

SOUTHEASTERN CONNECTICUT CULTURAL COALITION

Cultural Summit on Coordinated Marketing and Tourism
February 25, 2015 at Charter Oak Federal Credit Union, Waterford

SUMMARY

Panelists:

Randy Fiveash, State of Connecticut, Office of Tourism

Tony Sheridan, Greater Mystic Visitors Bureau

Janice Putnam, Eastern Connecticut Tourism District

Bence Strickland, Custom Publications, The Day

Attendance:

73 people registered to attend representing 60 organizations and businesses

Discussion topics, highlights and notable areas of interest:

- Overview of each organization and their services, benefits and programs, including the specific focus of each entity's marketing, i.e. events, places, etc.
- Discussion of the value and importance of collaborative packaging for consumers' benefit
- All panelists agreed that the role and influence of digital media has greatly increased, but that print media and bricks and mortar visitor centers retain an important place in the marketing mix
- Challenges to marketing the region and tourism are the relative lack of geographic knowledge on the part of visitors and even residents, the perceived boundaries of rivers, and the multiple marketing opportunities/platforms for tourism operators and providers
- Discussion of the current proposed state budget, which would eliminate tourism districts and reduce amount of state marketing

Outcomes:

- Survey sent out following summit to all attendees registered and walk-ins
- 20 responses received indicating
 - 1 Extremely Productive
 - 10 Very Productive
 - 6 Somewhat Productive
 - 3 Not that Productive
- Attendees who are novices in the tourism industry (small to medium orgs that would like to draw more tourists) found the summit very helpful in understanding who does what and the opportunities available
- Attendees who are seasoned professionals in the tourism industry were frustrated by the missed opportunity to discuss real changes in how agencies work together, the impact of the state budget cuts, and the potential to have used the summit as a call to action