

CENTRAL SOUTHEAST

REGIONAL BRANDING & INTER-ISLAND FERRY MARKETING PLAN

WORKSHOP SUMMARY



Workshop Sponsored by – State Department of Commerce, Community & Economic Development, and a Grant from the US Economic Development Administration

Developing Alaska Rural Tourism (DART) Program

commerce.state.ak.us/oed/dart/home.htm

Workshop Hosted by - Central Southeast Regional Partnership

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CENTRAL SOUTHEAST WORKSHOP: REGIONAL BRANDING & INTER-ISLAND FERRY MARKETING PLAN NOTES - 5.26.05

REGIONAL BRANDING –WORKSHOP SUMMARY

I. GOALS FOR MESSAGE

ULTIMATE GOAL:

Home page of website,
front page of brochure &
small advertisement

Elements include:

- tagline
- secondary headlines
- associated (brief) text
- images, graphics, photos
- **map!!**

Convey What's Unique About Central SE

- Best of Alaska in compact area: glaciers, whales, bears, wilderness, mountains, history, native culture, fishing, golf!
- Unique environment – rainforest islands
- Quality services – comfortable hotels & lodges, good food, skilled guides and tours
- Not Juneau – not overrun, off the beaten path by choice, downtowns still good places to buy hardware (but not emeralds - something in the spirit of “in the heart of the Inside Passage. but not in the center of the crowds”)

Address Central SE Weaknesses

- Lack of name recognition – no “first tier” attractions
- “Geographically challenged” – travelers don't know where central SE is, boundaries are amorphous
- Competition – many other attractive coastal towns in AK, with good scenery, fishing, etc.

Works for Residents

- Aim for a magnitude, type of tourism that doesn't alter community character, community life
- Maintain dominance of locally-owned businesses
- Attract tourists that match local values

Works for Target Market(s)

- Use images, language that appeals to target markets (likely different for Coffman Cove than, say, Petersburg)

And, Tagline/ Brand Images need to be:

- Compelling, memorable; strike an emotional chord

2. STRATEGIES FOR CONVEYING MESSAGE

1. Sustained delivery – takes years, constancy
2. Therefore, requires a sustainable organization
3. Convey message in many ways, more than just marketing material. “Live the brand” (e.g., everything from architecture, to signage, to glacier ice in your drinks)
4. Destination management - “no place stays special by accident” – have to deliver on the promise made in the brand
5. Requires willingness to test and refine marketing strategies

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May 26, 2005

ATTENDANCE – see attached sign in sheet, with contact numbers

PURPOSE OF WORKSHOP

- Review elements of successful regional branding programs
- Start process of creating a regional branding program in the central Southeast area
- Develop a near and longer term action plan for regional branding and to maximize benefits of the Inter-Island Ferry

WORKSHOP AGENDA - See attached

DEFINITIONS

Branding: more than just a slogan, logo;

A brand is:

- a commitment about a place and the experiences it offers,
- expressed in a way that captures people's imagination,
- presented in marketing materials and in the reality of the destination.

1. **Organic or Created** - Santa Barbara's successful image, in particular its red tiled roofs, & Spanish-style architecture, was consciously created in the 1920's to lure visitors
2. **Words, or Experience & Reputation** - Kodiak uses "emerald isle" but this tagline is overshadowed by the more powerful image of Kodiak as a place about bears and fish
3. **Landmarks** – San Francisco's golden gate bridge, New York's statue of liberty, the Eiffel tower, come to represent the place
4. **Delivering the Goods** – To be successful, reality of the place must be consonant with the promise made in the brand. Places like Amish Country in Penn. fail to deliver the promised rural setting, people are disappointed and visitation suffers,
5. **Packaging** – The character of the experience and the brand can be created by linking multiple destinations around a theme, such as the Texas bird trails
6. **Establish a Geographic Identity/Integrate products** – A combination of destination management and marketing can create a defined geographic area, with the same level of market recognition as places like National Parks. Monteverde, Costa Rica is a successful example, where visitors experience the natural environment, buy art, stay in themed accommodations, and enjoy soft adventure; Bristol Bay is working in the same direction.
7. **Sustained, Supported By Residents** – The theme must resonate with the desires of residents. San Francisco residents like their Victorian House; in Anchorage the theme of "city of lights & flowers" never captured the hearts of Anchorage residents.
8. **Multi-sensory, Integrated Experience** – The most successful destinations integrate the places image with a wide range of experiences, for example food in New Orleans, glacier ice in your drinks in Kenai Fjords National Park scenic tours.
9. **Fun – Yahoo! Mat-Su**

