

Megan L. Bruch
Marketing Specialist
Center for Profitable Agriculture
P.O. Box 1819
Spring Hill, TN 37174

Phone
(931)486-2777

Fax
(931)486-0141

E-mail
mlbruch@utk.edu

Web Site
<http://cpa.utk.edu>



Agritourism Marketing: Tie into Tourism

Tourism organizations in the state are often valuable marketing resources for agritourism enterprises.

Agritourism enterprises can be listed on the Tennessee Department of Tourist Development's Web site, <http://www.tnvacation.com>, free of charge. Department personnel are working on providing agritourism more visibility on the site and are seeking additional agritourism listings.

To add your enterprise to the site, register on-line at <http://www.tnvacation.com/vendor/>. All you need is an e-mail address and information about your enterprise. Click on "sign up," and you will be

asked to type in information including name, address, city, zip code, Web site, phone, fax, e-mail, enterprise description and directions.

The Web site manager, Mike Uhles, provided these helpful hints of things to include to increase the effectiveness of your listing:

- A link to your Web site
- Telephone number
- Easy to follow driving directions
- Zip code (this is used to randomly select nearby things to do and will increase your exposure)
- JPEG picture from your operation

Tennessee also has eight main regional tourism associations across the state. These associations promote tourism venues in their geographic regions through promotional tools such as Web sites, brochures and press releases. The Department of Agriculture has partnered with these associations in the past two years to develop regional agritourism brochures.

Tie into your regional association to promote your agritourism enterprise. To find contact information for your region's association, visit <http://cpa.utk.edu/level2/agritourism/regtourassocdirectors.pdf>.

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Apply Now for the TDA Cost-Share Program

By Jan Keyser, Tennessee Department of Agriculture

Tennessee agritourism entrepreneurs are invited to apply for cost-share assistance from the Tennessee Department of Agriculture. Applications are being accepted now through September 30, 2006.

The Agricultural Growth Initiative Producer Diversification Cost-Share is part of the Tennessee Agricultural Enhancement Program. This program is funded through an appropriation as proposed by Governor Phil Bredesen and supported by the Tennessee General Assembly.

The program allows producers to apply for 35 percent of

eligible project costs with the cost-share portion totaling a maximum of \$10,000 per year. Projects must be approved in advance to be eligible.

Proposed activities must demonstrate significant potential for increasing farm income and potential for long-term benefits. Three categories of eligible funding are available: farm infrastructure, marketing and specialty equipment.

Examples of typically eligible projects include new enterprise development activities; retail shelters; public use considerations such as handicap accessibility features, lighting, parking

area improvements and restroom facilities; and Web-site development, advertising costs and professional development training.

Applications will be evaluated on a competitive basis. Allocations will be announced on October 16, 2006. Producers will have until October 15, 2007 to complete their approved projects.

For additional information and an application, visit <http://www.tennessee.gov/agriculture/enhancement/prodapp.pdf>. Questions can be directed to Ag.Growth@state.tn.us or Jan Keyser or Dan Strasser at 615-837-5160.

Advertising 101

Advertising is an announcement made to the public to call attention to the desirable characteristics of a product or service. It requires investments of both time and finances. Done well, investments in advertising may generate sales. Done poorly, consumers may develop a negative impression of the business.

Advertising can be accomplished through many types of media including direct mail, newspapers, magazines, radio, television, point of sale, signage/billboards and the Internet. The media types chosen should be the same media used by the target audience (the specific consumers who are likely to visit the enterprise) to learn about products and services. Chosen media types should also fit within marketing budget limitations.

Once the types of media are chosen, the specific media outlets, such as the newspapers or radio stations, must be selected. Consider the geographic reach of the publications or stations and the types of readers or listeners to determine if they match the target audience of the enterprise being advertised.

The placement or timing of the advertisement is also an important factor to determine. When is the target audience likely to tune in to a radio? Which section of the newspaper or magazine is the target audience likely to read?

Advertisements and all other promotional materials should portray a consistent image of the enterprise. This will help to build customer

recognition of your business and decrease the potential for customer confusion.

The development and use of an appealing business name and an attractive logo will help build awareness and recognition of the enterprise and to create consistency in marketing efforts. A graphic artist could assist in the development of a logo. The business name and logo may be trademarked so that it cannot be used by other businesses.

Preparations for advertising should begin at least two months prior to the time when the advertisements will run. This includes contacting media for costs and scheduling information. If development of the advertisements will be outsourced, more time will be needed. A professional agency may be able to assist in the development of effective advertisements and determining placement. If possible, advertisements should be developed by the same source to maintain consistency.

