



VISIT  MESA

CITY LIMITLESS®

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2021/2022



EXPLORE  
CITY LIMITLESS®



## **VISION:**

Elevate Mesa as a must-experience destination in Arizona



## **MISSION:**

Promote the value and vitality of our visitor economy to create a better community

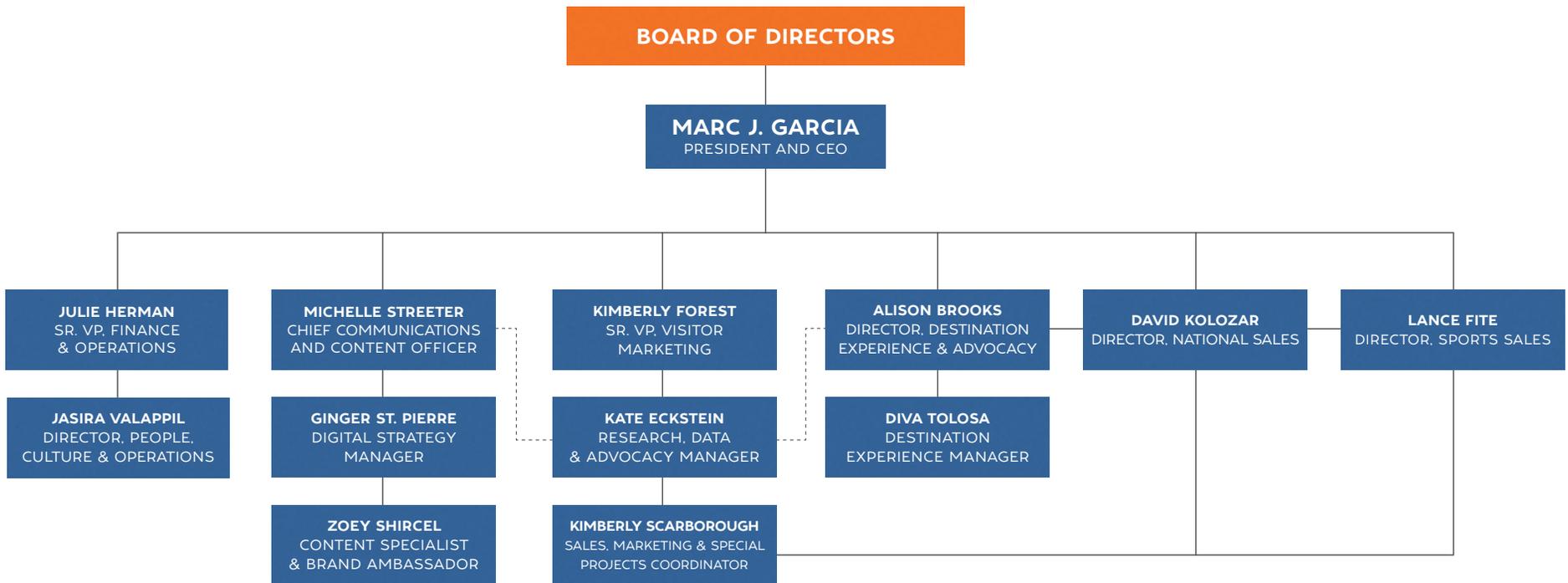


## **VALUES:**

Passion / Integrity / Excellence  
Inclusivity / Determination



## ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



## EXECUTIVE STAFF

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## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

