



BOWLING GREEN, OHIO

# ANNUAL REPORT 2023

Visit BG Ohio

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# HIGHLIGHTS

Visit BG Ohio will promote Bowling Green as a place to hold your event or meeting, encourage leisure visitors through experiences and provide hospitality assistance that will keep visitors coming back coming back. as a place to hold your event or meeting,

## GRANTS

The Visit BG Ohio Tourism Grant was awarded in 2023 to several organizations that impact tourism in Bowling Green. Our commitment to these grant recipients went much further than to just provide them with the requested. We worked along side them providing resources, connecting partners, and participating in the events.

**The Ohio Wine Producers Association** applied for this grant for the second in a three year commitment to grow the V.I.N.O. Wine Festival into a two day event. The OWPA provides these events to educate guests about Ohio wines and let them sample a wide variety in one place. It's a great way to encourage visits to the wineries at another time too!

- Held at the Pratt Pavilion in the Wood County Fairgrounds
- 12 Ohio wineries participated.
- Total of 41 additional vendors
- Demonstration by Chef Lisa Pucci Delgado
- About 500 guests with 20% of those guests from outside the BG Area
- Worked with local businesses for food, entertainment, advertising, and printing needs.

2024 will be year three of this commitment and we are expecting it to be a two day event.





Grant monies partnered The Bowling Green Chamber of Commerce with Visit BG in 2022 to expand the annual Independence Day fireworks display into **BG Boom Festival and Fireworks**. This event has been embraced by our community and year two was even larger than the first. We have also had the support of other organizations looking to be involved in the celebration. The location at the Fairgrounds is perfectly situated so that those that attend the festival can also watch the fireworks display launched from the National Tractor Pulling Championships property.

- It is estimated that the festival was attended by over 3,000 people.
- Food Trucks did exceptionally well
- Ample parking and room to expand.
- Worked with the Fair Board to provide the space and food vendors.



We continued grants to provide shuttles for both **The National Tractor Pulling Championships** and **Black Swamp Arts Festival**. The shuttles provide those staying in our hotels with an attractive convenience for choosing to stay at a Bowling Green property. The shuttles also stop downtown for those at the NTPC if anyone is looking to eat at a restaurant or do a little shopping.

- NTPC over 700 rides - Will support this event with the service again in 2024.
- BSAF usage continues to be low so we will be talking about another way to support them in 2024.



**GAS Disk Golf** requested grant monies to make improvements to the disk golf course at Carter Park. Currently the organization hosts tournaments that draw people from a 100-mile radius to watch or participate. The improvements will make the course more appealing and challenging, making it a destination course for the avid disk golf player.

- The organization asked to have an extension on the grant so that it could be used in 2023. The reason for the extension was to allow them to complete this work with additional work to be completed with ARPA funds in collaboration with BG Park and Recreation.
- This request was honored.

**The Bowling Green Curling Club** requested grant monies for equipment to assist them in making their club a national leader in both youth and differently abled curling.

- Make the club and sport fully accessible to those with different abilities.
- Make the club one of the leading youth curling facilities in the country.
- Attract new people to the sport and club, regardless of their ability or age.

The club has been featured on WTOL for these important improvements to the club.



Visit BG partnered with Downtown BG Special Improvement District and the Downtown Merchant's Association to create a deluxe coupon booklet to be used from last October through December 31, 2024. This coupon booklet features many of the Downtown Merchants as well as other businesses in Bowling Green to encourage Visitors to Shop - Dine - Explore Bowling Green while they are here.

They are being well received.