See attached PowerPoint slides for more details

ELEMENTS OF A SUCCESSFUL REGIONAL BRANDING PROGRAM

1. IDENTITY & ATTRACTIONS
 - A. Natural setting; culture & history
 - B. Activities & experiences
 - C. Communities, built environment
 - D. Competition
2. TIE TO MARKETS
3. TIE TO COMMUNITY
4. CURRENT MARKETING & ORGANIZATIONAL RESOURCES
 - A. Current Market image
 - B. Organizational Resources
5. CONVEYING & SUSTAINING DESTINATION IDENTITY
 - A. DISTILLATION – compelling words, images (& experiences); a memorable message that crystallizes what makes a place unique
 - B. SHARING THE MESSAGE – Who, How?
 - C. DESTINATION MANAGEMENT – creating & sustaining the experience of a place; 'living the brand'
 - D. CONSISTENCY OVER THE LONG HAUL

ACTION PLAN
MAY 26, 2005 REGIONAL BRANDING WORKSHOP

CENTRAL SOUTHEAST REGION PARTNERSHIP (or COALITION?)

I. SET UP REGIONAL MARKETING PARTNERSHIP

<i>Task</i>	<i>Who</i>	<i>When</i>
A. Refine mission statement, structure, etc.		
<i>Membership</i> – steering committee initially made up of 2 members each from Coffman Cove, Wrangell, Petersburg & IFA; option in future to expand to include Kake & other interested communities. All other interested parties will be invited to participate.	Partnership	Done?
<i>Structure</i> – do not (for now) form a new organization, work as an ad hoc group of organizations, with a shared mission	Partnership	Done?
<i>MOU</i> – prepare and approve formal agreements among members regarding mission, structure, etc.	Eric	June 15
B. “One pager” summarize CSERP <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mission Goals - summary of action plan - Area covered - Membership - Option for people to participate - Contact information - etc. 	Marie	June 15
C. Meet with regional organizations to publicize CSERP	partnership	ongoing
D. “Conveyner” strategy - arrange meetings, prepare notes (rotates on annual basis between 4 primary partners)	Eric (2005)	Done
E. Set next meetings		
- June 30 th - teleconference	Eric arrange	Done
- Sept 29 th , in Wrangell (to follow SE Conference meeting)	Eric, Carol arrange details	Done
F. Secure resources to carry out Partnership tasks		
- Work to get a VISTA volunteer to work as staff person	Odin	Oct 05
- Seek out grants for specific projects (use non-profit status of partner organizations as needed)	To be determined	
G. Compile information on strategies for starting, funding DMO’s		

2. NEAR TERM PRIORITIES - IFA & REGIONAL MARKETING PROGRAM

<i>Task</i>	<i>Who</i>	<i>When</i>
A. Assemble marketing photos (5-10 per community, high quality, high resolution) plus brief descriptive text for inclusion in IFA marketing guidebook, pass to Len. Photos reflect emerging theme(s)	Coffman, Wrangell Petersburg	End of June
B. Compile event schedule (through 2006; events at a scale likely to generate use of ferry), pass to Len	Each community	End of June

