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March 19, 2020

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

From: Robb Wells, President & CEO

Subject: President's Report of January & February Activities

2020 Year has roared out to an interesting start. Accommodations The Destination Master Plan as well as the Feasibility Study are both underway. The 2020 Business Plan continues to be executed and in some cases has already produced some fruit for the destination. Staff is continuing to build upon the momentum we closed the calendar year out with and we are very excited about how the next two quarters finish from a goals standpoint.

Bi-Month at a Glance

- Made the switch to Touchpoint Communications
- Sports Council submitted Dixie Softball Tournament room RFP for July 2020
- 18 million impressions in publicity impression netting \$169K in value
- Hosted Group Tour workshop
- Revenues are up through November 2019
- Threshold 360 Phase 2 completed with new mapping added
- Visit Beaufort App completion with scheduled launch in Spring 2020

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 with Touchpoint will last through June 2020 with the opportunity to extend the contract through the remainder of 2021 Fiscal Year.

Website: BeaufortSC.org continues to be placement based performance as one would expect with a digital campaign. The overall November-December performance was down YoY with organic traffic seeing the biggest drop.

Advertising: During November-December, our digital display, search and social campaigns continued running.

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- Month over month we saw a slight decrease in CTR (9.59% vs. 9.68% in October), as well as a slightly higher CPC and cost per conversion. This could be attributed to seasonality, as we saw a decrease in CTR from October to November last year. While the cost per conversion of \$27 is higher than October, it is still lower than September's \$28 cost per conversion.
- The "Vacations & Getaways" campaign was the top performer in regards to conversion rate for the first time! The "Beaufort" campaign continued to drive the most amount of conversions.
- YOY we are continuing to see a decrease in conversions. This is attributed to the removal of "smart goals" from being measured in this new fiscal year.
- During November the Facebook campaign continued running for the last month of the flight, running three ads, targeting adults ages 30-60 who are in a relationship that are interested in travel. The ads drove 6,404 clicks to site at a higher cost per click of \$0.68. Of the three ads, the "Winter Warmer" ad received the lower cost per link click of \$0.65. All three ads received similar overall cost per link clicks, ranging between \$0.65 - \$0.73. The paid social campaign is continuing to drive a high amount of onsite goal completions, aligned with Google Paid Search.

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

General Media Relations: PR team had 5 media pitches in November & December. We hosted 1 travel writer.

Through October, our PR value finished at \$2,184,877.94 in earned media. November's touch-points finished at 57. We closed the month with over 235 million media impressions fiscal YTD.

Destination Services

Year over year, the number of visitors increased by .5 % with 1,701 visitors in February 2020 compared to 1,692 in February 2019. Our Etrax counting system has been malfunctioning which would attribute to a slightly lower visitor count.

Fulfillment numbers (Kennickell) were up drastically for the month at 6,396 compared to 597 the previous year. This would be due to the release of our new 2020 Visitor Guide and push to distribute it.

Coupon Initiative for downtown merchants/attractions continued with additional businesses participating. Our two page coupon initiative has grown to three pages due to increased participation by merchants.

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Fam Tours: Created and executed the visit of 1 travel writer (@hey_ciara) who was vetted by our PR firm.

Bus Registration/Travel:

Number of Buses: 6

Number of Cruise Ships: 0

Meetings/Festivals:

Beaufort Area Sports Council meeting.

Cultural District Advisory Board meeting

Downtown Beaufort Merchants Association

Met with Kelly Tours/Grayline to discuss the placement of our official Visitor Center resources in their location. Additional meetings to follow.

MCAS Diversity Program/Black History Month

Women's Wellness Weekend planning meeting

Attended SC Ultra Running Festival at Burton Wells as part of the Beaufort Area Sports Council.

Beaufort International Film Festival. Set up a remote Visitor Services table the we staffed during peak hours.

SC Governors Conference on Tourism

Held quarterly staff and volunteer meeting for Visitor Center.

Began Gullah Festival communications to improve access to festival tickets and provide bus registration and parking information to those interested.

YMCA Annual Meeting

Pickle ball Organizational Meeting with YMCA/Shed players

Advertising Sales: Continued to bill and collect for Visitor Center advertising, website advertising, leads, and pad maps. Looking to create ad space on Itinerary Sheets, Restaurant Maps and Coupon Pages to cover professional printing costs.

Group Sales

Activities

Ongoing work with Kelly Tours/Grayline to develop additional retail tours in Beaufort. They purchased "Spirit of Old Beaufort" and will continue to work with Evelene Stevenson to offer her programs. They opened their Beaufort office the beginning of February.

