

2023

# Annual Report

VISIT COLORADO SPRINGS



Accomplishments, initiatives and exciting updates from 2023

[VISITCOS.COM](https://visitcos.com)





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# Organizational Overview

## → VISION

VCOS creates economic vitality through memorable visits to Colorado Springs & the Pikes Peak Wonders Region.

## → MISSION

Colorado Springs & the Pikes Peak Region will be the leading U.S. destination for experiential travel, inspired by the majesty of Pikes Peak, iconic, accessible natural wonders and the Olympic spirit.



# A LETTER FROM Doug Price



*It is because of our entire tourism industry that we have been able to achieve excellence.*

It was this time last year that our destination was named a Best Place to Travel in 2023 by *Forbes*. Of the 50 destinations recognized, Colorado Springs was one of 11 U.S. destinations. 2023 set the tone for what our future holds. Our city continues to strive toward and achieve excellence.

Early in the year, we gathered as a tourism industry and community at the U.S. Olympic & Paralympic Museum where we held our Annual Business Meeting. The theme – the Legacy of Tourism – was a fitting description of how we have built on our foundation to propel us into the future.

At the event, we recognized the incredible work that had been accomplished by Mayor John Suthers and First Lady Janet Suthers. They both were instrumental in supporting our tourism industry's growth through economic development efforts and establishing the Olympic City USA brand. Mayor Suthers even surprised me with a "Spirit of the Springs" Celebration award for my accomplishments in bolstering a tourism ecosystem that ranks COS as a top travel destination. It is because of our entire tourism industry that we have been able to achieve excellence.

A huge part of our destination's success has been the growth at the Colorado Springs Airport, which has encouraged more and more visitors and locals to fly in and out of COS. The addition of Southwest Airlines was just the beginning.

In 2023, the airport welcomed two new carriers, added several new nonstop services and introduced innovative projects to ensure the airport's accessibility to all. COS ended the year with the highest number of enplanements since 1999.

In the summer we received our Longwoods Visitor Profile Study data from 2022, unveiling some particularly impactful findings. We learned that we have been successful in flattening the curve for seasonal trips with the "slow" season (January through March) travel at 21%, April through June at 26%, peak season (July through September) at 29% and October through December at 24%. We also discovered that 35% of overnight visitors had someone in their travel party with a disability, compared to the U.S. norm of 20%.

More visitors with disabilities are coming to the Pikes Peak Region, and it's all of our jobs to ensure everyone feels welcome and can access our incredible attractions, restaurants, hotels and shopping districts. VCOS launched a partnership with an accessible travel planning and booking site, Wheel the World, to improve our efforts. Many of our partners joined us in this endeavor and have since been assessed with live listings on [WheelTheWorld.com](https://www.WheelTheWorld.com).

We are very proud of the hard work our tourism industry has accomplished over the last year. One of the core Olympic values is "excellence," and 2023 was a perfect set up for the 2024 Olympic/Paralympic year of achieving excellence in Olympic City USA.



# Industry Report

When 2023 began, there were two major areas of travel recovery expected to improve: meetings/business and international. According to the Global Business Travel Association, 84% of industry experts surveyed reported their company's business travel in 2023 either largely or mostly recovered compared to 2019. The U.S. Travel Association reported that in 2023, the country reached 84% of 2019 levels for international travel and are still expected to reach a full recovery by 2025. On the other hand, U.S. Travel found that domestic leisure growth slowed due to factors like consumer spending being impacted by credit conditions and the restart of student loan payments.

In the Pikes Peak Region, data from 2023 indicates a similar visitation year to 2022. While we don't yet have our 2023 Longwoods Visitor Profile Study until later in 2024, we do have data from CoStar and Lodgers and Automobile Rental Tax (LART). CoStar showed that hotel occupancy was 65.3%, down 1.6% in 2023 compared to 2022. The LART report showed that collections were up 2% overall year-over-year in 2023 compared to 2022. With the small decrease in occupancy and the small increase in LART, we predict our overall visitation and spending numbers will be similar to those of 2022. 2022 visitation and spending were both up over the pre-pandemic year of 2019 – so 2022 is now a good baseline for comparison of a successful tourism year.

A reliable, retained workforce persists as an industry challenge as tourism recovery continues. There are more available travel and tourism jobs, so the talent competition has gotten fiercer. According to Destinations International, organizations need to focus on personalizing recruitment efforts, promoting training and continued education and connecting employees with opportunities for networking and interacting.



# Destination Report



## Welcome Mayor Yemi Mobolade

In May 2023, Yemi Mobolade was elected mayor of Colorado Springs in a historic vote, becoming the city's first elected Black mayor. Mayor Yemi is supportive of the tourism industry with plans to tackle challenges of safety, affordability, infrastructure capabilities and establishing a government that works for all residents.

### COS AIRPORT

In May 2023, COS welcomed Avelo Airlines with nonstop service to Hollywood-Burbank Airport. The momentum continued with Delta announcing new nonstop service to Atlanta, welcoming Sun Country Airlines with a nonstop service to Minneapolis/St. Paul and Southwest beginning nonstop service to Long Beach.

ElevateCOS – the airport's terminal modernization project – launched in September. The project includes increasing sustainability, improving accessibility and updating amenities and aging infrastructure. Alongside ElevateCOS, the airport has partnered with Wheel the World to assess accessibility efforts and ensure the modernization addresses key accessibility concerns for travelers.