C. Compile info re sample itineraries for use in IFA marketing	Len – 1 st draft	End of June
D. Review refined IFA marketing plan, determine additional actions to maximize use, benefits of IFA for Central SE	Len, partnership	Sept mtng
E. Prepare initial sample “flyer” for marketing Central SE; include key themes, selection of possible tag lines, map, plus one photo from each community (hold off on logo/graphics). Odin Brudie (and Agnew::Beck if requested) can help with graphics.	Chris notes; Karen prepare	End of May
F. Test flyer with residents, organizations, visitors	Each community	June
G. Report back results to group; reach preliminary conclusion re taglines, sub headlines, themes for other words, map, photos – to Marie for coordination	Each community	June 30 meeting
H. Prepare standardized short regional marketing <i>insert</i> , for each individual community website. Function is to give short version of branding/image info, and be portal into more detailed information – a short version of flyer described above. Key elements: name, tagline, brief description, option to open and see map, brief list of websites. Flyer to include in Fall 05-Spring 06 community mailings.	Partnership (sub committee?)	Mock-up for Sept mtng
I. Post regional marketing summary <i>insert</i> on each community website	Each community	Oct
J. Prepare standardized insert re inter-island ferry service, to be used on each community’s website. Ferry insert will explain option to visit area by ferry, and direct readers to more detailed IFA information	Partnership, with Len	Mock-up for Sept mtng
K. Post summary ferry insert on each community website	Each community	Oct
L. Seek AMHS \$5000 grants (requires cash match, for each community; intended to promote ferry travel to events between September and May 15 th)		See below
- Review events schedules, consider new events	Each community	Summer
- Discuss, agree on event strategy (multi-community race?)	Partnership	Sept mtng
- Apply for grants	Partnership	Dec 05-Jan 06

3. LONGER TERM ACTIONS – CARRY OUT REGIONAL MARKETING PROGRAM

<i>Task</i>	<i>Who</i>	<i>When</i>
A. Formalize regional marketing partnership		
B. Establish more stable, regional funding strategy		
C. Develop regional website, regional brochures		
D. Develop more formal means of tracking visitation, spending and other community tourism impacts		
E. Develop more formal means to monitor results and refine marketing program		

WORKSHOP NOTES

I. IDENTITY & ATTRACTIONS: NATURAL SETTING, CULTURE, HISTORY

Branding efforts need to be based in the realities of what is unique, special about the area.

What are the region's greatest strengths as a destination?

- Unique – Not overrun by tourists, industrial tourism
- Real communities
- “Not like Juneau” (meaning avoid the reputation of being crowded)
- How are we different from other small communities that are also pristine?
 - With the IFA there will be better access
 - Combination of pristine and accessibility
 - Handful of top level attractions – tidewater glaciers, whale watching, Anan bears.
 - Instead, it's opportunity to do many things in a concentrated area – Stikine River, bears, small towns, etc.
- Real towns – friendly, real Alaska, unspoiled
- Alaskan owned businesses, Alaskan tour guides – not just somebody with a summer job
- Ability to tell good stories about what people see
- Today – relatively limited numbers of tourists
 - Survey - 78% in Petersburg don't want big cruise ships
 - Need to control amount of tourism (e.g. cruise docks)
- Everything is in one place
 - Compact, concentrated
 - Don't have to spend all your time driving (save money)
 - “see it all, without spending all your time traveling place to place”
- Range of activities available in region
 - Stikine River
 - Wildlife
 - Anan wildlife observatory
 - LeConte Glacier seals
 - Large amount of birds
 - Whale and seal watching in Fredrick Sound
 - Tidewater glaciers
 - Working Communities - Fishing industry, Timber
 - Protected waters (kayaking)
 - Mountains – climbing, landmarks
 - Devils Thumb
 - Castle
 - Rainforest - America's rainforest
 - Sport fishing
 - “Not like the Kenai” - “You and the fish”
 - Caves/Geology
 - Prince of Whales has em, but accessibility issues
 - Petroglyphs
 - Garnet
 - Rockhounding/fossils

