

warren county  
**ohio's largest  
playground**<sup>®</sup>

2019 ANNUAL REPORT | 2020 MARKETING PLAN





# our mission

The Warren County Convention & Visitors Bureau is a professional destination marketing and management organization whose mission is to strengthen the community by advancing economic growth and vitality through tourism and overnight stays, and encouraging significant participation by visitors in the local tourism economy.



# Introduction



To Our Friends & Colleagues,

Greetings from Ohio's Largest Playground®, Warren County!

When our County was founded back in 1803, surely no one thought it would one day be known for its "Beast" and its "Great Wolf," its lines in the sky carrying people 200 feet above the Little Miami Scenic River, its world-class sporting events, its knights on horseback, or its sauerkraut.

But Warren County is all of those things – all those tourism-related things – and so much more. Each year, millions of visitors are spending millions of dollars here, creating jobs and generating federal, state and local taxes. Those are taxes the residents of this amazing County needn't pay.

On numerous occasions, I've compared the function of a Convention and Visitors Bureau to that of a marketing firm or advertising agency. Both use similar tools – websites, display ads, promotions, public relations, social media, etc. But unlike a marketing firm that helps Procter & Gamble sell soap, our marketing firm, the Warren County CVB, "sells" the County to visitors from all over the country and the world.

On the following pages we take an in-depth look at 2019 and at what is to come in 2020. The WCCVB had a very successful year in 2019, made possible by the wonderful, dedicated people on our staff, our board, and in our community.

Taking a look at the numbers, 2019 saw an increase in lodging tax collections over 2018, while visitation to local attractions once again exceeded 12 million. There are plenty of reasons for that success. We're within a day's drive of 60% of the U.S. population, have a rich variety of outstanding yet reasonably priced hotel properties and B&Bs, and boast a multitude of exciting and unique attractions.

With all that Warren County has to offer, you can see why we're called Ohio's Largest Playground. We're looking forward to big things in 2020.



Sincerely,

Phillip S. Smith  
*President & Chief Executive Officer*





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## 2019 WCCVB Board

### 2019 Officers

#### Board Chairman

Richard Jones  
*Chief Operating Officer,  
 Warren County Community Services*

#### 2nd Vice Chairman

Sandy Eves  
*Owner, Kirkwood Inn*

#### Secretary

Mary Klei  
*Vice President, Board of Festivals and Tourism,  
 City of Lebanon*

#### Treasurer

Robyn Lane  
*Owner, Hidden Valley Orchards*

### 2019 Directors

Marissa Brock  
*Vice President of Marketing & Sales, Kings Island*

Michael Hogan  
*General Manager, Cincinnati Marriott Northeast*

Russell Jones  
*Legal Counsel & Officer, Gem City Tire*

William Kilimnik  
*General Manager, Golden Lamb Restaurant & Hotel*

Martin Russell  
*Deputy County Administrator;  
 Director, Warren County Office of Economic Development*

Jonathan D. Sams  
*Trustee, Turtlecreek Township*

Rob Swedinovich  
*Senior Director of Marketing,  
 Miami Valley Gaming and Racing*



## 2019 WCCVB Staff

### Administration

Phillip S. Smith  
*President & CEO*

Ian Groves  
*Director of Finance & Human Resources*

Nichole Detamore  
*Executive Assistant & Office Manager*

### Leisure Marketing

Scott Hutchinson  
*Director of Marketing & Communications*

Stacha Yundt  
*Manager of Marketing & Communications*

### Sports Marketing

Ben Huffman  
*Director of Sports Enterprises*

Linda Smith  
*Senior Manager, Visitor Services & Sales*

Scott Hofmann  
*Senior Manager of Sports Operations*

Britt Barry  
*Facilities Manager*



## Economic Impact



Each year, millions of visitors come to Warren County, Ohio's Largest Playground. The dollars they spend fuel a very powerful engine and Warren County's No. 1 industry: tourism.

Measuring the impact of tourism is sometimes difficult because the impact is felt across many sectors – even some that do not have an obvious tie to a visitor.

