



**ECCVB** ELKHART COUNTY CONVENTION  
AND VISITORS BUREAU INC.

**TOURISM BUILDING COMMUNITY**

ELKHART GOSHEN MIDDLEBURY NAPPANEE BRISTOL WAKARUSA



2017

## Place-Based Key Initiatives and Business Plan





# ECCVB, Inc. 2017 Place-Based Key Initiatives and Business Plan



## Who We Are ..... 3

*Organization Structure*  
*Accountability*  
*Values and Guiding Principles*

## 2017 Performance Measures ..... 5

## Mission and Key Strategies ..... 6

## Key Initiatives ..... 7

*Vibrant Communities*  
*Visitor Satisfaction*  
*Indiana Toll Road*  
*Active Transportation*  
*Group Experiences*

## Tourism & Community Leadership Involvement ..... 11

## Elkhart County Innkeepers Tax Commission ..... 12

## ECCVB, Inc. Board of Directors ..... 13

## ECCVB, Inc. Staff ..... 14

## ECCVB Priority Activities ..... 17

*Communications - Advertising*  
*Communications - Marketing*  
*Communications - Public Relations*  
*Destination Development*  
*Visitor Services*  
*Finance*  
*Technology*

## ECCVB 2017 Capital Replacement ..... 43

## Terms & Definitions ..... 47

## ECCVB 2017 Budget ..... 51



# WHO WE ARE

## > Organization Structure

The Elkhart County, IN Convention & Visitors Bureau (ECCVB) is a private, nonprofit corporation. It serves as the official tourism advertising / marketing and public / community relations organization for the Elkhart County hospitality industry.

The ECCVB represents the interests and needs of potential and actual visitors to Elkhart County and provides its visitor services free of charge. Funding for the ECCVB comes from a lodging tax collected from visitors at the local level by way of Elkhart County lodging facilities with more than 30 rooms.

As the champions for place-making initiatives and tourism promotion, the ECCVB takes an active role representing sustainable quality-of-place development through affiliations with government, economic development organizations, developers, tourism-related businesses and other organizations that align with its mission.

The ECCVB develops diverse strategic partnerships to maximize the effectiveness of its research-based marketing programs and development initiatives in Elkhart County.

- *A seven-member Innkeepers Tax Commission, appointed by the Elkhart County government executives under the direction of Indiana Law IC 6-9-19, has oversight responsibility for the appropriation of the lodging tax fund.*
- *A seven-member Board of Directors provides fiscal and policy stewardship for the Elkhart County Convention & Visitors Bureau Corporation.*
- *The ECCVB employs a 10-person staff which manages its various programs and operations and provides support to the area's hospitality industry.*
- *The ECCVB's governance and management is aligned in vision, purpose, values, strategic partnerships and program implementation and assigns the needed resources to accomplish successful outcomes.*



The ECCVB is a member of the **Northern Indiana Tourism Development Commission**, an alliance of seven CVBs in northern Indiana. With an agreed-upon destination brand positioning and strategy, NITDC members:

- *Collaborate on issues of mutual importance;*
- *Participate in cooperative marketing programming;*
- *Conduct credible research-based activities;*
- *Play a role on the Indiana Toll Road Advisory Committee and contribute to an integrated regional website that draws information from member websites and databases.*

## > Accountability

Accountability is an integral part of the corporate culture. The ECCVB must show how it effectively uses its resources to generate the greatest return on investment for the destination. It monitors and analyzes many sources of data on the industry-wide impact of tourism in the Elkhart County area, and reports how it contributes positively to the hospitality industry.

The Innkeepers Tax Commission and Board of Directors meet bi-monthly with ECCVB staff. At these meetings, the two bodies receive reports on performance metrics and discuss and act on policy initiatives and priorities.



## > Values and Guiding Principles

The ECCVB is guided in its daily activities by a foundation built on strong values and guiding principles that are:

- *Ethical*
- *Innovative*
- *Collaborative*
- *Inclusive*
- *Entrepreneurial*
- *Professional*
- *Accountable*

These norms are the foundation to perform successfully.

# 2017 PERFORMANCE MEASURES



- Total number of ECCVB partnerships: 705
- Total partner dollars invested in co-op programs: \$721,093
- Public Relations Advertising equivalency: \$480,000
- \$287,000 invested in Marketing and Advertising will generate \$33 million in visitor spending
- Travel Trade activities will generate \$3.85 million in group visitor spending
- Heritage Trail Audio Driving Tour distribution will generate \$3.6 million in visitor spending

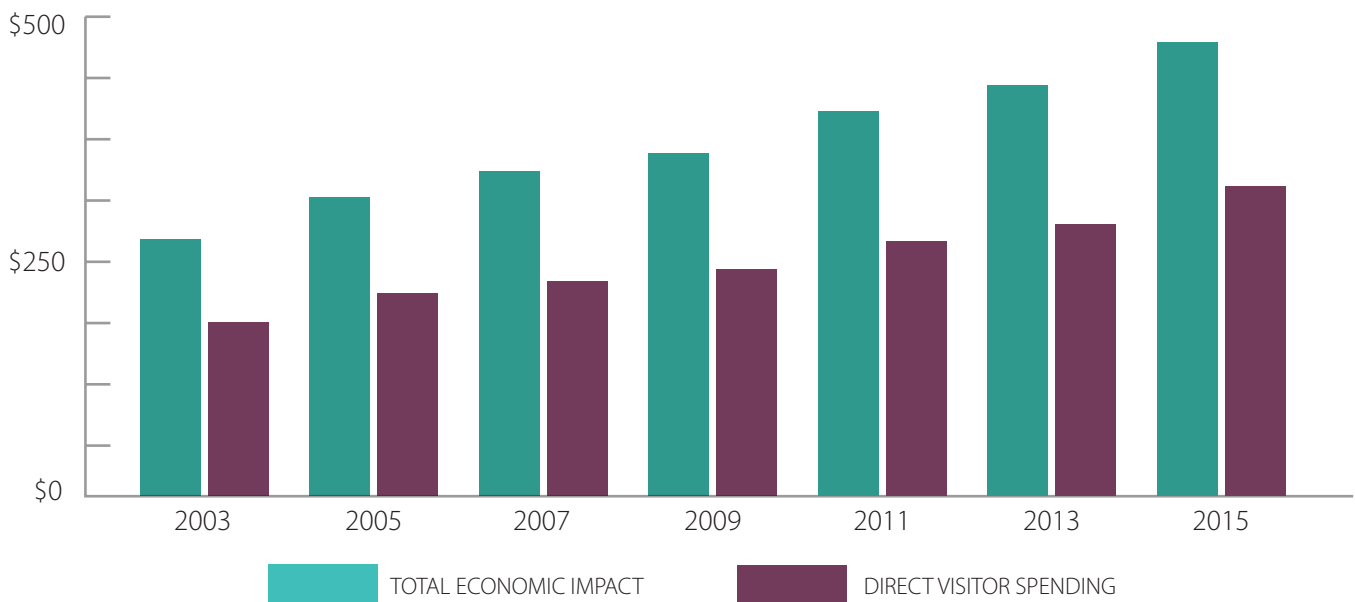
Room Tax: \$1.9 million

Total Return on Investment: \$40.4 million

For every dollar of lodging tax invested, there is more than a \$21 return on investment which is clearly and significantly generated through the Elkhart County, IN Convention & Visitors Bureau advertising, marketing and sales efforts.

## TOURISM ECONOMIC IMPACT

2003 - 2015



(\$ in millions) | Source: Certec, Inc

*A 12-year trend demonstrates an increase in both Economic Impact and Visitor Spending.*

# MISSION AND KEY STRATEGIES

The ECCVB is Elkhart County's champion for place-making initiatives through its affiliations with government, economic development organizations, developers, tourism-related businesses and organizations. The ECCVB forms strategic partnerships to maximize the effectiveness of its research-based branded marketing programs and development activities that highlight Elkhart County as an outstanding place to live, work and play.

It advocates for all Elkhart County communities by connecting visitors' needs and interests with the amenities, products and services provided by community partners and by leveraging relationships and staff expertise to enhance the quality of place of downtowns, neighborhoods and rural spaces. The ECCVB develops, executes and manages a broad range of programs that connect visitors with its hospitality partners while adhering to an overall vision of continuous development throughout Elkhart County.

To achieve its annual strategic goals, the ECCVB targets particular programs for emphasis through sponsorship and marketing activities, collaboration with partners and community organizations, and investment in development and planning initiatives.

For 2017, the focus will be placed in five key campaigns that are interrelated but also stand on their own as pillars of ECCVB's strategy:

**Vibrant Communities** (page 7): *Quality-of-place initiatives are taking root in many forms, from building on the arts, cultural and outdoors amenities that residents value to enhancing the attractiveness of downtowns.*

**Visitor Satisfaction** (page 8): *The Heritage Trail flagship binds Elkhart County's diverse communities together and draws visitors to enjoy our cities, towns, scenic countryside and Quilt Gardens.*

**Indiana Toll Road** (page 9): *Elkhart's place as the premiere stop along the Indiana Toll Road will be reinforced by an ongoing program to spotlight amenities and to research and develop attractions to complement existing inventory.*

**Active Transportation** (page 9): *Continuing improvements in trail networks and facilities will help spark greater interest in outdoor activities from competitive sports to recreational jogging, walking and bicycling. A bike share initiative in Elkhart and Goshen will be researched.*

**Group Experiences** (page 10): *Attracting and welcoming group travel brings a vitality to attractions and downtowns that enliven neighborhoods and reinforces Elkhart County's strengths.*



# KEY INITIATIVES

## > Vibrant Communities



### Heritage Trail

As one of the ECCVB's most successful brands, the Heritage Trail will continue its leading role in connecting each of Elkhart County's communities and scenic rural areas while reinforcing those downtowns and neighborhoods as excellent places to visit, live and play. From the annual travel guide to new programs to sophisticated marketing and promotional messages over multiple channels, the Heritage Trail celebrates the diversity and variety of urban, rural, family-friendly and authentic experiences.

