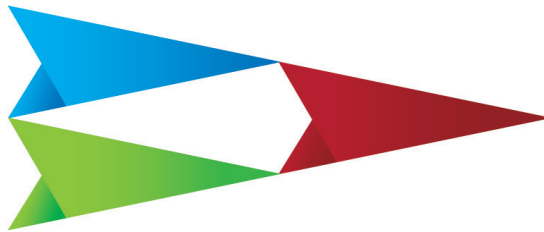


# Report to our community



GRAND ISLAND  
NEBRASKA

*Convention & Visitors Bureau*

# Mission: Grow the tourism economy

Dear industry and community stakeholders:

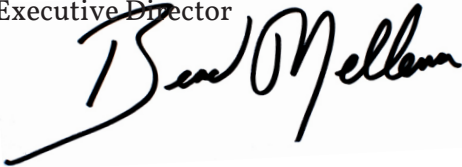
The Hall County-Grand Island Convention & Visitors Bureau (GICVB) board of Directors and Staff is committed to marketing our community and being a resource to the hospitality industry. We take great pride in the responsibility we have to serve those who rely on these efforts.

The GICVB is the organizational focal point for the local industry providing support and strategic direction to the industry. I hope that this report provides you with a better understanding of our efforts and how, along with our business and community partners, we provide value to Grand Island.

Through our programs of sales, services and marketing, we hope to connect to our visitors and potential visitors in a substantial and meaningful way.

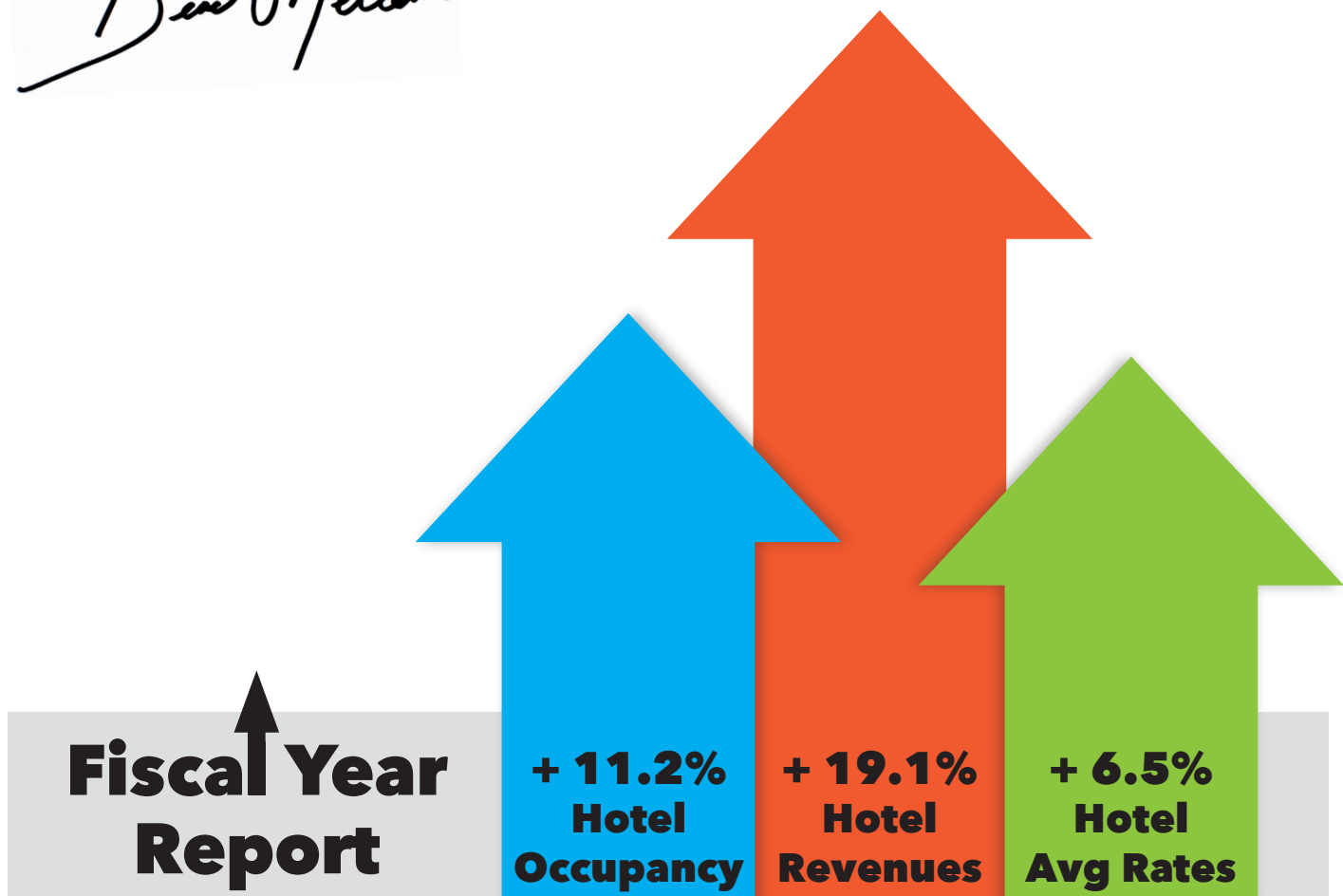
As we develop new economic and visitor experiences along with our partners in the Grow Grand Island initiative, we remain committed to our core mission to grow the tourism economy and identify Grand Island as a destination.

