

20 26

FEBRUARY BOARD REPORT





DIVERSIFY

ECCVB MARKETING, SALES & SERVICES STRATEGY

The ECCVB Diversify pillar focuses on expanding destination brand awareness and driving visitor conversion across broader and more diverse audiences. It targets both leisure and group travel markets, aligning experiences with niche audiences identified through research to maximize engagement, visitation, and extended stays.

DIVERSIFY PILLAR GOAL

Grow and diversify the county's visitor base by reaching multiple generations and interest groups. By increasing brand awareness, highlighting unique experiences, and connecting visitors with tailored offerings, we aim to boost travel conversion, extend stays, and create more meaningful, engaging experiences for all audiences.

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

ELKHART COUNTY DESTINATION BRAND PROMOTION

Strategy: Elevate awareness and engagement with Elkhart County's Well Crafted brand by implementing a cohesive marketing plan that integrates content creation, media campaigns, and promotions, targeting various audiences through digital, print, and influencer partnerships, while showcasing local attractions and unique experiences.

Tactics

- Develop and manage a comprehensive content plan to support the Well Crafted brand, coordinating content creation, media campaigns, promotions, and partnerships across digital, print, and influencer channels to highlight local attractions, unique experiences, and engage target audiences

Tasks

- Manage photo and video shoots highlighting Elkhart County assets and activities (January - December)

- Ongoing

- Produce and place print ads targeting the external visitor and internal resident (January - December)

Publications

- January: USAToday Go Escape Midwest - **Complete**
- April: TravellIN 1/3-page
- July: TravellIN 1/2-page

- Produce and distribute Leisure eNewsletters to promote Elkhart County assets (January - December)

- YTD 2

- Plan, manage and execute new destination website to further enhance the appeal to residents and visitors (January - December) - **Ongoing**

- Manage the *Made for More* campaign promoting the attractions and experiences of Elkhart County

Tasks

- Plan the strategy for the second year of the *Made for More* campaign (January - March) - **Ongoing**

- Manage the *Made for More* influencer campaign (April - December)

- Plan and execute targeted niche marketing campaigns that promote diverse collections of experiences - spanning dining, recreation, and local attractions - while supporting partners to drive engagement and awareness

Tasks

- Plan, manage and execute culinary and beverage strategies that showcase food experiences, supporting partners and increasing visitor interest (January - December) - **Ongoing**

Partners

- GreatLife.news digital channels
- Indiana Foodways digital channels, foodie trails and passports

- Plan, manage and execute a Well Crafted Champions video campaign, developing content that showcases local stories, experiences, and attractions to drive year-round engagement (January - December) - **Ongoing**

Well Crafted Champion Features

- Premier Arts
- Das Dutchman Essenhaus
- Coppes Nappanee
- Chubby Trout
- Venturi

- Develop and maintain a collection of itineraries to align with targeted niche segments (January - December)

- Ongoing

- Plan, manage and execute a brewery-specific campaign in collaboration with local stakeholders, highlighting brewery experiences and engaging target audiences (April - October)

- Develop and manage a comprehensive PR and media plan to support the Well Crafted brand, coordinating press outreach, story placements, media campaigns, and influencer partnerships to showcase local attractions, unique experiences, and increase destination awareness

Tasks

- Host travel journalists on FAM tours highlighting the destination (January - December) - **YTD 0**

- Plan for and attend media marketplace events representing the Elkhart County destination (March - December) - **Ongoing**

- Produce and distribute press releases and story pitches highlighting the destination to local, regional, national and travel media (January - December) - **YTD 3**

- Produce and distribute Well Crafted promotional kits for regional and national travel journalists (January - December) - **YTD 0**

DIVERSIFY

ELKHART COUNTY DESTINATION BRAND PROMOTION (cont)

