

Patty Smith, Chair  
Daniel Hennessee, Board Member  
Michael Nichols, Board Member  
Cristy Buckner, Board Member  
Edward Mondich, Board Member  
Kasey Crutcher, Board Member

Cassie Ham,  
Tourism Marketing Manager



**NOTICE OF MEETING  
TOURISM ADVISORY BOARD  
January 28, 2025  
4:00 PM  
City Hall Conference Room  
504 N. Queen Street  
Palestine, TX**

**Zoom Link:**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81983679712?pwd=DAhx1UMMD9r8dE6Q6aiFcjOzXEIE0n.1>

Meeting ID: 819 8367 9712

Passcode: 016122

One tap mobile

+13462487799,,81983679712#,,, \*016122# US

Note: when you are joining a Zoom meeting by phone, you can use your phone's dial pad to enter the commands \*6 for toggling mute/unmute and \*9 to "raise your hand."

Follow us live at: [facebook.com/palestinetx/](https://facebook.com/palestinetx/)

**A. CALL TO ORDER**

**B. PROPOSED CHANGES OF AGENDA ITEMS**

**C. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Any citizen wishing to speak during public comments regarding an item on or off the agenda may do so during this section of the agenda. All comments must be no more than five minutes in length. Any comments regarding items, not on the posted agenda may not be discussed or responded to by the Board. Members of the public may join via Zoom or in person.

**D. CONFLICT OF INTEREST DISCLOSURES**

**E. MANAGER'S REPORT**

1. Review the November 2024 Tourism Monthly Report
2. Review the December 2024 Tourism Monthly Report

**F. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

1. Consider approval of minutes from the December 5, 2024, meeting.
2. Consider approval of minutes from the January 8, 2025, meeting.

G. **DISCUSSION AND ACTION ITEMS**

1. Review the annotated 2020-2025 Visit Palestine Strategic Plan.

H. **ADJOURNMENT**

I certify that the above Notice of Meeting was posted on the outdoor bulletin board at the main entrance to City Hall, 504 N. Queen Street, Palestine, Texas, in compliance with Chapter 551 of the Texas Government Code on **Friday, January 24, 2025, at 4:30 p.m.**



April Jackson, City Secretary

IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PROVISIONS OF THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA) PERSONS IN NEED OF SPECIAL ACCOMMODATION TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS PROCEEDING SHALL, CONTACT THE CITY SECRETARY'S OFFICE VIA EMAIL AT [citysecretary@palestine-tx.org](mailto:citysecretary@palestine-tx.org) or 903-731-8414.



Agenda Date: 01/28/2025  
To: Tourism Advisory Board  
From: Cassie Ham, Tourism Marketing Manager  
Agenda Item: Review to Tourism Manager's Report for the month of November 2024  
Date Submitted: 01/24/2025

---

**SUMMARY:**

Review the Tourism Manager's Report for the month of November 2024.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION:**

No action is necessary.

**CITY MANAGER APPROVAL:**

---

**Attachments**

November 2024 Tourism Report



## TOURISM REPORT – NOVEMBER 2024

### Hotel Occupancy Income Tax Collected/STR Reporting

	November 2024	November 2023	+/- to Last Year	Year-to-Date
Occupancy	62%	62.5%	-0.5%	+11.5%
Average Daily Rate (ADR)	\$97.72	\$87.31	+11.9%	+5.2%
Revenue Per Avail. Room (RevPAR)	\$60.59	\$54.58	+11%	+17.4%
Revenue	\$1,286,839	\$1,159,236	+11%	+17.4%

\*Census includes 8 hotels, 708 rooms. (8 of 11 hotels reporting or 77% of the market)

### Accomplishments, Activities & Successes

- **Install began for Wayfinding Signage Project phase 1**
- **Economic Impact Data received for 2023**
- **Attended Film Friendly Texas and Digital Media Friendly Workshop**
- **Attended regional tourism meeting in Mineola, TX**

#### Marketing:

- Attended Film Friendly & Digital Media Friendly workshop
- Attended regional tourism meeting in Mineola, Texas
- Opened RFP for a mural in Downtown Palestine (310 W. Oak)
- Assisted in planning the Christmas Parade of Lights 2024

#### Main Street

- Promotion of Downtown shopping events including Pink Friday & Small Business Saturday
- Coordination services for the Downtown Revitalization Project, focused on contact with downtown businesses

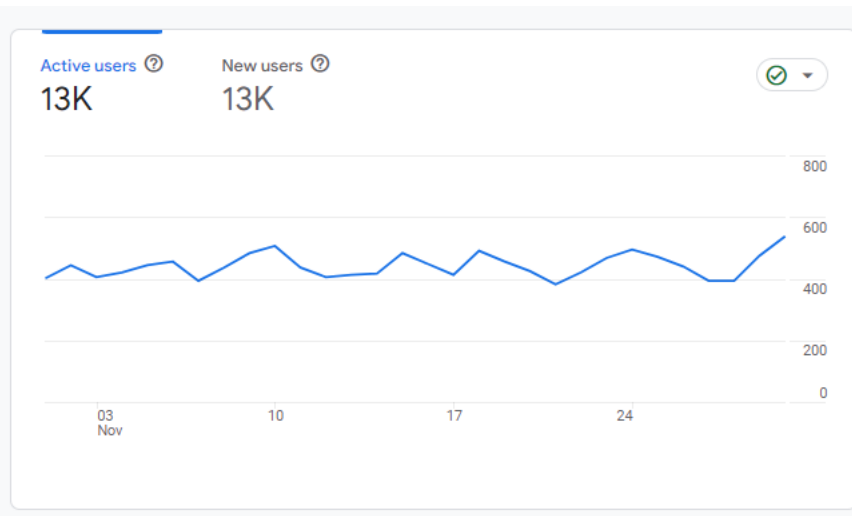
#### Visitor Center:

- Began distributing a limited-edition Christmas ornament to visitors
- Opened the Visitor Center on Saturdays from 10-3, beginning November 16.
- 284 Contacts in the Visitor Center (recorded). The busiest days for visitors were Saturday, with 61 visitors on 3 Saturdays, followed by Mondays with 43 visitors on those days.

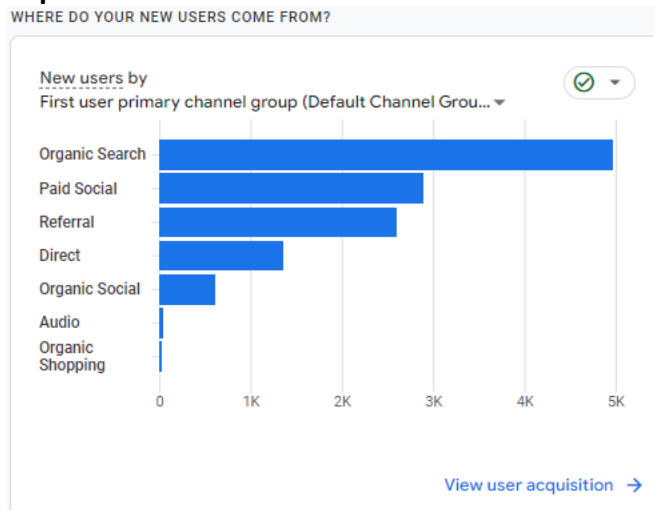
## Website Analytics

- Our top visited page was Christmas in Palestine, by far – it was the referral link on all digital media advertising.
- Organic traffic was nearly 2x paid traffic.
- Traffic was steady all month, with nothing out of the ordinary to note.
- We are aware of a few “dead end” or 404 error pages, and are working through our entire site to address those issues. Many are a result of past events that were “deactivated” to avoid confusion. The link exists, but leads nowhere – we plan to reactivate and redirect those links, rather than deactivating.

