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 **2024 ELKHART COUNTY CVB  
BUSINESS PLAN**



# FEBRUARY 2024 BOARD REPORT

*Proudly prepared by*







# DIVERSIFY

## ECCVB MARKETING, SALES & SERVICES STRATEGY

The objective of the ECCVB tourism marketing, sales & services strategy is to drive the destination brand awareness and visitor conversion among broader and more diverse target audiences that include the niche markets identified by Destination Think! There are three targeted strategies for the leisure travel market and three for the group travel market.

### DIVERSIFY PILLAR GOAL

Diversify the destination visitor base to better integrate multiple generations and interests. We expect to achieve higher travel conversion and extend stays by increasing the county's brand awareness and aligning experiences with an expanded market.

### DIVERSIFY PILLAR TARGET MARKETS OF FOCUS

- Arts and cultural heritage travel
- Outdoor recreation and adventure travel
- Visiting friends & relatives and pass-thru travel
- Group meeting and social/reunion travel
- Youth sports travel
- Group tour travel

## WELL CRAFTED DESTINATION

### *Tactics*

- Create and manage a content plan integrating website content, social media actions, paid media campaigns, eNewsletter initiatives, and digital content (January - December) - **Ongoing**
- Manage photo and video shoots highlighting Heritage Trail assets / activities (January - December) - **Ongoing**
- Produce and promote custom digital content focusing on storytelling of partners and highlighting Heritage Trail assets and experiences that focus on niche audiences (January - December) - **Ongoing**
- Produce and place print ads in publications targeting the external visitor and internal resident (January - December) - **(YTD 4: Phoenix Performing Arts, Premier Arts, (2) TravelIN)**
- Update, manage, and promote mobile passport programs (January - December) - **Ongoing**
- Refresh existing and create new trip ideas and itineraries aligning with niche audiences (January - December) - **Ongoing**
- Manage Google PPC ad campaign to promote the destination brand and its assets along the Heritage Trail across digital channels (January - December) - **Ongoing**
- Produce and distribute eNewsletters to promote Elkhart County assets (January - December) - **(YTD 2)**
- Host travel journalists on FAM tours highlighting the Well Crafted destination brand (January - December) - **(YTD 0)**
- Produce and distribute press releases and story pitches to local, regional, national and travel media (January - December) - **Ongoing**
- Manage and promote a Well Crafted Champions campaign integrating blog, video, podcast and social media elements (January - December) - **Ongoing**
- Manage and promote a video campaign integrating partner brands with the Elkhart County Well Crafted brand (January - December) - **Ongoing**
- Manage and promote a Well Crafted Elkhart County foodie campaign (January - December) - **Ongoing**
- Distribute Well Crafted promotional kits for regional and national travel journalists (April - June)
- Manage, distribute and promote a Roadtrippers campaign focused on the RV audience (April - December)

### *Metrics*

- Track mobile passport program participants, check-ins, prize pick redemptions (January - December) - **(YTD 0)**
- Track Well Crafted paid and organic digital promotions (January - December) - **(YTD Engagement 3,432; Impressions 110,980; Click-Through Rate 1.74%; Cost Per Click .22; Video Views 605; Fans 22,986)**
- Track Google PPC ad campaign promoting the destination brand and its assets along the Heritage Trail across digital channels (March, June, September, December)
- Track qualified media inquiries, generating media placements in print, broadcast, online and blog through impressions and advertising value equivalents (January - December) - **(YTD 87 placements; 406,255,700 reach; AVE \$3,757,859.62)**
- Track Media website analytics (January - December) - **(YTD Views 182; Users 129)**
- Track RV website analytics (January - December) - **(YTD Views 4,851; Users 2,233; RV Tour Sheet download 204)**
- Track Users and Views of Leisure Itineraries (January - December) - **(YTD 351)**
- Track Blog Post analytics (January - December) - **(YTD Top 5 Blog Posts In Home Amish Dining, Quilt Gardens Locations, Sunday Stops, Date Night, Things to do in February)**
- Track Well Crafted Champions campaign results (January - December) - **(YTD 0)**
- Track partner brand campaign results (January - December) - **(YTD 0)**
- Track Elkhart County Restaurant Weeks campaign results (March)
- Track Well Crafted Elkhart County promotional kit campaign to regional and national travel journalists (April - December)
- Track Roadtrippers campaign results focused on the RV audience (April - December)

