



INTERNAL MARKETING PLAN

Prepared for the Lowcountry Economic Alliance
By Avalanche Consulting, Inc.
June 2014



Introduction

Between 2009 and 2012, Beaufort County added 12,801 new residents, but lost 691 jobs, which equates to an overall economic impact of about \$34 million dollars in direct and indirect lost wages over three years as well as lost tax revenue associated with those wages. Taxes pay for roads, improve schools and preserve green space, among other vital elements of a community. The way to ensure that the Beaufort County's high quality of life remains the same is through job creation and business expansion, which grows the tax base and supports the level of amenities and infrastructure that the people of the region have come to expect.

This is an urgent situation. Beaufort County's economy is not keeping pace with the state of South Carolina's. Currently, the Southeastern US is a hot destination for business – particularly in aerospace and advanced manufacturing, logistics, and professional services. However, Beaufort County has a sluggish economy. Balance is a core concern in the county's economic development. While on the surface income levels look to be on par with other communities, salaries are low. This reflects a large retiree base, whose incomes include non-wage earnings, and a large base of low-wage secondary jobs, such as retail and construction. The region has a growing income disparity.

While this situation may not seem alarming to some, in the long run, it will impact all residents. Without a thriving primary industry – companies that produce goods and services that are exported and inject new dollars and tax revenue into a community – the cost of maintaining and improving critical infrastructure will fall on residents to an even greater degree than it already is. (According to Beaufort County, only 0.25% of the county's tax revenue comes from manufacturing companies compared 14.5% in Orangeburg County and 13.7% in Spartanburg County.) Quality of place, which is the sole reason many people move to Beaufort County, is threatened when primary businesses don't grow in a proportionate way as residential population.

Without primary business growth, the overreliance on residents' dollars to maintain infrastructure will turn into a downward spiral. Yet, there has been vehement opposition to economic development and primary business expansion in the county. While the county is in need of relevant real estate for the types of industry seeking to locate in the Southeastern US, even small redevelopment projects in Beaufort County have been vocally opposed.

With its proximity to major East Coast ports, scenic setting, university presence, and ripe state business climate, Beaufort County has enviable assets from an economic development perspective. The core issue, and why the county has negative business growth relative to its neighbors, is self-perpetuated. **Residents need to be made aware of the intimate correlation between primary business growth and the community's quality of life.**



Objectives of Lowcountry Economic Alliance Internal Marketing Plan

As a component of this Internal Marketing Plan, an online citizen survey was conducted in March, 2014 that asked local residents to share their perceptions of the Lowcountry's economy and economic development efforts. Results showed that:

- 47% of respondents gave the Lowcountry a "C" grade for economic performance over the past five years.
- 78% of respondents rated economic development and job creation as "Highest Priority" or "Medium Priority."
- According to a majority of survey respondents, successful economic development means recruiting/expanding new industry, improving/increasing educational assets, or starting/growing new startup companies.
- 83% said "YES" to supporting additional funding for economic development initiatives.
- 64% of the respondents have "negative, unfamiliar or indifferent" perceptions of the Lowcountry Economic Alliance efforts.

The survey shows support for economic development and additional funding for initiatives, while highlighting the need to improve overall economic performance for the future.

However, a vocal minority of residents has derailed economic development. The anti-development sentiment is exacerbated by the County's shortage of shovel-ready real estate for primary employers. Getting real estate ready for business will cost money, as the May 12, 2014 Thomas & Hutton engineering study illustrates.

Sharing the benefits of proactive economic development will help shine a light on the work of the LEA. Rallying community leaders around the initiative will help garner long-term support for the organization. The objectives of the plan reflect these needs.

Objective #1: Educate local residents about current economic conditions and how economic development translates into long-term quality of life for Beaufort County.

Beaufort County residents are unaware of the current economic conditions. They don't realize that jobs have been lost which equates to approximately \$34 million dollars not being spent across the region, which ultimately impacts quality of life issues. The way to ensure that Beaufort County's high quality of life remains the same is through job creation and business expansion, which grows our tax base and supports the level of amenities and infrastructure that the people of the region have come to expect. This is a message that needs to be shared broadly in a way that people understand.



Objective #2: Inform residents about the important efforts of the Lowcountry Economic Alliance.

As evidenced in the survey results, the LEA has an image issue. 64% of respondents have “negative, unfamiliar or indifferent” perceptions of the Lowcountry Economic Alliance efforts. Yet 78% of respondents rated economic development and job creation as “Highest Priority” or “Medium Priority.” Economic development is important to people. There is an urgent need to better communicate the efforts of the LEA and to have a plan to consistently communicate economic development news across Beaufort County.



Target Audiences

The term “economic development” receives different reactions from different people. There are constituents in Beaufort County who support the growth of primary businesses and understand the connection between job creation and the region’s quality of life. There are other constituents who might see primary business growth as a threat to quality of life, or a misappropriation of resources. As the LEA and other community leaders develop an internal communications strategy, it is important to identify and refine messages around those groups of residents who tend to have the strongest negative reactions to primary business growth. Based on our experience in the region and conversations with area and state leaders, the audiences most critical to the success or failure of economic development are:

- Retirees
- Native Beaufort County Residents
- Local Government Officials
- Business Leaders
- Students/Young Professionals
- Local media
- State economic development leaders



Primary Messages

Concept #1

Purpose: To educate residents that business growth relieves tax burden on Beaufort County residents and that taxes are needed to preserve the quality of life that they enjoy.

