



Assessment Findings and Suggestions Report

Mountain Home, Idaho
August, 2016

ROGER BROOKS >
International



Opportunity Assessment

INTRODUCTION

In June of 2016, an Opportunity Assessment of Mountain Home, Idaho, was conducted, and the findings were presented in a two-and-a-half hour workshop. The assessment provides an unbiased overview of Mountain Home - how it is seen by a visitor. It includes a review of local marketing efforts, signage, attractions, critical mass, retail mix, ease of getting around, customer service, visitor amenities such as parking and public restrooms, overall appeal, and the community's ability to attract overnight visitors.

In performing the Opportunity Assessment, we looked at the area through the eyes of a first-time visitor. No prior research was facilitated, and no community representatives were contacted except to set up the project. The city and surrounding area were "secretly shopped." Any person looking to relocate their business, industry, or residence will come to your community as a visitor first. Tourism is the front door to all your economic development efforts.

Once potential visitors find information about your area, are the marketing materials good enough to close the sale? In the Marketing Assessment, we reviewed your visitor website and print marketing materials.

A typical community has five opportunities to close the sale:

- 1) Personal contact (visitor information centers, trade shows, etc.)

- 2) Websites
- 3) Brochures and printed materials
- 4) Publicity (articles)
- 5) Word of mouth - the most effective means

We searched the internet for activities, requested and reviewed printed materials, and looked for articles and third-party information. As we prepared for travel to your community, we searched both commercial and organizational websites promoting the area, tourism websites, and read travel articles and guidebooks.

The marketing assessment determined how effective the marketing was in convincing a potential visitor that the area would be worth a special trip, a stop, or an overnight stay. The key to the marketing assessment is to see if you have a primary lure that makes you worth a special trip of a one-hour drive - or from further away. The question on most visitors' minds is: What do you have that I can't get closer to home? What makes you worth a special trip?

Where most communities falter is when they merely provide "lists" of what the community has, whether it's truly "unique" or not. Nearly every community in North America promotes the usual list of diversions: local museums, shops and restaurants, plenty of lodging, golf, outdoor recreation, historic downtowns, scenic vistas, etc. Of course, nearly every visitor can do these things closer to home. So, what makes Mountain Home worth the trip?

Always promote your primary lure first - what makes you worth that special trip. THEN, promote your diversionary, or "complementary" activities.

Would you go to Anaheim, California, if Disneyland wasn't there? Do you think that Universal Studios and Knotts Berry Farm mind that Disneyland gets all the glory? Of course not. Eighty percent of all tourism spending is with those secondary activities. Disney does the heavy lifting in terms of advertising and promotion, and the diversionary activities benefit.

In a nutshell, the Marketing Effectiveness Assessment looks for what makes your community worth a special trip, or a great place to live, or to do business. We look for details, details, details. Do you give a reason for visiting, and do you provide enough information to make it easy to plan a trip? Are the marketing materials good enough to close the sale?

The second part of the assessment process is the On-site Assessment. During this part of the assessment, we spent several days in the area, looking at enticements from the highways (signs, billboards, something that would get a visitor to stop), beautification and overall curb appeal, wayfinding (ease of getting around), visitor amenities (public restrooms, visitor information, parking), activities, overall appeal, retail mix (lodging, dining, shopping), critical mass, customer service, area attractions, pedestrian friendliness, gathering spaces, evening activities, and the availability of marketing materials and their effectiveness.

The area benefits from tourism when visitors spend money, and they do that in the local gift shops, restaurants, hotels, etc. Therefore, the On-site Assessment includes a candid look at private

businesses as much as public spaces and amenities.

For every shortcoming or challenge we note during the assessment process, we provide a low-cost "suggestion," where possible, on how the challenge can be corrected or overcome. The suggestions are not termed "recommendations," as they were developed without consulting the community first about possible constraints, future plans, or reasons why the suggestions may not be appropriate. Hopefully this assessment process will open dialogue within the community, leading people to adopt some or all of the suggestions, taking them from suggestions to recommendations.

It's important to note that to increase the town's tourism industry, fulfilling one or two of the suggestions may have little impact, but implementing a number of them, if not all, can have a profoundly successful impact on the town's ability to tap into the tourism industry.

Implementation of these suggestions must be a region-wide effort, involving both privately owned businesses as well as local, county, and state agencies, where appropriate. Every local organization plays a role in tourism, downtown revitalization, or economic development efforts. A Destination Marketing Organization (DMO, CVB, Chamber, TPA, etc.) will not be successful if the tourism effort is not region-wide.

In many cases, issues may come up that you are already aware of and are already working on. In that case, the assessment validates those efforts. But more often than not, the assessment will point out things that you are aware of but can't mention



or bring up without paying a political price. Local politics can be a killer of the tourism industry.

While marketing efforts are important, product development is the most important factor of a successful tourism industry. Visitors want activities, not just things to look at. How much time can a visitor spend enjoying activities - that cater to their interests - in your area? Does your community have truly unique attractions the visitor can't get closer to home? You must be able to deliver on your marketing promises – otherwise visitors might come once, but they won't come back. It's much more cost effective to bring people back, than to always go out and entice new visitors into town. "Been there, done that" communities eventually run out of visitors and find they don't have a sustainable tourism industry, or they simply become pit stops or gateways on the way to somewhere else.

After spending several days reviewing marketing materials and assessing the community, we have looked at all of these issues, and have developed some suggestions and ideas the community can discuss and possibly implement to help increase tourism spending locally.

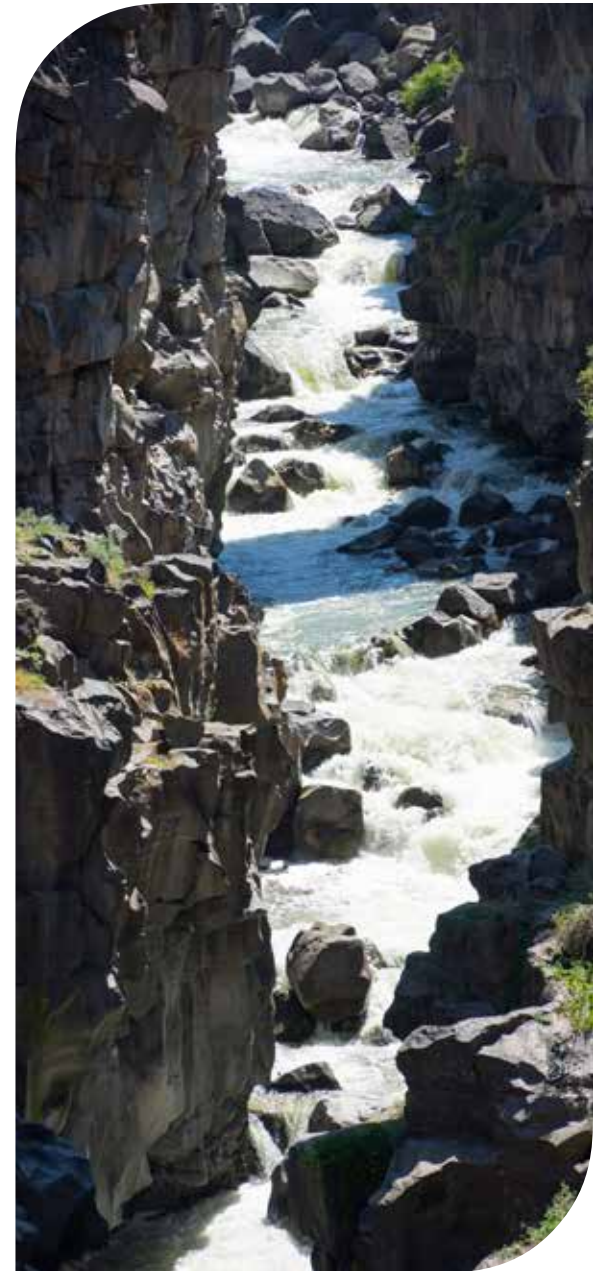
SUCCESSFUL TOURISM TRANSLATES TO CASH

Tourism is successful when the community imports more cash than it exports. When residents spend their hard-earned money outside the community, the community is exporting cash – often referred to as "leakage." Tourism helps fill that gap, importing cash into the local economy without the necessity of having to provide extended social and other services. Visitors come, spend money, then go home. When you import more

cash than you export, you have a positive "balance of trade." Communities with successful tourism programs easily see that the industry subsidizes the community, whereas other communities find that they subsidize visitors – providing services visitors use without them leaving enough money behind to cover the cost of those services.

The primary goal of the tourism industry is to bring more cash into the local economy. This doesn't happen when visitors come into the community, get out of their cars, and take photographs. And it doesn't happen when visitors go swimming in the lake at your park all day, sunning, and eating the lunch they brought from home. And it doesn't happen when visitors hike down your trails, enjoy your interpretive centers, or stroll through your lovely arboretums. These are all great things to do, and, of course, you do want your visitors to do these – but, you also want to entice them into your shops, your cafes, espresso stands, restaurants, galleries, B&B's, and hotels, ultimately opening their wallets to make purchases. That is what helps your local economy, your small merchants, your hoteliers, and your tax coffers.

To entice visitors to spend money in your community, you need to have places for them to spend it – you need to have the right mix of shops, restaurants, entertainment, and lodging facilities, all in an attractive setting, as well as attractions that make them want to visit you in the first place.



THE THREE TYPES OF TOURISM

1. Visiting friends and family

The number one reason people travel is to visit friends and/or family. If you did nothing to promote tourism, you would still have tourism in your community. However, when friends and family come to visit, do your residents take them out to eat, shop, dine locally? Or do they head to a neighboring community? Do your locals even know what you have to offer? An effective tourism marketing effort also includes educating locals as to what you have and how to find it through effective wayfinding signage, gateways and advertising.

2. Business travel

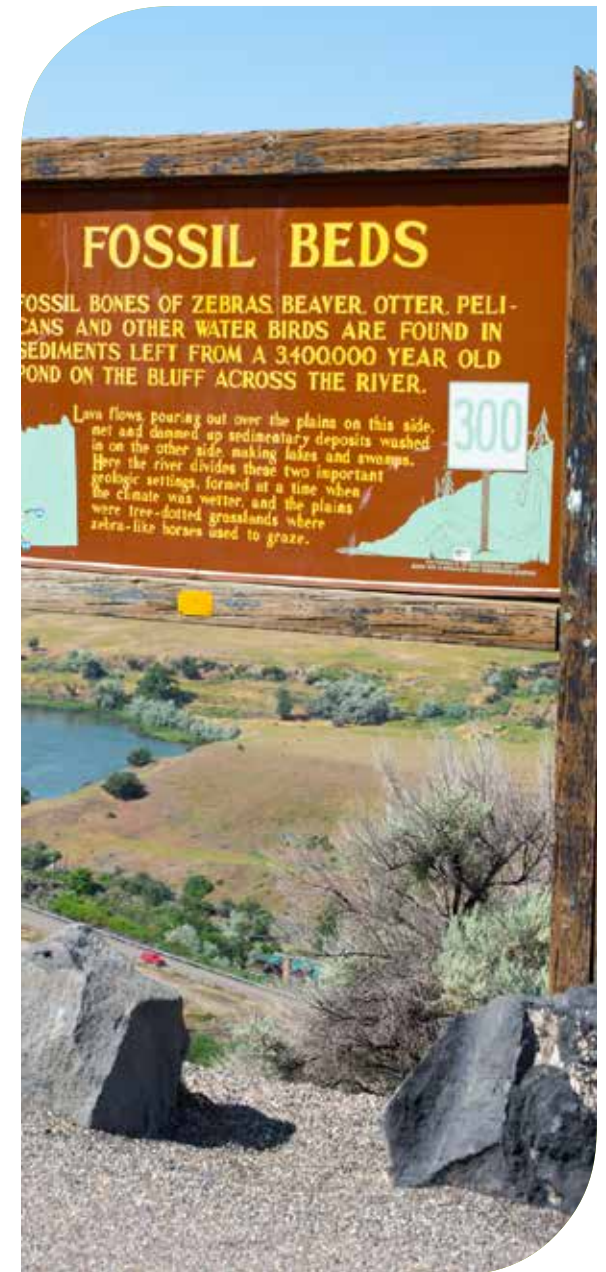
The second most popular reason for travel is business. Included in this category is educational travel: colleges and universities, as well as conventions and meetings, corporate travel, vendor travel, etc. Like leisure travelers, this group is looking for things to do “after hours” while in the area. The most successful convention and trade show towns are the result of their secondary activities or “diversions,” not simply because of their convention and exhibition facilities. Think Disneyworld, Disneyland, San Antonio’s River Walk, Banff, to name a few.

3. Leisure travel

The third, and most lucrative of all types of visitors, is the leisure traveler. They have no personal connections to the community, but are coming purely to enjoy themselves. They stay in commercial

lodging establishments, eat virtually all their meals in local restaurants, and their top diversionary activity is shopping and dining in a pedestrian-friendly setting.

The average leisure visitor is active 14 hours a day, yet typically only spends four to six hours with the primary lure. They then spend eight to ten hours with diversionary activities - things they could do closer to home, but will do while in the area. A good example of this is Branson, Missouri, the “live music-theater capital of the world.” This town of 6,500 residents hosts 7.5 million visitors a year.





The primary “lure” is the 49 music theaters. The average visitor attends two shows a day over about four hours. During the other hours of the day, the visitor will shop in local outlet malls, head to the water parks, theme parks, and other attractions, play a round of golf, hike, bike, fish, do some bird watching, and participate in any number of other activities they could do closer to home, but will do while visiting Branson.

THE THREE STAGES OF TOURISM

1. Status quo

If you take no action to develop the tourism industry, you will still have an element of tourism, simply because some travelers will pull off local highways or freeways for gas, food, or lodging, as well as the fact that the number one reason for travel is to visit friends or family. If you have residents, you will have some tourism.

2. Getting people to stop

The first priority of developing a successful tourism industry is getting people to stop. Imagine how successful businesses in the community would be if just 50% of the vehicles traveling through pulled off the highway and spent just 30 minutes in your community – buying gas, an ice cream cone, a sandwich, a gift or souvenir?

