

'Mayberry' tourism industry video to help students find career possibilities

Video series aimed at helping youth find satisfying jobs

The Mount Airy News

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A new video shot here by an entrepreneur from Raleigh aims to help young adults learn about available job opportunities.

Jim Babson recently produced a video featuring Mount Airy from the perspective of the employment opportunities the tourism industry provides. The video is part of the initial launch of the website that went live in November: uscareersonline.com.

Babson spent nearly seven years working for CityXpress Corp. where he created online marketing for auction events.

He approached local tourism leaders about filming a video for a series, part of his mission to connect industries that struggle to fill jobs with young people seeking career direction who may not know those jobs are out there.

"If we ask the question, why don't we have more workers, here's the reason why," he said, explaining it's because the youth have never heard of some of these possibilities.

"We've got to get the word out in a way that they connect."

To that end, Babson has overseen production of 10 videos highlighting different industries through the personal perspectives of those involved. They speak to both the types of jobs available and also what kinds of personality traits it takes to not just be successful in that industry, but be happy.

After a state legislator requested a video about tourism, Babson said he immediately thought of Mount Airy as a perfect example to demonstrate the importance of tourism in the state, and reached out to Jessica Icenhour Roberts, director of marketing and tourism at the Mount Airy Visitors Center.

"We were excited to have that opportunity to showcase our community," said Roberts, both to potential visitors and to local residents.

"People don't realize what's in their back yard."

A film crew spent a day in town, interviewing Roberts and other visitor center employees, and gathering footage from various tourist attractions.

Supplemented with file photos from the visitors center, the edited video provides an overview of how tourism impacts the local economy, the kinds of jobs that are available in the industry and all the county has to offer visitors, from Mayberry and beyond.

Hosted on YouTube, the video is published on Babson's website and is available for Roberts and local agencies to use however they please, all of it for free.

"I think it turned out really well," Roberts said. "It benefits us in two different ways," by helping people better understand how significantly the tourism industry contributes to the local economy and by highlighting the area's major events and attractions.



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You just can't argue with that data," said Roberts, who also spoke in the video about jobs.

"Several hotels and hospitality businesses are trying to hire staff," she said.

"I don't know if people realize this in the community. Some of the jobs offer health care and benefits. They're good-paying jobs."

By highlighting the area's major events and attractions, the video is also an invaluable promotional tool.

"We're trying to figure out different ways to use the video," Roberts said, and so far has posted it on visitor center websites and social media accounts, and using it with with Surry Community College, where they are working to develop hospitality classes, and with the Surry County Economic Development Partnership.

That's the kind of interaction Babson said he hopes to accomplish through the videos and website.

"In an effort to increase our workforce with mirroring the skills industry needs, it's simply that we have to have this type of connection and community with youth," he said, adding that he has hundreds of video projects planned.

"If we don't do something about it, shame on us.



Where do the US Careers Online videos come from?

By working with industry leaders, chambers of commerce, community colleges along with local and state governments US Careers Online produces sponsored "occupation highlight videos". USCO also accepts videos from corporations and educational institutions highlighting individual training programs and career opportunities. USCO's goal is to offer, a minimum, of 500 different career videos by the end of 2016 and 2500 by 2018.

The mission of US Careers Online is to be a resource for middle and high school students, educators and individuals re-entering the workforce to discover the many career opportunities available to them. Students today want to be active, engaged and know why they should learn specific skills. Using video verses printed brochures; US Careers Online highlights both careers and the pathways available to enter the workforce.

By viewing our repository of videos about pathways such as culinary arts, automotive technology, engineering, business and finance, health care, petroleum exploration, aviation maintenance, agribusiness, criminal justice, electricians, robotics maintenance, just to name a few examples. Viewers will become aware of occupations they may have never thought of as a career path. These are careers that they will find fulfilling and in most cases where they will earn excellent wages.

A graphic for US CAREERS online. At the top is the logo with the text "US CAREERS online" and "uscareersonline.com" below it, along with the tagline "Career Education with a Vision". Below the logo is a list of contact information: a phone icon with "919.880.3777", an email icon with "jim@uscareersonline.com", a website icon with "uscareersonline.com", a Twitter icon with "twitter.com/uscareersonline", and a Facebook icon with "facebook.com/uscareersonline". To the right of this list is a black rounded rectangle containing the name "JIM BABSON" and the word "FOUNDER" below it. At the bottom right of the graphic is a QR code.