MARKETING & COMMUNICATION COMMITTEE MEETING:

June 4, 2026

IN ATTENDANCE:

Alexea Veneracion, VCOS
Lindsay Cluckey, VCOS
Sheridan Powell, VCOS
Kate Hertz, VCOS
Reed Tafel, VCOS
Lanna Searle, VCOS
Mackenzie Carder, Pikes Peak – America's Mountain
Jessica Chappell, Pikes Peak – America's Mountain
Dave Harris, Ghost Town Museum
Eric Nissen, UCCS
Megan Silvey, UCCS
Kelsee Swenn, Downtown Partnership
Deepesh , Sun Capital Hotels
Belle Morrow, Sun Capital Hotels
Jesse McCoy, Visit Manitou Springs
Sierra Moon, Orange142
PK McPherson, PPRA
Shelby Clarke, Buffalo Lodge Bicycle Resort
Torie Giffin, Buffalo Lodge Bicycle Resort
Joe Hollmann, City of Colorado Springs
Jack Hebert, RagTag Studios
Devin Wood, COS Airport
Aidan Ryan, COS Airport
Sarah O'Brien, The Broadmoor
Bria Yatsko, Norwood Development Group
Tommy Schield, US Olympic & Paralympic Museum
Kristen Cannon, Pikes Peak Outdoor Recreation
Jayne Mhono Dickey, Source COS / Chamber and EDC

I. NEW & EXCITING UPDATES:

WELCOME LANNA SEARLE

- VCOS Summer Intern!

INFLUENCERS & MEDIA VISITS

- COMPLETED
  - Victoria Yore, @FollowMeAwayTravel
  - Kwasi Hope, History & Heritage Travel
- UPCOMING PRIORITES:
  - LGBTQ+ travel – Gwyn + Ami
  - Allegiant Routes – OC, Tampa, Mesa
  - Accessible travel – CTO Collaborations

PEAK INTO COS PODCAST

- RECENT
    - Sue Grace & Lauren Ciborowski – CC Summer Music Fest
    - Laurie Carroll, Scott Stuart – Pikes Peak or Bust Rodeo
- UPCOMING
    - El Pomar Foundation
    - Hosmer Visitor Center
    - 250 | 150 Episode

Q: How many listens are we averaging?
A: ~100 per episode

Q: Are there target demographics?
A: Out of state and in-state visitors. Modest listener base, but demographically diverse

Q: How are we pushing the podcasts?
A: Social media, partners promoting, etc.

KATE'S CONTENT SPECIALIZATION SPACE

- RECENT
    - **Did You Know With Doris** – 6 episodes, great engagement on TikTok
    - **"An Expert's Guide…"** - Recent additions: Colorado Yeti Tours & Echo Canyon Rafting
- UPCOMING
    - Another expert blog and social post with RAD Hostel

LONGWOODS 2025 DATA
Key Findings

- **25.6 M Visitors (up 0.3%)**
- **$3.1B Visitor spending (up 0.4%)**
- Aligned with US – flat for both day and overnight visitation
- Overall, held steady with 2024 (a record year)
- OTHER FINDINGS
    - 1.6% increase in overnight visitors (aligned with goal to attract more overnight vs day trippers)
    - 26% of overnight visitors traveled with their pets
    - 24% of overnight visitors traveled alone
    - 23% of overnight visitors had a travel party member who required accessibility services
    - 63% of visitation is considered "marketable" – visitors who are receptive to marketing efforts

2025 Factors

- Rising costs
- Unstable political climate / govt shutdown
- Decreased international visitation to the US

Q: Is this just Colorado Springs?
A: This is data for Teller, Fremont, and El Paso Counties.

2026 LIVE CAMPAIGNS:

1. **CRAFTS & DRAFTS**
   - "Choose your character"
   - Meta and Instream ads
   - Demographic: 21-55 Males & Females; Interested in fun summer activities, craft beer, wine, liquor, etc.
   - Running May – August (passport live until EOY
   - Great engagement so far: over 1500 sign-ups in two weeks
2. **DESTINATION STEWARDSHIP**
   - "Colorado Springs is really special" Leave No Trace messaging
   - Meta ads
   - Demographic: Locals and visitors
   - Running May – July
   - Upcoming toolkit for partners about how to LNT

Q: Are you doing much in the way of hashtags?
A: Instagram has moved away from hashtags and is looking more at keywords

Q: On the LNT front, have we been in contact with Miss USA, Mountain Queen?
A: She's local—we'll try and get some contact info

