

Profile

Applicant: Regional Application

Grant Manager: Will Haynes

Name of Organization: Southern Maine Coast Tourism Association

Mailing Address: PO Box 388
York, Maine 03909

Physical Address: York County Community College
112 College Drive
Wells, Maine 04090

Office Hours: 8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Telephone Number: 800-580-3820 Extension 510

Fax Number: 207-646-9675

Date of Incorporation: January 19th, 2000

EIN: 01-0523313

What were the top three highlights from the previous fiscal year?

Throughout 2004, the SMCTA implemented several successful marketing initiatives. Three of these highlights include:

1). Increasing the scope and quantity of the SMCTA fulfillment piece: With MTMPP funds and funds leveraged through this project, the SMCTA was able to expand the scope and distribution of this 44-page, color catalogue promoting lodging, dining and recreational activities in our region. Of the 65,000 printed, 77% were distributed throughout CT, NY and NJ hotels and visitors centers, with supply barely keeping up with demand. The remaining books were distributed at visitors centers throughout the state and at regional, national and international trade shows (see highlight #3).

2). Partnering with the Maine Tourism Commission to develop and air 30 second PSAs promoting tourism as an industry, and in state travel: While we await the final evaluation from the MTC, this partnership with them and regions around the state is seen as a highlight for last year. With Maine the size of all other NE states combined, promoting in state tourism was both strategic and smart. Additionally, increasing the understanding of tourism and its economic impact to the state is an important step to insuring the long term sustainability of the industry.

3). Participating in or maintaining a presence at a targeted slate of regional, national and international trade shows: With funds leveraged from the MTMPP grant program, the SMCTA participated in 10 trade shows, distributing over 5,000 fulfillment piece. Trade shows attended in person allowed for personal contact with over 7,500 potential travelers to our region. Trade show sites included PA, MA, RI, FL, Canada, Ireland, Germany and the UK.

While our marketing programs in 2004 were designed to reach a diverse traveling audience, there was and is a deliberate focus on targeting the drive market to increase shoulder season tourism.

Please state your three primary goals for the next year and how you expect them to increase tourism revenue for the region with cooperative funds.

In January of 2004, the SMCTA Board participated in a day-long strategic planning retreat, focused on setting goals and developing a marketing plan for the organization. Overarching goals that emerged from the process include--

Goal 1). Increasing awareness and understanding of the benefits to collaborative, regional marketing: As was noted in the prior section, increasing the understanding of the economic impact of tourism to our region and promoting collaborative marketing opportunities will contribute to long term sustainability of the industry.

Outcomes: Increase in SMCTA membership; Increased awareness of economic impact of tourism on the region; Development of new partnerships to market the region

Goal 2). Increasing travel to the region during the shoulder seasons: The Southern Maine Coast generally enjoys an active summer with many lodging establishments at or near capacity July-September. Summer months see 48% of visitors to our region, while 23% are here in fall and spring, and only 8% visit during the winter months. While the SMCTA will continue to market summer travel, we have a great opportunity to promote tourism during other times of the year, particularly during the late fall and

winter months.

Outcomes: Increase in travel during the shoulder season; Increase in drive market travel; Increase number of in-state visitors; Increase in day trips to region

Goal 3). Increasing the length of stay: The average length of stay while on the Southern Maine Coast is 3.6 nights. The Southern Maine Coast does a good job at marketing the region as a whole, but promoting intra-region travel and encouraging seeing more while here will benefit many tourism related businesses and will increase the likelihood of a longer length of stay.

Outcomes: Increase in number of communities visited on a given trip; Increase in length of stay; Decrease in pass through traffic/increase in overnight trips.

Please describe the overall strategy you will implement to achieve these goals.

Strategies to achieve goals listed above include:

Goal 1). Increasing awareness and understanding of the benefits to collaborative, regional marketing:

Strategy: The SMCTA will provide regular opportunities for educating business and community leaders on the impact of tourism. Specifically, the SMCTA will: generate a monthly newsletter to be distributed to each member chamber's membership list; organize and host an annual tourism summit; and consistently outreach to develop strong and stronger relationships with key stakeholders. These stakeholders will include business leaders not already engaged, municipal leaders, school administrators, and other key services located in our region (i.e. hospital, library, etc.).

