



FISCAL YEAR 2025

ANNUAL REPORT

EXPLORE ST. LOUIS

FY
25

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT

This past year gave St. Louis plenty to celebrate. From May through July, St. Louis hotels recorded the best sales in history, with more rooms sold during that three-month period than ever before. Hotel occupancy across the city and county rose to 59.1 percent, up 3.6 percent from last year. Room nights booked jumped 46 percent, surpassing 673,000. At a time when many destinations are seeing declines, St. Louis is bucking the trend. Our affordability, accessibility and wealth of experiences are bringing more travelers here, and that demand is fueling growth across the region.

But these numbers are more than just statistics. Behind them are stories of visitors walking through Forest Park, cheering at The Dome, sharing meals in our neighborhoods and discovering a city that surprises them. Every filled hotel room represents economic activity in our restaurants, shops and attractions. Every convention or meeting brings thousands of delegates who leave with a new impression of St. Louis, sharing that with family, colleagues and friends back home.

Meetings and conventions remain a cornerstone of our work. In FY25, America's Center hosted 63 major events that drew more than 650,000 guests and generated over 171,000 contracted room nights. Events like the Capitol Sports volleyball tournaments, the Association for Computing Machinery's Super Computing Conference and the Church of God in Christ Women's International Convention all showcased our city's capacity to deliver unforgettable experiences. And thanks to recent upgrades, The Dome continued to shine as a premier Midwest venue, hosting sold-out concerts, Battlehawks games and other large-scale events that energized downtown.

Our marketing and communications efforts worked hand-in-hand with sales to amplify St. Louis' story. Campaigns in key drive and fly markets positioned our city as a must-visit destination, while refreshed meetings messaging reminded planners why St. Louis is such an attractive choice. These efforts paid off across digital, social and PR channels, reaching millions of people nationally and strengthening St. Louis' reputation as a vibrant, welcoming city. Almost 332,000 visitors engaged directly with our team, supported by hundreds of volunteers whose dedication creates a first impression that is uniquely St. Louis.

Tourism is more than visitor numbers or media impressions. It's one of the most powerful economic engines in our region. It creates jobs, sparks investment and helps our neighborhoods thrive. Just as importantly, it builds civic pride. When visitors see St. Louis as energetic and dynamic, it reminds us to see our city through the same lens.

As we look ahead, we remain focused on telling St. Louis' story with pride and purpose, continuing to grow the visitor economy and making sure that every guest leaves with a reason to return. The momentum we've created is real, and with the strength of our partners and the spirit of our community, I'm confident the best is yet to come.

Thank you for your continued support of Explore St. Louis and for the role each of you plays in this success. It is an honor to serve this community and to help share St. Louis with the world. Together, we're not only shaping the future of travel and tourism; we're also helping to shape the future of our city.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brad Dean". The signature is fluid and cursive, written in a professional style.

Brad Dean
President & CEO
Explore St. Louis



leisure

160,996,287
TOTAL AD
IMPRESSIONS

2,203,940
CLICKS

with an average click-through rate of 1.3%

26,927,971
VIDEO VIEWS

delivered across Meta, TikTok and Azira CTV

m&c

1,094,707
TOTAL AD
IMPRESSIONS

utilized
META, AZIRA, CVENT
& GOOGLE DISPLAY

print and digital trade publications

LEISURE MARKETING

Broadened Digital Reach

We rolled out new campaigns across TikTok, Reddit, Expedia, Google Demand Gen and more, leveraging 16 diverse channels to engage emerging audiences, while strengthening our SEO efforts with a robust keyword program now featuring 2,400 targeted terms.

Expanded Target Markets

In addition to our nine core drive markets within 400 miles of St. Louis, we strategically added key quick-fly markets, including Denver; Dallas; Washington, D.C.; Atlanta; Houston; and Minneapolis.

Strong Paid Media Performance

Our digital ads delivered more than 160 million impressions with an average CTR of 1.3%, driving high-quality traffic to explore-stlouis.com.

Seasonal & Event-Driven Campaigns

Capitalizing on major events such as holiday lights, Mardi Gras, St. Louis CITY SC matches and summer festivals, we generated timely engagement and travel interest.

