



2022 ANNUAL REPORT

Published May 2023



Cover: View of Heritage Park Fountain in downtown Olympia with Capitol building in the background

This page: Swantown Marina

Images throughout the report are courtesy of Nate Burgher Photography



OUR MISSION

We reveal the most iconic Thurston County experiences for the world to discover.

OUR VISION

To be known as a top travel destination in the Pacific Northwest.

OUR VALUES

Accountability

We take responsibility for our words, actions, results, and everything in between.

Collaboration

We do our best work when we recognize one another's strengths—we listen, support, and adapt together.

Respect

We value diverse perspectives and treat people with dignity and professionalism.

Trust

The relationships we build are rooted in our ability to instill confidence that we are experts in our field, our actions are fair, and our behavior is responsible and reliable.

Integrity

Our organization is transparent and firmly rooted in the highest ethical standards.

Empathy

We care about the well-being of others and show kindness and caring every day.

"To travel is to live."

— Hans Christian Andersen

The historic water tower in Yelm





Port of Olympia

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“Travel is fatal to prejudice, bigotry, and narrow-mindedness, and many of our people need it sorely on these accounts. Broad, wholesome, charitable views of men and things cannot be acquired by vegetating in one little corner of the earth all one’s lifetime.”

– Mark Twain



Tumwater Artesian Brewfest at the
Tumwater Valley Golf Course



shown left to right: Kelly, Melissa, Annette, Heidi, Jeff

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2022 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Patty Belmonte, Hands On Children's Museum
Board Secretary

John Bourdon, Sandstone Distillery

Christina Daniels, Huber's Gasthaus
Board Treasurer

Chuck Denney, City of Tumwater

Amy Evans Harding, Port of Olympia

Sue Falash, Regional Athletic Complex (RAC)
Board President

Sans Gilmore, Sans M. Gilmore, PS, Inc.
Board Member At Large

Angela Jefferson, Tumwater City Council

Ed Kunkel, Lacey City Council

Hanford McCloud, Nisqually Indian Tribe

Aslan Meade,
 Thurston Economic Development Council

Jill Nelson, Spirlock's Farmhouse at Nelson Ranch

Mike Reid, City of Olympia

Line Roy, City of Yelm

Satpal Sohal, La Quinta Inn & Suites Tumwater
Board Vice President

Rick Walk, City of Lacey

Shina Wysocki, Chelsea Farms Oyster Bar



Board of
 Directors FAM
 tour at
 South Puget
 Sound
 Community
 College

DEFINITIONS KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Available Rooms/Rentals (room/rental supply) – The number of rooms/rentals multiplied by the number of days in a specific time period.

Average Daily Rate (ADR) – A measure of the average rate paid for rooms sold, calculated by dividing room revenue by rooms sold. Indicates average price that guests are willing to pay for their lodging, and overall value perception.

Booked Room Nights – Confirmed Hotel Room Nights from a sales booking at a Thurston County hotel

Certified Tourism Ambassador (CTA) – The number of individuals who attended the training session and received the industry-recognized certification.

Consumer E-Newsletter Subscribers – Individuals who signed up to receive Experience Olympia & Beyond's monthly e-newsletter.

Direct Economic Impact (Spending) – Impacts (business sales, jobs, income, and taxes) created directly from spending by visitors to a destination within a discreet group of tourism-related sectors (e.g. recreation, transportation, lodging).

Direct Jobs (Employment) – Jobs directly supported by visitor activity (includes part-time and seasonal work). One job is defined as one person working at least one hour per week for fifty weeks during the calendar year.

Earned Media Placements – Publicity or exposure gained from methods other than paid advertising.

Lead Room Nights – Estimated Hotel Room Nights for Thurston County hotels from a sales lead

Leads Booked – A future event that is contracted by planner with a venue, hotel or service provider.

Leads Sent – An inquiry for space (either sports or meetings) by a meeting planner or event organizer that the DMO has qualified to meet the planner's criteria and that requires at least 10 hotel guest rooms. Leads can also include conference services, such as catering or transportation.

Local Taxes – City and County taxes generated by visitor spending. This includes any local sales, income, lodging, usage fees, licenses, and other revenues streams of local governmental authorities – from transportation to sanitation to general government.

Occupancy – Percentage of available rooms sold during a specified time period. Occupancy is calculated by dividing the number of rooms sold by rooms available. Indicates demand for lodging.

PR Impressions – Interaction with Public Relations content.

Revenue Per Available Room/Rental (RevPAR) – Total room/rental revenue divided by the total number of available rooms/rentals. Indicates ability to fill rooms/rentals at an average rate, and overall health of lodging.

Short Term Rentals – Data collected from AirDNA comprised of rental details from Airbnb & VRBO and other sites. Indicates alternate lodging availability and potential shifts in consumer lodging choice behavior.

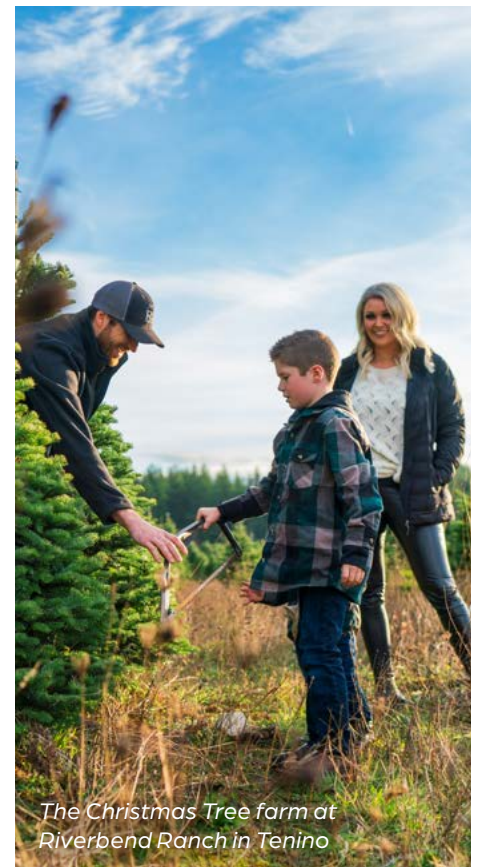
Social Media Audiences – Individuals who follow/like Experience Olympia & Beyond related pages on Facebook, Instagram and/or Twitter.

State Taxes – State tax revenues generated by visitor spending. This will include sales, income, corporate, usage fees and other assessments of state governments.

