

Excerpt from the Book: Vision – We Are Re-Creating the World: A Resource Manual “tool-box” for Revitalization and Empowerment through Grass-roots Strategies and Environmental Awareness by Andrew N. Skadberg, Ph.D.

Chapter 9—Tourism as a Case Example 3—an In-depth Description of the Development of a Regional and Replicable Initiative.

The purpose of this book is to provide the reader, and other interested people my best work. To that end I have provided examples, in the form of case-studies, of documents that I have specifically prepared at the request of some individual, agency or organization. While preparing this book I had a chance to refine some of the proposals, and case study examples. This is the case with the following example. The regional tourism development proposal has been presented to individuals in several countries, but a project has yet to begin in the breadth and depth that it is presented here. My home state of Iowa is an interesting case. Having grown up in Iowa, and driven a charter bus while attending college, I am personally aware that Iowa has incredible potential for tourism.

Additionally, the challenges being faced in the agricultural sector demand that some new strategy be developed. In 2006 Iowa was the first state to put a fully functional Wireless Internet and kiosk system in the 40 Dept. of Transportation rest area facilities. In fact, Iowa actually beat Texas to the punch because this phenomena started first in Texas. I, and a small team at Texas A&M University initiated project called TextBox which stimulated the wireless Internet phenomena which is now in some form in fifteen U.S. States.

The first proposal provided in this section, which is intended to expand in detail on how to actually develop the projects, was presented to a company in March of 2010, seven years since we initiated the first pilot project in Texas called TextBox.

This is the actual proposal that I presented to the president of that company. A very interesting story surrounds our being introduced. I had tracked the Iowa DOT's

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announcement of the Wireless initiative in Iowa because we were assisting a company called Coach Connect to get contracts in states that were launching these projects. I personally wrote the proposal that won them the Texas contract. Unfortunately for Coach Connect, having to create this extensive network, or “wireless portals (98 sites in total), FOR FREE, was too much for the fledgling company, and they went out of business.

I had decided that the Iowa RFP (request for proposal) was not advantageous when it was first announced in 2004. Even though the RFP went out as open, I am fairly had been preselected, and the company that was associated with the idea emerging in Iowa won the first contract. However, similar to Coach Connect their business model was not robust enough to generate revenues and they dropped the contract after only a year or so.

This was when I was introduced to Zoom, in the most strange of circumstances. In early 2007, I was *not* in the Wireless Internet business, so to speak since I had returned to Texas A&M and was working for Dr. Richard Ewing the Vice President for Research.

On January 12 I received a call from my sister that my father had suddenly died of a stroke. I rushed to Iowa, saw him in the hospital and discovered that he had truly passed instantaneously and they were only taking care of his body so his wishes to donate organs could be fulfilled.

The strange part of the story is when I had returned to my house in Bryan, Texas on the 15th of January, I had a letter in the mailbox from my Dad. Actually it wasn't really a letter, it was a newspaper clipping and a very short note. See Figure C9-1 of a photo of the Des Moines Register article and note.

Needless to say I was astounded, and a little bit “weirded out”. But I also felt this was some kind of sign. So I found Zoom's phone number and called the president of Zoom. It was a strange phone call to explain why I had called, but as it turned out Mike's father was very ill as well and ended up passing about three weeks later. We soon began to communicate and I assisted them to respond and win a contract in Minnesota and also in Texas. However, the movement of these projects has been very slow. The

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Figure C9-1: Photo of January 9, 2007 article from the Des Moines Register

challenge has been finding sponsors and funding. The proposal included as the first section of this *extended Tourism case-study*, is my attempt to get the ball rolling. It has been seven years since we first initiated this project in Texas, the infrastructure is in place, and the opportunity to extend a new set of services, especially to rural places is ripe. Tourism provides a unique opportunity to create a holistic strategy for a region or a community. This is because tourism as an industry touches many sectors of the economy.

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In order to be developed effectively and sustainably, a comprehensive strategy must be developed. Historically this has presented communities with challenges based on existing planning paradigms. However, if done in a systematic fashion with a phased implementation process the challenges actually create opportunities and build a natural process for moderating the growth of the initiative. The key is to implement good methods for monitoring progress.

There are many resources available, some very extensive, for developing tourism in a community. In our experience these processes become cumbersome and stymie the development process. In many cases “planning” seems to become an end in itself. Our approach is more practicable, and recommends the utilization of an organic process that allows for the natural progression of the initiatives and order to make sure the community does not get overwhelmed by the growth. Critical are tools and methods to monitor progress, and to identify potential problems early in their development stages, and to have effective methods for containing these problems.

The Development Project Puzzle

Pieces of the Puzzle – The process of developing “contextualized” projects would seem to be complex, however, by using an analogy of a puzzle we can more readily understand what our vision is, and organize and systematize the various steps (or parts) of the initiative (vision). Each puzzle piece has its own set of objectives, tasks, and contextual dynamics. Those comprise the successful accomplishment of that piece of the puzzle. However, it is absolutely critical to bring the pieces of the puzzle together, in context, in order for successful consummation of the vision. This is what “Science” has not taught us how to do – but this Solomon Source endeavor is a point of departure for this new paradigm of thinking, planning and acting. The foundations of this approach are derived, in part, from Systems Theory (approach or thinking) as elaborated by Jamshid Gharajedaghi in his book “Systems Thinking: Managing Chaos and Complexity: A Platform for Designing Business Architecture”

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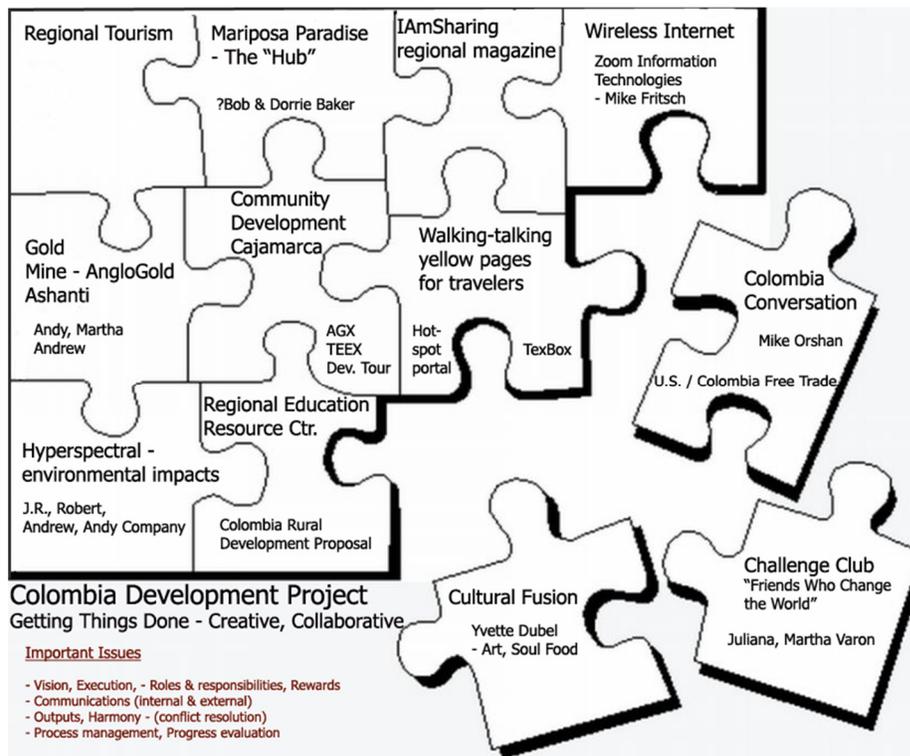


Figure C9-2: Hypothetical regional tourism development “Project Puzzle”

The puzzle depicted above is an “anecdotal” example. This is not a real project, however, many of the pieces, or components, presented in this example are very similar to what we would pursue in a regional tourism project. The purpose here is to give the reader as many ways to visualize and contextualize what needs to be accomplished on an endeavor that at first seems to be too complex, or convoluted, to be successful. However, using a systematic approach, and treating each of the puzzle pieces as an individual component of the larger whole allows these disparate, and seemingly unique strategies to be combined to a successful regional development project. Each of the puzzle pieces will have unique steps, processes, and organizational objectives, in most cases. However, as these come together to make the complete picture, they need to be complimentary. Briefly, I will describe each of the pieces and how they fit together and then to refer to more information in this book if the particular topic has been discussed in greater detail. After the introduction to the Project Puzzle, as if we were doing an actual project, more

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discussion will be provided of projects that have been presented in other places including Iowa, Texas, Jamaica and Colombia S.A.

Below you will find more description and detail of the pieces of the puzzle, as presented on the previous page, with references to other parts of this book that are related.

Regional Tourism

Regional Tourism is an over-arching opportunity space and will essentially encompass the various pieces in the diagram above. One of the important points to understand about the term “region” is that this is not pre-defined, and as we move into the future these regions will likely not be defined by traditional boundaries such as county, state or other geopolitical or jurisdictional definitions. The size of a region should be functional in character and should be defined by the regional groups that are coming together to advance their interests. This topic, like many, could become extensive, but the variables are too many to discuss in a general way. The key for our purposes is that as a region goes to work to create its unique strategy, the conversation and determination of regional size and composition should be foremost in their minds. This does not mean to create hard and fast lines whether these be geographical, jurisdictional or to define the cooperating communities. It is probably better to keep these more open and adaptive. However, there will need to be some definitions and boundaries made to create the marketing identity or the regional map. This then creates the “domain”, so to speak, in which the regional initiative operates and is planned from.

Mariposa Paradise

Creating a regional tourism attraction can be a very beneficial endeavor. Although this component is not absolutely necessary, it is highly beneficial. The development of a holistic, sustainable and well networked regional tourism strategy will help a region to identify what are the assets that are normally disparate and not well collected up into “critical mass of attractions”. This point is discussed in several places in the book, but will be discussed in detail in the following Experience Iowa example.

Regional Magazine

This idea is really based on the work of Yvette Dubel. The idea of creating a regional publication to help visitors, and residents identify with the region is very important. There

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are a number of benefits that are realized in this process including creating an recognizable identity, a sort of personality that they put forward that helps the people of the region, and visitors to identify with. Essentially the regional magazine is a good way to create the regional “brand”. Having a periodical whether it be weekly, monthly or quarterly also provides a way for the citizens and businesses of the region to be rewarded or recognized for what they are contributing to the region’s products and services. I could go on and on about this, but this could become a topic for a whole chapter. But suffice to say that having traditional print, and digital publications are important to get the word out. More on this will be discussed in chapter 12 about Yvette Dubel and her Cultural Fusion effort.

Wireless Internet (Zoom Projects in Iowa and Texas)

Providing wireless Internet is not required, however, it too can be highly beneficial. The next section of the book goes into significant details about what is involved with this. In many respects this phenomena is the backdrop to all of the tourism strategy described in this book. Our successful pilot project with the Texas Dept. of Transportation, and the subsequent wireless Internet initiative can become the cornerstone of an exciting endeavor. Imagine all of the communities providing wireless Internet that provides access to interesting, useful and easy to access information for what to do and see in those communities. This communications infrastructure could become a significant pillar on which to develop a sustainable community development initiative.

Large Energy or Development Project—Bioethanol, AngloGold Ashanti

Having some large scale initiative, preferably sustainable, can be another important piece to a regional and community development initiative. In Cajamarca, Colombia we had provided a proposal to a company AngloGold Ashanti that was exploring the potential of, purportedly, the second largest gold discovery in human history. We were proposing to support the beneficial economic support to the community that could be derived from the project while also developing strategy for protecting the community’s and region’s interests regarding economic, social and environmental impacts. The reader can see how, for example, the hyperspectral sensor would be an invaluable tool for developing an ongoing environmental monitoring and amelioration strategy. This would not only be for impacts from the mine operation but also agricultural and forestry. In almost all places

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these impact management strategies are non-existent, and in most cases it is because there is no economic support. For the gold mining project this could be a requirement and the company had already agreed to significant investments into the community for long-term sustainability. Another project that we are involved with is an energy project, but the process has been slow.

Hybrid Community Development Project

This piece of the puzzle is described in detail a little later in the book. This piece is required for rural places because the need for agricultural innovation and entrepreneurial advancement is essentially universal. This component also fulfills another important need for the “community” to have a “bricks and mortar” place to identify with. In many respects the Hybridized Community Development Cooperative, and the facilities, can become the hub on the wheel of the regional initiative. It is likely that these facilities can also be located adjacent to the tourism attraction.