Enhanced Creative Storytelling

We rolled out fresh video and photo assets showcasing neighborhoods, dining and attractions, fueling higher engagement across paid and organic channels.



MEETINGS & CONVENTION MARKETING

New Tradeshow Booth

Unveiled at MPI WEC 2025, our modern booth created a vibrant, immersive experience showcasing St. Louis' meeting-ready amenities. Its interactive design and high visibility positioned St. Louis as a leading meetings destination and generated record booth traffic.

Fresh Ad Campaign

Eye-catching creative and targeted messaging tailored to planners reinforced St. Louis as a vibrant, easy-to-access meetings destination.

Dynamic Videos & Photography

High-quality assets now elevate bids, collateral and presentations, capturing St. Louis at its best.

High-Impact Media Placements

Strategic buys across print, digital and paid social platforms delivered strong reach in priority markets.

Stronger Brand Storytelling in Paid Media

Ads now better highlight our differentiators – walkable downtown, affordability, hospitality – and reflect the energy of St. Louis through bold creative.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Massive Reach & Visibility

Social media content reached more than 69 million unique users, reinforcing St. Louis' position in the competitive leisure travel market.

Explosive Video Growth

By combining data-driven market research and innovative content strategies, we more than doubled our video views from FY24 to FY25, with Instagram reels and TikTok videos for 314 Day, the Saint Louis Zoo and the St. Louis Cardinals going viral.

Targeted Advertising Success

We introduced TikTok ads to coincide with our seasonal marketing campaigns, which received a total of 6.7 million views.

Platform Expansion and Engagement

We added Instagram and LinkedIn accounts for the St. Louis Civic Pride Foundation, and together, our 18 channels had an average of 2 million weekly impressions.

Influencer Collaborations

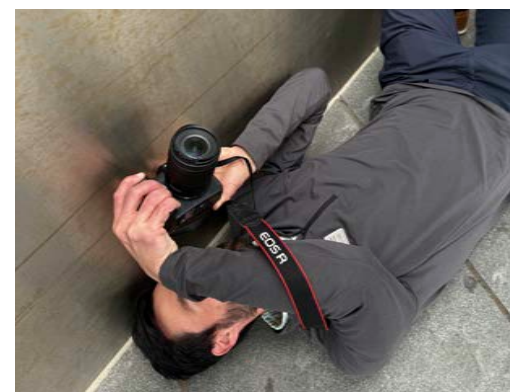
To expand our reach and inspire travel among priority audiences, we teamed up with 11 well-known influencers with strong followings in key markets such as Kansas City and Indianapolis. Their content covered St. Louis' delicious culinary scene, affordable family fun and holiday light displays, painting a vivid picture of St. Louis and its many vibes. Our influencer collaborations garnered over 1.1 million views, driving major visibility and engagement for the region.

social

69,678,574
TOTAL IMPRESSIONS
up 8.3% YOY

6,666,967
TOTAL VIDEO VIEWS
up 72.9% YOY

493,275
TOTAL FOLLOWERS
up from 441,769 in FY24



PUBLIC RELATIONS & COMMUNICATIONS

Strategic Media Relations Drove National and Regional Coverage

Through 37 curated media tours and two high-impact press conferences supporting COGIC and VEX Robotics, Explore St. Louis positioned the region in front of key audiences. These efforts generated 1.25 billion impressions, positioning St. Louis as a top leisure destination, and reinforcing St. Louis' role as a destination for meetings and events.

Meetings and Conventions Messaging Landed 15+ Features

By hosting seven top-tier MICE journalists during MPI WEC, we secured more than 15 feature stories that elevated St. Louis as a premier choice for meetings and conventions. Coverage appeared in influential industry publications, reaching planners and decision-makers nationwide.

Global Storytelling Through Strategic Partnerships

Our collaboration with the Missouri Division of Tourism brought a group of European journalists through St. Louis on a Route 66 tour. The result was rich, international coverage highlighting the city's culture, hospitality and Route 66 heritage.

