

# BEAUFORT

PORT ROYAL  SEA ISLANDS

November 21, 2019

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

From: Robb Wells, President & CEO

Subject: President's Report of September-October Activities

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Since the adoption of the Organizational Strategic Plan, the team has been advancing forward to achieve those goals. The 2020 Business Plan (*attached*) provides us with a great scoreboard as to how we are advancing and accomplishing the CVB's goals. The GBPRCVB team implemented several key initiatives over the past two months spanning every department.

## **Bi-Month at a Glance**

- Hosted Stakeholder PR & Group Tour workshops
- Sports Council received contract for Inshore Redfish Association for August 2020
- \$24 million in publicity impression netting \$224K in value
- Attended Mid-Atlantic tour operator show
- Revenues are up through October 2019
- Booked SC Economic Development Association meeting for August 2020
- Threshold 360 Phase 2 completed
- Visit Beaufort App completion with scheduled launch in Spring 2020

## **Marketing and Public Relations**

Staff hosted a Public Relations workshop with our partners from Ferebee Lane. We covered our travel writer vetting process which is a first for our in market stakeholders. Attendees also had the opportunity to make a 5 min pitch about their business, attraction, etc.

**Website:** BeaufortSC.org continues to show great performance but with the later digital push. Sessions remained flat YoY while total Unique Users increased 2%.

**Advertising:** During September-October, our digital display, search and social campaigns continued running.

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- The TripAdvisor campaign continued running throughout October, receiving a lower click-through rate month over month. While the CTR was lower, overall site conversions increased compared to the previous months, continuing to receive more onsite conversions than other digital tactics. Both the Retargeting and Beaufort SC/Coastal SC destination content audiences are performing fairly similarly.
- Valasiss campaign CTR increased, the campaign did not drive any Google Analytics conversions. We are continuing to investigate why the campaign performance is low.
- StackAdapt campaign continued running in October, receiving the highest click through rate to date of 0.30%, aligned with native benchmarks.
- Goal completions are ahead of anticipation but lower than desired.
- Paid Social is seeing a lower cost per click than our Spring run.

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

**General Media Relations:** PR team had 5 media pitches in October. We hosted 2 travel writers and attended the Travel Media Showcase with 30 appointments.

Through October, our PR value finished at \$2,016,099.57 in earned media. February's touch-points finished at 87. We closed the month with over 217 million media impressions.

## Destination Services

Visitor Center Visitor, Fulfillment & Sales Data	OCT 2019	OCT 2018	% Change	TOP 5 States	Top 3 Countries
Visitor Center Counts	3496	3777	-7.4%	SC	England
				NC	Canada
Visitor Guide Fulfillment (Kennickell)	2829	4793	-41.0%	FL	France
Visitor Guide Fulfillment (Local)	643	920	-30.1%	OH	
Welcome Bags	120	n/a		GA	
Bus Registrations	30	25	20.0%		
Cruise Ships	0	0			
<b>Visitor Center Sales</b>					
Consignment Sales Commissions	\$258.80	\$148.19	74.6%		
Ticket Sales Commissions	\$4077.00	\$1044.00	290.5%		* Includes \$2337 BHM Reimbursement
Inventory Sales	\$995.00	\$999.78	-0.5%		

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Year over year, the number of visitors decreased by only 7% with 3,496 visitors in October 2019 compared to 3,777 in October 2018.

Fulfillment numbers (Kennickell) were down for the month at 2,829 compared to 4,793 the previous year. Our local fulfillment initiative was down as well as we prepare to transition to a new 2020 Visitors Guide.

VC Sales numbers were up although over visitor count was down. This can be attributed to a better selection of inventory and staff product awareness.

*Welcome Bag Fulfillment:* 120 (HOAs, Groups, Hotels & Clubs)

*Meetings/Festivals:* Attended a BAHA Oyster Festival planning meeting, Downtown Merchants Meeting, CDAB, BBC Grand Reopening, Home 2 Suites tour, Business After Hours at Habersham, Pledge the Pink on Fripp Island, Downtown Trick or Treating (Cancelled) and Board Orientation x2. Worked with HBF and Tour of Homes providing space in the Arsenal courtyard for their ticket sales. Worked with Sharon Stewart and Homes for the Holidays to provide tourist information to participants.

*Advertising Sales:* Working with Ferebee Lane and Savannah Hilton Head and creating space on [BeaufortSC.org](http://BeaufortSC.org) homepage for their advertisement.

*Attractions:* Worked with BHM in regards to a new pricing model for the museum focusing on reducing the group rate. New rate effective in November.

*Fam Tours:* 2

*Website, Leads and Advertising Billing:* Continue to send out invoices and collect payments.

Visitor Guide Updates: Final proof submitted and is at the printer.

## **Group Sales**

### **Activities**

Ongoing - Selecting appointments for *American Bus Association Annual Marketplace* in January. We are currently in the appointment requesting phase, which will be finalized and assigned in late December or early January. We are excited that Colleen Jaegar, BW Sea Island Inn will attend ABA this year as well.

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9/18-21 - Attended *Motorcoach Asssoc of SC/VA/NC Annual Marketplace* in Winston-Salem, NC. 15 pre-scheduled appointments, 8 additional meetings. Follow-up completed to all clients met. MCASC leads sent to all hotels, attractions/tours & restaurants.

