



# 2010 VACo Achievement Awards

Deadline: June 1, 2010

## Application Form

All applications must include the following information. Separate applications must be submitted for each eligible program. Deadline: June 1, 2010.

### Program Information

Locality County of Roanoke, Virginia  
Program Title Maximizing Marketing Resources for a New Facility  
Program Category Communications  
Population Category 50,0001-100,000

### Contact Information

Name Scott Ramsburg  
Title Marketing Manager  
Department Parks, Recreation & Tourism  
Complete Mailing Address 1206 Kessler Mill Rd. Salem, VA 24153  
Telephone # (540) 387-6078 x230 Fax # (540) 387-6146  
E-mail sramsburg@roanokecountyva.gov

### Signature of county administrator or chief administrative officer

Name B. Clayton "Clay" Goodman III  
Title County Administrator  
Signature\* B. Clayton Goodman, III

\*Entries without this signature will not be accepted.

# Summary/Overview

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In December, 2009 Roanoke County celebrated the opening of a new 76,000 square foot recreation facility. Using a comprehensive and innovative marketing plan, the department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism was able to exceed initial membership goals and revenue projections for Green Ridge Recreation Center on a limited budget.

Roanoke County's marketing success is based on the use of innovative marketing techniques including collaboration with local media, interactive communications with prospective customers, utilization of existing resources, and the active involvement by marketing staff in the earliest phases of the project. By combining these four objectives, the County was able to achieve amazing results that can be easily duplicated by other localities, which is extremely important for local governments in today's economy.

After just over six months of operation, Green Ridge boasts over 2,400 membership units, made up 6,793 individual members, and is currently within \$50,000 of recovering 100% of its year-to-date operating costs. These numbers are approximately a year ahead of the projected membership and revenue goals for the facility. Clearly, Green Ridge Recreation Center is off to an amazing start as a result of Roanoke County's creative and groundbreaking marketing efforts.

In today's economy, local governments are increasingly being asked to do more with less; and Roanoke County, VA is no exception. When County leaders decided to construct a state-of-the-art recreation center, later known as Green Ridge Recreation Center, the County's Parks, Recreation and Tourism department was given the challenge of marketing a new facility to the public with the goal of achieving full operational cost recovery in less than three years. While a private sector business would typically spend up to 20% of its entire first-year budget on marketing, local governments routinely work with far less. In the case of Green Ridge, Roanoke County's Parks, Recreation and Tourism department would need to develop a marketing plan with a budget totaling less than 3% of the center's first-year operating budget. On the surface this would seem an impossible task, but with hard work and creativity the County was able to not only meet but exceed initial membership and revenue projections.

### **Background**

Roanoke County's marketing success is based on the use of innovative marketing techniques including collaboration with local media, interactive communications with perspective customers, utilization of existing resources, and active involvement in the earliest phase of the project. By combining the four objectives the County was able to achieve amazing results that can be duplicated by other localities.

The marketing campaign for the launch of Green Ridge was designed in three phases, as described in the marketing plan. (APPENDIX A).

- Phase 1 was the early awareness and soft launch campaign that was carried out from July 1, 2009 to September 29, 2009. During this time, Roanoke County residents

within 5 miles of the new facility were specifically targeted and invited to become a “fünfoundër” member. Using this word to capture the attention and imagination of potential customers, the campaign was able to create buy-in and set attainable goals for membership. This campaign used creative postcards (APPENDIX B), interactive media, and public event appearances to create an early environment for success.

- Phase 2 introduced the new recreation center to a broader audience and was carried out from October 1, 2009 to December 13, 2009. During this time, Roanoke County made extensive use of broadcast television (APPENDIX C) and radio media partnerships to introduce Green Ridge Recreation Center to the region. Early subscribers were given exclusive benefits as incentive for joining before the facility opened.
- Phase 3 technically began on the facility’s opening day and was carried into 2010. This phase used testimonial style advertisements on a variety of media to highlight the benefits to potential customers.

The success of these marketing efforts is clearly shown in the numbers. Before Green Ridge Recreation Center opened in December 2009, more than 800 membership units had been sold, well above the projected 360 units. And membership continues to grow. At the end of May 2010, Green Ridge boasted over 2,436 membership units and 6,793 individual members. The membership and monthly revenue totals for Green Ridge Recreation Center are at levels not projected until July 2011, and the Center is currently within \$50,000 of recovering 100% of its year-to-date operating costs. A recent *Roanoke Times* newspaper article characterized the

facility's early success this way, "Roanoke County's new recreation and aquatic center's financial position is far stronger than its critics, and even some of its supporters, had expected... people are working out in numbers far exceeding expectations... it's more than 6,400 members are more than double what county officials had hoped for." (APPENDIX D)

### **Collaboration with Local Media**

Roanoke County has always sought out opportunities to inform its citizens through local media through a variety of means including press releases, media contacts, and a government operated cable television network. In recent years, the Parks, Recreation and Tourism department expanded its media connections by entering into a trade relationship with the area's #1 local broadcast station, WDBJ7. Under the arrangement, the department would receive free broadcast commercials in exchange for free advertising in the County's quarterly recreation program guide.

In 2009, this agreement was re-negotiated with WDBJ7 with Green Ridge Recreation Center in mind. The broadcast station was offered logo placement on television marketing displays throughout the new recreation center, and given a variety of complimentary passes to the facility. In exchange, Roanoke County now receives over 150 commercial spots per year on each of the television company's two broadcast stations. Furthermore, the broadcast television station's sales department is collaboratively selling Green Ridge sponsorships to local businesses. (APPENDIX E) Potential sponsors are presented with the opportunity to purchase airtime on WDBJ promoting Green Ridge. The business receives a promotional tag on the commercial and logo placement in select areas of the recreation center, like a gymnasium

scoreboard (APPENDIX F) or a bench. Roanoke County receives cash to cover the cost of the item, and a broadcast television commercial at no charge. The television station receives additional revenue from the airtime sale. WDBJ7's marketing director Joel Sink summarized the partnership: "When the Green Ridge Recreation Center was announced, we knew it would be a success because of the great people behind it. I don't know of any other local government in our region that would have set such a high goal and then delivered the way that they did. Green Ridge is a great facility, but it would not have been the instant success without the marketing efforts of Roanoke County Parks and Recreation."

