



# VISIT SYRACUSE ANNUAL REPORT 2026







Visit Syracuse plays a critical role in Onondaga County's economic development strategy through its focus to grow the area's business of leisure tourism, meetings & conventions, sporting & special events and film/television production. As Onondaga County's official tourism promotion agency, Visit Syracuse is vital in driving direct visitor spending in a \$1.294 billion-dollar local tourism economy.\*

## MISSION

Our mission is to showcase the beauty, historic charm, diverse cultural richness, four distinctly inviting seasons, and alluring array of events and festivals that define our region, inspiring visitors to create memorable experiences while providing quality of life benefits for our residents.

## VISION

As a community leader, we continuously aim to stimulate economic vitality for our stakeholders and create a prosperous future for our community through consistent growth and development of tourism, conventions and special events. Through the Visit Syracuse Film Office, we work to promote, develop, and increase the area's film and television production positioning Syracuse, Onondaga County, and the Central New York Region as a key player in the entertainment and film industry.

*\*Source: Empire State Development, I LOVE NEW YORK & Tourism Economics*

We are designated as Onondaga County’s official Tourism Promotion Agency (TPA) via our direct collaboration with Empire State Development and the “I Love NY” program. An abundance of fabulous restaurants, first-class arts and cultural experiences and top-notch attractions await all visitors to the region, and the dedicated team of professionals at Visit Syracuse continuously promotes all four seasons through marketing campaigns, brand development, media relations, and more. We have the data and the resources to identify, capture, target and retarget a wide scope of potential visitors as we invite them to come enjoy and explore Syracuse, Onondaga County and Central New York – a great place to live, work, play and visit.

### ***History***

Visit Syracuse was established in 1919 to promote the Greater Syracuse area as a convention and leisure destination. Known initially as the City Club of Syracuse, which merged with the Syracuse Chamber of Commerce in 1918, the organization was officially designated as the Syracuse Convention & Visitors Bureau in November 1919. In 2015, the name was shortened to Visit Syracuse, for marketing purposes. No matter which name we go by, we have the distinction of being designated as the first official CVB organization in New York State.

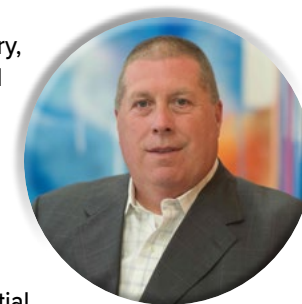
### ***Hosting conferences, conventions and more***

Meeting planners, along with their attendees, appreciate the accessibility of our destination at the crossroads of two major Interstate Highways, within a short four-hour drive of 10 major North American markets (home to about 80 million people.) Easy access via AMTRAK, as well as continued expansion of incoming flights to Syracuse’s Hancock International Airport, further solidifies our ability to serve as a host destination for a variety of meetings and events. Planners work closely with the Visit Syracuse sales and services team to review our selection of facilities and venues alongside an array of accommodations to fit any style and budget, setting the stage for the Central New York Region to host a variety of state, regional and national meetings, and events.

### ***Bringing Film Production to Syracuse***

The Visit Syracuse Film Office works to promote, develop, and increase film & television production in the Central New York Region. Utilizing state and local tax and rebate incentives, initiating local crew training programs, assisting with permits, and connecting filmmakers with area businesses are just a few examples of ensuring success. Having worked on dozens of films, with many more in development, the film office is constantly striving to make the Syracuse area a staple in the entertainment and film industry.

As we assess the tourism landscape in 2025, the national picture presents clear challenges. Across the country, many destinations experienced softer demand and declining visitation. Yet Onondaga County demonstrated resilience with modest but meaningful growth.



This success reflects our long-term strategy, targeted marketing, and community partnerships. Visitor spending drives our local economy, supporting jobs and small businesses. Tax revenues benefit residents throughout the county.

Visit Syracuse Film remains a powerful economic engine. Film and television production generates substantial local revenue. Extended crew stays fill our hotels, restaurants, and retail establishments. On-screen exposure elevates Syracuse's national profile and attracts future visitors.

