

# VERMILION SMALL BUSINESS GUIDE

**WINTER 2022**

[www.mainstreetvermilion.org](http://www.mainstreetvermilion.org)



# MESSAGE FROM MAIN STREET VERMILION

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## *Winter is here!*

It's only a bad thing if you don't embrace it and rise to the challenge. People will still come to Vermilion to enjoy the town in winter if you provide the incentive!

In the following pages we give you some things to be thinking about as we move into the winter season and some checklists to make sure you don't get off track. Consider these as inspiration and helpful suggestions to keep things fresh and interesting for you and your customers.

**Thank you for working together! Our community is most welcoming to visitors when we all work together. We appreciate you for doing your part in making Vermilion a great place to live or visit!**

We hope this seasonal guide sparks some fun winter ideas!



Marilou Suszko  
Executive Director



Amy Hoffman  
Special Projects Coordinator

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

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3	CHECKLIST: READY FOR WINTER + LEVERAGING "WINTER CULTURE"
4	YOUR PROMOTIONS + MARKETING
5	CUSTOMER FOCUS + STAFF + OPERATIONS
6	VERMILION BUSINESS CONNECTION + MOVING TO 2022
7-8	SCHEDULE OF EVENTS + SANDWICH BOARDS
9	2021/2022 WINTER TRENDS: TRAVEL, DINING, & RETAIL
10	MSV 2021/2022 TOURISM MARKETING PROGRAM
11	OHIO FIND IT HERE OPPORTUNITY + THANK YOU

# CHECKLIST: READY FOR WINTER

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Retailer, restaurateur, service business? As a Vermilion business, what you do to make Vermilion look inviting, welcome and open for business as we move into winter is important not just for your business, but for the entire town. **How can you make things feel inviting and renewed to keep business coming back all season?**



## LEVERAGING OUR WINTER CULTURE

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- ☐ **PRODUCT DISPLAYS** Are you **prominently displaying seasonal and non-seasonal products**, gifts and services that customers either want for winter or beyond?
- ☐ **WINDOW DISPLAYS** Make your windows say "**We Love Winter.**" Make sure to put your best foot forward with your winter displays and keep things lit up all the way until Ice a Fair...and beyond.
- ☐ **ADD DETAILS** It's the little things that count! **Nothing says, "Come in," like a hand-drawn, creative sandwich board or sign in front of your store or business.** Have you seen the 12-minute video on the benefits of sandwich signs? It's available on the Vermilion Business Connection FB page.
- ☐ **DECORATIONS** Add decorative pieces inside and outside your business to celebrate the season on walls, furniture, displays, windows etc.
- ☐ **POSTED SIGNS** Be sure to **check your windows for outdated signage from events long past.** Check and see that the language you use for things you don't want your customers to do is clear but friendly. "Please" and "Thank You" instead of "No," "Prohibited," and "Don't."



# YOUR PROMOTIONS + MARKETING

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- ☐ **WEBSITE** Does your website highlight winter-themed products? Think winter scents, tote bags, cozy clothes, coffee mugs, fresh food and new drinks. **Are your hours updated and prominently posted?**
- ☐ **BLOG** Do you have an active blog? You could talk about how good it feels to cozy up and unwind a little now that winter is here. **You can help spread the word about fun events happening throughout town in the coming months** (see list of events on pages 7 and 8).
- ☐ **NEWSLETTERS** Keep communicating with your customers. Tell them what's new with you and your business. **Personal connections create loyal customers.**
- ☐ **DATABASES** Start or **continue collecting email addresses.** Keeping in touch with your customers starts with knowing how. **What can you offer your customers in exchange for their email address and other contact info?** Some ideas: an invitation to a private event, a discount, a promise of knowing about upcoming deals before the general public.
- ☐ **SOCIAL MEDIA** Talk about winter using positive words and sayings: inviting, cozy, fun, celebrations, warm up, winter activities, outside, sunsets, play, etc. **Create fun promotions, scavenger hunts, incentives** to get more of your customers and followers friends to follow your business account.
- ☐ **EMAIL** Make sure your email campaigns include winter promos and events. Make Vermilion and your business a destination they don't want to miss.
- ☐ **ADVERTISING** Highlight **what is going on around you** and remember, your Main Street membership helps support Vermilion's tourism marketing program that seeks to bring people to town all year round. (see page 10).
- ☐ **PHONE MESSAGE** What does your phone message say? Think about starting it with something like, "Warm up in Vermilion." Make sure you **include current hours in your message.**



# CUSTOMER FOCUS

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- ☐ **CUSTOMER LOYALTY** How have you thanked them for supporting you and your business during the pandemic and the off season (times other than summer)? It can be as easy as a handwritten postcard or a small loyalty reward.
- ☐ **FIRST TIME CUSTOMERS** Have you connected new customers to your website and social media? Start by adding their email to your database so they are in the loop with what is happening at your business on a regular basis.
- ☐ **WORKING WITH OTHERS** Word-of-mouth from happy customers, neighboring businesses and organizations is important and the best advertising tool. **Do you partner with fellow business owners?** Do you know what they offer so you can direct visitors to their store?
- ☐ **MERCH** Is it new, seasonal, and in a place of honor in your store? **Visitors become repeat customers when you keep providing elements of surprise.** Move things around to make it more exciting to come back over and over all year round.