## SPONSORSHIPS

- BG Youth Baseball
- Firefly Nights
- Holiday Parade
- Wood County Museum - Music at the Museum
- Special Olympics

# MARKETING

## Publications

- State of Ohio Official Travel Guide
- Ohio Magazine
- Lake Erie Living
- Destination Toledo Visitors Guide
- City Guide
- Updated and Reprinting of Bowling Green Visitors Guides

## Digital

- Zone Free Publishing - Ohio Traveler
- Ohio Co-op
- Guest Quest - Travel Resource

## Social Media

- Facebook 5.9K Followers
- Instagram 2.2 K Followers

## Trade Shows and Events

- AAA Travel Show - Columbus
- Connect Sports Marketplace - Women in Sports Tourism Forum - Detroit
- S.O.A.R. - BGSU Student Orientation
- BGSU Family Weekend
- BGSU Homecoming
- NTPC - Welcome Booth
- Wood County Chamber Day at the Fair

## TV and Radio Appearances/Interviews

- WTOL 11
- NBC 24
- ABC 13
- The Morning Show WBGU 88.10 FM

# MAKING CONNECTIONS

## Memberships

- Northwest Ohio Co-Op
- Ohio Society of Association Professionals
- Ohio Travel Association

## Conferences

- Ohio Travel Association in Wooster, OH
- Destination Toledo Tourism Updates

# INVESTMENT IN PEOPLE

## Kathryn Patterson

In 2023 we provided Kat the opportunity to participate in the Ohio Travel Leadership Program. This was a 6 month program in which she had the opportunity to meet State Leaders in the industry, participate in a class project and meet counterparts from the area. We hosted a FAM-Tour in Bowling Green for Visit Northwest Ohio Co-Op, and she traveled to three tours being hosted by other Destination Marketing Organizations.

## Avery Ayers

We provided an internship for Avery Ayers, BGSU Student. Kat offered a wonderful learning experience for Avery who is interested in the hospitality industry.

# MEASURING SUCCESS

The Bowling Green Chamber of Commerce and Visit BG Ohio (VBGO) collaboration continues to evolve and look for new opportunities to help us market Bowling Green, Ohio.

The Smith Travel Research (STR or STAR) Report was purchased in 2023 giving us data from 2017 through April of 2023. The numbers below will only be reflective of the report through December of 2022.

- The supply of available hotel rooms increased in January 2021 with the addition of Home2 Suites. 118,260 was the supply of rooms in 2020 and that increased to 155,125 in 2021 and has stayed at that for 2022.
- Average daily rate increased from \$84.01 in 2020 to \$108.03 in 2022.
- Revenue Per Available Room increased from \$38.24 in 2020 to 70.51 in 2022.
- Occupancy in 2020 was at 45.5% and that increased to 65.3% in 2022.

At the Ohio Travel Association Conference, we learned that Business Travel has not recovered to Pre-Covid numbers and may never return. Ohio is performing very well in the hospitality industry showing numbers that very few across the United States have experienced.

It's also important to note that when we embarked on this new relationship of the Bowling Green Chamber managing Visit BG OH, Mayor Aspacher wanted to see that at least half of the proceeds of the hotel/motel tax would be directed towards Marketing of the City. The Expenses for 2023 totaled just a little of \$223,000 and of that \$117,400 was directed towards marketing efforts. In addition, we were able to earmark \$60,000 to put towards the BG Magazine Project in 2024.

The 2024 budget has over 60% of the projected income going toward marketing and that does not include the additional investment that will be made in the BG Magazine Project.

# IT'S A WRAP

## Community Calendar

The new web-based calendar platform was launched and integrated into the VisitBGOHio.org website. It provides content and updates captured through geofencing every 72 hours. There is work on our side that still needs to happen to provide all this information, but we are pleased with the change.

In all it took about six months to get it to where it is today. Those that use it, both for sharing events as well as for the calendar function, are pleased with the features.

Google Maps helps you find your way.

# LOOKING AHEAD

## BG Magazine

We are working with Handshoe, the marketing firm that created our branding and worked with CVB on the first edition of BG Magazine. Preparation for the new edition of the BG Magazine is already underway. We look to get as much done on this project in the first quarter of 2024 as we can.