

**Michener's Chesapeake Country National Scenic Byway
Corridor Management Plan
Advisory Committee Meeting #4 – Heritage Tourism**

I. Creating a Unified Chesapeake Country National Scenic Byway

As development of the Michener's Chesapeake Country Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan has progressed in 2010, organizers have given much consideration to the best strategies for achieving National Scenic Byway designation. The existence of three National Scenic Byways in the region – Chesapeake Country, Blue Crab and Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad – raised the question of how to not only obtain national designation but how to communicate a unified message that tells visitors that this is one region with many historical, cultural and natural resources to explore and enjoy.

With the strong encouragement of the Federal Highway Administration, the recommendation of the Corridor Management Plan consultant team led by Lardner/Klein Associates and the concurrence of many local stakeholders, this report recommends an approach that uses Chesapeake Country as the overarching byway name and which includes the Michener's and Blue Crab routes as extensions to create a unified thematic byway. (Because of its specific historical storyline, the Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad will continue to be a separate National Scenic Byway.)

This report presents the opportunities created by this approach by examining current national and Maryland travel trends, discussing Maryland's byways visitor research and the Maryland Office of Tourism's statewide byway marketing plans, and outlining strategies for organizing a nine-county byway network, identifying visitor readiness criteria for sites and developing marketing plans for the byway.

II. Overview of National Travel Trends

(Note: National travel data may data from 2008, 2009 or 2010 depending on when data was collected and reports produced. The most recent available data is used for each category.)

National Heritage Travel Trends

While the economic recession of recent years has had a tremendous impact on the travel industry, a major study shows that heritage travel continues to be a strong industry segment. *The Cultural and Heritage Traveler, 2009 Edition* found that 78 percent of all U.S. leisure travelers participate in cultural and/or heritage activities while traveling. This translates to 118.3 million adults each year. According to the study, cultural heritage travelers say they want:

- Travel experiences where the destination, its buildings and surroundings have retained their character.
- Travel to be “educational” – they make an effort to explore and learn about local arts, culture, environment and history.

Cultural heritage travelers spend an average of \$994 per trip compared to \$611 for other leisure travelers, making this a highly desirable travel industry segment. Cultural heritage travelers take an average of five trips per year vs. less than four trips for other travelers

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CULTURAL AND HERITAGE ACTIVITIES	% of Travelers Engaged
Attend a fair or festival	68%
Visit historic buildings	67%
Visit historic sites	66%
Visit Native American sites	64%
Attend a re-enactment	64%
Visit history museums	61%
Visit living history museums	60%
Take a tour of local history	59%
Visit a natural history museum	59%
Visit an art museum or gallery	54%
Shop for local arts and crafts	51%
Take an architecture tour	49%
Experienced local or regional cuisine	40%
Visit state/national parks	41%
Explore small towns	40%
Take a self-guided walking tour	32%
Visit farms and ranches	32%
Explore an urban neighborhood	30%
Visit a farmers' market	27%
Take a scenic drive	24%

Source: *The Cultural and Heritage Traveler, 2009 Edition*, conducted by Mandala Research, LLC for the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the U.S. Cultural and Heritage Tourism Marketing Council, and the U.S. Department of Commerce

National Travel Trends

A July 2010 survey reflects the continued impact of the economy and financial concerns on travel plans and actual trips taken by leisure travelers. *The State of the American Traveler* finds that “personal financial reasons” is the top answer for why travelers plan to take fewer trips – 55.9%. Other reasons include: gas was too expensive (40.7%), airfare was too expensive (36%), too busy at work (27.9%), not enough vacation time (20.8%).

The study’s findings reflect declining expectations for travel from the January 2010 survey:

Travel expectations in the next 12 months	January 2010	July 2010
Expect to increase travel	33.1%	27.6%
Expect to cut back on travel	13.6%	18.9%
Expect to increase travel spending	32.6%	25.6%

The July 2010 study shows that travelers are not giving up on travel but are adopting strategies to make it more affordable:

Travel Plans	Percentage
Look for travel discounts or bargains	61.9%
Visit generally less expensive destinations	29.3%
Reduce the number of leisure trips	23.8%
Take at least one staycation	22.6%
Reduce total days spent on leisure trips	22.1%
Shorten distance of trips or reduce side trips	20.8%
Select less expensive modes of transportation	18%
Cancel a trip that is already planned	4.2%

Although travelers still rely heavily on destination recommendations from friends, colleagues and relatives, the study showed – not surprisingly – that travelers are increasingly using all forms of technology in addition to traditional resources for travel planning.

