



warren county

2024 Annual Report
2025 Marketing Plan

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 by 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 Banshee, its dual wild waterparks, its globally recognized historic wonder, its world-class sporting events, its knights on horseback or its massive celebration of sauerkraut.

Warren County is all of those things, though. It's all of those tourism-related things – and so much more. Each year, millions of visitors spend millions of dollars here, creating jobs and generating federal, state and local taxes. Best of all, those are taxes residents of our amazing county needn't pay.

On numerous occasions, I've compared the function of a Convention & Visitors Bureau to that of a marketing firm or advertising agency. Both use similar tools such as web sites, display ads, social media pages and more. But unlike a marketing firm that helps Procter & Gamble sell soap, our CVB team "sells" our county to visitors from all across the country and world.

On the following pages we take an in-depth look at 2024 and at what is to come in 2025. The WCCVB enjoyed another successful year in 2024, made possible by the wonderful, dedicated people on our staff, on our board and in our community.

Taking a look at the numbers, 2024 saw strong lodging tax collections, while visitation to local attractions exceeded 14 million for the first time in county history. There are numerous reasons for our county's appeal as a tourism destination, chief among them our convenient location, easy accessibility, outstanding affordability and wealth of top-tier entertainment and lodging offerings.

All those aspects combined, it's no wonder we've long been known as *Ohio's Largest Playground*. Thank you all for your help in making 2024 another wonderful year. Here's to even bigger and better things in 2025.

Sincerely,

Phillip S. Smith
President & Chief Executive Officer





Table of Contents

Introduction	1
2025 WCCVB Board	
2025 Officers	2
2025 Directors	2
2025 WCCVB Staff	3
2024 Review	
Economic Impact.....	4
Charts / Graphs	4-5
2024 Leisure Marketing Review.....	6-7
2024 Sports Review.....	8
2025 Outlook	
2025 Leisure Marketing Outlook.....	10-11
2025 Creative Samples.....	12
2025 Sports Outlook	13

2025 WCCVB Board

2025 Officers

Board Chairman

Jonathan D. Sams

Trustee, Turtlecreek Township

1st Vice Chairman

Chad Showalter

Director of Communications, Kings Island

2nd Vice Chairman

Richard Jones

Retired Executive

Treasurer

Robyn Lane

Owner, Hidden Valley Orchards

Secretary

Karolyn Ellingson

Head of Industrial Workforce Development, FESTO

2025 Directors

Elizabeth Desrosiers

*Director of Marketing and Communications,
The Cincinnati Open*

Kevin Eldridge

General Manager, Great Wolf Lodge

Russell Jones

Legal Counsel & Officer, Gem City Tire

Joel Loots

Sr. Director of Marketing, Miami Valley Gaming

Martin Russell

*Warren County Administrator; Director, Warren County
Office of Economic Development*