In addition to this agreement with WDBJ7, the Parks, Recreation and Tourism department entered into cash/trade agreements or received in-kind support from other media including the Clearchannel radio group, ESPN radio, Lamar billboards, Yellowbook, Ogden Phone Directories and Mainstreet Newspapers. Combining all media sources, Roanoke County received more than \$40,000 in advertising at no charge between July 1, 2009 and May 30, 2010. During that time, the Parks, Recreation and Tourism department spent less than \$10,000 on paid advertising with traditional media to promote Green Ridge. The department's overall return on investment for traditional media was 4 to 1.

### **Interactive Marketing & Social Media**

The marketing campaign for Green Ridge Recreation Center was also groundbreaking for its extensive use of interactive marketing techniques. Beginning in January 2009, potential customers were invited to receive monthly e-mail updates about the construction progress. (APPENDIX G) These newsletters contained interesting facts and figures about the progress to

date, information about early registration incentives, and an introduction to new staff members as they were hired. Every e-mail communication had a personal touch with a message and signature from the parks and recreation department marketing manager, building a one-on-one relationship with each customer. The personal messages were later re-enforced by a television advertising campaign, which featured the marketing manager on camera speaking directly to customers about the benefits of the new facility. (APPENDIX C) Ultimately, over 6,000 individuals subscribed to the list. The average open rate for these emails was over 55% with an average click-through rate of 40%, much higher than the industry standard of 18% and 16% respectively.

In the fall of 2009, as the opening of Green Ridge Recreation Center drew closer, social media was also heavily used to generate public interest in the facility. The Parks, Recreation and Tourism department developed a streamlined process to deliver one message every day to multiple internet sources. A message was posted on the department's blog, (APPENDIX H) which was automatically transferred a Facebook page a Twitter feed an RSS feed, and a news update bar located on the department's website, [www.RoanokeCountyParks.com](http://www.RoanokeCountyParks.com) (APPENDIX I). These automated processes kept staff time updating messages to a minimum. Weekly Facebook trivia quizzes with small prizes were added later to generate an additional buzz about the facility. Currently, the department boasts over 1,100 Facebook fans and more than 540 Twitter followers. Interactive communication with members and potential customers continues to be an important part of daily recreation center operations, well after the facility's opening.

### **Utilization of Existing Resources**

To achieve success at Green Ridge Recreation Center, Roanoke County's department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism has utilized a unique model of internal resources. The County is unusual among its population category to have a full-time marketing professional devoted to promoting only the Parks, Recreation and Tourism department. This staff member produces a 40-page glossy recreation catalog mailed to over 60,000 area households four times a year, communicates with recreation customers, maintains the department's extensive website, and places media buys for promotion of the County's recreation programs and park services.

In addition, this full-time staff member designs all promotional materials in-house. While most recreation departments in Virginia with a large distribution pay outside agencies to create their marketing materials, Roanoke County saves tens of thousands of dollars annually by having a graphic designer on staff. For example, a high quality graphic logo was designed for the outdoor water park component of Green Ridge Recreation Center (APPENDIX J) which would typically cost up to \$10,000 from an outside source. The marketing staff member was instrumental in strengthening the department's brand within Green Ridge, and actively participated in the design of internal branding throughout the facility. (APPENDIX K) Internal graphic design capability also saved thousands in design costs for Green Ridge promotional publications like the founding member postcard, mailed to homes closest to the center location. (APPENDIX B) Using internally designed documents and online printing services such as [www.printplace.com](http://www.printplace.com) often saved the county up to 50% compared to a full service printer. Since the department already had relationships with over 10,000 annual recreation program participants, the marketing staff was able to use communication methods already in place to spread the word about the new center. In addition to the quarterly program catalog, the



County used flyers to public schools, informational displays at other recreation centers and public forums and direct communication with existing program participants. Roanoke County's internal marketing resources were made even more important by the geographic makeup of the area surrounding the center. Green Ridge needed to draw from 4 municipalities within three miles of the facility to be successful. Innovative use of existing resources made the task manageable.

### **Marketing Staff's Active Involvement in the Earliest Phases of the Project**

Green Ridge Recreation Center differs from many government projects in that marketing to the public was kept in mind throughout the design and operations planning process. A marketing staff member was consulted in every part of the design and operational planning process to help create a truly unique consumer product. First, the facility emphasizes fitness as fun, rather than simply body building. The indoor and outdoor aquatics areas feature water slides, spray features, and a current river unlike anything else in the region. An interactive game room is also part of the facility, allowing visitors to stay active using modern technology. A unique marketing positioning statement summed it up this way: "Healthy Fun for Everyone." Second, Green Ridge would rely on daily admission, as well as membership to recover operational costs. Typically, daily admission facilities do not have a membership component, and rely on large government subsidies to operate. Green Ridge has achieved success by combining both admission models with a pay-per-class recreation program structure typically found in Parks and Recreation departments. Additionally, the center has been able to distinguish itself in the marketplace by eliminating joining fees from memberships. By

capitalizing on these unique characteristics and the facility's convenient access to the local interstate system, the County's marketing staff was able to create clear and concise selling points to bring Green Ridge into public view. Center manager Matt Henke said, "The marketing plan for the center was more diverse and more comprehensive than any I've worked with opening facilities across the country. It utilized both traditional marketing resources and cutting edge new techniques. When you put all that together, it's a powerhouse."

Green Ridge Recreation Center is vital to Roanoke County's goal of improving the quality of life for residents, while attracting and retaining young professionals. The new facility is off to a great start as a result of a strong branding and marketing campaign. After just over 6 months of operation, Green Ridge has doubled the expected numbers of members and revenue projected. Innovative partnerships with local media, affordable internet based marketing techniques, use of in-house talent, and attention to marketing throughout the design process have combined to produce a state-of-the-art facility unlike any other in the Roanoke Valley that can be enjoyed for generations.

