



MESA CITY COUNCIL · ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

FY25-26 Update

(Including overall visitor economy performance)





WHO WE ARE

Visit Mesa is the official Destination Marketing Organization (DMO) for the City of Mesa, charged with branding, selling and marketing the destination; generating overnight visitation; supporting the hospitality industry that employs thousands of residents; and elevating the quality of life of Mesa residents.

Current # of staff members: 13*

Current # of board members: 25*

FY 25-26 Budget: \$4,705,079 (includes Mesa TLT, Prop 302 and private sector investment)

FUNDING MODEL

Visit Mesa is funded primarily through hotel (bed) tax revenue paid by overnight visitors — **not by Mesa residents or general fund dollars**. For every \$1 of public funding invested in Visit Mesa, an estimated \$24 in direct visitor spending is generated in Mesa.

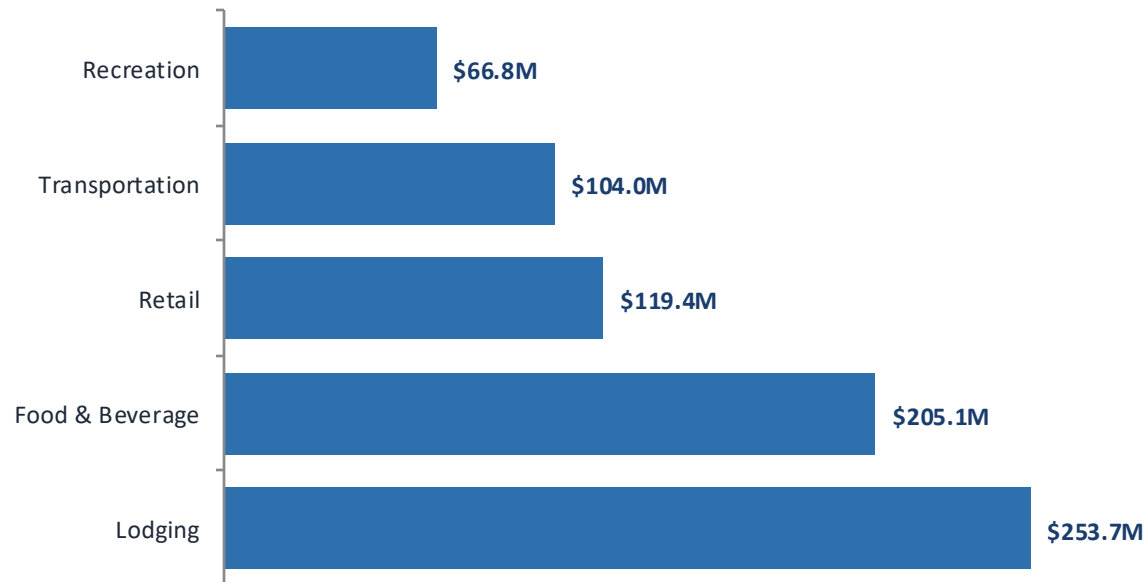


THE 2024 VISITOR ECONOMY: A KEY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DRIVER

