

Visit Estes Park COVID-19 Recovery Plan

Destination Organization Definition

“A destination organization is a community asset responsible for programs promoting a community as an attractive travel destination and enhancing its public image as a dynamic place to live and work. Through destination stewardship and brand importance, they strengthen the community’s economic position and vitality which provides opportunity for all the people in the destination”

Destination International

Visit Estes Park will provide guidance, leadership, and community unity – “Together we are Mountain Strong, we are in this together and we will get through this and recover successfully as a community”

- Recovery Task Force Team - Chamber, EDC, EALA, Town, County
- Managers Team and PIO’s Team – All PIO’s from entities in the region
- Support local businesses through assistance with access to grants, loans, funds
- Reorienting our marketing to be prepared for recovery timing
- Identifying key trigger-based response phases:
 - “To the Peak”- Community focused - (Estimated 4 weeks),
 - “Through the Decline”- Planning and support for local stakeholders - (Estimated 4 weeks)
 - “To the Recovery”- Re-entry into marketplace - (Estimated 4 weeks)
 - A three-phase plan that is estimated to take approximately three months)

Near Term Approach - During COVID: Trigger, “To the peak” - Phase 1

- Start with the premise that everything has changed. Everything should be filtered through the new normal and adjusted as changes occur
- Lockdown: No promotion or advertising, shift to addressing needs and challenges with a Community focus during phase 1 and begin recovery planning changes to current strategies
- Local Market Focus – Support programs that help the local community
- Re-orient strategic plan:
 - Consider Destination Health, Economic, Cultural, Organization
 - Budget, staff, Partners/Suppliers, Remote Working Uncertainties (Internal)
 - Duration, impact, government actions, visitor behavior, Local Tourism Industry
 - Cancellations, tracking tourism businesses closed, tourism jobs lost, air access lost, events cancelled, Key DMO Factors
 - Funding sources and security
 - Community focused, Stay at Home in effect, support the local community through volunteer programs, support for business, be a trusted conduit of helpful information, provide releases for local residents and supportive information for stakeholders
 - Create local website information as a go to source for businesses, visitors and the community

Additional Ideas:

- Promote Take out Tuesdays and Thursdays - Restaurants
- **NEW:** Stay Home Estes Park campaign: Feature through website, social media, email, points toward two audiences: visitors, residents
- Spotlight staff - Book recommendations, movies, favorite get outdoor things to do, dog walks
- Video content, social influencers for good, feature local bloggers
- Spotlight available business resources, things people can do virtually i.e. webcams, and the other things we are doing
- Virtual Weekend Getaway - # of impressions so far? Could use Skift, Travel & Leisure, Forbes, Men's Journal, PopSugar, Facebook, Instagram, Live Video Attendance to increase impressions

Mitigation of Covid-19 Impacts: Trigger "Through the decline" - Phase 2

Execute Plan for Assistance to local stakeholders: People begin to recover, support access to funding, develop marketing support planning to get ready to re-enter visitor marketplace adjusting to the new normal

- Adjust Strategies
- Collect Data, Research and Insights
- Develop long term impact models\
- Collect Data, Research and Insights: visitor numbers, comp report, Pace reports
- Analyze Data, Research and Insights watch trends
- Develop adjustments to scenarios and triggers

Supporting the Industry

- Identify new ways to generate revenue for stakeholders
- Lobby on industry's behalf to open doors and change policies where needed
- Rally locals to support business
- Empathize with industry, facilitate connection and keep spirits up
- Open source approach to resources
- Support local relief efforts

Support Community's Needs

Priority: Be willing to step into a new role and address our community's greatest needs

- Be willing to collaborate
- Coordinate active programs where appropriate
- Continue to support volunteer efforts

Reorganize and Realign

Priority: Organizational and team adaptation to the new reality and shifting reality

- Proactively develop a culture of empathy and caring
- Proactive operations for a remote team
- Realigning operational infrastructure
- Reviewing and re=assigning roles and organizational structure
- Using the right tools, systems, and technology
- Adjust or develop new processes to support productivity

