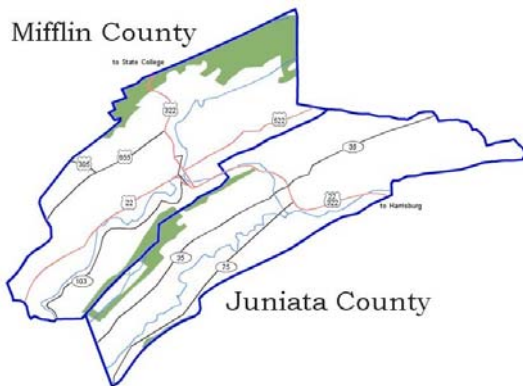


INTRODUCTION

The following is a summary of major projects recommended in this Plan for the Juniata River Valley Visitors Bureau to implement, along with further analysis of likely impacts:

Create A Tourism Map(s) for the Juniata River Valley

Description: Finish developing the tourism inventory map assembled by the Mifflin County Information Technology Department to create an interactive website version, with photographs and other information on each attraction, and several different published versions to illustrate the locations of various groups of attractions.



Estimated Costs: Work to date has been on an in-kind basis by Mifflin County. Continued development of the inventory map to be the basis of an interactive website will demand at least six more months of work plus associated out-of pocket costs. It is expected this will require approximately \$25,000 in further in-kind contributions for labor plus an estimated \$10,000 per year to maintain the site and

\$2,000 per year for reproduction of maps. There will also be additional software development needed to establish the interactive aspects of the map and create the linkages needed with the JRVVB to put a reservation system in place. It is anticipated this will require another \$3,000 per year for a total of \$15,000/year in on-going costs.

Economic Benefits for Tourists: This project will create a much more user friendly version of the Tourism Map now available and make it much easier to locate Juniata River Valley attractions. The Map will also be convertible to other versions for specific purposes (e.g. a driving tour of the Amish farm country found in the Big Valley).

As the interactive website is developed to accompany the Map, potential visitors will be able to obtain photographs and other information on lodging, dining and other attractions that they would otherwise have to wait for by mail or drive to a location where brochures are distributed.

Economic Benefits for JRVVB and Region: This project will increase the effectiveness of all the JRVVB's efforts by making available a Map that can be inserted in different brochures and on other websites with ease and limited expenses. It should allow for much higher quality materials even as costs of drafting and printing are reduced. The savings from having such a map available should be in the range of \$10,000 to \$15,000 per year.

There should, in addition, be growth in revenues to local businesses such as hotels who now lack photographs on the Internet and lose customers as a result. This will produce more

employment and more revenue for the JRVVB, making the project very cost-effective.

Special Requirements: This project depends upon Mifflin County continuing to make available the special expertise of its Information Technology Department and up-to-date computer hardware and software infrastructure to maintain the system.

Other Social, Economic and Environmental Impacts: This system and the Tourism Map will add to the prestige of both Counties as well as the JRVVB, helping to embellish the self-images of both residents and business owners. The Map is expected to primarily service existing visitors and simply get them to spend more while they're in the area. Nonetheless, stimulating any amount new tourism will also increase traffic and result in some further development of the area, changing its character in some respects, although not necessarily negatively. Mifflin County has anticipated such needs with its Transportation Plan and recommended Interchange Study.

Implementation Steps and Timeline:

- 1) Finish adding new layers to existing map. Complete by October 31, 2002.
- 2) Add other data and photos to the website version. Complete by December 31, 2002.
- 3) Finish developing the interactive aspects of the Inventory and Map, including links to the JRVVB and member websites. Complete by December 31, 2002.
- 4) Print and distribute hard copies in various versions. Complete by January 31, 2003.

Develop a Themed Advertising Program Targeted at Major Markets

Description: Establish a marketing theme such as "The Juniata River Valley...Discover Our Good Nature" to accompany an advertising and marketing campaign targeted at Washington D.C., Harrisburg, State College, Lancaster, York, Reading and Philadelphia-Wilmington. Base the theme on the cultural, historic and natural of the region and its relaxing atmosphere.



**Courtesy of Common Ground Magazine,
McVeytown, Pennsylvania (Mifflin County)
R. Dunmire, P. Brumbaugh**

Estimated Costs: While much can be done at limited cost to market the Juniata River Valley, reaching the target markets with effective advertising that reinforces its theme will require

significant investments. The costs of advertising in major market media outlets can be large. They can be reduced by seeking out free publicity in travel sections of newspapers or using smaller advertisements that refer to the website for more information, but no media is going to make itself available for free to non-advertisers. Travel articles will, therefore, depend to some extent on how willing the JRVVB is willing to invest in that media.

