

Turquoise Trail Corridor Management Plan

Version 1.0

14.0 Marketing Plan

The primary function of the marketing plan is to position the Turquoise Trail Scenic Byway as an All American Road. The Scenic Byway Advisory Council (SBAC) has previously identified intrinsic assets as being internationally and nationally significant. The nomination form for All American Road designation will be submitted in the next review round which is expected to be in January 2000. The marketing plan shall be consistent with the quality levels necessary to obtain and continue to meet the high standards of an All American Road designation.

14.1 CHANGING TIMES

In keeping with the Corridor Management Plan's vision, assets will be both promoted and protected for future generations. As intrinsic assets are developed for the visiting public, they will be incorporated into the overall marketing plan; hence, the marketing plan is a living document.

14.2 INTEGRATION

The Turquoise Trail Association has more than two decades of proven organizational capacity marketing the Turquoise Trail as a scenic and historic area. Key to this marketing plan is the objective of dove-tailing the resources of stakeholder groups to achieve a desired goal. The Turquoise Trail Association has the people and the experience to bring all the groups together.

- Marketing shall be integrated with the CMP Economic Development Plan (Ch. 15).
- Marketing shall be integrated with the CMP Tourism Development Plan (Ch 16).
- Marketing shall be sensitive to the needs of the local residents.
- Marketing shall be integrated, where possible, with New Mexico's "Tourism Blueprint for the Future", a strategic marketing plan, defined by the New Mexico Department of Tourism.
- Marketing shall be integrated, where possible, to obtain Federal and State matching funds and grants.

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- Marketing shall be integrated, where possible, with other scenic byways and Turquoise Trail partners such as the U. S. Forest Service, New Mexico Department of Tourism, Albuquerque Convention and Visitor's Bureau, Santa Fe Chamber of Commerce, East Mountain Chamber of Commerce, and the Tourism Association of New Mexico.

14.3 ADVERTISING

The Turquoise Trail Scenic Byway has been promoted as a scenic and historic area for more than two decades. Local organizations are expert at efficiently using limited resources to promote the road and its intrinsic assets. We will continue to use the financial and technical resources of those organizations.

The marketing goal has always been, and continues to be, to integrate the advertising campaigns of the diverse groups. Historically, we have been successful on many occasions; yet, there is a great deal of room for improvement. If the byway is designated as an All American Road, it will make it much easier to obtain market synergies by combining the resources of all the stakeholder groups.

The Turquoise Trail Association has an advertising committee that brings together all the member businesses in a consistent program. A goal of this marketing plan is to create a similar group for the region. It will be difficult, because we are both partners and competitors; however, the effort will be made to bring this to fruition.

14.3.1 Media

Historically, Turquoise Trail advertising has been in print. The State of New Mexico has placed TV ads in selected markets across the USA that may have clips on the Turquoise Trail included; however, the response is indirect.

- More than two million brochures have been distributed since 1984, with 200,000 distributed in 1998 alone.
- A website was installed at <http://www.turquoisetrail.org> in 1997 and the traffic has nearly doubled year over year.
- Hundreds of magazine advertisements have been placed by the Turquoise Trail Association, either directly or in partnerships.
- Numerous articles have been published about the Turquoise Trail in publications including the New York Times, Sunset, and the National Geographic Traveler.

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With increased funding opportunities, the marketing goal is now to move into other media such as TV, cable, and increased web activity as bandwidth allows. We would like to produce interpretive CDs, press kits, video news releases, public service announcements, newsletters, non-SPAM e-mail, radio and TV commercials, and increased public relations activities, as well as, comprehensive tourism training in partnership with our universities, state colleges, technical schools, and local industry.

We want to become more professionally visible at trade shows, research conferences, and large annual public events, first locally, with a subsequent national rollout. This will allow us more opportunity to partner in the future. Local events include the New Mexico Governor's Conference on Tourism, the Albuquerque Balloon Fiesta, the Tourism Association of New Mexico Research Conference and many smaller local public events. We are currently working on trademarks and developing more organic advertising and technical resources as part of our economic development program for the byway. The goal is to make the Turquoise Trail Scenic Byway a "must see" part of the Land of Enchantment.