SEO and Social Strategy Delivered Meaningful Gains

Improvements to our SEO- and GEO-targeted content led to a 3.3% increase in engaged sessions from organic search and a 9.6% lift from organic social. These data-driven strategies helped us reach and retain more qualified digital visitors.

Website Growth Fueled by Organic Search

Website users rose by more than 8% to 3.4 million, with organic search accounting for 47% of all traffic. This growth reflects the success of our integrated content strategy across owned and earned channels.



pr & comms

141

**HOSTED
STORYTELLERS**

**3.4 million
USERS**

**4.3 million
SESSIONS**

website traffic, up 8.2% YOY
& 7.1% YOY respectively

**195
NATIONAL**

**247
LOCAL**

earned media placement

**1.25 billion
NATIONAL
MEDIA
CIRCULATION**

DESTINATION SALES

Top Five Groups	Attendees
Capitol Sports Tournaments	52,814
Church of God in Christ Women's International Convention	9,567
Association of Equipment Manufacturers – World of Asphalt Show & Conference	6,931
Veterinary Emergency & Critical Care Society (VECCS) Annual Convention	6,739
TransWorld Halloween & Attractions Show	6,114

sales

**673,000
TOTAL
ROOM NIGHTS**

**1,314
LEADS**
totaling 2,349,977
room nights

**1,015,105
HOSTED
DELEGATES**



MEET ST. LOUIS

Economic Impact Through Hotel Room Nights

Meet St. Louis-supported events led to tens of thousands of room nights booked, including the Capitol Sports tournaments (52,814), COGIC Women's International Convention (9,567), World of Asphalt (6,931) and the International Veterinary Emergency and Critical Care Symposium (6,739).

Community Engagement and Charitable Giving

Many Meet St. Louis-supported groups prioritized local investment, with charitable contributions and service initiatives embedded into their events. COGIC Women's International Convention, for instance, donated \$200,000 to the Urban League of Metropolitan St. Louis to support its tornado relief efforts, while MPI WEC participants assembled hygiene kits and food boxes for local families affected by the natural disaster. The Seventh-day Adventist Church also donated \$100,000 to the city of St. Louis.

Expanded Use of Regional Infrastructure

Event size and complexity required collaboration across multiple venues and regions, extending economic benefits beyond the immediate downtown core. Capitol Sports events, for instance, spanned The Dome, America's Center, Chesterfield Sports Complex and hotels from St. Louis to St. Charles. Multi-site programming and city-wide activations from Gateway Arch National Park to the Grand Center Arts District to Washington University in St. Louis demonstrated the broad geographic impact of meetings, conventions and other events hosted in St. Louis.

Innovative Attendee Experience Design and Service Excellence

Meet St. Louis delivered high-quality service and personalized attendee experiences through housing support, unique St. Louis destination experiences, St. Louis subject matter experts as a part of the education tracts, meal planning, photo ops and more.

Strategic Positioning and Future Business Development

Hosting high-profile events in FY25 positioned St. Louis as a premier meetings destination. In preparation for future business, Meet St. Louis updated its SOPs, marketing materials and public safety protocols.



meet stl

354
GROUPS
ASSISTED

including 26 events
at America's Center

41
PLANNING
VISITS

WHAT CUSTOMERS ARE SAYING

“

“[The Meet St. Louis team] was an absolute pleasure to work with. This event wouldn't have been such a success without them. I appreciate them so much – they are part of the reason I'll be back to St. Louis.”

– Jyl Alampay, event manager for the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy

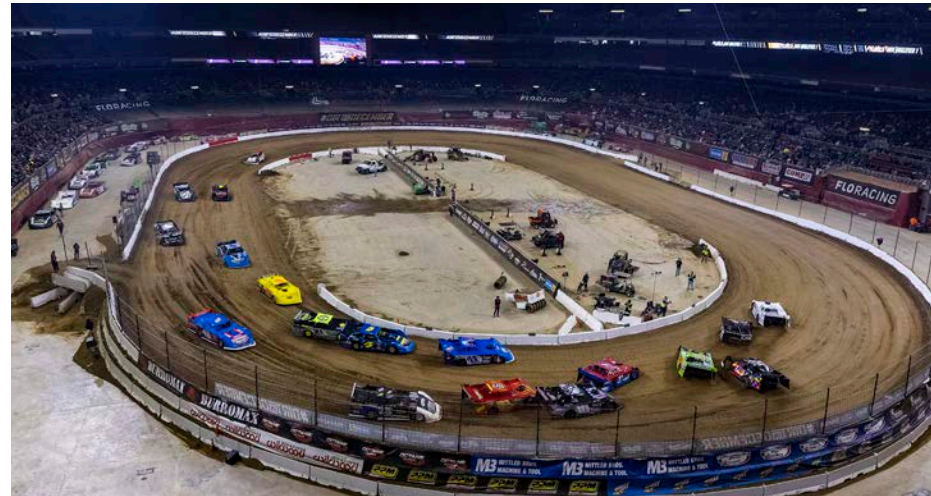
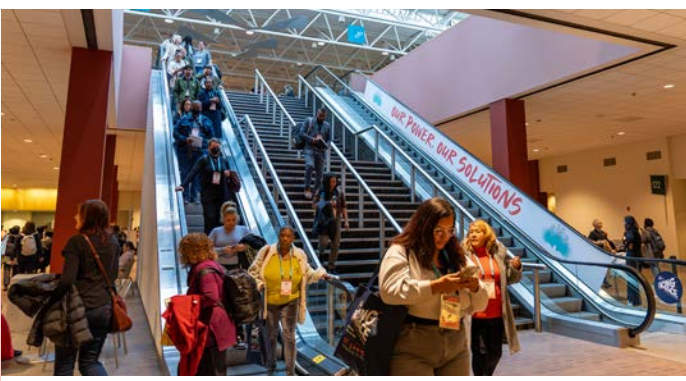
“[The Meet St. Louis team] helped orchestrate planning visits, driving us to various venues. They were heavily involved [in our planning process], and we wouldn't have made it without them.”

– Kara Ferguson, meetings and fellowships manager at the American Orthopaedic Association

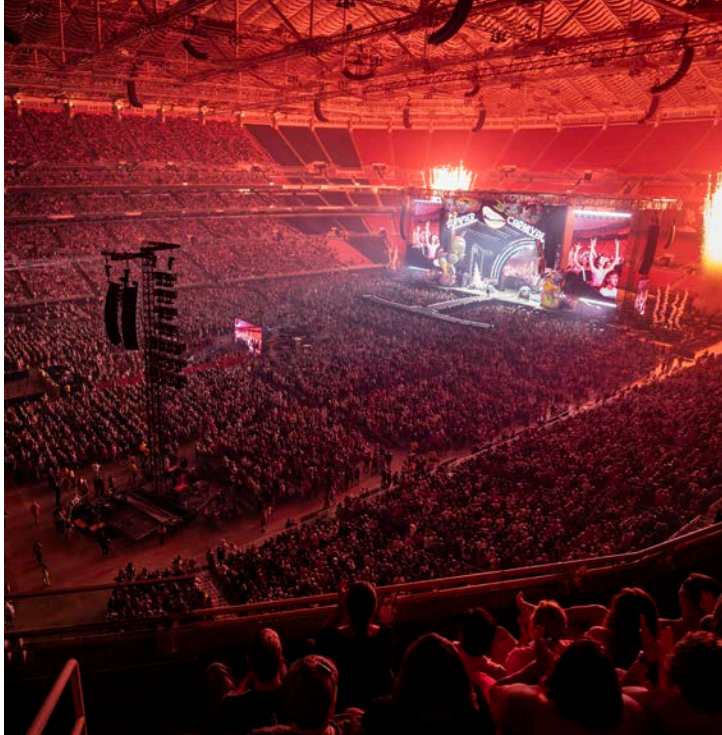
“[Meet St. Louis] helped with every need I had. I was most impressed with the volunteers that they found for me. Everyone was amazing to work with!”

– Jacki Bennis, CEO/director of conference services of Square One Meeting Planning

MEETINGS & EVENTS



AMERICA'S CENTER & THE DOME



High Event Volume

America's Center Convention Complex hosted 63 events, including the Nriva Convention, the International Veterinary Emergency and Critical Care Symposium, the NHLA Annual Convention, the Bands of America Super Regional Championship, the TransWorld Halloween & Attractions Show and MPI WEC, drawing hundreds of thousands of visitors to downtown St. Louis.

