

COMPETITIVENESS THROUGH BEST PRACTICES

## **FINAL REPORT**

City Centre Themed Districts  
March 24<sup>th</sup> – 29<sup>th</sup>, 2008

**Prepared by:**

**Johanna Egan  
Marketing Officer  
Tourism Atlantic - ACOA  
May 20, 2008**

## **Introduction**

This mission visited tourism destinations whose common objectives are to enhance the vitality of the city centre and attract tourists to the region through rich history, culture, famous shopping, and world renowned dining. This mission had a focus on city centre's which are pedestrian oriented for shopping and dining. Participants were exposed to historic yet exciting destinations that provide a true experience offering visitors and residents alike an unparalleled urban marketplace.

This theme was chosen because Atlantic Canada has several cities that have extensive history, as well as excellent dining and shopping for our visitors. These elements have always attracted tourists to our region. As tourists look towards cultural, entertaining experiences, Atlantic Canada has an opportunity to capitalize on the visitors' interest in the city centre experience. In particular, this trend presents an opportunity for partnership and networking between all stakeholders promoting tourism in Atlantic Canada.

The **City Centre Themed Districts Best Practices Mission** took place in Asheville NC, Gatlinburg TN, and Greenville SC from March 24<sup>th</sup> - 28<sup>th</sup>, 2008.

## **Purpose**

The purpose of the City Centre Themed Districts Best Practices Mission was to expose private sector operators and stakeholders to exemplary tourism products. The mission was developed to provide tourism planners with first-hand industry knowledge and information on the development and marketing models that exemplify such attributes as quality, high productivity, extended seasonality and motivation to travel. It was intended that the mission would serve as demonstrative research and would reinforce the need for innovative products that successfully address current market demands.

## **Primary Expectations**

The following provides a summary of the participants' primary expectations for the Best Practices Mission (taken from their applications):

- To learn more about
  - The research, product, marketing continuum model.
  - Branding a destination, its vision, co-operative marketing initiatives and promoting the destination.
  - Extending the peak tourism season.
  - The struggles that our industry may have experienced, and learn how they have overcome them.
  - How the municipality/city government plays a role in city centre development

- To gain an understanding of branding, best communication practices, and global destination development, relating to downtown revitalization of City Centre concepts.
- To see how smaller areas can be at the forefront and not swallowed by larger areas with much larger budgets.
- To see a variety of possibilities for developing infrastructure in the hope that some will be transferable to our situation.
- To find out how community “buy-in” to the development was achieved and how businesses were motivated and happy to participate.
- To develop a network of contacts from other places in the Atlantic Provinces, to share experiences and act as a resource for the future. It is these networks that will help promote the region together, making opportunities more accessible and affordable.
- To gain insight on the role of the municipality in developing tourism products and working with community and tourism organizations
- To gain ideas and inspiration regarding branding/theming and to be exposed to examples of successful community branding and the process involved in developing appropriate themes
- To explore the relevant issues, strengths, and weaknesses that must be addressed by City Centre entities.

### **Mission Itinerary**

#### **Monday, March 24<sup>th</sup>**

Day: Participants travel from Atlantic Canada to Charlotte, NC

3:30 p.m.: Meet at the Charlotte/Douglas International Airport in Charlotte, NC

3:45 p.m.: Group travels to Asheville, NC

6:15 p.m.: Check into Inn on Biltmore State

7:30 p.m.: Group dinner at Café on the Square

#### **Tuesday, March 25<sup>th</sup>**

7:30 a.m.: Breakfast & Check out

8:30 a.m.: Travel to Gatlinburg TN

10:30 a.m.: **Presentation:**

- **Wayfinding system development**
- **Downtown events to attract tourists both locally and abroad**

Presenter: David Perella, Executive Director

Gatlinburg Department of Tourism & Convention Centre  
Location: W.L. Mills Conference Centre

11:45 a.m.: Lunch at W.L. Mills Conference Centre

12:30 p.m.: **Presentation:**

- **Infrastructure development – how it has changed the downtown area**
  - **Origination of Undergrounding and Streetscape Project**
- **Public/private co-operative interests**
  - **Ripley’s Aquarium of the Smokies initiative**

