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# SUPPLEMENTAL BUDGET

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FY19 | FY20

March 19, 2019

PRESENTED BY THE GREATER SITKA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE  
104 Lake Street, Sitka, Ak 99835

## Introduction

The Greater Sitka Chamber of Commerce is currently in contract with the City of Sitka to provide Convention & Visitor Services (initial contract began Oct. 15; current contract began Jan. 1, 2019). The Sitka Chamber as Visit Sitka provided the 3-year Strategic Marketing Plan 2019-2021 and Annual Marketing Workplan FY19/20 to the Assembly in a work-session on Jan. 8, 2019.

*Exhibit B CVS Contract: "The annual contract amount shall be a minimum of \$300,000. Annual budget to be determined by the Sitka Assembly following an annual work session, with first payment in next fiscal year. If the contribution is increased by Assembly action, the annual contract amount will be adjusted accordingly. The Contractor is encouraged to request additional funding for specific projects above and beyond those included in this contract, pursuant to approval by the Assembly."*

The Sitka Chamber has prepared a base budget and supplemental budget based on the needs of the marketing program in order to match previous years' service levels and continue to grow the visitor industry in Sitka. For FY19, supplemental budget is for the 3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> quarters and FY20 is the full fiscal year. Examples of investments have been detailed in the following narratives and will be presented at a special meeting of the Assembly on March 19, 2019.

## Highlights

Alaska is now the most frequently booked cruise destination in the world

Sitka will see a **33% increase** in cruise traffic from 2018 to 2019

82% of visitors to Sitka are cruisers, 17% arrive via air, & 1% arrive via ferry

Sitka was selected to host SE Conference 2019 Annual Convention

Cruise Critic Selected Sitka as top 3-port in SE Alaska (2<sup>nd</sup> year)

Transient Lodging Tax and Sales Tax show positive growth

### FY19-Q3-Q4

Base \$300,000 Supplemental \$83,072

### FY20-Q1-Q4

Base \$300,000 Supplemental \$200,200

**Sitka convention sales ROI: \$99.16 for every \$1 invested in sales and marketing.** In CY18, Sitka saw appx. 2,575 attendees at 23 events\* to destination meetings and conventions for appx. 107 total days generating an est. economic impact of \$3.03M. \*(excluding SSMF & SFAC)

**ROI on ad equivalency is \$243.96 for every \$1 spent on travel media and familiarization tours.** In CY18, Visit Sitka had 216 media contacts and helped host 15 media visits to Sitka. With at least 3.9M in media ad equivalency over May-Aug. (Trendkite).

# Promotion

## Cruise/Yacht

**FY19: \$4,300**

**FY20: \$8,500**

Examples of programs: Seatrade Booth-Share Miami, FL- Relationship development and engagement of Cruiseline Executives and decision makers. Visit Sitka will be one of the 8 Premium Sponsor ports represented with a separate podium and strong presence among ports in the “North to Alaska” Booth. A premium placement gets us in front of the cruise industry market and allows us to connect with the more than 70 cruise lines and 11,000 professionals who are anticipated to attend the cruise industry's premier promotion and networking event. Additional cruise promotion includes attendance to the travel agent trade show, such as the American Society of Travel Advisors Annual Conference. 80% of cruise travel is booked through travel professionals. Visit Sitka will continue engagement with the yacht market and have membership with the US Superyacht Association.

## Meetings & Conventions

**FY19: \$7,000**

**FY20: \$16,000\***

Relationship building and face-to-face interactions with decisionmakers is essential to building our Meeting & Convention business in Sitka. Visit Sitka has identified incentive travel and C-suite retreats as the best fit for Sitka's strengths and location along with in-state trade, government and school travel. Projects to complement this strategy: travel to business-to-business (B2B) meeting planner events, developing a Meeting & Convention Guide and a Meeting Planner's Toolkit, brand aligned Meeting & Convention booth design and promotional items for both hosted events and travel. Promotional items are especially important for our emphasis on enhancing visitor experience and taking advantage of word-of-mouth marketing which research still shows is the number one driver of travel.

