



Little Rock

CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU

2018 ANNUAL REPORT

FEBRUARY 19, 2019

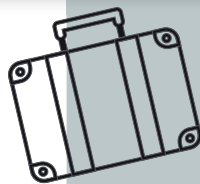
CONTENTS

- 3 • Executive Summary
- 4 • Organization & Leadership
- 5 • Mission & Brand Promise
- 6 • Value of Tourism
- 8 • Finance & Administration
- 11 • Facility Operations
- 18 • Sales & Services
- 23 • Marketing & Communications
- 26 • LRCVB Signature Events
- 28 • Destination Development
- 30 • Future Outlook
- 31 • 2019 Business Plan



Paddleboard yoga on the Arkansas River

2018 BY THE NUMBERS



6.4 MILLION

VISITORS TO PULASKI COUNTY



\$1.95 BILLION

GENERATED IN TRAVEL
SPENDING IN PULASKI COUNTY

Little Rock

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Reflecting on 2018, I am reminded of a quote from Heraclitus, "Change is the only constant in life." Indeed, the year brought much change to our city and the Little Rock Convention & Visitors Bureau (LRCVB). From new faces and leadership, to new office space, new sales and marketing initiatives, and the selection of new media agencies, transition in 2018 has already started paying off and will certainly pay dividends in the future.

As Arkansas's top travel destination, Little Rock sees the effects of tourism on our economy and quality of life in many ways – visitor spending, job creation, and tax generation. Pulaski County represents 25% of the state's total travel expenditures and 22% of the state's total visitors. Little Rock area tourism spending generated \$107M in state and local taxes, saving each Pulaski County household an average of \$688 in personal taxes!

The finance and administration team implemented several initiatives this year, including updating our tax regulations to account for online facilitating platforms in the lodging and prepared food industries, updating our organizational handbook and travel/expense policies, and implementing a digital purchasing and accounts payable software system and Office 365. Tax receipts continue to exceed prior year totals, with a 2.16% increase over 2017 collections.

Our facility management teams continue to perform at a high level, welcoming almost 637,000 attendees from groups that convened in LRCVB-managed facilities, and receiving an average score of 4.71 on a 5-point scale, from our client surveys. The team managed over \$1.3 million in capital projects, including new meeting rooms at the Statehouse Convention Center.

Our sales and marketing teams continue to inspire and influence individual travelers as well as meeting and convention groups. With the addition of two new vice presidents, they are working more collaboratively to increase awareness of the destination and create more effective ways to promote our region and attract visitors nationally and internationally through unique marketing campaigns, direct sales efforts, site visits, press tours, and more.

The sales team launched a new local recruitment campaign to encourage local members of associations to bring their meetings to Little Rock. The marketing team worked with an outside agency to conduct a full social media and web audit and develop a tactical content planning program to increase our presence across multiple social platforms. LRCVB is currently on-boarding two new media partners to manage paid media strategies and placement.

On the product development side, we are excited about the new U.S. Civil Rights Trail, which launched in January, and provides increased awareness of several Little Rock landmarks. The trail encompasses over 100 sites, across 46 cities, 14 states, and the District of Columbia. Little Rock Central High National Historic Site was honored with a "Top 10" site designation.

2018 brought a new office environment for the sales and facility operation teams, as approximately 25 staff members relocated to the Cromwell Building. We developed several employee committees promoting health and wellness, volunteer and community development, office celebrations, and sustainability. The dedicated team of employees at LRCVB make this place one of the best organizations!

In November I traveled to Lviv, Ukraine to speak at a tourism conference and had the opportunity to discuss Little Rock's meeting product and convention sales efforts. In 2018 I was also honored to be selected to serve on Destinations International's Board of Directors. Working together with city leadership, committed partners and our devoted staff, LRCVB will continue to position Little Rock as a premier travel destination. As word continues to spread about our wonderful city and region, we'll see more and more travelers from across the globe, creating an even larger impact locally!

Gretchen Hall, CDME, CMP
President & CEO

636,683

ATTENDANCE

525
EVENTS



AT LRCVB-MANAGED
FACILITIES

189,716

ROOM
NIGHTS
BOOKED
2018 – 2028



421

FUTURE MEETINGS,
CONVENTIONS AND
SPORTING EVENTS
ATTRACTED

223

GROUPS
SERVICED

343

MEETINGS, CONVENTIONS & SPORTING
EVENTS HOSTED IN 2018, ATTRACTING
353,962 ATTENDEES, AND GENERATING
\$87,019,850 IN TOTAL ECONOMIC IMPACT

91

CUSTOMERS HOSTED
THROUGH INDIVIDUAL SITE
VISITS AND FAMILIARIZATION
(FAM) TOURS

5,827

NEW SOCIAL
MEDIA
FANS AND
FOLLOWERS

9.26

MILLION IMPRESSIONS
ON SOCIAL MEDIA
AND 548,000+
SOCIAL ENGAGEMENTS

21

JOURNALISTS,
WRITERS,
AND
INFLUENCERS
HOSTED



LITTLE ROCK

MEDIA ACCOLADES AND AWARDS

- BusinessInsider.com named Little Rock as Arkansas's "Best Place to Live in Every US State," Dec., 2018
- Ranked #2 of "2018 Best Places to Retire" – Livability.com, Nov., 2019
- Ranked #8 of "America's Top 10 Small Cities for Prosperity" – Resonance Consultancy, June, 2018
- Ranked #23 in "America's 50 Best Small Cities" – Resonance Consultancy, June, 2018
- Featured as one of "14 Cities That Give You The Worst Case of FOMO (Fear of Missing Out)" – Expedia.com, Oct., 2018
- Named one of the "Best Places to Live in the South" – *Southern Travel + Lifestyles* magazine, Sept., 2018
- Little Rock Central High School featured as Arkansas's "Most Historic Location in Every State" – MSN.com, July, 2018
- River Market featured in *Where to Retire Magazine* that highlighted eight U.S. cities for downtown living

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. 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 four primary divisions – Finance & Administration, Sales & Services, Marketing & Communications, and Facility Operations.

Little Rock Advertising & Promotion Commission

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

- Capi Peck, Chair
- City Director Gene Fortson, Vice Chair
- Mayor Mark Stodola
- Jim Keet
- 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

Bill Fitzgerald, Vice President - Marketing & Communications

Gina Gemberling, Vice President - Sales & Services

James “Doc” Doolittle – Sr. Director of Facilities Maintenance/Engineering

Phyllis Lucas – Sr. Director of Event Operations

Ionette Neal – Sr. Director of Tax Revenue

Chris Phillips – Controller

Bobby Green – Director of Security

Randy Guphill – Director of Technical Services

Diana Long – Director of River Market Operations

Greg Johnson – Software Systems Engineer

Megan Neumeier – Assistant Director of Event Operations

Art Edwards – Facility Maintenance Manager

Tracy Graham – Accounting Manager

Norman Hale – Parking Manager

Cortez Jackson – Facility Maintenance Manager

Dan Limke – Creative Services Manager

Libby Lloyd – Communications Manager

Johnny Loney – Auxiliary Services Manager

Charlie Oppedisano – Retail Sales Manager

Kim Sanders – Human Resources Manager

Gwen Stallings – Building Service Manager

Gaby Valentin – Event Setup Manager

Jennifer Willis – Destination Services Manager

Katina Brown – Destination Services Specialist (staff representative)

STAFF AWARDS AND RECOGNITION



Marilyn Koehler was awarded the 2017 Silver Cup Award by the Arkansas Hospitality Association, Central Arkansas Chapter

Arkansas Hospitality Association's Stars of the Industry 2018 Finalists
Libby Doss Lloyd – Manager of the Year
Art Edwards – Front of the House Manager of the Year
Katina Brown – Heart of the House Hospitality Employee of the Year



Little Rock Convention & Visitors Bureau was honored with **Convention South's Annual Readers' Choice Award** as selected by meeting planners for exhibiting excellence, creativity, and professionalism in the meetings and conventions industry.

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.

VALUE OF TOURISM



TOURISM IMPACT IN PULASKI COUNTY

\$368,694,513
Travel Generated Payroll



\$74,252,067
Travel Generated State Tax



\$33,335,438
Travel Generated Local Tax



6,412,681
Total Annual Visitors

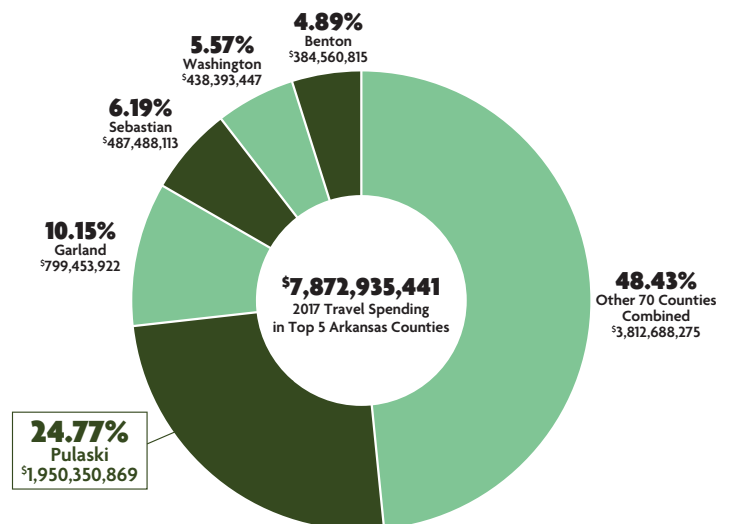


\$1,950,350,869
Total Travel Expenditures



13,786 jobs
Travel Related Employment

TRAVEL SPENDING IN TOP 5 ARKANSAS COUNTIES



Source: Arkansas Department of Parks & Tourism 2017 Economic Report

Pulaski County accounts for **22%** of the **total visitors to Arkansas.**
Pulaski County accounts for **25%** of the **total travel expenditures in Arkansas.**
Pulaski County accounts for **23%** of the **total travel related employment in Arkansas.**

TOURISM BY THE NUMBERS

ONE OF AMERICA'S LARGEST INDUSTRIES

\$1 TRILLION

total domestic and international inbound travelers spent in the U.S., for nearly \$2.4 trillion in economic output in 2017

\$164.8 BILLION

tax revenue directly generated for local, state, and federal governments

\$1,310 MORE

in taxes would be required from each U.S. household without the tax revenue generated by the travel and tourism industry

**\$2.8 BILLION PER DAY
\$118.2 MILLION PER HOUR
\$2 MILLION PER MINUTE
\$32,840 PER SECOND**

average direct spending by resident and international travelers in the U.S.

ONE OF AMERICA'S LARGEST EMPLOYERS

Supported a total of
15.6 MILLION JOBS
including

8.8 MILLION
directly in the travel industry and
6.8 MILLION
in other industries

\$258.8 BILLION

in travel-generated payroll for those employed directly in the U.S. travel industry

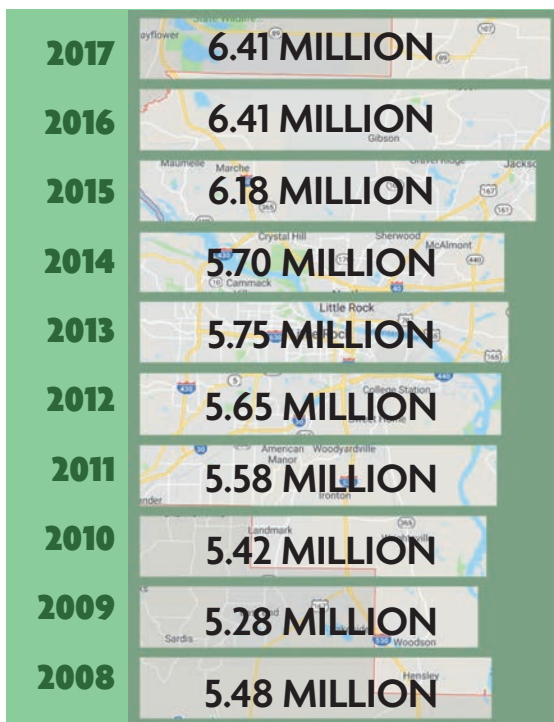
1 IN EVERY 9

U.S. non-farm jobs is directly and indirectly supported by travel and tourism

Travel is the
7TH LARGEST
employer of all industries in the U.S.