14.4 TRACKING

Tracking systems exist for current advertising. Advertising is placed in audited publications. Fulfillment is tracked via phone or written inquiry. The Albuquerque airport's kiosk tracks brochure consumption on a weekly basis. Over 200,000 Turquoise Trail brochures are distributed each year, with many distributed by the State. Feedback from the New Mexico Department of Tourism at points of entry is available and used. The Turquoise Trail website tracks visitors hourly, though only weekly data are being used at this time. The Turquoise Trail Association has organic resources to analyze data and is only limited by funding. The question is always asked, "How are we doing with this media" ? If the cost/benefit analysis is not favorable, the project is discontinued.

14.5 MARKET RESEARCH

The Turquoise Trail Association is the lead partner in marketing the Turquoise Trail Scenic Byway and accepts, analyzes, and provides market information to its many partners. The Turquoise Trail Association is a research contributor to the Tourism Association of New Mexico. Currently, research is being conducted at the Albuquerque International Sunport (airport). Members of the Turquoise Trail Association continue to be leaders in New Mexico's tourism industry.

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14.5.1 Chicken and egg scenario

Market research will have two major functions:

- I. To effectively and efficiently promote intrinsic assets that are already developed.
- II. To identify those intrinsic assets that would be candidates for development based on the public good derived from surveys and studies.

14.5.2 Museums

The Turquoise Trail is fortunate to have at least four museums along the byway that are able to efficiently collect data. The goal of this plan is to use those museums more effectively in the future.

14.5.3 Local business

Many of the businesses along the scenic byway are members of the Turquoise Trail Association. Through monthly social/business meetings, a tremendous amount of data are passed to each other and informally collected. A goal is to have more businesses become members, so that we may share financial and technical resources in a more organized way. As the area grows, data will be more formally collect and distributed.

14.6 FULFILLMENT

With the exception of paid brochure distribution, fulfillment has been on a mostly volunteer basis, giving the area a "personal touch". As the region grows, that "personal touch" will be more centrally controlled and expedited.

14.7 PUBLIC RELATIONS-- EXISTING SITUATION--THE GARRITY REPORT

At the request of the Turquoise Trail Association, The Garrity Group Public Relations surveyed the existing and explored future scenarios regarding the promotion of the Turquoise Trail Scenic Byway.

14.7.1 News perceptions

We assessed the perceptions about the Turquoise Trail being reported through the news media. To accomplish this task we utilized the Lexis-Nexis Database. We searched the last 90-days of print news coverage for stories that included the words "Turquoise" and "trail." Twelve of the thirty-three stories returned included coverage

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about the Turquoise Trail. Only one of the stories (focusing on a complaint regarding the Cerrillos Gravel Pit) had a negative bent. The remainder stories revealed that the local incidents remained local in the scope of news media coverage. Feature stories in the Santa Fe New Mexican, The Dallas Morning News, Albuquerque Journal, Denver Rocky Mountain News and the San Antonio Express-News featured favorable coverage regarding activities along the Turquoise Trail.

14.7.2 Internet presence

The Internet home page <http://www.turquoisetrail.org> is organized, visual and easy to navigate. It provides useful information to people wanting to visit the different aspects of the Turquoise Trail. If possible the Golden page should have information added (it has the least information available of all the pages). Also, on the links page, the Association should consider adding the Santa Fe (<http://www.santafe.org>) and Albuquerque (<http://www.abqcvb.org>) Convention and Visitor Bureau sites. By providing links to these sites, you are telling the "surfer" that there are two destinations at both entrances of the Turquoise Trail.

On a related note, the Association might want to consider an aggressive Internet campaign to get placed on the different Internet search engines. A recent search on Yahoo shows that for the key words "drive Albuquerque", "drive Santa Fe", "visit Albuquerque", "visit Santa Fe" there were no signs of the web page either in web sites or the first 40 web pages. For what it's worth, the State of New Mexico Department of Tourism page only made one of those search results.

