



Frequently asked questions:

Q. Who is The Midlands Authority for Conventions, Sports & Tourism (MACST)?

A. MACST is the parent organization of the Columbia Convention & Visitors Bureau, the Columbia Metropolitan Convention Center, and the Columbia Regional Sports Council.

The Columbia Metropolitan Convention and Visitors Bureau mission is to strengthen the area's economy by marketing and selling Columbia, its accommodations, restaurants, facilities and attractions as a destination for meetings, conventions, tradeshow, special events and leisure travel.

The Columbia Metropolitan Convention Center mission is to provide a first-class venue offering superior operations management and state-of-the-science amenities for the successful coordination of meetings, conventions, tradeshow, entertainment and other special events utilizing the facility.

The Columbia Regional Sports Council mission is to strengthen the area's economy by marketing and selling Columbia as a premier destination for sporting events and partnering with local sports organizations to grow and develop existing events.

Q. What is the purpose of the new Columbia marketing campaign?

A. The new campaign's purpose is to attract more conventions and meetings, sporting events and leisure visitors to our area.

Q. Is your target audience for the campaign local, regional or national?

A. Our target audiences are regional and national convention planners, sports event planners and leisure travelers.

Q. Isn't it bad to say that Columbia's hot?

A. Columbia's heat is legendary and the "Famously Hot" campaign takes that heat and puts a powerful twist on it. In this campaign, the "hotness" of Columbia refers to our happening nightlife, sizzling cuisine, fiery music and arts scene, and our sultry spirit. Additionally, our climate is a plus as we are a year-round destination. Hot also speaks to our progress; we're moving forward.

MIDLANDS AUTHORITY FOR CONVENTIONS, SPORTS & TOURISM

Columbia Metropolitan Convention & Visitors Bureau | 1010 Lincoln Street | Columbia, SC | 29201

Columbia Regional Sports Council | 1010 Lincoln Street | Columbia, SC | 29201

Columbia Metropolitan Convention Center | 1101 Lincoln Street | Columbia, SC | 29201

1.800.264.4884 | www.famouslyhot.com



Q. How did you develop the new marketing campaign?

A. The Midlands Authority for Conventions, Sports & Tourism partnered with industry and community leaders, individuals who market the area and ADCO, a local strategic, creative and interactive agency to work through a brand identity process.

More than 40 individuals each donated time to this team effort. Over the course of several meetings, the team examined Columbia's strengths and weaknesses; determined what sets us apart from the competition; and selected the words that best describe our city. Working through that process, the team came to consensus on the essence of Columbia's identity—The New Southern Hot Spot.

Q. How was "Famously Hot" chosen for the new marketing campaign?

A. The team defined Columbia as the new southern hot spot. "Columbia, SC. Famously Hot" rose to the surface as being unique, differentiating and attention grabbing.

Competition among destinations for conventions and meetings, sports events and leisure travel is intensely competitive. To be successful a campaign must cut through the clutter of advertisements. The goal was to design ads that were cutting-edge and unique. "Columbia, SC. Famously Hot" grabs the reader's attention, as does the photography that is different from the generic photos that other destinations use in their ads.

Q. Why does the campaign slogan just cite Columbia and not the Midlands region?

A. According to destination branding experts and research conducted by the Destination Marketing Association International, visitors do not distinguish between the city and its suburbs. As Eric La Brecque, a brand expert based in San Francisco, stated, "Political boundaries are irrelevant to tourists."

Q. Was it a smart investment to spend \$75,000 for this campaign?

A. MACST invested in more than a campaign. "Famously Hot" is the foundation for this campaign that also includes a strategic marketing plan for customer service delivery.

Tourism is a \$1 billion industry for the Columbia region and supports 12,000 area jobs that provide services, products and amenities for visitors. Tax paying households save \$675 a year due to the economic impact of tourism in the state.

This is an intensely competitive marketplace and for Columbia to be a player, we must break through the clutter with a comprehensive campaign, which will be carried to our target audience through advertising, Web development and direct marketing.



Q. Where does this funding come from?

A. The Midlands Authority for Conventions, Sports & Tourism is a private, not-for-profit corporation funded primarily by revenue generated by visitors through the accommodations tax.

Q. What is behind the design of the “Famously Hot” logo?

A. The goal of the marketing campaign is to create awareness for Columbia, SC as a destination for conventions and meetings, sports events and tourism. We made the words Columbia, SC prominent in the ad for that reason. The flames are not just a literal representation of heat, they are also symbolic of the spirit and energy of our community and a metaphor for all we have achieved and are yet to accomplish—a shining beacon for all to see. The three flames are symbolic of the three components of The Authority (Conventions & Visitors Bureau, Convention Center and Sports Authority) as well as our three rivers. The colors in the flames move from hot to cool which correspond to the word play used in the campaign—Famously Hot; Surprisingly Cool.