Brad Mellema  
Executive Director



**Brad Mellema, Executive Director**

Tricia Beem, Assistant Director  
Liz Gerberding, Convention Services  
Paul Nielsen, Marketing Manager



July 1, 2014-June 30, 2015 | STR Global Report

**and define Grand Island as a destination.**

## **FY 2014-2015 By the Numbers**

### **Details**

- 22 hotel properties
- 1,765 hotel rooms
- 22 citywide events\*

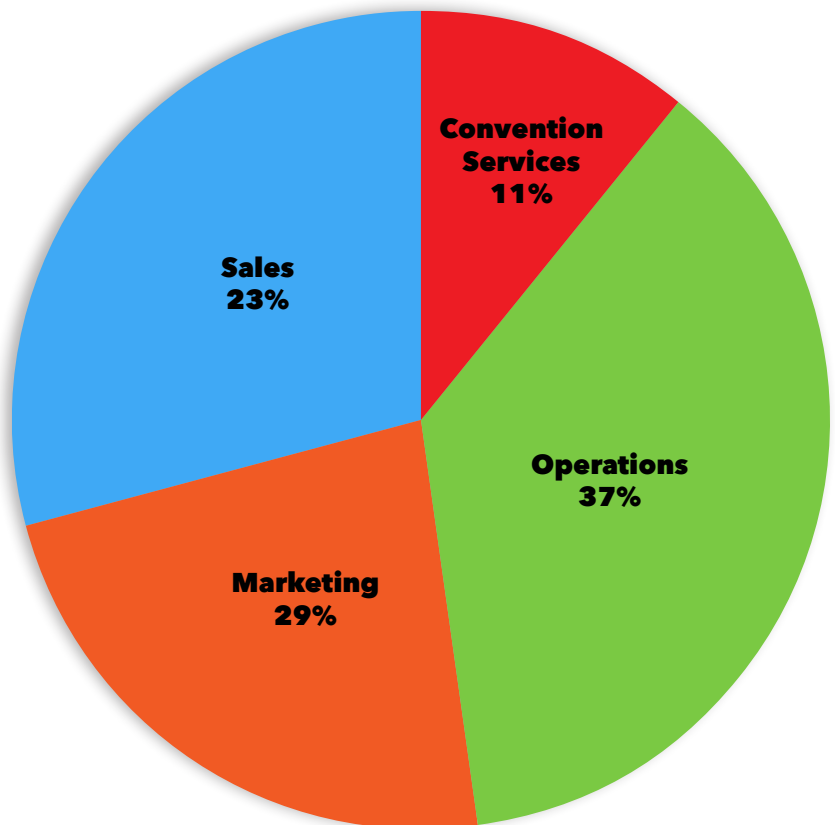
\* A citywide event is defined as one that requires five or more hotels to host.

