

Submitted to: Castle Rock Town Council

Report by: Pam Ridler, Castle Rock Chamber of Commerce

Submitted: August 18, 2016

Re: Castle Rock Chamber's January-July 2016 Mid-Year Reporting

Castle Rock Economic Partnership (CREP)—In the Chamber's role with the scope of the Contract for Services with the Town, the Chamber is responsible for coordinating the efforts of Business Support Services, Community Marketing and Tourism efforts which include community signature events.

I. Special Events & Tourism Projects

Community Event Management

Community character and events have been identified by our residents through the Town's surveys as reasons why they love Castle Rock and our community events celebrate our home-town feel atmosphere. The Chamber takes pride in leading several of the community signature events with the assistance of the Town, Downtown Alliance and volunteer business staffing. The Chamber continues to work towards improvement and increased quality by providing family oriented entertainment and to capture and record data to evaluate the return on objectives of these events.

The Chamber's Contract of Service with the Town is to organize, promote and implement the Douglas County Fair Parade (August), Colorado Artfest (September) and Starlighting (November) events. Although these three events have yet to take place, we are well into planning. Other community events which the Chamber continues to coordinate and facilitate are the Healthy Living Expo (February), Victoria House Block Party (June), and the Castle Rock WineFest (July). The Chamber also partners with the promoter of the Elephant Rock Ride (June) by providing them with volunteer recruitment and the management of onsite beer sales for the two-day event.

Healthy Living Expo: (February 6, 2016)

PURPOSE/OBJECTIVE:

The 5th annual Healthy Living Expo is a healthy lifestyle expo located at the Douglas County Events Center showcasing area businesses to our residents. The goal is to promote a strong local economy by featuring local and regional products and services with a healthy focus for residents of Castle Rock. HLE gives our residents the opportunity to shop local in an environment of education, entertainment and interactive activities.

MEASURABLE OUTCOMES:

- Attendance this year was estimated at 2,706 attendees for this 6-hour event, which is up from the 1,405 attendees in 2015 (+93%).

- 79 vendor booths was a decrease from 2015 due to the re-mapping of the Expo, and the addition of the kid's obstacle area.
- Free sponsored pancake breakfast was a continued feature.
- Brought back the Freeze Your Buns Off 5k run and partnered with the Stride Mob Race Team registering 173 runners.
- HLE social media exposure grew from 11,786 to 14,326 (+18%) impressions.
- Media (print/radio) touch points were in excess of 618,000
- Staffing— 14 volunteers estimated 42 hours, value equity of \$1,078.56**
Chamber staff estimated at 223.5 hours equally \$5,739.

**Town funding does not include direct support of the Healthy Living Expo special community event; however, 5.9% of Event/Program staffing and operations funding is applied according to the staffing % to this particular event/programs.*

***Volunteer event staffing is valued at \$25.68/hr. source CO Tourism Office.*

Victoria House Block Party (June 25, 2016)

PURPOSE/OBJECTIVE:

The 3rd Annual Victoria's House Block party is a free community event and open house for the Castle Rock Chamber of Commerce and Visitors Center. The purpose is to celebrate the kick-off to Castle Rock's summer events season and featuring the Visitor's Center being open Saturdays during the summer. All activities and food are free to the public, which to demonstrate "good will" between our businesses and residents.

MEASURABLE OUTCOMES:

- 24 booth vendors in 2016 which is the same in 2015
- Added entertainment and attractions on the entire block of Jerry between 4th and 5th
- Estimates of 515 people in attendance compared to 440 last year (+17%).
- Print media was limited to local newspaper and calendar promotion.
- Social media exposure for this year was 12,932 compared to 7,893 Impressions (+63% over 2016)
- Staffing—No volunteers were recruited for this event; however, Chamber staff estimated at 16.5 hours equally \$424.

**Town funding does not include direct support of the Victoria House Block Party community event; however less than 1% of Event/Program staffing and operations funding is applied according to the staffing % to this particular event/programs.*

Castle Rock WineFest: (July 16, 2016)

PURPOSE/OBJECTIVE:

The WineFest recently celebrated its 13th year hosted in The Meadows and has been identified as the eastern slope premier wine tasting event attracting wine lovers from across the state. The goal is to encourage cultural activities including the promotion of Colorado wines, day long entertainment and interactive demonstrations and activities to increase the economic impact to Castle Rock's local economy and marketing exposure.

MEASURABLE OUTCOMES:

- Ticket sales with multiple partnerships and new marketing outlets, the 2016 WineFest was a huge success with 3,688 attendees (+37.8%) over 2015.
- Implemented a full-page tabloid walking guide distributed to Castle Rock and Castle Pines households two weeks prior to the event.
- Social media impressions grew from 108,901 to 503,127 impressions (includes 5280.com and the Denver Ear Social Media)
- Current media (print/radio) impressions are in excess of 707,000. This number is flat from 2016 due to focus of increasing our social media presence.
- Event sponsorship is \$20,000 (+6%)
- Staffing—106 volunteers estimated at 503 hours value equity of \$13,008** Chamber staff estimated at 409 hours equally \$10,577.

