

IT'S A TRIP®

ALBUQUERQUE

CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU

To Whom It May Concern:

When the City of Albuquerque (CABQ) awarded the Albuquerque Convention and Visitors Bureau's (ACVB) marketing and sales contract in 2005, that contract stipulated that the bureau was to lead the process to develop a "Destination Master Plan".

Although numerous marketing plans have been generated over the years, the destination had never come together as a whole to develop a comprehensive master plan. During the annual board of directors retreat, the leadership decided the planning process should be led by a neutral outside party that would look objectively at all the destination's issues and opportunities and build a plan that made sense for the destination. In August of 2005, after looking at several organizations, ACVB contracted Egret Communications to guide the planning process.

During the process, it was clear that we had made the right choice. Egret approached Albuquerque with the understanding of and respect for our deep cultural heritage as a destination that evolved from thousands of years of Native American influence (still found in surrounding pueblos), hundreds of years of Spanish Colonial influence as well as Western "Cowboy" culture.

Egret was adept at working with a broad spectrum of the Albuquerque tourism/hospitality community, industry partners, elected officials, city staff, business leaders, interested citizens, and community volunteers to develop the plan, which is designed to reflect the vision and goals this destination has for itself, and the actions it intends to take to achieve the outcomes it desires.

We found the principals, Bob Harvey and Diane Kelsay, to be extremely gifted in leading conversations with diverse interest groups and in synthesizing the discussions to practical, actionable steps. We came away with over 30 specific objectives that have subsequently been incorporated into timelines and specific actions.

Perhaps most importantly, Egret did not come to town to "write" the plan for us. Through many interviews and discussions they were able to assimilate and summarize the opinions and desires of "The Destination". They were clear from the beginning that this would be *our* plan and that it would be a plan to be implemented – not filed away. The combination of cultural awareness, marketing expertise and pragmatic planning made Egret the perfect choice for Albuquerque. They have shown themselves friends of the industry and have become friends of our community.

Egret continues to be a solid partner as they watch our progress and provide encouragement as we execute the plan. Please visit www.itsatrip.org/theplan for an idea of both the process and product. If you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours in hospitality,

Joni Thompson, CPA
Chief Operating Officer