







# THE PULSE

Powered By  EventConnect™

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## TURNING UP THE HEAT

According to the EventConnect™ heat map (populated by those events utilizing the software), each of the four regions of the United States increased their overall number of events (year-to-date data) since [the last edition of the Pulse](#). States in the South have hosted 37.4% of events nationwide while the Midwest attracted an additional 31.2% over the past year. The map is getting darker, which is an exciting development for the sports events and tourism industry!



**Insight:** Since February 2021, states have hosted over 3,900 events for an average of 80.2 per state. 14 states are in triple digits and 37 states (75.5%) enjoyed an increase over the last three months (the remaining 12 stayed exactly the same). Although the overall gains are not dramatic, it is encouraging to note the fact that event numbers have rebounded from the pandemic and are steadily rising each month.



Photo by Richard R. Schunemann on Unsplash



STRI is a Sports ETA property



# WANT TO GET AWAY?

The November pulse highlighted the strong first quarter of 2021 that helped offset lower travel numbers as the year went on. The Pulse reveals a similar situation in 2022 as February data showed 68% of event registrants were traveling more than 100 miles. After a consistent string of months in the 40-50% range, 2022 is heading in the right direction.

**Insight:** Although time will reveal if registrant travel remains high, industry leaders can take comfort in knowing that COVID-19 restrictions (and traveler hesitancy) have decreased significantly over the last several months. New variants may arise, but vaccination rates and other precautions have allowed most states to stay open for business while prioritizing participant and spectator health.



## Vacations > Vacancies

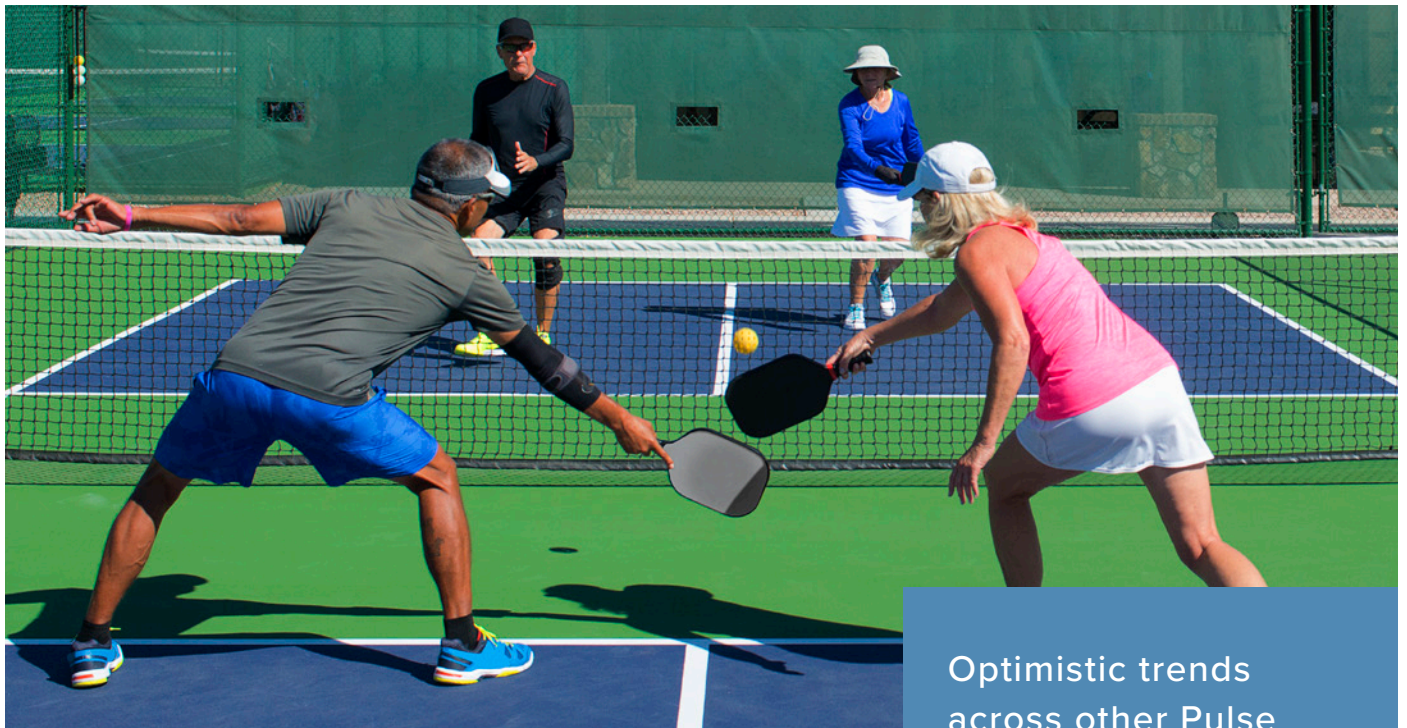
The positive trends related to hotel reservations and average length of stay seen at the end of 2021 have continued into the new year. Team reservations have stopped fluctuating and remain steady in the 9-10% range, while the average length of hotel stay topped three days in back-to-back months. Since 2020, the average length of stay has jumped 27.8% to its current level of 3.22 in 2022.