Unique Web Visits – A person who has visited experienceolympia.com at least once and is counted only once in the reporting time period.

Visitor Guides Mailed – The number of visitor guides distributed directly to consumers via the mail.

Visitor Volume – Both day and overnight visitors to Thurston County who live over 50 miles away.



The Christmas Tree farm at Riverbend Ranch in Tenino

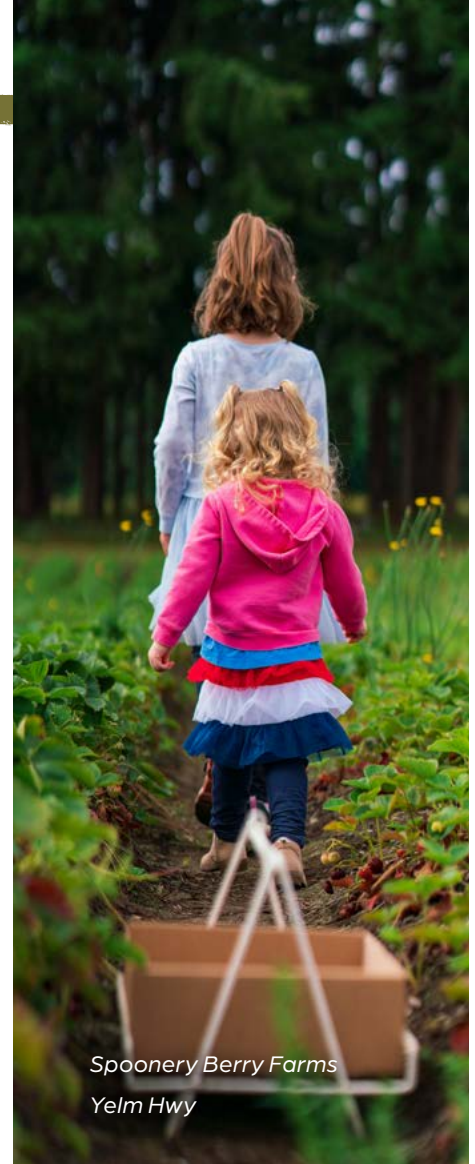
INTRODUCTION

Who We Are, What We Do and Why it Matters

Experience Olympia & Beyond is here to create awareness about the Thurston County experience—our communities, activities, and people—and to drive visitation to and throughout the region. Through highly targeted marketing and sales initiatives, we invite guests to experience and explore our region, whether they're a trade association looking to hold a meeting, a sports event planner aiming to book a tournament, an individual planning their family vacation, (or even a local looking for things to do)!

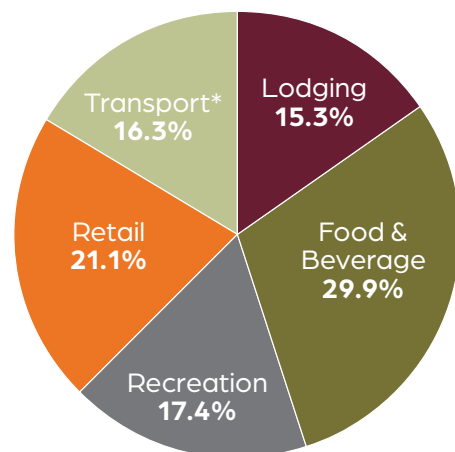
To do our best work, we know community alignment is essential. We work hand in hand with our partners at the Thurston Chamber of Commerce, the Thurston Economic Development Council, the Olympia Downtown Alliance, Chambers of Commerce from Lacey, Tumwater, Yelm, Tenino Area, and Grand Mound-Rochester, the Port of Olympia, and each of the municipalities we serve. We are champions of our destination and our state, so we also work closely with statewide tourism leaders including the State of Washington Tourism and the Port of Seattle to bring international and long-haul domestic tourism to Thurston County. Working with each of these partners allows us to best position Thurston County as a tourism destination for leisure, business, group, weddings, and sports tourism. These partnerships also pave the way for ensuring we deliver the best possible destination experience both for our visitors and locals who live and work here.

The ultimate result is a thriving Thurston County economy that is resilient and sustainable, that balances quality of life for locals with quality of experience for our guests.