\*Special Project for 2019: Sitka is the host community for Southeast Conference in September. The requirements for this include a hosted opening night reception for 250 people, transportation, soliciting auction items and running the silent auction. These costs, estimated at \$7,000, are built into the FY20 supplemental budget for Meetings & Conventions promotion.

## Tourism

**FY19: \$3,000**

**FY20: \$12,000**

Overall marketing Sitka as a destination for fully independent travelers, cruise travelers, sports fishers, international & domestic tour operators, airlines, other travel, friends and family. Examples of projects: Represent Sitka at Alaska Media Roadshow- a day of face-to-face meetings with the most influential travel media in the United States to increase editorial coverage of Sitka. Attendance at a travel-trade shows to reach ready-to-buy travelers for leisure and destination fishing increasing overnight stays in Sitka. Participating in the Alaska Travel Industry Association annual conference which brings together hundreds of travel industry professionals and advocates for Alaska's Tourism Industry.

## Media, Partnerships & Cooperative Marketing

**FY19: \$8,500**

**FY20: \$14,000**

Media outreach & PR amplifies our message beyond own fiscal constraints. Partnerships maintain our authority in the travel industry especially on Sitka specific issues including ferry services, air travel, etc. Co-op marketing opportunities allow Sitka to buy-up into larger advertising markets and return more value for our spend. ROI on ad equivalency is \$243.96 for every \$1 spent on travel media and familiarization tours. In CY18, Visit Sitka had 216 media contacts and helped host 15 media visits to Sitka. With at least 3.9 Million in media ad equivalency over May-August 2018. (Trendkite). Example of program: Arrange 2-3 influencer trips to Sitka in order to develop compelling content and distribute this content to large numbers of individuals from strategically identified audiences.

## Advertising

### Digital

**FY19: \$8,000**

**FY20: \$16,000**

Digital marketing spans content creation, social media marketing (video & image creation, paid promotion and ads) including online advertising with search & display ads plus email marketing. Precise targeting and instant KPI give VS the ability to quickly respond to changes in market conditions and other data. This will also give us access to the mobile phone market where a multitude of leisure travelers continue to use their mobile phones to plan their adventures. 96% of leisure travelers own or still regularly use a mobile phone and the use of mobile phones in trip planning before leaving home has nearly tripled in the past 3 years.

### Print

**FY19: \$2,500**

**FY20: \$3,700**

In general print vs. digital is a more expensive buy and we plan to focus on proven partners. Print presents ROI challenges. Visit Sitka will shift platform mix to closer meet industry and consumer trends. Examples of ad buys: Sunset and ATIA Vacation planner and online ad.

### Social Media

**FY19: \$22,000**

**FY20: \$41,500**

With 95 million photos and videos shared every day on just Instagram we continue to see the tremendous growth in this segment. Social media allows us to learn and connect with both potential travelers and locals, reach ever new audiences, improve customer service with real-time feedback, gain market share and increase brand awareness for relatively low spend compared to traditional outlets and establish Visit Sitka as the expert for both visitors and partners.

Example of programs: Social media marketing includes video & image creation, paid promotion and ads and platform management. For increased engagement Visit Sitka will create a relationship with potential travelers and build trust. These include producing Instagram stories, short-form video, instructional videos- to enhance visitor experience, and Facebook live.

## **Branded Content**

**FY19: \$5,000**

**FY20: \$20,000**

Branded content is content that does not involve traditional advertising. It can include articles, videos, podcasts and even live elements that bring relevant value to the consumer. It is not advertising in the way most people think of advertising (commercials, banner ads, social media ads, etc...). The key is grabbing the attention of today's consumer and driving real engagement through content." (mission.org 1.25.18) Branded content can work better than traditional advertising because it feels organic and authentic rather than ads that are in our face. When a consumer watches branded content, their brand recall is up to 59% higher than it is with display ads.