In October, the airport announced participation in the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower Program. The program helps people with hidden disabilities discreetly inform others that they have a disability that may not be readily apparent. It allows airport staff to be aware that the person may need more assistance and that their patience is appreciated.

### ADVOCACY

While an increase to the Lodgers and Automobile Rental Tax (LART) was not on the ballot, VCOS continues to prioritize education around the LART tax (aka visitor tax) for future support from residents.

In October 2023, VCOS announced board support for ballot issue 2A – TABOR retention. 2A asked voters to allow the City of Colorado Springs to retain \$4.7 million above the TABOR revenue cap to be used toward public safety improvements. In November, the majority of voters rejected the measure, so Mayor Yemi Mobolade conceded the issue. As a result, residents received a TABOR refund of just over \$20 per account holder with Colorado Springs Utilities. The public safety improvements will still proceed regardless.



# Destination Report cont.

## BOARD & STAFF

VCOS created an “elevator pitch” to help consistently and concisely describe what our organization does. The pitch was printed on business card-sized handouts for staff and board members to keep on hand.

### **The pitch reads as follows:**

*Our mission at Visit Colorado Springs is to create economic vitality through memorable visits to the wonders of Colorado Springs and the Pikes Peak Region. As brand ambassadors for Olympic City USA and the region, VCOS enriches the quality of life for our residents by inviting and welcoming leisure, sports, and group visitors. Our work to develop and promote the destination generates billions in annual revenue, creates more than 40,000 industry jobs and saves families hundreds of dollars in taxes annually. We strive to ensure all have a welcoming experience in our community, inspiring them to share their memories with friends and family and dream of their return visit or relocation to Colorado Springs.*

In late 2023, we said goodbye to our Board Chair Pepper Dombroski. We are so grateful for her service and dedication to our organization and the Colorado Springs tourism industry at large. Scott Marble was appointed as the new Board Chair and began his term in the new year.

## ADMINISTRATION

In 2023, we implemented cloud-based accounting software (Xledger) to improve accuracy in financial reporting and staff efficiency.

We transitioned from a full-time CFO to a fractional CFO – Brian Werner of BRW Tax Services – to perform part-time CFO duties. Along with this change, the advancement of our Senior Accountant, April Perez, to the role of Director of Finance marks a progression in leadership within the organization’s financial domain. The Director of Finance assumes a broader strategic role, leading financial planning, analysis and decision-making. This evolution reflects April’s growth not only in accounting proficiency but also in leadership abilities encompassing strategic vision, team management and effective communication with partners.

We also brought on local company, HR Branches, to assist with HR management and compliance. Reanna Werner works to ensure our human resources functions are in compliance and that we are taking care of our most important resource – our staff.

# Destination Report cont.

## OLYMPIC CITY USA

In a collaboration between UCCS and Olympic City USA, a new sculpture was designed and installed at the UCCS campus called “Olympians and Paralympians Among Us.” The artwork celebrates UCCS students who have competed as Olympic or Paralympic athletes and recognizes the spirit required to achieve both educational and athletic accolades.

At VCOS’ Tourism Awards Celebration in October, a brand-new annual award was unveiled – the Olympic City USA Janet Suthers Community Champion Award. The award celebrates a community champion who upholds the Olympic & Paralympic ideals and has made a profound and lasting impact on the city. Janet Suthers received the inaugural award.

## NEW VENUES

On July 12, a groundbreaking ceremony was held for new music venue, Sunset Amphitheater. It’s expected to bring in big-name artists and visitors, helping make Colorado Springs a new entertainment hub.

On July 25, a groundbreaking ceremony was held for the Hosmer Visitor Center – the new Colorado Welcome Center opening at the U.S. Air Force Academy. The last of the five City for Champions projects, this visitor center is expected to positively impact the region’s economy, workforce and quality of life.



## DESTINATION ACCOLADES

- #9 Top 10 Places to Live  
*U.S. News*
- #2 Most Desirable Place to Live  
*U.S. News*
- #15 Top Places to Live Out West  
*Livability*
- #1 Most Pet-Friendly City in the U.S.  
*PetLab*
- Top Place to Travel in 2024  
*Airbnb*
- *USA Today* 10Best  
Readers’ Choice Awards:
  - **Best Attraction for Sports Fans** – #4 U.S. Olympic & Paralympic Museum
  - **Best Zoo** – #4 Cheyenne Mountain Zoo
  - **Best Zoo Exhibit** – #2 Rocky Mountain Wild at Cheyenne Mountain Zoo
  - **Best Hotel for the Holidays** – #4 The Broadmoor
  - **Best Marathon** – #1 Pikes Peak Marathon
  - **Best Motorsports Race** – #4 Pikes Peak International Hill Climb



