



# **NORTH MYRTLE BEACH**

## **Chamber of Commerce Convention & Visitors Bureau**

### **Strategic Business Plan Fiscal Year 2020**

*Board approved October 2019*

# 2020 Strategic Business Plan

## Introduction

The North Myrtle Beach Chamber of Commerce and Convention & Visitors Bureau is a vital partner of the North Myrtle Beach community. The NMB Chamber concentrates on programming to fulfill **our mission “To Advance the Prosperity of North Myrtle Beach”**. We are the place where area businesses and residents come together under the common bond of prosperity and responsible development of our community. Our board of directors have adopted three core pillars working in concert to expand our local economy.

The first pillar is the North Myrtle Beach Chamber and CVB. We are a not-for-profit investor/partner-based organization providing educational programs, networking opportunities, and business to business interactions to facilitate work force development, professional development, and provide opportunities for business transactions to occur. We are delighted that business is conducted during our investor/partner programs. Consider us your community concierge and we will strive to connect you to the products and services you need in North Myrtle Beach.

Our community is a tourism-based economy. We share a common customer, visitors, who travel to our area for days, weeks, and even months. Our CVB works with tourism related businesses to implement strategic promotions to increase our market share of visitors to the Grand Strand. The NMB Chamber ensures our visitors are aware of our family friendly beaches, beautiful accommodations and wholesome entertainment. Our destination positioning is the expression of North Myrtle Beach as a special collection of classic seaside communities, unexpected adventures and relationship-fostering accommodations that make for a most relaxing beach vacation for the entire family to enjoy.

Our second core pillar is the Chamber Foundation; an organization dedicated to the support and advancement of the general welfare and prosperity of the greater North Myrtle Beach area for its citizens and community to prosper, thus lessening the burden on local and state government. Emphasis is given to areas and programs that impact our community’s quality of life, including economic, civic, cultural, scientific, and educational development. Successful initiatives undertaken by the Foundation to expand the reach and impact of the Chamber includes contributions to not-for-profit organizations and expanding our role in economic development through Build North Myrtle Beach initiatives.

The third core pillar is a community awareness and advocacy initiative Momentum. The Chamber is underway with a destination assessment gathering input for a new strategic plan. The inclusive planning process will redefine the community’s awareness and advocacy programs and operate with a focus on destination and community development. This will help us build momentum for where our community desires to be in the future. Going beyond the vision for our future the actionable plans, will continue to advance prosperity through incremental steps while enhancing the quality of life for our residents.

## **Multi-Year Strategic Plan**

The board is underway to develop a multi-year strategic plan. The input tool DestinationNEXT was used to gather an assessment on the strength of NMB as a destination as well as the strength of the community and government support. The findings of the DestinationNEXT is that North Myrtle Beach is a Trailblazer and enjoys strong destination strength and community support – although within the grid there is room to expand in both areas.

Based upon the community assessment and best practices the NMB Chamber/CVB board of directors identified six strategic initiatives that are big-picture, community focused, and inclusive:

1. Destination Promotion
2. Visitor Experience and Economic Development
3. Advocacy & Community Relations
4. Diversifying Funding Sources
5. Workforce Development
6. Destination Master Plan

The board's strategic plan will advance actionable programming, community support and engagement, economic development, and destination promotion and development that will have a positive and lasting impact on North Myrtle Beach.

Our organization will remain led by our guiding principles to:

- Grow the North Myrtle Beach Visitor and Destination Market
- Communicate our story
- Serve as the voice of business
- Focus on our customers

## **2020 Business Plan**

The 2020 Business Plan includes the strategic goals and tactical plans for the NMB Chamber/CVB, Chamber Foundation, and Momentum NMB covering the fiscal year 2020, July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2020. The marketing plan within the overall business plan concentrates on visitor promotion as well as business development activities of the NMB Chamber/CVB.

The four organizational goals for the business plan are:

1. Increase participation and engagement with the NMB Chamber/CVB through a strong value proposition for investors, partners, and donors.
2. Increase the promotion of NMB businesses.
3. Advocate on behalf of the community; serve as the voice of business as well as visitors.
4. Increase visitation to North Myrtle Beach.

The following section describes the goals, metrics, tactics, and committee support for the organizational goals.

# 1. Increase participation and engagement with the NMB Chamber/CVB through a strong value proposition for investors, partners, and donors.