# STAFF + OPERATIONS

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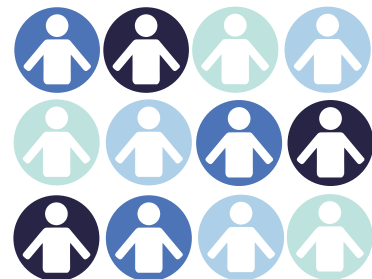
- ☐ **KNOWLEDGEABLE STAFF** Is your staff up-to-date on your winter offerings, specials, and what's going on around town this season and next? **They are the frontline when it comes to recommending places to go while visiting Vermilion. Be sure to share event information with them.**
- ☐ **SYSTEMS** Update your point of sale (POS) system with new specials, prices, etc.
- ☐ **SIGNAGE** Changing out signage inside can help keep things fresh for repeat customers. **Don't forget to look at your exterior signage as well.** Is it clear, in good condition, and easily visible? Main Street Vermilion has resources that can help with improving signage.





# VERMILION BUSINESS CONNECTION

- ☐ **CONNECT** Join the Vermilion Business Connection Facebook page. Use it as a place to ask for feedback and connect with other local businesses. Make sure we have your email address for our newsletter and email blasts.



We are also communicating via text message, too. If you would like to receive updates, share your cell phone number by emailing it to [amy@mainstreetvermilion.org](mailto:amy@mainstreetvermilion.org) with your name and business info.

- ☐ **CHECK IN** Take a look at the Vermilion Business Connection information updated regularly on our website, [www.mainstreetvermilion.org/businessconnection](http://www.mainstreetvermilion.org/businessconnection).

**NEXT VERMILION BUSINESS CONNECTION MEETING: TUESDAY, JANUARY 18**

## 2021/2022: MOVING INTO THE NEW YEAR

There are many reasons that people, both residents and visitors, come to Vermilion throughout the year and events are among the best. Days and nights filled with activity, fun, shopping, dining, art, and reasons to gather are at the top of everyone's list this year.

Ice a Fair is returning in 2022! **What will you add to this event at your business?** You could share the events with your customers, to get them to return to Vermilion again and again.

To help you plan for participation, sponsorship, or increased foot traffic, here is what's planned throughout Vermilion (so far) for 2022. For more information, please contact the hosting organization. *Please note that this schedule is subject to additions, changes or cancellations in compliance with current COVID health and safety mandates.*



# SCHEDULE OF EVENTS - 2022

## JANUARY

18 Vermilion Business Connection (MSV - location TBD)

## FEBRUARY

5 Ice A Fair returns! (MSV) *It's Back!*

## MARCH

17,18,19 Vermilion Restaurant Weekend (MSV)

## APRIL

19 Vermilion Business Connection (MSV - location TBD)

23 Chocolate and Wine Walk (VCOC)

## MAY

19 3rd Thursday Music (VCOC)

## JUNE

16 3rd Thursday Music (VCOC)

17-19 56th Festival of the Fish (VCOC)

## JULY

2, 9, 16, 23, 30 Market in the Park (MSV)

10, 17, 24, 31 Concert in the Park (VCOC)

19 Vermilion Business Connection (MSV - location TBD)

21 3rd Thursday Music (VCOC)

23 All Washed Up (MSV)

24 Chocolate and Wine Walk (VCOC)

TBD VetteMilion (Lake Shore Corvettes, Inc. Bob DiCarlo)

## AUGUST

6, 13, 20, 27 Market in the Park (MSV)

7, 14, 21, 28 Concert in the Park (VCOC)

5 - 6 Vermilion Beach Market at Sherod Park (Presented by Anne Naugle)

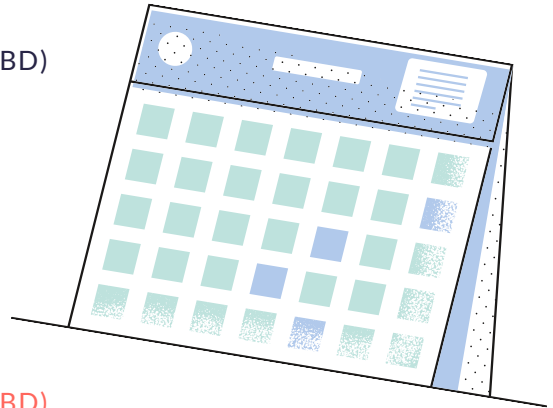
6 Chalk it Up (MSV)

18 3rd Thursday Music (VCOC)

27 Hot Diggity Dog Day (MSV)

## SEPTEMBER

15 3rd Thursday Music (VCOC)



Thank you to  
Shores & Islands Ohio  
for their sponsorship of  
Ice A Fair



## OCTOBER

1-31 Shake, Rattle, & Stroll (MSV)

TBD 50th Woollybear Festival (VCOC)