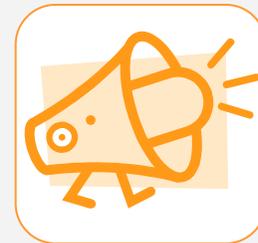
When developing advertisements, consider the six point advertising strategy (refer to table below). This strategy will assist in creating a focused and comprehensive advertisement that will effectively communicate

needed information to potential customers. Be sure to carefully check the advertisements for correct information, grammar and spelling.

Like many products and services, advertising is often a "get what you pay for" business. Although the rates for a four-line classified advertisement in the newspaper or a radio spot running at 3:00 am may seem like a bargain up front, they may not be an effective method to reach the specific target audience of your enterprise.

Remember that media agencies are businesses too. Selling advertising space is how these businesses earn revenue. Media agencies and advertisers support each other in their business endeavors.

During and following an advertisement campaign, it is important to evaluate its effectiveness in meeting the established purpose. This evaluation will help to determine if the correct media type, specific media outlet or advertisement placement was chosen. The information learned from the evaluation can be used to develop future advertising campaigns or make adjustments to the current campaign.



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Six Point Advertising Strategy

1.	Primary Purpose <i>What is the primary purpose of our advertisement?</i>
2.	Primary Benefit <i>What unique benefit can we offer customers? What primary customer value or need can my enterprise meet?</i>
3.	Secondary Benefit <i>What other key benefits will customers receive from our products or services?</i>
4.	Target Audience <i>At whom (what target market) are we aiming this advertisement?</i>
5.	Audience Reaction <i>What response do we want from our audience (come to the operation, visit a Web site)?</i>
6.	Company Personality <i>What image do we want to convey in our advertisement?</i>

Market Minute

The increasing ethnic diversity in the nation and in Tennessee may create market opportunities for on-farm retail markets, farmers' markets and agritourism enterprises. The growing ethnic populations control significant purchasing power and have preferences for products offered or that could be offered by Tennessee farms.

One example is the growing Hispanic population in Tennessee, which increased 35 percent between 2000 and 2004 and is expected to continue in the future. Hispanic consumers prefer fresh products, and Hispanic households

purchase almost 27 percent more fruits and vegetables than the average U.S. household.

Accessing ethnic markets can be challenging, however. Language barriers, cultural differences and taking the time to build trust and relationships within the ethnic community are major obstacles.

The first step is for entrepreneurs to learn about the culture of the specific ethnic group to which they hope to market products. Entrepreneurs should learn about preferences for products, including the types of products desired as well as any special processing or

packaging needs. A new publication, called "The Growing Hispanic Population in Tennessee: A Potential Market Opportunity for Farmers and Value-Added Entrepreneurs?" is available to help Tennessee farmers learn information needed to market to the Hispanic consumers in the state. The publication was developed as part of an agreement with the Tennessee Department of Agriculture and the USDA Agricultural Marketing Service. It is available from local Extension offices or at <http://extension.tennessee.edu/publications/pbfiles/PB1762.pdf>.



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Resource Review

The **Horticultural Business Information Network** is a collection of business resources that can be used for managerial decision-making by many types of horticultural operations.

This on-line directory lists resources for retail garden centers, direct marketing enterprises, value-added businesses, fruit and vegetable operations, nurseries, greenhouses and

landscaping firms. The site provides a short description and a link to each resource. Resources include presentations, Web sites, publications and contacts.

The site is maintained by Dr. Charlie Hall, Extension Economist for The University of Tennessee Extension. Dr. Hall has more than 18 years of experience in horticultural marketing and management. He hopes the site will help Tennessee

entrepreneurs answer many of their horticultural-related questions.

The Horticultural Business Information Network can be accessed on-line at <http://www.utextension.utk.edu/hbin/>.

Upcoming Events

Officer Elections for the Tennessee Agritourism Association

August 14, 2006, 11am CDT, Autumn Acres Farm Crossville, TN

All interested agritourism operators are welcome. Please bring your own lunch.

For more information, contact:

Dan Strasser, TN Dept. of Agriculture at 615-837-5160 or dan.strasser@state.tn.us

Vera Ann Myers, Myers Pumpkin Patch and Corn Maze at 423-235-4796 or veraann@xtn.net

2007 Tennessee Agritourism Conference

January 22-23, 2007 Pigeon Forge, TN

Southeast Region Agritourism Council Meeting

January 24, 2007 Pigeon Forge, TN

Programs in agriculture and natural resources, 4-H youth development, family and consumer sciences and resource development. University of Tennessee Institute of Agriculture, U.S. Department of Agriculture and county governments cooperating. UT Extension provides equal opportunities in programs and employment.