



MATPRA

MID-ATLANTIC TOURISM PUBLIC RELATIONS ALLIANCE

Quarterly Meeting

October 15, 2021 Virtual - Covid-19 Pandemic

Call to Order

Anna Weltz, Chair

Attendance and Introductions

Hilary Daily, Calvert County Economic Development; Tina Coleman, Southern Delaware; Jen Sigal, Visit Loudoun; Morgan Christopher, Endless Mountains and Visit Potter-Tioga; Jenny Landis and Buffie Boyer, Juniata River Valley; Linda Devlin, Allegheny National Forest; Jen Arrigo, Greater Wilmington CVB; Alicia Quinn, Discover Lehigh Valley; Vanessa Junkin, Wicomico County Tourism; Christine Temple, Visit Erie; Jessica Williams, Visit Staunton; Patty Williams, Lexington and Rockbridge Area Tourism; Anna Weltz, GO Laurel Highlands; Tiffany Hernandez, Butler County Tourism; Jennifer Bell, Harrisonburg Tourism and Visitor Services; Cora Gnegy, Giles County, VA; Jana Carter, Kent County, MD Tourism; Susan Seifried, Visit Annapolis and Anne Arundel; Linda Sones, Columbia Montour VB; Leslie Baker, Hampton CVB; Janet Falotico, Visit Lawrence County PA; Shane Terry, Visit Wytheville; Courtney Swenson, Stafford County Tourism VA; Justin Kerns, Winchester-Frederick County CVB; Taylor Spellman, Virginia's Blue Ridge; Leslie Troy, Maryland Office of Tourism; Maggie Boyden, Explore Charles County MD; Crystal Abrom, Visit Howard County MD; Brenda Black, Shenandoah County Tourism VA; Tracey Johnson, Visit Baltimore; Aaron Jumper, Cumberland Valley VB PA; Miranda Jarrell, Visit Williamsburg; Jennifer Callison, Waynesboro VA; Ed Stoddard, Happy Valley Adventure Bureau; Mindy Schneider, Visit HARford; Tina Ladd, Hampshire County WV

Welcome and Housekeeping

Anna Weltz, Chair

Virtual attendance was taken along with answering the ice breaker questions "How long have you been with your DMO and how long have you been a part of MATPRA." Anna welcomed new board secretary, Tiffany Hernandez. Anna asked if everyone was receiving the e-newsletter; everyone on the call responded "yes."

Approval of Minutes - July 16, 2021

Tiffany Hernandez, Secretary

Motion to approve: Cora Gnegy

Second: Linda Devlin

No opposed: Motion passes

Approval of Treasurer's Report

Krista Boothby, Treasurer

Motion to approve: Cora Gnegy

Second: Taylor Spellman

No opposed: Motion passes

Old Business

Anna Weltz, Chair

New Staff Member - We are looking at hiring a new staff. Tasks assigned to the new employee are being discussed and a draft of duties is in the works. Our organization needs consistency. We are currently at 79 paid members, which is the most MATPA has ever seen!

New Business

Jen Sigal, Past Chair

A member survey about the 20th year anniversary survey went out. We are gathering ideas on how to honor the 20th anniversary of MATPRA in 2022.

Anna - Everyone, please fill out the survey if you haven't already

Jen - We're getting positive feedback. NYC and DC are the top choices as destinations for an event. We have good responses having a MATPRA booth at major media events and tradeshow like IMM.

Justin Kerns - I can volunteer to help plan this

Ed Stoddard - I think it's a good idea for MATPRA to attend media events, but the state reps might be a better option.

Morgan Christopher - We need to really think about the state reps attending. I'd feel better if a MATPRA rep could attend and promote our MATPRA members and destinations.

Anna Weltz and Jen Sigal - We like the idea of MATPRA being at events to grow awareness of the organization and its membership

Taylor Spellman - Maybe we can have a two-part event. State reps could attend along with MATPRA reps. Perhaps all could attend the show, then we host a dinner and invite writers.

Linda Devlin - I like the idea of working with state reps to grow MATPRA. Do we need to change the way we go after writers? Should we attend shows to make contacts or do we rethink our plan?

Jen Sigal - Maybe we can utilize our group press releases to list "20 things" to help celebrate our 20th year in 2022. We can also utilize video on our website.