## Active Users all sources:



## Top referral sources:



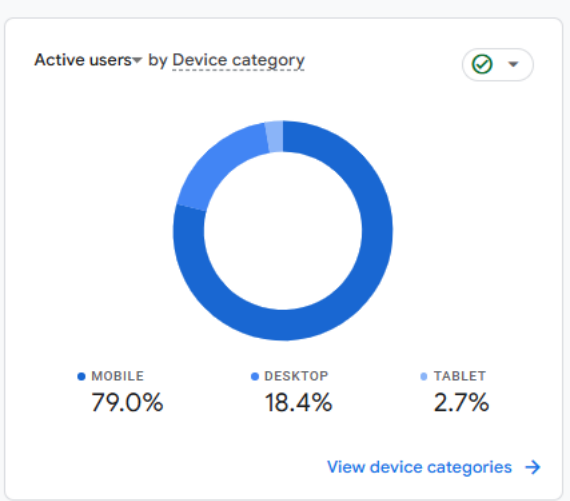
Users by City (top DMAs):

Plot rows		Search...						
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	City		Active users	New users	Engaged sessions	Engagement rate	Engaged sessions per active user	Average engagement time per active user
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Total		12,729 100% of total	12,528 100% of total	7,312 100% of total	47.68% Avg 0%	0.57 Avg 0%	50s Avg 0%
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	1 Dallas		3,242	3,049	1,909	49.09%	0.59	49s
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	2 Houston		1,616	1,576	680	35.88%	0.42	35s
	3 (not set)		1,052	974	685	54.28%	0.65	58s
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	4 Palestine		423	359	412	63.19%	0.97	2m 54s
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	5 Austin		417	403	171	35.48%	0.41	25s
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	6 Fort Worth		358	347	135	31.76%	0.38	23s
<input type="checkbox"/>	7 San Antonio		131	122	58	40.28%	0.44	44s
<input type="checkbox"/>	8 Tyler		131	125	96	63.58%	0.73	57s
<input type="checkbox"/>	9 Chicago		92	87	68	59.13%	0.74	1m 03s
<input type="checkbox"/>	10 College Station		87	84	45	46.88%	0.52	25s

Top Pages:

Views by	
Page title and scree...	
PAGE TITLE AND S...	VIEWS
Christmas in Palesti...	8.9K
Visit Palestine	4.2K
Palestine, TX Events ...	945
404 Not Found	797
TEXAS STATE RAILR...	729
/p/things-to-do/even...	492
Davey Dogwood Park	291
.	
View pages and screens →	

Device Type:



## Social Media Reporting:

Visit Palestine, TX Social Media Report							
Facebook							
Month of 11/01/2024 - 11/30/2024							
TOP PERFORMING POST							
11/06/2024 - Christmas Flyer	Reach: 9,452		Impressions: 11,749	Interactions: 120	Reactions: 43	Comments: 13	Shares: 58
			Percentages				
REACH							
Total Reach	179,433	19.30%					
Reach Breakdown							
Followers	7,364	26.80%					
Non-Followers	167,797	20.90%					
Organic	28,584	53.50%					
Ads	150,536	64.90%					
FOLLOWERS							
Total Follows	21,677						
Follows	160						
Un-Follows	56						
Net Follows	104	39.20%					
DEMOGRAPHIC							
Women		Men					
18-24	0.90%	18-24	0.40%				
25-34	8.00%	25-34	2.90%				
35-44	17.20%	35-44	4.20%				
45-54	17.60%	45-54	4.00%				
55-64	17.30%	55-64	3.30%				
65+	20.00%	65+	4.20%				

## Visit Palestine, TX Social Media Report

Instagram

11/01/2024 - 11/30/2024

TOP PERFORMING POST				
11/19/2024 - Pint & Barrel Promo	Reach: 734	Impressions: 763	Interactions: 68	Reactions: 66
		Percentages		
REACH				
Total Reach	2,967	3.90%		
Reach Breakdown				
Organic	2,193	13.80%		
Ads	813	124.00%		
FOLLOWERS				
Total Follows	8,074			
Follows	254			
Un-Follows	51			
Net Follows	203			
DEMOGRAPHIC				
Women		Men		
18-24	2.60%	18-24	1.60%	
25-34	15.90%	25-34	5.90%	
35-44	26.30%	35-44	8.30%	
45-54	17.00%	45-54	5.50%	
55-64	8.10%	55-64	2.80%	
65+	4.60%	65+	1.40%	
TOP CITIES		Percentage of Audience		
Palestine		12.40%		
Houston		6.20%		
San Antonio		3.80%		
Dallas		2.40%		





# 2024-2025 Campaign Summary

Nov 1, 2024 - Dec 2, 2024

Social Summary

With a 0.9% CTR benchmark for social campaigns, your campaign surpassed the standard by 101%. Additionally, All Clicks rose by 64%, Main Clicks by 49%, and Page Engagement increased by 53% since October 2024.

Impressions	Main Clicks	Clicks (All)	CTR (Main Clicks)	CTR (All Clicks)	Reactions	Saves	Shares	Comments	Page Likes	Page Engagement
235,387	4,271	11,227	1.81%	4.77%	1,020	49	146	43	19	5,548

Native Summary

For a Native campaign, the benchmark for Time on Site (TOS) is 40 seconds. Your campaign achieved an 82 second TOS, exceeding the standard by 105% and improving over last month's performance by 61%. Additionally, all key metrics are on the rise: Clicks increased by 410%, and 2+ Site Interactions surged by 424% compared to October 2024.

Impressions	Clicks	CTR	2+ Site Interactions	TOS (Time on Site)
499,131	3,447	0.69%	3,780	1m 22s

## Total November 2024 Campaign Performance

Impressions

734,518

Clicks (All)

14,674

CTR (All)

