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ROWAN COUNTY TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
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ROWAN COUNTY TOURISM DESTINATION MARKETING COMMITTEE MEETING

Thursday, February 6, 2020: 10:00 am, Gateway Building

DESTINATION MARKETING COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Committee Members Attending: Vivian Hopkins, Kelly Alexander, Gretchen Witt, Michelle Patterson, Darrell Blackwelder, Krista Osterweil, Annette Privette Keller

Not Attending: Amie Baudoin, Aaron Kepley

TDA Staff: James Meacham, Sarah Michalec, Mary Scott Norris

DMC Call to Order

James Meacham called the DMC meeting to order at 10:02 am.

Approval of the Minutes

Motion: Krista Osterweil made a motion for approval of the December 2019 meeting minutes.

Second: Vivian Hopkins

Motion: Approved

James Meacham called the meeting to order at 10:02 a.m. and welcomed everyone to the Destination Marketing Committee Meeting for February 2020.

Meacham shared that Sarah Michalec will be going on maternity leave in May and there will be transitions going on in regards to digital marketing. Michalec asked everyone to assist in sending in their scheduled events ahead of time.

Meacham shared a structural change that is happening between the partnership between the CVB and Downtown Salisbury Inc. (DSI). For several years the CVB has been managing the digital and

social media marketing for DSI. It is a large time commitment for Sarah to do this and with her maternity leave coming up, the CVB will be transitioning these responsibilities back to the City of Salisbury and the DSI staff. The CVB will still work to provide marketing support for DSI and, from a financial perspective, as is done with several partners, support in terms of paid social media and paid digital support. There will be a 90- day transition period between the CVB and DSI.

The CVB is about to start a new ticketing incentive package for the Fire Truck Festival in 2020 for families who stay overnight in Rowan County.

Wine about Winter is coming up this week and DSI has sold over 1,300 tickets for the event. The trolleys are being utilized during the event with 33 room nights associated with the package.

Rowan County was not chosen for the location for the Little League World Series. The decision was based largely on infrastructure. Rowan County will still be the host of the regional portion of the Little League World Series tournament.

The Railwalk Pavilion is complete and it will be the new home to the Downtown Salisbury Farmer's Market. The market will run April 18- December 19. The CVB is working with the Farmer's market and City of Salisbury staff on details such as road closures. There will be a grand opening celebration of the Pavilion towards the end of April to kick off the Farmer's market season and dedicate the Pavilion and the connections to Arts & Ag that are in that location.

Starting this year and moving forward, the third week of September will kick off "Rowan County Hospitality Week." This would include FAM Tours, award celebrations, PR stories and have a large focus on the service and hospitality industries here in Rowan County.

Tourism Support Requests

There was one request for support from Tilley H-D Biker and Blues BBQ Rally. They are requesting the same amount that they have in years past of \$3,000 to be put towards the cost of the judges reception, lodging cost for out of town guest, and hospitality which includes the breakfast cost for the competition team. Each year this event generates 40-50 room nights and they are expecting the same amount this year.

Motion: Michelle Patterson made a motion to approve the Tilley H-D Biker Blues
BBQ Rally
Second: Krista Osterweil
Motion: Approved

Destination Marketing Report- Year End Report 2019

Meacham gave the Year End Report for 2019. For Tourism Supported Investments, the committee approved \$79,483 in CVB investment, generating 3,571 in room nights and had an event-visitor related economic impact of \$8,785,847.

The trolley program greatly exceeded 2018 with a 41.9% increase in ridership and 77.6% increase in revenue. There was a 54% increase in rentals and 20% increase in advanced bookings. Scrooge wrapped up the year with 17 shows and 1,764 riders. The CVB also partnered with Lee St. Theatre to introduce a new theatrical trolley tour, Time Warp Trolley Tour which had 193 attendees.

Traditional Visitor inquiries fulfilled for the year were 338. The 2019 Destination Incentive Packages that were offered included: Wine about Winter, Brew & Choo Festival, Carolina Bohemian Jam, Day Out with Thomas, Brewbury Festival, October Tour, Polar Express, Time Warp Trolley Tour. The total number of packages booked in 2019 was 569 and total room nights were 947.

In 2019 there were 15 media assists and 36 media placements for Public Relations, averaging 4 mentions a month. The community calendar continued to be a great partnership with the Salisbury Post, resulting in 84,019 views, an average of 2.5 submissions per day, and 8,622 unique events.

Michalec gave the report for digital media. Users were up to 160,983 on the website, page views increased 4.75% and session time increased by 11.67%. Mobile continues to be the primary viewing device at 59.97%, however, desktop users increased by 29.81% from 2018. In the second half of 2019, the CVB switched to a new email newsletter platform. By doing so, the email open rate increased by 79% in 2019 and the click through rate increased by 59%. There are just over 4,100 subscribers to date.

Social Media continues to be one of the most effective digital marketing tools. Across all platforms there are over 20,000 followers. The top Facebook post for the year related to the Day Out with Thomas Package, Autumn Jubilee's 40th Anniversary, and an Article from Our State magazine relating to Keaton's BBQ. Top twitter posts were about the Best Trails in Rowan County bloc, Scrooge's Christmas Trolley Tour, and the Tis the Season Spectacular parade. All 3 top post for Instagram were about different Cheerwine Murals.

Meacham mentioned that total lodging revenues were up just over 10% for 2019.

Destination Marketing Report- January 2020

The committee was given the 2020 report to review on their own. CVB staff continues to work with the North Carolina Transportation Museum on the Rail Passenger Car Alliance. There is

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expected to be a surge in room nights in the fall due to the upcoming Republican National Convention in Charlotte, NC. The CVB is not encouraging hotels to join the room block. The rooms are expected to be filled faster without holding rooms.

Annette gave an update on the new ball park in Kannapolis. Everything is going great single tickets will come on sale closer to when the season starts. The ground breaking of Kannapolis Crossing will begin this winter, if all goes as planned.

Adjourn

With no additional business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:38 a.m.

Respectfully submitted by: Mary Scott Norris, RCCVB