Travel Planning Resources	Percentage
User-generated content – reviews of hotels, destinations, restaurants, activities and itineraries	42.9%
Recommendations from friends, colleagues or relatives	39.9%
Print resources – magazines, newspaper travel sections, guidebooks, direct mail	34.8%
DMO websites	31.2%
Mobile phone/PDA	28%
Travel-related TV programs	27.4%
Social media – destination pages, friend/fan of destination, photo sharing sites, Twitter	26.2%

Source: *State of the American Traveler, July 2010 edition, Destination Analysts, Inc.*

III. Overview of Maryland Travel Trends

Maryland Office of Tourism

In 2009, visitation to Maryland increased by 1 million visitors to a total of 29 million. Only six states increased visitation during this time period due to the economic recession. However, reports also note that Maryland's sales tax collections coded to tourism (eight categories) were down 2.3% statewide.

The Maryland Office of Tourism Development has focused on continuing to attract increasing numbers of visitors and to increase expenditures through implementation of a new brand identity/positioning strategy that clearly communicates what visitors will experience on their trip to Maryland. Research conducted as part of the plan's development found that Maryland will benefit from targeting touring and resort-type vacations. These kinds of vacations showcase the state's natural beauty, historic sites, and cities, towns and villages. Additionally, research shows that visitors who enjoy these types of vacations generate higher economic impact for Maryland. In particular, touring visitors travel around Maryland more, participate in more activities and stay longer.

The department's 2010 marketing plan identifies the state's target audience as adults age 25-64 (with strong marketing emphasis to reach women who are shown to be travel decision makers). This audience has a household income of \$75,000+, is well educated and works in managerial and professional occupations. The average travel party size is 2.15 persons with 24 percent of trips taken with children. The largest number of travelers is Maryland residents comprising 28 percent of all travelers in 2008. Primary out-of-state markets are within a 400-mile radius with most marketing targeting potential visitors from Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Virginia, Delaware and West Virginia as well as parts of New York, Ohio, Indiana and North Carolina.

The marketing plan notes: "The audience is further defined by their special interests in Maryland's travel products, which may include but are not limited to: Civil War, the Underground Railroad, the Star-Spangled Banner, Maryland and America's Byways, other cultural heritage programs, outdoor recreation and sporting events and multicultural sites/events."

The plan also identifies the travel trade – group travel leaders, meeting planners, association managers, tour operators, travel agents and sporting event managers – as a target for the tourism office's sales efforts.

Maryland's Top 10 Tourism Activities
Dining
Shopping
Sightseeing
Entertainment
Beach/Waterfront
Nightlife
Museum/Art Exhibit
Parks (national/state)
Festival/Craft Fair
Attend Sports Event

Source: Maryland Office of Tourism, 2010 Marketing Plan

Maryland Byways Research

In 2008, the Maryland Office of Tourism Development received support from the Maryland State Highway Administration and the National Scenic Byways Program to conduct research on the state's byways. Findings from this research are guiding development and marketing plans for the Maryland Byways Program. The study included an internet panel as well as focus groups. Respondents were drawn from the state's key marketing regions and included those who have traveled or were likely to travel on a byway.

Internet Study Panel Findings

In the internet panel, those who have traveled on a Maryland Byway identified their top interests as:

Activity	Percentage
Visit beaches	56%
Explore coastal/waterfront communities and scenic areas	54%
Enjoy unique local foods	50%
Visit a historical attraction	49%
Visit a National or State Park	46%
Visit a scenic lookout	46%
Attend a fair, festival or special event	43%
Go swimming	39%
Visit cultural attraction	38%
Explore a small town or village	37%

Travelers also had specific expectations for a trip that includes a Maryland Byway:

Maryland Byways Trip Perception
Fun experience
Great vacation experience for adults
Great place for learning and discovery*
Offers unique vacation experience
Lots to see and do
Must-see destination
Place that offers real adventure*
Offers interesting historic areas/attractions*
Good family vacation experience
Interesting scenery

* Not listed in Top 10 for general perceptions of Maryland trips.

