THE GREATER SITKA chamber OF COMMERCE

VISIT Sitka

Convention & Visitors Services Contract

Greater Sitka Chamber of Commerce

March 19th, 2019

Background

Transient Lodging Tax

Est. 1985

(Formally Hotel, Motel and Bed & Breakfast Transient Room Tax)

- 6% tax per night (originally 4%)
- Industry Specific Tax collected by the Visitor Industry
- Funds used for Visitor Industry Promotion
- Formally funded the Sitka Convention and Visitors Bureau 1985-2015

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Visitor Activities Enhancement Fund

The proceeds contained in the visitor activities enhancement fund may be appropriated by the assembly for any purpose related to the **enhancement of tourism and visitor-related activities** in the municipality, to include but not be limited to, contractual funding of a **convention and visitor's bureau, funding of travel of municipal officials to travel-related conventions and trade shows, and procurement of tourism-related advertising.**

Est. February 2015

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Convention and Visitors Services Contract

- 2015 Original RFP for Convention & Visitor Services
- Greater Sitka Chamber of Commerce Selected
  - 3 year contract October 2015-June 2018
  - Sitka Chamber creates Visit Sitka, Sitka's Destination Marketing Agency (DMO)
  - 3 year renewable contract awarded December 2018
    - *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."*

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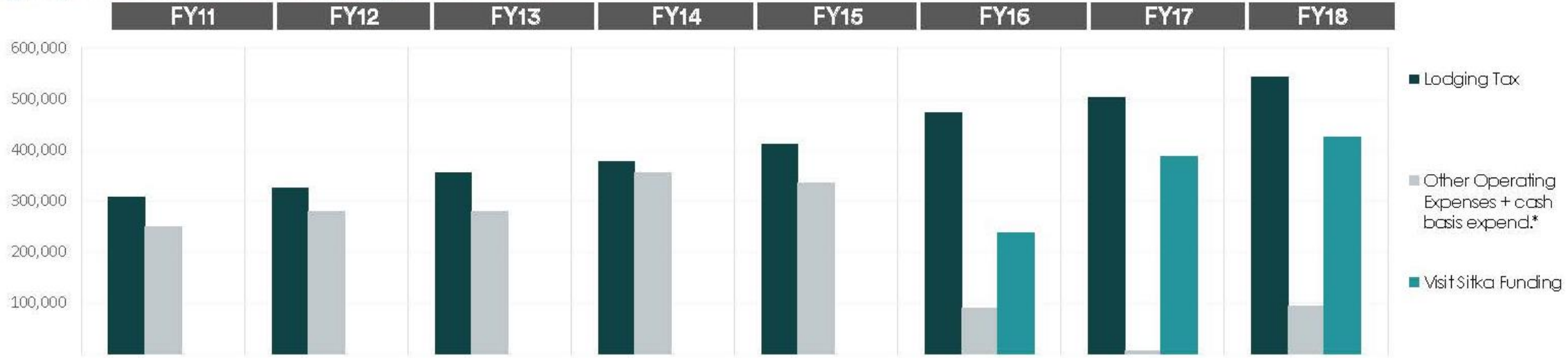
Lodging Tax vs. CVS Funding FY11-FY18



Actuals	FY11	FY12	FY13	FY14	FY15	FY16	FY17	FY18
Lodging Tax	307,890.00	325,351.00	354,158.00	377,547.00	411,916.00	472,900.00	503,439.00	543,697.00
Other Operating Expenses + cash basis expend.*	250,240.00	280,048.00	280,000.00	355,818.00	335,000.00	90,092.00	5,013.00	**93,180.00**
Visit Sitka Funding	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	237,500.00	387,126.00	425,732.00
% Lodging Tax to	**0.81**	**0.86**	**0.79**	**0.94**	**0.81**	**.19/.50**	**0.77**	**0.78**
Retained Cash Asset by CBS	57,650.00	45,303.00	74,158.00	21,729.00	76,916.00	145,308.00	111,300.00	24,785.00

Convention & Visitors Services Special Budget

FY19 Special Allocation $83,072

FY20 Special Allocation $200,200

Cruise Promotion

FY19 Special Allocation $4,300

FY20 Special Allocation $8,500

Promotion- Cruise

- 82% of Sitka's Visitor market
  - 17% Air
  - 1% Ferry
- Cruise Critic selected Sitka in the top three ports in SE AK

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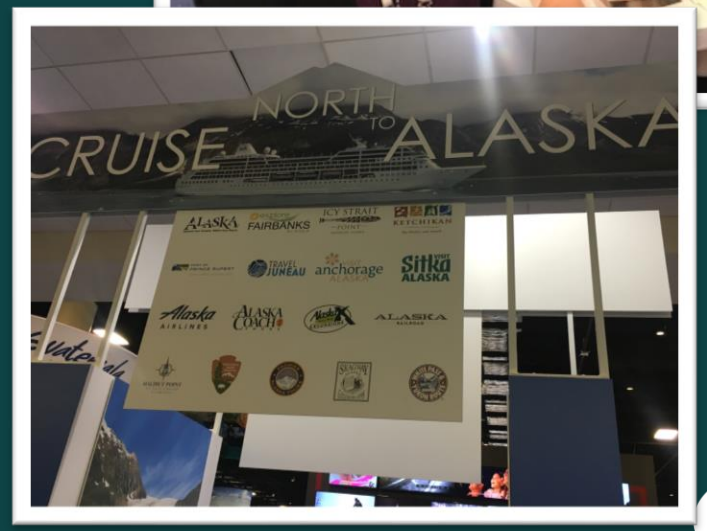
Promotion- Cruise

Seatrade Cruise Global

- Premium Sponsor
  - Sitka featured at one of 8 port podiums
- Premier Cruise Promotion Event
  - 70 Cruiselines
  - 11,000 professionals



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Promotion- Cruise

Travel Agent Trade Show

- 80% of Cruise booked through Travel Agents
  - Drive demand to Sitka destination
- Get our port exposure to XXX agents with existing clients

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Meetings & Conventions Promotion

FY19 Special Allocation $7,000

FY20 Special Allocation $16,000

Promotion- Mtgs & Conventions

- 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)

