



# 2015 Annual Report

**Best Place to Start a  
Business in Kansas**

Ranked #1 of 46 by NerdWallet, a San Francisco based personal finance company

**Top 100 Best  
Small Towns**

Ranked #76 of 12,000 small-to-medium sized cities by Livability.com

# Director's Message

Although 2015 seemed to pass in the blink of an eye, it certainly left a lasting impression on Merriam and the many accomplishments our town of 11,281 call home.

We are fortunate to be nestled in a metro region with a robust and growing tourism industry. As Kansas City greets 24 million visitors each year, we must remember that the attractions, restaurants, shops, art venues, arenas and facilities that we have come to love and frequent as residents simply would not exist without visitor spending. Not only would these favorite visitor amenities suffer without tourism dollars, but one other critical economic driver is also vastly dependent upon the influx of visitation — jobs. Take a peek at the impressive Kansas City visitor stats below which help drive the economy and sustain our quality of life. We say it again and again... tourism is economic development.



24 MILLION VISITORS



SPENT \$3.1 BILLION



SUSTAINED 46,000+ TOURISM JOBS  
(KC REGION)

As we embark on a new year filled with vast opportunities to promote Merriam and extend a warm welcome to others, please consider the important role visitors play in Merriam's economy. Give them a hearty hello if you're in their company and thank them for visiting our town. As the official destination marketing organization for Merriam, we appreciate your extension of hospitality to those who choose to visit and spend their dollars in our community.

Happy travels,

*Karen Crane*



## 2015 Lodging Report

MERRIAM, KANSAS	2013	2014	2015
OCCUPANCY	58%	68%	64%
AVERAGE DAILY RATE	\$63.47	\$62.23	\$69.77
TOTAL REVENUE	\$6.9M	\$8M	\$8.4M

## Kansas Tourism Industry Facts



Kansas hosts 34.8 million visitors annually. The statewide supply of rooms increased 2.5%, which led overall occupancy to fall 0.5%, but revenue still increased 5.6% over 2014.

There are 625 properties in Kansas with 44,379 rooms. Merriam offers five lodging properties with 519 rooms.



Between 2011 and 2015, Kansas communities experienced a \$10.8 million increase in revenue through guest tax collections.



Tourism employment has grown four straight years and impacts more than 92,000 jobs in Kansas...that's more than the populations of Leavenworth and Manhattan combined.

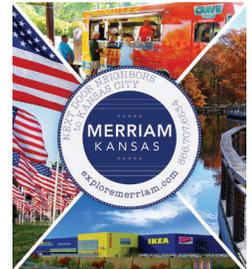


Visitor spending has averaged a 5.7% annual growth rate since 2009, and accounts for \$570 million in state and local government revenues. Each household in Kansas would have to pay an additional \$511 to generate the total visitor tax revenue.



## 2015 Highlights & Marketing Snapshot

- ▶ 21 ad placements with 4.16M total impressions
- ▶ “Think Like A Guest” – guest blog published on the national meetings magazine website, Small Market Meetings, yielded the highest click-rates of all 2015 SMM blogs
- ▶ Big 12 free rides; 124 riders, 614,485 ad impressions, 729 clicks to exploremerriam.com
- ▶ Merriam hosted a Piano on Parade as part of the Keys 4 Kids program. The piano was designed by artist Lisa McElwee and featured a seek and find theme—perfect for families visiting the Merriam Marketplace.
- ▶ Escorted professional travel writer Maureen Littlejohn through Merriam, resulting in great exposure for some of Merriam’s most treasured stops: <http://maureenlittlejohn.com/2015/07/dorothy-we-are-in-kansas>
- ▶ Exhibited at four major tradeshow and events: American Bus Association, Missouri Bank Travel, Missouri Meetings & Events and Tour Kansas Showcase. The ABA post event, hosted by KC Destinations, landed the highest satisfaction among evaluation comments from tour planners of all post-convention events.
- ▶ Hosted the June Certified Tourism Ambassador training at Merriam Historic Plaza, graduating nine new Heartland Tourism Ambassadors into the metro region’s hospitality program.
- ▶ Offered a fun, engaging summer promotion for families and kids. The Passport to Merriam encouraged stops at six preferred visitor attractions and awarded a summer prize basket to one lucky winner named Lev!



## Merriam...By the numbers 2015

Assisted 748 visitors stopping by Merriam Historic Plaza

107 geocaches found by tech visitors

Attended 4 tradeshow, visiting with 812 people

Distributed 10,027 visitor guides

Provided 72 goodies to visitors at hotels throughout the year

4.5 out of 5-star visitor rating on Facebook

2,163 social followers across Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Pinterest

1,158 tour group attendees

407 people used the Merriam Historic Plaza meeting room

3,275 digital kiosk views



**STRAWBERRY HILL POVITICA**  
Nominee for QVC's best  
breakfast food of 2015

**LEE JEANS**  
Top 25 Kansas City brands  
-Ingram's Magazine



Build a place people want to visit,  
you'll build a place where people want to live.

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

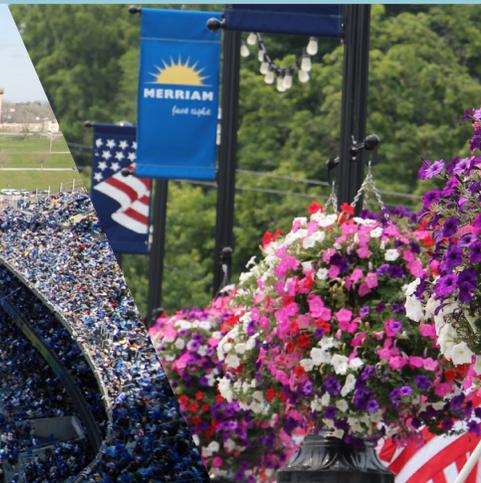
Build a place where people want to work,  
you'll build a place where business has to be.

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

-Maura Gast, Executive Director  
Irving Texas CVB



**KANSAS CITY ROYALS**  
2015 World Series Champions



**MIXTURE'S PUMPKIN SPICE CANDLE**  
Voted #1 scented candle  
-Huffington Post

**IKEA**  
Voted a favorite kid-friendly restaurant  
-KC Parent Magazine



**MERRIAM VISITORS BUREAU**

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