

**Board of County Commissioners
Agenda Request**

Date of Meeting: June 2, 2015

Date Submitted: May 14, 2015

To: Honorable Chairperson and Members of the Board

From: Robert M. Presnell, County Administrator
Allara Mills Gutcher, Director of Planning and Community Development

Subject: **Public Hearing:** Adoption of the 2015/16 Tourist Development Council Strategic Plan

Statement of Issue:

Public hearing to consider the adoption of an amended Tourist Development Strategic Plan, known as the Gadsden County Tourist Development Council 2015/16 Strategic Plan.

Background:

Florida Statutes Section 125.0104 provides for a local option for the establishment of a tourist development council, and to establish a local option tourist development tax.

On October 15, 2002 the Gadsden County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) adopted Ordinance 2002-003 which established a two cent tourist development tax in all of Gadsden County if approved by referendum. A referendum was held and the tourist development tax passed in November of 2002.

In December of 2009, the BOCC most recently amended the Tourist Development Plan; this plan has not been updated since. The Tourist Development Council began working on updating the Strategic Plan in April of 2014. Two visioning sessions were held with a consultant to identify common goals of the organization. Using this input, the TDC marketing consultant, Chisano Marketing Group, began the rewrite of the Strategic Plan in January 2015. This plan was presented to the TDC at two regularly scheduled meetings in March and April of this year. Outreach was made to the tourism agency representatives to attend and comment on the proposed plan.

Analysis:

Pursuant to Florida Statutes, “The tourist development tax shall be levied and imposed pursuant to an ordinance containing the county tourist development plan.” §125.0104(4)(a). Statutory parameters for requirements of this plan include: anticipated net tourist development tax revenue for the subsequent 24 months (see Exhibit 1, page 21 of Plan), the taxing district, which is

Gadsden County, and a list of the proposed uses of the tax revenue by specific project or special use (see Plan goals and policies, specifically Goals 2 and 3) in addition to parameters of fund expenditures (see Strategy 5.1, page 15).

The Plan can only be “substantially amended by ordinance enacted by an affirmative vote of a majority plus one member of the governing board.” §125.0104(4)(d), Florida Statutes.

Tourist Development Council Recommendation:

On April 20, 2015, the TDC made a recommendation to the BOCC to adopt the 2015/16 Strategic Plan by ordinance.

Options:

- Option 1 Adopt Ordinance 2015-007 to amend the Gadsden County Tourist Development Strategic Plan and authorize the Chairperson to sign.
- Option 2 Do not adopt Ordinance 2015-007 to amend the Gadsden County Tourist Development Strategic Plan.
- Option 3 Adopt Ordinance 2015-007 and amend the Gadsden County Tourist Development Strategic Plan, with revisions as specifically stated.
- Option 4 Board Discretion

County Administrator’s Recommendation:

- Option 4 Board Discretion

Attachments:

Ordinance 2015-007 with the 2015/16 Tourist Development Strategic Plan attached as Exhibit A Notice (legal advertisement)

ORDINANCE NO. 2015 - 007

AN ORDINANCE OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF GADSDEN COUNTY, FLORIDA, AMENDING THE TOURIST DEVELOPMENT PLAN TO PROVIDE FOR ANTICIPATED NET TOURIST DEVELOPMENT TAX REVENUE, THE TAXING DISTRICT IN WHICH THE TAX IS COLLECTED, AND PROPOSED USES AND ALLOCATIONS FOR THE USE OF THE TAX REVENUE; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; PROVIDING FOR REPEAL; PROVIDING FOR MODIFICATIONS THAT MAY ARISE FROM CONSIDERATION AT PUBLIC HEARING; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

WHEREAS, the “Local Option Tourist Development Tax” set forth in Section 125.0104, Florida Statutes, authorizes the Board of County Commissioners (Board) to levy and impose a tourist development tax within the County boundaries; and

WHEREAS, such tax may be collected on the exercise of renting, leasing, or letting for consideration any living quarters or accommodations in any hotel, apartment hotel, motel, resort motel, apartment, apartment motel, rooming house, mobile home park, recreational vehicle park, condominium, or timeshare resort for a term of six (6) months or less; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to the authority established in that statute, the Board enacted Ordinance 2002 – 003, which levied a two (2) percent tourist development tax that is collected throughout the jurisdictional boundary of Gadsden County for certain permissible uses as set forth in Florida Statute; and

WHEREAS, Section 125.0104(4)(d), Florida Statutes, provides that the plan for tourist development may not be substantially amended except by ordinance enacted by an affirmative vote of a majority plus one additional member of the governing board; and

WHEREAS, the Gadsden County Board of County Commissioners deems it necessary to amend the Tourist Development Plan with current information and updated goals and strategies;

Now therefore, be it ordained by the Board of County Commissioners of Gadsden County, Florida, that:

Section I. Approval of Amendment and Adoption of Plan.

The Gadsden County Tourist Development Council Strategic Plan is hereby amended, and the Gadsden County Tourist Development Council Strategic Plan, as attached hereto as Exhibit “A” is hereby adopted and approved.

Section II: Repealer

Gadsden County Ordinance Numbers 2008-035 and 2009-035, which adopted prior versions of the Gadsden County Tourist Development Strategic Plan, are hereby repealed in their entirety. Those parts of Ordinance Numbers 2010-004, 2012-006, and 2013-005 which adopted prior versions of the Gadsden County Tourist Development Strategic Plan are also hereby repealed, but those parts of Ordinance Numbers 2010-004, 2012-006, and 2013-005 which adopted and amended the By-Laws of the Tourist Development Council are not repealed, and the adopted By-Laws, as amended, are not affected by the adoption of this Ordinance. The Gadsden County Tourist Development Strategic Plan as attached hereto as Exhibit “A” shall be the only effective Tourist Development Strategic Plan.