Walking Talking Yellow Pages (Regional Tourism Projects in Iowa and Texas)

This is one of my more passionate points that seems to be a radical idea. And yet, to me, it is the most sensible and important. I just cannot understand why we are killing so many trees to have something as ineffectual as a phone book delivered to our house every year. With the technologies that we have at our disposal the phone book is obsolete. It must be replaced. The money that people spend on the ads would more than support any level of technology that we could ever desire. Also, eliminating the waste of printing, production and the problems associated with the books ending up in the landfills. It might be most efficient to just convert the significant infrastructure that is in place for the Yellow Pages and have it dedicated to selling the Walking Talking Digital Yellow pages. The reasons for this conversion are so extensive, but it is not the point to discuss all of these here. However, it should be a major emphasis as we move forward with our endeavors, if for no other reasons to eliminate destroying so many trees..

Community Conversation (Regional Networking)

As with other parts of the puzzle, this piece was inspired by our work with one of our friends. Mike Orshan is a power-networker. This particular piece of the puzzle is related to communications and community cohesion and is highly dependent on networking. There are several layers of communications whether it be for project leaders, advisors, or the

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individual businesses and organizations that will want to keep open channels of communications. This piece of the puzzle is also related to others such as the walking talking yellow pages, and regional tourism. It is important to note here that even though these various “functions” are shown as independent parts, the analogy of the puzzle really does apply. All parts are interrelated whether or not they are adjacent to each other. All pieces are important in order to get a complete picture.

Environmental Impacts—Hyperspectral

This section puzzle piece has been described in detail previously and is of course included here because environmental protection is critical for success of any endeavor as we move into a new paradigm of existence. We must revolutionize how we relate and utilize our natural resources. This piece of the puzzle is also strongly tied to the educational foundational pieces. However, education is likely an important aspect of every piece.

Regional Education Resource Center

Another pillar of our regional development structure, this piece of the puzzle is tied most directly with the Hybridized Community Development Cooperative, Environmental and Regional Tourism. But as stated previously, education is foundational and a part of all aspects of a RRES initiative. This include having young people involved, actual educational programs teaching agriculture, tourism, entrepreneurship, but also internal and external educational components for regional citizens and visitors. This component was described in detail in the Executive Summary but also, in a specific case situation, for the Reverence for Life University.

The Arts—Cultural Fusion

The arts are another pillar of the RRES. This is really self explanatory, because without the arts, including music, theatre, crafts and all other forms the RRES would be a failure. Cultural Fusion is the passion of our dear friend Yvette Dubel who has been one of my strongest advocates and friends who has encouraged the continued development of the RRES. You will find a write up about Cultural Fusion in Chapter 12.

Social Action—Friends Who Change the World

Another key element for a successful RRES is projects and efforts to provide social

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benefits. The *Friends Who Change the World* example is only one and a longer description is provided in Chapter 12. For a region to have only one program is likely not a true case because the involvement of various service organizations and youth should extend across many activities. The point is to get the community involved with extending benefits of the planned community development strategies to as many people as possible. This piece of the puzzle ties directly to **Service** which is another foundational principle for a new paradigm of community development. The possibilities in this area are only limited by the imagination of the communities. Projects similar to Habitat for Humanity, community trash and recycling projects, community parks beautification and many others would build a strong foundation for an ongoing effort to revitalize communities and the lives of the people of the region, which ultimately will benefit visitors as well.

There is no limit to the number of pieces that could comprise a regional development project. The foregoing with twelve pieces is only illustrative.

The next section provides a comprehensive and current example of a statewide, regional tourism strategy as Solomon Source would conduct it. The company Zoom Information Systems is the company that has taken the lead in the United States winning contracts in about fifteen states to do statewide and pilot projects similar to the one that we helped start in Texas in 2003. I actually contributed to the proposals for Minnesota and Texas with which they won the contract. However, I have not been involved in these projects yet because finding funding has been a challenge. Nonetheless, we wait patiently and continue to provide a broader based vision combined with a comprehensive strategy that supports both sides of the opportunity space that we see in this realm. The following Case Study gives a current and fairly comprehensive description of the way that we would capitalize on this robust opportunity. This is the actual proposal that was sent to a company to initiate this project and we are waiting for a response.

Case Example - Adaptable Strategy for Developing and Growing Regional Community Networks

March 7, 2010

– This proposal was presented to start in Iowa and then Texas

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A key to success for an Iowa collaborative initiative is to capitalize on multiple income streams. It is very important to understand that there are two *primary* customer bases to be developed, although there are many additional markets that can be pursued, each with considerable potential income. The first appears to be well understood in the marketplace, that being to provide information to travelers. Even though there is much to be done in that market, a greater opportunity exists in the other.

The second seems hidden, but we can see that historically there have been entities that have capitalized on this market. This market is in the communities and businesses, especially in rural places. Two companies that capitalized on these markets are Wal-mart and Dollar General. This opportunity is discussed in more detail in what I call the “Urban-Rural Nexus” in **Topic A**. Diagram 1 below shows where our collaborative is already positioned. And the second “market”, on the right, is just waiting to be tapped into. Strategy has been developed and additional resources identified by which to provide desperately needed services to this market.

Another key is for our team to be fully immersed in the tourism industry, and this does not mean selling travel packages. It means serving an industry that historically has been highly fragmented. But we can collate the pieces of the puzzle because tourism is just a large network, easily managed by technology. All of the tools we need already exist to capitalize on existing, and many new markets by creating the network, can be in the right position. The technology needs of the industry are not complex. It is mainly about networking and education. All the information needed is readily available. Also, the industry is expanding, but it is highly underserved, so we have a ready audience.

Additionally there are many rudimentary, well established networks that already exist, but they are not using technologies to full advantage. Most tourism organizations (e.g. Texas Travel Industry Assoc., America Outdoors) are really old fashioned, but their customers are not. They know they need better technologies, especially when it comes to the Internet. But no entity is fulfilling these needs, and custom solutions are too expensive. Additionally, and this is HUGE, *tourism is the key for revitalization of rural areas, especially those historically dependent on agriculture.*

Potential income streams are available from numerous sources, and these are

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summarized in **Topic B**. The long-term opportunity space, in my opinion, is the community side of the model.

I have written extensively on each of the topics in this executive summary. And each of these models are not just theoretical. I have been involved in deploying them myself, or there are successful examples to replicate. The key to our success is to identify and evaluate these opportunities, develop a strategy, and then pursue based on a set of pre-established criteria. Currently I believe Iowa and Texas are top candidates. After the team has reviewed and approved this overview, I recommend that we develop a detailed “phased” project approach, focusing first on income generation. However, I believe it is important to develop all of these strategies in the long-run because it is a complete package. And leaving out parts would be like leaving parts off your car because you didn’t understand how they functioned.



Diagram C9-3: Zoom positioning between travelers services, and supporting communities

As an overview, here are the initial ideas to be considered. Extended discussion is provided in the Supplementary Topics. Understand that these ideas have been developed over twenty-five years. And there is considerable more supporting documentation and information than is provided in this document.

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Multiple income streams, products and services, membership fees, monthly subscriptions, fundraising strategies, sponsorship pursuits.

Identify strategic relationships. (For Iowa)

- Congressman
- Foundations
- Agencies, Silos & Smokestacks
- CVBs, COCs
- Large Financial Organizations
- Universities
- Publishing companies
- Associations

Develop strategy for getting “seed” funding, We can use a similar strategy as we did in Texas for fundraising for the Great Texas Coastal Birding tournament. When we implemented this in Texas we raised, from scratch, about \$100,000. Seed funding was provided by communities, CVBs, COCs or other organizations. For example, we can form an *Executive Committee for Rural Tourism Dev.* an Advisory Board, with these organizations as Executive Advisors and Sponsors for the creation of this statewide strategy.

Fundraising Strategies I believe that our team is positioned in a very auspicious place and that with the right presentation and packaging that a very appealing presentation could be made to very big entities, a short list is:

- Google
- Amazon
- Microsoft
- Intel
- Facebook (they just launched to mobile version)
- Large state, and other philanthropic organizations

Three-pronged Approach to Regional Tourism Based on prior experience with TextBox, AdventGX and community tourism development with Extension at Texas A&M University, I have developed a three-pronged approach to rural tourism development. A more detailed description is included in **Topic C**. The three foci are:

Institute – develop a central repository of expertise for tourism and entrepreneurship (I have several courses ready to be launched and more are available, for free, from other sources).

Marketing presence/portal – the technologies to accomplish are readily available, but we can expand and launch via the WWW.

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Technology and networking support system – Again, the materials to build the foundation are easily accessible, but we can add new resources as deemed necessary over time, but to start everything needed is in place.

Developing Community Networks This is to a great extent the “bread and butter” of our team’s business opportunity. This information has already been captured and we can easily approach the various entities and offer a package of services to earn revenue, and to build a robust Network. This connects to the Three-pronged Approach introduced above.

Stringing Pearls on the Necklace – Growing the Network Essentially, our process will be about capturing all of the existing resources including communities, high level attractions, and adding to that the hard to find “pearls” that exist. Then we simply build the network and utilize online tools to get the word out. What we will develop is the “back-end” of the business (for supporting communities and small businesses), which is desperately needed in the tourism industry because it is so fragmented, especially in rural places. To Grow Our Network, we can utilize already existing “networks” and associations. But we can add to the services that they offer to their memberships. Such organizations include tourism associations, CVBs, COCs, restaurant assoc., etc. This strategy could also be connected to our developing, or helping to develop, a national “Rural Tourism Association” (see Appendix F). Attractions in Iowa include, the wine trails, Dubuque, Field of Dreams, Amana Colonies, RAGRAI, Villages of Van Buren, The Grotto in West Bend, etc. and all disparate attractions that can be brought together to create the necessary “critical mass” of resources. This idea is described further in **Topic D**.

Our Team’s Future Strategies All of the above items would work hand in glove to add robustness to the technologies that can be created for the next generation Location Based Services (LBS). A friend and past associate with AdventGX (Brad Cunningham) developed an earlier version of a system to provide businesses the ability to create dynamic, interactive marketing with their customers. The key to his model was a solid foundation on supporting the community.

Connection to Real Estate Tourism has an inherent relationship to real estate. I learned this from the director of East Texas Tourism Assoc, who has been in the business of

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tourism for over 45 years. Their real revenues are generated from Real Estate. We can easily adapt this as another significant income stream.

High Level Promotion and Exposure In order to create the most dynamic exposure to our growing domination of tourism, it will be advantageous to create unique public relations, marketing and promotional strategies (and potentially independent businesses). These are relatively simple as I have already done these businesses, or there are successful models that we can adapt to our purposes. Some of these include, but are not limited to (see

Topic E):

Travel Show (initially You Tube), tentative name “Experience Iowa”, product catalogues, gifts shops, merchandising, value-added, food products, Travel newsletters, magazine, regional travel guides (both digital and printed)

Replacing the Yellow Pages One way to view the opportunity is as a way to replace the Yellow Pages. Of course this is an internal, covert strategy because we don’t want to position the strategy as competition or as a threat to the phone book industry . However, the Yellow Pages model is antiquated. It needs to be replaced because it is ineffective, inefficient and wasteful. With all of the digital technologies just waiting to be utilized, we are in a position to extend a new model digitally and dynamically to rural places and the traveling public, even across the globe.

Topic A - The Context, or Opportunity Space – The Urban Rural Nexus

Traditionally urban and rural are viewed as two separate entities competing for resources. In actuality it is a whole system. Rural economies are dependent on an influx of dollars from the city. Cities are dependent on rural places for food, water, fiber, natural resource protection and for leisure and recreational respites. In other words the two are inextricably linked. Diagram 2 below presents what I call the Urban – Rural Nexus which illustrates the dynamic interchange and interdependencies.

The challenge for rural places is real. For centuries supplying various services to rural places has been a constant challenge because they need to be extended across distances, without the “critical mass” of customers which will pay for the services. Cities inherently

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have better access to services, but one could argue that the quality of life is not necessarily better. Much could be written about this conundrum, which is not the point of this summary. The key issue is to introduce the “opportunity space” for extending services to rural places, and to identify how urban centers and rural places are dependent on each other for ultimate survival. In a way this discussion suggests first recognizing the interdependencies and secondly to build a bridge for enhancing the opportunities that are presented to support this important dynamic relationship. *That bridge can be built via the Internet.*

It is critical to extend services to rural communities, and, with the advent of the Internet, it can be viable economically to do so. There are cases of businesses that realized the rural opportunity such as Wal-Mart and Dollar General. Both became highly profitable. However, these examples do little justice to the opportunity of extending services, education and empowerment tools, and resources to support the local citizenry of rural communities to be grown from the community itself. The overall potential for success in building this bridge, in combination with the “systems approach” for managing negative impacts more effectively, is tremendous and not just economically, but more importantly for the quality of life.