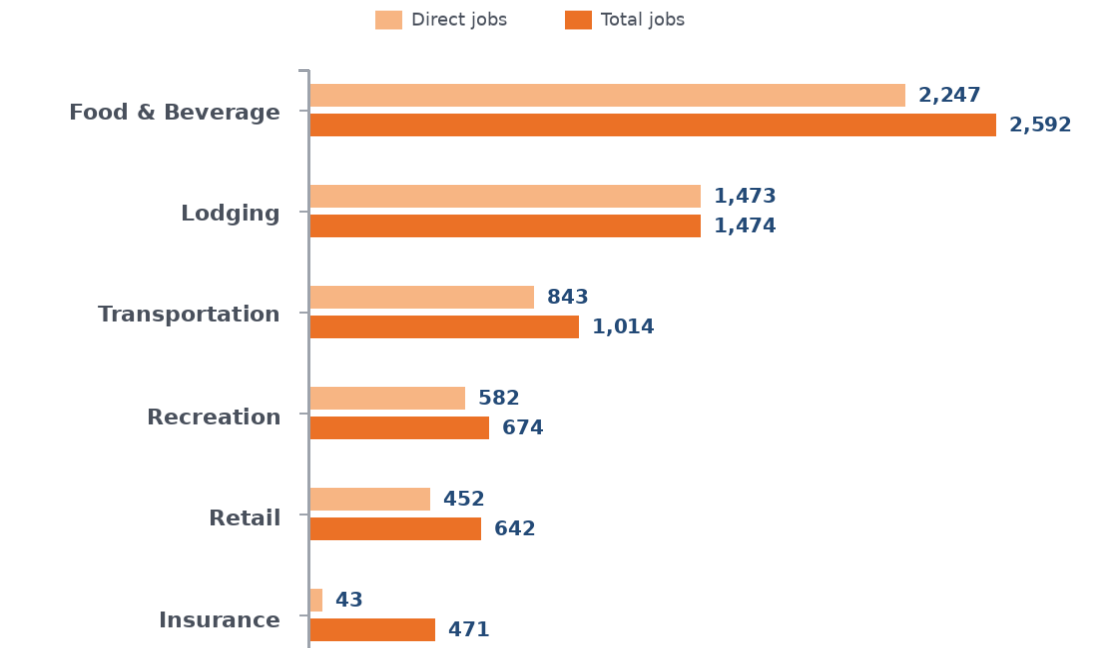
Independent analysis: Tourism Economics, an Oxford Economics Company



WHERE THE \$749M IS DIRECTLY SPENT



JOBS SUPPORTED BY THE VISITOR ECONOMY IN 2024

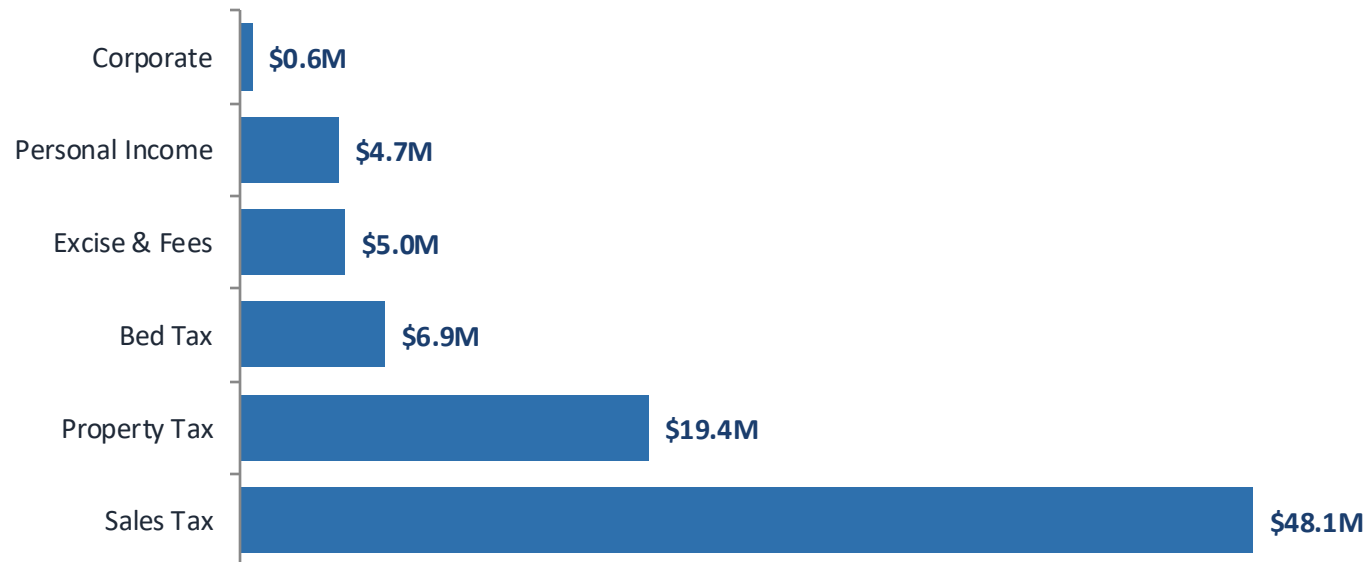


Source: Tourism Economics — Economic Impact of Visitors to Mesa, 2024 (Client Preliminary, July 2025). Total impact includes direct, indirect, and induced effects.