DIGITAL PASSES

- WELLNESS PASS (visitcos.com/wellness)
  - Year-round; seasonal promotions
  - 954 sign-ups to date
- CRAFTS & DRAFTS (visitcos.com/passport)
  - May – December
  - 1500 sign-ups within first two weeks
- COS CULTURE PASS (visitcos.com/history)
  - In collaboration with the CSPM, this pass commemorates America 250|150
  - May – December (year-round)
  - 104 sign-ups to date
  - Quiz-style pass that highlights our 5 pillars:
    - Founders & early days
    - Military, Industry and Aviation
    - Natural Wonders
    - Sports & Wellness
    - Western & Gold Rush
  - Users who check in at 5 locations by Labor Day are entered to win grand prize experience package:
    - VIP guided tour for a family of up to 4 at the Colorado Springs Pioneer Museum

- General admission for a family of up to 4 at the Space Foundation Discovery Center
- Pikes Peak – America's Mountain admission for one vehicle
- General admission for a family of up to 4 at the U.S. Olympic & Paralympic Museum
- Admission for a family of up to 4 at Flying W Ranch

2026 WEBSITE PERFORMANCE

- Big change in search landscape due to AI
- Meta data and website schema being optimized so AI can crawl the website easier
- Working with Tempest
- Seeing improvements in KPI as the year goes on

Traffic from LLMs

- Massive growth
- The audience is very engaged 60-70% click through to website
- SEO does still reign supreme; GEO is up and coming with AI
- GEO is not in place of SEO
- SEO foundation must be solid before GEO

Q: Are you breaking down which LLMs are sending high/low traffic?
A: ChatGPT is higher, but other LLMs are seeing more usage
Q: Do you know what types of content are doing well?
A: Content with authority: Rankings, listicles, etc. Thinking of keywords customers would be searching – less fluff, more direct language is doing better with AI
Q: Have we investigated tracking?
A: Tempest has a pulse on this for us; they are helping guide us. AI Chatbot Penny has a back end where we can see what people on our website are looking for

II. COMING SOON—WHAT WE'RE WORKING ON

WEBSITE REDESIGN

- INFORMATION ARCHITECTURE
  - June 5: Review sitemap, Traffic analysis, Content migration plan
- TIMELINE
  - August: Design Direction Review
  - October – December: Content Migration & CRM integration
  - December – January: Review & Training
  - February 2027: Launch
- Tempest came on FAM Trip in April

    - Pillars: Conventions and groups, History and culture, Attractions, Neighborhoods, Craft beverage / night life, Outdoor adventure and scenic
    - Great overview of destination to get an idea of what we have to offer
- Lessons were learned previously; Tempest has assured us that they will do better this time, strategies to make sure traffic isn't lost

Q: Is there any way of moving up the launch?
A: Contracts have already been signed

AMERICA 250 | COLORADO 150

- June 21: Rock Ledge House 150th anniversary celebration
- July 16: drone show at Pikes Peak or Bust Rodeo
- August 1: United We Rock at Rock Ledge Ranch
- The organizing committee meets monthly
- State will have activations, including media outreach, passports, events, etc.
- VCOS will also have activations, including media outreach, blog posts, social media posts, etc.
    - Influencer collaboration down the road to cover historical approach
- August 1, 2026 – Colorado Day
- Events and ways to get involved will be highlighted on PikesPeakArea150.com

BRAND ANTHEM VIDEO

- THEME: How our history fuels and drives our present
- SCRIPT: Poem written by Ashley Cornelius
- TIMELINE: Launch in End of –July / Mid- august
- UPDATE:
    - First block of filming done
    - Second block scheduled for June 15-18
    - Sourcing talent from local organizations & chambers
        - Great feedback and response
- Grant funding from CTO
- More emphasis on residents, this is who our region is, this is our past and how it shapes our present
- Poem will live on the website
- Working with Level 1 productions based out of Denver
- Importance of speaking to locals
- Video and non-video placements

ITINERARIES HUB

- What: Hub of detailed itineraries, organized by various user search categories, "Stay longer, experience more"

- Purpose: Inspire longer stays; encourage more overnight visitation; showcase how "it can't be done in a weekend"
- Features: Starting with 20+ itineraries, will be able to add more; training Guide Geek AI chatbot to refer to hub and itineraries for related user questions, mix & matching, etc.
- Current Progress:
    - Halfway done drafting itineraries; some already live on the site
    - Completing drafts in June
    - Communications plan; social content, newsletters, partner feedback
- Hub will help with AI metrics and search data
- Categories based on common search terms
- Open to ideas on more itineraries
- Future looking to expert itineraries
- Significant room for growth
- Hoping to get this hub launched this month because busy season, hopefully going to rank up more in those AI searches and get our chatbot trained
- Plan to update the itineraries every year as partners change, etc.

ROUND TABLE

1. ***How to best activate itineraries hub?***
2. ***Ways to collaborate and send visitors to the resource***
    - COS Airport: FlyMyAirport: Has a trip planning tool, could be great to connect it with our itineraries tool, to cross promote and collaborate
3. ***Ideas for future itineraries***
    - Q; Are we using events as a specific topic because people plan trips around events?
      A: We have events built into these itineraries
    - Q: Do you have music and concerts?
      A: Kate is working on them right now.

