



**How To**

***SURVIVE***

**The Upcoming  
Tourism Funding**

***CRUNCH***

**Dennis Lively  
Of**

**"Tourism Learning Center"**

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# **How To Survive The Upcoming Tourism Funding Crunch**

**Dennis Lively**

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## **About The Author, Dennis Lively**

Dennis lives in New Martinsville, West Virginia with his wife, Cheryl. Dennis has one daughter, Jessica Bailey Ischy, and two sons, Robert and Ryan Lively.

Dennis' writing career has spanned 16 years and over 600 titles now with the great majority of his works being digital. He's just come to Amazon for physical books to be published and to take advantage of the Kindle platform for digital publishing.

Dennis enjoys writing "how-to" books so much that nearly all of his 600+ digital books are in the "how-to" classification.

He's just discovered children's books and has published a children's series entitled "The Amazing Adventures Of The Fabulous Bushytail Brothers" More children's titles are scheduled to be published soon. (That's probably due to Daniel, Dennis' only grandchild, being born just 1 year ago!)

Lately, Dennis has returned to the roots of his youth and started writing science fiction...and in his typical "energizer bunny" style of working, has just released 18 titles to the public.

Dennis has been a musician most of his life and has been lucky enough to be the musical director for revival groups like The Drifters, The Platters, The Coasters, Tommy James, Dennis Yost and others.

Dennis also hosts Self Publishers Talk Radio each Thursday evening at 6:30PM eastern time. The show features conversations with self published authors who give their best tips to the listeners.

Dennis' tourism career got started in 1975 and has never ended. He's been active in CVBs and chambers of commerce in 3 different states. He currently owns TourismLearningCenter.Com which has become the leading online choice for information on tourism and attracting visitors to a location.

You can find out more about Dennis at [DennisLively.com](http://DennisLively.com)

## Prologue

From: BusinessReport.Com

OLYMPIA, Wash. (AP) -- Like a business trying to sell a product, Washington state has for years attracted visitors by promoting stunning images of some of the nation's most majestic scenery -- from the snowcapped peaks of the Cascades to the rainforests and thundering waterfalls of the Olympic Peninsula.

That marketing is now coming to an abrupt end.

By the end of this week (June 2011), Washington will close its official tourism agency and become the only state to cease all state funding for self-promotion. It's just one example of how states are coping with budget deficits brought on by slumping tax revenue.

"When you're taking kids off health care and raising tuition, you have to make some tough decisions," said Senate Republican Leader Mike Hewitt, who has for years sat on a commission that guides Washington's tourism strategy.

In May, the state Legislature eliminated the remaining funding for the tourism agency, about \$2 million for the coming fiscal year. State support had been as high as \$7 million in years past.

Not all states are following Washington's approach. Some view tourism as a key industry that will contribute to an economic rebound,

one that is worthy of state support even in an era of declining revenue for other services.

Michigan, surrounded by the Great Lakes, is pouring millions of dollars into marketing campaigns, hoping for any advantage in the competition for the small amount of discretionary cash consumers are willing to spend on travel.

Even though Michigan has consistently had one of the nation's highest unemployment rates, it will spend about \$25 million this year on marketing. That is five times the budget it had for self-promotion just six years ago. The state's tourism industry contributes a small amount.

Michigan is now in the middle of its largest national advertising buy -- spending more than \$11 million to splash its "Pure Michigan" message on cable. George Zimmermann, vice president for Travel Michigan, said research indicates that a dollar spent on out-of-state advertising returns \$3.29 cents in tax money alone -- and much more for businesses.

"It's a bit of a no-brainer," Zimmerman said. "Tourism is not the answer to restoring the Michigan economy, but we do believe it's one of the answers."

Some states have established public-private partnerships to share the cost of marketing.

California state government pays for just a fraction of a tourism budget that relies on assessments paid by hotels, restaurants, rental car companies and other tourism-related businesses. The annual budget for promoting travel to California is about \$50 million, but only about \$200,000 of that will come from the state in the fiscal year that begins July 1.

Marsha Massey, Washington state's departing tourism director, said her state should follow that model, allowing the industry to be responsible for its own promotions.

"It is going to be a positive for the state's tourism industry to really be in charge of their own destiny," Massey said. "The process of getting here to there is going to take a little time."

To fill the void, Washington's tourism industry has established a new promotional organization. It will take over some state assets -- such as the tourism website -- but is still trying to identify a way to fund a sustained marketing campaign.

The group has raised more than \$300,000, said Kim Bennett, chief executive officer of the Vancouver Regional Tourism Office in southwest Washington. She would like to see a minimum of \$15 million.

"We cannot continue to operate and be competitive with other states without appropriate funding," Bennett said. "Everyone who is

selling a good or a service or a destination, you have to get out and market. Your competitors are out there marketing."

Visitors to Washington spent some \$15.2 billion in 2010, according to state figures.

About half the states are shrinking their marketing budgets, while the other half plan to increase them, according to the U.S. Travel Association.

New York's spending is down 60 percent to \$5.5 million, while Arizona is down 40 percent to \$8 million. Even Hawaii, one of the world's leading tourism destinations, is trying to redirect tourism money to other uses.

Gov. Neil Abercrombie said this year that tax dollars spent on promoting tourism in the state were disproportionate to other needs. He vowed to spend more of that money on social programs, environmental protection and infrastructure improvements.

Marketing money comes from a 9.25 percent tax on Hawaii hotel rooms and other accommodations. The amount to be spent from that pot on tourism will be capped at \$69 million for the next four fiscal years.

While that's still a healthy budget, the cap is projected to divert a significant amount to other state priorities.

Alaska, Louisiana and Michigan had the largest increases in marketing dollars between this year and last, according to the travel association.

"What Washington has done puts that state on an island," said Geoff Freeman, executive vice president of the travel association. "No state at this point in time has been, with all due respect to Washington, as short-sighted as those leaders have been."

The only other state that comes close to rivaling Washington's cuts during the recession is Connecticut, which essentially eliminated its tourism budget for two years but maintained its staff. Connecticut is reversing itself, with a new budget for the next two fiscal years that proposes restoring \$15 million to the program.

The state's tourism industry has been limping along and struggling to stay competitive, said Randy Fiveash, Connecticut's tourism division director.

"We know we lost market share," he said.

## Introduction

Do you think the title of this book is maybe a little bit overboard? Do you think I just threw that title together to try to sell a lot more books?

That title is very literal and was specifically designed to say exactly what it says!

A funding crunch IS coming to the tourism field...and, in some places, it's already here. If it hasn't hit YOUR area yet, then you have some time to get proactive BEFORE your funding slows to a trickle or dries up entirely.

If your funding has diminished noticeably over the last couple of years, you need to get your head out of the sand (or anywhere else you might have it) and start thinking like a survivor because the odds are VERY high that your funding levels will get worse before they start getting better.

I know some of you you don't believe me or don't want to believe me but maybe I can get you to see what's coming down the road if I appeal to the logical side of your brain.

Here's what's happening and the historically correct reason WHY it's happening to us...

In the past, and right up to this very moment, funding mechanisms for tourism organizations has been nearly the same since way back in history when someone figured out that getting tourists to visit an area was good for the businesses and general economy of that area.

Since that time, tourism organizations have had two basic ways of getting funding for the programs they had developed to accomplish their goal of attracting more visitors, and therefore, money, to their area.

The first time tested technique that tourism professionals employed was implementing a membership fee for area businesses. That worked well for a while, and still works to some degree today. The fact that a business is a member of a CVB or chamber DOES ensure that, to a certain degree, that business's interests will be taken care of. The trouble began when techniques for attracting visitors to an area became more expensive...in most cases, much more expensive...and personnel costs started increasing as well. CVBs and chambers all over the United States needed more money than memberships fees could bring in.

In order to continue their efforts to attract tourists, CVBs and chambers turned to government for funding. First, the local city government and then, the local county government and finally, the state government. At that point, it seemed like things were getting really good!

And it WAS really good for a while!

I'll be talking about West Virginia because I have first hand knowledge of what's been happening here in the mountain state for many years now. West Virginia is by no means unique! All 49 other states in our republic have similar funding processes...and similar, if not worse, problems.

West Virginia, like many other states, has a state approved lottery system which encompasses lottery tickets, video poker machines, dog and horse racing as well as casino table gaming. A portion of all the proceeds of this lottery system were allotted to travel and tourism efforts throughout the state.

For the first few years, money flowed through the system extremely well and tourism literally boomed in the state!

Then, surrounding states jumped on the lottery bandwagon to fund initiatives they wanted to advance in their states. Suddenly, West Virginia had competition for gambling money...and NOT just from other gambling operations in others states!

The slowdown in the American economy...and the world economy...brought down the amount of income people had with which to gamble, so gambling revenues fell which meant that the states' share of that revenue fell along with it.

It got to be a very vicious cycle which squeezed many programs...tourism among them!

Even though West Virginia was one of only **SIX STATES** in the whole republic to **NOT** have a budget deficit, the state government **STILL** ended up cutting tourism dollars by 50%! So, if you were a tourism professional in West Virginia, there went HALF of YOUR budget!

Those same cuts are happening all over the country.

**You need to lift your nose up off the grindstone a moment and think about this.**

You can't suddenly start charging more for your memberships...the economy in your area just won't let that happen. If business costs are going up...and you KNOW they are...what can you do to justify charging that business more to be a member of your CVB or chamber? What would be their reactions if you DID increase your membership fee by 50%?

You know the answer to that one as well as I do! You suddenly would have a lot less members. So, using the membership funding technique to increase your funding isn't going to work.

Now, think about the government funding technique. Are you seeing increases in how much funding your organization is going to get next year? How about 2 years from now? 5 years? You KNOW that funding levels aren't going to increase any time soon!

Odds are, things aren't going to get better financially for any state OR the entire republic for quite a few years. BUT, odds are good that the costs of marketing and advertising in order to attract visitors to your area are NOT going to decrease but rather increase!

So, there you go. For the great majority of us, traditional funding sources are looking pretty bleak for the near future. What are YOUR plans for the "lean years" that are coming to everyone in the tourism field?

I know there are some out there that are saying, "Our state government will NEVER let tourism funding go down very much!" I just heard that the other day!

When times were good and money was plentiful, I would have agreed with her. But times "ain't" good and money is NOT plentiful anymore...at least money coming in. We all have PLENTY of money promised to go out every year. Money promised to Medicaid, public employees pensions, infrastructure, just to name a few that every state faces.

**If you think that state budget makers will cut Medicaid, public employee pensions and infrastructure to give tourism organizations MORE funding, then PLEASE bring me back a lollipop from Candy Land when your visit there is through!**

It ain't gonna happen!

You can't raise your membership fees and you can't count on the state to give you more funding BUT the new programs...heck, just the same old programs you're using now...are all costing more and more all the time.

So, what are you gonna do? Just hide your head and hope that your organization can make it through this tough time? Just do the minimum your organization can afford and hope that visitors will come to your area anyway?

**Here's probably a more meaningful question:** Do you believe that the techniques your organization is using right now or plans to use in the near future are worthwhile and WORTH the money you're spending on them?

If you believe the techniques you're using or plan to use are good, worthwhile and WILL work for your area, how are you gonna pay for them? **THAT'S the real question! How are you gonna pay for them?**

**Here's a novel idea:** instead of going to your local area businesses and begging for more money in membership fees OR going to your state government with hat in hand begging for more funding, how 'bout your organization EARNs the money?

**"We make money the old fashioned way, we EARN it!"**

Now, I'm NOT talking about fund raisers, banquets, bake sales or selling cookies! All of those things work and you're welcome to do all that any time you want but you just can't base a budget on bake sales!.

I AM talking about offering much needed, business growing services to businesses in your area.

Tell me this...who in your area knows the needs and problems of business owners more than you and your staff? You know what they can afford and, more importantly, what they CAN'T afford. You know the problems and successes they face every day. **You are the area experts on area businesses!**

Here's another one: who in your area...unless you have Microsoft or Apple or Google in your area...knows more about the effective use of the Internet than you and your staff? You use Internet marketing techniques everyday and quite effectively!

**So, why aren't you offering Internet based services to businesses in your area for a fee?** You know their problems and what they want...they tell you that every time you see them. Who better to do "Internet stuff" for them?

**I'm talking about technologies that will show your business owners an almost IMMEDIATE, NOTICEABLE profit!** AND, at a cost that's HIGHLY affordable for ANY business!

**I'm talking about technologies that YOU can pick up and run with TODAY...at little or no cost to your organization.**

Here's just ONE little example: A technology that doesn't cost your organization or anyone in it one thin dime. It's one of those "no-brainer" kind of things where the business owner says "Let's do it!" right away. It's easy to get 5 businesses started using this new technology every day. Here's the good part. Your organization makes \$200 per business right up front PLUS \$20 a month for as long as they use that service...and they won't want to ever leave the service because they make so much new profit from it!

Let's use some round numbers here. 200 businesses in your area start using this technology. That's \$40,000.00 right upfront AND \$4,000.00 a month in recurring profits for YOUR organization! 200 is NOT a pipe dream! I've seen a brand new person get 15 businesses started using this technology IN ONE DAY!

The psychology behind a local CVB or chamber offering good, quickly profitable, inexpensive services to local area businesses ought to be apparent.

If what your organization is doing for the business owners is less expensive and works better than any other service they could find any place else AND they know that the money they are paying your organization will go right back into developing more tourist visits to THEIR local area...why WOULDN'T they have your organization get them started using this service? That's a classic "win-win"!

This technology is such a "no-brainer" that, even if your organization has all the funding in the world, you need to take a look at it since it will make such a BIG difference to the businesses in your area that choose to use it. When they make money from this technology, you've earned every dollar of your fee.

That's just ONE idea!

There are plenty of others that would be appropriate for any tourism organization in any area of the country.

The remainder of this book is going to be just a brief look at some of the technologies and services you need to be taking a close look at. The businesses in your area are hurting financially just like your organization is. By implementing some of these technologies and offering some of these services, you can help the local businesses while at the same time earning a good, solid, recurring income for your CVB or chamber!

**Let's dig in to the details...that's coming up next!**

## Services You Can Offer Local Businesses

### **IDEA #1: A GOOD, SOLID, MEASURABLE, INEXPENSIVE WAY TO ADVERTISE LOCALLY.**

Think about what businesses in your area need. One thing they definitely need are good, solid, effective, inexpensive ways to advertise their goods and/or services to their local area. The emphasis there is on cost-effective, "sure-to-work" ways to advertise.

If you look, you'll see businesses in your area ARE trying to advertise to increase business and hopefully their bottom lines. They run newspaper ads, radio ads, TV ads and then sit there and try to figure out if the advertising is working and if it's worth it or not.

They don't have a reliable way to measure how many people are even reading or listening to or watching or seeing their ads. All of the forms of advertising will have their own little charts showing potential listeners, potential viewers, potential readers...you get the picture.

All of that potential but **NOT ONE** of them is actually measurable!

And...THAT'S where you and your expertise come in!

You and your organization can very easily and extremely inexpensively start operating a local business directory which will give the businesses in your area a reliable, MEASURABLE place to advertise in YOUR local area.

Go to [www.rohnertparkcityguide.com](http://www.rohnertparkcityguide.com) (if you can click on that link, go ahead and do that. It'll take you directly there.) At the very top of the left hand side of the page, there's a long black, box with NAVIGATION in white. Right below that, you'll see HOME and then ADVERTISING. Please click on that ADVERTISING. On the page you're taken to, scroll down just a bit and you'll see that this local business directory is charging \$65.00 a month for advertising on the site.

That's a great example of a well designed local business directory! It also looks like a lot of work, doesn't it? You'll be amazed to find out that the website was fully functional just like that the day the owners received it from the company.

You'll also be amazed at what the cost to get this directory up and running is...\$59.00 a month! It's even less than that if your organization pays yearly...it goes down to \$50 a month or \$600 a year!

If you browse through that site, you'll see they have approximately 100 premium advertisers. That's \$6500.00 a month on a \$59.00 a month investment. Not a bad return on their investment!

Why would businesses in YOUR area want to advertise on a directory like that if you DID start one? That's an easy one. Look at the front page of that site again. Notice how many local things are on there. A local photo contest, local weather, local gas prices, local real estate, local jobs, local events, horoscopes, games...a TON of stuff that gets visitors to come back to the site on a daily basis!