### Quilt Gardens

This singular event, which has attracted visitors and public acclaim from across the globe, celebrates its 10th anniversary. The Quilt Gardens offers a distinctive experience every year, attracting visitors with disparate interests such as gardening, quilting and history.

In 2017, the Quilt Gardens will add one of the largest and most significant public exhibition of Seward Johnson's sculptures. The historic implications will boost the self-guided tour and the downtowns by drawing greater attention to thriving shops, galleries, eateries and natural amenities.



### Vibrant Communities Action Agenda

Implementation of the Action Agenda will bring together policymakers and residents from across the region to collaborate and enact the actions, policies and programs they wanted to strengthen what we love about our communities and attract more residents and visitors.



**Via its sponsorship program, the ECCVB supports non-profit organizations which conduct events and festivals that build stronger community relationships, encourage visits from around the region and reinforce the area's position as attractive communities.**

Events supported in 2016 include:

#### Elkhart County

- *Pumpkinvine Bike Ride*
- *Bloom & Zoom*
- *Gathering at Five Medals historical re-enactment*

#### Elkhart

- *ASA fast pitch softball tournament*
- *Elkhart Bike Night*
- *Elkhart Jazz Festival*
- *Midwest Museum of American Art Juried Regional art show*
- *Moose Rugby Grounds*

#### Goshen

- *Goshen First Fridays monthly festival*

#### Nappanee

- *Nappanee Apple Festival*

#### Wakarusa

- *Wakarusa Maple Syrup Festival*
- *Wakarusa Bluegrass Festival*

**The ECCVB is committing \$100,000 to events and programs in 2017.**

## > Visitor Satisfaction

### Downtowns

Through multiple initiatives, including the Live Work Play capacity grants, development and promotional activities will increase in tempo, with programs and personnel in place in Elkhart and Middlebury and plans being developed for Goshen and Nappanee.



### Rural Experiences

Thousands of visitors come to Elkhart County annually to experience the tranquility and comfort of Amish Country. The Heritage Trail enhances the visitor experience with planning tools by connecting visitors to each of Elkhart County's vibrant communities. The strength of the Amish Country brand enables it to be an entry point for the diversity of experiences in our destination.

## > Indiana Toll Road



### North Pointe

This area will be the subject of continued study, even as strategies are enacted consistent with feasibility studies of the properties adjacent to the Indiana Toll Road. The plaza is a central pillar to the continuing strategy of making Elkhart's Exit 92 the premier stop on the toll road.

### Toll Road Exits

As partners with the Northern Indiana Tourism Development Commission, the ECCVB will continue to support NITDC's efforts to deliver tourism and hospitality messages to the roughly 65 million travelers annually on the toll road. The Exit 92 advertising campaign will also draw an increasing share of those travelers to utilize lodging, dining and other facilities in Elkhart, while the ECCVB will play a key role in supporting the new Cool North campaign.



## > Active Transportation



### Trail Networks

Elkhart County enjoys a healthy and growing trail network that have encouraged bicycling, jogging and walking enthusiasts to take advantage. Continued development will expand the trails, lay the foundation for future development and increase awareness of residents and visitors of the multiple stops on the Heritage Trail such as the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail and multiple spurs which connect Elkhart and other areas of Goshen.

## > Active Transportation (cont.)

### Events and Programs

Organized activities bring communities together and expose residents and visitors to assets and experiences they might not otherwise have sought. By supporting events such as the Pumpkinvine Bike Ride, Bike Elkhart Quilt Gardens Ride and programs that boost parks, the ECCVB activates outdoor spaces and nurtures connections. Development of guided walking tours in Elkhart and Middlebury will build awareness of each community's unique qualities.



## > Group Experiences



### Motorcoaches & RV Rallies

Tour groups have long gravitated to Amish Country and Quilt Gardens attractions, but the affection and trust they have in Elkhart County's charms are extending now to downtowns and other activities in the region. These visitors from around the region and country lend weight to the idea that Elkhart County is an excellent place to live, work and play.

Elkhart County's position as a recreational vehicle manufacturing hub also draws visitors, particularly for organized rallies that allow RV companies and owners to forge deeper relations and enjoy the amenities available at local campgrounds. An ongoing feasibility study that could lead to expansion at the RV Hall of Fame and Museum would open doors to further visitor activity.

### Sports

2017 will be an important year in the development of sports venues and programming, drawing more potential visitors that may not have considered this area in the past. The ECCVB's partnerships have helped spark development of a world-class natatorium and ice sports facility, with construction likely in the coming year.

# ECCVB, Inc. Tourism & Community Leadership Involvement

## **Diana Lawson, FCDME, Chief Executive Officer**

- SoMa Chair
- SoMa Public Relations/Marketing Committee Chair
- Indiana Toll Road Community Advisory Board
- Northern Indiana Tourism Development Commission Board of Directors Secretary
- Elkhart County / Cities
- Vibrant Communities Steering Committee
- Lerner Governing Board, Vice President
- Friends of the Lerner Board Vice President
- Lerner Strategic Plan Committee
- Quilt Gardens along the Heritage Trail Chair
- WNIT Community Advisory Board
- Downtown Goshen, Inc. Board Member
- Goshen Theatre Fundraising Committee
- Regional Cities Initiative
- MACOG Active Transportation Steering Committee
- MACOG Transportation for America National Committee
- Regional Development Authority (RDA) Marketing Committee
- Regional Development Authority (RDA) Talent Attraction Retention Chair

## **Amanda Eckelbarger, Senior Creative Design Manager**

- DMAI 30 Under 30 Member
- Indiana Tourism Association Professional Development Committee
- Indiana Tourism Association Annual Conference Awards Committee Co-Chair
- Indiana Tourism Association Annual Conference Planning Committee

## **Mike Huber, Director of Destination Development**

- Northern Indiana Tourism Development Commission Research Ad-hoc Taskforce
- Downtown Elkhart, Inc.
- Elkhart County Redevelopment Commission President
- Elkhart North Gateway Village Steering Committee
- Northwest Gateway Steering Committee Chair
- Vibrant Communities Organizing Team
- Regional Cities Talent Attraction Committee
- Goshen Theater Board, Secretary / Treasurer
- MACOG Transportation for America Leadership Committee

## **Janis Logsdon, Director of Advertising Sales and Leisure Marketing**

- Elkhart County Historical Society Board Member
- Northern Indiana Tourism Development Commission Marketing Committee

## **Terry Mark, Director of Communications and Public Relations**

- Vibrant Communities Organizing Team
- Vibrant Communities Communications Team Chair
- Elkhart River District Organizaing Committee
- Member, Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Elkhart Board of Trustees

## **Jessica Miller-Barnhart, Senior Technology Marketing Manager**

- Northern Indiana Tourism Development Commission Technology Ad-hoc Taskforce
- Wellfield Spring Marketplace Committee

## **Sonya Nash, CTIS Director of Group & Experiential Sales and Marketing**

- Northern Indiana Tourism Development Commission Group Ad-hoc Taskforce
- Northern Indiana Partnership for the Arts Commission Grant Review Panel Chair
- Quilt Gardens along the Heritage Trail Project Manager
- Michiana Master Gardener
- Seward Johnson Exhibition Project Manager
- Indiana Department of Tourism ABA Planning Committee
- Gateway Mile AutoFest Planning Committee

## **Cindy Ostrom, Director of Finance and Administration**

- Vibrant Communities Organizing Team

# Elkhart County Innkeepers Tax Commission

## **Beth Ronzone, President**

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## **Gita Patel**

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# ECCVB, Inc. Staff

## **Diana Lawson, FCDME, Chief Executive Officer**

**diana@amishcountry.org**

### Responsibilities:

- Researches, develops, leads, and facilitates the overall strategic and operational responsibilities regarding staff, programs, expansion, and execution of the ECCVB's mission and goals to be Elkhart County's champion for the local tourism industry.
- Collaborates directly with the Commission and Board, along with community partners, on the collaborative vision, policymaking and business strategy for the organization.
- Serves as the primary spokesperson and Chief Executive Officer for the ECCVB.

## **Amanda Eckelbarger, Senior Creative Design Manager**

**amanda@amishcountry.org**

### Responsibilities:

- Manages all aspects of the creative design areas and provides support for the ECCVB team by developing, creating and updating the visual brand and content for the marketing and collateral materials to provide quality branding, along with accurate and timely publication to attract interest and meet the overall organizational goals.

## **Mindy Engle, Destination Concierge**

**mindy@amishcountry.org**

### Responsibilities:

- Provides professional, friendly, and personal service to visitors and callers of the Visitor Center to generate spending and economic impact throughout the destinations.
- Represents the direct and official resource to visitors of the Center by providing travel information and other visitor services in-person, over the phone, and online.

## **Mike Huber, Director of Destination Development**

**mike@amishcountry.org**

### Responsibilities:

- Researches, develops, leads, executes and facilitates destination development strategies and related activities that support new and redevelopment of targeted attraction areas.
- Develops, leads, and supports strategic business development through strategic development, marketing, guidance, and related training activities that will generate investments and increased economic impact throughout the destination locations.

## **Janis Logsdon, Director Advertising Sales and Leisure Marketing**

**janis@amishcountry.org**

### Responsibilities:

- Researches, develops, leads, facilitates, and executes the solicitation of leisure advertising sales and marketing that generate brand awareness, promote destination assets and optimally engage leisure visitors towards destination visits and spending, utilizing cooperative advertising efforts, paid, earned, and owned media channels, along with other marketing resources.

## **Mike Long, Destination Concierge**

**mike.long@amishcountry.org**

### Responsibilities:

- Provides professional, friendly, and personal service to visitors and callers of the Visitor Center to generate spending and economic impact throughout the destinations.
- Represents the direct and official resource to visitors of the Center by providing travel information and other visitor services in-person, over the phone, and online.

