



Q1 2023 - CVB Report to the Board

Your CVB packed a considerable amount of work into the first quarter of 2023. Q1 was advocacy season with two trips to Albany for legislative appointments, as well as direct outreach to our state and federal elected officials. The first round of Agriculinary grants have been awarded. We produced a highly successful Ithaca Loves Teachers Celebration and hired our new Visitor Experience Manager, Vitaliy Polashenko. We increased advertising to influence winter travel, attended multiple consumer and travel tradeshow, and hosted our very first meeting client event in New York City. And, we began work on the 2024 budget and marketing plan for submission to STPB in April.

Congratulations to our Meeting Sales Manager, Lisa Conarton, on her award from Meeting Professionals International Upstate New York Chapter.

This is a brief summary of the work the CVB team accomplished in Q1 2023:

MARKETING

VisitIthaca.com

While March experienced an overall decrease in website traffic of 18% YoY, we also saw 17,500 organic clicks last month, which represents a 1% decrease. Organic impressions numbered 1.1 million, a 2% increase. The average ranking position for the site moved from 18.3 in 2022 to 15.3 in 2023.

Website traffic	Q1 2023	Q1 2022
Total Sessions	209,439	224,404
Ave time on page	1:47	1:25
Website referrals to partners	March 2023	March 2022
Attractions Book Online button	n/a	74
Lodging Book Online*	1614	155
Visit Website clicks from listing	3355	1744

*In 2023 includes use of Check Rates or Book now through Book>Direct

Social:

During Q1 we combined our own content along with user generated content and paid content creators throughout winter. We promoted Ithaca Loves Teachers celebration events and deals with frequent posts on its dedicated Facebook page. We ran a targeted paid Facebook campaign in partnership with Cortland County to highlight “Stay & Play” winter activities. Throughout the month of March, we leaned into family friendly activities, places to eat and spring scenes across Tompkins County. Our most popular post was featuring Stone Bend Farm’s brunch with 16,000 impressions and an engagement of 5.19 %.

2023	March	Feb	Jan		2022	March	Feb	Jan
Instagram followers	18.2K (+12% from 2022)	17.9 K	17.7 K		Facebook followers	43.3K (+3.5% from 2022)	43.2 K	43.4 K
Instagram Account Reach	29 K	44 K	33.7 K		Facebook Reach	310.3 K	305.5 K	221.4 K
Instagram Post Content Interactions	6,155 K	6,103	6,070		Facebook User Engagements	13.6 K	14.1 K	7.8 k
Instagram Story Reach	33.5 K	30.7 K	30 K		Facebook Paid Reach	238,397	306,198	144,930
Instagram Reel Interactions	2,166	2,588	2,367					

PR and Media Relations:

The marketing team launched a strong start to 2023 with increased hosting of influencers to produce more content which promoted winter visitation. We responded to 16 media leads, double the hosting in 2022. We supplied information for articles, supported image requests, and received extensive coverage from two outdoors influencers.

We attended the NY Travel + Adventure Show in January in partnership with New York's Best Experiences. An estimated 30,000 people attended during the two days. The CVB distributed more than 500 travel guides and Ithaca Tompkins International Airport promotional items to advertise the direct JFK flights.

We also attended the Philadelphia Flower Show in March in partnership with New York's Best Experiences. While our team for there for a day, our travel guides were distributed throughout the multi-day show. We highlighted the Ithaca Childrens' Garden, Cornell Botanic Gardens and Lab of Ornithology, along with other agricultural experiences across Tompkins County.

Media coverage in the first quarter of 2023 included:

Outdoors influencer Karina Benninger, who we hosted in December 2022:

- Instagram post: <https://www.instagram.com/p/CnkAhLEj34p/>
- 3-Day Itinerary blog post: <https://kbhikes.com/explore-outdoors-in-ithaca-ny-3-day-itinerary/>
- Ithaca Falls Waterfall Hike blog post: <https://kbhikes.com/amazing-easy-waterfall-hike-to-do-in-any-season-ithaca-falls/>
- Grayhaven Motel Lodging Review blog post: <https://kbhikes.com/ny-lodging-review-grayhaven-motel/>

Spectrum 1 Local News featured Tompkins County attractions and winter promotional events, including the Stay & Play Winter Pass and Ithaca Loves Teachers, in two separate live interviews.:

- Stay and Play pass offers deals, promotions in Southern Tier: <https://spectrumlocalnews.com/nys/central-ny/CTV/2023/02/21/southern-tier-stay-and-play-pass>
- Teachers get a break this week in Ithaca: <https://spectrumlocalnews.com/nys/central-ny/CTV/2023/02/25/teachers-get-a-break-this-week-in-ithaca>

Tompkins Weekly

- Annual Teachers Celebration set to stimulate economy <https://www.tompkinsweekly.com/articles/annual-teachers-celebration-set-to-stimulate-economy/>

Flock Finger Lakes, which was a paid partnership in 2022, released their second video in January 2023:

- SNOWSHOEING at Lindsay-Parsons Biodiversity Preserve (Finger Lakes Land Trust)
<https://youtu.be/vMah5Zk2RC4>

Fyllis Hockman, a writer who we hosted in summer 2022, published this article on eight websites throughout the fall and winter in 2022, and one final publication placed it in January 2023:

- Join Us in Ithaca, NY: A Land of Gorges, Greenery, Gardens and Goats!
<https://instinct.thekiti.com/instinct/s3lfak62ehw7ta5lp3txkal9alwc74>

Agriculinary Microgrants

The first round of Agriculinary tourism microgrant applications were received and graded. Of the 11 applications received, ten have been notified of their grant awards. One application was incomplete and the CVB team will be reaching out to offer assistance. All but \$880 of the total grant budget of \$20,000 has been allocated. These are reimbursable grants. We do not anticipate any additional rounds of grants, unless additional funds become available from room tax, or if a project is not completed. Thank you to the Agriculinary committee for their time investment and helpful suggestions.

SALES

The sales team kicked off 2023 at the Professional Convention Management Association (PCMA) Convening Leaders Convention with excellent educational and networking opportunities. We represented our destination at Meeting Professionals International Gala and at the Empire State Society of Association Executives' Meetings, Membership and Marketing event. The sales team also hosted a successful client luncheon for meeting planners and receptive tour operators at the Cornell Club in NYC in collaboration with our hotel partners. We took 29 appointments at the American Bus Association annual tradeshow and participated in PA Bus Association Marketplace where it was announced that Ithaca will be the host destination for the 2024 PBA Annual Meeting!

The "Meetings Make Sense in Ithaca" client gift box campaign launched in January, as a way to keep our destination top of mind; it has been well received. We also created Threshold 360 tours for the Fairfield Inn & Suites by Marriott and the State Theatre. The team also assisted the Rodeway Inn and Suites with DOS onboarding and Extranet training.

Ithaca gained exposure internationally from participation in a "Why TAP" video released to partners and PPTPs this month. TAP also featured a frozen Taughannock Falls image in their first Preferred Professional Travel Provider (PPTP) newsletter.

Conference Center:

Q1 was an exciting time for the Ithaca Downtown Conference Center. We hosted the first hard hat tour with a prospective client for June 2024 and sent a contract to another group who would like to book in May 2024. We also upgraded our CVENT listing for the Ithaca Downtown Conference Center and implemented an event diagramming tool which enables us to create mock layouts for potential clients.

Sales Team Leads for January-March 2023:

Q1 2023	Definite	Tentative	Lost	Grand Total
# of leads	17	20	11	48
Total room nights	2874	3102	4825	10801
Economic Impact	\$494,778	\$846,149	\$1,263,040	\$2,603,967

VISITOR EXPERIENCE

The Visitor Experience team has spent a good portion of Q1 interviewing and selecting a Visitor Experience Manager. Once Vitaliy Polyashenko started in February, we promptly began a search to fill seasonal and part-time Visitor Experience Specialist positions.

The team attended seven off-site events and one virtual grad fair in addition to hosting one Virtual Ithaca 101 this quarter. Four of these events were for Ithaca College and five were for Cornell University.

The Ithaca Loves Teachers celebration set a new record this year with 2,278 digital pass downloads from 17 states. There were over 150 deals and 40 events taking place February 16– 28, 2023. A full report of Ithaca Loves Teachers will be shared in the future.

By the Numbers:

	Q1 2023	Q1 2022	YOY % change
Phone	200	308	-35%
DVC Traffic	646	751	-14%
Taughannock Traffic	0	0	0
Chats	275	210	+31%
TG Requests	645	696	-7%
Off-Site Events	7208	5131	+40%
Total	8974	7134	+26%