Newspaper ad rates for the target markets identified in the Marketing Plan (Chapter 7) are as follows:

Newspaper Advertising Rate Analysis for Recommended Target Markets				
Newspaper	Standard Rate Per Column Inch	Bulk Contract Volume Rate	Total Readership	Standard Cost Per 1,000 Readers
Washington Post	\$325.00	\$238.60	1,712,300	\$0.19
Washington Sunday	\$454.60	\$335.80	2,359,500	\$0.19
Reading Times-Eagle	\$30.76	\$28.76	134,190	\$0.23
Reading Sunday	\$32.52	\$30.36	192,526	\$0.17
Baltimore Sun	\$142.30	\$71.15	619,096	\$0.23
Baltimore Sunday	\$200.10	\$160.08	940,770	\$0.21
York Sunday	\$54.23	\$45.90	214,710	\$0.25
York Daily/Dispatch	\$51.64	\$43.70	184,866	\$0.28
Harrisburg Patriot-News	\$68.70	\$53.45	238,000	\$0.29
Harrisburg Sunday	\$78.50	\$63.45	298,000	\$0.26
Lancaster Intelligencer	\$57.80	\$34.68	195,200	\$0.30
Lancaster Sunday	\$65.45	\$39.27	222,800	\$0.29
Philadelphia Inquirer	\$302.00	\$212.00	971,100	\$0.31
Philadelphia Sunday	\$428.00	\$407.00	1,464,824	\$0.29
Wilmington News Journal	\$101.80	\$66.17	265,100	\$0.38
Wilmington Sunday	\$128.25	\$83.36	272,600	\$0.47
Centre Daily Times	\$25.08	\$16.68	55,100	\$0.46
Centre Daily Sunday	\$32.73	\$21.61	60,400	\$0.54

NOTE: Readership numbers from Audit Bureau of Circulations where available, newspaper statements or estimated at 2.0 times circulation.

There are wide differences in the costs of reaching the target markets with newspapers. The least expensive, in costs per reader reached, is also the best market economically,

that being the Washington, D.C. metro area, although the Reading Times-Eagle Sunday edition is, taken alone, the single best buy. Nevertheless, repetition is key and placing repeated advertisements in a paper such as the "Washington Post" can be expensive (a single two column by four inch open rate ad in the Sunday edition would cost over \$3,600). Distance is also a factor and the higher probability of attracting a visitor from Harrisburg may well justify the slightly higher costs per reader.

Balancing of all these factors suggests markets such as Lancaster, where the cost per reader is still quite reasonable and same size ad would cost \$525, are the best bet. A campaign focused on Harrisburg, Lancaster and York, with 20 such advertisements in each paper annually at bulk rates, would cost approximately \$25,000.

Some additional funds should also be invested in other media and markets and, therefore, the total annual costs of an effective advertising campaign are probably closer to \$35,000. There will also be funding required at the outset to develop the appropriate theme, test it and put it in a graphically appealing format. This will require an estimated \$10,000 to \$15,000, based on experience in other areas.

Economic Benefits for Tourists: Creating an effective image of the Juniata River Valley that matches reality and reinforces themes built upon the cultural, historical and natural environment helps to steer new development in directions that preserve the quality of experience for visitors and the quality of life for residents. Advertising also helps to direct the visitors to the best assets of the area,

making each visit a more rewarding one.

Economic Benefits for JRVVB and Region:

Additional tourism of the type an advertising campaign would produce, would generate new customers for existing businesses, more employment and more revenue for the JRVVB, making the project a very cost-effective measure for increasing tourism.

Special Requirements: Developing an advertising campaign will demand professional expertise in both advertising and graphic design. This is not a task that can simply be given to a local printer or media representative. Alternatives will need to be created and focus groups used to test them. An advertising agency should also be used to negotiate the best contract rates and advise the JRVVB on placement and timing of the advertising.

Other Social, Economic and Environmental

Impacts: Increasing tourism will also increase traffic and result in some further development. However, growth is likely anyway. Effective advertising, by creating a high quality image of the Juniata River Valley, will help set expectations and standards for that growth.