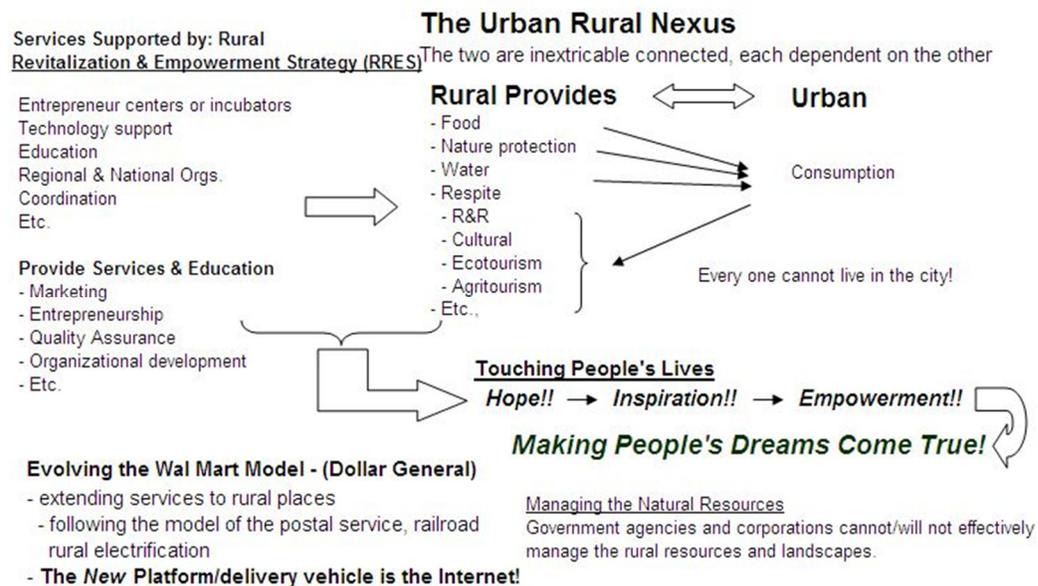


Diagram C9-4: The Urban – Rural Nexus – Building the Bridge

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In Diagram C9-4 we highlight the provision of a group of services and information to empower rural communities (starting upper left). The key to this diagram is the process of extending services to rural regions and communities which have been historically underserved. The large 90 degree arrow points to the desired outcomes: the bringing of hope, inspiration and ultimately empowerment to individuals where success is ultimately grounded. The upper right quadrant of the diagram depicts the interdependent relationships between rural and urban places.

The bullet points in the bottom left of the diagram highlights that entities previously have extended services and have been successful. However, our new opportunity is even greater with the advent of the Internet. In fact, we often point out that our new success will not be based on consumerism, selling people a bunch of stuff that, probably, people don't need, but on providing resources to empower people through education and the various “empowerment tools” to capitalize on the inherent capital available in all places a) people, 2) the natural resource endowment, and 3) the history and culture of the place.

Finally, the last point in the bottom right of the diagram is included for those who would argue that private landowners cannot or will not protect the natural environment. This observation is true to an extent. However, our experience working in Texas, which is almost exclusively privately owned, is that landowners love their land. And if they end up causing damages it is usually a result of ignorance, and they will have to absorb losses which is not in their best interest. We observed that as land management education was made available to these people it was taken up and implemented with impressive success. The primary point of the statement in Diagram C5-16, “The Big Picture” about government agencies is that first, there is not the political will to make enough “effective” land management agencies for all lands, and secondly if there was, it would be such a huge endeavor it would almost surely fail. We have examples of this in the United States such as the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), and the effectiveness of these organizations for managing the vast resources under their watch is dubious at best.

A basic fact could be stated as we look at the rural-urban question: not every one can live in the city! *Nor would we want them to.* One need only look at history, and contemporary urban centers to see what happens when too many people live in close proximity.

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However, as one looks at economic pressures on the average rural citizen there appears to be significant challenges to be able to “stay on the land”, so to speak. And pressures continue to grow on urban centers as mass exodus occur from rural areas of people hoping to find a better life, especially in developing countries.

However, there are some deviations to these trends in places like the United States. Where people have freed themselves financially, there are growing numbers that are moving from the city to rural places, and/or buying second homes there. Some investigators are highlighting that rural places are flourishing. Needless to say, as one travels in rural communities whether it is in the United States or any country, there appears to be some level of revitalization. Nonetheless, in our observations, problems are still ubiquitous, especially for the poor. These problems can especially be seen in communities that have historically been on the fringe, economically, socially or geographically (e.g. urban), or are in areas of racial diversity.

Further stymieing the process of agencies or corporations extending services is because knowledge is “silo’ized” . Each entity (agency) segments their area of service and only tries to push a narrow set of ideas/programs onto their constituents – almost always utilizing a “top-down” bureaucratic approach. Efforts are fragmented and lack quality and substance. We could cite several cases. In the process they are using up precious financial resources that could be better utilized by cooperating with other agencies and programs that not only extend services from the top down, but start to build from “grass-roots” . Often the agencies and institutions have policies to share and collaborate with other organizations, or to make what they offer more germane and effective through cooperation, but in the end we would argue this usually is only becomes “lip-service” .

The time has come to bring more value and substance in the programs and services that are offered in the spirit of cooperation and efficiency, and utilizing new technologies. Drivers for this process go beyond the traditional, almost exclusive economic drivers to include things like, environmental sustainability, enhancing the “quality of life”, innovation and inspiration in business and agriculture, creativity, enthusiasm, human connections, passion, spirit, intuition, etc.

In summary, some important points to consider when evaluating the “Urban – Rural

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Nexus”

- Rural landowners can provide much needed land and natural resource management, even if the “public will” was to create agencies to provide “land management” it is highly cost prohibitive, plus the performance of these agencies for long-term “protection”, from a historical perspective, is really abysmal.
- Rural areas are necessary for the “recreation respite”, from the high paced, stressful lifestyle of cities. Nature is truly necessary for adequate rest and revitalization and large, quiet natural areas are rarely found in cities.
- Plenty of solutions are available from educational institutions and agencies that can be utilized to cope with the rural economic, social and environmental conundrum. The key is to develop the ways/means to extend these services.
- There is a tremendous opportunity to create a new service paradigm for “Extension education” via the Internet and technology tools.
- Value comes from real solutions. There are numerous “success stories” at various scales from around the globe by which general principles can be derived and then those strategies adapted to various contexts.

Topic B—Where’s the Money?

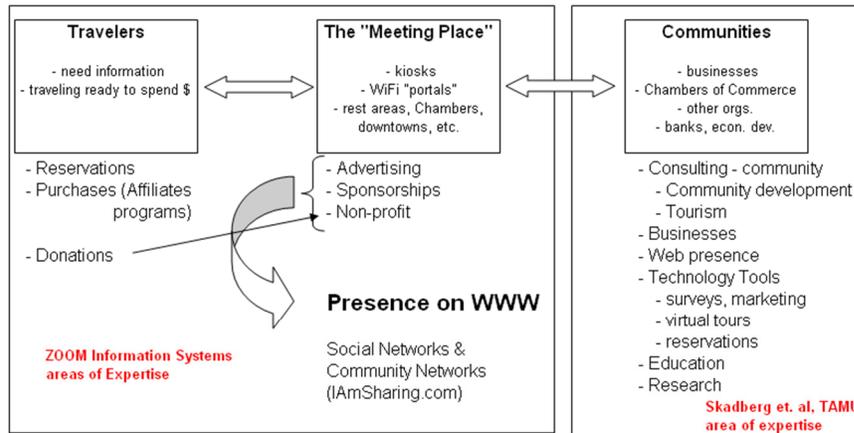
The following Diagram C9-5 was created when we were pulling together proposals to pursue the wireless Internet contract with the state of Texas. There are many different ways to develop income streams from a multiplicity of customers. In order for the greatest success, the long term strategy should be to develop all of them. In the short-term we should examine the quickest return so we can then re-invest to develop the system and grow the team to support all scales including State, region, community, organizations and associations, businesses and landowners.

As mentioned above, the first opportunity would be to approach communities to develop a sort of “seed-funding” strategy to further build out the system by which we can provide various services to the businesses (courses, expert advise, networking, etc.) and at the same build out a robust sales team and strategy.

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DOT WiFi/Kiosks Where's the \$\$\$



Finding Other Support - Grants, fundraising

Government Funding

- ISTE A (Transportation Enhancement)
- Governor's Office
- Homeland Security
- Agencies (TxDOT, THC, etc.)
- SBIR, etc.
- Congressional Earmarks

Philanthropic, fundraising

- Kelloggs
- Bill Gates
- etc.

Other Potential Players / Sponsors - benefactors

Microsoft (Surface), Google (Earth), Amazon (A-9), Intel (digital communities)

Diagram C9-5: Where's the Money

Large Financial Institutions Additionally, I believe we should very quickly approach banks to have a conversation about potential collaboration.

Congresspeople Other important relationships would be with political representatives at local, state and the national level.

Topic C: Iowa Community and Tourism Development Project (ICTDP)

This paper has received the majority of my attention in the last two years, although the concepts have been in development since I wrote the original strategy for the Texas Heritage Trail program in 1997. This approach is adaptable. It has been presented to people and organizations in many places including Colombia, Jamaica, Portugal, Hungary, etc. This is the first that this approach has been presented in the United States, but all of the experience for it came from my work in the tourism and recreation industry in Iowa, Texas and my studies of "experiential tourism" for the last 25 years.

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Introduction

I have been evaluating the potential of Iowa (and the mid-west) for rural tourism and innovative agricultural development since 1984. Based on this experience and considerable research Iowa could become a leader in the emerging realm of “experiential tourism” and innovation in agriculture. Iowa truly could become the “Field of Dreams” in this ever expanding “opportunity space”!

However, as with most governmental jurisdictions, whether it is United States, or any location, a significant challenge arises regarding coordination of organizational efforts and to realize the full potentials of tourism while maintaining a strong, diverse agricultural economy. This proposal describes recommendations for how to develop tourism while at the same time empowering rural communities and their citizens to expand the economy (especially agricultural) of the region/country. At the same time, careful considerations are made for a holistic approach to protect the environmental, historical and cultural characteristics of the communities and the region.

As a result of our research we have identified three primary “Initiatives” diagram C9-6 to comprise the Iowa Community and Tourism Development Project (ICTDP). These Initiatives will best be developed simultaneously and in a harmonious fashion. Each of these Initiatives are described in detail later in this document. An introduction to these initiatives are:

Initiative I – Education: Iowa Tourism, Agricultural and Community Economic Diversification Institute—the “ITACED Institute” for tourism and value-added agricultural technical assistance. (The Institute could be sponsorship named, similar to the Papa John’s institute at the University of Northern Iowa—UNI)

As depicted in Diagram C9-6, this part of the initiative is associated with ITACED Institute that will provide access to information and technical assistance to Iowa with an entrepreneurial focus. The ITACED Institute will support a holistic economic development strategy focused on tourism, innovation in agriculture and small business development. We can access, for free, considerable educational materials targeting rural economic development. The ITACED will be an institutional (ultimately a physical location) and a Web based distance learning

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resource to be accessed through “partner” organizations (e.g. universities, Internet cafes and/or community and school computer centers/classrooms). Additionally the ITACED will provide on-site, hands-on training seminars to local “trainers” to create a network of “tech-transfer associates” throughout Iowa. It is our preference to partner with universities and technical colleges to develop educational outreach programs.

*Initiative II – Branding/Marketing: “Experience Iowa” regional tourism destination branding (national and internationally marketed). – **the actual “brand/trademark” will be developed from the initiative itself, “Experience Iowa” is only used as a place-holder.***

Develop the state of Iowa with regional branding to be marketed nationally and internationally as “Experience Iowa”, as an experiential tourism destination. The purpose of this initiative is to expand experiential tourism in the state based on an abundance of tourism destinations and attractions, in addition to the existing and developing infrastructure. Based on preliminary assessments and economic indicators, experiential/rural tourism in Iowa offers a robust and expanding market. “Experience Iowa” will develop the connections between the various attractions, will create the marketing tools and brand, and will provide the travel and tourism services to grow this potential market.

