

Colorado Scenic and Historic Byways Annual Meeting

CRAFT Program: “Lessons Learned and Getting Started”

Scenic Highway of Legends –

The cities of Trinidad and Walsenburg both participated in the CTO’s first CRAFT 101 project in 2018. Business owners and tourism leaders from the HOL communities of La Veta, Walsenburg, Stonewall, Cuchara, Cokedale and Trinidad attended classes in Walsenburg and/ or Trinidad and while the financial benefit of a possible \$10,000 grant was a definite plus, one community leader put it quite well, saying, “I was focused more on how the program would bring the Byway stakeholders together.”

Following the day-long meetings, the communities then were asked how they would use grant funding to further implement recommendations and insights identified from the project.

The Walsenburg CRAFT project identified the need for a accessible, sustainable medium that could catalog their visitor assets and be regularly updated. The resulting implementation funds supported the development of an inventory of tourist attractions, which was then used to refine the rebuild of SpanishPeaksCountry.com website, to develop multiple CTO itineraries, define public relations efforts, acclimate the new consultants to the region, as well as produce new photography and videography projects.

The Trinidad CRAFT project identified the need for a detailed visitor profile study that could help inform current local tourism businesses and operators about who is traveling to Trinidad, help understand the demographic of the visitors and why they are visiting. It would also help to determine what additional visitor profiles there was the ability to attract, and help identify if there were other reasonable tourism assets that could be considered to attract potential future visitors. As a result, the community has identified bicycle tourism as a potential new industry that is not only possible, but recommended by leaders in the industry and plans were to create and plan a new signature event (pre-COVID)

Both community projects resulted in giving direction to the tourism leaders in the respective communities along the Scenic Highway of Legends on how to positively impact the growth of tourism as a major economic industry in the southern Colorado region.