Presenter: Cindy Ogle, Gatlinburg City Manager

Location: Mills Conference Centre

2:00 p.m.: Guided tour of Ripley’s Aquarium of the Smokies

3:30 p.m.: Guided walking tour of city centre

5:00 p.m.: Check into Hampton Inn Gatlinburg

6:30 p.m.: Group Dinner at the Park Grill Steakhouse

Wednesday, March 26<sup>th</sup>

7:30 a.m.: Breakfast & Check out

8:30 a.m.: Travel to Asheville NC

10:30 a.m.: **Presentation: Building a Global Destination Brand: The story of how Asheville built a strong brand, city center and tourism products**

Presenter: Cate Marvill, Tourism Product Development Manager  
Beth Anne McPheeters, Brand Marketing Manager  
Asheville Convention and Visitors Bureau

Location: Asheville Convention and Visitors Bureau Ashe Room

11:45 a.m.: Working lunch (boxed lunches from one of Asheville’s noted independent restaurants)

*Climb aboard a historical trolley for a personalized city tour that will focus on what makes Asheville one of Frommer’s top must see global destinations.*

1:30 p.m.: **Presentation: City Centre Focus: Learn from leaders from the City of Asheville on the development of Asheville’s strengths and challenges in preserving its unique city essence in the 21<sup>st</sup> century**

Presenter: Sam Powers, City of Asheville Development Office and other staff

Location: City of Asheville Development Office

- 3:00 pm.: **Site visit: Walking tour of downtown Asheville with stops at Grove Arcade Public Market, Pack Square Park, etc.**  
 Presenter: Officers from several downtown attractions  
 Location: Downtown Asheville
- 7:00 p.m.: Group dinner at the MarketPlace  
*(Owned by one of the founders of AIR – Asheville’s Independent downtown restaurant association (over 60 members) – Mark Rosenstein – will be addressing the group for discussion and Q&A focusing on how AIR plays a crucial role in city centre development)*

Thursday, March 27<sup>th</sup>

- 7:30 a.m.: Breakfast & check out
- 8:30 a.m.: Travel to Greenville, SC
- 10:00 a.m.: **Presentation: How to work effectively in conjunction with local businesses and the community**  
**To see the successful use of a city center product**  
 Presenter: Nancy Whitworth  
 Mary Douglas Neal – Downtown Development Manager  
 City of Greenville Economic Development  
 Location: 201 RiverPlace, 4<sup>th</sup> floor in The Bounce Agency
- 11:00 a.m.: **Presentation: How the arts draw tourism to the area**  
 Presenter: Alan Ethridge, Executive Director  
 Metropolitan Arts Council  
 Location: 201 RiverPlace, 4<sup>th</sup> floor in The Bounce Agency
- 12:00 p.m.: Travel to lunch location
- 12:15 p.m.: Lunch at Trio
- 1:15 p.m.: Walking tour with Mary Douglas Neal focusing on:
  - Public/private partnerships
  - Downtown planning and development
  - The arts as well as tourism
- 2:30 p.m.: Free afternoon to spend time walking downtown and shopping to get a real feel for the city centre
- 4:30 p.m.: Transportation to Hilton Greenville and check in
- 6:00 p.m.: **Group dinner** at Overlook Grill

Friday, March 28<sup>th</sup>

8:00 a.m.: Breakfast and check out

9:30 a.m.: **Presentation:**

- **Economic Development Structure**
- **How the Upstate region is similar/different to other areas**
- **How regionalism has helped the area**

Presenters: Jennifer Noel, VP of Marketing for Upstate Alliance

11:00 a.m.: **Presentation:**

- **Co-operative marketing initiatives for city centre activities**
- **New and interesting ways to promote city centre product to attract tourists - marketing both locally and abroad**

Presenter: Lauren Posta, Marketing Manager  
Greenville Convention & Visitors Bureau

Location: The Lazy Goat restaurant

12:00 p.m.: Lunch buffet at The Lazy Goat

1:00 p.m.: Travel to Charlotte, NC

3:00 pm.: Check into Wingate by Wyndham or fly out to Atlantic Canada

5:30 p.m.: Wrap-up dinner

Saturday, March 29<sup>th</sup>

Morning: Travel from Charlotte, NC to Atlantic Canada

## **Mission Leader**

Brian Schmeisser – ACOA-APECA PE

## **Participants**

### New Brunswick

John Johnston – East Point Inc.  
Meredith Caissie – City of Bathurst

### Newfoundland and Labrador

Stephen Jewczyk – City of Mount Pearl  
Keith Watton – Corner Brook Downtown Business Association

