

2022 Annual Report
2023 Marketing Plan

warren county
**ohio's largest
playground®**





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!

While the pandemic was clinching its icy tentacles around the tourism industry in 2020, research was being produced which seemed to indicate which types of destinations would fare best in a post-pandemic world. That research suggested future visitors would favor rural or suburban destinations in drivable locations with outdoor activities. That research gave us hope at the Warren County Convention & Visitors Bureau that a rebound from the depths of COVID could be achieved. But we had work to do.

No other industry in the State of Ohio, or arguably in the nation, was more negatively affected by COVID-19 than the tourism industry. In 2020, Warren County alone lost \$257 million in economic impact and 2,000 tourism-related jobs as our tourism partners were forced to shutter their doors for many months and ride out the storm.

But the economic impact study for 2021, which was conducted in 2022 by the State of Ohio and Longwoods International, showed a solid rebound. Warren County tourism's annual economic impact reached a record \$1.45 billion, a \$371 million increase over 2020, completely erasing the \$257 million lost in 2020 versus 2019. The study also showed tourism supports 12,310 jobs in Warren County, and those jobs produce \$346 million in wages. In addition, a federal jobs report in February 2023 showed the sector with the largest increase in jobs was tourism and hospitality. These signs all point to a rebound in our tourism economy in Warren County.

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.

COVID-19 forced dramatic changes to our activities, our messaging and our tactics. It even forced us to engage in a legal fight to keep one of our biggest tourism drivers open. But now the WCCVB is back and fully engaged in the business of selling our County to world.

On the following pages we take an in-depth look at 2022 and at what is to come in 2023. Warren County is blessed to have a robust tourism industry, made possible by the wonderful, dedicated people who comprise our staff, our board, and our community. We're also within a day's drive of 60 percent 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. Each year we expect big things. We're looking forward to bigger and brighter days in 2023.

Sincerely,

Philip S. Smith
President & Chief Executive Officer





Table of Contents

Introduction	1
2023 WCCVB Board	
2023 Officers.....	2
2023 Directors.....	2
2023 WCCVB Staff	3
2022 Review	
Economic Impact.....	4
Charts / Graphs	4-5
2022 Leisure Marketing Review.....	6-7
2022 Sports Review	8
2023 Outlook	
2023 Leisure Marketing Outlook.....	10-11
2023 Creative Samples	12
2023 Sports Outlook.....	13

2023 WCCVB Board

2023 Officers

Board Chairman

Jonathan D. Sams

Trustee, Turtlecreek Township

Treasurer

Robyn Lane

Owner, Hidden Valley Orchards

Secretary

Karolyn Ellingson

*Business Development Manager,
Workforce Development Division, Sinclair College*

2023 Directors

Elizabeth Desrosiers

*Director of Marketing and Communications,
Western & Southern Open*

Barbara Hogan

*CEO & President, Timbelo, Inc.;
Partner & Vice President, Afidence*

Richard Jones

*Executive Consultant, Warren County Community
Services*

Russell Jones

Legal Counsel & Officer, Gem City Tire

Martin Russell

*Deputy County Administrator;
Executive Director, Warren County Port Authority*

Chad Showalter

Director of Communications, Kings Island



2023 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*

Britt Barry
Facilities Manager

Brandon Moravec
Assistant Facilities Manager

Josh Berning
Operations Coordinator

Chris Wolary
Operations Coordinator

Matt Johnson
Groundskeeper

Sports Marketing

Ben Huffman
Director of Sports Enterprises

Linda Smith
*Senior Manager, Visitor
Services & Sales*

Scott Hofmann
*Senior Manager of Sports
Operations*



Economic Impact



An estimated 13.1 million visitors made their way to Warren County's various events and attractions in 2022, setting a new annual attendance record and fueling the incredibly powerful engine that is Warren County's No. 1 industry: tourism.