# Destination Report cont.

## DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION

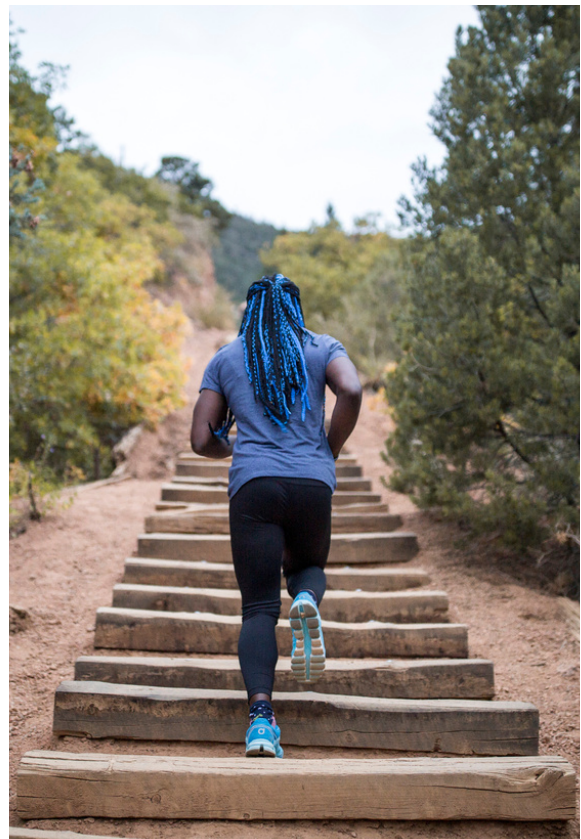
Early in the year, the team was awarded Tourism Management Grant funds from the Colorado Tourism Office. The grant money was used to enter a partnership with travel company Wheel the World. Similar to Expedia and other travel booking sites, Wheel the World allows travelers to peruse things to do and places to stay in a destination – but it’s entirely geared toward travelers with disabilities. Users create profiles outlining any specific accommodations or accessibility features they require and Wheel the World matches them with properties that are a good fit. This partnership allowed Visit Colorado Springs to educate partners on the importance of having adequate accessibility information available to travelers. By the end of 2023, there were 25 partner properties on board with a goal of securing 5 more before the end of the grant period in April 2024.

VCOS met quarterly with both the DEI Committee and Accessibility Task Force, and at the end of 2023, new members were secured for both groups. At these meetings, the groups have worked through priorities like establishing a DEI Commitment Statement for VCOS and connecting with new community members to improve accessibility across the city.

In 2023, the VCOS staff completed two VCOS-required DEI trainings with Destination International’s Chief Inclusion Officer Sophia Hyder Hock. In these trainings, the staff received education and scenario-based

learning around microaggressions, preferred terminology and what the words “diversity,” “equity” and “inclusion” mean to us as an organization.

At the end of the year, VCOS was awarded an El Paso County Investment Fund grant toward an additional project with Wheel the World. The new project will include filming, producing and promoting new digital assets to directly target travelers with disabilities and showcase our region’s accessibility.



# New & Under Construction

## NEW PROPERTIES IN 2023

- Tru and Homewood Suites
- Residence Inn Airport
- TownePlace Suites
- Chamonix Casino Hotel
- Extended Stay America Colorado Springs



## RENOVATED/UNDER CONSTRUCTION IN 2023

- **Flying Horse Resort & Club** – New East Lodge opened with 54 new guestrooms and suites plus a 3,700-square-foot ballroom and restaurant
- **Cheyenne Mountain Resort** – Renovated a majority of their meeting space
- **Garden of the Gods Resort & Club** – \$40 million renovation including 57 club rooms, Grand View Restaurant, the main entrance and The Kissing Camels Golf Course
- **The Mining Exchange** – Renovated the lobby including a coffee shop, 68 guestrooms and a restaurant coming at a later date
- **Hotel Polaris** – Construction began for a late 2024 opening date



# Staff Updates

## NEW HIRES



**BRITTANY HUNT**  
Senior Sales Manager



**JULIET JACOBY**  
Group Sales Manager



## STAFF ACCOLADES

### SALES TEAM

- **2023 Platinum Choice Award**  
*Smart Meetings*
- **2023 Best West CVBs/CMOs**  
*Meetings Today*
- **2023 Distinctive Achievement Award**  
*Association Conventions & Facilities*
- **#42 Top 50 Meeting Destinations in North America**  
*Cvent*

### MARKETING & COMMS TEAM

#### VCOS DESTINATION VIDEO

- **Gold Viddy Award**
- **Creative Marketing Campaign**  
(finalist) *Colorado Tourism Awards*
- Air time on ESPN2



