



QC, THAT'S WHERE!

**TOURISM CONNECTS
COMMUNITIES &
CULTURES.**

QUADCITIES
VISITQUADCITIES.COM

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT AND CEO

Dave Herrell



On behalf of our Board of Directors and professional team, thank you for believing in the power of tourism and its impact on our regional economy. As we close out FY24, our commitment to shaping the Quad Cities as a must-experience riverfront destination has never been stronger.

Tourism fuels our \$1.3 billion visitor economy, driving critical non-resident revenue that supports job creation, enhances quality of life, and fosters a sense of resident pride across our region. Our collective efforts continue positioning the Quad Cities as an attractive place to visit, live, work, learn and experience.

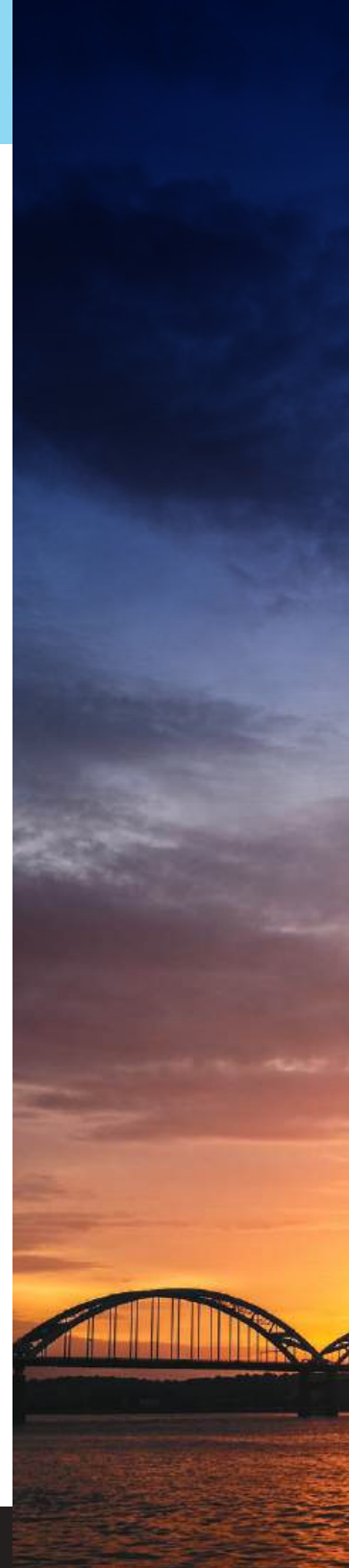
Visit Quad Cities remains focused on Tourism Development, Destination Marketing and delivering an exceptional Visitor Experience. We are grateful for the unwavering support from our public and private sector partners, whose belief in our shared vision allows us to push forward with purpose and confidence.

This FY24 Impact Report highlights the milestones we've achieved together, and we look forward to building on this momentum in the months ahead. With your continued partnership, we will keep telling our story proudly and driving the success of the Quad Cities' future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dave M. Herrell".

Dave Herrell, CTA
President and CEO
Visit Quad Cities



LETTER FROM FY25 BOARD CHAIR

Maria Ontiveros



I am honored to step into the role of Board Chair for Visit Quad Cities, an organization that plays such a vital role in our community's growth and development. Having served on the Board since 2020, I have seen firsthand the positive impact tourism has on our region's economy, culture and overall quality of life.

As we reflect on FY24, I am proud of the accomplishments that have strengthened the Quad Cities as a must-experience destination. Our efforts not only attracted visitors but also deepened our connections within the community. The work that Visit Quad Cities does, in collaboration with our partners, helps shape the future of the region and opens the door for new opportunities that benefit all Quad Citizens.

In my role with Mercado on Fifth, I have witnessed how effective destination marketing can transform communities by bringing people together and supporting local businesses. I am excited to continue this important work in service to Visit Quad Cities and to build on the momentum we have achieved.

As we look ahead to FY25, I believe we have the vision and the resources to drive even greater success. Our region's potential is limitless, and together we can continue to elevate the Quad Cities as a place that is not only great to visit, but also to call home.

Thank you to our Board, partners and stakeholders for your ongoing dedication. I look forward to working together to ensure the Quad Cities remains a vibrant and thriving destination.

Respectfully yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Maria Ontiveros".

