Tourism Marketing in WA

• 2011 – Legislature eliminated state tourism office
• Since then, travel spending growth slower than national average
• Travel-generated tax revenue growth slower than national rate
• Urban vs. Rural growth disparity
• Neighboring states increase market share by raising their own marketing budgets
• Oregon doubled tourism funding last year
Travel Oregon
The Seven Wonders of Oregon Campaign

Think of the wonders Washington has to share!
2016-17 State Tourism Budgets

- Washington: $0* (No state funding, no tourism office. The nonprofit Washington Tourism Alliance contributed $400,000 to distribute visitor guides, maintain a website, and provided limited marketing activities.)
- Hawaii: $87M
- Florida: $86M
- Illinois: $53M
- Texas: $46M
- Michigan: $34M

Source: U.S. Travel Association 2016-17 provisional budgets and Destination BC
Washington Tourism Alliance  History

• June 2011 – WTA formed
• Purpose was to keep basic program alive and formulate a proposal for new statewide tourism marketing program
• Diverse Board of Directors – small and large businesses as well as geographic; DMO representatives
• Initially traveled the State to meet with industry stakeholders
• Generated funding through membership and marketing initiatives
• Sought support from industry groups
• Inherited assets from the State tourism office
Washington Tourism Recent History

• 2013-2015 Bridge Funding $500,000 a year
• Allowed for distribution of visitors’ guide and maintenance of website
• 2014 – Legislature passes study bill
• Legislation proposing through industry assessment fails in 2015-2016
• Summer of 2016 – Legislative Task Force formed
• 2017 – Funding for draft marketing program
Legislative Tourism Working Group


Sen. Dean Takko (D-Longview)  Sen. Hans Zeiger (R-Puyallup)
Legislative Tourism Working Group


• Introduced in 2017 and passed unanimously in 2018 Legislature and signed by the governor
• Marketing Plan/Advertising focus on rural and tourism dependent communities, international tourists and outdoor recreation
• Work with local DMO’s
• Plan for responding to crisis in tourism areas
• Implementation of marketing program by industry non-profit
• Oversight by Washington Tourism Marketing Authority
• May appoint an advisory committee
• Funding from public and private sources
Governance

Washington Tourism Marketing Authority (WTMA)

13 voting members
4 legislators, 9 tourism industry representatives
  • Must reflect diversity in geography, size of businesses, gender, and ethnicity
  • Will contract with a non-profit organization to market the state
  • Determine what constitutes a match
  • Evaluate the impact of the state tourism marketing program
Funding – No New Taxes

• Total of $9 million per biennium - $3 million from general fund state to dedicated account and a $6 million private or non-general fund match over a biennium

• 0.2 percent of existing general sales taxes collected on retail sales of lodging, restaurants and rental cars will be diverted into the Statewide Tourism Marketing Account

• Deposits are limited to $3 million per biennium

• Match may include some forms of in-kind payments

• Release of general state funds contingent upon 2:1 private match

• Example: $20,000 contribution to WTA for international trade show would release $10,000 from state.
WTA Marketing Plan

• NOT A NEW BRAND OR SLOGAN, but a road map

• Based on research and determination of target markets

• Focus on Adventures and Indulgences in every corner of our state – for example, outdoor experiences, wine tourism

• Encourage people to come, spend money and visit our rural areas across the whole state, in order to drive economic development in every region

• Help the industry groups participate in larger marketing opportunities than they can manage individually, in order to attract more people to visit

• Make sure that the great State of Washington stays top of mind when our target visitors start to dream about their next vacation
What’s Next?

• WTMA needs to have initial organizational meeting
• Decision on contractor
• Definition of what constitutes a match
• Contractor needs to expand staff and other subcontractors
Thank you for coming!!!

For more information,
Please visit our industry website:
www.watourismalliance.com
and the official State Tourism website:
www.experiencewa.com