Despite losing significant hotel inventory, our convention sales team exceeded annual goals. We secured over 50,000 committed room nights in a competitive marketplace. Our team's adaptability and strategic positioning demonstrate our facility strengths. We achieved this while many markets experienced booking declines.

Our digital presence continues to outperform expectations and industry benchmarks. Website engagement has deepened significantly with increased time on page. Social media growth and video views exceed comparable destinations. Our brand messaging resonates strongly with today's travelers.

Local festivals and signature events draw regional visitors and boost spending. They reinforce Syracuse's reputation as a vibrant, welcoming destination.

Sustained growth in 2025 positions us well for future progress. Ongoing investment in tourism assets strengthens our competitive position. Momentum from transformative projects like Micron creates additional opportunities. Our focus remains clear: continue building momentum and ensure tourism remains vital and expanding in our local economy.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'D. Liedka'.

**DANNY LIEDKA**  
*President & CEO*

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 1** *BOARD OF DIRECTORS*
- 2** *STAFF*
- 3** *ECONOMIC IMPACT*
- 5** *MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS*
- 11** *SALES & SERVICES*
- 13** *WELCOME CENTER*
- 14** *FILM*





**KATHY RAPP**  
*Chair*



**DAVID AITKEN**  
*Vice Chair*



**TONY MANGANO**  
*Treasurer*



**PETER CASPER**



**FRANKLIN FRY**



**KYLE HARES**



**ISABELLE HARRIS**



**JULIE LAFAVE**



**JASON TERRERI**



**MERIKE TREIR**



**DAVID HOYNE**

## Board of Directors

The Visit Syracuse Board of Directors is comprised of leaders from the hospitality industry, including representatives from local hotels, the county's largest convention center, top regional attractions, and government agencies. The Board supports Visit Syracuse through strategic planning, budgeting, approval processes, and guidance on destination management across Onondaga County, the Finger Lakes, and Central New York regions.



**DANNY LIEDKA**  
*President & CEO*



**ELIZABETH JUDGE**  
*Chief Marketing Officer*



**ERIC VINAL**  
*VP of Film, TV, & Entertainment*



**GREG SNELL**  
*Sales Team Leader*



**MELISSA MORGAN**  
*Sr. Administrative Assistant*



**JEFF MICKLE**  
*Sr. Sales Manager*



**CHAD WELCH**  
*Sr. Sales Manager*



**SARAH CONWAY**  
*Director of Services*



**MARY MOORE**  
*Tour & Travel Sales Manager*



**ALLYSON TOWNDROW**  
*Manager,  
CNY Welcome Center*



**BRIDGET ROONEY**  
*Digital Marketing Outreach Manager*



**BRITTANY JURAVICH**  
*Marketing & Creative Specialist*



**PAUL STANNARD**  
*Marketing & Design Specialist*



**SADIE URTZ**  
*Marketing & Social Media Coordinator*

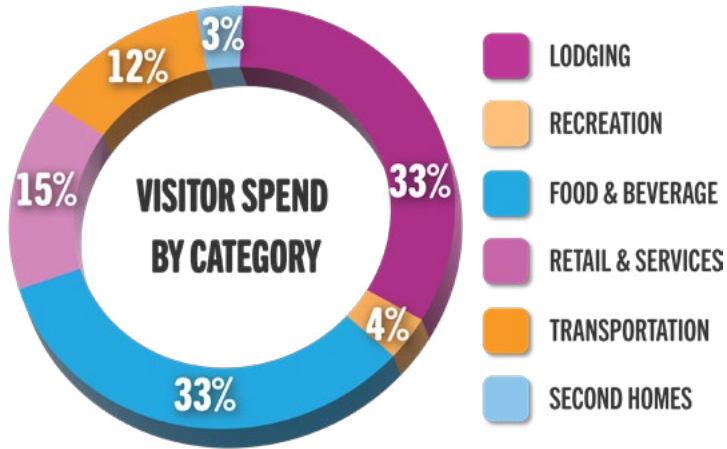


**ROBIN CORTESE**  
*Brand Champion*

# ECONOMIC IMPACT

VISITORS SPENT  
**\$1.294 Billion**  
IN 2024

**+3% Growth**  
FROM 2023 TO 2024



VISITORS SPENT  
**\$148,400** EVERY HOUR  
IN ONONDAGA COUNTY



### JOB GENERATION

Tourism related industries employed

**15,697 People**

and resulted in

**\$555.2 Million**

in labor income

### TAX REVENUE

Tourism generated

**\$86.7 Million**

in local taxes and

**\$69 Million**

in state taxes

The economic impact of tourism is essential for sustaining community growth and keeping local economies balanced. When visitors spend money at hotels, restaurants, and attractions, it creates jobs and supports businesses that help the entire community thrive and remain financially stable.

# MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS

## *PARTNERSHIPS AND PROMOTIONS*

Advertising campaigns are critical to the overall success of our marketing objectives. Together with a variety of partners, we strategically target diverse audiences throughout the year, covering the following themes and more.

### *NY BY RAIL*

Visit Syracuse continued its partnership with NY By Rail magazine through a mix of digital and print advertising, while also launching a new campaign collaboration with **Miss New York**. The partnership showcased rail travel to the region via Amtrak and highlighted key attractions including the Great New York State Fair, Syracuse Boat Tours, the Syracuse Mets, and several local restaurants. Miss New York, who was later crowned **Miss America**, helped amplify the campaign's reach and visibility.



### *NYS BLUES FESTIVAL & SYRACUSE INTERNATIONAL JAZZ FEST*

Visit Syracuse maintained partnerships with the **New York State Blues Festival** and **Syracuse International Jazz Fest** to expand promotional campaigns developed by **Advance Media NY**. These multi-channel campaigns featured Spotify ads, digital and social media, YouTube, streaming platforms, and print advertising across New York State and the Northeast, reaching audiences in Boston, Philadelphia, and the NYC/NJ/Connecticut tri-state area.



## SPORTS & ATHLETICS

Visit Syracuse maintained strong partnerships with the **Syracuse Crunch** and **Syracuse Mets**, featuring SYR branding during televised broadcasts, like SNY, and across partner social media channels.

The organization also continued its partnership with **Syracuse University Athletics** through **Learfield** into its fourth year, promoting the region to visiting and returning fans. Digital campaigns like “Where Do You Cheer From?” and “Why I Love Syracuse” have generated over 10K total engagements with click-through rates averaging 0.32%.

**66.67%**  
**OPT-IN RATE**

**+2 Million**  
**IMPRESSIONS**



## STRATEGIC PROGRAM ADVERTISING

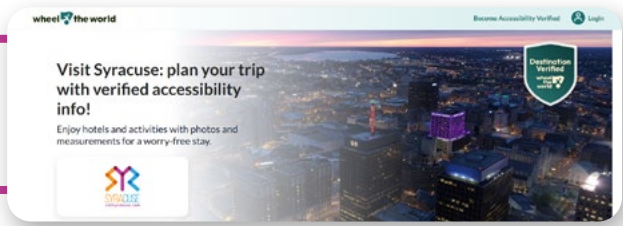
Visit Syracuse expanded its market presence this year through advertising in the **Buffalo Bills** and **New York Mets** yearbook programs, and **World Series** playoff publication. These strategic placements extended the destination’s visibility to key markets including **Seattle**, **Los Angeles**, **Milwaukee**, **NYC**, **Buffalo**, and **Toronto**, connecting with engaged sports audiences across North America.

## TRAVEL FOR ALL

Syracuse is a welcoming destination for every traveler, with attractions, events, and public spaces designed to be accessible and inclusive for people of all abilities and backgrounds.

### WHEEL THE WORLD

Visit Syracuse now proudly partners with Wheel the World to **support more accessible and inclusive travel experiences** across the region.



### PRIDE IN SYRACUSE

Visit Syracuse continues to elevate **visibility** and **support** for the LGBTQ+ community through meaningful partnerships, inclusive storytelling, and year-round community engagement. This includes proud sponsorships and presence at events like Pride Day at the New York State Fair, helping ensure everyone feels **seen, celebrated, and welcome** in our region.

### SIMPLE WONDERS

The campaign with Travel Alliance Partnership aimed to **position Syracuse as a destination rich in history and outdoor experiences**, while delivering strong performance across digital channels. It generated over 29.6 million impressions, 136,000+ landing page views, **more than 407,000 clicks**, 268 app downloads, and high-performing coverage from five media outlets.

