

West Plains, Missouri

DOWNTOWN
REVITALIZATION &
ECONOMIC
ASSISTANCE FOR
MISSOURI



DESTINATION
ASSESSMENT

APRIL 18, 2008

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INTRODUCTION

The DREAM Initiative concentrates efforts on downtown revitalization because the overall health of the community is greatly influenced by the vitality and viability of its downtown. Moreover, downtown reflects the unique attributes of a community—its heritage, its people, and its future. While much of America becomes culturally homogenized, our downtowns should retain their unique identity and reflect the incredible diversity contained within the American story. For visitors, downtowns embody the character of the community and represent hidden treasures awaiting discovery.

The DREAM Initiative recognizes that downtown exists within a larger context. Visitors may be attracted to a region for destinations outside downtown, such as a nearby natural or historic attraction, but downtown should be a part of their adventure. In order for downtown to be a viable destination it must offer unique shopping, dining, and recreational opportunities.

The Destination Assessment component of the DREAM Initiative will help West Plains better understand its potential to derive benefits from tourism. The assessment will help formulate a realistic vision for West Plains to implement improvements to its unique tourism industry. Recommendations will address potential synergies among existing features to capitalize on West Plains' Downtown and the surrounding area's assets.

The "Destination Assessment Team" is a collaborative effort among representatives of PGAV, the Missouri Division of Tourism, and the Missouri Arts Council. The findings and recommendations contained within the Destination Assessment, while primarily prepared by PGAV, represent a coordinated effort to address the "visitor" experience from independent consultants and key State agencies involved in tourism and the arts. It is anticipated that the Missouri Division of Tourism and the Missouri Arts Council will play an ongoing role in providing technical and financial resources, as applicable.

This assessment will assume, as numerous West Plains officials, residents, and businesses noted in early meetings, that the style of tourism West Plains desires to promote is of a controlled, sustainable, orderly nature. The City would like to avoid the connotative meanings attached to the word 'tourist' and are more interested in the characteristics described by the word 'visitor'.



The Importance of Tourism

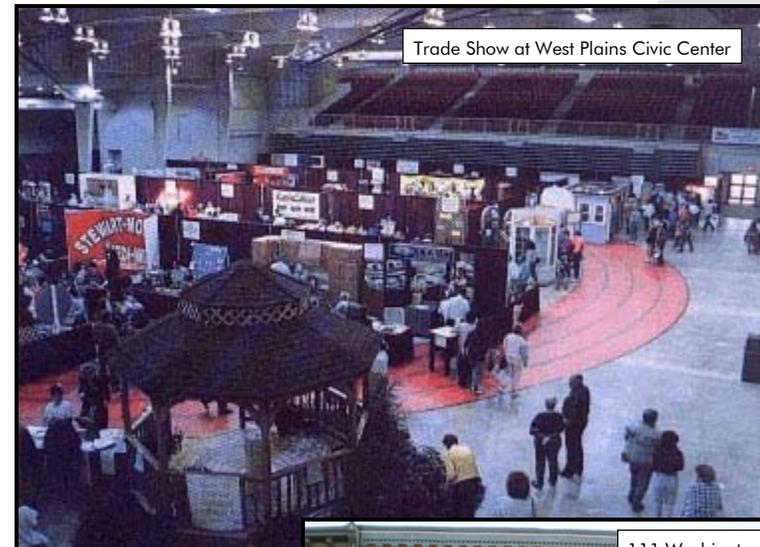
Visitors are the vehicle by which outside money travels into, around, and hopefully not just through the community. A well balanced Economic Development strategy will include the capture of tourist dollars. Most downtowns do not have the retail base they once enjoyed. As a result, residents are often forced to shop elsewhere (creating 'leakage') or through catalog or internet shopping. The attraction and importing of new cash to the community through tourism is a strategy to deal with the financial gap left by these changes in consumer spending habits. Visitors leave behind tax revenue from purchases at the community's businesses.

But a community's attractions, its products, must be compelling enough to pull visitors from far enough away that they will stay overnight in the community. This distance is defined in many ways and is typically 50 miles. The 'overnight stay' is the ultimate goal of a tourism strategy as this visitor will spend many times more money as other types of visitors.

In addition to the direct impact of tax revenues, tourism enhancement can also be an effective retail development strategy. Retailers will serve the visitors and collect the revenues. Many retailers can benefit from understanding their market may extend beyond the limits of their community, by utilizing marketing techniques for targeted visitor profiles, or expanding hours and services specifically for visitors.

The local residents will benefit from added visitor services as well. A thriving visitor trade will cause greater money circulation; improved services and infrastructure for everyone; job and entrepreneurial opportunities; and enhanced shopping convenience, choice, and competitiveness. A well balanced mix of retail and services will make Downtown attractive to residents and visitors.

It is possible that there can be detrimental effects of tourism. As visitors grow, they will demand greater services and may cause strife with the permanent residents. Particularly successful strategies, if not properly planned, can cause a much more intense influx of visitors and support businesses than the community is prepared to handle.



Assessment Methodology

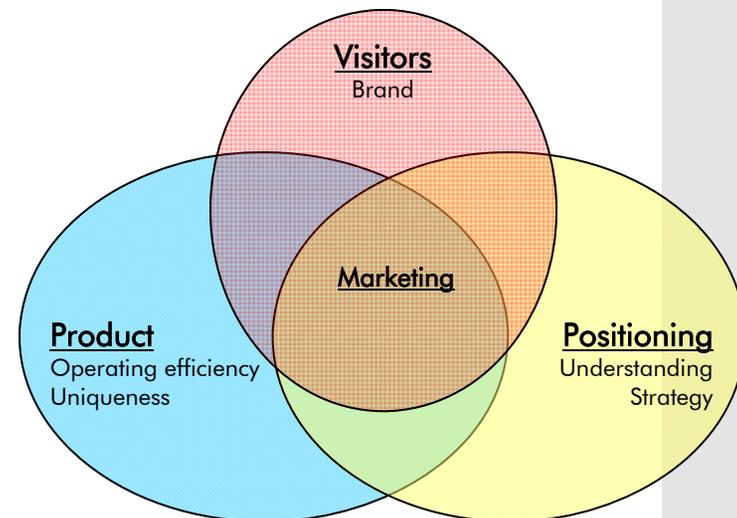
The Destination Assessment provides a snapshot of the visitor industry operating community-wide, but will focus on Downtown. The process consists of reviewing data, marketing materials, visiting the community and its key features, meeting with community tourism leaders, and compiling a report with recommendations. The recommendations should serve as a strategic foundation as the community moves through subsequent steps of planning and design on their way toward destination success. Understanding the framework used to evaluate destinations will provide context for the recommendations and suggestions for improvement.

The ideas reviewed and explored will be as the City relates to its customers as a business. Therefore the **product** that the City is selling to its visitors is the Downtown and all of its amenities. Businesses, restaurants, museums, infrastructure, people, streets, sidewalks, parks, events, and many other attractions create the **product**. **Attachment 1** in the Appendix is an inventory of attractions and is the beginning definition of West Plains' product. A product should constantly strive for a **competitive advantage** that will allow it to be a more attractive choice over other, similar products. There are two parts to competitive advantage; **operating efficiency** and **uniqueness**.

The product is nothing if the visitors are not aware of its existence. The **position** of the product in the overall marketplace allows it to be competitive for the desired customers. It is critically important that the community spend some time **understanding** how it is unique. This capacity is what will set it apart from others. If there is a service level at which the community can be the 'best', this can be a useful draw. A review of the product to assess these strengths should be ongoing. Once this understanding occurs, **strategies** can be developed for improving, solidifying, or repositioning a community's product.

The meeting of product and positioning, is **marketing**. The DREAM Initiative includes a marketing aspect that will provide more detail, including improvements to existing or the establishment of new strategies to increase visitors to West Plains.

Visitors or customers are the final piece of the puzzle. Understanding must be garnered concerning the types of visitors being attracted and the trends associated with that style of visitor. Opportunities for adjustments to the product and identifying unmet potential may be uncovered. The businesses and people that influence the product will come to better understand their customers and the revenue potential that exists for their businesses.



If marketing is successful in reaching the intended visitors, they will carry with them a preconceived idea of the communities **brand**. Your brand is what people think of you—your image. A brand is a promise to provide a product or service in a consistent way.

Destination brands have distinct aspects of their image in the mind of the customer. Each one represents an opportunity to differentiate from competition and offer a consumer benefit. Destinations reach their maximum potential only when they leverage all four.

