



LINDSBORG CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU

ANNUAL REPORT

2023

PREPARED BY
HOLLY LOFTON



visit LINDSBORG
CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU



2023 RECAP

highlighting our efforts to market Lindsborg to visitors and groups

With 2023 at an end, we are celebrating a year that was full of wins for the Lindsborg community. Tourism continues to be a successful economic driver and we look forward to the upcoming year! The Lindsborg Convention & Visitors Bureau's Annual Report highlights our efforts to market Lindsborg and to provide assistance to visitors and groups to Lindsborg.

In this report, we focus on four types of marketing:

1. **Earned** - media, blogger, and influencer relations
2. **Owned** - website, blog, and content generated in-house
3. **Shared** - social media, word of mouth, and referrals
4. **Paid** - advertising

We also showcase new and continuing projects, grants, partnerships, visitation, and the economic impact of tourism in Lindsborg.

We look forward to building on this foundation.

Holly Lofton, Director
Lindsborg Convention and Visitors Bureau



CVB staff responded to nearly 11,000 emails in the 2023 year.



PROMOTION - EARNED

The Lindsborg Convention & Visitors Bureau continues to capitalize on earned media by coordinating with media outlets, responding to inquiries, and positioning Lindsborg on journalists' radar. Media stories are then utilized in social media promotions and on the Visit Lindsborg website. Below are just a few of the 2023 articles that feature Lindsborg.



2023 top online & print articles

- 7 Cutest Small Towns In Kansas - World Atlas
- The Best Small Towns To Retire In Kansas -World Atlas
- One-Day Itinerary in Lindsborg, Kansas - Midwest Living
- The 12 Best Romantic Places In Kansas - Americantowns Media
- Travel Awaits: 12 Fabulous U.S. Cities That Feel Like You've Gone To Europe - Travel Awaits
- In Kansas' 'Little Sweden USA,' the small-town American dream is still alive - Kansas City Star online
- Lindsborg, Kansas: 'Just a little slice of heaven on earth' - Kansas City Star online
- The Charming Bed and Breakfasts in Small-Town Kansas Worthy Of Your Bucket List - Only in Your State
- 9 of the Friendliest Towns in Kansas - World Atlas
- 125th Anniversary of Lindsborg's Old Mill Begins with a Good Greasing - KMWU Wichita (NPR)
- 14 Best Small Towns to Visit in the U.S. - Travel Awaits
- 11 Unique Places to Visit in Kansas - Travel With Sara
- Need a getaway? These 4 small cities are worth the road trip - Wichita Eagle
- Get Out There - USA Today Travel Midwest (Coronado Heights Castle and Park)
- Take a Road Trip to Europe - USA Today Travel Midwest
- Weekender: Visit Lindsborg - Johnson County Lifestyler
- Finding that Swedish Flair in Kansas - Edmond Life & Leisure
- Exploring Lindsborg - Kansas Living
- 10 Charming Towns to Visit During the Holidays - AAA Magazine
- 21 U.S. Places That Will Remind You of Cities Around the World - AAA Magazine
- Things to do in Lindsborg, Kansas: A guide to the Swedish Capital of the USA - Postcard Jar
- 6 Cool, Hidden, and Unusual Things to Do in Lindsborg, Kansas - Atlas Obscura
- 6 Great Places to Live - AARP Magazine



PROMOTION - EARNED



TELEVISION

The Lindsborg CVB shared stories, photos, and videos with Kansas television stations interested in featuring Lindsborg stories. We are fortunate to have area photographers and videographers that gladly share their work with our office, knowing that this elevates the Lindsborg community.

RADIO

The Lindsborg CVB produced radio ads and talk radio programming for Ad Astra Radio. Programs were sponsored by local businesses and aired on multiple days of the week at multiple times. Recordings in 2023 featured a wide variety of information including travel and tourism, new businesses, festivals and events, and other topics of interest. Programs featured various Lindsborg people and personalities.