*Initiative III—Developing New Technologies: The Iowa TravelerHost Information Centers—Internet access portals (wireless Internet portals, kiosks) – Iowa TravelerHost Tourism and Community Network – **the actual name of the network will be developed out of the initiative.***

The purpose of the Iowa TravelerHost Tourism and Community Network (TravelerHost Network) is to provide: 1) a complete “package” of answers to questions that traveler’s might have, 2) customized information about the places they are traveling through, and 3) support for rural communities and small businesses to market themselves. For a place like Iowa, the intent of the TravelerHost Network is to help regions and communities be better hosts to visitors and do a better job of “Marketing Iowa”. In addition, the TravelerHost

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Network can provide dynamic, interesting and timely information to users at locations where it is not practical to have staff to serve people.



Diagram C9-6: The Three Initiatives of the Iowa Community and Tourism Development Project (education, marketing, technology)

The guiding principles for this three-initiative project in Iowa are to embrace Creative, Holistic and Sustainable Development and key concerns include:

- Tourism and agricultural innovation must be developed in the context of the existing economy.
- The local region/communities must be the “owners”!
- New development must be complimentary, and enhance quality of life.
- The *Project* must protect the natural, cultural, social and historical resources.
- Diversity is paramount, any single industry economy is risky – even tourism.
- Most important factor in the new tourism economy—EXPERIENCE (Authentic, Real, Quality).

Iowa is primed for success – because it already has a strong agricultural economy and a robust business sector.

Potential Collaborators

- **Zoom Information Systems**
- State and U.S. Representatives
- Bank and other funding organizations

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- AAA
- Department of Economic Development
- University of Northern Iowa
- Iowa State University
- Department of Tourism
- North Central Regional Center for Rural Development (NCRCRD – Michigan State)
- Solomon Source Consulting
- Meredith Printing
- Des Moines Register, and T.V. stations

Introduction to Vision, Guiding Principles and Important Project Concepts

Following prior projects undertaken, it is critical to have a strong conceptual framework for projects. We have created several theoretical foundations that have been derived from over 25 years of work in the tourism industry at all levels. These conceptual and theoretical foundations began with the regional development models created by Clare Gunn in 1979, however we have included considerable refinement and integrated the important aspects of the Internet. These theories (or “guiding principles”) will not be presented again here but have been described in detail based on real work in communities in Texas and Iowa, as well as in international settings.

The purpose of the Iowa Community and Tourism Development Project is to stimulate creative innovation in the economy of Iowa through the creation of an experiential learning institution (**see Diagram 4**). We will begin with a core educational program derived from our team’s broad based experience. Delivery will be supported by state-of-the-art hardware and software infrastructure. Our “faculty” is connected to excellent colleagues, experts and practitioners around the world. Working together, they can produce a unique experiential, multidisciplinary, international institution that will excel in education, research and outreach. Iowa students will be able to expand their horizons enormously in this virtual and on-site learning environment.

Initiative I: Education, Iowa Tourism and Rural Economic Diversification Pilot-Initiative (ITACED Institute)

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Introduction

As one travels Iowa and experiences the rich, diverse and robust culture it is quite apparent that agriculture and tourism are entirely complimentary. The beauty and unique character of the countryside is a result of the strong history of agriculture. The aim of this proposed project is to recognize the strengths of these two industries and develop strategies to grow opportunities and further diversify the economy, based upon existing agriculture. Additionally, this proposal recommends the development of new technologies that will facilitate this process and significantly contribute to a new platform for *extending education* to more people. Inherent in these technologies are the capabilities to track all aspects of the initiative including educational program success, marketing and business performance.

The initiative in short, will build a bridge of benefits to two (and more) woven industries – tourism and agriculture via entrepreneurship, diversification into value-added agriculture and creative business development in contrast to a competitive approach. The main features of the initiative will build from a regional focus, development of cooperatives, and adapting successful innovative tourism and agricultural initiatives from other places (e.g. Texas, Delaware, Rwanda SPREAD project, etc.). *Technology* and *education* will be the vehicles for success. The end result of any effort will be to extend educational opportunities to broader and more diverse audiences. The effort will focus on extension outreach programs throughout the region. Once this effort has been developed, tested and evolved the same process can be taken to other areas in Iowa (and other mid-western states) and adopted.

Develop an Iowa Technical Assistance & Educational Resource Center (hereafter ITACED Institute) that provides access to information and assistance to Iowa with an entrepreneurial focus.

Proposed Approach

- 1) Aim to enhance a holistic economic development strategy – tourism (ecotourism, nature, heritage and cultural tourism, etc.), agriculture, value-added agriculture, energy, entrepreneurship, micro-enterprise development.
- 2) Adapt existing educational materials through Solomon Source Consulting for use in

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Iowa. (e.g. *Nature Tourism: A Guidebook for Evaluating Enterprise Opportunities, Developing Tourism in Your Community, Identifying Community Power Actors, Texas Friendly*, etc).

- 3) Develop a “custom” entrepreneurial training series (modularized), specific to the context of the host community(s) – we currently have resources designated and may partner with universities and colleges to develop educational outreach programs.
- 4) Develop a custom Iowa Rural Community Leadership Program (IRCLP).
- 5) Create a Web based distance learning resource Institute that could be accessed through “partner” universities, Internet cafes and/or community and school computer centers/classrooms.
 - On-site, hands-on training seminars provided by locally trained instructors (using a train-the-trainer) approach (seek sponsorship from Hungarian agencies, non-profit organizations or other entities).
- 6) Conduct research and project benchmarking throughout the project lifecycle.

Steps in the Process

- Conduct Strategic Planning session for the ITACED Institute strategy workshop – Identify Project Board and Key Stakeholders for the coalition.
- Form working coalition.
- Identify viable sized “region(s)” to initiate project.
- Create short list of prospect communities (regional based preferred – see criteria below).
- Evaluate those communities based on a set of criteria to ensure project success.
- Resources for the Institute are available and some are in development, or can be adopted/integrated from a variety of sources (e.g. Solomon Source, Extension materials from various U.S. universities, etc.).
- Identify potential additional funding sources (public & private)

Our team and other appropriate associates “contextualize” the approach based on political and social climate of proposed sites. Diagram C9-7 shows the general structure and flow from the Mission, essentially established under the rubric of the ITACED

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Institute, the creation of products and services using existing financial and information sources, and moving through the three “arms” (i.e. Institute, Experience Iowa, Trademark) of the initiative towards the delivery of practical outputs for our customers and constituents.

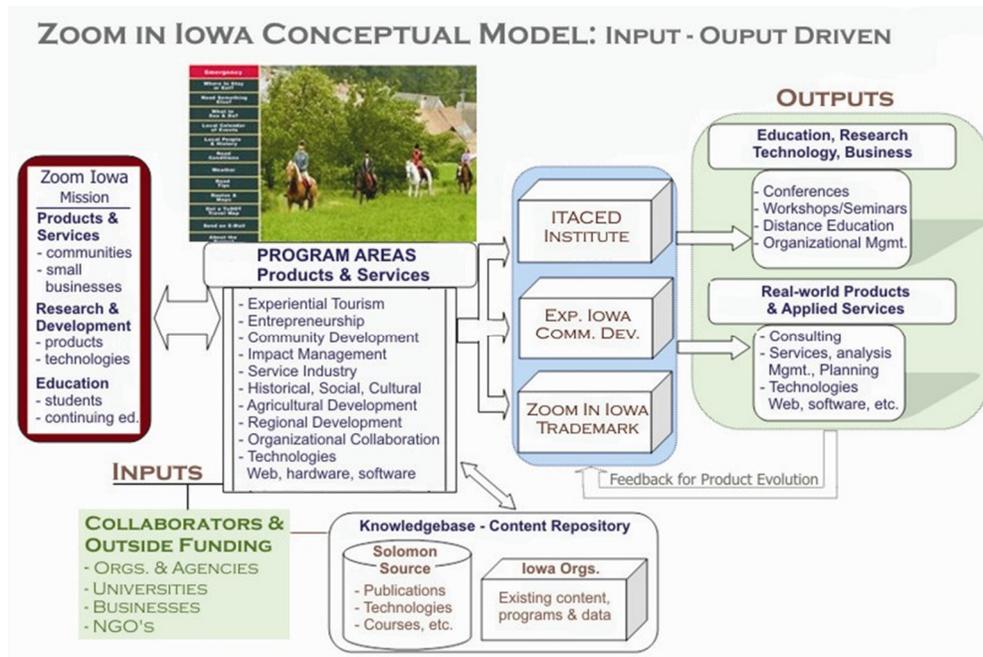


Diagram C9-7. Iowa Conceptual Model: Input – Output Driven

Pilot Study Areas – Pending discussion

Rural Iowa agricultural and rural community (Ames?)

See criteria for selection listed below

Outcomes:

- 1) Stimulate/create robust rural community economies.
- 2) Sustainability as a driver creating sensible linkages between the various complimentary “assets” and economic sectors within the community/region.
- 3) Conserve (and/or enhance) the natural, historical and cultural assets of the community.
- 4) Enhance *Quality of Life*

This initiative aims to integrate all aspects of community economic development into a

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centralized approach supported by a technology based information and technical assistance – ITACED. Publications, information and a variety of rudimentary tools are available to assist communities realize a more diverse set of economic development opportunities. These resources can be combined with new forms of assistance to address other important areas of need including: leadership training & development, tourism development, community enhancement, technology development and utilization, and forest, animal and plant (ecological) protection and enhancement. These areas can be supported via technical assistance and training and other support to stimulate/enhance other economic activities that are necessary for communities to flourish, while also protecting the natural and historical resource base and culture of the region.

The approach utilized will provide incentives for the adoption and diffusion of the use of new technologies and distance learning tools and information that is, essentially, universally needed for tourism and other economic development activities. New Web-based technologies can create direct economic returns (rewards) for businesses and communities. These “rewards” then will stimulate people to expand their use of computers for running and growing their businesses and community economic development programs.

An active outreach and “marketing branch” of this initiative will promote resources and services and also conduct in-the-field research to identify and recruit communities that are “primed” with proper leadership and a community collaborative spirit. These communities (or groups of communities) can then be “seeded” with a package of incentives to stimulate their participation.

Because this approach is designed to be market-driven, it will be economically sustainable perpetually. Driven by a successful business development model, programs will be designed to be self-sustaining over time. Initial funds will be used to “prime” the initiative, but the “Institute” will be designed to generate revenues so that the initiative will not need to be subsidized over time.

Pilot Community (Region) Selection Criteria – (tentative and not prioritized)

- Leadership
- Creativity

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- Cottage industries
- Relatively stable economic basis
- Community forestry
- Funding assistance available
- Diversity of natural resources
- Critical mass of tourist attractions
- Linkages between communities (collaborative potential)
- Absence of contentiousness intra-community and inter-community
- Infrastructure (roads, telecommunications, service industry e.g. food, lodging)
- Access to financial support and outside funding
- Social networking - capital
- Access – to tourism attractions by visitors, distance from University collaborators
- Prior leadership training
- Volunteer/service organizations
- Prior projects that may have potential to re-start or revitalize
- Rural development models (existing Hungarian approaches – Rwanda/Texas A&M)

Initiative II Branding/Marketing: “Experience Iowa” – Regional Brand for National and International Markets

Preliminarily, Dr. Skadberg has determined that Iowa is well positioned to become a national and international tourist destination. Our Iowa network has been actively researching and developing an approach (and a preliminary brand) that will compliment the Iowa TravelerHost kiosk project.

Regional Brand

Developed in Iowa, the “Experience Iowa” brand - the place, as an regional, national/international tourism destination. The purpose of this is to expand experiential tourism in the state based on an abundance of tourism destinations and attractions as well as existing and developing infrastructure. Based on preliminary assessments and economic indicators experiential/rural tourism in Iowa offers a robust and expanding market place. Dr. Skadberg and his tourism network in Iowa will

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develop the connections between the various attractions, will develop the marketing tools and brand, and will create the travel and tourism services to grow this potential market.

Steps in the Process

- Identify products – (e.g. Farm-stay/B&Bs, The Four Elements of Iowa)
- Develop phased concept for “marketing master-plan” – then answer the question “where do we start first?”
- Create list of Farm-stay/B&Bs for first packages
- Create list of tours as part of a “menu of experiences”
- Reverse engineer “packages” pricing based on expenses (e.g. accommodations, transportation, staffing, marketing, air tickets etc.)
- Forecast expenses out over time
- Develop list of people and organizations that might be involved directly or indirectly.
- Develop “mock-up” Web site
- Identify organizations to help, collaborate or invite as “sponsors” (e.g. business, agencies, organizations).
- Begin thinking of a Board of Advisors
- Begin thinking about who should be involved – guides, teachers, resort operators, program leaders, director and staff.
- Financing, fundraising, loans, etc.

