



October 15, 2020

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

From: Robb Wells, President & CEO

Subject: President's Report of August & September 2020 Activities

August and September traditionally have been support months where our organization builds up to a productive fall while making preparations for potential weather events. This year we saw a continuation of our recovery plan, increased travel writers visits, hit our advertising stride for the rest of 2020. We do view the future with great optimism as future travel demand is starting to present itself more, but recognize the financial impact on our stakeholders.

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 ended in June and a new contract was extended through June 2021. All advertising placed in July has been executed with the full report included in the board packet.

Website: BeaufortSC.org continues to be placement based. Sessions increased YoY a total of 12.3% while new users increased by 9.8%. The biggest driving factors to the website is organic searches (increasing 74.6%), followed by paid searches (increasing 81.9%).

Advertising: During August, our search, social, and video campaigns continued running, targeting our top drive markets: Greenville, Columbia, Charleston, Charolette, and Augusta. Overall, the "Visit Beaufort" brand was seen 683,195 times. This drove 8,111 new users to BeaufortSC.org and 1,563 conversions. Of the 1,563 conversions 209 were Booking Engine Search on site.

- Paid Search Placement
 - The campaigns' primary markets which are also our primary brand awareness markets/drive markets are the top performing with highest amount of conversions. Numbers consist of 175,486 impressions with a click-through-rate of 10.9% and a conversion rate of 16.1%.
- Paid Social Placement

- In paid social, currently the campaign is running story ads, and these are showcased on Facebook and Instagram. This campaign delivered over 634 new users to the website with over 3,347 completed video views.
- Video (Youtube & OTT/CTV) Placement
 - On YouTube, we are targeting people with content related to Lowcountry content; beach vacations, outdoor recreation, etc. In total, this campaign produced 216,025 impressions with a completion rate of 55.7%. On average these users completed 5 website conversions.
 - OTT is considered a branding tactic. Organic site growth in target markets is a metric we look at to gauge success for branding tactics. Since the launch of this campaign we have seen organic site traffic growth of an average of 77% YOY with Greenville having the highest growth with 152%.

Newsletter Campaigns: Since July, the CVB has started two E-Newsletter campaigns; both are monthly and go out to potential travelers and tour operators to keep Beaufort at “front of mind”. Both campaigns have an average open rate of 20% - 35% and a click-through-rate of 4% - 9%.

For more insight, please refer to the August / September 2020 Paid Media Reports.

General Media Relations: For August and September 2020, the PR Value finished at \$378,051, and the total AD Value finished at \$126,017. We placed 12 stories this month with a total of 13,586,731 readers reached.

In August and September, 12 story pitches were made, publications include; The New York Times, CNN Travel, Southern Living, Travel South, Discover SC, and Delish, each story placed mentions Beaufort, Port Royal, or the Sea Islands. No Press releases were sent out during August or September. In August the Beaufort CVB hosted a successful PR workshop that allowed local businesses to gain insight into the tourism industry and provide transparency about the public relations practices for Beaufort Port Royal and establishes a relationship between our local businesses and our PR team. This also gave the PR team the opportunity to hear what’s new for businesses and unique story angles in the area for future ventures for hosting future journalists and influencers. In August Beaufort Port Royal and the Sea Islands welcomed 59 teams as they competed in the IFA Redfish fishing tour and 23 teams that competed in the Kayak Tour, IFA was able to give away 40,000+ to those who placed in the competition, creating a successful and enjoyable event. The IFA tournament has expressed interest in including Beaufort on the tour again next year. In the month of September, the CVB was able to host two Fam Tours for the area that resulted in great content for the are of Beaufort. We are continually working with TouchPoint Communications to ensure Travel Writers continue to come to the area during this time of uncertainty Through October and November.

Destination Services

Visitor Center Visitor, Fulfillment & Sales Data	AUG 2020	AUG 2019	% Change	TOP 3 States	TOP Countries
Visitor Center Counts	1224	2,044	-40.1%	SC, GA, NC	England -2 Japan - 2
Visitor Guide Fulfillment (Kennickell)	300	5,104	-94.1%		
Visitor Guide Fulfillment (Local)	154	325	-52.6%		
Welcome Bags	101	299			
Visitor Center Sales					
Consignment Sales Commissions	\$96.30	296.18	-67.5%		
Ticket Sales Commissions	\$323.00	534.4	-39.6%		
Inventory Sales	\$493.55	\$967.41	-49.0%		

Kennickell Fulfillment/Local fulfillment variances due to CVB handling individual leads in house to reduce expenses. Bulk distribution still being handled by Kennickell.

