

BEAUFORT

PORT ROYAL  SEA ISLANDS

September 19, 2019

To: Board of Directors - Greater Beaufort-Port Royal CVB
From: Robb Wells, President & CEO
Subject: President's Report

A highlight of the recent months is to see the successful implementation of our strategic imperatives begin to take shape. Couple that with the activation of the 2020 CVB Business Plan and our staff is confident in our approach as well as our strategy. We talk a lot about delivering an Experience that exceeds all Expectations. Our commitment to this formula continues to be realized in our followup surveys, letters, social media comments, etc. We have a tremendous team here and it is something that the Tourism Industry and Ecosystem here in Northern Beaufort County should not only be proud of, but also should embrace.

Bi-Month at a Glance

- Attended Sports Council meetings.
- Saw \$217 million in publicity impression
- Launched new digital campaign
- Revenues are up through August 2019.
- Launched Coast is Clear Campaign - again.

Marketing and Public Relations

Website: BeaufortSC.org continues to show great performance but with the later digital push, . Sessions remained flat YoY while total Unique Users increased 2%. Page views decreased 4% over previous July-August run with total pages visited per session decreasing 4%.

Advertising: During July-August, our digital display, search and social campaigns continued running.

- StackAdapt and TripAdvisor all launched with success, we are monitoring Valassis
- Goal completions are ahead of anticipation but lower than desired.
- Paid Social is seeing a lower cost per click than our Spring run.

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

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

Through August, 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	JUL - AUG 2019	JUL - AUG 2018	% Change
Visitor Center Counts	4,859	6,150	-21.0%
Visitor Guide Fulfillment (Kennickell)	11,132	17,958	-38.0%
Visitor Guide Fulfillment (Local)	994	2,587	-61.6%
Welcome Bags	299	n/a	
Visitor Center Sales			
Consignment Sales Commissions	\$480.00	\$354.44	35.4%
Ticket Sales Commissions	\$1,066.40	\$1,051.80	1.4%
Inventory Sales	\$2,167.08	\$1,540.49	40.7%

Year over year, the number of visitors decreased by 27% with 2,044 visitors in August 2019 compared to 2,823 in August 2018. Fulfillment numbers (Kennickell) were down for the month at 5,104 compared to 10,414 the previous year. Our local fulfillment initiative was also down.

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: 299 (HOAs, Groups, Hotels & Clubs). Coupon Initiative for downtown merchants/attractions migrated to. [BeaufortSC.org/Specials & Deals](http://BeaufortSC.org/Specials&Deals)

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Bus Registration/Travel:

Number of Buses: 5

Number of Cruise Ships: 0

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Meetings/Festivals: We held our first Tours & Attractions Forum on August 21st with 11 in attendance. Other meetings: ATAX, Women's Wellness, LC Weekly

Advertising Sales:

Meetings: MacDonal's Marketplace, Spirit of Old Beaufort, Verdier House, Sports Council, Habersham, Coastal Real Estate Solutions/John Hedden

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

Visitor Comments:

Tammy is so kind and very helpful!

Jannie was so friendly and gave very informative advice on the things we wanted to do on our trip.

The best info ever! More than I have ever received from a Visitor Center! She is amazing! Thank you!

Very nice service... gave nice information which was very helpful, was very polite and engaged in small talk and complimented my outfit.

Group Sales

- July 21-24 the CVB hosted a FAM Tour for 6 tour operator companies with participation from local partners in Beaufort's tourism industry. The tour was a tremendous success resulting in the possibility for nearly 2,000 room nights in local hotels in 2020, and more into 2021.
- July 21, Jennifer Gannon with Nowak Tours spent two days in Beaufort to gather information for the possibility student tours in the future. I also met with Jennifer at SYTA in August.
- July 24, Julie Bideaux with TourMappers was in town for a site visit. They are interested in working with Beaufort Inns to develop packages for international visitors. I arranged her schedule and escorted her in visiting six of our inns.
- August 9-13 - Attended Student Youth Travel Assoc Annual Marketplace in Birmingham, AL - Had 17 pre-scheduled appointments, and met with additional 12 operators met with onsite. Leads sent to all hotels, attractions/tours and restaurants upon return.

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Sales contacts/services provided:

- 7/8/19 - Follow-up with John Lombino, Sun City Italian Club - 2020 spring visit possible group of 50
- 7/9/19 - Follow-up with Stuart Weisburg, One if by Land Tours, Charlotte, NC - Planning a site visit in fall 2019.
- 7/9/19 - Follow-up with Bob Cline - US Tours, WV - Planning 2020 Southern Charm Christmas. Helping to design an itinerary.
- 7/9/19 - Ongoing contact with Patty Rogers, Trips by Patty - Has booked spring 2020 tours
- Red Knights Rally - exploring Beaufort for May 2022 Rally for up to 200. Provided materials for consideration.
- East-West Global Travel & Tours - Requesting information for 40 ppl, 9/18/19 (Hunting Island, Kazoo Factory, Lunch). Website lead
- Capitol Tour - 24 ppl for lunch/group menu- 8/31/19. Website lead.

RFPs Sent:

- Natl Womens Pro Golf /tournament - Sept 26-Oct 1, 2019. 30-35 room requested. RFP Sent to partners on 7/26/19.
- Peak Performance Tours - Corporate Incentive Program - April 2020 - Thursday - Sunday - 30 ppl - 18-20 rooms. RFP sent to Rhett, Anchorage, Beaufort Inn only at their request. (This lead was from SYTA)

Local outreach:

- Met with Owner and Caretaker of Fripp Plantation to discuss future use for group tours, events and rentals. Visited the site to see possibilities.
- Met with Craig Reeves to discuss group activities for adults and students at Sea Eagle Market docks
- Discussed possible tour group activities with Patrick Harris at Harris Pillow Factory
- Discussed Beaufort to Savannah day trips with Kelly Tours - pick-ups at several Beaufort locations. Coordinating specifics w/Jonathan Sullivan

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. Submission of receipts for checks to be cut have been processed for the 2018 Shrimp Festival.

Stakeholder Engagement: In August, Threshold had 2,337 views, 755 engagements with the videos, and 439 completions. Estimated media value is \$4,575. (Note: Threshold 360 launched mid-November 2018.)

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Threshold 360 is uploading the new captures to the portal, to be updated on the website as well.

Hubspot has 1,676 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, 97 surveys have been completed.

The top three states represented are South Carolina, North Carolina, and Georgia with 25.8% being day visitors. 25.3% stayed in a full service hotel, followed by 12.6% staying in a short term rental. Vacation was the primary reason for visiting, 64.2%, and 19% just passing through. 13.3% of people said they spent \$200-299.99 on lodging, 17.4% spends \$100-149.99 on retail, 18.7% spend \$100-149.99 on food dining out, and 15.33% spend \$100-149.99 on recreation. Visitors are learning about Beaufort through word of mouth, 33.7%. The main activities while visiting are restaurants, historical landmarks, beaches, sightseeing, museums, SC State Parks, and shopping. 95.8% were traveling with adults, and 26.3% 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 first email was sent out in the middle of August with 11 responses, and the second batch was just sent out on the 13th of September.

Rated their visit a 4.64. 54.5% 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 4.55, and recommending it to friends is 4.64. Their experience at the Visitor Center received a 4.7 star rating.

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 outline is attached to this report.*