

# Fremont County Tourism Council

## 2017 Destination Marketing Report

### 2017 Volunteer Board Appointees

Kristyn Econome, Treasurer – Fremont Adventure Recreation through 12/31/2018  
Peggy Gair, Secretary – Royal Gorge Bridge & Park through 12/31/2020  
Blaine Heckart, Board – Quality Inn & Suites through 12/31/2020  
Larry Hill, Board – Starlite Campground through 12/31/2019  
Beth Katchmar, Vice-Chair – Pizza Maddness through 12/31/2018  
Steve Kaverman, Chair – Tourism Champion through 12/31/2019  
John Miller, Board – Willie’s Antiques through 12/31/2018

### Ex-Officio Members

Canon City Chamber – Kris Webb  
Commissioner – Dwayne McFall  
Cañon City Council – Dolly Gonzales  
Florence City Council – Paul Villagrana  
Florence Chamber – Barna Kasa  
Fremont Heritage Commission – Jim Nelson  
Fremont EDC – Rob Brown

## **1** Lodging Tax Collections & Total Investments\*

Budgeted State Remittance: \$185,000

Actual Lodging Tax Remittance: \$229,329 (+\$25,558 over 2016). Highest ever!

CTO Grant: \$25,000

Cañon City Funding: \$25,000

**Total Fund: \$279,329**

Total Investments & Expenses: ~\$310,669

Variance: -\$31,340

*\*These figures have not yet been reconciled with the Finance Department. Estimated variance is due to digital marketing and visitor guide fulfillment expenses that were not reimbursed as expected by the OEDIT Grant.*

## 2 Economic Benefits

Research conducted for the Colorado Tourism Office by Dean Runyon Associates reported the latest figures on the economic impact of tourism to Fremont County.

Impact/Benefit	2015	2016	Change
Travel Spending	\$64.2 million	\$65.6 million	+ \$1.4 million
Earnings	\$16.3 million	\$16.6 million	+ \$0.3 million
Tourism Jobs	855	836	- 19
Local Taxes	\$1.7 million	\$2.5 million	+ \$0.8 million
State Taxes	\$1.9 million	\$ 1.9 million	none

2017 figures are anticipated in June, and are expected to show continuing improvement. Complete Report: [Colorado Travel Impacts](#)

## 3 New Logo and Website

2017 began with a positive end-of-year balance carried over from 2016. This enabled the FCTC to acquire the URL [RoyalGorgeRegion.com](http://RoyalGorgeRegion.com), which was privately owned, redesign the website, and development of a new logo. The logo is available in the format shown here, and others, to suit publication needs.



The new branding is consistent with the findings and recommendations of the marketing study conducted pro-bono by YearOne, for the FCTC in 2016. The Royal Gorge is the region's most widely known and recognizable destination attraction, and our strongest marketing asset.

## **4** DIGITAL MARKETING

*All performance statistics are for the calendar year.*

- **Facebook**

- **People Reached 2,432,548**
- Impressions 5,818,032
- Engagement 720,640 (LIKE, Share, Comment)

*Facebook campaigns 2017 Acquisition Cost: \$0.0089 per person.*

- **Google Search and Re-Targeting and YouTube campaigns**

- Search clicks 54,691
- Display Clicks 251,646
- Video Views 186,086
- Total Impressions 46,500,000

*Google campaigns 2017 Acquisition Cost: \$0.0529 per person*

- **Website Traffic**

- Visitors 301,207
- Page views 600,387
- Visitor Guide Requests 1,201

### **CTO Social Media Coops** *(The CTO matched the FCTC's \$1,000 investment with \$1,000)*

- Royal Gorge Region 9 Must Do Activities
  - People Reached Organically (@no cost to CTO or FCTC): 135,638
  - Paid Reach 306,225
  - Likes 3,692
- Rafting in the Royal Gorge Region (Video)
  - People Reached Organically (@no cost to CTO or FCTC): 91,868
  - Paid Reach 497,717
  - Likes 3,573
  - Video Views 295,089

### **Other Digital & Print Marketing Channels**

- VisitCOS.com email newsletters
- Colorado.com Sponsored Content Page
- Colorado.com Leads Program
- Colorado.com Web and Print Listings
- CTO Summer ALIVE Magazine Ad (*PRINT*)

### **Email Newsletters**

VistaWorks publishes a monthly email newsletter for the FCTC with over 75,967 opt-in subscribers. The newsletter highlights events, attractions, activities, etc.

