



ANNUAL REPORT 2023

MUSKOGEE TOURISM AUTHORITY

Table of Contents

2	About
3	Executive Summary
4	Roxy Theater
6	Visit Muskogee
9	Marketing & Promotion
13	Budget
14	Grant Support
15	2023 Highlights
17	2024 & Beyond



“

Muskogee is lucky to have the Tourism Authority, to be a certified film friendly community and have received the state's RedBud award for tourism.”

- Oklahoma Labor Commissioner Leslie Osborn

MUSKOGEE TOURISM AUTHORITY

The Muskogee Tourism Authority (MTA) is a public trust of the City of Muskogee. The MTA oversees the Roxy Theater and the Visit Muskogee Tourism Program. Oxford Productions, Inc. professionally manages the Roxy Theater and Visit Muskogee.

“To undertake or support, either through financial or other means, activities within the community of Muskogee, OK, which enhance, support and foster tourism.”

- Muskogee Tourism Authority Trust Indenture



Tammye Howell
*Executive Director
of Tourism*



Demi Gilliam Smith
*Deputy Director
of Tourism*



Melissa Lee
*Tourism Office
Manager*



Oscar Ray
*Roxy Theater
General Manager*



Toni Cotton*
*Roxy Theater
Fiscal Manager*

Jacqueline Bennett*
Roxy Theater Food & Beverage

Sharon Radeker*
Roxy Theater Food & Beverage

Patrick Kays**
Roxy Theater VISTA

**part time, **grant-funded position*

Board of Trustees

Daniel Chepkaukas, *Chair*
Evelyn Hibbs, *Vice-Chair*
Tracy Cole, *Secretary/Treasurer*
Councilor Patrick Cale
Michael Gragg
Mark Patel
Councilor Traci McGee
Aanje Wilkerson
Tim Wheeler

Tourism Advisory Committee

Sarah Gile, *Chair - Castle of Muskogee Seat*
Dylan Lucht, *Vice Chair - Main Street Muskogee Seat*
Darren Armstrong - *At-Large Seat*
Heather Cain - *Muskogee Hotel Lodging Association Seat*
Dr. Ron Ramming - *At-Large Seat*
Sharon Ray - *Museums Seat*

Executive Summary

To Mayor, City Council, MTA Board, MTA Advisory Committee and Community Members:



As we reflect on the past year, I am filled with gratitude for the unwavering support and enthusiasm of our community for tourism. Muskogee's rich culture and warm hospitality make it a destination of choice, and I want to express my sincere appreciation to everyone involved. Tourism isn't just about attracting visitors; it's about fostering economic growth and preserving our unique heritage. Through the collaborative efforts of our community, we've not only welcomed guests but also contributed significantly to the city's economic prosperity. As we move forward, let's continue to celebrate our cultural treasures, create memorable experiences and showcase Muskogee as a must-visit destination.

Together, we are shaping a vibrant future for Muskogee.

TOURISM INDUSTRY OVERVIEW

Muskogee's tourism industry has experienced notable growth, with a steady increase in visitors over recent years. In 2023, the city welcomed more than 500,000 tourists, contributing significantly to the local economy. Key attractions, such as the Castle of Muskogee, Honor Heights Park, Roxy Theater and Five Civilized Tribes Museum, continue to draw visitors seeking cultural enrichment. Strategic tourism events, including NJCAA and B.A.S.S. Nation tournaments, the renowned Azalea Festival, Oklahoma Renaissance Festival and Jeep Jam, among many others, have played a pivotal role in driving tourism. Hotel occupancy rates have consistently remained above the national average, reflecting Muskogee's appeal as a destination. Notably, Muskogee proudly boasts more hotels than the average community of similar size, enhancing our hospitality offerings.

Our lodging partners support tourism tremendously and have played a critical role in helping secure some of the city's largest events. The integral role of restaurants and dining experiences in complementing Muskogee's tourism appeal also cannot be understated, as they serve as pivotal components in enhancing visitors' experiences and contributing to the overall allure of our city. Additionally, the community's commitment to preserving its cultural heritage has been a driving force, attracting those interested in the rich history of the Five Civilized Tribes, Jefferson Highway and more. As Muskogee continues to invest in infrastructure and enhance its tourism offerings, the outlook remains promising for sustained growth and an enduring positive impact on the local economy.

