

DECISIONS  
3-16-05



**2004-2005  
Marketing Plan**



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Hill & Company Integrated Marketing & Advertising has been commissioned by the Silver Thread Colorado Scenic Byway Committee to develop the marketing plan for 2004-2005. The basis of the plan is formulated from the available research within each Byway community (Lake City, Creede & South Fork), the Colorado Tourism Organization and the 2003 America's Colorado Scenic Byway research study conducted by the Center for Community Development.

The Silver Thread Colorado Scenic Byway Committee currently consists of an 18 member board representing the communities, businesses, Bureau of Land Management, Division of Wildlife, US Forest Service, Chambers and Visitor Centers that serve the Silver Thread Scenic Byway area.

The Silver Thread Byway has a 10-year history with almost a million dollars in grant money previously applied towards a Lure brochure, interpretive signs, a guidebook, and Visitor Centers with displays. Both Lake City and South Fork house Silver Thread Interpretive Centers. Creede has received a CDOT grant to acquire property for a Visitor Information Center. A Colorado Division of Wildlife grant funds a watchable wildlife brochure for the Byway, which should be print ready by 2004. Beginning in February, the three communities are sharing a billboard on US 285 coming into Alamosa to promote the Silver Thread.

The towns along the Byway are rich in history and cultural heritage. Lake City currently has the largest Historic District in the State. The quality of historic architecture within each of the towns along the Byway is high and could be used to combine historic elements with present day offerings to incite visitation.

As we reviewed the research provided by the Center for Community Development within the Colorado Scenic Byway study, it became increasingly clear that decisions to visit the Byways of Colorado are made after arrival in the State. This information provides great opportunity to expand the regional reach of Byway efforts to include broader and more targeted distribution mechanisms.

Existing research from the Visitor Centers and Chambers within each community was forwarded to the Center for Community Development for compilation. The information sent included geographic origin of visitors and in some cases average length of stay, 800 number and email information. The information was placed into a database and analyzed, resulting in the identification of the top geographic origin data for each community (based on visitor center statistics).

However it was not possible to determine the overall visitor demographics and seasonal attributes of travelers along the Byway. This will need to be accomplished in the future along with the development of consistent data gathering practices that will result in the review of comparative data from community to community and Visitor Center to Visitor Center or Chamber.

The goal of this plan is to provide a roadmap for the Silver Thread Scenic Byway Committee to follow through 2005. It identifies three key areas the Committee can focus on to increase awareness and visitation to the Byway and its communities. These areas include:

1. Research
2. Branding, Communication and Collaboration
3. Education and training

**1. Research**

There is a need for additional research and consistent methodology from community to community, which will provide an ability to analyze differences between the communities as well as opportunities.

- A. Developing a consistent methodology of research between each community and its respective Visitor Centers and Chambers to track data seasonally.
  - Chamber vs. Visitor Center vs. community at large
- B. Identification of day visitor versus overnight visitor attributes by season to include:
  - Geographic origin
  - Trip planning motivators
  - Travel party information (such as length of stay, number of people in travel party, travel patterns)
  - Demographic information such as HHI, education, marital status, employment status
  - Awareness of the Scenic Byway prior to visiting
  - Reasons for including the Scenic Byway in their vacation plans
- C. Identification of destination and routing to include points of entry to the Byway area to assist targeted marketing efforts.
- D. Monitoring lodging tax, town sales tax and county sales tax collections.

**2. Branding, Communication & Collaboration**

- A. Clear identification of the "essence" of the Byway and how it is represented to the local residents and visitors to the area.
- B. Development of point of sale messaging that will establish the brand within the targeted area.
- C. Communication of this asset to local residents to generate additional repeat visitation and increased length of stay.
- D. Continued collaboration between the three towns (South Fork, Creede and Lake City) to promote the Byway and its assets.

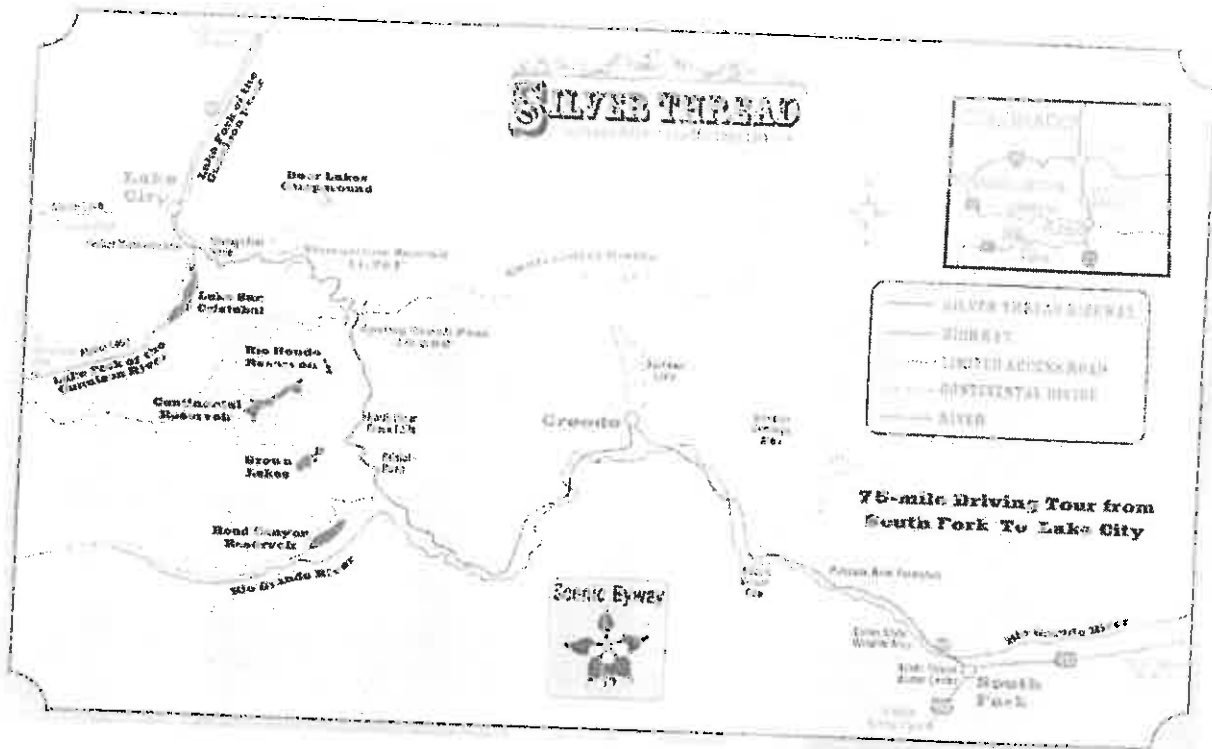
**3. Education & Training**

- A. Education to each community of the Byway and its heritage.
- B. Training to community residents on how to promote this asset within their own businesses.

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## I. SITUATION ANALYSIS



### A. Silver Thread Scenic Byway

The Silver Thread Scenic Byway is located in the southwest portion of the state of Colorado on Hwy. 149, which goes over the Continental Divide. It is a 75-mile journey between the towns of South Fork, Lake City and Creede and crosses the Gunnison and Rio Grande National Forests as well as the majestic San Juan Mountains. Major attractions along the Byway include Lake San Cristobal, the Slumgullion Mud Slide, North Clear Creek Falls, the headwaters of the Rio Grande and Wagon Wheel Gap. This historic Byway was formed in 1990 and is a Forest Service National Scenic Byway as well as a Colorado State Scenic and Historic Byway.

The Byway and the towns along the route make this a special and historical place for travel. Originally, the Ute Indians inhabited the area surrounding the Byway. After 1873, the Utes moved further west and mining moved into the area along with ranching. With this influx of new methods to drive the economy, the railroad began development in the late 1880s. With the onslaught of automobiles in the early 1900s the railroad was replaced by a dirt road now known as the Silver Thread Scenic Byway. This road remained a dirt road until 1968 when the Creede to Lake City portion of the Silver Thread was paved. The last part of the highway was paved in 1983 and is now as we know it, the Silver Thread Scenic Byway.

The towns along the Byway each provide a special piece of history to the area and are an essential part of the 75-mile journey through their offerings and the diversity of the three counties they encompass. At the start of the Byway lies South Fork. South Fork is the gateway to the San Juan

Mountains as well as the Silver Thread Scenic Byway. Originally the town was known for timber processing and agriculture. Today, South Fork has become somewhat of a resort area and the main

attraction to visitors is the downhill skiing located at Wolf Creek. Wolf Creek maintains snow levels early in the winter season and late into Spring making it a popular spot to powder ski. South Fork also provides great water activities such as fishing and rafting.

After South Fork, travelers will encounter Creede which was founded in 1889. Creede originally boomed with silver mining and is named after one of the first settlers to strike it rich in the area named Nicholas Creede. The town grew rapidly in the 1880s and then in 1893 began its demise when silver prices plummeted. Today, Creede is best known for its Underground Mining Museum and its Repertory Theatre which consistently sells out July through September of each year.

On the last few miles of the Byway lies Lake City. Lake City lays claim to possessing one of the richest lead and silver mines in the San Juan Mountains. Unlike some of the other mountain mining towns in the late 1800s, Lake City exuded culture, class and churches. Lake City is currently one of the largest historic districts in the state and still focuses on art with its historic Black Crooke Theatre and through hosting many cultural events throughout the year.

With the three signature towns along the route that all offer a unique historical experience, travelers find the beauty of the drive equally compelling. Large open spaces and vast wilderness, coupled with the San Juan Mountains and the Rio Grande make this route truly unique and an important piece of American history. For 75 miles the Silver Thread and the surrounding towns offer activities and events year-round. The unique selling proposition of the area lies in its location and the three diverse towns along its path.

The ability to market the entire Byway and the towns and historic sites along the way will be the essential part of the marketing plan. The ability to cross promote the towns via the local Chambers and all printed materials will be the first phase in assisting this process and the ability to communicate the unique attributes of the towns and the scenery will be the focal point of all efforts.

## **B. Travel Industry Overview**

Looking back on 2003, the travel industry in general suffered relatively high revenue losses with a marked decline in travel overall worldwide. Going into 2003, consumer confidence was at its lowest level since 1993 and nationally, year-round hotel occupancies fell below 60% by the end of 2002. As we review initiatives for 2004-2005 it will be important to better understand how people travel, why they travel and when they will travel. As the economy continues to fluctuate and resolution in the Middle East is still unsettled, the consumer market watches and waits. Travel abroad has slowed considerably and more and more people are traveling shorter distances and by car.

Trends within the industry also show a marked decline in room rate and overall occupancy. With the highest rate of short term bookings since the 1970s, the lodging community has found it difficult to forecast budget, rate and occupancy. The Internet continues to help drive sales, however, market savvy consumers have now become "rate players" via the Internet. The ability to seek out and find the best rate available is a quick and easy process and allows the consumer more control over selection and price than in the past.

As we approach the summer of 2004, the tourism sector in general is cautiously optimistic. Early indicators show that travel is up over 2003 and the desire to visit Colorado is increasing.

General Trends in the Industry include the following:

### **Travel Industry Overview-**

#### **Market Overview**

As the American economy begins to recover following ongoing war in Iraq and the ongoing threat of terrorism, travel trends are changing worldwide. The four greatest forces dictating travel trends are:

- 9/11 legacy
- Languishing economy
- Evolving demography of social values
- Growing impact of the Internet on distribution

#### **Colorado Travel Trends:**

All of these factors have contributed to the reaction on the part of the travel community reflecting large drops in rate and an increase in special pricing and packaging as well as lower air fares. As the tourism industry continues to recover, Colorado is seeing its own trends which may reflect an upswing in overall visitation and revenue for 2004.

Based on a study of leisure travelers nationwide conducted by Yesawich, Pepperdine, Brown and Russell in June of 2003, more than half of leisure travelers interested in visiting Colorado have taken one or more extended leisure trips of five nights or more. This is a significantly higher proportion than those travelers polled who do not intend to travel to Colorado in the next twelve months.

The income levels of leisure travelers to Colorado are relatively higher than those travelers who do not intend to visit Colorado and overall the majority of leisure visitors to Colorado intend to travel to Europe and the Middle East in the next two years.

The vast majority of respondents (84%) to the Yesawich survey who planned on taking a trip to Colorado in 2003 planned to travel by personal automobile. Additionally, 31% of those who planned on coming to Colorado said their primary purpose of the trip would be sightseeing.

