

Independence Tourism Commission



Transient Guest Tax Program
January 1 – June 30, 2023



INDEPENDENCE
★PARKS ★RECREATION ★TOURISM★

Mission and Membership

The Independence Tourism Commission was established by Ordinance in 1997. The Commission serves as an advocate for the tourism industry in Independence by educating residents and businesses of the economic, cultural, and historic value of tourism in Independence, promoting cooperation and communication among tourism sites, and addressing issues that affect tourism.

The Commission advises and recommends policies, procedures and programs that benefit tourism in Independence by helping to support the Tourism Division objectives and providing regular feedback to the Parks, Recreation & Tourism Department. The Transient Guest Tax (TGT) is solely dedicated to supporting the promotion, operation and development of tourism-related activities and can only be used for this purpose. The Commission also serves as the Transient Guest Sales Tax Oversight Committee.

The Tourism Commission consists of nine members appointed by the City Council. Commissioners include Chairman Sam Rushay, Lynne Baker, Mike Calvert, Scott Forsyth, Amy Kistler, Jodi Krantz, Bobby McCutcheon, Jeff McLaughlin, and John Thornton.

Transient Guest Tax Review

The original Transient Guest Tax was approved in 1970 when voters approved a 4% gross receipt tax for hotel stays. Voters increased the tax to 5% in 1979, and later to 6.5% in 2002.

Through June 30, 2023, the tax generated \$2,322,046, or 118%, of the TGT revenue for Fiscal Year 2022-23.

Marketing and Promotions

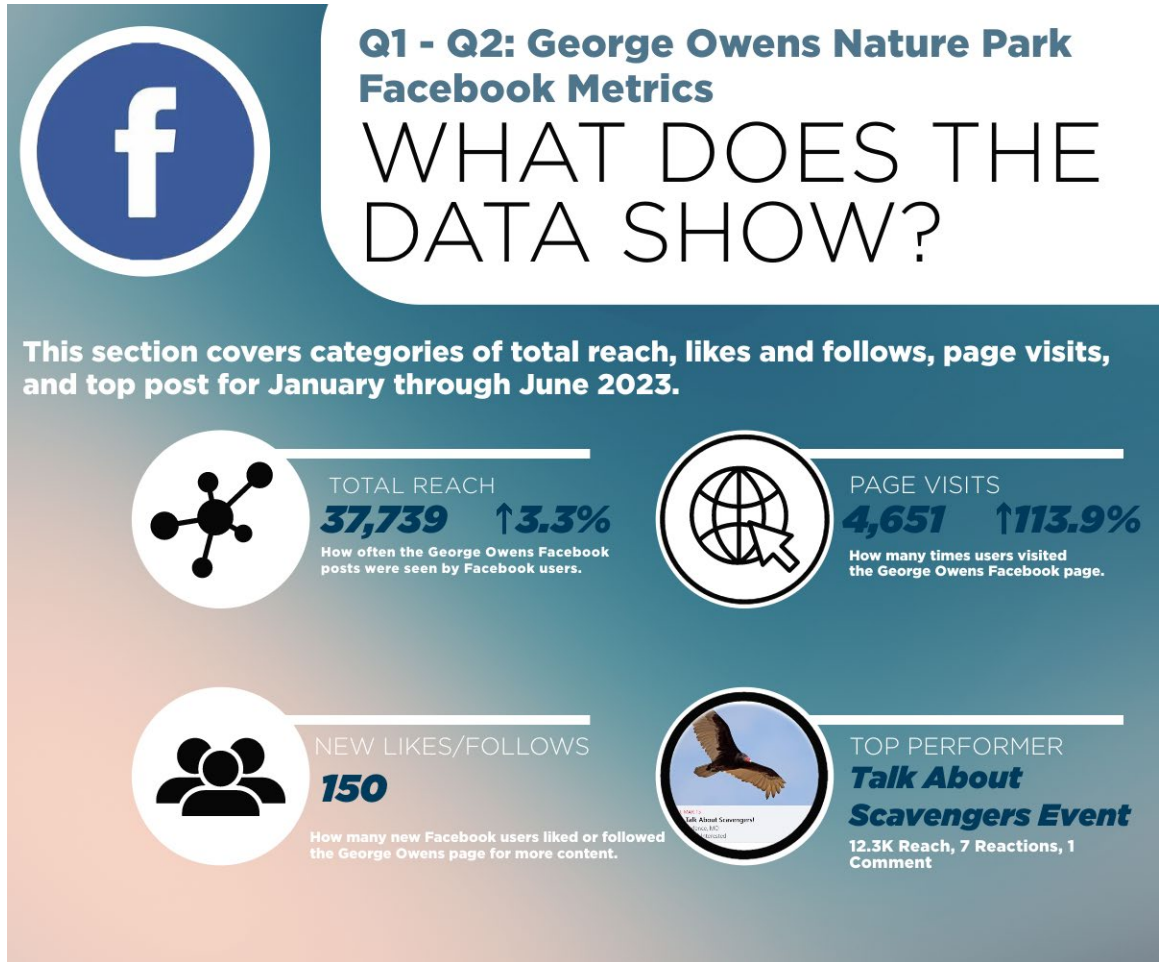
The Communications Team continues to utilize social media and video to share stories about our community, program, and venues for Parks, Recreation & Tourism. PRT has six Facebook pages: George Owens Nature Parks, National Frontier Trails, Museum, Independence Uptown Market, adventure Oasis, Parks|Recreation|Tourism, and Visit Independence. While some pages have seen a slower increase than previous months, growth continues across all pages.

