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And

Stephanie Slocum

Surry County
Recommended Marketing Strategy

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Surry County has much to offer visitors. In return, these visitors will spend money, thus supporting existing county businesses and attracting new ones, adding jobs and increasing tax revenues. But first they must be enticed to come. The team of Goldman & Associates and Stephanie Slocum has been tasked with developing the plan to begin marketing Surry County as a great place to visit. Stated another way, Surry is launching the process of becoming a well-known tourism brand.

Partnering with county administration and the Surry County Tourism Support Group, our team has developed a brand vision, brand positioning statement, brand theme, brand strategy, brand marketing plan and budget. All of this is designed so the county can take the next step in developing and promoting itself into a tourism destination.

Extensive research was collected, analyzed and shared with the Group prior to devising the brand vision, positioning statement, theme and marketing plan. Data identified in the research are referred to in this plan.

Brand Vision:

A brand vision is a succinct statement designed to provide a goal for what a tourism destination would like to achieve with its branding. A vision can and should evolve over time. Another way of stating brand vision is to ask: What one goal does the Surry branding program seek to accomplish in the near term? Based on the extensive research performed, this is the brand vision:

The brand vision is for visitors to Coastal Virginia to spend at least a day of their vacation in Surry County.

Brand Positioning Statement:

A Brand Positioning Statement clarifies what makes the brand unique and details what characteristics of the brand are special to the destination. In this case, what is the special draw for vacationers to come to Surry County?

Surry County is an agrarian community conveniently located on the edge of suburban Virginia, where a short, free ferry ride from Williamsburg or a scenic drive along Route 10 from Norfolk and Richmond can carry you back in time to authentic experiences from our country's heritage. Our guests can enjoy outdoor activities in natural settings, wildlife and native fauna, and traditional tastes and foods with pick-your-own-freshness.

Brand Theme:

The brand theme best encompasses why people should visit Surry County. It is a broad statement to entice prospective visitors to consider the destination based on its special amenities. The brand theme creates an emotional connection and serves as an umbrella for all the marketing which follows. Future marketing will expound upon the brand theme. The brand theme can't by itself address all that a region is or offers or the variety of seasonal offerings. It is simply a foundation to tell a larger story that will entice visitors.

Savor the secrets of Surry

Savor

- The word "savor" has a meaning of taste or smell
- According to the Oxford American Dictionary it has "the power to arouse enjoyment"
- According to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary it has "the quality to make something interesting or enjoyable". It is "a distinct quality"

Secrets

- Something that is kept or meant to be kept unknown or unseen by others
- Something that is not properly understood, a mystery
- Not frequented, secluded

The theme line can be translated in broader words as:

Surry invites you visit hidden places that have the power to arouse enjoyment.

It also makes a slight allusion to food production which is a key product of the county. There is also strong alliteration that makes the theme easier to remember.

Brand Strategy:

With high quality and diverse tourism assets, but with a significantly limited tourism infrastructure and budget, it will be critical for Surry County to undertake the following steps:

1. Make it easy for visitors to become aware of, find and enjoy Surry County assets and link them in logical and coherent ways so they are appealing and accessible.
2. Support a visitation program with staff and a dedicated tax or line item in the county budget.
3. Realize creating an increasingly powerful visitation program is a long-term process that builds on itself; the journey never ends and is taken one step at a time.
4. Continue to enhance and develop visitation offerings and amenities. The more there is to do day and night, seven days a week, 52 weeks a year, the more visitors will come. (A matrix of suggested expanded and new tourism products serving as thought-starters for discussion can be found at the end of this document.)
5. Educate residents on the county's visitation assets and the benefits of tourism. Encourage them to become advocates for the county to their guests and people they encounter in work environments, for example.
6. Give reasons for people to visit more than once, either for multiple-day visits while they are in the region or to come back another time.
7. Focus the county's visitation marketing primarily on its visitor assets as a whole. There may be a place and time for single asset marketing, but it should not dominate the county's marketing program (with the exception of the asset providing dedicated marketing funds to the county to be promoted through the county's marketing program).
8. Prioritize and focus the marketing budget where it will bring the greatest return.