**Mike Hutchinson**  
Chairperson  
East Valley Partnership

**Carl Grupp**  
Vice Chairperson  
Coastline Travel

**Dennis Kavanaugh**  
Secretary  
City of Mesa Resident

**Tannis McBean**  
Treasurer  
Las Sendas Golf Club & Vistas Pavilion

**Marc Garcia (Ex-Officio)**  
President and CEO  
Visit Mesa

**Rich Adams (Emeritus)**  
Immediate Past Chair  
Southwest Business Credit Services

## BOARD MEMBERS

**Vice Mayor Jen Duff (Ex-Officio)**  
City of Mesa

**Patricia Gaukel**  
Courtyard by Marriott Mesa

**Christopher Glover**  
Arizona State University

**Jon Green**  
Concord Eastridge

**Sally Harrison**  
Mesa Chamber of Commerce

**Bryan Heintz**  
DoubleTree by Hilton Phoenix/Mesa

**Angela Hughey**  
ONE Community

**Lorena Martinez**  
Residence Inn Phoenix/Mesa

**Randy McGrane**  
Ensemble Real Estate Solutions  
& Investments

**Andrea Moore (Ex-Officio)**  
City of Mesa, Parks, Recreation  
and Community Facilities

**Shar Najafi-Piper, Ph.D.**  
COPA Health

**Jaye O'Donnell (Ex-Officio)**  
City of Mesa, Economic Development

**J. Brian O'Neill**  
Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport

**Rodney Reese**  
Legacy Sports USA  
at Oak View Group

**Frankie Jo Rios**  
East Valley Hispanic Chamber  
of Commerce

**Tom Sadler**  
Arizona Sports and Tourism Authority

**Marnie Schubert (Ex-Officio)**  
Town of Queen Creek

**Tom Stapley**  
Hawes Trail Alliance

**Kevin Thorpe**  
Power Hotel Group

**Tony Wall**  
3W Management

**Ron Williams**  
Mesa Human Relations Advisory Board

## EMERITUS MEMBERS

**Tom Rhodes**  
City of Mesa Resident

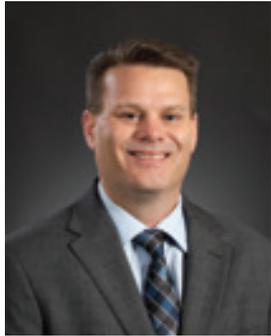
**Steve West**  
Udall | Shumway

**Marty Whalen**  
City of Mesa Resident

**Dave Wier**  
CG Promo Group

# THE YEAR AHEAD: RECOVERY AND RECONNECTION

## A Letter from Visit Mesa President and CEO Marc Garcia



If we learned one thing from this past year, it is that change is constant. Witnessing the resiliency of Mesa's hospitality industry and the storms the community weathered together over the last 18 months has inspired me. Visit Mesa conducted a number of campaigns lending support to small businesses, developed promotions that featured our partners, and secured more headlines

celebrating Mesa and our mission to promote the value and vitality of the visitor economy than we could have anticipated. We quickly discovered that coming together is what guided our destination out of crisis. Our resilience can truly be credited to the strong foundation that existed for Visit Mesa, our partners, and stakeholders.

We are starting our new fiscal year on a high note earning praise and recognition for leading the Autism Certified City initiative from both Arizona Office of Tourism, earning their Best Marketing Award - Urban Award at their annual Governor's Conference on Tourism, and from the U.S. Travel Association, who honored Visit Mesa with a Destiny Award for Special Projects. It's moments like these that ensure me our destination marketing is guided, impactful and most of all, working.

As we cast our vision toward the future, we can clearly see that consumers of travel are unstoppable. They want to see and do things, and exploration and discovery is intrinsic to who we are as a society. We know from key insights tracked

during the pandemic that more than 237 million visitors entered U.S. national parks, demand for outdoor activity-focused travel increased putting Mesa at an advantage, and travelers swapped international travel for domestic trips during COVID-19 and will continue to do so in the year ahead. Never before have we had access to a such a large collection of new visitors that have a high propensity to select Mesa as their travel destination of choice.

At Visit Mesa, we are tirelessly tracking insights into domestic travel sentiment and monitoring consumer behaviors and patterns to ensure we are ready for any disruption, while at the same time listening for key signals that indicate when we can expect waves of leisure travel activity and prepare for surges as demand for travel continues to peak.

The latest Smith Travel Research data shows that midscale and economy class hotels across the U.S. have exceeded 2019 occupancy levels, well in advance of the 2023 rebound predictions. Mesa has exceeded 2019 RevPAR levels every month April through August 2021. More pertinent to Mesa's hotel industry is the news that non-luxury hotels are leading ADR growth. Mesa's hotel and motel product mix is benefiting the most from the climbs the industry is seeing in daily rate. And we expect it to continue as U.S. vaccination rates hold strong and industry best practices regarding travel safety are fully embraced.

Leisure travel will continue to lead the recovery as we close out this year, and many of those gains will be seen in the form of high weekend occupancy. As youth sports and tournament activity remains strong in Mesa, weekend traffic across our city will be

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the gift that keeps on giving. Group demand is improving for Greater Phoenix, but we are still behind leisure demand by more than 60%. Forecasters have shared that business transient and group travel will be the last segments to recover due to so many other mitigating factors impacted by the pandemic such as corporate downsizing and the shift to virtual meetings and events.

As we embrace the new priorities of our visitors - safety first, family connection and self-restoration - we are planning a dynamic return to business as usual at Visit Mesa. We are doubling down on our commitment to Mesa and the community by strengthening the role of our ambassadors on our For the Love of Mesa steering committee and targeting locals with our Visitors Mean Business message and tourism support pledge. We are championing equity, diversity and inclusion efforts within the visitor industry and guiding hospitality leadership on these critical issues that impact all we do and all we represent here in Mesa. Visit Mesa will donate our time and staff resources to the newly formed Mesa Regional Foundation for Accessibility, Diversity and Inclusion and pave the way for a sustainable future workforce in our city. Our agency partners at HAPI are developing an aggressive marketing plan led by our Visitor Marketing team that includes commercial placement into popular streaming platforms and extends our destination promise to the short-term rental marketplace, an area where we are seeing an explosive growth of consumer demand. Our Communications team will roll out the welcome mat for clients as they return to hosting in-bound press tours and secure

influencer-endorsed social media coverage. Our sales teams are also planning their return to partner-driven sales missions and client fly-ins that will showcase all the new visitor developments and product enhancements that were recently completed in Mesa. We are also ready to help cast a national spotlight on all the new experiences taking shape in our destination this coming year including the sports and entertainment promise of Mesa's Legacy Sports Park, the largest facility of its kind in North America. You can read about all these plans and more in the pages ahead.

Visit Mesa is facing a year of recovery in the making and we have plans to reconnect to the hard work and outreach that makes us proud and has the most impact. I want to share my sincere gratitude to our city leadership, our Board of Directors, Mesa's hospitality members, our partners, and Mesa residents. The constant stream of feedback shared last year, the inspiring messages of hope we received and the care that we experienced from our partners during the pandemic served as a North Star for all of us at Visit Mesa. As I reflect on what we accomplished during the worst year in U.S. travel history, I know our collective resiliency was all made possible because of an undeniable passion for Mesa that is ever present in our community. We are Mesa City Limitless®.