Section III: Severability

If any word, phrase, clause, section or portion of this Ordinance is for any reason held by a court of competent jurisdiction to be unconstitutional, inoperative, or void, such portion or words shall be deemed a separate and independent provision and such holding shall not affect the validity of the remaining portions thereof.

Section IV: Non-Inclusion in the Code of Ordinances

This ordinance shall not be included in Section the Gadsden County Code of Ordinances.

Section V: Modification

It is the intent of the Board of County Commissioners that the provisions of this Ordinance, including the amendment attached hereto as Exhibit “A,” may be modified as a result of considerations that may arise during public hearings. Such modifications shall be incorporated into the final version of the Ordinance adopted by the Board and filed by the Clerk pursuant to Section VI.

Section VI: Effective Date

This ordinance shall become effective as provided by law.

The above and foregoing Ordinance was read and approved at a duly convened regular meeting of the Board of County Commissioners of Gadsden County, Florida on this the 2nd day of June, 2015.

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
GADSDEN COUNTY, FLORIDA

BY: _____

Brenda A. Holt, BOCC Chairperson

ATTEST:

CLERK OF COURTS
GADSDEN COUNTY, FLORIDA

BY: _____

Nicholas Thomas, Clerk of Court



Gadsden County Tourism Development Council
2015-2016 STRATEGIC PLAN

DRAFT



Introduction

MISSION

The mission of Gadsden County's Tourism Development Council is to foster, develop and promote a sustainable tourism product, thereby bringing more people (visitors) to the area, getting them to stay longer, and to spend money.

VISION

The Gadsden County Tourism Development Council (TDC) envisions a tourist destination that showcases the values, heritage, culture and natural beauty of the County. As well, the TDC looks to foster a spirit of partnership within the county to develop and implement innovative and effective programs/initiatives that will not only grow our tourism industry, but increase economic impact and jobs, resulting in a greater tax base for localities and the county.

BRAND PROMISE

Gadsden County, Florida is an American Original. A step into America's past and present, where visitors can experience a world steeped in history, nature, and the great outdoors, as well as incredible architecture, art, events, concerts, festivals and more.

To this end, Gadsden County has moved to a "promise" payoff of DO SOMETHING ORIGINAL. Using this as the primary thematic touch point and positioning will not only help bring to life all that is Gadsden County, but it will allow the county to stake a claim to a "promise" that is not currently being used elsewhere; we believe this is because no other destination believes they can stake such a claim.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The tourist development tax is collected throughout the jurisdictional boundary of Gadsden County, including all incorporated and unincorporated areas, pursuant to §125.0104, Florida Statutes. Historical revenues collected and projections are shown in Exhibit 1. The revenues shall be used in accordance with §125.0104, Florida Statutes, and this Plan. The Gadsden County Tourist Development Council has been established pursuant to §125.0104, Florida Statutes, and has the responsibility and authority set forth in the statute. The Gadsden County Tourist Development Council also has the authority to expend tourist development tax revenues in accordance with §125.0104, Florida Statutes, and this Plan, up to a maximum amount of \$5,000.00, and to enter into agreements under its authority, without further approval from the Gadsden County Board of County Commissioners.

In alignment with the mission, the TDC will focus on the following goals in this fiscal time-frame:

- Create consensus on visitor touch-points that the Gadsden County TDC and stakeholders believe is ready for "vacation" access.
- Foster partner/ambassador development
- Develop marketing components for stage one of the "tourism" rollout.
- Road show:

- Roll out the tourism program to stakeholders.
- Begin rolling out the marketing efforts within Gadsden County.
- Create funding parameters for distribution of TDC funds.

Florida, with more than 95 million visitors every single year, is one of the largest and most lucrative tourist sectors in the world. With its' sandy beaches, beautiful weather, and incredible tourist attractions, it is no wonder that so many people dream about visiting. At the same time, many of these very "dreamers" have little knowledge of off-the-beaten-path destinations like Gadsden County; places where charm and distinctive qualities offer visitors a unique opportunity to *Do Something Original*. Our focus for 2015 and 2016 will be to build a communications platform that will begin the process of changing how Gadsden County Florida is viewed as a tourism destination.

We have no doubt that Gadsden County is the only location in Florida that can offer visitors the rare combination of outdoor activities, small town America and an alluring peek into a Florida (and America) that once was - the deep rich history matched by few. With beautiful old Victorian-style homes, historic landmarks, hunting, incredible sightseeing and prime fishing grounds, this county can offer a vacation experience not often seen by Florida tourists.

While many historic destinations have gone "Hollywood", Gadsden County has stayed true to its heritage; a heritage filled with rich stories (Tobacco Farms, Coke Millionaires) and old-school pastimes (hunting, fishing, and sightseeing) of its ancestors. Differentiating from other Florida destinations built on the beach and high-tech, high-touch attractions, Gadsden County is in a perfect position to offer vacationers an opportunity to truly get away...to try something new...to try something different...to try something original.

It's our time, and team Gadsden is well positioned to offer vacation opportunities that are very Florida, yet very different.

With recent spending in adventure travel of \$345 billion, taking trips with a connection to nature is an increasingly appealing vacation experience to tourists. Enter one of Gadsden County's many strengths which is the ability to provide a memorable outdoor experience for every member of a family. For example, Gadsden's Joe Budd Wildlife Management Area would be a great sell to anyone seeking a beautiful hike, relaxing bike ride, or during certain times of the year, the perfect hunting ground. Lake Talquin, on the other hand, would be the perfect visit for anyone seeking the type of trip involving canoeing, sailing, and sightseeing in an environment known for Bald Eagles, Osprey, Deer, and Wild Turkeys. Outdoor vacations typically cater to either one person's desires, or they simply don't offer enough fun for an entire trip. But Gadsden County is different; with our outdoor amenities, we can provide a great vacation for the hiker, hunter, sightseer, birder, boater, camper, or simple outdoorsman, no matter the age.