Additionally, the two Counties both possess relatively good highway infrastructure east and west off of Route 322, where the major attractions are to found. These highways are able to accommodate additional visitation.

Many communities are also beginning to address land use issues related to quality. Much can be done with site plan review standards that accommodate growth but insist on better designs, limited signage and more landscaping. More planning is recommended.

Implementation Steps and Timeline:

- 1) Secure the services of a professional designer and an advertising agency to manage the development and testing of a marketing theme. Complete by January 31, 2003.
- 2) Create and test the marketing theme. Complete by March 31, 2003.
- 3) Schedule the placement of advertisements, subject to the availability of funding and negotiation of appropriate contract rates. Complete by April 30, 2003.
- 4) Evaluate effectiveness of advertising by tracking inquiries and surveying members. Complete by December 31, 2003.



**Courtesy of Common Ground Magazine,
R. Dunmire, P. Brumbaugh**

Establish A Website Development Program for JRVVB Members

Description: Provide JRVVB members with a free web page linked to the Tourism Inventory and Map along with the technical assistance required to develop that page and/or a separate website linked back to the JRVVB and ExperiencePA.com. This would include training in maintaining their pages or websites. This should be a strictly member benefit.

Estimated Costs: Some of this work will be included in developing the interactive Tourism Map and reservation program, but members need to be encouraged to go further in developing their own web pages or independent websites such as Buttonwood Campground's. This will require additional technical expertise for both the initial development stage and on-going training. Once the sites are created, the business owners should take responsibility for them.

A cost-effective method of providing such assistance would be to model it on a program being applied in nearby Bedford County. That project is featured on the State's "Pennsylvania Digital Grassroots" website. Students from the Bedford County Technical Center and Everett Area School District have teamed with a Future Business Learners of America local chapter to establish what is in effect a local media development company. Their project is to create an interactive virtual tour of Bedford County in partnership with the County Chamber of Commerce, Office of Economic Development and Visitors Bureau. A similar initiative could serve to provide the technical

resources needed to sponsor a website development program for JRVVB members.

Some supervision, software and overhead costs will still be involved if this approach is used but those costs would be relatively small, perhaps \$5,000 to \$10,000 per year. Should it be impossible to assemble such a program, than technical assistance would have to be purchased from other website developers. It would, typically, cost between \$1,000 and \$2,000 each to develop a professional website if that were the case, but those costs could be controlled and adapted to available funds by asking members to share in the expense with the JRVVB (50% each would be appropriate) and taking projects on an application basis.

Websites are the most cost-effective form of advertising for most of the businesses who now make up the Juniata River Valley's tourism sector. Additionally, the use of the Internet is soaring while print and other media are either in decline or diversifying to such an extent that it is difficult to achieve effective market penetration. Therefore, website development among members needs to be a priority for the JRVVB. It deserves a funding priority as well and not simply token attention. A \$10,000 to \$15,000/year commitment is warranted.

Economic Benefits for Tourists: This project will make it much easier for visitors to find Juniata River Valley attractions and know what to expect before they arrive. The Internet is fast becoming (if not already) the preferred tool for travel planning (see Chapter 6). Making the Juniata River Valley Internet friendly serves the needs of ever greater numbers of tourists.



Courtesy of Common Ground Magazine.

Economic Benefits for JRVVB and Region:

This project is necessary for the JRVVB to be competitive in the increasingly sophisticated world of tourism promotion. Getting noticed demands a strong Internet presence by not only the JRVVB, but also its individual members. Websites are the modern versions of brochures.

They cannot be the sole method of advertising but should serve as the structure for other methods of marketing. Newspaper and other media advertisements, tourism maps and signage all need to direct readers to the websites as the place to learn more and make travel arrangements.

Sponsoring website development by members will allow the JRVVB to grow in value as a service provider. It will also grow tourism itself and help to form an image of the area that encourages quality development.

Special Requirements: This project will require up-to-date computer hardware and software infrastructure, a source of competent technical assistance in website development, capable supervision of any students employed on the project and a funding commitment from the JRVVB.

Other Social, Economic and Environmental Impacts: This project, like others proposed, will be directed at better servicing existing tourism providers and visitors. The goal will be to increase their spending while in the Juniata River Valley. This will, nevertheless, tend to increase traffic and encourage some additional development of the area as additional tourism sites are established.

The key will be to create a self-fulfilling high-quality image of the area as a cultural, historic and natural environment worth preserving. Given such a self-image, businesses and communities will have every reason to plan and do it right and to fit into the image.

