

Collaboration Creates Attractive Communities— for Both Residents and Visitors

KEY TAKEAWAY

Investing in the improvement of a destination makes it more attractive to visitors, but also to talent. What may begin as an effort to bolster the livability of a place can turn into a travel boom that offsets costs and creates an unexpected tourism economy with lasting value.

Communities that invest in creating a place where people want to spend their time—whether it be for a weekend, a semester or a lifetime—will gain long-term dividends. Meaningful economic development that leads to attracting businesses, talent and visitors requires cooperative partnerships with all stakeholders in an area: lawmakers, public officials, city planners; the business community; chambers of commerce; and tourism offices or destination marketing organizations. The diversity of the American landscape, cultures and heritages provide the preexisting infrastructure to build on and promote, but every community leader must do their part to shape and share their story.

The ability to attract and retain a skilled workforce remains a top factor in business location decisions, particularly in a tight labor market. **Attractive job opportunities capture talent's attention, but travel is the first step in shaping perception.** No matter how strong a reputation an organization or community has, few people would move to a new location without visiting or experiencing it firsthand.¹²

According to a recent Development Counsellors International (DCI) survey of 1,000 working-age individuals to understand how talent assess new job opportunities and relocation decisions, **more than three-quarters (76%) of employed Americans indicated that firsthand experience was instrumental in forming impressions of a community**—higher than any other sources including internet research, social media, rankings or word-of-mouth.¹³

DMOs need to expand their roles within cities or destinations, and position themselves as the stewards and managers of the city's brand—not only for tourism, but for talent attraction and investment as well. No other organization in a destination has the funding or expertise to do it, and by assuming that role, a DMO can expand its value proposition to the community it serves.”

– Chris Fair, president, Resonance Consultancy and author of ‘America's Best Cities’ report

CASE STUDY

PHOTO CREDIT: CINCINNATI



Cincinnati: Polishing the Queen City's Jewels

Just a few blocks from Cincinnati's city-center is the Over-the-Rhine neighborhood. Today, it is known for its breweries steeped in the neighborhood's German culture, its performance venues like the historic Music Hall that swans over Washington Park and neighborhood centers like Findlay Market.

Just 17 years ago, the picture was starkly different. In 2001, race riots rocked the city of Cincinnati. The aftermath informed a long, slow decline that put the city in crisis.

That was not to be the end of the city's story. What has followed has been nothing short of a total renaissance that has brought vibrancy, community, culture—and, yes, tourism—to a place that had been all but forgotten.

Cincinnati is home to nine Fortune 500 companies, including Kroger, Procter & Gamble (P&G), GE Aviation and Macy's. But without an attractive downtown where employees could live and work, the leaders of Cincinnati's business community worried about their talent pool and longevity in the area.

In 2002, then-Mayor Charlie Luken paved the way for the establishment of a nonprofit corporation that had the capacity to deliver efficient, effective change. He recruited P&G's then-CEO, A.G. Lafley, as chairman, a position Lafley only accepted after getting assurances that the city had the political will to endure a long and difficult process. "This wasn't going to take a year or two, but a decade or more," Lafley shared with



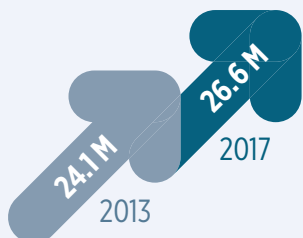
CASE STUDY

Cincinnati: Polishing the Queen City's Jewels

Politico Magazine. “And it was going to require all of the assets and resources of the city coming together, setting aside all their separate agendas, and agreeing to support a clear strategy and set of goals.”¹⁴

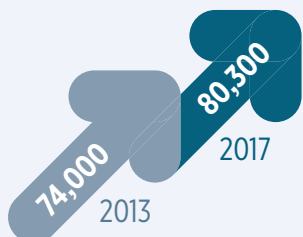
Corporate leaders founded the Cincinnati City Center Development Corporation (3CDC), backed by an \$80 million fund.¹⁵ That funding, combined with federal support through New Market Tax Credits, spurred dramatic changes.