SILVER DAVEY AWARD RECIPIENT  
INTEGRATED CAMPAIGN - TRAVEL & TOURISM

**CAMPAIGN Snapshot**

BOOKED	DELIVERED
Views Booked: 625,000	Views Delivered: 641,247
Budget: 50,000 USD	Added value views: 16,247 (1.3k USD)
CPV: 0.08 USD	Engagements: 32,820
	Video Completions: 525,884
	Clicks to website: 3,994
	Average Time Spent: 15.6 seconds

Additional metrics: 15.6min ATS, 100% Viewability guaranteed.

## WEBSITE

VisitSyracuse.com is a top source of information for everything visitors need to know about coming to the Syracuse and Onondaga County regions. The site features things to do, daily events, itineraries, and more. Blog content alone drives +200,000 visits per year!

**667K**  
**ACTIVE USERS**

**1.6 Million**  
**PAGE VIEWS**

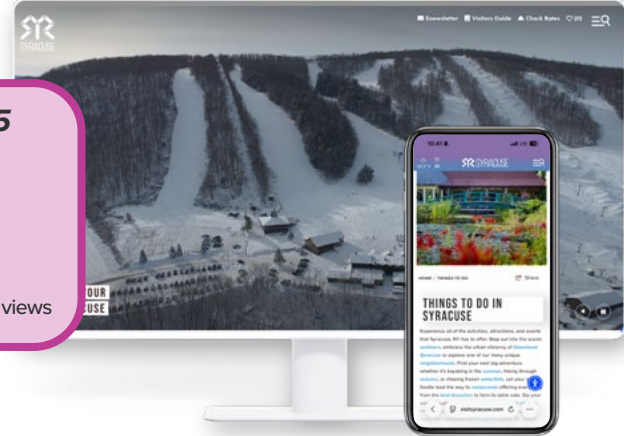
**1m 05s**  
**AVG. TIME ON PAGE**

### TOP PAGES OF 2025

1. Events Calendar | 369,675 views
2. Homepage | 110,478 views
3. Simple Wonders | 87,079
4. Things To Do | 45,879
5. Events This Weekend | 40,808 views

### TOP BLOGS OF 2025

1. 4th of July Fireworks | 10,831 views
2. Go Chasing Waterfalls | 9,177 views
3. Easter Dinner in Syracuse | 8,588
4. July Events in Syracuse | 7,720 views
5. Syracuse Summer Bucket List | 6,941 views



## VISITOR'S GUIDE

In 2025, the Visitor's Guide was fully **rebranded** and **modernized**, refreshing its design and storytelling to better reflect the vibrancy of the region. Released earlier than previous years, the guide received strong community praise and support, with nearly the entire print inventory distributed within nine months.



## SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media serves as a vital tool for engaging with current and potential visitors in real-time. Through strategic content and community management, we connect with audiences where they spend their time, building brand awareness and inspiring travel to Syracuse year-round.

**55,312**  
**TOTAL FOLLOWERS**

**2,307,117**  
**VIDEO VIEWS**

**+60.6%**  
**ENGAGEMENTS**

**+33.6%**  
**NET AUDIENCE GROWTH**

**OVER**  
**1,100**  
**POSTS**

**9.42%**  
**INTERACTION RATE**  
**FROM PAID CAMPAIGNS**



## PUBLIC RELATIONS

Visit Syracuse strengthened the region's visibility through proactive public relations efforts that highlighted Onondaga County's attractions, experiences, and stories on a national level. From generating **press releases** and securing **high-value media placements** to hosting **record-setting FAM tours**, supporting media partners, and building strategic relationships, these efforts helped position Syracuse as a must-visit destination well beyond the local market.

