

Nevada unveils latest tourism campaign

By Richard N. Velotta, Las Vegas Sun

Virginia “is for lovers.”

Kentucky has “unbridled spirit.”

And now, Nevada is “A World Within. A State Apart.”

State tourism leaders today unveiled the state’s new slogan, which has been almost two years in the making and cost close to \$9 million. Officials also debuted the first television commercial to use the branding.



Nevada tourism officials try to balance rural places like Genoa with the urban appeal of Las Vegas. Photo/LTN file

The slogan conveys the uniqueness of the state, residents’ independent spirit and the variety of experiences and opportunities Nevada provides, Gov. Brian Sandoval said. The state plans to use the mark on documents from all of its departments.

Nevada began its quest to create a brand and slogan in 2001. It hired GreenRubino, a Seattle company, to research what

aspects of the state best resonated with residents and visitors.

The company tinkered with several proposals. The taglines included "ReiNVent," which included the state's postal code; "All in Nevada," a play on poker terminology; and "Nevada is for Doers," which referred to the variety of things to see and do here. All were soundly criticized by the public and members of the Nevada Tourism Commission.

Claudia Vecchio became the state director of tourism and cultural affairs in October 2011, took GreenRubino's research and handed it off to a new agency, New York-based Burson-Marsteller. It was a controversial choice.

The company again was an out-of-state vendor, and its two-year contract with Nevada cost \$3.2 million. GreenRubino, by comparison, charged \$250,000.

To date, the total cost of Nevada's tagline project, including the work by GreenRubino and Burson-Marsteller, the development of the television ad, ad buys in several California markets and development of a mobile app is about \$8.5 million.

"A brand is more than a tagline," Vecchio said. "It's a full collection of expectations, experiences and characteristics. It's the full breadth of language and the way we communicate with our audiences."

Burson-Marsteller explains the slogan like this: "We are unwavering, we go about things our own way. We're a hearty bunch, unyielding and diverse like the land itself. We're mountains and snow and valleys of fire. We're characters. We live in our own world. When other states restrict, we allow. We're silver mines and pickups on long, lonely roads. But we're also artists and oddballs and one-liner kings. Yes, we're Vegas, but we're also Tahoe and the Hoover Dam and wide-open country. We are enterprising. We are future focused. We're unlike any other state in the union. We are Nevada. A

world within. A state apart.”

Sandoval asked Burson-Marsteller to develop a brand that all state departments could use, much the way Kentucky uses its “unbridled spirit” brand.

“We wanted to put a clear personality around the state that we could all collectively rally behind,” Vecchio said. “That did change and broaden our challenge a little bit. Instead of having something that appealed just to travelers, we needed it to appeal to Nevadans, because they are the ones that are going to be our brand ambassadors.”

Vecchio said the concept celebrates the dualities of the state.

“One of the greatest challenges, when I thought about how we would develop a statewide brand, was overcoming some of these boundaries we had,” she said. “We’re north, we’re south. We’re urban, we’re rural. We’re this, we’re that, when we are in fact one state. So instead of fighting these boundaries, we’re celebrating them, saying we are a world within with a lot to do here, but then, we do things differently than anyone else does.”

Burson-Marsteller tested the slogan with 800 people in Nevada, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Sacramento, Fresno, San Diego, Phoenix and Salt Lake City. About 78 percent liked it, the company said.

The public will get its first look at the branding in a television commercial launching the state’s summer tourism campaign. It incorporates a distinct Nevada vibe. The soundtrack is performed by the Killers, who come from Las Vegas.

The band covers the classic western song, “Don’t Fence Me In,” written in 1934 by Cole Porter and Robert Fletcher. It has been performed by Bing Crosby, the Andrews Sisters, Eddie

Arnold, Roy Rogers, Gene Autry, Ella Fitzgerald and Willie Nelson.

But Vecchio had only one band in mind for the commercial – the Killers.

When she contacted front man Brandon Flowers, the band was on tour in Europe. They recorded it while on the road.

“They took the time out of this crazy tour schedule to record the song,” Vecchio said. “They’ve been a great, great partner and when people hear it, I think they’ll agree that they nailed it.”

The commercial features actors singing with the band while a montage of local sites and activities flash in the background – hiking at the Valley of Fire State Park, riding jet skis on the Colorado River, riding ziplines in Boulder City.

The ad directs people to the state’s website where they can find more information about the places shown. The Killers’ version of “Don’t Fence Me In” also can be downloaded from the website.