Growing Tourism in Iowa through public and private partnerships - fostering community participation

From our experience in the tourism industry, we understand that cooperation and partnerships are very important for the success of a tourism development effort. Therefore, it is imperative for Iowa regional organizations, national agencies, travel organizations, universities and community colleges, and the communities where the Iowa TravelerHost Network facilities reside to collaborate for the success of this initiative. Although technology is critical to this project, it is Experience Iowa’s mission to make the technology transparent to its users, so that the tourism agencies can dedicate their energies for public relations and to create win-win relationships. We envision that the

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following objectives can be accomplished through a partnership between the public and private sectors:

- Increase community assistance to enhance informational content provided to travelers.
- Reduce problems associated with vandalism and theft to facilities and equipment at travel information facilities.
- Leverage potential support of organizations that might benefit from the project (financial and otherwise).
- Better assure that the benefits of this initiative are shared by as many communities, businesses and citizens as possible

Leverage the other two Initiatives to maximize the marketing impact of “Experience Iowa” to expand recognition of Iowa as a tourism destination, especially the ITACED Institute (Initiative I).



Figure C9-3: Conceptual Web Mock-up for “Experience Iowa!”

Initiative III: Developing New Technologies: Iowa TravelerHost Tourism and Community Network

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What is the Experience Iowa, TravelerHost Tourism and Community Network?

The Experience Iowa TravelerHost Tourism and Community Network (hereafter TravelerHost Network) is a network of free-standing kiosks and virtual portals installed or “broadcast” in various locations throughout Iowa (hotels, airports, attractions, etc.). A pilot project called “TexBox Tourism and Community Network” was developed and deployed in Texas in the United States. TexBoxes (electronic information kiosks), during the pilot, provided important travel information and services to the traveling public. The Experience Iowa TravelerHost Network will create numerous additional benefits, a few include:

- a new “marketing” venue for rural communities and businesses interested in growing tourism.
- hubs for regional and community collaboration and networking
- valuable capabilities to disseminate critical emergency/medical services to rural areas
- system to capture valuable information about the traveling public, their activities, preferences and feedback

Introduction and Demonstration Project Overview

Proposed is the development of a demonstration version of free-standing computer information kiosk including: cabinet, computer hardware (CPU, touch-screen monitor, etc.) and software necessary to facilitate access to an online based system that will provide information to the traveling public. Initial information provided will include:

- Tourist information (accommodations, attractions, services, etc.—*for pilot these resources may be limited*)
- Weather
- Road conditions
- Route information
- Safety Information
- User surveys
- Emergency services
- Interpretive information about the area (natural, cultural, etc.)

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- Local industry contact information

Each chosen site will need to have Internet access available to the kiosk, preferably high-speed.

Justification

Travelers typically know little about the places they are traveling through. They also have questions that need to be answered (e.g. road conditions, weather, etc.). In conjunction with the efforts of the Iowa Department of Transportation and of Tourism, this proposal outlines the creation of a network of digital information kiosks/portals that will provide answers to traveler’s questions.

Purpose

The purpose of the TravelerHost Network is to provide:

- 1) a complete “package” of answers to questions that traveler’s might have,
- 2) customized information about the places they are traveling through,
- 3) support small businesses in rural communities and regions, and
- 4) contribute to coordination of tourism development efforts throughout Iowa.

For a state like Iowa, the intent of the TravelerHost Network is to help the Iowa DOT and communities be better hosts to visitors and do a better job of “Marketing Iowa”. In addition, the TravelerHost Network can provide dynamic, interesting and timely information to users at locations where it is not practical to have the facilities staffed. In addition, the TravelerHost network can serve as a template that can easily be adapted throughout the entire state of Iowa and then the mid-west.

Steps in the Process

Partner organizations and our team will perform the following tasks as part of this project:

- Conduct on-site reconnaissance and perform research in the areas and communities where the kiosks/portals will be.
- Contact communities located near each kiosk for assistance with gathering local information about attractions, accommodations and other pertinent information.
- Purchase, assemble and test the hardware, software and other equipment for the physical Kiosk system (including the cabinet and any accessories).

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- Research and identify Web based resources and information that will constitute the “informational content” of Kiosk system.
- Develop Graphic User Interface (GUI) necessary to provide touch-screen access to information provided through the kiosks.
- Develop Web based resources (Web pages, text, graphics, maps, etc.) that will be stored locally on the computer CPU that will be housed in each of the four kiosk units.
- Develop Web based resources (Web pages, text, graphics, databases, maps, etc.) that will be accessed from a Web server housed at a centralized location

The final “pilot” product will present a prototype with some, but not all, of the information developed.

A regional tourism development hub?

The Iowa TravelerHost can become a tourism hub, creating a communication and collaboration network to assist communities and businesses to share information and resources. The TravelerHost Network is a system that can provide “marketing” exposure for rural communities to travelers who stop in Iowa communities and tourism attractions and Travel Information Centers annually.

Partners in the TravelerHost Network

A cornerstone of the TravelerHost Network is that the “content” of each will be developed and maintained by regional groups (local COC, CVB’s, etc.) who live near the visitor facilities or attractions. Local responsibility can transform the project into a community grassroots-based effort. This design distributes responsibility of developing and maintaining the content to local groups who are one of the primary beneficiaries of the system, besides the traveling public.

The Iowa Traveler Information Centers can become more important for nearby communities because the information technology infrastructure outlined in this proposal might very well establish Iowa tourism information centers as “Hubs” for community and regional tourism development. The TravelerHost Network can answer customer’s questions while it can also address several other important issues that are facing the tourism industry, rural communities, and citizens in the Department. A few of these are

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outlined briefly below.

Addressing the Needs of Both User Groups

The TravelerHost Network can help Iowa and the Dept. of Tourism to satisfy the needs of communities' and travelers. Communities need to promote their areas to the traveling public, and travelers need travel information and ways to find tourism opportunities. The TravelerHost Network accomplishes this while satisfying several goals for Iowa, its citizens, and the people that are visiting the country. A few of these include:

Easing traveler's—travel anxieties—safety & security

The TravelerHost Network will provide important safety and security information which can potentially reduce traffic fatalities and ensure that traveler's concerns are minimized, while maximizing public awareness of safety issues.

Create tourism marketing opportunities for communities and businesses

The TravelerHost Network will provide communities a way to attract travelers to spend some time in their region. Marketing for rural areas is constantly a challenge. The kiosks and portals at designated locations would provide useful information to travelers and create a new vehicle to reach potential customers who at the present time are driving by with little knowledge about the area.

Avoid creating a new government agency or bureaucracy

The TravelerHost Network will provide additional information without creating a need for additional on-site personnel. The design of the TravelerHost Network facilitates gathering information and providing a network for inputting, accessing and updating the information. The majority of content production and management will be the responsibility of the communities where the tourism kiosks are located.

Collect important information about tourism's Impact in Iowa

Embedded in the TravelerHost Network kiosks technology are the capabilities to capture important information about users of the system. Several strategies have been developed and can be used to gather important information about tourism in throughout Iowa. In addition, this information will be invaluable to policy and decision makers (local, regional, national) and researchers interested in studying tourism's impacts.

Internet Access Kiosk

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Internet access Kiosks will be installed in designated facilities in a well-lit, secure location. They will be secured to the floor to prevent theft. The kiosks that are being considered will be heavy-duty with durable components, designed specifically for use in areas without supervision. Other components such as a security camera will be included to discourage vandalism.

The kiosk will be attractive with a modular design. It will include the following components:

- 1) Kiosk Enclosure
- 2) Color monitor (optional touch screen)
- 3) Computer CPU with CD drive (up-to-date processor and RAM/ROM memory)
- 4) Durable keyboard
- 5) Durable trackball mouse (optional outdoor)
- 6) Camera
- 7) Speakers/sound system
- 8) Internet ready with wireless capability (optional wireless Internet "hot-spot")
- 9) Promotional space



Figure C9-4: Example Kiosk

Promotion and Public Relation Campaigns

Working in concert with the existing projects in Iowa, “*Experience Iowa*” will launch a public relations campaign to promote this project in a selected region, nationwide and internationally. This project is the first of its kind in Iowa and it will serve as a model for other states considering this type of offering. To sustain the positive publicity about this initiative, “*Experience Iowa*” (see branding discussion in Initiative II) will actively promote this service utilizing its media contacts and outlets and through its relationships with governmental offices, other businesses, tourism associations and other organizations.

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will actually coordinate, track, and monitor all activities, in perpetuity.

Diagram C9-9 depicts the need to establish a critical mass of attractions in order to attract more visitors and to be able to support a regional, national and international branding effort for enhancing tourism development (the map in Diagram C9-9 is Iowa). In addition, through the pooling of organizational, institutional and community resources, capacity building is enhanced via improvements in efficiencies and effectiveness due to improved communication and coordination.

Effective coordination is easily accommodated by utilizing Internet Communication Technologies (ICT). Due to the ease of “manifesting” and supporting “The Network” with ICT tools, we will be better able to support regional networking and collaboration. The model we employ is about cooperation and creativity rather than a competitive model. This focus results in the greatest benefits for the greatest number of people, “the whole is greater than the sum of its parts”.

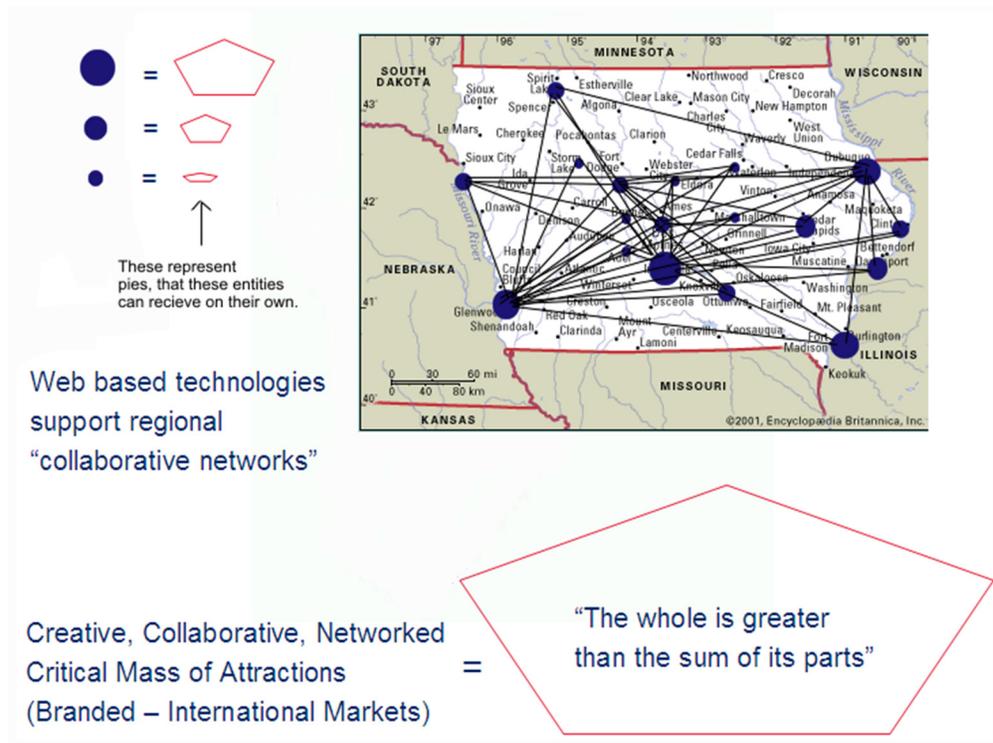


Diagram C9-9: Establishing a critical mass of attractions via coordination and technology – (example provided for Iowa)

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Electronic (virtual) meeting places – an interface for commerce and education

Real, substantive content needs to be generated from the grass-roots. Otherwise information is superficial and doesn't get to the real story. Every place, business and person has a story to tell. In order to create this content we need to create a “grass-fire” of inspiration to provide a way for people to be able to tell their story – whatever it might be. This process of people catching onto a wave of new ideas or technologies is called “adoption-diffusion”. This term describes the process by which people start taking part of a new phenomenon, and those ideas are then taken up by more and more people in a society. An example of when this idea was first applied was with refrigerators.

