

Small Markets Meeting – February 22, 2007 Madison's Café in Jefferson City

Attending: Karen Krispin, Pansy Glenn, Amy Supple, Mark Wessels, Towanda Gelbach, Andy Thiem and Marci Bennett.

Branson Receptive Reception

Karen reviewed the comments about the Branson Reception that the participants sent to Andy after the event. The comments are attached for your review.

From the comments and those in attendance at the meeting, overall everyone thought the event was important and should be repeated again this year. A different time of year was suggested, possibly September. It will be important to look at the industry calendar before confirming a date (SYTA and the Tour of Missouri are both planned in September). It was also recommended that we look at the Hilton Promenade at Branson Landing.

A discussion was had about the time of day. Lunch was suggested and the committee felt that would limit the amount of time the attendees would have to visit the booths and it was recommended we keep the happy hour time slot.

A question about what to do with the money that is left over from the event (approximately \$2,000) is still undecided at this time. Marci will check with the accountant to see if MACVB can refund the money or not. Most feedback received is that people are comfortable with allocated the money for the 2007 event. If your CVB would like the money refunded (if MACVB is able) please notify Karen by March 31, 2007. Otherwise the money will be used for start up money for the 2007 event.

Please take a minute to look through your information from the event; we are missing the list of those who attended the event. **If you were the last one to work the registration table and have the sign in list or the fish bowl of business cards,** please contact Karen immediately.

Other suggestions were to schedule appointments to visit the area receptives the day of the event or the day after the event. Instead of walking in unannounced, we could send postcards stating representatives from MACVB Small Markets Committee would be visiting their office, giving the date and a time frame.

Before our next meeting, please take a minute to think about the next Branson Receptive Reception this fall. We will discuss the 2007 event briefly at the next meeting in March or April and finalize some details then. Once we have the event organized, we will submit a budget to the MACVB Board with a paragraph about the event for their approval.

Small Market Committee's Goals in 2007

Amy made the point that we must remember that we are the small markets with limited staff and money. Prior to planning the Branson Reception we focused on sharing ideas and suggestions, including health care. We must be careful not to spend our time and energy planning events only. Everyone's time is limited and to be successful, we must all give our input in steering the committee in a direction beneficial to everyone. Those attending the meeting agreed!

Suggestions of how to promote the Small Market in 2007:

- Small ads like in the Missouri Press, 2" X 2' directing to the MACVB Website, then to the Small Markets logo. Mark Wessels will check the website to make sure the Small Markets logo is there. He will forward his findings to Karen and she will get the information to Marci. If changes are made to the MACVB website, we should go through Marci.

- Press Releases – Maybe the new ad agency would write some releases on behalf of the MACVB Small Markets promoting day trips, extending your trip to Missouri, etc. We will ask Sam about the possibility of him sending Blaine a letter from MACVB thanking him for what a great job he is doing and asking him to introduce us to the new agency. We would be happy to provide them information for the releases.
- Profile Sheets for Market Place events from the state – The small markets would like representation on the profile sheets, even if it is a very small part directing tour operators to the MACVB website for the state's hidden gems. The proper channels should be gone through though; we don't want to "step on any toes".
- Sharing advertising/event ideas that others might benefit from. A meeting should be dedicated to a group discussion sharing the places you advertise/events you host in your area that you have seen positive results and the avenues you have tried that didn't work and why. This includes, but not limited to, billboards, email blasts, websites, radio, TV, print, events, and anything else you wish to share. This will help with the co-op advertising opportunities in the future.
- It was suggested we should explore a new name for the committee, small markets is not appealing to everyone. ☺

If anyone has any changes or additions to the meeting minutes, please feel free to forward them to Karen at your earliest convenience. (She gets caught up in the meetings and forgets to write things down!) The meeting was adjourned at 1:00 p.m. Thank you to everyone that was able to attend.

Comments from the Branson Reception from Event Participants.

What a great start to a great event. I was hoping for a higher number of guests, but there were a couple of quality receptives there and I think they will book some business with us. With hindsight, I would recommend doing this event again next year and we will participate. I think we can scale back the cash prizes, if everyone brings a door prize. Mentions at a few BARA events and other receptive events would be helpful, we would just have to be careful that it isn't perceived as a BARA event as some receptives perceive BARA as a clique and exclusive. The bingo cards worked well. Have some dedicated staff to work the registration table so it doesn't take away from the CVBs time in their booths. Do more with signage at registration, on the food table, at the bar, on the dining tables, etc. to reinforce the brand.