## **ECCVB, Inc. Staff** (cont.)

### **Terry Mark, Director of Communications and Public Relations**

**terry@amishcountry.org**

#### Responsibilities:

- Researches, develops, leads, executes and facilitates the organizational communications and public relations aspects for the organization, utilizing various platforms and messaging vehicles along with ongoing community engagement initiatives that will influence increased community/stakeholder awareness, sentiment, and synergies of the ECCVB, along with ultimate increased local / visitor attraction to Elkhart County.

### **Jessica Miller-Barnhart, Senior Technology Marketing Manager**

**jessica@amishcountry.org**

#### Responsibilities:

- Manages all of the Bureau's technology systems, including hardware, software, servers, devices, phones, staff / partner training and support, along with website and database management to support the daily technical activities effectively that generate overall organizational goal attainment.

### **Sonya Nash, Director of Group & Experiential Sales and Marketing**

**sonya@amishcountry.org**

#### Responsibilities:

- Researches, develops, leads, facilitates, and executes sales and marketing strategies through partnerships with local businesses and stakeholders to create or refresh destination experiences that will convert or create buyer interest and extend overnight stays in the destination locations for groups.
- Leads related sales and marketing efforts, including convention / meeting and group tour sales, along with destination enhancements, entertainment and event planning, and other related group support services.

### **Cindy Ostrom, Director of Finance and Administration**

**cindy@amishcountry.org**

#### Responsibilities:

- Researches, develops, leads, executes and facilitates all office administrative, financial and accounting, visitor center, human resources and facilities functions for the Bureau to ensure overall compliance, organizational effectiveness, and continual efficiencies towards the respective financial, customer, and team member goals of the organization.





## ECCVB Priority Activities





## > COMMUNICATIONS - ADVERTISING

**GOAL** To increase destination awareness and economic impact using paid and co-op channels that generate brand awareness, promote destination assets and optimally engage defined market segments.

**Advertising Objective** By investing in co-operative media buys (in partnership with the Northern Indiana Tourism Development Commission and the Indiana Office of Tourism Development) and Elkhart County specific placements, the ECCVB will promote destination campaigns and maximize media value.

### REGIONAL CO-OPS

#### **NITDC Regional Marketing Co-op Activity Measures**

- Content hub development and content marketing strategy (January - December)
- 10 themed, regional e-newsletters to 20,500 opt-ins (April - December)
- Toll Road visitors guide, 125,000 distribution, inside front cover ad and opposite inside front cover ad: CVB partner investment \$9,840
- Midwest Living, circulation 795,000, 8 page insert, full page and half page ads: \$14,500 (May/June)
- Brochure distribution (Area Guide, Exit 92, Museums, and Quilt Gardens) at Toll Road plazas: \$11,100
- Website activity: Unique users: 100,000 | Page Views: 400,000 | Partnerships: 7 | Impressions: 2.1 million (January - December)
- By leveraging \$34,500 to a partner investment of \$241,500 the ECCVB will communicate the Elkhart County / Northern Indiana assets across multiple advertising platforms including social media, digital and print; Total value of investment: \$276,000 (January - December)
- Tourist Assistance Portal (TAP); CVB investment: \$7,500; Total Co-op dollars: \$45,000; Total value of investment: \$52,500 (January - December)
- By leveraging \$7,500 to a partner investment of \$45,000, the ECCVB will communicate the Elkhart County / Northern Indiana assets through 2.1 million impressions (January - December)

#### **Indiana Travel Guide | VisitIndiana.com Activity Measures**

- Brochure lead generation ad and listings: \$4,480
- Circulation: 500,000 | Partnerships: 112 | Impressions: 62.5 million (January - December)
- CVB investment: \$4,480; Total Co-op dollars: \$64,580; Total value of investment: \$69,060
- By leveraging \$4,480 to a partner investment of \$64,580 the ECCVB will communicate the Elkhart County / Northern Indiana assets through 62.5 million impressions; Total value of investment: \$76,560 (January - December)
- Receive 5,250 Heritage Trail Adventures Area Guide requests (January - December)

#### **Visit Indiana | Indiana Office of Tourism Development Marketing Co-op Activity Measures**

- Impressions: 190,680,600 | Partnerships: 7 | Households reached : 11 million (April - September)
- CVB investment: \$75,000; Total Co-op dollars: \$225,000; Total value of investment: \$300,000
- By leveraging \$75,000 to a partner and state investment of \$225,000 the ECCVB will communicate Elkhart County assets to 11 million households; Total value of investment: \$300,000 (January - December)
- Receive 1,000 website visits (January - December)

#### **Indiana Festival Guide Activity Measures**

- Full page ad
- Circulation: 500,000 | Partnerships: 90 | Impressions: 51 million
- CVB investment: \$3,600; Total Co-op dollars: \$46,400; Total value of investment: \$50,000 (January - December)
- By leveraging \$3,600 to a partner investment of \$46,400 the ECCVB will communicate the Elkhart County / Northern Indiana assets through 51 million impressions (January - December)

**REGIONAL ADVERTISING ACTIVITY MEASURES****OUTDOOR****I-80/90 Billboards / Exit 92**

- Burkhardt, LaMar, Connor: I-80/90 Eastbound (7) Lake, LaPorte, St. Joseph & Elkhart Counties (April - December)
- Outfront: I-80/90 Westbound (2) Elkhart & Steuben Counties (April - December)
- 20.5 million impressions (April - December)
- CVB partner investment: \$66,900

**I-80/90 Barrier Plaza Posters and Banners / Exit 92**

- (10) Posters - Westpoint / Eastbound from Chicago Skyway (January - December)
- Gross impressions: 18.3 million annually
- CVB investment: \$25,000
- (10) Posters - Eastpoint / Westbound from Ohio Turnpike (April - December)
- Gross impressions: 9 million annually
- CVB partner investment: \$16,500
- Toll Road Travel Plaza Banners at MM91 Eastbound: CVB partner investment \$6,750

**SOCIAL MEDIA****Facebook / Heritage Trail, Quilt Gardens, Seward Johnson**

- Sponsored / boosted posts (April - November)
- Obtain a 3% engagement rate (likes, comments, click-thru's)
- CVB investment: \$2,500

**DIGITAL****YELP / Exit 92**

- Targeted digital ads and / or enhanced profile (March - October)
- Receive 1,200 Views and 95 Leads on Yelp business page (January - December)
- CVB investment: \$1,500

**WAZE / Exit 92**

- Targeted digital "billboard" displays to drivers based upon location
- Receive 5,000 Views (January - December)
- CVB investment: \$1,500

**Direct Mail**

- Heritage Trail Adventures Area Guide mailing to out of market audience targeted list (May)
- CVB investment: \$2,500

## SPECIALTY AND CHAMBER PUBLICATION ADVERTISING ACTIVITY MEASURES

### **Quilt Garden Print Advertising Activity Measures**

#### **PCMGGA Gardening Show Program**

- Porter County (2,000 attendance, 4,000 emails, 18,000 page views; 1X: January)
- CVB investment: \$325

#### **National Garden Clubs convention program**

- Grand Rapids (700; 1X: May)
- CVB investment: \$500

#### **PCMGGA Garden Walk Program**

- Grand Rapids (2,000 attendance, 4,000 emails, 18,000 page views; 1X: July)
- CVB investment: \$100

#### **Garden Clubs of IL, Garden Glories**

- Illinois Garden Club members (9,200; 1X: June / July)
- CVB investment: \$400

#### **American Quilters Society Quilt Show**

- Paducah (37,000; 1X: April)
- CVB investment: \$474
- Grand Rapids (20,000; 1X: August)
- CVB investment: \$450

#### **Shipshewana Quilt Festival**

- Festival program (4,000; 1X: June)
- CVB investment: \$100

#### **Amish Acres Arts & Crafts Festival**

- Festival program (60,000; 1X: August)
- CVB investment: \$2,000

### **Heritage Trail Print Advertising Activity Measures**

#### **Premier Arts / Downtown Elkhart Gateway Mile**

- Performance programs (30,000; 5X: February - December)
- CVB investment: \$1,200

#### **Amish Acres Round Barn Theatre**

- Performance Programs (70,000; 7X: April - December)
- CVB investment: \$800

#### **The Beacher**

- Weekly newspaper (4,000; 1X: May)
- CVB investment: \$415

#### **Chamber Publications (Elkhart, Goshen, Middlebury, Nappanee)**

- Chamber Member Directories and Tourism Brochures (5X: August - November)
- CVB investment: \$1,780

#### **Miscellaneous Local Publications (Discover Elkhart Country, InMiddlebury, RV Business, Granger Living)**

- Monthly or quarterly magazines (circulation 7,500 - 15,000; 4X: May - October)
- CVB investment: \$5,000

## Local Media Channels Activity Measures

### Radio

- Create 3 advertising campaigns highlighting local assets on 5 diverse top local radio stations (WVPE, WNSN, Radio LaRaza, U93, B100) (June - August)
- Reach a weekly cumulative audience of 42,500 adults 35-64, 3 campaigns (June - August)
- CVB investment: \$5,000
- Track site visits (June - August)

### Television

- Create an advertising campaign highlighting local assets to the local market (June - August)
- Reach a weekly cumulative audience of 60,000 adults 35-64 (June - August)
- CVB investment: \$5,000
- Track site visits (June - August)

### Social Media

#### Facebook (Heritage Trail, Quilt Gardens, Seward Johnson)

- Sponsored / boosted posts (April - November)
- Obtain a 3% engagement rate (likes, comments, click-thru's)
- CVB investment: \$2,500

### Direct Mail

- Heritage Trail Adventures Travel Guide mailing to local audience with a call to action letter (June)
- CVB investment: \$2500
- Track site visit increase based on call to action (June)

**Travel Trade Partnership Advertising Objective** Develop in partnership with local businesses a strategic advertising campaign for the travel trade market which generates qualified leads and positions Amish Country as a premier destination.