2.00%

2+ Site Interactions

3,780

Page Engagements

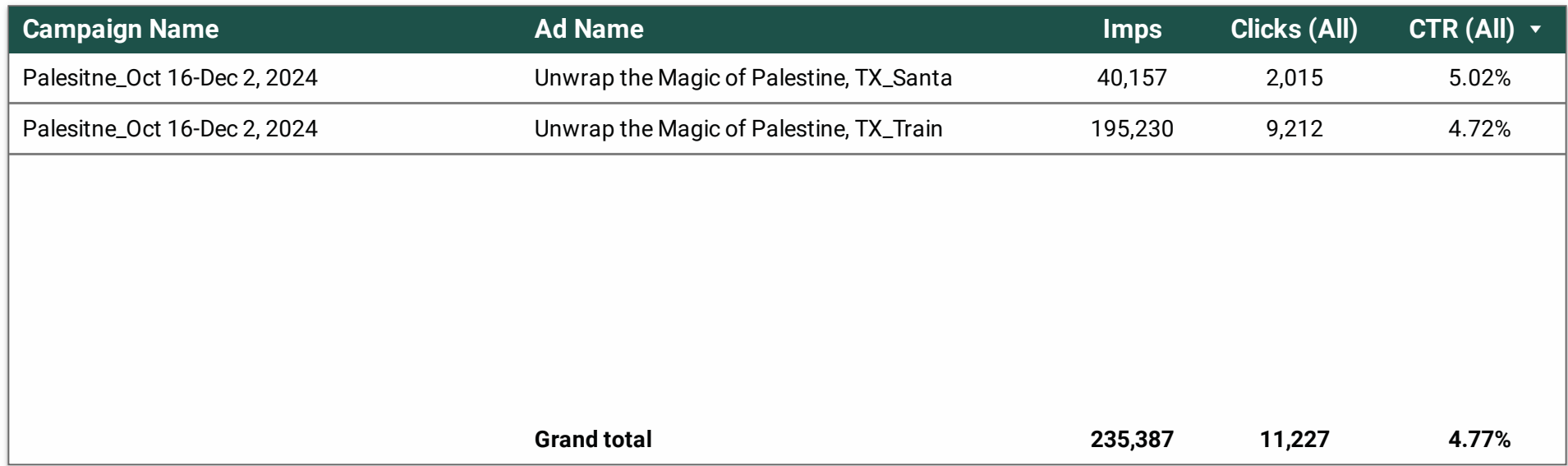
5,548

TOS (Time on Site)

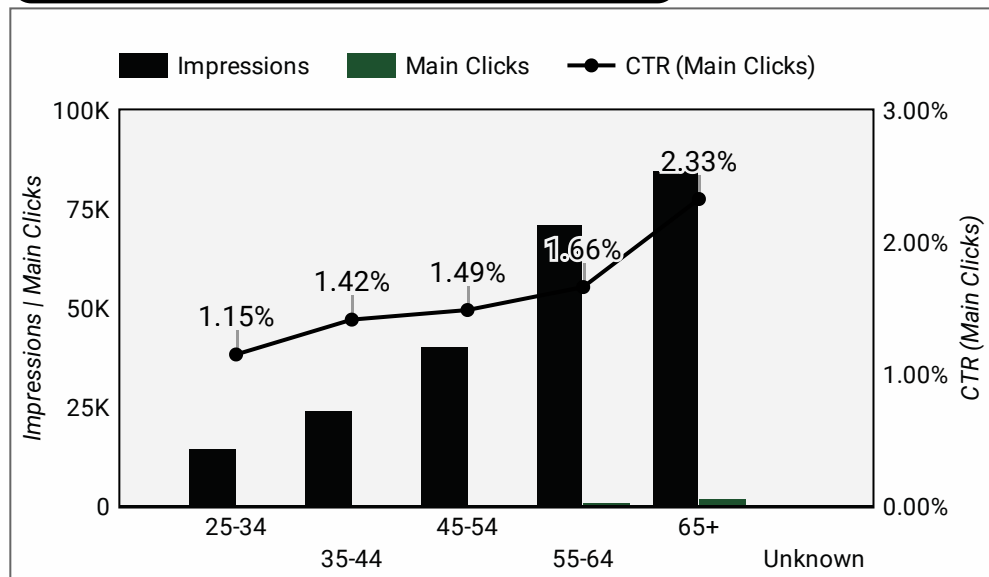
1m 22s



Strategy	Impressions	Main Clicks	Clicks (All)	CTR (All) ▾
Site Retargeting/FB/IG Engagers	17,505	297	939	5.36%
Tour Texas Retargeting	209,151	3,829	9,930	4.75%
Behavioral	8,731	145	358	4.10%
Grand total	235,387	4,271	11,227	4.77%



Ad DMA Region	Imps.	Clicks (All)	CTR (All) ▾
Tyler-Longview(Lfkn&Nc gd)	18,133	1,039	5.73%
Waco-Temple-Bryan	18,638	1,013	5.44%
Dallas-Ft. Worth	92,290	4,415	4.78%
Beaumont-Port Arthur	9,235	441	4.78%
Houston	72,555	3,335	4.60%
Austin	14,790	620	4.19%
Abilene-Sweetwater	2,987	122	4.08%
San Antonio	6,758	242	3.58%
Unknown	1	0	0.00%
Grand total	235,387	11,227	4.77%



Impressions Main Clicks CTR (Main Clicks)

Category	Impressions (K)	Main Clicks (K)	CTR (Main Clicks) (%)
female	175	1.9	1.08
male	60	1.55	0.95
unknown	2	2.08	1.15



Social Creative - Oct 16-Dec 2, 2024

Nov 1, 2024 - Dec 2, 2024



Unwrap the Magic of Palestine, TX\_Santa  
5.02% CTR (All)

Unwrap the Magic of Palestine, TX\_Train  
4.72% CTR (All)



Visit Palestine, Texas

Sponsored · 

Whether you're hopping a ride on the Polar Express or visiting the Grinch at the historic jailhouse, Palestine is a one-of-a-kind Christmas escape.



VISITPALESTINE.COM

Unwrap the Magic of Palestine, TX

Plan Your Visit Today

Learn more

 Like

 Comment

 Share



Visit Palestine, Texas

Sponsored · 

Whether you're hopping a ride on the Polar Express or visiting the Grinch at the historic jailhouse, Palestine is a one-of-a-kind Christmas escape.



