



DOWNTOWN INSTITUTE: COLLABORATIVE AND REGIONAL MARKETING FOR SOUTHWEST COLORADO

SILVERTON: JUNE 6-7, 2016



Downtown Colorado Inc.
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DOWNTOWN INSTITUTE OVERVIEW

The goal of revitalization is to create, improve, and maintain a viable community for living and business activity. Downtown Colorado, Inc. (DCI)'s Downtown Institutes provide an opportunity for just that. These workshops offer a unique opportunity for communities of any size to bring high level presenters and trainers to town for an intensive discussion on a topic pertinent to local downtown issues. Each Downtown Institute consists of 3-5 sessions that form a unique local training workshop.

The Silverton Downtown Institute: Collaborative and Regional Marketing, held June 6-7 in the beautiful southwest Colorado mountain community of Silverton, focused on developing an authentic community brand, implementing a branding and marketing process, and using that brand to build effective and engaging wayfinding signage. The event began on June 6 with a meet and greet and tour of the San Juan County History Museum, housed in the rehabilitated San Juan County Jail. The museum showcases the incredible history of one of the West's most lucrative gold and silver mining regions. The following morning, a presentation was given on discovering your community's unique brand and identity, conducting a formal branding process and creating a tagline and logo, and a session on implementing the brand through wayfinding signage. In the afternoon, a work session was held for communities to discuss areas for collaboration moving forward.

OBJECTIVES

The overall objectives for this event were to bring together small communities from the region to consider how to plan for marketing with a regional approach. Some of the focus areas included: providing a venue to discuss local initiatives and areas for regional collaboration; showcasing the work being done by Silverton; giving Silverton the opportunity to learn from the marketing and branding efforts of other communities as they embark on a wayfinding process; and creating an action plan with manageable projects for collaborative marketing in the region.

DOWNTOWN INSTITUTE: SOUTHWEST COLORADO AND REGIONAL COLLABORATION

Rural communities are often challenged with a small staff and face tight budgets; looking beyond your own community can be quite difficult. This Institute allowed leaders from Southwest Colorado, including Silverton, Ouray, Ridgway, Ignacio, Bayfield and Paonia, to come together for a day of education and collaborative planning. Themes from the meeting included the rugged geography of the region which can make collaboration difficult, the scenic byways that link communities, possible resources, key distinctions between marketing for tourists and marketing for community growth and the growing importance of the recreation economy and heritage tourism in southwest Colorado.

During the meeting, communities shared successful and exciting local events and initiatives. Silverton, a mecca for recreation and heritage tourism, is now an EPA Superfund site. The community has taken steps to re-brand "Superfund" and turn it into an asset however. The community will host Super Fun Days on August 5th and 6th, an event themed around the EPA and Gold King Mine, with participation from downtown businesses, EPA, and San Juan Public Health Department. Silverton hosts many other events, including a new concert series on the 3rd Fridays during the summer of 2016.

Other communities from the region, and from as far away as Paonia, shared ongoing marketing initiatives. Ouray is currently advocating for larger clearinghouses for group travel, not only in Ouray, but for the region. Ouray currently hosts a Jeep Jamboree, which benefits Silverton, Lake City and other communities along the Alpine Loop. Bayfield discussed their process in developing a new brand, working with Avant Marketing. Ignacio discussed regional links to New Mexico, as well as ways to further link their community's efforts to others in the region. Elaine Brett, from Paonia, helped facilitate the event, and shared Paonia's story, as the community has embraced farm to table, local agriculture and agritourism as key assets and core to the community's identity.

Wayfinding was discussed as a crucial way to both orient visitors and residents, and to share a community brand. Walker Christensen, a landscape architect with DHM Design, gave a presentation on wayfinding signage and shared examples of wayfinding projects from Ridgeway, Three Springs in Durango and other Colorado communities.

The group then discussed challenges to branding and marketing, chief among them a lack of resources. Resources for collaborative marketing efforts discussed include: the Department of Local Affairs (DOLA), which has recently awarded branding grants for some communities in the southwest region; Colorado Tourism Office (CTO), which prefers grants for regional initiatives; the Office of

Economic Development and International Trade (OEDIT) recreation grants; and possibilities for interns through university marketing programs. Meeting participants discussed the benefits and value of a low cost collaborative marketing effort as a way to begin a regional approach.

The group then agreed on three collaborative projects: a regional music calendar with all summer concerts in Ridgway, Ouray, Silverton and possibly other communities; a cultural heritage passport giving cheaper admission to museums in the region; and a CTO grant to fund expanding these initiatives.

This Downtown Institute provided a valuable venue opportunity for collaborative thinking. Community leaders were inspired by the work being done in the region, and left with an action plan for new collaborative marketing initiatives. DCI looks forward to continuing this work in southwest Colorado.

PARTICIPANTS

Avant Marketing
City of Ouray
DHM Design
Durango and Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad
Grand Imperial Hotel
Ouray Chamber Resort Association
Ridgway Chamber
Ridgway Creative District
Ridgway Volunteers
Rock Pirates/Silverton Chamber
San Juan County Public Health
Silverton Chamber
Silverton Residents and Volunteers
Town of Bayfield
Town of Ignacio
Town of Paonia
Town of Ridgway
Town of Silverton
Venture Snowboards

PLANNING TEAM

Elaine Brett, Business and organization development consultant
Walker Christensen, DHM Design
Katherine Correll, Downtown Colorado, Inc.
Michele Hamilton, Town of Silverton
Will Kerns, Downtown Colorado, Inc.
Chris La May, Town of Bayfield
Blair Runion, Town of Silverton
Jamie Shapiro, Downtown Colorado, Inc.
Mark Vogel, Avant Marketing

ACTION PLAN

Lead Person /Entity	Project	Objective	Steps
Diedra Silbert, Town Ridgway	Regional music calendar	Increase awareness regional opportunities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Collect music itineraries 2. Create a Facebook page with a regional music calendar 3. Share Facebook page and encourage others to share
Caroline Lescroart, Ridgway Chamber	Cultural heritage passport	Incentivize visitors to explore the unique cultural heritage offerings of the area.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reach out to cultural entities (museums, theaters, etc.) 2. Work out details (\$1 off each place, or other) 3. Create a list with all venues, locations and price
SWCOG or other entity	CTO grant for regional initiative	Funding for regional marketing initiatives	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Include Silverton, Ouray, Ridgway and Ignacio 2. Could fund passport, itineraries (such as music outlined above or recreation) that include miles for day trips, and possible stipend for intern or contract to develop these materials.