#### **Trade Publications Cooperative Advertising Activity Measures**

- Develop 39 Co-op partnerships (January)
- Advertise in 5 publications *Group Tour Northeastern*, *Leisure Group Travel*, *Groups Today*, *Going on Faith*, and *Select Traveler* (January - December)
- Coordinate 74 insertions including YouTube video links, social media posts, e-newsletters, online itinerary pages, photo galleries, and print ads (January (7), February (7), March (6), April (5), May (6), June (6), July (7), August (5), September (13), October (4), November (5), December (4))

#### **Select Traveler**

- Total reach: 5,000 per issue
- Total frequency: (2) full page ads (Indiana editorial feature issue March/April plus July/August); (5) Web Itineraries (January - December); (1) Web Listing/Link (January - December); (1) full page Marquee Listing (July); (1) Trip Search Link (January - December)
- CVB Investment: \$0; Co-op media dollars: \$3,500; Total value of investment: \$3,500

#### **Leisure Group Travel**

- Total reach: 20,000 per issue
- Total frequency: (1) Full page ad Indiana annual issue (January), (1) Full page itinerary page (February)
- CVB investment: \$2,295; Co-op media dollars: \$3,675; Total value of investment: \$5,970

#### **Groups Today**

- Total reach: 7,000
- Total frequency: (3) Contest Sponsorships for NTA, Travel South (Feb-March), (1) e-newsletter feature (June)
- CVB investment: \$1,032.85; Co-op media dollars: \$2,065.70; Total value of investment: \$3,098.55

#### **Going on Faith**

- Total reach: 6,500 per issue
- Total frequency: (1) 2/3 pg. ad Northern Indiana editorial feature issue (Summer/July)
- CVB investment: \$0; Co-op media dollars: \$1,500; Total value of investment: \$1,500

#### **Group Tour Northeastern**

- Total reach: 15,500 per print issue, 12,500 per e-newsletter, 3,000 per social media post
- Total frequency: (3) 1/2 page ads (February, May, November), (6) months YouTube video link with e-magazine feature (Jan-June), (1) full page ad Indiana annual issue (January), (1) exclusive e-blast including itinerary and banner ad (August), (2) Facebook mention, (8) Twitter Posts, (1) Blog post (September)
- CVB investment: \$0; Co-op media dollars: \$14,223.55; Total value of investment: \$14,223.55



## > COMMUNICATIONS - MARKETING

**GOAL** To create campaigns that generate destination awareness and increased spending on a platform of paid, earned and given media channels, interest-specific messaging and ongoing community engagement.

### 2017 Campaign Channel Summaries

**Vibrant Communities ... along the Heritage Trail Campaign Channel** To speak to group and leisure travelers, residents and local stakeholders seeking place-based activity in cities and towns and their connections to the Heritage Trail / Quilt Gardens experience.

Communications will build awareness / engagement and increased spending through geo / behavioral targeting, social channels, radio, email marketing and integration with stakeholder-managed communications and ECCVB-sponsored events.

**Exit 92 Marketing Campaign Channel** To promote I-80/90 Exit 92 as the best option for transient traveler stops, communicate the density and proximity of familiar brands, and maximize opportunities created by travel plaza closures/upgrades. The campaign will target the 65 million vehicles travelling the Indiana Toll Road annually.

The campaign will communicate easy access, density and familiar trusted lodging and dining choices at Exit 92 (January - December) resulting in increased demand and return visits with longer stays. Promotions include indoor travel plaza placements (Indiana and Ohio) and outdoor signage placement and messaging. Placements include coupons, travel app advertising, Twitter and logo-specific billboards.

**Weekend Stays Campaign Channel** To increase the demand for Friday - Saturday overnights year-round. The campaign will target niche-specific visitor segments such as outdoor enthusiasts, repeat visitors and VFR.

The campaign will highlight weekend-specific options and detailed itineraries. Marketing will include, digital and social media channels (Facebook, Twitter and Instagram) and geographic and behavioral targeting. Media placements will consist of digital, social media and personalized website experiences based on user behavior.

**Recreation/Active Transportation** To extend destination appeal to outdoor enthusiasts by continuing development and boosting promotion of Elkhart County's extensive system of trails and waterways.

The campaign will market current outdoor assets and complementing experiences and work in partnership with stakeholders to continue to develop and enhance the tools and products that facilitate a positive visitor experience (Maps, signage, amenities and online resources). Marketing will include digital, social media channels (Facebook, Twitter and Instagram) and personalized web content based on user interest, location and demographics.

**Group/Travel Trade Campaign Channel** To convert a buyer's interest and extend overnight stays in the destination by developing partnerships with local businesses and working with stakeholders to create new product and refresh and update existing product to create new buyer interest.

The campaign will focus on three core elements of activity including marketing engagement with itinerary and experience development along with customer service and partnership development that will feature and enhance products and services specific to the group/motorcoach market segment.

**Heritage Trail Marketing Objective** To speak to group and leisure travelers, residents and local stakeholders seeking place-based activity in cities and towns and their connections to the Heritage Trail / Quilt Gardens experience.

#### Heritage Trail Activity Measures

- Communicate and collaborate ongoing marketing campaigns with partners to promote Elkhart County to visitors and residents (January - December)
- Update creative concept for print and digital media (February)
- Promote and distribute 3,000 Heritage Trail audio driving tours via CD and MP3 download (January - December)
- Produce and distribute 30,000 Heritage Trail maps (February - December)
- Refresh and update Heritage Trail audio tour (January - April)
- Research and develop downloadable digital Heritage Trail files for offline use (May)
- Promote local assets to residents and out-of-market visitors via GetSmart website content personalization (January - December)
- Receive 2,000 Click throughs, 900,000 impressions, .16% Site Click through rate from our our customized GetSmart Content (January - December)
- Promote local assets to residents via radio advertising (June - August)
- Promote local assets to residents and drive market via direct mail (May/June)
- Create and distribute 14 leisure e-newsletters (January - November)
- Develop and distribute eNewsletter evaluation survey (May)
- Promote Elkhart and Middlebury downtown walking tours to local residents and leisure travelers via social media channels (Facebook, Twitter and Instagram) (April - October)
- Develop and promote assets highlighting new content and micro-experiences via (6) targeted digital buys, (9) social media sponsored/boosted posts, mobile app, and website (April - November)
- Receive 200 views of the micro-experience section in the mobile app (February - December)
- Receive 1,000 unique PageViews to the micro-experiences pages on the HTadventures website (January - December)
- Receive 250,000 Unique Visits (an increase of 5%) to the HTadventures site (January - December)
- Generate a 3% Facebook engagement rate from organic, promoted, and sponsored posts (likes, shares, comments, tagging) (May - October)

#### Quilt Gardens along the Heritage Trail Activity Measures

- Update creative concept for print and digital media (January)
- Produce and distribute 30,000 rack cards (January - September)
- Update partner brand management guide and marketing guidelines (January)
- Create and distribute 11 Quilt Garden Insider e-newsletters (March - October)
- Produce and post Master Gardeners Guidebook and Quilters Chronicles Guidebook on website (May)
- Coordinate on-site signage design, production and placement for 30 Quilt Garden and Quilt Mural locations (April)
- Create 5 Animoto videos for Facebook sponsored and boosted posts (June - September)
- Receive 200 views of the Quilt Gardens section in the mobile app (May - October)
- Generate a 3% Facebook engagement rate from organic, promoted, and sponsored posts (likes, shares, comments, tagging) (May - December)
- Receive 1,470 PDF downloads (an increase of 5%) of the Master Gardener Guidebook (January - December)
- Receive 315 PDF downloads (an increase of 5%) of the Quilters Chronicles guide (January - December)
- Receive 33,000 QuiltGardens.com PageViews (an increase of 5%) (January - December)

#### Seward Johnson Epic Art along the Heritage Trail Activity Measures

- Develop creative concept for print and digital media (January)
- Produce and distribute 20,000 rack cards (January - September)
- Produce and distribute 10,000 Seward Johnson Epic Art Guides (January - September)
- Receive 15,000 PageViews and 1,470 PDF downloads of Seward Johnson Epic Art Guide (June - September)
- Create Animoto video content for Facebook sponsored and boosted posts (June - September)
- Create and implement photo scavenger hunt Facebook / Instagram social media promotion (June - July)
- Generate a 3% Facebook engagement rate from organic, promoted, and sponsored posts (likes, shares, comments, tagging) (May - December)

**Exit 92 Marketing Objective** To promote I-80/90 Exit 92 as the best option for transient traveler stops, communicate the density and proximity of familiar brands and maximize opportunities created by travel plaza closures/updates

#### Exit 92 Activity Measures

- Confirm ad placements and establish timelines (January)
- Confirm and place 10 outdoor signs (January - February)
- Confirm and place 15,000 rack cards for distribution at Indiana & Ohio Toll Road plazas (January)
- Confirm and place Toll booth barrier window signage (eastbound & westbound) placement (January)
- Toll Road Exit-by-Exit Guide ad placement (250,000 printed) (January)
- Toll Road map ad placement (125,000 printed) (January)
- Confirm travel plaza lobby signage & Tourist Assistance Portal (TAP) kiosks placement (April)
- Confirm Digital Ad Placement (Waze, Yelp) (April)
- Increase Twitter Followers to 6,900 (an increase of 6%) January - December)
- Increase Twitter Engagements to 8,115 (an increase of 50%) (January - December)
- Receive 2,000 Actions and offer redemption from Waze travel app (clicks, info clicks, navigation, website visits, phone calls (January - December)

**Weekend Stays Marketing Objective** To increase the demand for Friday - Saturday overnights year-round. The campaign will target niche-specific visitor segments such as outdoor enthusiasts, repeat visitors and VFR.

