HAINES BOROUGH
TOURISM DEPARTMENT

Haines, Alaska Visitor Center 2023 Season Report

Executive Summary: The 2023 tourism season in Haines, Alaska, marked a significant milestone as the industry rebounded to pre-pandemic numbers, demonstrating a robust recovery in travel activity in the Haines area. Alaska, in general, is experiencing a resurgence in popularity, with heightened interest from travelers. However, it is crucial to recognize the intense competition among various communities, making it imperative for Haines to remain proactive and to keep investing in the promotion of Haines as a destination. This competitive landscape necessitates a strategic approach to ensure Haines remains a top choice for travelers.

Marketing Strategies: Recognizing the need for a multifaceted marketing approach, the Haines Visitor Center has invested in iconic hard-copy advertising spaces, reclaiming prominent positions in publications like the Milepost back page, Alaska Magazine, and Bells. These traditional avenues continue to be valuable in reaching a broad audience.However, adapting to the evolving landscape, the Visitor Center is also embracing modern marketing strategies. A notable shift involves leveraging influencers to promote Haines. By partnering with individuals who hold sway over specific target audiences, we aim to enhance our reach and engagement.

Social Media Growth: Acknowledging the digital age's impact on travel decisions, the Visitor Center is actively growing its social media audience. Platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok serve as powerful tools to showcase the beauty of Haines, connect with potential visitors, and create a community around the destination. In the long run, this effort is anticipated to be a cost-effective approach, maximizing the return on investment.

Community Impact: It is crucial to highlight that Haines is not an isolated entity in the tourism ecosystem. The decisions made by neighboring communities regarding cruise ship industry regulations can significantly impact our own community. Therefore, being proactive in advocating for Haines' unique offerings and coordinating efforts with neighboring ports is vital for sustained success.

Conclusion: The 2023 season has positioned Haines, Alaska, as a premier destination for travelers, showcasing a remarkable recovery from the challenges posed by the pandemic. By combining traditional advertising methods with modern influencer collaborations and social media growth, the Haines Visitor Center is taking a holistic approach to ensure long-term success in a competitive market. As we navigate the dynamic tourism landscape, the emphasis on being proactive remains paramount for securing Haines' place as a top choice among Alaska's stunning destinations.

The Haines Borough Tourism Department compiles this report, utilizing data from reputable sources including the Haines-Skagway Fast Ferry, Alaska Marine Highway System, Cruise Line Agencies of Alaska, US Customs and Border Protection, Statistics Canada, and more.

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CRUISE SHIPS

97 TOTAL CALLS

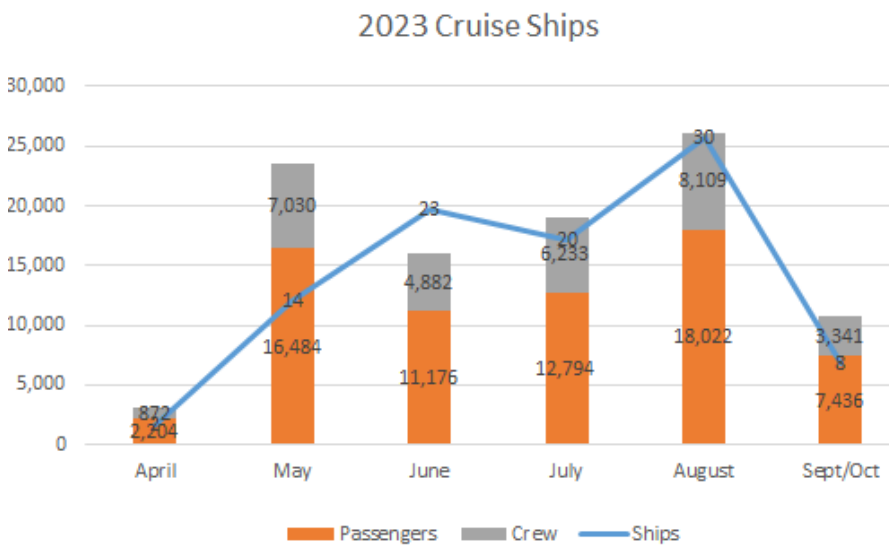
68,116 PASSENGERS

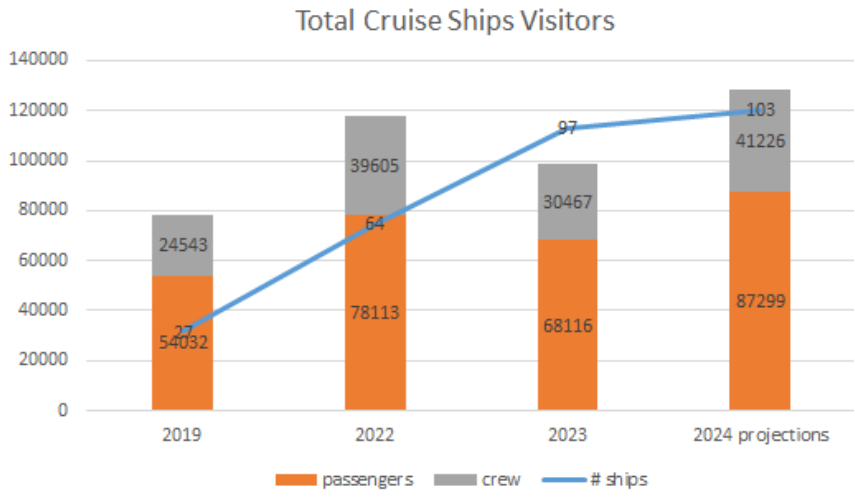
30,467 CREW

In 2023, cruise ship visits numbered a total of 97 calls, welcoming 68,116 passengers and hosting 30,467 crew members. Notably, pre-COVID 2019 saw 54,032 guests, while 2022 registered a higher count of 78,113 visitors.

It's important to acknowledge that the elevated figures in 2022 were partly due to ship docking constraints caused by slides in Skagway. These constraints diverted a total of 8 vessels to Haines, resulting in up to 8,000 additional visitors compared than what was oringally scheduled for the 2022 season.

However, 2023 recorded a total of 68,116 passengers, indicating a stable visitation rate. Projections for 2024 anticipate 103 ship calls, hosting an estimated 87,299 passengers.





*2022 numbers reflect calls rerouted due to slide in Skagway.

CRUISE SHIPS

EVENING CALLS

6 EVENING ARRIVALS

12,852 PASSENGERS

16% EVENING ONLY GUESTS

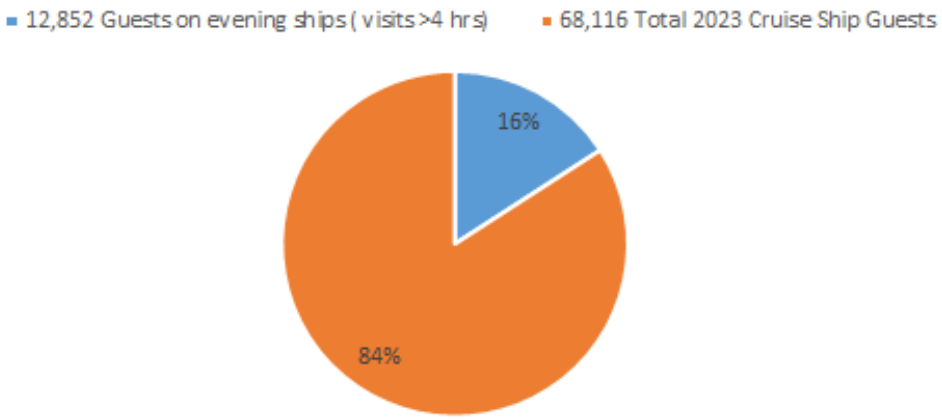
In 2023, Haines had a total of 8 scheduled evening cruise ship calls, primarily with six from the Brilliance of the Seas. Unfortunately, the two calls planned with the Radiance of the Seas were canceled due to adverse weather conditions and mechanical issues.