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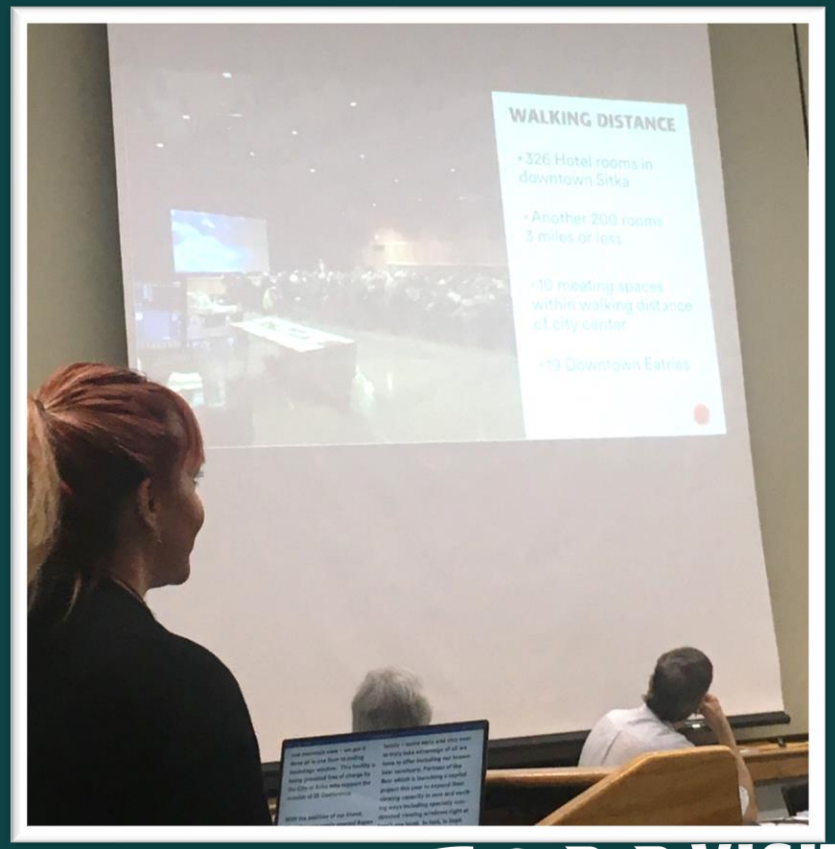
Promotion- Meetings & Conventions

- Relationship building & face-to-face interactions with decision makers
  - Incentive Travel
  - C-Suite retreats
  - In-state
  - Trade
  - Government
  - School travel



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Promotion- Conventions

Special Project

- Host Community Southeast Conference September 2019
  - Hosted opening night reception
  - Transportation support
  - Live/silent auction support
  - 250-300 people

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Tourism Promotion

FY19 Special Allocation $3,000

FY20 Special Allocation $12,000

Promotion- Tourism

- Travel-trade show
  - Independent and fishing visitors
- Alaska Travel Industry Association
  - Connect with hundreds of travel industry professionals and advocates

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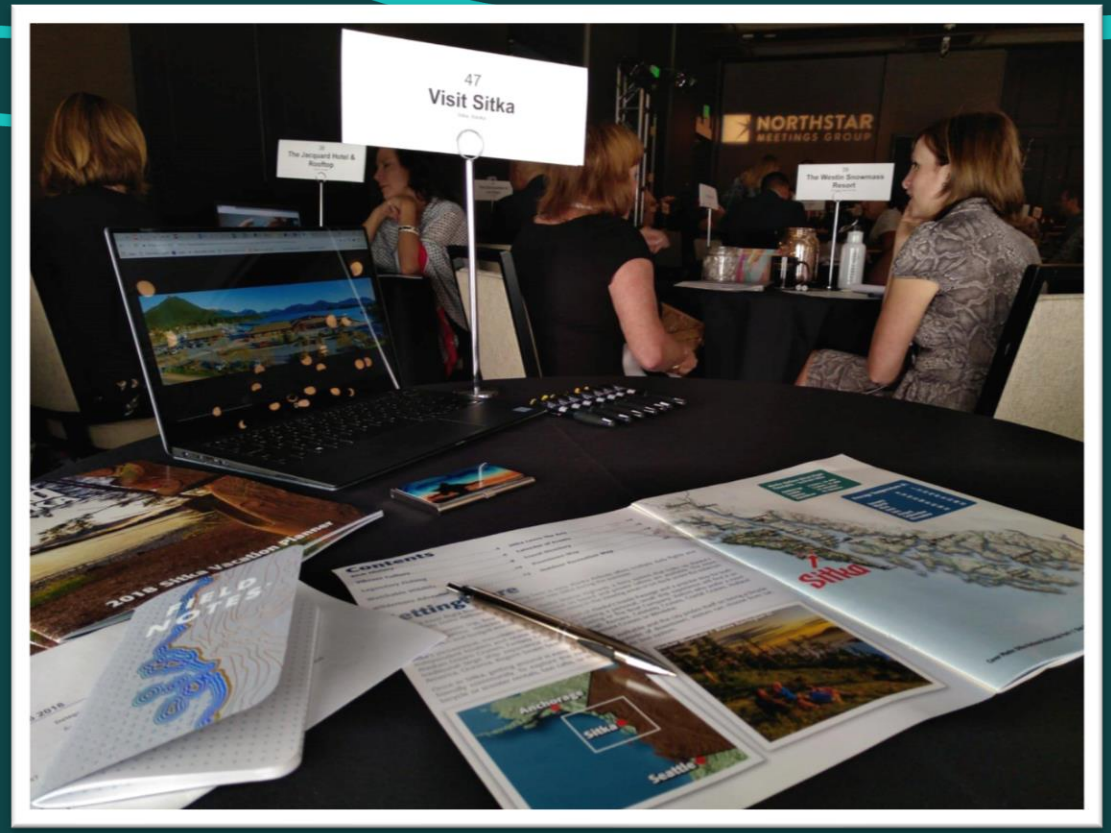
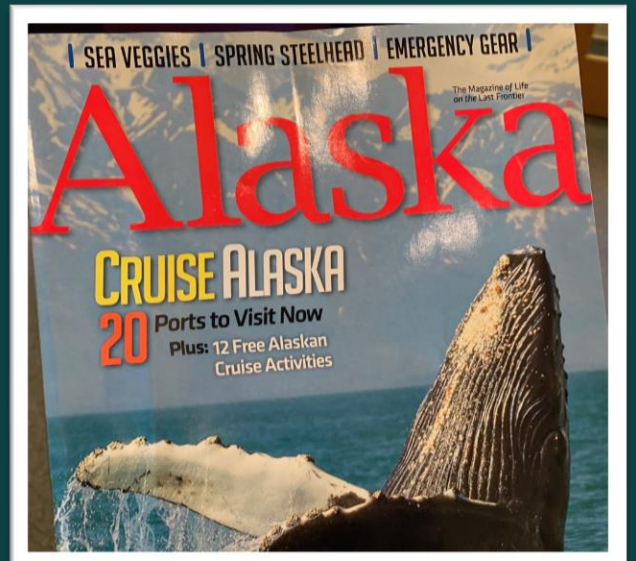
Promotion- Tourism