# Appendix A



# Marketing Plan

For Green Ridge Recreation Center & Splash Valley Water Park



- Part 1: Marketing Overview*
  - Part 2: Branding*
  - Part 3: Campaign Descriptions*
  - Part 4: Marketing Expenses*
  - Part 5: Results Tracking*
  - Appendix A: Graphic Schedule*
  - Appendix B: Publication Guide*
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  - Appendix D: Television Commercial Scripts*
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Prepared by Scott Ramsburg  
Marketing Manager, Roanoke County Parks, Recreation & Tourism

# Part 1: Marketing Overview

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## Executive Summary

Green Ridge Recreation Center will dramatically change the way Roanoke County's department of Parks, Recreation & Tourism operates, while providing an exciting new service to County residents and the Roanoke Valley as a whole. Although opening a large multi-million dollar facility like this one during a possible economic downturn will be a challenge, we must capitalize on the features that make the facility unique in the region. This marketing plan defines the unique selling points of the center, while distinctly separating marketing efforts for the indoor center from the outdoor waterpark, hereafter referred to as "Splash Valley." The facilities will be introduced to the public through six distinct phases:

- 1) Jan 1 2009 – June 30, 2009 = "**Early Awareness**" campaign and "**Existing Marketing Efforts**"
- 2) July 1 2009 – September 29, 2009 = "**fünfoundër**" soft launch campaign
- 3) October 1 – December 30, 2009 = "**Healthy Fun for Everyone**" campaign
- 4) December 12, January 1 – **Grand Opening** events
- 5) January 1 – March 30, 2010 = "**Testimonial**" campaign
- 6) April 1 – July 1, 2010 = "**Get Cool Fast**" campaign

Each of these campaigns has unique target demographics and target geographic locations which will be explained in this document. It's truly an exciting time for residents of the Roanoke Valley as we open a unique facility and turn the page to a new era of service provided by Roanoke County Parks, Recreation & Tourism.

### **Description of the Recreation Center:**

Upon opening in January 2010, Green Ridge Recreation Center will consist of over 75,000 square feet of indoor program, fitness, and aquatic space, plus a 20,000 square foot outdoor water park. The center is designed to meet the leisure needs of Roanoke County and surrounding communities, including wellness, aquatics, athletics, community education, and special events.

### **Mission Statement:**

To provide wholesome and meaningful leisure services for the health and wellbeing of its members and visitors.

### **Financial Feasibility:**

Green Ridge Recreation Center's financial operating goal as stated Roanoke County's Board of Supervisors is to be 100% financially self-sustaining, exclusive of debt service. Revenues will come from a combination of memberships, daily admissions, program fees, rentals and concessions. Total gross revenue for year one (open only half the fiscal year) is estimated to be \$642,000, with expenditures of roughly \$1.2 million. The center will break even in year 3 with an expected revenue and expense at approximately \$2.4 million. The net loss in years 1 and 2 will be made up through existing department savings from fee-class revenues. This marketing plan counts on a department-wide marketing budget of at least \$150,000. Eighty percent of this budget will come from Fee Class revenue allocations from the previous fiscal year. Twenty percent will come from Roanoke County Parks, Recreation and Tourism's operating budget.

## **Strategic Focus and Plan**

### ***Mission / Vision:***

The plan presented in this document for fiscal year 2009-2010 combines current marketing efforts already in place for our recreation programs with SIX PHASES designed to introduce the center to the public and create brand awareness within the Roanoke region. A soft launch in July 2009 will focus on previous customers, and the 5,000 closest residences to the center. A large-scale media campaign will run from October to December 2009, and will focus on a larger geographic area and broad audience. A testimonial campaign will run from January to March 2010, lending a personal touch to our advertising. Success of our marketing efforts will be judged against the following main objectives.

### ***Objectives – FISCAL YEAR 2009-10 (Half Year)***

- Generate at least \$650,000 in revenue
- Sell at least 1,187 membership units
- Sell at least 15,000 Splash Valley Admissions (May-June Only)

### ***Objectives – FISCAL YEAR 2010-11***

- Generate at least \$1.9 million in revenue
- Sell at least 2,097 membership units
- Sell at least 40,000 Splash Valley Admissions

### ***Objectives – FISCAL YEAR 2011-12***

- Generate at least \$2.4 million in revenue
- Sell at least 2,750 membership units
- Sell at least 50,000 Splash Valley Admissions

### ***Target Markets:***

The target market for recreation is diverse. Specific target marketing objectives will be described later in this document. Our core customer is a participant in "adult leisure" programs. Our main target demographic is age 35 to 50, skewing female. These are decision makers, and most likely to have families with children. Additional key demographics include youth, teen, and young family audiences.

### ***Similar Area Facilities:***

The most similar facilities in the region are YMCA's with locations in downtown Roanoke and Salem. The Y offers a similar program mix and pricing structure to our facility. Gold's Gym, the RAC and the BAC, along with many smaller fitness center like Planet Fitness and Curves seek a different type of clientele. Green Ridge Recreation Center must distinguish itself from these facilities by being a more "FUN" alternative, as the other area facilities are extremely fitness focused. As a recreation organization, we can provide a wider range of programs for our members, like arts and crafts and athletic leagues. We also have the advantage of indoor and outdoor aquatic facilities with water slides and other "fun" features, rather than just lap lanes.

## **Situation Analysis**

### **Strengths:**

**Programs** – As an existing parks and recreation department, we already have the resources and contacts in place to immediately begin programming out of the new center. Our services carry a positive reputation, and our customer retention rate is a high 78%. With several multipurpose rooms hosting community programs daily, we have the opportunity to get more people “through the doors” than a fitness center. Everyone is a potential member.

**Aquatics** – The indoor and outdoor facilities are both unlike any aquatics facility in the Roanoke Valley. Splash Valley will draw from a large area because it is such a unique place. The indoor aquatics center will be one of the key selling points for wellness center membership. Swimming lessons are also a growth market for the area.

**In-Kind Media** – Perceived as a non-profit organization, Roanoke County Parks has the advantage of being able to garner free media support, especially from broadcast television and radio stations. We will continue to build on existing relationships and build new ones.

