



Director's Message

This past year truly redefined the tourism industry and left a lasting impact on our destination. As we reflect on the many challenges of the pandemic, and we understand it will take time to fully rebuild (industry experts predict 2024), here in Merriam, we're already recapturing visitation and moving towards recovery.

The pent-up demand for travel has led to more bookings. Leisure and sports travelers are returning. The Merriam Visitors Bureau continues to work in partnership with local businesses to create experiences that showcase our Midwestern hospitality while meeting the needs of our visitors. In-person festivals, meetings, and events are back. Occupancy is gradually increasing as are the daily rates at our lodging properties, and we are slowly but surely regaining business and group cancellations from 2020.

However, as we finally begin to recover from hefty visitor spending losses, the work is far from done. We're now faced with a staffing shortage like we've never seen before. In fact, as of October 2021, there were 300,000 fewer workers in the U.S. hotel industry than two years prior (2022 Deloitte Travel Outlook).

Because travel and tourism was one of the hardest hit industries during the pandemic, we realize the road to recovery requires a new way to promote our destination. In the coming year and beyond, the Merriam Visitors Bureau is committed to helping restore the economic machine that fuels this community. That commitment is what delivers jobs, revenue, and a bright future for our family, friends, and guests. We appreciate your continued support of tourism in Merriam and are pleased to be of service to all those who choose to explore our destination.

Karen Crane

Director

Tourism Data: Local, Regional, and State

2021

TRANSIENT GUEST TAX

The Merriam Visitors Bureau is funded by a portion of the transient guest tax collected from visitors staying overnight in Merriam lodging properties.

(Charter Ordinance No. 23, Section 6)

MERRIAM HOTEL PERFORMANCE

Merriam lodging properties nearly recovered to pre-pandemic levels by the end of 2021.

	2019	2020	2021	% Change from 2020
OCCUPANCY	65.6%	52.6%	65.6%	24.8%
AVG DAILY RATE	\$74.54	\$61.57	\$71.55	16.2%
REVENUE	\$7.6 M	\$4.9M	\$7.3 M	47.4%

DRURY
INN

Sold to a Hotel Lotus in
late December, 2021

extended
STAY
AMERICA

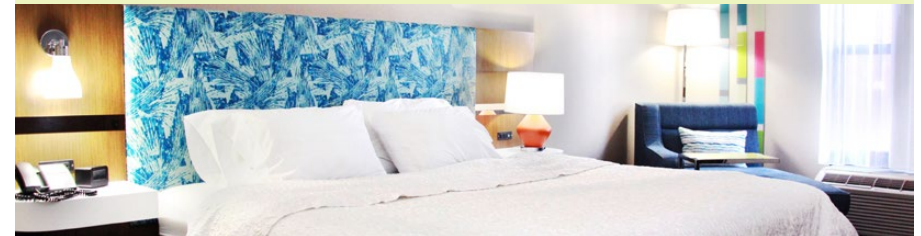
Hampton
Inn

QUALITY
INN

2021 TAX COLLECTIONS

\$406,544

CHANGE FROM 2020: 42.28% ↗



TRANSIENT GUEST TAX USAGE

52.7%

35.7%

6% 5.6%

Merriam Visitors Bureau & Historic Plaza

Special Events
Merriam Marketplace & Farmers' Market
Economic Development



Source: 2018
Economic Impact
Study & Visitor
Profile: Tourism
Economics, an
Oxford Economics
Company -
Longwoods
International

25 MILLION
visitors to Kansas City

Visitors spent
\$5.6 BILLION

47% OF VISITORS
stay overnight

1 OUT OF 19 LOCAL JOBS
are funded by tourism spending

KANSAS

In 2020 alone,
the tourism
industry in Kansas
generated:

Source: Economic Impact
of Tourism in Kansas
2020, Tourism Economics

31.4 MILLION
visitors

A traveler is worth
\$173 PER DAY
to the Kansas economy

Leisure travel accounts for **67%**
of visitor spending and business
travel accounts for **33%**

Visitors spent
\$5.4 BILLION

\$589 MILLION
in state and local taxes is
generated by visitor spending;
without tourism, each Kansas
household would spend an
additional \$520 to replace the
visitor tax contributions

Highlights & Achievements

2021



E-NEWSLETTER

Redesigned the leisure e-newsletter with 975 total subscribers and an average open rate of 26%.

GOOGLE-ICIOUS

Google display ad campaign generated 234,000 impressions and 1,336 clicks.

SUMMER INSTA-CHALLENGE



Summer promotion included a list of 30 places to snap a selfie and play our Insta-Challenge!

GIVING BACK

Hosted "Tourism Gives Back" – a clean-up effort along the Turkey Creek Trail with members of KC Destinations!



AWARDS

Gold PRISM award for the 2020 Visitors Guide
– Public Relations Society of America-GKC
Best Visitors Guide In-House (four years in a row!); Best Online Media (website)
– Tourism Industry Association of Kansas



EXPLOREMERRIAM.COM

Launched exploremerriam.com, and the new site had award winning success.
Here's what the judges said:

"Thank you for the stats on the increase of your page views!! Love the locally made tab!!! The Visitors Guide button at top of page is VERY VISIBLE! Good job! Great sweat equity in this project."

"LOVE the new website design! It is super easy to navigate, highly engaging visuals & color."

"Great site. Robust content, easy to navigate."

"Tabs up front make it easy to navigate! Love the locally made!!!"

TRAVEL WRITERS

Hosted two travel writers at local Merriam stops!

July 9: Jody Halstead

May 7: Roxie Yonkey



FELINE FRIENDLY

Welcomed the first-ever feline visitor to Merriam Historic Plaza – Tia the Cat!

GROUPS

Recaptured four pandemic group cancellations:

June: A+ consulting (corporate meeting)

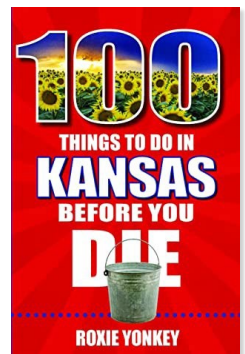
Sept: Bilbrey Tours (Texas)

Dec: Moostash Joe's Tours (Nebraska)

Dec: Mayflower Tours (Illinois)

100 THINGS

Merriam landed twice in "100 Things to Do in Kansas Before You Die" by Kansas author and travel writer, Roxie Yonkey. Shout out to K.C. Strings and Strawberry Hill Povitica for the mentions!





Looking ahead... 2022

- ▶ We're planning an earlier release of the 2022 Community & Visitor Guide, and it will now be mailed to residents and businesses every year!
- ▶ We're adding economic development and business retention to our mix of services.
- ▶ We're discussing a new grant program for our accommodation partners.
- ▶ Merriam Historic Plaza will receive a few cosmetic upgrades after 15 years of operation.
- ▶ We'll welcome 10 out-of-state media writers to Kansas with the Northeast Kansas Tourism Association.

How you can help tourism in Merriam...

- ✓ Share your Merriam photos with friends and relatives; then, invite them to visit!
- ✓ Ask your company to host a meeting, training, or conference in Merriam. Our community center has meeting space that's *Just Right!*
- ✓ Leave our hospitality partners a great review – hotels, restaurants, attractions, and local merchants appreciate your 5-star recommendations!
- ✓ Share the Merriam Community & Visitor Guide with a friend or relative. We can mail one, or you can share the link online!
- ✓ Explore Merriam, shop and eat local – though you might not stay overnight, your spending still helps Merriam's economy.
- ✓ Follow us socially @ExploreMerriam.