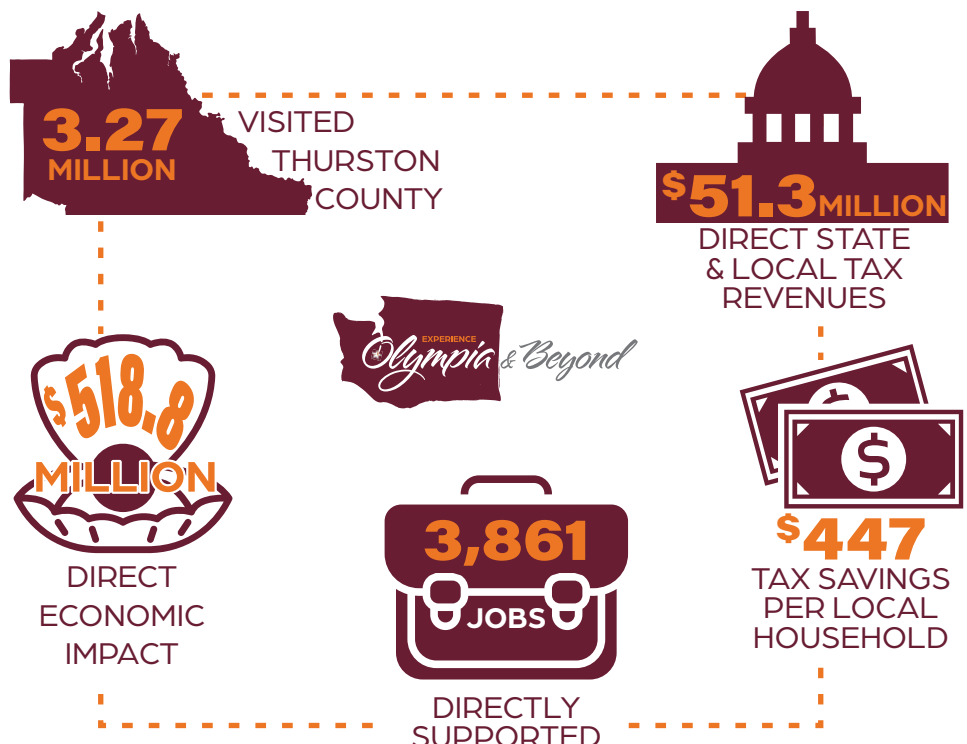


Spoonery Berry Farms
Yelm Hwy

VALUE & ECONOMIC BENEFIT

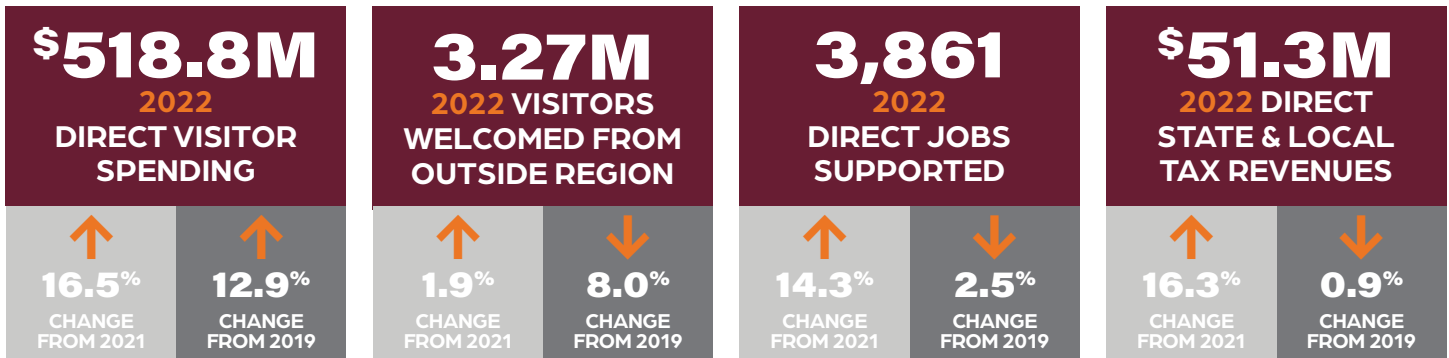


Source: Tourism Economics, 2023

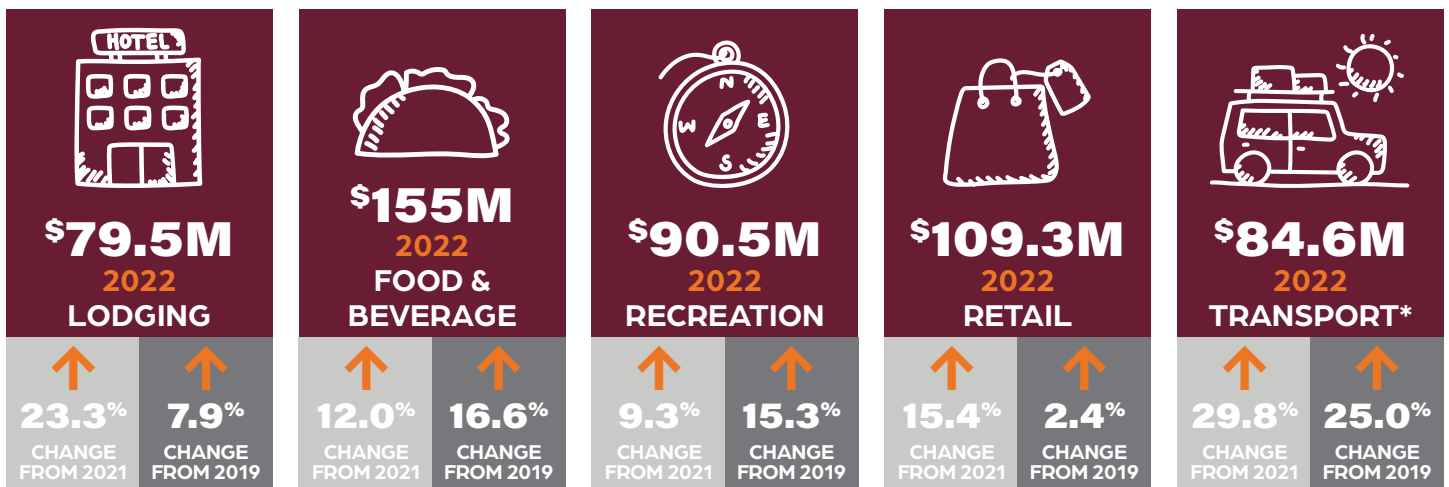


THURSTON COUNTY TOURISM YEAR IN NUMBERS

ECONOMIC IMPACT



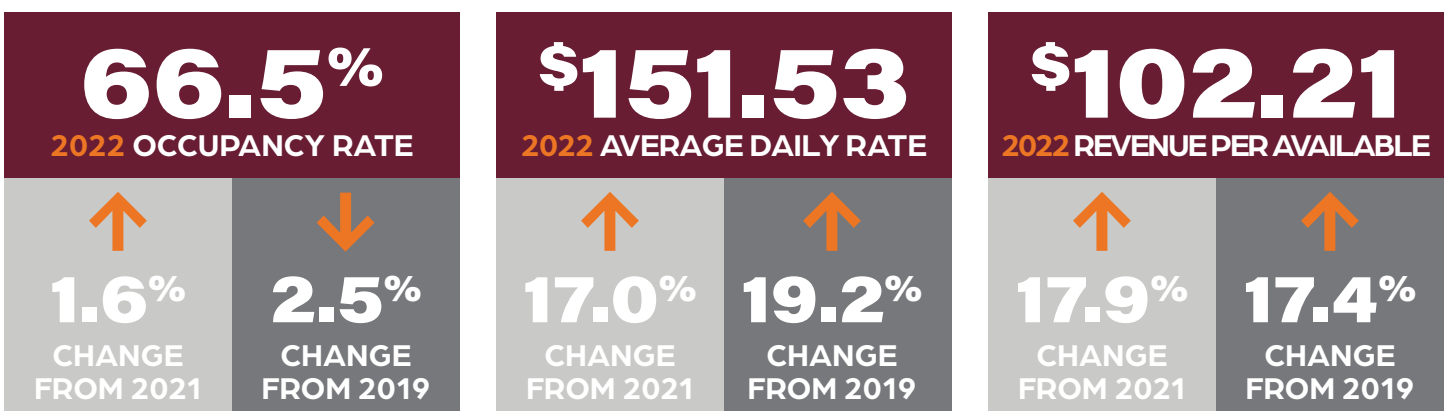
SPENDING BY SEGMENT



*Transport includes local transportation (the use of personal vehicles, taxis/ride-share, trains, public transportation etc.) and air transportation.

