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Kim Phillips: Life's better in Denton

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Denton Convention & Visitor Bureau

DRC Denton Original

Published: 29 March 2014 09:36 PM

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Salute Your High School Senior & Support Your High School's Project Graduation

Salute your high school senior in the Denton Record-Chronicle's annual Graduation section and the Denton Record-Chronicle will donate \$10 to the respective high school's Project Graduation fund.

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The Texas Travel Industry Association's brand tagline is "Life's Better in a State of Travel."

This column's regular readers know I talk a lot about branding, how it's much more than a mere logo. My focus is typically honing in on our Denton Original Independent brand and all the facets that make it so successful in the marketplace from the essence it conveys to delivering on the promise it represents.

The "Life's Better" brand is one to be explored as well, because it encompasses our Denton brand along with the rest of the state's individual destination brands and communicates the message that travel is a vital industry to every Texan.

The Texas Travel Industry Association is a nonprofit organization that unites businesses, organizations, associations and individuals throughout Texas who are dedicated to developing Texas tourism to its fullest potential. Its membership consists of airlines, hoteliers, CVBs, chambers of commerce, attractions, retailers, restaurants, travel publications, tour operators and individuals. I am proud to serve on the TTIA Board of Directors as incoming chair, having worked with TTIA for the past 25 years in my destination-marketing career. A "state of travel" at first glance conjured for me a state of mind. A state of travel as a mindset is one of passion for exploration, adventure and relaxation. It is a way of thinking that embraces departure from one's norm as necessary medicine for achieving a better life. It is my opinion that everyone has a travel state of mind, at least now and again. Don't we all love vacation?

Digging deeper into the brand, however, we also find an important economic message in the "Life's Better" tagline. Texas is a state of travel, and life's better in our state because of the impact travel makes on our economy.

Did you know, for example, that travel and tourism is the third largest industry in Texas? It is also one of our largest exports, second only to oil and gas.

Let me put this into a dollars and cents portrait. According to the Office of the Governor, Texas Economic Development and Tourism, total direct travel spending in Texas in 2012 was \$65.7 billion, up by 6 percent from year end 2011. Travelers generated \$4.4 billion in local and state tax revenues, directly supporting 568,000 jobs and indirectly supporting 499,000 jobs in leisure, hospitality, transportation, retail trade, real estate, construction, insurance, finance, government and other industries.

Now that we understand the economic numbers, we can totally “get” the “Life’s Better” tagline’s essence. The state’s report concludes with a meaningful statement personal to each of us: “Travel puts \$840 into every Texas household.”

Last week, a Denton delegation traveled to Austin for TTIA’s Unity Dinner, an annual gathering held in Austin that highlights the tourism industry’s economic impact on the great state of Texas. More than 900 tourism delegates and legislators from across the state convened at the Austin Convention Center to the theme that “Travel Matters.”

Our delegation included Bob Moses, chair of the Denton CVB Advisory Board, and his wife, Joanne; Chuck Carpenter, president of the Denton Chamber of Commerce; Julie Glover, Downtown Denton Development officer; Adam Gawarecki, Chamber Economic Development vice president; Texas state Sen. Craig Estes’ staff assistant Katherine Metcalf; Dana Lodge, Denton CVB sales director; and me.

As we did last year, the Denton CVB and DentonRadio.com sponsored the music for the event, showcasing Denton’s own singer/songwriters to drive home the important role Denton plays as a leader in Texas music. The stellar performance by Ellie Meyer, Caleb Coonrod and DentonRadio.com director Jake Laughlin in the heart of Austin clearly delivered the message that Denton’s music matters to Texas travel. They made us proud, Denton!

Our music is a major part of how we talk about ourselves in the Texas travel marketplace. It’s integral to our character, to Denton’s sense of place. Our music scene is a cornerstone draw for travel’s local tax impact. And the local impact is where the “Life’s Better” tagline encompasses our Denton brand.

Life’s better in Denton because of travel. In fact, the travel industry in Denton County is responsible for 5,830 jobs and a \$13.5 million impact on our local tax receipts. Direct travel spending accounts for more than \$6.5 billion in our Denton County businesses. Travel matters to our economy right here at home.

To sum it all up, life is better in a state of travel. Thanks to travel and our unique original independent brand, life is better in Denton, too.

KIM PHILLIPS is vice president of the Denton Convention & Visitors Bureau at the Denton Chamber of Commerce. She loves promoting Denton’s original, independent spirit through the city’s sense of place and cast of many characters. She can be reached at kim@discoverdenton.com.