

8.0 Promotion, Economic Development and Marketing

This chapter will describe the future promotion, economic development and marketing efforts/opportunities of the HTURB. These efforts should complement county, regional and state tourism plans and efforts, as well as other agencies in the region that focus their efforts on promotion, marketing and economic development.

Scenic Byways provide a significant opportunity for economic development and offer a cohesive and dedicated group of vested interests that can utilize the organization and dedication of the affiliated Byway group, or Steering Committee, to advance the economic development goals and objectives of regional communities and agencies. Along with Scenic Byway designation at the state or national level comes funding opportunities and technical assistance that can aid the Byway corridor's communities in seeking and harnessing the necessary funding and interest normally required for economic development to occur. This chapter will address the potential for these opportunities and provide direction for achieving economic development goals and wishes.

Target markets, including niche market segments, and multi-lingual information needs are also discussed. The major themes of the corridor, profiles of potential users, and other pertinent information pertaining to the promotion of the corridor are also presented. Based on the history and culture of the corridor and American's affinity for auto travel, additional strategies for attracting important niche markets is included.

Also mentioned, as required by the FHWA Guideline for Corridor Management Plan (CMP) development criteria, are opportunities for tour operators, multi-lingual inclusion and promotion, and international visitation.

National Scenic Byway CMP Point #12

Plan of how the Byway will be marketed and publicized.

8.1 Major Themes of the HTURB

The HTURB has a significant and marketable corridor story, and therefore, tourist draw. The Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad corridor story, and the significance of both, defines a direct and easily identifiable corridor theme.

8.2 Profile of Potential Scenic Drivers

Recent analysis and information provided by the National Scenic Byways Program - America's Resource Center summarized several research efforts that had been commissioned to support the National Scenic Byway Program. Highlights from the various studies are described below:

- Research in Colorado and Minnesota documented that the most common Scenic Byway travel profile in those two (2) states was an adult couple over the age of 45 traveling without children.
- In another study profiles were developed from two (2) types of Scenic Byway corridor data. As with the Colorado and Minnesota research, both profiles represented couples.

Couple Profile #1 was crafted from people who requested a National Scenic Byways map via the NSBP website. Profile #1 consisted of a couple, aged 45-64, with a household income that ranged from \$60,000-\$70,000. Couple Profile #1 enjoyed individual sports like golfing and biking, were fitness oriented, and traveled frequently. They spent time online (using the internet) and enjoyed working around the house and yard, listened to news, talk, classical and contemporary radio stations, bought performance cars and shopped at stores like Nordstrom and Eddie Bauer.

- The second profile (Profile #2) was created from data on people who visited the National Road Welcome Center in Indiana. Couple Profile #2 owned a powerboat and camper/RV, liked to hunt or fish, drove a GM car or Ford truck, listened to country/religious/gospel radio, watched TNN, CNN, soap-operas (“soaps”) and the Today Show, and shopped at Wal-Mart.

The two (2) very different profiles illustrate the wide appeal of scenic driving as a recreational activity. This is a good thing for the scenic Byway industry; however, it creates a difficult target market selection and can create the inefficient use of promotional and marketing funding opportunities.

In the final study discussed in the September 2000 *Vistas* newsletter, a national telephone survey was conducted to gauge the awareness of the National Scenic Byways Program. That national research project yielded the following results:

- About a quarter (25.9%) of the respondents had heard of National Scenic Byways or All-American Roads
- Respondents reported taking an average of 5-6 overnight trips each year
- More than three-quarters (76%) indicated that they took the most interesting route when they traveled
- Respondents indicated that they are “very likely” (57%) or “somewhat likely” (35%) to take a scenic or historic drive to get to their destination
- The top three (3) sources of travel information included AAA or other travel clubs (46%), calling a toll-free number (46%), or using the internet (39%)

The August 2000 issue of *Vistas* profiled the economic impact of three (3) Scenic Byways in New Mexico. Although this was primarily an economic impact study, the average per party expenditures for the three (3) routes ranged from \$323-\$576.

(Source: Vistas Magazine, Federal Highway Administration, National Scenic Byways Program, America's Resource Center, 2000)

A recent study conducted by the School of Business and Economics at the University of Minnesota concluded the following about the economic impacts of Scenic Byways:

- 19 to 33 jobs are created/maintained per \$1 million of visitor spending
- 3.4% to 20% increase in annual vehicular traffic along the Scenic Byway corridor
- \$0.045 to \$0.08 State & Local tax receipts collected per \$1.00 of visitor spending
- \$65,000 in additional visitor spending with every 1% increase in vehicle miles traveled (VMT)

- \$104 of visitor group spending per trip along the Scenic Byway
- \$32,500 annual visitor spending per mile of Scenic Byway

(Source: *Summary of Quantifying the Economic Impacts of Scenic Byway Designation by the School of Business and Economics at the University of Minnesota, 2010*)

8.3 Target Markets

Defining specific target markets for promotional and marketing efforts is crucial to the success of any promotional campaign and marketing efforts. The following list is not inclusive, but defines the key target markets as defined by the HTURB community during the Community Workshops (see Public Participation chapter in this document).