LODGING PERFORMANCE

At the end of 2022, Thurston County had 27 hotel/motel properties with 2,779 available rooms.



Source: Smith Travel Research

THE THURSTON

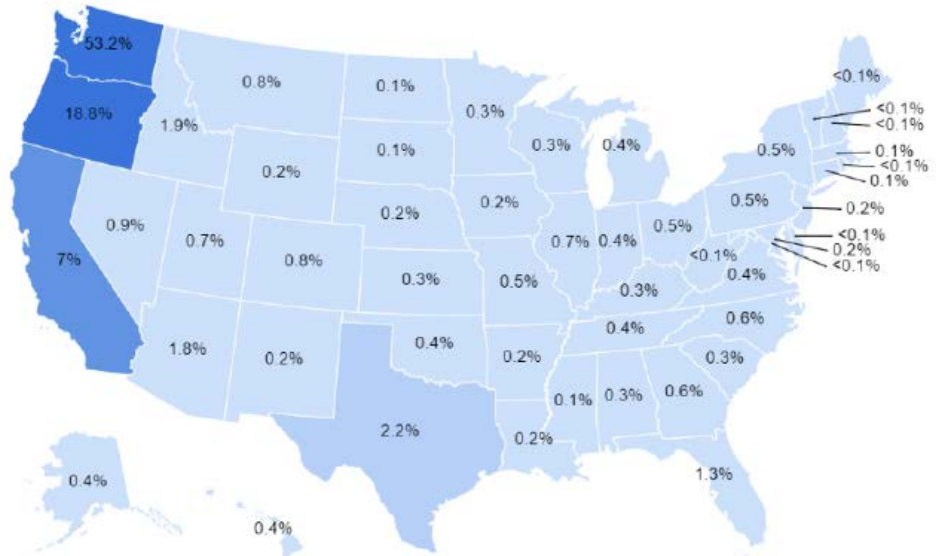


3.27M = **\$518.8M**
VISITORS IN DIRECT SPENDING

WHERE VISITORS COME FROM*

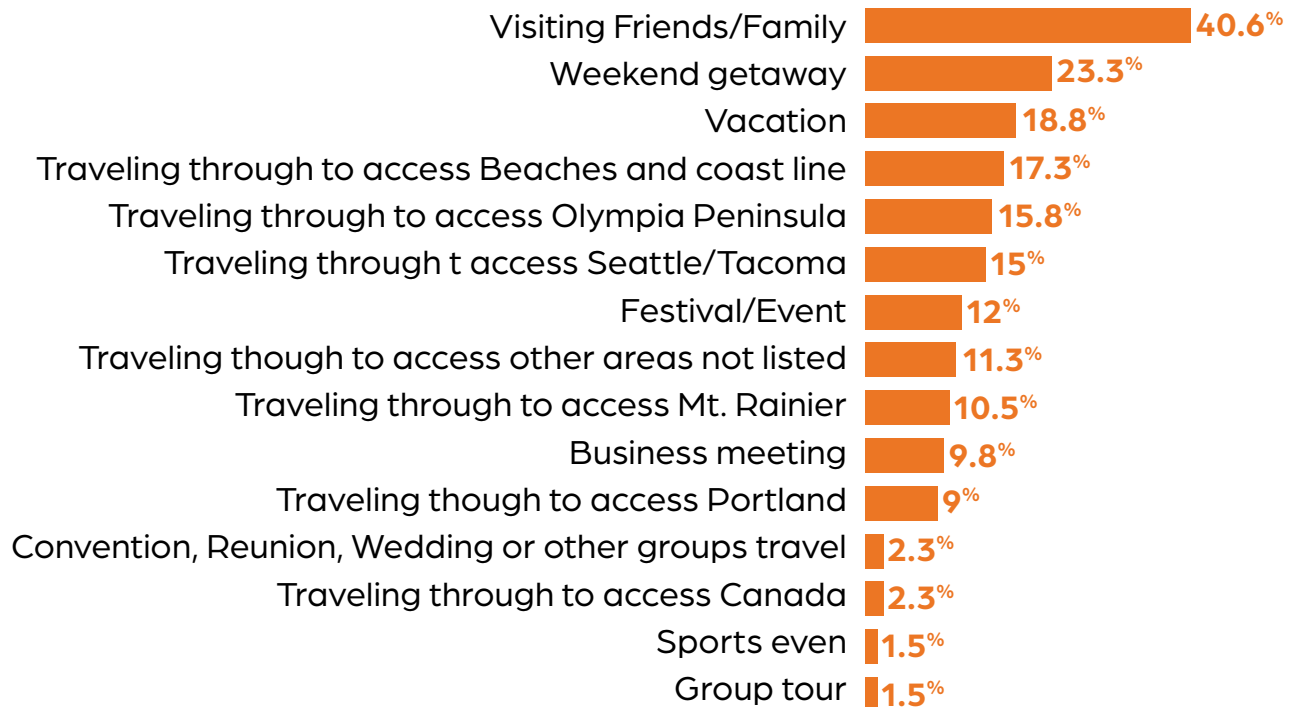
TOP MARKETS

4.9%	Vancouver, WA
4.8%	Portland, OR
4.3%	Seattle, WA
2.0%	Everett, WA
1.9%	Spokane, WA
1.7%	Longview, WA
1.5%	Bothell, WA
1.4%	Salem, OR
1.4%	Bellevue, WA
1.3%	Bellingham, WA



* Based on unique visitors.