CINCINNATI VISITORS



From overhauling Fountain Square, the city's center, to a block-by-block revitalization of Over-the-Rhine, Cincinnati started on a path that few could have predicted. Area natives have been lured back to become part of the city's new chapter. Chef Ryan Santos, who had gone to restaurants from Chicago to Copenhagen, told *Chicago Tribune*, “There wasn't anything to stick around for [10 years ago]. Now the changes are so significant, I wanted to be a part of this.”¹⁶

CINCINNATI TOURISM JOBS



The significant changes have paid off. Cincinnati recently landed on *New York Times*' “52 Places to Go in 2018”¹⁷ and Lonely Planet's “2018 Best in the U.S.” lists.¹⁸

Attracting talent also attracts tourists. In just five years, the region went from hosting 24.1 million visitors to a record 26.6 million visitors in 2017. The visitor growth also resulted in job growth, as tourism jobs grew to 80,300 in 2017, up from 74,000 in 2013.¹⁹

Tourism is a welcome growth area for the economy. Tax revenues from tourism brought in \$1.2 billion in 2017, offsetting the tax burden by \$653 a year for every household in the Greater Cincinnati region.

Interestingly, 3CDC reports its total investment in the city since 2004 is \$1.3 billion.²⁰ **The tax revenue from visitors nearly offsets that amount in a single year.**

The city is seizing its moment and planning for a future that includes tourism as a centerpiece. There is a planned \$135 million expansion of its convention center,²¹ new transatlantic service from WOW Air,²² and the announcement that FC Cincinnati would become the 26th Major League Soccer (MLS) team.²³

For all the investments in what sound like tourist attractions, the plan in Cincinnati was never about tourism. From its beginnings, the goal was to create a place that would be attractive to live and work so that the companies in the area would have a strong talent pool. But through smart coordination among the city's stakeholders, including destination marketers, the growth in visitors created an economic boon that helped offset development costs and outpaced expectations.

Destination Marketers are Economic Developers

KEY TAKEAWAY

Quality of life is increasingly important to relocation decisions. Destination marketing organizations are skilled storytellers that can empower and enliven efforts to entice businesses to headquarter or grow in an area.

Destination marketing organizations, state tourism offices and convention and visitors bureaus are charged with growing travel, but often do much more than promotion. They are marketers who tell the story of a community and what it has to offer, painting a picture of why a place is somewhere worth stopping by—or staying a while.

With a presently low national unemployment rate, employees have more leverage in deciding not only who to work for, but also *where* they want to live. Beyond the standard tax incentives, low crime rates and educational opportunities, economic development organizations are realizing they need to demonstrate quality of life through unique cultural, dining and recreational offerings.

Who better to tell that side of a community than destination marketing professionals?

Destination marketers no longer market only to tourists, but shape the area's image, making them not just promoters but managers of their destination. When done well, their work can develop economies and improve communities for visitors, current and prospective residents alike.

Destination promotion serves a true catalyst for economic development. It builds awareness, creates familiarity and grows relationships in networks that are critical for the success and expansion of businesses in the region. The tourism economy not only generates taxes and creates jobs, but tourism promotion propels economic growth by sustaining the things we love and need—from the basic infrastructure of roads and buildings to great restaurants and shops, outdoor recreation and the arts. This directly impacts and improves the quality of life of local residents.”

– Paige Alost, executive director, Athens County Convention and Visitors Bureau²⁴

CASE STUDY



Marketing a Destination to Amazon

Amazon's announcement of a second headquarters ("HQ2") spurred action in cities across North America. With the promise of up to 50,000 jobs, with an average salary of \$100,000, at one of the world's fastest-growing companies, economic developers, chambers of commerce, city councils and other agencies clamored to attract Amazon's HQ2 to their city.

One of Amazon's six decision drivers is finding a "community where employees will enjoy living with recreational and educational opportunities."²⁵ As suitor locations scrambled to woo the tech giant, destination marketing organizations highlighted how their value extends to attracting businesses, not just tourists.

Kansas City Gets in the Game

While not one of Amazon's top 20 candidates, Visit KC, Kansas City's economic development organization dedicated to tourism, provided marketing support to sell the city as part of their bid for Amazon's HQ2.

Partnering with the Kansas City Area Development Council (KCADC), Visit KC took the lead on providing consistent messaging and visuals to demonstrate what makes Kansas City unique.

Amazon aside, Visit KC has a successful track record highlighting the positive lifestyle Kansas City offers to visitors, residents and its potential workforce. Major corporations headquartered in the area—including H&R Block, Garmin International and Hallmark Cards—work with Visit KC to provide support for their recruitment efforts.