**Marc J. Garcia**  
President and CEO | Visit Mesa

# 2020 MESA VISITOR PROFILE

Source: Longwoods International - Travel USA® Visitor Profile



**900K**

overnight visitors in 2020



**27%**

overnight trips



**3.3 MILLION**

visitors in 2020



**\$233**

average spent per person  
on overnight trips



**\$49**

average spent per  
person on day trips



**47%**

of overnight travelers  
planned their trips 2 months  
or less in advance



**4.8 NIGHTS**

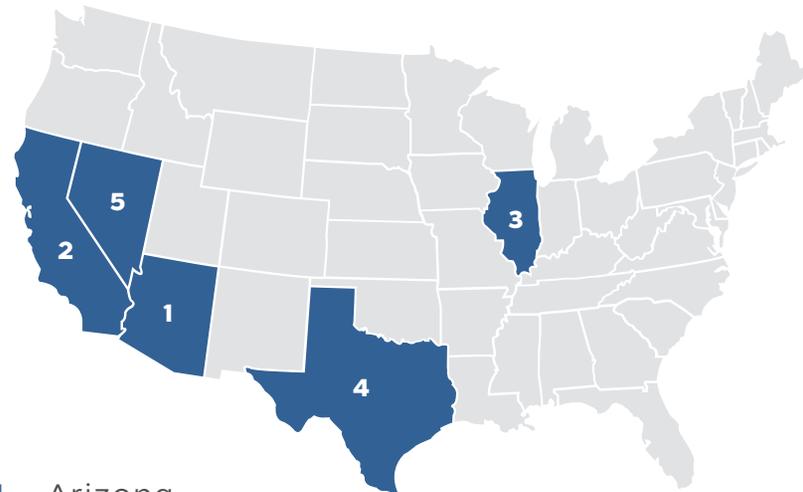
average length of stay



**2.7 PEOPLE**

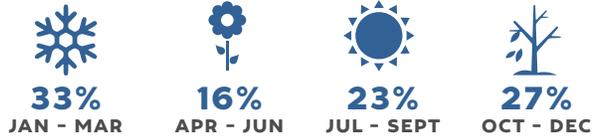
average party size

## TOP FEEDER STATES FOR OVERNIGHT VISITORS



- 1 Arizona
- 2 California
- 3 Illinois
- 4 Texas
- 5 Nevada

SEASON OF TRIP:



ACTIVITY GROUPINGS FOR OVERNIGHT TO MESA:



**61%** OF RESPONDENTS WERE VERY SATISFIED WITH THEIR OVERALL TRIP EXPERIENCE IN MESA

TOP SOURCES FOR TRIP PLANNING INFORMATION:



## 2020 ECONOMIC IMPACT OF VISITORS IN MESA

Source: Tourism Economics An Oxford Economics Company

### \$471 MILLION TOTAL VISITOR SPENDING



**PERSONAL INCOME**

The \$267 million in total income generated by tourism is the equivalent of over \$1,400 for every household in Mesa.



**EMPLOYMENT**

The number of total jobs sustained by tourism, 6,480 jobs, is enough to fill just over half of Hohokam Stadium.



**STATE AND LOCAL TAXES**

The \$58 million in state and local taxes generated by tourism would cover the average salaries of over 1,000 public school teachers in Mesa.

**PANDEMIC'S EFFECT ON VISITOR ACTIVITY**

Visitor spending declined **23%** to **\$470.6 Million**.

Employment supported by visitor spending declined **19%**, with **6,480** jobs in Mesa sustained by the tourism industry.

Visitors generated **\$58 Million** in state and local taxes, which is equivalent to **\$321** in tax savings per household.

Short Term Rentals supported **\$55 Million** in sales in 2020.

# PARTNER RELATIONS

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Visit Mesa continues the road to recovery, the Destination Experience team will play a vital role in enhancing Visit Mesa's partnership program to ensure we are supporting all partners at all levels. Our tiered partnership opportunities allow partners to select a program that best supports their marketing objectives and budget, with additional add-on packages that will deliver a wider social media presence on Visit Mesa's owned feeds and offer increased digital marketing exposure. In the year ahead, the Destination Experience department will conduct a survey to better understand desired outcomes from our valued partners and identify ways for businesses and their employees to become more involved within the community and as advocates for Visit Mesa.

## PRIORITIES

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- Encourage partners to be more engaged within the partnership program by encouraging attendance and contribution at Visit Mesa events, participation in board subcommittees, frequently submitting special offers, coordinating volunteer opportunities, and ongoing personal "check-ins" with the Destination Experience team.
- Conduct a partnership audit surveying partners to identify what deliverables they consider to be of highest value, discover what communication methods and timings are preferred, analyze extranet usage, and determine their perceived return on investment.
- Reimagine the partnership program based on feedback from current and prospective partners to be more aligned with partner needs and implement more impactful marketing tactics.
- Establish a digital resource library for partner training to include basic marketing tutorials, extranet portal usage, customer service fundamentals, EDI awareness, and accessibility enhancements and etiquette.