The following excerpt from Rogers will provide a good overview of this concept.

Rogers Model for the Adoption and Diffusion of Innovations

The innovation adoption curve of Rogers is a model that classifies adopters of innovations into various categories, based on the idea that certain individuals are inevitably more open to adaptation than others. It is also referred to as Multi-Step Flow Theory or Diffusion of Innovations Theory.

Innovators

Brave people, pulling the change. Innovators are very important communication.

Early Adopters

Respectable people, opinion leaders, try out new ideas, but in a careful way.

Early Majority

Thoughtful people, careful but accepting change more quickly than the average.

Late Majority

Skeptic people, will use new ideas or products only when the majority is using it.

Laggards

Traditional people, caring for the "old ways", are critical towards new ideas and will only accept it if the new idea has become mainstream or even tradition.

The **diffusion of innovations curve** (innovation adoption curve) of Rogers is useful to remember that trying to quickly and massively convince the mass of a new controversial idea is useless. It makes more sense in these circumstances to start with convincing

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innovators and early adopters first. Also the categories and percentages can be used as a first draft to estimate target groups for communication purposes.

Diffusion research focus was on five elements: 1) the characteristics of an innovation which may influence its adoption; 2) the decision-making process that occurs when individuals consider adopting a new idea, product or practice; 3) the characteristics of individuals that make them likely to adopt an innovation; 4) the consequences for individuals and society of adopting an innovation; and 5) communication channels used in the adoption process.

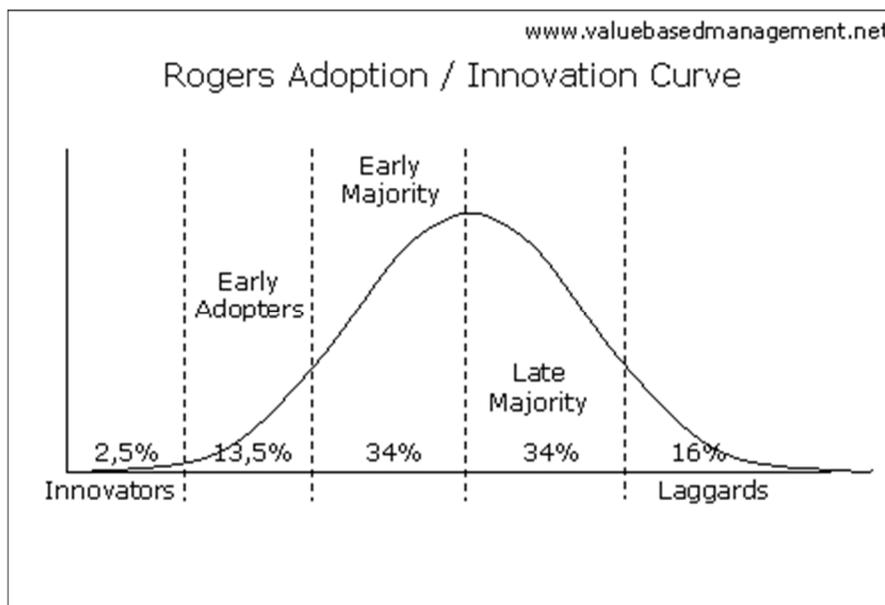
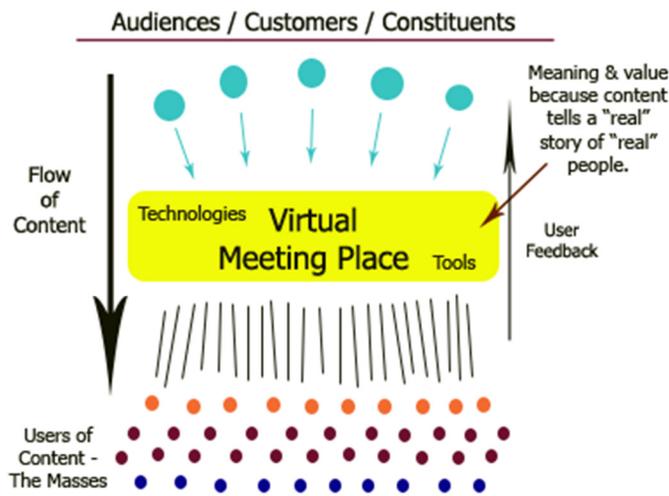


Diagram C9-9: Rogers Adoption Diffusion Curve

(source: http://www.valuebasedmanagement.net/methods_rogers_innovation_adoption_curve.html)

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The machines (properly empowered) will teach our Customers how to create the content as they go through the process of using the tools/technologies. We just need to make it Simple!

Diagram C9-10: Electronic (Virtual) Meeting Places – An Interface for Commerce and Education – supporting exchange between users and content providers.

Diagram C9-10 depicts what I call the “Virtual Meeting Place” (web portal) which shows the flow of information and services from a group of content providers (e.g. businesses, institutions, organizations, etc.) to their customers or constituents. We believe the quality of the exchange is based upon two primary components 1) the efficiency and effectiveness of the technologies to facilitate the exchange (technologies & tools), and 2) the usefulness and usability of the information and services being exchanged – connected to the idea of “stickiness” in ICT circles. (Also see “flow experience” or optimal experience theory, Mihály Csíkszentmihályi)

Much could be written on these two items. For brevity we suggest that there are challenges and tremendous opportunities to improve in both areas. Secondly, we see that for our objectives, the most critical element is to decipher existing information into useful materials for those entities, or audiences, that we intend to serve. Our observation is that within the Internet as a whole (including well established institutions) that there is more than enough information available to satisfy most purposes, or needs. The challenge, and opportunity, is to convert and/or translate this information into a form that is understandable and usable for various constituencies, and then deliver it to the audiences

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with expediency. We refer to this process as “sifting through the haystack”, which for the Internet is becoming more challenging every day. This is because every day more content is being created and also the potential to get lost in the labyrinth increases. The next critical step is to develop the technology tools to facilitate these exchanges in a way that satisfies the users, and helps them to improve their lives.

“Meaningful” Content is King!

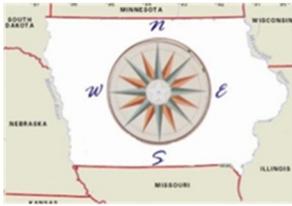
In order for new ideas to move “across the landscape”, metaphorically speaking, people need to see how these new services might benefit them. It seems entirely possible that with these technologies, and audience appropriate content, that the process of adoption-diffusion can be accelerated. A key to this will be using the tools at our disposal to carry the message of “benefits” and by making the adoption process simple and painless.

In the domain of the services that we intend to offer, there may actually be more than one thing that is being adopted by our customers. For example, new environmentally benign agricultural practices and the technology they are using. The need to consider and address our customer’s fears, concerns and other obstacles that might deter their using our technology is paramount. The best way to address these issues is to understand our customers and make sure the services are user friendly and to provide rapid rewards that will help them realize the overall benefits in the shortest time possible.

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Topic E: Experience Iowa Travel Show



Introduction

This is about: “people helping people, and the planet”.

We also believe that travel and tourism are vehicles that can lead to peace on the planet.

We understand that “The Solution” to many of the world’s challenges has to do with educating people and providing opportunities for people to get exposure to the wonders of nature, and for them to experience nature in new ways – leading to an awakening of the spirit.

Initially, our approach seems to focus on tourism or economic development. However, upon closer examination, it is apparent that these are used as vehicles for interaction, and platforms to establish opportunities for people to experience the out-of-doors. We use the term "Experiential Tourism" to describe a very robust opportunity space, mainly because there has been so much fragmentation in the tourism industry, with new terms being constantly created (e.g. ecotourism, nature tourism, heritage, shopping, etc). Ultimately it all comes down to experience. Satiating people's curiosity and providing them with meaningful, memorable experiences.

Purpose

The Experience Iowa Travel Show, will create an attractive and interesting way for people to discover what there is to see and do, and the people and places behind those experiences. This is one of the primary marketing mechanisms for our endeavors. It should provide a great deal of attraction for bringing our Rural Tourism Association together as we branch out to offer our various “rural development” resources (toolbox) to regions, communities, businesses and agriculturalists.

Plans to do the Experience Iowa Traveling Show

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Vision/dream for Experience Iowa Travel Show

“If you're doing something new you've got to have a vision. You've got to have a perspective. You've got to have some north star you're aiming for, and you just believe somehow you'll get there, which kind of gets to the passion point.” ~ Steve Case ~

The Experience Iowa Travel Show is in essence a marketing platform for expanding the impact and exposure of Iowa and Experience Iowa to the world. The idea follows along the lines of Mutual of Omaha's Wild Kingdom, or Crocodile Hunter, but about real people and places and experiences.

Another benefit of the Experience Iowa Travel Show, is to bring goodwill to those places that we visit. Telling their story and planting seeds for dreams to grow. Showcasing what they are doing, and basically getting the word out to the world. Discovering the hard to find stories and telling them. At the same time we promote and educate people, in those places, about our “tool-box” of community, tourism and small business development and empowerment resources.

We will travel in a “green”, environmental “cutting edge” coach, using all the most current technologies for reducing our “carbon footprint”, but not foregoing the latest technologies or conveniences. As we travel, one primary aim will be to grow our Rural Tourism Association and introduce to more and more people and communities our wholesome endeavor to “tell the stories of the people and their places, and the Gaia”.

This is not about creating a celebrity, or “travel show” as it is about authenticity. It comes down, ultimately, to waking people up to our relationship to our hearts, the earth (Gaia), the cosmos and each other.

What sets the Experience Iowa Travel Show apart?

- the way we tell the story (interpretation).
- the host's (Dr. Skadberg) personality, his expertise, but also his experience with the tourism industry from end to end.
- Our Web interface that provides the necessary information about how to experience the places presented.
- That it is about showing people experiences that they can afford and do

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themselves, not high risk, expense, dangerous or hard to get to.

- The subjects of the show are unique, interesting, authentic and about *regular* people and places.

The Starting Point – Iowa, Texas, then to the Mid-west and other states where wireless Internet projects are being developed.

Experience Iowa Travel Show – marketing/brand materials out and line up next steps

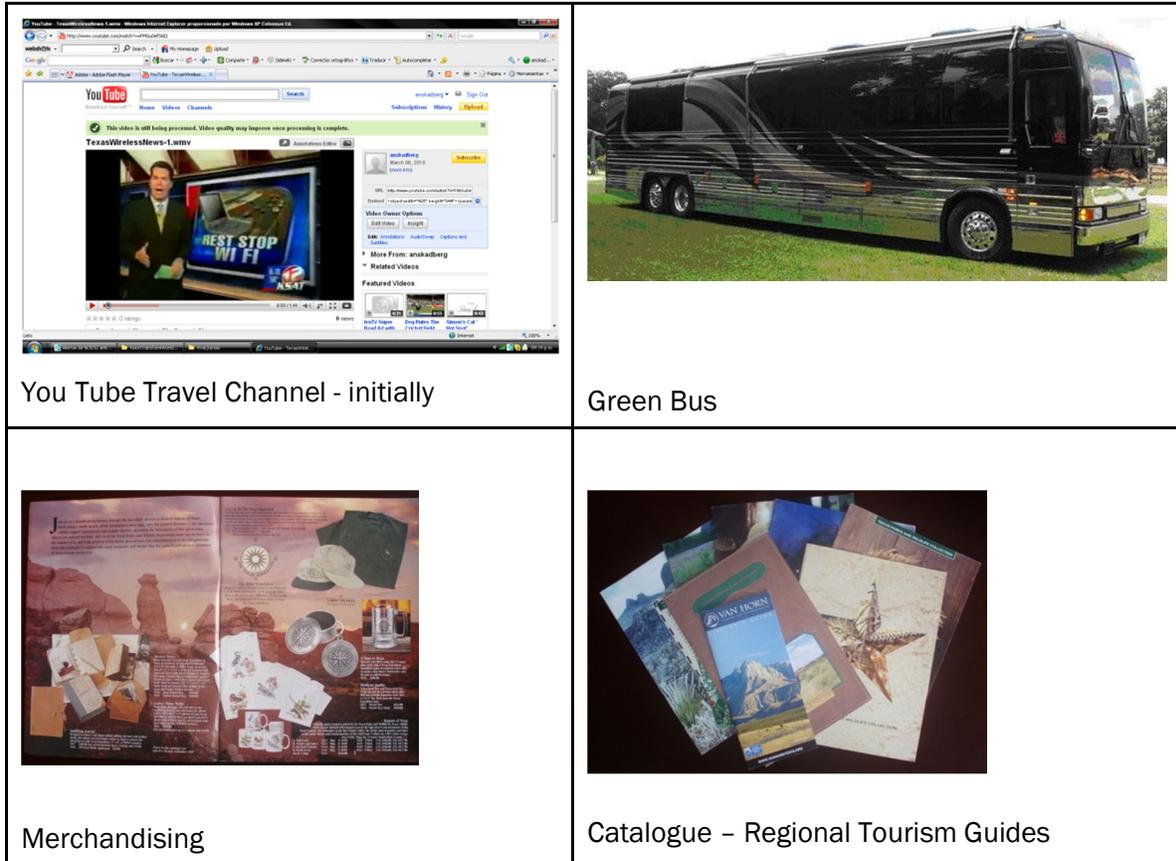


Figure C9-5: Various components of The Experience Iowa Travel Show

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Figure C9-5 continued: Various components of The Experience Iowa Travel Show

Videos/photos - production

- Go to each of the towns and major attractions throughout the state and do video/photo shoot,
- Develop a semi-standard way to story-board and capture,
- Standardize presentations, videos, to some degree to create consistency,
- Create a Script for each Movie: use Dr. Jim Kimmel’s principles of interpretation to tell the story.

