



**Thurston County Hotel & Motel Commission Meeting Agenda**  
**Monday, April 30, 2018 • 3:30 pm**

**AGENDA**

1. Welcome & Call to Order
2. Consent Calendar (items of a routine nature)
  - a. Approval of February 26, 2018 Minutes
  - b. Financials
3. STR Report
4. Marketing & Communications Report
5. Event Grant Program
6. Items from the Floor
7. Adjournment

**Next Meeting: June 25, 2018**



## Thurston County Hotel & Motel Commission Meeting Agenda Monday, February 26, 2018 • 3:30 pm

**ATTENDEES:** Jeetu Chaudhry, Greg Taylor, Valerie Walters, Nick Durant, Michael Gustaves, John Hutchings, Shauna Stewart, Craig Ottavelli (staff)

### MINUTES

1. Welcome & Call to Order – **Michael Gustaves called the meeting to order at 3:40 pm.**
2. Consent Calendar (items of a routine nature) – **It was moved, second, passed unanimously to approve the consent calendar as presented.**
  - a. Approval of November 20, 2017 Minutes
  - b. Financials
3. STR Report – Ms. Stuart reported on the 2018 scorecard included in the meeting packet. For 2018 occupancy was up 4.82%.
4. Marketing & Communications Report – The City of Olympia was recognized as one of the 29 best small cities in the US.
  - a. The Portland outreach resulted in two videos and substantial promotions related to the coffee trail.
  - b. The VCB also works as the regions Film Commission, hosting and supporting film crews and movie companies.
  - c. Copies were distributed of Handcrafted Meetings and Play It Different, available online at the VCB website [here](#).
  - d. Work continues between the Sports Commission and the Lacey Parks Board to promote sports facilities in the region.
5. Items from the Floor
  - a. Commissioners discussed leveraging TPA funds to for competitive grants to develop locally held events that bring travelers to the region. The VCB is currently exploring options for outreach and collaborating to bring events to the region, but does not have plans for a formal competitive process. Year one of a new event supported by a grant could lead to further/ongoing support by LTAC funds with sufficient tracking of room nights in partnership with local properties. Funding for a grant program for events based on a percentage of carry over funds from the previous year would impact the overall budget differently. Benefits of a grant program would need to be considered in relation to missed opportunities for more traditional event and tradeshow development. The next TPA agenda will include ‘*Event Grant Program*’ to further the conversation about the pros and cons of providing limited grants for events that meet highly structured criteria.
6. Adjournment – **Chair Gustaves adjourned the meeting at 4:45 pm.**

**Next Meeting: April 30, 2018**

**Olympia-Lacey-Tumwater Visitor & Convention Bureau**  
**Revenue & Expense Budget Performance - 2018 YTD**  
February 2018

	Feb 18	Budget	% of Budget	Jan - Feb 18
<b>Ordinary Income/Expense</b>				
<b>Income</b>				
<b>40000 - LTAC</b>				
40110 - LTAC-Lacey	6,666.67	6,666.67	100.0%	13,333.30
40120 - LTAC-Olympia	8,333.33	8,333.33	100.0%	16,666.70
40130 - LTAC-Tumwater	2,177.67	2,177.67	100.0%	4,355.34
<b>Total 40000 - LTAC</b>	<b>17,177.67</b>	<b>17,177.67</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>34,355.34</b>
<b>40200 - Membership</b>				
40210 - New Memberships	800.00	300.00	266.67%	1,400.00
40220 - Renewing Memberships	2,750.00	1,200.00	229.17%	4,250.00
<b>Total 40200 - Membership</b>	<b>3,550.00</b>	<b>1,500.00</b>	<b>236.67%</b>	<b>5,650.00</b>
<b>40300 - Private Funds</b>				
40310 - Advertising	0.00	0.00	0.0%	0.00
40320 - Event Income	0.00	0.00	0.0%	0.00
40330 - In Kind Event Income	0.00	0.00	0.0%	0.00
40340 - Sponsorship	0.00	0.00	0.0%	1,086.00
<b>Total 40300 - Private Funds</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.0%</b>	<b>1,086.00</b>
<b>40400 - TPA Income</b>				
40410 - TPA Revenue	61,155.17	59,782.77	102.3%	135,185.47
<b>Total 40400 - TPA Income</b>	<b>61,155.17</b>	<b>59,782.77</b>	<b>102.3%</b>	<b>135,185.47</b>
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>81,882.84</b>	<b>78,460.44</b>	<b>104.36%</b>	<b>176,276.81</b>
<b>Gross Profit</b>	<b>81,882.84</b>	<b>78,460.44</b>	<b>104.36%</b>	<b>176,276.81</b>
<b>Expense</b>				
<b>50100 - Marketing &amp; Communications</b>				
50110 - Advertising	13,351.34	9,983.33	133.74%	32,844.90
50120 - Content Development	2,830.00	2,830.00	100.0%	5,660.00
50130 - Distribution	0.00	0.00	0.0%	0.00
50140 - Layout & Design	383.71	500.00	76.74%	1,054.71
<b>Total 50150 - Media FAM Tours</b>	<b>223.40</b>	<b>730.00</b>	<b>30.6%</b>	<b>691.03</b>
50160 - Membership & Research	1,583.84	750.00	211.18%	3,438.86
50170 - Printing & Brochures	0.00	0.00	0.0%	416.67
<b>Total 50180 - Product &amp; Development</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>1,125.00</b>	<b>0.0%</b>	<b>0.00</b>
<b>Total 50200 - Special Projects</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.0%</b>	<b>47.10</b>
<b>Total 50300 - Visitor Guide</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.0%</b>	<b>0.00</b>
50400 - Website	31,851.57	31,377.80	101.51%	37,208.64
<b>Total 50100 - Marketing &amp; Communications</b>	<b>50,223.86</b>	<b>47,296.13</b>	<b>106.19%</b>	<b>81,361.91</b>
<b>Total 51100 - Annual Meeting</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.0%</b>	<b>0.00</b>
51200 - Meals & Registrations	155.04	300.00	51.68%	576.60
<b>Total 51300 - Member Events</b>	<b>2,308.90</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>2,308.90</b>
<b>Total 51000 - Community Relations</b>	<b>2,463.94</b>	<b>300.00</b>	<b>821.31%</b>	<b>2,885.50</b>
<b>52000 - Sales</b>				