#### DOUG PRICE

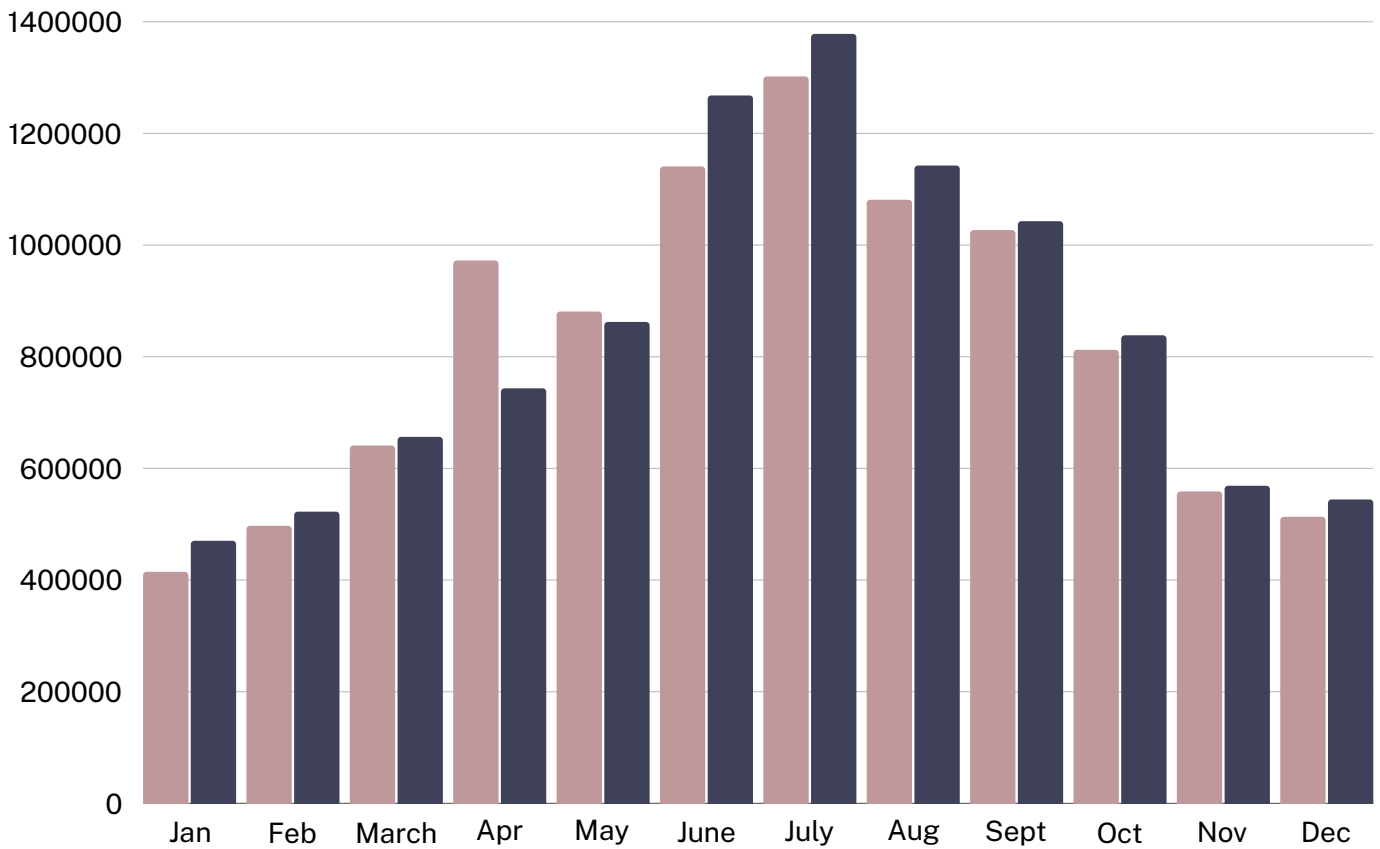
- **Spirit of the Springs Award**  
*City of Colorado Springs*
- **Outstanding Tourism Champion**  
*Colorado Tourism Office*

# Performance Measures

## LART BY MONTH

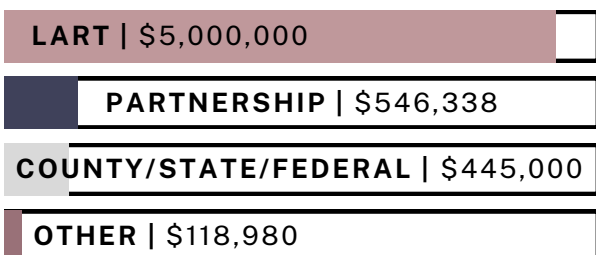
2022 \$9,841,667 2023 \$10,038,231

+2% YOY



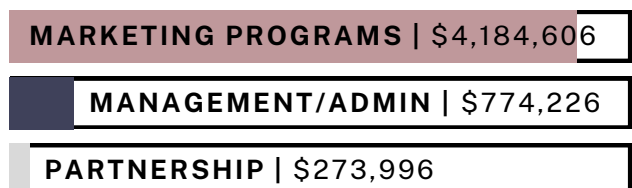
## 2023 FUNDING SOURCES

TOTAL: \$6,068,718











## 2023 EXPENDITURES

TOTAL: \$5,232,828



# Performance Measures cont.

<b>MARKETING</b>	 <b>MARKETING IMPRESSIONS</b> 45,178,996
	 <b>NEWSLETTER SUBSCRIBERS</b> 27,707
	 <b>PAID ADVERTISING</b> \$1,069,654
	 <b>WEBSITE SESSIONS</b> 2,971,981

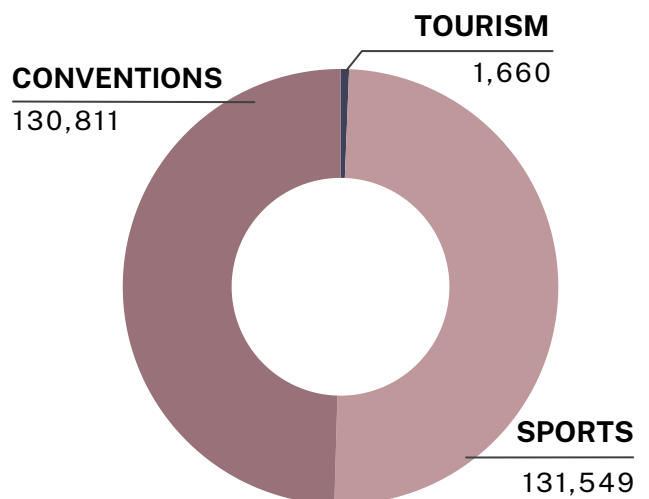
<b>PARTNERSHIP</b>	
 <b>PARTNERSHIP REVENUE</b> 461,067	
 <b>TOTAL PARTNERS</b> 485	
 <b>NEW PARTNERS</b> 63	
 <b>PARTNER RETENTION RATE</b> 87%	