#### Weekend Stays Activity Measures

- Assess existing product and attraction inventory (January)
- Define desired niche audiences based on product and attraction inventory and lodging availability (January)
- Promote assets highlighting new content and micro-experiences via (6) targeted digital buys, (9) social media sponsored / boosted posts, mobile app, and website (April - November)
- Obtain 4,373 downloads (an increase of 5%) of weekend itineraries from CVB website (February - December)
- Achieve a 5% increase in Friday - Saturday overnights, confirmed by STR data (June - December)
- Obtain 300 views of the weekend focused micro-experiences pages of the mobile app (April - December)
- Generate a 3% Facebook engagement rate from organic, promoted, and sponsored posts (likes, shares, comments, tagging) (May - September)

**Outdoor Recreation Marketing Objective** To extend destination appeal to outdoor enthusiasts by continuing development and boosting promotion of Elkhart County's extensive system of trails and waterways.

#### Outdoor Recreation Activity Measures

- Work with outdoor stakeholders and event coordinators to incorporate CVB messaging into existing maps and other promotional outlets (January - December)
- Enhance Outdoor section of CVB website to highlight Elkhart County's extensive system of trails, waterways, and other outdoor activities (January - March)
- Create outdoor-specific itineraries based on preference, duration and complementing experiences (April)
- Produce and distribute 750 outdoor activity guides (April - December)
- Create digital Elkhart County Bicycling / Walking Trail guide PDF (May)
- Obtain 1,000 downloads of the Elkhart County Bicycling/Walking Trail guide (May - September)
- Obtain 300 views of the outdoor focused micro-experiences pages of the mobile app (April - December)
- Obtain 3,329 PageViews (an increase of 5%) of the outdoor pages of CVB website and 813 downloads (an increase of 5%) of outdoor itineraries (January - December)

**Group/Travel Trade Marketing Engagement & Development Objective** To generate qualified tour operator leads and increase sales for local businesses by positioning Amish Country and the RV Capital of the World as premier destinations for the group market thru attendance at tradeshow, giving sales presentations and conducting direct mail campaigns, sales missions, e-mail campaigns, group website, social media strategies, trade publication Co-op advertising campaigns and destination preview tours.

#### Marketing Engagement & Development Activity Measures

- Attend 6 tradeshow: ABA, Heartland, Midwest Marketplace, TAP Dance, Great Day Tours, NTA (January - December)
- Conduct 1 Sales Mission: Midwest (October)
- Generate 11 e-newsletters (January - November)
- Conduct 2 personalized destination previews, 1 Great Day Group Leader Preview tour and 1 destination wide preview tours (January - December)
- Conduct 1 Heritage Trail Adventures Area Guide direct mail campaign (June)
- Coordinate advertisements in 5 publications, Leisure Group Travel, Groups Today, Going on Faith, and Select Traveler (January - December)
- Coordinate monthly group website updates and social media strategies (January - December)
- Generate 150 qualified leads and appointments (January - December)
- Generate 300 visits to the Travel Trade Group Planner Resources page on AmishCountryTours.org (January - December)
- Generate 18,000 Unique Page Views on Group site and 600 Sample Itinerary PDF Downloads (January - December)

**Group/Travel Trade Services Development Objective** To retain and expand group visits by developing services and providing information to group planners in partnership with area stakeholders thru the distribution of Group Tour Planners, Travel Guides, Profile Sheets, DVD's, digital photography, and suggested itineraries.

#### Services Development Activity Measures

- Provide service and assistance to 200 clients (January - December)

**Group/Travel Trade Partnership Development Objective** To retain and develop a group marketing team with area stakeholders engaged and involved in working together to generate leads and increase sales thru networking sessions, partnership opportunities, and educational programming.

#### Partnership Development Activity Measures

- Develop 10 Co-op partnerships from marketing development activities (January - October)
- Participate in a Co-op partnership with the Indiana Office of Tourism for the ABA 2017 and ABA 2018 Marketplaces (January - December)
- Participate in a Co-op partnership with the Indianapolis CVA (central region) and French Lick CVB (southern region) acting as the northern region leader promoting the Indiana Treasures Tour (January - December)
- Develop a new themed inclusive itinerary (February)
- Conduct 2 direct mail co-op postcard campaigns with the Indiana Treasures Tour partners and with Amish Acres (January - May)
- Create and implement concierge visitor services program offering group experiences to the leisure market (April - September)
- Generate \$3,000 in additional Co-op partnership revenues (February - October)

**Promotional Materials Objective** To develop and distribute targeted, persuasive collateral that strengthens destination brands, communicates key experiences and encourages (ongoing) engagement.

#### Travel Guide Activity Measures

- Manage sales, content and production of 68-page 2018 Heritage Trail Adventures Area Guide (July - December)
- Complete 150 contracts resulting in \$180,000 in total sales; realize \$85,000 in net profit (July - December)
- Oversee distribution of 200,000 printed copies of 2017 Heritage Trail Adventures Area Guide edition (February - December)

## **Promotional Materials Objective Continued**

### **Production / Content Management Activity Measures**

- Develop comprehensive content grid integrating paid, digital and social schedules (January)
- Manage content, frequency and metrics for Front Desk Update, Leisure, Business to Business, Travel Trade and Quilt Garden Insider e-newsletters (January - December)
- Develop content and creative for 100 print ads targeting leisure / group / resident / VFR markets (January - December)
- Manage copy, photography and videography for 350 pieces of marketing / sales collateral (January - December)
- Create 5 Animoto video segments highlighting downtowns and Heritage Trail assets / activities (May - October)
- Schedule 4 photo shoots highlighting Heritage Trail assets / activities (January - December)
- Develop content for GetSmart website personalization (January - December)

### **Group Marketing Activity Measures**

- Manage production of Amish Country / Quilt Gardens Profile Sheets, Group Itinerary and Experience Guide, Co-op ads, itineraries, templates, FAM fliers and trade show presentation (January - December)

### **Sponsorship Activation Activity Measures**

- Confirm key messages, performance measures and activation methods (March - October)

**Amish Country | Elkhart County E-Marketing Objective** To generate awareness, highlight key visitation drivers, provide travel recommendations, and drive web traffic.

### **E-Marketing Activity Measures**

- Receive 22% click to open rate from 12 Leisure e-newsletters (March - December)
- Receive 25% open rate from 11 Quilt Gardens Insider e-newsletters (January - December)
- Receive 11% click to open rate from 11 Group / Travel Trade e-newsletters (January - November)
- Receive 6% click to open rate from 24 Front Desk Update e-newsletters to lodging facility front desk personnel and advertiser / partners audience (January - December)
- Receive 30% click to open rate from 12 Business to Business e-newsletters (January - December)

## **Overall Leisure & Group/Travel Trade Advertising/Marketing Communication Performance Measures**

- Invest \$287,000 in advertising and marketing which will convert to \$33 million in Total Visitor Spending\* reflecting both Area Guide Travel Guide [printed and electronic] and Unique Website Visits (January - December)
- Create 75 customized itineraries, averaging in 2.5 days of length, generating \$1.1 million in group visitor spending
- Generate 125 daytrips and 125 overnight trips resulting in \$2.75 million in group visitor spending
- Maintain average length of group stays to 2 days
- Realize \$100,000 in group visitor spending from group direct mail promotion
- Total Co-op advertising investment / Group-Travel Trade - \$28,644
- Total CVB advertising investment / Group-Travel Trade - \$5,400
- Total CVB advertising investment / Leisure - \$387,000 (contingent on \$100,000 TIF funding subsidizing i-80/90 Exit 92 campaign)
- Total Co-op advertising investment / Leisure - \$800,000

### **\* Visitor Spending Performance Metrics**

Advertising Performance is the amount in visitor spending generated by the ECCVB efforts Visitor Spending - (Total Travel Guide Requests X Conversion Rate 56%) X (2.7 people in travel party) X (2.6 days average length of stay) X (\$103 per person per day)

Website Performance is the amount of visitor spending generated by the ECCVB's website efforts Visitor Spending - (Total Unique Visits X Conversion Rate of 10%) X (2.7 people in travel party) X (2.6 days average length of stay) X (\$103 per person per day)

*Research Resource:*

**2015 Economic Impact Report** by Certec Inc.



## > COMMUNICATIONS - PUBLIC RELATIONS

**GOAL** To generate increased awareness among local residents, potential visitors, stakeholders and community partners about the wide diversity of experiences and quality - of - place amenities in Elkhart County and to encourage participation in the civic life of the community.

**Content Management Objective** To create and maintain a program of compelling and valuable content that engages local and visitor audiences, reinforcing Elkhart County's position as a vibrant destination and attractive place to live, work and play.

### **Content Management Activity Measures**

- Develop and maintain an editorial calendar integrating website content, GetSmart, social media actions, paid media campaigns and e - marketing initiatives (January - December)
- Develop and execute a protocol for content editing, encompassing website, e - marketing, paid media (January - December)

### **Content Creation Activity Measures**

- Develop and publish 30 place-making-related articles for distribution via various ECCVB channels, supporting each of the 2017 campaigns and projects (January - December)
- Research, develop and launch a new communications vehicle targeting the local / regional audience on quality-of-place activities within the destination (January - December)

**Community Relations Objective** To build awareness for the mission of the ECCVB and the critical role it plays in the Elkhart County hospitality industry and place-making and to support quality-of-place projects in the community.

