Assessing the Heritage Tourism Potential of your Downtown

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Agenda for this morning

- Basic introduction to heritage tourism concepts
- Overview NTCP Heritage Tourism 5 principles
- Overview of NTCP Heritage Tourism 4 steps
- What are you selling to visitors?
- 12 basic tourism amenities for every downtown
- Questions

Donna don’t forget to talk about...
Your questions you want answered from this session

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The National Trust defines heritage tourism as “traveling to experience the places, artifacts and activities that authentically represent the stories and people of the past,” and heritage tourism can include cultural, historic and natural resources.

http://www.preservationnation.org/information-center/economics-of-revitalization/heritage-tourism/#.VXnJ8vlVikq

5 NTHP Heritage Tourism Principles

1. Collaborate
2. Find the Fit
3. Make Sites and Programs Come Alive
4. Focus on Quality and Authenticity
5. Preserve and Protect
1. Collaborate

- Political & biz leaders
- Tourist sites, attractions & historic sites operators
- Artists, craftspeople, folk life, re-enactors
- YOUR Main Street Organization
- Hotel, motel, B&B operators
- CVB or Destination Management Organization
- Funders
- Others?

Why should Main Street collaborate?

2. Find the Fit

- What kind and amount of tourism can your community handle?
- Distinctive, not homogenized experiences
- What kind of experiences to locals WANT to share?
- What do they NOT want to share? WHY? Respect that!

2. Find the fit—when TOURISM is just too much

- Festivals that become too big?
- Visitor parking lots, shuttle transportation
- Too many busses? Where to park them?
- Too many police calls?
- Group tours 55 people at attractions
- Clean public restrooms (not just 2)
- Restaurants that can handle a bus load at one time in a quick turn round

Why should Main Street care what kind of visitors should
Do locals want visitors?

3. Make Sites and Programs Come Alive
- Worth the drive
- Interpretation: is not just
  - Names/dates
  - Object identification
  - Genealogical or family lore

On average, visitors will remember:
- 10% of what they HEAR
- 30% of what they READ
- 50% of what they SEE
- 90% of what they DO
  - Hands on activities for kids and adults

Why should Main Street care about good interpretation?
3. Make Sites and Programs Come Alive

- Guided vs. non-guided tours
- 55% hate guided tours
- 45% love them
- Must offer both

4. Focus on quality and authenticity

- Your true stories
- Authentic contributions of past generations
- Distinguishes your area
- Authenticity adds real value and visitor appeal
- Special charm draws visitors

- Research
- Training for docents/guides
- Quality preservation/restoration work, honest
- Self-guided materials for walking tours
- Promotional literature (brochures)
- Exhibit labels
- Cell phone tours, apps

4. Quality and Authenticity

- Live interpreters are costly
  - Costumed or not?
  - Living history or not?
  - Demonstrations or not?
  - In character or not?

- Manage expectations of visitors
- Honesty is best
  - Under promise
  - Over deliver

Why should Main Street be concerned about authenticity?
5. Preserve and protect

- Costs to develop heritage programming
- Timeline
- Skills needed
- Preservation and conservation plans in place

5. Preserve and protect

- Long term impact—loading, overuse?
- Balancing preservation and promotion
  - How many visitors can you really handle?
- Build support for tourism among locals
- Good partnerships

Why should Main Street care about protecting our historic & cultural assets?

5 principles of Heritage Tourism

Questions?
4 NTHP Heritage Tourism Steps

1. Assess the potential
2. Plan and Organize
3. Prepare, Protect & Manage
4. Market for Success

1. Assess the potential
   - Who can help?
   - Site, story or resource/attraction?
   - Existing assets--museums, sites, themes, tangible & intangible, regional links
1. Assess the potential
- Collect materials (FORM) about all sites, stories, resources/attractions
- Visit all sites/attractions, conduct assessment (FORM)
- Compile all, create CURRENT CONDITIONS memo

2. Plan and Organize
- Why? We want cultural heritage tourism to:
  - For What? To do what?
  - For Whom? Who do you want versus who do you currently attract?
  - From Where? We want visitors from
  - When? We want visitors during?
- Create a work plan and then implement!
- Where will the money come from? Hotel/Motel tax, grants, fees?

3. Prepare, Protect & Manage
- Prepare:
  - What stories will you tell?
  - Identify variety of interpretive methods
  - Guided vs. self guided
  - Hospitality training a must for front line workers
- Protect:
  - Designations
  - Planning and zoning
  - Design guidelines
  - Design assistance and incentives
  - Sign ordinance
  - Demolition review/local preservation ordinance
3. Prepare, Protect & Manage

- Manage:
  - Coordination with hotels, attractions, retail
  - Events
  - Identify gaps in visitor infrastructure
  - Work to solve problems (i.e. restrooms)
  - Establish carrying capacity
  - Don’t kill the goose

4. Market for success

- Public Relations
- Advertising
- Graphic Materials
- Promotions
- Developing a new domestic market takes approximately three years
- International audience takes five years—even when you use every one of the techniques presented here.