The New Normal Re-entry into marketplace: Trigger “To the Recovery”- Phase 3

- Evolve Communications and Marketing based upon new internal and partner recovery plans
- Execute new marketing and PR initiatives (See Appendix A and B)
- Adjust for new normal in Group Sales
- Support local Stakeholders through VEP service programs
- Continue to support recovery of local businesses
- Communicate based upon needs and current state
 - Be present and responsible: transparent, informative, and visitor first
 - Keep Destination top of mind while being sensitive to audience realities
 - Authenticity
 - Highlight destination in creative ways
 - Inspire civic pride

Moving Forward: Do the next great thing for our community

Financial Impact Analysis

Covid-19 Impacts Forecast to VEP Budget:

Prior Year:		Forecast:*	
July 2019 -	\$439,807	July 2020 -	\$329,855
June 2019 -	\$384,066	June 2020 -	\$192,033
May 2019 -	\$153,035	May 2020 -	\$0
April 2019 -	\$82,559	April 2020 -	\$0

Difference: -\$537,579

June at 50% of 2019 then return to normal- **\$192,033 - *Absolute best case***
Total lost revenue - \$427,592

June at 0% of 2019, return to normal - **\$0 - *Current estimated case***
Total lost revenue - \$619,660

July at 75% of 2019, return to normal - **\$329,855 - *Middle ground of all estimates***
Total lost revenue - \$729,611

July at 50% of 2019, return to normal - **\$219,903 - *Current estimated worst case***
Total lost revenue - \$839,563

* all models assume 25% of 2019 for March 2020, \$0 for April 2020 & \$0 for May 2020.

Range of revenue lost for VEP \$427,500 - \$839,563 for 2020.

Total lodging budgeted revenue - \$2,472,000

% lost range - 17.5% - 34%

Appendix A

Backbone Media: COVID Media Trends & Strategies (Here)

Appendix B

Turner: COVID-19 Media Relations Strategy & Recovery (Here)



BACKBONE
— MEDIA —

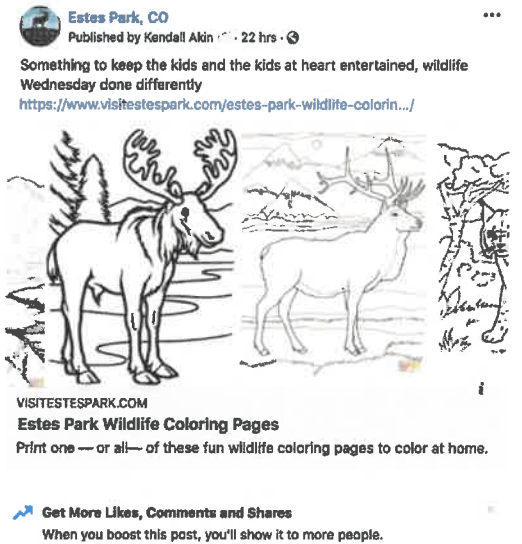
**COVID Media
Trends &
Strategy**



Current Media Action (March 16 – current)

Previously strategy to emphasize spring visitation to Estes no longer an option due to current landscape – therefore over the last two weeks we have been focused on:

- Communicate closure and safety messaging to community and potential visitors (through organic channels)
 - Detailed landing page built out by Visit Estes Park’s site
 - Social messaging and sharing
- Pause, cancel or reschedule any paid media that would be in market March and April
 - A few vendors were unable to cancel due to the long lead timing – OOH billboards along i-70 and print ads in Elevation Outdoors and DenverWestword
 - These vendors were switched to from spring messaging to general summer branding messaging



Timing

The statewide ["Stay At Home" order](#) will remain in place until at least April 11. Larimer County's ["Stay At Home" order](#) is effective through April 17. Both will most likely be extended longer.

This brings up major questions including:

When will it be safe for people to leave their homes and travel?