## Metrics:

- Revenues from dues investments, participation fees, cooperative programs, and donors
- Retention rate for investors
- Investor/Partner annual survey results
- Attendance at NMB Chamber events and activities

## Tactics:

- A. Communicate the investor/partner value proposition through published materials, story coverage on the website, testimonials, and promotional campaigns
  1. Update content on websites to include descriptions and content that represents our investor/partners
  2. Add networking and educational program options and increase participation
    - First Friday Business Builders (10 out of 12 months)
    - Business After Hours (10 out of 12 months)
    - Economic Development Summit
    - Marketing Summit
    - Trip Advisor Reputation Management Training
    - Business Expo
    - Awards Gala
    - Holiday Open House
    - Annual Meeting
    - See also the NMB Chamber Foundation Events
  3. Increase visibility for investor/partners through lunch and learns, public relations, and through activities in the Visitor Information Center
    - Lunch & Learns (at least 15 during the year)
  4. Provide relevant and valuable infinity programs such as Blue Cross/Blue Shield, Liberty Insurance, FSI Office Supplies, and Office Depot benefits for our investors/partners
- B. Encourage access to programming for individuals not affiliated with a local business (retirees, residents who want to be engaged)
- C. Continue to expand Ambassadors program to increase the ration of Ambassadors to Investor/Partners and promote engagement
- D. Complete Investor/Partner Blitz to call on all investor/partner businesses between January 1<sup>st</sup> and April 1<sup>st</sup>.
- E. Use Visitor Information Center to serve as a Community Concierge
  - a. Drive traffic to Visitor Information Center and attract visitors and residents to new programming
  - b. Continue to partner with NMBHS Special Education Department to fulfill their mandatory 360 hours' work experience for their Occupational Diploma
  - c. Support the J1 Student Orientation
  - d. Sell tickets for Community Non-Profit Fundraisers

- e. A drop off location for local charities and events
  - f. Participate in “The Great Kindness Challenge” NMB Elementary
  - g. Participate in Awards Day for NMB Elementary
  - h. Participate in Career Day Caravan
  - i. Project Lifesaver for Horry County
  - j. Designated Safe Place for Teens in need
  - k. Work with Horry County Solicitor’s Office for Pre-Trial Intervention (PTI)
- F. Expand the business development sales approach for partnership sales and retention
    - Update and promote Build North Myrtle Beach with a specific budget and initiatives
    - Re-define the cooperative marketing initiative, SMILE Co-op and increase participation
    - Increase the participation in Build North Myrtle Beach
    - Launch a Premier Sponsor Level to secure sponsorships for NMB Chamber/CVB events and activities
  - G. Continue the public relations promotion of the Business of the Month, Legacy Business of the Month, event sponsors, and accolades earned by local businesses and individuals.
  - H. Produce a Weekly Update to the investor database to communicate activities at the NMB Chamber/CVB and provide businesses a platform to communicate to the investors/partners.
  - I. Distribute a Weekly Executive Review for board investors, elected officials, and key leaders in the community providing relevant content about the business community, government affairs, and program data points.
  - J. Produce and post a Quarterly Dashboard for program metrics to share with elected officials, investors/partners, and customize for SMILE co-op participants.
  - K. Explore a name change to clarify the priorities and functions of the organization and connect with our customers
  - L. Celebrate 20 years serving the business community and feature the businesses and individuals who work together to establish the Chamber of Commerce.
  - M. Recruit investors/partners to serve on committees and increase participation and engagement.

**Implementation Teams:**

The **committees** that will promote and support these tactics include the Investor Committee and its events and education subcommittees, the Community Awareness and Advocacy Committee, and the Destination Marketing Committee.

**Chamber/CVB Team** members will support these tactics including Business Development, Partner Relations and Events Director, Visitor Services Director, Content Manager, Senior Director of Public Relations and Government Affairs, and the President & CEO.

## 2. Increase the promotion of NMB businesses.

### **Metrics:**

- NMB Chamber/CVB Website measures to include unique users, page views, user sessions, bounce rate, time on site,
- Economic development opportunities (impact and level of activity)
- Small Business Saturday participation
- Giving Tuesday participation
- Local coverage of business features through earned and paid media
- Local media coverage of Legacy Investors and Business of the Month programs
- Lunch and Learn Programs

