

Arkansas[®]

THE NATURAL STATE

Regional Tourist Association Board of Directors Manual

Explore

Northwest Arkansas



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Suggested additions for each Regional Tourist Association:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Brief History of Organization | <input type="checkbox"/> Long Range Plan |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Statement of Purpose / Mission Statement | <input type="checkbox"/> Membership List |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Articles of Incorporation | <input type="checkbox"/> Minutes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bylaws | <input type="checkbox"/> Meeting Dates |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Policies & Procedures | <input type="checkbox"/> Budget & Recent Financial Statements |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Organizational Chart | <input type="checkbox"/> Bylaws |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Board of Directors Roster w/ Contact Information | <input type="checkbox"/> Calendar of Events |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Board Responsibilities (general and specific) | <input type="checkbox"/> Other relevant information |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Committee Composition & Job Descriptions | |

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Arkansas Regional Tourist Association Program. Whether you are new on the board of directors or an old hand, you are taking on an important responsibility by agreeing to serve on this board. It is important to your community, your area of the state, and especially to the members your organization represents.

To be effective, you need to understand how this board and the Regional Tourist Association Program work. In this guide, you will find information to help you and your board be successful. Even though your work as a board member is voluntary, it will take dedication, hard work, and a great deal of effort. By working together and by being the best board member you can be, we can achieve all of Arkansas's tourism-related goals.

HOW DOES TOURISM BENEFIT LOCAL & STATE ECONOMIES?

Before we get into the Regional Tourist Association Program itself, you first need to know how tourism benefits the local and state economies. You'll quickly understand why your role as a board member is so important.

Whether on the move for business or pleasure, travelers contribute to Arkansas's economic prosperity. In 2016, visitor expenditures totaled \$7.7 billion a year, making travel and tourism one of Arkansas's largest industries. Providing for travelers' needs creates work for 66,000 people, with a payroll of \$1.4 billion. Because travelers pay taxes as they spend money, their purchases generate \$393 million in state taxes and another \$145 million in local taxes each year. These dollars are crucial, particularly in their support of public education.