Implementation Steps and Timeline:

- 1) Develop a partnership with schools, one or more colleges or private website developers to offer the technical assistance required. Complete by February 28, 2003.
- 2) Develop assistance guidelines and take applications from members for the first round of websites, requiring some level of cost-sharing (50% sharing recommended). Complete by April 30, 2003.
- 3) Develop, critique and approve new websites, with links to JRVVB and ExperiencePA.com sites. Complete by September 30, 2003.
- 4) Publish initial websites on the Internet, including making arrangements for hosting. Also, take applications for second round of sites. Complete by October 31, 2003.

www.experiencePA.COM

**Establish a Travel Packaging Program
for the Juniata River Valley**

Description: Establish a formal travel packaging program for JRVVB members, combining two or more complementary offerings into single-price packages that include a variety of services such as lodging, meals, entrance fees to attractions, entertainment, transportation costs (e.g. Amtrak), guide services or other similar activities.

JRVVB staff would identify potential attractions that could be part of packages and meet with owner and managers to design programs offering distinctive customer benefits capable of being effectively marketed. Reservation, refund and cancellation policies would need to be addressed. Advertising would need to be arranged and funds collected and dispersed on behalf of package partners.

Packages would need to be priced so that customers could not purchase them in separate elements for less than the package prices. The JRVVB would also need to help owners determine if the packages are financially feasible by applying a break-even analysis to establish how many packages they must sell before earning a profit. Evaluation of how changes in package costs or prices would affect the number of packages a business must sell would be part of this.

Summarizing, travel packaging would involve three separate phases as follows:

- ◇ Package Preparation (market research, negotiations for services, pricing)

- ◇ Package Marketing (advertising, personal sales)
- ◇ Package Management (reservations, paying suppliers, administration)

Estimated Costs: The JRVVB will be able use its website and proposed reservation system to help with packaging. However, the largest expense will be for staff support that participating members should help cover by paying some additional fees. Packaging is a service that can be marketed to interested members at a discounted price that covers JRVVB out-of-pocket salary expense but still offers a good value for interested members. This would promote both the JRVVB and tourism generally.

If packaging partners include some of the bus tour companies already stopping regularly in the area, the potential is quite large and considerable staff resources could be required. A one day per week position (a reasonable assumption) would cost approximately \$10,000 to \$12,000 with overhead included. If packaging partners covered the basic salary in fees paid (say \$6,000) and all other out-of-pocket expenses, the net costs to the JRVVB would be about \$4,000 to \$6,000/year.

Economic Benefits for Tourists: Packaging would allow visitors to budget for trips. It would reduce the time consumed in making travel arrangements by allowing customers to arrange several components of a trip at once. Tickets, meals and other package components can often be purchased at wholesale prices, which together with the cost of packaging would still provide a good value for the customer. Visitors unfamiliar with many of the

activities and attractions of the Juniata River Valley would be helped to find them more easily as packaged services. Finally, packaging would provides an opportunity to address specialized interests by offering package components not readily available to individual customers (e.g. a quilting demonstration by some of the best quilt makers in the area).

Economic Benefits for JRVVB and Region: Packaging can be used to improve profitability by adding value to an existing product. Visitors can, for instance, be required to stay a certain length of time to qualify for package pricing. Packaging can also be used during low tourism demand periods to add features to a business's offering and produce increased sales.

Packaging can reduce marketing costs for individual package partners, especially if the businesses involved have similar customers. It can also be a very cost-effective way to target specific markets by offering special weekends or visits built around recurring Juniata River Valley events (e.g. the Ice Festival).

Packages can be designed to include less known or often overlooked attractions and, thereby, generate new tourism and increased business for small providers. They offer the capacity to reach new markets with more compelling and convenient products, bring back prior customers and develop multi-trip customers.

Special Requirements: This project would demand JRVVB staff with a combination of basic entrepreneurial, financial and marketing skills. While packaging partners can provide some of these skills, the JRVVB needs to be able to help all partners visualize the potential, design and price out packages, help sell them

and collect and disburse funds paid out and received.

Market research, budgeting, projecting of sales, setting up a point of contact, cross-promotion agreements, booking procedures, promotion and quality control would all have to be addressed. These would require a very competent JRVVB staff person who can be assigned to the task of travel package development and management. Training and some professional technical assistance would also be required.