Message Points:

- In a healthy community, businesses generate a majority of the tax base that helps build roads, improve schools, preserve green space, keep the community safe, create job opportunities for their children and keep life beautiful.
- In healthy communities, businesses generate a healthy portion of the tax base.
- That is NOT the case in Beaufort County. Manufacturers, who based on their capital investment, tend to be sizable contributors to the tax base, only represent 0.25% of Beaufort County's tax base. The weight of the tax burden falls almost entirely on Beaufort County property owners.
- This is just one indicator that the economy in Beaufort County is lop-sided. Primary employers like manufacturers contribute a small share of county tax revenue relative to other South Carolina counties whose tax base is 12-15% from manufacturing.
- Growing light manufacturing and high-tech businesses in Beaufort County is the answer to this disparity.
- It's a smart way to relieve your tax burden and to have the resources our community needs to build roads, improve schools, preserve green space, keep the community safe, create job opportunities for our children and put more money in our pockets to enjoy life in Beaufort County.
- The LEA is charged with helping businesses grow in Beaufort County so that we can keep Beaufort County beautiful.
- We want more business to keep Beaufort County beautiful.



Concept #2

Purpose: To educate residents about how lost jobs ultimately affect the region's quality of life.

Message Points:

- Between 2009 and 2012, the number of jobs in South Carolina increased 2.5%, while the number of jobs in Beaufort County DECREASED by 1.2%.
- This 1.2% decrease in jobs equates to approximately \$23 million in lost payroll and at least another \$11 million lost that would be rippling through our economy as a result of those wages.
- That's \$34 million in lost wages in 3 years as well as lost tax revenue associated with those wages. Beaufort County is leaking money and jobs while other South Carolina communities are thriving.
- \$34 million equates to 34,000 \$1,000 mortgage payments; more than 113,000 \$300 car payments; 680,000 \$50 meal tabs in local restaurants and over 1.1 million rounds of \$30 golf.
- Why does this matter? Because Beaufort County's quality of life depends on having a healthy business climate.
- When businesses shrink, so does our tax base. The dollars our governments need to invest in schools, improve roads, preserve parks and beaches, keep our community safe and preserve Beaufort County's beauty are not enough if we rely on the tax dollars of residents alone.
- When businesses shrink, we lose their tax dollars. Residents like you have to pay more to maintain the quality of life that you expect.
- The LEA is charged with helping businesses grow in Beaufort County so that our residents can have more money to enjoy life and keep Beaufort County beautiful.
- We want more business to keep Beaufort County beautiful.



Messages by Target Audience

While the overarching message is the same for all target audiences, there are specific points that will resonate with each. The takeaway is the same for all - **We want more business to keep Beaufort County beautiful.**

Retirees

When businesses grow in Beaufort County, new taxes are generated that help us to maintain integrity, preserve green space, keep our beaches pristine, preserve our rich heritage and support our cultural centers. When businesses grow in Beaufort County, we keep life beautiful in Beaufort County.

Native Beaufort County Residents

When businesses grow in Beaufort County, new taxes are generated that preserve our rich heritage, maintain integrity, preserve green space and keep our beaches pristine. When businesses grow in Beaufort County, we keep life beautiful in Beaufort County.

Local Government Officials

When businesses grow in Beaufort County, new taxes are generated that help us build resources, effectively govern, support local businesses, improve schools and expand roads. When businesses grow in Beaufort County, we keep life beautiful in Beaufort County.

Local Business Leaders

When businesses grow in Beaufort County, new taxes are generated that support businesses' needs - like funding education and training programs and providing robust resources for entrepreneurs and improving infrastructure. When businesses grow in Beaufort County, we keep life beautiful in Beaufort County.

Students/Young Professionals

When businesses grow in Beaufort County, more jobs are available allowing you to earn a living, have a secure future in our region and to enjoy life in Beaufort County. When businesses grow in Beaufort County, we keep life beautiful in Beaufort County.



Local Media

When jobs grow in our region, so does the audience for local media. The audience base grows and advertising revenue grows. Local media also has an opportunity to share stories about our region that is adopted in state and national media, bringing more attention to our assets and our quality journalists. Negative commentary to local news stories is inevitable. (It happens in every community.) Engage a team of visible, respected volunteers to respond to postings that are factually erroneous.

State Economic Development Leaders

In addition to local audiences, keep state partners abreast of Beaufort County developments by including South Carolina Department of Commerce leadership on all LEA mailing lists and copy @SCcommerce when sharing good news from Beaufort County on social media.



Marketing Tools

Messages will need to be shared across a wide variety of mediums and channels. This will require appropriate marketing tools to tell the story. For example, social media channels can be used to share a 30-second video. Or a personal story can be shared via blog, press release, an article or translated into a print or web ad.

RECOMMENDATION: Invest in appropriate marketing tools to spread the word about economic development in Beaufort County.

Press Releases:

Press releases are developed for stories that are newsworthy and current. When appropriate, craft a press release about a situation pertaining to one of the marketing messages – i.e.; storyline, new development, announcing a newsworthy project, etc.

Issue press releases regarding job announcements, new partnerships and any noteworthy and non-confidential activities of the LEA.

Articles

Articles are an effective tool that can be posted on the blog and shared with media outlets and neighborhood newsletters. They can also be positioned on social media platforms and linked on active and pertinent community list serves. Articles are made interesting by highlighting personal positive impacts of the LEA. There is the opportunity for good reach as you ask partners to share the articles via their blogs, websites, social media accounts and membership/distribution lists.

Beaufort County Wants Business Microsite and Blog

The microsite – www.beaufortcountywantsbusiness.com - can be added to the existing LEA website. The microsite can house information about the impact of economic development on the community and related statistics. The blog would be a component of the microsite. You can create specific content on the blog which can then be shared via social media. Additionally, articles, e-newsletters and press releases can be shared on the blog, which creates another channel for that content.



Weekly e-newsletter/e-card

Messages should be rotated on a weekly basis. The e-newsletter should contain important and urgent news, meeting notices, call for volunteers and new endorsements. Design the card so that it can be easily shared by other organizations and stakeholders to their distribution lists. Post to local message boards/online discussion boards as appropriate.