- Alaska Media Roadshow
  - Face-to-face with vetted media





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Media, Partnerships & Cooperative Marketing

FY19 Special Allocation $8,500

FY20 Special Allocation $14,000

Media & Public Relations

- 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.
- 3.9 Million in media ad equivalency over May-August 2018. (Trendkite).

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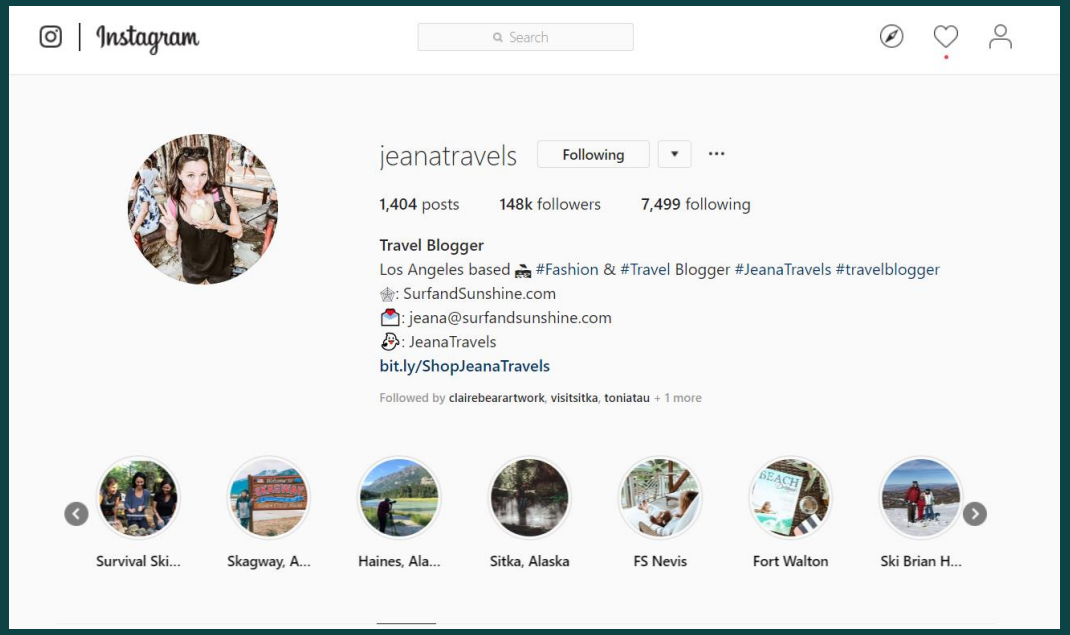
Media & Public Relations

- Influencer trips to Sitka



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Advertising

FY19 Special Allocation $8,000

FY20 Special Allocation $16,000

Digital Advertising

- Content Creation
- On brand and telling the Sitka Story
- 96% of leisure travelers user mobile phones for trip planning

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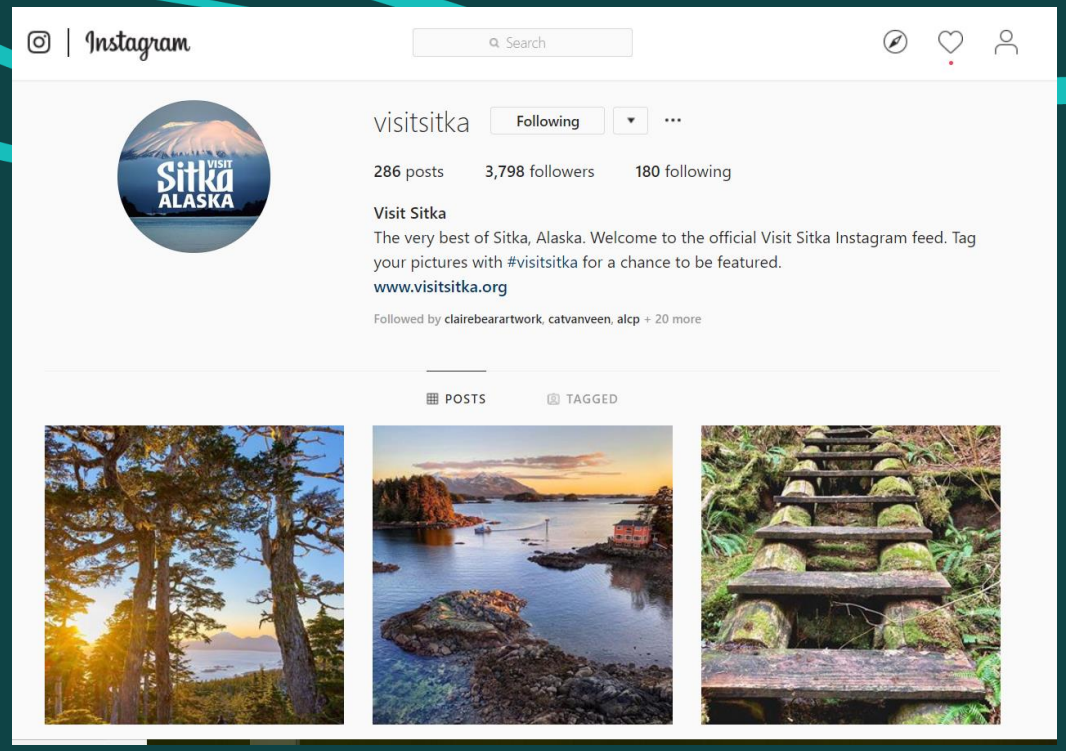
Print Advertising