VISITPALESTINE.COM

Unwrap the Magic of Palestine, TX

Plan Your Visit Today

Learn more

 Like

 Comment

 Share

AJR DIGITAL MEDIA SOLUTIONS





NATIVE PERFORMANCE

Nov 1, 2024 - Dec 2, 2024

Impressions  
499,131

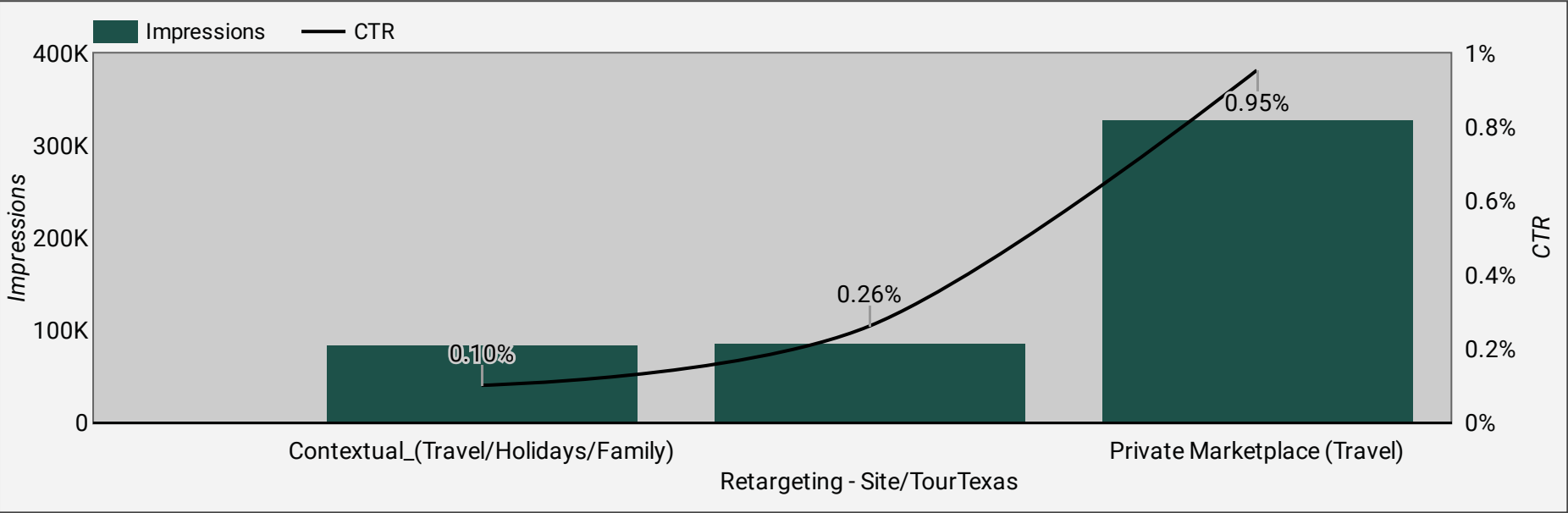
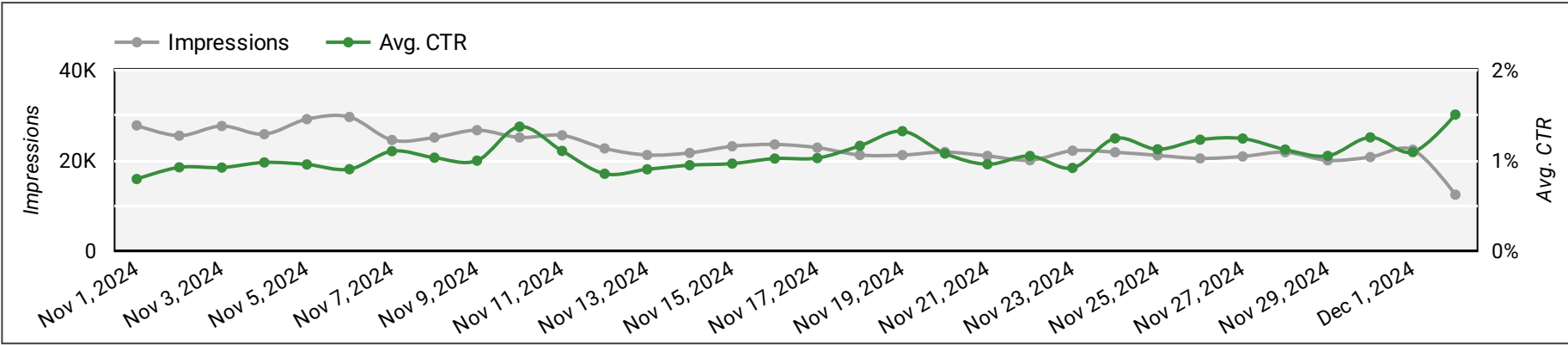
Clicks  
3,447

CTR  
0.69%

2+ Site Interactions  
3,780

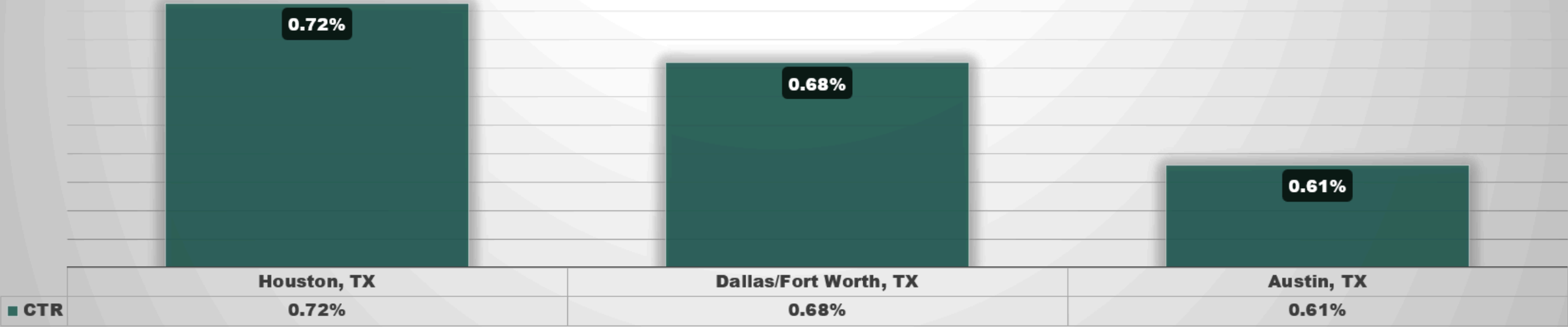
TOS (Time on Site)  
1m 22s

Strategy	Impressions	Clicks	CTR ▾
Private Marketplace (Travel)	328,617	3,137	0.95%
Retargeting - Site/TourTexas	85,658	224	0.26%
Contextual_(Travel/Holidays/Family)	84,856	86	0.10%
Grand total	499,131	3,447	0.69%



Campaign	Creative	Impressions	Clicks	CTR ▾
Palestine_Native_Oct 16-Dec 2, 2024	Visit Palestine_Native Oct-Dec 24_1200x627 _Grinch	128,554	1,433	1.11%
Palestine_Native_Oct 16-Dec 2, 2024	Visit Palestine_Native Oct-Dec 24_1200x627_Tree	195,170	1,506	0.77%
Palestine_Native_Oct 16-Dec 2, 2024	Visit Palestine_Native Oct-Dec 24_600x600_Train	123,647	431	0.35%
Palestine_Native_Oct 16-Dec 2, 2024	Visit Palestine_Native Oct-Dec 24_600x600_Santa	51,760	77	0.15%
Grand total		499,131	3,447	0.69%

Top DMA's by CTR





Native Creative - Oct 16-Dec 2, 2024

Nov 1, 2024 - Dec 2, 2024

Visit Palestine\_Native Oct-Dec 24\_ 1200x627 \_Grinch

1.11% CTR



Visit Palestine TX

Unwrap the Magic of Palestine, TX

Whether you're hopping a ride on the Polar Express or visiting the Grinch at the historic jailhouse, Palestine is a one-of-a-kind Christmas escape.

Visit Palestine\_Native Oct-Dec 24\_ 600x600\_Santa

0.15% CTR



Visit Palestine TX

Unwrap the Magic of Palestine, TX

Whether you're hopping a ride on the Polar Express or visiting the Grinch at the historic jailhouse, Palestine is a one-of-a-kind Christmas escape.

Visit Palestine\_Native Oct-Dec 24\_ 600x600\_Train

0.35% CTR



Visit Palestine TX

Unwrap the Magic of Palestine, TX

Whether you're hopping a ride on the Polar Express or visiting the Grinch at the historic jailhouse, Palestine is a one-of-a-kind Christmas escape.

Visit Palestine\_Native Oct-Dec 24\_1200x627\_Tree

0.77% CTR



Visit Palestine TX

Unwrap the Magic of Palestine, TX

Whether you're hopping a ride on the Polar Express or visiting the Grinch at the historic jailhouse, Palestine is a one-of-a-kind Christmas escape.

