



Destination  
Development, Inc.



## Community Assessment Findings & Suggestions

Pendleton, Oregon

October, 2006





### **...and some ideas to increase tourism spending.**

In October of 2006, a Community Tourism Assessment of Pendleton was conducted, and the findings were presented in a two-hour workshop. The assessment provides an unbiased overview of the community – how it is seen by a visitor. It includes a review of local marketing efforts, signage, attractions, critical mass, retail mix, ease of getting around, customer service, visitor amenities such as parking and public restrooms, overall appeal, and the community's ability to attract overnight visitors.

In performing the "Community Assessment," we looked at the area through the eyes of a first-time visitor. No prior research was facilitated, and no community representatives were contacted except to set up the project, and the town and surrounding area were "secretly shopped."

There are two primary elements to the assessment process: First is the "Marketing Effectiveness Assessment."

How easy is it for potential visitors to find information about the community or area? Once they find information, are your marketing materials good enough to close the sale? In the Marketing Effectiveness Assessment, we assigned two (or more) people to plan trips into the general region. They did not know, in advance, who the assessment was for. They used whatever resources they would typically use in planning a trip: travel guides, brochures, the internet, calling visitor information centers, review of marketing materials, etc. - just as you might do in planning a trip to a "new" area or destination.

The community has five opportunities to close the sale:

- 1) Personal contact (visitor information centers, trade shows, etc.)
- 2) Websites
- 3) Brochures and printed materials
- 4) Publicity (articles)
- 5) Word of mouth - the most effective means

We tested all of these methods by contacting area visitor information services and attractions, searching the internet for activities, requesting and reviewing printed materials, looking for articles and third-party information, and questioning regional contacts. We reviewed both commercial and organizational websites promoting the area, state tourism websites, read travel articles, and looked at AAA Tour Book reviews and suggested activities.

## Assessment Findings & Suggestions

The marketing assessment determined how visible the community was during the research, and how effective the marketing was in convincing a potential visitor that the community would be worth a special trip, a stop, or an overnight stay. The key to the marketing assessment is to see if you have a primary lure that makes you worth a special trip of a two-hour drive - or further away. The question on most visitors' mind is: what do you have that I can't get closer to home? What makes you worth a special trip?

Where most communities fail is when they merely provide a "list" of what the community has, whether it's truly "unique" or not. Nearly every community in North America promotes the usual list of diversions: local museums, unique shops and restaurants, plenty of lodging, golf, outdoor recreation (bird watching, hiking, biking, boating, etc., etc.), historic downtowns, scenic vistas, and so on. Of course, nearly every visitor can do this closer to home. So, what makes your community worth a special trip?

Always promote your primary lure first - what makes you worth that special trip, THEN your diversionary activities. Would you go to Anaheim, California if Disneyland wasn't there? Do you think that Universal Studios and Knotts Berry Farm get upset that Disneyland gets all the glory? That they are diversions? Of course not. Eighty percent of all tourism spending is with diversionary activities. Disney does the heavy lifting in terms of advertising and promotion, and the diversionary activities ride on those coattails.

In a nutshell, the Marketing Effectiveness Assessment looks for things that make you worth a special trip and an overnight stay. The secret shoppers look for details, details, details. To be successful you must provide itineraries and specifics - not just generalities. Are your marketing efforts good enough to close the sale?

The second part of the assessment process is the On-site Assessment. During this part of the assessment, we spent several days in the community, looking at enticement from freeways and highways (signs, billboards, something that would get a visitor to stop), beautification and overall curb appeal, wayfinding (ease of getting around), visitor amenities (public restrooms, visitor information, parking), activities, overall appeal, retail mix (lodging, dining, shopping), critical mass, customer service, area attractions, pedestrian friendliness, gathering spaces, evening activities, and the availability of marketing materials and their effectiveness.

The community benefits from tourism when visitors spend money, and they do that in the local gift shops, restaurants, hotels, etc. Therefore, the On-site

## *First Impressions, continued*

Assessment includes a candid look at private businesses as much as public spaces and amenities.

For every shortcoming or challenge we note during the assessment process, we provide a low-cost "suggestion," where possible, on how the challenge can be corrected or overcome. The suggestions are not termed "recommendations," as they were developed without consulting the community first about possible restraints, future plans, or reasons the suggestions may not be appropriate. Hopefully this assessment process will open dialogue within the community, leading it to adopt some or all of the suggestions, taking them from suggestions to recommendations.

It's important to note that to increase the community's tourism industry, fulfilling one or two of the suggestions may have little impact, but implementing a number of them, if not all, can have a profoundly successful impact on the community's ability to tap into the tourism industry.

Implementation of these suggestions must be a community-wide effort, involving both privately owned businesses as well as local, county, and state agencies, where appropriate. Every local organization plays a role in tourism, downtown revitalization, or economic development efforts. A Destination Marketing Organization (DMO, CVB, Chamber, TPA, etc.) cannot be successful if the tourism effort is not community-wide.

In many cases, issues may come up that you are already aware of and are already working on. In that case, the assessment validates those efforts. But more often than not, the assessment will point out things that you are painfully aware of but can't mention or bring up without paying a political price. Local politics can be a killer of the tourism industry.

While marketing efforts are important, product development is the most important factor of a successful tourism industry. Visitors want activities, not just things to look at. How much time can a visitor spend enjoying activities - that cater to their interests - in your community? Does your community have truly unique attractions the visitor can't get closer to home? You must be able to deliver on your marketing promises - otherwise visitors might come once, but they won't come back. It's much more cost effective to bring people back, than to always go out and entice new visitors into town. "Been there, done that" communities eventually run out of visitors and find they don't have a sustainable tourism industry, or simply become pit stops or gateways on the way somewhere else.



## Assessment Findings & Suggestions

After spending several days reviewing marketing materials and assessing the community, we have looked at all of these issues, developed some suggestions and ideas the community can discuss and possibly implement to help increase tourism spending locally.

### SUCCESSFUL TOURISM TRANSLATES TO CASH

Tourism is successful when the community imports more cash than it exports. When residents spend their hard-earned money outside the community, the community is exporting cash – often referred to as “leakage.” Tourism helps fill that gap, importing cash into the local economy without the necessity of having to provide extended social and other services. Visitors come, spend money, then go home. When you import more cash than you export, you have a positive “balance of trade.” Communities with successful tourism programs easily see that the industry subsidizes the community, whereas other communities find that they subsidize visitors – providing services visitors use without them leaving enough money behind to cover the cost of those services.

The primary goal of the tourism industry is to bring more cash into the local economy. This doesn't happen when visitors come into the community, get out of their cars, and take photographs. And it doesn't happen when visitors go swimming in the lake at your city park all day, sunning, and eating the lunch they brought from home. And it doesn't happen when visitors hike down your trails, enjoy your interpretive centers, or stroll through your lovely arboretums. These are all great things to do, and, of course, you do want your visitors to do these – but, you also want to entice them into your shops, your cafes, espresso stands, restaurants, galleries, B&B's, hotels, ultimately opening their wallets to make purchases. That is what helps your local economy, your small merchants, your hoteliers, and your tax coffers.

To entice visitors to spend money in your community, you need to have places for them to spend it – you need to have the right mix of shops, restaurants, entertainment, and lodging facilities, all in an attractive setting, as well as the attractions that make them want to visit you in the first place.

### THE THREE TYPES OF TOURISM

#### 1. Visiting friends and family

The number one reason people travel is to visit friends and/or family. If you did nothing to promote tourism, you would still have tourism in your community. However, when friends and family come to visit, do local residents take them out to eat, shop, dine locally? Or do they head to a neighboring commu-

## *First Impressions, continued*

nity? Do your locals even know what you have to offer? An effective tourism marketing effort also includes educating locals as to what you have and how to find it through effective wayfinding signage, gateways and advertising.

#### 2. Business travel

The second most popular reason for travel is business. Included in this category is educational travel: colleges and universities, as well as conventions and meetings, corporate travel, vendor travel, etc. Like leisure travelers, this group is looking for things to do “after hours” while in the area. The most successful convention and trade show towns are the result of their secondary activities or “diversions,” not simply because of their convention and exhibition facilities. Think DisneyWorld, Disneyland, San Antonio's River Walk, to name a few.

#### 3. Leisure travel

The third, and most lucrative of all types of visitors, is the leisure traveler. They have no personal connections to the community, but are coming purely to enjoy themselves. They stay in commercial lodging establishments, eat virtually all their meals in local restaurants, and their top diversionary activity is shopping and dining in a pedestrian-friendly setting.

The average leisure visitor is active 14 hours a day, yet typically only spends four to six hours with the primary lure. They then spend eight to ten hours with diversionary activities - things they could do closer to home, but will do while in the area. A good example of this is Branson, Missouri, the “live music-theater capital of the world.” This town of 6,500 residents hosts 7.5 million visitors a year. The primary “lure” is the 49 music theaters. The average visitor attends two shows a day over about four hours. During the other hours of the day, the visitor will shop in local outlet malls, head to the water parks, theme parks, and other attractions, play a round of golf, hike, bike, fish, do some bird watching, and participate in any number of other activities they could do closer to home, but will do while visiting Branson.

### THE THREE STAGES OF TOURISM

#### 1. Status quo

If you take no action to develop the tourism industry, you will still have an element of tourism, simply because some travelers will pull off local highways or freeways for gas, food, or lodging, as well as the fact that the number one reason for travel is to visit friends or family. If you have residents, you will have some tourism.



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## *First Impressions, continued*

### 2. Getting people to stop

The first priority of developing a successful tourism industry is getting people to stop. Imagine how successful businesses in the community would be if just 50% of the vehicles traveling through pulled off the highway and spent just 30 minutes in your community – buying gas, an ice cream cone, a sandwich, a gift or souvenir?

If there's a strong pull, imagine the money spent if visitors stayed two hours in the community, which nearly always translates to additional spending.

The first goal is to get those travelers to stop.

### 3. Becoming the destination

To become a destination community you must have attractions and supporting amenities that convince visitors to spend the night. And those attractions must be different from what the visitor can get closer to home.

Overnight visitors spend three times that of day visitors, and nearly ten times that of visitors using your community as a pit stop on the way to somewhere else.

#### THE FOUR-TIMES RULE

Visitors will make a point of stopping or staying in a community if it has enough activities that appeal specifically to them and will keep them busy four times longer than it took them to get there.

In other words, if a person has to drive 15 minutes to visit you, do you have enough for them to do to keep them busy for an hour? (4 times 15 minutes) If a visitor has to drive an hour, do you have the activities and amenities to keep them busy for four hours?

The more you have to offer, collectively, the further visitors will come, and the longer they will stay, and of course, the more they will spend. This is why it is so important for communities to market more than just their immediate geographic areas. By marketing neighboring activities and attractions, you present much more for a visitor to do, and you make the visit worth the trip.

Visitors don't care about city limits or county lines – so market the broader package and you'll be able to keep people in the area long enough to translate to another meal, some more shopping, and hopefully, an overnight stay.

### SELL THE EXPERIENCE, NOT GEOGRAPHY

Nearly every destination marketing organization is charged with promoting a geographic area, yet visitors couldn't care less about those boundaries. They are looking for activities that cater to their interests, and location is second to the experience. ALWAYS promote the primary lure first, then the location. If I want to go see Andy Williams, I don't care whether he's in Muskogee, Oklahoma or in Branson, Missouri. Visitors, by the millions, head to Disneyland, DisneyWorld, Dollywood and other attractions. They are not going to Anaheim, Orlando or Pigeon Forge.

Always sell the activity - the experience - THEN the location.

### LURES, DIVERSIONS AND AMBIANCE

Too often communities promote the list of diversions that nearly every community has. The primary lure is the activity that a visitor can't find closer to home.

Always promote your primary lure, then the diversions. Do not try to be all things to all people. Have you ever gone anywhere because they had "something for everyone?" Of course not - you go there because they have something specific for you. Find your niche and promote it like crazy.

Historic downtowns provide ambiance - they are not attractions, diversions, nor are they a primary lure. It's what's *in* the buildings that makes a downtown a destination.

The same can be said for scenery. Unless your vista is a world-class scene, such as Niagara Falls or the Grand Canyon, scenic vistas create wonderful ambiance, but don't translate to spending, and they only last a few minutes. Then what?

All too often communities promote their heritage as a primary draw. How far would you travel to visit a mining museum? A timber museum? An agricultural center? A county historical museum? Heritage must be outstanding and pervasive throughout the community to be a primary lure, such as Plimoth Plantation or Salem, Massachusetts.

Thousands of communities are the "capital" of something. For instance, in California, Borrego Springs is the grapefruit capital of the world. Gilroy is the garlic capital. Modesto is the tomato capital. Gridley is the kiwi capital. Oxnard

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is the strawberry capital. Fallbrook is the avocado capital. But here's the question: Have you ever gone anywhere because it was the capital of a fruit or a vegetable?

Your local heritage is important to the community and can set the ambiance, even becoming a diversionary activity. But to the vast majority of potential visitors, it's not a reason to make a special trip.

### BE DIFFERENT OR THE BEST

Why should a visitor come to your community if they can enjoy the same activities closer to home? Too many communities promote "outdoor recreation" as their primary draw. Unfortunately, that is the same attraction promoted by nearly every community in North America.

If you are different, then you have a reason for travelers to choose to visit you. If you are the best, then visitors will generally flock to your doors.

If you have great hiking trails, then market their unique qualities. Be specific and paint the image of how wonderful they are in the minds of your potential visitors. If you have one fantastic restaurant in town, let people know about it – a unique dining experience is something many people will travel far to enjoy.

Ashland, Oregon, previously a depressed timber town, began its Shakespeare Festival, which now runs nine months of the year and draws hundreds of thousands of visitors who spend an average of six nights in the community. The Shakespeare Festival made Ashland different from any other community.

Leavenworth, Washington, another dying timber town, adopted a Bavarian architectural theme and produces dozens of Bavarian events every year. Some now say the town looks more genuinely Bavarian than towns in Bavaria. It is now one of the primary



tourist destinations in Washington state, hosting more than 2.5 million visitors annually. They offer a different experience, an experience that is pervasive throughout town.

Okanogan County, Washington is an outdoor recreational paradise – just like 37 of the 38 other counties in Washington. So why go to the Okanogan? Because they are the best. They researched guidebooks, newspaper and magazine articles, and pulled quotes they could use in their advertising efforts. Like, "Pinch yourself, you're in Okanogan Country with perhaps the best cross country skiing on the continent." This, and other quotes like it, make it worth the drive to visit Okanogan Country. The third-party endorsements show that they are the best.

Set yourself apart from everyone else, and you'll see that in being unique, you'll become a greater attraction.

### CRITICAL MASS MEANS CASH

Although it may not be the primary reason why visitors come to your community, shopping and dining in a pedestrian setting is the number one activity

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of visitors. Besides lodging, it is also how visitors spend the most amount of money.

Do you have a pedestrian-friendly shopping district? If not, can you create one? Many communities have been highly successful with the development of a two or three block long pedestrian “village” including visitor-oriented retail shops, dining, visitor information, restrooms, etc., all in an attractive, landscaped setting.

The general rule of thumb in those two or three blocks (not spread out all over town) is 10+10+10: Ten destination retail shops, which includes galleries, antiques, collectibles, home accents and furnishings, artists in action, book stores, logo gear (clothing), souvenirs, outfitters, tour operators, activity shops such as kites, jewelry, wine or tobacco shops, and other specialties. The second ten is for food: ice cream, fudge and candy stores, soda fountains, sit-down dining, coffee shops, cafes, bistros, delis, etc. And the final ten are businesses open after 6:00 pm. This includes entertainment: bars, dance clubs, theaters (movies and performing), retail shops with activities (piano bar in a wine shop), etc. The important point is to group these businesses together to create the “critical



mass” in a pedestrian-friendly setting. This will attract visitors as well as locals, and make it worth their while to stop and shop. People are always drawn to the critical mass – the opportunity to have multiple choices, multiple experiences, all in a convenient and attractive setting.

### TOURISM IS AN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITY

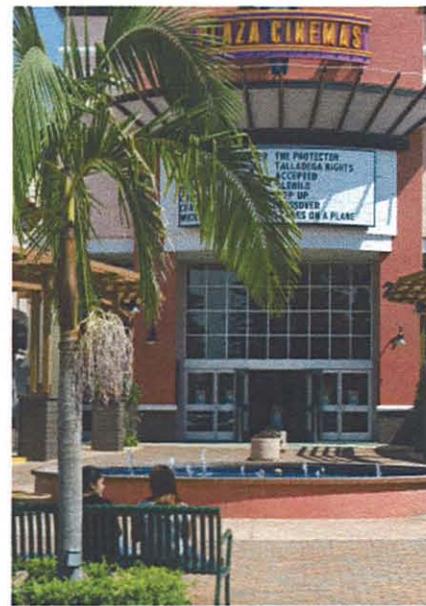
The goal of successful tourism is for people to come into the community, spend money, and go home. Tourism is nearly a \$650 billion dollar industry in the U.S., supporting millions of jobs. Ninety percent of tourism industry businesses are small businesses of which 90% have less than 15 employees. Tourism provides the opportunity for entrepreneurs to get started, for small family-run businesses to thrive, for artisans and craftspeople to find a market, and creates a basis for unique niche-retail environment including wineries, artists, crafts, etc. Tourism provides a diverse market within the community, expanding its potential. Enhancing the community through beautification efforts creates an attractive setting for both locals and visitors, key in revitalizing a community’s downtown. And a tourism-friendly town will attract non-tourism industries faster than others – new businesses will see the community as a

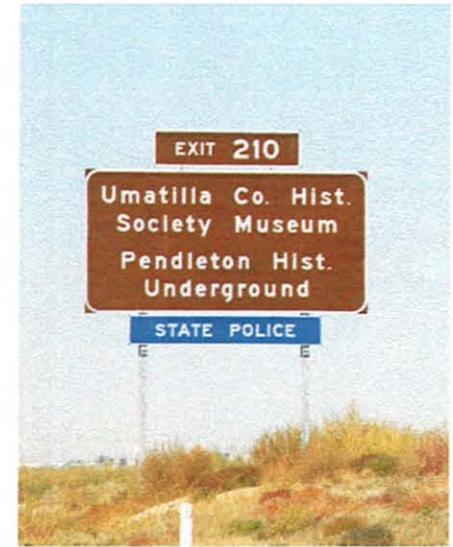
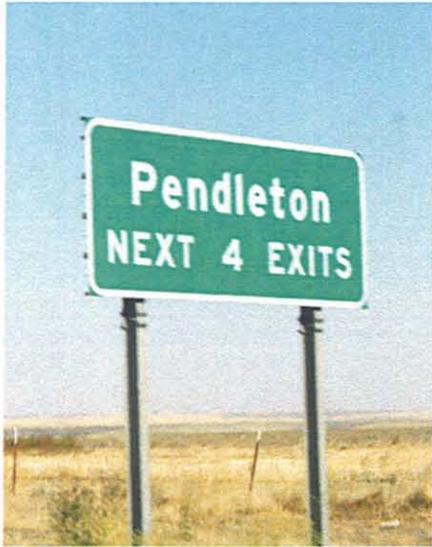
visitor before they make a final determination about the community. Tourism is the front door to your economic development efforts.

The benefits of a healthy tourism industry can rejuvenate a town, foster community pride, encourage economic diversity, and lead the way to a vital, successful community.

### NEXT STEPS

The findings and suggestions in this report can provide your community with many ideas, strategies, and goals to reach for. We hope that it fosters dialogue in the community and becomes a springboard for the community in enhancing its tourism industry, leading to greater prosperity, rejuvenation, and enjoyment by all the citizens.





**Suggestion #1:**

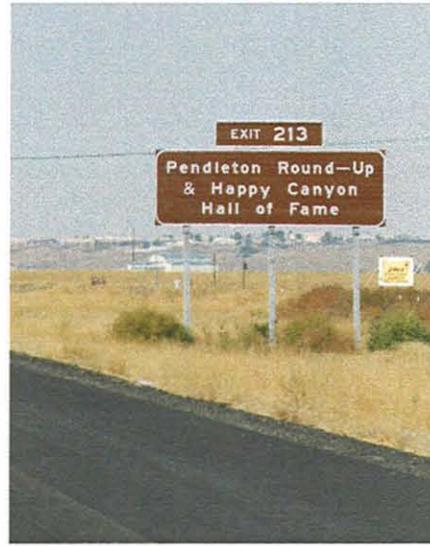
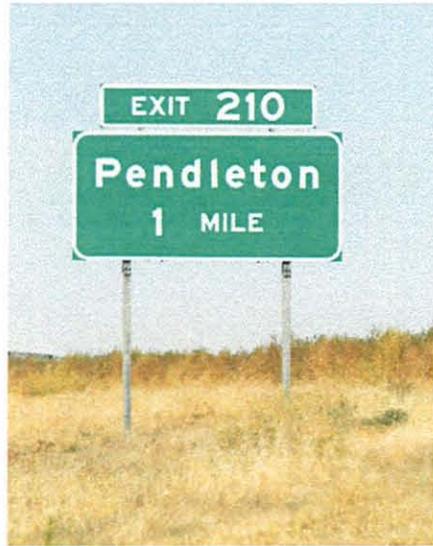
Which exit takes me downtown? To attractions?  
Add "Downtown - Exit 213" (top left)

**Suggestion #2:**

Change "National Historic District" to "Historic Downtown." (top two center photos)

**Suggestion #3:**

I thought Pendleton was the next four exits? And that downtown was exit 213? Where do the other three exits take you? Add "Downtown - Exit 213." (near right)



**Suggestion #4:**

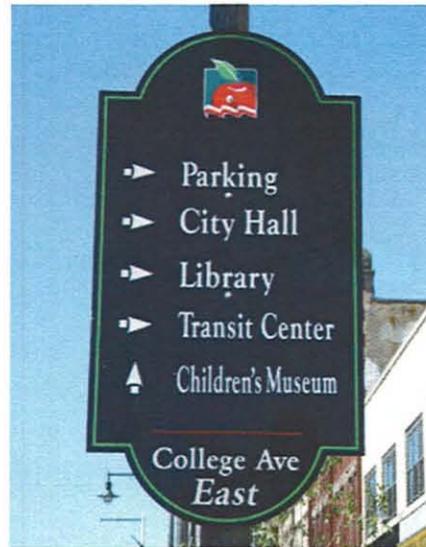
"Umatilla County Historical Society Museum" has little appeal (top right). Consider "The Rail Museum" or "The Age of Communication Museum." Always promote the experience, not the organization.

**Suggestion #5:**

Identify a primary exit (just one each direction) to your attractions and downtown. This will make it easier to develop a wayfinding system to key attractions, amenities and services.



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### Suggestion #8:

Pendleton should develop and implement a new signage plan & program to address:

- Wayfinding
- Gateways & entries
- Attractions
- Amenities
- Billboards and marketing displays

Never include more than five items on a sign. Make your signage decorative, designed to enhance the brand of the community like these examples shown here. The signs used in Appleton, WI (top right) are approximately \$550 each including the mounting hardware.

### Suggestion #6:

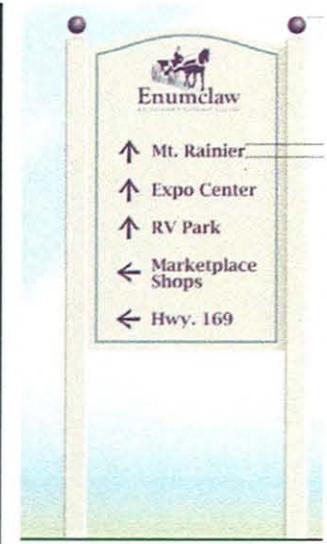
Consolidate your signage and make your signs decorative - to fit your brand. There are four signs here - too many to read in a few seconds, making it confusing.

Avoid sign clutter.



### Suggestion #7:

Your visitor info signs should be consistent. Pick one style. Visitors have less than four seconds to read a sign and so there should be no more than one logo or graphic image and less than eight words - total.



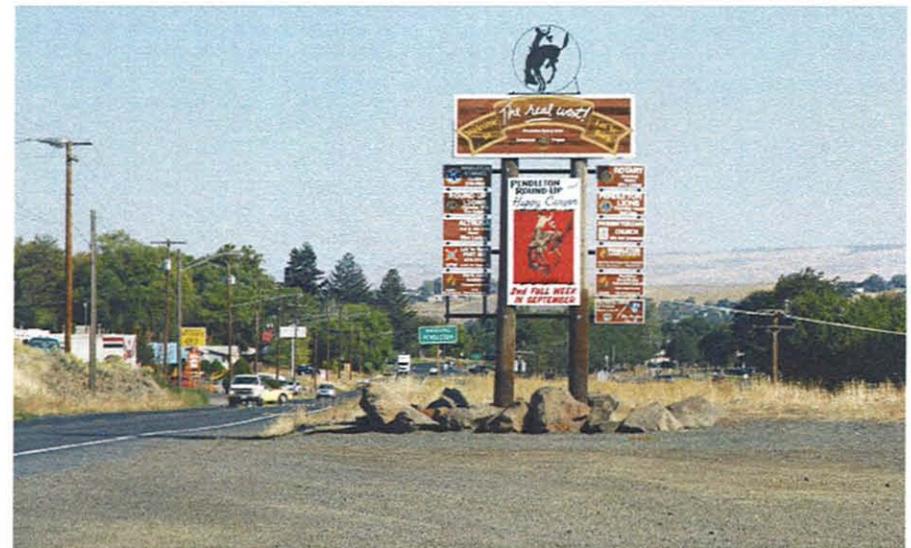
# CARSON CITY



### The importance of wayfinding:

Nationally, less than 5% of visitors ever stop at visitor information centers, so good signage and wayfinding (directional signage) is critical to making sure your visitors can locate your attractions, amenities, diversionary activities and services. Not only does good wayfinding help visitors spend more time and money in the community, but they also educate your residents and front-line employees as to what's available in the community and where things are located.

Note the signage design concept developed for Carson City, Nevada (above.) It's easy to read and decorative - the design enhances their image of the Old West. The signage system should make it obvious what the community's brand is.

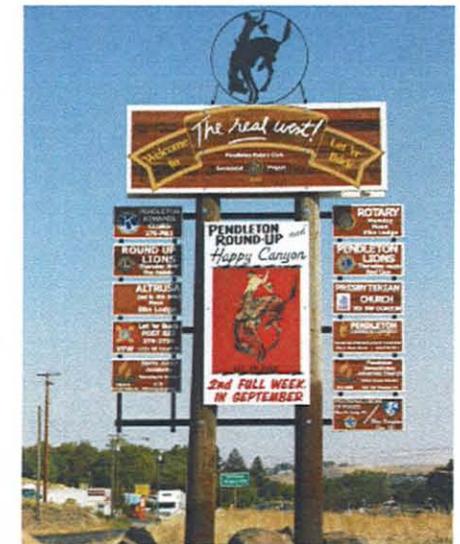


### Suggestion #9:

Add directional signage to downtown and attractions. (top and right) Build a landscaped planter around the base of the sign and fill it with annual color. The gateways into Pendleton are drab and brown. Add some color and curb appeal.

### Suggestion #10:

Reduce the amount of text on each organizational sign. Instead of phone numbers, tell the visitor when and where.



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### Suggestion #11:

Place your gateway signs where you will make the first best impression, not necessarily at city limits. All signs, including those at the city limits, should provide directions to downtown as well as a welcome to the community. At the city limits in Oroville, signage states "Historic Downtown Oroville - ahead one mile," then when visitors arrive in downtown they are treated to decorative gateway signage (above) placed on both sides of the street at both ends of their three-block long historic district. When visitors see welcome signage they immediately judge "the book" by its cover. What's around your gateway signs? What does it say about the the community?

### Suggestion #12:

Always place auxiliary organizations' signs in locations where people can stop and get information. Gig Harbor (top left) has placed their auxiliary organizations' signs right next to their visitor information. Baker City, Oregon placed their auxiliary signs next to the visitor information center.



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### Suggestion #13:

Redevelop this intersection (above) to add some appeal. Pick up the trash, add beautification. This was our first impression of Pendleton, and it wasn't good.

Replace the asphalt in the islands and replace it with river rock and log-growth shrubs or annual color similar to what they've done in Bel-fair, Washington (right).

The Round-Up grounds look more like a jail than the outstanding event venue that it actually is.

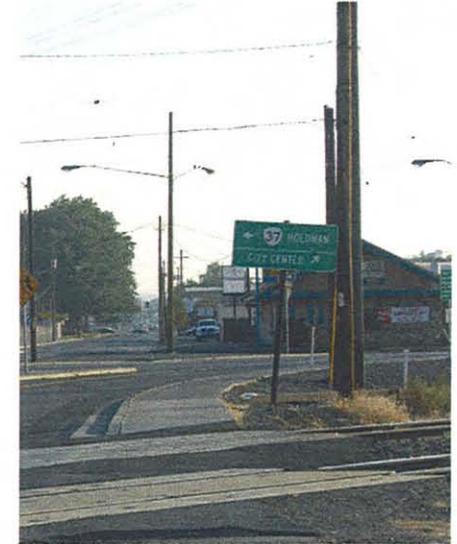


### Suggestion #14:

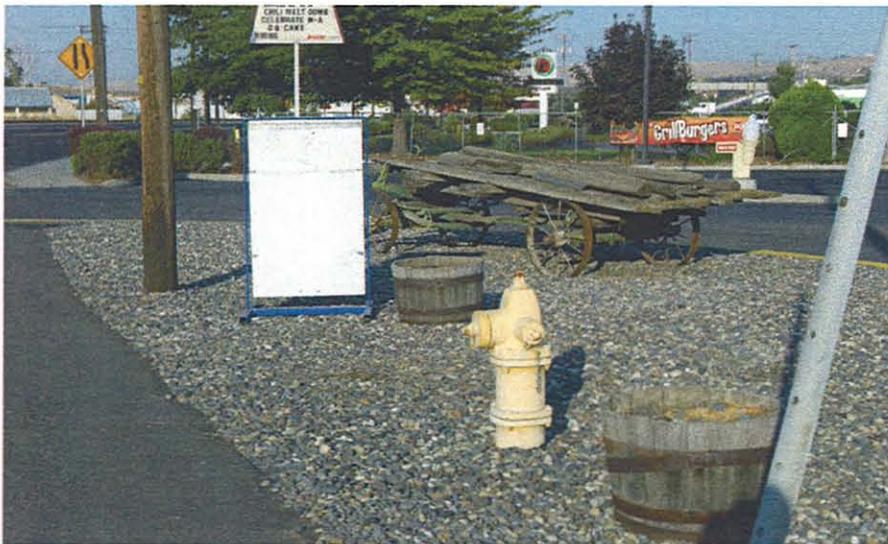
Make a statement at the entry to your community. This is where most visitors will have their first impressions of Pendleton and where they will decide where to go and what to do. Add street trees, low-growth vegetation. This is a key intersection in terms of wayfinding and gateway signage. Where is downtown?

### Suggestion #15:

Weeds and trash make a community look like nobody cares. Develop a weed and trash abatement program.



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### Suggestion #16:

The gravel here (left photos) is better than asphalt, but river rock would be even better with some grasses and junipers. Move the dumpster to a screened location.