- Limited print buys with focus on media and public relations
- Alaska State Vacation Planner
- Sunset Magazine

Social Media



- Video & image creation
- Paid promotion and ads
- Instagram stories
- Short-form video
- Instructional videos- enhance the visitor experience
- Facebook live

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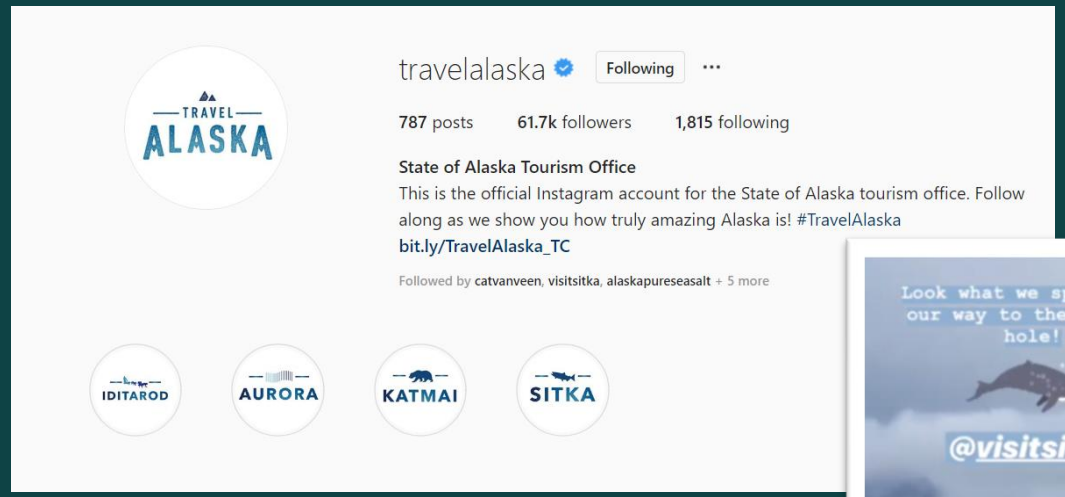
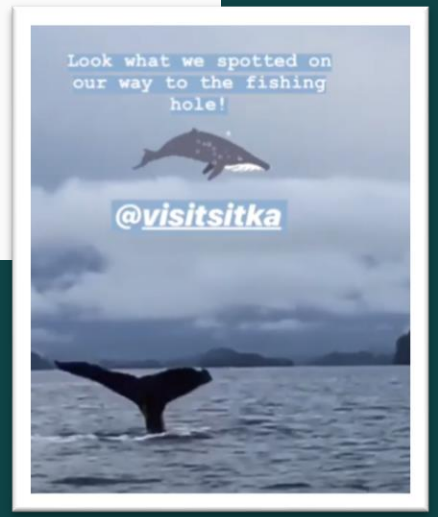
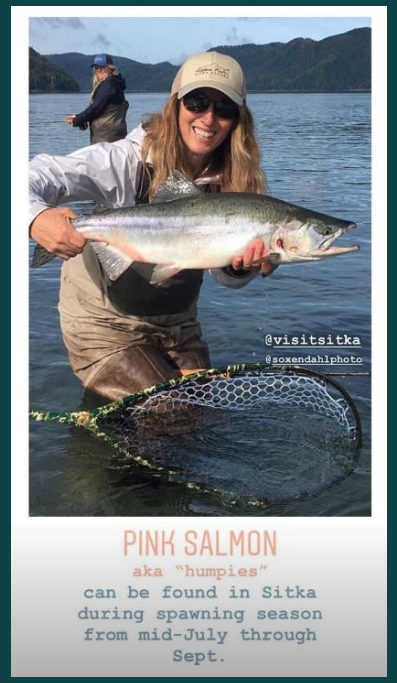
Social Media







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Branded Content

FY19 Special Allocation $5,000

FY20 Special Allocation $20,000

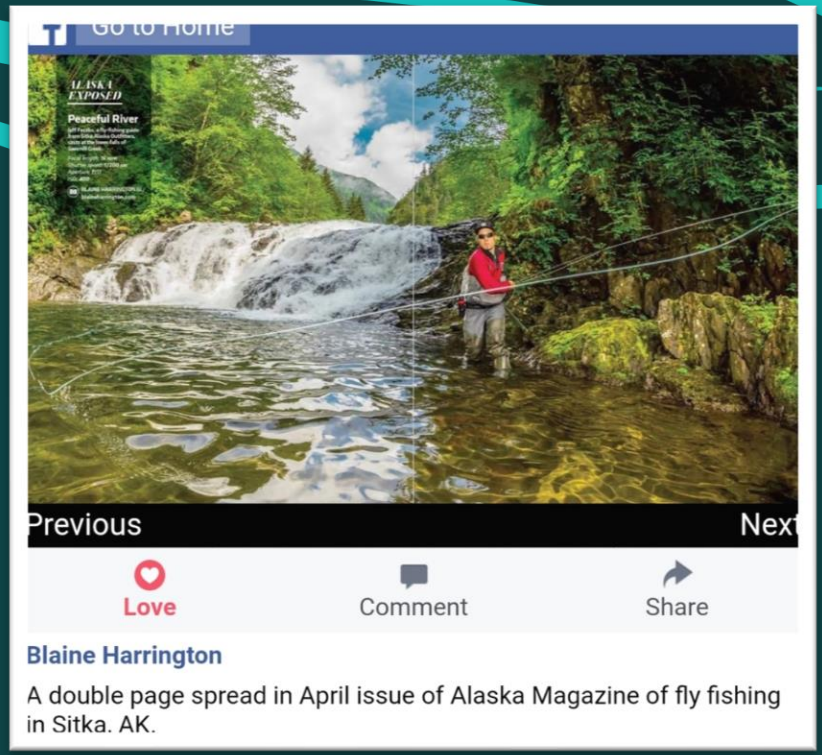
Branded Content

- Includes the content for:
  - Articles
  - Videos
  - Podcasts
- Supports the New Website
  - Planned expansion into social media