REALM ONE—PLACE:

If you visit the Empire State Building, you go to a building with the city surrounding it. Up at the observation tower, the **place** becomes an oasis high above bustling Manhattan. What benefits does the place provide for the guest? Some people like the high energy feeling of being in the city, but they may also like taking a break from the intensity. People go to a destination. It exists in a physical place. A destination should try to get the most out of the power of its place.

REALM TWO—EXPERIENCE:

Hike in the canyon. Ride the coaster. Attend a show. People want to *do* something at a destination—something unique, something to brag about, or something to share. The experience of a destination can provide key benefits to guests and a fundamental part of its brand. A destination can reach its full potential when it promotes the benefits of a unique experience and delivers.

REALM THREE—MINDSET:

Sometimes a destination epitomizes or evokes an attitude, value, or mindset that has meaning beyond the physical limits of the site. Colonial Williamsburg set out to “own” the concept of Colonial America, and people might feel more patriotic just thinking about it. When a destination can symbolize an aspirational concept, it can form a powerful connection with its guests. The destination becomes a touchstone for the concept and people return to renew their connection with it.

REALM FOUR—ORGANIZATION:

What role does the organization behind the destination play in the brand? The Niagara Parks emblem conveys tremendous trust among regional guests, who want to spend their money with the organization that helps preserve the nature and heritage of Niagara Falls. The organizational dimension of a destination may also make a big difference to future employees, donors, business partners, granting agencies, or other organizations. People want to associate with a cause or organization they feel good about, one that expresses their own values and aspirations.

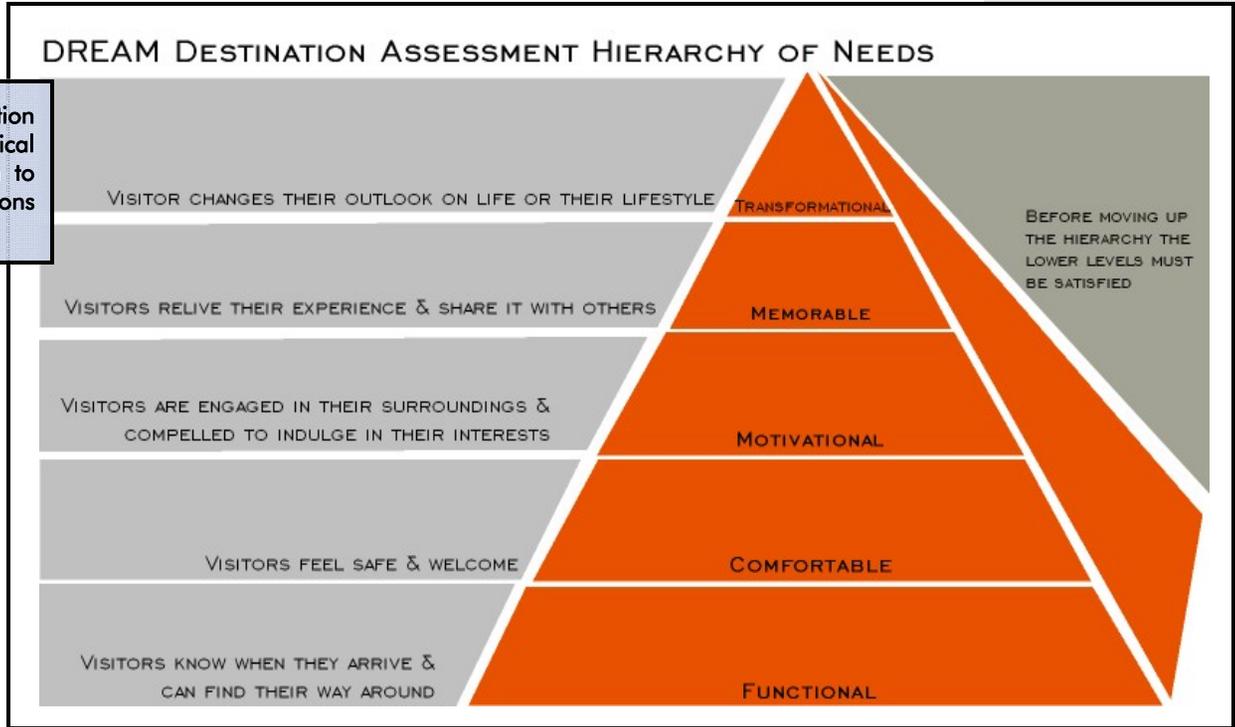
When people think of your destination, do they long to be in the place, get excited by the experience, aspire to the values represented, and trust the organization behind it? When you can answer ‘yes’ to all four, people will attribute a high value to your destination which relates directly to attendance and financial success.

Hierarchy of Needs

Destinations and, in a larger sense, downtowns are basically customer-oriented businesses and therefore should always take the customer point-of-view. When destinations conduct product development and determine marketing decisions they must address what the customer wants and needs. During the Destination Assessment Kick-Off Meeting, the Destination Assessment Team introduced the concept of a destination consumer “Hierarchy of Needs,” which hypothesizes that customers must have their most basic needs met before they can attain higher levels of fulfillment. This customer-focused theme will recur throughout the recommendations for each community.

For the purposes of this Destination Assessment, PGAV uses the hierarchical scheme shown here, listed from bottom to top, to illustrate and describe the motivations of the typical, “downtown” Missouri tourist.

There are a great number of reasons or desires that drive an individual consumer’s decision to travel and their choice of destination. The “Hierarchy of Needs” describes the requirements a typical visitor has to have met in order for them to have a fulfilling destination experience. Questions a municipality’s staff may ask themselves regarding whether or not their community’s destination assets meet these needs are:



1. Functional: Does the City provide adequate wayfinding to make travel throughout the area easy and somewhat intuitive? Do visitors know when they have “arrived”? Does the City adequately provide basic comforts, such as parking, bathrooms, and a place to rest? Is information about destinations and events easily attainable?
2. Comfortable: Is the downtown pedestrian friendly and well lit? Are the building facades and streetscape designs aesthetically pleasing? Are numerous lodging and dining options present throughout the municipality? Does the downtown provide adequate comforts so that the visitor can relax and get away from home?

3. Motivational: Does the downtown provide visitors with activities in which to participate? What will move the visitor to get out of their car and get involved? Does the downtown provide a chance to learn, interact with others, and an opportunity for adventure or escape?
4. Memorable: Does the downtown leave the visitor with positive memories? Do visitors repeatedly return to downtown? Do visitors recommend a visit to downtown to others? Is there positive word-of-mouth about downtown?
5. Transformational: If the City meets the aforementioned needs, then they've created a fulfilling experience to the visitor, which, hopefully, will positively change the visitor; thus imbuing the visitor with not only a valuable rejuvenative experience, but also a new and positive outlook on life. The visitor will want to return to and reconnect with the destination to renew that positive outlook in the future. The visitor will actively seek to bring others and share the rejuvenative experience.

In the case of a visit to a destination like a resort, zoo or theme park, a single organization manages the tourist experience to ensure a “seamless” experience; one that flows smoothly and consistently from parking and restrooms to attractions, food and shopping without breaks in the “brand.” People have come to expect this level of product and service. Destination communities would benefit from emulating this model to the degree they can considering the complexity of their destination environment (i.e. multiple tourism product owners and interests). For example, Destination communities can develop organizational structures that support a coordinated aesthetic presentation of downtown; manage a consistent and unified marketing plan; administer special event planning; and guide businesses towards consistent business standards (i.e. uniform business hours).

Although Destination Assessment focuses on tourism and arts, many of the recommendations promise to improve quality of life for both visitors and residents. Conversely, many of the recommendations in other parts of the overall DREAM initiative, such as streetscape improvements and traffic management will provide essential infrastructure to support tourism. This synergy of benefits illustrates the key strategy of the initiative—that an integrated approach to planning and implementation will achieve the best results for West Plains.



Court Square Existing Improvements

CHARACTERISTICS OF SUCCESSFUL DESTINATIONS

The City of West Plains' Product

Revitalization efforts of small to medium rural downtowns have occurred for numerous and varied reasons. Some have failed, some have met with success. The ability to adapt to changes and take advantage of opportunities while preserving the elements that make the downtown unique is the deciding factor between the two. Common themes can be attributed to the successful efforts. Planning, Organization, Financing, Marketing, and Retail are all aspects addressed by the DREAM Initiative and are all common elements of successful downtowns.