Rock climbing at
Pinnacle Mountain State Park

PULASKI COUNTY ANNUAL VISITORS



Source: Arkansas Department of Parks & Tourism 2017 Economic Report

EVERY \$1 MILLION in sales of travel goods and services
directly generates **8 JOBS** for the industry

TRAVEL & TOURISM WORKS FOR ARKANSAS

Domestic and international travelers to Arkansas spent
\$7 BILLION
in 2016 and generated
\$1 BILLION
that helped fund jobs and public programs such as police, firefighters, teachers, roads, and convention centers

66,710 jobs created by travelers to Arkansas in 2016
represent **6.7%** of the state's private industry employment

For every
\$1 MILLION spent in Arkansas by domestic and international travelers
9.6 jobs are created

Source: US Travel Association

FINANCE & ADMINISTRATION

The Finance and Administration division provides day-to-day support and is comprised of the tax, accounting, information technology, and human resource departments.

The tax department collects the advertising and promotion tax, which is assessed on the gross receipts of lodging and prepared food sales in the City of Little Rock. Tax collections for 2018 exceeded \$14 million.

In 2018, the A&P Tax Rules & Regulations were revised to make necessary updates and to incorporate facilitating platforms, such as Airbnb, VRBO, Bitesquad, Waitr, and others.

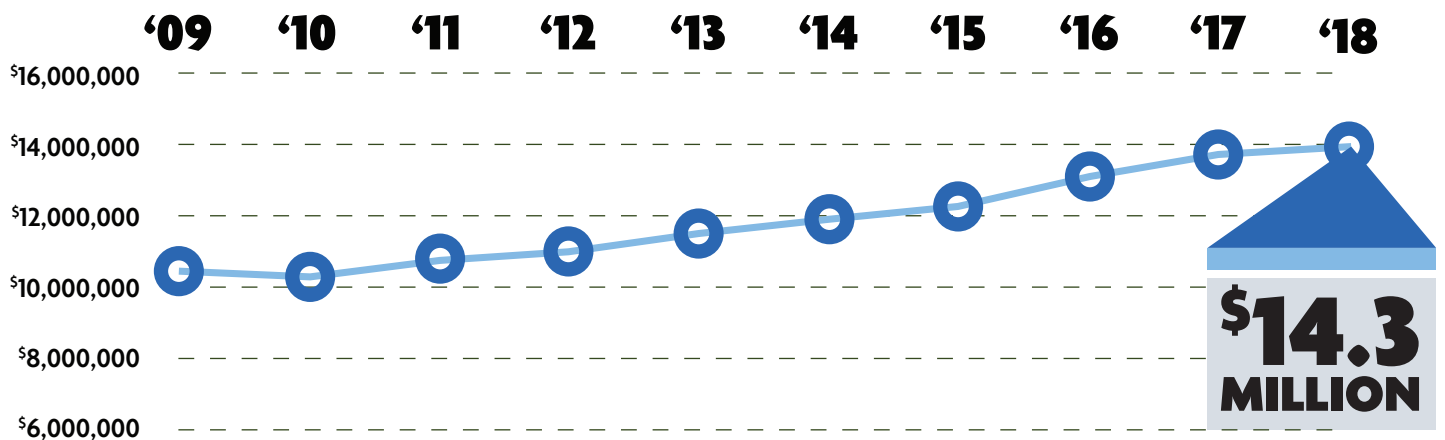
As the sharing economy and online retail options continue to grow it remains a priority of the commission to ensure advertising and promotion tax is applied fairly and consistently.

Additionally, the LRCVB employee handbook was updated and reviewed by legal counsel, a new digital purchasing and accounts payable software system was implemented, an upgrade to Office 365 was completed, cloud-based hosting for certain software was finalized, and updates were made to the wireless internet system at the convention center.

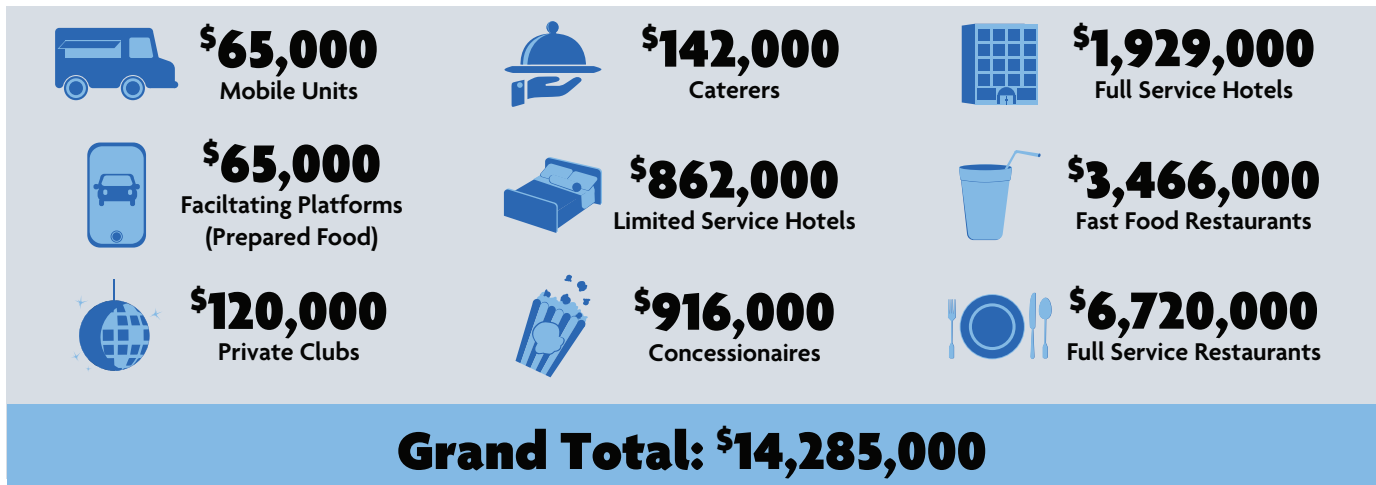
The Arkansas Arts Center and MacArthur Park bond series was finalized in the last quarter of 2018, which means the project is underway and the additional lodging tax enacted in 2016 is fully committed to the bonds.