VISIT Sitka

Branded Content

- Produce 5 x 1-1:30 minute story videos
  - Experience based visuals
- Use footage for shorter clips for Facebook and Instagram
- Produce a 30-50 high res image gallery
- Content to support partnerships with AK Airlines and high end sport fishing/outdoor gear producers



VISIT Sitka

Branded Collateral

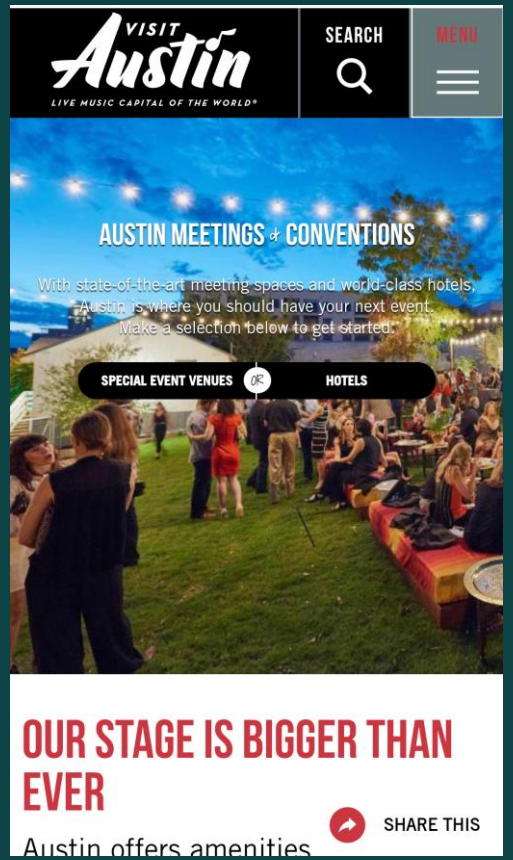
FY19 Special Allocation $7,000

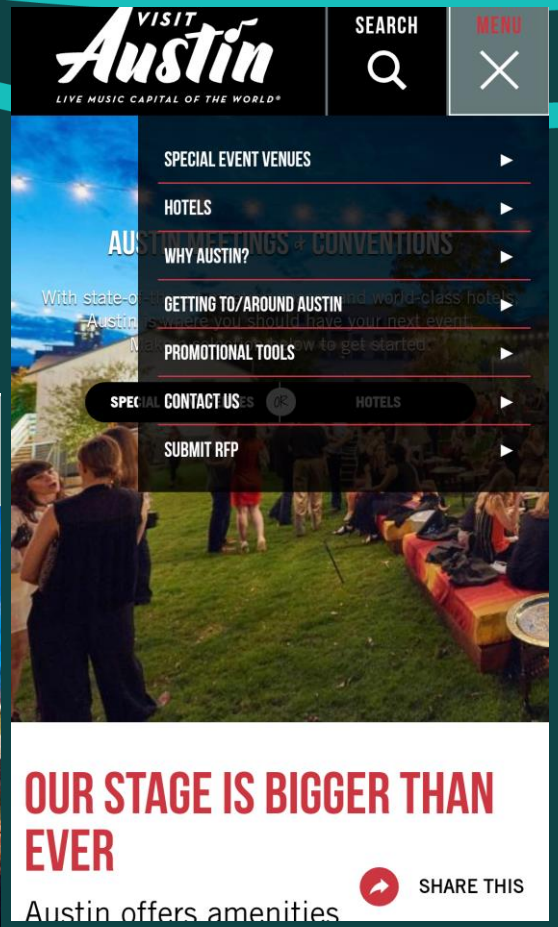
FY20 Special Allocation $19,350

Branded Collateral

Special Project

- Meeting & Convention Guide
- Tool-kit





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Branded Collateral

- 2019- New Magazine Style
  - Editorial Content
  - Full page visuals
  - Digitally Interactive Version

  - VisitSitka.org

Branded Collateral

DINING

Eating Alaska

Painted octopus tentacles stretch across a windowed wall in Beak restaurant, a sea-to-table eatery situated in downtown Sitka. With a view of O'Connell Bridge and the surrounding ocean, patrons can enjoy a cup of salmon chowder or honey miso black cod tips from Beak's eclectic wooden top tables.

Beak's unique name has multiple meanings for owner Renée Trafton. It reflects the restaurant's octopus logo she had in tow before its opening in 2017, and it has a deeper meaning that pays homage to the core of the restaurant's philosophy.

"I didn't realize it at first, but Beak is also Be AK. Be Alaska. Like, eat it!" Renée said.

Part of Renée's mission, she says, is to "give people a sense of place, a sense of the Southeast Alaskan lifestyle." One way she achieves her goal is by serving as many locally sourced ingredients as possible to showcase the hearty and unique flavors of the region.

"I try to buy local because we have really great seafood here, it keeps shipping costs lower, and I like to work within the limits you have," said Renée. "We're on a remote island, but if you look deeply, you can find a lot of really interesting products that aren't on traditional menus."

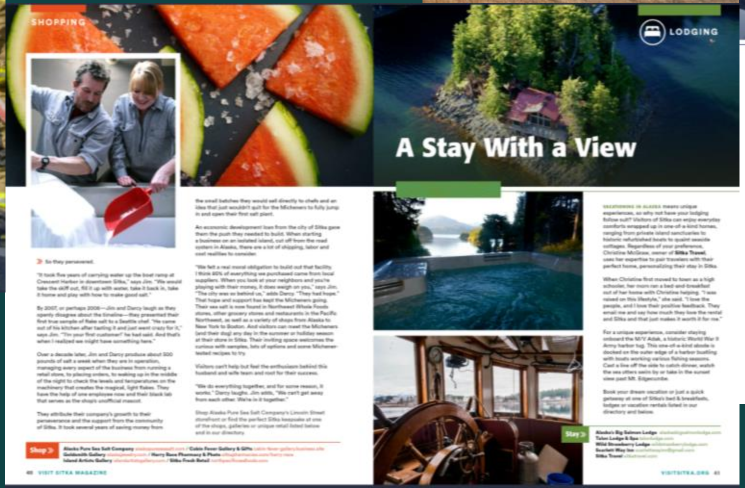
really underutilized piece[s]." Other local delicacies include black cod tips, the tender meat under the fish's jaw, and salmon skin. Renée prepares the crispy thin skin like a potato chip and serves it with habanero honey and arugula.

