



# Assessment Findings and Suggestions Report

Carbon County, UT  
June, 2018

**ROGER BROOKS** >  
International





## Opportunity Assessment

### INTRODUCTION

In May of 2018, an Opportunity Assessment of Carbon County, Utah, was conducted, and the findings were presented in a two-and-a-half hour workshop. The assessment provides an unbiased overview of Carbon County—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 county'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 county and surrounding area were “secretly shopped.” Any person looking to relocate their business, industry, or residence will come to your communities 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 websites 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 Carbon County 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 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, galleries, 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 communities, 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 county'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, and 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.

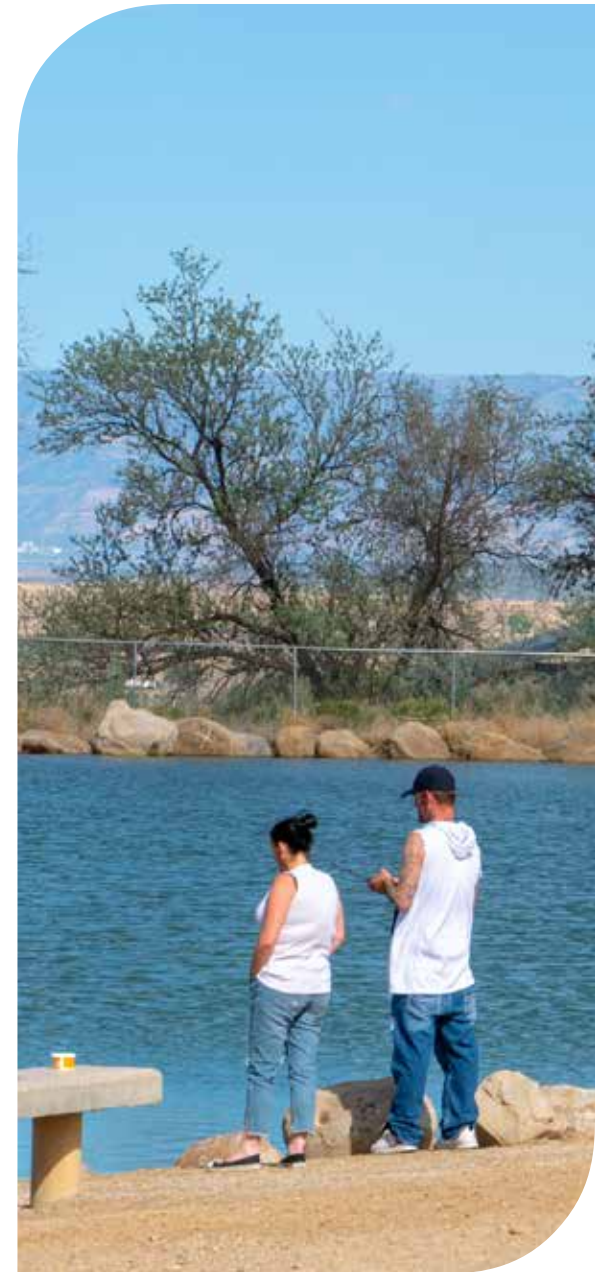
### **SUCCESSFUL TOURISM TRANSLATES TO CASH**

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&Bs, 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

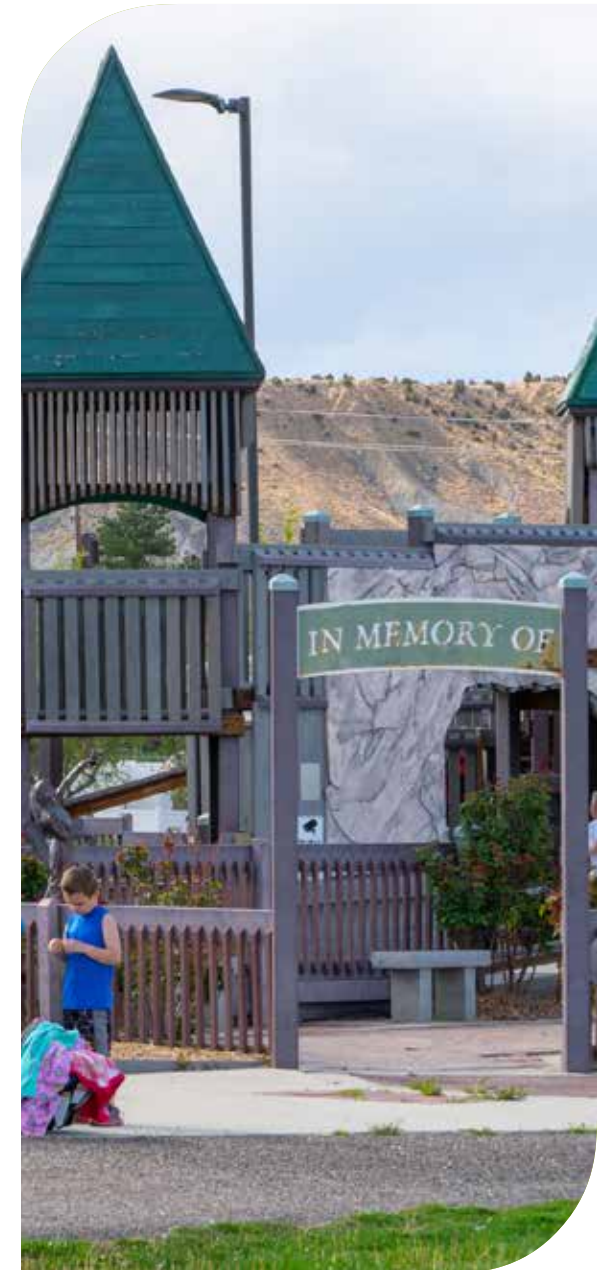
The second most popular reason for travel is business. Included in this category is educational travel: colleges and universities, as well as conventions and meetings, corporate travel, vendor travel, etc. Like leisure travelers, this group is looking for things to do “after hours” while in the area. 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 four 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 communities 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 communities 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 would help build your branding, product development, and marketing plan from the ground up – with local input, brainstorming, research, and creative planning. We could 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 community effort—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 county 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 would provide a program to get local residents and the business community pulling together, building the county'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



Carbon County's assessment included reviewing 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 several days in the county, looking at signage and wayfinding (how easy was it to find attractions and amenities?), appeal, critical mass (places in the county to spend money), your attractions, amenities, customer service, and more.

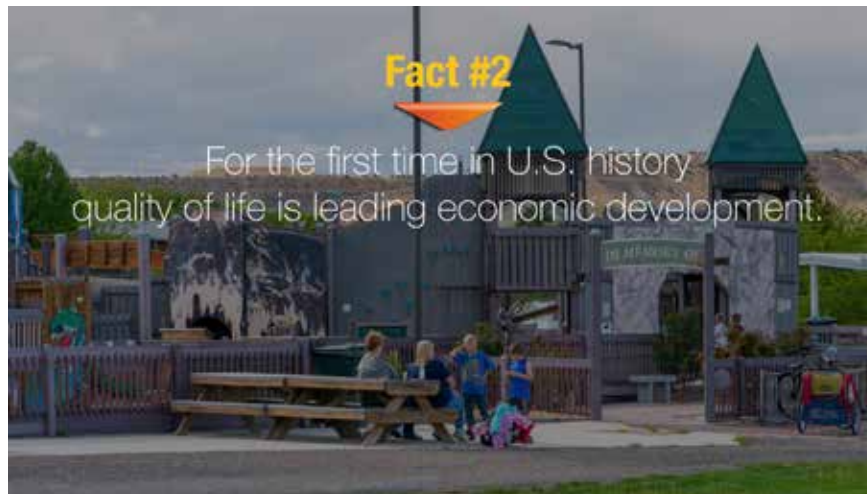
We looked at Carbon County as: 1) a place to live and raise a family, 2) a place to work, invest in, or bring a business, and 3) a place to visit.

Over the past three years, we've become very familiar with Utah and Utah's

unique attractions. We've worked in more than 75 amazing communities in Utah so far, and that familiarity with the state enables us to provide you with focused, practical suggestions.

The governor's focus on 25,000 jobs in rural Utah by 2025 is in full swing, and Utah's State Tourism Director, Vicki Varela, began the Rourism program to assist rural communities in further developing their tourism to increase jobs. 50% of the funding for this assessment was provided by the Rourism program, and 50% was provided by Carbon County, whose commissioners are working hard to increase economic development and quality of life for the residents of the county.



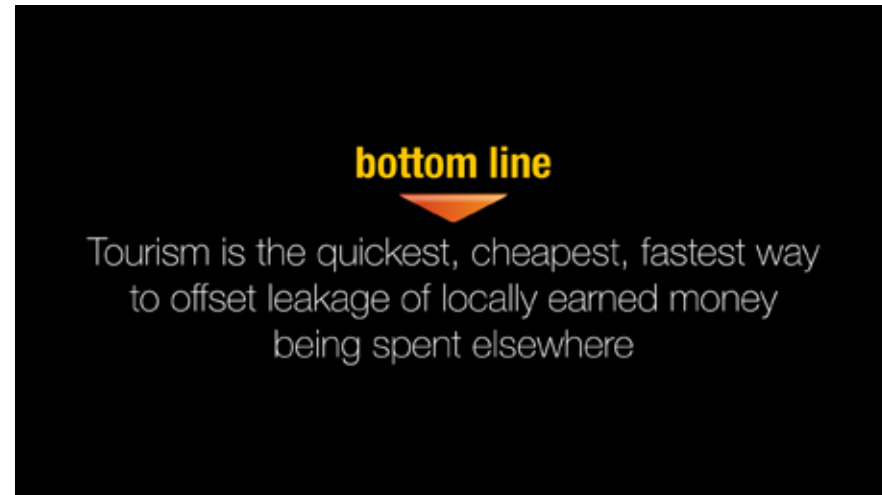


Why the focus on tourism? Tourism is a means to an end. It is about job and business creation and importing more cash into your community.

Fact #1. Tourism is the front door to your non-tourism economic development. Anyone looking to start a business in Carbon County, invest here, or move here, comes first as a visitor. Their impression of your community will either open the door to the possibility of investing in your community, or slam it shut.

Fact #2. For the first time, quality of life is the leading factor in economic development efforts. Once a community starts working to attract more visitors, the place becomes more appealing to local residents. Beautification

efforts, new attractions and better amenities don't just benefit visitors. Development and community improvement create a community people are invested in, a place where locals want to spend time. The community looks better, it has more to offer, and the first people to trickle back in to downtown to shop, dine, and be entertained will be the people who already live there. The sense of community pride that develops may not be measurable, but it will be substantial and make a huge difference in the health and vitality of the community. Vibrant, exciting communities, where locals want to hang out, are exactly the types of places visitors want to spend time in as well. And quality of life is one of the top reasons businesses choose to relocate.



Fact #3: Tourism is the purest form of economic development—people come, spend money, and then go home. Tourism helps import more cash into your communities. When residents spend money outside their community, that's leakage. Communities that leak more money than they bring in will go broke. Tourism can help fix that situation.

Fact #4: Tourism is the fastest growing industry in Utah and across the country. People love to travel to visit friends and family, experience new activities, see new places, and attend conferences and conventions. Tourism continues to grow.

Fact #5. Tourism is the top industry for new businesses. People see opportunities to start their own businesses as shop owners, artists and gallery owners, lodging, restaurants, tour guides and adventure guides, and more. Tourism provides new customers for some of the most creative and innovative new small businesses. These types of businesses also make a community more enjoyable for locals.





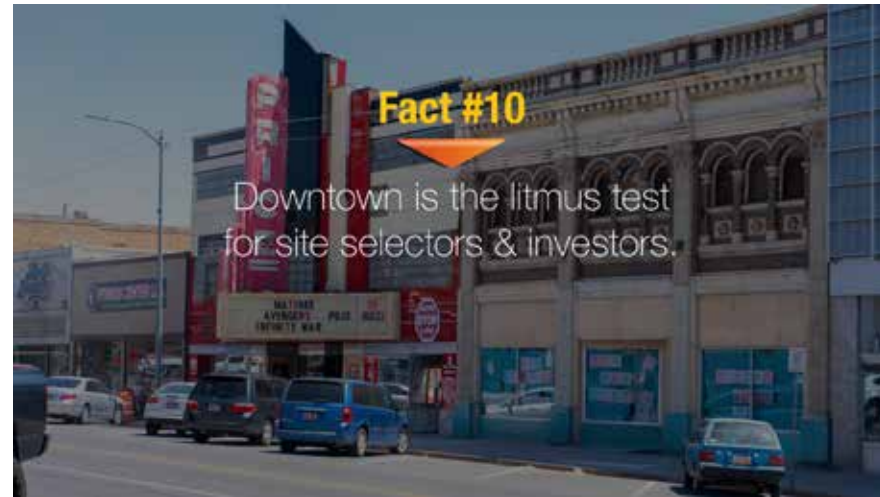
Fact #6. Tourism DOES create family-wage jobs. Yes, there are lower paying jobs in the tourism industry, because much of tourism is service-oriented. Those jobs give people the opportunities to work part-time if they choose, or to start out and learn new skills. But people who start their new businesses, such as a restaurant, destination-retail shop, or adventure guide, do so because they are supporting themselves and their families with that business.

Fact #7. Tourism creates community pride. When a community works to become more attractive, have more activities, and be more successful for businesses, the residents take pride in their area. They want to spend time there, support local businesses, volunteer more to make it even better. Tourism

helps your community become more desirable.

Fact #8. Tourism reduces the tax burden on local residents and businesses. By importing more cash into the community, tourism helps pay some of that tax burden. In fact, without tourism, each household in Utah would have to pay an additional \$1,235 per year in state taxes.

Fact #9. The top activity of visitors in the world is shopping, dining and entertainment in a pedestrian-friendly setting. This isn't the reason people visit, but it is their top activity once they arrive. This makes an intimate downtown with restaurants and shops very important for successful tourism.



Fact #10. Shopping and dining is where 80% of all non-lodging tourism spending takes place. That is why Disney built “Downtown Disney” outside all its theme parks—to get that 80%.

The health of the downtown shows the health of the community economically. Site selectors will look at the health and vibrancy of downtown to help them decide whether or not to locate there.

Fact #11. If residents don’t spend their time and money in their own downtown, neither will visitors. Downtown has to be the type of place where

LOCALS want to spend time as well. Community first. Downtowns are at the heart of community development.

Fact #12. Tourism must play an important role in your long term strategic planning efforts. In your economic development planning, tourism needs to play a role—it is the front door to all your economic development efforts.

