CAMERON TOURISM COMMISSION
Summary Report

History

- August, 2000, City establishes a 5-member Cameron Tourism Commission (CTC) to promote, develop, market and fund area tourism-related activities; works closely with Chamber.
- Council provides an initial $10,000 operating fund with the expectation that the CTC will become self-funded through its own revenue-generating activities.
- CTC holds first meeting August 23, 2000. Officers are: Neal Slaughter, chair; Mo Chung, vice chair; Carlene Bray, sec.-treas.; Betty Price and Roger wood are members. George Pratt later replaces Mo Chung. CTC conducts strategic planning; hears from tourism professionals in St. Joseph, Chillicothe and Mo. Division of Tourism.
- CTC establishes goal for Cameron to operate as central clearinghouse for events and activities within 30 miles; promotion of area events with Cameron as the hub for food, lodging, fuel and shopping.
- CTC assumes operation of Tourist Information Center (TIC) which was provided and operated by the Pony Express Convention & Visitors Bureau for the previous two years at a cost of $11,000 per year with utilities furnished by McDonald's. The St. Joseph group gives the caboose to the City.
- The TIC averages 2,100 visitors per month with 200 staying overnight in Cameron and 900 eating in Cameron while operating 7 a.m.-5 p.m. seven days a week. Few local businesses utilize TIC for coupons, brochures or promotion.
- Rep. Randall Relford helps CTC secure State funding at $15,000 for the first year then $10,000 per year for two more years for operation of TIC.
- CTC sponsors two separate performances by the Union Mill Opry at Goodrich Auditorium in 2001 and 2002 as promotional effort. CTC does not expect to make money, however the well-attended events break even.
- CTC has Western Missouri Correctional Center construct 15 oak brochure floor stands which are distributed free to local restaurants, motels, retailers, banks, C-stores and other high-traffic locations. CTC finds difficulty in filling and maintaining the stands.
- CTC surveys Chamber members and finds that members support second attempt at lodging tax by vote of 40-12.
- Despite lack of organized opposition, the lodging tax issue fails by a margin of more than 2-1.
- All five members of the CTC resign. Vacancies remain unfilled and the CTC remains inoperative since.

CTC Initiatives, Incomplete

- Maps. These would include area attractions and events; distributed regionally.
- Murals. Chillicothe made this idea a reality, sliced bread notwithstanding.
- Place Mats. Cameron map showing Cameron parks, historic sites, public buildings and attractions…to be used at local restaurants.
- Events Calendar—Printed. Monthly on each brochure stand and bulletin board.
- Events Calendar—Electronic. Computer terminal at motels, C-stores, restaurants.

- Bus Tours—Cameron as hub with trips to Jamesport, Penney Museum, Amish, Pony Express, Jesse James, Watkins Mill, farms and more. International interest.

Moving Forward

- Council makes intent to re-establish CTC known; solicits volunteer members.
- Council appoints 5-9 members to CTC; need not be residents of Cameron.
- Charge them with creating a multi-phase Tourism Plan for Cameron.
- Consider regional strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.
- Create assessment of assets/attractions.
- Determine plans for marketing, promotion, theme, etc.
- Partner with Cameron Chamber, regional tourism groups, US 36 Heritage Alliance and Mo. Division of Tourism.
- Develop funding sources, sponsorships and cooperative campaigns.
- Use existing, successful programs and plans (St. Joseph, Marceline, Hannibal) as resource.
- Combine regional marketing efforts for increased grant favor.
- Show conviction by indicating willingness to establish City budget item to help fund programs and activities.