	<b>Feb 18</b>	<b>Budget</b>	<b>% of Budget</b>	<b>Jan - Feb 18</b>
<b>Total 52100 · Tradeshow</b>	3,130.13	850.00	368.25%	8,239.25
<b>52200 · Event Sponsorship &amp; Bid Fees</b>	2,126.13	3,500.00	60.75%	2,204.75
<b>Total 52300 · FAM Tours</b>	400.00	25.00	1,600.0%	600.00
<b>52400 · Client Entertainment</b>	24.94	100.00	24.94%	24.94
<b>Total 52000 · Sales</b>	5,681.20	4,475.00	126.95%	11,068.94
<b>60000 · Operations</b>				
<b>Total 60100 · Personnel Expense</b>	39,084.79	40,744.03	95.93%	85,439.93
<b>Total 60200 · Internet and Technology</b>	2,129.83	2,488.75	85.58%	4,937.07
<b>60310 · Rent &amp; Facility Charges</b>	5,663.01	5,685.94	99.6%	11,263.25
<b>60320 · Equipment</b>	0.00	250.00	0.0%	0.00
<b>60340 · Insurance</b>	1,578.53	0.00	100.0%	1,792.02
<b>60360 · Licenses &amp; Fees</b>	0.00	25.00	0.0%	0.00
<b>60380 · Postage and Shipping</b>	36.30	200.00	18.15%	36.30
<b>Total 60400 · Professional Development</b>	2,046.67	1,880.00	108.87%	2,546.79
<b>60410 · Printing</b>	288.01	400.00	72.0%	685.37
<b>Total 60500 · Professional Fees</b>	105.82	55.00	192.4%	216.32
<b>60550 · Repairs &amp; Maintenance</b>	0.00	0.00	0.0%	0.00
<b>60570 · Supplies</b>	406.56	825.00	49.28%	1,021.84
<b>Total 60580 · Travel Expenses</b>	509.39	1,215.00	41.93%	1,084.85
<b>Total 60600 · Bank Charges</b>	3.65	12.50	29.2%	17.95
<b>Total 60000 · Operations</b>	51,852.56	53,781.22	96.41%	109,041.69
<b>61000 · TPA Administration</b>				
<b>Total 61105 · Marketing &amp; Operations</b>	115.62	20.00	578.1%	224.54
<b>Total 61200 · Professional Fees</b>	2,658.75	2,325.00	114.36%	4,952.92
<b>Total 61000 · TPA Administration</b>	2,774.37	2,345.00	118.31%	5,177.46
<b>Total Expense</b>	112,995.93	108,197.35	104.44%	209,535.50
<b>Net Ordinary Income</b>	-31,113.09	-29,736.91	104.63%	-33,258.69
<b>Total Other Income</b>	71.26	15.00	475.07%	149.93
<b>Net Other Income</b>	71.26	15.00	475.07%	149.93
<b>Net Income</b>	<b>-31,041.83</b>	<b>-29,721.91</b>	<b>104.44%</b>	<b>-33,108.76</b>



**Olympia-Lacey-Tumwater Visitor & Convention Bur**  
**Revenue & Expense Budget Performance - 1**  
**February 2018**

**Accrual Basis**

	<b>YTD Budget</b>	<b>% of Budget</b>	<b>Annual Budget</b>
<b>Ordinary Income/Expense</b>			
<b>Income</b>			
<b>40000 - LTAC</b>			
40110 - LTAC-Lacey	13,333.30	100.0%	80,000.00
40120 - LTAC-Olympia	16,666.70	100.0%	100,000.00
40130 - LTAC-Tumwater	4,355.30	100.0%	26,132.00
<b>Total 40000 - LTAC</b>	<b>34,355.30</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>206,132.00</b>
<b>40200 - Membership</b>			
40210 - New Memberships	600.00	233.33%	3,600.00
40220 - Renewing Memberships	2,400.00	177.08%	14,400.00
<b>Total 40200 - Membership</b>	<b>3,000.00</b>	<b>188.33%</b>	<b>18,000.00</b>
<b>40300 - Private Funds</b>			
40310 - Advertising	0.00	0.0%	44,870.00
40320 - Event Income	0.00	0.0%	25,300.00
40330 - In Kind Event Income	0.00	0.0%	15,000.00
40340 - Sponsorship	0.00	100.0%	40,000.00
<b>Total 40300 - Private Funds</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>125,170.00</b>
<b>40400 - TPA Income</b>			
40410 - TPA Revenue	127,984.52	105.63%	942,023.53
<b>Total 40400 - TPA Income</b>	<b>127,984.52</b>	<b>105.63%</b>	<b>942,023.53</b>
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>165,339.82</b>	<b>106.62%</b>	<b>1,291,325.53</b>
<b>Gross Profit</b>	<b>165,339.82</b>	<b>106.62%</b>	<b>1,291,325.53</b>
<b>Expense</b>			
<b>50100 - Marketing &amp; Communications</b>			
50110 - Advertising	17,816.63	184.35%	216,527.00
50120 - Content Development	5,660.00	100.0%	34,960.00
50130 - Distribution	0.00	0.0%	18,000.00
50140 - Layout & Design	800.00	131.84%	17,300.00
<b>Total 50150 - Media FAM Tours</b>	<b>4,705.00</b>	<b>14.69%</b>	<b>15,000.00</b>
50160 - Membership & Research	1,865.00	184.39%	22,154.00
50170 - Printing & Brochures	0.00	100.0%	14,000.00
<b>Total 50180 - Product &amp; Development</b>	<b>1,125.00</b>	<b>0.0%</b>	<b>22,500.00</b>
<b>Total 50200 - Special Projects</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>9,000.00</b>
<b>Total 50300 - Visitor Guide</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.0%</b>	<b>80,870.00</b>
<b>50400 - Website</b>	<b>33,377.80</b>	<b>111.48%</b>	<b>71,883.80</b>
<b>Total 50100 - Marketing &amp; Communications</b>	<b>65,349.43</b>	<b>124.5%</b>	<b>522,194.80</b>
<b>Total 51100 - Annual Meeting</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.0%</b>	<b>24,750.00</b>
<b>51200 - Meals &amp; Registrations</b>	<b>600.00</b>	<b>96.1%</b>	<b>4,250.00</b>
<b>Total 51300 - Member Events</b>	<b>375.00</b>	<b>615.71%</b>	<b>16,140.00</b>
<b>Total 51000 - Community Relations</b>	<b>975.00</b>	<b>295.95%</b>	<b>45,140.00</b>
<b>52000 - Sales</b>			