Your downtown should be your number one priority.





The primary focus of all elected or public officials is to work to improve the quality of life for their citizens. Downtowns are a critical component of a community's quality of life.

Downtowns are becoming the place we gather to relax with friends—it's becoming our "Third Place." Our "First Place" is our home.

Our "Second Place" is where we work. And our "Third Place" is the place we go to "hang out," socialize, and relax with friends and family. Downtowns are

perfect for being our "Third Place." And that is their future: being the place we go after work and on weekends to spend leisure time with family and friends, shopping in unique, local stores, dining, enjoying coffee and conversation, watching street musicians, etc. We want a relaxed atmosphere with casual entertainment, outdoor dining, and easy shopping after our long day at work. We want the community feeling that our own downtown can give us. We want the community connection.



Downtowns help reduce "leakage" of locally earned money spent elsewhere.



Downtowns help carry the burden of local taxes. This is tax base.



Downtowns are your best economic development recruitment tool.



There is **NOTHING** you can invest in (besides schools) that will create a faster or better return on investment than your downtown.



Downtowns are more important than ever before. A successful downtown helps reduce leakage of locally earned money spent elsewhere. When downtown businesses do well, property values increase, property owners are motivated to invest in their buildings, and the increased tax base helps relieve the tax burdens on residents. 15% to 30% of tax base should be in downtown.

The quickest way to reduce leakage is to make downtown a priority; they are your best economic development recruitment tool.

A vibrant downtown will bring back young families.

When we were in Helper, we went into the coffee shop and talked with the young woman working there. She had grown up there and was working in the coffee shop during summer break from college. She said that her goal, once she finished college, was to come back home to Helper and open a business. That is what you want!





70% of retail sales come after 6:00 pm.

ARE YOU OPEN?

### Today's Soundbite

**Marketing will bring people to you just once.**  
Period.

70% of all consumer retail spending takes place after 6:00 p.m. If your retail shops aren't open when people want to shop, they will miss out on those sales. Have you ever wondered why big box stores are open late into the evening hours? That's when most people do their shopping.

Shopping and dining go together. When a critical mass of restaurants and shops are open in the evening hours, in an intimate setting, people will gather and spend time there, and the businesses will thrive.

People choose to hold conventions in places where there are things to do

### Today's Soundbite

**The ONLY thing that brings them back is your product:**

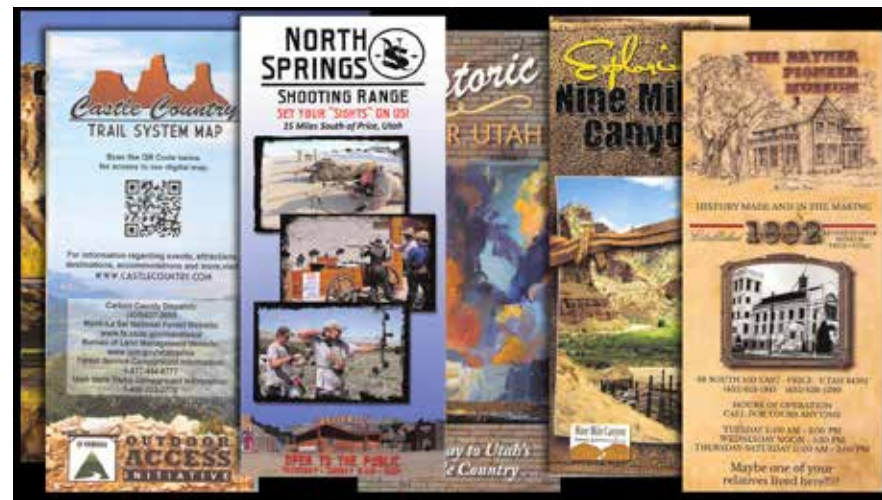
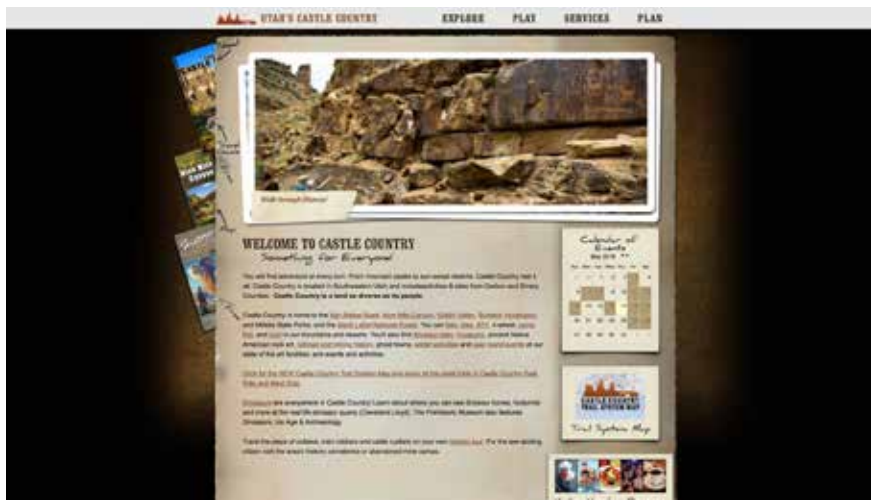
- The primary activity that drew them
- The complementary activities
- Your amenities
- The people they interact with

AFTER the convention day is over.

If visitors spend their days exploring Nine Mile Canyon or doing other outdoor recreation, and then they come back to town at the end of the day, and your shops are closed, the visitors won't be able to spend any money in them.

Overnight visitors spend four times that of day visitors. But you have to be open when these visitors want to shop or dine.

Marketing will bring people to your community just once. It's your product that brings them back.



The assessment process includes looking at the county through the eyes of a visitor, from three different viewpoints: As a place to live; as a place to work, start a business, or invest in; and as a place to visit.

We looked at Carbon County's marketing: visibility and effectiveness. And we performed the on-site assessment, where we looked at the county's appeal, attractions, critical mass, signage and wayfinding, amenities, customer service, and more.

We looked at the county's online presence, including websites, and we looked at print materials as well. We used these materials (top left and right) to help

guide our on-site assessment.

We spent a lot of time looking at the Castle Country Trail System Map (bottom left), and gradually we realized that this didn't include hiking trails—this map is for ATV/OHV use. This should be stated clearly on the map.

Suggestion: Create a map of "day hikes" in Carbon County, and they should all be within a 45-minute drive. Hiking appeals to every age group, and they have 12 times the participation of motorized trail sports. You will increase your market by making it easier for those who want to hike.





An important note about brochures is to always promote the experience before the mission or purpose. This museum brochure (top left) tells us about the purpose of the museum, but when visitors are deciding if they want to visit, the want to know what they will experience. What will they see and do while there? Sometimes we are too busy trying to inform people about our organization that we don't let them know why it is worth their time to visit.

One thing nice about Price is that the city has some of the best quality lodging in the whole area. We stayed at the Holiday Inn Express (top right), and the reason for our choice was because of the reviews on TripAdvisor. TripAdvisor is the most visited travel website in the world, so it is very important that lodging

facilities, restaurants, and attractions are included there.

First thing we did when we got into Price was look for visitor information. We saw this sign (bottom left), and then we saw this building with the Visitor Information banner (bottom right). This did not give a good impression, and we assumed this was your official visitor information center. It was closed much of the time. It is a private business, and it should be required to state that on its signs. This is doing a disservice to visitors by misleading them into thinking this is official visitor information. Consider either moving the Visitor Information sign (bottom left) down another block or adding "Ahead and left three blocks" to avoid confusion.



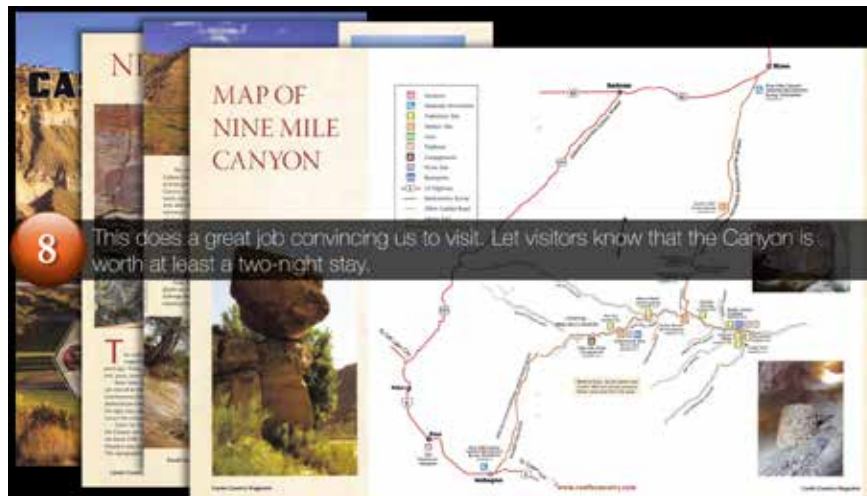
When we continue down Main, we do see a sign pointing to the left for visitor information. But once we turn, we don't see any sign letting us know we've arrived (top left). It turns out that the sign is hidden behind the utility boxes, and it's much too small to be seen easily. Suggestion: Move the sign to make it more visible.

We did end up finding it, and we were very impressed with the beautiful County Administration Building. We went inside, and right inside the doors was this great display of brochures (top right). We are concerned that the visitor information center is on the second floor, though. It should be easier to

access, and should always be on the main floor. We didn't realize that the lobby doors are always open, so visitor information is available around the clock. Let visitors know this by adding a sign outside stating, "Visitor Information Open 24/7" with an arrow pointing inside the front door.

Suggestion: It is always best to have visitor information in the heart of your spending district. When people stop to get information, they are much more likely to decide to go into a nearby shop or restaurant, but there is no opportunity for that at the administration building. At some point in the future, consider a move.





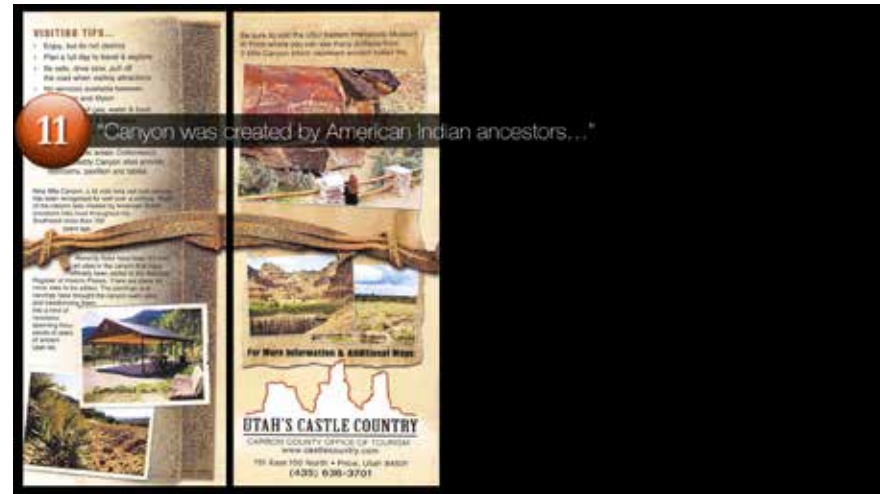
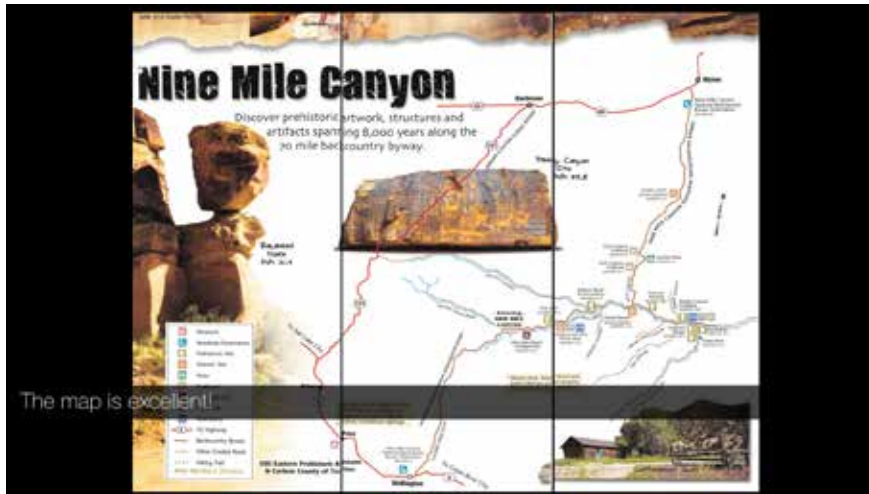
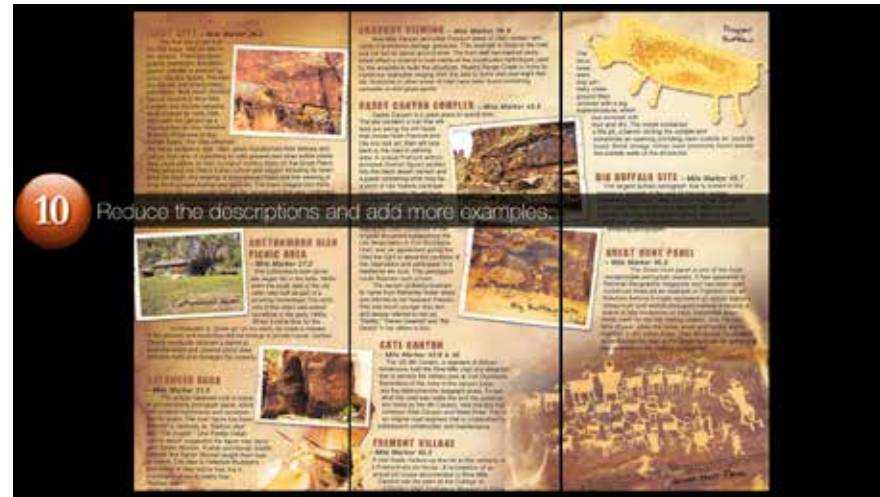
We found the county visitor's guide to be very helpful (top left), but we didn't know why the designation "Castle Country." It sounds good, but inside was no explanation for the name—it's all about Carbon County. Give a brief explanation inside about the name "Castle Country."

The "Four Times Rule" is critical for rural counties. It states that people will travel someplace that has enough for them to do that will take four times longer than it took them to travel there. For example, if it takes two hours to drive from Salt Lake City to Carbon County, does the county have enough to keep visitors active for eight hours? (4 x 2) That is why most people who vacation in Hawaii spend at least a week, because it takes so long to get

there (top right). This is why you need to promote day trips that are within a 45-minute drive each direction. If it takes longer to get there, people are much more likely to just spend the night there than to drive back to Price.

