

YAKIMA VALLEY TOURISM ANNUAL REPORT

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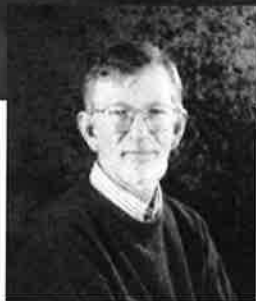


YAKIMA
VALLEY

LEADERSHIP MESSAGE

On behalf of the Board of Directors and staff of Yakima Valley Tourism, we are proud to present our 2018 Annual Report.

Our organization is responsible for promoting the community as an attractive travel destination while building the image of Yakima and the Yakima Valley as a dynamic place to live and work. Through our efforts, we champion a stronger economy and provide opportunity for our residents.



John Baule
2018 Board Chair



John Cooper
President & CEO

Tourism is a vital industry and employer for our community:

\$410 MILLION
TRAVELERS SPENT \$410 MILLION IN YAKIMA COUNTY IN 2017*



3,850 JOBS SUPPORTED

YAKIMA CONVENTION CENTER

The Yakima Convention Center is a premier meeting and community gathering facility in the region and is a major generator of economic activity for Yakima.

IN 2018, THE CENTER WAS ABLE TO BREAK ALL RECORDS IN EARNED REVENUE.

56

CONVENTIONS HELD

91,098

OVERNIGHT ATTENDEES & DAY VISITORS HOSTED

\$10.8 MILLION
IN DIRECT SPENDING FROM CONVENTION ATTENDEES

ON THE HORIZON

To remain competitive, the City of Yakima has approved building an 18,500-square-foot addition to the Center over the next two years. This will double the exhibit hall and add more lobby and storage space.

*latest figures available

CONVENTION & GROUP SALES

A major charge of Yakima Valley Tourism is to recruit and serve conventions and groups to our community. These visitors contribute to the economy and fabric of the city.

139

LEADS
GENERATED

18,475

FUTURE ROOM NIGHTS BOOKED

14

NEW CONVENTION
ACCOUNTS OPENED

87

FUTURE DAYS
BOOKED AT THE YAKIMA
CONVENTION CENTER

CONVENTION & GROUP SERVICES

Our Volunteer Information Specialists logged 115 hours and assisted 275 convention delegates, providing information about the community.

SALES ACTIVITIES

We hosted 140 state meeting professionals and associates at the 50th Annual Convention of the Washington State Association of Executives (WSAE). It was a rousing success.

“ Compliments to our many hosts...whose teams provided a dream experience for everyone. The conference attracted members from all corners of the state along with 15 past presidents. The food was gourmet and the people we met were priceless. Yakima provided fantastic spaces for us to gather, learn and share, which is so important to our association community. We are grateful to everyone who contributed to this successful and most memorable conference experience.”
Brit Kramer, CAE WSAE Executive Director

Olympia-based meeting planners are a vital source of group business for the Valley. To attract these customers, we hosted a networking event in the greater Olympia area with 32 meeting planners.

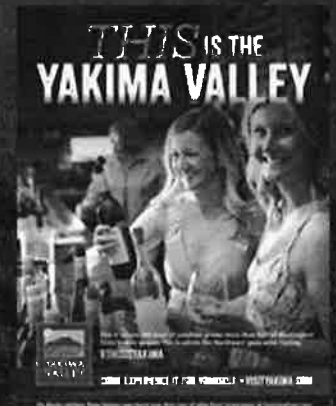
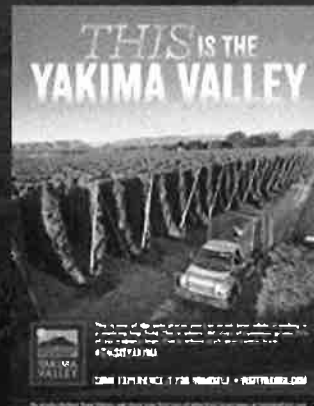
In addition, staff made numerous sales trips around the state and visited with more than 30 different associations/organizations. These trips were often made with the new Mobile Information Center & Kiosk (M.I.C.K.), giving more exposure to the region.

INDUSTRY INVOLVEMENT & EDUCATION

By being active in trade organizations, staff builds relationships and attracts conventions to the Yakima Valley. Organizations include the Washington Society of Association Executives and The Society of Government Meeting Professionals — two key groups for convention business. In November we hosted a training session attended by 34 sales and management staff from our local hotels on the latest trends and best practices in customer relations.

MARKETING & PROMOTION

2018 was another busy year for the Marketing Department. We updated our websites and placed advertising that focused on our unique craft beverages in the wine and beer industries, fresh produce through u-pick experiences and outdoor adventure.