Maria Ontiveros, CTA

Board Chair

Visit Quad Cities

VQC OVERVIEW



ABOUT US

Founded in 1990, Visit Quad Cities, previously known as the Quad Cities Convention & Visitors Bureau, was created from the merger of the Davenport and Bettendorf Visitor Bureaus with the Illinois Quad-City Travel & Visitors Bureau. As the official Destination Marketing Organization (DMO) for the region, we follow our core values: People, Partnerships, and Personality. The Quad Cities region spans a bi-state area (Iowa/Illinois) with communities in Eastern Iowa and Northwest Illinois, located along the world-renowned Mississippi River.

For nearly 35 years, Visit Quad Cities has driven regional investment by promoting and servicing tourism. We attract new and repeat visitors for meetings, conventions, sporting events, group tours, business travel, vacations and getaways. As a private, 501(c)(6) non-profit, our mission is to boost economic growth through tourism, build our brand, share the Quad Cities story and improve the quality of life for Quad Citizens. We are led by a volunteer Board of Directors made up of regional community leaders and

operated by a professional staff. We are supported by a network of investors and partners who empower us to achieve our mission.

Our goal is to gain global attention by focusing on Tourism Development, Destination Marketing and Visitor Experience. We also manage two key divisions: Sports QC Powered by Visit Quad Cities, a 501(c)(3) organization that serves as the region's sports commission and Quad Cities Destination, Inc., a 501(c)(3) organization focused on tourism initiatives that benefit the community.

Visit Quad Cities is accredited by the Destination Marketing Accreditation Program (DMAP), which holds us to the highest industry standards. This accreditation means we operate transparently and effectively, meeting the standards we promise to our stakeholders.

[Learn more about our investors. >](#)



DESTINATION VISION

In 2030, the Quad Cities is a proud, forward-thinking, visitor-centric region connected by the storied Mississippi River and a shared love of local, independent arts, culture and creativity. This family of communities attracts young explorers and dreamers, investors and entrepreneurs because it offers homegrown imagination and innovation—an eclectic music, art, culinary, sports, and entertainment scene, an original and authentic experience of one of the world's greatest rivers, and an open-minded Midwestern spirit that brings success within reach for all. People love the Quad Cities because they want to be part of its growing, blooming, welcoming and evolving energy, and get closer to a place that's as genuine as it is quirky, as unexpected as it is energizing, as deeply rooted as it is forever current.



VALUES

MISSION

Visit Quad Cities enhances the region's quality of life and creates economic development opportunities through tourism to inspire and build our Mississippi River regional destination.

VISION

The Quad Cities will be recognized internationally as a must-experience riverfront destination.

BRAND PROMISE

We promise lifelong memories and authentic experiences inspired by the energy, culture and positive Midwestern spirit that defines our regional destination.

BELONGING STATEMENT

Visit Quad Cities is committed to helping foster a region that is built by a culture of belonging. QC, That's Where we are a welcoming community that celebrates inclusion and diversity so that every Quad Citizen and visitor can thrive.



BY THE NUMBERS

\$1.3 BILLION

ANNUAL VISITOR SPENDING IN THE QC

52.2% AVERAGE
HOTEL OCCUPANCY IN FY24

\$102.51

AVERAGE DAILY HOTEL
ROOM RATE

[\$54.10 AVERAGE
REVENUE GENERATED
PER HOTEL ROOM

6,500+ HOTEL ROOMS

\$30M+ IN DIRECT ECONOMIC IMPACT
THROUGH GROUP BUSINESS.

602,756

QUAD CITIES INTERNATIONAL
AIRPORT PASSENGERS

9,000 Quad Citizens employed in the
visitor economy industry

\$6.63M EARNED

MEDIA VALUE

**33 MILLION ADVERTISING
IMPRESSIONS**

GENERATED THROUGH VQC CAMPAIGNS



15,329 OPT-IN EMAIL AND QC
INSIDERS TEXT SUBSCRIBERS

2.3M
SOCIAL MEDIA REACH

**108 PARTICIPATING
RESTAURANTS**

IN QC RESTAURANT WEEK

**203 CERTIFIED TOURISM
AMBASSADORS**

FY24 HIGHLIGHTS

✓ **Tell and sell our QC story to the world**

- Generated more than 33 million out-of-market advertising impressions through targeted marketing and promotional campaigns.
- Targets for increased website visitation were surpassed, with 355,059 visits against a goal of 320,000. Visitor sessions also exceeded expectations, reaching 461,144, surpassing the goal of 400,000.
- Published 75 episodes of the “QC, That’s Where,” podcast and exceeded 6,300 lifetime downloads.

