



VISIT COOK COUNTY

ORGANIZATIONAL GUIDEBOOK

It's hard to believe that Visit Cook County was established nearly eleven years. In February 2020, as we were approaching our 10th Anniversary, the unprecedented challenge of a COVID-19 was upon us. The pandemic delayed the preparation of this organizational guidebook. It is important to educate, archive, and reflect on our organization's timeline.



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR COMMENTS

LINDA JUREK

JANUARY 2021

As we now approach our 11th anniversary, and in preparation for the January 2021 Visit Cook County Board of Directors Retreat, we felt it would be beneficial to encapsulate the milestones of change since our inception. This document will provide an overview of our mission and vision, a evolutionary timeline for growth, documenting marketing achievements, personnel changes, financial goals, and achievements. The document also captures some history in the establishment of the three tourism associations to which we credit as the early catalyst for launching our prevalent tourism economy.

The Evolution of Destination Marketing

When DMOs were initially created, they were singularly focused on securing convention and meeting business for their community. The first DMO was created in 1896 to lure conventions to town in order to showcase Detroit to attendees as a potential locale for entrepreneurial investment (the goal was not “heads in beds” in this initial iteration). These first organizations were called “Convention Bureaus” and eventually expanded to include “and Visitors” (thus, CVBs). For many communities, however, it wasn’t until the ‘70s and ‘80s that marketing to leisure travelers began to be embraced. And, that evolution hasn’t stopped.

- Bill Geist, DMOproz

When travel ground to a halt in March 2020 due to COVID-19, DMOs were the agencies that pivoted, virtually overnight, to provide assistance to their business communities. We achieved this by assisting with community communication, reducing and changing our marketing message to one of safe travel, and assisting out tourism partners in whatever way possible to get and keep their doors opened and people employed. Though resources were questionable in April and May of 2020, we pivoted. We managed our own operation and used our marketing voice to fit the needs of Northeastern MN to suit the time.

VCC is an advocacy partner with our local Cook County Chamber of Commerce, EDA and SBDA. And while the mission and vision of our separate organizations are different, our goals align. VCC exists to attract visitors. The EDA and SBDA exist to attract business start-ups, then help to establish and secure funding. The Cook County Chamber exists to make the business members insanely successful. A DMO's brand message encourages visitation and if successful, results in returning visitors who may possibly relocate to Cook County as residents.

In simple terms:

- If you build a place where people want to **visit**, you will have built a place where people want to **live**.*
- If you build a place where people want to **live**, you will have built a place where people have to **work**.*
- If you build a place where people want to **work**, you will have built a place where **business wants to be**.*
- If you build a place where **business wants to be**, you have built a place where **people want to visit**.*

It starts with visit... Visit Cook County.

MISSION & VISION

THE FOUNDATION

Mission Statement

The mission of Visit Cook County is to enhance and grow a sustainable tourism economy in Cook County, MN.

Vision Statement

Visit Cook County provides solutions to tourism and visitor related interests of the region.

Original Mission and Vision Statement - adopted March 2010

March 2010 - Mission Statement

The mission of the Cook County Visitors Bureau is to strengthen, promote and represent the tourism organizations in Cook County in order to help them better meet the diverse needs of visitors to the county. To do this, the Cook County Visitors Bureau provides the County's tourism organizations with the information, tools and resources they need to succeed, including education and training, networking, advocacy, and group buying programs.

March 2010 - Vision Statement

The Cook County Visitors Bureau envisions a future in which the Cook County Visitors Bureau is a key partner in providing solutions that address the tourism and visitor related issues facing the region.

Update to Mission & Vision Statement - adopted September 2018

In 2018, A group of board members (D. Tersteeg, N. Burns, D. Seaton, E. Haussner) volunteered to revisit and provide input on edits to the statements.

HISTORY

COMING TOGETHER AS ONE ORGANIZATION

ORGANIZATIONAL ROOTS

1936 - GUNFLINT TRAIL ASSOCIATION ESTABLISHED

In 1992, the Gunflint Trail Association regrouped and a lodging tax district was established with a collection rate of 2%. The members hosted a 75 year anniversary celebration in October 2011. Lodging tax increase to 3% was implemented on December 1, 1997.

1983 - LUTSEN TOFTE TOURISM ASSOCIATION ESTABLISHED

Lutsen Tofte Tourism Incorporated in 1983. Collection of Lodging Tax at 2% started in 1987. LTS Recreation Mgmt. Corporation incorporated 12/16/1991 - Lutsen Tofte Schroeder Recreation Management Corporation incorporated. Lodging tax resolution at 3% recorded March 22, 1993.

1998 - CONVENTION & VISITOR BUREAU OF GRAND MARAIS ESTABLISHED

The Convention & Visitors Bureau (CVB) was formed by the Grand Marais Chamber of Commerce as an arm of the Chamber. Chamber board members chose which board they wanted to serve on and one director was employed to manage both operations.

2000 - GRAND MARAIS AREA TOURISM ASSOCIATION ESTABLISHED

GMATA was incorporated. 2001-2009 GMATA exists separate from the Chamber of Commerce and the lodging tax from the Grand Marais lodging tax district supports tourism outreach and marketing. Four directors were hired over the course of eight years. From a 2005 GMATA strategic planning session it is recorded that "There will be a greater number and variety of things for people to see and do in Grand Marais including creating a four season destination, utilization of the harbor, bike racks throughout town, small downtown indoor venue for the performing arts, etc." Lodging tax resolution at 3% recorded October 1, 2000. Prior to the establishment of GMATA, the City of Grand Marais began collecting lodging tax in 1988 at 2%, with an increase to 3% in 1991.

2008 - COOK COUNTY EVENTS & VISITORS BUREAU ESTABLISHED

2010 - VISIT COOK COUNTY

Cook County Visitors Bureau (Visit Cook County) approved in March 2010 with first joint collection of lodging tax beginning on May 1, 2010

From a press release dated March 8, 2010:

COOK COUNTY, MN (Mar. 8, 2010) – The Cook County Events and Visitors Bureau (CCEVB), Grand Marais Area Tourism Association (GMATA), Lutsen-Tofte Tourism Association (LTTA), Gunflint Trail Association (GTA), Grand Portage Tourism, and Lutsen Mountains Ski Area will officially join together to participate in a management company, the Cook County Visitors Bureau, effective May 1, 2010.

This new county-wide entity, led by a board with membership from each of the individual tourism areas, will soon represent all Cook County tourism efforts, strengthen Cook County's brand identity, and work to fortify the member tourism areas' individual identities. The combined effort reflects the need to provide a coordinated marketing approach to attracting visitors to Cook County while increasing efficiency and better leveraging budgets and personnel. Each of the individual tourism entities will stay intact to aid in annual planning, participate in and address local issues, set priorities, and elect board representation to the new Cook County Visitors Bureau.

Visitors have long been choosing northeastern MN as their vacation destination. Each area of our county is recognized for its own special attributes and visitors are rarely drawn to just one area. We have compelling attributes - the greatest of lakes, the tallest waterfall, the allure of the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness, the greatest ski resort in the midwest, and an eclectic mix of unique lodging options, restaurants, art, culture, wildlife, outdoor adventure, and so much more.

As an organization, we are at a pivotal place of change; not only change forced upon us by operating during a pandemic but change in our leadership, financial structure and business ownership. As an example, the pandemic and subsequent closing of the Canadian border has placed undue hardship on Grand Portage. This hardship has forced the Tribal Council to relinquish their financial contribution to our organization as well as their seat on the VCC board of directors.

