



Annual Report Fiscal Year 2021

Photo Credit: Council Bluffs Photography by Buck Christensen

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Council Bluffs, IA 51501

UNleashCB.com



un LIKE ANYWHERE ELSE.
ON PURPOSE



LEAVING NO STONE UNTURNED...

That phrase, leaving no stone unturned, speaks to the work of the Council Bluffs CVB throughout fiscal year 2021. While the pandemic threw everything but the kitchen sink at all of us, the CBCVB responded in kind by using every tool at its disposal to bring business back. Allow me to share some examples with you.

It began with the 2020 summer travel marketing initiative. Working with Council Bluffs hotels, the bureau launched a marketing campaign targeting Iowa and surrounding states with digital advertising. The CBCVB invested \$37,052, created 300,000 impressions, and drove 9,138 visits to UNleashCB.com. Marketing initiatives followed in the fall and spring, spending an additional \$25,250, creating another 1,822,000 impressions, and resulting in 9,398 website visits and 18,000 page views. According to one hotel partner, they realized 582 room nights sold, representing \$52,000 in revenue during the spring initiative alone.

For the first time, the CBCVB initiated a photo contest in the fall of 2020 as another way to engage both locals and visitors to explore Pottawattamie County while increasing the bureau's image library. A second contest was conducted over the winter, and a third commenced in June. The first two contests yielded 214 photo submissions and created 98,210 online impressions.

Local restaurants remained an important priority. The CBCVB broke new ground by promoting restaurants through a bracket competition titled UNleash Your Appetite. Residents and visitors were invited to nominate their favorite Pottawattamie pizza place. The 16 restaurants with the most nominations went head-to-head, vying for votes through four rounds. With more than 7,700 online ballots cast, Pizza King was crowned as the champion. However, all local restaurants came out ahead with additional exposure on social media. The contest generated 92,256 online impressions.

In a similar way, the Omaha Metropolitan Area Tourism Awards brought more attention to hospitality businesses in Pottawattamie, Douglas, and Sarpy Counties. Locals and visitors nominated and voted for the best attraction, hotel, restaurant, and retail business in each of the three counties. The Pottawattamie County winners were Ditmars Vineyard & Orchard, Holiday Inn Hotel & Suites @ Ameristar, Pizza King, and Anytime Tees.

Scott Hoffman joined the bureau's team in October to lead our sales efforts as senior sales manager. He jumped in with both feet to assist event planners in identifying venues, set up hotel room blocks, and in some cases, hold virtual conferences if in-person was not possible. With more than 35 years of experience and his familiarity with CB, Scott proved to be the right person at the right time to navigate sales during an unprecedented time.

Space doesn't permit me to list the many other projects the Council Bluffs CVB pursued during the year. However, I think you will agree that the bureau rose to the occasion to meet these extraordinary times and leave no stone unturned.

Patricia LaBounty
BOARD PRESIDENT



Photo Credit: Mac & V



DIGITAL MARKETING

Despite online activity drastically changing, more web users visited UNleashCB.com in fiscal year 2021 than ever before, growing by 9.98 percent. More blogs were published than ever before, going from 117 to 146 or a 25 percent increase. Furthermore, UNleashCB gained more than 1,100 new social media followers.



967
events
added to website
calendar

* 1,205 in FY 19 and 1,081 in FY 20



130,528 web users

Producing more visits
to UNleashCB.com
than ever before.



146 blogs published

117 in FY 20
80 in FY 19
18 in FY 18



1,128 new social media followers

| | FY 17 | FY 18 | FY 19 | FY 20 | FY 21 | Change (from FY 20) |
|----------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|---------------------|
| SESSIONS | 48,217 | 59,421 | 120,292 | 148,907 | 156,728 | + 5.25% |
| USERS | 39,326 | 49,322 | 90,059 | 118,685 | 130,528 | + 9.98% |
| PAGE VIEWS | 104,089 | 148,810 | 239,282 | 283,864 | 268,825 | - 5.3% |
| PAGES/SESSIONS | 2.01 | 2.50 | 1.99 | 1.92 | 1.73 | - 9.9% |
| AVG. SESSION | 1:42 min. | 1:42 min. | 1:29 min. | 1:27 min. | 1:05 min. | - 17.32% |

SUMMER TRAVEL MARKETING INITIATIVE JUNE 22 - SEPTEMBER 7, 2020

At the beginning of summer, the CBCVB began a digital advertising campaign to promote Council Bluffs hotel stays. Five hotels provided special discounted rates to inspire getaways, reunions, and staycations.

INITIATIVE RESULTS:

| | |
|----------------|------------------------------|
| INVESTMENT | \$37,052 |
| METHODS | Google AdWords, Facebook Ads |
| IMPRESSIONS | 300,000 |
| PAGE VISITS | 9,138 |
| WEB PAGE VIEWS | 12,800 |



PARTICIPATING HOTELS:

Country Inn & Suites, Courtyard by Marriott, Hampton Inn @ Ameristar, Holiday Inn Hotel & Suites @ Ameristar, and Microtel Inn & Suites

FALL TRAVEL MARKETING INITIATIVE

SEPTEMBER 8 - NOVEMBER 30, 2020

Immediately following the summer initiative, the CBCVB maintained its marketing efforts with a second digital advertising campaign working with eight hotels to promote fall staycations and getaway trips.