Analytics from the Visit Independence YouTube, Instagram, Twitter, and website platforms are included due to their outreach to residents and visitors for information.

Earned media is essential to measuring success in growth and reach. Parks|Recreation|Tourism-related topics were mentioned 6.13K times by media January through June with a total reach of 1.41 billion people for the period.

Facebook

Facebook pages include the George Owens Nature Park, National Frontier Trails Museum, Independence Uptown Market, Adventure Oasis, Parks, Recreation & Tourism Department, and Visit Independence pages. Below are graphics for each page highlighting reach, page visits, new likes and follows, and the top performer over the six months for each Facebook page.





Q1 - Q2: National Frontier Trails Museum Facebook Metrics

WHAT DOES THE DATA SHOW?

This section covers categories of total reach, likes and follows, page visits, and top post for January through June 2023.



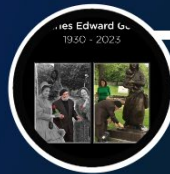
TOTAL REACH
24,550 ↑**473.4%**
How often the NFTM Facebook posts were seen by Facebook users



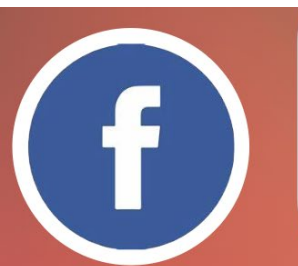
PAGE VISITS
1,273 ↑**292.9%**
How many times users visited the NFTM Facebook page



NEW LIKES/FOLLOWS
65 ↑**178.2%**
How many new Facebook users liked or followed the NFTM page for more content



TOP PERFORMER
Passing of Charles Goslin
7,258 Reach, 113 Reactions, 12 Shares, 2 Comments



Q1 - Q2: Independence Uptown Market Facebook Metrics

WHAT DOES THE DATA SHOW?

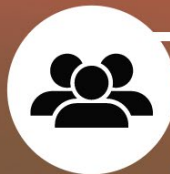
This section covers categories of total reach, likes and follows, page visits, and top post from January through June 2023.



TOTAL REACH
56,131
How often IUM Facebook posts were seen by Facebook users.



PAGE VISITS
10,913 ↑**106.8%**
How many times users visited the IUM Facebook page.



NEW LIKES/FOLLOWS
446 ↑**38.1%**
How many new Facebook users liked or followed the IUM page for more content



TOP PERFORMER
Rummage Sale
14.4K Reach, 1 Comments, 11 reactions



Q1 - Q2: Adventure Oasis Facebook Metrics

WHAT DOES THE DATA SHOW?

This section covers categories of total reach, likes and follows, page visits, and top post from January through June 2023.



TOTAL REACH
156,130 ↑153.2%
How often Adventure Oasis Facebook posts were seen by Facebook users.



PAGE VISITS
30,110 ↑302.9%
How many times users visited the Adventure Oasis Facebook page.



