THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY EXPERIENCED CONTINUED GROWTH ACROSS A VARIETY OF MEASURES INCLUDING HOTEL OCCUPANCY, AVERAGE RATE AND REVPAR IMPROVEMENT COMPARED TO THE YEAR PRIOR OF 0.4%, 6.5% AND 6.9%, RESPECTIVELY.

Dear Members,

The national spotlight has been upon our region as we and other major metropolitan areas across the country embrace the challenges to create lasting change in social injustice and equality. As we continue to address these ongoing issues, St. Louis’ growth and momentum as a tourism and convention/meeting destination in FY 2015 remained strong. Key performance indicators for St. Louis City and County including hotel occupancy, rate and RevPAR account for new highs of 66.4%, $107.19 and $71.17 respectively according to Smith Travel Research. Our Sales team continues to set the bar for success by exceeding their FY 2015 goal securing 449 convention/meetings and 563 group tours committing to 576,542 room nights for groups arriving between 2015 and 2021.

Meeting planners for conventions, meetings and corporate groups continue to choose St. Louis for their events, as evidenced by several renewed or extended bookings and many new events. Renewed or extended bookings include the InterVarsity Christian Fellowship (2018, 2021), Church of God in Christ (through 2019), Capitol Sports (through 2021), TransWorld Tradeshows (2017, 2018, 2019), Stifel (2016, 2017) and the National Information Solutions Cooperative (through 2020). New groups that selected us include the National Bar Association (2016), the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (2017), and United Rentals (2017, 2019).

Throughout FY 2015, we’ve seen newly renovated hotel rooms across the region, and new experiences for visitors to enjoy, including Inside the Economy Museum at the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis, the debut of the JUSTICE LEAGUE: Battle for Metropolis ride at Six Flags St. Louis, the Adam Aronson Fine Arts Center at Laumeier Sculpture Park and the McDonnell Polar Bear Point at the Saint Louis Zoo. Along with the continued progress of the CityArchRiver project revolutionizing the ground surrounding the Gateway Arch, we eagerly await the opening of the National Blues Museum FY 2016, offering visitors and residents alike a new must-see attraction in the heart of downtown.

With the help of our partners throughout the hospitality community, we hosted the American Bus Associations (ABA) 2015 Marketplace in January. More than 3,300 ABA attendees had the opportunity to see firsthand the transformation St. Louis has experienced over the past decade. As a direct result of hosting this event, St. Louis experienced a direct spending impact approaching $4.2 million. Most importantly, it allowed us to showcase our region to this influential group and help create new business opportunities.

With all the investment and energy surrounding our expanding convention and tourism offerings, St. Louis is poised for ongoing success!

Sincerely,

Kathleen M. Ratcliffe, President
ST. LOUIS IS WELL-POSITIONED TO RESPOND TO THE LEISURE SEGMENT BY PROVIDING A PLETHORA OF FREE WORLD-CLASS ATTRACTIONS, ABUNDANT SHOPPING AND DINING OFFERINGS AND AFFORDABLE ACCOMMODATIONS.

Seasonal Marketing Campaigns
Creating a year-round presence in target markets, the SLCVC conducted seasonal advertising campaigns utilizing television, radio, print, online and keyword search.

Due to the unrest in the region at the time, the decision was made to pull the fall campaign. A holiday campaign focused on shopping ran for three weeks during December in markets within 150-200 miles of St. Louis. Markets included Champaign, Springfield, Decatur, Quincy, Bloomington and Peoria, IL; Columbia, Springfield, Cape Girardeau, Hannibal and Jefferson City, MO; Terre Haute and Evansville, IN; and Paducah, KY.

