

ANNUAL REPORT  
2007 Accomplishments  
Lawrence Convention and Visitors Bureau

**JUDY BILLINGS, Director**

2007 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

I am continually amazed at the capacity of the LCVB staff and the effectiveness with which each and every one of them works. The accomplishments for such a small staff and a limited budget rival that of any larger CVB I know. This staff is responsible for the following target markets: leisure travelers, media, conventions & meetings, group tours, sports and film. I'm very proud to work with this group of people.

Lawrence Convention & Visitors Bureau (LCVB) Accomplishments

My role as Director of the LCVB has been to facilitate staff discussions and serve as a sounding board on how to best reach our target markets and to be sure that we operate within our budget for these activities. I am the spokesperson for the Visitor Industry in Lawrence and, as such, I try to make sure the public knows the importance of visitor dollars to our economy. Details of staff work can be found elsewhere in this document.

The LCVB supports local groups in varying capacities as follows:

- Founding partner in the Kaw Valley Farm Tour and continue to be involved in this growing event to feature our agricultural community, marketed, notified area media, placed and paid for advertising and created web page on [www.visitlawrence.com](http://www.visitlawrence.com).
- Created annual Civil War on the Western Frontier brochure, notified area media of events and marketed the event as a feature on [www.visitlawrence.com](http://www.visitlawrence.com).
- Produced and marketed the Lawrence Indian Art Show, developed web page for [www.visitlawrence.com](http://www.visitlawrence.com).
- Participated in planning and marketed Get Downtown!
- Served as consultant and marketed River City Reading Festival.
- Serve on planning committee for Kansas Relays, marketed and supplied welcome baskets for dignitaries.
- Sponsored and marketed Lawrence ½ Marathon.
- Provided bus service to Downtown Lawrence, coordinated hotel stays and marketed Wakarusa Valley Music Festival as well as supported efforts to get a multi-year contract with the state.

- Sponsored, served on planning committee and marketed Old Fashioned Christmas Parade with features in Visitor Guide and [www.visitlawrence.com](http://www.visitlawrence.com)
- Serve on Black Jack Trust chair, events committee for Black Jack Battlefield.
- Organized and hosted a very successful Douglas County Heritage Summit II that was attended by over 50 local people a day after an enormous snow storm.
- Various staff serves on boards and committees as follows: Downtown Lawrence Board of Directors, Lawrence Community Theatre Capital Campaign, Lied Center Board of Directors, PLAY, Travel Industry Association of Kansas Board of Directors.

I have served for the past two years on the Steering Committee for the **Kansas Tourism Initiative (KTI)** to create a plan to enhance the Kansas tourism product and marketing messages to potential visitors on a state, national and international level. A new concept in tourism management called VISIT KANSAS has been introduced in the Kansas legislature through 2007 interim committees. The KTI initiative will operate as an “empowered cooperative effort” involving both the public and private sectors, setting strategies and goals, allocating resources, evaluating plans and programs and maximizing the economic benefits of the Kansas tourism industry. Legislation proposing the new organization and funding will be introduced in the 2008 Kansas legislative session. A stronger state tourism office will obviously benefit Lawrence.

LCVB operates the **Visitor Information Center** in the city-owned Union Pacific Depot. This facility serves us well and we appreciate the generosity of the city. In this capacity, we also serve the city as staff for an average of three building-rental events per week during our daytime VIC hours which include the weekends.

#### **Freedom’s Frontier National Heritage Area (FFNHA) accomplishments in 2007**

My role with FFNHA has been to be the force behind creating this area both politically and to grow the grassroots organization throughout the 41-county area. The following was accomplished in 2007:

- Developed an RFP and conducted a national search for a team of professionals to facilitate the public process for the required FFNHA Management Plan. Staffed a committee from throughout the area to review five proposals, interview three teams and select the final team. The past three months have been spent developing a Scope of Work for the process and reviewing multiple drafts of a contract with the team.
- Developed agendas and conducted the grassroots partnership meetings monthly that have grown from 50 to over 100 participants in the past year.
- Developed a Board of Trustees that has met monthly, adopted bylaws and raised over \$154,000 toward the financial commitment of the Management Plan process.
- Dealt with IRS issues of the 501c3 status of the organization.
- Governors of both Missouri and Kansas have agreed to be Honorary Co-Chairs of the FFNHA Board of Trustees.