It has never been more important to commit, understand and support the mission and vision of our organization. We hope this document will provide you with a better understanding of where we've been and will also help guide the decisions to be made in the next few years.

TIMELINE

THE EVOLUTION OF VISIT COOK COUNTY

FOUNDATIONAL YEARS

1936

GTA

The Gunflint Trail Association was loosely established in 1936. The members hosted a 75 year anniversary celebration in October 2011. In 1992, the Gunflint Trail Association regrouped and lodging tax district was established.

1983

LTTA

Lutsen Tofte Tourism Association was incorporated.

1998

CVB

The Convention & Visitors Bureau (CVB) was formed by the Grand Marais Chamber of Commerce as an arm of the Chamber.

2000

GMATA

GMATA was incorporated. 2001-2009 GMATA exists separate from the Chamber of Commerce. Grand Marais lodging tax district supports tourism outreach and marketing. Four directors were hired over the course of eight years.

2008

CCEVB

Cook County Events & Visitors Bureau established.

2008

1% LODGING TAX

Cook County campaigns for and succeeds in gaining approval from the State to start collecting an additional 1% county tax for the purpose of funding the CCEVB.

2010

VCC

All county tourism associations come together under one organization and Visit Cook County is established. All county-wide collected lodging tax is combined for achievement of greater marketing efforts.

GETTING STARTED

2010-12

2010 - Bylaws adopted, organizational structure set, merger of associations and assets, hire new Executive Director. Marketing That Matters hired as marketing agency Ron Sackett Brand Study Presented to BOD. VCC rents Mayhew Building

2011 - Lutsen 99er launches 1st year with 80 participants.

2013

June - Launch of the Way North of Ordinary Brand and Website. GTA & GMATA retain independent websites. LTTA and CCEVB sites dissolve.

July - New executive director hired, Linda Jurek

November - Lake Superior Storm Festival 1st year

2014

Giant Voices hired as new marketing agency. LINPR hired as public relations firm.

March - New Marketing Manager hired, Kjersti Vick.

April - Waterfall Season Campaign Launches

May - Base map for VCC created as a template for future visitor information guides

May & June, GTA & GMATA merge old websites into new VCC website

June - VCC adopts former Cook County Chamber events

July - Mobile site launched

October - Launched Mobile App with Bluebridge

2010-2013 | The Merger of Assets & Personnel

With birth of the organization, came the merger of assets and staff. In spring of 2010, the VCC organization rents the Mayhew Building for the Administrative office. The employees of GMATA, GTA, LTTA and the CCEVB were interviewed for new roles under the VCC umbrella. Maggie Barnard, of the CCEVB was retained as VCC Events Director. Diane Lesman, from GMATA was hired as Marketing Assistant. Suzanne Weber, from GTA, was hired as Admin Manager. Sally Nankivell, from LTTA, was hired as Executive Director of Visit Cook County. July 2013, Linda Jurek hired as Executive Director replacing Sally Nankivell.

2010-2014 | Marketing Department

Marketing the Matters was hired as the marketing agency in September 2010. Jim Vick served as interim Director of Marketing of the organization until the full time hiring of Tom Borgman in 2011. In March 2012, Shelby Gonzales replaced Borgman as Marketing Manager. In December of 2013, Giant Voices was hired as the new Marketing Agency, officially on-boarding in January 2014. Gonzales moved on in February 2014, Kjersti Vick was hired in March 2014 as Marketing Manager.

2013 | New Website

In June, the new VCC website, built by Marketing that Matters and DKS, is launched. Content is centered around custom avatars designed to enhance the customer experience and the extensive interactive map. LTTA and CCEVB websites merged into the new site, GTA and GMATA retained independent websites until May/June of 2014.

2013-2014 | Seasonal Campaigns

The seasonal themed event, Lake Superior Storm Festival, hosts its first event weekend November 2013. The concept of the seasonal campaign, Waterfall Season, first launches in April 2014.

2014 | Mobile App

In response to providing a mobile friendly experience to users, a mobile app was created for visitors to find events and local businesses on the go. The mobile app was also used to send notification updates for events like Moose Madness and measurable snowfalls. Upon launching a fully mobile responsive website in 2017, the mobile app was discontinued.

2014 | SNG Bond & Marketing Agreements Signed

To fund expansion and improvement at Superior National, LTTA agrees to allow lodging tax to be used as payments on a bond agreement between the EDA and Cook County, Minnesota if gross revenues from SNG are insufficient to bear the cost. A marketing agreement is also agreed upon between SNG, the EDA, and VCC.

GROWTH YEARS

2015

May - Grand Marais WINS "America's Coolest Small Town" Contest

June - Event: 1st Boundary Waters Expo

July - Event Resource Coordinator Position approved. Communications Manager position created.

October - VCC purchases and moves Information Center and admin team into existing building. Katie Krantz hired as first Events Resource Manager. Maggie Barnard transitions to Communications Manager. Anna Klobuchar transitions to Info Center Coordinator.

2016

January - Hygge Season Campaign Launches

May - Event: 1st Le Grand du Nord

July - Grand Marais wins USA Today's "Best Midwestern Small Town" contest & listed in Outside Magazine's "The Best 16 Places to Live in the US"

September - New Visitor Guide created

2017

February - Hygge Festival 1st year

July - Event: 1st Gunflint Trail Biggest Blueberry Contest

August - Launch new website

September - Events: 1st Fall Art Along the Lake Studio Tour (replacing Crossing Borders)

November - Discontinue mobile app

December - Dark Sky Season Campaign Launches

2015-2017 | New Building

The purchase and move of Visit Cook County into the 116 W Hwy 61 building was a benchmark both financially, and structurally for the organization. The purchase of the building was made possible by taking on two new long term liabilities, a mortgage through the Grand Marais State Bank, and a loan from the Cook County Revolving Loan Fund. Internal renovations were completed and the Info Center relocated on Labor Day 2015. The administrative team moved in October 2015. External renovations completed in 2017. Additional funds provided by a 5 year loan through the Grand Marais State Bank.

2015 | Coolest Small Town Award

Grand Marais wins “America’s Coolest Small Town” award from Budget Travel Magazine.

2015 | Events & Personnel

The board suggested and approved the creation of an Events Manager position on the VCC Administrative staff. K. Krantz hired in October 2015 to oversee and manage the 1% events and budget. Maggie Barnard transitions to Communications Manager. Anna Klobuchar transitions to Info Center Coordinator.

2015 | Website Listings

Website listings expanded beyond lodging to include dining, retail and other services.

2015-2016 | Grand Marais Lodging Tax Increases 17.3%

GMATA lodging tax collections increased by 17.3% in 2015-2016 as a result of the media and marketing success of the Coolest Small Town award. This growth in tax collections allowed GMATA to increase the number of representatives allocated to their association on the Visit Cook County Board of Directors.

2017 | Website Rebuild

After 5 years, the process to rebuild the website began. The new website is built to be mobile responsive and shifts focus away from the avatars and more towards activities and adventures. New site officially launched in August 2017.

DEFINING YEARS

2018

March - 1st VCC Board Retreat at Gunflint Lodge.

May - Lily Nelson-Pedersen hired as Event Resource Coordinator

September - New mission & vision adopted

November - Board Strategy Session at Surfside. First Draft of Board Priorities and Goals presented.