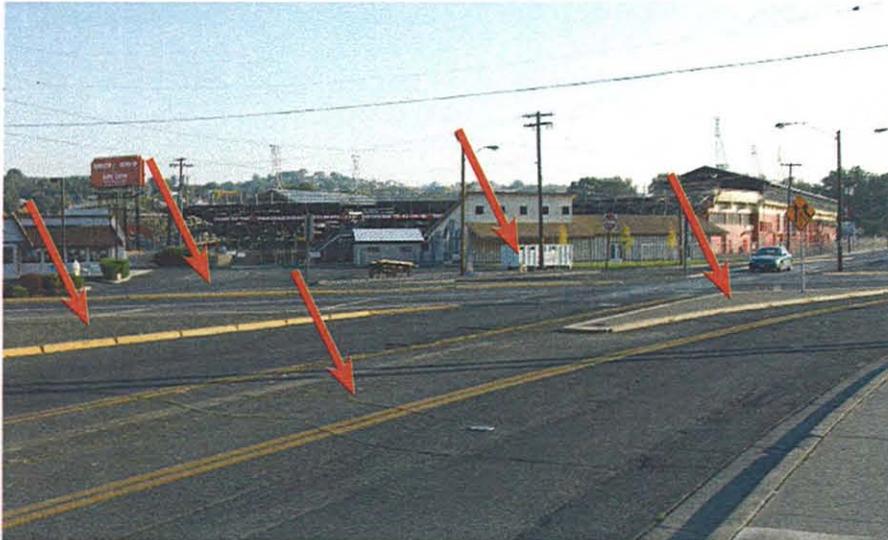
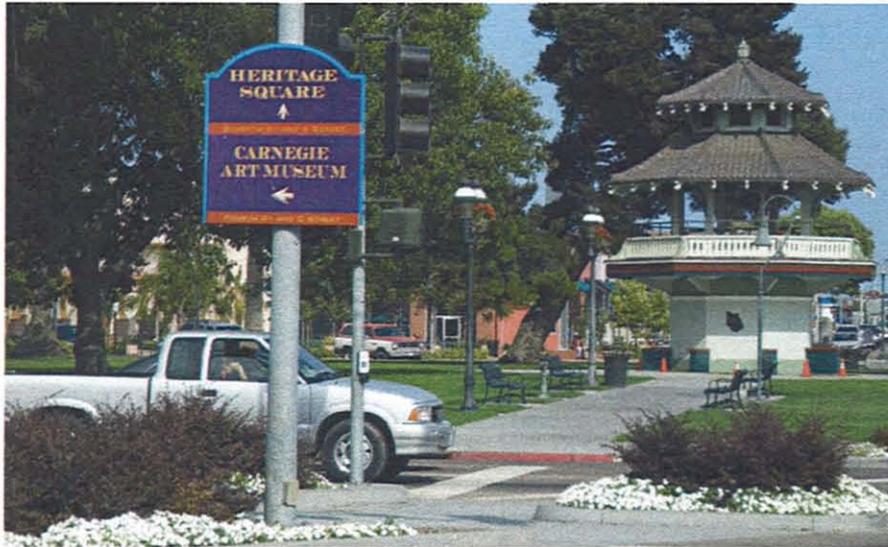
### Suggestion #17:

Remove the temporary signs (bottom left). Fill the barrels with plants - either shrubs or annual color or, better yet, remove them and do permanent plantings. Nothing sells like beautification. Think of your favorite destinations. Are they beautiful? Do they have outstanding curb appeal?

In Oxnard, California, they replaced asphalt islands with annual color and barberry shrubs (top right), which make downtown inviting, attractive, and softens the look of asphalt and concrete. Beautification is an investment with a terrific return on investment. This key intersection should be a top priority in terms of developing an outstanding gateway to the community, the rodeo grounds, and downtown.



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### Suggestion #18:

You have one of the top rated rodeo attractions in the U.S. Does your town look like it? Add landscaped islands - not asphalt. (bottom left) Once again, Oxnard (top left) did a nice job of adding lawn areas, landscaping traffic islands, and adding decorative wayfinding signage.

The appearance of your streets make a strong statement about your community to visitors. The greater the “perceived value,” the more visitors will spend and the longer they will stay.

Sisters, Oregon with a population of just over 1,100 residents (top right photos) has become one of the most beloved destinations in Oregon. It is stunningly beautiful and what was once just a day-trip from Bend area visitors, has now become a destination in its own right. Much of the credit goes to the critical mass, facade improvements, business mix and beautification. Everywhere you go in Sisters is a perfect photo opportunity. Where is that in Pendleton?



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### Suggestion #19:

Pay a visit to Sisters, Oregon to see how they implemented their beautification program, and what it's done for them. Solvang, California (top left) is another good example of excellent beautification program. The Danish town north of Santa Barbara is one of the most visited small towns in California and is constantly featured in magazines around the world. Without the beautification program, even locals know that the success of the town would be minimal.

### Suggestion #20:

Continue your sidewalks (top right) to make Pendleton more pedestrian-friendly. These two photos (top right and bottom left) show how bleak this primary Pendleton intersection is. The merchants in this area also need to do their part. They have done little, if anything, to make their shops appealing to either locals or visitors.



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### Suggestion #21:

Add a row of pyramidalis shrubs (top left) inside the fence spaced on three foot centers. Remove the chain link and make it a wrought iron fence like the one shown below.

Don't make your best attraction look like a jail. Add pots every ten feet along the sidewalk outside the fence. Make this the showcase rodeo grounds in North America. Consider adding 14' tall street lights or standards every 35' and adding pole banners to them promoting the Round-Up and Pendleton.

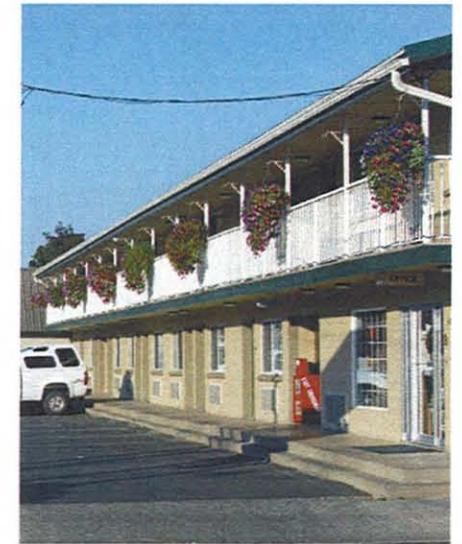


### Suggestion #22:

Add hanging baskets every eight to ten feet under the awnings, and planters every few feet. Consider developing murals for the building to promote the brand of the town. Exchange ornamental trees with native vegetation. Make a strong, attractive statement. The museum currently looks like a warehouse. Make it an attraction.

### Note:

Travelodge (right) has done a nice job with the hanging baskets. Now add planters along the sidewalk to soften the look of concrete.



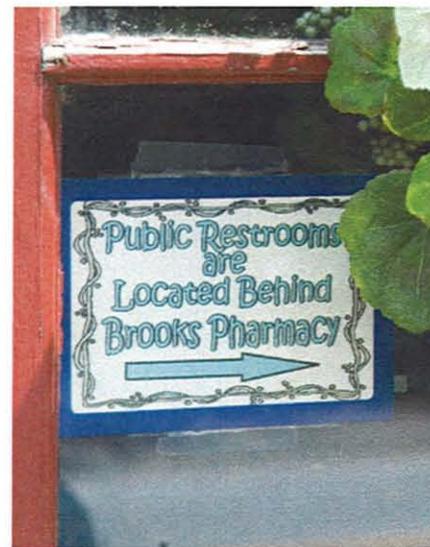
## Assessment Findings & Suggestions



### Suggestion #23:

Half-barrels every six feet would make a dramatic difference to the overall appeal of both downtown, museums, and the rodeo grounds, as Leavenworth, Washington (top left) has done.

First impressions are lasting impressions. Provide screening for dumpsters so they don't stand out so prominently (near right).



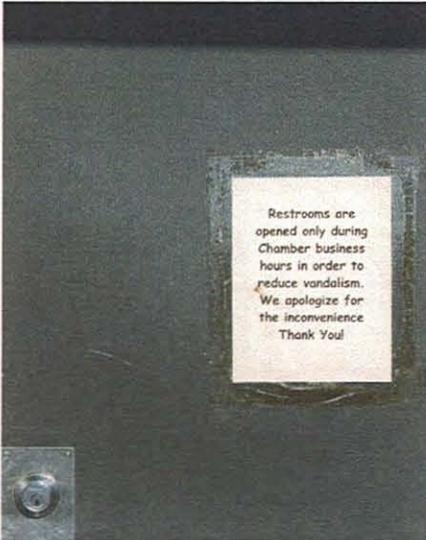
### The power of public restrooms:

The number one reason people stop is to use restroom facilities. Take advantage of that and provide public restrooms and include them on your wayfinding signage.

Restrooms translate to spending. Once stopped, visitors will often get a bite to eat or visit a nearby shop. Never just say "no." Tell visitors where they can find the facilities as the shopowner in Wickford, RI has done (top right). Include visitor information at restrooms as done in Gig Harbor, WA (below) and as the Pendleton Chamber has done.



## Assessment Findings & Suggestions



### Suggestion #24:

Good job identifying the restrooms (top left). Don't just say no (left). Give visitors an alternative. Don't let people know you have vandalism problems. Visitors want to spend time in places where they feel safe.

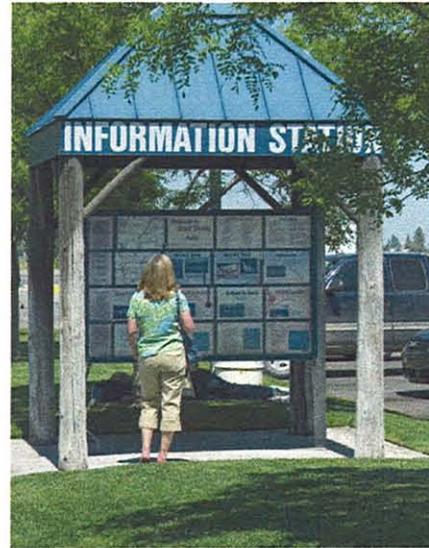
### Suggestion #25:

The Farmers Market has done a good job letting people know where restrooms are located (bottom right).

Restrooms translate to spending. Make sure they are located in places where visitors can spend time and money. Visitors don't just travel during peak summer months and during office hours, and restrooms are needed around the clock.



## Assessment Findings & Suggestions

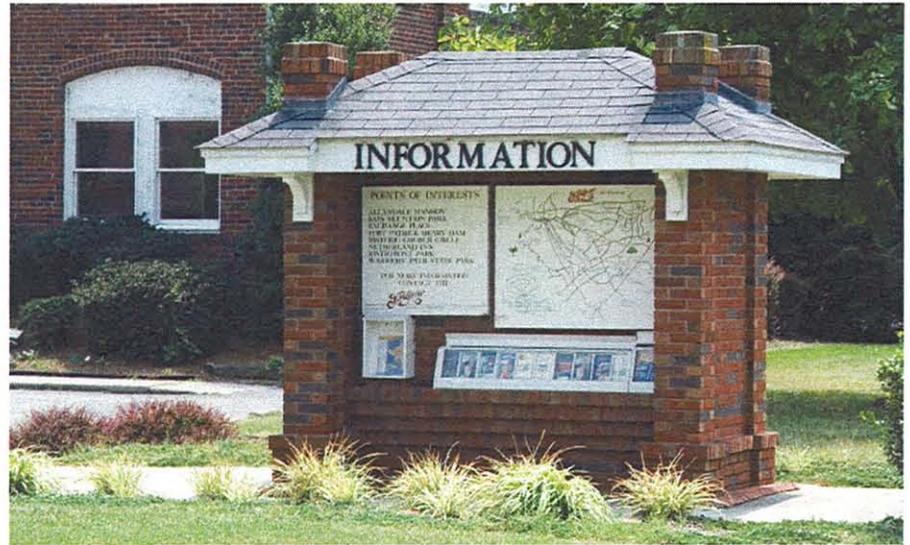
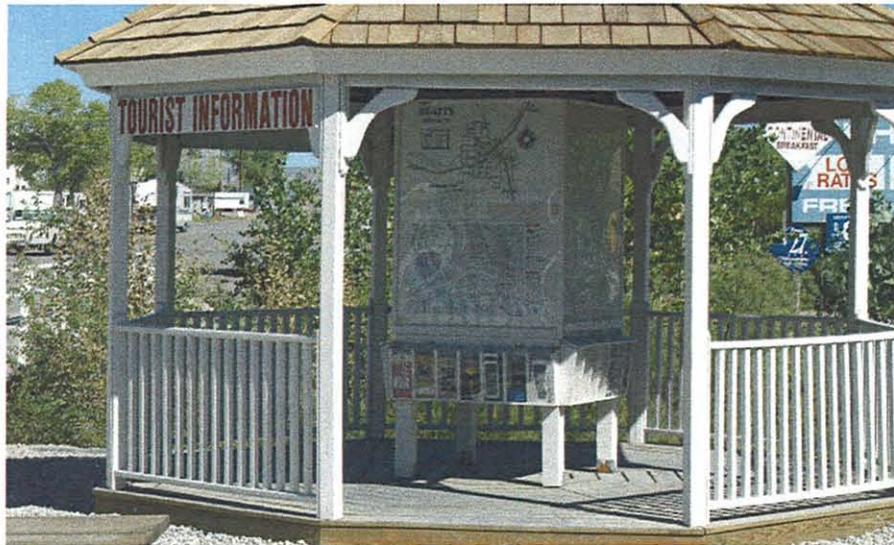


### 24/7 Visitor info kiosks:

Good job providing visitor information at the Chamber office (far left). Visitor information kiosks should be placed throughout the community at key spending points: attractions, parking areas, lodging facilities, shopping areas. If they are placed in locations visitors can also spend money, you'll receive a double benefit.

### Suggestion #26:

Each kiosk should cross-sell attractions, making it easy for visitors to find out about other activities. Provide brochure distribution as well.



## Assessment Findings & Suggestions

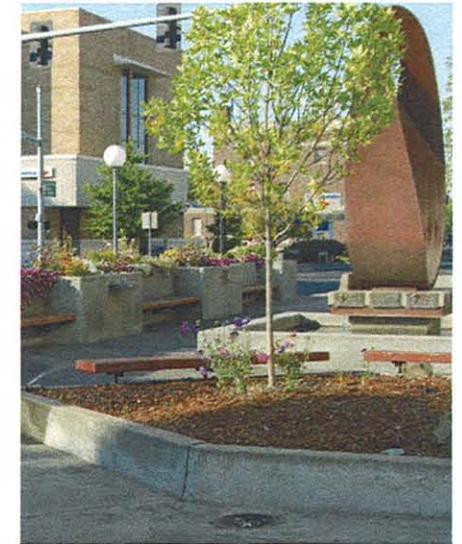
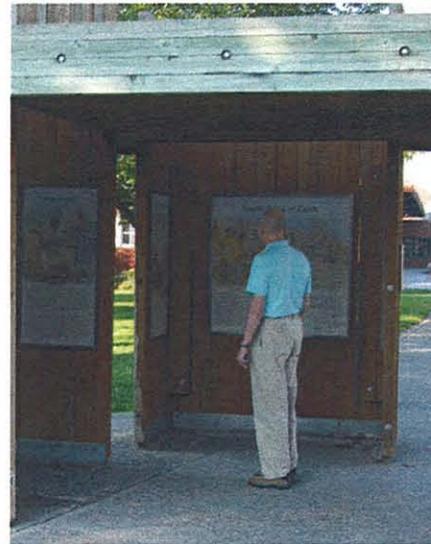
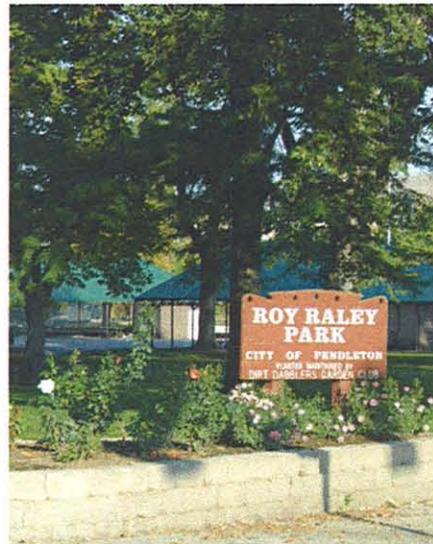


### Suggestions #27 - 31:

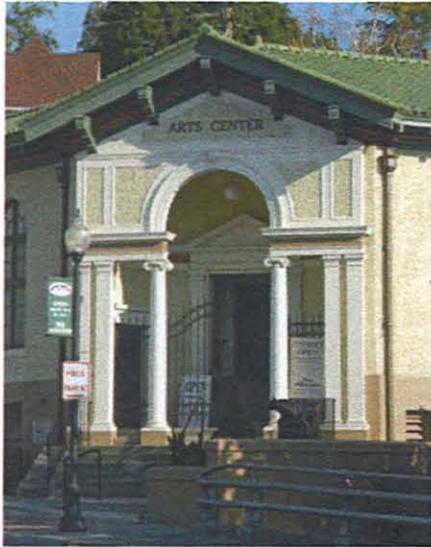
These five locations are excellent for visitor information kiosks. A small wall-mounted display on the front of the chamber building, or signage to the 24 hour information around back would be helpful. (top left)

A brochure distribution panel should be added to the information center in the middle bottom photo.

Kiosks should contain area maps, highlights of attractions and events, lodging and restaurant options, photos, and brochure distribution. Make it easy for visitors to get information.



## Assessment Findings & Suggestions



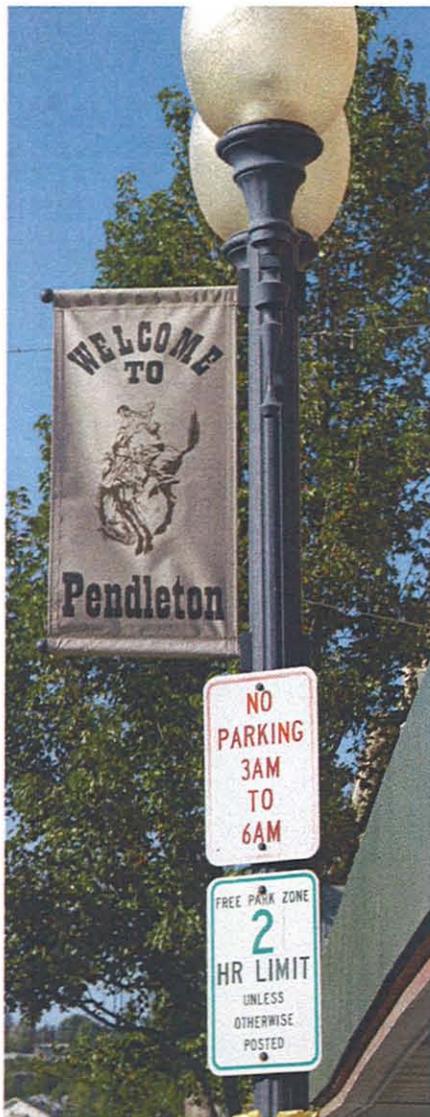
### Suggestion #32 - 35:

Add visitor information at the Arts Center as well.

A kiosk at the park (right) would be helpful as well (imagine a gazebo like the one shown on the previous page), in addition to the Convention Center, the Casino, and the Tamastlikt Institute.

Each kiosk would look the same, but would have different information cross-selling other attractions and amenities. You may end up with as many as a dozen visitor info kiosks.



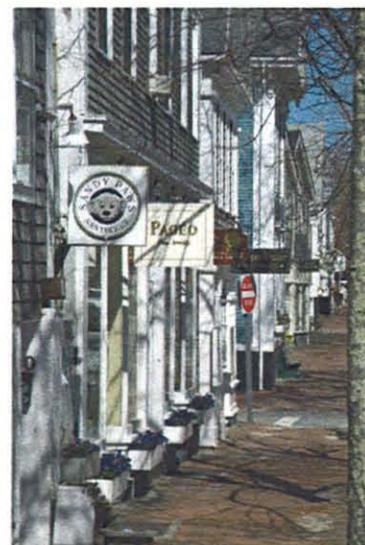


### Suggestion #36:

“Unless otherwise posted”? Has anything else ever been posted (left)? If you insist on two-hour parking limits, tell visitors where “all-day parking” can be found. Visitors will spend up to four hours in a downtown shopping district. Two-hour parking sends customers away before they’ve finished spending money.

### Suggestion #37:

There are exceptions to the parking limits rule? Is this for underground tour participants or for everyone? Explain what this means. (below)



### The rule of blade, or perpendicular, signage:

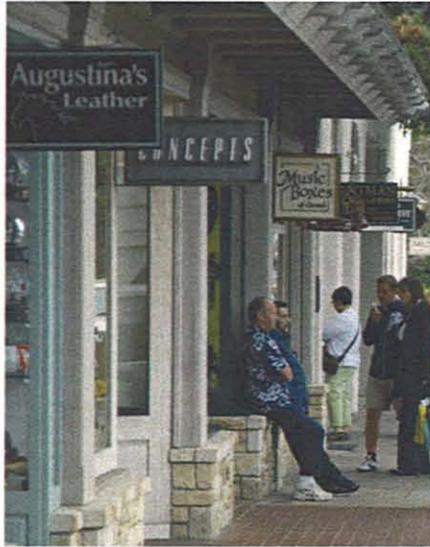
Storefront signage should be perpendicular to the street (blade signs) and of uniform height and size, making it easier for motorists and pedestrians to see what’s available.

Signs should be decorative to increase the perceived value. Use no more than six words on a merchant sign. Avoid script lettering. The general rule regarding lettering height: 1 inch for every 12 feet of distance.

Sign sizes vary depending on the buildings, roadways, right of ways, etc., but generally are no wider than 36” and no more than 24” tall.



## Assessment Findings & Suggestions



### Suggestion #38:

Can you tell what is in any of the shops in the photos bottom left and middle? Use perpendicular “blade” signs of a consistent height and size. See the example at top left - it’s easy to see what shops are available.

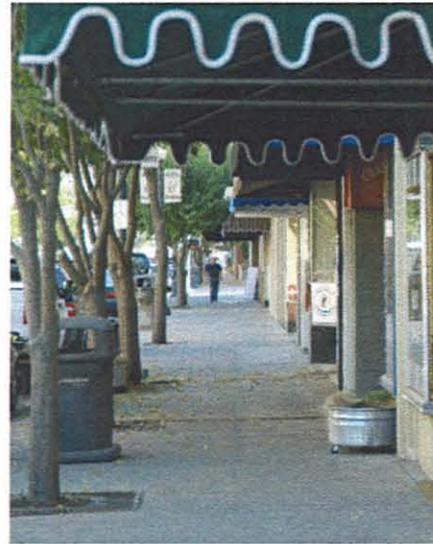
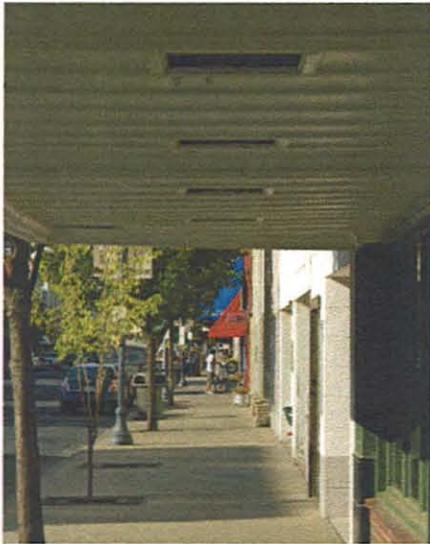
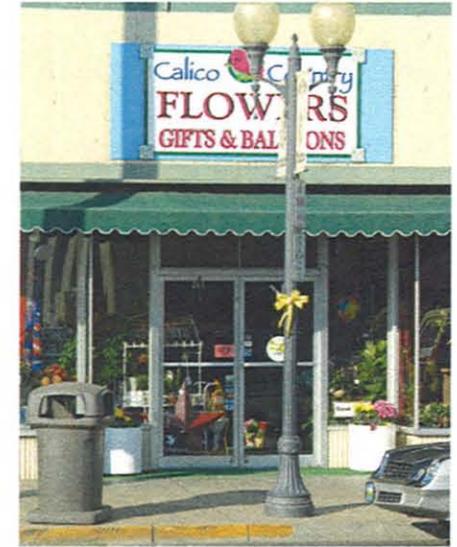
### Suggestion #39:

The signs on the storefronts in the two right photos are only visible from across the street.

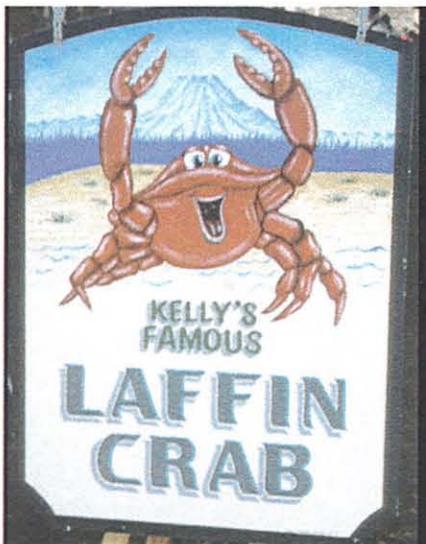
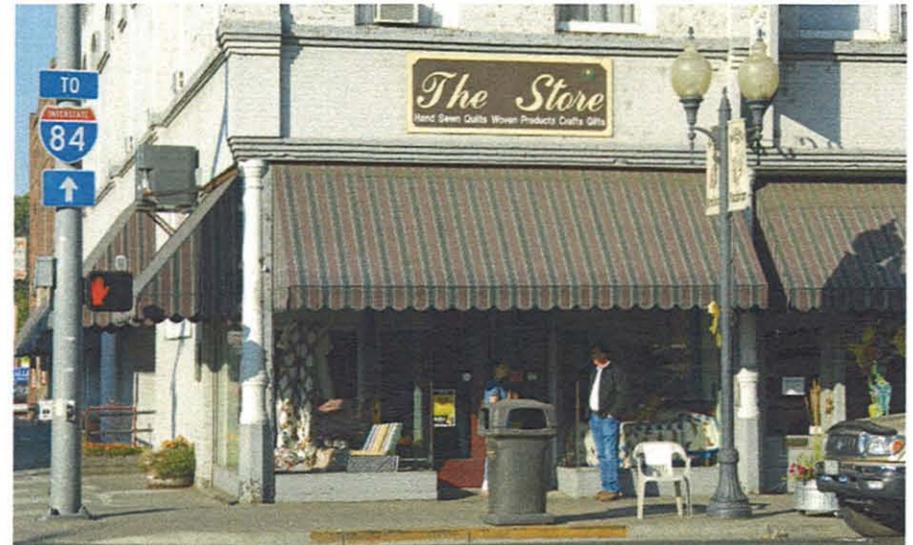
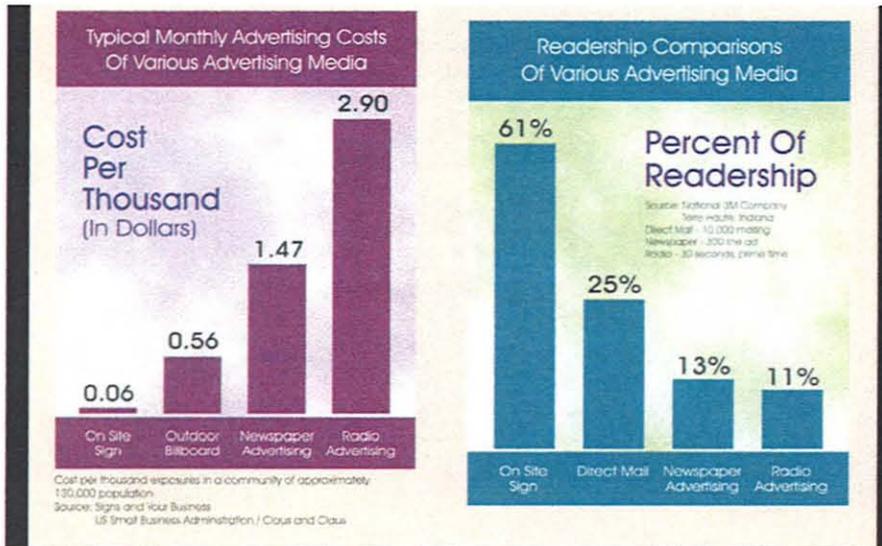
Signs should be below the awnings (below) so that people can see them.

Blade signs should be between 7 feet and 9 feet off the ground.

Downtown can use a “signage makeover” that will provide signage guidelines, samples, and ideas that will increase spending downtown. Plastic banners should not be allowed downtown as permanent signage.



## Assessment Findings & Suggestions



### Readership:

The charts above show the effectiveness of good signage, with 61% of passersby reading on-site signage, compared to 25% who read direct mail, 13% who read newspaper ads, and 11% who listen to radio advertising. When signage is done well, it can have a remarkable impact on revenues.

### Suggestion #40:

Always promote what it is you're selling - the lure to bring customers in - before you promote the name of the business. Laffin Crab is no longer in business. They sold kites.

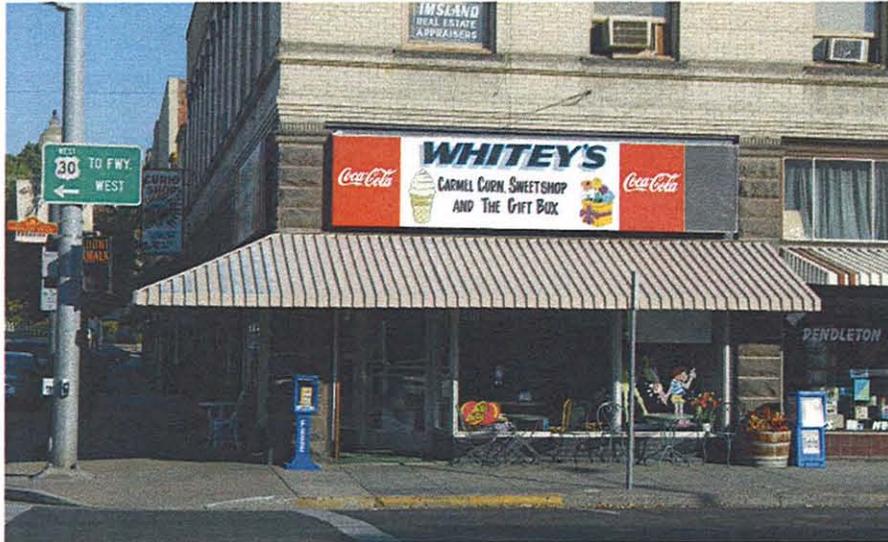
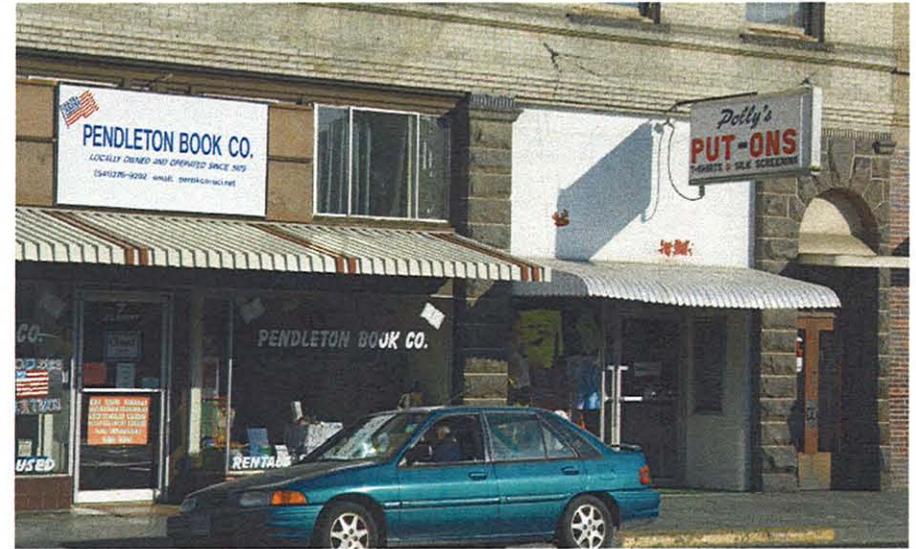
### Suggestion #41:

"Hand Sewn Quilts & Woven Products" should be prominent on this merchant's sign (above). "The Store" can be in small type. Promote the lure first, then let customers know the name of the store.

### Note:

What is Milarkey's? Does it have something to do with its neighbor, Dean's Athletic? This particular sign is confusing. We're not too sure what Milarkey's is and what it has to do with Dean's Athletic.





**Suggestion #42:**

What is "Correction Connection"? Sounds like a prison store. (top left) Promote what it is you're selling before the name of the store. Don't just say "Closed," let customers know when you're open, so they'll know when they should come back.

All the "closed" signs in downtown should be replaced with signs that state "Open daily at 10:00 am" or "Open Monday-Friday, 11- 6." It was hard to tell when or if certain stores downtown are open or out of business.

**Suggestion #43:**

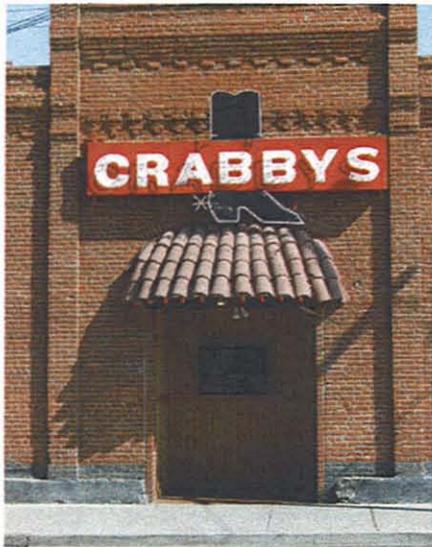
Develop a downtown retail technical assistance signage program with perhaps some matching funds to help redevelop nearly all of the merchant signage downtown.

The program can be merchant-driven, with guidelines for size, placement, and design. If a co-op buying program is established, retailers may be able to get discounts because of the quantity of signs being ordered.

Consider a merchant-driven design review board and buying co-op.



