

Marketing Department Annual Report 2024 – 2025

Overview:

Tourism visitor numbers were mixed across city venues and online outlets for the year. Our tourism numbers remain strong.

During the 2023-2024 fiscal year, attendance at the Foley Welcome Center totaled 4,412, compared to 4,749 in FY 23. This was a decrease of 7 percent. Attendance at the Holmes Medical Museum was 9,180, up 2.5 percent over 2023. Attendance at the Foley Railroad Museum was 20,227 in 2024. This is up about 2 percent from 2023. The Caboose Club attendance was flat from 2023 – 2024 at 20,466 visitors.

Online Visitors:

Press Releases:

Foley continues to gather public and media notice through website postings, press releases and coverage in the local media.

In the last year, more than 270 postings have been featured on the City of Foley website. These postings are also frequently sent out as press releases, which are often featured in Gulf Coast Media, Bay Business News, The Mullet Wrapper and local television news programs, which has greatly increased public visibility for the City of Foley.

For example, in September, 2024, Critical Mention found 198 local, national and international media reports featuring Foley. These included stories on the purchase of the N3N biplane as part of Foley's ongoing plans to commemorate its listing as a World War II Heritage City, the new budget with more than \$85 million in capital projects, traffic improvements, plans for a new aquatics center and studies to improve traffic flow in the community. These postings are frequently featured in Gulf Coast Media, Bay Business News, The Mullet Wrapper and local television news programs. During September, 15 postings were also featured on the city website, which also greatly increased public visibility for the City of Foley.

Mayor's Newsletters

A Mayor's Newsletter that hits the highlights of Foley happenings is produced and mailed quarterly to Foley businesses and residents. A total of 19,000 newsletters are printed each month. A majority of the newsletters are mailed. Copies are also distributed at city hall, the library and the welcome center. An electronic copy of the newsletter is posted on the city website and an electronic edition is emailed to those who ask to be included on the emailing list.

Advertising

The Marketing Department purchases advertising for the city in multiple publications. These include the Alabama Vacation Guide; Coast 360, Find it Local, published by the South Baldwin Chamber of Commerce; Facebook ads; the Mullet Wrapper and billboards on the Foley Beach Express, among others.

Events

- Fall and Spring Midday Melodies are Foley's newest events, held in both the months of October and March. Local musicians perform in the park from 11 a.m. until 2 p.m. Residents are invited

to bring a chair or blanket and enjoy music is our beautiful park near the fountain. Attendees can purchase food from a vendor in the park, or bring their own. .

- Hometown Halloween is held annually on the Thursday before Halloween. This event is the largest city-sponsored event held in the downtown area. The city closes three major downtown roadways and partners with approximately forty total businesses and organizations to provide activities to delight children. The costume contest with contestants ranging from babies to adults usually attracts over 200 participants. It is difficult to estimate the number of attendees, but a good guesstimate is from 3,000 to 5,000.
- Christmas in the Park is a hometown tree-lighting event that includes a tree decorating contest, photo opportunities and a visit from Santa Claus.
- Let it Snow is held each year after the Foley Christmas Parade which is sponsored by the Kiwanis Club. This event includes snow, children's activities, music and a holiday marketplace.
- April Walking Tours In 2024, Foley averaged over 50 attendees on each Saturday of the month. This is the highest participation we've ever experienced. Those who took a tour included both old and new residents as well as visitors. The tours were led by community leaders. Foley has partnered with the Alabama Tourism Department in this statewide event for over 10 years.
- Heritage Park Marketplace hosted over 50 different vendors this year. The market included a great mix of local artisans, crafters, and small businesses, offering everything from handmade items to unique local finds. There were also a large variety of food truck options.
- Music and a Movie events entertained approximately 2,650 people over five Fridays in April and May. Rain affected the attendance of two of the evenings. April 19th was the largest event of the season with perfect weather and an attendance of over 800 people. This event aligns with Heritage Park Marketplace for each of the five weeks.
- Baldwin Pops, Baldwin County's volunteer band, presents two free concerts in Foley each year. One is held in the Foley Civic Center at Christmas, and the second is held outdoors in Heritage Park.

Centennial Plaza – Engraved Bricks can still be purchased for installation in Centennial Plaza in Heritage Park.

