

Annual Marketing Budget: Large Community CVB budget (over \$100,000)

Submission Category: Member Community Collaboration

Organization: Kansas Gunsmoke Trail

Contributors to the Project: Wichita, Abilene, Hays, and Dodge City CVB staff members.

Was it handled internally or externally: Both: CVB staff members designed and managed the marketing content, and Bandwango executed the mobile passport based on the information we provided.

Integrated Components or Type:

Project Description: Howdy, partners, and welcome to the Gunsmoke Trail! This road trip visits four Kansas cities linked to Gunsmoke, the Emmy-winning Western that captivated audiences for 20 years and continues to air nearly 70 years later. Through a mobile passport, itinerary, website, rack card, and billboard, the Kansas Gunsmoke Trail partnership found new ways to market existing attractions.

Project Results/Entry Analytics: The mobile passport launched in April 2024, attracting 186 users from 26 states and over 230 check-ins at attractions across four partner communities in the first four months. Earned media includes Kansas TV and radio spots, state newspaper features, and recognition on the International Chisolm Trail Association's "Cattle Trails Showcase" series. Travel bloggers are sharing the trail, and tour planners are excited about this new themed tour.

Web Link: <https://www.kansasgunsmoketrail.com/>

<https://www.kwch.com/2024/04/11/take-trip-back-wild-west-gunsmoke-trail/>

<https://salinapost.com/posts/46a4a2d4-ea48-4614-a648-b7207fee471e>

<https://midwestwanderer.com/tag/kansas-gunsmoke-trail/>

<https://wintertexasenroute.com/2024/06/18/mosey-along-the-gunsmoke-trail-in-kansas/>

Summary: Partners, if you like Gunsmoke, you'll love the Kansas Gunsmoke Trail!

Key Performance Indicators: The performance of this new campaign is evident in metrics provided by the mobile platform provider, Bandwango. This new campaign has already seen success in initial sign up and check-ins. Partner cities have plans to expand future marketing to targeted audiences and test user messaging within the platform.

From March-June, nearly 5,000 users visited the Kansas Gunsmoke Trail website with 9,700 views. Top cities include Kansas City, Dallas, Chicago, Wichita, Hays, Abilene and Salina. Paid social media ads are the top referrer, with organic social and direct access not far behind.

Goals accomplished:

- Tap into a new and well-established audience of “cowboy culture” enthusiasts and get new visitors to Kansas
- Get travel writers and tour planners excited about coming to Kansas (Midwest Wanderer and Winter Texans Enroute have already visited, and Roadrunner Journeys is booked to follow the Gunsmoke Trail Sept. 9 – 14)
- Promote historic sites, attractions, retail, and restaurants that fit the Gunsmoke/Wild West theme to increase visitor economic impact
- Extend visitors’ stays to increase TGT and Sales Tax collections
- Provide multiple marketing touch points with earned media (tv and radio), shared media (travel writers), paid media (billboard) and owned media (website, newsletters, rack cards and itinerary).

Comments: Howdy, partners, and welcome to the Gunsmoke Trail! This road trip visits four cities in Kansas that played a role in Gunsmoke, the Emmy award-winning primetime Western that entertained audiences for 20 years. Through a mobile passport, itinerary, website, rack card, and billboard, the Kansas Gunsmoke Trail partnership found new ways to market existing attractions.

Rebranding cowboy-themed attractions under the Gunsmoke umbrella breathed new life into these sites, with established Gunsmoke Fans Facebook Groups, totaling over 150,000 members, providing a built-in audience.

The collaborative spirit between Wichita, Abilene, Hays, and Dodge City has been amazing. Each city contributed to branding, marketing, media contacts, prize fulfillment, and more, ensuring the project's success.

Larger marketing endeavors, like the I-70 billboard, became manageable by splitting expenses among partner cities. With upcoming travel writer visits, we look forward to expanding marketing efforts with new content.

Additional: