Tourism strategy to rebrand Reno-Tahoe

By Yun Long, Reno Gazette-Journal

A new tourism campaign is moving away from the gaming-centric marketing to redefine the Reno-Tahoe region as a four-season resort destination.

Christopher Baums, Reno-Sparks Convention & Vistors Authority president and CEO, unveiled the "What's Your Passion?" campaign aimed at visitors who want to explore their passions in Reno-Tahoe.

"It asks people to become involved," Baum said. "When you ask people "What's Your Passion?" with a question mark on the end, you are expecting an response. … Most people will think 'Gee, what is my passion,' and very often, it's something you haven't done in awhile and isn't it time to do it in Reno Tahoe USA?"

The campaign is repositioning Reno Tahoe as a "friendly, four-season resort destination – in a spectacular natural setting – that offers world class attraction, activities and events to excite the passions of almost anyone," according the RSCVA.

The $1.6 million campaign, targeted at Reno Tahoe's core market of Northern California, will include 32 billboards from Sacramento to the Bay Area, two radio ads and print advertising in Southwest Airlines' *Spirit*, AAA's *Via, Sunset, Sacramento* and *San Francisco* magazines.

Read the whole story

What services locally, regionally, or statewide would you consolidate and why?

Placer County hires firm to market agricultural assets

Placer County is embracing its agricultural attributes.

Agricultural Commissioner Joshua Huntsinger encouraged the Board of Supervisors to select a contractor who will do agricultural marketing for Placer County.

After a competitive recruitment process, Merlot Marketing of Sacramento was selected from 10 applicants. The Board of Supervisors has approved the $79,995 contract, which will run from March 13, 2012, until June 30, 2013.

“Agriculture in Placer County is a $65 million a year industry,” Huntsinger said in a press release. “Our goal is to assist farmers in remaining profitable and increase their sales. This is a significant boost to our economy.”

Merlot Marketing will work with agricultural organizations, as well as individual farmers and ranchers to promote local products and events that feature those products. The marketing effort will use local, regional and national media to tout the benefits and uniqueness of Placer County-grown produce and products made from that produce.

The marketing program, which began in 2001, continued annually until 2009, when difficult economic times forced its suspension.

Bear box battle forces S. Tahoe to bid project for 3rd time

By Kathryn Reed

To avoid another lawsuit when it comes to bids and contracts (like Lakeview Commons), the South Lake Tahoe City Council voted for the safe bet – to start the process all over. When the bids go out again for bear boxes to be installed on public property it will actually be the third time.

This is because the first time the bid documents were released they included a photo of a trademarked bear box. That's a big no-no. Not only that, but it was a box from a company planning to submit a bid.



Bear boxes may be installed in public

areas
throughout
South Lake
Tahoe.
Photo/NPS

Then bids went out again, with nine entities responding to that request. One of the respondents commented on the type of material needed for durability reasons, citing the low bid not being the right standard.

Gary O'Neill, purchaser for the city, told the council on March 20 that he only contacted the low bidder to see if they would upgrade the material to galvanized steel.

"The additional cost did not affect the lowest bidder," O'Neill said at Tuesday's meeting.

The four councilmembers – Mayor Claire Fortier was absent – were not comfortable with bid requirements changing midstream before a contract was awarded and without all applicants weighing in on the change to know how, if at all, it would affect their bids.

"It troubles me how the timing of this happened," Councilwoman Angela Swanson said. "It's an irregularity in the bidding process that I'm uncomfortable with."

What is being bid on is providing the city with 200-plus bear boxes that will be installed throughout town on public property. This was originally supposed to happen a few years ago when the Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery named South Lake Tahoe one of four cities in California to share a $1.5 million grant. The news came in October 2008 and nearly five months to the day later the money was frozen.

In May 2010, the city got word it could go forward with spending the $394,000 grant. It wasn't ready to do so and asked for an extension. Now the deadline to spend the money is

May 2012.

A primary reason the matter was pulled from the consent agenda is because on March 16 protests were filed by Tahoe Bear Box Co. and BearSaver – two bidders. They believe Carson Valley Welding, the low bidder and whom staff recommended the city contract with, is infringing on their trademark and don't have containers that are bear resistant.

Randy Stanaway of Tahoe Bear Box said, "It was unclear if you wanted the cheapest box or the best value." He said if criteria were strictly the lowest bidder, he would have put in a different bid.

It's customary for public projects to award the bid to the lowest reasonable bid. However, the bid documents didn't mention lowest bidder, just best value.

When questioned by the council, O'Neill said the only criterion staff used was price.

Stanaway admitted to the council he is affiliated with BearSaver as well, saying it's one product, but two distributors. He said two bids are turned in to meet the needs of entities like the U.S. Forest Service that require a minimum of two bids.