If there’s a strong pull, imagine the money spent if visitors stayed two hours in the community, which nearly always translates to additional spending.

The first goal is to get those travelers to stop.

3. Becoming the destination

To become a destination community you must have

attractions and supporting amenities that convince visitors to spend the night. And those attractions must be different from what the visitor can get closer to home.

Overnight visitors spend three times that of day visitors, and nearly ten times that of visitors using your community as a pit stop on the way to somewhere else.

THE FOUR-TIMES RULE

Visitors will make a point of stopping or staying in a community if it has enough activities that appeal specifically to them and will keep them busy four times longer than it took them to get there.

In other words, if a person has to drive 15 minutes to visit you, do you have enough for them to do to keep them busy for an hour? (4 times 15 minutes) If a visitor has to drive an hour, do you have the activities and amenities to keep them busy for four hours?

The more you have to offer, collectively, the further visitors will come, and the longer they will stay, and of course, the more they will spend. This is why it is so important for communities to market more than just their immediate geographic areas. By marketing neighboring activities and attractions, you present much more for a visitor to do, and you make the visit worth the trip.

Visitors don’t care about city limits or county lines – so market the broader package and you’ll be able to keep people in the area long enough to translate to another meal, some more shopping, and hopefully, an overnight stay.

SELL THE EXPERIENCE, NOT GEOGRAPHY

Nearly every destination marketing organization is charged with promoting a geographic area, yet visitors couldn't care less about those boundaries. They are looking for activities that cater to their interests, and location is second to the experience. ALWAYS promote the primary lure first, then the location. People by the millions head to Disneyland, Disneyworld, Dollywood and other attractions. They are not going to Anaheim, Orlando or Pigeon Forge.

Always sell the activity - the experience - THEN the location.

LURES, DIVERSIONS AND AMBIANCE

Too often communities promote the list of diversions that nearly every community has. The primary lure is the activity that a visitor can't find closer to home.

Always promote your primary lure, then the diversions. Do not try to be all things to all people. Have you ever gone anywhere because they had "something for everyone?" Of course not - you go there because they have something specific for you. Find your niche and promote it like crazy.

Historic downtowns provide ambiance - they are not attractions, diversions, nor are they a primary lure. It's what's in the buildings that makes a downtown a destination.

The same can be said for scenery. Unless your vista is a world-class scene, such as Niagara Falls or the Grand Canyon, scenic vistas create wonderful ambiance, but don't translate to spending, and they only last a few minutes. Then what?

All too often communities promote their heritage as a primary draw. How far would you travel to visit a mining museum? A timber museum? An agricultural center? A county historical museum? Heritage must be outstanding and pervasive throughout the community to be a primary lure, such as Plimoth Plantation or Salem, Massachusetts.

Thousands of communities are the "capital" of something. For instance, in California, Borrego Springs is the grapefruit capital of the world. Gilroy is the garlic capital. Modesto is the tomato capital. Gridley is the kiwi capital. Oxnard is the strawberry capital. Fallbrook is the avocado capital. But here's the question: Have you ever gone anywhere because it was the capital of a fruit or vegetable?

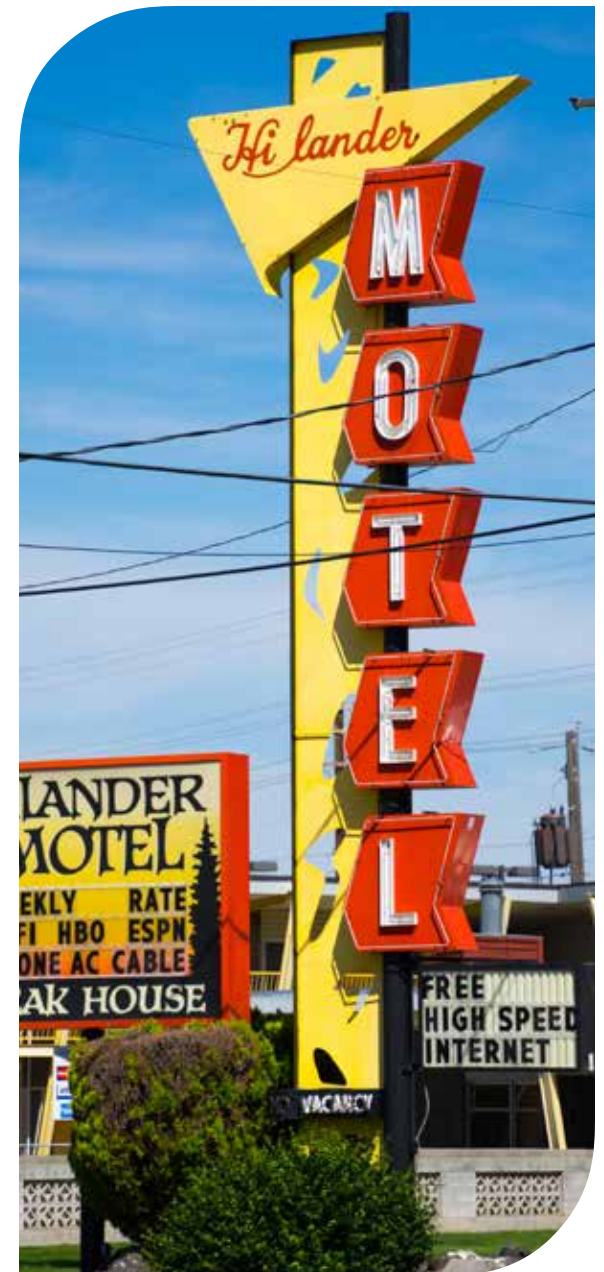
Your local heritage is important to the community and can set the ambiance, even becoming a diversionary activity. For local heritage to be a major attraction, it needs to combine activities with ambiance, and it needs to be pervasive throughout the area.

BE DIFFERENT OR THE BEST

Why should a visitor come to your community if they can enjoy the same activities closer to home? Too many communities promote "outdoor recreation" as their primary draw. Unfortunately, that is the same attraction promoted by nearly every community in North America.

If you are different, then you have a reason for travelers to choose to visit you. If you are the best, then visitors will generally flock to your doors.

If you have great hiking trails, then market their unique qualities. Be specific and paint the image





of how wonderful they are in the minds of your potential visitors. If you have one fantastic restaurant in town, let people know about it – a unique dining experience is something many people will travel far to enjoy.

Ashland, Oregon, previously a depressed timber town, began its Shakespeare Festival, which now runs nine months of the year and draws hundreds of thousands of visitors who spend an average of six nights in the community. The Shakespeare Festival made Ashland different from any other community.

Leavenworth, Washington, another dying timber town, adopted a Bavarian architectural theme and produces dozens of Bavarian events every year. Some now say the town looks more genuinely Bavarian than towns in Bavaria. It is now one of the primary tourist destinations in Washington state, hosting more than 2.5 million visitors annually. They offer a different experience, an experience that is pervasive throughout town.

Okanogan County, Washington is an outdoor recreational paradise – just like 37 of the 38 other counties in Washington. So why go to the Okanogan? Because they are the best. They researched guidebooks, newspaper and magazine articles, and pulled quotes they could use in their advertising efforts. Like, “Pinch yourself, you’re in Okanogan Country with perhaps the best cross country skiing on the continent.” This, and other quotes like it, make it worth the drive to visit Okanogan Country. The third-party endorsements show that they are the best.

Set yourself apart from everyone else, and you’ll see that by being unique, you’ll be a greater attraction.



CRITICAL MASS MEANS CASH

Although it may not be the primary reason why visitors come to your community, shopping and dining in a pedestrian setting is the number one activity of visitors. Besides lodging, it is also how visitors spend the most amount of money.

Do you have a pedestrian-friendly shopping district? If not, can you create one? Many communities have been highly successful with the development of a two or three block long pedestrian “village” including visitor-oriented retail shops, dining, visitor information, restrooms, etc., all in an attractive, landscaped setting.

The general rule of thumb in those two or three blocks (not spread out all over town) is 10+10+10: Ten destination retail shops, which includes galleries, antiques, collectibles, home accents and furnishings, artists in action, book stores, logo gear (clothing), souvenirs, outfitters, tour operators, activity shops such as kites, jewelry, wine or tobacco shops, and other specialties. The second ten is for food: ice cream, fudge and candy stores, soda fountains, sit-down dining, coffee shops, cafes, bistros, delis, etc. And the final ten are businesses open after 6:00 pm. This includes entertainment: bars, dance clubs, theaters (movies and performing arts), retail shops with activities (piano bar in a wine shop), etc.

The important point is to group these businesses together to create the “critical mass” in a pedestrian-friendly setting. This will attract visitors as well as locals, and make it worth their while to stop and shop. People are always drawn to the critical mass –

the opportunity to have multiple choices, multiple experiences, all in a convenient and attractive setting.

TOURISM IS AN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITY

The goal of successful tourism is for people to come into the community, spend money, and go home. Tourism is nearly a \$947 billion dollar industry in the U.S., nearly \$82 billion in Canada, and supports millions of jobs. Ninety percent of tourism industry businesses are small businesses of which 90% have less than 15 employees. Tourism provides the opportunity for entrepreneurs to get started, for small family-run businesses to thrive, for artisans and craftspeople to find a market, and creates a basis for unique niche-retail environment including wineries, artists, crafts, etc. Tourism provides a diverse market within the community, expanding its potential. Enhancing the community through beautification efforts creates an attractive setting for both locals and visitors, key in revitalizing a community's downtown. And a tourism-friendly town will attract non-tourism industries faster than others – new businesses will see the community as a visitor before they make a final determination about the community. Tourism is the front door to your economic development efforts.

The benefits of a healthy tourism industry can rejuvenate a town, foster community pride, encourage economic diversity, and lead the way to a vital, successful community.



NEXT STEPS

The findings and suggestions in this report will provide many ideas, strategies, and goals to reach for. We hope that it fosters dialogue and becomes a springboard for the community in enhancing the tourism industry and other economic development efforts, leading to greater prosperity, rejuvenation, and enjoyment by all the citizens.

This report offers a first step in reaching that goal. To fully realize the benefits of this assessment, the community should take these findings and suggestions, discuss them and evaluate them, and develop a plan for implementation.

A detailed branding plan would help to build on the results of this assessment, adding in-depth research, evaluation, and local input to develop a unique brand and implementation program. The assessment process essentially provides a look at where you are today. RBI's BrandCamp program helps build your branding plan from the ground up - with local input, brainstorming, research, and creative planning. We can work with you to guide you through the process, helping create a plan that has local champions and community buy-in.

The next step in the planning process would be to provide public outreach and review past and current planning efforts. This would determine your goals as a region.

The third step would involve research, feasibility and market analysis, and determining your brand - what you are or hope to be known for.

Then comes the "development" portion of the plan or the "how to get there" program: determining

what product development initiatives need to be undertaken to reinforce and grow the brand. This also includes defining the roles of the various local organizations. Brand-building takes a village - everyone pulling in the same direction, each with their own "to do list."

Finally, there's the detailed marketing plan: how and when you will tell the world who you are and what makes you special - the place to live, work and play.

The branding plan should be an "action plan" as opposed to a "strategic plan." You want a to do list, by organization, not just general strategies, goals and objectives.

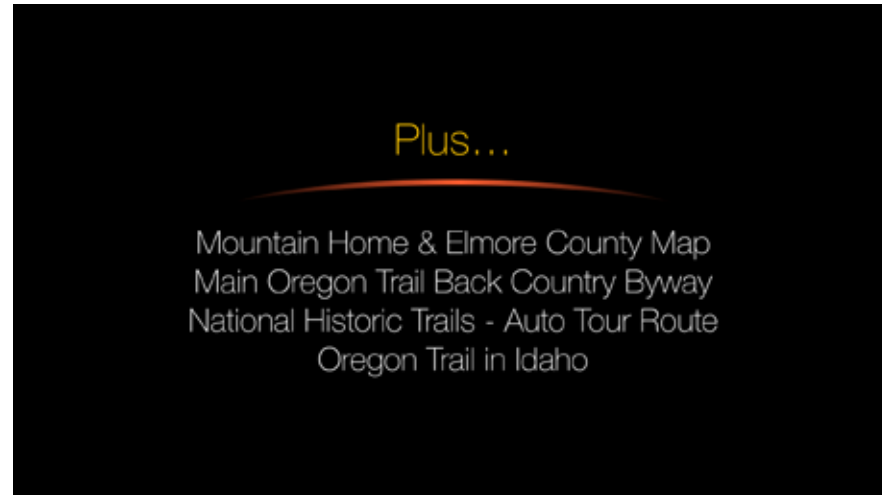
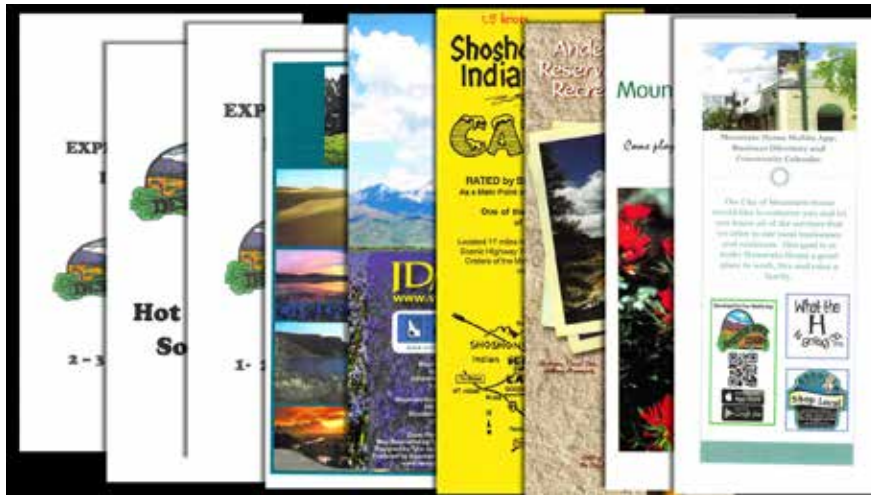
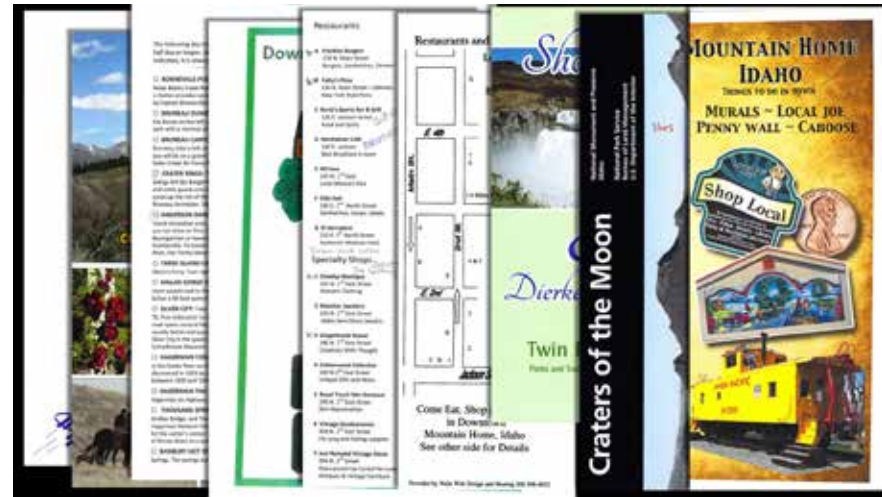
The recommendations should provide all the necessary steps for your town to be successful in attaining its goals of a more diverse economy with an enhanced tourism industry and to become more attractive and enjoyable for both visitors and citizens.