CONTRIBUTION TO THE LOCAL ECONOMY

Tourism in Muskogee has emerged as a potent economic engine, catalyzing job creation and revenue generation. In 2023, the industry directly supported more than 2,500 jobs, spanning hospitality, entertainment and service sectors. This employment surge not only provides livelihoods but also fosters a dynamic and diverse local workforce. Moreover, tourism contributed substantially to the city's revenue stream, injecting millions of dollars into the economy. Revenue generated from accommodations, dining and attractions has a ripple effect, benefitting local businesses and services. This financial influx enhances municipal infrastructure and public services, creating a symbiotic relationship between tourism and community development.

In 2023, there was a small decrease in hotel/motel tax collected throughout the year. It wasn't until later in the year when the city increased auditing efforts that a significant uptick in hotel/motel tax collections was recorded. This bodes well for tourism heading into 2024. As Muskogee continues to position itself as a premier destination, the positive economic impact of tourism remains a cornerstone, elevating the city's prosperity and quality of life for residents.

With gratitude,

Tammye Howell

Executive Director of Tourism



Roxy Theater

Operated by the Muskogee Tourism Authority

HISTORY

Muskogee's Roxy Theater is the ONLY Roxy left in OK and one of fewer than fifty surviving Roxy Theaters nationwide. It has become a destination for tourists, movie historians and photographers seeking an eclectic location.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS: 2023

- ▶ Selected for \$25,000 Cherokee Nation grant by Cherokee Chief Chuck Hoskin, Jr.
- ▶ Hosted Cuba Gooding, Jr. for a special reunion showing of "The Tuskegee Airmen"
- ▶ Hosted the Roxy Theater's 2023 Oklahoma Movie Hall of Fame Induction, welcoming Cleavon Little, Ryan Merriman and George 'Fritz' Kiersch; and also recognizing the films "Sherwood Forest: Top Secret" and "The Cherokee Word for Water"
- ▶ Hosted regular movie premiers, including "Brinlee" and "From Wounded Knee to Standing Rock: A Reporter's Journey"
- ▶ Hosted regular open-mic events, including comedy, poetry and the Songwriter's Song Swap
- ▶ Hosted the annual Bare Bones International Film Festival
- ▶ Hosted two weeks of Camp Roxy, providing scholarships thanks to a grant from the Muskogee Area Arts Council

Roxy Theater

Operated by the Muskogee Tourism Authority

- ▶ Hosted sold-out audiences for the Billy Lee Martin - Comedy Stampede Tour
- ▶ Hosted traveling performance of Loretta Lynn's granddaughter, Tayla Lynn, and Conway Twitty's grandson, Tre Twitty
- ▶ Hosted full crowds for the annual interactive Rocky Horror Picture Show
- ▶ Hosted Polar Express Pajama Party in partnership with Three Rivers Museum
- ▶ Numerous rentals, birthday parties, field trips, business events, etc.
- ▶ Welcomed new grant-funded AmeriCorps VISTA position
- ▶ Collaborated with the City of Muskogee on necessary facility improvements
- ▶ Overall increase in grants and sponsorships from previous year





Visit Muskogee offers a range of services and functions aimed at promoting and supporting tourism in Muskogee.

Marketing & Promotion

Visit Muskogee actively markets and promotes the city to attract tourists. This includes advertising campaigns, social media marketing, website management, and producing promotional materials like brochures, videos and travel guides.

Visitor Information Center

Visit Muskogee operates a visitor information center as well as booths at various events throughout the year, offering tourists information about attractions, accommodations, events, transportation and other local services. Staff provides maps, brochures and personalized recommendations.

Event Planning & Support

Visit Muskogee assists in organizing and promoting events, festivals, conferences and conventions. Staff works with local businesses, event planners, law enforcement and other stakeholders to attract and facilitate these events, which can boost tourism and the local economy.

Partnerships & Collaboration

Visit Muskogee collaborates with local businesses, hotels, restaurants, attractions and transportation services to create package deals, special offers and tourism-related initiatives that benefit both visitors and local stakeholders.

Market Research & Data Analysis

Visit Muskogee conducts market research, collects data and analyzes tourism trends to understand visitor preferences, behaviors and spending patterns. This information helps in developing effective marketing strategies and identifying growth opportunities.

