

Independence Tourism Commission



INDEPENDENCE ★ MISSOURI ★

A GREAT AMERICAN STORY



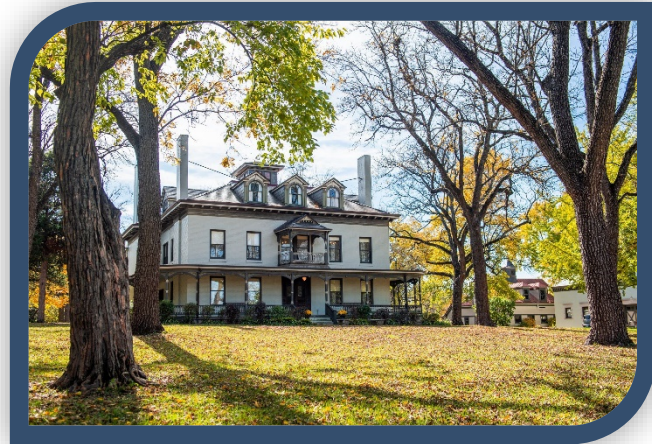
INDEPENDENCE
★ PARKS ★ RECREATION ★ TOURISM ★

11th Transient Guest Tax Program Report
October 18, 2021

Executive Summary

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 Commission also serves as the Transient Guest Sales Tax Oversight Committee.

It is the opinion of the members of the Independence Tourism Commission that the activities, initiatives, and projects funded by the Transient Guest Sales Tax are in keeping with the sales tax program's intent, and that the program is critical in supporting the work of the Department to attract visitors to our community and preserve our city-owned historic sites.



Bingham-Waggoner Estate



Independence Square

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Transient Guest Tax Review

The original Transient Guest Tax was approved in 1970. Voters at that time approved a 4% gross receipt tax for hotel stays. The tax was increased to 5% in 1979, and later increased to 6.5% by voter approval in 2002. The tax remains at this rate today and typically generates approximately \$1.9 million for Tourism promotion and Tourism related activities.

The tax is still recovering following the effects of COVID-19. The current fiscal year's budget anticipates the tax revenue will be reduced to \$1.6 million, a 16% reduction from typical annual tax revenue.

Through September 30, 2021, the tax has generated \$571,686, or 34.6%, of the TGT revenue anticipated for this entire Fiscal Year. It is anticipated that the tax will not fully recover until FY 23-24.



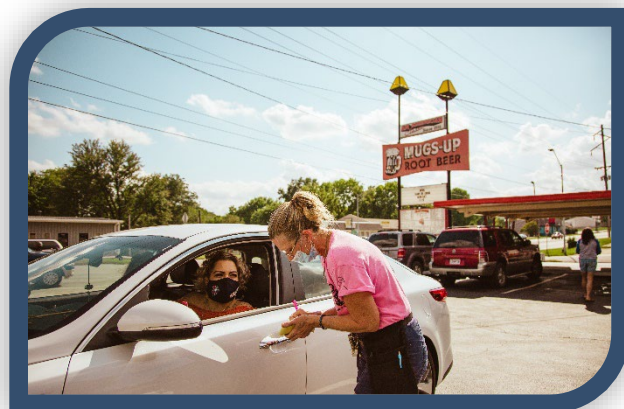
Pioneer Trails Adventures

Current Commissioners

The Tourism Commission consists of 9 voting members appointed by the City Council. Current members of the Tourism Commission include Chairperson Sam Rushay, Vice-Chair Kris Zerr, Secretary John Thornton, Nancy Kerr, Steven Kohn, Jodi Krantz, and Michelle Shanahan-DeMoss. There are currently two vacancies.

Operating Status

The Transient Guest Tax is solely dedicated to supporting the promotion, operation and development of tourism-related activities and can only be used for this purpose. The Tourism Commission serves as the transient guest tax oversight committee and is responsible for submitting a report biannually to City Council.



Mugs Up Drive-In

Marketing and Promotions

General, Genealogy and History Campaigns

April 1, 2021 - September 30, 2021

Facebook Total Clicks 110,499	Facebook Post Engagements 1,306,189	Facebook Video Views 1,306,753
Google Impressions 5,291,091		
Standard Content Distribution Clicks 29,456	Standard Content Distribution Ave Time on Page 00:02:66	Standard Content Distribution % of New Users 90.12%

Baseball & Football Campaigns

April 1, 2021 - September 30, 2021

Facebook Total Clicks 12,458	FacebookPostEngagements 887	
Standard Content Distribution Clicks 12,328	Standard Content Distribution Ave Time on Page 00:02:66	Standard Content Distribution % <u>of</u> New Users 90.12%
Snapchat Impressions 1,085,045	Snapchat Swipes and Swipe Rate 2,036 .6% (Football performed much better than baseball)	Snapchat Video Views 5,833