### **Nationwide Travel Trends**

#### **Colorado Tourism Conference 2003**

Peter Yesawich, President & CEO of Yesawich, Pepperdine & Brown

As the research shows, our tourism customers continue to change and evolve. At the 2003 Colorado Tourism Office Annual Conference, Peter Yesawich of Yesawich, Pepperdine and Brown spoke on the evolution of the leisure visitor. Following is a synopsis of his leisure traveler report.

Overall nationally, consumers are now exhibiting the following trends:

#### **Consumer Trends**

- Consumers want to reconnect with what they really feel is important
- 1 out of 5 consumers in America does not speak English at home
- 62% increase in Spanish speaking population in the last two decades
- 73% now spend more time thinking about what works in their lives and what does not
- 71% of all parents wish they spent more time as a group
- 69% wish they had more time to sit and talk with their children
- 80% of families practice "togetherness" (shared vacations with other families or relatives)
- 8 out of 10 travelers have "togetherness" at least once in the past 2 years
- All consumers now feel that they are VIPs and will not relinquish the perks of the 90s while being unwilling to pay more

#### **Internet Trends**

- The single most significant change created by the Internet has been to give the consumer a greater sense of control in travel decisions
- 63% of travelers, including those interested in visiting Colorado, got travel information and prices over the Internet, compared to 57% in 2003
- 58% of all consumers said they get the best travel prices online
- 92% of all consumers shop for lowest fares online
- 68% of all consumers have difficulty in finding what they are searching for
- 76% find online advertising a nuisance
- 38% of users are willing to pay 20% more for customized products and services

#### **Leisure Vacation**

- Leisure travelers have become more family centric in their actions and response to travel
- 48% of all leisure travelers feel that economic conditions are making it harder for them to travel
- 11% of all travelers feel they have less free time to spend on traveling
- Value has become the key to travelers' hearts
- The status symbol for travelers today is getting a better deal than other travelers
- 6 out of 10 travelers want to make sure they do not overpay
- 81% of all consumers want to go someplace they have never been before

#### **Where they dream about going:**

- |              |                         |
|--------------|-------------------------|
| ▪ Florida    | 38%                     |
| ▪ California | 34%                     |
| ▪ Colorado   | 17% (down 2% from 2002) |
| ▪ Hawaii     | 16%                     |
| ▪ Arizona    | 17%                     |
| ▪ New York   | 16%                     |
| ▪ Alaska     | 15%                     |



**Out of all vacations taken**

- 51% feel they do not have enough vacation time (down 5% from 2002)
- 54% focus on weekend stays
- 23% take vacations for 5+ days
- 23% take weekday vacations
- 41% experience time poverty

**C. Statewide Travel Trends**

The statistics on the following two pages are compiled from the Longwoods International 2003 research for the state of Colorado. This research provides information on vacationers selecting Colorado as their vacation destination. If we use the research compiled by Longwoods along with the more recent research compiled as part of the America's Scenic Byway Study, we are able to define the trip types and general vacation attributes of vacationers to Mineral, Rio Grande and Hinsdale Counties. This information will assist in defining 2004-2005 efforts until additional research has been compiled from the communities of Lake City, Creede and South Fork.

**Purpose of Trip**

Colorado's trends for 2003 core segments generally paralleled national trends:

- E. More touring, special event, combined business-pleasure, casino and country resort trips
- F. Little change for city and ski trips

In 2003, Colorado attracted the following numbers of visitors in these segments:

Touring trips	2,920,000
Outdoors trips	1,710,000
Ski trips	1,620,000
Special event trips	1,630,000
Business-pleasure trips	1,440,000
City trips	610,000
Casino trips	480,000
Country resort trips	380,000

**Sources of Business:**

Most Colorado visitors over the past several years have come from the Western states comprising the Mountain, West North Central, and West South Central census divisions. In 2002, 61% of all overnight leisure trips originated in the Pacific Coast region and Colorado residents themselves accounted for slightly over 2 in 10 vacationers.



**CREEDE VISITOR CENTER**

The top 3 states for visitation to Creed's Visitor Center were similar to Lake City with the exception of New Mexico in 3<sup>rd</sup> place for Creede as opposed to Oklahoma, for Lake City (2nd quarter numbers for 2001 reflected below):

State	City	Visitors
Texas	Dallas/Ft worth	100
Texas	Amarillo	21
Texas	San Antonio	19
Colorado	Denver Metro	73
Colorado	Colorado Springs	21
Colorado	Montrose	19
New Mexico	Albuquerque	35
New Mexico	Clovis	10
New Mexico	Los Alamos	6

**SOUTH FORK GUEST BOOK ENTRIES**

State	2001	2002	2003
Texas	661	381	426
Oklahoma	260	123	162
Colorado	280	178	153
Arizona	0	0	52
Kansas	91	55	47
Louisiana	57	54	43
Missouri	90	41	42
New Mexico	58	37	32
<b>Total # of Visitors</b>	<b>2056</b>	<b>1230</b>	<b>1281</b>

**LODGING TAX RECAP**

Lodging tax revenue was reported for 2001-2004. Small decreases in overall revenue occurred from 2002 to 2003. For all four years, 4<sup>th</sup> quarter had the highest collections. Total revenue by year is listed in the chart below for each county.

<b>Period</b>	<b>Lodging Tax for Rio Grande County including South Fork, Del Norte &amp; Monte Vista</b>	<b>Lodging Tax for Hinsdale County (Lake City)</b>	<b>Lodging Tax for Mineral County (Creede)</b>
2001	\$59,880	\$38,260	\$48,397
2002	\$72,355	\$41,654	\$46,954
2003	\$63,352	\$38,747	\$47,573
2004	\$78,455	\$41,692	\$43,704

**SALES TAX RECAP**

As reported by the Colorado Department of Revenue, the following chart provides an overview of sales tax collections for the Silver Thread Colorado Scenic Byway area including the towns of South Fork, Creede and Lake City.

**TOWN SALES TAX**

<b>Period</b>	<b>Sales Tax for South Fork</b>	<b>Sales Tax for Lake City</b>	<b>Sales Tax for Creede</b>
2001	223,066	199,876	156,347
2002	207,084	199,938	144,146
2003	216,970	200,346	130,498
2004	202,098	191,980	136,699*

\*Creede Sales Tax does not include 4<sup>th</sup> quarter 2004.

**COUNTY SALES TAX**

Period	Sales Tax Rio Grand County (South Fork)	Sales Tax Mineral County (Creede)	Sales Tax Hinsdale County (Lake City)
2001	353,691	323,412	391,805
2002	344,186	302,101	371,721
2003	294,688	144,506	173,361
2004		158,071	172,112

**LODGING UNITS**

TYPE	LAKE CITY	CREEDE	SOUTH FORK
Sleeping rooms	40 Includes hotels and motels	282 Includes cabins, rooms, cottages and ranch house	346 Includes Motels, cabins and B&Bs
Campgrounds	351 Includes camping cabins	255 Includes RV & Tent sites not Forest Service campgrounds	994 Includes RV & Tent Sites
% Change	-1%	0	0

**2003 SOUTH FORK OCCUPANCY**

TYPE	JAN %	FEB %	MAR %	APR %	MAY %	JUNE %	JULY %	AUG %	SEP %	OCT %	NOV %	DEC %
Cabin	34.0	38.8	44.4	7.0	21.1	50.5	77.3	76.4	68.1	59.6	43.3	62.6
Rooms	21.2	20.3	25.0	11.3	24.0	43.0	62.7	64.0	49.2	46.2	39.8	49.6
RV	11.3	12.9	14.8	2.3	6.7	12.6	19.3	19.1	17.0	19.9	14.4	20.9



## **AMERICA'S SCENIC BYWAYS COLORADO REPORT**

Overall trends for scenic Byways statewide were released in the 2003 America's Scenic Byways Colorado Report completed in 2003 by the Center for Community Development. The report focused on key trends in Colorado for all the Byways combined. The information from this study will be instrumental in defining the unique attributes of the visitor to the Silver Thread Scenic Byway. The information also confirms the importance of word of mouth and referral as a primary way to gain visitation to America's Scenic Byways. The more important attributes of the report include the following:

### **Target Audience:**

The scenic Byway vacation traveler includes in-state, national, and international visitors. It is comprised of the following audience:

### **Traveler Profile:**

- Couples 45 to 65 years old traveling together
- Families
- Travel by car (78% travel by their own car, only 11% by vehicle rental), air or both
- Originate from Texas, Colorado, Oklahoma, Kansas and Missouri domestically, and Germany and New Zealand Internationally (Silver Thread regions only)
- Main reason for travel is vacation (45%) or sightseeing (27%)

### **Information Sources for Trip Planning:**

- Recommendation (41%)
- Highway Signs (16%)
- Chance (14%)
- Brochure (13%)
- Internet (11%)

### **Reasons for Taking the Byway:**

- Scenery was the number one reason for traveling the route (43%)
- Interesting was the second most popular reason at 23%
- Direct route (23%)
- Fastest way to get to destination (14%)

**Length of Stay:**

- The majority of scenic by way travelers only visited for the day (35%)
- 20% stayed up the 3 nights
- 20% stayed only 1 night
- 15% stayed 6 nights or longer

**Accommodation Types:**

- Hotel (41%)
- Campground (22%)
- Friend or family house (11% each)

**Where Travelers Learned of Colorado Byways:**

- Total awareness of Colorado or National Scenic Byway designation was 38%. Of those that were aware, 82% said it did not influence their trip
- 30% learned by highway signs
- 29% of all visitors learned by map
- 11% learned by experience
- 11% learned from friends
- 5% learned by Byway brochure
- 4% learned by the Internet

**Research Highlight on Activities:**

- 77% of those surveyed traveled with their families
- 90% went sightseeing
- 84% viewed nature
- 84% engaged in photography
- 54% had a one week vacation or more
- The most popular attributes for traveling were reasonable prices and helpful people
- Spending in recreation equipment and services was typically \$50 or less
- Retail purchases of souvenirs, arts and crafts and antiques were \$150 or less
- 80% of the respondents were either satisfied or very satisfied with Byway attributes and amenities
- Attributes that were most important were good roadways (63%), absence of litter (57%), clear information and directional signs (57%) and restrooms and drinking water



### **III. GOALS & OBJECTIVES**

Primary goals and objectives for the Silver Thread Colorado Scenic Byway Committee include extending the Byway to reach Gunnison County as well as developing more synergy amongst the three towns to promote the Byway. As the goals have been identified, strategies for accomplishing each goal must also be initiated.

1. Create a 'key value statement for the Silver Thread Colorado Scenic Byway in order to better and more effectively describe and ultimately sell the Byway and the towns located along the drive
2. Extend the Silver Thread Colorado Scenic Byway to Highway 50 (Gunnison County).
3. Through a coordinated campaign of public relations, paid advertising and partnerships with local and regional parties, build awareness of the Silver Thread Scenic Byway year-round.
4. Initiate research to collect data on area visitation in high season, low season and shoulder periods. As part of this data collection provide analysis of the following:
  - Seasonal variances in traffic and visitation
  - Identification of key entry and exit points along with routes leading to entry points.
  - Establish a visitor profile by season
  - Determine trip planning process and attributes in selecting Silver Thread Colorado Scenic Byway
5. Expand the current relationships between the three towns to leverage and market the Byway as well as the individual towns along it.
6. Continue to educate and train the residents and front line employees of each community on the Silver Thread Scenic Byway as a tourism attraction and asset to each community.

#### **IV. STRATEGIES & TACTICS**

##### **Goal**

Create a 'key value statement for the Silver Thread Colorado Scenic Byway in order to better and more effectively describe and ultimately sell the Byway and the towns located along the drive.

##### **Strategy**

- Establish the "essence" of the Byway resulting in a unique positioning statement and tagline that will provide a succinct branding statement to the Silver Thread Colorado Scenic Byway committee to use on all marketing and advertising materials.

##### **Tactics**

- Set up a creative review meeting in September 2005 to clearly identify the unique points of difference of the Silver Thread Scenic Byway.
- Review current brand (logo, identity, colors, fonts) and identify a tagline to be used for future inclusion at the Visitor Centers, collateral, ads, promotions, etc.
- Identify each community's unique strengths that complement the unique appeal of the Silver Thread Byway.
- Write a positioning statement.
- Provide an identity standards manual, which each town can use in promoting the Byway. The manual will include the logo, colors, details on fonts and sizes. It will be distributed electronically (on CD) to each Committee member as well as to each Town Government.
- Identify any need to change the existing brochure to complement the new branding message compiling printing and production estimates. Identify budgets from each community that can assist in funding this project.