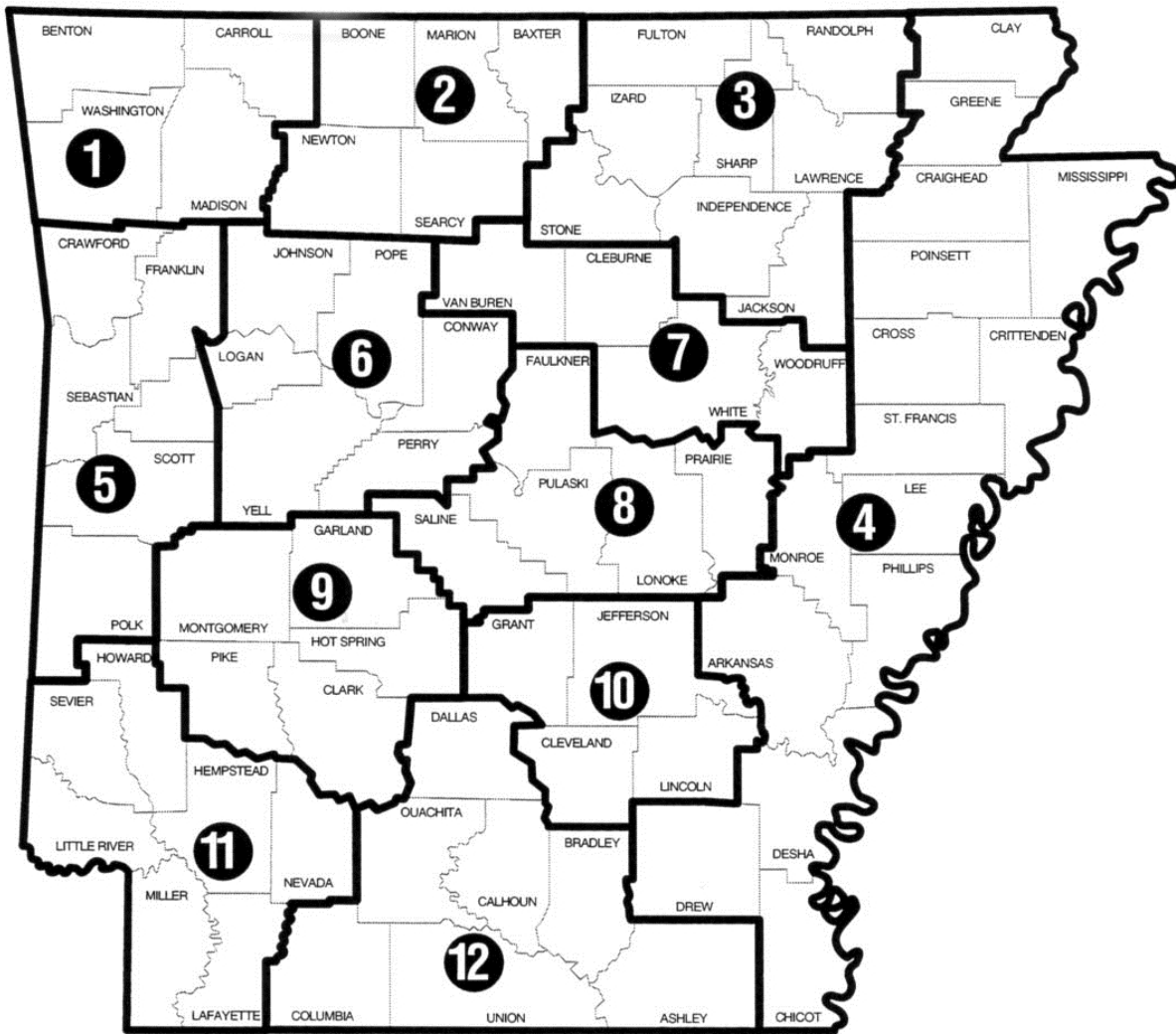
Also, most tourists don't cost us much. They spend their money in The Natural State, yet we don't have to build schools, hospitals, or jails to support them. In addition, tourists can help us create new industries in Arkansas. For instance, a CEO of a company might take a vacation in Arkansas and like the surroundings and the people so much that he/she moves the company to our state. In fact, this scenario has happened.

Visit www.arkansas.com and click on the Economic Reports link for more detailed information, including statistics by county.

WHAT IS A REGIONAL TOURIST ASSOCIATION?

A Regional Tourist Association is a nonprofit corporation established for the purpose of encouraging and stimulating tourist travel and vacation business to and within the region. The Regional Matching Fund Program began in 1969, and currently includes twelve Tourist Associations in Arkansas.

REGIONAL TOURIST ASSOCIATIONS MAP



For contact information for each region, visit www.arkansas.com/industry-insider/tourism-development/regions.aspx.

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. Northwest Arkansas Tourism Association | 8. Heart of Arkansas Travel Association |
| 2. Ozark Mountain Region | 9. Diamond Lakes Association |
| 3. Ozark Gateway Tourist Council | 10. Arkansas' Land of Legends Travel Association |
| 4. Arkansas Delta Byways Region | 11. Arkansas' Great Southwest Recreation Association |
| 5. Western Arkansas' Mountain Frontier | 12. Arkansas' South Tourism Association |
| 6. Arkansas River Valley Tri-Peaks Region | |
| 7. Greers Ferry Lake & Little Red River Association | |

WHAT DOES A REGIONAL TOURIST ASSOCIATION DO?

The Regional Tourist Associations are charged with encouraging and promoting travel to and within their specific regions of the state. The variety and scope of the promotional efforts is virtually unlimited, depending on the needs, financial resources, creativity and desires of each particular region to carry them out. Each Regional Tourist Association develops its own advertising budget to get its message out to prospective visitors.