14.7.3 Marketing plan

Overall the marketing plan is sound. There is an emphasis on hospitality training. I suggest that you focus training on law enforcement and government employees in the area. When a visitor is in need of assistance, they tend to ask uniformed "officials" over an average person they might pass on the street. Video News Releases can be a positive form of marketing, however they are very costly. Before embarking on this particular project, you should ask yourself, "What are the target audiences?" Those audiences will help you shape the costs of producing and distributing the VNR. The target audiences listed in the plan are right on. I wouldn't change a thing.

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14.8 PUBLIC RELATIONS-- FUTURE SCENARIOS--THE GARRITY REPORT

14.8.1 Media Relations

The targeting of news publications in the travel trade as well as media with travel sections and calendar of event sections, are effective ways to build awareness about the trail and its destinations. While a positive effort is being made with regards to editorial messages, I believe that there could be more return on investment by effectively creating implementing a public relations plan targeted to the news media.

14.8.2 Local Media Contacts

The three local television network affiliates should be pitched to cover different aspects of the Turquoise Trail. This awareness will provide a way to position the beautiful sites and activities offered along the Turquoise Trail to potential visitors around New Mexico.

14.8.3 The Scenic Way to Santa Fe

Marketing directly to rental car agencies in Albuquerque opens an opportunity to position the Turquoise Trail to visitors trekking to Santa Fe. This can be accomplished through the creation of a heavy card stock 1/3rd-page brochure with a map showing easy access to the Turquoise Trail between Albuquerque and Santa Fe. The brochures are provided to the rental car agencies based at the Albuquerque Sunport along with a quick presentation to frontline personnel. Doughnuts and coffee would accompany the presentations. A larger presentation could be arranged by contacting national car rental call centers.

14.8.4 Regional and Travel Trade Contacts

Information can be provided to the news media through a cost-effective way by making available media materials to the Albuquerque Convention and Visitors Bureau, Albuquerque Hispano Chamber of Commerce, Indian Tourism Association, and the New Mexico Department of Tourism. By creating a one-page document (front and back) you can include facts, story ideas, contact information and a map favorably positioning the Turquoise Trail. The one-page can be provided to the above-mentioned organizations with the condition that they include it in all media response materials issued by their respective organizations.

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14.8.5 Crisis Planning

I strongly urge the Turquoise Trail Association to consider the creation of a crisis communication plan. As we have seen in Florida (targeting of German Tourists), Missouri (flooding of the Mississippi River), and Alaska (Exxon Valdez oil spill) a crisis can consume and negatively impact visitation, if it is not properly managed. The high number of leisure travelers, bus tours, and outdoor enthusiasts frequenting activities and destinations along the Turquoise Trail, increases the likelihood of a disaster occurring.

14.8.6 Overview

Successful marketing and public relations campaigns rely upon consistency of messages combined with frequency of awareness. When working with your local community, the news media and trade partners, make sure you are doing everything possible to maintain top of mind awareness. It appears in the context of this plan that you are achieving or already on the right path to meet those objectives.

14.9 PUBLIC CONTACT

The Turquoise Trail Association commonly uses two local Post Office Boxes to receive U.S. mail. The Association does not have a phone number listed under its name; nevertheless, several of the Association officers commonly allow the Association the use of their phones in print ads. To implement the goal of high quality fulfillment and public relations, one standard phone number will be acquired and a system to insure staffing to return calls in a timely manner will be designed and put in place. If financially possible a national toll free number will be acquired. That number will subsequently be marketed.

14.10 QUALITY CONTROL

A committee to maintain and improve quality standards will be created. The SBAC recommends that a comprehensive training program be developed, including hospitality training.

