

CRAFT

WORKSHOP

SUMMARY REPORT FOR
THE FRONTIER PATHWAYS SCENIC BYWAY
MARCH 5, 2020



THIS REPORT WAS CREATED IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE COLORADO TOURISM OFFICE AS PART OF THE COLORADO RURAL ACADEMY FOR TOURISM (CRAFT), AND THE FRONTIER PATHWAYS SCENIC BYWAY.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



On March 5, 2020 the Frontier Pathways Scenic Byway CRAFT Workshop was held at the El Pueblo History Museum in Pueblo, Colorado. The workshop was attended by a combination of scenic byway committee members, municipalities, chamber and tourism offices, and other stakeholders. The CRAFT Workshop topic was a combination of Marketing and Historical and Cultural Tourism, with a focus on considering ways to market the Frontier Pathways tour itineraries that have been developed to promote tourism along the scenic byway.

Based on recommendations from the previous CRAFT Mentor, we explored the ways to advertise to bus tour companies and international tour operators, but also discovered some regional audiences to market to. The group decided on a short-term goal to utilize their implementation funding for a scenic byway map/brochure that will include the five itineraries, as well as some long-term goals to work toward. The group felt they were missing some important stakeholders but will begin reaching out with a positive and unified message to gain support.



CRAFT IN THE COMMUNITY

Colorado Rural Academy for Tourism (CRAFT) Workshops provide one- or one-and-a-half-day intensive training and work for communities or regions wishing to advance a tourism-related strategy for a specific industry segment. Workshops are offered for Culinary & Agritourism, Cycling Tourism, Heritage & Cultural Tourism, Marketing & Social Media, Outdoor Adventure Tourism and Sustainable Tourism. Upon successful completion of a Workshop, communities are eligible to apply for up to \$2,500 in implementation funding towards a project defined during the Workshop.

Frontier Pathways has previously participated in a CRAFT Mentor project.

Marketing plus Heritage & Cultural Tourism CRAFT Workshop with the Frontier Pathways Scenic Byway

OUTLINE OF DEFINED WORKSHOP GOALS

- ▶ Understand the current itineraries and the benefit of marketing them
- ▶ Understand marketing Cultural and Heritage Tours to US and International markets
- ▶ Learn about demographics and target markets for bus tours and international tour companies
- ▶ Learn about tour companies and tour operators and how best to market itineraries to them.
- ▶ Discuss options for marketing grants and resources available to communities and independent businesses
- ▶ Create plan for implementation funding

WORKSHOP AGENDA OVERVIEW

▶ Highlights of activities

- ▶ The morning started with introductions and the attendees were asked to share the one "must see or do" thing they would share with a visitor or the thing they love the most about their scenic byway region. These responses were recorded and when placed in a word collage we see there is much to love about the Frontier Pathways area:



The group then moved into a presentation to learn about the Frontier Pathways tour itineraries, the recommendations of the recent CRAFT Mentor, basic marketing, and marketing strategies and demographics. The group was split into 4 smaller teams and discussed the demographics of the "dream tourist" who would most enjoy these itineraries. Each group reported out to the larger group.

The guest speaker for the workshop was Julianne Frederick, Executive Director, Tour Colorado. This organization works to promote US and international group tours within Colorado. Julianne talked about who these visitors are, the impact of motor coach tours on Colorado's economy, the importance of building long term relationships with tour operators and how to reach them through Tour Colorado, National Tour Association and the American Bus Association.

After lunch Katie Payer shared information about the CTO Marketing Programs and Support. Then there was a lengthy discussion about what success looks like and a session strategizing next steps. A discussion about CTO Marketing Matching Grants followed with examples of some existing successful collaborations shared and ideas about how to engage the local stakeholders in creating a successful collaboration. The final discussion was about the CRAFT Workshop implementation funding.

SUMMARY OF OUTCOMES

The Frontier Pathways Scenic Byway has created five viable tour itineraries that introduce visitors to some unique, historic assets and attractions. These itineraries can be marketed to tour operators along with a local step-on guide, they can be used to share on Colorado.com as Colo-road trip itineraries, and on the various Colorado Scenic Byway resources.

During the small group exercise to identify the “dream tourist” for these itineraries, it was discovered that there are several opportunities to reach out to regional visitors. The following is a breakdown of each of the itineraries and potential audiences that were identified.

▶ Itinerary “A Day on the American Frontier”

- ▶ 4th grade Colorado History students. These classes are required to study Colorado’s history and the Pueblo area has some of the oldest and most diverse history – from the multiple countries claiming sovereignty, native inhabitants, the coal and iron industrial history, and military history. Currently, local schools are invited to visit the historical assets on the scenic byway, this outreach could extend to several neighboring school districts.
- ▶ Military history buffs
- ▶ Hunters interested in historical hunting techniques and the animals that were available historically.

▶ Itinerary “Pueblo Legacy Tour”

- ▶ Over 50’s with inquisitive minds
- ▶ Geeks (fondly – of course)
- ▶ Colorado history buffs

▶ Itinerary “Cowboys and Castles”

- ▶ Families traveling by car, RV, travel trailer
- ▶ Retirees traveling by car, RV
- ▶ People interested in discovering the “Real West”

▶ Itinerary “Home of Heroes and Walk of Valor”

- ▶ Active and retired military
- ▶ Families visiting the Air Force Academy
- ▶ Medal of Honor recipients and their families
- ▶ Plane enthusiasts
- ▶ Military history buffs

▶ Itinerary “Royal Gorge Bridge and Cripple Creek”

- ▶ While not technically on the Frontier Pathways Scenic Byway, there was discussion on how the scenic byway committee could collaborate to draw visitors from these nearby attractions.

