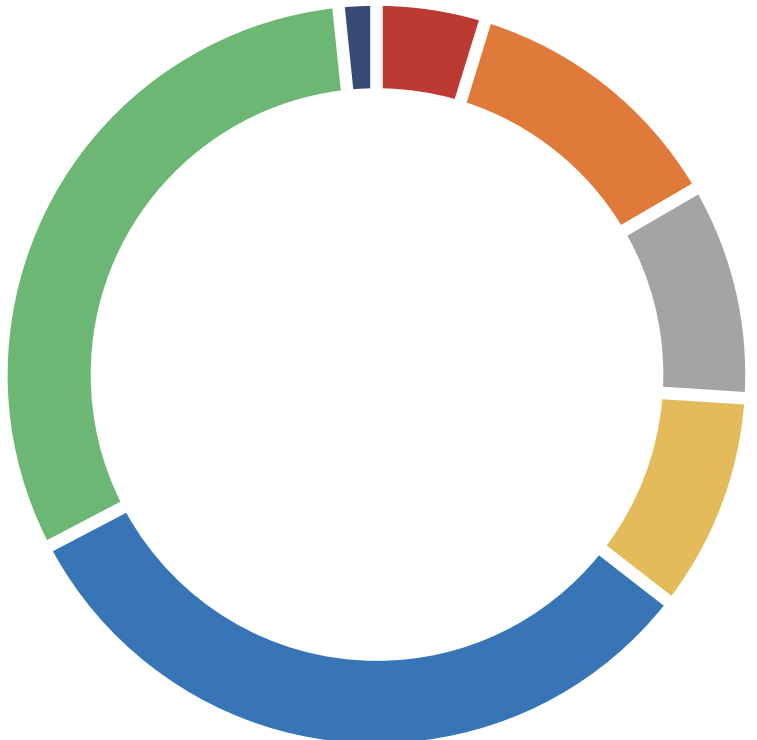
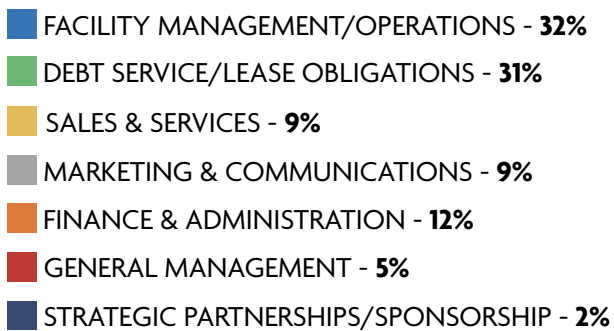
\*Facilitating platform includes online purveyors such as Airbnb, Priceline/Agoda, bite squad, Grubhub, etc.

## 2020 TOTAL REVENUE

\$15.6 MILLION

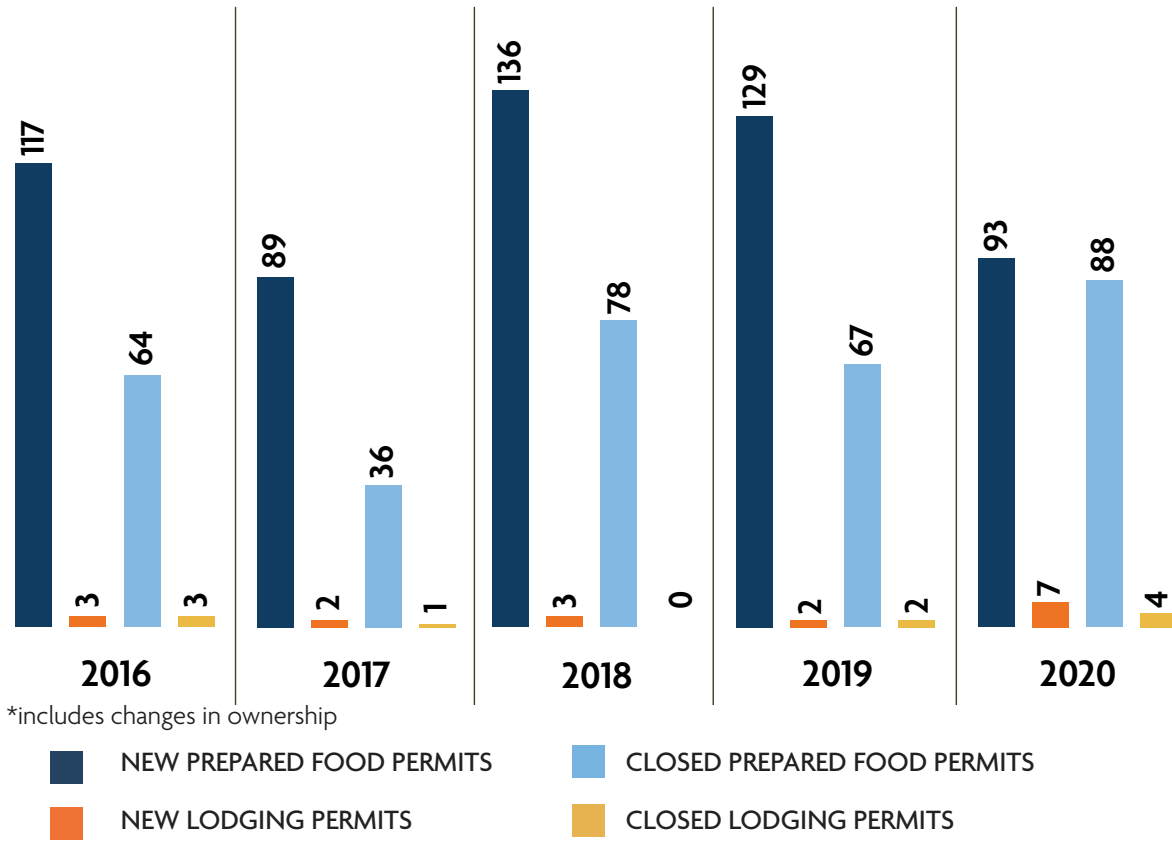


## 2020 TOTAL EXPENDITURES





## 2016-2020 NEW & CLOSED PERMITS





# FACILITY OPERATIONS

The LRCVB's Facility Operations division manages the Statehouse Convention Center, the Robinson Center, the Cromwell office building, and multiple downtown parking facilities. Additionally, the LRCVB manages several amenities in the River Market District including, Ottenheimer Market Hall, two outdoor pavilions, the First Security Amphitheater, and all surface parking within Riverfront Park.

The division also has direct operational responsibility for Little Rock Marriott and DoubleTree by Hilton Little Rock, the two city-owned hotel properties. It also serves as the contract liaison between these properties and the Little Rock Advertising & Promotion Commission.



2020 and COVID-19 have changed the face of the meeting and entertainment business, probably forever. Though the first two and a half months of the year were busy, the pandemic was a challenge for the entire operations team throughout the rest of the year. The team juggled hundreds of cancellations, postponements, and re-bookings of virtually all business in every facility, all while dealing with significant staff reductions and lost revenue.

Approximately 60% of the event-driven staff were furloughed, partially furloughed, laid off, or moved from full time to part-time roles. The remaining team members worked through the challenges, managed an incredibly complicated booking calendar, and attended advanced training in event operations, sanitization, and managing COVID guidelines.

New protocols and procedures were written and published that allow the LRCVB to welcome back business with the knowledge and expertise to better manage events while keeping our employees and guests safe.



#### **GLOBAL BIORISK ADVISORY COUNCIL (GBAC):**

In mid-year, five operations team members undertook an extensive training and certification program through two industry trade associations. These staff members worked to receive the GBAC STAR Facility Accreditation, the cleaning industry's only outbreak prevention, response, and recovery accreditation.



The program is performance-based and designed to help facilities establish a comprehensive cleaning system, disinfection, and infectious disease prevention for their guests, facilities, and staff. The LRCVB's service personnel have been trained through the program and are prepared to successfully implement all the safety and sanitation measures available. Official accreditation is expected in the first quarter of 2021.

# FACILITY & CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

A downturn in business levels did not translate to lessened responsibility for the maintenance and upkeep of the multiple facilities that the LRCVB operates. Though very few capital expenditures were made due to the revenue reductions, the in-house team completed numerous projects, upgrades, and improvements, with limited funding.

## CROMWELL BUILDING

- Second floor HVAC control system replacement
- Fourth floor LED lighting replacement
- Chiller replacement (two 60-ton chillers)

## CONVENTION DISTRICT PARKING DECK

- LED lighting replacement

## RIVER MARKET

- Parking kiosk repairs
- Replacement of water heater #2

## STATEHOUSE CONVENTION CENTER

- Lower Level meeting room LED conversion
- HVAC controls AHU-5 (meeting rooms)
- HVAC controls AHU's 1,2,3 and 7 (Governors Halls)
- Advanced lighting controls for Expansion and Gallery Hall
- Rebuild of chillers 1 and 2 in the Expansion
- Replacement of purge units in chillers 1 and 2 in the Expansion
- Replacement of blinds in all Registration areas
- Repainting of the Wally Allen Ballroom
- Repair of leak in chiller 1 barrel
- Repainting of Gallery Hall
- Repainting of Rotunda
- Repainting of all Registration areas (interior & exterior)
- LED conversion of the hanging lumineers in the Rotunda and Gallery Hall
- Renovation of BOH ceiling adjacent to engineering shop and west roll door





# 2020 FACILITY USAGE



Robinson Center	# of Events	Patron Days
Convention	5	7,895
Performance/Concert	43	76,243
Dance/Party	2	510
Food Function	6	748
Meeting/Seminar/Exam	227*	6,252**
Rehearsals	8	725
Graduation	0	0
Recital/Competition	6	3,582
Other	0	0
<b>Total Events</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>89,703</b>

\* 219 of these meetings denotes City of Little Rock Internal Meetings

\*\* 4,589 is attributed to City of Little Rock Internal Meetings

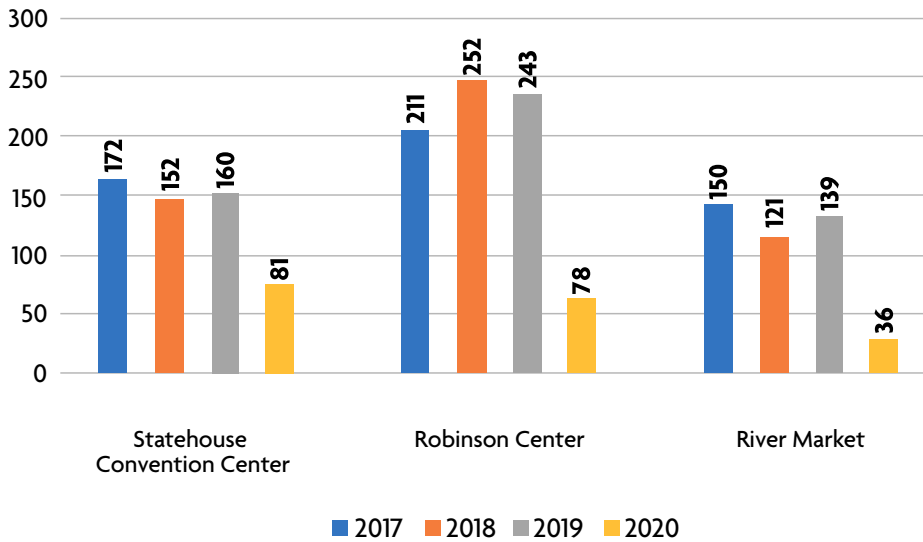


Statehouse Convention Center	# of Events	Patron Days
Convention	5	4,160
Convention w/Tradeshow	6	23,989
Performance/Concert	0	0
Dance/Party	0	0
Food Function	6	4,127
Meeting/Seminar	9	1,531
Consumer Show	3	15,000
Sports	1	2,400
Graduation	0	0
Recital/Competition	0	0
Exams	5	950
Other	0	0
<b>Total Events</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>52,157</b>

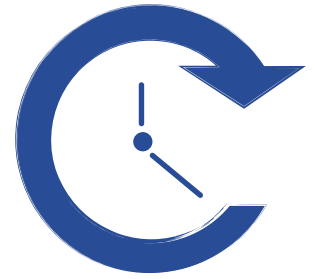
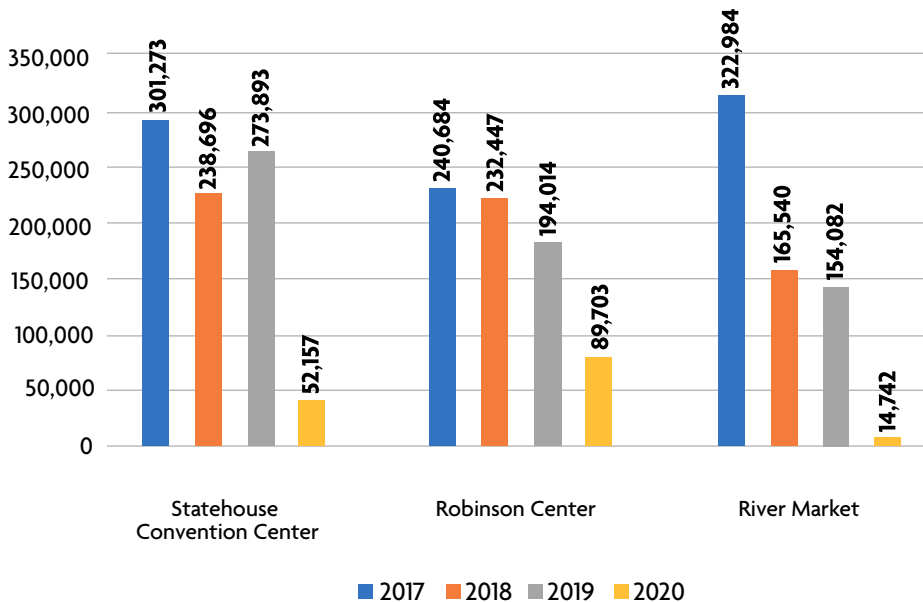


River Market	# of Events	Patron Days
Performance/Concert/Movie	0	0
Dances	0	0
Food Function	13	1,310
Meeting/Seminar	8	200
Consumer Show (including Farmers Market)	13	12,897
Sports/Hobby	0	0
Festival	0	0
Other	2	335
<b>Total Events</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>14,742</b>

## TOTAL EVENTS



## TOTAL PATRON DAYS



**51 GROUP  
POSTPONEMENTS**



**\$8,462,642  
ECONOMIC IMPACT**



**297 GROUP  
CANCELLATIONS**



**\$26,692,632  
ECONOMIC IMPACT**







# SALES & MARKETING

In many ways, the Sales & Marketing division is the most public face of the LRCVB. This 15-member team recruits groups to hold meetings and events in Little Rock, while also serving as an in-house marketing agency for the organization, working to increase the city's profile and awareness as a travel destination.