VISITOR ECONOMY FISCAL IMPACTS - CY2024



STATE & LOCAL TAX BREAKDOWN (\$M, 2024)




WHY THIS MATTERS

Without the visitor economy, each Mesa household would need to be taxed an additional **\$432** to replace the state and local taxes visitors generate.

Tourism is a low-cost, high-return tool for funding city services without burdening residents.

VISITOR TRENDS — CALENDAR YEAR 2025

Growing overnight visitation drives hotel occupancy, restaurant sales, retail spending, and tax revenues.

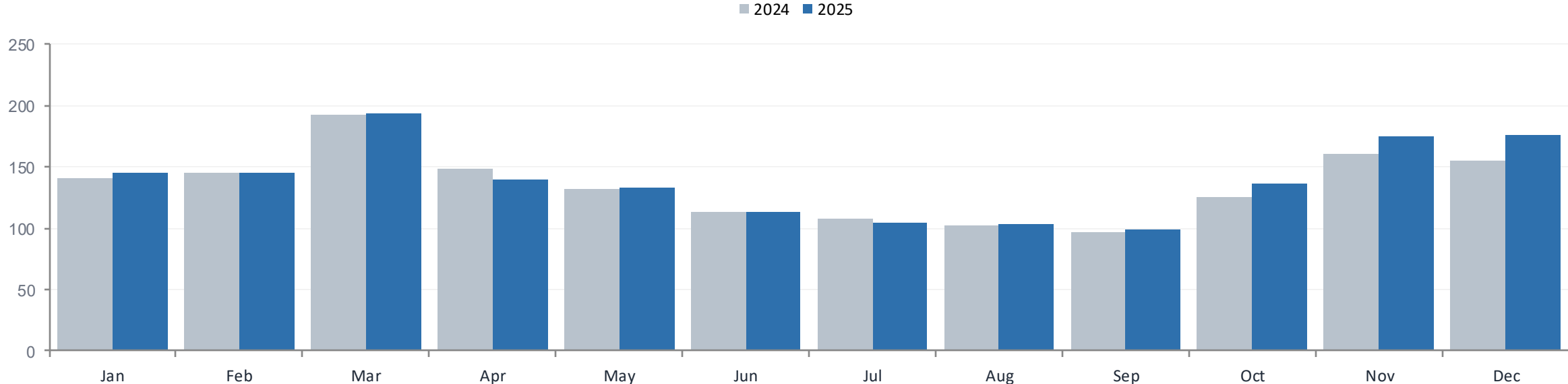


1.67M
OVERNIGHT TRIPS
+2.7% vs. 2024

+13.7%
DECEMBER YoY
Strongest month of the year

Q4 2025
MOMENTUM PHASE
Three consecutive +8% months

MESA OVERNIGHT TRIPS BY MONTH — 2025 VS 2024 (thousands)



Source: Placer.ai — Mesa overnight trips, Jan-Dec 2025 vs. Jan-Dec 2024.

GROWING DEMAND SUPPORTS HOTEL INVESTMENT

(Running 12 Months and FY 25-26 To Date)

Demand and revenue holding steady as supply expands; peak season shows strong compression