**Goal**

Research extending the Silver Thread Colorado Scenic Byway to Highway 50 (Gunnison County) with the route designation occurring by 2008.

**Strategy**

- Work closely with the Colorado State Scenic Byway Committee, CDOT, Hinsdale County, Gunnison County and the City of Gunnison, State Historical Society, Division of Wildlife, Forest Service and Federal Agencies to accomplish the goal of designating and extending the Byway to Hwy 50.
- Gain recognition of the Byway from the Gunnison County side by developing marketing signage from 50 to Hwy. 50.

**Tactics**

- Meet with Sally Pearce of the Colorado State Scenic Byway committee to discuss the requirements for the Byway extension.
- Establish a timeline and list of tactics by April 2005.

### **Goal**

Through a coordinated campaign of public relations, paid advertising and partnerships with local and regional parties, build awareness of the Silver Thread Scenic Byway year-round.

### **Strategy**

Develop a communications plan that will promote visitation to the Byway year-round, maximizing the synergy between each community's existing efforts.

### **Tactics**

#### **Public Relations**

- Hire a professional public relations consultant to develop public relations initiatives to include the following:
  - Press kit folder and a series of press releases promoting the Scenic Byway and the towns along the Byway. Releases to include a compiled calendar of local events and a 4-day itinerary linking each community.
  - Make media sales calls focusing on travel and historic media in Colorado & Texas.
  
- Scenic Byway Committee to coordinate and complete the following in promotion of the Silver Thread Scenic Byway.
  - Establish an Action 22 FAM Tour to the Silver Thread Scenic Byway
  - Publish itineraries on each community Web site and in Visitor Centers
  - Contact AAA offices in Colorado to inform of Silver Thread Byway making sure that each office has Silver Thread Scenic Byway brochures.
  - Identify RV Parks, and RV Rental places that will provide information on the Silver Thread Scenic Byway.
  - Contact Tracks and Trails (a RV trip planning company) informing them of the Silver Thread Scenic Byway and making sure that they have all pertinent Byway materials including information on the towns.
  - Customize materials by target audience - Leisure Market, Media, Visitor Centers as referrers, Forest Service and BLM offices.
  - Continue brochure distribution, designing specific rack cards to target each distribution area (Montrose, Ouray, Durango, Pagosa Springs, Gunnison, Alamosa). Each rack card to provide an overview of the Silver Thread Byway and towns, and maps clearly providing directions from the point of referral.

Silver Thread Colorado Scenic Byway

- Assure rack card and brochure distribution to Visitor Centers, Chambers of Commerce, Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management offices and other visitor distribution outlets in the communities surrounding the Silver Thread Byway including Montrose, Durango, Telluride, Gunnison, Crested Butte, Pagosa Springs, Saguache, Del Norte and Alamosa.
- Determine the possibility of developing a Scenic Byway passport program as a central promotion to garner visitation and stops along the Silver Thread route.
- Continue billboard messaging announcing Silver Thread Scenic Byway to entice visitation. Evaluate ability to expand billboard presence along key routes leading to the Silver Thread Scenic Byway (Montrose to Gunnison).
- Establish a calendar of events piece that will assist in driving visitation to the towns along the Silver Thread Scenic Byway. Promote events on all collateral, Web sites and in press kit.
- Review colorado.com to make sure the Silver Thread Colorado Scenic Byway is included.
- Review the Colorado Scenic Byway's Web site to make sure that all information is current and fresh.
- Piggyback on CTO efforts, participating with Media FAMS, supplying photography to get included in CTO printed materials and B-roll.
- Participate in Southwest Colorado Travel Region marketing efforts garnering additional exposure for the Silver Thread Scenic Byway.
- Participate with Colorado Scenic Byway Committee programs including training and education opportunities to promote the Byway to residents of the local communities.
- Develop tactics to reintroduce the Scenic Byway and the communities of South Fork, Creede and Lake City to Pagosa Springs Chamber, Visitor Center and residents after the completed construction on Wolf Creek Pass.
- Provide ability to book the towns along the Scenic Byway online, including information on the Scenic Byway with each reservation confirmation.
- Research the possibility of a Silver Thread Colorado Scenic Byway game kit for kids that would induce visitation and stopping along the Byway to find answers.
- Develop insertions promoting the Byway into Visitor Guides in Pagosa, Gunnison and the San Luis Valley.

### **Goal**

Initiate research to collect data on area visitation in high season, low season and shoulder periods.

### **Strategy**

- Research studies to include intercept and overnight visitor studies.
- Establish data collection criteria for each Visitor Center and Chamber.
- Determine survey opportunities from town to town, developing a central questionnaire that can be managed by each town Visitor Center or Chamber to query visitors utilizing the visitor center resources.

### **Tactics**

- Visitor Center Logs
  - Visitor Center and Chamber - collect number of visitors, geographic origin, email addresses and time of year data on visitors stopping at Centers and Chambers for information.
  - Catalog data by Visitor Center, Chamber and location.
  - Input data into Excel Spread Sheet and submit monthly to Creede for compilation.
  - Analyze seasonal trends by town and in total.
  - Update marketing plan data by 2005.
- Establish an Intercept or Overnight Visitor Study to capture the following:
  - Seasonal variances in traffic and visitation.
  - Identification of key entry and exit points along with routes leading to entry points.
  - Establish a visitor profile by season.
  - Determine trip planning process and attributes in selecting Silver Thread Colorado Scenic Byway.
  - Collection of data over 12 month period.
  - Update marketing plan at the end of 2005.
- Utilize the questionnaire developed by the Lake City Chamber of Commerce for each community to collect more in-depth data via the Visitor Center outlet. Tabulate and generate a 2004 vs. 2005 report.

**Goal**

Continue to educate and train the residents and front line employees of each community on the Silver Thread Scenic Byway as a tourism attraction and asset to each community.

**Strategy**

Utilize the Colorado State Scenic Byway kit to train residents and businesses within each community.

**Tactics**

- Schedule a Train the Trainers seminar with Judy Walden or Sally Pearce to train representatives from each Chamber, Visitor Center and interested Committee Members.
- Trainees will then train residents and businesses in April 2005 in preparation for the Summer 2005 season.
- Schedule a meeting to define the "essence" of the Byway prior to the training session.

**V. BUDGET**

The following budget reflects costs for implementation of strategies and tactics as outlined in this marketing plan. The Silver Thread Colorado Scenic Byway Committee will need to evaluate what can be accomplished according to staffing levels, budget and ability to implement. Research will be conducted by the Center for Community Development. Public Relations can be conducted by Ore Communications and Hill & Company is happy to provide the services for creative and production. Training will be conducted by the Colorado State Scenic Byway office (Sally Pearce or Judy Walden).

**Research** **\$5,000.00**

Services supplied by the Center for Community Development.  
Research will entail zip code analysis, intercept study and tabulation of visitor center and chamber data for 2005 supplied to the Center by each Chamber/Visitor Center.

**Public Relations** **\$5,000.00**

Development of press kit and press releases.  
Writing and distribution of press releases and press kit  
Kit to be used for Action 22 FAM, calls to Front Range Media.

**Positioning and branding campaign developments** **\$2,000.00**

Development of key value statement, identity standards.  
Essence seminar conducted by Judy Walden of the Colorado State Scenic Byway office.  
Communication of available resources to use in promotion of the Byway through businesses, chambers and Visitor Centers.

**Rack Cards** **\$3,000.00**

Development of rack cards for 2005 distribution to all Visitor centers and chambers. 4X9 rack card with Map. 4 color/2 color. Includes rack distribution.



<p><b>Train the Trainer</b> Training conducted by Sally Pearce or Judy Walden to representatives of each community on promoting Silver Thread. Trainees will then provide training to the community.</p>	<p>In kind</p>
<p><b>Calendar of events flyer</b> Desktop published and distributed in each Visitor Center and Chamber. Can also be mailed with reservations confirmations. Supplied to each community liaison and distributed in press kit.</p>	<p>In kind</p>
<p><b>On line reservation and availability checker</b> Set up and attachment of online reservations system to each designated visitor site for Lake City, Creede and South Fork. Cost includes set up, training and launch of system. One time set up fee of \$2500.00. Ongoing monthly fee of \$375.00 to be split amongst the three towns.</p>	<p><b>\$6,000.00</b></p>
<p><b>Advertising</b> Ad placement in Visitor Guides for Pagosa, Gunnison and the San Luis Valley. Includes colorado.com listings, Concierge ITB program, CTO brochure distribution.</p>	<p><b>\$6,000.00</b></p>
<p><b>Ad production</b> Development of a template ad to be used by the Byway and to feature each town with call to action. Ad to be used in visitor guide advertising, AAA and any other publications identified by the Silver Thread Byway Committee. Ad development research</p>	<p><b>\$2,000.00</b></p>
<p><b>Total Budget</b></p>	<p><b>\$29,000.00</b></p>

**VI. Action Calendar**

<u>Month</u>	<u>Action</u>	<u>Responsibility</u>
<b>June</b>	Marketing Plan completed and submitted to Byway Committee.	Hill & Company
	Each Visitor Center to use universal form to compile visitor center visitation statistics.	South Fork, Creede, Lake City
	Each Visitor Center or Chamber to collect zip code data through local businesses labeling by month.	
	Work with Center for Community Development to conduct more in depth research, piggybacking on any effort being accomplished during summer 2004.	Michelle
	Research additional billboard placement that may be available from Montrose to Gunnison.	Michelle
<b>September</b>	Schedule a meeting with Sally Pearce to discuss Byway extension.	Pat Richmond
	Schedule a creative session to identify the essence of the Byway to include Byway Committee members, Hill & Company & Judy Walden.	Hill & Company
	Compile data collected during summer 2004 and forward to Hill & Company for review and inclusion in marketing plan.	South Fork Creede Lake City Byway Committee

<b>October</b>	Update Silver Thread information on each community Web site.	Byway Committee
	Evaluate online reservations booker.	Hill & Company
	Snowmobile expo, Denver	South Fork & Creede
	Meet with Sally Pearce on Byway extension. Develop timeline and tactical list to complete.	Hill & Company & Committee
	Write positioning statement and develop identify standards based on findings from creative meeting.	Hill & Company & Committee
	Compile estimates for production and printing of individual rack cards. Establish distribution timeline.	Committee Members
	Identify cost to reprint existing brochure, evaluating effectiveness of current piece.	H&C & Committee Members
<b>November</b>	Establish press kit and press releases. Complete itineraries, calendars of events, etc., posting to each community's Web site.	
	Albuquerque Ski Show	South Fork
	Dallas Ski Show	South Fork
	Arizona Golf Show	South Fork

	<p>Houston Ski Trade Show</p> <p>Develop direct sales plan to target Visitor Centers, Chambers and key referrers of business (AAA offices, State Welcome Centers)</p> <p>Lock in billboard for 2005</p> <p>Splash page development</p> <p>Branding, tagline, logo, ad template</p> <p>Online training</p> <p>Splash page development</p>	<p>South Fork</p> <p>Committee Members</p> <p>Committee Members</p> <p>Hill &amp; Company</p> <p>Hill &amp; Company</p> <p>Hill &amp; Company</p>
<p><b>December</b></p> <p><b>January</b></p>	<p>Collect ad schedules from each Chamber/VC</p> <p>Identify research methodology for Summer 2005. Evaluate research tactics used in 2004 bringing and utilize the ones that worked in 2005.</p> <p>Continue to implement extension tactics</p> <p>Distribute press kit to key media, make media sales calls</p> <p>Tradeshow distribution</p> <p>Ad placements</p> <p>Rack card development</p>	<p>Hill &amp; Company</p> <p>Hill &amp; Company</p> <p>Hill &amp; Company</p> <p>Hill &amp; Company</p> <p>Hill &amp; Company Center for Community Development &amp; Committee Members</p> <p>Ore Communications</p> <p>Comm. Mem.</p> <p>Comm. Mem.</p> <p>Comm. Mem.</p>

Silver Thread Colorado Scenic Byway

ay

February

March

April

Contact distribution company- rack card	Comm. Mem.
Amarillo Outdoor Sport Show	South Fork
Tradeshow distribution	Comm. Mem
Ad placements	Comm. Mem.
Comm. mtg. to identify data gathering	Comm. Mem.
Rack card delivery	
Trade show distribution	Comm. Mem.
Ad placements	Comm. Mem.
Schedule Train the Community Seminar	Committee Members
Continue to implement extension tactics Begin training residents and businesses, continue through May 2005.	Trainers designated from seminar
Denver Outdoor Sport Show	South Fork
Continue to implement extension tactics Distribute rack cards in conjunction with sales calls.	Committee Members
Update all Web sites with most current information.	
Possible Denver Off Highway Expo	South Fork

## MESSAGING

Following are some of the existing materials being used to promote the Silver Thread Colorado Scenic Byway.

