

# Bringing Buses to Your Town

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# GOALS

- Business of motorcoach travel
- Power of group travel in Ohio
- Group travel trends
- Building relationships with your local convention and visitors bureaus
- Designing group tour experiences
- Where and how to market

# What is Group Travel?





# The Basics



## A Very Simple Explanation

**Group Travel** means multiple people traveling to your community

**Independent Travel** means people who visit your community solo, with friends, or with family

**The most important thing to remember is that buying process is different**

# The Process



Destinations, hotels, restaurants, shops and attractions “sell” opportunities for experiences



Tour operator selects destinations and experiences and offers “packaged tours”



Buys a “packaged tour” from a tour operator



# An Example

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Sept 28-Oct 2 Don't Miss Our 50th

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28-Oct	

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## SPRING IN THE HOLMES COUNTY AMISH COUNTRY

Saturday April 12, 2014

\$89

Elyria, No. Olmsted, Middleburg Hts, Independence, Beachwood, As Applicable



Dinner is special, since we'll be having a family-style meal with bountiful servings; it's been pleasing townspeople and tourists for over thirty years. No one will want to skip a tempting piece of their homemade pie for dessert. Many guests enjoy the rocking chairs on the front porch or listening to the clip-clop of buggies passing through the Amish farming valley. We'll have time to visit the impressive Carlisle Gift House, the bakery, Coblentz Chocolates and, just before we head for home, an Amish meat market that offers bacon, steaks, smoked pork chops and other great items you may want to take with you. We've again included Sol's Exchange & Sol's Kit-N-Kaboodle brimming with furniture, candles, quilts, handmade dolls and even goose clothes. We've also expanded the tour this year to also include a Christmas Shoppe with holiday home decor and holiday gifts at Schrack's Homestead.

# Tour Operators



- Large and small companies
- May sell directly to consumers, group leaders, travel agents, etc.
- Some own buses, others do not
- Good source of repeat business
- Difficult to tell legitimacy, which is why marketplaces (such as Heartland) pre-qualify



# Group Leaders



- Bank clubs, church groups, garden clubs . . .
- The more complicated the trip (overnights, etc.), the more likely they'll use the services of a tour operator
- Difficult to access

# Power of Group Travel in Ohio

# Group Travel in Ohio



\$1.14 billion in  
direct sales



\$3.66 billion  
total economic  
impact

SOURCE: John Dunham and Associates, Inc., "2012 Economic Impact of the Motorcoach Tourism Industry,  
American Bus Association Foundation





**17%**

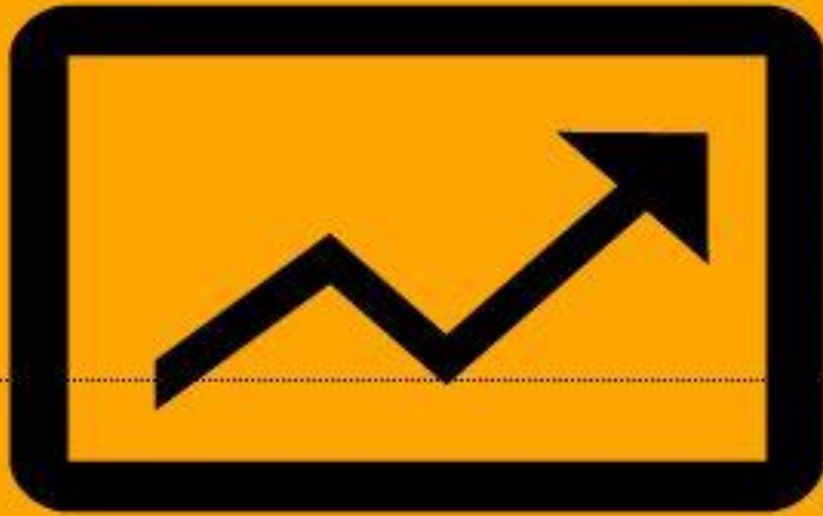
Ohio overnight  
marketable trips  
booked as an  
escorted group  
travel trip in 2012



