



Franklin County Tourism Network **Planning Team Meeting 2/27/09**

Attendees: Lloyd Griscom, High Peaks Alliance; Betty Gensel, Coastal Enterprises, Inc.; Alison Hagerstrom, Greater Franklin Development Corp.; Fred Hardy, Franklin County Commissioner; Shaunacy Cobb, Mountain Counties Heritage; Dina Jackson, Androscoggin Valley Council of Governments; Evelyn McAllister, Rangeley Lakes Region Chamber of Commerce; Rick Martin, Comfort Inn Suites; Bonnie Perkins, Jay, Livermore, Livermore Falls Chamber of Commerce; and Lorna Nichols, Franklin County Chamber of Commerce.

Important Decisions

1. Planning team should communicate monthly but does not have to meet that often.
2. FCTN is not ready to have a booth at the Franklin County Business Expo.
3. The group is unsure of who should provide staff support going forward. Lorna is exploring her capacity and will get back to Shaunacy. Planning team input will be requested before any decisions are made.
4. Workgroups will hold a conference call by the end of March to determine which businesses should be recruited. Next steps after this call will be asking each participant to recruit one business, hold a meeting/conference call to determine the chair, and then decide on a path forward.

Workgroups

1. Marketing/Branding: Dina*, Evelyn, Bonnie, Lorna, Rick, Lloyd
 2. Communications/Public Relations: Bonnie, Shaunacy*, Fred, Bruce
 3. Resource Management/Product Development: Warren, Bruce, Dina, Forrest, Alison*, Rick, Lloyd
 4. Education/Training: Warren, Evelyn, Shaunacy, Lorna, Marc, Betty*
- * Indicates person who agreed to organize first conference call *

FCTN Mission Statement

The purpose of the Franklin County Tourism Network is to create opportunities for business growth and product development, focusing on Franklin County's four season destination offerings.

Meeting Notes

Network Attributes. Betty initiated a discussion of network attributes. Attributes listed by the group were: shared workload, engaged participants, projects are a product of many, good communication, shared values in mission, non hierarchical with a flat distribution of power instead of top down, no one person in control, collaborative, based off a shared vision, mutual benefit with mutual respect, and all pieces represented.

Workgroups. Four workgroups were proposed at the last meeting: Marketing/Branding, Communications/Public Relations, Resource Management/Product Development, and Education/Training. A discussion of paring down this list led to the decision that all four are needed. Rick explained that they are all intertwined and are equally important.

Rick felt that the education and the communications piece are needed to strengthen product development. Dina questions which ones come first, the education or the product?

Alison reinforced the need for partnering between the Franklin County Community College Network and FCTN on the education and training piece. FCCC has received some grant money to support hospitality training.

Dina expressed concern about the need for a marketing committee at this stage. There are many organizations (chambers, tourism councils) that are focused on marketing in addition to what the individual businesses are doing. She is mindful of taking marketing money from the chambers. Perhaps the group may want to secure some funding down the road to market a specific product. Rick explained that he thought the marketing group could focus on encouraging all the marketing efforts to speak the same language. Dina thought this was a good idea and that these groups could work this similar language into their guidebooks and websites.

Business Involvement. The group decided on a two prong approach, general outreach and then targeted recruitment. First prong is crafting an explanation of FCTN that explains the mission, structure, status, and invites businesses to email or call a point person if they are interested in participating. This would go out through the chamber newsletters, Marc's guide list, downtown business association, FCCCC and through the MCH database. Included in this prong is a press release for local papers.

The second prong involves reaching out to specific businesses to recruit for participation or feedback. This list will be determined by the workgroups and will also include businesses interviewed by Shaunacy last spring.