- Travelers seeking historical information or documentation
- African-American story/culture seekers (story of the Underground Railroad)
- Travel writer associations and individuals
- Outdoor Writers Association of America
- Society of American Travel Writers
- Recreational Vehicle (RV) enthusiasts and industry
- Genealogy researchers/enthusiasts
- Americana enthusiasts
- International travelers of the following markets:
 - ✓ China
 - ✓ Europe
 - ✓ Canada

National Scenic Byway CMP Point #15

A narrative on how the All-American Road would be promoted, interpreted, and marketed in order to attract travelers, especially those from other countries. The agencies responsible for these activities should be identified.

8.4 Niche Markets

The HTURB Steering Committee should focus its promotional efforts on the target markets outlined in this chapter. In addition, it may be determined that targeting a niche market or sub-target market may be more efficient. The following are some niche markets that the Steering Committee may elect to pursue with promotional opportunities:

- *Harriet Tubman and Underground Railroad Niche* – as the major theme of the HTURB it is imperative that Harriet Tubman and Underground Railroad enthusiasts are targeted in promotional efforts.
- *Geographic Niche* – those travelers who live within a four (4) hour commute/200 mile drive of the corridor. These travelers can make frequent trips to the corridor; however, they tend to make day trips and not require lodging, so the revenue impact that they bring is not as large as an overnight traveler.

- *Beach Goers* – given the location of the HTURB along or in close proximity to routes commonly traveled by beach-goers from throughout the northeast, it is imperative that marketing and promotional efforts be targeted at this audience. Capturing these travelers may not directly result in diverted trips or side trips, but at a minimum, later or future trips may be planned to experience the offerings of the HTURB.
- *Scenic Driver or “Sunday Driver” Niche* – these travelers tend to select corridors that offer a slow paced drive with plenty of scenery and consistent tourist amenities (dinners, shopping, parks, etc.) to stop at along the way.
- *Heritage or Americana Niche* – the Heritage or Americana niche market is made up of travelers that seek out events and sites that hold values of traditional and historical value that helped shape America.
- *Ambience Niche* - rest and relaxation in a beautiful place other than “home” is the goal of many visitors to the HTURB region. Ambiance seekers come for entertainment/special events, cooler temperatures, rest/relaxation, coastal experiences (where offered) and fresh air. Scenic driving for ambiance-seekers is a form of recreation and transportation. Other ambiance-seekers can be categorized by accommodations and include lifestyle changers (new residents/retirees), second homeowners and vacation/rental occupants.
- *Independent International Travelers Niche* – one of the most promising international niche markets is the independent international traveler. Since the HTURB is located near large international tourism centers (Philadelphia, Washington, D.C., and Baltimore) it is critical that the corridor harness the opportunity to draw these travelers to the HTURB region.

8.5 Partnerships for Promotion and Marketing Efforts

A critical task for the HTURB Steering Committee is to coordinate with a variety of tourism entities at all levels from local to international. As an All-American Road or National Scenic Byway the HTURB will have the opportunity to attract a larger market of travelers. It is imperative that international tourism markets are reached and partnerships can help keep the outreach and promotional costs low while still reaching these large target markets. Some of the tourism coordination and potential partnerships should be targeted, but not limited to, the following entities:

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| • Delaware Tourism Office | • National Trust for Historic Preservation Cultural Heritage Tourism Program |
| • Underground Railroad Coalition (Delaware and other states) | • Convention & Visitors Bureaus (CVB) |
| • Maryland Tourism | • World Tourism Organization |
| • Visit Delaware | • International Tourism Partnership |
| • National Scenic Byways Program | • United States – National Parks Service (NPS) and the Heritage Areas Program |
| • United States Department of Agriculture – Travel and Recreation | • Main Street communities administrated by the DEDO |
| • Travel Industry of American (TIA) | |
| • Chambers of Commerce | |
| • City and County Tourism entities | |
| • Regional Tourism Groups | |

8.6 Accommodating and Enhancing Increased Tourism

Although the HTURB corridor has sufficient infrastructure in place to support an increase in travelers while maintaining a safe traveler experience, it is a goal of the corridor communities to increase and enhance the availability, quantity, and quality of traveler amenities (see the Tourist Amenities and Corridor Vision, Goals and Strategies chapters). The corridor can easily accommodate an increase in vehicular travelers (see the Roadway Characteristics chapter) safely and with no disruption to the enjoyment of the Scenic Byway or its associated resources. The corridor's communities have identified several goals that will also enhance the traveler experience by providing an increase in available facilities (restrooms, pull-offs, interpretation, etc).