Performance Metrics & Key Indicators

- Well Crafted paid and organic digital promotions (January - December) - **YTD Profile Performance Summary: Impressions 527,646; Engagement 2,348; Post Link Clicks 200; Video Views 3,254; Fans 29,094**
- Qualified media inquiries and resulting earned media placements measured by impressions and advertising value equivalents (January - December) - **YTD 271 placements; 2,665,240,038 reach; \$24,653,470.47 AVE**
- Media page website analytics (January - December) - **YTD Views 2,236; Users 2,011**
- RV page website analytics (January - December) - **YTD Views 3,543; Users 2,814**
- Users and Views of Leisure Itineraries/Blogs (January - December) - **YTD Views 2,388; Users 2,227**
- Blog Post analytics (January - December) - **YTD Top 5 Blog Posts: Winter Activities, Valentine's Day, Amish Dining, 4H Fair, Trip Ideas**
- Well Crafted Champions campaign results (January - December) - (YTD Impressions **0; Engagements 0; Post Link Clicks 0; Video Views: 116**)
- *Made For More* campaign results (January - December) - **Google SEM: 10.99% CTR (Benchmark: 10.95%), Google Performance Max: 7.78% CTR (Benchmark: 2.97%)**
- Well Crafted Elkhart County promotional kit campaign to regional and national travel journalists (April - December)
- Influencer campaign results (April - December)
- Elkhart County Brewery campaign results (October - December)

HERITAGE TRAIL

Strategy: Enhance and promote the Heritage Trail experience through wayfinding tools and custom digital content that highlights the trail's unique assets and attractions throughout the year.

Tactics

- Promote the Heritage Trail Audio Driving Tour through coordinated branding, marketing and digital outreach initiatives

Tasks

- Produce and distribute updated Heritage Trail maps to guide visitors and enhance navigation (January) - **Complete**
- Manage and maintain Heritage Trail wayfinding signage and inventory to ensure consistency and quality across the route (January - December) - **Ongoing**
- Develop and promote custom digital content showcasing Heritage Trail assets, stories, and experiences to inspire year-round exploration (January - December) - **Ongoing**

Performance Metrics & Key Indicators

- Heritage Trail audio driving tours distribution via CD, USB, and streaming (January - December) - **YTD 29**
- Heritage Trail printed map distribution (January - December) - **YTD 100**
- Heritage Trail map downloads (January - December) - **YTD 286**
- Heritage Trail page website analytics (January - December) - **YTD Views 1,187; Users 916**

QUILT GARDENS ALONG THE HERITAGE TRAIL

Strategy: Revitalize, elevate and sustain the Quilt Gardens and Quilt Murals experience by updating creative concepts and expanding marketing efforts through targeted ads and specialized itineraries.

Tactics

- Refresh creative concepts and messaging for Quilt Gardens and Quilt Murals branding, marketing and digital outreach initiatives

Tasks

- Create copy for production of Quilt Gardens and Quilt Murals signs (March - April)
- Update partner brand management guide and promotion guidelines (March)

QUILT GARDENS ALONG THE HERITAGE TRAIL (cont)

Tactics

- Coordinate and facilitate new Quilt Mural materials and production for murals in Elkhart, Goshen and Middlebury

Tasks

- Confirm patterns, materials and artist (January) - **Complete**
- Confirm and maintain delivery schedule to ensure on-time installation (February - April) - **Ongoing**
- Develop and implement a comprehensive marketing and advertising plan for the Quilt Gardens and Quilt Murals, integrating print and digital media, targeted niche placements, and specialized itineraries to expand reach, attract new audiences, and sustain engagement throughout the season

Tasks

- Produce and distribute Quilt Gardens rack cards (January - September) - **Ongoing**
- Confirm and maintain rack card distribution at Indiana Toll Road and Ohio Turnpike plazas (April - September)
- Produce and place ads targeting the quilting and/or gardening market (January - December)

Publications

- o January: PCMGA Prestige Package & Garden Walk Web - **Complete**
- o April: MMGA Full Page; AQS Paducah 2/3-page
- o May: Shipshewana Flea Market Full Page; Beacher Full Page
- o June: SWIMGA Full Page
- o August: AQS Grand Rapids 2/3-page
- Develop and maintain a collection of Quilt Garden specialized itineraries (January - December) - **Ongoing**
- Develop and execute a strategic PR and media plan for the Quilt Gardens along the Heritage Trail, coordinating press outreach, securing story placements, and amplifying media coverage to elevate the experience and boost public awareness

Tasks

- Develop, create, and promote Behind the Blooms Quilt Garden video campaign (April - September)