### Logo

Recommendation to include names of each town underneath logo.

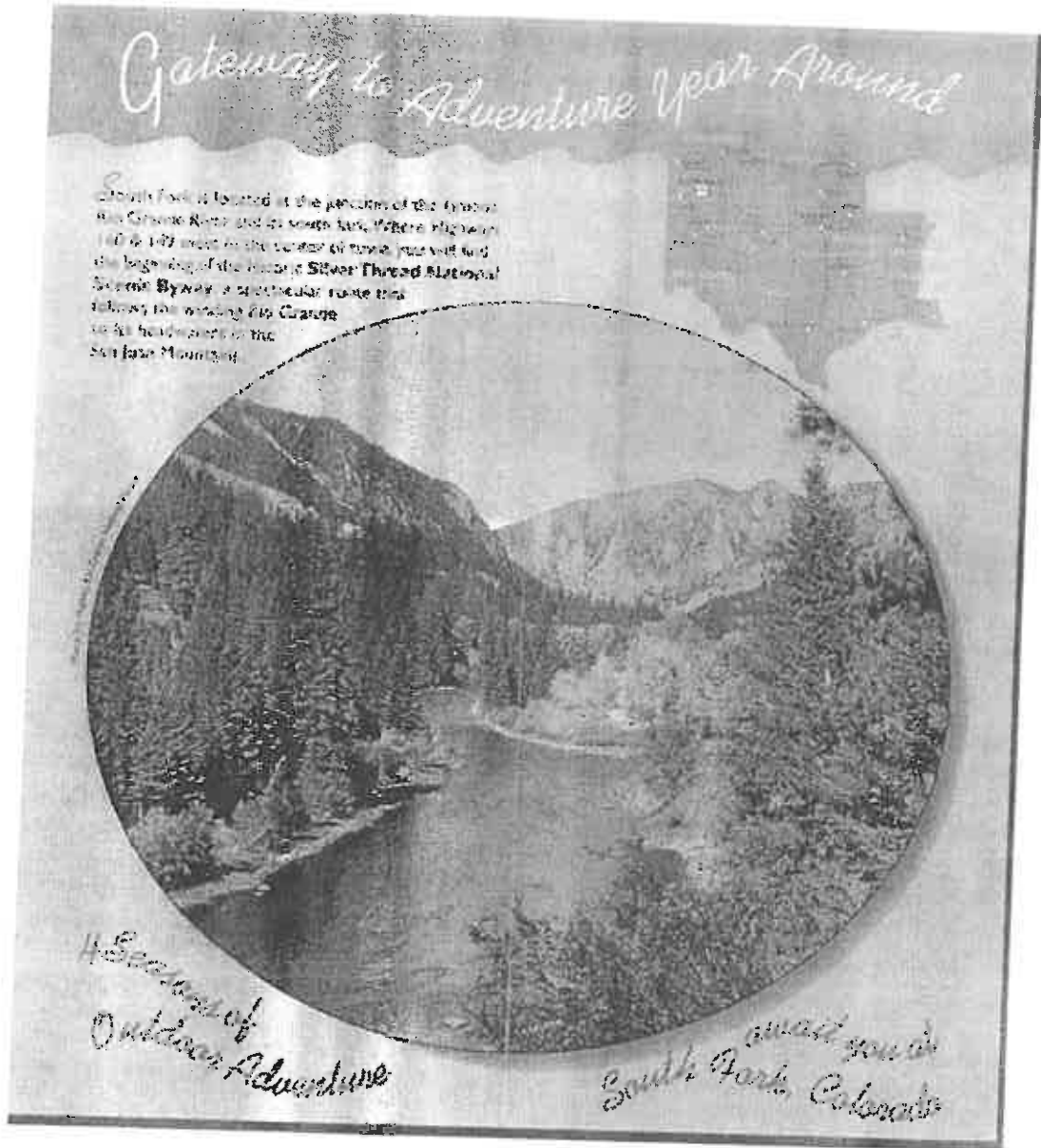


Inclusion of Byway mention on Creede & Mineral County promotional material.



### Billboard





Inside spread of South Fork Brochure promoting Byway.

Colorado State Scenic & Historic Byway Brochure



**T**he colorful old mining camps of the Silver Thread offer history, scenic beauty, and a heavy dose of authenticity. The heights around Creede and Lake City remain strewn with abandoned mining structures, most of them accessible via rugged backcountry roads. Between the two towns, Highway 149 shadows the upper reaches of the Rio Grande, serving up a bounty of natural wonders—sparkling North Clear Creek Falls, the Slingshotton earth slide, and the shark-like fin of Uncompahgre Peak. Those mountains can be unforgiving: In 1843 explorer John C. Fremont lost a third of his men—and a quarter of a century later the infamous Alred Packer cannibalized his companions—in two ill-fated winter expeditions.

**Length:** 75 miles **Driving time:** 2 hours  
**Special features:** Collier State Wildlife Area, Rio Grande National Forest **Contact:** Creede Chamber of Commerce, P.O. Box 509, Creede, CO 81130 / (719) 636-2372



## **AMERICA'S SCENIC BYWAYS COLORADO REPORT**

Overall trends for scenic Byways statewide were released in the 2003 America's Scenic Byways Colorado Report completed in 2003 by the Center for Community Development. The report focused on key trends in Colorado for all the Byways combined. The information from this study will be instrumental in defining the unique attributes of the visitor to the Silver Thread Scenic Byway. The information also confirms the importance of word of mouth and referral as a primary way to gain visitation to America's Scenic Byways. The more important attributes of the report include the following:

### **Target Audience:**

The scenic Byway vacation traveler includes in-state, national, and international visitors. It is comprised of the following audience:

### **Traveler Profile:**

- Couples 45 to 65 years old traveling together
- Families
- Travel by car (78% travel by their own car, only 11% by vehicle rental), air or both
- Originate from Texas, Colorado, Oklahoma, Kansas and Missouri domestically, and Germany and New Zealand Internationally (Silver Thread regions only)
- Main reason for travel is vacation (45%) or sightseeing (27%)

### **Information Sources for Trip Planning:**

- Recommendation (41%)
- Highway Signs (16%)
- Chance (14%)
- Brochure (13%)
- Internet (11%)

### **Reasons for Taking the Byway:**

- Scenery was the number one reason for traveling the route (43%)
- Interesting was the second most popular reason at 23%
- Direct route (23%)
- Fastest way to get to destination (14%)

**Length of Stay:**

- The majority of scenic by way travelers only visited for the day (35%)
- 20% stayed up the 3 nights
- 20% stayed only 1 night
- 15% stayed 6 nights or longer

**Accommodation Types:**

- Hotel (41%)
- Campground (22%)
- Friend or family house (11% each)

**Where Travelers Learned of Colorado Byways:**

- Total awareness of Colorado or National Scenic Byway designation was 38%. Of those that were aware, 82% said it did not influence their trip
- 30% learned by highway signs
- 29% of all visitors learned by map
- 11% learned by experience
- 11% learned from friends
- 5% learned by Byway brochure
- 4% learned by the Internet

**Research Highlight on Activities:**

- 77% of those surveyed traveled with their families
- 90% went sightseeing
- 84% viewed nature
- 84% engaged in photography
- 54% had a one week vacation or more
- The most popular attributes for traveling were reasonable prices and helpful people
- Spending in recreation equipment and services was typically \$50 or less
- Retail purchases of souvenirs, arts and crafts and antiques were \$150 or less
- 80% of the respondents were either satisfied or very satisfied with Byway attributes and amenities
- Attributes that were most important were good roadways (63%), absence of litter (57%), clear information and directional signs (57%) and restrooms and drinking water

### **III. GOALS & OBJECTIVES**

Primary goals and objectives for the Silver Thread Colorado Scenic Byway Committee include extending the Byway to reach Gunnison County as well as developing more synergy amongst the three towns to promote the Byway. As the goals have been identified, strategies for accomplishing each goal must also be initiated.

1. Create a 'key value statement for the Silver Thread Colorado Scenic Byway in order to better and more effectively describe and ultimately sell the Byway and the towns located along the drive
2. Extend the Silver Thread Colorado Scenic Byway to Highway 50 (Gunnison County).
3. Through a coordinated campaign of public relations, paid advertising and partnerships with local and regional parties, build awareness of the Silver Thread Scenic Byway year-round.
4. Initiate research to collect data on area visitation in high season, low season and shoulder periods. As part of this data collection provide analysis of the following:
  - Seasonal variances in traffic and visitation
  - Identification of key entry and exit points along with routes leading to entry points.
  - Establish a visitor profile by season
  - Determine trip planning process and attributes in selecting Silver Thread Colorado Scenic Byway
5. Expand the current relationships between the three towns to leverage and market the Byway as well as the individual towns along it.
6. Continue to educate and train the residents and front line employees of each community on the Silver Thread Scenic Byway as a tourism attraction and asset to each community.

## **IV. STRATEGIES & TACTICS**

### **Goal**

Create a 'key value statement for the Silver Thread Colorado Scenic Byway in order to better and more effectively describe and ultimately sell the Byway and the towns located along the drive.

### **Strategy**

- Establish the "essence" of the Byway resulting in a unique positioning statement and tagline that will provide a succinct branding statement to the Silver Thread Colorado Scenic Byway committee to use on all marketing and advertising materials.

### **Tactics**

- Set up a creative review meeting in September 2005 to clearly identify the unique points of difference of the Silver Thread Scenic Byway.
- Review current brand (logo, identity, colors, fonts) and identify a tagline to be used for future inclusion at the Visitor Centers, collateral, ads, promotions, etc.
- Identify each community's unique strengths that complement the unique appeal of the Silver Thread Byway.
- Write a positioning statement.
- Provide an identity standards manual, which each town can use in promoting the Byway. The manual will include the logo, colors, details on fonts and sizes. It will be distributed electronically (on CD) to each Committee member as well as to each Town Government.
- Identify any need to change the existing brochure to complement the new branding message compiling printing and production estimates. Identify budgets from each community that can assist in funding this project.

**Goal**

Research extending the Silver Thread Colorado Scenic Byway to Highway 50 (Gunnison County) with the route designation occurring by 2008.

**Strategy**

- Work closely with the Colorado State Scenic Byway Committee, CDOT, Hinsdale County, Gunnison County and the City of Gunnison, State Historical Society, Division of Wildlife, Forest Service and Federal Agencies to accomplish the goal of designating and extending the Byway to Hwy 50.
- Gain recognition of the Byway from the Gunnison County side by developing marketing signage from 50 to Hwy. 50.

**Tactics**

- Meet with Sally Pearce of the Colorado State Scenic Byway committee to discuss the requirements for the Byway extension.
- Establish a timeline and list of tactics by April 2005.

**Goal**

Through a coordinated campaign of public relations, paid advertising and partnerships with local and regional parties, build awareness of the Silver Thread Scenic Byway year-round.

**Strategy**

Develop a communications plan that will promote visitation to the Byway year-round, maximizing the synergy between each community's existing efforts.

**Tactics**

**Public Relations**

- Hire a professional public relations consultant to develop public relations initiatives to include the following:
  - Press kit folder and a series of press releases promoting the Scenic Byway and the towns along the Byway. Releases to include a compiled calendar of local events and a 4-day itinerary linking each community.
  - Make media sales calls focusing on travel and historic media in Colorado & Texas.
- Scenic Byway Committee to coordinate and complete the following in promotion of the Silver Thread Scenic Byway.
  - Establish an Action 22 FAM Tour to the Silver Thread Scenic Byway
  - Publish itineraries on each community Web site and in Visitor Centers
  - Contact AAA offices in Colorado to inform of Silver Thread Byway making sure that each office has Silver Thread Scenic Byway brochures.
  - Identify RV Parks, and RV Rental places that will provide information on the Silver Thread Scenic Byway.
  - Contact Tracks and Trails (a RV trip planning company) informing them of the Silver Thread Scenic Byway and making sure that they have all pertinent Byway materials including information on the towns.
  - Customize materials by target audience - Leisure Market, Media, Visitor Centers as referrers, Forest Service and BLM offices.
  - Continue brochure distribution, designing specific rack cards to target each distribution area (Montrose, Ouray, Durango, Pagosa Springs, Gunnison, Alamosa). Each rack card to provide an overview of the Silver Thread Byway and towns, and maps clearly providing directions from the point of referral.