III. UPCOMING EVENTS

- **Partner Academy** – June 10, 2-3:30pm at VCOS Office
- **Tourism Master Class** (Accessibility-focused) – July 15 2-3:30pm, Location TBD
- **Q3 Partner Mixer** - August 12, 5-7:30pm Cheyenne Mountain Zoo

IV. MEMBER UPDATES

- **Pikes Peak – America's Mountain**
    - Donut Day is Saturday, June 6
    - "Ranger Talks to Go" launching with Donut Day
    - Zeb Pike's Journal and sword reveal at the summit – more to come soon!

- Tickets now on sale: July 4th, Aug 1st sunset and sunrise openings
- Getting Ranger Donut, Mascot

- **Downtown**
  - 2026 Art on the Street exhibits launch Friday, June 5
  - Thursday summer music series in Acacia Park starts June 4 and runs every Thursday through September – in partnership with Dizzy Charlies
  - New business openings: Cinchona, My Cellar, Lolley's, Ice Guys, Hopkes Hortium (relocating from OCC), Sports Book Bar & Grill
- **Ghost Town Museum:**
  - Rocky Mountain State games coming up – kick starts the season
  - May a little flat; price of gas, weather have been factors
  - Retail sales are good
- **Buffalo Lodge:**
  - Roll-by Art Festival on June 12 – local, international artists
  - Celebrating 10-year anniversary – bike ride, DJ pool party, VIP Party, Yacht Rock party!
  - Best Q1 ever!
  - "Best of" Gazette awards:
    - Gold: best hotel, best hotel bar
    - Silver: Best hotel swimming pool
    - Bronze: Best live music venue
- **RagTag Studios:**
  - Crafts & Drafts and Destination Stewardship doing well
  - More filming in the coming months!
- **Norwood**
  - New restaurant: Cafe Madro in Plaza of the Rockies, coffee & pastries
  - Country line dancing every Monday and Wednesday (5-10pm) at the Meanwhile Block
  - Summer Art Market (previously at CSPM) is now at Meanwhile Block, Wednesdays from 1-8pm
  - First & Main summer concert series has started (Fridays)
- **City of COS:**
  - 250 | 150 promotion
  - United We Rock, Pikes Peak America's Mountain Fest
  - Promoting the COS Culture Pass
  - 150 table initiative with Hey Neighbor: community campaign to encourage 150 meals across 150 tables in neighborhoods
- **Orange 142**
  - Awareness campaigns
  - Finished summer campaign last week
    - Will be able to dive into that data in about 30 days
- **UCCS**
  - New Marketing team member – Megan Silvey

    - Billboards: regional community impact campaign featuring UCCS alum
        - Community Impact | UCCS
    - June is transfer month: free application admissions for transfer students and all PPSC students will have automatic admission granted at a certain GPA
    - Won an award for their current Power of Possibilities campaign
- **Broadmoor**
    - Broadmoor's busy group season
    - Working on new website to launch in fall
    - Summit and De Lago both have happy hour menus
    - Seven Falls is going to seven days a week June 16
    - May announced that the Cog Railway is bringing back the sunrise train for sunrise openings
    - Outdoor properties having events this summer
- **PPRA:**
    - YouTube channel hit 10M plays!!
- **Sun Capitol Hotels:**
    - New GM onboarded
    - Good summer season
    - Gearing up for fall
- **Source COS:**
    - Amicus brief was successful, will centralize some government contracts in COS in the tech, military and space industries.
    - Working on various story angles – 250/150, Pikes Peak International Hill Climb, collaboration with VCOS + meeting planners feature coming soon
- **Pikes Peak Outdoors**
    - Get Outside Day (Saturday, June 6): rock climbing, scuba diving, dunk tank, Mountain Queen, 40+ vendors
    - Pikes Peak APEX (June 13-14)
    - Pikes Peak Outdoor Hoedown (September 13 from 3-6pm in Bancroft Park): fundraiser, live and silent auction, local food trucks, kids activities
- **COS Airport**
    - Potential new routes coming
    - Getting to Know Your Airport podcast series focusing on the local impact of the airport
    - Elevate COS: modernization program; construction
        - Should wrap in 2027
        - Ribbon cutting waiting until everything is concluded
    - Alex, Director, looking for speaking engagements in the community– if there are opportunities, please reach out
    - Retiring some of the small airport messaging and moving towards a "travel easy" verbiage and messaging
        - Remove "small airport" messaging for now; Will be branding kit coming later

- FlyMyAirport
- Airport's 100 in 2027: yearlong campaign
- Will be involved in lots of local events – say hi!
- Arts at the Airport - $500 micro-grant supporting local community artists
  - Quarterly rotation in partnership with Cottonwood of the Arts, visitors can "vote" for their favorite piece from each collection
  - Finalization of 5 outdoor sculptures