The sales team is split between a dedicated group of sales professionals and the destination services team. Each salesperson has a distinct market segment and uses a proactive direct sales approach and participation at industry tradeshows to generate greater awareness and make Little Rock top-of-mind as a group destination. The destination services team provides services to assist with customer and attendee satisfaction to build destination loyalty and referrals, and increase attendance and visitor spending in Little Rock.

The marketing and communications team works to increase the city's profile and awareness as a travel destination by developing and implementing programs that deliver targeted messaging across multiple marketing channels for all target audiences.

While the pandemic disrupted these roles for much of 2020, the entire division quickly pivoted to provide up-to-date information on travel and safety precautions, developing new ways to stay engaged and connecting with clients, and shifted advertising efforts to align with the ever-changing pandemic environment.



# SALES & SERVICE

## TRADESHOW MARKETING

IN-PERSON	
American Bus Association Marketplace 2020	Omaha, NE
Travel South	Baton Rouge, LA
PCMA Convening Leaders	San Francisco
RCMA EMERGE	Irving, TX
Destination International	Washington, D.C.
Connect Diversity	Kissimmee, FL
Connect Chicago	Chicago, IL

VIRTUAL
TEAMS 2020
Sports ETA
Connect Specialty/Faith
Connect Association
North Star Meetings- WILMI Conferences

## BIG WINS - NEW BUSINESS

GROUP NAME	NAME OF MEETING	ROOM NIGHTS	ATTENDANCE	DIRECT SPENDING IMPACT
American Choral Directors Association	Southwestern Division Conference 2022	1669	2300	\$822,596.44
United Soybean Board	2022 USB February Board Meeting	480	250	\$220,275.10
Delta Waterfowl	2022 Delta Waterfowl Foundation - Duck Hunters Expo	725	1000	\$367,026.31
Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulcher of Jerusalem	2024 Annual Meeting SW	800	800	\$582,808.59
Southern Management Association	SMA 2022 Annual Conference	1069	400	\$1,331,819.51
National Plant Board	95th Annual Meeting	535	160	\$168,007.82

## NEW BUSINESS IN 2020

ASSOCIATION	NAME OF MEETING	ROOM NIGHTS	ATTENDANCE	DIRECT SPENDING IMPACT
9th District Omega Psi Phi Fraternity	2020 International Undergraduate Leadership Summit	984	800	\$342,306.90
Southern Sustainable Agriculture Working Group	Annual Convention 2020	1475	1300	\$869,474.20
Association of Presbyterian Church Educators	Association of Presbyterian Church Educations 2020	1972	700	\$516,219.77
Southeast Tourism Society	Connections Conference 2020	538	350	\$283,118.00
The Soaring Society of America	2020 Soaring Society of America Biennial Convention	961	2000	\$379,324.34
American Fisheries Society	Southern Division of the American Fisheries Society Meeting & International Catfish Symposium	850	450	\$232,250.59
American Choral Directors Association - SW Division	Southwestern Division Conference 2020	1630	2000	\$827,647.50

## 2020 SALES & SERVICE ACTIVITIES

**223 LEADS**

DISTRIBUTED, REPRESENTING POTENTIAL 116,532 ROOM NIGHTS

**148 GROUPS**

SECURED, REPRESENTING 66,178 ROOM NIGHTS AND  
101,137 ATTENDEES WITH AN ESTIMATED IMPACT OF  
\$36,806,086 IN DIRECT SPENDING

**71 GROUPS**

SERVICED REPRESENTING 39,895 ROOM NIGHTS AND 79,354 PEOPLE  
WITH AN ESTIMATED IMPACT OF \$19,820,844 IN DIRECT SPENDING

**2,916**

SALES PROSPECTING CONTACTS MADE

**1,878**

SERVICE/RETENTION CONTACTS MADE

**147**

TRADESHOW CONTACTS MADE

**17 SITE VISITS**

HOSTED IN LITTLE ROCK

EMAIL CAMPAIGNS REACHED

**80,203 CLIENTS**

WITH A 24.4% OPEN RATE

## MARKETING

## GOALS

Drive overnight stays among targeted visitor groups

Drive Bed Tax and Restaurant Tax Collections

Drive overall in-market spend and economic impact

Raise awareness for lodging options, activities, restaurants, and attractions

Keep the Little Rock brand top-of-mind

IF YOU'RE BIG  
ON HISTORY,  
YOU'RE BIG ON LITTLE ROCK.  
*Little Rock .com*

IF YOU'RE BIG  
ON MEETINGS THAT EXCEED EXPECTATIONS,  
YOU'RE BIG ON LITTLE ROCK.

Easy accessibility. A friendly, walkable downtown. And plenty of great venues. All in a fun, historic  
destination that delivers big time value for your group. Learn more at [LittleRockMeetings.com](http://LittleRockMeetings.com)

*Little Rock*

IF YOU'RE BIG  
ON LOCAL FLAVOR,  
YOU'RE BIG ON LITTLE ROCK.  
*Little Rock .com*

**BIG & LITTLE ROCK**

28



# ADVERTISING

Prior to COVID-19, Little Rock was projecting increases in restaurant and bed tax collections in 2020. Additionally, an annual advertising plan was created that included identified campaigns. With the onset of the crises, the opportunity existed for Little Rock to step in with an evolved integrated marketing campaign to mitigate, as much as possible, the negative impacts to the restaurant and bed tax collections, and bring much needed revenues to uplift the local economy. As the situation in Arkansas, the US, and around the world evolved, all marketing efforts evolved too.

## FOCUS SHIFTED TO TWO KEY TRAVELER TYPES IN DEFINED MARKETS:

The **RESILIENT TRAVELER** is ready to travel and are interested in what is ready for them in the destination. Tactic: Conquest Targeting and Email Marketing.

The **RELUCTANT TRAVELER** wants to travel again but is a little more hesitant and needs to be both inspired by content and visuals as well as education that the destination is safe and ready. Tactic: Connected TV, Second Screen Targeting, Streaming audio, and Email Marketing.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

CAMPAIGN FLIGHT: JULY 13, 2020 – SEPTEMBER 30, 2020 (100 DAYS)  
MEASUREMENT WINDOW: JULY 13, 2020 – SEPTEMBER 30, 2020 (100 DAYS)

### OBJECTIVE

Drive visitors to spend money in Little Rock and help the destination begin to recover during COVID.

### STRATEGY/TARGETING

Leverage Epsilon's Transaction based travel audiences to find people that have the ability and proclivity to travel. Suppress residents of Little Rock and targeted markets:

**EPSILON®**

### CAMPAIGN METRICS

**\$602MM**  
TOTAL MESSAGED REVENUE



**\$90K**  
INVESTMENT



**\$6.7:1**  
ROAS

**1.6M**  
UNIQUE INDIVIDUALS  
REACHED



**2.9K**  
TOTAL VISITORS



**0.18%**  
MESSAGE TRAVELER RATE

**7.4K**  
TOTAL  
TRANSACTIONS



**2.6**  
AVERAGE  
PURCHASES  
PER VISITOR



**\$208**  
AVERAGE MEASURED  
SPEND PER VISITOR

## OUT OF STATE TARGETED MARKETS:

Dallas  
Kansas City

Memphis

Nashville  
Shreveport

## OUT OF STATE MEDIA CAMPAIGN IMPRESSIONS

Conversant Media	9,853,184
Expedia	1,344,470
Expedia US	139,441
NexStar	776,094
Pandora Radio	755,038
Samba.tv	1,330,357
Facebook	2,997,006
<b>TOTAL IMPRESSIONS</b>	<b>17,195,590</b>

## IN STATE TARGETED COUNTIES:

Pulaski  
Benton  
Washington  
Sebastian  
Crawford

Pope  
Jefferson  
Faulkner  
White

Craighead  
Garland  
Saline  
Lonoke  
Union

## IN STATE MEDIA CAMPAIGN IMPRESSIONS

Search Engine Marketing	81,937
Paid Social (Facebook and Instagram)	2,336,256
Native Display	545,194
Connect TV	189,203
Video Pre-Roll	246,742
<b>TOTAL IMPRESSIONS</b>	<b>3,399,332</b>

# PUBLIC RELATIONS ACTIVITY

124,398

EMAIL COMMUNICATIONS WERE  
DISTRIBUTED TO LOCAL PARTNERS  
WITH A 34.74% OPEN RATE

48

BLOGS CREATED

41

IN-MARKET  
PRESS RELEASE DISTRIBUTION

12

OUT-OF-MARKET  
PRESS RELEASE DISTRIBUTION

186

IN-MARKET PITCHES  
(Highlights: LRCVB 50th, BOLR, Southeast  
Tourism Society Conference, River Market  
Swap Shop, District Social, NTTW)

14

OUT-OF-MARKET PITCHES

168

IN-MARKET  
SEGMENTS/STORIES

(Highlights: COVID Impact, LRCVB  
50th, BOLR, Southeast Tourism Society  
Conference, River Market Swap Shop, District  
Social, NTTW)

203

OUT-OF-MARKET  
SEGMENTS/STORIES

(Highlights: Culinary Video, GoNOMAD,  
Beyond Your Backyard with Erik Hastings,  
ABA Destinations Magazine, GH Podcasts)

8

TRAVEL WRITERS  
HOSTED/ASSISTED

**DEBORAH DOUGLAS**

Civil Rights Trail, Moon Guides

**CASPER JANNING & CECILIE HOEGH**

Influencers, Denmark –  
Travel South USA partnership with  
ADPHAT

**CAROLYN MOSTYN**

Gannett publications

**VAGABOND3**

Influencer family, "The Ultimate Summer  
Road Trip" series

**BILL CLEVLEN**

Bill on the Road USA, Pickleball video  
series/Little Rock feature

**AAA EXPLORER**

Vogel Schwartz Sculpture Garden

**READER'S DIGEST, MSN LIFESTYLE**

"15 Visually Stunning Pedestrian Walkways Across the U.S." (Big Dam Bridge)

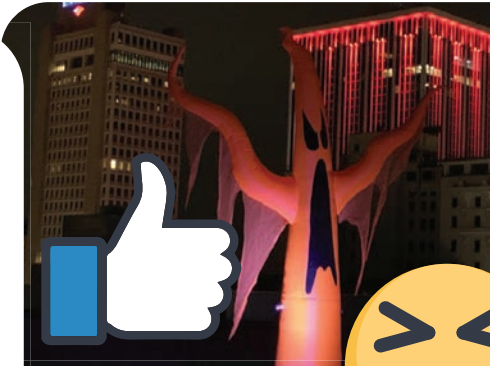




## SOCIAL MEDIA

In 2020, the LRCVB adapted our social strategy recommended by TwoSix Digital on our social networks, to significant success, earning more than 18 Million impressions on social media across a total of nine accounts, over four social networks.

LRCVB GREW TO  
**131,600+**  
**FANS AND FOLLOWERS**  
ACROSS ALL ACCOUNTS,



INCLUDING  
**8,400+**  
**NEW FANS/ FOLLOWERS**



**568,000+**  
SOCIAL ENGAGEMENTS

FACEBOOK PAGES  
ACCUMULATED

**43,000**  
**MINUTES**

OF VIEWED VIDEO.  
THESE VIDEOS GARNERED




**6,900+**  
**ENGAGEMENTS,**  
AN UPTICK OF  
**66.8% OVER 2019.**

**BIG ON  
LITTLE  
ROCK**

CAMPAIGN ROLL OUT EARNED

**1,800+**  
**ENGAGEMENTS**  
**ON THE LAUNCH DAY,**  
MAKING IT THE  
HIGH-WATER MARK  
FOR THE YEAR.

### SOCIAL MEDIA ANNUAL STATISTICS

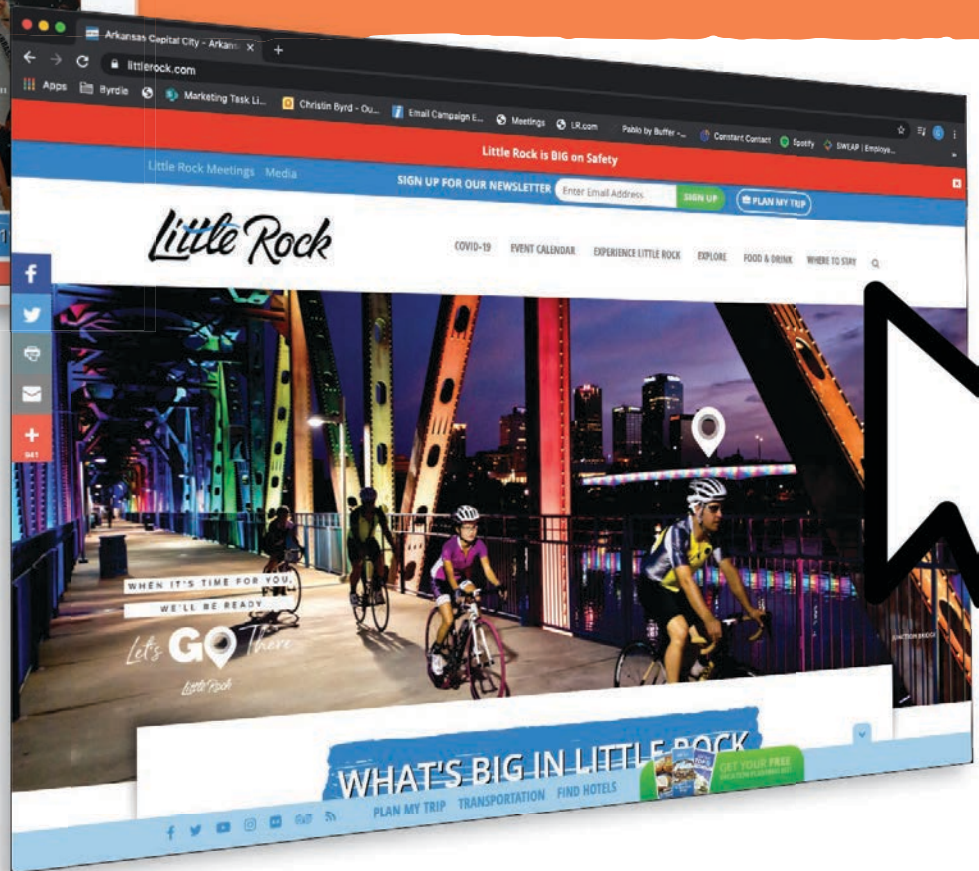
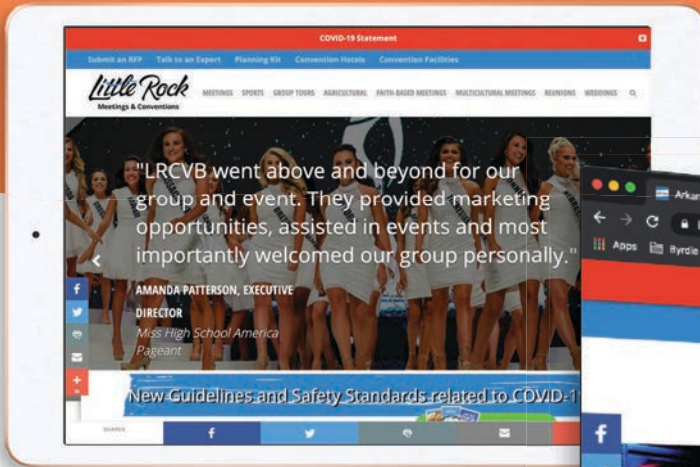
	TOTAL FANS	INCREASE OVER PREVIOUS YEAR
		
