

Moving Heritage Tourism Forward in Pennsylvania

Prepared for:

***The Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and
Natural Resources***

***The Pennsylvania Department of Community and
Economic Development***

The Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission

The Center for Rural Pennsylvania

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This report was prepared for the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR), the Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED), the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission (PHMC), and the Center for Rural Pennsylvania.

These state agencies cosponsored a statewide summit and four regional workshops on heritage tourism during the Spring of 2000. Their intent was to provide a forum for obtaining, from a cross section of individuals and organizations, the opinions, concerns, and ideas about the state of heritage tourism within the Commonwealth. Specific topics for discussion included: Authenticity, Interpretation, and Education; Heritage Development and Infrastructure; Preservation and Conservation; and Marketing and Infrastructure.

This report presents the comments and consensus of the more than 200 attendees who are involved in the daily efforts of developing, interpreting, and marketing Pennsylvania's rich heritage and culture. The sponsors thank the people who contributed to this effort and hope we have adequately captured and presented their views.

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INTRODUCTION

Pennsylvania has been a national leader in heritage tourism development for the past decade, launching a number of state, regional and local programs that have been replicated around the country. But those responsible for Pennsylvania's

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heritage tourism successes are concerned that Pennsylvania will not be able to sustain this leadership position and take advantage of the growing interest in heritage travel, unless new energy and resources are directed toward heritage tourism development in the state.

To respond to this concern, on May 3, 2000, the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR), the Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED), the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission (PHMC), and the Center for Rural Pennsylvania convened a statewide Heritage Tourism Summit in Monroeville, Pennsylvania. The purpose of the summit was to determine the status of heritage tourism in Pennsylvania, and generate ideas about how to take heritage tourism to the next level.

More than a 100 people participated in the May summit, which was followed by a series of regional workshops in Titusville, Pottsville, Bellefonte and Towanda, in June 2000. Participants at these events included representatives of state designated heritage parks, historical societies, revitalization corporations, museums, preservation organizations, state agencies, state legislative offices, and local governments, as well as heritage site and business owners, travel writers, and other interested individuals.

At each of the events, there were work sessions that focused on preservation and conservation; authenticity, interpretation and education; heritage development and infrastructure; and heritage tourism marketing. In discussing these topics, participants were asked to respond to a number of key questions:

- what is the status of heritage tourism in Pennsylvania today?
- what successes can we build on?
- where are we falling short? and
- what do we need to do to retain our leadership position and capitalize on heritage tourism opportunities in the future?

This report represents a summary of the ideas and recommendations that emerged from the summit and the workshops. It is intended to serve as a starting point for the next phase of heritage tourism development activity in Pennsylvania.

TAKING STOCK OF WHERE WE ARE

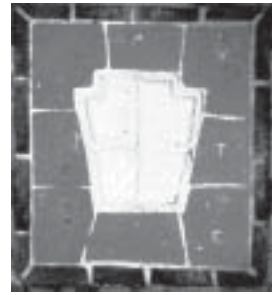
What is heritage tourism and why is it important for Pennsylvania?

A working definition

Participants at the Heritage Tourism Summit and regional workshops emphasized the need for a common definition of heritage tourism. In 1999, DCNR, in partnership with DCED, PHMC, Preservation Pennsylvania, and the Federation of Museums and Historical Organizations, commissioned a comprehensive study of heritage tourism in Pennsylvania. The following definition of heritage tourism was used in developing a visitor survey for the study:

Heritage tourism is a leisure trip with the primary purpose of visiting historic, cultural, natural, recreational and scenic attractions to learn more about the past in an enjoyable way.

When the visitors surveyed were asked to identify the heritage attractions that drew them to Pennsylvania, they most often mentioned the Gettysburg and Valley Forge battlefields, Philadelphia's Independence Hall and Liberty Bell, and Amish Country in Lancaster County. They also mentioned, historic



districts and towns, cultural and history museums, parks, heritage walking and driving tours, excursion railroads, and industrial heritage sites as attractive heritage travel destinations.

This working definition and set of examples can serve as a starting point for defining heritage tourism. The definition can be refined further, as needed, as part of a renewed effort to build heritage tourism in Pennsylvania.

