

Profile

Applicant: Regional Application

Grant Manager: Barbara Desmarais

Name of Organization: Midcoast Maine Chamber Council

Mailing Address: 199 Water St.
Bath, Maine 04530

Physical Address: 199 Water St.
Bath, Maine 04530

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Date of Incorporation: September 27th, 1988

EIN: 22-2982547

What were the top three highlights from the previous fiscal year?

1. **COLLATERAL MATERIALS:** This year we broadened our reach by distributing over 35,000 See Life! brochures featuring regional maps, activities, and events. This was an increase of 10,000 brochures over the previous year. We added new distribution venues: the Bath Visitors Center and the Maine Welcome Center in Belfast. The Bath Visitors Center alone distributed almost 8000 brochures to drop-in visitors and Maine Eastern Railroad train passengers, which is 80% of our increased distribution.

2. **PUBLIC RELATIONS PROGRAM AND MARKETING & SOCIAL MEDIA:** This year we achieved a fully integrated social media program incorporating weekly or biweekly bogs, Facebook and Twitter posts, and a quarterly newsletter. All the media increased visitorship to our website mainesmidcoast.com.

3. **EXPANDED ADVERTISING CAMPAIGN:** We also advertised in our traditional venues with print ads in Downeast and Yankee Magazines. Additionally, we increased our Internet presence via a successful spring Facebook Pay-Per-Click campaign.

Please state your three primary goals for the next year and how you expect them to increase tourism revenue for the region with cooperative funds.

Our three primary goals continue to be to solidify our established customer base, encourage longer visits throughout the year, and increase brand awareness as follows:

1. Solidify our established customer base and convey a value message to potential new customers in our primary geographic markets. Focusing on the accessibility of the MidCoast region in terms of the natural beauty, relaxed lifestyle and unique cultural experience it offers, without the inconveniences of more remote locales, will stimulate both repeat visits and new exploration of the region.

2. Encourage longer, year-round visits to Maine's MidCoast by promoting travel throughout the region. Exploring the many attractions of the regional peninsulas and coastal communities will create a more varied experience for vacationers and leave them wanting more.

3. Increase brand awareness with a wider audience through the use of new media with coordinated, integrated creative materials and public relations activities that focus on the key attributes and attractions of the region. Clear communication of the beauty, maritime culture and unique geography of the MidCoast will help spread the word about the Maine's Midcoast experience and draw new tourists to the region.

Please describe the overall strategy you will implement to achieve these goals.

Our overall strategy for 2012 is much like that of 2011. We have determined which projects increased visits to our website, calls to the toll free number, and enhanced this year's increase in visitors. Details follow:

1. We will increase repeat as well as new tourism visits to Maine's MidCoast by continuing to engage our core customers through

targeted advertising of our brand in print and online publications that have a Maine or New England centric readership and/or are geographically targeted to our primary markets in Maine, Quebec, greater Boston, and the Northeast.

2. We will encourage longer visits to MidCoast Maine by sharing information about activities in different parts of the region through distribution of an updated Vacation Planner & Map at appropriate visitor centers, chamber offices, travel trade shows and online. The 16-page brochure gives a branded overview of the region but also organizes information about regional attractions in a way that makes it easy for enthusiasts from diverse interest groups to follow their interests from point to point. The reprint of this brochure will allow us to continue a broad distribution strategy and fulfill information requests. Continued distribution of the brochure at trade shows in the Northeast and Canada, and at Visitors Centers from Kittery to Belfast will encourage visitors to consider staying in the MidCoast region for their vacation. We will also post the brochure to our website and to VisitMaine.com to increase our reach.

3. We will increase brand awareness with a wider audience through use of the mainesmidcoast.com and mainesmidcoastpress.com websites; web-based advertising and press release sites; and the continued integration of social networking (blog and Facebook) into the MidCoast region's marketing plan. We will replace our e-newsletter with a simpler, easily accessible quarterly PDF on our website, mainesmidcoast.com.