Performance Metrics & Key Indicators

- Qualified media inquiries and resulting media placements measured by impressions and advertising value equivalents (January - December) - **YTD 271 placements; 2,665,240,038 reach; \$24,653,470.47 AVE**
- Quilt Gardens landing page website analytics (January - December)
- **YTD Views 2,138; Users; 1,495; Blog Views 605**
- Quilt Gardens map downloads (January - December) - **YTD 286**
- Paid and organic analytics (April - December)
- Rack card distribution (May - September)
- Quilt Garden paid and organic digital promotions (June - September)

ELKHART COUNTY AREA GUIDE

Strategy: Maximize the reach and impact of the Elkhart County Area Guide through comprehensive production, distribution, and digital integration, ensuring broad visibility and engagement across regional and digital platforms.

Tactics

- Develop and manage a comprehensive content plan to distribute the Elkhart County Area Guide in digital, print, and social channels to maximize destination visibility and inspire travel

Tasks

- Develop electronic version of 2026 Elkhart County Area Guide for digital distribution (January) - **Complete**
- Update creative concept for digital media (January - February) - **Complete**
- Confirm and place Elkhart County Area Guide with regional publication distribution (January) - **Complete**
- Oversee distribution of 150,000 printed copies of 2026 Elkhart County Area Guide (January - December)
- **Ongoing**
- Maintain distribution at Indiana Toll Road and Ohio Turnpike plazas (January - December) - **Ongoing**
- Develop, produce and distribute direct mail postcard promoting the Elkhart County Area Guide (March - May)

DIVERSIFY

ELKHART COUNTY AREA GUIDE (cont)

Tactics

- Coordinate, collaborate and manage the design and production of the 2027 Elkhart County Area Guide to ensure a cohesive, engaging, and on-brand publication that effectively reaches and inspires target audiences

Tasks

- Research and develop partner co-op marketing packages for print, digital and email (January - May)
 - **Ongoing**
- Update creative concept for the 2027 Elkhart County Area Guide (February - May) - **Ongoing**
- Manage sales, content and production of the 2027 Elkhart County Area Guide (June - December)

Performance Metrics & Key Indicators

- 2026 Elkhart County Area Guide print distribution (January - December) - **YTD 74,350**
- 2026 Elkhart County Area Guide digital distribution (January - December) - **YTD 311**

ELKHART COUNTY EVENT CALENDAR

Strategy: Increase awareness among residents and visitors about diverse activities and events happening in the area, encouraging community engagement and participation.

Tactics

- Develop and manage a comprehensive content plan to support the Elkhart County Event Calendar across digital, print, and social channels to highlight local festivals and events to target audiences

Tasks

- Develop, produce, and distribute event calendar direct mail postcard (March - April)
- Create and manage billboards (May - September)

Performance Metrics & Key Indicators

- Event Calendar page website analytics (January - December) - **YTD Views 8,432; Users 5,670**
- Paid and organic analytics (January - December) - **YTD Impressions 5,733; Engagements 161; Post Link Clicks 26**
- Postcard distribution (May)

ELKHART COUNTY CO-OP CAMPAIGNS

Strategy: Leverage advertising opportunities by collaborating with various partners at a local, regional and state level, enhancing visibility and driving tourism and engagement to the Elkhart County area.

INDIANA TRAVEL GUIDE & VISITINDIANA.COM

Tactics

- Plan and execute advertising and promotional efforts by coordinating a co-op partnership with the Indiana Destination Development Corporation

Tasks

- Develop and produce brochure lead generation ad and listing ads (January) - **Complete**
- Develop and produce eNewsletter (January) - **Complete**
- Produce half page co-op ad for Grand Rapids city Magazine (February) - **Complete**

Performance Metrics & Key Indicators

- Elkhart County Area Guide requests received (January - December) - **YTD 532**

ELKHART COUNTY CO-OP CAMPAIGNS (cont)

INDIANA FESTIVAL GUIDE

Tactics

- Plan and execute advertising efforts through a co-op partnership with the Indiana State Festival Association

Tasks

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

INDIANA'S COOL NORTH

Tactics

- Plan and execute advertising and promotional efforts by coordinating a co-op partnership with the Northern Indiana Tourism Development Commission