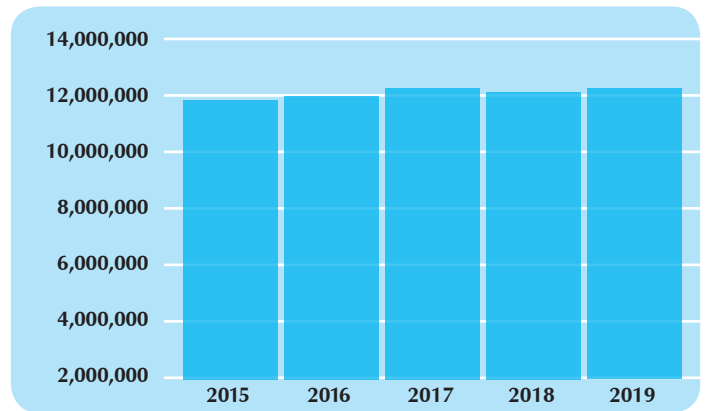
The latest economic impact study conducted by the State of Ohio shows total tourism-related spending in Warren County exceeded \$1.2 billion and generated \$285 million in wages and \$148.8 million in Federal, State and Local taxes.

Tourism supports 11,666 jobs in Warren County. That equates to one in every nine jobs, or 11% of all jobs in the County.