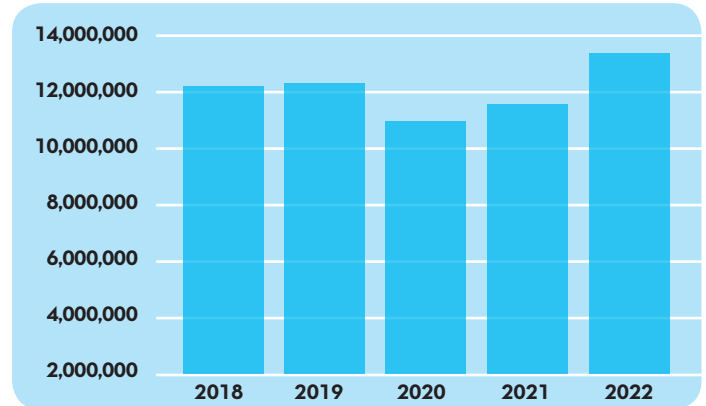
While measuring the true impact of tourism is often difficult because it can be felt across so many different sectors, a recent study by the State of Ohio offered some impressive insight.

That study, conducted in early 2022, found that Warren County tourism accounts for more than \$1.45 billion in economic impact each year, while generating approximately \$346 million in wages, as well as \$199 million in Federal, State and Local taxes.

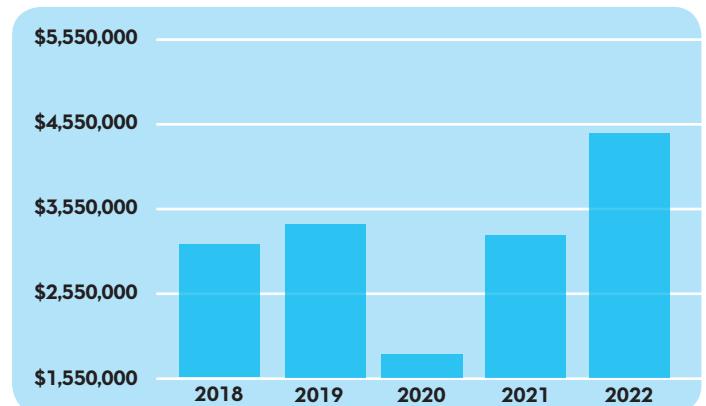
The industry also supports more than 12,000 jobs – or approximately 9% of the county's private workforce, making Warren County the second-most tourism-dependent county in all of Southwest Ohio.