- Worked with the National Park Service to develop a GIS map of the entire FFNHA to be linked to the NPS Civil War website in commemoration of the Sesquicentennial of the beginning of the Civil War in 2011.

### Destination Management, Inc. (DMI) Accomplishments

This is an organization that I would not have anticipated one year ago. The commitment by those involved in its creation has humbled me and excited me at the same time. I believe that once DMI is fully operational, it will serve Lawrence and Douglas County very well. It's a process that will take time to accomplish. Major accomplishment:

- Created a new business and moved the CVB to its new space generously provided by the City. I have overseen every facet of this move from obtaining a donation of modular furnishings (some of which the city's Parks & Recreation Department now has in storage for their use) to phone and internet service, business equipment & services and personnel items such as health insurance and a retirement program. It was a two-month whirlwind of cooperation by staff and assistance from every vendor that made a proposal.

### SUSAN HENDERSON, Director of Marketing

#### 2007 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Identified Kansas State University researcher to conduct Advertising Effectiveness Study and worked with him to survey 3,138 potential Lawrence visitors about their perceptions of LCVB marketing efforts and Lawrence. Study revealed:
  - \$59:\$1 return on advertising investment
  - High satisfaction with [www.visitlawrence.com](http://www.visitlawrence.com)
- Produced Lawrence "lure brochure" to be distributed in information racks along I-70 throughout Kansas. Pocket-sized guide will save postage when used to fulfill requests for information when full Visitor Guide isn't necessary.
- Participated in TIA (Travel Industry Association) International PowWow event in April 2007 with Kansas Travel & Tourism.
  - Brought five international travel writers to Lawrence in subsequent months
  - 12 international tour operators here in October for a Familiarization Tour
- Attended Travel Media Showcase with Kansas Travel & Tourism and met with 46 qualified travel writers with interest in Kansas. Conducted follow-up with writers and will continue to work with state office to identify those writers that might be brought to the state to visit.
- Working with Ruf Strategic Solutions to attach demographic/psychographic "cluster codes" to people currently in the LCVB database allowing LCVB to know more about those individuals and how they travel.
- Created Lawrence Media Kit on CD including images and news releases. Using CDs in place of, or in conjunction with, paper media kits saved time and money for LCVB and is increasingly favored way for writers to receive information.

- Initiated use of CleanPix online photo system. This system allows us to upload files to the CleanPix server where they're converted into five different file types. We can send writers and others in need of high-resolution images to the site to download whatever they need. The system saves immense amounts of time and allows writers to view a wider variety of images. It links from our website and allows us to monitor who is downloading what.

**BOB SANNER, Lawrence Sports Corporation**

**2007 ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

- Completed our third and final year of hosting the USA Cycling's Collegiate Road National Championships. By attracting 100 different universities to Lawrence, we introduced Lawrence to these athletes and their parents. The vast majority left with a positive experience of Lawrence and vowed to return. More important, we demonstrated to USA Cycling that the CVB can build consensus and cooperation among state, county and local leaders to host these road events.
- USA Cycling has asked the Lawrence CVB to pursue hosting the 2009 Jr. Road National Championships. This event is considered a "step-up" in USA Cycling's schedule of events.
- AFA's National Girls' Fastpitch "B" Championships. The 2,000 room nights and the \$1.8 million in total direct spending are evidence of the tournament's significant impact. One of the main reasons AFA returns to Lawrence is the ability of the CVB office to secure sponsorships, sell advertising and organize room blocks for teams and complimentary rooms for officials.
- 2007 USATF National Jr. Olympics Cross Country Championships. This event was the culmination of a 2 1/2-year effort to host 2,800 athletes and 7,000 visitors. This event demonstrated the CVB's ability to persevere—despite an initial setback with KU Athletics concerning the use of Rim Rock Farm. Lawrence offered its best: the Lied Center for Opening Ceremonies, Billy Mills as keynote speaker, an exceptional video educating attendees about the Rim Rock Farm tradition and Coach Bob Timmons, and Rim Rock Farm itself, an incredible venue for this sport. We also stayed true to the CVB's mission by generating 1,750 room nights for area hotels.