Support for Visitor Services

Visit Muskogee provides support for visitor services such as transportation options, visitor safety, accessibility and sustainability initiatives to enhance the overall visitor experience.

Destination Development

Visit Muskogee contributes to destination development by identifying potential tourism opportunities, preserving cultural heritage, improving infrastructure and advocating for policies that support sustainable tourism growth.

Advocacy & Representation

Visit Muskogee advocates on behalf of the tourism industry, representing the interests of local businesses and stakeholders to government bodies and policymakers.

Tourism Education & Training

Visit Muskogee offers educational programs, training and resources to local businesses and tourism professionals to enhance their understanding of the industry and improve service quality.

Film Recruitment & Assistance

Visit Muskogee holds Film Friendly certification from the State Film + Music Office and actively works to recruit film professionals and productions to the city. Staff also assists and facilitates these media projects with permitting and coordination, location scouting, support services and more.



A NEW LOGO: THE NEXT CHAPTER IN TOURISM

Visit Muskogee launched a new logo that embodies the warmth, authenticity and dynamic spirit of the city. The logo represents the next chapter in Muskogee's tourism journey, showcasing its unique history, local culture and inviting charm, making it a must-visit destination.

The logo was designed by Civitas, a marketing and communications agency that specializes in working with governments, companies, economic development organizations, causes and coalitions. Guided by their expertise, the logo combines modern aesthetics with a deep appreciation for Muskogee's heritage. It was carefully designed to reflect the following key brand values:

- ▶ **Inviting:** Muskogee is a warm and welcoming destination, inviting travelers with open arms. The logo's design embraces visitors and makes them feel at home from the moment they arrive.
- ▶ **Authentic:** Celebrating Muskogee's unique history and local culture authentically, the logo is a true representation of the region's rich heritage.
- ▶ **Dynamic:** Muskogee is an ever-evolving destination with a dynamic blend of old-world charm and modern appeal. The logo captures this perfect blend, making it clear that Muskogee is a place where history meets innovation.

At the heart of the logo is a captivating and contemporary icon, built from a geometric pattern. This pattern is not just visually stunning but also pays homage to Muskogee's deep-rooted history and culture. The geometric design symbolizes precision, order and progress, showcasing a destination that is on the rise. Embedded within this intricate geometric pattern is a subtle yet clever representation of Visit Muskogee's monogram, "VM."

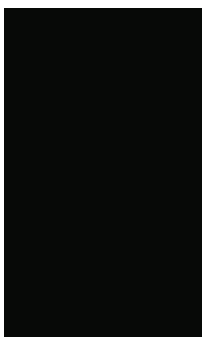
The chosen color palette for the logo is a testament to Muskogee's natural beauty. These colors mirror the region's breathtaking landscapes, from its serene waters to the lush hues of Oklahoma's Green Country. The unforgettable sunsets that grace Muskogee are also reflected in the logo's warm and inviting color scheme, creating a visual connection between the destination and its visitors.

A NEW LOGO: THE NEXT CHAPTER IN TOURISM

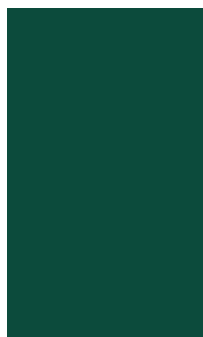
LOGOS



COLOR PALETTE



BLACK



GREEN



BLUE



YELLOW



RED ORANGE

Marketing & Promotion

MARKETING CAMPAIGN

Visit Muskogee strategically tailors its robust marketing initiatives to cater to diverse travel seasons. With a focus on capturing the essence of Muskogee's attractions, our campaigns shift their emphasis throughout the year. In spring, our promotions center around the renowned Azalea Festival, highlighting the city's cultural allure. As summer arrives, the spotlight shifts to outdoor adventures with our trail and ride guides, enticing nature enthusiasts and adventurers. Additionally, during the winter season, our Christmas campaign evokes the magical spirit of the holidays in Muskogee. Targeted specifically at audiences beyond Muskogee, our marketing aims to entice travelers from varied backgrounds, travel influencers, group travel experts, as well as professionals in the travel and event planning industry. By showcasing Muskogee as an enticing destination, these initiatives seek to capture the attention of individuals who may not be familiar with the city, inviting them to explore its unique offerings and experiences. Please note that due to our primary focus on attracting visitors from outside Muskogee, local residents may not always witness these promotional efforts.

