2015

LEBANON TOURISM REPORT

MISSOURI US 66

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Lyle Anderson
Mayor

Chris Heard
City Administrator

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Bruce Conklin
Tourism Director

Laina Starnes
City Clerk

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June 12, 2015

Council Members of the City of Lebanon,

It is my pleasure to present to you an annual report outlining the tourism department for the City of Lebanon. I have now been in this position for just over a year and I can say that I'm still continuously learning every day how I and all my industry partners help impact the area through tourism. Working with the state on our grant and attending tourism related conferences has allowed me to network with some of the most knowledgeable people in this industry. I have witnessed the dedication of our State Representatives as they fully support tourism for our area. It truly has been a great experience to work for the area in this capacity.

I have learned, based on the information contained in the FY2014 Missouri Division of Tourism annual report, that Missouri is in the top 15 states for visitation in America. Also contained in the annual report is a breakdown by county of total tourism related spending and employment numbers. The economic impact to Laclede County is $49,448,868 and we currently have 1,113 tourism related jobs. Those figures astounded me. It just goes to show how lucky we are to have the attractions that stimulate visitation to the area like we do.

While creating this report I had to dig through a lot of numbers and information to come up with the information that I'm presenting to you. Moving forward I will be able to use this as a baseline to help increase the efficiency and accuracy of this report. Also it is a departmental goal to determine how I can create truly reliable event benchmarks with which to measure our successes.

I am pleased to report that we have been awarded the Marketing Matching Grant (MMG) for FY2016 in the amount of $31,542 to be put towards this year's campaign. You will see in the following pages how necessary this grant is to the success of our campaign.

I hope the following report meets your expectations and, should you have any questions please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Bruce Conklin

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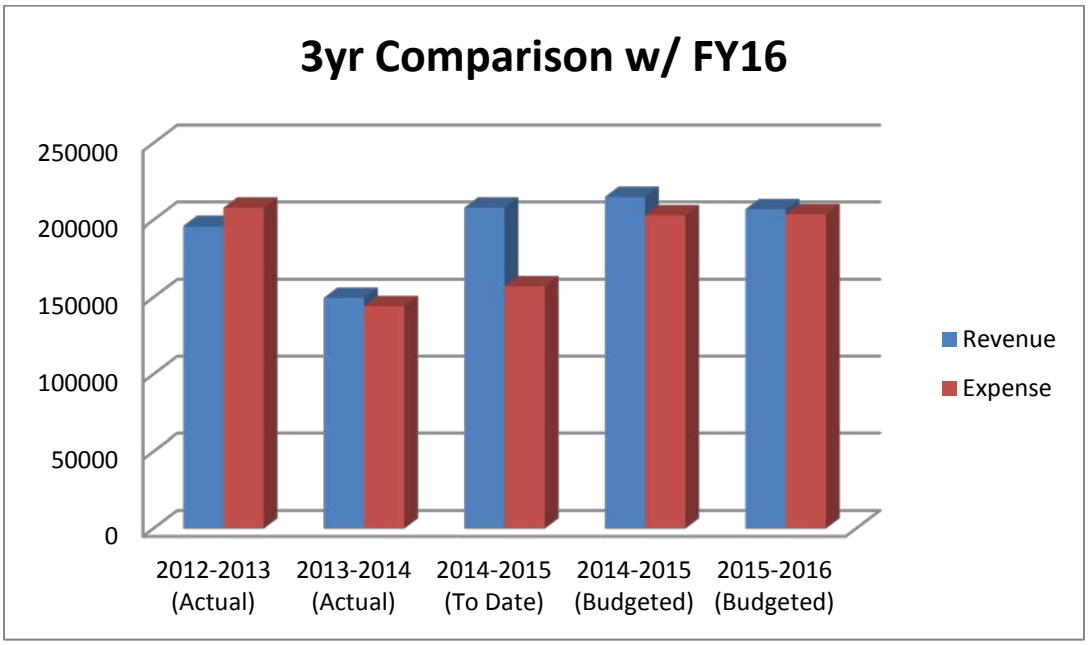
Tourism Budget