December - Dark Sky Festival 1st year. Submission of RFP for Gov. Fishing Opener at GTA for the 2020 event.

2019

January - Board Priorities & Goals adopted. Marketing focus shifted towards digital. Update Pillow Count. Marketing Committee established.

February - Being work on website tier changes

May - Launch Pixel Project with AimClear

July - Launch new lodging tiers on website

November - VCC Board Retreat @ Lutsen Resort

2020

January - Discontinuation of contracted PR services with LINPR. Kjersti Vick Promoted to Marketing & PR Director, a new position in the organization.

June - Lily Nelson-Pedersen promoted to Events & Admin Manager.

February to Present - COVID-19

2018 | Board Retreat

The first VCC board retreat was held in March of 2018 at Gunflint Lodge. Following the retreat, a new Mission & Vision was created by a volunteer committee. Additional board work post retreat was the creation of the Board Priorities and Goals that was presented in November 2018.

2018 | RFP Governor's Fishing Opener

VCC gathers information, meets with the GTA and submits a formal RFP to host the MN Governor's Fishing Opener in 2020 on the Gunflint Trail. VCC was not awarded for that year but was highly encouraged to submit for future consideration.

2018-2019 | LTTA Lodging Tax Benchmark Growth

At the end of FY 18-19, LTTA reaches a benchmark growth of 76% growth in lodging tax collections over 2010 at the inception of VCC.

2019 | Board Priorities and Goals

The BOD accepts the presented 2018-19 FY Board Priorities and Goals. VCC staff creates action plan to achieve.

2019 | Website, Tiers & Pixel Project

As part of the Priorities & Goals, VCC was tasked with reformatting lodging listings into tiers by pillow count. Last pillow count was performed in 2016 and a new count was accomplished with updated criteria to ascertain a more accurate count. An increase of 2,369 pillows was found in the updated count, a combination of specific parameters as well as an increase in private vacation rentals contributed to the increase. Additionally in an effort to show the value of the VCC website, a pilot project with AimClear was performed to analyze how users engage with VCC during their customer journey. This involved installing a pixel on key stakeholders websites to monitor engagement duration and timeline. The hypothesis was that during the discovery process, users visited multiple sites over a span of time before finally making a purchasing decision. Unfortunately the tool was not able to provide definitive information due to incompatible technology and methodology. The pixel project was dissolved February 2020.

2020 | COVID-19

The end of February 2020 was the start to an unprecedented time of uncertainty and change for both Visit Cook County as an organization, and the global community. COVID-19 had major impacts on the economy, workforce, daily life, and much more that we are still in the midst of almost a full year later.

March 16 | Gov. Walz Executive Order 20-04 - Closure of Non Essential Businesses

Order from the state for the closure of all non essential businesses including bars, restaurants, gyms, spas, and more. This order does not apply to lodging businesses.

March 16 | VCC Info Center Closes - Admin Team Moves Remote

As directed by the order, the Grand Marais and Tofte Info Centers close to the public. VCC Admin team adjusts and pivots to work from home.

March 25 | Gov Walz Executive Order 20-20 - Shelter in Place

Though lodging businesses were not required to close by the state, at this point many of our local lodging businesses cancelled reservations and asked visitors to stay home as requested. This effort was put forth on behalf of Cook County Public Health. Much discussion at this time was about the scarce medical resources available to an aging population in our remote area.

March 25 - 31 | VCC Response

Visit Cook County leadership and key members of Admin team come together to start to formulate a plan to move forward with loss of all sources of income, and no rebound in sight. Initial budget cuts are made to overhead.

April 1 | Staff Released on Furlough

All staff except for Linda Jurek, Kjersti Vick, and Molly O'Neill were released on furlough starting April 1.

April | Pandemic Reopening Group

Initiated by Cook County Chamber with representation from local health care, VCC board members, Cook County Government, City Government, EDA and SBDA. Linda Jurek participates in 2 hour WTIP Covid Conversation Program with other group members. VCC begins work on the Best Practices Guidebook. VCC launches the Hospitality Hub Group on Facebook.

May | Balancing Act

VCC worked relentlessly to create messaging around community health and economic tourism balance.

2020 | COVID-19 - *Continued*

April | 1% Budget Reductions

GTA & GMATA moves to reduce FY 20-21 1% events budgets down to bare minimums. LTTA does not change budget, and decides instead to handle each event on a case-by-case basis.

April | Budget Reductions

After the initial reduction in overhead from staff furloughs, and the pivot of the 1% budgets by associations, further budget cuts occurred fast and furiously. Expenditures for March - May were negotiated down to the bare minimum.

- All current and planned ad spends were cancelled
- Negotiation of marketing contract with agency Giant Voices for reduced cost investment
- Cancellation and halt of Event Newsletter
- Applications sent to banking agents for deferral of loan payments
- Applicable vendors called for cancellation of service (cleaners, etc.)

May | Overhead & Staff Pivot

Decision is made to permanently close Tofte Information Center. Tofte staff is offered employment in Grand Marais location. Carah Thomas Maskell returns full time to implement and oversee COVID safety measures for the Grand Marais Info Center to reopen. She is the only information center staff at this time. Decision is made to permanently reduce Administrative team by one member. Implementation of a combined role between Events and Finance begins--new position of Administrative and Events Manager is taken on by Lily Nelson-Pedersen, who returns from furlough full time in mid-May. Molly O'Neill stays to train and phase out of role. She finishes her tenure at the end of the Summer.

July | "Full" Staff Returns

All remaining furloughed staff returns to full time work. Some info center staff returns part time.

August | Switch from Seasonal Budget to Tactical Budget

In response to needing to move forward with a more flexible budget, VCC team and leadership transitioned the financial budget structure from the traditional season-based method to a new tactical based method. The tactical method focuses on the type of marketing rather than the time of year. It is designed around research into VCC's benchmark percentages from historical data and allow for an easier pivot in events in our future such as COVID-19.

2020 | COVID-19 - *Continued*

Summer | Rebound

In comparison to many other tourism destinations, Cook County was identified early on as a safe location for travel. Being within driving distance and with so much outdoor space, many of our communities saw increased visitor traffic this season. Many hurdles still had to be overcome by our businesses, including the closure of the Canadian Border, lack of international support staffing (COVID/Government restrictions), new costs and requirements for COVID safety measures, and the first year of a two-year road construction project on Highway 61 and downtown Grand Marais.

May - October | GTA Lodging Tax Growth

The Gunflint Trail, in particular, saw enormous growth with a 10% increase in lodging tax collections in May-October over the previous year.

Fall | Improving the Balance Sheet

By recommendation of the finance committee and with approval from the executive committee, efforts were made to improve the balance sheet of the organization by paying off all long term liabilities. This included repayment in full of the mortgage on the 116 W Hwy 61 property, repayment in full of the Cook County Revolving Loan for building improvements, and repayment in full of a 5 year loan from the Grand Marais State Bank also for building improvements.

Community Investment

In a true pivot from our original marketing plans of January 2020, the Visit Cook County team worked to identify and fulfill the needs of our business community and residential community as quickly as we could identify them and formulate solutions. Some highlights from this work includes:

Cook County Buffs/Face Coverings - 28,000 units provided free of cost to community at an investment of \$24,150.

One Moose Apart - Campaign, logos, and more created and utilized to much success county-wide.