In its promotional efforts, the Regional Tourist Association often works cooperatively with state, county, and city governments, chambers of commerce, and private businesses and individuals throughout the region.

HOW IS A REGIONAL TOURIST ASSOCIATION ORGANIZED?

Each Regional Tourist Association is established under the Arkansas Nonprofit Corporation Act, and has its own constitution and bylaws governing the activities and purposes of the Association. Bylaws are a set of specifications for the structure of your organization.

The bylaws of each Association provide for the selection of a board of directors and successor members on the boards. In some Regional Tourist Associations, the members of the organization elect the directors; in others, the board of directors may appoint replacement directors as their terms expire. In any case, the board has the responsibility for the direction and administration of the Association, and serves without pay.

WHAT SERVICES DOES A REGIONAL TOURIST ASSOCIATION OFFER?

Each Regional Tourist Association has its own benefits that it offers to its members and to the State of Arkansas as a whole. All of the Tourist Associations have the common services of promoting their areas of the state, answering inquiries about their region and specific attractions and businesses included in the region, and serving as representatives of the area at various state and county functions and events. Probably the main service each Regional Tourist Association offers is to serve as a unifying influence for its members. In addition, the regions are in a unique position to educate local legislators on tourism-related issues.

HOW IS A REGIONAL TOURIST ASSOCIATION FINANCED?

Upon recognition as a Regional Tourist Association by the Arkansas State Parks, Recreation and Travel Commission (the Commission that sets policy for the Arkansas Department of Parks and Tourism), each Regional Tourist Association is eligible to receive matching funds for promotional use on a 2 to 1 basis from the Department of Parks and Tourism (i.e., 2 state dollars for every local dollar up to annual maximum). Of these matching funds, up to 10% may be used for administrative purposes such as salaries, office rent, and office supplies. To be eligible for funding, the Regional Associations must follow the matching funds guidelines as set forth by the State Parks, Recreation and Travel Commission, the Publicity and Tourism Act (legislation that established the regional program), and the Arkansas Nonprofit Corporation Act.

Visit www.arkansas.com/industry-insider/tourism-development/regions.aspx for a copy of the state's rules and regulations.

Let's take brochures for example. In order for the association to receive grant moneys from Parks and Tourism, it must complete the application for funding. Included in this application must be an invoice for the project, a copy of the front and back of the regional association's check for payment to the vendor of at least one-third of the advertising costs of the project, and a completed brochure which serves as proof of performance for the project. Once the application is received by Parks and Tourism with the necessary backup materials included, a check is mailed to the regional association for two-thirds of the total advertising costs for the project.

The one-third "down payment" plus any other moneys that the Regional Tourist Association might acquire normally come from membership fees and brochure advertising sales. Fund-raisers and sponsorships are other revenue sources that some associations use. And, in some cases, other Regional Tourist Associations will not expend all of their state matching funds for a given fiscal year, and the funding is either distributed among the remaining Regional Associations or is returned to the Arkansas Tourism Division's trust fund.

WHO ARE THE MEMBERS OF A REGIONAL TOURIST ASSOCIATION?

All citizens, businesses, or industries interested in the promotion and development of tourism and vacation business to and within the regional area are eligible for membership upon payment of dues. Dues structures and voting privileges vary among the Associations. Membership in a Regional Tourist Association is an investment in the local communities, counties, and the entire State of Arkansas.

WHAT ARE THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF BOARD MEMBERS?

Serving on the board of directors of any nonprofit corporation is much more than just attending meetings and having a title. If you cannot find time to attend the meetings, then you probably should not agree to serve on the board. A board member should be committed to the Regional Tourist Association by unselfishly giving of his/her time, experience, skills, and often his/her money to advance the mission and goals of the Association. Board members should also support the board even when he/she disagrees with the majority decision. This involves showing mutual respect and courtesy to other board members.

