



July 14, 2009

2009 Mid-Year Report (January – June)

Per the Scope of Work, Exhibit B in Pierce County Contract:

Contractor shall:

A. Develop and maintain a state of the art regional website, www.VisitRainier.com, with an online availability module and other trip planning features.

- The new 2.0 version of the website (www.VisitRainier.com) was completed in early January of 2009. All components were completed and the results have been more than satisfactory. Use of the website continues to climb daily. New people are finding out about the user friendly quality of the website and the vast assortment of resources available on the website. The lodging page is the number one page on the website, followed by hiking, maps and top ten things to do. In July, the board began the process to create the next version 2.1 in order to keep up with technology and key features that need to be added to keep the website on the leading edge. The next version will increase loading times, streamline google maps and further optimization of the website.
- Contracted with travel writers to provide content such as trip reports for hiking, Mt. biking, horseback riding and nature stories. Contests are being held to drive people to the website to capture email addresses.

Search engine ranking comparison – www.VisitRainier.com is on page one of both Yahoo and Google search engines.

“Mt. Rainier” June 2009	#5 position on page 1 on Yahoo.com
“Mt. Rainier” June 2009	#6 position on page 1 on Google.com
“Mt. Rainier Lodging” June 2009	#2 position on page 1 on Google.com
“Mt. Rainier Lodging” June 2009	#1 position on page 1 on Yahoo.com
“Mt. Rainier Activities” June 2009	#1 position on page 1 on Google.com
“Mt Rainier Vacations” June 2009	#1 position on page 1 on Google.com
“Hiking Mt. Rainier” June 2009	#3 position on page 1 on Google.com

Other word searches continue to increase positioning

On-Line Reservations – We have now 60 of 68 properties participating on the Visit Rainier website. Nearly all properties are now using the Webervations system. This enables the consumer to check for availability without having to leave the VisitRainier.com website. It is integrated into the interactive map and all lodging with availability will show up on the map for any given date. Properties have control of updating their own amenities, map location, description, photos and video in addition to their contact information. A video component is being added thanks to a \$7000

grant awarded from the Department of Commerce (CTED). Each property is being invited to add a virtual tour of their property to the website.

B. Implement an internet advertising campaign using Google Adwords. All marketing will direct traffic to the website.

Advertising and e-commerce –Visit Rainier purchases Google Ads to help drive traffic to the website. Other print ads have on-line advertising to complement the print ads. Seattle CVB is returning good referral of traffic, as is ExperienceWa.com.

At this time the new website does not have advertising on the site. It is one of the components that will be added in the future to help generate dollars for Visit Rainier programs.

We have set up Twitter and Facebook accounts. Twitter has over 600 followers for VR.

C. Implement a limited print advertising campaign reaching 6 million readers in regional publications that is not affordable for individual properties. Coop ads used where possible.

Print advertising was reduced in 2009 due to the reduction in funding. We focused our investment on three main publications, Washington State Travel Planner, Discover America and AAA Tour Guide. With reserve funds we began purchasing some small space ads in local publications.

D. Implement a public relations campaign to increase exposure for the Mt. Rainier area in local, regional, national, and international media. Activities to include: up to 15 press releases, with constant contact to a comprehensive list of over 300 media and freelance travel writers in the Pacific Northwest Region; story pitches to media via PR Firm; media visits and an electronic media kit and website press room

2009 Public Relations focus on:

Spring travel deals and Easter, King 5 Best of Washington, Hawaiian Airlines in-flight video, Men's Fitness Magazine supplied rooms and meals.

Press Releases for:

- Mt. Rainier Film Festival
- Summer Dining on the Mountain
- Summer Learning for Families
- Mt. Rainier Overview

E. Distribute 200,000 brochure maps in Seattle, Portland, cruise and ferry terminals

200,000 Brochures were reprinted in 2009 and distributed from Seattle to Portland through Certified Folder display racks in hotels, restaurants, ferry and cruise terminals and the SeaTac airport and attractions throughout the region.

F. Utilize other advertising opportunities such as email blasts and newsletters.

Two e-newsletters have been sent to over 2000 consumers from a email list gathered from our marketing efforts. One e-newsletter was sent to industry stakeholders and one e-newsletter was sent to all lodging property owners.

E. Monitoring

We are currently tracking with two different web statistic companies for tracking Unique Visitors. The difference between the two sets of numbers is due to two different methods of data collection, as well as their different ways of defining a unique visitor. Google Analytic numbers are only available beginning June 2007. We continue to monitor web statistics through Google Analytics on

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a month to month basis to gather important information about who uses the website and what information they are looking for.

	1&1 Hosting 2007	1&1 Hosting 2008	Google Analytics 2007	Google Analytics 2008	Google Analytics 2009
January	5816	21,641	Not available	7479	6552
February	5061	21,279	Not available	7285	6228
March	8485	23,740	Not available	8110	7959
April	13,129	29,723	Not available	8670	10,233
May	25,687	39,807	Not available	12,583	13,930
June	No report	No report	10,203	13,701	18,107

A report from the Dean Runyan County by County analysis provided annually by WA State tourism and the Department of Revenue data will be compiled and used to determine the value of the marketing effort and to some extent measure the return on investment. A synopsis of this information will be provided to Pierce County.

Department of Revenue statistics:

- June 2006 \$239,783
- June 2007 \$280,374
- June 2008 \$278,668
- June 2009 \$308,032

Travel Spending in Pierce County \$979,500,000

Travel related employment and earnings –11,360 jobs with \$236 million in earnings

Source: Dean Runyan Report for 2008-most recent available

Occupancy rates will help determine if target audience is reached as well as calls generated by the toll free number.

In the second half of the year, a system will be put into place to track the number of direct referrals to properties listed on our website. This is one of the key features that will be available on the new system. Over 500 calls have been received on the toll free line through May.

E. This funding will support the efforts and costs associated with contractor staff, administration, marketing/promotion, travel, and consultants.

Visit Rainier has contracted with MK Marketing (Mary Kay Nelson and Annalee Tobey) and Carol Zahorsky and Associates to administer the programs funded by Pierce County. 90% of Visit Rainier’s costs of marketing and promotion, travel and operating expenses are covered by Pierce County. 10% is covered by Lewis County and city of Morton. Eatonville has contributed \$3000 towards the effort this year.