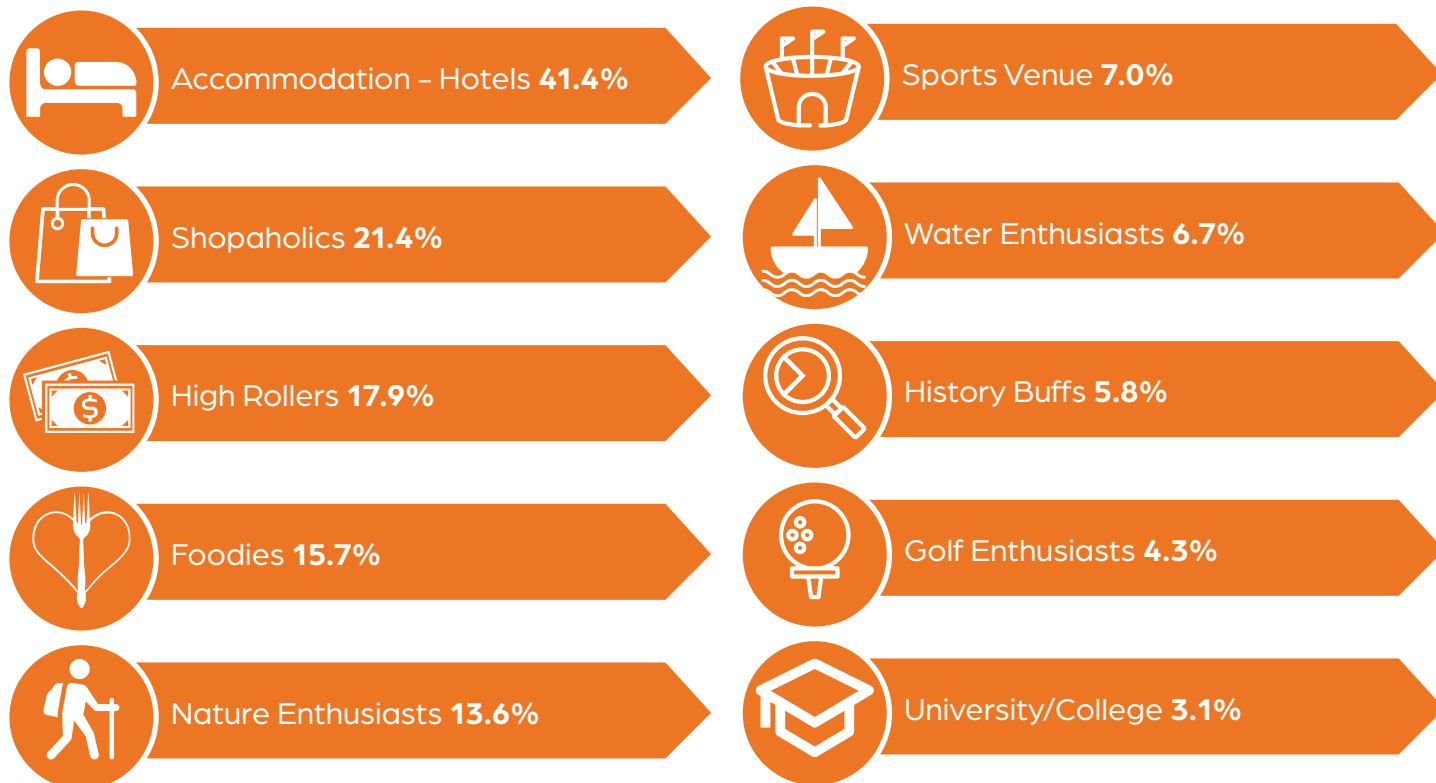
WHY THEY VISIT **



**Select all that apply

COUNTY VISITOR

TOP VISITOR SEGMENTS



74.3% Repeat Visitors

38.3%

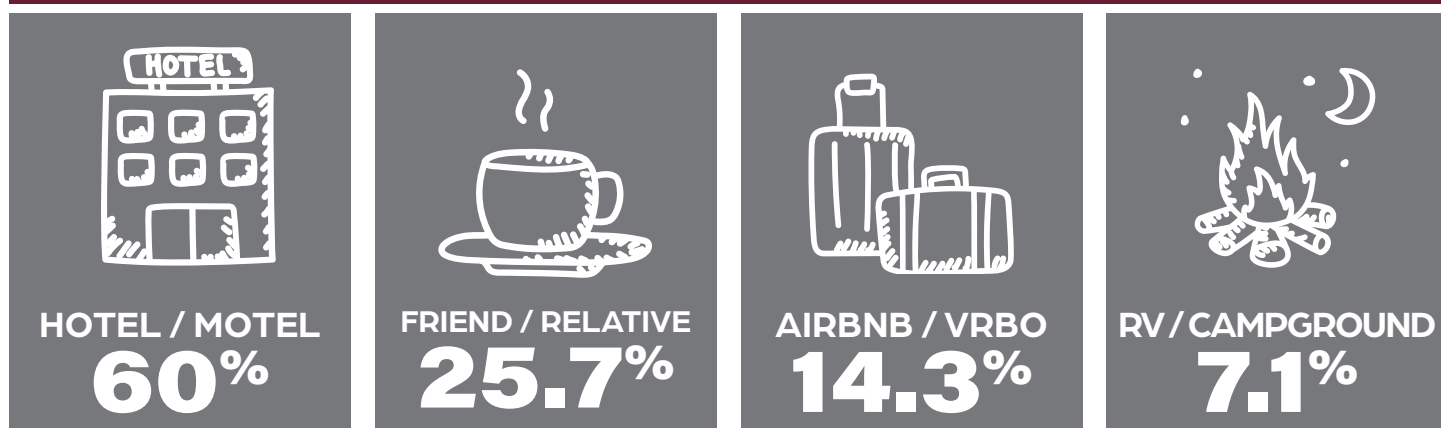
DAY TRIPS

61.7%

OVERNIGHT TRIPS

2.3 AVERAGE DAYS (3.0 AVERAGE FOR HOTEL/MOTEL VISITORS)

WHERE OVERNIGHT VISITORS STAY **



Source: Tourism Economics, 2023; Datafy, 2023, Experience Olympia & Beyond Sentiment Survey, 2022

**Select all that apply

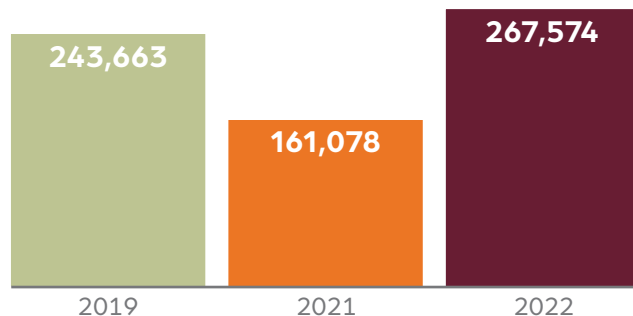
MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS RESULTS

Unique Website Visits

Individuals visiting our website actively seek information to help them plan their visit to our region. These visits are indicators of consumers demonstrating their desire to travel to our destination.

2022 unique website visits to experienceolympia.com exceeded visits in 2021 and 2019. Growth can be attributed to the positive attention captured after the new website launch in May of 2022, new engaging content, improved SEO, and paid digital advertising pushing visitation directly to the new website.