One Moose Apart T-Shirt Fundraiser - a fundraising campaign using the creative raised \$9,339 for the local community.

Grand Marais Trash Can Lids - because of increased take-out containers, artistic garbages were commissioned by the CEC, VCC donated the lids.

Hospitality Hub Facebook Group - created as a place for businesses to communicate freely and discuss issues during covid-19

Glide Dining and Retail Hours App - an overhaul of the Google Sheet to be more mobile friendly and searchable.

Zoom Backgrounds - custom VCC themed backgrounds for visitors to use to keep Cook County top of mind during virtual meetings.

Best Practices Guidebook - created in April to help guide businesses as how to safely reopen and assure future guests of safety.

Pandemic Reopening Group - continues to meet and changes name to Pandemic Economy Group.

LEADERSHIP

BOARD, ASSOCIATION MEMBERS, & TEAM

“Recognize that diversity brings richness. Diversity brings new ideas. Diversity brings growth. Diversity brings dynamism. Diversity brings energy. And, lack of diversity means sameness, dullness, lack of growth.”

-Destination International

Cook County is a diverse geographical area with our inland lakes, Lake Superior shoreline, BWCAW, international border and Boreal forest. The organizational structure of Visit Cook County, with our board of directors and tourism associations, mirrors this diversity. Our organizational model is not replicated anywhere else across the State of Minnesota. The unique perspectives and diversity in our leadership are a key factor in our success. While our association and board members must share similar values in relationship to tourism as a whole, the support of the the mission and vision of Visit Cook County remains at the core of our organizational structure.

VCC Board of Directors Responsibilities:

- Determining strategic goals and direction
- Enhancing the organization’s public image
- Determining goals through an approved strategic plan
- Assuring effective organizational and financial planning
- Electing officers in accordance with the by-laws

VCC Board & Association Member Responsibilities:

- Attending meetings of the board of directors and/or association meetings
- Supporting and promoting the mission and vision of VCC
- Embracing sound, ethical, and dedicated decisions that support the mission and vision of the organization

Visit Cook County Administrative & Information Center Team - Visit Cook County retains and employs a professional staff to carry out the initiatives and directives of the board and associations.

The following are lists of current employees, past employees, their tenure and positions.

Visit Cook County Administrative Team - Current

Linda Jurek, Executive Director (2013 - present)
Kjersti Vick, Marketing & Public Relations Director (2014 - present)
Lily Nelson-Pedersen, Financial & Administrative Manager (2018 - present)
Carah Thomas Maskell, Information Center Coordinator (2018 - present)
Nick Cusick, Events & Marketing Coordinator (2021 - present)
Chris Powell, Information Center (2019 - present)
Dan Helmerson, Information Center (2011 - present)
Aaron Carlson, Information Center (2019 - present)
Carolyn Higgins, Information Center (2005 - present)*

Past Employees & Tenure

Tom Borgman, Marketing Director (2011 - 2012)
Shelby Gonzales, Marketing Manager (2012 - 2014)
Sally Nankivell, Executive Director (2010 - 2013)*
Anna Klobuchar (2012 - 2019)
Alicia Kangas (2010 - 2018)*
Bill Wehseler (2010 - 2020)*
Molly O'Neill (2016 - 2020)
Suzanne Weber (2010 - 2017)*
Diane Lesman (2010 - 2011)*
Judy Boots (2007 - 2019)*
Katie Krantz (2016 - 2018)
Mandy Theiner (2008 - 2015)*
Maggie Barnard, Communications Manager (2009 - 2021)*

**employed by tourism associations prior to 2010 merger and creation of Visit Cook County*

Visit Cook County Board of Directors - The board for Visit Cook County consists of leadership from each of the tourism associations.

The following are lists of current leadership for both the VCC Board of Directors and each of the tourism associations. The description of composition per the association bylaws and management agreement is included for reference. The right hand column includes a list of individuals who have served in prior years.

Visit Cook County Board of Directors - Current

Jennifer Kennedy, Chair (GMATA)
Charles Skinner, Vice Chair (LMC)
John Fredrickson, Treasurer (GTA)
Katie Krantz (LTТА)
Dave Tersteeg (GMATA)
Eric Humphrey (GMATA)
Jim Vick (LMC)
Bryce Campbell (LTТА)
Thom McAleer (LTТА)
Emily Haussner (LTТА)
Clair Nalezny (LTТА)
Carl Madsen (GTA)

Past Board Service

Nancy Burns (LTТА)
Mike Prom (GTA)
Zach Baumann (GTA)
Dave Seaton (GTA)
Adam VanTassel (GTA)
Bob McCloughan (GTA)
Dave Seaton (GTA)
Amber Pratt (GMATA)
Bill Hansen (LTТА)
Bob Ryan (LTТА)
Eric Humphrey (GMATA)
Stephanie Slanga (GMATA)
Beth Kennedy (GMATA)
Dennis Rysdahl (LTТА)
Mike Larson (LTТА)

Visit Cook County Executive Committee - The composition of the executive committee consists of Chairman, Vice Chairman, Secretary/Treasurer, and at least one representative of each Member [Association] having two or more Director Representatives. Committee membership is directly tied to VCC Board membership.

Visit Cook County Finance Committee - The composition of the finance committee consists of the Secretary/Treasurer of the VCC Board serving as the Chair of the committee and any other voluntary representatives from the Member associations.

Visit Cook County Executive Committee - Current

Jennifer Kennedy, Chair (GMATA)

Charles Skinner, Vice Chair (LMC)

John Fredrickson, Treasurer (GTA)

Bryce Campbell, (LTTA)

Open Seat, (GP)

Visit Cook County Finance Committee - Current **(Open for Association Representative Volunteers)**

John Fredrickson, Chair

Charles Skinner

Jim Vick

Bryce Campbell

Dave Tersteeg

LEADERSHIP | GUNFLINT TRAIL BOARD MEMBERS PAST & PRESENT

Gunflint Trail Association - Two Members from the GTA serve on the Visit Cook County Board of Directors. The GTA Board of Directors consists of the officers (president, vice president, and secretary/treasurer) and three to five other voting members elected by a majority vote at the fall meeting.

GTA Board of Directors - Current

John Fredrickson, President

Carl Madsen, Vice President

Open Seat, Sec./Treasurer

Deb Mark, At Large

Nancy Waver, At Large

Past Board Service

Dave Seaton

Zach Baumann

Bob McCloughan

Mike Prom

Bruce Kerfoot

Adam VanTassel

Mike Sherfy

Sue Ahrendt

LEADERSHIP | GRAND MARAIS AREA TOURISM BOARD MEMBERS PAST & PRESENT

Grand Marais Area Tourism Association - Three members of GMATA are selected to serve on the Visit Cook County Board of Directors. The GMATA board of directors consists of five lodging representatives, and two representatives from retail and dining with all attempts to make sure there is at least one appointee from both retail and dining.