TACTICS

Activities Guides & Ride Guides

More than 5,000 Activities Guides are distributed annually at 24/7, self-serve locations in Muskogee (8 sites) as well as throughout the region in hotels, gas stations and other tourist hot-spots (171 sites) thanks to a cooperative agreement with Certified Folder. Visit Muskogee guides are also available statewide at various events and mailed directly to potential visitors sent to Visit Muskogee by the State Tourism & Recreation Department. Visit Muskogee also widely distributes a Ride Guide for motorcycle enthusiasts.



Local Activities Guides Locations:

- ▶ Civic Center
- ▶ Oklahoma Music Hall of Fame
- ▶ Three Rivers Museum
- ▶ River Country Water Park
- ▶ Honor Heights Park @ The Papillion
- ▶ Castle of Muskogee
- ▶ Muskogee War Memorial Park: USS Batfish
- ▶ Muskogee Public Library



Kiosks

Visit Muskogee has installed interactive, touch screen kiosks at various locations throughout Muskogee to help residents and visitors explore the city.

Kiosk Locations:

- ▶ Downtown Visitor Center
- ▶ Port of Muskogee
- ▶ Muskogee Little Theatre
- ▶ Five Civilized Tribes Museum
- ▶ Castle of Muskogee
- ▶ Muskogee-Davis Airport

Marketing & Promotion



Visitor Cards

Approximately 10,000 visitor cards were distributed throughout the city this year, encouraging people to plan their visit by scanning a QR code and downloading the Visit Muskogee app.

Visitor Card Locations:

- ▶ Oklahoma Music Hall of Fame
- ▶ Muskogee Public Library
- ▶ Muskogee Civic Center
- ▶ Muskogee Little Theater
- ▶ Mattie Jane's on Main
- ▶ Queen City + Co.
- ▶ Maine's/Max's Garage
- ▶ Muskogee Davis Regional Airport
- ▶ Three Rivers Museum
- ▶ Five Civilized Tribes Museum
- ▶ Port of Muskogee
- ▶ Castle of Muskogee
- ▶ Honor Heights Park @ The Papillion
- ▶ Starbucks
- ▶ McDonalds (BA Turnpike)
- ▶ River Country Waterpark
- ▶ RibCrib BBQ
- ▶ Chili's Bar & Grill
- ▶ Tropical Smoothie
- ▶ Fairfield Inn & Suites by Marriott
- ▶ Holiday Inn Express & Suites
- ▶ Home2Suites by Hilton
- ▶ La Quinta Inn & Suites
- ▶ Comfort Inn & Suites



Flowcode QR Codes
Where & Number Scanned

1. Hotel Cards	670
2. Download Our App	147
3. 2022 Activities Guide	89
4. Okie Raceway	53
5. Guide to Green Country	75

Visit Muskogee App

The app serves as a personalizable and mobile guide to Muskogee containing lists of lodgings, dining, shopping and leisure activities that allow users to plan the perfect trip.

7,781	11,971	38sec.	137	7,917	75
Total Users	Page Views	Avg. Session Duration	IOS Downloads	Total Sessions	Android Downloads



Marketing & Promotion

monthly MUSKOGEE

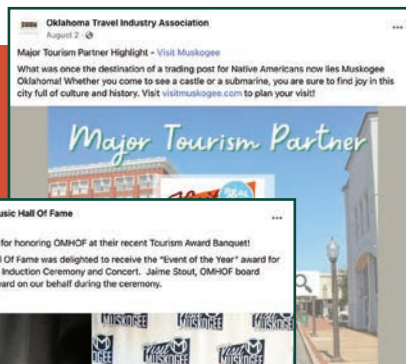
Visit Muskogee collects email addresses from a variety of campaigns and events, and sends a monthly newsletter showcasing the latest and greatest events for visitors to check out.