New Additions:

- VIP area with wine pairings and special amenities
- Added a Bier Garten
- Mainstage band entertainment staging moved more to centralized location with extended hours in addition to 2nd small stage with acoustical music.

**Town funding does not include direct support to the Castle Rock WineFest special community event, however 6.2% of Event/Program staffing and operations funding according to the staffing % to particular event/programs.*

***Volunteer event staffing is valued at \$25.86/hr. source CO Tourism Office.*

II. Community Marketing, Advertising and Social Media promotion

PURPOSE/OBJECTIVE:

To facilitate community marketing by continuing to manage the VisitCastleRock.org website and Community Events Calendar VisitCastleRock.org/events with ongoing content curation. This site is a visually engaging and interactive for the user and allows local organizations, vendors and event planners to submit their events to the

community calendar for posting with the objective to promote community activities. The goal is to keep our residents connected and give them a sense of community with enhanced social, cultural and recreational experiences.

Cross marketing efforts have been created by working with our community partners as part of the Community Marketing Taskforce with the plan to continue to explore local and regional mass media and social media opportunities, expanding our communities' exposure and creation of local discount Stay and Play packages. We also will educate our new residents of the local amenities through the continued distribution of Welcome to Castle Rock packets.

MEASURABLE OUTCOMES:

- VisitCastleRock.org website has increased its backlinks from 1,042 in December, 2015 to 6,416 to-date (515% increase) and has exceeded our goal inline of our comprehensive SEO plan.
- VisitCastleRock.org pageviews currently is 59,465 (+13%) and new users are 19,685 (+42%) which has surpassed our 10% goal for 2016.
- Published a new Livability magazine in print and digitally with an interactive mobile version. This magazine showcases Castle Rock's strengths through photography and professionally written stories of Castle Rock's community character.
- Cross marketing efforts have been created with our partners in promoting local businesses, recreation, parks/trails, community events. Shop the Rock Welcome packets to date have been distributed to 1,227 households.
- Partnered with Town, County, Downtown Alliance, Chamber and the Outlets in the creation and distribution of Summer Community Events printed calendar mailed in May to every household in Castle Rock (19,000 directly mailed) and 11,000 distributed at local community partner locations.
- Continue to produce a full-page tabloid advertisement distributed through the Castle Rock NewsPress to residents which promotes upcoming community events and programs (19,500 household distribution monthly throughout Castle Rock and Castle Pines).

Visitors/Residents Assistance

- Visitor Center—continue to have the Visitor Center open in the summer 6 days per week (Saturdays from Memorial Day through Labor Day open 9 am-1 pm). To date the Chamber has welcomed 3,798 visitors)
- Volunteer Hospitality Trainings—We have six volunteers who welcome visitors.

III. Small Business Assistance

PURPOSE/OBJECTIVE:

The Economic Gardening program has recently been rebranded as the **eXcelerate Business Development Program**. The program continues to foster entrepreneurial activity by providing the essential information, infrastructure and resources required for successful business development and growth. The Chamber has been offering services and information at little or no cost to both start-ups and established businesses in Castle Rock for more than ten years. As a committee we strategize and plan relevant training events, workshops and other programs to educate and equip business owners, executives, managers and their employees in addition to providing one-on-one business consultations.

MEASURABLE OUTCOMES:

- ***One-on-one business consultations*** with expert volunteer counseling 17 businesses and/or start-ups to date. The value of volunteer services is \$2,550 to date.
- ***Business monthly trainings--3rd Tech Tuesday, BizBuilder Lunch 'n Learn, Worksite Wellness and On-line trainings*** continue to grow in popularity. To date we have conducted 22 trainings with 239 participants (88 non-duplicated businesses). Business volunteers have contributed. The value of over \$5,888 of in-kind professional staffing has been contributed.
- ***Business Outreach program*** welcomes new businesses on behalf of the Castle Rock Economic Partnership, offering to help them make local connections, find local resources, etc. So far in 2016, 93 new businesses have been mailed a welcome letter and business assistance brochure which is followed up with a phone call and an email by Chamber staff. (80 emails YTD). A second connection letter is mailed eight months after they appear on the list (184 letters YTD). The idea is to communicate in a variety of ways, a variety of times. We invite them to attend Chamber networking events and training classes for free and emphasize the Chamber, Town and EDC are here to help them get established.
- New in 2016, the Chamber developed and coordinated two **Douglas County Job Fair** events to assist our local employers to fill their employment needs and are planning for a third job fair event in October. A total of 67 businesses and 553 job seekers have participated so far this year.

IV. Volunteer Development

Leadership Douglas County Program:

PURPOSE/OBJECTIVE:

LDC is designed to identify, educate and motivate current and emerging leaders who will strengthen and enhance the experiential program of personal growth and skill development through this 10-month program. LDC completed its 17th class in June graduating 18 class participants (298 graduates since 2000). The program utilized a total of 183 volunteers contributing 376 hours valued at \$19,686 from January-July in 2016 and staffing valued at \$7,321.

The 2016/17 class selection has been completed with the acceptance of 22 new participants from local businesses, non-profit and government participants who will begin their classes in September.