Stanaway made accusations that Carson Valley Welding's boxes would not last long.

Don Heldoorn, owner of Carson Valley Welding, took great issue with this statement. He assured the council the hinges and locks on his boxes – what he says get used the most – have a lifetime warranty, the actual boxes have a 10-year warranty, and all come with anti-graffiti powder.

Robert Huckaby, attorney for Carson Valley Welding, also spoke at the meeting. He said there is no trademark issue and that his client would indemnify the city against any trademark

claims.

City Manager Tony O'Rourke after the meeting told *Lake Tahoe News* there is no official can in the industry as some claim. He said when he worked in Beaver Creek a bear box was designed specifically for that community.

Now the process begins all over, with the idea the money will still be available for the boxes to be distributed at city owned beaches, public buildings like the recreation complex, ball fields and perhaps bus stops.

The remainder of the grant is earmarked for a Chevy Silverado hybrid pickup to replace the current pickup that gets 4 miles to the gallon.

In other action:

• The council heard a presentation from trails planner Garrett Villanueva of the U.S. Forest Service about the proposed bike park at Bijou Community Park. No action was taken.

• The land swap with the California Tahoe Conservancy was unanimously approved.

• An agreement with RO Anderson Engineering for design, permitting and financial consulting service for the Harrison Avenue project was approved. This includes working on turning the newly acquired property at Modesto and Harrison avenues into a parking lot and possibly expanding the city lot closer to El Dorado Beach. The Planning Commission will review more detailed Harrison Avenue plans on April 12, with the council having the topic on its April 17 agenda.

• It was agreed to proceed with a feasibility study to look at how South Lake Tahoe and Lake Valley fire departments could share or consolidate resources. Councilmembers Tom Davis and Angela Swanson were appointed to that committee because they are the reps on the ambulance JPA that involves the same two

agencies.

• Steve Knoll was appointed to the Parks and Recreation Commission.

Unity at the Lake having open house

Unity at the Lake is having an open house March 24 from 1-4pm at 1195 Rufus Allen Blvd., South Lake Tahoe.

There will be food, camaraderie, children’s activities and fun for all ages.

The music ministry, OneVoice, will perform throughout the day.

For more info, call (530) 544.2266.

Matchmaking service targets real estate buyers

By Yun Long, Reno Gazette-Journal

Matching the perfect home with the right buyer can take time – in many showings – as well as a major investment in money and emotion. Specific criteria must be addressed: Is the style right? Are the home's features attractive?

Producers Forum, an online real estate database service, is working to help Northern Nevadans in the industry make better connections. The company, which is based in Palo Alto, helps real estate agents match interested buyers with homes that aren't always available in the public marketplace.

The website allows serious buyers into the market and for members to share and organize information about homes that are for sale but aren't openly listed.

"The buyer pool for the (Reno and Tahoe) regions tend to be outside those regions," said Eric Trailer, CEO and founder of the Producers Forum. "Therefore, for agents to connect with agents where the buyers pools are is certainly a benefit to Reno agents."

Trailer will host two sessions to introduce the service to Reno, Sparks and Lake Tahoe real estate agents and brokers Thursday at Ticor Title. The service allows agents to better share information with their counterparts in the local market, as well as outside markets with interested buyers.

Arjun Dhingra, who works sales and business development at Mortgage Capital Associates and serves the Northern Nevada and Northern California markets, said that recently his company has handled many loans for Californians relocating or buying a second home in Nevada.

Read the whole story

Ruining produce in the refrigerator

By Huffington Post



Keep onions out of the refrigerator
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Don’t stick that onion in the fridge. You might think that you’re being resourceful. You might think you’re stretching your dollars by prolonging the life of your produce (which, in a way, you kind of are). But what you’re really doing is making them taste worse – a lot worse.

If you think about it, refrigerating much of our produce just isn’t logical. All of the foods we eat are unique, so it makes sense that they should be treated according to their individual makeup. There’s a pretty simple rule to follow (disclaimer: it isn’t 100 percent fool-proof, because even supermarkets get it wrong sometimes): if it’s not being kept cold at the supermarket, it really shouldn’t be kept cold in your home.

Read the whole story

Joe Cocker/Huey Lewis & The News

Joe Cocker/Huey Lewis & The News are part of the Harveys Outdoor Concert Series on Aug. 17 at 7:30pm. Tickets go from $49.50 to $99.50.

Journey at Harveys

At the Harveys' Outdoor Concert Series will be Journey, with Pat Benatar and Loverboy on stage July 22 at 6pm. Tickets range from $59.50 to $199.50.

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