



Destination Marketing & Visitor Services Proposal

Grinnell Convention & Visitors Bureau Plan Of Work 2016-17

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PART I

OVERVIEW

Tourism is the intentional branding of a community. We work hard to strategically increase awareness of Grinnell as a travel destination. Whether that be placing an ad, securing a regional meeting, or hosting a regional sporting event, these are all opportunities to tell Grinnell's story.

Tourism impacts the community in many ways, such as through the number of visitors who travel to Grinnell or the dollars they spend or the hotel stays they generate. When tourism can provide a unique experience for visitors, one that brings economic prosperity to our community, we also create a positive experience for those who call Grinnell home. By supporting businesses, events, and organizations that make this community vibrant, the quality of life and the opportunities available to residents increases.

➤ **Partnering with the Chamber of Commerce**

The Grinnell Area Chamber of Commerce is committed to the success and growth of the Grinnell community. We have operated the Grinnell Convention and Visitors Bureau for several years and propose continuing our public/private partnership with the City of Grinnell's Hotel/Motel Tax Committee for fiscal year 2016-17.

Many communities have found that the best way to provide destination marketing and visitor services is through a well-established organization that offers a trusted "chamber of commerce" brand. This is helpful because of the Chamber's relationships with the business community and community at large. There is synergy and efficiency in one organization operating business, tourism, and branding functions for a community.

Why the Grinnell Area Chamber of Commerce?

- Represent the largest collective voice of business in the city and county, with 300 members who represent a workforce of more than 6,000.
- Provide a qualified, experienced team that efficiently operates as an in-house marketing agency. The staff has expertise in hospitality, marketing, event management, and customer service.
- Build awareness about Grinnell through our digital marketing channels, especially GetIntoGrinnell.com and our weekly e-newsletter.
- Manage social media channels in an effort to increase awareness about Grinnell. Success in managing social media tourism goals is illustrated through the receipt of the "2014 Outstanding Social Media Execution Award" from the Iowa Tourism Office.
- Proven track record with event management and involvement with the majority of tourism events in the community.
- Maintain relationships with the Iowa Tourism Office and regularly work with their staff to gain exposure for Grinnell.
- Maintain memberships in several tourism organizations including Central Iowa Tourism Region, Travel Federation of Iowa, and Iowa Destination Marketing Alliance. Attend the annual Iowa Tourism Conference hosted by the Iowa Tourism Office.
- Maintain efficiencies by operating both the Chamber of Commerce and Convention & Visitors Bureau, which complement each other.

PART II

TOURISM STRATEGIES

With the approval of the Grinnell Hotel-Motel Tax Committee, we propose continuing our strategic direction for the fiscal year 2016-17. These three key tourism strategies were outlined this past year, and we we feel they should remain our areas of focus.

This proposal outlines the individual components of a fully integrated destination marketing and visitor services program designed to ultimately increase hotel/motel tax revenues and sales tax revenues, in alignment with the goals and objectives set by the Grinnell Hotel/Motel Tax Committee.

➤ STRATEGY #1

Position Grinnell as a sports and recreation hub in Iowa.

Grinnell is an ideal location for youth and collegiate sporting events in the region because the city boasts a large inventory of sporting event venues.

Tactics:

1. Collaborate with the Grinnell Sports Authority committee in an effort to provide support to sporting events/tournaments and sport facilities.
2. Expand information about local sporting facilities on GetIntoGrinnell.com.
3. Continue to grow Grinnell Games as Iowa's Family Sports Festival.
4. Grow awareness of Grinnell as destination for gravel bike riding enthusiasts.

Target Markets:

1. Tournament managers
2. Coaches and team leaders
3. Gravel bike riding enthusiasts
4. Athletes
5. Runners

PART II (continued)

TOURISM STRATEGIES

► STRATEGY #2

Position Grinnell as a regional dining destination in central Iowa.

As Grinnell's reputation for dining continues to grow, our city is poised to offer travelers an authentic culinary tourism experience. We will strive to elevate Grinnell's reputation as a dining destination. We will use dining as a driver and point of differentiation to grow visitation to Grinnell.

