

NEW YEAR, NEW BRAND

Chamber of Commerce rolls out new branding look for Cannon Beach

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COAST WEEKEND

With a new year comes a new message from the Cannon Beach Chamber of Commerce, which is looking to launch a new branding campaign for the town early this year.

The new brand, which consists of a new town logo and comprehensive style guide, is all centered around one tagline that will be featured in various advertising spots, the visitor guide, the email marketing program and social media: “There is Magic Here.”

“If you read through what people are posting about Cannon Beach, you’ll read the word ‘magic’ everywhere,” said Kevan Ridgway, chair of the chamber’s marketing committee. “Cannon Beach is an escape from reality. It’s what people feel here.”

The project is the first formal attempt to create a cohesive brand to attract visitors in the off-season. Armed with recently secured transient lodging tax revenues previously not in the chamber’s coffers, Ridgway said the committee could now afford to deliver a consistent and contemporary brand to attract the next generation of Cannon Beach tourists.

“It’s all about consistency. It used to be in marketing that it took someone would have to interact with your brand seven times before internalizing your call to action,” Ridgway

**CANNON
BEACH**
There is Magic Here.

COURTESY CANNON BEACH CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

The logo showing the city’s new branding concept

said. Now research says it’s more like a couple dozen or so times. “We need to reach out to people in all the ways we can with the same clear images and words.”

The message

When Ridgway first came to Cannon Beach, he said he saw lots of posters up with no common theme for Cannon Beach.

“We needed a brand evolution,” Ridgway said.

Since last year, the chamber worked with the company Red & Co. to develop color palettes, a tone of voice in ad writing, and photo style guides. The goal is to attract a demographic of affluent millennials, Ridgway said.

“We are very dependent on the baby boomer market, which is okay, but we’re dying off. We have to appeal to a younger market,” he said.

The changes to come will include more photo ads featuring people

rather than landscape scenery, sharper, modern text and, most notably, a modern logo, said Gary Hayes, president of Explorer Media Group.

“It’s personal, it’s authentic, it’s fun and playful,” said Hayes. Some of the first implementation will be seen in Cannon Beach Magazine, which his company produces. “We’re not changing that we’re an art town, or a premier beach destination. We’re packaging it in a fresh and contemporary way. I think people will notice, but it’s not such a change where they think, ‘This isn’t my Cannon Beach.’”

The conflict

While the committee voted to approve it in December, members of the Chamber board have expressed hesitations about certain design elements not fitting the feel of the town.

According to both Hayes and Ridgway, Chamber board members disagreed with the final design

elements of the logo. Others took issue with colorful illustrations of icons like Haystack Rock and puffins that were proposed, which bear a similarity to the aesthetic of Seaside’s branding. Risley said she wants more original art and photography to be showcased to define the town’s look.

“We don’t want to homogenize ourselves. The draw of both places is the fact we are so different. You can go to one place and enjoy the other next door,” said Risley, a Chamber board member who did not vote to approve the brand redesign.

While she did not agree with the final version of the logo, Risley said she thinks the branding overall is “fresh and clever,” and that it is important for the community to support the new look for it to succeed.

However, she still sees room for improvement.

“People who are attracted to Cannon Beach are very impressed with how it is so natural and nature-oriented and art-oriented, and I think we need to make sure we continue to project that,” Risley said. “The look is fresh, which I appreciate, but we need to maintain the feel we’ve been able to project in the past.”

Hayes, who held similar reservations about the illustrations, said part of implementing the new look will be translating these differences of opinion into the product.

“Whenever you embark on this journey, you get a variety of opinions. Our job is to translate that into what works for our community,” he said. “We are looking at phasing in the branding immediately, one project at a time.”