PHOTO CREDIT: VISIT KC



PHOTO CREDIT: VISIT KC

CASE STUDY

Marketing a Destination to Amazon

Philadelphia Makes a Bid

Both the Philadelphia Convention & Visitors Bureau (PHLCVB) and Visit Philadelphia shared resources and expertise to illustrate the city's attractiveness in the city's Amazon HQ2 bid.²⁶ **According to PHLCVB's Chief Administration Officer Angela Val, "Having marketing organizations involved infused soul into the process—helping tell the story and bring it to life."**

The city's DMOs contributed their marketing and social media support to bring the PHILADELPHIA DELIVERS website to life.²⁷ The efforts paid off as the city made it to Amazon's shortlist of candidates for HQ2. Originally created to sell Philadelphia to Amazon, the city is continuing to leverage the website and its content for future business recruitment efforts.



Visit Philadelphia contributed to the overall effort of HQ2, with specific emphasis on establishing Philadelphia as a place to live, work and play, by applying work in image building for Philadelphia through advertising and social media to those living in Seattle and working for Amazon.

– Meryl Levitz, president and CEO, VISIT PHILADELPHIA

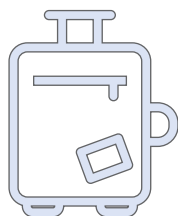
Participating in the Amazon bid process helped us uncover a new narrative for Philadelphia. As the primary sales and marketing arm for the PA Convention Center and the organization charged with positioning Philadelphia globally, we are always looking for creative ways to tell Philadelphia's story. The Amazon bid process enabled us to do that while also connecting us to new partners that can assist us in positioning Philadelphia as a premier U.S. destination."

– Julie Coker Graham, president and CEO, PHLCVB²⁸

Destinations Create a Sense of Place and Pride for Residents

KEY TAKEAWAY

The residents of a community are at heart the decision-makers--their opinions matter. Residents who take pride in their community are valuable advocates for its storytelling, serving as a trusted resource to friends and family and other potential visitors.



54% of leisure travel
is to visit friends and relatives

63% of first-hand visits
to friends and relatives
influenced impressions
of a destination for
college graduates

Residents can be champions of a destination or detractors if they do not see the value in increasing visitor demand. **As tourism demand continues to increase, destination marketing organizations have the added responsibility of engaging with and creating advocates with local residents as well.**

More than half (54%) of leisure travel is to visit friends and family.²⁹ When residents take pride in where they live, they can promote their community and what makes it unique to their loved ones. Friends and relatives are often a key resource when planning a trip. Not only do family and friends influence travel planning decisions, close to two-thirds (63%) of recent college graduates indicated their impressions of a destination were formed as a result of first-hand visits to friends and relatives.³⁰ As the next generation chooses their careers and where they want to start the next phase of their lives, perceptions and image of a location are on their short list.

Research shows that **residents of a destination are critical resources for those planning a trip** and play an even greater role in creating a truly authentic experience throughout the visitor's journey. The interactions our residents have with travelers **significantly help to change the perception of Cleveland and create unforgettable experiences** that contribute to visitors' decisions to come back."

– David Gilbert, president and CEO, Destination Cleveland

CASE STUDY


 NEW ORLEANS
& COMPANY


 NYC
& Company
nycgo.com


 Wyoming
Office of Tourism

Three Ways to Build Pride

NYC & Company Markets the Stay-cation

NYC & Company leveraged New York City residents for its long-running *See Your City* campaign. At the campaign's launch, Fred Dixon, president and CEO of NYC & Company, said,

"We want to give New Yorkers a new perspective on the five boroughs. Start thinking of the more than 250 New York City neighborhoods as 250 opportunities to travel."³²

Nearly four years since the launch, *See Your City* has curated content from locals that is available to visitors who want to live like a local during their visit, and created appreciation for the travel industry—even if the idea of traveling only requires a ride on the subway.

As storytellers focused on promotion that will attract new and diverse visitors—and keep them coming back to experience more—destination marketing organizations can find new ways to help residents be proud of where they live.