2025 WCCVB Staff

Administration

Phillip S. Smith
President & CEO

Ian Groves
*Director of Finance &
Human Resources*

Nichole Detamore
Director of Administration

Leisure Marketing

Scott Hutchinson
*Director of Marketing
& Communications*

Stacha Yundt
*Manager of Marketing
& Communications*

Sports Marketing

Ben Huffman
Director of Sports Tourism

Scott Hofmann
*Assistant Director of Sports
Tourism, Operations*

Britt Barry
*Assistant Director of Sports
Tourism, Facilities*

Matt Johnson
Assistant Facilities Manager

Kirk Mellendorf
Park Groundskeeper

Jack Welch
Operations Coordinator



Economic Impact



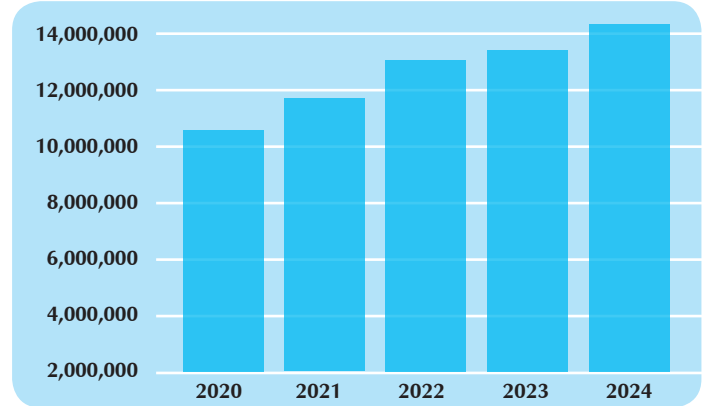
An estimated 14.3 million visitors made their way to Warren County's various events and attractions in 2024, setting a new annual attendance record and fueling the incredibly powerful engine that is Warren County's No. 1 industry: tourism.

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.

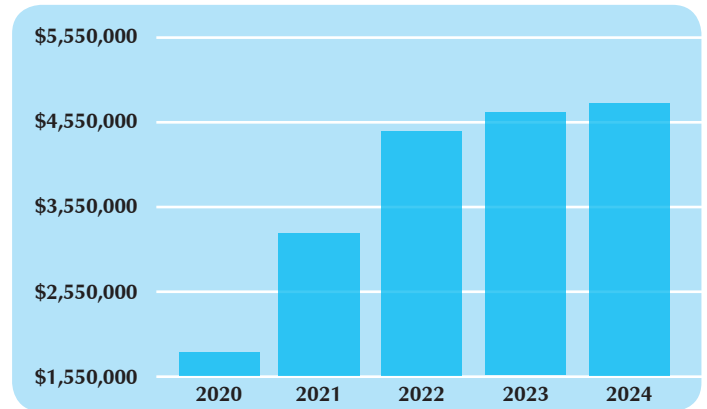
That study, conducted in 2024, found Warren County tourism accounts for more than \$1.7 billion in economic impact each year, while generating approximately \$403 million in wages, as well as \$217 million in federal, state and local taxes. The industry also supports more than 13,500 jobs – or approximately 9.2% of the county's private workforce.