The City is the product and has to offer other products including attractions, ambience, lodging, dining, recreation, shopping—whatever people do when they visit a destination. The Downtown should have a good base and balance of businesses and amenities that address the basic needs of the hierarchy and support the higher levels as the Downtown improves. The 'correct' mix of businesses for Downtown is the mix that works at any given point in time. This will be different for every community and will change. This Destination Assessment, coupled with the DREAM Retail Market Analysis will identify retail gaps and make suggestions for current deficiencies in West Plains' Downtown, but it is more vital that the community be prepared to act on future opportunities and adjust its strategies to exploit growth opportunities.

A formal procedure should be put in place to inventory the Downtown business mix annually and this information should be shared with the public. A simple spreadsheet with Standard Industrial Classifications (SIC) codes like the one in **Attachment 2** in the Appendix can be used. Targeted retail sectors can be promoted and contacted. Business types that support the desired positioning of downtown and address deficiencies in the Hierarchy of Needs should be top priority. Specific types of businesses that might improve West Plains downtown are noted later in this assessment. Given the goal of capturing visitor spending, general examples of retailers and products (other than the obvious examples of lodging, restaurants, and pubs) can be suggested:

Apparel	Collectibles	Home Décor	Photography	Stuffed Animals & Dolls
Antiques Stores	Culinary Items	Jewelry	Quilts & Rugs	T-shirts
Art Galleries	Factory Outlets	Leather Goods	Skin Products	Toys
Baskets	Flowers	Liquor & Wine	Specialty Foods:	Themed Restaurants
Book Stores	Glass & Pottery	Novelties	Cheese	
Candles & Crafts	Sporting Goods	Perfumes & Soaps	Candy	
Cards & Souvenirs	History & Ethnic	Pet Supplies	Coffee	

Market Positioning

Destination success requires products *and* marketing, neither can work alone. Marketing is how destinations make people aware of product attributes and benefits. Both should reflect a distinct market positioning and brand—something that draws on the strengths of the destination, feels authentic, and leverages people’s desire for unique experiences.

Market positioning, has two main steps; understanding and strategy.

Understanding: A destination must understand how visitors (customers) currently perceive it as a destination. This perception is the community’s image or brand. Consumer research, with methods such as intercepts, internet surveys, and focus groups, is the best way to determine current perceptions accurately.

Strategy: The destination must craft a strategy that builds on the positive aspects of its current image and repositions it, if necessary, to a more advantageous and competitive position. Repositioning takes time, patience and persistence because it involves changing perceptions.

West Plains competes in a crowded marketplace to attract visitors at a time when the economy is uncertain and travelers are more knowledgeable, thrifty, and critical than ever before. The positioning strategy developed will need to show a high quality, worthwhile, and unique experience can be found in West Plains.



Visitors and Trends

The City must understand who is currently visiting the community and who might have potential to visit. This requires a broad look at the overall market of travelers in the region. From this information a profile of a typical visitor can be developed.

Strictly speaking, any non-resident, temporary visitor for any amount of time is a tourist. The goal of Destination Assessment is to enable the City to be more prepared to attract more visitors *and* get them to spend their money in the Downtown. In addition, there are accidental visitors; people who did not leave their home destination with the intention of traveling to the community. Thusly the definition can be refined to read **“any non-resident, temporary consumer visiting for any amount of time.”** Visitors can further be categorized by the type of reason for which they choose to visit the community and may fall into more than one category. This report will contemplate the following types of visitors:

- 1) Business Travelers—Most likely to travel during the week, driven by businesses, primarily basic needs of lodging, restaurants, services, gift shopping, and evening entertainment, potential to impress and return for pleasure.
- 2) Family Travelers—Most likely to travel during the weekend, driven by relatives, less likely to need lodging, potential needs of services and restaurants, general shopping.
- 3) Ethnic and Cultural Seekers—Looking for exposure to new experiences, development, and education. Interested in the areas ‘way of life’ and people. Adventurous and looking for more than basic needs. Museums, galleries, concerts, festivals, and performances. Likely to shop for unique items.
- 4) Heritage and Passive Recreation Enthusiasts—This visitor enjoys the scenery and feel of the area more than the interaction with the people. They are more inwardly focused and reflective. Their needs are similar to the culture seeker, but are just as likely to enjoy a drive through town to look at architecture or a walk in the local parks.
- 5) Active Outdoor Adventurers—Intense enjoyers of the parks and natural areas. These sportsmen enjoy a wide variety and are not always young. Outdoorsmen, boaters, hikers, or golfers; they are on the move. They are devoted and spend money on their chosen sport.
- 6) Urban Entertainment—The shoppers, team sport spectators, college visitors, night owls, or amusement park attendees. They tend to travel in groups and have a higher expendable income. Internet connectivity and cell phone access is important to them.



General nationwide tourism trends noted in the Harvard Business Review include:

- 70% of destination decisions are made by women.
- Consumers today have more money and less guilt about spending it than past consumers.
- Consumers today have a stronger desire to examine their emotional side.
- Consumers today have a wider variety of choices available.
- Emotional pools that influence decisions include:
 - ⇒ Taking care of ME...rejuvenation
 - ⇒ Questing...new experiences, growth, fun
 - ⇒ Connecting...finding and deepening relationships
 - ⇒ Individual style...person expression through products and experiences
- Authenticity drives people to want to get beyond homogenized franchise culture, but they still have high expectations that have been created by the chains such as Disney, etc.
- Families are using travel to reunite. Parents, Kids, Grandparents, Grandkids...all seek something fun and age appropriate. Entertainment for the kids and something enjoyable for the adults...a mix of fun, physical activity, and enrichment/education.
- Long weekends or other short trips often work better for busy families.
- The internet continues to play an increasing role in travel planning and research.
- Health and well-being continues to grow in financial priority.
- The greatest luxuries are time and space.

The Missouri Division of Tourism notes the following demographic trends among State visitors:

- 43.5% indicated they have traveled in Missouri in the past 2 years.
- Average age: 47- 55 years old.
- Estimated 40% of Missouri travelers have a 4 year degree or higher.
- Estimated 34% of the FY05 respondents were professionals.
- Estimated that half of the households visiting Missouri during FY05 had an income of \$50,000 or more: the same as during the previous five fiscal years.
- Average per person trip expenditures: \$162.57 during FY05.
- Per person per day expenditures by Missouri visitors: \$50.58.
- Leisure travel is estimated to have been the dominant purpose of stay, accounting for 69% of Missouri's visitors.
- Visit Friends or Relatives accounted for 21%.
- Getaway Weekend accounted for 13%.
- Over 50% of Missouri's travelers are from out-of-state.
- Most of Missouri's out of state visitors come from Missouri's neighboring states. Texas continues to send more visitors to Missouri than any other non-neighboring State.

In late 2007 and early 2008 the DREAM Initiative conducted a Visitor's Survey of visitors to West Plains. Most of these surveys were completed during special events held at the West Plains Civic Center, therefore most respondents indicated that their reason for visiting West Plains was to attend a special event. Other interesting responses include:

- 96.3% of respondents indicated they had visited downtown West Plains before.
- 24.6% of respondents said they visit downtown once a month or more. 60.4% said they visit downtown more than once a year, but less than once a month.
- 53.5% of respondents indicated they were planning to dine in downtown.
- 23.9% of respondents thought they would spend less than \$50 on their visit to downtown. 76.1% thought they would spend more.
- 30.5% brought a child under 18 with them on their visit.
- 94.8% of respondents thought downtown was "very" or "somewhat" easy to navigate. (34.3% "very" and 60.6% "somewhat")
- 61.5% of respondents thought the downtown business hours "very" or "somewhat" convenient. (9.4% "very" and 52.1% "somewhat")
- 51.6% thought downtown parking was "somewhat" or "very" inconvenient. (50.7% "somewhat" and .9% "very")
- 38.2 % of the respondents were staying with friends or relatives.
- An overwhelming response of 95.6% felt that "more shops (in general)" would make them more likely to visit downtown. Other answers included a specific type of shop. (in order; Restaurants, Coffee shop, specialty/upscale, clothing, grocery)
- "More special events", "bands/live concerts", "family events", and "more restaurants" were the top responses for recreation or entertainment opportunities likely to make a visitor come to downtown.
- "benches/more green space", "renovation of historic buildings", "more/better parking", and "water features such as fountains and waterfalls" were the top physical improvements indicated by respondents.
- Respondents indicated hobbies of "live music", "fine dining", and "walking/hiking" more often, while "biking" and "golf" were among the least noted hobbies.
- Respondents tended to be Male, having an income of \$25,000—\$50,000, aged 35-49.

