



March 24, 2023

Revised May 10, 2023 following guest tax election

Norman City Council
201 West Gray St.
Norman, OK 73069

Dear Mayor and Council Members,

I am happy to present the Fiscal Year 2024 budget and strategic plan of work for VisitNorman. The last several years have brought unprecedented chaos and change to the hospitality industry. We have seen the industry rebound and begin to approach pre-pandemic numbers. The dollars spent by visitors in Norman improve our citizens' quality of life by supporting the shops and restaurants that we all love to frequent. They also contribute to sales tax collection without the need for many services that Norman citizens use. We are excited for the upcoming year and plan to do some great things!

Fiscal Year 2024 Strategic Plan of Work

Marketing Plan

Among the marketing strengths for VisitNorman is the inherited brand awareness that many years of quality earned media impressions and hearty social media followings along with search-engine optimization that have made search-engine marketing, digital campaigns and sponsored social media posts more credible and effective. In FY24, VisitNorman plans to build upon new digital platforms while moving away from traditional print advertising. This includes shifting to more video-focused content and promotion.

Privacy policies may make it harder to collect data from our visitors through their cell phones, but we will continue to use data to analyze best uses and practices for our marketing programs.

Looking forward to FY24, continuing to grow impressions (with an emphasis on the Public Relations efforts to grow engagement) will be the top priority. Emphasizing impressions, imagining a wind tunnel, will allow secondary efforts like the digital banners and retargeting campaigns to sweep up with overall visibility.

Madden Media has been our long-term outsource partner for SEO, SEM and social media sponsorship with Multiview as our long-term digital retargeting campaign partner. These work in concert as a user searches for Norman and is then directed to our website by Madden and after arrival will be served VisitNorman banners in a Multiview retargeting campaign to reinforce the visibility.



The Sooner Sports campaign is multifaceted and is led by the Game Day Central page on SoonerSports.com and social media posts that tag and/or identify VisitNorman. Direct referrals to VisitNorman.com are the main goal while adding followers to our social media channels who will see year-round follow our messages as the secondary goal. The increase in the guest tax will allow us to partner with student athletes through Name, Image and Likeness to run a “My Home Town” campaign with athletes showing off their favorite parts of Norman.

Similarly, the digital campaign with TravelOK.com not only increases VisitNorman’s visibility on the state’s tourism website but also allows for a direct click-through to our newly designed website. The display print placement in the state travel guide allows for Norman to be represented at international, national and regional consumer travel shows when we are not able to be present.

We will continue to support our local events and festivals. Being able to provide support to newer initiatives like restaurant week, Brewtoberfest, holiday carriages between Campus Corner and Downtown can provide the seed money. Being able to provide additional cash investments in more established festivals and events can provide the kind of catalyst to ensure endurance.

Long-standing marketing pieces remain in the marketing budget. The state travel bag sponsorship means that VisitNorman has our logo alongside other destination marketing organizations on the recyclable bag that is distributed to various audiences by the state travel office. Our email marketing investment is intended to reach the contacts we have been collecting for more than 20 years and serving them with marketing messages throughout each year. Constant Contact is the supplier we have been using for the last several years and one advantage is that we are able to remain compliant with the evolving legislation regarding privacy, spam, etc.

Our visitors guide will continue to be distributed in all of our welcome bags, at tradeshow and conferences, and through our partnership with TravelOK. The guide is a collaboration with The University of Oklahoma with them providing about a third of the pages and distribution points at the OU Visitors Center. A portion of the printed guides are also warehoused by the state travel office to send out to users who have requested our guide on their website, the visitor guide fulfillment. Guides are also very popular to be added to welcome bags for conferences, conventions, meetings and other gatherings at our meeting places.

For the past several years, we have also invested in an app that duplicates most of the information from our visitors guide and our website. This app is especially important to the younger demographic in our audience.



Sales Strategy

In FY24 the VisitNorman sales team will ramp our conference and convention efforts back up as business travel rebounds back to pre-pandemic levels. Local interaction will continue to be important as we work to engage partners and community members looking for meeting and event prospects. We will also work on state level to continue to build relationships with our Oklahoma state associations. This will include sales blitzes targeted at local and regional planners.