Lodging and Attendance

Attendance History

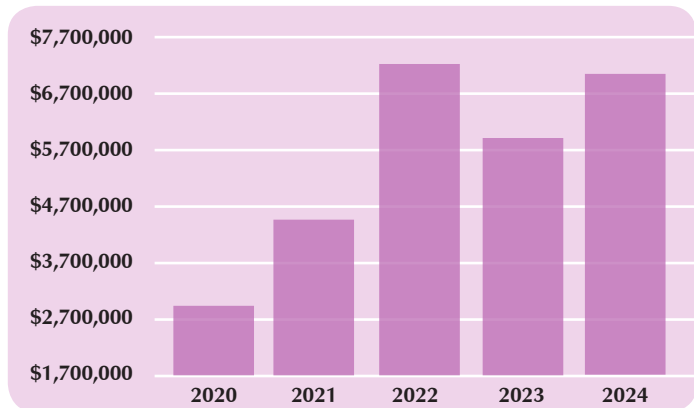


Lodging Tax Revenue

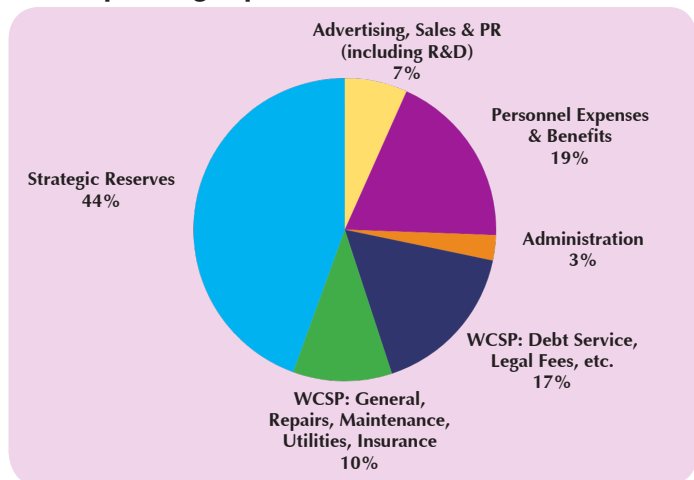


Operating Revenue and Expenses

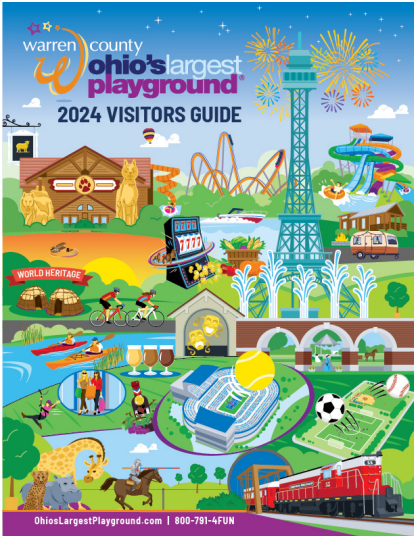
Operating Revenue



2024 Operating Expenses



2024 Leisure Marketing Review



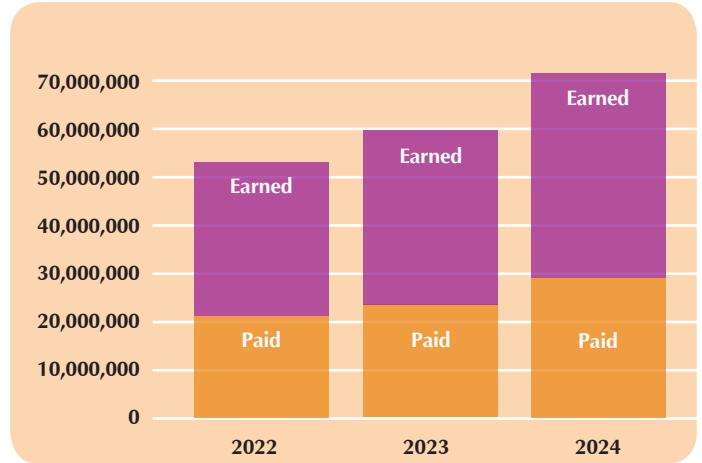
**2024
Visitors Guide**

Riding the momentum of what was a record-setting year for Warren County tourism in 2023, the WCCVB’s Leisure Marketing Team continued to build the county’s reputation as an affordable, drivable and action-packed destination by launching a carefully planned, multi-faceted and cost-conscious 2024 marketing campaign.

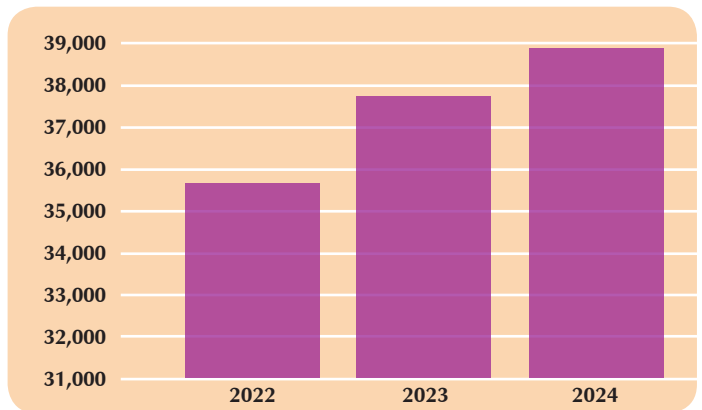
That campaign, which included digital, social, broadcast and print advertising placements, as well as consistent in-house marketing efforts, generated more than 28 million owned and paid gross impressions, while earned public relations efforts garnered an additional 44.7 million.

The WCCVB’s social media channels and e-newsletter also saw tremendous growth in 2024, as did its web site and blog – both of which set all-time records for annual traffic.