For the spring and summer advertising campaigns, media ran in a variety of markets – from the larger markets of years past to closer in markets usually reserved for the fall and winter time period to new markets. Television and digital media ran in Memphis and Nashville, TN; Cedar Rapids and Des Moines, IA; Champaign, Bloomington, Peoria, Decatur and Springfield, IL; Kansas City, Cape Girardeau and Springfield, MO; Evansville, IN; Louisville and Paducah, KY and the Quad Cities. Ads on the Cardinals Radio Network and Fox Sports Midwest helped to extend our message to over 100 additional markets. A new television commercial featured a St. Louis musician strumming a ukulele to a catchy song about St. Louis and featured 11 attractions. The spot ran in conjunction with a Facebook promotion in which families could submit photos in a “Funnest Family” contest. The contest page had over 8,100 likes with more than 200 photo submissions in just over six weeks.

To further leverage the seasonal campaigns, the SLCVC conducted promotions in Memphis (Memphis in May Beale Street Music Festival) and Chicago (Chicago Blues Festival) and two minor league baseball games (Springfield Cardinals and Memphis Redbirds). At all of the events, visitors to the St. Louis booth were given Official St. Louis Visitors Guides, kids’ activity books, St. Louis leisure marketing
koozies and registered to win a weekend getaway to St. Louis. Local outreach events included Be A Tourist In Your Own Town, PrideFest and the Festival of Lights.

Based on the advertising impact and effectiveness study conducted by an independent market research organization, the campaigns achieved the following results:

- Awareness levels of nearly 50% in each of the markets targeted.
- Generated $136 of direct tourism expenditures for every $1 invested in marketing communications totaling an estimated $186 million in economic impact.
- explorestlouis.com hosted a record 6.9 million visits with more than 4.2 million unique visitors.

Explore the 314
The Explore the 314 campaign, targeting African-American travelers, continued to see very good results. The campaign introduced new creative this year and shifted away from traditional media as it utilized only digital offerings. Content placement generated more than 15,000 visits to the explorestlouis.com website while display advertising accounted for more than 5.8 million consumer impressions.

Hispanic Campaign
Spring of FY 2015 saw the launch of our first campaign targeting Hispanic travelers. This digital campaign drove visitors to a multilingual landing page featuring St. Louis’ Hispanic arts community. The content portion of the campaign garnered over 12,000 visits to the website while the display ads generated more than two million impressions.

St. Lou is...Friendly
An advertising campaign targeting LGBT travelers continued to see strong results in FY 2015. Content placement drove nearly 15,000 visits to the LGBT section of explorestlouis.com while display advertising delivered more than 11 million impressions and 16,000 clicks.

Leisure Travel Sales Department
The Leisure Travel Sales (LTS) Department is responsible for the group tour market both domestic and international, family reunions, group leaders, bank club directors, LGBT and the wedding market. Participation at the following shows during FY 2015 included: Student & Youth Travel Association, Ontario Motorcoach Association, American Bus Association, National Tour Association, Travel South – Domestic and International Showcase, Travel Alliance Partners, US Travel’s IPW, International Gay & Lesbian Travel Association and sales missions to the Chicago and the Los Angeles markets.

More than 3,300 people convened in St. Louis for ABA’s 2015 Marketplace (Jan. 10-13) at the America’s Center convention complex. As a direct result of hosting ABA, St. Louis experienced a direct spending impact approaching $4.2 million.
meetings & conventions