Carbon County does have plenty to keep visitors active. And promoting Cleveland Lloyd Dinosaur Quarry or Joe's Valley is fine too. People will still come back to Price. And Nine Mile Canyon is well worth at least a two night stay—it's fabulous and there's so much to see and do there. You want visitors to spend their money in Carbon County, so don't send them too far away.

We saw Nine Mile Ranch and Bunk-N-Breakfast (bottom right), and it looks great.



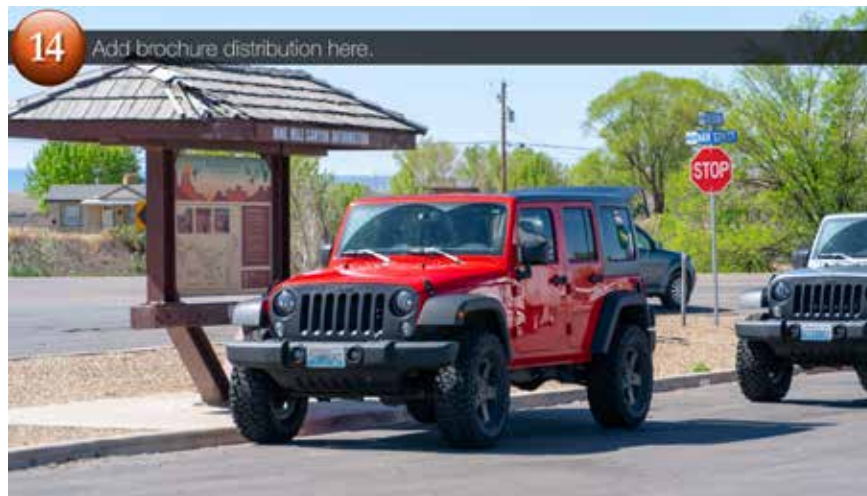
Promote Nine Mile Canyon as Castle Country's signature #1 attraction. You could suggest that visitors have options of staying in Price, Helper, or Wellington, or even at the Bunk-N-Breakfast in the canyon itself.

Suggestion: Make a few changes to the Nine Mile Canyon brochure. Focus on what visitors will experience while there. That's the top priority. Then, you can let them know about the history and wildlife. The history is fascinating, and it is extremely important, but first you want to entice visitors to come by telling them what they can see and do while there.

Suggestion: Reduce the descriptions (top right) so that you can add more of the sites. The map is very well done—it was very useful.

Suggestion: Be careful of some of the wording—people who take things very literally would notice "the Canyon was created by American Indian ancestors..." Actually the canyon was created by wind, water and sun. But the rock art was created by American Indian ancestors. This is on the back page under "Visiting Tips."





We received another brochure for Nine Mile Canyon (top left), and this one included sites and mile marker information. It was amazing to see 80 different things listed!

Some of the items were a little confusing. #12—the road from Argyle Canyon to Indian Canyon—we didn't know if there was anything to see along that road. #19 is a signature someone wrote on a rock in 1986. This isn't really an item of interest to visitors because it's not ancient art; it's recent vandalism. When you call attention to it in a brochure, you're inviting more vandalism. #38—Example of Discrimination! We had no idea what this was referring to. We had a hard

time finding a lot of these sites even using the mileage numbers. Suggestion: Provide fewer of these sites, leaving out the more recent vandalism ones and non-essentials, and combine the two brochures into more of an itinerary format. Let people know they should provision up in Price or Wellington, bringing food and water for the day, and guide them through the entire day in Nine Mile Canyon.

Add brochure distribution at the little information kiosk in Wellington (bottom left). An example of brochure holders can be seen here (bottom right). These would be perfect for a Nine Mile Canyon brochure.





This information board (top left) is excellent. Adding a brochure holder would be very helpful. Most people don't have a clipboard in their car to write everything down, so easy access to a brochure is important.

Suggestion: The information board is getting faded and could use fresh paint. Could it be an Eagle Scout project? Nine Mile Canyon is your top attraction in the county, so keeping the signage fresh and attractive is critical.

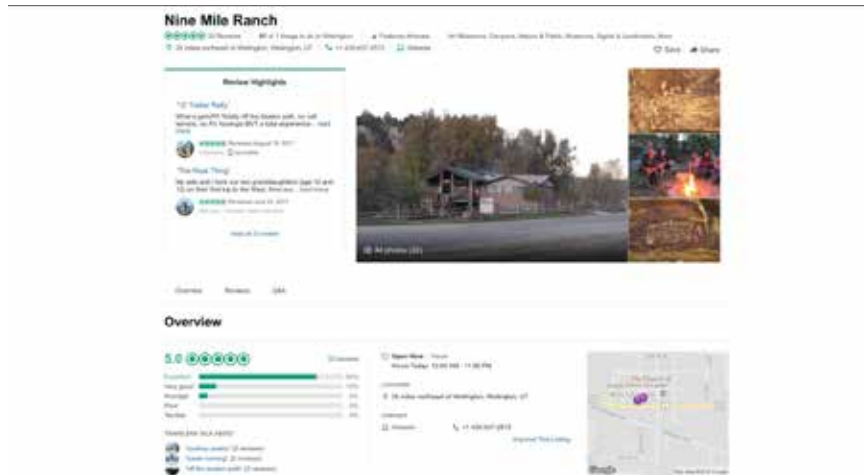
The sign at the beginning of Soldier Creek Road that explains where Nine Mile Canyon begins is very helpful. Thank you!

Even before reaching Nine Mile Canyon, the drive along Soldier Creek Road is gorgeous. Promote that part of the drive as well, from mile 12 to 2—it could be promoted as a scenic drive (top right).

The gateway sign is excellent (bottom left). Encourage people to stop and take photos in front of the sign to post on social media by adding a hashtag.

Nine Mile Ranch (bottom right) looks like a lot of fun. They have signage to let people know all that they offer, as well as pricing, to make it easy. Great job!





The reviews on TripAdvisor of Nine Mile Ranch are very good (top left). Mostly excellent reviews! This is a great asset.

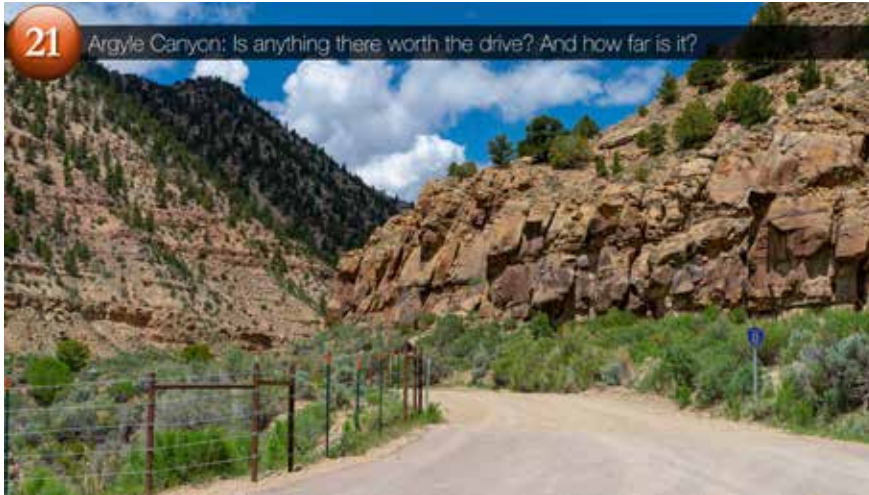
We saw the picnic area as well. We were curious about some of the older cabins (top right). Consider adding interpretive signage to let visitors know some of the history—in story form. It will make the canyon even more appealing.

Let visitors know when they see one of these pull-offs along the road (bottom

left) that there is likely a petroglyph or archeological site nearby. The only site (out of 52) that was marked was the first one. Even with the mileage information in the brochure, it was very hard to find most of the sites.

When you write up the itineraries, include photos of the sites with people in them, for scale, like this one (bottom right). This makes it much easier to find the petroglyph or other attraction.





We saw the road leading to Argyle Canyon (top left), but there was no information about anything to see there. Add signage letting visitors know if there is anything, and how far it is.

We thought this balanced rock (top right), also known as “pig rock,” was very cool. Consider creating an app for Nine Mile Canyon that would tell about these different sites. It could answer questions such as how long the rock has been there, how much it might weigh, is there any chance of it falling, etc. This information could be included in a brochure as well, but it would make for a lengthy brochure.

We had a hard time finding most of the rock art and granary sites because they were not marked at all. We tried to use the odometer readings to match with the mile markers in the brochure, but when we missed some and had to back track, the odometer readings were wrong. Many cars nowadays don't have 10th of a mile readings on their odometers, so they won't work at all to help find the sites. And when we think we're at the right spot, it's very hard to know which side of the street or just where along the route the art is located.

Suggestion: Place signs, even if just an arrow, at the location of each rock art and granary site. You could do this gradually, but it would make the visitor experience so much better.





If there is anything to see or do along any of these side routes (top left), then let us know. You want to give visitors as much to do as possible, and we couldn't find any information about things to do at these different locations.

This is such a beautiful drive (top right)! In your marketing, use photos of these incredible roads, and include a car and/or motorcycles. In fact, you could even market to motorcycle and car clubs to come out and enjoy the drive.

We had a hard time finding any of the granaries and most of the rock art

because it wasn't marked at all. We didn't really know what a granary looked like, so we didn't know what to look for. Include photos in the brochure. We thought perhaps this (bottom left) was a granary, but apparently it isn't. We talked to several other groups of visitors who had a hard time as well.





When we saw this sign (top left), which says “The Great Hunt Panel 1.3 miles” with an arrow pointing to the right, we assumed we needed to find a trail to the right of the road and walk 1.3 miles to see the panel. But we couldn’t find any trail to the right at all.

Up ahead was a sign pointing straight ahead for Cottonwood Canyon (top right). But it turns out that the Great Hunt Panel is down the road to Cottonwood Canyon. It isn’t to the right.

We were disappointed thinking we would miss the fabulous Great Hunt Panel,

but we decided to continue down Cottonwood Canyon and see if there was anything else. After a little over a mile, we came to the parking lot for the Great Hunt Panel (bottom left). And the trail to the panel is wide, short, and easy (bottom right).

Suggestion: Fix the misleading signage immediately. Show that the Great Hunt Panel is straight ahead, down Cottonwood Canyon. This is critical. We talked with two different groups of visitors who couldn’t find the Great Hunt because of this sign.





So we were able to see the Great Hunt Panel after all. In your marketing, show pictures like this (top left). People photographing your greatest sites. The plaque (top right) is wonderful, stating that "The Great Hunt is one of the most recognized and famous art sites in Utah."

On our way back we stopped to see the Big Buffalo art. In your marketing, show photos like this (bottom left) so that people can see what the trail looks like. Show people next to the art to give it scale and show how close a visitor can get to the art (bottom right).





Rather than directing visitors "north" or "east," tell them to turn left or right. Many visitors aren't sure what direction they are facing, so telling them "north" isn't helpful. For example, to find the pregnant buffalo art, the directions say to turn north, but it would be more helpful to say turn left (top left).

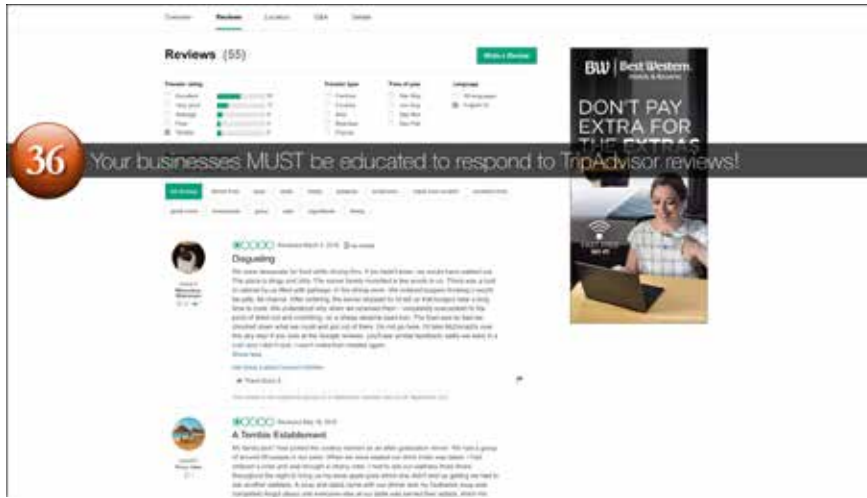
The petroglyphs are truly amazing. The meaning of many of the symbols isn't known, but people are always curious. If possible, provide some interpretive information for the symbols that are known or suspected. Tell the story about what they might mean and how they came to be.

These suggestions could be done for probably less than \$20,000. Suggestion:

Work with BLM on adding signage for the rock art and granary sites, and even handle the costs. Nine Mile Canyon is Carbon County's greatest attraction, and you want to make it easy and enjoyable for visitors, so that they can spend all day there. If they spend all day, they'll stay at least two nights in Price, and overnight visitors spend four times that of day visitors.

Creating a Nine Mile Canyon detailed itinerary doesn't need to be complicated. This is an example of an itinerary we created for Seattle (bottom left and right). Your signature photo could be of the road through the incredible scenery, and then use smaller photos for each of the sites. Put it on your website, and encourage people to buy provisions in town.



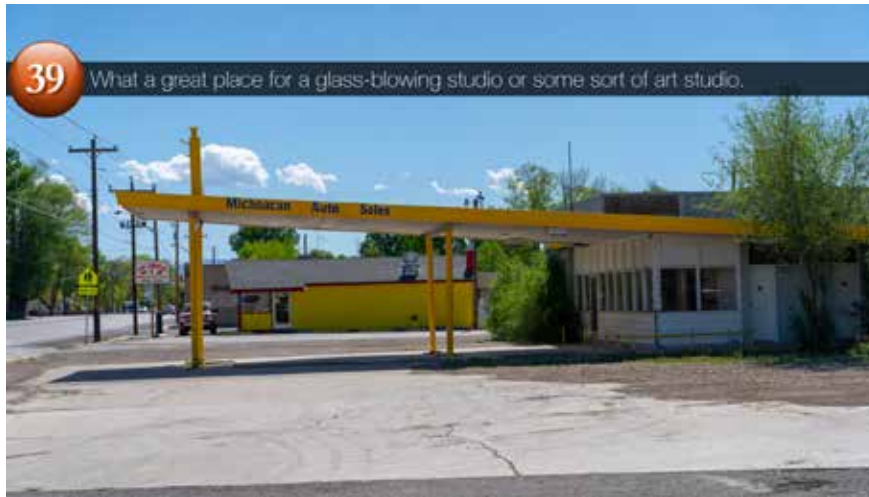


A few notes about Wellington: We debated about eating lunch at any place in Wellington, because no place looked great, and the TripAdvisor reviews (top left) weren't great either. We ended up eating at the Cowboy's Kitchen (top right). There were a number of negative reviews on TripAdvisor, and we were shocked that the owner never responded.