UNIQUE WEB VISITS



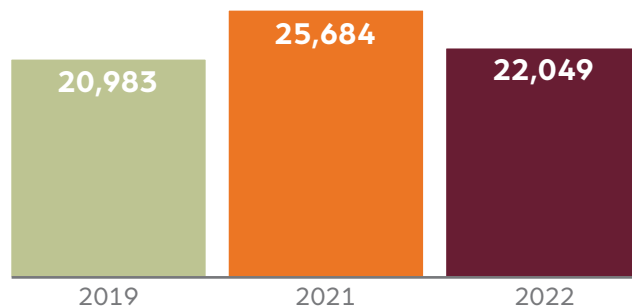
Social Media Audience

Social media is a tool we employ to inspire visitation to our region, to build relationships and foster two-way communication with visitors and locals alike. This audience is an indicator of consumers demonstrating their desire to relate with and/or form a relationship with our destination.

Experience Olympia and Beyond's social media audience declined -14.2% compared to 2021. This is due to having to disable our previous Facebook account, start a new account and regrow this audience.



SOCIAL MEDIA AUDIENCE*



* 2022 not directly comparable to past figures due to restructuring of our Facebook page.

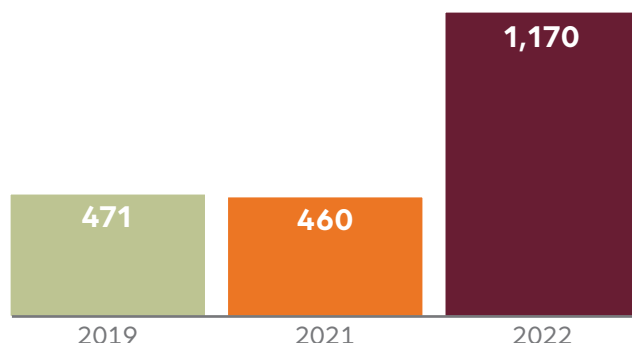
Visitor Guides Mailed

Consumers can request that we mail them a printed copy of our Visitor Guide to help them plan their trip, or to help them make on-the-ground decisions while in-market. These visits are indicators of consumers demonstrating their desire to travel to our destination.

1,170 visitor guides were mailed to consumers, an increase of 154.3% from the year prior.



VISITOR GUIDES MAILED



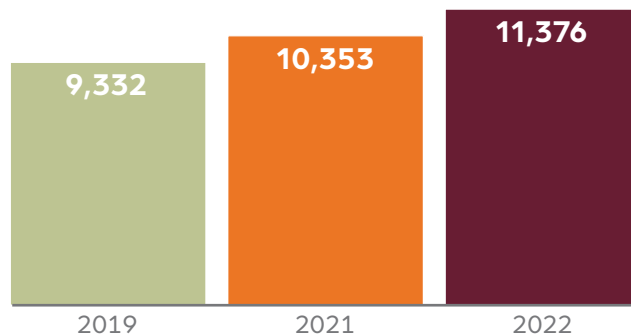
MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS RESULTS

Consumer E-Newsletter Subscribers

Consumers must opt-in to receive our email communications. Our consumer email newsletters are sent out no fewer than one time per month, year-round, to encourage new and repeat visits to our region, and to provide access to planning support via our website, experienceolympia.com. This audience is an indicator of consumers demonstrating their desire to relate with and/or form a relationship with our destination.

Consumer e-newsletter subscribers increased 9.9% from 2021.

CONSUMER E-NEWSLETTER SUBSCRIBERS

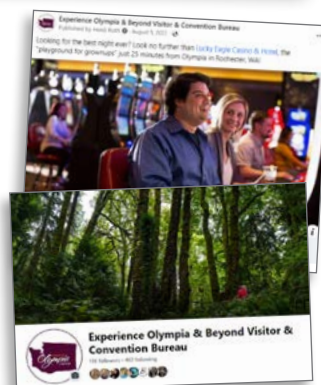


Earned Media Placements

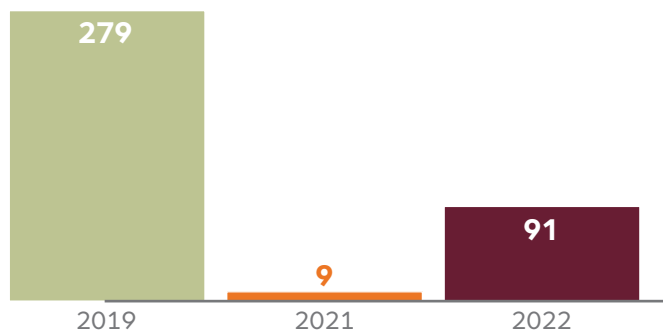
Each quarter we provide our public relations firm with a detailed list of Thurston County seasonal attractions, experiences, and stories for their team to pitch to travel writers and other influencers. The stories, articles and/or social media posts that result are considered earned coverage. These media placements are indicators of media (and their audiences') interest in our destination.

PR Impressions

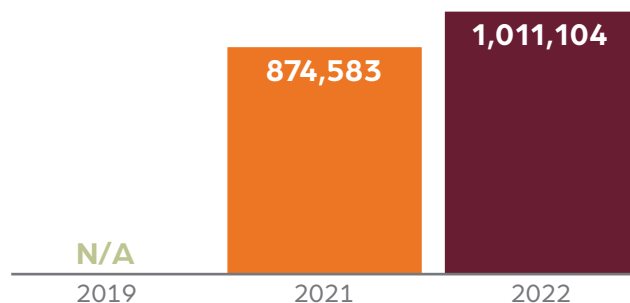
The number of times that earned media placements are viewed are tracked and reflected as PR impressions. These media impressions are indicators of media (and their audiences') interest in our destination.



EARNED MEDIA PLACEMENTS**



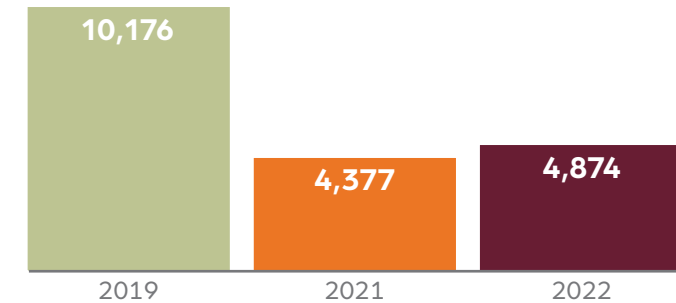
PR IMPRESSIONS**



**Earned Media Placements/PR Impressions not directly comparable to past figures since a new vendor uses a different methodology to track performance.