Be Like Charlie Campaign Volunteer Campaign April 1, 2021 - September 30, 2021

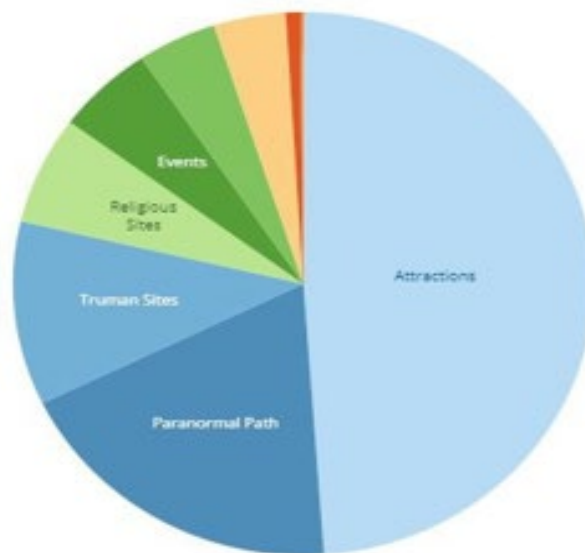
Facebook Total Clicks
13,172

Facebook Post Engagements
18,773

Google Search Engine Marketing April 1, 2021 - September 30, 2021

33,736 Clicks ▾

Attractions	16,486
Paranormal Path	6,375
Truman Sites	3,690
Religious Sites	2,173
Events	1,842
Shopping	1,490
Restaurants	1,353
Children's Attractions	277
Visit	50



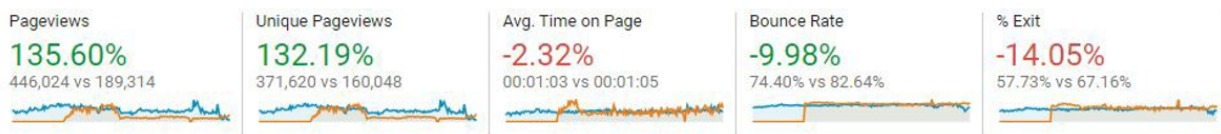
Website Statistics YoY - Users

Users ? ↓	New Users ?	Sessions ?	Bounce Rate ?	Pages / Session ?	Avg. Session Duration ?
113.50% ↑ 220,868 vs 103,450	111.62% ↑ 217,916 vs 102,973	104.26% ↑ 257,455 vs 126,041	9.93% ↓ 74.40% vs 82.60%	16.20% ↑ 1.73 vs 1.49	46.20% ↑ 00:00:46 vs 00:00:32

- 255 Visitor Guide requests this FY (1035 for the calendar year)
- 858 Newsletter Signups
- Campaign traffic accounts for 81% of all site sessions this FY
- All organic and paid Website Users are up 165% and sessions are up 159%

YoY – Year over Year: Compares results with those of the same period in the previous year

Website Statistics YoY - Pageviews



- Pageviews up 135.60%
- Unique Pageviews up 132.19%
- Average Time on Page down to 1 min 3 seconds from 1 min 5 seconds
- Bounce Rate improved to 74.40% from 82.64%
- Exit percentage down to 57.73% from 67.16%

Social Media Campaigns:





Facebook Analytics

April 1 - September 30, 2021

Best Performing Ads

Recent Content	Type	↓ Reach	↑ Likes and Reactions	↑ Comments	↑ Shares	↑ Results
 Truman Libra... Thu Jul 8, 2:13p...		247.8K	1.4K	--	232	5.2K Link Clicks
 Carousel Ad Thu Jun 10, 11:...		232.3K	347	--	34	4.6K Landing Page Vie...
 Things to Do ... Wed Jul 7, 12:5...		150.6K	156	--	2	9.4K Link Clicks
 Truman Libra... Fri Jul 9, 10:45a...		119.5K	494	--	53	1.8K Link Clicks
 Truman Libra... Fri Jul 9, 10:39a...		108.7K	228	--	48	1.5K Link Clicks

Best Performing Organic Posts

	🎉 Happy 200th birthday, Missouri! Everyone love...	4764 People reached	523 Post engagements
	It was quite the show at the Truman Library this m...	3757 People reached	470 Post engagements
	What do all of these places have in common? Wee...	6161 People reached	434 Post engagements
	Harry Truman once said, "May the sun never set o...	3860 People reached	144 Post engagements

Sales and Services:

Staff provided 435 welcome bags for six tour groups and greeted visitors on six separate bus tours. Over 800 guests stopped at the Welcome Center for brochures and information.

Facility and Historic Site Operations

National Frontier Trails Museum

The Missouri Bicentennial Celebration at the National Frontier Trails Museum helped to kick off the re-opening of the Museum in a festive manner. The multiple-day event included musical performances, puppet shows, and a display of original paintings by George Caleb Bingham.

Since that time the Museum has been open to the public on Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays. Operating hours will increase when staffing allows. There have been nearly 1500 visitors since reopening on August 7th.



The Museum's security system was upgraded, and additional cameras were added to expand coverage both inside and outside of the Museum. Repairs to the building's air conditioning system were required before re-opening. The Museum parking lot had curbing repairs and an asphalt overlay prior to reopening.