NEWSPAPERS & MAGAZINES

From news releases to feature stories, calendars, or photos, the Lindsborg CVB happily partners with area newspapers and national publications to promote Lindsborg to their readerships. Eight pitches were sent to qualified HARO (Help A Reporter Out) leads in the 2023 year, resulting in multiple online and print articles featuring Lindsborg.



PROMOTION - PAID

Recognizing its budget limitations and the rising cost of traditional advertising, the Lindsborg Convention & Visitors Bureau strategically purchases ads.



2023 AD PURCHASES

- **Kansas Travel Guide** - 400,000 guides are distributed annually to people who request them, at rest stops, visitor centers, and events in and out of Kansas. Additionally, an online guide is available for download on TravelKS.com.
- **KANSAS! Magazine** - 36,000 subscribers, bookstores, & newsstands
- **USA Today, Midwest Travel** - available side-by-side the daily USA Today throughout the Midwestern United States and online to millions of USA Today digital subscribers
- **Kansas City Travel Guide** - 50,000 readers through print magazine - distributed throughout the metro, as well as at visitor centers throughout the four-state region
- **Travel Kansas** - professional offices, ICT Airport, and Kansas subscribers
- **LIED Center Program** - captivated readers that attend various Lied Center events throughout their programming season
- **Meet Kansas** - meeting and conference planners across Kansas
- **Regional Newspapers** - targeting shoppers for holiday season and special events
- **Nordstjernan** - Swedish-American audience interested in Swedish traditions, news, events, recipes, and products



PROMOTION - PAID



BILLBOARDS - Traditional

- The Lindsborg Convention & Visitors Bureau maintains two billboards along Kansas I-70, three along I-135 and one on Highway 4. In addition, partnerships with Lindsborg businesses and Bethany College increase Lindsborg's presence by an additional eight boards.
- According to 2023 data from the Kansas Department of Transportation, the daily traffic count for these locations range from 18,600 - 25,300 vehicles.

BILLBOARDS - Digital

- The Lindsborg Convention & Visitors Bureau partnered in 2023 with 10 local businesses and Visit Wichita to place digital billboards at two locations in the Oklahoma City Metro area, catching the eye of commuters as well as travelers along the I-135 corridor.
- According to data provided from Lamar, the weekly impression count for these rotating billboards is 939,318. Billboards started running in March of 2023 and continued until October 2023 thanks to 2022 grant funding from Kansas Tourism in the amount of \$10,000.



PROMOTION - PAID

LINDSBORG VISITORS GUIDE

This Lindsborg brochure continues to be popular in distribution racks and is depleted faster than most other brochures. This guide is printed, by necessity, in higher quantities than that of brochures from other larger communities across the state. This year, we will utilize 10,000 brochures.



BROCHURE DISTRIBUTION

The Lindsborg Convention & Visitors Bureau contracted with Central Brochure Distribution to place the Lindsborg Visitors Guide in more than 250 distribution racks in hotels, restaurants, and gas stations in Kansas. The guide was also available in Kansas' two welcome centers (Belle Plaine and Goodland), as well as 28 state-designated Travel Information Centers throughout Kansas.

TRAVEL INFORMATION CENTER (TIC)

The Lindsborg Convention & Visitors Bureau also maintains a state-designated travel information center to serve visitors on Main Street, Lindsborg. This location is stocked at a minimum of twice per week, and more frequently during peak travel seasons. New signage was ordered for the travel center this year for placement before Svensk Hyllningsfest.



PROMOTION - OWNED

LINDSBORG POSTEN & NEWS RELEASES

The Lindsborg Convention & Visitors Bureau creates an electronic newsletter that shares topics of interest for locals and potential visitors. The newsletter is sent to anyone who requests information about Lindsborg and is also shared on social media. Additional news releases were sent out in 2023 to cover events that were not announced to the CVB before the Posten release date each month.