Goal 2). Increasing travel to the region during the shoulder seasons:

Strategy: The SMCTA will promote marketing opportunities that focus on attracting visitors during the shoulder seasons. These marketing opportunities will include working with local tourism businesses to assess seasonal availability; promoting the fall/winter months in the SMCTA fulfillment piece and on the SMCTA web site; and may include developing off season packages and inviting/hosting familiarization tours focused on the shoulder seasons. The SMCTA will also explore developing a marketing campaign that encourages travel in a particular month or season.

3). Increasing the length of stay:

Strategy: The SMCTA will promote intra-regional internneraries through the fulfillment piece and on our web site, highlighting the many activities that one can participate in while visiting here. This may include developing a "stay an extra day" campaign to encourage visitors to extend their stay. Additionally, the SMCTA will continue to support and seek partnerships with associations and collaboratives that support regional travel around particular themes (past partnerships have included Golf ME and a local association of antiques dealers).

How do these goals and strategies fit with the Office of Tourism's?

The goals of the Southern Maine Coast Tourism Association dovetail and support each of the Maine Office of Tourism's, but most specifically the Office's goals of: encouraging current visitors to stay longer, expanding the geographic area of their visit and spending more; and that of making tourism a year round industry.

Additionally, strategies being implemented by the SMCTA geared toward strengthening support for tourism as an industry and increasing travel during the shoulder season complement the strategies spelled out by the Office of Tourism in its 5-year plan.

The SMCTA appreciates the collaborative approaches being utilized to increase tourism across the state and will continue to be an active regional entity partnering with the State to do so.

Please describe how the financial resources will be monitored by your organization.

The SMCTA contracts with Paige Farmer, owner of The Bottom Line, for bookkeeping services. Ms. Farmer works closely with the treasurer to oversee financial activity for the organization. A Financial Report is presented to the board of directors at their monthly meeting and includes a profit and loss statement, a balance sheet, a budget report, and when appropriate, individual financial statements for specific projects.

The SMCTA contracts with Yorke Associates, a PA firm located in Cape Neddick, for the preparation of its annual 990 tax return and McCallum & Connelly, CPA to audit the final financial report submitted to the Office of Tourism at the close of the grant year.

The SMCTA maintains a checking account with credit card processing capabilities at Kennebunk Savings Bank, and has done so for the past five years.

Primary Analysis

Research

Is your region or event conducting any research initiatives this year?

Yes

If you have Research Initiatives, please state the purpose and give a brief description of each.

The SMCTA is currently developing a web based survey to gather more data regarding potential visitors to the region. Questions are being developed to identify type of trip, length of stay, purpose of trip and items of interest. Additionally, the survey will gather information on use of the website, including navigation to the site, ease of use and usefulness of the site content.

The SMCTA has also used information included in the Longwoods International report to assist in establishing goals and activities for the upcoming year. This data will serve as baseline and the SMCTA will continue to track items from it including overnight stays, season of trip, length of stay and regional destinations visited.

Public Relations

Who is the person/company that is responsible for your PR program?

Company: Will Haynes

Address: Southern Maine Coast Tourism Association
PO Box 388
York, ME 03909

Phone: 207-475-6339

Email Address: southernmainecoast@yccc.edu

Would you be interested in participating in a two-hour public relations workshop?

Yes

Would you like to be contacted regarding PR efforts?

Yes

Please provide a list of editorial contacts:

The SMCTA is currently developing a list of editorial contacts that includes, but is not limited to the following:

Travel Editor - Boston Sunday Globe
Feature Editor - Hartford Courant
Travel Editor - New York Times
Feature Editor - Sunday Toronto Sun Times
Producer - Fox Cable Travel Show
Exec. Director - Travel Writers Association of America
Exec. Director - Magazine Association of America

Please provide a list of publications and/or broadcast outlets you would most like to target:

See above

Co-Op Efforts

In what type(s) of co-op effort, if any, is your group participating?

Internal, e.g. A local matching program with hotels and inns., External, e.g. Partnerships with other groups., State-wide, e.g. Coordinated intra-state vacation effort in partnership with the MOT, participate in MOT/PSA

Please describe in further detail your co-op efforts:

Internal: The Southern Maine Coast Tourism Association collaborates on a co-op print ad section in Maine Invites You, which then is further developed into the SMCTA stand alone fulfillment piece. This co-op ad is generally 28-33 pages and includes membership from the Greater York Region, Kennebunk/Kennebunkport, Wells, Ogunquit, Old Orchard Beach and Biddeford Saco Chambers of Commerce.