### **Board / Commission Advocacy Activity Measures**

- Work with the ECCVB director to facilitate 5 joint meetings of the Elkhart County Innkeepers Tax Commission and ECCVB Board of Directors (January - December)
- Prepare and communicate meeting agendas and past meeting minutes in advance of the meetings (January - December)
- Record the actions at each meeting by taking minutes (January - December)
- Facilitate 12 Advocacy meetings (informal information - sharing meetings) of the Elkhart County Innkeepers Tax Commission and ECCVB Board of Directors (January - December)
- Work with the ECCVB director to manage the membership of the Elkhart County Innkeepers Tax Commission and ECCVB Board of Directors by identifying the positions in which the office holder's term is expiring (October - December)

### **Vibrant Communities Activity Measures**

- Participate in Vibrant Communities administrative activities as part of organizing team and aide to implementation steering committee (January - December)
- Manage communications strategy for Vibrant Communities (January - December)
- Facilitate the launch of the Vibrant Bucks program (January)

### **B2B Communications Activity Measures**

- Produce and distribute 12 e-newsletters for ECCVB stakeholders - elected officials, business and community leaders, hospitality industry partners, etc. (January - December)
- Research, produce and distribute an annual report of the ECCVB's key performance measures and key messages that support the ECCVB's mission and role in community (January - April)
- Distribute 12 public relations tips to community partners via targeted email lists (January - December)
- Develop and distribute laminated 2017 local event listings to 150 local tourism businesses (January)

### **Sponsorship Program Activity Measures**

- Review sponsorship practices and revise internal guidelines (January)
- Develop activation measures that support the ECCVB's key initiatives - i.e. support of website / social media presence, Vibrant Communities, connectivity (February)

#### Community Relations Objective (Cont.)

- Provide 3 sponsorship education opportunities via IEG webinars (January - December)
- Manage sponsorship information dissemination, communication, eligibility, proposal and contract filing and activation for 12 properties (January - December)

#### Travel Guide Assistance Fund Activity Measures

- Distribute Travel Guide Assistance Fund grant application announcements/guidelines to all eligible partners (July - August)
- Process \$17,152.50 in grant awards (January - July)
- Provide 17 not-for-profit organizations the ability to participate in the Heritage Trail Adventures Area Guide at an affordable rate (August - November)

**Public Relations Objective** To maintain a positive relationship with media sources which have an interest in the ECCVB destination and to encourage frequent and affirmative mentions of the destination's assets and attributes.

#### Press Releases Activity Measures

- Produce and distribute 18 press releases to local and regional media (January - December)

#### Targeted Campaigns Activity Measures

- Create and distribute 4 targeted media campaigns supporting Quilt Gardens, Seward Johnson, outdoor recreation and micro-experiences (January - August)
- Develop a FAM tour for outdoors journalists attending the Outdoors Writers Association convention in Fort Wayne in 2018 (January - July)

#### Outreach Activity Measures

- Develop key messages for Media Marketplace (January - April)
- Attend Media Marketplace (April)
- Generate 3,000 visits to media site (January - December)
- Generate 150 qualified media inquiries (January - December)

#### **Overall Public Relations Performance Measures**

- Generate 600 media placements (print, broadcast, online, blogs), yielding 48,000,000 impressions resulting in \$480,000 in advertising value (January - December)

## > DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT

**GOAL** To generate spending and economic impact throughout the destination by implementing strategies that support redevelopment of targeted areas and support business development through marketing and training activities.

### **Vibrant Communities - Quality of Place**

During 2017, the projects and activities for destination development will be organized to strengthen the ECCVB's commitment to the overall Vibrant Communities quality of place objective. ECCVB leadership and staff will manage a significant role in assisting the community through a process that will implement the priority strategies identified through the Vibrant Communities Planning Process. The strategies outlined during the 2013-2014 tourism development strategic planning process served as the ECCVB's platform for its participation and advocacy during the Vibrant Communities process, as such the further implementation of these programs will be organized under this overall objective.

**Vibrant Communities Objective** To facilitate implementation of the Vibrant Communities Action Agenda. In collaboration with the Community Foundation of Elkhart County, the Vibrant Community implementation process will include a community led structure to prioritize developed strategies and create accountability for investment in Community of Place projects throughout Elkhart County.

### **Vibrant Communities Activity Measures**

- Facilitate meetings of the Vibrant Communities Implementation Team (January - December)
- In partnership with Community Foundation, facilitate development and implementation of the Vibrant Bucks Micro-grant Program (January-March)
- Facilitate 3-4 technical assistance workshops (March, June, September, December)
- In partnership with local Chamber staff, facilitate community based implementation meetings (January - December)
- In partnership with issue based task forces, facilitate community based implementation meetings (January - December)
- Identify funding resources to implement Quality of Place Activities (January - December)

### **Downtown and Gateway District Redevelopment**

The ECCVB recognizes that good planning and development are vital to attracting visitors to a destination. The downtowns of communities along the Heritage Trail provide an ideal complement to the rural experience. Therefore, the ECCVB is engaged in representing the visitor and the visitor industry in these initiatives.

**Community Based Downtown Redevelopment Objective** As one of the 4 Tourism Development Pillars, this objective relates to working with each community in Elkhart County to achieve success with Downtown Development Objectives through active participation and technical assistance

### **Community Based Downtown Redevelopment Activity Measures**

- Through Vibrant Communities, work on the implementation of the Market District Redevelopment Plan (January - December)
- Continue leadership of Ice Sports Facility Regional Cities Project in conjunction with Elkhart Community Schools and the City of Elkhart (January - June)
- Continue participation on the Goshen Theatre Board working toward strategic planning and implementation of community fundraising (January - December)
- Continue implementation of Downtown wayfinding signage and kiosk program - Goshen (January - December)
- Work with Nappanee Chamber of Commerce and City officials on the development of a Comprehensive Plan (January - December)

## **Downtown and Gateway District Redevelopment** (Cont)

**Downtown Live. Work. Play Capacity Grants Objective** The ECCVB has committed to increasing the success of the downtown initiatives by building the capacity of stakeholder organizations to implement Live/Work/Play strategies. The ECCVB will create a new technical assistance grant program, providing administrative resources allowing existing stakeholder organizations to expand their ability to provide new services. The ECCVB will actively engage stakeholder organizations to identify the gaps in existing services, and create an approach to most effectively fill the service gaps.

### **Downtown Live. Work. Play. Capacity Grants Activity Measures**

- Manage Grant reporting requirements to ECCF (June)
- Facilitate and evaluate grantee progress reports and continued funding eligibility (March, June, October, December)

**Exit 92 Redevelopment Objective** To coordinate activities that support the North Pointe redevelopment strategies, including activities to enhance the amenities and aesthetics of the North Pointe neighborhood and SR 19 corridor. This includes participating in a leadership role in researching positioning Exit 92 to be the premier Toll Road exit through visitor enhancements as a future redevelopment strategy for the neighborhood.

### **Exit 92 Redevelopment Activity Measures**

- Represent ECCVB and neighborhood stakeholders as part of Gateway Working Committee in support of redevelopment planning activities, including the SR 19 Corridor Multi-use Path (January - December)
- On behalf of the Elkhart Redevelopment Commission, continue the development of strategies to develop a visitor focused gateway enhancement study - continue exploration of Outlet Shopping and Water Park Hotel Projects identified in 2016 study (January - June)
- On behalf of the Elkhart Redevelopment Commission, continue development of aesthetic gateway enhancements (January -December)
- Continue to facilitate individual meetings with key property holders to identify relocation / acquisition opportunities (January - December)

**Outdoor Recreation Objective** To coordinate activities that support the strategies identified in the Tourism Development Plan to link, enhance and create outdoor recreation opportunities in Elkhart County. This includes participating in a leadership role in research and technical assistance, along with supporting existing stakeholder groups.

### **Outdoor Recreation Activity Measures**

- Work with existing bicycle stakeholder groups to create outdoor recreation promotion materials, both electronic and print, bicycle and walking focused (January)
- Work with existing bicycle stakeholder groups on distribution and marketing of outdoor recreation promotion materials, both electronic and print, bicycle and walking focused (February - December)
- Work with Elkhart County Redevelopment Commission and RV/MH Hall of Fame to explore feasibility of expanded RV Event Facility at I-80/90 Exit 96 (January - December)

**ECCVB Research Objective** To continue collection of data in support of ECCVB activities including an assessment of the impact of CVB programs on business partners.

### **ECCVB Research Activity Measures**

- In partnership with NITDC, work with Nichols Tourism to implement a Visitor Image and Perception Study (January - June)
- Work with Nichols Tourism to implement a Resident Image and Perception Study in conjunction with Visitor Image research (January - June)
- Assist ECCVB staff with appropriate distribution of all ECCVB research (January - December)

### **Destination Experience Development**

In 2017, the ECCVB will continue activating new product development initiatives through a comprehensive experiential development strategy. This strategy is based on collaboration with existing partners to link and enhance signature offerings as well as engineer new, engaging and immersive experiences.

**Downtown Walking Tour Development Objective** To research and develop high quality, enlightening and entertaining public tour experiences led by locals in order to demonstrate that Elkhart County is an exceptional place to live, work, play and visit utilizing existing Heritage Trail and Quilt Gardens. To use interactive experiences and innovative resources to help newcomers and locals alike get more connected to the people, places and projects in Elkhart County downtowns.

#### **Downtown Walking Tour Development Activity Measures**

- Coordinate development of content for 2 downtown Elkhart and 2 downtown Middlebury guided walking tours (January - June)
- Research and implement technology needs and support materials for both communities (January - May)
- Create and implement process for downtown walking tour management (January - June)
- Develop and execute communications strategy and marketing messaging to promote downtown walking tours (January - October)
- Conduct 2 trial runs of downtown Middlebury walking tours including focus group feedback sessions (April)
- Realize 1 departure weekly in both downtown Elkhart and downtown Middlebury (each with a minimum of 2 people) (May - October)

### **Overall Destination Development Performance Measures**

- The ECCVB will receive and administer \$120,000 in grant funding from the Community Foundation of Elkhart County and the City of Elkhart Redevelopment Commission related to the Live / Work / Play Capacity Grant Program
- The ECCVB will receive and administer \$65,000 from the Community Foundation of Elkhart County related to the Vibrant Communities Implementation and facilitation of the Vibrant Bucks Micro-grant Program
- The ECCVB will receive and administer \$50,000 in grant funding from the Elkhart Redevelopment Commission related to additional North Pointe development studies
- Downtown Signage Program will leverage \$50,000 in City of Goshen community funding
- The ECCVB will receive and manage \$100,000 from the Elkhart Redevelopment Commission to promote Exit 92 as a premier Toll Road stop



## > VISITOR SERVICES

**GOAL** To generate spending and economic impact throughout the destination by being the official resource providing travel information and visitor services both in-person and online.