Responding to reviews is free, and it shows people that you care. Businesses should always monitor their reviews on TripAdvisor, and they should always respond. If the review is negative, you can respond by thanking the reviewer, apologizing for the problem, and telling them that you are working to correct

it. That will go very far in alleviating the negativity of the review. And then, of course, you do need to work to improve!

Have you ever said, “That looks like a nice place to eat.” Outside appearance matters. No place in Wellington looked “like a nice place to eat.” Add pots of flowers, hanging baskets, chairs, attractive signage. The stark appearance of asphalt, concrete, and brick isn’t appealing. Soften the look, and be welcoming. At the motel, change the “Office” sign to say “Lobby.”



Some of the buildings in Wellington have a lot of potential. For example, this empty auto sales building (top left) would make a great glass blowing studio or other art studio.

The old post office (top right) would potentially make a good location for a Nine Mile Canyon Visitor Center. Perhaps the U.S. Postal Service would lease the building for \$1 a month to a non-profit for that use. It could have visitor information as well as sell souvenirs and memorabilia of the area. Not that this should be a county visitor information center—it is best to have that in Price in the heart of the spending district.

First impressions are important. The sign at the motel (bottom left) states that it has updated rooms, but the sign is so worn that it looks like it was put up 20 years ago. The blue tarp, weeds, lumber and debris in the parking area make the motel look poor quality. Appearances matter!

Take down the unused temporary signs (bottom right) and put away the lawn spreader. Make the motel look welcoming and attractive, rather than sloppy. If it's sloppy on the outside, why would anyone think the rooms are clean and comfortable? Add hanging baskets, benches, and pots.



## Lodging: B&Bs, Inns, Hotels, Motels

The top **15%** in terms of quality command **85%** of all leisure-travel business.



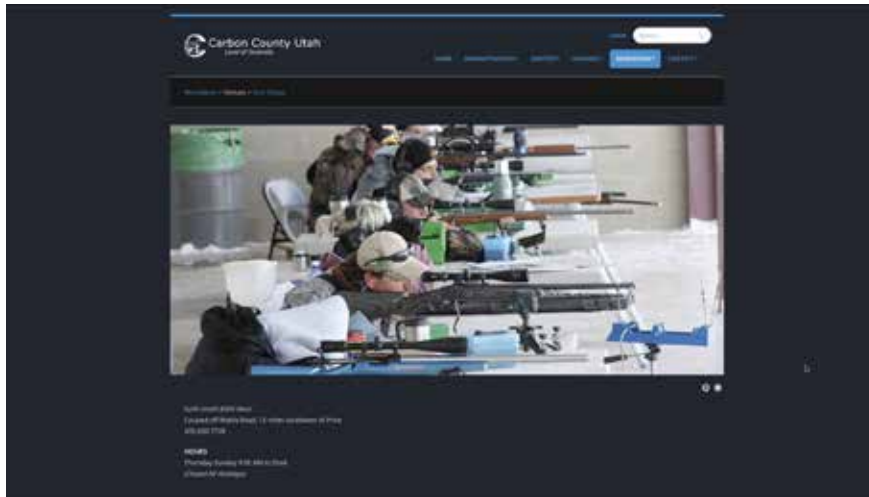
The top 15% of lodging facilities in terms of quality do 85% of all leisure travel business. That doesn't mean there is no place for economy lodging, or motels from the '50s. But it does mean that they need to be clean, decorated, comfortable, and welcoming. Give people a reason to say, "That looks like a nice place to stay."

Don't be stuck in the mindset that the travel season is only between Memorial Day and Labor Day. The peak months for Baby Boomer travel are April, May, September and October. A lot of your businesses aren't even open then.



On our way back into Price and Helper, we decided to check out the North Springs Shooting Range. Their simple rack card (top right) convinced us. They really made the sale, especially with the archery ranges and cowboy action town. It sounds like a lot of fun, and this must be a great asset for the county. Their rack card even has easy to follow directions. Great job!

We drove there, and unfortunately, it was closed. It seems like everything is only open Thursdays through Saturdays. But we looked around, and it looks fabulous.



43 Redevelop the sign here. This is an "attraction" worth investing in.



44 Great job! Make the banner a permanent sign!



Great job promoting upcoming events.

We looked at the county's website to see if there was more information about the shooting range, and the website was great (top left)! It showed a lot of information and great photos. We think this should be promoted extensively—in fact, we heard there had been a recent competition with people coming from all over the country!

Suggestion: Redo the sign (top right). It's cracked and faded and hard to read.

We drove back into Price and went to check out the Carbon Country Club Golf Course (bottom left). Nice sign, and it's great to say that you are open to the

public. Suggestion: Make the banner a permanent sign, and include hours and number of holes.

It's great that the golf course has a readerboard showing upcoming events (bottom right).





The golf course is stunning (top left) and we were surprised there weren't more golfers taking advantage of it.

We were driving down Hwy 6, and we noticed the billboards. Drivers have at most four seconds to read a billboard. Only use eight words, or 14 maximum. More than that, and they have to stop their cars to read all the text. They should also have just one simple graphic – never two or more photos. Billboards should never be designed as a print ad; they don't work. Never use outlined text on a billboard, and never use a script font. You want them easy

to read. Also, promote your primary lure—not just what every other place has. Give a call to action and a reason to get off the highway.

This one has too much text (top right). Change to: Go back 3 billion years. Next exit. Prehistoric Museum.

The Price City one (bottom left and right) is too busy. Use one graphic only, and state: Your base camp to the famous Nine Mile Canyon. Next exit. Welcome to Price.





This billboard is very hard to read (top left and right), and not just because there are some trees in the way. It looks like a print ad design. Don't promote things outside Carbon County; you don't want to be a gateway. A gateway is something you pass through. This billboard says "We have everything except for you." That's not a reason WHY we should exit there and come to Price. Promote your top attractions.

Billboards are most effective when they are simple and promote a specific lure. The Little America Travel Center has had these billboards up for years (bottom left and right). The cones are now 50¢, but the billboard is still very effective.

They bring in \$12 million a year in non-ice cream sales! Simple, easy to read, one graphic, a great reason to stop, a primary lure. It works.





Never use more than 12 words on a billboard—eight or fewer is best.

Use contrasting colors and one simple graphic, like the examples on this page.  
Give a call to action—such as the free wine tasting.

Use yellow on a dark background because yellow attracts the eye.



More examples of good billboards: Coming into Utah, you can see this great billboard (top left). And leaving Vernal, we loved this billboard (top right) of the kids waving goodbye to you. It seemed personal and pulled at the heartstrings.

When we drove into Helper, we were amazed at the very cool renovated gas station (bottom left). Really, we were speechless—we've never seen such a great job of renovation, down to the finest detail. It is awesome!

Looking down the main street through Helper, we couldn't believe how gorgeous it was (bottom right). We were excited to be there!

For years we've been saying that Springdale is the best town to visit in Utah. Springdale is right next to the west entrance to Zion National Park, which gives it a huge advantage over most towns. But now, nearly one third of the visitors who stay in Springdale are coming primarily because of the town, and visiting Zion is one of the things they do while they are there. This shows the power of having a pedestrian-friendly downtown, with lots of shopping and dining that is open into the evening hours.

And Helper is certainly up and coming! We think in another three to five years that Helper will be a destination itself.





We could see all the work that the citizens of Helper are putting into their town (top left). The new sidewalks, benches, street trees, planters—it looks amazing. It's a shame the power lines weren't put underground at the time the sidewalks were torn up though.

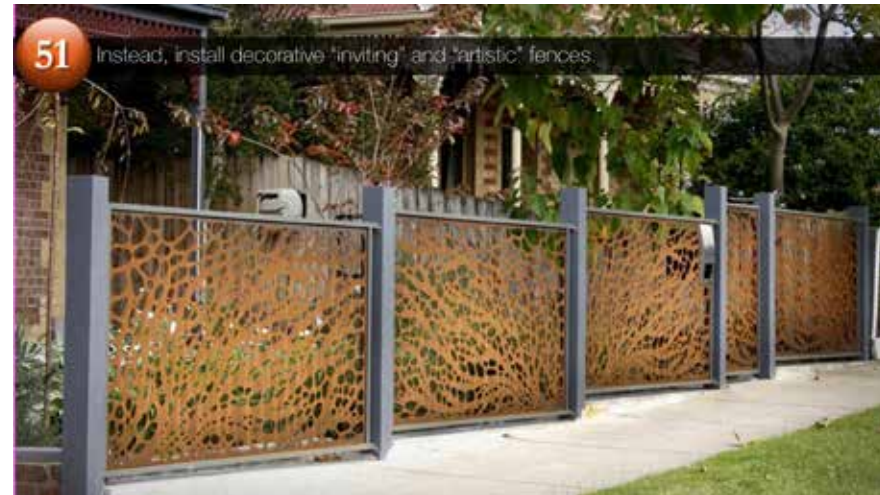
We enjoyed the very nice beautification outside the storefronts (top right). As we walked around town, merchants would come out of their shops and talk to us about the work being done, and how great the town is.

We ate dinner at the Balance Rock Eatery, and it was great.

We were happy to see the Amtrak train stopping in Helper (bottom left). It won't be long until visitors will be coming on the train to spend a few days in Helper!

We really like the market and deli (bottom right), and the red trim looks great. Suggestion: Make it stand out even more with pots of flowers against the building. Always soften the transition between the asphalt parking lot or sidewalk and the building facade with pots, planters, and benches or chairs.





This view of Helper with the morning sunshine is stunning (top left).

When we got to the other end of town and saw Sinclair Gasoline (top right), we thought it was just perfect. Downtown bookends, with Sinclair on one end and Continental on the other.

We loved the old trucks (bottom left). Suggestion: Don't allow chain link fencing in the downtown—in both Helper and Price. Chain link fences give

such a “prison” feeling, and you want to avoid that. Instead of chain link, there are a lot of other options, like this decorative fence (bottom right). Helper is such an arts destination that artistic fences would be perfect there.





Even this type of inexpensive fencing (top left) is much better than chain link. You could use any type of wood you choose, and people could still view the trucks.

This fence is wrought-iron (top right), and it is very attractive. They also make fencing that looks like wrought-iron but is vinyl. This style of fence (bottom left) would also be a great improvement.

Chain link fences have no place in an historic downtown, especially in an artistic and historic downtown.

These poor trucks look like they are in jail (bottom right).



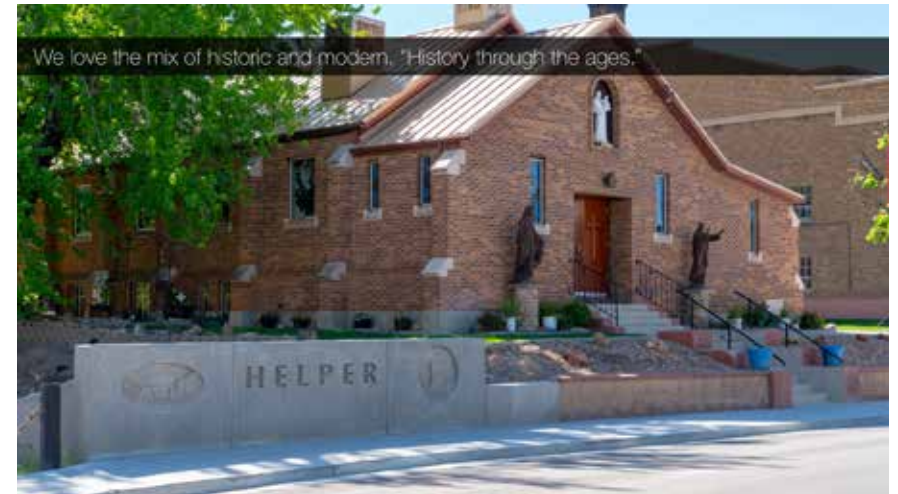


Another great thing we noticed coming into Helper from this direction is the renovated older homes (top left). We love the pastel colors, and they give a great impression of the town. We heard that they are soon going to be landscaped—it's so impressive to see how engaged folks in Helper are.

On the other entrance to downtown there are more residences (top right). It would be great if they could be renovated and painted as well.

We took a look at the Western Mining and Railroad Museum (bottom left), and it was great. The displays were well done, it's in an attractive setting, and the interpretive signs are attractive and informative. Suggestion: Add an interpretive sign for this (bottom right) as well.





Museums should change their displays every 90 to 120 days, otherwise people don't come back. When there's a new display, you'll get repeat visits. And be sure your displays always tell stories. Try to bring the personal connection into every display—people are interested in how people actually used the items on display, and if there are any interesting stories about specific people in the area, those are fascinating for visitors. Avoid promoting your museums using words like "artifacts," "collections," "displays." You want to evoke emotion.

This interpretive panel is very well done (top right). Suggestion: Add a brochure holder like this one in Rhode Island (bottom left).

The church downtown (bottom right) is beautiful. We loved the fact that Helper has a lot of historical buildings as well as more modern structures. There's a great variety and it all blends together perfectly.





The Auditorium looks like a great building, but we weren't sure what it is used for. We later learned that events are held here. Suggestion: Put up a readerboard to let the public and visitors know what is coming soon. It's an invitation to come back.

If the building wasn't currently being used for anything, we were going to suggest contacting ArtSpace about it. ArtSpace converts old buildings into artist live/work/gallery space, like this building (top right) in Michigan City, Indiana. They created live/work space for 40 artisans in this building, which had been vacant.

We took a look in this building that is undergoing renovation (bottom left), and it looks like it's going to be awesome. We love the mix of wood, steel, and brick. We understand it's going to be a motorcycle museum, and that will be a great addition to the town.

We saw this tiny building and thought it would make a great visitor information kiosk (bottom right). We understand that it's going to be for ice cream or hot dogs, and that's very good too.





Across the street (top left), we saw this pleasant park and gazebo. Suggestion: Many buildings and structures have Christmas lights up, even though it is nearly summer. Unless these lights are just being used as a year-round decor, it would be good to remove them when it's not the Christmas season.

The gazebo has some great information about Helper and the area (top right).

If any activities, events, and performances are held here (bottom left), add an events calendar to invite us back.