A good plan will provide a program to get local residents and the business community pulling together, building the town's unique image in the minds of visitors and residents alike. The result of your efforts will be a prosperous, enjoyable environment in which to live, work, and visit.





Findings & Suggestions



Our assessment process included reviewing Mountain Home’s marketing materials, plus looking at your online presence, reviews on TripAdvisor and other information sites, as well as performing the “secret-shopping” on-site assessment. We spent a week in Mountain Home, looking at signage and wayfinding (how easy was it to find your attractions and amenities?), appeal, critical mass (were there places in the county to spend money?), your attractions, amenities, customer service, and more.

We looked at Mountain Home as: 1) a place to live and raise a family, 2) a place to work, invest in, or bring a business, and 3) a place to visit.

Before we arrived, we requested information. We received many excellent marketing materials (top right and bottom left). You have done an amazing job putting together brochures and other materials, and on a small budget.



1 10 brochures you can eliminate in packets you send out



We received a lot of information about attractions quite a distance from Mountain Home. We recommend that you promote day trips that are only a 45 minute drive away - no further. There's a big danger that when you send your visitors to Boise or Twin Falls for an attraction, your visitors will just stay there, especially since those larger cities have more attractions, shopping, lodging, and entertainment.

For people traveling from Twin Falls to Boise (top left), Mountain Home is in the middle. But nowadays, with cars having air conditioning and more comfort than in years past, there's not a lot of reason to stop in Mountain Home. You need to give people a reason to stop.

Ten brochures (bottom left) you can eliminate from the packets you send to potential visitors (unless they specifically request them): The Mountain Home & Elmore County map; Main Oregon Trail Back Country Byway; National Historic Trails Auto Tour Route; Oregon Trail in Idaho; the Mobile App card (seems more resident-oriented); the shop-local card; Craters of the Moon (too far away); Shoshone Falls (too far); Shoshone Indian Caves (too far); and Explore Idaho in a Day (too far).

That still leaves quite a few brochures (bottom right). We'll show you how you can reduce these to just two marketing pieces, and we'll tell you why you need them.



To visit Mountain Home, we flew into Boise, and we were thrilled to see a directional sign for “Mountain Home” right at the airport (top left). Very good.

We drove to Mountain Home on I-84, and took a look at coming in from both directions. After exiting the freeway, we took a careful look at the drive into town, assessing gateways and first impressions of the area.

When the sign says Mountain Home, we assume we’ve already arrived, even if the town is actually a few miles down the road. Our first impression, coming from the northwest, is that there is some industrial (to be expected), but the area gradually becomes more run down the closer we get to town.

That doesn’t give a good impression. There are still no signs telling us where a downtown might be. We see a welcome sign, but still nothing that tells us where there’s a downtown. After a few minutes, we realize we’re leaving town.

Always put your gateways where you will make the first, best impression (bottom left). People begin to judge you where they see your signs - if necessary, add signage that states “Downtown - Ahead One Mile.”

As we drive into town from the other direction, we see the welcome sign (bottom right), which is attractive, but it is in a very unattractive area.



5 Start a voluntary abatement program to remove eyesores.

6 Put up cedar screening fences where possible.

This scene (top left) is right across the street from the welcome sign. Nearby we saw this signage for the mobile park (top right), which has paint peeling and is faded, plus it has the temporary sign behind it. Not a good first impression.

entrance highways into town. First impressions are lasting, and your gateways are where visitors and newcomers form their first impressions.

We saw places that looked like this (bottom left) - it looks long abandoned, and it's an eyesore. Start a voluntary abatement program to remove things like this.

Put up cedar fencing to screen places like this (bottom right) from the main



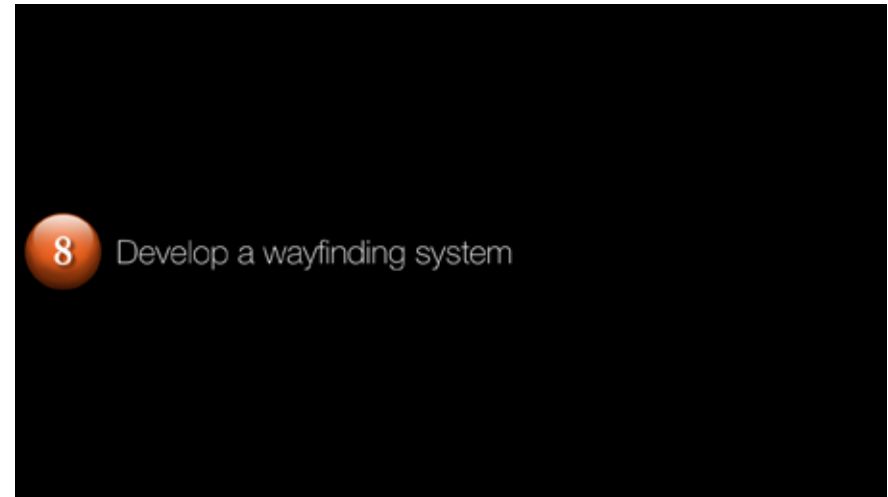
Do something about dilapidated billboards and signs like this (top left). Either enforce abatement programs to have it removed, or try to put it to use with new messaging and graphics to promote Mountain Home.

After we arrived, we wanted to find some lunch. We searched TripAdvisor, and decided to try the Dilly Deli, and it was great - good sandwiches and great service. But the address was 190 East 2nd North. Since Mountain Home isn't on a grid pattern, we had a terrible time trying to find things with these convoluted addresses. We had to use our navigation system, and even then, it was difficult. The majority of travelers do not have nav systems, so it's even

harder for them.

There is no wayfinding system in Mountain Home - no signs for anything in the city. The only signs tell people how to leave (bottom right). There are no signs to tell you how to find the golf course, Legacy Park, the museum, or downtown.

Worse yet, many thoroughfares seem to have four or five names. You've got: I-84, BR84, Hwy 20, Hwy 26, Hwy 30, BR30, Hwy 78, Hwy 50, Sunset Strip, Sunset Way. We never found any street signs with "Sunset" - they were only mentioned in directions provided in the marketing materials.



We did see the Visitor Information sign (top left), but we had a terrible time actually finding the VIC. We finally asked some people and found that it was tucked behind the McDonalds. But it is very easy to miss signs you need to see when there is so much sign clutter.

Our biggest suggestion is to develop a wayfinding system. It should include:

- Gateways and entries
- Attractions and activities
- Amenities (parking, washrooms)

- Trail markers and access points
- Visitor information kiosks
- Pedestrian wayfinding in your downtown

The signage should be decorative to fit your ambiance and easy to read, such as these examples from Modesto, CA (bottom left) and Woodlands, TX (bottom right).



Wayfinding is an investment, not an expense

- Plays a role in your branding efforts
- A major component in your marketing efforts
- Reinforces a positive experience
- Increases spending locally
- Educates visitors and locals about what you have and where it's located
- Builds community pride
- Is as much a science as an art

Wayfinding signs should have no more than five items on a sign. They should always be decorative and work with the community's brand.

Always make signage easy to read and avoid condensed text or script lettering. While wayfinding signage should be easy to read and follow, it should also be decorative, as these examples are from Appleton, Wisconsin (top left), Kalamazoo, MI (top right), and French Lick, IN (bottom left).

It is also important that wayfinding signage "connect the dots" all the way to the end. That means that signs should not just point you once in the right direction, but also indicate each turn to make as well as the distance to reach

the destination. The destination should be clearly marked, so that people know when they've arrived. And the signage should begin at the freeways or highways - don't wait until people are already close to downtown to let them know how to get there. A good wayfinding system will educate residents and visitors about what assets Mountain Home has.

Get Elmore County, Mountain Home, other cities and towns together to create a county-wide wayfinding task force.

Studies show that wayfinding will increase retail sales and services between 14% and 28%.



Without the front desk staff at the Hampton Inn, where we were staying, we would never have known about your wonderful Legacy Park (top left). There are no wayfinding signs to it at all. Seeing this awesome park changed our perceptions of Mountain Home.

We found that many people at the Air Force Base go to Boise to spend their free time, and they bypass Mountain Home entirely by taking the “Bypass Road.” They probably don’t have any idea what your town has to offer, because wayfinding not only tells people how to find attractions and amenities, it also tells them what attractions and amenities you have to offer.

We did end up finding the Visitor Information Center (top right and bottom left). It is very nice, and they did an excellent job giving us information when we went inside.

The only thing it needs is to have visitor information available around the clock. This simple brochure holder in Bruce County, Ontario (bottom right), is one simple solution. It is weather-proof, and easily holds a good supply of brochures.



This map display in Wickford, Rhode Island (top left), has two brochure holders.

This small kiosk in Moses Lake, Washington, (top right) provides information about not-to-be-missed attractions in the area. It was created by volunteers.

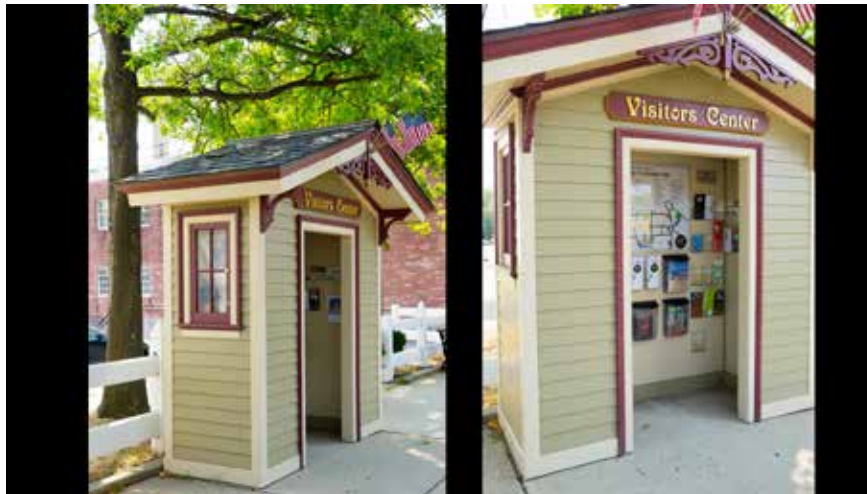
This visitor information kiosk (bottom left and right) is a great example of a kiosk that fits the ambiance of the town. This includes brochure distribution (bottom right), and each business or attraction that displays their brochure pays \$3-\$5 each month, which covers the cost of restocking, maintenance, and a little more to go for building another kiosk.

Place visitor information all around town - make it easy for your visitors to learn what you have to offer and to cross-sell other attractions and amenities in the area. The more you have to offer, the longer people will stay, and the more money they will spend.



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Watch the video for all kinds of ideas and more information.



For more information, watch our video about visitor information centers in our online library.

One of our favorite places is Cape May, NJ (top right). They have created a very attractive, self-serve visitor information kiosk. We don't need technology here, just an old fashioned kiosk where you can pick up a printed brochure. Note the message at the top, "Welcome friends, old and new, linger here a day or two."

Flemington, NJ (bottom left) built some of these unmanned visitor kiosks. They

are small enough to go almost anywhere, and they have maps and several brochures.

North Platte, Nebraska (bottom right), had this brochure holder specially made to distribute three separate brochures.

Visitors don't just travel during business hours, so it's important to have brochures and information available around the clock.



According to Bentley University's Center for Marketing Technology, prior to traveling, only 32% of travel decisions are made using brochures or printed pieces (#1: internet, #2: friends and family). But once we are in the area, a whopping 81% of travel decisions are made from brochures. You can increase your retail sales just by providing 24/7 access to visitor guides.

We suggest you place visitor information kiosks with brochure distribution at several places around town (top left), particularly at the Chamber of Commerce building downtown. Eventually, consider moving your visitor information center to a downtown location.

Once people get out of their cars, you have a four times greater chance of getting them to spend money. If your visitor information is downtown and offers restrooms, you give visitors two good reasons to stop. While there, they may decide to go into a nearby shop, get a snack, or have a meal.

Suggestion: This sign has a great map of the Oregon Trail on the side facing AWAY from the sidewalk (bottom left). Consider putting the map on both sides and adding brochure distribution to cross-sell Mountain Home.

The text on this display (bottom right) is very descriptive, but it doesn't tell me WHERE I can do the activities described. Give details.

13

Go portable with your visitor information!



If you ever have tournaments or events, consider getting a couple of these portable visitor information kiosks (all photos this page). These are in Banff, Alberta. They are made of PVC pipe and covered with fabric. They can be closed up for the night, and they are easy to assemble and disassemble for storage.

It's a great idea to take visitor information to where the people are - make it easy for your visitors to get information, and you'll reap the benefits.

