

Funding Update

Capital City/Lake Murray Country was able to create a Food Competition Event for our region and specifically for Columbia. The overall budget for the event was \$1M. So, the funding provided went a long way to make all of our events happen plus a new one.

It is vital that the legislature, SCPRT and all our funding partners realize the complexity of pulling off major events that provide long lasting results. We hear all the time from some of our funding partners that we need to generate more dollars within our budgets. No one does that as well as Capital City/Lake Murray Country Regional Tourism Board. The Southeastern BBQ Showdown will grow and become an event to assist in not only funding the event, but also funding the organization in future years. So, while we are marketing the region as a whole to potential visitors, we are also luring major outdoor recreational events, including national fishing tournaments and now producing a MEGA tourism event to raise additional dollars. See the numbers below.

We were able to increase social media spends, additional TV and major OTT – all resulting in the following:

ALL marketing efforts drive traffic to our website – RESULTS: 874,296 Views UP 59.75%, Users UP 39.94 Views per user 14.16% UP - Overall, a 4M gain in impressions over previous fiscal year.

Television - Fishing University filmed fishing show on Lake Murray which included our tourism ad – Bassmaster Elite event filmed for Fox Sports Airing over 1.1 million households and finally the airing of the Southern BBQ Showdown event in a one hour show on the Cooking Channel, Discover and Balley Sports nationally. BAMAQ Steak Competition at Lake Murray also televised for regional airings.

EVENTS - Bassmasters Elite Series, Queen City Kayak, Bass Fishing, Bass Nation, Bassmaster Collegiate, Bassmaster Kayak, Youth State Bassmaster, Queen City Southern, USA Kayak, Big Bass Tour, Queen City Main - only 3 of these were lake wide the rest held at Dreher Island State Park. The Clash Volleyball National Competition,

- **Inaugural SE BBQ Showdown brought a total of 23 chef teams into the region from Japan, Texas, NC, SC, GA and Nashville. – over 2,473 visitors from 18 different states – 12 sponsors and created a TV show to air nationally. 66.7% of visitors were from out of state.**
- Stats from BBQ Showdown – Website 64,110 sessions, Media Impressions **2,938,682 – 47,540 clicks and 2.3 CT** Ran OTT/Social Media and Radio campaign with IHeart Media for Nashville, Knoxville, Charlotte, Atlanta and August markets.
Social Media (Reach) 1,122,902 – (Clicks) 6,688 – (Video Views) 409, 893
- Stats from our media from articles and PR – Digital Impressions 22,758,315, Print 1,096,459 for total impressions from articles 22,759,412 – Total Est value - \$210,579,248.
- Kelly Hughes, Communications/Marketing Manager is now the voice of Explore Lake Murray Country as we continue working with Relic in production of this popular Podcast. We experienced tremendous growth in the Podcast this year and now rated #3 on Apple we could not have done this, **WITHOUT THIS FUNDING.**
- Planning underway to development a week-long celebration for July 2027. This will mark Lake Murray turning 100 years old. From airplane flyover, commemorative book on construction of the old and new dam to regional history presentations in four county area theaters and more. The goal is to pull in the four counties in this celebration.
- **Lake Murray named #2 lake for outdoor recreation by USA Today Readers!!!**