Pennsylvania's superior product

Pennsylvania has one of the richest collections of heritage attractions in the country. From archaeological sites that give insight into Native American life before the Colonial settlers arrived, to sites that can teach about Pennsylvania's role in the founding of this country, in the conduct of the Civil War - including the Underground Railroad, and in the development of our nation's economy, Pennsylvania offers visitors an extraordinary range of heritage sites. Its most famous sites, like Independence Hall and the battlefield at Gettysburg, are complemented by a host of historic towns and villages, heritage corridors, recreational areas, museums, festivals and other cultural events.

The beauty of Pennsylvania's landscapes, rivers, trails, and scenic byways add to the quality of the visitor experience. In the 1999 survey, over 50% of those who had traveled to a heritage site said they had visited an outdoor recreation site as well, demonstrating the strong connection between heritage and outdoor recreational travel. In responding to the survey the words heritage travelers used most frequently to describe their visits to Pennsylvania were "educational", "scenic" and "fun".

Pennsylvania's superior product brings many visitors to the state. A 1997 survey by the Travel Industry Association of America identified the top ten states by total number of historic/cultural travelers visiting those states. Pennsylvania ranked third in the

nation, behind California and New York, but ahead of Texas, Virginia, Florida and the rest of the 50 states.

Economic and quality of life benefits

The same historic sites, parks, forests, and cultural activities that make Pennsylvania such an attractive place to visit, play an increasingly important role in the growth of the state's economy and the quality of life in its communities.

Tourism is Pennsylvania's second largest industry. In 2000, the tourism industry supported over 560,000 jobs and contributed over \$26 billion to the state's economy. A significant portion of that can be attributed to heritage travel. A 1999 report for the Pennsylvania Center for Travel, Tourism and Film indicated that 75% of all travel was leisure travel, and 25% of all leisure trip expenditures in Pennsylvania were attributable to heritage tourism. That makes heritage tourism a multi-billion dollar industry in Pennsylvania.

Heritage tourism development is also a community development strategy that can benefit all parts of the state. From Philadelphia's waterfront, to the mill towns of western Pennsylvania, the forests of the north-central region, and the cities, towns and farms of central and eastern Pennsylvania, the state's communities have begun to capitalize on their heritage resources. Heritage tourism development brings new economic opportunities and jobs. It also builds local pride as citizens learn about their own unique parts of the Pennsylvania story. Communities that embrace heritage tourism, do this by developing sites, festivals and attractions that bring enjoyment to residents, as well as drawing visitors to the area.

Opportunities for growth

Tourism is a growth industry. In 1999, Pennsylvania's travel and tourism industry saw more than \$1 billion in growth, and a sizable share of that growth was due to heritage travel. 1997 figures for

heritage travel in Pennsylvania represented a 23% increase from the year before, three times higher than the growth in other kinds of leisure travel in the state.

A 1999 report by the Travel Industry Association of America ranked historic sites and museums as the #3 leisure tourism destination nationally, behind shopping and outdoor activities. Cultural events and festivals ranked #5 in popularity. It is widely recognized that heritage travelers stay longer and spend more than other tourists, making it very attractive to continue to build this sector of the tourism market.

Given the growth that is occurring in heritage tourism and Pennsylvania's superior product, heritage tourism presents an attractive economic development opportunity for the state with important quality of life benefits as well.

What do we have in place that we can build on?

Pennsylvania has been a national leader in heritage tourism development over the last decade. The state legislature has invested millions of dollars in heritage and cultural resources and remains very supportive of these efforts. The state also has a number of heritage tourism-related programmatic initiatives it can build on. The following is a summary of some of the most innovative initiatives.

Pennsylvania Heritage Parks Program and National Heritage Areas

Regional heritage tourism development is a growing trend across the country, and Pennsylvania's Heritage Parks Program (PHPP), administered by DCNR and the state Heritage Park Interagency Task Force, is the best-established statewide heritage area program in the country today, and serves as a model for other states. The PHPP was launched in 1989 to help regions across the Commonwealth capitalize on Pennsylvania's unique industrial heritage. The state's

heritage parks are not "parks" in the traditional sense, they are large geographic regions, that cross jurisdictional boundaries, but share certain natural features and parts of Pennsylvania history. Public and private stakeholders throughout the regions have come together to foster community and economic development within these areas, using the development, conservation and promotion of heritage resources as the focal point for these activities.