Big Nights and Boisterous Crowds

The Dome at America's Center remained a top concert and event venue, showcasing major acts such as P!NK and Kendrick Lamar alongside popular public events such as Gateway Dirt Nationals, Monster Jam and St. Louis Battlehawks games.

Enhanced Facilities and Fan Experience

New turf and LED lighting significantly improved sports fans' experiences at The Dome.

Expanded Spaces

America's Center Convention Complex debuted its new 72,000-square-foot exhibit hall at the beginning of FY25, and we recently dedicated the new entrance and lobby at Dr. Martin Luther King Drive and Ninth Street to Dr. Donald M. Suggs, publisher and executive editor of The St. Louis American.

Outdoor Oasis

The 40-bed culinary garden on the west side of America's Center started growing everything from strawberries to corn and watermelon to radishes, providing Levy Restaurants with vibrant, seasonal and sustainable ingredients for on-site catering.

AMERICA'S CENTER FY25 EVENTS

NRIVA 2024 Convention	July 2-8, 2024
US Junior Nationals Girls Basketball Tournament	July 10-17, 2024
Urban League of Metropolitan St. Louis Back to School Fest & Urban Expo	July 18-22, 2024
Metropolitan Fire Department: Fire Division Promotional Tests	July 22-26, 2024
RJO Summer Buying Show	August 1-6, 2024
Presbyterian Church (USA) Women's Churchwide Gathering	August 7-11, 2024
P!NK Concert	August 10, 2024
St. Louis Police Foundation: STL Police Foundation Luncheon	August 29-September 3, 2024
International VECCS Symposium	September 3-11, 2024
2024 Explore St. Louis Annual Meeting	September 25, 2024
2024 NHLA Annual Convention & Exhibit Showcase	September 30-October 5, 2024
City of St. Louis Youth City Flag Football Game	October 6, 2024
The St. Louis American Salute to Excellence	October 10-13, 2024
NABA Scholarship Event	October 17-18, 2024
St. Louis Battlehawks Select-A-Suite	October 23, 2024

Bands of America 2024 Super Regional Championship	October 24-26, 2024
Gospel Broadcasting Network Fresh Wind Crusade	November 15-18, 2024
Race Forward National Conference	November 19-23, 2024
Gateway Dirt Nationals	November 27-December 9, 2024
2024 Missouri Bridal & Wedding Expo	December 1, 2024
2024 Hot Chocolate 15K/5K Expo	December 6-7, 2024
2024 Explore St. Louis Holiday Party	December 18, 2024
2025 St. Louis Auto Show	January 9-12, 2025
Monster Jam	January 18-19, 2025
Dot Foods National Business Meeting 2025	January 22-25, 2025
St. Louis RV Vacation & Travel Show	January 31-February 2, 2025
Capitol Sports Dennis Lafata Tournament	February 8-10, 2025
Capitol Sports President's Weeekend Tournament	February 15-17, 2025
Team Central St. Louis Classic Gymnastics Invitational	February 20-23, 2025
2025 TransWorld Halloween & Attractions Show	February 27-March 2, 2025
Capitol Sports MEQ Weekend I	March 7-9, 2025
Capitol Sports MEQ Weekend II	March 14-16, 2025
Gentlemen of Vision Step Competition	March 15, 2025
World of Asphalt Show & Conference	March 21-29, 2025
Afghan Prayer Service	March 30-31, 2025
Tech STL AI 25: Building What's Next	March 31, 2025
Alpha Kappa Alpha Central Regional Conference	April 1-6, 2025
UFL Battlehawks: Game 1	April 6, 2025
Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis Bankwide Town Hall 2025	April 11-15, 2025
Oddities & Curiosities Expo 2025	April 11-13, 2025
2025 Spring Missouri Bridal & Wedding Expo	April 12-13, 2025
UFL Battlehawks: Game 2	April 13, 2025
Make-A-Wish Foundation	April 14, 2025
SNMA Annual Medical Education Conference	April 15-21, 2025
UFL Battlehawks: Game 3	April 26, 2025
Marian Magic Fundraiser, Marian Middle School	April 27, 2025
2025 Gateway to Innovation	April 28-May 1, 2025
Annual Conference on YMCA Philanthropy	April 29-May 3, 2025
Pathway St. Louis 2025	May 2-11, 2025
Legacy Dance Championships	May 2-4, 2025
UFL Battlehawks: Game 4	May 2, 2025
Omega Psi Phi Luncheon	May 2-3, 2025
2025 GEOINT Symposium (US GeoSpatial Institute)	May 15-22, 2025
UFL Battlehawks: Game 5	May 17, 2025
UFL Battlehawks: Game 6	May 23, 2025
COGIC Women's International Convention	May 23-31, 2025
Kendrick Lamar & Sza: Grand National Tour	June 4, 2025
UFL Playoff Game	June 8, 2025
UFL Championship Game	June 14, 2025
MPI World Education Congress	June 18-20, 2025
Solution Tree Professional Learning Communities at Work Institute 2025	June 22-25, 2025