Little Rock CVB	47,980	1,236
River Market	28,443	2,741
Robinson Center	18,448	1,141
		
Little Rock CVB	7,822	337
River Market	16,558	72
Robinson Center	851	63
		
Little Rock CVB	5,187	1,328
River Market	4,291	1,213
Robinson Center	2,106	330

## WEBSITE ANALYTICS

## THE DIVISION MANAGES THE FOLLOWING WEBSITES:

LittleRock.com  
RiverMarket.info  
LittleRockMeetings.com  
DineLR.com

ShopTheRock.com  
RiverLightsintheRock.com  
RobinsonCenter.com  
StatehouseConventionCenter.com



903,565  
PAGE VIEWS

486,617  
UNIQUE VISITORS

1:32  
AVERAGE SESSION

296,000+  
MOBILE SESSIONS –  
A JUMP OF NEARLY

175%

### TRAFFIC SOURCES:

As we work with agency partners at Paradise and MHP we are seeing growth in new traffic sources for the website.

- 52.21% organic search engines (204,700+ users)
- 17.21% direct web address (67,300+ users)
- 11% social media (43,000+ users)
- 7.40% referral sources (28,900+ users)
- 2.33% display sources (9,100+ users)
- 1.28% paid search (5,000+ users)
- 8.58% other (33,500+ users)

BIG & LITTLE ROCK





## TOP 5 MOST READ BLOGS:

- Pull Up A Chair at These Little Rock Restaurants (12,900+ views)
- Five Downtown Restaurants You Should Order From This Week (7,600+ views)
- How to Eat Out in Little Rock (6,800+ views)
- Six Reasons to be Big on Little Rock (2,400+ views)
- Everything You Need to Know About the Big on Little Rock Safety Pledge (1,400 views)

## TOP 5 OUT OF STATE MARKETS:

1. Texas (17.70% of total traffic, up 25%)
2. Tennessee (6.73%, up 25%, moved up from #3)
3. Missouri (2.69%, small increase, up from #4)
4. Illinois (2.56%, 72% decrease, down from #2)
5. California (1.93%, slight decrease)

## TOP DMAS FOR WEBSITE TRAFFIC (OUTSIDE OF CENTRAL ARKANSAS)

1. Dallas-Ft. Worth, TX (14.38%, 21% increase)
2. Memphis, TN (6.32%, 14% increase)
3. Nashville, TN (1.65%, 30% increase)
4. Tulsa, OK (2.30%, 53% increase)
5. Chicago, IL (2.25%, 302% decrease)
6. Kansas City, MO (1.98%, 27% increase)
7. Ft Smith-Fayetteville-Springdale-Rogers, AR (1.54%, 28% decrease)
8. Atlanta, GA (1.39%) (new)
9. Houston, TX (1.35%, 25% increase)
10. Washington DC (1.23%, 27% decrease)

## TOP 5 PAGES ON LITTLEROCK.COM:

- LittleRock.com Homepage (7.42%, 13% decrease)
- Covid-19 Information (4.80%)
- Covid-19 Landing Page (3.52%)
- Event Calendar (2.79%, 120% decrease)
- Experience Little Rock (2.15%, 17% increase)



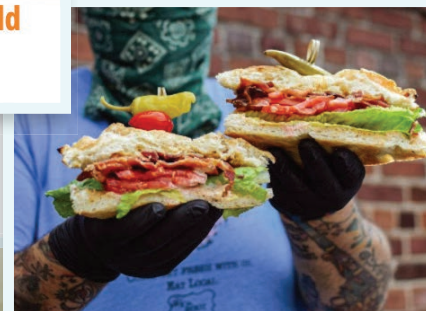
### Pull Up a Chair or Grab a Booth at These Little Rock Restaurant Dining Rooms

Posted on May 15, 2020



### Local Restaurants You Should Order From This Week

Posted on April 17, 2020



### How to Eat Out in Little Rock

Posted on August 20, 2020



### Six Reasons to Be Big on Little Rock

Posted on February 27, 2020



### Everything You Need to Know About the BIG on Safety Pledge

Posted on July 16, 2020

# 2020 YEAR IN REVIEW

## Q1

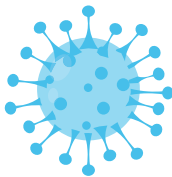
### JANUARY

JANUARY 1-19



Hosts 16 shows of Broadway's hit musical, Wicked.

JANUARY 9



World Health Organization announces COVID-19.

JANUARY 21



CDC announces first COVID-19 case in the United States.

### FEBRUARY

FEBRUARY 3



US declares a public health emergency.

FEBRUARY 9-12

Hosts Southeast Tourism Society with 300+ tourism professionals.

FEBRUARY 18



2019 Annual Report is presented to the Advertising & Promotion Commission.

FEBRUARY 19



Lassis Inn is named American Classic by James Beard Foundation.

### MARCH

MARCH 11



First presumptive positive case of COVID-19 in Arkansas is announced.

MARCH 13



President declares COVID-19 a national emergency.

MARCH 16



Mayor Frank Scott, Jr. announces a citywide curfew to limit spread of coronavirus.

MARCH 24



Great-American Take Out campaign launches.

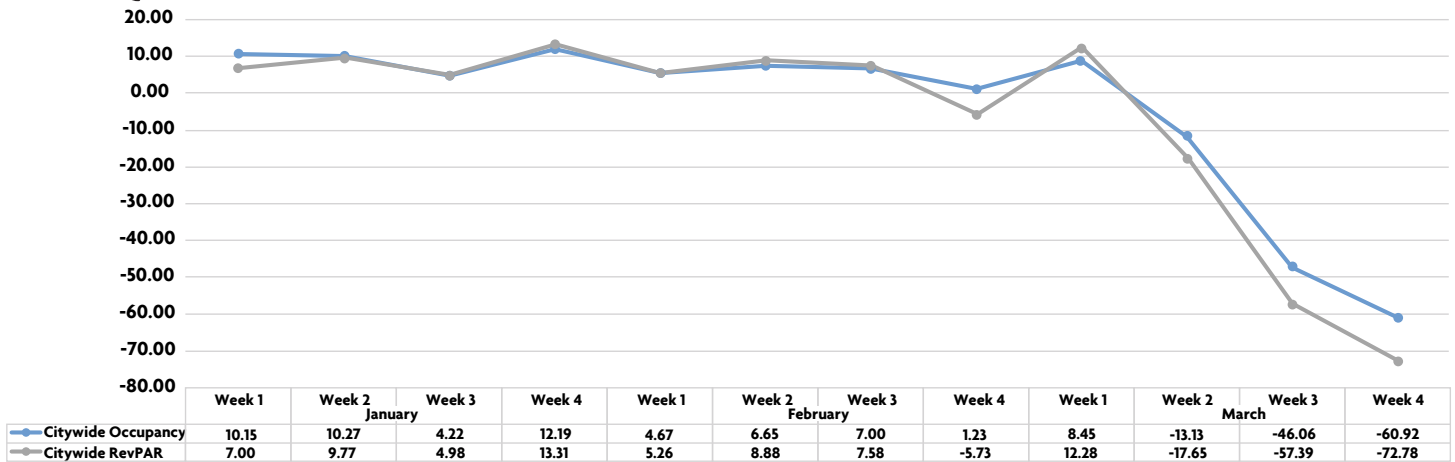
## JANUARY

## FEBRUARY

## MARCH



# Q1 2020 LITTLE ROCK HOTEL DATA %Δ 2019-2020



## MARCH 25

Senate passes the CARES Act.

## MARCH 26



Mangan Holcomb Partners/ Team SI and the LRCVB create UpliftArkansas.com, a statewide, resource website that provides a comprehensive list of local businesses, restaurants, services, and other essential information.

## STATEWIDE DIRECTIVES

Governor Hutchinson

### MARCH 17

Closes public schools.

### MARCH 19

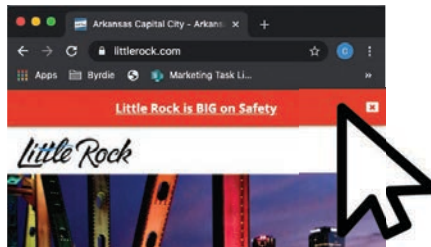
Restricts in-room dining in restaurants and bars.

### MARCH 26

Issues directive for limitations on gatherings and indoor venues.

## LRCVB ACTIVITIES

Begins sending Weekly Industry Updates providing research and resources for partners.



Creates a COVID-19 information page on LittleRock.com that provided access to local, state, and federal resources, as well as local restaurant, attraction, and event updates.

LRCVB Tax Department begins offering COVID Relief Tax Deferment Plans.



Sends Client Care Packages to meeting planners.



Creates stay-at-home activities, including Little Rock-themed BINGO cards and printable coloring pages of local landmarks.

## LOCAL NEWS HEADLINES

### MARCH 30

"LRCVB: April Events Canceled; Downtown Hotel Revenue Off 65%"

Arkansas Business

"THE ROAD TO RECOVERY STILL HAS A LOT OF UNKNOWN AT THIS TIME."

— Gretchen Hall, CEO, LRCVB

# Q2

APRIL

## STATEWIDE DIRECTIVES

Governor Hutchinson

APRIL 4



Limits out-of-state travelers to Arkansas.

## LRCVB ACTIVITIES



LRCVB employees volunteer at the Clinton Presidential Center packing meals for students. Big on Little Rock-branded van is used to deliver meals.

Launches the Robinson Center Broadway Bracket Challenge in lieu of NCAA's March Madness cancellation.



Launches "Big on Staying Home" video.



Launches a program to sell Big on Little Rock t-shirts and masks to raise funds supporting the LR CARES initiative. THV11 partnered with the LRCVB to promote the campaign.



Creates Little Rock themed jigsaw puzzles for more stay-at-home activities.



Launches "Better Days Ahead" video.



Partners with Inviting Arkansas magazine to promote and support local restaurants - a month-long social media campaign encouraging residents to support restaurants through curbside, take-out, or delivery options.

Launches a "Staycation" social media campaign.



Hosts first virtual Industry Mixer.

## LOCAL NEWS HEADLINES

APRIL 6

"LRCVB Canceled Events Total \$7.4M in Economic Impact"  
Arkansas Business

"WE ARE HOPEFUL THAT THINGS WILL SLOWLY START TO PICK UP THIS SUMMER BUT FEEL IT WILL BE A VERY SLOW PROCESS. WE MAY NOT SEE CONVENTION BUSINESS BACK UNTIL NEXT YEAR."

— Gretchen Hall, CEO, LRCVB

APRIL 10

"Convention bureau details the damage so far from coronavirus"  
Arkansas Times

THE AGENCY WAS PROJECTING A DECLINE IN REVENUE FROM THE RESTAURANT AND HOTEL TAX THIS YEAR BY MORE THAN \$5 MILLION, BUT HALL SAID THAT REMAINED A "MOVING TARGET".

APRIL 26

"Little Rock tourism industry feels the impact of COVID-19"  
KATV

"WE'RE LOOKING RIGHT NOW AT ALL OF THE POTENTIAL PROCEDURES THAT WE WILL NEED TO BE PUT IN PLACE TO MAKE OUR EVENT FACILITIES A SAFER ENVIRONMENT WHEN WE DO OPEN. WE DO FEEL LIKE THAT'S GOING TO BE A SLOW-PHASED APPROACH."

— Gretchen Hall, CEO, LRCVB

APRIL

BIG ON LITTLE ROCK

36



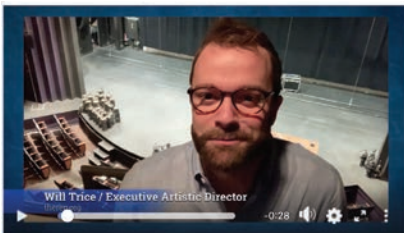
## MAY

MAY 6



Gerald Lloyd of the Bulldog Flight Formation Team celebrates National Nurses Day by filling central Arkansas's skies with giant hearts in honor of local healthcare professionals and first responders.

MAY 6



KATV and Celebrity Attractions work together to create a spot in support of Little Rock's local performing arts organizations.

MAY 28

US COVID-19 deaths pass 100,000

### STATEWIDE DIRECTIVES

#### Governor Hutchinson

MAY 5

Lifts restrictions on out-of-state travelers to Arkansas from areas not considered hot spots, implements certain quarantine requirements.

MAY 11

Dine-in operations at restaurants resume with capacity restrictions.

MAY 18

Capacity increases to 33% for large gatherings.

## LRCVB ACTIVITIES



NATIONAL TRAVEL & TOURISM WEEK

National Travel and Tourism Week presents an opportune moment to unite the industry, celebrate its indomitable spirit, and elevate the role it will play in Arkansas's - and America's - economic recovery. Since the in-person rallies and community events that have become hallmarks of the week in past years aren't possible, the LRCVB pivots to a virtual celebration surrounding the 2020 theme, "Spirit of Travel."

Produces a video that pays tribute to the many faces of Little Rock's hospitality industry, highlighting the local restaurants, attractions, lodging facilities, retail shops, and more that make Arkansas's capital city special. The video is a message of unity, support, hope, and steadfastness.

Launches a virtual, self-guided mural tour.

Joins the #VirtualRoadTrip hosted by U.S. Travel Association on social media to celebrate the week.

Hosts a special industry mixer with a panel of Governor Hutchinson's Economic Recovery Task Force members.

Hosts a virtual Industry Mixer with US Congressman French Hill.

Announces special River Lights in the Rock tributes for all Pulaski County high school graduations. Several downtown businesses light their buildings as well. Lights are scheduled throughout the summer.

Participates in first Virtual Sales Tradeshow with Northstar Media.

Launches a Zero Attrition campaign with area hotels offering groups with up to 75 peak rooms zero attrition and zero cancellation fees.

Hosts a virtual Industry Mixer with the theme "Recovery & Rebound" to discuss relaunch, re-targeting, advertising campaigns.

### LOCAL NEWS HEADLINES

MAY 8

"Another gloomy report on hospitality industry"

Arkansas Times

MAY 8

"In an Odd Tourism Week, LRCVB's Gretchen Hall Looks Ahead"

Arkansas Business

"WE'RE CELEBRATING THE SPIRIT OF TRAVEL, BUT WE HAD TO MAKE SOME ADJUSTMENTS AND DO IT A LITTLE DIFFERENTLY," SHE SAID. TRAVEL AND TOURISM WEEK DOES MORE THAN HIGHLIGHT DESTINATIONS AND TRAVEL OPPORTUNITIES. "IT ALSO PAYS TRIBUTE AND HIGHLIGHTS THOSE THAT WORK IN THE INDUSTRY, AND THAT'S IMPORTANT BECAUSE WE'VE ALL BEEN HIT VERY HARD IN THIS INDUSTRY."

— Gretchen Hall, CEO, LRCVB

MAY 29

"Reopening Arkansas Tourism & Hospitality Industry"

Arkansas Week, AETN

"...RESEARCH IS PROJECTING RESTAURANT SALES TO BE DOWN ABOUT \$110 MILLION DOLLARS THIS YEAR DUE TO CORONAVIRUS, AND IN THE LODGING INDUSTRY IN LITTLE ROCK ANOTHER \$34 MILLION DOLLAR LOSS"

— Gretchen Hall, CEO, LRCVB

## MAY

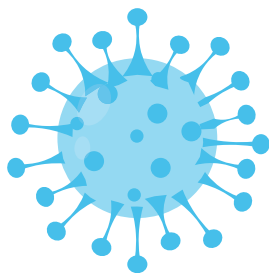
## JUNE

JUNE 5



City of Little Rock announces Dine Out initiative.

JUNE 10



US COVID-19 cases reach 2 million.

JUNE 25



Mayor Scott issues directive for face coverings in the city of Little Rock.

## STATEWIDE DIRECTIVES

Governor Hutchinson

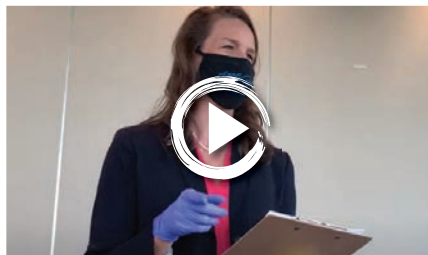
JUNE 15



Increases dine-in service capacity at restaurants, large gatherings and moves to Phase II reopening for businesses.

### LRCVB ACTIVITIES

Creates a COVID-19 Travel Industry Impact Briefing to send to members of the Arkansas CARES Act committee.



Produces "We're Ready for You" video targeting meeting planners.

## Smartmeetings

"We're Ready for You" video wins SMART Meetings Magazine contest.

The LRCVB and the Arkansas Association of CVBs (AACVB) create a COVID-19 Impact on the Arkansas Tourism Industry Briefing to send to elected officials.



Hosts the first travel writer since February. Vagabond3 is a family of three traveling cross-country making "The Ultimate Summer Road Trip" with specific interests in outdoor recreation and civil rights.



Launches Big on Safety Pledge Campaign. Almost 200 businesses sign up and pledge to follow CDC and Department of Health COVID-19 Guidelines to ensure the safest environment for employees and guests.

### LOCAL NEWS HEADLINES

JUNE 8

"Little Rock CVB Announces Zero-Attrition Policy"  
USAE

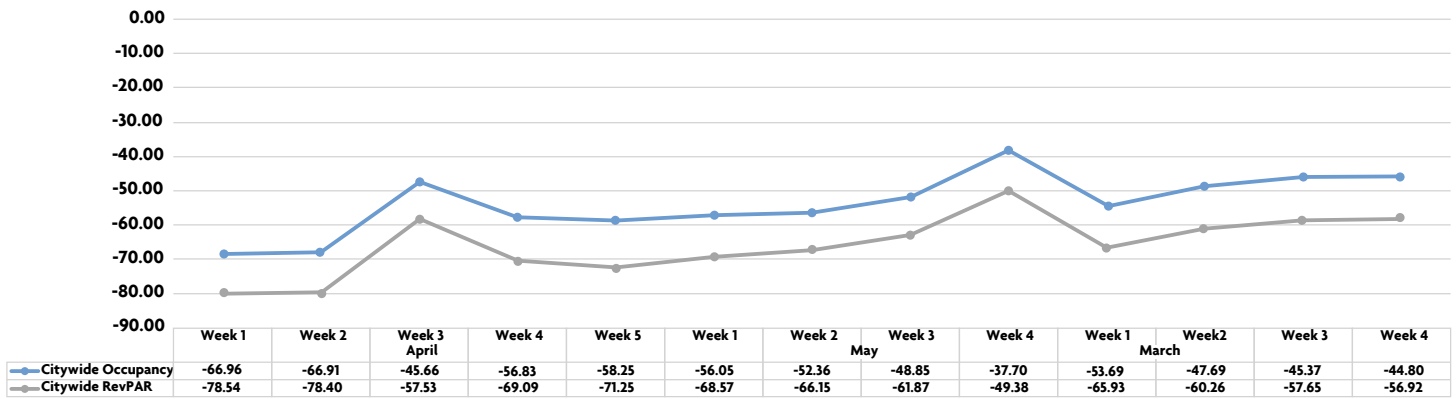
## JUNE

# BIG & LITTLE ROCK

# 38



# Q2 2020 LITTLE ROCK HOTEL DATA %Δ 2019-2020



## JUNE 10

“Little Rock Event Cancellations Have Resulted in Millions of Dollars of Lost Revenue”  
**Arkansas Money & Politics**

“SINCE MARCH 12, WE HAVE HAD 130 EVENT CANCELLATIONS, WHICH IS A LOSS IN DIRECT RENTAL REVENUE OF \$1.3 MILLION. THE LOSS IN REVENUE FROM ASSOCIATED TRAVEL EXPENDITURES IS EVEN HIGHER...”

— Gretchen Hall, CEO, LRCVB

## JUNE 15

“A&P Trends Show Pandemic Pummeling Arkansas Visitors Bureaus”  
**Arkansas Business**

“PEOPLE ARE STILL CONTINUING TO CANCEL.”

— Gretchen Hall, CEO, LRCVB

“AND THOSE (CONVENTION AND VISITORS BUREAUS) THAT ARE FUNDED SOLELY THROUGH A HOTEL TAX ARE SIGNIFICANTLY MORE IMPACTED RIGHT NOW. OUR RESTAURANTS, I WOULD SAY, ARE SURVIVING — THEY’RE NOT THRIVING, BUT THEY ARE SURVIVING... BUT THE HOTELS ARE REALLY DYING.”

— Gretchen Hall, CEO, LRCVB

## JUNE 15

“LRCVB outlines economic impact of COVID-19”  
**Talk Business & Politics**

“THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC HAS DEVASTATED THE TRAVELING WORLD, AND TOURISM IN LITTLE ROCK HAS BEEN NO EXCEPTION... TOURISM WAS ONE OF THE FASTEST-GROWING INDUSTRIES IN THE WORLD AND HAD BEEN GROWING IN LITTLE ROCK IN RECENT YEARS. THE DIFFICULT REALITY IS OUR INDUSTRY IS CURRENTLY THE HARDEST HIT INDUSTRY WHEN IT COMES TO THE ECONOMIC EFFECTS OF THIS VIRUS AND WILL BE ONE OF THE LAST TO RECOVER.”

— Gretchen Hall, CEO, LRCVB

## JUNE 15

“LRCVB reports significant losses in restaurant and hotel industries due to COVID-19”  
**Arkansas Money & Politics**

## JUNE 16

“Report: Steep Revenue Losses for Little Rock Hotels, Restaurants During Pandemic”  
**KATV, Talk Business & Politics**

## JUNE 23

“Event cancellations lead to more than \$23 million economic impact in Little Rock”  
**KATV**

“SO FAR, WE’VE LOST OVER 214 EVENTS AND GROUP GATHERINGS IN THOSE FACILITIES, AND THE TOTAL ECONOMIC IMPACT IS OVER \$23 MILLION TO OUR COMMUNITY...”

— Gretchen Hall, CEO, LRCVB

## JUNE 29

“Little Rock Convention & Visitors Bureau, local partners provide resources for businesses, residents, and visitors”  
**KARK**

“THE HEALTH AND SAFETY OF ALL LITTLE ROCK RESIDENTS AND VISITORS IS OUR TOP CONCERN AS RESTRICTIONS ARE LIFTED AND ARKANSAS’S CAPITAL CITY SLOWLY REOPENS.”

— Gretchen Hall, CEO, LRCVB

# Q3

## JULY

JULY 7



City approves new temporary South Main Entertainment District and expands hours and boundaries for the River Market Entertainment District.

### STATEWIDE DIRECTIVES Governor Hutchinson

JULY 20

Issues directive for face coverings.

### LRCVB ACTIVITIES

Upgrades safety protocols in all managed facilities, adding measures to ensure the health and safety of guests, including safety guideline signage, re-configured capacity charts, face-covering requirements, food and beverage adaptations and more.

Launches "Mask Up" campaign (#MaskUpLR) to support the statewide face mask mandate.

Hosts first virtual site tour, securing a 2022 National Convention.

Hosts a virtual Industry Mixer featuring Jim Karrh who presents "Loud, Clear and Growing: How Businesses Stand Out Through Everyday Messages".

Holds first "hybrid" meeting at Statehouse Convention Center.

## LOCAL NEWS HEADLINES

JULY 9

"Little Rock CVB enhances safety protocols in meeting spaces"  
**Associations Conventions & Facilities**

JULY 12

"Titans of Industry: Gretchen Hall Titan of Tourism"  
**Content Titan**

JULY 27

"Arkansas hotels continue to struggle through coronavirus pandemic"  
**THV11**

"IN THE HOTELS, WE HAVE SEEN SOME POSITIVE IMPROVEMENTS IN THEIR OCCUPANCY OVER THE LAST COUPLE OF WEEKS. THE ROAD TO RECOVERY IS GOING TO BE VERY SLOW..."

— Gretchen Hall, CEO, LRCVB

JULY 27

"Little Rock-area hotels say struggle persists"  
**Arkansas Democrat-Gazette**

JULY 30

"Travel on Hold: Tourism can recover from COVID-19"  
**Gretchen Hall Op-Ed, Arkansas Democrat-Gazette**

"JUST LIKE IN OTHER ECONOMIC SECTORS IMPACTED BY THE PANDEMIC, TOURISM'S RECOVERY WILL BE LONG AND MEASURED, BUT EVEN NOW, AS WE COLLECTIVELY SPEND A SUMMER AT HOME, RESEARCH SHOWS THAT WE ARE ALL LONGING TO TRAVEL AGAIN. OUR NATIONAL DESIRE TO GET OUT AND EXPLORE OUR WORLD HASN'T BEEN DIMINISHED BY THIS PANDEMIC AND AS WE SLOWLY BEGIN TO TRAVEL AGAIN, IT'S IMPORTANT THAT WE SUPPORT OUR LOCAL TOURISM BUSINESSES FIRST."

— Gretchen Hall, CEO, LRCVB

## AUGUST

### LRCVB ACTIVITIES



Launches Little Rock Sculpture Tour featuring some of the capital city's vibrant outdoor art installations, beginning with Vogel Schwartz Sculpture Garden and Riverfront Park downtown. The tour includes more than 100 art pieces.

### COVID-19: Travel Industry Impact Briefing

Little Rock and Pulaski County, Updated August 10, 2020

### Little Rock CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU

The coronavirus pandemic has devastated the traveling world, and tourism in Little Rock is no exception.

Among the hardest-hit industry sectors, both here and nationally, **travel and tourism**, an industry that typically puts over 20,000 people to work in Central Arkansas, and more than 68,000 individuals across the state. Thousands of these jobs have been lost as a result of COVID-19. Through no fault of their own, travel and tourism workers have seen their livelihoods vanish in just a few short months, with no end yet in sight.

That's why restoring confidence among the traveling public and getting customers back into travel-related businesses must be a top priority once the health crisis is effectively under control. Imagine—even long after the health crisis has ended—vacant hotels, empty attractions, desolate convention and meeting facilities, and no patrons in restaurants or retail establishments.

Tourism and travel generated spending will be critical to powering America's and Arkansas's economic recovery.



Prior to COVID-19, tourism was Arkansas's #2 economic driver.

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT 2	SPENDING: \$1.3 BILLION	PERSONS: 403.2 MILLION	JOB: 20,350	TRAVEL INDUSTRY EMPLOYMENT: 5
STATE	SPENDING: 7.4 BILLION	PERSONS: 9.4 BILLION	JOB: 68,030	TRAVEL INDUSTRY EMPLOYMENT: 4
				TAX REVENUE: \$3.3 BILLION

Pulaski County accounts for 25% of the total travel expenditures in Arkansas

Tourism was one of the fastest growing industries in the world... In fact, World Travel & Tourism Council's (WTTC) annual research shows the Travel & Tourism sector experienced 3.5% growth in 2019, outpacing that of the global economy (2.5%) for the ninth consecutive year. The difficult reality is the travel industry is currently the hardest hit industry when it comes to the economic effects of COVID-19, and will be one of the last to recover.

Updates the Little Rock COVID-19 Travel Industry Impact Briefing for elected officials and members of the Arkansas CARES Act committee.

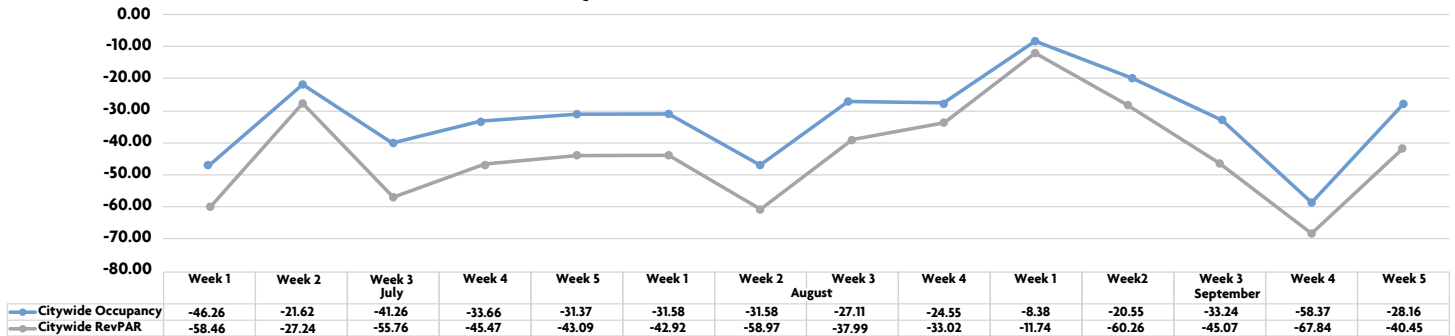
The LRCVB and AACVB update the COVID-19 Impact on the Arkansas Tourism Industry Briefing for elected officials and members of the Arkansas CARES Act committee.

## JULY

## AUGUST



# Q3 2020 LITTLE ROCK HOTEL DATA %Δ 2019-2020



## LOCAL NEWS HEADLINES

### AUGUST 16

“Convention chief: Hospitality industry needs federal help, expects ‘long, slow’ recover”  
Talk Business & Politics

“HOW QUICKLY DID IT HAPPEN? ALMOST OVERNIGHT. WE WENT FROM HAVING THE MOST EVENTS ON OUR BOOKS IN ANY CALENDAR YEAR GOING INTO 2020 AFTER HAVING A FABULOUS 2019 AS FAR AS TOURISM NUMBERS GO. IT JUST WENT FROM HAVING BUSY FACILITIES TO HAVING VERY DARK FACILITIES...IT HAS LINGERED MUCH LONGER THAN ANY OF US ANTICIPATED AND IT HAS BEEN BRUTAL.”  
— Gretchen Hall, CEO, LRCVB

### AUGUST 20

“Tourism industry on the long road to recovery six months into COVID-19 pandemic”  
KATV

### AUGUST 20

“Little Rock top tourism official discusses doing business during pandemic”  
Northwest Arkansas Business Journal, KUAF 91.3 FM

### AUGUST 25

“Gretchen Hall: Little Rock Rock Stars”  
Destination Marketing Podcast

### AUGUST 27

“Gretchen Hall: First News with Kevin Miller”  
KARN 102.9 FM

## SEPTEMBER

### SEPTEMBER 16

Federal administration releases vaccination distribution plan.

## LRCVB ACTIVITIES

“Let’s Go There” National initiative begins with U.S. Travel Association and DMOs across the nation. The campaign is designed to rekindle the desire to travel and explore.



Holds “Little Rock Cares” press conference to announce \$11,442 raised to support the city’s COVID-19 Emergency Relief Fund.

Hosts first in-person site visit since February.

## LOCAL NEWS HEADLINES

### SEPTEMBER 8

“LRCVB raises more than \$11,000 for city during pandemic”  
KATV

### SEPTEMBER 8

“LRCVB presents City of Little Rock with check for ‘Little Rock Cares’ emergency relief fund”  
KLRT

“LITTLE ROCK IS AN AMAZING COMMUNITY, AS EVIDENT BY \$11,442 DOLLARS BEING RAISED FOR THIS INITIATIVE. WE HELP EACH OTHER IN TIMES OF NEED, AND THIS ASSISTANCE HAS BEEN CRITICAL FOR OUR CITY.”  
— Gretchen Hall, CEO, LRCVB

### SEPTEMBER 14

“A&P Tax Collections Plunge”  
Arkansas Business

### SEPTEMBER 23

“Local hotel industry in ‘survival mode’ due to COVID-19 impacts”  
THV11

“THE HOTEL INDUSTRY IN ARKANSAS AND ACROSS THE COUNTRY AND RIGHT HER IN LITTLE ROCK, THEY’RE IN SURVIVAL MODE.”  
— Gretchen Hall, CEO, LRCVB

### SEPTEMBER 28

“The future of live events in central Arkansas in wake of Coronavirus pandemic”  
THV11

“THERE’S REALLY NOTHING MORE SAD THAN TO WALK THROUGH A WORLD-CLASS PERFORMING ARTS THEATER AND IT JUST BE SILENT AND EMPTY.”  
— Gretchen Hall, CEO, LRCVB

## SEPTEMBER

# Q4

## OCTOBER LRCVB ACTIVITIES



Hosts a virtual Industry Mixer featuring Whitney Burgess from MHP who discuss digital and online resources partners should consider when marketing to potential guests and visitors.

## Little Rock HISTORIC CHURCH TOUR

Announces the Little Rock Historic Church Tour highlighting eighteen churches rich in history and architectural design. Thirteen are listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

### LOCAL NEWS HEADLINES

**OCTOBER 21**

"Little Rock seeks \$3 million from state for convention, visitors bureau"

Arkansas Democrat-Gazette

**OCTOBER 26**

"Pandemic puts live music venues on the riverfront in choppy economic waters"

Arkansas Times

## NOVEMBER

**NOVEMBER 16**



Governor Hutchinson creates the Arkansas Business Interruption Grant to support private businesses in the hospitality, tourism and service industries that are negatively affected by governmental COVID-19 mandates. \$48M in federal CARES Act funds are distributed.

### LRCVB ACTIVITIES



Launches the Little Rock Military History Tour packaging local landmarks that honor veterans and fallen soldiers into a virtual and driving tour that features 14 monuments, memorials, and museums dedicated to those who have served our country and sacrificed for its freedom.

### LOCAL NEWS HEADLINES

**NOVEMBER 8**

"Arkansas Tourism Ticker: COVID-19 still pushes double-digit declines in tourism sector"

Talk Business & Politics

## DECEMBER

**DECEMBER 18**



## CARES Act

Arkansas Department of Parks, Heritage and Tourism launches a relief program to support state DMOs/CVBs and large publicly owned event facilities. 21 organizations receive more than \$3.5 million in grants supported by funding from the federal CARES Act.

### LRCVB ACTIVITIES



Sends picture books to meeting planners, industry partners, and travel writers, to inspire their next trip to Little Rock.



Sends 42nd Industry Update.

## OCTOBER

## NOVEMBER

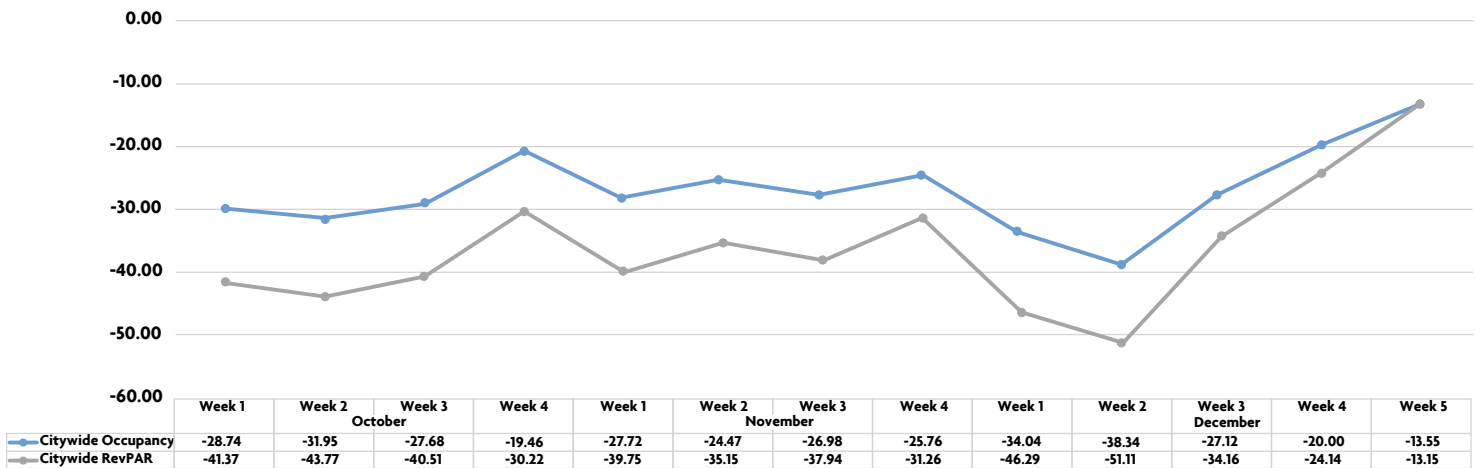
## DECEMBER

# BIG & LITTLE ROCK

# 42



## Q4 2020 LITTLE ROCK HOTEL DATA %Δ 2019-2020



# 297 EVENT CANCELLATIONS



Ends the year with 297 event cancellations at Statehouse Convention Center, Robinson Center, First Security Amphitheater and River Market Pavilions.

### LOCAL NEWS HEADLINES

#### DECEMBER 6

“Executive Roundtable:  
2021 will be difficult; all eyes on  
2022 for recovery”  
**Talk Business & Politics**

“WITHIN OUR ORGANIZATION,  
WE’RE LIKE A CLOSE-KNIT FAMILY.  
WE’VE BEEN ABLE TO REBOUND  
AND I’M REALLY PROUD OF ALL  
OUR EMPLOYEES THAT ARE STILL  
WITH US. THE UNFORTUNATE PART  
OF OUR BUSINESS, ESPECIALLY ON  
THE HOTEL SIDE, IS WE REALLY DON’T  
ANTICIPATE A TRUE PICKUP  
OR RECOVERY EFFORTS TO START  
UNTIL LATE NEXT YEAR AND BEYOND.”

— Gretchen Hall, CEO, LRCVB

#### DECEMBER 22

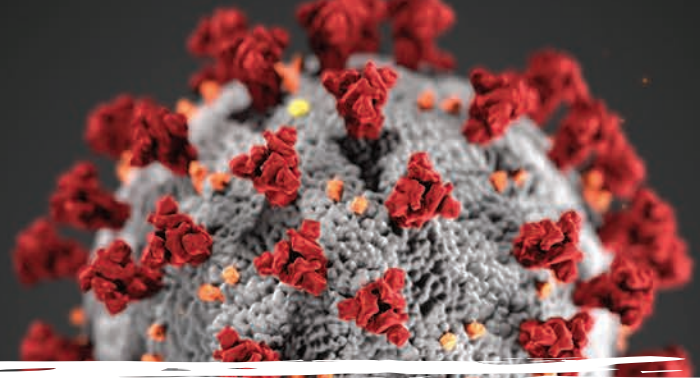
“Little Rock CVB Gets Creative in  
Challenging Times, Looks to Future”  
**Arkansas Money & Politics**

“WE’VE TRIED TO DO A VARIETY OF  
THINGS TO CONTINUE TO NOT ONLY STAY  
RELEVANT, BUT ALSO TO HELP ALL OF  
OUR BUSINESSES IN THE INDUSTRY.”

I’M THE ETERNAL OPTIMIST,  
WHICH HAS BEEN INCREASINGLY  
HARDER TO BE IN THIS ENVIRONMENT,  
I WILL ADMIT THAT. EVEN THOUGH  
THIS IS THE REALITY THAT WE’RE  
GOING TO LIVE IN THE FIRST QUARTER  
OF 2021, THERE IS GOING TO BE  
SOMETHING MAGICAL ABOUT PUTTING  
2020 IN THE REARVIEW MIRROR AND  
GOING INTO A NEW YEAR WITH  
INCREASING HOPE AND OPTIMISM.”

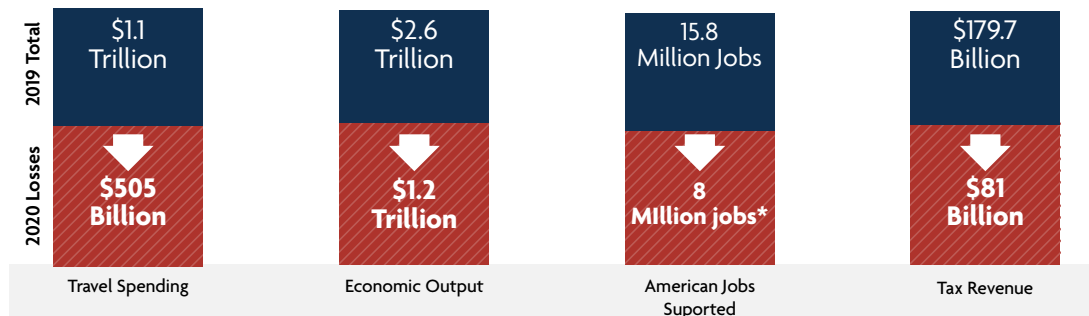
— Gretchen Hall, CEO, LRCVB

# NATIONAL COVID RESEARCH & IMPACT



While the U.S. is in a **RECESSION**, the travel industry is in a **DEPRESSION**.