MEETINGS/TOUR & TRAVEL SALES RESULTS

MEETINGS - LEAD ROOM NIGHTS



Meetings and events bookings rebounded in 2022 but still lag behind 2019, a national trend. According to U.S. Travel Association, 2022 domestic group bookings are anticipated to be at 67% of 2019 levels. Still, the team secured new bookings from new clients like the Master Brewers Association and the Miss Washington Scholarship Organization.

MEETINGS BOOKINGS

Association of Washington Cities Mayors Exchange

Hilton Garden Inn

Master Brewers Association

District NW Fall Conference

2 bookings: The Olympia Hotel at Capitol Lake, Exploration Coach Lines

Miss Washington Scholarship

Organization Teen Forum 2022

The Olympia Hotel at Capitol Lake

Olympia Harbor Days

DoubleTree by Hilton, Red Lion Inn & Suites, TownePlace Suites, Hilton Garden Inn, Super 8 Lacey

Open Roads Tour & Travel

Capitol Building Tour

Pacific Northwest Farm Direct

Marketing Association 2022

3 bookings: DoubleTree by Hilton, Budd Bay Catering, Freedom Tours

USAF 1788a 1st Special Forces Retreat

Great Wolf Lodge

Visit Spokane Client Appreciation

Rutledge Corn Maze

Washington Filmworks Roundtable

The Olympia Hotel at Capitol Lake

Washington Interscholastic Activities Association

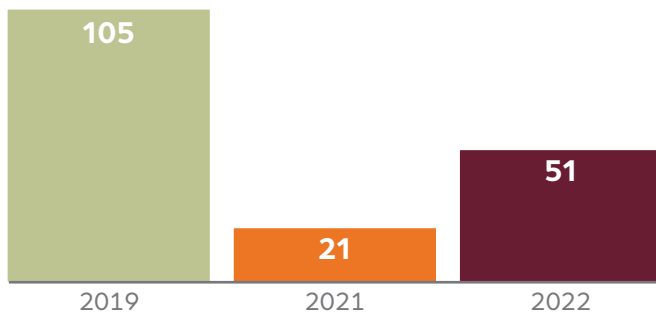
Coaches School 2022

The Olympia Hotel at Capitol Lake

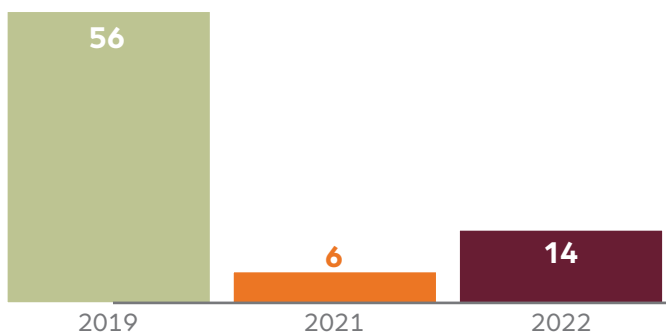
Witt Birthday Celebration

Huber's Gasthaus

MEETINGS - LEADS



MEETINGS - LEADS BOOKED



Longhouse Center at Evergreen State College



MEETINGS LOST BUSINESS

Adamari Entertainment

Pushed to future year due to previous commitment

AgrAbility National Training Workshop

chose The Centennial Hotel Spokane, ADA requirements

Association of Educational Service Districts

met virtually

Be In Health Conference

no response

City Nation Place Americas Conference

wants a more urban destination

Einmaleins Seminar

no response

Juniper Networks Leadership Retreat

stayed closer to HQ in California

MarjanNet DS Spring Conference

no response

Miss Washington Scholarship

Organization Competition Week 2022

chose Four Points by Sheraton Seattle, could not find available venue in Olympia

Miss Washington Scholarship

Organization Outstanding Teen

kept event in South Seattle

Miss Washington Scholarship

Organization Spring Forum 2022

kept event in South Seattle

National Summer Institute for Learning Communities

Evergreen State College to provide housing

Planning Association of Washington

chose Campbell's Resort, Lake Chelan

Richard Orcutt Memorial

No response

State of Washington Tourism Board Retreat

chose Vancouver, location farther from population centers

The Living Church of God

no response

Washington State Dental Hygienists Conference

chose Lynnwood Convention Center, meeting space requirements

Western Interstate Commission

on Higher Education Conference

Hotel Murano – Tacoma

MEETINGS CANCELLATIONS

Association of Washington Cities Mayors Exchange

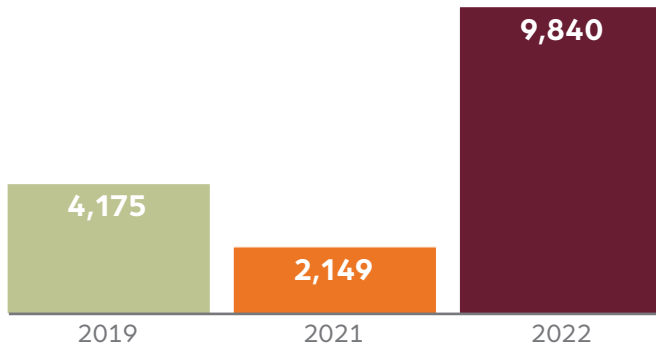
went virtual

SPORTS SALES RESULTS

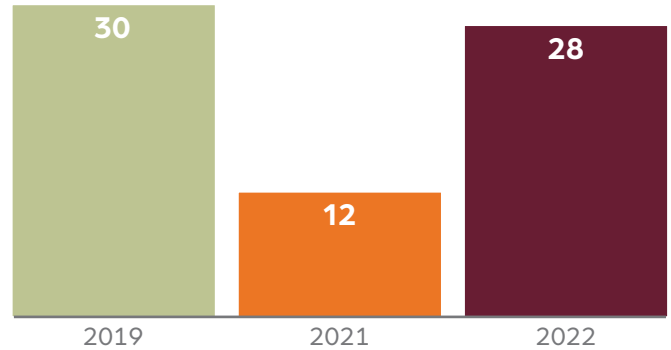
The sports market provided more optimistic results with a 358% increase in lead room nights and a 354% increase in booked room nights booked from

those leads. A few large bookings accounted for those increases, including rebooking the high school golf state championships and the USSSA National Fastpitch Championship.

