WHO'S ERIK?

Rural Rebound Initiative Coordinator
Otter Tail County, MN

- started January 2017
- former sports anchor
- video production
- wife Jena, 3 kids
DOES HE KNOW WHAT HE'S TALKING ABOUT?
OUR TIME TODAY

1. The Problem(s)
2. The Research
3. Our Solution
4. Is it working?
THE PROBLEM

source: Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development

pre-pandemic
THE OTHER PROBLEM

TRADITIONAL NARRATIVE(S)

• rural is dead and/or dying
• there's nothing to do here
• we used to have ______
• we could have had ______
• the middle of nowhere
• all of our kids leave
"Nobody will move to your town out of pity."

Ben Winchester University of Minnesota Extension
THE RESEARCH

30-49 year olds are moving in

source: Ben Winchester, University of Minnesota Extension
WHY DO PEOPLE MIGRATE TO RURAL COMMUNITIES?

- simpler pace of life
- safety & security
- affordable housing
- outdoor recreation
- quality schools

Does your community have any/all of these?

source: University of Minnesota Extension
WHY DO PEOPLE MIGRATE TO RURAL COMMUNITIES?

“There are people choosing to move to your town for what you are today and what you will be – not what you were.”

– Ben Winchester
MORE RESEARCH

THE HALO EFFECT

- studied people exposed to tourism advertising
- 33% strongly agreed the destination seemed like a good place to live
- 62% strongly agreed if exposed to ad & visited
- Exposed to ad + visit = 131% image lift

source: EMT 2018 advertising ROI research conducted by Longwoods International
OUR SOLUTION
Write our own narrative.

"Always & forever our job is to tell our story. That is never going to change. The way you make real money, the way you make real impact, the way things get changed is by great story telling. It's always been that way and it will always be that way because we're human beings & that's what we LIKE" 

Gary Vaynerchuk
SINCE THE DAWN OF CIVILIZATION
OUR SOLUTION
Writing our own narrative.

Who       - 30-49 year olds
What      - reasons they migrate
When      - 24/7/365
Where     - their eyes & ears are
Why       - to create top of mind awareness
The Halo Effect

Find Your Inner Otter

Tourism is the 1st date. You don't ask strangers to get married.
WHY DO PEOPLE MIGRATE TO RURAL COMMUNITIES?

- simpler pace of life
- safety & security
- affordable housing
- outdoor recreation
- quality schools

source: University of Minnesota Extension
WHO USES THESE?
WHO HAS ONE OF THESE?
HOW - take lots & lots of pics

- document don't produce
- intent & effort
- platform specific
- people, places, things
- sunsets, sunrises
- micro-campaigns
- content pillars
- hire someone who can

Find the lifestyle you're looking for.

tontertaillakescountry.com/jobs
This could be your Tuesday night.
This could be your commute.
HOW - the power of video
RURAL BY CHOICE

2 seasons
12 episodes
long form video
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Profile</th>
<th>Audience</th>
<th>Audience Growth</th>
<th>Published Posts</th>
<th>Impressions</th>
<th>Engagements</th>
<th>Rate (per Impression)</th>
<th>Video Views</th>
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IS IT WORKING?
IS IT WORKING?
IS IT WORKING?

Percent change in population from 2010 - 2021

Quite a few rural counties now have a higher population compared to 2010.
PART OF A BIGGER PICTURE

WE DON'T OPERATE IN A SILO

ON THE MAP

INFRASTRUCTURE
HOUSING
BROADBAND
CHILDCARE

EMPLOYER/
EMPLOYEE
RESOURCES

WELCOMING
COMMUNITIES

[Image of a map, housing symbol, OTC Works logo, and a mural]
The moral of the story.

- be good at being you
- own your narrative
- it's not the thing you fling, it's the fling itself
Thank You

Questions?