Courtney Swenson - We can utilize a Youtube channel to upload DMO videos.

Janet Falotico - We can create an evergreen MATPRA video that shows content we have in all areas of the MidAtlantic. Then the video will drive people to the MATPRA website.

Tina Coleman - We don't know the future. Do we want to spend the money on events in 2023? Maybe we can have a 2022 marketing awareness campaign to target the media. We can hire an agency to organize the details and promote the campaign.

Justin Kerns - Great idea. I can help volunteer on a committee to help organize.

Morgan Christopher - Maybe we can have a banner "20 Years Strong" or something like that.

Courtney Swenson - drafted a 20 year banner and shared with the board for approval

Cora Gnegy - Can we get referrals of media events to attend?

Brenda Black - We have an industry media calendar, and I'd be happy to share it.

Jen Sigal - We have have a press release about MATPRA's 20th year and quotes from long standing members

Courtney Swenson - I like the idea of using 2022 to recreate the value of MATPRA. We can create a story and/or campaign on how we want to grow and that we're timeless

Anna Weltz - If anyone has old photos from past Media Marketplaces, please email them to the board. Maybe we can share these old photos in a powerpoint presentation at the next Marketplace.

2022 Marketplace Update

Anna Weltz, Chair

2021 Fee Refund Update

Ed Stoddard, Host Committee

Anna Weltz - We were grateful for State College to take on hosting Marketplace. We had several media start cancelling and didn't feel like the event would serve our members and the media in the way it should. It was a very hard decision to make. Team PA will rehost in 2022. The timeline and info will be determined soon.

Ed Stoddard - Covid impacted our staff, which made things take more time. As of this week, all refunds have been processed via Paypal. Refunded checks were processed and mailed. Please let me know if you didn't receive the refund.

Jenny Landis - Why didn't you hold our money for next year?

Anna Weltz - We didn't feel it was the right thing to do and DMOs need their money for their budgets

Annual Meeting Committee Reports

Website Committee

Crystal Abrom (sub for Ali Morris)

Past & Current Projects:

Each DMO has a specific profile and everyone needs to update their pages. As for events, they are approved within 24-28 hours. Please include events that encourage overnight stays.

We have overhauled the Destinations section. Each Destination now has an extensive Profile page, which can highlight a destination overview, contact information, social media links (including YouTube, a new addition!), and any events, itineraries, and posts that have been submitted to website. In the general overview section, users can also add image galleries, text, solo images, etc.

(example: Columbia Montour and Fairfax County)

- This effort also included a comprehensive audit of usernames and destinations, so that
- Destinations are listed by Destination Location, but their DMO/Organizational Name
- remained top of mind for branding purposes.

New pages have included:

- Video Gallery - <https://matpra.org/destination-videos/>
- Suggested Itineraries - <https://matpra.org/itineraries/>
- An updated News section - <https://matpra.org/about-us/news/>
- Destination Visitor Guides - <https://matpra.org/destination-visitor-guides/>
- Began utilizing an Alert banner, for use in situations like COVID-19 health updates and also for
- Marketplace Registration announcements, etc.
- Press releases have begun being added to the site as "News Posts," to ensure they get crawled by Google for search engine optimization.

New initiatives:

Fresh imagery throughout site

Overhaul of Story Ideas page

Website approval notifications and preview functionality

Filter capability on News Post page similar to Itineraries section

20th Anniversary Content Implementation, per direction from Board & Marketing committee

Analytics / UTM tracking in coordination with social media committee

One Slot Open on Website Committee! Please reach out especially if you have interest or knowledge in search engine optimization, analytics, and Wordpress.

Membership Committee

Taylor Spellman

We are addressing how membership is being managed and establishing an updated database.

Membership Update: 79 paying members

Projects & New Initiatives:

Spring/Summer 2021:

- New process to streamline MATPRA's membership management
- Set up form to collect DMO details, contact info, etc. in one place
- Established and regularly maintain membership and committee contact databases
- Email outreach to new and existing members with helpful resources and member details

Fall 2021: Mailchimp deep clean (DMO contacts)

Spring 2022: Membership will be contacting members for annual updates.