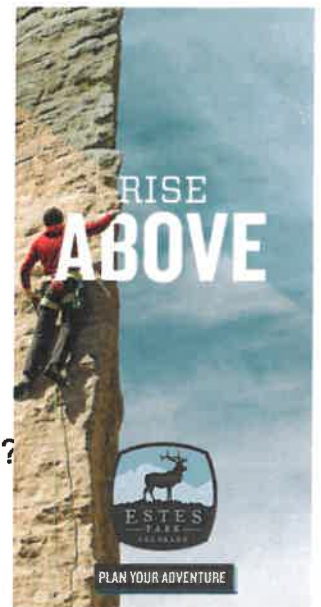
When will it be appropriate to start messaging people to book travel?

Will travel return "business as usual?"

Will there be pent up travel interest?

Will people have disposal income to spend on travel?

Will there be fear around events and shared spaces?





Travel Indicators

Monitor and follow trends in the travel landscape to help understand user behavior and interest researching, planning and booking future travel through platforms such as:

Google Trends/Search

We will use Google Trends as indicator of when consumers are starting to feel confident enough to start searching for vacation related terms such as "mountain vacations" "rebooking travel" "Estes Park vacations" search volume for all of these terms have dipped in the last week to two weeks, once we see search volume start to rise to around where it was before the COVID-19 this will let us know consumers are ready to start booking vacations. [example](#)

OTA booking data

Monitoring travel data from Adara, Sojern, Expedia, TripAdvisor and more on a weekly basis. The benefit of such is the ability to foresee up to a 20-week forecast. With the ever-changing travel climate we're experiencing due to COVID-19, we will analyze both the short-and long-term trends for flights and hotels. Backbone suspects national trends will lead the turnaround and that will signal VEP to prepare for re-entry. [example](#)

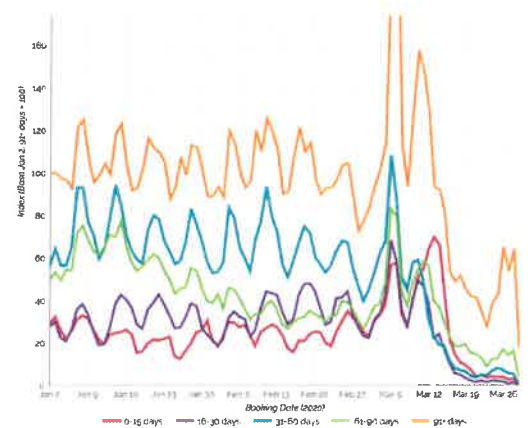
Social indicators

Track social language, engagement and volume around travel content across Estes Park, and other travel destinations.



PRODUCTS SOLUTION

Trip Purpose: Leisure - Family



Keyword: Travel Guide

Interest over time





Short Term Approach

We don't know when media will go live, so we will approach a re-entry into advertising with flexible commitments that can shift depending on information and trends.

We do know in the current media landscape there is an increase in traffic to most publications, websites, social, TV/ConnectTV and most other mediums right now.

We will continue to develop our Estes Park Podcast, an audio visitors guide/storytelling that can help inspire, educate and inform guests as they are on their journey to get to Estes Park





Short Term Approach

OTA Content – Online Travel agents such as TripAdvisor, Adara, Sojern and Expedia will help us identify and advertise to people who are actively searching travel. This can be one of the first channels we start engaging with, knowing that users we are targeting in this space are actively ready to book travel.

AiR Program – We feel the Athlete in Residence program can help share a voice of inspiration, safety and descriptive emotional understanding to users with personal relatable messaging encouraging travel by example to Estes Park. We have earmarked additional funds to add distribution to this content and shooting video around these athletes.

Custom Content / Re-scheduled spring media – some elements of our spring media buy were able to be pushed to this summer/fall to help ensure strong summer visitation to Estes Park – We feel these custom content stories will be flexible and able to pivot to messaging that is relevant and appropriate to reengaging a changing travel space.

