

Vancouver Island DMO shifts focus to social responsibility

Vancouver Island's 60-year-old tourism organization, previously known as Tourism Vancouver Island, is making a major shift.

After operating for its first 50 years focused on promotions and marketing – with success measured in visitor numbers and spending – and then shifting about 10 years ago to prioritize destination management and planning, now the organization is operating as a social enterprise.

The change brings a new name – 4VI – and a new mindset and strategy rooted in using its revenue to support four pillars of social responsibility: communities, businesses, culture and environment.

"Travel is still a force for good, but we need to strike a balance between the profitability and the business side with what is best for the environment and the communities and the residents that live here. It's about mitigating impacts but also enhancing the things that need attention," said Anthony Everett, president and CEO of 4VI.

One of the top priorities – the one he says "keeps him up at night" – is finding money. 4VI is funded by contracts it has with local communities and government agencies - for example to provide consulting, marketing, research and other services. For this year Everett says the organization has a budget of CAN\$6.5 million, including several multi-year contracts that give it a good foundation on which to build.

– phocuswire.com



Boston's tourism campaign emphasizes the city's diverse heritage via its accents

A national marketing campaign puts the accents of Boston front and center in a push designed and run by local entrepreneurs of color.

The effort highlights many accents — broadly construed.

Beyond the broad 'a's and dropped 'r's of stereotyped Boston speech, the campaign features "accents" as in the flourish of a chef's seasoning, the languages of a diverse population and the intellectual sass of a city famously built upon a hill.

The multimedia campaign was unveiled recently with hopes of attracting new visitors and convincing current residents to explore the city's diverse neighborhoods.

The Greater Boston Convention & Visitors Bureau in collaboration with Collette Phillips Communications and Proverb Agency, is back with a second phase of the "All Inclusive Boston" campaign. The \$1.5 million push to reshape Boston's image as a city more welcoming and inclusive than widely perceived (Boston was ranked in 2017 as the most

unwelcoming city to Black people) will rely primarily on a national broadcast and digital media buy, supported locally by partner NBC-10.

A 30-second ad produced by Proverb, a minority-owned agency, shows various figures from Boston's human palette declaring with pride, "This is my Boston accent."

An Asian chef working over a grill, a bar patron hoisting a pint, and prominent Boston intellectual Ibram Kendi speaking softly in the iconic reading room of the Boston Public Library are a few of the characters accented in the upbeat video.

Martha Sheridan, CEO of the Greater Boston Convention & Visitors Bureau, said that the idea is definitely to take people off the traditional path. "It's about showcasing the diversity of our city, but it's also about attracting a more diverse visitor to Boston as well."

Last year the campaign drew 4,000 tourists to the city in spite of a major Covid surge, according to the Greater Boston CVB.

– skift.com, baystatebanner.com



New Illinois campaign plays off its location

The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) has kicked off the state's new tourism campaign, "Middle of Everything," starring Illinois native and actress Jane Lynch.

The campaign aims to highlight Illinois as the center of culture, food, history, architecture, nightlife and natural wonders. In the "Middle of Everything," Lynch stars as Illinois' official tour guide showcasing iconic attractions in Chicago, Springfield, Historic Route 66, and the Garden of the

Gods in Shawnee National Forest in southern Illinois.

The \$30.3 million campaign is a critical next step in the state's efforts to accelerate the recovery of Illinois' tourism and hospitality industry—a major contributor to the state's economy, employing more than 600,000 people statewide prior to the pandemic. "I loved every minute of working on this project promoting tourism in my home state and I'm so proud to finally see it come to life," said Lynch.

— wsilvtv.com

Florida city responds to controversial law

One of South Florida's biggest cities is using some welcoming words for visitors after Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis signed the controversial "Don't Say Gay" law.

The legislation forbids the discussion of sexual orientation in some classrooms.

"We don't care who you love, who you marry. We don't care who or what you worship. We just want you to have a great experience," said Stacy Ritter, CEO of Visit Fort Lauderdale.

"We lost some conferences because of what is going on in the state capitol," said Ritter. "We realized we needed to do what we have been doing for 30 years, which is market ourselves as a welcoming and inclusive destination."

Businesses have pulled their conferences and events out of South Florida in the wake of the state's "Stop Woke Act," which would censor discussion in school and workplaces surrounding systematic racism and gender discrimination.

— wsvn.com



Colorado Gov. Jared Polis

Colorado diverts lodging taxes to other uses

Up to 90% of county lodging taxes can now be used outside of tourism marketing, allowing counties to make capital expenditures, under a new law in Colorado.

Those marketing efforts aren't as necessary if the tourism industry is facing larger problems servicing the guests who are already here, said Gov. Jared Polis.

"If the tourism community, and the industry, needs housing, because they need workers to be able to

power the tourism industry, that should be an allowable use of funds too," Polis said. The new bill says 90% of the lodging tax funds can be used outside of tourism marketing, allowing counties to make capital expenditures out of their lodging tax coffers for housing and child care, or for facilitating and enhancing visitor experiences, which includes trail maintenance.

The bill had bipartisan support.

— aspenimes.com