Posten
January 2023

2023 LINDSBORG POSTEN

12 Editions Sent

62,650 Individual Sends

22,175 Unique Opens

This averages to a 36.83% open rate, a high average for the travel industry.

POSTCARDS

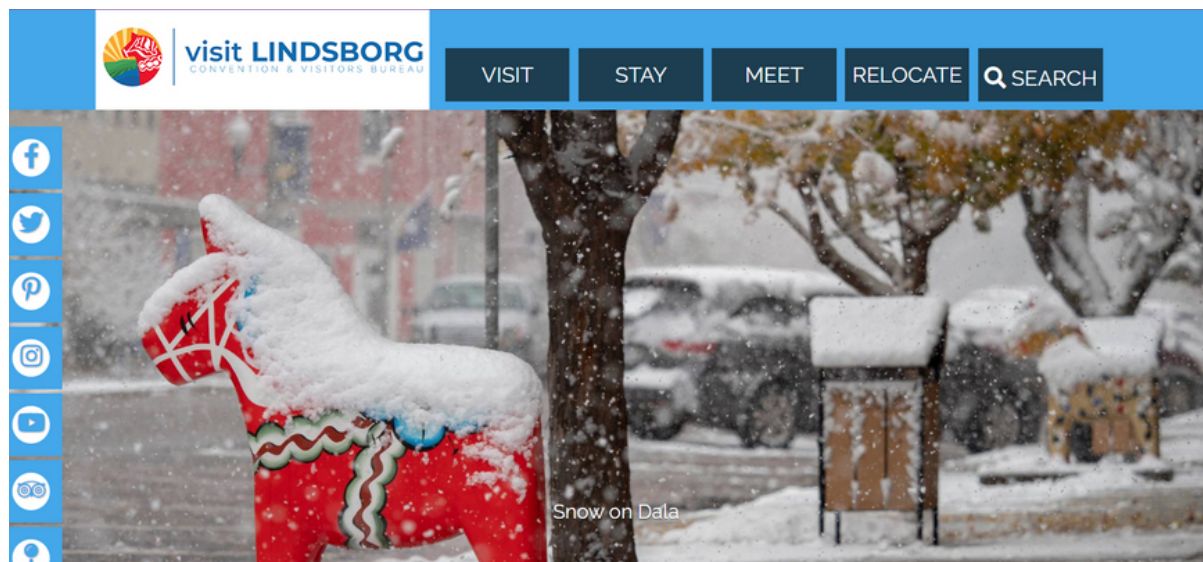
The Lindsborg Convention & Visitors Bureau creates new postcard artwork each year, with the assistance of local artists and photographers who allow the CVB to use their work for a small fee. These cards are distributed throughout the year in Hemslojd and White's Foodliner shipments as well as area trade shows, CVB information mailings, and to travelers stopping by the CVB office. In 2023, more than 36,000 postcards were distributed.



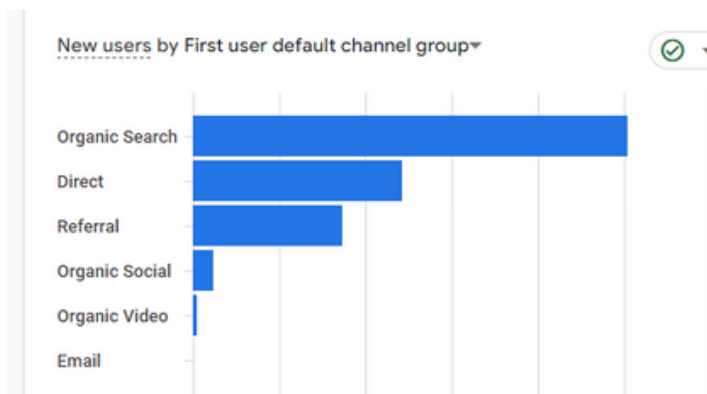
PROMOTION - OWNED

VISIT LINDSBORG WEBSITE

The Visit Lindsborg website is updated regularly with new content. The website saw 40,000 unique users in 2023 logging in for more than 94,000 sessions, clicking on 245,300 pages. A Google calendar of events is available on the website that can be subscribed to for those wanting to follow Lindsborg activities, events and festivals.