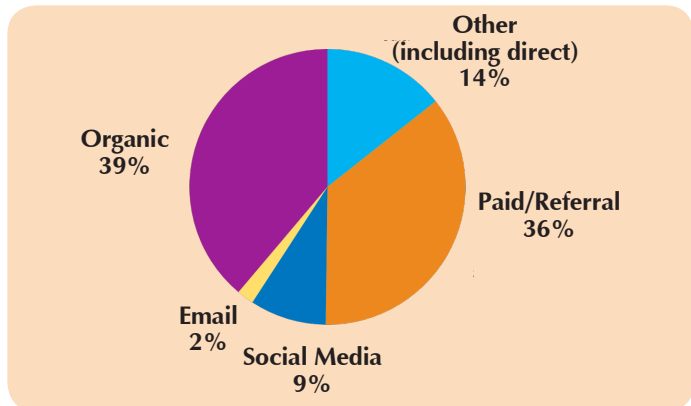
Gross Impressions



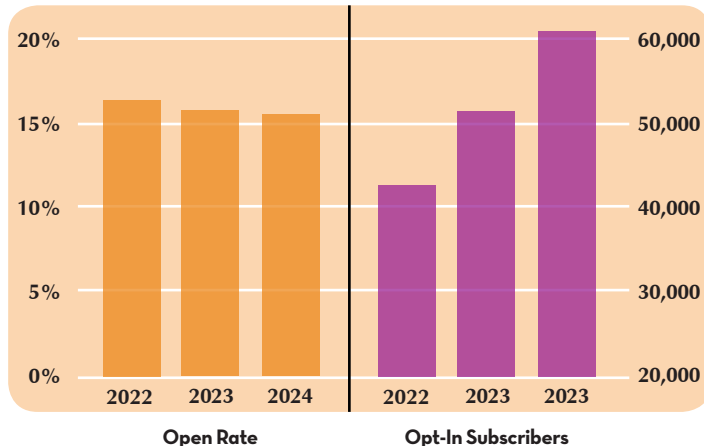
Social Media Followers



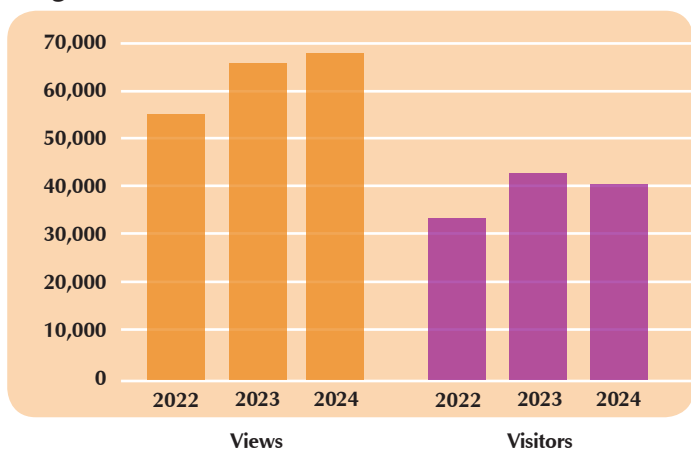
2024 Website Traffic Breakdown



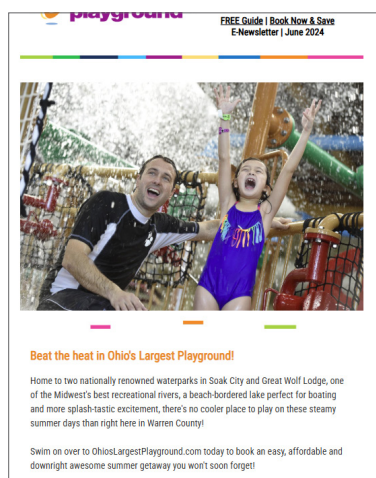
E-Newsletter Stats



Blog Stats



E-Newsletter



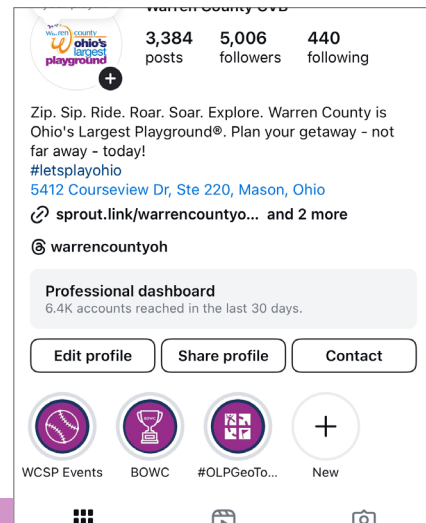
Facebook



X



Instagram



2024 Sports Review

In 2004, the Warren County Convention & Visitors Bureau launched a new sports division: Warren County Sports. Over the years, more than 12 million 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 \$920 million and driving nearly 1.25 million hotel room nights.

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

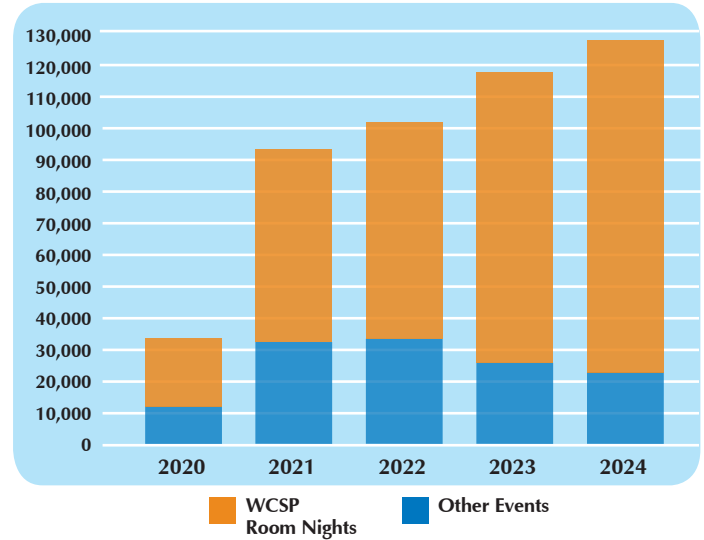
- Direct Sale Events (held as a direct result of sales/recruiting efforts by WC Sports)
- Assisted Events (for which WC Sports assists in the operation to some degree)
- Created Events (owned and operated by the WCCVB)
- Events at the Warren County Sports Park at Union Village (WCSP)