CURRENT ENVIRONMENT AND ASSESSMENT EXPERIENCE

Assessment Visit Experience

In September of 2007, the Destination Assessment Team visited West Plains, various attractions, and held a 'kick-off meeting' with various officials. The initial reviews were conducted free of influence and without any local representative input. After the 'first impressions' were documented, local opinions were solicited. The Team stayed overnight. After the meeting, additional research was conducted as the assessment was compiled.

Located just off State Highway 63, visitors must use a map to find their way to downtown West Plains and the heart of the historic district. Without a map, visitors can more often than not find themselves at the Wal-Mart, located just past downtown off Highway 63.

Traveling into historic downtown West Plains on Broadway leads visitors and residents through well-kept neighborhoods; past schools, playgrounds and the public library. Although there are signs announcing West Plains at one of the main intersections leading to downtown, the signs do not face the arriving cars.

The visitors' center for West Plains is incorporated into the larger Ozark Heritage Welcome Center. This Welcome Center greets visitors driving into West Plains on Highway 63, is inviting, and provides almost any information they could want about the Ozark Region and Missouri. The opportunity to purchase crafts and local foods helps to establish the mood and feel of the region. It presents a "home-made" and "small town" brand. The staff is welcoming and sets expectations of what visitors may experience in West Plains.

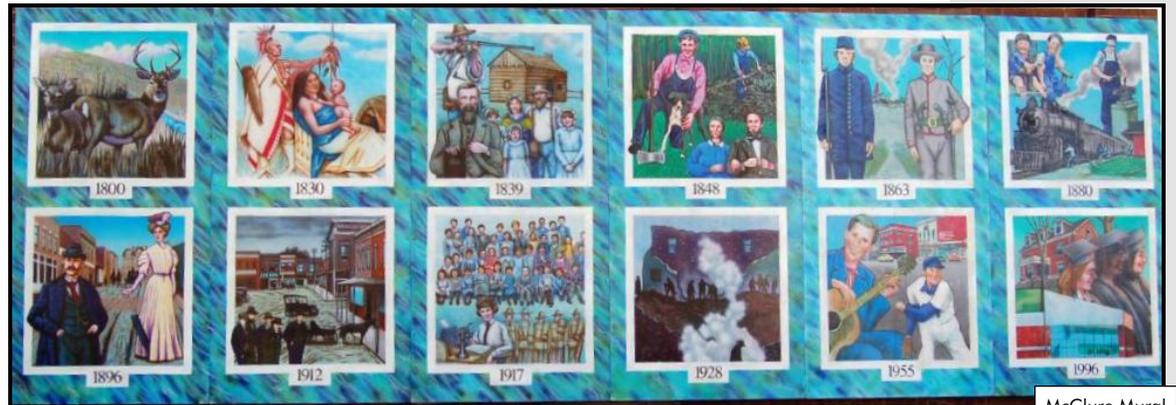
However, amidst the brochures, crafts, and food, it was not easy to find specific information and maps about West Plains. They were placed on racks in the Welcome Center, but it was not prominent given the competition with the other state brochures. This is understandable in consideration of the fact that this center serves the Ozark Region, not just West Plains.

The first impression a visitor has of a destination is typically a lasting impression. Upon arrival in the Courthouse Square Historic District, the Destination Assessment Team was delighted with design of the square, the easy diagonal parking, and the fact that the Howell County Courthouse in the center was surrounded by a selection of local businesses, a couple of restaurants, coffee shops, county offices and residential apartments and condominiums. West Plains felt like a real "home town."



There are no specific attractions located in Courthouse Square; but the historical murals by artist Mike McClure are wonderful to view and tell a visual story about the settlement of the West Plains area. The restaurants, coffees shops, antique and music stores make it enjoyable to stroll around the square, have lunch and purchase an antique and enjoy a piece of pie. The entire downtown historic area, from the sidewalks, storefronts and building, is well-kept and utilized by the residents. Visitors definitely have a positive sense of a slower pace as they walk around the historic district around Courthouse Square.

As there was no specific event or attraction in West Plains that drew the immediate attention of the Destination Assessment Team, they toured a variety of West Plains' main attractions. The West Plains Civic Center is just a couple of blocks beyond Courthouse Square and hosts a variety of events – from conferences and meetings, to performing arts and sporting events for local and professional teams. The Civic Center is the official home of the Missouri State University – West Plains campus men's basketball and women's volleyball teams.



McClure Mural



The Avenue Theatre is an intimate venue for community theatre, musical performances and children's theatre. Although it does not have the glamour of a big city theatre or the modern features of the Civic Center, the theatre brings the charm and nostalgia of 1950s to the small town of West Plains. The size and style of this theatre welcomes local and regional performers and provides space that is accessible to all in the community.



West Plains, Missouri

The Harlin Museum, located uphill several blocks outside of Courthouse Square, is a small museum that shows Ozark Heritage crafts and artwork from regional artists. In addition, the Museum owns the L.L. Broadfoot Collection, a beautiful and fascinating collection of charcoal illustrations of Ozark people and handwritten stories recorded by Broadfoot. The collection is not always on display as the museum rotates its collections and visiting shows in the main gallery. There is street parking around the museum and a small parking lot.

The Soap Lady—L.L. Broadfoot sketch



Several chain hotels are the main form of lodging for visitors. They are located outside of the historic downtown area and visitors need a personal vehicle, bus, or shuttle to travel to Courthouse Square or other downtown attractions. The cost and quality of the hotels range from modest to affordable. The hotels are well-suited for business travelers to West Plains; however a B&B style of lodging may be attractive to visitors looking for a more home town feel.



West Plains promotes a varied selection of restaurants; however the dining options are limited in choice and hours of operation. The Destination Assessment Team felt the length of a stay would be limited due to the few dining choices available.



Café 37



West Plains Opera House

Perceptions, Understanding & Current Positioning

“As part of the Ozarks Heritage Region of the State of Missouri, you’ll find that our area has something for everyone. Whether you enjoy antiques or art, classic cars or crafts, live theatre or sporting events, you’ll find activities to match your interests in West Plains.”

— Visitors Guide, A Guidebook to the City of West Plains and other Area Attractions
published by West Plains Chamber of Commerce

West Plains is proud of its local attractions and Ozark heritage, promoting the natural springs and mills in the region, as well as local community activities. Parks and outdoor recreation, local crafts, and community theatre performances are not the kind of attractions that typically draw visitors from the highway or persuade travelers to stay overnight, but are important features for the residents and businesses of West Plains. Upon reflection, the Destination Assessment Team views West Plains as a town facing challenges, but with many strengths and opportunities to improve its positioning as a distinct destination in southeast Missouri as well as a strong, vibrant community for its residents.

West Plains is a portal to the Ozark Region that spreads from south central Missouri to north eastern Arkansas, located just off State Highway 63. Travel to West Plains is, in large part, business-driven and most of the overnight stays occur during the week. There are events and community-based activities throughout the year that attract residents and visitors to West Plains, such as the “2nd Saturday Downtown Stroll” or the “Old Time Music Ozark Heritage Festival”. These events are attractive for community residents, and also appeal to visitors and business travelers.



West Plains Savings & Loan



Second Saturday Downtown Stroll



Downtown Antique Mall



West Plains Opera House

Visitor Profile

Business, conventions and meetings bring many people to West Plains during the week for an overnight stay. It appears there is sufficient lodging for the business visitors during the week, as well as on the weekend. According to the hotels there are many of the “Business Traveler” types of visitors already coming to West Plains.



The Missouri State University campus in West Plains also draws prospective students, current students, and their families several times throughout the school year. In addition to academics, the athletic teams also draw visitors on a regular basis. These visitors fit into the “Urban Entertainment” category.

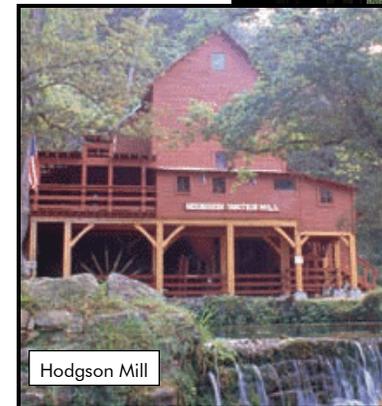


Other events in town and at the West Plains Motor Speedway also attract an adult audience during several weekends from spring through fall. This speedway represents a mix of the “Active Outdoor Adventurers” and “Urban Entertainment” groups.