How do these goals and strategies fit with the Office of Tourism's?

We will promote the MidCoast region and distribute branded materials as a snapshot of the overall Maine travel experience. Through our marketing, we will encourage visitors to stay for an extended period, travel throughout the region, and visit year-round in support of MOT goals.

Please describe how the financial resources will be monitored by your organization.

We request estimates or call for bids and compare costs before purchases. The Treasurer maintains records of all income and expenditures. The accounts are reconciled and a detailed financial statement is prepared for board review and approval on a monthly basis. At the close of each fiscal year, the account will be reviewed and all appropriate filings prepared by a certified public accountant.

Primary Analysis

Research

Is your region or event conducting any research initiatives this year?

No

If you have Research Initiatives, please state the purpose and give a brief description of each.

(No Response)

Public Relations

Who is the person/company that is responsible for your PR program?

Company: Briggs Advertising Inc.

Address: 199 Water St.
Bath, Maine 04530

Phone: 207-443-2067

Email Address: laura@briggsadv.com

Would you be interested in participating in a two-hour public relations workshop?

Yes

Would you like to be contacted regarding PR efforts?

Yes

Please provide a list of editorial contacts:

Downeast Magazine
Yankee Magazine
Boston Magazine
Boston Globe
Maine Media

Please provide a list of publications and/or broadcast outlets you would most like to target:

Downeast Magazine
Yankee Magazine
Boston Magazine
Boston Globe
Maine Media
WCSH TV
WGME TV
WMTW TV

Co-Op Efforts

In what type(s) of co-op effort, if any, is your group participating?

Internal, e.g. A local matching program with hotels and inns., External, e.g. Partnerships with other groups., State-wide, e.g. Coordinated intra-state vacation effort in partnership with the MOT, participate in MOT/PSA

Please describe in further detail your co-op efforts:

Internal Partnerships:

Our member chambers of commerce place branded advertising for the region in their yearly guidebooks and on their websites.

External Partnerships:

We financially support the marketing efforts of Cruise Maine.

Statewide:

We contribute a portion of grant funds to fund the statewide media advertising campaign in cooperation with other Maine regions. We send representatives to staff or brochures to display at the Maine Pavilion at travel trade shows.

Website Development & Maintenance

If you currently have a website, please provide us with your URL:

URL: www.mainesmidcoast.com

Please provide a brief description of the overall goal of your site and the functionality that the site offers to its visitors:

Our website is designed to promote the Maine's MidCoast brand, reinforcing the iconic attractions of the MidCoast region and celebrating the natural beauty, authentic culture, heritage, & accessibility of the region. It is attractions based & data driven.

Divided into Outdoors, In Town, Heritage, The Kitchen, Arts, Touring, Getting Here & More Info pages, each page describes an attribute that draws visitors to our region, with specific information on related topics of interest. On every page a menu that identifies services by categories that answer travel needs & allows access to a database that includes all members of the 8 chambers of commerce and 1 business development corporation that form the Midcoast Chamber Council. Listings include Google mapping. An automatic update feature ensures that the database remains current. The site also links to a Media Site, mainesmidcoastpress.com.

The site now includes a blog featuring seasonal events & interests and a quarterly events PDF

Please provide a brief description of the intended strategy for improvement over the next one to two years:

Over the next one to two years we will increase our blogs from one a week to two. We will also update the member databases to keep the listings as current as useful as possible.

Visitor Database

Do you collect and compile information on your visitors (names, addresses, areas of interest, etc.)?

Yes

If so, please describe how the database is currently structured and how it is used for marketing and communication initiatives:

Website visitors can sign up for our blog and visit us on Facebook. We use both venues to market local events and festivals, as well as convey local color. We also use Facebook Pay Per Click programs to increase the number website, blog, and Facebook visitors.

Budget Summary

Current Projects

Project 1: Cooperative Regional Advertising

Description: Regional Representatives chose to support Public Service Announcements to inform Maine residents about the role tourism plays in the Maine economy and to promote vacationing in Maine.

