





BUFFALO CONVENTION CENTER

Q1 2024 SALES & SERVICES HIGHLIGHTS



Buffalo Hosts the 2024 Select Traveler Conference

The nation's leading conference for the high-end group travel market. Bank Clubs, Alumni Associations and Traveling Chambers came to Buffalo in March 2024. Conference attendees of upscale group loyalty travel program directors met with DMO's, hotels, and suppliers from across the U.S. looking for upscale traveling groups. Visit Buffalo Niagara took the opportunity to host this conference to showcase the destination's tourism opportunities and for these travel planners to experience Buffalo firsthand for future programs.



- · Hyatt Regency Buffalo
- Destination Niagara USA
- · The Westin
- Wyoming County Chamber & Tourism Promotion Agency
- Niagara Falls State Park
- Platter's Chocolate Factory
- Buffalo AKG Art Museum
- Our Lady of Victory Basilica and National Shrine
- · Seneca Buffalo Creek Casino
- Theodore Roosevelt Inaugural
 Site
- · Admiral's Room
- · Darwin Martin House
- Pierce Arrow Car & Transportation Museum
- The Hofbräuhaus Buffalo
- Buffalo Botanical Gardens
- Queen City Destination Management



Bur









2025 and 2026 USCAA Basketball Small College National Championships

The United States Collegiate Athletic Association has announced that the 2025 and 2026 USCAA Basketball Small College National Championships will be held in Buffalo. Both tournaments will be organized by the United States Collegiate Athletic Association National Office and hosted Bryant and Stratton College, Villa Maria College and the Buffalo Niagara Sports Commission, and the Buffalo Niagara Sports Commission. On February 13, 2024, the BNSC and VBN celebrated the Small College Basketball National Championships coming to Buffalo with the COO of the USCAA, BJ Bertges, as rivals Villa Maria College and Bryant & Stratton College - Buffalo tipped off. At half-time, attendees also had their chance to try a half court shot to win a 2025 tournament pass. Thank you to Buffalo State Sports Arena for hosting us and to everyone who joined us.

SALES AND SERVICES STAFFING ANNOUNCEMENTS

NEW HIRES



Brooke Chavanne Administrative Sales Assistant



Temekia Powers
DC-Based National
Sales Director



James Adler
Director of Sports
Development



PROMOTIONS

Karen Cox Director of Convention Services



Marisa Urbano Convention Services Coordinator



Meredith Walsh National Sales Manager

Q1 2024 SALES & SERVICES HIGHLIGHTS





New York Society of Association Executives Broadway Event

Visit Buffalo Niagara joined our fellow New York State Destination Marketing Organizations (NYSDMO) at the New York Society of Association Executives Meet NY Conference in NYC. Meet NY is the largest hosted buyer hospitality event in the northeast. It is a one-of-akind gathering of association and not-for-profit leaders, convention, corporate and meetings professionals and their hospitality and vendor partners. VBN's National Sales Directors – Temekia Powers and Meaghan Zimmer represented the destination at the conference. In cooperation with our NYSDMO partners, VBN also hosted clients at a performance of the Broadway production of "Spamalot."

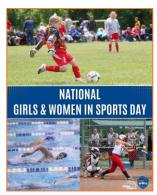






Preparing To Layout the Charcuterie Board for the 2024 American Cheese Society

Say cheese! Visit Buffalo Niagara visited Eden Valley Creamery with Kristen Cronyn from Meet & Eat Charcuterie in preparation for the American Cheese Society's upcoming Annual Conference. We couldn't be more excited to host this group in Buffalo this July alongside Erie County's Department of Environment and Planning, Invest Buffalo Niagara and the local farms and producers throughout Erie County.



National Girls & Women In Sports Day

February 7, 2024, was National Girls & Women in Sports Day! The Buffalo Niagara Sports Commission honored the incredible achievements and contributions of girls and women in the world of sports through social media posts. From breaking barriers to inspiring the next generation, female athletes have made a significant

impact on and off the field. The BNSC continues to support and champion inclusivity, diversity, and equity in sports through the events we bring to Buffalo and Erie County. It is our passion and goal to empower girls and women to pursue their athletic dreams and reach new heights of success!

Q1 2024 SALES AND SERVICES DEPARTMENT TRADESHOW ATTENDANCE



Convening Leaders San Diego, CA January 2-3 Temekia Powers and Meaghan Zimmer



Emerge Conference San Antonio, TX January 9-11 Mike Even and Meredith Walsh



Annual Convention Las Vegas, NV January 10-13 James Adler and Greg Gelinas



Annual Convention Nashville, TN January 13-16 Leah Mueller



Annual Convention Indianapolis, IN January 17-29 Karen Cox and Marisa Urbano



Annual Convention Tempe, AZ January 22-26 Greg Gelians



Annual Convention Memphis, TN February 11-14 Leah Mueller



ITB BERLIN

Annual Tradeshow Berlin, Germany March 5-7 Leah Mueller



Annual Tournament Richmond, VA March 7-10 James Adler and Lauran Vargo



Annual Convention Ashville, NC March 19-21 Meridith Walsh

Q1-2024 MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS HIGHLIGHTS



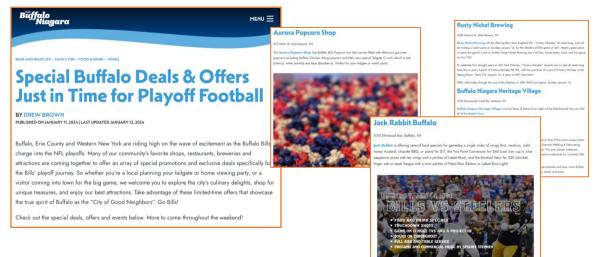
2024 Visit Buffalo Niagara In The BUF Visitor Guide

Visit Buffalo Niagara released its annual print and digital "In The BUF" Visitor Guide in January. VBN engaged local publisher, Buffalo Spree, to execute the design, layout and printing of the 2024 guide. The In The BUF guide will be distributed in over 80 different local and regional brochure rack locations as well as a drop in Sunday newspaper deliveries in Albany and Cleveland In late Spring.



