

# Turquoise Trail Corridor Management Plan

## Version 1.0

### 19.0 All American Road Marketing and Promotion Plan

#### 19.1 EXISTING MARKETING AND PROMOTION

From July 1, 1999 to June 30, 2000, the fiscal budget for the Turquoise Trail Association (TTA) is expected to exceed \$30,000 and moderately increase thereafter. This does not include the significant funds obtained from the FHWA to help obtain the All American Road designation. Funding for TTA's promotional programs comes from its membership dues and matching funds from the New Mexico Department of Tourism. The primary member contributors are the U.S. Forest Service, the Sandia Peak Tramway and Ski Area, and Sandia Crest House; moreover, the membership provides tens of thousands of dollars of donated time to assist in promotional efforts. The TTA is the only organization that has members along the entire length of the byway and has for decades been the leading advocate for the promotional activities on the byway. In fact, one of the first promotional activities was to name the area The Turquoise Trail, the history of which can be found in Chapter 1 of the CMP.

With an advertising budget of over \$30,000, the TTA is one of the largest non-profit, non-government tourism organizations in the state of New Mexico. While other byways have the financial support of local government, the Turquoise Trail Scenic Byway has only one municipality, Tijeras, along less than three miles of the byway. Tijeras is a community of less than 400 people with a modest tax base that cannot support tourism without outside assistance. Thus far, Tijeras has not contributed funds toward the promotion of the byway. The remainder of the byway is located in unincorporated areas spanning three New Mexico counties. Likewise, none of the three counties have contributed to the TTA. Neither the City of Albuquerque, nor the City of Santa Fe has provided the byway with financial support. That could change in the future, especially as Albuquerque tries to attract educated professionals to the area and quality of life issues become more important. With the All American Road designation, we intend to obtain funding on the basis that what is good for the byway is good for the counties and municipalities in the region.

#### 19.2 CHANGE IN FOCUS--POSITIONING THE ALL AMERICAN ROAD

Even with its significant regional budget, the TTA does not have sufficient resources to unilaterally promote the byway to national and foreign visitors, except in small ways; nevertheless, it does have the internal capability to act as a support group to international marketing efforts by others. Specifically, the TTA can and has provided the New Mexico Department of Tourism with all the expertise and materials they have requested in their international efforts.

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With the establishment of the kiosk at the Albuquerque International Sunport (airport) in early 1999 and the website installed in 1997, the TTA has already begun moving toward an international presence. Though small in dollar terms, national and international promotion of the byway as a destination has become a major part of the TTA budget.

### 19.2.1 Integration with local efforts

The financial resources of stakeholder groups promoting the Turquoise Trail is limited; hence, to achieve our promotional goals, we have to work with others in partnership to obtain a synergistic result. This is especially true of our international and national efforts. As it has done for more than a decade, the TTA will be the lead partner in the promotion of the byway. Some local and regional partners are:

- Albuquerque Convention and Visitor's Bureau
- Santa Fe Chamber of Commerce
- East Mountain Chamber of Commerce
- Tourism Association of New Mexico.
- Turquoise Trail business members numbering more than 50

### 19.2.2 Integration with New Mexico State Efforts

The New Mexico Department of Tourism promotes the state, regionally, nationally, and internationally, yet even its budget at a few million dollars is relatively small, dwarfed by other states such as Hawaii, California, New York, and Texas with advertising budgets at least an order of magnitude larger. Historically, New Mexico has promoted two assets, Native American culture and the City of Santa Fe. In fact, Santa Fe may have better name recognition, than New Mexico, which many people confuse with the nation of Mexico. We are confident that the designation of the Turquoise Trail as an All American Road will give New Mexico a third asset to promote, and for good reason.

- Albuquerque in the number one destination for visitors to New Mexico
- Santa Fe is the number two destination for visitors to New Mexico
- The northern byway terminus is in Santa Fe
- The southern byway terminus is ten minutes from Albuquerque and may actually be in Albuquerque if the city annexes part of the byway's unincorporated areas
- The Turquoise Trail is the only scenic direct non-interstate mode of road travel between the number one and number two New Mexico destinations.

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- The Turquoise Trail has the potential to become or already is the number three destination in New Mexico. In fact, over 2 million people already visit portions of the Turquoise Trail each year.
- The Turquoise Trail is the only byway in New Mexico that contains or intersects five of the twenty-four scenic and historic byways designated by New Mexico, thus providing additional visibility to those byways.

#### 19.2.3 Integration with Federal efforts

As part of the All American Road designation, the TTA intends to become pro-active in its international efforts by assisting the Departments of Transportation, Agriculture (U.S. Forest Service), Commerce, Interior, and State in the development of tourism. The assets the TTA may provide includes multilingual materials, a multilingual website, and most important, the expertise of its membership.