Lodging and Attendance

Attendance History



Lodging Tax Revenue

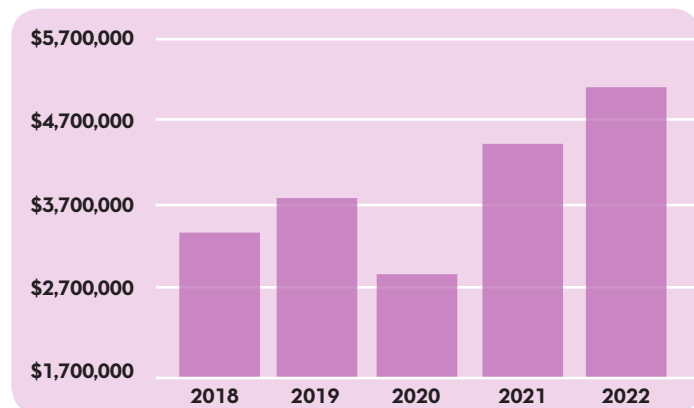


NOTE: 2018 4% County Lodging Tax vs 3% in Previous Years

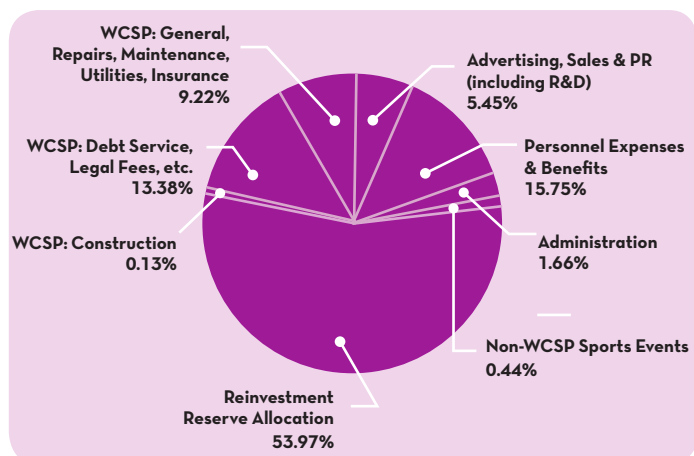


Operating Revenue and Expenses

Operating Revenue



2022 Operating Expenses



2022 Leisure Marketing Review



**2022
Visitors Guide**

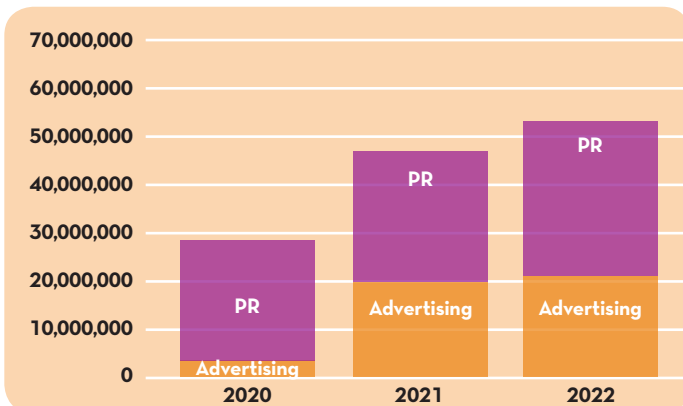
After navigating nearly two years of unique challenges raised by COVID-19's debilitating impact on the travel and tourism industry, the WCCVB and its Leisure Marketing department enjoyed what felt like a return to (almost) normal operations in 2022.

Warren County's reputation as both an affordable and easily drivable destination positioned it well for a rapid bounce back in 2022's travel climate, and the WCCVB's Leisure Marketing team took full advantage, launching a multi-faceted, yet cost-conscious promotional campaign that included digital, social, broadcast and print advertising placements, as well as consistent, in-house public relations efforts.

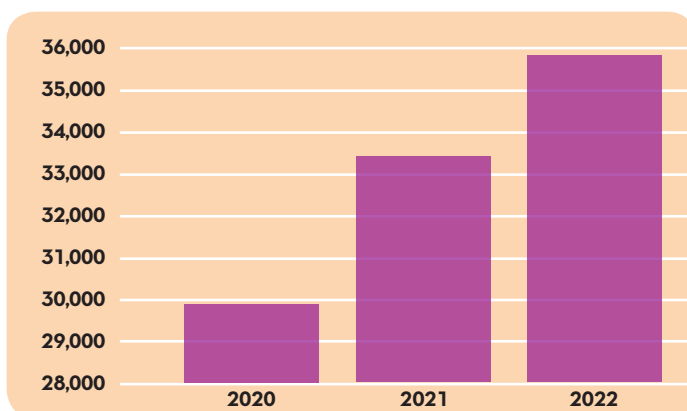
Owned and paid messages garnered more than 20.4 million gross impressions, while public relations efforts garnered an additional 31.5 million.

The WCCVB's social media channels and e-newsletter also saw tremendous growth in 2022, as did its web site and blog – both of which set all-time records for annual traffic.