Ongoing communication with Keith Green, Director IFA Redfish Kayak Tournament 8/21-23/2020. Accommodations and banquets booked at Quality Inn - up to 300 room nights.

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Secured accommodations for Dixie Girls Softball July 10-14 and Dixie Boys Baseball July 18-22. Potential 600-800 room nights for each event.

Researched and requested appointments at Travel South in Baton Rouge in March. Have been confirmed with 33 advance scheduled appointments.

Planning a **Tourism Forum** on May 6th during National Tourism Week for the local tourism industry. Peter Pantuso, President of the American Bus Association will be the guest speaker. The CVB will coordinate this event with BAHA.

Jan 10-15 - Attended *American Bus Association Annual Marketplace* in Omaha with 34 pre-scheduled appointments (average for CVBs is 27 appts). Met with additional operators during the week. Beaufort was also represented by Colleen Jaegar, BW Sea Island Inn this year. Leads were distributed to Beaufort hotels, restaurants and tours/attractions.

January 21-23 - Worked with Conference Center Venue Committee and consultants to explore locations and meet with local leaders to discuss possibilities. Provided a list of meeting executives that might complete a survey about Beaufort as a possible meeting destination.

January 29 - Sales call to Capitol Tours in Columbia. Met with Mary Young, Owner and staff to discuss possible group leader FAM to Beaufort this summer.

January 30 - SCSAE Annual Trade Show, Columbia, SC. The Beaufort CVB exhibited at the show and was accompanied by Jenny Sanborn, Beaufort Inn and Lenny Smith, Holiday Inn. (Most association execs that came to our booth had recently completed the Venue survey)

March 2-5 - *Trips by Patty* group at BW Sea Island Inn - **20 rooms x 2 nights = 40 room nights**

March 6 - Site visit for Jim Stevens, MARS - to acquaint him with components of Southern Porches tour.

March 8-12 - Mid Atlantic Receptive Service (MARS) - first Southern Porches tour in Beaufort at BW Sea Island Inn- 18 rooms x 4 nights = 72 room nights

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. We have

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tentatively scheduled a workshop with our partners at Advance Travel for the Spring of 2020.

Stakeholder Engagement: In November, Threshold had 1,652 views, 364 engagements with the videos, and 378 completions. Estimated media value is \$3,701. In December, Threshold had 1,143 views, 227 engagements with the videos, and 298 completions. Estimated media value is \$3,900. (Note: Threshold 360 launched mid-November 2018.)

Research:

Two new surveys have been launched. The first is in the Visitor Center. This captures the visitor profile. Since the launch in the end of July, 289 surveys have been completed.

The top three states represented are South Carolina, North Carolina, and Georgia with 27.7% being day visitors. 19.4% stayed in a full service hotel, followed by 13.9% staying in a short term rental. Vacation was the primary reason for visiting, 61.7%, and 18.4% just passing through. 10.6% of people said they spent \$200-299.99 on lodging, 27.1% spends \$100-149.99 on retail, 13.0% spend \$100-149.99 on food dining out, and 15.6% spend \$100-149.99 on recreation. The main activities while visiting are restaurants, historical landmarks, sightseeing, beaches, museums, shopping, and SC State Parks. The main demographic is females age 51-70 making an annual household income of \$100,000-149,999.

The other is a post-Beaufort visit survey. This is being emailed to visitors who filled out the sign in sheet in the VC. The emails were sent out in the middle of August, early September, and beginning of November. As of January 10, There are 67 responses. Rated their visit a 4.94. 51.5% said their visit exceeded their expectations, and 45.5% said it met their expectations. On a rating scale, the likeliness of returning to Beaufort is 4.38, and recommending it to friends is 4.65. Their experience at the Visitor Center received a 4.7 star rating. Additionally, 31% of visitors said they would have participated in night life had it been offered, particularly live music.

Strategic Plan and Administrative Activities

Administration: The 2020 CVB Business Plan is in full operation. It aligns with the strategic imperatives that the board adopted for the organization to accomplish over the course of the next two-three years. The plan focuses on Marketing, Sales and Visitor Services, Destination Development, Community Engagement, and Operation & Governance. The *Business Plan is attached to this report.*

Venue Feasibility Study Committee - Meeting with Linda Roper to plan January 21-23, 2020 site visit and interviews for Catherine Sarrett, Strategic Venue Studies and Chris Cavanaugh, Magellan Strategies.