

Knox County Convention and Visitors Bureau 2018 Plan of Action UPDATED

Latest Revision by the Board of Directors at an
UPDATE PLANNING RETREAT
Wednesday, November 29, 2017
Facilitated by Pat & Sandy Crow & Justin Bauer

Original Prepared January 14, 2003
Updated and revised annually 2004 through 2018
*Last Revision Adopted: **January 25, 2017***

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 2018

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
Ag Awareness & School Tours
Amish Auctions, Farm Markets, Owl Creek Auction etc.
Antiques
Ariel-Foundation Park
B&B's and Inns (definition of rooms)
Bridge of Dreams
Camp Sychar
Chautauqua, Lyceum, & Music Series
Children's Garden
College & High School Athletics
Colleges/universities participation
Committee structure and operation
Community & CVB work well together
Community Concert Association Series
CVB Leadership – responsive to market
Daniel Decatur Emmett
Distinguished Young Women of Ohio
Downtown Mount Vernon Historic District
Farmers Market
Festivals & Events – All
First Fridays
Galleries
Geo Cache
Geographic Center of Ohio
Golf programs remain steady
Harvest@TheWoodward – Local Foods
Heart of Ohio Tour – HOOT
Heart of Ohio Trail
Hiawatha Water Park
Historic Homes & Buildings
Home Schooling Programs
Honey Run Waterfall
Hunting
Inter-organizational cooperation
Inter-Trail Connection Development/Ohio to Erie Trail
July 4th celebrations & related activities
Kenyon Athletic Center
Knox County Fair
Knox County Historical Museum
Knox County Park District

Knox County Parks – Communities
Knox County Symphony
KnoxWays Program – byways, trails waterways, parks,
other natural resources
Kokosing Gap Trail
Kokosing River Water Trail & Access Points
Local Grown Food – Farms
Lodging -Traditional
Memorial Building
Mohican Valley Trail
Mohican and Kokosing Rivers
Mound View Cemetery Tours
Ohio's Best Hometown (Ohio Magazine)
Outdoor Recreation – trails, byways, etc.
Pacemakers Drag Strip
Pelotonia
Partners-in-Tourism Events
Parades
Performing Arts
Print Material – magazines & brochures
Quality restaurants
Quarry Chapel Church
Ramser Arboretum
School alumni & reunions
Scenic Byways – Wally Road & Gateway to Amish
Country (US 62, SR 514)
Schnormeier Garden Tour
Second Saturdays
Signage – Wayfinding Initiative
Social Media / Network
SPI/The Wright Center
Sports Tournaments & Activities
Tourism Market – responsive to changes
Tree Frog Canopy Tours
Velvet Ice Cream – Ye Olde Mill
Visual Art Community Promotions
Visitors > Experience Guide Magazine
Waco Fly In
Wally Road
Web Sites – VKO, HKO (new), TF, etc.
Wolf Run Regional Park & Bark Park
Woodward Opera House

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

Assisting attractions to develop
Consumer & Community Input
CVB Board – dedication, participation, supportive
Education – Kenyon, MVNU, COTC, secondary schools,
home schooler

Faith-based institutions & Events
Self-guided Tours
Shopping
Web Sites – KnoxWays.info, DanEmmett.org,
VisitMountVernonOhio.org, DixieLand.org,
KnoxArts.info

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. First Steps Completed in 2016, next steps under evaluation – **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. Improve Utilization of assets/resources – e.g. Fairgrounds, Children’s Garden - **Development**
 - ii. KnoxWays Development Plans/Implementation – River Front – **Development**
 - iii. Tourism Signage – Wayfinding Initiative started late 2016. Larger committee formed, consultant hired and funded. 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**

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, coordinate among tourism destinations.
- Explore and consider options to develop a tourism app for Knox County
- Do a Survey “Survey Monkey” 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
- Plan for succession of Executive Director

3. Specific Development and Marketing Activities

- The Woodward, Harvest@TheWoodward
- Trails & Scenic Water Byways, Trail Connections, Ariel-Foundation Park, & River Fronts, Ohio-Erie Trail
- Continue to participate in Marketing Consortiums & continue to network within State
- 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 Line
- 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
- Bicycle Knox County – Maps/App
- Annual FAM (Familiarization Tours for out of the area Meeting & Event Planners) trips
- 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)

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, weekly calendar reports on WMVO, 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
8) Develop a succession plan for the Executive Director position	Committee
9) Review and consider updates for the CVB Code of Regulations	Committee, Staff

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 media 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 videos of Knox County tourism brand, image, and product for distribution on all forms of media – YouTube, Website, Social Media . . .	Staff, Committee
5) Develop methods and partners to enhance the marketing and success of the Woodward and other such Knox County meeting and conference facilities.	

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, as well as Products made or produced in Knox County Examples: Postcards; Re-usable Shopping Bag for Farmers Markets; T-Shirts, etc.	Committee
-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----------

C. Ideas for consideration in the Future

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.

TASKS: (Rank by order of importance)

**ASSIGNMENT +
DATE to COMPLETE:**

- | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|
| 1) Promote development of state and federal recognized byways and waterways throughout Knox County. | Committee |
| Designate 3C as a “Historic Corridor” or “ByWay” | 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 |
| 3) With Board approval, implement the destination development plan. | 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) Get feedback from service providers and consumers to use to measure the value of the CVB marketing programs. Consider working cooperatively with the local college to determine best choices and methods. | Staff & Committee |
| 4) Wayfinding Initiative – complete the Wayfinding Initiative and implement the signage program. | Staff & Committee |

III. Destination & Economic Development Committee (continued)

C. **FUTURE > 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 Bridges
 - c. Via Duct crossing
3. Waterways
4. Recreational Parks
5. ByWays & Highways

Consider Future Designation of the Johnny Appleseed ByWay

D. **FUTURE > Riverfront** - Encourage riverfront development throughout the county as part of the KnoxWays initiative as it relates to destinations or potential attractions such as the Dan Emmett House, railroad crossings, Ariel-Foundation Park

E. **DEFINE >** You know you're from Knox County when _____!