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CUYAHOGA COUNTY 2022 VISITATION UP BY 12%, OUTPERFORMS STATE OF OHIO VISITATION GROWTH

All performance metrics experience significant growth for second straight year

CLEVELAND (Oct. 17, 2023) – Destination Cleveland, the destination marketing and management organization for Cuyahoga County, today announced that business and leisure travel generated **17.9 million visits to Cuyahoga County in 2022**. This represents a **12% increase over 2021ⁱ**, which outpaced the State of Ohio's 6%ⁱⁱ growth rate and was slightly ahead of the U.S. domestic visitation growth rate of 11%ⁱⁱⁱ. In 2022, visit volume reached 92% of 2019 levels.

Data from Tourism Economics, a division of Oxford Economics, shows that both day and overnight visitor volumes grew, with day visits growing at 12% and overnight visits increasing by 11%. Day visitors represented 58% of the total number of visitors to the region, while 42% were overnight visitors, which is consistent with Cuyahoga County's visit distribution over the past three years.

"2022 was a new beginning for the travel and tourism industry – we're back on track as an industry that infuses money into the economy and contributes to positive perceptions of Cleveland as a place to live and work," said David Gilbert, president and CEO of Destination Cleveland. "Destination Cleveland, as the steward of the industry, remains steadfastly committed to leading the industry to its pre-pandemic success levels as quickly as possible. Through collaboration, our visitor economy can and will contribute to the region's long-term equitable growth."

When looking at the past 10 years (2013-2022), travel and tourism's impact in Cuyahoga County is unmistakable. Visitation is up nearly 11%; direct spending is up 31%; employment income has grown by a staggering 61%; and taxes generated have increased by 53%.

Direct Sales and Economic Impact

Visitor spending continued to positively affect the local economy^{iv}. Travel and tourism in Cuyahoga County accounted for **\$6.4 billion in direct sales**, contributing to a total economic impact of \$10.6 billion. This 19% increase in direct spending represents **101% of 2019 levels** and is ahead of both state (+13%) and U.S. domestic (+6%) travel spending increases in 2022.

Employment, Taxes Generated and Resident Tax Offset

Travel and tourism produced **\$3.5 billion in employment income for locals** through about **69,200 jobs** in Cuyahoga County, representing one of every 14 jobs in the county^v. The increase of 5,200 jobs from 2021 represents a significant rebound – reaching 99% of pre-pandemic employment (69,500).

The industry generated **\$1.5 billion in federal, state and local taxes**, resulting in a **savings of nearly \$1,330 in taxes for each Cuyahoga County household**.

"Visitors continued to help drive the Cleveland economy in 2022, spending \$6.4 billion throughout Cuyahoga County and supporting the local community through jobs, wages, and taxes," said Adam Sacks, president of Tourism Economics. "While growth in the U.S. economy is expected to slow in 2024, the recovery in business activity and sustained strength in leisure travel should allow Cleveland's visitor economy to continue to grow."

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Recovery to 2019 Performance and 2023 Outlook

In 2023, Cuyahoga County's travel and tourism industry is moving forward at full strength. Compared to 2019 data for both the State of Ohio and U.S. domestic travel, Cleveland fares as follows:

- 2022 **visit volume** reached 92% of pre-pandemic (2019) visits, which slightly trailed the U.S. domestic recovery at 97% and the State at 103%.
- 2022 **visitor direct spending** reached 101% of 2019 levels, which is ahead of the U.S. overall at 93% but trailing the State at 110%.
- 2022 **employment** recovered to 99% of 2019 totals, which is ahead of State recovery at 95% and only slightly behind U.S. overall employment recovery at 102%.

When looking at 2023 lodging performance data (the most real-time indicator for the industry), Cuyahoga County's travel and tourism recovery is on pace with regional drive markets and only slightly trails the US overall. Through August 2023, hotel performance^{vi} in Cuyahoga County is strong in key categories:

- 2023 **YTD Hotel Occupancy** is at 96% of 2019 levels, which is slightly ahead of the U.S. overall at 95%. Among its peer cities, Cleveland has the top recovery percentage.
- 2023 **YTD Hotel ADR** is at 116% of 2019 levels, which puts Cleveland at third highest among its peers and on pace with U.S. overall (118%).

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ABOUT DESTINATION CLEVELAND: *Destination Cleveland is Cleveland's destination marketing and management organization. The private, non-profit organization's mission is to stimulate economic growth by attracting people and connecting them to experiences that illustrate Cleveland's diversity, creativity and contagious passion. In 2022, visitation increased 12% over the year prior to 17.9 million visits. For more information, visit www.thisiscleveland.com.*

ⁱ Metrics sourced from Cuyahoga County's 2022 Visitor Volume study produced by D.K. Shifflet as well as the 2022 Tourism Economics Cleveland Visitation Report.

ⁱⁱ Data sourced from [TourismOhio 2022 Economic Impacts Report](#)

ⁱⁱⁱ Data sourced from [U.S. Travel Association Summer 2023 Travel Forecast](#)

^{iv} Data sourced from Tourism Economics, a division of Oxford Economics and a world leader in global forecasting and quantitative analysis.

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^{vi} Data sourced from STR, Inc., a leading provider of premium data benchmarking, analytics and marketplace insights for the global hospitality industry