The GICVB is a not-for-profit organization that brings together businesses, attractions, and organizations that rely on tourism. The GICVB was founded in 1982 and operates under the authority of the Hall County Board of Supervisors. In Grand Island, the current lodging tax is 6%, 2% of which funds the entire budget of the GICVB. No local property taxes are used in our operation.

2% Visitor Promotion Fund

2% Visitor Improvement Fund

2% Heartland Events Center Marketing Fund (city)  
= 6% total lodging tax



**Mission: Grow the tourism economy**

# Marketing Grand Island

As our city enters a new era of growth, we have focused our marketing efforts into five areas. This allows us to have an identifiable brand in areas that have the largest potential effect on the tourism business sector in our community. It is important that we have a recognizable brand, even across our five segments so that the image begins to build over time with our audiences. We want people to recognize our brand.

We are highlighting people who exemplify each of our marketing focus areas at a high level. We show buildings and facilities, but feel that people have a deeper connection to introduce potential customers to our community.

We have spent time upgrading the look of two of our most visible sales tools this past year, the Grand Island Vibe magazine as well our VisitGrandIsland.com website. They are designed to be simple and elegant providing the user with basic travel information as well as encouraging them to explore more deeply and spend more time with what makes Grand Island great.





**and define Grand Island as a destination.**

Market segment 1

## **Cranes, wildlife, nature**

### The cranes are our key attraction

The sandhill crane migration is an enduring identifier for Grand Island and for Nebraska. Every year, we attract visitors from all fifty states and dozens of countries largely during the month of March to witness the event. This is important business and one that is certainly open for growth in future years. In close partnership with the Crane Trust, we have produced maps, promotional materials, and have placed print and electronic advertisements to provide a consistent message.

Media tours have been conducted each of the last three years in partnership with the Nebraska Tourism Commission and reach millions of readers through editorial content.

“There are very few places where people of all backgrounds can come together and share such an experience. Where else will you find yourself in a viewing blind with a chance crowd consisting of a New York banker, a housewife from Grand Island, a college student from Denver and a poet from the Andes of Chile.” - *Brad Mellema*



# Mission: Grow the tourism economy

Market segment 2

## Agriculture

### Our roots

Agriculture is at the very heart of who we are in Grand Island. Most area jobs are either directly related to or support the agriculture industry. With the addition of the Fonner Park livestock complex that houses the Nebraska State Fair, cattle shows have now become a part of our landscape. The recently formed Grand Island Livestock Complex Authority is charged with promoting the buildings to prospective cattle and livestock associations and sales.

It is clear that these facilities, along with events such as Husker Harvest Days, are a real identifier for Grand Island.

*“This is the best facility we’ve been in.” – Boer Goat show attendee quoted in The Independent*



**and define Grand Island as a destination.**

Market segment 3

## **Meetings and Group Tours**

### A passion for hospitality

Providing resources and information to group tours and meeting planners is a bedrock activity of your CVB. We are the local boots on the ground that meeting and group tour planners depend on to get events pulled together.

Each group has unique needs. Efficient and professional services have an impact, in partnership with local conference properties, in attracting and retaining events. Services include information packets, name tags, registration assistance, event consultation, tour assistance, site selection, lodging blocks, and event marketing.

*"I have the opportunity to work with a lot of travel 'professionals'... I don't even remember half of them. This is not the case with Tricia Beem; she left a lasting impression on me and is truly the yardstick by which I evaluate the other professionals with whom I must deal. I wish I could bottle her manner and sell it to the other representatives of travel." – Karla Hynes, Iowa State Savings Bank*



# Mission: Grow the tourism economy

Market segment 4

## Sports Events

### The shooting park is a bullseye

This market continues to grow. The Heartland Events Center has brought in a tremendous number of annual sporting events. The new Veterans Athletic Complex is a great addition to our city, and the Heartland Public Shooting Park remains a regional gem that we must keep using to grow the tourism economy in Grand Island.

“No matter the outcome on the court, every team, player, coach, or spectator came out a winner in Grand Island as a result of the red carpet treatment they received.”

