

Heritage Tourism Program

MAJOR INITIATIVES CATALOGUE

KEY **FINISHED**
 UNDERWAY
 NEW
(blue = linked to pilot project initiative)

- STRATEGIC PLAN

A Strategic Plan for Heritage Tourism Enhancement provides short and long term strategies for the CTO, other State agencies, and stakeholders throughout Colorado to develop and promote cultural heritage travel in the state.
- RESEARCH
(some activities ongoing)

Baseline research conducted by Longwoods International in 2005 highlights the value of heritage travelers to Colorado's economy: during the 2003 travel year, 38% of Colorado's overnight leisure travelers engaged in heritage activities; this same group accounted for 45% of all overnight leisure spending. Longwoods research conducted in 2007 included an expanded look at both cultural and heritage travel in Colorado during the 2006 travel year. Cultural heritage travelers accounted for 57% of overnight leisure travel in 2006. Of these, 37% identified themselves as "interested in cultural heritage activities." 20% did not identify themselves as "interested in cultural heritage activities" but nonetheless participated in cultural heritage activities on their trip. The self-defined cultural heritage tourism interest group (the 37% most likely to be influenced by CTO marketing activities) accounted for 44% of all overnight leisure spending (\$3.4 billion) in 2006; 35% of this group say their trip planning was influenced by cultural and/or historical offerings. The 2006 study highlights a variety of Colorado cultural heritage elements of key importance to Colorado consumers that could feature prominently in marketing campaigns. The top two: great historic towns and great events and festivals. Among the elements surveyed, their importance to consumers was only surpassed by unspoiled natural landscapes.
- CTO MARKETING
(some activities ongoing)

Heritage features were added to the Official State Vacation Guide and Colorado.com beginning in 2006. The 2007 spring/summer marketing campaign featured several significant heritage attractions in key mass media executions. The involvement of arts, cultural, and preservation stakeholders is critical in selecting inclusions that meet high **standards for quality and authenticity**, standards advanced in *A Strategic Plan for Heritage Tourism Enhancement*.
- ONLINE TOOLKIT

The industry section on Colorado.com features resource pages for cultural heritage tourism practitioners. Resources are organized into four categories: best practices, funding, assistance organizations, and research.
- HERITAGE
TOURISM
BRANDING

Colorado Journeys is a brand being developed to strategically promote Colorado's cultural heritage assets, through regional and state programming. A comprehensive branding effort that links marketing materials, certified sites, and directional signage can elevate the profile of Colorado's cultural heritage attractions in the marketplace.
- SCENIC &
HISTORIC BYWAYS
MARKETING

State and national scenic byways are non-interstate travel routes, designated for the natural, cultural, and/or historic attributes found along their course. The designation makes them eligible for federal funding that can be used for conservation, preservation, marketing, and other activities. In cooperation with CDOT, CHS, and other funders, two publications are being developed through the Heritage Tourism Program to promote Colorado's Scenic and Historic Byways.
- REGIONAL PILOT
PROJECTS

Four regions spanning twenty-one counties were competitively selected to test heritage tourism enhancement strategies through focused, regional development. Beginning with an initial \$220,000 investment, the initiative has successfully leveraged over \$1.1 million to date. The four regions are working with the State to lay a foundation for regional cultural heritage tourism programs statewide.

- HERITAGE TOURISM DATABASE

The heritage tourism database will catalogue cultural heritage attractions and serve a variety of purposes including: (1) Provide a database of heritage and cultural attractions for use in websites and printed marketing materials; (2) Provide a searchable tool that can be used to develop itineraries or other tourism products; (3) Provide industry contact information to better connect Colorado’s heritage tourism network; (4) Qualify heritage attractions with both minimum and preferred **standards**, and identifying visual and performing arts attractions that have been juried or auditioned by arts professionals; (5) Identify tourism development needs to allow for strategic targeted assistance.
- HERITAGE TOURISM ASSESSMENT PROGRAM

Modeled on the Colorado Office of Economic Development’s Community Assessment Program and the National Trust for Historic Preservation’s Share Your Heritage Program, multi-day assessments will be conducted by a team of experts in each pilot project region following completion of the heritage tourism database. Experts will include leaders in heritage tourism and representatives from organizations identified as partners or potential partners in the heritage tourism strategic plan. Building on an analysis of product inventories contained in the database, assessments will help regions determine how to best integrate heritage assets into the area’s tourism economy, creating two task-oriented products: (1) a SWOT analysis for the region, and (2) an assistance profile from agencies represented by the team members.
- REGIONAL WEBSITES

A undertaking to establish four regional heritage tourism websites was launched through the pilot project initiative. The websites will have a similar look, feel, and navigational structure, feature the unique cultural heritage attributes of each region, and provide a variety of visitor information and trip planning tools. The websites are advertising-free, community-driven sites that will provide an honest and accurate representation of attractions in Colorado with listings based on merit (i.e. **standards**) rather than an ability to “pay-to-play.” The websites will employ and leverage the *Colorado Journeys* brand.
- REGIONAL RESEARCH

This research evaluates pilot project success based on a suite of indicators that focus on the ability of heritage tourism to positively impact regional and state economies, the ability of heritage tourism to positively impact historic preservation and landscape conservation efforts, and the ability for heritage tourism to generate other “cultural health” indicators.
- THEMATIC PILOT PROJECT

A “magnet” website for heritage travelers that employs the *Colorado Journeys* brand. The website will feature Colorado heritage attractions that meet the highest quality standards criteria and provide exceptional visitor experiences. The magnet website will feature heritage sites previously featured in other SHF funded media campaigns—Explore Colorado, the Colorado Official State Vacation Guide, and www.Colorado.com. New heritage sites, selected through a formal evaluation process, will also be featured on the magnet website. A robust array of rich media (videos, podcasts, scrollable panoramic photos) will enrich the website.
- MEDIA CAMPAIGN

A heritage specific advertising campaign designed to drive consumer traffic to the magnet website. Increased visitation to heritage attractions featured on the website and elevating the profile of Colorado’s cultural heritage in general is the goal of the campaign. The heritage advertising campaign will advance the *Colorado Journeys* brand to increase recognition in the marketplace. It will complement the CTO’s general domestic advertising campaign, which already invests substantially in promoting Colorado’s heritage to the U.S. market. The heritage specific advertising campaign will focus more heavily on instate and regional markets
- REGIONAL PROGRAM EXPANSION

The CTO is expanding outreach and assistance to new regions by launching a cultural heritage tourism **districting process** and **competitive funding program**. The districting process will establish cultural heritage districts across Colorado, taking into account considerations for regional program development advanced in the State heritage tourism strategic plan (existing alliances; cultural, historical and geographic identities; regional travel patterns/consumer behavior, etc.). Pilot Project boundaries will be formalized and new cultural heritage tourism districts will be selected through the competitive funding program, which will encourage inclusiveness within district boundaries, collaboration among diverse stakeholder groups, and a match to include cash funds, organizational housing, and administrative support. Awards will not be made to more than one organization working within a cultural heritage tourism district. Selected districts will receive technical and financial assistance packages to include:

 - Formal, multi-day, heritage tourism assessments conducted by the CTO and its partners
 - Quality Standards training
 - Heritage Tourism Database development and training
 - Regional Website development and training
 - Financial assistance packages to accomplish regionally specific goals and objectives