Silver Thread Colorado Scenic Byway

- Assure rack card and brochure distribution to Visitor Centers, Chambers of Commerce, Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management offices and other visitor distribution outlets in the communities surrounding the Silver Thread Byway including Montrose, Durango, Telluride, Gunnison, Crested Butte, Pagosa Springs, Saguache, Del Norte and Alamosa.
- Determine the possibility of developing a Scenic Byway passport program as a central promotion to garner visitation and stops along the Silver Thread route.
- Continue billboard messaging announcing Silver Thread Scenic Byway to entice visitation. Evaluate ability to expand billboard presence along key routes leading to the Silver Thread Scenic Byway (Montrose to Gunnison).
- Establish a calendar of events piece that will assist in driving visitation to the towns along the Silver Thread Scenic Byway. Promote events on all collateral, Web sites and in press kit.
- Review colorado.com to make sure the Silver Thread Colorado Scenic Byway is included.
- Review the Colorado Scenic Byway's Web site to make sure that all information is current and fresh.
- Piggyback on CTO efforts, participating with Media FAMS, supplying photography to get included in CTO printed materials and B-roll.
- Participate in Southwest Colorado Travel Region marketing efforts garnering additional exposure for the Silver Thread Scenic Byway.
- Participate with Colorado Scenic Byway Committee programs including training and education opportunities to promote the Byway to residents of the local communities.
- Develop tactics to reintroduce the Scenic Byway and the communities of South Fork, Creede and Lake City to Pagosa Springs Chamber, Visitor Center and residents after the completed construction on Wolf Creek Pass.
- Provide ability to book the towns along the Scenic Byway online, including information on the Scenic Byway with each reservation confirmation.
- Research the possibility of a Silver Thread Colorado Scenic Byway game kit for kids that would induce visitation and stopping along the Byway to find answers.
- Develop insertions promoting the Byway into Visitor Guides in Pagosa, Gunnison and the San Luis Valley.

### **Goal**

Initiate research to collect data on area visitation in high season, low season and shoulder periods.

### **Strategy**

- Research studies to include intercept and overnight visitor studies.
- Establish data collection criteria for each Visitor Center and Chamber.
- Determine survey opportunities from town to town, developing a central questionnaire that can be managed by **each** town Visitor Center or Chamber to query visitors utilizing the visitor center resources.

### **Tactics**

- Visitor Center Logs
  - Visitor Center and Chamber - collect number of visitors, geographic origin, email addresses and time of year data on visitors stopping at Centers and Chambers for information.
  - Catalog data by Visitor Center, Chamber and location.
  - Input data into Excel Spread Sheet and submit monthly to Creede for compilation.
  - Analyze seasonal trends by town and in total.
  - Update marketing plan data by 2005.
- Establish an Intercept or Overnight Visitor Study to capture the following:
  - Seasonal variances in traffic and visitation.
  - Identification of key entry and exit points along with routes leading to entry points.
  - Establish a visitor profile by season.
  - Determine trip planning process and attributes in selecting Silver Thread Colorado Scenic Byway.
  - Collection of data over 12 month period.
  - Update marketing plan at the end of 2005.
- Utilize the questionnaire developed by the Lake City Chamber of Commerce for each community to collect more in-depth data via the Visitor Center outlet. Tabulate and generate a 2004 vs. 2005 report.



**Goal**

Continue to educate and train the residents and front line employees of each community on the Silver Thread Scenic Byway as a tourism attraction and asset to each community.

**Strategy**

Utilize the Colorado State Scenic Byway kit to train residents and businesses within each community.

**Tactics**

- Schedule a Train the Trainers seminar with Judy Walden or Sally Pearce to train representatives from each Chamber, Visitor Center and interested Committee Members.
- Trainees will then train residents and businesses in April 2005 in preparation for the Summer 2005 season.
- Schedule a meeting to define the "essence" of the Byway prior to the training session.

**V. BUDGET**

The following budget reflects costs for implementation of strategies and tactics as outlined in this marketing plan. The Silver Thread Colorado Scenic Byway Committee will need to evaluate what can be accomplished according to staffing levels, budget and ability to implement. Research will be conducted by the Center for Community Development. Public Relations can be conducted by Ore Communications and Hill & Company is happy to provide the services for creative and production. Training will be conducted by the Colorado State Scenic Byway office (Sally Pearce or Judy Walden).

**Research \$5,000.00**

Services supplied by the Center for Community Development.  
Research will entail zip code analysis, intercept study and tabulation of visitor center and chamber data for 2005 supplied to the Center by each Chamber/Visitor Center.

**Public Relations \$5,000.00**

Development of press kit and press releases.  
Writing and distribution of press releases and press kit  
Kit to be used for Action 22 FAM, calls to Front Range Media.

**Positioning and branding campaign developments \$2,000.00**

Development of key value statement, identity standards.  
Essence seminar conducted by Judy Walden of the Colorado State Scenic Byway office.  
Communication of available resources to use in promotion of the Byway through businesses, chambers and Visitor Centers.

**Rack Cards \$3,000.00**

Development of rack cards for 2005 distribution to all Visitor centers and chambers. 4X9 rack card with Map. 4 color/2 color. Includes rack distribution.

<p><b>Train the Trainer</b>            Training conducted by Sally Pearce or Judy Walden to representatives of each community on promoting Silver Thread. Trainees will then provide training to the community.</p>	<p>In kind</p>
<p><b>Calendar of events flyer</b>            Desktop published and distributed in each Visitor Center and Chamber. Can also be mailed with reservations confirmations. Supplied to each community liaison and distributed in press kit.</p>	<p>In kind</p>
<p><b>On line reservation and availability checker</b>            Set up and attachment of online reservations system to each designated visitor site for Lake City, Creede and South Fork. Cost includes set up, training and launch of system. One time set up fee of \$2500.00. Ongoing monthly fee of \$375.00 to be split amongst the three towns.</p>	<p><b>\$6,000.00</b></p>
<p><b>Advertising</b>            Ad placement in Visitor Guides for Pagosa, Gunnison and the San Luis Valley. Includes colorado.com listings, Concierge ITB program, CTO brochure distribution.</p>	<p><b>\$6,000.00</b></p>
<p><b>Ad production</b>            Development of a template ad to be used by the Byway and to feature each town with call to action. Ad to be used in visitor guide advertising, AAA and any other publications identified by the Silver Thread Byway Committee. Ad development research</p>	<p><b>\$2,000.00</b></p>
<p><b>Total Budget</b></p>	<p><b>\$29,000.00</b></p>

**VI. Action Calendar**

<u>Month</u>	<u>Action</u>	<u>Responsibility</u>
<b>June</b>	Marketing Plan completed and submitted to Byway Committee.	Hill & Company
	Each Visitor Center to use universal form to compile visitor center visitation statistics.	South Fork, Creede, Lake City
	Each Visitor Center or Chamber to collect zip code data through local businesses labeling by month.	
	Work with Center for Community Development to conduct more in depth research, piggybacking on any effort being accomplished during summer 2004.	Michelle
	Research additional billboard placement that may be available from Montrose to Gunnison.	Michelle
<b>September</b>	Schedule a meeting with Sally Pearce to discuss Byway extension.	Pat Richmond
	Schedule a creative session to identify the essence of the Byway to include Byway Committee members, Hill & Company & Judy Walden.	Hill & Company
	Compile data collected during summer 2004 and forward to Hill & Company for review and inclusion in marketing plan.	South Fork Creede Lake City Byway Committee

<b>October</b>	Update Silver Thread information on each community Web site.	Byway Committee
	Evaluate online reservations booker.	Hill & Company
	Snowmobile expo, Denver	South Fork & Creede
	Meet with Sally Pearce on Byway extension. Develop timeline and tactical list to complete.	Hill & Company & Committee
	Write positioning statement and develop identify standards based on findings from creative meeting.	Hill & Company & Committee
	Compile estimates for production and printing of individual rack cards. Establish distribution timeline.	Committee Members
	Identify cost to reprint existing brochure, evaluating effectiveness of current piece.	H&C & Committee Members
<b>November</b>	Establish press kit and press releases. Complete itineraries, calendars of events, etc., posting to each community's Web site.	
	Albuquerque Ski Show	South Fork
	Dallas Ski Show	South Fork
	Arizona Golf Show	South Fork

<b>December</b>	Houston Ski Trade Show	South Fork
	Develop direct sales plan to target Visitor Centers, Chambers and key referrers of business (AAA offices, State Welcome Centers)	Committee Members
	Lock in billboard for 2005	Committee Members
	Splash page development	Hill & Company
	Branding, tagline, logo, ad template	Hill & Company
	Online training	Hill & Company
	Splash page development	Hill & Company
<b>January</b>	Collect ad schedules from each Chamber/VC	Hill & Company
	Identify research methodology for Summer 2005. Evaluate research tactics used in 2004 bringing and utilize the ones that worked in 2005.	Hill & Company Center for Community Development &
	Continue to implement extension tactics	Committee Members
	Distribute press kit to key media, make media sales calls	Ore Communications
	Tradeshow distribution	Comm. Mem.
	Ad placements	Comm. Mem.
	Rack card development	Comm. Mem.

February

March

April

Contact distribution company- rack card	Comm. Mem.
Amarillo Outdoor Sport Show	South Fork
Tradeshow distribution	Comm. Mem
Ad placements	Comm. Mem.
Comm. mtg. to identify data gathering	Comm. Mem.
Rack card delivery	
Trade show distribution	Comm. Mem.
Ad placements	Comm. Mem.
Schedule Train the Community Seminar	Committee Members
Continue to implement extension tactics Begin training residents and businesses, continue through May 2005.	Trainers designated from seminar
Denver Outdoor Sport Show	South Fork
Continue to implement extension tactics Distribute rack cards in conjunction with sales calls.	Committee Members
Update all Web sites with most current information.	
Possible Denver Off Highway Expo	South Fork

## MESSAGING

Following are some of the existing materials being used to promote the Silver Thread Colorado Scenic Byway.

### Logo

Recommendation to include names of each town underneath logo.



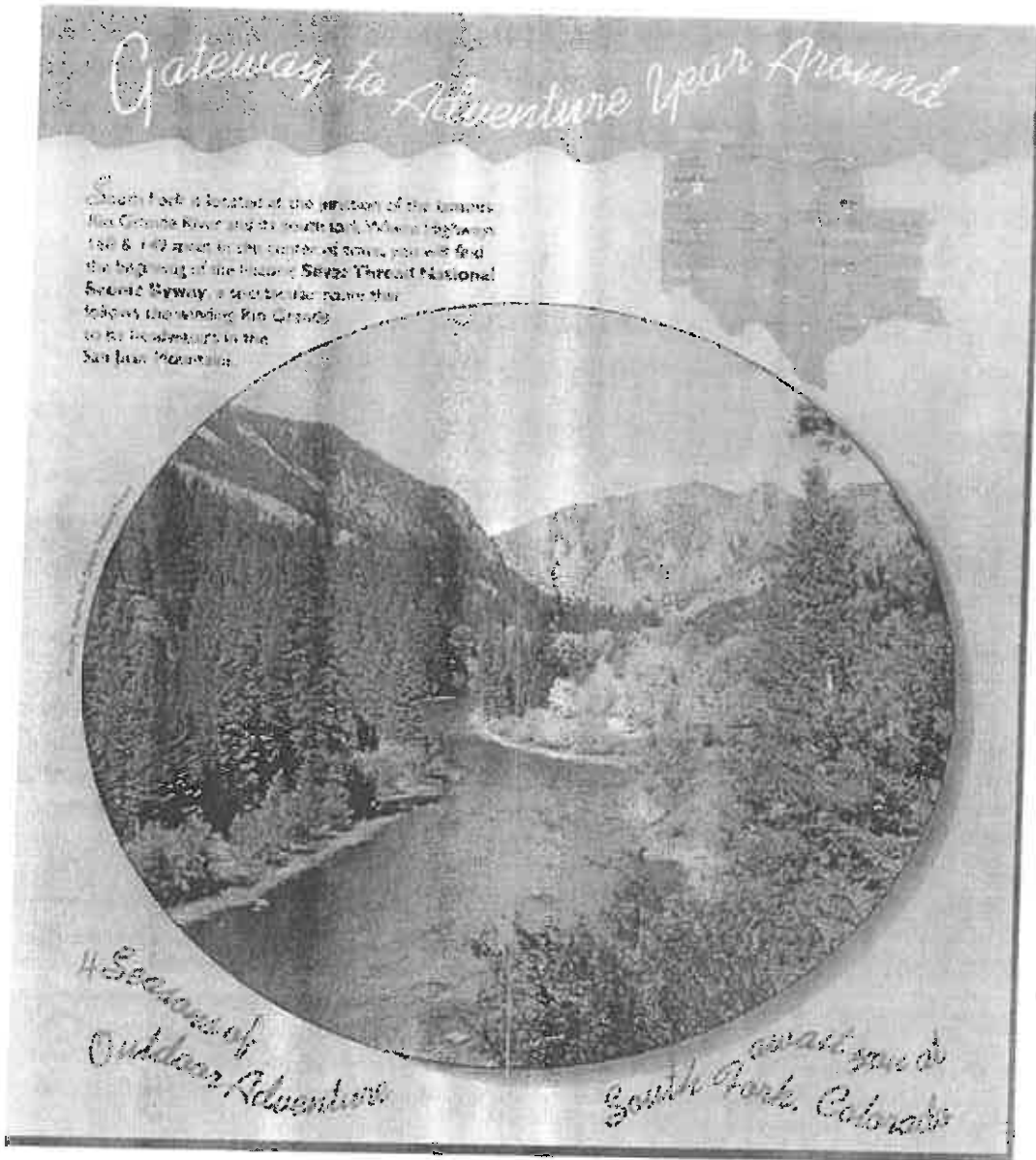
Inclusion of Byway mention on Creede & Mineral County promotional material.