## Assessment Findings & Suggestions



### Suggestion #44:

What is Crabby's? It's impossible to tell from the sign above. Until we saw the sign around the building we thought it was a bar or a brothel. Is it Crabby's or Spice of Life? Are they one and the same? When people are confused, they shrug their shoulders and say one word: "next."

### Note:

Three closed signs on one window. The point is made. But when is the store open? Let potential customers know. It should be more important to say when you're open than to make sure everyone knows you're closed.

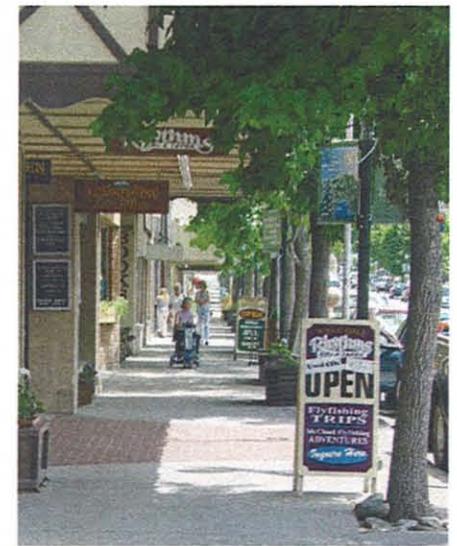
### Suggestion #45:

Quality signage is critically important to sales (bottom left) and overall ambiance of the community. Signs should always reflect the brand of the community.

Include hours of operation on your signage.

### Suggestion #46:

Develop a technical assistance program for downtown retailers. It should include signage, exterior displays, beautification, facade improvements, and window displays.



## Assessment Findings & Suggestions



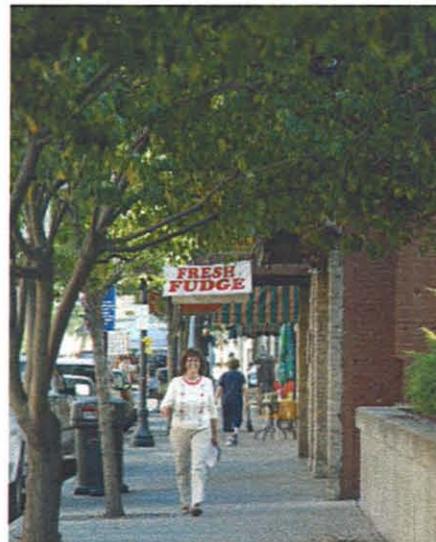
### Suggestion #47:

Don't allow banners downtown, except for special events, and then by permit only and for no more than two weeks.

Banners reduce the overall appeal of the town and the merchant. Don't look like a garage sale town.

### Invest in beautification:

Nothing sells like beautification - it is an investment with an incredible return.



La Rua (above) in Whistler, BC is an excellent example of Whistler's beautification efforts. As the top ski destination in North America, it is actually busier in the summer than the winter. The beautiful ambiance of its pedestrian retail area is part of the reason for the huge volume of visitors.

Adding street trees every 35 feet, flowers in planters and baskets, and outdoor furnishings makes it more inviting, encouraging shoppers to stay longer. If locals won't hang out downtown, neither will visitors. Do you have gathering places?



## Assessment Findings & Suggestions



### Invest in beautification:

A recent study showed that street trees will increase retail spending by an average of 18% (above).

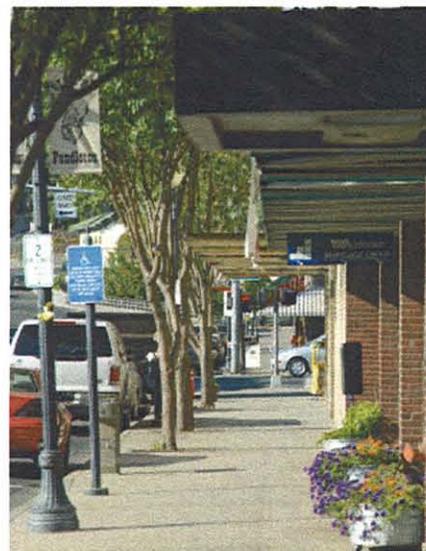
The display (near right) showcases this merchant's wares while adding tremendous beauty to the streetscape. Without it, the building is pretty nondescript.

Notice the effect of adding planters filled with flowers in the photo bottom right, compared with the photo top right (before and after).

People are drawn to beautiful places.



## Assessment Findings & Suggestions



### Suggestion #49:

Planters should be placed every four to six feet apart. Add benches, decorative trash barrels, hanging baskets. Consider wooden barrels as opposed to the metal wheeled containers.

Some merchants do a good job but it's hit and miss.

The outdoor display in Grass Valley, CA., far left, really pulls people into the store.

### Suggestion #50:

Add Catalina umbrellas and additional planters. (below)



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**KEEP  
AMERICA  
BEAUTIFUL**  
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Suggestion #48: Join and  
get involved with the  
KAB network.





**Note:**

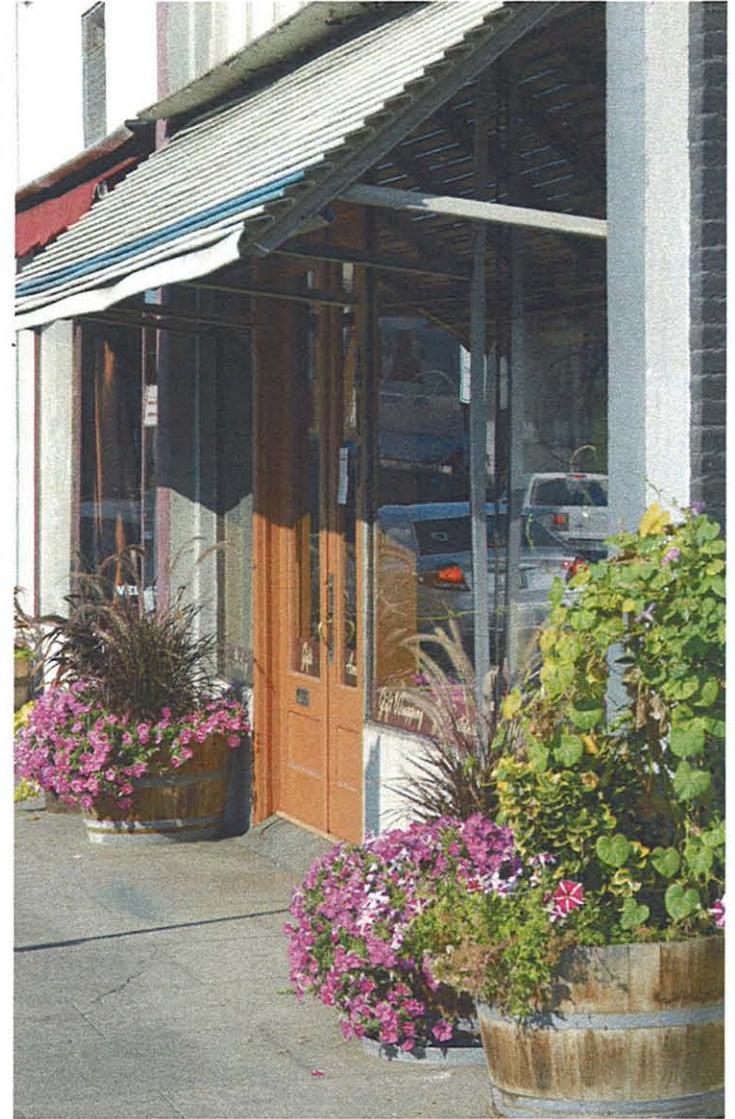
The merchant's pictured here have done a terrific job of creating curb appeal - but it takes a village to really create an outstanding destination downtown.

Add hanging baskets under awnings to add even more appeal.

Then add perpendicular blade signs and remove the plastic banners (Correction Connection).

Get ideas from the following successful Oregon towns:

- Old Downtown Bend
  - Cannon Beach
  - Sisters
  - Ashland
- Washington:
- Leavenworth
  - LaConner
  - Port Townsend



## Assessment Findings & Suggestions



### Curb appeal:

Curb appeal can account for 70% of sales at restaurants, retail shops, lodging facilities, wineries, and golf courses.

Which of these stores are you more drawn to (right)? Imagine USA Subs with curb appeal like the top photo, taken in Door County, WI.

How much more appeal would some of these shops have with planters of flowers, hanging baskets, benches or tables and chairs outside? Does everything have to be brown and gray? Add some life, some color.

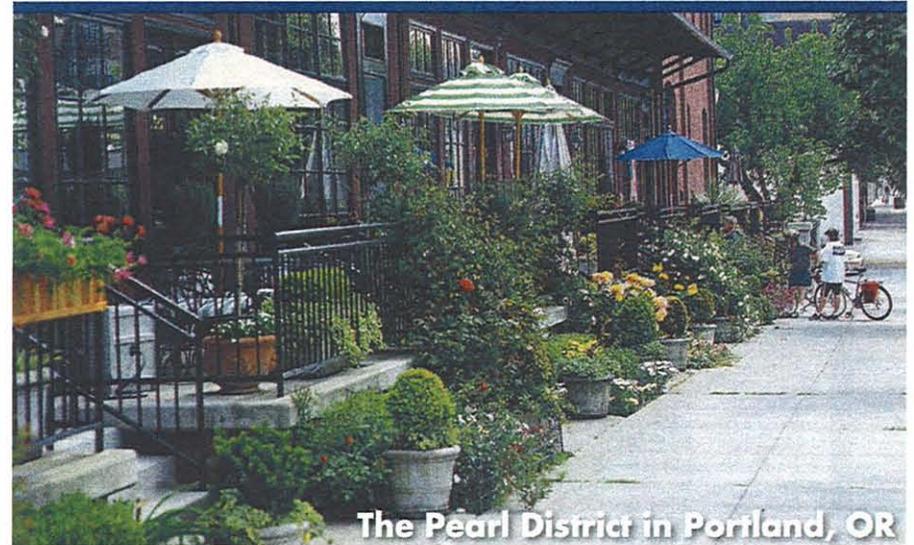
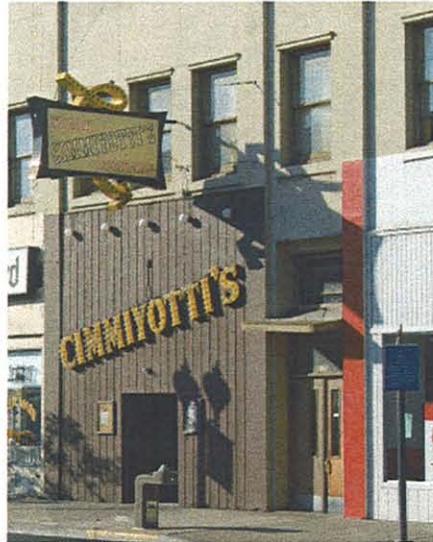




### Suggestion #51:

This is a great restaurant (top left). Is it “Knights Inn” or “Stetson’s”? Once again, it looks like an office building. Some paint and added curb appeal would pull patrons in more.

Add more curb appeal to the building (near right). Cimmiyotti’s could benefit from beautification, such as some potted shrubs and flowers outside its doors. Our guess is that the restaurant is out of business. It’s hard to tell whether or not it still operates. This was a highly recommended restaurant, but we couldn’t get past the overall look and avoided dining there.



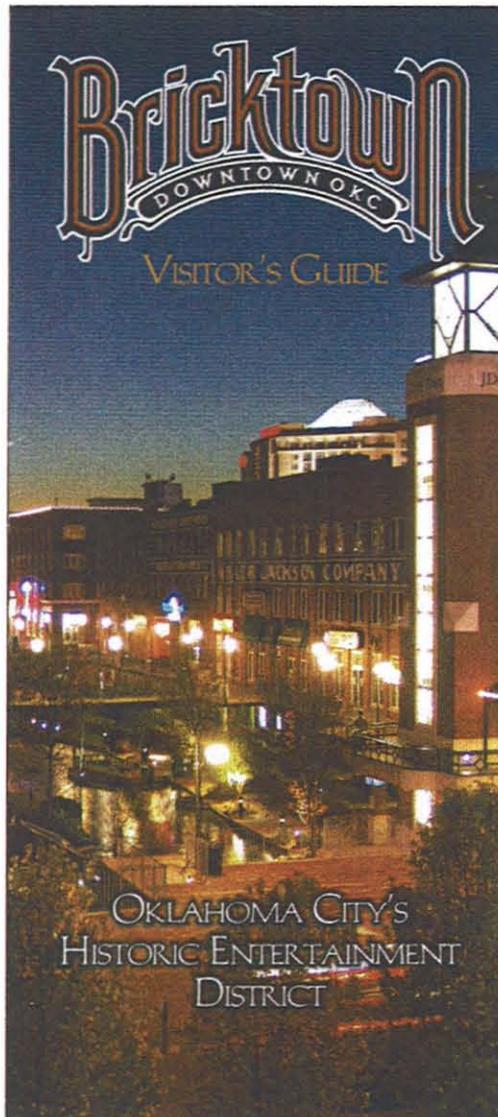
The Pearl District in Portland, OR

### Suggestion #52:

Give downtown its own name - that helps make it an attraction, a destination. “Central Business District” or “Town Center” don’t have much appeal. Would you rather go to “downtown Portland” or “The Pearl District?” Make downtown a destination, not just a place.

Create an identity, which will foster the “mall mentality” among the merchants. Businesses in the area tend to share common goals and efforts in terms of marketing, signage, operating hours, outdoor dining and displays, parking and public amenities when they are part of the same “mall.”





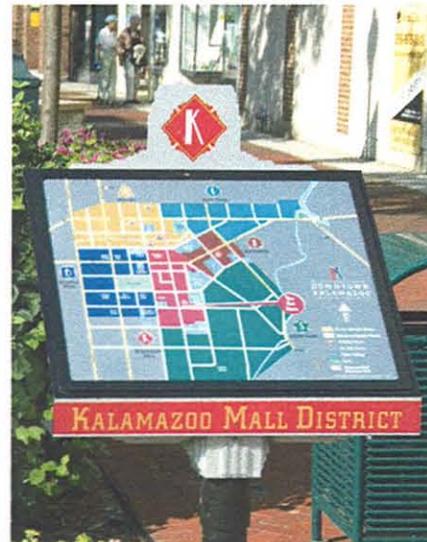
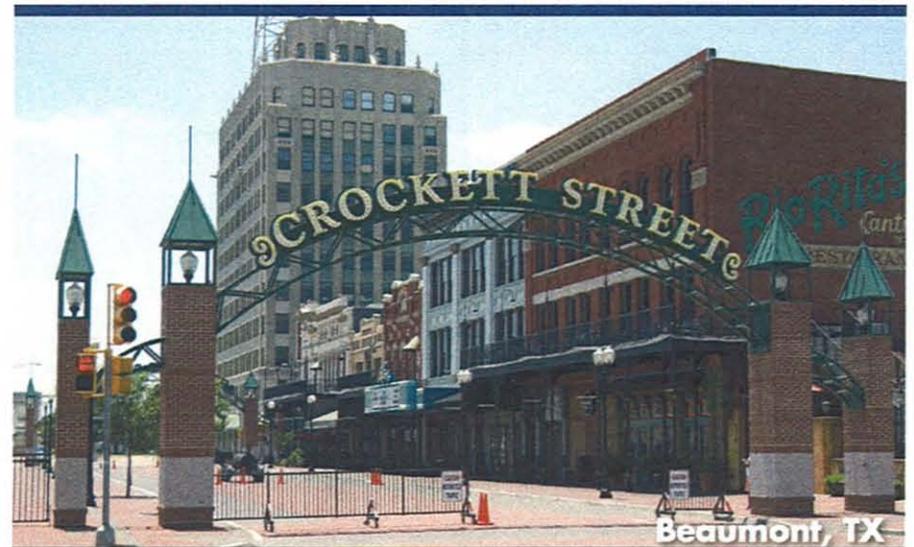
**Create different districts:**

Some cities with names for special districts include:

- San Diego - Gaslamp District
- Seattle - Pioneer Square
- Nelson, BC - Baker Street
- Portland, OR - The Pearl District
- Oklahoma City - Bricktown
- Chicago - The Magnificent Mile
- Baltimore - Inner Harbor
- Santa Monica - Third Street Promenade
- San Antonio - The Riverwalk
- New Orleans - Bourbon Street, The French Quarter
- Snoqualmie, WA - Rail District

Give downtown a name that reflects the brand of the community. This is one of the tasks of the current Brand Development Plan being developed by the Destination Development team for downtown Pendleton.

Battle Creek, Michigan is developing a competitive sports capital brand and the name for the core downtown district is "Celebration Square." It fits the winning brand.



**Suggestion #53:**

Create gateways and boundaries into the downtown district. Attractive gateways into downtown instill a "sense of place," an identifiable destination. It helps develop a place people are drawn to, proud of, and where they want to spend time and money.

Crockett Street (above) is only one block long - but that block is filled with entertainment venues, and people drive from miles away to take in a show and spend the night. A town can have several districts, as is the case in Kalamazoo, MI (left).



## Assessment Findings & Suggestions

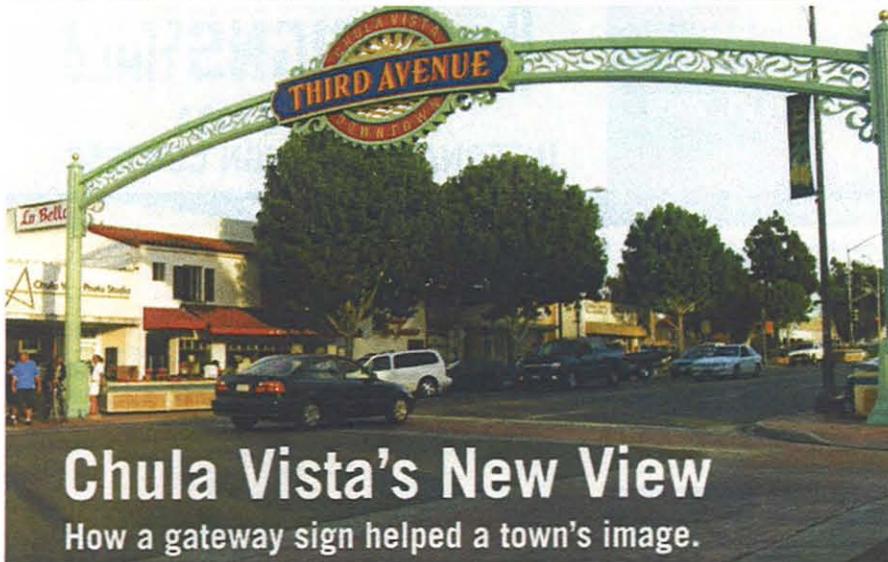


### Note:

The core downtown area seems to be four blocks long - from Frasier to Byers. Both of these intersections would be ideal for true gateways into the core district.

Chula Vista (bottom left) saw retail sales increase with the addition of its gateway into the Third Avenue shopping district. The gateway sign to Market Street, Woodlands, Texas (below), adds to the district's ambience of fine quality shops.

Gateways and boundaries can be overhead signs, like Chula Vista's, or a street level sign, like Market Street's. It should make a bold statement and reflect the brand and ambience of the district.





**Gateways & boundaries:**

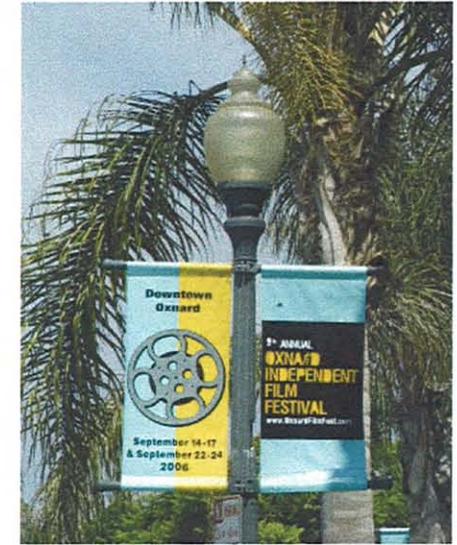
Installing decorative crosswalks is another method used to define boundaries, as well as adding to the ambience of the district.

Decorative crosswalks can be designed to enhance the brand image of downtown. These sidewalks (above and left) were created by StreetPrint, located in Vancouver, B.C. The process embeds decorative designs into the asphalt - this is not paint - that will last for decades and is far less expensive than paver stones. It can be driven on within minutes of being embossed into the crosswalk (top photo).

Hawthorne, NV (top right) is looking to embed 26' stars in each of the town's five intersections and using stars and stripes for its crosswalks. The brand: America's Patriotic Home.

**Suggestion #54:**

Promote downtown events using pole banners: they create a festive feeling and can't be missed.

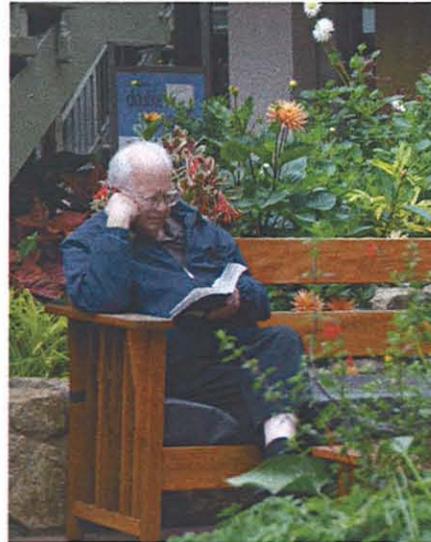




**Suggestion #55:**

Develop gathering places and narrow the streets to provide places for events, places for people to hang out. People love to gather in attractive, bustling surroundings in an intimate setting. A lively downtown is healthy - you can help create that by providing the space with seating, tables, lighting, trees, flowers, and locations for events and performances. Add public art and landscaping.

Create plaza areas for entertainment, a permanent home for a weekend market (top right), and add water (bottom center) that draw people downtown.

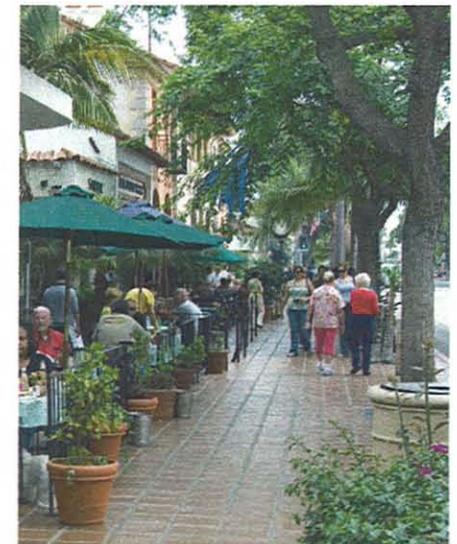




**Create gathering places, event plazas:**

Kalamazoo, Michigan has done an excellent job creating gathering places (top and left photos) and Kalamazoo is a major entertainment center for people from within a 100 mile radius. Create locations for outdoor dining, events, vendors, and socializing. Providing locations for farmers' markets, crafts fairs, and small performances, which attract visitors as well as residents.

Notice the outdoor dining and wide sidewalks in Santa Barbara (bottom right).



## Assessment Findings & Suggestions



### Suggestion #56:

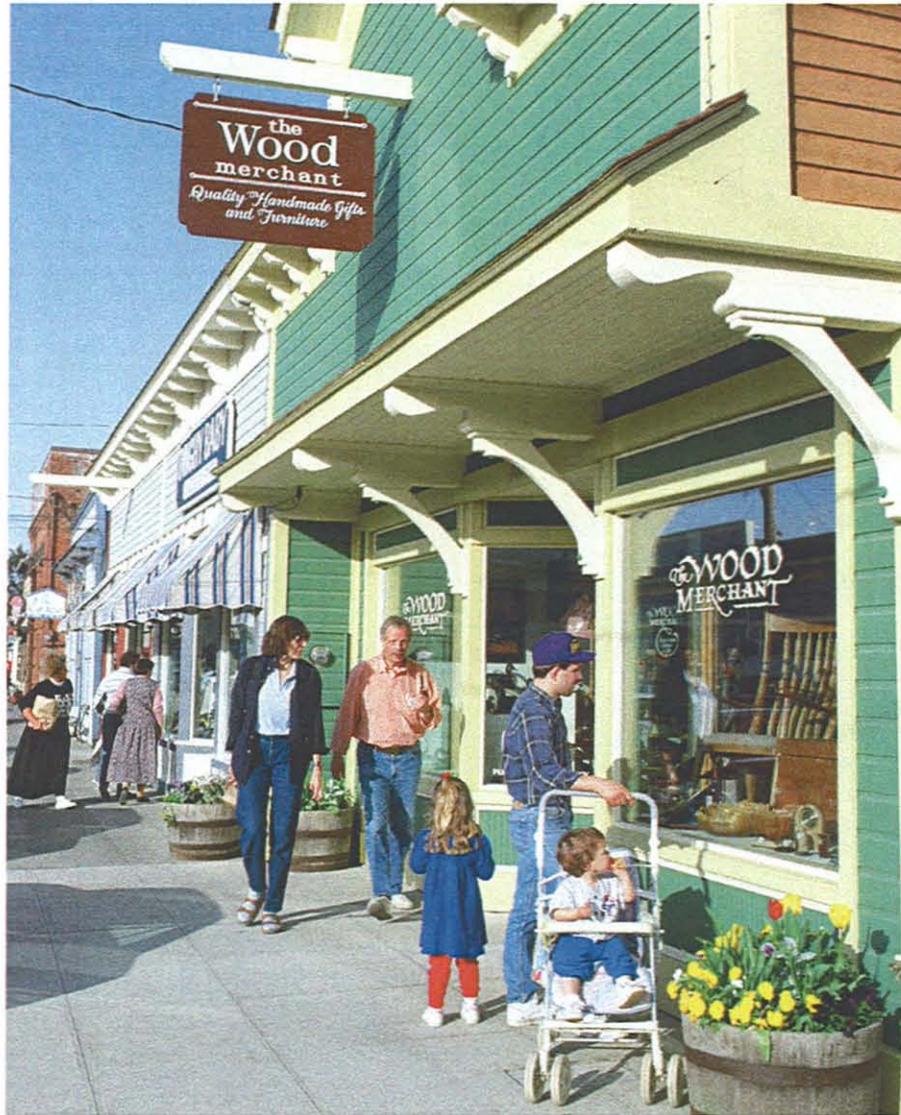
Make downtown a hub of activity. Entertainers (left), exhibitions, car shows (top right). Recruit outside events, and make sure you have 40 a year. When you recruit them, they do the work of putting on the event and marketing it, while you roll out the red carpet for them. Contact clubs and associations that hold events for their members, such as car clubs, hobby clubs, quilting clubs. Invite them to hold upcoming events in Pendleton.

### Suggestion #57:

Bring downtown to life. Invite street vendors, artists in action, musicians to downtown. This creates a fun, festival-like ambience, making people want to be there. "Festival Retail" and "Lifestyle retail" areas are now major attractions across the country.

Samples shown here clockwise from top left: Asheville, NC; Solvang, CA's First Annual Wheels & Windmills Car Show; Nelson, BC; Third Street Promenade, Santa Monica, CA.





### The rule of critical mass:

The number one diversion of visitors is shopping and dining in a pedestrian setting. This is also where most visitor spending takes place. To attract visitors and keep them longer, a downtown needs to have the critical mass. In a two-to-three lineal block downtown area, there should be - at minimum:

- Ten destination retail shops (not neighborhood retail)
- Ten dining/treats shops
- Ten places open after 6:00 p.m. Entertainment is preferable.

Neighborhood retail includes banks, yoga centers, boot and shoe repair, symphony office, salons, office supply stores, service companies, hardware stores, second hand stores, portrait studios, computer shops, hair design college, mobile phone shops, mortgage companies, eye care and medical clinics, armed forces, finance companies, insurance companies, and investments firms. These businesses do not attract visitors.

### Destination retail includes:

- Restaurants
- Collectibles
- Wine shops
- Tour companies
- Gift shops
- Clothing, logo gear
- Ice cream and treats
- Bakeries
- Saloons and entertainment
- Coffee shops
- Antiques (not second hand stores)
- Museums and attractions
- Outfitters
- Home accents and furnishings
- Jewelry
- Galleries and foundries
- Pubs, bistros

### What to do:

- Create pedestrian-friendly shopping districts or areas
- Create "open market" events or that type of atmosphere with flea markets, farmers markets, arts and crafts fairs - plus include education and entertainment.
- Narrow the streets, widen the sidewalks to create an intimate atmosphere.
- Sometimes it's necessary to "rearrange the furniture" - move businesses' locations to achieve the critical mass.

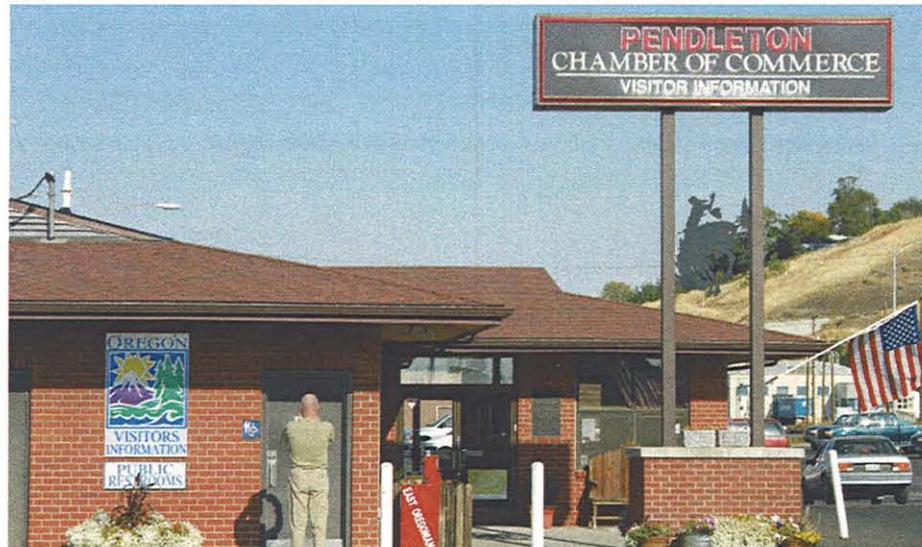




**Suggestion #58:**

The banks of the Umatilla River are here? Consider placing interpretive signage downtown - in spending areas.

When people get out of their car to read interpretive signs, they are much more likely to decide to buy a souvenir or an ice cream cone if they are nearby - translating to additional spending.



**Other notes:**

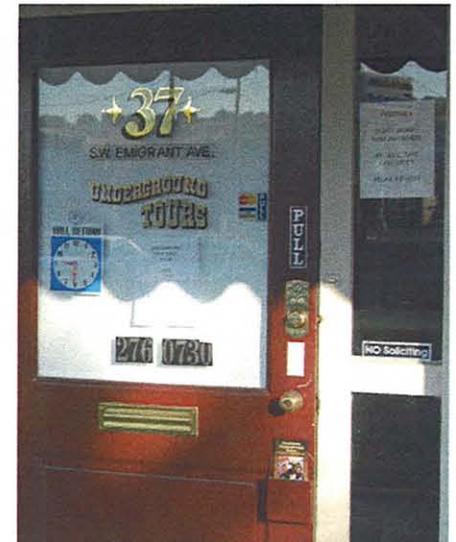
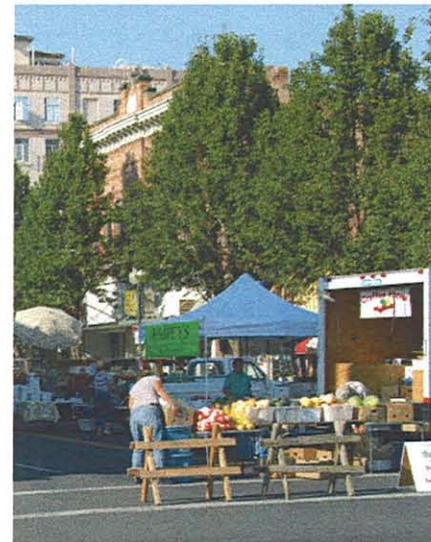
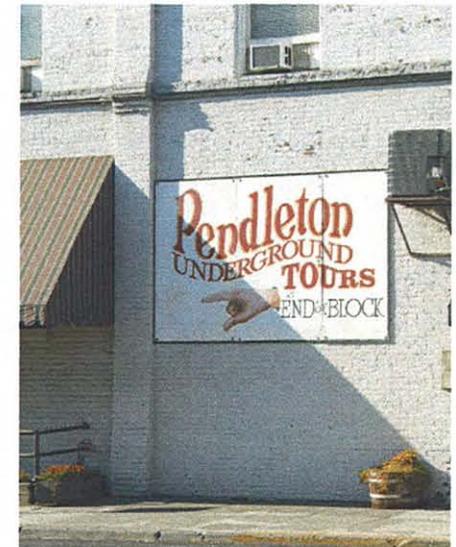
The Chamber is in a good location downtown.

