

EFFECTIVE MARKETING

To attract visitors and new investment, communities should clearly articulate their brand. Marketing efforts should draw attention to unique assets that differentiate downtown from other communities, creating a positive image for residents and visitors. Local businesses can use this branding in their own marketing efforts, further strengthening the brand's image and expanding its reach.

TOURISM

Small cities and surrounding rural areas often have notable cultural and natural resources. Supporting context-sensitive economic development in these areas draws tourists and investment downtown, while creating new opportunities for landowners. There are several different types of tourism including:

Heritage Tourism

Your region's small towns offer visitors an affordable opportunity to learn more about the state's unique history and culture.

Agri-Tourism

Many farmers are looking for new ways to generate income, while preserving the area's rural character. Agri-tourism focuses on providing visitors with opportunities to experience activities associated with agricultural production. Agri-tourism businesses include distilleries, wineries, farmers markets, pick-your-own operations, rural bed and breakfasts, farm to table dining, corn mazes, horseback riding and more. Visitors will not only patronize these rural businesses, but visit shops, restaurants and hotels in the nearby downtowns. Agri-tourism operations in scenic areas within a short drive of major cities are often the most successful.

Eco-Tourism

Your region contains high quality landscapes that can accommodate hiking, birding, biking, camping and other types of outdoor activities. Rural downtowns serve as a base for people visiting the surrounding natural areas, providing eco-tourists with accommodations, restaurants and other necessities.

PUBLIC EVENTS

To attract tourist and locals downtown, organizations can sponsor different types of events:

Festivals

Festivals, parades, concerts, movies, street dances and similar events highlight the community's unique assets, attracting local and out-of-town visitors.

Farmers Markets

Farmer's market's attract locals and out-of-towner's alike, while creating new economic opportunities for nearby agricultural producers and highlighting the area's rural heritage. Food trucks, arts and crafts vendors, live music and other vendors also participate.

Athletic Events

Fitness classes are held in parks, plazas and other public spaces, bringing people and new activity to downtown. Organized runs, walks, marathons, etc. attract visitors, especially on the weekends.

Volunteer Opportunities

Communities provide opportunities for citizens to improve their downtowns, such as painting facades, planting and maintaining streetscapes, and/or picking up trash. These efforts not only beautify public spaces, but build support for local businesses and public investment in downtown areas.

FACT:

To attract customers, businesses should have attractive facades. In fact, 70% of first time sales are generated by customers drawn inside by the building's appealing exterior.