

## **Mayor's Task Force Economic Development Tasks for 2021:** **First Quarter 2021 report**

### **Outreach: IN PROGRESS**

The Economic Development Department (ED) continues its local outreach efforts to Valdez small businesses. This includes composing content for e-mail messages, social media posts, and radio advertising on various programs, as well as COVID-19 information as it becomes available.

The ED also assists the PIO in reporting the active Economic Development initiatives that have been implemented for COVID-19 business relief in the bi-weekly report with the following:

- Help compose and send e-mails to contact list
- Maintain a Business Contacts log to document what type of assistance is being provided and with which businesses have been in contact.

### **Lunch & Learns: IN PROGRESS**

- *Economic Development - FIRST WEBINAR February 2, 2021*

First educational webinar was on February 2, 2021 and covered the new round of stimulus money and who could apply for more money, which is actually everyone. This webinar and the slide show was sent out to every registered business so they could watch at their leisure and remain informed.

### **Event Mitigation Implementation: IN PROGRESS**

- *Economic Development – Develop & implement through the summer of 2021*
- *This plan has been developed and is posted on the Economic Development webpage for anyone to use when hosting an event.*

The City of Valdez (COV) has developed a mitigation plan for the municipality, businesses, and organizations to use when planning events in a safe and efficient manner. It includes a template or outline that event planners and organizers can use to determine if their events are still viable with mitigation protocols in place.

### **Marketing Grant: FIRST & SECOND ROUNDS COMPLETE**

- *Applications due by January 15, 2021(1<sup>st</sup> round)*
- *Economic Diversification Commission (EDC) approved 21 applicants*
- *Second round closing date is February 12, 2021*
- *EDC approved 7 applicants*
- *EDC decided to take a “wait and see” approach regarding a 3<sup>rd</sup> round*

### **Business Economic Recovery Grants: FIRST ROUND COMPLETE**

- *Administered by AKSBDC*
- *Applications due by February 12, 2021*
- *Approved 39 applicants*
- *W9s received and payment processed for 30 applicants*
- *Extension of grant approved by EDC to April 30, 2021*

### **Marketing Tasks for 2021: IN PROGRESS**

- *This is a collaborative effort between ED & the Valdez Convention and Visitors Bureau (VCVB)*

- *ED will be the lead department on this project with monthly check-in meetings between ED, VCVB & Thompson & Co. (T&C)*
- *Implementation January 2021-December 2021*

**Thompson & Co.:**

- Hosting a one-hour social media training presentation (Lunch & Learn) on **April 22, 2021** which is offered to City of Valdez stakeholders, tourism partners, and more. Training will go over how stakeholders and partners can take advantage of the City of Valdez's content creation strategy with T&C.
- T&C's digital team (videographer, photographer, and social media manager) came to town in **February 2021** to capture winter footage. They will also come back during the summer to capture that season as well. This will help T&C capture the real beauty Valdez has to offer, year round.

**Coordinated Marketing Plan and Brand Development: PROJECT START APRIL 2021**

This project is a coordinated marketing program for all community assets with the goal of the program to strengthen and rebuild all segments of our economy. The vision is marketing outreach for the Port of Valdez, Valdez Harbors, Parks and Recreation, tourism, business development, and resident recruitment/retention.

The firm chosen will develop a unifying brand and developing a set of implementation plans. They will facilitate community and stakeholder conversations to gather the tools necessary to outline a community wide marketing plan.

- *ED will be the lead department on this project with monthly check-in meetings with the Economic Diversification Commission.*
- *There is a 9 person Branding Committee consisting of the VCVB staff, City staff, Community Stakeholders, EDC members and one council person*
- *Implementation April 2021-December 2021*

**Travel Incentive program:**

- *Implementation by May 1, 2021*
- *Survey went out to all businesses for their feedback on what they would like to see and the consensus was a passport type or coupon book with businesses*
- *Currently working on design and implementation*
- *Collaboration between ED & VCVB - EDC will be lead – Discussions are already happening as of January 2021*

COV, in partnership with the VCVB, should implement a travel incentive program in 2021. The goal of the program is to encourage extending lengths of stay in the community and increase spending while in the community. The program would encourage increased mid-week stays. Program development is still under way to determine which incentive will be the most effective, but travel incentives in this kind of economic environment have proven to be successful. This will serve as a placeholder.

**Additional Partnership Marketing Tasks for 2021:**

**Milepost: COMPLETE**

- *Design & submit completed December 2020*
- *Implementation March 2021*

**Valdez Convention & Visitors Bureau**  
**Additional Destination Marketing**

**Travel Trade Expansion**

**\$45,850**

- **Under Contract with VCVB – Ovibos Consulting**

The VCVB has put under contract Juno with Ovibos Consulting. Her overall goal: To establish increased tourism and develop a travel trade outreach plan to further promote Valdez as a destination to tour operators and travel advisors? It is crucial for VCVB to re-connect with current contacts, provide professional training, streamline communication processes, and develop a firm database strategy. Over the next two years, representing Valdez at trade shows will be a huge component to establishing and maintaining connections with these travel professionals. In addition to these improvements, increased visibility on social media and a well-stocked photo database will showcase the natural highlights and services of VCVB members, as well as provide trade contacts with promotional material.

**Instate Promotions**

**\$12,500**

- **VCVB is lead – VCVB hired Ovibos Consulting**

Funds will be used in the creation of a summer and winter contest promotion in a main Alaska market i.e. Anchorage, Fairbanks. The idea is to create an event to draw in interested parties and create a buzz about Valdez. Examples include Valdez artist show in Anchorage, or a brewery tasting in Fairbanks.

**Build Photo and Video Assets**

**\$20,000**

- **VCVB is Lead – VCVB Ovibos Consulting**

Funds will be used to pay for a professional photographer and videographer to dedicate time to shoot footage of Valdez both summer and winter. Images captured would be usable by the City of Valdez, VCVB, Members, and those selling Valdez. A Request for Proposal would be put out for a photographer/videographer to take document, people, places, things, wildlife, activities, businesses, and streets.