

2021 Visitor Statistics

On-Site Visitors	17,147
Museum Website	20,392
Explore Website	7,595

Growth and Progress

Last year, we saw a 234% increase in visitors from the year before in the worst days of the pandemic. This was still 40% lower than 2019, which was our all-time record number of visitors. While the number of visitors remains significantly lower than our previous high, our retail sales have more than doubled our previous records. While we are still getting fewer visitors, they are spending more money. This is extremely encouraging for our ongoing recovery.

Museum Dedication

In less than three years, we have completed a major expansion and relocation of the Calico Rock Museum & Visitor Center. We are excited to dedicate this 14,000 square foot facility. Please mark your calendars and join us on Saturday, April 9, 2022 at 10:00 a.m. The ceremony and reception will be held in The Nook, our new event and expo center inside the museum.

2022 Calendar of Events

April 9, 2022	Dedication of the Calico Rock Museum & Visitor Center
June 10-11, 2022	Lions Club Rodeo & All School Reunion
July 3, 2022	Lions Club Fireworks
Sept 9-10, 2022	Native American Weekend
December 10, 2022	Living Windows & Lighted Christmas Parade

Improvement Projects Status Update

A new welcome sign has been installed at the entry to Peppersauce Ghost Town. Work is progressing on The Nook, including the completion of the decks in Peppersauce Alley. Finally, the mural on Main Street should be sandblasted soon and new metal signage installed.

We are very excited about 2022! As always, thank you for the opportunity to serve you.

Respectfully submitted,



January 2022 Visitors

Museum Website	762
Explore Website	143

Winter Projects Update

Construction is continuing on The Nook, our new event and expo space off Peppersauce Alley. By the time you read this report, the drywall should be completed and ready for painting, installing the copper ceiling tiles, and finishing. The decks have been completed along with the space that will become the secret sculpture garden. The connecting decks provide their own event space for the public and have been a nice addition to Peppersauce Alley.

We are waiting on the painter to sandblast the mural so we can install the metal signage. We are designing the new banners for the light poles on Main Street and getting ready to install the memorial bricks, as well. We are hoping all of this work will be done by the first of March, but it will definitely be completed by the museum dedication on April 9.

New Businesses

We will participate in a "Welcome to Calico" event for the new owners of the Riverview Hotel on Saturday, February 5. There are some other projects that are happening on Main Street that we hope to have announcements about soon. Our goal is to have businesses or displays in all of the storefronts in 2022.

Community Announcements

In addition to updating the city's page on ExploreCalico.com, we also provide community announcements on our Facebook page and e-mail blasts. These announcements include positive news about students in our school or folks in the community, water leaks, health updates, and information for the city and county.

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As always, thank you for the opportunity to serve you.

Respectfully submitted,



February 2022 Visitors

On-Site Visitors	511
Museum Website	1,320
Explore Website	336

Winter Projects Update

At The Nook, the drywall is finished, the walls are painted, ceilings are being installed, and the electrical and plumbing is being finished. The decks have been completed along with the space that will become the secret sculpture garden. The connecting decks provide their own event space for the public and have been a nice addition to Peppersauce Alley.

We are waiting on the painter to sandblast the mural so we can install the metal signage. We have ordered new banners for the light poles on Main Street and the memorial bricks have been installed, as well.

Bootlegger Daze

We are hosting a special exhibition and reunion on *The Bootleggers*, the only major motion picture filmed in Calico Rock, on Saturday, May 14. We have props from the movie, stories from locals, and will be showing the movie. The event will take place in The Nook. We are still collecting stories and working on special guests.

Main Street Calico Rock Developments

Several properties in the Main Street Historic District have sold recently and new businesses will be opening in them. The River View Hotel, the historic Vogue Cleaners building, and the Calico Mall property all have planned developments in them. We also have a new website focusing on our Main Street Historic District: www.mainstreetcalicorock.com

Upcoming Events

April 9, 2022	Dedication of the Calico Rock Museum & Visitor Center
May 14, 2022	Bootlegger Daze
June 10-11, 2022	Lions Club Rodeo & All School Reunion
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Respectfully submitted,



March 2022 Visitors

On-Site Visitors	2,312
Museum Website	1,446
Explore Website	464

Winter Projects Update

The Nook is now finished and we are moving into the space and getting ready for Dedication. We are wrapping up some projects on the facilities: installing guttering on the back of the building, enclosing the Loft for a larger Archives area, and finishing up the science center.

