



BUSINESS PLAN 2011

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2010 was a successful year for the CTTA with a much improved financial situation. Net equity increased from -\$19618 on Jan 31 2010 to -\$9186 on Jan 31 2011. This was accomplished largely by reducing expenses while maintaining services through volunteer effort. Maintaining the same level of volunteer commitment will be difficult over the long-term, so as the financial position of the Association becomes more improves, the CTTA must be prepared to balance its reliance on volunteers with increasing use of contract/performance-based paid work.

The Cowboy Trail Tourism Association is committed to promoting tourism in on the Eastern Slopes of Alberta, and proved in 2010 that it could do so in a manner that is both effective and economical. The plan for 2011 builds on the experience of last year by increasing the promotion and marketing activities while gradually paying down the long-term debt.

This plan outlines the manner in which the CTTA will attract and serve both members and tourists in 2011.

Key decisions for the 2011 year are:

- The website was greatly improved and upgraded in 2010. In 2011 new initiatives will be undertaken to promote www.thecowboytrail.com and drive traffic to the website.
- The CTTA will produce 35,000 of its very popular guide booklets, and will distribute it through a variety of channels ensuring its placement at over 300 locations around Alberta, not including member venues.
- The CTTA will continue working with communities to develop and promote “by-way” tours enticing day-trippers to their region from the major neighbouring urban centers.
- Souvenir items bearing the popular cowboy trail logo will be developed under license and made available to retailers. Member businesses will be able to purchase these items at a lower cost than non-members.
- The CTTA will continue collaboration with the Alberta Outfitters Association, the Alberta Country Vacations Association and other industry groups to improve overall effectiveness of marketing
- The debt will continue to be retired gradually over the next 5 years.

1. GOALS OF THE ASSOCIATION

As proclaimed in the bylaws, the objects of the Cowboy Trail Tourism Association (CTTA) are to:

- a. Promote the cultural, heritage, and adventure opportunities afforded within the Cowboy Trail Corridor to tourists seeking these experiences, products and services;
- b. Assist communities, attractions and businesses offering tourist experiences within the Cowboy Trail Corridor to develop, coordinate and collaborate with each other to mutual benefit; and
- c. Help the general public find the cultural, heritage and adventure activities and experiences they seek within the Cowboy Trail Corridor.

The aim of this Business Plan is to outline the manner in which these objectives will be pursued in 2011/12.

2. MARKETING PLAN

Marketing in 2011 will take 4 forms:

1. Promotion of the website;
2. Production and distribution of the very popular guide brochure;
3. Brand promotion through sale of licensed products bearing the world famous cowboy trail logo; and
4. Participation in shows and direct marketing.

2.1 Website promotion

a. Radio ad campaign. The cowboytrail.com has been recently revitalized, but visitor traffic has fallen off over the last several years. This trend must be reversed. The primary means to do this will be a radio ad campaign directing listeners to go to the site when planning their weekends/leisure time. \$10,000 of the Associations money will be put into this campaign, which will hopefully attract additional partners and qualify for TDR co-operative funding. The basic (\$10000) campaign will start in Calgary and be taken to Edmonton as additional funding is found. The campaign will run in the April-May-June timeframe. Members will be encouraged to donate prizes to be offered in conjunction with the ad campaign, which will give them individual exposure while providing listeners with a "call to action". Success will be judged by significantly increased visitation to thecowboytrail.com. Additionally, the ads should generate some increased traffic by listeners who are inspired to drive the Cowboy Trail without first visiting the website. Web traffic can be easily monitored and analyzed to identify trends and effectiveness of the radio ads. Increased general awareness and visitation can only be assessed anecdotally.

b. Links and search engine optimization. To improve search engine ranking reciprocal links will be encouraged with members and relevant organizations.

c. Facebook page. Has been established and will provide an additional forum for discussion and postings by members and travelers.

2.2 Guide brochures

The guide brochure has been consistently in demand since it was first introduced and is a revenue generator for the Association. Last year 35,000 were produced, a number that seems to meet our ability to distribute. This year the same number will be printed, but the distribution will be done in the following manners:

a. Cowboy Trail Distribution (renewed);

b. Inter-West (new) will distribute to and keep stocked 250 locations throughout Alberta;

c. Tourism Calgary The Association has taken out membership in Tourism Calgary for 2011 so that brochures will be stocked at their kiosks at the Calgary Airport and Tower;

d. Trade shows Members attending trade shows will be encouraged to take and distribute the brochures

e. Members Brochures will be distributed to members to place as they see fit throughout their community; and

f. Other opportunities will be pursued as moneys allow (i.e. insertion in Saturday newspapers)

2.3 Brand Promotion

The Cowboy trail's logo is very attractive and popular with travelers to our region, and there is a strong and yet untapped demand for a wide range of souvenir goods emblazoned with it. The Association has arranged with a local business, Diamond Valley Clothing Company to produce and market items under license, whereby the Association gets a small license fee for every item sold. Items will be made available for sale to all interested retailers, but the cost will be less to businesses that are members of the Association. Products available will be viewable on our website, but orders sent directly to the manufacturer, who will be provided with a membership list so the appropriate price can be quoted.