### Billboard







Inside spread of South Fork Brochure promoting Byway.

Colorado State Scenic & Historic Byway Brochure



**T**he colorful old mining towns of the Silver Thread offer history, scenic beauty, and a heavy dose of authenticity. The heights around Creede and Lake City remain strewn with abandoned mining structures, most of them accessible via rugged backcountry roads. Between the two towns, Highway 149 shadows the upper reaches of the Rio Grande, serving up a bounty of natural wonders—sparkling North Clear Creek Falls, the Slomgullion earth slide, and the shark-like fin of Uncompahgre Peak. These mountains can be unforgiving. In 1848 explorer John C. Fremont lost a third of his men—and a quarter of a century later the infamous Alfred Pecker cannibalized his companions—in two ill-fated winter expeditions.

**Length:** 55 miles **Driving time:** 2 hours  
**Special features:** Collier State Wildlife Area, Rio Grande National Forest **Contact:** Creede Chamber of Commerce, 350 Elm 550, Creede, CO 81130 (719) 658-2111

**Silver Thread Scenic and Historic Byway  
Discussion and Evaluation of Marketing Plan  
October 26, 2005**

The Silver Thread Scenic and Historic Byway Committee met at Freemon's Store on SH 149 between Creede and Lake City on Wednesday, October 26, 2005, to discuss and evaluate each of the activities outlined in the General Marketing Plan as established for implementation of the TEA-21 marketing grant. A final report, including evaluation forms, will be sent to Sally Pearce, Colorado Scenic Byways Coordinator.

Attending the meeting were Pat Richmond, acting administrator for the grant through the Creede/Mineral County C of C, Brenda Maze, current manager of the Creede/Mineral County C of C, Edna Mason, Gunnison NF Lake City office, Sally Thode, BLM Lake City office, Josephine Pierce, South Fork Visitor Center, and Angie and Ron Hague, owners of the Adobe Gallery on the Silver Thread.

**Bylaws:** While waiting for the arrival of Linda Hill of Hill and Company, the committee discussed the topic of non-profit incorporation. Richmond opened the discussion by reminding the members present of the decision made at the Silver Thread meeting in South Fork in December 2001. Nineteen people who attended that meeting agreed that it was time for the Silver Thread Byway Committee to incorporate as a non-profit entity. As a result, the development of bylaws for a non-profit corporation became an aspect of the Master Plan. Incorporation and bylaws have been discussed during meetings for the past two years. The present committee members spent considerable time reviewing copies of bylaws for other Byways. Josephine Pierce prepared a draft version drawn from bylaws of other Byways. Michelle Pierce also developed a draft based upon Lake City's non-profit bylaws. The Silver Thread members decided during their meeting in Creede last fall to utilize the bylaws format written for the Los Caminos Antiguos Byway, so Michelle Pierce prepared another draft for the next committee meeting in Lake City. Creede and South Fork representatives were unable to attend that meeting due to inclement weather on the passes. Those attending the Lake City meeting held two opinions—1) to take another look at other Byways' bylaws or 2) to discontinue the whole idea of non-profit incorporation.

Richmond had reviewed the draft based upon Los Caminos' bylaws and had added a few modifications based on articles found in bylaws for other Byways. ST committee members had received e-mail copies of the latest draft prior to the October 26 meeting and were given hard copies during the meeting. Richmond reviewed modifications added to the draft initially prepared by Michelle Pierce, including a Non-Discrimination statement.

Richmond then read an e-mail message from Alena Haskell, Lake City C of C director, who was unable to attend the October 26 meeting. Haskell wrote that she did not think the committee needed bylaws. Richmond offered point/counterpoint comments by noting that 1) the decision to incorporate came from a meeting with a large representation but that many present in South Fork had not attended a meeting since; 2) the committee has been able to rely upon local agencies and organizations for leadership in the past but the exodus of personnel can and has affected the continuity of activities and programs; 3) the three towns have developed rapport and cooperation

in promoting and extending the Byway, developing the wildlife brochure, etc. but promotion of the extension and furtherance of other activities might require a formal and consistent approach that is not subject to changes within any local political climate.

Richmond then asked for comments from other members. Edna Mason said the West Elk Byway is not incorporated. She said representatives of government agencies are available to handle routine topics while administration of grant funds is directed through a non-profit organization. That group collects a small administrative fee for its services. Mason said one concern raised during the meeting in Lake City was financial liability that any group might have if it signed on as a member of a non-profit corporation.

Josephine Pierce supported incorporation by citing continuity of programs if agency or local personnel change. Pierce mentioned problems associated with funds from the sale of the Silver Thread guidebook as a result of several personnel changes in a short period of time. She noted that a person coming into a position might not know what has transpired previously and might not be prepared to follow through. Organization's priorities also can change which can cause representation on the committee to fluctuate. Pierce felt that the structure offered by incorporation was important to assuring that activities already started continue with a regular schedule instead of falling aside until someone decides to reactivate interest, as had been the case in the past.

Brenda Maze also supported incorporation and cited the problems that might exist were Richmond still not available to complete the administrative tasks for the current marketing grant. As the new manager of the C of C, Maze noted that she would have no idea of what needed to be done.

Angie Hague said that promotion of the natural wonders found along the Silver Thread seemed more relevant than spending time on incorporating the committee and developing bylaws.

Sally Thode said that after listening to pros and cons presented by other members, she was not sure whether this was the time for incorporation or not.

With Linda Hill's arrival, Richmond suggested that the members continue to think about the issue of incorporation and bylaws as they proceeded through their discussion and evaluations of the Marketing Plan with Hill. The committee followed the written evaluation form in discussing the marketing activities.

**Research:** Hill began by explaining how her office had compiled the original research information used in developing the marketing proposals. She had hoped to have the results of the surveys conducted in all three towns during the summer of 2005 for reference in discussing the various marketing activities. However, Lisa Touten advised her that the survey results will not be ready until the end of the year.

For those not involved with the surveys, Richmond explained that intercept surveys were conducted in all three communities this past summer. Touten conducted a person to person survey in Lake City. The same survey forms were placed in businesses and lodging

establishments in Creede and South Fork with some surveys being acquired through direct contact at the visitor centers and during events. Richmond had also developed a simple check mark counter top survey that was placed in businesses in all three towns.

Richmond and Pierce agreed that the main problem with the Intercept Survey was the length. People seemed unwilling to take the time to complete two pages. People had virtually no interest in taking a follow-up survey that they were supposed to FAX or mail back after leaving the area.

Angie Hague asked the purpose of the surveys. Hill explained that the surveys provide validation of details in the marketing plan. If surveys can be conducted at various seasons within each community, the data can be used to assess results and to make comparisons. This information makes marketing more strategic. Survey data allows advertising to be purchased for specific purposes instead of being sold as something that may or may not fit the area's needs.

Hill noted that while all three communities had used some kind of visitor survey in the past, the differences in format and data collected made it difficult to establish a correlation from community to community and a pattern for the Silver Thread. She noted that a visitor does not see boundaries along the Silver Thread. Visitors are looking for experiences between points A & B. Hill will inquire whether Jon Schler might have students who could conduct off-season surveys within each community to fill out the database for future marketing strategies.

**Logo and Ads:** Hill showed the new logo and explained that previous logos used for the Silver Thread had not been consistent. The new logo design includes the names of all three towns. The color version should be used when printed on white background. The black version or a white version can be used on colored backgrounds. Hill showed how the logo had been used in the commercial ad designs along with the tagline: "Three unique towns; two magnificent valleys; one spectacular drive." Hill had copies of the color ads that had been placed in *AAA Encompass*, *True West* magazine, *Inside/Outside*, and *Vacationland*. She said that ads were geared not only toward enticing people to the Silver Thread but also toward encouraging them to return.

Richmond asked Pierce and Maze what kind of responses their offices had to the ads. *True West* does submit a reader response list for ads placed in their magazine. Neither Maze nor Pierce was aware of any direct response as a result of the *AAA* or *Vacationland* ads. Pierce did have one caller who had seen the *Inside/Outside* ad. Hill suggested looking at the demographics for responses to determine whether there is a pattern that might be associated with the timing and locations of the commercial ads.

Richmond mentioned that the Silver Thread also had been listed as a destination and under each town's heading in the 2005 *Official Colorado Vacation Guide* and on [colorado.com](http://colorado.com). She noted that this information will not appear in the new OVG issue or the state's tourism website.

Hill pointed out that the ad layouts can be used for future advertising. The larger ad included a short list of summer events to initiate interest. This list and other aspects of the ads can be changed by anyone having access to Quark. Richmond noted that approximately 25% of the cash funds for the marketing grant went toward commercial advertising.

**Rack Card:** The rack card was designed by committee members with advice from Hill and Company. The back side has a generic calendar of events for all three towns so that the card can be used from year to year. Pierce sent 10,000 cards for rack distribution in towns throughout southern and western Colorado, northern New Mexico, and Albuquerque. Although the contract with *Certified* covered a three month distribution period, the company offered to keep the rack cards on display until they run out.

Again, no current data indicates exactly how many people have visited the Silver Thread as a result of the Rack Card. Richmond explained that the committee had selected a photo that would let people know that the Silver Thread is a paved highway as that had been a frequently asked question in the past.

**Trade Shows:** Richmond explained that the Silver Thread Byway had been represented at four trade shows through the Colorado Tourism Office's concierge program. These were held in Kansas City, Chicago, Dallas, and Berlin. Richmond said that based upon Alena Haskell's experience in Kansas City the concierge shows may not have been as effective as anticipated. Haskell found that people representing CTO were unfamiliar with anything outside Denver and the I-70 beltway. Because of Haskell's presence, the Silver Thread was promoted at the Kansas City show. The Crested Butte representative offered to make sure that the Silver Thread was promoted at the Chicago show so those two shows may prove to be beneficial to future interest in the Silver Thread.

Richmond said that in year's past, the CTO representative for the Berlin show always sent a report citing how many brochures were distributed as well as information about contact agencies. CTO also had previously provided follow-up information for their concierge shows. As of the time Richmond left the C of C office, no such information had been forthcoming this year. CTO had changed their marketing company which might be the reason that follow-up information has not been submitted. Maze said that she has received no information from CTO about colorado.com contacts or the trade shows.

Thode asked why the Silver Thread representative attended the Kansas City show and not the other shows. Pierce and Richmond explained that CTO limits the number of non-CTO brochures as well as the number of local individuals invited to participate. Both are determined on a first come basis. The process has become quite competitive with only three or four openings available per show. It was unusual for the Silver Thread to be able to have brochures distributed at three of the four national shows.