Buffalo Bills Playoffs Guide

The Buffalo Bills hosted two NFL playoff games in January with visiting teams from Pittsburgh and Kansas City. With Buffalo experiencing playoff-fever, Visit Buffalo Niagara organized a special guide for fans coming to Buffalo for the games. Visit Buffalo Niagara also secured nearly 50 playoff specific discounts and deals from Erie County tourism partners.



Examples of Q1 Website Content and Related Social Media





Q1-2024 MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS HIGHLIGHTS

EXAMPLES OF Q1 MEDIA HITS





ARCHITECTURE + DESIGN

29 Frank Lloyd Wright Homes You Can Actually Visit

VISIT THESE CITIES FOR BRILLIANT ARCHITECTURE

Buffalo, N.Y.



Though earlier this century Buffalo was an unfairly maligned poster child for urban decay, a hundred the planet. That era, and the money that came with it, attracted legendary architects like Frank Lloyd Wright, Louis Sullivan and Henry H. Lloyd Wright, Louis Sulinvan and Henry H. Richardson to the city. The impressive structures they designed still stand, including the Romanesque Revival Richardson Hotel, formerly the Buffalo State Asylum for the Insane, and the recently restored Martin House, the Wright-designed home of a Larkin Co. executive.





From cruises to flights: 4 ways to experience the April total eclipse

Published 5:03 PM EST, Fri March 1, 2024



On April 8, 2024, parts of North America will witness the grandest of all celestial shows; a total solar the Sky will begin over the Pacific coast of Mexico at 11:07 am PDT, gradually move northeast across the continent and conclude over Newfoundland, Canada

Readership: 6,440,602 **Shares: NA**

Readership: 62,346 **Shares: 1**

Viewership: 43,843,683 Shares: 3

Readership: 120,210,731 Shares: 23

SURFACE

Saint Neri Salutes Buffalo's Renaissance

Samuel Amoia and Michael Woltz return to their roots with a decadent cocktail lounge that captures the momentum of a once-overlooked city experiencing a rebound.

February 13, 2024



Readership: 65,303

Shares: NA

FOOD&WINE

Total Solar Eclipse 2024: Where to Eat in Buffalo, Rochester, and Syracuse

Traveling to Upstate New York to witness totality?

By Anna Staropoli Updated on March 27, 2024







Readership: 14,013,710 **Shares: NA**

The New York Times

A Dark Day Is Coming for Buffalo. It Can't Wait.

A total eclipse will pass directly over the city next month, and as many as a million visitors ar expected to visit.

Share full article 😞 🔲 Read in app







Readership: 136,659,740 Shares: 237

Seeing Ourselves and Each Other in Buffalo's Black Arts Scene

I can only hope my work helps preserve the legacy of this community as the next generation builds upon the blueprints laid before them.

Tiffany D. Gaines March 11, 2024



Readership: 564,021 Shares: 32

Honoring and Celebrating Buffalo's African American Community During Black History Month





WUFO Radio Station & Black History Collective

Q1 2024 MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS HIGHLIGHTS

FEBRUARY

Q1 Most-Viewed Social Media Video Views

JANUARY

POVs You tracking awinterwalkin Buffalo and this is what you see...

Winter Walk

Total Views: 107,226

MUST SEE

SOLAR ECLIPSE
BUFFALO, NY

Must See Total Solar Eclipse - Buffalo, NY **Total Views: 135,800**

MARCH



Butter Lamb Total Views: 101,700

Other Q1 Social Media Video Content:

Places To Find Mocktails In Buffalo

Let's Explore The Buffalo Science Museum

Buy Me A Sweet Treat

Calling All Book Lovers

Happy Fish Fry Season

Women's History Month

Alethea's Chocolates

Spring in Buffalo

We've won!

SILVER AWARD





Q1 2024 MARKETING DEPARTMENT CONFERENCE / TRADESHOW ATTENDANCE



The TravMedia Summit New York, NY January 24 & 25 Michelle Kearns



Social Media Marketing World San Diego, CA March 18-20 **Kate Scaduto**



Marketing & Communications Summit Salt Lake City, UT March 27-30 Karen Fashana



Q1-2024 DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT / INDUSTRY RELATIONS HIGHLIGHTS



Tourism Marketing Outlook Summit

Visit Buffalo Niagara hosted our second annual Tourism Marketing Outlook Forum on January 23, 2024. At the forum, we shared our upcoming sales, marketing, and destination experience initiatives for 2024 with 116 of our industry partners.

Our featured speakers included Don Jones from Zartico and Richard Peterson from the US Cultural & Heritage Marketing Council, followed by a panel discussion with Kristen Esposito from Esposito Global Partners, Patricia Niscior from the Empire State Building and our very own, Leah Mueller from Visit Buffalo Niagara. Their perspective and industry expertise made the event a great success.



Eclipse Safety Preparedness Workshop

Visit Buffalo Niagara and the Office of the Erie County Executive, Mark Poloncarz, held an industry Eclipse Emergency Preparedness Workshop in February at the Buffalo Convention Center. The workshop was designed to help the tourism and business community to prepare for and

address concerns related to the mass gathering and continue to encourage participation by our valued hospitality partners.