10/31-11/2 - Participated in a tour operator show, *Spotlight on the Mid Atlantic* in Gaithersburg, MD. This was a table-top show where the tour companies visited our booth. There was also an "itinerary building" session where operators worked with destinations to create itineraries that may become a selling tour for them. Leads will be sent to all hotels, attractions/tours & restaurants.

## **Sales Contacts/Services Provided**

9/24 - Coordinated second site visit for *Shore Excursions/Victory Cruise Lines*. Planning 8 arrivals in 2020 beginning April 4; 10-12 arrivals in 2021. Each arrival of up to 300 passengers will offer multiple tours of Beaufort - one day only.

9/26 - Spoke to Steve Everidge, *Shenandoah Tours* (met at ABA/TAP). He has booked small group (18 ppl) for 10/28 in Beaufort -1 night at HGI (9 rooms x 1 night = **9 room nights**). Booked Carriage tour for 10/29 morning then free time to shop and lunch before departing for Jekyll Island.

9/26 - *Trips by Patty* booked second group at BW Sea Island Inn for February 10-12 - 20 rooms x 2 nights = 40 room nights; also 2nd group in March - 20 rooms x 2 nights = 40 room nights - **TOTAL - 80 room nights**.

10/7 - Met with Carla and Robbie Willis, *Willis Tours* about 4 group visits in Spring 2020. Sent sample Itineraries. Site visit 10/10-11/19. Booked BW Sea Island - March 23-26, 2020 - 24 room x 2 nights = 48 room nights. (Considering 3 additional tours - 3/30-4/2; 4/6-9; 4/13-16 - **TOTAL -192 room nights**)

10/3 - Communication with Christy Schad, planner for IFA Redfin/Kayak Tour to be held in Beaufort 8/21-23/2020

10/28 Site Visit for *And Rawls & Ed West, SC Economic Development Association Institute* - Aug 5-7 program for 65 ppl - 40 rooms x 2 nights = **80 room nights**. Some may consider extending stay through the weekend. They were very impressed with Beaufort and confirmed that they will bring this program here - thanks to Stephen Murray. In addition, they may consider Beaufort for an additional program in the spring of 2021. **Booked at Beaufort Inn.**

10/29 - Site visit for Roger Baker with *Kelly Tours*, Charleston Tour Department. Developing a 1-2 night Beaufort tour that will be promoted in Savannah and Charleston. He will bring with him one of their clients, Richard Harrington of Newmarket Holidays,

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UK. Mr. Harrington may consider this tour for his clients from the UK arriving in Charleston next

## **RFP's Sent**

9/24 - RFP sent to Holiday Inn for October 28th seminar for 150 people. Contact: Ashleigh Carmichael. Group chose another destination.

10/16 - RFP sent to downtown Hotels and Inns for Kitty Spiers, *Friends of SC Libraries* re: August 2020 conference for 40 ppl (accommodations only - meetings at Library)

10/21 - RFP for Friends of SC Libraries - sent to all hotels for accommodations only: 30-40 rooms/2 nights - April 3-4, 2020

10/29 - RFP for *SC Economic Development Assoc Institute* in Aug, 2020 - sent to BW Sea Island Inn, Beaufort Inn and Holiday Inn and Suites - (planner's choices after site visit)

## **Local Outreach**

*DOS Roundtable* - October 1 at new Home 2 Suites Hotel. 8 hotel representatives were in attendance.

Working with Anita Prather, Rhonda Carey, Peach Morrison and other committee members to coordinate "*Holiday Calendar of Events*" for the entire month of December

November 8th at 9:00 am - The CVB hosted a workshop, "*Are You Group Tour Ready?*" at the Holiday Inn and Suites. We invited three tour operators, Mary Young, Capitol Tours; Susan Sauer, Discover Tours; and Kate Scopetti, Mid Atlantic Receptive Services; to be guest speakers on an "Ask the Operator" panel during the workshop. We had 17 RSVP's, however only 11 in attendance (plus 4 staff). The information was very well received with questions from participants.

## **Community Affairs**

**Tourism Product Development:** The CVB staff secured grant funding for the Taste of Beaufort, Shrimp Fest and the Gullah festival in Beaufort for 2019-2020 FY.

We continue to work with our attractions to develop a better messaging as well as assisting with TripAdvisor content and review. We have tentatively scheduled a workshop with our partners at TripAdvisor for the Spring of 2020.

**Stakeholder Engagement:** In September, Threshold had 1,982 views, 612 engagements with the videos, and 490 completions. Estimated media value is \$3,604. In October, Threshold had 2,069 views, 565 engagements with the videos, and 435 completions. Estimated media value is \$4,041. (Note: Threshold 360 launched mid-November 2018.)

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Threshold 360's new captures are currently being uploaded onto the website.

Hubspot has 1,712 contacts and is still being updated as more trade shows are bringing new contacts.

## **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, 204 surveys have been completed.

The top three states represented are South Carolina, North Carolina, and Georgia with 30.8% 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. 7.9% of people said they spent \$200-299.99 on lodging, 19.1% spends \$100-149.99 on retail, 18.1% spend \$100-149.99 on food dining out, and 15.6% spend \$100-149.99 on recreation. Visitors are learning about Beaufort through word of mouth, 32.5%. The main activities while visiting are restaurants, historical landmarks, sightseeing, beaches, museums, shopping, and SC State Parks, in that order. 96% were traveling with adults, and 17.6% were traveling with kids. 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 November 8th, There are 18 responses.

Rated their visit a 4.94. 55.6% said their visit exceeded their expectations, and 44.4% 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 4.6 star rating. Additionally, 25% 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.*