This information sign is so worn it's difficult to read (bottom right). You could remove it and use a QR code or an app to provide more information about local history.





Some of the old buildings' architectural detail is fabulous (top left). It's exciting to see these buildings being renovated and their old facades uncovered.

One thing Helper could use is a business recruitment program. A community will be more successful if the right business mix is recruited, and it doesn't always happen organically. Create a list of desired businesses to get a good mix.

We took the liberty of creating a list of businesses we thought would be good to add to Helper (top right). This would give visitors more to do so that they would stay longer and spend more money. Having 20 galleries, 10 with

artists in action, would attract so many visitors, and people are four times more likely to buy art when they meet the artist. Adding more places where we can get food doesn't mean just restaurants, it also means the bakery, a confectionary, a wine-tasting shop, an ice cream shop, and more. If you had 15 eateries in Helper, people would be coming from Provo to spend time there.

Seventy percent of all retail sales take place after 6:00 p.m. So staying open in the evening hours is critical. You can work up gradually, starting with Fridays and Saturdays. Building owners should define the operating hours and days with their tenants to make it consistent throughout downtown. Downtown would be perfect for a boutique hotel (bottom right).





Suggestion: Take a trip to visit Jerome, Arizona. It was originally a mining town, but the mines began collapsing under the town. It essentially became a ghost town, until artists started moving in. Now, it is filled with galleries, restaurants, wineries and brew-pubs, great shops, and quaint hotels. It's a busy destination for visitors, and it's thriving. It's all because of the business mix.

We were thrilled to see Clear Creek Adventures (top left), but it wasn't open during the times we were in Helper. Glad to hear that it is in business.

We loved this little courtyard (top right). It opens into Helper Hub (bottom left), which is a combination business space and gallery. What a great idea to

accommodate small businesses and travelers who need an office temporarily.

We went into Kathleen's gallery (bottom right), and her work was stunning. She showed us where she works in the back, and she called her neighboring gallery owner so that we could go see her place as well, which was amazing. When we left, we felt like we had a new friend.

We were so impressed with the "go to" attitude among the people in Helper. It seemed like everyone was excited to be part of making the town a better place, and people were getting together to make things happen.





Here are some lessons everyone could learn from what Helper is doing:

- Work to bring downtown to life. They have incredible first Fridays. Activities, music. Awesome.
- Wider sidewalks, narrower streets, and facade side beautification downtown. Fantastic!
- Beautification. Great job! (top left and right) Seventy percent of first time sales can come from curb appeal. We love the pots, hanging baskets, tables and chairs.

The details make a huge difference. At the coffee shop (bottom left) notice the historic mailboxes, the pots, the sign painted on the window is perfect. There are chairs and a table outside, the orange paint gives such a terrific splash of color, the glass blocks look great. It gives such a welcoming appearance that you can't help but want to go inside.

And inside it's incredible too (bottom right). It's designed to be a place to "hang out." Comfortable, attractive, and it's a gallery as well.

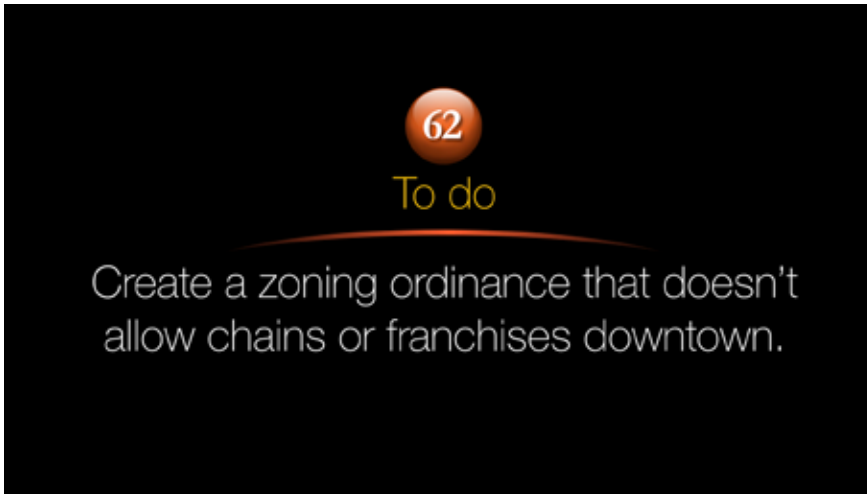




We loved how Helper has placed plaques in its sidewalks that all say, “Welcome Friends” in different languages (top left). Wonderful!

In some of the vacancies, people in Helper put art in the windows (top right). This turns lemons into lemonade!

The historic photo on this door (bottom left) adds a touch of decor, and these excellent pop up window displays (bottom right) are a great thing to do to turn a vacant retail space into an attractive scene.



This alley (top left) has been filled with tables, chairs, and pots of flowers, turning it into a warm, inviting, people-friendly space.

The window displays in downtown Helper (top right) are exceptional.

Suggestion: Helper should create a zoning ordinance that doesn't allow chains or franchises in the core downtown area. This can be an overlay district. As Helper grows more successful, chains and franchises are going to want to open downtown. In order to keep its authentic ambiance, Helper shouldn't allow this. It is too easy for a small town to lose its unique qualities—the

qualities that make it authentic—when chains and franchises become part of downtown. This is what happened in Banff, Alberta. It used to be charming and full of unique mountain character, but its success attracted many chain stores. They have taken over the town, and now downtown Banff has all the same retail stores, chain restaurants, and cheesy souvenir shops that can be found anywhere else. Genuine local businesses can't afford to be there anymore. A zoning ordinance created now can help prevent that from happening.

We saw the Visitor Info sign (bottom right), but we didn't see where the visitor information center was.





Looking in the direction of the Visitor Info sign, we saw the bank building (top left), and there was nothing to indicate that we could find visitor information in the bank. ATM machines at the drive thru, but not visitor information.

We weren't sure where the main entrance was to this bank building either (top right). We couldn't see an entrance from the street.

Then we learned that this building is not a bank – it is now City Hall. And there is visitor information inside. If we look very, very carefully at the sign (bottom

left), we can see “City Offices” in tiny letters on the Helper Zions Bank ATM sign. This needs new signage to make it clear that this building is City Hall, that there is visitor info located here, and signage to direct people to the entrance.

Add a hashtag for Big John (bottom right). This will encourage people to post photos of themselves with Big John on Facebook and Instagram.



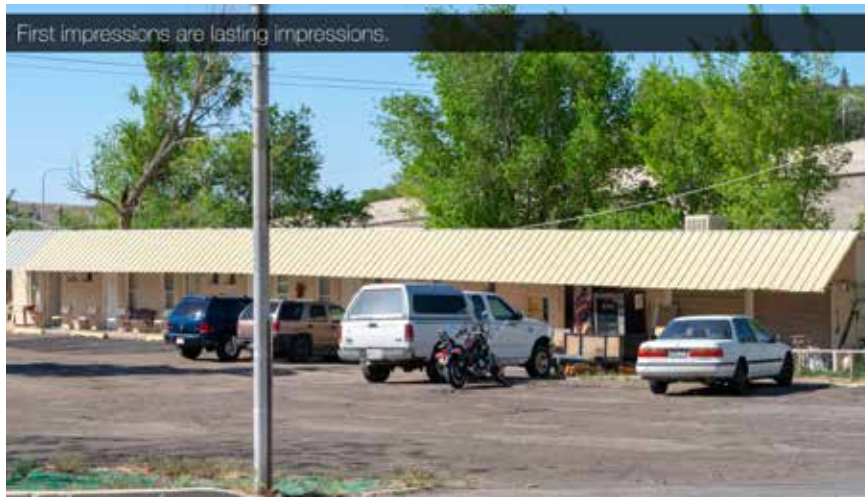
Shops shouldn't put up "Closed" signs like this (top left). Invite us back by telling us when you will be open. This sign has a "clock" to indicate the opening time, but the hands are missing. Simply saying "Closed" is like telling prospective customers to just go away. Always invite us back.

When you buy light bulbs, either LED or fluorescent, you can either get 5,000k, which is bright like Wal-Mart, or 2,700k, which is softer. For restaurants like the Balanced Rock (top right), you should use the softer, 2,700k lighting. People like to dine in a more intimate atmosphere, and the brightness and color of the lighting makes a big difference.

Some of the shops that are on the outskirts of Helper, like this gift store (bottom left), might be recruited to move into downtown, if they are a good fit. This shop could benefit from some beautification – add pots and hanging baskets, and move the garbage can to the side or the back.

This motel (bottom right) would also benefit from beautification. Clean up the front area, add benches, pots, and hanging baskets. Take down the Christmas lights.





First impressions are lasting impressions. We tend to “judge the book by the cover.” So, if the outside of the motel (top left) has weeds and no beautification, we expect that the inside won’t be well-maintained. Clean up the outside, get rid of the weeds, add pots of flowers.

The public restrooms in this little park by the river (top right) would also benefit from some beautification efforts. Consider a decorative mural on this blank wall.

We couldn’t really tell what this business was (bottom left). Plastic banners should only be allowed for special occasions, and only for 30 days. Shops

should be required to use permanent signs. Retail signage is the best advertising there is, so you want it to be attractive and to promote what it is you are selling. This banner is hard to read. Window displays should be decorative. Clothing on a hanger doesn’t create a good display. Up the bar! The table and chairs are good out front.

The front of this shop (bottom right) looks cluttered. Don’t use plastic banners as permanent signage, and don’t post signs saying no public restrooms. That’s like saying, “Go away.” Instead, tell visitors where they can find them. Add more beautification—benches, tables, chairs, pots.



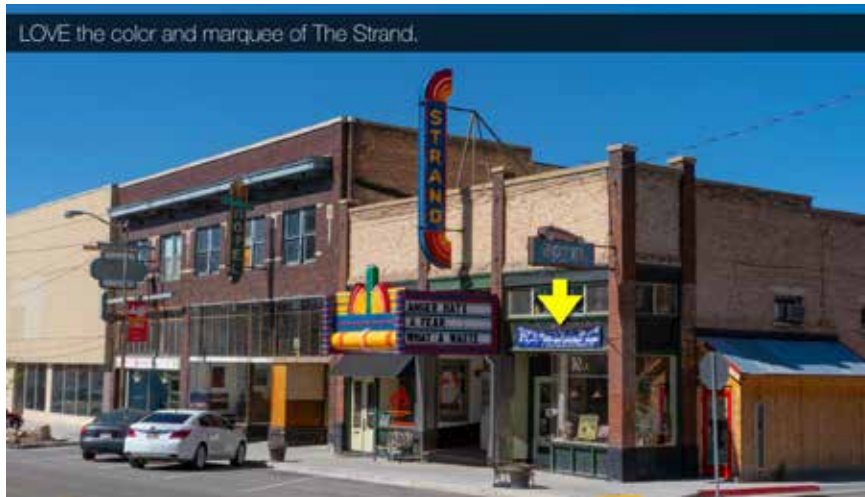


Merchants should be able to use about 24 inches of the sidewalk against the building facade for benches, displays, and pots. In Canmore, Alberta, merchants put beautiful displays of their merchandise on the sidewalks like these (top left and right). These are extensions of window displays to exterior spaces, and besides looking beautiful, they tell people you are open, and you welcome their business. Outdoor displays are NOT clothes racks, boxes of stuff, or tables piled with merchandise. They need to be decorative displays.

This shop (bottom left) is an excellent example of using beautiful outdoor displays and beautification to attract customers. You can tell they are open and welcoming.

Is this bowling alley an operating business (bottom right)? Is it open? It's hard to tell because there are no pots, no benches, nothing outside to give you a clue or invite you in. Add beautification, and soften the transition between the sidewalk and the building facade.





We loved the colorful accents on the Strand (top left). Historical downtowns are even more attractive when people aren't afraid to use some color! We weren't sure if this shop (with the yellow arrow) is a gallery and if it is open and operating. Add some pots outside!

Again, we love the colorful trim on this shop (top right). Redo the window displays, though. Clothes on hangers don't add much appeal. Make the display more decorative. Add some pots outside.

The theater (bottom left) looks wonderful. We saw the posters for an event that is long done and over, but nothing for any upcoming events. Add a calendar of events to invite us back. Promote what is coming up.

The sign on this shop (bottom right) states that they are open in the summer from 10 to 5. We didn't know when "summer" starts. June 21st? And by closing at 5:00, you aren't allowing people who work during the day to come into your shop.



We had a very hard time finding businesses that were open in Helper (top left). Many businesses were only open a few days out of the week, and fewer still were open in the evening hours.

Seventy percent of all consumer retail spending takes place after 6:00 p.m. Springdale, population 600 (bottom left), has the highest per capita retail sales of any town in Utah. They do have a big advantage of being next to the western entrance to Zion National Park, and their retailers make the most of it. All their shops are open until 9:00 or 10:00 p.m. every night. They know that

many visitors are hiking and playing in the park during the day, so they come back to town for dinner, and then they want to shop. So the retailers stay open.

One good way merchants can stay open later is to start a shared worker program, where one person is "shared" for different times of the day by several retailers. Start slowly – just Friday and Saturday evenings. Then, add more days as time goes on.

We loved this suspension bridge (bottom right). This looks like a fun place to walk.

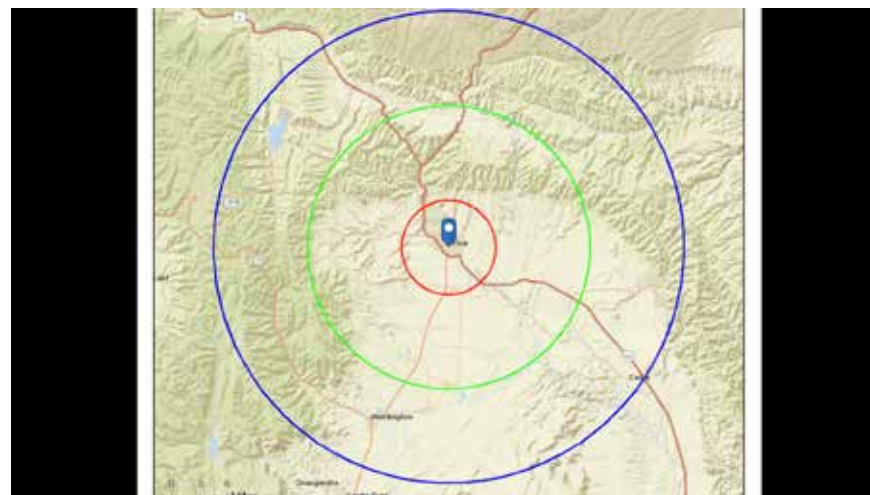




Where else can you find the Statue of Liberty (top left) in Carbon County? What fun. And we were so pleased to see an attractive fence—not chain link. This is a much superior type of fence than chain link, which should never be used in a downtown.