**Drop-in Rates** – Our facility has the luxury of being able to offer low daily admission, or drop-in rates. Our competitors are exclusively membership focused and unlikely to offer this service at a reasonable price. This could potentially be a good revenue stream.

**Location** – The center's visibility and easy access from interstates 81 and 581 will be a benefit to our business. Thousands of area residents pass by the center every day on their way to and from work.

### **Weaknesses:**

**County/Non-County Rates** – Roanoke County's Board of Supervisors has requested discounted rates for Roanoke County residents. As a facility asked to recover 100% of its operating budget, this is a difficult request to manage. Due to its location, the center would not be able to achieve its operating goals without encouraging use by both County and Non-County residents. Different rates mean possible alienation of non-resident members. While County rates will be priced below the competition, Non-County could price us out of the market if not carefully structured.

**Proximity to Homes** – North County is not as densely populated as some areas around the Roanoke Valley. The center is not situated within a population center like Brambleton Center or the YMCA.

**Older Demographics** – North County has fewer school-age children than other areas of the Roanoke Valley. As a center with many features appealing to youth, this could be a challenge for us.

### **Opportunities:**

**New Audience for Programs** – North Roanoke County is an untapped area for our current recreation programs. We already take in over \$1.5 million per year out of the Brambleton Center. By duplicating successful programs at Green Ridge, we hope to bring double our program revenue department wide.

**Splash Valley** – The outdoor waterpark is such a unique facility for the region that it will likely “sell itself” with minimal advertising push. Demand should be great for this type of entertainment.

**Special Events** – Green Ridge Center is the perfect venue for community special events. Plus, the more events we do, the better exposure for the center!

## Part 2: Branding

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### Marketing Message

#### *Unique Selling Points:*

- **Variety of Programs...** – Green Ridge Center will feature a wider range of programming than other area facilities, offering far more than simply “wellness” programs. Classes under our current heading “Life Skills” and “Cultural Arts” will broaden our base of programs.
- **Aquatics Should be Fun...** – Our indoor and outdoor aquatics centers are geared towards FUN, not just lap lane. Both facilities are unique for the region and are focused on children and family.
- **No Joining Fees** – Most fitness facilities in the region require a joining fee, long term contracts, and early termination fee. Joining fees are most often used as a marketing tool to “discount” for new members. Potential members will enjoy the fact that there is no trickery involved in a membership with us.
- **Membership Not Required...** – Unlike other facilities in the valley, we will offer AFFORDABLE day-rate admission and a-la-carte program participation.
- **Beautiful Facility** – Green Ridge will stand out from the competition by virtue of its looks alone. The center boasts 180 degree views of the surrounding mountains from the elevated walking track and aerobics rooms. The appearance of the center is less institutional similar area facilities, and contains dynamic architectural features.
- **Easy Interstate Access** – The center is located right off the interstate, which could convince Roanoke workers (who live outside the valley) to choose Green Ridge as the place to go before and after work. This message will be most effective targeted to people who work in the Roanoke Valley but live elsewhere.

#### **Positioning Statement**

“Healthy Fun for Everyone” will serve as the positioning statement for Green Ridge Recreation Center as it is introduced to the public. This word “Healthy” speaks to the fitness component of the center, without having the appearance of being a body-building facility. Even the YMCA uses the term “Strength” in their marketing. This can have negative connotations for potential members that are intimidated by hard-core workout buffs. “Fun” refers to the center’s most unique features, the kid-friendly aquatics and wide range of recreation programming. While other facilities may be more fitness oriented, Green Ridge will have the distinction of being the most fun! The word “Everyone” brings a sense of inclusiveness to the positioning statement.

#### Positioning statements of nearby facilities:

Carillion (RAC/BAC) “Fitness With a Purpose”

YMCA “We Build Strong Families, Strong Kids, Strong Communities”

Gold’s Gym “Know Your Own Strength”

Curves “Your Curves Will Amaze You” “30-minute Workout”

Planet Fitness “Judgment Free Zone”



Drive Distance – With a location very close to the interstate, Green Ridge falls within a 15 minute driving distance of most areas of the Roanoke Valley.

**Threats:**

Geographic Barriers – The political makeup of the region may be a challenge to membership. Communities like Salem and Vinton are especially loyal to businesses within their own boundaries.

Other nearby facilities – Our current plan calls for lower rates than the YMCA, but if they respond to our rates by lowering theirs it could be problematic.

Community Backlash – There is a small contingent of the community who characterize the facility as “wasteful spending”. If these citizens are extremely vocal, it could lead to negative publicity.

Down Economy – If the US recession continues into 2010, there may be fewer people willing to pay for a monthly membership to Green Ridge. On the other hand, this could play to our advantage if we have lower rates than similar area facilities, and people visit Splash Valley instead of traveling to the beach or regional waterparks.

## **Unique Marketing Tools**

### ***Customer Incentives***

- Corporate Discount – These will be among our lowest rates available to the center. There will be two levels of corporate discounts depending on the size of the organization and their ability to provide committed members.
- Roanoke County Parks Program Discount – Members of the center will be eligible for a discount off select Roanoke County recreation programs at other locations throughout the county. The percentage discount is still being considered, and would fall between 15% and 20%. Programs with the available member discount will be indicated in REConnection Magazine.
- Early Adopter Giveaways – Our first 400 members deserve special treatment, as they will have bought into the center without seeing the finished product. These members will receive free logo items such as t-shirts, bags, and bumper stickers. If center occupancy allows, early members should be able to use the center for FREE several weeks in December before the official grand opening.

### ***Testimonials***

Our marketing will make extensive use of testimonials as marketing tools, especially when the center opens in January. Potential customers respond well to peer advertising, especially for such a personal experience as a recreation center membership.

### ***Coverage through Publicity***

For better or for worse, Green Ridge Recreation Center will get a significant amount of public attention due alone to the fact it is a government run facility. This can be used to our advantage by frequent contact with the media. Facility and Membership information will be distributed to all media in August as a reference. Frequent press releases may help with public awareness.