14.11 MARKET SEGMENTATION AND TARGET MARKETS

Several target markets have been identified. Most of the current advertising to target markets has been driven by New Mexico Department of Tourism research. With limited resources, the Turquoise Trail generally uses existing research and partners with the State and other groups to leverage advertising; however, with a federal designation

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and additional financial resources, the Turquoise Trail will be able to move to a leadership position. The market segments (not in order of importance) identified thus far are:

- Residents of Albuquerque, Santa Fe. and local residents.
- Visitors from the nearby states of Colorado, Texas, Arizona, Oklahoma, and Utah.
- Visitors from our major market states of California and New York.
- Airline travelers at the Albuquerque International Sunport
- International travelers beginning with visitors from Canada and Mexico
- Other international travelers.
- Overflow from local events such as the Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta
- Group tour companies and travel agents

These target audiences are based on previous studies. For example, in 1997, 27% of international visitors came from Canada and 18% came from Mexico--data that came from the New Mexico Department of Tourism. Within those groups, the data gets fuzzy, as the Turquoise Trail has all six intrinsic assets and is visitor-friendly to just about anyone. Before targeting with more specificity, additional research will be performed from our website, kiosk, and small internal projects. We will seek funding opportunities for market research. Research will translate to the development of certain intrinsic assets over others and allow our advertising to drill down to small target groups.

14.12 AVOID REDUNDANCY

Market studies have been done by the New Mexico Department of Tourism and other organizations that are available at no cost. The Turquoise Trail Scenic Byway uses, and will continue to use those studies. Where possible, we plan to add to, rather than duplicate efforts. Indeed, the visitor profile study recently done by one of our sister byways, the Santa Fe Trail, uses 1994 data. In a nutshell, the data follow the New Mexico State profile; hence, they are good to use as a guideline and may actually reflect the same profiles as the Turquoise Trail visitors. We plan to augment existing research by obtaining specific demographic and psychographic information from our local businesses, museums, website, and the U. S. Forest Service and to subsequently make our research available in professional forums.

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14.13 GOALS AND PROJECTS

The following projects will implement the marketing goals and strategy in this plan.

14.13.1 Year 2000

Goal: Position the Turquoise Trail Scenic Byway as an All American Road. When implemented, the following year 2000 projects will work toward that goal.

14.13.1.1 Byway marketing plan

A marketing plan was completed in 1999 as part of the Turquoise Trail Corridor Management Plan and will be updated semi-annually. The Turquoise Trail Association will likely provide an in-kind donation to update the plan.

14.13.1.2 Advertising

The Turquoise Trail Association has a comprehensive advertising campaign based on its prior year budget. Many projects are joint ventures. The East Mountain Chamber of Commerce produces an annual business directory that covers most of the business assets in the southern half of the scenic byway using New Mexico Department of Tourism matching funds.

The current Turquoise Trail Association budget only allows print advertising. An informational kiosk has been installed at the airport using federal grant funds from 1999. Funds for that project will be depleted in January, 2000. Additional funds are required to continue that high visibility project, which is a partnership project with our Sandia Peak Tramway intrinsic asset. Two other New Mexico Scenic Byways and two National Scenic Byways (Heart of New Mexico project) are being promoted as part of our kiosk effectiveness research on a complementary basis. The kiosk is essential, because it can be quickly reconfigured to meet changing market conditions and is visible to national and international airline passengers visiting New Mexico.

To position the Turquoise Trail as an All American Road, our advertising has to reach a larger market using media, other than print. Funds for TV, radio, and cable will help us reach North American markets, including Canada and Mexico, our two largest international visitor base countries. Internet content and advertising is necessary to reach overseas international markets. More advertising is necessary in the Santa Fe area to promote the northern section of the scenic byway, including the historic areas of San Marcos, Cerrillos, and Madrid. Hotel displays, Santa Fe airport, and other means should be used in the Santa Fe visitor target market.

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14.13.1.3 Exhibits for trade shows

An All American Road must be marketed nationally and internationally. A trade show campaign with a local, state, and national rollout will allow us to promote the Turquoise Trail Scenic Byway on a more personal and professional level, allowing us to network with travel professionals across our Nation.

14.13.1.4 Press Kits

There is no need for a press kit this year.

