



# City of Broken Arrow Convention & Visitors Bureau Strategic Plan 2017 - 2020

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"If you build a place people want to visit,  
you build a place where people want to live.

"If you build a place where people want to live,  
you'll build a place where people want to work.

"If you build a place where people want to work,  
you'll build a place where business has to be.

"And if you build a place where business has to be,  
you'll build a place where people have to visit."

—Maura Gast, Irving, TX, CVB and DMAI Chair, July 2009.

**VISION FOR BROKEN ARROW AS A DESTINATION**

City of Broken Arrow Convention & Visitors Bureau (BACVB) envisions a destination that is/has:

- A year-round weekend getaway for fun activities.
- An attractive destination for shopping, dining and fun activities.
- A place where teams and individuals compete in the highest quality sports and recreation facilities.
- A gathering place where groups convene.
- A great place to raise a family and invite family to visit.



**Research Driven** – City of Broken Arrow CVB is a research-driven organization having comprehensive market research to guide overall strategy. Research and this plan will focus the efforts of the City, CVB Board, CVB staff and travel industry leaders on measurable goals and objectives.

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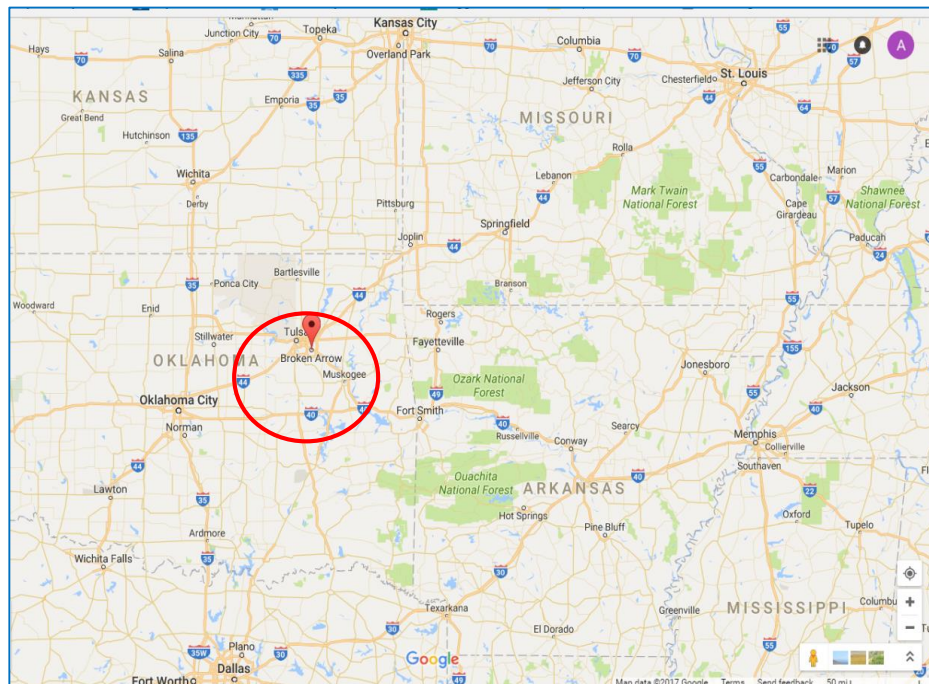
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## 2. Research Summary of Findings

- **Broken Arrow is a destination poised for growth; currently needs a master plan for development and new attractors to help drive demand for the overbuilt supply of hotel rooms.**
- **Location** – Broken Arrow is located in the upper northeastern corner of Oklahoma, just 20 minutes outside of Tulsa and is considered to be part of the Tulsa Metropolitan Area. Highways 64 and 51 serve as conduits to Interstate 44, connecting travelers to Tulsa, Oklahoma City and beyond.
- **Drive increased spending** – 1) invite more people to visit Broken Arrow overnight; 2) encourage visitors to spend more once they have arrived.



