

Tourism Proceedings
PNWER Annual Summit – Big Sky, Montana
July 15, 2015

Co-chair Meg O'Leary, Director, Montana Department of Commerce
Co-chair Dave Cowen, General Manager, The Bucharth Gardens

Speakers:

Taylor Middleton, General Manager, Big Sky Resort
Paul Nursey, President & CEO, Tourism Victoria
Trina Mousseau, Chief Marketing Officer, Tourism Victoria
Glenniss Indreland, Brand Manager, Big Sky Resort
Alroy Chan, Director, Corporate Development, Rocky Mountaineer
Rob Eaton, Senior Manager, Government Affairs, Amtrak
Christopher Dorrington, Bureau Chief, Multimodal Planning Bureau, Montana
Department of Transportation

Discussion Topics

Winter Tourism Opportunities to Market Ski Destinations are Major Drivers of
Winter Tourism Economies – Taylor Middleton

There are three main pillars for marketing a ski destination:

1. Outstanding Recreation
2. Vibrant Communities
3. Effective Transportation (air & drive) Big Sky has 14 summer direct flights and 12 winter direct flights

There are four Big Challenges that every destination faces:

1. Capital Intensive (i.e. The Summit, Moonlight, Sewers, roads, NW Energy for BSR)
2. Weather Anomalies (especially in the PNW)
3. Economic Cycles (i.e. 2008)
4. Very Long Term – BSR started in 1968-9

Residential Tourism:

1. Business Capital (ROI)
2. Community Infrastructure
3. Schools/Livable Community
4. Tax Base
5. Jobs/Employment
6. Transportation (BZN has 14 non-stop because of the university, YNP, the summer, etc.)

NORPASS, First Nations Tourism, Sichuan Visa – Dave Cowen

- Norpass: walk-on, bi-national travel pass b/w WA, BC, & AK
 - Could include state/provincial/international ferry & rail systems
 - Convenience and flexibility to tourists
 - Unique tourist experience
 - Supports transportation industries
 - What's next?
 - Support ferry companies with logistics
 - Governments talk about flexible tariffs
 - Flexible ticketing system, interline airline model
- The Sichuan Visa supports the transportation model of connecting vehicle and foot traffic. It is important because we have seen a drastic increase in Chinese visitation to the U.S.
 - Need bilateral discussion among experts
 - Government collaborate with industry on innovation and tactics

Tourisms Impact in the PNWER Region – Paul Nursey

- Tourism is not all about the logo or tagline, but now more the story. It is so important to have effect storytelling when talking about your destination. We need to market by collage or consensus.
- Do not market to yourself, market to the customer. For example: Path to purchase is thinking about going to Mexico → hotel → then things to do.
- There are many great product offerings, but we need to sell customer experiences and show that you're meeting customer expectations.
- It's not about the logo and the tag line, it's about the storytelling
- PNW – emerging tourism superpower, many recent successes thanks to collaboration between USA & CAN (2-nation vacation support)

Tourism & Marketing – Trina Mousseau

- Effective Marketing Principles:
 1. Well-developed brand
 2. Breakthrough Creative
 3. Reach in marketplace
 4. Cohesive content strategy. Intercept consumer at the right time at travel planning cycle.
- Native Advertising – Make paid content look like earned content
- 5 tips to Max Results:
 1. Do it if it's worth talking about. Stretch your dollar (i.e. if 5-10 people show interest in your post and share it, that is stretching your dollar).
 2. Don't outspend, out smart. "Mirror mirror" creative that was posted in bathrooms of the convention center got more buzz than that main event sponsors.

3. Provide constant reasons to consume your product, i.e. Romance
4. Inspire partners to play with you. i.e. Pink and red lights in downtown during Valentine's Day because the destination was marketed as a great place to come for romance.
5. Be chronic about your results. Never let that slide. Check them AT LEAST 1-2 times per day.

Tourism & Marketing – Glenniss Indreland

- MTOT is a sound brand and markets to the geo-traveler.
- There are many joint-venture opportunities for CVBs to piggy back on. For example: staff training/superhost, Ski Magazine, MN Airport takeover with Billings CVB.

Tourism & Marketing – Dale w/Buchart Gardens

- There needs to be collaboration on all levels for success to take place.
- Thriving tourism industry – good for economy (drive employment, investment, tax revenue, ancillary industries)
- Goals: encompass PNWER region in tourism, become destination, preserve smooth travel experience

Rail Tourism – Rob Eaton, Alroy Chan

- About 30 percent of riders are riding the train for travel purposes.
- PNW served by 3 Amtrak routes, regional rail packages are key
- Must coordinate with host railroads on scheduling, as well as expansion of network through cooperation
- Right now, they're just on the highline in Montana (from Libby to Wolf Point). Possibility of expanding.
- Two-nation vacation
 - Transport guests seamlessly between the United States & Canada.
 - \$40 million revenue/1,550 job increase
- Future:
 - How can PNWER help promote rail tourism
 - How can Rocky Mountaineer help PNWER?

Marine Tourism – Rob Eaton, Alroy Chan

- Key mantra: unlock the potential of marine tourism
 - Ferries are a noteworthy attraction of PNW
 - Hindrance: cross-border travel (customs, immigration, etc.)
 - Solutions: 2-nation vacation, pre-clearance, NorPass etc.
- Must aim to make Ferry travel part of the PNW tourism package experience
 - Improve border cross process, development programs to be seamless