

REPORT FOR KNOXVILLE OFFICE OF REDEVELOPMENT AND CUMBERLAND MERCHANTS (CAMA)

Research by: Angie Carrier, UT-MTAS Municipal Management Consultant and Frances Adams-O'Brien, Librarian

OVERVIEW

The completion of the Cumberland Avenue Corridor Project has changed the focus or philosophy of the business owners along Cumberland Avenue from infrastructure improvements to marketing and building partnerships and relationships to enable growth of their business. After discussions and research, it is definite that there are many different partnerships between cities, Chambers of Commerce and universities. We have not been able to locate the magic bullet or formula for making an event or partnership successful as it seems each community has a different focus and is willing to try different approaches until something succeeds.

We have the following general suggestions for your consideration.

Expanding the association membership to include professional services or even neighborhood associations or groups could be very beneficial to CAMA. Professional services could include marketing agencies, insurance agencies, or larger business that have the capacity to utilize retail, dining or professional services and be able to give back via human resources, communication, social media expertise etc. that could assist the existing merchants. It could be a fantastic partnership for all.

A partnership with the UT Off-Campus and Commuter Services office also could be something to explore. In reviewing this office's calendar and social media presence, we can see that this organization is very active. They may welcome information from the merchants that are so close to campus that would be beneficial to students who live off campus and travel to the campus on a daily basis. Here is their website address:

<https://commuter.utk.edu/>

We strongly encourage CAMA to reconsider the marketing presentations created by UT students. Otherwise, how can CAMA carry the torch for the website? Revisiting could be a good opportunity for CAMA to involve a student to implement a social media plan. Suggested initiatives to establish: become a destination area, identify a target audience/geographic area, consider seasonality (fill the gap), develop a logo, develop new branding, develop a new identity, and develop new positioning. Serious consideration of the proposals could possibly open other doors at the university to a more collaborative relationship between CAMA and the University.

As requested, we have also researched several cities in Tennessee that have universities as well as one city in North Carolina with a major university in order to uncover and share any best practices with applicability to CAMA.

EXAMPLES FROM DIFFERENT COMMUNITIES

TENNESSEE TECH-COOKEVILLE

- a. Fall Festival-booth, presence
- b. Do something informal-one big event versus a couple of small things
- c. More direct marketing, look at statistics, and take a specific issue to a marketing class on campus

Our contact in Cookeville provided the following suggestions as well:

- d. What if they host a welcome student event?
- e. Is there a gap with student affairs on campus-can the merchants help fill that gap?
- f. Touch base with the individual associations on campus-create relationships
- g. Host a pep rally, pep band, Greek night?

NASHVILLE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE-PARTNERSHIPS BETWEEN UNIVERSITIES AND MERCHANTS ASSOCIATIONS- NANCY EISENBRANDT, CCE CHIEF OPERATIONS OFFICER

- a. Activities with community colleges like co-hosting speaker events
- b. Sponsorship of young professionals
- c. Tennessee Reconnect-Adults returning to school to finish a degree-can the businesses reach this demographic by offering events?
- d. The Chamber's investors can participate in best practices with city governments-such as developing a transit initiative in Nashville region
- e. Vanderbilt University has a dedicated professor on staff that believes in a lifelong learning initiative and holds special sessions on art history at local businesses outside of the classroom
- f. Local business partnering with a local children's museum pulling in botany/zoology department at the university

RUTHERFORD CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND CITY OF MURFREESBORO-KELLI BEAM/JENNIFER MOODY

- a. Steel Barrel Brewery, which owns an 82-acre farm just outside the city limits and has formed a close partnership with MTSU's Department of Agriculture. Because of this relationship, MTSU now offers a degree program in fermentation science and students are able to conduct fermentation labs, are studying what hops grow best in our climate, etc.
<https://www.mtsu.edu/programs/fermentation/index.php>
- b. Another great example of a partnership (although not with the college) is the MTSU Small Business Development Center, which operates in cooperation with the Rutherford County Chamber of Commerce and provides free consulting, practical seminars and business information for growing small businesses in the Middle Tennessee area. The center is located at the

Rutherford County Chamber of Commerce and is open Monday through Friday 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

For more information on these programs, visit the Small Business Development Center website at: <http://www.tsbdc.org/>. Also, our contact in Murfreesboro provided the following suggestion as well: "We'd love to have an Entrepreneur Center like Nashville's <https://www.ec.co/> - but that is a future project/goal!"

MEET MURFREESBORO DAY AT MTSU!

MTSU- <http://www.mtsu.edu/nsfp/meet-murfreesboro.php>

This program started in 2001 and has been a pretty consistent event over the last 17 years. About 50 businesses participate each year. There is no set criteria other than the businesses have to pay a non-refundable fee and be available to attend the event. It is a two day event for about 4 hours each day. The University provides tables and large tents, but the businesses are able to bring giveaways and things to promote their business. Each year pamphlets are sent to about 300 local businesses, many of which already have partnerships with the university, and they decide whether or not they want to participate. Businesses have an option to bring their own tent, table, etc. for an additional fee.

Here are the details on the event:

Meet Murfreesboro

August 28-29, 2018 | Student Union Commons

Promote Your Business at MTSU

Area businesses are invited to advertise on campus during the annual Meet Murfreesboro event. This is your chance to promote products and services to thousands of students, staff, and faculty for two consecutive days. Few forms of advertising can reach as many potential customers at such a low cost!

Registration

Registration will be available starting July 1, 2018. If you have any questions regarding 2018 registration, please contact lydia.cayton@mtsu.edu.

Get Added to Our Mailing List

If you would like to be added to our mailing list to receive more information about Meet Murfreesboro and notification that registration is available, please fill out the following form:

TOWN OF CHAPEL HILL, NORTH CAROLINA

The Town of Chapel Hill has a link to the University of North Carolina's Off Campus Student office on its website. <https://offcampus.unc.edu/> This office has all sorts of information about living off-campus including information about town, however, nothing is mentioned about the chamber or business alliance by the University on this site.

Please note the following program mentioned that seems to be a partnership between the Town and UNC-CH—the Good Neighbor Initiative. <https://offcampus.unc.edu/resources/being-good-neighbor>

The Downtown Chapel Hill (NC) organization <http://www.downtownchapelhill.com/> has a wealth of information related to events in the downtown area of Chapel Hill but nothing seems strictly student focused.

Carrboro (NC) Business Alliance -- <http://www.carolinachamber.org/carrboro-business-alliance> -- Nothing going on strictly focused on students but plenty of activities but there is some interesting by-law language that could be helpful to CAMA as they explore their future direction. <http://www.localcarrboro.com/>