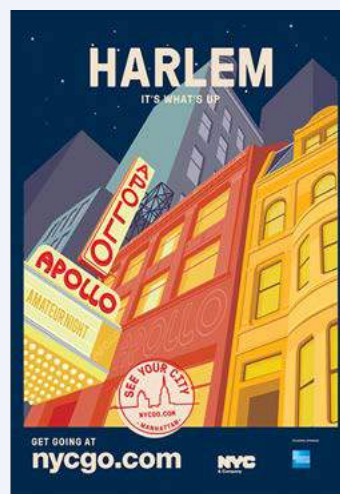
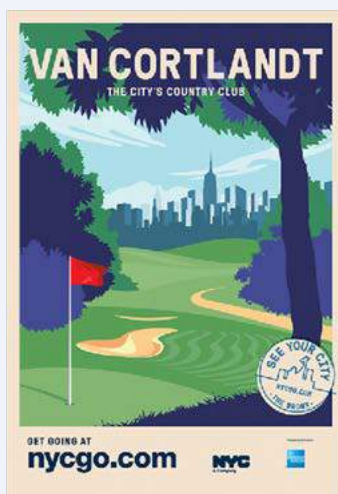


PHOTO CREDITS: NYC & COMPANY

CASE STUDY

Three Ways to Build Pride

New Orleans & Company Captures the Spirit of the City

As New Orleans' largest employer, tourism generates billions of dollars in tax revenues for the local economy. **The refreshed tourism campaign from New Orleans & Company is raising awareness among city residents that while visitors may come and go, their dollars stay—and ripple through the community** to fund city services, police, schools, salaries, and ultimately, improve the quality of life for every New Orleanais.

New Orleans & Company will focus on ensuring that tourism benefits all residents as it continues to drive business to tourism stakeholders and provide a world-class destination for visitors. By connecting employment seekers to career opportunities and other workforce initiatives, New Orleans & Company is focused on new ways to support its residents by providing training, support and pathways forward.

We believe that our culture is our greatest strength and the people of New Orleans create that culture. As New Orleans & Company, we are committed to ensuring that our industry benefits all residents of our city and nourishes and sustains the culture that attracts millions of visitors each year and improves the quality of life for all of us who call New Orleans home.”

– Stephen Perry, president and CEO,
New Orleans & Company³³



PHOTO CREDITS: NEW ORLEANS & COMPANY

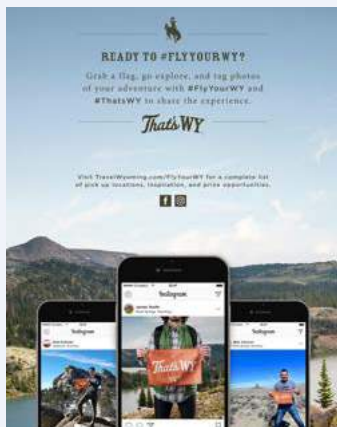
CASE STUDY

Three Ways to Build Pride

Wyoming Office of Tourism Promotes WY Pride

Developed to diversify visitation across the state, the Fly Your WY program encourages visitors to see more of the state than the most popular Wyoming highlights by inspiring residents to promote travel in their local communities. **Designed to be shared in travel photos and through social media, 500 bright orange 'That's WY' flags were distributed to the state's 23 counties on March 7, 2018.** The day was coined 3.07 Day after the only area code in the state. Residents and local businesses celebrated their state pride and flooded social media with photos and videos showing off the Cowboy State with language that focused on 307, as well as the #FlyYourWY campaign.

Leading up to the summer travel season, the Wyoming Office of Tourism partnered with the Wyoming Division of State Parks and Historic Sites to distribute 'That's WY' flags at 20 state parks and historic sites throughout the state.



Wyoming's 'Fly Your WY' campaign will run through the summer of 2018. There have already been nearly 9,000 page views on the campaign website and over 700 page views from industry partners seeking additional details on how to get

involved since the launch earlier this spring. On Instagram, there are more than 1,000 posts using the #FlyYourWY hashtag.

Wyoming is home to some of the most beautiful places in the country and the #FlyYourWY promotion encourages folks to show off all that is wonderful about Wyoming, from our iconic attractions to our small-town gems."