The farmers market is terrific. Wouldn't it be great if it had a permanent home and was open three or four days a week?

The Underground Tours was relatively easy to find.

**Suggestion #59:**

Add a teaser here (far right). How long does the tour take? What will I see? By appointment/reservation only? That's too bad.



## Assessment Findings & Suggestions



### Suggestion #60:

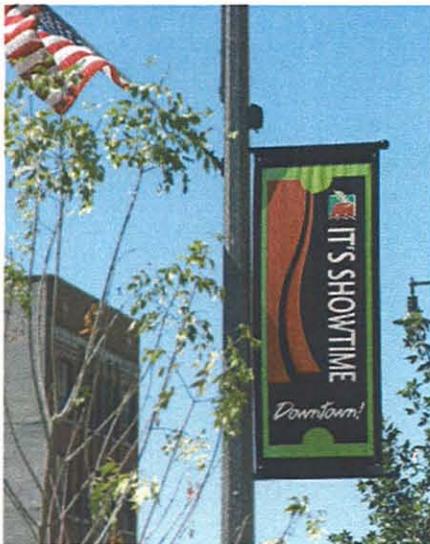
Consider larger, more colorful pole banners. (See example bottom left) Sell the experience, not geography or even the city, but the feeling: which is what a brand is.

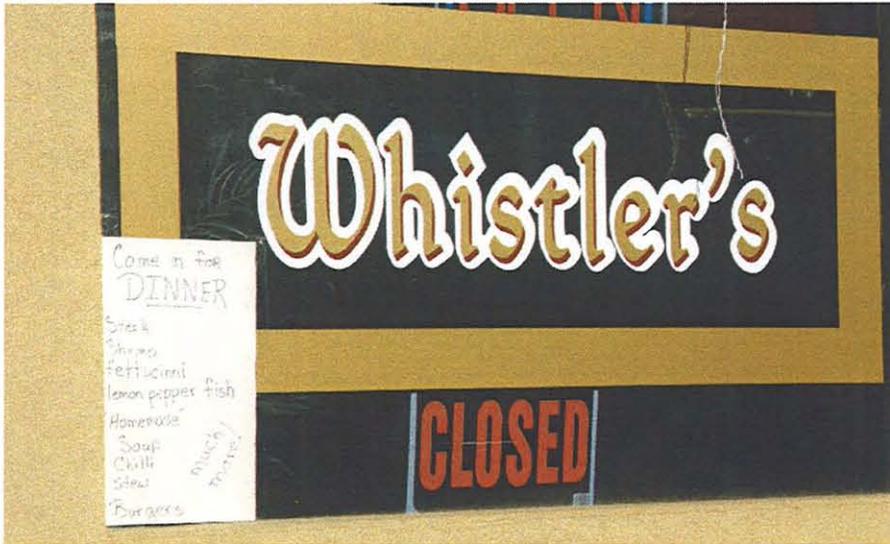
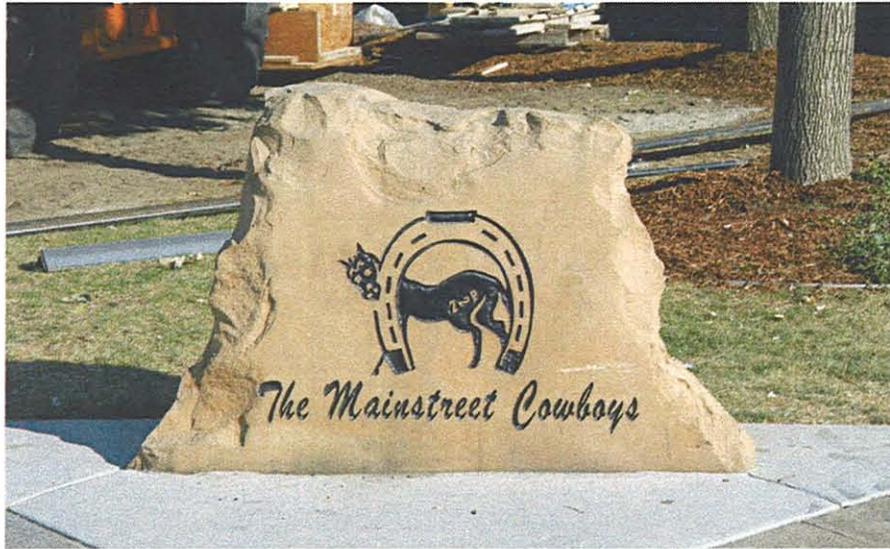
### Suggestion #61:

The Children's Museum looks great. Consider painting the aluminum frames and the building. Make its appearance more fun.

### Suggestion #62:

Colorize or add murals (bottom right) to reduce the concrete bunker look. Make sure your public art reinforces your brand.





**Suggestion #63:**

Who and what are the Mainstreet Cowboys? Add an interpretive sign. Is this an annual event? A local club? Always promote experiences, activities, attractions - not organizations.

**Suggestion #64:**

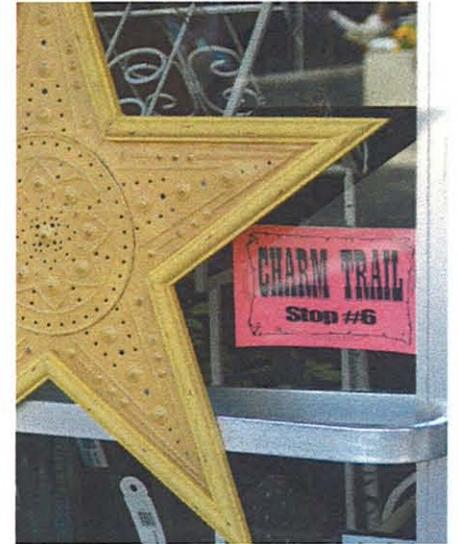
Is Whistler's still operating? Don't use a "Closed" sign - instead, post a sign that tells when you are open. Our assumption was that it is permanently closed. There was nothing to tell us otherwise. What is Whistler's?

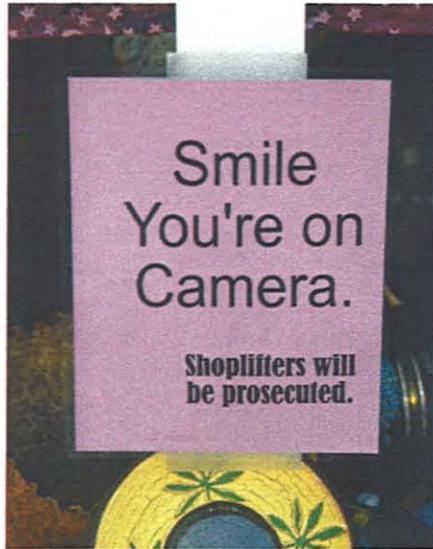
**Suggestion #65:**

Trade the trash receptacles out for ones that are more decorative and in keeping with a high-quality downtown. Once again, does everything have to be gray or brown?

**Suggestion #66:**

On the Charm Trail signs add "Ask about the trail inside" for those who don't know what it is. This is a great diversionary activity for visitors to get them into Pendleton's shops.



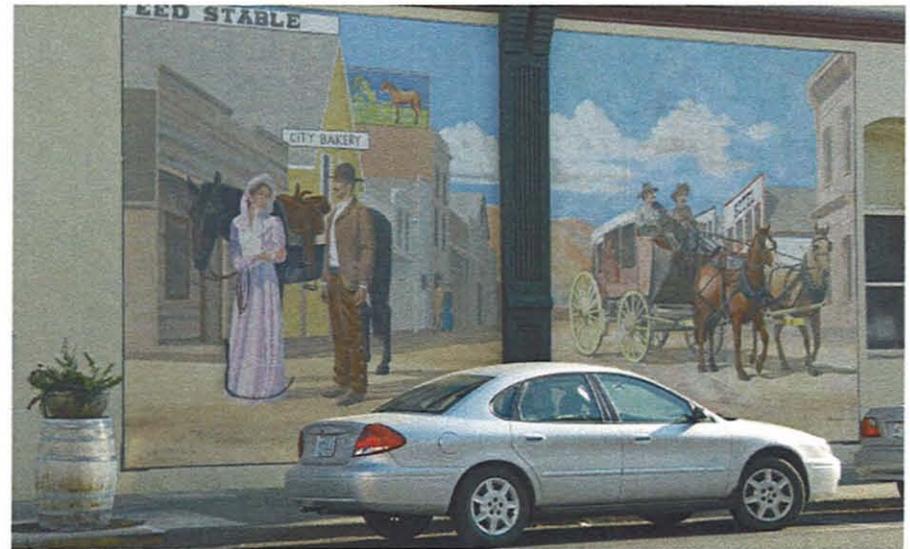


**Suggestion #67:**

This sign (left) creates the perception that Pendleton has some security problems. Is this really necessary? It gave us the impression that the merchant isn't very friendly and also made us think that downtown isn't a great place to visit or "hang out."

**Question:**

Is this a gift shop or a tattoo parlor (below)?



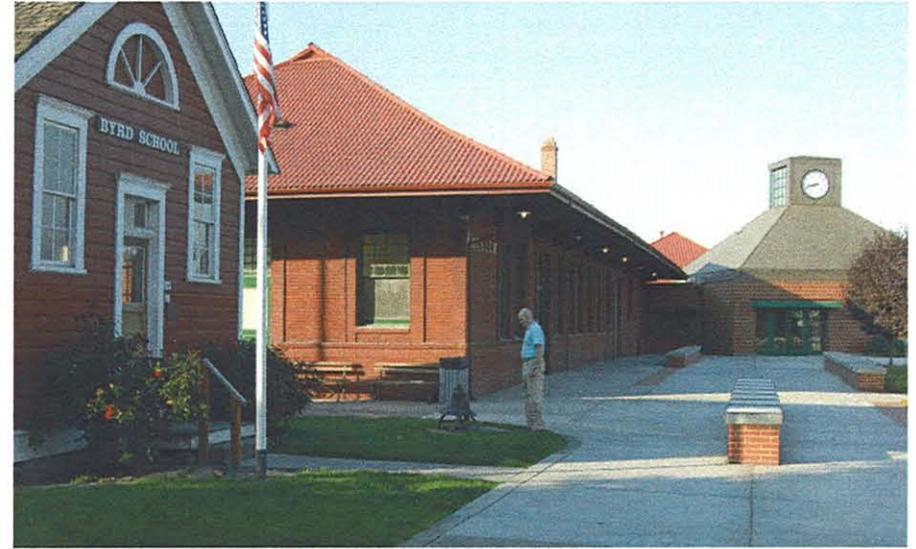
**Notes:**

The murals are very attractive and do a good job of portraying Pendleton as a historic western town. Unfortunately, there are hundreds of towns in the west (starting in Oklahoma) offering similar experiences. The trick is to create or promote something totally unique to Pendleton. Many will argue that "The Real West" starts west of the Mississippi and includes hundreds of towns: Tombstone, Deadwood, Oatman, Winthrop, and many others.

Where is the museum (near left)? These doors were confusing.



## Assessment Findings & Suggestions



### Suggestion #68:

When is it open? (above) Include hours. Our impression is that it is permanently closed or closed for the season. Before you tell people the price, make the sale: what is here? What is the museum about?

### Suggestion #69:

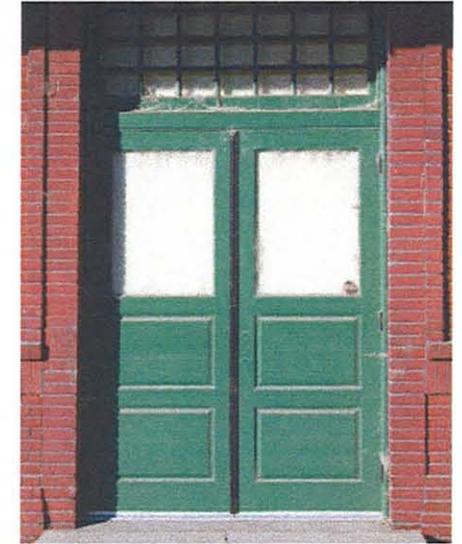
Although the sign said it was open (near right), the museum was closed. Include operating hours on the sign.



### Suggestion #70:

The museum is nice and the grounds are well maintained. However, the side doors (right) were covered in cobwebs. Perhaps a great scout project.

The location of the museum is excellent, with the Chamber next door. The museum needs to give the characters names, make it much more interactive, and bring the "story" to life so it doesn't become a "been there, done that" attraction. The museum, while very nice, is pretty static. It should walk visitors through a day in the life of the 1950's. June & Ward Cleaver with kids Theodore (Beaver) and Wally.



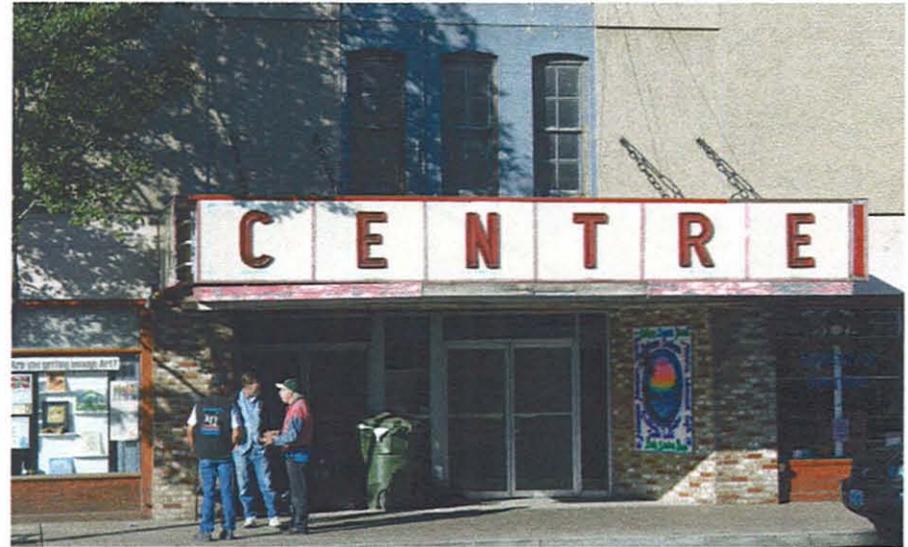


### The rule of telling stories:

Cultural tourism is one of the fastest growing segments in the industry. It takes visitors on a journey of discovery, beyond the gift shops and amusements and into the community's soul - its history, environment, and the arts.

Museums are a mainstay of cultural tourism. They will often display items from the town and showcase some of the unusual characters that lived there. But many museums fail because they simply show artifacts rather than tell stories. They have collections of old bottles, typewriters, furniture, industry equipment, and all sorts of memorabilia that have meaning but no context. What makes a museum successful is its ability to tell stories, either oral or written. An artifact without a story is just something to look at. But a story brings it alive. It makes it real and memorable. And it keeps visitors longer, which translates to more spending.

Museums that tell great stories captivate visitors for hours, and they'll develop a bond with the community. They'll also tell others how much fun they had.

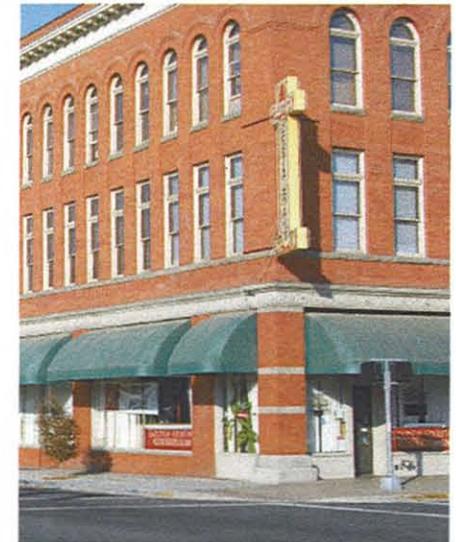


### Suggestion #71:

Is this a theater (above)? What is this place? Is it open? Develop better signage and a calendar of events - if it's operating.

### Great bones:

Downtown has "great bones" - a terrific foundation to build upon. The architecture of downtown Pendleton is outstanding and the city has real promise as both a local and regional destination. It may require some rearranging of merchants, a new merchant mix, better merchandising in terms of curb appeal and signage, and making it more intimate.



## Assessment Findings & Suggestions



### A downtown case history: Greenville, South Carolina

This case history in photos shows Greenville, SC (top right) as it was in the mid 70s. A four-lane street, lots of concrete and asphalt, no curb appeal, and declining retail sales and plenty of vacant buildings. While this town is larger than Pendleton (60,000), it's downtown was dying and was dealing with 40 to 60% vacancy rates.

It's revitalization efforts began by narrowing the street to two lanes (bottom right), adding bulb-outs, angle parking, canopy trees every 30 feet, creating buffers between the parking and sidewalks. This photo was taken in the mid 80s.

By creating narrower streets, traffic slowed and the overall ambiance became more intimate and inviting. Gradually businesses (destination retail) moved back into downtown Greenville. Take a look at Greenville today, on the next page.





**Greenville, South Carolina**

Here is Greenville today - same street (left) in almost the same location as shown on the previous page. The canopy of trees is spectacular, and merchants never complain about leaves or trees blocking signs. Greenville is vibrant, active, and full of busy shoppers - all the time.

In surveying 14 merchants downtown every one said that if the trees were gone, they would be too.

Greenville is now one of the most popular downtowns in all of South Carolina. Pendleton can do this too.





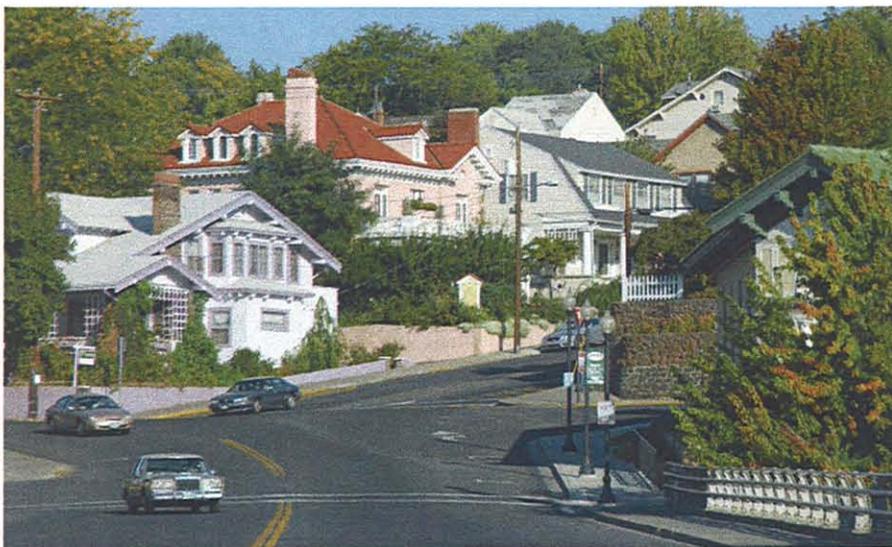
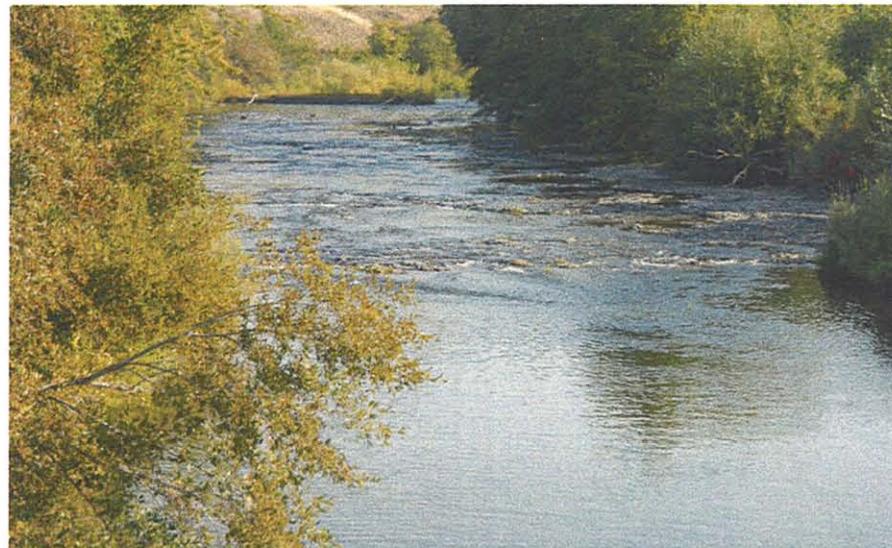
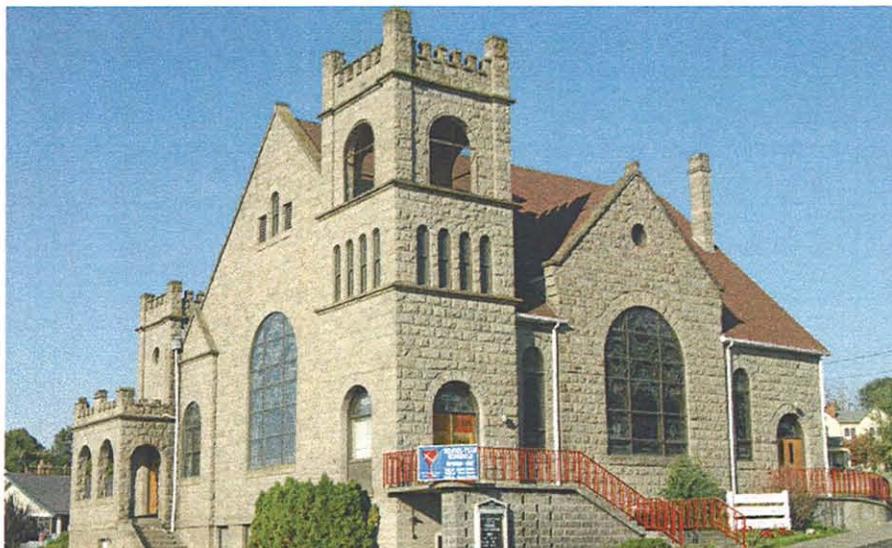
### Greenville, South Carolina

Sidewalks are 20 feet or wider in spots, there are buffers between traffic and pedestrian areas (bottom left), and the city developed a coordinated wayfinding, signage, and informational system throughout downtown (this page, previous page).

The wide sidewalks allow ample opportunity for street musicians and outdoor dining. Visitors travel from all over the region to spend time in Greenville - one of the truly outstanding towns in the U.S. The entire effort took 20 years, and is still progressing.



## Assessment Findings & Suggestions

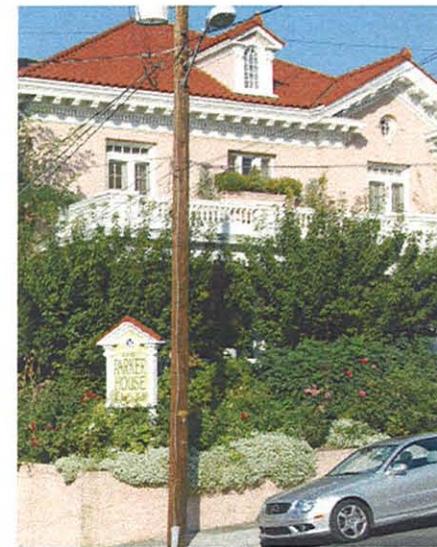


**Note:**

Is there any opportunity to take advantage of the river running through town? Water is always a powerful draw.

Once we started to explore Pendleton, we were surprised to find some incredible homes, churches, B&B's, and some of the city's best "gems."

Consider developing a self-guided tour of the community.





**Suggestion #72:**

With these beautiful homes downtown, consider putting together a tour of homes, highlighting their history and the characters who once lived in them.

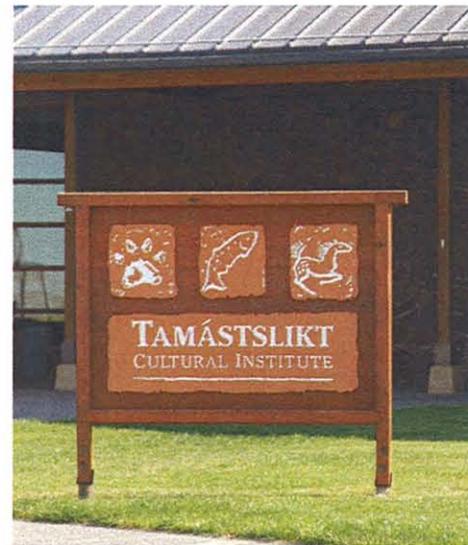
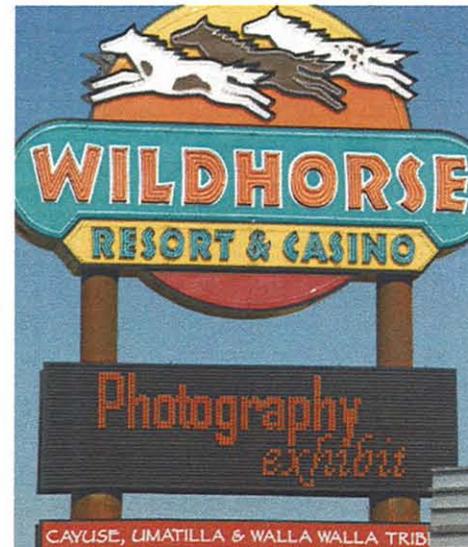
**Suggestion #73:**

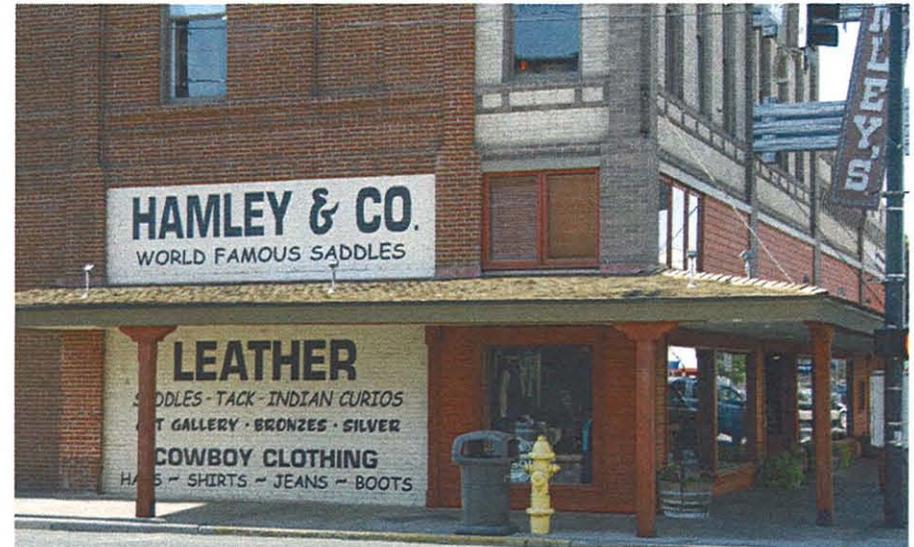
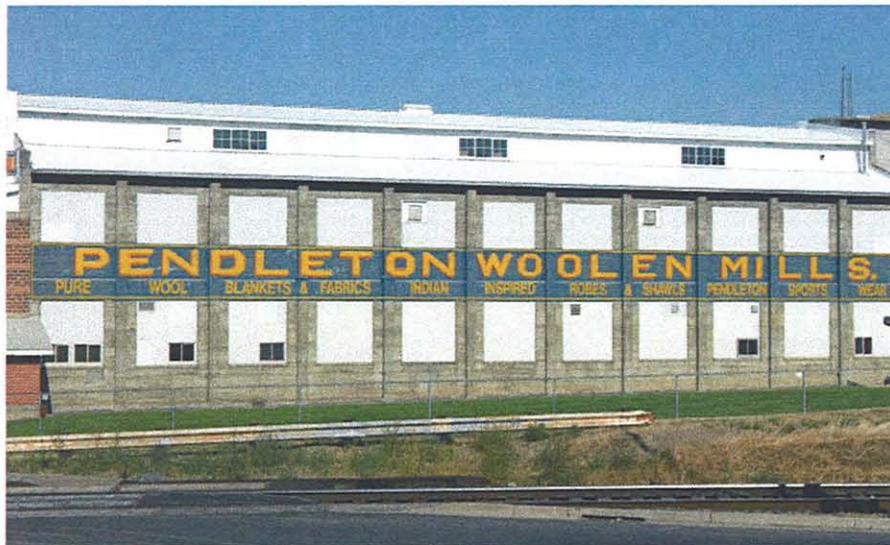
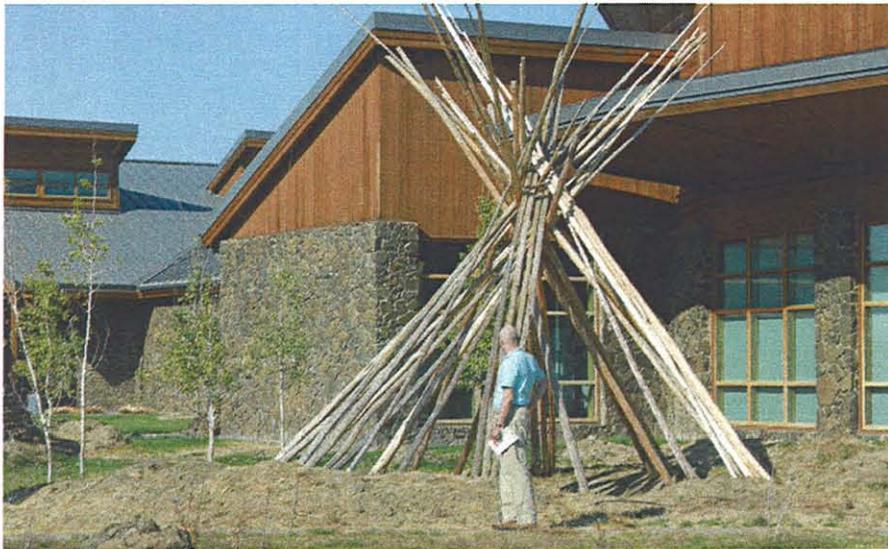
Is the Tamastlikt Cultural Institute a museum that is open to the public? Perhaps it should be promoted as a Cultural Museum instead of an institute.

Consider changing the name to something people can spell, remember, and pronounce.

Another option is in marketing materials and in the museum to show people how it's pronounced, what it means, and give them a fun way to remember how it's spelled.

Visitors we approached simply call it the "Indian Museum" and most of those didn't know the name of the tribe. Could it be named the Umatilla Cultural Museum?

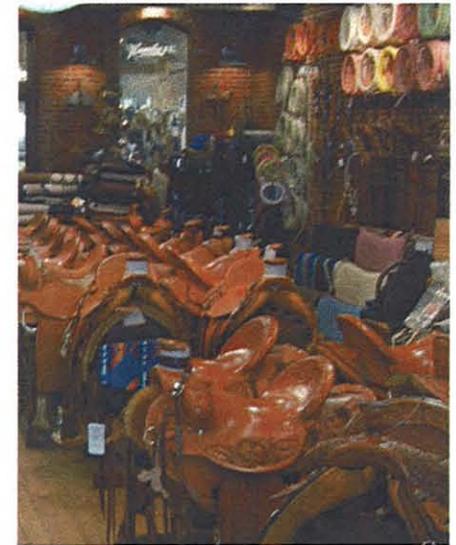




**The primary lures & diversions:**

The woolen Mills wasn't too easy to find, but is a nice diversion for visitors.

Hamley & Co. provided a great draw - letting visitors see saddles being made. This is perhaps Pendleton's best attraction in terms of creating an outstanding retail experience, the fact that you can watch saddle artisans at work (even on weekends), and the fact that the company is expanding the facilities for events, a restaurant, etc. Even for non-equestrian folks, this is a great experience in a terrific setting.





**Note:**

In a nutshell:

- Develop a decorative wayfinding system to connect the dots.
- Design and install a series of visitor information kiosks, each cross-selling other attractions and amenities.
- Focus on downtown retail mix, technical assistance to retailers, curb appeal. Narrow the streets, create gateways, etc.
- Make downtown an event center - always something going on. A hub of activity.
- Promote specific businesses, create a lure to pull passers-by off I-84.
- Work on a solid brand - and a primary lure besides the Roundup.

Destination Development, Inc. has been retained to develop a brand for downtown Pendleton - what you want to be known for. Nearly everyone in North America has probably heard the name Pendleton because of Pendleton Woolen Mills and secondly, because of the Round-Up, one of the premier rodeo events in the U.S. and Canada.

Unfortunately, the Round Up lasts only a couple of weeks (including set-up, tear down and the event itself), and the Woolen Mills is geared more to manufacturing than to creating an experience. The store is nice as are the weekday tours, but beyond that Pendleton is lacking a primary draw. The question we heard when speaking with people in the Portland and Seattle areas (and even in the TriCities) was, what is there to do in Pendleton the other 50 weeks of the year?