MTMPP Award: \$10,000.00

Project 2: Administrative Costs

Description: The Administrative fee is 20% of the regional grant allocation and does not require a match.

MTMPP Award: \$19,200.00

Project 3: Cruise Maine

Project Type: Travel Trade & Consumer Shows

Description: Financial Support and Trade Show Staffing

Element 1: Financial Support

Project: Cruise Maine

Element Description: To help further the development of Maine as a major cruise destination for both large and small ships.

Timeline: SeaTrade Convention in 2012

Tracking: We will measure success by the number of cruises booked, and make a broad inference of effectiveness through spikes in unique visits at CruiseMaine's website, www.cruisemaineuse.com, over the year, as well as an educated estimate to the amount of new dollars brought to the region through these efforts.

Target Market: National and International Cruise Lines

Rationale: With a significant number of our members being served by the efforts of the Cruise Maine Coalition, it is our intention to provide a portion of our regional grant to help further the worthy cause of this multi-regional entity. The cruise industry is a growing source of valuable tourism dollars that we feel benefits our region and the state of Maine as a whole. Given the growing connection between tourism and security, our region, and the State as a whole stands to benefit greatly from its position as a safe, secure destination. Visitors from cruise ships have the opportunity to sample the attractions and beauty of our region and may choose to return for a longer stay.

By its nature, the cruise industry provides a great source of revenue to the region and state, with minimal amount of long term impact, or stress upon resources. The money will go towards funding of CruiseMaine marketing materials, website updates and maintenance, direct mail, e-mail campaigns, and trade show costs for the annual Seatrade convention in Miami. The success of the Cruise Maine coalition is dependent on time, energy and money from each member and we are committed to our support.

Partners: Other coastal tourism regions, MaineDot and MOT

Budget Description: We will continue our traditional support of \$3000.

MTMPP Award: \$3,000.00

Cash Match: \$0.00

In-Kind Match: \$3,000.00

Project 4: Vacation Planner Brochure

Project Type: Brochures

Description: 16 page brochure featuring maps of the regional peninsulas, attractions and scenic drives, for use at the MOT travel show pavilion and visitor centers.

Element 2: Production (Design & Printing)

Project: Vacation Planner Brochure

Element Description: Reprint of 35,000 copies of regional Vacation Planner & Map. Brochure includes maps that guide readers through the region along Rt. 1 and illustrates the unique topography of the mid-coast peninsulas and harbors. Accompanying copy and photos identify area attractions and activities for visitors. The brochure:

Encourages travel within the region

Raises the profile of our brand image

Differentiates midcoast Maine from competitors

Maintains a direct-to-customer contact model

Coordinates with Maine Office of Tourism marketing

Timeline: Design and Copy approvals - Spring 2012, followed by 3 print quotes

Print Completion - Spring 2012

Distribution at Travel Trade shows Spring, Summer 2012

Distribution at Visitor Centers and Chambers of Commerce - ongoing Spring, Summer 2012

Tracking: We will measure effectiveness by the number of brochures distributed, and more generally through an educated assessment of increases in travel throughout the region.

Target Market: Travel show attendees who are exploring vacation options; visitors within Maine, website visitors for the online version.

Rationale: As an affordable and somewhat underutilized travel destination, Maine's mid-coast region is well positioned for growth; the "undiscovered" coast has the natural beauty and relaxing attributes of more remote locations without the inconveniences.

Updating and reprinting the brochure enhances this powerful marketing tool by maintaining accurate information for the visitor and coordinating the cover design with our other advertising and marketing pieces to enhance the MidCoast brand.

By distributing a brochure that guides visitors through the region, we make it easy to explore the attractions of each area and encourage users to stay longer or return another time in order to experience those portions of the coast they might have missed.

We also post a PDF version on our website mainesmidcoast.com and on visitmaine.com for those who like electronic media - a growing audience.

Distribution Plan: The brochure is designed to fit racks at the Maine Office of Tourism travel show pavilion for distribution at Travel Trade shows and statewide visitors booths. The brochures were sent to all the MOT pavilion shows and are also stocked at the regional Chambers of Commerce; Visitors Centers in Kittery, Portland, Yarmouth, Bath and Belfast; and will be sent to those who request printed materials about the region. The brochure will also be posted on mainesmidcoast.com and visitmaine.com.

Budget Description: Number of brochures will be determined by extent of design changes needed and print bids receive.

Design & Printing \$17,000, \$2500 Cash Match, \$5500 In-Kind Match

MTMPP Award: \$17,000.00

Cash Match: \$2,500.00

In-Kind Match: \$5,000.00

Element 3: Vacation Planner Brochure Display and Delivery

Project: Vacation Planner Brochure

Element Description: The goal is to maintain ample brochure stock at the several visitors centers and the chambers throughout the year. This will be accomplished by hiring an independent contractor to deliver and maintain brochure inventory at all locations.

Timeline: The contractor will check inventories on a regular basis, more often during the busiest tourist season, less often through the winter months.

Tracking: We will track the effectiveness of deliveries by checking in with brochure venues to confirm timely and consistent restocking.

Target Market: Visitors to the various visitors centers and chambers and trade show venues.

Rationale: Maintaining the presence of the MidCoast brand necessitates our brochure be available at all times and in all seasons at the various visitors centers and chambers. Ease of finding MidCoast information will encourage more visitors to spend time in the region.

Distribution Plan: The contractor will store undistributed brochures, check with brochure venues periodically, and deliver brochures to venues as needed.

Budget Description: Brochure Display and Delivery \$2500, \$1250 In-Kind Match

MTMPP Award: \$2,500.00

Cash Match: \$650.00

In-Kind Match: \$1,200.00

Project 5: Maine Invites You

Project Type: Advertising

Description: Create a strong, branded positioning statement celebrating the attractions of the Mid-Coast region and promoting our website, www.mainesmidcoast.com within the publication's pages to a very qualified

audience,

Element 4: Full Page Color Ad

Project: Maine Invites You

Element Description: Design and place a 1- page, 4-color ad within Maine Invites You, promoting the Maine's MidCoast brand and highlighting the diverse attractions of the region. The advertisement will promote our website (www.mainesmidcoast.com) and invite subscription to our on-line newsletter.

Timeline: Materials will be provided to the publication for the 2011 issue before the due date.

Tracking: We will measure success chiefly by the number of requests for information generated through the advertisement made to our website and phone number, and will make a broad inference of effectiveness through spikes in web hits during the period.

Target Market: Potential visitors to the state who have specifically requested information from the MOT.

Rationale: As the primary print fulfillment piece distributed by the Office of Tourism, Maine Invites You is a leading method for reaching an audience interested in visiting our state. Inclusion in MIY allows MC3 to make a strong, branded positioning statement that summarizes the experience of visiting the region and delivers it to a prime audience.

Media Type: Print

Co-op Opportunity: *(No Response)*

Budget Description: Placement \$6000

MTMPP Award: \$6,000.00

Cash Match: \$500.00

In-Kind Match: \$2,000.00

Element 5: Maine Invites You Design

Project: Maine Invites You

Element Description: Design of Maine Invites You ad for MOT website.

Timeline: Design will be completed before the 2011 due date.

Tracking: We will measure success by the number of information requests generated by the ad to our website and phone number and will make a broad inference of effectiveness through spikes in web hits during the period.

Target Market: Potential visitors to the state who have specifically requested information from the Maine Office of Tourism.

Rationale: It is important that the MidCoast brand be consistent and fresh in order to maintain our connection with previous visitors and also forge new links to those who have yet to visit the MidCoast

Media Type: Print

Co-op Opportunity: *(No Response)*

Budget Description: Design \$3000

MTMPP Award: \$3,000.00

Cash Match: \$300.00

In-Kind Match: \$0.00

Project 6: Marketing & Social Media

Project Type: Advertising

Description: MC3 chose Briggs Advertising as its Marketing & Social Media consultant.