There are nine designated areas in the state heritage park system: the Oil Heritage Region, Endless Mountains Heritage Region, the Lackawanna Heritage Valley, the Delaware and Lehigh Canal Heritage Corridor, the National Road Heritage Park, Rivers of Steel Heritage Area, Lincoln Highway Heritage Corridor, Allegheny Ridge State Heritage Park, and Schuylkill River Heritage Corridor. Two more are being planned in the Lancaster York Heritage Region and Lumber Heritage Region. Four of the designated state areas are also national heritage areas, making them eligible for federal as well as state funding. A fifth national heritage area is the Path of Progress, a 500-mile tour route in southwestern Pennsylvania. It is administered by the Southwestern PA Heritage Preservation Commission, which was established in 1988 to identify and preserve industrial heritage resources in southwestern Pennsylvania.

Pennsylvania Heritage Tourism Initiative

In 1994, the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission launched a multi-year heritage tourism initiative in partnership with the Center for Rural Pennsylvania, DCNR's Heritage Parks Program, and DCED's Office of Travel, Tourism and Film Promotion, to help historical organizations, local communities and the tourism industry capitalize on Pennsylvania's heritage tourism opportunities. The Heritage Tourism Initiative launched a series of pilot projects to promote collaboration between heritage attractions, tourist



promotion agencies and the travel industry, and develop models of successful, locally and regionally based tourism development efforts. The National Trust for Historic Preservation was chosen to provide technical assistance for the initiative.

The four initial areas selected were Lancaster County, Philadelphia, Bucks County, and the Oil Heritage Region and they have produced a wealth of valuable models, training guides, and marketing concepts that can be used in communities across the Commonwealth. In Phase II, the Poconos Heritage Region, Erie Heritage Development, and the Underground Railroad linking Philadelphia and Lancaster County were added.

Regional Marketing Initiative

In January 2001, Governor Ridge announced the award of \$8.5 million dollars in state matching grants for 22 regional marketing plans, the largest amount ever awarded through the four-year-old Regional Marketing Initiatives (RMI) matching-grant program. Regional Marketing Initiative funds are used by regional tourism marketing groups to undertake advertising activities, develop websites, create regional reservation systems, and reach out to international travelers. To be eligible, applications must include participation from at least five counties, and state funds must be matched by local dollars, fifty percent of which must come from the private sector.

Beneficiaries of this year's RMI grants included Northwest Great Outdoors Tourism Awareness, a project to increase overnight stays in northwestern Pennsylvania, the Unique Lodging Guide, a guide created to increase the visibility of unusual lodging opportunities in the state, and the WITF Historical Markers program, a web-based multimedia project to encourage visitors to explore the Commonwealth's historical sites. The RMI offers regional consortiums an opportunity to combine heritage tourism marketing with broader tourism development efforts.

Farmland/Open Space Preservation and Growing Greener

Created in 1989, Pennsylvania's Farmland Preservation Program, administered by the PA Department of Agriculture, has protected more than 1,400 farms and 180,000 acres of farmland from development. In 2000, a record 283 farms totaling 33,000 acres were preserved through the purchase of development rights, with state, county and in some cases township funds. In February 2001, the American Farmland Trust, a nonprofit farmland conservation group, recognized Pennsylvania's leadership in the area of farmland preservation with an achievement award for protecting more farmland than any other state in the country. The Community Conservation Partnership, administered by DCNR, has assisted in protecting 41,000 acres of open space and natural areas throughout the Commonwealth since 1994.