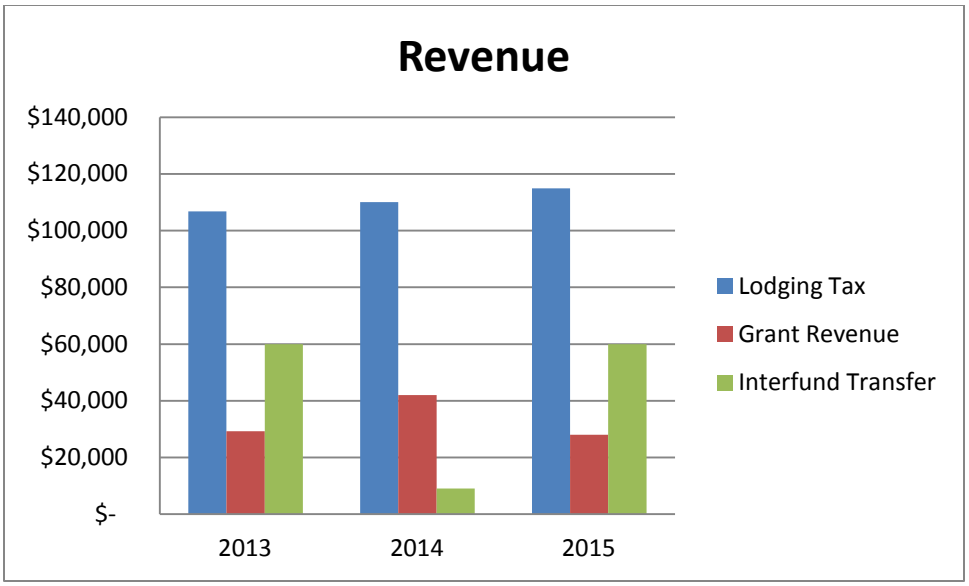
The tourism budget is comprised of three main components for revenue: a lodging tax, grant revenue, and an inter-fund transfer. The lodging tax brings in the greatest amount of revenue to the department and allows us to participate in numerous marketing activities which create our marketing mix. Our marketing mix is comprised of print, digital media, billboards, and a television commercial. The following graphs depict a snapshot of the tourism budget over the last three years.

This first graph shows revenue versus expense for the past three fiscal years and includes the budgeted FY2015 versus to date and the proposed budget for FY2016. You can see represented in the graph that the department has become better at managing expenses and is more in line with revenues. Just a side note on the FY2015 to date budget - as the fiscal year is not complete, and there will still be some cost rolling in from advertising before the close of this fiscal year. Expenses will look more in line with what was budgeted for 2015, perhaps even less.

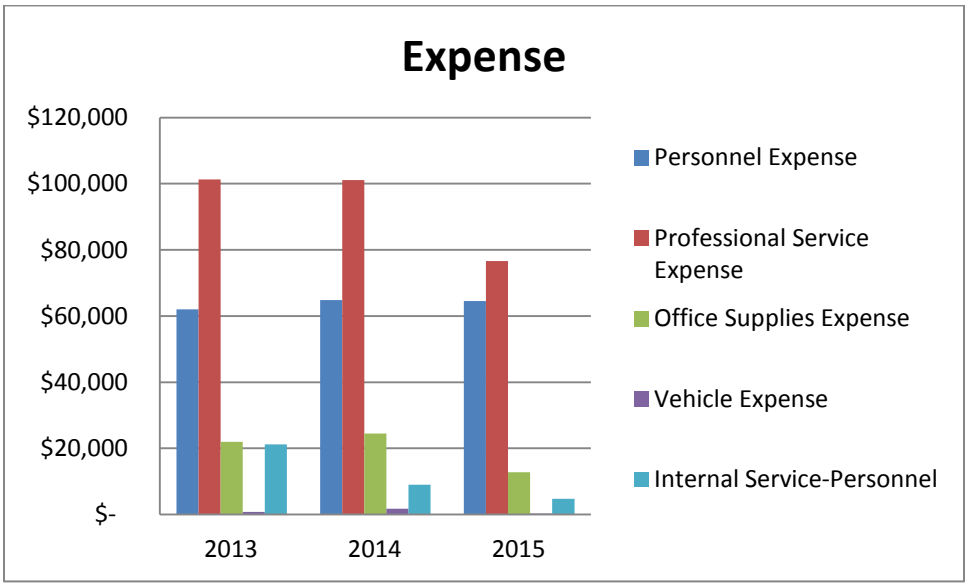


The following graphs show how revenue flows in and out through the various functions of this department. The expense graph is an overview of all expenses broken out by the group the individual line items are tucked under. I have also included a three-year breakdown in these graphs.

Lodging tax, the biggest contributor to our budget, has been gradually increasing since fiscal year 2013. This is a good indicator that tourism is working for the area. The lodging tax has increased steadily for the last three years and the difference between FY2013 and FY2015 is approximately $8,200. Grant revenue has fluctuated over the last three years. Major contributing factors to this are the adjustments made to the grant. These adjustments included a loss of funding for production of creative content, no matching on attending trade shows, and no assistance in mass production (printing costs).

