

Heritage Tourism Program

Below are the major initiatives of the Colorado Tourism Office to raise awareness of and appreciation for Colorado's heritage tourism assets. Since the inception of the Heritage Tourism Program, total funding has exceeded \$1.8 million from a variety of partners in addition to the Colorado Tourism Office. The CTO's partners include Colorado Department of Transportation's Scenic and Historic Byways program, Colorado Council on the Arts, Colorado Division of Wildlife, Colorado State Parks, the National Trust for Historic Preservation and the Colorado Historical Society's State Historical Fund.

STRATEGIC PLAN	<i>A Strategic Plan for Heritage Tourism Enhancement</i> 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 <i>(some activities ongoing)</i>	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	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 <i>A Strategic Plan for Heritage Tourism Enhancement</i> .
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	<i>Colorado Journeys</i> 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	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 information in the heritage tourism database. Prior to the on-site assessments, a group of experts will review the sites at board table review session. The discussions at this review will shape the direction of the community assessments and address outstanding questions from the information entered into the 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 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.
ENHANCED HERITAGE WEB CONTENT	Colorado.com will feature enhanced information about Colorado heritage attractions that meet the highest quality standards criteria and provide exceptional visitor experiences. The website will feature heritage sites previously featured in other 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 in the future. A robust array of rich media will enrich the website.
MEDIA CAMPAIGN	A heritage specific advertising campaign designed to drive consumer traffic to Colorado.com. 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. 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 cultural heritage tourism organizations statewide. The program will expand beyond the four pilot projects by taking the products and lessons learned to additional areas across Colorado. The resources will include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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