Topics Presented:

- Emergency Services/Transportation Safety / Law Enforcement emergency preparedness plans; traffic management updates.
- Onsite Emergency Safety Measures first aid training and kits, CPR Training, AEDs.
- Mass Gatherings accommodation of large crowds in public spaces.
- Eye Safety the process of light damage to the retina, understanding the effects of a solar eclipse on your eyes and how to stay safe during your viewing experience.
- Cloud Climatology the fuzzy probabilities of good viewing conditions for the eclipse.
- Communication Planning pre-planning for communications services to help mitigate shortfalls and close gaps; limited cell phone service, emergency channels; public awareness campaigns/press conferences.
- Hotel Occupancy / Group Activities hotel bookings, motorcoach reports, new developments.





Buffalo – Erie County Certified Travel Ambassador Program

Visit Buffalo Niagara held it's first focus groups and expert panel sessions in March to create the curriculum for a new county-wide ambassador program. The Buffalo-Erie County CTA program will be available for all frontline employees, business leaders and residents interested in learning more about Erie County as a travel destination and being a part of VBN's corps of ambassadors. CTA educational and experiential sessions will begin in the third quarter.



In The BUF e-Newsletter

The new year brought a relaunch of the Visit Buffalo Niagara In The BUF industry and community e-newsletter. The newsletter has enjoyed a weekly open rate in the mid—40% since it's relaunch in January and continues to add new subscribers each week. .

NEW STAFF MEMBER



Nicklaus Householder Destination Experience Specialist

U.S. Travel Forecast – Winter 2024 Forecast Highlights

Domestic Leisure trips have fully recovered but economic headwinds post challenges in 2024. Domestic leisure trips officially achieved a full recovery to pre-pandemic levels in 2022. Domestic leisure growth has decelerated through three quarters of 2023, as consumer spending has slowed amidst higherborrowing costs, tighter credit conditions, and restarting of student loan payments.

Domestic business is impacted by slowdown. Domestic business visitation finished 2022 at 80% of 2019 volume, gaining additional traction in 2023. Expected to register 89% of 2019 levels by year-end, business travel is still expected to grow in 2024, albeit at a slower rate. Persistently weak economic growth will be driven by the cumulative impact of Fed rate hikes, more restrictive fiscal policy, and weakened household finances leading consumers to cut back on spending and business to cut back on hiring and investment. As a result, tourism economics does not anticipate a full recovery in domestic business trips until 2026.

Forecast Drivers – U.S. Economy Forecast

Economic Output

U.S. GDP growth is estimated at 2.4% in 2023. The U.S. economy is set to slow significantly in 2024 and forecast GDP growth will east to just 1.2% due to restrictive monetary and fiscal policies. An extended period of below-

International

Labor market data showed signs of cooling in November, with payroll growth slowing when adjusting for workers returning from strikes. The forecast sees payroll growth remaining more resilient and we have lowered the peak employment rate. More gradual rebalancing means wage growth will remain above 3.5% for longer.

Consumers

The current strength of consumer spending is unsustainable. Real income growth is cooling and dwindling excess savings are concentrated among more affluent, thriftier households. The 5% annualized expansion of consumer spending in Q3 pushed the savings ratio down to 3.8%, well below the long-term average and close to post-pandemic lows.

Inflation

Falling gasoline prices, a drop in shelter inflation, and continued declines in core goods prices have kept headline and core inflation on a downward trajectory. While easing supply chain pressures should keep goods, prices, falling into early 2024, a still tight labor market will keep service inflation sticky. Year-on-year inflation is forecast to drop from 4.1% in 2023 to 2.6% in 2024.

Forecast Drivers - Headwinds

trend growth into 2025 is anticipated.

Domestic Leisure

- Softening of pent-up demand
- · Dwindling of excess savings
- · Slowing economy
- Softening labor market and wage growth
- Continued elevated inflation
- Resumption of student loan payments constrain balance sheets

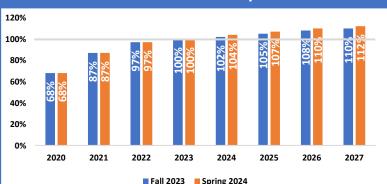
Domestic Business

- Economic slowdown leading to negative business conditions
- · Expected decline in corporate profits
- Stalled business investment
- More widespread cost-cutting measures such as limiting the number of employees attending meetings and conferences
- Continued acceptance of virtual meetings

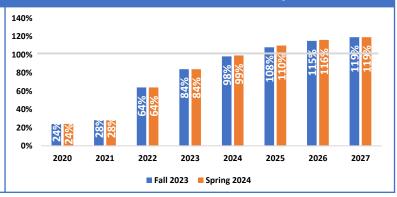
International

- · Prolonged visa wait times
- Unfavorable exchange rate (i.e., strong dollar)
- Expected slowdown in the global economy
- Long-haul travel from China weak as domestic recovery is prioritized within China

Forecast Drivers – Domestic Trips



Forecast Drivers – International Trips





2023 Website User and Conversation Study

Visit Buffalo Niagara commissioned a comprehensive study on the VisitBuffaloNiagara.com website. The study was conducted by Future Partners as part of a larger study of DMO websites. The primary objectives of this research were to:

- Determine Website Return on Investment: The total amount of direct visitor spending in Buffalo/Erie County that is generated by and attributed to its website (i.e., the amount of visitor sending in the destination that would NOT have occurred in the absence of the website).
- **Develop a Website User Profile:** Demographic, psychographic additional and behavioral information about website users, as well as content sought on the website.

	We	bsite F	ROI Est	imates
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Trips to Buffalo/Erie County generated by website (i.e.., incremental trips)

15,300

Average length of stay on incremental trips

2.3 Nights

Total visor spending per day on incremental trips

\$368.97

Total visitor spending on incremental trips

\$13,130,519

Incremental visitor days spend on trips extended by website's influence

5,648

Total visitor spending on trip days extended by website

\$2,083,815

Total economic impact ROI of the website

\$15,214,334

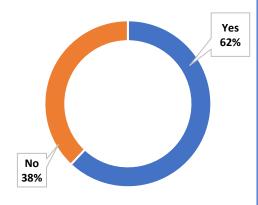
Total economic impact / ROI per unique visitor

\$15.89

Snapshot of Buffalo/Erie County Visitors

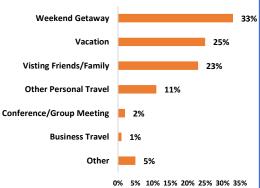
Visited the Destination

Of those visiting the VisitBuffaloNiagara.com website, nearly two-thirds have visited the area (62% averaging 1.7 trips.



