

October 30, 2014

M E M O R A N D U M

To: Members of Advertising and Promotion Commission

From: Steve Clark, President Fayetteville Chamber of Commerce

Re: Benefits of Joint Effort on Economic Development and Tourism

Members of the Commission,

The Fayetteville Chamber of Commerce is applying to serve and manage the duties and functions of the Fayetteville Advertising and Promotion Commission. We are seeking to do this work through and by virtue of a professional consulting contract. Obviously, this is out of the ordinary for Fayetteville. However, it is the norm in both Springdale and Rogers. Your counterparts on those commissions contract with their respective Chambers to unify those communities' efforts in economic development. I have attached letters from businesses in the Rogers community advocating the benefits of combining the efforts of A&P and the Chamber.

Undoubtedly, tourism is one key component of a robust economic development strategy. That fact was recognized by the City of Fayetteville in 2009, when the city entered into a consulting contract with the Chamber to focus on economic development. That contract directed the Chamber to target its economic development efforts on healthcare, clean tech, non profits, and hospitality and tourism. Efforts have been made in the areas of cultural and historic tourism, in entertainment, with the upgrading and expansion of the Walton Arts Center, and through events like our Hispanic Heritage Festival. Yet, I believe that with all of the success that you have enjoyed, due primarily to the Commission's and Marilyn's leadership, that there is more we can do together.

The Chamber can contribute to such a joint effort by:

## Providing a voice for tourism and promotion

- The Fayetteville Chamber is officially recognized by the City as the first point of contact for economic development. That information has been widely shared over the past 6 years with the Arkansas Economic Development Commission, the Arkansas Development Finance Authority, the Arkansas Parks and Tourism Commission, the University of Arkansas World Trade Center and other International trade groups, the Arkansas Hospitality Association, Arkansas Capital Corporation and various site selection organization throughout the U.S.;

Providing a voice for A&P at:

- the Northwest Arkansas Council;
- the Northwest Arkansas Tourism Association; (NATA), the Chamber is already on the board;
- Northwest Arkansas Workforce Investment Board;
- the board of Bikes, Blues, and Barbeque;
- the board of the Walton Arts Center;
- the City and University's Town and Gown Committee;
- the Uptown Merchants Association;
- the newly organized Mid Town Merchants Association;
- the Dickson Street Merchants Association;

Experience in dealing with public inquiries, planning and managing events, and the process of receiving A&P Funding

- Hispanic Heritage Festival – 5,000 attendees over two days and a recipient of a \$5,000.00 A&P funding grant;
- Chamber Annual Luncheon - over 500 attendees
- Chamber Excellence in Business Breakfast - 225 attendees
- Chamber Style Show – over 100 attendees
- Over 5,000 personal visitors annually to the Chamber offices
- Over 150 meetings held annually with between 5 and 50 persons
- Spring Swing Golf Outing – over 150 participants
- Fayetteville Teacher Expo - over 700 teachers and guests

- Rockin' with the Razorbacks – dinner and pep rally with over 400+ guests attending
- Washington County Teacher Expo for over 600 teachers and guests

### Networking Opportunities

- 650+ graduates of Leadership Fayetteville in leadership roles throughout Fayetteville and Northwest Arkansas
- 12 networking events annually focusing on Fayetteville professionals, sponsored by hotels, restaurants and clubs
- 1200 businesses belong to the Chamber
- 100 plus ribbon cuttings and ground breakings for new businesses annually

### Economic Development Credentials and Administration:

- Chung Tan, Chief Economic Developer – Ms. Tan is one of only 14 economic developers in Arkansas and about 6,000 worldwide to hold the prestigious international designation of CEcD. She is the only certified economic developer in Northwest Arkansas;
- Five members of the Chamber Team have completed the Basic Economic Development Course, which is 60% of our Team;
- Our Chamber Team has two Leed Green Associates as certified by the U.S. Green Building Council. No other Chamber in Arkansas has two LEED GA's;
- The Fayetteville Chamber is an Accredited Chamber with 3 Stars. There are 7,000 Chambers across the United States and only 227 of them are accredited. The only other Chamber accredited in Northwest Arkansas is the Rogers-Lowell Chamber;
- The Fayetteville Chamber has been involved in international economic development and tourism over the past 28 months traveling to Panama City and Colon Panama;