Creating the Initial Infrastructure for a Brand Marketing Program:

Both virtual (on-line) and physical infrastructure are essential to a brand marketing program. They encourage visitors by providing details on how to proceed with their visit upon arrival. This is especially important since most decisions affecting visitation - once at their destination - are last-minute. The research shows:

- 55% of travelers book their travel-related activities and hotels upon arrival at their destination.
- In 2012, 10% of leisure travelers used destination websites to plan their trips, 9% used traveler-provided websites, 5% used social networking, and 4% used mobile devices.
- This is a total of 28% using Internet-related resources and we believe the number is growing. The rest mainly used family and friends - 23%, or their past experience - 31%.

Virtual Infrastructure: Decisions related to leisure travel are being made rapidly and multiple Internet resources help many people make them at the last minute. The ability to provide instant information is essential. It is therefore crucial to have a strong presence on the Internet through a tourism-focused website and multiple social media sites such as Facebook, Google +, TripAdvisor and YouTube. If other social media like Snapchat, Twitter and Pinterest become more popular for travel decisions, they too may need to be addressed. Where possible, one-on-one social engagement is very important. These sites must entice and be consistent in messaging with Surry's planned marketing. They are elements of the virtual infrastructure the

county must create. Marketing without this infrastructure will greatly diminish the value of the county's investment. Therefore it is crucial that these items below are the first elements of the brand plan to be implemented in the first phase of the brand development.

Website and Social Media: Though the county has recently created a tourism website which has many good qualities, it needs a more visitor-friendly/engaging website. An enhanced or new site should include the brand messages, brand theme, new and exciting photography produced for marketing purposes, new logos and typefaces that will also be used in other marketing materials, a logical and easy-to-follow navigation structured with Search Engine Optimization (SEO) best practices, Google analytics, a calendar management module, day trip ideas, downloadable tours and more. A Facebook fan page and Google + site for better Google search results must also be developed. These too need to follow the messaging and images of the planned marketing materials as well as engage and update visitors and prospective visitors on events and activities. The website cannot be static. It must be updated regularly with new information, activities as well as dates and times as they become available for upcoming events.

Photography: Another element of this virtual infrastructure that needs to be produced at a very early stage and prior to developing marketing materials and the modified or new website is specialized photography. This photography not only can be used on the website and in marketing materials, it can also be utilized by the Virginia Tourism Corporation in its promotional efforts on behalf of the county, for public relations and more.

Brand Logo, Typestyle and Usage Plan: A brand logo for Surry County tourism and typestyle for the brand theme need to be developed. In addition, a simple usage plan of standard graphics - for how they should be used together with the Virginia is for Lovers theme under various circumstances and structures - is required.

Downloadable Tours: More planning is needed to create downloadable tours. These are virtual guides that visitors can download to their mobile devices and follow in their vehicles or on foot. The subject matter can be quite varied from early Native American and African-American sites to early 20th century railroad structures to recreational and informational trails. Self-guided tours are a means of broadening Surry County's visitation options with little investment.

Physical Infrastructure: Hand-in-hand with the virtual infrastructure is physical infrastructure that would enhance the visitor experience. While it is not essential to have it all in place prior to the initiating the county's marketing plan, it would be highly beneficial if some of it were. The items listed below will come about in the second phase of the marketing plan.

Visitor Center: The benefits are obvious in being able to answer questions; directing people to sites, activities, tours, events, dining; providing dates and times, ticket sales, updating events and times on the tourism website and Facebook page; and distributing

literature. This staff should also work with Greater Williamsburg area hotels, motels and timeshare companies and their association to encourage visitation from their guests.

Opening New Assets: As stated earlier, the opening of new assets is important to growth of tourism. The winery will be an excellent addition. The African-American schoolhouse and country store seem to be almost ready for prime time and would add greatly to the county's offerings if they were regularly open to visitors. Discussions should be held with Edwards about creating a tour for visitors or establishing a demonstration area near its Surry County store to show how hogs are raised in a free-range environment.