These were made by Green Mountain Gazebo. The cost for a 6 foot base price is \$1,750. Printing would be between \$225 and \$850. They have a gazebo frame, unprinted vinyl canopy and skirt. There are two counters, and three carrying bags.



The displays on the kiosks at the visitor information center were helpful, and this is a great photo (top left). Consider developing a new logo for Mountain Home. This one is fun, but it looks a bit dated, and it's hard to see all the graphic elements, especially from a distance.

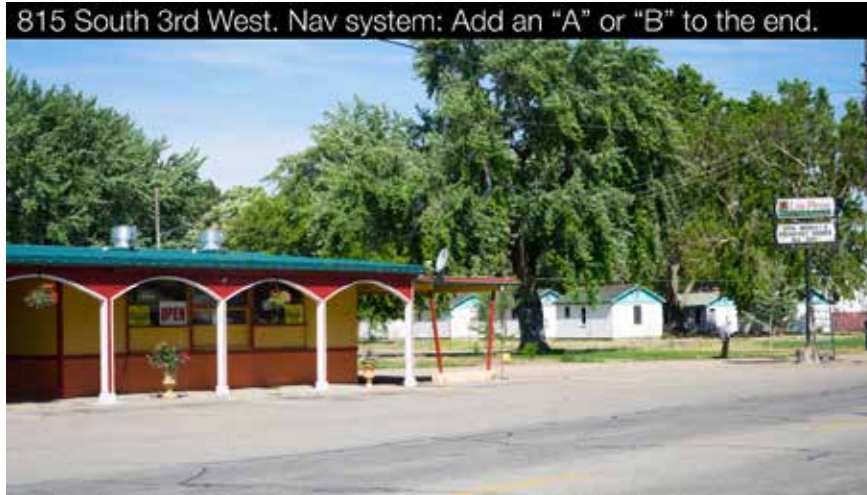
Consider dropping the marketing phrases "Big back yard," "Crossroads of the West," and "Large city conveniences..." These phrases are overused and don't set Mountain Home apart from other places in the western United States.

We went into the Visitor Information Center (bottom left), and asked them questions about nearby attractions, etc., and the lady working there was

fabulous - one of the best, most helpful we've ever seen. Thank you!

When we checked into our hotel, we asked the front desk about restaurant recommendations for dinner. They pulled out this card (bottom right), and told us about some of their favorites. Their help was excellent.

Sometimes front-line employees don't want to give recommendations because they might be chamber members and don't feel they can recommend one place over another. That attitude is a real disservice to their customers. Fortunately, your front-line staff is some of the best we've ever seen, putting customers first.



815 South 3rd West. Nav system: Add an "A" or "B" to the end.



We accidentally found an amazing park.



We took their advice and went to Los Pinos for dinner (top left). Our navigation system really had a hard time finding the address - apparently it needs an "A" or a "B" added to this address to get it right. We finally found the restaurant, though, and it was great.

If there is a way you can rename or reorganize your streets, we suggest you do so. The system is so convoluted, it's difficult to find our way around, even with a navigation system.

The front desk staff at our hotel suggested we check out Legacy Park, and after a lot of searching, we found it (top right, bottom left and right). It is amazing!

We saw the class being held (bottom left), the parents and children playing (bottom right), the ponds, wetlands, rose garden, and more. It is stunning, and our impression of Mountain Home skyrocketed.



We thought it was awesome that parents can come here to teach their children how to fish (top left).

We weren't sure if this space was the koi pond having work done, or what (top right). If this is a work in progress, post a sign telling what it will be and when it will be done. Invite us back! Ditto for this location in the park (bottom right).

The one thing missing from the park is permanent restroom facilities (bottom left). We were shocked they weren't here - using porta-potties at this awesome

park is a real shame. We suggest you add permanent restrooms as soon as possible.

Neighborhoods and homes in the "north" area are fabulous.



It seems as though about 50% of the homes have an RV, trailer, boat, motorcycle, ATV. A super recreationally-oriented community. Cool.



The list

Bonneville Point	Banbury Hot Springs
Bruneau Dunes	Johnson's Bridge Hot Springs
Bruneau Canyon Overlook	Glenns Ferry
Crater Rings	Carl Miller Park
Anderson Ranch Recreation Area	Mountain Home Museum
Three Island Crossing State Park	Hagerman Fossil Beds
Malad Gorge State Park	Hagerman Fish Hatcheries
Silver City	Thousand Springs State Park
Hagerman Fossil Beds	The Desert Loop
Hagerman Fish Hatcheries	Legacy Park

We looked at the homes around Legacy Park, and they are very nice (all photos on this page). They are beautifully landscaped and well taken care of.

We also noticed that many homes have RVs, boats, motorcycles, or trailers, and we realized that people who live here must love the outdoor recreation that is available. Nice!

We were so glad we had a navigation system to help us find our way back to the hotel, otherwise it would have been very difficult!

We used the brochures to make a list of attractions we needed to go see (bottom right). We didn't know which of these were "not to be missed."

We wanted to include the ones that were within a 45 minute to one hour drive. Farther than that, and people will be more likely to not return to Mountain Home. We couldn't figure out where Bonneville Point was - the text said to take exit 64, and we didn't know where that was. The description didn't really close the sale, and we found that it was too close to Boise, so we didn't include it after all.



We divided up the attractions into areas: NW, NE, SE, and SW (top left).

Some of the attractions are Oregon Trail wagon ruts, which can be interesting to see once or twice. But after that, most people (especially millennials) aren't interested. People are more interested in the stories about the people who traveled the Oregon Trail - without the stories, the wagon ruts become a "been there, done that" experience.

First, we headed SE, and we went to Glenn's Ferry (top right). We were thrilled that they had wayfinding signs (bottom left), so it was easy to find their

primary attractions. Some of their signs even included distances, which was excellent.

Their visitor information center was great, right in the middle of their spending district (bottom right). We strongly suggest that you also have your visitor information center in downtown, too.

Glenn's Ferry has done a great job theming their town as "Old West." Since they are so close to Mountain Home, we crossed that theme off the list as a brand option.

Wow. Gorgeous winery.



19 Nice interpretive center. Update the film! Add exterior visitor information.



We saw the Crossings Winery (top left), and it was beautiful. We loved the fact that they put little signs up in their vineyards telling you the type of grape.

We found Three Island Crossing State Park and went into the interpretive center (top right). It was great, but we would suggest updating the film and adding outdoor visitor information with brochure distribution. The film quality was very poor, and the primary focus of the film seemed to be about the problems with the relationship between the Euro-Americans and the Native Americans. It would be great to focus more on stories of the travels and the

history of the ferry crossing as well as about how the Native Americans lived in this area before the pioneers came, and the importance of the river to all the cultures.

We continued on, and it is a beautiful area. We stopped at interpretive sites (bottom left), and they were well done. We were trying to find Thousand Springs State Park, and we had a hard time. Even our navigation system gave confusing information. We could see the gorgeous waterfalls in the distance (bottom right).

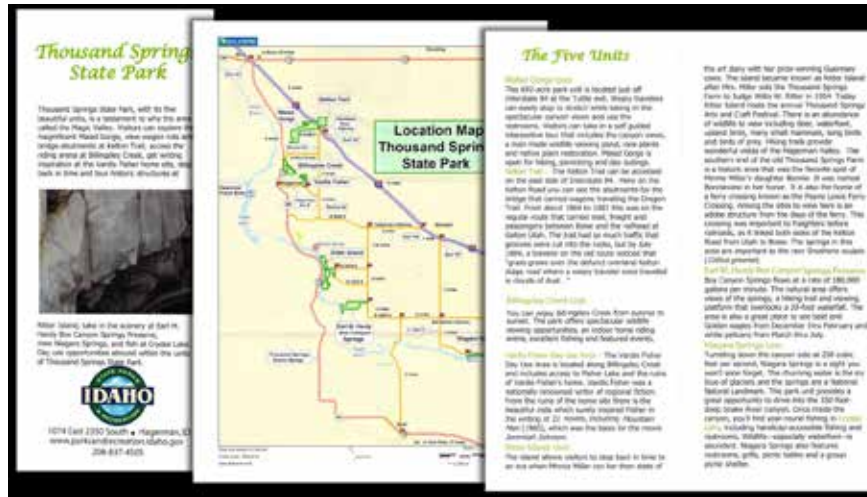


As we saw more and more spring-fed waterfalls in the distance, we pulled off the highway (top left). We're sure this was private property, but there were no public pull-offs and no interpretive signs.

We went to the fish hatchery (top right), and there were people there looking at the facilities. But there were no fish to see (bottom left). The fish aren't there this time of year; in fact they are only in these hatchery ponds for about a month a year. So that was disappointing. In your marketing, be sure to give this type of detailed information so that visitors know what to expect.

We went to Malad Gorge State Park (bottom right). We saw the sign to the Devil's Washbowl Interpretive Area, and with a name like that, we had to take a look.

When we got out of the car, a State Park Ranger was there and came up to talk with us. He told us how to find the "devil" in the rocks when you look down into the canyon from the bridge.

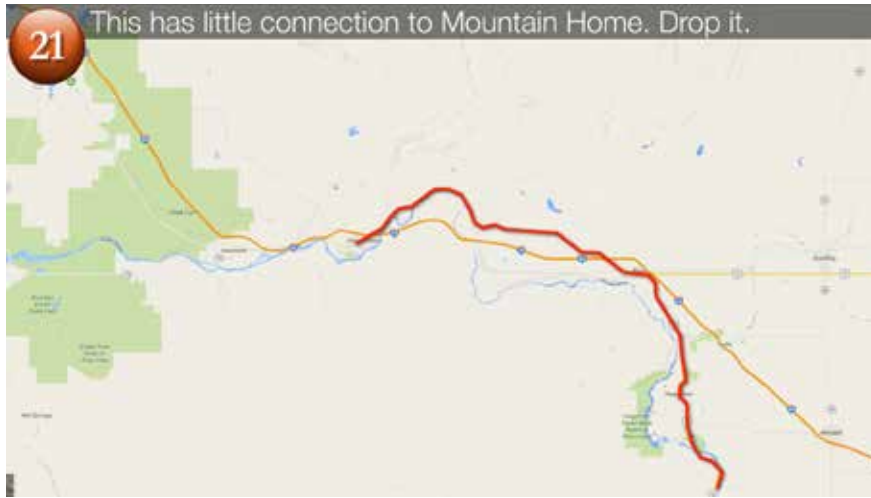


The Ranger also gave us a brochure for Thousand Springs State Park (top left). This is fantastic! We learned that Thousand Springs is a collection of five smaller “units” including Mad Gorge. That explained why we had so much trouble finding the location! None of the other marketing materials we received explained this, so we were happy to finally solve the puzzle. Be sure to include details in your marketing, so that visitors aren’t confused.

We did go out onto the bridge (top right) and found the “devil.” It was a stunning view, and a gorgeous spot to visit.

The interpretive signs (bottom left) told very entertaining stories about escaped convicts hiding in this canyon. It was a lot of fun to read these, and we will always remember this spot because of these stories.

We didn’t continue on to look at the other “units” of the state park because they were getting too far away from Mountain Home and too close to Twin Falls (bottom right).

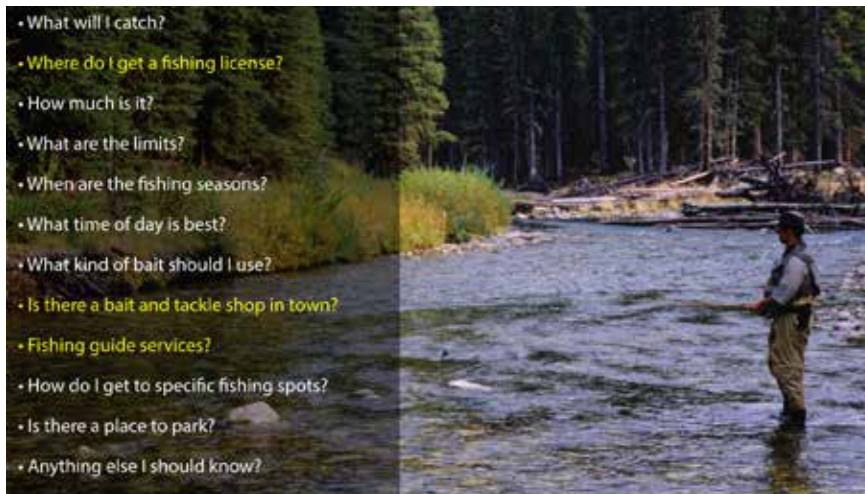


We felt that this route would be better promoted as a scenic route between Twin Falls and Boise, with a stop in the middle for lunch or a break in Mountain Home (top left). It's a gorgeous drive, but we felt that most visitors would be more likely to stay in Twin Falls if they were to do this as a day trip. We suggest not promoting this as a day trip from Mountain Home.

Then we used our navigation system to find Bruneau Dunes State Park. As we approached (top right), we thought it looked impressive, but it wasn't until we got up close, that we realized how amazing it really was. When you see people in the photo (bottom left), the scale of the dunes makes a huge impact.

Suggestion: Quit promoting places, and start promoting activities. Scenic vistas last five minutes, and then what? People are looking for things to do.

So we went to the different parts of the park and saw that you could get life vests (bottom right), but no boats! We suggest that State Parks provide vendors that would rent canoes and kayaks, have food trucks and concessions. Perhaps fishing gear and even locally made handcrafts and gifts. These could be local businesses. Take advantage of the assets to provide activities and earn revenues. As it is, once visitors arrive, all they can do is walk around.



This state park is stunning, and is a great “anchor tenant” for Mountain Home.

We saw that the lake has a lot of fish (top left), but we didn’t see any information about fishing: Is it permitted; do you need a fishing license; is it catch and release or catch and keep? We had directions to the park, but the marketing materials had no more information about what to do there.

Visitors need details in order to plan their trip and make the most of their time in your community. The more there is to do, the longer people will stay and the

more money they will spend. For fishing, visitors need to know the answers to these questions (bottom left). Be sure to provide this information in your marketing.

We did see the fish-cleaning station (top right), so fishing must be allowed here. Suggestion: The sign is so faded it’s hard to read. Refresh the sign.

We saw the observatory (bottom right). It looks great.



