

Cabarrus County, North Carolina

Making Digital Impact on a Dime



Cabarrus County CVB's business site helps the bureau get the green flag from local stakeholders to keep tourism growing.

While building a strong online presence for visitors is a goal shared by all DMOs, Cabarrus County CVB in North Carolina also believes in making a strong digital impression on its local stakeholders. The business site not only educates visitors on the bureau's activities, but also key statistics about the impact of travel and tourism to the region — all through a clean, streamlined design. The bureau manages the website in house on a minimal budget, which allows for flexibility and control.

Representing All Partners

As a non-membership DMO, the Cabarrus County Convention & Visitors Bureau is committed to being a resource for all hospitality and tourism partners in Cabarrus County. As such, it was always critical that all stakeholders, from the local residents to business owners to elected officials, understood how the bureau was contributing to and positively impacting the area.

The bureau realized that in order to raise support their goals and encourage others to be champions of tourism, the bureau first must

educate and keep its stakeholders informed.

Creating an Advocacy Platform

Communicating to multiple audiences on a variety of topics required a flexible, appealing, and far-reaching platform. A website solely dedicated to keep the DMO's involvement and impact in its destination top of mind surfaced as the most effective to state the bureau's mission and lay out the tactics used to achieve its stated goals.

"We want the community to

recognize the value that the CVB brings to the area and understand how we're working to better the quality of life for all stakeholders," said Donna Carpenter, President & CEO of the Cabarrus County CVB.

Unlike VisitCabarrus.com where the primary purpose is to provide information to visitors, CabCoCVB.com is loaded with statistics, mission and vision, key dates, engaging videos, a social media lounge, and essential information like DMO job

“We're working to better the quality of life for all stakeholders.”

Design on a Budget

CabCoCVB.com was developed in house by the DMO's Web Marketing Manager, and supplied with content created by the entire staff and crafted by the Communications Manager.

Its clean, responsive design achieved the initial goal to streamline communications and focus visitor attention on the information presented. Other design elements like social functions and navigation to

Donna Carpenter, President & CEO
Cabarrus County CVB

openings and the bureau's press room.

Moreover, while the bureau continues to push information through multiple marketing channels, the business website serves to streamline and consolidate communications.

other pages within the site were purposefully placed to encourage longer page views and make it easy to share information.

“The site has absolutely been worth the low-cost investment,” adds Carpenter. “In-house production and maintenance also helps

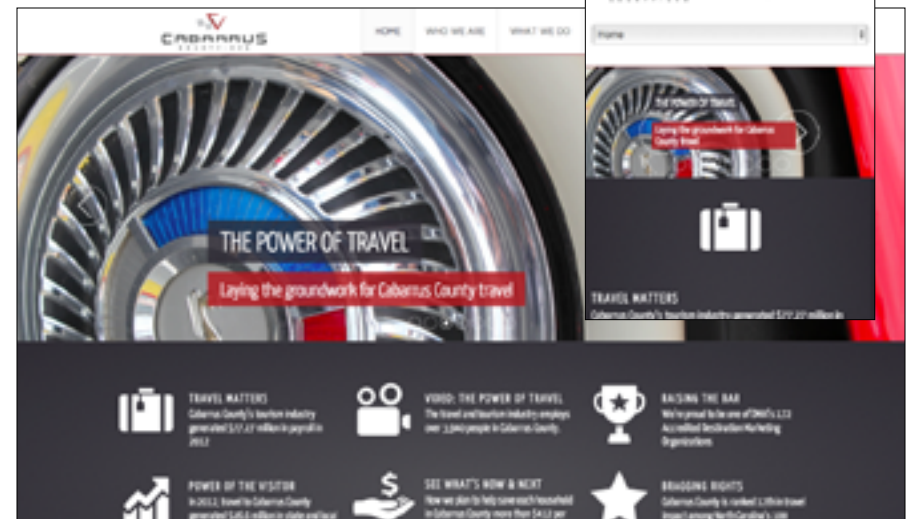
maintain control, allowing updates and additions to be made as often and as quickly as needed.”

