

Submitted to: Castle Rock Town Council

Report By: Pam Ridler, Castle Rock Chamber of Commerce

Submitted: August 7, 2015

Re: Castle Rock Chamber's January-July 2015 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 Branding, 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 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 7, 2015)**

#### **PURPOSE/OBJECTIVE:**

The 4<sup>th</sup> 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 1,405 people for this 6-hour event. The challenge encountered by this event was a 70 degree plus weather in February and people wanted to be outside, not indoors.
- 116 vendor booths (9% booth increase over 2014) which included a total of 32 health screenings compared to 6 in 2014. Also the Six Pillars of Health & Wellness theme.
- Free sponsored pancake breakfast was a new feature.

- Obtained corporate sponsorship with Pepsico which also included \$10,000 metro media free radio advertisement with Aquafina.
- HLE social media exposure grew from 5,000 to a reach of 11,786 impressions.
- Media (print/radio) touch points were in excess of 500,000 exceeding our goal of 84,000
- Staffing—15 volunteers estimated 40 hours value equity of \$1,034\*\* and Chamber staff estimated at 221 hours equally \$4,890.

*\*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 6, 2015)**

#### **PURPOSE/OBJECTIVE:**

The 2<sup>nd</sup> 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 the opening of the Visitor's Center on 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 compared to 12 vendors in 2014 (100% Increase)
- Estimates of 440 people in attendance compared to 218 last year.
- Print media was limited to local newspaper and calendar promotion.
- Social media exposure for this year was 7,893 Impressions (was not tracked in 2014)
- Staffing—No volunteers were recruited for this event; however Chamber staff estimated at 33 hours equally \$827.

*\*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 18, 2015)**

#### **PURPOSE/OBJECTIVE:**

*The WineFest* recently celebrated its 12<sup>th</sup> 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--going into the day of the event presales were 9% above last year with the goal to increase total attendance by 6%; however due to a mid-afternoon rain storm day of purchase ticket attendance was down by 2%. Additional sponsors, vendors and

volunteer increased the total attendance was 2,617 which was an overall increase over 2014 by 3%.

- Vendor booths were 91 which was an increase of 14% over 2014.
- Sponsorships increased 31% over 2014.
- New additions: second performance stage, five new interactive activity areas, additional square footage to festival and a second north entrance gate to festival grounds.
- WineFest Social media impressions grew from 7,200 to 108,901 impressions. The goal was to increase by 12%.
- Current media (print/radio) impressions are in excess of 707,000 (157%+)--the 2015 goal was to reach 275,000 (10%+ over 2014) media impressions this year.
- Staffing—78 volunteers estimated at 271 hours value equity of \$6,959\*\* and Chamber staff estimated at 393 hours equally \$9,397.

*\*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 Branding/re-branding**--The Chamber submitted a proposed enhanced plan for community marketing and branding (Strategic Plan) on March 15, 2015 to the Town of Castle Rock staff; however at this time no action to accept the submission has been received.

III. **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 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. We also will educate our new residents of the local amenities through the continued distribution of Welcome to Castle Rock packets.

**MEASURABLE OUTCOMES:**

Advertising

- Partnered with Town, County, Downtown Alliance and Chamber staff 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.

- Implemented a full-page tabloid advertisement distributed through the Castle Rock NewsPress to residents which promotes upcoming community events and programs (200,000 household distribution monthly throughout Douglas County).

#### Social Media

- Partnered with Town staff, Downtown Alliance and Chamber in the creation of a Community App called CRToday which incorporates text notifications, promotes centralized Community Events Calendar and local discount portal (cross platforms) in promotion of events and our community services. 6,500 downloads of the app with a 98.3% open rate with Events and Visitor Center pages being the most popular pages.
- The social media presence for VisitCastleRock as of July 31, 2015 has increased by 49% on Facebook and 16% on Twitter. The page likes increased from 2,942 to 3,679 (25%) which has already exceeded the goal of 20% by end of 2015.
- The Chamber continues to manage the VisitCastleRock.org website which integrates our areas cultural scene by promoting events, area nightlife, galleries, historic tours and the museum in addition to recreational activities. This website continues to be a great resource for the community by offering in depth relocation, senior living/activities, churches, schools, day care, neighborhoods, government services, higher education or emergency services which are directly linked to the appropriate providers in our community. Our efforts to communicate to both residents, businesses and non-profits to utilize the interactive event calendar system with the google analytics at 11,958 page views.