### **Visitor Services Activity Measures**

- Provide friendly personal service to an average of 14,000 visitors to the Visitor Center (January - December)
- Provide friendly personal service to an average of 1,400 people calling to request Heritage Trail Adventures Area Guides and general destination questions (January - December)
- Provide up-to-date information by distributing over 24,000 local business brochures, maps, regional travel guides, etc. (January - December)

### **Driving Tours Activity Measures**

- Distribute 3,000 Heritage Trail Audio Driving Tours via CD and MP3 download (January - December)
- Maintain Trip Tips program weekly to enhance visitor experience (January - December)

**VFR / Community Relations Objective** To position the Visitor Center and its staff as a resource for local residents and the community at large by providing friendly personal service.

### **VFR / Community Relations Activity Measures**

- Provide the Visitor Center's meeting room as a resource to 100 community group meetings (January - December)
- Develop and distribute 26 Front Desk Update e-newsletters to local lodging facilities, attractions, Chambers of Commerce and media (January - December)

### **Overall Visitor Services Performance Measures**

- Convert Heritage Trail rentals to \$2.2 million\* in increased visitor spending (including CDs and downloads) (January - December)

*\* Heritage Trail Performance Metrics is the amount in visitor spending generated by the distribution of the Heritage Trail Visitor Spending = (2.7 people in travel party) X (2.6 days average length of stay) X (\$103 per person per day) = Visitor Spending per Heritage Trail CD. Includes CDs and MP3 downloads.*

*Research Resource:*

*2015 Economic Impact Report by Certec Inc.*



## > FINANCE

**GOAL** To generate spending and economic impact throughout the destination by maintaining best practices in revenue and human resources management.

**Finance Objective** To have a thorough understanding of and the ability to interpret financial data, by developing accurate and concise financial reports, tracking hospitality trends, and managing income and expenses.

### Finance Activity Measures

- Develop a sound 2017 line item budget (January)
- Establish financial ratios and projections (January - December)
- Develop monthly financial reports and statements for the corporation (January - December)
- Perform all accounts receivable and payable for the corporation (January - December)
- Perform as the Commission's designated collections administrator for delinquencies (January - December)
- Develop monthly reports on collections activities and hotel occupancy trends (January - December)
- Complete all county, state and federal employee withholding obligations (January - December)
- Complete all grant financial requirements (January - December)
- Maintain a 95% collections rate of lodging tax receipts (January - December)
- Maintain a 95% collections rate of Heritage Trail Adventures Area Guide contracts (January - December)

**Human Resources Objective** To manage day-to-day human resource functions and obligations of the corporation by maintaining personnel records and human resource information systems such as health insurance, retirement contributions, supplementary benefits and accrued personal time off for employees.

### Human Resources Activity Measures

- Keep current all personnel records for each employee (January - December)
- Research benefit plans that best meet employee's needs and budgetary requirements of the corporation (April - June)
- Work with all employees to assist with interpretation of benefit plans and filing procedures (January - December)
- Manage the corporate / employee IRA contribution plans (April, July, October, December)
- Track and report all employee personal time off (January - December)
- Distribute Employee Job Satisfaction survey (December)

**Building Operations Objective** To manage all building operations and personnel associated with the Visitor Center managing contract agreements and personnel.

### Building Operations Activity Measures

- Oversee all maintenance agreements for building and equipment (January - December)
- Initiate all necessary building / equipment service and repairs (January - December)
- Supervise Visitor Center attendants (January - December)
- Develop Visitor Center attendant schedules and assign appropriate duties (January - December)
- Oversee installation and removal of Quilt Mural on Visitor Center building (May, October)



## > TECHNOLOGY

**GOAL** To generate spending and economic impact throughout the destination by providing staff with the software, hardware and technical support needed to manage daily responsibilities in an efficient, accountable manner.

**Technology Objective** To maintain the Bureau's computers, software, database and reporting systems.

**Financial** - The ECCVB will continue to use Peachtree Accounting software to manage all sales transactions, accounts payable and receivable. The 2017 Peachtree Tax Update will be purchased.

**Contact Database** - The ECCVB will continue to use Simpleview as its primary contact database and will purchase the annual fee for 2017.

**Marketing** - The ECCVB will continue to update all bureau websites, blogs and message boards and social media applications as needed. Updates will be made in-house.. Any updates that cannot be made in house will be outsourced to the existing vendor, VERB. The Bureau will continue to utilize WhatCounts / Publicaster email software as its primary email software program and purchase the annual fee for 2017.

**Equipment** - The ECCVB will continue to monitor existing hardware and software needs for the staff. All computer needs will be upgraded per the Capital Equipment Replacement Plan.

**Professional Development** - Each staff member is encouraged to obtain training in areas of new software specific to their area of responsibility if needed. Minimum technology use requirements for all staff include the ability to use all Microsoft Office 2010 programs, Simpleview Database, printers and fax machine.

### **Technology Activity Measures**

- IT problem solving as needed (January - December)
- New general software and hardware researched and purchased per Capital Equipment Replacement Plan (January - December)
- Produce, print and distribute 1 business plan to staff and Board and Commission (January)
- Produce, print and distribute 12 reports to staff and Board and Commission monthly (January - December)
- Provide at least 8 Internet / Social Media training sessions to our partners (March - October)

### **Database Management Activity Measures**

- Accurately enter 20,000 contacts (Heritage Trail Adventures Area Guide Requests) into the database (January - December)
- Complete and send 1 bulk mailing to the fulfillment house weekly (January - December)
- Assure the accuracy of contact database by doing one duplicate scan, one publication code check annually and one overall Member / Partner updated and as needed (March)





## ECCVB 2017 Capital Replacement





## > 2017 CAPITAL REPLACEMENT PLAN

The Elkhart County, IN Convention & Visitor Bureau, Inc has made it a goal to maintain and continually upgrade the current viable equipment.

**The focus of the Capital Equipment Replacement Plan is to:**

- Maintain current infrastructure (example: Server Maintenance, Application Upgrades)
- Provide necessary tools and technologies to CVB employees (example: PC & Server replacement, new software, etc.)
- Maintain office equipment, furniture and vehicle needs

**The Capital Plan below outlines the strategic direction for each focus area mentioned above.**

**Maintaining Existing Infrastructure:**

- PC Replacement Plan Replace three employee PC desktops every 5 years, Mac every 4 years and laptops every 4 years
- Server Replacement Replace server every 4 - 5 years to achieve 100% network uptime to ensure critical systems remain operational
- Telephone Equipment Telephone Network: replaced as needed, Cell phones/mobile devices: replaced every 2 - 3 years
- Network Printer, Scanners, Projectors, Cameras: Replace annually as needed
- Software: Replace server every 4 - 5 years to achieve 100% network uptime to ensure critical systems remain operational
- Miscellaneous Software, Hardware (external hard drives, keyboards, mice, monitors, battery backup, replacement backup batteries, etc.): Replace annually as needed
- Vehicles: (1) vehicle maintains a 3 - year lease, (1) vehicle purchased, replaced as needed (approximately 10 years)
- Furniture: Replace as needed, currently all staff offices are equipped to ensure 100% productivity

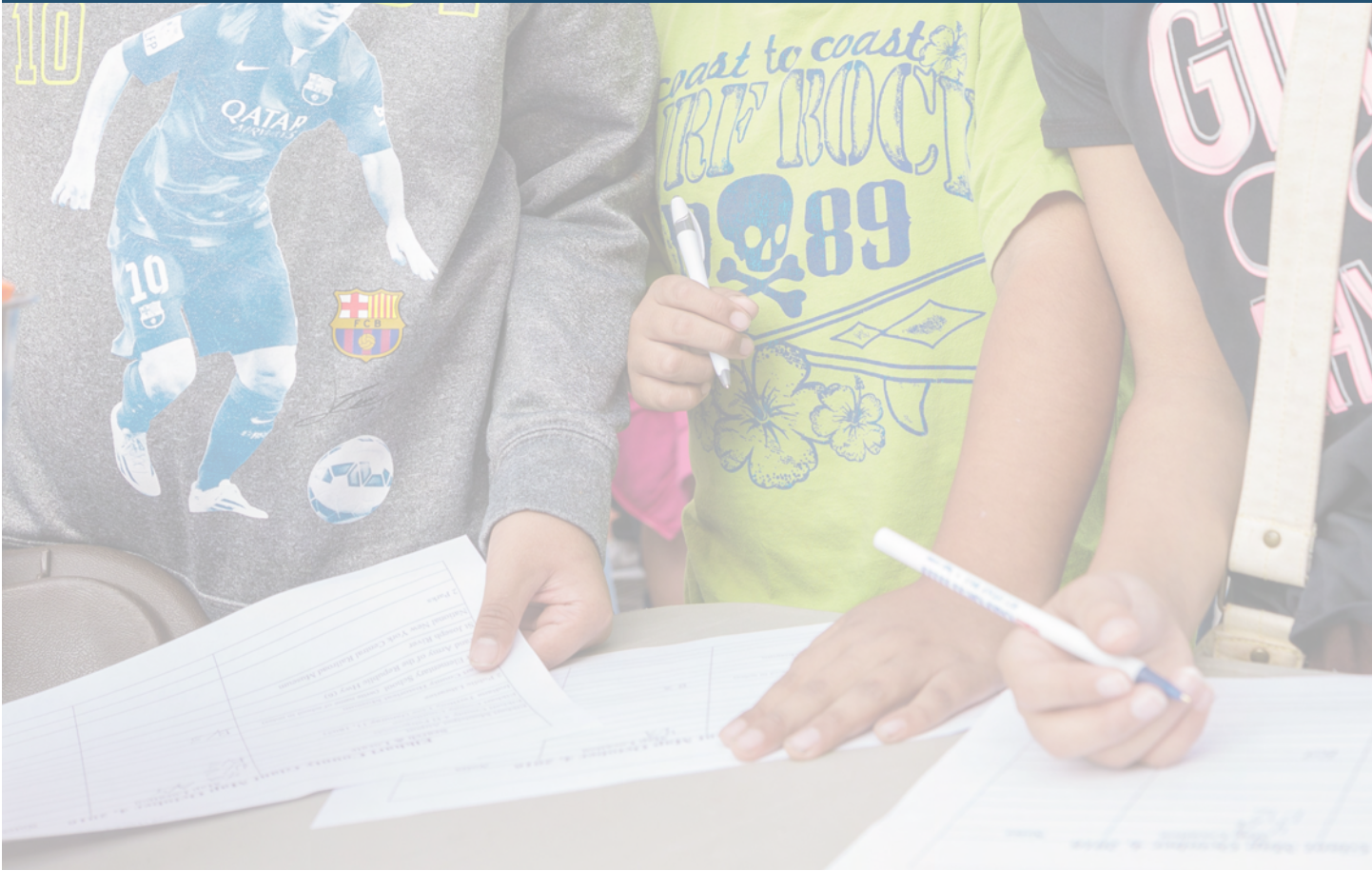
**Request for Exceptions to Replacement:**