### Nova Scotia

Sally Burnie – Town of Annapolis Royal  
Jill Cruikshank – Region of Queens Municipality  
Esther Dares – Town of Yarmouth  
Carmel Avery MacDonald – Guysborough County Regional Development Authority

### Prince Edward Island

Ron Casey – Downtown Summerside Inc.  
Dawn Alan – Downtown Charlottetown Inc.  
Bill Schurman – The Summerside Wellness Centre  
Lisa Doyle MacBain – Charlottetown Area Development Corporation (CADC)

## **Mission Activities and Presentations**

### **1. Gatlinburg, Tennessee**

Gatlinburg Department of Tourism & Convention Centre

#### **Background**

Gatlinburg TN is a city with a diverse mix of retail, dining, and attractions. The adjacent Great Smoky Mountains National Park, now boasting over nine million visitors annually, has transformed Gatlinburg into a mountain resort destination, packed with accommodations of every sort, dozens of local-to-national restaurants, and attractions. Surrounded on three sides by the natural beauty of the National Park, Gatlinburg prides itself in its mountain heritage, the arts, crafts, and retail shops of the area reflect that heritage to a large extent. Gatlinburg is a walking community, especially along the Downtown Parkway, which runs from one end of town to the other with hundreds of things to see and do in between.

The Gatlinburg Tourism Department comprises several different aspects for the city of Gatlinburg. The Office of Special Events creates and implements festivals and parades for visitors to enjoy. The Visitor Services Department supplies visiting guests with information about the accommodations, attractions, dining and outdoor activities in the area. The Sales Department helps tour groups plan and coordinate their conventions and trade shows. The Operations Department helps tour groups and conventions to set up the event from the beginning to the end of the event. Every department works together to form a team that helps guests feel special and welcome to Gatlinburg.

#### **Contacts**

David Perella – Executive Director  
Cindy Ogle – Gatlinburg City Manager  
Gatlinburg Department of Tourism & Convention Centre  
303 Reagan Drive  
Gatlinburg, TN 37738  
[www.ci.gatlinburg.tn.us](http://www.ci.gatlinburg.tn.us)

#### **Brief Description of activities / presentations**

David Perella delivered a presentation covering:

- Way-finding system development
- Downtown events to attract tourist both locally and abroad

Cindy delivered a presentation covering:

- Infrastructure development – how it has changed the downtown area

- Origination of Undergrounding and Streetscape Project
- Public/Private co-operative interests

These presentations were followed by a walking tour.

Comments of the activity/presentations, and lessons learned

“David was an excellent presenter and his facility was stellar. His knowledge of tourism, marketing and his product was exceptional. We could have met with him for much longer.”

“David gave us a good understanding of the development of the convention centre and also the dynamics of the community, the tourism businesses and the role of the city in supporting the tourism industry. He was very honest in sharing costs, plus both the good and bad aspects of Gatlinburg”.

“Cindy’s presentation was excellent with lots of good information and situation examples that could be easily related to our region. Very informative and interesting and both presentations were very timely. Walking tour was very worthwhile.”

“Cindy gave an excellent presentation on underground services and streetscape improvements. Again, she was very honest and we certainly could have used more time with her. This was a very hospitable group. ”

“Cindy was very passionate and interesting. Her focus on private/public partnerships was informative.”

As a result of our visit to Gatlinburg, TN the following points have been noted:

1. Downtown rejuvenation ideas (i.e. the opportunity for underground services and streetscape improvements)
2. Learned about new and interesting funding structures (i.e. private/public)
3. The importance of the city’s tourism support in city development

**2. Asheville, NC**  
Asheville Convention and Visitors Bureau

Background

Asheville NC is a great “in process” community with a vibrant night life, several districts, and is considered one of the best well-branded communities in the U.S. Asheville is a terrific example of downtown development.

The Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce is planning for the future of the Asheville area. With the mission of increasing the region’s livability by advancing its economic

vitality, the Chamber is a partnership of over 2,000 businesses, organizations and coalitions supporting the community and each other. The Chamber provides a platform for businesses to come together to work towards common goals. Guided by the Chamber's Strategic Plan, developed by the board of directors, the Chamber serves as a collective voice to advocate for business issues.

The Chamber consists of various departments with different funding mechanisms and focuses, including tourism, economic development, member services, public policy and workforce development. Working together has created a winning partnership for the community, cutting operating costs and bringing together leadership from different arenas of the community.

### Contacts

Cate Marvill – Tourism Product Development/Community  
Beth Anne McPheeters – Brand Marketing Manager  
Asheville Convention and Visitors Bureau  
36 Montford Ave.  
Asheville, NC 28801  
[www.ashevillechamber.org](http://www.ashevillechamber.org)

### Brief Description of activities / presentations

Cate and Beth Anne delivered a presentation titled: Building a Global Destination Brand - The story of how Asheville built a strong brand, city center, and tourism products.

This was followed by a customized city trolley tour visiting all the major sites discussed in the previous presentations.

### Comments of the activity/presentations, and lessons learned

“Excellent presentation and content that was very applicable to our goals.”

“Presentation on Tourism Product Development was very relevant, introducing a novel concept and funding, combining projects with benefits to the whole community, not just the visitor.”

“Beth Ann was an excellent presenter! Her energy and product knowledge was stellar. The theme could be related easily to our city and I was very impressed with this group's willingness to share and provide any and all information. Asheville is a beautiful town!”

“Trolley tour provided the best site tour of the trip.”

“A powerful communicator and who is very passionate about branding and marketing this community – very good research, preparations and presentation.”

“This was absolutely excellent. Presenter was outstanding – superb product knowledge and enthusiasm in delivery. She would be an ideal candidate for speaking engagements in our region. Totally excellent and extremely applicable – we could all learn a great deal from this.”

As a result of our visit to the Asheville Convention and Visitors Bureau the following points have been noted:

1. The necessity and benefits of properly following the branding process
2. The importance of the relationship between community involvement and successful marketing when branding a community
3. The potential and opportunity for destination development

### 3. City of Asheville Development Office

#### Background

The Office of Economic Development is a division of the city manager’s office, led by Economic Development Director Sam Powers.

The office focuses on collaborating with city departments involved in the development process and on working with outside agencies like the Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce, Advantage West, Land-of-Sky Regional Council and Buncombe County to address community strategies for balanced growth and job creation. Services provided by the office include the Minority Business Program, real estate management and economic development planning. This office serves as liaison to the Asheville Film Commission and the Downtown Commission.

#### Contacts

Sam Powers – Economic Development Director  
City of Asheville Development Office  
29 Haywood Street  
Asheville, NC 28801  
[www.ashevillenc.gov](http://www.ashevillenc.gov)

#### Brief Description of activities / presentations

Sam delivered a presentation titled: City Centre Focus - Learn from leaders from the City of Asheville on the development of Asheville’s strengths and challenges in preserving its unique city essence in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

This presentation was followed by a guided walking tour of the downtown area.

Comments of the activity/presentations, and lessons learned

“It was good to get different perspectives and have concepts reinforced from the various presenters.”

“We were provided with excellent examples of downtown renewal.”

“The walking tour helped us to see what they discussed during the presentation. It was interesting to see the plans for the proposed downtown park.”

As a result of our visit to the City of Asheville Development Office the following points have been noted:

1. The importance of downtown renewal was reinforced
2. The requirement and attention to detail necessary for successful downtown revitalization
3. The importance of community involvement and commitment to downtown development as a huge tourism asset.

**4. Asheville’s Independent Downtown Restaurant Association**

Background

The Asheville Independent Restaurant Association was formed in fall of 2002 as a volunteer- based non-profit organization that is dedicated to fostering a stronger business environment for Asheville's locally owned and operated restaurants.

The association’s mission is to cooperatively promote the common interests of and contribute to the well being of those locally owned independent restaurants and individuals engaged in the food service/hospitality industry in Asheville, North Carolina.

