



Stowe[®]
VERMONT

STOWE AREA ASSOCIATION FY 2024 ANNUAL REPORT

MAY 2023 - APRIL 2024



From the Executive Director

Stowe has a reputation as an outdoor recreation mecca; a destination to escape the busy day-to-day life and reconnect with nature. This appeal not only drives visitation but has built a uniquely vibrant community. The people of Stowe are what make up the soul of our community and what make this such an incredible place. Our guests come to us from a wide range of backgrounds, experiences, and locations. As a collective community we aim to foster a welcoming environment where everyone feels welcome and safe.

Fiscal year 2024 has been an inspiring and dynamic year for the Stowe Area Association (SAA), marking the beginning of significant milestones as we embarked on our three-year strategic plan and embraced a refreshed brand approach to position Stowe as a premier, year-round destination.

As we look forward to the opportunities of the coming fiscal year, I am honored to continue working alongside our dedicated team, board, members, and valued partners. Together, we enhance what makes Stowe a sought-after place to live, work, and play.

Carrie Simmons
Executive Director



WHO WE ARE

Established in 1945, Stowe Area Association (SAA) is a 501(c)(6) nonprofit member-based marketing and sales organization. Our primary purpose is to promote the Stowe, Vermont region as a vibrant, world-class destination, enhancing the experience for visitors and quality of life for residents while supporting the community's economic well-being.

STRATEGIC VISION

To balance Stowe's visitor economy with the community, SAA developed a three-year strategic plan focused on purpose-driven growth and sustainability. This plan emphasizes three key pillars:

DESTINATION STEWARDSHIP

Striving to balance the needs of visitors, the environment, and the local community.

SUSTAINABILITY

Ensuring the long-term success of SAA and its staff through sustainable practices.

MEMBERSHIP GROWTH

Attracting new members and enhancing existing members' engagement by providing valuable programs, services, and benefits.

FY 2024 HIGHLIGHTS

VISITOR INFORMATION CENTER

As the “Front Door” to Stowe, we assist digital and in-person visitors with trip planning and lodging reservations. In fiscal year 2024, our Visitor Information Center welcomed 20,000 visitors from across the U.S. and more than 80 countries.

JULY 2023 FLOOD RESPONSE

We act as the communications hub for our members connecting them to our guests, local and state government, and residential communities. The value of our communications was evidenced by our clear communications in response to the July 2023 flood response and recovery.

Our member communications included road closure updates, outdoor recreation statuses, and resources for flood-affected businesses and individuals. Guest communications reassured travelers that most Stowe businesses and attractions were open, while also providing safety guidelines to ensure safe arrivals.

Our balanced messaging acknowledged that, while many Stowe operations continued as normal, several members of the regional workforce were deeply affected by the floods.

TOTAL SOLAR ECLIPSE

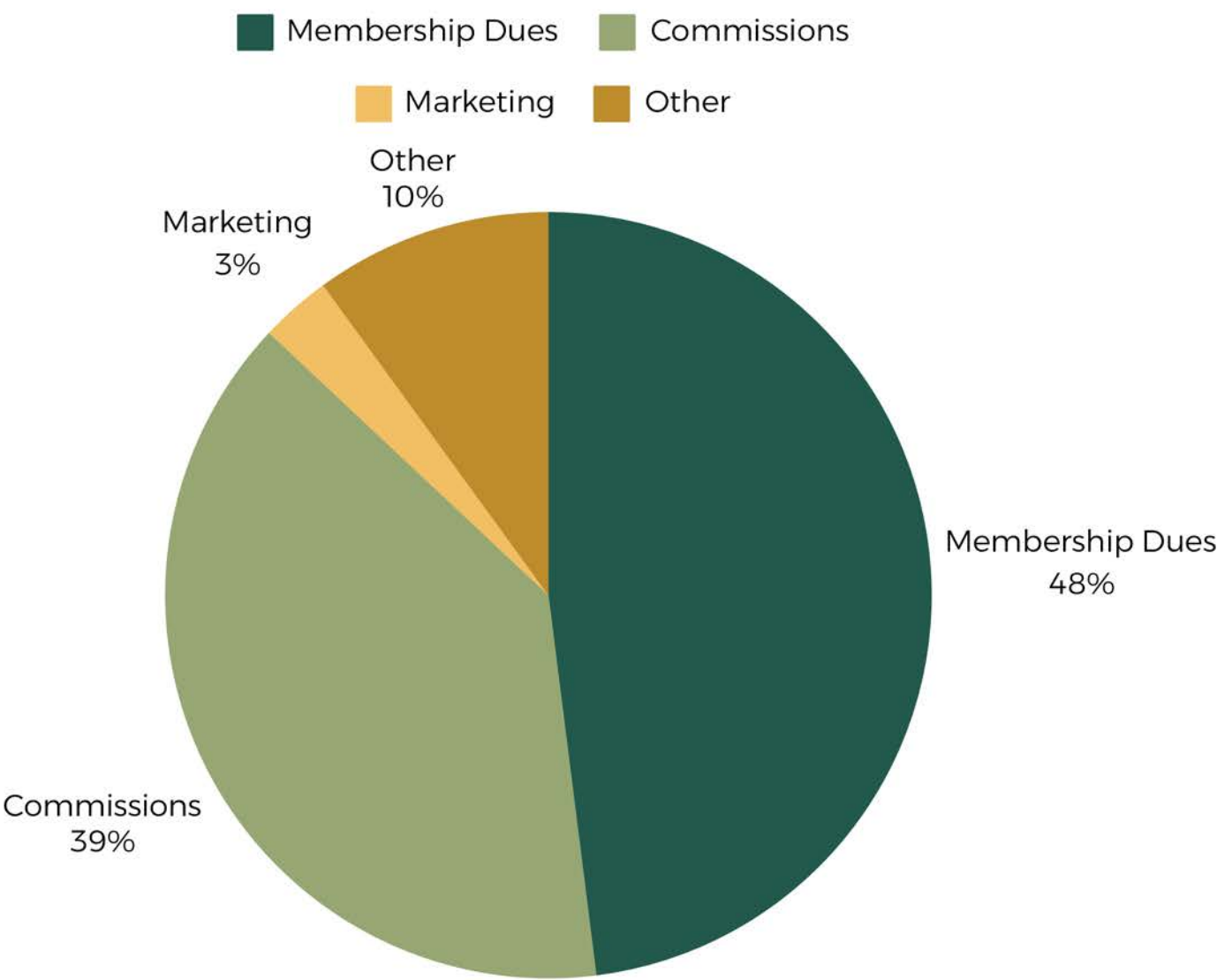
The April 8, 2024 Total Solar Eclipse presented a unique opportunity to attract guests during a slower tourism month. Recognizing its significance early, SAA began preparations a year in advance. We collaborated with local and state partners, facilitated a community planning session, provided trip-planning advice to guests, distributed solar eclipse glasses, and shared regular updates to support our members.