### ***Existing Exposure***

Roanoke County Parks has the luxury of an existing base of customers and programs. We already have an active mailing list, and great contacts with program instructors. Plus, REConnection Magazine reaches over 50,000 households 4 times a year. We plan to increase distribution to 6 times a year beginning in September 2009.

## **Web Presence**

### **Website Publicity**

All website publicity for the center will go through the county's main Parks, Recreation and Tourism website, [www.RoanokeCountyParks.com](http://www.RoanokeCountyParks.com). Green Ridge has already been placed on the left navigation bar of the website. As the center opening gets closer, a button will also be placed in the white space on the body of the web page for easy access. Roanoke County already has the rights to this simple and easy to remember domain name. Directing people to the main page will also help cross-promote our other recreation programs. The URL [www.GreenRidgeRecreationCenter.com](http://www.GreenRidgeRecreationCenter.com), .org and .net will be purchased for future use. This will help increase our search engine ranking and act as a link for site visitors who type in the URL directly.

### **Green Ridge Content**

The Green Ridge section of the website will focus on the following main areas. General Information, Wellness Center, Indoor Leisure Pool, Splash Valley Water Park, Rooms/Rentals, and Membership. (Membership will be listed as Frequently Asked Questions until membership rates are published)

### **Interactive Health Section**

Working with [www.Fitnoke.com](http://www.Fitnoke.com), we plan to incorporate an interactive health and wellness section into our website. This Roanoke area fitness resource allows online tracking of your fitness progress and an interactive forum. All members of the center will be entered into Fitnoke as members. Just another fantastic benefit of becoming a member!

## **Printed Materials**

### **Logos:**

Green Ridge Recreation Center will be branded using the Roanoke County Parks, Recreation and Tourism main logo. Since Roanoke County already has a separate logo for parks and recreation, it does not make sense to create a new one for this center, nor would it make sense to have a separate logo for Brambleton Center. Both Brambleton and Green Ridge will be marketed as Roanoke County premier recreation facilities. Use of the partial logo (trees and water only) is acceptable only if the complete name of the department is written nearby. i.e. Roanoke County Parks, Recreation and Tourism. Splash Valley will be branded with a distinct logo of its own. This facility will likely draw from a more regional audience and become a true tourism destination for the Roanoke Valley.



### **Fonts:**

Keeping with the design standards set out in Roanoke County Parks, Recreation and Tourism's annual marketing plan, all major titles should be printed in Impact Font, while all supporting text should be written in Gill Sans MT Regular font. Subtitles should be written in Gills Sans MT Bold font. These fonts appear in the department logo and are consistent among all print publications. Logo colors are Blue (C99M73Y27K10) and Green (C89M29Y90K18). Titles for Splash Valley may use the font in the logo, which is Aardvark Café.

### **Signage & Branding Presence on Site:**

Door and directory signs are being designed using Roanoke County Parks logo elements and colors. The logo is also incorporated into the multipurpose rooms within the facility. Television sign displays will be placed in 4 high-traffic locations in the building to promote program times. They will play looping versions of REConnection Television and other internal marketing video like commercials. Cross promotion of our a-la-carte recreation programs should be utilized whenever possible.

## **Target Audiences**

### **Women Age 30-48**

This is our primary target group. Women typically make the buying decisions in a household, are more likely to use a fitness facility, and are more likely to be home during the day to take advantage of our programs. Women in this age group are likely to have young families, with children in the right age range to use the center. The branding messages most effective for this group will be "Variety of Programs" and "Aquatics Should be Fun".

### **Women Age 49-65**

Women in this age group are likely to be without children and looking for the opportunity to socialize. Again, since women make the buying decisions in most households, they are the target for our ads. The branding messages most effective for this group will be "No Extra Fees", and "Beautiful Facility". An extra selling point for ages 55 and older are our reduced rates for senior couples. Our organization defines a senior at a lower age than most. This could give us an advantage with that age group.

### **Daleville, Troutville and Fincastle Region:**

This area north of Roanoke County has grown tremendously in recent years, but the only comparable facility in the area is the Botetourt Athletic Club. Many in the area would use a center like ours because they don't want to pay the steep rates of the BAC, but are looking for a place to stay healthy. In addition, most of the people who live in that area drive in to the Roanoke Valley to work. Green Ridge's close proximity to the junction of Interstate 81 and 581 may be ideal for these populations. The branding message most effective for this group will be "Convenient Location".

## Part 3: Campaign Descriptions

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### Campaign Phases and Dates

- 1) Jan 1 2009 – June 30, 2009 = “**Early Awareness**” campaign and **Existing Marketing Efforts**
- 2) July 1 2009 – September 29, 2009 = “**fünfoundër**” soft launch campaign
- 3) October 1 – December 30, 2009 = “**Healthy Fun for Everyone**” campaign
- 4) December 5, 2009 and January 1 2010 – “**Grand Opening**” events
- 5) January 1 – March 30, 2010 = “**Testimonial**” campaign
- 6) April 1 – July 1, 2010 = “**Get Cool Fast**” campaign

### Early Awareness Campaign & Existing Marketing Efforts

#### Campaign Overview

Over the past several years we have promoted the center through existing forms of communication such as our quarterly program guide REConnection Magazine (described below). In recent months, we have reached out further by adding informational displays about the center at Hollins Library, and attending various community meetings, events and trade shows. In May 2009, flyers were distributed to Roanoke County elementary students within our annual Summer Camp program guide. In June 2009 banners will be hung prominently at the Green Ridge site to attract drive by traffic.