✓ **Attract and host conventions, meetings, conferences, events, group tours and reunions**

- Generated more than \$30 million in direct economic impact through group business.
- Hosted the 50th anniversary of RAGBRAI with more than 30,000 participants.
- Hosted the Coca-Cola Collectors 50th Anniversary National Convention.
- Booked first national tradeshow, the 2027 Small Market Meetings event.
- Hosted the Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity Iowa Statewide Convention.
- Hosted the U.S. Army Sustainment Command LOGCAP Global Summit.

- Hosted the Iowa Association of Business & Industry Taking Care of Business Conference.
- Hosted the Illinois State Association of Letter Carriers Convention.

- Published 20 blogs which produced 17,279 website page views.
- Hosted more than half a dozen social media giveaways garnering nearly 1,700 engagements (likes, comments and shares).

- Hosted the NAIA Women's Golf National Championship in continued partnership with St. Ambrose University and TPC Deere Run.
- Visit Quad Cities staff dedicated over 200 hours to successfully submitting bids for 12 NCAA events.
- Hosted the USA BMX North Central Gold Championships at East Moline BMX Speedway.

✔ **Competitively position the market for identity and growth**

- Successfully received reaccreditation of the Destinations International DMAP certification for four additional years.
- Secured the largest public sector grant in VQC history with a \$1 million Illinois Tourism Incentive Grant to attract and host new events for the region.

✔ **Sales, service and relationship development within the tourism industry**

- Assisted partners in securing more than \$124,000 in Meet in Iowa funds for meetings and events.
- Attended and met with hundreds of meeting planners, rights holders, national governing bodies, tour operators and reunion planners at eight national tradeshows.
- Provided more than 250 convention, meeting, conference, event, group tour and reunion sales leads to partners.
- Hosted a record number of national river cruises in FY24 with 52 stops; nearly 5,000 visitors; 70,000+ referrals to Quad Cities partners.

✔ **Drive brand promotion, content marketing and engagement with customers**

- Earned media value produced 326 news and media mentions with a total advertising equivalency of \$6.63 million.
- Partnered with Hummingbirds to engage hyperlocal content creators/influencers to promote Restaurant Week and VQC Trail products, generating 20.6 thousand impressions.
- Partnered with local lifestyle shows Living Local and QC, That's Where to promote Visit Quad Cities' mission, products and to educate the community about VQC's work.
- Supported the promotion of more than 1,000 events through our user-generated Event Calendar and platforms.

✔ **Destination development and provide visitor services for guests and Quad Citizens**

- Established new partnerships with Wheel the World and Sunflower to address accessible tourism gaps in the market.
- Continued development of the Quad Cities Certified Tourism (CTA) program, growing by 66% year-over-year with 203 CTAs.
- Served 5,076 guests in our destination centers at Union Station and River Station by providing destination expertise as well as offering unique programs such as free bike rentals.

✔ **Successfully bid on, recruit and host sporting events for the region**

- Strengthened partnership with Augustana College in hosting the USA Water Polo Division III Men's National Championship.
- Hosted the U.S. Bowling Congress Iowa State Tournament for 12 weeks bringing 9,000 attendees to the Quad Cities.
- Assisted TBK Bank Sports Complex in hosting the United States Adult Soccer Association Men's & Women's Amateur Cup Finals.

✔ **Create and develop innovative product experiences for tourism**

- Successfully built the John Deere Trail, a new tourism product set to launch in FY25 which features several John Deere points of interest in the region.
- Record-breaking engagement with QC Restaurant Week with 108 participating restaurants.

FY24 DATAFY REPORT

FY24 July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2024 (50+ Mile radius)

13.5 MILLION VISITOR DAYS
SPENT IN THE QC

6.7 MILLION VISITS
TO THE QC REGIONAL DESTINATION

2 DAYS AVERAGE LENGTH
OF STAY

JULY SAW THE HIGHEST VISITOR
ACTIVITY WITH PEAK VISITOR
DAYS RECORDED



DEMOGRAPHICS

AGE

16-24: **16.4%**
25-44: **28.8%**
45-64: **35.1%**
65+: **19.7%**

INCOME

Under 50K: **28.4%**
50K-75K: **17%**
75K-100K: **18%**
100K-150K: **21.3%**
150K+: **15.3%**