**12%**

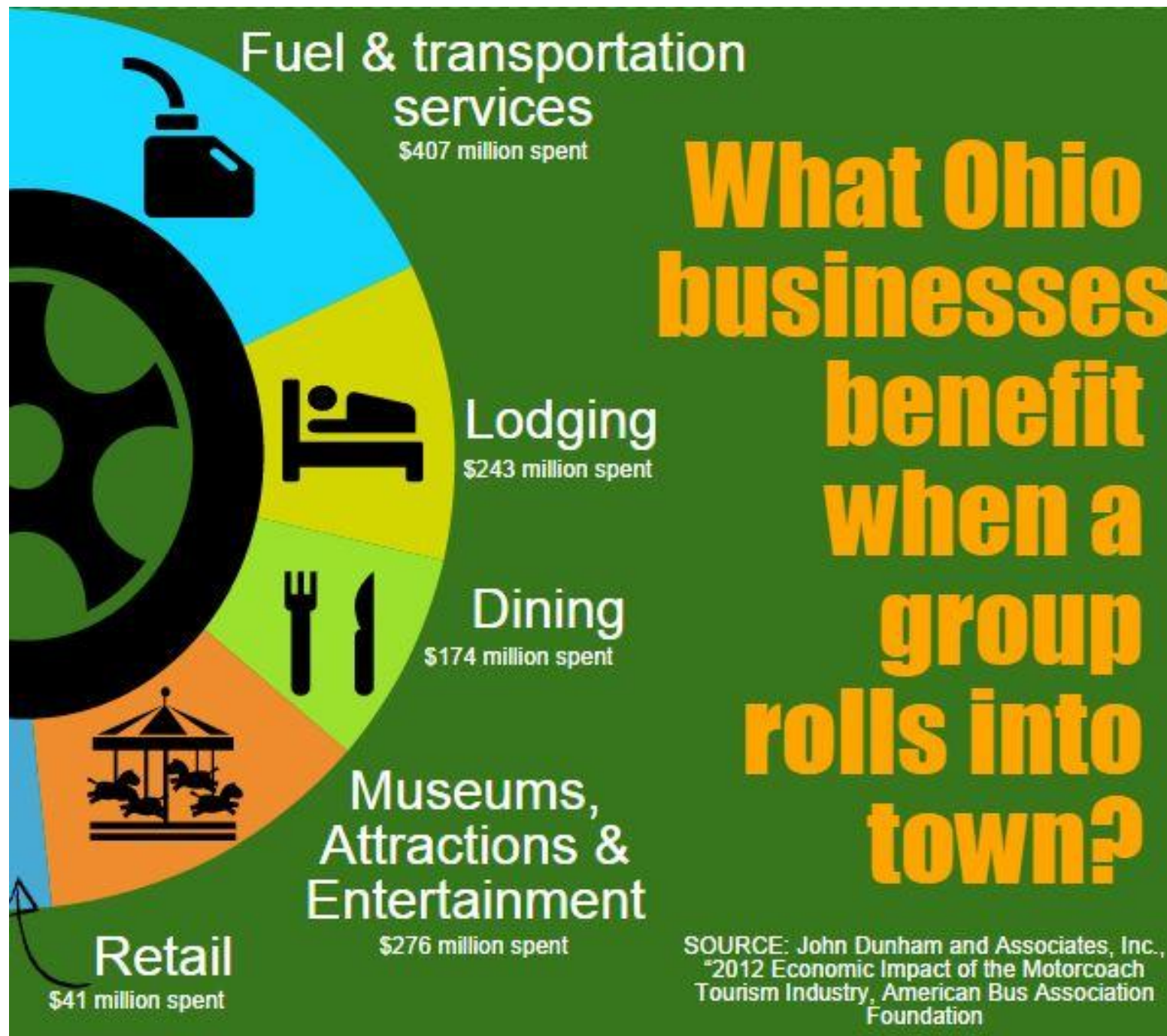
**increase  
since 2011**

SOURCE: Office of TourismOhio Fall Town  
Hall Meeting Presentation, 2013

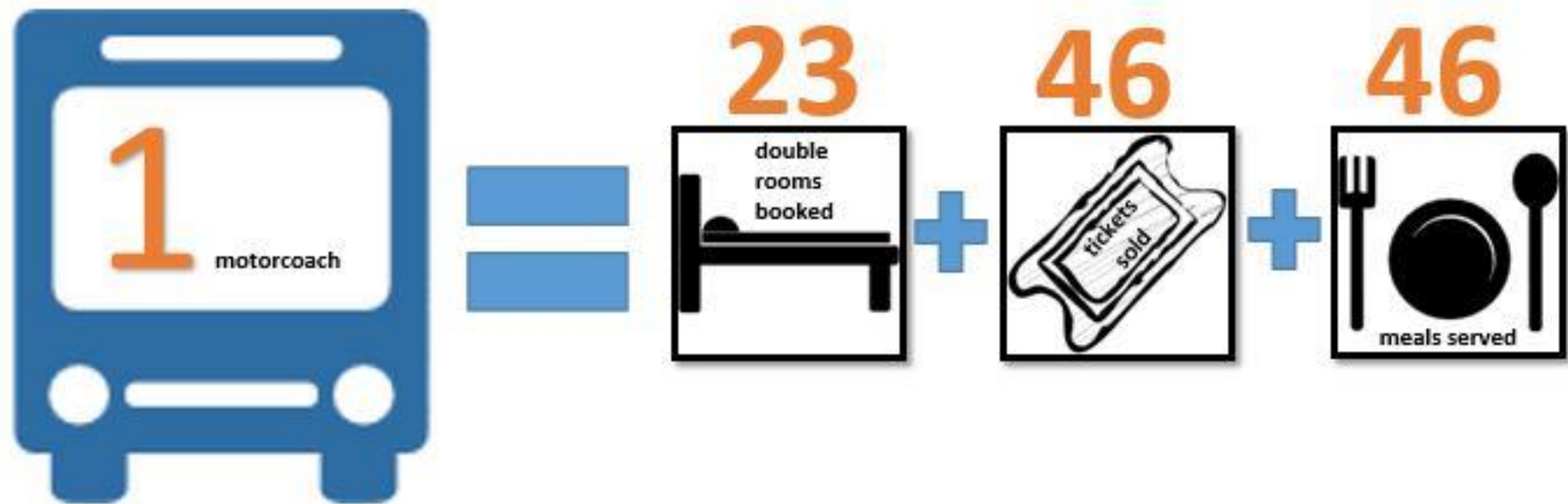


92% of tour operators  
reported more  
customers in 2013

SOURCE: U.S. Tour Operators Association, "Tour  
Operator Members Forecast a 'Boom Year' Ahead:  
Majority Report Double-digit Growth in 2013", Dec. 5, 2013.