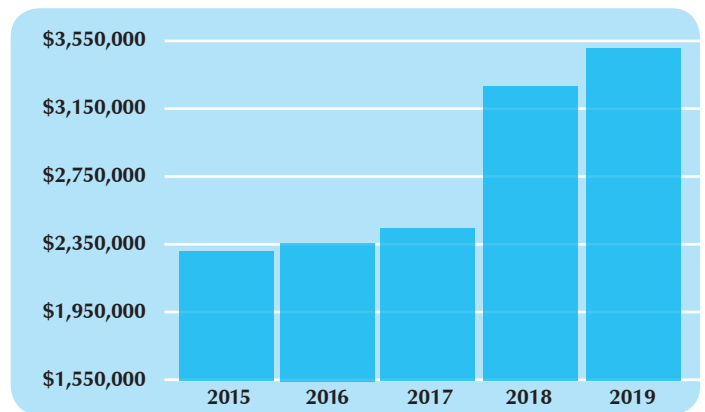


## Lodging and Attendance

### Attendance History



### Lodging Tax Revenue

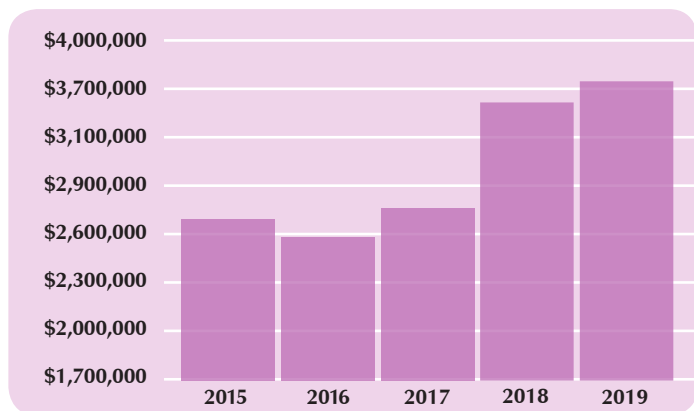


NOTE: 2018 & 2019 4% County Lodging Tax vs 3% in Previous Years

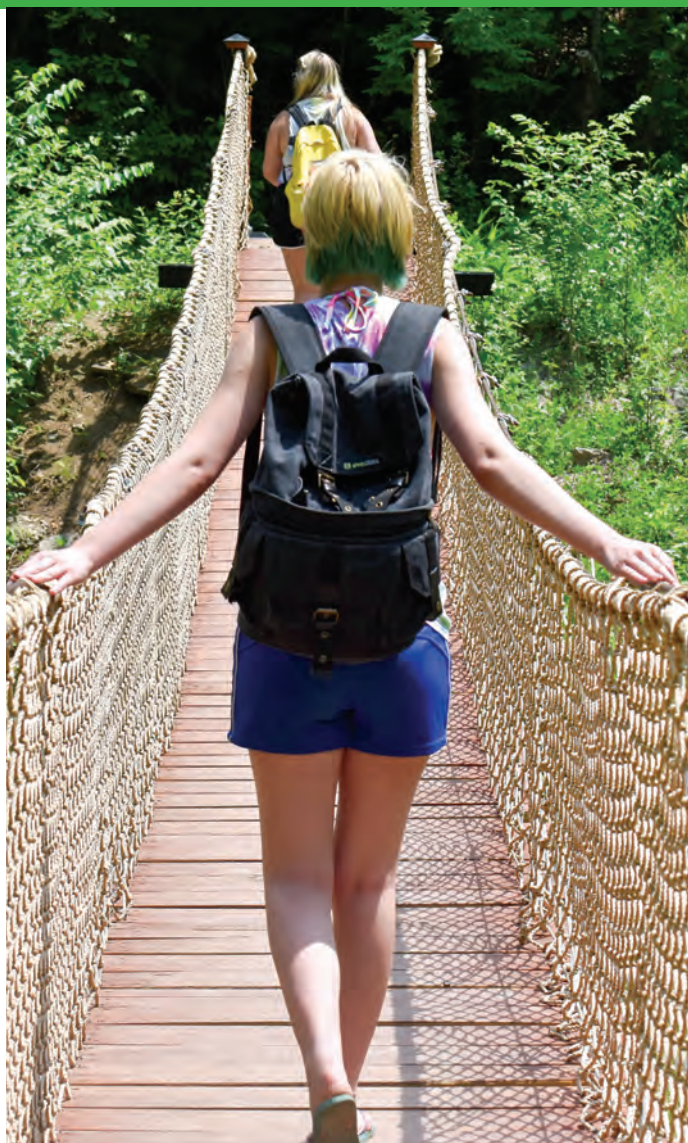
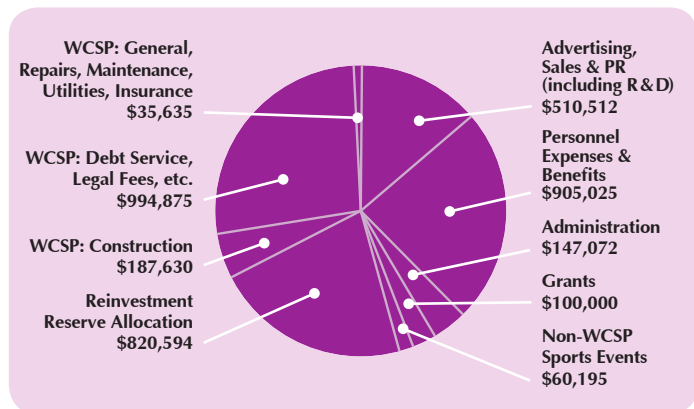


# Operating Revenue and Expenses

## Operating Revenue



## 2019 Operating Expenses

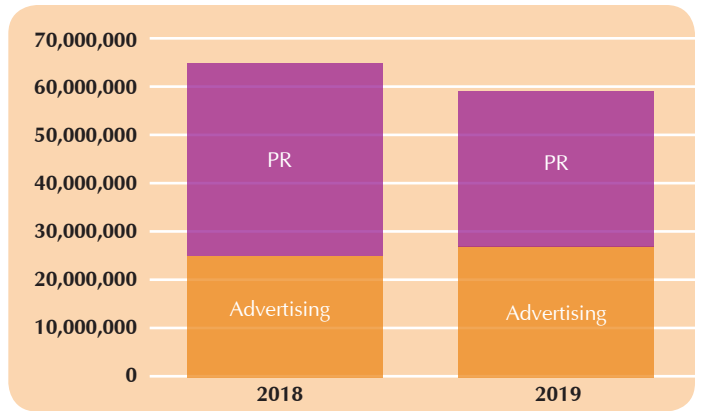


# 2019 Leisure Marketing Review

The interest in Warren County by leisure travelers continued to grow in 2019, due in part to the efforts of the Leisure Marketing department and its comprehensive plan encompassing digital campaigns, social media promotions, advertising placements, direct outreach and public relations.

Owned / paid messages were distributed in print, cinema, out-of-home, radio and online. These placements garnered nearly 26.6 million gross impressions. Public relations efforts garnered more than 32.7 million gross impressions.

