

# BEAUFORT

PORT ROYAL  SEA ISLANDS

March 21, 2019

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

From: Robb Wells

Subject: President's Report

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## **January-February at a Glance**

- Attended Initial Formal Sports Council meeting.
- Hosted 14 Travel writers as a part of Travel South Travel FAM
- Hosted 23 Tour Operators as a part of Travel South's Operators FAM
- Research Completed with Beaufort International Film Festival
- Revenues are up through February 2019.

## **January-February KPI: By the Numbers**

- January, total site sessions increased YoY 57% with page views up 238% during the same period. February also saw increases in sessions (+54%) as well as page views (+73%).
- Organic sessions decrease over these two months less than 1%, with all Paid Digital Advertising traffic increasing over the same time (+200%).
- Goal completions decreased for the first two months of 2019.
- The Beaufort Visitors Center saw a decrease in visitors for February

## **Marketing and Public Relations**

**Advertising:** During February, GroundTruth, Sojern and TripAdvisor digital display campaigns were relaunched, as well as Pinterest. Paid search and paid social campaigns continued running. During January and February, we ran a campaign for the ABA Meeting and Marketplace through El Toro and Facebook.

# BEAUFORT

PORT ROYAL  SEA ISLANDS

Campaign	Sessions	All Goal Completions
Google Paid Search	5,624	562
GroundTruth	3,290	5
Pinterest	1,299	9
Sojern	1,174	20
Facebook	901	74
TripAdvisor	226	25
El Toro	196	-
Instagram	168	10
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>12,878</b>	<b>705</b>

- In February, both CTR and conversion rate increased month over month. The increase in conversions is attributed to Smart Goals being turned back on.
- While we were off during February of last year, we saw the CTR increase during the Spring flight compared to the Fall.
- The campaign has been overspending the daily budget, indicating there is a high volume of searches and that the campaign can spend higher than the given budget. The daily budgets have been slightly reduced to ensure we do not exceed total campaign budget by end of May.

Month	Impr.	Clicks	CTR	Avg. CPC	Conversions	Conv. Rate	Cost / Conv.	Avg. Page Pos.	Net Spend
August	80,051	8,590	10.73%	\$0.62	488	6.34%	\$9.82	1.7	\$3,368
September	46,577	3,317	7.12%	\$0.88	351	10.59%	\$8.34	1.5	\$2,930
October	52,032	5,106	9.81%	\$0.96	928	18.17%	\$5.27	1.5	\$4,893
November	42,195	4,012	9.51%	\$1.14	611	15.24%	\$7.48	1.5	\$4,575
January	49,354	4,515	9.15%	\$1.08	184	4.08%	\$26.49	1.9	\$4,874
February	46,977	5,247	11.17%	\$0.95	606	11.55%	\$8.22	1.8	\$4,980

*For more insight, please refer to the February Paid Media Reports.*

**General Media Relations:** PR team had 5 media pitches in February. We hosted 15 Travel writers with Travel South Pre-FAM and TOWN Carolina making up the FAMs.

February's PR value finished at \$331,357.25 in earned media. February's touch-points finished at 145, setting a new bar for media touchpoint in a month. We also made 5 active story pitches regarding Spring Break Travel, Black History Month, Film Festival, Underrated Destinations, and Romantic Destinations for Valentines Day. Scoop Charlotte and The Charlotte Observer provided notable results. We closed the month with over 35 million media impressions.

# BEAUFORT

PORT ROYAL  SEA ISLANDS

## Destination Services

Year over year, the number of visitors decreased by 42% with 1,692 visitors in February 2019 compared to 2,920 in February 2018. Our Etrax counting system has been malfunctioning which would attribute to a slightly lower visitor count.

Fulfillment numbers (Kennickell) were down for the month at 597 compared to 2,000 the previous year. We had an extraordinary high in January fulfillment which may be the result of lower numbers this month. Our local fulfillment initiative continues to be up with a 365% increase YoY. (815 - February 2019 vs. 175 - February 2018). Again, increased efforts and communication with local partners in offering visitor guides to them has provided a steady increase in our distribution.