Group discussion brought forth the following concerns and challenges:

- ▶ If the scenic byway organization decides to run tours for these itineraries, they will need multiple vans, insurance, trained guides, a reservation booking system
- ▶ A need for more local public transportation and individuals could use to explore the itineraries
- ▶ A voice with the decision makers – municipal, county, political and community groups. There is much frustration with the lack of knowledge about the scenic byway and its assets and coordinated efforts to promote the area
- ▶ Lack of interstate signage to draw visitors off the I-25 corridor
- ▶ A need for financial resources, increased collaborations, and coordination of unified message

Group discussion brought forth the following opportunities

- ▶ Collaboration with partners to create a unified message to present to municipal and county entities
- ▶ A need for partners to create a cohesive strategic tourism plan
- ▶ Support the Pueblo Chamber and CTO Google co-op to improve community and business presence online
- ▶ Apply for additional CRAFT Workshops or CRAFT 101/201 programs
- ▶ Build a plan to apply for a CTO Marketing Matching Grant

The group finished with a lively discussion about the best use for the workshop implementation funding. The idea of purchasing a van to sell tours for the itinerary was discussed. Creating a map and brochure for the scenic byway route and include the itineraries was also discussed.



NEXT STEPS

Community

- ▶ Get bid for design and printing of a map/brochure
- ▶ Apply for CRAFT Workshop implementation funding
- ▶ Research the actual costs of setting up a tour company to sell guided tours of the scenic byway itineraries to fund future projects on the byway
 - ▶ Cost of vans
 - ▶ Insurance
 - ▶ Reservation system
 - ▶ Tour guides – training and compensation
- ▶ Contact OEDIT to learn about the Rural Opportunity Program to get assistance to determine if a business model is viable and sustainable
- ▶ Reach out to additional stakeholders to share the results and ideas from the workshop and begin building collaborations
 - ▶ Unified tourism strategic plan
 - ▶ Consider a CTO Marketing Matching Grant



Facilitator Recommendations

- ▶ Form a marketing and outreach committee to consider ways to offer the scenic byway itineraries to the potential regional travelers identified above
 - ▶ Fall 2020 - Choose five neighboring school districts to invite 4th grade classes to use the itineraries in their Colorado History studies. Continue to reach out to five new school districts in Spring of 2021 and five more in Fall 202. Maintain a database of local schools and the new schools so regular updates and invitations can be sent.
 - ▶ Create an outreach and marketing plan to regional military facilities, staff, family, support organizations, schools
 - ▶ Explore offering the itineraries to Front Range RV dealers to be included in their “new owner” packets
- ▶ Research options to reach regional and national audiences through Tour Colorado, Colorado Scenic Byways and the Colorado Tourism Office
 - ▶ Consumer travel and RV shows in Denver/Colorado Springs
 - ▶ National tour operator shows through NTA and ABA
 - ▶ Colorado Scenic Byways microsites on [Colorado.com](https://www.colorado.com)
 - ▶ Submit itineraries to Colo-road trips
- ▶ Connect with CTO domestic and international PR teams
 - ▶ Register to receive and respond to PR Hot Sheet requests for story ideas
 - ▶ Attend at least one CTO sponsored Media Reception to share story ideas directly with Colorado media representatives
- ▶ Craft positive messages about the Frontier Pathways Scenic Byway and give regular updates to municipal and county leadership to educate and inform them of the importance of supporting the work and stakeholders of the byway.

CRAFT WORKSHOP IMPLEMENTATION FUNDING

The Frontier Pathways Scenic Byway will use the CRAFT implementation funding to match a credit they have with a local graphic design company to create a map/brochure highlighting the itineraries and additional resources in the area.

FACILITATOR INFO

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Heidi has worked in the tourism industry for most of her career and currently works for the Ouray Tourism Office with responsibilities in destination development, marketing and public relations. She has been actively involved with the Colorado Hot Springs Loop and Mountains and Mesas collaborative marketing grant programs. Heidi serves on the Colorado Scenic Byways Commission as the Western Colorado Byways representative. She is an alumna of the Class of 2019 Colorado Tourism Leadership Journey. Heidi has recently started her own consulting company, HCP Consulting LLC to make sharing her vast industry experience with other organizations and destinations.

"Working as the facilitator for the Frontier Pathways Scenic Byway CRAFT Workshop was an honor. The group was very engaged, participated in activities and discussions and were passionate about their goals and projects. I look forward to watching the group move forward in a positive and proactive approach to achieve their goals."

CTO CONTACT INFORMATION

The Colorado Rural Academy for Tourism (CRAFT) is part of the Colorado Tourism Office's Destination Development Program which exists to address the need to drive economic growth in rural Colorado by providing tourism-related education, funding, and support with the goals of increasing visitor spending, strengthening local economies and bolstering community pride. For additional information on opportunities with the Colorado Tourism Office please check out our website industry.colorado.com.

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