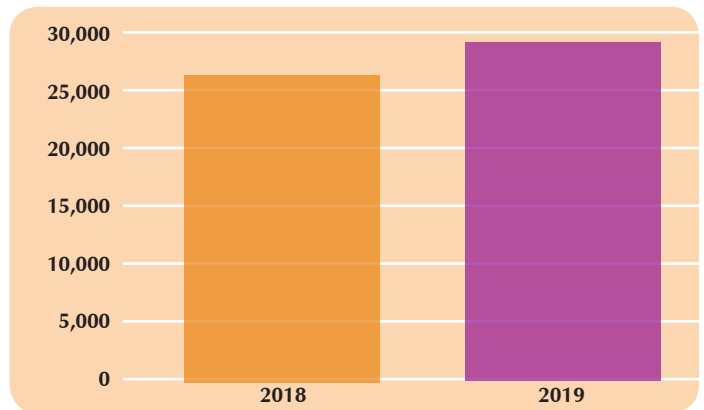
## Gross Impressions



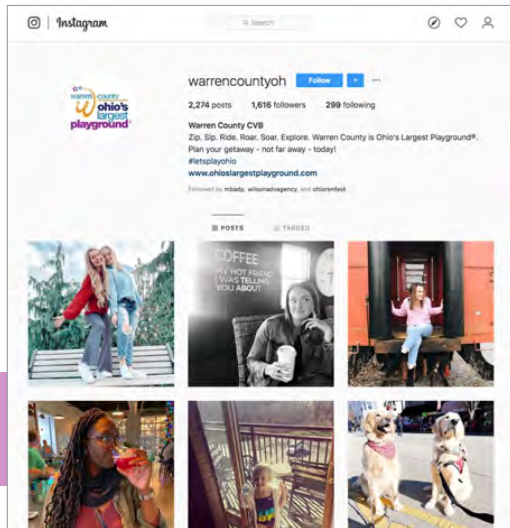
## Visitors Guide



## Social Media Followers



## Instagram

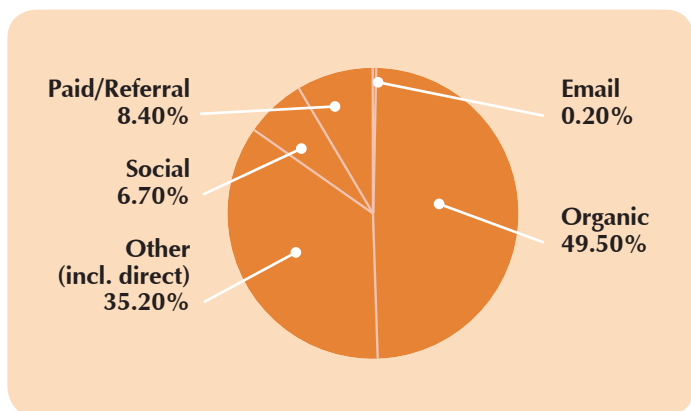


## Twitter

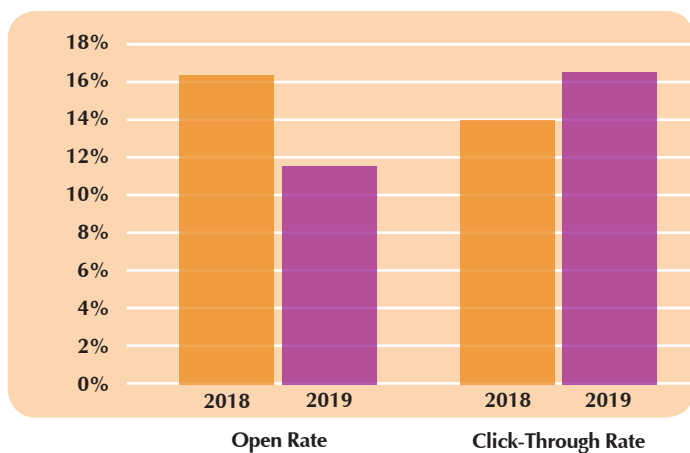




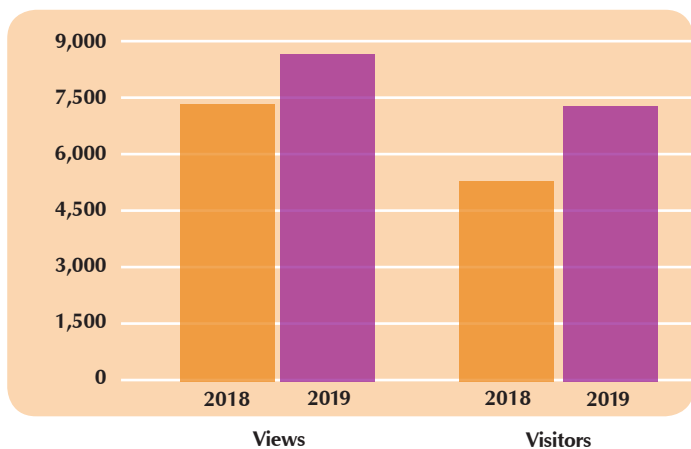
### 2019 Website Traffic Breakdown



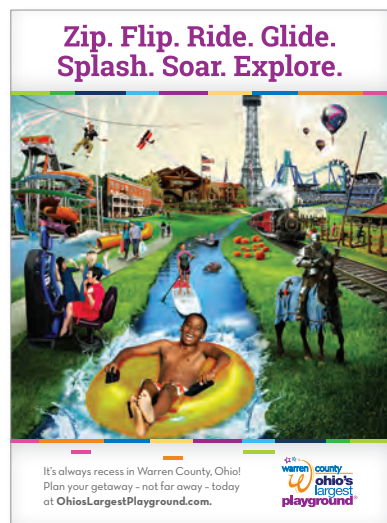
### E-Newsletter Stats



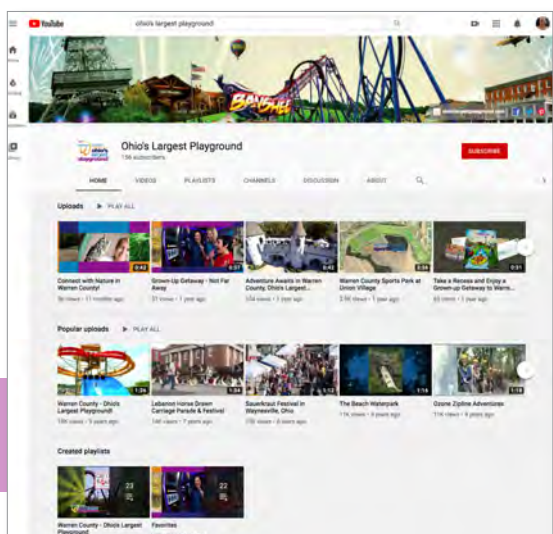
### Blog Stats – Stories from the Playground



### Print Ad



### YouTube



### E-Newsletter



# 2019 Sports Review

In 2004, the Warren County Convention & Visitors Bureau launched its sports division, now known as Warren County Sports. Over the past 16 years, hundreds of thousands of athletes and their families have come to Ohio's Largest Playground for the best in competition and fun, generating an economic impact for the region estimated at nearly \$500 million.