Packaged Language for Community Presentations

It is important that the language used to convey the message – written or spoken - be consistent. Stakeholders and Blue Ribbon Task Force members should be provided with this specific language via tools that help them to share the message.

Elevator Pitch: The Elevator pitch is a brief summary of the primary message. While the core message remains the same, it can be customized by target audience. It should be less than 30 seconds.

Talking Points for leaders: This is a summary of quick facts and messages in concise bullet points.

PowerPoint Presentation/Template: A consistent PowerPoint presentation to be used when speaking in the community at civic organizations, community meetings, etc. Additionally, produce a few slides that can be shared with stakeholders that they can use when communicating on the topic. After finalizing the Elevator Pitch and talking points, distribute to all stakeholders, partners and Blue Ribbon Task Force Members for their use. Ask them to spread the word and be advocates for LEA and economic development.

Collateral

These are tools to communicate with target audiences. Some can be both printed and electronic.

Infographic: An infographic is a compilation of facts and figures in an interesting configuration to help convey the message. It can be either electronic or printed.

Palm Card: A palm-sized leave behind piece that shares figures and information about the initiative. Good for leave behinds at community and civic meetings.

Direct Mail piece to target zip codes/neighborhoods: A printed piece to be mailed to those most important target audiences. It is an opportunity to specific target an audience via zip code, neighborhood or demographic.



Window Clings/posters for local businesses: An opportunity to engage local businesses while reaching their shoppers.

Video and YouTube Channel

Finalize a series of short video clips communicating the communications messages along with Unimedia. Establish a YouTube channel for the LEA/Beaufort County Wants Business campaign and post all videos online. Link other social media and public relations outreach to the YouTube channel. Work with Beaufort County Government to rotate the videos hourly on the local government access channel. Also if there are locally produced broadcast programs on the government channel or any other broadcast outlet, LEA leadership should be a regular guest on the program, updating and educating residents on the importance of economic development.

Print Media Ads

Consider developing print ads showcasing the infographic in local newspapers, magazines and neighborhood newsletters.

Web Advertising

Consider investing in banner advertising on websites visited by local residents, most likely Island Packet, Beaufort Gazette and other sources of local news including any local online discussion boards or online neighborhood newsletters.

Letters to the Editor

Letters to the Editor can be an effective way of sharing opinion, generating awareness and inspiring others to take positive action. It can sometimes be a catalyst for the media to cover a story from a particular perspective so it is important to coordinate this communication around key points and to be clear in messaging. Also have geographic representation from across the county.

Recommendation: Ask stakeholders and Blue Ribbon Task Force members to write letters to the editor. Provide them with examples, the following tips and key points.

Tips for Writing Letters to the Editor

- Address your letter “To the Editor.”
- Be concise and focus on one important point.
- Follow the guidelines and word count requirements of the publication or your letter will be edited.
- Include your contact information. Many papers call to verify that you wrote the letter.



- Use words that create a sense of urgency and show how readers will be impacted by the point you are making.
- Ask for action. “Tell your friends.” “Come to the meeting.”
- Proofread your letter and use spell check.
- Email your letter in the body of the email. Don’t send attachments, as it may encounter a spam filter.
- Follow up with a call the day after you submit the letter and ask if it will be printed.

Things to Avoid

- Don’t overstate or exaggerate. That gives readers pause and makes your point suspect.
- Don’t speak negatively about those who oppose your position.
- Don’t use all CAPS or *italics*. Let the words speak for themselves.

Key Points to Share with Letter Writers

- A lack of primary businesses means a lack of tax dollars.
- If we don’t grow the tax base by adding primary businesses, property owners’ tax burden will increase and quality of life is threatened.
- In a healthy economy, businesses generate the majority of the tax base. That’s not the case in Beaufort County.
- We need strong tax base supported by primary businesses to help build roads, improve schools, preserve green space, keep the community safe and create job opportunities for our children. This is what keeps life beautiful in Beaufort County.
- Growing businesses in Beaufort County is NOT destructive. Growing light manufacturing and high-tech businesses is a smart way to relieve our tax burden and put more money in the hands of the residents to keep life beautiful in Beaufort County.

Sample Letter to the Editor

To the Editor:

We moved to Beaufort County 12 years ago because we fell in love with our greatest asset – our incomparable quality of life. We love the beaches, the parks and living on an island. We love how we live. But times are changing and we see that being threatened. So many people move here, but we haven’t seen many companies move here. Growing businesses in Beaufort County is a smart way to relieve our tax burden and have resources that our community needs to maintain our greatest asset. If we don’t start to recruit businesses to Beaufort County, our taxes will go up and our quality of life will go down.

Sincerely,

Ellie Engle
321 Barkalot Lane
Beaufort, SC 12345
(843) 555-3333



- Beaufort County's quality of life depends on having a healthy business climate. We want more business to keep Beaufort County beautiful.
- From 2009 – 2012, Beaufort County primary jobs declined by 1.2%, while the state's primary job figures increased 2.5%. The 1.2% decrease in jobs equates to \$34 million in lost wages during that same time, as well lost tax revenue associated with those wages. Beaufort County is leaking money and jobs while other South Carolina communities are thriving.

Social Media

Social Media is an effective and affordable way to share messages about the efforts of the Lowcountry Economic Alliance. To be successful, there must be a defined strategy and a manageable execution strategy. The following examples illustrate the primary social media channels to use for the LEA.





Facebook

Sample Post:



Recommend making the Lowcountry Economic Alliance Facebook page more active. Post regularly and ask partners to like the page and encourage their partners to follow as well.



