

Uniquely Idaho

Supporting place-based economic development by promoting, protecting and enhancing unique Idaho sites, services and products

Newsletter No. 1

Summer / Fall 2007

The Journey So Far

A chronicle of the efforts to bring cultural tourism opportunities to Idaho (written by Delta James).

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An update on the effort to designate a route in Canyon County a scenic byway. In addition to other features, the focus will be on local wineries.

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St. Maries Arts Tourism

Starting with the Arts, Jeff Baker and others are gearing up to identify, support and promote what is uniquely Idaho in and around St. Maries

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A regional collaborative effort to develop an initiative similar to HandMade in America from the St. Joe River down to the Clearwater.

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Uniquely Idaho: A Brief History

May, 2005: What is now Uniquely Idaho, a place-based economic development strategy that helps communities identify, enhance and market their unique sites, heritage, culture and products (primarily through community planning, business and community development assistance and marketing materials such as guide books), began when the Idaho Department of Commerce Tourism Division partnered with Idaho Commission on the Arts to bring Becky Anderson, Executive Director of rural North Carolina's HandMade in America (www.handmadeinamerica.org) to present a keynote address at the Idaho Governor's Conference on Recreation and Tourism in Idaho Falls. HandMade's novel approach to economic and tourism development sparked numerous requests from keynote attendees to have Becky return to Idaho for a series of regional presentations.

April/May 2006: Back by popular demand, Becky returned to Idaho for a seven-stop keynote tour (Moscow, Sandpoint, Twin Falls, Pocatello, Idaho Falls, Hailey and Boise) thanks to the support of the Idaho Commission on the Arts, USDA Rural Development, Idaho Rural Partnership, and Dept. of Commerce. 614 people attended.

July 2006: State and federal agency representatives convened for the first Uniquely Idaho steering committee meeting where the

question was asked, "Will this model work in the West?"

Aug. 2006: Coordinators from Hands of Harvest (www.handsofharvest.org), an effort in central Montana modeled after HandMade in America, presented in Boise to 43 attendees and demonstrated that, yes, this approach to place-based economic development can work in the rural, vast geography of the West.

Nov. 2006: Eleven Idahoans (representing the Arts Commission, UI Extension, Clearwater Economic Development Association (CEDA), Clearwater County Economic Development, Mountain Home and St. Maries) attended HandMade in America's Rural Tourism Workshop in Asheville, NC.

Dec. 2006: The Uniquely Idaho Steering Committee issued a RFQ seeking to identify and support regional projects similar to the HandMade model.

Feb. 2007: RFQ deadline. Four projects were submitted:
• Canyon County Economic Development & Idaho Grape Growers & Wine Producers Commission
• CEDA
• Coeur d'Alene Tribe
• St. Maries Arts Council / Greater St. Joe Development Foundation

Since then Steering Committee partners have supported projects in a variety of ways:

• Arts Commission awarded \$7500 to St. Maries Arts Council to begin asset identification.

- Tourism Division is working with St. Maries to update their tourism-related websites.
- Tourism Division has provided technical assistance to Coeur d'Alene Tribe regarding a visitors' survey they proposed.
- The Gold Rush Artisan Adventures in Clearwater County is featured in the Discover Guide, a North Central Idaho Travel Association publication.
- In North / North Central Idaho, University of Idaho Extension organized two regional meetings aimed to bridge the St. Maries and Clearwater efforts. Steering Committee members Dale Dixon and Delta James facilitated the meetings.
- Garry Young of ITD has been assisting the Canyon County group with the scenic byway designation process.



Idahoans attending the rural tourism workshop at the HandMade Institute visited a potter's studio. This piece is made with a real leaf.

The Uniquely Idaho Steering Committee will continue to identify, support and promote the kind of regional efforts described on page 2.

Delta James, Economic Specialist with Idaho Department of Commerce, has been a catalyst for and champion of Uniquely Idaho

Snake River Canyon

The Snake River Canyon Scenic Byway (SRCSB) Committee is busy getting a route that follows the Snake River in Canyon County designated as a scenic byway. The designation will be from State Highway 45 and the Snake River at the southern end of Canyon County along Map Rock Road, continuing north along Chicken Dinner Road, west along Homedale Road, north along Allendale Road, then west along Ustick Road, north on Fargo Road, west along Dixie Road, up Wamstad Road to Parma, and finally along US 95 and US 20/26 to the Snake River on the north end. Garry Young, Idaho Transportation Department and Uniquely Idaho Steering Committee member, is assisting the group and anticipates approval by the Idaho Transportation board in late October. After official designation, the SRCSB logo can be fabricated for signs and within a short time thereafter be placed along the route. Also with designation the SRCSB will receive funding for the development of a corridor management plan (CMP).

