

Knox County Convention and Visitors Bureau 2016 Plan of Action FINAL

Latest Revision by the Board of Directors at an
UPDATE PLANNING RETREAT
Wednesday, January 27, 2016
Facilitated by Pat & Sandy Crow

Original Prepared January 14, 2003
Updated and revised annually 2004 through 2015
Last Revision Adopted: February 24, 2016

Background

The Board of Directors of the Knox County Convention and Visitors Bureau met in a planning session to set its course for the year and beyond. The session was well-attended and a high degree of consensus was achieved.

The Purpose of the Session

To get all participants “on the same page”
To develop plans for continued and increased success
To identify action plans for the year by updating the plan for 2015

The Mission of Knox CVB

The mission was confirmed as; *“To increase tourism and attract more visitors to Knox County”*

CVB and Community Progress Evaluation

Things Done Well >> Maintain and Improve as Deemed Appropriate

Ag Museum	Knox County Park District
Ag Awareness & School Tours	Knox County Parks – Communities
Amish Auctions, Farm Markets, Owl Creek Auction etc.	Knox County Symphony
Antiques	KnoxWays Program – byways, trails waterways, parks, other natural resources
Ariel-Foundation Park	Kokosing Gap Trail
B&B’s and Inns (definition of rooms)	Kokosing River Water Trail & Access Points
Bridge of Dreams	Local Grown Food – Farms
Camp Sychar	Lodging -Traditional
Chautauqua, Lyceum, & Music Series	Memorial Building
Children’s Garden	Mohican Valley Trail
College & High School Athletics	Mohican and Kokosing Rivers
Colleges/universities participation	Mound View Cemetery Tours
Community & CVB work well together	Outdoor Recreation – trails, byways, etc.
Community Concert Association Series	Pacemakers Drag Strip
CVB Board – dedication, participation, supportive	Paletonia
CVB Leadership – responsive to market	Partners-in-Tourism Events
Daniel Decatur Emmett	Parades
Distinguished Young Women of Ohio	Performing Arts
Downtown Mount Vernon Historic District	Print Material – magazines & brochures
Farmers Market	Quality restaurants
Festivals & Events – All	Quarry Chapel Church
First Fridays	Ramser Arboretum
Galleries	School alumni & reunions
Geo Cache	Scenic Byways – Wally Road & Gateway to Amish Country (US 62, SR 514)
Geographic Center of Ohio	Schnormeier Garden Tour
Golf programs remain steady	Second Saturdays
Harvest@TheWoodward – Local Foods	Social Media / Network
Heart of Ohio Tour – HOOT	Sports Tournaments & Activities
Heart of Ohio Trail	ThePlace@TheWoodward
Hiawatha Water Park	Tourism Market – responsive to changes
Historic Homes & Buildings	Tree Frog Canopy Tours
Honey Run Waterfall	Velvet Ice Cream – Ye Olde Mill
Hunting	Visual Art Community Promotions
Inter-organizational cooperation	Visitors > Experience Guide Magazine
Inter-Trail Connection Development	Waco
July 4 th celebrations & related activities	Wally Road
Kenyon Athletic Center	Web Sites – VKO, HKO (new), TF, etc.
Knox County Fair	Wolf Run Regional Park & Bark Park
Knox County Historical Museum	Woodward Opera House

Things Done So-So >> Assess and Improve as Deemed Appropriate

Assisting attractions to develop	Shopping
Committee structure and operation	Signage
Consumer & Community Input	Social Networking
Education – Kenyon, MVNU, COTC, secondary schools, Home School	Web Sites – KnoxWays.info, DanEmmett.org, Home School MountVernonOhio.org,
Faith-based institutions & Events	DixieLand.org, KnoxArts.info
Self-guided Tours	

Things To Get Done – To Do – listed by Category and in Priority order

1. Immediate Needs

- a. Marketing Plan - Develop and initiate a vibrant and aggressive annual Tourism Marketing Plan
 - i. Social Networking – Develop an effective strategy and program to define availability and functionality of all attractions, destinations, educational institutions, and tourism suppliers. – **Staff, Board**
 - ii. Web Sites – **Staff & Board**
 - iii. Update sites, introduce mobile sites, stay technologically and cyber current.
 - iv. More clearly define availability and functionality of all attractions, destinations, and tourism suppliers. - **Staff, Board**
 - v. Improve Material Distribution – **Staff & Marketing**
 - vi. Improve Promotion of Meeting and Conference Facilities – **Marketing**
 - vii. Improve Promotion of Group Tours – **Marketing**
- b. Development Plan - Develop and initiate a vibrant and aggressive annual Tourism Development Plan.
 - i. Wally Road Paving – Executive Is scheduled to be Paved
 - ii. Improve Utilization of assets/resources – e.g. Fairgrounds, Children’s Garden - **Development**
 - iii. KnoxWays Development Plans/Implementation – River Front – **Development**
 - iv. Tourism Signage - Parks, restrooms, bike paths, etc. – **Development** - Consider Maps at kiosks in county – e.g. Log cabin at KGT in Mt Vernon & at distribution points - **Marketing**