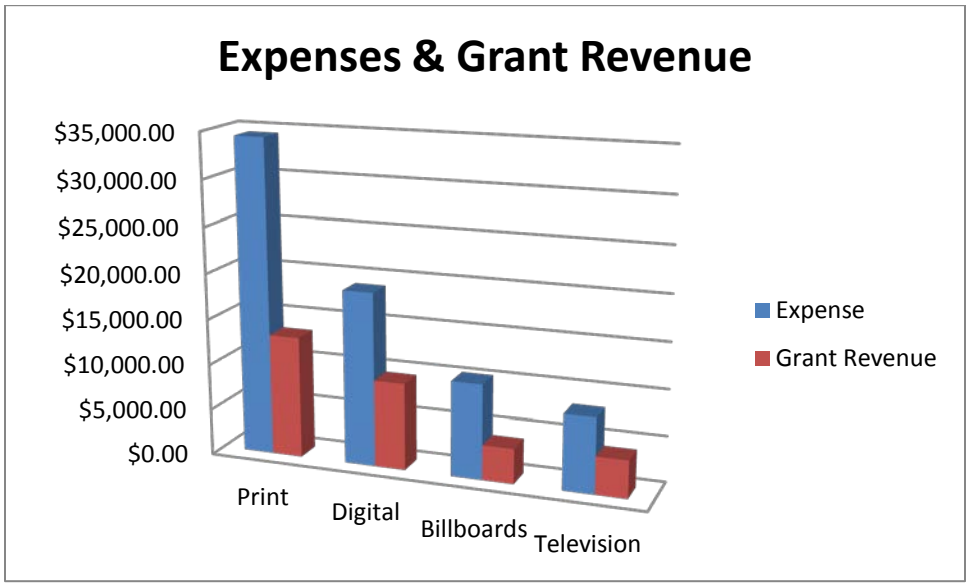


The department was conservative with the budget this year while trying to keep our expenses in line with incoming revenue. Also, as previously stated, not all expenses for FY2015 have been processed and there may be some carryover to the new fiscal year. Professional services expense the (largest of the expenses) includes all the individual advertising line items.

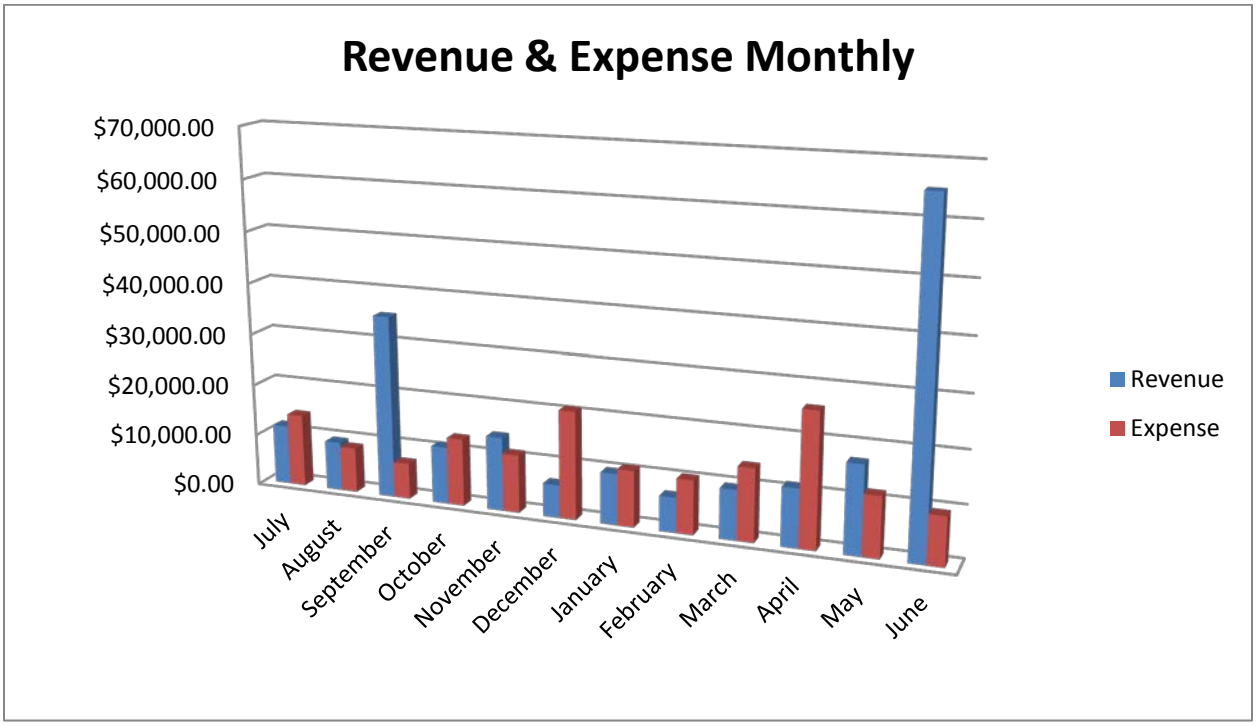


Grant revenue is acquired through quarterly reimbursements from the state on approved marketing activities as part of the Marketing Matching Grant (MMG) program. This is an important component of our revenue stream. This yearly grant allows us to continue to grow our campaigns and to take part in different marketing activities that otherwise we wouldn't be able to. The graph below shows the different marketing activities we participate in and the revenue that we receive through the reimbursements. Print (Magazine Ads) is our largest expense for advertising and has components that are not covered by the grant. The revenue, therefore, is not quite 50-50. Also, with billboards, the ratio