On Main Street, we have power washed the mural and will be painting the wall and installing the new metal signage, hopefully before Dedication. The Memorial Walk additions are completed and the new banners for Main Street are in production.

Enterprise Center

One of the areas we have identified is the need for small office space for start-ups, internet-based businesses, and other businesses. Our board has approved renovating a space behind Peppersauce on Main in the Bluff City Bank Building as an enterprise center. Along with the Coal House, this will provide 5-6 office spaces that we can make available at an affordable price with all utilities included. We hope to have this project open by summer.

Staff Attends Annual Conference

In late March, our staff attended the annual Arkansas Museums Association Conference at DeGray Lake State Park Resort. The conference has educational sessions, networking opportunities, and the annual banquet where museums are recognized for their achievements in the past year. Our own Gloria Sanders is the president of the association and led the meeting. It was a great experience for our staff and good for our community.

Upcoming Events

April 8, 2022	Chairman's Reception (Private for Invitees-Officials & Donors)
April 9, 2022	Dedication of the Calico Rock Museum & Visitor Center
May 14, 2022	Bootlegger Daze
June 10-11, 2022	Lions Club Rodeo & All School Reunion

As always, thank you for the opportunity to serve you.

Respectfully submitted,



May 2022

April 2022 Visitors

On-Site Visitors	2,312
Museum Website	843
Explore Website	186

Improvement Projects Update

The museum dedication was well attended and was also broadcast on Facebook. We extend a huge thank you for your invaluable support.

On Main Street, the wall has been painted and metal signage has been installed. We think it looks very classy and is very welcoming for visitors. As you know, the mural was irreparable. Prior to removing the mural, we did commission the artist to paint a huge rendition of it that hangs in the entry of the art center, so it is preserved. The new banners have been installed on Main Street and look very nice and fresh.

Targeted Ad Campaign

In late April, we began a targeted Facebook ad campaign promoting tourism to Calico Rock. The ad features a breathtaking photo of the bluffs and river. The ad has a button to call the visitor center and promotes the ExploreCalico.com website. The ad is targeting Facebook users in West Little Rock, Conway, Fort Smith, Bentonville, Fayetteville, and Jonesboro.

As of this writing, we are about halfway through the ad run. We have reached 9,412 Facebook users: 59% women and 41% men. 483 people have engaged with the ad. Hopefully, the ad will generate tourism for Calico Rock and Izard County.

Bootlegger Daze

On Saturday, May 14, we will open our first special exhibition in The Nook focusing on *The Bootleggers* movie, filmed in and around Calico Rock in 1973-74. We're excited to showcase this part of our history and to host our first exhibition in this new space. It will be a great place for future art shows, events, reunions, and corporate retreats. The Bootlegger Daze exhibit will be open from May 14 through Rodeo Weekend.

Upcoming Events

May 14, 2022	Bootlegger Daze
June 10-11, 2022	Lions Club Rodeo & All School Reunion

As always, thank you for the opportunity to serve you.

Respectfully submitted,



May 2022 Visitors

On-Site Visitors	1,957
Museum Website	630
Explore Website	140
Bootlegger Daze	225

Targeted Ad Campaign Results

Our targeted Facebook ad campaign was completed in May. The ad ran in Conway, West Little Rock, Fayetteville, Rogers, and Jonesboro. The ad reached 14,172 direct consumers with 307 of those users contacting the museum for information on a summer visit.

Diving into the demographics, the majority of placements were over the age of 45 and 3% of placements were in Oklahoma and Missouri. 57% were placed on women's Facebook pages. Interestingly, placement was about even between men and women in lower age groups, but as the user aged placement grew among females which is indicative of increased Facebook use among women in older users. We're excited to see the results of this campaign that cost less than 2 cents per placement.

Monthly Events

On the first Saturday of every month, we are hosting "Meet the Artists" where several artists are in the museum demonstrating their craft. This is generating both positive reviews by visitors and increases in our sales in the Artisan Gift Shop. On the third Friday of each month, the Main Street businesses are hosting extended sales where businesses are staying open late for our visitors and tourists in the community. These two events are giving us the opportunity to promote our community and county.

Our Walls Are Talking Rodeo Weekend

On Saturday, June 11, we are hosting a special event we're calling "Our Walls Are Talking." We have volunteers to act as local legends and to bring our exhibits to life. It will be a great opportunity to capitalize on the visitors in town for the Rodeo. It will be held from 1:00 to 3:00 ahead of the Rodeo Parade and after the All-School Reunion.