Tasks

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

Performance Metrics & Key Indicators

- Elkhart County Area Guide requests received (January - December) - **YTD 17**

DOWNTOWN ELKHART PROMOTIONS

Tactics

- Develop and manage a comprehensive content plan across digital, print, and social channels to promote Downtown Elkhart assets and experience

Tasks

- Research and develop events that support downtown partners and increase visitor interest (January - December) - **Ongoing**
- Research and develop a culinary and beverage strategy that showcase food experiences, supporting partners and increasing visitor interest (May - October)

Performance Metrics & Key Indicators

- Digital campaign analytics (March, June, September, December)

EXIT 92 PROMOTIONS

Tactics

- Develop and manage a comprehensive plan across digital and print to promote I-80/90 Exit 92 as the premier exit on the Indiana Toll Road, highlighting density of lodging and dining options to target audiences

Tasks

- Refine and refresh messaging for Exit 92 assets (January) - **Complete**
- Confirm and maintain outdoor billboards along I-80/90 Toll Road (January - December) - **Ongoing**
- Confirm and maintain collateral distribution at Indiana Toll Road and Ohio Turnpike plazas (January - December) - **Ongoing**
- Confirm and maintain distribution of commercial trucking rack card at Indiana Toll Road and Ohio Turnpike plazas (January - December) - **Ongoing**
- Confirm and maintain distribution of lodging and restaurant rack card at Indiana Toll Road and Ohio Turnpike plazas (January - December) - **Ongoing**
- Confirm and place full page ad in University of Notre Dame Football Program (March)
- Produce and distribute in-app ads (April - November)

DIVERSIFY

ELKHART COUNTY CO-OP CAMPAIGNS (cont)

EXIT 92 PROMOTIONS

Performance Metrics & Key Indicators

- Exit 92 page website analytics (January - December) - **YTD 798**
- Exit 92 rack card distribution (April - December)
- In-app ad impressions (May - December)

SMALL MEETINGS MARKET

Strategy: Engage small meeting and event planners by leveraging targeted content, media promotion, partnership programs, and direct communication to drive awareness, site visits, and meeting opportunities in Elkhart County.

Tactics

- Amplify Elkhart County as a premier destination for small meetings and events by producing and placing content in print and digital publications targeting small meeting and event planners, promoting relevant events and stories

Tasks

- Produce and place Small Market Meetings 1/2-page print and eblast (May)
- Update and distribute Meeting Planner Guide (May - December)
- Support meeting, event, and RV Rally planners by providing expert guidance, resources, and personalized assistance to enhance their planning, coordination, and overall event experience

Tasks

- Provide services, information and assistance to planners (January - December) - **Ongoing**
- Research and targeted outreach to meeting planners (January - December) - **Ongoing**
- Update webpages for each small meetings market segment (January - December) - **Ongoing**
- Update and distribute RV Rally Planner Guide (May - December)

Performance Metrics & Key Indicators

- Meetings page website analytics (January - December) - **YTD Views 1,852; Users 1,355**
- RV page website analytics (January - December) - **YTD Views 3,543; Users 2,814**
- Meeting Planner Guide downloads (January - December) - **YTD 2**
- Meeting Planner Guide distribution (January - December) - **11**
- RV Rally Planner Guide downloads (January - December) - **11**
- Meeting market contacts, leads, and RFPs (January - December)

YOUTH SPORTS MARKET

Strategy: Promote Elkhart County as a premier destination for youth sports through ad placements, collaboration and comprehensive support to sporting event organizers.

Tactics

- Develop and manage a comprehensive marketing plan to engage with sports rights holders and event planners to increase awareness, highlight key assets, and support sports event development in Elkhart County

Tasks

- Collaborate with Team Indiana on sporting event initiatives and promotions aligning with Elkhart County assets (January - December) - **Ongoing**
- Update Sports Profile Sheet (March)
- Support sporting event organizers by providing services, information, promotional assets, and personalized assistance to enhance their planning, coordination, and overall event experience (January - December) - **Ongoing**
- Place print ad in Sports Planning Guide: Indiana (July)

YOUTH SPORTS MARKET (cont)

Performance Metrics & Key Indicators

- Sports Facilities Profile Sheet downloads (January - December) - **YTD 5**
- Sports page website analytics (January - December) - **YTD Views 286; Users 262**

TRAVEL TRADE MARKET

Strategy: Actively engage and attract tour operators and group planners by leveraging targeted print and digital content, FAM tours, trade shows, and tailored itineraries while providing ongoing support and follow-up.