65.2%

12-MO OCCUPANCY

Through April 2026

\$118

12-MO ADR

Mesa overall, all classes

+4.7%

SUPPLY GROWTH

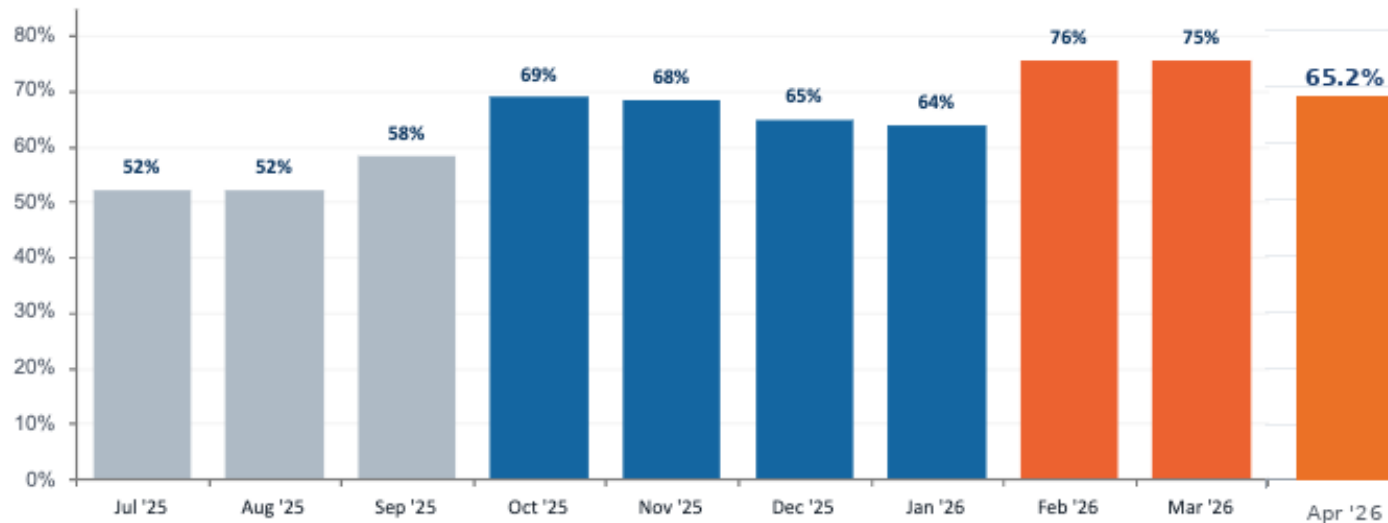
New rooms outpacing demand

+3.4%

DEMAND GROWTH

Room nights consumed

MESA MONTHLY OCCUPANCY — FY25-26 (Jul 2025 – Apr 2026)



KEY TAKEAWAY

Demand is up **+3.4%** on a trailing 12-month basis, but supply growth of **+4.7%** is compressing year-over-year RevPAR.

Peak winter months (Feb-Mar 2026) cleared **75% occupancy with ADR above \$160** — confirming the destination's pricing power when demand is present.

SALES & EVENTS

FY 2025-26 year to date through May 31, 2026

Publicly funded sales efforts generated

102

DEFINITE EVENTS

Booked in FY25-26

98,540

CONTRACTED ROOM NIGHTS

Total definite business

121,263

ATTENDANCE BOOKED

Across all definite events

\$123M

EST. DIRECT SPEND

\$73.4M actualized to date

DEFINITE BOOKED BUSINESS BY SEGMENT — FY25-26

SEGMENT	CONTRACTED RN	ATTENDANCE	EST. VISITOR SPEND
Sports	57,974	94,215	\$78.3M
Meetings & Conventions	12,520	15,046	\$34.7M
Leisure — OTA & Attribution Campaigns	28,046	12,002	\$10.0M
TOTAL DEFINITE	98,540	121,263	\$123M

OTA: Online Travel Agency (Expedia.com, hotels.com, VRBO.com, etc).

THE BOOKED-BUSINESS STORY

Sports is the volume engine — **57,974 contracted room nights** and \$78.3M in estimated spend.

Conventions, meetings & group business delivered **\$34.7M** in estimated spend, including wholesale travel-trade production.

Leisure OTA campaigns (Adara, Expedia) added **28,046 contracted room nights to date**.

FY25-26 WINS - SPORTS EVENTS

Publicly funded sales efforts generated

FIFA WORLD CUP 2026 TEAM BASE CAMP

GLOBAL STAGE · SUMMER 2026 · 4,600+ ROOM NIGHTS

Mesa selected as a team base camp for the FIFA World Cup 2026 — international exposure and team room-night impact.

MLS NEXT FEST

6,000 ROOM NIGHTS · 14,000 ATTENDEES

Premier youth soccer event drawing teams from across North America; multi-year agreement secured.



TRIPLE CROWN SPRING SHOWCASE

5,500 ROOM NIGHTS · 21,000+ ATHLETES

Major multi-session spring tournament series — among the largest sports room-night generators of the year.

MOUNTAIN WEST & WAC BASEBALL CHAMPIONSHIPS

1,885 ROOM NIGHTS · 2,450 ATTENDEES

Simultaneous NCAA conference championships hosted in Mesa — demonstrating venue depth and capacity.

MSBL & NABA WORLD SERIES

1,522 ROOM NIGHTS · 1,250 ATTENDEES

Adult amateur baseball championships — long-duration events with strong shoulder-season value.