We seek to expand our outreach, in particular by using ever-evolving social media in a targeted and integrated way on a timely, on-going basis. Our current social media include a blog and Facebook page.

Element 6: Marketing & Social Media

Project: Marketing & Social Media

Element Description: Our goal is to integrate the MidCoast brand marketing, particularly the ever-evolving social media, to reach potential visitors more effectively and consistently. Our current social media include twice-weekly blogs and Facebook posts.

Timeline: 2-3 Facebook posts each week

2 blogs per week

Tracking: We will use Google Analytics to track website hits as each item is posted or e-mailed, as well as track comments on Facebook and the blog.

Target Market: Potential & past MidCoast visitors, particularly the Internet-savvy.

Rationale: We chose to separate Marketing & Social Media from traditional regional event-based PR in order to increase our on-line presence. Many potential visitors now use the Internet to plan their trips, so we must target that venue in order to reach these visitors.

Media Type: Online: Facebook, www.MainesMidCoast.com blog

Co-op Opportunity: *(No Response)*

Budget Description: \$16,690 as follows:

2-3 Facebook posts per week - \$2600

2 Blogs per week, writing and proofing @ \$116.25 each - \$12,090

\$2000 for other opportunities as they arise

MTMPP Award: \$16,690.00

Cash Match: \$2,500.00

In-Kind Match: \$8,850.00

Element 7: Facebook Pay Per Click Campaigns - 2

Project: Marketing & Social Media

Element Description: The goal of the PPC campaigns is bringing awareness of the MidCoast brand to our target audience. This should increase visitors to our website, blog, and Facebook page and, ultimately, increase visitors to the MidCoast area.

Timeline: The first campaign will most likely take place in the late summer to fall, with the second the following late spring.

Tracking: We hope to see an increase in clicks on our website, more blog comments, and an increase in Facebook Friends.

Target Market: Our audience is the northeast US, in particular Maine and Massachusetts.

Rationale: We chose the PPC programs because they were effective tools in the past, successfully increasing the number of visitors to our website, Facebook page and blog - which shows an increased interest in visiting the MidCoast.

Media Type: Online - Facebook

Co-op Opportunity: *(No Response)*

Budget Description: 2 Facebook Pay Per Click Campaigns @ \$2000 each = \$4000

MTMPP Award: \$4,000.00

Cash Match: \$400.00

In-Kind Match: \$250.00

Element 8: YouTube Video

Project: Marketing & Social Media

Element Description: We will post MidCoast videos to YouTube.com so that potential visitors can get an immediate look at the MidCoast brand at any time of their choosing.

Timeline: We will both gather old and generate new content throughout the grant cycle and post as it is ready.

Tracking: YouTube tracks hit on a particular video, so we will use that information to see the popularity of our videos.

Target Market: Our target audience is anyone who uses the Internet, particularly those in the northeast US.

Rationale: We chose this element because of the continuing popularity of YouTube.com and its wide reach at a reasonable cost. In general we have found online media to be a cost effective way to reach a large audience.

Media Type: Online

Co-op Opportunity: *(No Response)*

Budget Description: Create branded YouTube page, editing & formatting existing footage, posting videos to YouTube page.

MTMPP Award: \$3,310.00

Cash Match: \$250.00

In-Kind Match: \$250.00

Project 7: Print Advertising

Project Type: Advertising

Description: Strategically timed advertising placement in targeted publications.

Element 9: Print Advertising

Project: Print Advertising

Element Description: We will place print ads to promote seasonal tourism based activities and events in the midcoast region during the prime summer and spring and fall shoulder seasons to an upscale readership with ties to New England.

Timeline: Once the board has determined which print publications best fulfill this grant cycle's need, we will reserve space and supply artwork - usually 2 months prior to publication.

Tracking: We will measure success chiefly through the number of inquiries generated by the advertising through our website and phone line and will make a broad inference of effectiveness through spikes in web hits following publication.