Other Social, Economic and Environmental Impacts: Packaging would bring new tourism to the Juniata River Valley, adding jobs and increasing the profitability of existing tourism businesses. It would also increase traffic and result in some further development of the area as new tourism businesses were established to take advantage of the traffic. Once again, however, the goals should be to strengthen existing businesses and use packaging to help build a tourism industry focused on activities that will maintain the Juniata River Valley's rural farm and outdoor character.

Implementation Steps and Timeline:

- 1) Train staff in packaging and establish fee structure for partners. Complete by October 31, 2003.
- 2) Do market research with tour companies and others and solicit package partners. Complete by December 31, 2003.
- 3) Assemble, market, administer and evaluate package programs. Complete first round by December 31, 2004.

Establish a Travel Media Information Program for the Juniata River Valley

Description: Establish a formal travel media information program within the JRVVB to encourage more writing of travel articles and generation of free publicity for the Juniata River Valley. This would involve a combination of the following measures:

- ◇ Regular (weekly, if possible) news releases on Juniata River Valley tourism happenings and attractions, including reports on JRVVB activity.
- ◇ E-mailed versions of weekly or monthly calendars of events and story ideas.
- ◇ Organized travel media tours on request and by scheduling at least annually. The Pocono Mountains Vacation Bureau maintains a special web page for travel media representatives. The Bureau also encourages the press to request tours by completing a simple web-based form (www.poconos.org/travelmedia).
- ◇ An image library. This could be based on some of the excellent photography assembled by Mifflin County's "Common Ground" magazine, examples of which are included in this Chapter and much of which is already published on a Morehead State University website.
- ◇ A "travel press kit" including brochure collections, maps, statistics, background information on the two counties, contacts, pricing data, calendars of events, travel

package information, suggested story lines and other materials.

The Pocono Mountain Vacation Bureau web page for the travel media provides an overview of that agency's excellent program. It provides a model that could be largely replicated in the Juniata River Valley.

The Valleys of the Susquehanna agency was also successful in using a travel consultant to organize a 1998 press tour that generated the equivalent of over \$250,000 of advertising (See Chapter 6). This could be an appropriate technique for the JRVVB to apply on its own or in cooperation with the Valleys organization.

Estimated Costs: The JRVVB's largest expense in supporting a travel media information program would be staff time, although an estimated \$1,000 to \$2,000 per year would be required for printing and distribution of press kit materials with perhaps twice that amount to cover the cost of conducting tours (e.g. transportation, meals, lodging). The staff time involved would represent perhaps \$5,000 to \$6,000/year for a total cost in the range of \$8,000 to \$12,000/year.

Economic Benefits for Tourists: Tourists would learn more about the special character of the Juniata River Valley as a result of travel media information program. This would increase appreciation of the area's cultural, historic and natural attributes and improve the quality of visitor experiences.

Economic Benefits for JRVVB and Region: The benefits for the JRVVB and region from

this program are simple - inexpensive or free advertising. Travel articles would also serve to shape the brand image of the Juniata River Valley in detailed ways that paid advertisements could not. Travel articles would serve to promote the region and increase those types of tourism most suited to preserving its essential rural farm character.

Special Requirements: This project would demand JRVVB staff trained to generate news releases, assemble professional press kits and develop story lines for articles. The ability to relate well with travel media representatives would also be important.

Other Social, Economic and Environmental Impacts: Like other possible initiatives, added travel media attention would bring new tourism to the Juniata River Valley with the attendant economic benefits and traffic impacts discussed above. It would, yet once again, however, primarily help existing tourism businesses and encourage new businesses that fit the vision set forth in Chapter 1.

Implementation Steps and Timeline:

- 1) Establish travel media information page on JRVVB website and assemble travel press kit. Complete by December 31, 2003.
- 2) Begin regular e-mail communications with local and regional media, especially within the target markets of State College, Lancaster, Harrisburg, York, Reading, Baltimore, Washington and Philadelphia. Complete by January 31, 2004.
- 3) Organize first scheduled travel media tour. Complete by June 30, 2004.