Native URL ▾

<https://www.visitpalestine.com/p/things-to-do/festivals--parades/christmas-in-palestine>

1 - 1 / 1 < >



Agenda Date: 01/28/2025  
To: Tourism Advisory Board  
From: Cassie Ham, Tourism Marketing Manager  
Agenda Item: Review the Tourism Manager's Report for the Month of December 2024.  
Date Submitted: 01/24/2025

---

**SUMMARY:**

Review the Tourism Manager's Report for the month of December 2024.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION:**

No action is required.

**CITY MANAGER APPROVAL:**

---

**Attachments**

December 2024 Tourism Report



## TOURISM REPORT – DECEMBER 2024

### Hotel Occupancy Income Tax Collected/STR Reporting

	December 2024	December 2023	+/- to Last Year	Year-to-Date
Occupancy	52.1%	56.4	-7.6%	+9.7%
Average Daily Rate (ADR)	\$98.01	\$90.45	+8.4%	+5.5%
Revenue Per Avail. Room (RevPAR)	\$51.11	\$51.02	+0.2%	+15.8%
Revenue	\$1,151,802	\$1,149,911	+0.2%	+15.8%

\*Census includes 8 hotels, 727 rooms. (8 of 12 hotels reporting or 66.7% of the market)

### Accomplishments, Activities & Successes

- **Palestine named one of the top-6 “Small Town Christmases Worth the Drive”**
- **Christmas in Palestine – the Visitor Center was open every Saturday to provide information to visitors during the busy Christmas season.**
- **Completed Wayfinding phase 1**
- **Recorded a Christmas in Palestine commercial (and raw footage) to be used for future promotions.**

#### Marketing:

- Coordinated Palestine Christmas experience package for the winner from the State Fair of Texas
- Submitted early spring 2025 advertising
- Developed a work plan to update the Visit Palestine website
- Assisted Main Street with Parade of Lights

#### Main Street

- Organization & promotion of Christmas on Main & Parade of Lights
- Coordination services for the Downtown Revitalization Project, including preparations to move to Phases 3&4
- Coordination services for the Railroad Heritage Center exterior remodel (project funded by a Community Development Grant from PEDC)
- Downtown Palestine now offers the Safe Haven Baby Box

#### Visitor Center:

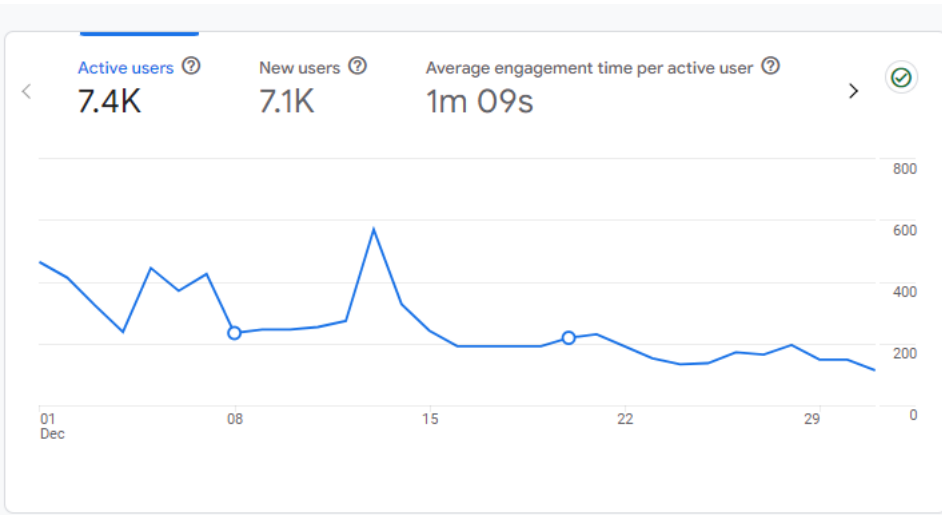
- Hosted open house for the Chamber of Commerce Holiday Tour of Homes

- At least 538 contacts in the Visitor Center. The day of the week with the highest number of visitors was Saturday with 154 total visitors, followed by Friday with only 58 people visiting on that day during the month of December.

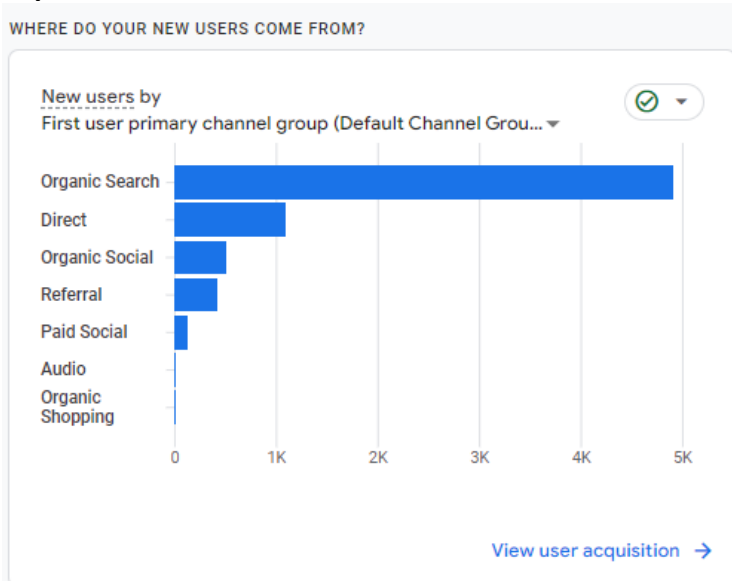
### Website Analytics

- Traffic was down from the month prior, due to lack of paid social media advertising; however, organic traffic was up from November 2024.
- Dallas, Houston and Fort Worth continue to be our largest Markets for visitors.
- We saw traffic spikes for a few days prior to December 7, which was the original day for our Christmas Parade of Lights, and again on December 13, which was the rescheduled day of the parade, due to inclement weather.

### Active Users all sources:



### Top referral sources:





Users by City (top markets):

Plot rows

Search...

	City	Active users	New users	Engaged sessions	Engagement rate	Engaged sessions per active user	Average engagement time per active user
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Total	7,351 100% of total	7,082 100% of total	5,584 100% of total	58.69% Avg 0%	0.76 Avg 0%	1m 09s Avg 0%
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	1 Dallas	2,243	2,062	1,748	58.19%	0.78	1m 06s
	2 (not set)	782	687	579	60.19%	0.74	1m 04s
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	3 Palestine	530	448	487	61.03%	0.92	1m 38s
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	4 Houston	460	437	344	60.35%	0.75	1m 12s
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	5 Fort Worth	180	160	126	58.88%	0.70	1m 04s
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	6 Austin	140	133	101	62.73%	0.72	1m 16s
<input type="checkbox"/>	7 Tyler	108	106	89	71.77%	0.82	1m 01s
<input type="checkbox"/>	8 The Woodlands	79	64	54	56.84%	0.68	59s
<input type="checkbox"/>	9 New York	68	64	24	30.77%	0.35	42s
<input type="checkbox"/>	10 Atlanta	57	45	39	58.21%	0.68	1m 08s

Top Pages:

Views by

Page title and screenshot

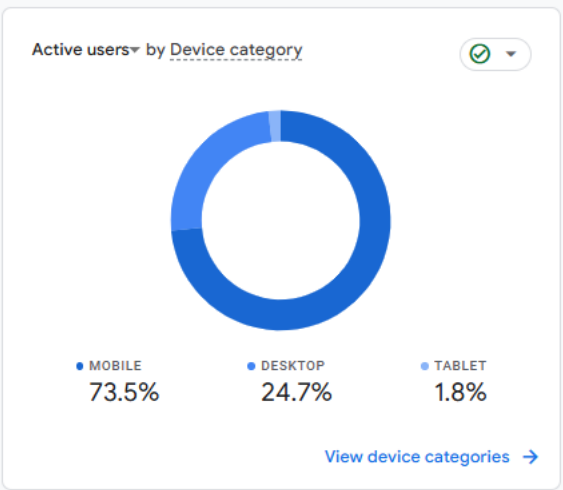
PAGE TITLE AND SCREENSHOT

VIEWS

Visit Palestine	4K
Christmas in Palestine	1.9K
Unwrap a Small Town	1.2K
Palestine, TX Events	1.1K
Palestine, TX Events	971
TEXAS STATE RAILROAD	633
/p/things-to-do/evening	572

View pages and screens

Device Type:



## Social Media Reporting:

Visit Palestine, TX Social Media Report						
Facebook						
Month of 12/01/2024 - 12/31/2024						
TOP PERFORMING POST						
12/09/2024 - WGOIP	Reach: 5,471	Views: 10,367	Interactions: 45	Reactions: 16	Comments: 8	Shares: 21
		Percentages				
REACH						
Total Reach	27,447	84.70%				
Reach Breakdown						
Followers	5,477	25.60%				
Non-Followers	22,408	86.60%				
Organic	19,026	33.40%				
Ads	9,620	93.60%				
VIEWS						
Total Views	105,298	69.10%				
Followers	48%	182.40%				
Non-Followers	52%	37.30%				
Organic	90%	164.70%				
Ads	10%	84.80%				
FOLLOWERS						
Total Follows	21,708					
Follows	100					
Un-Follows	50					
Net Follows	50	51.90%				
DEMOGRAPHIC						
Women			Men			
18-24	0.90%		18-24	0.40%		
25-34	7.90%		25-34	2.90%		
35-44	17.10%		35-44	4.20%		
45-54	17.60%		45-54	3.90%		
55-64	17.40%		55-64	3.30%		
65+	20.10%		65+	4.30%		

## Visit Palestine, TX Social Media Report

Instagram

12/01/2024 - 12/31/2024

TOP PERFORMING POST						
12/03/2024 - Happy Trails Promo		Reach: 840	Views: 1,026	Interactions: 40	Reactions: 32	Comments: 3
			Percentages			
REACH						
Total Reach		2,344	21.00%			
Reach Breakdown						
Organic	2,307	5.20%				
Ads	30	96.30%				
VIEWS						
Total Views		10,569	1.00%			
Organic	100%	11.10%				
Ads	0%	100.00%				
FOLLOWERS						
Total Follows		8,082				
Follows	65	74.40%				
Un-Follows	54	5.90%				
Net Follows		11				
DEMOGRAPHIC						
Women			Men			
	18-24	2.60%	18-24	1.60%		
	25-34	15.60%	25-34	5.80%		
	35-44	26.40%	35-44	8.40%		
	45-54	17.10%	45-54	5.50%		
	55-64	8.10%	55-64	2.90%		



Agenda Date: 01/28/2025

To: Tourism Advisory Board

From: Cassie Ham, Tourism Marketing Manager

Agenda Item: Approve Meeting Minutes from the December 5, 2024 Meeting of the Tourism Advisory Board

Date Submitted: 01/24/2025

---

**SUMMARY:**

Approve Meeting Minutes from the December 5, 2024 Meeting of the Tourism Advisory Board

**RECOMMENDED ACTION:**

Consider approving the item as presented.

**CITY MANAGER APPROVAL:**

---

**Attachments**

12.5.24 TAB Meeting Minutes

THE STATE OF TEXAS                   §  
COUNTY OF ANDERSON               §  
THE CITY OF PALESTINE             §

The Tourism Advisory Board of the City of Palestine convened in a Regular Meeting on Thursday, December 5, 2024 at 4:00 p.m., in the City Hall Conference Room, 504 N. Queen Street, Palestine, Texas, with the following people present: Chair Patty Smith, Board Vice-Chair Daniel Hennessee, and board members Michael Nichols, Edward Mondich, and Mike Ezzell.

Staff present: Tourism Marketing Manager Cassie Ham and City Secretary, April Jackson.

Not present: Board members Cristy Buckner and Kasey Crutcher.

### **CALL TO ORDER**

With a quorum present, Chair Patty Smith called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

### **PROPOSED CHANGES OF AGENDA ITEMS**

There were none.

### **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

There were none.

### **CONFLICT OF INTEREST DISCLOSURES**

There were none.

### **DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

1. Tourism Marketing Manager Cassie Ham presented the Tourism Monthly Report for October 2024.

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

1. Consider approval of minutes from the November 4, 2024 meeting.

Daniel Hennessee made a motion to approve the minutes, with an update to the spelling of Kasey Crutcher's name on item 4. The motion seconded by Board Member Ed. Mondich.

**Vote:** 5 – 0 – Unanimously

## **DISCUSSION AND ACTION ITEMS**

1. Review the Palestine Wayfinding Signage Project as of December 2024. No action was taken.
2. Discussion and possible action regarding the current strategic plan for Tourism in the City of Palestine.

Michael Nichols requested an annotated copy of the current Strategic Plan (2020-2025) be provided to the Board.

3. Authorize the Tourism Marketing Manager to form a committee to evaluate the current strategic plan for tourism in Palestine.

Daniel Hennessee made a motion to authorize Tourism Marketing Manager to form a strategic planning committee of not more than 3 Tourism Advisory Board members, and at least 3 community stakeholders to evaluate and update the Strategic plan for tourism in Palestine. Mike Ezzell seconded the motion.

**Vote:** 5 – 0 – Unanimously

## **ADJOURN**

With no other business to come before the board, the meeting was adjourned at 4:37 p.m.

PASSED AND APPROVED THIS 28TH DAY OF JANUARY 2025.

ATTEST:

---

Patty Smith, Chair

---

Cassie Ham,  
Tourism Marketing Manager



Agenda Date: 01/28/2025

To: Tourism Advisory Board

From: Cassie Ham, Tourism Marketing Manager

Agenda Item: Approve Meeting Minutes for the January 8, 2025 meeting of the Tourism Advisory Board

Date Submitted: 01/24/2025

---

**SUMMARY:**

Consider approving the meeting minutes from the January 8, 2025 meeting of the Tourism Advisory Board.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION:**

Consider approving the item as presented.

**CITY MANAGER APPROVAL:**

---

**Attachments**

1.8.25 TAB Meeting Minutes

THE STATE OF TEXAS                   §  
COUNTY OF ANDERSON               §  
THE CITY OF PALESTINE             §

The Tourism Advisory Board of the City of Palestine convened in a Special Meeting on Thursday, January 8, 2025 at 4:00 p.m., in the City Hall Conference Room, 504 N. Queen Street, Palestine, Texas, with the following people present: Chair Patty Smith, and board members Michael Nichols, Cristy Buckner, Edward Mondich, and Kasey Crutcher.

Staff present: Tourism Marketing Manager Cassie Ham and City Manager's Administrative Assistant, Casey DeBord.

Not present: Board Vice-Chair Daniel Hennessee.