A key recommendation emerging from the internet study reflects the importance of marketing partnerships: **Explore partnership development to increase exposure and awareness. Create/leverage partnerships with local brands and tourism attractions that share attributes and motivating travel factors.**

Focus Group Findings

The 15 focus groups held in five target markets examined participants' trip motivations, travel planning and recognition of byways as a type of travel. Top travel motivators included relaxation, activities, outdoors/nature, exploring the unknown, education and culture, and destinations that are child-friendly. After hearing a definition and description of a scenic byway, responses were positive to this type of travel.

Participants said their top travel planning resource is the internet. Respondents said they use the internet as a resource to generate ideas about where to travel as well as planning trip logistics including lodging, food, entertainment and activities. Some respondents also noted that collateral materials such as guidebooks or brochures were valuable trip planning tools. Maps were considered essential, especially when traveling on a byway.

IV. Maryland Byways Marketing Plans

Based on findings in the Maryland Byways research study, the Maryland Office of Tourism Development is implementing new marketing strategies to promote the state's byways including:

Winter 2010/11	
	Develop marketing campaign materials including the new Maryland brand concept.
Spring 2011	
	Produce new guidebook – combines statewide map with byway narratives; designate All-American Roads and National Scenic Byways; include driving tours, experiences grid, 2-4 page spread on heritage areas. Fulfill inquiries (ongoing) .
	MD Office of Tourism website (Visit Maryland) – Develop a MSB and Driving Tours landing page and support pages; expand information on interactive map that will include videos, photo collections, seasonal information, multiple itineraries, user-generated content. (To be developed in phases.)
	Spring-Summer-Fall advertising campaign in print and electronic formats. (Repeat annually.)
	Implement social networking strategy through Facebook, Twitter and Flickr. Train staff in call centers on products. (Repeat annually.)
	Promote byways at travel trade and consumer shows. (Repeat annually.)
	Engage travel writers, photographers and videographers for interactive outlets. (Spring-Fall – frequency TBD.)
Fall 2011	
	Include performance assessment in MD Tourism Office FY annual report. (Repeat annually.)
Spring 2012	
	Develop “smart phone” applications for all online information.
2013	
	Conduct consumer research to measure consumer awareness and product viability.

V. Positioning the Chesapeake Country/Michener's Chesapeake Scenic Byway

Current Situation

The route that encompasses Michener's Chesapeake Scenic Byway follows several roadways through Talbot, Caroline and Dorchester counties. In addition, these counties encompass numerous promotional/organizational entities including:

- **Stories of the Chesapeake State Heritage Area** includes Caroline, Talbot, Kent and Queen Anne Counties.
- **Heart of the Chesapeake State Heritage Area** is in Dorchester County.
- **Chesapeake Country Byway** – a National Scenic Byway in Cecil, Kent and Queen Anne's Counties, and a state byway, travels through Talbot County, Caroline and Dorchester counties.

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- **Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Byway** – an All-American Road travels through Dorchester County and Caroline counties.
- **Three county tourism offices** – Caroline County Office of Tourism, Talbot County Office of Tourism and Dorchester County Department of Tourism each have individual marketing plans and varying budgets. (Dorchester tourism department also manages the Heart of Chesapeake State Heritage Area).
- **John Smith Water Trail** – a National Historical Trail managed by the National Park Service.
- **Chesapeake Bay Gateways Network** – includes numerous designated sites throughout the three county area and beyond.
- **U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service** – offers a birding and wildlife viewing tour leading from Blackwater Wildlife Management Area in Dorchester County.