The surrounding springs, mills, and the sprawling wilderness of the Missouri Ozarks attract many visitors likely fitting into the categories of “Family Travelers”, “Heritage and Passive Recreation Enthusiasts”, and “Active Outdoor Adventurers”.

The other local events, theatre, shops and parks in and around West Plains’ historic district provide a favorable range of activities and venues for residents and families that appeal to all visitor types, but particularly to the “Ethnic and Cultural Seekers”.

The visitor survey conducted seems to indicate that people are willing to go to downtown West Plains for events and dinner, but require more compelling shopping and activities to repeat a visit or stay a longer period of time.



CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND IMPLEMENTATION

General Strategies

West Plains possesses the foundation for cultural and entertainment attractions that can draw residents and regional tourists to the historic downtown district and the natural attractions in the surrounding environs. However, West Plains – in particular the downtown district – does not yet have the critical mass of attractions or a distinctive destination brand to attract more visitors to West Plains as a destination. The integration of business operations, improving wayfinding and signage and furnishing visitors’ “basic needs” will provide good customer services.

The regular promotion and display of the L.L. Broadfoot Collection in conjunction with festivals, workshops, and event that feature Ozark heritage and culture will strengthen the personal experience and provide opportunities for enrichment to visitors. Ultimately, the addition of more shops and restaurants will complement the attractions and provide that critical mass needed to draw more tourists to West Plains as a destination.

Overall, West Plains will be able to reap the benefits of a “quick win” by addressing the recommendations that focus on the “basic needs” and “social experiences” of the visitors’ Hierarchy of Needs. Specifically, improving signage and wayfinding, improving streetscapes and buildings, and adding a visitor center to the downtown area will provide all visitors with a level of comfort and sense of place of West Plains that will encourage them to visit and stay in the downtown area.

Addressing these basic needs will significantly improve the “home town” feel of West Plains, and will allow visitors to look beyond their comfort and safety needs, and explore the attractions that will deliver that “personal” and “enriching” experiences that tourists hope to find in a destination. For West Plains, visitors will be able to really enjoy the richness and variety of arts, food, culture and natural resources of the region, and firmly establish West Plains as the center for Ozark Heritage and Culture.

Attention should be paid to the number and variety of shops and restaurants within the historic Downtown. Filling empty storefronts, with particular attention to the types of retailer, will help create a more seamless shopping experience. New and existing stores should offer goods that complement the needs of visitors as well as residents.

Suggested Positioning of West Plains: Center of Ozark Heritage and Culture

West Plains is not the only quaint, small town Missouri, nor is it the only town to feature regional arts, and faces destination competition on both accounts. However, the location of West Plains at the threshold of Ozark region, custody of the extraordinary L.L. Broadfoot Collection, organized and active arts council that has already established relationships with Ozark artists and culture, and access to performance venues creates a unique combination of attributes to position West Plains as the center of Ozark heritage and culture.

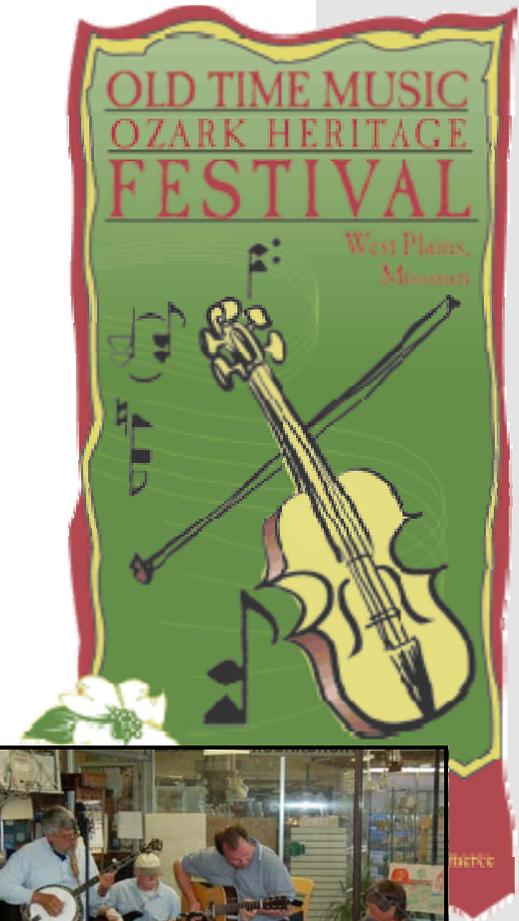
Improvement of existing attractions and addition of events located in the historic downtown district will strengthen community support for historic West Plains and will bring more residents, activities and money to downtown West Plains. As the residents visit downtown more and more, visits from tourists and business travelers will be an added bonus.

Suggestions for Tourism Marketing

West Plains is not currently in a position to market Courthouse Square and the downtown district as a visitor destination. However, investing in the people, businesses and community of West Plains will bring the most benefit to West Plains as a town, and ultimately as a destination. The downtown should seek collaborative efforts to be included in 'packages' for other area destinations.

A strategy that may show some improvement is to target the business travelers through their companies and hotels. These visitors seem to be a constant stream and will require services that the downtown is just as capable of providing as other areas of the community.

There may be some value to a discussion concerning in-state and out-of-state visitors as it relates to marketing. The Destination Assessment Team felt that the city and downtown would have no need to adjust other attraction efforts as the focus should remain on West Plains downtown improving its basic service levels for ALL visitors. In the future, there may be opportunities to provide more specific market segmentation and leverage the city's geopolitical location near the Arkansas border.



Reaching Destination Potential

There are different levels of recommendations that West Plains can follow in order to reach its destination potential. Improvements can range from better integration of existing community resources to adding more cultural events and attractions. Addressing basic (Functional & Comfortable) needs of visitors and coordination of existing resources and attractions can have a significant impact in helping West Plains realize its potential to its local community and region. In addition, addressing these basic needs in the historic downtown will help the Courthouse Square Historic District realize its potential as the center of community and Ozark cultural activities for West Plains.

◆ PUBLIC IMPROVEMENTS ◆

Improve Signage and Wayfinding

It is important that the City establish a sense of place, define the boundaries of the Courthouse Square Historic District, and distinguish the brand of West Plains. There should be simple and clear directions to the downtown area. An improved and clearly defined corridor from Highway 63 to the downtown district will help welcome both residents and tourists to the downtown district. Signage and wayfinding is a basic functional need that will provide direction to the historic downtown area and guide visitors and residents to featured attractions or events, however excess signage leads to clutter and decreases the effectiveness of signage.

There is currently one small sign designating the turn on Broadway into Downtown from regular Highway 63., but “Business Highway 63” is an exit further North and South and the “Business” designation usually indicates the downtown of a community. Once on Business Highway 63 there are no signs directing the visitor to turn East onto Broadway. And then once on Broadway there are no signs directing a visitor to turn South on Washington Avenue into the Downtown core, although there is a “Downtown West Plains” designation sign. This directional signage situation should be addressed as soon as possible and will be discussed in more detail in the Design and Strategic Plan components of the DREAM documents.



Approaches to town from Highway 63



Looking South on Washington Avenue

Improve Streetscapes and Buildings

First impressions make for lasting impressions, and the first impressions of downtown will be the streetscapes and buildings. Buildings and infrastructure in the historic Downtown should be improved to provide the visitor, and residents, with a more pleasant experience. Streetscapes should be improved with attention paid to wayfinding, sidewalk repair, benches, lighting, and beautification. Storefronts in the downtown area should be restored with consideration given to the historic qualities of downtown, such as the restoration of The Opera House in Courthouse Square. Improving these elements of comfort will improve visitors' first impressions as well as the whole downtown experience for visitors and residents.