## PR & COMMUNICATIONS

<b>PAID SOCIAL</b> \$411,441	<b>PUBLISHED ARTICLES</b> 477	<b>MEDIA EQUIVALENCY</b> \$6,946,283	<b>INFLUENCER VISITS</b> 10
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<b>GROUP SALES</b>	 <b>LEADS SENT</b> 1,200
	 <b>SERVICING ACTIVITIES</b> 13,647
	 <b>MISSION CONTACTS</b> 3,121
	 <b>TRADE SHOWS</b> 26
	 <b>REVENUE GENERATED</b> \$182,587,391

## GROUP ROOM NIGHTS





## Visitor Services

2023 was a successful year for Visitor Information Services with an overall 58.8% increase in gift shop sales. This increase can be attributed to more variety in the retail space, improved displays in the gift shop and more promotion of the items on social media channels. New products included a partnership with Rocky Mountain Soap Company to sell their locally made products in the gift shop.

### KIOSKS

After launching new kiosks in 2022, new software and hardware was deployed in the kiosks at the Garden of the Gods Visitor and Nature Center and the VCOS Visitor Information Center in 2023. A new kiosk was also placed at the Bear Creek Nature Center.

### COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Efforts were made to expand upon the visitor information available in the community. These included sharing info at the Air Force Academy New Parents Orientation, Cheyenne Mountain Newcomers Group, Schriever SFB Newcomers Orientation and Colorado Springs Chamber of Commerce's "Hello Colorado Springs" Kick-Off.



# Department Reports



## ▾ Group Sales

It was a successful time for the Sales team with 1,085 Requests for Proposals received throughout the year – a record number of leads for conventions. The conversion of Hotel Eleganté from a full-service property to a residential complex presented a challenge to the sales team, as it removed an important value-priced, full-service property with expansive meeting space. There were also several months of being short-staffed, though an experienced salesperson was brought on at the end of the year.

### ARPA FUNDING

The \$400K ARPA grant awarded by the Colorado Tourism Office increased advertising and improved visibility to corporate and association meeting planners. Staff members attended 26 tradeshows, making 3,240 contacts for a record number of engagements. It's clear planners are back to doing business in person. Some highlights included IMEX America and MPI World Education Conference.

### DOMESTIC TOUR

Domestic Tour is on the road to recovery. Q3 2023 data showed the strongest third quarter since 2019. According to a report from Expert Market Research, the motorcoach market is projected to grow at a compound annual growth rate of 5.2% between 2024 and 2032. Key trends in the industry include the rising demand for cost-effective options for group travel, the production of electric motorcoaches to reduce emissions and advancements in technology. As ridership rebounds, VCOS is reviving this lucrative market, hiring a new Sales Manager and returning to this sector with renewed energy.





## ▾ Sports & Special Events

Great community partnerships, such as with the Colorado Springs Sports Corporation, drove success in the sports market in 2023. We saw significant growth in sporting event attendance and room nights compared to 2021 and 2022. We've also been able to see strong retention of events that return to Colorado Springs annually.



**ASSISTEND IN  
80 SPORTING EVENTS**



**120,000  
ROOM NIGHTS**



**\$80 MILLION  
ECONOMIC IMPACT**

### JUMP ROPE

In July 2023, we achieved a major milestone by partnering with Sports Corp and Colorado College to host the International Jump Rope Union's World Championships at Robson Arena. This collaboration brought together over 1,200 athletes from over 20 countries, generating an estimated 22,000 room nights and economic impact of nearly \$9 million.

### NOTABLE EVENTS

- **The Broadmoor Winter Polo Classic** | 600+ attendees.
- **USA Pickleball's Great Plains Regional** | 200 athletes | 600 room nights.
- **USA Ultimate** | 1,000 athletes | 900 room nights.
- **USA Weightlifting National Championships** | 1,800 athletes | 1,900 room nights





## Partnership

2023 was a steady year of growth with 63 new member businesses. The five-year dues increase program that started in 2017 continued, but the final year's increases were split between 2023 and 2024. This change was made to provide extended financial support to our partners' businesses while continuing to assist VCOS in expanding our marketing efforts.

### PARTNER EVENTS

Events throughout the year brought partners and staff members together to network, share marketing tactics, educate on a variety of topics and celebrate the area's long-standing legacy of tourism that richly contributes to our local economy.

Overall, we hosted 13, well-attended events.