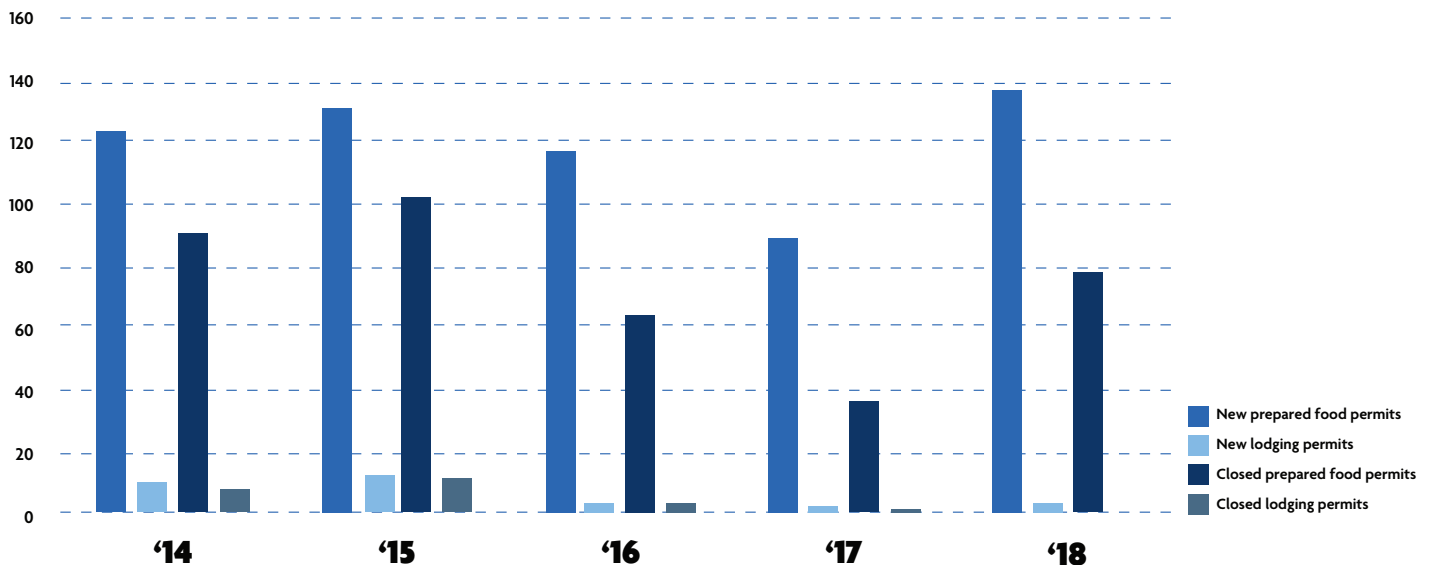
A&P TAX COLLECTIONS 2009-2018



2018 TAX COLLECTIONS BY BUSINESS TYPE



2014-2018 NEW AND CLOSED PERMITS



2018 EXAMINATIONS & RANDOM AUDITS

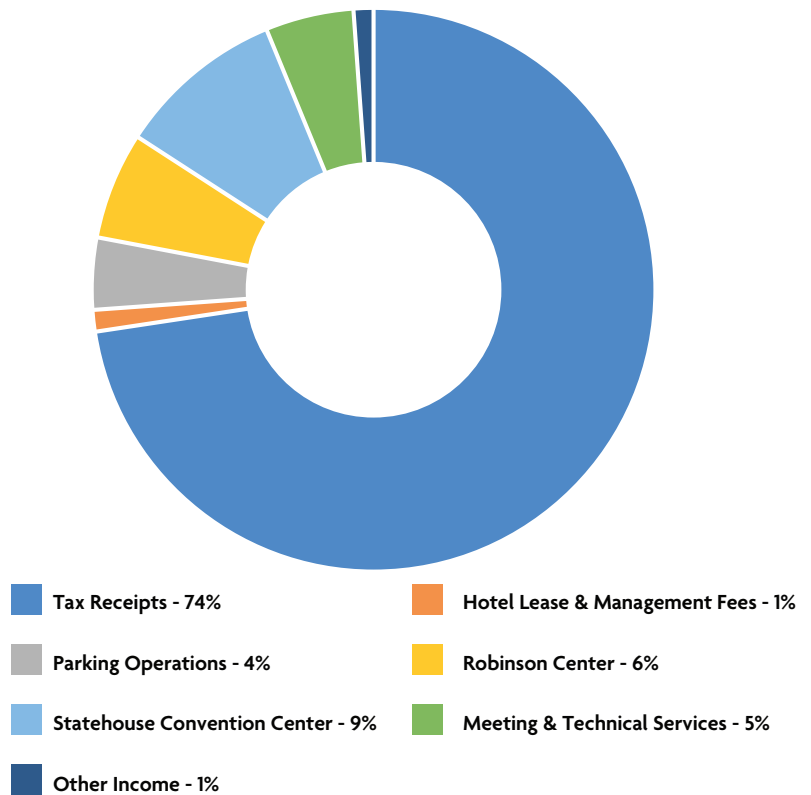
27.59%
Additional tax due

41.38%
No adjustments

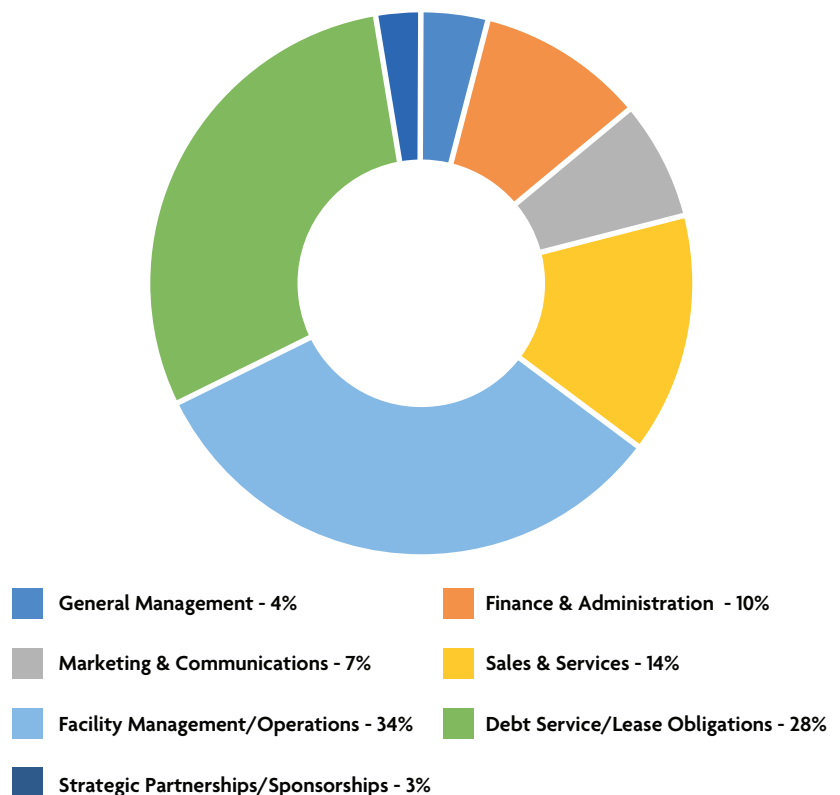
31.03%
Refund due to permittee



2018 TOTAL REVENUE \$19.3 MILLION



2018 TOTAL EXPENDITURES



**unaudited results*

FACILITY OPERATIONS



The Facility Operations division, under agreement with the City of Little Rock, is responsible for the management of the Statehouse Convention Center (SCC), the Robinson Center (RC), the municipal parking garage at Robinson and the parking decks at 2nd and Main Streets, as well as 2nd and River Market Avenue. Under a Memorandum of Understanding with the city, LRCVB is also the management entity of the River Market (RM). These responsibilities include Ottenheimer Market Hall, two outdoor pavilions, the First Security Amphitheater and all surface parking within Riverfront Park.

The division has direct operational responsibility and serves as contract liaison between the city-owned hotel properties (Little Rock Marriott and DoubleTree by Hilton Little Rock) and the Little Rock Advertising & Promotion Commission.

Lastly, the facility operations division manages the commission owned parking lot on Block 2, directly across from the Statehouse Convention Center, and the Cromwell office building at 101 South Spring Street.

The Facility Operations division had a productive year in 2018. It began with freezing temperatures, burst pipes and flooding at Statehouse Convention Center and the Cromwell Building on January 3 and ended with a bang as LRCVB debuted new meeting rooms in the Statehouse Convention Center!

The engineering department managed numerous projects as capital improvements exceeded \$1.3 million for the year. Major projects took place in all facilities – Robinson Center, Statehouse Convention Center, the River Market and the Cromwell Building.

Parking operations had another profitable year, reaching levels required by the city to service the parking deck debt and retaining a very strong A+ bond rating.

In Robinson Performance Hall, the Broadway Theater Series presented *Beautiful - The Carol King Story*, *Dirty Dancing*, *The Lion King*, *Jersey Boys*,

Love Never Dies, and *Finding Neverland*. Celebrity Attractions continues to deliver impressive line-ups for the destination. The Broadway season provided 49 performances with 87,204 tickets sold.

The Arkansas Symphony Orchestra also had another very successful season with a total of 21 performances including music from *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, *The Sorcerer's Apprentice*, and *The Music Of Star Wars*. In addition, acts such as Jason Isbell, Bobby Bones, Ray LaMontagne, and Jason Mraz performed to sellout crowds in the facility.

LRCVB also hired and trained a group of ushers and ticket takers. New security measures were implemented including magnetron scanning systems and bag checks. Numerous staff were trained through LRPD's Active Aggressor and Stop The Bleed programs, as well as facility evacuation training led by the LRCVB security department.

The Statehouse Convention Center continued to perform well although the number of events was down slightly year over year. Expenses were managed well against a slight decline in revenue. Numerous capital projects were completed, new meeting rooms constructed, wireless Internet expanded, and projects in conjunction with FWH II, the Marriott lease holder, were successfully completed.

The River Market increased programming with several new events. Staple events such as the Farmers' Market, Jazz in the Park, Movies in the Park, Small Business Saturday, Locally Labeled pavilion party, Chop the Rock chef series, with several new events like Bizarre Bazaar and holiday activities featuring live reindeer were popular this year.

New strategic initiatives in 2018 included a request for an urban consultant to assist in reviewing and making recommendations regarding operations of the 20+ year-old Ottenheimer Market Hall and to develop concepts for increased utilization. Additionally, LRCVB issued a request for qualifications to partner with an exclusive promoter for ticketed concerts in First Security Amphitheater. Both projects will continue into 2019.

2018 CLIENT SURVEY SUMMARY

OVERALL
AVERAGE

4.71
OUT OF 5

LRCVB
STAFF AND
FACILITIES
RATING

ACCURACY • VALUE • SATISFACTION
RESPONSIVENESS • COORDINATION • SERVICE
KNOWLEDGE • PROFESSIONALISM
PRESENCE • EXPERIENCE • SAFETY • VARIETY
FRIENDLINESS • PROFESSIONALISM
CLEANLINESS • FACILITY CONDITION



2018 CAPITAL PROJECTS

CROMWELL BUILDING

Space on the third floor of the Cromwell building was redeveloped and approximately 25 sales and operations staff members being relocated in May, resulting in the majority of the LRCVB staff now located in the same facility for the first time.



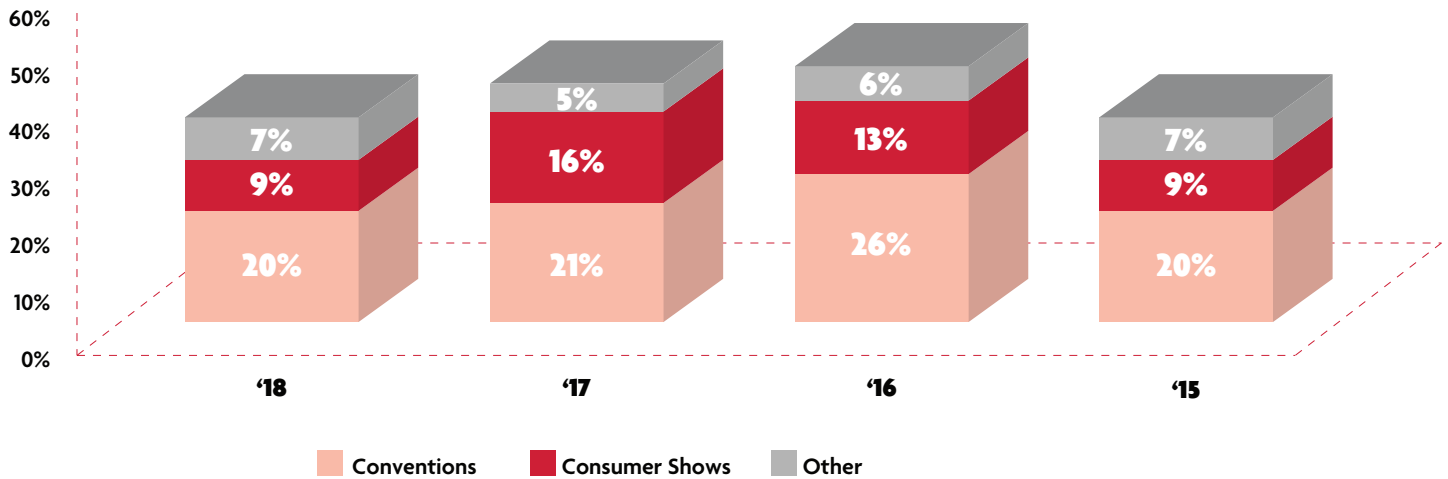
STATEHOUSE CONVENTION CENTER

With the decision to relocate the sales and operations teams into the Cromwell Building, there was a unique opportunity to redevelop the previous office space at the Statehouse Convention Center into new meeting room space in the west end of the center. The 1999 expansion of Statehouse Convention Center included expanded exhibit hall space, the Wally Allen Ballroom and a fully equipped production kitchen; however, it did not include smaller meeting rooms or breakout space. The new development added three new meeting rooms, a reception area, and a mother's nursing room, totaling approximately 4,000 square feet.

LRCVB replaced the energy management system in the Statehouse Convention Center expansion to bring the system and HVAC controls up to modern standards and increased efficiency. Lastly, the final quarter of 2018 included the replacement of the Cromwell Building elevator, which had been anticipated since purchasing the building in 2016. A new roof hatch and access ladder, required by the State of Arkansas, was also included in the project.

Various equipment and replacement furniture purchases, Performance Hall enhancements, upgrades to the wireless internet at Statehouse Convention Center, enhanced signage in the Robinson garage, upgraded HVAC controls in the Cromwell Building and additional purchases for LRCVB's working fleet were also completed in 2018. Total Capital Expenditures amounted to \$1,302,974.

STATEHOUSE CONVENTION CENTER EXHIBIT HALL OCCUPANCY BY TYPE

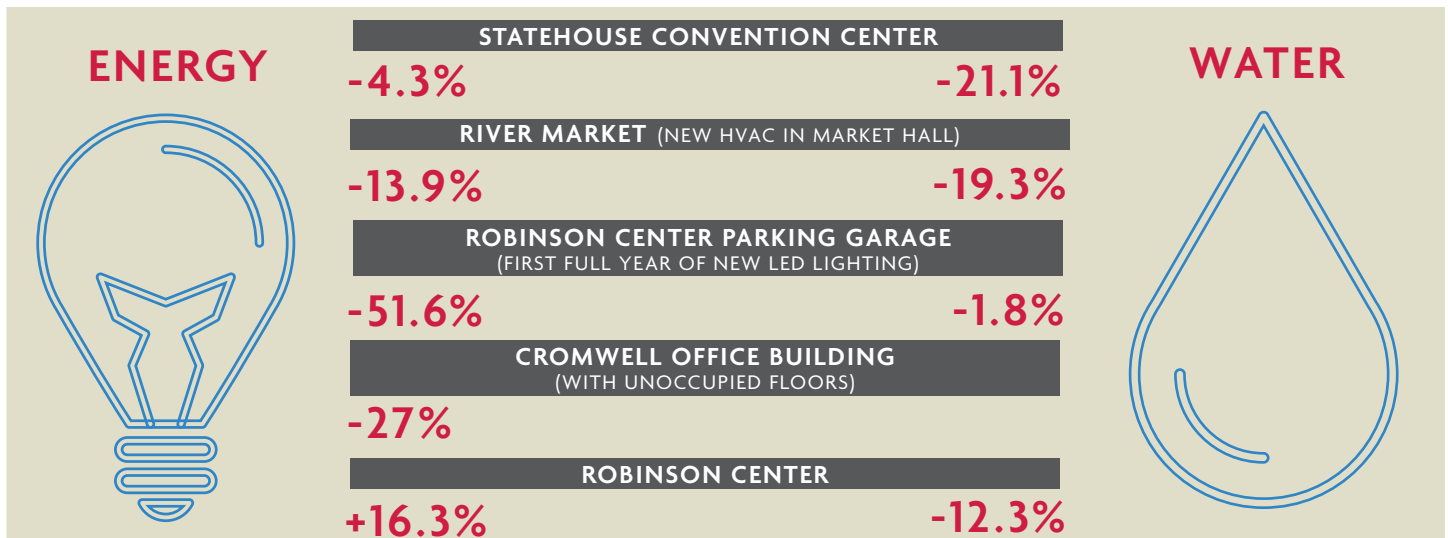


STATEHOUSE
CONVENTION
CENTER

Named a
“2018 Top New or Renovated Meeting Site”
 by *ConventionSouth Magazine*

SUSTAINABILITY EFFORTS

LRCVB continues to implement sustainability measures throughout its managed facilities and continues to enjoy financial benefits from those efforts. The following data is based on the applicable baseline years as compared to October 2017 – October 2018.



