



COLORADO
Blueprint 2.0



COLORADO
COME TO LIFE

2016-2017 Blueprint 2.0 | Tourism Promotion & Development Delta County

Delta County, located on Colorado's western slope, was selected as a Colorado Blueprint 2.0 Tourism Promotion and Development project during the inaugural year of Colorado's Blueprint 2.0 Initiative. This case study shares information about the Blueprint 2.0 Initiative, Delta County's Tourism Promotion & Development track project, initial outcomes from the project and steps forward. It also provides advice for other communities who might engage in a Blueprint 2.0 Tourism project.

About Blueprint 2.0 and the Tourism Promotion & Development Track

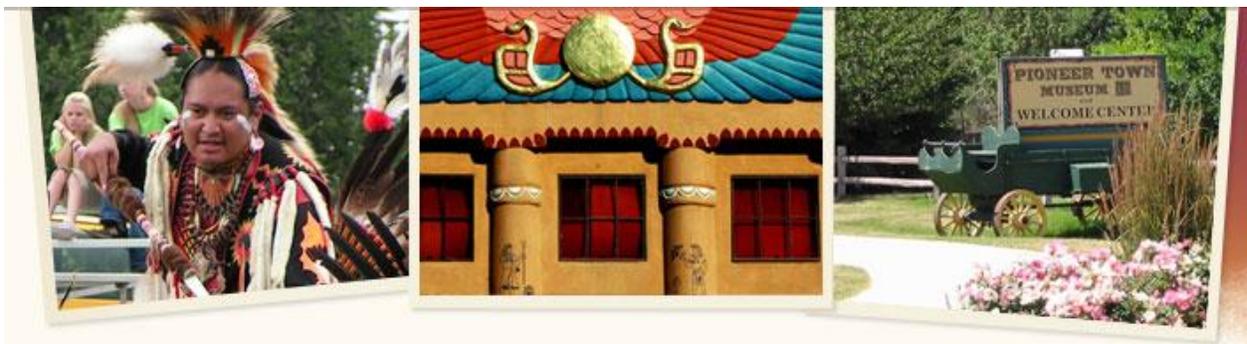
Colorado Blueprint 2.0's purpose is to examine how best to support the economic development goals of rural and small communities around the state, and to leverage and deploy resources in service of those goals. Eleven areas were developed in support of this vision and through feedback from communities. One of these areas was Tourism Promotion & Development.

Specifically, Colorado Tourism Office's (CTO) efforts to raise awareness of and appreciation for tourism statewide, initiated a peer-assistance and training program for regions and destinations that want to improve or expand their own tourism assets. Three communities/ regions were selected to be paired with a peer expert based on the specific needs of that community, the development of a scope of work, deliverables and timeframe developed by community and mentor during first stage of initiative, and where possible, continued support from the CTO.

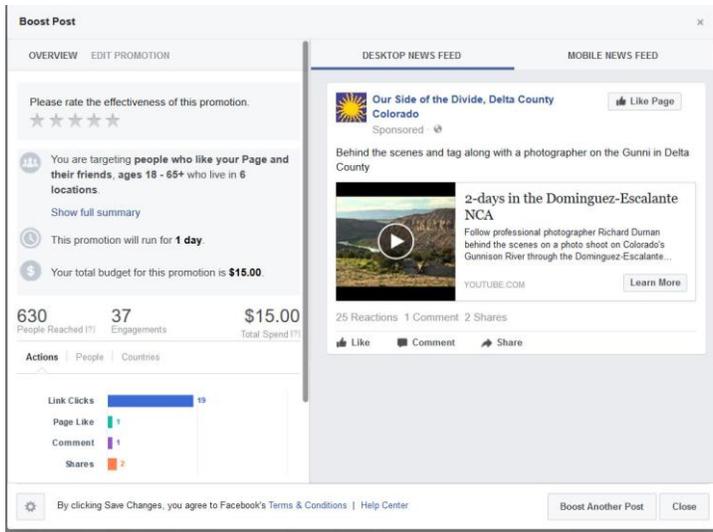
Delta County's Tourism Promotion Initiative

The goal of Delta County's project was to unify the county's five towns "to create an organized and cohesive promotion plan that sends a more welcoming and unified message out to the traveler." For this initiative, Delta County worked with an experienced marketing mentor, Dave Santucci, to develop a comprehensive marketing plan. Partners in this effort included all five local Chambers of Commerce; Delta County; Delta County Economic Development, Inc.; Grand Mesa National Scenic and Historic Byway; the local BLM office in Montrose, and the Colorado Tourism Office. Kelli Hepler served as Delta County's project lead.

Using best practice case studies which showed how peer communities used influencers for promotion via social media, Delta County developed a multifaceted marketing approach, which included a strong social media platform. Much of the plan focused on boosted social media posts using branded content, and Delta County experienced strong results.