NAIA WOMEN'S BEACH VOLLEYBALL CHAMPIONSHIP

250 ROOM NIGHTS · 700 ATTENDEES · 2-YR DEAL

Multi-year championship secured. Establishes Mesa as home of an emerging NCAA-feeder event.

FY25-26 WINS - MEETINGS/CONVENTIONS/EVENTS

Publicly funded sales efforts generated

PENTEC HEALTH SUMMIT 2026

820 ROOM NIGHTS IN THE MEDICAL MARKET SEGMENT

Medical market segment has been an elusive one for the lack of resort product, but the Pentec Summit hosted at the Sheraton Mesa Hotel was a welcome exception.

MASTER TECH EXPO 2026

TRADE-SHOW · 900+ ROOM NIGHTS & 1,000 ATTENDEES

2026 was the 5th consecutive year that the Mesa Convention Center has hosted this international trade-show and annual meeting. Major brands like Sony, Kenwood, JBL are among the exhibitors.

ARIZONA ASSOCIATION FOR THE GIFTED AND TALENTED

AAGT 2026 ANNUAL CONFERENCE · 95 ROOM NIGHTS

Over 1,000 educators, students and advocates gathered at the Mesa Convention Center for this annual conference for the 5th consecutive year.

VEX DIAMOND IN THE DESERT

INTERNATIONAL ROBOTICS COMPETITION · 350 ROOM NIGHTS

600+ high school and 400+ middle school students participated at the inaugural Diamond in the Desert robotics competition that took place at the Mesa Convention Center.

MEXICAN BASEBALL FIESTA & SLOAN PARK

CUBS PARTNERSHIP · EXPANDING

Continued partnership with the Cubs and Hispanic community engagement; expanding to six teams.

COPPER STATE BEER FESTIVAL

SIGNATURE FEST · 5,000 ATTENDEES

Mesa festival drawing regional visitation and showcasing the local beer, craft & culture scene.

ALT FEST

AWARD-WINNING FESTIVAL · 4,600+ ATTENDEES

Award-winning arts and music festival extending Mesa's creative-destination brand and downtown activation.



WHY THIS MATTERS FOR ED: Sports and group business alone generate more than 70,000 contracted room nights and over \$113 million in estimated visitor expenditures, driving demand for hotels, restaurants, retail, and attractions. Signature events like Copper State Beer Fest and ALT Fest further activate downtown, strengthen Mesa's destination brand, and create economic impact across the community.

THE LEAKAGE OPPORTUNITY

Mesa attracts major demand it cannot fully capture — room nights and high-value group business leak to neighboring cities

Placer.ai Leakage Report, Last 12 Months



- Estimated leakage impact: approximately \$177.8M in lost hotel revenue, equal to roughly \$12.4M in combined TLT/TPT, based on a 3-night average stay and \$120 ADR.

SPORTS ROOM-NIGHT LEAKAGE EXAMPLES

Sources: Visit Mesa CRM & Destinations International Event Impact Calculator

EVENT	TOTAL EVENT RN	MESA RN	GAP
MLS Next	39,000+	<6,000	33,000+
SC Del Sol	3,500+	877	2,600+
Triple Crown Spring Showcase	21,000+	~5,000	16,000+

- Mesa hosted MLS Next Fest but, with limited hotel inventory, held only ~18% of the room nights — the remaining 33,000+ booked in Scottsdale, Tempe, and Phoenix. This does not include the estimated room nights for families and guests, which would make the leakage even greater.

LEAKAGE IS A PATTERN, NOT A ONE-OFF

- Requested sports room nights exceeded current contracted capacity by more than 75,000 room nights.
- The issue is not lack of demand. The issue is in-market capacity and capture.
- This supports a broader economic-development case around lodging product, event-support infrastructure, and visitor-serving growth.

LOST GROUP BUSINESS: limited hotel inventory and insufficient meeting, ballroom, and exhibit space cost Mesa convertible business from **Nestlé Health Sciences, Blank Rome, and Madrigal Pharmaceuticals**, among others.

The demand is already here — Mesa needs the product to capture it.