Promote Agricultural Tourism Ventures for the Juniata River Valley

Description: Encourage the development of additional agricultural tourism businesses to complement other tourism offerings and build on the "Discover Our Good Nature" theme. Examples of agri-tourism ventures include :

- ◇ Outdoor farm recreation such as equine activities, wildlife viewing, clay bird shooting, hay rides, fee fishing/hunting, camping/picnicking, cross-country skiing, off-road vehicles and mountain biking.
- ◇ Educational experiences such as school tours, garden shows, brewery/winery tours, agricultural technical tours, historical agricultural exhibits, crop testing and exotic animal farms.
- ◇ Direct agricultural sales such as farmers' markets, on-farm processing and sales, roadside stands, farm-related crafts and gifts and u-pick operations.
- ◇ Entertainment such as food festivals, fairs, petting zoos, hunting/working dog trials, corn or sunflower mazes and musical events (e.g. bluegrass events).
- ◇ Accommodations such bed and breakfast inns, farm vacation resorts and hostels.

Promoting agricultural tourism is largely a matter of education and technical assistance. The Region's farmers first need to be made aware of the tourism assets they possess. One of the most important is the fact most farms

are family operations. Family history is a great marketing device to reach visitors eager to take home wine, cheese and other farm products they can tell others they purchased at a little family-owned farm in the Juniata River Valley.



Example of Agricultural Tourism

The Juniata River Valley Visitors Bureau should encourage the development of additional agricultural tourism ventures such as new fruit and vegetable stands, fishing ponds, farm tours and u-pick operations through seminars on how to establish and conduct these enterprises. It should also solicit farmers interested in such endeavors. The Wayne County, Pennsylvania, Chamber of Commerce, for example, was successful in interesting one its farm members

in pursuing a corn maze operation to complement its train excursions. That business now attracts over 3,000 visitors annually and has been expanded to include a petting zoo.

However, rural landowners are often unsure, for example, how to manage liability concerns with these types of enterprises. They require additional technical education in regard to this matter and other facets of the tourism business if fee-based agricultural tourism is to develop. These educational programs should be accomplished in cooperation with the Penn State Cooperative Extension Service. The University of California Small Farm Center also provides some direction in this regard.

Finally, some advertising support from the JRVVB is important. Bucks County, Pennsylvania does a very effective job with a plain paper booklet advertising several dozen sites and combines this with a website where such attractions are packaged with bed and breakfast accommodations. A good example is also found in Agritour (UK) Ltd., which is dedicated to promoting farm stays and tours in England. (See www.agritour.com.)

Estimated Costs: The JRVVB's required investment in supporting an agricultural tourism program would be largely limited to staff time, although an estimated \$1,000 to \$2,000 per year would be demanded for printing and distribution of promotional materials. The staff time involved would represent perhaps \$3,000 to \$5,000/year for a total cost in the range of \$4,000 to \$7,000/year.

Economic Benefits for Tourists: Expanded agri-tourism opportunities would broaden visitor opportunities and increase appreciation

of the area's cultural and natural attributes.

Economic Benefits for JRVVB and Region:

Agricultural tourism is well suited to preserving the Juniata River Valley's rural character and working landscapes. It promises additional tourism income for the area while also enhancing farm income. It should help to preserve the working farms that form such an important part of the Juniata River Valley.

Special Requirements: This project would require JRVVB staff to coordinate efforts closely with the Cooperative Extension Service and secure technical assistance from other sources (e.g. legal advice, design assistance).

Other Social, Economic and Environmental Impacts: Added tourism to the Juniata River Valley will result in economic benefits to both farms and other businesses and only limited environmental and social impacts due to its compatibility with the Region's existing agricultural and rural character.

Implementation Steps and Timeline:

- 1) Survey need for specific agri-tourism enterprises and farmer interest. Complete by June 30, 2003.
- 2) Work with Cooperative Extension Service to identify resources and conduct seminars for interested parties. Complete by December 31, 2003
- 3) Work with Cooperative Extension Service to prepare and publish agri-tourism brochure including guide and map to all farms with direct sales. Complete by June 30, 2004.

Trail and Tour Development in the Juniata River Valley

Description: Support the development of additional trails and tours matching the objectives of this Regional Tourism Plan. Such trails and tours might include:

- ◇ Designation of Route 322 as a Scenic Byway using the private/public designation approach employed with respect to Pennsylvania Route 6. This collaborative approach can avoid many of the controversial growth control issues that have surrounded some other byway designations, while allowing the joint promotion of the route as a scenic tour.
- ◇ Designation of other scenic byways or scenic driving tours along Routes 35, 75, 522 and 655 (and possibly others). Union County's "Rural Routes of Union County" promotion provides an example.
- ◇ Supporting establishment of formal trails along the Pennsylvania Canal (and possibly some Canal restoration), Juniata River and the ridgetops through the two Counties. Groups such as the Juniata River Canal Trail Association are already pursuing trails or related projects in some cases that should be supported by the JRVVB in securing governmental cooperation, making grant requests and promotion.
- ◇ Supporting, through advertising and promotion, the already established wine trails and other tours through the region.

