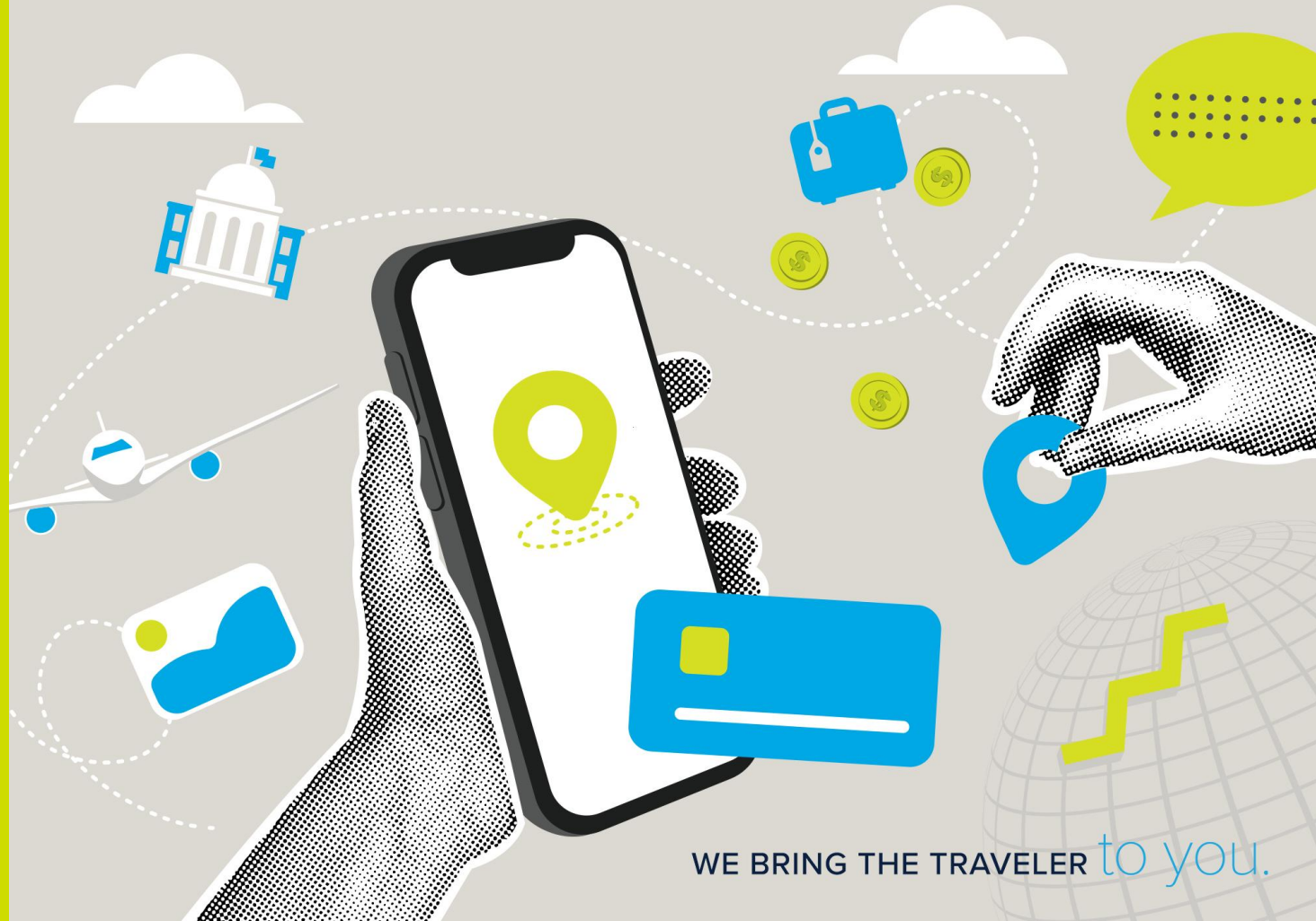


Economic Impact and Advocacy

June 5, 2025

ADVANCE
TRAVEL & TOURISM
destination marketers



WE BRING THE TRAVELER *to you.*

Agenda

1. Contributors
2. Why advocacy matters
3. Who to build advocacy with
4. Identifying your partners
5. How to show the value of tourism
6. Conclusions

Voices in the field



- a. Anne DarConte – Hill Staffer – Advocacy@southeasttourism.org
- b. Bill Geist – DMO Proz
- c. Ed Morrison – Strategic Doing Institute
- d. Josiah Brown – New York Sherpa
- e. Kalene Griffith – Bentonville, AR
- f. Tami Reist – Alabama Mtn Lakes
- g. Josh Gibson – Tennessee Dept of Tourism

What is Advocacy?

Advocacy (n) - The act of pleading or arguing in favor of something, such as a cause, idea, or policy; active support.

We believe telling the story of **Economic Impact** is a bipartisan way to drive your advocacy efforts.

Key Groups



1. Local Community
2. Business Leaders
3. Political Figures

What is Community Stewardship?