MARKETING & DEMAND GENERATION — FYTD Thru May

Paid media, search, and social channels driving measurable room nights and outperforming targets

25.9M

PAID MEDIA IMPRESSIONS

+70.4% YoY FYTD

892K+

WEBSITE SESSIONS

+12.3% FYTD

43:1

AVERAGE ROAS

Peaked at 62.6:1 in February

+12.8%

WEB ENGAGEMENT RATE YOY

Engaged site users from Paid Traffic

86.7K

SOCIAL FOLLOWERS

+19.5% vs. prior FY (72.5K)

28K+

ATTRIBUTED ROOM NIGHTS

93% of annual goal

8.8%

VISIT RATE

Foot traffic driven by website visits (attribution per Tourism Economics)

5.9 Days

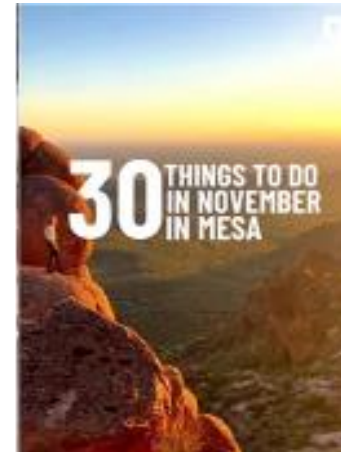
LENGTH OF STAY

+26% YoY (Adara)

*Marketing is pacing to deliver est. 30K attributed and OTA room nights this fiscal year — up from 20.6K in the prior full fiscal year, a projected **36% year-over-year gain**.*

MARKETING CREATIVE EXAMPLES

These campaigns helped drive 28,000+ attributed room nights.



AI & SEARCH LEADERSHIP

AI is changing how destinations compete, operate, and connect with visitors. Visit Mesa is applying it strategically, using practical tools with clear purpose and human oversight. AI tools help Visit Mesa extend marketing reach and improve productivity without proportional increases in staffing costs.

WHAT WE'RE DOING

AI Roadmap Implementation

First DMO in the nation to implement a formal procedural roadmap which includes both execution by individual staffer and department lead, while adhering to organization-wide usage policies.

AI Optimization Strategic Plan

Generative Engine Optimization (GEO) to surface Mesa in AI answers, not just search results.

Scrunch AI brand monitoring

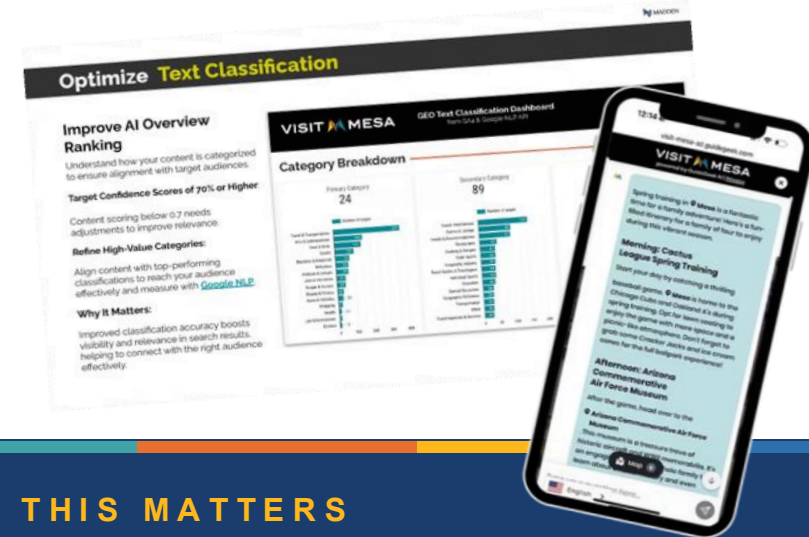
Real-time tracking of how and when Mesa is cited across AI platforms.

Custom GPTs + org-wide adoption

Internal AI tools across marketing, communications, and destination experience (Partnership sales).

AI webinar series

Open to all Mesa businesses, sharing practical AI insights from Visit Mesa's roadmap to support innovation across our community.



WHY THIS MATTERS

Search is being rebuilt around AI Across travel, organic clicks are down **20–30% YoY** as AI answers replace blue links.

Mesa is bucking the trend: Search site impressions are **up 38% YoY** because we optimize to be the source that AI engines cite.

We are leading this shift, not reacting to it — protecting Mesa's visibility as visitor behavior changes.

P.R. & EARNED MEDIA — FYTD (Thru May)

National media exposure strengthens Mesa's reputation among visitors, event planners, investors, and future residents.