SUSTAINABILITY RELATED PROJECTS COMPLETED IN 2018

Statehouse Convention Center: Replacement of all loading dock lighting with LED fixtures, expansion replacement of building automation system (BAS), expansion replacement of malfunctioning chilled water and hot water valves, expansion addition of VFD's to cooling towers

River Market: Replacement of HVAC system in Market Hall, replacement of building automation system (BAS) in entire building

Cromwell Building: Modernization of elevator

FACILITY USAGE

ROBINSON CENTER

2018		
EVENT TYPE	# OF EVENTS	PATRON DAYS
CONVENTIONS	19	19,907
SHOWS	105	165,993
DANCES	3	720
BANQUETS, RECEPTIONS & LUNCHEONS	36	8,055
MEETINGS	36	13,813
REHEARSALS	45	3,609
GRADUATIONS	1	2,050
RECITAL/COMPETITIONS	7	18,300
TOTALS	252	232,447

TOTAL USER DAYS - 270



STATEHOUSE CONVENTION CENTER

2018		
EVENT TYPE	# OF EVENTS	PATRON DAYS
CONVENTIONS	35	106,236
SHOWS	4	2,470
DANCE/PARTY	1	740
BANQUETS, RECEPTIONS & LUNCHEONS	40	29,546
MEETING	32	16,743
CONSUMER SHOW	13	36,150
SPORTS	6	32,895
GRADUATIONS	7	9,750
REHEARSALS	1	1,500
RECITAL/COMPETITIONS	5	1,813
EXAMS	8	853
TOTALS	152	238,696

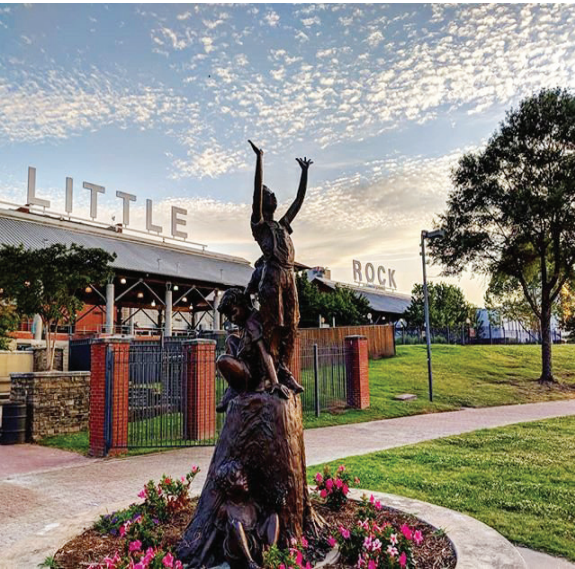
TOTAL USER DAYS - 283





RIVER MARKET

2018		
EVENT TYPE	# OF EVENTS	PATRON DAYS
SHOWS	23	52,316
DANCES	2	90
BANQUETS, RECEPTIONS & LUNCHEONS	48	9,336
MEETINGS	9	1,765
TRADE SHOW/ EXHIBITS (INCLUDING FARMERS MARKET)	24	70,900
SPORTS/HOBBY	6	1,647
FESTIVALS	8	27,650
RECITAL/ COMPETITIONS	1	1,836
TOTALS	121	165,540






ROBINSON CENTER

LRCVB partnered with the University of Arkansas at Little Rock Center for Arkansas History and Culture and Windgate Center for Art + Design to create a permanent exhibit detailing the history of the building and its role as a city landmark. The exhibit, presented as a timeline along the east wall of the Robinson Center's second-floor lobby chronicles the building's rich history from the 1930s to present day. The timeline begins with a dramatic

10-foot-tall photograph of Joseph Taylor Robinson, the former governor and U.S. senator for whom Robinson Auditorium was named. At the opposite end is a reproduction painting of the newly remodeled building that re-opened November 10, 2016, following a 28-month, \$70-million-dollar restoration, renovation and expansion led by the LRCVB.

LITTLE ROCK'S LONGEST RUNNING BROADWAY PRODUCTION



23 performances

Over 49,000 theatergoers

Economic benefit over \$11M

*figure based on Touring Broadway League report



Robinson Center received an

HONOR AWARD

from



AIA Arkansas

Emerging Professionals

RIVER MARKET 2018 PROGRAMMING HIGHLIGHTS

- **Bizarre Bazaar** – (March) New event featured unique shopping by local artists and craft vendors, drawing approximately 500 visitors and 40 vendors.

- **Jazz in the Park** – (Wednesday evenings in April & September) – in partnership with the Art Porter Music Education Foundation. This was year 6 for the series, with a total of 8 performances, each attracting an average of 500 attendees.

• Little Rock Farmers Market Special Promotions included:

- Opening Day Celebration
- Second Saturday Events such as Kid's Club – a program that educated kids about foods they can find at the market, Garden Gourmet Chef Series, and Rock City Rescue
- Red Cross Annual Blood Drive
- National Farmers' Market Day featured Cockrill's Critters for the kids
- New partnership with Arkansas Foodbank, Arkansas Hunger Relief Alliance and Society of St. Andrews conducted a fresh food drive monthly



- **Movies in the Park** – Wednesday evenings in June and July – featured 9 movies, several with special guests like Wonder Woman, Belle from

Beauty and the Beast as well as a partnership with Care for Animals to showcase adoptable pets during the showing of *Zootopia*. The series was also supported by several local businesses through sponsorships.

- **Think BIG Shop Small** – on Small Business Saturday in November, a block party style shopping event with approximately 50 local vendors and 2,500 in attendance

- **Locally Labeled Pavilion Party** – a free community event promoted the Locally Labeled passport program that highlighted all of the local adult beverage companies.

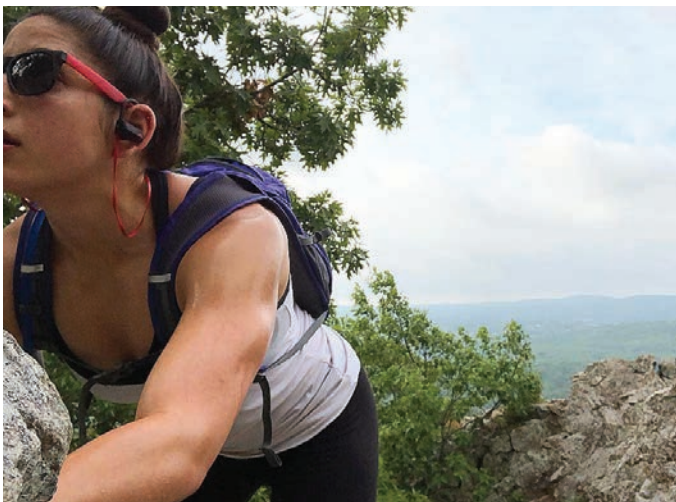
- **Reindeer on the River** – a one day family festival featured live reindeer, face painting, reindeer cookie creations, writing letters to Santa, making reindeer themed ornaments and crafts, and making reindeer dust.

- **CHOP the ROCK series** – a cooking show that features locally owned restaurants and chefs, attractions and more. Each episode airs on the City of Little Rock Access Channel, as well as LRCVB and City of Little Rock YouTube channels.

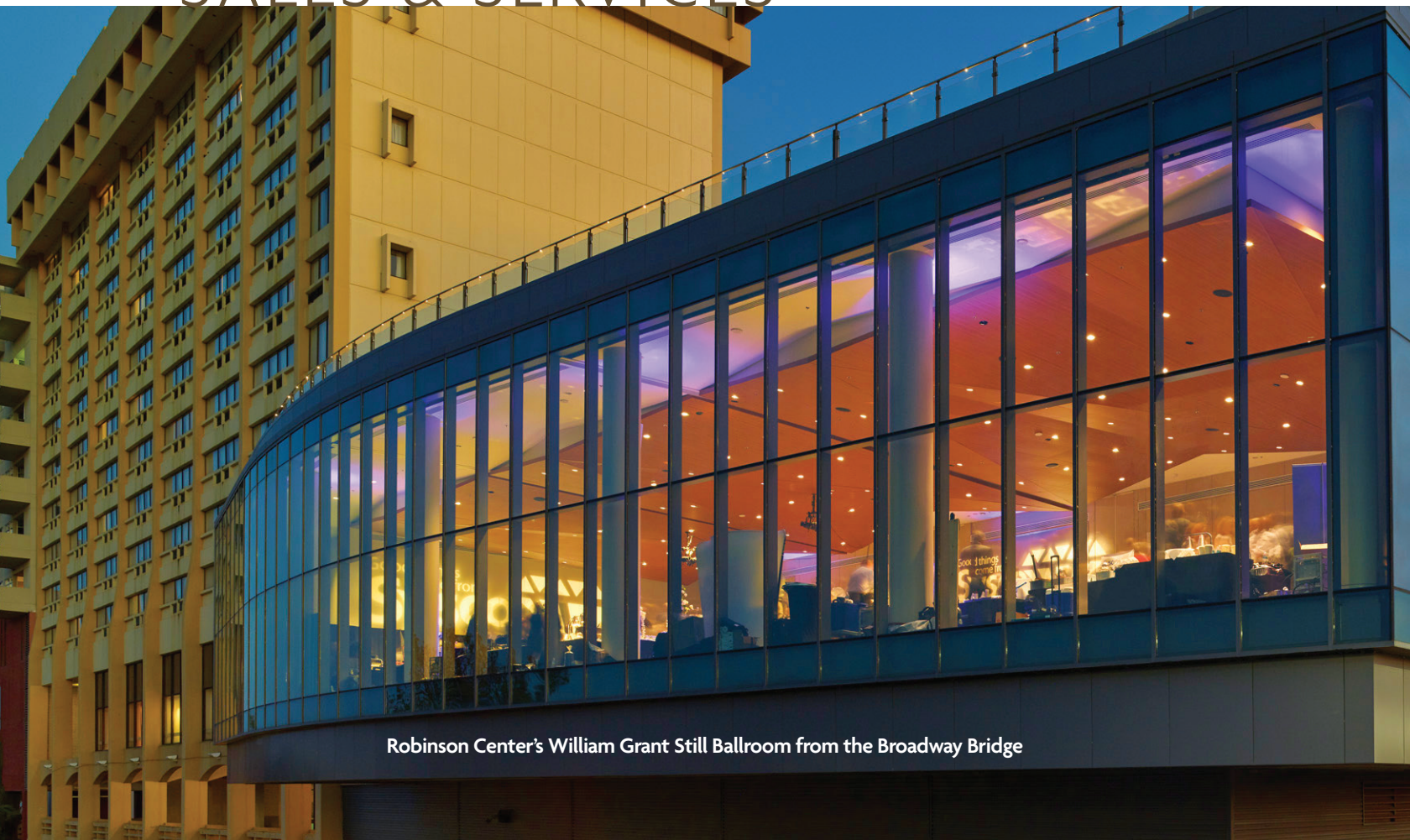
- Participated in **2nd Friday Art Night** several times through outreach, marketing and street vendor coordination.

