

## Partnerships

Creating effective partnerships is an important principle for a successful heritage tourism program. Successful heritage tourism programs are most often characterized by collaboration between public and private national, state, and local groups. Often it takes a grassroots movement to sustain a community's culture and heritage. It is vital that the local community get involved and be supportive of any heritage tourism promotion. Without the involvement of supportive residents who believe in a project's importance and success, promoting a community's heritage will be difficult.

Some heritage tourism projects can be too costly and time consuming for one organization to support. At the same, many different community organizations, businesses, and people can benefit from such a project. It is important to identify all possible groups that could benefit from a heritage tourism project and approach them about contributing to the project in some way.

Partnerships that promote heritage tourism can lead to new uses for historic properties, collaborative interpretive efforts, increased volunteer participation, and greater leverage of financial and human resources. Partnerships in heritage tourism can and should protect the environment, celebrate cultures, and preserve history. It will ultimately build stronger ties between elected officials and citizens.

(Partnering to Promote Heritage Tourism in Local Communities: Guidance for Federal Agencies – <http://www.achp.gov>)

### Public Partners:

- **Local partners:** Local and regional public partners make it possible to pool resources, fund projects, and expand marketing potential. These partners can include city and county governments, historical societies, chambers of commerce, and other economic or community development organizations.
- **State partners:** State partners can include state universities, South Dakota Office of Tourism, South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks, and the South Dakota State Historical Society. State partners can be an invaluable resource for obtaining funds and technical assistance.
- **Federal partners:** Federal partners generally offer promotion and funding in the form of grants to heritage tourism programs. For example, the federal partnership in the Central South Dakota Heritage Tourism Education Program came from a Preserve America grant administered by the Department of the Interior, National Park Service. The online Our Shared Heritage Travel Itinerary was created by the collaboration between the South Dakota Historic Preservation Office and National Park Service.



### Private partners:

- Private partners can be large or small corporations and are often responsible for investments, project development and operations. They may also be financial or material donors. The private partnership in the Central South Dakota Heritage Tourism Education Program is the Dakota, Minnesota and Eastern Railroad Company (DM&E).
- Local private partners: Local partners are important because there are many resources needed that no one organization can supply. Local partners may be integral members of the community who can offer both financial and community support. Local partners can include political leaders, business owners, tourist site operators, hospitality operators, artists, craftsmen, and landowners.

The partners in the Central South Dakota Heritage Tourism Education Program included the South Dakota State Historical Society, Preserve America, and the Dakota, Minnesota & Eastern Railroad. Additional support came from the South Dakota Heritage Fund, City of Pierre, City of Fort Pierre, Pierre Historic Preservation Commission, South Dakota Office of Tourism, and South Dakota Department of Game, Fish & Parks.

In order for these partnerships to be successful:

- A letter of agreement should be written defining the roles, duties, responsibilities, and financial and management commitments of each partner.
- Benefits received by all partners should be agreed upon beforehand.
- The mission or purpose of the project must be shared by all partners.
- Partners should be chosen wisely based on their own missions and how they will help promote the image of the project.
- There should be frequent open communication to discuss changes, problems, strategies, and timelines.
- Give regular updates and reports to help keep all partners aware of others' progress and changes.
- Be sure credit is given to all partners as appropriate.

(Developing Successful Partnerships – Planning Guidelines for Heritage Tourism and Interpretive Sites, Facilities and Organizations by John A. Veverka - <http://www.heritageinterp.com/developi.htm>)

[Back to Cultural Heritage Tourism](#)