External: The SMCTA has worked with local and regional associations including Golf ME and a local association of antique dealers to develop and place cooperative print ads in targeted publications. Additionally, the SMCTA partnered with Cruise ME to promote cruise related travel to the coastal towns and with the Greater Portland CVB on a cooperative promotion in the Boston Globe magazine.

Statewide: The SMCTA participates in the statewide PSA program geared toward increasing in state tourism and support for tourism as an industry in Maine.

Website Development & Maintenance

If you currently have a website, please provide us with your URL:

URL: www.southernmainecoast.org

Please provide a brief description of the overall goal of your site and the functionality that the site offers to its visitors:

The southernmainecoast.org site has undergone a dramatic transformation over the past year. A great deal of time and attention was given to the enhancement and improvement of the site including: an update of all graphics and text; new indexing for easier searching; newer and more relevant links; and the development of a web based media kit.

The site offers visitors information on where to stay, dine and visit while here, a downloadable version of our fulfillment piece, maps, weather, and a reciprocal link with the Amtrak Downeaster. Additionally, the site includes a regional calendar of events and links to each member chamber.

Please provide a brief description of the intended strategy for improvement over the next one to two years:

Please see Project #3.

Visitor Database

Do you collect and compile information on your visitors (names, addresses, areas of interest, etc.)?

No

If so, please describe how the database is currently structured and how it is used for marketing and communication initiatives:

Currently this feature is under construction and is a component of our on line survey. A plan for incorporating this into our current marketing plan will be developed prior to final implementation.

Additionally, each SMCTA member chamber does compile contact names and responds to requests for inquiry information.

Budget Summary

Current Projects

Project 1: Southern Maine Coast Fulfillment Piece

Project Type: Fulfillment

Description: Over the past 3 years, with grant funds provided from the Office of Tourism, the SMCTA has created a color fulfillment piece derived from our existing co-op ad in Maine Invites You. Advertisers partnering with the SMCTA ad placement in Maine Invites You are included in the over run, and are given a 1 year link on the SMCTA web site. The fulfillment piece is distributed throughout the northeast drive market via CTM Brochure Display and trade shows.

While Maine Invites You is extremely beneficial for the Southern Maine Coast, the size and scope of the book can overwhelm the SMCTA section. Creating a stand alone piece from the ad in Maine Invites You provides an economical way for the region to showcase itself to potential visitors, encouraging them to stay longer and see more.

In March 2005 SMCTA was able to hire a full time Program Manager. This will allow the organization to dedicate the time it will need to carry out the expansion of the piece described below.

Element 1: Development of a 40-44 page color catalogue

Project: Southern Maine Coast Fulfillment Piece

Element Description: The 2006 SMCTA fulfillment piece will be a 40-44 page 4-color magazine that includes sections on what to do while here, a regional calendar of events, and descriptive editorial and graphics highlighting the region. New this year, the magazine will feature sections on specific activities such as golf, antiques and arts/heritage. The SMCTA will work with associations that it has established relationships with to develop theme related co-op ads with their members that will allow these groups to generate revenue for themselves as well as SMCTA. Finally, the SMCTA will develop a full page ad in the fulfillment piece driving traffic to the SMCTA web site.

65,000 copies will be printed and distributed throughout hotels and visitor centers in NY, NJ, MA, CT, ME, PA, Canada and beyond via CTM Brochure Display and at trade shows. Books will also be used to fulfill requests for information on the South Coast received by the OT (SMCTA will obtain the leads list) and through the SMCTA.

- Timeline:**
- August 2005: Solicit 3-5 bids for design/printing
 - September 2005: Develop co-op ad for Maine Invites You
 - September 2005: Work with associations to develop and sell theme based co-op ad sections
 - November 2005: Forward Maine Invites You ad to graphic designer
 - December 2005: Proof fulfillment piece
 - January 2006: Fulfillment piece goes to print
 - February 2006: Fulfillment piece printed and shipped
 - February 2006: Fulfillment piece distributed at consumer travel show in Foxboro, MA
 - February 2006: Fulfillment piece uploaded to web site as downloadable .pdf file
 - March 2006: Distribution begins throughout NY/CT/NJ hotels and visitor centers through CTM Brochure Display (50,000)

March 2006: Distribution at trade shows in PA/MA and Canada

April 2006: Distribution at Canadian trade shows

Tracking: The SMCTA will determine the effectiveness by tracking:

of new advertisers

of total advertisers

of pages sold in theme based sections

of total pages

and type of distribution

of visitors to the web site indicating that the magazine drove them to it

of downloads of magazine from web site

Responses to web based evaluation:

Ease of use and usefulness of the magazine in generating and/or supporting new or return visits to the region;

Extending or increasing length of stay due to suggested regional itineraries;

Likelihood of a return visit within 1 year; season of visit.