GMATA Board of Directors - Current

Jennifer Kennedy, Chair, Lodging Representative

Sara Hingos, Vice Chair, Dining Representative

Chris Mehlhaff, Lodging Representative

Tom Nelson, Lodging Representative

Dave Tersteeg, Lodging Representative

Eric Humphrey, Retail Representative

Rachelle Christianson, Lodging Representative

Past Board Service

Amber Pratt

Mark Sandbo

Sue O'Quinn

Emily Haussner

Paul Sporn

Andrew Warren

Jan Lemke

De J DeJong

Stephanie Slanga

LEADERSHIP | LUTSEN-TOFTE-SCHROEDER AREA TOURISM BOARD MEMBERS PAST & PRESENT

Lutsen Tofte Tourism Association - Five members of LTTA are elected to serve on the Visit Cook County Board of Directors. The LTTA board of directors consists of the following:

Current Lutsen Tofte Tourism Board of Directors

Bryce Campbell, Lutsen Resort, President (a)

Jim Vick, Eagle Ridge, Vice President (a)

Dennis Rysdahl, AmericInn, Sec./Treasurer (b)

Clair Nalezny, CVR (a)

Emily Haussner, Caribou Highlands (a)

Katie Krantz, Bluefin Bay (a)

Thom McAleer, Cascade Lodge (b)

Kim Corliss, North Shore Winery (c)

Charles Skinner, Lutsen Mountains (d)

Past Board Service

Nancy Burns

Stephanie Slanga

Michael O'Phelan

Scott Harrison

Bill Hansen

Mike Larson

Section 3.02: (a) representatives of private and commercial businesses located in or near the towns of Lutsen, Tofte or Schroeder, Minnesota which annually collect pre-tax lodging revenues in excess of \$1,000,000 and pay lodging tax in accordance with Minnesota Statutes §469.190 (referred to as "Large Lodging Tax Directors"), (b) representatives of up to two lodging businesses selected by the vote of the Large Lodging Tax Directors, located in or near the towns of Lutsen, Tofte or Schroeder, Minnesota, which annually collect pre-tax lodging revenues of less than \$1,000,000 and pay lodging tax in accordance with Minnesota Statutes §469.190 (referred to as "Other Lodging Tax Directors"), (c) representatives of up to two private and commercial non-lodging businesses selected by the vote of the Large Lodging Tax Directors, whether or not located outside the boundaries of those towns, (referred to as "Tourism Directors"), and (d) a representative of Lutsen Mountain Corp. The management of the following operations are currently entitled to designate a nominee to be a member of the board of directors of the corporation as Large Lodging Tax Directors, and to participate in the selection of Other Lodging Tax Directors and Tourism Directors: Bluefin Bay, Caribou Highlands, Cascade Vacation Rentals, Eagle Ridge, Lutsen Resort.

Visit Cook County recognizes the value of building and maintaining relationships with organizations in our communities as well as at the State level. Following you will find a list of organizations we align with support and/or leadership.

Explore Minnesota Tourism Serves to elevate Minnesota as a premier travel destination through results-driven, innovative destination marketing and to inspire consumers and facilitate their travel to and within the state of Minnesota. VCC partners with Explore MN on many levels. Our involvement and support has heightened the awareness of tourism in Northeastern MN. VCC is a respected leader in the realm of Minnesota destination marketing organizations.

Explore Minnesota Annual Tourism Conference Presentations:

March 2018 - Destination Marketing Panel / K. Vick and Panel

March 2019 - The Strength of Events / L. Jurek

February 2020 - The State of Short-Term Rentals: Scope, Opportunities, Challenges & Future / L. Jurek and Panel

February 2020 - Advocacy and Lobbying: Tips and Tricks from the Trenches from MACVB Leaders / L. Jurek and Panel

Awards:

February 2015 - Travel Marketing Award - Award of Excellence to Visit Cook County

February 2016 - Travel Marketing Award - Award of Merit to Visit Cook County

January 2017 - EMT Industry Award - Rising Star Award presented to Linda Jurek

January 2017 - EMT Industry Award - Award of Excellence Event of the Year - Lutsen 99er

January 2017 - EMT Industry Award - Award of Merit - Lake Superior Storm Festival

February 2020 - EMT Industry Award - Tourism Rising Star for Marketing presented to Kjersti Vick

Minnesota Association of Convention and Visitor Bureaus is a not-for-profit organization which provides member bureaus with legislative information, continuing education and public recognition of the tourism and convention industry in Minnesota. Linda Jurek was appointed to the board of directors in 2018. Visit Cook County hosted the education conference in June 2019 bringing over 50 DMO leaders to Cook County.

Cook County Chamber of Commerce The mission of the Cook County Chamber of Commerce is to be the representative voice of county for-profit and non-profit businesses in working to improve the county economy and to address pressing county socioeconomic issues. With intention, the executive director of Visit Cook County serves as a board member of the Cook County Chamber. The organization is also a member and provides financial support to the Chamber.

Hospitality Minnesota was established April 1, 2020 when a merger took place of the Minnesota Lodging Association, Minnesota Restaurant Association and Minnesota Resort and Campground Association. Combining the three associations provides a stronger and more unified voice for all efforts within the tourism industry including advocacy, programming and education. Visit Cook County is a member of Hospitality MN. Hospitality Minnesota, as a combined entity under the leadership of Liz Rammer, has been a critical voice and frontline advocate for tourism during the pandemic.

North Shore Scenic Byway Committee The North Shore Scenic Drive Council is the oversight committee that guides the promotion and interpretation of the North Shore Scenic Drive, an All-American Road. The Council has representatives from the Counties, Cities, and tourism organizations along the Byway. The Council is staffed by ARDC's Regional Planning Division and is funded through a combination of local and federal dollars.

Gunflint Trail Scenic Byway Committee The Gunflint Trail Scenic Byway Committee is the oversight committee that guides the promotion, preservation and interpretation of the Gunflint Trail Scenic Byway which is one of three nationally designated scenic byways in the Superior National Forest.

Minnesota Arrowhead Committee Formerly known as the Minnesota Arrowhead Association, a regional branch of Explore MN Tourism.

Heart of Hospitality Award Visit Cook County launched this annual award during the fall of 2019. Nominations are accepted from each tourism association. The businesses of the tourism associations are asked to nominate one employee who stands out for their excellent service and enhancing the visitor's experience. The award was well received in 2019. During the pandemic, the awards were presented to the winners and video and pictures were shared with our communities.

Other

October 15, 2020 - University of Minnesota Tourism Webinar - Presentation by Kjersti Vick and Joe Henry, Lake of the Woods Tourism

November 18, 2019 - Climate Change Workshop, Lutsen Mountains - Climate Change and Tourism - L. Jurek presenter during daylong conference

February 2017 - The Benefits of Collaborating with Lodging Tax and Marketing - International Falls Presentation by L. Jurek and K. Vick