And more importantly, what do you have that the visitor can't get closer to home and that makes you worth a special trip?

Also, remember that all museums, including the Smithsonian, are diversions and not primary lures. 85% of visitors to the Smithsonian, in Washington, DC, are there for another reason and while there, the museum is a must-see attraction. Pendleton has many terrific diversions: several museums, some outdoor recreational opportunities, the casino (a primary draw for many), the underground tour (perhaps one of the best activities and by far, the most experiential), Pendleton Woolen Mills, Hamley Saddles, and others. The number one diversion of visitors, world-wide, is shopping and dining in an attractive pedestrian-friendly and intimate setting. And this is where 80% of all visitor spending takes place. Downtown can be the key in keeping people overnight, and bringing them back time and again.

Now you need to create the primary lure: what you are known for the rest of the year. This is the age of specialization. With 2,000 new communities working to tap into tourism across the U.S. every year, the trick is to specialize. The days of "we have something for everyone" are over. Find your niche and promote it like crazy.



# Assessment Findings & Suggestions

## starved TO THE area activities guide

**YOUR GUIDE TO NATURE'S SPLENDOR**  
**OUTDOOR ADVENTURES**  
**HOMETOWN COOKIN'**  
**FAMILY FUN**  
**HISTORIC TREASURES**  
**RARE FINDS**

www.enjoyillinoiscountry.com

### TWO SISTERS CANDY & GIFTS

1011 Lakeside Drive, Ottawa  
Open: Mon-Fri 10:00-5:00, Sat 10:00-4:00, Sun 10:00-4:00  
815-224-4438  
www.twosisterscandy.com

Two Sisters Candy & Gifts is a family business that has been serving the Ottawa area since 1988. We are known for our wide variety of candies, gifts, and more. Our location is in the heart of downtown Ottawa, making it easy to find us. We offer a wide variety of products, including custom-made gifts and more. We are a family business and we are proud to serve our customers with the highest quality products and excellent customer service.

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### THE POPCORN WAGON GOURMET POPCORN

Washington Park, Ottawa  
Open: Wednesdays, Fridays, Saturdays  
11:00am-5:00pm  
815-224-4438  
www.popcornwagon.com

The variety of fresh popcorn is a wonderful treat. We use the best popcorn and we use the best ingredients. We are a family business and we are proud to serve our customers with the highest quality products and excellent customer service.

OTAWA

### UPTOWN GRILL CONTEMPORARY CUISINE

1407 Riverside Drive, Ottawa  
Open: Mon-Fri 11:00-11:00, Sat 11:00-11:00, Sun 11:00-11:00  
815-224-4438  
www.uptowngrill.com

The upscale dining scene in the area will be a lot more exciting when you have the Uptown Grill. We are a family business and we are proud to serve our customers with the highest quality products and excellent customer service.

LAMBLE

### HEGELER CARUS MANSION TOURS

1407 Riverside Drive, Ottawa  
Open: Wednesdays, Fridays, Saturdays 11:00-11:00  
815-224-4438  
www.hegelercarus.com

The Mansion, built in 1874, has been recently restored and is now open to the public. We are a family business and we are proud to serve our customers with the highest quality products and excellent customer service.

LAMBLE

### JEREMIAH JOE SPECIALTY COFFEE

1011 Lakeside Drive, Ottawa  
Open: Mon-Fri 10:00-5:00, Sat 10:00-4:00, Sun 10:00-4:00  
815-224-4438  
www.jeremiahjoe.com

Jeremiah Joe Specialty Coffee is a family business that has been serving the Ottawa area since 1988. We are known for our wide variety of specialty coffees and more. Our location is in the heart of downtown Ottawa, making it easy to find us. We offer a wide variety of products, including custom-made gifts and more. We are a family business and we are proud to serve our customers with the highest quality products and excellent customer service.

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### SKYDIVE CHICAGO SKYDIVING

1011 Lakeside Drive, Ottawa  
Open: Mon-Fri 10:00-5:00, Sat 10:00-4:00, Sun 10:00-4:00  
815-224-4438  
www.skydivechicago.com

Skydive Chicago is a family business that has been serving the Ottawa area since 1988. We are known for our wide variety of skydiving experiences and more. Our location is in the heart of downtown Ottawa, making it easy to find us. We offer a wide variety of products, including custom-made gifts and more. We are a family business and we are proud to serve our customers with the highest quality products and excellent customer service.

OTAWA

• Promote specific businesses: Create an Activities Guide that highlights specific shops, attractions, restaurants, etc. that are unique. This one, produced by the Ottawa, Illinois Visitor Center, is proving very successful.

### RIVER ADVENTURES, INC. CANOE & BIKE RENTALS

1011 Lakeside Drive, Ottawa  
Open: Mon-Fri 10:00-5:00, Sat 10:00-4:00, Sun 10:00-4:00  
815-224-4438  
www.riveradventures.com

River Adventures, Inc. is a family business that has been serving the Ottawa area since 1988. We are known for our wide variety of canoe and bike rentals and more. Our location is in the heart of downtown Ottawa, making it easy to find us. We offer a wide variety of products, including custom-made gifts and more. We are a family business and we are proud to serve our customers with the highest quality products and excellent customer service.

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### JJ'S PUB BAR & GRILL

1011 Lakeside Drive, Ottawa  
Open: Mon-Fri 10:00-5:00, Sat 10:00-4:00, Sun 10:00-4:00  
815-224-4438  
www.jjspub.com

JJ's Pub Bar & Grill is a family business that has been serving the Ottawa area since 1988. We are known for our wide variety of pub food and drinks and more. Our location is in the heart of downtown Ottawa, making it easy to find us. We offer a wide variety of products, including custom-made gifts and more. We are a family business and we are proud to serve our customers with the highest quality products and excellent customer service.

OTAWA

### DÉJÀ VU HOME & GARDEN BOUTIQUE

1011 Lakeside Drive, Ottawa  
Open: Mon-Fri 10:00-5:00, Sat 10:00-4:00, Sun 10:00-4:00  
815-224-4438  
www.dejavu.com

Déjà Vu Home & Garden Boutique is a family business that has been serving the Ottawa area since 1988. We are known for our wide variety of home and garden products and more. Our location is in the heart of downtown Ottawa, making it easy to find us. We offer a wide variety of products, including custom-made gifts and more. We are a family business and we are proud to serve our customers with the highest quality products and excellent customer service.

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### OTTAWA RIVERBOAT CO. RIVER CRUISES

1011 Lakeside Drive, Ottawa  
Open: Mon-Fri 10:00-5:00, Sat 10:00-4:00, Sun 10:00-4:00  
815-224-4438  
www.otawariverboat.com

Ottawa Riverboat Co. is a family business that has been serving the Ottawa area since 1988. We are known for our wide variety of river cruises and more. Our location is in the heart of downtown Ottawa, making it easy to find us. We offer a wide variety of products, including custom-made gifts and more. We are a family business and we are proud to serve our customers with the highest quality products and excellent customer service.

OTAWA

### WEBER HOUSE & GARDEN COTTAGE TOURS

1011 Lakeside Drive, Ottawa  
Open: Mon-Fri 10:00-5:00, Sat 10:00-4:00, Sun 10:00-4:00  
815-224-4438  
www.weberhouse.com

Weber House & Garden Cottage Tours is a family business that has been serving the Ottawa area since 1988. We are known for our wide variety of cottage tours and more. Our location is in the heart of downtown Ottawa, making it easy to find us. We offer a wide variety of products, including custom-made gifts and more. We are a family business and we are proud to serve our customers with the highest quality products and excellent customer service.

STEARLOR

### CAJUN CONNECTION TASTE OF LOUISIANA

1011 Lakeside Drive, Ottawa  
Open: Mon-Fri 10:00-5:00, Sat 10:00-4:00, Sun 10:00-4:00  
815-224-4438  
www.cajunconnection.com

Cajun Connection Taste of Louisiana is a family business that has been serving the Ottawa area since 1988. We are known for our wide variety of Cajun food and more. Our location is in the heart of downtown Ottawa, making it easy to find us. We offer a wide variety of products, including custom-made gifts and more. We are a family business and we are proud to serve our customers with the highest quality products and excellent customer service.

UTICA

### STARVED ROCK LODGE & CONFERENCE CENTER

1011 Lakeside Drive, Ottawa  
Open: Mon-Fri 10:00-5:00, Sat 10:00-4:00, Sun 10:00-4:00  
815-224-4438  
www.starvedrock.com

Starved Rock Lodge & Conference Center is a family business that has been serving the Ottawa area since 1988. We are known for our wide variety of lodging and conference services and more. Our location is in the heart of downtown Ottawa, making it easy to find us. We offer a wide variety of products, including custom-made gifts and more. We are a family business and we are proud to serve our customers with the highest quality products and excellent customer service.

UTICA

### AUGUST HILL WINERY

1011 Lakeside Drive, Ottawa  
Open: Mon-Fri 10:00-5:00, Sat 10:00-4:00, Sun 10:00-4:00  
815-224-4438  
www.augusthillwinery.com

August Hill Winery is a family business that has been serving the Ottawa area since 1988. We are known for our wide variety of wine and more. Our location is in the heart of downtown Ottawa, making it easy to find us. We offer a wide variety of products, including custom-made gifts and more. We are a family business and we are proud to serve our customers with the highest quality products and excellent customer service.

UTICA

### ILLINOIS EXPERIENCE OTTAWA

1011 Lakeside Drive, Ottawa  
Open: Mon-Fri 10:00-5:00, Sat 10:00-4:00, Sun 10:00-4:00  
815-224-4438  
www.illinoisexperienceottawa.com

Illinois Experience Ottawa is a family business that has been serving the Ottawa area since 1988. We are known for our wide variety of activities and more. Our location is in the heart of downtown Ottawa, making it easy to find us. We offer a wide variety of products, including custom-made gifts and more. We are a family business and we are proud to serve our customers with the highest quality products and excellent customer service.

OTAWA



**The following few pages contain assessments by our secret shoppers, who researched the area from a distance, reviewing marketing materials to see if they could find the area, and if the materials were convincing enough to make them want to visit.**

### Pendleton, OR Assessment

I started my research on Pendleton, Oregon by searching for the city using Google, and easily found links to both the city website and the Chamber of Commerce website. The link to the city website didn't work.

The Chamber of Commerce website ([www.pendletonchamber.com/](http://www.pendletonchamber.com/)) included some visitor information. It features a list of "28½ Ways to Lasso the Real West," presumably a list of attractions in the area. It included some genuine attractions, such as the Bar M Ranch, Children's Museum, Heritage Station Museum and Underground Tours. It also included things like the city parks, aquatic center, fitness centers such as Curves, and the movie theater; all items for which the word "attraction" is something of a stretch.

The website included pdf versions of attractions, dining and lodging guides, which would be useful for someone wishing to print out information. The pdf attractions guide actually included more information on each attraction than the visitor information page of the website. It at least had summaries of each of the 28½ things, whereas the list on the visitor information page was just that, a list. Some of the items had links to other websites with more information, but some did not.

I also found information on Pendleton and the Eastern Oregon area, on Oregon's travel website, [www.traveloregon.com](http://www.traveloregon.com). Pendleton is featured as one of the "Trips We Love"; it is touted as "Travel East to Experience the Old West". It talks about the Bar M Ranch and Bingham Hot Springs, located about 30 miles outside Pendleton, plus the Underground Tours, the Tamastlikt Cultural Institute and the Pendleton Round-Up.

I called the Pendleton Chamber of Commerce to get visitor information and request a brochure or visitor guide. The representative was very friendly and gave me a little information about Pendleton, including a description of the Pendleton Round-Up and a little bit about the Underground Tours and the nearby Umatilla Indian Reservation. She seemed a little unsure of what to send me as far as a visitor guide, giving me the impression that they don't have a visitor brochure or something similar.

Elsewhere in Eastern Oregon, there are a number of interesting attractions and places to visit. Places like the John Day Fossil Beds and Painted Hills along with the Thomas Condon Paleontology Center Museum seemed interesting, as did the National Historic Oregon Trail Interpretive Center. There is a lot of fascinating history in this area, as well as beautiful scenery.

I think I would spend some time in Pendleton, perhaps as part of a trip through Eastern Oregon. I was intrigued by the Tamastlikt Cultural Institute as well as the Underground Tours. I would consider it a short trip, and more likely if I lived closer, such as in Spokane or Portland, rather than the Seattle area. The Travel Oregon website actually was more useful for me in finding information about things to do in Pendleton than the Chamber of Commerce website. It mentioned Pendleton and Pendleton attractions in several places and included more detailed information than I could find elsewhere. If I had only looked on the Chamber website, I would be much less likely to consider a trip there.

### Pendleton, OR Materials

I called and requested marketing materials from Pendleton, OR. I received three brochures detailing Pendleton's attractions, lodging and dining, as well as a booklet entitled, "Pendleton Power Book: Guide to Doing Business in Pendleton".

The attractions brochure is a printed copy of the pdf that is available online. It has their "28½ ways to lasso the real west", which is essentially a list of at-



## Assessment Findings & Suggestions

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tractions with short summaries and contact information. Some of the attractions aren't truly that; for example, city parks, the movie theater, and Curves are all listed. It is a simple piece, but nice enough; easy to read and has good summaries. I think they might benefit by reordering their list, so that the more interesting attractions come first. Pendleton Round Up is number 18 and the Underground Tours are number 20.

The lodging and dining guides are similar; printed versions of the pdfs available online. They are nice pieces containing short descriptions of the accommodations and restaurants in Pendleton, along with contact information.

The Pendleton Power Book doesn't have visitor information as much as relocation and business information. It is a very nice booklet with lots of information on demographics, amenities, businesses, etc. But not very useful to a visitor.

### Pendleton, Oregon

I called the Pendleton Chamber of Commerce and spoke with a representative who was very friendly and easy to talk with.

When I was a child, we would drive through Pendleton on our way to visit relatives in Idaho. I don't remember a lot about it but I would like to visit again. The location of Pendleton is great - Tri-Cities is an hour away; Portland, Boise and Spokane are a little over three hours away. The representative told me the population of Pendleton is approximately 16,000 and the people are very friendly. She proved that!

I received a visitors guide in the mail. What I found unique about the visitors guide that was that one side/cover of the book was called the "Pendleton Power Book" (chamber information) and the other side/cover was the guide for residents and visitors. Very clever without having to do two separate guides. I also received three smaller brochures on Lodging, Dining, and 28½ ways to Lasso the Real West. Information I read states that "Pendleton has an

average of nearly a quarter-million visitors in town per year for events, attractions, conference, conventions and the number continues to grow." Wow!

Would I go there if I were in Boise, Spokane, Seattle or Portland? I would consider staying in Walla Walla then spending a day in Pendleton. Always wanted to visit Walla Walla also so I could combine the two. I would also want to visit the Tri Cities.

### Other Comments/Observations:

I went to this web site - <http://www.pendleton.or.us>. I was not impressed with the opening page. Too busy - needs an appealing look. AND, there is a typo - Emergency is spelled wrong. There were good photos at <http://www.pendleton.or.us/pool%20photos.htm>.

Not too many good photos to grab -

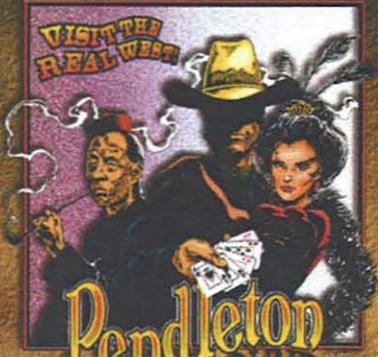
The Pendleton Convention Center photo is weak - <http://pendletonnet.com/business/pcc/>

The Pendleton Chamber of Commerce opening page is much more appealing - <http://www.pendletonchamber.com>.

I liked this information about the Working Girls Hotel <http://www.pendletonundergroundtours.com/main> - then click on Working Girls Hotel.



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One of the most important elements of a strong branding program is continuity. These three brochures are the best marketing pieces in Pendleton. While some continuity could be created to make them a little more uniform, they all use dark rich colors, are all professionally produced, and have a distinctive western flair about them.

One element of developing a Community Branding, Development & Marketing Action Plan (of which this assessment is a part of), is creating a Style Guide that would include brand identities (logos), graphic standards, type styles, and key marketing messages that develop a true brand. This is part of a "brand system," which also includes wayfinding signage design, gateways and entry designs, retail signage, etc.

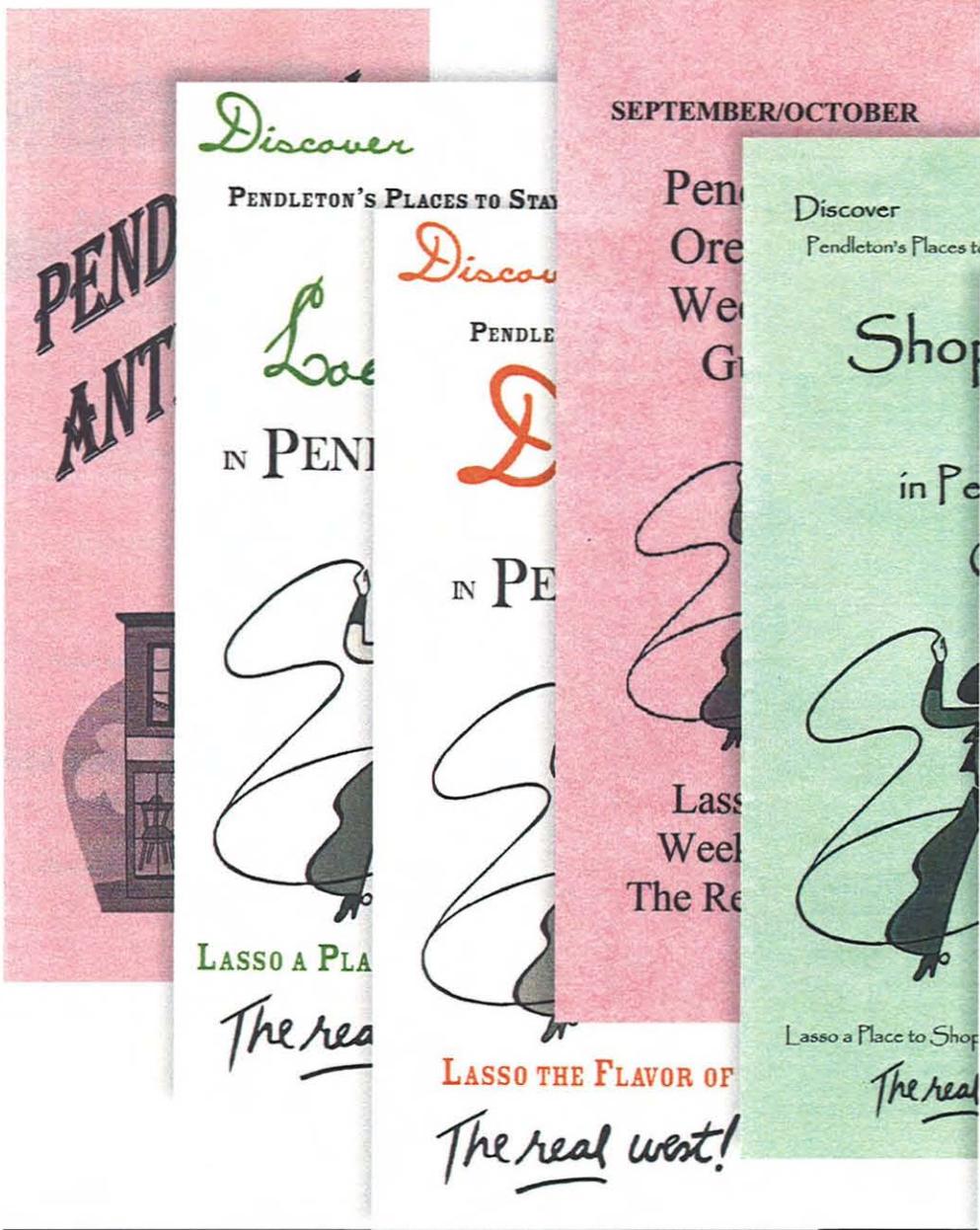




The map does nothing to entice people to visit Pendleton, but might be a good tool once in the area. It's not necessary that it be sent to would-be visitors, except on request. Perhaps it could be available at local hotels and real estate offices.

The other pieces are nice, but don't tie to the overall brand. Consider developing a cooperative Activities Guide, like the one shown earlier for Ottawa, Illinois.





These pamphlets are essentially lists of hotels/motels, restaurants, retail stores, and attractions. They don't do anything to "sell" me on visiting Pendleton, although they might be useful if I were already planning to visit, just as a phone book would be useful.

The Attractions piece (28-1/2 Ways) has brief descriptions of the attractions, but many of them aren't really visitor attractions. The family aquatic center and cinemas, the athletic clubs and library, really aren't visitor attractions. There are some, however, that could be played up: Underground Tours, Woolen Mills, Tamastlikt Cultural Institute, and Hamley & Company. If you're going to list antique stores and art galleries as an attraction, it would be best to list more than four each – four antique stores doesn't sound like much. But, if some are outstanding stores, they could be highlighted for their uniqueness.

The Weekend Guide looks pretty useful – although it wouldn't be a "sales" piece either. But it has hours and locations of museums and stores.

I think the information in all these pieces could be included in one Visitors Guide that would be a good sales piece.

Discover  
 PENDLETON'S ATTRACTIONS  
 28 1/2 Ways  
 TO LASSO  
 The real west!  
 IN PENDLETON  
 OREGON

Welcome to Pendleton's  
Cultural Crossroads.



This brochure is, by far, the best marketing piece in Pendleton and, in fact, is a great example for other communities to follow. This should be the primary marketing piece, and all other brochures can be made available online, by request, or once in Pendleton. It would be terrific if this had the same look and feel as the Hamley brochure with the dark, rich colors and western flair for what the town is known.

## THE CROSSROADS

## Pendleton Center for the Arts

Pendleton has long been the place where traffic on the great river and overland adventurers meet. Native Americans, farmers, cattlemen, trappers and explorers all mingled at this eastern Oregon crossroads.

That cultural cross-pollination is still happening today. Where else can you go from the world's best Round-Up to great theater, symphony, fine art exhibitions and cultural museums? Pendleton has a thriving cultural life and the Cultural Crossroads is the one number to call to find out what's happening in the community.

To get a current schedule of events in the Pendleton area, call 278-5959.

The Pendleton Center for the Arts features a wide variety of...



painting in auditorium



Enjoy classes and view a nut private ev



## Betty Feves Memorial Gallery

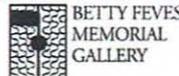
The Betty Feves Memorial Gallery is located on the beautiful campus of Blue Mountain Community College in Pendleton.

The Gallery is a non-profit exhibit space connecting emerging and established artists and their work with students, staff and the general public in Eastern Oregon. We believe a community college gallery can be an important educational tool, fostering an appreciation for the richness and diversity of art and providing personal and professional development by supporting artistic expression.

**Guiding Principles:**  
We choose exhibits which seek to educate viewers and that reflect the diversity of the world outside our local community.

We provide an environment where artists can explore experimental and non-conventional art and art forms and opportunities for exchange between artists and students.

We encourage emerging artists in their professional development. Open to the public during the academic year from September through May, Monday-Friday 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.



Blue Mountain College, 2411 NW Garden P.O. Box 100  
Pendleton OR 97801 • 541-278-5952

## Children's Museum of Eastern Oregon

## College Community Theater

College Community Theater has been producing plays on the campus of Pendleton's Blue Mountain Community College for more than forty years through the cooperative efforts of theatre students and the talent from the community.

For tickets and information, call the CCT box office at 541-278-5955.



**COLLEGE COMMUNITY THEATRE**  
2411 NW Garden, Pendleton, OR 97801 • 541-278-5928

## Crow's Shadow Institute of the Arts

The Art Institute's programming includes instruction in both contemporary and traditional art forms and serves Native American emerging artists, established artists and youth.

**Programs for artists include:**

- Artist & Master Printer collaborations
- Artist marketing and career development
- Print studio tours and demonstrations
- Symposia and lectures
- Institutional collaborations
- Community and youth programs
- Workshops & classes
- Internships
- Open studio times
- Gallery exhibitions

Founded by artist James Laxador in 1992, Crow's Shadow brings students, teachers and professional artists together on the Umatilla Indian Reservation to share, learn and create.

Art making opportunities vary from fine art printmaking to basketmaking, from computer graphics to beadworking and from photography to papermaking. Visitors are encouraged to call for directions and to inquire about tours of the facility.

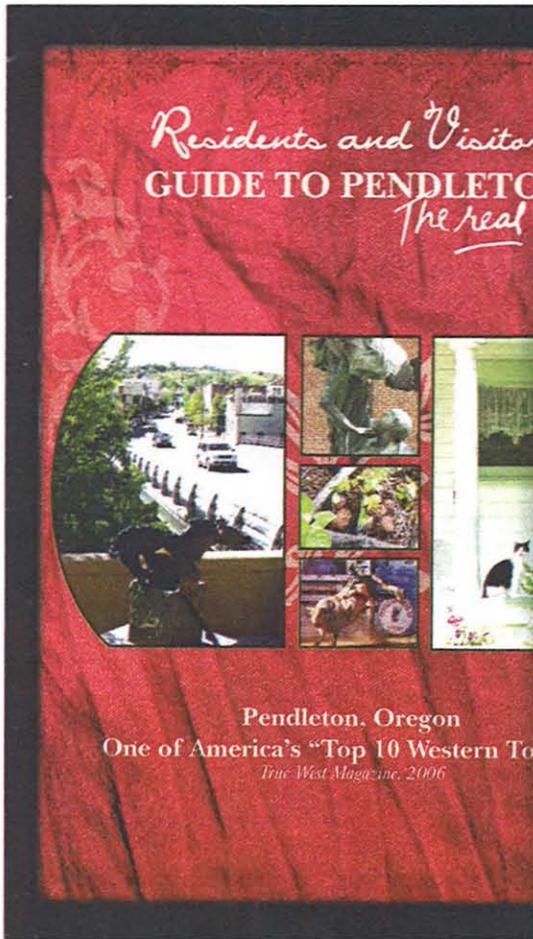
[www.crowshadow.org](http://www.crowshadow.org)



**CROW'S SHADOW  
INSTITUTE OF THE ARTS**

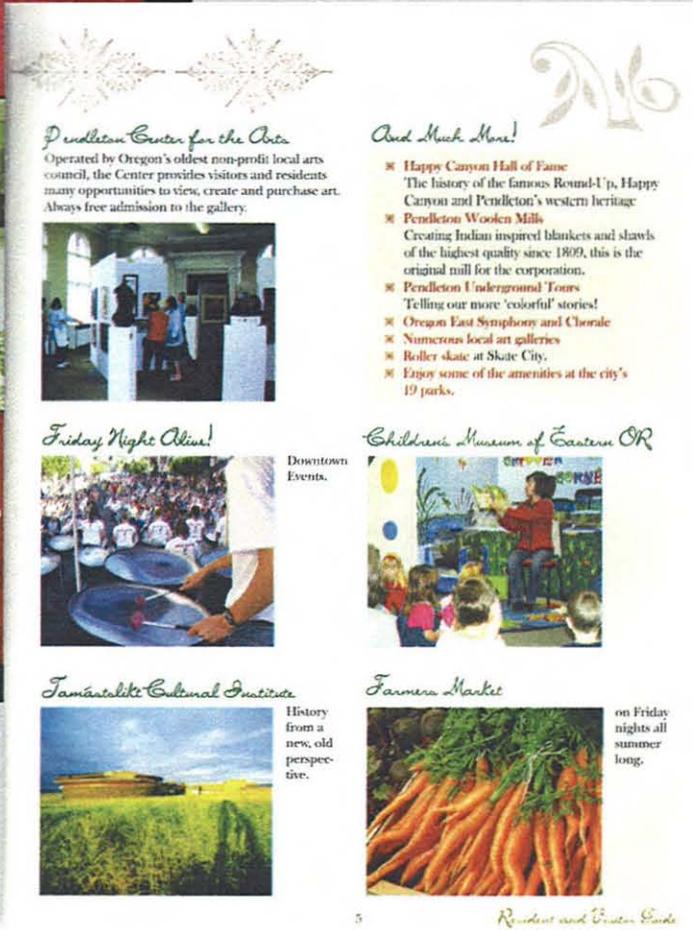
48004 St. Andrews Rd., Pendleton OR 97801 • 541-276-3954





Visitors' Guide: A glossy, 8-1/2 x 11 magazine – one half is for visitors, and the other half is for people interested in doing business in Pendleton.

An attractive piece, it is full of photography, and provides basic information such as location, climate, a list of attractions, events, recreational activities, and some other information regarding health care, education, and housing. The layout isn't outstanding – it's pretty basic, but straightforward.



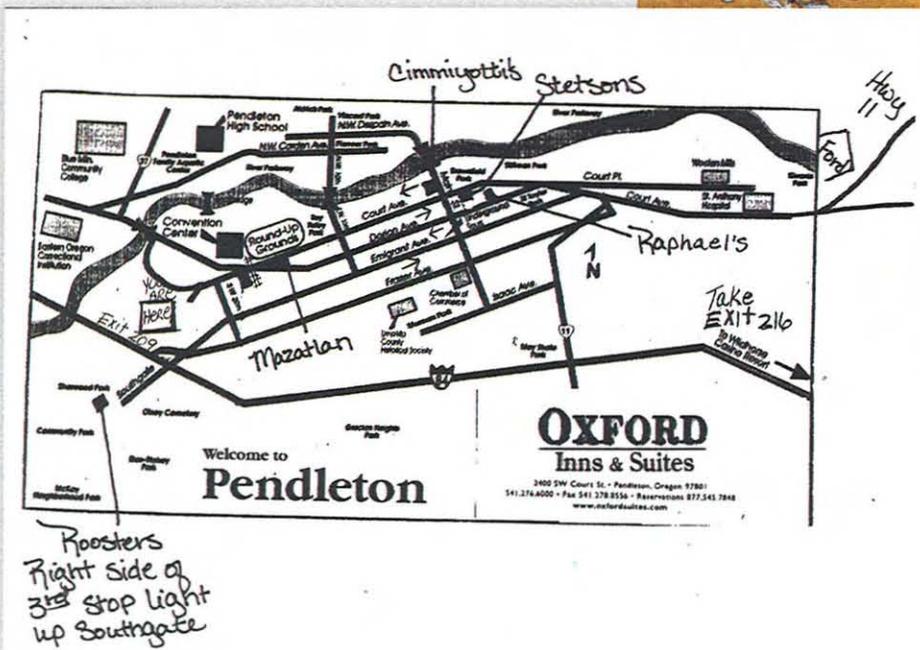
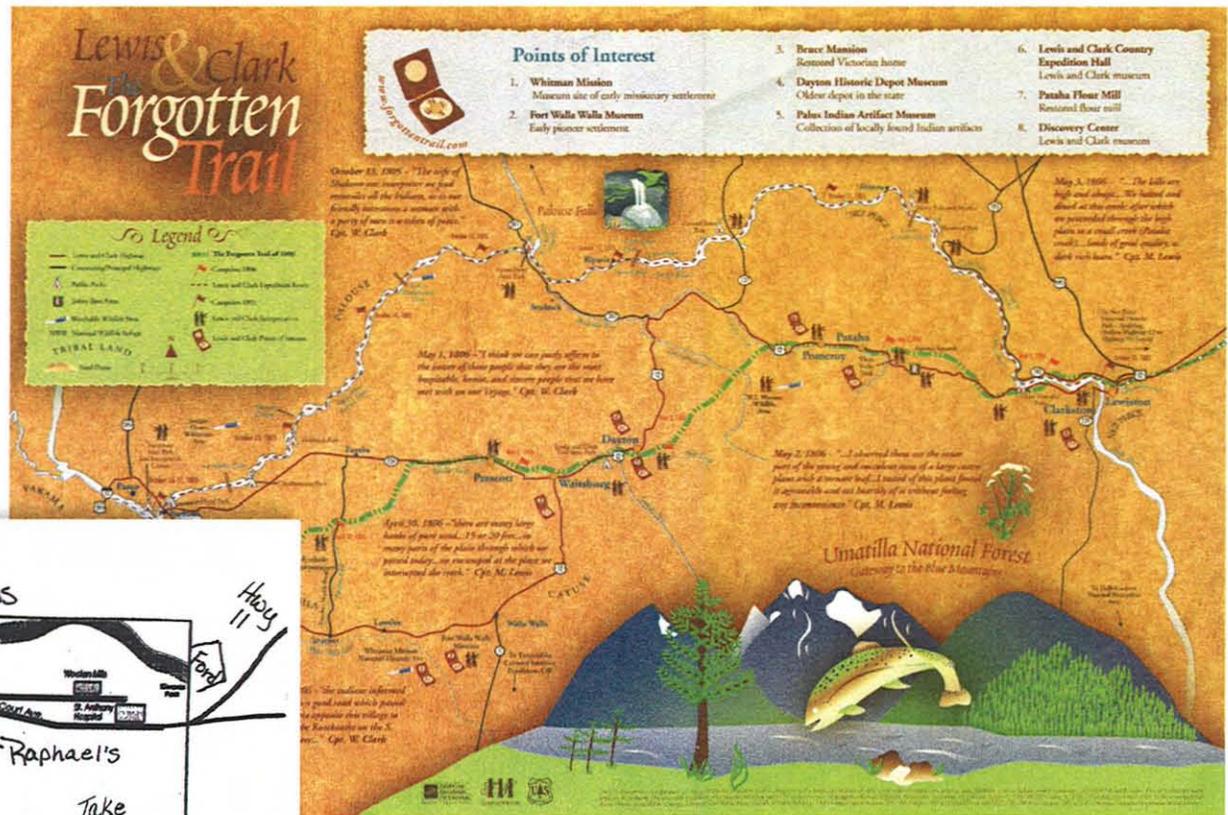
The attractions pages really don't give me enough information to make me want to go there. I know that Pendleton's largest event is the Pendleton Round-Up, but the brief description – "One of the largest rodeos and western celebrations in the nation happens in Pendleton every September" – could be greatly improved upon. Tell me specifics about the event – how many days, what happens, how many people come – give me a feel for what it would be like to go to the Round-Up.