Twitter

Sample Post:



While the LEA already has a primary Twitter account, it is not very active. Post regularly and solicit new followers. Be sure to follow these accounts:

@hiltonheadsc
@HiltonHead_Golf
@hiltonhead_news
@SCcommerce
@LowcountryAero
@hhmonthly
@HiltonHeadView
@outsidehh
@hhi_living
@SAVHHIairport
@HHIBChamber
@hiltonheadtweet
@WHHITV
@BlufftonToday
@BlufftonChamber
@GBRC99
@IPBG_Matt
@MilesatChamber
@islandpacket
@GinaNSmith
@thatslauderdale
@ThatsBug2U
@IPBGCurrent
@insidepages
@beaufortgazette
@Beaufort_SC
@Beaufort_TParty
@BeaufortRegCoC
@bcgovsc
@Visit_Beaufort



Instagram

Sample Post:



Corporations and organizations are among the fastest growing segment of users on Instagram. It is primarily a visual medium using photos or brief (less than 10 seconds) videos with a succinct caption. It is a great medium to share culture, which makes it a perfect match to highlight the quality of life elements of Beaufort County. Recommend an Instagram account under Lowcountry Economic Alliance.



Google Plus

Sample Post:

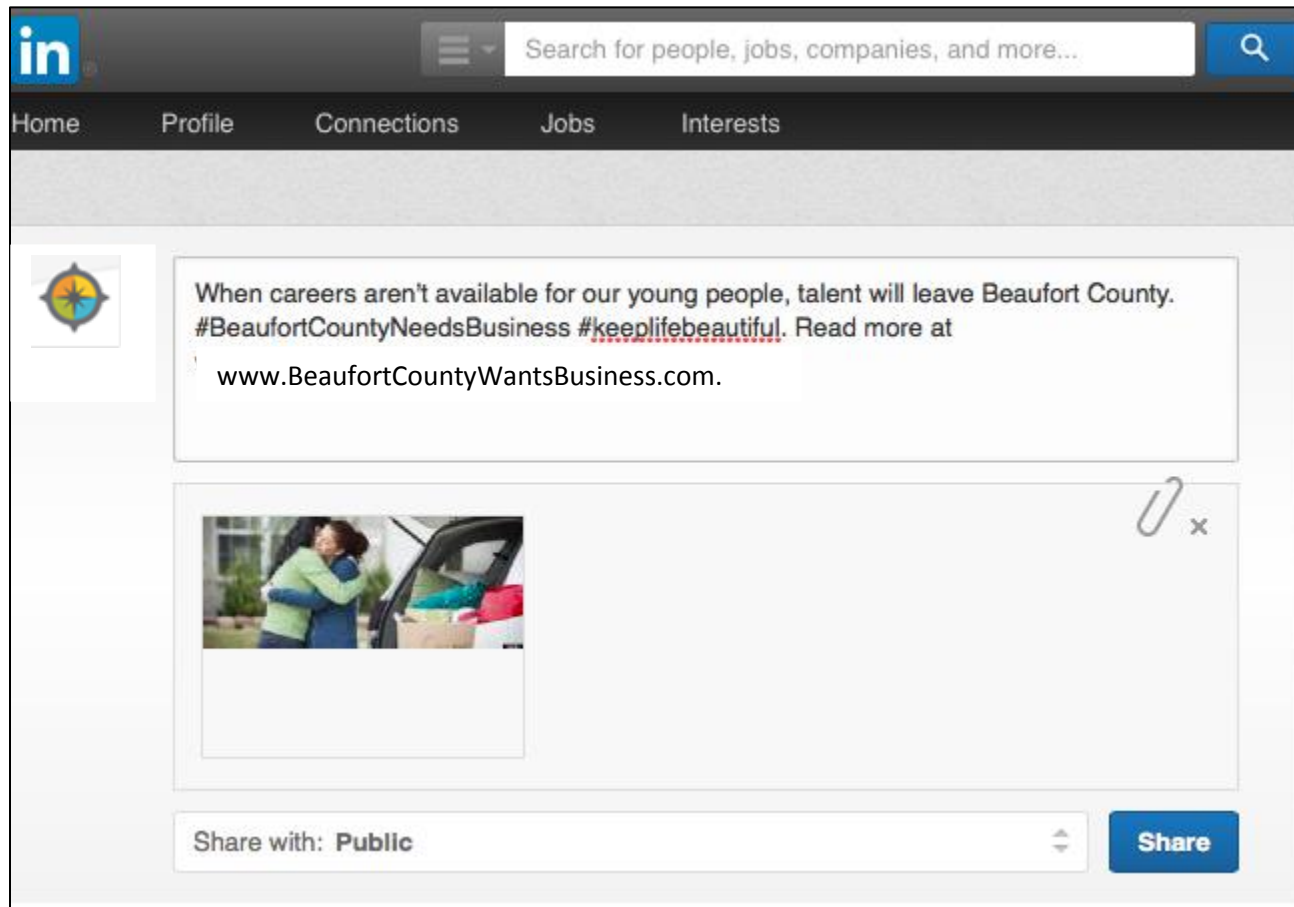


While Google+ looks and feels like Facebook, the benefits are different. Corporations and businesses are now using Google+ to improve brand SEO (Search Engine Optimization) efforts, as posts to their accounts show up in search results. Recommend starting a Google+ account for the Lowcountry Economic Alliance.



LinkedIn

Sample Post:



LinkedIn is the social media channel specifically tailored for business. Establish a LinkedIn account for the Lowcountry Economic Alliance and actively engage partners to grow the network and share the Beaufort County Needs Business message.



