

**BEREA TOURISM COMMISSION MINUTES
BUSINESS MEETING
WEDNESDAY, January 11, 2022, 3:00 PM**

**City Annex Building
304 Chestnut Street**

Called to order at 3:04 PM; Patrick Huston presiding.

COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT:

- Kristy Napier
- Becky Brown
- Laura Carpenter
- Rick Thomas
- Patrick Huston

SUPPORT STAFF PRESENT:

- Donna Angel
- Liz Todd
- Dani Gift

GUESTS PRESENT:

- Mayor Bruce Fraley
- Rose Beverly
- Samuel Dykes
- Roy
- Chris Walsh

APPROVAL OF Agenda:

Rick Thomas moved to approve the agenda. Second by Kristy Napier. Motion passed unanimously.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES :

Laura Carpenter moved to approve minutes. Second by Kristy Napier. Motion passed unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

None.

TROLLEY REPORT – CHRIS WALSH

Presented on trolley options, including three options for diesel trolley options. All trolleys being considered are ADA accessible and will require a class b CDL license, which can be obtained through Berea Public Works. Discussion led to a continued search for trolley options and further research into the difference between purchasing our own trolley and renting .

DIRECTORS REPORT: DONNA ANGEL

1. **AMENDED Budget Change Reminder:** \$142,000.00 ARPA
2. **Small Business Saturday and Shop Small Sat.** 11.26.22 Due to the Flash Freeze that occurred, merchant sales and visitor counts were down due to the 2 most important revenue earning of the Christmas season, being closed.
3. **Merry Mingling Event:** 11.26.22 was a success w/approx. 300 in attendance
4. City-Wide **“Light Up”** for Christmas was a huge success: 100 of 141 businesses participated in lighting store fronts and carried out the seasonal theme, Of “It’s a Candy Cane Kind of Christmas in Berea”.
5. **Article Highlights about Berea:** 14 Reasons to visit Berea: Only in your state.com: #1 Berea, Welcome Center-L&N Train Depot: #2 Indian Fort Mtn. Trail: #3 Family -Friendly Biking: #4Extraordinary Shopping: #5 Madison County Waterways: #6 Historic Boone Tavern Hotel & Rest.: #7 Public Art: #8 Festivals & more Festivals: #9 Jammin on the Porch: #10 Berea Farmers Market: #11 Get Hands -On with Art: #12 The 10th Largest Yard Sale in the Country: #13 A Host of Eateries: #14 Live Performances for Every Season:
6. **The Farmer’s Market:** Awning for the Ford Building by Ag Credit
7. **Electronic Sign for the Pavilion:**
8. **Tolle Building:** Architect plans completed & ready to write the RFP for bid work:

9. Tourism will be working w/BCS and other schools to host a “**International Student Art Fair**” **June 9 & 10th** w/multiple locations being used. PD teachers & instructors expected 200 teachers will participate in the student’s weekend fair.
10. **Valentine’s Day** Marketing Promotion: Paid ads
11. **Music Concerts: Permission to use 4,000 for June concerts from RIG funds:***
12. **The City of Berea along w/Tourism staff** in December began the planning stages of the 2023 BCF: Introduction letters to the vendors with info of the past consultant retirement and the city facilitating the festival going forward have been sent. Invite letters to the vendor applicants and the checklist/guidelines have been sent as well.
13. **Dani Gift:** Media Manager graduated December w/her PA degree: Congratulations:
14. **Gov. Beshear** announced last week that Kentucky Personnel Cabinet Deputy Secretary Lindy Casebier will become secretary of the Tourism, Arts and Heritage Cabinet following Secretary Mike Berry’s retirement in February 2023.

January Media Report – Dani Gift

Digital Media Projects (Completed)

- 1) Updated all Berea Craft Festival forms to include new information, contacts, etc.
- 2) Added the new map to the Website, along with links to all local shops and restaurants, and entertainment venues.
- 3) 25 under 25 digital and print marketing to support local artists and businesses throughout the holiday season.
- 4) Major social media marketing push for Shop Small Saturday and the Mayor’s Merry Mingling
- 5) Created a “Photo Request” Shared File to easily source photos

Digital Media Project (Ongoing)

- 1) 2023 Website Calendar Updates
- 2) 2023 LearnShop Marketing
- 3) Valentines Day social media advertisements (Paid and Organic)

Print Projects (Completed)

- 1) 25 Under 25 posters and flyers
- 2) New design for “Thank you for visiting Berea” sign (Kentucky Artisan Center)
- 3) New design for “Welcome to Berea” signs

