

# CURRY COUNTY PROMOTIONAL ALLIANCE STRATEGIC MARKETING PLAN



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## PREFACE

The Plan, a strategic framework, has been designed to provide both short and long range approaches to assist in producing successful economic development impact from Curry County's livability, products, services and tourism.

The purpose for developing a Curry County Promotional Alliance Strategic Marketing Plan is twofold in nature:

- Develop, implement and sustain a marketing plan to promote the quality of Curry County tourism, products, services and livability.
- Create a singular distinction, strategic awareness, and differentiation in the mind of the target markets to increase business activity benefitting the Curry County economy.

The proposed Curry County Promotional alliance (CCPA) can be an "umbrella" effort and does not seek to compete with any existing efforts. Building on existing efforts and developing new coordinated promotional activities will benefit the stakeholders in and out of Curry County (i.e., residents, businesses, consumers, visitors and others). Curry has much to build on.

This Plan is based in rigorous data research. John Adams pointed out that "facts are stubborn things." He is right in that through careful and objective examination of facts we often derive conclusions not based on anecdotal information or emotional responses. A very large body of facts, data, was discovered in the course of research for this Plan development (see Appendices). Much is included herein but it would take many more pages to compile all the findings.

Many dozens of strategic planning efforts from other areas across the U.S. were reviewed. Where it makes good sense, we "borrowed" ideas as appropriate for Curry County. The takeaway here is that we found a demonstrable increase in the creation and execution of these plans across the American landscape. We need to do the same in Curry.

Derivation of this Plan also benefits from face-to-face meetings with a variety of county groups and stakeholders to hear their thoughts and ideas. Every attempt was made to include many of these into the recommendations.

We urge a thorough review of this Plan and the supporting materials with an open mind regarding the findings and recommendations. And we encourage continued discussion, deliberation and collaboration with Curry County's economic development partners in livability, products, services and tourism to achieve the long-term success that the county deserves.

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Introduction

Research in support of this Plan, a strategic framework, is rooted in the proposition that countywide coordination of promotional resources can and should be leveraged; fostering additional dollars to flow into the economy and raising the awareness of the many opportunities afforded to travelers and residents in Curry County. Economic development efforts will be strengthened by bringing together and providing a level of comprehensive planning and coordination of the various promotional efforts that now exist. Further, there is a great opportunity to capitalize on the array of quality products and services not covered under existing efforts.

Tourism is a source of revenue for individuals and businesses in the county but not the only source. Indeed, some may be surprised to find just exactly where tourism stands in relation to other revenue sources (i.e., 2.2% of overall personal income, 8% of wages, annual average wages of \$12,618 vs. \$ 29,186 for all wages in the county). We need to grow tourism along with other revenue sources to provide an even higher level of average wages for county residents and to introduce greater counter-cyclical business activity. Given the nature and draw of tourism, it can help to foster opportunities to bolster sales of products, services and livability aspects of this county.

Curry stands out in a very positive way simply by its natural beauty. It's that natural beauty that provides the backdrop for a growing eco-tourism opportunity. The growing number of eco-tourists tends to be more financially upscale and willing to spend more for the right set of experiences. Many are seeking a higher quality of life that the region provides. As more folks "discover" Curry (for example, eco-tourists), there is an opportunity to attract and retain these folks as residents.

Curry would be a great place for development of green businesses and is another reason to entice the eco-tourist traveler to live in Curry and to invest in green technologies, creating jobs in a fast growing industry. This could reverse the significant decline in manufacturing jobs seen since 2000. Many financial incentives are now available for green industry development.

Fishing is likely to remain as a source for attracting tourists; so, too, with hunting. Fishermen and hunters spend fairly liberally when here. We need to make sure they know we're open for business.

Curry sits on some of the most beautiful coast and forest land on the west coast. We can exploit and share this resource without destroying it. It is a new form of natural resource extraction (i.e., eco-tourism). In this approach the natural resource remains and can be "extracted" over and over. Tourism can still be a basis for solid economic development in the county.