NEW LIKES/FOLLOWS
419 ↑121.7%
How many new Facebook users liked or followed the Adventure Oasis page for more content.



TOP PERFORMER
Checklist for Opening Day
116,961 Reach, 1,358 Reactions, 779 Comments, 506 Shares, and 730 link clicks



Q1 - Q2: Parks | Recreation | Tourism Facebook Metrics

WHAT DOES THE DATA SHOW?

This section covers categories of total reach, likes and follows, page visits, and top post in January through June 2023.



TOTAL REACH
63,929 ↑93.5%
How often the PRT Facebook posts were seen by Facebook users



PAGE VISITS
7,839 ↑73.4%
How many times users visited the PRT Facebook page



NEW LIKES/FOLLOWS
306 ↑73.9%
How many new Facebook users liked or followed the PRT page for more content



TOP PERFORMER
Crafternoon: Tie Dye
14,769 Reach, 105 Reactions, 44 Comments, 43 Shares, 50 link clicks



Q1 - Q2: Visit Independence Facebook Metrics

WHAT DOES THE DATA SHOW?

This section covers categories of total reach, likes and follows, page visits, and top post for January through June 2023.



TOTAL REACH
64,396 ↑ **200.4%**
How often Visit Independence Facebook posts were seen by Facebook users



PAGE VISITS
3,036 ↑ **107%**
How many times users visited the Visit Independence Facebook page



NEW LIKES/FOLLOWS
336 ↑ **72.3%**
How many new Facebook users liked or followed the Visit Independence page for more content



TOP PERFORMER
Strawberry Festival
13,810 Reach, 567 Reactions, 120 Shares, 66 comments, 1 Link click

YouTube

Video is an important part of the communications mix, and the Communications Team has increased promotional videos covering a variety of events, programs, and venues within the City. For January through June, 15 videos were produced. Here are the top three videos with the most views and reach:

[Let's Go Chiefs!](#)

[Truman’s Executive Order 9981](#)

