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Generating Sales from Bike Trail Users

Presented to the Monroe Chamber of Commerce and Industry

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Agenda

1. How trails are used to promote development
2. What the community can do to capture more sales
3. What local businesses can do to capture more sales



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1. How Trails are Used to Promote Development

Regional Economic Development - promoting trails as a quality of life enhancement to retain or recruit businesses and residents.

Tourism Development - using trails as a way to attract hotels, restaurants and other tourism-related businesses.

Main Street Revitalization - linking trails with downtown to channel demand for retail shops, restaurants, and services.

Source: Implementing Trail Based Economic Development Programs: A Handbook for Iowa Communities, Iowa Department of Transportation

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Lessons learned from other communities

Trails are just one element of a larger visitor experience.
Provide other opportunities to draw visitors.

For a community to be trail destination, individual businesses must work together to build critical mass.

Trail users learn about trails by word of mouth, as well travel articles, on the Internet, etc.

Year-round activity is crucial to the survival of many trail related businesses. Must serve other segments as well.

Slogans and marketing themes are meaningless unless the entire community buys into them.

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Lessons learned from other communities

Communities must provide quality lodging, and dining activities to supplement the draw of recreation.

Different types of trail users behave differently. For example, snowmobilers are more likely to travel in larger parties, stay longer, and spend more money than bicyclists.

A festival only creates economic impacts for a few days each year. To be effective economic development tools, festivals must become points-of-entry for year-round experiences.

Source: Implementing Trail Based Economic Development Programs: A Handbook for Iowa Communities, Iowa Department of Transportation

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Case Study: Sparta, WI

- One of the nation's first railtrails was the Elroy-Sparta State Trail in southwestern Wisconsin (built in the 1960's)
- Very popular due to three long tunnels along its 32 miles. 100,000-120,000 users per year.
- Other trails have opened in the area, making it a popular destination for bicyclists, XC skiers, snowmobilers, and hikers.
- Sparta declares itself the "Bicycling Capital of America."

Source: Implementing Trail Based Economic Development Programs: A Handbook for Iowa Communities, Iowa Department of Transportation



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Sparta, WI continued

Sparta's identity is also expressed by its businesses:

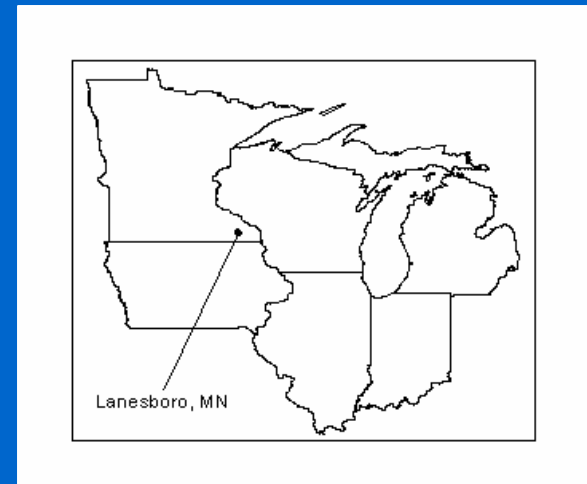
- hotels and campgrounds provide free trail passes;
- restaurants serve healthier food desired by bicyclists;
- arts and crafts and novelty shops serve visiting trail users; and
- tour operators package bus tours that include lodging, bike rental, and shuttle service.



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Case Study: Lanesboro, MN

- Natural surroundings in rural atmosphere
- Active outdoor recreation area
- Frequented by groups, families, and couples seeking active outdoor sports
- Community of 900 residents, located in the Root River Valley



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Lanesboro, MN continued

Scenic Valley Winery

- Produce/market fruit wines
- Accommodates tourists by shipping products during the holiday season



Capron Hardware

- Promotes its business to the recreational market
- Rents and sells outdoor equipment, camping and fishing supplies



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2. What the community can do to capture more sales

General Steps (any community)

1. Enlist Citizen Involvement
2. Build a Community Identity
3. Develop a Marketing Plan
4. Choose an approach:
 - Regional Economic Development
 - Tourism Development
 - Main Street Revitalization
5. Organize for Implementation



Source: Implementing Trail Based Economic Development Programs: A Handbook for Iowa Communities, Iowa Department of Transportation