A Wayfinding and Interpretation Assessment Plan (WIAP) is a short-term objective of the HTURB Steering Committee. Interpretation of the HTURB's resources will be increased and enhanced through the development of a series of wayfinding and interpretive signs and markers. These wayfinding and interpretive signs will give the corridor a unified look, increased navigation efficiency, as well as provide opportunities for traveler education. The HTURB stakeholder group plans to seek grant funding and partnering to help accomplish this goal.

8.7 Future Promotional Strategies

It is important to outline future promotional and marketing strategies in a clear and concise manner, in coordination with potential partnerships (see previous sections) and timeframes. Each promotional strategy discussed within this section supports the overall Vision and Mission of the HTURB (see Corridor Vision, Mission, Goals and Strategies chapter of this CMP). The promotional strategies are categorized by timeframe:

- Immediate (2012-2013)
- Intermediate (2013-2015)
- Long-Range (2015-2020)

More precise timelines budgets/funding and implementation plans for each strategy will be prepared prior to implementation as funding is identified. It is beyond the scope of this section of the CMP to do so. A detailed Promotional and Marketing Plan should be another objective of the HTURB Steering Committee. This would provide direct guidance and defined target markets coupled with branding and marketing campaigns, which would steer the HTURB towards direct and effective implementation of marketing and promotion strategies.

Immediate (2012 - 2013)

- Recommend HTURB story ideas to destination marketing organizations for their respective media programs
- Work with the adjoining state Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Byways and the associated groups, such as the Underground Railroad Coalition, to coordinate promotional efforts and campaigns to benefit both entities
- Develop a professional photographic library and historical photographic archive (make this available online)
- Begin creating/drafting a HTURB DVD for both the hospitality industry and the tourist market. This should be available online, as well as in hard-copy.

- Create a hospitality training course that aims at educating local corridor businesses and residents about the HTURB, its associated resources, benefits, and history
- Define an on-going plan to coordinate development and management of the HTURB
- Coordinate with destination-marketing organizations (DMOs) and tourist entities to add the HTURB to their existing marketing plans
- Seek funding to enhance and continue to promote the HTURB website
- Utilize social media to expand the reach of the HTURB (Facebook page, Twitter tweets, YouTube, and others)
- Compile a media mailing list from a variety of sources (ex. businesses, tourism marketing organizations)
- Develop a trade show display for the HTURB including a tablecloth, rear panel, telescoping pull-up banner, and other associated material
- Create a brochure and a rack card (size 4" x 9" informational piece printed on cardstock) for distribution at selected special events and through destination marketing
- Develop a corridor itinerary that provides detailed traveler ideas based on defined timeframes (ex. 30 minutes around Wilmington, two (2) hours along the Byway, etc.)
- Create themed brochures that provide direct and detailed traveler ideas for niche travel segments (ex. wildlife viewing, historic properties, biking, Underground Railroad sites, etc.)
- Develop a quarterly digital magazine that will be distributed to local businesses, the HTURB mailing list, realtors, land owners, tourists, and other appropriate markets

Intermediate Range (2013-2015)

- Develop and implement a Wayfinding and Interpretation Assessment Plan (WIAP)
- Create a media/writer's kit that includes background notes, story ideas, photographs and high-quality maps of the region and the corridor
- Develop a Tour Guide Training Certification Program. Before developing a Tour Guide Training Certification Program, it may be wise to have a public meeting with some of the representatives of organizations, societies and individuals in each county that are already engaged in presenting Underground Railroad programs or tours for their feedback.
- Develop a media plan that defines the steps taken and contacts needed to promote large events or key news associated with the HTURB
- Create a driving guide displaying stories and itineraries for automobile travelers (can be done in video format as well)
- Coordinate with corridor resources to promote and educate the public about the HTURB corridor story
- Work with area realtors and accommodations operators (e.g., B&B, motels, inns) to include HTURB information in their publications or in-room guides
- Promote the HTURB website by linking to partner cross-promotion websites
- Coordinate with other regional State or National Scenic Byways for promotion and marketing sharing opportunities
- Increase the visibility of the HTURB in area tourism marketing materials and publications

