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Public Relations Writing II

RFP Response

CITY OF SAGINAW SEEKS MARKETING FIRM

The City of Saginaw is seeking the Michigan Economic Development Corporation's (MEDC) Redevelopment Ready Communities (RRC) certification. The RRC certification assures potential investors, businesses and residents that the communities has policies and practices in place to facilitate economic development, and are welcoming and committed to working on the revitalization and growth of Saginaw. The City of Saginaw was approved by the MEDC for the RRC Program in December 2015. A team of staff members from multiple departments was formed to work on the components of the RRC Program. It was decided to contract with a professional organization to prepare the Marketing Plan.

Scope of Work:

Phase I – Research

Brand and marketing audit

Situational analysis

Saginaw, MI is a manufacturing town hit hard by the 2008 economic crisis in the United States. The city has a higher than average proportion of manufacturing jobs and high unemployment rates. In an effort to relieve citizens of the economic circumstances, the City of Saginaw attained a Redevelopment Ready Communities (RRC) certification from the Michigan Economic Development Corporation. The purpose of this certification is to encourage businesses to come to Saginaw in the form of a traditional "downtown Main Street." Benefits include streamlined approvals, help with development strategies and establishing predictability for investors, and focus limited resources.

SWOT analysis

Strengths

- Saginaw is approved for RRC certification. This means that business investors will have more predictability in their investments, an easier time getting started, and more guidance for success.
- Michigan is ranked among the top 10 states for corporate tax competitiveness due to its six percent corporate income tax, saving \$500 million in annual business savings by eliminating industrial personal property tax.
- Real estate costs in Saginaw are comparatively low.

Weaknesses

- High poverty rate (23 percent in 2009; nine percent in 2015)
- Most citizens are not college educated (60 percent of citizens' highest level of education is high school)
- High crime rate
- Population decline (likely due to lack of jobs)

Opportunities

- Economic development in Saginaw is focused on innovation, clean energy, and manufacturing exports.
- Saginaw has 81 times the number photovoltaic (clean energy) jobs compared to the United States metro average. Clean energy jobs pay higher than average median wages.
- Higher than average number of patents per employee
- High unemployment rate, meaning there are people looking for jobs in this area

Threats

- Other cities who have a recorded history of successful businesses starting in their areas and lower crime rates

Interviews with Stakeholders

In order to develop a successful campaign, we would like access to interview the following stakeholders:

1. Local small business owners in the area
 - a. Examples: Spatz Bakery, Yeo & Yeo CPAs, Steinbrink Engineering
2. Large company representatives who have businesses in Saginaw
 - a. Examples: Merrill Aviation & Defense, Fullerton Tool Company, Hausbeck Pickle Co., The UPS Store
3. Small businesses who are not in the area
4. Large corporation representatives not in the area
5. Mayor of Saginaw
6. Local labor union representatives
7. Saginaw Chamber of Commerce
8. Citizens of Saginaw
 - a. Employed
 - b. Unemployed
 - c. Below poverty line
 - d. Median income

Identify what the city has to offer:

Workforce

Saginaw citizens are eager to for regular, sustainable work that can support their families. The city is looking for established jobs, both skilled and unskilled. The workforce in this area is hands-on manufacturing, with a “made in the USA” pride. Opportunities for both high wage and lower wage jobs are needed, with a focus on living wages.

Location and Space

Real estate in Saginaw is highly affordable, and businesses can expect to pay low taxes in this area. As the city seeks to combat blighting, deals on foreclosures and adjacent properties are often ideal for new and small businesses.

Incentives

The RRC certification will enable businesses to streamline approval processes that help their business get off the ground. Corporate tax incentives in Michigan are among the best in the country, saving businesses hundreds of millions annually.

Market

Saginaw is focusing on its manufacturing exports for large corporations. For small businesses, the city’s new RRC certification is focusing on bringing a downtown to the city, a place where small businesses can thrive in the traditional “Main Street, USA.”

Infrastructure

The City of Saginaw is eager to bring new businesses into the community. They have set up the infrastructure needed to support businesses as they get started. Including 24-hour customer service, personalized guidance, and strategies to help new businesses succeed coming into Saginaw.

Phase II – Implementation

Based on the research, our marketing company can create an integrated campaign, complete with visual elements to accompany the requested promotional materials.

Target Markets

1. Primary target - businesses
 - a. New small businesses
 - i. Restaurants, consumer shops, construction companies
 - b. Large corporations who might consider opening in Saginaw
 - i. Manufacturing, clean energy businesses, tech and innovation companies
2. Citizens of Saginaw
 - a. Unemployed citizens looking for jobs
 - i. Skilled workers looking for managerial positions
 - ii. Unskilled workers looking service and manufacturing positions

Promotional materials

Publicity

- Local news - pitch on new RRC certification and implications for citizens and business owners
 - Local television: WNEM (CBS); WJRT (ABC); WEYI (NBC)
 - Newspapers: *The Saginaw News*, *The Saginaw Press*, *The Township Times*
- State and National B2B news - pitch on manufacturing, clean energy, real estate
 - *Crain's Detroit Business*, *Grand Rapids Business*, *MiBiz*, *Corp! Magazine*, *DBusiness*

Personal Selling

- City business development representatives will be trained to reach out to potential investors (business owners and corporate representatives) about opportunities in Saginaw to encourage the opportunity. They should be prepared to speak in detail about the benefits specific to the organization/person they are speaking with and act as an account manager as the companies go through the process of opening in Saginaw

Advertising

- B2B ads targeting business owners and corporate representatives
 - Informative, with details on benefits of the program and how it benefits businesses, clear on where to find more information
 - Placement: aforementioned publications mentioned in publicity section
- Ads targeting citizens looking for work
 - Informative about where businesses are coming in, how to apply for jobs and where to get more information
 - Placement: outdoor bus depots, benches, mass transit, radio

Social Media

- Content marketing to raise awareness about building businesses in Saginaw
 - Interviews with success stories
 - Case studies
 - Infographics to clarify process
- E-newsletters, Facebook, Twitter, Youtube, and Instagram will be the primary mediums to deliver this information
- Placement: use City of Saginaw official social media handles and partner with local businesses to share stories on their social media pages.

Direct Mail

- Mailers with information about how to get started, tangible benefits, and where to learn more
- Target: business owners, corporate representatives, and potential business owners in Michigan

Website

- Dedicated website for new businesses needs
- Should be robust, but clear
- All aspects should include summary of processes and benefits, visually heavy with infographics, flowcharts, and simple forms
- Superior customer service component, robust FAQs, fast responses to inquiries and personalized service

Phase IV – Tracking Outcomes

Measurements

Success will be measured by tracking the following throughout the campaign and tracking results over the course of two years:

1. How many businesses have expressed interest
 - a. Inquired on their own through online
 - b. Engaged with a personal seller
 - c. Replied to a direct mailer, social media post, or email
2. How many businesses have opened or are in the process of opening since the beginning of the campaign?
3. How many jobs have been created as a result of new or existing businesses in Saginaw since the campaign?

Resources:

<http://www.saginaw-mi.com/>

[Michigan Economics Condition Assessment: Flint, Kalamazoo, Holland, And Saginaw](#)

<https://www.miplace.org/communities/rrc/>