

VISIT
BEAUFORT
PORT ROYAL  SEA ISLANDS

August 20, 2020

To: Board of Directors - Greater Beaufort-Port Royal CVB

From: Robb Wells, President & CEO

Subject: President's Report of July 2020 Activities

The start of a new fiscal year provides a “Clean Slate” for our charge towards recovery. By some estimates, a full recovery in the tourism industry may be in full swing by 2023. The optimist says 2022. The pessimist was not asked for their opinion. Our industry will look entirely different by then, because it already looks different now. The DMO is as important today as it has ever been. Our role in this economy has to be more centered on how we keep our community moving forward towards recovery and find positions of new successes.

Month at a Glance

- Colonial Athletic Association announced additional year in Beaufort, SC
- "Visit Beaufort" brand was seen 1,761,411 times
- 144 million impressions in publicity netting over \$4 million in publicity value
- Visitor Center was reopened with new hours
- Sales division continues to reach out to planners to discuss 2021 options

Marketing and Public Relations

Touchpoint Communications was brought on board to fill the void with the vacancy in public relations team at Ferebee Lane. The “gap” agreement ended in June and a new contract was extended though June 2021. All advertising placed in July has been executed with the full report included in the board packet.

Website: BeaufortSC.org continues to be placement based. Sessions increased YoY a total of 28.4% while new users increased by 25%. The biggest driving factors to the website is organic searches (increasing 53.5%), followed by paid searches (increasing 185.1%).

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Advertising: During July, our search, social, and video campaigns continued running, targeting our top drive markets: Greenville, Columbia, Charleston, Charolette, and Augusta. Overall, the "Visit Beaufort" brand was seen 1,761,411 times. This drove 11,414 new users to BeaufortSC.org and 1,667 conversions. Of the 1,667 conversions 247 were Booking Engine Search on site.

- Paid Search Placement
 - The campaigns' primary markets which are also our primary brand awareness markets/drive markets are the top performing with highest amount of conversions. Numbers consist of 145,273 impressions with a click-through-rate of 11.5% and a conversion rate of 14.3%.
- Paid Social Placement
 - In paid social, currently the campaign is running story ads, and these are showcased on Facebook and Instagram. This campaign delivered over 2,693 new users to the website with over 15,340 completed video views.
- Video (Youtube & OTT/CTV) Placement
 - On YouTube, we are targeting people with content related to Lowcountry content; beach vacations, outdoor recreation, etc. In total, this campaign produced 404,296 impressions with a completion rate of 48.3%. On average these users completed 5 website conversions.
 - OTT is considered a branding tactic. Organic site growth in target markets is a metric we look at to gauge success for branding tactics. Since the launch of this campaign we have seen organic site traffic growth of an average of 86% YOY with Greenville having the highest growth with 136%.
- In July the TripAdvisor campaign kept running, with 731,302 impressions and receiving a CTR of .23%. Numbers have stayed consistent since November of last year, despite the pause caused by Covid-19.

For more insight, please refer to the July 2020 Paid Media Reports.

General Media Relations: For the month of July 2020, the PR Value finished at \$4,019,312, and the total AD Value finished at \$1,339,771. We placed 20 stories this month with a total of 144,449,669 readers reached.

In the Month of July 5 story pitches were made, publications include; Forbes, Southern Living, Travelocity, The Southern Fork, and Delish, each story placed mentions Beaufort, Port Royal, or the Sea Islands. No Press releases were sent out this month only tailored pitches to the media. We were able to pitch how Beaufort is responding to COVID and

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what we have to offer travelers looking to do outdoor activities and the safety precautions that attractions, restaurants, and offers. July's PR opportunities were also discussed thoroughly through Zoom between Beaufort CVB and Touchpoint. We are continually working with TouchPoint Communications to ensure Travel Writers continue to come to the area during this time of uncertainty through August and September. We participated in the Southern Living Travel Summit call with Beaufort, Edisto Beach, and Mount Pleasant. We also created a PR program Google Form for local businesses to complete regarding PR opportunities and involvement including our PR workshop which is to be executed on September 9th.

Destination Services

| Visitor Center Visitor, Fulfillment & Sales Data | JULY 2020 | JULY 2019 | % Change | TOP 5 States | Top 3 Countries |
|--|-----------|-----------|----------|--------------|-----------------|
| Visitor Center Counts | 1200 | 2,831 | -57.6% | SC | France (4) |
| | | | | GA | Venezuela (2) |
| Visitor Guide Fulfillment (Kennickell) | 100 | 6,028 | -98.3% | NC | |
| Visitor Guide Fulfillment (Local) | 462 | 300 | 54.0% | TN | |
| Welcome Bags | 125 | 406 | | FL | |
| Visitor Center Sales | | | | | |
| Consignment Sales Commissions | \$122.70 | \$184.00 | -33.3% | | |
| Ticket Sales Commissions* | \$138.00 | \$586.00 | -76.5% | | |
| Inventory Sales | \$778.24 | 1,199.67 | -35.1% | | |

Kennickell Fulfillment/Local Fulfillment variances due to CVB handling individual leads in-house to reduce expenses. Bulk distribution still being handled by Kennickell.