ac & dome

63
EVENTS

656,218
GUEST
ATTENDANCE

171,671
CONTRACTED
ROOM NIGHTS

PARTNERSHIP

Annual Meeting

The 2024 Annual Meeting & Awards saw a record-breaking 1,000 people in attendance. The event was held in the newly opened Hall 4X, showcasing the new space's features.

Holiday Party

The 2024 Partnership Holiday Party broke attendance records with 800 attendees.

Power of Neighborhoods

The organization reactivated our neighborhood program with multiple areas coming on board, including Laclede's Landing, The Grove, Maplewood, Ladue and Pacific, with more to come.

Pride of STL

The St. Louis Civic Pride Foundation's Explorer Series events continued spotlighting local gems such as Side Project Brewing, Westport Plaza, the Danforth Plant Science Center and VUE at 612 North.

Education & Engagement

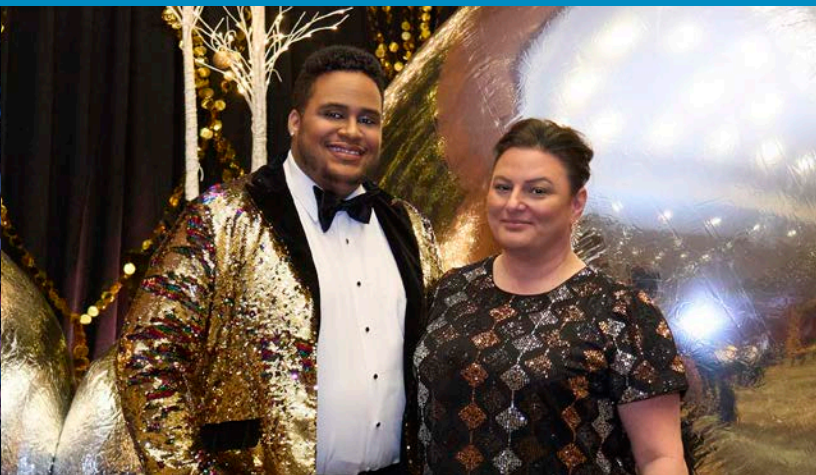
The partnership department continued hosting educational webinars and events such as Coffee with Explore St. Louis: Route 66 edition. Explore St. Louis Fest gave attraction partners the opportunity to educate locals and visitors alike on all the great ways to kick off summer.

partners

925
CURRENT
PARTNERS

74
NEW
PARTNERS
RECRUITED

90%
PARTNER
RETENTION
RATE



ST. LOUIS FILM OFFICE

MO Action

The continued promotion of the Missouri Motion Media Tax Incentive has proven effective, drawing more than 45 registered productions to the St. Louis region.

Soul on Fire

Sony Pictures acquired *Soul on Fire*, the first feature film to utilize the Missouri Motion Media Tax Credit, for a fall 2025 nationwide theatrical release.