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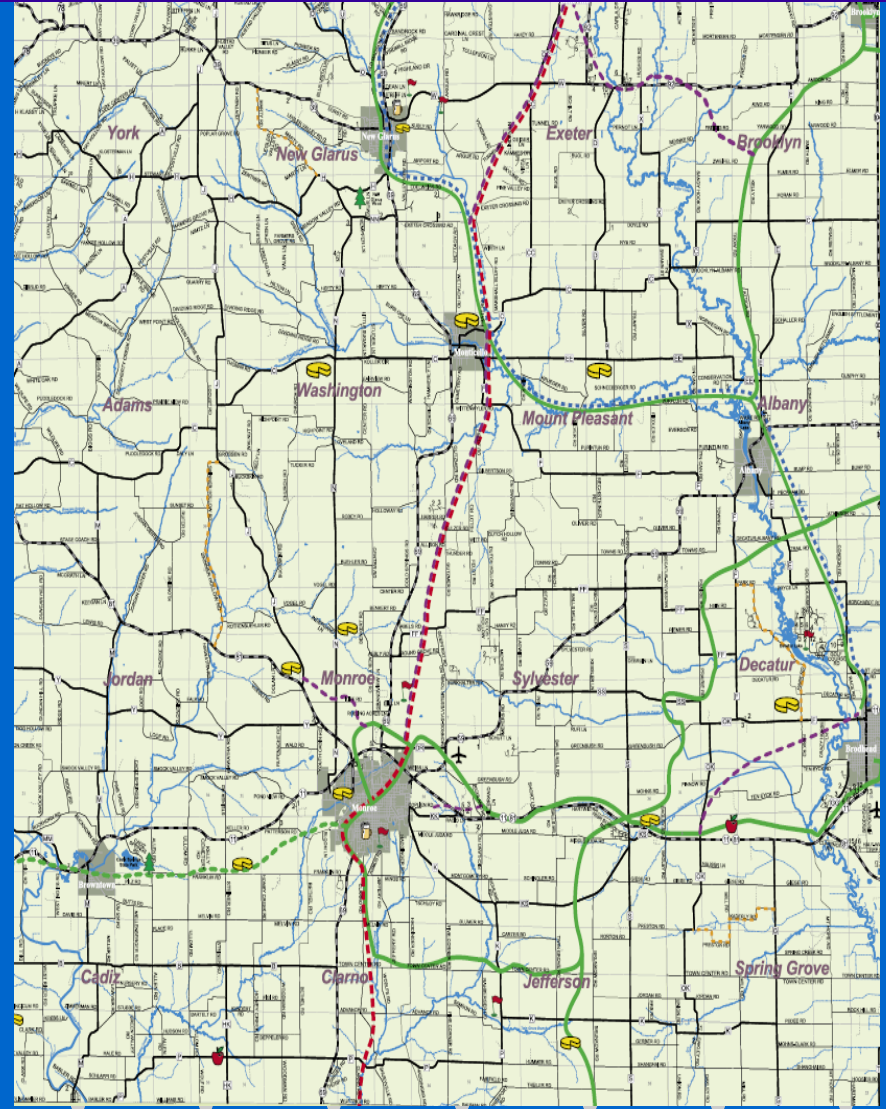
Help businesses understand the variety of tourist expenditures, such as:

- Antiques
- Art Gallery
- Baskets
- Bakery Products
- Bird Houses
- Books
- Candles
- Cheese
- Chocolates/Candy
- Christmas Items
- Coffee Shop
- Crafts
- Dolls
- Factory Outlets
- Flowers
- Glass
- Golf/Outdoor Equipment
- Gourmet Foods
- Heritage/Ethnic Gifts
- Home Accessories
- Jewelry
- Leather Items
- Lifestyle Apparel
- Liquor and Wines
- Perfume/Soaps
- Pet Supplies
- Photography
- Pottery
- Quilts
- Rugs
- Skin and Health Care
- T-shirts and Clothing
- Teddy Bears
- Theme/Historic Restaurants
- Toys
- Wreaths

Support marketing initiatives like “Bike Green County”



- professionally planned routes
- maps and attraction sheets
- loop from 20-80 miles per day,
- reservations at your choice of motel, hotel, or B&B
- luggage to overnight stays
- emergency road service provided



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Link the trail to Monroe's business districts



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Recognize bicycling challenges from trail to 8th St. district

- Looking east on 8th St
 - Auto intensive area and congestion make it less bike-friendly, especially crossing 7th Ave,



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Improve linkage from trail to Downtown Monroe

- Looking south from trail on 14th Ave
 - No directions to Downtown



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Improve linkage from trail to Downtown Monroe

- Looking south on 16th Ave
 - No painted bike lanes to downtown
 - Challenging crossing at 9th St (what lane do you pedal in?)



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Improve linkage from trail to Downtown Monroe

- Looking south on 16th Ave
 - Inviting downtown, but no visible bike parking



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Showcase what Downtown Monroe has to offer

- Interesting shopping and dining opportunities



Showcase what Downtown Monroe has to offer

- Great selection of events



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What local businesses can do to capture more sales

General Steps (any community)

1. Enlist Citizen Involvement
2. Build a Community Identity
3. Develop a Marketing Plan
4. Choose approach to Economic Development
 - Regional Economic Development
 - Tourism Development
 - Main Street Revitalization
5. Organize for Implementation

Source: Implementing Trail Based Economic Development Programs: A Handbook for Iowa Communities, Iowa Department of Transportation

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Selected retail strategies

- Recognize the first impressions visitors have of your business
- Have a window show to grab the attention of pedestrians
- Use sidewalk displays
- Appeal to the senses of sight, smell and sound



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Selected retail strategies

- Be a source for recreational licenses
- Be open when bicyclists are in town.
- Offer restroom facilities for visitors
- Post road/trail maps and provide visitor information
- Teach employees about the area
- Offer shipping



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Selected retail strategies

- Provide an educational experience
- Provide samples
- Offer convenience products
- Provide products that describe or reflect the local area
- Stock items that the trail user may have forgotten
- Sell products that the visitors can take with them



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