## 5 Royal Gorge Vacation Guide

Guides were ***distributed*** to tourist information racks and Colorado's ten visitor centers under the terms of an \$11,232.00 contract with **Certified Folder Display Service, Inc.**

**Colorado Activity Centers (CAC) fulfilled 14,002 direct requests for printed copies** of the Royal Gorge Vacation Guide; an increase of 4,327 guides over 2016. A total of \$36,842 was invested in postage, handling and supplies, or \$2.53 per guide. These requests reached us through the publisher's website and our own (1,480), as well as from leads programs subscribed to through the Colorado Tourism Office (10,429) and Colorado Springs Convention & Visitor's Bureau (2,063). **CAC also distributed guides to their own brochure & magazine racks, supplementing locations covered by Certified.**

Additional copies for the guide were distributed through the Cañon City Chamber of Commerce. **Total 2017 production was 120,000 copies.**

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### **Cañon City Chamber of Commerce**

The Cañon City Chamber of Commerce is the defacto 'OFFICE' and public face for the virtual organization that is FCTC, answering the published telephone numbers and responding to inquiries from email and walk-in visitors.

- Tourism telephone inquiries: 1,853
- Tourism Walk-in's to Chamber office: 1,440
- Visitor Cabin in Veteran's Park (May to September): 5,034
- The Chamber is the local repository of Royal Gorge Vacation Guide. They are distributed to visitors from the Peabody and the cabin, and are made available to local businesses wishing to maintain their own supply for distribution.

### **CTO Grant Recipient**

On behalf of the region, VistaWorks compiled and submitted an application for the Colorado Tourism Office grant in 2017. **For the 5th consecutive year, the FCTC was successful in obtaining a \$25,000 grant**, which we matched with \$25,000 from the FCTC budget. This money is invaluable and was used for the following:

- Signage for Chamber of Commerce Visitor's Cabin in Veteran's Park
- Colorado.com Banner advertising
- Denver Post advertising coordinated by the Chamber of Commerce
- Expanded Social Media Promotion
- Colorado.com E-newsletters
- Brand Awareness Campaigns (Video promotion, Logo development, etc.)

- Expanded Visitor Guide fulfillment
- FAR Recreation Guide printing and distribution
- Self-Guided Heritage Tour Development

### **OEDIT Grant Recipient**

The FCTC was notified by the Colorado Office of Economic Development and International Trade (OEDIT) in May, that it was to be the **recipient of a \$75,000 marketing grant**. The grant required no matching funds. The final grant agreement was signed in September.

Administration of the grant, and the process of putting systems in place to meet compliance requirements proved to be extremely frustrating, and more complicated than OEDIT grant managers first represented. OEDIT denied reimbursement of some marketing & advertising expenditures made between the time we were notified of the grant award, and final processing of the grant agreement. Reporting and reimbursement requirements continued to be changed and redefined even *after* the grant agreement was signed. This forced the FCTC to absorb costs believed to be reimbursable.

In December, in view of changing contract, reporting and reimbursement requirements the Board considered declining to accept the grant, before voting to carry it forward into 2018. Separate RFP's and service contracts, and special dedicated expense accounts set up by the County should allow the FCTC to invest the grant as intended, and comply with OEDIT and HUD accounting requirements.

### **Destination Marketing Partners**

**As the only all-volunteer Destination Marketing Organization in Colorado**, the Fremont County Tourism Council relies on its marketing partners to reach and influence prospective visitors. Integral to those efforts are:

- **VistaWorks**, marketing communications & advertising coordinator, webmaster and administrative support.
- **Fremont County**, administrative support with meeting minutes (special thanks to Debbie Ulrich), accounts payable and financial reporting (special thanks to Charlene Halstead and Andy Lovins).
- **Colorado Activity Centers**, publishes, distributes and fulfills direct requests for Visitor Guides.
- **Certified Folder**, distributes Visitor Guides to racks and CTO Visitor Centers over a wide area of the state.
- **Colorado Springs Convention & Visitor's Bureau / VisitCOS**. To help offset the CVB's stagnate funding (LART, or Lodging & Rental Car Tax has not increased since inception in 1978) the FCTC's investment will increase from \$328 in 2017, to \$571 over five years; an average annual increase of \$49.
- **Colorado Tourism Office**

### **Fremont County Heritage Commission**

The Council continued to work with the Heritage Commission on self-guided tours, using a portion of the CTO grant to support their projects. In 2017, the Heritage Commission distributed 3,384 print copies of seven (7) different tour booklets. Another 4,473 copies were downloaded electronically from FremontHeritage.com and RoyalGorgeRegion.com

### **Fremont Adventure Recreation – FAR**

With FCTC/CTO support, FAR was able to print nearly 5,000 trail guides, all of which were distributed by June of 2017. FAR's full-color guides went out to biking/hiking shops across Colorado, in Pueblo, Colorado Springs, Buena Vista, Salida, Gunnison, and others. FAR also distributed the guides locally via the Chamber of Commerce, Red Canyon Cycles, as well as through other FAR supporters.