ETHNICITY

White: **87.6%**
Black: **3.7%**
Hispanic: **6.45%**
Asian: **2.82%**

NUMBER IN HOUSEHOLD

1-2: **43.1%** 3-5: **47%** 6+: **9.97%**

MALE VS. FEMALE

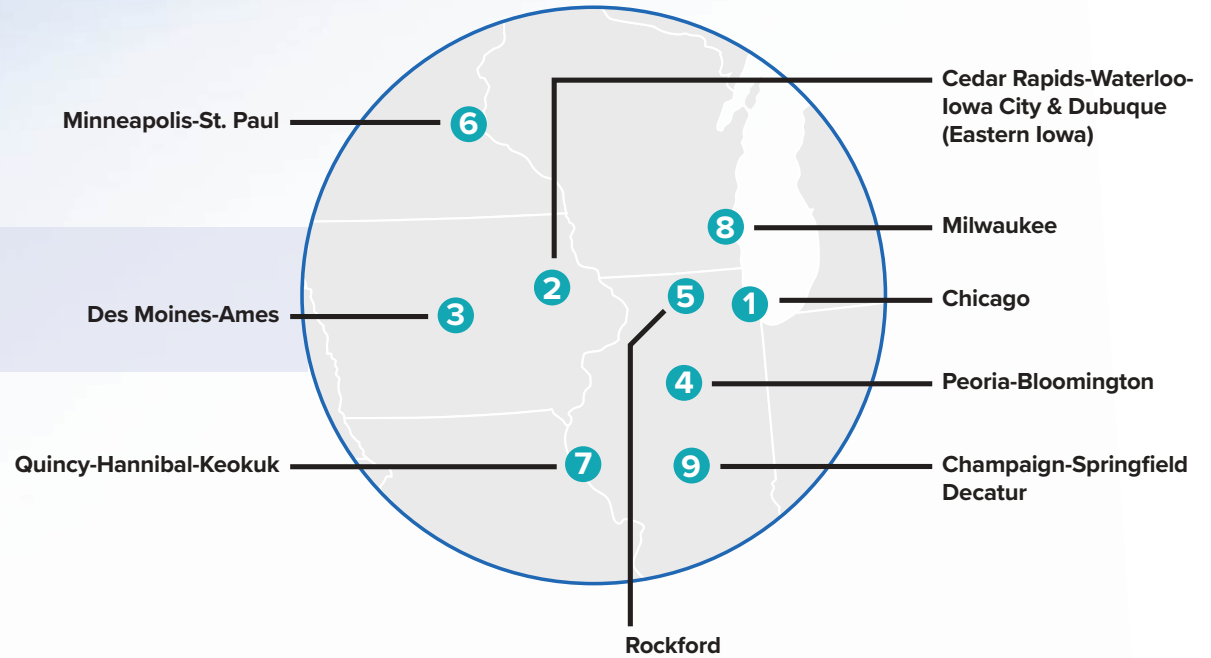
49.9% Male
50.1% Female

EDUCATION

High School: **55.7%**
Bachelors: **39.1%**
Graduate: **5.2%**

*Mobile phone data capture from 16 yrs. old+

TOP CITIES FOR VISITATION BY DMA



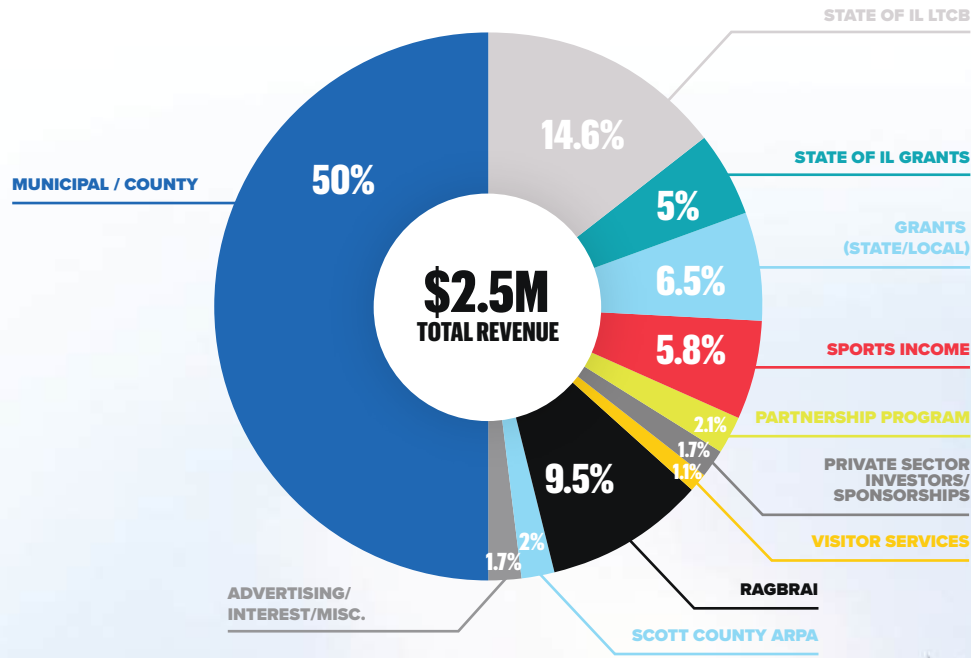
*Note: The unique visitors metric is no longer available due to updates in Datafy's reporting system. All visitor statistics have been adjusted to reflect the latest available data.



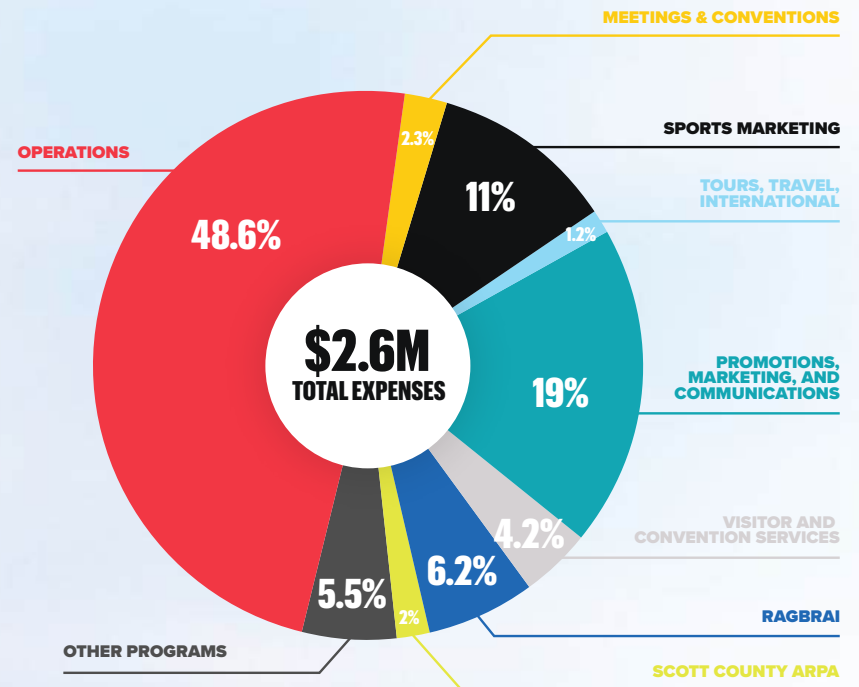
FY24 FINANCIAL SUMMARY AND STATEMENT

July 1, 2023 - June 30, 2024

FY24 REVENUE SUMMARY



FY24 EXPENSE SUMMARY



	FYE24 6/30/2024 *Pre-audit	FY24 Original Budget
REVENUE		
Municipalities/Counties	\$1,270,057	\$1,275,000
State of Illinois Grants		
- State of IL LTCB Grant	\$373,011	\$320,575
- Illinois Travel & Tourism Grant	\$86,872	\$87,075
- Illinois Private Sector Grant	\$12,138	
- Illinois Marketing Partnership Grant	\$25,000	
- Illinois International Grant	\$5,192	
- ARPA Funding (Rock Island County)		
- ARPA Funding (Scott County)	\$52,000	\$100,000
- ARPA Funding (Municipal Partners)		
Grants (State/Local)	\$165,000	\$175,000
Partnership Program	\$53,423	\$55,000
Publication Advertising	\$6,660	\$8,500
Visitor Services	\$25,337	\$31,500
Private Sector Sponsorships/Investor Program	\$45,000	\$30,000
Miscellaneous		
- Interest Income	\$5,457	\$3,000
- Miscellaneous	\$31,702	\$11,000
- RAGBRAI	\$243,157	\$170,000
QC Sports Commission Income	\$146,434	\$125,650
TOTAL REVENUE	\$2,546,442	\$2,392,300