To generate that economic impact, WC Sports manages three different types of sporting events:

- **Direct Sale Events** – which are held as a direct result of sales/recruiting efforts by WC Sports
- **Assisted Events** – for which WC Sports assists in the operation to some degree
- **Created Events** – which are owned and operated by the WCCVB

WC Sports once again had an amazing year in 2019, generating more than 63,000 hotel room nights and \$37.5 million in estimated economic impact, thus positioning itself for continued growth in 2020 and beyond.

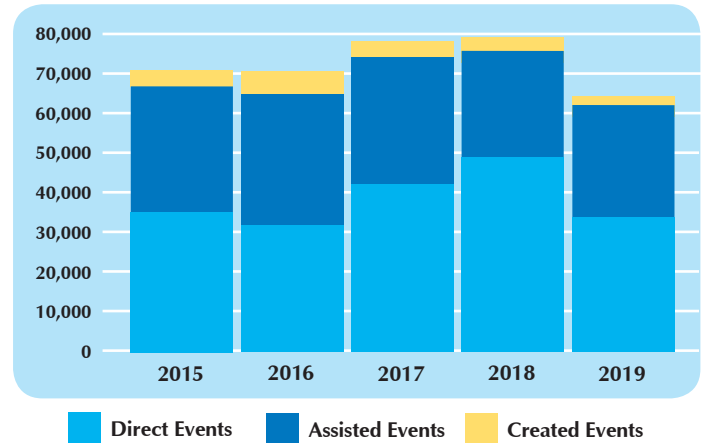
WC Sports hosted 52 Direct Sale Events that helped to generate approximately 36,586 hotel room nights in 2019, while working with limited facility availability due to construction and the rest of normal city parks that are traditionally utilized.