– Kristin Dialessi, brand integration senior manager, Wyoming Office of Tourism³⁴

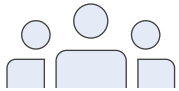
Destination Marketers are Small Business Champions

KEY TAKEAWAY

Small businesses make a destination unique, vibrant and more attractive to visitors. Not only is travel a significant part of the small business community, travel promotion can stimulate small business growth by generating visitor demand.

Small business is critical to the U.S. economy. According to the Small Business Administration, companies that employ under 500 workers account for 99.7 percent of firms with paid employees and contribute to nearly half (48%) of the total private-sector workforce.³⁵ **In addition, small businesses are the primary force for job creation. From 1992 to 2016, small businesses generated 62 percent of all new jobs in the U.S.**³⁶

The top small-business employer in the United States is the travel-dependent leisure and hospitality sector.



Small businesses in leisure and hospitality employ

8.8 million workers

which account for 15.4 percent of private-sector small business employment in the country

While small businesses account for 48 percent of the overall private-sector workforce, they account for 61 percent of workers in leisure and hospitality.³⁷ Small businesses in leisure and hospitality employ 8.8 million workers, which account for 15 percent of private-sector small-business employment in the country—more than any other industry.³⁸

This extends across America: leisure and hospitality is the top small-business employer in 23 states, and second in the remaining 27 states.



CASE STUDY



Virginia is for Small Business

In Virginia, half of the state's private workforce is employed by a small business.

Among the 20,000 leisure and hospitality establishments, two-thirds are businesses with fewer than 20 employees.

The Hardywood Park Craft Brewery Effect

Nestled in an industrial neighborhood of Richmond, the Hardywood Park Craft Brewery has played a pivotal role in the boom of craft beer in Virginia. Founded in 2011 with three employees, Hardywood now employs 80 people. The brewery recently expanded into Charlottesville, VA and is investing in a new \$28 million brewing facility and beer campus that will bring **60 new jobs to rural Goochland, VA**.³⁹

Their original location receives 150,000 patrons annually and they expect to hit 250,000 in their new facility. The brewery estimates that 20 percent of visitors are from out of state—boosting the local economy with new travel spending, jobs and tax revenues.⁴⁰ The now 200+ breweries in Virginia have an estimated \$9 billion economic impact for the Commonwealth.⁴¹



Hardywood Park Craft Brewery estimates that **20% of visitors are from out of state**—boosting the local economy with new travel spending, jobs and tax revenues.

Luray Caverns Lures New Visitors

Page County, home to Luray, benefited from \$67 million in visitor spending and nearly \$6 million in state and local tax revenues in 2016.⁴²

Discovered in the Shenandoah Valley, more than 100 years ago, Luray Caverns are the largest caverns in the eastern United States. The first illumination for visitors was held in 1878 with just two employees. Luray Caverns has been open every day since and now employs 250 full-time and seasonal employees. In 2017, more than 500,000 visitors experienced Luray Caverns, and it is now designated a National Natural Landmark and the fourth most visited attraction in Virginia.

Virginia Tourism Corporation supports the creation of new tourism businesses, entrepreneurs and job creation, finding unique ways to market small businesses as an integral part of a visitor experience. **The organization advocates on behalf of small businesses on Capitol Hill, citing the economic opportunity for small businesses in the travel and tourism industry.**

Destination Marketers Build Bridges to Rural Communities

KEY TAKEAWAY

Destination marketing organizations are champions of rural regions, shining a spotlight on places that may be otherwise overlooked by visitors and invigorating economies of underserved areas.

Many state tourism organizations utilize marketing funds to assist in the promotion and development of rural communities that may not otherwise have stable revenue sources or ample employment opportunities otherwise. **Rural communities can benefit immediately from an increase in travel and tourism, which capitalizes on existing infrastructure, resources and people rather than new investment.** Even local businesses not directly related to tourism such as gas stations, grocery stores and other retail establishments can see immediate results to their bottom line with increased visitation and spending.

Investing in rural tourism development can also help alleviate areas concerned with “overtourism” by providing alternative travel experiences and dispersing visitors across the state.

Destination development programs are increasingly being implemented to develop and promote attractive, unique tourism assets in lesser known, more rural areas.



