



Q4 2022 - CVB Report to the Board

For many the end of the year brings a slower pace, but not for your CVB. We closed down the Taughannock Overlook visitor center. We continued to review the redesigned website for errors and broken links. Work on the 2023 Travel Guide updates began in earnest. Marketing of the conference center was ramped up, as was travel trade engagement. Q3 Grant reports were submitted. The 2023 NYS Matching Funds grant application was submitted and approved. And, we moved into our new offices at 124 Brindley Street!

Here is a brief snapshot of the work accomplished by the CVB team in the fourth quarter of 2022:

MARKETING

With the launch of the new website, we have been anticipating a decrease in traffic, for the first six months. In December, **VisitIthaca.com** received 22,500 sessions overall, a 35% decrease from 2021. Despite the decreases expected following a website redesign, Visit Ithaca outperformed other DMOs in engagement metrics, including organic pages per session which is **11% more than DMO average**, and average session duration was 4% longer than DMO average.

Organic sessions numbered 14,700 this year, a 30% decrease from 2021. Organic clicks numbered 12,200 in December, a 4% decrease, while organic impressions numbered 700,800, a 33% decrease. **Despite the decreases, organic click-through rate experienced an impressive 44% growth, while average ranking position improved by 26%.**

website traffic	Q4 2022	Q4 2021
Total Sessions	100, 820	108,622
Unique Users	73,926	101,912
Website referrals to partners	Dec 2022	Dec 2021
Attractions Book Online button	0*	237
Lodging Book Online button	648	344
Visit Website clicks from listing	2707	4768

In Q4 The Book > Direct “Book Your Stay” accommodations widget sent 3407 referrals to lodging properties from VisitIthaca.com

Q4 2022 Social:

We began Q4 with continued sharing of agricultural activities and then transitioned into our winter focus of shopping small and a wonderland of waterfalls. We continued to share reels and static posts promoting partners’ offerings. In December we ramped up our Instagram story promotions by directly sharing partner posts about events or gift ideas to our stories, resulting in an increase for our story reach.

Instagram	December 2022	November 2022	October 2022	Facebook	December 2021	November 2021	October 2021
Instagram Followers	17.5K	17.4K	17.4K	Facebook Followers	43.4K	43.4K	42.5K
Account Reach	19.3K	14.1K	36.5K	Total Reach	62.1K	23.7K	69.3K
Post Interactions	7,108	4,022	13.2 K	Page Engagements	5,281	2,882	7,082
Story Reach	69.8 K	28.3K	20.5 K				
Reels Interactions	1,212	530					

The **Waterfalls Challenge** digital pass continues to engage visitors. There were 140 pass sign-ups and 806 check-ins during Q4 of 2022. A total of 2,764 people has signed-up for the pass since October 2021 with 6,787 check-ins across all locations. We pushed winter waterfalls on our social media channels and have ordered more beanies, water bottles and stickers for people who participate in the challenge to redeem. A-frame signage will be transitioned to the downtown visitor center for Q1.

PR:

We responded to five media queries in Q4 for: a TripAdvisor article about waterfalls and hikes in New York, and a Forbes article about luxury hotels offering Valentine’s Day packages; a PureWow article about NYC Winter Weekend Getaways, Best Hotels for Wellness visits, and Amazing Cities/Towns to Visit in 2023.

We worked with Madden Media, the PR firm that represents the Finger Lakes Regional Tourism Council to plan for a winter photoshoot to take place in February 2023. We also communicated with a writer planning an April or May 2023 visit highlighting Ithaca as a LGBTQ+ travel destination.

We also hosted an outdoors influencer who highlighted our outdoors assets, dining and Grayhaven Motel on social media and is preparing a blog post to be published in January 2023.