Trip Type

A third of visitors came to Buffalo/Erie County for a weekend getaway (33%), followed by vacationers (25%) and those visiting friends/family (23%).



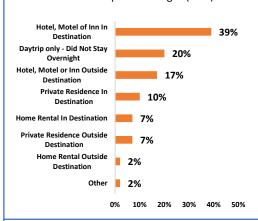
Average Length of Stay

Visitors stayed an average of little over three days (3.2 days; 2.3 nights).



Place of Stay

Visitors most stayed in commercial lodging in Buffalo/Erie County. Of visitors who used the website during the planning state, two-in-five stayed in a hotel/motel/inn (39%) while another one-in-five did not spend the night (20%).



Average Daily Spend per Travel Party

Travel parties who used the

VisitBuffaloNiagara.com website spent a daily average of \$558 while in Buffalo/Erie County. Lodging and dining spending nearly match and represent the lion's share of the travel budget (\$144 lodging; \$140 restaurants0.



Average Daily Spend per Person

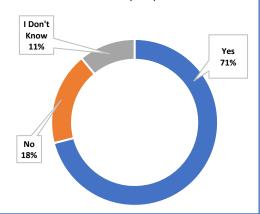
The daily spending by the travel party typically covered 2.2 persons, for an average of \$252 per person per day.





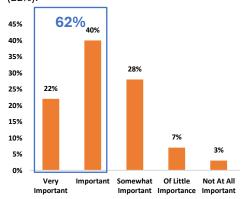
Impact of Website on Destination Decision

VisitBuffaloNiagara.com effectively persuades its users to visit the area. Nearly three quarters of the website users agreed that the site influenced them to visit (71%).



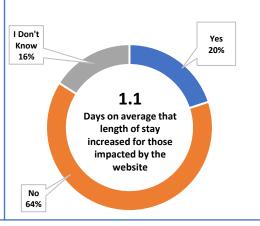
Website Importance To Destination Decision

Among those who reported that the website influenced their decision to visit Buffalo/Erie County, almost two/thirds deemed the website as either "important" (40%) or "very important" (22%).



Impact of Website on Length of Stay

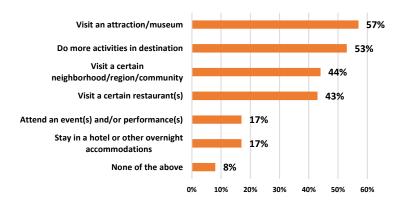
On-in-five Buffalo/Erie County visitors felt that the website increased the number of days they spent in the area (20%), typically by more than a day (1.1 days).



Snapshot of Buffalo/Erie County Visitors

Trip Decisions Influenced by Website

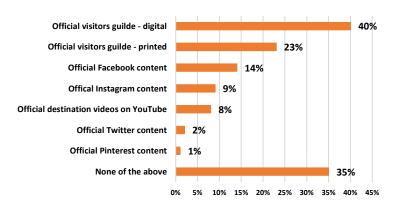
The website effectively broadened interest in the area. Three-in-five visitors felt the website influenced them to visit an attraction or museum (57%) or to generally just do more activities while there (53%). Neighborhoods (44%) and restaurants (42%) gained clientele as well.



Official Visit Buffalo Niagara Resources Used

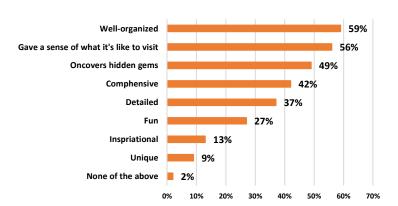
Two-in-five Buffalo/Erie County visitors used a digital Visitor Guide to supplement their website usage (40%); about have as many used a printed guide (23%).

Other key online aids include Facebook (14%), Instagram (9%), and/or YouTube (8%).



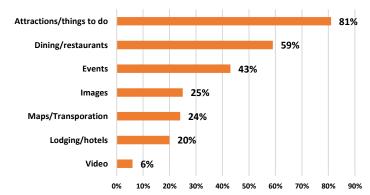
Descriptions of Website Content

Users city two dominate areas of effectiveness for the website: well organized (59%) and giving a sense of what it's like to visit (56%0. It gathers secondarily high praise in uncovering hidden gems (49%), comprehensiveness (42%), detail (37%), and fun (27%).



Most Influential Website Content

The VisitBuffaloNiagara.com website most influenced visitors to add attractions / things to do (81%) while there. Three-in-five considered the dining/restaurant features among the most influential (59%). Several highlighted events (43%).



Likelihood to Recommend VisitBuffaloNiagara.com

Website users highly praise the VisitBuffaloNiagara.com website, assigning it a 8.7 out of 10-point scale, as a website to recommend to others planning a trip to Buffalo/Erie County.