Sales blitz goal of *one* per quarter (two examples below):

- **Theme: Road Trip**
 - Highlight: hotels, unique meeting space, outdoor offerings and upcoming festivals
 - Client gift ideas: Norman-themed car BINGO, gas card, MIO snacks, VN ice scraper, luggage tag, etc.
 - Potential contacts/clients: Oklahoma-based associations/government/hobby (and North Texas)
- **Theme: 1889**
 - Nod to Yellowstone/1883
 - Highlight: hotels and meeting space, of course—but emphasize Western/Native culture and flair offered in Norman (from the Sam and Fred to BBQ and live music venues)
 - Client gift ideas: embroidered bandana, Mason's peanuts, Ray's BBQ sauce (or similar), Toby Keith "something or other," 6-pack local beer, etc.
 - Potential contacts/clients: American Bus Association (or similar *leisure* group tours); work with Angel/Morgan/Chickasaw Nation for potential contacts

The sales team will continue going to tradeshow to meet with planners on a one-on-one basis.

While we always believed youth sports were recession proof, we have now seen they are also pandemic proof. Throughout the past two years, sports tournaments helped to keep the lights on at our hotels and drove occupancy. The Norman Forward projects are set to be completed this year and VisitNorman is working to create a sports commission that will work with the local operators to attract tournaments, meets and events at the facilities when not being used by our local leagues. The new sports venues provide a tremendous opportunity for visitor growth in Norman.

Norman Sports July '22-June '23

Sales Blitz goal of 2 per year (examples below)

- **Theme: SEC campaign**

- Highlight Norman's sporting complexes, unique meeting space, upcoming Norman tournaments.
- Client gift ideas; signed football/basketball by coaches or premier OU athletes.
- Potential contacts/clients: visit SEC opponents cities, meet with the following youth programs soccer/basketball/cheer/baseball/softball.
- **Theme: Big-12 Farewell Tour (Texas specific) Waco, Lubbock, Austin, Fort Worth**
 - Highlight Norman's sporting complexes, unique meeting space, upcoming Norman tournaments.
 - Client gift ideas: Rays BBQ sauce, local brews, Dara Marie cookies. Signed picture from Toby Keith or other "Oklahoma" artists.
 - Potential clients: Partner with Mickey Mantle & Perfect Game to meet with their client base to encourage additional play-in tournaments throughout the year, or leisure travel.

On May 9, the guest tax was increased from 5% to 8% thanks to the overwhelming support from Norman citizens. This will allow for the creation of the Norman Sports Commission, or **NormanSports**. The sports commission will be a blended structure under the umbrella of VisitNorman with a Director, Event Coordinator and shared marketing services.

NormanSports will enhance community messaging and marketing by expanded communications between stakeholders, local media and hospitality community within the local sports community. We will also broadcast our success, press releases, social media among traditional media outlets, including economic impact data to raise awareness among events right holders, planners and organizers.

The commission will work on targeted nation outreach attending industry conferences and conventions. The team will conduct sales trips and familiarization visits taking local program leaders and elected officials. Norman is known as a sports town and we now have the venues and resources to take advantage of that reputation. Work has also already begun to expand partnerships with OU Athletics, Parks & Rec and other community stakeholders.

One of the most exciting aspects of **NormanSports** will be creating our own events. We will always compete to bring events like the BEEP Baseball World Series to Norman but those are competitive and not guaranteed to come back year after year. When we create and own events we know those will be here each and every year. The event coordinator will work to create special events like half marathons, softball tournaments, triathlons and others.

Finally, the additional revenue generated will include a dedicated portion going towards venue enhancement of Norman Forward projects. These enhancements and upgrades could include things like bleachers, lighting, shade structures and more. This will increase our ability to attract tournaments, but also provide better experiences for our own Norman leagues and competitors.

There is a renewed energy within the travel and tourism industry and VisitNorman is ecstatic to be marketing Norman to visitors. We have a one-time opportunity to prepare Norman for our move to the SEC.

VisitNorman is excited to help roll out the welcome mat and prepare our city to make a tremendous first impression.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Dan Schemm".

Dan Schemm, Executive Director