**Discount Coupon Envelopes:** Richmond explained this activity was conducted by the local offices. Business-sized envelopes were imprinted with the Silver Thread logo. These envelopes were placed in the visitor centers in each town. Each envelope held discount coupons offered by businesses within all three communities. Both the envelopes and the coupons were stamped on the back with the point of distribution. This would allow tracking of travel along the Silver Thread. Richmond had designed a generic coupon that could be used by any business after some business owners said they would like to participate but either did not have time or the means for producing their own coupons.

Both Pierce and Maze said that very few people had picked up the envelopes. Maze had resorted to writing "Free Coupons" on the envelopes, which did help. Maze had called businesses offering discount coupons and none reported having someone use a coupon. Pierce said the same was true in South Fork. Richmond noted that the Durango VC has been using coupon envelopes for years to help track whether people who stop at the VC visit local businesses. Hill said that whether people use the coupons might depend on whether people think they have value. Some people will pick up coupons because they are free without any intention of actually using them. Cost for the activity was minimal and the envelopes can be used in other ways.

**Press Packets:** Hill said that Gaylene Orr had prepared publicity folders bearing the Silver Thread logo stickers. Each folder held press releases, a CD with photos submitted by committee members, Calendar of Events, Silver Thread and local brochures. The packets were sent to 50 media contacts that Orr felt would have interest in the Silver Thread.

Richmond noted that the press packets cost just over \$5,000. She said that proofing the text for the press releases took a considerable amount of local office time. Pierce said that South Fork sends out press packets to contacts received through CTO. She did not see anything different between her own packet and the contents of the packet prepared specifically for the Silver Thread. She would like a list of the contacts who received the Silver Thread press packet.

Hill said that the Silver Thread packet might be more effective toward developing an itinerary for the Silver Thread than would local press packets. Richmond said that the committee had decided that the Silver Thread press kit should focus on a variety of itineraries. Pierce said that one press release offered a town to town itinerary.

Richmond and Pierce both felt that the press kit did not meet their expectations. The final versions of the press releases were better than earlier drafts. Richmond said that lack of familiarity with the area made it difficult for the writer to present a compelling verbal image of the Byway. Maze said that as far as she knew her office had received no contacts as a result of the press kits.

Hill said that checking demographics and URLs for any contacts made through local websites might help indicate the effectiveness of the trade shows, commercial ads, and other aspects of the marketing campaign. She suggested including the Silver Thread press releases in any publicity sent from local offices.

**Web Page:** Richmond reminded the committee that rather than investing in a separate website for the Silver Thread, the members had agreed to include a Silver Thread web page in local websites. Hill and Company had designed the Silver Thread web page so that it could also serve as the jump page for the Lodging Availability Checker system. The Silver Thread web page currently appears on websites for all three communities.

**Lodging Availability Checker System:** Richmond directed the committee's attention to the lodging availability checker system as developed for the Silver Thread Byway by Hill and Company. She reminded the members that many lodging establishments had indicated a desire to have some local method of allowing potential visitors to check on lodging availability as most

small town businesses cannot afford services provided by national booking agencies. However, once the system was in place, businesses either decided that it was too difficult to enter their data or took too much time to check the system for requests. Richmond, Maze, Pierce and Haskell had all expended time working with business owners and had even assisted with getting their data into the system. Pierce noted that some South Fork businesses do not have e-mail. Richmond said some Creede businesses did not use the service because the same people book lodging from year to year. Richmond explained that after evaluating the situation and receiving an offer from Hill and Company to refund part of the fee, the Executive Steering Committee decided to cancel the service. The refunded money was applied toward commercial ads in *True West*, *Inside/Outside*, and on KSPK FM radio which reaches audiences in the upper and lower Arkansas Valley, the I25 corridor from Pueblo south, northern New Mexico, and the San Luis Valley. The radio ads were changed monthly to reflect current activities and points of interest. Pierce said she heard the radio ads and had at least one visitor comment on having heard the radio ad.

Hill presented report sheets showing that for the month of June the Availability Checker System had been used to contact local businesses for accommodations. Richmond pointed out that in checking lodging information for Lake City after the Silver Thread system was removed, she found that the establishments listed by national booking systems under the Lake City heading actually were located in Telluride or some other community that uses the national agency's services.

Hill said the data base for the Silver Thread system will be retained should local businesses decide to use the system in the future. Hill will forward to committee members a Power Point on the Internet and tourism. She said that current marketing reports show that if lodging businesses are not positioned on-line, people will not come. 28% of the total tourism population currently books on-line. Pierce said that 35% of the information requests received at the South Fork Visitor Center come off the Internet. She said 70% of the ski rentals for Wolf Creek are reserved on-line.

Hill emphasized again that visitors are interested in experiences and good service, not the local political climate. Lodging, packages, special events, amenities, features, and itineraries are what they want to find when they use the Internet. She suggested that all three local websites should include area maps that make it easy for people to identify location as well as travel routes.

Richmond mentioned the value of the Silver Thread sign in Alamosa in tapping into the travel market headed for the Great Sand Dunes National Park. This summer the park had over 3 million visitors. The Silver Thread sign on north bound US 160/285 directs attention to a different kind of experience either as part of a current visit or for future vacations with its portrayal of mountains, lake, and river. Richmond said that the Lake City C of C had indicated that they might not contribute toward the sign's lease fee after the current contract expires.

Hill said that every effort should be made to keep the Silver Thread sign in Alamosa. She suggested making sure that committee members and businesses in each town consider how hard it is to get a grandfathered highway sign. Maze noted that the Creede C of C had lost their sign east of South Fork on US 160 and so far has not been able to find another sign that complies with



CDOT regulations. Pierce and Maze said that their share of the lease fee is included in their new budgets. Pierce said that since the lease contract does not end until March 2006, the committee has time to work on options for being able to finance and keep the sign if Lake City is unable to provide a share of the lease fee.

**Byway Extension:** Richmond said that the Lake City and Hinsdale County representatives had done a great job in organizing the data presented in support of extending the Byway to US 50. She said the question now becomes, Where do we go from here? She noted that the committee has no financial resources for continuing any of the advertising campaigns, for reprinting brochures, or additional interpretive signs. She said that grant money through the Byway office could not be used to reprint the current guidebook or to update the existing signs which contain some incorrect information. However, grant money might be available to create a new guidebook and signs for the extension. Everything now in publication is out of date including maps in the guidebook and the wildlife brochure.

Thode said the committee should start thinking about places for interpretive signs. The rest area at the juncture of SH 149 and US 50 was discussed as an excellent spot for signs and a literature kiosk with brochures and maps. Richmond suggested finding a spot close to where the Old Spanish Trail crosses the Silver Thread in the Powderhorn/Cebolla area as NPS/BLM will be setting National Historic Trail Markers along that route. Another suggestion was a spot that would allow a view of the dry hill country north of the Lake Fork's volcanic cliffs and canyon. Richmond reminded the committee that one reason for extending the Byway was to encourage travelers to connect with other Byways and to promote circle trips. There are several circles that make for interesting one or two day trips. She said some travelers specifically look for Byways. Hill noted that many people want roads that will take them away from the Interstate experience.

Mason said there are enough wildlife brochures to last through the winter. She suggested creating a text and map insert for the wildlife brochure and the guidebook. Pierce offered to create an insert for existing publications. She also suggested allowing local businesses to purchase the existing guidebooks for 50 cents. This would encourage greater familiarity with the Byway publication while allowing the businesses to make a little money on the sale of the guidebooks. She noted that originally half of the money from the sale of the guidebooks was supposed to be set aside for reprints, but that process has not been followed for a couple of years. Richmond said that the Rio Grande NFS had allowed money set aside from the sale of the Bachelor Loop guidebooks to be used for the latest reprint the Silver Thread guidebook.

Hill inquired whether it might be possible to place a map of the full Byway at the US 50 entry. Pierce said there is a map at the South Fork VC, but that, too, will need to be updated. Hill suggested that in the meantime the maps of the Byway, connecting loops, circle routes, etc. should be included in websites and on printed materials. She said the committee should consider promoting a loop or circle tour that ties to Mesa Verde's 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Silver Thread brochures should be available along US 160 from Pagosa Springs to Cortez.

Mason suggested a grand opening for the extension at the US 50-SH 149 juncture with a ribbon cutting ceremony. The event could kick-off the summer season. West Elk, Gunnison, the governor and other public dignitaries could be invited to attend. Hill said the event could be

carried by AP. She suggested timing the ceremony so as to tie to some local event or events that would encourage people to travel the Byway beyond the ceremony point.

Mason said the committee needs to make sure the Byway stays scenic and spiffy. Some points of concern are the FS gravel pit, CDOW unit signs, CDOT signs, the FS snow fence, etc. Richmond said that although the Byway is designated as a state and FS scenic route, people often are focused on their own office responsibilities and do not always think about how activities may relate to other agencies. The committee agreed that contact should be made with all agencies to remind them about the importance of keeping the Byway scenic. Mason encouraged all members to keep their eyes open when they travel the Byway and to encourage pride in the route among all interested parties including private land owners.

Richmond said that the committee will have to consider how to pay for future interpretive and promotional activities. Suggestions included looking to TEA-21 grants, SW Travel Region, Action 22, etc. Other agencies such as the Colorado Historical Society, CDOW, etc. may be able to provide cash or in-kind matches.

The committee will touch base with Sally Pearce about how to proceed in promoting the extension. Gunnison offices, agencies, and C of C will be contacted as well as representatives for the West Elk Loop Byway to assure their participation in future plans.

Since Hill needed to leave, Richmond asked her to share any ideas she might have about incorporation for the Byway committee. Hill said that non-profit incorporation status tends to give validity to the efforts of a group, puts the organization above the reach of political interplay, and shows that the group's interests reach beyond boundaries. She said incorporation tends to show solidarity within the group, which is important for funding requests. Richmond noted that some foundations and agencies now specify that grant funds cannot be used for "pass-through" projects.

Hill will send the Internet Power Point for use in promoting current and future marketing activities. She encouraged the continued use of surveys to develop a solid demographics data base. Signs, maps, and press releases are crucial to making visitors aware of the Silver Thread Byway.

Pierce and Richmond spoke about the possibility of extending the Silver Thread Byway over Wolf Creek Pass to Pagosa Springs. Pagosa Springs C of C has expressed their interest. The route would provide a completely different experience from the Upper Rio Grande and Lake Fork valleys especially with the overlook into the San Juan Valley and the hot springs.

After Hill's departure, Richmond asked again, Where do we go from here? How do we build on what we have started? How do we proceed with the reprints of the brochures, maps, interpretive signs, etc.? Can we accomplish our goals if we continue as a loose-knit committee or should we proceed toward non-profit incorporation?

A. Hague said that after listening to the discussion of the marketing plan, she felt that incorporation would put the committee above local politics. Pierce said that she would like to see

some of the people who were involved at the time it was decided that the committee should incorporate come back to the table. Richmond said that Bylaws for non-profit corporations can specify no financial obligation for participating entities. She said the SLV Visitor Center had such a statement in their Memo of Understanding and in their bylaws. Richmond said there may have been an MOU initially for the Silver Thread. If the committee decides not to pursue non-profit incorporation, an MOU might help re-establish interest and commitment among the various agencies and organizations.

Richmond said that while she will no longer be representing the Creede C of C on the committee, she is not leaving the area. She said she is willing to help coordinate activities for the committee and will serve on the committee as a representative of the Old Spanish Trail Association. Both South Fork and Creede lost their e-mail data bases this summer. Richmond asked that members from each community make sure that she has current e-mail addresses for all interested parties.

Thode suggested trying to get all parties associated with the Byway to the table to discuss incorporation and the proposed bylaws. Richmond noted that some agencies have changed personnel and in some cases positions no longer exist. She asked that each agency and group having interest in the Silver Thread submit current contact information for supervisors and local representatives. Richmond suggested holding the next meeting in Gunnison to encourage participation from that side. She said that trying to get people to suggest meeting times via e-mail does not work as some do not respond and those who do have to proceed with other plans while waiting to hear back.

**Thode suggested scheduling the next meeting for the second week in January. The committee concurred that the topic of incorporation and draft bylaws, as related to how best to continue current projects and promote future goals, will be the agenda for the next meeting. All interested parties will be notified of exact date, time and Gunnison location.**

## Silver Thread Scenic Byway wraps up two year marketing campaign

The Silver Thread Byway Committee has entered the final stages of a two-year marketing campaign funded through a \$50,000 grant from the National Scenic Byways Commission and the Colorado Scenic Byways Office. The Silver Thread Scenic and Historic Byway (SH 149) is sanctioned as one of twenty-four premier routes in Colorado by the Colorado Department of Transportation. The National Forest has also given scenic and historic designation to the route.