Upcoming Events

June 10-11, 2022 Lions Club Rodeo & All School Reunion & Our Walls Are Talking

As always, thank you for the opportunity to serve you.

Respectfully submitted,



June 2022 Visitors

On-Site Visitors	2,127
Museum Website	348
Explore Website	262

“Our Walls Were Talking”

Local volunteers brought our exhibits to life during Rodeo Weekend last month. They portrayed historical figures from our past and brought our history to life. The event was well-attended and provided a relief from the heat for visitors in town after the All-School Reunion and before the Rodeo Parade. We plan to bring this event back in the future.

Main Street Developments

This month, the Foundation will sell our building at 100 Main Street which is occupied by The Marketplace. Under the deal, The Marketplace and Peppersauce on Main will remain where it is until the rest of the year. The new owner will be opening a vintage clothing shop that she successfully ran in Colorado next year. The Foundation is buying 114 Main Street where the Downtown Mall, Clinkingbeard’s Dry Goods, and Wiseman Hotel was located. Early next year, we will move The Marketplace and Peppersauce on Main to this building, which will put our store on one level. We plan to convert the upstairs into an enterprise center with office units for start-up businesses, service providers, and others. This will also allow us to make 104 Main Street available as a rental unit or develop it for other uses. We see these changes as positive for the community as we continue our efforts to revitalize Main Street and our local economy.

Impact on Tourism

What impact is COVID, high inflation and gas prices, and talk of recession having on tourism? Our visitor numbers remain 32% lower than 2019 before the pandemic, but we continue to see sales figures higher than pre-pandemic spending. While these sales numbers have largely leveled off, we have not seen a decline despite high inflation. Fewer people may be traveling, but they are willing to spend more money. We have closely monitored where visitors are coming from to see if our visitors are largely regional due to gas prices, but we have not seen evidence to support that theory. In fact, we had visitors from Minnesota, Washington, and Hawaii in June. We did see a spike in visitors in June that may correlate to the Facebook advertising that we did in May. We will continue to keep you posted on developments.

As always, thank you for the opportunity to serve you.

Respectfully submitted,



July 2022 Visitors

On-Site Visitors	2,113
Facebook Ad Results	24,040

Targeted Facebook Ad



On Independence Day, we began our second targeted Facebook ad campaign of 2022. The ads were targeted to Maumelle; West Little Rock; Conway; Bentonville; Fayetteville; Jonesboro; Germantown, TN; Frisco, Tx; and West Lafayette, LA. We chose these zip codes for their affluence and relative proximity to Calico Rock. We spent less than \$500 over 14 days for the ads to run. The results were astounding.

The ads reached 24,040 Facebook users. The ad demographics were 40% over the age of 55, 58% women, with a vast majority residing in Arkansas. We also saw placements in Indiana, Texas, and Tennessee.

Slowing Tourism Economy

In the past month, we have seen a drought, scorching temperatures, sky-high inflation, record gas prices, a barrage of negative news stories, and rising COVID cases. There is no question all of this negativity has taken a toll on the local economy. Visitors were down 25% from last year and we are seeing sales down about 40% from last year. It isn't all bad news as we are seeing some turnaround in the last week as gas prices have fallen, the stock market rebounded, and rain began blessing the community. We will keep a close watch on this going forward.

Events

We have postponed our Native American Weekend until 2023 at the request of the Native American Nations we work with. We are scheduling local activities to try to keep tourists engaged and bring local residents out. These events are being promoted on our Facebook page.

As always, thank you for the opportunity to serve you.

Respectfully submitted,



August 2022 Visitors

On-Site Visitors	1,552
Facebook Insights	4,116
Meetings & Events	42
Total Visitors	5,710

Archives

We received a treasure trove of archival materials from Coach Harold Ray and Mrs. Pat Jeffery's family, including everyone of Coach's scorebooks. It's quite a collection. A year ago, we began an effort to catalog and photograph every artifacts in our collection. It's a huge task that will take some time to complete, but it will be well-worth it in the end. It's an honor to be able to preserve our community's history and to be entrusted with so many family treasures.