CASE STUDY

PHOTO CREDITS: UTAH OFFICE OF TOURISM



Utah Invests in “Rourism”

The overall Utah economy is roaring. Real GDP growth was up nearly 18 percent over the last five years, compared to 10.5 percent nationally.⁴³ Utah is home to the second highest share of federally owned land in the U.S. with two-thirds of land in Utah publicly-owned.⁴⁴ After the oil and gas extraction boom dissipated, many of these rural economies did not have economic alternatives, and while the large metropolitan cities have been booming, there is a “silent recession” in more rural areas of the state.

Tourism is particularly important to Utah’s less populated counties where public land and outdoor recreation opportunities are plentiful.⁴⁵ **In rural counties, 12 percent of private sector jobs are directly supported by tourism**, compared to five percent in urban areas of the state.⁴⁶ **Local tourism-related sales tax revenue made up more than 75 percent of total local sales tax revenue in four rural Utah counties.**⁴⁷

The Utah Office of Tourism supports rural areas of the state through their “Utah Rourism” initiative. With a mission to aid rural areas in economic development efforts, improve the visitor experience, enhance recreation opportunities, and increase support services, capacity and extend busy seasons, “Utah Rourism” has stimulated many rural communities throughout the state.

Originally starting with four pilot communities, the state tourism office provided \$75,000 in matching funds to assist with destination development. In 2017, nearly \$2.5 million in tourism development and marketing funds were awarded to rural counties to assist with destination development, branding and promotion, training and enhancing recreation and support services to provide an improved visitor experience.

The state tourism office is now working with nearly 20 rural communities. The program’s success has caught the eye of Governor Gary Herbert, prompting him to focus on aggressive job growth in this region.⁴⁸

In rural counties, **12% of private sector jobs** are directly supported by tourism.

Local tourism-related sales tax revenue made up more than **75%** of total local sales tax revenue in four rural Utah counties.

Outdoor recreation is indispensable in increasing economic opportunity in more rural areas of the state. We have set a statewide goal of creating 25,000 jobs in the 25 counties off the Wasatch Front by 2020—and a growing outdoor recreation economy will play a key part in reaching that goal.

- Utah Governor Gary Herbert⁴⁹

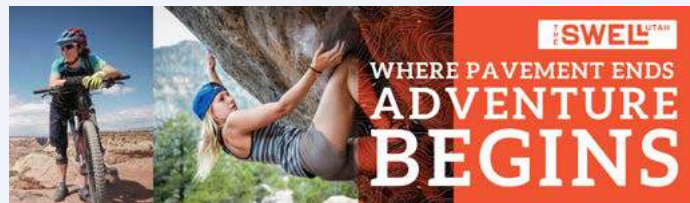
CASE STUDY

Utah Invests in “Rourism”

“Utah Rourism” investments have improved the visitor experience in a variety of communities across the state. Logan, UT is adding wayfinding signage and provided matching funds for downtown businesses to improve sidewalks, planters and other elements to create a more positive first impression for visitors. As a basecamp for the iconic Zion, Bryce and Grand Canyons, Kanab, UT is focusing on promoting the community as a world-class hiking destination. Investments to improve the visitor experience include trail development and enhanced signage to local trails, as well as private sector outreach to extend the local businesses hours and offerings.



Emery County launched a marketing campaign to increase awareness about the San Rafael Swell. **Tourists are discovering the area, leading to business growth and increased revenue infused into the local economy.** The county has seen an increase in business opportunities ranging from locally managed Airbnb properties to new restaurants and service industry businesses.⁵⁰ For local resident Brett White, who opened Castle Valley Small Engine, it was simply a matter of seeing a need and doing something about it. There was not a place where off-road riders could get their four-wheelers repaired, so he opened one. “People come out to explore the trails, and they usually bring their own machines. In the past if something broke down, the nearest shop was nearly 45 miles away.”⁵¹



Emery County’s goal is to not only raise awareness amongst tourists, but also to highlight business opportunities in the surrounding cities and towns.⁵² Emery County is promoting the affordability, quality of life and economic development programming that is attractive to entrepreneurs and business investors. The county understands that the key to prosperity is diversification of businesses, services and amenities and is actively working to attract each.⁵³



PHOTO CREDITS: UTAH OFFICE OF TOURISM

CASE STUDY

PHOTO CREDITS: COLORADO HISTORIC HOT SPRINGS LOOP



CRAFTing Opportunities for Rural Colorado

Founded in 2018, the Colorado Rural Academy for Tourism (CRAFT) provides support and education for rural communities on how to build tourism into an economic development strategy. The Colorado Tourism Office then leverages their marketing expertise and partnerships to promote new or enhanced traveler experiences in the areas.