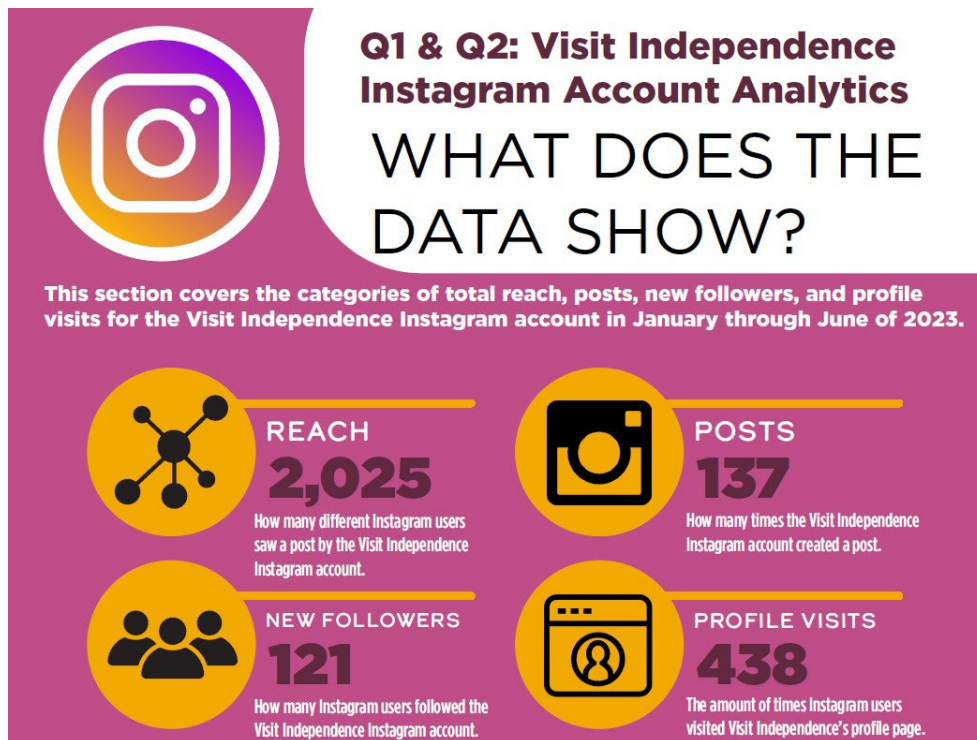
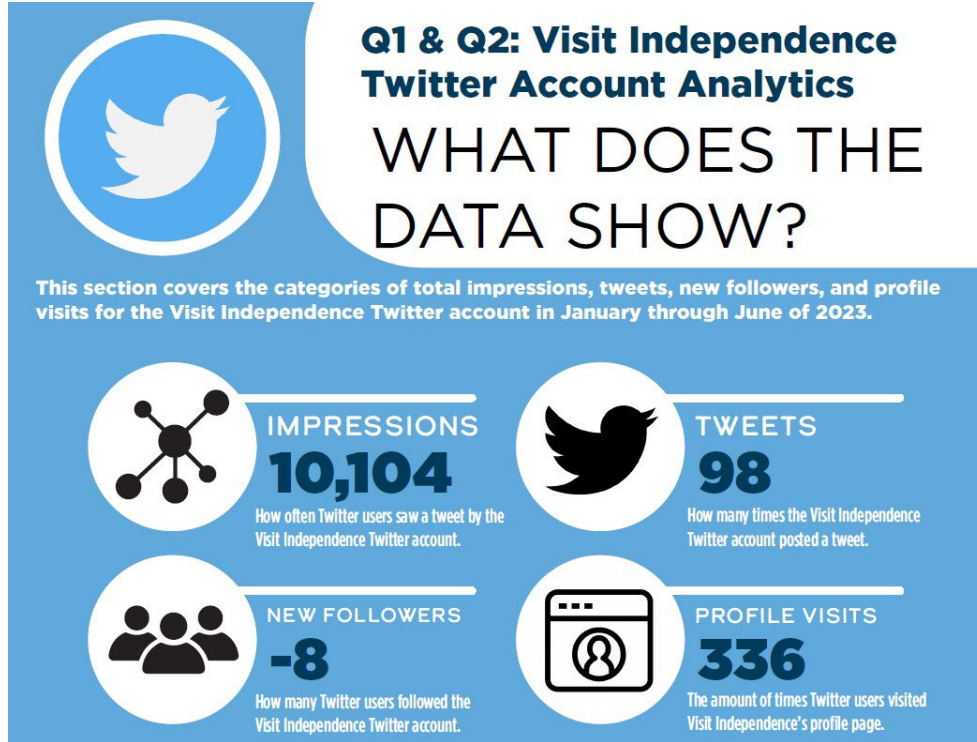
[Truman Day](#)

Here are the metrics on how they performed:



Twitter and Instagram

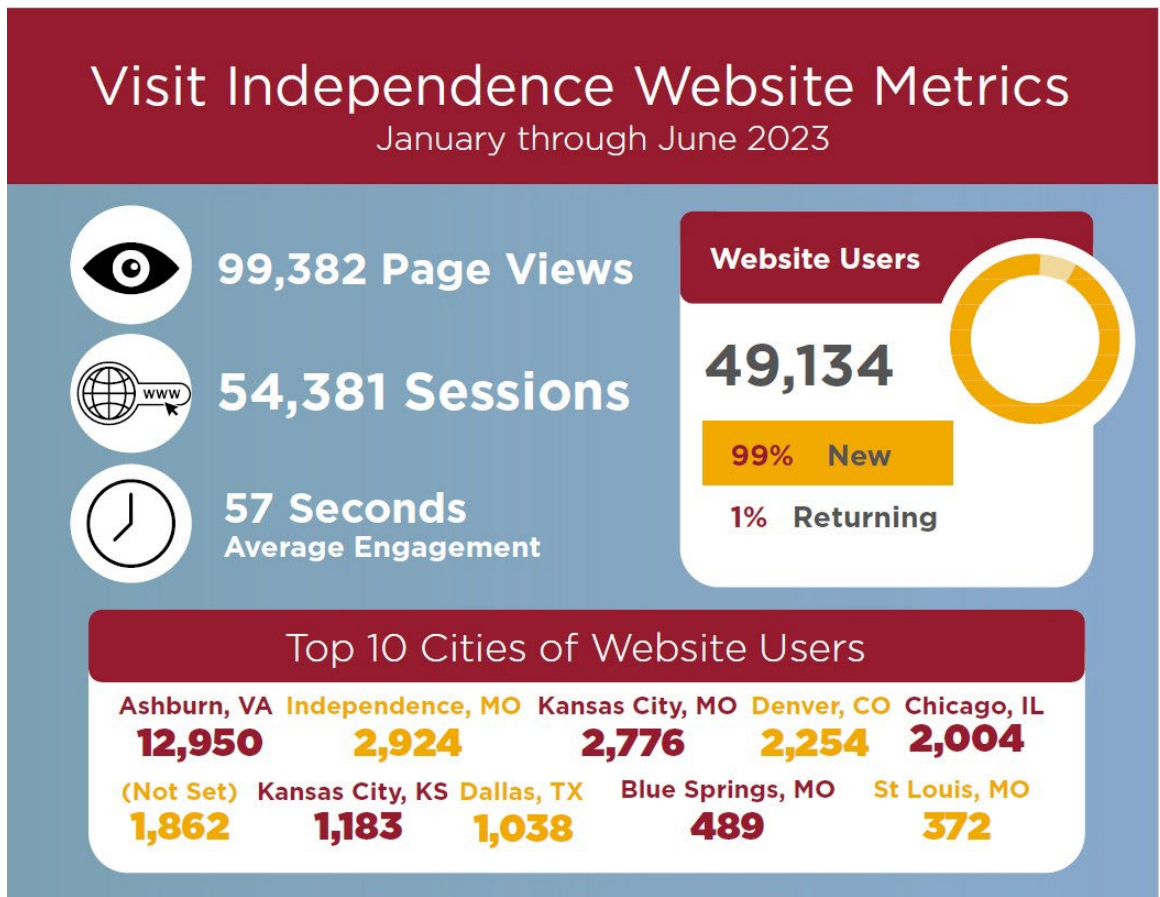
The Communications Team maintains and monitors accounts for Twitter and Instagram under Visit Independence. These posts highlight upcoming events, venues, and history for those wishing to learn more about why Independence is a place they want to visit. A slight decline in followers is a result of the transition from Twitter to 'X'.



Website

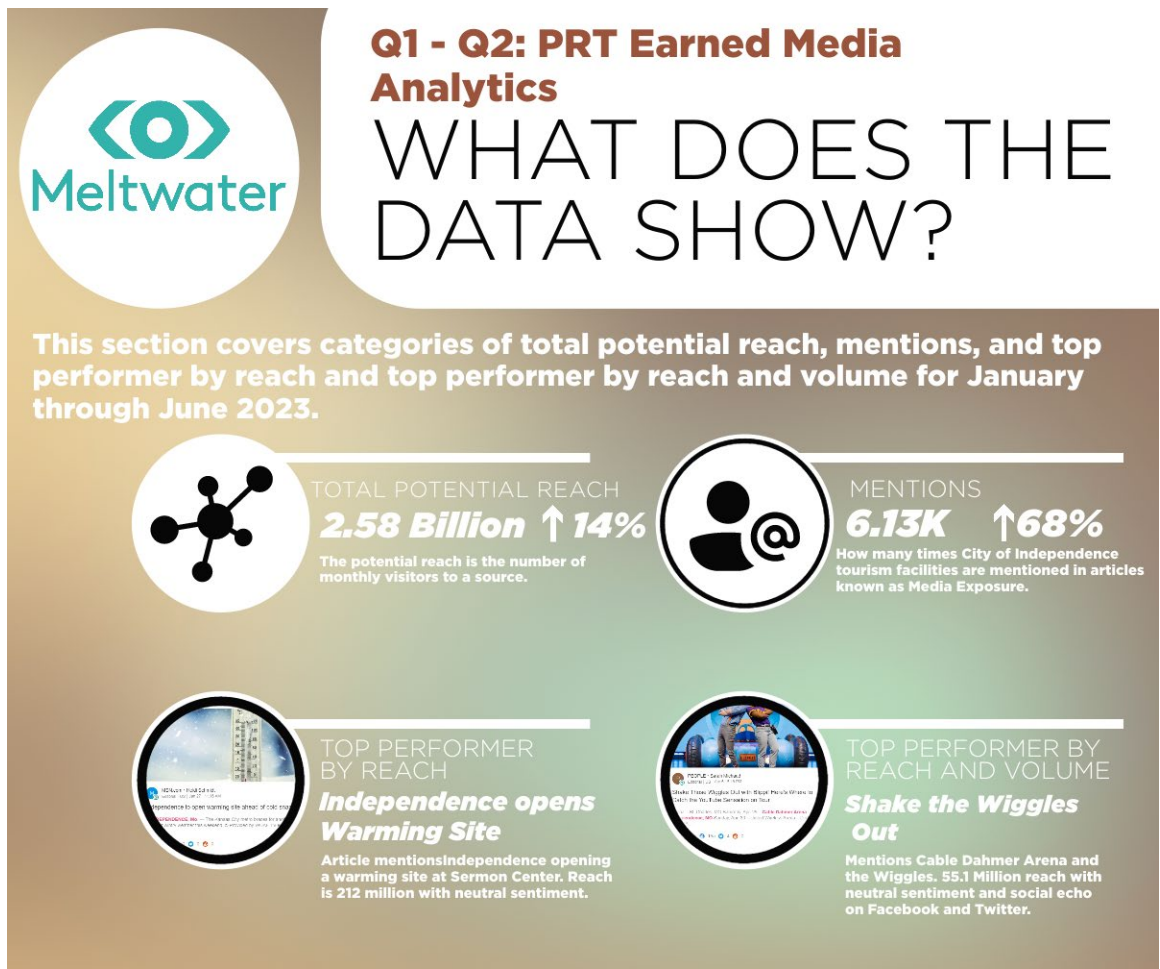
As noted in the data below, the Visit Independence website has information relevant to both visitors and residents. It continues to be a place where all members of every community can learn about Parks|Recreation|Tourism facilities, events and activities, and the City’s history.