#### Visitors/Residents Assistance

- Visitor Center--New in 2015 objective was a pilot project of expanding the days/hours of the Castle Rock Visitor Center located inside the Chamber operation on Saturdays from Memorial Day through Labor Day. To date the Chamber has welcomed 11,711 which includes 140 visitors in the nine Saturdays in June & July (June 6—during Victoria's House Block Party 68 people come into the Visitor Center for information.) The Saturday totals to date average 9.5 visitors each Saturday (excluding June 6<sup>th</sup> data). By the end of August, this will increase the hours of operation by 3% by adding 60 hours.
- Volunteer Hospitality Trainings--Created a volunteer training manual and process for Visitor Center volunteers. Currently we have three community volunteers assisting staff on Saturdays.
- Welcome to New Residents—Shop the Rock packets have been mailed to 1,308 new residents which introduce their families to shopping, dining, recreation and other local resources, businesses and events within our community.

#### **IV. Business Assistance**

##### ***PURPOSE/OBJECTIVE:***

The concept of Economic Gardening fosters 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-one one business consultations** with expert volunteer counseling is 37.5 hours with 31 businesses to date. The goal for 2015 is to increase our counseling service hours by 20% to 74 hours. The value of volunteer services is \$4,688 to date.
- **Business monthly trainings**--3<sup>rd</sup> Tech Tuesday, BizBuilder Lunch 'n Learn and On-line trainings continue to grow in popularity. To date we have conducted 19 trainings with 209 participants (82 non-duplicated businesses). Business volunteers have contributed 77.5 volunteer hours valued at \$6,975.
- **New this Year**—The Chamber's **Worksite Wellness Coalition** was selected in April as a Pilot Program for the State of Colorado. The partnership with Health Links Colorado is to engage local employers in the process of developing basic employee wellness programs for their companies. Castle Rock was chosen for this project which includes technical assistance, resources and recognition for participating employers. To date two trainings with the total participation of 32 unique businesses.
- **Business Outreach program** in May we expanded our outreach program to new Castle Rock businesses on behalf of the Castle Rock Economic Partnership offering to help them make local connections, find local resources, etc. The process includes (1) mailed welcome letter one month after they appear on the Town's new business list (158 letters mailed to date), (2) a personal phone call to the business two months after letter sent (87 connections made YTD), (3) email a networking event and training class invitation (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.
- **Young Entrepreneurs Academy (YEA!)** has completed its third year with the 30-week after school program which transforms students into entrepreneurs. Since the beginning of 2014, we have been able to secure middle and high school classroom credit for the participating students through Douglas County School District. This year we enrolled 14 students into the program which exceed our goal of 12 students and have had a total of 434 people attend classes, field trips and events with 58 of them being business volunteers contributing 320 hours of their time calculated the value is \$16,346. Cost of staffing is \$8,464. We are currently in the process of recruitment of the 4<sup>th</sup> year class which will begin in October.  
New this fall, Castle Rock's new co-working space, ConneXion Spot, has offered the Chamber to host YEA! in their flex space for our weekly classes relocating from Castle View High School. We have done so for a couple of reasons: 1) we hope to be seen as a program for all DCSD students and 2) as ConneXion Spot grows, it will serve entrepreneurs in an environment where new business development and collaborations are the norm and we'd like our kids to see this and be a part of that culture.

- **Leadership Douglas County Program:**

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 16<sup>th</sup> class in June graduating 16 class participants (262 graduates since 2000). The program utilized a total of 60 volunteers contributing 344 hours valued at \$17,544 from January-July in 2015 and staffing valued at \$7,302.

As a class project, this year's class raised contributions of just under \$26,000 for new office furniture for the Douglas Elbert Taskforce in Castle Rock to assist with their remodel.

The 2015/16 class selection has been completed with the acceptance of 18 new business, non-profit and government participants who will begin their classes in September.