- Road system – access to lakes, rivers; to scenic views and trails
- Native culture
 - Wrangell – new museum; Petroglyph Beach; Chief Shakes Island
 - POW - Native communities (e.g., Klawock)
 - Norwegian culture in Petersburg
 - Petersburg - tour at cannery
 - Archeological dig summer 06 in Coffman Cove
- Seafood – world famous, wild Alaskan, lots of it, variety: crab, salmon, cod, shrimp, halibut, oysters, etc...(also synergies between seafood and tourism marketing)
- Safe harbors, port infrastructure
- Services, facilities
 - Security
 - Reliability
 - Friendly
 - Unlike Valdez - it's a real town, has all the products locals need
 - Groceries, services
 - Infrastructure in Wrangell and Petersburg but not yet in Prince of Wales
- Climate – “Not a freezing icebox”
- Quiet

Weaknesses – Attractions, Services

- No name recognition
- Rain
- Seasonal wildlife
- Seasonality in general
- Tourism Services – summary evaluation below; DCCED is working on completing a more detailed version of this inventory

	Petersburg	Wrangell	Prince of Wales
Accommodations	Good	Good/Ltd	limited
Lodges	Good	limited	Good
Tours	Good	Good	limited
Town - architecture			
Town - “explorability”	Good	Good	Limited
Cultural Attractions	sites but not necessarily guides or interpretive info to tell stories; Wrangell has some good facilities		

- See section 4A re challenges/weaknesses re marketing

2. TIE TO MARKETS

Who’s coming? What do they want to do?

- General – don’t have decent information, need better data; estimates below are very speculative
- Today
 - Independent travelers
 - Wildlife viewers
 - Birders

- Hunters and Fishers
 - Adventures (kayak, wildlife, hike)
 - Specific destinations (e.g., Stikine)
 - Stop on larger itinerary – Prince of Wales
 - Coffman Cove – coming just to Prince of Wales
- Other & misc
 - Alaskans
 - Veterans (Local VFW Halls attract visiting vets)
 - Visiting Friends and Relatives - important
- Package tours
 - Wrangell – 2200 per weekly cruise boat stop (but likely not next year)
 - Petersburg – 100-115 passenger cruise ships – several a week
 - Prince of Wales – none
- Summary: cruise ship vs. the independent travelers market
 - Wrangell – 75% cruise, 25% independent travelers
 - Petersburg – 75% cruise, 25% independent travelers
 - Prince of Wales – 75% independent travelers, 25% VFR
 - Independent travelers generally spend more than the cruise ship tourists
 - Some cruise ship travelers spend money, some don't (depends on length of stay)
- Future Targets
 - Attract people who will spend their whole trip in area – make the area become a destination
 - Small groups
 - Families
 - Yachts
 - Wildlife viewers
 - Birders
 - RVers (see list)
 - Small meetings, groups (have convention center, reasonable weather year round)

3. TIE TO COMMUNITY – What do Residents want for Tourism? How much growth? What Kinds of Tourism to Encourage, to Discourage?

- Interest in maintaining communities
- Measured tourism – growth, tourism managed to minimize conflicts
- Year-round businesses
- Locally owned businesses
- Want diversified economy – do not put all the eggs in one basket
- Selling point of IFA
 - Communities have invested in program with an expectation of economic benefits
 - Communities understand that they can't get these economic benefits without growth, including tourists
 - Acceptance of tourism but: How to market? Desire to broaden participation

4A. MARKET IDENTITY TODAY – What image does traveling public have of the area, what is currently emphasized in marketing material?

- Overall
 - area has minimal identity, market recognition
 - visitors stop on longer tours of SE, rarely do package tours focus on Central SE
- Prince of Wales
 - Promo tagline - “The actual Alaska”
 - US’s 3rd biggest island
 - Road system/logging
 - “working class” visitors
 - Hunting
 - Fishing
 - Multiple small communities
- Petersburg
 - Promo tagline - “Alaska’s little Norway”
 - “Petersburg shrimp”
 - Wrangell narrows – well known to ferry riders (a place to see shoreline up close)
 - Small, quaint, attractive coastal town
 - Fishing
 - LeConte Glacier
 - Rain
- Wrangell
 - Tagline – Gateway to the Stikine River; “Three flags/Four Nations”
 - American Legion – 3 Flags Pin
 - Anan Wildlife Observatory, bears
 - Stikine River
 - Fishing
 - Tlingit Culture and ancient history (petroglyphs)
 - Small, friendly, coastal town
 - Working community; logging community – attracts a “working class” visitor?
- Central SE regional Identity?
 - SE generally? known as Inner Passageway, cruise destination, Tongass NF
 - Central SE sub region? some public knowledge of Stikine, Anan, but overall – zip