Social Media Tips

- Offer easy connections via icons on your homepage and throughout your website.
- Post regularly using a social media engagement calendar to optimize messaging and ease implementation.
- Use a consistent style and follow brand guidelines closely.
- Ask followers and fans to share your message.
- Engage your followers and fans in friendly banter. Reply to posts on your content.
- Acknowledge when others re-post your content.
- Be engaging and use photos, videos and links where appropriate.
- Like and share others' appropriate content.
- Make the process easier and less time-consuming by automating posts and scheduling them in advance.
- Include others in your posts by tagging them. For example, tag Beaufort County by using @bcgovsc or tag SC Department of Commerce by using @SCcommerce.

Social Media Engagement Calendar

It is helpful to plan out the week's social media engagements in advance. This allows for consistent and intentional messaging across the channels, reinforcing content each day without appearing repetitive. Time management is also improved through automation of posts for future delivery throughout the week. See an example on the next page.



Social Media Engagement Calendar (One- Week Sample)

DATE	Message	Twitter	Facebook	Instagram	Google+	LinkedIn
MON	Quality of Life	Unsurpassed beauty here. Let's keep it that way. #keeplifebeautiful #BeaufortCountyWantsBusiness (Insert Waterfront Park Pic)	Don't you love it? Want to keep it? #BeaufortCountyWantsBusiness #keeplifebeautiful (Insert Waterfront Park Pic)	Let's keep having moments just like this. Preserve our quality of life. #keeplifebeautiful #BeaufortCountyWantsBusiness (Insert Waterfront Park Pic)	Ahhhhh - breathe in. The perfect moment. Let's keep having them. #keeplifebeautiful #BeaufortCountyWantsBusiness (Insert Waterfront Park Pic)	So many beautiful scenes like this across Beaufort County. To maintain this world-class quality of life, we need a healthy business climate. Support the Lowcountry Economic Alliance - #keeplifebeautiful. (Insert Waterfront Park Pic)
TUES	Leaking jobs and money	#BeaufortCountyWantsBusiness We are leaking jobs and \$ while other SC towns are thriving. Plug the leak. #keeplifebeautiful	We are leaking jobs and money while other SC towns are thriving. Plug the leak. #keeplifebeautiful. #BeaufortCountyWantsBusiness (Insert pic of leaky bucket)			We are leaking jobs and money while other SC towns are thriving. Plug the leak with new businesses. #keeplifebeautiful. #BeaufortCountyWantsBusiness (Insert pic of leaky bucket)
WED	\$34 Million	1.2% jobs lost = \$34M in lost wages over 3 yrs. \$\$\$ not spent in Beaufort County. What would \$34M have bought? #BeaufortCountyWantsBusiness	\$34 Million in lost wages over 3 years means \$34 Million was not spent here locally on basic goods like housing, transportation and food. Time for a change. #BeaufortCountyWantsBusiness #keeplifebeautiful.			
THUR	Create jobs for our kids	If Beaufort County loses jobs, our kids lose opportunities. Don't drive them away. #BeaufortCountyWantsBusiness (Insert pic of parent hugging child in driveway)		Don't watch them drive away. Keep our graduates in Beaufort County. #BeaufortCountyWantsBusiness s to #keeplifebeautiful and create jobs for our kids. (Insert pic of parent hugging child in driveway)	Will she come back to the place she calls home? Will she raise her family here? Keep our young adults in Beaufort County. #BeaufortCountyWantsBusiness #keeplifebeautiful	
FRI	Create jobs for our kids		There's no hug big enough. Don't watch them leave. Keep our young adults in Beaufort County. #BeaufortCountyWantsBusiness to #keeplifebeautiful. (Insert pic of parent hugging child in driveway)			When we don't have careers for our young people, talent will leave Beaufort County. #BeaufortCountyWantsBusiness #keeplifebeautiful www.beaufortcountynneedsbusiness.com



Communications Channels

Channels are the various outlets and ways to tell the story.

- Local media
 - Print/Online Advertising
 - Beaufort Gazette (Beaufort)
 - The Island News (Beaufort)
 - Island Packet (Hilton Head)
 - Lowcountry Weekly (Beaufort – every other week)
 - Bluffton Today (Bluffton)
 - Celebrate Hilton Head/Celebrate Bluffton
 - Monthly/Weekly Newsletters to local Property Owners Associations and Homeowner Associations
 - Broadcast
 - WHHI-TV/Sun City TV
 - Local Radio Stations
 - Beaufort County Government Channel
- Young Professionals/Student Groups (identify through leadership organizations and USCB)
- Social Media
 - Twitter
 - Facebook
 - Instagram
 - Google+
 - LinkedIn
 - YouTube
- Personal Networks and Social Events
 - Identify major events over next several months
 - Represent there and distribute info
- Chambers of Commerce/Realtors/Builders Associations
- Community Presentations – to be given by staff and Task Force members
 - Civic Organizations (Rotary, Kiwanis, etc.)
 - Local Business Associations (Shopping Area Associations, Business Park, etc.)
 - Neighborhood Associations
 - The Marsh Association



- SOBs – South of Broad
 - SunCity
- Letter to Editor Campaign
 - Island Packet – Hilton Head
 - Beaufort Tribune – Beaufort
 - Bluffton Today
 - Online Discussion Forums
 - Neighborhood Newsletters (Sun City, etc.)



Channel Plan Example – Message Delivery Across Multiple Channels

The following examples illustrate how a specific message can be packaged, re-packaged and distributed across multiple channels.

Target Audience: Native Beaufort County Residents

Message: When businesses grow in Beaufort County, new taxes are generated that preserve our rich heritage, maintain integrity, preserve green space and keep our beaches pristine. When businesses grow in Beaufort County, we keep life beautiful in Beaufort County.

Takeaway: We want more business to keep Beaufort County beautiful.

