

Destination Gettysburg Column
By Carl Whitehill
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The changing roles of DMOs

For more than 60 years, Destination Gettysburg's role in the community, primarily, has been tourism marketing – using a variety of tools to attract visitors from around the world to spend money and support jobs in our community.

As its core function, the staff at Destination Gettysburg employs paid advertising, public relations, sales and social media content to inspire travelers to spend a few days, bring a group or host a meeting in Adams County.

But the roles of such destination marketing organizations (DMOs), as we're commonly known throughout the country, are changing. No longer are DMOs, like Destination Gettysburg, strictly marketing to potential visitors.

Today, these organizations are becoming more like destination management organizations and taking an active role in shaping the destination and impacting the local community through tourism. DMOs are now taking seats at the table to discuss planning, growth and economic development issues that will not only bolster tourism, but all industries in all communities.

Here in Adams County, Destination Gettysburg is already working with key stakeholders, economic development organizations and the county planning office to facilitate the growth of tourism. This effort is critical as the interests and needs of travelers are shifting and Destination Gettysburg is best equipped to protect a destination's brand and build new opportunities based on what our region can offer visitors.

The most visible campaign is Advantage Adams – a collaboration of Destination Gettysburg, Gettysburg Adams Chamber of Commerce, Adams County Economic Development Corporation, Harrisburg Area Community College and Adams County Office of Planning & Development. The partnership seeks to not only identify and help business to build or expand, but to ensure that local education is in line with what the community needs from all industries – including tourism.

Together, these organizations aim to open dialogue with local business leaders and developers, and work with local municipalities to gauge the interest, openness and ease of economic development throughout the region.

In addition to collaborating with fellow community organizations, the staff at Destination Gettysburg will work closer with businesses throughout Adams County's tourism community to market their products in better harmony with the destination as a whole to create a stronger experience and greater brand awareness.

Evolving – whether through new experiences, new businesses or the growth in technology to meet the needs of visitors – is crucial for any destination. Destination Gettysburg is proud to say that these conversations have begun, and the organization is taking an active role in shaping the destination, the experiences for travelers for not only today, but for years to come.

If you're interested in learning more about the tourism industry here in Adams County, join Destination Gettysburg and the Adams County Commissioners for a forum on Tuesday, Nov. 14, at the Harbaugh-Thomas Library in Biglerville. The forum will include a presentation by Destination Gettysburg's leadership about the impact the tourism industry has on the local community and its residents, as well as showcasing some of the marketing to attract visitors to communities throughout Adams County.

More about tourism in Adams County – including news, research, marketing and articles – can always be found at www.gettysburgtourismworks.com.

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