248

MEDIA MENTIONS

198% of annual goal

\$5.1M

PUBLICITY VALUE

Earned media equivalent

335M+

AUDIENCE REACH

Estimated impressions

11M

MAY AUDIENCE

Single-month peak

WHAT THE NATIONAL PRESS IS SAYING ABOUT MESA

ACCESSIBILITY LEADERSHIP

Mesa is consistently profiled as a national leader in accessible and inclusive tourism — covered by national outlets following the Dani Bowman / Love on the Spectrum FAM tour.

ARTS & CULTURE WEEK

Mesa Arts & Culture Week earned significant earned-media coverage in regional and national lifestyle publications, helping establish Mesa as a creative destination beyond Spring Training. This partner collaboration has earned recognition by the 2026 AZ Travel Awards as the Destination Marketing Campaign of the Year.

CITY LIMITLESS® PODCAST

Our podcast expanded Mesa's storytelling reach through compelling conversations with influential guests, introducing new audiences to the destination and elevating brand awareness. These efforts earned a Telly Award and contributed to the podcast's recognition by the 2026 AZ Travel Awards as Destination Social Media Account of the Year.

EARNED MEDIA



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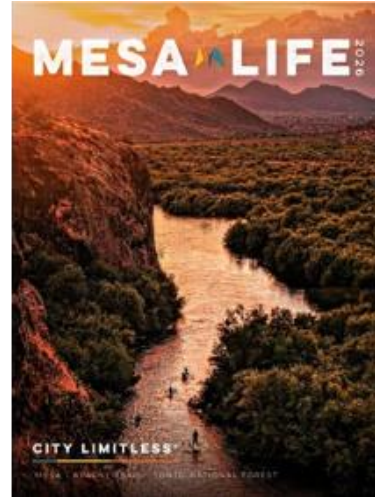
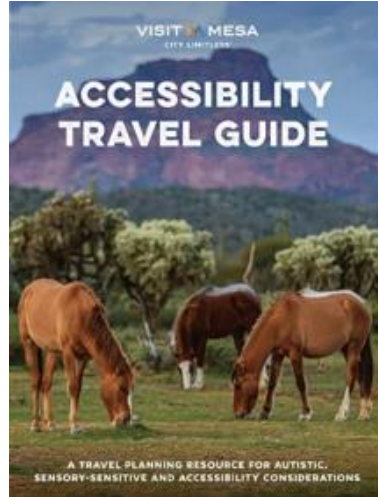
SEE & DO - FOOD & DRINK - HOMES - COMMUNITY - EVENTS



Visit Mesa Launches New Adventure Guide

Written by Fabulous Arizona - Published on May 28, 2026 - in See & Do, Travel & Adventure

Visit Mesa has released a new Adventure Guide designed to help visitors and residents explore the outdoor recreation opportunities surrounding Mesa and the greater Sonoran Desert region.

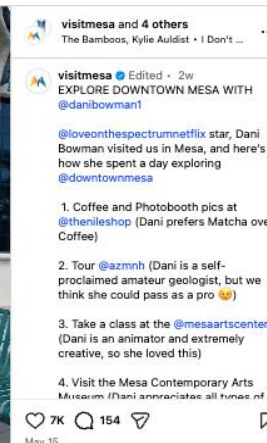


THINGS TO DO

Rare cougar shadow returns to Superstition Mountains March 15-21



The best time to catch the shadow is 30 minutes before sunset March 15-21.



WATCH NOW

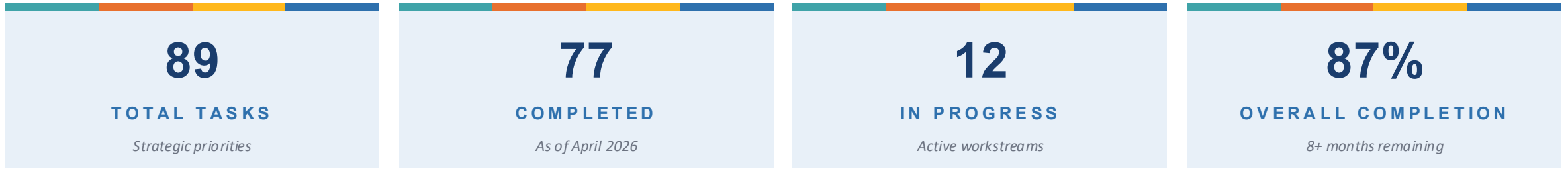
MESA NEWS

WATCH: Mesa is growing rapidly but there aren't enough lodging options

The City of Mesa is adding hotels at a hurried pace. Economic developers in the Valley show Mesa is growing, and there isn't enough hotel space to house the growing number of visitors.

