

MARKETING COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Galena Country Tourism

Tues., February 19, 2019 2 p.m.

GGMI Admin Office

101 Bouthillier St., Galena IL 61036

The Marketing Committee met to review the year's marketing results to date (July 1- Jan. 1), go over upcoming goals for the remainder of the fiscal year and to review the new visitor's guide.

Attending the meeting were Chair, Mike Murphy, Colin Sanderson, Birgit Radin, Katie Burcham, and CEO Rose Noble.

Noble gave the option to send a monthly marketing report created by Madden Media that shows a breakdown of what topics people are clicking on and how many people are reading the stories, it keeps count of all interactions through Madden Media campaigns. The Madden campaigns have been successful, Noble notes that the social media and storytelling campaigns are extremely successful. The report only includes Madden Media which is mostly digital media. Noble will send this out to the Marketing Committee monthly and will be reviewed at the quarterly Marketing Committee Meetings. Sanderson asked who the contact person for Madden was and where they are based out of, and that our rep. is in Chicago and our project manager is in Tucson. Noble did note that she will be cutting back on SEM (Search Engine Marketing) spending next year. She also notes she is working with JRudny (Webmaster) on website optimization and reconstruction on the website.

Quarter 1 marketing hit hard on outdoor adventures, summer, retail/shopping, and holidays. Oct. hit hard on ShopSmall and that campaign showed success. The campaign was offered County-wide and Noble noted we will continue to build on the event.

Quarter 2 released LGBTQ story campaign that did alright, the travel writer could have been better but he did not have the knowledge of Galena before staying here which could have impacted his stay.

The promotions calendar on the Marketing Initiatives packet highlights themes that are worked into promotions whether it be a press releases, stories on the website, social media, and blogs.

Radin asked how the average traveler would find information on Galena. Noble answered, many ways. Our branding stretches across display ads, social, SEM, SEO, print, video and more. Also, all Stories have ads displayed across the web with click throughs to our website. Stories are also worked into social media, blogs, and any article associated. The Stories are multi-layered. Every story has a social media ad in addition to the every day message of "Get to Galena Country".

The direct contact numbers are looking great. FY 18' total interactions were 9.9 mil and YTD are 10 mil, this number is above last year's numbers with 5 months remaining.

Sanderson asked about the website. Noble explained that the website work is being conducted by JRudny and will be removed from the Wordpress platform. This will provide more security and the ability to make changes and not have to pay an additional cost to do so. Website work was worked into

the budget for \$30k with SEO built in, noting that this was approved last May. Birgit asked why the site needs work? Noble notes one example that Google Analytics cannot properly measure clicks on the Events Calendar page because it is through a third party provider. The work scheduled will provide a calendar format where clicks and interactions can be measured in total. Noble also says the new format will allow for hidden tags and make our content more searchable for viewers. There will also be backend upgrades to allow for efficiency internally when adding content to the site. All content from the current site will pull through to the reconstructed site without issue. Murphy asked if one will be able to notice the changes as they are being completed, any downtime? Noble said the look will be different but there will be no downtime.

Radin questioned how to see what's being done from the promotions calendar on the Marketing Initiatives handout - Noble explained that these are themes being worked into stories, social media, blogs, video and articles. She also reminded the Committee that she presents recent/current promotions to the Board every month during her CEO report.

Noble presented the Committee pamphlets themed with different activities/things to do; Haunted, Outdoors, History, Golf, and Winter. Noble states that the Welcome Center sometimes has difficulty getting rack cards from businesses and these pamphlets will provide another resource to the traveler visiting the Welcome Center. Sanderson asked if the pamphlets are digital, which they are not. Pamphlets are stocked in the Welcome Center but also mailed out when travelers are requesting certain information and will be used as an insert in newspapers. Radin asked why they couldn't be in one booklet. Noble explained that these are geared towards different themes and rather than the Welcome Center Reps. pulling multiple racks cards for one theme, they can use a themed pamphlet as one resource. These are meant to be specialized and not all-encompassing.

Noble presented the new visitor's guide to the Committee. The eNewsletter to visitors (from our Constant Contact database) informing them of the new guide and how to request one was being sent this week. Inside the digital version, bolded words, pictures and business listings have a weblink which will direct the visitor to a more specific topic such as their business listing on visitgalena.org or a business' direct website. The digital guide is unable to measure individual click throughs but GCT can measure clicks that came from the guide link as a total and will see it as a referral on the businesses side, meaning the individual business will be able to measure clicks from the guide to through their own analytics as well. Sanderson asked what would it take to have the ability to measure click throughs, Noble said we would have to build out the digital guide completely on its own, as a mini-website, which is not cost-efficient an unnecessary.

Murphy asked if the guide within the website is displayed as a magazine in which pages can be clicked on, Noble confirmed yes. GCT will also be pulling content from stories within the guide and making them individual webpages throughout the year. Murphy praises that the digital side having the individual links to each business is invaluable.

Radin still unclear on how the customer finds the new guide. Noble notes we receive leads monthly via ad campaigns and daily via Welcome Center notifications, as well as visitors passing through the State Tourist Information Centers (TICs) and our kiosks at the Oasis'. Noble notes the main picture on the website will also be the cover of the guide that can be clicked on to direct views to the digital guide. There will be links to it on social media campaigns as well. The eNewsletter will have a link to click through to the new guide. Sanderson asks if the smaller towns in the County have email data bases that

they can use to E-blast the new guide, and Noble says that most rely on GCT to do that. However, when GCT sends out the Industry eNewsletter to stakeholders this month, we will create a note that says share this link with your followers to also spread the word about the new guide.

Radin states she thinks the picture on the cover of the guide looks artificial. Noble confirms it is most definitely a real picture of our beautiful Main Street Galena.

Sanderson asks how the pictures on the guide were chosen. Noble notes they are chosen the same way they run any other campaign, saying the marketing team highlights places throughout the County making sure the content was relatable to the story, theme, presentation and layout. Sanderson questions why to use pictures in the back listings and not just the listing text? Noble states that she wants to keep going with the measures already in place, that have proven successful. GCT could produce a product with no pictures but it wouldn't be engaging. The point of the visitor's guide is to promote everyone, even the smaller businesses, that don't get a lot of exposure not to just highlight known businesses. Sanderson notes that there will be questions about why and how content was chosen but also says he loves the presentation and doesn't want to change it in future issues. Murphy agrees that the photos are great.

Murphy points out that the guide's purpose is to draw in visitors in and to display what the County has to offer. Radin states she thinks the pictures are chosen randomly. Radin feels that the content needs to relate to what is being linked to them rather than saying 'we haven't promoted this business in a while, lets highlight them.' Noble says there is nothing random about it. She notes that all photos are related to the content and there are many reason why GCT would and wouldn't use specific images. She also states that articles can't feature everyone all the time. GCT needs to be selective with our content and properly round out the marketing and promotional message of the destination, not just talk about the same few each time. This is true in every promotion ran, including the visitors guide. Noble also mentioned that every tourism-related business is mentioned in the guide. Murphy asked if the cover can be changed digitally and Noble confirmed it can. She says they have the ability to have multiple covers digitally but the content inside will remain the same. Also, if another shipment of guides needs to be printed before fall, the cover can be changed before print and then sent out. But again, the content inside will remain the same for the year's guide.

Murphy asked if the Galenian will be available at the Welcome Center. Noble says yes it will but GCT will not distribute them as they did in past years. It will be used as a resource when travelers are here and not mailed out.

Noble has presented the guide to a few groups already and has received positive feedback thus far. Noble has asked everyone to go through the guide and is asking for their reactions and input.

Radin still questions if the guide is good enough for one years' time, will the content hold up? She believes a year is too long, and maybe will need to switch out the cover photo for each season. Radin says if reprinted she wants to change the content inside to reflect the seasons. Sanderson asked how other DMO's do their guides and Noble said most do an annual guide and some don't have any at all. Noble also notes that the board has known since the budget was approved in May, that we were putting out an annual guide. Murphy said it is crazy to think we could produce a guide quarterly. He adds that we would need another full-time team to handle that task alone. He also reminds Radin that the digital guide will provide more flexibility and the ability to change content when needed. Noble notes to keep

in mind that they built a digital hub to highlight different stories throughout the year and will be changing and adding to on a regular basis. Noble believes the digital guide will draw more views than the print version.

The sales position has been restructured to focus more on group experiences rather than traditional meetings due lack of venue options. Noble has a list of tradeshow that she would like a sales person at but not just focus on tradeshow. Sanderson wants to look into other types of shows such as a brew master for breweries or a winery show, shows that highlight our market. Murphy believes that it is more beneficial to do tradeshow at Rosemont than going to Cincinnati or Indianapolis since our market is in Chicago.

To reiterate Noble would like to do a quarterly marketing meetings and still present marketing initiatives at the monthly board meetings, and will send the Madden report to the Marketing Committee Monthly and field any questions from the Committee as they come.

With no further business Murphy motions to adjourn, Radin seconds 3:13 p.m.