- Ed Morrison's
Idea

Your role in making sure your community thrives today and tomorrow.

As leaders of our communities, how can we appeal to our local stakeholders and influencers?

Everyone cares about something... what are those things?

Locals & Volunteers



To be an effective host community, you will need help.

Your local residents can become your advocates and volunteers, but you have to engage them.

Local Business Leaders



Numbers vs Narratives

Connecting the dollars and impact to actual people and business is more effective.

Tourism allows business to thrive, but do your local community and leaders realize the impact?

Managing Your Key Stakeholders

- Each group has different priorities - do your homework
- Emphasize tourism's impact on local life
- Be proactive, tell your story first
- Short-term success isn't always in the long-term best interest



Robb Wells – President and CEO Visit
Beaufort, Port Royal and Sea Islands

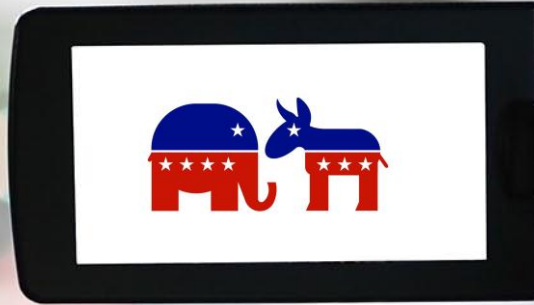
Local Boards & Leaders



What matters to each stakeholder?

Are you speaking to them in their language?

Be careful with people wanting to be political.