of expense to revenue is not quite 50-50 because there is one billboard that is not qualified for inclusion in the grant, requiring us to pay all direct costs. Digital media and television are exactly 50-50 as we only participate in activities that can be covered by the grant.



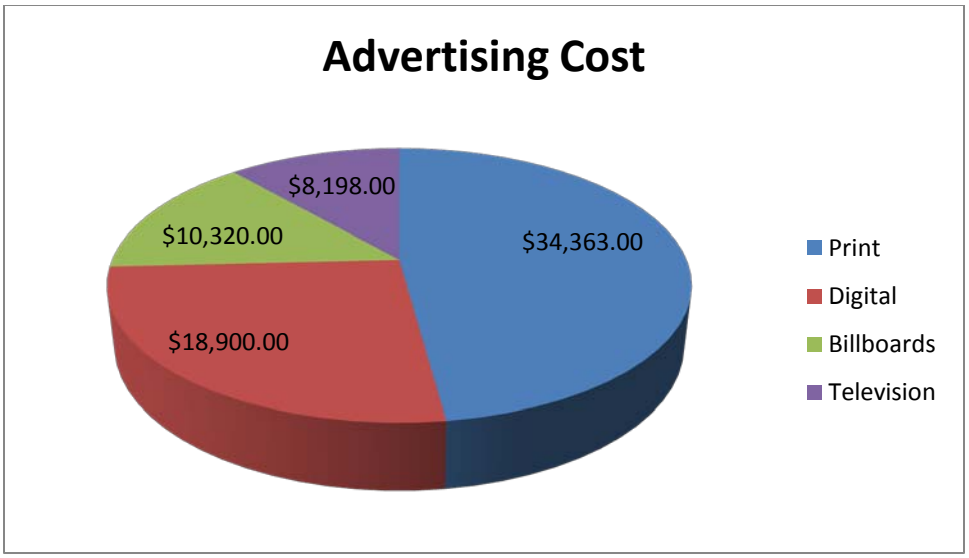
The last graph depicted for the budget shows expense versus revenue by monthly increments over the entire fiscal year. The biggest jumps in revenue occurred in September when we received fourth-quarter reimbursement for the 2014 grant and in June through the inter-fund transfer. The biggest expense jumps are in December during preparation for trade shows and the upcoming tourism season and in April when the majority of marketing activities pick up.



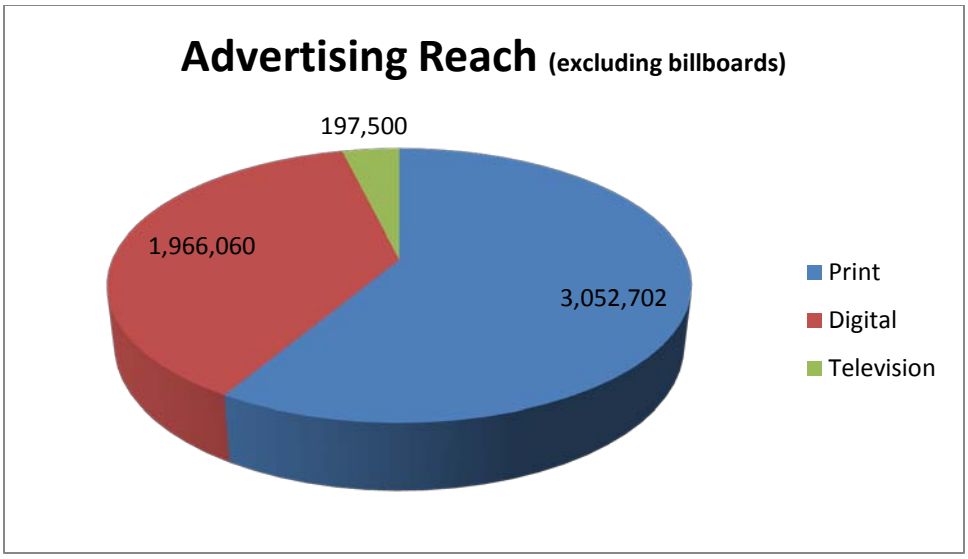
Marketing/ Advertising / PR

Marketing is the action of promoting products or services which includes advertising. Advertising is the activity of producing advertisements for commercial products or services. Public relations or PR is the practice of managing the spread of information between an individual or organization and the public. This department is currently responsible for all three of these different activities in the promotion of Lebanon and the surrounding area.