## GOALS

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**\$158,000 GENERATED REVENUE**

**450 PARTNER DELIVERABLES**



# NATIONAL SALES

As health and safety concerns eased earlier this year and the United States vaccination rates climbed, National Sales was able to secure new group meetings business and shift confirmed meetings to future years resulting in about 8,000 new and recovered room nights. For the upcoming fiscal year, the focus will be to continue to help reinvigorate in-person meetings by serving as a key resource and partner to meeting planners. Our focus will be to identify groups with 30 to 150 guestrooms on peak in the following market segments: association, religious, military reunions, and government. The department will continue to push our Visit Mesa National Sales Group Credit Promotion through client-direct campaigns, strategic media placements, and during face-to-face tradeshows where we will promote Mesa as one of the most affordable, value-driven meeting destinations in Arizona.

## PRIORITIES

- National Sales will develop marketing co-ops with select meeting planning organizations to offer enhanced listings of Mesa hotels and secure opportunities to conduct exclusive buyer education tours and host sales missions at headquarter offices for in-person presentations.
- Build out and expand National Sales' online library of interactive tours to offer a virtual, readily available alternative experience to in-person visits. Enhanced content will be developed through a new partnership with Threshold 360.
- Produce an updated Meeting Planners Guide that features up-to-date information to meeting planners about the destination. Reference new and recent developments i.e., downtown restaurants, area attractions, venue options, and more.
- Execute seasonal sales missions visiting pre-qualified meeting planners and invite partners to conduct in-destination sales calls.

## GOALS

<b># OF BOOKED HOTEL ROOM NIGHTS:</b>	<b>12,250</b>
<b># OF ATTENDEES:</b>	<b>8,000</b>
<b># OF LEADS:</b>	<b>165</b>
<b>ESTIMATED DIRECT VISITOR SPEND:</b>	<b>\$7,000,000</b>

## NATIONAL SALES TRAVEL SCHEDULE

Connect	August 30-September 2, 2021   Tampa, FL
Midwest Sales Mission	Fall 2021, TBD   Chicago, IL
D.C. Sales Mission	Spring 2022, TBD   Washington, D.C.
Small Market Meetings Summit	May 2-3, 2022   Fort Worth, TX

# SPORTS SALES

Sports Sales will continue to secure a balance of professional, collegiate, and youth events hosted in Mesa and conduct a quality analysis of our events product to ensure year-round business flow. Mesa and the East Valley will soon boast the largest sports and entertainment facility in North America, Legacy Sports Park, expected to house the nation's largest sports events ranging from youth to Olympic-scale competition, music festivals, full-scale event productions, and everything in between.

## PRIORITIES

- Leverage Visit Mesa's relationship with Legacy Sports Park to bring in dynamic, impactful, large-scale events year-round. This includes shared marketing outreach, sales missions, and community engagement.
- Expand the qualifying process for prospective youth and amateur sporting events at Mesa facilities to ensure maximum return on investment.
- Target reputation-building events that have a national presence and contract those larger programs that have the ability to consume multiple city facilities and reach new benchmarks. Mesa will be equipped to host large-scale events with Legacy Sports Park and the announced expansions of both the Red Mountain Baseball and Soccer Complex, the Gene Autry Tennis Center, and others in the coming years.
- Balance, replace, and relocate sporting event dates to ensure Mesa hotel supply sufficiently meets the new expected demand for rooms. This effort ensures hotel partners will flourish with new sports groups and the new business will not exhaust the supply chain.

## GOALS

# OF BOOKED HOTEL ROOM NIGHTS:	52,500
# OF ATTENDEES:	27,300
# OF LEADS:	232
# OF SITE INSPECTIONS/FAM TOURS:	8
ESTIMATED DIRECT VISITOR SPEND:	\$32,011,376

## SPORTS SALES TRAVEL SCHEDULE

Sports ETA	October 25-29, 2021   Birmingham, AL
Sports ETA	April 2022   TBD

## MESA'S GAME CHANGER: LEGACY SPORTS PARK

Opening in January 2022, Legacy Sports Park is a privately owned, 320-acre multi-use family sports and entertainment complex located in east Mesa. Legacy Sports Park will be the largest complex of its kind in the United States and is expected to generate hundreds of millions of dollars in direct visitor expenditures supporting Mesa and the surrounding community, with an expected three million visitors annually. Housing and event logistics leader, EventConnect, will serve as Legacy Sports USA official partner to streamline attendee user data to maximize attendee experiences with event and hotel registrations, ticketing, and concessions planning for the venue's outdoor and indoor athletic facilities. Visit Mesa will be working alongside EventConnect's team to ensure Mesa hotels receive first priority in housing obligations.

Visit Mesa will elevate its sports promise and presence as the signature host destination for a new roster of athletic events and new sports groups that come and compete on Mesa soil. In addition, Legacy Sports Park will feature a multi-purpose arena and outdoor amphitheater which will schedule live events, family shows, exhibitions, and conventions. OVG Facilities, a division of the Oak View Group, will manage the day-to-day operations at Legacy Sports Park and is responsible for booking and creating premium content that promises to deliver the ultimate guest experience.