Visitor Center Visitor, Fulfillment & Sales Data	FEB 2019	FEB 2018	% Change
Visitor Center Counts	1,692	2,920	-42.1%
Visitor Guide Fulfillment (Kennickell)	597	2,000	-70.2%
Visitor Guide Fulfillment (Local)	815	175	365.7%
<b>Visitor Center Sales</b>			
Consignment Sales Commissions	\$157.00	\$334.07	-53.0%
Ticket Sales Commissions	\$1,043.00	\$847.00	23.1%
Inventory Sales	\$712.00	\$594.94	19.7%

Coupon Initiative for downtown merchants/attractions continued with additional businesses participating. A template was created for easy updating of coupons as well as to provide a well branded clean product. Presently we have a two page coupon insert that was distributed approximately 250 sets during the month.

*Fam Tours:* Worked with 2 groups (Travel South Tour Operators and Travel Writers) to create itineraries and make reservations for their visits.

*Bus Registration/Travel:*

Number of Buses: Jan.-5 / Feb.-33

Number of Cruise Ships: Feb.-2

*Groups:* Worked with Ginnie Kozak, DOT Conference to be held in February. Provided Welcome Bags and assistance with hosting a reception at the Arsenal.

# BEAUFORT

PORT ROYAL  SEA ISLANDS

Provided a box of Visitor Guides to company bringing a bus to the Gullah Festival.

*Restaurant Map:* Map updated. Need to sell advertising.

*Advertising Sales:* Continued to bill and collect for Visitor Center advertising, website advertising, leads, and pad maps. Communicated with Habersham, Keller Williams, Coastal Real Estate regarding advertising opportunities.

*Visitor Guide Updates-* VC staff started continues to work on corrections and updates.

## **Group Sales**

The development of our sales division has seen an increase in facilitating request and activities to start the new year. The completion of Sales Components on [BeaufortSC.org](http://BeaufortSC.org) allows us to capture and share information online. Monthly traffic continues to grow on the site for the groups and meeting pages.

## **General Activities**

- 1/22/19 Attended SCSAE in Columbia. New exhibit booth drew some good feedback. Met with 24 prospects at the show. I felt the show was not very well attended, and received the same comment from others who have attended in the past. All prospects have been contacted with information about locations in Beaufort for their meetings.
- Sent RFP for SCACPA's - hotels not able to accommodate meeting needs or within the preferred rate range.
- Responded to appropriate leads (only 4 out of 10 leads) provided by Danna Lilly from RCMA. Religious groups tend to have attendance in the hundreds-thousands, most too large for Beaufort.
- Created a "one page" of hotel meeting space to insert into the Meeting Planner Profiles.

## **Motorcoach**

- 1/14-17 Attended ABA in Louisville. Meetings with 58 (26 advance appointments, 32 pick-ups) tour operator companies. Most very interested Beaufort for 2020-2021. Follow-up letters sent to all tour operators,.
- Met with Alicia Decine and 3 of her colleagues with Tauck Tours on 2/5 to discuss adding additional time and possibly overnights in Beaufort to the Tauck itinerary in 2020-2021.
- Continue to work with several tour operators creating 2-3 day itineraries in Beaufort: Kate Scopetti - Mid Atlantic Receptive Services; Bob Cline - US Tours; Bob Bennett - Out of Carolina Tours; Patty Rogers - Trips by Patty; Jo Annette Marston - Kenley Konnection Travel (she was also on the Travel South FAM Tour.
- Completed a second site visit with Kate Scopetti , MARS and Don Adams - Kelly Tours on 2/21. Coordinated a meeting at CVB office to introduce them to local businesses that could be included in the "Southern Porches" tour program. Working with Ms. Scopetti to organize VIP FAM Tour of Beaufort for up to 36 pre-qualified companies for the "Southern Porches" itinerary.

# BEAUFORT

PORT ROYAL  SEA ISLANDS

- Met with tour operators participating in the Travel South FAM Tour on Friday, 2/22 and Saturday 2/23. Met with one of those operators, Kenley Konnection Travel at ABA. They asked for assistance in coordinating a “Gullah Heritage” tour to Beaufort in July.