Governor Ridge's "Growing Greener" program calls for over \$650 million of state funds over the next several years to ensure that the state grows in ways that preserve its most precious natural and recreational resources. The money is being divided among a number of state agencies who will see that it is invested in preserving farmland and open space, enhancing all of the state's parks, trails, greenways, recreational opportunities restoring watersheds, building water and sewer lines, and cleaning up abandoned mine lands. These investments in Pennsylvania's natural, agricultural, scenic and recreational resources can complement new state and local heritage tourism development efforts.

State Tourism, Preservation Plans, and Greenways

In June 1999, the Governor's Advisory Council on Travel and Tourism worked with the Pennsylvania Office for Travel, Tourism and Film to develop the first five-year Strategic Tourism Master Plan for Pennsylvania. It identified cultural and historical tourism as important markets to focus on, because of

the growing interest in and higher economic benefits of this type of travel. The plan calls for the state to integrate tourism planning efforts, enhance the state's tourism infrastructure and visitor services, and expand tourism promotion activities.

In 1998-99, PHMC and Preservation Pennsylvania, the statewide preservation non-profit in Pennsylvania, launched an ambitious public involvement process to develop The Pennsylvania Historic Preservation Plan. The plan recommended that preservation leaders in Pennsylvania work with a wide range of state and local partners to develop heritage tourism potential in communities across the Commonwealth. Both the Strategic Tourism Master Plan and the PA Historic Preservation plan help set the stage for a more focused and collaborative effort to develop heritage tourism in the state.

In response to Executive Order 1998-3, DCNR, DEP and PennDOT, in conjunction with the Greenways Partnership Commission, are finalizing "Pennsylvania's Greenways – An Action Plan for Creating Greenways". The vision for this effort is the development of an outstanding network of greenways across the Commonwealth, creating a highly visible asset that will enhance the quality of life for all. The network of greenways will connect urban and rural open space, natural landscape features, scenic, cultural, historic, and recreational sites, and community centers to achieve sustainable growth and livable communities.

Main Street Program

The Main Street Program, coordinated by the Department of Community and Economic Development, works with local communities to revitalize historic main streets in communities across the Commonwealth. Historic towns are a major attraction to heritage travelers and the Main Street program is a way to bring the state's traditional main streets back to life for residents and visitors alike. These are

just some of the many other activities in Pennsylvania that can contribute to heritage tourism development.

In addition to its existing programs and initiatives, Pennsylvania has many agencies, organizations and individuals that can play leadership roles in taking heritage tourism in Pennsylvania to the next level, including The Governor's Advisory Council on Tourism, DCNR, DCED, PHMC, the Center for Rural Pennsylvania, the Pennsylvania Travel Council, Tourist Promotion Agencies, local governments, chambers of commerce, private and nonprofit owners of heritage tourism sites and businesses, and others.

What is holding us back?

With its pioneer heritage parks program, rich collection of historic sites, and recent tourism related initiatives, Pennsylvania has been a leader in heritage tourism development. But the state has reached a point where it must renew its commitment to heritage tourism development in innovative ways if it wants to continue to grow this portion of the state's economy.

At the heritage tourism summit and the regional workshops held around the state, participants identified several major barriers to moving forward.

Fragmentation of effort and lack of integrated leadership

There are many heritage tourism activities and initiatives underway in the Commonwealth, but there is no formal mechanism to coordinate these and no entity charged with providing vision and leadership for heritage tourism efforts.

Lack of public education and awareness

Not enough citizens, local government officials, preservation and tourism practitioners, traditional economic development professionals and others, are aware of the wide range of benefits offered by heritage tourism development. Pennsylvania needs to build a broader constituency that understands what



heritage tourism development is and what it can contribute to economic development, conservation of natural resources, and quality of life in Pennsylvania.

Uneven quality in site restoration and interpretation

The quality and authenticity of historic site restoration and interpretation are uneven. There is no systematic effort to provide guidelines, technical assistance, or incentives to private site developers, non-profit organizations and local communities to help them develop their heritage sites to a uniformly high standard.

Inadequate visitor service infrastructure

Many heritage sites and areas lack adequate visitor services to meet current and future needs. These sites and areas need help in determining the kinds of visitor services they should have to handle different numbers and types of visitors. More careful attention needs to be given to the quality of directional and interpretive signs at heritage attractions to improve visibility, access and the quality of the visitor experience.