14.13.1.5 Marketing Research

There is a need for Turquoise Trail Scenic Byway specific research in several areas. Marketing projects will have to be conducted in phases over several years due to budgetary constraints, as well as, the need to conduct year over year analysis. The first phase will determine how the Turquoise Trail Scenic Byway, as an All American Road, will provide visitors with an interesting, adventurous, educational, and fun experience. In order to gain this information, we plan to implement a user survey to measure customer satisfaction. Several businesses such as restaurants and museums will assist the Turquoise Trail Association by having surveys available at their location and requesting customers to fill them out. The information gathered from these surveys will allow private organizations to further develop their tourism products and make the byway more attractive as an All American Road.

14.13.1.6 Hospitality Training

Although there is a need for hospitality training as part of a more comprehensive training and visitor awareness program, we will not implement this program until we have the results from the year 2000 marketing research project.

14.13.1.7 Video - Broadcast Quality -VNR

Past partnership projects include Albuquerque, NM rather than Santa Fe, NM, a smaller regional market, making it difficult to market the northern section of the scenic byway which lies adjacent to Santa Fe. Video news releases (VNR) and Public Service Announcements (PSA) will reach the larger markets necessary for an All American Road. Video content emphasizing the northern turquoise and coal mines and the historic areas of Madrid and Cerrillos will help market those areas and allow partnership opportunities to open up in Santa Fe. Video footage produced by this

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project will be archived and can subsequently be used for those partnership projects. As part of an integrated plan, this project will open up partnership projects in the print media as well.

14.13.2 Year 2001

Goal: Promote specific intrinsic assets as part of an overall advertising campaign. When implemented, the following year 2001 projects will work toward that goal.

14.13.2.1 Byway marketing plan

A marketing plan was completed in 1999 and will be updated semi-annually. The Turquoise Trail Association will likely provide an in-kind donation for this purpose.

14.13.2.2 Advertising

As the Turquoise Trail is now expected to be an All American Road, advertising will move toward promoting the top intrinsic assets on the Turquoise Trail All American Road. This section of the plan will be updated based on our year 2000 research to allow an efficient use of resources.

14.13.1.3 Exhibits for trade shows

If exhibits for trade shows were designed and constructed in the year 2000, they will be used in 2001; therefore, funding for construction will not be necessary; however, funding is necessary to pay for entry fees, shipping costs, and other trade show expenses.

14.13.2.4 Press Kits

Based on market research from the previous year, press kits will be designed and distributed; moreover, the press kits should be designed in such a manner to be useful to travel agencies, tour agencies, and tour bus companies. Information should be useful to the New Mexico Department of Tourism and the US Departments of Transportation, Commerce, and State for international marketing purposes.

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14.13.2.5 Marketing Research

There will be a need for market research to track and measure the advertising results for individual intrinsic assets, so that adjustments may be made to continue to provide quality information to the visiting public economically. Furthermore, visitors must be queried about their experiences, both positive and negative, during their visit to the scenic byway to assist us in providing a quality experience in the future. We want repeat customers.

14.13.2.6 Hospitality Training

Based on our year 2000 marketing research project, we will implement a hospitality training program for businesses, employees, and the interested general public.

14.13.2.7 Video - Broadcast Quality -VNR

VNRs will be produced to market intrinsic assets. The specific assets to be marketed are not known at this time. In a future semiannual marketing plan update, the general content will be identified. That will occur approximately one year before production begins.

14.13.3 Years 2002 and beyond

Goal: Semi-annual review of the marketing plan with adjustments based on current economic conditions and a status review of our intrinsic asset inventory. Promote newly developed intrinsic assets, as they become available to the visiting public.

Strategies and projects: Out-year projects depend on the successful completion of interpretive and construction projects for the years 2000 and 2001; moreover, as economic and market conditions change, forward looking marketing for more than a few years is an art at best. Fortunately, this marketing plan and the Corridor Management Plan are living documents that can and will change to best use our resources. We will continue to use all possible media where the cost/benefit analysis is positive and where results can be effectively measured.