Website use continues to increase and with it the number of mobile device users accessing the website. Organic searches still, by far, represent the bulk of those finding and utilizing the Visit Lindsborg website.



PROMOTION - SHARED

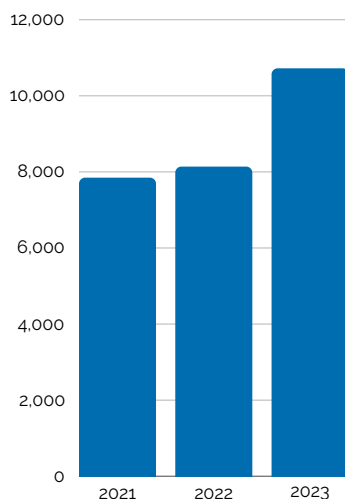
SOCIAL MEDIA

The Lindsborg Convention & Visitors Bureau uses social media to reach new audiences. Comparatively, the Visit Lindsborg Facebook page has significantly more page likes and engagement per capita than many communities across the state, to include those of a much larger size. We continue to grow the number of users to all social media platforms.

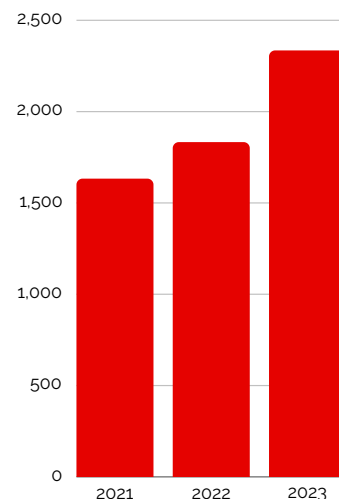
Lindsborg can be found on Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Pinterest and X (Twitter).



FACEBOOK GROWTH (PAGE LIKES)



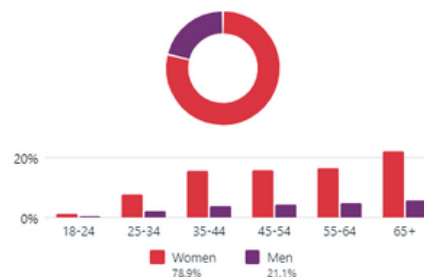
INSTAGRAM GROWTH (PAGE LIKES)



Facebook followers ⓘ

10,722

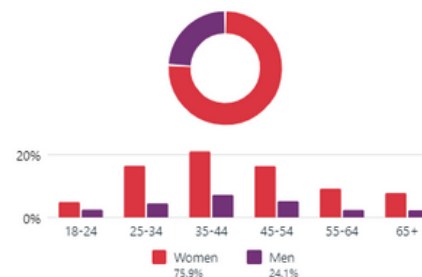
Age & gender ⓘ



Instagram followers ⓘ

2,335

Age & gender ⓘ



PROMOTION - GRANTS

2023 AWARDED GRANTS

The Lindsborg Community was awarded the EPIC Grant, a pilot program under the Kansas Creative Arts Industries Commission and the Kansas Department of Commerce. This grant required assembling multiple community committees to meet and discuss possible projects and assembling a group that could travel to out-of-town evening meetings with other communities receiving this grant and KCAIC/Commerce employees.

The final project selected, Arts on the Prairie, will be housed under the Sandzen Gallery, providing two weeks of summer arts classes. Attendees will travel from across the U.S. to attend one of four available classes and will venture out into the community for activities during their week of study. Bethany College classroom facilities will be utilized, providing interaction with the college, staff and students. Local lodging will be utilized for overnight stays, increasing lodging revenue and transient guest tax.