As well, many people love to vacation in a place that has a strong tie to the old days of America. With continuing advancement of technology and the constant connectedness of social media, many people want to take a step back to when times were simpler. Society has changed so

dramatically over the past 30 or so years that many people have lost touch with what life was like before the internet, computers, tablets and smartphones. This serves as an opportunity for Gadsden County. Gadsden's unique old-style towns, historical landmarks, and former tobacco farms give people that oh-so sought after blast to the past. That authentic historical aura is an asset that so many people seek when looking for a getaway from their fast-paced life.

Moving forward, our communications efforts must begin to recognize, and then capitalize, on the fact that Gadsden Country represents a destination that offers what more and more people are looking for; to get away from stress, chaos and deadlines, and to discover (or re-discover) something original.

Last, as we get ready to embark on a new direction for Gadsden County, we cannot forget the advantages of having close by neighbors like Tallahassee and Panama City. Seasonally, these two areas draw large groups of travelers that could potentially be an asset for Gadsden County. Particularly given our limited budgets, we owe it to ourselves to determine if their events can become a visitor opportunity for the County. For example, with Festivals and Field concerts becoming increasingly popular among the college demographic, there is no denying the potential financial impact they can have on a local economy. From the Gasparilla Pirate Festival, to EDM concerts and the Luke Bryan Farm Tour, festivals celebrating history, causes, and simply the beautiful outdoors are possibilities worth considering; not to mention FSU and FAMU football.

It's our time to develop a foundational roadmap for tourism that will serve Gadsden County for many years to come; a roadmap that is not only supported strongly by stakeholders throughout the County, but one that has room to grow and evolve.

To this end, the focal point for the Gadsden County TDC for 2015-2016 will be to lay a foundation for consistent growth and to develop a communications platform that will not only focus on getting stakeholders deeply involved, but will bring them together in a way that provides a powerful launching pad for the strategic outreach that follows.

FINDING SUCCESS

Knowing there is much to accomplish, we asked *what must happen for Gadsden County to be successful in its tourism endeavors*. Five things:

- *Leadership*
 - Enhanced leadership from both the public and private sector.
 - Foster a positive outlook.
 - Collectively assert that tourism/economic growth is a high priority for the County.
- *Cooperation*
 - Collaboration between city/county government and the business community to help facilitate and support the overall "tourism" efforts.
 - Success through coordination with other organizations and groups.
- *Creation of a "tourism" infrastructure*

- Creation of a way for visitors/vacationers to have easy access to activities and events in Gadsden County.
- *Tourism education*
 - Educate and develop tourism ambassadors with all stakeholders – business, government and residents.
- *Co-operative In-kind Contributions*
 - Work with the media; local businesses; tourism partners; government partners.



Beautiful Lake Talquin

GADSDEN COUNTY TDC 2015-2016 PLAN GOALS AND STRATEGIES

Goal 1

Find consensus on those visitor touch-points that the Gadsden County TDC and stakeholders believe is ready for “vacation” access.

Strategy 1.1

To rally around the county’s primary touch-points:

- History – Historic Vacation
- Architectural – Landmark Vacation
- Outdoors Vacation
- Small Town America – Shopping – Vacation
- Celebrity Driven Events

A. History-Historic Vacation

The TDC, in concert with stakeholders and partners, need to determine what “historic” sites/locations are ready now to be part of a vacation portfolio we will be putting together. Some of the areas of interest include touch-points such as:

- The Coke story
- Indian Burial Grounds
- Tobacco Farms
- Civil War History
- Historic homes, churches, cemeteries...
- Veterans’ monuments
- The Black History Trail
- Etc.

Once we determine what “sites” will be of most interest, we will begin the process of strategically bundling the “history” touch-points into a package that visitors/vacationers can easily access and understand. For example:

- Each historic location will be assigned a number, all of which should follow an orderly process, i.e., location 1 should be close to location 2 which should be close to 3, etc.
- Once numbers are assigned, the county will then need to erect a sign in front of each “historic” location. On the sign might be:
 - The words “Gadsden County Historic Site”
 - The applicable number
 - The TDC website address – www.dosomethingoriginal.com

- Similarly we will create an historic map that outlines where each “historic location” is within the county. These maps will be made available in designated locations throughout the county, and of course correspond to the “number” system.

Longer term, we will look to add a “narrative” component to the historic vacation touch-point that will allow visitors to truly enjoy their self-tour:

- On the Gadsden County Tourism APP (which we will have already developed), smartphone users will be able listen to a voice-narrative of each historic location – there will be options for short and long narratives.
- For those who do not have a smartphone, or who may not be able to “use their data”, we will also look into the option of installing a “talking house” transmitter whereby we can record messaging that visitors can listen to on their car radios – AM or FM.
- As well, visitors will be able to access narrative via Gadsden County’s Mobile Web Site.
- Of course it goes without saying that all appropriate and user-friendly information for this vacation touch-point will go on the TDC’s website.

B. Architectural – Landmark Vacation

We would treat this vacation bucket in the same fashion as the “historic” outline above. Some of the areas of interest include touch points such as:

- E.B. Shelfer House
- E.C. Love House
- John Lee McFarlin House
- Judge P.W. White House
- Old Philadelphia Presbyterian Church
- Quincy Library
- Quincy Woman’s Club
- Stockton-Curry House
- Willoughby Gregory House
- The Leaf Theater (tobacco – haunted)
- The Dezell House

C. Outdoors/Trails

Collectively, we will determine what areas of interest will fall into this vacation bucket. Once determined, our goal will be to accomplish the following:

- Create an attractive and fun outdoors map that visitors/vacationers can pick up at several locations throughout the county.
 - We would also make a printable version that can be accessed online (www.dosomethingoriginal.com)

- Make sure all “outdoor/trails” information can be easily accessed on the TDC’s mobile site.