Future Goals:

- MATPRA Facebook Group Membership Clean Up
- Further streamline distribution of info through new member emails
- New member socials during in-person annual and quarterly meetings

- Ongoing: Membership/Committee database updates

Stay in touch with us and let us know of any DMO changes.

Marketing and Social Media Committee

Vanessa Junkin & Courtney Swenson

Please send in your group press releases and mark your photos appropriately, or they will not get featured. Also, we reshare the group press releases on our social media outlets. Please follow our SM accounts.

Anna Weltz - If you're not a member of our DMO Facebook page, please let me know.

Linda Scones and Jennifer Bell responded that they need to be added.

Past and Current Projects:

- Monthly Group Releases
- Weekly Social Media postings

Courtney Swenson - I created a marketing plan, and these are our initiatives.

New initiatives for FY22 – FY23:

- Recruit DMO Members to join the Marketing & Social Media Committee
- Marketing Plan
- Create Brand Guidelines
- Updating Fact Sheets & One-pagers
- Implementing YouTube Channel
- Create Marketing & Advertising Strategy

If you are interested in learning or growing your marketing, advertising, graphic design, strategic planning, content creation, and social media expertise, consider joining the Marketing & Social Media Committee!

Media Committee

Morgan Christopher

I'm communicating with the board and putting together pdfs of the media. I'll also be updating media forms and cleaning up the media list to reflect current updates. We are questioning "Who's not on our media list" and want to get new media to Marketplace, which is one of our goals.

Media Committee Tasks

- Keeping a comprehensive record of our media contacts and updating these lists throughout the year
- Management of the Marketplace Application process from distribution through acceptance for participation in the event
- Working with Marketplace hosts and the board of directors to communicate marketplace information with the media partners as necessary

Media Committee Goals

- Update the full Media List pursuant to reflect current media
- Review the current Marketplace application process and propose changes to reflect
- MATPRA's needs for information from media in the acceptance process
- Review our media lists to ascertain who might be "missing from the table" to grow our base of partners
- Court publications and platforms that offer access to media markets who are not currently attending or applying for Marketplace participation

Anna Weltz - If you have a journalist you'd like to recommend, send their contact info to the MATPRA Gmail account. Alos, DMO story sheets have been put in a Google Drive. The Media Committee is creating a one-sheet about the accepted media to provide to DMO members

There is a new position on the committee and we're welcoming new members to come on board.

Professional Development Session

Anna Weltz, Chair

Roundtable discussion of projects, trends, opportunities, etc.

Justin Kerns - I've noticed that a lot of travel writers are being fickle and changing their plans or cancelling their visits

Ed Stoddard - Yes, I agree. This happened to me.

Brenda Black - Writers want to be on their own.

Leslie Baker - We have given out suggested itineraries.

Christ Temple - We have done really well with writers but noticed that they didn't have to travel very far. Canadian writers reached out to see if they could come in 2022.

Leslie Troy - We've had a lot of writers in the area and lots lined up for Dec. Writers are planning at the last minute. Writers are covering more cost and focusing on indoor activities.

Anna Weltz - When building an itinerary, how are you working with your partners on communicating w/businesses to update their hours?

Jana Carter - We send out emails and social media posts to encourage businesses to update their info

Linda Devlin - Is anyone bringing writers to Air bnb's or traditional hotels?

Anna Weltz - We are looking at their travel needs. Some might go to Air bnb's or hotels. But demand is high, so I have to use what I have.

Anna Weltz - Are your writers transitioning to start expecting payments now?

Ed Stoddard - I was pitched by several writers and they were wanting to charge me.

Tracey Johnson - I agree Ed. We very rarely work with influencers and it's very easy for them to fake their numbers. You have to be careful.

Susan Seifried - We don't pay to play. We never host influencers.

Justin Kerns - There's a lot of uncertainty. Where do we direct our funding next year?

Linda Devlin - We pulled back on our funding for our trade shows next year. We are taking that funding and doing research to help us set up anew path for our organization.

Anna Weltz - Does anyone use Air DNA?

Several responded with "yes" and many had great reviews about this service.

Jonathan Bellingham - It's my last MATPRA meeting. He gave a beautiful farewell to the organization.

Tina Ladd will be his replacement at MATPRA

Next Quarterly Meeting: Jan. 21, 2022, Charles County, MD

Closing Comments / Adjournment

Anna Weltz, Chair