The same can be said for the other attractions – they need much more detail to paint the picture and make them come alive.

This piece actually seems to be much more designed for people thinking of moving to Pendleton – very little of it is for visitors. I suggest making it two separate pieces – one a relocation piece, and the other just for visitors. Since most of it is for relocation, it would be a shame to spend so much on such a large, expensive piece, plus the mailing costs, to send it to visitors.

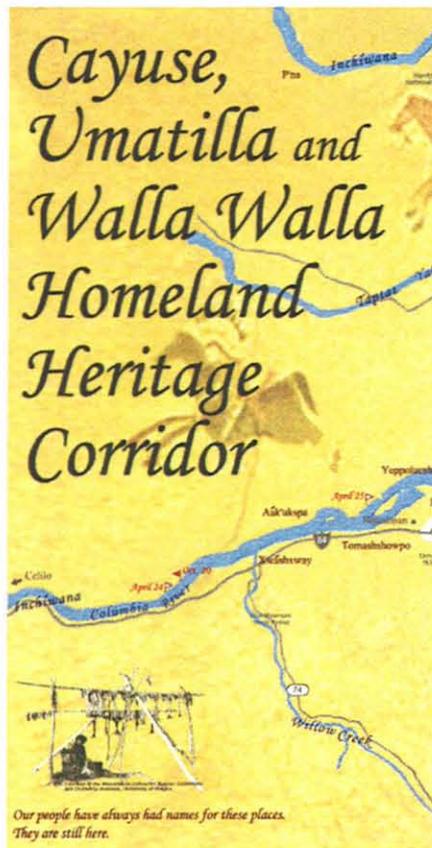
To make it a true visitors guide, it would be great to redesign it, possibly in a smaller booklet, and to really highlight specific attractions, restaurants that are outstanding, and events. Write up a few detailed itineraries for visitors to use.





Because visitors have a tough time navigating through and around Pendleton, local hotels have various versions of improvised maps showing some restaurants and attractions. The Chamber should consider developing a professionally produced map showing primary commercial streets, restaurants, shops, and attractions - perhaps something along the lines of the Forgotten Trail placemat.





Always promote experiences and activities over geography. So, what is there to do here that it makes worth reading the brochure?

The following section is a primer about the branding process. It provides 26 things you should know in order to create and implement a successful branding program.

While it has little to do with the assessment process, determining your future will help guide how and what you implement in terms of the suggestions made during the assessment process.

Pendleton is well known for the Woolen Mills and for the Round Up. But how can this be leveraged to make Pendleton a destination beyond just the round up (the other 51 weeks of the year), or a stop at the Pendleton Woolen Mills then moving on to other destinations.

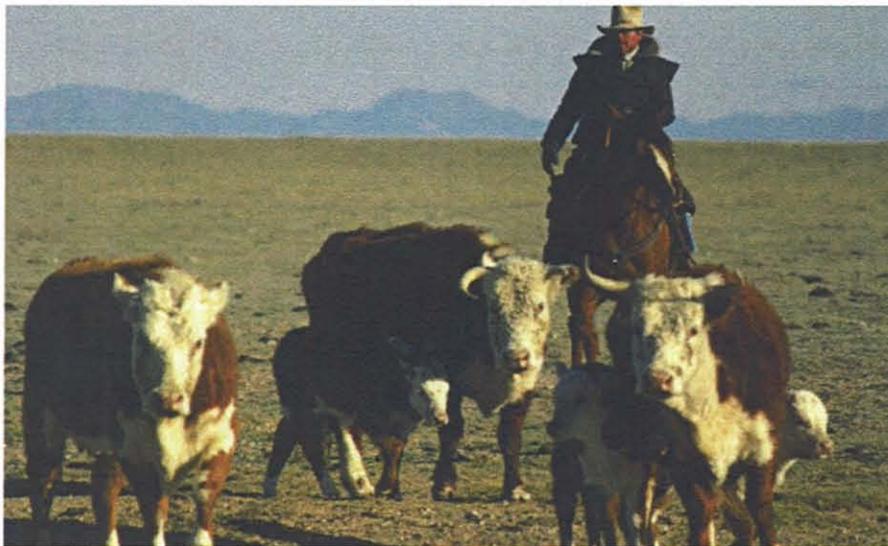
Particularly, what should downtown Pendleton do to become a destination area for locals as well as visitors?

This branding primer will guide you through the following:

- Defining what a brand is
- How to choose a brand and why
- Who will champion the cause
- Niche group sub-brands
- Developing winning logos and slogans that will support the brand
- Suggested reading

It is the job of Destination Development to come up with the answers to these questions, with input from Pendleton. We look forward to hearing from you.





**Insanity Has Its Own Rewards**  
The rule of differentiation

### POINT #1 • A brand is a perception

This is the most important, most talked about, but most misunderstood rule in the tourism and downtown redevelopment industry. Branding is NOT about slogans and logos. It is what people think of you - NOT what you say you are. It's a perception. It is the art of differentiation, creating Top of Mind Awareness (TOMA) and maintaining that position.

In a society that's information rich and time poor, people value feeling more than information. Branding is the "feeling" a potential visitor has about you. When someone mentions Disneyland, what is the perception - the feeling - that comes to mind? Your brand should evoke emotion or an image. When you hear the words Napa County and then Napa Valley, which brings an image to your mind? A picture of what it's like there.

### POINT #2 • Welcome to the age of specialization

Our purchasing choices have multiplied. Every year another 3,000 communities in North America are working to diversify into tourism. This has forced communities to specialize. Welcome the age of specialization - particularly in the tourism industry. It's the age of niche marketing.

The specialists have the biggest successes:

- The Limited: Upscale clothing for working women
- The Gap: Casual clothing for the young at heart
- Victoria's Secret: Sexy undergarments
- Foot Locker: Athletic shoes

Communities with strong brands:

- Branson, MO - The music theater capital of the world
- Las Vegas, NV - The adult entertainment playground
- Nashville, TN - The country music capital of the world
- Memphis, TN - Home of Elvis Presley and Graceland
- Orlando, FL - Kids & family (DisneyWorld)
- Williamsburg, VA - Colonial America
- Victoria, BC - The world's garden city

### POINT #3 • What do you have I can't get closer to home?

In order to be successful, you must be worth a special trip and that means being different or the best. What sets you apart from your competition? How are you different? Why should I travel to you, if I can enjoy the same things closer to home?

Branding is critical for every business, every community and every downtown.

### POINT #4 • Branding may include "repositioning"

Many communities need to establish a "positioning" or "repositioning" program. If perceptions of you are negative, you need to change the focus and often that starts with curb appeal - the visual impressions of the community or business. If visitors expect one thing and see something else, it changes their perceptions - repositioning you in their mind.



### POINT #5 • Jettison the generic

Don't be all things to all people. "We have it all" does not translate to sales. Be specific. No generalities. Don't let politics kill your branding efforts. Avoid the following words in your marketing efforts:

- Discover
- We have it all
- Best kept secret
- Outdoor recreation
- Historic downtown
- We have it all
- Visit (name of town)
- Explore
- Something for everyone
- The four season destination
- Center of it all
- So much to see and do
- Experience
- Gateway

There are 425 counties in the 11 Western U.S. states. Almost every one promotes "outdoor recreation," which can mean almost anything. And just about everyone can find recreation close to home. Three hundred and eighty of these communities promote outdoor recreation as the primary draw. How far would you travel for the generic outdoor recreation? You wouldn't. You travel for a specific type of recreation - something that caters to you. We don't go places where there's something for everyone. We go places where there's something for me. All of the words listed above are NOT a brand, nor are they a reason to visit.

Because communities are so generic in their marketing, is it any wonder that 97% of all community-based advertising is ineffective?

The more variations you attach to a brand, the more the customer loses focus. Gradually, the brand comes to mean nothing at all. The specialist, however, can focus on one thing, one message. This focus enables the community to put a sharp point on the marketing effort that quickly drives it into the mind.

### POINT #6 • Promote the primary lure

Always promote the primary lure, not the diversions. Diversions are things I can do closer to home, but are not what brings me to your town. However, I will do them while visiting you. Diversions include golf, shopping and

dining, visiting local museums, attending community events, recreational activities, visiting historic downtowns, etc.

### POINT #7 • Education is imperative

Educate locals on the differences between the lure (what you have that no one else has and makes you worth a special trip), the diversion (secondary activities once the visitor is there), the icon (the photo opportunity, but not the reason to go there), amenities (supporting infrastructure like parking, 24 hour visitor information, restrooms, etc.), and ambiance (scenic vistas, historic downtowns, beautification, etc.). Historic downtowns are not a draw, they are part of the ambiance. It's what's in the buildings that creates the draw.

Eventually, everyone needs to be a spokesperson for the brand. Support is imperative to maintaining a strong, successful brand.

### POINT #8 • The primary lure cannot succeed without diversions

The average overnight visitor is active 14 hours a day, yet spends just four to six hours with the primary lure. Visitors then will spend 8 to 10 hours a day with diversionary activities. 80% of all visitor spending takes place with diversions.

### POINT #9 • A brand must include certain parameters

Brand criteria:

- It must have wide appeal (but not be all things to all people)
- It must be specific (narrow your focus)
- It must be truly unique.
- It must promise something of value. It must be experiential, not just something to look at.
- It must be expandable

Do not leach off the popularity of others unless they are in an entirely different market.

### POINT #10 • Brand feasibility is what counts

To succeed you must promote businesses and attractions that support and



grow the brand. If culinary tourism is your primary lure, you must promote the dining experiences that deliver on the promise. Sorry Arby's, you're the diversion, not the lure.

This is why coming up with a successful brand is never a public process. Feasibility is what determines a successful brand, not sentiment, not memberships, not political clout, not trying to make everyone happy. This is a critical distinction that separates emotion from the fact that this is about revenues - importing cash into the community or business.

The feasibility of any brand includes the following:

- Is this something that the major and secondary markets can't get closer to home? That no one else in the market is already working on?
- Is the brand expandable? Does it have legs? Can you attach "brand extensions" to it? For instance, you may decide to become the mountain biking capital - can you add street biking? A velodrome? BMX courses? Cyclo-cross? Then can you add cross-participation sports like rock climbing?
- Is the brand something the community can buy into over time? Not many cities could easily buy into becoming the next Las Vegas, or Sin City. While the public does not decide on the brand, they are important to developing it and telling the world.
- How much money will it take to develop and "own" the brand? Where will the money come from? And how long will it take to see a return on investment?
- Is this brand something that will attract private-sector investment? When will they see a return on their investment?
- Will the brand extend your seasons? Can it be developed to a nine-month plus season?

### **POINT #11 • It's tough to maintain your position**

Never rest on your laurels. People are always gunning for number one. Wine has become the most oversaturated tourism branding effort in North America, yet Napa Valley still "owns" the Wine Capital of America." Yet, Napa

has to always work hard to maintain it's position as dozens of other "wine countries" have entered the fray.

### **POINT #12 • Branding requires a pioneer**

Every branding effort requires a tireless pioneer. Who is your pioneer? And who will work with the pioneer (or pioneers) to champion the cause? Pioneers are those that invest in the brand. 95% of the time the pioneers are from the private sector, not the public sector. (see next point)

### **POINT #13 • Branding is a bottom-up exercise**

Branding is very, very rarely a top-down effort. The business community must take the lead. The local government is there to assist, wherever possible.

### **POINT #14 • Politics is the killer of any branding effort**

Once you have the brand determined, THEN bring the public on board. It takes a village to develop the brand, but only a pioneer and champions to determine the brand.

### **POINT #15 • It doesn't have to be sexy**

A brand doesn't have to be sexy to be effective. Take the case of Bullhead City, Arizona. It can't compete with its neighbor, Laughlin, Nevada just across the Colorado River. What Bullhead City has, that Laughlin doesn't have - is a Wal-Mart. So, "For all your personal needs, head to Bullhead City, just across the bridge." When visitors head to Bullhead City for toothpaste or other personal items, those visitors see restaurants, antique shops, river tours, etc. Wal-Mart may not be sexy, but in this case, it's the primary lure.

### **POINT #16 • Start small. Narrow your focus.**

It is far better to be a big fish in a small pond (then increase the size of the pond), than to be a small fish in a big pond. You won't be noticed.

Narrow your focus. Then narrow it some more. Take the case of Kellogg, Idaho where visitors will find hundreds of miles of pristine biking trails. Unfortunately, there are thousands of places with hundreds of miles of



pristine biking trails. But there is no place in North America where you'll find the Route of the Hiawatha - a 15 mile trail that passes through ten tunnels and over seven high tressels, and is best known for the Taft Tunnel which burrows 1.66 mile under the Idaho/Montana state line. This trail has no competitors and is a national attraction drawing visitors from all over North America. While there, visitors shop, dine, visit historic Wallace, participate in other recreational activities, visit nearby Coeur d'Alene, and bike other trails. Narrow your focus, then narrow it some more.

**POINT #17 • Branding often requires a recruitment effort**

Recruit supporting businesses that can help grow the brand and cement your position so you own it. The Route of the Hiawatha could not succeed without supporting businesses - hotels, restaurants, bike rentals, tour operators, bike repair shops, transportation to and from the trail, etc.

**POINT #18 • Don't sell it until you can deliver**

Resist the urge to market the brand until you can deliver on the promise. Hawthorne, Nevada was so gung ho on their brand as "America's Patriotic Home" that the community rented and posted billboards along major interstates promoting the brand. The problem? The community had little to show for it. A brand must be obvious to everyone who lives there and visits. If it's an empty shell, people won't come back and they'll tell people there was nothing to do or see that supported the effort.

**POINT #19 • Just say no to focus groups**

NEVER use a focus group to decide on a brand. Ask your customers - they're better at telling it like it is.

**POINT #20 • Continuity is king**

A brand must have continuity. Every local organization should play into the brand in terms of identities, slogans, colors, general look of marketing materials, facade improvements, etc.

**POINT #21 • Start with a plan**

Every community should create a Community (or downtown) Branding,

Development & Marketing Action Plan. This is NOT a strategic plan, which offers general strategies, goals and objectives. This is a to do list that includes just about every local organization. Everyone plays a role in the branding process. Start with a plan that will help define the roles of each organization. This way people are pulling in the same direction. That makes it fun. Each of the key organizations should sit on a "Brand Development Committee." Each has their list and each time they meet the discussion revolves around "how are you doing on your list?" creating fun and some peer pressure to deliver.

Always decide on the brand direction using an outside facilitator. If you ask 20 people in your community (or downtown) what your brand should be, chances are you'll get 20 different answers. When you pick one, you just alienated 19 of your future stakeholders, who you need on board to promote and develop the brand.

Everyone will have an idea, and understandably, each will be somewhat self-serving. You must take the politics out of the branding effort. After all, this is about cash, not sentiment.

**POINT #22 • Yes, you can develop sub-brands**

Chevrolet doesn't run ads stating "Buy a Chevy. We have cars for everyone." Instead they market the Geo Metro to its specific audience, the Suburban to a different audience, and the Corvette to yet another niche audience.

**POINT #23 • These are NOT brands**

- Historic downtowns (brands are activity-based)
- Slogans and logos (they just reinforce and promote the brand)
- Geography (unless you're the Grand Canyon - totally unique)
- Gateway (something you pass through to go somewhere else)
- Unique (the most overused word in tourism that has come to mean nothing at all)

**POINT #24 • Steps to developing a brand**

1. Develop a small "brand development committee." This small group should include both public and private sector stakeholders who are bent on making



something happen for the community and won't let politics kill the effort. Typically keep this committee to seven (or so) "players."

2. This committee would act as a steering committee in hiring outside expertise to develop the Action Plan. Select your consulting firm using a Statement of Qualifications (SOQ) as opposed to a Request for Proposals (RFP) process. Hire the best, then negotiate the fees and scope of work. If you can't reach an agreement, go to number two on your list of finalists. Hire a team that understands what it takes to develop a community or downtown brand - and don't get hung up on the sex appeal of logos and slogans, which are merely a minor part of the branding effort, but are NOT the brand.

3. You will work with your Brand Development Consultant through the process - educating locals as to what branding is, requesting ideas and options from the public. Then the consultant team will take these ideas and will run them through the feasibility analysis, as described earlier. Once a brand emerges, the Action Plan will be developed. It should include:

- The overall brand and any sub-brands
- Product development that will grow and support the brand
- Roles of various local organizations
- Private investment roles and supporting businesses
- Funding of every recommendation
- Benchmarks & timelines
- Brand identities, sub-brand identities, graphic standards, brand style guide, wayfinding and gateway design, key marketing messages, slogans, etc.
- Public relations plan (brands are built through PR, not advertising)
- Community outreach planning

4. During this process the "brand development committee" may change to a new group or additional members that will be champions for the brand. For instance, if the brand revolves around team sports, the champions would be those that are professionals in the sports industry: coaches, sporting organizations, sports retailers and businesses, sports marketing organizations, etc. This brings credibility and private investment to the branding effort and

gives the brand a voice in the community. This group will be charged with promoting the brand locally, getting buy-in from the community, and oversee implementation of the action plan.

5. Locals should not make the final decision on the logo(s), slogans and key marketing messages. You will never reach a consensus using public input, which always results in a watered down, generic brand and messages. Instead, the "customers" are used to decide the outcome of this effort. For instance, Battle Creek, Michigan is beginning the work of becoming the "Competitive Sports Capital of the Midwest." They will start with competitive biking as the initial brand - (The Competitive Biking Capital of the Midwest). You have to "earn" a brand. In this case, logos, slogans and key marketing messages were designed, but the final four options were sent to the customers - competitive biking organizations, race organizers, sports marketing professionals, event planners, etc. - all people they want to attract to Battle Creek. They were sent the various options (no group meetings or focus groups - they were tested individually) and asked which would most appeal to them as a destination - and to their members, clients or customers. This is marketing, so why not ask the customers to make the final decision. This also takes the politics out of the process.

6. Once the brand has been set and a draft plan developed, the committee and the consulting team will need to "sell" it to local leaders (usually one on one), participating organizations, etc. Make sure that whoever you hire has some top-notch sales ability - they will be your initial voice in promoting the brand.

7. Let your local leaders, particularly elected leaders, take ownership of the brand. It's ok if it's their idea - ownership is not an issue, getting something done is. Whatever it takes to make it happen. There may end up being minor revisions to the draft plan as a result, but that may be necessary to get total buy-in to the final plan.

NOTE: Cities or counties are often the lead organization in getting the plan developed, but once it's been developed it's not up to the governmental



agency to implement it. They are the conduit in developing the plan, which will be handed over to the business community and other local organizations for implementation. The city, after that point, is there in a supporting role - particularly when it comes to infrastructure or publicly owned facilities that need to be developed or enhanced in order to capture a successful brand.

8. The Brand Champions will stay involved for years. Branding is a process, not a one-time event. It needs to be nurtured, promoted, and grown. Members may come and go, and all need to be active in the process - not just in an advisory role. Typically this committee would be independent of any organization, but sometimes may be a committee of the city (or county), or work under a destination marketing organization, downtown (Main Street), or Chamber of Commerce. The consulting firm would determine this as part of their process.

### **POINT #25 • Four rules to creating a great slogan**

A slogan is simply an exclamation point on your key message. It's not the brand, it just reinforces it. Would you go to Disneyland because their slogan is "The happiest place on earth"? No, you go there because of what Disneyland means to you as a destination. The slogan just reinforces your feelings: that it's a great place for families.

The following was adapted by an article written by Kim T. Gordon, author of *Bringing Home the Business*.

Finish the following phrase: "You're in good hands with..."

If you immediately recognized this motto as belonging to Allstate Insurance, then all the marketing muscle and millions of dollars the company has invested in the slogan are paying off by firmly establishing its brand name.

Now try to identify the company that uses this phrase: "It's everywhere you want to be."

Did you instantly think of Visa, or did you wonder for a second whether that

slogan might belong to MasterCard?

To win the name game in the marketing world, you must make sure your prospects and customers do more than remember hearing your slogan—they have to associate it with your community, not your competitor's. To make sure your slogan or tag line hits home, follow these four tips:

### **1. Evoke your key benefit**

Great slogans not only are built around a brand's core promise—they also establish an exclusive connection in customers' minds. You and your marketing staff or advertising agency must create a slogan that evokes your key benefits and reflects the unique experience your community (or business) delivers.

For example, back when Burger King introduced its "Have it your way" slogan in 1974, the company was battling the cookie-cutter image of assembly-line fast-food burger restaurants. It positioned itself as the chain where burgers were made to order and focused on diners' ability to customize their burgers by asking counter staff to "hold the pickle, hold the lettuce." Burger King's focus on that flexibility was directly reflected in this memorable slogan.

### **2. Test with prospects and customers**

Qualitative research is essential before putting your marketing resources squarely behind a newly developed slogan. It's important to speak to potential customers as well as existing ones to avoid skewing the outcome. If you only query your current customers, you may never figure out how to appeal to those who never considered your previous marketing messages very compelling. Phone surveys and customer focus groups can be used to test proposed slogans as well as uncover or verify information about the benefits your prospects and customers expect to realize when they use your product or service.

### **3. Include your community name**

Evidence suggests slogans fare better when it comes to customer recall if



they incorporate the company or product name. Wolf Group New York, an ad agency with such clients as Häagen-Dazs and Miracle-Gro, tested consumer recognition of 19 tag lines that were part of successful, long-running advertising campaigns backed by hundreds of millions of dollars. Each of the top-five brands in the survey included the product or advertiser's name, while none of the bottom 10 did. For example, Visa's slogan, "It's everywhere you want to be," was familiar to 70 percent of respondents, but only 15 percent could correctly identify who the advertiser was. On the other hand, the tag line "Like a good neighbor, State Farm is there," experienced practically universal recognition.

#### 4. Stick with it

Never adopt a new slogan as a quick fix or as part of a temporary campaign. Success requires committing to a slogan or tag line for several years—perhaps even decades—and incorporating it into all your marketing materials as a part of the company logo. If you want to protect your business's marketing investment in the new slogan, you should consider trademarking it. At the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office Web site, you can fill out a trademark application, search the trademark database and research general information about trademarks.

Whatever you do, just remember that a great slogan is like a partner in a happy marriage—it will share your company's name and be your marketing partner for many years to come. So consider your options carefully.

#### **POINT #26 • Notes about brand identities (your logo)**

Use ONE simple graphic. Don't try to be all things to all people. Pictures, instead of graphics, are too hard to identify as a "brand mark." The most overused community identities include mountains, water, trees and sun. Just about every community has these. So what makes you special?

Develop a Branding Style Guide so that you have continuity in all your marketing materials even from other local organizations. Everyone should adopt the brand and design standards. What would happen to Coca Cola is every bottling plant developed its own Coke cans, bottles, ads, etc? It would

be a dead company.

Your logo should look good in full color, two-colors, in black and white, on signs, banners, and when reduced to about 3/4" in the corner of an ad or on a business card.

The simpler the logo, the better it looks on "logo gear" - things you sell to promote the brand and have it promote itself. Also, can the logo be stitched on shirts and jackets?

The most memorable logos are the simplest logos. Do you know what Nike's logo looks like? The "swatch" is one of the world's most recognized brand marks. It's not, by the way, a picture of a tennis shoe.

#### **The final word**

It takes a village to create a successful brand. But it starts with just one person, one event, one business.

Your website must also reflect the brand in look and feel, and it should promote the key lures that will enhance the brand. Your website should start with "Pick Your Season" then "Pick Your Passion" - the activity the visitor is most interested in. This way your sub-brands (primary lures to niche groups) and diversions can be easily located within your website.

Remember that branding takes time. You can't build a brand overnight. Branding is like pushing a car (see the last page). It takes momentum.

LOCAL POLITICS IS THE KILLER OF THE TOURISM INDUSTRY. Visitors spend more money on diversions than the primary draw, which is often a "loss leader." Trying to please everyone is a recipe for an ineffective branding and marketing program.

Finally, implementation of nearly every rule outlined in the book "The 25 Immutable Rules of Successful Tourism" should take place AFTER the brand has been developed. Your wayfinding signage, gateways, visitor information



## Assessment Findings & Suggestions

kiosks, downtowns, business mix, critical mass, marketing materials, should all reflect the brand. Build the foundation first - and a strong one at that - and that will foster a successful branding effort.

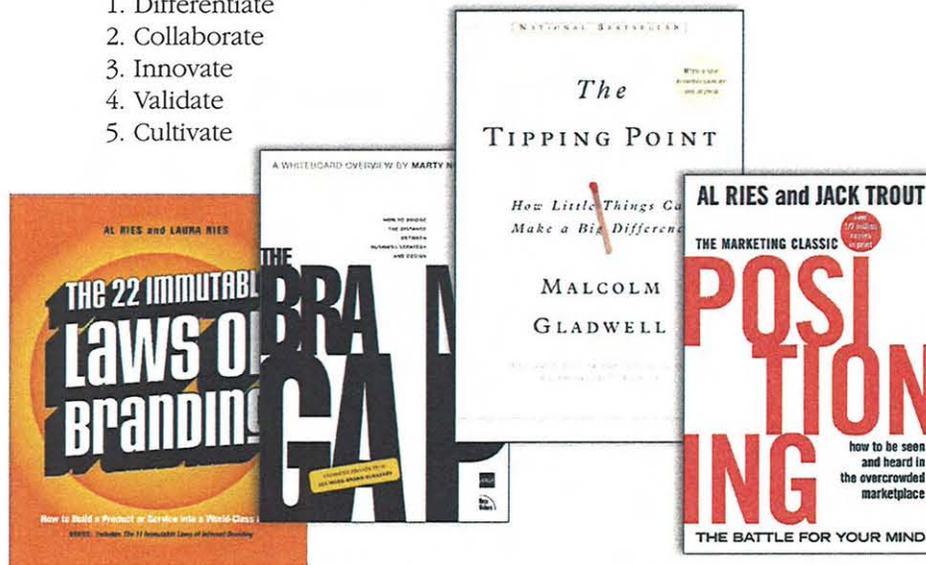
### POINT #27 • Suggested reading

While these books are geared more to products than communities, they will provide you with clear insights as to what it takes to develop a winning brand.

- The 22 Immutable Laws of Branding by Al Ries and Laura Ries
- The Brand Gap by Marty Neumeier
- The Tipping Point by Malcolm Gladwell
- Positioning: The Battle For Your Mind by Al Ries and Jack Trout

Perhaps Marty Neumeier summed it up best in The Brand Gap when he provided the five keys to a successful brand:

1. Differentiate
2. Collaborate
3. Innovate
4. Validate
5. Cultivate



The next section contains information and some rules on developing or improving your marketing website(s). Ninety-four percent of web-enabled households use the internet to plan their travel. Your website must be good enough to close the sale.

This is NOT a critique of local websites, but simply offers ideas and suggestions on how to take your internet marketing efforts to the next level. Happy reading.



### YOUR TOWN ONLINE - 25 Tips for Creating and Marketing an Effective Destination Website

The following are excerpts from the soon to be published book "Your Town Online." This is here to provide Pendleton with insights and suggestions as your internet marketing efforts grow. The web is now the top resource for all people planning to travel.

#### FORWARD

This section of your assessment is for all those people charged with promoting their towns to increase tourism spending, revitalize downtowns, or for economic development reasons.

When local earnings are spent outside the community, this is leakage. But when outside dollars come back into the community, that's economic development. A successful community imports more cash than it exports. As communities are forced to operate like businesses, they are finding that sales and promotion are critical aspects of a community's life.

Whether you are a Chamber of Commerce, an economic development office or destination marketing organization, downtown revitalization (Main Street) manager, or city/county staff charged with marketing your community, you already know how important a role the internet plays in marketing and branding your community.

While there are dozens, if not hundreds, of books on the subject, this book cuts to the chase and outlines what you can do to develop a website that's good enough to close the sale. You'll see dozens of examples, and key things to keep in mind as you develop a stronger, more effective website.

#### INTRODUCTION

"The new phone book's here! The new phone book's here!" yelled Navin Johnson, as he danced around the gas station grounds.

"Well, I wish I could get so excited about nothing," replied his boss Harry, the gas station owner.

"Nothing? Are you kidding?!" Navin shouted back. "Page 73, Johnson, Navin R! I'm somebody now! Millions of people look at this book every day! This is the kind of spontaneous publicity, your name in print, that makes people! I'm impressed! Things are going to start happening to me now!"

Navin, played by Steve Martin in the comedy *The Jerk* (1979), was finally somebody. His name was in print. He was listed in the phone book with hundreds of thousands of other somebodies. What are the chances that his name was spotted by the millions of people who use the phone book? Well, slim, but at least he was somebody.

How would this scene apply to the Internet? Consider the following:

- A new website goes on line an average of every three seconds. In fact, more than 64 million domain names have been registered in the U.S. alone – so far. Can you imagine a phone book with 64 million names listed in the white pages?
- The Internet is fourth to only electricity, the automobile, and television in its influence among daily American life. Not bad for a technology few even knew existed less than 20 years ago.
- Eighty-eight percent of all Americans say that the Internet plays a major role in their lives, surpassing television for the first time.
- Seventy-five percent of all Americans use the Internet regularly, and sixty-eight percent have immediate access to the web either at home or work.
- New Internet users are growing at the alarming rate of nearly ten percent – per month!
- Ninety-five percent of U.S. car buyers do research on-line.
- A whopping ninety-four percent of all Internet users plan their travel using the web.



## Assessment Findings & Suggestions

Website use for travel planning has grown quickly and varies little by age and income or gender. Surprisingly, older Americans are using the Web for travel planning as often as younger Americans. This means that the highest potential travelers (those older, retired consumers with the greatest disposable income) can be effectively reached via the Internet. According to one study by Stanford University, Internet users spend 5% of their online time researching travel sites.

So, how excited were you when your website “went live?” And now that you have a website, have you ever considered why you have it? What is your website’s purpose?

Many communities will state that the website is simply an information source for local residents, businesses, and community leaders. But the real power of the Internet lies in its power to promote.

It’s rare to find a community that isn’t looking for some form of economic growth: residential, business, industry, or tourism. The Internet is the most powerful and cost effective way to market your community.

There are two major challenges with a website: Is it good enough to close the sale? And can your customer even find it?

Consider this. If Navin Johnson had a book listing the 64 million registered domain names instead of phone numbers, his name would be listed on page number 12,066 of the 313,725 page book. With 28,000 new websites coming on line every day, the phone book would grow by 4,235 pages per month!