Tactics

- Develop and manage a comprehensive content plan to support in-bound group travel, coordinating content creation, media campaigns, promotions, and partnerships across digital and print channels to highlight local attractions, unique experiences, and engage target audiences

Tasks

- Produce and place print and digital insertions in publications targeting tour operators and group planners (January - December)

Publications

- January: Group Travel Leader 1/3-page ad; Going on Faith 1/2-page ad; Group Tour 1/4-page ad + advertorial CVB Showcase; Group Tour 1/2-page ad + advertorial Indiana Showcase - **Complete**
- April: Group Travel Leader 1/3-page ad; Group Tour 1/2-page ad + advertorial Outdoor Excursions
- June: Group Travel Leader 1/3-page ad
- July: Group Tour 1/3-page ad
- October: Group Tour 1/3-page ad
- Develop and distribute customized daytrip and overnight itineraries to align with targeted niche segments (January - December) - **YTD 41**
- Attend trade shows targeting tour operators and group planners (January - December) - **YTD 1**
- Produce and distribute Travel Trade eNewsletters to promote Elkhart County assets (January - December) - **YTD 2**
- Update and create group profile sheet for travel trade shows (November - December)
- Collaborate with local and regional stakeholders to shape and implement a comprehensive group marketing strategy across a multi-county experience, using FAM tours as a key showcase tool - Ongoing

Tasks

- Convene conversations with regional DMOs to talk about group marketing strategy and potential advertising co-ops (March - December)
- Support tour operators and group planners by providing services, information, promotional assets, and personalized assistance to enhance their planning, coordination, and overall experience - **YTD 5**

Performance Metrics & Key Indicators

- Travel Trade page website analytics (January - December) - **YTD Views 5,908; Users 5,510**
- Travel Trade profile sheet downloads (January - December) - **YTD 2**
- Travel Trade show leads and appointments (January - December) - **YTD 36**
- Travel Trade show attendee follow-up (January - December) - **YTD 40**



CURATE

ECCVB DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

The ECCVB Curate pillar focuses on fostering product and community development to strengthen the organization's role as a Destination Architect. This strategy supports existing and new partners in creating and delivering compelling experiences that reflect the Well Crafted destination brand, engage target audiences, and maximize the value of the county's unique assets.

CURATE PILLAR GOAL

Build and enhance tourism experiences across Elkhart County by implementing strategies that support development, promotion, and training initiatives. Facilitate the creation of a diverse range of engaging, high-quality experiences that drive visitor spending, strengthen communities, and align with the Well Crafted destination branding.

CURATE PILLAR TARGET MARKETS OF FOCUS

- Event support and development
- Small business support
- Outdoor recreation
- RV industry engagement
- Youth sports market engagement
- Vibrant Communities initiatives

DESTINATION EXPERIENCE DEVELOPMENT

Strategy: Innovate and diversify Elkhart County's tourism offerings by researching and developing niche-aligned experiential campaigns, cross-promotions, and partnerships with both traditional and non-traditional stakeholders, while enhancing visitor engagement and feedback integration across seasonal, culinary, and cultural experiences.

Tactics

- Research, design, and develop immersive experiences tailored to niche segments, while cultivating partnerships with traditional and non-traditional stakeholders to diversify and enhance destination offerings

Tasks

- Research and develop immersive and engaging experiences aligning with niche segmentation (January - December) - **Ongoing**
- Foster conversations for potential farm-to-table food experience (January - December) - **Ongoing**
- Develop and foster partnerships with both traditional tourism stakeholders and non-traditional ones to diversify the tourism offerings (January - December) - **Ongoing**
- Research and develop countywide seasonal experiential art exhibitions, activating and aligning with niche segmentation (January - December) - **Ongoing**
- Research partners for a future accessibility assessment of the destination (November - December)
- Research and develop Quilt Gardens 20th Anniversary experiences aligning with niche segmentation