- **Need Periods:** Hotel supply is overbuilt and the CVB MUST drive demand year-round (Winter, Spring & Fall Sunday/Monday).
- **Leakage:** Room nights are being lost to Tulsa hotels just across the line = lost revenue.
- **Target Markets:** OK, KS, MO, AR, TX
- **Target Audiences:** Adult couples & families; meetings/ small conferences, team sports, convert day-trip to overnight.
- **Lifestyles:** Active outdoors, sports, shopping.
- **Local Perception:** Visitor perception is slightly better than local (not unusual), leaders have vision and support planning.
- **Need to market the destination:** CVB has been used primarily for operating facilities and dispensing grants. Need to restructure and drive aggressive sales and marketing program.
- **Direct Sales:** Group sales to fill need periods (sports/meetings)
- **Attractors Needed:** The research identified the need for additional engaging, year-round activities (attractors) that will inspire future visitation.
- **Gateways & wayfinding:** Need a plan for gateways, signs, traffic patterns.

3. Overall Direction and Goals 2020

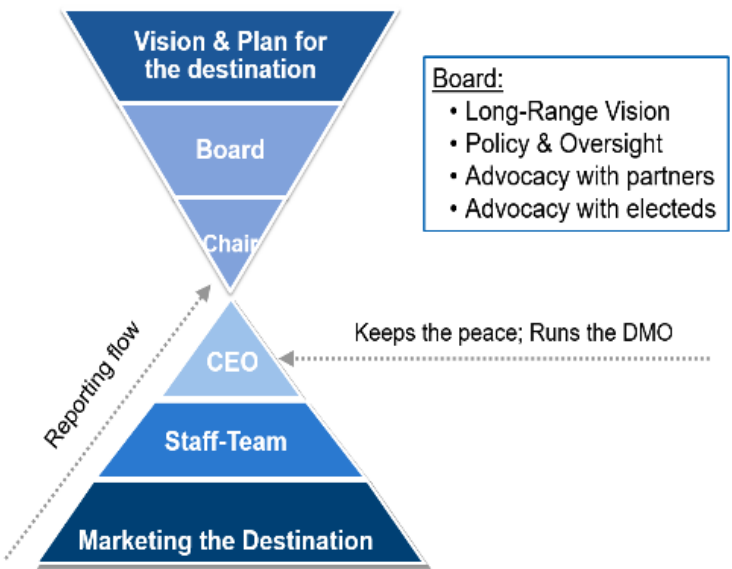
STRATEGIC DIRECTION AND GOALS

This Travel Industry Strategic Plan for the City of Broken Arrow CVB is based on the research findings in the 2016/17 study conducted by Young Strategies, Inc. as well as the firm’s knowledge of best practices within the travel industry. The strategies herein are intended to drive travel industry growth for Broken Arrow through 2020.

- **Restructure BACVB** – create new structure focused on group sales and leisure marketing to drive increased room demand.
- **9 Person Board** – lodging (2), dining (2), retail (2), sports (1), attraction (1), City Council (1). The Board’s work supports the City to focus on strategic development of the travel industry in Broken Arrow.
- **Staffing (3)** – Director/Marketing, Group Sales, Office/support. City to provide PR support to drive press stories about visiting Broken Arrow.
- **Group sales** – hire an experienced team sports & small meetings/conferences sales person to partner with hotels & facilities to drive increased group business. You must drive group business to Stoney Creek Hotel & Conference Center and the new Hilton Garden Inn while increasing transient demand for all hotels.
- **Marketing** – build a brand around the unique name “Broken Arrow”. Develop aggressive strategies for website & digital; social media and traditional marketing in partnership with regional and state DMOs.
- **Gateways** – support city in the development of gateways that create a sense of place and direct arriving guests to information and core gathering spots.
- **Signage & wayfinding** – visitors can’t spend money if they can’t find the cash registers. A signage system throughout the city will help move visitors about efficiently and drive increased spending.
- **Visitor information** – provide an app, maps, guides and other visitor information services to help visitors engage with the destination. Overnight visitors must be directed from hotels to find the shopping, dining and activities throughout Broken Arrow to drive maximum visitor spending.