- **Educational Series:** Creating Engaging Video Content on Social Media: How to Find, Hire and Keep Great Employees; and Generating Marketing Content with AI.
- **Mixer locations:** WhirlyBall, Mash Mechanix & 1350 Distilling, and Venetucci Farms/Gather Mountain Blooms.
- **Annual Business Meeting:** U.S. Olympic & Paralympic Museum
- **Tourism Awards Celebration:** Flying W Ranch, Celebrating the Legacy of Tourism

### PARTNER HANDBOOK

In 2023 we launched our Partner Handbook, a comprehensive toolkit consisting of a printed trifold and accompanying landing page that expands on the information with more details. This toolkit was created as a guide for partners to utilize through each stage of their partnership. With comprehensive steps for the partner to follow during onboarding, great references, tips and resources for updates and opportunities for additional promotion, the project aims to enhance the ROI of a VCOS partnership and make the process seamless and easy.



SCAN TO SEE  
THE PARTNER  
HANDBOOK



OR VISIT THE LINK BELOW  
[VisitCOS.com/handbook](https://VisitCOS.com/handbook)



## International

In 2023, the international promotion budget was moved from Group Sales to Marketing. This budget was reinstated after pausing from 2020-2022 due to the pandemic and a slow recovering international market. The international market was still in recovery compared to pre-pandemic levels, facing continued challenges like long visa wait times.

### CTO COLLABORATION

Throughout the year, we re-engaged with the Colorado Tourism Office's international team, including participating in their booth at the IPW trade show. We also did co-op advertising through Miles Partnership and started preparing to participate in their Travel Exchange Program. This program will make Colorado Springs hotels more bookable to the international market. Our team attended all CTO International Promotions Committee meetings to build connections and learn about upcoming programs to help bring back the international traveler to Colorado Springs and the Pikes Peak Region.

### INITIATIVES

Other initiatives included digital ad campaigns in the UK and Germany through Herrmann Global and the purchase of the Destination Trip Report through a CTO alliance with RMI Destination Marketing. Among all cities in Colorado, Colorado Springs is second only to Denver in the number of international visitors.



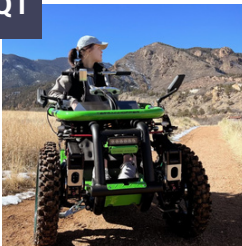


## Communications

### QUARTERLY AMBASSADORS

In 2023, the VCOS social team hosted a different ambassador each quarter. Each ambassador focused on a different “niche” - accessible travel, family-friendly activities, adrenaline-seeking adventures and food & beverage content. Each woman spent time around the Pikes Peak Region and highlighted their experiences through social media.

Q1



Baeh Gill  
@baeh\_gill

Q2



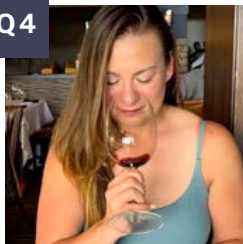
Kyana Miner  
@BlackAdventureMom

Q3



Dani Strobel  
@ItsDaniJonas

Q4



Jenn O'Neil  
@HangryAsianGirl

### PODCAST

*Peak Into COS* continued in 2023 with 12 new episodes that featured business owners and individuals from around Colorado Springs and beyond. Individuals represented Garden of the Gods, Dragonfly Paddle Yoga, Colorado Ski Furniture and more.

We also published two episodes of *Peak Into Our Week*, where the VCOS Staff discussed winter outdoor activities and date night spots around the region.

Our team and the Studio 809 Podcast Collective moved studios with the vacancy of the CS Indy / Colorado Springs Business Journal offices. We now record in The Next Us, a collaborative co-working space in Downtown Colorado Springs.

### MEDIA RELATIONS

- Our communications team coordinated 10 influencer visits in 2023
- We also saw a large return in International visits from journalists and Colorado representatives



## Marketing

### THE RISE OF GA4

The transition from Universal Analytics (UA) to Google Analytics 4 (GA4) in 2023 was a significant evolution in digital analytics. GA4 introduced a new approach to analytics, focusing on cross-platform measurement, machine learning capabilities and enhanced user-centric data collection. This transition came with several challenges for our team and digital marketers worldwide.

- **Learning curve:** GA4 uses a different data model and terminology compared to UA, demanding new ways of understanding and interpreting data.
- **Limited historical data:** Historical data access in GA4 is not as comprehensive as UA, making comparisons with previous periods challenging.
- **Privacy-focused:** GA4 prioritizes user privacy, impacting data granularity and requiring adjustments to tracking methods.
- **Reporting shift:** Many reports and metrics from UA do not have direct equivalents in GA4, necessitating adaptation in reporting strategies.

As we continue to become more familiar with the platform, GA4 will help us make smarter decisions and improve our website's performance in the long run.

### OFFICIAL VACATION PLANNER

The 2024 Official Vacation Planner, themed "The Stuff of Legends," showcased a captivating photo of Rita the Rock Planter by Lars Leber Photography. Printing 400,000 copies in February 2024, the planner was distributed nationwide. Planning commenced in March 2023, with multiple photoshoots conducted during the summer and fall months. Highlights included hikers at Red Rock Canyon Open Space, illustrating a youthful demographic enjoying outdoor spaces. Additionally, we partnered with Bear Creek Nature Center to capture the newly opened Visually Impaired Persons (VIP) Trail, featuring a blind model and her guide dog, and collaborated with an accessibility task force member to showcase his TerrainHopper at Ute Valley Park. These photoshoots effectively demonstrated the accessibility of our outdoor spaces for people of all ages and abilities.



## Marketing cont.

### WEBSITE RECOVERY

After facing a significant loss in web traffic and SEO Rankings in 2022, 2023 marked a substantial turnaround and progress toward total recovery.