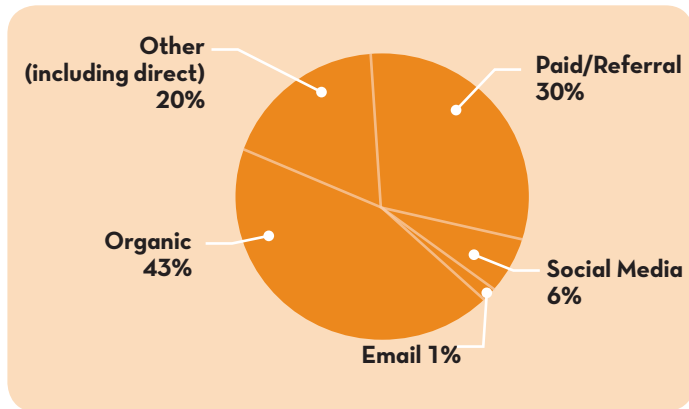
Gross Impressions



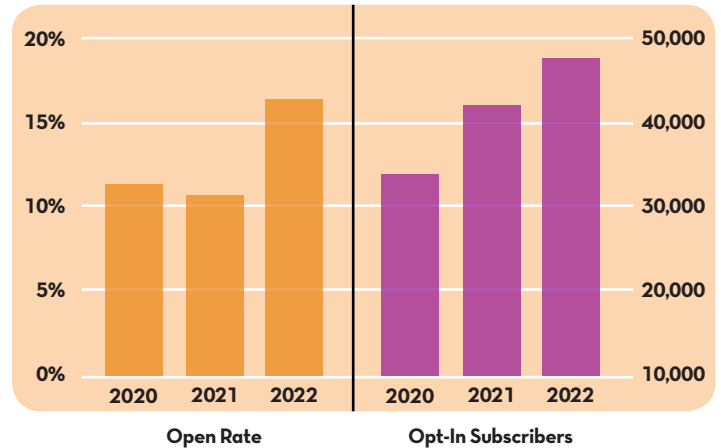
Social Media Followers



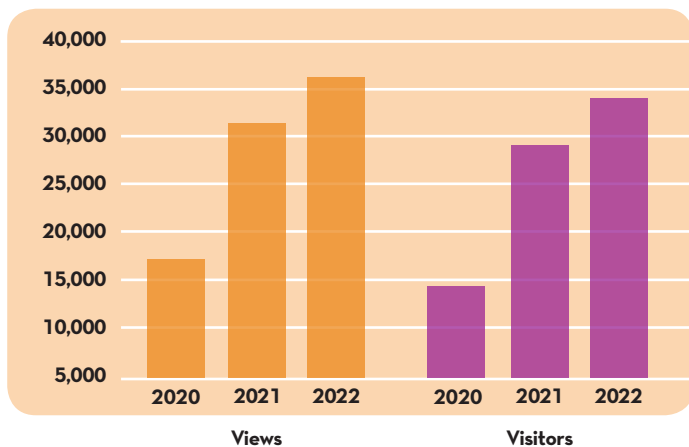
2022 Website Traffic Breakdown



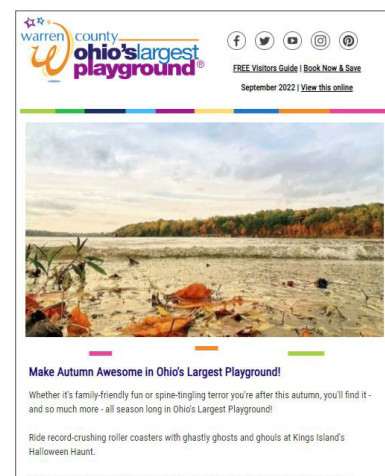
E-Newsletter Stats



Blog Stats



E-Newsletter



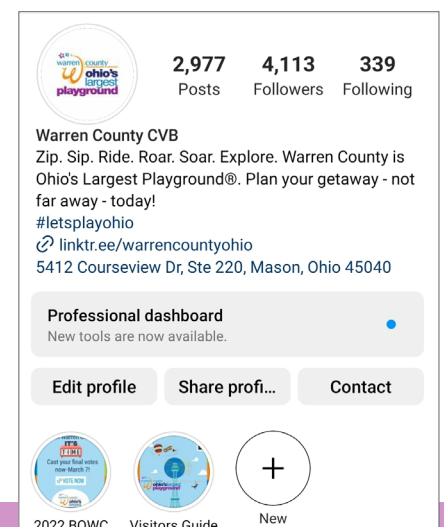
Facebook



Twitter



Instagram



2022 Sports Review



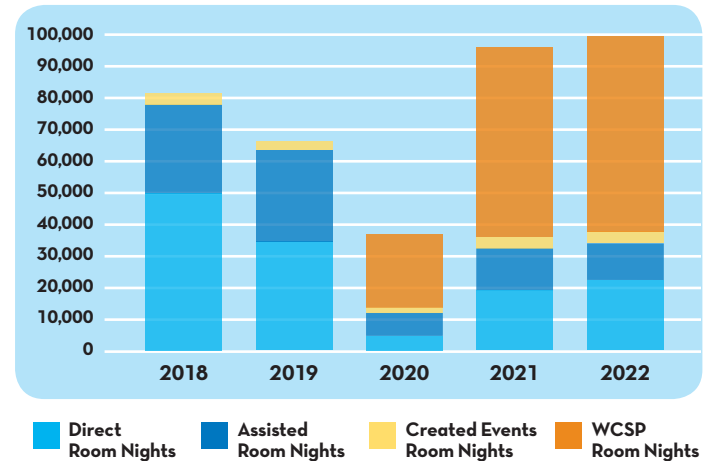
In 2004, the Warren County Convention & Visitors Bureau launched its sports division, now known as Warren County Sports. Over the years, hundreds of thousands of athletes and their families have come to Ohio's Largest Playground for the best in competition and fun, generating an economic impact for the region estimated at more than \$535 million and 900,000 hotel room nights.

To generate that economic activity, Warren County Sports manages four different categories of sporting events:

- 1) Direct Sale Events (held as a direct result of sales/recruiting efforts by WC Sports)