- Hosted **American Idol** auditions, **Mr. Peanut**, a **Thanksgiving Red Cross blood drive**, **Arkansas Rice Federation promotional event**, and **Minors in Music** annual performance.

SOCIAL MEDIA MOMENTS: #LOVELITTLE ROCK



SALES & SERVICES



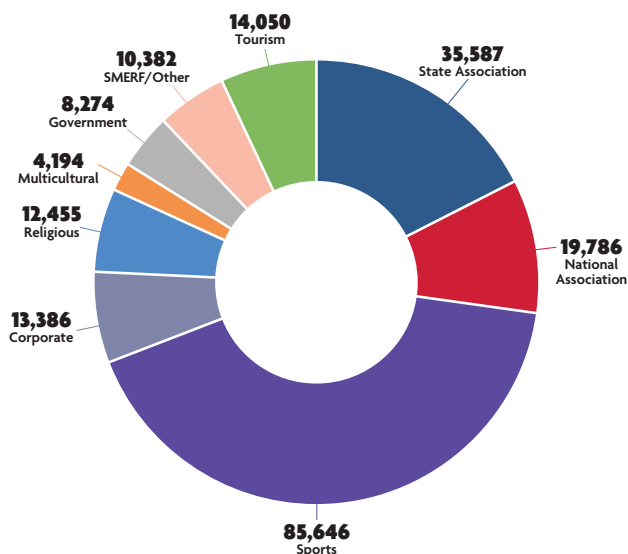
Robinson Center's William Grant Still Ballroom from the Broadway Bridge

2018 BIG WINS FOR NEW BUSINESS

ASSOCIATION	NAME OF MEETING	ROOM NIGHTS	ATTENDANCE
Southern Sustainable Agriculture Working Group	2019 Annual Convention	1,475	1,300
Southern Sustainable Agriculture Working Group	2020 Annual Convention	1,475	1,300
North American Association of State and Provincial Lotteries	2019 Annual Conference and Trade Show	1,892	800
Higher Education Web Professionals Association	2020 Annual Conference	2,150	800
Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies	2020 CALEA Conference	1,798	375
Association of Play Therapy, Inc.	2021 Annual Conference	1,620	1,000
International Institute of Municipal Clerks	2022 IIMC Annual Conference	2,840	1,000
International Association of Operative Millers	2021 IAOM Annual Conference & Expo	1,460	850
Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity Southwest Province	2019 Southwest Province Conference	937	500
Association of Southeastern Biologists	2022 ASB Annual Meeting	850	1,000
African Violet Society of America	2020 AVSA Annual Convention	839	250
Southwest Athletic Trainers Association	2021 Annual Convention	742	600
South Central Region, Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc.	2019 South Central Regional Meeting	589	1,500
American Association of Airport Executives – Southeast Chapter	2020 Southeast Chapter of Association of Airport Executives	550	300
National Association of Government Web Professionals	2020 NAGW National Conference	586	225



2018 ROOM NIGHTS BY MARKET SEGMENT



The Sales and Services division is dedicated to increasing the number of groups and group room nights in Little Rock, providing services to assist in customer satisfaction, and increasing attendance, as well as encouraging increased visitor spending in the destination.

The sales team is divided by market segments focused on Sports, Government and State Association, Multicultural, Religious, National/Regional Association, Corporate, Motorcoach, Reunions and Weddings. The sales team influences new account development through a proactive direct sales approach and participation at industry tradeshows. The team frequently invites decision makers to Little Rock to showcase the community as a potential destination for a meeting or event.

2018 Productivity & Business Mix

In 2018, the sales team secured 421 future meetings and events representing 189,716 guest room nights and 665,911 attendees. Additionally, the sales team distributed 368 future meetings and event leads to industry partners with the potential of 239,095 guest room nights and 498,727 attendees.

The sales team attended 18 meeting and convention tradeshows, and conducted 302 scheduled appointments. Additionally, the team attended three sports focused tradeshows and conducted 92 scheduled appointments. The tourism team worked to enhance Little Rock's exposure to the motor coach market, including international tour operators, at eight tradeshows.

LRCVB hosted 91 individual site visits for planning and site selections purposes. Little Rock also played host to the Going on Faith conference, welcoming 135 buyers to the capital city.

The destination service team provides a wide variety of services to planners hosting meetings and events in Little Rock. Services include temporary staffing, destination information booths, name badges, and convention materials. The team continues to enhance attendance building opportunities through social media and partnerships with organizations that have selected Little Rock. Over the past year, the team attended The International Cake Exploration Society's Annual Convention, the North American Association of State and Provincial Lotteries Annual Conference and the Church of God in Christ Convocation encouraging attendance at their upcoming events to Little Rock in 2019.

In 2018, the destination services team managed pre-registration for 17 groups with a total attendance of 5,612, provided a total of 1,556 registrar hours for 53 groups; and distributed 77,177 brochures to various meetings, conventions, weddings, reunions, and sports events. Overall, the team provided services for 223 groups with a total room contribution of 45,028 and projected economic impact of \$41,098,538.

2018 SALES BOOKINGS

ARRIVAL YEAR	# OF BOOKINGS	ROOM NIGHTS	ATTENDEES
2018	248	63,238	312,443
2019	121	72,560	213,342
2020	20	20,769	21,166
2021	11	11,696	54,700
2022+	21	21,453	64,260



2018 SITE VISITS

MONTH	SITE VISITS	POTENTIAL ATTENDEES	TOTAL POTENTIAL ROOM NIGHTS
JANUARY	5	825	967
FEBRUARY	5	1,425	618
MARCH	12	13,165	14,044
APRIL	12	2,860	5,148
MAY	9	5,925	6,445
JUNE	6	2,370	2,054
JULY	5	4,375	3,495
AUGUST	10	4,325	9,095
SEPTEMBER	5	1,625	1,426
OCTOBER	15	6,850	8,396
NOVEMBER	4	2,230	3,479
DECEMBER	3	2,285	1,912
2018 TOTALS	91	48,260	57,079

ECONOMIC IMPACT OF ACTUALIZED CONVENTION BUSINESS IN 2018

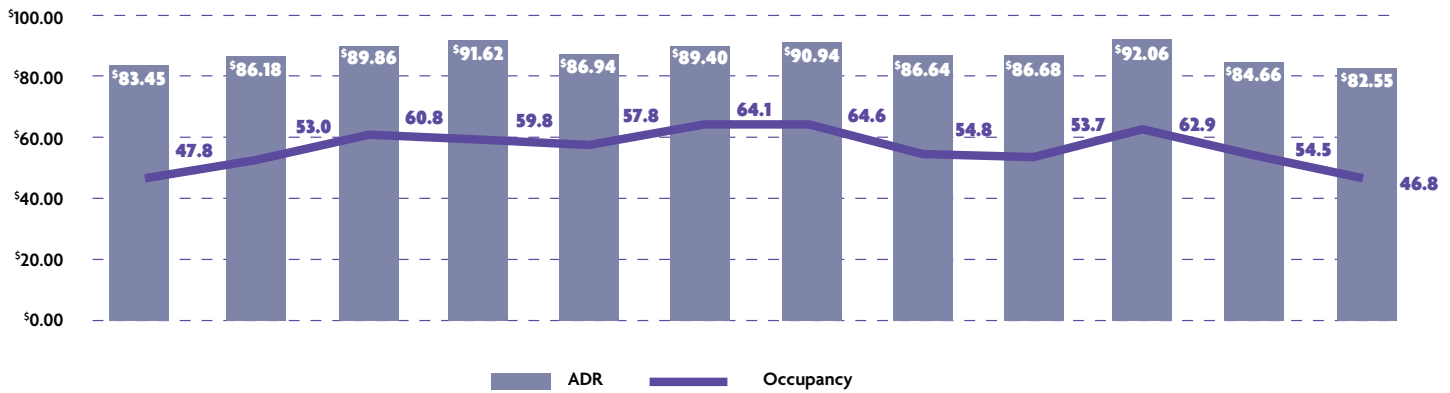
MONTH	ECONOMIC IMPACT
JANUARY	\$6,305,325
FEBRUARY	\$2,365,249
MARCH	\$14,916,125
APRIL	\$12,624,260
MAY	\$3,514,885
JUNE	\$8,701,858
JULY	\$15,604,784
AUGUST	\$4,424,876
SEPTEMBER	\$2,671,793
OCTOBER	\$9,119,128
NOVEMBER	\$4,962,832

**according to DI Economic Calculator*

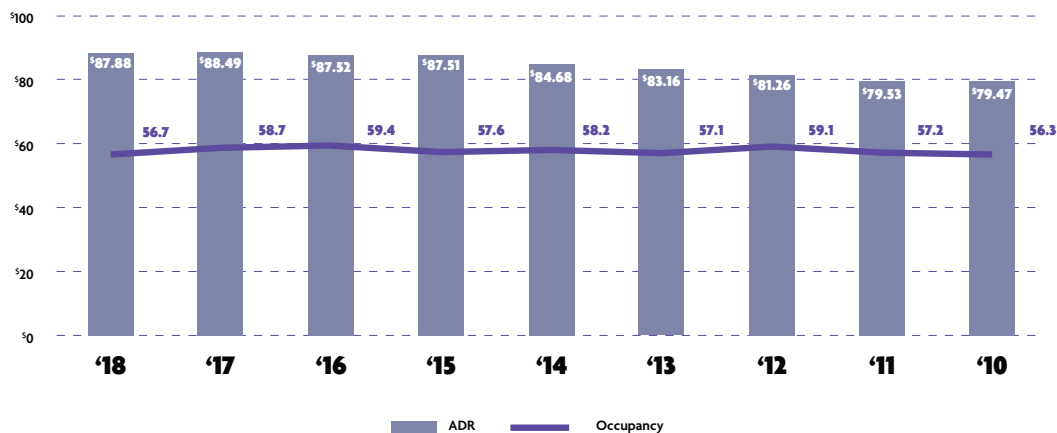
2018 COMPETITIVE MARKET HOTEL INFORMATION

	Occ %		ADR		RevPAR		Percent Change from YTD 2017					
	2018	2017	2018	2017	2018	2017	OCC	ADR	REVPAR	ROOM REV	ROOM AVAIL	ROOM SOLD
MEMPHIS, TN	64.9	65.2	96.38	95.92	62.56	62.50	-0.4	0.5	0.1	1.5	1.4	1.0
OKLAHOMA CITY, OK	62.5	62.2	83.72	82.47	52.34	51.28	0.6	1.5	2.1	8.1	5.9	6.5
TULSA, OK	56.1	54.4	80.25	80.48	45.03	43.80	3.1	-0.3	2.8	5.5	2.6	5.8
WICHITA, KS	58.4	56.5	82.10	83.45	47.93	47.15	3.3	-1.6	1.7	3.2	1.5	4.9
NORTHWEST AR	65.4	64.9	94.41	91.48	61.75	59.39	0.8	3.2	4.0	4.5	0.5	1.3
BIRMINGHAM, AL	65.7	64.5	90.82	90.00	59.67	58.10	1.8	0.9	2.7	4.2	1.5	3.3
MONTGOMERY, AL	67.4	63.4	83.89	80.52	56.58	51.05	6.4	4.2	10.8	12.7	1.7	8.2
LITTLE ROCK	56.7	58.7	87.88	88.63	49.86	52.05	-3.4	-0.8	-4.2	-1.2	3.1	-0.4
JACKSON, MS	56.7	58.8	80.22	80.12	45.47	47.07	-3.5	0.1	-3.4	-2.4	1.1	-2.5
NORTH LITTLE ROCK, AR	52.6	53.1	75.18	75.59	39.55	40.11	-0.9	-0.5	-1.4	-1.4	0.0	-0.9
HOT SPRINGS, AR	43.7	42.9	99.91	102.05	43.67	43.81	1.8	-2.1	-0.3	1.3	1.6	3.5
LITTLE ROCK DOWNTOWN	66.8	69.7	127.15	129.53	84.95	90.31	-4.2	-1.8	-5.9	-0.2	6.1	1.6

2018 OCCUPANCY & ADR BY MONTH



2018 OCCUPANCY & ADR BY YEAR



LITTLE ROCK CUSTOMER ADVISORY BOARD

The Sales and Services team hosted the second annual Customer Advisory Board meeting May 21-23, 2018. The Customer Advisory Board was established in 2017 to garner insight, opinion, and perspective from a select group of meeting planners on how they perceive Little Rock as a destination and how LRCVB can better position the city in the competitive marketplace of attracting conventions.