D. Small Town America/Shopping – Vacation

For this component, we simply want to make sure we have a variety of platforms where visitors can access small town/shopping information. Possibilities include:

- Web Site
- APP
- Social Media
- Rack Brochure

E. Celebrity Driven Events

This will be a project in the making. We believe Gadsden County has a real opportunity to develop an annual type event that could help put the DO SOMETHING ORIGINAL brand on the map. Consider there are a few “famous” celebrities that once called Gadsden County their home:

- Dexter Jackson – Super Bowl XXXVII Most Valuable Player
- Billy Dean – County Music Singer
- Nat Adderley Jr. – Music arranger; spent most of his career with Luther Vandross
- Jerrie Mock – the first woman to fly solo around the world

We would like to see if we can leverage this celebrity status into an annual event that will help to get the news out about tourism in Gadsden County.

The first event we would like to pursue is an annual event that we would like to call DEXTER JACKSON’S CAMP OUT WITH THE FLORIDA STATE SEMINOLES. The premise of the event is that each year, during the Florida State Seminoles Spring Football Schedule, the team would travel to Gadsden County for a campout and practice. We would need to pick a location where there is room for tents and a football practice/scrimmage...and then there would be a lot of logistics to plan:

- Families (with kids between the ages of 0 and 0) would be invited to visit Gadsden County and camp out with the Noles – a one night camp out, with football instructions and then a FSU practice/scrimmage the next day.
- The campout would be limited (depending on the size of the location).
- Participating families would pay a base fee to participate and would need to bring their own tent and camping supplies.
- As well, we would want to secure a certain number of “camp” spaces for underprivileged families.
- The night of the camp out – a BBQ, and autograph signing by the Noles. Maybe a concert?
- Next morning, a breakfast, football instructions for the kids...and then the Noles will have their spring practice/scrimmage.

This is really top line, but strategically the goal is clear. Done right, people would clamor to get to this event annually, and it would be a showcase for the county. And we believe there would be a better than even chance for media coverage - ESPN/Sports/ Main stream news.

- Step one...put the seed of concept on paper.
- Step two...a partner/stakeholder will need to reach out to Dexter Jackson to see if he is game.

Another BIG possibility is a FARM TOUR CONCERT with Luke Bryan. It's already an established concept – see <http://www.lukebryan.com/farm-tour.html> - Luke comes to Tallahassee annually. While we are not trying to steal such an event from our neighbors in Tallahassee, we do believe it is an opportunity worth pursuing for Gadsden County. Plus, is there a chance that Billy Dean knows Luke Bryan? Can he twist some arms?

We realize a younger audience generally attends a Luke Bryan performance; but if we can get them thinking about Gadsden County, and all that we have to offer, that's a good thing. We need to explore the possibilities, and further, use 2015-2016 as a year to tap into any star power we can, and then begin to develop our “annual event” programs moving forward.

Measurement

- Complete the “vacation buckets” as planned? Have we put together an easy-to-follow vacation plan for visitors/vacationers to Gadsden County?
- Make significant progress in planning/securing a major annual event for the county, i.e., Camp out with the Noles; Luke Bryan Farm Tour, or another idea of this nature.

Goal 2

Foster partner/ambassador development.

Strategy 2.1

Create partnerships through branding and educational sessions with local tourism industry businesses.

A. Local Businesses - Global

Practically every business in Gadsden County has the ability to help the “tourism” process. Below are examples of tactics we are looking to initiate, and that local businesses can support.

Website bugs

- We are developing what we call a website bug.
- This bug will allow participating businesses to place (as appropriate) on their individual websites a bug that says *Do Something Original – Supporting Tourism in Gadsden County*
- The BUG will be a live link to the dosomethingoriginal.com website, allowing those who visit participating websites the ability to find out more.

Window Signs/Clings

- We are developing a small, yet noticeable, window cling/decal.
- These static window clings will be an easy way for Gadsden County businesses to show their support with placement in an appropriate location on their windows.
- The signs would of course push the *Do Something Original* theme as well as our web site address, plus a QR code for individuals to scan if they choose – the scan would also take folks to the dosomethingoriginal.com.

T-shirts

- We are designing *Do Something Original* t-shirts.
- The intent is not to sell these as a profit center; rather we are looking to sell them at cost. This is first and foremost a way to advertise the brand – to advertise Gadsden County tourism.
- While this may appear to be more of a general consumer item, we will call on business to get involved:
 - Wear them themselves
 - Buy shirts for their employees
 - Depending on the business, buy shirts to sell or giveaway to their customers
- As well, we would like to consider adapting the shirt concepts to individual towns throughout the county. For example:
 - Do Something Original in Gadsden County Florida
 - Do Something Original in Quincy Florida
 - Do Something Original in Havana Florida
 - Do Something Original in Chattahoochee Florida, and so on.

- Then for tourists, we perhaps create shirts that say something to the affect of I DID SOMETHING ORIGINAL IN....

Posters

- We are designing a series of posters that will show off the key vacation touch-points in the county.
- Again, we will be looking for Gadsden County businesses/partners to hang posters in their workplace.

Collateral

- Once we have been able to get some of the items noted above into market, we will turn our eyes toward collateral that may be helpful to the cause.
- For example rack cards or brochure for each touch-point?
- Bill stuffers to go in utility bills, phone bills, etc. to educate stakeholders about some of our programs that they can participate in, or better yet, share with their friends and family around the state and country.

B. Radio Stations – Public Service Announcements (PSA)

We will be asking one or more of our ambassadors who might have an in with the local radio stations to help the cause with WTCL AM – Chattahoochee or WGWD FM – Quincy. The goal is to convince both stations to fully commit to helping the county get our tourism message out - to offer the county some PSA activity. As well, we hope they will participate with shirt giveaways, the web bug, window clings, etc.

C. Outdoor Advertising Companies

We will be asking one or more of our ambassadors who might have an in with the local outdoor advertising companies to allow the Gadsden County TDC to promote tourism on unused outdoor space. We would of course pay for any production costs – but the space would be free as long as it not being requested by a paying advertiser. Hopefully we would be able to create vinyl boards whereby after being removed, the vinyl can be re-used in the future.

D. Bus Wraps

Examine the potential to use bus wraps on local transit and use public service announcements inside the bus.