On the Assisted Events side, WC Sports continued to work with regional baseball and basketball tournaments and events. By sharing event and marketing expertise with outside event organizers, we were able to grow non-bureau tournaments. Relationships with local event planners paid off in 2019. In total, the Assisted Events sector helped generate approximately \$15.5 million in economic impact.

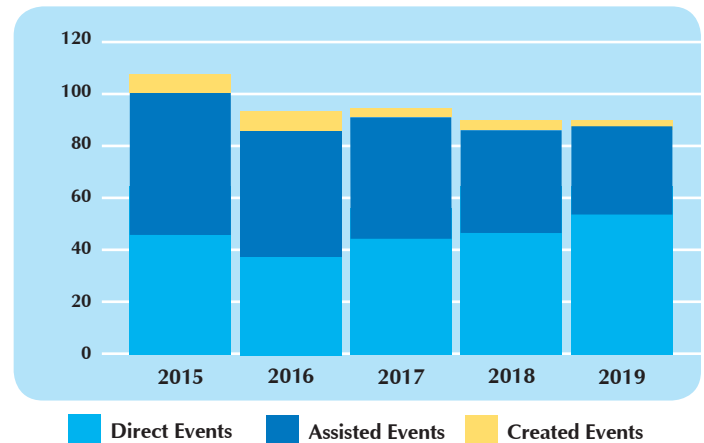
The Created Events segment also played a significant role in 2019. WC Sports produced two events that generated more than \$1.4 million in estimated economic impact and accounted for more than 2,400 hotel room nights. The Created Events portion of the business has allowed us to grow all three segments of our business through contacts and abilities showcased by running our own events.

WC Sports is looking forward to incredible growth starting in 2020 with the opening of the Warren County Sports Park at Union Village. The staff spent a lot of time in 2019 working with a variety of aspects of the park, including construction, marketing, and sales of the WC Sports Park. The Sports Park puts WC Sports on a different level in 2020 and beyond.

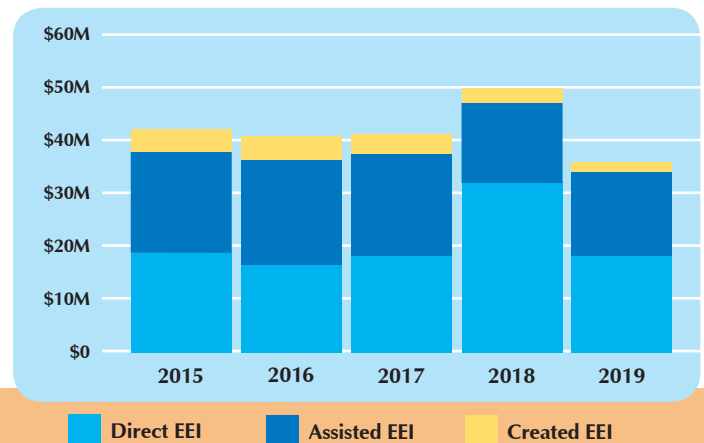
Sports Room Night History



Sports Event History



Sports Estimated Economic Impact (EEI) History



## Group Tour

At the end of 2009, the WCCVB made the strategic decision to de-emphasize group tour and meeting planning as a focus of the Bureau. However, the WCCVB continues to monitor this business sector by working with tour operators, attending group tour shows, etc.