Tasks

- Research public art exhibits and other unique opportunities that can enhance the 20th anniversary experience (January - September) - **Ongoing**
- Research the viability and implementation of a coordinated storytelling and tourism engagement programs that elevate cultural narratives and supports community revitalization through strategic event and partnership initiatives

Tasks

- Foster conversations with Downtown Goshen, Inc. and the Goshen Redevelopment Commission to explore a Downtown Goshen digital promotional campaign (January - December) - **Ongoing**
- Foster conversations with Benham Avenue and Tolson Center stakeholders to explore possible cultural programs and offerings (January - December) - **YTD 1**
- Research the viability and implementation of a Catalytic Tourism Initiatives Program to accelerate priority experience development projects across the county that advance priority sectors (arts & culture, experiential tourism, outdoor recreation and youth sports) through focused program development and promotion

Tasks

- Convene conversations with stakeholders and partners to discuss the importance of aligning priorities and resources to enhance community development and quality of place initiatives (March - September)
- Strengthen Elkhart County's event and arts ecosystem by supporting signature festivals, live music, and venue-based entertainment, while partnering with local performing arts organizations to expand access and opportunities across the community

Tasks

- Foster conversations to enhance Juke Elkhart and Juke Goshen (January - December) - **YTD 6**
- Foster conversations to explore an Elkhart County based Idea Week event (January - December) - **YTD 2**

GROUP EXPERIENCE DEVELOPMENT

Strategy: Create a collaborative framework among local stakeholders, hoteliers, and regional partners to enhance the destination's overall tourism ecosystem.

Tactics

- Collaborate with stakeholders to implement immersive, high-impact visitor experiences that are accessible and engaging for groups, appealing to both first-time and repeat audiences, while aligning with key destination development pillars and supporting strategic growth initiatives

Tasks

- Continue development of Northern Indiana Signature Experiences with partnerships with LaGrange County CVB and Visit South Bend Mishawaka (January - December) - **Ongoing**
- Continue to work with local stakeholders, hoteliers and area partners to provide education, inspiration, and partner-sharing opportunities

OUTDOOR RECREATION DEVELOPMENT

Strategy: Collaborate with local stakeholders to develop and enhance outdoor experiences, including improved park and trail wayfinding, and activate blueways experiences that align with niche market segments.

Tactics

- Facilitate stakeholder collaboration to plan, enhance, and activate outdoor and water-based experiences, including amenities and wayfinding, ensuring alignment with niche visitor segments and countywide tourism goals

Tasks

- Facilitate research and development of a greenways wayfinding program (April - December)

RV EXPERIENCE DEVELOPMENT

Strategy: Enhance and initiate engaging experiences for RV visitors in Elkhart County through collaboration with the RV industry and by communicating activities that resonate with the destination brand.

Tactics

- Facilitate collaboration with RV industry stakeholders to connect RV travelers with Elkhart County experiences and amenities, strengthening the county's position as a premier RV destination

Tasks

- Convene conversations with campgrounds and RV rally planners to shape visitor engagement strategies that encourage exploration of Elkhart County's amenities and assets (April - December)

VIBRANT COMMUNITIES

Strategy: Partner with the Community Foundation of Elkhart County to manage and coordinate Vibrant Communities activities by fostering creative ideation and community stakeholder engagement.

Tactics

- Facilitate and coordinate collaborative community initiatives - including wayfinding audits, Vibrant Communities programming, creative ideation, new project development, and neighborhood revitalization - in partnership with stakeholders and community partners throughout the year

Tasks

- Convene planning meetings to execute technical assistance related activities (January - December)
- YTD 5



BALANCE

ECCVB RESOURCE & MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

The ECCVB Balance pillar focuses on leveraging research to guide development and promotional investments, ensuring that efforts are informed, strategic, and aligned with both community and visitor priorities. Insights from research help maintain a thoughtful equilibrium between tourism promotion and development, optimizing outcomes for the county and its partners.

BALANCE PILLAR GOAL

Optimize the ECCVB's focus and resources to lead the destination and visitor industry effectively. Operate as a high-performing, fiscally responsible organization through a skilled team, strategic partnerships, and data-driven decision-making that supports both community and visitor objectives.

