

Citizens for Economic Vitality Task Force

Visit to Burke, VT

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Following are categorized but largely unedited comments below from participants and UNH Cooperative Extension Staff (compiled on 1/8/2016).



Business

1. Importance of businesses to PLAN their response to a changing customer desires
2. How can I differentiate my business to capture market rather than competing with the resort (e.g.: offering local-flavor rooms, meals, romance rather than luxury, state-of the art products that the resort will be selling)?
3. How will I market my “new” product to attract the niche demographic that desires something different?
4. Strategic Planning and Marketing critical for small businesses;
5. Businesses need to understand their assets and how to change, evolve and sell to new markets --- niche market planning;
6. Need for broadband and web presence in small business planning and marketing;
7. Know the market – yours and theirs
8. You need data
9. Local business must change to benefit
10. Businesses must decide to compete or compliment the large, new development
11. Word of mouth and passive marketing can work
12. Workforce development is an issue
13. Large tourism assets (ski resort) operate differently from small business so you must understand them

14. Small business owners must look at their product and not compete head to head but differentiate.
15. Many tourists want a genuine local experience so you can sell that
16. Market to this new consumer
17. Businesses need coaching and support
18. Kingdom Trails has done much work on understanding its users so they can build from the data – they survey, talk to them.
19. Need adaptation strategy – how are you now going to sell your product?
20. Don't compete with resort but do stimulate people to come (e.g. Kingdom trails)
21. Local contractors are not big enough to supply development/construction services for resort. Best to hope for local labor working for larger firms that aren't local.



Municipal

1. Land Use: Act-250 (state imposed zoning) is an awesome if you are a municipality, not-so-great if you are a resident or business wishing for fewer constraints. Discuss the pass-option that Burke gave their existing residents.
2. Act 250 seemingly a positive for all actors in the Burke area; and
3. Land use an important piece of the puzzle.
4. Go slow – potential change comes and goes
5. Enacted and did overhaul of zoning
6. Regional planning commission knew what questions to ask and what studies were needed
7. In areas without zoning (Craftsbury VT) they use other tool – village center design
8. Tourism can run you out - effective zoning can help
9. Keep open communication with developer
10. Be careful of public-private partnership because you may be responsible for it if private group steps out
11. Be wary of public - private partnerships because owners change.
12. Don't let the development rush the process
13. Act 250 provided good support for Burke municipalities



Community

1. Strategic Planning critical
2. “Tourism will hit you like a train”
3. Education --- University/College/Comm. College can be great to meeting some of the critical challenges in rural communities;
4. Don’t focus on the redevelopment or new project – can’t control what they do
5. You need data
6. A small group can lead and move forward – can’t always wait for or get community consensus
7. Communities struggle to fill executive level jobs in hospitality
8. Hospitality can be a profitable career – need education about this. Partnering with educational institutions to train for this
9. A community can promote what it values and sell it – local food, landscape, recreation etc.
10. Large resort may value your local assets for different reasons. They may value local farms for the view they offer their customers rather than the local food
11. Planning and reaching out to Canadian market. Make effort. Have information in French. Market directly to them.
12. What can we do to support the big event (Balsams)
13. Recognize that the resort is doing this for profit. Community support from the resort will come if it supports said profit.
14. Kingdom trails much like “ride the wilds”
 - 80,000 visitors went to the Kingdom Trails in 2015
 - User fees work
 - 72% male users
 - Majority of users are Canadian
 - Majority of users are young
15. Many users who live in Burke area work at hospitals and schools
16. Colleges near Burke add big positive impact to Burke.