# 2020 Leisure Marketing Outlook

## Leisure Marketing 2020 Objectives, Strategies & Tactics

### Objective: Increase name and brand awareness

Continue with consistent creative that consistently conveys multitude and diversity of attractions in a visually impactful manner

- Collateral, Print
- Digital, Social Media, Website, E-Newsletters
- Video

### Expand marketing presence in key geographic markets

- Social and PR targeting
- Paid media

### Increase messaging frequency

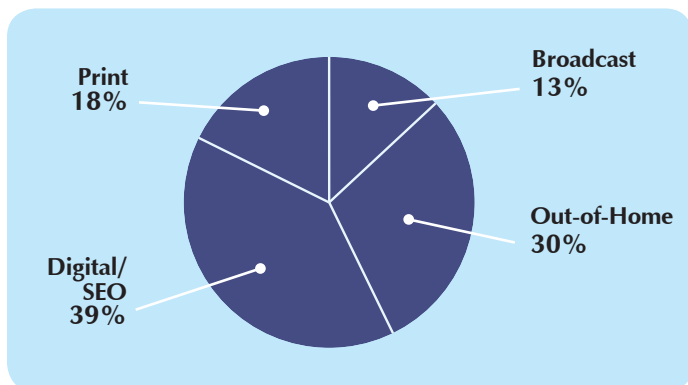
- Continue with frequent relevant posts on social media with increased focus on video
- Increase relevant editor/writer/blogger outreach
- Use appropriate media mix to maximize both reach and frequency with desired target audiences

### Continue to improve upon integration with WCCVB Sports

- Social media
- Press releases

### 2020 Media Budget Allocations

Percentage of Ad Budget



### Objective: Increase travel interest with relevant target audiences

Target audiences – including demographics, psychographics and geography – were determined based on analysis of past information requests, website traffic and industry research

- Primary Geographic Focus:
  - Illinois – Chicago
  - Indiana – Indianapolis
  - Kentucky – Louisville
  - Michigan – Detroit
  - Ohio – Cleveland
  - Pennsylvania – Pittsburgh, Philadelphia
  - Tennessee – Nashville
  - West Virginia – Charleston, Huntington
  - Canada – Toronto
- Primary Demographic Focus: Women ages 35 - 50 with children ages birth to 18
- Secondary Demographic Focus: Adults ages 50 - 64

### Utilize the best media mix to elicit quality leads

- Review past/existing media placements relative to website traffic generation, lead quality, cost per lead and engagement
- Review potential media for demographic and psychographic relevance

### Ensure messaging fits the audience (not one-size-fits-all) in both public relations and advertising

### Maximize opportunities with youth sports participants and their families

### Make sure available content (activities, lodging, etc.) lives up to the brand promise to the best of the WCCVB's ability

- Continually educate partners on importance of keeping information up-to-date with the WCCVB
- Monitor changes and closings in the communities and ensure timely updates are made where appropriate and possible

**Objective: Increase conversions**

Work with booking agency on diversity and availability of packages

Continue to solicit packages, discounts, etc. from partners

- Be creative in developing shoulder-season travel options and opportunities
- Encourage collaboration among partners to develop appealing packages and itineraries

### 2020 Leisure Marketing Goals

Consumer E-Newsletters	12
Partner E-Newsletters	12
Leisure PR Stories	10 placements in target markets
Sports PR Stories	8 placements in target markets