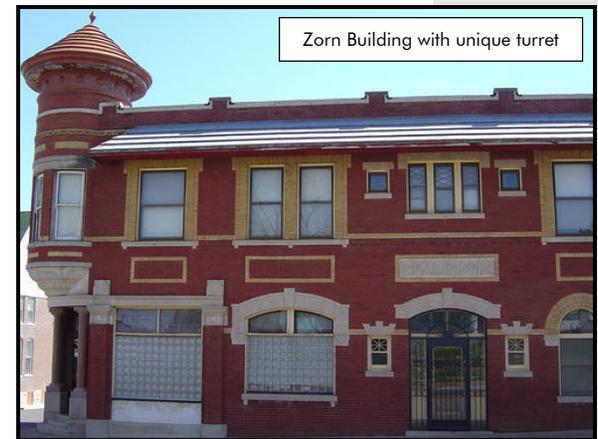
Add Visitor Center to Downtown Area

Providing information to visitors is a vital component of a successful destination. The Ozark Heritage Welcome Center for West Plains and the region is good for visitors passing through on Highway 63, but many of the visitors to downtown do not pass through the Welcome Center, located north and outside of town. Also, many of the residents who may use the downtown district would benefit with information that is specific to the attractions, shops, restaurants and events that are located around Courthouse Square. Not only will this provide valuable functional information for the community, but it will encourage and welcome residents and visitors to spend time and feel comfortable in the downtown. Consequently, the addition of another visitor's center or kiosk in, or near Courthouse Square would benefit tourists and residents alike.

In addition, the visitor's center and accompanying information should be easy to locate for any visitor traveling by any means. One way to accomplish this is through improved wayfinding and signage, a simple and cost effective solution. The information from the visitor center should be available 24 hours/7 days a week with brochures made available outside the visitor's center when it is closed. Furthermore, information should be placed in additional strategic locations. Consideration should be given to major transportation entryways as well as major attractions.

Provide Public Amenities for Visitors

Access to public restrooms is a basic need and important to creating a seamless experience. This is particularly important in consideration of the fact that Courthouse Square and the surrounding blocks host events and festivals in the downtown area. Public restrooms can be located in conjunction with the Visitor's Center or in conjunction with a public market. Furthermore, the facilities will provide shelter, a place to rest, and possibly the opportunity to purchase simple conveniences.



◆ *RETAIL & RETAIL OPERATIONS* ◆

Coordinate Downtown Businesses and Area Activities

West Plains has the start of a diverse mix of attractions and character that make it a unique destination; however these attractions must work in concert in order to be successful. A simple way to improve the integration is through increased coordination of visitor-oriented retailers, service providers, attractions, and event activities. It is important that all businesses in West Plains work together to provide visitors with a seamless experience. Performances at the Civic Center or races at the West Plains Motor Speedway may provide the main attractions but it is only through the coordination of all businesses can the basic and higher level needs of a visitor be met. Improved communication and coordination can help retailers and attractions develop similar hours of operation to encourage visitors to extend their stay, and provide a seamless experience while better meeting visitors needs.

The Chamber of Commerce or Downtown West Plains, Inc. should develop business education programs to assist and encourage this synergy and encourage stores to cross-promote each other. Retailers should modify or expand their product offerings to address the needs of visitors, taking into account both basic needs and higher needs. Particular attention should be paid to the specific visitor type being targeted and their corresponding needs. Additionally, providing attractive displays and coordinating themes and hours of operation will help create a positive shopping experience. Merchants should also attempt to stay open later than 5:00 pm. With the business travelers likely at work and other visitors exploring the surrounding environs, there is truly little to do in West Plains after daylight hours.

The City should work to encourage and allow innovations such as outdoor café seating and downtown promotions that will add a sense of excitement to the Courthouse Square.

The shops and restaurants in downtown West Plains can also benefit greatly by coordinating their retail operations and with events and festivals hosted at the Civic Center or sponsored by the University. This can be accomplished through a variety of means including increasing communication, improving product offerings and displays, and coordinating hours and events.

The coordination of the variety of activities, shops and restaurants will help to create a “critical mass” of activities in downtown West Plains and encourage more visitors to come to Courthouse Square. Included in this coordination should be the planned “Greenway.” Currently, the plan is that the greenway path connecting the Civic Center to the University will pass 2 or 3 blocks north of the center of downtown and Courthouse Square. However, planning the greenway to pass through Courthouse Square may help to integrate these destinations within West Plains, promote awareness of historic Courthouse Square, and have more reason to keep restaurants and shops open later. Students will likely take the shortest route to their destination, so merely constructing improvements may not be enough of a draw.

◆ *EVENTS* ◆

Existing or newly created events can take advantage of various visitor trends. Authenticity, Family Travel, and Time and Space are all positive aspects of most rural communities. West Plains can use its easy, slower pace, family atmosphere, and wealth of recreational attractions to appeal to the entire Family. Events that capitalize on and promote these aspects of the community should be developed.

The “2nd Saturday Downtown Stroll” is a great example of an event that coordinates the resources of the downtown. This event persuades West Plains residents to visit downtown, enjoy food, entertainment, shops and visit with other members of the community. The addition of other events that happen during the day on weekends allows for families to enjoy downtown and provides them the opportunity to shop at the outdoor markets that are open on weekends just outside Courthouse Square.

“Listen to live music” was the top hobby response indicated by the Visitor Survey. Live music can be added to nearly every event.

◆ *MARKETING* ◆

Coordinate the Positioning Statement

The folk life, crafts and culture of the Ozarks is a feature that can distinguish West Plains from the arts offerings in other towns in Missouri. The West Plains’ Council on the Arts promotes heritage tourism in the Ozarks, and brings the culture of traditional arts, music, food and other experiences of Ozark folk life to the community of West Plains. With support from arts organizations, such as the Missouri Arts Council, the West Plains Council on the Arts is actively working to establish West Plains as a threshold community to the Ozarks and its unique culture. Handmade crafts, fine art, and music will be the key to adopting a cultural experience that is viewed as a regional treat, but not a commercialized, ‘backwoods’ stereotype.

In addition, the L.L. Broadfoot collection of illustrations and stories of Ozark people and their life experiences adds to the authenticity and credibility of West Plains as the center for Ozark heritage arts and culture. The Avenue Theatre could provide an intimate venue for these experiences and will leverage an underused resource in the downtown district. The addition of more musical performances, storytelling, and workshops in Ozark arts, craft and cooking will add more reasons for residents and tourists to visit Courthouse Square and downtown West Plains.

◆ *OTHER* ◆

Harlin Museum Presence

In order for the downtown to truly take advantage of the L.L. Broadfoot collection and reinforce the positioning as the Center for Ozark Heritage and Culture the Harlin Museum should have a presence on Court Square. Visitors and residents will be more likely to peruse a gallery or exhibit if made more accessible and often the best and most effective marketing for such an attraction will be the retelling of the memory to others. This arrangement would also benefit the Harlin Museum by expanding the reach, visibility, and limited hours currently available.

Develop a Downtown Marketplace

By seeking to expand the local Farmer's Market or developing a new Market, downtown West Plains will gain a restaurant attraction, specialty food shop, entrepreneurial outlet, and residential service all in one business. An outside market should have covered areas, occur regularly, have extra restrooms, and incorporate other activities. A more permanent inside marketplace should be open to various suppliers and producers, not just the property owner. Outdoor locations would be the corners and arcades of the square, while an indoor location might be the Butler Incubator. Locally grown or made products should be featured.

Provide Valet parking

This is a high level recommendation that will fit in nicely with the suggested positioning of West Plains as the center for Ozark heritage and culture. Officials desire a attraction of a high quality visitor and want to deliver a more 'upscale' type of experience. The synergistic potential of Ozark art, music, and history, crafts, community theatre, and the marketplace can all be aimed to provide look at Ozark culture that is not the stereotypical image.

Valet parking on regular weekends and during events will provide the visitor with a stunning experience that they will not expect, feed into the positioning of West Plains, and assist with the parking issue.

It is important that the City overall, through a Community Improvement District or another financing mechanism, provide this service, perhaps on opposite corners of Court Square. If the service is only located in front of one restaurant or in the same place, it will be connected as being 'with' that establishment and lose its impact as a product of the West Plains overall experience.

Implementation

The various recommendations included can be implemented as the organization of Downtown West Plains, Inc. stabilizes with its new director. Sustainable organizational funding necessary to implement the programmatic recommendations will likely require a special district such as a Community Improvement District or a hotel tax. Valet parking could be funded through this mechanism.

The Missouri Arts Council offers funding programs to expand cultural offerings and the Missouri Division of Tourism can assist with group tours and promotions of West Plains attractions. Developing and promoting a local marketplace can be assisted by the Missouri Department of Agriculture. Information on these and other programs can be provided by the DREAM sponsors and can be found at:

www.missouriartscouncil.org
www.visitmo.com
www.mda.mo.gov

Other projects and aspects that support physical recommendations, such as wayfinding, retail attraction, and streetscape design will be found in other DREAM reports.