Experience Iowa Travel Show Itinerary

Get out the map of Iowa, listing some of our first customers, and additional premier attractions and begin creating a video/travel schedule.

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- Communities, attractions, presentations, sales, collaboration strategies.
- Contact places preliminarily to ensure quality control, and manage relationships.
- Prepare promotional materials to leave with featured locations.
- Look at calendar of events to be sure to get to the communities during key times.

Sponsorship Financial Mechanisms

Look for potential “green” sponsors for traveling, bus, low-impact

- How will we “sell” them the idea?

Put together sponsorship strategy/package for entities featured in the show

- Make a marketing plan.
- Create sponsorship list.
- Prepare sponsor package.
- Get sponsors.

Transportation

- Identify how to Outfit as a “Green” bus,
- Look for sponsorships, fuel, technology, attractions, agencies,
- State, Inter-state, Mid-west, national, corporate, international.

The Experience Iowa Travel Show will highlight the following, using our unique experiential tourism interpretive model.

- People
- Accommodations/services – B&Bs
- Food
- History, culture and commerce
- Hospitality
- Environment, landscapes, weather, etc.
- Festivals and Events

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Topic F: Creating an Association



Rural Tourism Association – Iowa Chapter

Mission

The mission of the Rural Tourism Association is to grow tourism and improve rural economic opportunities for businesses, agriculturalists and citizens, in a sustainable way protecting the environmental, social and cultural/historical character of communities and regions throughout Iowa. A primary aim of the Association will be to enhance diversity of economic activities utilizing a creative, cooperative organizational model to expand tourism and complimentary activities to grow regional, national and international markets. The means by which we will accomplish this mission will include, but not be limited to:

- effective and audience appropriate educational programs.
- utilize collaborative/cooperative networking practices and technologies.
- employ creative and ethical marketing attraction programs and techniques.
- employ internal and external evaluative practices to keep the Association’s services current and beneficial to the membership.
- establish relationships with appropriate organizations, institutions and policy makers.
- maintain open and effective internal and external communications, especially to serve the best interests of the members.
- provide greater use value and benefits than the cash value of the membership fees and services.

How will the Rural Tourism Association serve its members?

- Produce “Guidebooks” and feature member businesses and attractions.
- Create a “collaborative network” giving them access to state-of-the-art Web

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- presence and networking tools and educational resources.
- Provide discounted educational programs and materials.
 - a) Courses (online and classroom) in collaboration with institutions.
 - b) Workshops, seminars and short courses.
 - c) Online tutorials and access to expert advice and “white papers”.
- Marketing, Promotions and attraction and advertising.
 - a) Through the Association’s marketing efforts.
 - b) Regional, national and international.
 - c) Co-op advertising.
 - d) Marketing educational programs and consulting assistance.
 - e) Members will get preferred rates for advertising in materials produced by the Association (e.g. Guidebook, magazine).
- Membership to a “cooperative” that will effectively leverage the collective interests of the individual members.
 - a) With policy makers.
 - b) With important regional, national and international organizations.
 - c) With travel agencies and online marketing organizations.
 - c) Building a team to pursue grants and external funding for business and other purposes.
- Provide services that are complimentary to regional tourism development efforts.
 - a) Value-added agriculture.
 - b) Innovation in agriculture for diversification
 - c) Environmental conservation (e.g. habitat protection).
 - d) Cultural/historical protection and enhancement.
 - e) Social “good works” in collaboration with service organizations and governmental programs.
 - f) Hospitality (hotel and restaurant).
 - g) Festival and event planning.

Case Example: Creating a Large Regional Tourism Attraction—Moving towards

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tangible resources for the regional development model.

Creating the “hubs on the Wheels” will be highly advantageous to a region’s success. Human beings like to have “real things”. In fact, if you look at what most organizations and governments spend their monies on, it is for bricks and mortar. We will gladly spend billions of dollars on concrete. Even though I believe there should be a balance in how our public dollars are spent, this is the current state of affairs . This is likely changing and I believe people will become more willing to spend money on “non-tangible” assets to better serve people. However, for the time being we cannot ignore the reality that people want to have stuff, physical things to represent success. The next projects are much more physically tangible than many of the previously presented ideas and programs.

In this section, we are beginning to build the various facilities, which are important and necessary, in order to conduct and support the various organizational functions of the RRES. The first part of the regional facilities is for a tourism resort, and the second is the facilities for what we call the Hybrid Community Diversified Cooperative (HCDC). These two facilities provide “hubs on the wheel” for the two major functions necessary to support the RRES as a comprehensive strategy. The first is for the regions diversified and regionally networked tourism strategy, and the second is related to innovation in the areas of agriculture, business and entrepreneurship. Both of these facilities have complimentary natures in that they promote innovation, creativity, collaboration and education. However, there are also distinct differences in them. Unfortunately I am not an architect because I would like to provide beautiful landscape and architectural drawings showing graphic details of the concepts. Maybe the next edition I will have attracted an architect to help with some drawings.

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Mariposa Paradise – education, renewal resort & regional development in Quindio, Colombia

Mariposa Paradise, a project of Solomon Source will establish a “hub” for sustainable regional economic development in Quindio/Tolima, Colombia. The vision for Solomon Source is to create

“place(s) where spirits will soar. Spaces and endeavors where Love will be re-presented and hearts will be re-recognized through the creative energies within us; resulting in spaces where people can come, heal from their past, dream for the future and experience a type of learning that will re-acquaint them with their own heart in the context of understanding and discovering joy, nurturing, and self empowerment. Teachers emerge where needed to speak with wisdom that questions instead of instructs.”

Vision for Mariposa Paradise as a Tourism Attraction to stimulate economic and community development

Currently a project in a conceptual phase in involves a broad based initiative to enhance regional development in Colombia. The following diagram depicts the “pieces of the puzzle”.

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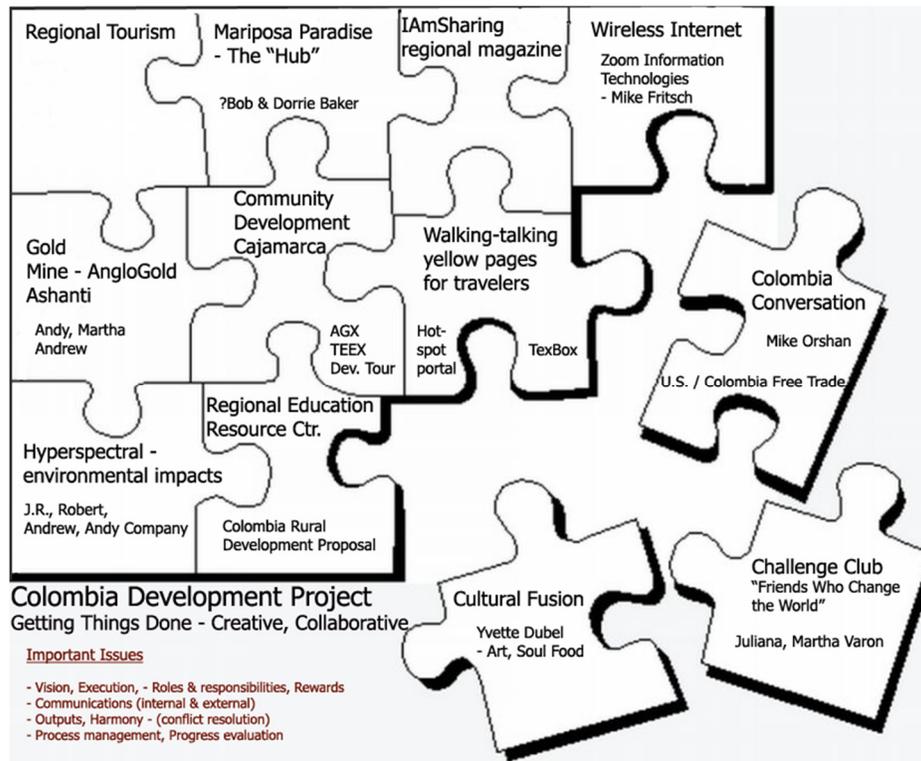


Diagram C9-11: The Mariposa Paradise project puzzle

Mariposa Paradise – The Hub

Project description

Mariposa Paradise will be located in a beautiful natural area in Colombia. The natural area could be near the rain forest or a tropical area. There are really no limitations, just the requirement that the area have abundant natural space and be peaceful without encroaching urban, industrial or “noisy” development. The key is to provide access to nature with a focus on promoting renewal through interaction with nature.

The concept is to take the example of the Las Camelias Resort (previous photo) we visited and “add-value”, including education and spiritual renewal. Of course all of the more traditional things, pleasures will also likely be provided (playground, amusement park, theatre, swimming pools, restaurant, spa/massage).

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Our task with the renewal resort is to re-present the Love in our hearts. Demonstrate its power. Create a place where this Love pervades and we can bring the best of all worlds to be. All that has come together to this point is through the various laws of nature and we will base our process on the Law of Allowing. We are also using the Law of Deliberate Creation.

The attraction would also be developed based upon all of the knowledge we have regarding regional and community development.

The Quindio region of Colombia is an auspicious place to begin a project like this because this area is “recovering” from the earthquake of January 1999. Martha, my wife, refers to our opportunity as “rebuilding hope and people”.

Mariposa will tie together all of the concepts that I have been learning and teaching. With Van Horn, Texas I learned that individual healing must occur for the community to heal. Each individual is responsible for their lives and how they interact/shape their world. Once a person understands and lives this, everything can be transformed. Their experience literally transforms and they can create magic – literally trans-conforming their “reality” to what they desire. This can be done in any way but if one is aligned with the purpose of the Universe and Gaia then great power will come to their aid.

Unique assets

As with any place the “inherent capital”, are the people, the natural resources and the history and culture of the place. Quindio, Colombia is abundant in all of these areas and one of our key initial steps will be to identify these assets, organize them, and make contact with those people and organizations that will be beneficial to the project. We have many connections to many of the good people, organizations and communities in the region.

Our special business approach

The Recreation Experience Model (Diagram C9-12) provides our business modus operandi. This process shows how we will stay engaged with our clients and customers in the long term. A well respected hospitality training program will also be used extensively and could

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be also used as part of the renew curriculum. For a detailed description of the Recreation Experience Model see “A New Pair of Glasses” in Chapter 13, Volume II.