Upon arrival, the board members received updates on Little Rock followed by a destination tour. LRCVB facility operations team joined the conversation the following day, educating members on the unique role that LRCVB plays as the management organization for the Statehouse Convention Center, the Robinson Center, the River Market, and multiple parking facilities.

The board members viewed this as a definite strength, and competitive advantage, in attracting new conventions into Little Rock. Board members reviewed various marketing materials including the newly redesigned meetings website, bid proposal packets, facilities guides, and more. The meeting wrapped up on Wednesday morning discussing Little Rock's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.



TRADESHOW MARKETING

LRCVB enhanced its presence at several industry tradeshows in 2018 through a variety of marketing activities. Both pre-show and post-show promotions were sent to meeting planners in attendance, as well as sponsorships at target shows that provide additional exposure and brand awareness for Little Rock as a meeting destination.

ROCK STAR PROGRAM

LRCVB launched a new sales initiative to bring additional group business to Little Rock. Meetings, conventions and events brought to Little Rock by local citizens have significant impact on the local economy. Because of this impact, LRCVB launched the Rock Star program to encourage residents who travel to other cities to attend conventions, meetings, or events to bring these events home to Little Rock.



The program was unveiled at a press conference followed by an awards luncheon on the stage at the Robinson Performance Hall, in which 41 residents were recognized for their positive contributions in steering new meeting and event business to the City of Little Rock. These individuals belong to a variety of clubs, fraternal organizations, professional associations, faith-based organizations, and sporting groups, and they have worked diligently to bring a meeting, convention or event to the city. Annually, LRCVB will honor resident Rock Stars for their positive contributions toward recruiting new meeting and event business to Little Rock.



2018 LITTLE ROCK ROCK STAR HONOREES

Mayor Mark Stodola
2018 National League of Cities

Bruce Moore
2017 National Forum for
Black Public Administrators

Joan Adcock
2020 Neighborhoods USA

Clint & Marla Albright
Annual Busch Softball Classic Tournament

Laura Bailey
2018 Intoximeters Users Group
Conference

Johnny Bale, Mike & Elvira Thompson
2019 National Corvette Caravan

Rob Beadel, Max Braswell
2019 Sustainable Forestry Initiative

Larry Bilon on behalf of Wilma Keller
Annual Ozark Tournament

**Bishop Frank J. Anderson,
Bishop D.L. Lindsey, Sr.,
Bishop Jewel R. Withers Jr.,
Bishop Junius Williams,
Bishop Robert Rudolph, Jr.**
2019 Church of God in Christ
Men Perfecting Men

Bishop Michael Mitchell
2020 African Methodist Episcopal Church
Holy Convocation

Beverly Buchanan
2019 National Association of State
Community Services Program
Annual Conference

Janet Carson
2018 Azalea Society of America
Annual National Convention

Daniel Cockrell
Association of Living History, Farm and
Agriculture Museums 2019
Southeast Regional Meeting

Tim Collier
2018 Dixie Pawnbrokers
Annual Convention and Expo

Chad Cook
2017 Caterpillar User Equipment Manager
Meeting

Michael DeAngelis
2018 Geological Society of
America South Central Region

Karen Fetzner
2018 Rotary International
Executive Director Conference

**Interim Police Chief Alice Fulk,
Lt. Mary Cook**
2020 Commission on Accreditation
for Law Enforcement Association

Deanna Garretson
United States Tennis Association Southern
and National Tournaments

B.J. Golden
Annual Little Rock Juniors Volley in the Rock
Tournament

Scott Greenwood
2017 Junior US Open Water Ski Championships

Andrew Guffey
2019 National Agriculture in the
Classroom Annual Conference

Michael Henderson
2018 G&T Accounting and Finance
Association Annual Conference

Bill Ingram
Annual Real Deal in the Rock
Tournament

Brian Marr on behalf of Kristen Marr
Little Rock Lacrosse Annual Laxfest
Tournament

Bobby Mathews
2019 Southwest Regional Chapter
American Association of Physicists in Medicine

Ron Mathieu
2020 American Association of
Airport Executives SE Chapter

Rachelle Miller
2020 Annual Mid-South Education
Research Association

Dr. Grover Miller
2018 American Chemical Society
Southwest Regional Meeting

Neil Morton, Sun Lee
ATA International Annual World Expo

Autumn Parker
National Academic Advising Association
2019 July Summer Institute

Gary Patel
AAHIOA Gulf Regional Chapter
2018 LPS of USA, Inc.

Amanda Smith
Miss High School America

Dr. Roderick Smothers
Philander Smith College
2019 Social Justice Convention

Mary Kate Snow
2019 SW Association Student
Assistance Programs

Chip Stearns
United States Tennis Association
Annual Southern 16s Closed Championships

Kathy Tatum
2019 Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc.
South Central Regional Meeting

Kristin Veasey-Knox
2018 National Association of
University Women National Convention

Diane Whitbey
2022 International Institute
of Municipal Clerks (IIMC)

Judy Winters
2017-2019 Sweet Adelines
Regional Competition

Bishop Woosley
2019 National Association of
State and Provincial Lotteries

ISCG Derrick Young
Enlisted Association of National Guard
49th Annual Conference 2020

**Randy Zellers, Trey Reid,
Jeff Williams, Jill Rohrbach**
2019 Outdoor Association of America
Annual Conference

MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS



The Marketing and Communications division promotes a positive image of Little Rock as a travel destination through targeted advertising, promotions, collateral materials, and public relations efforts. In addition, the team manages all website marketing, social media, special event promotions and sponsorships and the management of visitor information centers. The division works to increase the city's profile and awareness as a travel destination by promoting its ongoing development, unique features and awards.

To improve overall marketing, advertising and digital outreach, LRCVB entered into agreements with three agencies in 2018. Paradise Advertising and Marketing of St. Petersburg, Fla., and Mangan Holcomb Partners of Little Rock will work jointly to develop marketing and media plans for national and local placements, respectively. TwoSix Digital of Brighton, Mich., completed a web and digital audit and developed a strategic content development plan. These efforts will guide the social media and digital campaigns in the future. Two of the three agencies have extensive experience and expertise working with Destination Marketing Organizations (DMOs) while the third has deep local knowledge. Reinforced by these new additions to the LRCVB, the Marketing and Communications team will be much better positioned to mount integrated and trackable campaigns in the future.

Travel Journalists

LRCVB hosts a variety of media, influencers, and travel journalists to help tell the Little Rock story in a genuine way and increase the awareness of the destination. In 2018 LRCVB worked with 21 individuals:

- **Robert Annis** (freelancer) – *Rails to Trails Magazine*
- **Ashli Brehm** (blogger) – *Baby on the Brehm*
- **Eric Althoff** (freelancer) – *Napa Valley Register*
- **Nancy Floyd, Jen McDonald** – *Taste of the South Magazine*
- **Coast2CoastWithKids** (blogger)
- **Elle Hardy** – *Thrillest.com*
- **Jeff & Crystal Bryant** (bloggers) – *OurChangingLives.com*
- **Pip & Luke Jones** – *Pip and the City*
- **Peter Hannaford & Steve Hartridge** – *Travel South USA/ADPT*
- **Emma Reynolds** – *Brand USA/ADPT*
- **Erik Hastings** – *Erik the Travel Guy*
- **Karen Off Mayer** (freelance) – *DeSoto Magazine*
- **Margaret Littman** – *Moon Publishing*
- **Sheree Williams** – *Cuisine Noir Magazine*
- **Lori Blaylock** (blogger) – *SouthernerSays.com*
- **Marzio Mian & Nanni Fontana** – *Travel South USA/ADPT*
- **Lia Grabowski** – *The Local Palate Magazine*

International Outreach

Little Rock has great product offerings that appeal to international visitors, and LRCVB continues to participate in strategic partnerships to increase brand awareness abroad. For several years LRCVB has partnered with Brand USA, the official organization dedicated to marketing the United States as a premier travel destination, to increase the city's profile through various programs. In the spring, LRCVB launched a new destination video developed in partnership with Brand USA's Native Traveler project.

Through the power of social media LRCVB brought in a top influencer from Wales, United Kingdom. New Little Rock videos caught the eye of a blogger with more than 16,000 Instagram followers alone. What began as a Twitter conversation resulted in a week's visit to Little Rock in September from Pip and Luke Jones or "Pip and the City."



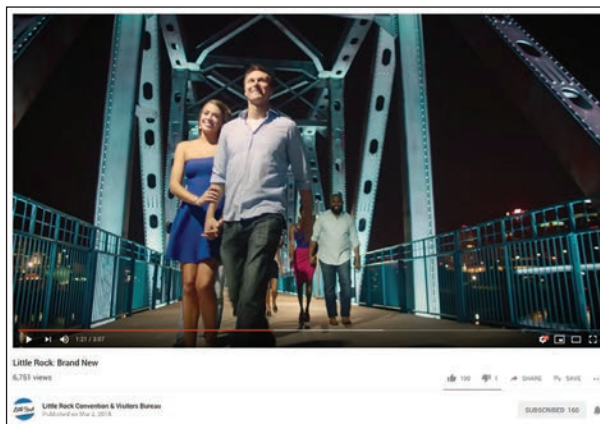
Children's splash pad at Riverfront Park

New in 2018, the Arkansas Department of Parks & Tourism partnered with Travel South USA and Brand USA to hire a consultant to work with key journalists and group travel leaders in several European markets. Additionally, Little Rock co-hosted a destination familiarization trip with eight international tour operators following the Travel South International tradeshow.

LRCVB's President & CEO, Gretchen Hall was invited to participate as a keynote speaker for the Lviv Convention Bureau at a tourism conference in Lviv, Ukraine. Gretchen highlighted Little Rock's product, discussed trends in the meetings industry and ways LRCVB partners with the local hotel community as well as highlights from the "Rock Star" program.

Public Relations Activities

The communications team distributed 33 press releases, both locally and nationally, that featured activities such as Movies in the Park and major destination initiatives like the launch of the U.S. Civil Rights Trail.



In March, a new destination video was launched that showcased a reinvigorated Little Rock. It was a montage of local highlights set to recording artist Ben Rector's hit song, "Brand New" featuring the capital city's culinary scene, revitalization initiatives, outdoor adventure opportunities, arts, culture, and much more.