- 2) Assisted Events (for which WC Sports assists in the operation to some degree)
- 3) Created Events (owned and operated by the WCCVB)
- 4) Warren County Sports Park events

Between 2006-2020 the focus of the Warren County CVB, as it related to Sports Tourism growth, was the development of its own sports complex, which would generate incremental economic impact and hotel room nights to the county, as sports tourism impact at the time was limited in growth with current facilities.

Sports Room Night History



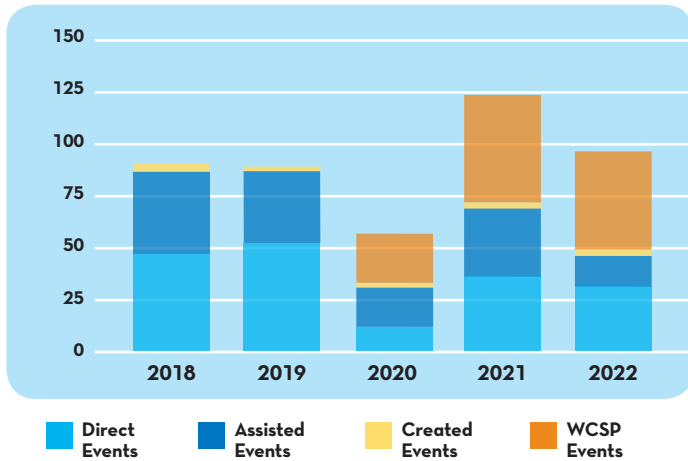
The goals of this project were three-fold: Increase overall impact, spread impact throughout the county and calendar, and obtain control of schedule allow the WCCVB to drive impact when hotels need it most.

The Warren County Sports Park (WCSP) was opened in 2020, and in 2020 and 2021 the WC Sports Park met its objectives and did what was expected. However, it was at a muted level due to the pandemic and the response to it.