- sponsored cabin and lodging feature in Dwell
- gear related sponsored content in GearJunkie
- 5280 and Westword Denver related sponsored content
- Backpacker custom content story and video feature
- Leverage Pinterest platform to drive consumers to our blog content featuring appropriate messaging around travel to Estes Park

Video content – between the “Estes Inspired” video series, ongoing summer and fall content shot by Cultivator, archived content and the Athlete in Residence video content we feel we will have strong video assets to lead messaging across social, ConnectedTV (Hulu), YouTube and other potential video platforms.



Estes Park Recovery

Drive Market – We don't anticipate the travel rebound to be a single day turning point with the flick of a switch. Travel will most likely slowly rebound with people visiting places that feel comfortable and safe. Estes Park fits well as a "safe" drive market destination. Lodging is less reliant on large hotels, flights or public gathering places (museums, beaches, ect...) the main attraction, is large, spread out and mostly accessed by car - which may have significant appeal in this landscape.

Affordable Travel– With potential long-term effects on the economy, there may be less disposable income for most travelers. Choosing a destination that is affordable will be important to travelers this summer/fall. Compared to many other mountain destination destinations in the competitive set, Estes Park offers a great affordable travel value.

Summer Media plan – With so much unknown it will be important to make sure that visitation to Estes carries forward in a way that is safe and responsible. While we generally have been focusing less budget towards a well visited summer season, 2020 will be a year to leverage media, first the drive markets then larger national markets, to keep healthy visitation to the community.

Over Crowding and sustainability messaging– In the event that Estes does see normal heavy visitation, it will be important to be ready to communicate to guests ways to be sustainable, respectful guests and way to help avoid large lines and crowds of people around Estes Park.



THANK-YOU

COVID-19 MEDIA RELATIONS
STRATEGY & RECOVERY



PRESENTED BY TURNER

MARCH 26, 2020

OUR NEAR TERM APPROACH

IN CONSIDERING OUR MEDIA RELATIONS APPROACH FOR THE NEXT SEVERAL WEEKS:

Our goal is to:

- Maintain our relationships with top tier media in priority markets
- Uncover ways to virtually pitch Estes Park stories with a sensitive approach
- Prepare for press trips and media missions when market begins to indicate timing for return

PR Strategy

- Secure long-lead travel stories (most outlets are still planning travel coverage for July and beyond)
- Shorter-term, leverage branding opportunities with editorial placements around virtual travel, visual round-ups, feel good stories, character/personality focus, etc
- Develop fully executable go-to-market strategy to launch once COVID-19 news starts to wane



OUR NEAR TERM APPROACH

We know that:

- Social distancing is the prevalent recommendation in all markets and international travel restrictions abound
- Continuing to promote travel could be perceived as insensitive and tone deaf, unless approached with sensitivity and sense
- Shifting our storytelling cannot appear opportunistic
- DMOs and destinations have accepted that their role needs to support flattening the COVID-19 curve
- Recognizing that we are well-aware of all the above is critical to maintaining credibility with media and with consumers through any media storytelling



JOURNALIST MINDSET

SOURCE: OUTREACH FROM OUR TEAM TO TOP MEDIA CONTACTS

What we're seeing & hearing:

- No immediacy in travel coverage, nothing encouraging travel now
- Opportunities for destinations to maintain share of voice and build brand equity
- Tone and mindset have shifted quickly. Drastic changes in responses compared to just one week ago:
 - No international or domestic travel allowed
 - All teams now working remotely
 - Many travel writers have shifted beats
 - Significant lay-offs at major media companies

Journalists are:

- Continuing to cover travel. Writing about:
 - What companies are doing to support consumers in time of need
 - Future focused travel content – summer 2020 through 2021
 - Evergreen angles that creates and inspires a sense of wanderlust in a destination
 - Content that inspires and entertains consumers while in their homes
 - Human interest stories
- Leaning more towards domestic travel with shift to featuring more outdoor and less crowded destinations
- Encouraging us to keep pitching and sharing stories, but we must ensure content is sensitive to the current climate



2020 TACTICAL PLAN ADJUSTMENTS

MEDIA INQUIRIES AND ACTIVITIES:

CANCEL:

All travel, events and activities within 45 days:

- Have been fully cancelled (with a rebooking request for later in the year)
- No travel planning of any kind

PAUSE:

Activities between 45 days and 60 days:

- Planning paused and no travel to be booked.
- Incoming travel interest will be fielded on a case by case basis with the aforementioned 30-day cancellation standard discussed up front.
- Outreach to media for future bookings (looking at July and beyond)

CONTINUE:

Activities 60 to 90 days (or more):

- Still accepting interest from writers for press trips but no bookings made unless market recovery date is certain for requested date



MEDIA OUTREACH STRATEGY (NEXT 30 DAYS)

1. Re-engaging with writers of previous Estes Park coverage and press visits for the purpose of:
 - Developing new story ideas based on their press visits
 - Encouraging additional coverage based on what the NEW NOW is for travel
2. Working with media who actively outreach to TURNER to include Estes Park in upcoming articles
3. Develop story angles and pitches for immediate launch
4. Consider regional Estes Park media strategy - recovery plans are likely to be dependent on return of flight routes and schedules
5. TURNER team to brainstorm internally and with Visit Estes Park team
 - Could we do virtual press trips with existing content and assets?
 - How can we repurpose existing assets for compelling pitching and invitations to media that will get their attention
6. Pursue 'the right stories' vs. just any story. Some will not be productive stories for Estes Park



ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES (NEXT 60-90 DAYS)

UTILIZE TIME TO WORK ON THE FOLLOWING:

- Review 2020 strategy and KPIs to make adjustments due to COVID
 - Review and update all press kit materials and online press room, with a focus on narratives and audiences defined in the 2020 strategy
 - Update all media lists in Cision, review lists for upcoming events, activities and target markets
 - Reset calendar and develop media lists and invitations for press trips past June (situation to be fluid)
 - Stay in contact with all partners that represent hotels and attractions to stay abreast of updates and reopening dates
 - Identify and begin outreach for brand partnerships for future collaborations
 - Audit awards and develop calendar for opportunities
- Reporting:**
- New Media Monitoring
 - COVID-19 Estes Park and reach of stories
 - COVID-19 Travel Coverage report
 - Media sentiment continues to be reported through TURNER



OTHER THOUGHTS

During COVID:

- Start with premise that everything has changed. Everything should be filtered through the new normal
- How do we bring Estes Park into people's homes?
 - Expect rise in increased consumption of Television and OTT. If producing content for those at home, must be hyper-sensitive to tonality, ensuring Visit Estes Park is not being tone deaf
 - Amplify the good – what great things are small business doing, etc. for positive coverage
 - Look for positive stories. DMO role now can be to curate and amplify those great stories through owned and earned channels
- Brands need to show their human side more than ever
- People want to/will want to get back to travel
 - How we harness the enthusiasm for travel will be crucial
 - Luxury travel can rebound quicker (less affected by economy)
- People really understand the value of travel and tourism right now



OTHER THOUGHTS

Post COVID:

- Alert the media as Estes Park gets to the recovery stage
- Release of information must ensure consistency of messaging through news releases; fact sheets; Q&A documents; destination web pages
- Issue consistent timely messages to media
- Engage travel editors and writers with inspiring updated content and target those consumers who have an airline ticket voucher in their pocket persuading them to rebook to your destination - herein lies an opportunity
- Media may be hesitant to travel in groups and a greater on focus on individual trips may be necessary for the short-term
- Visuals are as important as stories to show a destination is safe, beautiful and getting back to normalcy. Assets will be crucial
- Will need to lean on messages that will help change the fear and negative perceptions of travel, of the safety of a destination, that the virus has created
- Everyone will be vying for hearts of consumers in a financially struggling world. Telling great stories. Expect to see more brief itineraries, price sensitive offers, etc
- Consumers will be looking for information regarding health of a destination. Showcasing the spirit and values of Estes Park that includes both functional health information combined with high level and retail focused travel information/offers

