

An
action
plan

for marketing

Alaska's
Seward
Highway

October, 2000

All-American Road

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seward hwy

a destination & experience



Vision: Potential travelers of the Seward Highway, All-American Road are aware that the highway is a premiere Alaskan destination and experience.

participation



Vision: Highway stakeholders and the visitor industry participate in byway planning and oversight.

benefits



Vision: Seward Highway stakeholders know the benefits of promoting the All-American Road.

success



Vision: Visitors and the businesses bordering the highway share positive experiences of the byway designation.

vision

To effectively promote the Seward Highway, All-American Road as a destination and experience like no other in the world.

This report represents a plan of action for developing and implementing a comprehensive marketing strategy for the Seward Highway, All-American Road.

The Seward Highway was designated as a National Scenic Byway in 1998. Since that time, relatively little has been done to formally publicize the national honor, or to market the Seward as a visitor attraction and destination. In June of 2000, the Seward Highway was given the highest honor available for scenic byways, that of All-American Road. Only 14 other roads in the nation share this designation, which means the route is nationally significant and a “destination unto itself.”

Under terms of a federal scenic byways grant (FFY99), a special marketing advisory committee of the Seward Highway Partnership Board drafted this plan of action after careful consideration of the byway’s corridor management plan (*Seward Highway Partnership Plan*, 1998) and desired marketing outcomes.

The Seward Highway Corridor Partnership Plan identifies three Keystone Strategies for the byway:

1. The Seward Highway should provide a safe, aesthetic and world-class driving experience.
2. Effective visitor management is necessary to ensure long term economic development through tourism.
3. Haphazard development poses the greatest threat to the highway’s ability to attract visitors and quality development.

The vision established by the marketing advisory committee is to *effectively promote the Seward Highway to people inside and outside of Alaska as a destination and experience like no other in the world.*

The Marketing Committee

Members of the Seward Highway Partnership Board Special Marketing Advisory Committee include:

U.S.D.A. Forest Service
Alison Rein

Alaska Dept. of Transportation & Public Facilities
Murph O’Brien, Central Region
Katrina Moss, Central Region
Diana Rigg, Central Region
Diane Regan, Statewide Planning

Alaska Dept. of Community & Economic Development
Ginny Fay, Tourism Office

Alaska Railroad Corporation
Janet Swanson

Kenai Visitors and Convention Bureau
Kathy Tarr

Kenai Peninsula Borough
Lisa Parker

Alaska Travel Industry Association
Tina Lindgren
Peggy McNees

Background

The special advisory committee for marketing has a limited focus and task. The group was representative of a variety of viewpoints and backgrounds.

Participants were asked to identify a vision for marketing the byway, and advise professionals involved in developing marketing materials.

This Action Plan for Marketing the Seward Highway All-American Road should not be mistaken for a final marketing plan. Rather, it is intended as a checklist of activities to pursue a more detailed, focused public relations and advertising strategy.

Many of the answers to questions about positioning, identity, and marketing are found in the *Seward Highway Partnership Plan*. Reference to this manual is highly recommended for future development of marketing strategies.

Given the three keystone strategies identified by the founders of the byway in the Partnership Plan, it is clear that there are two types of marketing needed: public relations aimed at local residents and businesses, and marketing to visitors from outside Alaska.

The Seward Highway Corridor Partnership Plan urges responsible visitation management. This starts with the marketing process. For example, the plan recommends that tourists are encouraged only to travel to areas that are already developed or targeted for future development.

Positioning

Positioning is the development of an identity to occupy a specific place in the minds of potential customers. The National Scenic Byway Resource Center's Marketing Tool Kit identifies the position as follows:

...your byway's position should be the central or key image that will remain with your visitors long after they've returned home.

The Seward Highway was named an All-American Road in June, 2000 in recognition of its scenic and recreational qualities. In a recent survey, residents living near the Seward Highway and Chugach National Forest said they most value outdoor recreation in the area. Aesthetic qualities of the national forest, including sights, sounds and smells, were listed as residents' third greatest value.¹

Early participants in the planning process called the Seward Highway, "the most beautiful highway in the country." It features "jagged peaks and alpine meadows to breathtaking fjords and crystal lakes". It is common to view wildlife along the byway, including Dall sheep, beluga whales, eagles and an occasional moose. There are quaint Alaska towns and ample access to outdoor recreation, such as hiking, bicycling, fishing, skiing, ice-climbing, wind-surfing, and more.

