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POSITIVELY CLEVELAND REPORTS TOURISM INCREASE IN 2013
VISITORS GENERATED \$7.4 BILLION IN ECONOMIC IMPACT AND SUPPORTED 63,394 JOBS

CLEVELAND (Aug. 12, 2014) – [Positively Cleveland](#) released the results of its [2013 Convention & Leisure Tourism Metrics Report](#) today which showed a significant increase in the number of visitors to Cuyahoga County last year. The report is a combination of industry statistics as well as the convention and visitors bureau’s own performance metrics.

According to Cuyahoga County’s 2013 Visitor Volume Study, the number of visitors to Greater Cleveland increased by nearly 4 percent from 15.6 million visitors in 2012 to 16.2 million visitors in 2013.* In addition, the Economic Impact of Tourism in Cuyahoga County, Ohio study released by TourismOhio and Tourism Economics, showed visitors to Cleveland generated an economic impact of \$7.4 billion in 2013, up 6.7 percent since 2011 when the statistic was last calculated.

The economic impact study also concluded the tourism industry in Cuyahoga County supported 63,394 jobs, a 4 percent increase over the number of jobs reported in 2012, while taxes generated from the industry increased from \$886 million in 2011 to \$1 billion in 2013.

“Last year was no doubt a gateway year for the visitor industry to increase its economic impact in Cuyahoga County,” said David Gilbert, president & CEO of Positively Cleveland. “Cleveland’s status as a visitor destination continues to improve, which is validated by these numbers. We expect this momentum to continue as we open six new Downtown hotels and host larger scale meetings, including the 2016 Republican National Convention.”

GROWTH OF CLEVELAND’S MEETINGS AND CONVENTIONS MARKET

The opening of the new Cleveland Convention Center in June of 2013 provided a new, state-of-the-art facility for Positively Cleveland to market to meeting and event planners. Because the city is now able to accommodate a larger capacity, the Downtown core can host more, larger scale events than ever before. Last year, the city welcomed the Rubber Division-American Chemical Society which brought 5,500 attendees, Content Marketing World which hosted 1,200 attendees and the National Senior Games which brought nearly 25,000 visitors and \$36.1 million in economic impact.

The addition of the convention center affords the Positively Cleveland meetings and conventions sales team, along with the hotel community and the convention center, a greater opportunity to reach a broader audience in different markets.

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In 2013 alone, the Positively Cleveland sales team generated a record-breaking number of sales leads. As a result of the continued partnership with the Greater Cleveland Sports Commission, the Greater Cleveland Film Commission, the I-X Center, the new Cleveland Convention Center, Public Auditorium and area hotels, a total of 457 leads were generated for meetings and conventions interested in coming to Cleveland – an increase of almost 40 percent since 2012.

The opening of the convention center also sparked investor interest in Downtown’s convention package. By 2016, Cleveland will add six new hotels to its Downtown landscape, which will increase the city’s hotel offering to 5,000 rooms, a number that includes the 600-room Hilton Cleveland Downtown convention center hotel.

MARKETING/COMMUNICATIONS

In addition to the increasing interest in Cleveland as a destination of choice among meeting planners, Positively Cleveland saw a similar increase from leisure media at the local, regional and national levels. As a result, the organization generated more than 1,100 articles in 2013 highlighting Cleveland as a visitor destination. The number indicates an increase of more than 16 percent, due in part to the 90 travel writers the organization’s PR team hosted in 2013.

DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT

In 2013, the Destination Development and Community Affairs (DDCA) team made significant strides to advance how Cleveland looks, acts and feels as a visitor destination.

To that end, Positively Cleveland worked with [LAND Studio](#) and [Applied Wayfinding Information and Design](#) to create two comprehensive plans in order to ensure a seamless visitor experience at all of Cleveland’s world-class destinations. The Wayfinding Master Plan focuses on improved visitor navigation through the city and the Curb Appeal Plan ensures the pathways that take visitors from one place to the next are beautified.

The team also trained more than 900 participants through the [CLE Travelbackers](#) program. The number represents more than 55 organizations who embraced the program’s objective of providing Cleveland’s valued hospitality community with the knowledge and tools to enhance visitor experiences.

“It’s particularly exciting that the increases in the 2013 metrics report are the result of the hard work and the collaboration of our partners that took place last year.” said Gilbert. “We are confident that with our continued focus and effort, we will see Cleveland’s tourism metrics continue to rise.”

The complete 2013 Convention & Leisure Tourism Metrics Report can be found online by clicking [here](#).

ABOUT POSITIVELY CLEVELAND: *Positively Cleveland is Cleveland’s convention and visitors bureau. This private non-profit organization’s mission is to drive economic impact and stimulate community vitality for Greater Cleveland through leisure and business travel. Cleveland welcomes more than 16 million visitors annually. For more information, visit ThisisCleveland.com.*

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**Cuyahoga County’s 2013 Visitor Volume study, D.K. Shifflet, May 2014.*