– Debra Velder, NSAA





**and define Grand Island as a destination.**

Market segment 5

## **Us – marketing to ourselves**

### Creating 50,000 sales people

Who better than Us to sell ourselves. Grand Island needs to think of itself as a great place to host events, conduct business, and entertain. To that end, we are instituting the Us Campaign to educate ourselves about some of the hidden treasures of our community. We have a lot to offer guests of all ages and interests and equipping our residents with understanding about what we offer can be a powerful marketing tool.

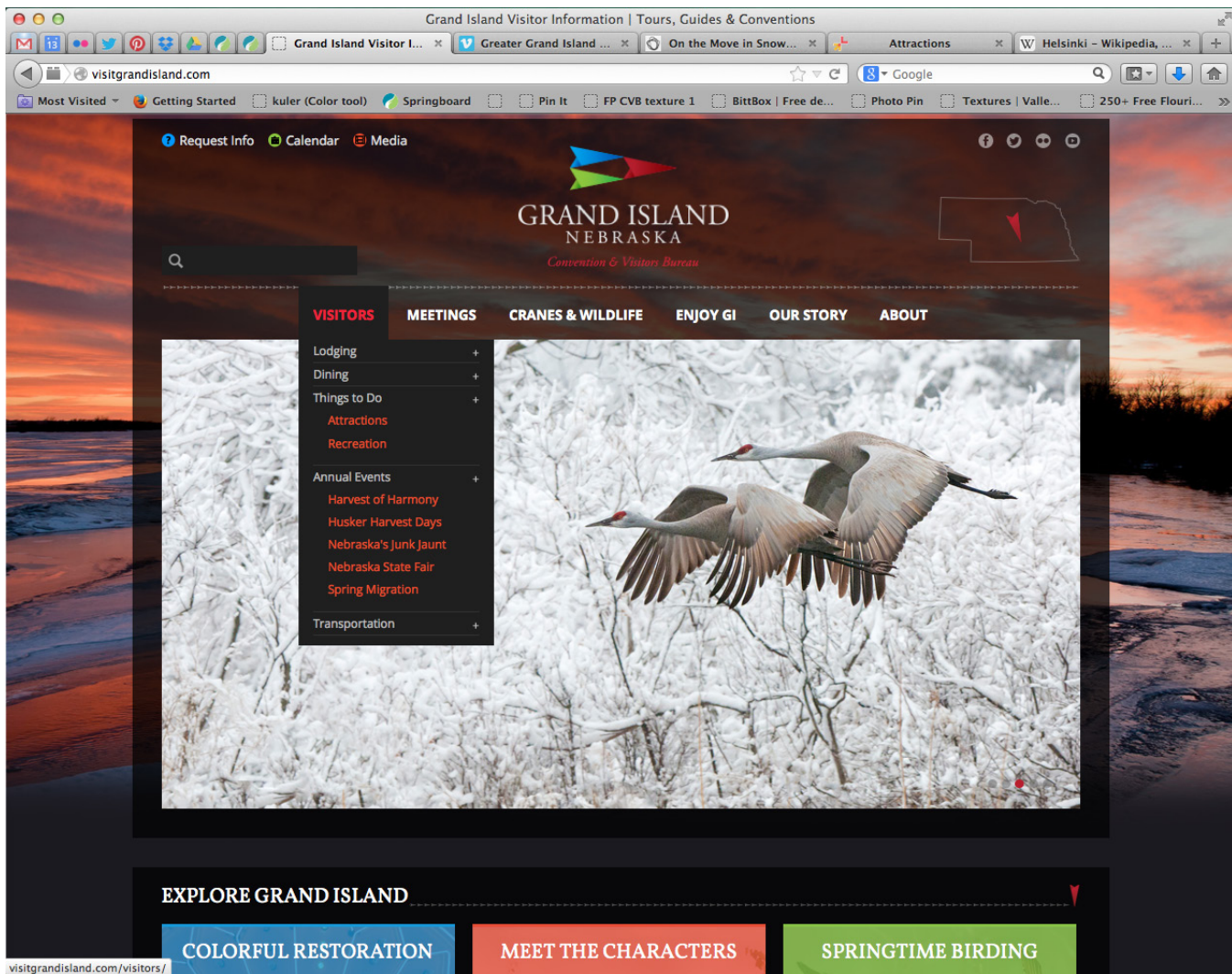
“We hadn’t thought of Grand Island much until we happened to meet a couple from Grand Island at a restaurant and they told us all the great things there are to do there. So we thought we’d better visit!” – February 2014 phone call from *TheWalkingTourists.com*