- **Kansas Creative Arts Industries Commission/Kansas Dept. of Commerce - \$45,000**



The Lindsborg CVB was awarded a grant by the Kansas Creative Arts Industries Commission/Kansas Department of Commerce to continue the successful Wild Dala Search. This project will continue into early 2024 with remaining grant dollars, providing more opportunities for visitors to search for their own glass Wild Dala

- **Kansas Creative Arts Industries Commission/Kansas Dept. of Commerce - \$3,800**



PROMOTION - PARTNERSHIPS

The Lindsborg Convention & Visitors Bureau is a member of organizations that help promote and advocate for tourism. These memberships pay off in relationships and community visibility among policymakers.

MEMBERSHIPS & BOARDS

- Travel Industry Association of Kansas - Lindsborg CVB Director served on the Executive Board as Vice President of the Association in 2023
- South-Central Kansas Tourism Region - Lindsborg CVB Director served on the executive board in 2023.
- Tour Kansas
- Kansas State Fair Board - Lindsborg - CVB Director served on the board in a Governor-appointed position representing the Travel Industry Association of Kansas in 2023.
- Semiquincentennial Commission - CVB Director served on this Governor-appointed position, planning the 2026 celebration of our nation's 250th anniversary.



Participation in these groups allowed CVB staff to represent Tour Kansas and TIAK at multiple events during the year.

- Staff attended the Kansas State Fair, representing both the Travel Industry Association of Kansas, South Central Kansas Tourism, and the community of Lindsborg.
- CVB staff also traveled to Washington D.C., on behalf of the TIAK, to represent travel in Kansas, meeting with members of Congress. Many of these interactions led to discussions about prior visits to Lindsborg and positive views on the Lindsborg community - our projects and progress.

PROMOTION - PARTNERSHIPS

KANSAS DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM

The Lindsborg CVB maintains listings for Lindsborg attractions and businesses on the TravelKS.com website. In 2022, these listings received 7,875 views and 3,170 clicks, for a 40% conversion rate.

The CVB also coordinated 32 paid listings in the Official Kansas Travel Guide for Lindsborg businesses and attractions. Businesses and attractions paid for these listings and the CVB's services were complimentary.





VISITATION

TOURS AND GROUPS

In 2023, tour group numbers still did not regain their pre-covid numbers, but as the year went on we did see a small increase in bookings and began to see bookings for 2024. Marketing to this audience will be a focus of our 2024 marketing plan.

CVB staff assists group travel planners with providing travel visit options, final itineraries (based on the tour planners' activities choices), reservations, welcome bags. We offer the same services to any group, regardless of size.



SPECIAL PROJECTS

USD 400 - 4TH GRADE COMMUNITY SERVICE DAY

Beginning in 2022, CVB staff worked with the City of Lindsborg Parks Director, Noah Flores, to plan the 2023 Soderstrom 4th Grade Community Service Day. Students planted trees, shrubs, and a pollinators garden along the Valkommen Trail for residents and visitors to enjoy for many years to come. Partnerships with Williams Environmental (project grant dollars), the City of Lindsborg Parks Department, Lindsborg Tree Board, Kansas Arborists Association, McPherson County Soil Conservation office, K-State Extension, and Monarch Watch provided free milkweed plants, trees and shrubs, tools, perennial seed, and education. Programs like this are a purposeful way to engage Smoky Valley youth in the importance of civil service and community pride while teaching them about Smoky Valley history. The day ended with Swedish treats from White's Foodliner, providing new and unusual flavors for students and faculty.



SEARCH FOR THE WILD DALA

The CVB continued to work with a disabled artist from Hutchinson to create glass Wild Dala suncatchers that were hidden throughout the community in places we hoped visitors and residents to better explore. This program will continue into 2024 with grant dollars from the Kansas Creative Arts Industries Commission. Each suncatcher was unique, numbered and dated for tracking by CVB staff. Finders got to keep the Wild Dala as a reminder of Lindsborg.



