



SALISBURY-ROWAN COUNTY CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU
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Name: Destination Marketing Committee

Date of Meeting: January 7, 2016

Committee Chair: Krista Osterweil

Date of Next Meeting: February 4, 2016

Committee Members Attending: Suzanne Jones, Justin Dionne, Gretchen Witt, Kelly Alexander, Vivian Hopkins, Thad Howell

Tourism Staff: James Meacham, Melissa Murguz, Stephanie Centeno, Allyson Teague

Tourism Staff Not Attending: Tara Ludwig

Not Attending: Michelle Patterson, Krista Osterweil

James Meacham called the meeting to order at 10:05 AM.

Approval of the Minutes:

Motion: Justin Dionne made the motion for the approval of the November 5, 2015 minutes.

Second: Kelly Alexander

Motion: Approved

Branding and Digital Infrastructure Update:

James Meacham informed the committee the Rowan County Branding project is off to a good start. A majority of December was spent conducting internal focus groups and leadership interviews. This year the broader research phase will take place with external market focus groups, which will show how others see Salisbury and Rowan County from a variety of perspectives. January will also bring a broad community wide survey. There will be an online and offline component for an extended period of time. Once the surveys are completed, Chandlerthinks will start the formulation of identifying the themes and the brand.

Chandlerthinks identified an interesting relationship between a county resident and a city resident. The folks that don't live in Salisbury view Salisbury as "the city" and how a trip to town provides them with a variety of activities, shopping, and dining that can't be achieved within their immediate surrounding area. The county residents feel the current state of city directly affects their way of life. If Salisbury isn't successful then the county residents' ability to be successful and conduct a certain way of life is hindered. Conversely, Chandlerthinks discovered that city residents care deeply about land preservation and historic preservation become upset when new unwanted construction arises because it affects a certain way of life within the city limits. The city/county relationship is dependent upon one another in order to carry out a particular way of life.

Meacham informed the group that Tara Ludwig has completed two photoshoots for the branding project which have captured a lot of high quality imagery and video. In addition, an agreement has been reach with Aristotle for a new CMS, or content management system, and website update. Furthermore, an agreement with Simpleview has also been implemented for a CRM, or customer relationship management system. This will be a day-to-day platform the CVB will utilize in order to track data, manage partner relationships, reporting, performance, database inquiries, etc. Implementing the new CRM will assist the CVB with seamlessly measuring performance on a regular basis and allow partners to feed data back into the system. There will be a live component called Destination Dashboard, which can be utilized by anyone on the CVB staff can retrieve reports on any activity at any time.

Trolley

Meacham congratulated Melissa Murguz on a job well done with managing the trolley program. In 2015 there was \$120,123 of revenue for the trolley tours, rentals, and routes for Rowan Cabarrus Community College. This is associated with 1200 room nights filled with local hotels.

Murguz stated that the trolley program will be offering new tours and building on the existing interactive tours. Ludwig and Murguz will meet in January to consider putting together an entire program of works for the 2016 trolley system.

Meacham indicated that the CVB is essentially managing an attraction with the trolley program. In doing so there are questions of how attraction partners will be maximized, how to not overly compete, and should the program be expanded. Gretchen Witt conveyed the trolley program isn't in competition with community partners. Justin Dionne agreed and felt the trolleys greatly enhance other groups along the way, especially while other festivals and special events are taking place. The trolley program offerings can work in conjunction with community partners by promoting one another, which generates revenue and increases visitation overall. Meacham stated that research is being done to determine how other CVB's are maximizing online booking capacity that maintain similar attractions.

The Scrooge trolley tours generated a total ridership of 859. The slowest weekend, out of four weekends available, was during the Thanksgiving holiday. However, the last three weekends were at full capacity. Two extra tours were purchased by groups to have the whole trolley for a private tour. With the addition of two shows there was a total revenue of \$15,110.

Partnership Marketing

Meacham conveyed that the CVB and the NC Transportation Museum will have a meeting to determine how more can be included to the event packages already available for existing special events. By upscaling packages and producing add-ons the events can become a weekend experience for visitors instead of a day trip or just one overnight. Kelly Alexander stated the 2015 Polar Express event generated 25,000 tickets sold. The last two years a package has been offered for standard seats on the Polar Express, so in the future the NCTM will put together packages for different level tickets being sold. Alexander shared an example of one up-sale the NCTM provided for Polar Express where visitors could purchase a book in advance including Santa Claus' signature. This offering alone helped to generate an extra \$22,000 for the museum. Furthermore, Alexander conveyed to the group that the ticketing system will be upgraded to a more user-friendly version in order to maximize revenue.

Group Business

Meacham informed the committee that the Antique Automobile Club of America (AACAA) is scheduled to be in Salisbury in June. In addition, the Fine Arts Conference, established by Rowan Cabarrus Community College, will take place in Salisbury during the month of February. It is anticipated that 70 to 90 room nights will be generated as a result of the Fine Arts Conference. The CVB and RCCC would like to make the conference an established annual event.

Digital Marketing

The CVB has seen a massive increase in web traffic and social media as a result of efforts in conjunction with Aristotle, as well as effectively marketing the Scrooge trolley tour. Meacham shared an initial monthly campaign report produced by Aristotle. The report gives an overview of how visitors receive their information when researching what Salisbury has to offer. The analytics produced by the reports will allow the CVB to make better marketing decisions. The CVB can drive ticket sales early and sell out trolley tours much quicker with the help of Aristotle.

Meacham stated the second Aristotle photoshoot took place from December 8th – 12th. There is a spring photoshoot scheduled as well in order to have all four seasons digitally mastered in video and photography. Kannapolis' Village Weekend was highlighted as a destination for the

holiday photoshoot and the city's leadership was excited to participate. There were also several successful social media campaigns and radio spots for holiday marketing.

Other Business

Meacham told the committee that the February CVB Board meeting will be a planning session, led by Chris Cavanaugh, so the next Destination Marketing Committee meeting should also be a planning session in order to bring ideas for 2016 to the Board.

There were no questions. The meeting was adjourned at 10:50 AM.

Respectfully submitted by:
Allyson Teague, SRCCVB Office Assistant