We drove around the rest of Helper, and we were very impressed by the other amenities. Helper looks like a great town to live in, work in, and visit. We loved seeing the ball fields (top right), the parks (bottom left), the community pool, and of course, the downtown is wonderful.





First thing we took a look at for Price is the demographics (top left and right). Within a 5 mile radius there is a population of 14,300; within 15 miles the population is 20,200; and within 25 miles the population is 25,300. Price is a service hub for a lot of the surrounding population.

When people get off the freeway to head into Price, there are no signs telling people where to find downtown. There are very few signs to help people find anything in Price, and the signs that you do have (bottom left) need to be replaced.

The biggest priority for Price is a new, comprehensive wayfinding system. A wayfinding system should include:

- Gateways and entries
- Attractions and activities
- Amenities (parking, washrooms)
- Trail markers and access points
- Visitor information kiosks
- Pedestrian wayfinding in your downtown





Every time we were going to head to downtown Price, we would mistakenly turn before the bridge, and end up on a dead-end street (top left). A sign directing people to go straight for downtown is critical here.

In downtown Price, we suggest the City initially concentrate its efforts on the two blocks shown here (top right) to the right. There are 48 retail spaces in this area, and this area shows the most promise for revitalization to become a core downtown gathering space. Work on changing the business mix.

One problem downtown Price is facing is that it actively gives the impression that it is 1.) unsafe, and 2.) unfriendly.

The sign on the Elks door (bottom left) makes this area look like it is dangerous. And the sign on the Community Clothing Closet (bottom right) looks like they don't want any customers to come in their door.



This looks like it is a charitable organization (top left), and yet the first thing you see when you approach their door is the sign saying that they will refuse service to anyone. So, either they are very unfriendly, or there are a lot of unsavory people who might harass shoppers downtown.

Clean up the sidewalks. The weeds (top right) make it look like no one cares about the town.

Can you tell what is in any of these shops? (bottom left and right) When we drive down a street, we are focused on what is in front of us. We can't see the

signs that are on the sides of the buildings. When we walk down a sidewalk, we can't see what is on the faces of the buildings either. Both Price and Helper need blade signs. These are signs that are perpendicular to the buildings, and they make it easy to see what shops there are down the street.





In order for us to see what this store is (top left), we had to go out into the street to see the sign. Blade signs would fix that problem.

This shop (top right and bottom left) has a pretty facade, but it's difficult to tell what it sells. We could barely make out that the name is "22" which includes a stylized heart, but we thought at first that it was a restaurant. Then, up close, we could make out the word "clothing" under 22, in very thin lettering. It was almost impossible to read. Add signage on the awning as well as a blade sign, and make it easy to see that you are a clothing store. This is an awesome shop. Always promote what you sell before the name of the store.

Once again, we are not big fans of clothing on hangers in shop windows. There are many mannequins for sale online, and they don't have to be expensive. Using a mannequin or two would make the window displays more attractive.

We were a bit confused by Oliveto Furniture—we were expecting a furniture store, but they primarily sell home accents, gifts, and gourmet kitchen goods. It is a fantastic shop! We really enjoyed it, and we think this store is worth a drive from Provo. We suggest adding signage outside that indicates that you sell home accents, gifts, and gourmet kitchen goods.





Olivetto has an attractive bench and pots outside (top left), and it is an amazing store (top right). The displays and merchandise are fantastic. But it is very hard for shops to do well when there are so few of them in a downtown. The few shops there aren't enough to keep downtown active and successful. There needs to be more.

Olivetto needs to be marketed specifically as one of the "very best of Price." This store, and a few others, need to be marketed as "While you are here in Price, you've got to visit some of our very best shops and restaurants." And then they need to be specifically promoted. Economic development means

successful businesses. Private businesses need to be promoted in order to help the whole city be more successful.

Do not use clothes racks as an outdoor display (bottom left). Clothes racks, tables piled with merchandise, and boxes with merchandise make you look like a garage sale town. Outdoor displays need to be decorative and artful.

This shop (bottom right) looks very nice with the pots of geraniums out front. Add a small table and chairs to make your entrance even more inviting.





We heard that this coffee shop is very good (top left). But would you rather go into it, or into this one in Helper (top right)? The Coffee Shop in Price doesn't have any curb appeal. Add pots and a small table with chairs. Be inviting!

It was hard for us to tell what this shop sells (bottom left) because there are no blade signs. The bench outside is good, but not enough. Add pots. Fill the concrete pot with blooms. Add a blade sign that says, "Crafts."

Some of the architecture in downtown Price is gorgeous (bottom right). The city has great "bones" and lots of potential.





We were glad to see there is a bike shop (top left), but without anything outside, we weren't sure if it was operating. Take a look at this bike shop in Wildwood, New Jersey (top right). Every morning they put these bikes outside, and it looks fantastic, draws the eye, and is inviting. Set up a bike display outside of this shop (top left). Sure, you'll need to move it inside every evening, but it'll attract more customers.

This restaurant is in a nice building (bottom left), but it looks very plain. Add a pot in front of each post with a pyramidalis shrub (inset) – this would make it much more attractive. Add outdoor dining.

Outdoor dining is a fantastic way to entice customers into your restaurants. When there is space, and it really doesn't take a lot, restaurants should provide outdoor dining. Besides being a form of beautification, outdoor dining adds a vibrant, active ambiance to the area, making it feel more festive and fun. And people want to be part of the fun—especially if you also include live, acoustic music.

This pizza place in Door County, Wisconsin (bottom right) took part of their parking lot, covered it with synthetic turf, built a barrier with potted shrubs and flowers, and created a great outdoor dining space with tables, chairs, and Catalina umbrellas. It's inexpensively done, and really attracts customers.





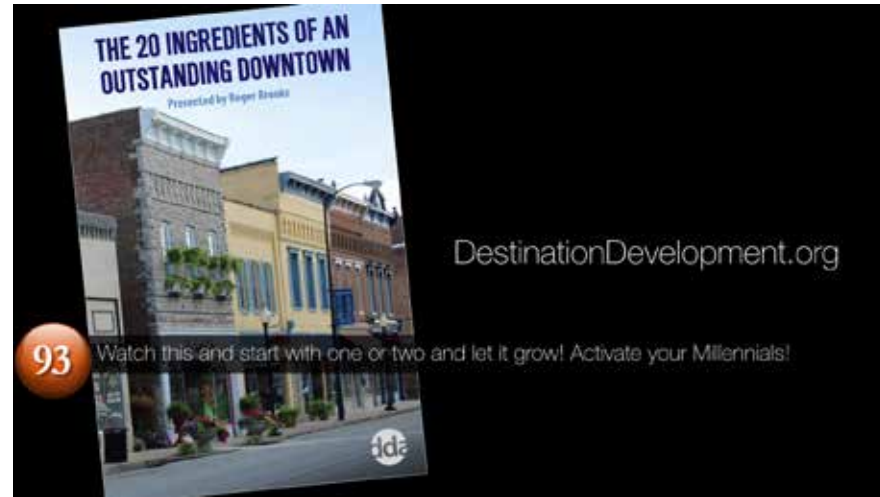
We ate at the Main Street Grill (top left). Use the readerboard for more than just "Free WiFi." Do you have specials? Let us know! Let us know your best meals. Add beautification—this looks stark and plain.

It seems some of the merchants in Price just can't be bothered with trying to increase their business and attract customers.

We couldn't tell what this place was (top right). Is it an Italian restaurant, or a bar, or a nightclub? Is it even operating? You'll attract more customers if you

make it more obvious what you have to offer. Visitors aren't just going to take a chance and hope their guess is right. Add beautification and signage.

Seventy percent of first time sales at restaurants, shops, golf courses, wineries come from curb appeal. This restaurant (bottom left and right) is ranked in the top five restaurants in Price according to TripAdvisor. But we were reluctant to give it a try because it looks so stark and bare. Add beautification! Add outdoor dining! Make your restaurant LOOK inviting.



Downtown Price looks like it is in a downward spiral. You don't want that to happen! The health of your downtown indicates the health of your community, and if you want to attract any economic development; if you want to retain your youth; if you want to have a thriving and successful community, you need to take action to bring downtown to life.

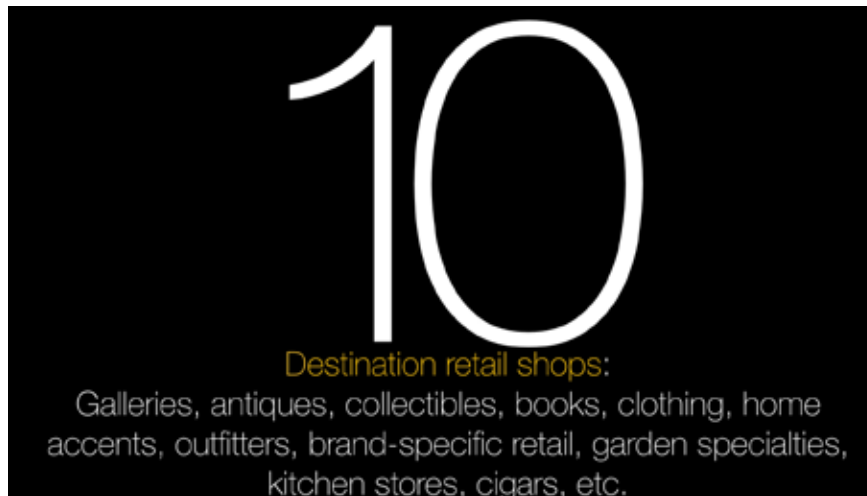
Suggestion: Create a "Destination Price" team to take action to benefit downtown. This could be a simple ad hoc committee of people with the mayor to work together to benefit downtown. Start by watching our video series about the Resurgence of Downtowns (top left). Also, start watching

the other videos in DDA's video library, beginning with "The 20 Ingredients of an Outstanding Downtown" (top right). We researched 400 downtowns or downtown districts to determine the top 20 ingredients common to the most successful of them, and these videos show the results.

Most successful downtowns defined a strong brand and created a retail focus (bottom left). Some downtown brand focus ideas are shown bottom right.

Our suggestion would be for downtown Price to focus on being an entertainment district—not a bar scene, but a place where there are activities, food, movies, music, and performances in the evening hours.





Successful downtowns orchestrated recruitment of their business mix to create “critical mass.” This is known as the 10 + 10 + 10 rule.

Within three lineal blocks (not square blocks), there should be: ten places that sell food, ten destination retail stores, and ten places open after 6:00 p.m.

Think about how antique malls do ten times the business when they are together. Auto dealers do seven times the sales when they are grouped together as an auto mall. Think about how gas stations cluster together at street corners, and fast food restaurants cluster together the same way. They

all do more business when they are grouped together than when they are spread apart. People are attracted to the choices.

Sometimes you need to help orchestrate the business mix. Work with property owners—help them to catch your vision. Work to recruit the businesses that you need for downtown. Start with a retail focus.

You want your downtown businesses to develop the “mall mentality”—the attitude that they are working together to create a successful, thriving business district.

# 11

## Development of programmed gathering places



Another common element among successful downtowns is that they have a programmed gathering space. If you can get people to come downtown on a consistent basis, retailers will come back and open shops. People first, then retailers will follow.

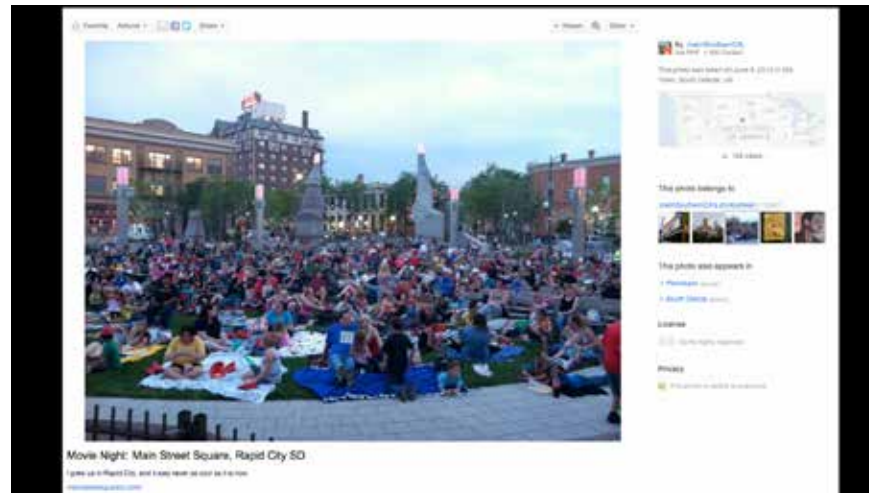
One example of how a plaza turned a downtown around is Rapid City, SD. Rapid City wanted to give people a reason to spend time and money downtown. They turned a downtown parking lot (top right) into this amazing plaza area (bottom left and right). This space includes a stage, lawn area for seating or multi-purpose events, an interactive fountain, and ice skating

throughout the winter. The plaza has several restaurants and shops bordering it. Downtown Rapid City went from a 35% vacancy rate to zero.

This is the plaza on a Sunday morning at 10:00 (bottom left and right). The city is hosting a classic car show, and it is packed.

Because they have the plaza, numerous organizations started hosting their events in downtown Rapid City. Their downtown has become an attraction in its own right. They closed off this street (bottom left) to have additional space for a classic car show.





They have a splash pad that attracts families and kids (top left). Their little train operates during events. The lawn area can provide seating for performances (top left), and their stage is located to the left. They want to make some changes: it's too small! They create an ice skating rink in the winter (top right).

Total cost was \$8 million (and it could have been built for \$5 million). Funding sources: \$4.5 million from philanthropy, \$3.5 million from the city. To put it in perspective, they make \$120,000 per year just in ice skate rentals.

A plaza **MUST** be programmed, not just be an open space.

Rapid City is now considered a cool place to be. They are attracting younger

residents. During the summer months, the city hosts "Monday Night Movies on the Square," which draws more than 3,500 people into downtown Rapid City each Monday (bottom right). The comment on this picture posted on social media: *I grew up in Rapid City, and it was never as cool as it is now.*

Another idea for a downtown plaza is Ovation Plaza in Old Strathcona, Edmonton, Alberta. The plans are for an empty lot to be transformed into this vibrant plaza (bottom right). It includes a splash pad that can become an ice rink in the winter, a stage, lots of space for food vendors, tables, and chairs, and space for exhibits and events.