Hashtags: #beaufortcountywantsbusiness, #keephlifebeautiful

Website: www.BeaufortCountyWantsBusiness.com



Blog Post

Beaufort County Wants Business Blog

By: Lowcountry Economic Alliance
May 13, 2014

If we do not take serious proactive steps to grow our business base then we must rely on our residential economy. That means residents – all of us – will pay higher taxes. From the perspective of jobs and industry, we are underperforming compared to the state and our peers. We need thriving primary industry – companies that produce goods and services that are exported and inject new dollars and tax revenue into a community – without it, the cost of maintaining and improving critical infrastructure will fall on residents to an even greater degree than it already is.

In Beaufort County, manufacturing accounts for just .25% of all property tax paid. That's less than 1%. In Orangeburg County it is 14.5%, Spartanburg County, 13.7% and Aiken County, 12.8%. Quality of place, which is the sole reason many people move to Beaufort County, is threatened when primary businesses don't grow in a proportionate way as residential population.

This impacts all of Beaufort County. When business grows, our tax base grows. Without primary business growth, the over-reliance on residents' dollars to maintain infrastructure will turn into a downward spiral. With its proximity to major East Coast ports, scenic setting, university presence, and ripe state business climate, Beaufort County has enviable assets from an economic development perspective. It is time to stop the leaking and save our quality of life. There is a DIRECT correlation **between primary business growth and the community's quality of life.**

More business in Beaufort County will generate tax revenue, new wages and jobs. The injection of new dollars into our economy will help us to do all these things – to maintain and improve Quality of Life in Beaufort County – which is our greatest asset.

Please help us spread the word to your networks. Share this blog post and your support. Use the hashtag #LowcountryWantsBusiness to make sure our ideas share a common home.



From: Lowcountry Economic Alliance <news@lowcountryeconomicalliance.org>
Subject: Beaufort County Wants Business – Join us on May 12
Reply: news@lowcountryeconomicalliance.org

Having trouble viewing this email? [Click here](#)



Beaufort County Wants Business

6:30 p.m. at Whale Branch Early College High School

Support the Lowcountry Economic Alliance on Monday evening as we host a dialogue about why Beaufort County needs to grow our primary business presence so we can grow the tax base. If we don't take serious proactive steps to grow our business base then we must rely on our property owners to shoulder the bulk of the tax burden – and that means higher taxes for all of us.

The meeting starts at 6:30 p.m. at Whale Branch Early College High School.



Did you know?

In Beaufort County, manufacturing accounts for just .25% of all property tax paid. That is less than 1%. In contrast, in Orangeburg County it is 14.5%, Spartanburg County, 13.7% and Aiken County, 12.8%. Quality of place, which is the sole reason many people move to Beaufort County, is threatened when primary businesses, like light manufacturing and high tech companies, don't grow in a proportionate way to the residential population.

We Can Speak to YOUR Group

Lowcountry Economic Alliance staff and board members are available to speak to your group about Beaufort County's economy and the direct correlation between primary business growth and the community's quality of life. Contact us at (843) 555-1111 to share how to #keeplifebeautiful!

[Click here to see how we're keeping life beautiful in Beaufort County!](#)
www.beaufortcountynneedsbusiness.com





Letters to the Editor

To the Editor:

Beaufort County property owners have been carrying the tax responsibility for this community for too long. The number of people moving here continues to climb, putting more strain on our infrastructure with nothing to offset the costs. These new residents come here because of our quality of life. Quality of life is going to erode if we don't get some businesses here to grow the tax base.

We can't possibly continue to fund our beloved quality of life on our own. It's not mathematically possible. We have got to add new jobs and new companies in our community so that our tax base grows. If not, our taxes will go up and our amenities will go down.

Beaufort County needs business!

Sincerely,

Stan Smith
123 Bones Boulevard
Hilton Head, SC 12345
(843) 555-5555

To the Editor:

I attended the Sales Tax Commission meeting on May 12, 2014 and learned that over the last 3 years the number of jobs in Beaufort County has decreased. At the same time, communities around the state are adding jobs and thriving. The lost jobs meant \$34 million in lost wages over 3 years. That is money not getting spent here in our community. For fun, I did some math. \$34 million equates to 34,000 \$1,000 mortgage payments. \$34 million equates to 113,333 \$300 car payments. \$34 million equates to 680,000 \$50 meal tabs in local restaurants. Get the picture? \$34 million dollars did not circulate through the county because it wasn't here to spend.

It's time to change that. We've got to support a plan to grow primary jobs and attract industry to Beaufort County or we are all going to suffer. Our taxes will increase, our access to quality of life amenities will decrease and our local economy will decline.

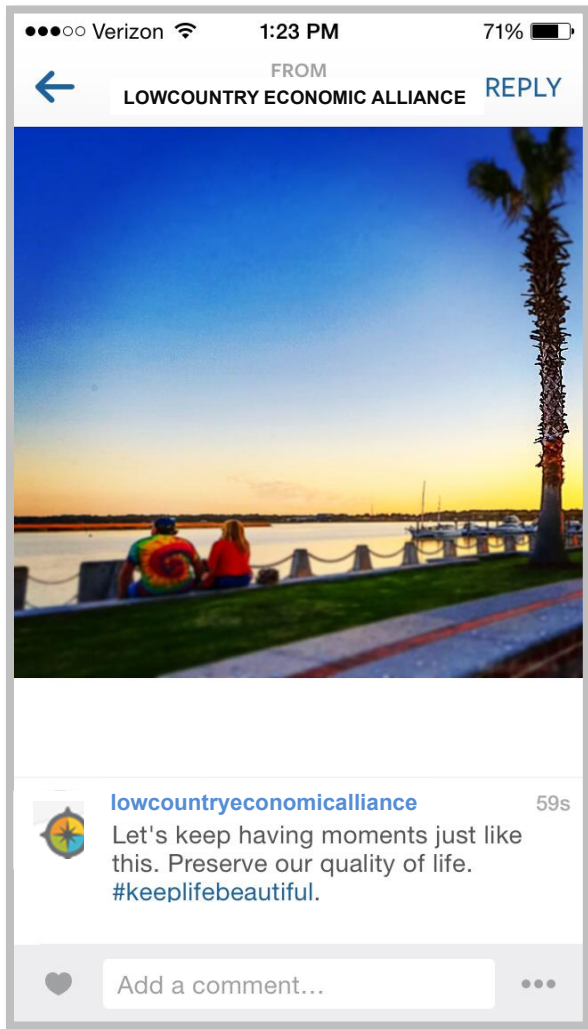
We can't afford to lose another \$34 million – Beaufort County needs business!