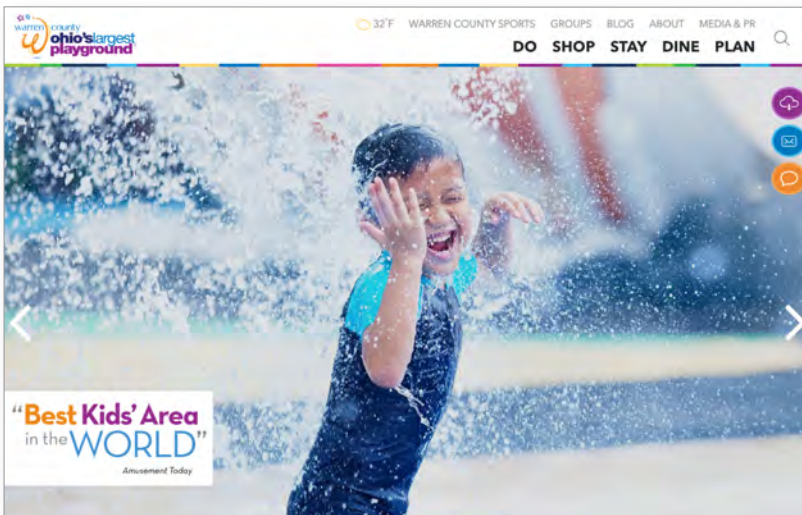
**2020 Warren County CVB Media Plan**

MEDIA	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
<b>Broadcast/Out-of-Home</b>												
National Cinema Media					■	■	■					
Radio				■	■							
Streaming Television					■	■	■					
Ad-Rack (Travel Centers)			■	■	■	■						
<b>Print</b>												
Country Living Magazine				■	■							
Crossings Magazine				■	■							
Midwest Living Magazine			■	■	■	■	■	■	■			
2020 Ohio Travel Guide	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
<b>Digital</b>												
Display Banners & Online Video				■	■	■	■					
Cinema Booster					■	■	■					
Travel Guides Free			■	■	■	■						
Travel Spike State of Ohio E-Newsletters				■	■	■						
<b>Owned/Earned</b>												
PR	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Online Media*	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■

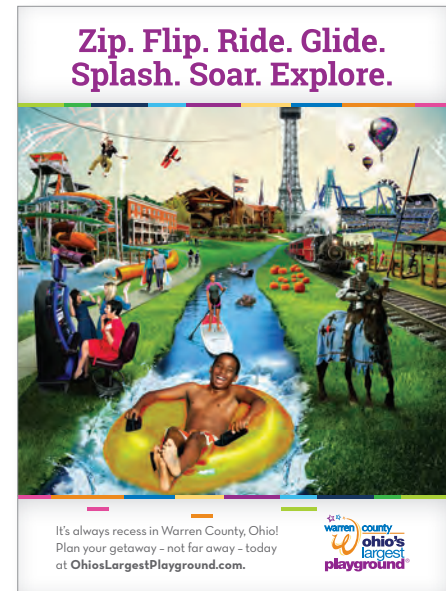
\* Includes blogs, e-newsletter, social media, website, SEO, etc.

# 2020 Creative Samples

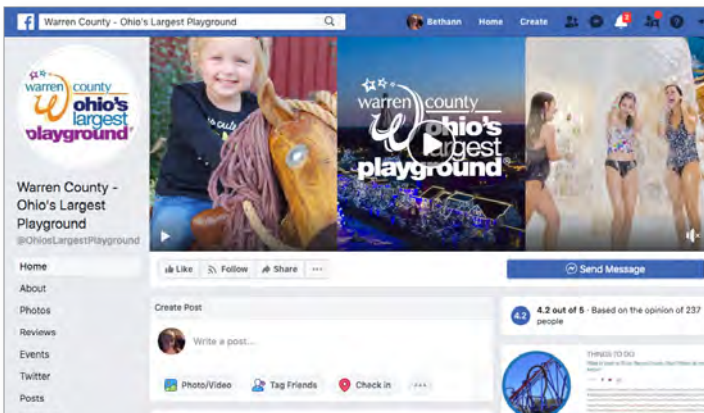
## Website



## Print Ads



## Facebook



## Digital Ads



## Instagram



# 2020 Sports Marketing Outlook

## Sports Marketing 2020 Objectives, Strategies & Tactics

### Objective: Deliver over 95,500 room nights and \$57M in estimated impact – highest year to date

- Utilize traditional facilities all open dates
- Opening year of multipurpose side of Warren County Sports Park will bring significant growth
- Encourage/assist local groups to produce their own events
- Work to further grow existing events
- Increase attendance by leveraging tourism backdrop and family vacation opportunities (KI Sports Pass, etc.)

### Objective: Efficient operations

- Manage budget to ensure lowest per room night spend in history
- Promote sports complex efficiently through advertising and trade shows
- Efficiently build staff to manage Sports Park and expected growth

### Website



### Objective: Strategic growth with sports park opening

- Begin operations of complex; equipment, staff, event support, etc.
- Fill any open dates/weekends at Sports Park with large impact events
- Continue to recruit and retain sponsors for the park

### 2020 Sports Marketing Goals

Events	97
Attendance	228,000
Room Nights	95,500
Est. Economic Impact	\$57,378,000





**Warren County Convention & Visitors Bureau**

5412 Courseview Drive, Suite 220 • Mason, OH 45040

P: 513.204.1900 • F: 513.204.1999

[www.OhiosLargestPlayground.com](http://www.OhiosLargestPlayground.com)