- ◇ Working with professional tour operators (several of whom already stop at the Routes 35 and 322 interchange) to create new "trails" and tours for bus trips through the region.
- ◇ Studying the advantages of obtaining official recognition of the Juniata River as a Pennsylvania Scenic River. The management obligations connected with the designation may not warrant taking that step, but this would not stop the JRVVB and adjoining counties from doing their own designation of the Juniata River as a regional scenic river with linkages to Raystown Lake, in much the same way as Route 6 has been identified as a scenic byway without extensive governmental intervention. The existing watershed organization could also play an important role in such a designation. Scenic river designation should, in fact, be driven by the outcome of watershed studies documenting its unique features.
- ◇ Creating the image of the Juniata River Valley as a trail through history by effectively signing various gateways into the Region as well as points of interest along the various trails and tours throughout it. These welcome signs should be of a distinctive high quality nature (preferably wood) and consistently employ the "Juniata River Valley...Discover Our Good Nature" theme. Similar signs should be encouraged at entranceways to Boroughs and villages. A design competition is one way to stimulate interest in such signage and also raise private contributions for its placement.

Estimated Costs: The JRVVB's largest expense in supporting trail and tour development would be staff time. Advertising and promotion would be part of the JRVVB's normal program. The staff time involved would represent perhaps \$5,000 to \$6,000/year. The JRVVB may also want to consider investing in a signage program by allocating approximately \$10,000/year for this purpose.

Economic Benefits for Tourists: Trail and tour development will increase visitor access to cultural, historic and natural features of the Juniata River Valley and, thereby, improve the quality of visitor experiences.

Economic Benefits for JRVVB and Region: Trails and tours can help shape the brand image of the Juniata River Valley by giving tourists exposure to particular facets of the Region and promoting those types of tourism most suited to preserving its rural farm character.

Special Requirements: This project would demand JRVVB staff coordination of multiple efforts by other parties both private and public. JRVVB leadership would be demanded to achieve consistency in signage, initiate contacts with governmental entities and pull together various parties.

Other Social, Economic and Environmental Impacts: New trails and tours would bring additional tourism to the Juniata River Valley with associated economic benefits and traffic impacts. They would, nevertheless, primarily encourage those activities fitting the JRVVB vision and, thereby, grow tourism without detracting significantly from the character or quality of life in the Region.

Implementation Steps and Timeline:

- 1) Identify the best trail and scenic tour opportunities for further development. Complete by December 31, 2003.
- 2) Establish an ad hoc task force of interested parties to pursue designations. Complete by March 31, 2004.
- 3) Develop signage and promotion plans for selected trails and routes. Complete by September 30, 2004.
- 4) Erect signage and begin promotion of selected trails and routes. Complete by June 30, 2005.
- 5) Repeat process for new trails and tours.



**Community and Economic
Development for Tourism**

Description: Community and economic development measures intended to increase the Region's attractiveness for tourism. These largely governmental measures might include:

- ◇ Downtown revitalization to enhance the appeal of these areas for new shops and visitors. The Downtown Lewistown Strategic Plan, for example, needs to be implemented with the support of the JRVVB to restore the Borough's "sense of place." This involves such efforts as redesigning Market Street for two-way traffic, upgrading facades and modifying parking arrangements. All these things are necessary to make the downtown a place of business friendly to shoppers and visitors. Monthly and weekly events (e.g. annual sidewalk sales, farmers market, Goose Day events) are also needed downtown to pull in visitors. Downtowns help define the character of an area and, therefore, need attention as a matter of regional priority. Mifflintown serves Juniata County very well in this way. Lewistown has much yet unrealized potential that can serve to encourage tourism throughout the Juniata River Valley.
- ◇ Cleanup and revitalization of gateway areas to the Region. Victory Park and the areas along the River in Lewistown, for example, need cleaning up. New boat launches may be worth considering in this regard. Older buildings need renovation.

