

Turquoise Trail Corridor Management Plan

Version 2.0

14.0 Marketing Plan

The primary function of the marketing plan is to position the Turquoise Trail Scenic Byway as a National Scenic Byway. The Scenic Byway Advisory Council (SBAC) has previously identified intrinsic assets as being internationally and nationally significant. The marketing plan shall be consistent with the quality levels necessary to continue to meet the high standards of a National Scenic Byway.

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 dovetailing 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 the New Mexico Tourism Department strategic marketing plan.
- 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 state and National Scenic Byways and Turquoise Trail partners such as the U. S. Forest Service, New Mexico Tourism Department, 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 National 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.

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. One successful effort has been an ongoing relationship with the Heart of New Mexico, a region marketing group funded by the state and regional partners.

14.3.1 Media

Historically, Turquoise Trail advertising has been in print, but other media have also been used over the years.

- More than two million brochures have been distributed since 1984, with 150,000 distributed in 2006 alone.
- 10,000 copies of a multi-lingual brochure have been printed and will be distributed in 2006. In previous years, 50,000 brochures were distributed. The brochure content has been placed on the website as well.
- A website was installed at <http://www.turquoisetrail.org> in 1997 and the traffic has continued to grow over the years.
- 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 and our partners have produced interpretive CDs, press kits, video news releases, public service announcements, newsletters, and increased public relations activities.

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. The goal is to make the Turquoise Trail National 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. Over 150,000 Turquoise Trail brochures are distributed each year, with many distributed by the State. Feedback from the New Mexico Tourism Department 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 member 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 National 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. Members of the Turquoise Trail Association continue to be leaders in New Mexico's tourism industry.

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.

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14.5.3 Local business

Many of the businesses along the scenic byway are members of the Turquoise Trail Association. Through quarterly 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 collected 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 by local visitor centers.

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

In 1999, 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 National 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 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

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of the web page either in web sites or the first 40 web pages. For what it's worth, the State of New Mexico Tourism Department 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.

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 front-line 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

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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.

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 a local Post Office Box to receive U.S. mail. The Association has a toll free phone number listed under its name. To implement the goal of high quality fulfillment and public relations, one standard phone number has been acquired and a system to insure staffing to return calls in a timely manner has been designed and put in place.

14.10 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 Tourism Department research. With limited resources, the Turquoise Trail generally uses existing research and partners with the State and other groups to leverage advertising; however, with our federal designation and additional financial resources, the Turquoise Trail is 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

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- 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

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 Tourism Department. Within those groups, the data gets fuzzy, as the Turquoise Trail has all six intrinsic assets and is visitor-friendly to just about anyone.

14.11 AVOID REDUNDANCY

Market studies have been done by the New Mexico Tourism Department and other organizations that are available at no cost. The Turquoise Trail National 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 have augmented existing research by obtaining specific demographic and psychographic information from our local businesses, museums, website, and the U. S. Forest Service. We also made our research available to professional forums.

14.12 GOALS AND PROJECTS

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

Goal: Continue to market the Turquoise Trail as a National Scenic Byway.

14.12.1 Byway marketing plan

A marketing plan was completed in 1999 as part of the Turquoise Trail Corridor Management Plan and will be updated periodically.

14.12.2 Advertising

The Turquoise Trail Association has a comprehensive advertising campaign based on its prior year budget. Many projects are joint ventures.

The current Turquoise Trail Association budget not only allows print and web advertising, but allows flexibility for joint partnership opportunities.

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To position the Turquoise Trail as a National Scenic Byway, our advertising has to reach a larger market using media, other than print. 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 displays, and other means have been used in the Santa Fe visitor target market.

14.12.3 Exhibits for trade shows

A trade show exhibit has been produced with byway funds.

14.12.4 Press Kits

Convention press kit information has been made available on the Turquoise Trail website.

14.12.5 Marketing Research

Marketing research has been produced using byway grant funding.

14.12.6 Video - Broadcast Quality -VNR

VNRs have been created and distributed using byway grant funding. As additional funds become available, those VNRs are expected to be placed on the web.

14.13 Years 2006 and beyond

Goal: Periodic 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: 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.