

Senator Mullin and Representative Botzow,

As tasked in Act 51, passed in 2015, the Agency of Commerce and Community Development (ACCD) has been working to “develop an economic development marketing program, highlighting the many positive features that make Vermont a great place to live, work and do business.”

Progress on our efforts to-date to complete this work were presented in testimony to the House Committee on Commerce and Economic Development on Wednesday, January 6, 2015 and to the Senate Committee on Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs on Wednesday, January 13, 2015. In support of that testimony, a summary is included below of the steps already taken and the timeframe to complete the economic development marketing program, including the identification of goals, targets, performance measures and results as specified in statute.

By way of this written communication and the testimony given, we would advise that our statutory requirement to report on or [before January 15, 2016](#) has been met, and we will submit a full written report when the economic development marketing program is complete, anticipated by [April 1, 2016](#).

Summary and Additional Detail on Testimony

June – August 2015: Following the appropriation of \$200,000 in S.138, ACCD embarked on an internal discovery phase with team members from the Department of Tourism and Marketing, the Department of Economic Development and the Chief Marketing Office to review stakeholder research, existing assets, and past economic development marketing efforts. In order to maximize the resources allocated for this effort, the ACCD team developed a draft profile of target audiences, key messages and possible tactics internally to better inform the consultants to be contracted to assist with the development of the economic development marketing program.

September – November 2015: A Request for Proposals for consulting services to assist ACCD as noted above was released on September 9, 2015. A total of 13 responses were received, from both in-state and out-of-state firms, generally of high-quality. Five finalists were selected to participate in a Question and Answer interview format, resulting in the selection of two firms.

November – December 2015: After contract negotiations, a scope of services was executed between ACCD and both Development Counsellors International (DCI) of New York, and Spike Advertising of Vermont. DCI was able to offer an impressive breadth and depth of experience in 'place' marketing and demonstrated economic development marketing expertise for clients nationwide. The firm has limited experience working in Vermont, which the Selection Committee felt provided a valuable outside perspective. Spike

Advertising was able to offer a breadth and depth of experience in marketing the Vermont brand and in working with State entities to define and articulate target audiences and key messages -- and provided an equally valuable in-state perspective and sensibility. With such complementary skills to bring to the project, the Selection Committee unanimously agreed that offering a contract to both firms would provide the best possible outcome to the State; as well as the best value, as the total value of the two contracts (\$60,000) was less than budgets proposed by other finalists.

July - December 2015: To act on a potential strategy already identified, the ACCD team began to capture some of Vermont's success stories through a series of video profiles. The best channels for distributing these videos will be identified in the final economic development marketing plan, but can also be viewed through the following links:

- Vermed (<https://youtu.be/JrSfJBhdeaE>)
- Chroma Technology (<https://youtu.be/1AxBUuFmu7A>)
- Logic Supply (https://youtu.be/H_Gr8NW97KU)
- Fresh Tracks' Road Pitch (<https://youtu.be/vk6iRHoBKOM>)

January – February 2016: Phase One (Discovery) of the work of the consultants' is [due by February 15, 2016](#) and includes:

- Analysis of the internal discovery work by ACCD, to determine merits and gaps;
- A stakeholder engagement immersion tour and interviews to capture the perceived barriers to and opportunities for economic development in the state;
- A media audit of national press, to determine what is and what isn't being written about Vermont;
- Three internal and external surveys, of stakeholders, corporate executives and young professionals, respectively, to determine baseline perceptions.

February 2016: Based on the results of the discovery work, Phase Two of the consultants work will include the prioritization of target audiences and the development of key messages for top priority audiences. Deliverables for Phase Two due are by [March 1, 2016](#).

March 2016: Based on the Discovery and Key Message Development phases, the Contractors will be developing a three-year economic development marketing plan, to include:

- Communication goals and objectives;
- Identification and prioritization of strategies and tactics for reaching target audiences;
- Development of a metrics system and dashboard to measure outcomes of all proposed activities;

- Analysis of internal and external resources, including staff time, required to execute all proposed activities;
- Budget and timeline for implementation.

As noted above, the completion of the work to develop an economic development marketing program is scheduled to be completed by [April 1, 2016](#) after which a full written report will be submitted. If the Chairs would find it helpful, the consultants will make themselves available to present the final report in Committee(s).

Patricia Moulton, Secretary
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Sent from my iPad, please excuse the typos!