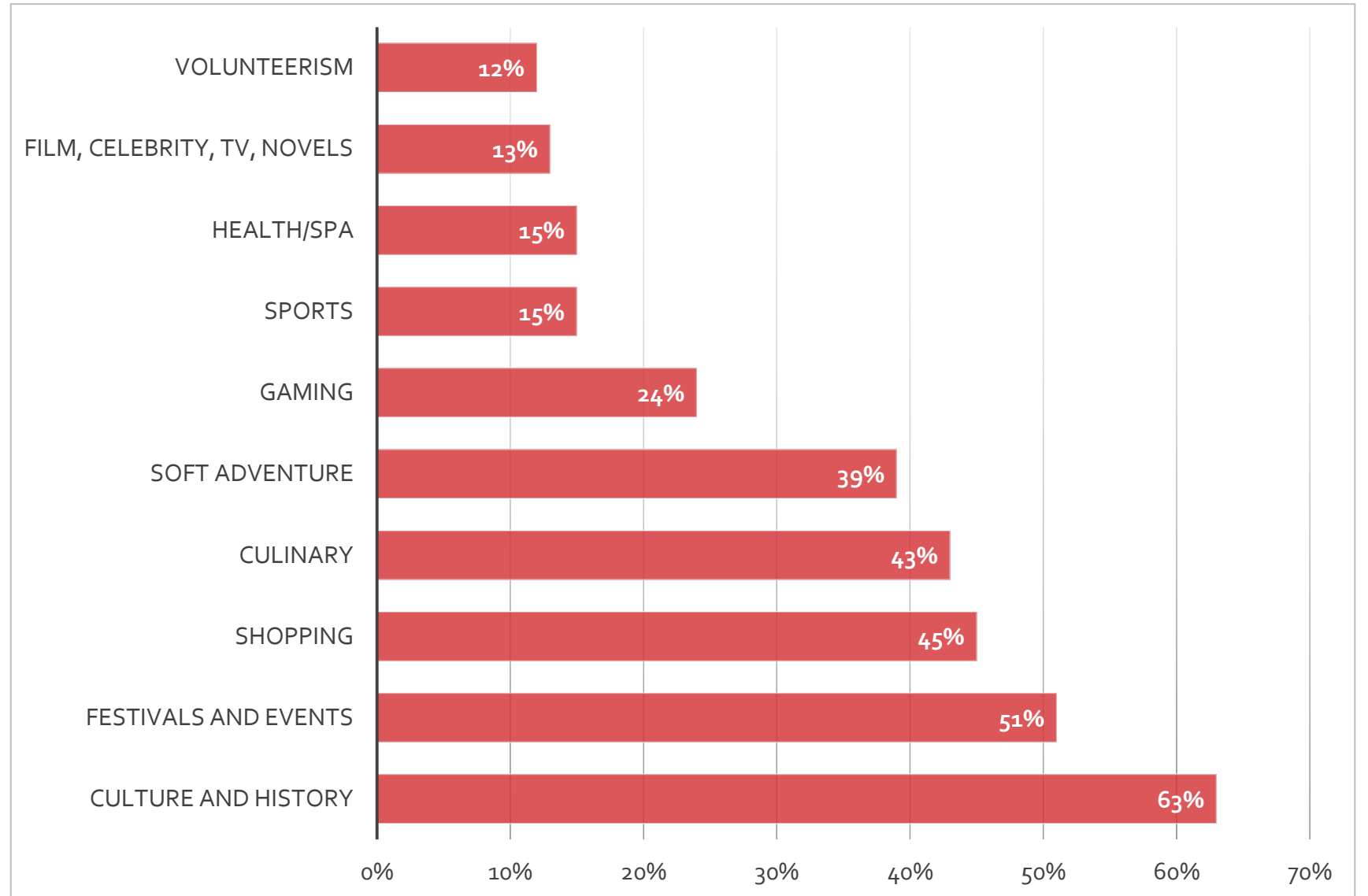






# Group Travel Trends

# Group Experiences Most Sought After





## What Operators are Seeking

- Price and Value . . . 91%
- Previous Experience . . . 69%
- Uniqueness . . . 64%
- Reputation . . . 64%



At least 82% begin researching itineraries at least six months in advance

# Market is Changing

More choices, more options

Entertainment later in the day

Experiential, active

Niche

Smaller-sized groups





# Designing Group Experiences



Feet on the  
Street  
Don't forget  
"Potties for  
the Bodies!"



# Industry Standards

## Front door service



## Comps for drivers and escorts





## Greet and Meet

Add a personal touch by greeting the motorcoach when it arrives!