SPECIAL PROJECTS

STARRY, STARRY NIGHT IN LINDSBORG

CVB Staff partnered with the Kansas Cosmosphere, Small World Gallery/Jim Richardson, and the Salina Astronomy Club to plan and carry out this new event. The November evening provided opportunities for participants to view the stars from Coronado Heights and Heritage Square and to listen to Jim Richardson's National Geographic program, *Glories of Our Night Sky: Wonders and Worries*. The evening was a smashing success with numbers exceeding our wildest expectations. This was the largest event hosted by the Sundstrom Conference Center in 2023.

Special thanks goes to the Smoky Valley Historical Association, owner of Coronado Heights, and the Lindsborg Old Mill & Swedish Heritage Museum. Both venues provided perfect dark environments for viewing the starry sky.

Visitors traveled from as far as Kansas City to attend. Shuttle passes to Coronado Heights viewing were by reservation only (free) and 300 passes were reserved in less than 48 hours, with more adding their names to a wait list.

The Kansas Cosmosphere ended the evening with an ask to do this again in 2024. The 2024 date will be announced later this year.



SPECIAL PROJECTS

SMART WATCH FACES

In December of 2022, CVB staff began creating Lindsborg smart watch faces for visitors and residents to enjoy, helping remind them of their love for Lindsborg on a daily basis. Watch faces were created throughout the 2023 year for multiple Lindsborg events. Watch faces will work on multiple smartwatch platforms and can be downloaded from the Facer App, available in the Apple and Google App Stores.



CORONADO HEIGHTS KITE FLY

With a sponsorship from CVB Board member Maleta Forsberg, the CVB was able to host the 3rd Annual Coronado Heights Kite Fly in May. More than 150 people, to include many adult kite flyers, attended throughout the day, enjoying making, assembling, and flying their own kites. Professional kite flyers were invited to the event by Wings of the Wind Kite Shop and provided technical assistance throughout the day. Trollslända Toy Store supported this event by stocking kites for purchase. This event will again take place on May 18, 2024.





SPECIAL PROJECTS

8TH GRADE TRIP TO THE STATEHOUSE

CVB staff worked with the City Administrator to plan a trip to the Kansas Capitol for the Smoky Valley Middle School 8th Grade Class. This trip provided opportunities for students to tour the Capitol and learn more about state government and the importance of Lindsborg participation in important legislative and state office conversations and decisions.



BETHANY COLLEGE INTERN

The Lindsborg CVB was ever so fortunate to bring on a Bethany College Intern for the 1st semester of the 2023 year. Avery Dauer joined our staff, learning the ropes and offering her valuable assistance on many projects. We are happy to see her now working with students and faculty as Student Activities Coordinator at Bethany College, following her May 2023 graduation. She will be a valuable asset to Bethany in the same way she was to the Visit Lindsborg office! Avery has also recently stepped up to serve on the Svensk Hyllningsfest Committee.





SPECIAL PROJECTS

TRAVEL WRITERS

CVB Staff worked independently, and as a team with the Kansas Department of Tourism and the South Central Kansas Tourism Region to plan trips for several travel writers during the 2023 year. These writers spent valuable time in the Lindsborg community sharing their travel experiences with their online audiences and various publications.

Vanessa Whiteside's work was shared with Midwest Living Magazine, resulting in the only article featuring a Kansas Community in their Best of the Midwest travel issue.

Online content, provided by each of these writers, continues to elevate Lindsborg's presence to others that write travel material, resulting in more written material about Lindsborg. Online content also continues to provide valuable travel reviews to those that consider making Lindsborg a future travel destination.



Postcard Jar, Steve and Ann Teget



One Delightful Life, Vanessa Whiteside



Travel with Sara, Sara Broers

SPECIAL PROJECTS

2024 KANSAS STATE FAIR COMMERCIALS

CVB Staff worked, during the Kansas State Fair, with the staff of BowerComm to assist in filming commercials for the 2024 Kansas State Fair. The City of Lindsborg has continued to maintain good relationship with BowerComm after they were hired to work for the City of Lindsborg, marketing living in Lindsborg, in 2021. These commercials will roll out later in 2024.