THE SALES TEAM BOOKED 449 CONVENTIONS/MEETINGS (555,826 ROOM NIGHTS) AND 563 GROUP TOURS (20,716 ROOM NIGHTS) FOR A TOTAL OF 576,542 ROOM NIGHTS, OR 103% OF GOAL. THE SALES TEAM HAD KEY WINS ACROSS EACH GOAL TIME PERIOD EXCEEDING THE MID-TERM (127%) AND ACHIEVING 91% OF BOTH THE SHORT AND LONG TERM PERIODS. SOME OF THE LARGEST BOOKINGS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Room Nights</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Competitor Group, Rock n' Roll Marathon</td>
<td>October 2015</td>
<td>6,980</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confidential*</td>
<td>August 2016</td>
<td>13,608</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gay &amp; Lesbian International Sports Association</td>
<td>June 2016</td>
<td>5,450</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Missouri Valley Conference, Men's Basketball Tournament</td>
<td>March 2016-18</td>
<td>37,566</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The National Bar Association</td>
<td>July 2016</td>
<td>4,478</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Collegiate Athletic Association, Men's Basketball</td>
<td>March 2016</td>
<td>6,956</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stifel</td>
<td>October 2016-17</td>
<td>9,050</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Federation of Labor &amp; Congress of Industrial Organizations</td>
<td>October 2017</td>
<td>9,365</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capitol Sports Center, Inc. Mideast Volleyball Qualifier</td>
<td>March 2017 and March 2019-21</td>
<td>36,840</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church of God in Christ, Inc.</td>
<td>November 2017-19</td>
<td>75,141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confidential*</td>
<td>July 2017</td>
<td>20,560</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crawford Contractor Connection</td>
<td>June 2017</td>
<td>6,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telugu Association of North America</td>
<td>July 2017</td>
<td>4,132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TransWorld Tradeshows, LLC</td>
<td>March 2017-19</td>
<td>25,380</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Rentals, Inc.</td>
<td>January 2017-18</td>
<td>12,686</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capitol Sports Center, Presidents Weekend Tournament #2</td>
<td>February 2018 &amp; 2021</td>
<td>16,070</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>InterVarsity Christian Fellowship</td>
<td>January 2018, 2021</td>
<td>59,166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Institute of Steel Construction</td>
<td>April 2019</td>
<td>5,025</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Information Solutions Cooperative</td>
<td>September 2019-20</td>
<td>13,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North American YMCA Development Organization</td>
<td>April 2021</td>
<td>4,475</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*See Corporate Market note

Our sales team consists of 15 sales professionals deployed between four offices (St. Louis, Chicago, Denver & Washington, D.C.) targeting a wide variety of prospects. Following are highlights of our segmentation strategy for the past fiscal year.
**Association**

The association market continues to be booking relatively short term and St. Louis took advantage to capture 255 association events that had not yet selected their destination for the short (2014-15) or mid (2016-17) terms. A key win, the AFL/CIO Quadrennial Constitutional Convention (9,365 room nights) will be here in October of 2017. In total, the sales team succeeded in booking association events garnering 121,937 total room nights. The team continues to work hard to position St. Louis for the larger association market that typically make their selections beyond the five year mark.

**Corporate**

Short and mid-term corporate and tradeshow events continue to present great opportunity for St. Louis. TransWorld Expo has produced the Halloween and Attractions Show in St. Louis since 2010 and extended their relationship for three additional years, 2017-19. This March tradeshow brings an estimated 8,000 attendees and produces over 8,400 total room nights per year. United Rentals returns to St. Louis again the first week of January 2017 & 2018. National Information Solutions Cooperative (booked through 2019), Stifel (2016 & 2017), UniGroup (2016), Dot Foods (2016) and Nestle Purina Petcare (2016) are all great St. Louis corporations that continued to keep their business at home in St. Louis. Two large direct selling companies selected St. Louis, one in 2016 and one in 2017. These groups request to be confidential until announced to their representatives, but respectively represent 13,680 and 20,560 total room nights. In all, corporate bookings represented 121 events totalling 144,527 room nights.

**Sports**

Capitol Sports Volleyball extended their Mideast Qualifier event through 2021. Capitol Sports also secured the President’s Day weekend tournament through 2021 and added an extended second weekend tournament, starting in 2018. With this add in 2018, Capitol Sports will produce an estimated 26,000 room nights. Additionally, NCAA Division I Basketball returns to St. Louis in 2016 with a 1st/2nd rounds of the big tournament. Sports Sales extended the St. Louis relationship with the Missouri Valley Conference with their secured hotel agreements for 2016-18. In all, sports bookings represented 44 events totaling 138,882 room nights.

