

Statewide Tourism Marketing Program Overview

THE BENEFITS

Background

- When *the legislature closed the state tourism office* in 2011 Washington was, and *had consistently been, one of the lowest ranked in the nation* for state funding of tourism.
- *Facing further cuts* to the existing non-competitive budget *and imminent closure* of the state tourism office, *industry leaders representing all corners and sectors in the state banded together with a mission* to assume the existing assets in an effort *maintain a presence in the market* while at the same time *develop a long-term, stable funding model* that would be primarily industry funded and governed.
- Since 2011, *Washington remains the only state without* a state-funded tourism program.

Statewide coordination and promotion is critical

- A statewide tourism marketing program will make travelers aware of the state's diverse attractions, and *coordinate regional and local efforts to promote travel to Washington*.
- A traveler who considers visiting Washington will visit *one of the state's regions where they will travel to one of that region's cities and towns, and ultimately patronize an individual business within that location*.
- More *remote/rural destinations benefit the most from a statewide marketing program* because they do not have the financial ability to target the wider domestic and international markets.
- Hotels, attractions, restaurants, retail and smaller towns/destinations *have limited resources to both promote themselves* and build interest in a destination.

Opportunities, goals and objectives of a statewide marketing plan

Optimize statewide impact through effective marketing plans

- *Implement a statewide marketing plan* that will showcase Washington as a world-class destination and inspire overnight leisure travel.
- Deploy a *comprehensive destination advertising campaign*, enhancing the state's online presence.
- *Partner with DMOs, ports and others to build on success of prevailing overseas* tourism marketing programs.
- Include *cultural, heritage and tribal tourism components* throughout the marketing plan.
- Include *rural tourism and outdoor recreation components* throughout the marketing plan.
- *Grow visitor service* and information, including *visitor guides and a visitor call center*.
- *Develop a North American travel trade development program*.
- Re-establish a *destination publicity program*.

Be a resource to local businesses and destinations

- *Give local businesses and destinations the tools to connect to* the state marketing plan.
- *Connect and optimize* local sales, marketing and destination development efforts.
- *Employ ongoing destination development* for attractions, facilities, products and services that *support host communities* throughout the state.
- *Enhance the destination website* (www.experiencewa.com).
- *Expand the social media* marketing program.
- Develop a *disaster response plan and program* to assist communities affected by natural and man-made disasters that affect tourism in those areas.
- Provide *strategic professional industry development* and training opportunities.

Measure Results

- Contract with destination market research organizations to *assess the economic impact* of the travel industry.
- Conduct annual, comprehensive statewide research via a national firm to *evaluate program success*.