2024 KANSAS STATE FAIR BOOTHS

CVB Staff worked with members of the Kansas Legislature to secure and staff a booth for the week of the Kansas State Fair. The bulk of staffing was carried out by Representative Susan Estes, assisting this commission in reaching out to Kansans with questions about how they would like to celebrate the 250th anniversary of our nation, in Kansas. The booth was also staffed by members of the Sons of the American Revolution, providing an individual in costume each day, which was a huge draw to this booth.



CVB Staff also helped set up, tear down, and work the South Central Kansas Tourism Booth as a board member of this regional organization.

Staff took home slips of paper from the drawings held in each booth, to enter in a newsletter database for each organization.





AWARDS

2023 TIAK COMMUNITY AWARENESS

The Lindsborg CVB was awarded the top marketing award for Small Market Community Awareness at the Kansas Tourism Conference. This is a competitive award that the CVB applied for in June, with awards determined in September by a panel of professionals meeting to review and vote on each entry from across the state.

In November, we had the privilege of handing this award to the artist that helped win it! It was enjoyable to give recognition to our Wild Dala Artist, Adam, and his staff. Lindsborg residents assembled to provide their congratulations to Adam, along with a fair amount of confetti and snacks.

Adam's new trophy resides in his studio, alongside the framed article written by the Lindsborg News Record about him and this project. We truly believe this to be one of the most meaningful projects we have ever tackled. The Wild Dala Hunt continues to provide enjoyment while also providing income and purpose to a fantastic young man with Asperger's Syndrome, a form of Autism. #AutismCan



EDUCATION

HOSPITALITY AND CUSTOMER SERVICE

The City of Lindsborg provides opportunities to all City employees to attend educational sessions, classes, webinars and participates in book sharing to allow employees to grow in their confidence and knowledge of their work-related tasks. In 2023 a hospitality and customer service class was offered to frontline employees. This class required multiple days and hours out of the office over a six-week period, but was found to be well worth the time and effort, and class assignments. Diane Reece, CVB assistant, attended from the CVB office and Lisa Johnson, Sundstrom Manager, from the Sundstrom Conference Center, both finding this provide valuable insights and also opportunities to learn what each person did in her respective department. We are all important gears in a machine that runs well when we work together.

This program was made available through K-State Extension.



LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Sundstrom Manager, Lisa Johnson participated in several online classes that focused primarily on management in leadership, her most recent certification earned through the Kansas Society of Association Executives eLearning program.



SUNDSTROM CONFERENCE CENTER

Management of the Sundstrom Conference Center comes under the oversight of the Lindsborg CVB. Management changed hands in 2022 and management has remained under the watchful eye of Lisa Johnson.

This year consisted of Lisa working not only on events and event sales, but also working to assemble quality electronic records for many facets of the Sundstrom. Lisa's work will allow the City to electronically review past events, guest numbers, and maintenance records without searching through paper records, a project she could tackle with current, available technology. This information will be utilized as we focus on forecasting and planning for the Sundstrom.

2023 EVENT STATISTICS:

- 87 total events hosted.
- SCC had 4,845 guests through its doors in 2023

NEW TO THE SUNDSTROM:

- New rates were rolled out for the Sundstrom Conference Center, making it very affordable to individuals and groups from the Smoky Valley as well as offering hourly rates that better serve those with limited needs. Rates can be found [online](#).
- The Sundstrom website was updated, in house (CVB), with new photos and information to make it helpful to potential visitors.
- Many new Rec Department programs were added to the Sundstrom Schedule, utilizing the upstairs floor for pickleball, summer activities for youth, and the Banquet Hall for a family movie night in December, all adding value to the community.