Also collaboration with regional tourism groups and events can be very efficient for West Plains. The City should seek to expand and strengthen these bonds whenever possible. Participation in events like the “Tour of Missouri” bicycle race that winds through several Missouri communities should be promoted.

West Plains could also participate with nearby Arkansas communities to develop regional events.

Tour of Missouri



APPENDIX

Attachment 1—Inventory of Attractions

IN TOWN ATTRACTIONS

Type of Attraction	Name of Attraction	Comments
Historic Sites/ Points of Interest	Historic Murals	Artist Michael McClure has created a series of twelve images that depict successive time periods from the pristine state of nature to the arrival of Native Americans, then the first settlers through the Civil War and into the 20th century.
	Historic Downtown	The “Courthouse Square” Historic District in Downtown West Plains is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.
Parks and Recreation	Robert Neathery Skate Park	A challenging layout designed especially for their sport. A skate shop is conveniently located next to the park.
	City Parks and Walking Trails	Eleven parks are available for recreation with some providing playgrounds, pavilions, picnic tables and grills. The city also provides an aquatics park, as well as baseball/softball diamonds, soccer fields, tennis courts and walking parks. The Missouri Conservation Department also has a beautiful nature trail with fish ponds and park benches.
	Heart of the Ozarks Fairgrounds	A venue for rodeos, fair & livestock shows, truck & tractor pulls, demolition derby, flea markets, antique shows, gun shows and more.
Golf Courses	West Plains Municipal Course	Public; 18-hole
	West Plains Country Club	Private; 18-hole

IN TOWN ATTRACTIONS

Type of Attraction	Name of Attraction	Comments
Museums	Harlin Museum	Built in 1889 and has been preserved, along with period furniture as a monument to the era in which he lived. A modern addition to the house includes a large gallery space and basement museum.
	Genealogy Library	Many resources and services are available to meet informational, recreational and educational needs. The library has a separate area for genealogy which includes the collection of the South Central Missouri Genealogy Society.
Family Entertainment	Various	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> City Pool Civic Center Pool (indoors) Family Cinema Glass Sword Cinema Grand Prix Go Karts & Mini-Golf Hit & Run Paintball Lightning Bowl Missouri Conservation Dept. Rock On Indoor Climbing Gym Skateland
Shopping	Antiques & Collectibles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Antique Corner Downtown Antique Mall Eledge House Antiques Ma & Pa's Collectables Mary Lou's Jefferson Street Flea Market Mom's Memories Antiques Old Time Flea Market Antique Mall Wrought Iron Antiques
	Farmers Market	A "Producer Only Market"; everything sold is grown or produced locally by the Market vendor. Seasonal: March through December.

IN TOWN ATTRACTIONS

Type of Attraction	Name of Attraction	Comments
Accommodations	Hotels & Motels	Best Western Grand Villa Holiday Inn Express Rest Inn Motel Regency Inn and Suites Super 8 Motel Best Value Inn & Conference Center West Plains Motel
	RV Parks	Chipmunk Crossing Henry's RV & Mobile Home Park Road Runner RV Park
Higher Education Centers	Missouri State University- West Plains	Specializes in providing quality post-secondary education to students of all ages in the south-central Ozarks region of Missouri. Some bachelor's and master's degree programs also are available at the West Plains Campus through the Academic Outreach program at Missouri State University-Springfield.
	South Central Career Center	Offers a full slate of work-related courses. Complementing this effort is the Missouri Customized Training Program.
	William Woods University- outreach campus	A private, professions-oriented institution of 3,000 students. The University offers undergraduate and graduate degrees in a variety of disciplines on the main campus in Fulton and in outreach settings, such as West Plains.

IN TOWN ATTRACTIONS

Type of Attraction	Name of Attraction	Comments
Arts & Entertainment	Yellow House Community Arts Center	Built in 1903. A volunteer organization devoted to promoting the arts and education in the West Plains area.
	Avenue Theater	A neo-art deco movie house built in 1950, operated until 1986, then donated to Arts on the Avenue, Inc., a non-profit arts organization formed to convert the facility into a community theater.
	Missouri State University (University/Community Programs)	Programming includes visual and performing arts, concerts, workshops, films, and lectures. Programs are delivered at the West Plains Civic Center
	West Plains Motor Speedway	A 100-acre motorsports facility located 6 miles south of West Plains. Featured weekly, IMCA Modifieds, Super Stock, Hobby Stock, Cruisers and the Youth Hobby Stock divisions race on Saturday nights beginning in March and running through September.
	Old Time Music, Ozark Heritage Festival	The festival is held annually, the third Friday and Saturday in June, on the Historic Court Square in West Plains. Musicians, artisans and storytellers from throughout the state come to the Festival in support of creating a place to listen, watch, interact with and honor the old time traditions of southern Ozarks' communities.
	Performing Arts Theater	Completely equipped, 450 seat, theatre provides a variety of cultural arts & entertainment productions in a luxurious, intimate atmosphere.
	West Plains Civic Center	Popular facility for everything from concerts to circuses, championship rodeos to athletic events and conferences to conventions. Includes a pool and fitness center. The official home of the Missouri State University-West Plains campus men's basketball and women's volleyball teams.

HOWELL COUNTY ATTRACTIONS

Type of Attraction	Name of Attraction	Comments
Rivers and Lakes	Eleven Point	Features Ozarks' history, scenic beauty and spectacular fishing opportunities.
	Spring River	A year-round float stream regularly stocked with rainbow trout.
Scenic Wilderness	White Ranch State Forest	This 6,414-acre area has been divided into three tracts and is dominated by forests with deer, turkey, beaver and squirrels. This peaceful wilderness is the perfect place for hiking, bird watching, picnicking, primitive camping, hunting and fishing. Rifle and pistol ranges were added for practice and enjoyment.
	The Ozark Trail	When finished, the Ozark Trail will reach from St. Louis through central and south central Missouri into western Arkansas, a distance of 500 miles. Much of the trail has been designed to accommodate foot, mountain bike and equestrian traffic.
	The Ridge Runner Trail	This 22-mile segment of the Ozark Trail extends from Noblett Lake to the North Fork Recreation Area at Hammond Camp. Wildflowers and flowering dogwoods, shadbush and service berry are backdrop to more than 300 species of mammals, reptiles, amphibians and birds.
	Vanderhoef Memorial State Forest	A 140-acre forest with nature trail, diversity of native plant life and the West Fork of the Spring River where one can find bass, goggle eye and sunfish.
	Irish Wilderness	A federal forest preserve of 16,500 acres. Horseback riding, hiking, biking and camping are favorite ---activities on the Ozark Trail along the Eleven Point River and its tributaries.

SOUTH CENTRAL MISSOURI ATTRACTIONS

Type of Attraction	Name of Attraction	Comments
Mills & Springs	Rockbridge Mill	Stands as a monument to the tenacity of Ozarks' pioneers. Today, the mill is the scenic center of a privately owned fishing resort, trout hatchery, game ranch, restaurant and lodge.
	Hodgson Mill & Spring	Built in 1894. Listed on National Register of Historic Places. Unique in that it was built into a rock bluff directly over the spring's 29 million gallon outflow.
	Dawt Mill	Built in 1897, the only water-powered grist mill located on the North Fork River. Now a resort with canoeing, lodging, camping, food and supplies.
	Topaz Mill	Constructed in 1895 and hidden away in a valley along the upper North Fork of the White River, the mill is privately owned and preserved.
	Zanoni Mill & Spring	Though a mill has operated on this site since the Civil War era, the mill wheel and flume is all that remains of the original structure. Today, the new structure is a venue for weddings and other special events.
	Falling Spring & Mill	Located on Hurricane Creek near the Eleven Point River. Part of a small park maintained by the U.S. Forest Service. The mill was constructed in the 1920's and features one of the area's few wooden overshot waterwheels with much of its primitive machinery still intact.
	Turner's Mill Spring	A 25-foot tall steel mill. The wheel stands alone in the spring branch a short walk from Surprise school, whose last graduating class was in 1945.
	Boze Mill Spring	Beside the Eleven Point River, the spring produces 12 million gallons of water per day. The historic 1880's turbine and hand-layered rock wall from the grist mill still exist. Perfect starting point for tubing.

