

Tristate
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OWENSBORO CONVENTION CENTER BEATING EXPECTATIONS

The Owensboro Convention Center continues delivering on its promise to bring more big events downtown.

Officials say they've beat expectations since opening in the winter of 2014.

"We were really pleased with the results of this last year," says General Manager Dean Dennis.

Two and a half years after the events started arriving, Dennis says it's paying off more than expected.

"We're driving almost three times as much revenue through the building and more revenue per event through the building," he says.

In the latest fiscal year, nearly 270 events held, drawing more than 110,000 guests, generating more than \$15 million in economic impact for the city. Among the events were 22 conventions, nearly double predicted in a feasibility study done before it opened.

"I think more importantly than even the numbers is how it's really integrated to being an integral part of this community as a quality of life piece as well as an economic generator for people who come for conventions."

More than 12,000 hotel nights were booked by event guests at city hotels during that period. But Dennis says despite all the guests coming through these doors at the Owensboro Convention Center, they're still missing out on some bigger events because of a lack of nearby hotel rooms.

"We've lost some business because we didn't have enough rooms within walking distance that the event planners wanted," he says. "A third hotel makes a lot of sense for us right now."

A third convention center hotel is still in the works in the proposed TIF district near the convention center. Dennis says it would meet the needs of bigger conventions they're looking to book.

"You can always do more, and we certainly want to continue to drive more events, drive more conventions," Dennis adds.