U.S. TRAVEL  
ASSOCIATION



\*At its lowest point in May.

## RESTORING TRAVEL WILL RESTORE AMERICAN JOBS

- Travel spending totaled a mere \$679 billion in 2020, an unprecedented 42% annual decline (nearly \$500 billion) from 2019.
- Business travel spending fell 70% (compared to 27% for leisure travel).
- Since the beginning of March and through the end of 2020, the pandemic has resulted in \$492 billion in cumulative losses for the U.S. travel economy, equating to a daily loss of approximately \$1.6 billion for the past 10 months.
- The continual depressed level of travel spending has caused a loss of \$64 billion in federal, state and local tax revenue since March 1.



## ROAD TRAVEL TRENDS TRACKER

(measures consumer road trips of 50 miles or more in all 50 U.S. states.)

- After declining drastically in March and April, road travel recovered most of its losses through the summer, but regressed again in the fall.
- The seven-day average of road trips reached a pandemic low by falling 72% compared to 2019 in early-April but then improved drastically through the summer (with year-over-year declines around 20% and into the teens) and peaked with its strongest pandemic performance of just 5% down over the Labor Day holiday.
- Road travel regressed through the fall (reaching nearly 30% decline over 2019 in mid-December) but then improved over the winter holidays (down 6% year-over-year).



ARRIVALIST

## AIR TRAVEL: PASSENGER SCREENINGS AT TSA

- After declining drastically in March and April, air travel recovered some of its losses through the rest of 2020, but remains at less than half of 2019 levels.
- The seven-day average of TSA screenings reached a pandemic low by falling 96% compared to 2019 in mid-April but then improved through the summer (with year-over-year declines around 70%) and fall (with year-over-year declines near 60%).

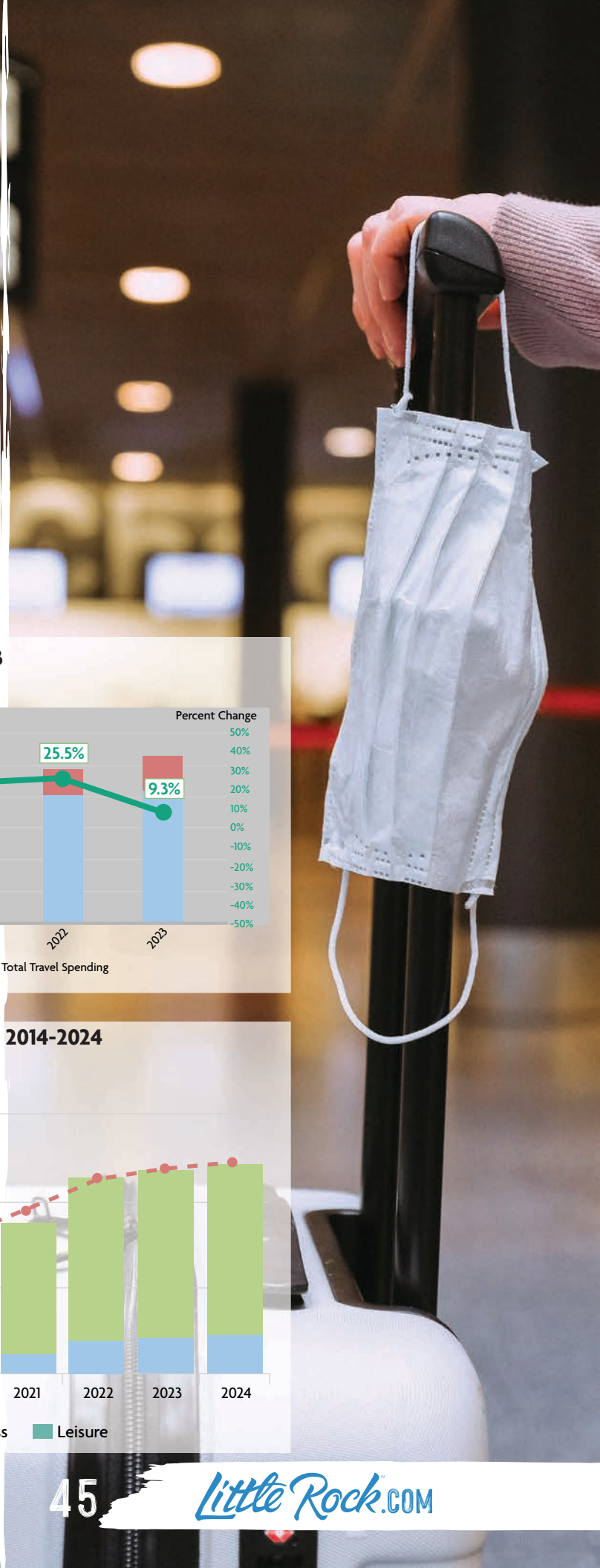


Transportation  
Security  
Administration

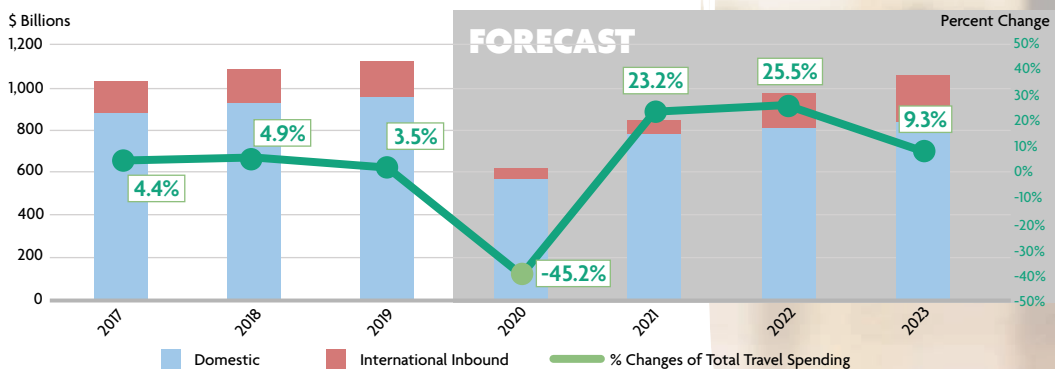


## HOTEL OCCUPANCY

- Hotel occupancy averaged just 44% in 2020 (33% lower than in 2019), and Revenue per Available Room (RevPar) was just \$45 (48% lower than in 2019)—all-time lows in terms of both absolute numbers and year-over-year declines.
- After reaching its best year-over-year pandemic performance in September (down 28%), the year-over-year change in hotel occupancy fell 35% in November and then improved slightly down just 32% in December.
- Luxury hotels again performed the worst: 21% occupancy in December 2020 compared to 68% in December 2019 (a decline of 69%).
- Economy hotels performed the best: 45% occupancy in December 2020 compared to 48% in December 2019 (a decline of 7%).



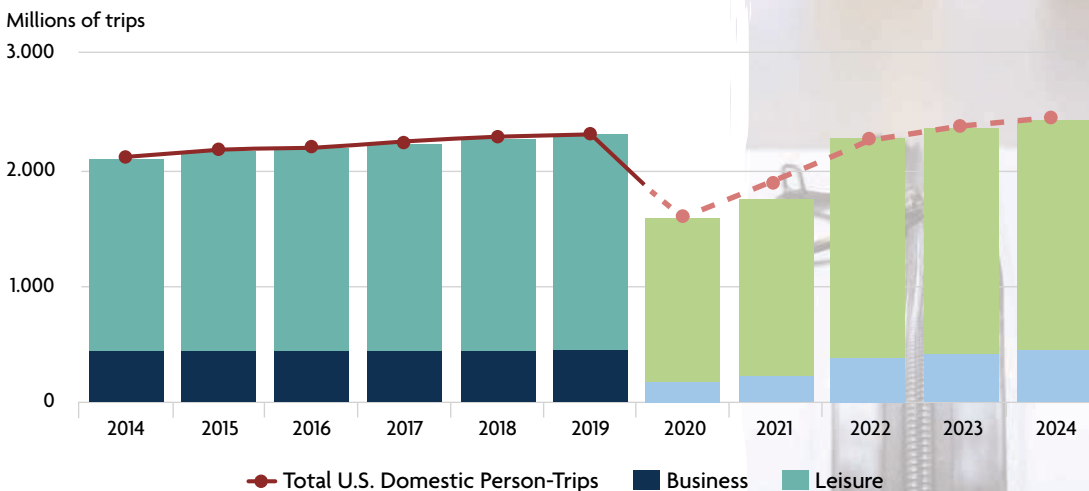
## TRAVEL SPENDING & FORECAST IN THE U.S., 2017-2023



SOURCE: US Travel Association and Oxford Economics

## DOMESTIC TRAVEL VOLUME & FORECAST IN THE U.S., 2014-2024

### U.S. DOMESTIC PERSON-TRIPS



SOURCE: US Travel Association and Oxford Economics

# COMMUNITY SHINING STARS



While COVID-19 forced us to be socially distant, many members of the tourism and hospitality industry never stopped working to bring us together. The pandemic brought out the best in our community, with individuals at every level stepping up to support one another. Little Rock will remember their acts of kindness, compassion, and generosity for years to come. Together, these community leaders' spirit of selflessness exemplifies what it means to be **Big on Little Rock**.

## ANDY DERRICK

Thank you for your generous \$2,000 tip to our restaurant industry staff!

## THE BUTCHER SHOP

Thank you for feeding our medical professionals!

## THREE FOLD NOODLE AND DUMPLING CO.

Thank you for donating 75 meals to Jericho Way Day Resource Center!

## TRIO'S

Thank you for feeding furloughed restaurant-industry staff!

## ROCK REGION METRO

Thank you for providing free shuttle service and meal deliveries!

## SAFE EATS LR

Thank you for digitally connecting restaurants and customers!

## CLINTON PRESIDENTIAL CENTER/ WORLD CENTRAL KITCHEN

Thank you for providing hundreds of thousands of meals to Arkansans in need!

## COPPER GRILL

Thank you for feeding our first responders!





**THINKDERO**

Thank you for providing free culinary photo services!



**DOWNTOWN  
LITTLE ROCK  
PARTNERSHIP**

Thank you for donating 75 meals to the Jericho Way Day Resource Center!



**@ THE CORNER**

Thank you for feeding our medical professionals and first responders!



**KATV**

Thank you for your support during National Travel and Tourism Week!



**LARRY'S PIZZA**

Thank you for feeding furloughed and laid-off employees!



**CAPER'S**

Thank you for delivering lunch to the staff of Briarwood Nursing Home!



**MHP/TEAM SI**

Thank you for creating and promoting Uplift Arkansas to support local businesses!



**CONTENT TITAN**

Thank you for the "Lighten the Load" series featuring local restaurants and businesses!



**THV11**

Thank you for helping with the Little Rock Cares and the Big on Little Rock Covid Relief programs!



**CUSTOMXM**

Thank you for printing complementary banners for local restaurants!



**ROCK TOWN  
DISTILLERY**

Thank you for making Rock Town Hand Sanitizer and offering free BYOB fill-ups!



**LIBRARY KITCHEN  
+ LOUNGE**

Thank you for feeding our first responders!



**RODNEY BLOCK**

Thank you for playing free virtual concerts and keeping us entertained!



**STAR OF INDIA**

Thank you for feeding our frontline healthcare workers!



**YELLOW ROCKET  
CONCEPTS**

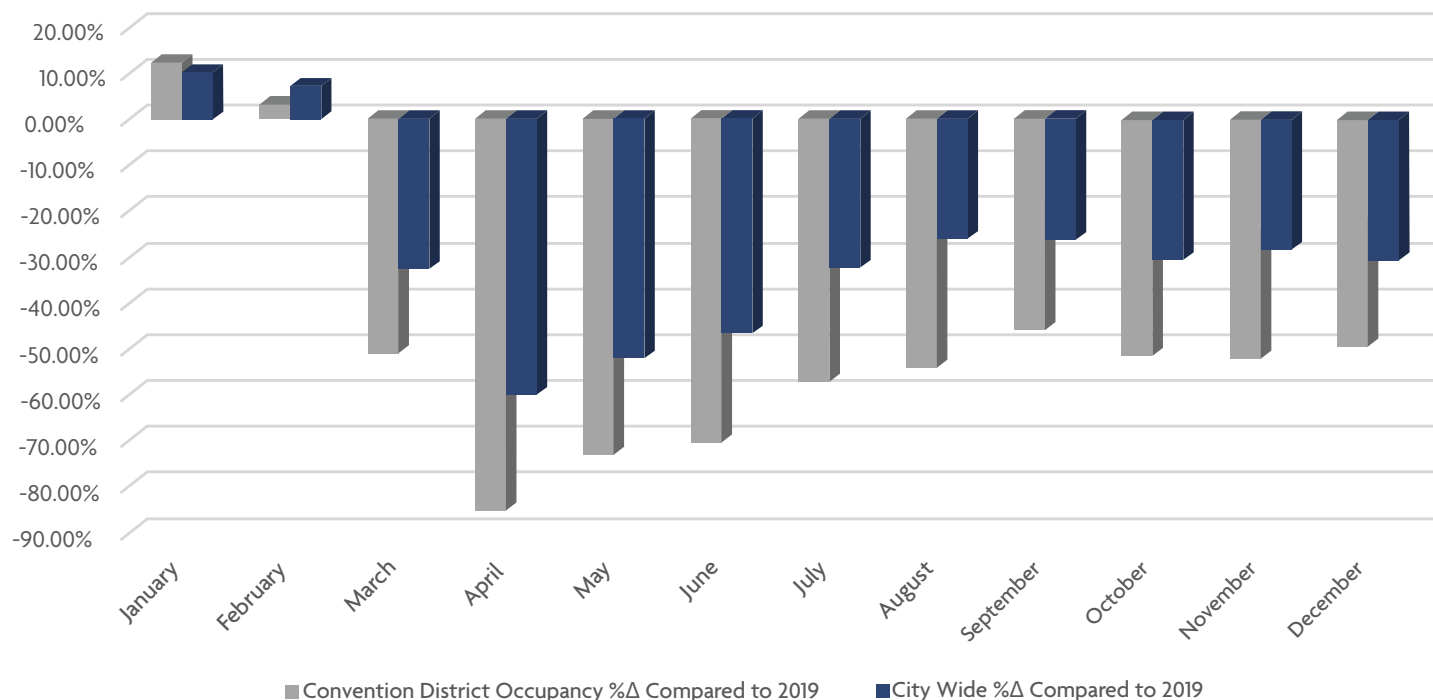
Thank you for feeding our frontline healthcare workers!