Several slogans for the Seward Highway were suggested, such as "Seward Highway -- where the only thing Bore-ing is the Tide," "Where you can reach out and touch Alaska," and "Where the journey is the destination." A final slogan or theme should be selected to market the highway and help form an identity.

¹*Chugach National Forest Planning Study, 1998, Alaska Pacific University, Gregory Brown, PhD. (Residents chose "life support" as their second greatest value of the national forest)*

Interpretation

With specific regard to marketing scenic byways, the byway's position should be linked to its interpretive themes. Interpretation is a critical component to meeting and exceeding a visitor's expectations.

At this time, the Seward Highway does not have a single, unified interpretation plan. However, there is a lot of interpretation available for the duration of the route, featuring information on Alaska geography, wildlife, history and recreation. The Alaska Division of State Parks and the U.S. Forest Service have handled interpretation within their respective jurisdictions along the Seward Highway.

Most common are wood-framed kiosks featuring interpretive panels placed at roadside pullouts and scenic overlooks. Some newer displays include textures worked into the pavement, such as animal footprints.

State Park rangers are often available at the Potter Marsh Waterfowl Refuge, just outside of Anchorage. The Begich-Boggs visitor center in Portage is fully-staffed by U.S. Forest Service personnel who make available an avalanche of information on various Alaskan topics. The new Alaska Sealife Center in Seward is a must-see for visitors interested in marine wildlife.

New interpretive sites have recently been added to Scenic overlooks at McHugh Creek, Bird Point and Canyon Creek. Almost all of these waysides include access to new trails or existing, even historic trailheads, such as the Iditarod trail.

A series of brightly colored historical panels were erected at pullouts during 1999-2000, in recognition of the Alaska Gold Rush Centennial. These attractive signs are a sub-theme to the overall image of the Seward Highway All-American Road.

The marketing advisory committee recommended themes for the highway's market position, but deferred refinement to public relations professionals.

The Marketing Plan

Marketing may be conducted in two ways, and the marketing advisory committee recommends a combination of both.

First, begin a low-budget, public outreach effort within Alaska, such as the "local awareness campaign." A local awareness campaign was also recommended in the Seward Highway Corridor Partnership Plan.

To monitor success of a local awareness campaign, the subcommittee suggests conducting research to assess public awareness of the All-American Road designation, by local residents, businesses and government agencies, and reviewing visitor and traveler comments.

The second recommended effort is development of a long-range tourism advertising/public relations campaign plan to reach audiences outside of Alaska.

High budget marketing should be focused, cost-effective, take advantage of multiple media and methods, plug into existing Alaska and National Scenic Byway/All-American Road tourism marketing networks, and utilize suggestions found in the National Scenic Byways Program Marketing Tool Kit.

A five-year marketing plan is recommended. If an advertising/public relations firm is utilized, an effective, up-to-date system of monitoring success of marketing efforts should be used.

Goals and objectives of these two efforts are provided on the following pages.

target

*This plan addresses two primary target audiences:
stakeholders and visitors.*

residents & businesses



Stakeholders include residents and private landowners who live and work along the Seward Highway corridor, as well as businesses located near and dependent upon the Seward Highway.

alaskans



Visitors include residents of Alaska who thrive and recreate in or near the Seward Highway.

agencies



Stakeholders include agencies with regulatory, financial, development, conservation or maintenance concerns.

visitors



Visitors include non-Alaskans who don't yet realize the benefits of visiting the Seward Highway.

audiences

A separate plan of action for each of the two target audiences is detailed on the following pages.

Stakeholders include businesses, government and non-governmental entities, and residents located along the Seward Highway, All-American Road. These stakeholders offer tremendous potential for promoting the Seward Highway, All-American Road while conserving its intrinsic qualities.

Public awareness among citizen stakeholders can be improved and broadened. An increase in local outreach is needed to expand knowledge of the byway's national status and understanding of the Seward Highway Partnership Plan.

Alaskans who use the Seward highway for work, home and play should be made aware that the Seward Highway has been designated as an All-American Road, and of the benefits of designation. It is anticipated that this knowledge will translate into a sense of pride in the byway that provides an extra incentive to care for this valuable, scenic and natural asset.

Business owners may want to know how to utilize the designation for promotion and economic development. The Seward Highway Partnership Board and DOT&PF should provide a fact sheet as well as materials such as brochures and logos.

Concerned residents and business owners may want to know what the designation and corridor plan imply for them. Their questions should be answered, concerns addressed, and fears allayed. Some simply want to ensure that the highway will remain scenic indefinitely and its natural and historic features will remain predominant.

Visitors include Alaska residents who now travel the Seward Highway, as well as out-of-state visitors.

What we know about visitors is that the majority tend to be 35 years of age and older, educated, and employed. According to the Alaska Tourism Marketing Council's Images III study conducted in 1996, there are over 18 million U.S. adults who have suggested they are "highly" likely to visit Alaska. Another 30 million who are "interested" in visiting Alaska.

Visitor research conducted by the State of Alaska suggests several types of marketing may be needed to reach out-of-state visitors. For example, after several years of decline, the number of vehicles crossing the US/Canada border into Alaska appears to be increasing. Recent studies in Anchorage and discussions with tour operators suggest 34% or more of the market may be visiting friends and family.

We do not know, however, how many are aware of the Seward Highway's designation, and what types of visitors come to drive the byway. We also do not know what factors may prevent them from choosing to drive a scenic byway, as opposed to choosing some other mode of travel.

The marketing subcommittee is requesting marketing consultants to further identify target audiences as part of an overall, targeted advertising/public relations strategy for the Seward Highway.

Among these target audiences, we seek to increase awareness that the Seward Highway has been designated as an All-American Road, and motivate visitors to choose highway travel as part of their Alaska vacation plans.

goals

awareness



Objective: Increase public knowledge that the Seward Highway has been designated as an All-American Road.

promote benefits



Objective: Promote benefits to stakeholders, including more jobs, increased business revenue, a larger tax base, a better economy, and protection for scenic, natural, and historic assets.

address concerns



Objective: Honestly address stakeholder concerns about negative impacts of the designation.

involvement



Objective: Show stakeholders that the public has a voice in highway projects, and the All-American Road has resulted in improved access, trails, and interpretation at three Seward Highway waysides.

stakeholders

Purpose

Before the Seward Highway can be effectively promoted to visitors as a destination and experience, the people who live and work in the Seward Highway Corridor need to be aware of the national designation, and understand the benefits they may receive from the designation. So, the purpose of working with stakeholders is to effectively promote the benefits of the All-American Road designation within the highway corridor so that stakeholders will support and participate in promotional efforts.

The Seward Partnership should promote to stakeholders the concept that designation of “their road” as an All-American Road directly benefits them and their communities economically, and actually assists in preserving the area’s beauty and tranquility.

Strategies

Within the next two years, the Seward Highway Partnership Board should instigate a modest local awareness campaign directed specifically at Seward Highway stakeholders. This effort could be known as a Seward Highway Local Awareness Campaign.

The Seward Highway Partnership should select a team to arrange a series of highly publicized town meetings, a “road show,” with three primary objectives: to raise awareness, promote benefits, and address concerns.

General promotion of the Seward Highway, as well as promotion for town meetings, should utilize as many types of low- or no-cost media and methods as possible. The team involved with the local awareness campaign could also tie into existing networks of the National Scenic Byway/All-American Road program, and utilize suggestions found in the National Scenic Byway Program Marketing Toolkit.

In preparation for public engagements, the local awareness campaign team should develop a press packet, a display, a slide presentation, and a speaker’s bureau. Prior to any town meetings, the team should conduct initial visits to local communities. Residents may also be contacted by mailings.

The local awareness campaign team should also follow up with a toll-free hotline or internet-based communication effort to answer questions, allay fears and bolster enthusiasm.

The marketing subcommittee also suggested several other methods of promoting the highway:

Free Logo and Promotional Materials. Provide businesses with the Seward All-American Road logo and a fact sheet, so that they may use the designation to promote their businesses.

Hospitality Training. The Seward Highway Partnership may want to contract for Alaska Host training in communities. This state program has a roster of certified trainers around the state.

Highway Brochure/Fact Sheet. Develop a brochure to direct mail to businesses and private landowners that provides basic, pertinent information of interest.

Internal Agency Awareness Efforts. Seward Highway Partnership Board members should arrange for internal government presentations on the the Seward Highway Partnership Plan.

Special Event(s). The partnership may choose to create a special event in honor of the All-American

benefits & special features

Road, such as a ribbon cutting or marathon.

Stakeholders live in a special place, with easy access to grandeur, wilderness, geologic and wildlife diversity, oceans, mountains, tidal marshes, history, culture and year-round recreational opportunities in a small area.