**Insight:** Hotel usage continues to be an industry strength post-pandemic. As more tournaments and other events return to their normal levels, increased registrant travel (mentioned above) will drive the number of overnight stays to new heights in 2022.



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## ADR is Holding Steady

The Average Daily Rate (ADR) finished 2021 down slightly (6.34%) from 2020. When the November Pulse was published, ADR was sitting at \$133.34, but that number has risen 4.1% to \$138.78 in February. After a tough (and often unpredictable) 2021, good things are on the horizon.

**Insight:** Optimistic trends across other Pulse metrics (hosted events, travel, length of stay, etc.) should lead to an ADR increase. However, it may take longer than expected for numbers to reach pre-pandemic levels. Industry leaders should be encouraged by the fact that the January-February average for 2022 is \$142.24, approximately \$20.00 higher than a year ago.

## Let the Gains Begin

After a volatile 2021 year that saw event hotel reservation lead time decrease by 7.1% and event registration lead time fall by over 13%, these two metrics have made quick turnarounds. As of February, the 2022 average hotel reservation lead time was 86.4 days, almost a week longer than the numbers seen in early 2021. While event registration lead times aren't as strong as the peak months of 2021, February 2022 (75.7 days) lead time was 50% higher than the industry had seen in February 2021 (51 days).

**Insight:** As lead times increase, industry partners will gain a clearer long-term picture of the tourism landscape. This will allow for more proactive planning initiatives and help fill gaps in event portfolios. Although EventConnect™ data collected by Sports ETA only represents a sample of the events taking place across the country, it does provide a reputable snapshot that extends to the rest of the market.

# ACTIONABLE TAKEAWAYS

- 1. Get ready for some friendly competition.** It is no secret that more states are loosening COVID-related restrictions, leagues are fully operational, facilities are opening, and travelers are ready to travel further/stay longer. As a result, states that have “enjoyed” less restrictive environments over the past year will now see competition from neighboring states or other regional competitors for event-related business. Do your best to provide the best experience possible so that you can retain any new (and possibly unexpected) 2021 business and recruit more visitors in 2022. The map is getting darker, but make sure your organization’s future stays bright!



- 2. Start strong so you can finish strong.** The data clearly shows that the first two months of 2022 have been extremely positive for the sports events and tourism industry. Take advantage of the fact that travel is booming, ADR numbers are creeping up, and lead times are increasing. The spring season will be a boom of activity and your organization should be preparing accordingly. Ride the wave, don’t get pummeled by it!

- 3. Remain outside the box.** While the last two years have been undoubtedly challenging, the pandemic allowed industry leaders to explore many new types of events, revenue streams, target markets, etc. Use this newfound information to your advantage instead of simply returning to the pre-2019 “status quo.” Annual events are great and traditional activities will always be a cornerstone of your organization, but don’t be afraid to diversify your portfolio in a way that will set you up for long-term sustainability!

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