In some situations, there may be a need to run special software, upgrade an OS or perform unique tasks where a desktop computer, network equipment or server system would require more memory, a faster processor, or a larger hard disk drive than the one currently in use. This situation will be evaluated to determine an appropriate upgrade path. Recommendations may include additional memory, a larger hard disk drive or storage unit, a newer workstation computer, network equipment or server system. While the majority of requests are expected to come at the end of year, requests will be reviewed throughout the year to handle unforeseen changes.





Terms & Definitions





## > Terms and Definitions

### **General**

**Activity** - A physical action taken by the CVB functional area that ultimately supports its mission, e.g., attending a tradeshow, conducting a familiarization tour, writing and distributing a press release

**CVB/ECCVB** - Elkhart County Convention & Visitors Bureau, Inc.

**CFEC** - Community Foundation of Elkhart County

**DEI** - Downtown Elkhart Inc.

**Goal** - An overall summary of what the ECCVB wants to accomplish in each departmental area

**Innkeeper's Tax** - Collected as an additional percent on the room rate in Elkhart County

**NITDC** - Northern Indiana Tourism Development Commission

**Objective** - A specific, measureable condition that must be attained in order to accomplish a particular program goal

**Performance Measure** - A measure that helps to define and quantify the results of the CVB activity. Implementation of this system of measures will yield actionable tools that the CVB staff can use for short and long term enhancement of its efforts

**RV** - Recreational Vehicle

**RVIC** - Recreation Vehicle Indiana Council

**SBI** - Small Business Initiative

**SMART** - Strategic Market Area Research in Tourism

**VFR** - Visiting friends and relatives

**Vibrant Bucks Micro-Grant Program** - The micro-grant program created by the Vibrant Communities initiative will allow individuals, small groups and community arts and cultural organizations, among others, to seek funds to carry out fun, creative projects that take place in Elkhart County

**Vibrant Communities Initiative** - This initiative is focused on quality-of-place issues, those qualities such as arts and culture, parks, downtowns, neighborhoods, that make a city or town a better place to live. An Action Agenda is being implemented in 2017 based on the input gathered in 2016 from hundreds of residents from all over Elkhart County

**Visitor** - One who travels away from home for a distance of at least 50 miles (one way) to stay overnight for business, pleasure, personal affairs, or any other purpose except to commute to work

### **Advertising**

**Frequency** - Average number of times households or persons viewed a given program, station or advertisement during a specific time period. This number is derived by dividing the Gross Ratings Points (GRPs) by the Reach.

**Gross Rating Point (GRP)** - A unit of measurement of audience size. It is used to measure the exposure to one or more programs or commercials, without regard to multiple exposures of the same advertising to individuals. *One GRP = 1% TV households.*

**Circulation** - Refers to the number of copies sold of a given publication, at a given time or as averaged over a period of time.

**Impressions** - Sum of audiences, in terms of people or households viewing a publication, where there is exposure to the same publication or program on multiple occasions. Two gross impressions could mean the same person was in the audience on two occasions or that two different people had been exposed only once.

**Reach** - Unduplicated number of individuals or households exposed to an advertising medium at least once during the average week for a reported time period (also known as *Cumulative Audience*).

**ROI** - Return on Investment.

### **Public Relations**

**Advertising Equivalency** - A means of converting editorial space in the media into advertising costs, by measuring the amount of editorial coverage and then calculating what it would have cost to buy that space, if it had been advertising.

**Circulation** - Refers to the number of copies sold of a given publication, at a given time or as averaged over a period of time.

**IEG** - This organization is an industry-recognized leader in the area of sponsorships. Through its website, sponsorshop.com, and an annual conference, online reports and events, it is a source for insights, training and networking.

**Impressions** - The number of those who might have had the opportunity to be exposed to a story that appeared in the media. Sometimes referred to as "opportunity to see." An "impression" usually refers to the total audited circulation of a publication or the audience reach of a broadcast.

**MarketingProfs** - Industry leader for modern marketing tools, training, strategies, articles, online seminars, and discussion forums.

**Media Marketplace** - Annual conference organized by state tourism, bringing together travel media writers with tourism organizations, major hotel properties, attractions and transportation companies.

**Meltwater** - Online service used to track media coverage, establish contacts with media professionals and influencers, and distribute press releases and story pitches.

### **Digital/Website**

**Ad Views (Impressions)** - Number of times an ad banner is (presumably) seen by visitors.

**Click-through Rate** - the percentage of people visiting a web page who access a hypertext link to a particular advertisement

**Hyperlink** - An electronic connection between two websites.

**Engagement** - Engagement Rate is a metric that social media marketers use to measure a brand's effectiveness at engaging their audience. Typically engagement rate takes your comments, likes, shares, actions divided by fans/followers.

**GetSmart** - A personalization platform that allows you to serve targeted experiences to website visitors in real-time.

**Impressions** - Impressions are the number of times a post from your Page is displayed, whether the post is clicked or not. People may see multiple impressions of the same post. For example, someone might see a Page update in News Feed once, and then a second time if their friend shares it.

**Mobile App** - A mobile app is a software application designed to run on mobile devices such as smartphones and tablet computers

**Page Views** - Number of times a user requests a webpage that may contain a particular advertisement.

**Social Media** - Website, Emails, Blog, YouTube, Pinterest, Flickr, Facebook, Twitter.

**Unique Visit** - Number of different individuals who visit a website within a specific time period.

**Visit** - A sequence of requests made by one user at one website. If a visitor does not request any new information for a period of time, known as the "time-out" period, then the next request by the visitor is considered a new visit.

**Waze** - Targeted Digital "billboard" that displays information to drivers based on their location.

### **Travel Industry**

**Package Travel** - A package in combination of two or more types of tour components into a product which is produced, assembled, promoted and sold as a package by a tour operator at an all-inclusive price.

**Tour Series/Tour Programs** - Multiple departures to the same destination throughout the year.

**Group Tour** - A travel package for an assembly of travelers that has a common itinerary, travel date, and transportation. Group tours are usually prearranged, prepaid, and include transportation, lodging, dining, and attraction admissions.

**Independent Travel (IT)** - A custom-designed, prepaid travel package with many individualized arrangements. ITs are unescorted and usually have no formal itinerary. Sometimes referred to as FIT.

**Travel Trade** - Any individual or company that creates and/or markets tours and/or IT packages. Travel trade includes but is not limited to tour operators, travel agents, individual travel planners, online travel companies.

**Tour Catalog** - A publication by tour wholesalers listing their tour offerings. Catalogs are distributed to retail agents who make them available to their customers.

**Economic Impact** - Visitor spending generates secondary spending (*indirect and induced*) on the destination's local economy over and above the original visitor spending. These secondary impacts, when combined with the original direct spending, result in the **economic impact**. **Indirect spending** is spending by the destination's travel industry businesses on goods and services from local suppliers. **Induced spending** occurs when employees in the destination's travel industry and its suppliers spend their wages in the local economy. This chain of buying and selling among businesses and employees continues until the original direct spending "leaks out" of the local economy. The **economic multiplier** is calculated as total economic impact divided by direct spending.

**FAM (Familiarization) Tour** - A free or reduced-rate trip offered to travel professionals to acquaint them with what a destination, attraction, or supplier has to offer. FAMs should be considered a sales effort, more than just an educational trip for the travel trade.

**Itinerary (Suggested)** - A recommended schedule of visitor-oriented activities, usually including entertainment and recreation venues, retail stores and often highlighting unique, one-of-a-kind offerings. Itineraries are often themed: family, romantic, first-time visitor, etc.

**Visitor Spending** - (number of visitors) X (spending per person per day) X (length of stay).

**Hotel Lead** - When a group tour or independent tour program inquiry from the travel trade that includes a request for hotel rooms over a specific set/range of dates is forwarded by the CVB sales staff only to those hotels that meet the travel trade's criteria.

**Non-hotel Lead** - When an inquiry for a group tour or independent tour program not requiring hotel rooms from the travel trade over a specific set/range of dates is forwarded by the CVB sales staff only to those non-hotel tourism industry businesses that meet the travel trade's criteria.

**Booking from a Hotel Lead** - A booking confirmed in writing from an authorized agent (hotel, travel trade) or by documenting the tour/programs presence in the travel trade's distribution. Channels such as a brochure, website or special sales/marketing program. The booking must be the result of a CVB-generated lead. CVBs should include information on room nights, total visitors and associated visitor spending.

**Booking from a Non-hotel lead** - Booking confirmed in writing from an authorized agent (hotel, travel trade) or by documenting the tour/programs presence in the travel trade's distribution. Channels such as a brochure, website or special sales/marketing program. The booking must be the result of a CVB-generated lead. CVBs should include information on room nights, total visitors and associated visitor spending.