#### 19.2.4 Bring it all together

It is a daunting task to coordinate the efforts and resources of all these groups, but the TTA has been successful in even bringing competitors together to achieve something larger, something positive, for all concerned. To continue this process the TTA will:

- Provide local expertise to the national and international efforts of the FHWA
- Provide local expertise to the New Mexico Department of Tourism
- Assist the U. S. Forest Service
- Provide promotional materials such as multilingual brochures
- Assist in the development of new promotional materials
- Pro-actively determine what our state and federal partners are doing, so that we are consistent in our efforts.
- Perform the tasks necessary to obtain federal and state matching funds to promote the byway as an All American Road nationally and internationally

#### 19.3 MARKET RESEARCH AND EFFECTIVENESS MEASUREMENT

The TTA is the lead partner in marketing the Turquoise Trail Scenic Byway and will continue to do so if All American Road designation is awarded. The TTA and its partners will have added responsibilities and an expanded role in research subsequent to designation. The role of market research for the All American Road can be broken down to a series of steps.

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### 19.3.1 First phase and existing research program steps:

1. Define existing intrinsic qualities of national and international significance
2. Define specific target markets
3. Match the intrinsic quality to the target market(s)
4. Promote the intrinsic quality to the target market(s)
5. Measure the effectiveness of the marketing program
6. Adjust the marketing program based on the effectiveness measurement results

### 19.3.2 Follow on phase research program steps:

1. Research target market wants and needs in terms of intrinsic qualities that the byway has, but has not yet developed, such as the historic and cultural qualities of the Civilian Conservation Corps.
2. Develop those new intrinsic qualities to a level of national and international significance over a period of years.
3. Match the new intrinsic qualities to the appropriate target market(s)
4. Promote the new intrinsic quality to the target market(s)
5. Measure the effectiveness of the new marketing program
6. Adjust the new marketing program based on the effectiveness measurement results

### 19.3.3 Data gathering and tracking

Data gathering will determine how the byway will provide visitors with an interesting, adventurous, educational, and fun experience. Information will be gathered using various means such as local surveys, existing information, and website questionnaires. Byway businesses such as restaurants and museums will assist the Turquoise Trail Association by having short surveys available at their locations and requesting customers to fill them out. The website is already being used to gather information nationally and will be expanded to obtain international information when more funds are available for that purpose. International visitors, whose customs, needs, demographics, and psychographics are unclear, may be identified by bed and breakfast hosts that come to know their guests over a period of days. This informal survey method is more likely to accurately assess foreign cultural values than a short questionnaire. To illustrate, hosts can immediately determine what a guest wants for breakfast, how they dress, or what they do for recreation during their stay.

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Using survey information and member feedback, the Turquoise Trail Association can act as a central processing point of information to track everything from ad placement, to website hits, to visitor attendance at museums, to visitor use of recreational facilities such as the ski area or tram. Many of the tracking systems are already in place and only require funding to access and study the data.

Until additional funding is available, the Turquoise Trail Association will continue to use the tracking resources already in use such as the website surveys, e-mail, airport kiosk research, telephone and regular mail.

### 19.4 MARKET SEGMENTATION AND TARGET MARKETS

Historically, the Turquoise Trail has been promoted in local and regional markets, through the use of brochures distributed across New Mexico via the Department of Tourism's visitor centers located at several entry points into the states. This primarily targets the nearby states of Colorado, Texas, Arizona, Oklahoma, and Utah. The brochures are also prevalent in local markets of nearby Albuquerque and Santa Fe.

As the Turquoise Trail moves to a leadership position with a national designation, the market segments will expand to include coastal states such as California and New York, and international travelers, beginning with Canada and Mexico. From there, we will move to Europe. The world is a big place and marketing dollars cannot simply be spent based on country, specific groups within those countries must be targeted. Until such research is acquired and more financial resources are obtained, the markets we already advertise in will be explored with an expanded promotional program that, thus far, has included:

- Airline travelers at the Albuquerque International Sunport using the kiosk
- More distant travelers using our website

We will soon expand our efforts to include visiting local car rental facilities and travel agencies, and providing information to bus and group tour companies.

### 19.5 ADVERTISING

The Turquoise Trail Scenic Byway has been promoted as a scenic and historic area for more than two decades. Once designated an All American Road, advertising will move toward promoting two major byway features:

- The Turquoise Trail All American Road as a destination
- The top intrinsic assets on the byway.

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In fact, this process has already started using the airport kiosk and the website. TEA-21 marketing grant proposals have been submitted in anticipation of the designation in early 2000.

