



FOCUS 2020

Visitor Development Committee

Report to Focus 2020 CAT – April 29, 2009

1. Finalized the committee objective and defined visitor.

- A visitor is a person who resides outside of the city of Mitchell and who makes, or has a potential to make, an economic impact.



2. Developed survey and letter for various organizations in the Mitchell Community.

- Sent 55 organizations a survey and letter.
- 22 organizations responded.

3. Developed questions as guidance for the speakers' presentations. They were as follows:

- What is your organization doing to enhance Visitor Development?
- What can the Visitor Development Committee do to help your organization?
- Does your organization have the ability to expand?
- Whom does your organization turn to for funding or sponsoring of an event?



Scheduled the following speakers for presentations:

- **Corn Palace Gift Shop:**

Dale & Barb Odegaard

- **Chamber City Beautification Committee:**

Jim Wold, Jan Quenzer, Karen Jorgenson

- **Main Street & Beyond:**

Dave Brooks & Jeff Logan

- **Corn Palace Utilization**

Mark Schilling & Dale Odegaard

- **CVB & Visitor's Center:**

Bryan Hisel

Allison Thompson, Mary Lou Voigt

Hannah Walters – new CVB director



(Continued)

- Pheasant Country:

Brad Zimmerman

- Extreme Cheerleading:

Traci Loecker

- Mitchell Baseball Association:

Dave Huber & Jim Johnston

- Mitchell Soccer Association:

Denise Werner

- High School Activities Association:

Curt Hart

- Mitchell School Activities Director:

Geoff Gross

- Prehistoric Indian Village Amphitheatre Project



VOLUNTEERISM:

FINDINGS:



1. The ability to host events is dependent on the strength of the respective associations and their underlying volunteers.
2. There is a lack of organized effort to promote community volunteerism.
 - How are businesses encouraged to promote volunteerism amongst their employees?

RECOMMENDATION:

1. Organizations and businesses should be encouraged to develop and maintain a volunteer list.

CORN PALACE UTILIZATION:



FINDINGS:

1. Lack of clear coordination and accountability for utilization.
2. Use for tourism attraction and events activities are not consistently compatible.
3. Inadequate for major state events.
4. The Corn Palace is central to tourism
5. The Corn Palace has not adapted to changing tourism tastes and travel.
6. The Corn Palace is an indispensable asset to the identity of Mitchell

RECOMMENDATION:

1. Regardless of events center, investment in the Corn Palace is essential:
 - structural improvements
 - enhancing tourism experience (EDUTAINMENT)
2. Separation of tourism and events activities
3. Separation of physical space between tourism and events activities

MAIN STREET:

FINDINGS:

1. Parking is an obstacle to Main Street development.
2. Absentee ownership presents challenges to Main Street investment.
3. Corn Palace activities are beneficial to Main Street.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. Main Street and Beyond is deserving of continued city support.

PREHISTORIC INDIAN VILLAGE AMPHITHEATRE PROJECT:



FINDINGS:

1. Tourists are interested in Native American culture.
2. This project presents an opportunity to expand Mitchell's tourism base and promote Native American history to visitors.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. The Committee for Development of Amphitheatre project is deserving of continued consideration and support.

EVENTS COORDINATION:

FINDINGS:

1. There is a lack of community events coordination when soliciting state/high school/regional events.
2. Individual associations are responsible for solicitation, hosting, and staffing events.
3. There is no individual or entity responsible for the recruitment of events.
4. Incentive to promote an event is commensurate with the time and reward of hosting the event.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. The Chamber of Commerce should re-assess role in events coordination and management.
2. Consideration should be given to the establishment of an Events Authority.
3. Greater effort is needed to maintain more complete calendar of events.



WHAT IS AN EVENTS AUTHORITY:



An Events Authority could be established for facilitating, coordinating, and assisting with solicitation, promotion and hosting of various community athletic and cultural events.

- The Focus 2020 CAT should consider feasibility, and determine proper structure and accountability of such an Authority

- Specific funding resources and required paid staff positions need to be considered

OTHER MATTER TO BE ADDRESSED -

The community's effort to promote visitor development must also consider the impression the City leaves on the visitors. Specifically, how do our entrances, residential and commercial properties, etc appear in the eyes of a new or returning visitor?

The visitor development committee did not focus on the community's Event Center project as the City had an established task force in place. However, we endorse the continued study and evaluation of an Events Center, and would welcome participation in this effort

The committee also endorses the Focus 2020 mission to maintain these committees on an ongoing basis.