Here is a sample of media coverage for Q4 include:

Little Cities That Think Big: 8 Forward-Thinking Destinations Across the U.S. by Afar magazine
<https://www.afar.com/magazine/small-cities-us-visit-right-now>

Best Things to do in Finger Lakes: Weekend Itinerary by With Sunshine Sol
<https://withsunshinesol.com/best-things-to-do-in-finger-lakes-weekend-itinerary/>

Accessible Outdoor Experiences in the Finger Lakes by Life in the Finger Lakes
<https://www.lifeinthefingerlakes.com/accessible-outdoor-experiences-in-the-finger-lakes/>

12 Incredible Things To Do During A Weekend In Ithaca, New York by Travel Awaits
<https://www.travelawaits.com/2817803/best-things-to-do-ithaca-ny/>

10 Hidden Frozen Waterfalls In New York That Are Still Worth Chasing In Winter by Only in Your State
<https://www.onlyinyourstate.com/new-york/winter-waterfalls-ny/>

Ithaca's Many Gorgeous Waterfalls Captivate Year 'round by Discover Upstate New York
<https://www.discoverupstateny.com/blog/33/261/ithaca-s-many-goregous-waterfalls-captivate-year-round/>

SNOWSHOEING at Lindsay-Parsons Biodiversity Preserve (Finger Lakes Land Trust) by Flock Finger Lakes
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vMah5Zk2RC4&ab_channel=FlockFingerLakes

Ithaca, NY: A Land of Gorges, Greenery, Gardens and Goats by Fyllis Hockman, a writer who we assisted during a FAM trip this fall; featured on The Best of Times, Creators and The Epoch Times.

<http://www.thebestoftimesnews.com/article.php?article=2135&issue=879>

<https://www.creators.com/read/travel-and-adventure/12/22/find-gorges-greenery-gardens-and-goats-in-ithaca-new-york>

https://www.theepochtimes.com/find-gorges-greenery-gardens-and-goats-in-ithaca-new-york_4956275.html

11 social posts (8 dedicated to Ithaca/Tompkins County, 3 included in other posts) by Karina Benninger (the FAM visitor from December).

<https://www.instagram.com/kb.hikes/>

SALES

The Sales Team represented Tompkins County at multiple tradeshows in Q4, including Bus Association of New York (BANY) marketplace, Ontario Motor Coach Association, MPI Upstate NY Fall Focus event, Small Market Meetings Conference, Destinations East, and TAP's Virtual December Showcase.

Q4 saw us working very closely with the Ithaca/Tompkins International Airport. We met with the Executive Director of the airport to discuss changes, challenges, ways that Visit Ithaca can support PR & marketing efforts, and produced a Threshold 360 Virtual Tour for the airport. We also captured virtual tours for the Ithaca Marriott Downtown on the Commons and Discover Cayuga Lake.

As we gear up for 2023, we welcomed Isabella Glidden as an intern to the sales team. Training for the Infor Sales and Catering Solution Software for the Ithaca Downtown Conference Center was also completed with the intention of using this platform as a sales tool to respond to RFPs. Additionally, we renewed our contract with BrandUSA for a Spring Canada Multi-Channel advertising campaign.

Sales Team Leads for October -December 2022:

Q4 2022	Definite	Tentative	Lost	Grand Total
# of leads	5	7	1	13
Total room nights	685	1122	30	1837
Economic Impact	\$179,790	\$303,040	\$7,800	\$490,630

VISITOR EXPERIENCE

Q4 means the end of season for the Overlook at Taughannock Visitor Center. Visitation at the Overlook Visitor Center was slightly down 14% over record setting 2021 numbers but we outpaces 2020 and 2019 by 134% and 36% respectively.

We extended well wishes to Site Supervisor, Ryan Shehu in his new role as Sales Manager for Visit Detroit. We also bid farewell to Visitor Experience Specialists Beth Duff and Marybeth Bunge, who are relocating to be closer to family before the 2023 season. These transitions presented the opportunity to assess current

operational needs and the creation of a Visitor Experience Manager role. We are interviewing candidates now and will post for Visitor Experience Specialist positions in January.

Work continued to support the marketing team to transition partners to the new events platform and to update the lodging list for the 2023 travel guide. Work on the 2023 Ithaca Loves Teachers celebration has ramped up too.

By the Numbers:

	Q4 2022	Q4 2021	Q4 % change	YTD 2022	YTD 2021	YOY % change
Phone	223	262	15%	1306	1432	-9%
ESD Traffic*	0	22	-100%	65	104	-37%
DVC Traffic	798	921	-13%	4198	2996	+40%
Taug. Traffic	5776	5866	-1%	41839	48386	-14%
Chats	206	215	-4%	1007	1745	-42%
TG Requests	308	456	-32%	2958	3823	-23%
Off-Site Events	4529	2481	+82%	17924	4780	+275%
Total	11840	10223	+15%	69297	63266	+9%

*ESD VIC closed to public