



EXTENDED

TOURISM COCKTAIL

CenStates TTRA members share how they spend their precious research funds in results-oriented and strategic ways.

**JULIE KNUTSON | EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, WATERTOWN
CONVENTION AND VISITORS BUREAU**

Successfully measuring ROI means tapping multiple sources. Julie Knutson shows how the right mix of research, collaboration, and sharing data can help everyone succeed.

ONE PART

1 PART

"BOOTS ON THE GROUND" RESEARCH

Watertown CVB dug deep this past year looking to find the ROI and impact of hosting the biggest fireworks show in South Dakota. To do this, we rolled up our sleeves, started conversations, and built relationships. With a little unconventional thinking and some extra work, we were able to find key data.

Here's how the Watertown CVB used this approach for the annual 4th of July fireworks show.

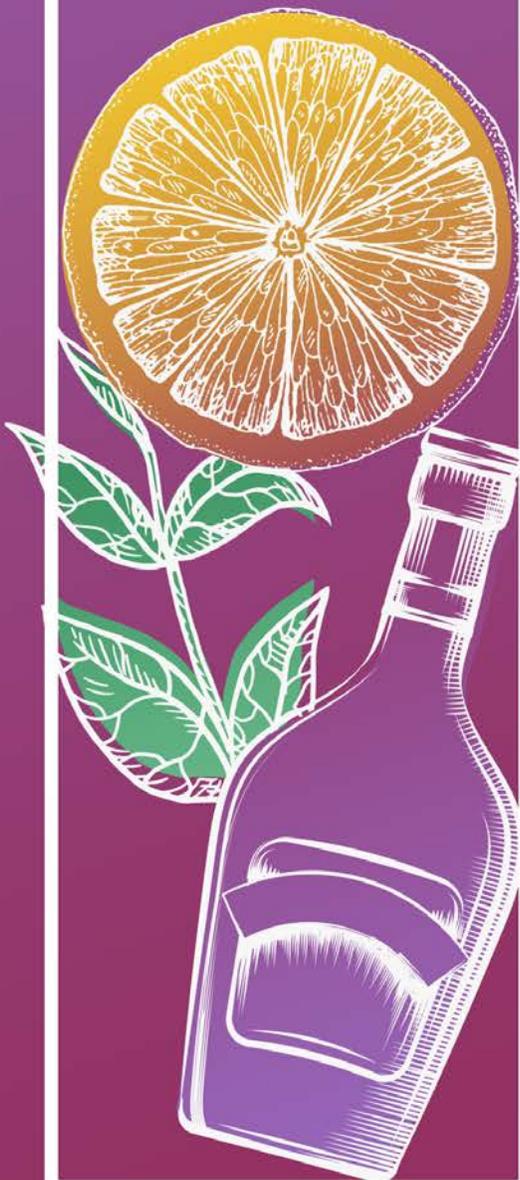
First, we started by calling all area campgrounds and documenting the total number of pads and occupancy.

In addition to calls made, the Watertown CVB calculated the number of parking spaces available within a specific radius of the event, allowing us to determine the number of individuals in attendance of the event.

Finally, a survey was developed and sent to all hoteliers to understand the number of occupied hotel rooms for the event dates. Together, these efforts helped produce actionable results.



TWO PARTS



2 PARTS

METRICS & COLLABORATION

Sharing information and receiving reporting/metrics from state entities provides context and information for your community. Collaborate with local businesses and groups to gain visitor data and keep an eye on similar entities outside of your city limits and state lines.

Here are some other key points to keep in mind when collaborating with others on tourism research projects:

When seeking relevant data and statistics, consider contacting comparable businesses. For example, I assisted in connecting Watertown's local Bramble Park Zoo to the Kansas City Zoo to collaborate on ways to work together to use webcams to share the zoo's most entertaining animals on the web.

I also work directly with my state's Industry Outreach & Development team for industry information, economic impact information, and tools to share with my stakeholders.

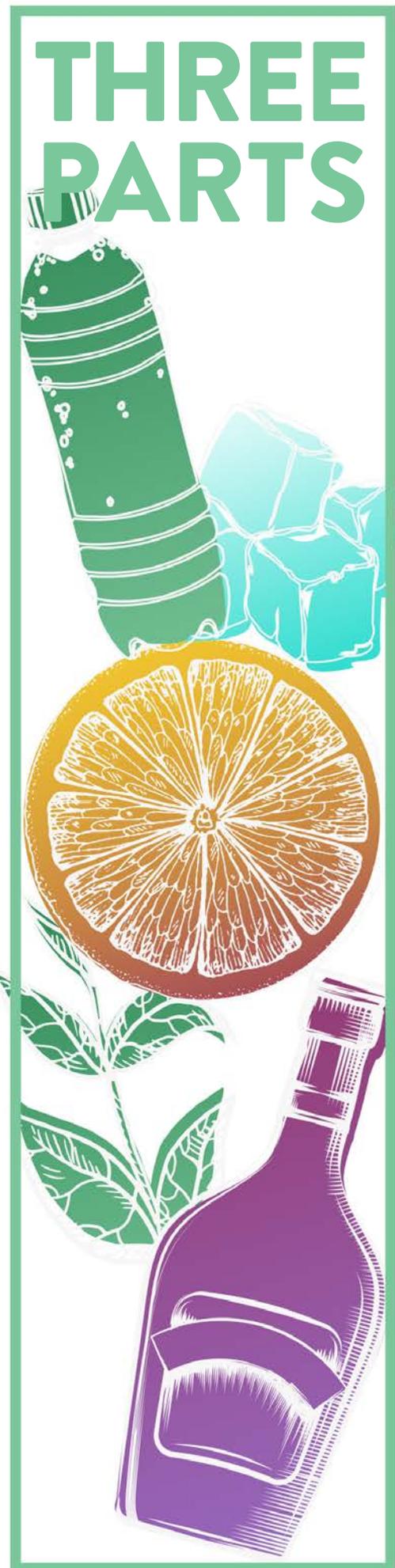
Be curious and don't be afraid to do your own research. I'm not afraid to Google what I'm curious about, download white papers, and archive ideas for future use.

3 PARTS

SHARING SUCCESS

By securing additional vendors and sponsors and by sharing past successes and ongoing metrics, Watertown events have grown year after year. Tax dollars from visitor spending have continued to increase, allowing the Watertown CVB to partner with city government, leaders and other organizations to share results, helping drive recent business growth.

After achieving successes, remember to pass along any relevant information to the team and any other parties involved in the work. Doing so will help build trust and transparency.





CHEERS

By Julie Knutson
Executive Director, Watertown Convention and Visitors Bureau

Julie is a naturally curious individual and self-proclaimed geek. Having owned a travel agency, as well as working in retail and real estate, she has discovered the only way to learn what you need to know on the job is to research. Her secret to success: know the things your competition doesn't.

VisitWatertownSD.com



**TRAVEL AND TOURISM
RESEARCH ASSOCIATION**

CenStates Chapter

TTRA strives to increase the quality, value, effectiveness, and use of research in travel marketing, planning, and development. CenStates is the regional chapter that focuses on issues in the 15-states Central US region.

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<https://ttra.com/central-chapter/about/>