Evening visits present challenges for local tour operators and businesses as the ships typically spend less than four hours in port, limiting guests' opportunities to experience our community and surrounding areas fully.

In 2023, evening calls constituted 16% of the total cruise ship passengers, accounting for 12,852 out of 68,116 guests for the season. Looking ahead to 2024, there are six scheduled evening calls for the Radiance of the Seas, albeit with slightly later docking times from 7 pm to 11 pm.

2023 Evening Calls

6 total evening calls (Brilliance of the Seas), 2 evening calls cancelled (Radiance of the Seas)



2024 Projected Evening Calls

(6 calls, Radiance of the Seas 7pm-11pm)

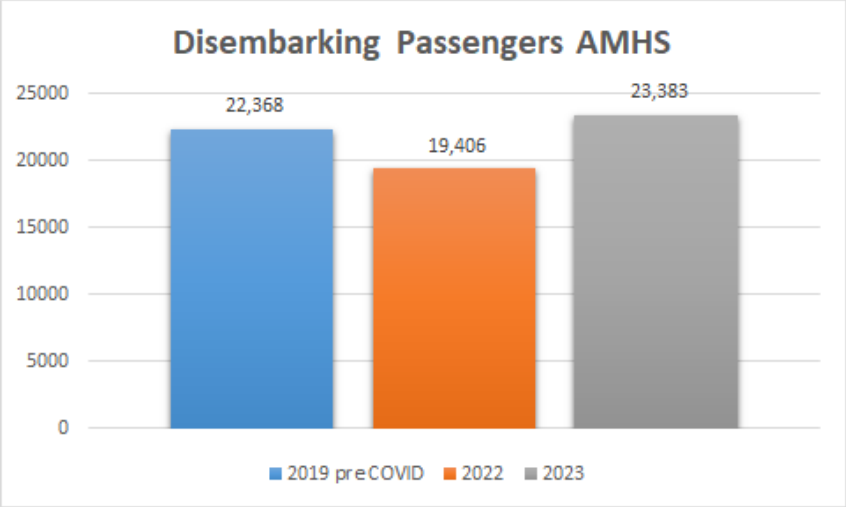
The total projected guests for these evening visits in 2024 amount to 12,834, representing 13% of the 87,299 total projected cruise ship guests. While there's a slight decrease in the percentage compared to 2023, the impact on local tours and businesses should still be noted, given the limited time window for these evening visits.

ALASKA MARINE HIGHWAY SYSTEM

23,383
Disembarking Passengers

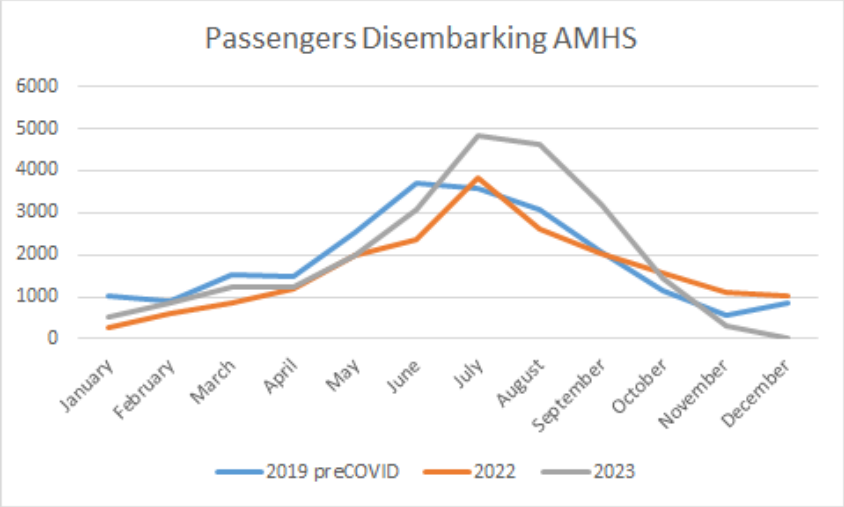
7,927
Disembarking Vehicles

The Alaska Marine Highway System's 2023 data indicates a positive trend with 23,383 disembarking passengers and 7,927 vehicles at the Haines ferry terminal. This surpasses pre-COVID 2019 passenger totals of 22,368 and exceeds 2022 numbers at 19,406.



The peak ridership remains consistent between April and September, with the highest numbers occurring in late July and early August, aligning with the peak tourism season.

This uptick in passenger and vehicle disembarkation signifies a promising recovery for the Alaska Marine Highway System, showcasing an increase in travel activity and a return to pre-pandemic levels, if not surpassing them during certain periods.



The increased ridership in 2023 for the Alaska Marine Highway System might reflect the impact of enhanced ferry schedules. This alignment suggests that more convenient and efficient ferry timings could be contributing to the heightened passenger and vehicle numbers, fostering a more favorable and accessible travel experience for passengers.

BORDER TRAFFIC

SOUTHBOUND DALTON CACHE

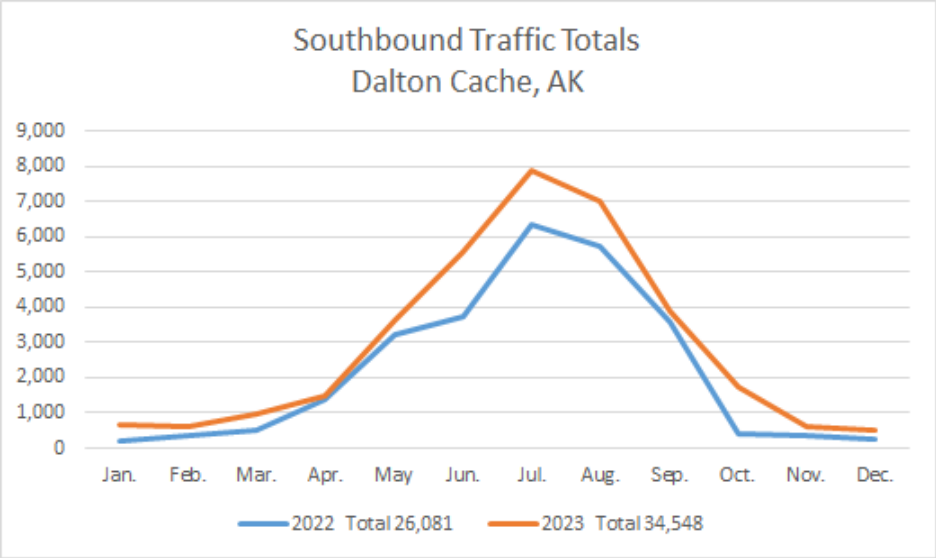
34,548 Travelers

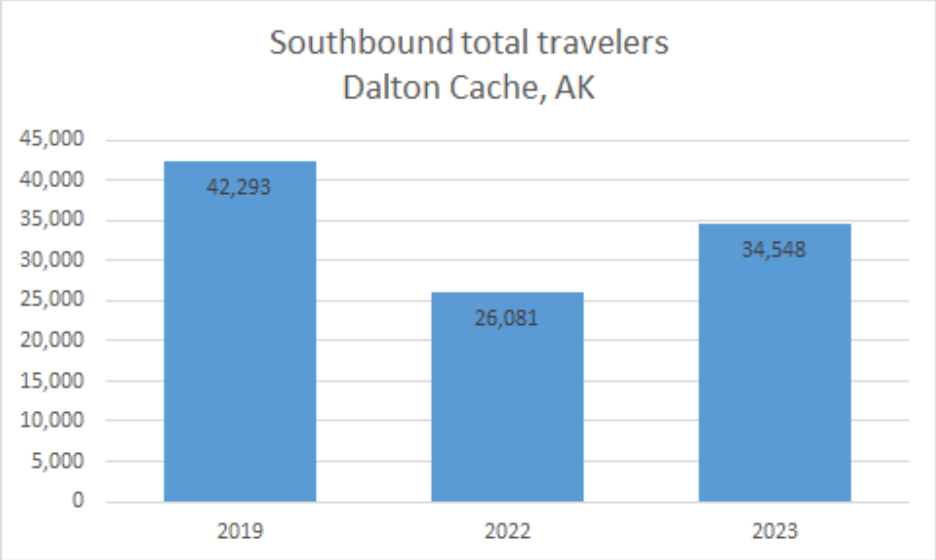
+32% Travelers 2022-2023

The influx of traveler traffic entering the US from Canada at the Dalton Cache border crossing showcased a distinct surge in passenger vehicles. In 2022, the recorded count stood at 26,081 vehicles, noticeably escalating to 34,548 in 2023.

This surge aligns with the overarching trend of heightened traffic and increased visitors observed in Haines during 2023, highlighting a significant upswing in cross-border travel through this specific entry point. Consequently, this data indicates a substantial 32.45% increase from the preceding year (2022) at the Dalton Cache border crossing for southbound traffic entering the US from Canada.

It's essential to note that despite the surge in border crossing passengers from 2022 to 2023, the total numbers remain lower compared to pre-pandemic counts. In 2019, travelers totaled 42,293, indicating that while there's a notable rebound, the figures have yet to reach the levels observed before the pandemic.