Since its inception, WC Sports has sought to produce travel-worthy events and tournaments to draw athletes from around the nation to Warren County. Not long after the launch of WC Sports, it became apparent that a destination sports facility, built and managed by the WCCVB, would be vital to fulfilling that purpose. That vision was supported by three separate studies conducted by three different independent research firms.

After years of planning, the vision of a dedicated destination sports facility finally became a reality in 2020, and since its opening the WCSP has grown each year in terms of annual economic impact.

All three of those aforementioned independent

Sports Room Night History



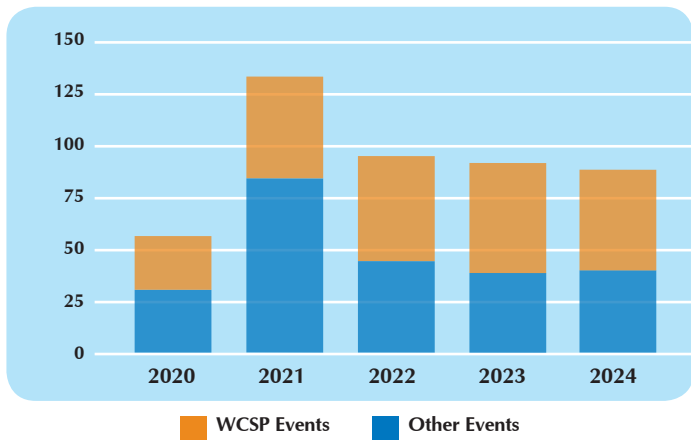
studies included a forecast for the fifth year of operation of the WCSP including economic impact, attendance and room nights. In 2024, the actual fifth year of operation for the WCSP, all of those estimated projections were exceeded.

