

VISIT ROWAN COUNTY

SALISBURY, NORTH CAROLINA

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ROWAN COUNTY TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

204 E Innes Street, Ste. 120, Salisbury, NC 28144
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Name: Destination Marketing Committee

Date of Meeting: January 10, 2019

Committee Chair: To Be Appointed

Date of Next Meeting: February 7, 2019

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

Not Attending: Aaron Kepley

Tourism Staff: Tara Furr, Sarah Michalec

Tara Furr called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m. and welcomed everyone to the Destination Marketing Committee Meeting for January 2019.

Meeting Minutes:

Furr called for a motion to approve the November 2018 minutes as presented.

Motion: Kelly Alexander made a motion to approve the minutes.
Second: Michelle Patterson
Motion: Approved

Destination Marketing Report

Furr presented the Destination Marketing Report. December was a very busy month for the trolleys. The Scrooge trolley tour was in its 6th year in partnership with Lee Street Theatre.

Tickets were sold out with 60 successful shows. Lee Street revamped the tour this year and felt it was the best yet. Year-to-date, trolley revenue is around \$10,000.

The Polar Express package was also very successful, especially with an increase of new Airbnb properties being booked throughout the county. There were close to 1,000 room nights associated with Polar Express, however around 100 less room nights and 100 less packages were booked in comparison to last year. Due to inclement weather, one Polar Express day had to be cancelled and rescheduled, which impacted the final total number of packages. Unfortunately, some guests attempted to cheat the system and ended up receiving tickets for free without completing planned hotel stays. The TDA will be working closely with the hotels next year to remedy this issue, possibly with advanced deposits.

The Wine about Winter is scheduled for February 1st and includes two free tickets with an overnight stay in Rowan County. So far, there are 7 packages booked.

With regard to group sales, the Fine Arts Conference is scheduled for February 21st - 23rd with Rowan Cabarrus Community College. There will be an overnight stay package for the first 30 participants, receiving free registration if a two-night stay is booked in Rowan County. So far, there are about 100 registrants signed up.

The North Carolina Main Street Managers Conference is coming up in March, with an estimated 500 room nights affiliated. This conference is being held in partnership with DSI and the City of Salisbury. The TDA's roles include securing the hotels and venues for events. In addition, the TDA will be donating the trolleys to transport guests, including a historic tour. The welcome reception will be sponsored by the TDA with catering by Morgan Ridge and an offering of glass bottle Cheerwine. Also, the Cheerwine will be available at the hospitality tent throughout the event.

Salisbury has been awarded a stop by the Cycle NC Tour, with 1500 cyclists, from all across the country, visiting the NC Transportation Museum and Salisbury in September. Approximately 250 will be staying in the local hotels, with 125 projected room nights due to double occupancy. The remainder of the cyclists will camp at the NCTM.

In addition, the TDA is working with the Little League Tournament, scheduled for July 2019, and the Rail Passenger Car Alliance, scheduled for January 2021. As of right now, there is an estimate of 1000 room nights secured for 2019.

There was a lot of great exposure for the holiday events, however Public Relations is not where the TDA would like it to be. This is due to the attention needed for Group Sales at this time. However, a new coordinator position will be added soon, which will help with Visitor Services and Group Sales. This will allow more time to be devoted to PR.

Sarah Michalec shared the digital report with the group, stating there has been a continued increase in traffic on the website as people regularly explore restaurants and other events. There was a huge growth and reach on social media, especially with the holiday campaign. On

Facebook there was a lot of activity around Christmas in the Grove and Twitter showed a lot of mentions about Polar Express and Festival of Lights in Kannapolis. The Blog has been very well received, particularly the ones targeting specific activities for couples and specific activities for children, which caters to the needs of various groups.

Furr stated Major League Fishing was here filming a segment about the Yadkin River, which will air this summer. This was a multi-county partnership with the Land Trust. The Major League Fishing crew, staff, and fishermen all stayed in local hotels. There is a preview event on May 11th in Albemarle.

The Visit NC Conference will take place in March and TDA staff will be attending. The goal is to see how the TDA can take part in the co-op being offered in 2019-2020 in order to get destination marketing out to a broader audience.

Arts & Ag 2019

Furr stated all the dates are being finalized for Arts & Ag 2019. The main events at the larger locations, including the NC Transportation Museum, Patterson Farm, and Kannapolis, will be heavily marketed and utilize extra funding.

Adjourn

With no additional business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:45 a.m.

Respectfully submitted by: Allyson Teague, RCTDA