

## **The Development of Public Relations Media for Nakhon Ratchasima Tourism Creating an International Economic Competition Potential.**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This research is important within the current ASEAN context where borders are more open and personal travel is encouraged. More tourism in Thailand, especially from other ASEAN nations, where augment local incomes and could stimulate the international economic competition potential. The production of a guidebook and a tourism - calendar would greatly facilitate travelling in Nakhon Ratchasima Province. The objectives of this research are 1) survey the tourism resources and the tourism destinations 2) to take the resultant data and create a province – specific tourism guidebook and calendar (as pieces of international public relations media). The primary data was collected by using a survey form and the secondary data was gathered by studying documents, journals, researches from government and private organizations and websites. Nakhon Ratchasima Province was an ancient province with a long history and the tourism resources could be divided into 2 categories ;the natural tourism resources and the tourism resources created by human. The tourism in Nakhon Ratchasima Province still reflects the provincial slogan “city of heroin and the home of good silk, Korat noodles, Angkorian temples and famous Dan Kwian earthenware”. This sector also includes ecotourism, healthcare tourism and western lifestyle tourism. We argue that these resources could be publicized by public relations media via a tourism guide book and a tourism calendar with both Thai and English language versions, thus reaching more international target groups.

**Key words** : Public Relations, Tourism

### **Rationale and Problem Statement**

Nakhon Ratchasima Province has various natural tourism resources which interest Thai and foreign tourists. This observation is supported by the number of the tourists per year ; a total of about 5,232,940 tourists. These include about 5,124,864 Thai tourists ( 98%) and 108,076 foreign tourists (2%). This places Nakhon Ratchasima as 6<sup>th</sup> in

the country in terms of the number of tourists and 13<sup>th</sup> in terms of the income generated by tourism(8,432 million Baht per year).

In order to maintain this income level and to add value to the nation as an important center of ASEAN tourism, The Office of Nakhon Ratchasima Province has identified public relations as the main strategy for attracting both old and new tourists visit and especially to regular re-visit, the area. Consequently, the provincial administration committees resolved to undertake the research project entitled “The Development of Public Relations Media for Nakhon Ratchasima Tourism Creating an International Economic Competition Potential” The result of the research would be the tourism calendar and the tourism guidebook for tourists in Thai and English. The data in these two media items would be updated and modernized to be able to compete in the international economy.

### Objectives of the Research

1. to survey the tourism resources and the tourism destination at present in Nakhon Ratchasima Province
2. to internationally publicize Nakhon Ratchasima Province tourism via tourism guidebook and a tourism calendar.

### Research Duration

October 2014 – April 2015

### Scope of the Research

Nakhon Ratchasima Province covers 32 districts. According to the study of tourism potential as detailed in Table1 below, there were 13 districts with major tourism values. Thus, this study emphasized these 13 high-potential districts .

Table 1 : Scope of the research

| Area Sdudy(Districts) |                | Content Area Study   |
|-----------------------|----------------|--|
| 1                     | Muang          | The potential tourism destinations are the destinations which are categorized among these tourism resources<br>1. The important festivals<br>2. Local products and souvenirs<br>3. Rental car services<br>4. Golf Fields<br>5. Facilities such as accommodations, restaurants, important telephone numbers |
| 2                     | Si Kiew        |  |
| 3                     | Pak Chong      |  |
| 4                     | Soung Nern     |  |
| 5                     | Dan Khun Tod   |  |
| 6                     | Pak Thong Chai |  |
| 7                     | Choke Chai     |  |
| 8                     | Sung Sang      |  |
| 9                     | None Soung     |  |
| 10                    | Phimai         |  |
| 11                    | Korn Buree     |  |
| 12                    | Huay Thalaeng  |  |
| 13                    | Wang Nam Kaew  |  |

### Theory and Conceptual Framework

The research used the Tourism concept to frame the work. Tourism means traveling for entertainment or learning. Tourism is a dynamic and competitive industry

that requires the ability to adapt constantly to customers' changing needs and desires, as the customer's satisfaction, safety and enjoyment are particularly the focus of tourism businesses. Tourism is inter-related with diverse economic sectors such as transportation, travel services, entertainment, festivals, local products, souvenirs, accommodation, food and beverage services. The tourism resources are included with natural resources, human construction resources and cultural resources. These resources must be attractive, accessible, and full of amenities.

### Methodology

The research used quantitative and qualitative methodologies as follows:

1. Select the study area. According to Ministry of Tourism and Sports study in 2011, there were 13 high-potential districts for tourism among the total of 32 districts of Nakhon Ratchasima Provinces. See Table1(above).

2. Survey the tourism resources in 13 districts in the following aspects; tourism resources, the important festivals, local products and souvenirs, rental car services, golf fields and facilities (accommodations, restaurants and important telephone numbers).

3. Analyze the tourism resources and arrange the tour guide tables and the tourism instructions.

4. Take the content of tourism resources, tour guide tables and tourism instructions published in tourism guide books, tourism calendars and maps in Thai and English to be internationally publicized.

### Tools of the study

The survey form of the tourism resources, the destinations and the other facilities.

### Data analysis

After collecting the data, it was analyzed, synthesized and categorized to form the content of the tourism guide books, tourism calendars and maps.

