



DEPARTMENT OF

**COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
SERVICES**

Economic Development Division

m e m o r a n d u m

TO: Mayor Laurel Prussing
FROM: Elizabeth H. Tyler, AICP, Director
DATE: May 10, 2007
SUBJECT: Marketing Urbana

Description

Based on discussions with the Mayor and City Council, staff has been asked to review the City's existing marketing efforts and to provide new ideas and concepts to incorporate into those efforts. The purpose of this memorandum is to suggest a range of marketing options for the City and to discuss how these relate to past and current efforts.

Issues and Discussion

Urbana is not unique in that it is sometimes subject to negative and/or inaccurate public information. In order to better inform public perception it is helpful to actively promote the positive image of the City and to keep citizens informed of the many beneficial policies and programs offered by the City. City Council has tasked staff with developing ways to disseminate positive news, stories, and information about the City. The Mayor and staff have met several times to discuss practical ways to accomplish this. Staff has also conferred with the Marketing Committee of the Urbana Business Association for their input. Below is a list of marketing ideas and how they relate to past, current, and possibly future efforts.

Marketing Efforts

1. Determine what Urbana is valued for and succeeds at. Other than being the home of the University of Illinois, what is the identity of the community: Tree City, parks, neighborhoods, medical, Lincoln related history, etc.? Conduct a marketing/City image survey to determine how members of the public perceive of the City of Urbana. Based on overall perceptions, determine where resources can best be used.
2. While there may be some overlap in economic development related marketing versus the marketing efforts for the City as a whole, these efforts will largely have two different target markets. An effort should be made to maximize limited marketing dollars to reach the intended audience for all of Urbana's marketing efforts. While we have well developed materials about

our economic development programs, polished materials regarding the City as a whole are lacking. Staff will be sharing examples of these materials to obtain specific feedback.

3. Continue to coordinate marketing efforts with the UBA manager and the UBA marketing committee in order to maximize effectiveness, take advantage of local experts in the field, and avoid duplication of efforts.
4. Increase the City's presence at local and regional shows and events. Include a professionally produced booth, promotional items, and marketing materials. The City has recently increased attendance at shows and events, and is budgeting for increased participation and exhibition at these events in the future.
5. Have a University of Illinois and/or a Parkland College marketing class draft ideas for promoting Urbana as a class project. The City should take advantage of local talent in providing imaging and marketing ideas.

Promotional Pieces

6. Develop a single brochure that promotes the positive aspects and services provided by all departments of the City. The City has a number of existing pieces, but few address the City as a whole and materials can be updated and improved in appearance and consistency of format.
7. Create a quarterly promotional city newsletter (similar to the previous StreetTalk or Eye on Urbana). Costs could be minimized by utilizing an electronic newsletter. Currently, we use Block Grant funds to publish Neighborhood News, but this is limited to our Target Area.
8. Consider investing in a branding effort and media campaign that might include:
 - a. Effort to formulate an appropriate "tag line" that is used consistently in marketing materials and communications.
 - b. Professionally produced marketing materials with a consistent theme.

These efforts could take advantage of student talent available through the University of Illinois and Parkland College and/or the many progressive and creative marketing firms that are located in the community.

Media

9. Send regular monthly "positive news" press releases (multi-topic). These press releases can include current events as well as feature different themes, departments, and divisions. These have been done periodically in the past.
10. Have a monthly show on UPTV about "positive news" in Urbana (multi-topic). An idea for a theme could be "Did You Know?" For example, "Did you know that Community Development issued 110 building permits for new single family homes in 2006?" Or, "Did you know that Public Works filled 67 potholes after the winter season?" Or, "Did you know that Community

Development has incentive programs for businesses?" The program could feature the staff related to the topic in an interview session.

11. Have UBA forward the "positive news" items and news releases to their members and contacts. The text could consistently follow the theme from the UPTV show, for example "Did You Know?"
12. Consider a simpler, more user-friendly, and visually appealing website design. Changes to the website are currently in the works and will be presented to Council on May 14th.

Business Coordination

13. Continue meeting with the local residential realtor groups in coordination with existing UBA efforts. Highlight the benefits and amenities available in Urbana. Also, include realtors in our retention visit schedule. Recent events with Realtors include the very well attended Realtor's Bus Tour. The Home Parade is held in the Summer and the annual Realtor's Breakfast is held in the Fall. Following up on these contacts is a way to maintain positive interactions with the real estate community.
14. Continue to coordinate ground breaking and ribbon cutting events with UBA and the Chamber of Commerce. Also, continue producing and distributing the ribbon cutting/development flyer. This flyer has recently been updated for the numerous events held to date in 2007 (copy attached).
15. Work with local hotels, specifically front desk staff, as a first point of contact with visitors to our community. Provide them with appropriate brochures/flyers about Urbana for their display racks. The City currently provides Citywide and Downtown maps to hotels, but additional City materials can be produced for distribution.
16. An effort should be made to have a larger presence on the University of Illinois campus for "move-in" to help inform residents that are new to the area. Representatives of the City of Urbana could distribute maps and information on Urbana restaurants, supermarkets, home improvement stores, City services, important phone numbers, etc. This is done in many University communities and helps to promote good relations between student residents and other residents. The City does provide a "Welcome to Urbana" brochure to returning students off-campus, but this focus is primarily on neighborhood issues.

Fiscal Impact

The proposed marketing ideas will have varying levels of fiscal impact. Some efforts, such as development of press releases and distribution of positive news, will have a minimal budgetary impact in that they primarily affect the use of staff time. Other efforts, such as increased attendance and exhibition at shows and events or a branding effort/media campaign, could potentially have a larger budgetary impact with consulting services and professionally produced marketing materials. As it is determined which marketing efforts are appropriate for the City of Urbana, more research will be done to determine a more accurate cost estimate for each initiative. It should be noted, however, that the City's budget already includes available funds for marketing efforts. The 2007-2008 budget includes

increased expenditures for trade show attendance and economic development conferences. Existing marketing line items within the TIF budgets can also be used to develop materials to promote Urbana.

Request

Provide staff with feedback and direction regarding marketing efforts and identify any additional efforts that may be desired.

Tom Carrino, Economic Development Manager

Attached: Ribbon Cutting Flyer

URBANA CELEBRATES NEW AND EXPANDING BUSINESSES IN 2006 AND 2007



Star Uniforms renovated an existing building at 400 N. Broadway.



Health Alliance recently celebrated its first year at Lincoln Square Village.



Speedway opened its new location at 2011 N. Lincoln.



Piato offers breakfast and lunch at the food court in Lincoln Square Village.



Amber Glen is a new Alzheimer's Special Care Center located at 1704 E. Amber Lane.



Budget Rental opened its new location at 902 W. University.



Manolo's offers pizza and empanadas at 1115 W. Oregon.



Bella Home is a new home furnishings and clothing store located at 110 W. Main.



Ethnic Xpressions is located in the Five Points Commerce Center at the northeast corner of Cunningham and University.



Carpet Advantage opened its new location at 213 S. Industrial in the East Urbana Industrial Park.



Heartland Gallery, located at 112 W. Main, is the first business to use the City of Urbana's new Gallery District Incentive Program.



A Kut Above is located in the Five Points Commerce Center at the northeast corner of Cunningham and University.



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