The Visitors Center was unable to sell tickets to the following attractions in July 2020: The Verdier House, Santa Elena History Center, Cpt. Dick's Boat Tours, Van Tours

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(Beaufort Tours and Kelly Tours), and limited Carriage tour tickets due to COVID restrictions (reduced seating) and weather/heat restrictions.

Visitor Center counts and sales are down due to COVID-19.

Group Sales

Communications

- 6/14-18/20 - Attended the Travel Alliance Partners (TAP) Virtual Trade Show via ZOOM. Had individual appointments with 28 tour operators over 3 days. Leads were distributed to the local tourism industry - hotels, restaurants, tours, attractions, etc.
- On-going communication this month with these tour companies to gauge market interest and offer itinerary suggestions: All-American Tours (PA), Kelly Tours (SC), One if by Land (NC), US Tours (WV), Willis Tours (GA), Twin Travel Concepts (NY), Shenandoah Tours (VA), Tales of the South (GA), First Choice Tours (MA), Capitol Tours & Coach (SC), Tauck Tours (CT), Trips by Patty (NC), MARS (VA), Worldstrides (VA). **All have laid-off staff; Worldstrides (largest student operator in the world) has filed Chapter 11 and laid-off staff. Those still trying to book business are focusing on 2021 - some spring potential, however primarily fall and holidays.
- I have participated several times this month in webinars with industry peers in research, sales and marketing and clients to network about COVID-19 recovery.
- Ongoing networking with local businesses.

Group Business Potential

- 6/22 - Lina DiCarlo/Twin Travel Concepts - called with an interested in a small "luxury" tour (8-10 ppl) for Spring 2021. Provided itinerary ideas. She specifically requested information for downtown historic Inns. This was a TAP Lead.
- 8/21-23/20 - IFA Redfish Tournament - 80 rooms x 2 nights = 160 room nights at Quality Inn. Also 5 rooms x 3 nights = 15 room nights at BW Sea Island Inn for staff and organizer. Total 175 room nights. CVB is coordinating gift bags and refreshments for participants.
- Shenandoah Tours (ABA/TAP). Booked a small group (18 ppl) for 10/28/21 in Beaufort - 1 night at HGI (9 rooms x 1 night = 18 room nights). Booked Carriage tour for 10/29 morning then free time to shop and lunch before departing for Jekyll Island.
- 6/9/20 - MGA Travel, Myrtle Beach. Assisted in planing a luxury 2-night tour to Beaufort this fall. May do a regular tour here in 2021. Booked at Beaufort Inn.
- 6/8-10/20 - Site visit - Bob Mann Tours, NY. Creating 2021 tour itinerary. Stayed at Best Western and Hampton Inn. Downtown Beaufort and Gullah Tour with Grayline Beaufort.
- Created several sample itineraries and sent RFP to hotels for 3 weekend dates in April 2021 for All-American Tours. They are not sure spring will sell - ay move to fat or 2022.

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- Sent RFP to hotels for Mid-Atlantic Receptive Services' - 2021 Gullah Festival tour program.

Community Affairs

Tourism Product Development: We continue to work with our attractions to develop a better messaging as well as assisting with TripAdvisor content and review.

Stakeholder Engagement: In July, Threshold had n2827 views, 664 engagements with the videos, and 467 completions. Estimated media value is \$5,598.

Research:

Since the beginning of the Pandemic, the CVB has moved towards weekly research. Our goal is to provide our stakeholders with the most up to date information available. The CVB is utilizing the Destination Analysts weekly Wave Report as well as Longwoods International Wave report. In conjunction with the weekly wave reports, other research is being used to supplement and verify the credibility of the research findings.

Strategic Plan and Administrative Activities

Administration: The 2020 CVB Business Plan was put on pause as we entered into Recovery Phase. The staff put all efforts into identifying opportunities and working with stakeholders and adversities partners to maneuver the new waters. AS we enter the fall, we anticipate the business plan as well as strategic direction to change to meet the needs of both the industry and our funding.

Venue Feasibility Study Committee -The draft report is completed and awaits ad-hoc committee presentation which is scheduled for August/September 2020. Catherine Sarrett with Strategic Venue Studies will present the findings.

Destination Net Strategic Studies concluded in March with the report delivered in May of 2020. Chris Cavanaugh will report at the August 2020 Board of Directors meeting.