We strongly suggest creating a downtown public plaza. Plazas need to be about people, not just architecture. They need to be designed for activities, not just beauty. They are not parks. Plazas are simple in design so that they can accommodate a wide variety of activities.

Wouldn't it be great to have early morning yoga on the plaza? (top left)  
Consider how much fun it would be to have a Taste of Carbon County event on a plaza downtown (top right).

Artisans in action would entice people to slow down and watch, spending

more time downtown (bottom left). All kinds of performances (bottom right) can be held there, from music to performance art.

All activities need to be open to the public and be free. You could put out large chess sets, ping pong tables, bocci courts, all different kinds of activities that don't have to be expensive, but give people fun things to do.





When you provide activities downtown, people want to come and be part of it. Activities give people exciting and new things to do. Bring in food trucks—food is important to have right on the plaza or next to it.

This very simple rectangular plaza (top right) is successful because the city brings in a variety of food trucks and provides shade and seating for people to enjoy. A plaza doesn't have to be fancy—it just needs to have activities people want, be comfortable, attractive, and easy to access. It needs to be in the heart of the spending district.

We saw the Bryner Museum (bottom left), and it looks very nice. Make it easier to tell when it is open.

We visited the USU Eastern Prehistoric Museum (bottom right), and it was great. It is rated the #1 thing to do in Price on TripAdvisor.

We suggest that visitor information should be at or next to the museum. It should be located in the heart of your spending district—when visitors stop for information, they are much more likely to go into a shop, the museum, or a restaurant if it is right there.





This is a "must see" photography exhibit. I love that term! Archeoastronomy.



95 This video will show you how to make it happen with step-by-step instructions.



96 The city needs to finish the job in terms of wayfinding.

We loved this dinosaur at the entrance to the Museum (top left). It is a fabulous museum, and the displays tell vivid stories, making it so much fun. This photography exhibit (top right) inside the museum is also excellent—a real "must see."

We explored the area in depth, but there were many things we would never have even known were in Price if we hadn't been doing the assessment. Price needs a wayfinding system to let people know what assets it has and how to find them. Suggestion: Watch the "Art of Developing a Wayfinding System" in the DDA video library.

With a wayfinding system, people would be able to find your Fairgrounds and Events Center much more easily. They are quite a distance from downtown, and the signs do not lead you all the way there.





We were amazed when we found Carbon County's Senior Activity Center (top left and right), and the Event Center (bottom left). These facilities look amazing!

Do events take place at the Event Center? If so, put up a Calendar of Events readerboard to invite us. We saw the race track and arena as well, and they look fantastic.

The fishing pond (bottom right) is great, and we loved that there was a sign on

the fence giving you all the information you need to fish there.

These facilities are fabulous! We never had any way to know about them except by exploring on our own; otherwise, we would have missed them entirely.

Carbon County needs a wayfinding system to let visitors and residents know what you have to offer.



We were surprised to find the remote control flying field (top left), and this is one of the best we have ever seen. You even have a place for motocross. How are people supposed to know about these great assets without signage?

We also found the Carbon County Ball Park (top right), and there was a game on while we were there. It is awesome.

We found the county airport (bottom left and right). This is another tremendous asset and it presents a great opportunity for gliding lessons and rides, as well as flight instruction.





We went back into some of the residential neighborhoods, and we found the very nice skate park (top left) and the BMX Track (top right). Wonderful!

Terrace Hills Park (bottom left) is amazing. We wouldn't be surprised if 99 out of 100 people who come to Price have no idea that Price has so much to offer.

Since quality of life is leading economic development, these community assets should be front and center—marketed and easy to find through a good wayfinding system.

We also found Washington Park, and it is also an excellent park, and we're sure it gets a lot of use in the summer!

Instead of posting a sign saying, "Monitored by Surveillance Camera," which makes it sound like a dangerous place, you could simply say, "Smile! You're on Camera!" That gets the same point across, but in a nicer way.





We saw Desert Thunder, and we realize that it is closed, but it gave us an idea. Perhaps Price could focus on "What's your recreational passion? We've got it here!" Price has so many varying recreational opportunities, and this would really work. What an awesome place to live!

The high school looks great (top right).

And we saw the Utah State University campus (bottom left and right). Of course, this is amazing. Having a university in your downtown is a fantastic asset for the community, and it brings in a lot of people. But one question: Where do we find the Aggie Ice Cream? It would be wonderful if the University opened an Aggie Ice Cream shop, and had it staffed by students!





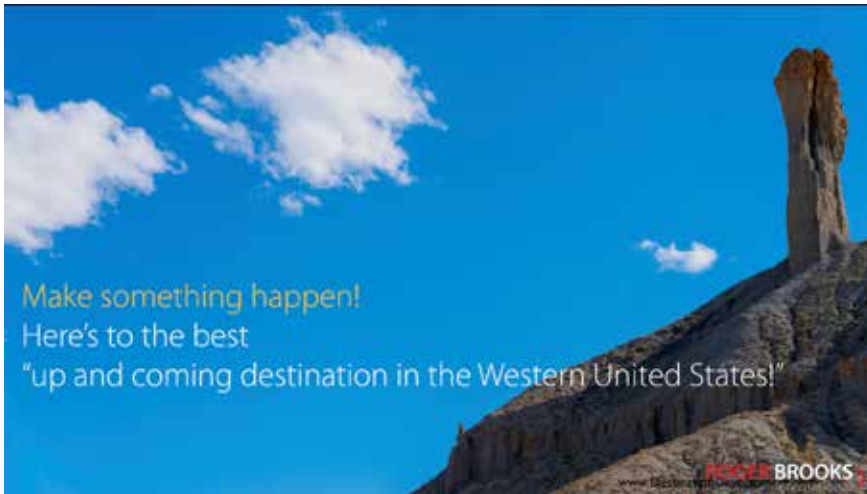
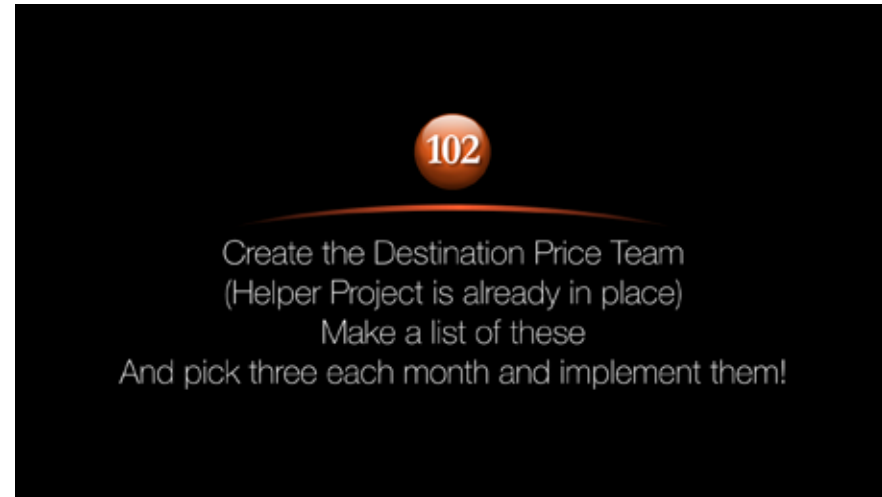
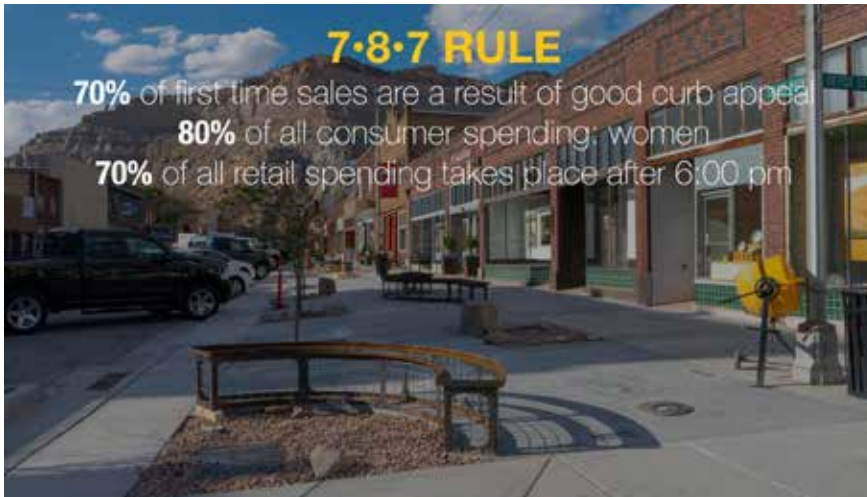
After finding all the wonderful assets in Price, we started driving around looking at neighborhoods and houses. There are a lot of gorgeous homes (top left)!

We thought the Frosty Freeze looked like a super fun place (top right).

All these assets and fun things to do in Price show that Price is a great place to live and work. Make it easier for people to find all these great things.

Women account for 80% of all consumer retail spending (bottom left). And women prefer being in places that feel safe and are welcoming. That should drive your decisions about your downtowns.

This photo above was not staged. It was taken in Wickford, RI, and it shows how important benches are for a lively shopping district. Have you ever wondered why people often place a bench or a couple of chairs on their front porch? Even if they never sit there? It makes their front porch feel welcoming. Your downtowns should have lots of benches.



The 7 • 8 • 7 Rule:

70% of first time sales at retail shops and restaurants are a result of good curb appeal.

80% of all consumer retail spending is from women.

70% of all retail spending takes place after 6:00 p.m.

Use the 7 • 8 • 7 Rule to guide your downtown efforts.

Create a Destination Price Team to start making something happen in Price.

Include millennials in your team. Helper is well on its way, working hard, and making a difference. Price can see great results as well. Make a list of the suggestions in this report, prioritize them, and pick three to implement each month. The most expensive suggestion is probably the creation of a downtown plaza, but it will make a huge difference for downtown Price, turning it into a real gathering place for residents as well as visitors.

Wishing you the very best in your efforts! You are on your way!







## Carbon County Marketing Assessment

The following pages contain a marketing assessment by our secret shoppers, who researched the area from a distance, reviewing marketing materials to see if they could find the area, and if the materials were convincing enough to make them want to visit.

### Marketing Materials/Collateral requested: via phone, to the Castle Country Travel Bureau

I called the tourism office and spoke with a representative, who was very nice, asked what I was interested in seeing in the area, when we planned to come, how many were in my party, if we were bringing ATVs, and if we planned to stay in an RV or hotel.

I told her we had interests in the geology of the area, main attractions and places to eat. She said she would send accommodation and restaurant guides as well as their general guide. Plus, she would send me the packet of their specific guides to sites like the San Rafael Swell, etc.

### Materials received in the mail:

- A letter to me from the Marketing Manager: The letter had a paragraph about Nine Mile Canyon, one about the two museums in the county, reference to their website [www.castlecountry.com](http://www.castlecountry.com), and an enclosure note about the two \$5 Gift cards.
  - 2—\$5.00 cash cards to use at Participating Partners
  - North Springs Shooting Range brochure
  - Prehistoric Museum brochure (death elevated) with a \$1.00 off coupon
  - Carbon Rec Adventures brochure with info about mountain biking and hiking
- These were the main materials generically for visitors (not from outfitters):
- Nine Mile Canyon brochure: I like this brochure, it folded out to be nine panels,



because it contained a lot of info. There was a road map that noted sites and amenities, descriptions of each site with Mile Marker locations, and a spread on nine-mile canyon history and nature.

- Nine Mile Canyon self-guided tour brochure: This was a photocopied, folded page with six panels. It gave a long list of sites with corresponding odometer locations from Miller's Chevron in Wellington and two small printed maps. It also had a list of DON'Ts. I think this could be re-done a bit to make sure the printed panels line up with the folds and cut down a bit on the larger pictures. Plus, I'm not sure how handy the odometer readings will be, especially if people get off the main road for any period of time to take side trips. And, the DON'T list could be more a DO list similar to what they have now, like 'DO respect the ancient petroglyph art and leave the area untouched for others to enjoy viewing' or 'Do adhere to fence lines and private property boundaries'.

- Historic Helper, Utah brochure: This is a 12-panel standard size brochure. It had a nice map of the little town of Helper and quick directions to town.

- Utah's Castle Country Visitor's Guide (which includes Carbon and Emery counties)

- Vendor brochures included: Carbon Rec Adventures (hiking, rafting, climbing, mountain biking), Utah State University Eastern Prehistoric Museum and North Springs Shooting Range. The shooting range brochure has a very specific audience and all the pictures on the front were of men. The Carbon Rec Adventures brochure had nice pictures of people enjoying the outdoors on one side and specific excursion info on the other side—the Labyrinth Canyon Canoe Trip on calm water sounded like fun to me.

## WEBSITES:

1.) At Utah.com, I searched for Carbon County and it brought up a link to '5 Fall Family Scenic Drives.' [https://utah.com/search/carbon-county?search\\_source=recently-visited](https://utah.com/search/carbon-county?search_source=recently-visited)

I didn't see any immediate mention of Carbon County in the article descriptions. Although, btw, this little article is nice because it gives specific recommendations for places to eat.

I had the most luck searching for Price, Utah, and starting there for finding things to do.

I did find that the visitutah site usually grouped Carbon County together with Emery County (Castle Country), which made it difficult to figure out the specific activities that were just for Carbon County. This site also made it harder to narrow your search for things to do down to just Carbon County.

I searched for Things to do in Price, and Expedia had nothing! TripAdvisor was better: [https://www.tripadvisor.com/Attractions-g57104-Activities-c40-Price\\_Utah.html](https://www.tripadvisor.com/Attractions-g57104-Activities-c40-Price_Utah.html). This little site had a number of suggestions: <http://www.americantowns.com/price-ut/things-to-do/>. Go Utah had a number of suggestions: <https://www.go-utah.com/Price/> by type of vendor or type of thing you wanted to do.

The Carbon County Magazine (from 2013 I think), that I found a PDF of on the [castlecountry.com](http://castlecountry.com) website, was one of the most helpful things I read for figuring out what might be fun to do in Carbon County. All of these things were noted: Scofield Reservoir (state park), Desert Wave Pool, Carbon County Country Club golf course and Historic Helper Main Street. Although, I couldn't tell at first if all of these things were in Carbon County (or if they might be in Emery County).

I looked further into the Scofield Reservoir and saw mostly very nice photos of the area, although it doesn't look like there is any main beach on the shores. I think it must mostly be used for boating and fishing. It seemed that there wasn't a lot developed along the shores. They use the water for irrigation, etc. This area did not really appeal to me as a place to visit. Plus, there was one picture of a truck in the grass with debris around it that kept showing up, from an old car accident near the reservoir. If people are not paying attention, and see this picture keep showing up, they might think the area around the reservoir is junky. It might be good to see if that picture could be taken off any site about the area that is not news related.