# VISITOR MARKETING, RESEARCH AND DATA ANALYTICS

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Visitor Marketing is planning an effective, two-pronged approach to increasing business via digital marketing channels. Our initial efforts will focus on generating awareness of Mesa and its offerings among people in Visit Mesa's top drive markets and feeder markets who may have never heard of the destination, followed by helping put our brand top of mind for people who already know Mesa. We will achieve this by running pre-roll video, connected television (CTV), display banners and cue cards, which are visual advertisements that feature different animated messages. Secondly, we will aim efforts on direct response tactics to generate hotel and short-term rental (STR) bookings, which will represent the bulk of our marketing spend. For this effort, we will engage in paid search, an in-bound marketing tactic to reach prospective travelers who are in the planning process. More importantly, Visit Mesa will be partnering with Expedia, the world's most popular and trusted online travel agent (OTA) to drive bookings among Mesa hotels. Expedia and its partners allow Visit Mesa to serve digital ads to hyper-relevant audiences who are ready to make reservations, resulting in direct and accountable bookings and ROI.

## PRIORITIES

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- Strengthen digital advertising with additional dedicated funding streams and incorporating diverse imagery in each campaign. Visitor Marketing will develop content that addresses the ever-growing short-term rental market.
- Target key feeder cities with Expedia and other related online travel agencies (OTAs) with updated agreements.
- Develop quarterly inspirational email campaigns to international operators to solidify Visit Mesa's commitment to these markets and their clients.
- Attend IPW in Orlando (June 2022), which attracts more than 1,200 buyers from countries worldwide. Visit Mesa will unveil a completely redesigned tradeshow booth reflective of what inspires Mesa residents and visitors.

## STATE OF THE INDUSTRY FOR DESTINATION MARKETERS

Traveler sentiment related to domestic and international travel have resulted in Visit Mesa having to shift from a North American and overseas focus that involved consumers and tour operators to direct-to-consumer digital options in the U.S. and Canada. The travel consumer has grown dependent on the ease of booking through online travel agencies for many types of accommodations, and leading the way are hotels and short-term rental properties. Campaign reporting for Visitor Marketing's program of work will target key feeder markets based on contextual and behavioral parameters. Our Expedia campaigns, on the other hand, will reach those travelers who have visited our area in the past 12 months or have searched for accommodations in surrounding cities in the Phoenix area. We plan to take advantage of opportunities in the short-term rental market that will creatively mirror Mesa's hotel campaigns. These visitors typically stay in market longer and use more services and frequent local businesses in the various neighborhoods that may not offer nearby hotel product.

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## **SYMPHONY BY TOURISM ECONOMICS**

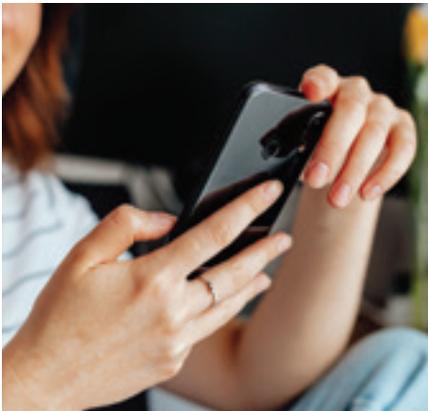
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### **SYMPHONY | TOURISM ECONOMICS**

Symphony is an analytics platform created and operated by industry giant, Tourism Economics. This platform allows Visit Mesa to integrate all our existing and future reporting into one efficient dashboard, helping us to identify trends across all different first-party and third-party data sets, and visualize our data in a meaningful way to provide a clearer analysis. By incorporating Symphony into our reporting process, Visit Mesa can provide consistent and harmonized reports to stakeholders, while also assisting our internal teams with making strategic decisions with real-time insights when available.

## **LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION**

Visit Mesa will be utilizing location data intelligence this year, a service provided by Near. Visit Mesa will now track real-time visitor insights using geolocational tracking on application data from mobile phones. This one-of-a-kind technology can provide information about where Mesa's visitors are coming from, what they are doing while they are in our city and how long they stay in our destination. This data will allow Visit Mesa to identify any new emerging markets and understand why they visit our city (leisure travel, business meetings, etc.), while improving our ability to target potential visitors based off behavioral trends. Near's visitor data is also incorporated into our custom Symphony dashboard, allowing us to enrich our other data sources with these consumer insights.



## **LISTENING TO THE SHORT-TERM RENTAL MARKET WITH AirDNA**

Short-term rentals have broken through as a legitimate lodging option for Mesa visitors. With short-term rentals reaching up to almost a quarter of total lodging revenue for the city, Visit Mesa partnered with AirDNA to provide reporting on that booking data. AirDNA scrapes major short-term rental booking platforms for occupancy and revenue data, allowing us to see how this market is evolving, and better understand trends in Mesa's lodging industry.

# VISITOR MARKETING, RESEARCH AND DATA ANALYTICS

## REACHING CONSUMERS ON CTV

Visit Mesa will explore video advertising that is delivered through ConnectedTV (CTV), which is a service that connects to a Smart TV to support video content streaming. Different types of CTV include Roku, Amazon Fire TV, Apple TV, PlayStation, and more. This recent tactic enables Visit Mesa to serve video ads to consumers who are watching premium content on their Smart TVs. The video ads come across looking like traditional TV commercials, but they're served digitally so we can hyper target the ads with demographic, geographic and behavioral criteria, and we can track the performance, just like we do with display banner ads. Another benefit to CTV is that most videos are non-skippable, meaning viewers are unable to skip the commercial to continue to their desired programming. This ensures our messages are being viewed in their entirety.