Enewsletter *(Increase/decrease based on previous year)*

Click-to-Open Rate	4.30%	↑ 1.61%
Click Rate	1.36%	↑ .50%
Contacts	4,667	
Campaigns Sent	60	↑ 66.67%
Emails Sent	50,456	↑ 41.91%
Delivery Rate	99.35%	↑ 1.19%
Unsubscribe Rate	.34%	↓ .14%
Bounce Rate	.65%	↓ 1.19%
Open Rate	31.76%	↓ .30%

Social Media *(Increase/decrease based on previous year)*

Reach	111,680	↑ 19%
Followers	33,888	
Page Likes	32,919	
Visits	11,273	↑ 121.7%
New Page Likes	538	↑ 31.5%
Median Post Engagement	18	↑ 157%
Messaging Conversations	71	↑ 1,300%
New Contacts	59	↑ 637.5%



Instagram @visitmuskogee | Twitter/X @visitmuskogee23 | Threads @visitmuskogee | YouTube @visitmuskogee



Downtown Visitor Center

Now in its second year, the Downtown Visitor Center serves as a gateway for visitors, offering a tangible space where guests can gather information, maps and personalized recommendations. In an era dominated by digital communication, a physical center fosters a sense of authenticity and trust among tourists seeking memorable encounters and genuine insights into Muskogee's offerings.

Visitor Packets

Visit Muskogee distributed more than 500 visitor packets to support events, conferences, etc.

Marketing & Promotion

Earned Media

Articles in the Muskogee Phoenix, regularly appearing on local radio 101.7 Okie Country. TV stories covering NJCAA and B.A.S.S. Nation Tournament on Channels 2 and 6.



ATTRACTING TOURISM: Muskogee offers much for holiday travelers



Advertising



Christmas Guide

In partnership with the Muskogee Phoenix, Visit Muskogee developed and distributed 12,000 Magical Muskogee Christmas Guides that highlight the city's holiday events, attractions, restaurants and shopping experiences. Located in rack stations around town, the guide will also be handed out to visitors driving through the Castle of Muskogee holiday display.



Green Country Tourism

Visit Muskogee has partnered with Green Country Tourism, the destination marketing organization for the 18-county region of northeast Oklahoma. This new partnership includes a cooperative program that supports local businesses by giving them opportunities for free or highly-discounted rates on advertising.



Jefferson Highway

As a member of the Jefferson Highway Association, Visit Muskogee is an active participant in promoting and preserving this historic highway. This year, Visit Muskogee paid for the Historic Signage Program along the highway that will have information for visitors and QR codes to learn more.



Film Friendly

After achieving Film Friendly certification last year by the State Film + Music Office, Visit Muskogee is building on its efforts to attract the film industry to the city. Initiatives include engaging with state and tribal film offices to get more productions in Muskogee, as well as building a new website, filmfriendlymuskogee.com, with resources and information to assist film professionals with doing business in Muskogee.



**Muskogee Tourism Authority
Revenue
July 2022 - June 2023**

Roxy Revenue	189,720.93
Visit Muskogee Revenue	
Hotel/Motel Tax	516,500.00
Other Support	79,322.98
Total Operating Revenue:	\$785,543.91

**Muskogee Tourism Authority
Expenses
July 2022 - June 2023**

Roxy Expenses	217,888.63*
Visit Muskogee Expenses	653,908.48*
Total Operating Expenses:	\$859,242.13

**Carry-over funds utilized*

**Taxes
July 2022 - June 2023**

Sales Tax Collected	\$30,459,171.86
Total Lodging Tax Collected	\$938,587.18
Lodging Tax Allocated to MTA	\$516,500.00

The Muskogee Tourism Authority's financial statements are independently audited every fiscal year by Morse & Co., PLLC.

Grant Support

Visit Muskogee is proud to provide funding to events that support Muskogee's tourism and economy. An online grant portal was launched to further facilitate the program.

GRANTEES

B.A.S.S. Nation Series
Okie Bedouin Creole Festival
Castle of Muskogee: Christmas
Cruis'n Angels Car Show
Exchange Club: Chili Cook Off
Exchange Club: Jeep Jam
Hilldale Robotics State Event
Jefferson Highway: Signage Project
MHS All Class Reunion
Muskogee Chamber of Commerce
Muskogee Civic Center: Broadway's Next Hit Musical
Muskogee Civic Center: Lucha Libre
Muskogee Civic Center: The Magic Show of Michael Grandinetti
Muskogee Civic Center: River City Fights 4
Muskogee Golf Club: APT Golf Tournament
Muskogee Little Theatre: Peter Pan
Muskogee Parks: Depot Green Movie Nights
Muskogee Parks: Localmotion - Fall Festival of Arts
Muskogee Parks: Oklahoma Festival of Ballooning
Muskogee Regional Jr. Livestock Show
Muskogee Senior Games
Neighbors Building Neighborhoods: MONAA
NJCAA Basketball Tournament
Oklahoma Music Hall of Fame: Induction Sponsorship
Oklahoma Music Hall of Fame: Thursday Night Live Sponsorship
Okie Raceway Park
Oklahoma Senior Games
Port Muskogee: Three Forks Harbor Signage Project
Roxy Theater: Oklahoma Movie Hall of Fame
Three Rivers Museum: Bass Reeves