4B. CURRENT MARKETING & ORGANIZATIONAL RESOURCES

- Problems with marketing today:
 - Lack of name recognition
 - General lack of regional cooperative marketing
 - Lack of money & resources needed (e.g., bed tax) to do marketing
 - Lack of means for regional coordination, no regional organization/DMO
- Overview of marketing today (and potential marketing fund sources)
 - Petersburg
 - 4 % bed tax produces \$25,000 (\$10,000 used for marketing)
 - Managed mostly by Chamber

- 6% sales tax also (none to tourism)
- Proposed \$160,000 – 3 years marketing (not just tourism)
- Wrangell
 - \$4/night visitor fee produces \$20,000 plus additional \$20,000 from city for tourism marketing
 - Managed by Convention & Visitors Bureau, appointed by city
 - 7% sales tax (none to tourism)
- Prince of Wales
 - No bed tax; city charter says won't be any taxes –Coffman Cove
 - Sales tax in other POW communities (?)
 - Chamber – member dues
- Potential Partners
 - Alaska Airlines
 - USFS
 - Southeast Conference
 - Southeast Alaska Tourism Council
 - ATIA
 - Regional hubs – Juneau, Ketchikan
 - Other small, coastal communities (Cordova, Kodiak)

5. CONVEYING & SUSTAINING DESTINATION IDENTITY

5A. DISTILLING A CLEAR MESSAGE

Process

1. Define goals/criteria for selecting a marketing image
2. Define themes
3. Develop options for “taglines,” maps, graphics, etc
4. Test package with communities, visitors, businesses

Criteria for Judging Branding Taglines, Marketing Themes

- Accurately reflects reality of place, distinguishing characteristics
- Responds to lack of knowledge of Southeast, particularly of Central SE (most likely requires a map)
- In synch with resident views, resident desires to maintain quality of communities
- Works with traveler expectations
- Memorable, compelling

Types of Marketing Themes

- access (“easily accessible”)
- attractions (“great wildlife viewing”)
- environment
- community
- geography
- history

Candidate Themes and Taglines

- We have it all
- Alaskan rainforest
- Tongass
- Coastal communities
- Island safaris
- Alaskan owned and operated
- Inside passage
- Alaska's secret garden
- Rainforest Islands
- Capture frequently heard sentiment of people who've visited but didn't have enough time "I wish we could stay a few more days..." "If only we had known..."
- Where Alaskans play; what if you work where you play
- Alaska's tree house/playhouse reality
- Did you know Alaska has a rainforest
- Alaska's hidden secret
- The heart of inside passage
- Island in the rainforest (mist)
- Tongass Triangle
 - Lose yourself in the triangle
 - Connecting travelers with wilderness
- Authentic, real communities
- Alaska's Island Rainforest
 - Heart of the inside passage
 - Ancient (Islands in the Rain)
 - Natural
- How to travel like an Alaskan; Visit Alaska like Alaskans - gear: trade yellow tourist raingear for green; a pair of extra tuffs
- Green
- Accessible, concentrated
 - Have it all
 - Don't have to choose
 - Don't have to compromise

NEXT STEPS – FIND BEST WAYS TO DO THE FOLLOWING:

- A. SHARE THE MESSAGE - websites, brochures, marketing partnerships, etc.
- B. DESTINATION MANAGEMENT - sustaining the experience of a place; 'living the brand'
- C. CONSISTENCY OVER THE LONG HAUL – establish an organization, with adequate funding, to present the marketing image for long enough to build brand recognition

OTHER INFORMATION REQUESTED

- How to keep downtown business intact
- How to do zoning ordinance in places that are skeptical about zoning (e.g. Talkeetna)
- How to direct visitors to destinations that don't conflict with residents
- Lessons from other Destination Marketing/Management Organizations