BALANCE PILLAR TARGET MARKETS OF FOCUS

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

DESTINATION RESEARCH

Strategy: Enhance informed decision-making and stakeholder engagement by collecting, analyzing, and reporting comprehensive tourism and economic impact data, while identifying opportunities to support strategic development initiatives.

Tactics

- Facilitate and oversee research and reporting efforts to evaluate Elkhart County's tourism performance, integrating data analysis and key insights to inform strategic decision-making and demonstrate economic impact

Tasks

- Partner with Certec to facilitate the Economic Impact Study (January - December) - **Ongoing**
- Collect and report findings of STR data (January - December) - **YTD 8 Weekly, 2 Monthly**
- Evaluate and interpret destination performance data provided through the Symphony platform (January - December) - **Ongoing**
- Integrating key trends and insights into the Executive Tourism Performance Report (January - December) - **Ongoing**
- Lead stakeholder engagement and data-informed analysis to develop the next ECCVB Strategic Plan and Destination Plan, ensuring alignment with key development pillars and actionable recommendations for future growth

Tasks

- Develop and implement a strategy to engage stakeholders in advancing youth sports facility investment (January - December) - **Ongoing**
- Partner with Clarity of Place to plan and execute public meetings that engage community stakeholders and gather input to help shape the destination's long-term strategic direction (March - July)

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Strategy: Achieve financial stability and operational efficiency while ensuring compliance with all financial obligations.

Tactics

- Oversee the financial management and fiscal accountability of the organization through effective budgeting, reporting, compliance, and revenue collection practices that ensure transparency, sustainability, and organizational strength

Tasks

- Develop a 2026 line-item budget (January) - **YTD 2**
- Establish financial ratios and projections (January - December) - **YTD 2**
- Develop monthly financial reports and statements for the corporation (January - December) - **YTD 2**
- Perform all accounts receivable and payable for the corporation (January - December) - **YTD 2**
- Perform as the Commission's designated collections administrator for delinquencies (January - December) - **YTD 2**
- Develop monthly reports on collections activities and hotel occupancy trends (January - December) - **YTD 2**
- Complete all county, state and federal employee withholding obligations (January - December) - **YTD 2**
- Complete all grant financial requirements (January - December) - **YTD 2**
- Maintain a 95% collections rate of lodging tax receipts (January - December) - **YTD 2**
- Maintain a 95% collections rate of Elkhart County Area Guide contracts (January - December) - **YTD 2**

HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Strategy: Enhance employee engagement and satisfaction by maintaining accurate personnel records, providing comprehensive benefits support, managing contributions, and evaluating development opportunities

Tactics

- Manage human resources operations and employee relations to maintain compliance, optimize benefits, and foster a supportive and growth-oriented workplace culture

Tasks

- Keep current all personnel records for each employee (January - December) - **YTD 2**
- Work with all employees to assist with interpretation of benefit plans and filing procedures (January - December) - **YTD 2**
- Oversee and report all employee personal time off (January - December) - **YTD 2**
- Manage the corporate / employee SRA contribution plans (January - December) - **YTD 2**
- Research benefit plans that best meet employee's needs and corporation budgetary requirements (January - December) - **YTD 2**
- Distribute Employee Professional Development Survey (December)

VISITOR CENTER SERVICES

Strategy: Deliver exceptional customer experiences by offering friendly, personalized service and providing comprehensive, up-to-date resources at the Visitor Center.

Tactics

- Deliver exceptional visitor services by providing personalized assistance, information, and resources both in-person and online to enhance the overall visitor experience

Tasks

- Provide friendly, personal service both in-person and online (January - December) - **Ongoing**
- Provide local business brochures, maps, travel guides and other materials (January - December) - **Ongoing**



ADVOCATE

ECCVB STAKEHOLDER & RESIDENT RELATIONS STRATEGY

The ECCVB Advocate pillar strives to deepen understanding of how tourism drives economic growth, strengthens the community, and enhances the quality of life for Elkhart County residents by supporting local businesses, fostering meaningful partnerships, promoting the region's unique attractions, and showcasing the county as a premier destination for visitors and groups alike.