### 19.5.1 Reaching critical mass

As stated in the general marketing plan, the Turquoise Trail Association has an advertising committee that brings together all the member businesses in a consistent program. Once designated, All American Road, the importance of regional and national partnerships come to the front burner. We will have to redouble our efforts to bring together diverse groups, even competitors, to reach a critical mass in advertising. The All American Road designation should make that task somewhat easier, as we all focus on a common goal. In general, this is what we must do:

- Create a list of all the stakeholder groups that can or already advertise
- Find common themes to bring them together. The All American Road is a common thread.
- Jointly create an advertising campaign and share expenses

### 19.5.2 The print campaign

Based on research matching intrinsic qualities to target markets, implement the following:

- Continue the airport kiosk adding multilingual interpretive materials
- Expand print advertising in publications such as the New York Times, Sunset, and the National Geographic Traveler that have a foreign subscribership
- Expand print adverting in US based publications in a foreign language
- Advertising in newspapers and magazines in Canada and Mexico
- Glean international visitors from the Albuquerque Balloon Fiesta

### 19.5.3 The web campaign

While most of these advertising formats cost a great deal of money, reaching into the millions of dollars, website development is much less expensive and will be expanded using existing Turquoise Trail Association funds.

- Translate the website information to foreign languages
- Advertise the website on the web paying attention to foreign language sites
- Create voluntary international e-mail lists which are not SPAM
- List on international directories and search engines

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### 19.5.4 The public relations campaign

- Create a public relations plan targeting international news journalists
- Target international news publications in the travel trade
- Target the travel sections of international non-travel publications
- Target car rental agencies at the Albuquerque International Sunport with multilingual maps

### 19.5.4 The everything else campaign

Since the funds available are limited, other forms of advertising can only be executed in a limited way. Video news releases, national and international travel trade shows, and television advertising are all too expensive to use because their production costs are high and they usually hit a mass market that cannot be segmented. Cable has potential, but is also currently beyond our means; therefore, we will not be able to use other media until it is cost effective to do so, either by partnering or affiliating with complementary products. We continue to look at these opportunities and study their potential.

### 19.5.5 Hospitality training

Our hospitality training will focus on three areas:

- Uniformed officials
- Local business employees that interface with the public
- Local driving public

Although the training of uniformed officials is the main focus, that is not sufficient. Currently there are very few police, public buildings, or staffed fire protection facilities on the byway. The U. S. Forest Service Rangers are highly visible on weekends, but not during the week, nor in the colder months. Except for the ranger station in Tijeras and at the top of Sandia Crest, there is little in the way of public sector support after dark. For that reason, the private businesses that interface with the public daily, including uniformed phone and electric utility personnel, should be trained to provide assistance. This is especially true of gas stations that open late into the evening.

Most byway travelers are local commuter traffic. Their actions greatly affect the visitor experience, mostly in a negative way. Education and sensitivity training should be provided to the local driving population to make them aware of the importance of tourists to the area. One novel idea is to pass laws requiring traffic law violators to pay for and take visitor sensitivity training, perhaps as part of a defensive driving course.

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### 19.6 CRISIS PLANNING

As the visitor traffic increases, so does the chance for a negative anomaly to occur. We want to be ready to give assistance to the visitor in the case of a disaster, no matter how small. We intend to find funding sources to create a crisis communications plan, as well as, encourage local authorities to give high priority to providing disaster assistance to visitors, including police, fire, medical, and financial support.

### 19.7 AAR MARKETING AND PROMOTION GOALS

- Position the Turquoise Trail as an All American Road
- Promote the byway as a destination
- Promote the nationally and internationally recognized intrinsic qualities
- Promote the byway as being more than scenic
- Obtain funding to develop the AAR marketing and promotion plan

### 19.8 ALL AMERICAN ROAD MARKETING AND PROMOTION OBJECTIVES

- Increase the brand recognition of the “Turquoise Trail”
- Obtain funding from municipalities that the byway supports such as Albuquerque, Santa Fe, and Tijeras
- Obtain funding from unincorporated communities, if they become incorporated
- Obtain funding from Bernalillo, Sandoval, and Santa Fe Counties
- Continue to obtain funding from private business
- Obtain funding from individuals
- Assist non-profit byway groups with their efforts to attain funding
- Increase foreign travel to the Turquoise Trail

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### 19.9 AAR MARKETING AND PROMOTION STRATEGIES AND PROJECTS

- Develop slogans such as “It’s not just another pretty place” emphasizing the other intrinsic qualities
- Continue to update the CMP’s domestic and international marketing plans
- Exhibit at national and international trade shows
- Develop international press kits for target nations
- Develop a car rental hospitality kit
- Develop a tourism information package that can be used by travel agencies, tour operators, and tour bus companies
- Develop a short “quick kit” for local use to attract visitors already here
- Develop a video new release that can be incorporated into national and international videos developed by the state and federal government
- Increase the TTA budget to \$50,000
- Have a coordinated total budget from all sources in excess of \$1,000,000
- Coordinate at least 80% of all advertising and promotion along the byway
- Create a membership drive to have at least 80% of the businesses along the Turquoise Trail as members of the TTA.
- Submit grant proposals as allowed by TEA-21 for marketing.
- Continue to submit matching fund proposals to the NM Department of Tourism.
- Increase the volunteer participation of the membership
- Obtain volunteer participation from the community
- Create an ambassadors group to help visitors
- Change laws to enhance the visitor experience, especially traffic laws
- Train law enforcement and government employees to be ambassadors