## Vision Statement

Vision for Tourism	To work proactively to grow the destination travel component of the county economy, setting out to become a premier destinations experience-combining nature, adventure, heritage, and culture-and to attract high value visitors.
Vision for Quality Products	To develop comprehensive standards awareness for accommodations, guides, attractions, dining establishments, services and Curry County made products.
Vision for Services	To build awareness for opportunities to establish new and unique services in the county. To partner and collaborate with existing service providers to enhance the quality of those services and those who are being served.
Vision for Livability	To work with local governments, non-profits and organizations that will effectively raise the social quality of Curry County.
Vision for Partnerships	To collaborate, support and nurture relationships with local, regional and state tourism partners. To build effective communications with county and regional stakeholders, businesses and the public.

### **Goal 1: Countywide coordination of promotional efforts**

*The concept of “consolidated promotion” recognizes that a stronger promotional program—including counties and regions—results when all interests, market segments and business interests are coordinated under one collaborative umbrella program to effectively leverage results.*

#### **Strategy 1.1 Obtain resolutions of support for the CCPA**

By being “duly sanctioned” the CCPA gains another level of authority and recognition for its intended purpose.

#### **Strategy 1.2 Adopt a formal organizational status for the CCPA**

By taking a next step to create a more formal structure for the CCPA, several things are likely to be more readily accomplished. For example, raising revenue to support the organization’s programs (grants), establishing a set of rules for and orderly governance process (bylaws) and a “more sanctioned” and, therefore, official status in the community.

#### **Strategy 1.3 Adopt a CCPA governance structure (bylaws)**

The CCPA effort will benefit from a more formal organizational structure. Governance is the action of developing and managing consistent, cohesive policies, processes and decision rights for a given area of responsibility. Governance along with professional organizational structures provides a formal mechanism for participative decision-making and increased accountability.

#### **Strategy 1.4 Implement jointly agreed to priorities for the CCPA**

Priorities of the CCPA need to be set using the recommendations of the Plan. It will not be possible to implement all recommendations at one time. An estimated duration of 3 to 5 years will be required for implementation of the recommended strategies and actions of this Plan. Accomplishing these will require staff (volunteer and paid) and an estimate of time and dollars required for each.

#### **Goal 2: Tourism is a strategic component of an economic development strategy.**

*Organized properly, tourism activities can reinforce efforts to recruit new businesses and entrepreneurs to the Curry County by making them aware of community amenities that can also improve business operations. Tourism increases the tax base that helps pay for county and community amenities and services. It creates jobs and business opportunities for entry level people and entrepreneurs. Tourism helps to diversify the economy so that communities are no longer dependent on one or two industries.*

#### **Strategy 2.1 Curry County as a destination of choice for travelers.**

The CCPA will work to ensure the success of its purpose by using seven guiding principles: Positioning, Credibility, Communications, Quality, Internal Marketing, Long-term Perspective and Repositioning. These seven principles are critical to building and promoting value. Taken together these principles will also stimulate interest and desire on the part of consumers to take action and visit.

#### **Strategy 2.2 Apply the principles of sustainable nature-based tourism**

Increase the business volume of Curry County's tourism business partners and constituents. Focus on the rapidly growing eco-tourism market.

#### **Strategy 2.4 Maximize the length and frequency of stay**

The longer someone remains in the county, the greater their spending. The more time we have with them, the greater the opportunity to enhance the value of the visitor's experience. Increased spending provides for even more economic generation.

#### **Strategy 2.5 Develop and sustain a "Buy Curry" promotional campaign**

Quite a variety of products are made in Curry. They range from food to textiles to machinery to... well, you name it. Today there is no one focal point for promoting Curry products.

#### **Strategy 2.6 Develop a Livability promotion that highlights Curry services.**

Services availability in the county can be found in the Yellow Pages, chamber directories, and through advertisements. However, this is not the same as presenting a coherent listing and description of those services that might appeal to those persons interested in living in the county. But it has to be more than just a list or directory. We need to demonstrate through short vignettes just how when integrated together these services provide the necessary infrastructure for a quality living situation.

#### **Strategy 2.9 Use relationship marketing across all categories**

Constructive relationships with select target customers are more important to long-term economic success than acquiring widespread public awareness. Relationship marketing is the process of attracting, maintaining, and enhancing relationships with these key people.