St. Louis Appeal

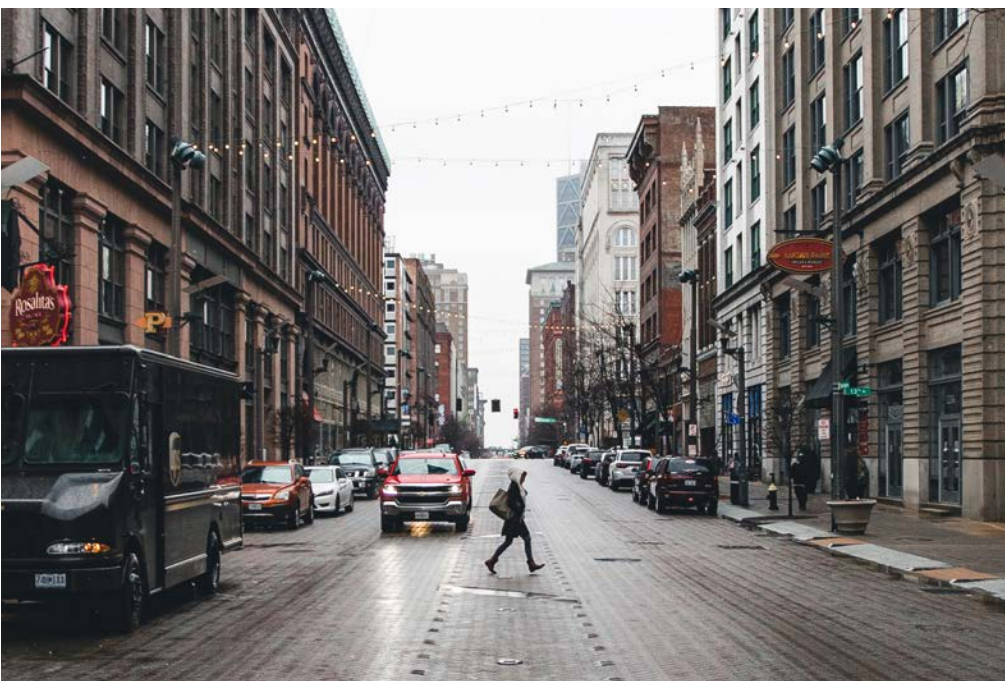
The St. Louis Film Office successfully attracted three feature films that were initially set to film in alternate locations.

Record Attendance

A local attraction received record attendance during the filming of a nationally televised TV series.

Economic Impacts

There was an overall increase in spending for goods and services associated with production, including but not limited to commercial real estate, hotel rooms and dining.



film

50+
**ASSISTED
PRODUCTIONS**

\$5.5 million
**ECONOMIC
IMPACT**

across the St. Louis region

2,000+
**ROOM NIGHTS
BOOKED**

VOLUNTEERS

Downtown Clean-Up

Visitor Services' Tourism Trash Force initiative was awarded the St. Louis Attractions Association's Spirit of St. Louis program award.

Fresh Looks

We updated our visitor centers at St. Louis Lambert International Airport Terminal 1 and St. Louis Union Station.

Trained Local Ambassadors

We launched a campaign to share appreciation and information with frontline taxi, Lyft and Uber drivers, in partnership with Greater St. Louis, Inc. and the airport.

Committed to Recruitment

For MPI WEC, we recruited a team of 200-plus volunteers through a six-month campaign targeting a dozen St. Louis industry associations. Those volunteers served 1,473 hours during the event, filling almost 400 shifts and tracking 14,593 delegate engagements. They were fully trained, well prepared and then celebrated for their service.

Activated Community Spaces

During MPI WEC, we spearheaded the hospitality and volunteer committees. Hospitality highlights activated by volunteers included 10 live music performances at airport terminals during peak arrivals, welcome desks in each hotel stocked with gooey butter cake, tour guide-led shuttle rides and greeters throughout the event footprint.



service

331,941
VISITOR
INTERACTIONS

4% increase over FY24

76
EVENT
IMPACTS
conventions & local festivals

150
ACTIVE
VOLUNTEERS

THANK YOU TO OUR 900+ PARTNERS THAT HELP KEEP ST. LOUIS ON TOP

FY25 CORPORATE PARTNERS



explore **st.louis**

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