And those visitors aren't from Singapore or Bombay! They're from right there in the Rohnert Park area...just the audience the businesses want to reach with their advertising!

PLUS...they can see exactly how many visitors see their advertisement, how long that average visitor spends on their advertisement and where that average visitor came from. They absolutely CAN'T do that with any type of advertising they're using now. AND...I can guarantee you that they're paying a LOT MORE than \$65.00 a month for that "unmeasurable" advertising!

When you mix the price of advertising with the ability to measure their advertising along with the local audience and add in the fact that a sizable portion of every dollar they spend with your organization will go right back into getting more visitors to your area, you come up with that "win-win-win" situation we mentioned earlier.

I owned a directory like this one in a small town, 7000 people, in the mountains of West Virginia. That website averaged 3200 visitors a day and 85% of those visitors were from RIGHT THERE IN THE AREA! I charged \$50 a month to advertise on the site and had 138 businesses advertising with me.

I sold that website to the local newspaper who just wanted to rid themselves of a competitor.

I urge you to take a close, hard look at [www.CityAmerica.com](http://www.CityAmerica.com) to get more details. The people who own that company are VERY helpful!

**IDEA #2: (THE IDEA I ALLUDED TO EARLIER IN THIS BOOK)  
OFFER CELL PHONE COUPONS TO THE BUSINESSES IN YOUR  
AREA.**

Even here in West Virginia, people are using cell phones a LOT! Every where you go you see people with a cell phone up to their ear or texting on them. AND...make sure you notice what happens when a cell phone user gets a new message. They read it almost immediately! I've noticed that almost every day now for the last several months...and I'm sure you have as well.

Business owners have noticed the same thing that you and I have. Those business owners all want to be able to put offers from THEIR business on those cell phones where people are going to read them and act on them.

The system I wrote about earlier gives YOU and your area businesses the ability to send those text coupons directly to the phones of people who request them.

Imagine that someone walking down the street in your hometown sees a sign that says, "For a FREE Appetizer, text freeapp to 236581" sitting outside the front of a local restaurant. Think they'll text that? Of course they will and of course they'll go into that restaurant to get that free appetizer. They'll probably end up staying and eating dinner as well!

The system I'm telling you about is made for people who don't want to do a bunch of hard-core selling. Just walk into any business with a ready-made poster or 2, ask the owners permission to run a test for 2-3 days (*they all say yes to this because they want to see if it works or not before they even want to talk about buying this service*). What happens usually is that the owner calls you up and says he/she wants to get started with this stuff right away before the test period is completed! It's REALLY that simple!

The system costs them a monthly fee, which you get a percentage of each and every month the business continues using the service. That percentage nets your organization \$20.00 per month. Get 100 businesses on the system and you've created a RECURRING income of \$2000.00 a month for your organization.

OH YEAH...your organization also makes an "upfront" one-time fee for every new business you put on the system. That's usually around \$200.00. So, that same 100 new businesses we were just talking about generates \$20,000.00 for your organization PLUS the monthly income!

The company who's behind this great service is called Boost Contact and they'll give you a FREE PDF download explaining everything about this very POWERFUL service that you can offer to businesses in your area right away.

To get your comprehensive, private download just enter your name and email address at:

[http://www.boostcontact.com/vid/sq3.html#oid=2442\\_2](http://www.boostcontact.com/vid/sq3.html#oid=2442_2) and they'll email it to you.

Text message coupons **ALWAYS** make a major positive change for the profitability of businesses in any area.

It's time for YOU to take a look at offering that service to businesses in your area. It'll certainly help their bottom line AND help your organization earn more of your tourism funding budget.

**IDEA #3: MAKE SURE BUSINESSES IN YOUR AREA THAT HAVE WEBSITES CAN BE VIEWED EASILY BY POTENTIAL VISITORS.**

38% of the visitors to all 638 of my websites use their phone to access my sites. **38%! That's over 20,000 visitors every month who would never be able to see my websites...and therefore, never be able to buy my books...if I didn't have a mobile version of each of my sites.**

I'll hazard a guess here and say, since you're in the tourism business, your percentage is probably higher than that!

