****

**2019 STF Session Recap**

**Keynote**

*Dr. Mark Lyons, President & CEO, Alltech*

Mark discussed his and his family’s devotion to Kentucky and particularly eastern Kentucky that resulted in creating Dueling Barrels Brewery & Distillery in Pikeville.

* For Alltech, as with tourism, customer experience is the differentiating factor.
* Alltech, started by his father, Dr. Pearse Lyons, with $10,000, is now a global company with 6,000 employees.
* The Lyons family is from a long line of coopers. Dr. Pearse Lyons received his master’s degree in brewing & distilling and Ph.D. in yeast fermentation.
* Reasons that Pearse Lyons put Dueling Barrels in Pikeville include:

Eastern Kentucky felt like his native Ireland, he saw long term business potential in the mountains, he saw the entrepreneurial spirit of Pikeville, the vibrant history, and a culture of artists and artisans.

**Issues that Keep Our Industry Awake at Night & What to Do About**

**Them**

*Sara Osborne, MML&K;**State Representative John Blanton;**State*

*Representative Angie Hatton*

State Representatives Hatton and Blanton joined with moderator and KTIA lobbyist Sara Osborne in offering their insights and suggestions for communicating with and building relationships with legislators. Some of the legislators’ suggestions were:

* Make contact now and don’t wait until you have an ask.
* Be persistent in communicating.  Repetition of contacts is a good thing in building relationships.
* Understand that legislators *need* information. With approximately 500 bills introduced just in a short session, they cannot read and absorb all of them.
* Don't wait until the frenzy of a legislative session to try to get a legislator's attention.
* Invite legislators to your events.
* Statistics are good, but whenever possible, put a face to your issue. Humanize and personalize issues and positions.
* Legislators have relationships with people whose knowledge and advice they have come to rely on and trust.  Work toward developing this type of relationship with your legislators.

**Engaging Stories and Those Who Tell Them**

*Dave Lorenz, Vice President, Travel Michigan*

Using his office’s Pure Michigan campaign to set the stage, Dave Lorenz, discussed how marketing can and should tell a story. Some of his tips included:

* Use real people to talk about your destination or business.
* Some stories can be told without people as the storyteller. Visuals alone can tell a story.
* Look for storytellers in unusual places.
* Telling the story can be done inexpensively with a GoPro or cell phone video.
* Instagram is an excellent platform for conveying stories.
* Video that tells a story doesn’t have to be highly edited and as such can convey authenticity.
* The most effective stories carry with them an emotional appeal.

**Investing in Creative Placemaking & Placekeeping – Appalachia**

**and Beyond**

*Lora Smith, Fund Manager, Appalachian Impact Fund;**Dr. Alison Davis,*

*Professor of Agricultural Economics, University of Kentucky and Executive*

*Director of the Community and Economic Development Initiative of*

*Kentucky (CEDIK); Robert Gipe, Artist and author, Harlan, Kentucky*

The panel discussed creative placemaking and placekeeping, offering

examples and connecting both to tourism.

* Creative Placemaking – Leveraging the power of the arts, culture and creativity to serve a community's interest – one of which is tourism - while driving a broader agenda for change, growth and transformation in a way that also builds character and quality of place.
* Creative Placekeeping – The active care and maintenance of a place and its social fabric by the people who live and work there, and keeping the cultural memories associated with a locale alive, while supporting the ability of local people to maintain their way of life as they choose. Placekeeping speaks to authenticity, an element critical in attracting visitors.
* Emphasized the importance of downtowns to placemaking and placekeeping and offered suggestions for enhancements such as wayfaring signage and murals.
* Provided examples of events and projects that enhanced placemaking and placekeeping, while engaging residents and attracting visitors.
* Discussed “First Impressions,” a service through which a community can assess its strengths and weaknesses through the eyes of “secret shopper” outside volunteers who visit a community and develop a report based on their observations. First Impressions is a program of UK’s Community and Economic Development Initiative of Kentucky (CEDIK).

**Workforce Training as You Like It - Brought to You by KCTCS**

*Donna Davis, System Director for Workforce Solutions, Kentucky Community & Technical College System (KCTCS)*

Ms. Davis’ power point presentation can be accessed at [ktia.com/spring-travel-forum](http://ktia.com/spring-travel-forum). Key points included:

* Described workforce training that KCTCS can develop on virtually any topic – from specific skill sets to general soft skills.
* The training can be provided to individual companies or groups of companies and be delivered on the companies’ premises.
* CVBs may want to consider organizing sessions for their local industry. For example, Eric Summe, President & CEO of meetNKY commented during the session thathis team and area hotel GMs have taken an initial step toward the development of training through Gateway Community & Technical College. his team is already working with Gateway Community & Technical College on the development of a training program for area hotels.
* To discuss how KCTCS can address your workforce training needs, contact Donna Davis at 859-256-3249 or [donna.davis@kctcs.edu](mailto:donna.davis@kctcs.edu). Be sure to mention that you are a KTIA member.

**U.S. and Kentucky Hotel Trends**

*Lyse Perrigo, Business Development Senior Associate, STR*

Ms. Perrigo’s complete presentation is contained in the power point that you can access at [ktia.com/spring-travel-forum](http://ktia.com/spring-travel-forum). In addition to the analysis of the Kentucky hotel market was her review of several Kentucky festivals and events and their local impact.