



## **Marketing Campaign for Special Event or Commemoration (2025-2026)**

### **Category Description**

*(This category is exclusive to municipalities only.)*

Submit a suite of materials (three to five pieces with a common theme) centered on marketing and communications for a specific event, i.e., a parade, holiday festival, ribbon cutting, etc.

Judges will assess criteria such as creativity, effectiveness and overall outcomes, attendance, earned media, etc.

**SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION SUGGESTIONS:** Summary of earned media, attendance, event feedback, print, video, digital or social media elements.

### **Name of Individual Submitting Entry**

Joelle Castelli

### **Affiliation (Municipality/Organization)**

City of Clearwater

### **Primary Contact Email**

joelle.castelli@myclearwater.com

### **Primary Contact Phone**

(727) 562-4092

**Entry Title**

Clearwater Goes Ducking Crazy

**Social Media**

<https://www.facebook.com/cityofclearwater/>

**Video Link (YouTube or Vimeo)**

<https://youtu.be/qG4Xq6u98a0?si=4bAN2MzOIlthFmbl>

**Supporting Documentation**

Mama Duck.mp4

Mama Duck Webpage Screen Recording.mp4

FMCA Submission Reel.png

FMCA Facebook Post Static.png

**What are the goals and objectives of the Special Event or Commemoration (include target audience)?**

The main objective for this event was to bring people into the downtown Clearwater and create traction for the urban renaissance that the downtown core is undergoing. The downtown Clearwater core was newly renovated with an \$84 million Coachman Park redevelopment project, and the area currently has a Community Redevelopment Agency in place to bring foot traffic to an often-overlooked part of our city.

The goal of bringing the World's Largest Rubber Duck, named Mama Duck, was to bring an attraction and public art installation to the area that would get people talking and bring them down to Coachman Park.

There were two main demographics that we wanted to target with this activation. The first was out-of-town and out-of-state guests to bring people to the city during a slower season of tourism. The second was to bring local residents and citizens to our downtown core to rediscover Coachman Park and to stop by and enjoy the downtown businesses on our main strip of Cleveland Street.

**Describe the supporting documentation submitted with this entry.**

The attached slide deck is the presentation that our Arts and Cultural Affairs Manager presented in front of the Clearwater City Council, following the unprecedented success of this art installation. The slides show the economic impact of this public art activation.

The Public Communications Department researched and measured the success of this campaign with preliminary data to show the number of attendees, increase in parking revenues, and the overall economic impact of Mama Duck on the downtown Clearwater area.

The social media screenshots show the community's excitement and the success of getting the word out about this activation. Good or bad, the community was talking about Mama Duck, and it brought thousands of people to a park that usually sees under 100 people a day when there is not an event taking place. We received the highest engagement rates on our duck posts compared to any other boosted or organic content that we have shared on our pages. A link to the attached screenshot can be viewed here:

<https://www.facebook.com/share/p/17s2YaKDIB/>

Item three is a screen-recording of our webpage. One of the lessons learned from this event was that the duck cannot be inflated or stay blown up when the winds are higher than 25 mph. To mitigate questions we received from the public about the duck's being inflated or not, we repositioned our Coachman Park web-camera and rebranded it as the "Duck Cam" for the duration of Mama Duck's stay in Clearwater. This

camera was later picked up by local news stations to showcase the weather.

In order to build the momentum surrounding Mama Duck, we created reels and other video content to create excitement for the art installation. We shared a reel of the duck being inflated on opening day that gained a lot of traction on social media as well as the local news. A link to that reel on Facebook can be found here: <https://www.facebook.com/share/v/1DwyVd5RRq/>

**What is new, innovative or creative about this event?**

We used various out-of-the-box branding of events to entice people to come to the park.

We threw the Rubber Duck a birthday party to celebrate National Rubber Duck Day, which occurred during the art installation and featured concerts with the famous musical Jack Hartmann and Mr. Brad. This event was hugely successful and brought thousands of families to Coachman Park.

We also planned an event centered around Jeep lovers and their duck obsessions. We aimed to create programming and communication pieces geared toward various interest groups that connected with the duck. And our special events team also hosted a special Duck Dash 5K race, in which 500 participants signed up and raced around Mama Duck in Coachman Park and along the beautiful Clearwater waterfront.

We shared the content in local mom groups to promote the Rubber Ducky Birthday Bash and Duck Dash 5K, and also to Jeep fan pages to promote the Duck 'n' Drive Jeep Invasion.

**Describe how the event was successful (include your evaluation process and metrics).**

When measuring the successes of this campaign, we looked into two key areas to determine the outcomes: quantitative economic impact data and anecdotal feedback from key stakeholders.

Since this activation included many free events, we looked at several key factors, such as the sales of our Duck Dash 5K event and parking revenue data from the start of the art installation Jan. 9 through her last day Jan. 25, and we compared the parking revenue data to that of January 2025. Parking revenue increased by more than \$13,000 from the previous January earnings.

In addition, our sponsorships from local organizations covered the majority of the cost of the installation. We calculated an earned media value for this activation of over \$230,000 for the three weeks that Mama Duck was in Coachman Park.

We interviewed our downtown business owners to gather feedback about how the presence of Mama Duck impacted their sales. Several of our businesses participated in "Duck Mania" by running specials themed around the duck. Three of our restaurants sold out of their duck specials, and all interviewed parties self-reported that they were shocked at the volume of business that this activation brought in.

We also spoke with patrons at the park while they were visiting to ask from where they traveled. Several visitors noted that they planned trips to see the duck from places such as Denver, Colorado, as well as cities in Florida such as Gainesville, Palmetto, Sarasota and Tampa.

**Recognizing the diversity of our communication departments across the state, in the space below, discuss the factors that set your community and submission apart i.e, department size, overall budget spend, innovative and creative techniques utilized, impact on community and size of city/county as examples.**

While the city of Clearwater is world-renowned for its bright and beautiful beaches, the downtown core struggles to attract traffic due to a myriad of land issues and building vacancies. These obstacles have made it difficult to bring foot traffic into our downtown area.

This art installation was a huge departure from anything we've done before, and the city team was excited

to be a part of the World's Largest Rubber Duck's successful visit to Clearwater. This campaign was so unique and exciting that a photo of Mama Duck in Clearwater appeared in the print version of the Wall Street Journal shortly after she made her debut!

This overall campaign required little spending and was offset by a fairly large number of sponsorships, all while creating a new and exciting buzz around downtown Clearwater.