Just think about it. A family is on their way to your area...in a car, on a train, leaving an airport...don't you think they'll be checking their reservations, checking for a good restaurant, checking attractions in your area for hours of operation and any special deals they may have?

Of course they will be!

Here's a great test for you...use a smart phone (an iPhone, android, etc.) and try to think like a new visitor to your area. Try to find a hotel or motel, try to find a good restaurant, try to find information on attractions in your area.

How'd you do? Were you able to get the information you were looking for? Were all the businesses that YOU know that new visitor should be looking at available for them?

Just because you can see a piece of a website doesn't mean a visitor can get the info they're looking for.

How easy was the site to navigate? Did you have to scroll back and forth and up and down to be able to read anything on the site?

Another educated guess...probably 50% of the businesses in your area DON'T have a web presence that a traveler to your area can easily and quickly use.

Let's say, for instance, that you get 1000 visitors to your area every month. If you use my figures, which are based on 4 years of historical information, 380 of those visitors will be using a smart phone to check things out before they even get to you. That figure may be as high as 500 visitors that can't get the information they want in a quick easy way.

What first impression has your area given those new visitors?

Do you see that, in a time of shrinking budgets, those 380 visitors we hypothetically lost mean a LOT?

What can YOU do to make sure the businesses in your area can easily be found by travelers who use their smart phones?

Here's what you can do.

Go to any (or all) of the following websites and spend a little time seeing how a mobile website creator works and how easy one is to use.

<http://mobile.wix.com/>

<http://www.yourmobisite.com/>

<http://www.mobisitegalore.com/>

<http://gomobi.info/home.html>

<http://www.google.com/sites/help/intl/en/mobile-landing-pages/mlpb.html>

NOW...choose one of the sites to base your business on. YOUR BUSINESS? WHAT BUSINESS?

You (or someone on your staff) are going to jump in and build a mobile site for a guinea pig business in your area. All of these sites offer a free option so take advantage of that fact and try a couple of the sites.

Likewise, all of the sites offer an unlimited package so that you can build an unlimited number of sites. THAT'S what you want!

MobiSiteGalore (the one I'm most familiar with) has an unlimited package that costs \$220.00 a year. Less that \$20.00 a month.

All of these mobile site builders are extremely easy to use and have great customer service to answer any questions you may have. Actually building a mobile site is surprisingly easy.

If you build just 2 mobile sites for 2 businesses in your area, and charge them just \$10.00 a month for that, you've made that \$20.00 a month investment back.

The going rate, nationally, for a mobile site is \$50.00 a month which includes hosting. So, you're saving them money and making them visible to the visitors who are coming to your area.

I charge \$20.00 a month and have never had anyone cancel or complain...especially when they hear their customers say, "Oh, I found you on my phone!"

By making sure that the VAST majority of the businesses in your area have a mobile site, you can give your new visitors a great first experience and leave a MUCH better taste in their mouths about your area.

You're making your area look good, the businesses in that area look good AND you're making your organization money as well!

## **IDEA #4: MAKE SURE EVERY BUSINESS IN YOUR AREA HAS ACCESS TO AT LEAST A MINIMAL WEB PRESCENCE.**

This idea is actually a natural outgrowth of the previous idea we just finished discussing.

I'm sure you know which businesses in your area DON'T have a web presence of any type. You probably also know businesses who are trying to make do with an occasional FaceBook post. I'm sure you hear from business owners every day telling you they plan to get a website started...sometime soon.

Sometime soon is NOW!

It's so simple and easy and non time consuming to have a website up and running in a matter of a couple hours that there just isn't any excuse left for not having one.

Take an hour and learn how to setup a WordPress blog. The best place to do that is at: <http://ithemes.com/tutorials/> That's a totally free learning site that has 25 or so videos waiting for you. The videos are bite sized and easy to learn from.

Learn how to install a WordPress blog...it just takes 1 click!

By helping the businesses which don't have websites to start one, you'll be doing them a HUGE favor...especially if you can show them how to do it for next to nothing!

Here's the second part of the equation: go to [www.HostGator.com](http://www.HostGator.com) and look for "VIEW RESELLER PLANS". When you've clicked on that, you'll see a reseller plan called "ALUMINUM" . That's the one you want to sign up for.