AIR

TRANSPORTATION

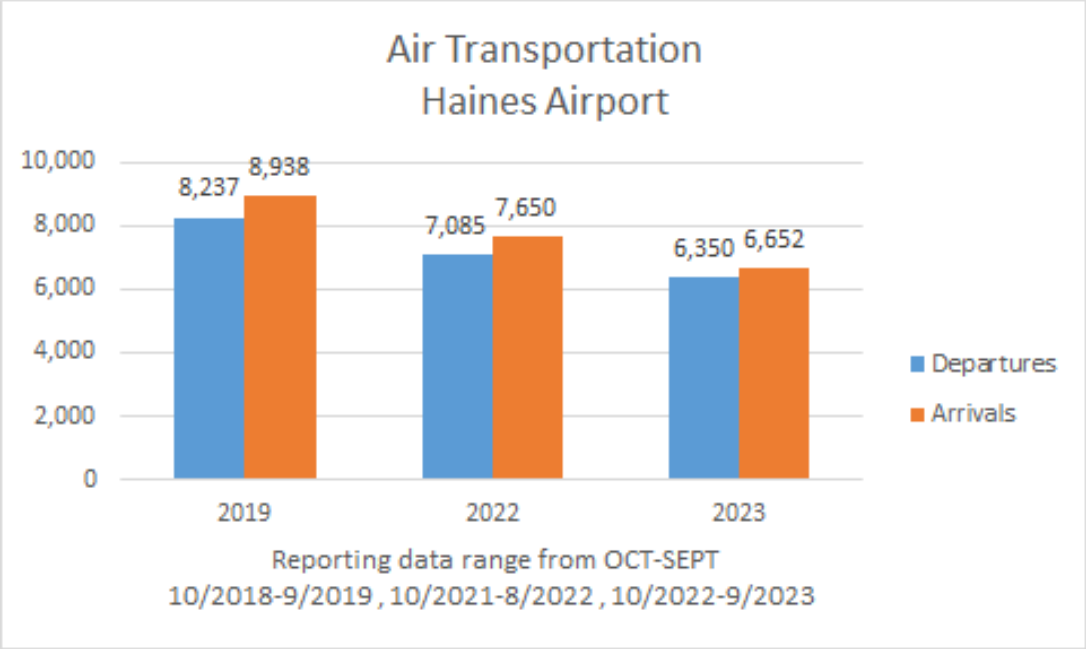
6,652
Arrivals 2023

-11.6%

Arrivals
2022-2023

In 2023, Haines Airport documented 6,350 departing passengers and 6,652 arrivals, showing a decrease from the 7,085 departures and 7,650 arrivals recorded in 2022. Pre-pandemic numbers were notably higher, with 8,237 departures and 8,938 arrivals, indicating a substantial disparity.

The data, sourced from the US Department of Transportation for the periods 10/2018-9/2019, 10/2021-9/2022, and 10/2022-9/2023, illustrates a decrease of approximately 11.6% in arrivals from 2022 to 2023. This decline underscores a slower recovery in the air transportation sector compared to other modes, perhaps influenced by various contributing factors. Despite improvements from the previous year, the arrival numbers in 2023 continue to reflect a substantial gap from pre-COVID levels, indicating the ongoing challenges and the need for further recovery in air travel.



VISITOR CENTER

CONSUMER DATA

963 TOTAL Visitor Guide Requests

3,647 TOTAL Walk-In Visitors

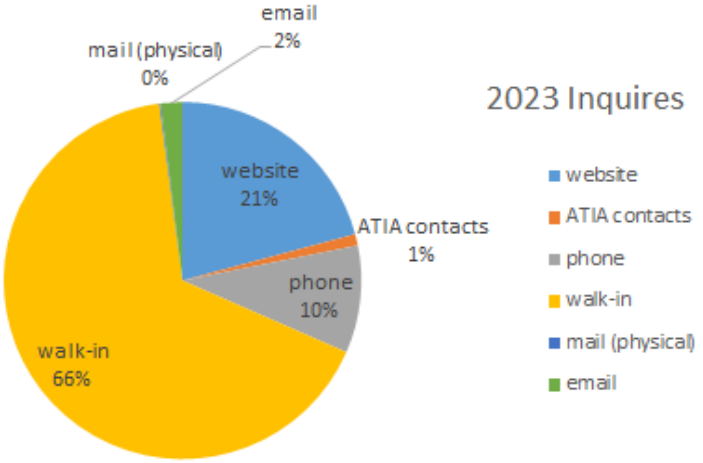
In 2023, the Visitor Center experienced a notable increase in visitor engagement. A total of 963 visitor guides were requested and mailed out, compared to 771 requests in 2022, signifying a significant uptick.

In terms of inquiries, 2023 saw a total of 5,498, with 1,144 stemming from the website and 3,647 from walk-ins. Comparatively, 2022 had 4,858 inquiries, comprising 895 from the website and 3,335 walk-ins. Notably, this showcases a rise not just in the overall numbers but also in website inquiries and walk-in interactions.

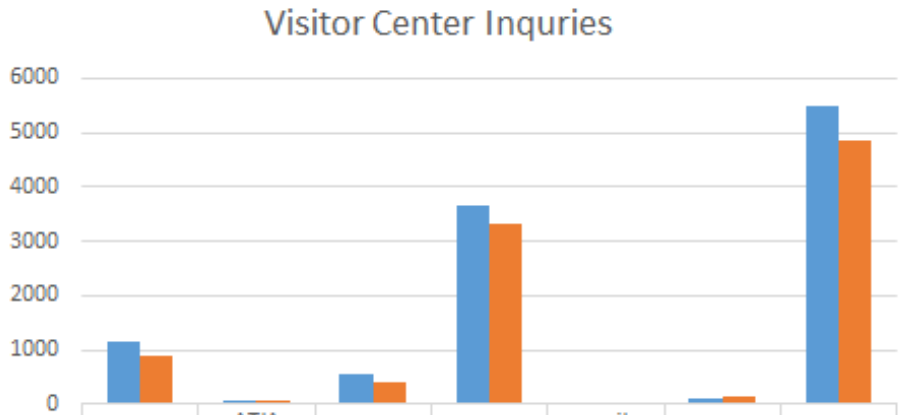
To quantify the increase:

- Visitor guide requests: 24.87% increase from 2022 to 2023 (963 in 2023 compared to 771 in 2022).
- Total inquiries: 13.20% increase from 2022 to 2023 (5,498 in 2023 compared to 4,858 in 2022).