#### Target Audience

Existing Customers, People already somewhat familiar with the project

#### REConnection Magazine

Currently, REConnection Magazine is distributed to over 50,000 households four times a year. Beginning in September 2009, this publication will increase in frequency to every other month. Distribution will consist of three large circulation runs (60,000 copies) and several smaller circulation runs (20,000 copies). Distribution breaks down as follows

Date	Copies	Received by	Promo Focus
September 1	60,000	All County, Salem, Daleville, Fincastle, Previous Customers	Green Ridge
November 1	20,000	Previous Customers, North Roanoke Valley	Green Ridge
January 1	60,000	All County, Salem, Daleville, Fincastle, Previous Customers	Green Ridge
March 1	20,000	Previous Customers, South Roanoke Valley	Splash Valley
May 1	60,000	All County, Salem, Daleville, Fincastle, Previous Customers	Splash Valley

#### REConnection Television

A quarterly half-hour television program that airs both on RVTV cable, and on our website [www.RoanokeCountyParks.com](http://www.RoanokeCountyParks.com). Within the first year of center operation, my goal is to increase production of the program every other month instead of quarterly, coinciding with the new magazine schedule.

#### Social Media

Daily updates are posted on REConnection Online, a blog maintained by the marketing department. This blog is sent via RSS feed to Facebook, Twitter, and the [www.RoanokeCountyParks.com](http://www.RoanokeCountyParks.com) main webpage. Our department has already achieved regional acclaim for great interactive use of these social media products, and has a growing participant base on each of them.



**Email Newsletters**

Over 3,000 previous customers are members of our email newsletter database. The first of every month, a message is sent to this list highlighting programs and events from Roanoke County Parks. Beginning in June, a more targeted “Green Ridge Recreation Center” mailing list will start receiving “behind the scenes” emails with pictures of the center under construction. These will give members more buy-in and a personal connection with the project.

**Initial Publications Creation**

Also during this time, a wide range of print materials must be created that will be necessary for operation of the center. These publications include but are not limited to: new member folders, membership guides, brochures for rentals and birthday party room, stationary, gift certificates, workout charts.

**Community Presence**

Beginning in this phase, and extending throughout the center’s first year of operation, every effort should be made to get in front of community members. We will seek out opportunities to speak at community meetings and workplaces, as well as opportunities to have a booth presence at trade shows and events.

**Giveaways**

Giveaways are an important part of community awareness. We should make an effort to give away free passes and memberships at all times, especially during these early months. For charitable events and fundraisers, giveaways will consist of “Two Month Individual Memberships”. For smaller prizes, and handouts in the community, giveaways will consist of “Free One Day Admission” passes.

**Timeline and Costs**

When	Media	What	Cost
March 1	Mail	REConnection Spring 2009 Magazine	n/a
March 20	Flyer	Glossy Half Page folded flyer printed – distribution at trade shows / rec centers	\$300
May 1	Kiosk	Display set up at Hollins Library	\$300
May 15	Schools	½ page insert distributed within Summer Camp guide to Elementary Schools	n/a
June 1	Mail	REConnection Summer 2009 Magazine	n/a
June 10	Billboard	Two banners hung at Green Ridge Site, visible from interstate581	\$900
June-Aug	Television	REConnection Summer show on RVTV	n/a

**Total Cost = \$1,230 (From FY 08-09 Funds)**

## “fûnfoundër” Soft Launch Campaign

### Campaign Overview

Beginning Monday, July 20th we will begin accepting memberships to the center, but will start with a somewhat smaller advertising campaign. This campaign is designed to invoke a sense of community ownership in the project, while creating a buzz for the center's opening. Our target audience for this campaign will likely have heard of the center. Through a series of postcards and newspaper articles, populations near the center will be asked “Are you a fûnfoundër?” **See Appendix C for postcard example.** This statement is followed by the definition – “One who promotes healthy fun in the Roanoke Valley by purchasing a founding membership at Roanoke County’s new Green Ridge Recreation Center.” The message is designed to quickly capture attention with a seemingly unusual statement that provokes them to read further. At the same time, the message promotes the idea of “fun” which is one of the distinguishing factors of the center. Rather than provide a great amount of information, this campaign is designed to make consumers want to seek more, and will point them to the website. This marketing campaign will be used in conjunction with prizes such as a t-shirt and other gear given away to the first 200 members. Quirky statements like these are desirable in t-shirts, especially among the 20-40 year demographic. As a result, more new members will be likely to wear the shirt and create free advertising. New members will be given the option of taking home a free political-campaign style sign for their front yard with the message: “I am a fûnfoundër” Ideally, these signs will begin popping up across the area causing further buzz for the center.

### Media Mix

Direct Mail (Postcard), Internet (www.RoanokeCountyParks.com), Newspapers, Community Meetings, Small Community banners, Billboards, RVTV

### Target Audiences

Previous Participants, North Roanoke County residents, North Roanoke City residents, Troutville/Fincastle residents

### Marketing Timeline and Costs

When	Media	What	Cost
June 15	Giveaway	Tote Bags – 500 with Green Ridge and Roanoke County Parks insignia	\$850
June 15	Giveaway	Pens – 1,000 with Green Ridge and Roanoke County Parks insignia	\$400
June 15	Giveaway	Sticky Pads – 500 with Green Ridge and Roanoke County Parks insignia	\$200
June 15	Giveaway	Fridge Magnets - 500 with Green Ridge txt & Roanoke County Parks logo	\$200
June 15	Giveaway	Kid Tattoos - – 200 with fûnfoundër campaign logos	\$100
June 15	Giveaway	T-Shirts – 400 with fûnfoundër campaign logos	\$2,200
June 15	Giveaway	Water Bottles – 200 with fûnfoundër campaign logos	\$200
June 15	Giveaway	Small Towels – 200 with fûnfoundër campaign logos	\$400
June 15	Giveaway	Window. Bumper Stickers – 200 with fûnfoundër campaign logos	\$150
June 15	Giveaway	Campaign Style Signs – 250 with fûnfoundër campaign logos	\$300
July 15	All	Press release with rates and announcement of July 20 for presale	\$0
July 15	Web	Redesign of web with release dates. Update free promo websites	\$0
July 15	Email	Send release to pre-registered subscribers in our database	\$0
July 15	Mail	Postcard to 5,000 nearest residents to center	\$2,000
July 15-30	Newspaper	Roanoke Times Targeted to North Roanoke Insert	\$1,000
July 15-30	Newspaper	Fincastle Herald and Salem Times targeted ads	\$600
Aug 25	Mail	Fall REConnection Magazine sends printed prices to wide audience	n/a
Sep 1	Television	REConnection Fall show on RVTV	\$0
Tbd	Billboard	Lamar Available Inventory - TBD	\$1,500
tbd	Flyer	Re-Print of Glossy Marketing Flyer – 5,000 copies	\$500
Tbd	Flyer	Printed Materials various – membership app, descrip of services	\$1,000