2.4 Trade Shows and Direct Marketing

Due to the high cost and difficulty getting volunteers to man booths, the CTTA

will not stand exclusively at any show this year. Members attending shows will be encouraged to use the CTTA's promotional material (brochures, banner, tent, stickers) to augment their own displays.

3. FINANCIAL PLAN

3.1 Current Situation.

We go into this year in a much improved financial position from last, which in turn was better than 2009. The table below shows a comparison of Jan 10 to Jan 11.

	31Jan 10	31 Jan 11	Delta
Cash in bank	\$849.39	\$7647.60	+900%
Total current assets	\$4154.33	\$8958.96	+215%
Total current liabilities	\$25,692.24	\$20,065.20	-22%
Total Equity	- \$19618.44	- \$9186.77	+54%

That said, we are still in negative territory with outstanding liabilities exceeding assets. Fiscal prudence and cost-effectiveness will remain the order of the day as we continue to chisel away slowly at the debt, while providing a good service at a fair price to our membership.

3.2 Budget.

The Financial Plan is tied directly to the membership and guide brochure advertizing, as these remain the primary source

BUDGET 2011

Activity	2010 (actual)	2011 (proposed)
Membership & advertising	43,032	45,000
Other sales	893.34	3,000
TOTAL REVENUE	\$43,926.20	\$47,000
Cost of Memberships		
Cost of Brochure	20,740.00	21,000
Publication		
Distribution & postage	374.54	3,000
Website	4,860.00	1500
Product Line/inventory	790.00	1500
Contract fees		
Casual labour		
Salaries & benefits		
Accounting & legal	1,293.75	1200
Office rent		

Storage rent	153.28	155.00
Equipment rent		
Repairs and maintenance		
Office and stationary	99.08	100
Office postage		200
Telephone & fax	126.35	200
Utilities		
Insurance		500
Dues and memberships		500
Taxes and licenses		
Advertising		10500
Promotion	477.75	1000
Meeting expenses		
Seminars & courses		
Trade shows & conferences	350.00	1000
Travel costs		400
Interest and bank charges	1790.88	500
Credit card commissions		
Bad debts	1761.90	
Misc		
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$31,055.63	\$43,255
Net profit/loss	\$12,870.57.	\$3,745

TDR Co-operative funding will be used to augment marketing as much as possible.

Community Initiative grants will be applied for to offset some of the operating expenses. If granted, that will free more revenue to marketing and service the debt.

4. CUSTOMER SERVICE PLAN

In 2010 the Association experimented with having inquiries directed to a member reception tour operator, Creative Western Adventures, for response or booking arrangements. Because few of the inquires were looking to book tour packages, and generally asked questions that promised no significant revenue producing opportunities for the operator, this arrangement proved more of a burden than opportunity. Henceforth all inquiries will be directed to the President to answer or forward to someone who can.

5. MEMBERSHIP SERVICE PLAN

5.1 Improved Member Services

Our members are also customers of the CTTA, and need to get good value for their membership fees. Various levels of membership participation will continue to provide businesses the opportunity to participate to the degree their budgets and priorities allow.

In order to serve our members better, we undertake in 2011 to:

1. Conduct a survey of members to identify better their needs and priorities;
2. Provide effective marketing at reasonable cost;
3. Facilitate member-to-member and member-to-executive communication;
4. Maintain membership records through use of modern software;
5. Update the website frequently, so new members get posted soon after joining and delinquent members are dropped; and
6. Make a variety of souvenir products available for resale, at a reduced price to members.

5.2 Performance Objectives

Our objective for 2011 is to increase our membership to 60, with members throughout the Cowboy Trail Corridor and in all business categories.

5.3 Community Role

The communities of the Cowboy Trail are needed to continue playing a leadership role, as we are a community-based organization. This is particularly important in the regions where the CTTA hasn't yet developed a strong presence.

Among the roles for community leaders are:

1. The development of day trip "by-way" maps highlighting the attractions and activities of their region and enticing day-trippers from the major centers to visit;
2. Grouping local businesses and attractions together in a guide brochure segment highlighting things to do in their community or region; and
3. Helping businesses complete funding applications for TDR and other grants.

6. FUTURE PLANNING/DIRECTIONS

Over the past dozen years the CTTA has adapted to a circumstances both fat and lean, and evolved through several forms. With the prospect of a debt-free future in sight, this year is an appropriate time for the Cowboy Trail Tourism Association to call a meeting with all members, stakeholders and industry affiliates to consider the future role and strategic positioning of the organization.