This past year (2022) showcased what the Warren County Sports Park will do for the community moving forward. Warren County was ranked as the No. 2 sports destination in the country by Sports Tourism Index due to this new facility and the backdrop of the county's tourism offerings.

The Warren County Sports Park met its intended purpose throughout 2022, hosting 48 events with more than 960,000 attendees throughout the year in all programming. These activities brought \$63.1 million in estimated economic impact to the community and generated approximately 67,400 hotel room nights. Warren County had a record year for Sports Tourism in 2022, hosting a total of

Sports Event History

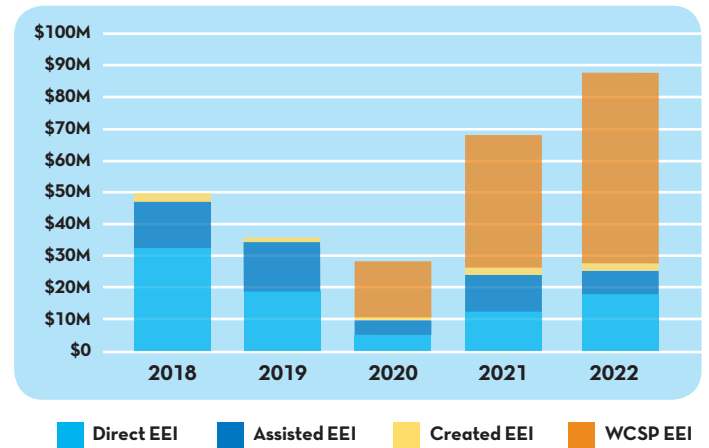


92 events, attracting more than 1,250,000 people, generating \$88.2 million in estimated economic impact and filling more than 101,000 room nights.

Plans for 2023 are even brighter. Warren County will host 100 events, with more than 1,250,000 attendees, generate 115,000 hotel room nights, and drive \$95 million in estimated economic impact. The 2023 WCSP calendar is sold out, allowing the WCSP to generate more than \$70 million of that \$95 million total impact.

Event highlights for Warren County in 2023 include 24 soccer tournaments, 22 baseball events, and three lacrosse tournaments at the WCSP, along with USA Ultimate College Nationals, Big East Baseball, and many other exciting events.

Sports Estimated Economic Impact (EEI) History



2023 Leisure Marketing Outlook

Leisure Marketing 2023 Objectives, Strategies & Tactics

Objective:

Sell Warren County as an attractive destination for today's traveler

Leverage new and previously existing marketing creative to communicate Warren County's easy accessibility, affordability and wealth of family and grown-up friendly offerings, utilizing the following vehicles:

- Digital (Search engine marketing, banner ads, online video, social media, e-newsletters)
- Broadcast
- Print

Expand marketing presence in key geographic markets

- Strategically target messaging across all mediums and platforms
- Increase reliance on analytics and trend-tracking

Further leverage budget-friendly, in-house marketing solutions

- Increase frequency of blog and social media posts
- Increase collaboration with influencers and travel writers

Objective:

Increase Warren County's brand awareness among relevant audiences

Target messaging to thoroughly researched and carefully identified regions and groups:

- Geographic Targets:
 - Illinois - Chicago
 - Indiana - Indianapolis, Fort Wayne
 - Kentucky - Louisville
 - Michigan - Detroit
 - Ohio - Cleveland
 - Pennsylvania - Pittsburgh, Philadelphia
 - Tennessee - Nashville
 - West Virginia - Charleston, Huntington
- Demographic Targets:
 - 1) Women ages 35-50 with children ages birth to 18
 - 2) Adults ages 50-64
- Ensure all messaging fits its appropriate audience

