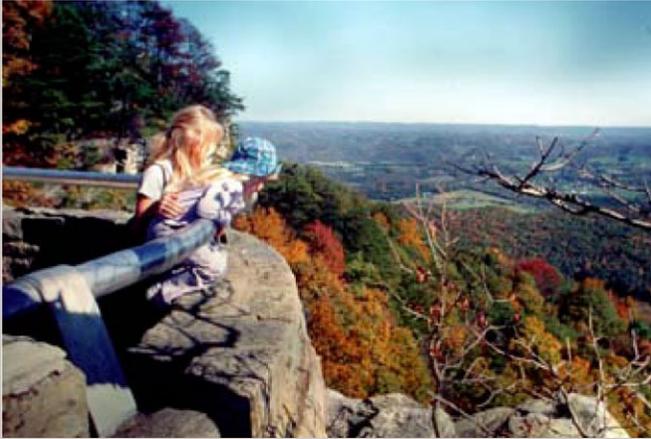


Marketing Your Byway



Palisades Scenic Overlook

Research conducted by America's Byways Resource Center and the Federal Highway Administration in 2006 and 2007 concludes that the America's Byways Collection is an "untapped opportunity in terms of stewardship, preservation and economic value for the communities along the designated byways." While less than 10% of Americans over 18 had traveled a byway in the previous two years, 60% of Americans over 18 said they would visit a byway after learning more about them.

How can a local byway attract these travelers and keep them returning? By developing a marketing plan as part of a Byway's Corridor Management Plan (CMP) or in greater detail after the CMP is complete. If the Marketing Plan address what current and potential travelers are looking for in a byway experience, your byway can increase travel along with benefits to local attractions.

National research also revealed factors that would increase the appeal of byways travel:

- More information/better publicity
- More rest stops/shops
- Better/smooth roads
- Cheaper gas
- Good locations/destinations
- More signs/maps
- Less traffic
- Tour book/itinerary
- Better/more lodging

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Understanding what makes a byway appealing to target audiences is the key to developing an effective marketing campaign to promote your byway as a desirable destination for travelers.

How to start?

Set specific marketing goals to provide a focus for messaging and tactics. These might include:

1. Develop the byway as a destination for tourists/travelers visiting the area, including access to attractions in the byway corridor.
2. Develop a detailed profile of current and potential travelers in order to create a targeted marketing campaign.
3. Develop an interactive website to stimulate byway visits.
4. Identify sufficient public and/or funding sources to implement the Marketing Plan.

Identify the audience

1. Who visits your byway now, and what markets are untapped? Older travelers? Families? Couples? Heritage or cultural travelers?
2. Who are your potential partners? Area attractions? Services (gas, food, lodging)? Tourism offices? Main Street Businesses and Organizations?

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Develop a plan

A campaign starts with a marketing plan to focus tactics on the most effective ways to reach the target audience. It should include:

1. An overarching message, including brand, tagline and headlines, consistent with the mission “roads build communities”.
2. Audience-focused tactics (for example, a collaborative effort with AARP to reach older travelers, byway marketing toolkits for attractions, hand-outs at gas stations, cooperative arrangements with partners for links to your website, etc.).
3. A budget and possible private and public funding sources.
4. A timeline and marketing calendar.

Market research revealed that people would make small changes in their daily activities to reduce congestion and improve air quality. A marketing strategy with tactics, toolkits and activities advanced the message: “It All Adds Up to Cleaner Air” and promoted simple steps research indicated people would take:

- Trip chaining (combine errands)
- Regular car maintenance
- Alternate choices
- Proper fueling
- Telecommuting

Customizable materials kept messages consistent and allowed for the addition of logos for local use. A web center offered toolkits, downloadable materials and interactive message boards. As a result, the program grew from 10 communities to more than 100, with messages distributed in more than 35 states.



The Federal Highway Administration’s “It All Adds Up to Cleaner Air” outreach initiative was developed to build awareness of transportation choices on congestion and air quality.



Resources

- Federal Highway Administration National Scenic Byways Program (NSBP): Resources for Byways communities—including logos, promotional maps, consumer research and a marketing forum—are available at www.bywaysonline.org/ & byways.org/.
- Partners of America’s Byways Resource Center
 - Goodyear
www.goodyear.com/corporate/
 - National Geographic Society
www.nationalgeographic.com/
 - American Road Magazine
americanroadmagazine.com/