Target Market: While the fulfillment piece is significantly distributed to the potential drive market visitor, it is also used to fulfill requests for information on the South Coast received by the OT and the SMCTA directly.

Additionally, with the new theme based sections, the piece is designed to appeal to hobbyists and enthusiasts in specific areas such as golf, arts, etc.

The magazine isn't geared specifically toward visitors with or without children, but is designed in such a way to appeal to both.

Rationale: This fulfillment piece directly impacts goals 2 & 3 of the organization: increasing travel to the region, particularly during the shoulder seasons, and increasing the length of stay by suggesting regional itineraries that encourage intra-region travel.

The magazine will include editorial and graphics to encourage spring and fall visits, along with a calendar of events that highlights those seasons. Additionally, with expanded "what to do while you are here" sections, there will be an opportunity to illustrate the diversity of activities in this region and invite visitors to add a day or two to their trip to take it all in.

Advertisers in the magazine appreciate the direct to consumer advertising focusing on the Southern Maine Coast and find it a value add to their purchase of ad space through the SMCTA in Maine Invites You.

Individuals receiving the magazine have an opportunity to see a beautiful depiction of our region, along with practical ideas for travelling here.

Finally, the sale of space in the magazine generates revenue that the SMCTA is then able to reinvest in further distribution of the piece and other marketing projects including the possible expansion of trade show participation, increased PR, and the Southern Maine Coast Annual Tourism Summit and.

Partners: Anticipated partners on this project include:

SMCTA member chambers

Local lodging and restaurants

Local recreational/activity associations

Budget Description: The budget amounts below include the development, printing and distribution of the Southern Maine Coast Tourism fulfillment piece. The MTMPP award will be used to design the piece post Maine Invites You (\$2,500) and will cover printing costs for up to 36 pages (\$32,000). Additionally MTMPP funds will be used for distribution by CTM Brochure Display throughout the NY/CT/NJ area through their hotel and visitors program (\$12,000).

The cash match is based on the design of the original Maine Invites You advertisement (\$3,500), and the number of pages sold in the new theme sections, for which printing is not included in the MTMPP award (\$4,000). The cash match also includes the cost of distribution at trade shows in Canada, PA, MA and RI (\$6,500).

In-kind match includes time devoted by the SMCTA board and staff to oversee the development of the piece (\$5,000) and participation in trade show and other distribution (\$5,500).

MTMPP Award: \$46,500.00

Cash Match: \$14,000.00

In-Kind Match: \$10,500.00

Project 2: Statewide PSAs

Project Type: Advertising

Description: The SMCTA will partner with the Maine Tourism Commission again this year to support a tourism advocacy and in-state tourism promotion developed by the Maine Tourism Commission. This is a statewide initiative that includes partnership from all funded regions.

This television based ad campaign includes a series of PSAs and paid advertisements that were designed by Warren, Kremer, Paino. The first series of ads describe the tourism industry and its importance to the Maine economy and the second set encourages intra-state tourism.

Element 2: Cooperative purchase of television air time

Project: Statewide PSAs

Element Description: This series of PSAs and paid advertisements have been developed to increase intrastate tourism and to educate residents, community leaders and policy makers as to the benefit of tourism for the Maine economy.

Timeline: Spring 2006-PSAs and paid advertisements air on statewide television media outlets.

Tracking: The SMCTA will rely on the Maine Tourism Commission to provide an evaluation of the program and its ability to achieve targeted goals.

Target Market: The target audience for this series of ads are Maine residents, community leaders and policy makers.

One series of ads encourages Maine residents to vacation in other areas of the state and enjoy what's "right in their back yard".

The second series of ads focus on educating residents, community leaders and policy makers as to the economic benefits of tourism for the state, generating a better understanding and support of investing in a stronger tourism industry.

Rationale: As is described in the previous section, Goal #1, focuses on educating stakeholders as to the benefit of tourism to our region. These television advertisements allow the SMCTA to capitalize on an existing project to do just that.