## 2021/2022 DIGITAL MEDIA BUYS AND ESTIMATED IMPRESSIONS

MEDIA	ESTIMATED IMPRESSIONS
General Campaign - Programmatic Display	20,000,000
General Campaign - Programmatic Pre-Roll Video	1,250,000
General Campaign - ConnectedTV	600,000
General Campaign - Paid Search	415,000
General Campaign - Expedia	2,467,256
General Campaign - VRBO	2,335,087
Autism Campaign - Paid Search	415,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>27,482,343</b>



# DIGITAL STRATEGIES

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Visit Mesa will continue to utilize the most effective means of reaching travelers in the digital space. The Digital Strategies Manager and Content Strategist, under the guidance of Visit Mesa's Chief Communications and Content Officer, will develop and execute digital campaigns that are engaging and have the highest propensity to increase followers across all of Visit Mesa's owned social media platforms. We will support social media giveaways, encourage Visit Mesa hashtag use, update our user-generated content galleries on VisitMesa.com, and invite our fan base to tag @VisitMesa and tag our partners on their posted content for increased awareness of our offerings. A special emphasis this year will be placed on rebuilding our consumer database, which has been impacted by global email marketing regulations. We will work with our Destination Experience team to support optimum performance on all partnership deliverables, and we will secure more earned and paid media endorsements of the Mesa City Limitless® experience from influencers. We currently leverage the power of social influencers and bloggers to advance Visit Mesa's brand awareness. Their endorsements and consumer reach in target cities have been effective and we can monitor how their activity drives inquiries to our Visit Mesa social media outlets and website.

## PRIORITIES

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- Ensure proper functionality and accurate reporting within iDSS, Visit Mesa's new customer relationship management database that launched in April 2021. The cloud-based platform does everything a DMO needs to do - from sales, membership and services, to media, marketing and finance.
- Build on the momentum created in FY21 with our paid social media campaigns. Content creators will endorse Visit Mesa and our destination experiences and invite their audiences to consider Mesa as their next travel vacation destination.
- Maintain a strong pace of social media posts, relying on user-generated content to share an authentic representation of our destination. This includes increasing our hashtag aggregation service on Crowdriff, filtering in content based on 120 key words and phrases related to our destination.
- Promote Visit Mesa blog posts on news media portals, such as Newsbreak and Patch.com, to increase referrals to the Visit Mesa website. Digital Strategies will identify more online news sites that will accept our blog posts as articles and push our exclusive content to consumers.

## GOALS

INCREASE CONSUMER OPT-IN ACCOUNTS BY 3%

INCREASE DISTRIBUTION OF CONSUMER EMAIL BLASTS TO 6 TIMES/YEAR

INCREASE UNIQUE BLOG VIEWS BY 5%

INCREASE INSTAGRAM FOLLOWERS BY 10%

INCREASE TIKTOK FOLLOWERS BY 25%

INCREASE TIKTOK VIEWS (ON INFLUENCER ACCOUNTS) BY 10%

## TRAVEL SCHEDULE

Tempest Tourism Academy    October 12-15, 2021 | Philadelphia, PA

DMA West Tech Summit    Spring 2022 | TBD

## FINDING THE CONTENT CREATORS

Visit Mesa is now using influencer marketing software to better identify those content creators who can carry forth Visit Mesa's brand promise to legions of potential consumers. Upfluence is an all-in-one platform that allows Visit Mesa to manage our influencer campaigns from start to finish. Our team will now have access to 4 million active accounts across all popular social networks including Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Pinterest, TikTok, WordPress, and more. The new tools provided by Upfluence will also help Visit Mesa geo-locate influencers and bloggers so we can target clients in key cities where we know there's a large portion of travelers visiting our area. The software also allows us to collect their social data and insights, and track performance on their social media activity including engagement, likes and shares.



# COMMUNICATIONS

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As the media landscape continues to change shape and serve up even more ways to consume news, daily alerts and travel-related content, Visit Mesa's Communications team will be working to ensure destination storytelling is taking place on all the new formats. Communications will gradually return to hosting travel writers and social media influencers in market on hosted press visits for individual guests with confirmed assignments to cover Mesa City Limitless®. New storylines are developing in the city as Downtown Mesa continues to announce new offerings for visitors, and the team will have a compelling sports narrative to share with news media when Legacy Sports Park opens in early 2022. Communications will lead on developing engaging content for all of Visit Mesa's owned social media feeds with a special emphasis placed on building audience share on TikTok and utilizing more video programming to share our messages. After almost two years without media mission activity in key cities, Visit Mesa's staff will return to appointment-based shows and support media outreach efforts organized by the Arizona Office of Tourism.

## PRIORITIES

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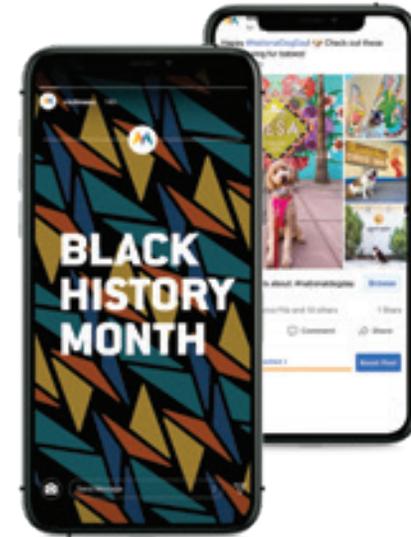
- Establish active pitching goals and research editorial calendars to ensure Mesa messaging is at the forefront of both traditional print and online travel-media outlets. Visit Mesa's online media site will soon feature a new collection of press releases that will also carry over to TravMedia's International Press Room.
- Secure national public relations representation to support the Communications team with in-bound media visits. We will also enlist local representation during peak season to ensure Visit Mesa messaging is being pushed out to the Arizona-based media.
- Coordinate a Spring 2022 Blogger event for local media clients that showcase new visitor developments in Mesa. The success of the 2021 Downtown Mesa blog night will be repeated with the opening of ASU @ Mesa City Center.
- Lead the For the Love of Mesa Steering Committee in crafting their stories and tapping into this group of local leaders to ensure the residential viewpoint on tourism is being shared in our outreach and destination marketing activities.
- Monitor the U.K. market with the return of non-stop service to London taking place in late 2021. Work with TTM Agency on a strategic pre-summer media position contingent on demand and current events related to international entry into the U.S.

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## TELLING OUR STORY

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Communications is the storytelling force for Visit Mesa and our curated content reflects both the destination and our mission while grabbing the attention of targeted consumers. Our content creation is dynamic and highlights trends in the travel industry, Visit Mesa news and announcements, partner messaging, advocacy, and localized events, and other key messaging that occurs throughout the year. Visit Mesa is also responsible for topical content that aligns to established national editorial timelines and themes such as Plan for Vacation Day, National Travel & Tourism Week, Black History Month, and other cultural events honored in our country. One of the more successful tools to share our story is the Visit Mesa blog. This format lends itself to long-form storytelling and embedding links to our partner pages as well as sharing photography and video. We share the blog posts on Visit Mesa's social media accounts, including Facebook and Instagram, to enhance their performance and increase viewership and referrals to VisitMesa.com.



## MEET OUR MAKERS VIDEO SERIES

Communications will develop even more storytelling videos as we showcase the makers in our destination. These profile videos will offer a candid, interview-style portrait of our partners and stakeholders for viewers to learn more about Visit Mesa and the Mesa visitor economy. Hosted by Brand Ambassador and Content Strategist Zoey Shircel, the content featured will also be selected by members of the steering committee. The series will be showcased on social media and housed on the For the Love of Mesa website and the Visit Mesa YouTube Channel.

# COMMUNICATIONS



## LOCAL LOVE CONTINUES TO GROW

Visit Mesa will grow the For the Love of Mesa Steering Committee in the coming year so there is representation from all six city districts. The committee is currently made up of residents, local community leaders and influential voices who help shape Mesa's programming. Last year's video series that featured Mesa businesses selected by the committee earned Visit Mesa a Gold Telly Award. Communications will frame their voices and input into a variety of our strategies and will feature members in our 2022 Mesa Life Visitors Guide profiles, secure members as guest bloggers and develop social media stories where we feature committee members' best day in Mesa using their photos and their sentiments about Mesa. Communications will also coordinate a For the Love of Mesa: Local Love Tour and host these ambassadors to a destination experience so they can experience more of Mesa. Exposure to our visitor-related partners and product will secure more admiration and support from this valued group. The committee will also serve as a mighty mouthpiece for Visit Mesa's news, accolades, marketing campaigns, and messaging as they help spread the word about all we are doing in our community.

## FOR THE LOVE OF MESA STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

**Jack Barz**, Organ Stop Pizza

**Josh Coddington**, Arizona Office of Tourism

**David Crummey**, RAIL CDC: Retail, Arts, Innovation, Livability

**Michael Dorr**, Cider Corps

**Tara Hall**, City of Mesa

**Catherine Hanley**, EVE Abroad

**Jeremy Heath**, We Run The Desert Podcast

**Frankie Jo Rios**, East Valley Hispanic Chamber of Commerce

**Tannis McBean**, Las Sendas Golf Club & Vistas Pavilion

**Kathy Norris-Wilhelm**, Canyon Records/Carriage Lane Community

**Alexander Phillips**, 12 West Brewing Tap Room & Restaurant

**Forrest Smith**, City of Mesa

**Mandy Snell**, Core Clarity, Inc

**Kaitlin Thresher**, Downtown Mesa Association



**EARNED MEDIA IMPRESSIONS:** 265 MILLION  
**MEDIA FAM TOURS (IN-MARKET AND VIRTUAL):** 53  
**MEDIA ASSISTS:** 200

#### TRAVEL SCHEDULE

U.S. Travel Association's ESTO Conference	August 15-18, 2021   Los Angeles, CA
Travel Classics West and Arizona Media Marketplace	November 16-19, 2021   Scottsdale, AZ
TravMedia International Media Marketplace	January 23-25, 2022   New York City
PRSA Travel & Tourism Conference	May 22-25, 2022   Spokane, WA
U.S. Travel Association's IPW Media Marketplace	June 6, 2022   Orlando, FL

## PRESS RELEASE SEASONAL CALENDAR

### FALL DISTRIBUTION

Harvest Season Featuring the Fresh Foodie Trail®  
 Fall Break Deals & Events  
 What's New in Mesa 2021

### WINTER DISTRIBUTION

Annual Summit  
 Autism & Accessibility Guide  
 Sports Developments  
 Holiday Events  
 Outdoor Adventure

### SPRING DISTRIBUTION

Downtown Mesa Developments  
 New & Expanded GeoTours  
 Meeting Planner Guide  
 What's New in Mesa 2022

### SUMMER DISTRIBUTION

Stay & Play, Visit Mesa Deals  
 Water Recreation

# ADVOCACY

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Visit Mesa will continue to actively educate the value of the Mesa visitor industry and our destination promise to stakeholders and the community at-large. By extracting key data from internal and external reports, monitoring impactful legislation and collaborating with peer advocates in tourism, we will continue to update the Visitors Mean Business website, expand the presence of this branded asset locally in Mesa and share powerful messaging about the impacts of the visitor industry and its influence in Mesa.