Target Market: People who love the New England countryside and traditions, people who love Maine, or who have always been interested but need a stimulus to visit.

Rationale: Appropriate print advertising reaches a qualified readership that is affluent, already interested in New England culture and traditions, and in many cases living within a days drive of Maine. We will seek to advertising in publications that will help extend the reach of our brand and increase brand awareness, and can be used to spur tourism activity during the shoulder seasons.

We will use this venue to drive visitors to our website, increase our email contact list, and promote the midcoast as a year-round travel destination at a time when readers may be making vacation plans or ready to make an impulse trip.

Media Type: Print

Co-op Opportunity: *(No Response)*

Budget Description: \$10,000 for design & placement

MTMPP Award: \$10,000.00

Cash Match: \$1,250.00

In-Kind Match: \$4,500.00

Project 8: Visitor Center Kiosks (\$200 under Admin)

Project Type: Advertising

Description: Rental free standing Kiosks at the Kittery and Yarmouth Visitors Information Centers.

Element 10: Free Standing Kiosks

Project: Visitor Center Kiosks (\$200 under Admin)

Element Description: Yearly Space Rental Fee

Timeline: Yearly Renewal Agreement July 2011

Tracking: The number of brochures and guides distributed from each center.

Target Market: All of the qualified visitors coming to the Maine Tourism Visitor's Centers in Kittery and Yarmouth.

Rationale: Over 850,000 visitors pass through the Kittery and Yarmouth Visitor's Centers annually. Evidence from both the state's own data and interviews conducted with Visitor Center staff tell us that a very large number of people come to Maine with no particular destination in mind until they reach the Visitor's Centers.

Our kiosks in these centers provide us with the graphic vehicle and point of fulfillment opportunities necessary to help make a strong case for a Mid-Coast vacation, and encourage more and longer visits through effective communication of the region's events and activities.

We are updating the Kiosks' look for consistency of branding to reinforce awareness of the attractions of Maine's MidCoast to those who have already chosen to visit Maine and lead them to explore the MidCoast region.

Media Type: POP Free-Standing Display Kiosks

Co-op Opportunity: *(No Response)*

Budget Description: Kiosk Space Rental \$1500 (less \$200 in Admin) = \$1300

MTMPP Award: \$1,300.00

Cash Match: \$0.00

In-Kind Match: \$0.00

Project Quick Reference

	<u>MTMPP Award</u>	<u>Cash Match</u>	<u>In-Kind Match</u>
Cooperative Regional Advertising			
Cooperative Regional Advertising	\$10,000.00		
Administrative Costs			
Administrative Costs	\$19,200.00		
Cruise Maine			
Financial Support	\$3,000.00	\$0.00	\$3,000.00
Vacation Planner Brochure			
Production (Design & Printing)	\$17,000.00	\$2,500.00	\$5,000.00
Vacation Planner Brochure Display and Delivery	\$2,500.00	\$650.00	\$1,200.00
Maine Invites You			
Full Page Color Ad	\$6,000.00	\$500.00	\$2,000.00
Maine Invites You Design	\$3,000.00	\$300.00	\$0.00

Maine Tourism Marketing Partnership Program



Marketing & Social Media

Marketing & Social Media	\$16,690.00	\$2,500.00	\$8,850.00
Facebook Pay Per Click Campaigns - 2	\$4,000.00	\$400.00	\$250.00
YouTube Video	\$3,310.00	\$250.00	\$250.00

Print Advertising

Print Advertising	\$10,000.00	\$1,250.00	\$4,500.00
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Visitor Center Kiosks (\$200 under Admin)

Free Standing Kiosks	\$1,300.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
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Budget Summary

Proposed MTMPP Award:	\$96,000.00
Administrative Costs:	\$19,200.00
Cash Match:	\$8,350.00
In-Kind Match:	\$25,050.00
Total Match:	\$33,400.00
Total Proposed Budget:	\$129,400.00