

Inbound Destination: ILM

Meeting Minutes

March 27, 2013 at 10:00AM

Present: Karen Smith, Heather Loftin, Maureen Donovan, Rhonda Bellamy, Carey Ricks, Jon Rosborough, Jim Morton, Caitlen White

Next meeting: TBD

INBOUND TOURIST DESTINATION: ILM FOCUS GROUP

March 27, 2013

- OBJECTIVE: How do we effectively market ILM and SENC as an inbound tourist destination??
 - Roundtable focus group of key stakeholders
 - Is it doable?
 - If yes, how do we attract passengers to become tourists in our region

- BRAINSTORMING:
 - “Top of Mind Awareness” exercise: jot down first thoughts-elicits first impressions
 - Our region is known for its---
 - We are great at---
 - What makes us different or unique as a tourist destination
 - We stand out from other tourist destinations because---
 - How can we influence their/tourist choices=> ILM and SENC
 - Obstacles to overcome

- MARKETING PLAN:
 - Define marketing goals
 - ID target audiences/locations
 - Our message: what is it
 - Communication methods and tools
 - Staffing and financial resources
 - Measuring success: management and monitoring

- IMPLEMENTATION:
 - How to maximize marketing impact with least budget
 - Networking with inbound/point of origin communities: key partnerships
 - “Welcome to Wilmington/SENC: Our Special Part of the World”

Notes from Meeting:

- Our efforts should link up with the Dept. of Tourism. North Carolina is #6 for Tourism and #27 for tourism budget.
- Wilmington relates more to Charleston over Myrtle Beach because of our Southern Hospitality and focus on family. Myrtle Beach is much more commercial.
- More non-stop flights = more marketable areas. We should focus on the non-stop flights we currently have and market to those areas.
- Vacations are based on traditions – how do we establish new traditions in Wilmington?
- We need to promote an experience over just a week at the beach. Travelers are craving more experience-driven vacations.
- We should identify current driving market and focus outside of that radius for fly-in travelers.
- Golf is a big focus for this area. Golfers are flying to Wilmington. Guys-only trips vs. men+wives golf trips = 2 totally different marketing strategies.
- Southport tourism has increase because of the movie, Safe Haven. People love Wilmington because of the movies that have been filmed here.
- Dept. of Commerce does a great job. We need to make them aware of our intentions. We should also contact the marina too because Wilmington is becoming a fly-in, drive-in, boat-in destination. We need to streamline all efforts so that there is one single voice coming from Wilmington.
- People to reach out to for next meeting: Chamber of Commerce, Economic Development Agencies, Dick Jones, Dept. of Commerce, CVB, Convention Center, Dept. of Tourism.
- Getting other people involved will assure that our efforts are not being duplicated. It will also be beneficial because they might have research to help.
- Arts travelers stay twice as long and spend twice as much.
- ILM airport can help promote Wilmington as a destination from within – add rotating graphics to the baggage belt, in-terminal signs, etc.
- Target audience is “Out of Staters”, Canadians, and International Travelers. We can also focus on a niche group of people who are interested in diving, surfing, history, arts, etc.
- Initial marketing geographical areas should be those in which ILM has non-stop service to.
- We can use statistics to get the message in the right place. Use ILM to get them here, and then have the CVB show them what they can do.