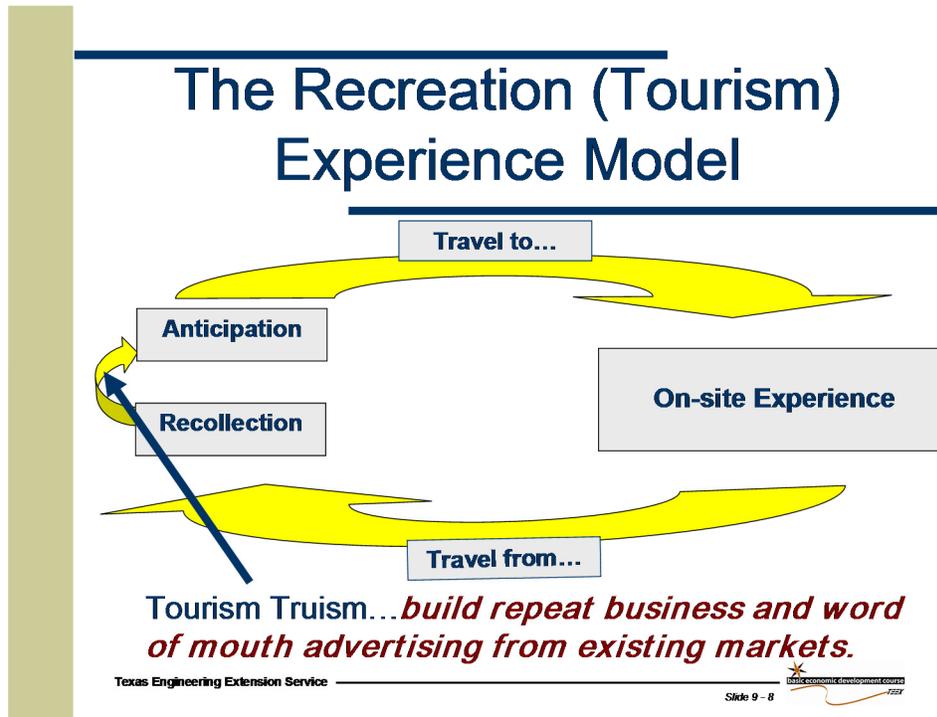


Diagram C9-12: The Recreation Experience Model

In addition we will have educational and inspirational resources on site.

School of the Future – School to Do Good

There can be an education branch and the “School to Do Good”, developed from “Friends Who Change the World” Armenia Challenge Club.

Traditional and experiential education will be instrumental in developing the educational components for programs at Mariposa. Traditional education represents the existing way and experiential builds a bridge, a path to new, novel and innovative ways to bring the power of learning to its full potential. This involves new learning materials, content, experiences, processes but also the power of group discovery (Master Mind) and interpersonal experiences.

Experiential education

Nature experiences. Social projects. Ropes course. Leadership training.

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Spiritual Renewal Center

Based on a group of friends who have been working diligently on themselves, and on things to help other people change their lives. Draw from list of materials that have been pulled together over time.

IAmSharing collaborative network

The IAmSharing (or some other name) network will be our vehicle to showcase and build the virtual version of Mariposa Paradise.

Regional development ties - attractions

- Las Camelias Resort
- Museo del Oro – Quimbaya (Gold Museum featuring – anthropology)
- Cajamaraca
- Panaca & Coffee Park
- Butterfly Gardens
- Salento
- All Quindio communities

Other linkages to entities to include:

ZERI, and other international “showcase” projects (see Chapter 12 and Volume II).

Steps in the process

- Find our the architect for Mariposa (green, sustainable energy building)
- Visualize property with lake, stream, forest not too far from agricultural areas
- Create facility map/layout
- Make drawing based on vision and photos
- Develop phased concept for project – then answer the question “where do we start first?”
- Develop list of people and organizations that might be involved directly or indirectly.
- Identify organizations to help or collaborate with (e.g. business, agencies, schools).
- Organize first curriculums:

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- Tourism/entrepreneurship,
- Challenge Club: Social responsibility
- Consider building relationship with Las Camelias resort to get started on our education and social responsibility programs.
- Invite architect/planner to be involved
- Look at writing business plan, but don't constrain vision.
- Based on ecologically based concepts combine beautiful architecture, layout and design with ecologically sustainable practices (green building, energy efficiencies, etc.)
- Locate the perfect setting, preferable that there be a lake, river or some water body nearby
 - Brainstorm components of the attraction, renewal center and academy.
 - Begin thinking of a Board of Advisors.
 - Begin thinking about who should be involved – teachers, resort operators, program leaders, renewal center director and staff.
 - Fundraising, loans, etc.

Facilities (tentative):

- | | |
|---|-----------------------------|
| - Cabins | - Conference Center |
| - Health (Healing) Center | - Resort rooms |
| - Guest Houses | - Gift shop/bookstore |
| - Experiential Education Center – “Academy” | |
| - Technology Center | - Ropes course |
| - Hiking trails | - Lake (river) |
| - Camping | - Restaurant |
| - Grocery: farmers market | - Amusement area/playground |

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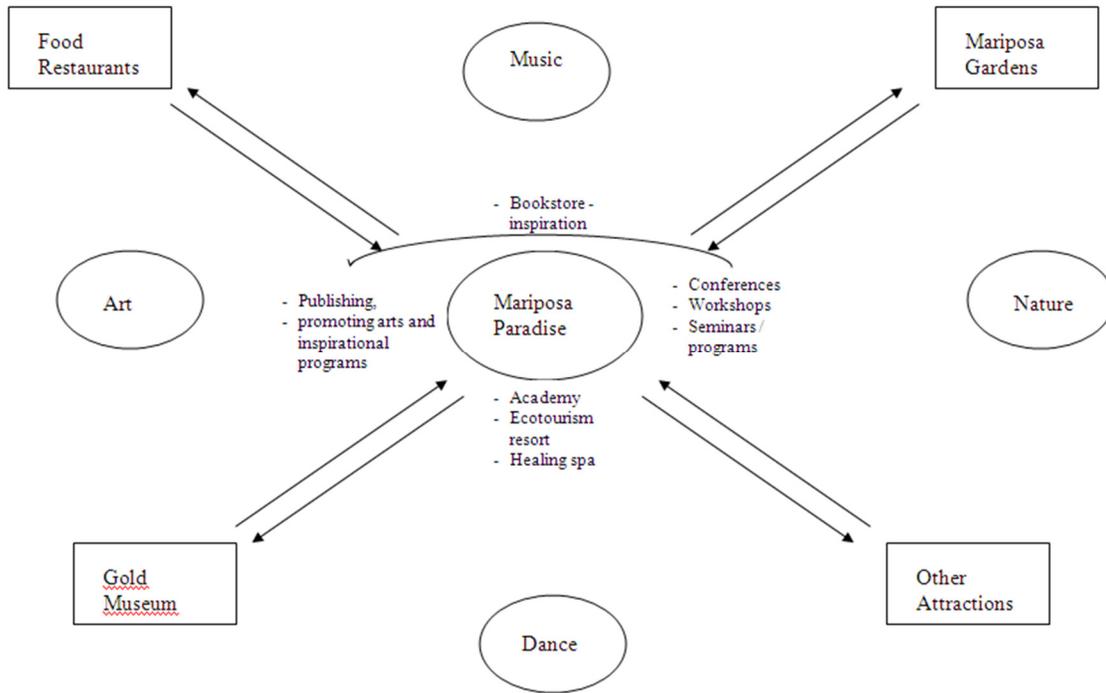


Diagram C9-13: conceptual Connections between Mariposa and Regional Attractions with Art, Music, Dance and Nature as a Backdrop

Diagram shows how the Mariposa attraction is positioned as a sort of hub to many different resources and attractions within the region. The cultural backdrop, which is what brings the heart and soul of the region to life and can enhance its development within the region are the creative arts, here depicted in the circles Art, Music, Dance. Nature is the other core component by providing the context of connection to the beauty, serenity and energy that is supplied from the natural world.

As we look at the center of the diagram we have provided some examples of the kinds of activities to be supported. These include events, conferences, educational programs, etc. This could then be connected to the production of books and other inspired works that are produced from the educational and inspirational workshops being held at the resort.

Diagram C9-14 Shows how the Mariposa Paradise becomes one hub as it connects to the other major components of the regional strategy. This diagram could be applied to each of

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the elements in the same fashion in this way it creates a sort of multi-nested network. The arrows show that there is an exchange that crosses between all of these functions in a dynamic interchange.

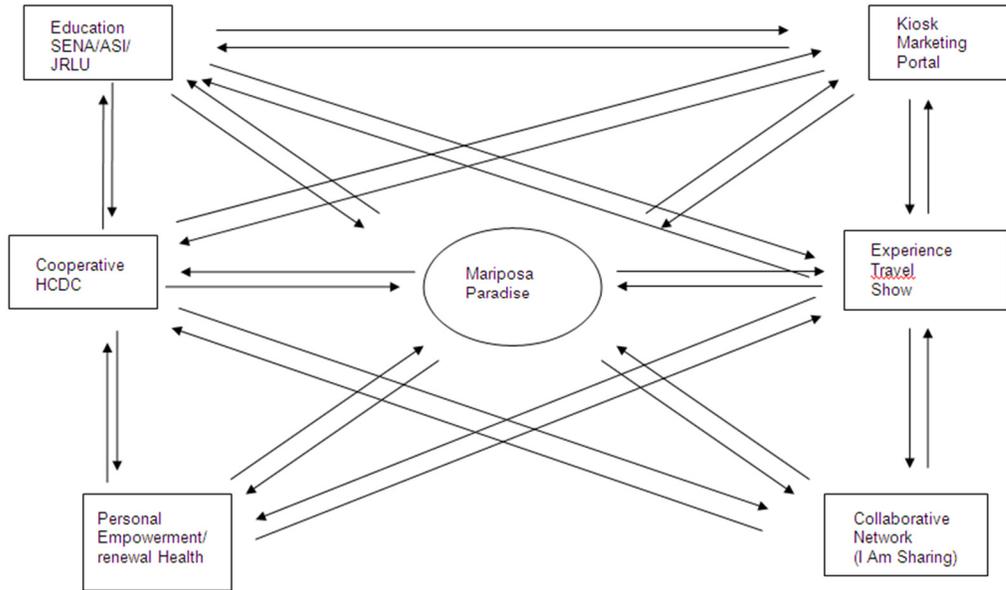


Diagram C9-14: Relationship between Mariposa and major components of RRES

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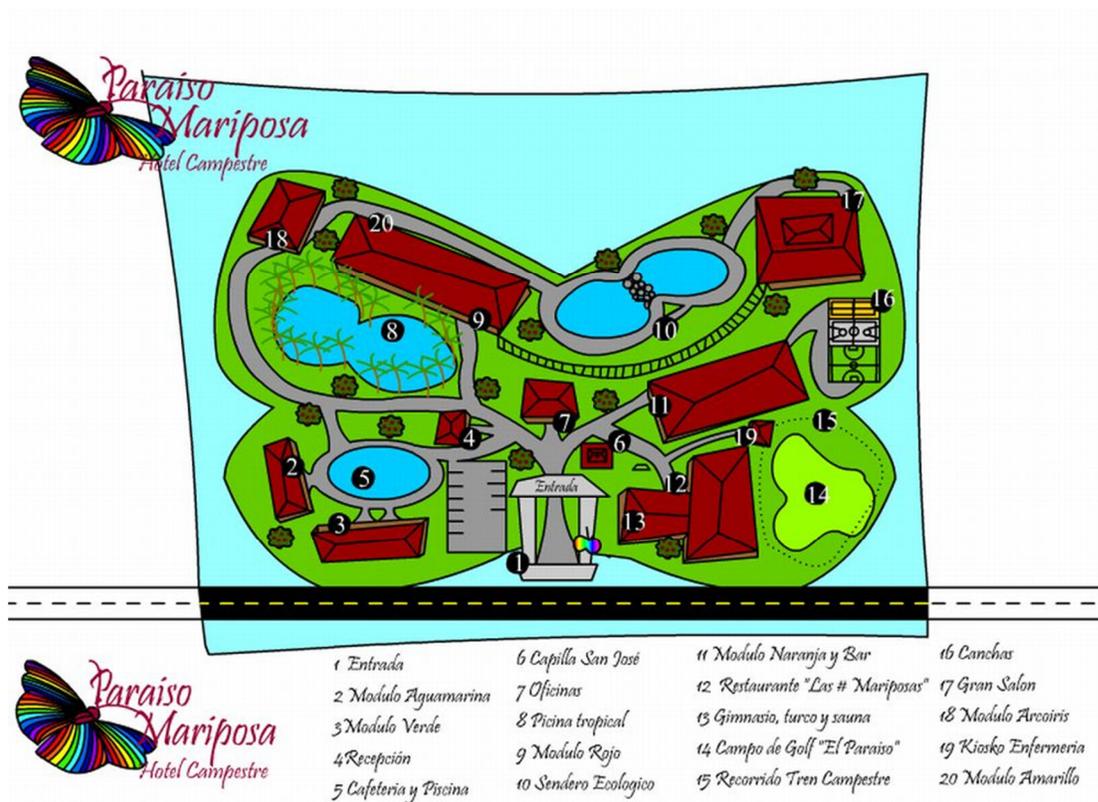


Diagram C9-15: An artistic rendering of the facilities and layout of the Mariposa Paradise (this graphic and logo was done by Juan Jose Castro Varon, at 11 years old).

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