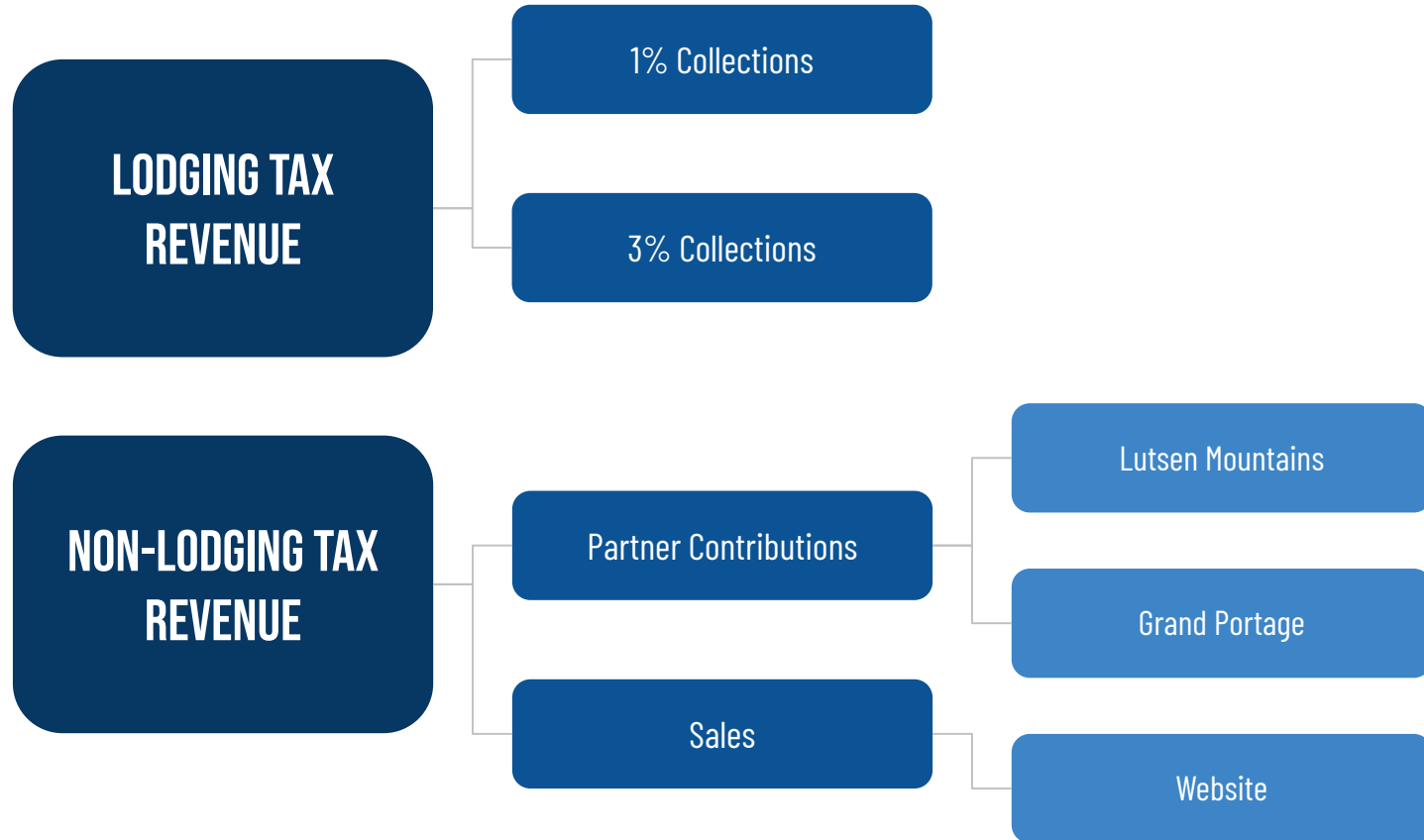
Cook County Higher Education - Programming and presentations conducted by both L. Jurek and K. Vick

Tourism Training - 2013-2016 L. Jurek conducted tourism training for each member organization.

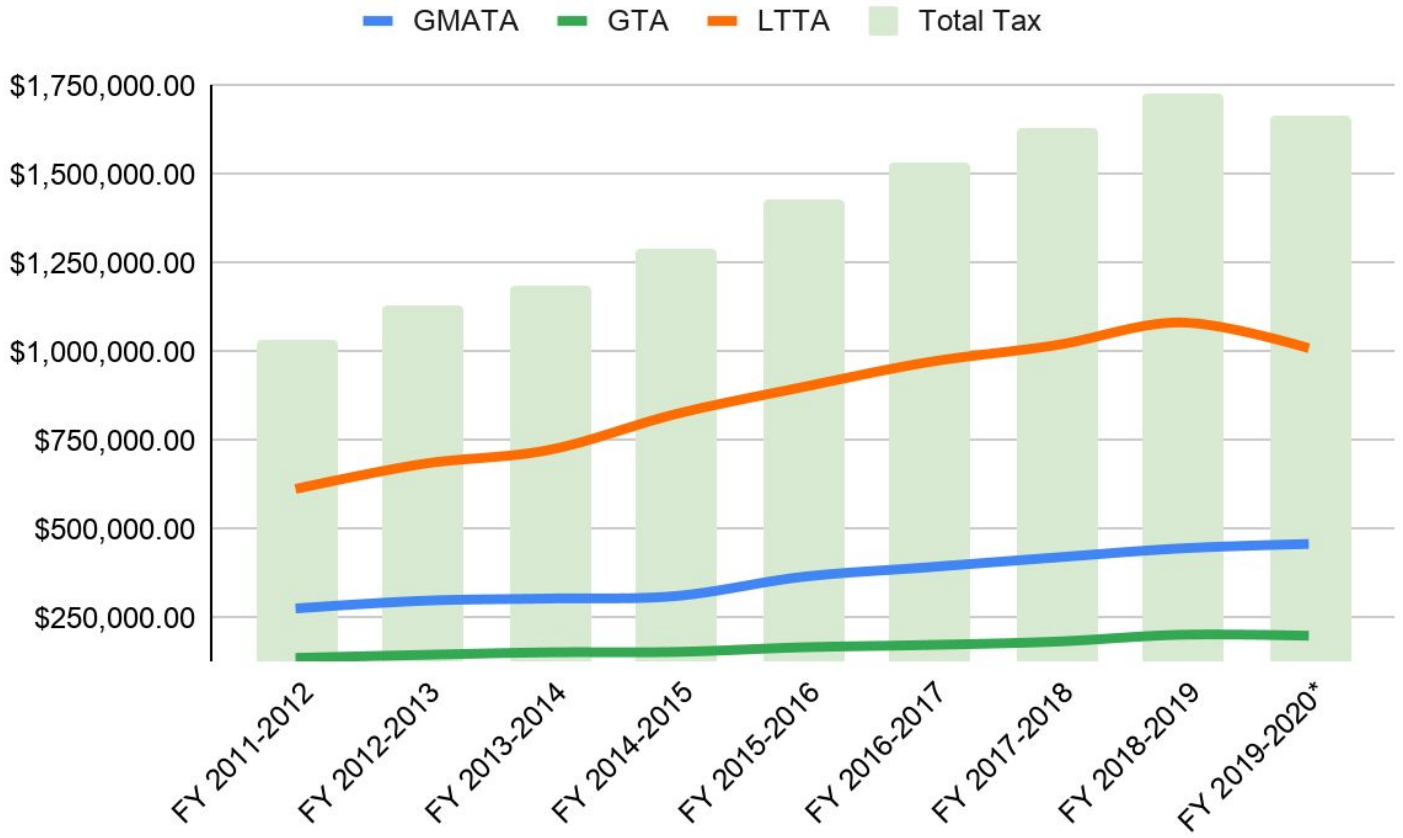
Fall 2016 - Homeowner's Association Presentation at Lutsen Resort

And many more.....

FINANCES



FINANCES | LODGING TAX - GROWTH 2011-2020



* due to changes in reporting income as a response to COVID-19, FY 2019-2020 includes only 10 months of income.

Lodging Tax is referred to in many ways across the US. In some regions, **lodging tax** may also be known by **stay tax, occupancy tax, room tax, sales tax, tourist tax, or hotel tax**. Lodging tax, as we refer to the tax universally across the State of Minnesota, is protected by many advocacy organizations throughout the state including Explore Minnesota, Hospitality Minnesota, and MN Area of Conventions and Visitors Bureau. In Minnesota, Local Lodging Tax collection is guided the Minnesota Statute 469.190.