**Religious and Multicultural**

The Church of God in Christ, once again, selected St. Louis extending their relationship through 2019. By selecting St. Louis for years 2017, 2018 and 2019, COGIC will bring an estimated 25,000 room nights per year the first week of November. InterVarsity Christian Fellowship USA will again hold their triennial Urbana Mission Convention in St. Louis this year between Christmas and New Year’s Day and selected to remain in St. Louis in both 2018 and 2021. This event will bring approximately 18,000 young adults and an estimated 29,000 room nights each year. This market in whole represented 150,480 total room nights for future years.
FY 2015 WAS ANOTHER PRODUCTIVE YEAR FOR THE CVC’S PUBLIC RELATIONS DEPARTMENT. Despite the backdrop of national media coverage generated by the events in Ferguson, the PR team worked to generate 530 positive stories/mentions, more than 87.3 million in earned media circulation and 68 hosted journalists who explored – and then wrote about – all that St. Louis has to offer visitors. Media press trips and proactive story pitches generated an assortment of favorable coverage in a host of local and national media outlets including:

- AAA Home & Away
- AAA Midwest Traveler
- Associates Press
- Chicago Tribune
- Chicago Parent Magazine
- Cleveland Palin-Dealer
- Conde Nast Traveler
- The Daily Meal
- Dallas Morning News
- Food Network
- Fox News
- USA Today
- USA Today Top 10
- Kansas City Star
- Minneapolis Star-Tribune
- Midwest Traveler
- NPR
- Orlando Sentinel
- Southern Bride
- Travel Channel
- The Weather Channel
- Virgin Atlantic

The SLCVC once again led companies and organizations across the region in celebrating Nation Travel and Tourism Week (NTTW), an annual recognition of the importance of travel to our society and economy.

This year’s efforts were highlighted by the annual “Be A Tourist In Your Own Town” tradeshow, which was held for the first time at the Busch II Infield at Ballpark Village on April 30. Nearly 50 SLCVC members participated in the event, helping to showcase what their organizations have to offer visitors and residents alike. Also, as part of the NTTW celebrations, the SLCVC PR team also hosted the annual High School Culinary Competition. Other PR efforts throughout the year included extensive local and regional media outreach, travel column for the Saint Louis American newspaper, and various radio spots on KMOX.

THE CONVENTION OPERATIONS TEAM CONTINUES TO IMPROVE THE CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE AT AMERICA’S CENTER AND EDWARD JONES DOME. Each year, we undertake hundreds of projects, both large and small, to upgrade and enhance our facilities to best serve our guests. Highlights of FY 2015 improvements include:

- A Distributed Antenna System (or DAS) was installed throughout the entire America’s Center complex providing significantly improved cellular telephone signal coverage. As of the end of FY 2015, work in the Dome portion of the building was ongoing but expected to be finished by end of first quarter FY 2016.

- New portable concession carts were purchased for the convention center to provide additional points of sale and to introduce new offerings in support of meeting and event food and beverage demands for convention and public show attendees.

- Installation of a new audio system for the Edward Jones Dome, has greatly enhanced acoustics for not only football fans, but all events held in the facility.

- Replacement of the cooling tower located near the side of the Edward Jones Dome to improve system efficiency and reliability.
THE CONVENTION SERVICES DEPARTMENT WORKS TO SUCCESSFULLY HOST CONVENTIONS, MEETINGS AND TRADESHOWS BOOKED BY SALES TO ENSURE A POSITIVE ST. LOUIS EXPERIENCE AND TO ENCOURAGE RE-BOOKINGS FOR FUTURE YEARS.

The Services team hosted 91 planning visits for future groups and assisted the Sales team with four site visits for potential groups during the year. They attended three pre-promotes for those conventions in St. Louis the following year and provided services to 841 groups of all sizes – 35 of which were city wide groups.