	FYE24 6/30/2024 *Pre-audit	FY24 Original Budget
EXPENSES		
Meetings & Conventions	\$58,881	\$68,300
Tour & Travel & International	\$30,300	\$21,100
Sports Marketing	\$281,001	\$273,850
Scott County ARPA	\$52,000	\$100,000
RAGBRAI	\$161,878	\$150,000
Promotion, Marketing & Communications	\$500,143	\$344,478
Visitor & Convention Services	\$109,239	\$217,340
Q2030 Backbone Champion Investment	\$0	\$10,000
Other Program	\$142,782	\$142,150
Operating Expenses	\$1,269,250	\$1,270,987
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$2,605,475	\$2,598,205
	FYE24 6/30/2024 *Pre-audit	FY24 Original Budget
NET INCOME	\$(59,033)	\$(205,905)

*Pre-audited year-end budget

**Revenue and expenses impacted by statewide grants

TOURISM MASTER PLAN AND GOALS

The Visit Quad Cities Tourism Master Plan is designed to achieve several key objectives: builds consensus among stakeholders involved in tourism-related development for the region, helps investors and businesses identify where to focus their efforts as the tourism vision is implemented, and closes the gap between the activities and experiences offered by stakeholders (supply) and what visitors and residents seek to experience (demand).

Below are a few highlights from the 17 recommendations and 92 initiatives that our organization is taking on, in partnership with other Quad Cities' entities.

Prioritize investment in the visitor economy to remain competitive.

Visit Quad Cities is collaborating with its public funding partners to establish a comprehensive regional approach to tourism funding. For the first time in its nearly 35-year history, the organization is finalizing a multi-jurisdictional Interlocal Agreement to ensure long-term financial stability and increased support for its role as a non-profit economic development engine for the region. Visit Quad Cities continues to strengthen its relationships with the Illinois Office of Tourism and the Iowa Tourism Office to secure additional resources. Through the Illinois State Tourism Incentive Grant, Visit Quad Cities obtained the largest public grant in its history, which is critical for advancing business development in a competitive national marketplace. Combined with local investments from the Regional Development Authority (RDA) and VQC's operating budget, these funds will drive economic growth and significantly enhance the region's visitor economy.

Prioritizing Diversity and Inclusivity in Tourism

Visit Quad Cities (VQC) has partnered with inclusivity leader Wheel the World to enhance accessible tourism and address existing gaps. With support from a grant by the Iowa Tourism Office, VQC is developing resources and training for its Certified Tourism Ambassadors (CTAs) and updating its 2025 website to create a more inclusive experience. Additionally, as a new member of the Sunflower Program, VQC is committed to supporting individuals with hidden disabilities and advancing accessibility across the region.

Articulate and emotionalize the Quad Cities' identity.

Visit Quad Cities continues to strengthen its QC, That's Where regional brand messaging in key outbound markets. Paid media campaigns, focusing on a values-driven marketing approach, generated millions of impressions across Chicagoland and drive-to markets in Iowa, Illinois, and Wisconsin. These multi-channel efforts produced 33 million impressions, reaching targeted demographics with creative, diverse messaging to enhance brand visibility and drive conversion.

[Learn more about our Tourism Master Plan >](#)



STRATEGIC PLAN: AREAS OF FOCUS

To realize the vision for Quad Cities tourism, we have distilled the Strategic Plan recommendations into six areas of focus:

DESTINATION PROMOTION

Articulate and emotionalize the Quad Cities identity; leverage meetings and events to drive economic development; engage Quad Citizens to build resident pride and activate destination advocates.

DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT

Enhance the Quad Cities' meetings and events infrastructure; develop a shared riverfront vision development plan; create vibrant and diverse downtowns; improve mobility and connectivity in the region.

DESTINATION PROGRAMMING

Develop a cultural tourism plan that increases vibrancy of both the tourism and creative economies; develop a strategic approach to bidding on, cultivating, creating, and hosting sporting events; attract, develop, promote, and activate year-round events that attract visitors and engage locals; establish a clear vision and direction for the development of the Quad Cities nighttime economy.

DESTINATION STEWARDSHIP

Develop and maintain a skilled workforce ready to meet industry needs; prioritize diversity and inclusivity in tourism development and promotion.

