LBI Beyond the Beach Culture

By: Lori A. Pepenella, DS, CDME

Sharing the artistic side of the LBI Region from visual, performing, culinary and sporting has allowed the business community to take a closer look at what makes it unique, while satisfying visitors craving for creativity.



Photo credit: Long Beach Foundation of the Arts & Sciences
"En Plain Air" painting.

During summer of 2014 that the Long Beach Island Region Destination Marketing Organization, the tourism arm of the 101 year old Southern Ocean County Chamber of Commerce had begun planning with local, county and statewide artists and art advocates to introduce The print, digital and social campaign focusing on businesses and their craft that will make for a year round conversation of why to shop, dine or attend events in the LBI Region of the Jersey Shore. Southern Ocean County Chamber represents businesses in Lacey Township, Ocean Township, Barnegat Township, Stafford Township, Eagleswood, Tuckerton, Little Egg and all of Long Beach Island.

Taking stock of the talent that was within the region, small independent businesses take pride in what they do, we have brilliant performances in theater, dance, and music. We have visual in galleries of artisans in every medium, we have storytellers who interpret our local history and our environment. We also have one of a kind boutiques, surf shops, restaurants, bakeries, and long standing organizations like Tuckerton Seaport's NJ Folk Life Center, LBI Foundation of the Arts & Sciences and other cultural groups that help complete the full experience. Responding to vacation and relaxation trends which are becoming more simplified, all generations making time to disconnect from the everyday and connect with people and places that rejuvenate. Southern Ocean Chamber's Beach Culture Redefined Campaign is taking another look at our part of the shore, different seasons, and for different inspirations.

The regional chamber invested in videos produced by Erik Hastings and Olive Bone Studios, and reworked their 2015 Escape Guide Visitor for print and online distribution along with a series of ads designed by Jetty Inc. Through social media #beachcultureredefined is meant for sharing. The ad campaign is in collaboration with local artists, photographers, designers who will focus not on single events but on exploring what is within the destination. The Southern Ocean County Chamber of Commerce has included ArtPride NJ, a coalition of arts organizations and individuals and the state's biggest advocates in gaining support and recognition of the arts. Ann Marie Miller, Executive Director adds "ArtPride New Jersey is excited to work with the Southern Ocean County Chamber of Commerce to shine a light on the many arts related businesses on Long Beach Island. From galleries and theatre to places where you can be inspired to create, the arts offer new ways to explore the Island for tourists and residents."

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Mary Tantillo Swell.
Photo credit: Colors Art Studio

The ArtPride New Jersey Foundation announced this spring, its award of $10,000 from the National Endowment for the Arts. This award, will support Discover Jersey Arts Cultural Tourism Destinations, a project that will promote arts and cultural activities in regions throughout New Jersey. The first outcome of the grant award is a cultural destination web page to support the Southern Ocean County Chamber of Commerce's "Beach Culture Redefined," Campaign. Through its grant making to thousands of non-profits each year, the NEA promotes opportunities for people in communities across America to experience the arts and exercise their creativity.

Putting these ad campaigns into action, the Beach Culture Redefined message was revised for Holidays Redefined, putting the emphasis on picking up specialty gifts in local shops would brighten the holiday experience. With dozens of special events added to the large selection of unusual and customized gift giving opportunities that their region offers, Southern Ocean Chamber worked with local businesses preparing to give the upcoming holidays a new lift. Coordinating businesses, attractions and organizations throughout the community to create a palate of simple pleasures throughout the season. It began with Shop Small Saturday and went right until end of December; the marketing effort had comprised a list that encourages visitors to make merry while shopping for specialty items to add to their list. In addition to independent shop offerings, with the hope that visitors will purchase gifts that keep giving, such as tickets, class registration or gift certificates that would bring friends and family down and stay longer. The campaign was extremely popular and the momentum continued for Valentine's Day Weekend with Valentine's Redefined promoting Chocolate Making classes and Valentine Penny Rug crafting courses at Tuckerton Seaport, Science Saturday at Long Beach Island Foundation, Cupcake decorating tea at Sweet Memory in Forked River as well as soulful spa treatments, special live performances and overnight stay packages. Reservations and attendance at all events were up, with the promise of experiencing toasty inns and focusing on the sense of place adding winter white beaches, coastal landmarks, galleries and museums set a different glow.