63%
of appropriation was committed
to advertising and grants



2023 Highlights

This year Visit Muskogee hosted its first ever Tourism Awards in which they honored individuals, businesses and organizations in Muskogee who have made great contributions to the local tourism industry.



Home2Suites earned the Hospitality Award that recognized outstanding commitment to providing exceptional hospitality and creating memorable experiences for visitors.



Jonathan Rowe earned Best Individual Contributor/Volunteer of the Year Award for his remarkable dedication and selfless efforts in volunteering, contributing significantly to the success of Muskogee's tourism initiatives.



The Event of the Year went to the Oklahoma Music Hall of Fame Induction, celebrated for its exceptional execution and impact on the local community, showcasing the rich musical heritage of Muskogee.



Destination of the Year went to the Castle of Muskogee as a premier destination that consistently offers outstanding experiences to visitors and locals alike.



Cherokee Nation, Bravado Wireless and Arvest Bank were recognized as Event Sponsors/Supporters of the Year for their unwavering support and partnership in making tourism events and initiatives a resounding success.



Collaboration of the Year went to Muskogee Public Schools for their outstanding collaboration with Visit Muskogee in promoting educational and engaging experiences for visitors.

2023 Highlights

VISIT MUSKOGEE: 2023



- ▶ Launched Film Muskogee website



- ▶ Nominated and secured 5 Civilized Tribes Museum to True West Magazine as a Top 10 Western Museum



- ▶ Successfully recruited and executed first year of NJCAA Region II State Wide Basketball tournament (Secured 5 year contract)



- ▶ Successfully hosted Grand Gathering by the Widows Sons motorcycle conference (over 1,000 bikers from across the globe)

2023 Highlights

- ▶ **Successfully recruited and Executed B.A.S.S. Nation Central Regional**
(over 75 anglers from around the region stayed and competed in Muskogee for a week)
- ▶ **Tammye Howell, Executive Director of Tourism, invited to serve on Green Country Tourism Board**
- ▶ **Received Red Bud Merit Award for Best Brochure or Publication, \$10,000 or Less, from the Oklahoma Travel Industry Association**
- ▶ **Hosted tourism partnership meeting every quarter**
(Invited attractions, hoteliers, restaurants, and other community leaders to collaborate on tourism projects and events)
- ▶ **Strengthened ties with Native American partners, including the Cherokee Nation to promote the B.A.S.S. Nation Series Central Regional and the Muscogee Nation to promote the NJCAA Region II Basketball Tournament**



2024 & Beyond

LOOKING AHEAD: 2024

- ▶ **Tulsa Boat, Sport & Travel Show**
(January 29-February 4)
- ▶ **NJCAA Region II Basketball Tournament**
(March 13-16)
- ▶ **TORA! TORA! TORA! Air Show Practice**
(March 14-17)
- ▶ **TNT Fireworks B.A.S.S. NATION Series Central Qualifier**
(April 3-5)
- ▶ **Regional Family Motor Coach Association (FMCA) Convention at Hatbox Field/Event Center**
(May 17-20)
- ▶ **Jefferson Highway Convoy**
(October 16-17)
- ▶ **Visit Muskogee is actively working with local stakeholders to bring back the Muskogee County Fair!**



MOVING MUSKOGEE FORWARD THROUGH TOURISM DEVELOPMENT



Roxy Theater

220 W. Okmulgee Ave. Muskogee, OK 74401
918-684-6366

RoxyMuskogee.org



Visit Muskogee

216 W. Okmulgee Ave. Muskogee, OK 74401
918-684-6202

VisitMuskogee.org

Muskogee Tourism Authority | Managed by Oxford Productions, Inc.