This website is in the final stages of transferring content to the new site. As the City works to unveil the new website this fall, Visit Independence information will integrate better with Parks|Recreation|Tourism information for residents, visitors, and groups looking for information about Independence.



Earned Media

Meltwater continues to be the platform used to gather information about earned media. For January through June 2023, the City obtained growth in total potential reach with a 165% increase. Unique monthly visitors continue to surpass expectations in sources mentioning Parks | Recreation | Tourism-related topics.



The breakdown of mentions varies across different sources from blogs, social media, news, and broadcast platforms. Mentions by voice are across social media and broadcast channels. The source for top publishers varies between reach and volume. These mentions include publishers from MSN.com and Our Sports Central.

Included in the summary of data are the top publishers and mentions by sources and voice.

Q1 - Q2: PRT Earned Media Metrics

WHAT DOES THE DATA SHOW?

This section covers categories of mentions by source, mentions by voice, top publisher by reach and top publisher by volume for January through June 2023.

Metric	Value	Additional Info
Mentions by Source	4,832 Social Media Documents	Source type gauges which source shares the most documents.
Mentions by Voice	909 Broadcast Documents	How many searches from broadcast documents for PRT mentions.
Top Publisher by Reach	1.41 Billion	MSN.com was the top source by reach.
Top Publisher by Volume	72 Articles	Our Sports Central was the top source by volume.

Top Performance

The top three overall social media performers showcase two Adventure Oasis Facebook posts and an Adventure Oasis event. Throughout the summer, the waterpark content performed well as a result of season build-up.



What's next?

The Communications team continues to work through a full calendar of promotions for the fall.

Quarterly updates are being created for the visitor guide. These are online publications for community members and visitors to download. The publications cover events and activities that were not able to be included in the printed visitor guide. The quarterly update is shared on the Visit Independence website with a blog discussing the highlights. The next quarterly update is in the works and will be published in early October.

Finally, the City continues to work on the new website which is scheduled to launch this fall. New information and blog posts are continually added to the Visit Independence website.

Visitor Services and Promotions

Promotion Services assisted with planning, accommodations, and reservations for nine regional and national conferences. Staff represented Independence at the annual Group Travel Exchange by the Missouri Travel Alliance, meeting one-on-one with tour operators, bank club directors, group travel buyers and Missouri tourism representatives.