Improved Signage: It would be highly beneficial to place directional signage and information at the Scotland side of the ferry to direct visitors to county tourism sites and website.

Surry's Target Markets: Where the County Needs to Initially Direct Its Brand Marketing Resources:

Research we've presented, coupled with very limited overnight amenities, leads to the conclusion that Surry County is a secondary destination. Attracting visitors for day trips who are staying in the Greater Williamsburg area or who are visiting Surry County residents is critically important to the county's success in marketing itself and needs to be the primary focus of the marketing plan. A secondary market focus is attracting nearby Greater Williamsburg and neighboring community residents to visit. Since nearly 45% of the visitors to the region come to see families and friends, this should be a part of the marketing investment and will be addressed through public relations.

The large amount of money needed to invest in marketing is usually a surprise to organizations. Therefore efficiency and maximizing the use of the most effective tools are critical. The more precise the plan, the targeted prospects, the messages targeting prospects and media used, the more effectively the marketing dollars are spent. In addition, consistency of messaging and appearance for all Surry County marketing materials is crucial; otherwise the county will be competing with other visitation options and itself as visitors are exposed to the many choices they have for their time and money.

- 1. Greater Williamsburg Visitors:** Major Williamsburg sites spend over \$15 million annually to attract visitors. Surry County needs to piggy-back on this investment. It can do so by marketing within the single destination of Greater Williamsburg where literally millions of people visit each year. Drawing only a small amount of Greater Williamsburg visitors will increase Surry County's visitation more than the initial goal of 10 percent. The Surry brand vision encourages Williamsburg visitors to spend at least a day visiting Surry County. Research shows visitors seek exciting and new activities like those found in Surry County. It will be crucial to keep the focus on Greater Williamsburg in the first few years of the brand program; any major marketing investment to draw visitors from other Coastal Virginia communities to Surry County at this time would be spreading limited resources too thin and detract from the goal of raising visitation by 10 percent.

Simply stated, it would be unrealistic and too expensive. To reach Greater Williamsburg visitors, we are recommending this plan of action for the second phase of nine months.

- a. Leasing rack space in visitor information rack displays in Greater Williamsburg hotels, motels and timeshares, Greater Williamsburg restaurants and shopping sites, key Virginia tourist information Welcome Centers and the Edwards Ham Shop of Williamsburg is the first step. Extensive distribution of travel information where tourists gather in the Greater Williamsburg area is critical to awareness. Though the present Surry County tourism brochure is comprehensive and nicely produced, it will need to be revised once the present print run has been distributed. It too should reflect the new messaging, theme, logo and photography, as should all Surry County marketing materials. To extensively distribute the brochure in the large quantity of racks the plan calls for, the brochure will need to be printed in quantities of tens of thousands.
 - b. Advertising in the Williamsburg, Jamestown, Yorktown Area Visitor's Guide. This publication is printed twice annually and is specifically distributed to Greater Williamsburg visitors. Purchasing space in this publication will allow Surry County to place its branded ad with those of the Jamestown-Scotland ferry and the Smithfield/Isle of Wight ads. Together these ads and any additional cooperative ads sold to Surry County attractions will form a large section within the Guide and help attract visitors. The messaging, theme, look and use of logos within the ad should reinforce what is seen on the website, the new brochure and all other marketing materials to be produced moving forward.
 - c. Continuing to advertise on the Jamestown-Scotland ferry is an excellent means of communicating to visitors. Discussions should be held with VDOT to expand marketing opportunities on the ferry.
 - d. Digital advertising focused just in Greater Williamsburg will be placed on Facebook and Google search and be tied to key search terms visitors would use to find local activities and places to visit. Hot links within the ads will take prospective tourists to the Surry County website for more information. We know from the research that last-minute decision-making is common and that mobile devices such as 4-G phones and mobile pads are commonly used to search for ideas on what to do while on vacation. Therefore purchasing digital advertising in this venue will be a very effective means of reaching people seeking ideas on what to do on vacation in Greater Williamsburg.
 - e. Advertising in the Virginia Travel Guide in the Coastal Virginia section is both valuable as a Virginia Tourism Association partner and for attracting some of the 600,000 prospective visitors who receive the publication.
- 2. Williamsburg Hotel and Motel Association members:** Anything that encourages visitors to stay an extra night in Greater Williamsburg would be a tremendous benefit to owners and managers of Williamsburg area hotels, motels and timeshares. Turning these Williamsburg Hotel and Motel Association members into advocates for spending at least a day in Surry County would be a very worthwhile effort and strongly benefit both