Closing the Loop on Communications

With its well-designed and well-stocked business site, the Cabarrus County CVB has earned its relevance and represents the organization not just to the visitor, but one that defines its activities in terms of real benefits for the local community. As the bureau shares the county's tourism story, the website provides consistency to how it communicates with both audiences in the future. •

Screen captures show the clean, responsive design of CabCoCVB.com's homepage. The landing page illustrates travel and tourism's impact to the county.

Visitors can get more details by clicking into dedicated pages like the one shown here.



Words from a DMO Advocate

Donna Carpenter

President & CEO Cabarrus County Convention & Visitors Bureau

Share a personal story about the impact of travel and tourism in Cabarrus County.

My grandson Jaidyn was with me during a NASCAR Camping World Truck Series event at Charlotte Motor Speedway a few years ago when driver Kyle Busch picked him up and sat him in the seat of his race truck. Now, he's a fan for life.

The Travel Effect is all about revealing the positive impact that travel has on every one of us. For Cabarrus County residents, the impact of tourism not only comes through in financial benefits that visitor spending brings to the area, but should also be felt through the pride of place that emerges as

guests share positive feedback and heartwarming stories about their experiences here.

What's next on your advocacy agenda to tackle?

The Cabarrus County CVB has a working document that helps to reveal "what's next." The Destination 2020 Vision Plan is a compass to create an optimal experience for everyone who visits the area. Exit 49 was identified as the most important element that should be addressed first, so the CVB implemented a Board-approved feasibility study that identified what could be done to enhance the experience as well as pedestrian safety at Exit 49. The



plan was then turned over to the City of Concord to be executed. With input from our Board of Directors and are stakeholders, the Cabarrus County CVB will continue to update and revise the plan as we make strides and identify new opportunities for improvement. The Vision Plan can also be accessed on www.CabCoCVB.com.

Do you have any advice for other DMOs on the topic of advocacy?

As representatives of the destination, we're committed to making the best impression possible. Be transparent, be good stewards of visitor tax dollars,



Prior to becoming President/CEO of the Cabarrus County Convention and Visitors Bureau, Donna Carpenter served as director of tourism and partnership development with Visit Charlotte. She has extensive experience in the DMO industry as Executive Director and Director of Sports and Public Relations at various bureaus and chambers of commerce. Carpenter also has Certification as a Tourism Marketing Professional and CDME Certification (Certified Destination Marketing Executive).

She is currently President of Destination Marketing Association of North Carolina and is actively a member of Southeast Tourism Society and National Tourism Association. She also sits on the 600 Festival and Cabarrus Economic Development Council boards.

share ideas and think big, but remember that it's the details that make the most impact. Remember names. Help mend an unfortunate experience even if you're not at fault. Provide Golden Rule service by treating others as you would want to be treated, as setting yourself apart doesn't always mean putting on the best show. •

NATIONAL TRAVEL & TOURISM WEEK



MAY 3-11, 2014

U.S. TRAVEL
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The first full week of May is annually recognized as National Travel and Tourism Week. The U.S. travel community has collectively marked the event in a number of creative ways, from staging local rallies and conducting media outreach to securing proclamations and resolutions from local legislative bodies. Each year, localized events are presented in cities, states and travel businesses nationwide to champion the power of travel.

Learn more here: <http://www.ustravel.org/marketing/national-travel-and-tourism-week>

Keep up with stories from the DMAI's series "Travel & Tourism Advocacy in Action" throughout National Travel and Tourism Week. You can find all case studies on our blog at <http://www.destinationmarketing.org/blog>.

Help get your advocacy projects and strategy off the ground when you join us for our complimentary webinar:

"Building Better Stakeholder Relationships"
May 20 at 1:30 PM EDT

[Learn more and register here.](#)