That plan will cost you \$25 a month.

BUT...you can host HUNDREDS of websites on that account and charge maybe \$5.00 a month.

I have that same reseller plan and use it entirely for all of my websites for all of my books. As of this writing, that's 628 websites!

You can easily see that only 5 businesses hosting with you at \$5.00 a month makes the strategy break even.

Once you have the new business hosted, it's simply a matter of 1-2 clicks and that business has a WordPress blog...that looks like a website...ready for the world to see.

Take a few minutes and think about this one.

Businesses in your area need to get on the Internet. Businesses in your area WANT to get on the Internet. In order to get on the Internet, those businesses have to have web hosting. Why are you letting them shell out their hard earned money to a company that won't even come close to returning that money for the benefit of the area like YOUR CVB or chamber will?

SO...webhosting and WordPress.

If you get someone that wants to design their own website, send them to one of the links below.

All of those companies offer a VERY easy to use platform for anyone, anywhere to have a web presence.

Most of those companies make the businesses host (for free usually) with them when the website is finished.

I'd recommend that you or a staff member try out a few of these companies. They all offer a free portion. You'll be amazed what you can learn and therefore, turn around and teach businesses in your area!

<http://www.wix.com/>

[http://www.weebly.com/designer platform](http://www.weebly.com/designer-platform)

<http://www.ezweb123.com/>

<http://www.devhub.com/>

<http://www.doodlekit.com/>

**IDEA #5: MAKE SURE EVERY BUSINESS IN YOUR AREA HAS ACCESS TO YOUR STAFF FOR QUESTIONS, ANSWERS AND SOLUTIONS.**

The absolute BEST thing you can do with any knowledge or experience you've gained is to share it.

**YOU** and your staff have some very specialized knowledge and experience that is priceless to businesses in your area.

The businesses in your area want to advertise more effectively and measurably and profitably. YOU know how to do that. Share it with them.

The businesses in your area want to be able to put their offers and services on the cellphones of people they see answering text messages every day. YOU know how to do that. Share it with them.

The businesses in your area want visitors who are coming to the area and trying to get information on the cellphones to be able to see THEIR websites. YOU know how to do that. Share it with them.

Some businesses in your area want and need a web presence. YOU know how to do that. Share it with them.

It comes down to YOU sharing your knowledge and experience in order to make your area a better place for visitors.

If you're not sharing what you know and have learned, you're actually cheating the businesses of your area.

I know that's pretty strong...but it's VERY true.

Every business in your area should have a flier from your organization which has a list of what business owners can learn from you...along with ways to get in contact with you.

What would be wrong with hosting free seminars on some of the topics we've discussed here? Who knows, maybe someone might learn ways to make their business more profitable by effectively using the Internet.

**Two facts:**

**#1** YOU have knowledge and experience that business owners in your area desperately need;

**#2** If YOU don't at least try to share that knowledge and experience with those business owners, you're doing them and your entire area a huge disservice.

Am I trying to "guilt trip" you into at least trying to teach business owners in your area how to effectively use the Internet?

**I SURE AM!**

## Wrapping It All Up

Okay...there are just 5 ideas for you. Once you get the hang of thinking of ways to serve the businesses in your area that will make them more profitable while pleasing the visitors that will be buying at those businesses, you're SURE to come up with others.

The key here is to always serve the businesses in your area while always thinking of the "customer experience" your area offers to visitors.

YOU and your staff are THE experts on Internet marketing in your area. Don't ever forget that! Your knowledge and experience are valuable to the business owners of your area.

Show them ways to please their customers while, at the same time, making more profits. Sell them (yes I said SELL!) technology that you KNOW they'll need and want BEFORE some slick talking person from out of town talks them into paying sometimes 100s of dollars more for.

For that, you DESERVE to earn money!

Let's take a quick look at the 5 ideas we discussed and formulate an action plan for each of them:

**IDEA #1:** A GOOD, SOLID, MEASURABLE, INEXPENSIVE WAY TO ADVERTISE LOCALLY.

**Go to** [www.CityAmerica.Com](http://www.CityAmerica.Com)

**Check out** several of the sites listed under "TESTIMONIALS"

**Decide** if you want to be able to offer this style of measurable, affordable advertising to business owners in your area.