	YTD Budget	% of Budget	Annual Budget
Total 52100 · Tradeshow	9,275.00	88.83%	19,560.00
52200 · Event Sponsorship & Bid Fees	3,500.00	62.99%	8,700.00
Total 52300 · FAM Tours	50.00	1,200.0%	1,500.00
52400 · Client Entertainment	200.00	12.47%	1,600.00
Total 52000 · Sales	13,025.00	84.98%	31,360.00
60000 · Operations			
Total 60100 · Personnel Expense	81,488.11	104.85%	494,928.41
Total 60200 · Internet and Technology	4,966.50	99.41%	29,854.00
60310 · Rent & Facility Charges	11,371.84	99.05%	68,231.24
60320 · Equipment	500.00	0.0%	3,000.00
60340 · Insurance	0.00	100.0%	2,900.00
60360 · Licenses & Fees	25.00	0.0%	200.00
60380 · Postage and Shipping	400.00	9.08%	2,500.00
Total 60400 · Professional Development	3,380.00	75.35%	12,980.00
60410 · Printing	775.00	88.44%	4,775.00
Total 60500 · Professional Fees	110.00	196.66%	14,300.00
60550 · Repairs & Maintenance	0.00	0.0%	500.00
60570 · Supplies	1,650.00	61.93%	10,000.00
Total 60580 · Travel Expenses	1,630.00	66.56%	17,075.00
Total 60600 · Bank Charges	25.00	71.8%	275.00
Total 60000 · Operations	106,321.45	102.56%	661,518.65
61000 · TPA Administration			
Total 61105 · Marketing & Operations	35.00	641.54%	3,135.00
Total 61200 · Professional Fees	4,650.00	106.51%	27,900.00
Total 61000 · TPA Administration	4,685.00	110.51%	31,035.00
Total Expense	190,355.88	110.08%	1,291,248.45
Net Ordinary Income	-25,016.06	132.95%	77.08
Total Other Income	30.00	499.77%	200.00
Net Other Income	30.00	499.77%	200.00
Net Income	-24,986.06	132.51%	277.08



2018

# BUSINESS AND MARKETING PLAN

SERVING THURSTON COUNTY



[EXPERIENCEOLYMPIA.COM](http://EXPERIENCEOLYMPIA.COM)









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# Message From Board President & Ceo

## VCB INVESTORS, MEMBERS AND FRIENDS,

Thank you for your continued partnership. We are proud to work with a diverse group of passionate individuals and businesses who make Thurston County a remarkable place to visit and promote.

Last year, the Olympia-Lacey-Tumwater Visitor & Convention Bureau (VCB) launched its new destination brand. With the launch came a new name, brand platform, website, visitor guide, social media presence, advertising campaigns, activation events, public relations and more. In 2018 we will take those investments to the next level. Our theme for the year is "elevate", meaning we will elevate newly launched programs with an unflinching commitment to get better every day.

The team will also work towards accomplishing four key strategic objectives outlined in the 2018-2021 Strategic Plan. These objectives are as follows:

- Build a Cult Following: Increase awareness for the brand
- Do Sales and Marketing that Works: Amplify our message with a fanatical focus to put heads in beds
- Craft the Destination: Influence placemaking and product development initiatives to enhance the visitor experience while maintaining local quality of life
- Create Raving Fans: Engage the community to accomplish a shared vision together

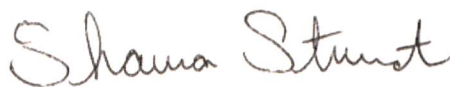
The following pages reveal the VCB's plans to strengthen the region's economy by developing meaningful experiences and promoting travel to vibrant Thurston County. We cannot do it alone. We need all of our members, partners and friends to engage, celebrate and join us.

Together we will do great things.



Jill Barnes

President, Board of Directors



Shauna Stewart

Chief Experience Officer





## Board of Directors

### **Jill Barnes**

The Washington Center  
for the Performing Arts

### **Patty Belmonte**

Hands On Children's Museum

### **Janine Condit**

Hampton Inn Olympia/Lacey

### **Christina Daniels**

Huber's Gasthaus

### **Michael Davidson**

DoubleTree by Hilton

### **Joe Downing**

Port of Olympia

### **Sue Falash**

Regional Athletic Complex (RAC)

### **Kelly Green**

South Puget Sound  
Community College

### **Jason Hearn**

Lacey City Council

### **Sans Gilmore**

Sans M. Gilmore, P.S., Inc.