### **Region 13 Tourism Sector Partnership**

Efforts that were initiated in the fall of 2015 to pull together tourism-related business owners and managers, and supporting government partners in Fremont, Custer, Chaffee and Lake counties continued through 2017. These counties are all within Region 13, one of the state's Workforce Development Planning Regions. Peggy Gair and Steve Kaverman remained involved with the core group. Visit [ColoradoOutdoorRecreation](#) for more information.

### **Community Grants**

FCTC Bylaws require that at least 5% of annual lodging tax revenue be distributed to local community organizations. **\$9,250.00 was distributed to fourteen (14) community organizations to help fund event marketing efforts.** A "Sweepstake Contest" was conducted in an attempt to gain more insight into lodging and spending patterns among participants at funded events, but it produced little data. By year's end, when the process for awarding grants in 2018 began, only a few 2017 grant recipients had complied with the FCTC's reporting requirements.

### **Tourism Marketing District**

Early in 2017 the FCTC chartered a sub-committee to study formation of a Tourism Marketing District, or Local Marketing District, under provisions of CRS Title 29, with the goal of generating more lodging tax revenue to be invested in destination marketing efforts. As options for doing so were considered, the City proposed an alternative path using Home Rule Authority that was seen as more expedient. In July, the City formed the Royal Gorge Regional Tourism Council (RGRTC). Steve Kaverman and Kristyn Econome applied for, and were appointed to, the RGRTC board. The City Council approved an ordinance placing Issue 1A on the November ballot, which if approved, would have created a 5% CITY Lodging Tax. The measure failed to gain approval from voters.

Undeterred, efforts by the Royal Gorge Regional Tourism Council to create a Tourism Marketing District, are continuing in 2018. Steve Kaverman continues to serve on the RGRTC Board,

interacting on behalf of Fremont County, and at the direction of the BOCC. A primary goal is to ensure the county's interests are represented in eventual formation of a single, unified destination marketing organization (DMO) serving the Royal Gorge Region.

### **Industry Participation & Association**

- In January, Steve Kaverman represented the Royal Gorge Region/FCTC for Tourism Day at the Capitol, and attended the Legislative Reception hosted by the Tourism Industry Association of Colorado (TIAC).
- In April, Steve Kaverman was the presenter/speaker for the Cañon City Chamber of Commerce Leadership program. The presentation familiarized program participants with the importance of tourism in the region's economy, and the industry's facets.
- In May, the FCTC was a Bronze Sponsor for the Southern Colorado Tourism Summit, held in La Junta. FCTC Board members staffed the Royal Gorge Region exhibit and distributed marketing literature.
- In May, the FCTC hosted a 2-day familiarization tour (FAM) of the Royal Gorge Region for Jill Lammers (now Corbin), the recently appointed Director of Heritage & Agritourism for the Colorado Tourism Office.
- In June, Steve Kaverman attended the Colorado Association of Destination Marketing Organizations (CADMO) annual membership retreat.
- In October, Steve Kaverman represented the Royal Gorge Region/Fremont County Tourism Council at the Governor's Tourism Conference in Grand Junction.

The FCTC now maintains membership in both CADMO and TIAC.

### **2017 Press Releases & Media Coverage**

#### **Best place in the Nation to Ride a Bike**

<http://www.marketwired.com/press-release/colorado-the-best-place-in-the-nation-to-ride-a-bike-2228480.htm>

#### **Luxury Women's Yoga Retreat**

<https://www.wetravel.com/trips/rise-up-luxury-fall-yoga-hiking-retreat-rise-up-retreats-and-adventures-canon-city-91415334>

**Street Meeting Magazine** – Mountain Events and Venues Royal Gorge Bridge and Park “Park After Dark”

#### **Colorado Tourism Office**

– New for Summer 2017

Royal Gorge Dinosaur Experience, Echo Canyon Luxury Cabins

– Summer 2018 News

Royal Gorge Bridge and Park – 5 year anniversary of re-opening

– Colorado vacations and experiences that won't break the bank.

**Colorado.com Itineraries**

Family Itinerary

Heritage 5 day

Family 5 day

Adventure 7 day

Royal Gorge Region – Branding

**Chieftan**

[http://www.chieftain.com/business/localbusiness/building-a-bigger-brand-no-letup-in-promoting-royal-gorge/article\\_764a910f-f7fd-5065-be5e-f7d08f6cba14.html](http://www.chieftain.com/business/localbusiness/building-a-bigger-brand-no-letup-in-promoting-royal-gorge/article_764a910f-f7fd-5065-be5e-f7d08f6cba14.html)

**New Website Showcases the Royal Gorge Region**

<http://www.prweb.com/releases/2017/04/prweb14259286.htm>

**LA Times** – Royal Gorge Dino Experience

**Smithsonian.com** - Dinosaur Wars, paleontological history, important discoveries, Dinosaur Experience

**Colorado Meetings + Events Magazine** – 2017 Winter issue, Dinosaur Experience

**5280 Magazine** – Uncharted Colorado / Indian Springs Trace Fossil