parties. Surry County needs to make a large investment of time and money to bring this message to them and build this relationship. A start would be to advertise in their association's guide (which is part of the above plan). However, the plan recommended below is additional and more comprehensive. It demonstrates Surry County's commitment to working with the association and its members.

- a. Three to four FAM trips to be held each year should be structured to regularly take Greater Williamsburg hotel, motel and timeshare managers, front desk staff, concierges and owners to Surry County so they can be educated on what the county has to offer their guests. This might be expanded to include other organizations such as the Chamber of Commerce and prospective outfitter companies that could help county visitation.
 - b. Requests to make presentations about Surry County should be made to the association.
 - c. Consideration should be given to joining the association if it allows outside organizations to do so.
 - d. Surry County should sponsor a regular or annual key association event or activity.
 - e. Collateral materials specific to association members and their staff about Surry County visitation should be developed. Sales meetings with owners, managers and appropriate hotel/motel staff need to be set up to go over the information.
 - f. Make presentations to other associations and businesses that could be of value to bringing visitors to Surry County. These include the area Chamber of Commerce, outfitters and tour operators who may or may not be part of the Greater Williamsburg Hotel and Motel Association.
- 3. Surry County Residents:** Fully a quarter of all travel activity decisions for visitors are made by family and friends. Surry County residents should actively advocate that visiting family and friends spend time in Surry County exploring what the county has to offer. Educating residents and business about the assets of the county and the benefits of why they should be encouraging local visitation is crucial to the success of Surry County's branding effort.
- a. Work with the Surry County Chamber of Commerce and other associations such as Rotary to ensure businesses affected by tourism educate their staff about the importance of tourism, available information for visitors and the community's assets.
 - b. Address the opportunity at community civic leagues, religious and social gatherings and encourage visitation by passing out brochures and discount coupons.
 - c. Educate Surry County businesses. This should include customer service practices and business to business referrals. They need to know what assets are offered and how to direct others to them. They need to have access to collateral

materials and know how to access the latest digital information on-line at the Surry County tourism website.

4. **Residents Living in Nearby Coastal Virginia Communities.** Residents visiting other communities within the region comprise 45-percent of the travel and visitation activity in Coastal Virginia. Though these residents are nearby and can easily visit any time of year, convincing them to spend their free time and money in Surry is more challenging than attracting visitors coming to the region due to the enormous marketing investment it takes to advertise throughout the region. This high advertising investment means it is not feasible for Surry to embark on a regional advertising program, at least at this stage of marketing the county. However, there is a better and much more financially modest means to effectively reach regional residents: A public relations program that interests the local news media in covering events and activities in Surry is the most effective and efficient way to tell Surry County's story. These media are always looking to spotlight new and exciting activities in places they have not covered before. A regular program of contacting media to persuade them to provide news coverage is important not only for awareness of nearby communities, but Surry County residents, too, who may not have explored the county's attractions and are not advocating for them.

Phases of the Plan: The plan that we are recommending is to take place over the course of a year's time. When the plan begins will be determined by the timing of Surry County and funding. There are two stages to the plan.

- a. The initial phase consists of the virtual infrastructure – development of a logo, typestyle, brand usage plan, photography, creating downloadable tours, signage, enhancing or remaking the website and building a social media presence.
- b. The second phase consists of pushing out the message. It is here that collateral production and brochure distribution, advertising production, media placement, public relations, engagement programs with the Greater Williamsburg Hotel and Motel Association and other businesses, and engagement programs with Surry County residents and businesses should take place.