**The currency of politicians is
ATTENTION**

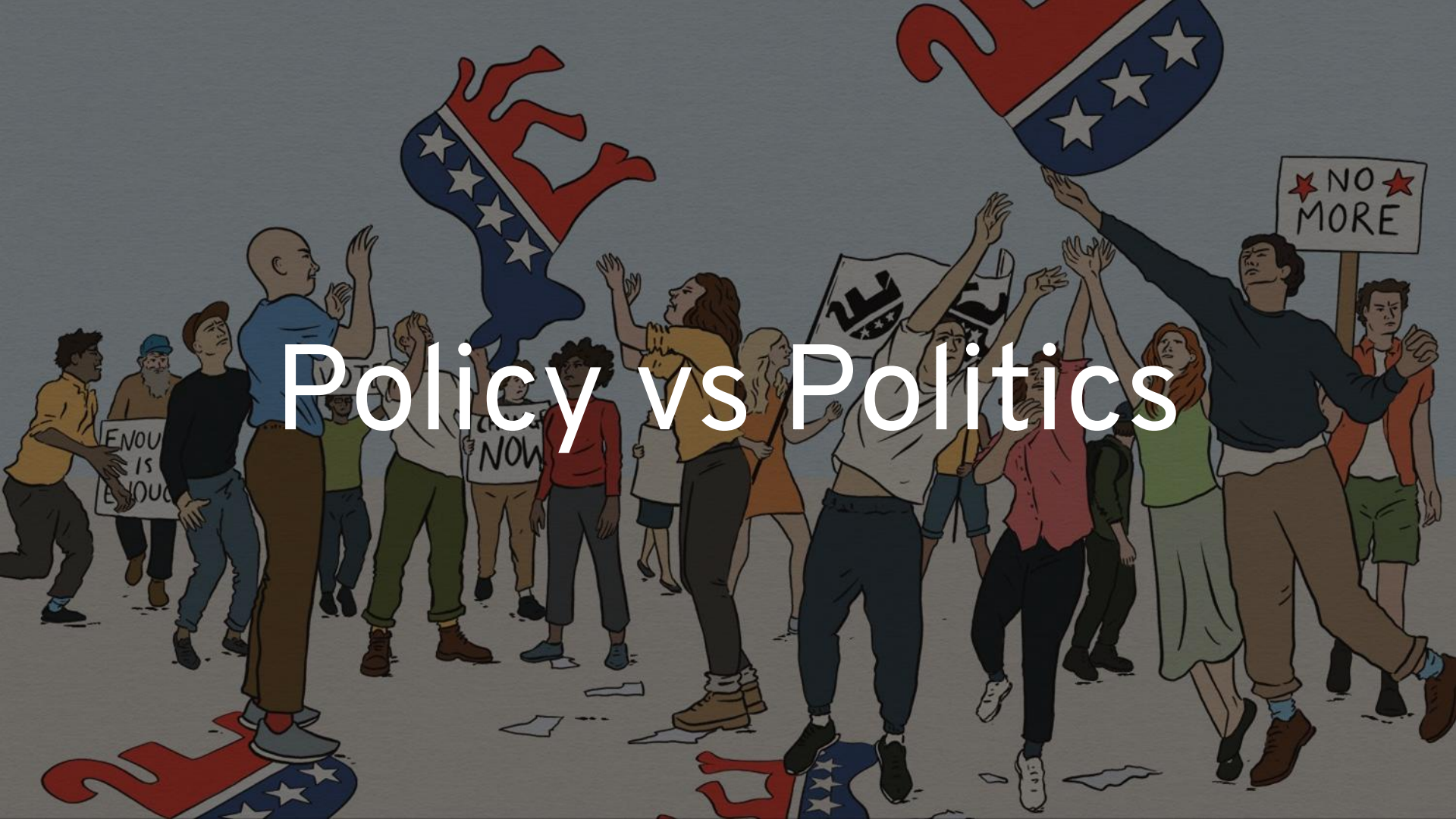
Tami's Tips

1. Conduct economic impact studies – numbers matter
2. Can we get a big check photo op?
3. Schedule face to face meetings with local legislators
4. Include your mayor/city council as non-voting board member
5. Include local leader on your distribution lists
6. Connect with legislators and community leaders on social media
7. Attend local government meetings



Tami Reist – President/CEO Visit North Alabama

Policy vs Politics



Working With Your State

1. Ask your state tourism office's research department for help
2. Invest in resources that help you tell your story on a local level
3. Communicate your success to local leaders and stakeholders (more on that in a moment)
4. Work with your local tax officials to ensure your community isn't missing opportunities

*“Economic Impact numbers are only useful
if they’re grounded in the real world”*

- Tennessee Dept. of Tourist Development

How Other States Measure Success

- The state of Tennessee worked with Tourism Economics and leveraged multiple data sources to be able to tell their story
- Longwoods International: survey data, including spending and visitor profile characteristics for visitors to Tennessee
- Bureau of Economic Analysis and Bureau of Labor Statistics: employment and wage data, by industry
- STR and AirDNA: lodging performance data, including room demand, room rates, occupancy, and room revenue, for hotels and short-term rentals, respectively
- Visa Data Insights: credit card transaction data
- TN Department of Revenue: Lodging and sales tax receipts
- US Census: business sales by industry and seasonal second homes inventory
- Tourism Economics: international travel data for overseas, Canadian, and Mexican travel to Tennessee based on aviation, survey, and credit card information

Some of What They Measured

- What the state of Tennessee is measuring, and how they determine its impact

SPENDING

Lodging, Food & Bev,
Recreation, Shopping, Gas
Stations, Second Homes,
Local Transport

DIRECT IMPACT

Impacts created directly by
visitor spending to a
destination within distinct
tourism segments

INDIRECT IMPACT

Economic effects created by
B2B purchases in relation to
tourism, i.e, restaurants
purchasing supplies from
local grocers

INDUCED IMPACT

Impacts created from wages
of employees generated
from direct or indirect
tourism spending in your
community

How To Show Success, an Easy Example

--
Tourism puts \$867 million back into Northeast Tennessee each year.

Find out more about our Hospitality & Tourism Certificate: northeasttennessee.org/HTC



Alicia Phelps

Executive Director

PO Box 5442

Johnson City, TN 37602

423-262-0238

NortheastTennessee.org

Netta-Members.com

How To Show Success, an Easy Example

Northeast Tennessee Tourism Association
PO Box 5442
Johnson City, TN 37604
423.262.0238
tourism@northeasttennessee.org
northeasttennessee.org
netta-members.com



Visitors Spent \$867 Million in Northeast Tennessee in 2023, Sets New Record

Statewide Report Shows Tourism is Breaking Records Locally

Visitors to Northeast Tennessee generated \$867,135,100 in spending in 2023, a 3% increase from 2022, according to newly released data from Tourism Economics and the Tennessee Department of Tourist Development.

Northeast Travel Snapshot (2023)

Values represent the direct impact for both domestic and international travel

Annual Tourism Impact	
Direct economic impact of visitors	
Spending	
	\$867,135,100
Employment	State Taxes
7,034	\$53,315,200
Labor Income	Local Taxes
\$212,946,400	\$33,522,600

8
Counties

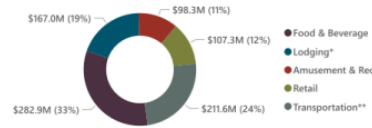
TENNESSEE

Daily Tourism Impact

On an average day, visitor spending generated:

\$2,375,713 in daily expenditures
\$583,415 in daily labor income
\$146,069 in daily state tax collections
\$91,843 in daily local tax collections

Direct Visitor Spending by Industry



* A small portion of Lodging comes from second home spending

** Transportation includes both ground and air transportation

Direct Visitor Spending by Year



What is "direct visitor spending" and why does it matter?

Direct visitor spending are those dollars that a visitor exchanges with businesses in the five categories shown in the pie chart (above). It does not include indirect spending (ex: B2B purchases) or induced spending (ex: employee wages spent in the local economy). **Visitor spending injects real money into the local economy and generates taxes for local and state government budgets.**

Key Takeaways



- 1. Get engaged with policy not politics**
- 2. Communicate the value to your local community**
- 3. Use data to tell stories to your key stakeholders**
- 4. Your state level organizations are here to help**

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