

Governor's Tourism Conference Summary

The Governor's Tourism Conference was held in Loveland September 21-23, 2011. There were 355 attendees from all over the state. They were greeted by over 20 Loveland Ambassadors, monumental/life size sculpture outside and inside the hotel and a gracious and accommodating Embassy staff. Engaging Loveland also stocked and staffed two Loveland information booths during the three days. Embassy Suites had 429 room nights as a result of the conference.

At the Welcome Dinner on Wednesday, the City Council and Community Marketing Commission members were acknowledged and each conference attendee received a locally cast pewter business card holder and Historical Society walking map of Loveland. Mayor Gutierrez spoke at the event. Thursday morning, Governor Hickenlooper gave a thoughtful and inspiring speech about the impact of tourism and the future of tourism in the state. It was a great way to start the day.

The educational content of the conference was beneficial as well, including sessions on Social Media, the 2011 Outlook and Beyond, Destination Marketing Organizations, Creating the Customer Experience, Marketing and the PR message among others. The keynote speakers were also excellent.

Thursday night, all attendees were invited to an amazing reception hosted by the City of Loveland at Benson Sculpture Park. Shuttles delivered participants to the park where they were treated to a variety of delicious appetizers, local beer, wine and spirits, live music, docent guided tours of the park, and the outdoor ambiance that only Colorado can provide.

The Colorado Tourism Office provided great exposure for the Loveland area through their conference website. Several of local photographer Don Reilly's images acted as a slide show to the home page. There were links to several local partners, and an About Loveland section. Currently, there is a thank you to Loveland on the site for providing a wonderful venue for this year's event.

Again, the feedback and event surveys have been extremely positive, not only about the host hotel, but about all the efforts that were made by the Loveland Community to create a memorable experience for attendees. It is our hope that these efforts will keep Loveland in the minds of the attendees and add to the work being done to make Loveland a tourism destination.

Lastly, Mayor Gutierrez gifted a copy of Loveland 365 to Colorado Tourism Director Al White. This book now sits on the table at the entrance of the Colorado Office of Economic Development and International Trade, just like he said it would!

Event Summary:

Governor's Tourism Conference
September 21-23, 2011
Embassy Suites Hotel Loveland



Key Points to the Event:

1. Create a memorable experience for attendees:
Specially crafted Gifts were provided for all attendees, Sculpture in Hotel, Banners to communicate what Loveland is and has, created flash drive materials to be given to each attendee
2. Host an Event for all attendees at **Benson Sculpture Park** on Thursday, September 22nd:
 - Trained 8 volunteers to be on each bus to talk about Loveland
 - Created DVD presentation of running images played on each bus
 - Created partnership with **Outlets of Loveland** for prizes to be given out on buses from **Coach Factory Store**. Additionally Engaging Loveland donated "HeART" cards and Loveland 365 books were given out.
 - Received complimentary beverages from **O'Dell's & New Belgium & Sweetheart City Wines** that were served onboard the **Gray Line** buses
 - Contracted with boutique Loveland caterers to create a garden party ambiance at the park; **Taste, A Catered Affair & Carter's Creative**; were selected.
 - **Sal Valdivia**, classical guitarist played during the event.
 - **Sweetheart City Wines, Zephyr Cellars, Grimm Brothers, and Dancing Pines Distillery** all served beverages.
 - **George Walbye** provided two separate tours of the sculpture park
 - Provided after event options with dining in **Downtown Loveland** and **The Shops at the Promenade**.
3. Assisted with coordination of Loveland volunteer needs to staff information booth, trade show booth and event staff.

Other Notes:

- Approximately 300+ attendees were at the evening event on September 22nd.
- Used all local caterers and beverage companies
- Accepted opportunity to host CTO international in-market representatives that sell Colorado in Mexico, Canada, Japan, Germany and the United Kingdom along with two CTO staff members.
- An article appeared in the paper following press releases sent prior to the event.
- Coordinated event with Parks, Traffic & Waste Departments.
- Wrote a City Tour scrip for the volunteers to follow and use as a guideline for the City Tour
- Secured images from local photographer Don Reilly to produce DVD for the buses.
- Coordinated with the CTO on all event matters on-site at the Embassy Suites (i.e. credentials, VIP tables, agenda for Mayor's remarks, Governor's appearance with Mayor, gift placements, registration etc.)
- The Event was produced under budget.

Feedback:

I have received abundant feedback from attendees, CTO, vendors and others that the event was a wonderful venue, great food and a beautiful evening spent in our Sculpture Park. The CTO will be providing us with their formal feedback they received from surveys.