Caboose Club – The Caboose Club volunteers continue to operate Foley's Model Train Exhibit. During the past year several models of Foley's historic buildings have been added to the exhibit.

Marketing Department EOY Stats

FY 23 VS FY24		WELCOME CENTER	HOLMES MUSEUM	DEPOT MUSEUM	CABOOSE CLUB	TRAIN RIDES
FY 23		4749	8950	19856	20487	7930
FY 24		4412	9180	20227	20466	6995
FY23 vs FY24	Total	-7.1000%	2.570%	1.8700%	0%	-11.8000%

FY 2024 VISITORS - ALL LOCATIONS.

VISITORS	Oct-23	Nov-23	Dec-23	Jan-24	Feb-24	Mar-24	Apr-24	May-24	Jun-24	Jul-24	Aug-24	Sep-24	TOTAL
Welcome Center	276	270	280	697	488	371	613	305	306	269	279	258	4412
Holmes Museum	580	520	653	704	856	938	1360	519	975	889	689	497	9180
Depot Museum	1328	1467	1851	1446	1946	1917	1415	1420	2175	2506	1669	1087	20227
Model Train Exhibit	1197	1611	2194	1362	2218	2095	1299	1433	2124	2093	1693	1147	20466
Event Train Riders	612	538	711	75	251	394	450	321	907	1292	906	538	6995
Total Visitors	3993	4406	5689	4284	5759	5715	5137	3998	6487	7049	5236	3527	61280

VISITOR INFORMATION PACKETS	Oct-23	Nov-23	Dec-23	Jan-24	Feb-24	Mar-24	Apr-24	May-24	Jun-24	Jul-24	Aug-24	Sep-24	TOTAL
Mailed Packets	171	124	63	2	464	297	303	236	423	200	226	138	2647
Welcome Packets	50	50	50	1166	200	145	520	200	230	600	400	400	4011
Total Information Packets	221	174	113	1168	664	442	823	436	653	800	626	538	6658

Sources: phone/website, South Baldwin Chamber of Commerce, Alabama Advantage, and the Alabama Vacation Guide

WEBSITE STATISTICS	Oct-23	Nov-23	Dec-23	Jan-24	Feb-24	Mar-24	Apr-24	May-24	Jun-24	Jul-24	Aug-24	Sep-24	TOTAL
VisitFoley.com - Users	5481	5288	5,521	5122	8277	7343	7789	7453	6316	7399	6581	4030	76600
CityOfFoley.org - Users	11776	12702	17014	24838	22027	14166	12550	14824	15798	13966	13644	12033	185338
Visit Foley Facebook Activity	8652	4302	5,156	10581	3776	3398	3230	5504	3156	3762	3618	3041	58176
City of Foley Facebook Activity	16744	14497	27,634	31536	34361	11473	12792	17013	5316	5716	5345	4618	187045
Total Online Activity	42653	36789	55,325	72077	68441	36380	36361	44794	30586	30843	29188	23722	507159

*New Comments, Likes, Shares, Views, Fans, etc.

VOLUNTEER HOURS	Oct-23	Nov-23	Dec-23	Jan-24	Feb-24	Mar-24	Apr-24	May-24	Jun-24	Jul-24	Aug-24	Sep-24	TOTAL
Welcome Center	6	0	18	120	0	0	12	15	0	0	0	0	171
Caboose Club	247.5	318.5	396	376	391	413	417	321	339	257	322	309	4107
Kids Train Drivers & Assistants	22	16	16	2	12	18	12	8	27	31	40	16	220
Total Volunteer Hours	275.5	334.5	430	498	403	431	441	344	366	288	362	325	4498

E-Newsletters	Oct-23	Nov-23	Dec-23	Jan-24	Feb-24	Mar-24	Apr-24	May-24	Jun-24	Jul-24	Aug-24	Sep-24	TOTAL
Visitors													0
Local	2395	2393	2393	2393	2,384	2387	2440	2456	2461	2467	2466	2465	29100
Total Newsletters	2395	2393	2393	2393	2384	2387	2440	2456	2461	2467	2466	2465	29100

April 2024 Saturdays Walking Tour	
	Participants
Sat, Apr 6	53
Sat, Apr 13	66
Sat, Apr 20	54
Sat, Apr 27	54
Total	227