The Visitors Center was still unable to sell tickets to the following attractions in August 2020: The Verdier House, Cpt. Dick's Boat Tours, and Beaufort Tours, and limited Carriage tours to to COVID restrictions, reduced seating and weather/heat restrictions. Kelly Tours began selling van tours in July 2020 with an eight person maximum.

Visitors Center counts continue to remain down due to COVID-19.

Visitor Center Visitor, Fulfillment & Sales Data	Sept 2020	Sept 2019	% Change	TOP 3 States	TOP Countries
Visitor Center Counts	1310	1,605	-18.4%	SC, NC, GA	GER - 4 CAN - 1
Visitor Guide Fulfillment (Kennickell)	2100	0			
Visitor Guide Fulfillment (Local)	2834	35	7997.1%		
Welcome Bags	12	280			
Visitor Center Sales					
Consignment Sales Commissions	\$146.40	\$160.19	-8.6%		
Ticket Sales Commissions	\$626.20	\$976.60	-35.9%		
Inventory Sales	\$650.82	\$719.99	-9.6%		

Kennickell Fulfillment/Local fulfillment variances due to CVB handling individual leads in house to reduce expenses. Bulk distribution still being handled by Kennickell. Local fulfillment increased due to in house distribution of Southern Living Leads.

The Visitors Center was still unable to sell tickets to the following attractions in September 2020: The Verdier House, Cpt. Dick's Boat Tours, and Beaufort Tours. The Visitors Center is selling limited Carriage tours to to COVID restrictions, reduced seating and weather/heat restrictions. We continue to sell Kelly Van Tours (limited seating) and Janet's Walking Tours tickets. The Visitors Center began selling Emma's Golf Cart tour tickets in September 2020.

Visitors Center counts remain down due to COVID 19.

Group Sales

For the past several months, Sales has expanded to include advertisement placement, research, learning and PR/marketing due to Covid-19. I regularly share and participate in industry webinars covering research data, safety standards, marketing ideas and client/colleague networking. These activities are sponsored by industry organizations such as AFAR Travel Media, Connect Travel, ABA/Women in Buses, SYTA and Southern Living/ Meredith Publishing. I have found them to be very helpful in moving forward again to the new normal in group sales.

Placement of a summer ad and listing in Southern Living Magazine has yielded 634 individual leads to date. Look for a full page ad in the winter edition of Coastal Living magazine as well. We have also continued our advertising/listings in trade publications and the Discover SC Visitor guide. In addition, our digital campaign is on-going.

IFA Redfish held their 2021 Tournament in Beaufort this August 21-23 with 120 participants. The tournament ran smoothly and was a great success. Participants and organizers alike were very impressed with Beaufort and are considering a return to Beaufort in 2021.

Our first motorcoach arrived on 9/14 - Village Travel from Kansas brought 34 people to Beaufort for a day trip between Charleston and Savannah. They scheduled a carriage tour and remained in town for lunch on their own and some shopping.

While the remainder of 2020 remains uncertain, there is a positive trend looking to spring, fall and the holidays in 2021. I have assisted tour companies in planning 2021 itineraries in Beaufort. Several tours and meetings that cancelled in 2020 have rebooked in 2021. I am currently aware of 940 group/meeting room nights through our leads in 2021 either new or re-booked from 2020 cancellations.

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.

Research:

Since the beginning of the Pandemic, the CVB has moved towards weekly research. Our goal is to provide our stakeholders with the most up to date information available. The CVB is utilizing the Destination Analysts weekly Wave Report as well as Longwoods International Wave report. In conjunction with the weekly wave reports, other research is being used to supplement and verify the credibility of the research findings.

Strategic Plan and Administrative Activities

Administration: The GBPRCVB and the Town of Port Royal officially signed the DMO Agreement. Town council passed the motion to move forward with the agreement on September 9th. Van Willis is to submit the full amount of 2019-2020 advertising to better prepare for budget and execution.

Venue Feasibility Study Committee met with Catherine Surratt who presented the findings of the Meetings and Venue Feasibility Study. The AD-hoc committee will reconvene to discuss the results and next steps.

Destination Next Strategic Studies concluded in March with the report delivered in May of 2020. Chris Cavanaugh presented to both City of Beaufort Council and Town of Port Royal Council in the month of September.