As part of the Michener's Chesapeake Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan's development, organizers have considered extending the existing Chesapeake Country National Scenic Byway to include this route and to further extend the route to encompass the Blue Crab National Scenic Byway. These extensions will add six more counties to the partnership, each with additional promotional and organizational entities:

- **Kent County** and **Queen Anne's County** are part of Stories of the Chesapeake State Heritage Area and also include the Kent County Tourism Development Office and the Queen Anne's County Office of Tourism.
- **Cecil County** includes the Cecil County Office of Tourism. The county is also part of the **Lower Susquehanna Heritage Greenway** (state heritage area).
- **Somerset County, Worcester County** and **Wicomico County** include the Blue Crab Scenic Byway. The three counties also comprise the **Lower Eastern Shore State Heritage Area**. Tourism offices are Somerset County Tourism, Worcester County Tourism and Wicomico County Convention and Visitors Association.

Each of these entities has varying degrees of tourism marketing plans and promotions which are dependent upon available staff and funding as well as the priorities determined by each managing organization.

Regarding the existing byways within or immediately linking to the project area: Chesapeake Country National Scenic Byway and Blue Crab – promotion by local organizers appears to focus on a website for each byway ([Chesapeake Byway](#) and [Blue Crab Byway](#)). The Harriet Tubman/Underground Railroad Byway, which will continue to be a separate National Scenic Byway due to its specific historical storyline, is promoted on several websites but does not have a dedicated website. Of the tourism offices in counties that include these routes, only Kent County has a link from the tourism website to the Chesapeake byway website ([Kent County](#)).

The Need for a Primary Byway Route (Spine)

The Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) Scenic Byway Program managers are strongly encouraging the creation of a primary byway route as a single spine from which destinations and itineraries can be organized, signed and interpreted. FHWA also encourages developing routes that display strong continuity in relation to the byway theme. They discourage multiple byways in the same region that are not connected.

The FHWA provides guidance through 11 “Key Points to Keep in Mind When Considering Nomination”

[Key Points for Byway Nominations](#). Two points particularly related to the decision-making process for this byway are:

- It is important to explain the integrity of the proposed designated route—from the standpoint of traveler safety, continuity and the significance of Intrinsic Quality(s).
- The experience of the byway is broader than just the road. Distinctive features of the byway corridor—the points of interest, activities and events—should be included in context of a traveler’s complete itinerary.

For Chesapeake Country this means that achieving the goal of National Scenic Byway designation has the best chance of designation if:

- A **single Chesapeake Country Scenic Byway** can be established from Cecil County to Crisfield, and
- The nomination of Michener’s Chesapeake and Chesapeake Bay portions of the Blue Crab byway can be submitted as an **extension of the existing Chesapeake Country National Scenic Byway**.

A positive step has already been made by managers of the Blue Crab Byway who have agreed to separate their byway into two:

- A continuation of Chesapeake Country National Scenic Byway from Vienna to Crisfield, and
- A coastal heritage byway route linking Virginia, Maryland and Delaware (Delmarva) will be created. Managers agreed to work with partners in Delaware and Virginia to create a DelMarVa Coastal Heritage byway route that picks up the Atlantic side of the former Blue Crab.
- The link in between the two byways will be the “Beach to Bay Indian Trail,” a National Recreation Trail designated by Congress and a second link across Delaware through Sussex County.

Planning and Building a Byway Coalition

In addition to addressing the preferences and recommendations of FHWA, it is important for organizers to consider the two groups who will be most impacted by these decisions. This section looks at strategies to address these groups:

Why Collaborate?

Collaboration is the basis of all successful cultural heritage tourism programs, providing a unique opportunity to unite partners who may not have worked together in the past. There are many reasons to collaborate:

- **Financial incentives** – Stretch limited budgets by pooling resources.
- **Program Development** – Create thematic tours that tell a broader story and link sites.
- **Keep Products Fresh** – New tours, itineraries and events provide reasons for visitors to come to the region, stay longer and return.
- **Reach New Target Audiences** – More visitors can be reached through sharing visitor research information.
- **Benefit from Your Partners Expertise** – Everyone brings different skills and knowledge to a partnership. Combining this expertise strengthens programs and enhances success.
- **Increase Advocacy** – When partners work together, it strengthens the case for support from elected officials and the community.

- **Byway organizers** – The benefits of a regional cooperative partnership are examined and potential organizational strategies to manage what will be a lengthy byway route through nine counties are outlined.
- **Travelers along the byway** – Key opportunities are identified for developing byway marketing plans that will build on existing tourism promotions in order to attract travelers to the byway and to explore the region.

