Planning the perfect journey on a Scenic Byway

How do you help promote summer travel on your scenic byway? Let's walk through an example using a recent partnership between the Colorado Byways Program and MyScenicDrives.com (Colorado Byways Program information is shown in italics).

Get the word out! Send out a press release to your local news agencies and do other outreach to alert visitors to your byway, before summer travels start or early in the season.

The Colorado Byways Program sent a press release in mid-May. "We encourage visitors and residents alike to take advantage of these free resources and explore Colorado's byways," said Colorado Scenic Byways coordinator Lenore Bates. "Whether you are an outdoor enthusiast, history buff, nature lover, tourist or conservationist, Colorado's byways provide a "wow" factor that can't be denied."
Share new online features with your visitors or even new wayfinding/interpretive signs. These things may attract people that have already visited your byway. Also be sure to provide information about lodging, food, and other sights/destinations, so your visitors have a complete experience.

A new partnership between the Colorado Byways Program and MyScenicDrives.com includes features that showcase electrical vehicle charging stations, visitor amenities and a road-trip planner that can be printed or exported to a GPS device.

Twenty-three state parks are located on Colorado Byways, and byways connect hundreds of thousands of acres of Forest Service, BLM lands and state wildlife areas.

“The tourism generated by Colorado’s byways is often the key supporting financial source to many of our historic designated sites as well as to the local businesses along the byways,” said Bates. “Exploring the byways is a great way to support small businesses and communities along the byways.”

Share information in multiple ways.
Some visitors will rely only on their smartphones to get information once they’re out traveling your byway, but others will need a printed map and want one-on-one attention. Direct them to the right locations and to the right information!

In addition to the new electronic features, the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) furnishes a free Bicycling and Scenic Byways map at Colorado Welcome Centers or by mail upon request. (The bicycle route maps are also posted online.)

It’s time for some self-promotion. Your visitors want to know why they should visit and you need to tell them. Sharing statistics and numbers can help support your claims and makes your story more exciting.

In 2014, 3,010,000 visitors to Colorado accessed the state’s well-known scenic beauty, historical sites and recreational areas through “touring trips,” the second-highest activity after “outdoor trips” (3,220,000) among Colorado’s “core ‘marketable’ overnight travel segments.” (Marketable trips are those most subject to influence by marketing and promotion.) Two-thirds of touring travelers come from outside Colorado.

Sally Pearce, Co-Executive Director of the National Scenic Byway Foundation, submitted the information about the Colorado Byways Program. Want to highlight your Scenic Byway? Send us an email at info@nsbfoundation.com.
Update from IPW - sharing byways with the world

We had a wonderful time at IPW, the travel industry’s premier international marketplace and the largest generator of travel to the U.S., the first week of June. There were more than 1,100 exhibitor booths and over 5,000 attendees representing international travel buyers, domestic travel buyers and international journalists from over 70 countries.

The NSB Foundation had a booth alongside the National Park Service, AIANTA/BIA, America’s Great Outdoors, National Parks Promotion Council, Department of State, and other national agencies and organizations this year. Our marketing theme was “American Culture” and we spoke to so many people who were interested in visiting and promoting our great Scenic Byways!

By participating in IPW, we were able to bring increased visibility to scenic byways, generating referrals for domestic and international tour operators, receptive operators, travel writers and others.

From left to right, Drew Alberti, Stacy Brown, Toby Bloom, Smokey Bear, and Patricia McNally at the National Scenic Byway Foundation IPW conference booth.

Fast facts!

Use social media to promote RV parks and campgrounds along your byway
Don’t be fooled - RV parks and campgrounds can successfully promote themselves on social media! Check out these tips and share with any businesses in your area (read more tips at Tourism Currents):

1. **Activities are a must.** Whether you’re marketing to long-term guests like snowbirds, or those just passing through, the more activities you offer, the more enticing your RV park or campground will be.
2. **Work hard to help publicize local events to your clientele.** Make sure you keep your past guests up to date with an email newsletter, sent at least monthly. Your past guests are gold to you, so offer specials or value-enhanced packages to encourage them to come back and attend events in your community.
3. **Be active and stay informed with your local tourism organization.** Whether it's a small Chamber of Commerce, a full-blown CVB/DMO/Tourist Board, or a more loosely knit group, be a part of it.
Turquoise water, sandy beaches, and rocky outcroppings give just a glimpse of Big Sur's appeal (accessible from Route 1 - Big Sur Coast Highway). Photo by Martha Alejandre

By the numbers!
According to the Recreation Vehicle Industry Association, RV shipments through February 2017 totaled 73,287 units, an increase of 8.6% from the same period in 2016. This continues seven consecutive years of shipments growth as the industry has bounced back from effects of the Great Recession.

Know the joys of exchanging ideas with like minded Byway communities.

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National Scenic Byway Foundation

Gain a voice; access tools and training; and spread your Byway message.

Please visit our website and learn more: www.nsbfoundation.com