The CRAFT program recently worked with two rural communities to develop their tourism strategy. In Trinidad, CO, CRAFT Studio 101 and the Colorado Tourism Office brought together a diverse group of stakeholders to learn about key tourism topics and trends and the potential of tourism as a local economic driver in their community. Now Trinidad stakeholders speak with a unified voice and from a shared vision in regard to their current tourism inventory and potential future tourism productions. Together, they developed a new marketing campaign to promote the area.

Coupled with the CRAFT program, the Colorado Tourism Office Marketing Matching Grant Program provides funding to nonprofit organizations to promote less visited regions across the state as tourism destinations. **In 2017, the state invested \$600,000 through marketing matching grant programs.** Travel regions throughout the state are eligible for these grant dollars, as well as statewide associations, organizations and other nonprofit entities that engage in promoting travel throughout Colorado.

A recipient of the marketing matching grant award, the Pagosa Springs Town Tourism Committee utilized \$25,000 in matching funds to develop the widely successful Colorado Historic Hot Springs Loop. Through a partnership with five resort destinations, the campaign encouraged travelers to explore attractions along a scenic 720-mile route featuring 19 thermal mineral water attractions.



CASE STUDY

CRAFTing Opportunities for Rural Colorado

The state tourism office pitched the appealing hot spring visitor experience to top news outlets across the U.S. and generated an incredible amount of earned media. **In just two years, the loop garnered more than 150 news articles and editorials in top publications** from *USA Today*, *The Washington Post*, *National Geographic Traveler* and *Sunset Magazine*.

The campaign resulted in a significant increase in awareness of the hot springs, increased visitation, extended length of stays and record tax revenues for the five resort towns in western Colorado.⁵⁴



PHOTO CREDITS: COLORADO HISTORIC HOT SPRINGS LOOP

CASE STUDY


 South Carolina
Just right.

Discovering Undiscovered South Carolina

The Undiscovered South Carolina grant program is designed to assist communities develop publicly owned tourism products and attractions to encourage visitation to lesser known areas of South Carolina and stimulate their economies.⁵⁵ As a one-to-one matching program between the state and local government, the program requires financial support from the local government.

Travelers to South Carolina spent \$21.2 billion in 2016—up 5 percent from the prior year. This spending supports one in every 10 jobs in the state and generated \$1.6 billion in state and local taxes.

The state tourism director, Duane Parrish, credits the Undiscovered South Carolina marketing initiative for continuing to grow the travel industry across the state.

Since 2014, the South Carolina Office of Tourism invested \$1.6 million in nine projects across the state, supporting local jobs and generating tax revenues in rural communities.

Rich with history but beginning to deteriorate, the Historic Garvin-Garvey House in Bluffton, SC is the oldest home built by a freed slave on the May River. An investment of \$200,000 from the Undiscovered South Carolina grant program allowed the major rehabilitation project to move forward much more quickly than initially planned. In less than one year, the Garvin-Garvey House was preserved and will stand as a lasting legacy in the community.⁵⁶



PHOTO CREDITS: SOUTH CAROLINA OFFICE OF TOURISM

Destinations are Crisis Managers

KEY TAKEAWAY

Destination marketers are unexpected—but critical—resources during a crisis situation. During a crisis, DMOs, CVBs or tourism offices often serve as a source of credible information for both visitors and residents. During recovery, destination marketers are also uniquely positioned to get the word out that an area is open for business.

Destination marketers are taking on new responsibilities as crisis managers, serving as sources of information and helping with the rebuilding process of a community. With growing social media presence and engagement from both visitors and residents, destinations' communication channels are often utilized to share timely and official information from city leaders. Routinely, these channels provide travel advisory pages and updates on road and airport closures, emergency information and safety shelters.

Destination marketers are essential to recovery after a crisis.

Serving as a trusted resource for the public to learn when an area is open for business again, destination marketers are uniquely positioned to revive the economy by promoting the destination and getting visitors to return faster—the visitors that will generate tax revenues necessary for rebuilding.