**Total Marketing Cost = \$11,600**



## Healthy Fun for Everyone Campaign

### Campaign Overview

This is our first broad media campaign for the center. The campaign is designed to introduce the center to customers who likely have not heard anything about it. Each ad will focus on a specific unique aspect of the center, while introducing the center's main positioning statement, "Healthy Fun for Everyone." Television and radio will be the most utilized medium in this campaign, through partnership arrangements with both WDBJ7 and the Clearchannel Radio group. The visual appeal of television and immediacy of radio will not only show off the center in the best way, but will reach the broadest base of possible consumers. **See Appendix D for sample TV Commercial Scripts.** These advertisements will focus on the following features:

- The variety of programs available
- The unique aquatics features
- The convenient access from I-581 and I-81
- The beauty of the facility - especially walking track views
- The membership options (no joining fee, low walk-in admissions)

The ads will be upbeat and funny, with metaphorical references to what you currently "Can't Do" in a park, but CAN do at the Green Ridge Recreation Center. Connecting the center to "parks" enhances the connection in the public's mind between the government provided service of a park, and the government provided leisure services of the center.

### Media Mix

Broadcast TV, Direct Mail, Newspapers, Radio, Internet, RVTV

### Target Audience

Our direct mail pieces will have the broadest target of all, and must appeal to a wide variety of age as well as geographic locations in the region. The newspapers will target slightly older customers, while internet and radio will reach for a slightly younger audience. The immediacy of radio will help gear up customers to sign up for advance memberships. Target demographics for radio will vary by station.

### Marketing Timeline and Costs

When	Media	What	Cost	Value
Sep 1- Dec 31	television	:30 second spots on WDBJ (Marketing Inventory)	\$0	\$45,000
Sep-Oct	Kiosk	Valley View Mall Kiosk on Saturdays (9)	\$1,125	\$1,125
Oct 1	Flyer	Flyers to all Roanoke County schools and city if possible	\$800	\$800
Oct 1 - Dec 31	Television	Tagged :20 sec spots w/ corporate WDBJ (Sales Inventory)	\$0	\$45,000
Oct 1 - Dec 31	Internet	Banner ads on <a href="http://www.wdbj7.com">www.wdbj7.com</a>	\$2,500	\$2,500
Nov 1-30	Internet	Banner ads on <a href="http://www.Roanoke.com">www.Roanoke.com</a>	\$2,000	\$2,000
Nov 1-Dec 31	Internet	Banner ads on <a href="http://www.fitnoke.com">www.fitnoke.com</a>	\$0	\$500
Nov 1 - Dec 31	Internet	Placement on <a href="http://www.RoanokeforKids.com/">www.RoanokeforKids.com/</a> RoanokeforWomen	\$500	\$500
November 1	Mail	REConnection November Issue	n/a	n/a
Nov 1 - Jan 30	Radio	30 second spots on WROV, WYYD, and WSNV	\$1,000	\$20,000
Nov 1-30	Newspaper	Roanoke Times ads	\$2,000	\$2,000
Nov 1-30	Newspaper	Star Sentinel and Mainstreet newspapers	\$1,000	\$1,000
December 1	Television	REConnection Winter show on RVTV	\$0	\$5,000
December 15	Mail	Postcards to targeted zip codes and previous customers	\$6,000	\$6,000

Total Value = \$131,425

**Total Marketing Cost = \$16,925**



## Grand Opening Events

### **Members Only Opening AND Christmas Tree Lighting – Saturday, December 5 2009**

This event will take place in two parts. The first, from 3:00-6:00pm inside the center, consists of an invitation only members opening. Pre-registered members will be able to attend, as well as important community leaders, business owners and others by invitation. The event features special games, activities, snacks, prizes and dedications. Prizes will come from leftover giveaway stock. Limited areas of the facility will be open and staffed. The second part of the event is the County Christmas Tree lighting at 6:00. This event is outside the center and open to the public, and will feature hot chocolate and carols from ASK participants. Small groups will be allowed into the building for tours.

### **Public Grand Opening – “1<sup>st</sup> Annual Resolution Celebration” – Friday Jan 1 2010**

“Resolution Celebration” is not only a Grand Opening event, but also marks the beginning of a new ANNUAL event for Roanoke County Parks. Held on NEW YEAR'S DAY, we will open the recreation center to the public the entire day for FREE. There will be inflatables, face painting, costumed characters, kids activities, games and more – with all areas of the indoor center open to the public at no charge. There will be football lounges where sports enthusiasts can attend without missing their favorite bowl games. We will also hold a basketball contest with HUGE prizes using a prize insurance company to back the program. Green Ridge staff will of course be on hand to take registrations

### **Marketing Timeline and Costs**

When	Media	What	Cost
Nov 25	Mail	MOO Invitations go out to pre-registered members and special guests	\$50
Dec 1	Magazine	City Magazine and Bella Magazine ads	\$800
Dec 10	Flyer	Invitation to PGO sent to area schools	\$300
Dec 26	All	Press Release announcing event	\$0

Event Costs Excluded

**Total Marketing Cost = \$1,150**

## Testimonial Campaign

### Campaign Overview

This campaign will take place in the opening weeks of the center, and will focus on more specific selling points of the center. Rather than talking about the center's selling points in an eye-catching, metaphorical manner (like the previous campaign), this effort assumes most of the audience will know the center exists. It will use testimonials from existing members to convince their peers to join. Each ad will start out with a different demographic of family saying, "We fit at Green Ridge." These messages will focus again on the following features.