# LITTLE ROCK STATISTICS

The hotel industry experienced its most devastating year on record in 2020, resulting in historically low occupancy, massive job losses, and hotel closures across the country. Travel, across all sectors, is not expected to return to 2019 levels until 2024.

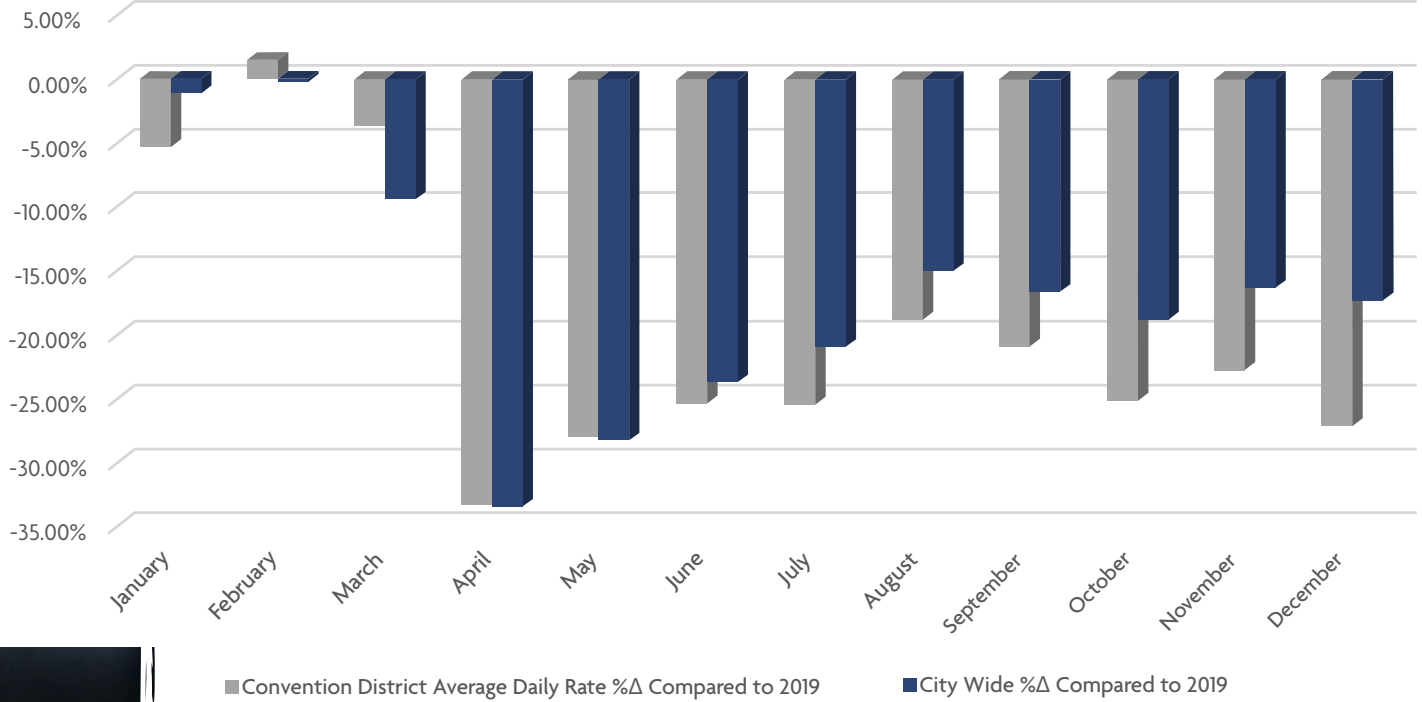
Little Rock had an overall occupancy rate of 41.6% and a RevPar of \$31.41. While this represents a dramatic 30.3% decrease from 2019's occupancy, several destinations in our comp set suffered decreases of 39-41%. Little Rock's RevPar was down 40.9% from 2019, right in line with the average in our comp set at -40%. The uncertainty of travel and personal safety will continue to drive decisions to cancel and postpone events throughout 2021.

## 2020 LITTLE ROCK HOTEL OCCUPANCY %Δ COMPARED TO 2019

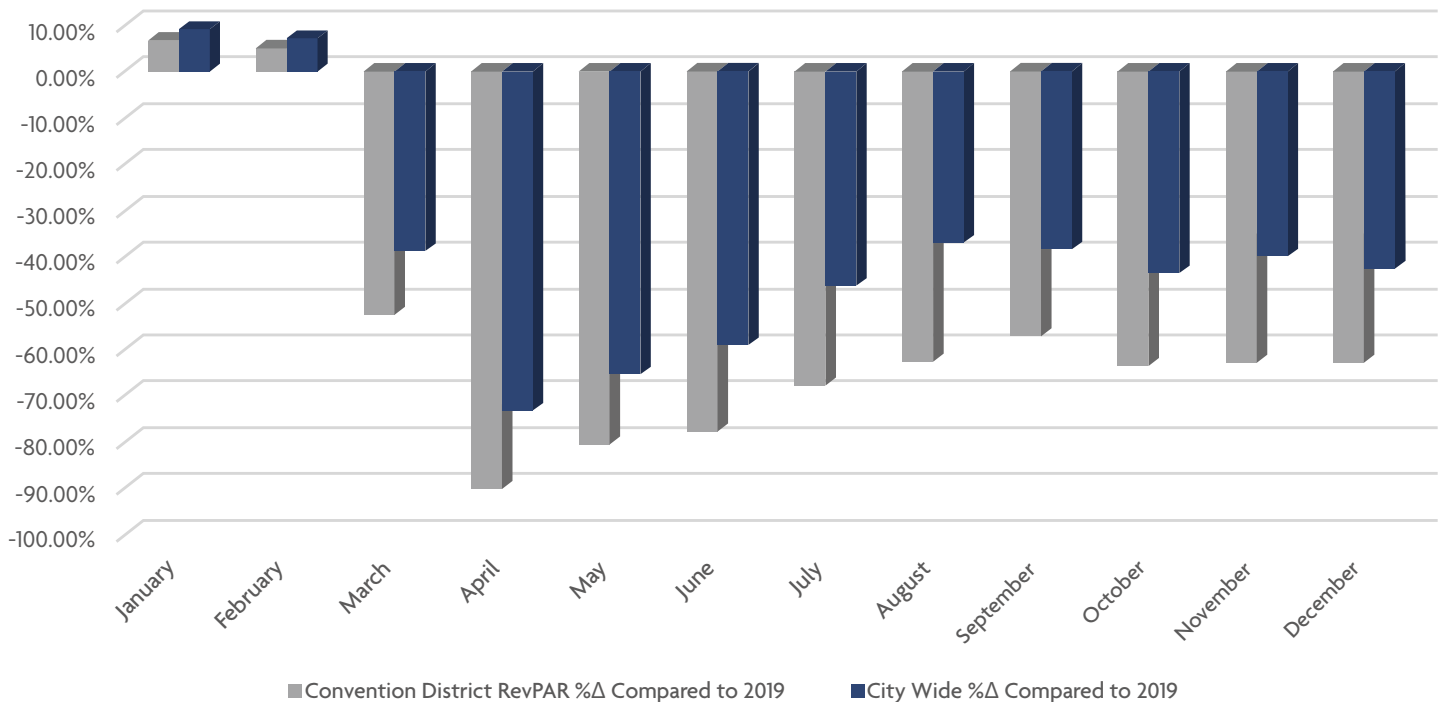




## 2020 LITTLE ROCK HOTEL ADR



## 2020 LITTLE ROCK HOTEL REVPAR



# HOTEL DATA 2019 VS 2020

	Occ %		ADR		RevPAR		Percent Change from YTD 2019		
	2019	2020	2019	2020	2019	2020	Occ	ADR	RevPAR
<b>Little Rock</b>	59.7	41.6	89.13	75.49	53.18	31.41	-30.3	-15.3	-40.9
<b>Little Rock Convention District</b>	72.0	36.8	130.17	110.34	93.71	40.56	-48.9	-15.2	-56.7
<b>North Little Rock</b>	55.7	43.9	76.67	69.12	42.71	30.31	-21.3	-9.8	-29.0
<b>Hot Springs, AR</b>	47.3	36.3	100.08	93.06	47.33	33.82	-23.1	-7.0	-28.5
<b>Northwest Arkansas</b>	65.2	39.9	98.04	76.90	63.96	30.66	-38.9	-21.6	-52.1
<b>Oklahoma City, OK</b>	60.7	42.5	83.07	71.05	50.46	30.17	-30.1	-14.5	-40.2
<b>Omaha, NE</b>	61.4	40.0	96.96	77.13	59.54	30.82	-34.9	-20.5	-48.2
<b>Louisville, KY-IN</b>	62.7	36.9	115.37	82.76	72.39	30.51	-41.2	-28.3	-57.8
<b>Birmingham, AL</b>	65.9	48.6	94.14	79.64	62.00	38.68	-26.3	-15.4	-37.6
<b>Baton Rouge, LA</b>	56.2	50.3	85.68	77.06	48.12	38.74	-10.5	-10.1	-19.5
<b>Albuquerque, NM</b>	67.5	45.2	89.68	71.14	60.49	32.18	-32.9	-20.7	-46.8
<b>Memphis, TN-AR-MS</b>	66.4	49.1	96.97	78.13	64.43	38.39	-26.0	-19.4	-40.4

Source: STR

## SHORT-TERM RENTAL DATA AND ANALYTICS 2019 VS 2020

	Available Listings			Booked Listings			Occupancy Rate			Average Daily Rate			RevPAR		
	2019	2020	% Chg	2019	2020	% Chg	2019	2020	% Chg	2019	2020	% Chg	2019	2020	% Chg
<b>Kansas City</b>	1,565	1,931	23.4%	1,469	1,707	16.2%	58%	54%	-6.1%	159	148	-7.2%	92	80	-12.9%
<b>Tulsa</b>	703	775	10.2%	633	675	6.6%	62%	63%	0.9%	112	118	4.9%	70	74	5.9%
<b>Shreveport</b>	146	176	20.5%	128	146	14.1%	57%	58%	2.3%	127	138	9.2%	72	81	11.7%
<b>Baton Rouge</b>	524	630	20.2%	449	522	16.3%	52%	52%	-0.8%	152	145	-4.2%	79	75	-5.0%
<b>Louisville</b>	3,611	2,894	-19.9%	3,073	2,467	-19.7%	54%	48%	-10.9%	257	237	-7.9%	139	114	-17.9%
<b>Memphis</b>	1,651	1,721	4.2%	1,548	1,549	0.1%	57%	50%	-11.7%	156	160	2.9%	88	80	-9.1%
<b>Oklahoma City</b>	1,095	1,331	21.6%	980	1,133	15.6%	62%	60%	-3.6%	118	116	-1.7%	74	70	-5.2%
<b>Birmingham</b>	508	761	49.8%	444	610	37.4%	66%	60%	-8.9%	166	152	-8.5%	109	91	-16.6%
<b>Little Rock</b>	375	473	26.1%	328	410	25.0%	58%	59%	0.8%	122	124	2.3%	71	73	3.2%
<b>Omaha</b>	956	978	2.3%	863	868	0.6%	56%	54%	-2.4%	156	140	-9.8%	86	76	-12.0%

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

## SHORT-TERM RENTAL DATA AND ANALYTICS IN ARKANSAS 2019 VS 2020

	Available Listings			Booked Listings			Occupancy Rate			Average Daily Rate			RevPAR		
	2019	2020	% Chg	2019	2020	% Chg	2019	2020	% Chg	2019	2020	% Chg	2019	2020	% Chg
<b>Fayetteville</b>	813	791	-2.7%	752	729	-3.1%	45%	48%	5.9%	196	185	-5.2%	89	89	0.4%
<b>Rogers</b>	241	281	16.6%	223	261	17.0%	50%	57%	14.5%	218	238	9.0%	109	136	24.9%
<b>Hot Springs</b>	1,206	1,467	21.6%	1,147	1,399	22.0%	44%	54%	22.8%	231	236	2.4%	101	127	25.7%
<b>Arkansas</b>	7,657	8,603	12.4%	7,120	7,973	12.0%	44%	54%	22.0%	190	196	2.8%	84	106	25.5%
<b>North Little Rock</b>	76	87	14.5%	66	63	-4.5%	60%	60%	0.3%	138	153	11.2%	83	92	11.6%
<b>Bentonville</b>	360	436	21.1%	335	399	19.1%	61%	62%	2.0%	151	159	4.8%	92	98	6.9%
<b>Little Rock</b>	375	473	26.1%	328	410	25.0%	58%	59%	0.8%	122	124	2.3%	71	73	3.2%