### Part I. Make your town shine – effective web-site design for destinations

#### TIP #1: TOURISM IS YOUR FRONT DOOR

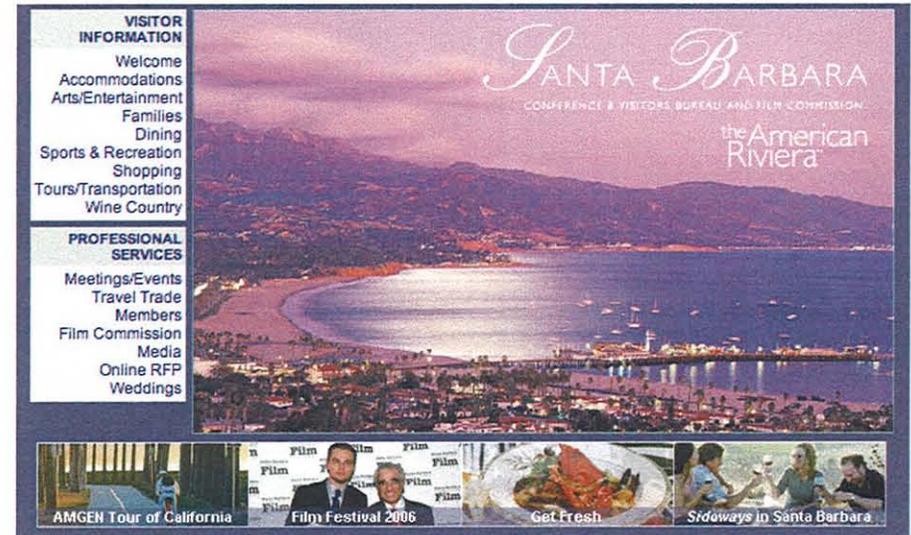
Tourism is the fastest growing industry in all fifty states, and nothing promotes a community like tourism. Because visitors see the quality of life – culture, history, activities, attractions, amenities, etc. – tourism is a primary attractor for non-tourism economic development efforts. Business people who

decide to relocate have always visited the new community first – as tourists. Your website should promote the community’s quality of life, and the best way to show that is by using great photography. Show off what your community has to offer visitors, residents, and businesses. Showing your community’s assets doesn’t just attract tourists. It also builds community pride, fosters a sense of cooperative spirit, and promotes economic development.

#### TIP #2: PULL YOUR CUSTOMERS INTO THE SITE

Your home page should be like your front door: attractive, clean, and inviting. To sell your community, use knock-out pictures and introductory text. Just like a novel or magazine article, the first line or paragraph must be powerful enough to grab the reader’s attention. And too much clutter distracts your visitor. Too many links and topics are confusing. Make it clean, easy to understand, and a pleasure to view.

Think of the splash page or home page as the front door to your community.



## Assessment Findings & Suggestions

Santa Barbara, California's Conference & Visitors Bureau's home/splash page, [www.santabarbaraca.com](http://www.santabarbaraca.com), is a beautiful example. The stunning slide show illustrates the beauty and activities in the area. Site visitors are mesmerized and watch the entire introduction, which only takes a few seconds. Sonoma County, California, has also done a good job with a splash page slide show at [www.sonomacounty.com](http://www.sonomacounty.com). The photos not only show the beauty of the county's vineyards, ocean, and rivers, they show people actively enjoying themselves.

The screenshot shows the Sonoma County Tourism Bureau website. The top left features the Sonoma County logo with the text "SONOMA COUNTY" and "AMERICA'S PREMIER WINE, SPA AND COASTAL DESTINATION". The main header area has a green banner with "SONOMA COUNTY TOURISM BUREAU" and a large image of cyclists on a vineyard. Below this is a navigation menu with links for "Hotels & Lodging", "Restaurants", "Activities", "Wineries", and "Spas". The main content area is titled "Sonoma Country Features..." and lists various amenities and activities. On the left, there is a sidebar with links for "About Sonoma County", "Sonoma County Map", "Travel Essentials", "Request Brochure", "Wine Country Weddings & Meetings", and "Special Packages & Discounts". The bottom of the page includes a footer with "Site Index | Email/Contact Us | Press".

Your home page needs to portray your town in the best possible light, making visitors want to continue looking through the website, and making people want to visit.

The screenshot shows the La Conner Washington website. The top left features the "LA CONNER WASHINGTON" logo. The main header area has a blue banner with "THE ELEMENTS FOR A PERFECT GETAWAY" and a large image of a bridge over water. Below this is a navigation menu with links for "HOME", "CONTACT CHAMBER", and "CONTACT TOWN". The main content area is titled "WELCOME" and features a "ROLL OVER PHOTO FOR DETAILS RAINBOW BRIDGE VIEW OF Mt. BAKER" section. Below this is an "UPCOMING CALENDAR OF EVENTS" section with a list of events. On the right, there are two logos: "CHAMBER OF COMMERCE" and "LA CONNER". The bottom of the page includes a footer with "© Copyright 2004 - Town of La Conner & La Conner Chamber of Commerce Photos by: Ellen Williams Site designed by: How it Works".

### TIP #3: CREATE A SINGLE FRONT DOOR

Many destination marketing websites have twenty, thirty, or forty (or more) links on the home page with no central focus, making the experience confusing right from the start. Seventy percent of web searches are met with frustration when the visitor has trouble finding the information they are looking for. Statistics show that visitors who can't easily find what they're looking for will move on after only twenty seconds.

Think about your website as if it were your home. You walk up to the front door, finding beautiful curb appeal (your splash page). That sets the tone for a good experience and shows visitors who you are.

Once through the front door, you can choose which direction you'd like to go. This can be as simple as two choices: the city section, or the chamber (or



visitor) section.

The small Washington State town of LaConner (see home page, previous page) did a great job bringing the city and chamber together, with their home page offering a choice between entering the Town site, and entering the Chamber site. More effective than multiple websites – and less expensive. Even through keywords they've created a partnership: LaConner, Washington: the town and visitor information. What a concept!

Options could include a series of links:

- The community
- Visitor information
- City hall info
- Chamber
- Doing business here
- Links and resources
- Website contents

If a visitor to the site is looking for visitor information, they will click on that link which will give them more options. If they're looking for the minutes to the last city council meeting, they'll click on the city hall info link.

Make it easy, logical, and progressive.

### TIP #4: KEEP IT SIMPLE AND IT WILL SELL

Navigating your website should be simple, answering the following questions: Where do I find the information I want? Where am I? Where can I go next? Where is the home page?

Your links should be the same on each page, offering visitors the opportunity to go back to the home page, or select a different option at any time. Including a "back button" is also a good idea. Don't force visitors to go through too many links to find the information they want – each additional link is an opportunity to lose the visitor.



Spend some time reviewing the Truckee, California website ([www.truckee.com](http://www.truckee.com)). Notice how easy it is to navigate? The links remain consistent no matter what page you're visiting, so it's easy to find additional information. Besides having sub-links for each category, there's also an introductory text. It's engaging, informative, and easy to use. Truckee, a town of 16,000, was our clear winner when picking a community in this region to visit. That's the power of a website that's good enough to close the sale.

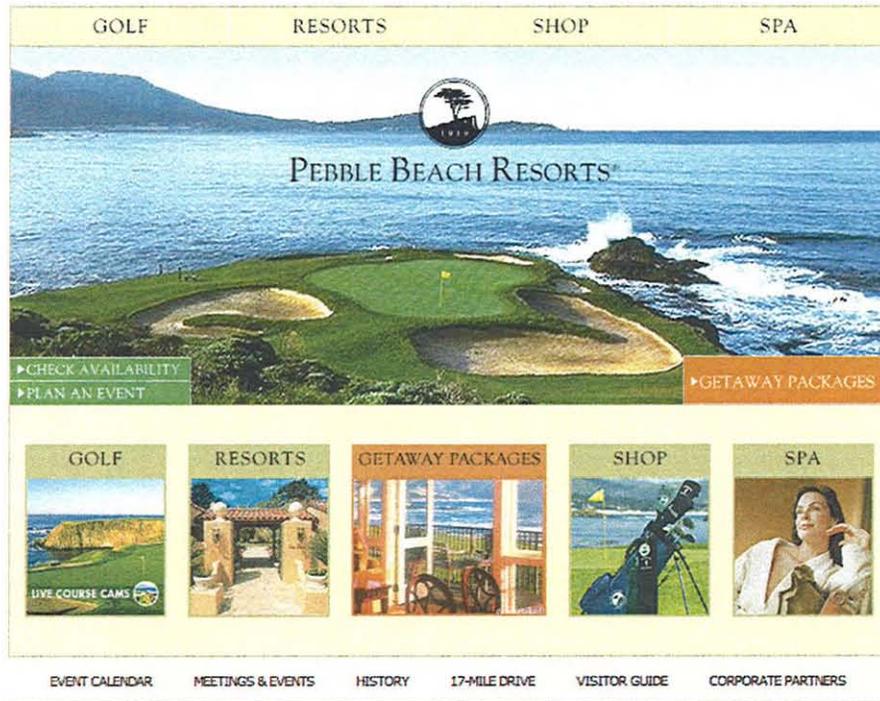
Another excellent website can be found at [www.pebblebeach.com](http://www.pebblebeach.com) (next page). It's easy to navigate, well written (using little text), uses world-class photography, endorsements and accolades to sell the experience, and makes it easy to plan an escape to Pebble Beach. The 17-Mile Drive page is an interactive map that gives specific information in an easy to follow format. Simplicity sells.

### TIP #5: PHOTOGRAPHY IS KING

Most communities wouldn't dream of producing a brochure with no photos to promote their town. They know very few visitors would even give that



## Assessment Findings & Suggestions



brochure a second look. So, why do so many communities skimp on photography on their websites?

Nothing sells like a good picture. Outstanding photography, photography that sells the experience, can do more to market your community than anything else. No matter how beautifully designed your website is, if there aren't good photos, it won't make the sale.

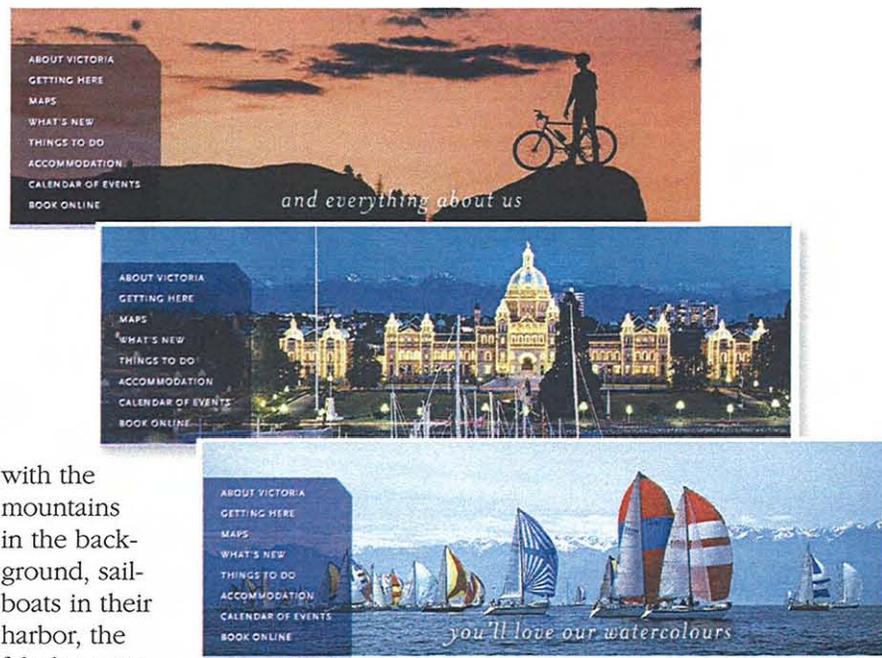
The photography needs to really sell the experience. Show people having a great time in your community: shopping, dining, riding bikes, picnicking, any activity a visitor would want to do in your town. People are looking for things to do, and you want your photos to get the potential visitor excited – to have them say, “Wow. I want to go there – that looks like fun!”

Potential visitors also want to know what your community looks like. If you have a great historic downtown shopping area, show them photos of people shopping there. If you have beautiful parks, show photos of people playing in those parks. If you have outstanding restaurants, post photos of those restaurants on your site. Give viewers a good image of your community. If you want people to spend the night with you, let them see what you look like first.

A good example of the use of outstanding photography can be found on Tourism Victoria's website, [www.tourismvictoria.com](http://www.tourismvictoria.com). The home page has changing photos, showing, in turn, kayakers, people walking on the beach



## Assessment Findings & Suggestions

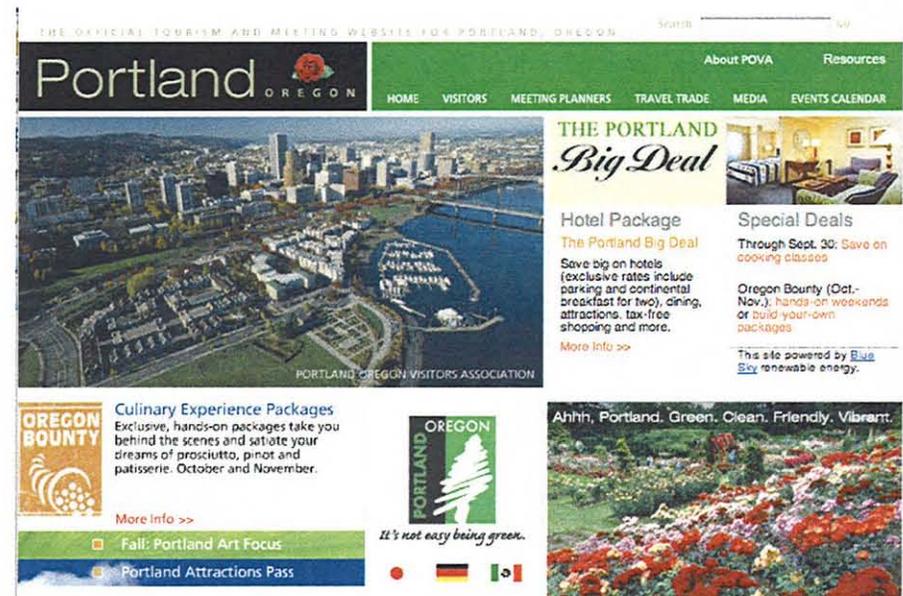


with the mountains in the background, sailboats in their harbor, the fabulous Vic-

toria skyline, the Empress hotel lit at night, and a bicycle rider. The photos are so stunning and show such a wide spread of the beauty and activities a visitor can find in Victoria, that they make the sale.

The Portland, Oregon Visitor Association's website, [www.pova.org](http://www.pova.org), shows changing photos of downtown Portland on its home page, giving viewers a good feel for the city. When viewers click on the "Visitor" link, they can see several photos of people enjoying different parts of the city: shopping downtown, strolling in a park, and enjoying the rose garden (Portland is known as the City of Roses.)

Let website viewers see what a great town you have; make them want to visit and have fun there too. Nothing can make the sale better than outstanding photography.



### TIP #6: DYNAMIC TEXT IS QUEEN

Journalists know the all-important rule that states if you can't engage readers by the end of the first paragraph, chances are you've already lost them.

You want to turn web-site visitors into customers. That means you have to get them engaged almost immediately. If outstanding photography is king in making the sale, dynamic text is queen. Know what you're trying to say and communicate it with friendly, informal, and jargon-free language.

Research shows that most website viewers don't read thoroughly – they scan the page. That means you need to use a special approach in writing for your website. Use clear, meaningful titles that give a good idea of the content of the page. Make your first sentence a summary of the content, and use headings to make major points. Bulleted items are a clean way to present information, particularly if they are "hot" links to other pages.





**CHATTANOOGA MARKET** SUNDAYS ON THE SOUTHSIDE

home  
calendar  
newsletter  
vendors  
agriculture  
peaches  
produce list  
Chattanooga  
directions  
contact us  
vendor info

### Welcome!

When you visit the Chattanooga Market, you will find still-warm bread from local bakeries, just picked produce that is thousands of miles fresher than most store-bought stuff (and tax free!), live music, artists and artisans selling things that they've made in and around Chattanooga, live chef demonstrations from some of our finest restaurants, farm fresh free range eggs, meats and more just waiting to entice you. Get lost in a Sunday filled with things that are good for your heart and soul, and support the local economy.

every Sunday features Chef Demos, local produce, live music, great food in the Market Cafe, and locally made arts and crafts!

The Chattanooga Market is a weekly open air market in downtown Chattanooga open each year from the last Sunday in April through the last Sunday before Christmas, 12 noon to 5pm.

And remember, big words are not necessarily better; long sentences are more difficult to understand; and passive voices are boring. That doesn't mean you should include jokes and puns, though. One man's humor is another man's insult, so be careful.

Your content should inform the reader, letting them know what benefits they'll enjoy by visiting your town. What's in it for them? Use the benefits to entice the reader to want to read more. Then, give your visitor detailed information about what you have to offer.

Don't break up one article into several pages. People scanning the article will usually stop at the end of the page, and you'll lose readers.

Finally, always spell check your writing. And go one step further – proofread. Spell check doesn't find every error. Have someone else proofread your work as well; it's easy to miss your own mistakes. Writing good content takes time and effort. Proofread, tighten, edit, and correct. You want your website

to convey exactly what you want to say, and you can do that with dynamic, brief, descriptive content that convinces your reader that, of all the places they can visit, they need to choose your town.

### TIP #7: DON'T PROVIDE LISTS, PROVIDE DETAILS

Far too many websites promote lists of things to see and do, places to shop, eat or spend the night. A list does nothing to entice a visit to the community or business. Nothing can close the sale like professional photography and text that gives the details.

Listing the Compass Rose, a gift shop in Olympia, Washington doesn't do much for you does it? There are literally thousands of gift shops out there, and just about every community has many of them. But if I told you that the owners of this truly unique shop travel the world picking up one-of-a-kind pieces of art and furnishings from African and Asian countries, you might have an interest. The Compass Rose, in fact, features some fascinating pieces of art hand carved out of ebony, and even stone. You'll find wooden giraffes nearly seven feet tall, a four-poster bed from India, and a selection of African masks that will enhance any home. Whether you're interested in this type of art or not, it certainly sounds more interesting than just a listing for The Compass Rose. Now imagine a whole collection of interesting stores and dining experiences complete with photography and descriptions. It doesn't take long before you've got a new customer on the way.

One note: Always promote the unusual and truly unique things you have to offer. If your customer can do the same thing closer to home, then pick something else as a key lure, and include photos and text that will make your customer want to go there.

The Rexburg, Idaho Chamber of Commerce has done an excellent job promoting specific activities.

If you go to [www.rexcc.com](http://www.rexcc.com) and click on things to see and do, then click on local attractions (we recommend just using the word "attractions,") it will list



## Assessment Findings & Suggestions

The screenshot shows the website for the Rexburg Idaho Chamber of Commerce. The header includes the logo and navigation links: Dance & Music Festival, Things To Do & See, Search, Sunbirds, Tourism, About Rexburg, and Events Calendar. The main content area is titled 'Local Attractions' and features two entries:

- TETON FLOOD MUSEUM**: This Museum located in the basement of the Tabernacle houses the Upper Snake River Valley Historical Society Museum aptly named the Teton Flood Museum because of its extensive collections of flood memorabilia including but not limited to films, photos, and other items related to the Teton Dam disaster. A 'Details' link is provided.
- REXBURG TABERNACLE**: The Tabernacle Building was purchased from the LDS Church after the Teton Dam collapsed and flooded the surrounding communities. This building sustained major damage. But after extensive renovation, the Teton Flood Museum opened the summer of 1982 in the basement of the Rexburg Tabernacle. Currently, it is maintained by the City of Rexburg. A 'Details' link is provided.

the various attractions, providing a teaser for each. These “teasers” could be better written to pull the visitor in, but provide the right idea. If an attraction grabs your attention, like Yellowstone Bear World, you can click on a link that takes provides you with more details, links, videos, etc.

Do NOT just link to the attractions' website unless you know it's good enough to close the sale, but offer it as an additional link, AFTER you've done what you can to close the sale for them.

Details, details, details. If visitors can't get specific details, chances are you'll lose the sale.

For instance, if you promote the fact that you have the best bass fishing in

the U.S. (that sets you apart from everyone else), then tell me about the details: Where is the best fishing spot? Is a license required? Are there fishing guides or boat rentals? Docks and fish cleaning facilities? Are there seasonal considerations? Bass tournaments? What about the weather? Provide maps, directions, distances (miles and kilometers), resources, contact information, best time of day for the biggest catches, etc.

### TIP #8: SELL THE EXPERIENCES, NOT GEOGRAPHY

Visitors are far more interested in things to see and do than in places: cities, counties, regions, or even states. Travelers are looking for activities, experiences, things to see and do. You must always provide a potential customer with reasons WHY they should visit. They are far more interested in Disneyland than in Anaheim. Going a step further, while we all know that Disneyland is “the happiest place on earth” (a good reason in itself to go there), the park still promotes the activities in all of its advertising: The Matterhorn,

The screenshot shows the Disneyland website. The header includes the logo and navigation links: PARKS, HOTELS, MORE MAGIC, MY VACATION, TICKETS & RESERVATIONS, and LOG IN. The main content area features a large image of a roller coaster ride with the text: "DISNEYLAND® PARK" and "Buy Tickets". Below the image, there is a section titled "DISNEYLAND® PARK" with the text: "From the charm of Main Street, U.S.A. to the whimsy of Mickey's Toontown, explore eight fantastic "lands" of nostalgia, color and delight. Let your imagination run free in a magic kingdom where life is a fairy tale and dreams really do come true." A "Buy Tickets" button is visible.



Splash Mountain, Pirates of the Caribbean, the Indiana Jones Adventure, or even meeting Mickey or Minnie. If you visit the Disneyland website (www.disneyland.com) you'll note that they let the visitor "choose and experience." A lot can be learned by looking at the best.

If you browse through the Disney site, or any site that does a great job of promoting experiences, you'll notice that the photography is professional, and shows people having a great time (the purpose of any experience). The photos make you want to go there. Does your site do the same thing? Every time you add an item to your site, regardless of whether it's an attraction, activity, lodging, dining, shopping, etc., ask yourself: do the photos and text I used make me want to go there? Will it make my customer want to go there?

We as human beings tend to be territorial. We are charged with marketing our community or area, so that's what we focus on: marketing the geography within our boundaries. But as visitors, we're not looking for geography. That's secondary to looking for activities. We are looking for things to see and do that cater to our specific interests.

This is perhaps the biggest mistake destination marketing organizations make. Instead of focusing on cities, counties, regions, and geographic areas, consider building your site using the words "Pick Your Season" followed by "Pick Your Passion."

This way you start with WHEN the guest would like to visit, followed by the activities available that time of year. If you pick the winter season in Door County, Wisconsin, the activities might include snowmobiling, snowshoeing, the areas dozen or so Christmas shops, and spa facilities and lodges. During each season, the experiences change.

Always sell the reason WHY someone should visit before you dig in with lodging, dining and diversions. All too often communities miss this step. Sell experiences, not geography, not your boundaries. People want to travel for the experience, so build the anticipation for a fun time, then tell your visitor why you are the best place to experience it.

Welcome to the "experience economy."

### TIP #9: BUILD THE BRAND

Branding is the art of differentiation – the community's unique image in the mind of its visitors. Much more than just logos and slogans, a community's brand is pervasive. It is a promise to visitors of what the community has to offer. The more distinctive the brand, the greater attraction it has; visitors like new, special experiences.

Branding requires continuity in all that you do: your product offerings, claim to fame, marketing, logo, slogan, and the look and feel of your marketing materials – particularly your website. A first glance at your website should tell visitors who you are and what sets you apart from everyone else.

The Napa Valley town of Calistoga has branded itself as a wellness center, and portrays that theme effectively on the chamber's website. Most successful community websites have that central focus, portraying their brand image:

- |                       |                                      |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------------|
| • Round Rock, TX      | Sports                               |
| • Wisconsin Dells, WI | Water parks                          |
| • Calistoga, CA       | Spas and wellness                    |
| • Pebble Beach, CA    | Spas and golf - an adult destination |
| • Truckee, CA         | Recreation                           |
| • Charleston, SC      | History                              |
| • Branson, MO         | Entertainment                        |

The branding focus doesn't mean that is all you have to offer, but it promotes the town's image, which should reflect its primary lure - what you have that the visitor can't get closer to home. To win the customer you must ALWAYS first promote what sets you apart.

Branson, Missouri, is home to 49 theaters, which are the primary draw to the community, and it hosts 7.5 million visitors annually. While the average visitor may attend two shows a day, they also spend more time shopping, dining, fishing, golfing, in spas, water parks, etc. What is their brand? Live





**CALISTOGA** Chamber of Commerce

cool wines  
hot springs  
warm welcome

Visitor Resources | Local Business List | Chamber Information | Community Resources

**Explore** the beautiful and diverse California wine country from charming Calistoga. At the top of the Napa Valley, centrally located between Napa and Sonoma counties, Calistoga is the historic hot springs resort destination of wine, water, and wellness. Visit wineries, take a balloon ride, hit the hiking or biking trails or just relax with a treatment in a spa. Unique shops, galleries and fine restaurants dot our historic downtown, which is easy strolling distance from many beautiful inns, hotels, and world-class spa resorts. Come see wine country as it was before freeways and fast food.

- > Plan an [upcoming trip](#)
- > Enjoy [discounts and promotions](#)
- > View a [list of businesses](#)
- > See a [list of retail shops](#)
- > View an [events calendar](#)
- > Learn about [our community](#)
- > See [area maps](#)
- > Request a [visitor's guide](#)

For help and information, call the Calistoga Chamber at (707) 942-6333

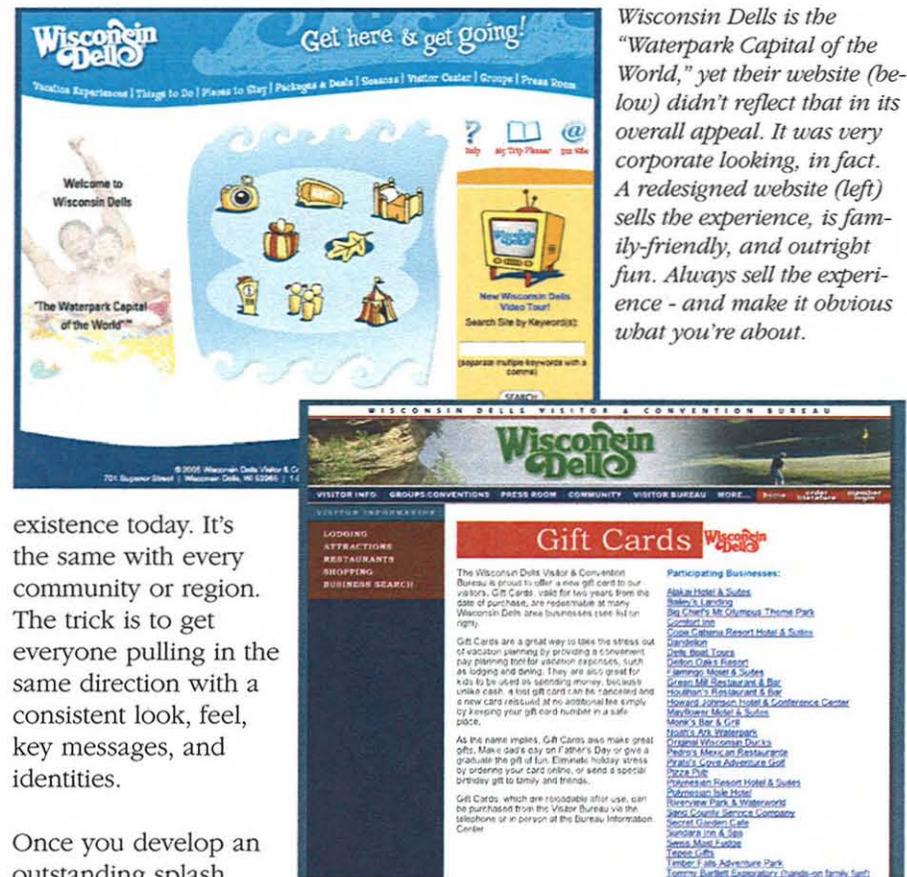
Lodging | Dining | Spas | Wineries | Shopping

entertainment. Branson's website reflects this brand.

The key is to promote who you are: why you are different and worth a special trip, and THEN the "other things" your visitors can do while in the area. Your brand should revolve around your primary lure. Don't try to be all things to all people.

### TIP #10: SPREAD THE BRAND AROUND

Building a strong brand requires a consistent message, a consistent look for the entire community. Can you imagine how Coca Cola would be perceived if every Coca Cola bottling plant produced its own Coke logo, own colors, and their own Coke commercials? The brand (and Coke) wouldn't be in



**Wisconsin Dells** Get here & get going!

The Official Experience | Things to Do | Places to Stay | Packages & Deals | Sources | Visitor Center | Groups | Press Room

Welcome to Wisconsin Dells

The Waterpark Capital of the World™

New Wisconsin Dells Video Tour!

Search Site by Keyword(s):

(Separate multiple keywords with a comma)

WISCONSIN DELLS VISITOR & CONVENTION BUREAU

**Wisconsin Dells**

VISITOR INFO | GROUPS/CONVENTIONS | PRESS ROOM | COMMUNITY | VISITOR BUREAU | MORE... Home | About Us | Contact Us

VISITOR INFORMATION

LODGING | ATTRACTIONS | RESTAURANTS | SHOPPING | BUSINESS SEARCH

**Gift Cards** Wisconsin Dells

The Wisconsin Dells Visitor & Convention Bureau is proud to offer a new gift card to our visitors. Gift Cards, valid for two years from the date of purchase, are redeemable at many Wisconsin Dells area businesses (see list on right).

Gift Cards are a great way to take the stress out of vacation planning by providing a convenient way planning for vacation expenses, such as lodging and dining. They are also great for kids to be used as spending money, business travel cash, a fun gift card can be purchased and a new card redeemed at no additional fee simply by keeping your gift card number in a safe place.

As the name implies, Gift Cards also make great gifts. Make dad's day on Father's Day or give a graduate the gift of fun. Eliminate holiday stress by ordering your card online, or send a social birthday gift to family and friends.

Gift Cards, which are redeemable after use, can be purchased from the Visitor Bureau via the telephone or in person at the Bureau Information Center.

Participating Businesses:

- Hakala Hotel & Suites
- Hotel & Lodging
- Big Chief's Mt. Olympus Theme Park
- Concordia
- Cross Catholic Resort Hotel & Suites
- Greenwood
- Delta Boat Tours
- Delton Oaks Resort
- Emerald Wood & Suites
- Green Mill Restaurant & Bar
- Hobson's Restaurant & Bar
- Howard Johnson Hotel & Conference Center
- Marriott Hotel & Suites
- Moore's Bar & Grill
- North's Inn Waterpark
- Orlando Wisconsin Ducks
- Pedro's Mexican Restaurant
- Prater's Cross Adventure Sport
- Delta Club
- Providence Resort Hotel & Suites
- Providence Lake Hotel
- Rockyview Park & Waterfront
- Rockyview Springs Company
- Secret Garden Cafe
- Sundance Inn & Spa
- Swiss Mont Lodge
- Woodlark
- Yonkers Park Adventure Park
- Tommy Bartlett Superstore (hand-on family fun)

existence today. It's the same with every community or region. The trick is to get everyone pulling in the same direction with a consistent look, feel, key messages, and identities.

Once you develop an outstanding splash page with the right logo and the layout and design promoting the ambiance and essence of the community, spread it around.

The city, chamber, convention and visitors bureau, and other local organizations should all use the same style or "look" on their front doors as well. This continuity helps build the brand, imprinting the brand image in the minds of visitors and residents.