Outcomes – Tourism Promotion



- New website
- Engagement up 500% for paid Facebook ads
- Weekly Facebook views grew from 2,500 to 8,000
- Lodging tax up 17% at the end of 2017 and currently shows a 3% increase for the quarter.
- Secured Blueprint implementation funds totaling \$7,495 from CTO to support the development of a video, still photos, and other content as proposed in their marketing plan.

Delta County’s Blueprint 2.0 work has gained additional success through involvement with the CTO social media coop, which matches ad buys dollar for dollar. With one featured post, Delta County had more than 247,000 viewers reached with 11,000+ engagements. Delta County saw a significant increase from 2,500-3,000 people reached weekly to 12,000-13,500 weekly, one month after running the co-op post (cost: \$1,000).

In November 2017, as a result of presenting a cohesive strategy and building on the momentum of their Blueprint 2.0 work, Delta County successfully applied for and received a CTO Marketing Matching Grant of \$25,000, which will propel their efforts further.

Challenges and Next Steps

Project lead, Kelli Hepler, noted that funding is needed to sustain the effort in the future.

“...[this has involved] lots of in-kind time from state, DCI, our side. We don't have a budget to do marketing. That's our next phase, how do we start to find money [for] developing print material, website, social media and online presence.”

Delta County developed a detailed follow-up plan with nine concrete steps to keep the foundational work of Blueprint 2.0 moving forward. Highlights of the plan include:

- Developing a new website with the Sitemap provided as a guide for navigation, Brand Voice document as a guide for content and advertising advice as a guide for monetizing in the near future.
- Devoting funding in 2018 budget to research, tracking, and analysis of key performance indicators for social media.
- Seeking funding: applying to CTO for additional funding for a key initiative, asking county commissioners for matching funds, and encouraging local 501(c)3 organizations in tourism to apply for Google Grants.

- Using VisitUSAParks, a social media program with demonstrated results, to create content for its social media campaign. Highlights will include fishing, mountain biking, and agritourism.

What Worked About Delta County’s Blueprint 2.0 Experience

- A strong mentor who customized guidance to the local community
“Getting the expertise of someone who was focused on us and not delivering a workshop aimed at larger groups. We really felt like our consultant really was passionate about our place and felt pride in working with us to uplift our marketing efforts without a lot of budget.”
 – Project Lead
- Report recommendations were doable and encouraged bite-size progress over time.
- The program has a lot of autonomy and isn’t rigid, allows for best local outcomes.

Advice for Other Communities

“ In rural Colorado we are faced with lack of staff, lack of budget and many times political or generational conflicts that keep progress from happening. If your consultant/team knows what you are up against (and honestly), you will get great advice and plans.” – Project Lead

Why Blueprint 2.0 Matters

“I feel like it's been a really good process for us...Being an economy that's been really depressed...We are really trying to figure out how to diversify and make our economy more resilient. We've got to build our infrastructure and make ourselves attractive to businesses coming in.” –Project Lead

“Our communities are much more on board and feeling included in the plans as we move forward. They are communicating more.” – Project Lead

To Learn More or Apply to the Program

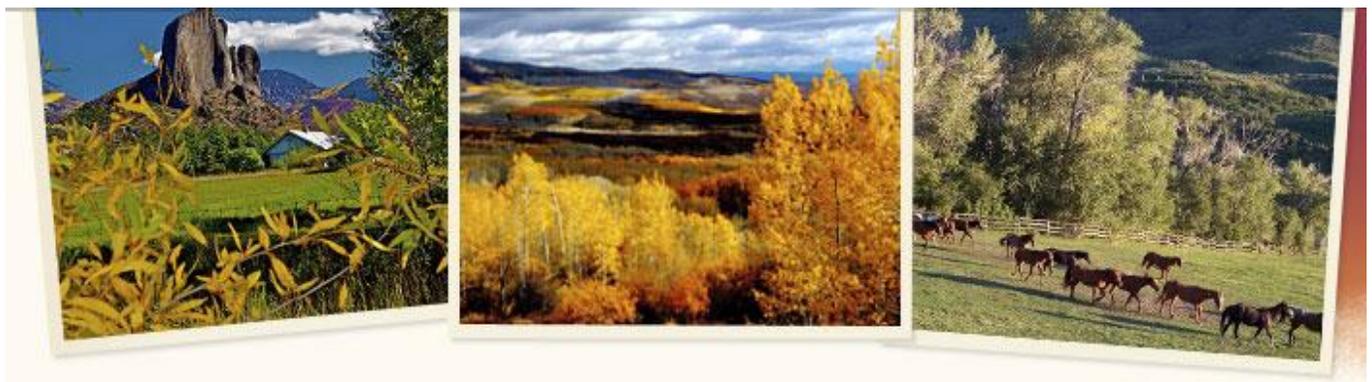
Please visit the Blueprint 2.0 website:

<http://choosecolorado.com/programs-initiatives/colorado-blueprint/>

Questions?

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Photographs are from Delta County’s official tourism website, which can be found at <http://www.deltacountycolorado.com>