"This is Yakima" Print Campaign examples

Surveys of our website visitors show that the website generates 3,623 new trips to the region, creating 4,405 new room nights in local hotels and \$3.5 million in spending.

299,834



PEOPLE REACHED THROUGH THE
"THIS IS YAKIMA" VIDEO CAMPAIGN

"THIS IS YAKIMA" CAMPAIGN

Most advertising was centered around our successful "This is Yakima" campaign. This project is designed to change peoples' perceptions about the Yakima Valley by showing the diverse experiences in our Valley. The showcase of this campaign was the "This Is Yakima" video produced with local company, Digital Vendetta Productions. The series of 30- and 60-second videos was viewed more than 196,000 times, shared 3,000 times and reached 299,834 people via social media channels.

NEW ROOM NIGHTS IN LOCAL HOTELS GENERATED FROM THE WEBSITE

4,405

\$ 3.5 MILLION
IN SPENDING FROM NEW TRIPS
GENERATED FROM THE WEBSITE

OTHER PROMOTIONS

- Securing a display board at Sea-Tac Airport to promote air service to Yakima and the Wine Flies Free Program on Alaska Air.
- A strong presence at the Seattle Food and Wine Festival that is attended by more than 2,000 people.
- Trip idea booklets that give visitors ideas of the many fun things to do in the Yakima Valley by each season.

MOVING FORWARD

As we step into 2019, we will evolve our web and print efforts with new features and technology to get people traveling to the Yakima Valley. **Last, but definitely not least, we would honor the loss of our team member and Marketing Manager, Jared Yoakum, who lost his battle with cancer at the end of August. The concept for the "This is Yakima" campaign originated from him and we are proud to continue the project in 2019.**

MEDIA RELATIONS & TRAVEL TRADE

The Yakima Valley was showcased at consumer and media trade shows. These events help secure media stories, visitors and group travel. Staff promoted the Yakima Valley at the following shows in 2018:

- Northwest Travel Writers Conference – Yakima
- Seattle Food & Wine Show – Seattle
- IPW (international operators and media) – Denver
- Go West Summit (international tour operators) – Salt Lake City
- Vintage Spokane (consumer wine show) – Spokane

16.1

MILLION

MEDIA IMPRESSIONS

MEDIA PROMOTIONS

Yakima Valley Tourism invites and hosts travel and trade representatives for tours of Yakima and the Yakima Valley with the help of local businesses.

In the spring, Yakima Valley Tourism hosted the Pacific Northwest Travel Writers Conference, with 100 travel writers and destinations attending. As part of the event, we hosted two media tours of the community plus a welcome reception at the 4th Street Theatre with local food and beverage vendors. Travel stories began to result from the event within weeks and will continue in future years.

In July we hosted Bobo & Chichi, popular social media influencers. As part of the promotion they posted through their channels three blog posts with more than 7,000 views; nine Instagram posts each garnering around 1,500 likes and ten Facebook posts reaching 37,000 viewers. Combined, the campaign yielded 310,000 impressions.

With Los Hernandez Tamales receiving a James Beard Award, we coordinated local sponsorship and media efforts for the James Beard Taste America event in Seattle, bringing local cuisine and displays to showcase the community.



Northwest Travel Writers Conference

MEDIA COVERAGE

Yakima Valley Tourism secured exceptional media for our region in 2018. Our efforts resulted in 16,062,468 impressions about Yakima and the Yakima Valley in print, broadcast and online channels. Touring travel media through the region will result in future coverage for our community.

The Yakima Valley enjoyed features in the following media (and many others) in 2018:

- U.K. newspaper Manchester Confidential
- 1889 Magazine
- Craft Beer & Brewing
- AAA Journey
- Sip Northwest
- Touring & Tasting
- OnTrak Magazine
- Seattle Magazine
- Meetings Northwest
- Sunset Online



IPW - Denver

MEMBERSHIP SERVICES

At the end of the year, 355 businesses and organizations were members of Yakima Valley Tourism, contributing close to \$130,000 in dues to support our efforts to advance tourism, a 9% increase above 2017. For their support, members receive many benefits to help them grow their businesses and create jobs.

355

YVT MEMBERS

9% INCREASE OVER 2017

MARKETING OPPORTUNITIES

Numerous e-newsletters went to members informing them about industry news, marketing, and sales tips, plus organizational events and opportunities. The popular Yakima Valley Official Travel Guide™ was produced and distributed, giving members and Yakima Valley cities extensive exposure.

HOLIDAY RECEPTION & SILENT AUCTION

The 29th Annual Holiday Reception & Silent Auction welcomed more than 300 guests with a Santa's Workshop theme. The event netted more than \$15,000 for Yakima Valley Tourism and the Visitor Information Center.

VISITOR INFORMATION CENTER

Our top-rated visitor information center is the first stop for thousands of Yakima Valley visitors, generating significant economic impact.