Although there are many organizations engaged in tourism promotions throughout the region, the risk of either confusing the visitor by having so much to choose from or having the visitor miss an opportunity (i.e. while looking at a county website a potential visitor might not learn about the scenic byways in the region) is real. Positioning the byway to attract visitors and generate economic impact requires a simple, clear presentation that will make it easy for visitors to understand the heritage, cultural and natural resources the area offers. To accomplish this goal, planning should focus in four key areas:

1. **Use the name “Chesapeake Country Scenic Byway” as the primary identifier** – All three byways – Chesapeake Country, Michener’s Chesapeake and Blue Crab – should be incorporated into one byway with the name Chesapeake Country National Scenic Byway. “Chesapeake Country” is a descriptive terms that also echoes the names of the two state heritage areas, making it easy for visitors to identify the region being promoted. Under this “umbrella” name, promotions can then be directed to three regions:
 - **Chesapeake Country Scenic Byway: Explore the Upper Shore**
 - **Chesapeake Country Scenic Byway: Discover Michener’s Maryland**
 - **Chesapeake Country Scenic Byway: Explore the Blue Crab Region of the Lower Eastern Shore**
2. **Organize a regional cooperative network** – Even with the existence of heritage areas, tourism promotion primarily occurs through individual county tourism offices. This organizational structure is due to funding sources, but in truth it has little to do with how visitors experience a destination. As a maturing tourism district that has made great strides in organizing heritage areas and scenic byways, it is important for the successful promotion of the byway that a regional cooperative network be established.

As noted in the Maryland Byways research study, a key recommendation emerging from the study is:

Explore partnership development to increase exposure and awareness. Create/leverage partnerships with local brands and tourism attractions that share attributes and motivating travel factors.

The network should include representatives from each of the county tourism offices and state heritage areas described previously. Additionally, a representative from the Maryland Office of Tourism should be invited to join the network. Anchor attractions from the region which have marketing plans and staff who focus on marketing should also be included. Organizational steps for the network are:

- All agencies should agree to have representation on the network. Representatives should be authorized to make decisions on behalf of their agency or office.
 - Establish a communication system. This will include a regular schedule of meetings (at least twice yearly) and structure for communication through regular emails to address issues and opportunities.
 - Review each agency's current marketing plans and promotions. Evaluate how different marketing strategies can work together to promote the scenic byway.
 - Coordinate individual tourism office, heritage area and attraction marketing strategies with Maryland Office of Tourism marketing to ensure that efforts reinforce and complement each other.
 - Review focus areas outlined in this report. Adopt the focus area strategies and develop a timeline for implementation.
3. **Apply for a National Scenic Byway marketing grant** – The National Scenic Byways grant program includes a marketing grant category ([NSB marketing grants](#)). Applications may be made for funding to develop a marketing plan and also for the implementation of marketing activities. All grants require a 20 percent match which may include in-kind services. Marketing grants must reflect the entire National Scenic Byway; therefore it will be critical for the regional cooperative network to reference the intrinsic qualities that unify the byway and to understand how network members can work together in promoting the byway along the entire route. The network should first apply for a grant to develop a marketing plan for the entire nine county byway region.

Application guidelines require “a detailed written account and timetable of objectives and anticipated methods to be considered to achieve the marketing goals, along with any anticipated performance measures for the strategies identified. This should be addressed within the context of the byway’s target market, and clearly address how the plan will showcase the byway, the intrinsic qualities supporting the byway’s designation, and the region.”

Network members should work together to incorporate selected elements from their own marketing plans and the state marketing plan into the regional byway marketing plan. This will allow county tourism offices, heritage areas and attractions to build on existing promotions and will reinforce messages to potential visitors about the destination experience. It will also allow for development of specific promotions targeting each of the three regions of the byway including Michener’s.

Once the network has developed a Chesapeake Country Scenic Byway marketing plan, the next step will be to apply for funds to implement the plan. Guidelines require that applicants “provide information on which specific components of the marketing plan will be addressed, discuss prior marketing efforts conducted to date, how the proposed project will build on/complement/expand on prior marketing initiatives and how results/performance will be measured. The application should also include information regarding the byway’s target market, including segmentation and niche markets.”