Key groups hosted and provided with service last year include: American Bus Association; American Society for Mass Spectrometry; Anheuser Busch; Capitol Sports (Mideast Volleyball Qualifier); Capitol Sports (President’s Weekend Tournament); Church of God in Christ; Competitor Group (Rock N Roll Marathon); Dynamic Communities; Enactus; FIRST; Joyce Meyer Ministries; Missouri Valley Conference; National Association of Credit Management; National Association of Pastoral Musicians; National Athletic Trainer’s Association; National Collegiate Athletic Association; Organo Gold Enterprises, Inc.; TransWorld Tradeshows, LLC; and Veterans of Foreign Wars.

In addition to staffing the SLCVC’s six Visitors Centers, our volunteer team assisted 30 conventions at America’s Center and Lambert-St. Louis International Airport. Groups such as NCAA Wrestling Championships, FIRST Robotics and Church of God in Christ were highlights.

Our largest volunteer effort of the year was on behalf of ABA Marketplace, an important gathering of motorcoach owners, tour operators and travel industry suppliers. Two hundred thirty-five volunteers joined the SLCVC to welcome and wow ABA delegates at their January meeting. The group of industry partners, SLCVC volunteers and staff filled 547 shifts to help showcase St. Louis. Our local team helped St. Louis shine by displaying enthusiasm and warm Midwestern hospitality. Everywhere delegates turned, they were greeted with friendly smiles and helping a hand.

In April, the SLCVC opened a new Visitor Center in the Old Courthouse at the invitation of the National Park Service and Gateway Arch. We expect to be located in the Old Courthouse for two years and are excited to located in one of St. Louis’ most historic sites. Visitor traffic at that location has been impressive. In just three months, we have welcomed and served almost 18,000 visitors at our booth.
THANK YOU, SLCVC MEMBERS! THANK YOU FOR ALL YOUR INCREDIBLE SUPPORT THIS PAST FISCAL YEAR. St. Louis’ hospitality package is stronger and vital due to the many offerings provided and produced by our members. As a result of your support, membership renewal and retention exceeded goal, thus we were able to offer a number of exciting programs this year.

We recognized several organizations and individuals at the September 2014 Annual Meeting with the All Star Award. CityArchRiver and the St. Louis Treasurer’s Office were honored for spearheading the Parking Garage Wayfinding Program. Three St. Louis organizations – the Economic Development Corp., the Regional Chamber and Civic Pride Foundation – were each presented an “All Star” for the Regional Marketing Program. St. Louis County Executive Charlie Dooley was honored for his many years of service and support of the hospitality industry.

Not to be outdone, there was a crowd of Hospitality Heroes this year: eight Super Heroes and 136 Hospitality Heroes were congratulated for their numerous acts of superior service.

Networking and education are keys to growing one’s business and knowledge of the industry. Members enjoyed connecting as Three-Sixty Rooftop Bar hosted the Membership Connection. Coffee and bagels mixed at Missouri Athletic Club, Charles F. Knight Executive Education & Conference Center, and American Kennel Club Museum of the Dog as members found out the latest developments from each SLCVC department. Educational seminars included presentations from St. Louis’ neighboring towns, how to work the student and youth travel market from the SYTA organization’s executive director, Carylann Assante, and responding to customer concerns following the unrest in Ferguson with STLForward.

The holiday spirit was in full donation swing at the annual Holiday Party, as members opened their hearts with donations to the Emerson Family YMCA, located in Ferguson. Lots of personal care items, as well as clothing, were given by attendees and accepted by the executive director.

Rounding out the fiscal year was the National Travel & Tourism Week Luncheon, hosted by Butler’s Pantry at Palladium Saint Louis and Climb So iLL. The program was kicked off in style by dancers from Modern American Dance Company (MADCO). Attendees were provided updates from representatives of Missouri Botanical Garden, Circus Flora, National Blues Museum, CityArchRiver, Loop Trolley and Six Flags St. Louis. Burgeoning chefs from Clyde C. Miller Career Academy, North Technical High School and South Technical High School were honored following their Culinary Cook-Off Competition.
The St. Louis Convention & Visitors Commission (SLCVC) is the driving force behind St. Louis’ $5 billion convention and tourism industry. The CVC also operates the America’s Center convention complex and the Edward Jones Dome.