Last year, the WCSP hosted 51 events and practices, welcoming more than 1.62 million attendees through the gates. That activity generated an economic impact of \$111 million for the community and filled more than 104,000 hotel room nights.

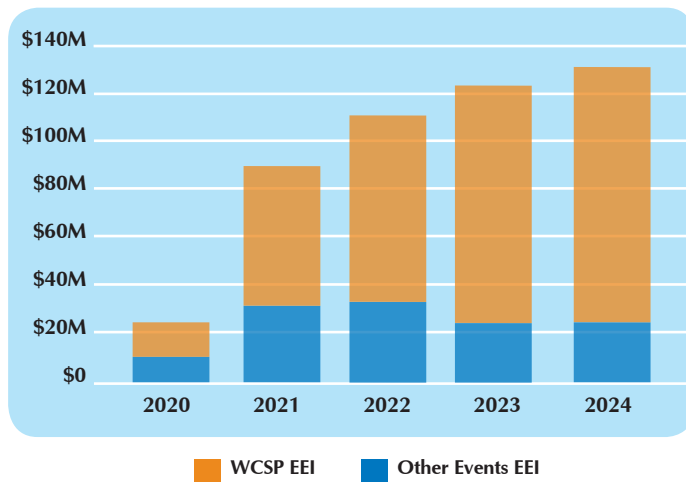
The impact of amateur sports in Warren County wasn’t limited to the WCSP, as Warren County Sports also hosts events in other venues and locations throughout the county. In total in 2024, Warren County Sports hosted 86 events attracting more than 1.875 million people, driving \$134.7 million in estimated economic impact, and generating more than 127,000 hotel room nights.

All of that economic activity isn’t just recognized locally: it’s recognized nationally as well. Warren

Sports Event History



Sports Estimated Economic Impact (EEI) History



County currently ranks as the No. 3 Sports Tourism Destination in the nation according to Sports Tourism Index.

The outlook for 2025 is even brighter. Warren County Sports projects to host a total of 90 events, drawing more than 1.9 million attendees, accounting for 130,000 hotel room nights and \$140 million in estimated economic impact. The 2025 calendar is already completely packed at the WCSP, activity which will account for more than \$115 million of that projected \$140 million impact.

Event highlights for 2025 will include 28 soccer tournaments, 20 baseball events and four lacrosse tournaments hosted at the WCSP, as well as an even wider variety of events scheduled to be held at additional sporting venues throughout the county.



2025 Leisure Marketing Outlook

Leisure Marketing 2025 Objectives, Strategies & Tactics

Objective:

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

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

- Digital: Search engine marketing, display ads, online video, social media, e-newsletters
- Broadcast: Broadcast radio, streaming radio & podcasts, streaming TV
- Print: Regional travel publications
- Out-of-Home: Tourism information centers

Further leverage budget-friendly, in-house marketing solutions

- Increase frequency of blog and social media content
- Increase collaboration with travel writers and influencers
- Increase frequency of consumer-facing e-newsletters
- Further improve web site content, connectiveness and usability

Objective:

Increase awareness of Warren County's outdoor, year-round and mid-week recreation opportunities

- Introduce new creative and messaging which further emphasizes outdoor attractions, fall/winter happenings and weekday opportunities to increase shoulder season and work week visitation.

Objective:

Increase Warren County's brand awareness among relevant audiences

Deliver effective messaging to thoroughly researched and carefully identified regions and groups:

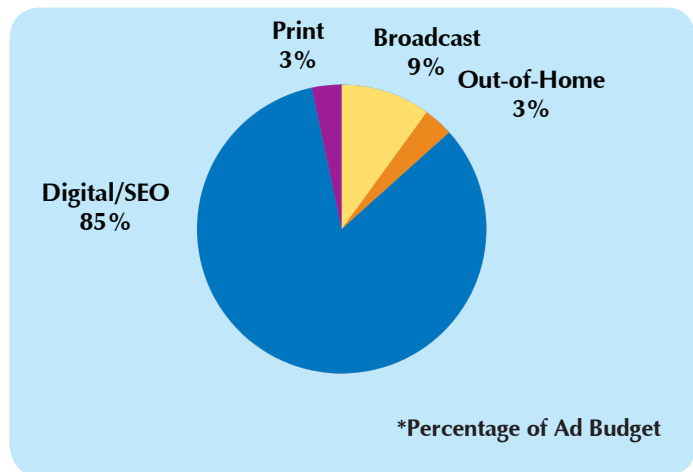
- Geographic Targets:
 - Illinois – Chicago
 - Indiana – Indianapolis, Fort Wayne
 - Kentucky - Louisville, Lexington
 - Michigan – Detroit
 - Ohio – Cleveland, Toledo
 - Pennsylvania – Pittsburgh
 - West Virginia – Charleston, Huntington
- Demographic Targets:
 - 1) Family Travel Planners: Women ages 35-50 with children ages birth to 18
 - 2) Empty Nesters: Adults ages 50-64

Objective:

Further emphasize collaboration with tourism partners and WCCVB staff

- Continue to meet and collaborate with tourism industry partners throughout the county as often and as impactfully as possible
- Take on as many speaking/networking opportunities as possible to further build partner relationships and WCCVB awareness
- Work more closely with Warren County Sports to further streamline efforts

2025 Media Budget Allocations*



2025 Leisure Marketing Goals

Consumer E-Newsletters	12
Partner E-Newsletters	12
Social Media Contests	10+
Travel Writer/Content Creator Collaborations	4+
<hr/>	
Leisure & Sports PR Stories	20 placements in target markets
<hr/>	
Social Media	15% increase in overall followers

2025 Warren County CVB Media Plan

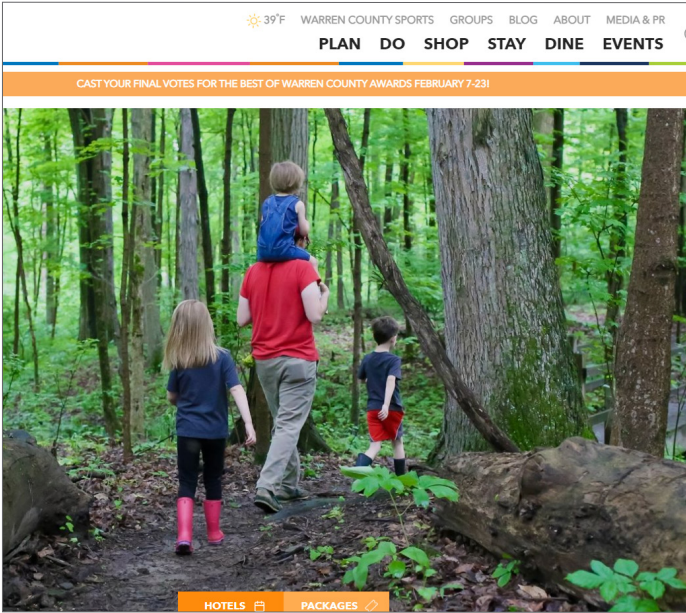
MEDIA	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
Broadcast/Out-of-Home												
iHeart Media (Streaming & Broadcast Radio + Podcasts)												
Travel Information Centers/Rest Stops												
Print												
2025 Ohio Travel Guide												
Tourism Industry Magazines (Various)												
Digital												
Search Engine Marketing												
Online Display/Banner Ads												
Connected/Streaming Television												
Paid Social Media												
Digital Visitors Guide Lead Gathering												
Paid Search Engine Optimization												
Owned/Earned												
Public Relations												
Online Media*												