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



# LITTLE ROCK HOTEL DATA BY MONTH 2020

	Convention District		City Wide		Convention District		City Wide		Convention District		City Wide	
	Occupancy				Average Daily Rate				RevPAR			
	2020 Actual	%Δ Compared to 2019	2020 Actual	%Δ Compared to 2019	2020 Actual	%Δ Compared to 2019	2020 Actual	%Δ Compared to 2019	2020 Actual	%Δ Compared to 2019	2020 Actual	%Δ Compared to 2019
January	68.50	12.50%	52.90	10.30%	\$121.80	-5.30%	\$85.74	-1.10%	\$83.47	6.60%	\$45.32	9.10%
February	71.40	3.40%	58.40	7.20%	\$133.06	1.50%	\$89.49	-0.20%	\$95.03	4.90%	\$52.30	7.10%
March	37.40	-50.90%	42.90	-32.50%	\$126.50	-3.60%	\$80.82	-9.40%	\$47.28	-52.70%	\$34.65	-38.90%
April	11.30	-85.40%	25.40	-59.90%	\$86.14	-33.30%	\$59.38	-33.40%	\$9.76	-90.30%	\$15.06	-73.30%
May	19.20	-73.30%	29.70	-51.90%	\$91.56	-28.00%	\$62.95	-28.20%	\$17.60	-80.80%	\$18.71	-65.50%
June	24.60	-70.40%	38.70	-46.40%	\$100.40	-25.40%	\$69.67	-23.70%	\$24.57	-77.90%	\$26.97	-59.10%
July	32.90	-57.10%	44.50	-32.10%	\$100.12	-25.50%	\$72.58	-20.90%	\$32.90	-68.10%	\$32.27	-46.40%
August	32.80	-54.10%	43.90	-25.90%	\$100.16	-19.00%	\$73.14	-15.00%	\$32.90	-62.80%	\$32.14	-37.00%
September	40.70	-45.90%	43.70	-26.20%	\$104.67	-21.00%	\$76.00	-16.60%	\$42.64	-57.30%	\$33.25	-38.50%
October	37.88	-51.44%	44.15	-30.53%	\$99.77	-25.25%	\$74.95	-18.76%	\$37.79	-63.70%	\$33.09	-43.56%
November	31.20	-52.10%	39.80	-28.30%	\$96.46	-22.80%	\$71.95	-16.30%	\$30.05	-63.00%	\$28.66	-40.00%
December	29.50	-49.50%	35.10	-30.70%	\$94.71	-27.20%	\$70.85	-17.30%	130.12	-63.20%	\$85.66	-42.70%
Averages	36.45	-47.85%	41.60	-28.91%	\$104.61	-19.57%	\$73.96	-16.74%	\$48.68	-55.69%	\$36.51	-39.06%



BILL AND HILLARY  
CLINTON NATIONAL AIRPORT  
LITTLE ROCK

TOTAL PASSENGERS

977,742

YEAR TO DATE 2020

-56.38

PERCENT (%) CHANGE



# DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT



## PINNACLE MOUNTAIN MONUMENT TRAILS

Pinnacle Mountain State Park became the home of Arkansas's newest and most technically advanced mountain biking trail system in September with the opening of the Pinnacle Mountain Monument Trails. This network of 13 trails is the third Monument Trail system in the state and was built as a collaboration between Arkansas State Parks, the Arkansas Parks and Recreation Foundation, and the Walton Family Foundation. Since their opening, mountain bikers have taken more than 33,000 rides on the network's 12 miles of trails.

## HOTEL DEVELOPMENTS

Downtown Little Rock welcomed its newest hotel when the AC Marriott Hotel opened in February. The hotel is located in the historic Hall and Davidson buildings, both of which are on the National Register of Historic Places. In October, a ribbon cutting was held for the new Aloft Little Rock West. The hotel had intended to open in the spring but postponed the celebration due to the pandemic. These two properties add 241 new rooms to the city's inventory.





## RIVER MARKET ENTERTAINMENT DISTRICT EXPANSION

July brought the expansion of the existing River Market Entertainment District (RMED). The district's boundaries were expanded to include the 100 blocks of South Rock and Commerce Streets. The district's hours were also changed to allow patrons to carry their drinks throughout the area every day from 8 a.m. until midnight. The RMED Outdoor Dining Room was established during the summer and fall to give patrons of district restaurants a socially distanced dining option downtown.

## MURALS

The trend of installing new murals across Little Rock continued in 2020. Throughout the summer, the "Peace" mural located beneath the 7th street railroad bridge was expanded to include calls for social justice and racial equality. Downtown's Baker's Alley, already home to several colorful works of art, was repainted as a giant block-long rainbow. In October, Ottenheimer Market Hall's east façade was part of the ARkanvas project, a statewide collaboration between OZ Art and Just Kids. Little Rock's mural, a giant framed collection of native butterflies, was created by French artist Youri "Mantra" Cansell.



## INTERSTATE CONSTRUCTION

Interstate construction projects bookended 2020. Almost 3 miles of I-630 were expanded to eight lanes stretching from University Avenue to Baptist Hospital. After several months of construction-related lane closures, all lanes opened in March, with construction being completed in June. Construction began on expanding the I-30 corridor through downtown Little Rock and over the Arkansas River in the fall. The project will require multiple changes in traffic patterns throughout the length of the project. Completion is currently slated for 2025.

## SOUTHWEST MAGNET HIGH SCHOOL

In August, Little Rock's newest high school, Southwest Magnet High School, welcomed its first students. The state-of-the-art high school campus features 400,000 square feet of academic and athletic space, including a 4,000-seat football stadium, a 2,500-seat arena, and a 500-seat auxiliary gym. The campus also includes a practice field and track as well as four tennis courts and fields for soccer, baseball, and softball.



## ARKANSAS MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS CONSTRUCTION

Now officially rebranded as the Arkansas Museum of Fine Arts, the former Arkansas Arts Center continued construction on its "reimagined" museum. The new space is expected to open to guests in spring 2022 as a significant architectural landmark for the state. The project will feature more than 125,000 square feet of new exhibit and classroom space and includes new landscaping in nearby MacArthur Park.

## PUBLIC INTERNET EXPANSION

To increase computer access, the City of Little Rock added Wi-Fi access to seven Little Rock parks. Additionally, five Little Rock community centers have been equipped with public Wi-Fi access. This will create options for future virtual learning opportunities and enhanced workshops and community meetings over time.

Additionally, in 2020, Little Rock took strides toward becoming a 5G city. Verizon and AT&T were issued permits to install 5G at 20 sites throughout Little Rock. The use of 5G will improve residents' and businesses' internet access and help City services be delivered quicker and more efficiently.





# AWARDS & ACCOLADES

**GRETCHEN HALL NAMED ONE OF ARKANSAS  
MONEY & POLITICS' 2020 TOP INFLUENCERS**

**2019 OUTSTANDING NEW CONSTRUCTION IN A HISTORIC SETTING**  
- Robinson Center Renovation and Expansion – Preserve Arkansas

**ROBINSON CENTER 2020 TRENDSETTER  
CITY AWARD HONORABLE MENTION  
FOR TOURISM/CREATIVE CULTURE**  
– Arkansas Business

**GRETCHEN HALL RECEIVED  
THE 2020 GOVERNOR'S  
ARTS COMMUNITY  
DEVELOPMENT AWARD**  
from the Arkansas Arts Council

**JAMES BEARD FOUNDATION NAMES  
LITTLE ROCK'S LASSIS INN  
AS AN AMERICAN CLASSIC**

**2019 OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT  
IN PRESERVATION EDUCATION  
HONORABLE MENTION**  
- UA Little Rock Center for Arkansas  
History and Culture and UA Little Rock  
Department of Art Design  
(Robinson Center Historic Timeline)  
– Preserve Arkansas

**LET'S TACO 'BOUT  
HOW AWESOME I AM**

**ARKANSAS FOOD HALL OF FAME AWARD WINNERS:  
INTERNATIONAL GREEK FOOD FESTIVAL – Food Themed Event**  
**SCOTT MCGEHEE – Proprietor of the Year**

**LRCVB'S "WE'RE READY FOR YOU" VIDEO**  
wins SMART Meetings Magazine contest

**10 UNIQUE & QUIRKY MUSEUMS  
AROUND THE UNITED STATES**  
- ESSE PURSE MUSEUM  
– 10Best/USA Today

**MUSEUM OF DISCOVERY**  
- #6 OF TOP 10  
**BEST CHILDREN'S MUSEUMS**  
– 10Best/USA Today

**ARKANSAS TOURISM HENRY AWARD IN  
THE "EXCEPTIONAL USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA"  
CATEGORY FOR LRCVB INSTAGRAM GIFS.**

At the time of the award,  
the GIFS had received more than  
one million impressions.  
*(created by Seth Barlow and Christin Byrd)*

**BICYCLE FRIENDLY COMMUNITY  
BRONZE LEVEL**  
– American League of Bicyclists

**THE CLINTON PRESIDENTIAL CENTER  
WON AN ARKANSAS TOURISM  
HENRY AWARD IN THE "DISTINGUISHED  
VOLUNTEER SERVICE" CATEGORY.**  
Since the Clinton Center opened in  
November 2004, its volunteers have  
contributed a staggering 723,000 hours  
of service. Using Independent Sector's  
estimated national average for volunteer  
hour valuation, \$23.56, that is an in-kind  
contribution of more than \$17 million.

**LITTLE ROCK INCLUDED IN NPR'S TOP TEN LIST FOR  
"SMALL CITIES THAT ARE A BIG DRAW  
FOR REMOTE WORK DURING THE PANDEMIC"**



# FUTURE OUTLOOK

Tourism and travel generated spending will be critical to Arkansas and Little Rock's economic recovery. Research shows a tremendous pent-up demand for travel. Leisure travel is expected to return first, with consumers optimistic about the national vaccine distribution and their ability to travel again in 2021. At the same time, business travel—which comprises the largest source of hotel revenue—remains nearly nonexistent, though it is expected to begin a slow return in the second half of the year.

Telling Little Rock's story and expanding our brand awareness is now more important than ever. Progress did continue in 2020 with several projects moving forward. The renovation and expansion of the former Arkansas Arts Center, now the Arkansas Museum of Fine Arts, made great progress and is still expected to reopen in 2022. This project will greatly enhance our artistic and cultural offerings and provide a new world-class museum for the city.

Additionally, the expansion of Interstate 30 is underway. Although the construction will be disruptive in the short-term, the finished project will yield safer access into our downtown core, create better connections with our expanding east village neighborhood, and create more than 15 acres of public green space in the heart of the River Market. We also anxiously await the completion of mountain biking trails that are currently under development in west Little Rock, the continuation of expanded public wi-fi throughout the city, and the return of concerts at the First Security Amphitheater.

The LRCVB's internal focus will be our continued efforts to reschedule lost business, refocusing our marketing efforts on new target audiences, developing a constant pipeline in the meetings market, creating a focus on workforce development initiatives for the industry, and intentional efforts surrounding diversity, equity and inclusion.

The pandemic led to the delay of numerous destination projects. We are now bringing those back to the table and working with city leaders and others to help champion these initiatives. From developing long-term parking solutions for downtown, to creating tournament-quality sports facilities that will exponentially grow tourism, to identifying a partner to reimagine the River Market's Ottenheimer Hall, these projects and more will position Little Rock for future financial growth and enhance the quality of life for all residents and visitors.

The LRCVB recently commissioned three feasibility studies focused on amateur sports facilities. We feel sports tourism is an area that can position Little Rock for tremendous economic growth as well as provide new opportunities for our city's youth. In 2019, sports-related travel spending totaled \$45.1 billion. With the right infrastructure, Little Rock could capture a sizable amount of this growing industry. Our city leaders see the value in sports, outdoor recreation, and public parks as well. If funding for the development of these facilities is secured, the LRCVB will focus on creating a sports commission to increase our sales and marketing efforts and maximize the local economic impact.

Longer-term plans for the city need to include conversations surrounding the expansion of the Statehouse Convention Center along with full-service hotel developments. The meetings industry will return and its historical impact on our community has been successful and verifiable over the years. Now is the time to begin plotting the future.

Travel carries so many benefits: creating memories, providing much needed mental breaks, developing a better understanding of different cultures, and enhancing learning opportunities. We look to 2021 with a renewed sense of hope and constant reminder that, *"optimism is an intellectual choice."* – Diana Schneider



**GRETCHEN HALL, CDME**  
PRESIDENT & CEO





# Little Rock COVID-19

# B I N G O

EXPERIENCED  
ZOOM FATIGUE



WATCHED ONE OF  
THE GOVERNOR'S  
PRESS CONFERENCES



JOINED A  
CONFERENCE CALL  
FROM BED



WENT TO A  
DRIVE-IN MOVIE OR  
PERFORMANCE



ORDERED TAKE  
OUT FROM A LOCAL  
RESTAURANT



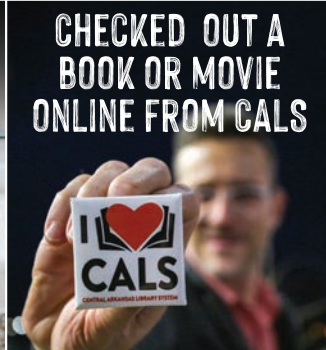
FORGOT TO  
UNMUTE  
YOURSELF  
ON ZOOM



USED A GROCERY  
STORE PICK-UP  
SERVICE



CHECKED OUT A  
BOOK OR MOVIE  
ONLINE FROM CALS



DEEP CLEANED  
THE ENTIRE HOUSE



BINGED  
3 NEW SHOWS



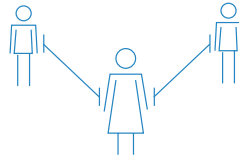
LISTENED TO THE  
SYMPHONY'S  
BEDTIME  
WITH BACH



EXPLORED THE  
VOGEL SCHWARTZ  
SCULPTURE GARDEN



FREE SPACE:



MAINTAINED A  
6' SOCIAL DISTANCE

MADE A  
QUARANTINI WITH  
ROCK TOWN  
DISTILLERY VODKA



RODE THE NEW  
MTB TRAILS AT  
PINNACLE  
MOUNTAIN



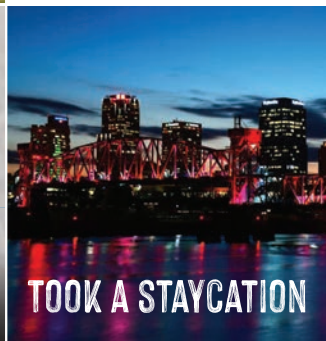
STILL CAN'T FIND  
DISINFECTANT  
WIPES



HAD ALCOHOL  
DELIVERED



TOOK A STAYCATION



WATCHED ONE OF THE  
ZOO'S LIVESTREAMS



WATCHED A  
BALLET ARKANSAS  
"ENCORE"  
PERFORMANCE



CLIMBED TO  
THE TOP OF  
PINNACLE  
MOUNTAIN



OWN 10+  
FACE MASKS



WORE PAJAMAS OR  
SHORTS DURING A  
ZOOM CALL



RODE A BIKE ON  
THE ARKANSAS  
RIVER TRAIL



ALREADY  
PLANNING  
YOUR NEXT  
VACATION