- Create HTURB merchandise and determine the most effective way to offer it to the public
- Develop a walking tour for the communities along the corridor that incorporate cultural heritage and history (ex. New Castle, Wilmington, Dover, Camden)
- Invite private sector travel and lifestyle publishers to write feature stories about the HTURB
- Add the HTURB route to national and international scenic drive publications and maps (including online versions)
- Retain the services of a publicist to promote the HTURB
- Design and implement one or more media/tourism FAM (familiarization) trips for the HTURB
- Conduct marketing research on the corridor
- Create itinerary files to be shared with the GPS/navigation community for use with in-car and handheld navigation devices
- Develop a geocaching group and/or tour
- Coordinate with the bicycle community to enhance cycling opportunities, promotion, and amenities along the HTURB corridor

Long-Range (2015-2020)

- Continue to market to the historical traveler and education/story seekers
- Continue to promote opportunities to cyclists, specifically the international cycling community
- Create a corridor-wide auto tour with interpretation and wayfinding
- Design and install a mile-marker system along the entire corridor

Since many of the short-range strategies will require substantial resources, both financial and staff-based (in-kind), outside resources (ex. grants and agency appropriations) will be necessary to see them through to implementation. The application process for grants and competitively awarded agency funds will include detailed budgets, timelines and assessment plans.

8.8 Assessment/Updating Marketing Activities

Prior to implementation, each component of the promotion and marketing plan will be assessed for its ability to further the vision and goals of the HTURB. A formal plan for assessment, including a mechanism for evaluating the ROI (return on investment) should be defined prior to the implementation of any marketing initiative or tactic. A useful tool for measuring the economic impact of Byway designation is the *Economic Impact Tool* designed/created by the America's Byways Resource Center in 2010. Information for each marketing initiative or tactic will be developed prior to implementation. Questions to be answered include the following:

- Who will act as the responsible party for this initiative?
- How does this initiative fit with local, regional, state or agency tourism plans?
- What is the distribution plan for the products of this initiative?
- How will the effectiveness of this initiative be assessed?
- Briefly describe the purpose or proposed outcome of the initiative.
- How does this strategy or initiative support the vision and goal for the HTURB?
- Which marketing objective(s) does this strategy or initiative support?

- What is the estimated budget for this strategy or initiative?
- What is the timeline for strategy or initiative?
- How will ROI (return on investment) be determined?

Note: The research referenced in this chapter is some of the best data available for scenic Byway travel profiles and assessments. There are some active studies being conducted by the America's Byways Resource Center (no longer active as of June 2012) and other state Byway programs to assess the impact of Scenic Byways on the economy and to determine more detailed profiles of scenic Byway travelers. Once this data is readily available to the HTURB it is recommended that the Steering Committee utilizes it to better implement their promotional and marketing efforts.

8.9 Multi-Lingual Promotion, Marketing and Information Plan

The HTURB is an international destination and as a result of this, multi-lingual information and promotional material is needed. Currently, there are no concentrated efforts by the Steering Committee to produce multi-lingual information. This chapter of the CMP provides a multi-lingual plan and outline (see below) for the corridor and will address Point #17 of the All-American Road/National Scenic Byway requirements.

National Scenic Byway CMP Point #17

A plan for addressing multi-lingual information needs.

In an effort to provide effective multi-lingual information the following steps should be taken:

1. The initial step should be for the Steering Committee to form a multi-lingual sub-committee with a leader or chairperson that has a thorough understanding of multi-lingual needs and international travel characteristics. It is advised that part of the group be a university or educational facility representative that has a multi-lingual background. This person can be used as a technical expert to provide future direction and insight.
2. Conduct a corridor-wide assessment to determine the international travelers that are currently traveling the corridor. In addition, an assessment of future international travelers can be conducted by reviewing marketing, outreach, and promotional materials to determine target markets.
3. Conduct a corridor-wide workshop that involves the business community, tourism entities, and local governments to review the multi-lingual needs assessment survey and discuss next steps and target markets. This step is imperative as it qualifies the findings of the survey and ensures a cohesive direction for future multi-lingual efforts.
4. Design a Fact Sheet or other uniform document that outlines the findings of the workshops and the survey and provides the local businesses, governments, and tourism entities with a definite course of direction for corridor-wide multi-lingual information needs and plans.
5. Create a HTURB Marketing and Promotion Plan with a focus and action list outlining the future steps and design characteristics of all multi-lingual information. This should include the language parameters and dialects, color schemes, media, and a schedule (short/long-term).
6. Launch a multi-lingual information campaign with an efficient and targeted approach towards a select few internationalities. This campaign should aim to target the selected

markets and then conduct a survey to determine if the multi-lingual information was beneficial and created the traveler draw.

As globalization and international tourism continues to increase there will be more need for multi-lingual information (wayfinding/interpretation, marketing materials, etc.) and promotional and marketing material along, and about the corridor. The multi-lingual needs assessment will determine what international markets to target and allow the HTURB group to more efficiently meet the needs of their visitors.