

April 11, 2018 Regional Tourism Meeting Summary

The Regional Tourism Committee of the Regional Community Institute held its third meeting on April 11, 2018 at 3:00pm at Heritage Park Village in Macclenny. Chairperson Thad Crowe, welcomed the attendees and reviewed the intent of the committee. The group then discussed various organizations that work on regional tourism, in search of models that might work in Northeast Florida. The ideas below were transcribed from the meeting notes. The meeting ended at 4:30 pm. The next meeting is to be held at Ravine Gardens State Park (1600 Twigg St, Palatka, FL 32177) at 3:00 PM on Tuesday, May 22.

REGIONAL TOURISM MEETING – April, 2018

LODGING

- Understand the supply of lodging by county
- Look for lodging partnerships/alliances
 - Duval & Smaller Counties, and/or
 - Smaller Counties Alliance
- AirBNB / Short term lodging – Status & Impact
 - Bed tax
 - Regulatory issues
 - Ability to communicate with hosts and issues

NEFRC BOARD INPUT & ISSUES

- Bed tax share model?
 - Issues
 - State requirements and mandates
 - % of tax collection varies by entity
 - Variation in local ordinances creates contrasts in how bed tax is allocated.
 - Is there a regional contribution model?
- Best Practices
 - Local government knowledge of fiscal impacts.
 - Data consistency & common metrics/terms. Apples to apples

MODELS

- Destination Marketing Organization (DMO) - Act as the community, county or local authority leader in tourism marketing and development

- List of DMOs in region and better understand how they operate
 - Calendar & event coordination
- First Coast Golf (Sport specific DMO – 501(c)6, NPO)
 - Funding
 - Five counties pay in
 - Private partnerships – Golf Courses (67 Public & Private) & Lodging
 - Marketing
 - On-line, print, fan tours – international, & trade shows
 - Advertising
 - Data & Reporting to track advertising dollars and it's cost/benefit
- Florida Restaurant and Lodging Association
 - Serve as an advocacy & education organization to its members.
 - Interested in a Macclenny / Baker partnership?
 - Do they have a hotel / restaurant synergy model?
- State of Georgia
 - Structured for regional tourism – Regional Travel Association (RTA)
 - Gather information on RTA's.
- V.F.I.
 - Manage expectations
- Sweet Tea Alliance
 - One time occurrence led by Nassau County
 - Promoted niche market with common theme – Quaint downtown setting while sipping tea on porch
 - Able to maximize advertisement expenditures
- Explore Northwest Florida , Visit Natural North Florida
 - Partnerships
 - County
 - Individual
 - Corporate
 - Funding
 - Membership fees \$5,000/year
 - Annual grants from DEO & Visit FL
 - Rural Area of Opportunity (RAO). Identify RAO's in NEFR.
 - Structure
 - Strong inter-local agreements
 - By-laws keep an active membership and commitment
 - Task force sets action items & administration (regional council) runs backend
 - Marketing
 - Media, publications, email, market rural areas at outdoor tradeshow
- Convention and Visitors Bureaus (CVB)
 - List the CVB's in each county

- Gather bed tax at county level.
- What structure might work in NE Florida?
 - What model would work for NE Florida?
 - Who are we? Regional assets → Moved to next meeting.
 - Based on who we are, identify target audience.
- General Discussion