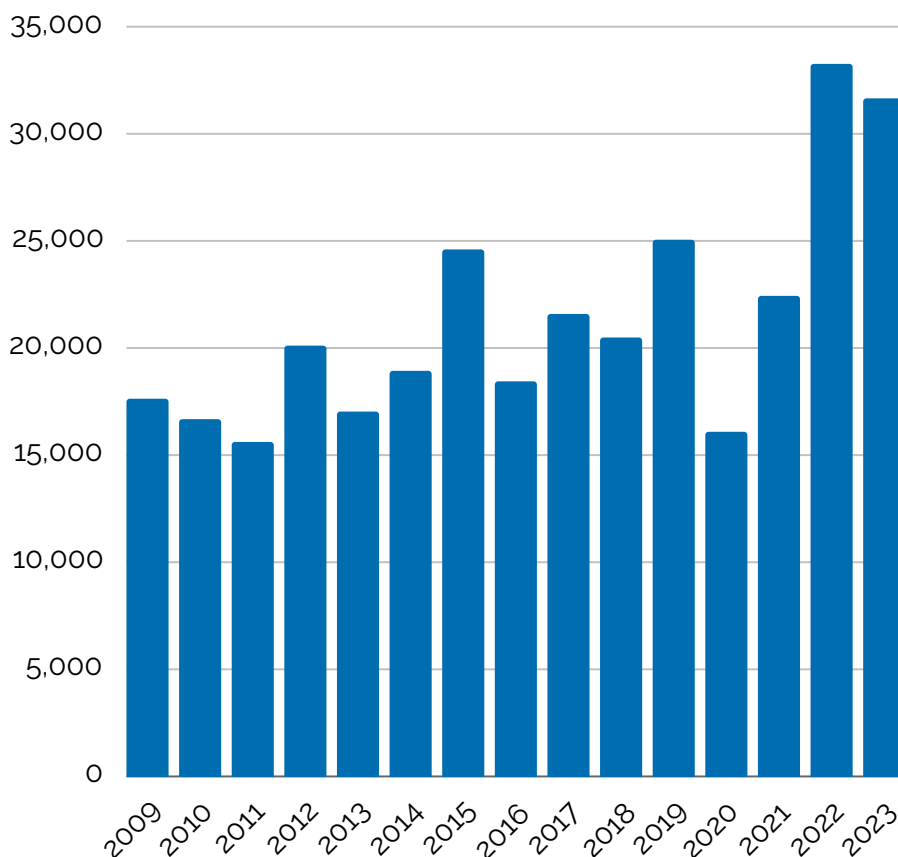
ECONOMIC IMPACT

TRANSIENT GUEST TAX

Transient Guest Tax is paid by visitors staying 21 nights or less in a lodging establishment. Transient Guest Tax provides marketing dollars for the Lindsborg CVB.

The Lindsborg CVB continued to work with local lodging, helping promote overnight stays in Lindsborg with paid advertising on social media, ending the year with another standout year in TGT collections.

Transient Guest Tax finished the 2023 year with exceptional transient guest tax numbers for each quarter and the second largest annual total since TGT has been tracked by the City of Lindsborg (beginning in 2005).





ECONOMIC IMPACT

SALES TAX

The City of Lindsborg sales tax is 9.5%. According to the Kansas Department of Revenue, 2023 sales tax collections totaled \$1,420,542.14 from sales at Lindsborg businesses. This is an 7.5% increase from 2022.





ABOUT US

The 2023 year provided changes in our offices and board with our college intern graduating, board members with expiring terms, and board members moves to new communities. We continue to be a group that works well together, mixing work and fun. We are grateful to be able to represent this community we love.

STAFF

Holly Lofton, Director

Diane Reece, Assistant to the Director

Avery Dauer, Bethany College Intern

Lisa Johnson, Sundstrom Conference Center Manager

BOARD

Kathy Richardson, Board Chair - Small World Gallery

Cindy Bhakta - Viking Motel

Chad Moore - Bethany College

Karna Peterson - Hemslojd

Molly Johnson - The Good Merchant

Caroline de Fillippis - Lindsborg Old Mill & Swedish Heritage Museum

Maleta Forsberg - Artist



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