These efforts paid off. The Total Solar Eclipse event led to nearly full occupancy on April 7 and 8, 2024, generating an estimated \$2 million in additional revenue for Stowe lodges and short-term rentals. The eclipse event page on gostowe.com received 8,682 views in the month leading up to the event, making it the fourth most-visited page in that period.



REVENUE

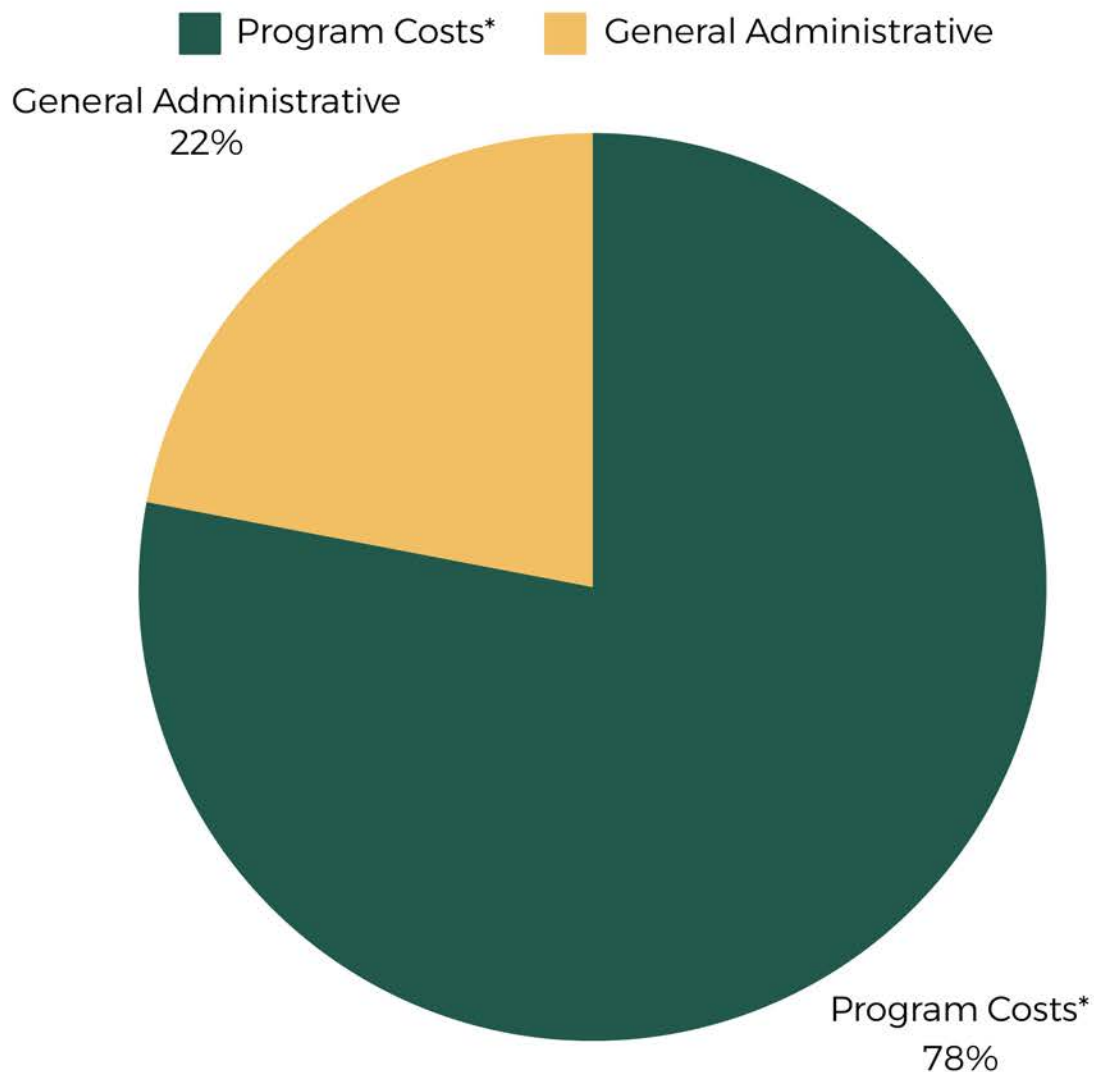
TOTAL FY24 REVENUE = \$993,700





EXPENSES

TOTAL FY24 EXPENSES = \$978,400



*Program Costs include marketing, membership, sales and reservations expenses.



SALES PERFORMANCE

In Fiscal Year 2024, Stowe Area Association (SAA) generated a record-breaking **3.5 million dollars** in lodging revenue across our three sales channels. A 6% increase year-over-year.

**LENGTH OF
STAY
INCREASED
3%**

**WINTER
REVENUE
GREW BY
8%**

**AVERAGE
DAILY RATE
INCREASED
11%**



MARKETING HIGHLIGHTS

GOSTOWE.COM

Recognized as the premier trip-planning and destination tourism resource for visitors to Stowe and the surrounding areas:

- 2.6 million pageviews
- 710,000 new users, up by over 35,000 from the previous year.

GO STOWE SOCIAL MEDIA

Engagement reached record highs:

- **August 2023:** 14,900 engagements on Facebook with a 95% engagement rate.
- **November 2023:** 17,900 engagements on Instagram with a 52% engagement rate.

PAID MEDIA

Advertisements in two new publications, reaching new audiences:

- **Hemispheres Magazine by United Airlines:** a half-page ad reaching over 14 million airline passengers.
- **National Geographic Traveller UK:** a two-page summer feature and digital campaign.

“SAA has done an incredible job in marketing the town as a year round destination.”

–Alex Stevens, Shaw’s General Store

STRATEGIC PLAN YEAR 1 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

SAA's work highlights our dedication to enhancing Stowe as a vibrant, inclusive destination while supporting our community and members. We look forward to building on these successes in the coming years.



MEMBERSHIP GROWTH

- Hosted series of Tourism Talks providing businesses with the time and space to engage in strategic conversations with fellow business owners and managers to address the challenges and opportunities that define the local business environment
- Grew SAA membership by over 10% through successful recruitment and member-centric initiatives.



DESTINATION STEWARDSHIP