150,000 copies of the 2023 Visitor Guide were printed and distributed to hotels and visitor centers across the state and throughout the greater Kansas City metropolitan area. Staff filled requests for nearly 294 visitor guides, 922 rack cards and 200 NFTM passes, 205 Independence trading cards, 300 civil war brochures, and 10 packets to out-of-state students.

Tourism staff has been participating in training and collecting data for the design and creation of the National Frontier Trails Museum web pages. Look for them this fall on the City’s new website.

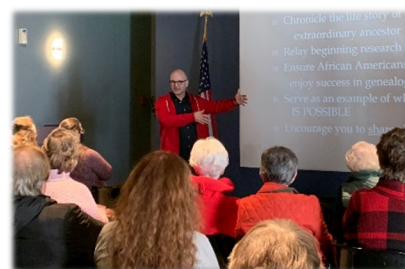
Main Street 1849 preparations required a significant amount of staff time. New interactive and educational activities were planned, building facades repaired and painted, and staff met with volunteers to be sure everything was ready for visitors over Labor Day weekend.

Facility and Historic Site Operations

National Frontier Trails Museum

The National Frontier Trails Museum was open for visitors three days a week, Thursdays – Saturdays until the end of June. Staff also accommodated organized school and bus tours outside of operating hours. Nearly 2600 visitors toured the National Frontier Trails Museum. International travelers came from Australia, Austria, Bangladesh, Belgium, Canada, UK, Germany, India, Norway, Scotland, and Switzerland as well as 45 different states.

The Local History Authors’ Non-Fiction Showcase series ran February through June. This monthly program featured a different theme and book written by local authors. Topics included slaves, outlaws, lawmen and frontier justice, and the California gold rush.



In preparation for the move to the Truman Memorial Building, staff inventoried exhibits, met with contractors about the removal and safe storage of the murals, and began carefully packing the displays.



The gift shop is being retooled with a new reception counter and will feature merchandise from new vendors. Temporary storage for the covered wagons is being secured.



At the same time, planning and design work took place at the Truman Memorial Building. Rooms were painted and lighting was upgraded from fluorescent to LED. Signage and promotion of the move is being coordinated with the City's Communications Team.

PGAV Architects continued their work on the Tourism and Museum Master Plan. PGAV has consulted with staff and engineers on the Downtown Streetscape Plan and the Truman Connected Plan. The final report with their findings and recommendations for a new National Frontier Trails Museum should be ready in the next few weeks.

Historic Sites

The historic sites opened for the tourist season on April 1st. Through the end of June, 554 guests visited the Bingham Waggoner Estate, 550 visited the Chicago & Alton Depot, and 1383 visitors toured the Vaile Mansion.

Historic Site Maintenance

In addition to routine mowing and grounds maintenance, Park Services coordinated the design and installation of a new furnace and air-conditioner at the Bingham Waggoner Carriage House, and then constructed a cage for the new unit. Portable air conditioning units were also installed in the main house, and staff replaced the handrail on the north porch. Due to vandalism, five windows and one door had to be replaced. Staff is working with a contractor to upgrade the alarm system.



At the Vaile Mansion, crews replaced a broken window and are getting bids to repair the front door that was vandalized. Staff poured a concrete pad and installed a new memorial bench on the grounds.



Windows were also vandalized at the Chicago & Alton Depot. Park Services staff replaced them and completed the necessary wood repair. Park Services coordinated with an HVAC contractor and National Park Service (NPS) staff to replace a failing air conditioning unit at Fire House #1. The NPS Visitor Center operates out of this facility.

Restoration of the Truman Depot will begin soon. The contract was awarded to Terry Snelling Construction, Inc. Park Services crews prepared the site by removing the bench seating, flowerpots, luggage carts and pictures from the walls. Park Services staff also ordered new amenities for the site, including bathroom sinks, soap dispensers and hand dryers.



In Closing

It is the opinion of the Independence Tourism Commission that the activities, initiatives, and projects supported by the Transient Guest Tax are in keeping with the program's intent, and that the work of the Parks, Recreation and Tourism Department continues to attract visitors to our community and preserve our City-owned historic sites.

The members of the Independence Tourism Commission express our appreciation to the Mayor and City Council for their continued support of providing the best possible historic sites, attractions, and programs for the people of Independence and our many visitors to enjoy.

