

Annual Marketing Budget: Medium Community CVB budget (\$20,000 - \$100,000)

Submission Category: Visitor Guide

Organization: Merriam Visitors Bureau

Contributors to the Project: Staff / VB office

Was it handled internally or externally: Internally

Integrated Components or Type:

Project Description: Published annually and crafted in-house, the Merriam Community & Visitor Guide serves as the definitive travel companion for our city, distributed both in print and online. Beyond a visitor guide, it serves as a comprehensive resource, enlightening residents about the treasures within their own backyard. In 2024, the all-new bilingual guide aims to leverage our unique strengths to entice and retain visitors while fostering community pride and awareness of local amenities among residents.

Project Results/Entry Analytics: 15,000 copies printed

Based on 2023 judges' comments, the guide is now offered online in Spanish, too!

All Merriam households and businesses receive a print copy in the mail.

Distribution to all state and local travel information centers, and a list of over 140 locations through Travel Brochure Distribution (in-state)

The online version has an average read time of 2 min and 55 seconds with 4,035 views since January.

Copies are available at all city facilities and local businesses by request

Web Link: <https://www.exploremerriam.com/Request-a-Visitors-Guide>

Summary: This annual guide boasts captivating imagery, local highlights, historical insights, and upcoming events to showcase the myriad of offerings in Merriam, from attractions to accommodations.

With a growing Latino and Hispanic population in our community and across the state, we've taken a significant step by digitally translating the guide into Spanish for the first time, ensuring inclusivity and accessibility for all.

Key Performance Indicators: Goal 1: Create compelling features.

The 2024 Merriam Community & Visitor Guide captivates visitors with its rich editorials, interactive features, breathtaking visuals, and comprehensive listings. Engaging articles spotlighting local gems offer readers a glimpse into Merriam's vibrant culture and attractions. Notable features include:

- Team Merriam Favorites--a curated selection of staff picks when hosting guests coming to Merriam.
- Historic Merriam Spotlight--an immersive exploration of our heritage, including a fascinating look at the 1944 Historic B-24 Bomber Crash.

- Library Feature—a compelling showcase of the newly opened Merriam Plaza Library, and a look at charming neighborhood Little Libraries across the city.
- 12 Months of Merriam Challenge—an interactive way to encourage residents and visitors to explore Merriam’s diverse attractions and cultural offerings.
- Just for the Kiddos—a dedicated "Just for Kids" section featuring interactive activities and a fun-filled adventure journal.

Goal 2: Engage Merriam residents as ambassadors of the community.

Our guide serves as a catalyst for residents to explore and celebrate Merriam's sense of community, artistic flair, and rich history. We spotlight local voices and provide practical resources such as comprehensive listings of where to dine, shop, play, or stay. We limit advertising so the guide can capture reader attention, and we empower residents to learn more about their city with the inclusion of intriguing fun facts, so they can better share their love for Merriam with visitors.

Goal 3: Offer inclusive readership.

Merriam's commitment to diversity and inclusion is exemplified by our values system and throughout every event and publication we create. In 2024, it was our privilege to translate the guide into a dual-language format so our growing Hispanic and Latino population could enjoy reading about their city in their native language. The 2024 Merriam Community & Visitor Guide was the first magazine-style publication offered by the city, utilizing a local organization to translate and edit the guide.

Comments: Local testimonials:

“Kudos to all involved in the making of the new Visitors Guide, another award-quality product showcasing our city.” – Jim R

“Merriam Visitors Bureau puts out this colorful booklet to inform people what’s available and happening in Merriam. It is so colorful and well done. Just one of the amenities my wife and I have enjoyed since purchasing a home in Merriam 56 years ago!” – Lanny M.

Additional: https://tiak.org/wp-content/uploads/gravity_forms/15-67bb6385f6beaf613db5ef0fa3684a86/2024/07/TIAK-Marketing-Awards-Merriam-Visitor-Guide-2024.pdf