### **Eileen Swarthout**

Tumwater City Council

### **Patrick Knutson**

River's Edge Restaurant/  
Budd Bay Cafe

### **Aslan Meade**

Thurston Economic  
Development Council

### **Sandra Miller**

Washington  
Hospitality Association

### **Lisa Parshley**

City of Olympia

### **Kathleen Thomas**

Saint Martin's University

## ENGAGE AND COLLABORATE

We are here to help you succeed. If you want to learn how you can get plugged into our dynamic marketing and sales initiatives, please reach out! (360) 704-7544 or [Info@ExperienceOlympia.com](mailto:Info@ExperienceOlympia.com)

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Serving as the region's official destination marketing organization, Experience Olympia & Beyond works day in and day out to put Thurston County on the map. Our team works with meeting and wedding planners, tour operators, sports event organizers, and leisure travelers to drive visitor dollars into the region. These dollars support local businesses and a vibrant quality of life for residents, but these dollars can't be taken for granted.

Before a visitor experiences Thurston County, they must first choose Thurston County, and before they can choose our destination, they must first choose to travel. Working behind the scenes in their decision-making process (from dreaming and planning to booking and experiencing), our destination marketing team influences the hearts and minds of these potential visitors. From influencing articles placed in favorite publications or blogs, to creating share-worthy video content and staying top-of-mind on social media, to serving up digital ads directly to our target market, we work to plant and grow seeds of interest for Thurston County.



The business and marketing plan details how we plan to influence visitors in 2018 to drive economic development in our region. Our primary focus is to elevate our existing programs, using data and analytics to drive decisions, and design more sophisticated messaging to put heads in beds. We also look forward to implementing two new initiatives related to our role as Thurston County's Sports Commission:

- Create a sport commission logo to improve visibility in the sports market
- Plan and implement a sports banquet celebrating local athletes and the impact of sports tourism on our local economy

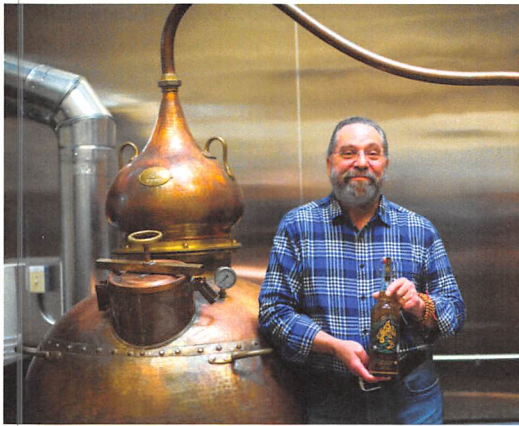
We know that what makes a great place to visit also makes it a great place to live and do business. Through effective destination marketing and sales strategies, we will continue to elevate the region's profile to attract more visitors, talent and businesses to the region.



## BUILD A CULT FOLLOWING

Increase awareness and love for the brand. People will speak passionately about Thurston County using language inspired by our brand platform and key messages, and easily recognize our visual identity—maybe even get a tattoo.

- RELENTLESSLY PURSUE VISITORS & KEEP BRAND PROMISE
- INSPIRE LOCALS TO EMBRACE THE BRAND



## DO SALES & MARKETING THAT WORKS

Amplify our message with a fanatical focus to put heads in beds. Visitors will choose Thurston County and the VCB will achieve and maintain a competitive advantage through extraordinary excellence.

- INFLUENCE THE INFLUENCERS TO REACH TARGET MARKETS
- USE RESEARCH & DATA TO DRIVE MESSAGING AND DECISIONS
- INNOVATE TO GAIN COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE
- IMPROVE THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SALES PROCESS

## CRAFT THE DESTINATION

Influence place-making and product development initiatives to enhance the visitor experience while maintaining local quality of life. The VCB will serve as the destination management experts.

- CREATE MEMORABLE VISITOR EXPERIENCES
- SERVE AS THOUGHT LEADERS
- CULTIVATE PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES
- ENSURE RESPONSIBLE TOURISM GROWTH



## CREATE RAVING FANS

Engage the community to accomplish a shared vision—together. The VCB will serve as a highly respected, wildly effective, go-to resource for tourism, marketing and economic development. Stakeholders will feel valued and value the business brought to the region by the VCB.

- ENGAGE THE COMMUNITY & CREATE MEANINGFUL CONNECTIONS
- INVITE NEW MEMBERS TO THE TABLE
- DEMONSTRATE VALUE TO KEY STAKEHOLDERS





## Goals & METRICS

In addition to the goals and measurable results outlined here, the VCB team also uses third-party research to monitor the health and vitality of tourism in Thurston County on an aggregate level. Dean Runyan Travel Research measures annual visitor spending, tax receipts and visitor volume. STR Reports measure weekly trends related to hotel occupancy and average daily rate.

Marketing & Communications Goals	2018	Change from 2017 Actuals
Unique Web Visits	97,040	+10%
Social Media Total Reach	1,467,867	+10%
Earned Media Placements	141 articles	+10%
PR Impressions	302 million	+10%
Group Sales Goals*	2018	Change from 2017 Actuals*
Lead Room Night	13,300	+30%
Booked Room Nights	2,920	+30%
Leads	147	+30%
Leads Booked	45	+30%
Visitor Services	2018	Change from 2017 Actuals
Walk-in visitors served at Visitor Information Center (VIC)	24,000	+0%

\*Includes leads for meetings, events, sports and tour/travel



# Situational Analysis

## TOURISM WORKS

Travel is a \$2.3 trillion-dollar industry supporting 15.3 million jobs nationwide. In fact, one out of every nine U.S. jobs depend on travel and tourism. Locally, Thurston County's tourism industry supports 3,040 jobs and generates \$303.2 million in direct spending. In 2016, Thurston County outpaced the competition in terms of growth. The average growth in Washington State was 3 percent, while Thurston County grew by 7.7 percent and was the only destination whose growth increased year over year.

### Thurston County Travel Impacts

- Total Destination Spending \$303.2M
- Total Tax Revenues \$31.8M
- Total Jobs/Employment 3,040
- Total Local Tax Receipts \$10.2M
- Total Overnight Person-Trips 1.2M

#### Sources:

Dean Runyan "2016 Travel Impacts", April 2017  
U.S. Travel Association

### DestinationNEXT Futures Study

In 2017, Destinations International released a futures study identifying top trends and strategies for destination organizations to consider as they adapt to the rapidly changing marketplace. The research identified five key roles destination organizations must focus on moving forward. These roles include: curators, adopters, catalysts, activists, and collaborators. Additionally, the study identified three transformational opportunities for the future:

- Destination management – playing a greater role in product development
- Business model – greater emphasis on partners and collaboration
- Sales and marketing – shifting from broad cast to engagement and transactional to relational



Image source: DestinationNEXT Futures Study 2017



### Project: Time-Off

America's declining vacation usage is resulting in a \$223 billion loss to the economy. These wasted days impact health, happiness, career success and the tourism industry. Project: Time Off is a coalition, supported by the industry, helping to tell the story of the value of time off. With the bold vision to change the way American culture thinks and behaves about their vacation time, Project: Time Off is encouraging a radical shift away from stockpiling vacation days to creating memories, relaxing and rejuvenating for overall fulfillment.

#### Sources:

Destinasionmarketing.org  
Projecttimeoff.com



# BUDGET

EXPENSE	2018
<b>Marketing &amp; Communications</b>	
Content Development	\$34,960
Advertising	\$216,527
Website	\$71,833.80
Printing & Brochures	\$14,000
Distribution	\$18,000
Layout & Design	\$17,300
Special Projects	\$9,000
Media FAM Tours	\$18,000
Visitor Guide	\$80,870
Product Development	\$22,500
Membership & Research	\$22,154
<b>Total Marketing &amp; Communications</b>	<b>\$522,194.80</b>

<b>Sales</b>	
Tradeshows	\$19,560
FAM Tours	\$1,500
Client Entertainment	\$1,600
Event Sponsorships & Bid Fees	\$8,700
<b>Total Sales</b>	<b>\$31,360</b>

<b>Community Relations</b>	
Member Events	\$16,140
Annual Meeting	\$24,750
Meals and Registrations	\$4,250
<b>Total Community Relations</b>	<b>\$45,140</b>

<b>Administration</b>	
Personnel	\$494,928.41
Operations (rent, technology, equipment, postage, license & fees, supplies, etc.)	\$166,560.24
<b>Total Administration</b>	<b>\$661,518.65</b>

<b>TPA Commission</b>	
Fund & Administration Fees	\$31,035

<b>TOTAL EXPENSE</b>	<b>\$1,291,248.45</b>
<b>NET INCOME</b>	<b>277.08</b>

INCOME	2018
<b>Private</b>	
Advertising	\$44,870
In Kind Event Income (Annual Meeting)	\$15,000
Event Income	\$25,300
Sponsorship	\$40,000
<b>Total Private</b>	<b>\$109,245</b>

<b>Membership</b>	
New Memberships	\$3,600
Renewing Memberships	\$14,400
<b>Total Membership</b>	<b>\$18,000</b>

<b>Lodging Tax (LTAC)</b>	
City of Lacey	\$80,000
City of Olympia	\$100,000
City of Tumwater	\$26,132
<b>Total LTAC</b>	<b>\$206,132</b>

<b>Tourism Promotion Area (TPA)</b>	
TPA Revenue	\$942,023.53
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>\$1,291,325.53</b>







## INDUSTRY AFFILIATIONS

To build relationships with industry influencers and prospective clients, and to stay current with industry trends, the VCB actively engages in the following organizations.

- Association of the United States Army (AUSA)
- Destinations International
- Destination Marketing Association of the West (DMA West)
- Meeting Professionals International, Washington State Chapter (MPI)
- National Association of Sports Commissions (NASC)
- National Tour Association (NTA)
- Public Relations Society of America (PRSA)
- Society of Government Meeting Professionals (SGMP)
- Washington Society of Association Executives, Washington State Chapter (WSAE)
- Washington Society of Destination Marketing Organizations (WSDMO)
- Washington Tourism Alliance (WTA)



## MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS

With a fanatical focus to put heads in beds, the VCB does marketing that works. By applying industry best practices and leveraging research and data to drive content, the VCB differentiates Thurston County as a decidedly different destination and helps visitors choose our region over the competition.

In 2018, the VCB will build on proven marketing strategies with an emphasis on influencer marketing. By working with travel and lifestyle influencers on social media, online and in print and in traditional medias we can amplify our message further and faster.

Year-round promotion will keep the area top-of-mind for trip planning and shoulder season promotions will help bolster business during the slower tourism season.

Marketing & Communications Goals	2018	Change from 2017 Actuals
Unique Web Visits	97,040	+10%
Social Media Total Reach	1,467,867	+10%
Earned Media Placements	141 articles	+10%
PR Impressions	302 million	+10%





## LEISURE TRAVEL

### Trends:

- Digital-first Word of Mouth: Every traveler is a storyteller. Consumers continue to look towards technology to discover and share experiences online
- The Bourdain Effect: Food communicates a unique sense of place. Visitors seek out local cuisine to directly experience the history of a region, the soul of its people and the rhythm of daily life
- Bliesure Travel: Mixing business with pleasure, business travelers are increasingly viewing work trips as adventures and bringing their families along for the fun
- Multigenerational Travel: Family travel is one of the fastest growing segments in tourism, accounting for a third of all leisure trips

### Target Audiences:

- Drive Market: Consumers within a 3.5-hour drive of Thurston County with emphasis on Seattle, Portland and Vancouver, BC.
- Generational Travelers: **Millennial Travelers** buy experiences, not things. **Baby Boomers/Mature Travelers** are more interested in soft adventure travel, experiencing nature, culture and natural wonders with mild physical activity.
- Niche Markets: Lifestyle travelers with interest in authentic experiences such as farm to table, arts, culinary, biking, coffee, family fun and beer-wine-spirits-cider experiences.

"In a time in which almost every experience can be digitized, food stands alone as stubbornly analog."

– Greg Oates, Skift.com



## DESTINATION BRANDING

In our pursuit to increase awareness and love for Thurston County's brand, the VCB will relentlessly pursue visitors, keep our brand promise and inspire locals to embrace the brand. An effective destination brand elevates the region's profile, creates preference for the area and inspires local pride.

### Key Initiatives:

- Support brand through consistent use of brand messaging and visual identity
- Provide a brand toolkit and training to local businesses and community organizations
- Encourage use of #DecidedlyDifferent on social media by local businesses, residents and visitors
- Partner with the Thurston Community Economic Alliance to effectively brand Thurston County as a place to visit, live and do business





## PAID MEDIA/ADVERTISING

The VCB will increase brand visibility and destination awareness through paid advertising in key markets.

Paid Media includes print ads, digital ads, paid search, and social media advertising. Digital advertising allows us to micro-target the right visitors for our destination. Consumer brand campaigns will run during Thurston County's slow seasons to drive overnight stays.

### Key Initiatives:

- Direct Marketing Tactics - paid advertisements, paid digital content, banner ads, search engine optimization and search engine marketing.

## DESTINATION ADVERTISING

AAA Journey Magazine  
 Direct Digital and Retargeting Advertising  
 Experience Washington  
 Google Ad Words  
 Go-Washington.com  
 King 5 Evening Magazine  
 NW Travel and Lifestyle Magazine  
 Pacific NW Golf Magazine  
 Scenic Byway Map and Guide  
 Social Media  
 Swarner Communications  
 ThurstonTalk  
 TripAdvisor  
 Visit Seattle  
 Washington Festivals and Events Magazine

## PUBLIC RELATIONS/EARNED MEDIA

Due to the personal nature of travel, word of mouth and trusted endorsements are key factors when planning future travel. Successful public relations strategies generate positive earned media placements.

### Target Audience:

Lifestyle and travel writers with focus and influence in farm to table, art, culinary, biking, coffee, family fun and beer-wine-spirits-cider.

### Key Initiatives:

Continue to build and nurture relationships with targeted media contacts through ongoing communications and proactive outreach.

- Develop and pitch seasonal story sheets, highlighting news, trends and themes in Thurston County
- Maintain updated press kit
- Host VIP client/media event
- Host ongoing FAM tours for select media





SOCIAL AND DIGITAL MEDIA

Today’s traveler lives on their mobile devices. Content marketing is a strategic marketing approach focused on creating and distributing valuable, relevant, and consistent brand messaging to target audiences.

Key Initiatives:



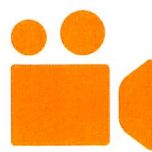
Website: Regularly update and create new content with inspiring destination and event information. Conduct a conversion study to measure results



Social Media: Connect, engage and inspire our target audiences. Encourage visitors to share their stories to their own networks by building on the success of the selfie spots



Blog: Full of powerful photos, destination tips and travel guides, our blog is another platform used to connect and inspire travel to Thurston County



Video Content – Visitors have an insatiable appetite for video content. The VCB will create and distribute videos, telling the brand story of travel to Thurston County



E-newsletters: Email marketing helps us stay connected and keep our consumer database informed of what’s happening in Thurston County. Lead nurturing campaigns will target specific visitors with relevant content



Photography – A picture is worth a thousand words. We will work with photographers to capture authentic destination experiences to be used across all marketing platforms and publications



GROUP SALES

When people come together to meet, celebrate or play, amazing things happen. Face-to-face interactions forge relationships, generate ideas and build skills that last a lifetime. Perhaps of greater interest to Thurston County are the jobs, revenue and far-reaching community impact group business has on our local economy.

With more than 2,700 hotel rooms and 40 special event venues, Thurston County is a unique and convenient option for meetings, tours, weddings and sporting events. Group sales are highly dependent on relationships. Our team works diligently with industry influencers to bring more people and more money into our local community and businesses. With increased capacity, our team will also work more closely with member businesses to ensure they are able to capitalize on the leads generated for the region.

Group Sales Goals*	2018	Change from 2017 Actuals
Lead Room Nights	13,300	+30%
Booked Room Nights	2,920	+30%
Leads	147	+30%
Leads Booked	45	+30%

\*Includes leads for meetings, events, sports and tour/travel



# TOUR AND TRAVEL SALES

## DOMESTIC TRAVEL TRENDS

Group travel continues to gain popularity. Baby boomers make up more than half of packaged travel spending in the U.S. According to AARP, these are still the most active travelers, making four to five trips a year. More than half of these trips are within the U.S., and many continue to travel with kids or grandkids.

Recently, other demographics have crept into the fold. The most innovative suppliers are creating experiences for millennial and generation X travelers. According to a study by WYSE Travel, the number of travelers older than age 30 have shown the biggest percentage of increase in the last decade. Generation X travelers account for one out of every three travelers, averaging three to four trips a year. The ability to make reservations for hotels and attractions using a mobile device is now the second biggest consideration after price.

One commonality with all demographics is that they are all seeking authentic experiences. They will immerse themselves in local culture. They want to “get off the bus” and become a part of the destination they are visiting. Travel that is focused on “recharging” and “rejuvenating” is growing with travelers seeking a healthier work/life balance. Notably, visits to secondary and tertiary cities are on the rise as travelers flock to quieter destinations. These destinations are also more affordable than ever, as the recent popularity of first-tier destinations like Seattle, Las Vegas, San Francisco and New York have priced out many groups. Culinary “farm-to-table” or “kitchen garden” experiences also have remained popular for the past few years, following the vein of immersion in local culture through sampling fresh, locally-crafted foods and beverages.



photo by Doug Walker

## INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL TRENDS

Approximately 7 percent of Washington State’s visitors in 2016 were international travelers. Those same visitors accounted for 15 percent of total visitor spending. International visitors stay longer, spend more money and visit more cities within a destination than domestic travelers. Seattle-Tacoma International Airport, the primary point of entry for overseas travelers, has been the fastest-growing U.S. airport for two of the past three years and in 2016, became one of the top ten busiest airports in the country.