Surry County Recommended Marketing Strategy Budget

The items in the budget below are based on present costs and are market rates. These prices have not been negotiated, nor have we sought out the lowest cost vendor for the estimates. Actual prices will vary based on the final scope of work. No estimates have been given for Surry County staff, construction, or sign making. We are including an advertising agency management fee to oversee the program as a separate line item. It is common to have this cost as a mark up for individual line items, or a commission for media placement. Lastly, production for advertising and printing of collateral materials will vary greatly based on their specifications. Staff will be expected to review these recommendations before presenting the Board of Supervisors with a Proposed Tourism Marketing Plan at a future date, which may contain any or all of the recommendations presented below.

1. Brand logo, typestyle and usage plan	\$7,500
2. Rights free photography and models	\$7,500
3. Website remake, rewrite and social media sites	\$24,000
4. Downloadable tours production (3 tours w/ website production)	\$4,600
5. Annual Greater Williamsburg hotel, motel, timeshare and restaurant brochure distribution rack space (through FPIS) ¹	\$2,988
6. Rack space in key Virginia Welcome Centers (2 centers year round)	\$960
7. Design, writing and production of brochure	\$2,750
8. Printing and shipping of brochure (30,000 qty)	\$8,500
9. Advertising space in the Williamsburg, Jamestown, Yorktown Area Visitor's Guide ½ page, 4-color, 2 editions	\$8,107
10. Advertising space in the Virginia Travel Guide, 1/3 rd page, 4-color, with digital guide hotlink	\$9,820
11. Writing, design and production of Guide ad	\$2,000
12. Digital advertising space on Google Search and Facebook in Greater Williamsburg (\$6000 each)	\$12,000
13. Digital advertising production	\$2,500
14. Print and digital advertising negotiation, management, media placement services and overseeing photography, collateral placement, print negotiations and print production, meetings with client and travel	\$18,000
15. Four FAM tours annually	\$6,000
16. Greater Williamsburg Hotel Motel Association membership/sponsorship investment	\$7,500
17. Greater Williamsburg Chamber of Commerce membership/sponsorship investment	\$2,500
18. Collateral materials for event distribution and presentations to Greater Williamsburg businesses	\$1,750
19. Collateral materials for distribution in Surry County on importance of program	\$1,000

¹ Additional Greater Williamsburg area distribution available from National Brochure Distributors

20. Year round Coastal Virginia and Richmond public relations program \$27,000

Thank you

The team of Goldman & Associates Public Relations and Stephanie Slocum greatly appreciates the opportunity you have provided us to work with Surry County on this vitally important branding program. We would like to acknowledge the very generous help, support and time provided by the Surry County Tourism Support Group, Pat Bernshausen and County Administrator Tyrone W. Franklin. Their involvement, support and extensive knowledge about the community have been very beneficial in developing this plan.

Surry County has many assets and opportunities to build its nascent tourism business into a large economic engine. With branding, and following this carefully developed plan, it will happen. Thank you for selecting the team of Goldman & Associates Public Relations and Stephanie Slocum to begin the Surry County tourism branding process.

Surry County Tourism Products: Potential Expansion and/or New Development

Product Theme	Current Businesses	Ideas for Potential Product Expansion/ New Development
<p>Agri-tourism (any agriculturally-based operation or activity that attracts visitors)</p>	<p>College Run Farms C. W. Reeson Nursery Drewry Farm: u-pick Endless Farms Alpacas</p>	<p>Food products education: how local products are grown, prepared, & served. Could include information on fruits, vegetables, peanuts, tobacco, cotton, wheat, soybeans, etc. Local food preparation by local chefs or by visitors under supervision of local chefs Education on historical gardening Trail of and tours (guided) of farms to include animals (e.g., raising free-range hogs, chickens, etc.), equipment used, family farm histories, and food production facilities Guided tours: nursery, winery, and flower gardens Direct purchases from local farm stands/shops, e.g., homemade juices, jellies, jams, pickles, baked goods, flowers, etc. Farmers market Agricultural exhibits Access to farm animals, petting "zoo", feeding animals, pony rides, etc. Agricultural fair/festival Pumpkin patch Christmas tree farm Corn maze Bed & breakfast on a farm Hay, tractor, and sleigh rides Fruit & vegetable picking product expansion On-site private parties, weddings, & orchard dinners Day camp and school field trips</p>
<p>Events</p>	<p>African American Family Reunion Bacon's Castle Monthly Events Blueberry Jam Festival Nottoway Indian Pow Wow Pork, Peanut, and Pine Festival</p>	<p>Food and/or wine events featuring local products where possible: "Taste of Surry" (expanded beyond current event), restaurant week/ weekend, culinary professionals, cookbook authors, & wine festival Equine competition/show Sports competitions using local venues and natural assets, such as for crew racing, runs, walks, etc. Barn dance Additional heritage activities Festivals/fairs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Art • County agricultural