When I searched the internet specifically under 'visit Carbon County' and found this site: <https://www.carbon.utah.gov>. Its black background and full width of the screen landscape photos (that scroll through on their own) make the area look impressive. It would have been nice if they would include the place or landform name on each of the photos. That way, viewers can say 'I want to see that!' and

then search for it. Although there is a person in at least one of the photos and a train in another, it would be better to see people or a person in each of the photos too so that potential visitors could imagine themselves there.

I chose the category 'Visit' from the buttons along the bottom of the front page and it takes you directly to the [www.castlecountry.com](http://www.castlecountry.com) site that is very clean and easy to navigate. Carbon County is also known as Castle Country (which also includes Emery County). This type of naming can be confusing for the reader. It would be good to figure out a way to tie it and differentiate these. I guess Carbon County has more to offer, so people don't question it.

Back on the [www.carbon.utah.gov](http://www.carbon.utah.gov) site, under RECREATION, AREA ATTRACTIONS, there are several attractions that have a direct link to their site. One of them is the Desert Wave Swimming Pool in Price, which takes you to the Price website. [http://www.priceutah.net/City\\_Dir/Desert\\_Wave\\_Pool/Desert\\_Wave\\_Pool.asp](http://www.priceutah.net/City_Dir/Desert_Wave_Pool/Desert_Wave_Pool.asp), and the page for the pool is a bit odd, the whole Price website says Water Conservation at the top. I would like to have seen more, larger photos of the pool. But, the other info was good, although they still mentioned January and February dates (in April). And, under Online Payment Options it said 'Desert Wave June 2017 Swim Clinic,' so maybe it is not kept as up to date as it should be. This looks like a fun place to visit in the summer as the pools are large and they have a range of amenities.

Via the [castlecountry.com](http://castlecountry.com) site, under Play, Attractions, choose the quarry, click on the website link and it says 'The Page you requested has been moved.' Also, on this page, The CLEVELAND LLOYD DINOSAUR QUARRY page, has quarry misspelled as 'qarry' under SEASON:

Prior to visiting, guests are encouraged to call (435)636-3600 to double-check quarry hours.

I did find this link: [usueastern.edu/museum/paleontology/Cleveland-Lloyd/index](http://usueastern.edu/museum/paleontology/Cleveland-Lloyd/index) page about the quarry. They have a great picture of where the bones were found with a key to the type of bone. Loving geology, I would definitely want to go to the quarry.

It would have been nice if this site told you typically how long it takes to go through the museum or quarry in the 'Plan a Visit' section. It seems like the quarry

visit could take a whole day. Overall though I thought that this site was very good, well-designed and easy to use.

Back on the [CastleCountry.com](http://CastleCountry.com) site, under RECREATION, VENUES, PUC AIRPORT, the site displayed 'error 404' and no information. If you selected the INDOOR ARENA or OUTDOOR ARENA (some scrolling pictures came up with black titles that were very hard to read), no information came up.

When I clicked on the link for the 'historic tour' from the first page, it did not take me to a different page. Link may be broken?

If you click on Recreation on the top menu, and then Visitors/Tourism, it takes you to the county's tourism site: [CastleCountry.com](http://CastleCountry.com). The first page has the subheading: 'something for everyone.' That should probably change as it's too generic.

Because this site refers to Castle Country (which includes two counties), it's hard to differentiate county-specific attractions. Possibly a map should be inserted under the paragraph with the list of attractions, as it would be helpful to people planning a trip based on locations.

You can choose an activity under the PLAY tab for more details. If you choose TRAIL you are able to select difficulty level to explore options determined by how strenuous the hikes are (although the TRAILS INTERACTIVE MAP came up blank when I tried to look at it another time). BOATING provides links to lake websites and maps. FISHING lets you choose FISH TYPE and WATER TYPES to find places that meet your specifications. The MOTOR SPORTS page provides links to tracks and events. WINTER SPORTS has info about 4 different winter sports. GUIDES & OUTFITTERS let you choose a season, then gives information for specific vendors and map links, and so on. Very handy information links under the PLAY menus.

From the PLAY, ATTRACTIONS page, if you click on each of the attractions, most of them bring up the same top photo of canyons. Might be nice to have a different photo on each page.

The page for ARTPLACE has a video about the city HELPER. Might be nice if the video tied more directly with ARTPLACE, unless they are defining Helper as this.



There is a link to a version of the New Castle Country trail system brochure. I think this would be better set up as pages, as you have to zoom in to any of the maps to be able to see anything exact, it's all four color (which many people will not want to print), and since it's in a layout that has to be folded-when you look at it on screen some of it is upside down. A simplified version for screen viewing with the images larger, and a black and white one for printing would be great additions. \*This applies to probably all the maps on this site, it would be great if they all offered a printable version.

Helpful links were also provided for: Calendar of Events, Trail System Map and Visitor Voucher Program along the right-hand side of the first page, and under PLAN.

Every page of the web site shows brochures that are free, peeking out from behind the main page on the far left edge. If you click on any of them, it takes you to a digital version.

The pictures the site uses, of all the natural beauty of the area and red sandstone formations, are beautiful! The photos of the countryside make me want to go and see the expansive landscapes of the area.

For visitors to find info, they can go to the menu for RECREATION, VISITORS/TOURISM, this will take them directly to the web site [castlecountry.com](http://castlecountry.com). The second sentence of the first paragraph at the web site [castlecountry.com](http://castlecountry.com) has one typo: Castle Country is located in Southeastern Utah and includeactivities & sites from Carbon and Emery Counties.

Also, the text on this page is part of the site's graphics, so people cannot cut and paste text, to save notes. That might be something visitors to the site would want to do, so maybe at least a printable travel-friendly version of some pages would be good. I did like the scrolling stack of photos at the top of the page because they show the diversity of the landscape and things to do/see.

There is a page on this site for Visitor Voucher Program with links to participating vendor sites. I think it would be nice if at the top of this page, it would also explain the program and how to get vouchers, even if that is redundant to somewhere else within the site.

Seeing the 9-mile canyon (I think you have to devote a day to this, because from what I could tell it is one route that takes around 8 hours) and the San Rafael Swell would definitely be on my list of places to visit in Utah.

The menus along the top are great. The categories make sense with usable information. These make it easy to narrow down what you are looking for.

There is description of the Tavaputs Ranch under Lodging on this site under SERVICES/LODGING. The 4th sentence misspells Creek as 'Creel'. Closest to the city of Price, this sounds like a fun place to stay and enjoy the outdoors. They are only open June 20th through September 31st. I would love to go to ride horses, hike and definitely do a cattle drive. <http://tavaputsranch.com/activities/activity/4.htm>

The LODGING section is good because it tells you what kind of lodging, gives you a map and contact number. Clicking on the name of the place, takes you to a dedicated page for it with more info.

On their Brochures-and-Maps page, the description for this map had a misspelling: Trails

New **Cardon** (s/b Carbon) County Trail System Map - Click here for PDF of the Carbon County Trail System Map

I found a Carbon County Magazine, via the [castlecountry.com](http://castlecountry.com) site. This magazine was really helpful in figuring out things to do. I still thought it somewhat difficult to figure out if things were in Carbon County specifically.

The [visitutah.com](http://visitutah.com) site has a section for Travel Guides under PLAN, that lets you choose pages for different countries, to see it in that language and request a 4 different travel guides in that language. You can also download digital guides here in English.

This page seems to lack a photo to the left of the map: <https://www.visitutah.com/attraction/carbon-county-office-of-tourism/> But, it does offer a link to [castlecountry.com](http://castlecountry.com).

The [visitutah](http://visitutah.com) site has a handy link for geocaching opportunities: <https://www.geocaching.com/play/geotours/visit-utah>. Although, links don't seem to be county specific, participation is by county: <https://www.visitutah.com/things-to->

do/outdoor-adventures/geocaching/geocaching-faq/, and the VisitUtah site does have articles about geocaching based on north, south, east and west Utah.

The Search function on this site is odd, clicking on the magnifying glass in the top bar menu, as it brings up a box with the word 'Search' a picture of a magnifying glass and a small arrow. You can't type over search to look for something, you have to click exactly on the arrow to be taken to a Search field. Some might think it doesn't work, since you can't type over the word 'search.'

From this site you can search for Carbon County or Castle Country and get relevant info, although not identical info.

I found a go-utah.com site that also allowed you to order brochures/guides. It also had brief descriptions of things to see in Utah. Just south of Price is the northern portion of the San Rafael Swell but it seems to be primarily in Emery County.

**<https://www.go-utah.com/Castle-Country-Travel-Region-DMO/>**

Here you can order the Castle Country Visitor's Guide. This is a compact little site that has four tabs of information. It's easy to read and to the point, with good information for the traveler.

**Facebook:** <https://www.facebook.com/pg/carboncounty.utah/posts/>

This site is maintained and current. Most info seems to apply to residents. There is a page of EVENTS.

**<https://www.carbon.utah.gov/blog>**

It appears that no one is maintaining the content on this site.

**Facebook -** <https://www.facebook.com/carboncounty.utah>

The WEBSITE selection, on the menu to the left on this page, seems like it is

missing information. It only has a picture and gives you the option to Send Message.

The EVENTS page had two upcoming 2018 events. There were not many REVIEWS here. It would be good to have a contest or in some other way encourage reviews to be posted. Most of the VIDEOS were Commission Meetings. Under POSTS, the top post was about Bee Colonies and how they wanted to know who kept bees.

### **Travel Guide –**

I received Utah's Castle Country Visitor's Guide in the mail. It contains full pages dedicated to the main outdoor and recreation destinations in the county. It also has a couple maps of the area and some business/service directories. There are descriptions of attractions, driving loop suggestions, and some ads for businesses in the back. A nice reference to have in the car, when visiting. The Carbon County Club golf course looks nice, I would like to see Nine Mile Canyon, The Prehistoric Museum in Price, and the Cleveland-Lloyd Dinosaur Quarry (although I can't tell from the ad what city they are in). I'd also like to hike Fish Creek trail in search of wildlife like elk and deer.

### **TripAdvisor –**

When you search for Carbon County, Utah a page comes up with a link to the [www.visitutah.com](http://www.visitutah.com) site, Life Elevated. If you type in Castle Country, it brings up places in the UK. Typing in Castle Country, Utah brings up a couple places in the county but still includes other places. There is a bit of information under East Carbon, Utah, but not much. I found a couple things to do 'near Castle Dale' that were in the general area: Wedge Overlook, San Rafael Bed & Breakfast, San Rafael Swell, Fattys restaurant, Cleveland-Lloyd Dinosaur Quarry, Millsite State Park and Sidewinder 4x4 (but I'm not sure all of these are actually in Carbon County, and a bunch lacked any reviews).

There really is not any presence for Carbon County or Castle Country on TripAdvisor.



## My Impressions -

Now that I've done this research:

IF Carbon County, UT were located two hours from my house, would I make a special trip there based on what I saw, read and learned?

I would definitely go.

Day 1: I'd probably start in Price (especially if I was flying in) and go to the Prehistoric Museum and Regional Information Center, and then go to the quarry (30 miles south of Price). I might spend a day in Price going to the museum and quarry, and then in the afternoon to the wave pool (if I had time).

Day 2: Nine Mile Canyon sounds very interesting, and I see from the maps on the CastleCountry magazine, that the trailhead is in Wellington. The drive through the canyon takes 6 to 8 hours, with viewing stops along the way (sounds like it was paved in 2013). I learned that the canyon is actually 46 miles long, and it just gets the name 9 mile from one of the first maps that was a 9-mile triangulation map. I would go to see all the ancient rock art on the cliff walls. This sounds like something that would be worth doing at least once. And, it would definitely take a whole day at least. The CCMagazine gives important advice to make sure your vehicle is gassed up before heading out, that you take enough water with you, and that if it is close to flooding season some of the road may be hard to get through (it's mostly paved).

Day 3: There are links to sightseeing vendors on the castlecountry site under Play and Guides & Outfitters (with 5 outfitters, but the link for Old Utah Trails didn't work). I think rafting would be a great way to see some of the migratory birds, petroglyphs and enjoy the outdoors, probably in late spring. I might try some rafting on the Green River. There were a number of guides out of Price. Carbon Rec Adventures offers day or half day tours. They have inflatable kayaks, paddle boats or oar boats, and said any skill level can do these. I'd probably choose the kayaks.

Day 4: I would also want to take a horse riding tour in the area, maybe with Hondoo Rivers & Trails. They have day trips, and it looks like they have a few trips are for several days at least. I think a day trip would be good for me.

Day 5: Hike or bike ride on the Fish Creek trail in search of wildlife like elk and deer.

I searched TripAdvisor for places to stay in Price (which would probably make a good base camp), and 5 of the hotels had no associated picture (although all weren't in Price). Plus, the Pinnacle Lodge at the Camelot Resort in Fruitland had no ratings. The Holiday Inn Express and Legacy Inn (much cheaper) both got very good ratings. I'd probably stay at the Holiday Inn.

OR

I'd like to stay at Tavaputs Ranch and do some horseback riding, (the visitutah.com site has a page for the ranch, but it looks like it is missing some photos) although probably be pretty expensive (with travel and tours), it would be worth a trip all its own would be the Tavaputs Ranch located in eastern Carbon County. It is located in the Book Cliffs. They have a variety of activities, and meals are included with your stay. They recommend you fly into Grand Junction, if you are flying to get there, as they are pretty far to the east in Utah. They are off the map, off at least 8 miles of dirt road at the end of the trip to the ranch (so they will shuttle you if you come in your own car, down the dirt part of the road). But, you can fly in to the ranch directly from Price too. There is a lot of information on their site: [http://tavaputsranch.com/home/photo\\_gallery.htm](http://tavaputsranch.com/home/photo_gallery.htm)

Daily rates are \$200.00 pp which includes meals and lodging. I would go hiking while there; I'd want to do the Range Creek Ruins day trip, want to see the herds of mule deer, and other days hike or do 4-wheel trips over the land. I would want to ride with the ranch hands too, but didn't see that offered.

Staying at the ranch would be a good way to see some of unspoiled, wild Carbon County.

2. IF I were driving through Carbon County (on my way to somewhere else), is there any place I'd stop?

- I'd stop at the Prehistoric Museum in Price to maybe spend an hour or so, and stop at Sherald's Frosty Freeze drive-in for lunch.



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