According to the Port of Seattle, China is now the top overseas market with a 20 percent increase in arrivals to Washington State in 2016. United Kingdom notched the second-most arrivals, however, this market showed a 10 percent decrease year over year. Two other top markets, Japan and Germany, have also slipped, showing 11 and 13 percent decreases respectively. One notable emerging market in 2016 was India, showing 22 percent growth year over year.

It should also be noted that Canada generated the most international travelers to the U.S. with nearly 20 million visitors by air and by land. Many of those traveling by land can reach Thurston County in less than a day.

International travel represents a significant growth opportunity for Washington State and its cities. Visit Seattle partnered with the Port of Seattle on 16 outbound sales missions and 51 inbound familiarization tours in 2016, however, without a state-wide marketing effort, only a limited amount of financial resources are available to extend sales efforts to destinations outside of the Seattle-area.

### Key Initiatives:

- Partner with Visit Seattle, Port of Seattle and Washington State DMO’s on statewide tour operator familiarization tours and tradeshow opportunities
- Attend and promote Thurston County as a travel destination at the following industry conferences and tradeshows
  - Go West Summit
  - NTA Travel Exchange
  - Spotlight on the Northwest
  - Swarner JBLM Travel Show
  - Develop and promote regional itineraries based on travel trends
  - Continue product development initiatives and engage members in packaged travel opportunities



## MILITARY POPULATION ON JBLM

Given the proximity to JBLM, the nearly 100,000 soldiers, airmen and their families are long term tourists to Thurston County.

### Target Audiences:

- **Military Families:** This audience is looking for family-friendly attractions and overall destination information. They need hotel information for visiting family and transition periods. Individuals can also be referral sources for group business such as military balls or spouses clubs. These events generate significant room nights and visitor spending.
- **Military Retreats, Yellow Ribbon and Strong Bonds:** Many group business leads come from the local contracting office based on requests by JBLM officers. These leads are available for bid by registered businesses. The VCB can help member partners receive and access these bids.

### Key Initiatives:

- Participate in advertising and direct sales programs with Swarner Communications, official media outlet for JBLM
- Work with Washington PTAC Office to access and distribute group business leads
- Attend Lacey Military Affairs Meetings and identify local military community leaders and referral opportunities



Meetings are being redesigned for the millennial mindset. Planners are encouraging a more flexible and dynamic meeting format resulting in more improved employee satisfaction and retention. Successful hotels and venues offer a relaxed social setting for meeting attendees, and, even hotels that don't boast an onsite restaurant will partner with other eateries close by for a memorable, local food and beverage experience.

### Target Audience:

Based on Thurston County's destination assets and available meeting space, the VCB will focus on targeting smaller meetings. Specifically, we will align our prospecting efforts with the region's assets and economic development priorities by pursuing agriculture and food systems, wine-beer-spirits-cider, and arts and culture events.

### Key Initiatives:

- Generate increase lead distribution and booked business from meeting planners, group leaders and event organizers
- Promote Thurston County at tradeshows
  - South Sound Wedding Show
  - MPI Cascadia Conference
  - WSAE Annual Conference
  - MPI HIVE Event
- Build and nurture relationships with key meeting planners through engaging and attending industry meetings and educational events
- Plan one meeting planner familiarization tour
- Host quarterly Wedding Collaborative meetings to engage members looking to book more wedding business
- Execute two targeted sales missions to Seattle and Portland
- Establish Conference Services program for confirmed group bookings in Thurston County to ensure a positive experience pre- and post- event
- Manage destination profile on CVENT and manage leads generated

## MEETING AND EVENT SALES

Meetings and events are vital to our region's economic growth. Meeting attendees typically stay longer and spend more money than leisure travelers. Group business also has longer booking windows ensuring positive economic impact for future years.

### Trends:

Thurston County is chock full of unique indoor and outdoor venues for meetings. The challenge is planning and executing meetings and events for groups larger than 400 people. There just aren't enough large spaces, or spaces with multiple breakout rooms under one roof.

Hospitality consulting firm Andrew Freeman & Co. predicts a decline in formal banquet events, replacing them with fun, interactive meal experiences. Expect the "farm-to-table" and "kitchen garden" experience to apply to smaller meetings and events. Minimalism is also a growing trend. The more advanced technology becomes, fewer materials are needed in the meeting room.





## SPORTS COMMISSION

Sports tourism includes those who travel for the purpose of observing or participating in a sporting event. People of all ages travel to participate in team sports such as soccer, basketball, baseball and volleyball, and individual sports such as golf, running, birding and cycling. From world-class facilities and natural assets to our centralized location, Thurston County's economy benefits from its unique position in this market.

### Trends:

Sports event organizers see smaller destinations as opportunities to promote their sport because they can approach the destination knowing that their event will "take over" a smaller community and will receive the undivided attention of the Sports Commission and facilities staff. Smaller sports commissions have been recognized for their ability to offer better service to sports event organizers because of the relationships that they have with municipal parks and recreation departments, school districts and business leaders. Planners know that their event won't get lost in the clutter of other events that might coincide with it in larger destinations.