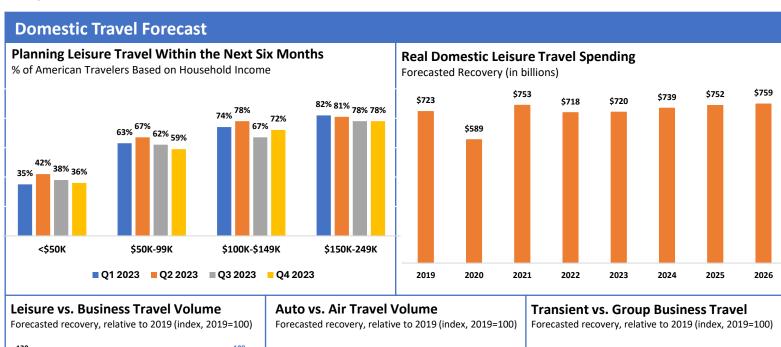


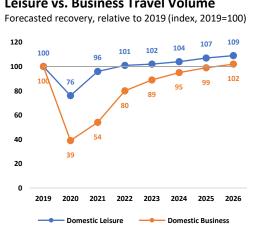
U.S. Travel and Tourism Economics Recovery and Growth Insights Dashboard

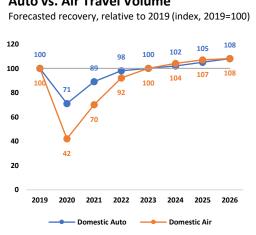
U.S. TRAVEL

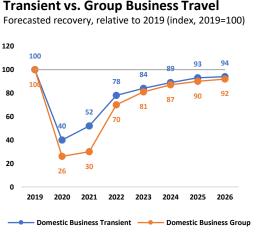


As a member of U.S. Travel, Visit Buffalo Niagara has access to the exclusive U.S. Travel Insights Dashboard, the most comprehensive and centralized source for high-frequency intelligence on the U.S. travel industry and the broader economy. The platform, powered by Tourism Economics, is supported by more than 20 data partners and tracks industry performance, travel volumes, and predictive travel indicators to provide members with a detailed, interactive view of travel's recovery and performance. Data partners include: AirDNA, Airline Data Inc., Future Partners, JD Powers, Longwoods International, MMGY, National Parks Service, National Travel and Tourism Office, Northstar Meetings Group, Oxford Economics, Simpleview, STR, Tempest, Tourism Economics, TransUnion, TravelClick and Amadeus Company, TSA, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Commerce.

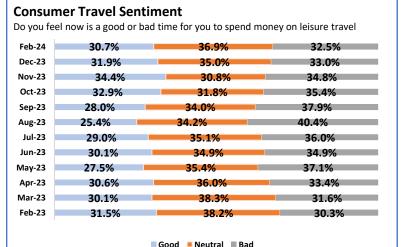








Feb-24	31.0%	40.0%	28.0%
Dec-23	32.7%	38.6%	28.6%
Nov-23	34.1%	34.5%	31.4%
Oct-23	34.9%	33.2%	31.9%
Sep-23	28.4%	36.4%	35.2%
Aug-23	27.3%	36.0%	36.3%
Jul-23	30.7%	35.4%	34.0%
Jun-23	30.9%	36.7%	32.4%
/lay-23	29.6%	35.6%	34.9%
Apr-23	29.2%	38.4%	32.4%
Mar-23	32.3%	37.0%	30.6%
Feb-23	30.1%	39.9%	30.0%
Jan-23	30.1%	39.3%	30.7%



Domestic Business Travel Forecast Business Travel Plans Next 6 Months Value of Face-to-Face Meetings % share of respondents expecting to take at least one trip How does your organization, or your clients, perceive the value of face-to-face meetings now vs. pre-pandemic? 32% 85% Internal meetings 30% 82% 29% 82% 84% 80% Conferences, conventions or trade shows 79% 81% 9% Customer, supplier, or other stakeholder 78% meetings 74% 1% Significantly less About the same Somewhat more Significantly more valuable valuable valuable valuable Pre-Pandemic ■ O4 2022 ■ O1 2023 ■ O2 2023 **Meeting Planner Outlook Corporate Executives Views on Business Travel** How the outlook for recovery has changed among meting planners the past six weeks Share of corporate executives that agree 03 04 01 02 2022 2022 2023 2023 Feb-24 15% 83% Business travel is essential to company operations 77% 81% 79% Dec-23 15% 42% 17% Oct-23 The amount of business travel has been limited due to Aug-23 11% **35%** 69% 64% 57% 55% customers/suppliers/stakeholders working remotely Jun-23 15% 30% Apr-23 29% Virtual meetings have replaced much of our organization's business travel and will continue to do so 71% 67% 72% 70% Feb-23 12% the next six months Dec-22 Oct-22 Over the long-term, having more remote employees in 66% 64% 66% 55% our organization will increase business spending for 20% Aug-22 internal meetings 20% Jun-22 Mar-22 Internal cost controls over the next six months will likely constrain business travel Jan-22 Risk mitigation effort are currently restricting employee



■ Less Optimistic
■ No Change

■ More Optimistic



Tourism Economics: Travel Trends From The Runway

Tourism Economics released a study that shows that air service continues to rebuild, grow in passenger volume and hold steady in rates. And while a steep travel trade deficit remains due to U.S. outbound travel outweighing inbound, positive signs point to the acceleration of international travel recovery. Four take aways from the study:

business travel

Air Travel Continues to Lift

U.S. air passenger volume numbers continue to grow as services rebuild. February marked the fifth consecutive month that total air traffic exceeded its 2019 comparison.

Airfares Remain Affordable

Though overall prices of consumer goods are up 24% from 2019 in the U.S., airfares remain roughly equal to pre-pandemic prices.

International Continues to Recover

International visits to the U.S. are acerating across major markets – and, in Europe, increased international travel remains a key driver of growth. Concurrently, Asian outbound travel is experiencing increased momentum.

U.S. Outbound Outweighs Inbound

More outbound U.S. trips (67 million) than international inbound trips (55 million) last year have contributed to a sizeable travel trade deficit of \$49 billion in 2023 compared to a surplus of \$9 billion in 2019.



2024 Destination Decisions Report

Future Partners and Miles Partnership shared the first 2024 Installment of the latest insights on informed on trends and new developments within the travel and media landscapes.