**Strategy 2.10 Everyone in Curry County is part of the promotional team effort**

All too often we still hear, “There’s nothing to do,” especially for many of our younger residents or even hotel clerks. The Hospitality 101 program will help with this, especially for wait staff and front desk clerks. But there may also be an opportunity to bring younger residents into this part of the promotional activity (see Strategy 2.11).

**Strategy 2.11 Leverage and use the energies and talents of youth**

High school students must complete a community project as part of the requirement for graduation. Let us go into the schools and bring this opportunity to the students. They can help by taking oral histories and writing them up (post them on the [www.visitcurrycounty.com](http://www.visitcurrycounty.com) website), documenting the historical significance of many sites in the county, preparing signage using a pre-defined set of attributes or participating in the creation of videos (YouTube).

**Strategy 2.12 Increase involvement of seniors**

Curry has a population of very active seniors. Many seek out opportunities to participate in community activities to both make a contribution as well as for the social aspects.

**Strategy 2.13 Understand the relationship of fishing to the economy**

Rural economies are suffering from the recession, as seen by rising unemployment rates. Rural economies historically go through very broad swings in their local economies. How might we use fishing (commercial and sport) to mitigate that swing and craft counter-cyclical revenue streams? Rural economies are attracting more professionals due to area livability. How might we use fishing to further induce this category of inbound migration?

**Goal 3: Innovative and integrated use of new technology and traditional media**

*The influence paradigm has changed... dramatically. We have moved from a linearity model to a networked model. This has occurred in a remarkably small timeframe. Curry’s competition is already underway with use of this new way of doing promotion, and it is highly effective. It is much more effective per dollar expended than traditional promotional approaches. It truly takes advantage of the market segment with money and a desire to spend it.*

**Strategy 3.1 Take advantage of the new model of influence**

Every day the use of email and websites is becoming more the norm. Web 2.0 (social networking) is emerging as one of the most powerful promotional tools ever seen.

**Strategy 3.2 Targeted use of traditional media**

There is still a place for traditional print media, although it is rapidly falling in the face of the use of internet technologies. Smaller runs of brochures and other print media, decreased use of newspaper advertisements and even moving promotional dollars away from radio and TV is becoming more widely accepted. Typically, these approaches are general in their targets and lack the specificity now required for targeting segmented market groups.

#### **Goal 4: Revenue to support CCPA actions**

*In kind support will likely be forthcoming but many activities will require financial support. Once the CCPA sets its priorities and creates a project plan, then we will know to what degree funding may be required.*

##### **Strategy 4.1 Understand CCPA priorities and establish funding needs**

Prior to seeking funding, the CCPA needs to establish its priorities. It is also understood that any moves to increase a tax base to improve funding opportunities must be pursued in a most careful manner.

#### **Goal 5: Continuous improvement**

*An ongoing and periodic Consolidated Marketing Analysis is recommended. This management report tracks all productivity categories, comparing the annual goal for each program, against monthly and year to date results. Evaluation of this nature requires establishment of a set of metrics and monitoring processes.*

##### **Strategy 5.1 Develop and apply a set of evaluation metrics**

Develop a set of evaluation metrics to be used to validate success of marketing campaigns and to be used to identify additional or modified campaigns over time.

#### **Recommendation for a CCPA start-up project**

Let us tap into the energies of youth and the wisdom/experience of seniors. A modest first project under the CCPA's auspices might be one that brings together students and seniors. A "My Curry County" project competition by students with seniors as advisors would develop a 2 minute video promoting Curry County. Even the naming of the project could be a competition held in advance of the video preparation.

Students would work with advisors (seniors) to produce this video to be posted on [www.visitcurrycounty.com](http://www.visitcurrycounty.com) and on YouTube. This might also serve as a senior project. Newspaper articles could inform the community as to the project and its status, eventually reporting out the winners. The articles would contain the website link. The CCPA board of directors would choose 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> place winners. Awards could be modest, say \$75 for first place, \$50 for second and \$25 for third.

In addition, get youth involved in the creation of a "My Curry County" Facebook account with an emphasis on youth related activities in the county (relates to livability but also gets youth involved in understanding their county). This would need to be a supervised and directed undertaking. Once established, and monitored, it could be a valuable way for the youth of the county to have a virtual space to keep up with and participate in WSUP in the county (BTW -- that's "what's up" for the non-informed).