

Principle Two: Find the Fit between the Community & Tourism

HANDOUT: 10 Creative Ideas to Find the Fit



1. Time Slices, Iowa

In Iowa, libraries organized a reading and discussion series. Communities could choose one Time Slice at a time until they had covered the four-part series on the history of the state. Scholars and historians lead the discussions, and many also included oral history projects, lectures and panel discussions, exhibits, writing projects and video histories. A project like this benefits the community, while materials gathered from similar projects could be used to develop exhibits and tours that would appeal to visitors.

2. The Zora Neale Hurston Festival in Eatonville, Florida

When a small Florida community near Orlando heard that a five-lane thoroughfare was planned through the heart of their community, they decided to take action to preserve the town's character. Eatonville organizers planned a festival celebrating the life of Zora Neale Hurston, an acclaimed early 20th century writer, folklorist and anthropologist who was born in Eatonville in 1891. The festival included academic programs and a street festival featuring music, dance, drama and ethnic cuisines. Eatonville could not house the 100,000 people who came each year, and so directed visitors to stay in nearby Orlando. The thoroughfare was never constructed, and the community found a way to welcome visitors while preserving the community's heritage.

3. Public Bandstand, in Rogersville, Tennessee

The city of Rogersville, Tennessee selected as a bicentennial project the recreation of a bandstand that had once stood at its town's center. The bandstand was built with donated materials and labor and now serves as a focal point for community concerts and events. The performances also provides promotional opportunities to attract visitors to the town.

4. Handmade in America in Asheville, North Carolina

In Asheville, North Carolina, an organization called Handmade in America has organized a program of craft trails in rural Appalachia. Each trail begins with organizers holding meetings with community residents. The meetings include an explanation of the program and discussed with residents about what they want to do and what they want to share with visitors--and what they prefer to keep for residents only. This information is incorporated into planning for each tour route.

5. Local Promotions, Lancaster, Pennsylvania

Public meetings and newspaper surveys were a key part of the early development for the Lancaster Heritage Tourism initiative in Pennsylvania. The newspaper survey helped gauge residents' opinions about heritage tourism in general and ask for their input in developing the program. Regional meetings and focus groups helped to determine the challenges and opportunities of creating a heritage tourism program. To ensure that the public has a continuing role, several locally initiated self-guided regional auto, bicycle and walking tours were created to link sites together. Residents in each community determined what they would share with visitors and what they would keep for residents only.

6. Overhill Exhibit, Tennessee

When the Tennessee Overhill Heritage Tourism Association first started to promote their three-county area to tourists, they realized that getting community support and building community pride were important first steps. A local arts commission designed an exhibit about the area, and a local carpenter helped to build an inexpensive and easily transportable exhibit. Tennessee Overhill contacted a bank in each county to request permission to display the exhibit. They gained support from the banks and encouraged them to become involved in the project.

7. Tourism Management Program, Charleston, South Carolina

Charleston, South Carolina has one of the most advanced tourism management programs in the country, having passed their first management ordinance in 1984. The ordinance included provisions to license tour guides, certify local tour vehicles, restrictions for routing and parking tour vehicles and more. The ordinance was designed to allow for the benefits of tourism while maintaining the quality of life for residents.

8. Sharing Visitors, Zion National Park, Springdale, Utah

Springdale is the gateway to this national park, and community and park officials worked together to develop a shuttle between the park and the city. The effort resulted in an improved experience for visitors and also brought revenue to Springdale. In addition, Springdale is featured on the homepage of the park's web site, making National Park visitors aware of the services and attractions available in the community.

9. Sharing Tourism Benefits, St. Lucia

The Ministry of Tourism in St. Lucia started a heritage tourism program to distribute the benefits of tourism more evenly throughout the island. The program offers technical assistance, training, loans and grants to enhance sites. For example, Mamiku Gardens offers visitors an opportunity to tour a plantation that has been owned by the same family since 1906. The goal of the program is to diversify St. Lucia's tourism products and promote sustainable tourism.

10. Revitalizing Madison, Indiana

Residents in the small community of Madison, in southern Indiana, have worked diligently to restore what was a fading historic downtown and to bring back businesses that appeal to visitors and residents alike. Through active involvement in the Main Street Program, the downtown has been restored, jobs have been created and the area is a popular heritage

tourism destination. A number of unique bed and breakfasts and restaurants have opened. Several historic sites have also been restored and are open to visitors. The community offers several annual events that provide residents with opportunities to get involved in their community, and provide promotional opportunities to attract visitors. As a result of these efforts, Madison was named one of a Dozen Distinctive Destinations by the National Trust for Historic Preservation in 2001.



Made possible by a grant from the American Express Company and the National Endowment for the Arts



Prepared by National Trust for Historic Preservation
Heritage Tourism Program