Some of the **benefits to stakeholders** include:

- International recognition of the Seward Highway's special attributes
- Funding for highway improvements
- Increased local business revenue
- Potential increase in jobs
- Increased tax base for local governments
- Protections for treasured assets

Some **special features** include:

- Easy access to scenic, historic and recreational features
- Awesome views
- Bore tides
- Easy viewing of rare wildlife such as Dall sheep, moose, and whales
- Multiple scenic pullouts
- Separate lanes for slow and faster traffic
- Restaurants and snack shops
- The Alaska Sea Life Center
- Opportunities for bicycling
- Camping
- Numerous hiking trails
- Fishing
- Access to Chugach National Forest

Monitoring Effectiveness

It is imperative that a Seward Highway Awareness campaign be monitored periodically for its effectiveness. The special advisory committee for marketing should review this action plan and its effectiveness periodically. Revisions to the plan should be made as needed.

One measure of success may be the level of stakeholders who choose to participate in promoting the Seward Highway. Another may be to conduct research, perhaps by partnering with tourism marketing agencies or the state Division of Tourism, such as the Alaska Visitors Statistics Program.

Finally, economic impact and visitor research could be beneficial to support and supplement current visitor trend research from the Alaska Division of Tourism, regional marketing organizations, and convention and visitors bureaus. This data would be helpful in marketing efforts to refine the audience and monitor effectiveness.

Budget

Currently there is no funding specifically earmarked for a Seward Highway Awareness campaign. The Seward Highway Partnership Board should address revenue concerns, and may seek federal scenic byway grant funding for this effort.

In order to conduct cost effective outreach, the local awareness campaign should make the best use of advertising/public relations activities described in the next chapter. The project manager should reduce duplication of effort between the two campaigns, such as development of a press kit, research and thematic design elements, whenever possible.

Any contract agency should provide a "menu" approach to proposed advertising public relations activities, allowing for flexibility in spending.



goals

marketing



Objective: The Seward Highway Partnership should develop a professional, long-range marketing plan.

monitor



Objective: Include in the marketing plan a description of how to evaluate the effectiveness of marketing activities. Review the plan periodically and revise if necessary.

partnering



Objective: Explore public-private partnerships to share advertising and other marketing expenses, where mutually beneficial.

use network



Objective: Maximize limited grant funds by utilizing the existing Alaska tourism marketing network to the extent possible.

visitors

Purpose

The purpose of the National Scenic Byway program is dual: to preserve our nation's most scenic, historic and cultural roads; and to promote economic development through increased visitation. This sentiment is echoed in the Seward Highway Partnership Plan, and shall be implemented through development of a comprehensive marketing strategy.

The purpose of targeted marketing to visitors is to promote the Seward Highway as a destination and experience. This, in turn, supports local economic development, and thereby encourages the preservation of the Seward Highway corridor as an irreplaceable asset to the state of Alaska and the world. The heart and soul of Alaska can be seen along the 127 miles from Seward to Anchorage, along the Seward Highway, All-American Road.

Marketing History

Tourism North- Tourism North is a cooperative visitor marketing effort between the State of Alaska, and Canadian Provinces of British Columbia, Yukon, and Alberta. The goal is to promote and increase highway travel through Canada to Alaska. The Alaska Department of Community and Economic Development's Tourism office (DCED) leads Alaska's role in the cooperative.

Under early interagency agreements, the Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities (DOT&PF) has contracted with the DCED to conduct marketing for the Alaska Scenic Byways program through Tourism North. The primary collateral include a highway travel planner publication called *North to Alaska!* and corresponding internet website. By tapping into this vast network, the Alaska Scenic Byway program has been able to use just \$80,000 to leverage a visitor marketing campaign worth over a million dollars.

In 1999, a single, full-page advertisement promoting travel to all of Alaska's scenic byways appeared *North to Alaska!* The 2000 publication included an award-winning tear-out booklet with maps and itineraries for five Alaska Scenic Byways. One suggests a travel itinerary on the Seward Highway.

Alaska Tourism Industry Association - As a result of state legislation in 1999, the marketing functions of DCED were handed over to a newly-created public/private group known as the Alaska Tourism Industry Association (ATIA).

Internet - Beginning in 1999, the Alaska Scenic Byway program has promoted the Seward Highway on the DOT&PF internet website, located at www.dot.state.ak.us/scenic.

Challenges

Marketing to visitors has become increasingly difficult as the state has decreased tourism marketing spending by nearly 60 percent. In 1990, Alaska spent \$15 million on tourism marketing efforts. In FY2000, the state is spending just \$6.6 million. The state now is 33rd place among states for tourism marketing.