I agree as well! We had some valuable contacts and for the money, we did good

I agree with the comments everyone else expressed. I also would like to see the extra money go back into another reception at a future time. It is all about "baby steps" and I believe that this was a great cooperative effort.

If nothing else I was able to take back to my area a better understanding of what each of you have to offer. Thanks to everyone for your hard work

I agree with the e-mails that we should do it again. And I too was surprised by the drawing prizes, they were great! I vote to keep the money in place and use it for our next project or next years receptive

I agree with everyone's comments...it was our first event; we showed we are all working together and learned a lot. Thank you to everyone who worked so hard to make this happen. It is much appreciated.

I feel we should keep the extra money for other small markets projects. I am focusing on the numbers attending, after all we were a few unknowns. Now, I feel we have some creditability, and giving those prizes away helped make that creditability. I will come next year. Perhaps one or two of our representatives can make an appearance at one of their BARA quarterly meetings and identify our small markets group & announce the date for our reception. I will come next year.

I agree with all of the comments but would go stronger on the cash prizes and question whether we should use them at all, especially with the number and quality of door prizes given. A staff person mentioned that a couple of receptives suggested late August or early September as preferable.

I thought the event was good for a first time united effort. Everyone now knows the small markets are working together and I think that is a very positive message.

The crowd was not as large as we had hoped but I do think we had some quality receptives present. We can make a few adjustments and make this work in the future. I believe we should try it at least once more and hopefully everyone will agree to participate again.

I am not planning to talk about how many receptives were there. I am only going to talk about the quality discussions I had. There were several. I really believe we will benefit from this and I am willing to participate in this at least one more time. As for the left over funds, my suggestion is to keep the money in place to fund future projects. I think we need to decide whether this leftover money should be used for a future reception like this or for some other project. At this point my thoughts are that we should save these funds for the next

reception. If we want to do a joint advertising effort then we can collect money for that. Having funds already set aside will make the next receptive reception less costly for each market.

One suggestion for next time is that we can hedge our bets on the cash prizes or gift certificates and base the number given on the number of receptives that show up.

Also, thanks to everyone who put out the extra effort to get this first event in place.

Thanks for organizing this event. Even though it will have been open for a while, I think that we still should shoot for an early fall event at the Hilton. If the suggestions come in recommending a spring event, I would suggest the spring of '08 rather than coming back only 4-7 months later in the spring of '07. If we can get the few receptives that came to talk it up to their cohorts then I think we stand an excellent chance to grow the event. I would also recommend trying to get permission to quote a couple of the attendees. Those who are high profile and well-respected in the industry. A quote from someone like Gail Myer saying how he thoroughly enjoyed a fun evening with 15 of Missouri's Hidden Gems, etc., etc. I will definitely attend the next event, but if the numbers are still below 20-25, I would question whether I would commit to this on an annual basis. I recommend refunding the money

I thought the event went quite well considering the lack of communication with the Majestic staff before the event and the poor set up when we arrived. I would be willing to do this again with better attendance and maybe in a different location. To help keep costs down, we could scale back on the value (not the number) of cash prizes, especially with every CVB bringing at least one gift.

Apparently tempting prospective attendees with big cash prizes isn't enough to get them to come and it did add to the overall cost of the event and our participation. Perhaps the time of year was the main problem. Perhaps we should try a luncheon reception, say from 11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m., where folks would know they would have lunch taken care of and wouldn't lose an evening for a sales pitch. I did like the "bingo" card because that meant everyone stopped at every table.

Another idea would be to choose a couple of days and then break up into teams to hand deliver the binders and gift bags with goodies from each of the CVBs. I realize that does not allow each of us to specifically sell our communities one-on-one, but we could reach more people face-to-face with our overall message. Just a thought and it might not be workable. To take that thought a little farther, we also could create a game where the receptives would have to at least glance through all the information to answer a question about every community that plays up our individuality. Then they could submit a completed entry for a drawing for a really neat prize, something that would motivate them to take the time to review the information.