Watching Trends

After a long, hot summer filled with negative news reports and sky-high inflation, we are seeing some relief in lower gas prices. In August, we saw a very slight increase in visitors year-over-year and sales were generally flat. We view this as good news as we hope to see the trend line reversing and beginning to see a rebound in tourism.

Events

We are holding educational classes in The Nook, Science Saturdays, extended Friday shopping hours on Main Street, and Artisan Demonstration Saturdays as part of our educational programming and our efforts to promote local tourism.

The Nook

We are also hosting an increasing number of community events and special occasions at The Nook. The facility has a catering kitchen, two handicap restrooms, and lots of space for family reunions, classes, community events, wedding receptions, and so much more.

As always, thank you for the opportunity to serve you.

Respectfully submitted,



October 2022

September 2022 Visitors

On-Site Visitors	1,480
Meetings & Events	36

Archives Grant

We received a \$5,000 grant from the Arkansas Humanities Council that will allow us to continue our archival work which is preserving the artifacts we have received. This grant will provide equipment we need, as well as a portion of the staff costs for archiving.

Parking Lot Donation

We received a gift of three overgrown lots from Mark Tew and Linda Boulton. These lots are situated behind Hart's Florist and located off Railroad Street. In partnership with the city, we will convert these lots into ecologically-friendly parking space and community garden space. This provides a much-needed source of parking primarily for future tenants of the Economic Center and Main Street. It will also allow handicap parking for Hart's Flowers, which will greatly benefit this local business.

National Conferences

Our leadership team will be attending the South East Museums Conference in Bentonville later this month and national symposiums in Nashville. These conferences provide an opportunity for professional growth, networking, and gathering ideas and information for our community.

As always, thank you for the opportunity to serve you.

Respectfully submitted,



October 2022 Visitors

On-Site Visitors	2,023
Meetings & Events	32

Recession Impacting Tourism Sector

Tourism numbers picked up slightly in October, however our tourist numbers remain 58% of the pre-pandemic levels. We remain incredibly hopeful that we will grow the number of visitors as we come out of the pandemic and recover from the recession. Inflationary prices continue to impact our tourism industry with a 42% reduction in visitors from pre-pandemic levels.

During the pandemic, while we had a loss in the number of visitors, those visitors were spending money. We saw very little impact on our tourism sector spending, which supported our local economy and our sales tax base. With inflationary prices and the talk of a recession, we have seen an impact on taxable sales throughout the community. Our October sales are 63% of the sales a year ago. This 37% reduction in sales is definitely impacting our operations and the tourism sector. We will continue to keep a close eye on these two important numbers that provide predictive guidance.

Main Street Improvements

In partnership with the city, inmates cleared the vacant lots we received from Mark Tew and Linda Boulton. These lots will become a green parking and community use area. They were also able to remove the unsightly deck on the front of the future Marketplace building. These improvements will continue to beautify the Main Street Historic District and support our local businesses. We have received many compliments and we share those with you!

Upcoming Events

We have several events planned in The Nook in November and have scheduled our Lighted Christmas Parade and Living Windows for December 10. We will close The Marketplace this same day to facilitate the move to the new building and clearing out our present building for the new owner.

As always, thank you for the opportunity to serve you.

Respectfully submitted,



November 2022 Visitors

On-Site Visitors 1,675

Continuing Economic Impact

Our economic guidance remains a mixed bag. Tourism was up 6% year-over-year, but tourism spending is off 44% from this time last year. As gas prices begin to decline and inflation begins to gradually ebb, we are hopeful for a resurgence in tourism spending in 2023.

Living Windows & Lighted Christmas Parade

Our annual Living Windows & Lighted Christmas Parade will be on Saturday, December 10. Living Windows will be from 5:00 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. along Main Street. The Parade will kick off from Main Street and the Mike Stephen Memorial Bridge at 6:30 p.m. and make its way down Main Street to Highway 56 and conclude at the Calico Rock Fire Station.

The Nook

We are excited to begin providing The Nook as a community room/event center in our partnership with the City next year. We have already hosted a number of family reunions, birthday parties, and Christmas parties this year. Like the Community Room, The Nook will be free to local area residents. In order to make sure the space is properly taken care of returned in good condition, we are asking folks for a \$50 deposit that is returned after the event if the space is cleaned up. The Nook has a catering kitchen with ice maker, refrigerator, warmers, and two handicap accessible restrooms.

As always, thank you for the opportunity to serve you. We are honored to work with you to serve our community and county. Merry Christmas!

Respectfully submitted,

