

BEAUFORT

PORT ROYAL  SEA ISLANDS

July 19, 2018

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

From: Robb Wells

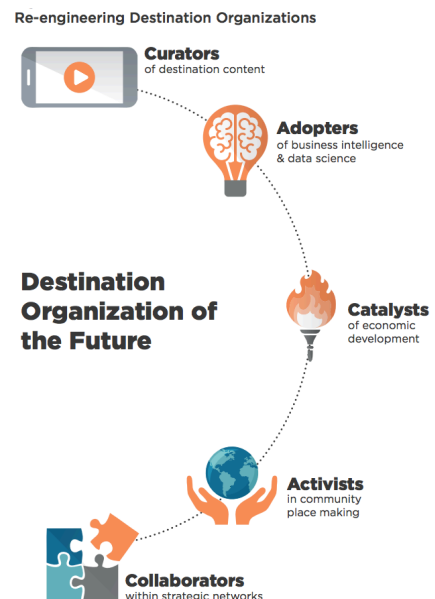
Subject: President's Report of Activities

As we begin our first year as an independent organization, I'd like to say how proud I am of the CVB team. In addition to the regular demands of inspiring visitation to northern Beaufort County, every member of our team has increased their work load to ensure that the transition was a success. I am grateful for their patience, flexibility, and commitment.

We enter a new fiscal year along with a new board, database, customer relationship management system, and a host of other "new" responsibilities. While our team is still in execution mode, we also are learning something new each and everyday about our independent operation.

I look forward to working with each of you as we tackle some new challenges that our destination has not had to endure in quite sometime, if ever. Room supply is growing and will continue to grow over the next 24 months. Growth among short-term rentals in our market area has not gone unnoticed. Data shows that short-term Supply grew 80% with Demand growing 101%. Combine those numbers with the addition of two new hotels and it quickly becomes apparent that we have our work cut out for us over the next few years.

In kicking off this new endeavor, it is my suggestion that we work towards a new strategic plan that focuses on the five critical roles of the re-engineered destination organization of the future: Curators; Adopters; Catalysts; Activists; and Collaborators. It will serve us well to not only align the CVB with industry standards, but reestablish our strategic role within our communities.



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Month at a Glance

- Met with incoming board members who had not previously served on the Tourism Advisory Committee. The meetings were more of an orientation including budget review as well as governance.
- Finalized the 2018-2019 Paid Media Plan with Ferebee Lane. This year's plan will include Billboards, Print (Coastal Living, Southern Living, etc), Digital (largest percent of paid media spend), and TV (Introducing Hulu TV commercials). The InnerCoastal campaign has received rave reviews for its sheer aesthetics as well as its boldness in creative positioning.
- Transition to the new organizational and operational processes, plus accounts and database maintenance is still ongoing with a completion for database work to take place EOM July.

June Metrics: By the Numbers

- Throughout June, total site sessions decreased from May. This decrease can be attributed to less paid media running during June compared to May, as paid search and GroundTruth campaigns ended in May.
- Organic sessions increased 6.4% month over month, this can be attributed to an increase in traffic across Google, Bing and Yahoo search platforms during June.
- While organic goal completions increased month over month, total goal completions slightly decreased from May. This could be due to less paid media running in June compared to May, as only the TripAdvisor digital campaign was running during June.
- The Beaufort Visitors Center welcomed over 3200 visitors this month which is up just slightly over last year.

Marketing and Public Relations

Advertising: The final remnants of the Spring campaign wrapped up in May and June. The CVB team worked with SCPRT and Ferebee Lane for a successful reimbursement submission to the state and city. The final SCPRT grant check came in over budget netting a positive revenue of over \$8,000.

Paid media finished with a CPL of \$2.06 for the full campaign. While we do expect more leads to trickle in over the next few months, we do not anticipate those leads to be very many. Our paid media impression finished the year just 24 million, with a CTR (Click Thru Rate) for the full campaign at 0.35%. Google AdWords proved to be the highest performer with Southern Living Digital performing the worst. Our plan for the upcoming year will reflect the data that we learned through last year's campaign.

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General Media Relations: PR team continues to pitch Beaufort, Port Royal, and the Sea Islands. We attended the South Carolina Parks, Recreation, Tourism (SCPRT) New York City Media Fam in May with over (20) media members in attendance.

End of Year PR value finished at \$1,711,809.00 making it the sixth straight year of over \$1.5 million in earned media. While down from previous year, the transition of agencies had some effect on the overall media touchpoints. 2017-2018 touchpoints saw our volume of story pitches increase to 284, a number that exceeded last year's numbers. The CVB team met with 60 media members at three State Sponsored Media Events, with 17 total site visits. We closed the year with over 182 million media impressions.

Research: We analyzed our four festivals surveyed over 2017. The demographics stand out. The average festival in all of Beaufort County has an typical demographic of a majority of females, married, ages 50-70. The Beaufort Water Festival is the only festival in the area that has a majority of males. It is also strongly single millennials, ages 18-39. The majority of these festival attendees also tend to have a lower level of education, with the majority completing some college or less. Taste of Beaufort and the Film Festival have married baby boomer females, ages 60 and up. The Shrimp Festival is largely married, generation x, females, ages 40-59. Lastly, while looking at economic impact paired with demographics, the typical attendees income is quite different. Beaufort Water Festival guests average out between \$35-49,000, Taste of Beaufort and Shrimp Festival averaging \$50-74,000, and Film Festival averaging \$75-99,000. Our intern, Angie Puleo, has been invaluable to our team this summer.

Destination Services

The number of visitors in the Visitor Center remained steady at 3,252 for June. In previous months (March-May) we saw visitor numbers go up and down with an overall decrease of 2.4% (326 visitors) compared to that same time period in 2017.

Visitor Guide Fulfillment has increased dramatically due in part to several factors which include: better placement of the online Visitor Guide Request button on BeaufortSC.org, new military rack cards distributed to all new Marine families, and a more concerted effort to build relationships with local partners and provide Visitor Guides to them for local distribution.

Public Affairs

Tourism Product Development Efforts:

Lynda and I met with the Spanish Moss Trail to discuss how to enhance their app and expand their coverage of the area. Dean Moss will present to the Board of Directors at the August Meeting.

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City of Beaufort staff met with the CVB team to update on the marketing assistance needed for the city events (Trick or Treat, Night on the Town). The CVB agreed to support the city events through in-kind advertising assistance through our community advertising outlets.

Attended the June 19th Downtown Merchants meeting to discuss the transition of the CVB but also update the group on the Events Calendar and Facebook integration model that we are operating. It is our desire to be more engaged with the merchants and supportive of their efforts to build events that of of value to the core downtown district.

Partner Engagement:

The CVB sent out a video and email to our stakeholders to updating our current organization and transition away from the chamber of commerce. A copy of that video and email can be provided to Board Members per request.

Strategic Plan and other Administrative Initiatives

Administration: The Board has been fully updated on the adopted 2018-2019 Budget. On June 26th, City Council approved the MOU with the CVB as well as the updated Arsenal Lease agreement. Both documents have been signed and are on file.

The CVB established a new CRM database (currently Hubspot), updating the contact information. The new CRM allows us to send out newsletters to let business know of changes happening in the Northern Beaufort County. Moving forward the focus is on the lodging, attractions, and restaurants. All of their contact information is now available in just a few clicks.