

From: David Hucks  
Sent: 3/21/2016 7:14:05 AM  
To: Haley, Nikki  
Cc:  
Subject: Fwd: Community Email requests to our News Team (The Ocean Water Quality Information Trap)

Governor Haley,

FYI

<http://www.myrtle-beach.com/static/mb-logo.png>

**David Hucks**  
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**Myrtle-Beach.com**

*Myrtle Beach's Healthy Senior Living Magazine*

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----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Myrtle Beach Minute** <[david@myrtlebeachsc.com](mailto:david@myrtlebeachsc.com)>  
<<mailto:david@myrtlebeachsc.com>>  
Date: Mon, Mar 21, 2016 at 6:16 AM  
Subject: Your requests to our organization (The Information Trap)  
To: "[brad.dean@visitmyrtlebeach.com](mailto:brad.dean@visitmyrtlebeach.com)" <[brad.dean@visitmyrtlebeach.com](mailto:brad.dean@visitmyrtlebeach.com)>  
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To Our Community,

To those businesses that have emailed or called our team this past week:

We formed our news team because we saw an obvious opportunity. As our competition was largely married to a traditional mindset, and, as each potential news competitor held constraining ties with the MBACC, a clear opportunity existed to leverage all social ingredients and provide consumers with a news flavor that actually could:

- Be uncensored
- Be unbiased
- Be engaging
- Be totally honest
- Hold local government and local messaging accountable

## **POWER VERSUS AUTHORITY**

There is no other news organization that we are aware of locally participating in this space. It was our unique evaluation of choosing to operate as a consumer's voice of empowerment versus taking a position as either a corporate power (current traditional news), trade associated power (MBACC) or governmental power (City Government). Our research shows that millennials simply won't trust any of the latter which created a huge window of opportunity for us.

The good news is: As Myrtle Beach businesses have learned to live with and grow into TripAdvisor, Google Reviews, Urban Spoon, and other such consumer friendly brand management sites so must the city of Myrtle Beach learn to live with Neighborhood Scout, DHEC monitoring websites, the NRDC monitoring

website, as well as MyrtleBeachSC.com. These sites are all highly visited and highly trusted by consumers. We are honored to be just one of such sites. Our brand just happens to be news.

### **ATTENTION: THIS WON'T WORK**

The City, the Chamber and local news should learn from the local businesses' collective experience. As businesses, we once attempted to trash such sites as Trip Advisor and Google reviews. Folks that didn't work.

Every model shows that our tourists visit as many as 23 websites before making a purchase decision. For Mark Kruea to use the city's good name so as to globally place on the "Official" city website **ATTENTION: MYRTLE BEACH'S WATER QUALITY IS FINE**, and not believe tourists would go out across the web and find: THE NRDC Water Quality Rating site, THE FORMER DHEC RATING SITE, the 2013 State Newspaper poor water quality articles, WMBFnews 2014 articles, and the 2009 Business week article among dozens of others, is a clear indication of how out of touch this team is. It is simply impossible for the MBACC and the city to hide everything globally that is authoritative on the web.

Mark discredited our city's official brand by doing this with our best 10% of consumers. You all know this 10%. They research everything. These are the people you call when you want to buy a new car. They have all the facts. These are the planners. These are the people who buy the larger condos because the entire family trusts them to do all the hard research for making such decisions.

### **ATTENTION: THIS WON'T WORK EITHER**

For Brad Dean, The Myrtle Beach Chamber, and one local news team to make MyrtleBeachSC.com out as villains and as liars on this water quality story. (Oddly: It was Sarah Miles and her team that won the day on credibility with WMBFnews' reporting here - Kudos Sarah) Once again, while Brad's team has by now gobbled up the entire search page results for those critical water quality search terms, and worked to get the DHEC map into a format that is less worrisome and more confusing for tourists, he did that only after 3.6 million people had seen prior maps and results from various sources stating Myrtle Beach did have Long Term ocean water quality issues. Those reports all lined up precisely with what MyrtleBeachSC.com was also reporting.

It was embarrassing for the city of Myrtle Beach, that a team with the resources of the MBACC, would lay this entire issue at the feet of a small upstart news team. Talk about a David vs. Goliath. He simply confused consumers.

CONFUSED MINDS - DO NOTHING. They certainly do not purchase. This issue has been on TripAdvisor Myrtle Beach forums for the past 3 years now. The drip drip of this issue started for us in 2009 and we were slowly losing our best family buyers. Poor leadership in dealing with the problem on the front end hurt us. (And please don't give us that Outfall project speech one more time)

Brad gambled the Chamber's good name and our entire town's reputation by using such a weak strategy. While it will allow the Chamber to act as a victim and lure in the majority of our 2016 summer traffic, he made the Chamber and the city look small and inept. Such a strategy is not how you build consumer trust. This strategy compounded the issue and cost us the best 10% of our most discriminating consumers because his message looked belittling and it did not square up with the facts consumers could readily see for themselves across all other channels. Having Media General push this narrative across as many of their stations as possible and placing similar media narratives in other areas like West Virginia will produce only marginal long term results.

**Belittling Social Media**, when our consumer base has completely migrated to it was another miscalculation by both Kruea and Dean. We will need to replace that 10% which were our best consumers. Trying to "oversell" 2016 now at this point will likely only do more damage.

**MANIPULATING DHEC** will discredit that organization as well and send consumers 100% to the [NRDC rating site <http://s3.amazonaws.com/nw-infographics/beachmap/index.html#33.7/-78.9>](http://s3.amazonaws.com/nw-infographics/beachmap/index.html#33.7/-78.9). It is now an easier site to follow and read than the new DHEC site. MyrtleBeachSC.com has worked to make the DHEC site the more credible site, however. This puts Myrtle Beach's future in its own hands. DHEC needs not be put in a position to become a complete cheerleader for team Myrtle Beach Chamber, however. Tourists will simply turn DHEC off in that case and run to the NRDC. We advise using wisdom here.

## **FIXING THE PROBLEM VERSUS THE PR**

Perhaps it is time that our local media, our local government, and our local chamber evaluate how much investment they make into public relations versus how well they actually do it. Arrogant, authoritative voices speaking like wounded experts aren't very compelling.

**Humility works wonders as does authentic transparency** versus the marketing lady our readers spoke with at the Chamber who stated ongoing,