

Independence Tourism Commission



INDEPENDENCE

★ MISSOURI ★

A GREAT AMERICAN STORY



INDEPENDENCE
★ PARKS ★ RECREATION ★ TOURISM ★

Transient Guest Tax Program Report
October 2022

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

It is the opinion of the Independence Tourism Commissioners 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.



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. Voters increased the tax to 5% in 1979, and later to 6.5% in 2002.

Through September 27, 2022, the tax has generated \$617,714, or 31.3%, of the TGT revenue anticipated for this Fiscal Year.



Commissioners

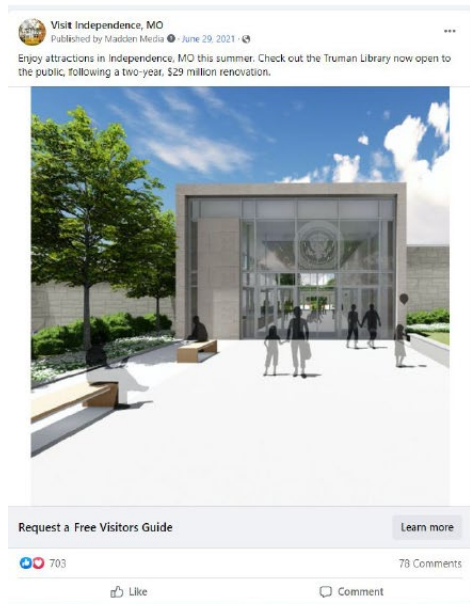
The Tourism Commission consists of nine members appointed by the City Council. Commissioners include Chairman Sam Rushay, Lynne Baker, Mike Calvert, Glen Esplin, Jodi Krantz, Bobby McCutcheon, and John Thornton, with two seats currently vacant.

Marketing and Promotions

TOTAL Facebook

Total Clicks 6,615 Post Engagements 4,022

Facebook Analytics October 1 - March 31, 2022



Best Performing Ad

- Larry Beltz**
Went to the Truman library today very nicely done. We have a treasure in Independence. Well worth the trip.

Like Reply 38w 2
- Kim Pierce**
We enjoyed our visit to the Truman library and truthfully didn't see the trash. We did enjoy eating at A Little BBQ Joint and the Frontier Trails Museum. Independence has much to be proud of and I plan to visit again.

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Best Performing Organic Posts

	The Parade of Hearts comes through Independence with four, really ne...	18835 People reached	3728 Post engagements
	Happy #nationalmomandpopbusinessday! 🥰 Which is your favorit...	3572 People reached	574 Post engagements
	We're just 2 weeks away from our historic sites reopening for 2022. 🙌 ...	2637 People reached	138 Post engagements

Print Media

- Missouri Travel Guide
- Visit KC Visitors Guide
- Midwest Living
- Show Me Missouri Magazine
- Missouri Life Magazine
- Chamber Directory

Website Statistics YoY - Users

Users ? ↓	New Users ?	Sessions ?	Bounce Rate ?	Pages / Session ?	Avg. Session Duration ?
84.72% ↓ 41,143 vs 269,300	84.75% ↓ 40,434 vs 265,104	86.92% ↓ 47,426 vs 362,577	10.61% ↓ 71.48% vs 79.96%	27.14% ↑ 1.82 vs 1.43	77.16% ↑ 00:01:04 vs 00:00:36

- 549 Visitor Guide requests July 21 - April 4, 22
- 292 Newsletter Signups
- Campaign traffic makes up 32.93% of traffic

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

Website Statistics YoY - Pageviews



- Pageviews down 83% (limited paid media currently running)
- Average Session Duration up 1 min 04 seconds from :36 seconds
- Bounce Rate improved to 71% from 80%

Visitor Services and Promotions

The Independence Visitor Center staff welcomed over 1,300 visitors and filled requests for 11,760 visitor guides, brochures, and pamphlets. Staff continues to assist visitors with information, directions, and recommendations on where to stay and what to see and do. They also assist tour operators with itinerary planning, hotel guest accommodations and attraction reservations.

Labor Day weekend the Parks, Recreation and Tourism Department put on “Main Street 1849” as part of the annual Santa-Cali-Gon Festival. Efforts have been taken to continue growing this event and bring back the history of the trails.

Staff and volunteers dressed the part in 1800’s apparel. The streets were lined with shops and scenes of 1849. Families learned of the past while enjoying live entertainment and educational demonstrations. The weather cooperated and this proved to be the best year yet!



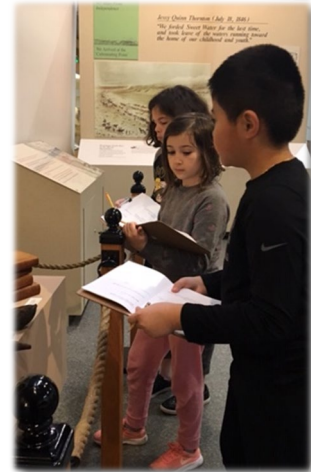
Facility and Historic Site Operations

National Frontier Trails Museum

The National Frontier Trails Museum is open for visitors year-round. The Museum currently operates three days a week, Thursdays – Saturdays, from 10:00 am to 4:00 pm. Operations will expand with additional facility hours as current staff vacancies are filled.

Staff accommodates organized school and bus tours outside of operating hours. There were 23 such tours from October 2021 through September 2022. There have been nearly 5145 visitors served at the National Frontier Trails Museum from October 2021 to September 2022.

A Request for Qualifications for a new Tourism and Museum Master Plan was released in July. Staff is currently evaluating responses.



Much-needed masonry repairs began this month at the museum. Work is expected to take several weeks and will include tuckpointing, Helical crack stitching, Helibeam repairs, and brick replacement where necessary. This involves both exterior and interior repairs.



Historic Site Programs

The historic sites opened for the 2022 tourism season on April 1st.

Volunteers led just over 8,200 tours at the Bingham-Waggoner Estate, Chicago and Alton Depot and the Vaile Mansion from October 2021 through September 2022. Volunteers provide countless hours of dedicated service sharing their site's unique place in the history of Independence.

Park Services staff added final touches to the lawn and landscaping at the Vaile Mansion ahead of the annual Strawberry Festival in June and provided tables and trash barrels for Bingham Waggoner's Winefest. Both popular events draw large crowds each year.



Historic Site Maintenance

Park Maintenance staff resumed routine mowing and trimming in April. Crews removed several fallen tree branches at the Log Courthouse in May and a large tree that fell at the Bingham Waggoner Estate in August.

Pishny Restoration Services out of Lenexa, KS completed restoration work on the north porch of the Vaile Mansion. They also restored two original wood windows on the north side, part of the interior's Pink Parlor. Upgrades were also made to the Vaile's fire protection system with the installation of more responsive detection devices.



In Closing

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 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.