Public relations

- Cheaper—third party endorsement
  - Media list
  - Press kit
  - Regular press releases
  - FAM tours
  - PSAs
  - Document all with PRO photos, upload to web site
  - Spokesperson
Advertising

- Expensive—all paid
- Compelling visuals and text
- Consistent advertising critical
- Print ads cheaper than TV/radio—is that right for audience?
- Ads for travel industry vs. individuals. Conversion rates

Graphics

- Branding
  - Logo
  - Tag line
- Web site, 1-800 number, fulfillment of brochure requests
- Print brochures, general and specialized (walking tour)

- Trade show booths, exhibit materials, storage
- Map/directory
- Directional and way finding signage, kiosks, highway signs, billboards, banners
- Rack cards, visitor centers, regional highway locations

Promoting your district

- Promoting to travel professionals at trade shows
- State travel office
- Consumer travel shows
- Trade missions
- Marketing comes last after you build tourist infrastructure—hotels, tours, open restaurants, restrooms, and have compelling attractions.
12 basic tourism amenities for Main Street organizations

12 Basic Tourism amenities

1. Effective web site for visitors
2. Visitor brochures
3. Directional signage/banners/highway
4. Retool existing events
5. Tours (all kinds)
6. Stores/restaurants open regular hours

7. Trained docent tour guides
8. Interpretive signage
9. Heritage programming for visitors
10. Visitor center (your office)
11. Marketing/advertising
12. Partners: hotels, attractions, CVB/Tourism entities
1. Effective web site for visitors

- Trip planning information on web site
- Maps of downtown, the region
- Pages with photos and links to hotels, restaurants, ATMs, gas stations, highway exits, recreational attractions, historic and shopping opportunities
- Phone numbers, addresses, GPS coordinates if address is not obvious.
- Lists of events, dates, times
- Open hours of stores/attractions

Web pages for visitors

2. Visitor brochures & Maps
3. Directional signs/banners

- Directional signage for parking town
- Using billboards
- Kiosks/maps for pedestrians
- Brown highway signs
- Byway/heritage area signage

4. Retool your events

- Review existing events
- Add components geared specifically for visitors
- Provide orientation if needed
5. Events for visitors (not locals)
- Identify which events are appropriate for visitors vs locals
- Seasonal retail events activities
- More orientation and
- Especially to restrooms
  And restaurants
- Help retailers with coop
  TV, Radio ads

5. Tours (walking, biking etc.)
- Tours of all kinds
  - Individual vs. group
  - Guided and self guided mixture is best
  - Home and garden tours
  - Trolley
  - Byways, trails, heritage areas

8. Open regular hours
- One of the most basic amenities
- Seasonal openings
- Published hours best
- Open by appointment
  Ok with a phone number
Open regular hours

Open by appointment

Open by chance?

Open seasonally?

7. Trained docent tour guides

Training about how to give a tour, how to lead people safely through streets, through a building, deal with questions

Don’t recommend a script

All docents trained in basic history of the area/building

Docent’s develop their own tour based on their interests

Know your facts

What are you actually selling to visitors?

Historic architecture?

Specific shops, destination retailers?

Destination Restaurants

Local color?

Recreational attractions?

Do you have “enough” to make a 2 hour stop?
8. Interpretive Signage

- 24 hour interpretation
- On a stand
- On the building
- Adjacent to a building
- Interpretive panels
  - 2-3 photos
  - Text: no more than 150 words

9. Heritage programming for visitors

- Retail events for visitors
- New walking tours
- New heritage attractions
- Coordinate/Cooperate with existing attractions
- Basic visitor amenities

10. Visitor Center - the MS office

- Directional signage to Visitor center
- Rename your office or have another sign
- Provide brochures, maps, event list, other tourism brochures
- Graceful welcome
11. Marketing/Advertising

- Money to advertise and market your district
- Coop ads helpful
- Local CVB on placement in their publications
- STATE tourism agency to maximize your town’s placement on their web site

Market what you have NOW

- Be honest in your advertising
- Seasonal? say so
- Market what is available TODAY
  - Under promise
  - Over deliver

Marketing

- Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, EMAIL MARKETING
- Visitor center open when visitors come
- Year long events calendar with dates
- Have destination biz advertise also
12. Partnering with CVB, tourism, others

- Main Street may be late to the party
- Expect to pay to participate
- What can you offer your partners?

Partnering: hoteliers

- Know the number of hotel rooms in town
- List all on your web site
- Maintain contact information with owners
- Determine if there are opportunities for growth
- Price Points for hotel rooms
- Web site for all
- Work with regional tourism entity

Partnering: CVB & tourism entities

- Learn about the regional and state tourism industry
- Raise funds to advertise in publications and web sites
- Encourage hotels and destination businesses to take ads too
Working together to make visitation great
- Main Street
- Lodging
- Retail
- Government
- Attractions
- Natural areas
- Tourism entities

Final Questions
- Review the Donna don’t forget.....

Thank you!

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