The statute in its entirety can be found here: <https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/cite/469.190>

Minnesota Statutes 469.190 - Local Lodging Tax - Authorization Summary

A statutory or home rule charter city may by ordinance, and a town may by the affirmative vote of the electors at the annual town meeting, or at a special town meeting, impose a tax of up to three percent on the gross receipts from the furnishing for consideration of lodging at a hotel, motel, rooming house, tourist court, or resort, other than the renting or leasing of it for a continuous period of 30 days or more. A statutory or home rule charter city may by ordinance impose the tax authorized under this subdivision on the camping site receipts of a municipal campground.

Disposition of Proceeds: Ninety-five percent of the gross proceeds from any tax shall be used by the statutory or home rule charter city or town to fund a local convention or tourism bureau for the purpose of marketing and promoting the city or town as a tourist or convention center. This subdivision shall not apply to any statutory or home rule charter city or town that has a lodging tax authorized by special law.

There are over 100 cities and/or towns currently collecting lodging tax throughout Minnesota. There are also 22 “cities” collecting lodging tax under charter or special law which means there has been approval to deviate from the expected use of lodging tax. This list includes: Minneapolis, Bloomington, Duluth, Rochester, St. Paul, Brooklyn Center, Tofte/Lutsen/Schroeder*, Winona, Roseville, Two Harbors, St. Cloud/Sartell/Sauk Rapids/St. Joseph/Waite Park, Newport, Itasca County, Hubbard County, Proctor, Giant’s Ridge Rec Area (Biwabik), Marshall, Sleepy Eye, La Crescent, Lake County, and Plymouth.

**Tofte/Lutsen/Schroeder special tax use allowed for Superior National Golf Course*

3% Lodging Tax

The tourism associations in Cook County adopted the collection of state lodging at varying times. Prior to 3% collections some associations or City entities began collecting lodging tax at a 2% rate as early as 1987. The three tourism associations adopted the collection of lodging tax at a 3% rate on the following dates:

LTTA	3% Lodging Tax adopted January 1, 1991
GTA	3% Lodging Tax adopted December 1, 1997
GMATA	3% Lodging Tax adopted October 1, 2000

1% Lodging Tax

Support for approval of collection was received from each of the townships and the tourism associations for the “purpose of increasing tourism and benefiting the economy of Cook County.” CCEVB was incorporated on July 20, 2007 and was initially funded with a 1% fee on lodging sales and a 3% fee on recreational sales by tourism businesses from the LTTA and GMATA regions with voluntary contributions from the GTA and the Grand Portage Tribal Council.

Ordinance Approved by Cook County Commissioners - 1% Lodging Tax Resolution No. 2008-54, November 2008

Adoption of the ordinance solidified the 1% collection of lodging tax to support CCEVB (events and marketing). GMATA, GTA, and LTTA did not support the 3% recreational tax; LMC supported the 3% recreational tax.

The 1% CCEVB, coupled with website sales and partner contributions, allows for more flexible budget expenditures outside the allowed use of the 3%. VCC works with each tourism association annually in the allocation of the funds from the 1%. This allows Visit Cook County to develop (produce), sponsor, and promote events and tourism initiatives in the area that align with the VCC mission and vision.

Cook County Events & Visitors Bureau (1% Lodging Tax Resolution)

The resolution included support from GMATA, LTTA, and GTA authorizing up to a 1% additional lodging tax and a 3% recreation tax to fund a new Cook County Event and Visitors Bureau for the purpose of increasing tourism visits during low tourism periods for the benefit of the economy and residents of Cook County. Incorporated on July 20, 2007 pending passage of State legislation. The State legislature approved the provisions in May 2008.

Effective Statute date: June 20, 2008 with tax collection beginning December 12, 2008 with the tax “continued for an initial period of five (5) years and thereafter for successive five year periods in the absence of a vote prior to the end of the fourth (4th) year. The State legislature approved this collection with termination 15 years after imposition.

From the Article of Incorporation of Cook County Events and Visitor Bureau:

This corporation is organized and shall be operated exclusively as a Business League for the purpose of planning, marketing, organizing, funding, promoting, supporting and hosting entertainment events and performances, conferences, education and training sessions, recreational activities, festivals and other events, with a focus on events during the low tourism time periods, to achieve a net increase in the number of visitors to Cook County and promote a sustainable year-around tourism economy in Cook County and improved year-around employment and economic well-being for the residents of Cook County.

Management Company Agreement - Cook County Visitors Bureau (VCC)

Document signed on March 8, 2010 combined lodging tax beginning May 1, 2010. Original document signed by: Bob McCloughan - GTA, Mark Sandbo - GMATA, Mike Larson - LTTA, Charles Skinner - Lutsen Mountains Corp., Frank Vecchio - Grand Portage, Charles Skinner - CCEVB

Owned by the Cook County Economic Development Authority (EDA) Superior National Golf (SNG) Course is a 27-hole, gold star, community asset in Lutsen, Minnesota.

Cook County & the EDA Bond Agreement

Although operated and run for many years prior to this date, in 2014 an agreement was made between Cook County, Minnesota, and the EDA to fund a major expansion project and make improvements to the existing course. Cook County issued **\$2,410,000 in General Tax Abatement Bonds** to the EDA to complete the project.

Bond repayments were scheduled to begin in 2016 (as outlined in the loan agreement) from SNG's *gross revenues*. However, as was also outlined, if *gross revenues* were not sufficient to cover the bonds, **lodging tax collected in the LTTA district** would be retained by Cook County as payment. Thus, starting in 2016 thru current, this collected lodging tax has been the sole source of payments on the SNG bonds.

The use of lodging tax in a project of this kind had to be **approved by the state in special legislation**. Collecting lodging tax under charter or special law indicates there has been approval to deviate from the expected use of lodging tax. Without special legislative approval, Statute 461.190, does not extend the use of lodging tax for capital improvement projects.

Visit Cook County, EDA, & SNG Marketing Agreement

Visit Cook County is tasked first and foremost as a marketing organization. Parallel to the use of lodging tax as a source to pay the SNG bonds in lieu of gross revenues, an official marketing agreement between the SNG, the EDA, and VCC was established in August 2013 and extends through 2022.

This agreement establishes an annual monetary VCC contribution of **\$50,000** and an EDA contribution of **\$20,000** for SNG to use toward marketing. This marketing agreement sunsets in 2022.

In taking an average of the last 7 fiscal years, the combination of the bond payments and the marketing contribution to SNG accounts for **8% of all of VCC's expenditures annually**.

MARKETING & PUBLIC RELATIONS

Traditional Marketing | Paid Media

When Visit Cook County formed in 2010, *Traditional Marketing tactics were still the primary marketing avenue. As the organization evolved and changed with technology, marketing efforts have shifted away from traditional tactics in favor of more trackable digital tactics.