Lack of aggressive marketing

A number of heritage sites and areas have engaged in creative marketing initiatives, but there is a need for a more aggressive and integrated marketing effort at the state level that will draw new visitors to the state's heritage attractions and encourage them to extend their visits.

Insufficient investment

There has been a substantial amount of investment in heritage tourism at the state level, and in many local and regional public and private efforts. However, investments to date do not reflect the quantity and quality of the state's heritage resources, or the tremendous opportunity heritage tourism presents for the Commonwealth and its communities.

What is needed to take heritage tourism to the next level?

Summit and workshop participants said realizing the potential of heritage tourism in Pennsylvania will require:

- ✓ Leadership;
- ✓ Vision;
- ✓ Action;
- ✓ Investment; and
- ✓ Education

It is necessary to identify leaders at the state, regional and local levels to carry the effort forward. These leaders need to provide a vision and show how heritage tourism can contribute to broad state and local goals—economic development, farmland and open space preservation, revitalizing existing cities and towns, and growing smarter—and improve the quality of life in individual communities. Once the leadership and vision are in place, Pennsylvania needs a statewide action plan for heritage tourism that identifies the next generation of creative initiatives, sets priorities, and recruits a wide range of public and private partners to move these forward. It also will require additional public and private investment to make these priorities a reality. A core component of this strategy must include schools to encourage an understanding of and appreciation for Pennsylvania's rich heritage. Teachers and students comprise a large percentage of visitors to historic sites and museums and they will play a critical role in the future on issues related to preservation and promotion.

CREATING A BLUEPRINT FOR HERITAGE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

Summit and workshop discussions produced many ideas and recommendations for moving heritage tourism to the next level in Pennsylvania. They are presented here to provide a framework for action.

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Where do we need to start?

Pennsylvania must take two major steps to launch the next generation of heritage tourism development initiatives: designate a lead entity at the state level, and develop a statewide heritage tourism strategy.

Designate a Lead Entity

There was broad agreement among those who attended the summit and workshops that heritage tourism leadership needs to be formalized. Informal collaboration among federal and state agencies, heritage sites, private businesses, and local governments and organizations has done a great deal to advance heritage tourism in Pennsylvania, but it is no longer enough. While some of the programs and initiatives that were developed by this collaborative effort will continue, the current organizational structure and funding levels are insufficient if Pennsylvania wants to make significant advances in the amount and quality of heritage tourism in the state over the coming years.

To keep Pennsylvania in the forefront of heritage tourism development and build that part of the state's economy, a specific entity needs to be given leadership responsibility and charged with developing a vision, quality standards, technical assistance, and aggressive outreach and marketing programs for heritage tourism development. This is not to be some type of "super agency" that would impose unwanted

requirements and conformity, but a state/regional/local partnership that is more formal than what exists today. The Governor's Tourism Advisory Council should be asked for guidance and support for formalizing heritage tourism leadership in the state.

One model that might be looked at is Pennsylvania's Greenways Partnership Commission. This Commission was established by Executive Order in 1998 to promote the development of greenways in Pennsylvania. It is co-chaired by two state agencies, includes members from 11 other state agencies, and has an advisory committee of over 100 groups and individuals. The Greenways Partnership is just one example of the kind of collaborative leadership, involving public and private partners, that is needed to advance heritage tourism in Pennsylvania.

Develop a Statewide Strategy

In addition to formalizing leadership, summit and workshop participants said the Commonwealth needs a statewide heritage tourism strategy. This is needed to raise awareness of the value of heritage tourism, set common goals and priorities, raise standards for heritage tourism sites and visitor services, and coordinate heritage tourism development efforts at the local, regional and state levels.

Participants said the first responsibility of the officially designated leadership entity should be to develop this strategy. They said the planning process should reach out to a wide range of stakeholders and include all ethnic, racial and economic groups. Regional forums, task forces and other mechanisms could be used to develop the strategy.



What should the strategy include?

Participants offered many ideas for what the state's heritage tourism strategy needs to include. These can be distilled into seven major elements outlined below.