Beak was inspired by the abundance of local seafood arriving on Sitka docks, but fish is not the only choice on the menu. Reindeer sausage from an Anchorage-based company, salads, hummus and a vegan barley soup round out the menu. Seasonal treats like berry scones with locally picked wild blueberries and huckleberries are also available.

Having worked in multiple luxury establishments, Renée became aware of what set the award winners apart, namely, quality and attention to detail.

"Because my background is in fine dining, I take a lot of care and thought in my food. I start with raw ingredients like potatoes

28 VISIT SITKA MAGAZINE



ACTIVITIES

Fishing with Friends

After a long and satisfying day reeling in fish from the bountiful Pacific waters surrounding Sitka, there is nothing quite like relaxing on your own peaceful oceanfront balcony and watching the sun set behind the dormant volcano Mt. Edgecumbe. With salty spray in the air and a playful sea otter family gliding by the water's edge below, guests soak in that truly Alaskan experience of being immersed in wild beauty.

At **Cascade Creek Inn & Charters**, husband and wife team Richard and Caryn Kraft are eager to share that unique feeling that drew them to Sitka over 30 years ago and ultimately inspired them to purchase the lodge they now so lovingly nurture and offer as a gift to their guests.

Cascade Creek Inn & Charters provides anglers of all experience levels with all-inclusive Alaskan fishing adventures in the summer months. Fishing days start early at the lodge, with a hearty breakfast and a ride to the dock where 30-foot aluminum boats await to safely, quickly and comfortably transport the group to fishing areas. Experienced guides and crew work to get clients into some good fishing with a variety of methods: mooching or trolling for salmon, bottom fishing for halibut and, when the winds cooperate off shore, using electric reels for the very deep fish, like black cod.

Following some afternoon fishing, guests return to enjoy some downtime and light refreshments in the lodge.

That time of day is Rich's favorite. He enjoys visiting with guests, hearing their fish stories from the day and trading a few of his own. After three seasons in business, there is already a familiar rhythm at the lodge that enriches the experience for him and his family. "That's pretty neat. You actually get people when they walk in the door," Rich Says. "You call them by first name. They've moved from being a guest to more of a friend. It makes the work even more enjoyable."

That warm, inviting feeling is a natural extension of the atmosphere the Krafts have created at their lodge. With only 10 guest rooms and two boats, Cascade Creek Inn offers a personalized, intimate experience for a variety of guests.

"We enjoy and have a number of families with younger children as well as older grandparents bringing extended family to just get away and spend some time together. We are now starting to get some bigger groups who like the idea of just them in the whole lodge, as we are the right size for many of these situations," explains Rich.

Rich and Caryn seem to understand the importance of time spent with loved ones. Their own grown children decided to go into business with their parents, and they all rely on each other to make the lodge a success. Two sons, Tyler and Nathan, captain the boats while their daughter Kaylee runs the lodge. Rich completes repairs and renovations while Caryn manages the books, schedules and customer service.

Originally from South Dakota, he and Caryn first moved to Sitka when Rich accepted a position with the Public Health Service after his medical school residency. After eight years in Sitka, they decided to move their three sons and daughter back to their home in the Dakotas, buy a farm and "teach those kids how to work!"

And work the Krafts did. Between running the farm, continuing to work for the Public Health Service, and the busyness of four children in school and sports, Rich said they had never worked harder in their life. It was at that point that Sitka called them back.

They returned to the island they loved and eventually sold the farm. Their college-aged sons spent summers as deckhands on charter boats, and the family became more immersed in the area. The two sons had become captains and were beginning to look for boats of their own when Rich and Caryn happened to notice a large for sale sign on the Cascade Inn one day a few years ago. One thing led to another, and all of a sudden the family owned their own B, B and B—bed, breakfast and boat.

"We love them and like having them around," says Rich of his children. "But they decided to come back and were moving into the boating business. It was more something everybody wanted to do, and it just came together."

One more family member, daughter-in-law Kristi, might just be the all-star of the Cascade Creek team. She appears with a smile and a ringing bell at 6 p.m. every evening to spoil guests with a gourmet dinner often featuring fish freshly caught in Sitka waters. From Cajun halibut with praline topping to homemade graham crackers for ice cream s'mores, evening meals are a delicious highlight for guests and staff alike. They bond over memories from the day and savor the local, fresh meal and the oceanfront view in this welcoming lodge thoughtfully appointed by the Kraft family.

For Rich, it's a magical time of day where guests really feel why Sitka is special. It's hard to pinpoint what exactly draws people in and why Rich and his family love sharing Sitka with their guests. He says, it's "not just one thing, but it is the people. We have the best people in Sitka."

To learn more about Cascade Creek Inn & Charters or book one of the many Sitka charter fishing options visit the listings below and in our directory.

Photo: Derek Mazur

World-class Fishing » **Alaska Premier Charters** wildstrawberrylodge.com / **Big Blue Charters** bigbluecharters.com / **Cascade Creek Inn & Charters** cascadecreekinnandcharters.com / **Talon Lodge & Spa** talonlodge.com / **Vonnie's B&B and Guide Services** vonniescharters.com

8 VISIT SITKA MAGAZINE

VISITSITKA.ORG 9

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Branded Collateral

SHIP NAME	PASSENGER COUNT
Amsterdam	1460
Carnival Legend	2124
Carnival Splendor	3000
Crystal Symphony	900
Eurodam	2100
Grand Princess	2600
Infinity	2038
Le Soleal	260
Millenium	2038
Norwegian Jewel	2376
Quest	100
Regatta	700
Seabourn Sojourn	450
Sea Bird	70

DOCKING CODE

ISD: Inner Sitka Dock
OSD: Old Sitka Dock
CR: Crescent Harbor
CPW: City Port Wall
PET: Petro Dock

PASSENGER ESTIMATES

2016: 120,988 passengers
2017: 125,878 passengers
2018: 135,788 passengers
May: 21,576p
June: 23,576p

VISIT Sitka

STAY UP TO DATE: Find the 2018 Cruise Ship Live Google Calendar here: visitsitka.org/partner-services

July 2018

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Total: 70 1 Sea Lion 70 PET, 07:00 – 18:00	**Total: 592** 2 Silver Shadow 382 2CR, 08:00 – 16:30 Star Legend 210 OSD, 08:00 – 20:00	**Total: 700** 3 Regatta 700 OSD, 07:00 – 16:00	**Total: 3000** 4 Crystal Symphony 900 2CR, 07:30 – 17:00 Eurodam 2100 OSD, 08:00 – 17:00	**Total: 1910** 5 Amsterdam 1460 OSD, 08:00 – 16:00 Seabourn Sojourn 450 ISD, 10:00 – 18:00	6	**Total: 700** 7 Seven Seas Mariner 700 OSD, 08:00 – 16:00
Total: 380 8 Quest 100 ISD, 06:00 – 18:00 Sea Bird 70 PET, 06:00 – 18:00 Star Legend 210 OSD, 07:00 – 17:00	**Total: 382** 9 Silver Shadow 382 2CR, 08:30 – 13:00	**Total: 2738** 10 Regatta 700 ISD, 07:00 – 16:00 Infinity 2038 OSD, 10:30 – 20:00	**Total: 2100** 11 Eurodam 2100 OSD, 08:00 – 17:00	**Total: 1460** 12 Amsterdam 1460 OSD, 08:00 – 16:00	**Total: 1460** 13 Zaandam 1460 OSD, 08:00 – 16:00	14

Visit Sitka | 104 Lake Street, Sitka, AK 99835 | (907) 747-8604 | VisitSitka.org | info@visitsitka.org

Photo by

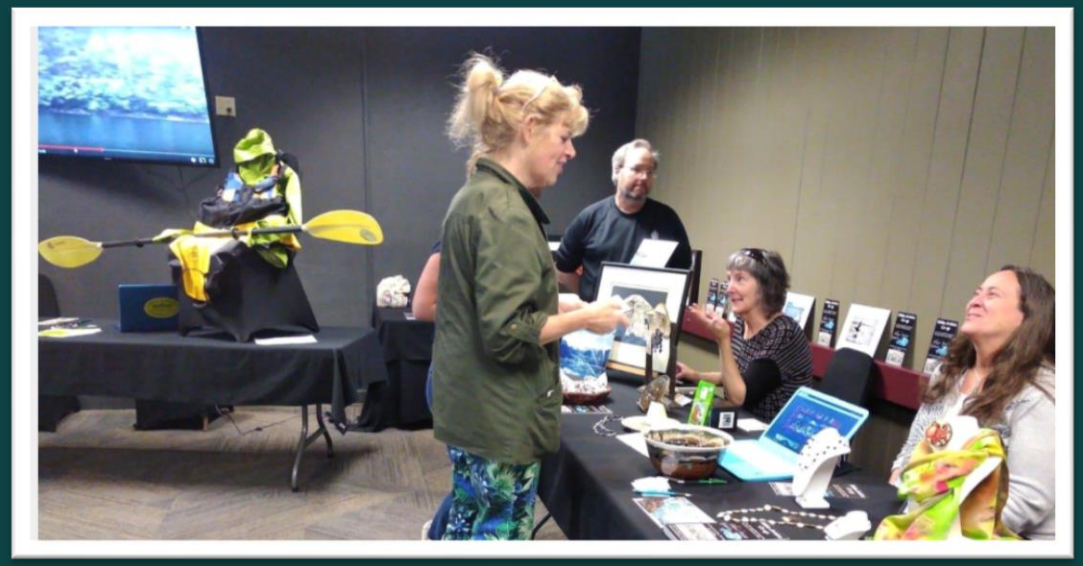
Tourism Business Training & Events

FY19 Special Allocation $500

FY20 Special Allocation $1,000

Tourism Business Training & Events

- Additional Support Tourism Business Sector
- Enhances Visitor Experience
- Summer Expo & Alaska Host