Sincerely,

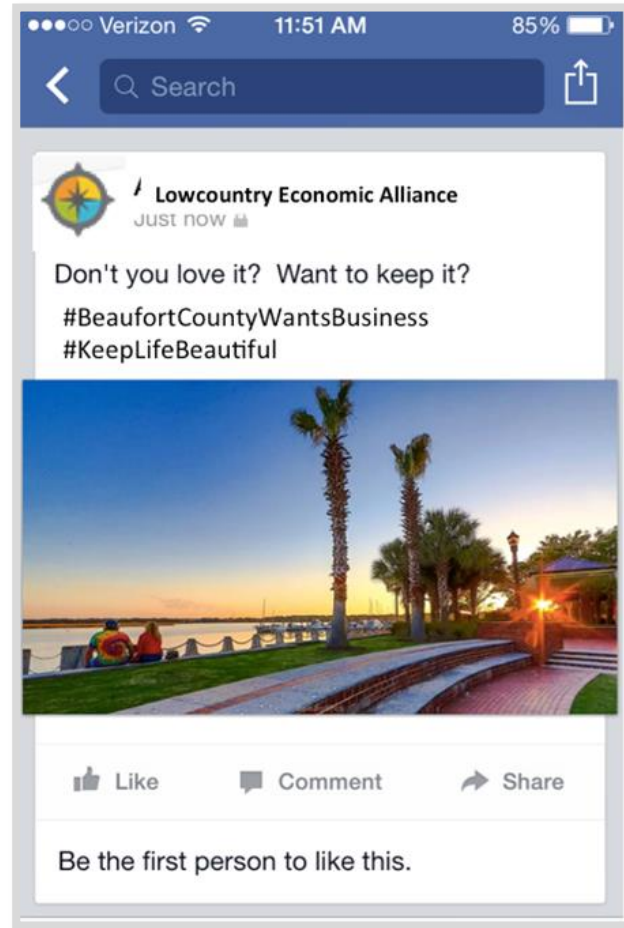
Stan Smith
321 Ruff Road
Bluffton, SC 54321
(843)555-2222



Instagram

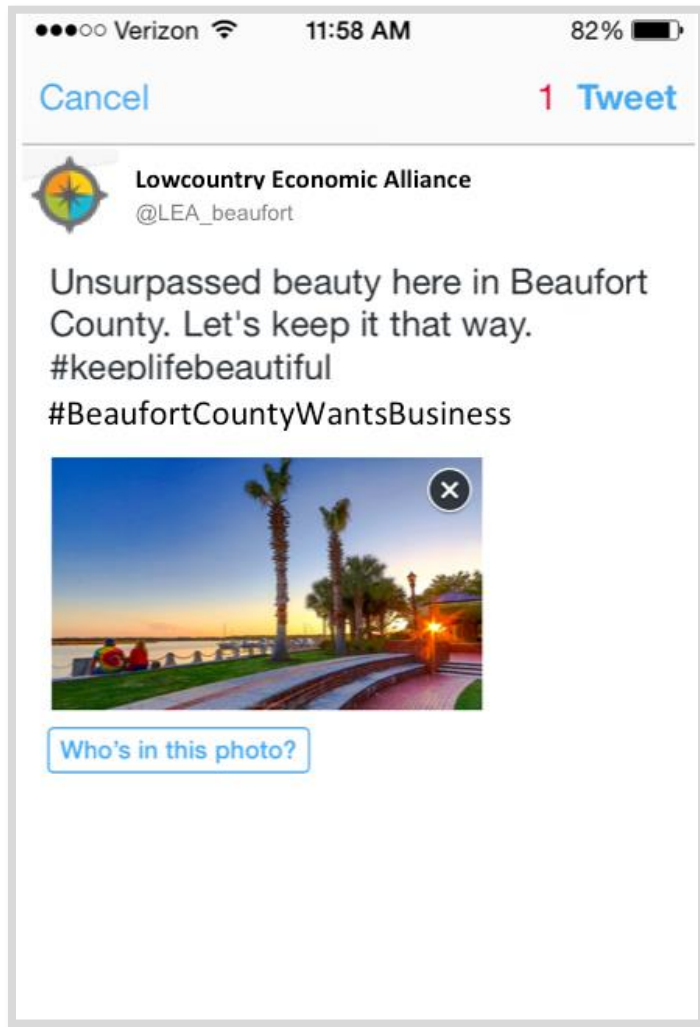


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So many beautiful scenes like this across Beaufort County. To maintain this world class quality of life, we need a healthy business climate. Support the Lowcountry Economic Alliance in growing businesses in Beaufort County.
#keeplifebeautiful.

www.BeaufortCountyWantsBusiness.com



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Talking Points

Talking Points for Stakeholders/Volunteers

Target Audience: Native Beaufort County Residents

When businesses grow in Beaufort County, new taxes are generated that preserve our rich heritage, maintain integrity, preserve green space and keep our beaches pristine. When businesses grow in Beaufort County, we keep life beautiful in Beaufort County.