In addition, the SMCTA has emphasized reaching the drive market through many of its advertising campaigns, of which visitors from the northern and western parts of the state are. The diversity of environments around the state provides a unique opportunity to enjoy a vacation experience without ever leaving the state.

Media Type: Television

Co-op Opportunity: (No Response)

Budget Description: \$10,000 as a regional contribution from the Southern Maine Coast. The cash match is comprised of 1/8th of the cost of the project being subsidized by the Office of Tourism.

MTMPP Award: \$10,000.00

Cash Match: \$2,500.00

In-Kind Match: \$1.00

Project 3: Web site updates and enhancements

Project Type: Website Development

Description: Funds are being requested this year to keep the SMCTA web site fresh and to take advantage of emerging marketing opportunities for it and through it. This will include special, web-driven promotions, ongoing keyword advertising, and periodically updating the graphics and text to reflect and promote the changing seasons.

Element 3: Design and updates

Project: Web site updates and enhancements

Element Description: The SMCTA is currently exploring a variety of new ways to utilize our web site to encourage new and return visits to the region, particularly during the shoulder seasons.

Strategies include changing graphics to promote spring and fall travel, highlights of upcoming events, and suggested intra-region itineraries.

Other potential strategies geared toward improving the usefulness of the site might include development of a package program, overnight giveaways, and an expanded hot link program. The site can also be a vehicle for educating and informing the consumer and other stakeholders on tourism related issues.

In addition to improving the functionality, look and usefulness of the site, the SMCTA will market the site more aggressively including the placement of a full page ad in the fulfillment piece dedicated toward driving traffic to the site, increasing the visibility of the web address on all our printed materials, and pursuing additional reciprocal link opportunities.

Timeline: July 2005: Meet with web master to finalize updates and schedule of updates (a new timeline will be submitted to the OT when a final version of 2005/2006 web updates is complete).

Tracking: Responses from web based questionnaire (type of trip, length of stay, purpose of trip, items of interest, use of website)

web hits

unique site visits

Country of origin of web site visitor

Peak time and days of visits

Referring search engines

Keywords

Target Market: The target audience visiting the SMCTA web site are potential new and returning visitors to Maine, or specifically to the Southern Maine Coast.

While there is a great deal of emphasis on the drive market as it relates to our fulfillment piece, the SMCTA recognizes that the web site offers a virtual tour of the region from any part of the world, by anyone in the world.

Additionally, the SMCTA wants to ensure that the site holds benefit for our members and advertisers, so soliciting input from local tourism representatives and businesses is an important value for us.

Rationale: As stated above, the web site offers a unique opportunity to engage anyone with a computer anywhere. Success of the web site is grounded in two things: A useful, rich, easy to navigate site and the awareness of the existence of the site. This proposed project element includes improving both of those things.

The SMCTA web site also allows us an opportunity to effect each of our stated goals (increasing education and awareness of the benefits and challenges of tourism; increasing travel during the shoulder seasons; and increasing length of stay) with one medium.

Budget Description: The MTMPP award amount will be used to contract with the SMCTA web designer, Winter Island Digital to make initial improvements and to complete a schedule of rotating updates throughout the year (\$2500). Additionally, funding will be used to purchase key word advertising (\$1000).

Cash match includes the annual hosting contract (\$1500).

The in-kind match includes the time of the SMCTA web committee given to plan for and oversee implementation (\$1500)

MTMPP Award: \$3,500.00
Cash Match: \$1,500.00
In-Kind Match: \$1,500.00

Project Quick Reference

| | <u>MTMPP Award</u> | <u>Cash Match</u> | <u>In-Kind Match</u> |
|---|--------------------|-------------------|----------------------|
| Southern Maine Coast Fulfillment Piece | | | |
| Development of a 40-44 page color catalogue | \$46,500.00 | \$14,000.00 | \$10,500.00 |
| Statewide PSAs | | | |
| Cooperative purchase of television air time | \$10,000.00 | \$2,500.00 | \$1.00 |
| Web site updates and enhancements | | | |
| Design and updates | \$3,500.00 | \$1,500.00 | \$1,500.00 |

Budget Summary

| | |
|-------------------------------|-------------|
| Proposed MTMPP Award: | \$60,000.00 |
| Administrative Costs: | \$15,000.00 |
| Cash Match: | \$18,000.00 |
| In-Kind Match: | \$12,001.00 |
| Total Match: | \$30,001.00 |
| Total Proposed Budget: | \$90,001.00 |