### **Tactics:**

- A. Implement marketing campaigns to feature local businesses and special initiatives
  - Recognize a business each month as *Business of the Month* and promote a feature about their business in Weekly Update, local media, and promote the business visually within the Visitor Information Center, and in the business itself regarding the honor.
  - Celebrate a *Legacy Business of the Month* and provide special coverage on the NMB Chamber/CVB website with a video, earn media in local outlets, and feature the business in a Weekly Update.
  - Coordinate and host a Business Expo and advertise the event to the community to promote the business investors/partners
  - Recruit relevant workshops where businesses may promote their expertise.
  - Produce short videos of our investors/partners and post on the NMB Chamber/CVB Website, YouTube Channel, and social media
  - Participate in and promote Small Business Saturday as part of the holiday shopping season in NMB.
  - Participate in Giving Tuesday to support our local charity investors/partners.
- B. Convene and facilitate economic development initiatives that support existing businesses while expanding the local economy.
- C. Implement programs in the Visitor Information Center to feature businesses, partners, and donors.
- D. Launch SkyNAV on the NMB Chamber/CVB website.
- E. Initiate an Artist event monthly in the Information Center to support arts and culture in NMB
- F. Produce the *Resource Guide* to include the investor/partner directory and resource information for residents about the businesses in NMB.

### **Implementation Teams:**

The **committees** that will promote and support these tactics include the Investor Committee and its events and education subcommittees, the Community Awareness and Advocacy Committee, the Economic Development Committee, and the Destination Marketing Committee.

**Chamber/CVB Team** members will support these tactics including Business Development, Partner Relations and Events Director, Visitor Services Director, Content Manager, Senior Director of Public Relations and Government Affairs, and the President & CEO.

### **3. Advocate on behalf of the community; serve as the voice of business as well as visitors.**

**Metrics:**

- The outcomes of the legislative agenda relative to our direct impact on outcomes
- Speaking engagements
- Earned media within the region
- Community relations programming
- Participation from community, business leaders, and policy makers

**Tactics:**

- A. Develop and manage a legislative agenda to monitor, support, and advance policies that support local businesses
  - Solicit input from investors/partners to develop the legislative agenda
  - Work with lobbyist to advance the NMB Chamber/CVB legislative agenda
  - Host a legislative recap session this fall
  - Host a Candidates Forum for NMB Chamber/CVB investors/partners and the community
  - Participate in the Grand Strand Legislative Reception
  - Meet with elected officials regularly to inform, update, inquire, and offer business community and destination development perspectives
  - Convene regular legislative calls to provide access for the business community to the NMB Chamber/CVB legislative team
- B. Support the destination position of North Myrtle Beach and advocate on behalf of the visitor experience
  - Conduct a Resident Sentiment Study to measure their support for tourism
  - Produce a section on the website for responsible and sustainable visitation that supports the community and enhances the visitor experience
  - Implement a community awareness campaign to inform, educate, and build awareness for the positive benefits from visitor spending.
  - Develop data points in conjunction with city officials that represent the impact of visitation on the tax base.
  - Provide research-based tourism data and trend analysis to advocate for visitor needs.
- C. Develop an Advocacy Toolkit
  - Recruit and train business and community leaders to be advocates on behalf of the voice of business and visitors
  - Participate in advocacy programs in Columbia and Washington DC as appropriate
- D. Represent businesses in local, regional, and state-wide policy discussions that will impact NMB businesses
  - Regularly attend public meetings on behalf of the NMB Chamber/CVB

- Gather input and provide feedback on behalf of NMB Chamber/CVB investors/partners
- Seek work-session opportunities as needed
- Convene subject matter experts to inform and educate leaders on relevant topics impacting businesses
- Utilize surveys, research, and case studies to develop talking points including best practices.

**Implementation Teams:**

The **committees** that will promote and support these tactics include the Public Policy Committee, Community Awareness and Advocacy Committee, Economic Development Committee, and the Destination Marketing Committee.

**Chamber/CVB Team** members will support these tactics including the Senior Director of Public Relations and Government Affairs and President & CEO, Marketing Director, Business Development Director, and Content Manager.

**4. Increase visitation to North Myrtle Beach.**

**Metrics:**

- Visitor spending
- Overnight stays
- Visitor website analytics
- Lead generation and conversion
- Earned media values
- SCPRT Grant funding level

**Tactics:**

- A. Implement integrated marketing plans especially focused on digital and public relations initiatives to attract visitors
  - a. Maximize consumer database for visitor engagement
  - b. Customize eblasts to consumer interests
  - c. Increase content in all assets and push content to other sources
  - d. Pitch stories to travel, golf, and lifestyle media
  - e. Advertise, market, engage prospective and returning visitors
- B. Implement a content-based strategy to inspire and engage supporting visitors at each stage of their travel journey
- C. Use geo-targeted advertising and promotion to intercept people considering Florida gulf coast beach vacations
- D. Maximize social media channels and tell the stories of North Myrtle Beach
- E. Develop and launch a new website that meets customer expectations, supports the destination brand, and inspires travel to North Myrtle Beach