We are very fortunate to have the ability to place ads in some very prominent magazines. We create content that highlights local attractions to entice visitors to our area. Some of the printed periodicals we partner with are American Road Magazine, Rural Missouri, Show Me Missouri, Show Me Route 66 Magazine, a regional insert and inclusion in the official Missouri Travel Guide. Included with our print through many of our advertising partners we are able to generate E-blasts, banner advertisements, electronic itineraries, and an interactive electronic brochure. We currently have three billboards along the I-44 corridor. Two are co-opted through the MMG and one we pay for fully. Currently running is a 30 second commercial that is on various cable channel networks from April to June. Below is a graph that shows how the advertising expenses are divided between print, digital, billboards and television.

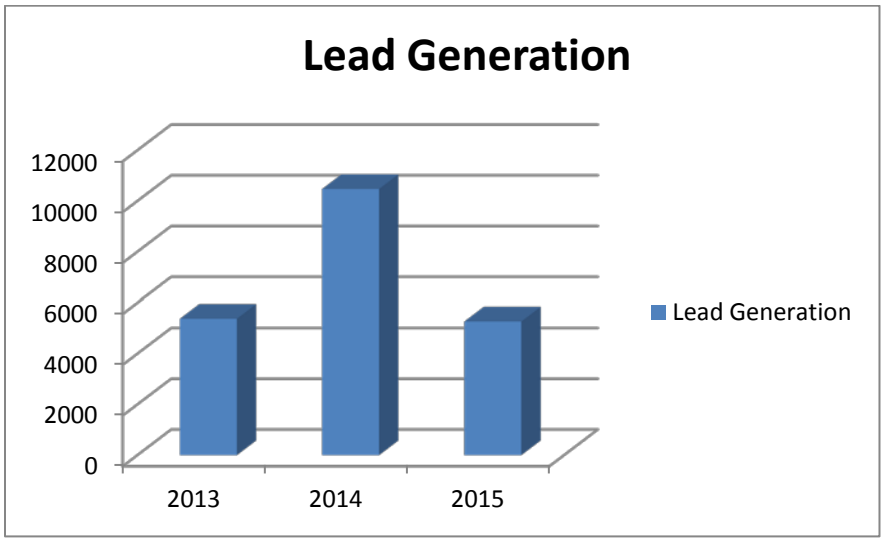


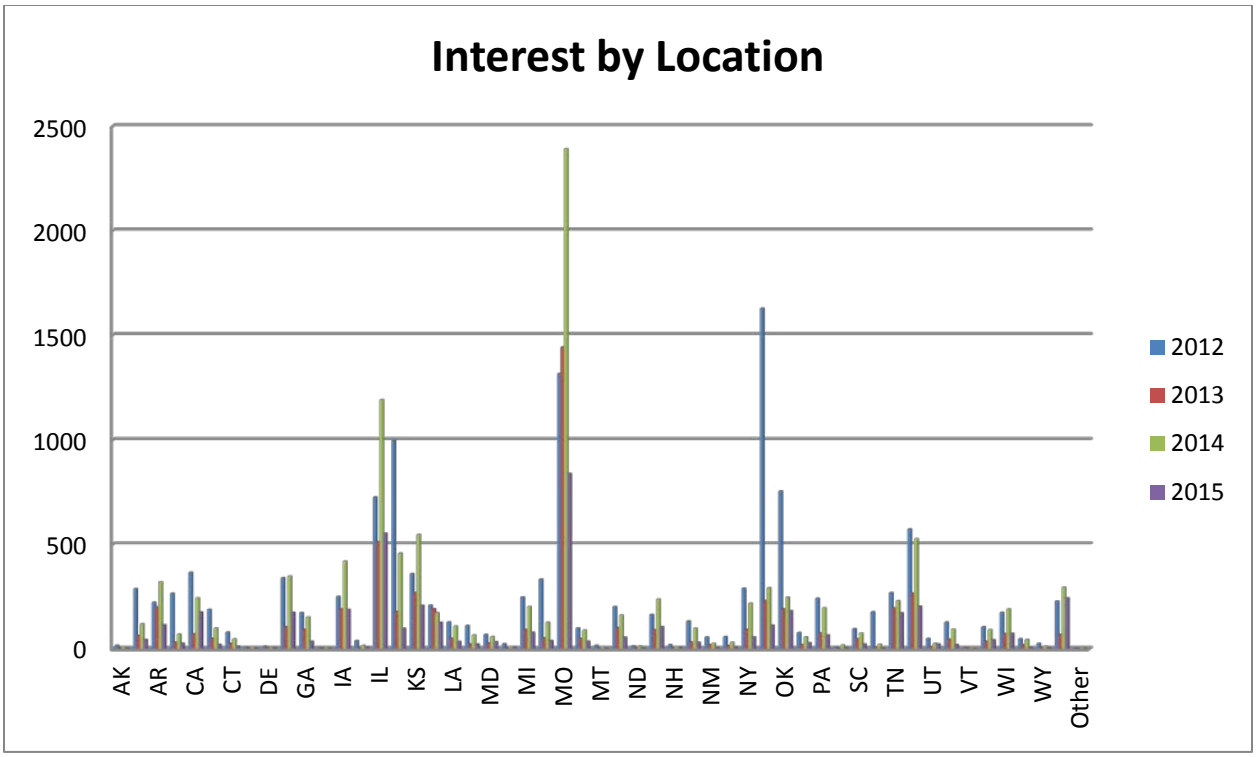
Although determining advertising effectiveness is not an exact science, we are able to use aggregated data based on criteria such as total publications produced, total publications directly mailed, total amount of E-blast, sent verse opened, amount of traffic estimated on any given highway, or total amount of commercials run at a given point during the day. The following numbers are based on those factors and are provided by the various advertising partners we work with. Billboards were not included in this graph as their total reach is estimated at roughly 71 million and therefore would sway the graph too much.