**KATE EICHTEN, Conventions Marketing Manager**

**2007 ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

- I have met with over 60 meeting planners and associations about bringing their next meeting or conference to Lawrence.
- Distributed information folder containing the facilities guide with all the tools meeting planners will need to assist in the planning process. (See attached list of meeting planners).
- I have supplied more than 40 groups with visitor information and helped with registration at various conferences.

- Estimated cost of services provided is nearly \$13,000
- Have submitted and won three meeting bids.
  - 2008 KS Paralegal Seminar; 60 attendees
  - 2009 HOG Rally (Harley Owners Group); 1,100 attendees
    - For the HOG Rally, I put together a Harley-themed slideshow highlighting Lawrence's attractions and options for activities during the Rally. The slideshow had the orange and black Harley theme throughout and included snapshots of Lawrence and tour options. I worked closely with Ken Burgeon, HOG Member from the OZ chapter in Topeka. We had to secure a minimum 400 hotel rooms as a part of the bidding process to show we could accommodate the Rally. I put together presentation folders for each HOG voting member that included a Lawrence CD titled "Tunes for the Trip" that contained songs that reflect the attitudes, sights and sounds of Lawrence. Also in the folder was a welcome letter from Mayor Hack, a welcome letter from the CVB, and a Lawrence Visitor Guide. I traveled to Junction City, the site of the 2007 rally, to assist Ken with the presentation. Chapter presidents from all around Kansas voted immediately following our presentation to choose the location for the 2009 bid, and we won it over Liberal, KS. My involvement with the planning of this event will significantly increase in 2008.
  - 2009 Kansas County Weed Directors Conference; 300 attendees
- Have submitted six additional bids
  - KU Center for International Business & Research (bid pending)
    - -Site visit has been completed and is awaiting final decision.
  - Kansas Association for Conservation & Environmental Education (bid pending)
    - -Site visit is scheduled for February 1.
  - Local Initiatives Support Corporation (bid pending)
    - -Many options are in place for this conference. Site visit may be scheduled soon; final decision is made by the board of directors
  - Kansas Emergency Management Association (2009, 2010)
    - (Lost to Topeka because Topeka gave sponsorship money for consecutive years)
  - Kansas State Nurses Association (2009)
    - (Lost to Salina because they wanted a more "Western" location)
- Other notable projects & events LCVB has been involved in
  - KSAE Golf Tournament
  - KSAE Trade Show & Convention
  - KU Law Reunion
  - Haskell Team Roping Classic
  - KU Lied Center Family Festival
  - Kansas Gifted Talented Creative Conference
  - Miss Kansas Competition
  - Pur-O-Zone Trade Show & Conference
  - Allen Press Editorial Seminar
  - 2008 Chautauqua

- All-KS Air Tour
  - 125<sup>th</sup> Sigma Chi Anniversary (2009)
  - Knights of Columbus Conference (2009)
- Developed and maintained working partnerships with the majority of the area hotel sales directors. More specifically, I have worked closely with Jamie Davis from the Holidome, Tracey Noll from the Eldridge, and Cindy Bonham from SpringHill Suites working on a wide variety of room blocks and major conference bids that each of these three properties can accommodate.
  - Maintained close working relationships with other properties in town to secure room blocks for various events. Maintaining these relationships strengthens the ties between the LCVB and the hotels and is crucial to the success of future conference business in Lawrence.
  - Made contact with a number of other facilities in Lawrence that can also accommodate meetings or other special events. Working with these venues reinforces the ‘flavor’ and uniqueness of Lawrence that some meeting planners constantly seek.
  - Participated in the 2007 Kansas Society of Association Executives annual trade show in December. I coordinated and sponsored a booth with five other Lawrence representatives to showcase what Lawrence has to offer to conference planners. Other participants were Jamie Davis, Holidome; Tracey Noll, Eldridge; Jeanie Hetrick, Holiday Inn Express; Mary Doveton, Lawrence Community Theatre, Steve Maceli and Janice Cordry, Maceli’s.
  - Theatre & Film Regional Competition (2009). The CVB partnered with KU’s department of theatre and film to secure a regional competition next January. Lawrence hotels will enjoy more than 1,000 room nights and, because the competition is a weeklong event, restaurants will remain busy.
  - The Knights of Columbus annual convention (2009). The event will require multiple hotels in order to offer 600 rooms to convention attendees. These two events will also pose challenges of providing shuttle service and the associated costs.
  - Assisted Bob Sanner with various sporting events.
    - Downtown Cycling Criterium- I alerted the Downtown businesses of the street closing for Sunday’s race in May, and I also helped with details related to the t-shirt that Ashlee developed.
    - AFA Softball - I helped secure hotel rooms, developed a restaurant list for participants, and arranged the meals for the umpires and other officials. Ashlee and I coordinated the delivery of one of these meals; helped with the opening ceremonies at the Lied Center.
    - Junior Olympic Cross Country Nationals-I developed a restaurant list for participants, picked up officials from the airport, and helped with registration and certificate distribution. I also developed the meal tickets for the pasta dinner, and the officials parking pass for race day.