### Results

The study revealed that Nakhon Ratchasima province is an ancient city with a long history, and that the tourism resources are divided into three categories ; natural attractions (Savanna meadow plateau, water falls, hills, comfortable pure cool weather), manufactured attraction (tourism destination, ancient remains, flower gardens, dams,handicrafts,etc.) as well as culture and life-style attractions. From the study, the slogan of the province that emphasizes Nakhon Ratchasima as the "city of heroin and the home of good silk, Korat noodles, Angkorian temples and famous Dan Kwian earthenware, very well expresses the tourism potential of the province. Moreover, additional newly manufactured attractions were identified such as agriculture attractions, health attractions and western lifestyle attractions. Theses attractions were shown in table 2.

| District | Attractions   | Souvenirs/Local Products   |
|----------|---|--|
| Muang    | Suranaree Monument                                    | Silk, Local Food (Chinese sausage,Rice cracker, Processed food,etc.) |
|          | City Gate   |  |
|          | Shrine of the City Pillar and White Elephant          |  |
|          | Nakhon Ratchasima University Arts and Cultural Office |  |

|  |                               |  |
|--|-------------------------------|--|
|  | Temples                       |  |
|  | Zoo                           |  |
|  | Khorat Fossil Museum          |  |
|  | Night Market(Save One Market) |  |

| District       | Attractions   | Souvernirs/Local Products  |
|----------------|---|--|
| Pak Chong      | Kho Yai National Park                               | Silk, Local Food (Chinese Sausage, Rice Cracker, Processed Food,etc.) Wine, Grape, Friuts, Milk Product, Cowboy Products |
|                | Lum Takong Rafting                                  |  |
|                | Temples   |  |
|                | Fruit Markets                                       |  |
|                | Military Working Dog School                         |  |
|                | Choke Chai Farm                                     |  |
|                | Kaew Saraputnuk Cave (Make a Wish Cave)             |  |
|                | Vineyard  |  |
|                | Western Lifestyle Attractions                       |  |
| Si Kiew        | Lum Takong Dam                                      | Thai Yuan Ethnic Cotton Cloth, Brass bells, Processed banana, Local chicken, Fried cricket in herbs                      |
|                | Lum Takong Power Plant                              |  |
|                | Foundation of the Venerable monk                    |  |
|                | Khow Chan Ngam Temple (Ancient Paint)               |  |
| Soung Nern     | Ancient Angkor temples                              | Pomeloos, Plates from Betel Palm Spathe, Salted Eggs, Fried - steamed stuff bun,Rice crackers with dried shredded pork.  |
|                | Ancient Temple                                      |  |
|                | Ancient City  |  |
|                | Home Stay showing Thai way of Life and History      |  |
|                | Iron Model Coffee Shop                              |  |
| Dan Khun Thod  | Wat Ban Rai Temple                                  | Ban Rai temple, Lam Prasatyai reservoir, Thep Witthayakom temple, Chilli   |
| Pak Thong Chai | Taku Temple(Ancient temple)                         | Silk, Korat Noodles  |
|                | Lumpaplung Dam                                      |  |
|                | Jim Thompson Farm                                   |  |
|                | Local Mango Orchard                                 |  |
| Wang Nam Kheaw | Sakaerat Environmental Research Station             | Organic Vegetable, Wine, Flowers, Plants, Shitake  |
|                | Tab Lan National Park                               |  |
|                | Sun Cliff (Pha Gep Tawan)                           |  |
|                | Khow Phaeng Mha Mountain (Mountain full of Wild Ox) |  |
|                | Eco Tourism at Phu Luang Mountain                   |  |
|                | Plant and Processed Shitake Center                  |  |
|                | Aster Garden  |  |
|                | Village Vineyard                                    |  |
| Choke Chai     | Earthen Ware Village                                | Earthen Ware, Lemon ,Thai sweet made of rice, nut,   |
|                | Lemon Garden  |  |

|            |   |   |
|------------|---|---|
|            |   | sesame-seeds and sugar  |
| Sung Sang  | Sun Beach( Chom Tawum Beach)                  | Bamboo products, Cocoon flowers, Silk, Fish sauce                       |
| None Soung | Site of Angkor Castles at Ban Prasart Village | Bags from plastic ropes, Ancient carts, Curry puff, Thong Muan crackers |
|            | Home stay,                                    |   |
|            | Local Dinner Festival                         |   |

| District                   | Attractions                   | Souvernirs/Local Products                                     |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------|---|
| Phimai                     | Thung Sumrit Monument         | Document bags from clothes, Herb shampoo, Silk, Blanket, Wort |
|                            | Phimai National Museum        |   |
|                            | Angkor Historical Park        |   |
|                            | Ancient Gate and Wall City    |   |
|                            | Crematory of King Bhrommathat |   |
|                            | Hermit House                  |   |
|                            | Ancient Banyan Garden         |   |
| Phet Phimai Orange Orchard |                               |   |
| Korn Buree                 | Chom Thong Beach              | Glass Blowing products, Document bags                         |
| Huay Thalaeng              | Lung Pradu Silk Village       | Natural Dyed Silk   |

The results of the research was analyzed and added as content for a guidebook and tourism calendar entitled “ All Season Joy in Korat”as shown in Figure 1.( Korat is an ancient name for Nakhon Ratchasima Province) to be publicized and placed at restaurants, coffee shops, accommodations, and transportation stations.



Figure 1 A guidebook and tourism calendar entitled “ All Season Joy in Korat”.

### Conclusions from the research

1. According to the results, some of the destinations are situated in the same area while others are far apart. Thus, we argue that package tours for the destinations in the same area should be arranged separately from those further apart. Consequently, the tourists will be not so tired and they will not spend too much time for travelling to the destinations.

2. The local guides and the hosts should be informed about the history of the destinations. This can add value to the historical sites.

3. The image of Nakhon Ratchasima Province should be well publicized with its unique elements emphasized, allowing it to stand out from other destinations in Thailand.

### Suggestion for the next study

1. There should be a study of the Nakhon Ratchasima image to help more clearly express a different identity from other provinces.

2. The geographic information technology for tourism should be studied and applied for the tourists' convenience.

3. An integrated communication for tourism study should be developed in Nakhon Ratchasima Province.

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