Visit Sitka has a tremendous need for branded content development to support our recent investment in a brand-new website and planned expansion into social media including a build out of our YouTube presence. Our videos are at least 6 years old and much of our image library is not focused on current areas we need. **Branded content is the foundation for all of our marketing promotion including traditional advertising, social media marketing, public relations and media.** We need to affectively leverage the brand development and website work to make those investments pay even more.

Examples of projects: Produce 5 (one for each high-potential niche) x 1-1:30 minute story video shorts displaying experience-focused visuals. Recut content to multiple versions of 1-minute clips for Facebook and 30 seconds for Instagram. Produce a gallery containing 30-50 high quality professional, on location, images for each high-potential niche to visualize the stories and experiences being promoted to these audiences. Actively seek out content partnerships with Alaska Airlines and high-end sport fishing and outdoor gear producers.

## **Branded Collateral/Infrastructure**

**FY19: \$7,000**

**FY20: \$19,350**

Examples of projects: The Meeting & Convention Guide- a downloadable information booklet targeted at meeting planners. This highly visual brochure showcases Sitka's meeting facilities, outstanding location, and the quality of the services and suppliers available. Planners should be able to present this document to decision makers to support a meeting proposal. Content can duplicate information shared on the website. Also, a Meeting Planner Toolkit should be available digitally through the website providing detailed listings for local services and suppliers, itinerary suggestions, and inspiration to support planners organizing events.

## **Visitors' Guide**

**FY19: \$6,522**

**FY20: \$12,250**

Examples of projects: 2019's Magazine-style Visitors' Guide will feature branded editorial content to ad ratio, featuring full-page visuals and content segmented to reflect the interests of the high potential target audiences. The Visitor Guide magazine provides the most consistent opportunity to increase demand and greater spend from these visitors.

# Tourism Business Training & Events

**FY19: \$500**

**FY20: \$1,000**

As detailed in Visit Sitka 3 Year Marketing Strategy, we want to add value at every step of the customer journey by enhancing the Visitor Experience while still focusing on the inspirational phase of destination promotion. Actions include Summer Expo and tourism business training like Alaska Host plus other process trainings.

## VisitSitka.org Website

### Website Development

**FY19: \$5,000**

**FY20: \$10,000**

Visit Sitka engages visitors to inspire their travel choices and one of our most important platforms to accomplish this is our new website. “Statistics show that leisure travelers search a number of online sources during their trip-planning activities. DMO websites that maintain current content and other practical travel information are extremely valuable to prospective travelers.” (TripSavvy). Visitsitka.org had 80,000 visitors during CY18. In order to keep our website “live” and relevant for visitors, locals and search engines, fresh content and updating is critical. Frequently added content such as a blog, images, updated vendor descriptions or article postings mean more engagement, better rankings, lower bounce rate, increased authority potential and higher search traffic. Examples of projects: building out the meetings and conventions section by posting a digital meeting & conventions guide, creating links to suppliers, providing downloadable references materials, captivating with new branded videos, setting up retargeting ads based on visits to key pages on the website (add Facebook pixel), providing more content on the destination weddings page, creating digital niche guides for specialty travel groups and adding a blog. Updating our tourism business images with professional or targeted photography.

### Website Maintenance

**FY19: \$3,750**

**FY20: \$5,900**

In order for the website to maintain functionality it is necessary to invest in maintenance which includes software updates and bug fixes, security scans, minor modifications, and maintaining overall site health.

## Special Project

### Alaska Fellows Program

**FY19: \$0**

**FY20: \$20,000**

The Alaska Fellows Program, a nine-month postgraduate fellowship program, will place a dynamic recent graduate with Visit Sitka, through Sitka Chamber’s non-profit status. The Sitka Winter Fellow would join the team and work on projects such as creating blog content for the Visit Sitka website engaging with tourism related businesses throughout the community. The Fellow would also work within the tourism community to coordinate workforce development trainings.