1. A campaign to identify Pennsylvania's heritage resources

Pennsylvania needs to build an inventory of heritage tourism resources. This inventory will identify the "product"—what the state has to offer travelers who come to enjoy and learn about Pennsylvania heritage. The heritage tourism development strategy needs to address what the inventory should include and how it should be developed. Consideration should be given to building the inventory on a regional basis to make it easier to identify clusters of sites and events with joint development and marketing potential.

Resource identification done in connection with the Heritage Parks Program, PHMC's programs, the PA Greenways Partnership Commission, the PA Council on the Arts, and other local and regional heritage tourism initiatives can provide a strong starting point for building this inventory. A private consultant may be needed to work with these partners to design and complete the inventory in a user-friendly format. Once completed, the inventory could be available to everyone involved in developing heritage tourism in the Commonwealth, from state agencies with tourism development responsibilities, to local chambers of commerce, visitor's bureaus, private site owners and tour operators.

2. Strategies to promote preservation and development of heritage resources at the state and local levels

Pennsylvania's heritage tourism strategy should highlight the need for sound land use practices that

will preserve the historic, scenic and cultural resources that provide a foundation for the state's heritage tourism industry and contribute greatly to the quality of life in Pennsylvania communities.

Tom Hylton's 1995 book *Save Our Land, Save Our Towns*, provides a compelling visual and narrative description of Pennsylvania's rich mosaic of towns, cities and countryside. Hylton warns that without careful attention, these historic communities, farms, forests, river corridors and vistas will be lost. He emphasizes the ways in which planning and investment in existing cities and towns can preserve the unique identity of each community, reduce sprawl development, and keep Pennsylvania a place people want to live, work and visit.

Heritage tourism development can be a tool to advance many of the things Pennsylvanians value most – responsible development, farmland preservation, and livable communities. Those responsible for crafting the heritage tourism strategy should work closely with PHMC, DCED, DCNR, PennDOT, the Department of Education and school districts, the Department of Agriculture, local governments, land conservancies, and private individuals across the state to promote the integration of heritage resource preservation and development into local and regional comprehensive plans, and use heritage tourism development to achieve other statewide goals.

3. Standards to guide preservation, interpretation and development of visitor service infrastructure at heritage sites

Pennsylvania needs a comprehensive set of heritage resource development standards to guide authentic restoration and interpretation, and encourage provision of adequate visitor service amenities at all heritage sites. In this era of fast food restaurants, chain stores and the homogenization of tourist attractions, visitors are drawn to unique places and stories. Standards are a way to see that Pennsylvania main-

tains the distinctive qualities of its heritage resources, tells true Pennsylvania stories, and provides the amenities that will encourage visitors to make return visits.

Forum participants agreed that Pennsylvania has a number of sites that meet the highest standards in the heritage tourism industry, but there is unevenness in the quality of site restoration, interpretation, and visitor services. Several Pennsylvania agencies and organizations have taken steps to raise the quality of the experience provided at heritage sites. PHMC has standards it applies to its own sites, and it uses the Secretary of the Interior's Standards to guide restoration activities by others at the state and local level. Individual management action plans for heritage parks require them to meet certain standards. The American Association of Museums has standards it requires sites to meet before they can be accredited, and a number of Pennsylvania museums have received this accreditation. The Lancaster County Commissioners adopted standards similar to those of the American Automobile Association for visitor amenities that need to be provided at individual sites.

These existing efforts to enhance the quality of the visitor experience at individual sites could serve as a starting point for a more comprehensive effort to develop statewide standards. Heritage tourists could be surveyed for their views on what constitutes a "visitor ready" site. States like Massachusetts that already have comprehensive standards for developing heritage tourism sites could be used as resources. Regional forums could be held to learn more about the current readiness of sites and encourage responsible stewardship.

Forum participants emphasized that standards should be developed in close collaboration with public and private owners and operators of heritage sites to ensure the highest possible level of cooperation in implementing the standards. Incentives could be

designed to encourage adoption of the standards, and meeting the standards could be a criterion for grant eligibility or state certification of some kind.