Print Projects (Ongoing)

- 1) New signage for the Berea Craft Festival
- 2) Logo Re-design for the Berea Craft Festival
- 3) New pop-up banner design for motorcoach conferences

Additional Projects

Facebook	October 2022	November 2022	December 2022
Total Reach	270,928	281,137	39,916
Engagement	3,872	3,832	3,027
Link Clicks	560	239	793
Followers	11,712	11,745	11,812
Instagram	October 2022	November 2022	December 2022
Total Impressions	7,563	33,465	25,185
Account Reached	10,007	8,095	3,054
Website Taps	40	11	11
Followers	3,645	3,653	3,694
Constant Contact	October 2022	November 2022	December 2022
Open Rate	43%	40%	40%
Click Rate	5%	3%	3%
New Subscribers	208	318	100
Total Subscriptions	14,238	14,556	14,656

- 1) Planned and Coordinated a school visit from Jackson County that included a “tourism talk” as well as a tour of several local artists.
- 2) Assisted with the Tourism Dog Food Drive to help support the Madison County Animal Shelter

2022 Year in Review

YouTube

4,881 video views
151.8 hours of watch time

Facebook

1,109,720 individual accounts reached
1,847 new followers to the Facebook Page

Instagram

44,181 individual accounts reached
98 new followers to the Instagram account

Constant Contact

3,784 New Subscribers (Net)
42% Open rate (1% above industry average)
6% Click Rate (5% above industry average)

2023 Goals/ Focuses

- 1) Increase Facebook Engagement to 4,000+ average per month.
- 2) Create more of a story-telling feel on Instagram
- 3) Release two new videos per month (covering business spotlights, events, etc.)

Motorcoach Specialist – Ethan Cima

Berea Tourism Report – January 2023
Ethan Cima, Motorcoach Specialist

I would like to share with you our end of the year numbers that I have totaled. (Fig. 1). Below is the number of groups, entertainment, and total bus visitors that we had in 2022. For comparison, I have gone back through past years and seen what Berea was bringing in previously. In 2019, Berea Tourism reached their highest ever group count (55) and after the decrease in group travel that the Covid-19 pandemic caused, we can now see that our 2022 group total number (50) is only 5 groups behind the highest ever recorded.

Figure 1



Figure 2



I have also gone through the data and looked through our files to find the number of total visitors based on motorcoach numbers alone. The data can be seen in the chart below (Fig. 2) where we see that in the past recent years our visitor count was increasing and was heading in the right direction. What we are seeing now, is that group travel is trending upwards again, and people are slowly coming back. The group travel industry is thinking that 2023 could be some of our highest numbers yet. In addition to our total groups and total visitors, we also booked entertainment for our groups with 20 entertainment reservations. With our average

cost of entertainment being \$500, this would bring an average revenue of \$10,000 for local entertainment groups from Berea and Madison County.

As we are gearing up for the new year of travel and planning, I am excited to see what we plan and the numbers we see in 2023. I will be traveling February 3-7th to the American Bus Association (ABA) in Detroit, MI. The appointments deadline closed on January 9th, and we are currently scheduled to have 30-35 appointments. In March, I am going to Cincinnati region for the Heartland Travel Show. I have requested 42 appointments with travel companies that are coming, I have heard back from 15-20 at this time. When traveling to these conferences and bringing business back with me to Berea, I use our new Group Tour Planner that we have produced. The planner allows for group travel companies to have easy access to what is Berea **has to offer** their visitors. Also, during this time while our program manager, Liz Todd, is away from office; I will be overseeing our LearnShop Classes for the month of February.

I wanted to write a report on my recent travel to the Travel South International Show in Louisville, that report can be found below:

2022 Travel South International Showcase – Louisville, KY

Hello commissioners, I wanted to send a quick note and follow up on what has been happening in the group travel/coach industry for Berea. I have not been able to be present at our last couple of meetings, but I have been selling the beautiful town we call home, to the travelers from all over the world.

I recently just had the opportunity to attend the Travel South International Showcase in Louisville. Travel South is a company that is made up of just five employees, but they outdo themselves each and every year. They have two conferences a year, one is “International,” while the other is “Domestic.” In the past, Berea has attended the domestic show in the past, but never the international. Being hosted in Louisville this year, made for a great opportunity that we could not afford to pass up.