18 Vermilion Business Connection (MSV - location TBD)

TBD Oktoberfest Event (MSV)

## NOVEMBER

5 Corks & Kegs (VCOC)

26 Small Business Saturday, Santa on the Boat (MSV & VCOC)

## DECEMBER

1 Light up Vermilion (MSV - subject to change)

MSV: MAIN STREET VERMILION VCOC: VERMILION CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

## Questions about events?

For questions on Main Street Vermilion Events

440.963.0772 Website: [mainstreetvermilion.org](http://mainstreetvermilion.org)

For questions on Vermilion Chamber of Commerce (VCOC) Events

440.967.4477 Website: [vermilionohio.com](http://vermilionohio.com)

*Do you have additional ideas for bringing people to town?*

*Please share and let us know what you'll do to help!*

## ROGER BROOKS ON THE USE OF SANDWICH BOARDS

This includes sidewalk signs, temporary placement (movable) signs, easel signs, A-boards, ground stake signs.

5 Rules for an A+ on your Sandwich Boards

1. They must be **unique** to the business
2. Use only to promote **special** sales or menu items
3. Placement: **ONLY in front** of the business
4. One per business or one for **every 40 feet**
5. They must be **put away** (pulled in) **when** the business is **closed**

Notes:

- Change them daily (at least weekly).
- Have other businesses give you feedback on your signage.
- Stay with the character of your business and away from the generic.
- **A little humor goes a long way!**





# 9 FOOD AND DRINK TRENDS FOR 2022

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1. Spicy foods
2. Childhood favorites
3. Beneficial snacks
4. Kombucha
5. Omakase
6. Mushroom drinks
7. 50/50 plant and meat
8. Vegan foods
9. Alternative milks

Source: [ThisIsPopulist.com](https://thisispopulist.com)

## CURRENT TRAVEL TRENDS

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8 Trends driving the future of travel:

1. An emphasis on local destinations
2. Consumers demand increased Covid-19 safety and cleanliness
3. Travelers go it alone
4. Travelers crave local experiences
5. Travel tech adoption accelerates
6. Consumers blend business and leisure travel
7. The travel industry gets serious about sustainability
8. Electric air travel goes mainstream

Source: [ExplodingTopics.com](https://explodingtopics.com)



# MSV 2021 TOURISM MARKETING PROGRAM

Main Street Vermilion invests in tourism promotions, an important part of our mission that impacts economic development and community revitalization. Here is a summary of most of our marketing efforts, encouraging people to visit Vermilion all year long.

**Tourism marketing efforts benefit ALL businesses**, whether tourism-related or otherwise. While the primary destination for visitors continues to be Vermilion beaches and the historic downtown, people arrive from the east, west, and south as well as boaters from the waterways. They discover businesses, restaurants, and services along the way where they may stop and spend a portion of their tourism dollars.

## PRINT ADVERTISING



CIRC: 350K [ANNUAL]



CIRC: 75K [JUNE]



CIRC: 375K [ANNUAL]

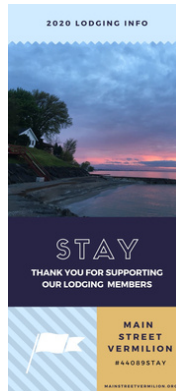
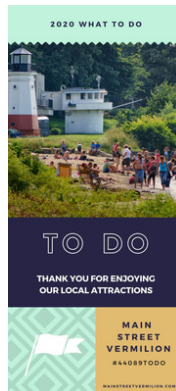


CIRC: 60K [MAY]



CIRC: 250K

MSV's **BROCHURE SERIES** highlights specific business segments and features MSV Business Partners. 5,000+ distributed annually from **Main Street Vermilion & Shore Thing**.



## PLUS...

- **MSV WEBSITE** promotes all Vermilion tourism-related businesses. Business Partners include links to their FB page or website.
- Marketing efforts include print, radio, and social media promotions for special events and programs.
- **New this year! We'll be adding the Ohio Magazine Digital Campaign and more social media boosted posts/ads to our marketing program again.**



**...but can visitors  
find you here?**

In 2020, TourismOhio started a campaign to support local shopping, dining and attractions. Take advantage of the power of [ohio.org](https://ohio.org) by creating a listing for your business. Ohio.org receives more than 5 million page views annually.

**BEGIN AT** <https://development.force.com/OhioListings/s/login/>

- Start your listing under **DESTINATIONS**
- Include up to 10 photos of your business/products to upload
- A description of your business (minimum 400 words)
- Website and social media links

QUESTIONS or NEED HELP? Call Amy or Marilou at 440.963.0772

We hope that the Main Street Vermilion Winter Business Guide  
has been helpful as you prepare your business  
for a new season.

*Spring Edition coming in February!*

Be sure to keep in touch through the Vermilion Business Connection.  
We meet quarterly (January, April, July and October) on the third Tuesday of the month.

Stay connected through the Vermilion Business Connection Facebook Page.

If you would like to join Main Street Vermilion as a business partner and support programs that promote tourism, advance community revitalization, and support economic development, contact

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Marilou Suszko". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of each name being capitalized and prominent.

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