“[The campaign is] really focused on instilling in-state pride,” Jacobson said. If New Mexicans love New Mexico, the thinking is that they will sell it as a vacation spot to friends and family from out-of-state. – *New Mexico Tourism Secretary Monique Jacobson*





# Mission: Grow the tourism economy

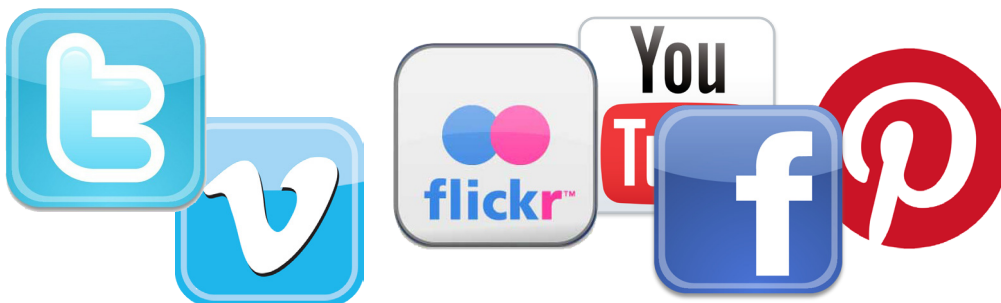


## VisitGrandIsland.com

(Jan 1-Dec 30, 2013) **Old site**

**New site** (Feb 2014-Feb 2015)

<b>25,336</b>	Visitors	<b>56,344</b>
<b>71%</b>	Bounce Rate	<b>24%</b>
<b>1 min 12 sec</b>	Time on Site	<b>4 min 6 sec</b>



# and define Grand Island as a destination.

**Free** Official visitor guide for Grand Island, NE  
**grand island Vibe**  
Issue 3 | Winter-Spring 2015  
Bill Dauterive  
Look inside for a crane

**things to do**

**Attractions**  
**Cairo Roots Museum**  
300 Foster St (City) • 308-483-4725 • [CairoRootsMuseum.org](http://CairoRootsMuseum.org)  
Preserving the history of Cairo and northwest Hall County including the townships of Mayfield, South Loup, Cameros and Harrison. Open Saturday 10am-Noon or by appointment.

**Fonner Park & Heartland Events Center**  
700 E Stolley Park Rd • 308-382-4515 • [HeartlandEventsCenter.com](http://HeartlandEventsCenter.com)  
The tradition continues in Grand Island when the sites open for live thoroughbred horse racing every February through May at Fonner Park. The events center hosts concerts, monster trucks, indoor football, trade shows, and just about anything else you can think of.

**Fred's Flying Circus**  
503 E 4th St • 308-384-8808  
Automotive sculptor Fred Schitt has created a garden of flying cartoon cars brimming with detail next to his shop.

**The Grand Theatre**  
316 W 3rd St • 308-381-2667 • [GrandMovieTheatre.com](http://GrandMovieTheatre.com)  
This recently restored movie house offers an experience you won't find at any modern cinema. For less than half the price, films are shown Friday-Sunday nights in this 1937 art-deco theatre which is also available for events during the week.

**Heartland Public Shooting Park**  
6788 W Husker Hwy • 308-385-5048 • [HeartlandPublicShootingPark.com](http://HeartlandPublicShootingPark.com)  
This 420-acre venue boasts lighted skeet ranges, lighted trap ranges, a 10-station sporting clay range, complete rifle and pistol ranges from 25 to 600 yards and archery ranges. The park plays host to regional and national events every year, and a small RV park is available.