Due to growth in internet usage, e-mail requests for Seward Highway travel information from visitors to the scenic byways website are on the rise. Due to budget cuts, state tourism staff are no longer able to respond public requests for scenic highway traveler information. These requests are currently being handled in-house by DOT&PF, but may be moved to appropriate marketing channels.

partnerships

Strategies

The Seward Highway Partnership should work through existing travel marketing channels to access established networks and the available talent pool of professional services. Working with a professional firm, the Partnership can use this Action Plan for Marketing the Seward Highway as a guide for developing a detailed 5-year marketing plan and advertising/public relations campaign.

The firm should work under the direction of the Seward Highway Special Advisory Committee for Marketing, the scenic byways coordinator, and the byway marketing leader. All drafts and work products must be pre-approved by the committee and scenic byways coordinator.

Partnerships

Funding necessary to market directly to targeted audiences is limited, therefore it is extremely important that links be made to existing state, regional, and local marketing and promotional efforts.

For example, the marketing team may want to tie into existing local contacts with national travel writers. Partner with visitor trade associations such as Alaska's network of tourism-related businesses to disseminate information.

The marketing team could also tie into existing networks of the National Scenic Byway program, and utilize suggestions found in the National Scenic Byway Program Marketing Tool Kit.

Advertising/Public Relations Campaign

The proposed advertising/public relations campaign would address the larger picture, identify tasks and address costs and benefits of specific items to ensure:

- The tasks are part of an overall effective marketing plan coordinated with other byways in Alaska.

- Target audiences and demographic factors are identified,
- A consistent theme is used in all promotional materials
- All products tie together graphically,
- Existing tourism distribution channels are identified to take full advantage of existing promotional opportunities,
- A range of marketing tasks/products, effective for Alaska, are documented with the following factors identified:
 - The target market
 - The collateral
 - The fulfillment and distribution plan
 - Associated advertising
 - Estimated costs, including associated postage costs

Products and Tasks

The marketing advisory committee suggests the firm explore some products and tasks:

Target Audiences. The firm should recommend specific target audiences on which to focus marketing.

Press Kit. The firm should develop a press kit, which may include photographs, maps, and recommended travel itineraries.

Assist Local Awareness Campaign. Materials developed for advertising/public relations campaign can provide support for the local awareness effort (page 7).

Travel Writer. The Partnership may consider hiring a travel writer to send a log over the internet as they travel the highway.

Partnerships. The firm should explore public/private partnerships to purchase advertising and distribute information.

Internet Website Explore ways to improve the website, increase visitation, and advertise on other internet websites.

VNR. Consider producing a video news release, and a longer format (20 min.) video for air on TV, visitor centers, and other mediums, such as the Alaska Public Lands Information Centers.

Travel Marketing Channels

Tourism North

A cooperative effort between the state of Alaska and Canadian Provinces of British Columbia, Yukon, and Alberta, this group focuses specifically on promoting highway travel between the Lower 48 and Alaska. Management of marketing efforts alternates between the various partners each year. The primary product of Tourism North is a publication of *North to Alaska!* and an accompanying internet website. The publication is mailed out to a list of likely travelers, and to people who inquire through a toll-free number or the website. Additional copies are placed in visitor centers and travel agencies. The publication run is 150,000 and may be responsible for an increase in Alaska/Canada border crossings in 1998. Tourism North has conducted previous marketing efforts for the Alaska Scenic Byways program.

Alaska Travel Industry Association (ATIA)

This public/private tourism marketing group was created in 2000 through legislative action that consolidated the functions of the Alaska Visitors Association and the Alaska Tourism Marketing Council, and the marketing functions of the state Division of Tourism. The organization operates on a combination of state funds and member fees. Membership ranges from large cruise lines to small mom-and-pop tourism businesses. The ATIA Fiscal Year 2001 budget shows a wide variety of services, including public relations, advertising, an internet website for visitors (www.travelalaska.com), niche marketing, research and international marketing. The primary publication is the *Official Alaska Travel Planner*. ATIA has contracted with an Anchorage-based firm for professional advertising and public relations services.

Department of Community & Economic Development

The Division of Tourism was dissolved in 2000, and the Department of Community and Economic Development now provides limited tourism functions under the new Division of Community and Business Development. The Division oversees the state's \$4.6 million contract with the Alaska Tourism Industry Association (ATIA) to provide tourism marketing services. The Division also oversees the state's tourism website.