The CMP will indicate the points of interest on the Byway. As a Uniquely Idaho project the SRCSB plans to focus the CMP on the agricultural (vineyards and hops fields, etc.) aspects of the byway as well as the many historical, geological and wildlife tourist opportunities available along the route.

The chairman of the Snake River Canyon Scenic Byway (SRCSB) Committee is Harold A. Nevill. His e-mail is: hnevill@pte.idaho.gov.

Uniquely North Idaho

A regional collaborative group has formed to develop and implement a place-based community and economic development initiative in north and north central Idaho (and parts of eastern Washington). Drawing heavily on the HandMade in America model the goal is to identify, protect and enhance unique sites, products and services in a defined geographic area. The group will develop loop tours and tour maps that focus on the arts, history, agriculture and food in the region between the St. Joe and Clearwater Rivers. A steering committee and subcommittees are forming that will involve both the Nez Perce and Coeur d'Alene Tribes, University of Idaho Extension, Lewis and Clark State College, Arts organizations and economic development practitioners from throughout the region as well as representatives from sustainable agriculture, Community Action Partnership, Chambers of Commerce

and the North Central Idaho Travel Association.

The steering committee will provide guidance and oversight for the following activities:

- 1) Community asset identification via a series of facilitated community meetings in towns interested in participating,
- 2) Community and Business Development through one-on-one consulting, training workshops and educational materials, and
- 3) Marketing and promotion of loop tours, package opportunities, communities and the region

The group intends to include willing eastern Washington partners in the project so will likely have to think of another name for itself. University of Idaho Extension will continue to coordinate the effort on an interim basis until funding is available to sustain the effort. Contact Lorie Higgins for more information: 208-885-9717 or higgins@uidaho.edu.



Uniquely Idaho - St. Maries

Advocates for the Arts in St. Maries are busy increasing economic opportunities for artists and entertainment opportunities for visitors. Recent and upcoming events include a redesigned Chamber of Commerce website that will be a central part of the Uniquely Idaho promotion (www.stmarieschamber.org). In July a Uniquely Idaho booth at the smART Festival featured up and coming artists and crafters. A "First Friday" Art Walk on Main St. is proving to be a popular way to promote art while providing a social gathering for the community. Other activities include a juried art show of pieces focused on a regional theme; enhancements to Ride Idaho will provide the bicycling participants with memorable opportunities, and a Druha Trava weekend with events planned around performances by the famous Czech Republic Bluegrass band.

Arts Council Vice President, Jeff Baker, is engaged in identifying cultural assets in the area that range from arts to agritourism sites. Jeff is also a Uniquely North Idaho steering committee member and will help integrate the St. Maries efforts with the Uniquely North Idaho regional effort to identify, develop, promote and protect the unique cultural assets

between and including the St. Joe and Clearwater Rivers.

Jeff can be contacted via email: jbaker8@verizon.net.

Upcoming Events

Helping Small Towns Succeed
October 23 - 25, 2007, Albuquerque
A training sponsored by the Heartland Center for Leadership Development
<http://www.heartlandcenter.info/hstsflyernolocation.pdf.pdf>

Resources and Links of Interest

New Mexico Fiber Arts Trail
www.nmfiberarts.org

Vermont's Cultural Heritage Tourism Toolkit
www.vermontartscouncil.org/Community/CulturalHeritageTourism/tabid/168/Default.aspx#CHI
ArtWorks Grants Pass, artist survey (asset identification)
www.artworksgp.com/index.php?cid=1263

Paper on marketing crafts to tourists, Michigan State University Extension (marketing)
web1.msue.msu.edu/imp/modtd/33809809.html

Geo Tourism lesson plans (marketing)
www.nationalgeographic.com/xpeditions/lessons/06/g35/geofriendly.html

Listings of small farms and farmers markets (asset identification)
www.touchthesoil.com

Missouri River Hills / Regional Cuisines project
www.showme.net/MRH/index.html

Economic Gardening in Littleton Colorado (business and community development)
www.littletongov.org/bia/economicgardening/default.asp

Publication by the Western Rural Development Center: Sustainable Rural Community Development: An Annotated Bibliography.
http://extension.usu.edu/files/publications/publication/pub_8058368.pdf

Uniquely Idaho is a collaborative effort of...

- University of Idaho Extension
- Idaho Dept. of Commerce
- USDA Rural Development
- Idaho Rural Partnership
- Idaho Transportation Department
- Idaho Commission on the Arts
- Idaho Department of Agriculture
- Idaho State Historical Society
- Idaho Parks and Recreation

And countless local and regional partners!