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## THE POWER OF TOURISM

***Mission:** The Alexandria Convention & Visitors Association is the City of Alexandria's tourism marketing agency, tasked with generating the tourism and conventions that increase revenues and promote the City of Alexandria and its assets.*

The Alexandria Convention & Visitors Association is a key driver of Alexandria's vibrant and growing tourism economy. A not-for-profit with **350 members** representing the breadth and depth of Alexandria's offerings, the ACVA is a Partner for Economic Growth with the Alexandria Economic Development Partnership and the Alexandria Small Business Development Center.

### Economic Impact

Tourism has a positive economic impact in both the revenue generated for the City and the additional dollars it contributes to the profitability of the city's businesses.

In 2011, tourism spending generated **\$711 million**, an increase of 8.1 percent, generating city tax revenue of **\$23.1 million**. Visitors supported **6,067 jobs** with a payroll of **\$118 million**.<sup>1</sup>

In five years, visitor spending has increased **22 percent** in Alexandria, dramatically outpacing increases for Virginia and Northern Virginia, both at 9 percent. Since 2007, spending has steadily increased from \$584 million.

### Return on Investment

A 2010 research study found that **every \$1 spent** by the ACVA on destination advertising generated **\$133** in consumer spending and **\$4** in additional tax revenue<sup>2</sup>. Regional advertising generated a return of **\$129** in visitor spending for each \$1 invested and **\$3** of City tax revenue for each \$1 invested.<sup>2</sup>

### Marketing Reach

Annually, advertising placed by the ACVA reaches **100 million** households in the mid-Atlantic region. Advertising campaigns include full-page advertisements in upscale publications such as Travel & Leisure, Food & Wine, and Real Simple as well as strategically placed online advertising.

Regional advertising, important to Alexandria's independent retailers and restaurants, reaches 14.5 million households through radio, online and print media.

<sup>1</sup>Source: Virginia Tourism Corporation, US Travel Association, Smith Travel Research

<sup>2</sup>Source: Strategic Marketing & Research Inc.

The impact of this advertising purchase is heightened significantly by the strategic media buyers who leveraged ACVA's media purchases to earn **\$1 million in bonus advertising** in fiscal year 2012. For the holiday 2012 campaign alone, they leveraged **a buy of \$144,000 with bonus of \$246,000** (yes, the bonus was greater than the buy) for a total holiday campaign value of **\$390,000**.

The newly redesigned VisitAlexandriaVA.com gets **1 million** visits a year, almost twice the traffic generated just two years ago. Approximately half of that traffic goes through the mobile version of the website. Over the past 12 months, the site has generated 800,000 unique visits and 3 million page views.

The VisitAlexandria Facebook page, launched in 2012, now has more than 3,000 followers and is growing. The recently launched Twitter feed has 1,335 followers.

### **Meetings & Sales Generated**

In 2012, the sales team made **80,000 contacts**, resulting in **850 groups leads** with more than **\$31 million** in potential revenue for Alexandria businesses with **\$3.8 million in actualized revenue**.

### **Press Generated**

In 2012, the public relations staff generated **600 media placements**, with placements in print outlets alone valued at **\$425,000** with a circulation of **16.1 million**. Recent coverage has included the *Wall Street Journal*, *Southern Living*, *Baltimore Sun*, *Baltimore Magazine* and *Virginia Living* as well as frequent coverage in the *Washington Post*, *Washington Business Journal* and on local TV network affiliates.

### **Visitors Services**

ACVA greets visitors with:

- Alexandria Visitors Center at Ramsay House, which welcomes **80,000** guests a year
- Official Alexandria Visitors Guide, circulation **400,000**
- Official Alexandria Map, circulation **300,000**
- Visitors Center staff, who distribute free-parking proclamations and assist in with hotel and restaurant reservations
- Promotions including the Key to the City, a coupon booklet with 100 special offers and the twice-yearly Alexandria Restaurant Week
- Information on motorcoach rules and regulations. ACVA actively educates tour operators, Alexandria businesses and residents in order to maintain smooth traffic flow.
- Assistance with short-term and overnight motorcoach parking permits. A combined total of **2,800** permits are processed annually.