INITIATIVE RESULTS:

| | |
|----------------|--|
| INVESTMENT | \$5,250 |
| METHODS | Digital geotargeting and retargeting, Google AdWords, and Facebook Ads |
| IMPRESSIONS | 570,000 |
| PAGE VISITS | 1,347 |
| WEB PAGE VIEWS | 2,000 |

PARTICIPATING HOTELS:

Best Western Crossroads of the Bluffs, Comfort Suites, Country Inn & Suites, Courtyard by Marriott, Hampton Inn @ Ameristar, Holiday Inn Hotel & Suites @ Ameristar, Microtel Inn & Suites, and My Place Hotel

SPRING TRAVEL MARKETING INITIATIVE

FEBRUARY 15 - MAY 15, 2021

In February, the CBCVB kicked off a third digital advertising campaign working with nine hotels. For three months, the initiative targeted residents between the ages of 22 and 55 living in Sioux Falls, SD; St Joseph, MO; and Grand Island, Hastings, and Kearney, NE to encourage spring getaway trips to CB.

INITIATIVE RESULTS:

| | |
|----------------|--|
| INVESTMENT | \$20,000 with a \$5,000 grant from the Iowa Tourism Office. |
| METHODS | Digital geotargeting and retargeting, Google AdWords, and Facebook Ads |
| IMPRESSIONS | 1.252 million |
| PAGE VISITS | 8,051 |
| WEB PAGE VIEWS | 16,000 |

PARTICIPATING HOTELS:

Best Western Crossroads of the Bluffs, Comfort Suites, Country Inn & Suites, Hampton Inn @ Ameristar, Harrah's Hotel, Holiday Inn Hotel & Suites @ Ameristar, Microtel Inn & Suites, My Place Hotel, and Red Roof Inn



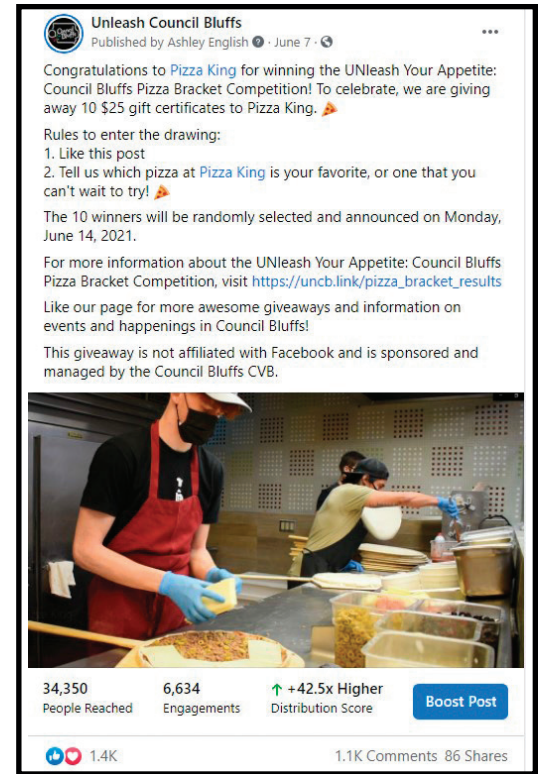
RESTAURANT BRACKET COMPETITION



To promote CB restaurants, the CBCVB launched a restaurant bracket competition on social media. Locals and visitors nominated their favorite Pottawattamie pizza place, and the 16 restaurants with the most nominations went head-to-head through four rounds of balloting, eliciting more than 7,700 votes. Once the public determined the winner, the CBCVB purchased 10 \$25 gift cards and conducted a giveaway on Facebook to promote the winning restaurant.



**PIZZA KING WON
WITH 729 VOTES**



RESULTS:

| | |
|-------------------|--------|
| TOTAL VOTES | 7,707 |
| TOTAL IMPRESSIONS | 92,256 |
| TOTAL REACH | 70,499 |
| TOTAL ENGAGEMENTS | 3,787 |

OMAHA METROPOLITAN AREA TOURISM AWARDS



Omaha Metropolitan Area
TOURISM AWARDS
3 COUNTIES · 2 STATES · 1 DESTINATION

POTTAWATTAMIE COUNTY

2021 WINNERS

BEST HOTEL



**HOLIDAY INN
HOTEL & SUITES
@ AMERISTAR**

BEST ATTRACTION



**DITMARS ORCHARD
& VINEYARD**

BEST RETAIL BUSINESS



**ANYTIME
TEES**

BEST RESTAURANT



**PIZZA
KING**

The OMA Tourism Awards are presented by the Council Bluffs CVB, Sarpy County Tourism, and Visit Omaha to celebrate the businesses and staff that contribute to the area's tourism economy. This year, the public nominated and voted for the best attractions, hotels, restaurants, and retail businesses in Pottawattamie, Douglas, and Sarpy Counties. More than 6,000 votes were cast across the three metro counties.