E. Gadsden County Times

- Press Releases
- PSA ads
- Event Announcements

F. Local Printers

Explore partnerships with local printing companies.

G. Restaurants

Encourage local restaurants to use the DO SOMETHING ORIGINAL concept – The Original Sandwich...Soup...Breakfast...?

H. City Councils, Chambers, Historic Societies, EDC's

- Looking for all “sister” partners to tie our tourism product into their marketing initiatives when and where appropriate, and visa versa.
- For example, does a town/city have pole banners that we could use at times to promote tourism for the entire county?
- Let's be creative.

I. Local Market EVENT Grants

Create a grant committee to review all marketing and grant requests, and to provide recommendations to the TDC moving forward.

As the Gadsden County TDC presses ahead on its new communications platform and messaging, we believe it is critical that the county be very precise in its expectations for potential marketing and grant partners. If money is to be allocated to any organization, they have to specifically check off a criteria sheet. That criteria sheet might include items like whether or not the:

- Event will create room nights for the County
- Event will provide one or more opportunities to communicate the Gadsden County Tourism message
- Event will primarily attract out-of-county visitors
- Event is minority/charity/non-profit driven
- Event is will promote the goals of this strategic plan

For each “criteria point”, the grant applicant will be required to provide detailed input regarding their answer. For example, the applicant will need to provide support for their claim that the event will, for example, create room nights.

As we put the new system in place, we foresee creating a point system that will determine if the applicant will receive marketing or grant funding from the County, whether or not the event would reach a status that the TDC would host the event (a grant), and finally, funding thresholds.

Last, the TDC needs to give strong consideration to how far in advance applicants must apply for funds. While the TDC certainly wants to help local businesses in their efforts to participate in and run events, the number one priority for the county must be that the grant money given out in some way promotes tourism in Gadsden County.

J. Visit Florida

Make sure all Visit Florida touch-points have the right Gadsden County Messaging. As well, we need to continue applying for Visit Florida Grants as appropriate.

K. Residents

Like for government and business partners, we need to find a way to get residents to carry the tourism torch. Things like T-shirts and Bumper Stickers are a given; but what else can we do to bring our tourism product to life.

As we develop our communications platform, this area will evolve – from conducting “tourism education” tours for residents, to creating electronic post card programs where residents can send “tourism” messages to friends and family around the nation.

As we contemplate the ideas outlined above, note that our intention at some point in time is to have a password protected area of the website where partners will be able to go into a MESSAGING TOOL BOX and find artwork they can use on their own to push our messaging forward.

Measurement

- Number of “partner” opportunities the Gadsden County TDC has offered.
- Number of “partner/ambassador” participants in the Gadsden County TDC tourism program and efforts.
- Level of in-kind contributions given to tourism effort – PSA’s, Partner, Time/Talent, etc.
- Newly crafted GRANT application process.
- Visit Florida Grant success
- Development of a partner TOOL BOX

Goal 3

Develop marketing components for stage one of our tourism rollout.

Strategy 3.1

With new energy and direction before us, there is a long list of things we'd like to do immediately. That of course will be impossible for a variety of reasons. However, below is our wish list, and our recommendation is that we begin checking off one at a time until we have built a communications platform that is both broad and deep.

- New Mission statement – completed and approved
- Vision statement – completed and approved
- Brand promise – completed and approved
- Modified Logo – looking for approval
- Web Site Bug – looking for approval
- Window Decal/Cling – looking for approval
- T-Shirts – looking for directional approval
- Posters – looking for directional approval
- Ruler Calendar – for presentation
- Events-Places of Interest APP – will be live no later than June 10, 2015
- Vacation Touch-Point Maps – needs discussion
- New website – not sure where we go funding wise – we have new looks to show
- Social Media Re-Brand; followed by social media plan recommendations
- Collateral Materials – develop as needed
- Electronic Postcards – once a new website is developed
- Outdoor Advertising – dictated by partner opportunities
- Public Service Announcements/Ads – dictated by partner opportunities
- Bill Stuffers – dictated by partner opportunities
- Bus Wrap – does the possibility exist?

Measurement

- New logo
- Completion of a number of partner elements for use – Web Bug; Window Cling; T-Shirts; Posters; Ruler Calendar.
- Completion of touch-point maps for visitor use.
- Completed social media rebrand.
- Completion of a new Gadsden County tourism/events APP.
- Completion of a new web site.
- Then any marketing element associated with “partner” efforts/contributions.

Goal 4

Present the plan and generate buy-in and excitement throughout the county.

Strategy 4.1

Once we have a good foundational plan established, i.e., vacation buckets, marketing materials, event planning, etc., we recommend initiating a “road show” tour that will be open to anyone who resides in Gadsden County. The “road show” will be broken down into two segments:

- The Strategic Approach
 - We will set up a date, time and location for residents of each town to come and hear what the plans are for Gadsden County Tourism.
- The Show – Simulated Tourism
 - We want stakeholders to experience what the tourists are going to experience.
 - We will set up tours for each of the touch points we will be focusing on whereby county residents can experience firsthand:
 - History
 - Landmarks/Architecture
 - Outdoors/Trails
 - Antiques/Shopping
 - There will be a guide with each tour.

Measurement

- A successful road show whereby all stakeholders feel they have a good solid grasp of tourism in Gadsden County Florida.

Goal 5

Create parameters and criteria for the distribution of tourist development tax revenues, without limiting the use of revenues set forth in §125.0104, Florida Statutes.

Strategy 5.1

Set forth general aspirational spending allocations.

Spending allocations, as it relates to overall budget:

In addition to the parameters mentioned in this Plan, below, the Tourist Development Council shall follow the following allocations as such spending relates to the revenues collected from the previous fully reported fiscal year.