4. **Use Heritage Area marketing resources to promote the byway** – The Maryland Heritage Areas Authority recently approved a strategic plan *Maryland Heritage Areas Program: Charting a Sustainable Course for the Next Decade: 2010-2020*. In addition to strategies for organizational management and stewardship, the plan includes strategies for marketing and product development in heritage areas. [MD Heritage Areas Strategic Plan](#)

In the research phase of the plan's development, an online survey of potential visitors to Maryland found a very positive response to heritage areas as a destination identifier. Two-thirds of respondents said they would be much more or somewhat more likely to visit a designated heritage area. The strategic plan incorporated this finding with strategies to help heritage areas capitalize on this positive image through promotional partnerships with local Destination Marketing Organizations (DMOs) and the Maryland Office of Tourism. (As noted previously the Maryland Office of Tourism's redesigned website includes an interactive map that highlights heritage areas and scenic byways.)

The Maryland Heritage Areas Program offers marketing grants that are submitted jointly by Heritage Areas and DMOs. (See Section 4.4 of the strategic plan). Grants of up to \$50,000 are available for use in advertising placement, participation in consumer and travel trade shows, printed materials/collateral and website development.

In addition, the program offers matching grants for capital and non-capital heritage tourism projects. Grant applications may be submitted by the heritage area or by nonprofit organizations or government agencies within the heritage area.

The Chesapeake Scenic Byway route will pass through four of Maryland's state heritage areas – Lower Eastern Shore, Lower Susquehanna Heritage Greenway, Heart of Chesapeake and Stories of the Chesapeake. The existing partnerships among heritage areas and DMOs offer opportunities to join together to benefit from each entity's promotional activities and to seek ways to partner in joint promotions. In particular, byway managers should work with the heritage areas and DMOs to:

- Identify grant opportunities for heritage tourism product development along the byway, and
- Work with heritage areas and DMOs to submit a marketing grant application with promotional elements showcasing the byway.

Establish Visitor Readiness Criteria

Identifying sites that are ready to host visitors as well as those that have potential to become visitor destinations is an important part of the byway planning process. Establishing classifications for sites will guide identification of:

- Sites that reflect the themes developed for the byway
- Sites that have potential for development as visitor attractions in order to target resources (grant applications, technical assistance, etc.) for interpretive development and site enhancements
- Sites that should be showcased in marketing and promotions to create an appealing image of the byway

Byway organizers will need to determine categories for visitor readiness. Categories that can be considered are:

Category	Description
Full Service	Ready for all types of visitors; open regular hours/days of operation; visitor services provided; site interpretation offered (i.e. guided or self-guided tours)
Limited Service	Can accommodate visitors but site has limited hours, interpretation and facilities
Future Site	Site has great potential for visitors but must implement plans to enhance site's hours of operation, interpretation and facilities

Marketing Focus Areas

As the byway marketing plan is developed, promotional efforts should focus in key areas connected to findings in Maryland's byway research study, the Maryland Office of Tourism's identification of emerging marketing venues and the department's byway marketing plans discussed earlier in this report. Focus areas should include:

- **Develop Websites** – The Maryland Byway research study – as well as most other current tourism studies – shows that the internet is the primary tool for travel planning. One option to consider that would demonstrate the strongest commitment to regional cooperation (and that will increase the chances for securing the grant) is to build upon the existing Chesapeake Country Scenic Byway website ([Chesapeake Byway](#)) which provides information on the history and culture of the region, itineraries for birding along the byway, enjoying water-related and agricultural tours and touring the area's historic churches. Links are included for the three county tourism offices (Cecil, Kent and Queen Anne's) as well as regional and state links and links to websites on specific topics including history, land and water. The Kent County tourism website has a link to this site from its homepage. To get the most out of the scenic byway website several steps should be taken:
 - If the existing Chesapeake Country NSB Alliance agrees, links should be added to all county tourism websites with an introduction inviting visitors to explore the region by traveling the byway. Alternatively, each of the three regions can develop their own website but link to each other in a cooperative and regional approach. This could be accomplished using the same structure as the National Scenic Byway Program's website for multi-state byways where a search for Chesapeake Country from both the Maryland and National Byway websites would identify all three regions with the visitor able to link to the region of their choice (using a simple overview page)
 - The byway's homepage should introduce the byway using language that reflects the characteristics that respondents in the Maryland Byways research study said they wanted in a byway travel experience (great place for learning and discovery, offers real adventure, interesting historic areas and attractions, etc.)
 - The list of byway attributes found on the homepage (Maryland's first nationally designated scenic byway, working landscapes and waterfronts, historic town centers, pristine natural areas, historic main streets, fish from a nearby pier, hike-bike-paddle, beauty-tranquility and history-traditions) should link to additional descriptions on the topic and listings of attractions where these attributes can be experienced.

