

# BEAUFORT

PORT ROYAL  SEA ISLANDS

November 15, 2018

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

From: Robb Wells

Subject: President's Report of Activities

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The GBPRCVB has completed a very busy two month stretch in which we expanded our promotional production to include group sales. Diversifying our visitor base is as important as it has ever been, especially with new hotel rooms being added to the market. This year, our area has seen a dramatic drop-off from tour companies. Our correction to this has been two fold. First we implore and secure the tour operators that had recently dropped Beaufort from their itineraries. Second, we proactively engage in the direct sales and promotion of Beaufort to tour operators from across the Southeast and Mid-Atlantic regions of the country. In January, Linda Jeffries (Director of Sales), will attend the American Bus Association marketplace in Louisville, KY and with that we continue our journey into the sales side our our industry.

## **Month at a Glance**

- Hurricane Micheal wrecked havoc, not on our property, but on our overall September performance as a destination.
- Presented to City of Beaufort City Council during work session per our MOU.
- Spoke to the vast majority of Hotel General Managers and Owners during BAHA GM Social.
- Linda Jeffries was promoted to the role of Director of Sales.
- Presented to County Finance Committee for funding request for FY 18-19.

## **September-October Metrics: By the Numbers**

- September, total site sessions increased YoY 35% with page views up 162% during the same period. October on the other hand, saw decreases in sessions but a sizable increase (102%) in pageviews.
- Organic sessions decreased over these two months (-4.9%), with Direct traffic increasing over 81% search being the largest gain in site acquisition.

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- Goal completions decreased for October after an increase for September. This is a repercussion of the hurricane. This will be monitored over the course of next month.
- The Beaufort Visitors Center welcomed over 3700 visitors this month which is up 8% over last year.

## **Marketing and Public Relations**

**Advertising:** The inner coastal campaign saw the implementation of its paid search campaign. During September and October, the media running was Google Paid Search, Sojern, Outbrain and GroundTruth digital display campaign. Hurricane Micheal prompted us to launch a mini campaign utilizing TV, Radio and Paid Social. We also launched our Facebook, Instagram and Pinterest campaigns post hurricane to fully execute our advertising campaign.

- Total site sessions from paid media: 16,379 (Sept Up 9%/October up 7.5%)
- Total site conversions from paid media: 1404 (Sept up 34.7%/Oct up 106%)

For more insight, please refer to the September and October Paid Media Reports.

**General Media Relations:** PR team had 8 media pitches in October while attending two Media missions (NYC and Atlanta). While Beaufort, Port Royal, and the Sea Islands didn't host any travel writers in our market, we did see the execution of our partnership with Social media influencer, Black Southern Belle.

October's PR value finished at \$345,387.57 in earned media. October's touch-points saw an enormous increase to 85 (most ever). We also made 8 active story pitches regarding Fall travel, Historic Sites, Farmers' markets, and more. We closed the month with over 37 million media impressions for the largest gain this year.

## **Destination Services**

Year over year, the number of visitors decreased by 8% with 3,777 visitors in October 2018 compared to 3,090 in October 2017.

Fulfillment numbers (Kennickell and local) were both up YoY (7,117-October 2018 vs 4,383-October 2017) due to increased effort and communication with local partners offering visitor guides to them. With our effective marketing plan and goal conversion, increased Visitor Guide requests are a result.

Coupon Initiative for downtown merchants/attractions continued with 12 businesses participating. A template was created for easy updating of coupons as well as to provide a well branded clean product.

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Group Travel: We assisted 6 groups (HOA, Heritage Days, Wedding Planner, Travel group, and reunions) with area information and provided 150 Welcome Bags which included our new coupons.

Bus Registration/Travel:

Number of Buses: 28

Worked with two tour companies to provide bus registration and itinerary information.

Meetings/Festivals:

Shrimp Fest 2018 - Attended

Downtown Merchants Meeting: Attended and presented our coupon initiative.

BAHA Social

Heritage Tourism Council Meeting

Attended Customer Service training held by the City of Beaufort.

PadMap: Updated map with new CVB information and logo. Order 10,000..

Also working to sell advertising on a reprint with advertising.

Advertising Sales: Continued to bill and collect for Visitor Center advertising.

Collected \$1,210

## **Group Sales**

Our Director of Sales continued introducing herself to staff/GMs at area hotels, attractions and restaurants. Working relationships are so important each our our division within the CVB.

Registered for American Bus Association and requested appointments with 75 tour operators in attendance. Several have been to Beaufort in the past . So far, I have had personal contact with 28 companies to be assure they also request an appointment with me at ABA.

The GBPRCVB has joined the following associations and/or register to attend their trade shows in 2019:

- SC Society of Association Executives
- Motorcoach Association of South Carolina (trade show includes NC and VA)
- MWR - Military Travel Shows (Jacksonville, FL)
- Student Youth Travel Association (pending)
- National Tour Association (pending)

Conducted a site visit on Nov 1 with Kate Scopetti, Mid Atlantic Receptive Services, Stephens City, Virginia. She visited the BW Sea Island, Beaufort Inn, Quality Inn and Hilton Garden Inn. She is developing a Beaufort itinerary for adult groups. This program will be a 2-3 day stay in Beaufort focusing on local history. Kate is a "receptive operator", therefore also sells her tour products to other tour companies which requires her to acquire the lowest price possible from her participating vendors. She will likely have this program ready to promote at ABA for implementation in 2019-2020. Kate has agreed to come back in 2019 to discuss group packaging with our local tours, attractions, restaurants and hotels.

On October 23 Linda spoke to Patty Rogers, Trips by Patty in Wilmington, NC who is interested in a 2-3 day Beaufort itinerary for active senior adults and/or a high-end ladies 2-3 day tour. I am currently coordinating a site visit on November 27-29 for her to visit hotels, restaurants and attractions/tours to develop a suitable itinerary for both markets.

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## **Public Affairs**

**Tourism Product Development Efforts:** The CVB staff has actively worked to secure advertising placement and grant funding for the festivals in Beaufort for the 2018-2019 FY. Final Vote to be taken in December. (Projected \$35,000+).

**Stakeholder Engagement:** Threshold 360 Virtual Tours has integrated the 360 tours to the backend of the **BeaufortSC.org**. The project includes interactive videos as well as mapping capabilities that focus on proximity to location. We are working on enhancing the product to incorporate clearer messaging on the website both on mobile and desktop.

Calendar and social media engagement tools are being utilized more efficiently on **beaufortsc.org** to better support our partners.

## **Strategic Plan and other Administrative Initiatives**

**Administration:** GBPRCVB Attorney and I are finalizing policies for the organization to adopt as we move forward. Following the Directors' BootCamp, a series of policies and conflict of interest documents were being prepared for final approval/signatures for the November Board meeting.