Add 24 hour visitor information with brochure distribution at the observatory. The information should cross-sell activities, shopping, dining, etc. that's available in Mountain Home. For people who are just visiting the state park, you might give them a reason to head into Mountain Home.

Add a schedule of events for the observatory (top right). This will give people a reason to come back.

We thought this sun dial (bottom left) was great. A lot of fun!

Bruneau Dunes State Park is fabulous. There could be plenty to do to keep a family busy all day, especially if you provide boat rentals and some concessionaires. And it is so close to Mountain Home. It is definitely one of Mountain Home's anchor tenants.



Sample criteria:

- Must be highly regarded (80%+ positive peer reviews, regional publications, TripAdvisor, Yelp, etc.)
- Must have good curb appeal
- Must be open year round
- Must be open until at least 6:00 pm
- Must be open six days a week (they can be closed on Mondays)
- Must be unique to the area (no chains, sorry)

Mountain Home needs to promote its anchor tenants. One of the best ways to do this is to create a brochure about "The Very Best of Mountain Home." A "Best Of" guide can have a dramatic impact on visitor spending. Its purpose is to promote your "anchor tenants" - those businesses and attractions that your visitors can't find closer to home - those you would drive an hour or so to visit.

It's important that the brochure NOT look like a bunch of ads. Use an advertorial format; include lots of photos with specific, descriptive text.

- It's critical to establish criteria to select the very best that you have, such as:
- Must be highly regarded (80%+ positive peer reviews, regional publications)
 - Must have good curb appeal

- Must be open June through October (to start)
- Must be open until at least 6:00 pm and be open six days a week
- Must be unique to your town (no chains)

Market your best: Restaurants (4); Retail shops and galleries (4); Activities and attractions (6) within a 45-minute drive. Send the brochure to your residents and have it available at the AFB, as well as have it available for visitors, so you can educate your residents and base personnel about what you have to offer in Mountain Home as well.

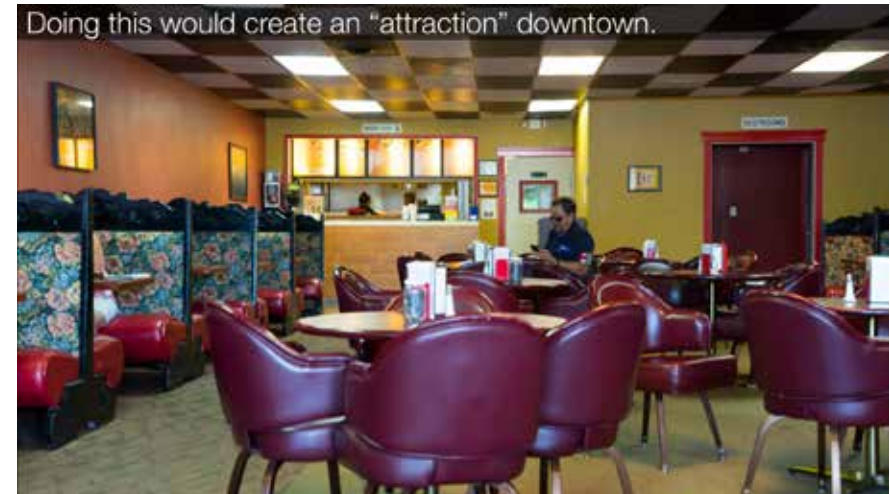
A "Best Of" guide will bring visitors to those anchor tenants, and while they are in Mountain Home, visitors will go in other shops and restaurants too.



We worked on a “Best Of” list to help get you started, and so far, we have Legacy Park and Bruneau Dunes State Park. We’ll add more as we go along, and these are just our suggestions.

We came back into town for lunch. One of the places recommended by our front desk staff at the hotel was Frankie’s, so we gave it a try. It is themed with kind of a 60’s vibe (top right) and music, and we thought it was pretty fun. We thought it would be great to go even further with the decor, and make it more 50’s and 60’s, and these photos show a few ideas (bottom left and right).

You could cover the walls with great memorabilia, add a jukebox (bottom left). Hang vinyl records from the ceiling (bottom right). Replace the chairs with something more 50’s fun style.



Even adding a retro gas pump (top left) would contribute to the theme. We found several businesses on the internet that sell 50's and 60's themed furniture and decor, and made a list of them (top right).

Doing this would turn Frankie's into a real attraction downtown. People would go there just for the fun retro atmosphere.

Doing this would create an "attraction" downtown. People love this old retro look. Mr. D's in Kingman, Arizona (bottom left) is along Route 66, and it's a very popular, successful place. Doesn't it look like a place you'd like to have lunch?

Brochures: "check road conditions." Really? Where?



Is this it? Really?



28 Remove this - perhaps a 4x4 "hidden gem."

Next on our list for the afternoon was to visit the Crater Rings. The directions in the visitor guide said to follow the frontage road along the freeway until you can turn left and cross the railroad tracks, then follow the dirt road out to the craters. The guide also says to check the road conditions before you go. Where do you check these road conditions? It is so rutted that the conditions must be bad all the time (top left and right). There were places the ruts were at least six inches deep, and every once in a while, another dirt road would angle off. It was hard to know where to go.

We saw these little hills in the distance (bottom left and right) and assumed

these were the craters. We finally reached one of them, and we were disappointed. We realize these are unique geologic formations, but they are so old and eroded that it's difficult to see them as the craters they used to be. There is no interpretive info there. It was not worth the long rough drive.

Also, whenever you promote something as an attraction, it's important to let visitors know if there are hazards involved. We were driving an SUV with high clearance, and if we had been driving a sedan, we would probably have damaged it. There was no mention of this problem in the marketing materials. We suggest you don't market this, or perhaps only as a 4X4 hidden gem.



Then we decided to head out to the attractions in the north west and check out Anderson Ranch Reservoir. We drove out Highway 20, and we were amazed. This is one of the most beautiful drives in Idaho!

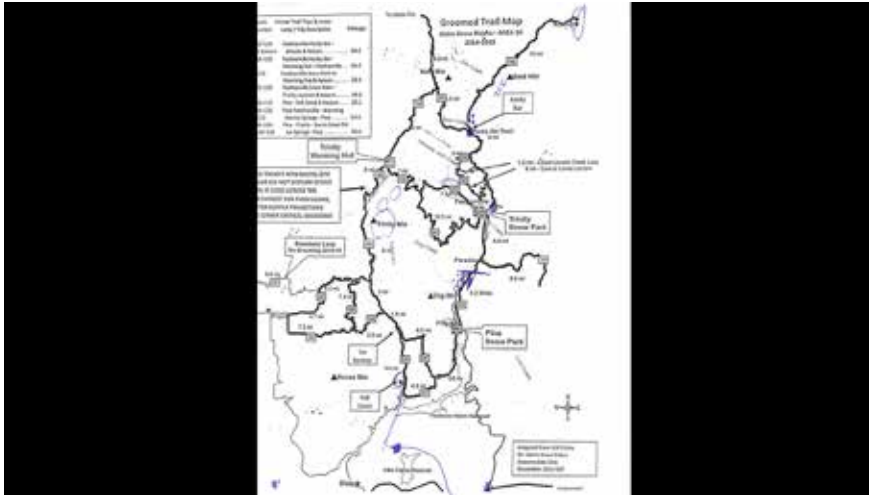
We stopped at the viewpoint at Goodale's Cutoff, and it was spectacular. The interpretive signs are great (top left).

This is an amazing setting (top right and bottom left). The reservoir is absolutely gorgeous. This should be promoted as one of Idaho's most beautiful

scenic drives.

We expected to find some kind of "ranch" since it's called Anderson Ranch Reservoir. We suggest you drop the word ranch plus call it a lake. "Lake" has a lot more appeal than "reservoir."

We drove up to Pine and stopped in Nitz Pine Store (bottom right). We bought some Idaho Spuds and asked the lady who owned the store a few questions.



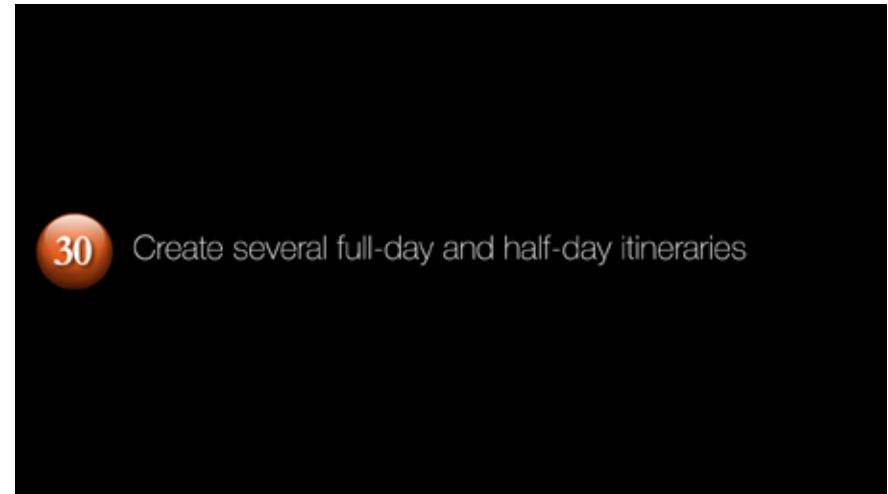
First, we asked her if the road made a loop around the reservoir - if we could continue on and come back the other side. She said yes, it does, but the other side is dirt roads, and there is a rough patch, and it would take a lot longer. We decided to pass, but we really wanted to know, because if this was a loop, it would be one of the best scenic loop drives in the country.

She pulled out a snowmobile map (top left) and she suggested we drive up farther to Johnson's Bridge. She said there were some hot springs there, flowing into the river, and that it's a fun place to stop. She said the water is really hot, so to be sure to wear shoes. She told us just where to park, where

the springs are, and that people will dam up the water with rocks to make little pools to soak in.

We did just what she suggested, and it was great fun (top right, bottom left and right).

These are the kinds of details visitors want to know about so they can enjoy activities and your scenic beauty. Details like how to find the hot springs, where to park, be sure to wear shoes, etc. It makes for a wonderful, memorable experience - one that visitors will tell their friends about and spread the word about what a great place Mountain Home is.



We would definitely add Anderson Ranch Lake as well as Johnson's Bridge Hot Springs to the list of "Best Ofs."

Mountain Home can lay claim to the nearby Bruneau Dunes State Park and Anderson Ranch Recreation Area, and those two attractions make you worth at least a two-night stay.

These two attractions also make Mountain Home a great place to live.

Suggestion: Create several full-day and half-day itineraries. These need to be highly detailed, just as the lady at Nitz Pine Store gave us the details for visiting Johnson's Bridge Hot Springs. Tell visitors all that they need to know to have an enjoyable experience. How do they find the location? What should they bring along? Are there any stops along the way where they could pick up treats, like Idaho Spuds? Where do they park? Details!



This brochure about the Anderson Ranch Reservoir & Fairfield Recreation Areas (top left) is too sparse on details to be very helpful or give people a good reason to visit. It has several snapshots with captions such as “Explore ghost towns of a bygone era” and “Explore the wide open offroad space.” This doesn’t give any specific information. Where are these ghost towns? How far away? What will we see there? Where is a good place to go offroad? Why? What will we see? What kind of vehicle do we need to have? Should we bring supplies? These are just a few of the questions that need to be answered - especially “Why?” What makes this place special, and why would I want to make the effort to go there?

We had Jordan of our office put together a sample itinerary for a visit to Seattle (top right and bottom left). It gives visitors very specific information, with times and costs for visiting the attractions, as well as where to eat (Ivor’s on the Seattle waterfront is great).

People want itineraries to help them plan their travel. That’s why thousands of people subscribe to travel magazines (bottom right).

You’ve got to include specific businesses in your itineraries. When people come to those shops or restaurants, they’ll also go into nearby neighboring businesses. This is economic development, and that means private business!

31

What to do

Make PR your marketing priority

1. Articles: Read three times more
2. Publicity equals credibility
3. \$1 spent on PR = \$3 in earned media

32

What to do

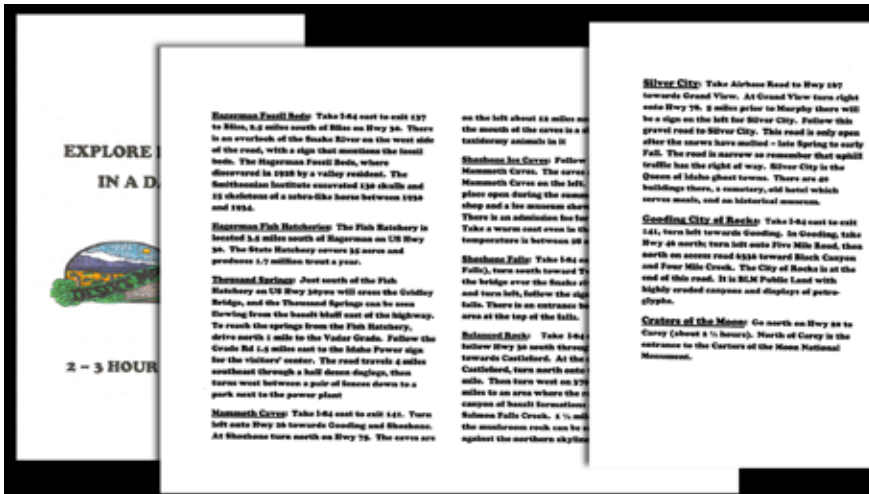
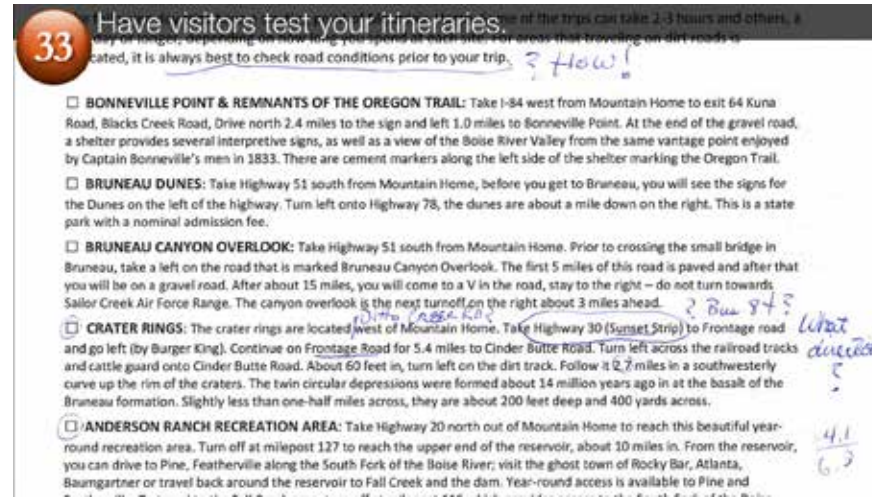
Find clubs & organizations
They are looking for places to send their members!