2. Future Initiatives

- a. Consider how to add bike racks throughout county - **Development**
- b. Cemetery Indexing

Prioritized Issues to be Addressed - Listed by Category and in Priority order

1. Vision, Maintaining the Focus

- Maintain an Effective Destination Marketing and **Development** Program
- Maintain and improve media recognition
- Maintain the integrity of the Knox County tourism product
- Maintain the community spirit
- Keep up with “Tourism” changes and growth within Knox County
- Consider recruiting/developing attractions with the Chamber of Commerce, ADF, etc
- Educate businesses of tourism traffic and the resulting economic impact
- Develop/maintain effective Knox tourism monitoring > service providers / consumers
- Monitor & Update CVB Committee structure and operation
- Assure open lines of communication to the community and affiliate organizations
- Hold Attractions Forum – Partners in Tourism (PIT) 2 to 3 times/year
- Continue and Improve the tourism advocacy for Knox County
- Do a Survey “Survey Mondkey” of Knox Co Fair attendees – Giveaway “night at a hotel”

2. Being Financially and Organizationally Strong

- Maintain positive relationship with Commissioners
- Develop funding for staffing needs and volunteers
- Utilize fee for service concepts
- Review lodging tax collection
- Hold regular and effective Board meetings
- Continue Annual Retreats & hold periodic review of plans and actions
- Participate in the monthly Interorganizational meetings
- Continue to participate in Marketing Consortiums & continue to network within State

3. Specific Development and Marketing Activities

- The Woodward, ThePlace@TheWoodward, Harvest@TheWoodward
- Trails & Scenic Water Byways, Trail Connections, Ariel-Foundation Park, & River Fronts
- Knox County Park District; Outdoor – Nature; Community Parks
- Locally Grown Food – Farms – Agriculture; Locally made products
- Wally Road; Mohican/Wally Road Area, Tree Top Canopy - Zip Lines
- B&O and CA&C Depot and All Area Meeting Facilities
- Amish; Class Reunions; Quarry Chapel Church
- Educational Resources; Links to local School’s Websites
- Develop more packages in the form of self-guided tours
- Assist Developing Downtowns
 1. Participate in the Greater Downtown Management Council (GDMC)
 2. Help create strategies to help capture people to stop and shop as they come to/thru town(s)
 3. Downtown Parking Maps

I. Executive Committee

Purpose – To assist the full board in the implementation of planning, management of the operations and the finances, and staff development of the Knox County CVB.

Strategy - Maintain the Vision and Focus of the CVB

<i>TASKS: (Rank by order of importance)</i>	<i>ASSIGNMENT + DATE to COMPLETE:</i>
1) Continued governance.	Committee
2) To manage the progress of all the committees.	Committee
3) Evaluate other potential sources of funding.	Staff, Committee
4) Act as the Internal Audit Committee, meeting quarterly to assess the finances of the organization. Assure that regular financial reviews are performed and report the results back to the Board.	Committee
5) Review audit recommendations and conflict of interest procedures, and other policy concerns.	Staff, Committee
6) Evaluate & improve the public relations program involving the promotion of the CVB as a viable community development partner. Share this information in a proactive manner with all other community development organizations, attractions, lodging, food service, and retail stores. Educate businesses of tourism traffic and the resulting economic impact. This would include the continuation of the “Partners in Tourism” series, monthly appearances on the WMVO morning program, etc.	Committee, Staff
7) Assure that the CVB continues its tradition of strategic planning annually renewing its commitment to serve the Knox County tourism industry.	Committee

II. Marketing Committee

A. Marketing

Purpose - Develop the annual CVB marketing plan. Assist the staff in implementing the CVB marketing plan and managing an effective marketing program to fulfill the mission of the Knox County CVB.