Culinary tourism is defined by the World Food Travel Association as the pursuit of unique and memorable eating and drinking experiences, not necessarily high-end or "gourmet." Culinary tourism or food tourism is experiencing the food of the country, region, or area, and is now considered a vital component of the tourism experience.

Tactics:

1. Develop partnerships with culinary destinations in Grinnell to implement cooperative marketing campaigns.
2. Work with key Grinnell restaurants to enhance the dining experience for tourists.
3. Include the Grinnell Farmers Market in marketing to help brand Grinnell as a local foods destination.
3. Supply culinary tourism education and information to Grinnell's culinary tourism businesses.
4. Create and curate content for GetIntoGrinnell.com.

Target Markets:

1. Foodies
2. Couples
3. Women
4. Millennials

► STRATEGY #3

Position Grinnell as a statewide destination rich in history, architecture, arts, and entertainment.

Grinnell's historic buildings, especially its downtown, and its variety in architecture are attractive to travelers. We will continue to spread awareness about historic and architecturally significant landmarks in the community. We will also work in collaboration with other local organizations to brand Grinnell as a community filled with arts and entertainment.

Tactics:

1. Showcase community assets that have historic and architectural significance.
2. Develop cooperative marketing partnerships with local arts organizations and galleries.
3. Create and curate content for GetIntoGrinnell.com.

Target Markets:

1. Baby Boomers
2. Retirees
3. Architecture Enthusiasts
4. History Enthusiasts
5. Arts Enthusiasts

PART III

WORK PRODUCTS & DELIVERABLES

Through our role as the Convention and Visitors Bureau, we propose continuing our work in the following areas. We have outlined our proposed objectives and tactics in each area along with our proposed measurable benchmarks. We will submit a monthly report to the Hotel/Motel Tax Committee that provides updates in each work area based on its measurable deliverables.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Objective: Increase social channel followers and engagement. Connect users to GetIntoGrinnell.com or other partner's websites. Connect with visitors from planning through their actual visit, offering them inspiration and information.

Tactics:

1. Continue to strengthen social channels as go-to resources for community information and inspiration.
2. Develop niche social promotions designed to further our objectives in branding Grinnell as a destination for sports/recreation, dining, history, architecture, arts, and entertainment.
3. Write or assist others with writing one blog post per month for TravellIowa.com's statewide travel blog.

Deliverables:

1. Number of fans/followers on social channels (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest)
2. Referral traffic directed to GetIntoGrinnell.com

DIGITAL

Objective: Position GetIntoGrinnell.com as the go-to source of information and inspiration about Grinnell. Increase traffic to GetIntoGrinnell.com.

Tactics:

1. Enhance website content by adding highly engaging photos and videos that entice users to spend more time on the website and that are designed for social sharing.
2. Expand website content, centered around our objectives in branding Grinnell as a destination for sports/recreation, dining, and history/arts/architecture.
3. Partner with a local photographer to acquire new promotional photography for GetIntoGrinnell.com, GrinnellIowa.gov, and marketing materials.

Deliverables:

1. Google Analytics (number of visitors, location of visitors, traffic to tourism content)
2. Reports on new tourism content added to website

PART III (continued)

WORK PRODUCTS & DELIVERABLES

PUBLIC RELATIONS

Objective: Raise top-of-mind awareness of Grinnell in the state of Iowa. Build relationships and communicate regularly with Iowa media and tourism industry.

Tactics:

1. Target niche publications and writers/bloggers with story pitches and press releases that align with tourism strategies.
2. Increase and maintain regular contact with media.
3. Continue to grow relationship with the Iowa Tourism Office.
4. Increase and maintain the Grinnell information posted at TravelIowa.com.
5. Submit nominations and applications for community awards and accolades.
6. Develop a new branding library available to anyone who wishes to promote the community. This could include logos, photos, and video.
7. Update community profiles on review websites such as TripAdvisor, Google Places, Yelp, and Wikipedia.

Deliverables:

1. Report of work with the Iowa Tourism Office and TravelIowa.com
2. Report of completed nominations and applications for awards and accolades
3. Report of updated profiles on review websites

PAID MEDIA

Objective: Raise awareness about Grinnell as a destination in the state of Iowa. Focus on target markets through niche advertising, centered around our three tourism strategies. Develop cooperative marketing opportunities for local businesses/attractions to increase their reach and reduce overall marketing expenses while creating a unified, intentional message and brand promise.

Tactics:

1. Develop a paid media plan and secure media placements for the year.
2. Design a framework for co-op marketing opportunities and secure local partners.
3. Create advertising collateral that stays true to the Grinnell brand and focuses on our three tourism strategies.
4. Act as the creative director for tourism marketing projects.

Deliverables:

1. Copies of the creative content produced for all marketing projects
2. Ad metrics (depending on advertising medium, metrics could include circulation, audience reach, impressions, clicks, responses)

PART III (continued)

WORK PRODUCTS & DELIVERABLES

VISITOR CENTER

Objective: Operate a physical downtown visitor center that serves as the official first point of contact, or “front door,” to the community. Assist visitors and ensure they have a good experience in Grinnell. Answer requests for visitor information.

Tactics:

1. Continue to operate a visitor center in the Merchants National Bank building, staffing it with Chamber/CVB staff and volunteers.
2. Respond to all requests for information by phone, mail, and in-person.
3. Provide planning assistance to visiting groups, both large and small.
4. Provide planning assistance to groups hosting tourism events/meetings in the community.
5. Provide digital and print resources to visitors, such as dining guides and maps.

Deliverables:

- . Report on assistance provided to visiting groups and events

COMMUNITY EVENTS

Objective: Add to the vitality of the community by hosting public events. These events add activity and entertainment, and draw attendees from the surrounding area. Use events as a reason to communicate with media.

Tactics:

1. Improve and grow Grinnell Games as Iowa’s Family Sports Festival.
2. Coordinate Grinnell On The Fourth festivities including parade and fireworks.
3. Grow the Grinnell Farmers Market through increased vendors, customers, and added activities/partnerships.
4. Provide event logistics and/or marketing support to other community events that draw visitors including but not limited to Music in the Park, Grinnell Vintage Auto Show, sports events/tournaments, Arts Council events, and Grinnell College events.

Deliverables:

1. Report of event progresss
2. Post-event results reports

PART IV

PROPOSED BUDGET

The following budget outlines our proposed fees for the services detailed in this proposal.

Proposed Destination Marketing & Visitor Services Budget

Fiscal Year 2016-17

	Hotel-Motel Tax Committee Investment	Matching Investment		
	Fee For Service	Project Dev/Promotions	Chamber of Commerce	Other Partners
SOCIAL MEDIA				
Management/Creative/Strategy	\$ 2,750.00		\$ 6,000.00	
Paid Niche Social Promotions		\$ 800.00		
DIGITAL				
Management/Creative/Strategy	\$ 5,250.00		\$ 6,000.00	
Content Development		\$ 1,500.00		
Photography/Videography		\$ 1,000.00	\$ 1,000.00	
PUBLIC RELATIONS				
Management/Creative/Strategy	\$ 3,250.00		\$ 1,000.00	
PAID MEDIA				
Management/Creative/Strategy	\$ 2,750.00			
Media Placements		\$ 5,000.00		\$ 4,000.00
VISITOR CENTER				
Management/Staffing/Rent	\$ 5,250.00		\$ 5,000.00	
COMMUNITY EVENTS**				
Management/Marketing	\$ 3,250.00		\$ 5,000.00	\$ 4,000.00
INDUSTRY INVOLVEMENT/EDUCATION				
Memberships/Conferences/Webinars	\$ 1,500.00		\$ 1,500.00	
Totals	\$ 24,000.00	\$ 8,300.00	\$ 25,500.00	\$ 8,000.00

PART V

SUMMARY

The Grinnell Area Chamber of Commerce values its partnership with the Hotel-Motel Tax Committee. We feel we are uniquely positioned to carry out Grinnell's work in destination marketing and visitor services. We look forward to working with you to execute this proposed plan of work for fiscal year 2016-17. This comprehensive plan will help us focus our destination marketing and visitor services efforts, resulting in a targeted approach that uses hotel-motel tax funds efficiently by pairing them with matching funds from the Chamber of Commerce membership as well as partner businesses and organizations. We will submit a written monthly update to the Hotel-Motel Tax Committee based on the deliverables outlined in this proposal.

Thank you for your consideration and continued partnership.