

Whitewater Valley Regional Conference

The Power of Collaboration

Facilitator's Notes:

These are the key ideas captured on the flipcharts from the second work session.

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Q: How can your efforts leverage and support the Byway [and its related projects]?

Group 1

Develop a unified branding campaign

- Used by groups pursuing regional initiatives
- Creates a consistent identity
- Provides an umbrella for groups to collaborate

Reported by Bonita Porter

Group 2

Focus on a regional tourism initiative

- Strengthen and leverage communications between all eight counties in the Whitewater Valley region
- Identify and share resources to improve product development and marketing, i.e. Regional Tourism Guide
- The Whitewater Canal Byway Association (WCBA) should serve as a information clearinghouse for trails, history, recreation and other tourism elements connecting assets throughout the Valley

Reported by Bob Felix

Group 3

WCBA serve as a regional convener

- Bring together interested groups and individuals to create "Trails" throughout the Valley
- Convene groups and communities in roundtables to identify and pursue collaborative opportunities
- Take advantage of the Valley's comparative advantage in history to create stories and experiences for residents and visitors
- Develop multi-media tools to serve as a regional information clearinghouse
- Capture the Valley's stories through oral histories
- Leverage the efforts of Ball State University to capture and tell the Valley's stories
 - Center for Historic Preservation
 - Building Better Communities
 - College of Architecture and Planning

Reported by Gail Ginther

Group 4

Regional Marketing

- Utilize Mapping and GIS (Geographic Information Systems) technologies
- Focus on two audiences – residents and visitors
- Continue to meet face-to-face and discuss opportunities as a Whitewater Valley then use Internet and Web linking technologies to support communications and follow-up

Reported by James Maley

Group 5

Education

- Target audience should be residents first
- Use the awareness of the Whitewater Canal and new Scenic Byway to create a brand for the Valley
- Teach local history in schools, i.e. Hagerstown
- Promote local agriculture through Farmers' Markets and emphasizing local cuisine (Chicken Trail)
- Use layering of trails and connecting assets to reveal the rich experiences available in the Valley

Reported by Keith Hall

Group 6

Youth Involvement

- Get young people involved in finding stories and marketing the Valley
- Identify and convene youth partners (individuals and organizations)
- Identify sponsors to provide resources, including financial support
- Take advantage of court-ordered community service to provide manpower for projects
- Use young people to provide new perspectives on visitor marketing, i.e. youth films
- Develop school field trip packages with coordinated sites and materials
- Develop year-around scheduling of events to bolster economy and maintain momentum

Reported by Jane Holman

Group 7

Interactive Web Site

- Create an interactive map with trip planning tools
- Use GIS to create asset and trail layers
- Promote advertising to support web site
- Pursue Geocaching project to create excitement in the Valley (Geocaching is a high-tech treasure hunting game played throughout the world by adventure seekers equipped with GPS devices)

- Conduct contests and games on the site to encourage exploration in the Valley
- Provide access to education tools—data, history, resource specialists, and lesson plans—to assist educators in teaching local history
- Leverage Internet photo sharing technology to capture pictures, stories, and experiences in the Valley
- Provide space for “user reviews” to promote great experiences for people traveling in the Valley
- Develop Internet “Info Spots” in Valley communities to promote assets and assist travelers in pursuing great experiences

Reported by Gary Schlueter

Group 8

Regional Convener/Facilitator

(Echoed many of the items already presented by other groups)

- Serve as an intermediary to help communities and organizations go across traditional boundaries and pursue projects with greater impact
- Seek to leverage people and their skills to strengthen the Valley
- Seek ways to leverage events and projects

Reported by Cindy Bernzott