CASE STUDY

PHOTO CREDIT: TEXAS TOURISM



Destinations Weather Hurricane Recovery

Texas Tourism and VISIT FLORIDA Play a Part in Hurricane Preparation and Recovery

As their state's official tourism marketing entity, Texas Tourism and VISIT FLORIDA play a vital role in each state's crisis response and recovery efforts. From ensuring visitors have the information they need to make informed travel planning decisions that will help them keep safe, to providing resources to tourism industry businesses looking for leadership and assistance, to serving as a conduit for information between state officials and local businesses, state tourism offices have proven to be pivotal crisis managers when emergencies arise.

In response to the landfall of Hurricane Irma and Harvey in the late-summer of 2017, the state tourism offices in Florida and Texas activated Travel advisory pages on consumer-facing websites. The tourism offices effectively provided weather alerts and official resources to assist visitors with making the most informed travel planning decisions possible. Throughout the hurricanes, the web pages were regularly updated to provide the latest official information on evacuation notices, curfews, traffic updates, power outages, gas availability and other timely resources travelers needed.



Quickly activating existing partnerships with Expedia and Airbnb, VISIT FLORIDA utilized multiple channels to share real-time information on accommodations available for displaced visitors and residents.

CASE STUDY

Destinations Weather Hurricane Recovery

VISIT FLORIDA also transitioned four of its Florida Welcome Centers, located at major access points, into emergency information centers, offering the latest intelligence on evacuation notices, accommodations, gas availability and road closures, as well as providing a much-needed respite for travelers.



When Hurricane Harvey, the second most costly hurricane to hit the U.S. mainland in over 100 years hit, **Texas Tourism coordinated a response with other state agencies, including the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department and the Texas Department of Transportation.** Texas Tourism was a reliable source of information educating both visitors and residents on the impact of the hurricane.

With targeted investments in additional advertising, promotional videos, media tours and familiarization trips, the state tourism offices played an active and important role in post-hurricane recovery to the hardest hit areas. The state tourism offices also worked to inform visitors that the vast majority of Texas and Florida destinations remained open for business.

Proactive media pitching and social media content highlighted the areas impacted by the storms and documented recovery progress, ultimately communicating when they were ready for tourists once again.

As a result of the support and investments in ongoing promotional campaigns from the state tourism office, many of the Texas Gulf Coast destinations enjoyed a record-breaking spring break season in 2018.



CASE STUDY

PHOTO CREDIT: OUTER BANKS VISITORS BUREAU

The Outer Banks®
OF NORTH CAROLINA
outerbanks.org

Hatteras is On: Outer Banks Power Outage

In July 2017, an eight-day power outage caused by construction drilling during the height of summer tourist season affected two islands of the Outer Banks.⁵⁷

A state of emergency and mandatory evacuation was ordered for 50,000 residents and visitors on Hatteras and Ocracoke Islands in North Carolina.⁵⁸

While national and regional media reported the incident as the “Outer Banks Power Outage,” indicating the entire vacation destination was inaccessible, the reality was only two islands, comprising 25 percent of the region, were part of the emergency.⁵⁹ The Outer Banks Visitors Bureau quickly mobilized to correct the story and inform the public that the outage was a localized event and the majority of the destination was unaffected.

The Outer Banks Visitors Bureau collaborated closely with local emergency management agencies and electricity companies to provide regular updates to the community throughout the event.⁶⁰



Production of a promotional video, “Hatteras is On,” was **viewed more than 600,000 times** and seen by nearly 7,000 Instagram users.⁶¹

Capitalizing on its reach, access to key businesses and creative talent, the visitors bureau took the lead announcing when Hatteras and Ocracoke Islands would reopen. Production of a promotional video, “Hatteras is On,” was instrumental in welcoming visitors back and supporting the tourism industry in the weeks following the outage. Viewed more than 600,000 times and seen by nearly 7,000 Instagram users, the video was one of the visitors bureau’s most popular posts ever.⁶¹ **While August 2017 revenues were down compared to previous years, business quickly bounced back and Hatteras and Ocracoke Islands experienced large gains between September and December resulting in positive numbers for the full calendar year.⁶²**

By effectively coordinating messaging with key agencies, maintaining consistency and providing regular updates, the Outer Banks Visitors Bureau played a key role informing the public and positively influencing perceptions to minimize the negative impact of the Outer Banks power outage.

PHOTO CREDIT: OUTER BANKS VISITORS BUREAU