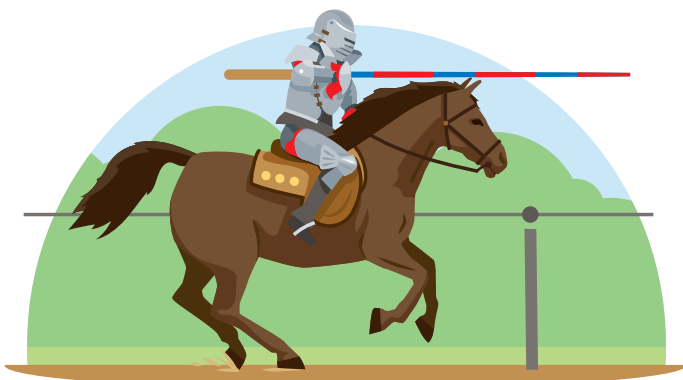
Objective:

Improve communication and integration with tourism partners and WCCVB staff

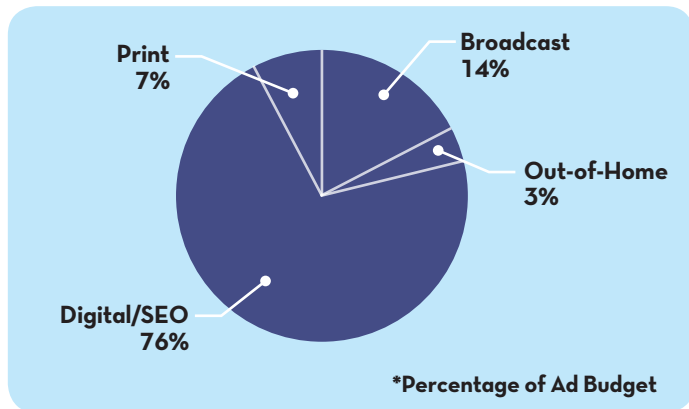
Meet and collaborate with restaurants, retailers, attractions, events and hotel partners frequently

Involve a wider variety of tourism partners in e-newsletter, blog and social media contest promotions

Work even more closely with Warren County Sports to further streamline efforts



2023 Media Budget Allocations*



2023 Leisure Marketing Goals

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

2023 Warren County CVB Media Plan

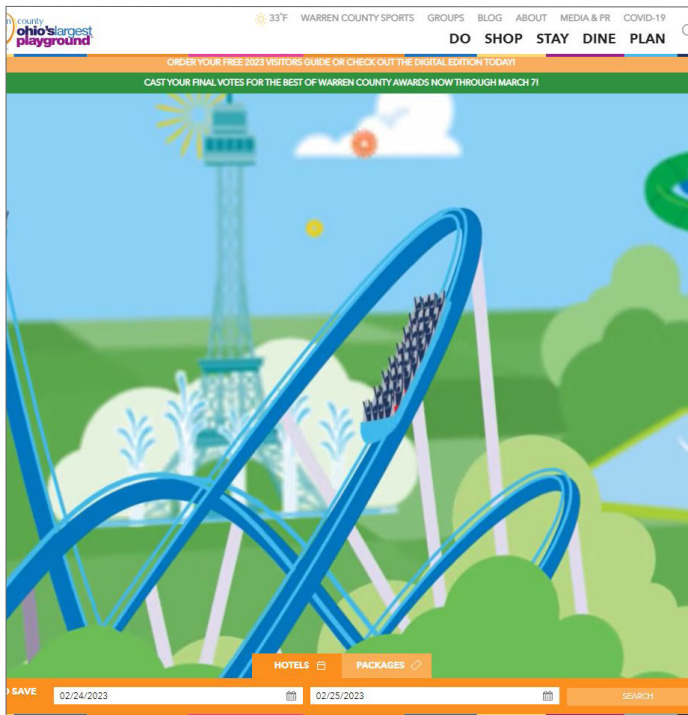
MEDIA	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
Broadcast/Out-of-Home												
iHeart Media (Streaming Radio)												
Broadcast Television												
Connected/Streaming Television												
Ad Rack (Travel Information Centers & Rest Stops)												
Print												
Midwest Living Magazine												
2023 Ohio Travel Guide												
Digital												
Online Display Ads, Traditional Online Video, Youtube												
Paid Social Media (Facebook, Instagram)												
Travel Guides Free (Visitors Guide Request Platform)												
Ohio Find It Here E-Newsletters												
Paid Search Engine Optimization												
Owned/Earned												
Public Relations												
Online Media*												