- Tourism and marketing by the TDC shall be limited to fifty (50) percent of the prior full-year budget. This shall include any consultant fees and marketing efforts.
- Event grant funds for TDC hosted events shall be limited to twenty (20) percent of the prior full-year budget.
- Marketing funds to events and organizations shall be limited to an expenditure of no more than fifteen (15) percent of the prior full-year budget.
- Administrative and other expenses shall be limited to the balance, or fifteen (15) percent of the prior full-year budget.

If the Tourist Development Council decides to use funds which are currently held due to unused funds from previous years' budgets, a majority vote of the TDC may allocate such funds to one of the categories above.

Strategy 5.2

Set forth parameters and criteria for the expenditure of revenues for signature events that the TDC has deemed significant enough to host such event. Such event funding shall be referred to hereinafter as "event grant funds".

Event Grant Funds:

Event grant funds shall be issued for events that the TDC has deemed significant enough that the TDC will assist by hosting the event. These funds may be considerable enough that the Board of County Commissioners must approve the amount, and/or a contract or memorandum of agreement may be required to be signed by both parties. Event grant funds may be identified in the annual budget, and specific events that will reoccur may be reflected in the annual budget. If identified in the annual budget, the event must be approved by the TDC no later than April 1 of the previous fiscal year. If not identified in the budget, then the TDC has a spending limit of \$5,000.00. Otherwise, if identified in the budget, then the event monetary allocation will not have to be separately approved outside of the budget approval process regardless of the amount.

The criteria for an event to receive grant funds is as follows:

- The event must promote tourism.
- The event must attract tourists in from out of the county.

- The event must be advertised as a “Gadsden County TDC hosted event”.
- The TDC logo must be prominently displayed on all printed materials, including mobile applications and web presence.
- Any verbal radio or TV spots must recognize funding from the TDC, and mention the event is hosted by the TDC.

Application submittal and process requirements:

The TDC shall require an applicant for an event that wishes the TDC to host such event, to submit specific information when requesting event grant funds.

Each applicant, at minimum, shall submit the following information:

- Name of event
- Name of event organizer/organization
- Date of event
- Theme or purpose of event
- Anticipated number of event participants/attendees
- Estimated bed nights
- Projected range of attendees (distance traveled)

The events committee shall review submitted applications, and make a recommendation to the TDC regarding the request of the grant events for the TDC to host an event.

The TDC shall subsequently hear the events committee recommendations at a public hearing, and adopt by majority vote, the committee recommendations.

Upon approval by the TDC, the grant recipient shall enter into a contract or memorandum of understanding regarding the event.

Strategy 5.3

Set forth parameters and criteria for the expenditure of revenues for events that the TDC does not host, but deems appropriate to assist with marketing. Such funding shall be referred to hereinafter as “marketing funds”.

Marketing Funds:

Marketing funds are available as deemed appropriate by the TDC, upon a schedule approved by the TDC. These funds are available on a reimbursement bases only, and are limited to no more than \$5,000 per event or organization which will promote tourism within Gadsden County in each fiscal year. Marketing funds may only be used for the following purposes:

- Print material advertising or marketing the event.
- Radio or TV spots.
- Internet presence advertising or marketing the event.

- The print materials must contain the TDC logo, including mobile applications and web presence.
- Verbal marketing (e.g. radio or TV spots) must mention funding received by the Gadsden County Tourist Development Council.

If an event has been funded by the TDC for three (3) consecutive years, a recommendation will be made reducing funding to a maximum of 50% of the prior year's funded amount, or 100% of the current year's funding request, whichever is less. This methodology will continue each year thereafter until such time as the funding level reaches zero dollars or the organization becomes self-sufficient, whichever occurs first.

Application submittal and process requirements:

The TDC shall require an applicant for an event, or on behalf of an organization, to submit specific information when requesting marketing funds.

Each applicant, at minimum, shall submit the following information:

- Name of event
- Name of event organizer/organization
- Date of event
- Theme or purpose of event
- Anticipated number of event participants/attendees
- Estimated bed nights
- Projected range of attendees (distance traveled)

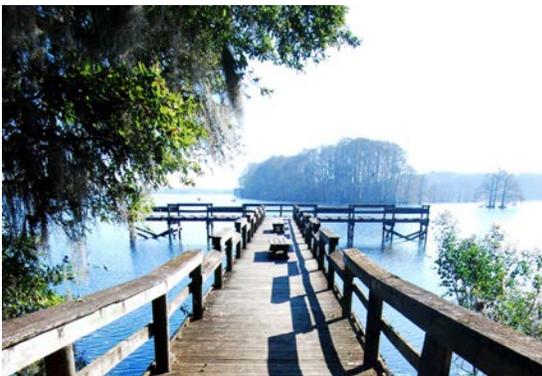
The events committee shall review submitted applications, and make a recommendation to the TDC regarding the priority of funding these events, if at all, by using a scoring system based on points received.

The funding of the marketing for the events shall be limited to the marketing funds allocated in the budget adopted for the respective fiscal year.

The TDC shall subsequently hear the events committee recommendations at a public hearing, and adopt by majority vote the priority list.

Measurement

Review of the effectiveness of the grant and marketing funds process, and review of the allocations assigned to specific expenditures.



CLOSING THOUGHTS
TO THE GADSDEN COUNTY TDC 2015-2016 PLAN

Efforts during 2015-2016 will be focused on encouraging the stakeholders in Gadsden County to become “tourism” advocates/ambassadors. Each of the elements outlined in this strategic plan is a piece of the puzzle that will bring tourism together in Gadsden County for the long term.

Little by little, as pieces of the puzzle come together, the picture will become clearer and clearer and the tourism story will get bigger and bigger.

Eliciting the support of the community for tourism efforts is likely not new; however, targeting the community and providing them with tools to support and drive home a consistent message is a creative and innovative way to build a solid strategic tourism foundation.

EXHIBIT 1 – Gadsden County Tourist Development Council Revenues

The information in Table 1 below shows a steady incline in revenue collection over the course of the past five fiscal years. Each year has increased by more than five (5) percent (Table 2) although no new hotels have been developed within Gadsden County since about 2008, with exception to the White Dog Plantation which opened as a bed and breakfast in 2014 (Source: Gadsden County Property Appraiser data base).