Make public relations your marketing priority. Articles have more credibility than advertising. Can you imagine the impact of an article in Sunset Magazine about Anderson Ranch? How many people have heard of Lake Coeur d'Alene compared to people who have heard of Anderson Ranch Lake? You need to get the word out with third party endorsements.

One great way to obtain publicity is to contact clubs and organizations, especially car and motorcycle clubs. Send them great itineraries and information about the drive around Anderson Ranch, which is one of the most

beautiful drives in the country. Write up an article for them to include in the magazines they send out to their members - they are looking for these types of drives to promote to their members (bottom left and right). Itineraries for these types of beautiful drives cater to their readers, and they are happy to publish them.



For example, the Mercedes owners club in Seattle recently provided itineraries for driving to Leavenworth, Washington, and Camano Island, Washington (top left). These are highly detailed itineraries, with recommendations for where to stop for lunch, viewpoints, shops, etc.

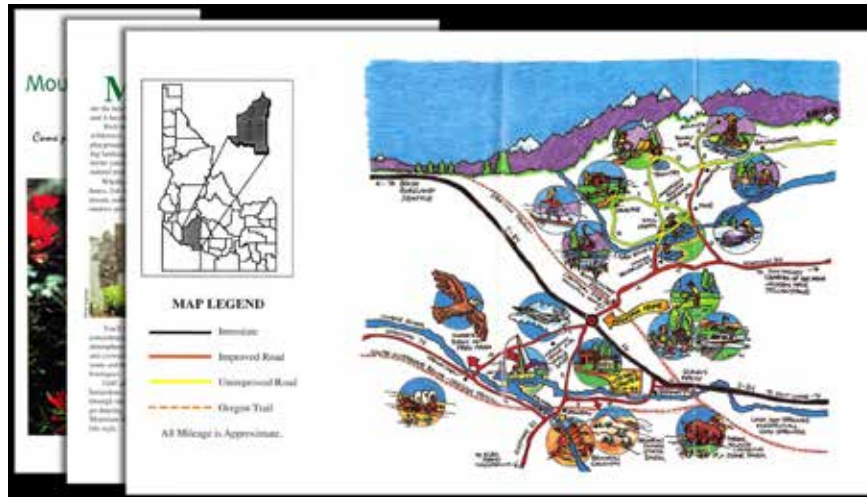
There are car clubs for all makes of cars - from Subaru to BMW to Mustangs. And your drive beside Anderson Ranch Reservoir would be fantastic for motorcycles too, so consider sending itineraries to various motorcycle clubs.

Be sure to promote shops, restaurants, and activities because they are good, not because they are members of your organization. Your customers are

your visitors, and when you don't promote a business because they aren't a member of your organization (such as the Chamber of Commerce), you are doing a disservice to your customers.

Be sure to have visitors test your itineraries to be sure they make sense (top right). Sometimes when we know a place very well, we don't realize our descriptions and directions aren't actually helpful.

This "Explore" brochure (bottom left) has directions, but doesn't do enough to tell visitors why they would want to go there, or what to do once they arrive.



The Mountain Home Come Play in Our Big Backyard brochure (top left) would be more effective with larger photographs that included people enjoying activities in the area. The map was difficult to decipher, so it wasn't very helpful. The Mountain Wonderland and High Desert Playground sections (top right) would also benefit from photos that show people doing activities, and they didn't give enough specific information about how to enjoy the activities being promoted (i.e. where do I go to arrange for whitewater rafting, kayaking, or canoeing?)

The top three inches of your brochures should always promote the experience - the activity - not the location (bottom left). Make your brochures stand out from the rest by using yellow on a dark background (or vice versa). Evoke emotion, even in your title. Does "The Houseboat From Hell" grab your attention and evoke emotion? (bottom right). When this business owner replaced his old brochure with this one, his business increased by more than 350%.



For all of your ads, use a single, outstanding photograph (top left). Add your header - your super short sales pitch. Hopefully, that will prompt people to read your body text, which further sells visitors on the experience. Include your logo or location at the bottom. Give a call to action, such as your website address to log in now. Your tagline is an exclamation point on your message.

Your photography needs to be unique to you. It needs to show people enjoying activities. Great photography really is worth a thousand nights - lodging nights!



Your photography should always show the experience in the foreground, location in the background.

What to do:

When you design your ads, videos, etc., make sure they include these four things:

- People immersed in an activity and smiling

- It must be unique to you
- Evoke emotion - create a “wow” response
- Sells a feeling more than just a place

Nothing sells as easily as a smile. Having a great time is always rule #1.



Remember - experience first, location second. Evoke emotion.



The photos don't always have to be extreme to evoke emotion. It can be as calm and serene as this photo top left. It evokes emotion - just a different kind.

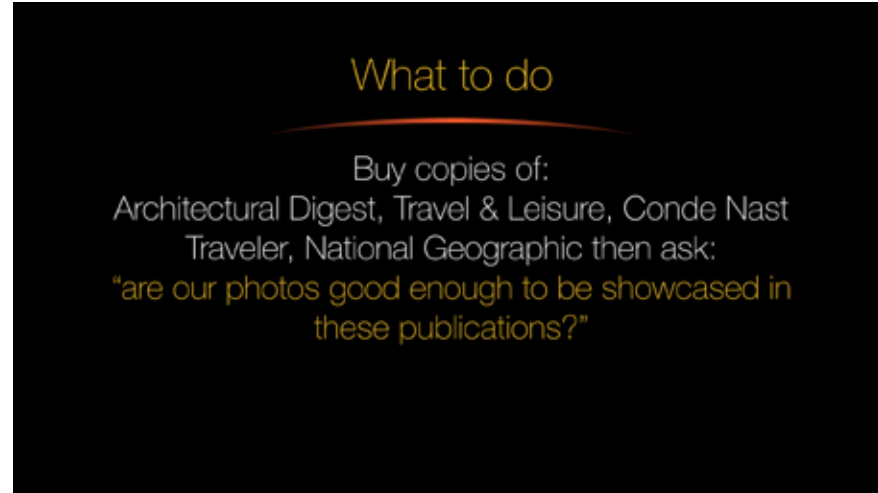
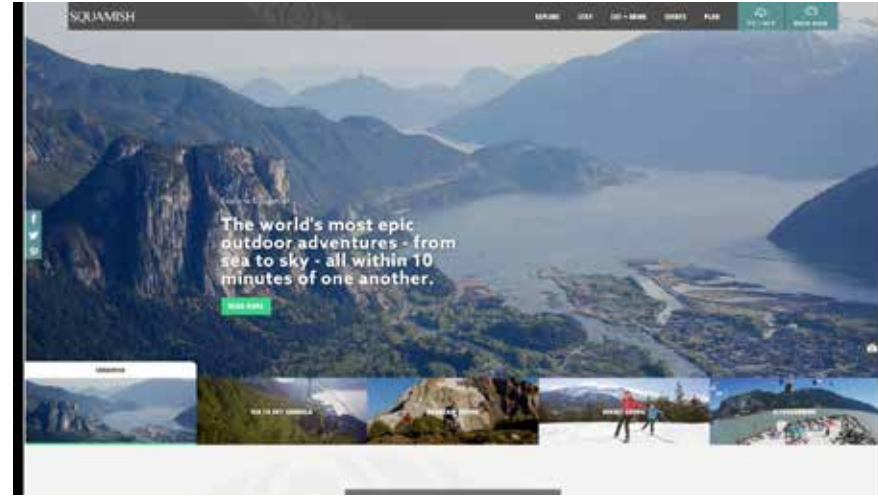
The one type of photo that doesn't need to show people is for lodging (top right). One of the top trends today is glamping.

Show people having fun (bottom left).

This little motel in Nova Scotia (bottom right) spent a lot of money upgrading

their old, dated facility. Then they spent a lot of money on some great photography. Now they are outcompeting a lot of the nearby luxury chain hotels.

Excellent photography is critically important. We are visual people.



Invest in your websites - redesign them to be visual first. Great photography sells better than anything else.

This is a B&B (top left). Doesn't this photo make it look like a great place to stay?

This is Squamish, BC's website (top right). Doesn't it look stunning, like a fantastic place to visit?

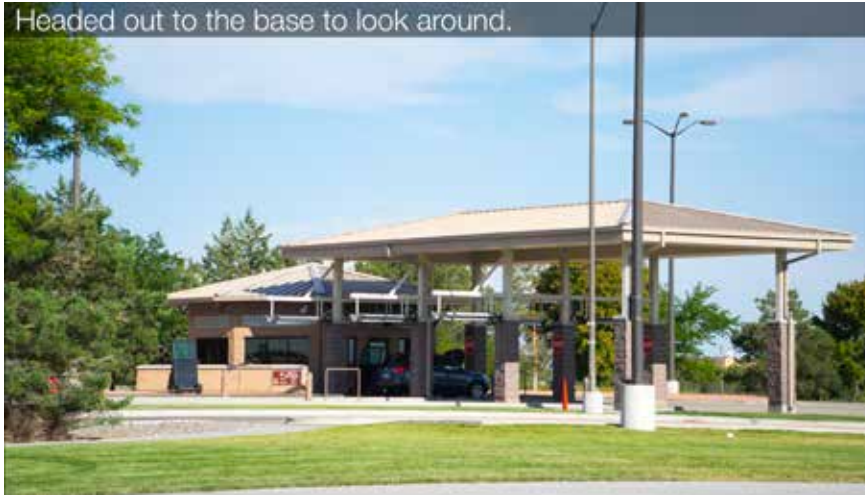
Excellent photography is critical for your marketing efforts. On Facebook,

photos perform best for likes, comments and shares. Pinterest generates more referral traffic for businesses than Google+, YouTube, and LinkedIn combined, and Pinterest's big focus is visual.

On TripAdvisor, lodging properties with 20 or more photos get 150% more engagement.

92% of women post and refer products, getaways, and vacations to friends via Facebook and other social media.

Headed out to the base to look around.



Not much in the way of curb appeal.



Great ambiance. Easily the best Asian restaurant in Idaho.



The Very Best Of List

Legacy Park in Mountain Home
Bruneau Dunes State Park
Anderson Ranch Lake (not reservoir)
Johnson's Bridge Hot Springs
Shiok! Restaurant

We drove out to the base (top left), but of course, we couldn't go inside. Just outside the base we stopped at Shiok! for dinner (top right and bottom left). We didn't think it had great curb appeal, but it was highly recommended. It was fabulous.



We were going to check out downtown Mountain Home, but there are no signs that tell travelers which way to downtown (top left). There are so many different designations for the highways that it is confusing - I-84, Highways 20, 26, 30 and Business 84.

By this time, we'd explored enough of the surrounding area that we knew where downtown was. First, we went to see the sign for Rattlesnake Station (top right). We'd heard the stories about how the town moved from this location to the current one.

We weren't sure why the tank is located in this spot, though (bottom left). Suggestion: Add some interpretive signage to explain about the tank.

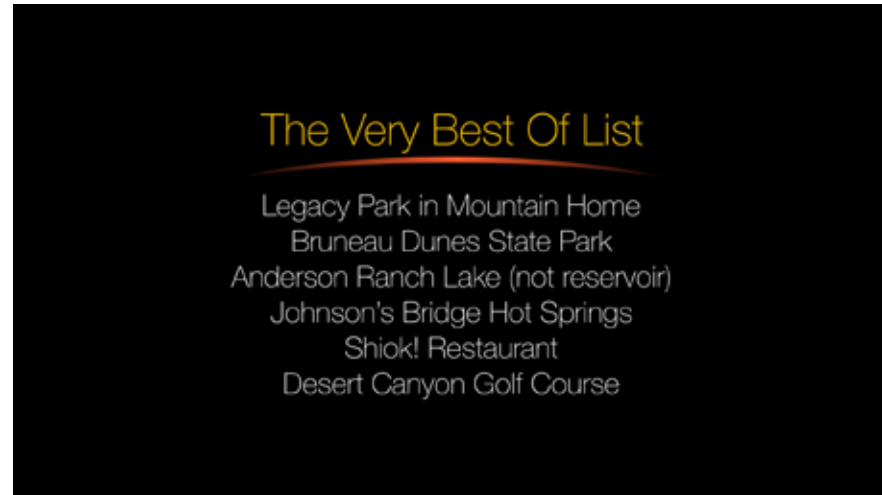
On the way into Mountain Home, we noticed the tiny golf course sign (bottom right), so we turned there to check it out.



We saw the Ranger District Office for the Boise National Forest (top left), and the visitor information kiosk there (top right) with brochure distribution. Congratulations! There was even a brochure for Mountain Home - fantastic.

While there, we noticed this trail and the sign beside it (bottom left). It was great - the sign gave information about the trail. It is a great amenity, and we saw a family walking along it (bottom right). We wouldn't consider it an "attraction," especially since it's right along the freeway, but it is a great amenity for both locals and visitors. A visitor staying at one of the nearby

hotels who wanted to go for a walk or run would really enjoy being able to use this trail.



We thought it was fun that there were old farming tools and equipment spaced out along the trail (top left), and that there were interpretive signs that told how each piece was used. Excellent. We checked how these looked from the freeway, and they are spaced so that they look good - they look like a display.

We made it to the golf course, and it looks fabulous (top right and bottom left). Suggestion: Add signage to let visitors know if the golf course is open for

public play, how many holes, if they rent carts and clubs, if there is a pro shop and restaurant. It looks like a fabulous golf course, and should be on your "Best Of" list.