Little Rock Brand Training

The Little Rock Ambassador Brand Training continued in 2018 with 14 sessions provided to 99 hospitality employees that included LRCVB staff, hoteliers, museums and attractions. These interactive courses focus on tourism's importance, the local economic impact, the LRCVB Brand Promise and principles, and how all citizens can be ambassadors for the destination.

Atlanta Food & Wine Festival

For the second year, LRCVB, along with several local chefs and beverage specialists attended the Atlanta Food & Wine Festival to engage with the 123 credentialed journalists, bloggers, and influencers who attended the festival. In 2018, Visit Bentonville and Arkansas Department of Parks & Tourism partnered with LRCVB to expand the "Savor Arkansas" presence at the festival.

Participation remained geared toward regional and national media and food bloggers who attended the festival. These events included the kickoff event "Destination Delicious," as well as a private breakfast for approximately 30 journalists. In addition, several local chefs taught individual classes.

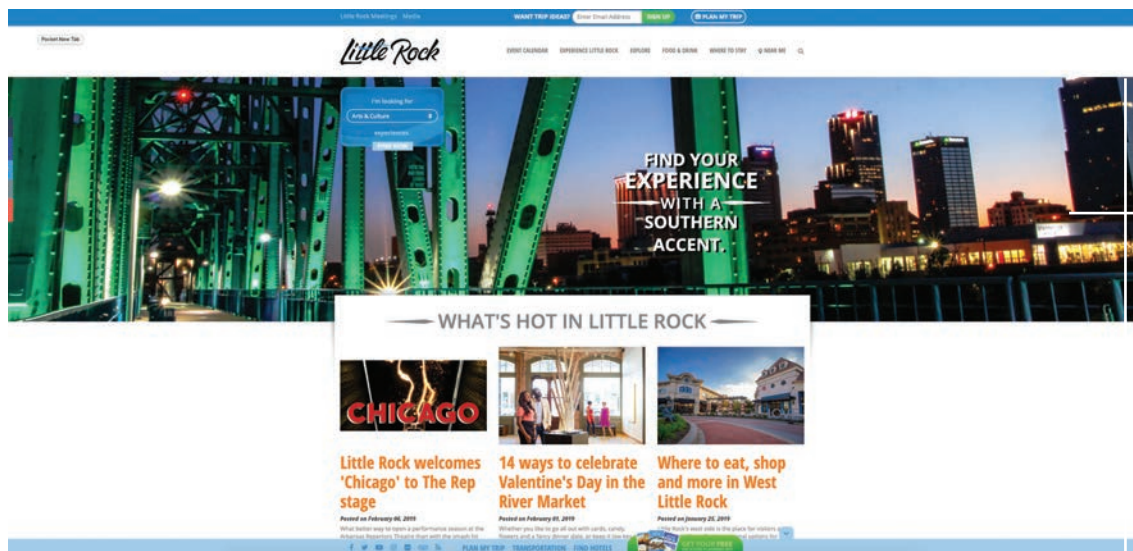
Visitor Information Centers & Collateral Distribution

LRCVB strives to provide exceptional visitor experiences with a focus on true hospitality through helpful destination representatives at local visitor centers.

Although the number of guests utilizing visitor centers continues to decrease nationally due to online technology and other information outlets, LRCVB believes that visitor centers continue to fill a need and personalize the visitor experience.

In 2018, the Little Rock visitor centers assisted almost 48,000 guests. The LRCVB staffs locations at the Bill and Hillary Clinton National Airport, Shop the Rock in the River Market District, the Statehouse Convention Center, Robinson Center and the Cromwell Building.

Additionally, LRCVB provides support for the Visitor Information Center at Historic Curran Hall. LRCVB also produces a number of brochures and collateral materials for distribution to help visitors explore all that Little Rock has to offer.



The division manages:

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

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

DIGITAL MARKETING

Due to increasing dependency on the internet, the destination website is the most valuable marketing asset for the overall success of a city.

In 2017, LRCVB launched a new fully responsive, mobile-first, website redesign. Much time was spent in 2018 optimizing the site for Google search and general SEO (search engine optimization). LittleRock.com

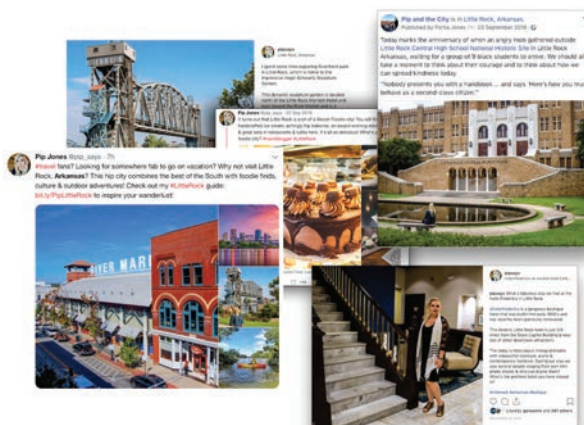
A new website was launched for Statehouse Convention Center. The site highlights the convention complex, and adjacent Marriott Hotel, and provides event organizers with more technical information related to hosting events, room capacities and facility capabilities. StatehouseConventionCenter.com

Updates are also being made to the LittleRockMeetings.com site and a reskin of RobinsonCenter.com is expected to launch the first quarter of 2019.

SOCIAL MEDIA

LRCVB has accumulated over 1.3 million social media fans and followers, with a total of nine accounts, across three social platforms. In 2018 LRCVB retained TwoSix Digital to conduct a full digital and social media audit of all LRCVB platforms, assess their effectiveness, and create a strategy and tactical content plan for future implementation.

- Gained 5,827 new social media fans and followers
- 9.26 million impressions on social media and 548,000+ social engagements
- Little Rock page accumulated more than 30,500 minutes of video viewed
- Little Rock's Broadway Series reached 84,000 people on Facebook, accumulated 25,750+ video views and 3,700 engagements from fans



TRAFFIC BY THE NUMBERS

- 559,176** page views
- 216,493** unique visitors
- 81%** new sessions
- 1:44** average session duration

TOP 5 OUT-OF-STATE MARKETS

- Texas (17.24% of total traffic)
- Tennessee (8.36%)
- Illinois (2.43%)
- Missouri (1.93%)
- California (1.65%)

TOP CITIES FOR TRAFFIC (OUTSIDE OF ARKANSAS)

1. Dallas, TX
2. Memphis, TN
3. Nashville, TN
4. Chicago, IL
5. Houston, TX
6. New York, NY
7. Atlanta, GA
8. Ashburn, VA
9. Oklahoma City, OK
10. Boardman, OR
11. Kansas City, MO



TOP 5 PAGES ON LITTlerock.com

- LittleRock.com (home) (12.88%)
- Event Calendar (5.95%)
- Experience Little Rock (2.28%)
- Free Things to Do (1.76%)
- Little Rock Annual Festivals and Events (1.24%)

TOP 5 MOST READ BLOGS

- Little Rock historic site makes Top 10
- U.S. Civil Rights Trail debuts today
- Feel brand new in Little Rock
- World Cheese Dip Championships
- Jazz in the Park returns

55.56% OF TOTAL TRAFFIC COMES FROM GOOGLE SEARCH

34.41% OF TOTAL TRAFFIC COMES FROM UTILIZING THE DIRECT WEB ADDRESS

LRCVB SIGNATURE EVENTS



LOCALLY LABELED PROGRAM

The passport program launched in October 2015 to highlight the growing number of breweries, along with the state's first legal distillery since Prohibition and several wineries located in Central Arkansas. The passport encourages people to visit the various businesses and receive a sticker in their passport.

Prizes are given to those who collect a certain number of stickers. The passport currently features: 11 breweries, one distillery, and two wineries. Since starting the program, 24,000 passports have been distributed. Of those returned for prizes, visitors were from 33 states, Puerto Rico, and Norway.

LOCALLY LABELED PAVILION PARTY

The annual party is a crowd favorite. Held in the River Market pavilions, the party features passport partner booths, samples, and products. Along with live entertainment and activities, this free event draws hundreds of attendees and celebrates Central Arkansas's popular adult beverage offerings.

NATIONAL TRAVEL & TOURISM WEEK

Celebrated the first week of May, special events and promotions are designed to



promote the value of the tourism industry.

In celebration of the 2018 National Travel and Tourism Week, LRCVB, the City of Little Rock, Quapaw Quarter Association, and the Arkansas Department of Parks & Tourism hosted a joint Travel Rally Day press event Tuesday, May 8, at the Little Rock Visitor Center at Historic Curran Hall to celebrate the importance of tourism in Arkansas and the capital city.

The national theme of "Travel Then & Now" looked at travel trends over time. At the press event, a commemorative time capsule filled with objects representing past and present travel-related items was buried at Curran Hall. Capsule contents included: a May 8, 1918, *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette* newspaper, Garman GPS, iPod nano, a mobile phone, Arkansas state highway map, local city maps, electric streetcar ride passes, thumb drive with various Little Rock photos, Curran Hall brochure, native

hyacinth bean pods, and a letter to citizens.

The capsule is scheduled to be opened May 18, 2052 to coincide with the 50th anniversary of Curran Hall's 2002 opening. Originally built in 1842, Curran Hall was saved from demolition in 1996, restored to its former glory, and in 2002 was dedicated as Little Rock's first official visitor information center.

The site was a fitting representation of travel and tourism's past and present, and an appropriate time capsule location.

HOSPITALITY MARKETING MIXERS

These quarterly meetings are held for area hospitality partners to discuss happenings in Little Rock, destination development initiatives, co-op, and packaging opportunities and industry news.

LITTLE ROCK FARMERS' MARKET

One of the state's largest outdoor fresh produce markets is hosted at the River Market pavilions each Saturday, May through September.

MOVIES IN THE PARK

The free family event provides a variety of options from animated favorites to comedy and acclaimed drama each Wednesday evening in June and July.



JAZZ IN THE PARK

Free weekly concerts feature local jazz artists performing in Riverfront Park's History Pavilion each Wednesday evening in April and September. Beverage sale proceeds benefit the Art Porter Music Education Foundation, which honors the legacies of the local father-son music legends, and provides scholarships to Arkansas students pursuing music careers.

CHOP THE ROCK

A series featuring local chefs, food festivals, and partners highlighting delicious recipes, local produce, cooking tips and more. All shows air on LRCVB and the City's You Tube channel and LRTV - the city access cable network.

BIG BOO-SEUM BASH

Hosted by the Greater Little Rock Museum and Cultural Attractions Consortium and LRCVB, the free event provides a safe environment for kids and families to enjoy fun Halloween activities and treats, while experiencing several of the wonderful museums and cultural attractions in the downtown area. Thirteen organizations participated in 2018.

BIG JINGLE JUBILEE HOLIDAY PARADE

This free community event is hosted each year in conjunction with the lighting of the Arkansas State Capitol and fireworks display. Grand marshals for the 2018 parade were two live reindeer.

They were the center of attention at the Reindeer on the River meet and greet the following day at the River Market pavilions.



DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT



UNITED STATES **CIVIL RIGHTS TRAIL**

U.S. CIVIL RIGHTS TRAIL

January 15, 2018, marked the launch of the U.S. Civil Rights Trail with more than 100 historic sites across 14 states and the District of Columbia. Little Rock boasts six of those sites, with Little Rock Central High School National Historic Site noted as a Top Ten Trail destination. The other sites featured on the trail include: Arkansas Civil Rights Heritage Trail, Clinton Presidential Center, Daisy Bates House, Little Rock Nine Memorial at the Arkansas State Capitol "Testament" and the Mosaic Templars Cultural Center.