This year's Destination Decisions, powered by the State of the American Traveler, examines what type of information American travelers value most when deciding where to take a trip. This edition also explores the nuances of how different traveler demographics impact how they determine where they want to go and what channels they turn to when seeking destination information.

Five Destination Decision Report Takeaways

Excitement for travel remains near record levels

More than 87% of Americans already have a trip planned for 2024. Travelers are still largely optimistic about their financial future, and 52% intend to make leisure travel a spending priority in the next three months.

Why This Is Important to Buffalo/Erie County

Leisure travel has contributed to Erie County's record levels of visitor spend and visitation, while business and meeting/convention travel not expected to return to 2019 levels until the end of 2024. Visitor spend, hotel occupancy and rate have all surpassed 2019 levels with new growth potential markets from Boston, Chicago, New York City, Philadelphia and Washington DC.

Key Reasons To Travel

Visiting friends and/or relatives remains a key driver for taking a trip, with **54.4%** of travelers indicating that the reason for a recent trip.

For others, relaxation (42.1%) and the need to escape the stress of daily life (30.9) were among the top reasons of U.S. travelers to finally book a trip.

Recent Zartico and Longwoods International research for Buffalo and Erie County show that Visiting Friend/Relatives continues to rank high in VBN's visitor profile.

Email and social media are alive and well

Travelers are expressed to a wide range of media and messaging every day.

Insider tip: travelers indicated they'd be **most receptive** to learning about destinations to visit via **email** (34.8%), followed closely by **websites** via search engine (34%) and **Facebook** (27.9).

Since it's launch in January, VBN's new weekly enewsletter has enjoyed a 43% open rate. The VBN website has also seen significant growth with a 22.6% increase engaged sessions compared to 2019. Continuing to be a regional leader in social media followers and engagement, VBN has nearly 250,000 followers on four social media platforms

Destination Hot List

Where American travelers are most likely to visit in the next 12 months.

Domestic

Florida California New York

Texas Arizona International

taly

United Kingdom

Mexico Canada France With the State's brand marketing of I LOVE NY and Buffalo being the second largest city in the State, we are positioned for increased leisure visitation, especially with the continued development of the destination's tourism project and our proximity to Niagara Falls.

Eventful Experiences

Two-thirds of all travelers are interested in traveling to experience a local event.

What event types would they travel for?

- Food and drink festivals 53.9%
- Music Festivals 51.3%
- Sports, as a spectacular 37.8%
- Unique natural phenomena 33.4%
- Unique local traditions 33.2%

Buffalo/Erie County has a plethora of new and long-term events and experiences including Buffalo Wing Festival, Wing Trail, Taste of Buffalo, Music Is Art, Borderland, BPO, Bills, Sabres, Bisons, NCAA, Niagara Falls, Total Solar Eclipse, New Year's Eve, St. Patrick's Day, Dyngus Day, Thanksgiving, World Largest Disco, and the soon to launch Freedom's Footsteps – A Journey Through Buffalo's African-American Heritage.

Q1-2024 Administration Highlights



2024 Business Plan

The Visit Buffalo Niagara Board of Directors unanimously approved the organization's 2024 Business Plan at the Q4 board meeting. The plans includes goals, objectives, strategies as well as quantifiable and qualifiable key performance indicators for each of the organization's individual departments. The plan also includes sections on research and forecasts from Tourism Economics and visitor profile data. In 2024, VBN will conduct a Social Inclusion Assessment by Destinations International to help guide our efforts to make decisions that impact the organization as well as industry standards regarding social inclusion.





MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS	SALES & SERVICES HARTMAN/CONVENTION, SPORTING EVENTA, TRAVEL TRAVE	INDUSTRY RELATIONS	RESEARCH
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ASI – Arts & Economic Prosperity 6

Visit Buffalo Niagara CEO, Patrick Kaler was invited to attend a presentation by Arts Services Inc. of the findings of their Arts & Economic Prosperity 6 study. The study concluded that there is a need for change in the conversation about nonprofit arts and culture organization from that of a charity-worthy of funding in prosperous economic times but hard to justify in challenging times — to that of an industry with economic and social impact. Arts & Economic Prosperity 6 delivers a clear and welcome message: when communities invest in arts and culture, they are not investing in community development at the expense of economic development. Rather, they are investing in an industry that stimulates the economy , supports local jobs, and contributes to building healthy, vibrant, and more livable communities.





Patrick Kaler, Visit Buffalo Niagara's CEO joined Shea's Buffalo – Brian Higgins, Destination Niagara Falls – John Percy, and the newly appointed CEO of the Buffalo Science Museum – Gary Siddall for the Buffalo Niagara Partnership's Industry Leader's Forum on Tourism and Hospitality.

Tech constantly evolves, affecting every industry and business. The hospitality and tourism industry is no exception, with digital innovations shaping the guest experience well before they even book their trip or make reservations.

The 2024 BNP Industry Leaders Forum (ILF) dialogue will revolve around the application of technology and its impact on our region including Buffalo's recent Regional Tech Hub designation by the federal government, how we market Western New York to a national and global audience, the health of our start-up ecosystem, and the importance of industry-specific platforms.



New York State Hospitality and Tourism Association 2024 Advocacy Issues

Visit Buffalo Niagara CEO, Patrick Kaler serves on the NYSHTA board of directors and executive committee.

2024 PRIORITY ADVOCACY ISSUES

NYSHTA

NEW YORK STATE HOSPITALITY & TOURISM ASSOCIATION (NYSHTA) | NYSHTA.ORG

BUDGET

Collection of Sales Tax on Short-Term Rentals

The FY 2025 Executive Budget contains a proposal to require the collection of sales tax on vacation rentals. Importantly, the provisions do not include the registration requirement contained in existing legislation. NYSHTA strongly supports the collection of taxes on short-term rental units.