Being my first conference, I did not know what to expect coming in, but I left confident knowing that I had given my all each day. I attended the show by being invited by Todd Finley, the Director of the Kentucky Artisan Center. Joining me and Todd was Alex Gabbard of Boone Tavern, where we shared a table covering the largest attractions and accommodations in the city of Berea. For three days, we met with travel planners and tour companies from all over the world. This included Australia, Brazil, Germany, Norway, and many more that were representatives of their respective countries. We had appointments starting at 9:00am and lasted until 5:00pm that afternoon, each lasting only 14 minutes to tell them about all that Berea has to offer them.

I wanted to send this to let you know what I have been working on for our city, since our meeting has been postponed until January. In the meantime, I hope you have a wonderful holiday season and enjoy your time away from work with your families. Thank you all for being a part of our tourism team, it is greatly appreciated.

For more information on the Travel South International Showcase, I will share a link down below that can share more insight into what all happened in Louisville. <https://travelindustrytoday.com/travel-south-looks-to-rise-again/>

Have a wonderful new year,

Ethan Cima

OPERATIONS MANAGER REPORT January : Nancy Conley

- 1. Berea Welcome Center Visitor Count (See full chart on separate sheet)**
December 2022: 1,124 (plus 17 grab and go bags)

Year Total 2022: 16,848 (plus 254 grab and go bags)
Year Total 2021: 16,692 (plus 899 grab and go bags)
Year Total 2020: 6,828 (plus 808 grab and go bags)
Year Total 2019: 19,445
- 2. Phone Calls Answered at Berea Welcome Center**
Year Total 2022: 1,734
Year Total 2021: 1,544
- 3. KY Visitor Guide Leads**
2022: 1845 leads received
2021: 1593 leads received
Top 10 states remained the same, just in a different order:

2021		2022	
Kentucky	222	Kentucky	220
Ohio	145	Ohio	143
Indiana	91	Illinois	108
Michigan	86	Michigan	95
Florida	84	Texas	90
Illinois	82	Florida	89
Wisconsin	70	Wisconsin	89
Pennsylvania	66	Indiana	86
Texas	63	Pennsylvania	81
Missouri	56	Missouri	61

1. Attended Kentucky Travel Industry Association Annual Conference in November
2. Sister City Japanese Delegation visited in November: Ted drove shuttle and photographed their visit. Hosted delegation on Nov. 8 at Berea Welcome Center
3. Berea Welcome Center Winterized in November
 - a. Ted has been working on replacing weather stripping at Welcome Center
 - b. Team has cleaned out flowerpots in Artisan Village
4. Winter Holiday Season Decorations up in November and down the first week of January; It's a Candy Cane Christmas in Berea theme
5. Kentucky Association for Environmental Education Conference: Held at Boone Tavern Nov. 29-Dec.1; shuttle to Artisan Village Nov. 29 from 4-6 for shopping. Many shops and galleries had extended hours.
6. All part time team members have completed their 90 days.
7. Presented on my role with Tourism to Leadership Madison County December 13
8. Partnered with Kalyn Wilson as a drop off location for a RITI Coat Drive
9. **Hosted Pictures with Santa**
 - a. December 3 and 10 - Berea Tourism Sponsored
 - b. December 12 - Participated in Parks Dept. Where's Santa Program
 - c. December 17 - Partnered with the Madison County Animal Shelter – Pictures with Santa and Dog Food Drive; collected over 300 lbs. of dog food
10. **Tenant Spotlight:**
 - a. **The Cabin of Old Town:** Will be open on beautiful days during the winter months.
 - b. **Becky Brown Jewelry:** Stocking up on special enamel jewelry items for your Valentine. Keep an eye out for seasonal drops of exclusive items in limited quantities in person or at bekybrownjewelry.com.
 - c. **Market 69:** Continuously receiving new stock and makers including Raven's Nature Family Farm: Buckeyes, fudge, gourmet cookies and more. Will be spotlighting special gifts each week until Valentine's Day on their Facebook page.
 - d. **A Little Southern Class Florist and Gifts:** Have a variety of special gifts in store. Place orders for Valentine's Day before Feb. 1 to get a dozen roses for \$60.
11. **Berea Welcome Center Winter Hours:** 9AM-5PM Monday thru Saturday. Closed on Sundays until mid-April.

TRANSIENT TAX COLLECTION – PATRICK HUSTON

Brief explanation of KY House Bill 8, which changes how transient room tax is now collected through 3rd party booking sites vs. local lodging options.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS:

Commissioners received compliments on the Mayor's Merry Mingling event

ADJOURNMENT:

Laura Carpenter moved to adjourn. Rick Thomas second. Motion passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 5:12 PM.