## HERITAGE TRAIL

### *Tactics*

- Produce Heritage Trail maps (January) - **Complete**
- Promote Heritage Trail audio driving tour (January - December) - **Ongoing**
- Manage Heritage Trail wayfinding signage and inventory (January - December) - **Ongoing**

### *Metrics*

- Track Heritage Trail audio driving tours distribution via CD, USB, and streaming (January - December) - **(YTD 25)**
- Track Heritage Trail printed map distribution (January - December) - **(YTD 1,250)**
- Track PDF downloads of Heritage Trail map (January - December) - **(YTD 488)**
- Track Heritage Trail page website analytics (January - December) - **(YTD Views 1,150; Users 642)**

## QUILT GARDENS ALONG THE HERITAGE TRAIL

### *Tactics*

- Update and create copy for Quilt Gardens and Quilt Murals signs (January - April) - **Ongoing**
- Update creative concept for print and digital media (January - April) - **Ongoing**
- Confirm and maintain rack card distribution at Indiana Toll Road and Ohio Turnpike plazas (January - September) - **Ongoing**
- Produce and place ads in publications targeting the quilting and/or gardening market (January - December) - **(YTD 3: PCMGA, AQS Paducah & Grand Rapids)**
- Update and promote mobile Quilt Gardens passport program (January - December) - **Ongoing**
- Update partner brand management guide and promotion guidelines (April)
- Produce and distribute Quilt Gardens rack cards (May - September)

### *Metrics*

- Track mobile passport program analytics (January - December) - **(YTD 0)**
- Track rack card distribution (January - December) - **(YTD 0)**
- Track qualified media inquiries, generating media placements in print, broadcast, online and blog through impressions and advertising value equivalents (January - December) - **(YTD 87 placements; 406,255,700 reach; AVE \$3,757,859.62)**
- Track Quilt Gardens website analytics (January - December) - **(YTD Website Views 2,093; Users 838; Blog Views 334)**
- Track Facebook, X (Twitter), Instagram paid and organic analytics (June - September)

## ELKHART COUNTY AREA GUIDE

### *Tactics*

- Develop and produce electronic version of 2024 Elkhart County Area Guide for digital distribution (January) - **Complete**
- Update creative concept for digital media (January - February) - **Ongoing**
- Oversee distribution of 175,000 printed copies of 2024 Elkhart County Area Guide (January - December) - **Ongoing**
- Confirm and maintain distribution at Indiana Toll Road and Ohio Turnpike plazas (January - December) - **Ongoing**
- Coordinate and collaborate design of 2025 Elkhart County Area Guide (April - June)
- Manage sales, content and production of the 2025 Elkhart County Area Guide (June - December)

### *Metrics*

- Track distribution of 2024 Elkhart County Area Guide (January - December) - **(YTD 37,860)**
- Track digital distribution of 2024 electronic version of Elkhart County Area Guide (January - December) - **(YTD 363)**

## ELKHART COUNTY EVENT CALENDAR

### *Tactics*

- Develop, produce, and distribute event calendar direct mail postcard (January - March) - **Ongoing**
- Manage a digital campaign (January - December) - **Ongoing**

### *Metrics*

- Track distribution (April)
- Track Event Calendar website analytics (January - December) - **(YTD Views 8,571, Users 2,540)**
- Track Facebook, X (Twitter), Instagram analytics (January - December) - **(YTD Impressions 9,334; Engagements 263, Post Link Clicks 51)**

## VISITING FRIENDS AND RELATIVES (VFR)

### *Tactics*

- Promote on social media channels (January - December) - **Ongoing**
- Update website landing page (February) - **Complete**

### *Metrics*

- Track Locals website page analytics (January - December) - **(YTD Views 33, Users 15)**
- Track Facebook, X (Twitter), Instagram analytics (January - December) - **(YTD Impressions 895; Engagements 28, Post Link Clicks 3)**

## INDIANA TRAVEL GUIDE & VISITINDIANA.COM

### *Tactics*

- Develop and produce brochure lead generation ad and listing ads (January) - **Complete**