**Make** the commitment. Remember your new local website is completely done on the day you receive it. All you need to do is upgrade the business listings that are contained in the site... and establish those upgraded businesses as your continuing advertisers.

**Outlay:** one time \$40 set up fee and \$59 a month no other fees other than a domain name for \$9.98/year.

**IDEA #2:** OFFER CELL PHONE COUPONS TO THE BUSINESSES IN YOUR AREA.

**Go to** [www.BoostContact.com](http://www.BoostContact.com)

**Read and understand** how it works

**Make** the commitment.

**Outlay:** \$0.00 to the company. Some printing costs for trial posters for possible customers.

**IDEA #3:** MAKE SURE BUSINESSES IN YOUR AREA THAT HAVE WEBSITES CAN BE VIEWED EASILY BY POTENTIAL VISITORS.

**Go to:** <http://www.mobisitegalore.com/> or any of the other sites listed on page 29 of this book

**Build** a free mobile site for 1 or 2 of the businesses in your area

**Make** a commitment to one of the sites that provide this service

**Outlay:** \$25.00 a month or \$200.00 a year Staff time for building the sites (approximately 1 hour per site)

**IDEA #4:** MAKE SURE EVERY BUSINESS IN YOUR AREA HAS ACCESS TO AT LEAST A MINIMAL WEB PRESENCE.

**Go to:** [www.HostGator.com](http://www.HostGator.com)

**Make** a commitment to a web hosting plan

**Go to:** <http://ithemes.com/tutorials/> to learn to build Wordpress websites

**Build** a Wordpress site using the cpanel of your new hosting service.

**Outlay:** \$25.00 per month for hosting

**IDEA #5:** MAKE SURE EVERY BUSINESS IN YOUR AREA HAS ACCESS TO YOUR STAFF FOR QUESTIONS, ANSWERS AND SOLUTIONS.

**Create** a flier or brochure listing what services your organization offers to business owners trying to understand and effectively use the Internet to make their businesses more profitable

**Outlay:** minimal Brochures or fliers can be printed right in your office

I've written this to help you see what's coming... actually it's already here in most areas...and start thinking about how you and your organization will react to it. How you and your organization will make it through the times of short funding that ARE coming to the tourism marketing field.

Most of you will probably choose to ignore all this and just continue muddling through and continue complaining about never having enough money to do the things you WANT to do to attract visitors. Hopefully, you can stop complaining and start doing something about it soon.

I know that a few of you will read this and take it to heart. If budget problems haven't hit you yet, they WILL soon! This is merely a very effective way to anticipate that problem and solve it before it even starts.

The ideas we've discussed in this short little book can and WILL make the difference for YOUR cvb or chamber...that is, IF you take them to heart and actually put them into effect.

There's no reason at all that you and your staff should have to worry about the coming tourism budget crunch. YOU have the power in YOUR hands now!

You can find out more about me at [www.DennisLively.com](http://www.DennisLively.com) You'll also find a "Contact Dennis" link there. Please feel free to use that link to email me your thoughts, your successes, your "not-so-successful" strategies, or just anything you'd like to talk to me about. I look forward to hearing from you.

If I can be of any help to you or your organization, please don't hesitate to contact me through [www.TourismLearningCenter.Com](http://www.TourismLearningCenter.Com) or through [www.DennisLively.Com](http://www.DennisLively.Com)

I hope you've gotten something good for yourself and your organization from this book. Take care of yourself AND take care of the businesses in your area.

*Dennis Lively*

## Resource Page

It's always a LOT easier for me when I have all the links I need in one place so I don't have to go fishing around in the book I'm reading. Saves me a lot of time and headaches.

I figure you may be the same way!

[www.cityamerica.com/](http://www.cityamerica.com/)

[www.BoostContact.com](http://www.BoostContact.com)

<http://mobile.wix.com/>

<http://www.yourmobisite.com/>

<http://www.mobisitegalore.com/>

<http://gomobi.info/home.html>

<http://www.google.com/sites/help/intl/en/mobile-landing-pages/mlpb.html>

<http://ithemes.com/tutorials/>

[www.HostGator.com](http://www.HostGator.com)

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