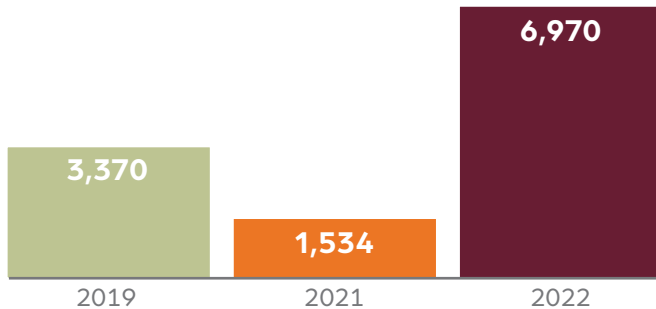
SPORTS - LEAD ROOM NIGHTS



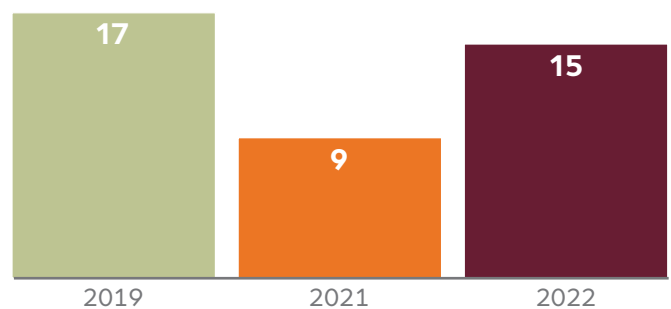
SPORTS - LEADS



SPORTS - BOOKED ROOM NIGHTS



SPORTS - LEADS BOOKED



OlyTown Artesians FC Semi-Pro Soccer



Golf at Tumwater Valley Golf Club

SPORTS BOOKINGS

American Junior Golf Association Championships

DoubleTree by Hilton, The Golf Club at Hawks Prairie

American Lung Association Reach The Beach Cycling Event

Quality Inn Lacey

Flag Football World Championship Tour 2022

LaQuinta Inn & Suites Lacey, Regional Athletic Complex

Oly Town Artesians FC

2 bookings: The Olympia Hotel at Capitol Lake

USA Pickleball Capital Pickleball Classic

The Olympia Hotel at Capitol Lake, La Quinta Inn & Suites Lacey, Rainier Vista Park

USA Ultimate Frisbee Comfort Inn Lacey

USSSA Cascades National Fastpitch Championships

Citywide event

Washington State Senior Games Pickleball 2022

The Olympia Hotel at Capitol Lake,
La Quinta Inn & Suites Lacey, Rainier Vista Park

WIAA 2A State Soccer Championships 2022

Best Western Tumwater, The Olympia Hotel at Capitol Lake, Hilton Garden Inn, TownePlace Suites by Marriott, Comfort Inn Lacey, Days Inn Lacey, Tumwater Stadium

WIAA 3A State Softball Championships 2022, 2023 and 2024

3 bookings: Comfort Inn Lacey,
LaQuinta Inn & Suites Lacey, Regional Athletic Complex

WIAA State Golf Championships 2023–24

2 bookings: Citywide event, Tumwater Valley Golf Club,
Hawks Prairie Golf Course

SPORTS LOST BUSINESS

Oly Town Artesians FC

housing not needed for select dates

WIAA State Championship Gymnastics

keeping the event at Sammamish High School

WIAA State Championship Track & Field

no availability

SPORTS CANCELLATIONS

GNAC Softball Championships 2022

moved to Eastern Washington due to poor weather

EVENT PLANNER FAMILIARIZATION TOUR

As engaging as trade shows are, there's no better way to showcase a destination than by bringing buyers into the region to experience it firsthand. The Experience Olympia & Beyond sales team invited 6 qualified meeting planners to visit a cross section of meeting and event professionals in Thurston County. Stops included the Hampton Inn & Suites Conference Center, Worthington Center at St. Martin's University, the HUB in Lacey, Great Wolf Lodge, and the Heritage Distilling Event Center. The planners were treated to a farm-to-table lunch courtesy of Summit Farms.



TRADE SHOW ACTIVITY

The Experience Olympia & Beyond sales team actively engaged in industry trade shows and conferences in 2022, allowing us to put our destination in front of meeting planners, event organizers and tour operators looking to book business into Washington State and Thurston County. The Go West Summit, held in Reno, NV brought together more than 100 qualified international tour wholesalers and receptive operators for one-on-one appointments. The US Travel Association's IPW Conference, held in Orlando, FL reunited the travel

industry with four full days of appointments with international tour operators, media representatives and travel agencies. Experience Olympia & Beyond joined a coalition of destination marketing organizations (DMOs) at this conference, working in partnership with State of Washington Tourism and the Port of Seattle. Later in the year, the National Tour Association Travel Exchange gathered more than 80 domestic tour operators looking for small group experiences in our region. The overwhelming message from tour operators in 2022 was that their clients need authentic experiences – ones that they can't "buy off the street." They also want outdoor recreation and proximity to National Parks, an amenity that Thurston County has in abundance.

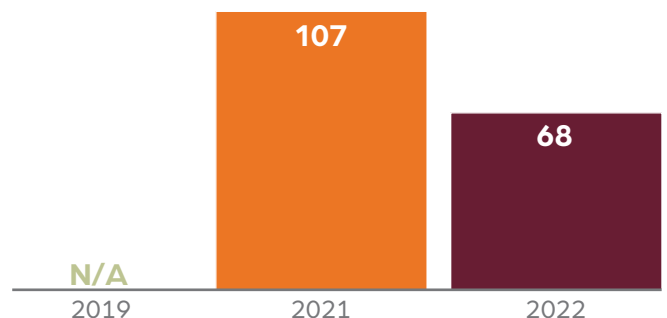


The sales team also visited Ft. Worth, TX in 2022, attending the Sports ETA Symposium for Sports Commissions. The team met with more than 20 sports event organizers looking to put their unique events at our facilities. Trending events include Pickleball, Lacrosse and Disc Golf.

CERTIFIED TOURISM AMBASSADORS

Experience Olympia & Beyond is proud to offer the Certified Tourism Ambassador (CTA) program that drives visitor spending through sharing an in-depth knowledge of our local tourism product with community leaders and hospitality professionals. Having hotel staff, restaurant servers, retail clerks and other hospitality professionals understand how to effectively share information about our destination to guests and locals gives our destination a competitive advantage. Experience Olympia & Beyond holds regular classes in the community throughout the year, with a total of 68 new CTA's trained in 2022.

TRAINED CERTIFIED TOURISM AMBASSADORS







experienceolympia.com



Billy Frank Jr. Nisqually
National Wildlife Refuge