4. An aggressive heritage tourism marketing campaign with a regional focus

An integrated, full-funded, marketing campaign that provides a consistent message and image statewide should be a central component of the state's heritage tourism development strategy. This is key to attracting more visitors to the state, and getting them to stay longer and visit more sites when they come.

The marketing campaign needs to include both short and long-term strategies. It should recommend ways to coordinate present and future marketing efforts across agencies and organizations. It should provide guidance for organizations and sites at the local and regional levels interested in undertaking their own marketing campaigns, and encourage thematic and regional initiatives that market groups of sites, like the Underground Railroad "Trail to Freedom" from Lancaster County to Philadelphia.

Forum participants suggested the marketing campaign begin with a compilation of marketing efforts already underway like PHMC's "Pennsylvania Trail of History" – a visitor guide to 26 historic sites and museums – and other initiatives under the leadership of the Governor's Advisory Council on Tourism, the state's tourism office, tourism promotion agencies, state designated heritage parks, and others. It should focus on coordinating and building on these. Participants suggested the "PA Destinations Marketing Manual" be revisited for its potential to serve as a model for local and regional marketing initiatives. Opportunities should be explored for cooperative marketing between the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts and DCED's Tourism, Film and Economic Development Marketing Department.

All of the marketing initiatives need to include extensive use of the Internet and other emerging



technologies. There should be a systematic effort to link as many heritage marketing sites as possible, tying in with Pennsylvania's technology initiatives and providing guidelines to make internet sites as user friendly as possible. An example to build on is the "ExperiencePA.com" portion of the state's website, which includes listings of national historic parks, history museums, and history tours compiled by region throughout the state. Private marketing professionals and others with marketing experience could be asked to provide technical assistance on putting together the marketing campaign.

5. A technical assistance and training initiative for heritage tourism organizations, sites and practitioners

There is a need throughout the state for technical assistance and training on site development, interpretation, providing adequate visitor services, and marketing. The statewide heritage tourism strategy should call for the development of model programs and products that could be widely disseminated.

A number of specific recommendations emerged from the Summit and regional meetings related to technical assistance and training. These included:

- establishing a clearinghouse for sharing "best practices" and other important information, borrowing ideas from programs like the PA Federation of Museums and Historical Organizations, the Heritage Tourism Initiative, State Heritage Parks, Preservation Pennsylvania, the Center for Rural Pennsylvania, historical organizations, and others that have effective programs for sharing their best ideas;
- making resource materials available over the Internet and in paper form;
- providing training sessions for historic site staff and heritage tourism practitioners on grant writing; and

- providing training for volunteers on authentic interpretation and storytelling.

All parts of the heritage tourism industry from individual sites, to tour operators, to heritage tourism practitioners should be involved in identifying training and technical assistance needs and the best delivery mechanisms for getting these out to interested individuals and organizations.

6. A business development component

The next generation of heritage tourism initiatives in Pennsylvania needs to do everything it can to capitalize on the economic development potential of heritage tourism.

Heritage tourism related businesses and activities can be developed in almost every community in the Commonwealth. Pennsylvania's cities, neighborhoods, and small towns all have their own histories and stories to tell. When communities identify their unique places and stories and invite people to come and visit them, it creates opportunities for a wide range of support businesses to develop from hotels and restaurants, to gift and souvenir shops, to tour operators and guides. These new businesses feed money into local economies and help support the basic businesses and services that are so important to the everyday life of Pennsylvania citizens.

The heritage tourism strategy should seek a wide range of partners to guide and support heritage tourism-related business development. The state's Small Business Development Centers could provide a mentoring and technical assistance program for heritage tourism related businesses just getting started. The Pennsylvania Main Street Program could contribute to this effort as part of its work to revitalize historic main streets. Revolving loan fund initiatives could be created to provide start-up capital for fledgling tourism based businesses unable to obtain conventional bank loans.

7. A strong public education and awareness initiative

Finally, the heritage tourism strategy needs to include a major public education and awareness component. A statewide campaign is needed to help build broad public understanding of the benefits of heritage tourism, and attract additional resources to support heritage tourism development efforts.