# Creating Collateral for Groups

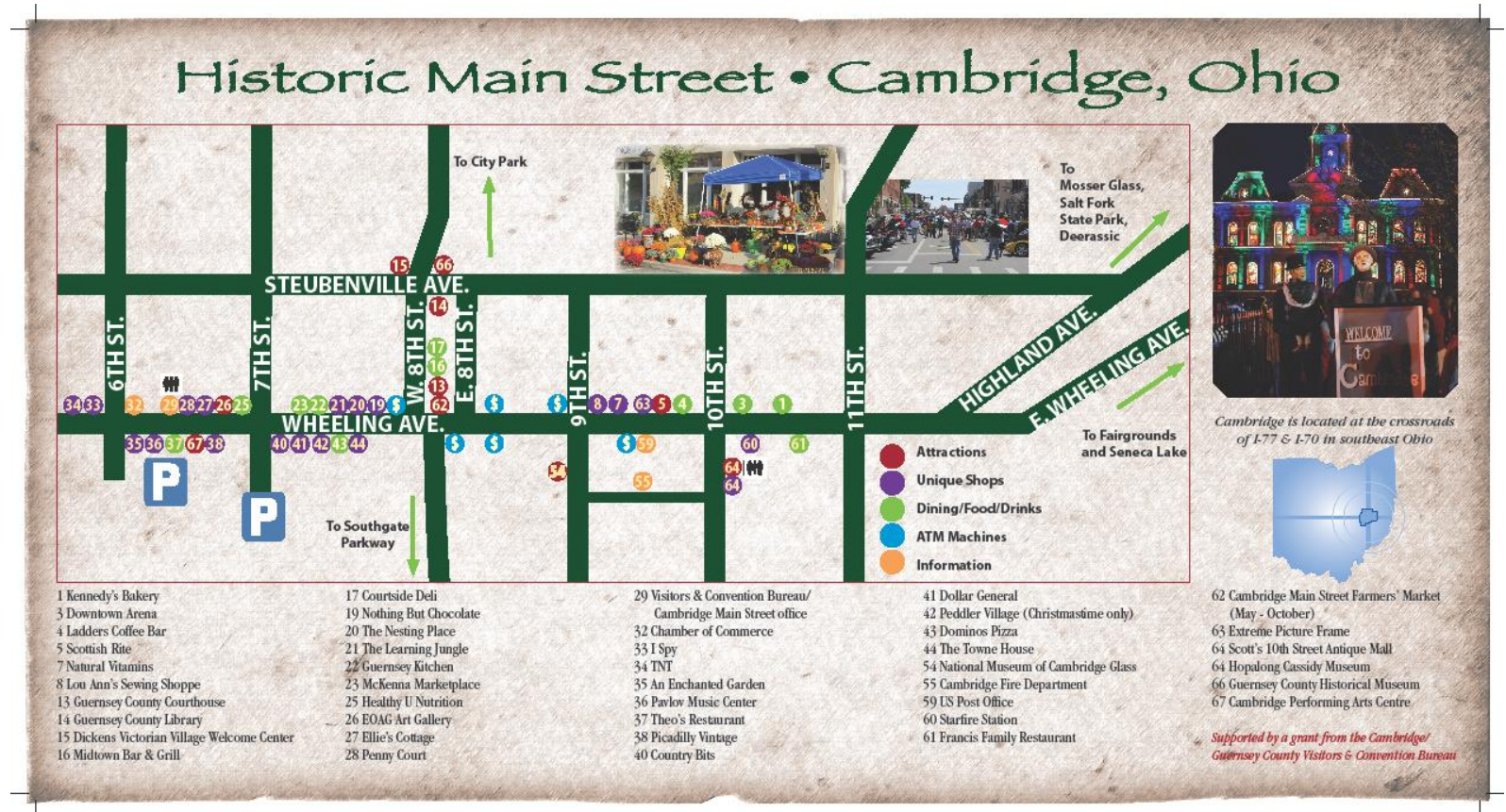
## Profile Sheet

- Location, location, location
- Put a face with a contact
- List your group tour amenities
- Highlight your attractions, events and unique experiences
- Pictures speak volumes





# Follow up Collateral



# It Takes a Village

Creating a destination for your downtown





# Where and How to Market

# Collaboration and Partnerships

Your DMO is your best resource





# Collaboration and Partnerships

## Heartland Travel Showcase



# Collaboration and Partnerships



Ohio Has IT! is an industry-led marketing partnership created to showcase the endless experiences that Ohio has for motorcoach groups. Whether you are looking for something educational for students, a experiential adventure for seniors or even a custom itinerary for your group's unique needs, Ohio Has IT! will provide you with the tools to reach out and create a memorable trip that is sure to be a hit with your group.

# Media Outlets for Groups

## Group Tour Magazine



## Group Travel Leader

# Working with your partners Incorporating Experiential Tourism

Meet Mr. Bennett, Miss  
Mitchel and Elva Voltz



National Museum of Cambridge  
Glass

Get your Cowboy On!



Hopalong Cassidy Museum and Festival



# Memories to last a lifetime



Create  
Customers  
for Life!

