

Bureau steps up efforts to attract tourists

By Rachel Sacco

When visitors tell me about their favorite things in Scottsdale, it's almost always their experiences of the desert – the vibrant colors, the iconic saguaros, and how welcoming they find it.

Just as many of us residents do, our visitors leave Scottsdale with an appreciation for the Sonoran Desert. It's what's most memorable for them. And while there may be other cities that call the Sonoran Desert home, no other community offers what Scottsdale does.

The Scottsdale Convention & Visitors Bureau will continue to do the things we have always done to attract visitors, but we want to look beyond our usual programs and help shape the future of Scottsdale.

To do this, and to bring the Sonoran Desert into every visitor experience, we need to explore the role that tourism plays in our community's future. This bigger vision is what we're calling our strategic focus, which centers around three core themes: delivering the brand, enhancing Scottsdale's tourism product, and securing tourism long-term.

To better deliver Scottsdale's brand, the bureau is finding ways to communicate the Sonoran Desert's essence in everything we create. Our visitors have the means to go anywhere in the world so we have to show them why to choose Scottsdale.

Early next year, we'll deliver our message to two of our most important markets – Chicago and New

Guest Commentary



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York – with new TV commercials.

The second opportunity for our industry is to enhance Scottsdale's tourism product – making sure our visitors have the best possible experience.

For example, we are looking into the idea of an adventure cen-

ter where the thousands of visitors who come to downtown Scottsdale could learn about hiking, biking and horseback riding.

Another way to enhance the experience for visitors is to help them see more of the destination – perhaps with trolleys that go from downtown into north Scottsdale, or becoming a city of bikes, such as Paris or Denver.

The third core theme from our strategic focus is securing tourism long term and ensuring that everything in our community reflects the Sonoran Desert experience so that people want to come back time and time again.

To accomplish this, the tourism industry has to have a seat at the table with everyone looking at projects through the lens of a visitor.

All of these opportunities are

being explored by the bureau, our board of directors and our community partners. But it takes more than just the Scottsdale Convention & Visitors Bureau. I hope that you'll join us and participate in community dialogues to ensure we are providing the best possible experience for not only our visitors, but also our residents.

Editor's note: Rachel Sacco is the president and CEO of the Scottsdale Convention & Visitors Bureau, which is responsible for marketing Scottsdale as a premier travel destination to national and international target audiences.