Marketing, or the act of promotion, is done through other various activities such as lead generation campaigns with our advertising partners, through social media interactions, and using print advertisements to highlight specific events. E-blasts through our advertising partners are also used to highlight events in the area that will draw out of town guests here. One of our major marketing campaigns is done through a promotion using social media and is also our biggest lead generator. In marketing, lead generation is the generation of consumer interest or inquiry into products or services of a business. Leads can be created for purposes such as list building, e-newsletter list acquisition or for sales leads. Below is a graph showing the success of our lead generator campaign. The 2015 campaign will not be complete until after the fiscal year, however, we are ahead of where we were this time last year.

Part of the lead generator campaign is fulfillment. Fulfillment can either be electronic or physical, and usually involves the acquisition of a visitor's guide. All leads that are generated are opted in and can be used in future campaign endeavors.





Public relations or PR is done through various channels some have been used prior to this past year and some are new. Our local radio partner KJEL works with us to create a weekly radio spot that is done live every Wednesday at 8:20 AM. This year we expanded to another local radio partner KTTK who uses a recording of that live show and broadcasts it four times at the end of the week up to the events mentioned in the broadcast. Just recently we have partnered with the Lebanon Daily Record to have that information included in a column.

Ozarks Experience festival will be at The Mall Saturday

Schedule is full of coming events

By Bruce Conklin
Lebanon Tourism director

There is such a variety of fun activities coming up this month and in July, guaranteed to be something for everyone. There are plenty of ways to find your getaway right here in Lebanon.

On Saturday join the Mall for the The Ozarks Experience. Come on out for this all day festival with music, vendors, food and much more. This free event will have nine bands, four guest speakers and goes from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.

The Junior Police Academy is scheduled for Monday and Tuesday.

Conklin

ebration will be June 20 at the Lebanon I-44 Speedway, and will provide attendees an action packed evening! The event will have a Family Game Zone, a wide display of vendors, plenty of food and drinks for purchase, NASCAR Whelen All American racing, the featured presentation will be the Monster Energy Moto X Stunt Team. To end the night there will be spectacular fireworks show.

Also on June 20, join the girls of the 2015 Miss Show Me State Pageant, hosted by Show Me Pageants. Young ladies ages 1-15 will compete in fun-fashion wear and formal wear, as well as an optional talent competition.

At the Cowan Civic

Other public relations activities consist of working closely with our local media partners on developing stories for upcoming events, engaging with Fort Leonard Wood by attending community orientation and the monthly community meeting to make them aware of what's going on locally, and engaging with local civic organizations. We are currently in the process of building an email list of those that are interested in local event information but do not have access to the radio broadcast or the paper.

Website & Social Media

On the majority of our advertising and marketing efforts the call to action is our website lebanonmo.org. It is where we keep the most information for visitors coming to the area and if they need additional information on local attractions, dining, shopping and hotels. Based on visitation to our website, we can

see the pattern of traffic and what visitors are interested in seeing while in the area. Bennett Spring State Park; Route 66; Shopping; Dining and Lodging, is the order from most views.