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

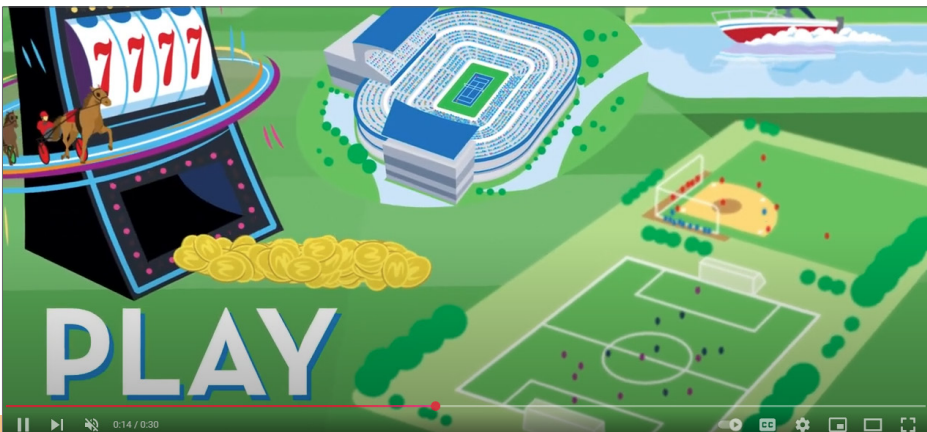
NOTE: Media calendar is subject to change

2025 Creative Samples*

Website – Home Page



Video Snapshots



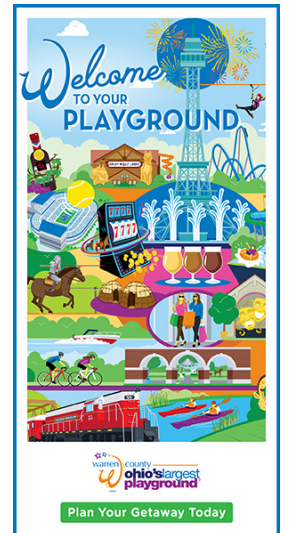
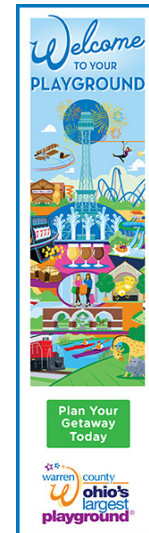
Print Ads



*New creative in development



Digital Ads



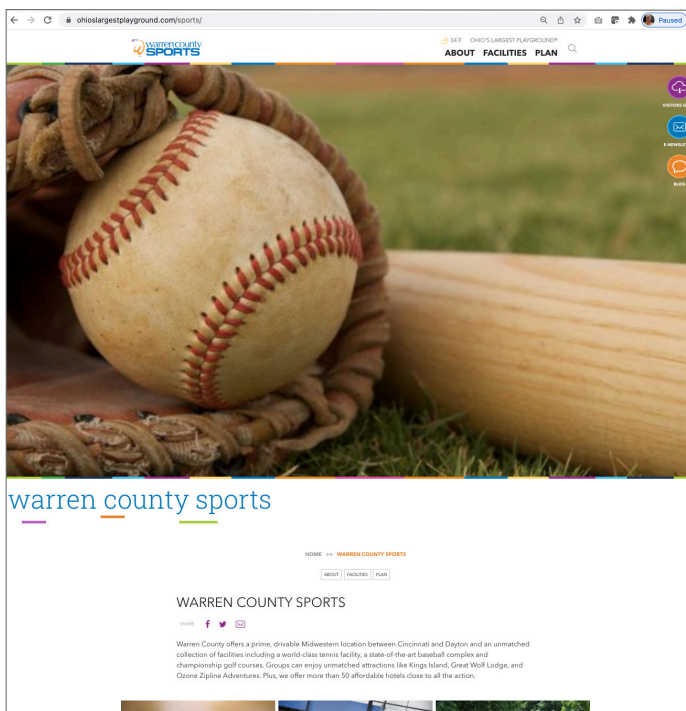
Sports Marketing 2025 Objectives, Strategies & Tactics

Objective:

Deliver record economic impact (\$140 million & 130,000 room nights)

- 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



2025 Sports Marketing Goals

Events	90
Attendance	1,900,000
Room Nights	130,000
Estimated Economic Impact	\$140,000,000

Objective:

Emphasize efficiency of 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:

Strategically grow 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

Connect with us
on social media!