ADVOCATE PILLAR GOAL

Build and strengthen relationships while championing the ECCVB and the tourism industry, ensuring tourism's vital economic impact is recognized. Communicate the importance and value of tourism and reinforce the ECCVB's role as the leader and expert in developing and promoting Elkhart County as a premier destination.

ADVOCATE PILLAR TARGET MARKETS OF FOCUS

- Elkhart County Innkeeper Tax Commission Members
- ECCVB Board of Directors
- Elected and appointed officials
- Tourism industry partners and local businesses
- Trade associations
- Media outlets
- Residents and community stakeholders

ECCVB ADVOCACY

Strategy: Strengthen relationships with key stakeholders and elected representatives by fostering collaboration, communicating the economic benefits of tourism, and supporting local partners through targeted engagement, recognition, and strategic messaging.

Tactics

- Coordinate ongoing promotion campaigns, support partner events, and implement targeted digital marketing strategies to expand event attendance and strengthen partners’ online presence
 - Tasks
 - Communicate and collaborate ongoing promotion campaigns with partners (January - December) - **Ongoing**
 - Support Middlebury Chamber and Visit Nappanee specific events through targeted digital marketing (June - September)
- Facilitate meetings, develop advocacy events, and connect the Elkhart County Innkeeper Tax Commission and ECCVB Board with elected officials and industry leaders to advance tourism and quality of place initiatives
 - Tasks
 - Update and implement an advocacy meeting plan strategy (January) - **Complete**
 - Develop, create, and implement advocacy opportunities with Elkhart County stakeholders developing relationships to foster a better understanding of partnership opportunities (January - December) - **YTD 2**
 - Opportunities
 - Advocacy Breakfasts (January - December)
 - City Council meeting presentations (May)
 - Greater Elkhart Chamber of Commerce Business After Hours (May)
 - National Travel and Tourism Week promotions (May)
 - Community events (January - December)
- Create and distribute messaging that highlight the economic benefits of tourism, reinforce quality of place efforts, and inform stakeholders of destination performance
 - Tasks
 - Update and distribute key messages on the value of quality of place and the economic benefits of tourism and to key stakeholders (January - December) - **Ongoing**
 - Send thank you and congratulatory notes to partners, stakeholders, and volunteer groups, acknowledging their contributions and fostering ongoing support for community and tourism initiatives (January - December) - **Ongoing**
 - Distribute B2B eNewsletters (January - December) - **YTD 2**
 - Develop and produce the Elkhart County Tourism Annual Report using insights and assets from the Executive Tourism Reports to communicate the economic benefits of tourism (January - March) - **Ongoing**
 - Distribute Elkhart County Tourism Annual Report to key stakeholders (April - December) - **Ongoing**

PUBLIC RELATIONS

Strategy: Amplify the value and economic impact of tourism in Elkhart County by distributing targeted advocacy messages, participating in media events, and engaging with travel media.

Tactics

- Develop and implement distribution plan for advocacy messages, including the annual report and handout, on the value of tourism and its economic impact on the destination
 - Tasks
 - Implement a content distribution plan through Great News.Life to local and regional audiences in Indiana (January - December) - **Ongoing**
 - Produce and distribute a quarterly tourism eNewsletter for travel media (February, May, August, November) - **YTD 1**
 - Develop and distribute compelling media narratives that position Elkhart County’s sports market and small meetings/events as timely, relevant, and newsworthy across local, regional, and travel media (January - December) - **Ongoing**

ECCVB SPONSORSHIP PROGRAMS

Strategy: Enhance community engagement by supporting quality of place events, increasing sponsorship program participation from underserved communities, and aligning sponsorship initiatives through updated practices and engagement tools.

Tactics

- Support community-based quality of place events consistent with the ECCVB Sponsorship Program, Area Guide Assistance Fund, and Community Support & Engagement programs

Tasks

- Review and update sponsorship practices, internal guidelines, and decision-making rubric (January - February) - **Complete**
- 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 (January - December) - **Ongoing**

*The Elkhart County CVB is the county's champion for
tourism promotion and placemaking initiatives.
We achieve economic vitality and enhanced quality of place
through diverse affiliations and collaborations.*



3421 CASSOPOLIS STREET, STE 100 | ELKHART, INDIANA
ECCVB.ORG