We currently have 4 social media platforms that we use in our marketing efforts. Our top social media platform is Facebook. Through one of our advertising partners we have participated in a lead generation sweepstakes campaign for the last three years. The goal of this campaign is to increase our reach through social media and increase our followship (likes). As to the success of this campaign, the numbers speak for themselves. In April 2012, we were sitting at 1430 likes. Just three years later we are currently sitting at 8,512 likes and there's still a few months left to this year's campaign. We hope to break 9000 likes this year.

Using the different analytic tools native to our social media platforms, we can see how we are performing and who is interested in what we are posting. We can then use this information to start targeting our message to individuals that fit those demographics. In the next two illustrations you will be able to see how we can identify our demographic as well as our reach through Facebook.

Your Fans | **People Reached** | **People Engaged** | **Check-ins**

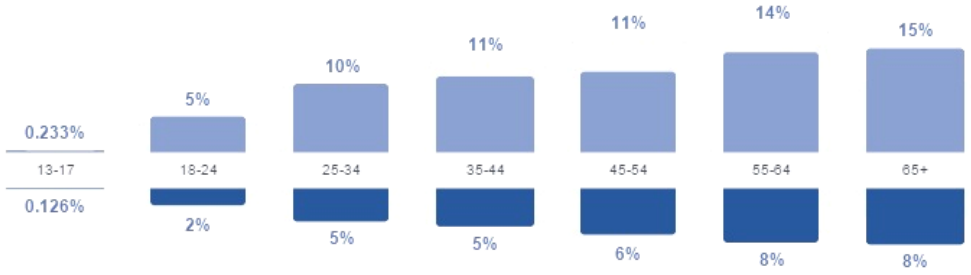
The number of people your post was served to in the past 28 days.

Women

65% People Reached — **69%** Your Fans

Men

34% People Reached — **30%** Your Fans



Country	People Reached
United States of America	27,477
Philippines	65
Germany	47
India	35

City	People Reached
Lebanon, MO	4,674
Springfield, MO	949
Kansas City, MO	353
St. Louis, MO	287

Language	People Reached
English (US)	27,171
English (UK)	465
Spanish	61
German	29