Because the hoteliers collect the tax and then submit it to the Department of State, the peak months are likely the months prior to what is shown in the table below. The highest months of revenue collection are reflected in Table 1, and include November and December. It is safer to assume that October and November are the highest actual revenue months, which aligns with the Florida State and FAMU football home games. As a result of this assumption, also note then that recently the months of March and May are also high revenue months. This may be attributed to spring break and snow bird travel to and from South Florida or the Gulf Coast beaches.

Table 1 – Gadsden County Tourist Development Council Historic Revenues, FY 10 – FY 14

Gadsden County Tourist Development Revenues Fiscal Years 2010 - 2014					
	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
October	\$6,581.00	\$5,300.00	\$7,983.00	\$7,713.00	\$5,251.76
November	\$7,638.00	\$7,614.00	\$9,269.00	\$9,332.00	\$12,795.12
December	\$6,235.00	\$9,650.00	\$8,757.00	\$9,800.00	\$11,292.73
January	\$4,859.00	\$5,772.00	\$7,092.00	\$7,738.00	\$8,461.58
February	\$4,429.00	\$4,919.00	\$7,024.00	\$7,130.00	\$8,135.31
March	\$4,604.00	\$5,419.00	\$7,472.00	\$8,330.00	\$9,282.80
April	\$7,197.00	\$7,871.00	\$9,038.00	\$11,433.00	\$11,363.90
May	\$7,531.00	\$7,952.00	\$8,193.00	\$9,687.00	\$9,252.54
June	\$7,273.00	\$6,724.00	\$7,550.00	\$11,689.00	\$10,633.53
July	\$6,948.00	\$6,681.00	\$7,953.00	\$9,438.00	\$9,600.42
August	\$7,887.00	\$8,479.00	\$8,380.00	\$6,621.00	\$9,956.72
September	\$6,620.00	\$6,775.00	\$7,127.00	\$9,633.00	\$8,533.97
Annual collections	\$77,802.00	\$83,156.00	\$95,838.00	\$108,544.00	\$114,560.38
Interest					\$276.42
Total Revenue	\$77,802.00	\$83,156.00	\$95,838.00	\$108,544.00	\$114,836.80

Difference from previous year's tax collection.

\$5,354.00 \$12,682.00 \$12,706.00 \$6,016.38

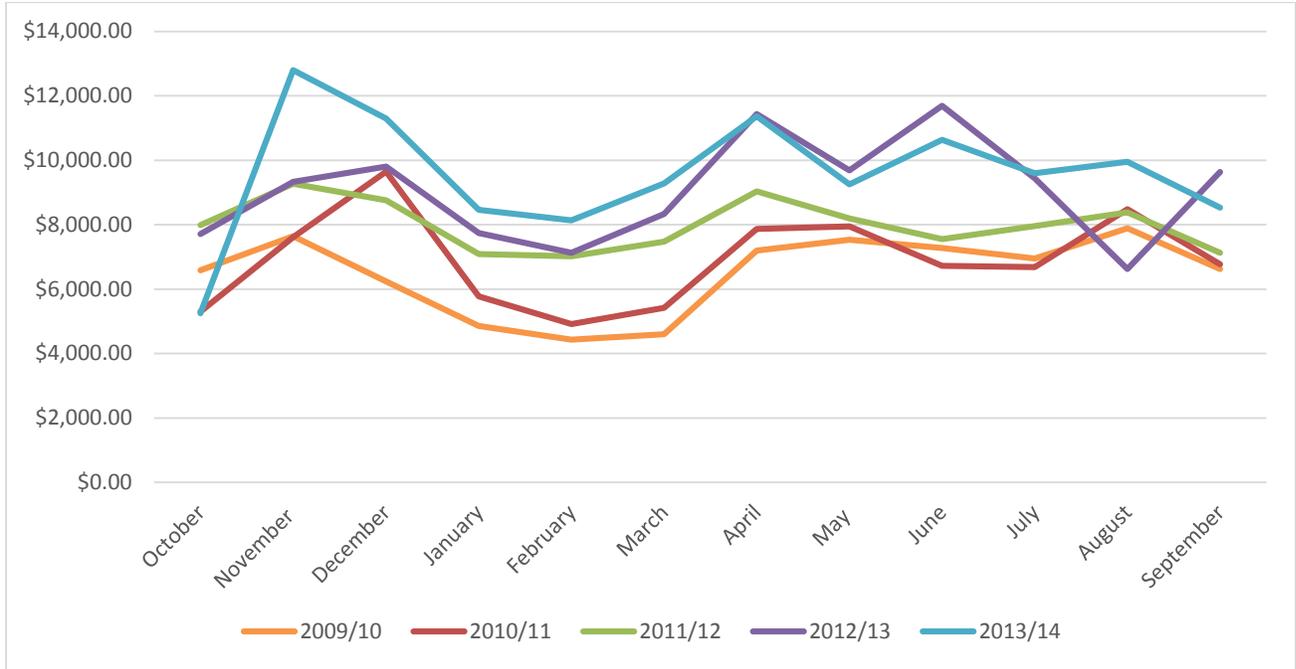
Green shading indicates a monthly revenue over \$10,000.

Note: Gadsden County collects two cents bed tax, and is eligible to collect up to four cents.