* Includes blogs, e-newsletter, social media, website, SEO content produced in-house

NOTE: Media calendar is subject to change

2023 Creative Samples*

Website - Home Page



Video Snapshot



* Creative concepts were still in development at the time of publication and are subject to change.

Print Ads



Banner Ads



Digital Ads



2023 Sports Marketing Outlook

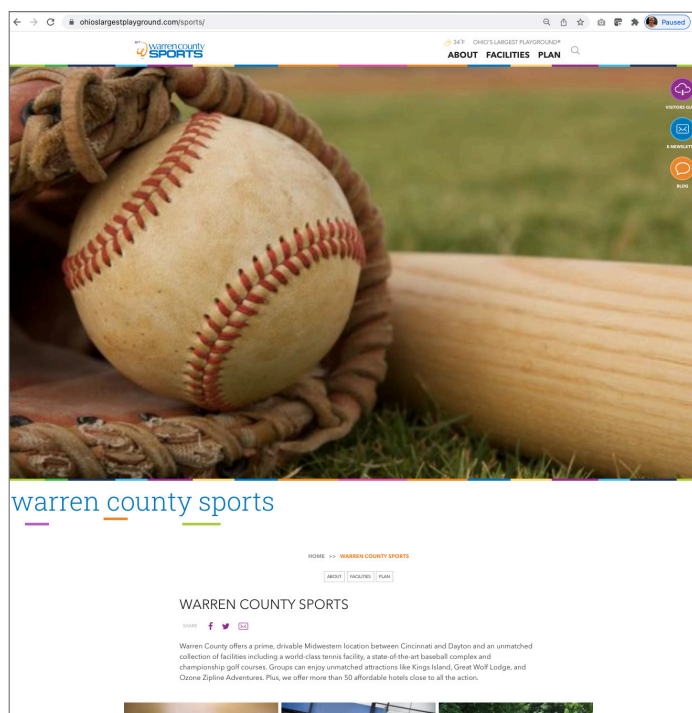
Sports Marketing 2023 Objectives, Strategies & Tactics

Objective:

Deliver 115,000 room nights and \$95M in Estimated Impact - highest year to date

- Fill every available date at the Warren County Sports Park
- Utilize traditional facilities on all open dates
- Encourage/assist local groups to produce their own events
- Return to selling facilities for future years at conferences and trade shows
- Grow existing events
- Increase attendance by leveraging tourism backdrop and family vacation opportunities

Website - Sports



2023 Sports Marketing Goals

Events	100
Attendance	1,250,000
Room Nights	115,000
Estimated Economic Impact	\$95,000,000

Objective:

Efficient Operations

- Manage budget to ensure lowest per room night spend possible
- Partner with organizations to increase sports impact through facility or event development
- Efficiently build staff to manage expected growth at WCSP

Objective:

Strategic Growth of WCSP

- Continue efficient operations - equipment, staff, event support, etc.
- Work with events to increase out-of-town attendance and sponsor business growth
- Continue to recruit and retain sponsors for the Warren County Sports Park

Objective:

Tell Our Story

- Present at community events telling the story of CVB Sports and opportunities for partnerships
- Work with multiple platforms and attend multiple tradeshows to obtain more events for facilities outside of the sports park



Warren County Convention & Visitors Bureau

5412 Courseview Drive, Suite 220 • Mason, OH 45040

P: 513.204.1900 • F: 513.204.1999

www.OhiosLargestPlayground.com

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on social media!