### *Metrics*

- Track Elkhart County Area Guide requests received (January - December) - **(YTD 651)**

## INDIANA FESTIVAL GUIDE

### *Tactics*

- Produce and place full page ad (January) - **Complete**

## NITDC INDIANA'S COOL NORTH REGIONAL PROMOTIONS CO-OP

### *Tactics*

- Produce and place Toll Road Exit-by-Exit Guide ad (January - February) - **Complete**
- Produce and place Toll Road Exit-by-Exit Guide map ad (January - February) - **Complete**



## **DOWNTOWN ELKHART PROMOTIONS CO-OP**

### *Tactics*

- Manage a digital ad campaign and print materials promoting Downtown Elkhart assets and experiences (January - December) - **Ongoing**

### *Metrics*

- Track Facebook and Instagram analytics (March, June, September, December)

## **EXIT 92 PROMOTIONS CO-OP**

### *Tactics*

- Refine and develop messaging for I-80/90 Exit 92 assets (January - December) - **Ongoing**
- Confirm and maintain outdoor billboards along I-80/90 Toll Road (January - December) - **Ongoing**
- Confirm and maintain rack card distribution at Indiana Toll Road and Ohio Turnpike plazas (January - December) - **Ongoing**
- Confirm and place full page ad in University of Notre Dame Football Program (April) - **Complete**
- Promote I-80/90 Exit 92 and its high density of assets and experiences through in-app ads (April - December)

### *Metrics*

- Track rack card distribution (January - December) - **(YTD 0)**
- Track in-app ad impressions received (May - December)

## **SMALL MEETINGS MARKET**

### *Tactics*

- Produce and place content in print and digital publications targeting small meeting and event planners searching for Midwest or Indiana destinations (January - December) - **(YTD 2: Small Market Meetings)**
- Identify and promote relevant small meetings events to local and regional media (January - December) - **Ongoing**
- Provide services, information and assistance to meeting and event planners (January - December) - **Ongoing**
- Produce and distribute Meeting Planner Guide (January - December) - **Ongoing**
- Produce and distribute RV Rally Planner Guide (January - December) - **Ongoing**

### *Metrics*

- Track Meetings website analytics (January - December) - **(YTD Views 769; Users 215)**
- Track PDF downloads of Meeting Planner Guide (January - December) - **(YTD 0)**
- Track PDF downloads of RV Rally Planner Guide (January - December) - **(YTD 0)**
- Track meeting market contacts, leads, and RFPs (January - December) - **(YTD 1)**

## YOUTH SPORTS MARKET

### *Tactics*

- Place print ad in publications targeting sports rights holders and sports event planners (January - December) - **(YTD 1: SPG)**
- Create and distribute press releases or story pitches to local, regional and travel media for the Elkhart County sports market (January - December) - **Ongoing**
- Collaborate with Team Indiana on sporting event initiatives and promotions aligning with Elkhart County assets (January - December) - **Ongoing**
- Provide services, information, promotional assets, and assistance to sporting event organizers (January - December) - **Ongoing**

### *Metrics*

- Track unique page views to the Sports Facilities Profile Sheet (January - December) - **(YTD 3)**
- Track unique page views to the Sports Information page (January - December) - **(YTD Views 210)**

## TRAVEL TRADE MARKET

### *Tactics*

- Produce and place print and digital insertions in publications targeting tour operators and group planners (January - December) - **(YTD 11: Going on Faith, (3) Group Travel Leader, (7) Group Tour Magazine, Leisure Group Travel)**
- Conduct in-person FAM tours (January - December) - **(YTD 0)**
- Attend tradeshows targeting tour operators and group planners (January - December) - **(YTD 1: American Bus Association)**
- Produce and distribute Travel Trade eNewsletters (January - December) - **(YTD 1)**
- Provide services, information and assistance to tour operators and group planners (January - December) - **Ongoing**
- Update and create group profiles and customized daytrip and overnight itineraries (January - December) - **Ongoing**

### *Metrics*

- Track Travel Trade website analytics (January - December) - **(YTD Views 613, Users 303)**
- Track PDF downloads of Travel Trade profile sheet (January - December) - **(YTD 0)**
- Track travel trade leads and appointments (January - December) - **(YTD 88)**



# CURATE

## ECCVB DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

The objective of the ECCVB curate strategy is to actively engage in product and community development activities that support the organization's role as a Destination Architect. This strategy approach will assist existing and new partners with development and delivery of more engaging experiences that align with the Well Crafted destination brand and targeted audiences while being synergistic with existing assets.