In addition to statewide partnering and commercial success, the craving for creativity spilled into one of the region's most iconic events. This year in the spirit of Beach Culture Redefined campaign, celebrating the independent and artisan nature of the LBI Region, the Chowderfest Committee, who organizes the 27 year old food festival has added a Creative Seafood Category. In addition to the traditional red and white chowders, the creative will introduce a third line of voting to the chowderfest popular vote. There will be all the familiar awards, but now a Creative Seafood Grand Champion along with runner up titles that will allow competing restaurants who make extraordinary soups to step forward and compete in a brand new way. The organization also dives into creating broadcasting messages, promoting arts and events all summer on their LBITV190 Beyond the Beach Television Program and their weekly LBI Region Radio Report that interviews artists and event producers on WBNJ 91.9FM.

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Of course there is the art itself, and making sure the works of local artists get recognized. During a farewell lunch held at Joint Base McGuire Dix Lakehurst, for the commander of the 87thFSS, which is the Honorary Squadron assigned to Southern Ocean Chamber, representatives presented a piece of locally made art purchased from Swell Colors Glass Studio in Surf City. The gift from the Jersey Love collection is handmade New Jersey Shaped glass ornament that contains grains of Long Beach Island sand contained in a small heart. By utilizing locally made art as opposed to purchasing something mass produced, extends the conversation even further regarding our community. Also populating newsfeeds on Facebook and Instagram with gallery shots, artists and pieces of art with messaging on art tours, open houses and special exhibits allow thousands to view, comment and share the beach culture messaging.

To contact Southern Ocean County Chamber of Commerce and their Destination Marketing Organization contact 609-494-7211, online or mobile at **www.visitLBIRegion.com**, find them on social as LBI Region and stop into visitor center at 265 West Ninth Street, Ship Bottom.

2015 Ocean County Historic Preservation Award Nomination

The Ocean County Cultural & Heritage Commission annually honors individuals, organizations, or businesses that have made a significant contribution to preserving an historic property in Ocean County. The purpose of this award program is to: recognize projects that preserve historical resources, heighten awareness of the importance of historic preservation, and acknowledge individuals, volunteers, professionals, and organizations that have been responsible for the restoration, rehabilitation, or adaptive use of historic buildings, structures, sites, cultural landscapes, or maritime properties. Only exterior work will be judged. Awards will be announced in December 2015. The Ocean County Board of Chosen Freeholders will present a framed resolution of the award and the names will be added to a permanent plaque honoring the award recipients. Nominations are due on or before October 20, 2015. Formal presentation will take place at the Salute to Ocean County in March of 2016 at Ocean County College. This form may be copied.

Guidelines:

- The project must be located in Ocean County and the structure at least 50 years old.
- The exterior of the project must retain the spirit, architectural integrity, and appearance of the original property.
- The use of modern materials is acceptable only when vintage materials are unavailable or impractical.
- Include 3 photographs of the project and, if available, one or more “before” photos. (Photos will be returned upon request.)

Project/Property Name:

Location/Address of Nomination:

Property Owner (if known):

Owner’s Daytime Telephone No. ( )

Email address:

Name of Person Making this Nomination:

Address of Above Nominator:

Nominator’s Daytime Telephone No. ( )

Email address:

Mail or deliver completed form and photographs to:
Ocean County Cultural & Heritage Commission
14 Hooper Avenue, P.O. Box 2191, Toms River, NJ 08754-2191
Questions? Contact: 732-929-4779 or culturalheritage@co.ocean.nj.us