ASHLEE ROLL-GREGORY, Assistant Marketing Director

**2007 ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

- Continued to develop and maintain the CVB website as a comprehensive resource for visitors by ensuring that all information on the site is complete and up-to-date.
- Tracked and reported website traffic, mailed 2,500 event postcards quarterly and 1,100 e-blasts quarterly to qualified Lawrence Visitors.
- Coordinated the 2007 Visitor Guide mailing, which included mailings to new KU Parents and the KU Season Ticketholder list, and managed distribution of Visitors Guides and other publications to state and regional Visitor Information Centers.
- Coordinated the fulfillment of 9,421 Ad Leads in 2007 from various magazines including AAA, Midwest Living and Home & Away.
- Maintained the Access database for all visitor contacts as a result of bureau marketing efforts and sought out new qualified contacts entered into the database.
  - Maintained a profile of the Lawrence visitor and other relevant statistics for advertising placement.
  - Reorganized the LCVB database and streamlined the survey and qualified visitor procedure.
- Maintained an inventory of office and convention supplies.
- Recorded minutes at CVB Advisory Board meetings, sent notice of meetings and distribute minutes and reports to Board.
- Made purchasing and/or printing decisions and kept staff informed of supplies needs.
- Answered phones and helped with general phone/email questions from the public.
- Responded to written, phone and email requests for information on Lawrence.
- Assisted in the production and dissemination of the Annual Destination Management Plan and the CVB Planning calendar.
- Invoiced hotels for online booking commissions as well as online linking fees as well as invoiced advertisers for the 2007 Visitors Guide.
- Assisted with Freedom's Frontier mailing letters, generating fundraising packets and electronic fundraising packets.
- Tracked Transient Guest Tax and collected voluntary hotel reporting numbers from hotels for a monthly city-wide occupancy report.
- Created and recorded two Lawrence iTours which were added to the visitlawrence website in addition to a new online survey and Lawrence video.

- Updated the LCVB visitor database into a more user-friendly interface.
- Streamlined the survey process to ensure that each addition is a qualified contact and potential visitor.
- Helped the Lawrence CVB move to its new location and establish office services.

**DEBBIE WHITE & SONIA REETZ – Lawrence Visitor Center**

**2007 ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

- Assist with hotel information, attractions, restaurants, shopping and relocation information. As the only Visitor Center in Eastern KS along I-70, help people that are traveling to locations within KS or through to neighboring states
- 9,934 total visitors stopped at the Visitor Center during 2007. 4,607 out of state visitors, 1,842 Kansans, 485 international visitors from 44 different countries, 1,018 people in groups and 1,982 Lawrencians.
- Daily Visitor Guide requests totaled at 883 in 2007.
- 2,853 Visitor Guide requests from advertising were sent; also organized and managed the bulk mailing of 23,000 visitor packets to incoming KU freshman parents, KU season ticket holders, marketing requests and CVB database recipients. These “stuffing parties” required that I reserve the work space, gather supplies (bags, labels, visitor guides, envelopes, marketing questionnaires, etc.), solicit volunteer assistance, provide lunch for the work crew, and arrange transportation of completed mailings. A 5,000 packet mailing requires over 100 large post office bags each weighing 25-40 lbs.
- Quarterly & Group Tour postcard mailings. For each quarterly mailing, we label and stamp 2,300 postcards. A Group Tour Operators card was created and mailed to 1,500 tour operators highlighting Holiday events and was sent in February 2007.
- Distributed bulk quantities of visitor guides to area hotels and attractions such as the Lawrence airport, KOA, KU Visitor Center, Dole Center, etc., on a weekly basis.
- Serve as the DMO, Destination Management Organization, for the KS State Tourism Office, in Lawrence. Responsibilities include entering and updating all events in and around Lawrence, along with entering and maintaining attractions, restaurants, shopping listings.
- Update the events calendar for the CVB website.
- Coordinate with group tour operators to create specialized itineraries for future history tours in 2008. Conducted four step-on-guided tours for various motorcoach groups. Hosted NTA pre-National Conference FAM Tour. Gave group a walking tour of Downtown Lawrence before sponsoring dinner at Free State Brewery, then toured



