

South Central Tennessee Tourism Association Annual Report 2023

Name: South Central Tennessee Tourism Association

Edison ID Number: 69674

Edison Vendor ID: 0000076766

Term: July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2023

Amount: \$70,000; \$35,000 for FY 23

Progress on Opening Welcome Center, Developing Partnerships, and Generating New Members

Date: September 27, 2023

I. Executive Summary:

This report highlights the progress and steps taken in line with our goals to open a regional welcome center, develop robust partnerships, and generate new members. Despite facing unforeseen challenges, we have been persistent in our endeavor to forge ahead, maintaining our focus on providing local and accessible resources, fostering partnerships, and ensuring workforce development and entrepreneurship in tourism initiatives. The execution of our mission was made possible in part by funding received from our Endowment grant.

II. Goal: Development of Partnerships

Progress:

- Hired Dominic Gialdini as the Director of Strategic Partnerships to specifically work within regional tourism partnerships and distressed and at-risk communities.
- Initiated a consistent dialogue with regional groups, addressing their needs, and providing valuable guidance and strategic plan execution.
- Enhanced community support, especially in areas with limited resources and staff.

Funding:

- Investments made possible through our expanded services and marketing offerings, such as co-op brochures, virtual brochure racks, and other paid marketing opportunities.
- Revenue generated from in-house social media management and website development services.

Outcome:

- Successfully developed and reinforced multiple regional partnerships, paving the way for future collaborations and growth opportunities.

III. Goal: Opening of Regional Welcome Center in Lynchburg

Progress:

- Ongoing work to open a regional welcome center in Lynchburg, focused on driving regional traffic post visitors' Lynchburg tour.
- Hired a merchandising expert to create a sustainable strategy for the welcome center.

Funding:

- Similar to partnership development, funding sources included expanded services and marketing offerings.
- A portion of the investment also funded by merchandise sales, aiming to offset the welcome center expenses.

Outcome:

- Significant progress in setup and staffing, anticipating a successful first year of the Lynchburg Welcome Center.

IV. Goal: Generation of New Members

Progress:

- Despite the tragic loss of our coworker, Allen Pitner, who was tasked with membership generation, we are regrouping to continue our membership enhancement initiatives.
- Recruited Lori Grimes and Lauren Martin to aid tourism-related businesses, educating them about industry opportunities and effective marketing strategies.

Outcome:

- Work is underway to revamp our strategies, ensuring our goal of new member generation is met efficiently.
- Key performance indicators have been established to direct the organization toward success.

V. Conclusion and Future Steps:

Despite the challenges faced, our commitment to our goals remains unwavering. Our continued investments into critical areas of need and focus testify to our dedication to making a difference in regional tourism, community partnerships, and overall regional growth.

Future steps include:

- Continued support and expansion of strategic partnerships led by Dominic Gialdini.
- Continued prospecting, engagement, and dialogue for efficient and effective new member generation.