GOVERNANCE

Develop a holistic and inclusive governance model for tourism; create a seamless visitor experience through regional cooperation; prioritize investment in the visitor economy to remain competitive.

IMPLEMENTATION

Establish and facilitate an Implementation Committee to coordinate action plans.





LETTER FROM FY24 BOARD CHAIR

Ben Leischner



Having the opportunity to serve as Board Chair for Visit Quad Cities has not only been a labor of love but also one of the most rewarding experiences of my professional career. As we reflect on the past year, I'm filled with pride and optimism for the future of the Quad Cities.

Over the past year, we have witnessed remarkable progress in our efforts to position the Quad Cities as a top-tier Midwest destination. From new legislative support to successful community events, we have demonstrated the power of collaboration and our ability to thrive in a competitive tourism landscape.

A particular highlight for me was the continued impact of the State of Illinois Tourism Incentive Grant, which has opened the door for continued growth in investments by the Illinois Office of Tourism and Travel Iowa.

This, along with meaningful partnerships and shared goals, helped us attract meetings, conventions, and large-scale events that benefit our regional economy.

The energy and passion of our board and stakeholders have been essential in these accomplishments. As I transition out of the role of Chair, I am more confident than ever that the Quad Cities is positioned for continued success. I look forward to seeing the exciting opportunities ahead and watching our region grow stronger and more vibrant.

Thank you to everyone who contributed to this journey. I am grateful for your commitment and excited to continue supporting Visit Quad Cities in new ways.

Respectfully yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ben Leischner".

Benjamin Leischner, A.A.E.

*Immediate Past Board Chair
Visit Quad Cities*



FY25 KEY LEADERSHIP

Visit Quad Cities Board of Directors

Nancy Ballenger, Isle Casino Hotel Bettendorf & Caesar's Entertainment
Neil Dahlstrom, John Deere
Mayor Reggie Freeman, City of East Moline
Mayor Bob Gallagher, City of Bettendorf
Steve Geifman, Geifman First Equity
Todd Hajduk, TPC Deere Run
Travis Hankins, Bally's Quad Cities
Dave Herrell, Visit Quad Cities; Ex-Officio
Mo Hyder, Rhythm City Casino Resort
Ben Leischner, Quad Cities International Airport
Mayor Mike Matson, City of Davenport
John Maxwell, Scott County, Iowa
Lee Meier, CAT Scale Company / Iowa-80 Group
Maria Ontiveros, Mercado on Fifth & Group O
Mayor Sangeetha Rayapati, City of Moline
Jennifer Sautter, MindFire Communications
Kai Swanson, Rock Island County, Illinois & Augustana College
Mayor Mike Thoms, City of Rock Island
Allison Wright, Pappas Wright, PC

Visit Quad Cities Executive Committee and Officers

Maria Ontiveros, Chair
Ben Leischner, Immediate Past Chair
Jennifer Sautter, First Vice-Chair
Neil Dahlstrom, Second Vice-Chair
Mo Hyder, Treasurer
Dave Herrell, Secretary

Finance, Audit & Compliance Committee

Jennifer Sautter, Committee Chair

Board Development & Governance Committee

Neil Dahlstrom, Committee Chair

Sports QC Advisory Group

Chair: Todd Hajduk, TPC Deere Run
Sara Cross, First Tee of the Quad Cities
Eric Griffith, City of Moline Parks & Recreation
Ryan Hintze, Iron Tee Golf & TBK Bank Sports Complex
Mike Holmes, St. Ambrose University
Andrew Lehman, John Deere Classic
Scott Mullen, Vibrant Arena at the MARK
Jeff Reiter, City of Bettendorf
Emily Skahill, Frontier Hospitality
Laura Wittnebel, TBK Bank Quad Cities Marathon
Mike Zapolski, Augustana College



VQC Tourism Products



#QCMuseumMonth
qcmuseummonth.com



#QCRestaurantWeek
qcrestaurantweek.com



#QCAleTrail
qcaletrail.com



#QCCoffeeTrail
qccoffeetrail.com



#JohnDeereTrail
johndeeretrail.com



#QCPublicArt
qcarttrail.com



#QCFamilyPass
qcfamilypass.com



#QCThatsWherePodcast
quadcitiespodcast.com



#QCInsidersBlog
qcinsidersblog.com



#QCInsiderText
textvisitqc.com

Key Tourism Partners