- Between 2009 and 2012, the number of jobs in South Carolina increased 2.5%, while the number of jobs in Beaufort County DECREASED by 1.2%.
- This 1.2% decrease in jobs equates to approximately \$34 million in lost wages.
- That's \$34 million in lost wages in 3 years as well as lost tax revenue associated with those wages. Beaufort County is leaking money and jobs while other South Carolina communities are thriving.
- Why does this matter? Because Beaufort County's quality of life depends on having a healthy business climate.
- When businesses shrink, so does our tax base. The dollars our governments need to invest in schools, improve roads, preserve parks and beaches, keep our community safe and preserve Beaufort County's beauty are not enough if we rely on the tax dollars of property owners alone.
- When businesses shrink, we lose their tax dollars. We have to pay more to maintain the quality of life that you expect.
- Growing light manufacturing and high-tech businesses in Beaufort County is a smart way to relieve our tax burden and to have the resources our community needs to build roads, improve schools, preserve green space, keep the community safe, create job opportunities for our children and put more money in our pockets to enjoy life in Beaufort County.
- The LEA is charged with helping businesses grown in Beaufort County so that our residents can have more money to enjoy life and keep Beaufort County beautiful.
- We want more business to keep Beaufort County beautiful.



Video

30 –Second Video Testimonial: Stan Smith, Native Beaufort County Resident

Target Audience: Native Beaufort County Residents

Setting: Henry C. Chambers Waterfront Park, Beaufort



“Other than college, I’ve lived my whole life here in Beaufort County. I can’t imagine living anywhere else. My wife and I walk along the waterfront every night. We love it. We want to maintain this high quality of life and amenities like this. To do that, we’ve got to grow business in Beaufort County. When businesses grow here, new taxes are generated that preserve our rich heritage, maintain integrity of our local government, preserve our green space and maintain our parks. When businesses grow in Beaufort County, we keep life beautiful in Beaufort County. We want more business to keep Beaufort County beautiful.”

Graphics: Lowcountry Economic Alliance, www.beaufortcountywantsbusiness.com



Direct Mail Piece

STOP THE LEAKING!!!

Beaufort County is
**leaking money and
jobs** while other South
Carolina communities
are thriving.



In a three year period, Beaufort County lost 1.2% of our primary jobs. That's \$34 million dollars in lost wages.

Beaufort County wants new business to generate tax revenue, new wages and jobs. This will expand our tax base and ultimately sustain our beloved quality of life.

www.BeaufortCountyWantsBusiness.com

FRONT



Right Place, Right People, Right Time



Ms. Ellie Engle
321 Barkalot Lane
Bluffton, SC 54321

**We want business
to keep Beaufort
County
Beautiful.**

BACK



Recommendations:

- **Use an Editorial Calendar to plan your messages and channel usage over a period of time. This helps to balance what people are hearing and seeing and provides an easy-to-follow plan for those managing the process.**
- **Ask for help in spreading the message by providing a one-pager entitled, “Here’s how YOU can help” – tips to help spread the message.**



Consensus Building through Collaboration Council

The Lowcountry Economic Alliance has strong advocates for economic development through the Board of Directors and Blue Ribbon Task Force. Most of these individuals come from the traditional business and development sectors. To broaden the base of support and to activate a better understanding of the impacts of economic development across the entire community, we recommend mobilizing the Blue Ribbon Task Force into a permanent group that is inclusive of all stakeholders and sectors of the local economy. The new “Collaboration Council” would consist of representatives of the following groups:

- LEA Board of Directors
- LEA Investors
- LEA Blue Ribbon Task Force
- Leadership from Companies in LEA Target Industries
- Chambers of Commerce Leadership
- Builders Association Leadership
- Realtors Association Leadership
- Education Leadership
 - K – 12
 - Higher Ed
 - Technical School
- Leadership from the Conservation/Environmental Community
- Leadership from Beaufort Art Association or Arts Council of Beaufort County
- County Government (non-elected)
- Municipal Government (non-elected)
- Utility Leadership
- United Way or other Non-Profit Leadership

The Collaboration Council becomes THE group that advocates for economic development in Beaufort County. It’s broad and inclusive representation demonstrates that economic development is at the core of a strong, vibrant and healthy community.



What are the characteristics of a healthy community?

- A community with a thriving local economy.
- A community with primary jobs at above-average wages.
- A community with a balanced residential/business tax base.
- A community that supports its' non-profit organizations personally and financially.
- A community that has a diverse and thriving arts and entertainment sector.
- A community that values and provides high quality education at all levels.
- A community that values the environment and wants to preserve its quality of life.
- A community with a plan.

Non-profits, artists, local governments and local businesses are all dependent upon a healthy economy in order to survive and ultimately thrive. Economic development – adding primary jobs in target industries – is THE answer.

What does Beaufort County need to become a healthier community?

- More primary industry/jobs.
- More land available for industry to locate here.
- More frequent, respectful and collaborative discussions among ALL stakeholders.

By engaging and energizing a broader representation of the local economy, the messages of “Beaufort County Wants Business” and “Keep Life Beautiful” will spread more organically across the community. This is an opportunity to tap personal and social networks to share the importance of economic development to the overall quality of life in Beaufort County. The co-chairs of the Collaboration Council should be widely respected across different sectors within the community and be known as collaborative leaders who get things done. Meetings should be held at least quarterly at rotating locations around Beaufort County. The purpose of the meetings is to educate and gain support on current economic development activities, demonstrate quality of life impact and identify ways for the group to work together on projects that improve business opportunities and quality of life in Beaufort County.



Long-Term Initiatives

- Produce and publish an Annual Report
- Maintain the Collaboration Council
- Establish Young Professionals Group
 - Establish a Retiree Mentor Program to help groom young professionals for leadership roles
- Keep Storytelling Campaign Alive for both companies and individuals
 - Produce new stories regularly
 - Create a library of Success Stories
 - Library of Best Practice Communities
 - Use affordable communication tools like social media to promote stories