### Key Initiatives:

- Targeted print and digital advertising
- Maintain dedicated sports section of the website
- Distribute Sports Facility Guide
- Support event bookings and success with bid fees and event sponsorships
- Generate increase lead distribution and booked business from sports event organizers.
- Attend National Association of Sports Commissions Conference
- Organize and execute a sports banquet recognizing community sports leaders and educate constituents on the impacts of sports tourism
- Leverage Sports Commission Advisory Committee and Sports Task Force to identify areas of opportunity for sports tourism and foster local participation in the service delivery process

### **The VCB helps event directors, participants and observers experience an exceptional event in Thurston County. We help with the following:**

- Assemble bid team/local organizing committee • Bid preparation assistance
- Presentation of bids • Connections to Thurston County community • Facility and site selection support
- Government relations • Hospitality services • Host site inspections • Secure rooms and rates for local hotels
- Marketing and promotion • Public relations • Research events open to bid • Review requests for proposals
- Vendor/supplier referrals • Visitor information and welcome packets



# VISITOR SERVICES

Travelers seek out Visitor Information Centers as a trusted, unbiased resource of information. The purpose of Visitor Services is to drive visitor spending in the region by welcoming area visitors and providing them with the information needed to stay longer and spend more.

Visitor Services	2018	Change from 2017 Actuals
Walk-in visitors served at Visitor Information Center (VIC)	24,000	+0%

## VISITOR INFORMATION CENTER

The Visitor Information Center (VIC) is iconically located on the Capital Campus with easy access to Interstate-5, Downtown Olympia and the region as a whole. While taking a break from their digital devices, many visitors seek out the personalized, insider information offered by local visitor information Specialists. Our team stands ready to welcome and inform.

Open seven days a week, a minimum of 355 days a year, the VIC serves as a valuable resource for travelers on the go. Our visitor services team positively impacts visitor spending throughout Thurston County and Washington State by encouraging travelers to explore more of the area and stay overnight.

### Key Initiatives:

- Recruit and train volunteer visitor information specialists, passionate about the region
- Provide brochures, maps and guides directing visitors to enjoy Thurston County
- Coordinate FAM (Familiarization) Tours for volunteers to gain first-hand experience at VCB member businesses



# FULFILLMENT AND COLLATERAL

The Thurston County Official visitor guide helps travelers decide where to go, what to see and where to stay. Research shows that Visitor Guides help visitors to increase their length of stay by an average of 1.9 days. Visitor guide users tend to be baby boomers and older with higher than average income. Between the extra lodging and higher daily spend, users are considered “high value” to the region as a whole. Of undecided travelers, more than 80 percent were influenced to choose a destination after reviewing a visitor guide.

“It’s incredibly easy to connect with something in print. You just pick it up. Sometimes, the simplest solutions are the best solutions.”

– Professor Ian Cross, Center for Marketing Technology at Bentley University  
[Skift.com](http://Skift.com)

### Key Initiatives:

The VCB will leverage the power of storytelling in Thurston County’s official Visitor Guide. The guide reads more as a lifestyle magazine than a traditional listings publication. From content to layout, the entire guide will be designed to deeply connect with the audience, create a sense of authenticity for the region and inspire visitors to choose Thurston County over other travel destinations.

The VCB will print and distribute Visitor Guide’s along the Interstate-5 corridor, in local hotels, at visitor events and upon visitor request. Our distribution strategy targets regional travelers and cruise passengers in Washington, Oregon and Vancouver, BC.

\*WACVB study conducted by Destination Analysts, March 2014 and Visitor Guide study conducted by National Laboratory for Tourism Ecommerce, Temple University March 2014





## DESTINATION MANAGEMENT

In 2018 and beyond, the VCB will play a greater role in product development and placemaking initiatives to enhance the visitor experience while maintaining local quality of life.

## Key Initiatives

- Hospitality Training - Elevate customer service and hospitality culture throughout the region
- Destination product development - Package amenities, facilities, products and services to deliver quality experiences for visitors
  - South Sound Coffee Trail
  - South Sound Craft Crawl
  - South Sound Wine Trail
  - Thurston Bountiful Byway
  - NEW: The Year of the Bike, create a biking affinity group to help package and promote regional offerings to the biking community
- Ensure responsible tourism growth by directly and indirectly marketing responsible tourism
- Develop interest-based itineraries for marketing and sales activities
- Provide insight, support and connections to entrepreneurs interested in starting or scaling tourism-related businesses

## COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS AND MEMBERSHIP

The VCB works with one-of-a-kind professionals, passionate about serving up the best of what they have to offer. These are the people who work day in and day out to create memorable and meaningful experiences for our visitors. From the coffee shop baristas and hotel managers to local artists and brewers, Thurston County is rich with people and stories that bring our destination to life and make this a remarkable place to visit.

In 2018 the VCB will engage the community and create meaningful community connections to move the tourism industry forward. We will leverage the power of in-person connections, local media and strategic relationships to build networks, advance business interests, and bring people together to accomplish a shared vision.

## Key Initiatives

- Destination Training – Educate and inspire local tourism and hospitality professionals to share Thurston County's brand story with visitors. With a renewed sense of pride and enhanced knowledge base, locals become brand champions, contributing to a healthy tourism community
- Invite new members to the table – Offer local businesses the opportunity to join the tourism community and benefit from visitor spending
- Strategic Alliances – Partner with tourism and non-tourism organizations to enhance quality of life and economic development in Thurston County
- Tourism Together – Quarterly membership events designed to build up the tourism community through valuable education, meaningful connections and intentional conversation to spark innovation and success
- Demonstrate Value to Key Stakeholders – Through regular communication, we will celebrate heads in beds, connect the dots between tourism and quality of life, and share the story of tourism's impact in greater economic development
- Thurston Community Economic Alliance – Partner with Thurston County's Economic Development Council and over 100 community partners to create economic prosperity for the region.







## CONNECT WITH US

We are here for you. If you have questions, comments or ideas, please feel free to reach out. We are delighted to connect with you via email, phone or in person.



**(360) 704-7544**

**INFO@EXPERIENCEOLYMPIA.COM**

