

## TRC Takeaways

Vicky Tebbetts, Chair, January 18, 2018

National Life Campus, 6<sup>th</sup> Floor Conference Room, Montpelier, VT, 9:00 - 11:00 am.

*Notes and available content from the January 18 meeting of the Travel Recreation Council.*

## Actions Items from Meeting:

ACTION ITEMS	OWNER(S)	DEADLINE	STATUS
Partner with Porter Air to offer vacation packages to guests from Canada	Vermont destinations	Ongoing	Contact Wendy Knight, Commissioner
Task force focused on expanding workforce recruitment seeks lodging property members.	Lodging properties	Ongoing	Contact Wendy Knight, Commissioner
Needed: Photos of people who come from a diverse background enjoying Vermont.	All tourism destinations	Ongoing	Contact Steve Cook, Deputy Commissioner
Include ThinkVermont ambassador recruitment content in industry or staff communications.	Vermont tourism industry	Ongoing	Contact Elaine Sopchak, ThinkVermont Project Manager: 802-505-1795 · elaine.sopchak@vermont.gov
The CMO and ThinkVermont are seeking industry partners to sign up as Think Vermont Ambassadors to help spread good news about working and living in VT	Heather Pelham, CMO	Ongoing	Open, Sign up at ThinkVermont.com/ambassadors
The CMO is seeking businesses with multiple jobs to fill (at least 10+) to list on ThinkVermont.com	Businesses with ten or more open positions; businesses affiliated with VBSR	Ongoing (site launches next month)	Open, email Think Vermont Project Manager Elaine Sopchak (Elaine.sopchak@vermont.gov)

## Meeting Summary:

1. VDTM – Wendy Knight, Commissioner
  - In the intersection of tourism and economic development, a new “Stay to Stay” recruitment campaign will pilot three-day entrepreneurial vacation weekends for a select audience in Rutland, Brattleboro and Bennington.
  - Winter cross-border travel with Porter Air is up and running. Flights originate and depart to Toronto. They would like to get more properties involved.
  - VDTM is expanding international marketing in-house: Sales Director Kathleen Kolva and international sales consultant Caroline Donaldson-Sinclair will continue to market internationally; moving away from Discover New England will allow expanded focus on Montreal and New York City gateways as well as Boston. Vermont continues with US Travel Association’s Brand USA marketing campaign. International visitorship makes up 1% of Vermont’s market and Discover New England fees made up 7.5% of the budget.
  - VDTM is working with the Agency of Agriculture and Department of Economic Development to expand workforce recruitment to new geographical areas.
  
2. Legislative Update – Wendy Knight, Commissioner
  - Tourism is working on the economic development team in two ways: A new focus on recruiting businesses through recreation and visitors; and a potential “innovation fund” grant program pending legislative funding that will fund local recruitment efforts. VDTM is seeking photos of diversity to help accomplish this campaign.
  - Vermont Life just wrapped up an important process where the end result was to keep the magazine in-house within VDTM. TRC designee to the task force, Brian Cain, reported that there were nine proposals; the task force whittled them down to three candidates and heard presentations. The committee asked VDTM to submit a fully-funded budget for Vermont Life, which the task force chose as the recommended course of action. As such, Vermont Life is becoming more integrated into VDTM and economic development, and they are in a better position than ever before. Staff will provide more details as to this integration at the next meeting. Vermont Life expects to break even for FY18.
  
3. VDTM Staff Reports
  - Steve Cook showed photos of the Vermont takeover of South Station in Boston with SkiVermont and Cabot. Additionally, Vermont has five billboards on Interstates 93 and 95. VDTM is also partnering with SkiVermont to offer lodging packages.
  - Philip Tortora is working with the beer marketing and tourism conference coming to Burlington in early March. The event will also draw a lot of press to

the state. He gave a run down of recent international earned media coverage, and Vermont destinations continue to host social media influencers through VDTM referral.

- Kathleen Kolva has mapped out VDTM's 2018 domestic and international sales activities: <http://accd.vermont.gov/sites/accdnew/files/documents/VDTM-ProgramInformation-2018PartnershipOpportunities.pdf>
- Hilary DelRoss is working with the committees of many conferences occurring in Vermont, including the beer marketing conference, recreation, and a bike summit. She is also updating trails and brochures, including the African-American Heritage Trail and the Byways.

4. ThinkVermont – Heather Pelham, CMO & Elaine Sopchak, ThinkVermont Project Manager

- Heather and Elaine summarized social media impacts, ambassador activity, earned media, and plans for an event series.
- ThinkVermont is comprised of internal and external campaigns; a paid recruitment campaign launches in February.
- In process: A Vermont asset map on the website with layers for schools, churches, regional development corporations, and so on; a web-based interface in partnership with Vermont Businesses for Social Responsibility that offers opportunities in jobs and learning; an event series on business and innovation. February 22-24 are ThinkVermont days at the Legislature.

Meeting adjourned at 12:00 pm.

*Next Meeting:* March 15, 2018 | 9:00 am – 11:00 am | Calvin Coolidge Conference Room