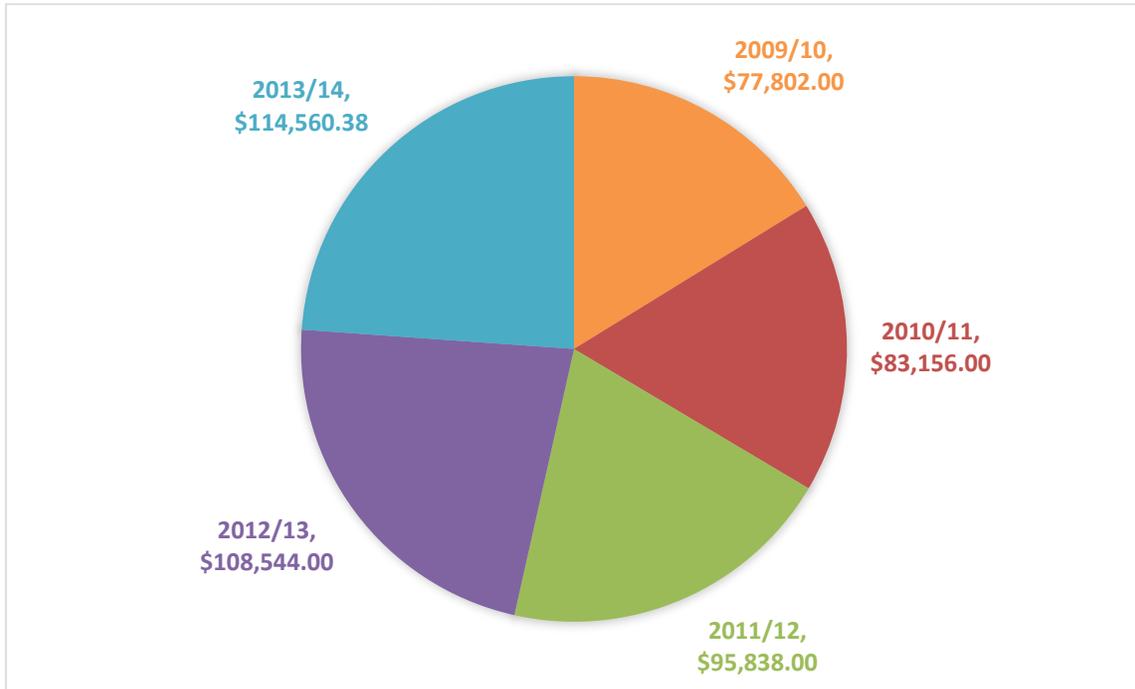
Source: Florida Department of Revenue

The following charts provide a representation of the above information in graphic form.

Graphic 1 – Comparison of Revenue by Month, FY10 – FY14.



Graphic 2 – Annual Revenues by Fiscal Year, FY 10 - FY14



Based upon the historical data in Table 1, the following analysis shows the increase in revenue from each year to the next.

Table 2 – Percentage Increase in Bed Tax Revenue, FY 10 – FY 14

Fiscal Years	Percent Increase
FY09/10 to FY10/11	6.4%
FY10/11 to FY11/12	13.2%
FY11/12 to FY12/13	11.7%
FY12/13 to FY13/14	5.3%

Source: Table 1

Conservatively, the tax projection for the next two fiscal years, which include FY15/16 and FY 16/17 are as follows, based up an increase in tax revenue of five (5) percent each year and an assumption that the TDC will collect a five (5) percent increase from the FY13/14 in the FY14/15 year.

Fiscal Year 14/15 estimate: \$120,288.40 (current year not complete)

Fiscal Year 15/16 projection: \$126,302.82

Fiscal Year 16/17 projection: \$132,617.96

NOTICE OF INTENT

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN to all concerned that the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) of Gadsden County, Florida, intends at its regularly scheduled meeting on the 2nd day of June 2015, at 6:00 P.M. at the Edward J. Butler Governmental Complex Building, 9 East Jefferson Street, Quincy, Florida, to consider enactment of the following ordinances:

AN ORDINANCE OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF GADSDEN COUNTY, FLORIDA, AMENDING THE TOURIST DEVELOPMENT PLAN TO PROVIDE FOR ANTICIPATED NET TOURIST DEVELOPMENT TAX REVENUE, THE TAXING DISTRICT IN WHICH THE TAX IS COLLECTED, AND PROPOSED USES AND ALLOCATIONS FOR THE USE OF THE TAX REVENUE; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; PROVIDING FOR REPEAL; PROVIDING FOR MODIFICATIONS THAT MAY ARISE FROM CONSIDERATION AT PUBLIC HEARING; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

AND

AN ORDINANCE OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF GADSDEN COUNTY, FLORIDA, AMENDING CHAPTER 2, ARTICLE V, DIVISION 3 AND CHAPTER 74, ARTICLE I, DIVISION 3 OF THE GADSDEN COUNTY CODE OF ORDINANCES, RELATED TO THE GADSDEN COUNTY TOURIST DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL AND TOURIST DEVELOPMENT TAX, TO PROVIDE FOR CLARITY AND CONSISTENCY WITH SECTION 125.0104, FLORIDA STATUTES; PROVIDING FOR REPEAL, SEVERABILITY, INCLUSION IN THE GADSDEN COUNTY CODE, AND MODIFICATIONS THAT MAY ARISE FROM CONSIDERATION AT PUBLIC HEARING; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

INTERESTED PARTIES MAY APPEAR AT THE MEETING AND BE HEARD WITH RESPECT TO THE PROPOSED ORDINANCES. IF A PERSON DECIDES TO APPEAL ANY DECISION MADE BY THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS WITH RESPECT TO THESE MATTERS, THEY WILL NEED A RECORD OF PROCEEDING, AND FOR SUCH PURPOSE, THEY MAY NEED TO ASSURE THAT A VERBATIM RECORDING OF THE PROCEEDING IS MADE, WHICH RECORD INCLUDES TESTIMONY AND EVIDENCE UPON WHICH THE APPEAL IS TO BE BASED.

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, persons needing assistance in obtaining any information from the County or attending the public hearing should contact the County by communication with the Community Development Administration Office, at (850) 875-8659 at least 48 hours prior to the hearing.

The proposed ordinances are available for public inspection at the Office of the Clerk, Gadsden County Courthouse, 10 E. Jefferson Street, Quincy, Florida.

Published one time

May 21, 2015

- Gadsden Times
- Havana Herald
- Twin City New