**The Grand Theatre**  
An architectural experience

**Pure Bison Return**  
To the Crane Trust prairie

**Authentic Italian**  
Made from scratch

**Keith Urban**  
Grammy-winning musician biggest act to ever play the Nebraska State Fair

**The Townsley-Murdock Site**  
Alma Rd & Gumbert Rd • 800-658-3178 • [VisitGrandIsland.com](http://VisitGrandIsland.com)  
Just west of Grand Island, you can see some of the only remaining wagon ruts or swales on the Mormon Trail. This 2.4-acre prairie has never been plowed.

**Railroad Hot Spot**  
Downtown Grand Island • 800-658-3178 • [VisitGrandIsland.com](http://VisitGrandIsland.com)  
An average of 140 trains pass through Grand Island every day. A train-watching park is in the works downtown, and north of downtown is the restored Burlington Station which hosts events and houses the Tri-City Model Railroad Association's layout. Stuhrr Museum offers static train displays and an 1890s railroad town.

**Raising Nebraska**  
501 E Fonner Park Rd • [RaisingNebraska.net](http://RaisingNebraska.net)  
Raising Nebraska is a 25,000 square foot agriculture display detailing how our food goes from farm to fork. Its interactive displays include a walkable map, a touch screen dining table, a full size center pivot section and more. An adjacent garden is under development. Open Tuesday 9-11am, Thursday 2-4pm and by appointment.

**Byways & Sandhills**  
**Lincoln Highway Scenic & Historic Byway**  
US Highway 26 • [LincolnHighwayScenicByway.com](http://LincolnHighwayScenicByway.com)  
An abundance of Lincoln Highway landmarks can be found in the Grand Island area including the one-of-a-kind Seedling Mile, Kensingers Service Station, the first FCC monitoring station and more.

**Loup Rivers Scenic Byway**  
Highway 91/11, Wood River to Dowling • [LoupRiversScenicByway.com](http://LoupRiversScenicByway.com)  
Pass through pristine rolling farmland into the scenic Loup River Basin and continue on to the supreme silence of the Sandhills. It's also home of the famous 300+ mile junk jaunt.

**The Crane Trust Nature & Visitor Center**  
The Crane Trust Nature & Visitor Center is your gateway to Nebraska's Platte River and your headquarters for the Spring Migration of the Sandhill Cranes. Relax in the art gallery, hike along the trails or explore the butterfly garden during the summer months. Open Monday-Saturday 9am-5pm.

**Derr House Prairie**  
13650 S Platte River Dr (Wood River) • 402-694-4191  
The Nature Conservancy's Derr House offers public trails through restored prairies and sponsors an annual prairie day with tours and lectures.

**Griffith Prairie & Farm**  
Platte River Valley • 402-694-5535 • [PrairiePlains.org](http://PrairiePlains.org)  
The Griffith Prairie and Farm is headquarters for the Prairie Plains Resource Institute which maintains and restores Nebraska ecosystems. Griffith Prairies 300 acres offers trails on open prairie, gulleys, steep cliffs, and half a mile of riverfront. An education center is being constructed on the property as well.

**Outdoor Learning Center**  
501 E Fonner Park Rd • 308-382-4400  
The Groundwater Guardian's learning center educates the public about water quantity and quality, groundwater stewardship, natural filtration techniques, efficient water use, and the Ogallala Aquifer. The Grand Island Library installed a similar bioswale in the summer of 2014.

**Spring Migration**  
Platte River Valley • 800-658-3178 • [VisitGrandIsland.com](http://VisitGrandIsland.com)  
National Geographic called the annual migration of the sandhill cranes one of the two greatest migrations in North America. More than 500,000 Sandhill Cranes descend on the region every spring. The largest concentration of cranes anywhere on the planet. See them up close on a guided tour through the Crane Trust Nature & Visitor Center.

VisitGrandIsland.com | 15

Printed twice annually, The Grand Island Vibe magazine is a resource for both travelers and residents. 55,000 issues are printed finding there way across Nebraska, in hotels, waiting rooms all around Grand Island, and as an insert in the Grand Island Independent newspaper.



**Mission: Grow the tourism economy and  
define Grand Island as a destination.**

# Partnerships



Grand Island Hospitality  
Association



GILCA



Visit Nebraska.  
Visit Nice®