Your Fans | **People Reached** | **People Engaged** | **Check-ins**

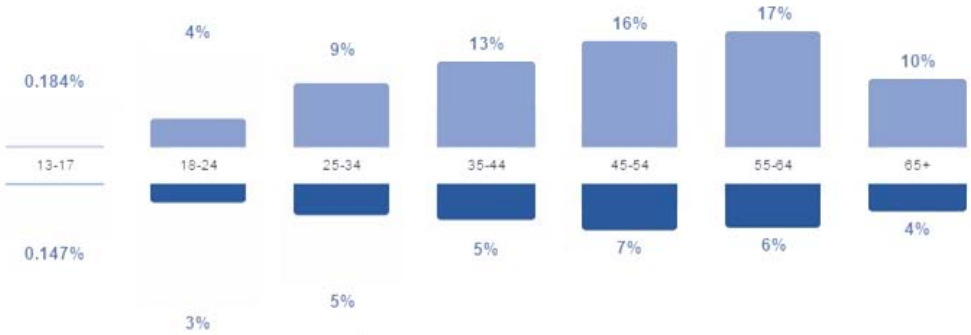
The people who like your Page

Women

69% Your Fans — **46%** All Facebook

Men

30% Your Fans — **54%** All Facebook

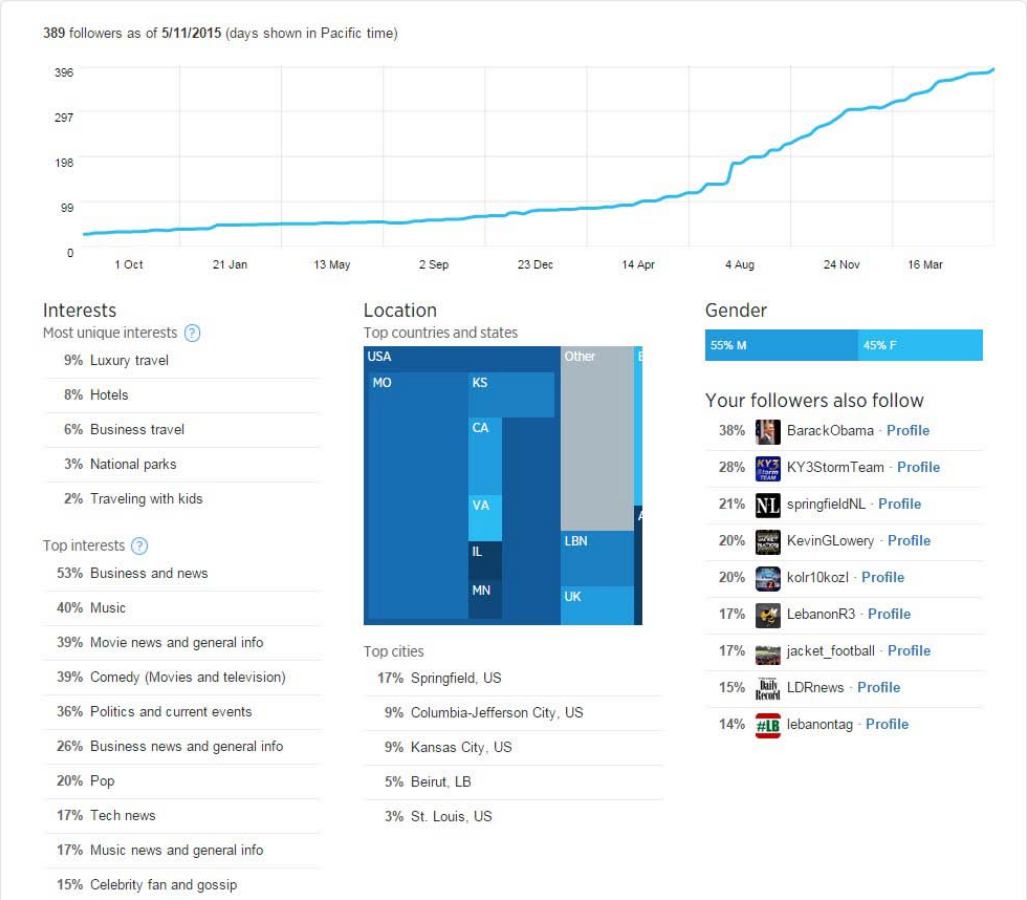


Country	Your Fans
United States of America	7,963
Lebanon	20
Philippines	16

City	Your Fans
Lebanon, MO	1,909
Springfield, MO	246
St. Louis, MO	107

Language	Your Fans
English (US)	7,927
English (UK)	161
Arabic	11

Twitter is our other social media platform and, although not as big, it has been growing steadily since May of last year. Its growth can be attributed to verification. Verification allows users to know that a particular account has gone through a process of authentication and is legitimate, which attracts followers. We were officially verified on Twitter on July 23, 2014. At that time we had 95 followers. Today we have over 419 followers. We can also use their native analytics to see how our posts are performing as well as our demographics for targeting purposes.



The remaining two platforms that we use are Google+ and YouTube. Unfortunately, Google+ will be going away in the future but I hope that we will continue to increase the growth of our YouTube presence. But that, and an additional social media platform, is still in the works.

Visitors Survey

(The information contained in this section was acquired through a conversion study and is only a snapshot of activity)

For the past three years the tourism department has participated in a visitor's survey conducted by our research partners, H2R Market Research. We supply them with email addresses from the leads we acquire throughout the year and they conduct a survey of those individuals to determine the success of the overall marketing campaign. Based on the information supplied in the report the FY2014 marketing campaign was a success. The marketing campaign generated an ROI of just over $12, an increase over 2013, and topping the historical average for the Lebanon area. The campaign generated nearly 6,000 inquiries (only inquires with email addresses were included in this study) to the CVB and produce more than 615,000 in gross revenue. Tourism spending per party is up to roughly $239 per party also a historical high.

The study revealed the majority of the visitors at 49% were in the area between June and August and the second most popular time of year to visit the area would be the fall from September to October. Topping the list of area activity participation a majority of the respondents were in the area for Bennett Spring State Park, Route 66 and the Niagara River. The top non-attraction activities for visitors while they were here was dining and shopping.

Approximately two thirds of Lebanon's visitors recalled seeing the print advertisements. That is a 15% increase over FY2013. The majority of the respondents believed the advertising was easy to understand, was believable, and fit with what they thought about Lebanon, Missouri. 68% of respondents said that the advertising made them want to find out more about visiting Lebanon. When asked what other destinations, if any, they considered before deciding to visit Lebanon, respondents said they considered destinations such as Florida, Kansas City, Hannibal, Joplin, Osage Beach, and California all before they ended up deciding to come here to Lebanon, Missouri to spend their vacation.

(The study for the FY2015 will begin in September and conclude in December and will be reflected in next year's report.)

A Look Ahead

Tourism for Lebanon and the surrounding area has so much potential. In the upcoming months and over the course of the next couple of years, tourism has a lot of exciting things on the horizon. The department will be starting to refresh the visitor's guide, begin construction on the 2016 visitor's calendar, start production of a new commercial, continuing the campaign to increase public relations and start the development of a multiyear visitor profile study. The way of the future is digital media;

however, it would be a mistake to forget about the traditional channels such as print. Finding that balance so we can increase our digital footprint but not alienate our traditional audience is a challenge that we will be looking into further.

This concludes my 2015 Annual Report to Council. I am available to you if you have any questions or require clarification on any part of this report.