Signage needs to be upgraded and landscaped welcome signs erected. The Victory Park area, in particular, could be part of a very attractive entranceway into Lewistown if it was upgraded and connected with some of the other features nearby such as the building below:



- ◇ Ensuring that future growth is of a high quality nature. This is equally important to cleanups in increasing the attractiveness of the Region. Comprehensive planning and effective land use regulations can be a major positive factor in ensuring that new commercial development incorporates good planning principles (e.g. parking in the rear, effective use of landscaping, ground vs. pole signs, etc.) and avoids the sprawl-like sameness of so many other communities. Billboard control is of particular importance and model sign regulations should be developed for consideration by municipalities. Highway interchange design and maintenance can also affect the image of an area. "Adopt a highway" and "adopt an interchange" beautification programs are very effective and should be promoted.

Mifflin County has developed a County Comprehensive Plan that addresses many of these issues and several municipalities have used it to build upon in crafting their

own plans. This process needs to be encouraged throughout the Juniata River Valley.

- ◇ Coordination of planning with surrounding counties and regions. Although formally part of the SEDA-COG and Valleys of the Susquehanna regions for purposes of most planning, economic development and promotion, Mifflin and Juniata Counties are also closely related to the Capitol Region and other Juniata River related areas of the Commonwealth. The relationships with Perry and Huntingdon Counties are particularly important, the latter because of the heavy influence and value of Raystown Lake as a regional attraction. Southern Alleghenies relationships are very important in general. This demands that Mifflin and Juniata actively participate in other alliances beyond the reaches of the Susquehanna. Juniata River promotions linked to Raystown Lake (and the other counties along the River) to get the spinoff benefits of its brand image are essential.
- ◇ Increasing access by tourism businesses to financial incentives already available for development. There are a number of existing loan programs and other financial incentives available through the Small Business Administration, SEDA-COG, the Small Communities Block Grant program, the Economic Development Administration, the Commonwealth and the Appalachian Regional Commission that are potential sources of financial capital for tourism businesses to develop and expand. These need to be inventoried, explained and publicized among JRVVB

members and potential members.

A simple matrix explanation of such programs, their uses, eligibility requirements and application procedures should be assembled by the JRVVB with the help of SEDA-COG and others for distribution. It needs to be annually updated. It should specifically include "potential uses of funds" information to encourage new tourism investment. Seminars along this along are also appropriate.

Tourist attractions and businesses now lacking and essential to an effective marketing program need to be targeted for the financial assistance. The region needs, in particular, to further develop its cultural attractions, historic sites, agricultural tourism assets, hunting and fishing related businesses, river related recreational uses and other trail and outdoor recreational facilities. Large scale event development of a compatible nature should also be supported (e.g. major festivals, new competitions). These are the areas with the greatest potential for growth and new activities in these categories will help to round out the region's offerings, building on existing assets.

- ◇ New tourism infrastructure investment by the Commonwealth. Investments in official traffic signage to direct visitors to key attractions are, for example, needed. It is essential to develop a less expensive and more streamlined alternative to the current PennDOT directional sign program. This will be especially important with the completion of the

Lewistown bypass now under construction.

Visitors also need to be directed to particularly attractive areas of the Juniata River Valley such as Mifflintown and the Big Valley. Long-term, the goal should be to secure a Route 322 Pennsylvania Welcome Center at the southern gateway to the Juniata River Valley, through which most visitors will come.

Estimated Costs: Because most of the above initiatives are governmental in nature, JRVVB expenses would be limited to the staff time involved in coordination and attendance at meetings. This would represent perhaps \$5,000 to \$10,000/year.

Economic Benefits for Tourists: Protecting and enhancing the special character of the Juniata River Valley would improve the quality of visitor experiences, offer more value to tourists.

Economic Benefits for JRVVB and Region: Higher quality visitor experiences produce higher tourism expenditures.

Special Requirements: This project would demand JRVVB staff participation in numerous activities outside the mainstream of tourism promotion, requiring an understanding of the long-term value to tourism of community development, planning and economic development.

Other Social, Economic and Environmental Impacts: Community and economic development are worthy goals independent of their importance to tourism promotion.

Implementation Steps and Timeline:

- 1) Identify those community and economic development projects, tourist attractions and businesses of most importance to tourism promotion. Complete by December 31, 2003.
- 2) Participate in the deliberations and work of other entities pursuing these community and economic development projects. Ongoing.
- 3) Complete and distribute inventory of financial assistance programs available to tourism businesses. Complete by June 30, 2004 and continue annually.