- The website's byways map should be expanded to include all counties and should be interactive. Users should be able to scroll over the name of a site and see a pop-up box that describes the site and links to the attractions' website.
 - The website should include testimonies from visitors to the region who have traveled the byway. Testimonies could be as simple as quotes that are included on pages throughout the website or could be in the form of blogs written by travelers.
 - Itineraries should be expanded (see next section).
- **Create Itineraries** – Itineraries are an easy way to help visitors get ideas about what to see and do, to identify attractions related to their particular interests and to organize their trips. The Chesapeake Country National Scenic Byway website includes itineraries for birding along the byway, enjoying water-related and agricultural tours and touring the area's historic churches. Itineraries can be expanded in order to:
 - **Incorporate themes from throughout the byway region.** Thematic itineraries could expand on the area's agricultural and maritime heritage, African-American history (e.g. Frederick Douglass), Native American history and other topics that encompass the entire region.
 - **Focus on specific themes for sections of the byway** – The Michener theme encompasses three counties – Caroline, Talbot and Dorchester – and an itinerary should reflect this specific topic. Talbot County has already developed a suggested itinerary that identifies sites in Easton, Oxford, St. Michaels and Tilghman Island related to author James Michener's research in writing *Chesapeake* (places where he stayed, dined and wrote while working on the novel) and also includes sites that inspired Michener's creation of towns and descriptions of cultural traditions – in particular the area's maritime history. ([Michener Itinerary](#)) This itinerary could be expanded to include stops in all three counties, creating a variety of options for one-day or multi-day tours.
 - **Create audiotours** – As itineraries are established, network organizers should track which itinerary pages are most often visited on the website. A plan for creating audiotours (adaptable to all available technologies and formats) should be developed, starting with the most popular itineraries. Audiotours offer a way to personalize the itineraries by using newspaper accounts, letters and other historic documents to bring the stories to life for visitors. Printable scripts should also be available for download for travelers who may not have audio equipment.
 - **Use Social Media** – The Maryland Office of Tourism's byway marketing plans include social media strategies to be implemented in the spring of 2011 including Facebook, Twitter and Flickr. The Chesapeake Byway network should also use these social media resources, beginning with creation of a Facebook page to allow promoters to interact with "friends" who have traveled along the byway and who can share their experiences with others who are interested in planning a trip. A Facebook page will also provide a forum to constantly provide updates about events and activities along the route. The page should include a link to the byway website as well as all county tourism and the Maryland Office of Tourism websites. Twitter and Flickr are additional social media resources that should be explored and used in future marketing efforts.

- **Evaluate the Need for Collateral Materials** – Maryland’s Byways research study showed that in addition to using the internet, travelers also want to have printed materials to take with them on their trips. The Maryland Office of Tourism is producing a new statewide byway guidebook that will include all byways and heritage areas. The Chesapeake Byway network should evaluate and determine if any additional collateral materials specific to the byway are needed. Consideration should be given to producing “tear-off” maps that relate to the various themes and itineraries that will be developed. These maps can be produced inexpensively as tear-off map pads and distributed through frontline tourism venues throughout the region and can also be available for download from the website. A good example is the “Detours” developed by the Blackstone Valley Tourism Council. ([Blackstone Detours](#)) The tourism council has developed 11 thematic tours ranging from history to farm stands to fall foliage. The downloadable pieces include information related to attractions, directions and a map as well as a website address and toll-free number for more information.