



BOWLING GREEN, OHIO

ANNUAL REPORT 2024

Visit BG Ohio

HIGHLIGHTS

Visit BG Ohio will promote Bowling Green as an ideal location for events and meetings, attract leisure visitors through unique experiences, and offer exceptional hospitality to ensure visitors keep returning.

GRANTS \$25,259.32

Visit BG Ohio (VBGO) awarded tourism grants in 2024 to several organizations that impact tourism in Bowling Green. Our commitment to these grant recipients went much further than to just provide them with the requested financial support of the grant. VBGO worked alongside these organizations providing resources, connecting partners, and participating in events.

Grant recipients do have to meet the criteria set in the application. Grants that are applied for by September of the previous year and are approved and included in the budget. The requested monies are awarded when a final report of the event is received.

The Bowling Green Curling Club applied for this grant to help support a four day bonspiel and eclipse celebration at their facility. The Eclipspiel was held April 5 - 8 and involved sixty teams (240 curlers) of which 85% were out of town players from twenty states. Many of these out of town guests also brought friends and family. Direct Spend included an estimated 320 hotel room nights \$35,200 and Registration and entry fees another \$31,500. They also spent just over \$20K on rentals, shuttles, entertainment, food, signage and more with local businesses.



With Bowling Green being in the path of April's solar eclipse, the curling club decided to host a curling tournament the weekend leading into it.

To calculate Indirect Tourism Spending (ITS*) for events in Bowling Green, including spending at restaurants, retail stores, grocery stores, gas stations and more, a professional team is needed for surveys and analysis. We have not made the investment to do that but would like to emphasize the significant role tourism has in economic development.

The event drew a lot of media attention and that is always exciting for the prospect of interest in Bowling Green as a place to hold an event.

Visit BG looks forward to working with the Curling Club in 2025 on another large event they are bringing to Bowling Green.

Wood County Historical Society requested grant monies to expand their Early Ohio on the Portage: A Living History Weekend. This event was May 3 - 5th at the museum and included a timeline of living history featuring portrayals/costumed interpreters from 1700-1865.

The request from WCHS was to expand their advertising to include billboards, digital media, paid social media, additional event signage and miscellaneous event necessities. The event was marketed as a multi-day, family friendly event in the hope of attracting that overnight stay at our hotels, but we were not able to attract this. This event did not have an admission fee so the direct spend was related to the event expenditures which were about \$7400.

The event received digital, print, and social media attention. The increase in attendance from



500 to 1500 was exceptional and shows how great the interest is in historic interpretation. The organization will be continuing the Early Ohio on the Portage program and are looking at another enhancement to the weekend with a "Bridgerton like ball."

The National Tractor Pulling Championships brings 60K people to Bowling Green for a three day event that is known internationally. A grant from Visit BG continues to provide essential hospitality services for the guests of Bowling Green hotels with shuttles to and from the fairgrounds and a stop downtown. Visit BG coordinates this shuttle service for NTPC as well as providing a hospitality tent at the event to help visitors with their questions about where to eat or shop and other attractions in BG.



Black Rights, Activism, Visibility, Equity better known in our community as BRAVE.

requested grant monies to assist them in continuing the tradition of holding a Juneteenth Festival for the Bowling Green community and our neighboring communities. This event was held June 15th at the Wooster Green.

The Juneteenth Festival unites a diverse crowd to celebrate freedom and culture. The celebration included live music, food, 10 Black owned businesses selling their products, and



activities for children. Approximately 550 attended the event, 8% from out-of-state and the others came from in state making this one of the top-attended Juneteenth events in the Northwest Ohio region.

The event confirmed ten hotel room nights with a direct spend of about \$1100.00 and an additional \$15.5K spent locally for event expenses.

The event received a lot of media attention both to the lead up and the day of the event.

The Ohio Wine Producers Association applied for this grant for the third in a three year commitment. The OWPA provides these events to educate guests about Ohio wines and let them sample a wide variety in one place. It is a wonderful way to encourage visits to the wineries at another time too!