RESULTS:

| | |
|-------------------|--------|
| TOTAL PAGEVIEWS | 1,236 |
| TOTAL IMPRESSIONS | 71,811 |
| TOTAL REACH | 47,830 |
| TOTAL ENGAGEMENTS | 2,316 |
| TOTAL VIDEO VIEWS | 13,911 |

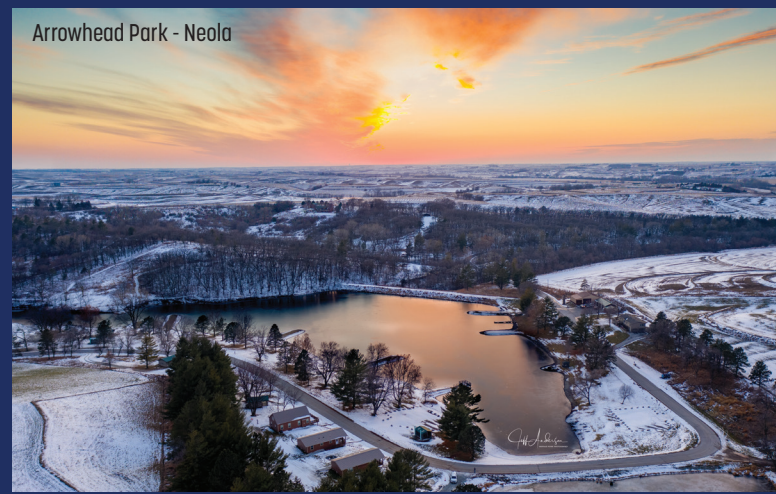
UNLEASHCB FALL PHOTO CONTEST



Hitchcock Nature Center

| | |
|-------------------|-------------------------|
| TOTAL SUBMISSIONS | 118 |
| TOTAL IMPRESSIONS | 61,485 |
| TOTAL REACH | 27,521 |
| WINNER | photographink20 (above) |

UNLEASHCB WINTER PHOTO CONTEST



Arrowhead Park - Neola

| | |
|-------------------|-----------------------|
| TOTAL SUBMISSIONS | 96 |
| TOTAL IMPRESSIONS | 36,725 |
| TOTAL REACH | 29,991 |
| WINNER | Jeff Anderson (above) |

The winners from both contests won a GoPro Hero7.

Submission Breakdown
for Both Contests →



107



83



24

UNLEASHCB PEOPLE'S CHOICE PHOTOS

The CBCVB saw an opportunity for more engagement, so they allowed the public to vote for their favorite photo from each contest. Two hundred and sixty-two votes were received for the fall contest, and 161 for the winter. The winners of the people's choice award were given \$100 worth of gift cards to local restaurants.



Council Bluffs

Troy Burrus



Neola

Jeff Anderson

SALES: MEETINGS & SPORTING EVENTS

Destination sales couldn't face headwinds any stiffer than those during the pandemic. Event cancellations and postponements continued. However, many events went forward, especially outdoor tournaments. Scott Hoffman joined the CBCVB as the new senior sales manager in October 2020. His decades of experience and community connections equipped him with the right tools to leverage opportunities and work around obstacles to secure events.

FISCAL YEAR 2021 EVENTS

| DATES | EVENTS |
|----------------------|--|
| Aug 21-23, 2020 | Peak Performance Fall Classic |
| Oct 22-25, 2020 | Halloween Havoc |
| Feb 4-7, 2021 | River City Classic Gymnastics & Taekwondo |
| Feb 19-21, 2021 | King & Queen of the MAC |
| Feb 25-28, 2021 | Phil Cahoy Sr Cornhusker Classic |
| April 8-11, 2021 | Region 4 Men's Gymnastics |
| April 15-19, 2021 | Heartland USA National Duals |
| April 16-18, 2021 | Rumble on the River |
| April 21-22, 2021 | NJCAA Wrestling National Championships |
| June 2-5, 2021 | Preserve Iowa Summit (virtual) |
| June 9-20, 2021 | US Olympic Swim Team Trials (hotel blocks) |
| June 16-July 1, 2021 | Triple Crown SlumpBuster |



Adidas 3SSB Championships



Triple Crown SlumpBuster

FUTURE EVENTS WON IN FISCAL YEAR 2021

| DATES | EVENTS |
|------------------|---|
| July 16-18, 2021 | Adidas 3SSB Championships |
| Oct 4-5, 2021 | Iowa Museum Association (virtual) |
| Oct 11-15, 2021 | Iowa Association of Realtors Conference |
| Oct 14-17, 2021 | USA Cornhole National Championships |
| Oct 21-24, 2021 | Anime NebrasKon |
| Oct 27-29, 2021 | National Home School Volleyball Tournament |
| Nov 19-21, 2021 | Mid-America Gamers Expo |
| May 5-8, 2022 | Iowa Rural Letter Carriers Association |
| July 7-9, 2022 | Rotary District 5650 Convention |
| Oct 26-28, 2022 | IA Assn of Student Financial Aid Admin Conference |
| Sept 18-20, 2025 | John Whitmer Historical Association Conference |