Through collaborative efforts, strategic partnerships and a focus on quality content and optimization, we successfully positioned ourselves on a trajectory of continued success in the digital landscape. The collective efforts of VCOS, Tempest (our SEO service provider) and Orange 142 (our paid advertising agency) propelled us towards significant year-over-year growth, nearly reaching pre-pandemic levels of 2019.

- **Sessions:** +10.2% YoY
- **Users:** +12.2% YoY
- **Views:** +15.5% YoY
- **Average Duration:** +19.1%. YoY
- **Engaged Sessions:** +21.8% YoY
- **Engagement Rate:** +10.6% YoY
- **Organic Traffic:** +11% YoY
- **Partner Referrals:** +2% YoY

### OUR SUCCESS

There were numerous contributing factors to the successful recovery of VisitCOS.com.

1. **Third-party Assessments:** Regular assessments from external parties helped validate and steer our strategies in the right direction.
2. **SEO Optimization:** The dedicated efforts of Tempest, our SEO specialists, played a crucial role in optimizing our website and guiding our SEO strategy, facilitating improved visibility and organic traffic.
3. **Paid Traffic Management:** Orange 142's management of paid traffic contributed to the overall increase in website performance.
4. **Content Strategy:** Our team's commitment to consistently producing relevant and timely content, aligned with high search demand, enhanced user engagement, driving sustained growth throughout the year.



## Advertising

### CTO ARPA GRANT

VCOS was awarded a \$400,000 grant by the Colorado Tourism Office with \$40,000 in matching funds from VCOS. The funds are for a campaign titled *Championship Meetings & Events in Olympic City USA*. The majority of the campaign will run in 2024, with 13 emails sent in 2023 to a database of more than 400,000 meeting planners. With participation from partners such as The Broadmoor, Flying Horse Resort & Club, Garden of the Gods Resort & Club, COS Airport, Mining Exchange and Radisson, these emails hit the mark and generated numerous Requests for Proposals through the Cvent portal.

### ARPA EMAIL CAMPAIGN

#### PERFORMANCE:

- **Impressions:** 574k
- **Clicks:** 38k
- **CTR:** 6.6%

### 2023 CAMPAIGN OVERVIEW

1. Leisure Summer
2. Crafts & Drafts
3. Olympic City USA
4. Share COS
5. OVP Joint Venture
6. Fall Travel
7. Arts Month
8. Rafting
9. ARPA

### OVERALL PERFORMANCE

**Impressions:** 45,178,996

**Clicks:** 466,000

**Views:** 2,423,707

**CTR:** 0.37%

# Advertising cont.

## CAMPAIGNS



**Share COS:** This campaign was a tourism advocacy effort that aimed to change community perceptions toward regional tourism. Centered around sharing our destination responsibly with people we love, this campaign was rolled out in two iterations. 1) Reminding people that this was a place that was first shared with them, and a place that they now love to share with others 2) using hard data to show the economic impact of “Sharing COS.”



**Rafting:** Recognizing the importance of supporting our rafting partners before the end of their season, we launched a short summer campaign dedicated to highlighting the region's outstanding outfitters. This initiative aimed to capitalize on the remaining summer period, encouraging our audience to embark on one more adventure before the season concludes.



**Fall Travel:** To encourage travelers to explore during shoulder seasons and promote sustainable travel practices, we strategically allocated the largest portion of our advertising budget to the Fall Travel campaign. This approach aimed to shift travel behaviors towards less congested times, thereby minimizing the impact on popular destinations and supporting local economies during off-peak periods. The emphasis on sustainability aligned with our commitment to responsible tourism practices and resonated with environmentally conscious travelers, further reinforcing our brand's values and positioning us as a responsible travel advocate.



## “LOCAL LOVE” MURAL

The "Local Love" project was a community beautification initiative in collaboration with Southwest Airlines®, The Colorado Springs Airport, The Colorado Springs Chamber & EDC and Claire Swinford. This mural project aimed to beautify the area with public art while fostering community spirit and celebrating connectivity. Inspired by the arrival of Southwest Airlines at Colorado Springs Airport (COS), “Local Love” not only commemorates Southwest's presence but also fosters a sense of pride and belonging within the Southeast Springs community.

The group partnered with local artist, Jeresnyka Rose, a talented and passionate advocate for both the arts and her community. The selected site at First & Main Town Center was secured through a partnership with Norwood and was selected for its high-visibility location and significant foot traffic.



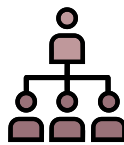
# Governance

## VCOS COMMITTEES



### FINANCE

Oversees VCOS budgets, financial policies and position, internal controls, contracts and audits.



### GOVERNANCE

Oversees the governing structure and policies of VCOS and nominates potential board members.



### MARKETING

Oversees marketing programs including advertising, website, publications, social media, PR, communications and advocacy.



### PARTNERSHIP

Oversees VCOS partnership programs regarding new sales, retention, dues, policies and events.



### DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION

Responsible for identifying the diversity, equity and inclusion strengths, issues and opportunities for VCOS and the tourism community in the Pikes Peak Region.



### ACCESSIBILITY

Comprising industry leaders and experts in the disability world, VCOS acts as the conveners to drive and assist in meaningful change.