Local Tourism Marketing Organizations

Many communities in Alaska have local tourism marketing organizations known as Convention and Visitors bureaus. The Kenai Peninsula Borough has its own Tourism Marketing Council. A complete list of local and regional tourism marketing organizations may be found on the state tourism website.

Monitoring Effectiveness

A professional advertising/public relations firm should submit methodology for evaluating the success of proposed marketing efforts. Success of the efforts should be monitored periodically. This plan should recognize that the effectiveness of marketing to travelers may be difficult to track by traditional methods.

Again, economic impact and visitor research could be beneficial to define and monitor marketing efforts. Marketing efforts should be coordinated and supplement current visitor trend research from the Alaska Department of Community & Economic Development. The group may also work with the Alaska Division of Tourism's Alaska Visitor Statistics Program (AVSP) for professional research efforts.

Budget

A portion of National Scenic Byway marketing grant funds should be used for professional public relations services to develop and implement a comprehensive Seward Highway Marketing Plan.

Contractor should identify a marketing plan with three budget levels:

- low-end, might include theme/message development, stories for press kit;
- middle range, might include some video/photography production, website development, brochure/tabloid;
- high-end might include advertising in visitor publications.

The Seward Highway Partnership should pursue additional marketing funds through grants and fund-raising.

tasks

To be accomplished within two years

stakeholders

Seward Highway Awareness Campaign

Put together a “Road Show” or “Whistle Stop” Tour.

- Promote the tour in advance:
 - Develop a Press Kit
 - Send kit to newspapers, radios and TV stations for advance stories
 - Promote internally through agency email and internet websites
- Make advance visits to communities
- Develop a speakers bureau & slide show
- Follow up on comments received and evaluate the events
- Provide toll-free phone line and email address to answer questions
- Identify a spokesperson(s)
- Direct-mail logos and fact sheets to Seward Highway businesses.

Other Ways to Raise Awareness

- Develop an event for public participation, such as run or walk in honor of Scenic Byway.
- Promote through interagency communications channels.
- Highlight projects and successes.

Evaluation

- Review plan annually and make adjustments as needed.

visitors

Seward Highway Marketing Plan

- Work with a professional Advertising/Public Relations firm to develop and begin implementing a comprehensive, long-range advertising/public relations campaign based on different funding levels.
- Plan should:
 - be cost effective,
 - further define target audiences
 - tap into existing tourism marketing networks.
 - explore public/private partnerships,
 - be measurable.
- Work products may include:
 - press kit
 - ad buys
 - travel writer
 - video news release
 - effective use of internet.

Evaluation

- The Seward Highway special advisory committee for marketing should evaluate plan annually, report to the Seward Highway Partnership Board, and make adjustments as needed.



summary

Marketing Action Plan

There should be two separate marketing efforts for the Seward Highway, All-American Road.

One effort should be a “Seward Highway Local Awareness Campaign,” which targets stakeholders in the corridor, and focuses specifically on raising awareness of the All-American Road designation, promoting the benefits of the designation, assisting businesses who want to use the designation for promotion purposes, and addressing concerns of local residents.

This effort should be low- to moderate-cost, make best use of existing networks, and should receive support from the second, larger advertising/public relations campaign. Organizers of this effort should refer to and utilize suggestions found in the National Scenic Byway Marketing Toolkit.

The second tourism effort should target highway visitors. The marketing advisory committee recommends utilizing an advertising/public relations firm to develop a detailed, long-range marketing plan, which is cost-effective and makes the best use possible of existing Alaska tourism marketing networks. This plan should specifically identify demographic target markets and include cost-effectiveness evaluation of each.

The project manager for both efforts should ensure consistency and cost-effectiveness of the two separate efforts by reducing duplication and establishing consistent design themes.

Both efforts should be periodically evaluated by the Special Advisory Committee for Marketing for effectiveness, and results report to the Seward Highway Partnership Board. Adjustments to either plan should be incorporated as needed.

Because grant money is limited, the Partnership should make effective use of the one-time grants, seek additional grant funding, and explore ways to fund future marketing efforts. This should include exploration of public/private partnerships, and possibly sales of promotional items such as t-shirts, caps and bumper stickers.

Special Issues

The Seward Highway Partnership Plan (SHPP) calls for a special advisory committee on tourism marketing. Input from the committee is included in this report. Representation should be broadened to include more members who have direct experience in marketing or are currently involved in the visitor industry.

All advertising/public relations efforts should refer to and utilize suggestions found in the National Scenic Byway Marketing Toolkit.

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