Bogota and Cartagena Columbia; and Sao Paulo Brazil;

- The Fayetteville Chamber met with Visit USA representatives in Panama City, Bogota, and Sao Paulo to promote a familiarization trip to Fayetteville for business opportunity and tourism to include travel writers with business leaders;
- The Fayetteville Chamber has worked with over 30 interns from the U of A in the past 36 months to work on economic development projects which included ideas that later became the NWA Hispanic Heritage Festival in Fayetteville and Tomorrow's Leaders, a regional leadership event;
- Our Chamber Team speaks 5 languages and is able to communicate internationally;
- In the last 90 days the Chamber has completed the following efforts to promote Fayetteville and economic development opportunities through tourism:
  - Interviewed by Talk Business for placement of a Fayetteville article detailing "sense of place" as an essential component of economic development;
  - Responded to an inquiry about hotel availability in Fayetteville regarding the 10 largest hotels, the number of rooms, and average room rate per day;
  - Assisted an investor to find suitable site to open a new Indian restaurant;
  - Met with a new franchisee of a yogurt business to discuss available resources for business start up;
  - Promoted and attended a job fair for Domino's Pizza and Hilton Garden Inn offering employment for more than 30 people in the HMR industry;
  - Assisted Ozark Natural Foods, organizer of the Midtown Music Showcase, to coordinate this event with other

merchants. The Chamber managed a booth at this event to help promote the Mid-Town Merchants Association;

- Promoted Film Fest;
- Recruiting a state conference to Fayetteville which would be comprised of 150 attendees from across the state;
- Provided tourism information to a group of senior adults from Greenview, TX who will be visiting Fayetteville;
- Met with the new Manager of the Chancellor Hotel regarding bringing state conferences to the hotel;
- Provided information and resources to an entrepreneur interested in starting a growler filling station in Fayetteville, a craft beer retail store;
- Met with an entrepreneur interested in investing in the tourism business;
- Promoted and attended the Fest of All in conjunction with First Thursday to promote Fayetteville as a city where different cultures are celebrated;
- Held a Business After Hours at Mojo's Pints and Pies to promote this business to the community

While many believe, incorrectly, that the Chamber's membership and mission is focused on manufacturing or industry, the following list is a sampling of Fayetteville and out-of-county HMR businesses that are considered as regular partners with the Chamber:

Andy's Frozen Custard  
Benny and Dave's Italian Ice  
Candlewood Suites  
Chartwells catering  
The Chancellor Hotel  
Domino's Pizza  
Zaxby's Chicken

Jammin Java  
Dunkin Donuts  
Qdoba Mexican Grill  
Love to Float Outfitters  
Mojo's Pints and Pies  
Ozark Natural Foods  
Smitty's Garage  
A & M Railroad - Springdale  
Buffalo Wings – Joplin Missouri  
Simply Divine Catering – Bentonville AR  
South Carolina Department of Commerce – Columbia  
SC  
TownePlace Suites Marriott – Springdale, AR

#### Community Involvement by Chamber Professional Team

- Lifestyles Board
- Single Parent Scholarship Fund Board
- 7 Hills Homeless Shelter Board
- City of Fayetteville Board of Health
- City of Fayetteville Public Facilities Board
- Habitat for Humanity Women's Board
- Community Creative Center Board
- Ozark Guidance Center Auxiliary Board
- Fayetteville Community Center Foundation Board
- Ozark Literacy Council Board
- Arkansas Governor's Mansion Board
- Walmart LPGA Golf Channel Committee
- Bikes Blues and BBQ Board
- Walton Arts Center Board
- City of Fayetteville Town and Gown Committee

#### Publications, Web and Social Media

- Approximately 4,850 unique visitors (first time to the web site) each month to "[Fayettevillear.com](http://Fayettevillear.com)" our Chamber domain;