### CURATE PILLAR GOAL

Encourage, support and assist the development of more diverse and engaging experiences throughout the county and its communities. We expect to expand connections with the local RV industry to increase their awareness of opportunities within the Elkhart County tourism space.

### CURATE PILLAR TARGET MARKETS OF FOCUS

- Event Support & Development
- Small Business Support
- Outdoor Recreation
- RV Industry Engagement
- Youth Sports Market Engagement
- Vibrant Communities Implementation

## DESTINATION EXPERIENCE DEVELOPMENT

### *Tactics*

- Continue outreach and activation of signature countywide experience aligning with Well Crafted and DNA niches (January - December) - **Ongoing**
- Research and develop countywide seasonal experiential art exhibitions activating and aligning with Well Crafted and DNA niches (January - December) - **Ongoing**
- Research and develop immersive and engaging experiences aligning with niche segmentations (January - December) - **Ongoing**
- Research and develop new interactive Visitor Center experience aligning with the Well Crafted destination brand (January - December) - **Ongoing**
- Develop a Well Crafted Champions campaign integrating blog, video, podcast and social media elements (January - March) - **Ongoing**
- Research and develop Elkhart County Well Crafted video campaign integrating partner brands (January - May) - **Ongoing**
- Research and develop a Well Crafted Elkhart County foodie campaign (January - March) - **Complete**
- Develop Well Crafted promotional kits for regional and national travel journalists (January - March) - **Complete**

## OUTDOOR RECREATION DEVELOPMENT

### *Tactics*

- Research and develop outdoor experiences in collaboration with local stakeholder organizations (January - December) - **Ongoing**
- Facilitate discussions with park and trail stakeholders on amenity wayfinding signage (January - December) - **(YTD 1)**
- Continue development and activation of countywide blueways experiences aligning with Well Crafted and DNA niches (January - December) - **Ongoing**

## RV EXPERIENCE DEVELOPMENT

### *Tactics*

- Develop an outreach strategy and facilitate discussions with RV industry stakeholders connecting RV travelers with Elkhart County assets (January - December) - **Ongoing**
- Develop a Roadtrippers influencer campaign for the RV family audience (January - December) - **Ongoing**

## VIBRANT COMMUNITIES

### *Tactics*

- Manage and coordinate Vibrant Communities activities in cooperation with community partners (January - December) - **Ongoing**



# BALANCE

## ECCVB RESOURCE & MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

The objective of the ECCVB Balance strategy is to engage in research that informs and guides development and promotion investment. Research findings will help guide a balanced approach between tourism promotion and development.

### **BALANCE PILLAR GOAL**

Balance the areas of focus of the ECCVB to optimize its potential and lead the visitor industry and communities. Operate as a fiscally responsible and highly performing destination organization through a highly effective team and leveraged partnerships.

### **BALANCE PILLAR TARGET MARKETS OF FOCUS**

- Elkhart County Innkeeper Tax Commission Members
- ECCVB Board of Directors
- ECCVB Staff
- Industry suppliers / vendors
- Industry partners

## DESTINATION RESEARCH

### *Tactics*

- Develop research reporting parameters to stakeholders and partners (January - April) - **Ongoing**
- Facilitate Certec Economic Impact Study (January - December) - **Ongoing**
- Collect and report findings of STR data (January - December) - **Ongoing**
- Analyze and communicate trends in Zartico reports (January - December) - **Ongoing**
- Analyze and communicate downtown hotel study findings (January - June) - **(YTD 2: Elkhart & Goshen)**
- Combine insights from multiple data streams into an Executive Summary (January - December) - **Ongoing**
- Develop dynamic visualizations for up to four Elkhart County events (January, March, July, December) - **Ongoing**
- Research and perform a youth sports facility feasibility study (January - December) - **Ongoing**

## FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

### *Tactics*

- Develop a sound 2024 line-item budget (January) - **Complete**
- Establish financial ratios and projections (January - December) - **Ongoing**
- Develop monthly financial reports and statements for the corporation (January - December) - **Ongoing**
- Perform all accounts receivable and payable for the corporation (January - December) - **Ongoing**
- Perform as the Commission's designated collections administrator for delinquencies (January - December) - **Ongoing**
- Develop monthly reports on collections activities and hotel occupancy trends (January - December) - **Ongoing**
- Complete all county, state and federal employee withholding obligations (January - December) - **Ongoing**
- Complete all grant financial requirements (January - December) - **Ongoing**
- Maintain a 95% collections rate of lodging tax receipts (January - December) - **Ongoing**
- Maintain a 95% collections rate of Elkhart County Area Guide contracts (January - December) - **Ongoing**

## HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

### *Tactics*

- Keep current all personnel records for each employee (January - December) - **Ongoing**
- Work with all employees to assist with interpretation of benefit plans and filing procedures (January - December) - **Ongoing**
- Oversee and report all employee personal time off (January - December) - **Ongoing**
- Manage the corporate / employee SRA contribution plans (January - December) - **Ongoing**
- Research benefit plans that best meet employee's needs and corporation budgetary requirements (January - December) - **Ongoing**
- Distribute Employee Professional Development Survey (December)

## VISITOR CENTER SERVICES

### *Tactics*

- Provide friendly personal service in-person and digitally (January - December) - **Ongoing**
- Provide and distribute Elkhart County Area Guide, up-to-date local business brochures, maps, regional travel guides and other materials in an appealing Visitor Center (January - December) - **Ongoing**



# ADVOCATE

## ECCVB STAKEHOLDER & RESIDENT RELATIONS STRATEGY

The objective of the ECCVB is to build a better understanding of the tourism industry's contributions to economic vitality and resident quality of place.

### ADVOCATE PILLAR GOAL

Build relationships and advocate on behalf of the ECCVB and the tourism industry ensuring the recognized role of tourism and its economic impact. Inform and advocate on the importance and value of tourism and the ECCVB's vital role as the leader and expert of the destination's tourism development and promotion.

### ADVOCATE PILLAR TARGET MARKETS OF FOCUS

- Elkhart County Innkeeper Tax Commission Members
- ECCVB Board of Directors
- Elected and Appointed Officials
- Industry partners
- Trade associations
- Media
- Residents

## ECCVB ADVOCACY

### *Tactics*

- Communicate and collaborate ongoing promotion campaigns with partners (January - December) - **Ongoing**
- Assist event organizers to increase attendance and build their digital audience for re-targeting (January - December) - **Ongoing**
- Develop and implement an advocacy meeting plan connecting the Elkhart County Innkeeper Tax Commission and ECCVB Board of Directors with key stakeholders/elected representatives (January - December) - **Ongoing**
- Distribute community Thank You Notes acknowledging Elkhart County partners, stakeholders and volunteer groups which support quality of place efforts (January - December) - **Ongoing**
- Facilitate meetings with Elkhart County stakeholders developing relationships and better understanding of partnership opportunities (January - December) - **Ongoing**
- Produce and distribute B2B eNewsletters (January - December) - **(YTD 2)**
- Update and distribute key messages on the value of quality of place (January - December) - **Ongoing**
- Develop and implement a strategy engaging local stakeholders to integrate Well Crafted messaging (January - December) - **Ongoing**

## PUBLIC RELATIONS

### *Tactics*

- Develop and distribute key messages on the value of tourism and its economic impact on the destination (January - December) - **Ongoing**
- Develop and implement public speaking training for ECCVB staff and stakeholders (January - December) - **Ongoing**
- Attend regional and national media marketplace events representing the Elkhart County destination (January - December) - **Ongoing**

## ECCVB SPONSORSHIP PROGRAMS

### *Tactics*

- Support community-based quality of place events consistent with the ECCVB Sponsorship Program, Area Guide Assistance Fund, and Community Support & Engagement programs (January - December) - **Ongoing**
- Develop increased participation in sponsorship program from traditionally underserved communities of Elkhart County (January - December) - **Ongoing**
- Evaluate, develop, and implement engagement tools and programs to assist ECCVB sponsorship partners in aligning with Elkhart County Well Crafted destination brand (January - December) - **Ongoing**
- Update sponsorship practices and internal guidelines as necessary (October - December)