The Silver Thread Byway Committee worked with Hill and Company of Edwards, Colorado, in developing a comprehensive plan that covered a variety of marketing strategies. The initial phase of the project included an in-depth study of visitation patterns along the byway and for each of the three Silver Thread towns. Creede, Lake City, and South Fork each hosts a large number of visitors from Texas but the actual places of origin, as determined by zip codes, vary significantly as shown by daily records kept for each byway town. Runner-up states also vary as to points of origin and destination with Kansas and Oklahoma providing significant visitation to one destination, Arizona and California to another, and Mississippi Valley a Gulf states to another.

The next phase of the Silver Thread Byway Committee's marketing plan initiated professional publicity kits with press releases, regional photos on CDs, brochures, and contact information for each of the three towns. A description of the Silver Thread Byway appears within both the Official State Vacation Guide and the state's official website, colorado.com, administered by the Colorado Tourism Office. Hill and Company developed two ads for placement in travel publications such as the May issue of Rocky Mountain AAA's Encounters magazine. This same ad appears in the summer travel issue of True West magazine. A larger ad, which features a collage of scenery found along the byway and a list of summer events, runs in the Grand Junction Daily Sentinel's Vacation edition and Inside/Outside, which covers the Four-Corners area.

Members of the Silver Thread Byway Committee developed a new rack card for distribution through commercial lodging and restaurant outlets in a number of southern Colorado and northern New Mexico locales as well as in Albuquerque. The rack card design emphasizes that the Silver Thread Scenic and Historic Byway is a well-maintained, paved highway with plenty of scenic and wildlife watching opportunities. The back side of the rack card lists the major events for each of the three towns.

In support of businesses associated with the Silver Thread Byway, the committee authorized an Internet lodging accommodations system that allows potential visitors to check on lodging facilities and availability prior to coming into the area. Setup service is free to any lodging establishment with a Creede, Lake City, or South Fork address. Businesses pay a small monthly service fee for lodging reserved through the system. Another promotional activity features Silver Thread coupon envelopes that are available at Silver Thread visitor centers. Discount and other trade coupons provided by Silver Thread merchants bear the name of the town distributing the envelope. This allows the Silver Thread Committee and the merchants to track both visitation and travel patterns along the Byway.

Committee members have conducted Silver Thread Scenic and Historic Byway tourism seminars using a special byways training kit developed by the Colorado Scenic Byway Office. The kit's activities are regionally adaptable to allow participants to become familiar with attractions and services found within their area. The byway committee also has supported two other major projects not funded through the marketing grant. Each of the three towns contributed toward establishing a Silver Thread Scenic Byway sign on US Highway 285 at the south edge of Alamosa to encourage travelers to proceed west on US Highway 160 to the juncture with SH 149 at South Fork. All three towns had experienced a noticeable decline in visitation due to alternate route signs that had directed westbound traffic away Wolf Creek Pass during the long period of work on the tunnel project. Through contributions from local, state, and federal entities associated with the Silver Thread Byway plus a grant from the Colorado Division of Wildlife, the committee produced a wildlife brochure with photos, descriptions, a location map, and observation checkboxes. The committee also printed another 10,000 copies of the very popular lure brochure, which features a cover photo by well-known San Luis Valley photographer J.D. Marston.

Two other activities being pursued by the committee at part of their Master Plan continue beyond the marketing grant phase. Under the leadership of Hinsdale County representatives, the committee has requested permission to extend the Silver Thread Scenic and Historic Byway from Lake City to US Highway 50 west of Gunnison. This allows the byway to serve as a link between two major federal highways (US 50 and US 160) and also brings travelers into conjunction with the West Elk Scenic Loop. Establishment of a non-profit corporation in support of the Silver Thread Scenic and Historic Byway expands future funding opportunities for the Silver Thread Byway.

The Silver Thread Byway Committee currently represents some nineteen local, state, and federal governmental agencies and entities and chambers of commerce. Individuals and businesses associated with the Silver Thread Scenic and Historic Byway are also encouraged to join the committee. Committee meetings are open to all interested parties. The Silver Thread Byway Committee will meet in June to review the outcomes of the marketing grant activities. Encounter surveys are planned for all three towns around the July 4<sup>th</sup> holidays. Jon Schler and staff of the Department of Local Affairs will tabulate the results for the Byway Committee's final report for the marketing grant. Copies of the report will be available at the visitor centers in Creede, Lake City and South Fork as well as on-line through each town's website. For more information about the Silver Thread Scenic and Historic Byway visit [creede.com](http://creede.com), [lakecity.com](http://lakecity.com), or [southfork.org](http://southfork.org).



## Intercept Survey

(Circle all that apply)

Thank you for completing this survey! The results of this survey will help us to make decisions on marketing and improvements to make our community more appealing and visitor friendly. **Your survey answers are completely anonymous and confidential. They will not be shared in other than statistical content.**

Time & Date of Survey \_\_\_\_\_

Location of Survey Creede

Gender: Male Female

Age: under 20 20-34 35-50 51-65 over 65

1. What is your home Zip code? \_\_\_\_\_ Country? \_\_\_\_\_

2. Is this your first visit to Creede ?

Yes No ? Times before \_\_\_\_\_

3. Did you know that there is a Byway linking South Fork, Creede. and Lake City?

Yes No

4. How did you learn about this area?

Friends/Relatives Internet Brochure Highway signs Advertisements

Chance Press article Recommendation Other \_\_\_\_\_

5. What is your mode of transportation?

Rented Vehicle SUV Car Truck RV Bicycle

Motorcycle Other \_\_\_\_\_

6. What is the purpose of your travel today?

Vacation/Holiday Sightseeing Visit with friends/relatives in area

Outdoor recreation Business (work/relocation) Other \_\_\_\_\_

**6. How long are you staying in the area?**

Passing through      Day only      (*Day only/Passing through-skip to #8*)  
1 night      2-3 nights      4-6 nights      7-14 nights      over 14 days

**7. What are your lodging accommodations while in the area?**

Motel/Hotel/Lodge      RV Park      Campground      Friends/Relatives      Cabin/Cottage/Condo  
Bed & Breakfast      Resort      Other \_\_\_\_\_

**8. What is your main destination? \_\_\_\_\_**

**9. What was your entry point to this area?**

South Fork & Hwy 160 via Pagosa Springs

South Fork & Hwy 160 via Del Norte

Hwy 149 & Hwy 50 from Gunnison

Hwy 149 & Hwy 50 from Montrose

Alpine Loop- Silverton

Alpine Loop-Ouray

**10. How many traveling in your group?**

Total \_\_\_\_\_ Males \_\_\_\_\_ Females \_\_\_\_\_

Males under 18? \_\_\_\_\_ Females under 18? \_\_\_\_\_

**11. What are your estimated expenditures in:**

Lake City?	\$0-50	\$51-100	\$101-200	\$201-400	\$401+
South Fork?	\$0-50	\$51-100	\$101-200	\$201-400	\$401+
Creede	\$0-50	\$51-100	\$101-200	\$201-400	\$401+

**Would you be interested in helping us gather more information by filling out Part 2 of this survey? It is a take home survey that can be mailed or faxed back to us. Your answers will be confidential and will not contain your name to make it completely anonymous.**



**Intercept Survey Part 2 ( Mail, FAX or email)**

Thank you for agreeing to participate in an extended version of our survey. **Your answers are confidential and completely anonymous and will be shared in statistical content form only.** The information you provide will be used in marketing our community to other visitors like you. On completion of this survey please:

**Fax to: (719) 658-2717**

**email: creede@amigo.net**

**Mail to:**

Silver Thread Scenic Byway Survey

Creede/Mineral County C of C

P.O. Box 580

Creede, CO 81130

**1. What is your home zip code?** \_\_\_\_\_

**2. While in the Silver Thread area (South Fork, Creede or Lake City), which leisure activities will your household participate? (Mark ALL that apply)**

- |                              |                     |                     |
|------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| a. Live productions/concerts | i. Horseback riding | q. Painting/Drawing |
| b. Scenic Driving            | j. Cooking          | r. Photography      |
| c. Bicycling                 | k. Gardening        | s. Quilting/Sewing  |
| d. Boating/canoeing/kayaking | l. Collecting       | t. Crafts           |
| e. Camping                   | m. Internet         | u. Woodworking      |
| f. Hiking                    | n. Museums          | v. Shopping         |
| g. Fishing                   | o. Four-wheeling    | w. Golf             |
| h. Hunting                   | p. Motorcycling     | x. Running          |
| y. Rafting                   | z. Other _____      |                     |

**3. Which of the following local events did you attend in the last 12 months? (● mark ALL that apply)**

WE=weekend

- |   |   |                            |
|---|---|----------------------------|
| SF Logger Days (3 <sup>rd</sup> WE in July) | Christmas in LC or Creede                   | Hunters Dinner (October)   |
| Fourth of July activities                   | San Juan Soltice 50 mile                    | Bingo                      |
| Colorfest Arts&Crafts Show                  | Musical Events                              | Taste of Creed             |
| Creede Woodcarvers Rendezvous               | SF/Creede Rodeos (June & July)              | Creede Repertory Theatre   |
| Alfred Packer Days                          | SF Square Dancing( 1 <sup>st</sup> WE Aug.) | Creede Mtn. Runs           |
| SF Car Show (Fathers Day WE)                | Creede Mtn. Man Rendevous                   | Creede Salsa Fiesta        |
| Creede Mining Events                        | Creede Rock & Mineral Show                  | Silver Thread Studio Tour  |
| MushroomForays (3 <sup>rd</sup> WE Aug.)    | Volksmarch Events                           | Chocolate Tasting Festival |
| Other _____                                 | (over)                                      |                            |



4. How would you rate Creede on each of the following characteristics? (● Circle ONE for each)

	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent
Variety of goods/services	a	b	c	d
Quality of goods/services	a	b	c	d
Cost of goods/services	a	b	c	d
Necessary goods/services	a	b	c	d
Friendliness and assistance	a	b	c	d
Convenience of business hours	a	b	c	d
Special events & festivals	a	b	c	d
Access to shops, museums, theatre	a	b	c	d
Attractiveness of Creede area	a	b	c	d
Safety within Creede area	a	b	c	d
Overall impression of Creede	a	b	c	d

5. Gender? a Male b Female

6. Marital Status a Never married b Married c Separated/Divorced d Widowed e. Partner

7. Age? a under 20 b 20-24 c 25-44 d 45-54 e 55-64 f over 64

8. Household size (including yourself). a One b Two c Three d Four e Five f Five+

9. Number of wage earners in household.

a One b Two c Three d Four e Five f Over Five

10. What is the highest level of formal education you have completed? (● mark ONE)

a Grade 11 or less c Technical College e Graduate School  
 b High School or GED d 4 Year College f Post Graduate School

12. What is your household's annual income? (Please mark ONE)

a under \$15,000 c \$25,000 – 34,999 e \$50,000 - \$74,999 g \$100,000 - \$149,999  
 b \$15,000 - \$24,999 d \$35,000 - \$49,999 f \$75,000 - \$99,999 h over \$150,000  
 i. decline to answer



*Silver Thread Scenic and Historic Byway  
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**KSPK Radio Ad**

25 60-second ads per month for three months

Cost =\$375

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Three unique towns, two magnificent valleys, one spectacular drive. That's what you'll find on State Highway 149, the Silver Thread Scenic and Historic Byway. Visit the colorful towns of Lake City, Creede and South Fork for true Rocky Mountain adventures and special activities. Along the way, learn about Wagon Wheel Gap, the Creede Fossil Formation, the Slumgullion mudslide, and Alfred Packer. Capture that special photo of Lake San Isabel, Colorado's second largest natural lake, and North Clear Creek Falls, Colorado's most photographed waterfall. Catch the view of spectacular Uncompahgre Peak and the Colorado Alps from Windy Point Overlook. Take a side tour to the Wheeler Geologic Area, the Bachelor Historic Loop, the Rio Grande Reservoir, or the Alpine Loop. Pick up our interpretive guidebook and the watchable wildlife brochure at visitor centers in Creede, Lake City and South Fork. Take the Silver Thread Scenic and Historic Byway for an afternoon, a day, or a fun-filled vacation.