35 Very nice. Make sure these are in places where people can pull over.



36 This one needs to be refreshed. Consider removing it.



First class. Great job. American Legion Blvd. looks great*



37 No chain link in your downtown! Volunteer effort to clean up this?

We saw the signs for the community service organizations (top left), and this was very nicely done. The signs and landscaping are well maintained, and this gives a very good impression. Suggestion: Place these signs in a location where people can pull over to the side of the road to read them. Sometimes visitors would like to attend a meeting or luncheon if they are members of the organization, and if they can't pull over to read the sign, they miss it.

This community service organization sign (top right) is in poor shape. Either refresh it or remove it.

American Legion Blvd looks great along this stretch of the roadway (bottom left). There are some challenges, though.

Suggestion: Create an ordinance that prohibits chain link fencing in the downtown core area. Chain link fences make a town look like a prison or industrial area. It is not attractive (bottom right). Wrought iron or vinyl that has the appearance of wrought iron is much more attractive.

Suggestion: Work with property owners to clean up and maintain the properties along your main corridors.



This area with the food truck and the mobile homes could use a great deal of clean up (top left). This might be excellent food, but the appearance needs to be improved. (Does it look like a great place to eat?) The mobile homes give a poor first impression as well - especially since this is along one of your major incoming corridors. Consider organizing a volunteer clean up day.

We went to the museum downtown, and they do a great job (top right). There are some stories that go with the items on display, but it could use more. Bring the artifacts, and the world they are from, to life, with stories about the people who used the items and what their lives were like.

This park is beautiful (bottom left), and it looks like a great gathering place for locals after work. We noticed that the sprinklers seemed to be running in the evenings, though, which made it hard for people to enjoy the park during that time. The community garden (bottom right) is great.



We started thinking about brand ideas for Mountain Home. A brand is much more than logos and slogans; a community brand is what you are known for - what people think of you - what sets you apart and makes you special.

We thought of equestrian, but you'd need to build the facilities.

Because of the Air Force and your airport, we thought of air sports and other activities, such as skydiving, balloon rides, gliding, pilot lessons, hang gliding, etc. This may not be a feasible brand, but we took a look at the idea. The airport doesn't offer any information (top right). Is it an FBO? Is this the office? (bottom left). There are no signs here.

Fishing and hunting came to mind, because you already have that. But that focus really wouldn't set you apart from nearly every other community in Idaho (or the whole Pacific Northwest).

Then we looked around at the town and thought about all the very cool mid-century things you have - restaurants, signs, etc. Possibly this theme could be expanded and developed. It would make you unique and attract people.

We had a hard time figuring out how to get across the tracks to this part of town (bottom right). We need wayfinding!



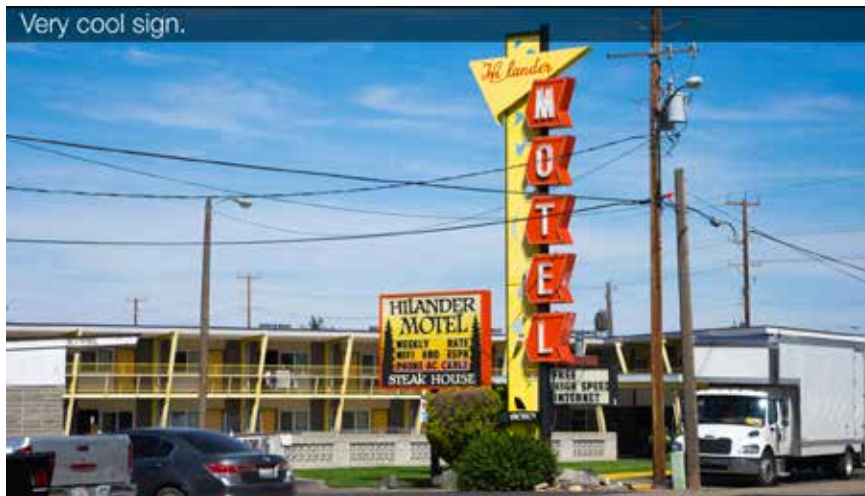
We finally did make it over to the other side of the train tracks, and we saw this monument (top left). We didn't know what it represents, though. We later learned that it was the Basque region of Spain, and that many Basque people live here in Mountain Home. We didn't notice the interpretive signs that were posted. Basque Park is very nice.

We saw the little shops on this side of the tracks, and it's a great little place, but easily missed.

We found our way to Optimist Park (top right), but it looked neglected. We

thought it might not be used much any more. It looked like there were rodeo grounds as well as a motocross park? There were no signs telling of upcoming events. Always have a readerboard outside event locations inviting us back to the next events.

We went back downtown and thought this place (bottom right) would be a great spot for a restaurant with outdoor dining. The patio area would need some repairs, but it could be done. Outdoor dining is one of the best things to help bring a downtown to life!



This spot looks like it could be a great gathering place (top left). Unfortunately, customers can't relax and enjoy this spot because they're only allowed to park for 15 minutes. When it's busy, that's not even enough time to order and get your ice cream and coffee. Suggestion: Allow your customers more than 15 minutes parking. Take the sign down.

to carry that theme. The Hilander Motel (bottom left) has one great old sign, and it looks very mid-century. This other sign (bottom right) looks awful, though. It should be removed because it creates a negative impression of the motel.

We thought one of the coolest things about downtown Mountain Home was the abundance of Mid-Century Modern signs and architecture. This stuff is "cool" now. This drive-in (top right) needs some work, but it has great potential



We noticed a lot of very cool mid-century, retro signs and buildings throughout town.

This motel (top left) has a cool sign, but it needs to keep its readerboard maintained.

We even liked Jovial Jerry's Lounge sign (top right). It needs maintenance, but it has potential. We didn't know what it was like inside.

The old fire truck on display (bottom left) is very cool and adds to that retro

ambiance.

Even this sign for parking rules (bottom right) has a retro feel, and the mural looks fabulous.



This gallery sign (top left) is my favorite. The gallery is gone, but the sign is still there.

This mural (top right) also looks cool and retro.

Loved this cafe sign (bottom left).

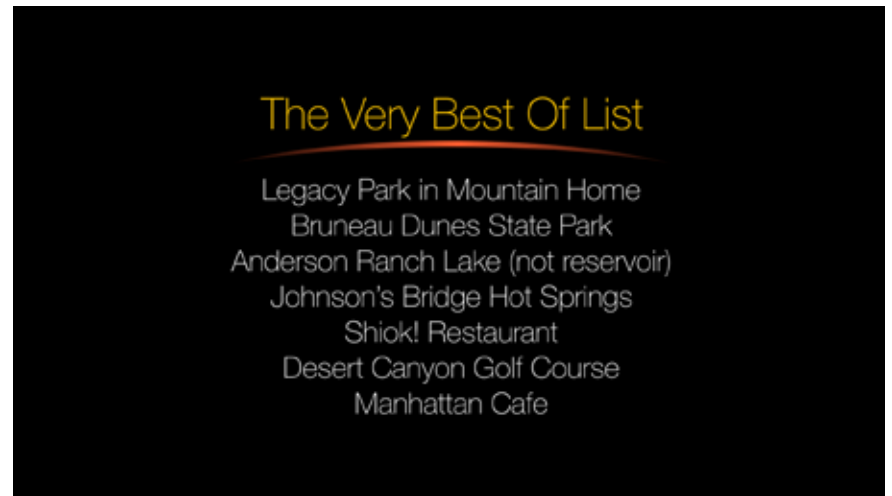
Stardust Plaza (bottom right) has a fantastic sign that is in keeping with the retro style.



The drugstore sign (top left) is great, as well as the Thunderbird Motel sign (top right).

It took us forever to find the theater (bottom left), but we thought its "Take One" sign was very cool.

Your newspaper office is in a great retro-styled building, and its sign is awesome too (bottom right).



Consider embracing the mid-century theme throughout town. Add to the signage you already have with more businesses using the retro style, and refurbish buildings and interiors to fit the theme. You would attract visitors of all ages - even millennials think it's very cool. People would come visit you just to enjoy that theme.

You could attract all kinds of events, shows and exhibits (top left) if Mountain Home had a mid-century, retro theme throughout town.

The Manhattan Cafe (top right) already has an interior that somewhat fits the theme. It needs some TLC, fixing the ceiling, and adding to the decor (bottom left). But we thought it was very cool, and the burgers were fantastic.

You could have mid-century themed festivals, such as sock hops, classic movies on the square, concerts, auto shows and auctions, and motels with themed rooms. (But not mid-century beds - the beds need to be comfortable.) Motels could theme different rooms around a specific year, and visitors could choose the year they want to celebrate, like a birth year, anniversary, etc.



Mountain Home has a lot of Basque history (top left). That's important to who you are. But there aren't really any activities related to that history to attract visitors, and visitors want activities. It's important to base your community brand on things to do - activities. If you decide to work on theming downtown on a mid-century, retro feel, you can include a lot of activities that fit that theme. That makes it a more feasible brand.

We noticed that Paul's (top right) is out of business and the building is vacant. Consider turning that building into a year-round public market. You could approach Albertson's (we heard they bought Paul's and shut it down), and ask them to donate the building to the city. Nobody in the greater Boise area has a

year-round, open every day, public market.

Then, you could take the parking lot and turn it into a public gathering space - a plaza (bottom left). Consider this: The building would house a public market, with not just produce, but also art, crafts, photography, paintings, antiques, etc. It would be open six or seven days a week until 9 p.m. You could shut down the little road beside the market (bottom right), so that the Stockyard would be right on the plaza. You could add street trees and vendor booths, tables and chairs for outdoor dining, and a stage for performances and events. You already have a parking lot available nearby that is currently under-utilized.



Turning the old Paul's building into a public market and creating a plaza next to it would revitalize your downtown by bringing people there on a consistent basis. The plaza would need to be programmed with activities and events, and it would provide a central gathering place for all your residents and visitors. You would need to have 250 days a year of activities. If you could attract 500 people downtown every day, your merchants would be successful. The key to revitalizing a downtown is bringing enough people there on a consistent basis. A public market and plaza would monetize these spaces and bring people downtown.

If you closed down one of the lanes on this street (top left), and added angle-in parking, you would make the area more pedestrian-friendly and intimate. And angle-in parking can increase sales by 20%.

Your parking lot (top right) would then be useful and monetized. These trees (bottom left) could be placed around the plaza, and more could be added.

Add a decorative crosswalk here (bottom right) for safety and visual appeal.



Remove the chain link fencing downtown (top left), and replace it with wrought-iron (top right). People driving along this corridor would see the wrought-iron and the plaza behind it, slow down, and think this is a very cool place to be.

Kurly's (bottom left) has done a great job with their curb appeal, and it's right there near the proposed plaza.

The city has made an investment in the downtown (bottom right), so now it's time to monetize it - to make it pay off.

The best way to revitalize downtown is to start with a small area, and make it a showcase. Make it a place people want spend time in. Then, once it's successful, you can expand your efforts from there.



For the market, you'd want to take the old Paul's building and essentially gut it. Remove the suspended ceilings to create a cool, industrial looking ambiance (such as the Chelsea Market in New York shown in all photos on this page). You could make your market look like this. Wouldn't it be cool to have people from Boise coming to visit you, rather than the other way around.

This market could be a business incubator for small businesses. You could have locally produced crafts and art here, as well as locally made food products. The variety would attract scores of people looking for unique items. Include

some prepared food items and have seating available. Add entertainment - musicians, performers. Make it lively! This would be an attraction itself.



The plaza would be Mountain Home's central gathering place. People are the heart of your town, and your plaza is its soul.

We are moving to a more European standard, where people are shopping and dining later in the evening. Towns in Europe were built around plazas (top left), and they have always been where locals gather to socialize, relax, dine, and spend time together. Plazas are a town's "Third Place."

The First Place is where we live - our homes (top right). The Second Place is where we work (bottom left). The Third Place is where we go to socialize and

spend our leisure time (bottom right). People have been wanting to find their Third Places for a long time. Ever since our towns started being built around the automobile, people have been missing their pedestrian-friendly downtowns and plazas, where they can gather, relax, and enjoy. Plazas provide that sense of an intimate, friendly, pedestrian space that is open to all. When plazas are located in the heart of a shopping and dining district, they are monetized, and merchants and customers all benefit.



A true plaza is...

- THE central gathering place
- A year round activity center
- Includes interactive water feature and ice rink
- Is programmed at least 250 days a year
- Includes a stage, lighting and sound system
- Incorporates retail/food year round

A great example is Rapid City, South Dakota. They turned a downtown parking lot (top left) into this amazing plaza area (top right and bottom left). This space includes a stage, lawn area for seating or multi-purpose events, an interactive fountain, and ice skating throughout the winter. The plaza has several restaurants and shops bordering it.

The plaza is programmed year-round, so there is always something going on. The splash pad runs 120 days each year, and the ice skating rink also runs 120 days a year. These count as event days, because there's something going on. It

has turned Rapid City into as big a tourism draw as Mt. Rushmore. Remember that plazas MUST be programmed, and they should always be commerce-driven, meaning they should be a place for vendors, performers, art shows, concerts, restaurants, food trucks, exhibitions, etc.

The impact on Rapid City is astounding. We surveyed 24 downtown merchants, and the consensus is that the plaza is the best thing Rapid City has ever done. Retailers continue to break sales records, and there aren't any retail vacancies. The average population age is dropping - the youth are coming back.



Another example is Indian Creek Plaza that we designed for Caldwell, Idaho. They are taking a large space downtown (top right) to create this. Note the amphitheater area (bottom left), which only descends a few steps, the splash pad/fountain (which becomes an ice rink in winter), the stage at the top, vendor booths, tables, chairs, and benches, and lots of trees. The cost is about \$5 million.

Building a plaza is expensive, so we thought if you took the parking lot and resurfaced it something like this (bottom right), it would be great.



Another idea for the surface of the plaza would be to use StreetPrint (top left). These are not pavers - this is embossed into the asphalt. It will last for 20 years and you can do snow removal right over the top.