- Developed a destination leadership marketing plan with a member-led task force to promote the Stowe region as a year-round destination.
- Established new partnerships with mission-aligned organizations, including Vermont Professionals of Color Network, Vermont Department of Aging and Independent Living, Vermont Futures Project, and Green Mountain Adaptive Sports.
- Created a roadmap for fostering an inclusive and welcoming environment.

“We joined the Stowe Area Association for their marketing power but also to support other businesses in Stowe and beyond. The Mixers are a great way to meet with business owners and managers throughout the area. SAA keeps me up to date on what is going on in the area through emails, meetings, and mixers.”

-Thadeus Davis, Savor Vermont Tours



LOOKING FORWARD

In fiscal year 2025, our focus shifts to implementing the new Go Stowe brand and reevaluating member benefits and dues structures.

NEW GO STOWE BRAND STRATEGY

Aligned with our Destination Stewardship pillar, we developed a refreshed Go Stowe brand strategy aimed at:

- Authentically representing Stowe's unique character.
- Tailoring messaging to attract values-aligned visitors who will appreciate and respect our community.
- Focusing on sustainable tourism to build lasting guest relationships.

The new brand will feature prominently across Go Stowe marketing materials, including a new user-friendly, intuitive website with enhanced trip-planning tools, photography, and videos.

"We continue to support SAA because SAA promotes all of Stowe, not one particular industry. By driving business to Stowe the entire business community benefits."

-Merry Vigneau, The Round Hearth Café & Marketplace

“Trapp Family Lodge is a proud member of Stowe Area Association. We appreciate the collaboration amongst area businesses to help promote the destination and all the amazing things that our amazing resort town has to offer. The collaborative efforts help support our local businesses and the overall Stowe economy.”

-Bob Schwartz, Trapp Family Lodge

A scenic view of a forested mountain range. In the foreground, a person is sitting on a rocky outcrop, looking out over a vast, green, forested valley. The background shows rolling hills and mountains under a clear sky. The Stowe Vermont logo is overlaid on the bottom left of the image.

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