ARKANSAS ARTS CENTER IMPROVEMENTS

The Arkansas Arts Center concept design features 127,000 square feet of renovated and new spaces. New areas include a versatile indoor/outdoor restaurant overlooking MacArthur Park, a new north entrance which reveals the original 1937 Museum of Fine Arts façade, a second floor of galleries, expanded art studios and art school gallery, a new drawing research center and conservation lab, a dedicated black box theatre, and expanded education spaces. A flexible "Cultural Living Room" will serve as an extension of the galleries, event space, or community gathering space with bar and lounge seating enjoying a view north across downtown Little Rock. The center is set to close in fall of 2019 to commence construction, and the project is scheduled for completion in 2022.



ELIZABETH ECKFORD COMMEMORATIVE BENCH

Just across the street from Little Rock Central High School, the Elizabeth Eckford Bench was unveiled on September 4, 2018, exactly 61 years after Elizabeth

Eckford sought shelter from the mob of students that were protesting the integration of Central High School on September 4, 1957. The bench is a replica of the original public city bus bench that stood there in 1957 and will serve as a visual element of the walking tour and a symbolic connection for visitors with the story of that day. Using the mobile app, visitors can record their reflections on the story while seated at the bench and share their narratives.

MACARTHUR MUSEUM IMPROVEMENTS

The MacArthur Museum of Arkansas Military History in downtown Little Rock underwent a \$1.5 million improvement project in 2018. The unique city-owned museum, which is also the birthplace of legendary General Douglas MacArthur, closed to the public in April, underwent a remarkable modernization of the climate-control systems within the nearly 180-year-old historic structure, and re-opened to great fanfare in September. Upgrades to exhibit lighting along with new interior paint dramatically improved the visitor experience. An additional grant of \$100,000 from the Department of Arkansas Heritage was used to reconstruct exterior porches and stabilize structural supports. The building's grand re-opening coincided with efforts to commemorate the 125th anniversary of the creation of MacArthur Park.

100 THINGS TO DO IN LITTLE ROCK BEFORE YOU DIE, 2ND EDITION

This guidebook cites local historic landmarks, attractions, shops, restaurants and more that every visitor and resident should visit in his or her lifetime. Written by Little Rock native Celia Anderson and LRCVB President and CEO Gretchen Hall, the second edition of the *100 Things to Do in Little Rock Before You Die* is a great guide to central Arkansas's long list of attractions, eateries, shops, historical landmarks and more. Little Rock is home to one of only 14 presidential libraries, the nation's only dedicated purse museum, an international organization focused on ending world hunger and poverty, and a National Park. It's also the birthplace of cheese dip and boasts a James Beard and Michelin Star award-winning chef inside the city's oldest historic boutique hotel. Grab your copy and start exploring today!



SMART KIOSKS

Thanks to modern technology and a partnership with the City of Little Rock, Smart City Media and Duke Energy One, Little Rock welcomed smart kiosks to its downtown area. The interactive kiosks provide information regarding attractions, nearby restaurants, special events, and much more. Additionally, each kiosk is a Wi-Fi hotspot, connects directly with LRPD and offers video capabilities to increase public safety. The kiosks link the city to the people, connecting the dots in real time, and providing a great experience for visitors and residents. Don't forget to take a photo using the selfie station while you're at the kiosk. You can have it sent directly to your smartphone!

VERIZON ARENA NAME CHANGE & NEW LOUNGE

Verizon Arena, an 18,000 seat sports and entertainment venue in North Little Rock, had some exciting improvements and announcements in 2018. The facility opened its newest premium offering, The Legends Lounge, where patrons receive early entry, dinner and drinks. They also installed a 16'w x 14'h new digital scoreboard that will enhance the fan experience during sporting events. Verizon Arena will also undergo a name change in October 2019 to Simmons Bank Arena. The deal struck by Arkansas-based Simmons Bank and the arena exceeded \$10 million and has a 15-year term.

OUTDOOR ADVENTURE UPDATE

Arkansas's 73rd natural area opened in the spring of 2018. Rattlesnake Ridge affords locals and visitors a 400-acre playground for hiking, mountain biking, rock climbing and unique flora and fauna experiences. Located minutes from downtown Little Rock and just over a mile from Pinnacle Mountain State Park, Rattlesnake Ridge has become a favorite spot for adventure seekers. Pinnacle Mountain State Park has improvements to their mountain biking trails planned for 2019, offering serious shredders some great runs near all the amenities metropolitan Little Rock has to offer.



EAST VILLAGE

One of Little Rock's oldest neighborhoods is now the city's newest destination for fun. East Village features tree-lined streets and cool re-purposed warehouses that now house trendy restaurants and bars. The Rail Yard is home to an urban beer garden, food trucks, fun and games for all and Count Porkula Barbecue, for some of the best eats you'll find. Cathead's Diner brings big-city culinary quality to a hip diner delight. Lost 40 and Rebel Kettle breweries create some of the best beer around, and serve up dependably delicious fare. Just east of I-30, East Village is also home to festivals and events, Heifer International, and nearby the Clinton Center and one terminus of the Rock Region Metro's streetcar line, which offers free rides throughout 2019.

HOTEL DEVELOPMENTS

Little Rock's lodging inventory continued to grow with one new hotel opening in 2018 and several more properties under construction, or announced, for future development. Tru by Hilton Little Rock West, located off I-30 at the Gateway Town Center, seconds from the Outlets of Little Rock shopping center, features 82 rooms and modern amenities that travelers will love.

FUTURE OUTLOOK



"Straight Lines on a Round World," outside Statehouse Convention Center

LRCVB enters 2019 with new commission members including newly elected Mayor Frank Scott, Jr., and Yogesh Asudani. The immediate future will be focused on the final years of the 2016-2020 Strategic Plan and the detailed 2019 Business Plan.

Much time will be spent implementing marketing initiatives with our new agencies, Paradise Advertising & Marketing, Mangan Holcomb Partners, and TwoSix Digital. We will examine and enhance all brand messaging, advertising and public relations efforts. This includes launching a more targeted and strategic effort around paid advertising. We will also increase digital and video marketing efforts, and fully utilize the personalization technology afforded by our new website platform.

The communications team will continue to develop niche angles, including those that appeal to travelers interested in culinary trends, the arts, outdoor adventure, multicultural highlights and the city's historical attributes. In partnership with Arkansas Department of Parks & Tourism, LRCVB will increase our targeting of international media as well as group tour operators and FIT market development.

New deployments of the sales team will allow us to cover additional market segments, and a new sales CRM system will increase our communications with both clients and partners as well as creating enhanced marketing opportunities. New sales endeavors like the "Rock Star" program, expanded tradeshow efforts and targeted marketing to meeting professionals are also priorities for 2019.

We are excited about the potential for more concerts at the First Security Amphitheater, under a booking contract agreement with a nationally known promoter. In addition, we look forward to working with the City

of Little Rock and consultants to re-imagine Ottenheimer Hall and bring increased visitation to Little Rock's downtown entertainment district.

The future for the destination, as a whole, revolves around infrastructure. With the I-30 crossing project on the short-term horizon, planning for future parking options in the downtown and convention corridor areas is critical. The improvements to the Arkansas Arts Center, Arkansas Military History Museum and MacArthur Park will certainly raise our profile and provide a wonderful tourism boost once complete. Sports continues to be one of our most critical sales segments. Unfortunately, Central Arkansas is sorely lacking both indoor and outdoor sports facilities that would be instrumental in attracting state, regional and national tournaments. Research proves that millions of sports participants, and their families and friends, travel each year for competitions. Little Rock is perfectly positioned to capture a significant share of that market with our family-friendly accommodations, attractions and amenities. For that reason, we would like to see the community focus on large scale development of youth sports facilities going forward.

The renovation of Robinson Center has demonstrated that a well thought out and carefully executed expansion and revitalization can produce very positive results. While the Statehouse Convention Center serves our needs now, it's not too early to begin thinking of a similarly large-scale expansion for that facility in the future. Such a project would require urban planning studies, potential new market identification, hotel room development and infrastructure support.

Working together with city leadership, committed partners and our dedicated staff, LRCVB will continue to position Little Rock as a premier travel destination.

Little Rock

CONVENTION &
VISITORS BUREAU

2019 LRCVB Business Plan

Continuing focus on the comprehensive
2016-2020 Strategic Plan; the following
outlines areas of concentration for 2019:



SALES & SERVICES

- Finalize full audit of current CRM system & implement a new CRM system that will enhance tracking, client outreach, and partner communication
- Develop consistent marketing messaging and sales support materials
- Expand pre and post tradeshow sales and marketing efforts
- Increase proactive sales outreach, focusing on new business development and prospecting goals
- Continue implementation of the local “Rock Star” program and host annual awards luncheon
- Host 3rd annual Customer Advisory Board (CAB) meeting
- Increase frequency of hotel DOS meetings
- Create a name badge program with local merchants for conference attendees to encourage increased visitor spending
- Partner with select destinations to create multi-city itineraries for tourism groups
- Work with large festivals and events on marketing and attendance building opportunities

MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS

- Work with new marketing agencies (Paradise Advertising & Marketing, Inc. and Mangan Holcomb Partners) to increase overall destination awareness and visitation
- Manage the integrated campaigns for Spring/Summer and Fall/Winter visitation with new marketing agencies
- Manage annual calendar for editorial, advertisements, website content, social media, special projects, media campaigns, etc.
- Target and host key influencers and travel journalists to Little Rock for increased exposure
- Support the sales division with marketing and PR assistance to grow convention business
- Develop tracking, goals, metrics and reporting for PR, social media, digital and advertising efforts
- Invest in new market research to identify visitor profiles and new feeder markets for leisure travel
- Focus on increased strategic storytelling and content creation
- Develop a checklist and process for ongoing website audit and management
- Utilize website personalization technology for targeted messaging
- Work with Convention Services to create pre/post e-marketing for meetings and conventions to encourage extended stays
- Implement 2019 social media strategy developed by TwoSix Digital
- Improve internal job processes and time management

FACILITY OPERATIONS

- Effectively manage capital projects throughout LRCVB managed facilities (20+ projects in excess of \$1.5 million)
- Finalize concert booking contract for First Security Amphitheater
- Increase safety and security training for staff
- Update all facility evacuation plans and emergency procedure manuals
- Invest in market research to quantify the total impact of the LRCVB-managed facilities
- Work with consultant to develop a concept plan regarding the future of Ottenheimer Hall and LRCVB's management agreement at the River Market
- Review signage at all facilities

FINANCE & ADMINISTRATION

- Manage 2019 capital project procurement processes
- Work with all departments to complete DMAP accreditation
- Evaluate the need for a new tax software system
- Implement new revenue recognition standards and prepare for new lease standards effective in 2020
- Update forms and SOPs across the organization, moving toward more paperless initiatives
- Continue to implement regulations for facilitating platforms (i.e. Airbnb, VRBO, in-home dining, etc.)
- Work with the City of Little Rock regarding food truck regulations, permitting and code enforcement
- Expand training opportunities across all lines of the organization and institute organization wide training calendar
- Evaluate employee recruitment methods and enhance orientation process for new hires
- Develop a formal employee recognition program for those that exemplify LRCVB's brand promise core values

DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT TO MONITOR & SUPPORT

- Improve downtown parking
- Arkansas Arts Center/MacArthur Park redevelopment
- Development of various sports facilities
- I-30 expansion project
- Increase outdoor product offerings like mountain biking trails and natural areas
- River Market capital improvements, concert series and management agreement

**LIFE
IS BETTER
WITH A
SOUTHERN
ACCENT.**

Little Rock

LittleRock.com