# VCOS Board of Directors

## **CHAIR | SCOTT MARBLE**

Colorado Springs Conservatory

## **VICE CHAIR | GUS KRIMM**

The Mining Exchange

## **TREASURER | DAVE HARRIS**

Ghost Town Museum

## **SECRETARY | BECKY LEINWEBER**

Pikes Peak Outdoor Recreation Alliance

### **CURTIS BOVA**

Hotel Polaris at the U.S. Air Force Academy

### **KRISTINA COGGINS HECK**

University of Colorado Colorado Springs

### **DR. HERMAN CRAWFORD**

Pikes Peak State College

### **SUSAN DAVIES**

Trails & Open Space Coalition

### **SCOTT FLEXMAN**

The Broadmoor

### **CRYSTAL LATIER**

El Paso County

### **MEGAN LEATHAM**

Colorado Springs Sports Corporation

### **WENDY MCHENRY**

Flying Horse Resort & Club

### **LISA NEENER**

The United States Air Force Academy

### **ED OKVATH**

Springhill Suites and Element

### **GREG PHILLIPS**

Colorado Springs Airport

### **JOHNNA REEDER KLEMEYER**

Colorado Springs Chamber & EDC

### **JENNY SHERMAN**

Odyssey Gastropub

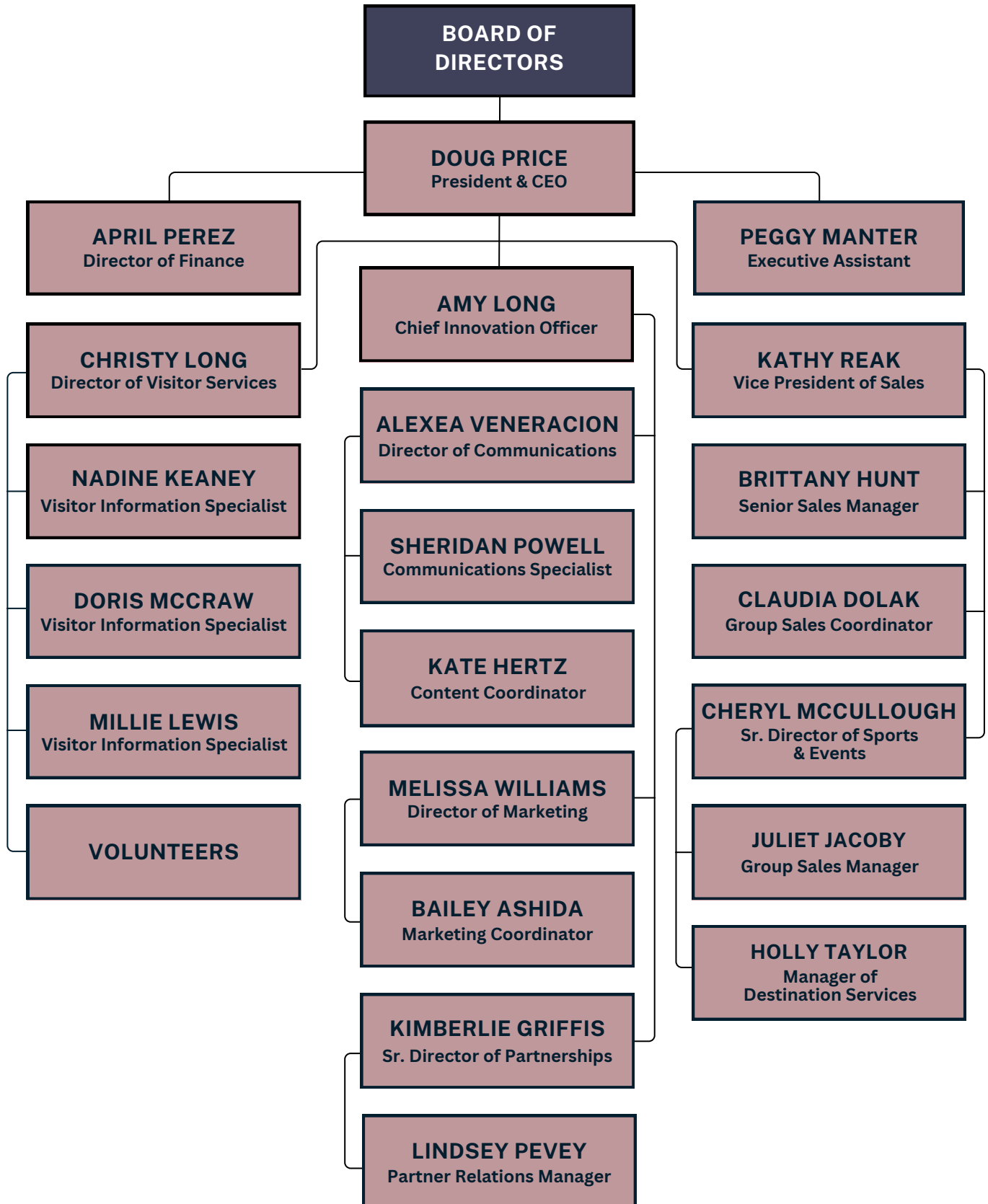
### **MICHELLE TALARICO**

City of Colorado Springs

### **MARISA WIGGLESWORTH**

U.S. Olympic & Paralympic Museum

# Organizational Chart



2023



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