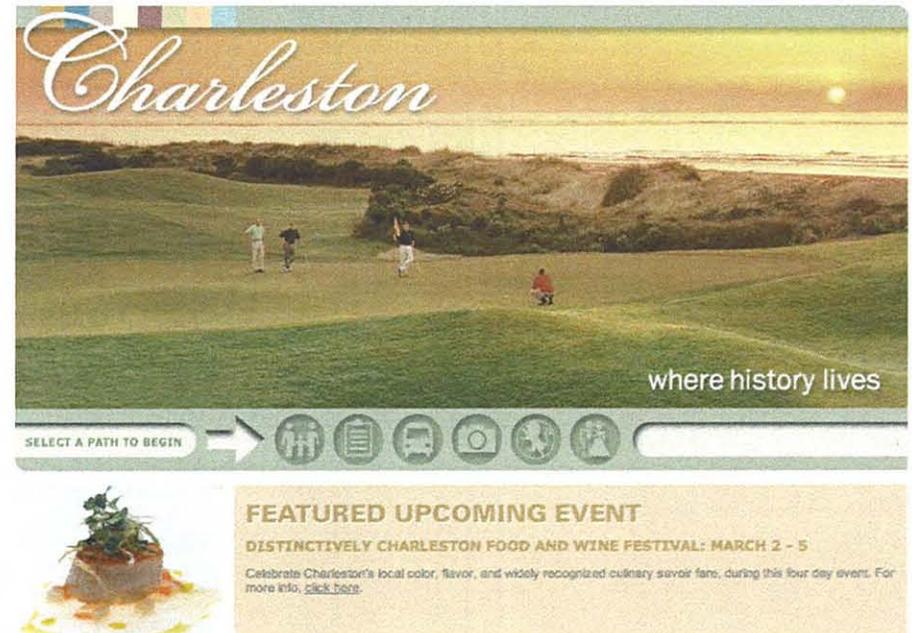
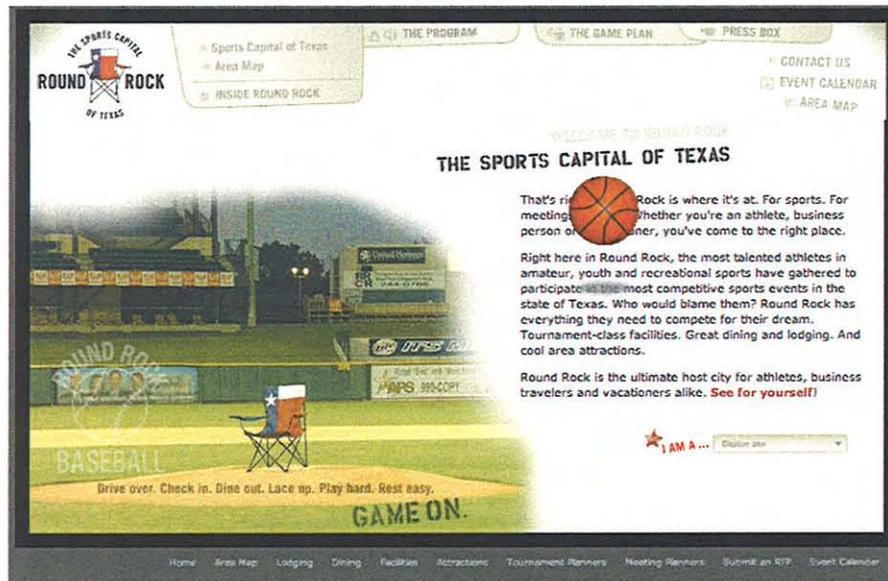


## Assessment Findings & Suggestions

Imagine the strength of the brand if the City of Santa Barbara and other local organizations used the “American Riviera” introduction as their splash page? This would create “top of mind awareness” that Santa Barbara is, in fact, The American Riviera.

Round Rock, Texas is working hard to become “The Sports Capital of Texas,” based on the community’s 500-acre sports park. If the city and other local organizations all introduced Round Rock as the sports capital on their websites, the brand could become even more powerful. “Welcome to the Sports Capital of Texas, and thanks for visiting the website of the Round Rock Garden Club.”

Charleston, South Carolina, promotes its outstanding history, and you can see that brand image of “history” carried through to various organizations’ websites in Charleston.



When a consistent message, look, brand image, is used throughout the community, the brand becomes more powerful. A good, powerful brand attracts visitors, businesses, and investment to the community.

### TIP #11: CREATE A CALL TO ACTION

If you’ve ever purchased a new car you know that the sales person will do everything he or she can to get you to buy right then and there. They know that if you leave, even if you say you’ll be back, the chances of you really coming back are less than 3%. It’s that way in every sales effort whether in a retail store, a car lot, or a website.

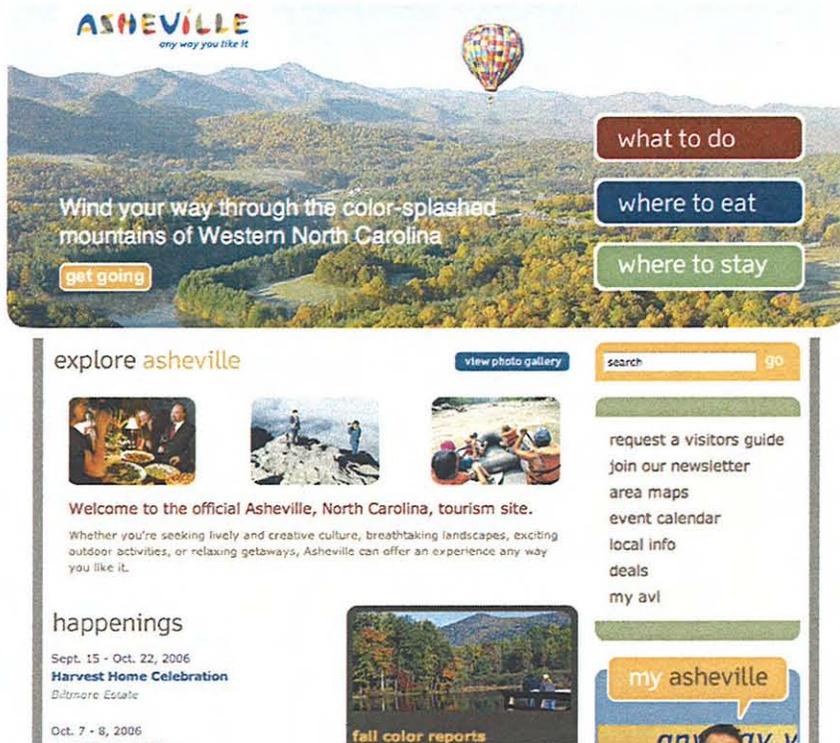
You need to create a Call to Action - something that will entice the website visitor to take action. Having a potential customer think, “Gee, I’ll have to go



## Assessment Findings & Suggestions

there sometime” is nice, but only 3% of the time will that translate to a real sale. Sweeten the pot by including a Special Deals section on your site - and promote prices, not percentages. Customers want bottom-line costs, not the usual hyperbole of “call for pricing” or “30% off.” Thirty percent off what? Give it to them straight.

Other calls to action can be a “Request for Information” form on the site that they fill out. While the brochure is available as a download, some customers would rather have the real thing. There’s certainly nothing wrong with that. After all, in a few days they will be reminded about you when it arrives in the mail in an envelope with the notation “Here’s the information you



requested.” In this case, your brochure needs to be good enough to close the sale. And it should have the same look and feel (overall design) as your website so that it creates a connection in the mind of the prospect.

Special events are another good call to action. If they only happen once a year, you create a “don’t miss it” reminder in the mind of the customer.

Another call to action would be for customers to sign up for an on-line newsletter (short and sweet) that caters to their interests. Once again, this creates Top of Mind Awareness, and in each you can include a call to action with special deals, packages, events, etc.

### TIP #12: MAKE IT EASY TO GET MORE INFO

Many organizations are so concerned about receiving spam that they refuse to include contact information on their websites, which, in essence, punishes the customer who is looking to spend time and money in the community.

As immediate and user-friendly websites are, some viewers will want to write to you or call you on the telephone. It’s amazing how many destination websites do not provide an address, phone number or even an e-mail address for inquiries. Be sure to include all three, with your toll-free number if you have one. A “Contact Us” page makes it easy for viewers to find that information if you don’t want to include it on your home page.

But not only must you provide contact information, you should also provide the following:

- An online request for information page with a list of publications and/or resources that can be sent them.
- Links to more detailed information and other resources.

The Metropolitan Tucson Convention & Visitors Bureau has created a well-designed and easy to navigate site, starting with a focused home page that includes a single link to the visitor section of the site, and then a “send me



## Assessment Findings & Suggestions

info" link. It includes options for different materials and doesn't ask too many questions. Too many questions to answer makes many visitors decide to not fill out the form at all.

Ninety four percent of people with internet access use it for travel planning. But even so, visitors will often have questions, need specific information, or want materials sent to them. Providing an easy way for visitors to contact you will ensure that visitors get all their questions answered, helping to make the sale.



**Tucson**  
Real. Natural. Arizona.

METROPOLITAN TUCSON CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU

Join in our holiday celebration with exciting events and [purchase the hats.](#)

Catch the action of Major League [Spring Training](#) in Tucson with the [Diamondbacks](#), [Rockies](#) and [White Sox](#).

United Airlines links Tucson and [San Francisco](#) with new non-stop service.

Get your kicks at the annual [Tucson Rodeo and Parade](#) February 16-26.

Double your fun with your [Tucson Attractions Passport](#). Over \$400 in savings on 240+ attractions.

Enjoy our world-famous 52nd Annual [Tucson Gem & Mineral Show](#) January 26 - February 12, 2006.

Visitor	Visitante de Habla Hispana	Meeting Planner	Travel Trade/Group Tour Planner	Media	Film Office
Discover all the wonderful things to do and see in Tucson. Book the perfect place to stay. Choose a fun day trip just for you. Find great Tucson values. And get handy real estate and newcomer information.	Venga y descubra las cosas excitantes que verá y hará en Tucson. Encuentre y reserve el lugar perfecto para hospedarse. Descubra nuestros lugares favoritos para ir de compras. Ahorre con los grandes descuentos en Tucson.	Tucson is perfect for your meeting or convention. Support your MFP and get free planning help. See our wide range of venues, affordable lodging and activities Tucson has to offer.	Plan exciting Southwest adventures for your clients. Get help from our exceptional tour & travel staff on itineraries, lodging, destination information, and site inspections.	Tucson is full of fascinating stories. Get the latest press releases, images, quick facts and personal help with your assignment.	Our great weather, diverse landscapes, and local pool of pros make Tucson a filmmaker's paradise. Browse our locations. Get production info, personal assistance and even set up a free scout.

Home | About Tucson | Image Gallery | Interactive Maps | Day Trips | Events | Site Map | Weather | Privacy Policy | Contact Us  
Visitante de Habla Hispana | Meeting Planner | Travel Trade/Group Tour Planner | Media | Film Office

### TIP #13: DOWNLOADS & ONLINE VIEWING SAVE MONEY, INCREASE SALES

Convenience is one of the most important factors of any marketing program. Your customers want - and expect - instant gratification. Since most people

do their travel planning during the evening hours in the comfort of home, they need the information readily available. Less than 5% of website visitors will write down a phone number (if they can find that) and then wait till the next day to call to get more information. ALL of your marketing materials should be available on-line in PDF format and formatted so that when downloaded, they can easily be printed on standard 8.5" x 11" paper.

If you've developed a tri-fold rack brochure, unfolded it would measure 12" wide by 9" tall. While this can be reduced to print on a standard sheet of paper, the text will likely be too small to read. Instead, break the brochure up into a series of 4" x 9" panels and the customer can print the panels, or the whole brochure as needed.

Don't forget to make available maps of your destination - its attractions, amenities, and its relationship to highways, airports and Amtrak. Travelers love maps, whether it's a link to a Mapquest.com version of your destination, or an elaborate schematic of your downtown, resort, trails, or wine country. These should be downloadable as well.

Meeting planners, event planners, editors, writers, and others are purging their file cabinets of press and conference planning kits and are now expecting that everything they need will be online.

By creating an easy-to-find Downloads section of your site, you will give your customers what they want: instant information, and you will save a substantial amount of money in printing, postage, envelopes, and time. Make it easy. Make it convenient. As an extra courtesy, you may want to identify the "byte" count of each download, or the download time on a standard 56k modem. Many Internet users are reluctant to begin downloading files unless they know what they are getting.

### TIP #14: START WITH THE SITE MAP (CONTENTS)

The last couple of pages of this book contains a sample "site map," or contents, for an effective tourism website. Whether you are a community or busi



## Assessment Findings & Suggestions

ness, you must make it easy to plan a visit. The easier you make it, the more likely you are to close the sale. Include your site map as a link for visitors to use – it helps to have this as a table of contents.

Every community and business is different, and so your site map may vary from the one provided below. But this can provide you with a starting point. Just remember, you must make your site friendly enough that Grandma can easily navigate through it. Do so through a few steps. Don't include more than seven choices on the home page - with all seven links in one location. Sites with links all over the page have no clear focus and are confusing.

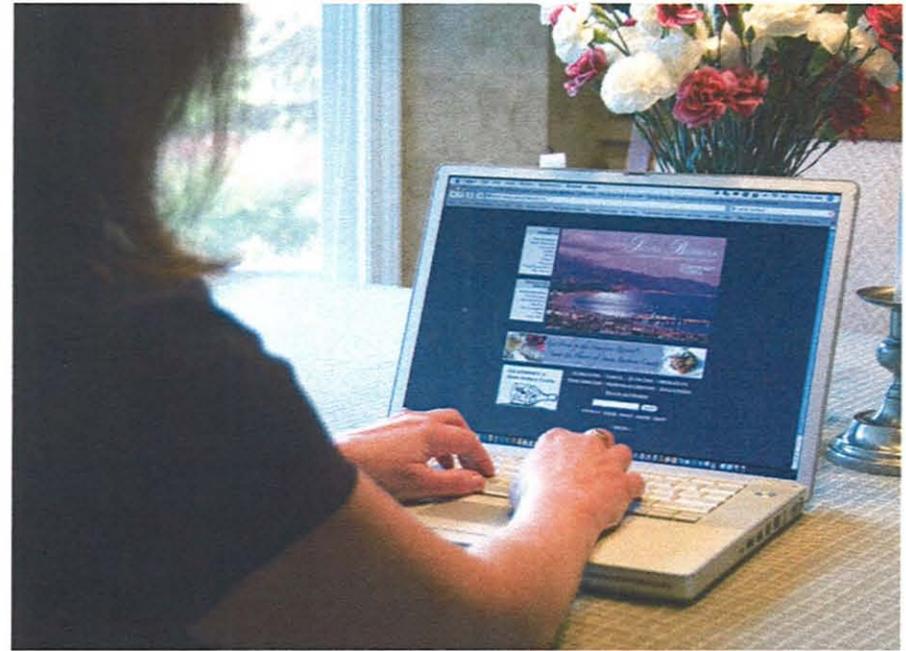
### TIP #15: DEVELOP PARTNERSHIPS

The more you have to offer collectively, the further people will travel and the longer they will stay. It's the Four Times Rule. People will travel to a destination if you have attractions, that appeal to them specifically, that will keep them occupied four times longer that it took them to get there. So, if a visitor travels two hours to reach you, do you have eight hours worth of activities that cater to them? (2 hours x 4 = 8).

You will be far more effective as one loud voice as opposed to a number of individual small voices. You still need to have a primary lure that sets you apart, but you must also have plenty of diversions or secondary activities - all of which translate to increased tourism spending.

Be sure to include information and links to nearby attractions, towns, amenities, that might appeal to visitors. Have reciprocal links. But don't just link to the other sites, or to partners. You need to make the sale on your site, then link the customer over for additional information. Some search engines use the number of links on a website as one of their criteria in determining the popularity of that site, and the more links, the higher the ranking of that site.

The small town of Rexburg, Idaho does an excellent job promoting the entire area (not just the town) as a top recreational area, but also does a great job of promoting the individual attractions. ([www.rexcc.com](http://www.rexcc.com))



### TIP #16: SIZE MATTERS

Laptop computer sales are quickly gaining on desktop systems, as are note-pad computers and other small-screen internet devices.

Make sure you develop your site to be approximately 600 pixels wide (8.5") by approximately 400 pixels tall (5.5"). Each "home page" of a new section of the site should adhere to this size. Follow-up pages should still remain the same width, but can be longer, only requiring the customer to scroll down. You NEVER want your customers to have to scroll side to side.

Developing a site that takes up a whole screen can leave lots of empty space, takes longer to load, and is often awkwardly configured.



Also make sure you have your site automatically centered on the screen. The goal is to make the site attractive, easy to view, navigate, and use.

### TIP #17: PUTTING TOGETHER THE TEAM

Website designers are a dime a dozen. Having the technical ability to write HTML does not equate to the talent to build an effective website. Just about everyone over the age of 12 with a computer can design-build a website. But having a website does absolutely nothing for you if it can't close the sale.

Consider building your website like you were building a home. It's highly unlikely that you'd have the architect actually design the house, build it, furnish it, and decorate it. When it comes to a tourism website, you will need the "architect" - the tourism professional that will develop the site map and how the site flows. Then you'll need the "finish carpenter" - the graphic designer that makes the site beautiful, easy to read, and sets the ambiance and character of the site. In a home the finish carpenter adds the nice touches - wainscoting, wood accents, tile and other elements that bring together the overall feel and ambiance of the home. Then you need the interior designer - the person who writes your headers and body copy. This part of the site also includes professional photography. The other player is the "engineer" - the professional that creates the "backbone" of the site: the infrastructure. This includes optimization of the site, compatibility, scripts and forms, databases for visitor registrations and opt-in marketing, downloadable files, JavaScript and Flash components (motion elements), etc.

While most website design firms say they have all these disciplines in-house, check other industry-related sites they've developed. Are they good enough to make you want to go there or buy the product?

In many cases, you may have the writing experience and the photography, and only need other elements.

Always hire the best, then negotiate the price - consider phasing the project, if you have to. If you can't come to terms you move onto the second best

- still very qualified and good. Your website is like making a movie: You have to have a good story (the experience), a good script (the dialogue that captivates you), a good cinematographer, good actors, and a strong supporting cast. Look at the development of your site in the same way. You're the executive producer.

### TIP #18: COMPARE YOURSELF TO YOUR COMPETITION

Make sure you stack up well against your competition. A potential visitor, undecided about where to stay, might check into all nearby towns. Or a family wanting to go on a kayaking adventure might look into any location that offers that activity. The point is that travelers these days, with access to so much information on the internet, can compare your town to any other town in the world online. You want to be sure you're still in the running.

After you identify your competitors, take the time to analyze their websites. Look at their layouts, their use of photography and text, and the features they present. How friendly are their websites? Are they attractive and compelling? Do they provide enough information? Do they offer special deals? And do they invite the viewer to subscribe to an email newsletter? Compare your features with theirs, and make sure you haven't forgotten something your competition is promoting.

If you are looking to relocate or vacation in one of the towns in California's Gold Country, chances are you'll start by doing some web research. You'll find the towns of Truckee, Angel's Camp, Nevada City, San Andreas, Copperopolis. Where would you go? Looking at their websites, comparing them, most people are attracted to Truckee, because their website is so compelling. The outstanding photography, ease of navigation, and text that sets the tone for a great experience makes Truckee the first choice. Comparing the different town's websites is a great exercise in seeing what makes a good site work.

Keep up to date with your competition - what they're offering, and how



## Assessment Findings & Suggestions

they present themselves. You'll be able to maintain your competitive edge by knowing how you stack up against the competition.

### Part II. Make your town stand out in the crowd – Marketing your website

#### TIP #19: MAKE YOUR URL MEMORABLE

Your URL is your internet address, and it should be both relevant and easy to remember. A shorter URL is usually better than a very long one; on the other hand, if it is too abbreviated, it won't make sense and might be difficult to remember. Keep it as simple as you can, while still making sense.

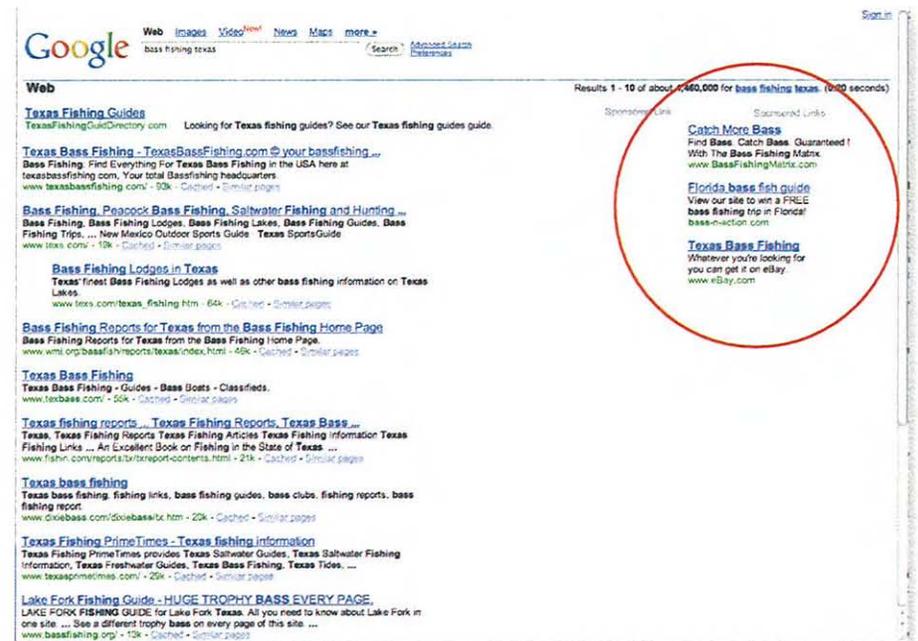
You can create additional URLs as part of specific marketing efforts, and have them link directly to your website. For example, to encourage visitors to Yosemite National Park during the winter, they began an ad campaign: "Yosemite This Winter," highlighting the winter sports and beauty to be experienced in the park. As part of the campaign, they purchased the URL [www.yosemite-thiswinter.com](http://www.yosemite-thiswinter.com), which linked directly to the winter in Yosemite landing page on the website.

Use memorable URLs as one more tool in your marketing efforts, and you'll see results with more hits to your website, and more visitors to your town.

#### TIP #20: PURCHASE YOUR WAY TO THE TOP

If bass fishing is the number one draw to your community, searching those words on Google (the most popular search engine), will yield 1,490,000 results. Since 70% of all web users don't look past the first page of search results, and 82% don't look beyond the first two pages, your site isn't going to be an effective marketing tool if it's listed on page 994.

Now you know why Google and Yahoo!, both with free search services, sell keyword listings. You bid for the keywords, with the highest bidder taking top honors on the first page of results, under "sponsor matches." Keyword bidding is referred to as "pay per click" – a powerful and cost-effective way



to market whatever you're selling.

Google's keyword program can be found at [www.adwords.com](http://www.adwords.com). Yahoo!'s program, which also covers Alta Vista, AOL, and other search engines, can be found at [www.overture.com](http://www.overture.com). Google and Yahoo! command more than 60% of all search requests.

A company will pay a one-time charge for each click, costing as little as 10¢, and on up to more than \$1, depending on how much other companies or communities bid for the keyword. That's a lot cheaper than the cost of a brochure, a stamp, and an envelope, plus the potential customer gets immediate information – something we expect in the Internet age. You can easily monitor which keywords are most effective or not used at all. You can make changes anytime, and you control the cost by setting limits. You even get to



## Assessment Findings & Suggestions

write the “teaser text” under your listing, whereas in normal search engines, text from the first page is simply displayed – not always the text that will pull customers to your site.

After the customer gets to your site, you want to be sure the site is good enough to close the sale.

### TIP #21: TAP INTO WEBSITE TOOLS

While purchasing key words is important, over time you hope to have your site listed at no charge AND on the first page of results. One of the best tools around for Search Engine Optimization (SEO) is NetMechanic’s Search Engine Power Pack. For \$99 a year, this is a major bargain. It can assist you in optimizing your site by analyzing each page for problems, compatibility, and will let you know how to properly emphasize keywords using Power Pack resources such as the Keyword Popularity Tool. ([www.netmechanic.com](http://www.netmechanic.com))

### TIP #22: LEVERAGE THE VALUE OF META-TAGS

When consumers search the internet using key words or phrases, some search engines use a special section of computer HTML language in websites called meta-tags to find the appropriate sites. Some search engines give the meta-tags more importance than the actual content of the page when searching. Many engines use a combination of techniques including meta-tags to find the websites they are looking for.

There are two main types of meta-tags recognized by search engines: “description” and “keywords.” These tags need to be placed in the “head” section of your HTML document. Several engines look for agreement between the “description”, “keyword,” “title” and “body text.” Using the same keywords in each field will help the search engine locate your site.

If you open up a website in Internet Explorer, for instance, you can go to a page, then from the menu go to View>Source. You’ll see the HTML that was used to build the page, including the meta-tags.



Drive traffic to your site and keep it there with **three simple steps.**

#### 1 Improve Your Site

Tools Make Web Site Maintenance Easy  
**Fix HTML Code Errors.**  
[Details](#) | [Buy It](#) | [Try It](#)

**HTML Toolbox** provides affordable web site maintenance. Checks for [broken links](#), HTML code errors, load time, spelling, browser compatibility and more.

**NEW!** For **advanced users**, check out our new Gold and Platinum offerings! With security, compliance and accessibility features needed to run a world class web site!

**Find Browser Display Problems.**  
[Details](#) | [Buy It](#)

See how your Web site looks in all major browsers with [Browser Photo](#).

Now updated with support for the latest browsers including Firefox and Opera! Click [here](#) for more details.

**Want Fast Loading Pages?**

Improve site load time with [GIFBot](#) our [FREE graphics optimization tool](#). Reduces file size, not image dimensions. **Free Tool!**

#### 2 Monitor Your Server

Catch Site Outages Quickly  
**Affordable Site Monitoring.**  
[Details](#) | [Buy It](#) | [Try It](#)

Maximize your site uptime with 24/7 [server monitoring](#) with [Server Check Pro](#).

**Don't lose business!** We notify you within 15 minutes if your site is down.

#### 3 Promote Your Site

Web Site Promotion Tools  
**Search Engine Optimization.**  
[Details](#) | [Buy It](#) | [Try It](#)

**Improve search engine ranking** with **Search Engine Power Pack**. Includes five search engine optimization tools that will drive qualified traffic to your site.

**Search Engine Submission.**  
[Details](#) | [Buy It](#) | [Try It](#)

**Submit your site** to the search engines with [Search Engine Starter](#).

#### Search Engine Optimization Tips

We also offer [Web site promotion](#) articles to improve search engine ranking through [search engine optimization](#).

#### Webmaster Tips

**Newsletter and Articles**  
**Webmaster Resource Center.**

Get HTML code help and Web site promotion tips in our [Webmaster Tips Newsletter](#). Listed by [subject](#) or [date](#).

Five years of articles on HTML code, web design, and [search engine optimization](#).



Want To Build Your Link Popularity?

Learn how to run a [link popularity](#) campaign to boost your search engine ranking.

Do Your Keywords Bring Traffic To Your Site?

Article on [keyword selection](#) helps you develop a dynamite keyword strategy that will bring qualified visitors to your site.

Show Off Your Site Excellence

This Site is a **NetMechanic® Star Performer!**

Boost your visitors confidence. Display a [Star Performer](#) award on your site.



Wisconsin Dells, the Waterpark Capital of the World, has done a good job with the use of meta-tags, using waterparks, resorts, attractions, hotels, motels, campgrounds, restaurants, festivals, dells, family, and more, to help search engines locate their site when potential visitors are searching for any

of those keywords.

When you develop, or redevelop your site, it can take up to six months for search engines to find and list your keywords, or meta-tags. Smart communities will use both meta-tags and pay-per-click programs. Once your site appears on the first page of search results as a result of your good use of meta-tags and content, you can drop the pay-per-click listing of those particular search words.

### TIP #23: CREATE LINK EXCHANGES

Link exchanges can boost your listing positions on major search engines, and create marketing partnerships. Throughout your site you should provide links to other sites - but don't rely on those sites to close the sale. That's for you to do. The other sites will just provide additional information about the experiences you're selling. Make sure you "exchange" links: "If you link to me, I'll link to you." Reciprocal links are a terrific way to increase the visibility of your site at little, if any, cost. Some search engines will boost your standing in the search pages based on the number of other websites that link to your website.

NOTE: Make sure you check the links on your site once a month. There's nothing more aggravating than clicking on old and/or broken links. Visitors don't have much patience for this inattention to detail.

### TIP #24: PERMISSION MARKETING - CREATING TOMA

There is no better way to create "Top of Mind Awareness" or TOMA than through "permission marketing" through periodic newsletters or notes fitting a specific category, such as "special deals" or "special events."

Include a page on your website for visitors to "sign up." Offer specific categories or topics that might be of interest to visitors to your area, such as "special weekend getaways," or "family activities."

Once a month or so, write and send out the newsletter. Keep it brief. Never use more than two paragraphs, then add links so a viewer can get more information. Be sure the information you send is newsworthy - not just advertising. You want the reader to feel that your newsletter has value.

By getting the quick and easy update every month or so, the reader is always reminded you exist. So when it comes time for a getaway, what's the first destination to come to mind? Hopefully yours.

Make it easy for subscribers to opt out at any time. Providing this option makes it easier for visitors to decide to sign up. And don't ask them too many questions about themselves on the sign-up page. That discourages readers. It's more important to get the newsletter out to as many readers as possible than to get detailed demographic information on only a few.

The island of Bonaire, in the Caribbean, does a great job of this. Every two weeks, the Bonaire Tourism Board sends out its "Quick 'n Easy Tourism Updates." Quick and easy are the operative words.

E-marketing programs are one of the most effective sales tools in the U.S. They create "top of mind awareness," bringing visitors back to your website - and your community - time and again.

### Part III. INVEST WISELY - The Importance of Your Town Online

Too many communities think nothing of spending \$20,000 or more on a brochure, while they spend \$5,000 on a website. 94% of all potential visitors (especially those with money to spend) will use the internet, while less than 5% will call or stop by a visitor information center. So how should you spend your money? Spending \$20,000 for a website good enough to close the sale is a very good investment. Spending another \$10,000 a year to keep it fresh, updated, and changing (to bring customers back), is well worth the cost. Investing in an e-marketing program, keeping the newsletters timely and relevant, can have a profound effect on your visibility and tourism sales.



### TIP #25: YOUR WEBSITE IS FOR YOUR CUSTOMER

Don't make the mistake of building your website for you, or the city council, or anyone else's vanity. The only purpose of your website is to meet the needs of your potential customers. Don't do anything that gets in the way of the sale, like making visitors sit through an animated presentation when they are trying to get to another page. Make sure your website works on a variety of operating systems (Windows, Mac OS, Linex.). Make the home page representative of what your unique feature is. The viewer should be able to tell what your website is about in less than 5 seconds. And as important as the mechanics are to the web designer, the bottom line is, "Does the website increase visitor traffic to your destination?" Evaluate this regularly, and consider changing your site if it is not producing.

### CONCLUSION

As for Navin Johnson, our enthusiastic "somebody", American Time News Magazine, in an interview, turned its probing eye on Navin Johnson who went on to fame and fortune after inventing Opti-grab eye-glasses. The little glasses handle sold ten million units in a few short months. "Mr. Johnson," Times News noted, "you've become a millionaire overnight. Who are you?"

Unfortunately, the internet hadn't been invented in 1979. Otherwise, no one would have needed to ask who Navin Johnson was.

### A SAMPLE SITE MAP

The following is a sample site-map or "contents" for an effective community-oriented website. This site map is simply a sample, but may give you a starting point if you're hoping to redevelop your site into a powerful marketing machine. Make it easy to navigate, just like walking into a home, starting at the front door.

### INTRO PAGE

- Welcome text
- Flash slide show (four or five photos)
- Skip intro button
- "Pick Your Season"

### HOME

- "Pick Your Passion" - (activities by season)
- Link to site search page
- Link to contacts (site map)
- Link to contact info page
- Primary buttons to categories below & next pages (in BOLD CAPS)

### VISITING (intro text)

- Primary Attractions (intro)
  - Historical
  - Cultural
  - Urban
  - Entertainment
  - Environmental
  - Recreational
  - Activity vendors
- Day Trips & Other Attractions (intro)
  - Within an hour's drive
  - Local diversions (secondary activities)
  - Quaint escapes
- Events (intro)
  - Major events (visitor-oriented events - not local events)
  - Events by month
- Quick Facts (intro)
  - Legends & claim to fame
  - Elevation & geography
  - Population, demographics
  - Did you know...
- Photo Gallery (intro)
  - Send a postcard
  - Photos by attractions category w/descriptions



Photographer credits/links  
Getting Here - Maps & Directions (intro)  
National  
Region (multi-state)  
State map  
Region/area map  
Distances chart (miles, k/m)

Weather & Seasons (intro)  
Typical weather patterns  
Current weather & forecast (link from weather site)  
Best activities by season

Visitor Services - Lodging, Dining & Shopping (intro)  
Lodging (sort by location, type, price)  
Dining (sort by type, style, location - featured restaurants)  
Shopping (sort by type, location - featured retailers)  
Services (sort by location, type of service)

Transportation (intro)  
Driving conditions  
Travel by RV  
Travel by boat  
Airports & services  
Tours (individual & groups)  
Rentals, other

Group Information (Intro)  
Venues: outdoor  
Venues: indoor  
Reunions and personal gatherings  
Conferences, meetings & trade shows  
Tours, group services  
Sporting events, venues

Trip Planner (Intro)  
Suggested itineraries  
Resources

Travel Links (Intro)  
State tourism info

Local chamber offices  
AAA, travel clubs  
Services

LIVING (Intro)  
Community info  
Community links, events  
Real estate  
Doing business

HISTORY (Intro)  
Pioneer/Native Americans  
Modern times  
Historical attractions (link to attractions)  
Historical resources

SPECIAL DEALS (Intro)  
Packages  
Seasonal discounts

DOWNLOADS (Intro)  
Activities Guide  
Meeting Planners Guide  
Video clips

RESOURCES (Intro)  
Press room  
Press releases (sort by topic)  
Backgrounder  
Events  
Photo library (thumbnail with contact info)  
Press contacts, resources  
Press downloads  
Articles about the area  
State government offices, links

SITE FOOTER  
Copyright info  
About the site link (browsers, webmaster info)





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