- Analytics reports of the 500 categories of businesses from which referrals are made indicate that four of the top five referral categories were Chamber businesses operating hotels/motels, tourist attractions, or restaurants/clubs;
- Approximately 1,500 unique visitors monthly log on to our “Livability.com/Fayetteville” web site and the largest number of visitors come from the following six cities – Houston, Dallas, Little Rock, Springdale, Rogers and Bentonville, in that order;
- Monthly, a 12-page newspaper insert is published in the Northwest Arkansas Times showcasing events, attractions and business networking events. This insert is delivered to 16,130 homes;
- The Chamber has 4,129 followers on Twitter;
- The Chamber’s daily Eblast circulation is distributed to 2,758 businesses;
- 5,000 copies of a 43-page magazine entitled, “[Livability Fayetteville](#)”, is published and distributed annually. The 2014 magazine feature story was “*Bringing the Funk*’ - from festivals to arts to Fayetteville’s hip side is the hot ticket”.

Pages 8 to 17 of this magazine featured

“**Things to Do**” like hit the lake, root for the Razorbacks, grab a brew, find inspiration, feel the burn, pick produce, enjoy the scenery and chow down.

“**Bringing the Funk**” included stories about the Dickson Street Entertainment District, Fayetteville Underground, First Thursday, Fayetteville Roots Festival, Artosphere, Block Street Block Party, Fayetteville Foam Fest and Bikes, Blues and BBQ.

“**Fun Times in Fayetteville**” featured the Symphony of Northwest Arkansas, Phunbags Comedy Improv troupe, TheatreSquared, the Walton Arts Center and the Arkansas Air Museum.

***“Fayetteville is for Foodies”*** included Penguin Ed’s, Arsaga’s and Jose’s restaurant and cantina.

***“Breath of Fresh Air”*** included stories on the trails at Finger Park, Lake Sequoyah, St. Paul and Scull Creek. Highlighted also was Wilson Park, the Botanical Gardens of the Ozarks, lakes Fayetteville, Wedington and Beaver.

### Potential Program Growth

The programs established by the Commission and its team have been outstanding. Yet, there are always new and different opportunities to consider that may achieve even greater results.

The Chamber would propose three such opportunities for review. It recommends that these items be considered and adopted for implementation to create growth in HMR revenue:

- 1) Initiate international tourism focused on the Visit USA programs, with which we have worked in Panama City, Panama and Bogota Columbia. These initial trips to Fayetteville and the region will begin in third quarter of 2015;
- 2) Initiate a recruitment program for out-of-town visitors centered around University of Arkansas and Fayetteville High athletics. This is a rich opportunity to coordinate with the communities of visiting teams and their fans for housing, food and entertainment associated with their travel while support their team in Fayetteville. We have an a preliminary outline to operate just such a program to begin the second quarter of 2015;
- 3) Partner with the Springdale Chamber of Commerce and the educational and economic leaders of Fayetteville, Springdale, Elkins, Greenland, West Fork, Farmington, Prairie Grove, and Lincoln, to establish and operate the Northwest Arkansas Sports Authority. With the cooperation between and leadership provided by the Fayetteville and Springdale Chambers and Advertising and

Promotion Commissions, this authority could begin hosting sports tournaments in less than one year.

The Springdale Chamber of Commerce owns the legal rights to the name of this authority and it is an incorporated business. After sharing with the Springdale Chamber that the Fayetteville Chamber was seeking to contract with the Fayetteville Advertising and Promotion Commission to create a unified economic development agenda, the Springdale Chamber agreed to become a mutual partner in advancing the idea of actively creating this sports authority. The value and economic benefit of a county-wide sports authority with the ability to host the largest of sports tournaments cannot be overstated.

Members of the Commission, the Chamber believes that working jointly, our combined efforts would have the net effect of increasing economic development and HMR revenue in Fayetteville. The Chamber thanks you for consideration of our proposal and we will be happy to discuss this idea further at your convenience.