Santa-Cali-Gon Main Street 1849

This event is always a full department-wide project. Park Maintenance staff provided set-up and take-down support, and Recreation and Tourism staff supervised the activities throughout the festival.

Volunteers from 3 different churches assisted in manning the booths for Gold Panning, Pioneer Toys & Games and Pioneer Crafts. First Person Interpreters ran the Pioneer School House and conversed with visitors to promote our event and encourage participation.

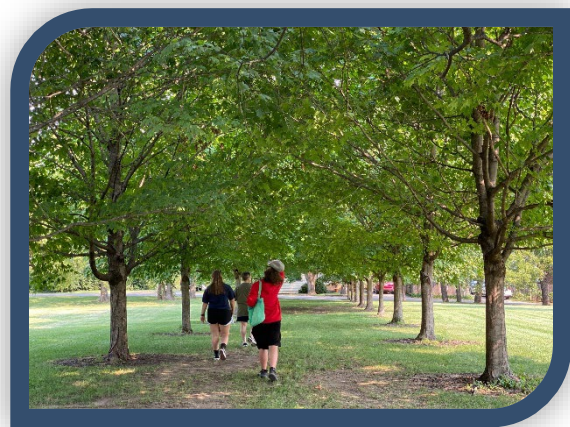


1849 Main Street

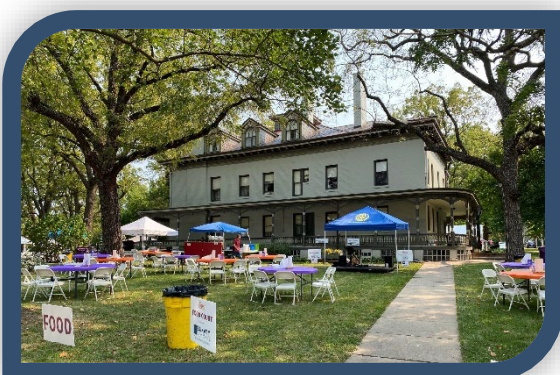
Historic Site Programs

The Historic Sites opened on May 1, 2021, with a Thursday through Sunday regular schedule. Volunteers provided nearly 3000 hours of service and 4756 guests toured the Bingham-Waggoner Estate, Chicago and Alton Depot and the Vaile Mansion from July through September.

Visitors roamed the grounds of the Vaile Mansion in search of leaves, bugs, walnuts, and other natural treasures at this summer's Scavenger Hunt. The city's Tree Commission assisted with planning the activities, and Park Maintenance staff trimmed trees, cleaned landscape beds, and performed general maintenance in preparation for this educational and fun event.



Scavenger Hunt



Independence Uncorked Wine Festival

Independence Uncorked is one of Missouri's largest wine festivals. It always brings a large crowd to the Bingham Waggoner Estate.

Parks Maintenance staff delivered and set up tables, trash receptacles and barricades for the popular event.

Historic Site Maintenance

The air conditioning system at Vaile Mansion required significant repairs this spring. The south cellar door had to be replaced due to vandalism.

Preservation staff met with Pishny Restoration to request quotes to address wood rot, stone sill and window trim deterioration, and porch stabilization. Pishny performed a detailed assessment. The Vaile Board is researching funding options and will coordinate efforts with the City.

Harry S Truman Presidential Library & Museum and Harry S Truman National Historic Site – Truman Home

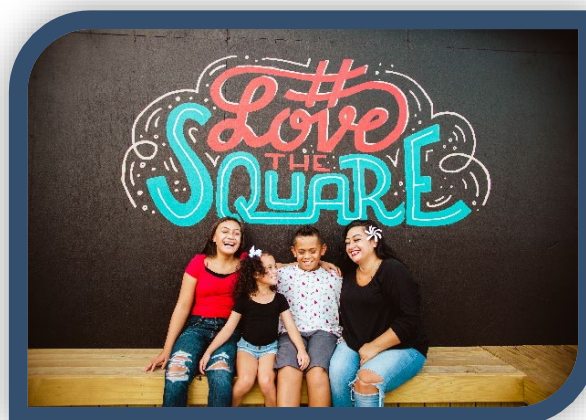
The Truman Library reopened July 2nd after closing in 2019 for a \$29 million renovation. The Truman Library closed again just three weeks later due to the resurgence of COVID-19. The Truman Home remains closed as well. Both closures have had a major impact on local tourism.

In Closing

Parks|Recreation|Tourism Director Eric Urfer retired in May 2021, and Morris Heide was named Acting Director. Currently there are on-going discussions about creating a 501(c)(6) for Tourism Sales & Services. The Tourism Commission unanimously endorsed this concept on May 25, 2021. The Independence Economic Development Council gave a presentation to the City Council on this topic on September 27, 2021. No decisions have been finalized at this point. The Tourism Manager and the Tourism Sales and Services Manager positions are both currently vacant and will not be filled until a decision is made concerning Tourism Sales & Services.

It is the opinion of the 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|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 gratitude and appreciation to the Mayor and City Council for their continued interest in and support of providing the best possible historic sites, attractions, and programs for the people of Independence and our many visitors to enjoy.



October 18, 2021