### **CALL TO ORDER**

With a quorum present, Chair Patty Smith called the meeting to order at 4:01 p.m.

### **PROPOSED CHANGES OF AGENDA ITEMS**

There were none.

### **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Mrs. Jean Mollard and Mr. Mike Searcy shared their thoughts about the mural project – the condition of the wall, and parking arrangements in the lot. They do approve of the mural project but want to ensure the longevity of the mural.

### **CONFLICT OF INTEREST DISCLOSURES**

There were none.

### **DISCUSSION AND ACTION ITEMS**

1. Discussion and possible action regarding the selection of a muralist for a mural to be placed at 310 W. Oak St.

Kasey Crutcher made a motion to approve Deanna Pickett's proposal. Ed Seconded the motion. Discussion related to cleaning and repairs to be made to the wall, longevity of the mural, paint to be used, process by which the wall will be primed and painted, Mr. Penningdale's expertise in masonry. Additional discussion took place regarding liability in the event of property damage.

Kasey amended his motion to approve Deanna Pickett's proposal with the prerequisite that there is an exclusion of liability for the City of Palestine, a paint consultant to consult on the type of paint to be used, and a masonry expert to inspect the integrity of the wall. Cristy seconded the motion.

**Vote:** 5 – 0 – Unanimously



**ADJOURN**

With no other business to come before the board, the meeting was adjourned at 4:48 p.m.

PASSED AND APPROVED THIS 28TH DAY OF JANUARY 2025.

---

Patty Smith, Chair

ATTEST:

---

Cassie Ham,  
Tourism Marketing Manager



Agenda Date: 01/28/2025  
To: Tourism Advisory Board  
From: Cassie Ham, Tourism Marketing Manager  
Agenda Item: Review annotated 2020-2025 Visit Palestine Strategic Plan  
Date Submitted: 01/24/2025

---

**SUMMARY:**

Per request of the Tourism Advisory Board, please review an annotated working version of the Visit Palestine Strategic Plan.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION:**

No action is necessary.

**CITY MANAGER APPROVAL:**

---

**Attachments**

Annotated 2020-2025 Visit Palestine Strategic Plan

## Goal 1 – Experience Immersion

- a) Texas State Railroad – Support efforts to enhance the static displays at the Palestine depot, expansion of special events and activities on site. **There are some static displays near the depot, but no known displays at the Palestine Depot. TSR has expanded their offerings throughout the year.**
- b) NASA – Establish a point of contact with NASA to develop an enhanced customer experience **No partnership currently exists**
  - a. Gauge interest with them to partner with Visit Palestine
  - b. Develop agreement and strategies to collaborate
  - c. Develop documents showcasing why this asset merits visitation
- c) Embrace technology for walking and driving tours **This was done early in the period, but now they need to be updated. We should address longevity/evergreen value of the content we create.**
  - a. Upgrade the digital platform for augmented reality and enhanced experiences.
  - b. Upload existing tours with visuals and audio
  - c. Content development
- d) Specialty tours – partner with locals to develop tours of existing sites that have marketable content
  - a. Ghost/Jailhouse **Texas Jailhouse has created several opportunities for private tours.**

## 2019-2022 Accomplishments

- Upgraded Visit Widget to enable Visit Palestine to utilize push notifications and proximity messaging **I don't think this is still a feature that is offered for the Visit Widget**
- Converted and uploaded 4 tours to the app/digital platform
- Successfully launched the 2<sup>nd</sup> annual Fairy Garden Project in Davey Dogwood Park

## Year One Short-Term Goals

- Create/upload 4 new tours, challenges to the digital platform **Done**
- Create social distancing options **No longer relevant**

## Years Two – Five Long-Term Goals

- Partner with NASA to host at least 2 guided tours per week by 2025 **incomplete**
- Develop at least 10 walking/driving tour uploads by 2025 **done**
- Expand events/activities at the Texas State Railroad by 2025. **Done - Not a measurable goal**

## Goal 2 – Heritage Development

- a) Develop a resource library of sound clips, vocal narratives, photos and videos
- b) Secure designation as Dogwood Capital of Texas
- c) Establish 6 destinations to develop living history displays
  - a. Sites to consider include ~~Reagan High School~~, Texas Jailhouse, Courthouse, ~~Eilenberger Bakery~~, Nickel Manor, Texas State Railroad (striktethrough locations are closed to the public)
- d) Develop tours
  - a. Trolley Tours – ticketed tours sold by Visit Palestine and/or other organizations
  - b. Establish guided tours available for download or as a service to hop on board
  - c. Create challenges/scavenger hunts to encourage social distance activity options including murals, sculptures, historic sites, architecture, etc.
  - d. Create alternative options for visitors to be able to access information while social distancing
  - e. Educate the community on local history through social media outlets

## 2019-2020 Accomplishments

- Designed 82<sup>nd</sup> annual Dogwood Trails Celebration Guide (unable to locate)
- Resource library created for historical photos/videos
- Developed Railroad History Tour (unable to locate)
- Updated historic driving tours and digitized in the app
- Submitted letters of intent to legislators with our intent to seek the designation as the Dogwood Capital of Texas

## Year One Short-Term Goals

- Establish a filing system and begin labeling and documenting files on hand Complete, but we need to address usage rights
- Obtain the designation of Dogwood Capital of Texas Complete (Dogwood Trails Capital of Texas)
- Launch 3-5 challenges/scavenger hunts to encourage social distancing activities Complete
- Research and establish 1 living history event in conjunction with an existing event or festival Incomplete as of January 2025.
- Create a print-ready booklet for the History of Palestine Incomplete (to my knowledge)
- Digitize and publish the African American Heritage information originally published in 1997 Complete

## Years Two-Five Long-Term Goals

- Continue to develop and add content to the resource library **Immeasurable**
- Develop a calendar of living history events throughout the year by 2025 **Incomplete**
- Create sustainable Trolley Tours per year by 2025 **Incomplete – staff has tasked creation of at least 2 seasonal tours by FY End**

## Goal 3 – Awareness

- a) Wayfinding signage
  - a. Create cohesive signage throughout the City
  - b. Develop maps and signage for recreational opportunities at our lakes and parks
  - c. Identify Main Street district through distinctive signage, including street signs, light pole banners, murals and pedestrian kiosks
  - d. Implement historic district boundaries and street signs
  - e. Develop a design plan for large identification signage for attractions and city owned properties
- b) Explore cooperative advertising opportunities with partners
- c) Provide Texas Friendly Training workshop every 2 years
- d) Partner with local attractions to develop residential FAM tours
- e) Explore volunteer managed booths at area events
- f) Attend select trade/industry shows

## 2019-2020 Accomplishments

- Hosted stakeholder meetings and survey to get wide ranging community support and ideas
- Attended 4 trade/industry shows
- HGTV Hometown Takeover video submission

## Year One Short-Term Goals

- Identify key locations for pedestrian kiosks in high traffic walkable areas throughout the City **Incomplete**
- Complete design plan for Trailblazing, proximity & pedestrian signage **Incomplete**
- Host a Texas Friendly Hospitality workshop **Incomplete, but we have the opportunity to host a workshop in 2025**
- Partner with attractions for the zip code captures and customer profiles **Incomplete**
- Attend 2 trade/industry shows **Complete**