**13 PRESS RELEASES**    **14+ MEDIA PLACEMENTS**

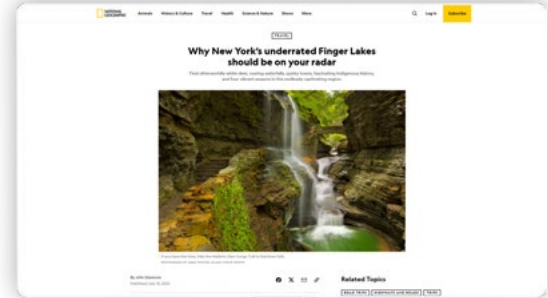
**12 FAM TOURS HOSTED**    **4 NATIONAL PLACEMENTS**

**TRAVEL+  
LEISURE**

**NATIONAL  
GEOGRAPHIC**

**yahoo!  
news**

**MATADOR  
network**



*Marketing & Communications*

# SALES & SERVICES

Visit Syracuse's Sales & Services team works year-round to attract meetings, conventions, sporting events, and group travel to Onondaga County. In 2025 alone, these efforts generated more than 55,000 convention and room nights, supporting local businesses and strengthening the region's visitor economy. The team collaborates with event planners and organizations to connect them with meeting spaces, hotels, and venues across the Greater Syracuse area.

**+50,000**  
**ROOM NIGHTS BOOKED**

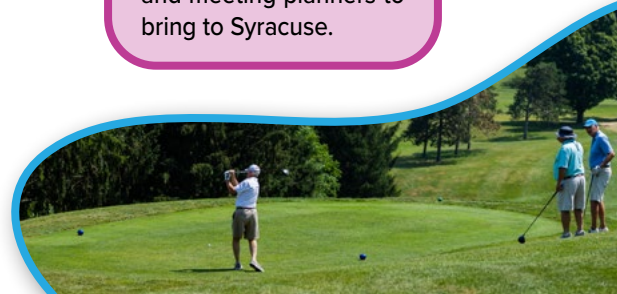
**+\$38 Million**  
**IN ECONOMIC IMPACT**

**41 MEETING PLANNERS**  
**HOSTED**

**87,420**  
**TENTATIVE ROOM NIGHTS**



The Visit Syracuse Sales and Services Team attends several trade shows every year to find new conventions, events and meeting planners to bring to Syracuse.



## VISITOR SERVICES

The Visit Syracuse Team offers convention and event services to groups that book in the region. From welcome bags and signage, to fully staffed events with knowledgeable locals at our concierge desks, we have services available for any size group!



## VISITOR INFO

**42**  
AVG. VISITOR AGE

**269 Miles**  
AVG. DISTANCE TRAVELED

**37.5%**  
OF VISITORS  
STAY OVERNIGHT



# WELCOME CENTER

The Central New York Welcome Center offers visitors and locals alike the opportunity to explore interactive I LOVE NY displays, purchase Syracuse area and regional Taste NY products and learn more about what New York State and the Syracuse area has to offer, from things to do, where you should visit and what you should try! The CNY Welcome Center store offers a variety of products, many from right here in Syracuse! It is also the only place in the Greater Syracuse area to purchase iconic *I Love NY* products, outside of the Syracuse Hancock Intl. Airport.

## TOP PRODUCTS OF 2025

1. Chocolate Pizza Co.
2. Syracuse Salt
3. Merle Maple Candy



# FILM

Visit Syracuse Film drives film and television production in the Central New York Region. The film office pitches major production studios and networks to film in the area, utilizing state tax incentives, county rebates, and talented local crews. The region boasts a 40% NYS production tax credit, a 45% NYS post-production tax credit and a newly added state Above the Line tax credit. These credits are higher than those offered in the downstate region.

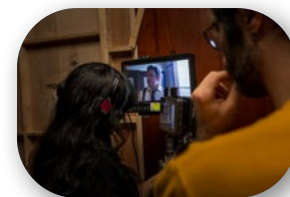
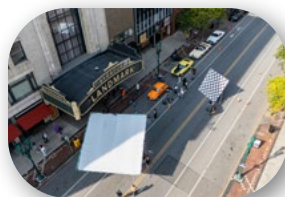
**11** *NEW PRODUCTIONS*

**\$ 30 Million**  
*IN PRODUCTION*

**64%** *INCREASE IN WEB PAGE VIEWS*

**\$ 53 Million**  
*IN POST-PRODUCTION*

Combined with budget-friendly costs, qualified production facilities, and experienced crews, Syracuse offers an efficient and cost-effective location for productions of all sizes.









*Visit*  
**SYRACUSE**.COM