- F. Launch SkyNAV on the Explore website to incorporate 360 Degree video
- G. Engage our visitors and offer opportunities for them to share their experiences and become travel influencers
- H. Differentiate the NMB destination experience from other SC coastal communities
- I. Update and refine the SMILE Co-op and pay-to-play cooperative marketing initiatives
- J. Leverage Grand Strand positioning to position NMB as a premier selection within the region
- K. Launch sustainable visitor campaign
- L. Produce a Visitors Guide both in print and digital versions to inspire travel to NMB
- M. Produce and distribute through a racking service an “lure” brochure
- N. Develop and utilize photography and video that tell the stories of NMB and inspire travel
- O. Promote the destination and events at shows such as Travel Media Showcase and media events coordinated by Travel South and the Southeast Tourism Society
- P. Promote events hosted by the City of North Myrtle Beach to increase visitation from outside the region to the Christmas Lights Celebration, Italian Irish Festival, Diva Race, St. Patrick’s Day, May Fest, and the Fourth of July
- Q. Host familiarization tours for travel influencers and decision makers
- R. Launch a public relations program targeting key lifestyle, travel, and golf publications and influencers to earn media coverage supporting the destination brand
- S. Complete sales missions and visit AAA offices and media in key markets
- T. Conduct research to understand the visitor and increase effectiveness of marketing plans
- U. Promote the City of North Myrtle Beach as a sports tournament venue
- V. See the Destination Marketing Plan details beginning on page 11.

**Implementation Teams:**

The **committees** that will promote and support these tactics include the Destination Marketing Committee, SMILE Coop Committee, and Economic Development Committee.

**Chamber/CVB Team** members will support these tactics including the Marketing Director, Content Manager, Business Development Director, Senior Director of Public Relations and Government Affairs and President & CEO, Marketing Director, and Content Manager.

A significant amount of coordination, design, and program implementation will be managed in conjunction with key business partners, especially, Crawford Strategy, Southern Tide Media, and Simpleview.

## **NMB Chamber Foundation**

The North Myrtle Beach Chamber Foundation was established to support the operations and mission of the NMB Chamber/CVB by providing a means to administer and underwrite civic, cultural, scientific, and educational programs through fund raising and grant-writing initiatives to increase private sector support.

Programming to support cultural and educational awareness, promoting quality of life initiatives, addressing workforce and educational issues in the community, and through a grants program support

community-based initiatives for the public benefit to the community has been the focus since the Foundations' inception in 2010.

The mission is to support and advance the general welfare and prosperity of the greater North Myrtle Beach, SC area so that its citizens and all areas of the community may prosper and lessen the burden of local and state governments.

The 2020 programming for the Foundation will implement the following tactics to support the NMB Chamber's goals and objectives:

- A. Strengthen the Value proposition for investors, partner, and donors
  - a. Coordinate and host a Volunteer Fair where charities and not-for-profits may recruit volunteers from the community
  - b. Support fundraising efforts for Building North Myrtle Beach to implement economic development and destination initiatives identified in the Strategic Plan
  - c. Coordinate a community calendar on the Chamber website for organizations to post their events and establish a resource serving the investors and community
  - d. Create and maintain a volunteer bank on the Chamber website where charities and not-for-profit organizations may post opportunities to earn service hours for students and team building and corporate volunteer service for investors
  
- B. Increase the promotion of NMB to visitors and businesses
  - a. Coordinate a Giving Tuesday program and promote local charities and not-for-profits to the businesses and residents through promotions of Giving Tuesday
  - b. Support Building North Myrtle Beach initiatives and provide visibility of the donors through the website, weekly updates, and presentations
  - c. Include a Chamber Foundation minute in the monthly First Friday Business Builder program to increase visibility of the Foundation and its donors
  - d. Create a responsible visitor responsible resident section on the website to promote how NMB cares for the beaches, supports green practices, and a "how to show you care" message about proactively caring for NMB and our environs
  
- C. Advocate on behalf of the community; serve as the voice of business as well as visitors
  - a. Advocate on behalf of education, people in need, and work force development
  - b. Participate in the Chamber Community Relations and Advocacy Committee
  - c. Initiate a Valor Awards dinner to honor service professionals and volunteers who contribute to our public safety
  - d. Support the implementation of the Strategic Plan
  - e. Update and launch the next phase of Building North Myrtle Beach