The statewide and regional leaders who develop the heritage tourism strategy should spearhead the education and constituency building effort. They should recruit private sector involvement from hospitality businesses, private-for-profit museums, and outdoor recreational activity providers. Regional forums could be used to identify priorities and strategies for building public awareness. Without an organized constituency, heritage tourism is not likely to attract the kind of support needed to realize its potential.

TAKING THE NEXT STEP

DCNR, DCED, PHMC, and the Center for Rural Pennsylvania convened the Heritage Tourism Summit and regional workshops in response to concerns that heritage tourism development in the state has reached a plateau. Maintaining a competitive edge in the quality and quantity of heritage tourism activity in Pennsylvania will require new vision, energy and resources.

Who needs to step forward?

Summit and workshop participants said the effort to advance heritage tourism needs to be formalized, cooperative, inclusive, and closely coordinated with efforts already underway to implement the Strategic Tourism Plan for the Commonwealth. They called for involvement by a wide range of stakeholders at the state, regional and local levels.

State-level stakeholders

At the state level, state agencies and organizations already involved in heritage tourism related activities need to step forward and launch a focused heritage tourism development effort, reaching out to a wide range of state and federal partners to help them. Stakeholders who are key at the state level include the General Assembly, the Governor's Advisory Council on Tourism, DCNR, DCED, PHMC, the Center for Rural Pennsylvania, PennDOT, Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture, Pennsylvania Travel Council, PA Council on the Arts, Pennsylvania Association of Convention and Visitors Bureaus, Preservation Pennsylvania, PA Federation of Museums and Historical Organizations, and state-level historical organizations.

Regional stakeholders

Regional stakeholders also need to step forward. They are critical to the regional organization and marketing components of the strategy, and to ensuring that regional distinctions are maintained in the state-wide strategy. Tourist Promotion Agencies, state designated heritage parks, area-wide economic development organizations, regional and county planning agencies, inter-jurisdictional groups that have received Regional Marketing Initiative funds, and trail and other conservation coalitions must bring a strong regional perspective to the effort and help bring a variety of other regional and local interests into the process.

Local stakeholders

Links to individual sites, businesses and activities take place at the local level. Local partners who are essential include individual heritage tourism-related businesses: site owners and operators, tour operators, outdoor recreation outfitters, and those involved in hotel, restaurant and other visitor service related enterprises. They include non-profit organizations that own and operate heritage sites, local elected



officials, chambers of commerce, community development corporations, and individual citizens with an interest in heritage tourism development opportunities in their communities.

Stakeholders at all of these levels must be brought into the planning process and asked to take leadership roles in areas where they have particular experience and expertise.

What else is needed to get the job done?

Those who participated in the summit and workshops agreed Pennsylvania cannot capitalize on the heritage tourism opportunities that exist with its current funding and delivery systems. As a first step, participants said it will take funding to support the creation of a lead entity, and to develop the heritage tourism strategy. Beyond that, participants made a number of suggestions for how to do a better job harnessing existing financial resources and attracting new resources to the heritage tourism development effort. These suggestions included:

- creating a database of existing funding sources and making these available to the entire heritage tourism network through newsletters, the internet and other mechanisms;
- collaborating regionally and thematically;
- publicizing existing grants more widely;
- making the grant process more user friendly;
- making criteria for evaluating grant applications clearer;
- providing workshops on fundraising and grant writing;
- pooling state resources available for heritage tourism development and using the statewide heritage tourism development strategy as a guide in allocating these;
- reaching out to major Pennsylvania founda-

tions;

- looking for ways to use TEA-21 transportation enhancement funds to support heritage tourism related investments;
- using state funds to leverage additional federal, local and private dollars; and
- seeking advice from the Governor's Council on Travel and Tourism on ways to explore a variety of new funding sources.

What is the bottom line?

There are major opportunities to expand heritage tourism in Pennsylvania and the economic benefits can be substantial, but it will require a major commitment on the part of both public and private entities to make this happen. With a more formal organizational structure and the commitment of additional resources, Pennsylvania can be a national leader in heritage tourism for many years to come, and reap the significant economic and quality of life benefits this will bring to the Commonwealth and its citizens.

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