## Years Two-Five Long-Term Goals

- Complete the Wayfinding Signage Plan implementation by 2025 **Complete**
- Host a Texas Friendly Hospitality workshop every two years (2023 & 2025) **Incomplete**
- Develop resident FAM tours with partners **Incomplete, but tasked for 2025**
- Host volunteer managed booths at area events **Incomplete**
- Attended trade/industry shows **Complete**

## Goal 4 – Nature Tourism Development

- a) Partner with TPWD and the City of Palestine to assess potential tourism opportunities
  - a. Gus Engling Wildlife Management Area
  - b. Steven Bennett Park – add trails and signage (pending Council decision for the future of the space)
  - c. ID Fairchild State Park
  - d. Palestine Community Forest – kayaking, canoeing, paddling trails, camping, hiking/biking trails & swimming **Incomplete**
- b) Develop seasonal driving trails **Fall foliage complete**
- c) Solicit & cultivate relationships to develop Fall Foliage Bus Tours and Birding Tours **Incomplete**
- d) Become a member of the Texas Paddling Trails **Incomplete**
- e) Define digital footprint for this guest **Complete**

## 2019 – 2020 Accomplishments

- Received designation for 2 sites to be added to the Texas Paddling Trails program **No longer active**
- Developed seasonal driving trail maps for the north/south routes, Davey Dogwood Park and historic homes.

## Year One Short-Term Goals

- Implement signage in parks/lakes/forest **Partially accomplished**
- Partner with TPWD to develop a plan to promote sites **Incomplete**
- Add 2 more hiking/biking trails to Dave Dogwood Park **Complete?**
- Clean up Community Forest Trails for public use **Upper Lake Trail cleared, otherwise incomplete**

## Years Two – Five Long-Term Goals

- Collaborate with partners to access new potential tourism opportunities **Incomplete, not measurable**
- Offered kayak/canoe rental service through outside partnerships **Incomplete**
- Allow overnight tent camping with registration at Upper/Lower City Lakes **Incomplete**
- Develop at least 4 dogwood and seasonal nature trails by 2025 **Complete?**

## Goal 5 – Main Street Partnerships

- a) Enhance the entertainment options with additional content and facility improvements
- b) Create Instagram-able moments
  - a. Murals – Establish a mural policy and
  - b. Standing pucks/selfie stations
  - c. Sculptures
  - d. UGC – utilize user generated content on social media
- c) Review and update ordinance
  - a. Explore options regarding street paint
  - b. Partner with Code Enforcement to develop a plan of action to document and enforce code violations
- d) Create a list of WIFI hot spots and promote visitation at those places
- e) Support Main Street in the process to secure a Cultural Arts District Designation – **this is an undertaking that is not possible in the current state of Main Street.**
- f) Partner with influencers to generate IRL (in real life) content
- g) Work to create a strong line of communication to enhance community engagement in Main Street

## 2019-2020 Accomplishments

- Created tags on visitpalestine.com with WIFI hot spot destinations – **there are currently SIX tagged businesses. Incomplete**
- Enhance entertainment options by partnering with facilities **... unsure, not a quantifiable goal?**
- Partner with 1 influencer to feature Main Street destinations
- Utilize social media and in person meetings to continue to cultivate community engagement **Complete**
- Built Mural Art Policy and Program for the City of Palestine to review **Complete**

## Year One Short-Term Goals

- Host a photo walk with amateur and professional photographers **Complete, but not sure where the photos are located/rights releases**
- Begin to review and educate property owners on the Main Street ordinances
- Maintain the sculpture program throughout the district **Complete – DAC manages**
- Partner with property owners to provide canvases for murals **Complete**
- Complete pedestrian signage plan in the Main Street district for implementation the following year **Incomplete**

## Years Two-Five Long-Term Goals

- Become a designated Cultural Arts District by 2025 **Incomplete**

## Goal 6 – Historic Preservation

- a) Partner with Historic Landmarks Committee, Historic Preservation Officer and Main Street Coordinator
- ~~b) Reagan High School~~
  - ~~a. Emergency stabilization of the porticos~~
  - ~~b. HVAC to climate control the entire facility~~
  - ~~c. Building accessibility~~
  - ~~d. Exhibit interpretation/lighting/preservation of the artifacts/marketing materials~~
- c) Encourage spaces with historical significance to apply for grants
  - a. Multi grant opportunities between HOT and Main Street
- d) Howard House Museum
  - a. Exterior repairs to façade
  - b. Establish a contract with the managing organization
  - c. Facility open to the general public with a minimum number of days per month to be established by City leadership
- e) Federal Building
  - a. Explore preservation and use opportunities

## 2019-2020 Accomplishments

- Revised contract to complete the Emergency stabilization to the porticos at Reagan High School (pending approval from leadership)
- Begin a dialogue with Friends of the Howard House to discuss goals for the City owned space and develop a plan of action for the maintenance and repairs needed
- Designated Official Best of Texas – Historic Designation – hosted videographer for feature footage for TV air in 2020.

## Year One Short-Term Goals



- Complete Emergency Stabilization Study for the Reagan High School and seek resources to facilitate repairs – City Council closed Reagan High School during COVID, never reopened, due to massive, needed repairs.
- Partner with 2 historic sites to consider applying for grant funds through PEDC, HOT and Main Street
- Continue to partner with the Friends of the Howard House to maintain public viewing hours during peak weekends and events Incomplete – currently only open for private events, and NOT open to the general public
- Partner with Anderson County to discuss potential opportunities for the Federal Building

### Years Two-Five Long-Term Goals

- Complete Emergency Stabilization repairs needed to the Reagan High School Incomplete
- Partner with 3 historic sites to consider applying for grant funds through PEDC, HOT and Main Street Partially Complete: Texas Theatre, Mt. Vernon AME
- Develop a plan with Anderson County for utilization and preservation of the Federal Building Incomplete

### Goal 7 – Digital Footprint

- a) Continue SEO review
- b) Add recommendations to all attractions
- c) Build and refine destination pages
- d) Create detailed visitor personas
- e) Batch schedule our social media 4x per week
- f) Utilize and build on vlog, blog, and Pinterest

### 2019 -2020 Accomplishments

- Added “You may also like...” links on each attraction and business page to other destinations that the visitor may find interesting
- Created Google Tags Manager account and applied to every page on VisitPalestine.com for tracking the effectiveness of our digital advertising campaigns
- Worked to build a baseline for SEO and Google Analytics using tools including OneSignal, Spyfu and Moz

### Year One Short-Term Goals

- Complete 5 detailed visitor personas Complete
- Batch social media posts per a weekly schedule maximizing organic publishing tools Complete

- Utilize social media outlets **Complete**
- Facebook: Post strategically engaging content based on carefully reviewed engagement statistics **Complete**
- Instagram: Build out page to its full capacity, create stories for highlights, actively seek out follower engagement **Complete, ongoing**
- Pinterest: Tie-in blog posts and flood our page with clickable content to enhance our searchable presence online **Ongoing, partially complete, not very active on Pinterest**

### Years Two-Five Long-Term Goals

- Analyze two year history to determine if we increased our SEO for VisitPalestine.com **Complete – SEO on our site is *not great*, many pages are lacking SEO titles, SEO descriptions and keywords/tags. Working to update the website by June 1, 2025.**
- Continue to develop and refine destination pages **Not a measurable goal.**