## PRIORITIES

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- Plan and execute the Visit Mesa Visitor Industry Summit in November 2021 to educate and engage our stakeholders. Content will include a keynote on the state of our industry, Visit Mesa's program of work, our key performance indicators that we are striving to reach this business year, and more.
- Actively expand and promote the Visitors Mean Business brand as the leading resource for residents to find the latest information about the impacts of the visitor industry. In addition, solicit the Visitors Mean Business Support Pledge to grow our contact database for future advocacy needs.
- Create Mesa Visitor Economy Communication white papers, commonly referred to as one-sheets, to educate unique audiences in an effective, condensed format. These sheets will be created for board members, City of Mesa staff, partners, state legislators, residents, and other groups to be determined.
- Conduct quarterly Travel Talks to highlight current and pending legislative issues at the local, state and federal levels of government. These events will also be used to outline Visit Mesa advocacy efforts, as well as to uncover collaboration opportunities within our visitor industry.

## GOALS

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<b>VISIT MESA VISITOR INDUSTRY SUMMIT ATTENDANCE:</b>	<b>200</b>
<b>SIGNED VISITORS MEAN BUSINESS SUPPORT PLEDGES:</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>VISITOR ECONOMY ONE SHEETS:</b>	<b>5</b>





Visit Mesa helped establish the Mesa Regional Foundation for Accessibility, Diversity & Inclusion to enhance and implement equity, diversity and inclusion for youth and adults within our community. The Foundation's signature program will inspire Mesa's future hospitality workforce by introducing students from Title 1 and vocational high schools to career opportunities within the industry. Through hands-on projects, experiential site visits, activities, guest speakers, and more, their exposure to the visitor industry and exploring viable career paths in our hospitality community will support Mesa's future workforce. With special emphasis on professional demeanor, networking and leadership, the Foundation expects to present students with prospects for college grants and entry-level jobs at the completion of the program.

In 2022, the Foundation will be partnering with Arizona State University, Arizona Autism United and the City of Mesa. The Foundation is planning a summer camp experience for youth on the autism spectrum that will align with ASU @ Mesa City Center's new campus, offering gaming, coding, digital technology, and virtual reality curriculums paired with peer engagement and mentoring by skilled professionals. Programming will eventually expand to run throughout the school year, with the intention of revealing educational and career opportunities for children on the spectrum as they grow into young adults.

The Foundation will continually conduct fundraisers and seek grant money to enhance and expand upon accessibility throughout Mesa with a special emphasis on technology. Possible considerations include a service that provides on-demand, reactive mobile navigation for people who are blind or visually impaired and non-motorized walking-bikes without pedals for visitors with mobility challenges.



# EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) are a shared value of Visit Mesa, our stakeholders, visitors, and residents. As we work to enhance Visit Mesa's brand value, it is imperative that our organization focus on expanding these initiatives through marketing campaigns, partner collaboration and advocacy efforts. As we strive to be the most accessible travel destination in America, we will continue to expand upon our current efforts, while actively researching and implementing new inclusive programming. In addition, the newly formed Mesa Regional Foundation for Accessibility, Diversity & Inclusion will enhance our overall efforts by supporting additional projects and events.

## PRIORITIES

- Expand the perceived value of the IBCCES Autism Certification program by encouraging partners to promote their accreditation, establishing partners return on investment into the Certified Autism Center (CAC) status, and collecting endorsements and testimonials from our CAC partners.
- Conduct quarterly accessibility and diversity-related trainings, establish a digital library resource for partners and stakeholders, and solicit feedback and participation from partners to better implement the overall initiatives.
- Continue to promote Mesa's Autism Certified City status, Hidden Disabilities Sunflower Program and virtual pre-trip planning tours and itineraries on both the AutismMesaAz.com and AccessibleMesa.com websites.
- Integrate visual representation of Visit Mesa's equity, diversity and inclusion values in marketing campaigns and across our social media platforms, including engagement with more diverse influencers.
- Establish vital programming within the newly formed foundation to align with Visit Mesa's EDI efforts.



**61 CERTIFIED AUTISM CENTERS**

**5 ACCESSIBLE ITINERARIES**

## TRAVEL SCHEDULE

Travelability Summit	August 30-31, 2021   Tampa, FL
DMA West Education Summit	September 29-October 1, 2021   Vancouver, WA
Destinations International Advocacy Summit	October 26-28, 2021   Houston, TX
U.S. Travel Association's Destination Capitol Hill	April 6-7, 2022   Washington, D.C.





[visitmesa.com](http://visitmesa.com)