VISIT Sitka

Website: VisitSitka.org

FY19 Special Allocation $5,000

FY20 Special Allocation $10,000

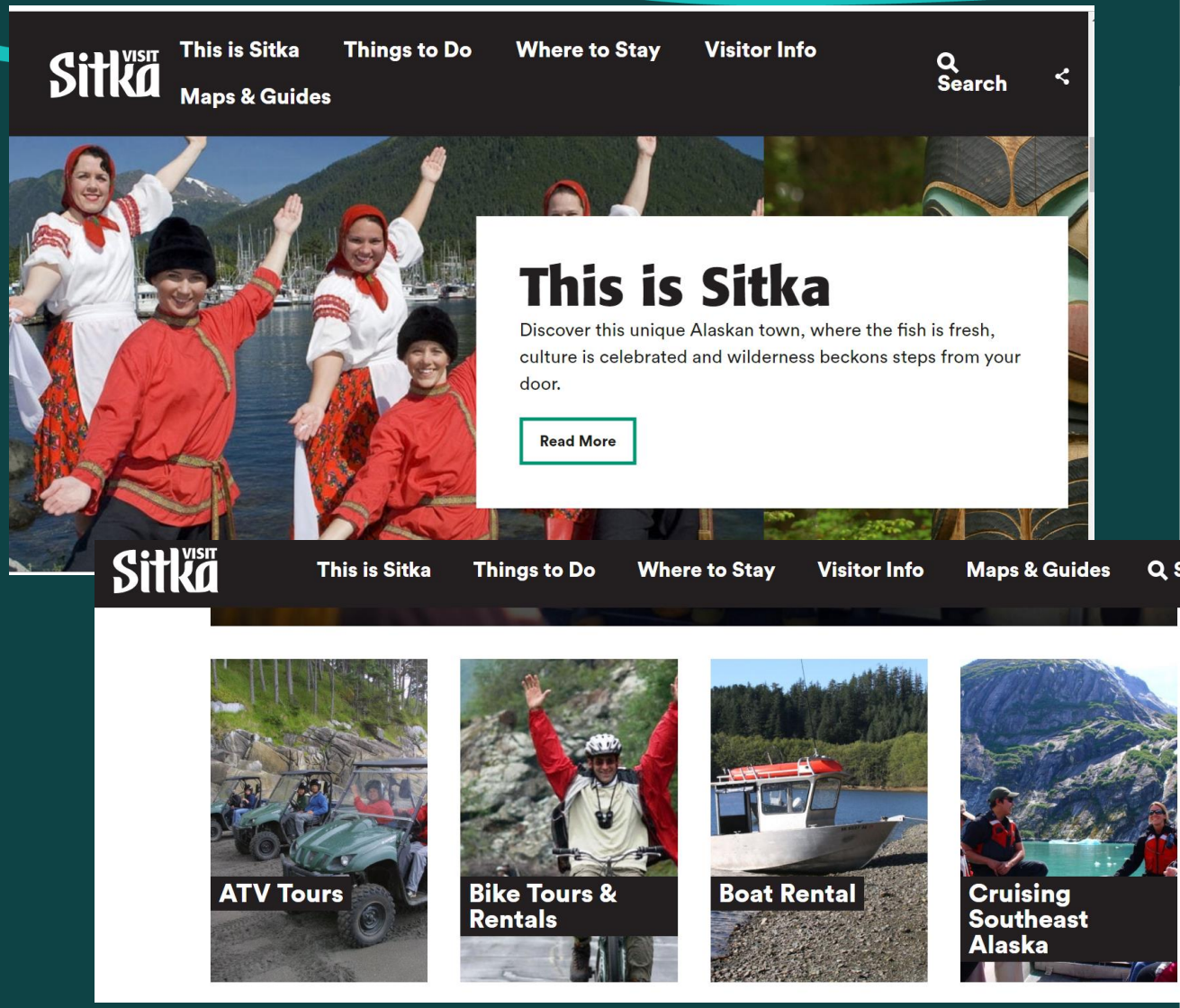
Visit Sitka Website

- Adding updated content regularly moves VS up in **search engine results** (SEO) - gets us in front of more eyes
- Builds a relationship and engagement with travelers
- **Positions Visit Sitka as expert** source again supporting relationship as trusted friend
- One of the **fastest and easiest** ways to regularly add content to website
- Makes the website more **dynamic and interactive**

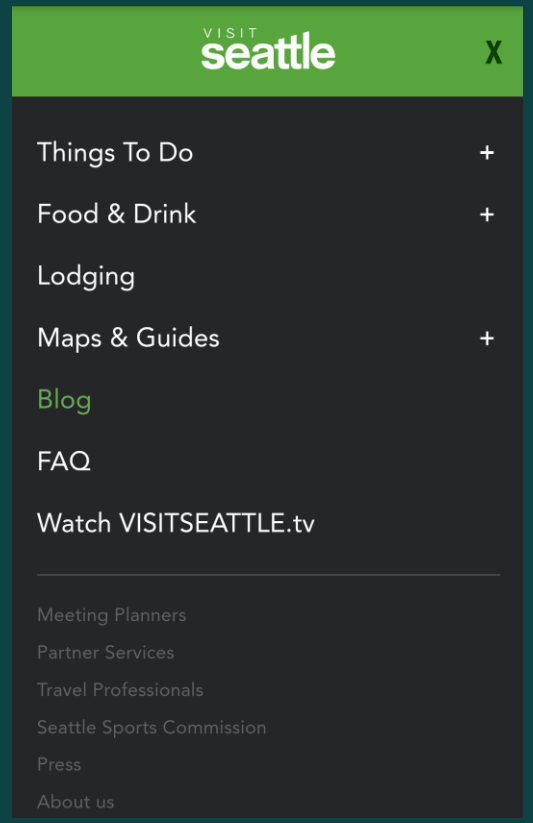
VISIT Sitka

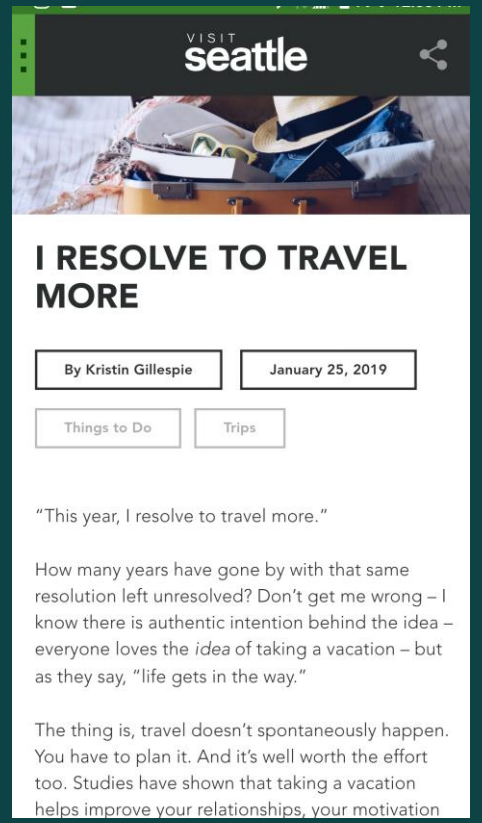
Website Development

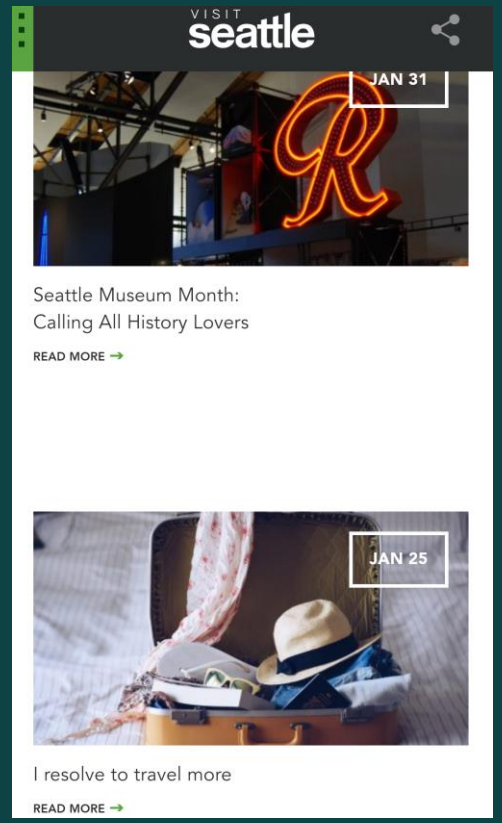
- 80,000 visitors in CY2018
- Fresh content
- Updated images
- Increased vendor descriptions
- Platform for Videos
- Blog



Visit Sitka Website Blog







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Special Project- Sitka Blog

FY20 Special Allocation $20,000