The board of directors is responsible for the direction and supervision of the Regional Tourist Association, but does not handle day-to-day operations. The executive committee and employees should take care of daily routines. However, this doesn't mean that board members should not take a lead role on teams and committees. And, if yours is an all-volunteer Association, then board members must take a more active role.

Following are some activities that are the responsibility of the board of directors:

- Determine the objectives and policies of the association
- Develop a long-range strategic plan
- Hire, supervise, and even fire employees
- Ensure that your region is carrying out its mission
- Hire and give direction to its advertising agency
- Monitor the association's finances
- Work with legislators on behalf of the tourism industry
- Learn the specifics of how the association and the board operates – including the matching fund guidelines
- Always be on the lookout for new members and advertisers
- Keep current with the latest tourism trends by participating in workshops, training seminars, and the annual Governor's Conference on Tourism

Teamwork is also an important aspect of being a board member. The board of directors is a team, not a group of individuals. And, above all, the board of directors must be accountable for its conduct – ethics begin with individual board members.

Each Regional Tourist Association's bylaws should address more specifically the role of the board member.

COMMITMENT TO SERVE:

I, *(board member name)* _____, recognizing the important responsibility I am undertaking in serving as a member of the Board of Directors of *(association name)* _____, hereby personally pledge to carry out in a trustworthy and diligent manner all of the duties and obligations inherent in my role as a board member.

My Role:

I acknowledge that my primary role as a board member is (1) to contribute to the defining of *(association name)* _____ mission and governing the fulfillment of that mission, and (2) to carry out the functions of the office of Board Members and/or Officer as delineated in the bylaws.

My role as a Board Member will focus on the development of broad policies that govern the implementation of institutional plans and purposes. This role is separate and distinct from the role of the director/administrator to whom is delegated the determining of the means of implementation.

My Commitment:

I will exercise the duties and responsibilities of this office with integrity, courtesy, and due care.

I Pledge:

- To establish as a high priority my attendance at all meetings of the board, committees, and task forces on which I serve.
- To come prepared to contribute to the discussion of issues and business to be addressed at scheduled meetings, having read the agenda and all background support material relevant to the meeting.
- To work with and respect the opinions of my peers who serve this board and to leave my personal prejudices out of all board discussions.
- To always act for the good of this organization.
- To represent this organization in a positive and supportive manner at all times and in all places.

- To observe parliamentary procedures and display courteous conduct in all board, committee, and task force meetings.
- To refrain from intruding on administrative issues that are the responsibility of management, except to monitor the results and prohibit methods not in congruity with board policy.
- To avoid conflicts of interest between my position as a board member and my personal life. If such a conflict does arise, I will declare that conflict before the board and refrain from voting on matters in which I have a conflict.
- To support in a positive manner all actions taken by the Board of Directors even when I am in a minority position on such actions.
- To agree to serve on at least one committee or task force, attend all meetings, and participate in the accomplishment of its objectives. If I chair the Board, a committee, or a task force, I will:
 - Call meetings as necessary until objectives are met;
 - Insure that the agenda and support materials are mailed to all members in advance of the meetings;
 - Conduct the meetings in an orderly, fair, open, and efficient manner; and
 - Make committee and task force progress reports/minutes to the Board of Directors at its scheduled meetings, using the adopted format.
- To participate in strategic planning meetings, board self-evaluation programs, and board development workshops, seminars, and other educational events that enhance my skills as a board member.
- To work hard to increase the understanding of, and appreciation for, Arkansas's tourism industry.

If, for any reason, I find myself unable to carry out the above duties as best as I can, I agree to resign my position as board member/officer.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

"Commitment Pledge" excerpt from Leadership Guide for Board Presidents and Committee Chairpersons, Aspen Publishers, inc., 1993.

HELPFUL CONTACT INFORMATION:

Arkansas Department of Parks and Tourism (ADPT)
One Capitol Mall, Little Rock, AR 72201

Phone: 501-682-7777
Fax: 501-682-2523

ADPT is comprised of several divisions including Tourist, State Parks, Great River Road, Keep Arkansas Beautiful, and the History Commission. The Tourist Division is charged with generating travel to and within Arkansas and enhancing the image of the state. The Tourism Division oversees the matching grant program for the Regional Tourist Associations and has numerous other programs available.

Arkansas Development Finance Authority (ADFA)
100 Main Street, Suite 200, Little Rock, AR 72201

Phone: 501-682-5900
Fax: 501-682-5859

ADFA promotes growth and development in Arkansas by raising funds through the issuance of taxable and tax-exempt bonds and by creating innovative and results-oriented lending programs. ADFA provided financing for a broad range of activities including tourism projects.

Arkansas Economic Development Commission (AEDC)
900 West Capitol Avenue, Little Rock, AR 72201

Phone: 501-682-1121
Fax: 501-682-7499

AEDC works to foster an environment that leads to improved economic well-being and quality of life for all citizens of Arkansas. AEDC primarily has three customer groups: communities, established industries, and prospects looking to locate or expand in the state. AEDC's Arkansas Community of Excellence Program (ACE) has now been redesigned to include tourism and retiree relocation as sectors that offer economic opportunity.

Arkansas Game and Fish Commission (AGFC)
#2 Natural Resources Drive, Little Rock, AR 72205

Phone: 501-223-6300
Fax: 501-223-6448

The AGFC manages the fish and wildlife resources of Arkansas while providing maximum enjoyment for the people. The Commission has pamphlets on hunting and fishing regulations available for visitors and residents.

Arkansas Highway and Transportation Department (AHTD)
10324 Interstate 30, Little Rock, AR 72209

Phone: 501-569-2000
Fax: 501-569-2664

The AHTD is responsible for the construction, maintenance, and operation of the state's highway system and its charged with coordination all transportation planning within the state. Additionally, the Department administers federal rail, public transportation, and traffic safety programs. The AHTD oversees the state's Adopt-a-Highway litter program and wildflower program. The AHTD also publishes the state highway map, and works cooperatively with ADPT by providing maintenance for the state tourist information centers.

Arkansas Hospitality Association (AHA)
603 S. Pulaski, Little Rock, AR 72201

Phone: 501-376-2323
Fax: 501-376-6517

The AHA is made up of the Arkansas Restaurant Association, the Arkansas travel Council, and the Arkansas Lodging Association. An important partner in tourism the AHA works to secure passage of legislation that is important to the industry. In addition, the AHA offers its members trade shows and various workshop.

Arkansas Tourism Development Foundation (ATDF)
303 West Capitol, Little Rock, AR 72201

Phone: 501-975-7284
Fax: 501-975-4241

The ATDF is an organization that serves the tourism industry by helping to defray expenses for the Governor's Conference on Tourism speakers, convention and motorcoach development, media days, and familiarization tours for travel writers, tour operators, and other travel industry professionals.

Department of Arkansas Heritage (DAH)
1500 Tower Building, 323 Center Street, Little Rock, AR 72201

Phone: 501-324-9150
Fax: 501-324-9154

The DAH is comprised of several agencies whose primary functions revolve around historic preservation, museums, natural areas and rivers preservation, and the development of the arts. The department oversees some of the state's top historical tourist attractions including the Old State House and the Delta Cultural Center. The Main Street Arkansas program provides assistance for downtown development projects.

University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service
2301 South University Avenue, Little Rock, AR 72204

Phone: 501-671-2000
Fax: 501-671-2046

The U of A Cooperative Extension Service works with local leaders to develop strong communities through leadership development, workshops, tourism, planning, and technical assistance. The Extension Service also houses a retirement development program that offers Arkansas communities information and assistance in developing community-based programs designed to attract and retain retirees.

SOURCES:

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