## Other group activities

- Carolina Reserve, Indian Land, SC - 56 ppl day-trip to Beaufort 2nd week of April. Met in office to assist in planning tour activities.
- Saint Peter’s School - 35 students and teachers visited BHM on 2/26
- Jannie Dodd - Spartanburg Church group of 40 to visit Beaufort on June 7th - interested in step-on guide and dining at Fish Camp.
- Stellar 63 Weapons Platoon Reunion - May 17-19 - 20 rooms /40 ppl. Hilton Garden Inn. Requested assistance with tour options.
- Continue to familiarize myself with local businesses to better sell Beaufort to the group markets. Have contacted/met with with owners/sales teams at: Kazoobie Kazoo Factory & Museum; Every Second Counts-Escape Room; Spirit of Old Beaufort new Frogmore facility; Port Royal Sound Maritime Center; Hwy 21 Drive-In Theater, Pinckney Retreat.
- Have discussed the need for “group menus” with several restauranteurs, who are working on this for future group business. (Chip Dinkins - Plums Restaurant group; Chris Johnson - Q On Bay; Tonya Murphy - Fish Camp; Paul Thompson - Panini’s; Patty Huckabee; The Tavern at Royal Pines.
- Attended 3 MWR Travel Fairs in Jacksonville, FL area (Mayport, Kings Bay and NAS JAX Navy Bases). These are consumer shows and were very well attended. At each show I met with more than a hundred people interested in possibly visiting Beaufort in the near future. 4 cases of brochures were distributed, (368 pcs). Our handout of Kazoos were a big hit with the families.

## Meeting Leads

- Responded to “MeetingsLive South” leads provided by Danna Lilly. Only e-mail addresses were provided. Sent e-mails to 12 out of 20 leads suggesting Beaufort as a meeting destination. There were 8 additional leads that were too large for the hotels in Beaufort to handle. Of the emails sent we received a response back from one.
- Sent RFP to appropriate hotels for SC Telecommunications Broadband Association meeting July 2019
- Sent RFP to appropriate hotels for Legal Mediation meetings - March 2019
- Assisting with tours and activities for SC Garden Club scheduled to meet in Beaufort in April.
- Responded to leads from Meetings Quest/NJ. Emails sent to 12 qualified leads out of 17 (5 too large for Beaufort properties)
- Coordinating with HHI CVB to create joint itinerary for Danna Lilly to promote at Travel South

# BEAUFORT

PORT ROYAL  SEA ISLANDS

## Community Affairs

**Tourism Product Development:** The CVB staff secured advertising placement and grant funding for the Taste of Beaufort, Shrimp Fest and the Gullah festival in Beaufort for 2018-2019 FY. For more transparent records, a new checking account was established for the grant. All of these monies are to be used solely for the purposes of advertising the three festivals listed.

**Stakeholder Engagement:** Threshold 360 is continuing to grow. The website now has interactive maps. With this new interactive map, visitors can easily find a listing and interact with the 360 video. Threshold 360 officially launched on [beaufortsc.org](http://beaufortsc.org) in November.

In February, Threshold has 5,400 views, 1,506 engagements with the videos, and 1,164 completions. Estimated media value is \$3,724. Since implementation, Threshold had 21,165 views, 5,966 engagements, and 4,537 completions. Estimated media value is \$32,390.

Calendar and social media engagement tools are being utilized more efficiently on [beaufortsc.org](http://beaufortsc.org) to better support our partners.

A new feature is our lodging maps. On each lodging listing, there is a map with other activities/restaurants within a certain radius. This allows another easy access touchpoint for visitors.

## Strategic Plan and Administrative Activities

**Administration:** County Finance Committee continues to discuss an ordinance rewrite for the 3% Accommodations disbursement. Currently, \$350,000 is invested into three organizations (HHI-Bluffton Chamber of Commerce and GBPRCVB receiving \$150,000 per organization, BCBC receiving \$50,000). The proposed ordinance rewrite has two changes. 1. Reduce the amounts disbursed to the HHI-Bluffton CVB and GBPRCVB by \$25,000 per organization and remit those funds to the Greater Bluffton Chamber of Commerce. 2. The ordinance will also dictate the timing of inspection of finances to include the number to 10 business days pas inspection. The next finance committee meeting is scheduled for April 1st but nothing new has been added to the agenda at this time.

Currently the Destination Marketing Fee has 8 participants with the first round of invoices sent last week.

The GBPRCVB hired Colleen Smith as the new Visitor Services Coordinator.