SOUTH CENTRAL MISSOURI ATTRACTIONS

Type of Attraction	Name of Attraction	Comments
Mills & Springs	Alley Spring & Mill	Located near Eminence, the spring empties 80 million gallons of water per day into the upper Jacks Fork River. The mill was built in 1894 and is now a museum. Part of a park which includes a pioneer one-room schoolhouse, swimming and picnic areas, hiking trails and campgrounds.
	Greer Spring	Described as "half a mile down and five miles back." Part of the Mark Twain National Forest. Its daily outflow of 220 million gallons of water more than doubles the size of the Eleven Point River into which it flows.
	Blue Spring	Located east of Eminence on Hwy. 106 near Owls Bend. Missouri's 6th largest spring with an average flow of 90 million gallons per day. The 17 acres surrounding the spring was declared a Natural Area in 1972 for the native flora.
	Round Spring	Located on Hwy. 19 north of Eminence. Picnic facilities are scenic and spacious. A nearby cave contains unusual geological formations.
	Big Spring	The largest single outlet spring in America. Located in the Ozark National Scenic Riverways near Van Buren. Owned by the National Park Service and has a developed campground.
	Mammoth Spring	Located just across the state line in Arkansas, it is named for the largest spring in Arkansas and is tenth largest in the world. It is also the headwaters of Spring River, a legendary trout stream.

SOUTH CENTRAL MISSOURI ATTRACTIONS

Type of Attraction	Name of Attraction	Comments
Rivers and Lakes	The Ozark National Scenic Riverways	The Ozark National Scenic Riverways was created by an act of Congress to protect the 134 miles of the Current and Jacks Fork Rivers. Excellent opportunities for canoeing, swimming and fishing. Seven major springs feed the riverways year-round and over 300 caves are recorded.
	North Fork of the White River	One of the most beautiful free-flowing trophy trout streams in the Ozarks. It is fed by a multitude of natural springs.
	Bryant Creek	A 45-mile long tributary of the White River in Missouri. It is floatable for 42.6 miles from Vera Cruz to the North Fork. A bass and catfish stream.
	Norfolk Lake	Missouri portion of the lake is about 2,000 acres and is fed by the North Fork River and Bryant Creek, two canoeing gems. Norfork is a 22,000 acre lake which offers excellent bass fishing. Campsites are available at both public use areas as well as at private camps and RV parks.
	McCormack Lake	A 15-acre secluded lake at the bottom of a spring-fed hollow north of Alton. It offers 8 camp and picnic sites in addition to a boat access and fishing.
Scenic Wilderness	Mark Twain National Forest	A 1.5-million acre forest. More than 40 campgrounds and picnic sites, over 350 miles of floatable streams, lakes, seven congressionally designated wilderness areas totaling over 63,000 acres and 125 miles of trails for bikers and ATV users. Horseback riding, hiking (including three national recreation trails), sightseeing and bird-watching are popular.
	Grand Gulf State Park	Near Thayer. Park preserves a canyon 3/4 of a mile long with walls reaching as high as 120 feet. Often called the "Little Grand Canyon." Contains one of the

SOUTH CENTRAL MISSOURI ATTRACTIONS

Type of Attraction	Name of Attraction	Comments
Scenic Wilderness	The Narrows	Located east of Thayer. Includes remains of Tommason Mill, which was built around 1908 and operated in the early part of the century.
	Caney Mountain Refuge	The Conservation dept's first wildlife management plan on a 6,694 acre tract is host to a diverse wildlife population as well as other natural wonders, including the state record gum tree, resident bald eagle populations and several unique plant communities.
	Devil's Backbone Wilderness	Comprises 6,595 acres of rugged Ozarks' hills and hollows and is noted for its rugged terrain and wild beauty. Area is under special preservation rules as a Wilderness area to maintain it for all adventuring individuals to enjoy.
	Tupelo Gum Pond Natural Area	The existence of this stand of water tupelo trees indicates Tupelo Gum Pond is one of the most ancient sinkhole ponds in the Ozark uplands.
	Coward's Hollow Natural Area	Located on 56-acres of the Mark Twain National Forest southwest of Van Buren, Missouri and accessible by Forest Service roads, the natural area contains an unusual chert shut-in, chert shelter cave, a 20-foot waterfall and a chert cliff in the lower
	Glade Top Trail	Cuts through the Mark Twain National Forest and borders the Hercules Glades Wilderness Area. The trail is a pleasant half-day activity for wildlife and nature
	Jam Up Cave	The "doorway" to Jam Up Cave stands eight stories tall and is more than 1,000 feet across. Preservation of plant species that have not been seen elsewhere in the Ozarks since the last Ice Age. Access to the cave is only by canoe from the Jacks Fork River.
	Rocky Falls	Magnificent display of rock and water in conflict. Rocky Creek cascades forty feet down into a pool of cold, clear water that is an excellent swimming hole. The site is on National Forest Service land with a picnic area located nearby.

Type of Attraction	Name of Event	Comments
Annual Events	Entertainment & Monthly Dance at Café 37 and Opera House	Monthly
	Yellow House Arts & Entertainment	Monthly
	Monthly Events at the West Plains Civic Center	Monthly
	Optimist Club Semi-Annual Gun & Knife Show	February, October
	Home & Garden Show	March
	Cystic Fibrosis Association Benefit Concert	March
	Shrine Circus	March
	Various shows & exhibits at Harlin Museum	April, May, June, July, August, September, November
	2nd Saturday Downtown Stroll	April, May, June, July, August, September, October, November, December
	Annual "Show-Me 100" National Competition	May
	Heart of the Ozarks Fair Spring Festival Carnival	May
	Caddy Shack Classic Golf Tournament	May
	Annual "Wheels & Deals" Car Show	June
	Semi-Annual H.O.B.A. Bluegrass Festival	June, September
	Annual Old Time Music, Ozark Heritage Festival	June
	Sky Fire Fireworks Festival	June
	Heart of the Ozarks Fair and Livestock Show	July
	NJCAA National Championship Women's Volleyball	November
	Annual Arts & Crafts Exposition	December

Attachment 2 - Sample Business Type Survey

EXISTING BUSINESSES, DREAM BOUNDARY (as of Feb, 2008)

<u>SIC Code</u>	<u>SIC Category / Product</u>	<u># In area</u>	<u># in 30 min.</u>	<u># in City</u>	<u>Comments</u>
01-09	Agricultural	-	6	3	
10-14	Mining	-	3	2	
15-17	Construction	3	93	46	
20-39	Manufacturing	4	55	33	
40-49	Transportation, Communication, Electric, Gas & Sanitary	3	36	23	
50-51	Wholesale Trade	2	62	38	
52-59	Retail	46	487	264	
60-67	Finance, Insurance, & Real Estate	15	125	109	
70-89	Services	61	466	362	
91-97	Public Administration	21	50	48	
99	Non Classifiable Establishments	-	18	13	
RETAIL CATEGORIES					
56	Apparel & Accessory Stores	4	21	17	4 Downtown close by 5 pm.
55	Automotive Dealers & Service Stations	5	106	54	
52	Building Materials, Hardware & Garden Supplies	3	58	24	
58	Eating & Drinking Places	5	59	32	Only 1 stays open past 5 pm.
54	Food Stores	1	38	16	1 downtown is "I.B. Fruit & Nuts"
57	Furniture & Home Furnishing Stores	5	51	31	
53	General Merchandise Stores	-	19	11	
59	Miscellaneous Retail	23	135	79	Should list these...23 is a large number for Misc.

SUGGESTED BUSINESSES TO ATTRACT (as of Feb, 2008)

<u>SIC Code</u>	<u>SIC Category / Product</u>	<u># now In area</u>	<u>Comments</u>
VISITOR RETAIL			
56	Apparel & Accessory Stores	4	4 could be adequate. Are all types available? Men's clothes? Shoes?
59320200	Antique Stores		
5999	Art Galleries		
51990600	Baskets		
5942	Book Stores		
5947	Candles & Crafts		
5947	Cards & Souvenirs		
5947	Collectibles		
5719	Culinary Items		
	Factory Outlets		
5992	Flowers		
5719	Glass & Pottery		
5941	Sporting Goods		
5999	History & Ethnic Shops		
5719	Home Décor		
5944	Jewelry		
5948	Leather Goods		
5921	Liquor & Wine		
5947	Novelties		
5999	Perfumes & Soaps		
5999	Pet Supplies		
5946	Photography		
5713	Quilts & Rugs		
5999	Skin Products		
5451	Specialty Foods: Cheese		
5441	Specialty Foods: Candy		
5499	Specialty Foods: Coffee		
5945	Stuffed Animals & Dolls		
56	T-Shirts		
5945	Toys		
5812	Themed Restaurants		