<u>TASKS: (Rank by order of importance)</u>	<u>ASSIGNMENT + DATE to COMPLETE</u>
1) Annually evaluate the current marketing program and develop a continuing program improving upon the existing process.	Annual Evaluation
2) Annually evaluate the website(s), social networking and update based on the new marketing program.	Annual Evaluation
3) Create an annual written marketing plan.	Staff, Committee
4) Create and implement a plan to create DVD's & web based videos of Knox County tourism brand, image, and product.	Staff, Committee

B. Tourism Products Development

Purpose - Work to develop a method for the creation and sale of products that represent Knox County's tourism Brand, image, and product.

1) Create and implement a plan to continue the financial growth of the Staff & Knox County Tourism industry and the CVB thru the Development and sale of products that represent our tourism Brand, image, and product. Examples: Postcards; Re-usable Shopping Bag for Farmers Markets; T-Shirts, etc.	Committee
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C. Ideas for consideration in 2016

1. Assess the drag strip, truck manic contest, bull riding for improved promotion.
2. Paul Lynde Comedy Contest
3. Evaluate agricultural tourism product in Knox County
4. Other Potential Events to consider at the appropriate time:
 - a. Horse and buggy rides, back to "good old days"
 - b. Quilt Conference
 - c. Other as opportunities present themselves
5. Develop Underground Railroad locations - More research needed
6. Develop walking/driving tours for historic buildings/sites in Mount Vernon & Knox County

III. Destination & Economic Development Committee

A. KnoxWays and Recreation Development

Purpose - To work with area groups that are promoting the creation, development, and designation of recreational trails, waterways, recreational parks, and byways in and around Knox County.

<i>TASKS: (Rank by order of importance)</i>	<i>ASSIGNMENT + DATE to COMPLETE:</i>
1) Promote development of state and federal recognized byways and waterways throughout Knox County.	Committee
Designate 3C as a “Historic Corridor	Staff
2) Promote development of and marketing concepts for recreational trails, waterways, recreational parks, etc. Continue to have this committee work with the county KnoxWays Committee. Schedule an annual meeting with Kokosing Gap Trail, Mohican Valley Trail, HOOT, Mount Vernon	Committee
3) Develop and implement a strategy to maintain the Countywide tourism database.	Staff & Committee

B. Destination Development

Purpose - Develop and implement a plan to increase the destination availability to our existing and potential tourism consumer to Knox County.

1) Evaluate the existing tourism product base.	Staff & Committee
2) Develop a plan to enhance the existing product, increase the tourism product availability in quantity and quality.	Staff & Committee
3) With Board approval, implement the destination development plan.	Staff & Committee
4) Encourage riverfront development throughout the county as part of the KnoxWays initiative.	Staff & Committee
5) Get feedback from service providers and consumers to use to measure the value of the CVB marketing programs. (Need to correlate with other part of this plan)	Committee
6) Tourism Study	Staff & Committee

Concepts for Further Development in 2016

C. KnoxWays and Recreation Development - Work with area groups that are promoting the creation, development, and designation of recreational trails, waterways, recreational parks, and byways in and around Knox County.

1. Maps // Print // Interactive
2. Trails –
 - a. Rail Bed Trails
 - b. Rail Road Bridge
 - i. Via Duct crossing
3. Signage – Consultants (Trail-Ways, Water-Ways, By-Ways, High-Ways)
 - a. Signs on Trails for road directions (Knox) (?)
 - b. Signs on Trails for facilities (DT) (GDMC)
 - c. Foundation Park / CA&C Depot
 - d. Native Indian Trails – Form a Group - Richard Morey, Paul Hotham, Walter Sperry, Ralph Ames, Mike Jimmer, Bill Jones
 - e. Ohio to Erie Corridor
4. Waterways
5. Recreational Parks
6. ByWays & Highways
 - a. 3C ByWay Corridor Management Staff
 - b. Johnny Appleseed ByWay Future

D. Destination Development – a) Evaluate the existing tourism product base. b) Develop a plan to enhance the existing product, increase the tourism product availability in quantity and quality.

- a. Use of Fair Grounds – Promote as Place to use
- b. Save the Barns / Tours – KCRF Tour- Sept / “Demo” @ Fairgrounds
- c. Woodward Local Foods – Woodward Dev. Corp

E. Riverfront - Encourage riverfront development throughout the county as part of the KnoxWays initiative.

- a. Dan Emmett House
- b. Railroad Crossing
- c. Ariel-Foundation Park

F. You know you’re from Knox County when _____!