

HK Advertising proposes marketing plan to Lodger's Tax Committee

Written by By Chrissy Largo Sun Correspondent
Friday, 04 December 2015 07:07



"I'd like to see the tourism of Gallup explode. I really feel that we have a lot to offer here," District 3 City Councilor and Lodger's Tax Committee member Yogash Kumar said to a handful of community members during the Lodger's Tax Committee's regular quarterly meeting held Dec.1.

In order to do just that City Manager, Maryann Ustick and David Hinkle, president of the Gallup-McKinley County Chamber of Commerce, selected HK Advertising, an advertising agency based out of Sante Fe to discuss implementation of a strategic marketing plan for the city of Gallup.

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With partnership efforts from the city and the Chamber, and after applying for a grant last year, both entities received word at the beginning of October that they were awarded a \$40,000 match grant from the State Tourism Association.

"I think it will help us tremendously in terms of being more strategic in what we fund, how we fund, and how we advertise the effectiveness of our advertising we are doing," Ustick said.

Cindy Tanner, a native of Gallup, and member of the Lodger's Tax Committee for about five years, explained that she and her husband are in the Native American art business; however, she thinks that Gallup's biggest asset, the Intertribal Ceremonial, has been slowly dwindling.

"I'd like to see that change, but I don't know how we can do that," she said. "I've been involved four years with that, personally, the exhibits and artists that come into play."

Dave Hayduk, CEO of HK Advertising, and James Glover of the Idea Group of Santa Fe, LLC, have gained decades of experience in advertising, and bolstering economic development and tourism in the New Mexico area.

Together, they work with cities and towns across the state to meet their goals of assembling marketing plans that create economic opportunities.

"We are a full-service firm that provides services to our clients," Hayduk said. "We really get in the trenches of our clients and help make the cash register ring. What is happening is, we are doubling our effect of our monies and our cities."

He mentioned Rebecca Latham, tourism cabinet secretary, who developed the "New Mexico True" campaign, which has over 30 communities participating.

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"She created a brand that was uniquely New Mexico, that all of our cities and towns of New Mexico share," Hayduk said. "She also created a brand that differentiates us from the competition."

Branding is a term that represents a company's market identity by who they are, what they do and what do they have to offer.

He explained that "true campaign is working for our cities across New Mexico because the traveler now understands what New Mexico" is all about and what they can do. In return, it brings more economic revenue to their communities.

Glover added that it is really a combination of pulling assets together, which is part of their task and letting people know what we have.

"The branding elements is part of delivering on the promise," said Glover. "We can make all sorts of claims to people to come to Gallup and advertise the heck out of it, but what happens when they get here. And do they have an experience that blows them away?"

One scope of work that will be initiated within the marketing plan will be to develop a travel website.

"Websites are number one on the travelers mind and how it is responsive to the mobile phone," Hayduk said. "Travelers are using tablets and mobile phones right and left."

Part of their marketing plan is evaluate what works and does not work Glover said.

"What we really want to do with this is, is to bring in some great minds to help us to boil down our image and who we are, what we are," Hinkle said.

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A final plan will be presented at a future City Council meeting for approval.