Product Theme	Current Businesses	Ideas for Potential Product Expansion/Development
Events (cont'd)		Festivals/fairs (cont'd) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crafts • Cultural • Folk/ethnic--Surry-related • Food • Historical • Home & garden • Music Car rally or show Haunted houses, expand to beyond Halloween
Food & Wine	Edward's Ham Restaurants SOON: Hampton Roads Winery	Food & winery trail of authentic Southern foods at local restaurants Foodie tour Food carts/street vendors Cooking classes, demonstrations & workshops, highlighting local products--could be held at farmers market Tastings of local specialties-food and wine Sampling of locally ethnic & historical food products Unique dining experiences Themed dinners at sites such as winery and historic buildings Educational sessions: Southern food, heritage/historical/cultural cooking & foods, cooking techniques, ham processing, wine making, etc. Locally-related food product competitions Tours of restaurant production operations & food processing plants Brewery Additional winery (cluster effect)
History, Culture & Heritage (experiencing places, artifacts and activities that authentically represent the stories and people of the past, including cultural, historic and natural resources)	Bacon's Castle Dendron Historical Society & Museum Chippokes Farm Museum Genealogical records Lawne's Creek Church Road Side Markers Smith's Fort Plantation/Manor House Surry Courthouse Surry County Historical Society & Museum Mt Pleasant/Swann's Point	Additional living cultural, heritage/historical & natural history sites, structures, and landscapes open to the public Attractions to include "museums, galleries, & theaters" with artifacts and activities that authentically represent local stories, local customs, foods/cooking, traditions, arts, crafts, dances, music, etc. Trail/guided tours with interpreters (to include courthouse buildings, depots, churches, houses, and commercial buildings) Historic gardens Educational sessions/workshops--unique and/or complementary to Historic Triangle

Product Theme	Current Businesses	Ideas for Potential Product Expansion/Development
History, Culture & Heritage (cont'd)		Cultural centers with performances Personal encounters with traditions, history, & culture that involve immersive experiences: visit, see, study, discuss culture, traditions, past happenings, lifestyles, living environments, and evolution and development Historic re-enactments "Museum" stores
Outdoor Recreation & Eco-tourism (tourism involving visiting fragile, pristine, and relatively undisturbed natural areas, intended as a low-impact and often small scale alternative to standard commercial/mass tourism)	Chippokes State Park <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boating • Bird Watching • Camping • Canoeing/kayaking • Fishing • Geocaching • Horseback Riding (bring own) • Swimming Slades Raceway/Motorcycle Racing Surry Recreation Center/Soccer	Gray's Creek Marina New development or formalization of outdoor recreational sites/structures: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trails for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Biking ▪ Bird-watching ▪ Canoe/kayaking ▪ Cross-country skiing ▪ Gardens ▪ Horseback riding ▪ Nature ▪ Working dog trails/training ▪ Walking/hiking/backpacking • Access to James River for water sports: boating/sailing, skiing, kayaking, fishing, jet skiing, etc. • Hunting Recruitment of recreational outfitters Planned/organized activities: meditation, yoga, stargazing, etc. More County-wide geocaching Education: recycling, composting, water conservation, energy conservation, etc. Horses provided for horseback riding Hog Island usage