**MEET
M.I.C.K**

In the spring of 2018 we added M.I.C.K. (Mobile Info Center & Kiosk) to our promotional efforts. In 2018, it appeared at 27 engagements to promote the region.

10,519

WALK-IN VISITORS

44%

PERCENTAGE OF PEOPLE
SERVED AT THE VIC THAT
EXTENDED THEIR STAY IN
THE YAKIMA VALLEY

\$ 171,064

IN NEW VISITOR SPENDING GENERATED

YAKIMA VALLEY SPORTS COMMISSION

The sporting event market continues to be a driving force behind growing tourism in the Yakima Valley, providing significant economic benefit and exposure for our community. The Yakima Valley Sports Commission staff works to enhance existing sporting events and tournaments, attract new ones and promote the Yakima Valley as a premier sports destination in the Pacific Northwest.

517

SPORTING EVENTS HELD

\$50 MILLION
ESTIMATED SPORTS TOURISM
ECONOMIC IMPACT IN 2018
(UP 8% OVER 2017)

In 2018, the WIAA awarded the 3A and 4A State Volleyball Championships to Yakima through the 2020-21 school year. Held the third week of November in the Yakima Valley SunDome, the tourney showcases the 16 best teams in each classification. With the addition of these events, Yakima now hosts five of the six classifications of WIAA State Volleyball Championships.



SIGNATURE EVENTS

The Sports Commission staff annually hosts four sporting events of their own.

Yakima Valley Sports Awards Luncheon

Awards were presented in 20 high school sports, honoring athletes, coaches and teams at the 2018 Sports Awards Luncheon, attended by approximately 600 people.

Hot Shots 3-On-3 Basketball Tourney

Due to unhealthy air quality from wildfires, the 16th Annual Hot Shots 3-On-3 Basketball Tourney had to be cancelled in 2018.

Dye Hard 5K

More than 400 runners participated in the inaugural Dye Hard 5K, the Yakima Valley's first night-time color run. Held under black lights and with glow-in-the-dark powder, the run took place at the Sozo Sports Complex.

SunDome Volleyball Festival

Eighty high school volleyball teams (64 varsity and 16 junior varsity) came to the Yakima Valley for the 16th Annual SunDome Volleyball Festival, held at the Yakima Valley SunDome (varsity) and Davis High School (JV).

WHAT'S IN STORE FOR 2019

2019 Business Plan Highlights

COMMUNITY & GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

- Continue developing the tourism products in the Yakima Valley. In 2019, our priority will be to work on an expansion of the Convention Center.
- Increase awareness of tourism's value to the public and political leaders.
- Generate story ideas for local media on Yakima Valley Tourism programs and the industry.

YAKIMA CONVENTION CENTER

- Proceed with the approved expansion of the Convention Center.
- Maximize Convention Center use to meet budgeted income and expenses.
- Continue Capital Facilities Plan projects to ensure the facility remains competitive, meets ongoing repairs plus additional enhancements.
- Maximize use of the Center to increase earned revenue by 3%, event days by 3% and serve an estimated 110,000 people.

CONVENTION & GROUP SALES

- Generate 200 group sales leads and book 30,000 future room nights.
- Attract planners to the region for site tours and training.
- Conduct eight to twelve sales trips to the Puget Sound area and around the state.

DESTINATION MARKETING

- Grow leisure travel through new promotional efforts.
- Place advertisements in key magazines, newspapers and digital media.
- Manage and improve consumer engagement through social media channels.
- Continually update and improve websites. Create unified advertising opportunities for the industry.

MEMBERSHIP SERVICES

- Provide support and services to members, helping to build their business.
- Build membership to 370 members and sustain a high level of retention.
- Create and distribute an exceptional 2019 Yakima Valley Official Travel Guide™.
- Develop new marketing programs to boost business for members and the community.

MEDIA & TRADE RELATIONS

- Secure media coverage for the Yakima Valley through extensive outreach efforts.
- Make media sales calls and pitches to publishers, writers and bloggers.
- Promote the area to the international travel trade.
- Attend leisure and industry travel shows.

YAKIMA VALLEY SPORTS COMMISSION

- Continue work on developing existing and new sports facilities.
- Attract new sporting events to local venues.
- Continue relationships with local sporting organizations, tournament directors, venues and elected officials.
- Grow the Yakima Valley Sports Commission's signature events.

VISITOR SERVICES

- Provide exceptional customer service to the visitors at the VIC.
- Encourage visitors to extend their stay and spending.
- Carry more local and Washington made products.
- Secure new and maintain existing VIC Sponsorships.



YAKIMA VALLEY TOURISM
10 North 8th St. • Yakima, WA 98901
509.575.3010 • VisitYakima.com