IMPLEMENTATION

Annual reviews of this three-year strategic plan should take place in lieu of annual retreats. The annual review takes place with staff and Board/City leadership at a predetermined time in the annual planning process. There is no need for a retreat if the plan implementation is on track and there are no external factors that change overall strategies and goals. If significant changes are needed the Board/staff may schedule a retreat and/or planning process to adjust the plan. Invest in market research to guide future sales and marketing efforts. Specific strategies are provided in this report.



## 4. Leisure & Group Marketing – Traditional & Digital

### STRATEGIC DIRECTION AND GOALS

The 2016/17 research confirmed that people DO come to Broken Arrow year-round for leisure getaways but it also confirmed that many people in the five-hour drive market have little or no knowledge of what there is to do in Broken Arrow or why they would visit. The overbuilt lodging supply demands a substantial increase in sales and marketing to create new demand and prevent the closing of hotels. Broken Arrow has limited funds for marketing the destination and will have to use a mix of traditional and digital marketing and PR for maximum ROI.

All strategies herein are focused on generating new demand for rooms during the times when lodging occupancy is low. The by-product of overnight promotion will be day-trip visitation. The BACVB will need to focus on driving broad-based economic impact from increased visitation and spending. The annual marketing plans will focus on specific strategies attracting leisure visitors from target markets. Leverage partnerships with local travel industry businesses to extend the reach and stretch the budget of the CVB.

### TRADITIONAL MARKETING

**Target those demographics most likely to drive visitation YEAR ROUND.**

- Active adult singles, groups and young couples
- Empty nesters seeking active, fun activities
- Families with kids when school is out

**Target lifestyles and travel preferences as a reason to visit.**

- Active outdoors, Shopping, History/heritage

**Traditional print advertising will continue to be a critical component for building awareness of Broken Arrow as a leisure destination.**

- Travel Guides
- In-state monthly lifestyle publications

**Develop advertising strategies to fill need periods which requires a close partnership with lodging and weekly analysis of STR data.**

**Maintain a high quality destination guide (small) for inquiry fulfillment and limited distribution to welcome centers and info racks.**

- A destination guide tells your story and is not a phone book.
- Sell ads so it pays for itself

**Maintain high-quality destination maps and print publications to drive in-market spending (ads cover the cost)**

### DIGITAL/SOCIAL MARKETING

**Maintain a dynamic website/blog as the foundation of the digital marketing program.**

- Dedicate staff time weekly (interns) to Search Engine Marketing (SEM) and content management and enhancement.
- Keep blog content fresh and use guest bloggers to provide unique perspectives.
- Investigate updated web design in 2020

**Stay on top of the ever-changing trends in social media**

- Maintain and continually update a prioritized focus list of social platforms: Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, etc.
- Monitor and advertise on OTAs and planning sites: Google, Trip Advisor, Expedia, Travelocity, etc.
- Conduct bi-monthly lunch and learn social media workshops for local partners to facilitate pushing the message out more.

## 5. PR Communications – Travel & Local Media

### STRATEGIC DIRECTION AND GOALS

Editorial coverage in travel and lifestyle publications is invaluable to build awareness of the travel experiences in Broken Arrow. A public relations (PR) effort is required to pitch stories to travel writers to generate both digital and traditional coverage. PR is the most cost-effective form of communication because the BACVB could never afford to buy the level of exposure delivered by editorial stories. Ideally, the BACVB should retain a top-notch public relations firm to reach targeted media in key domestic markets and draft on the state travel office and Tulsa efforts. However, the budget is limited and the City of Broken Arrow Director of Communications can provide the necessary PR support to the CVB with local and travel media. Additionally, local partnerships are critical to ensure Broken Arrow remains appropriately visible within travel publications touting Broken Arrow as a destination.

A local PR effort within Broken Arrow is important to maintain visibility and support for BACVB programs toward the long-term goal of building pride in Broken Arrow as a destination. The BACVB Tourism Director has primary responsibility for the organization's image and visibility within the City and immediate area. It is vital for the City and BACVB Board of Directors to support the Tourism Director to maintain civic buy-in by advocating with local leaders that travel promotion is sustainable economic development. Maintaining partnerships with governing bodies and community leadership is critical to the success of this plan. BACVB partnership within the local travel industry plays a significant role in achieving success.