Lawrence on way to Holiday Inn Express that donated rooms for the group. I also serve on the Tour Kansas organization that meets bi-monthly throughout the state.

- Coordinated Hotel Hospitality Training. Created a contest, combination of Jeopardy/Wheel of Fortune, for hotel front of the house staff. This event is to keep hotel personnel up-to-date on the attractions, events, history, shopping and restaurants in Lawrence.
- Worked with Ashlee to create the three new iTours-Quantrill's Raid, Downtown Lawrence, and Oak Hill Cemetery audio tours. We have these tours available at the Visitor Center on CD for purchase or the iTour can downloaded via the website or borrowed on an LCVB-owned iPod.
- Represented the Lawrence CVB and Douglas County at the Kansas Sampler Festival in Garden City May 5-6, 2007 and travel show at Fort Riley in March 2007.
- Worked with Katie Armitage during Civil War on the Western Frontier to educate children 7-12 about Mud Forts that were used during the 1850s.
- General office duties – Compile monthly statistics that include visitors, phone calls, VG requests, film viewing, hotel referrals, group tour inquiries, and bulk mailings.
- The Visitor Center supervises all Depot reservations that occur during our hours, Monday – Saturday 9 am – 5 pm, Sunday 1 – 5 pm. In 2007 there were 122 events supervised by Visitor Center staff and in addition we fielded a total of 425 inquiries about rental of the Depot, 232 telephone calls and 193 walk-ins.
- Freedom's Frontier National Heritage Area is where I spend at least half my time. I serve on several committees; Steering – we create the agendas for the monthly meetings; Tours – we are developing tours for the entire 41 county region that can be used by families, individuals, schools and motorcoaches; Visitor Readiness/Site Review – we will visit all 200 sites that have submitted forms (these are divided among seven committee member); and Website.
- Maintain the FFNHA website by posting monthly agendas and minutes, update the events calendar, and collect and organize the Visitor Readiness submissions. I also maintain a database of over 300 grassroots partners whom I correspond with electronically -send monthly meeting announcements with agendas & minutes and other pertinent communications. Field numerous questions about different aspects of the heritage area from the partners.
- Debbie White attended the International Heritage Development Conference in Detroit with Judy Billings and David Dunfield in June 2007 and a Interpretation Seminar held in Salina.
- Work with 30 volunteers who contribute over 2,000 hours in 2007 helping visitors to Lawrence and assisting with bulk mailings.

- Planned and organized volunteer celebrations including the annual Visitor Information Center's anniversary dinner, the volunteers' Christmas luncheon/party with special appreciation gifts for each volunteer, and various volunteer potluck dinners throughout the year.
- Composed the monthly volunteer newsletter. The "Volunteer Connection" informs volunteers of upcoming community and volunteer events, CVB happenings, current visitor statistics, and any other information required to keep volunteers up to date.
- Scheduled and supervised all monthly volunteer educational events, e.g., Eldridge Extended tour, Kugler Winery tour, Prairie Park Nature Center.
- Organized and made presentations to groups of school children, tour groups and civic organizations who scheduled field trips to the Visitor Center. The talks included historical information about Lawrence, the depot and the Visitor Center. Most of my groups also viewed the film and were given a guided walking tour around the grounds.
- Maintained an adequate inventory of office supplies, secured the building daily and reported maintenance issues to the Parks and Recreation department.
- Cleaned and maintain the building, as needed, to present an acceptable appearance for visitors. In addition, provided seasonal decorations for the Visitor Center area during the holidays.