We thought if you resurfaced the top of the parking lot with something decorative, added street trees all around, and set up some vendor booths like these (top right) in Asheville, NC, you would have the makings of a great plaza. Bring in street musicians (bottom left). In Asheville they don't even have to pay the musicians - they do it for the tips.

Add more trees besides the ones you already have (bottom right). A canopy of trees increases the perceived value of the location and of the shops and restaurants nearby. People will spend more money where there are street trees than where there aren't.



Make sure you have plenty of vendor booths (top left). You want to monetize the plaza.

Add a stage - it doesn't need to be fancy and expensive. Give people entertainment and places to sit, and in no time, you'd have crowds of people downtown.

In Disneyland they have a lot of raised planters (bottom right). The planter barriers are wide and just the right height to provide seating. This wasn't an accident. Provide places for people to sit.



This group of musicians (top left) is performing in Third Street Promenade in Santa Monica. Doesn't it look like fun?

Can you imagine a yoga class like this in your plaza in Mountain Home? (top right) It would be awesome. Think about the healthy, outdoor living feeling you already have here. This would just add to that.

Think about doing "The Taste of Southern Utah" or "The Taste of Mountain Home" in your plaza (bottom left). You would have the ability to hold huge

events like this, drawing visitors from all over the region.

Perhaps you could do a synthetic ice rink in the winter (bottom right). That would save you the expense of installing a permanent structure for an ice rink.



Relieved visitors spend more. You need public restrooms. If you create the Public Market, you could put public restrooms inside. Another idea is to build restrooms that are an attraction in themselves.

These restrooms (all photos this page) are located in Sulphur Springs, Texas. They have two of them (note the chess and checker boards). What's unique about them is that when you enter, you realize that the walls are one-way glass. When you're inside, you can see everything outside. But no one from the outside can see in. It can take some courage to use these, though!

These are such a novelty that people will drive 40 miles out of their way to Sulphur Springs to see them. They are an attraction themselves!

In order to make downtown Mountain Home a destination for visitors, first you have to make it be a place your locals would want to spend their time in.

The 7-8-7 Rule



51

What to do

Think benches.
You should have 30 to 40 of them.
Always at the facade, facing out.

The top visitor activity

Shopping, dining & entertainment
in a **pedestrian-friendly** intimate setting.

This is where 80% of all non-lodging
tourism spending takes place.

The 7-8-7- Rule is threefold:

- First, 70% of first-time sales at restaurants, wineries, retail shops, golf courses, and lodging facilities are from curb appeal. Mountain Home is sorely lacking in good curb appeal. It is up to the merchants to make the entries into their shops or restaurants attractive. It's up to merchants to pull people into their stores. The city is responsible for the streets and curbsides - the merchants are responsible for the building facades and sidewalk space in front of their stores.
- Second, women are responsible for 80% of all consumer spending. Think about how to attract women into your shop or restaurant. Women like

beautiful spaces that feel safe. Also, think benches! Look at the photo top right. Make sure downtown has plenty of benches - always at the building facade, facing out.

- Third, 70% of all brick and mortar spending takes place after 6:00 p.m. The average visitor is active 14 hours a day, but only spends 4 to 6 hours with their primary activity. They spend 8 to 10 hours with complementary activities. The top visitor activity is shopping and dining in a pedestrian-friendly setting, and this is where 80% of all non-lodging tourism spending takes place. But if you're closed, visitors can't spend money in your shop.



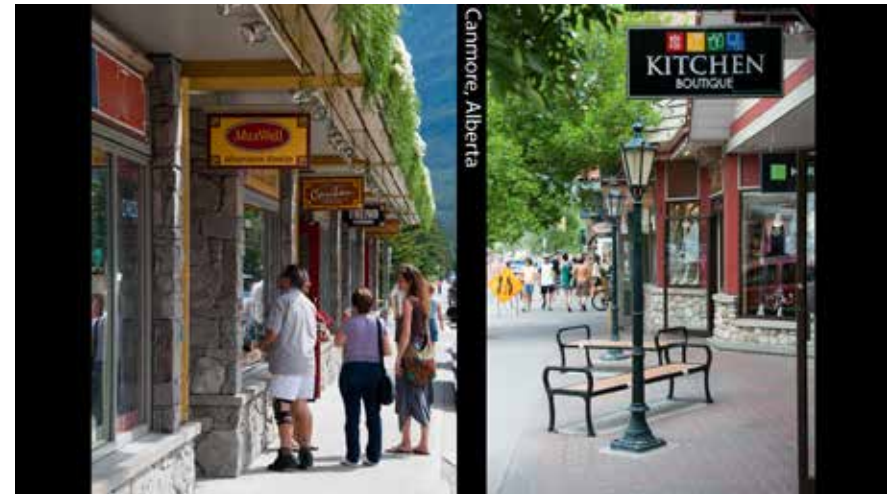
Merchants should always promote what it is they are selling before the name of the store. Coyote Creek (top left and right) is probably a great shop, but what do they sell? Why would I be tempted to go inside when I don't know what they are selling?

Their sign includes the description "wrought iron, home decor, and more," but the font is almost impossible to read. Instead, the sign should read "Wrought Iron and Home Decor" in large, easy to read type, and then "Coyote Creek" in smaller letters.

What is "The Stockyard"? (bottom left). There's no indication that it's a restaurant. If you go around back, you can see another sign that says "The Stockyard - Bar and Brewhouse." But the words Bar and Brewhouse are almost impossible to read.

Always promote what it is you are selling before the name of the store.

We can see that one of the shops on this street (bottom right) does tattoos. And farther down, there is a bakery. But what is in the rest of the shops? We have no idea. Merchants need to use blade signs.



One of the ingredients of a healthy downtown is that shops use blade signs. The right kind of signage can make or break a retail shop or restaurant. How will potential customers know what you're offering unless you tell them? When visitors drive (or walk) through downtown, signs that are placed flat against the building are almost impossible to read. Perpendicular (blade) signs take care of that problem.

These signs in Leavenworth, WA (top left) are excellent examples of effective blade signs. Chocolate, collectables, trains, restaurant. It's easy to see what

kind of stores these are. Nantucket, Massachusetts (top right) also uses very good blade signs. Here are some blade signs in Carmel, California (bottom left), and some in Canmore, Alberta (bottom right). Most successful downtowns have blade signs.



Downtown retail signs should follow these guidelines:

- Lettering should be one inch tall for every twelve feet of viewing distance.
- Script lettering should always be avoided.
- The signage should be decorative to enhance the ambiance of the city. Real signs, no billboards, plastic banners, or painted plywood signs.
- Retailers and attractions should promote the primary lure first, then the business name.
- Blade signs should be a consistent height and size.
- Keep verbiage to four words - no more than six words.

Can you tell what's in any of the shops in the photos top right, bottom left and right? Blade signs would fix that.



This building (top left) has several different shops, but the large sign just says “Stoecker Jewelers.” Blade signs would fix that, letting people know there are other shops here.

Restaurants should display their menus in an attractive setting, like this one in Banff, Alberta does (bottom right). This entices hungry visitors inside.

Extend window displays out to exterior spaces. Besides promoting what you sell, this adds beautification and makes your shop welcoming. This shop owner (top right) sets up this display every morning. This shop owner (bottom left) also sets up a beautiful display every morning, and she says that it saved her business by attracting more customers.



Merchants should use the outdoors as a place for “window displays” of their merchandise, attractively arranged, as these shop owners did in Canmore, AB (top left). Displays of merchandise, artfully arranged, can really pull customers into a shop.

The bikes outside this shop (top right) are a great way to attract people into the shop.

Think of outside displays as extensions of your window displays. Avoid putting out racks of clothes and tables or boxes of merchandise. This shop (bottom left), which is great, has a cart with books stacked on it, and this gives you a

second-rate destination appearance. If you wouldn't put a pile of books or racks of clothes in your window as a display, don't put them outside either.

Get rid of weeds around the sidewalks (bottom right). It looks like nobody cares. Even though this may be the city's responsibility, merchants should go ahead and take care of their sidewalks, simply because it's good for business. Welcome your customers by creating a clean, welcoming entry. In most places in Europe, you will see merchants outside before their shops open, sweeping and cleaning off their sidewalks, and setting up their outside displays. It makes good business sense.



It was great that Kurly's has created a patio for outdoor dining, but they should remove the readerboard and take down the structures that look like they're going to fall down (top left).

This might be the ugliest store in Idaho (top right). This is a clothing store, and it might be great, but it has no windows, it's the same color as concrete, and it has absolutely no beautification.

Suggestion: Use trompe l'oeil - architectural murals - to make blank walls

attractive. Trompe l'oeil murals are architectural or scenic murals that "fool the eye" - appearing real. One example is the photo bottom left. This blank wall was painted to appear as an old-fashioned grocers. The windows, doors, soda machine - even some of the plants - are all painted to create the illusion of a real grocery store.

Another example of a mural in progress (all - bottom right). First, the blank wall (small upper left), then in progress (small lower left), finally, the stunning finish.



Another example of trompe l'oeil is shown top left - before and after. The scene is so realistic - even the people standing and looking at the scene are painted. It's a beautiful solution to the stark blank wall in the "before" photo. This (top right) shows a close up of part of the finished wall.

Trompe l'oeil can also be used indoors. This brew pub (bottom left) had a long, boring expanse of blank wall. The artist painted images of hallways branching off, and the results are spectacular (bottom right). People have even tried to walk down the painted hall.



Huntsville, Texas used a facade easement program to help building owners use trompe l'oeil to make downtown gorgeous. What looks like detailed architectural elements on this building is really painted designs.

This building shows a different take on trompe l'oeil murals - painted windows showing the interior scenes (top right). They add a lot of interest to an otherwise boring building.

This building in Virginia City, Nevada, a historic mining town (bottom left),

was originally blank concrete. It looked completely out of place next to the old historic buildings. Trompe l'oeil fixed that - all the details showing on the building are painted: the bricks, windows, railings, roof details, and balcony.

Suggestion: Only allow plastic banners for special events and promotions, and then, only for two weeks at a time, four times a year (bottom right). Plastic banners simply give downtown a tacky appearance.



Suggestion: Merchants should never put up signs that say "Sorry, no public restrooms" (top left). This just tells customers to go away. Instead, they should put up a sign that tells visitors where they can find the public restrooms. Of course, that can be a problem when there are no public restrooms nearby. That's why it's so important for cities to have public facilities in their downtowns.

How could a visitor know that this bakery was open? (top right). Of course, we do see the "open" sign, but we also saw "open" signs in shop windows that were no longer in business, so that was no guarantee.

Curb appeal tells visitors that a shop is open, and curb appeal makes the shop inviting. Add pots, benches, and outdoor displays. Invite us in!

Most of the merchants downtown (bottom left and right) have absolutely no curb appeal. They need to add pots, outdoor displays, and benches.



We'd like to see merchants create displays like this (top left).

This is in Sisters, Oregon (top right), a town of 1,100. Doesn't that make you want to go into the shops?

Beautification is a great investment, and one way to help merchants make it more affordable is to organize a buying co-op. You could implement a beautification program similar to Fredericksburg, Texas (bottom left and right). The merchants combined forces to purchase pots, planters, planting soil,

and shrubs for everyone, then had students and youth clubs plant them as fundraisers. Notice that most of the pots are filled with evergreen shrubs - that makes them low maintenance, and they last all year long.



Neenah, Wisconsin did a downtown makeover (before: top left, and after: top right). Retail sales in the block with the beautification increased by 35% of the non-beautified street.

You can even do beautification in the winter (bottom left). Be creative!

It's easy to screen utility boxes and garbage cans (bottom right). Again, be creative.

Remember, curb appeal can account for up to 70% of first time sales at restaurants, golf courses, wineries, retail shops and lodging facilities.



This merchant (top left) made a good start with their pots, but this long expanse of building needs a lot more. There should be two benches and four pots. Consider painting the squares on the wall a color besides just gray.

This shop is great (top right), but doesn't have any curb appeal. Add pots and decorative blade signs. This shop is also a great one (bottom left), but it doesn't have any beautification. Add pots and benches.

These pots (bottom right) are very nice, but they should be at the facade. The

benches should also be at the facade facing out. Consider using comfortable benches, rather than ones that people wouldn't want to sit on.



Suggestion: Recruit more retail. Your population within 5 miles is 19,500 people. Within 15 miles, the population is 23,500. You have a large enough population to handle more retail. Without it, you are forcing your residents to shop in other towns. That's self-defeating. Recruit more stores.

Additional marketing suggestion: Create "Mountain Home's Hidden Gems." One of Door County, Wisconsin's most successful marketing pieces is a small book written by a private person called "101 Things to do in Door County" (bottom right). These are basically "hidden gems," and they are very specific, fun, mini-itineraries about things to do while visiting Door County. They aren't

Door County's best attractions, they are things only locals would know about. They let visitors know about all the other fun things to do, besides your major attractions.

Your hidden gems are not the major attractions that would get us to travel to Mountain Home, but while we're here, these are some fantastic little excursions and enjoyments we could have. These will get visitors to stay longer. This could be a privately produced marketing book.

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What's your brand?
Your unique selling proposition?

The initial idea list

1. Air sports (playing off the Air Force)
2. Equestrian (but would need big investment)
3. Mid-Century Cool (The Festival City)
4. Hunting & Fishing (Are you the best?)

The three killers

1. Local politics
2. Lack of champions
3. Lack of money (private & public)

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Make a list of these, put together a team and start working on turning some of these into action items.

Branding is how you set yourself apart from everyone else. It needs to be unique, and it needs to have a foundation in activities - in your product. It's not just marketing.

Our initial list of ideas includes air sports; equestrian; hunting and fishing; and mid-century (retro) cool, with a basis of festivals throughout the year. Your focus will drive your product development efforts as well as your marketing efforts. You may have some very different ideas that we didn't think of.

Make a list of these suggestions and ideas and put together a team of committed people to start turning these ideas into action.

Your goal should be to make Mountain Home a stand-alone destination. All the ingredients are here!



What you have here in Mountain Home is amazing. It's time to quit sending people somewhere else, and become a destination.

We hope that these assessment findings and suggestions will help to inspire change in Mountain Home, and help you make your community more successful, happier and healthier for all your residents and businesses.





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