- The variety of programs available
- The unique aquatics features
- The convenient access from I-581 and I-81
- The beauty of the facility - especially walking track views
- The membership options (no joining fee, walk-in options)

These messages are the 6 main unique selling points of the center, distinguishing it from the competition. The ads will of course mention the fact that the center is "Now Open", as well as include the general marketing positioning statement, "Healthy Fun for Everyone". Each ad will be presented as a testimonial, spoken by a center participant. The tag of all ads will reference [www.RoanokeCountyParks.com](http://www.RoanokeCountyParks.com).

### Target Audience

Target audience for all advertising is women ages 30-60. Media north of town will see the "convenience" message more than other messages, whereas media south of town will see the "membership not required" message with more frequency. Our television ads will skew towards families with young kids, while our newspaper ads will target a slightly older population.

### Timeline and Costs

When	Media	What	Cost	Value
Jan 1	Mail	REConnection Magazine January edition	n/a	n/a
Jan 1-Feb 28	Television	:30 second spots on WDBJ (Marketing Inventory)	\$0	\$45,000
Jan 1-Feb 28	Television	Tagged :20 sec spots with corporate sponsorship (Sales Inventory)	\$0	\$45,000
Jan 1 – Feb 28	Internet	Banner ads on <a href="http://www.wdbj7.com">www.wdbj7.com</a>	\$2,500	\$2,500
Jan 1 – Feb 28	Internet	Banner ads on <a href="http://www.fitnoke.com">www.fitnoke.com</a>	\$0	\$5,000
Jan 1 – Feb 28	Internet	Placement on <a href="http://www.RoanokeforKids.com">www.RoanokeforKids.com</a>	\$500	\$500
Jan 1-Feb 28	Newspaper	Roanoke Times	\$5,000	\$5,000
Jan 1-Feb 28	Newspaper	Mainstreet Newspapers and Roanoke Star Sentinel	\$2,000	\$2,000
Feb 6	Kiosk	Visible participation at Tons of Fun, Tanglewood Mall	\$0	\$0
Feb 10	Flyer	Insert in Summer Camps guide to schools	n/a	n/a
March 1	Mail	REConnection Magazine March Edition	n/a	n/a
March 1	Television	REConnection Spring show on RVTV	\$0	\$5,000

Total Value = \$110,000

**Total Marketing Cost = \$10,000**

## Get Cool Fast Campaign

### Campaign Overview

This campaign will take place during the months of April through July to introduce Splash Valley to the public. Ads begin with the teaser, "Get Cool Fast". This phrase references one of the primary functions of an outdoor pool (getting cool), while appealing to the youth audience by using the word "cool". Using the word "Fast" refers to both the speed of the water slides, and the time it takes to get here from anywhere in the valley (fast). These ads will contrast the typical cost of a trip to the beach or a regional amusement park to the cost of visiting Splash Valley. The tag of all ads will reference "Splash Valley at Green Ridge Recreation Center" and direct traffic to [www.RoanokeCountyParks.com](http://www.RoanokeCountyParks.com). One of the key pieces of marketing in this campaign is a large postcard sent to over 30,000 residents as well as Roanoke County public schools.

### Target Audience

Ads for the waterpark will target families with children ages 5 to 12. These are the people most likely to be using the facility during the summer. This is the only campaign that has marketing materials sent directly to public school students. Advertisements will all have kids in them, and the radio station trade contains stations geared towards a younger demographic. This campaign will heavily target South County residents, as they are likely to travel to Splash Valley even if they are not center members.

### Timeline and Costs

When	Media	What	Cost	Value
May 1	Mail	REConnection Magazine May Edition	n/a	n/a
May 20	All	Press Release	\$0	\$0
June 1	Mail	Postcards to targeted zip codes	\$6,000	\$6,000
June 1	Television	REConnection Summer Show on RVTV	\$0	\$5,000
April & June	Television	30 second spots on WDBJ (Marketing Inventory)	\$0	\$10,000
May 10	Flyer	Postcard sent to area schools	n/a	n/a
June 1-30	Internet	On <a href="http://www.Roanoke.com">www.Roanoke.com</a>	\$1,000	\$1,000
June 1-30	Internet	Placement on <a href="http://www.RoanokeforKids.com">www.RoanokeforKids.com</a>	\$500	\$500
June 1-30	Newspaper	Roanoke Times – Target South County	\$2,000	\$2,000
June 1-30	Newspaper	Mainstreet and Star Sentinel – Target South County	\$1,000	\$1,000
Jun 1-Jul 31	Radio	30 second spots on WROV, WJJS, WYYD, WSNV	\$1,000	\$20,000
Jul 1	Mail	REConnection Magazine July Edition	n/a	n/a

Total Value = \$45,500

**Total Marketing Cost = \$11,500**



## Part 4: Marketing Expenses

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### Campaign Totals

The total marketing expense per campaign is as follows. Please note that these costs exclude REConnection Magazine printing and distribution costs. See Below

<u>Campaign</u>	<u>Marketing Cost</u>	<u>Value</u>
1) Early Awareness	\$1,230	\$1,230
2) FunFounder	\$11,600	\$11,600
3) Healthy Fun for Everyone	\$16,925	\$131,425
4) Grand Opening Events	\$1,150	\$1,150
5) Testimonial	\$10,000	\$110,000
6) Get Cool Fast	\$11,500	\$45,500

**TOTAL CAMPAIGN COST = \$52,405** (\$1,230 from FY2008-2009)

**TOTAL CAMPAIGN VALUE = \$300,905**

### REConnection Magazine

The largest marketing expense for the entire department comes from printed/mail distributed publications. Please reference **Appendix B** for a list of all proposed department publications and their associated costs. REConnection Magazine is the department's primary method of communication with customers. Since Green Ridge/Splash Valley are not the only things marketed in this publication, I have broken out the costs separately from the general marketing campaign for the facility.

**September Print/Mail = \$23,860**

**November Print/Mail = \$8,100**

**January Print/Mail = \$23,860**

**March Print/Mail = \$8,100**

**May Print/Mail = \$23,860**

**TOTAL PRINT/MAIL = \$87,780**

### Funding Sources

The department has a marketing budget of approximately \$30,000 from general operating, and utilizes approximately \$5,000 from the postage budget of general operating. The rest of the funding for our marketing efforts will come from Fee Class rollover dollars.