### PUBLIC RELATIONS

**Travel Media - Editorial coverage in travel and lifestyle publications is invaluable when building awareness of Broken Arrow as a destination. PR is most cost-effective when competing with other regional destinations.**

- a) **BACVB partners with City of Broken Arrow Communications Director** to reach targeted media in key domestic markets to promote Broken Arrow as a destination travel experience.
- b) **Partnership within the state & Tulsa region** is critical to success to make sure Broken Arrow remains appropriately visible within travel publications touting Broken Arrow as a destination.
- c) **Unique angles** to promote include: active outdoors, shopping, team sports, history/heritage, concerts, theater, etc.
- d) **Host travel media fam tours** (group and individual) to promote unique story angles on active outdoors, heritage and entertainment.

**Local Media - Maintaining visibility and support within Broken Arrow for BACVB programs is critical toward the long-term goal of building awareness the destination. BACVB partnership within the local travel industry plays a critical role in this process.**

- a) The **BACVB Tourism Director** has primary responsibility for the organization's image and visibility within the City and State.
- b) It is critical to maintain civic buy-in by **advocating with local leaders that travel promotion is sustainable economic development.**
- c) Maintaining **partnerships with governing bodies is critical** to success led and supported by the Tourism Director.
- d) Provide constant updates to travel industry leaders of the activities and successes of the refocused BACVB.



## 6. Group Sales – Top Priority

### STRATEGIC DIRECTION AND GOALS

The BACVB must develop a group sales effort in 2017 with significant urgency to drive room nights focusing on a 6 – 12 month booking window. The group sales effort is critical to drive rapid demand growth to keep up with the excessive lodging supply growth in the market. The three hotels opening in 2017 are likely to absorb demand from the existing hotels in the market and thus drive the numbers down across the board.

BACVB will market Broken Arrow as a group destination (in close partnership with group hotels & facilities) to the following segments: small meetings (10 – 75 people), team sports, mid-sized conferences (50 – 300 attendees), group tour and reunions.

An aggressive group sales effort is needed to accomplish the following:

- Drive conference & meeting group room nights in the new Stoney Creek Hotel & Conference Center and Hilton Garden Inn as both will have the top meeting facilities in the destination. If these facilities fail to attract groups they will take room nights away from the existing hotels.
- Drive room nights in Broken Arrow from team sports events that use Broken Arrow sports facilities. The research confirmed that many softball and baseball tournaments hosted in Broken Arrow put their teams in Tulsa hotels and Broken Arrow hotels have lost these room blocks.
- Drive small meetings business into all lodging properties that have a conference/meeting room (most existing hotels).

### GROUP MARKETING DIRECTION AND GOALS

**The BACVB group recruitment effort (traditionally called sales) is focused on maintaining existing groups and recruiting new groups in partnership with local lodging and event venues in Broken Arrow.**

**Corporate small meetings market** requires aggressive prospecting. Target all chain businesses within the Tulsa region and find the regional meeting planners. Partner with the lodging properties and coordinate an old-fashioned sales blitz.

**Team Sports** – Priority one: get the rooms back from existing tournaments that have been lost to Tulsa area hotels. Then, target those sports in which Broken Arrow has competitive facilities in quality and quantity.

**Associations** – Seek out small board and regional meetings/conferences that fit into the facilities you have available.

**SMERF** (Social, Military, Education, Religious, Fraternal groups) While SMERF groups are reliable for steady business, they tend to be lower-rate driven and many prefer weekends.

**Government** – Maintain relationships with government planners with regular sales calls to state and federal offices in Tulsa and Oklahoma City.





## 7. Visitor Services

### STRATEGIC DIRECTION AND GOALS

The primary focus of BACVB efforts will be to attract first-time and repeat visitors to Broken Arrow with a focus on overnight visitation in paid accommodations. In other words, drive room nights in hotels! The secondary focus of BACVB's long-term strategy is aimed on driving increased visitor engagement and spending once travelers arrive within Broken Arrow. Traditional visitor centers will not be as effective as possible in a city as large as Broken Arrow. Plain and simple, the goal is to fish where the fish are – BACVB will seek out ways to connect with travelers throughout Broken Arrow to drive maximum visitor spending and impact!

Additionally, it must be recognized that visitor spending only happens when visitors find where they are going. Effective directional signage is essential to driving high visitor spending and satisfaction and BACVB should provide the leadership and planning to make this happen.

BACVB should use interns to audit the online apps and mobile sites (TripAdvisor, Yelp, etc.) that travelers use to find their way and make plans while traveling. Training sessions with local travel industry partners will maximize the use of mobile planning devices. Frequent "lunch and learn" free training sessions will help the local travel industry partners become better marketing partners. Training will focus on methods to deliver accurate information while upselling in a hospitable manner. A push-pull strategy should be utilized to drive visitors throughout the City.

### VISITOR SERVICES DIRECTION AND GOALS

**Connecting travelers with experiences to drive increase spending in Broken Arrow is the goal of the program.**

- a) Maintain visitor information (maps & guides) in **local attractions and lodging**.
- b) Provide visitor information services at **events** (sports, conferences, etc.)
- c) Provide **gift bags with information to groups** that meet size and impact criteria
- d) Engage a planning firm to develop a **way-finding & signage program** designed to help visitors find experiences throughout the County.
- e) Provide **front-line hospitality training throughout Broken Arrow** as a better informed front-line provides better information and drives increased visitor spending.
- f) Audit the **online apps and mobile sites** (Trip Advisor, Yelp, etc.) that travelers use to find their way and make plans while traveling.
- g) **Training sessions with local travel industry partners** will maximize the use of mobile planning devices. Frequent "**lunch and learn**" free training sessions will help the local travel industry partners become better marketing partners.

## 8. Staying on Trend with Existing Experiences

### STRATEGIC DIRECTION AND GOALS

Trends and traveler behavior are in a constant state of evolution. **A community-wide master plan that sets priorities for future development of visitor experiences is needed. Broken Arrow must develop new visitor experiences to become a unique place to visit.** Continue to support and encourage **the Rose District downtown Broken Arrow as a livable, walkable destination for leisure and group travelers.**

Broken Arrow must stay focused on **constant improvement to existing experiences** to avoid falling behind competitive cities in the region. Every destination faces product life cycle issues and Broken Arrow must continue addressing the lifecycle issues to maintain forward movement.



### ADDING TO EXISTING EXPERIENCES TO DRIVE DEMAND

- a) **Focus on development and continual improvement, as part of a master plan for new and existing visitor experiences.**
- b) **Core focus areas for continued success are:**
  - **Dynamic, walking-scale Rose District with shops, restaurants, entertainment, etc. additional small scale local shopping to create a shopping destination experience**
  - **Outdoor activities – recreation & active lifestyle with trails that connect the different parts of the area**
  - **Connecting group venues (sports in the south, meetings in the north) to lodging & shopping – core density**
  - **Conduct a competitive sports facility assessment to determine what new facilities could be developed to drive increased room demand**
  - **Explore medical tourism to take advantage of new lodging facilities in close proximity to medical facilities.**



## 9. Tracking and Accountability

### STRATEGIC DIRECTION AND GOALS

BACVB is a research-based, strategic destination marketing & management organization. Progress on accomplishing the goals will be tracked annually. Annual progress reports will be presented to the BACVB Board of Directors, elected officials and civic leaders throughout the City. An annual review session will cover prior-year accomplishments, set goals for the coming year and determine if a full retreat is necessary to change the strategic direction of the BACVB.

BACVB commissioned a comprehensive market research study as part of this planning process. No new visitor research is anticipated prior to 2020. However, the BACVB should monitor STR data for the market on a weekly basis paying close attention to supply and demand in the market.

### MATERIALS AND RESOURCES

- The Tourism Director will have primary oversight of on-going tracking, accountability and reporting.
- Retain independent research firms to conduct regular research (every 4-5 years), updates and benchmark research to guide future planning.
- STR data to monitor room supply and demand as well as rate.
- Conduct annual in-house review as part of planning process to track progress and economic impact of BACVB program of work.
- Investigate tracking software and economic impact models as necessary.