Each year this event is held at the Pratt Pavilion which is a very versatile venue at the Wood County Fairgrounds. Nine Ohio wineries participated and close to forty additional vendors. Most people stayed for 2 - 3 hours enjoying the wine and the company of family and friends. There were over three hundred ticket sales to wine enthusiasts from as far away as Cleveland as a direct spend of about \$13.5K. The event organizers also spend \$11K locally for event related expenses. This weekend was also Family Weekend, so it offered another activity for BGSU families a fun thing to do too.



The one exciting thing was that the hotel rooms were full, but we are not sure how many hotel rooms were generated from the event vs Family Weekend.

We are working with OWPA on helping them to make connections with some local events on a new concept they would like to try in 2025.

SPONSORSHIPS - \$74,352.00

- Soccer Challenge
- 4 x 4 Fest
- BG Boom Festival and Fireworks
- Bowling Green Pickleball Courts
- BG Youth Baseball
- Firefly Nights
- Holiday Parade
- Wood County Museum - Music at the Museum and Free First Fridays

MARKETING - \$89,206.30

Publications

- State of Ohio Official Travel Guide
- Ohio Magazine
- Extended Weekend Get Aways
- Destination Toledo Visitors Guide
- Kids Linked - Metro Link
- Bowling Green Visitors Guides
- Bowling Green Magazine

Digital

- Great Lakes Publishing
- M & P Media
- ITI Digital

Social Media

- Facebook 6.4K Followers up five hundred from 2023
- Instagram 2.2 K Followers

Trade Shows and Events

- AAA Travel Show - Columbus
- Sports Destination Conference - Portland Oregon
- S.O.A.R. - BGSU Student Orientation
- BGSU Family Weekend
- BGSU Homecoming
- NTPC - Welcome Booth
- Business Expo
- Wood County Chamber Day at the Fair

TV and Radio Appearances/Interviews

- WTOL 11
- NBC 24
- ABC 13
- The Morning Show WBGU 88.10 FM

MAKING CONNECTIONS

Memberships

- Visit Northwest Ohio Co-Op
- Ohio Travel Association

Conferences

- Ohio Travel Association in Toledo, OH
- Destination Toledo Tourism Updates

INVESTMENT IN PEOPLE

Taylor Ramos

In 2025 we will provide Taylor Ramos - Marketing Lead, the opportunity to participate in the Ohio Travel Leadership Program. This is a 6 month program in which she will have the opportunity to meet State Leaders in the industry, participate in a class project and meet counterparts from the area.

Lindsey LaPinta

We provided a part-time internship for Lindsay, BGSU Student, Science in individualized Business with a minor in Entrepreneurship. Lindsay was a huge help with our Bowling Green Magazine with a creative eye in designing advertisements, provided great content for our social platforms and more. At the conclusion of her internship, we offered her a part time position to help with creative.

Emma Riedel

We provided a full-time internship for Emma, BGSU Student Majoring in Tourism, Hospitality and Event Management. She was helpful in creating blogs for our audience, wrote a press release, social media content, helped at the Student Orientation events at BGSU and interacting with visitors at other events, helped with the magazine. At the conclusion of her internship, we offered her a part time position until she left for international study.

IT'S A WRAP

Bowling Green Magazine

The Bowling Green Magazine was first published in 2021 as a piece to be in distribution for 2 years. Due to the pandemic, we had an excessive number of magazines left to be distributed and planned to publish the 2024/2025 edition. This project was set to be long-term, which we had set money aside for and estimated the project cost of \$60K from previous publication estimates. The project for the Bowling Green Magazine took about 9 months to complete with the most intense part of the project happening January through March 2024.

The project was completed on time and provided a comprehensive and attractive piece to be used to promote Bowling Green to visitors and those looking to relocate.

We accomplished this under budget 46,792.50 and we were even able to distribute 20K copies polybagged with the Ohio Magazine which was a new tactic used to increase distribution to a direct market. In addition to this, we also followed a traditional path of having the magazine at all CVB and DMO's in Ohio, rest stops, events, and mailing by request.

LOOKING AHEAD

Visit BG Ohio understands the need to have an attractive, user-friendly website that provides essential information for people looking to plan a trip. We have made several enhancements to the website since 2021, but it is now time to evaluate if we need a refresh or a redesigned website for the most engaging experience the user can have.

We have started to research the needs of the user, assets we need for content, the