STRATEGIC PLAN EXECUTION (CY 2024 – 2026)

A calendar-year view of Visit Mesa's strategic priorities, showing progress from planning to measurable execution.



COMPLETED THIS YEAR

- ✓ AI Roadmap, GuideGeek, & operational AI integration
- ✓ New VisitMesa.com website launch
- ✓ Adventure Guide & Brand Book refresh
- ✓ Campaign attribution via Adara pixel
- ✓ Accessible tourism resources & adaptive sports development
- ✓ Partnership automation & CRM
- ✓ Event Investment & Marketing Framework
- ✓ Hotel development business case & universal design addendum

COMMUNITY IMPACT INITIATIVES

MESA ARTS & CULTURE WEEK

Established as a destination-defining signature initiative — drove measurable visitation and earned media.

SPRING TRAINING GUIDE

Premium destination content paired with sports tourism — drives early-year overnight visitation.

ALLEGIANT AIR CO-OP

Expanded reach in direct-flight markets through influencer marketing and strategic air service alignment.

EVENT DEVELOPMENT & SIGNATURE EVENT STRATEGY

Advanced signature event alignment while supporting new and emerging events including ALT Fest, Flavors on Main, Dia de los Muertos, Copper State Beer Festival and Mesa International Film Festival. Aligned event producers, venues and stakeholders around opportunities that drive visitation and economic impact.

CITY LIMITLESS® PODCAST & CONTENT

Award-winning storytelling platform extending Mesa's brand reach across audiences.

AWARDS & RECOGNITION — FY25-26

WINS BY CATEGORY

AMERICAN ADVERTISING AWARDS	"AI Can't" Campaign	<i>Gold ADDY</i>
DESTINATION SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNT	City Limitless® Podcast	<i>AZ Travel Award</i>
DESTINATION MARKETING CAMPAIGN	Mesa Arts & Culture Week	<i>AZ Travel Award</i>
EVENT MARKETING	ALT Fest	<i>AZ Travel Award</i>
PARTNERSHIP MARKETING	Las Sendas	<i>AZ Travel Award</i>
OUTDOOR / RECREATION	Hawes Trail System	<i>AZ Travel Award</i>
ATTRACTION MARKETING	Arizona Baseball Museum	<i>AZ Travel Award</i>
TELLY AWARD (BRANDED CONTENT)	Jesse Cole / Savannah Bananas Episode	<i>City Limitless® Podcast</i>

AMERICAN
ADVERTISING
AWARDS

The
Telly
Awards



LOOKING FORWARD — Q4 FY25-26 AND BEYOND

Priorities, pipeline, and momentum carrying Mesa into FY26-27

NEAR-TERM

Q4 FY25-26 PRIORITIES

- Spring/summer sports actualization (NAIA, WAC/MWC conference championships)
- IPW international buyer marketplace
- Summer Adventure campaign launch
- Year-end KPI reporting

PIPELINE

HOTEL DEVELOPMENT PIPELINE

- 21 properties / 3,146 rooms tracked:**
- 943 rooms under construction (2026–27)
 - 2,203 in planning/proposed (incl. AC Marriott Hotel, Residence Inn, two stadium hotels, 600-room Legacy Park, Longbow select service)

STRATEGIC

TIA — TOURISM IMPROVEMENT AREA

Continued advocacy for a TIA mechanism to provide stable, sustainable funding for destination marketing — a tool used successfully by 25 states and, as of now, 215+ U.S. cities.

NEW FY

FY26-27 PLANNING

2027–2029 strategic plan session, AOT Prop 302 execution, and a brand campaign with MOED connecting destination awareness to resident and business attraction.

OPPORTUNITIES TO ALIGN

Continued collaboration on visitor economy infrastructure, full-service hotel and event space development, and sustainable destination funding tools such as TIA/TID exploration.