Tourism Promotion Matching Grants

The Executive Budget reduces funding for the Tourism Promotion Matching Grant Program by \$1 million, to \$2.45 million. The enacted 2023 Budget funded this program at \$3.45 million. Lobby efforts have begun to restore to \$3.45 million.

Sunset the COVID Sick Leave Law

Current law requires employers to provide sick leave benefits, paid family leave, and disability-related benefits for employees subject to a quarantine due to COVID. As a result of the expiration of both State and Federal emergency orders, the Governor is proposing to sunset the State's COVID-19 Sick Leave Law as of July 31, 2024.

LEGISLATIVE

Short-Term Rental Legislation S885B (Hinchey) / A4130A (Fahy)

S885B/A4130A requires short-term rental units located outside of New York City to register with the Department of State. It also requires the collection of both sales and occupancy taxes on those units. NYSHTA strongly supports this legislation and has been working with our partners in both the Senate and the Assembly to advance the Bill this session.

NY Junk Fee Prevention Act S7783B (Gianaris)

The Senate introduced a bill that seeks to clarify conspicuous pricing practices regarding mandatory "junk fees." This has also been a hot-button issue at the national level. This Bill would mandate all fees be disclosed prior to purchase (booking the room). NYSHTA, along with its national hotel partners, met with the bill sponsor and offered some amendments that would eliminate the Private Right of Action. TIDs and BIDs would also be disclosed prior to purchase.

Air Conditioner Default S6222 (May) / A4095 (Epstein)

This legislation states that a keeper of a lodging facility shall not set the default temperature setting on any air conditioner located in any room or common area lower than 75 degrees between the months of May through October and/or higher than 64 degrees Fahrenheit between the months of November through April.

ADA Website Legislation S920 (COONEY) / A1684 (Woerner)

This legislation would provide places of accommodation, resort, or amusement with a time to cure provisions of a website or mobile application, related to allegations of unlawful discriminatory practices with respect to visually and hearing-impaired individuals.

Parks Seeking Age Reduction for Ride Operators

NYSHTA is developing bill language and securing sponsors for a bill that would lower the age to operate any ride at an Amusement Park in New York State to 16. Many surrounding states already have a law in place to allow for 16-year-olds to operate any ride, and with worker shortages continuing to be a challenge, this will allow for parks to be able to have more rides open to enhance the guest experience.

Q1-2024 Administration Highlights

U.S. Travel Association 2024 Priorities

Visit Buffalo Niagara CEO, Patrick Kaler serves on the U.S. Travel Association Board of Directors.

2024 Priorities



U.S. Travel's unique mission is to increase travel to and within the United States.

We pursue this mission by establishing travel as essential and responsible, advancing seamless and secure travel, shaping solutions to operational challenges and building a strong business. By engaging with U.S.

Travel, our members shape a thriving and sustainable travel experience.

Establish Travel as Essential and Responsible

The travel industry is an economic powerhouse that unites people, benefits society and is paramount to the United States' global competitiveness. We must elevate the perceived value of the industry among policymakers, opinion leaders and business leaders.

- Better position the industry to shape a more favorable perception of travel by determining which messages, messengers and data are most influential with each of our target audiences.
- Empower members to be stronger advocates at the local, state and federal levels by updating and effectively packaging the travel industry's most compelling economic impact data
- Strengthen government leadership on travel issues by developing a deeper bench of Congressional champions, most notably through expanding the <u>Travel Works</u> program with a goal of 24 events in 2024.
- Optimize political opportunities to strengthen relationships and underscore the value of travel by growing TravelPAC to more than \$1 million in this election cycle.
- Help the industry address the emerging issue of public safety by equipping travel leaders with accurate data and a shared messaging platform.

Improve the Travel Experience from Point A to Point B

U.S. Travel is uniquely positioned to bring the entirety of the travel industry together to improve the traveler's experience and enable future growth. This portion of our agenda should address both immediate challenges and pave the way for game-changing opportunities.

- Raise policymaker awareness of how the United States is falling behind global competitors by highlighting inefficiencies in America's travel process and the investments/strategies being pursued by other nations.
- Identify comprehensive policy solutions to make air travel more seamless, modern and secure by launching a commission of subject matter experts and capitalizing on the knowledge of our airline and airport members.
- Address immediate staffing, technology and infrastructure problems in today's air travel experience by securing final passage of Federal Aviation Administration reauthorization.
- Tackle the greatest obstacle to U.S. visitation—lengthy visa delays—by increasing awareness of the harm caused beyond the travel industry.
- Broaden the travel industry's relevance by pairing our air travel agenda with concrete proposals for advancing road and rail connectivity.

Provide Members with Tangible, Meaningful Opportunities to Learn, Connect and Shape Business

U.S. Travel seeks to create a value proposition that is diversified both in terms of our capabilities and the people within member organizations to whom we provide benefit. A thoughtful and intentional focus on our value proposition is fundamental to our future growth.

- Expand the association's value proposition—including new engagement opportunities and member resources—by capitalizing on insights derived from the comprehensive member survey.
- Invest in and innovate existing event portfolio—including IPW, ESTO, the Summer Summit and Future of Travel Mobility—and seek opportunities to grow value by meeting emerging educational needs.
- Provide the industry with segment-specific value by investing in group and international inbound subject matter experts and creating opportunities to collaborate with peers.
- Create content and communications that better inform the travel industry by leveraging U.S. Travel's expertise, access and convening power.
- Reinforce the value of investment in U.S. Travel by expanding access to resources and communications throughout member organizations and the broader travel industry.

Build a Best-in-Class Trade Association with an Eye Towards the Future

U.S. Travel seeks to operate as a business: making difficult decisions, wisely utilizing members' time and resources and investing in areas of opportunity.

- Build a targeted and strategic approach to membership including benefits, engagement and dues levels—that empowers the organization to better serve existing members and attract new members.
- Solidify the association as travel's leading voice and advocate through the development of a long-term vision that broadens its reach and unlocks new sources of revenue.
- Enhance the professional image of the industry and association by ensuring all organizational messaging and creative align with its strategic direction.
- Shape a culture of innovation, collaboration and member service by onboarding more than a dozen new team members across all areas of the association, including research, communications, events and membership.
- Position the association to better respond to industry needs and effectively communicate by strengthening operational capabilities, including database improvements and technology investments.

Q1-2024 Administration Highlights

U.S. Travel Association 2024 Priorities

Visit Buffalo Niagara CEO, Patrick Kaler serves on the U.S. Travel Association Board of Directors.



Economic Impact of the U.S. Travel Industry

2023 NATIONAL DATA

Travel is essential to driving economic growth and job creation in states, destinations and communities across America, and it is indispensable to our nation's global competitiveness. In 2023, travelers in the United States directly spent \$1.3 trillion, which produced an economic footprint of \$2.8 trillion and supported more than 15 million American jobs. Visit ustravel.org for the latest economic data and our full State of the Travel Industry.

WHEN THE TRAVEL INDUSTRY THRIVES, AMERICA THRIVES.



Produced
\$2.8 TRILLION
In Economic Output

Represented **2.5%** of our National GDP

But still has more than

1 MILLION
job openings as of early
2024

Travel strengthens communities and generated \$89 BILLION in state and local tax revenue



Each segment of travel plays an essential role in boosting **our economy**, contributing billions in travel spending:

DOMESTIC LEISURE

\$855 BILLION
(100% RECOVERED**)

TOTAL BUSINESS

\$294 BILLION

(81% RECOVERED**) -----

INTERNATIONAL INBOUND

\$155 BILLION

(73% RECOVERED**)

\$175 BILLION
(83% RECOVERED**)

\$119 BILLION
(79% RECOVERED**)

** Percent recovered to 2019 is adjusted for inflation

SOURCE: Tourism Economics, U.S. Travel Association and U.S. Department of Commerce

Q1 2024 CONVENTION CENTER HIGHLIGHTS











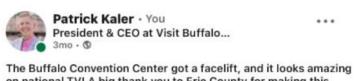




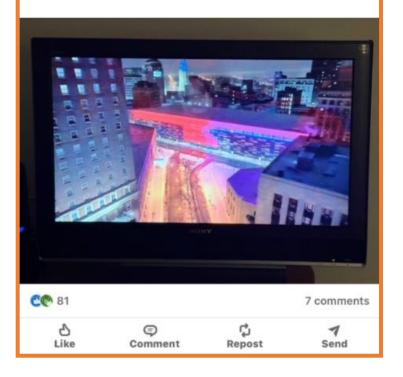
Q1 2024 CONVENTION CENTER HIGHLIGHTS







The Buffalo Convention Center got a facelift, and it looks amazing on national TV! A big thank you to Erie County for making this happen. This upgrade is sure to make Buffalo an even more attractive destination for conventions, meetings, and events. #destinationmarketing #destinationmanagement #convention #meetingsmeanbusiness #events #inthebuf Visit Buffalo Niagara





VISIT BUFFALO NIAGARA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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James Adler, Sports Sales Manager

Jennifer Bialek, Executive Assistant to the CEO

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Jo Ann Blatner, Industry Relations Assistant Drew Brown, Marketing Manager Michele Butlak, Accounting & Benefits Manager **Brooke Chavanne, Administrative Sales Assistant** Karen Cox, Convention Sales & Services Manager Mike Even, Vice President of Sales & Services Karen Fashana, Director of Marketing **Greg Gelinas, Director Sports Development** Ed Healy, Vice President of Marketing Nicklaus Householder, Patrick Kaler, President & CEO Michelle Kearns, Communications Manager **David Marzo, Chief Financial Officer Leah Mueller, Director of Tourism Sales** Heather Nowakowski, Business Intelligence Manager Kathryn Scaduto, Marketing and Social Media Specialist Renata Toney, Vice President of Destination Experience Marisa Urbano, Convention Services Coordinator Lauren Vargo, Sports Services Manager Meredith Walsh, National Sales Manager Meaghan Zimmer, National Sales Director

BUFFALO CONVENTION CENTER STAFF

Melissa Burke, Senior Director of Sales
Jeff Calkins, Vice President & General Manager
Lorna Cullen, Office Manager
Megan Gummo, Sales and Catering Manager
Patrick Kaler, President & CEO
Craig Landseadel, Executive Chef
Mary Ann Martin, Bookkeeper & Benefits Manager
Mark McMahon, Maintenance Supervisor
Terry O'Brien, Director of Operations
Heather Petrino, Sales & Service Coordinator
Ken Sanford, Chief Engineer
Christie Walker, Convention and Event Service Manager
Cory Watson, Food and Beverage Manager

Michael Will, Assistant Director of Operations

Danielle Winiarski, Assistant General Manager

Colleen Willis, Sales Manager

Alishia Vega, Front Desk Receptionist

Julie Brooks, Controller



VISION:

To be the most surprising destination you'll ever visit.

MISSION:

Transforming our community by inspiring visitors and locals to discover Buffalo and Erie County.

BUFFALO CONVENTION CENTER

VISION:

To create memorable event experiences for our guests and be a catalyst for economic development and improved quality of life in Buffalo and Erie County.

MISSION:

Delivering quality facilities and exceptional service through our warm hospitality, attention to detail and drive to achieve our clients' vision.

Data Sources For This Quarterly Highlights Report:

Cervis Technologies

Cision
Google Analytics
Key Data
Madden Media
Momentus Technologies
Sales Force Marketing Cloud
Simpleview
STR (Smith Travel Research)
Tourism Economics
Zartico



