



MADISON CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

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September 7, 2012

Attn: Board of Supervisors

Re: Chamber and Tourism Report

Chamber

The Chamber's next Board/Member meeting will be September 17th with guest a speaker talking to the group about September being Emergency Preparedness month. Two October Events:

- 1) **October 4th - Virginia Tourism is coming back to do the Customer Service Workshop geared for Managers this time!! And will be held from 1pm-4pm at Early Mountain Vineyard, more details to follow. Everyone said the Customer Service Workshop in February were well worth the time and couldn't wait for the next one! Hopefully County employees will come as well, think they would enjoy it.**
- 2) **Virginia Department of Business Assistance's Entrepreneur Express (for those wanting to start a business or to expand their own) War Memorial Building October 25th register at the following link <http://www.vastartup.org/register/events/848>**

Tourism

The Visitor Center had 50 visitors in August and approximately 9000 hits to the website!

Virginia Tourism's iconic LOVE artwork was great to have here to celebrate 20years of Taste of the Mountains.

Received report from Virginia Tourism that our traveler's spending went from 29million in 2010 to 31million in 2011 and that it was up for the entire state. Very good news!

"Sinatra Under the Stars" rescheduled for this Thursday, September 13th and also Thirsty Thursdays (2nd Thurs of the month) at Prince Michel. Sippin into Sunset is in full swing at Early Mountain on Fridays and many events going on DuCard as well including Sept 29th Public Lands Day in Shenandoah National Park, so entrance fee is waived. Attending the Celebrate Shenandoah meeting to be held October 11 at Skyland. And possibly day 1 of Tourism Summit October 24th.

Respectfully submitted,

Tracey W. Gardner, Exec Director & Tourism Coordinator

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Tourism Committee

Tourism Committee – will meet again November 7, 2012 1pm KOA/Shenandoah Hills

Update for September – Changed one our ads running Northern VA Mag to fall background, commercials hit before Labor Day weekend in Northern VA area, meeting with Comcast sometime September to talk about next campaign. Will begin working on new brochure.

Update for August – The Tourism Committee met August 8th approved proposed budget for \$50,000 to submit to the Board of Supervisors for approval and appropriations. Tracey met with Comcast and script writer for commercials. Tracey will continue working on the new brochure in the fall and winter.

Update for July – Lynn Graves and Tracey attended BOS workshop meeting and after discussions will be working on budget for current amount in TOT fund at next meeting. Purchased ¼ page ad that was on sale for \$249 with Destination Travel, Current advertising invoices for Northern Virginia Magazine (online) WEB – Travel, E-News Events and E-news Travel, totaling \$1225. Also submitted TOTM rack card which represents the entire County for \$727.27.

Tracey had conference call with Mary Lewis from Ebrains discussing the 5month key word search campaign via Virginia Tourism which brought in an extra 8,006 hits to our website. Mary also gave extra key words we can add to our site and other valuable ideas as well. Tracey also met with Laura Grigsby, contact from Susan Bernhardt with The Last Nickel/Cameleer from Comcast to discuss a widespread campaign both online and television ads. Laura is coming up with a proposal and will meet again before the next Tourism Committee meeting. Laura lives in the area and therefore already has ideas for campaign.

Received 140 leads from Cooperative Living ad. These are individuals who took the time to fill out info card from magazine and send in. The Chamber utilized the volunteers for this fulfillment.

(Historical data below).

The Tourism Committee met January 18, 2012 at Shenandoah Hills/KOA at 1pm. I presented information (including \$13,000 budget to start) on both many tourism marketing options, and the Committee feels it would be best to start with electronic marketing through Virginia Tourism. This will be the fastest option reaching the most people and quickest avenue to see ROI. The Committee can finalize these items via email.

- 1) Mary Lewis of eBrains, Inc who is in charge of Virginia Tourism Electronic Marketing program said best approach will be to do a Madison County paid search program that will drive clicks directly to the appropriate pages on the website. They can create a search program with key terms and words that will deliver up custom text ads for accommodations, dining, attractions, events when traveler are searching for those venues in Google, Bing and MSN search engines.

The Paid Search program will drive clicks to the Madison County tourism website at 2,000 clicks per month for a total of 8,000 clicks over four months. They can launch the program in as quickly as five days once we have the keyword list approved so can start this month thru May. Cost \$8,000. Mary Lewis is currently coming up with key terms as of January 6. At the January meeting, the Committee along with Scott from DuCard Vineyards looked over keywords and over several days, added and tweaked some of them.

Contract has been signed and sent to Teresa Miller as well.

- 2) The Committee also discussed Madison's portion to the RRRC, PD9 (last year was **\$1400**) can come from TOT as well. I met with Foothills Tourism Group and we plan on reprinting Virginia Piedmont brochure that is distributed to visitors centers and Virginia Welcome Centers. Also discussed Sesquicentennial Grant for next year as a region which would benefit Madison as well. The Virginia Piedmont still gets the most hits from Madison than all the other counties. We are between Google and Bing!!
- 3) The Committee agreed to redo the generic brochure since it hasn't been done (just updated text) for the last several years. At this point, just coming up with front cover and wording for inside. The design of the brochure will be \$1200-\$1500 and then will determine at next meeting how many to order. April update: Currently working on gathering info from other lodging entities for brochure.
- 4) April update working on ads in publications beginning with \$425 for Coop Living. \$700 for Monticello Wine Trail.
- 5) May/June update up to this point Northern Virginia Magazine, Jun/Jul/Aug E-News ads totaling \$1260, Six issues Travel Banner ads in Travel section \$2550, and three Travel and Entertainment banners \$1140.

Update for June: Still gathering info for brochure which is time consuming and also gathering info and deciding via email on other ads. Including Northern VA Magazine, working on ad for Virginia Wine TV(they plan to highlight our vineyards this year!!), AAA, Blue Ridge Digest and Blue Ridge Outdoors. May Cooperative Living magazine featured our ad.

Respectfully submitted,

Tracy W. Gardner, Executive Director, Tourism Coordinator,
Tourism Committee