These percentages underscore a substantial rise in visitor engagement and interest in 2023 compared to the preceding year, reflecting a growing enthusiasm for the Visitor Center's services and resources.



	total
2022	771
2023	963



	website	ATIA contacts	phone	walk-in	mail (physical)	email	total
2023	1144	57	535	3647	7	108	5498
2022	895	76	412	3335	4	136	4858

VISITOR CENTER

SOCIAL MEDIA INSIGHTS

REACH

FACEBOOK 1.1M
INSTAGRAM 307.9K

CLICKS

FACEBOOK 8.6K
INSTAGRAM 1.2K

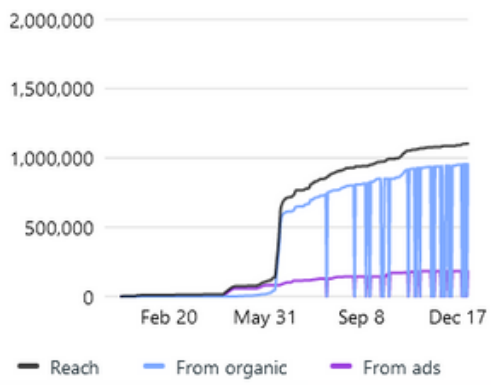
FACEBOOK PERFORMANCE & AUDIENCE

Reach
1.1M ↑ 197.7%

Content interactions
58.8K ↑ 653.3%

Followers
Lifetime
5.9K

Facebook followers
5,882



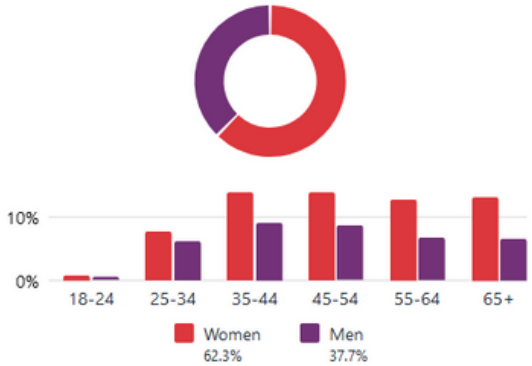
Reach breakdown

Total
1,102,989 ↑ 197.7%

From organic
955,081 ↑ 100%

From ads
181,132 ↓ 47.5%

Age & gender



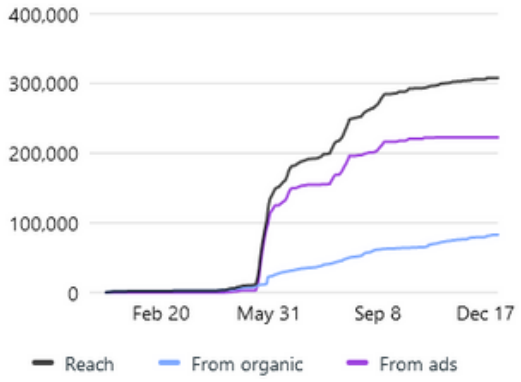
INSTAGRAM PERFORMANCE & AUDIENCE

Reach
308.1K ↑ 2.0K%

Content interactions
30.7K ↑ 100%

Followers
Lifetime
5.1K

Instagram followers
5,062



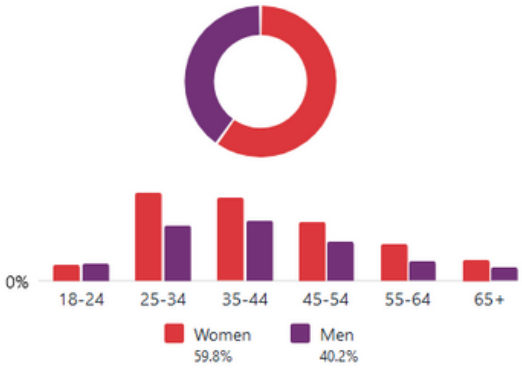
Reach breakdown

Total
308,072 ↑ 2.0K%

From organic
83,005 ↑ 13.4K%

From ads
222,691 ↑ 100%

Age & gender



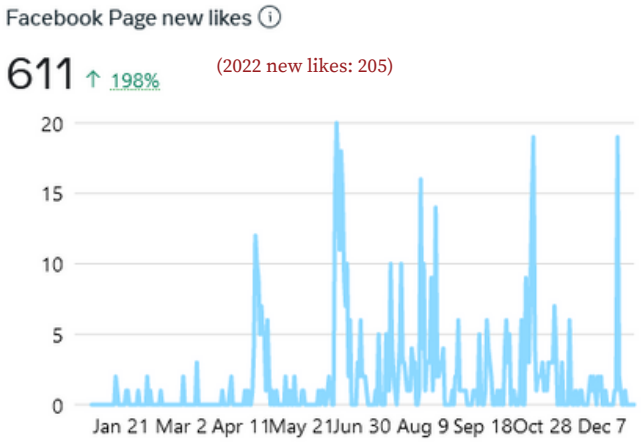
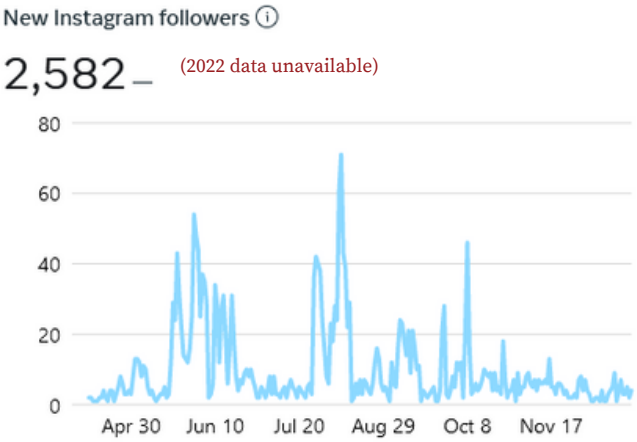
VISITOR CENTER

SOCIAL MEDIA INSIGHTS

The social media landscape for Haines in 2023 showcases a robust and dynamic digital presence. With a Facebook reach of 1.1 million and an Instagram reach of 307.9 thousand, the platforms served as powerful vehicles for engagement. The engagement metrics reinforce this, with 8.6k clicks on Facebook and 1.2k clicks on Instagram, demonstrating an active audience interacting with the content.

Facebook and Instagram boasted substantial follower counts, with 5.9k and 5.1k followers, respectively. Notably, Instagram exhibited the most pronounced growth, indicating a shifting preference among users. Furthermore, there's been a significant surge in page and profile visits. Facebook page visits skyrocketed by an impressive 350.7% from 2022, while Instagram profile visits surged by 271% in comparison.

The social media strategy emphasizing consistent, appealing content is evident in the staggering organic reach figures. Instagram's organic reach soared by an astounding 2,000% (13.4K% from organic reach), while Facebook witnessed a substantial 197.7% increase in reach compared to the previous year. These metrics echo the focused efforts beginning around May 2023, showcasing an evident correlation between content consistency and increased engagement, as illustrated by the graphs.

2023 PAGE AND PROFILE VISITS

2023 NEW LIKES AND FOLLOWERS