



**A  
Snapshot  
View  
Destination Hilliard  
Annual Report**



**2012**



## Highlights of 2012

Tourism directly and indirectly supports businesses, restaurants and attractions. In addition tourism generates tax revenue for local, state and federal governments. Without the tax revenue generated by travel and tourism, each household would pay more in taxes. In addition, the bed tax generated from visitors supports resident amenities. One out of nine jobs (lodging, retail, transportation, food and beverage and entertainment) depends on travel and tourism.

In 2012, Hilliard was recognized as Best Hometown of Central Ohio. A celebration, use of the Best Hometown logo on printed promotional items and in advertisements enhanced the image of the Hilliard community and increased visibility.

Destination Hilliard undertakes new and emerging marketing initiatives each year as a means to increase outreach and improve the visitors experience. Tried and true marketing such as paid advertising, website outreach and free press is only the foundation of our efforts. Social media has become the new staple of marketing. In 2012 we rolled out Pinterest to step up our efforts.

In 2012, there was twelve straight months of increase in bed tax. This can be attributed to increased marketing, June storm, USA Volleyball Tournament, Appaloosa Show, Farm Science Review and the newly opened casino.

### **Partnership Efforts**

Destination Hilliard was proud to partner with the City of Columbus in celebration of their Bicentennial through collaborative advertising and Explore the Heart of Hilliard in 200 minutes, geo cache activity which was funded through a \$10,000 grant from Chase and Greater Columbus Arts Council.

Destination Hilliard partnered with Ohio Humanities Council and the Northwest Franklin County Historical Society to offer a series of historical lectures; Longest Raid on Civil War, History of Baseball and American Presidents and their Sense of Humor.

Destination Hilliard offered a free grant writing seminar for all non-profits in the Hilliard community through a generous partnership with Strategic Links, Christy Farnbauch.

### **Future**

Several new projects were started in 2012 which will be completed in 2013. These projects include a Destination Hilliard Mobi site, Discover Ohio Magazine for Hilliard residents, a Non-Profit Educational Series in partnership with Key Bank, Senior Day at the Fair which will be marketed to assisted living facilities and senior centers across the state of Ohio and the planning of Solebrate! Food and Music Festival, June 21st-23rd, 2013.

# Stats

We continue to gather statistics to measure the success of our efforts and the Return on Investment.

## **Electronic Activity**

Unique web site visitors totaled 8,620, a 32% increase over 2011 with the largest increase during the month of December

E-Newsletter subscription totaled 698, a 240% increase from 2011

Facebook impressions totaled 42,516

Pinterest was launched first quarter of 2012. Currently have 10 boards with 76 pins and 42 followers which have garnered 30 likes and 47 repins.

## **Requests for Information**

Requests for information about Hilliard from leisure travelers, business travelers, group tour operators and meeting planners was 1,751, a 15% increase over 2011. Approximately 15,000 Visitors Guides were distributed throughout the state of Ohio through travel pavilions and visitors bureaus.

Readers Response Leads from Ads: 1,953 compared to 771 in 2011. This was due to more paid ads with response cards being placed. Readers Digest ad landed the biggest response.

Destination Hilliard provided Welcome Packets for groups visiting the city. A total number of 941 were distributed going primarily to those visiting for sporting events or events held at the Franklin County Fairgrounds. In addition, 235 New Resident Welcome Packets were delivered.

## **Press Coverage**

Free press coverage is critical to our outreach, expanding the opportunities by which potential visitors can learn about what's going on in Hilliard, Ohio. Through an aggressive press release campaign 29 press releases were sent with 36 media mentions published.

## **Media Buys**

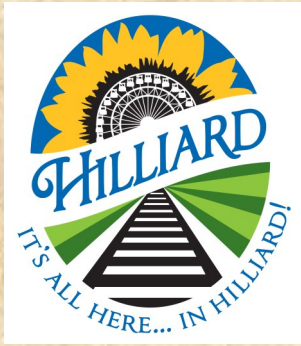
Paid advertising in 2012 included: Readers Digest, Ohio Travel Planner, Ohio Calendar of Events, Ohio Magazine, The Columbus Dispatch Summer Fun Guide, Columbus Parent and Experience Columbus Visitors Guide.

## **Group Tours**

The majority of motorcoach groups come to Hilliard for day trips. They generally visit some of our attractions and have lunch at a local establishment. We saw an increase in group tours in 2012 compared to 2011. Olde Hilliard Christmas drew several tour buses.

Destination Hilliard worked with a number of groups hosting large events and meetings in Hilliard to develop itineraries, provide welcome packets, assist with room blocks and group dining. A number of these events were held at the Franklin County Fairgrounds and Makoy Center.

Sports Tournaments are a growing visitors sector for Hilliard. Lacrosse, soccer, soft ball and cricket tournaments are constantly looking for space and hosting tournaments in Hilliard.



Destination Hilliard

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### **Mission Statement**

Destination Hilliard will engage our citizens and highlight Hilliard's talent, heritage and spirit by inspiring collaboration, sharing resources and facilitating quality events that enhance our community.

### **Awards**

First Place Middy Award

Community Activity

Explore the Heart of Hilliard in 200 Minutes

First Place Middy Award

Destination Hilliard E-Newsletter

Second Place Middy Award

Social Media: Pinterest

Ruby Award

Destination Hilliard E-Newsletter

Ruby Award

Social Media Campaign

### **Membership Affiliation**

Hilliard Arts Council

Hilliard Area Chamber of Commerce

Northwest Franklin County Historical Society

Experience Columbus

Central Area Tourism Alliance

Central Ohio Events Council

Ohio Association of Convention and Visitors Bureaus

Ohio Has It!

Ohio Office on Tourism

### **The Board**

Darrell Mayne, President

Don Byerly III

Rob Fil

Barb Rushley

Bill Utley

Kelly Willis

Executive Director: Christy Clark