Out-of-Home Campaigns

To help build awareness of the new brand, Visit Cook County, out-of-home marketing paid a significant role of the early campaign strategies. Summer of 2020, working with the Street Team, a canoe was portaged through downtown MPLS distributing information about the GTA. In the winter of 2013/14, VCC partnered with Lutsen Mountains to wrap the light rail train through downtown Minneapolis. Additional collaborations with Lutsen Mountains include two skywalk takeovers, in 2014/15 a bench was transformed into a chairlift and in 2016/17 the pillars in the skyway were graphically wrapped and included a takeover event with VCC staff handing out materials. Additionally, bus wraps were a part of seasonal marketing campaigns in 2014, 2015, 2016, 2018. These campaigns included both external and internal creative placements, most notably the Transit Shelter Takeovers in 2014 which won an award for Marketing Excellence at the 2015 Explore Minnesota Tourism Conference.

Billboards

Strategically chosen digital billboards have been a part of seasonal campaigns from 2014-2020. Additionally, GMATA had a long standing contract for a static billboard on the Northbound side of I-35 until 2016 when it was decided to shift to digital billboards with rotating creative. A welcome billboard, on the Candian side of the border, has been in place since 2013. A Grand Marais billboard has been in place on Ski Hill Road since pre-2010.

Trade Shows

Each year, the VCC team would attend a handful of carefully selected trade shows. Sponsorship of the Twin Cities Loppet occurred 2010-14. The Midwest Mountaineering Winter and Spring Expos were annually attended until 2017 when the shift was made to attend only the Winter Expo. CanoeCopia was added for the years of 2016-19; the last 3 years the booth was staffed by GTA members. In partnership with Lutsen Mountains, VCC attended ski events in Chicago, Minneapolis and Madison from 2010-17. The Arrowhead Snowmobile & Ice Fishing Expo was tested in 2014 & 2015. The Three Rivers Parks District MN Ski Opener was added in 2018. VCC partnered with the Lutsen 99er and attended the Birkebeiner Trade Show in 2017-20. Partnering with WTIP on annual live broadcast from the MN State Fairgrounds occurred 2017-19 - also garnering metro media interviews with Linda Jurek.

**Traditional marketing tactics are defined as Out-of-Home (transit & billboards), Trade Shows, Print and Broadcast (TV & Radio).*

Print

Magazines and Daily publications continue to play a role in marketing as they have evolved to expand into digital components. In 2018 and 2019, sponsored content around the Star Tribune multi-week series paired content adjacent to relevant promotions. 2018 featured a solo hiker experiencing the Superior Hiking Trail, 2019 featured a father and son trip in the BWCAW.

Broadcast

Broadcast has played several roles in promotion. Weekly updates by Linda Jurek through metro and regional radio broadcasts have been part of seasonal campaigns from 2015-2019. This strategy has worked particularly well during the winter season - keeping visitors updated on snow conditions, trail conditions and special events. Strategic alliance between paid TV advertising on KBJR paired with organic content features became part of the 2018-2020 annual campaign. Weather sponsorships in the Metro have also been part of our integrated strategy in the past.

Digital & Social Media Marketing

Emerging as a dominant part of our annual marketing plan in 2018, a heightened emphasis on digital and social media marketing was requested by the BOD to demonstrate the success and reach of VCC marketing efforts.

Digital Marketing

This tactic embodies a variety of media forms. Search, Display, Emailers, Geofencing, Retargeting, Native, and Programmatic marketing have all been critical components to a cohesive and multidimensional campaign. In 2019, the BOD tasked VCC with doubling users traffic to the website. Utilizing a holistic digital marketing approach, each component of the aforementioned tactics were employed. The result was an over 80% increase in traffic with quality interaction being retained.

Hubspot & Lead Gen

Incorporated into the website redesign in 2017, contact management software Hubspot was integrated into VCC strategic marketing and website design. This multipurpose digital tool provides deeper customer engagement opportunities to connect and retain evangelists by segmenting and streamlining communications with contacts.

Social Media

Utilized both as an organic communication and inspiration tool as well as a marketing avenue, social media has been an active participant in the overall marketing and public relations strategy for VCC. In 2015, the grassroots efforts for the “America’s Coolest Small Town” campaign began on social media and transformed into a marketing and PR campaign that spanned several years. Two primary hashtags have been launched by VCC. In 2014, #visitcc launched and was widely used. However, it was confused and co-opted with another destination (Corpus Christi, TX). Due to unaligned brand usage, #visitcc was retired from official use. Usage of #donorthmn began in 2015 and has since been used over 12,000 times.

Public Relations

Great gains have been achieved from public relations efforts from the past 11 years. Partial list of significant PR wins that garnered national media attention include, the Coolest Small Town Award (2015-16), the Moose through the ice rescue (2017), Travel & Leisure BWCAW story (2018), Covid-19 Pandemic effect on Travel in NY Times (2020). Since 2014, VCC has worked directly with over 30 influencers and FAM groups, including FAM groups from China, Italy and the Netherlands. Annual PR campaigns around 1% funded events and niche seasons (hygge, dark skies, waterfalls and storm seasons) continue to generate dozens of results a season.

Branding

In 2010, the newly formed Cook County Visitors Bureau launched and began researching brand identities. In 2011, the Sackett study was performed and a selection of taglines presented. Way North of Ordinary was chosen, which required a trademark license from the Bois Forte Band for usage. In 2013, the licensing expired and the brand “Way North of Ordinary” was transformed into Visit Cook County. In 2017, a new study was performed and “Naturally Unforgettable” became adopted as the new tagline.

Campaigns

Several marketing and content campaigns have been launched since 2013. Marketing campaigns launched include Encounter Cook County (2014), Juxtaposition (2015), and Seize the Season (2016). Multiple seasonal campaigns after launching were transformed into annual events. Waterfall season launched in 2013. Hygge Season launched in 2016, 1st event February 2017; Dark Sky Season launched in 2017, 1st event February 2018; Storm Season and Storm Festival launch November 2013.

Website

VCC has undergone two major website rebuilds in its tenure. The first site was launched in 2013 featuring avatars designed to lead the user through the site based on interest groupings. An interactive map was the only way to explore and discover local businesses. The initial site was built without mobile friendly capabilities and while several efforts to resolve were performed, in 2017 the VCC site was ready for a complete rebuild to make the website mobile responsive and more streamlined. By request of the BOD, in 2019, a revision to the lodging display was performed to provide properties with higher pillow counts a more equitable presence on the VCC website based on presumed lodging tax contribution.

Marketing Assets

In 2011, a major photoshoot campaign was launched with Layne Kennedy. To complete the portfolio, video assets were obtained in 2014 & 2015 with Capture Film Co. Being resourceful, in 2017, the video assets were reworked using pre-existing footage from the initial video shoot to create 10 new themed content pieces. In 2019, a collection of updated photo assets were needed and another photo shoot executed in June, September and January. Additional assets include a branded tent (2018), pull up banners (2015, 2018), and outdoor flag (2020).

Collateral & Swag

Developing and building assets to benefit the region has been a top priority of the organization since its inception. In 2016, a new Visitor Guide was created and was updated annually (2017-19). A summary of a few of the major VCC printed map assets and initial year developed: Waterfall maps (2014), Biking maps (2015), Cross-country ski map (2015), Downtown Grand Marais map (2016), Northern Lights map (2017), Gallery Guide (2018), ATV (2020). In 2016, a newly designed annual visitor guide was developed and has been updated annually until 2020. Additional promotional materials include VCC branded bags (2015-20), Moose antler hats (2013-19).

Since the inception of Visit Cook County, the organization has engaged with a marketing agency to assist with analytics, website and marketing initiatives. We are currently under contract with Giant Voices.

OUR TEAM APPROACH





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UPDATED: AUGUST 2021

