

DRAFT 1/23/04

Texas Yes! Workshop Planning Process/Responsibilities

To accomplish the goal of planning, organizing and conducting rural tourism workshops across the state in 2004 in a timely and efficient manner, TDA is proposing a multi-tiered approach involving several partners. The list below outlines the proposed primary responsibilities of each:

Curriculum Development and Coordination

Implement a Memorandum of Understanding with Texas A&M University's to develop, plan and guide the rural tourism workshop curriculum. Texas A&M has unparalleled expertise in rural issues and rural tourism. Responsibilities could include:

- Developing and overseeing a diverse and thorough workshop curriculum based on TDA's outline. Will include conducting active activities that provide attendees with hands-on learning experiences.
- Identifying and scheduling renowned keynote speakers and presenters with proven expertise in the subject area. Negotiate pricing and handle speakers' expenses.
- Creating well-designed notebook materials and coordinating speakers' notes and presentation pieces to provide to TDA for printing.
- Developing and mailing out a pre-workshop rural tourism workbook to participants to be graded and returned to attendees before the workshop is held.
- Developing and collecting attendee surveys on economic impact to create quantitative and qualitative reports tracking the impact of the workshop content and activities.
- Developing and collecting follow-up surveys to attendees to track long-term impact of the workshop program.
- Ensuring all audiovisual equipment needed by speakers is provided and available at workshops.

On-Site Logistics

Bid out services for a coordinator to organize and manage all workshop logistics. This is critical to the success of any multi-faceted event to ensure all of the details come together as needed. The responsibilities of the logistics coordinator could include the following:

- Serving as the lead point person on all workshop planning and coordination issues, working closely with all other partners, including TAMU, TDA and the public relations team.
- Developing and disseminating a workable timeline and schedule to ensure all activities and partners remain on task and accomplish deliverables in an efficient and coordinated manner.
- Working closely with host communities to schedule and arrange lodging accommodations, including negotiating any discounted rates.
- Scheduling and arranging meeting room space, ensuring facilities are available for refreshments to be served, etc.
- Organizing and arranging any necessary transportation needs for attendees and/or speakers as part of workshop session. Developing and coordinating extracurricular activities for attendees and attendee spouses and/or guests, including local tours and other community offerings. Will involve close coordination with host communities and possibly arranging local volunteer efforts to entertain out-of-town guests.
- Develop and produce attendee and speaker welcome packets to spotlight host communities. Packets should include information on local attractions, community history, local events, dining hot spots, and so on. Packets could also include coupons for local businesses, promotional giveaways and possibly samples of locally produced products.
- Overseeing workshop registration and check-in at all sites, including collecting fees and providing receipts and workbooks.
- Organizing and arranging all necessary reservations needed for workshops.
- Working closely with host communities to schedule workshops and coordinate event details.
- Assembling workshop materials and notebooks to provide to attendees at check-in.
- Working out and planning seating arrangements for workshops.

Public Relations

Bid out services for a public relations partner to ensure the workshops are well publicized and well attended. Getting the word out will make the difference between a handful of attendees and a meeting-room full. The responsibilities of the public relations partner could include the following:

- Developing and disseminating all media outreach, including press releases, broadcast messages and PSAs (with prior TDA approval).
- Organizing and promoting a workshop kick-off event to spotlight the host community and set the tone for the workshop as an up-beat, pro-tourism event.
- Working with the logistics coordinator to organize an attendee Meet and Greet dinner to rally everyone together and highlight local chefs, celebrities, etc. Create a fun event and promote it heavily to “get the word out.”
- Creating high-impact advertising, buzz and word-of-mouth to ensure the workshops are the “Talk of Texas.”

Community Input

Host communities will be asked to work with all of the workshop partners to ensure the success of the planning, outreach and follow-up. This will include working closely with TDA, Texas A&M, the Public Relations Partner and the Logistics Coordinator. Host communities will also be asked to provide refreshments for the workshops and to promote the event locally and in the immediate area.

Texas Department of Agriculture

TDA will be actively involved in overseeing and working with all workshop partners. TDA will also be responsible for recruiting attendees, creating the registration forms, printing workshop materials collected by Texas A&M and collating, assembling and mailing workshop notebooks. TDA will also ensure that an agency representative is in attendance at every workshop and that the Governor’s office is kept up-to-date and informed about key aspects of workshop planning, development and implementation.