Objectives

- To coordinate and promote the restaurant industry in Asheville.
- To maintain a business climate beneficial to the restaurant industry in general and independent restaurants specifically.
- To promote programs and activities which enhance the restaurant industry in Asheville
- To encourage and foster harmonious professional relationships between the membership and the public in general.
- To take public positions on issues of mutual concern.

## Contacts

Mark Rosenstein – founder of Asheville’s Independent Restaurant Association and owner of the Market Place Restaurant  
20 Wall Street  
Asheville, NC 28801  
<http://www.airasheville.org/>

## Brief Description of activities / presentations

The group dined at Mark’s restaurant the Market Place and he addressed the group for discussions and Q&A focusing on how AIR plays a crucial role in city centre development.

## Comments of the activity/presentations, and lessons learned

“He presented an excellent explanation of how and why the AIR came to be. He provided me with some ideas that I will pass along to our City’s Restaurant Association.”

“Very interesting – as we would like to start a similar program.”

“Great restaurant and food and the information was good to see how all the restaurants are working together.”

“Great touch that we were able to casual follow-up conversations with Mark, Cate, and Beth Ann at dinner – very interesting and timely.”

## **5. Greenville, SC** City of Greenville Economic Development

### Background

In Greenville SC there has been exciting revitalization that has occurred over the past 25 years. The redevelopment has focused on a vision to have “a thriving Downtown which is recognized nationally as an example of a ‘state-of-the-art’ community in which to live, work, and play, and which serves in itself as a national attraction.” In recent years Downtown Greenville has also developed into a dining/entertainment destination. With over sixty restaurants and pubs centred on Main Street, Greenville’s Downtown offers the greatest concentration of dining options in the entire Upstate area.

### Contacts

Mary Douglas Neal – Downtown Development Manager  
Nancy Whitworth – Economic and Community Development Director  
City of Greenville – Economic Development  
206 South Main Street

Greenville, SC

[www.greatergreenville.com](http://www.greatergreenville.com)

### Brief Description of activities / presentations

Mary and Nancy delivered a presentation focusing on:

- How to work effectively in conjunction with local businesses and the community
- To see the successful use of a city centre product

### Comments of the activity/presentations, and lessons learned

“This was one of the best presentations of the trip.”

“Nancy has been in her position for 30 years. She was a wealth of information on the present and the past. This was an excellent presentation. What a remarkable city. The redevelopment was incredible. There were lots of good ideas taken away.”

“This was an excellent presentation with before and after examples of the impacts on the downtown. They did a great explanation of the anchors and the 60 department’s role in facilitating development, focusing on quality rather than quantity.”

“Mary was a great hostess. Everyone was very impressed by her commitment and passion. She was extremely knowledgeable.”

“The guided tour of Greenville with Mary was excellent! It was great having an economic professional act as a guide to explain why and how development happened and the challenges and partnerships involved.”

“This group’s generosity to share information was exceptional.”

As a result of our visit to the City of Greenville Development office the following points have been noted:

1. The importance of committed individuals to a downtown’s transformation
2. How to develop planning concepts, development proposals, and strategic initiatives in the downtown theming.
3. The importance of focusing on quality rather than quantity when facilitating development.

## **6. Metropolitan Arts Council**

### Background

The Metropolitan Arts Council (MAC) is the only organization in Greenville, South Carolina working daily to support every discipline of the arts. MAC provides support to area arts organizations and many individual artists through its grants program, through its cultural planning process, by advocating on behalf of all artists and arts groups, and by

providing cooperative marketing opportunities promoting arts groups that might not have resources available to them.

The mission of the Metropolitan Arts Council is to stimulate and support artistic expression and its appreciation and enjoyment in ways that enrich all citizens, artists, cultural organizations, and communities of the Greenville County. This is accomplished by providing funding and other vital services to individual artists, arts organizations and arts education programs that greatly impact the economic well being of the community

### Contacts

Alan Ethridge – Executive Director  
Metropolitan Arts Council  
16 Augusta Street  
Greenville, SC 29601  
<http://www.greenvillearts.com>

### Brief Description of activities / presentations

Alan delivered a presentation titled: How the arts draw tourism to the area

### Comments of the activity/presentations, and lessons learned

“Alan was a very dynamic speaker with a passion for his product. His presentation was interesting and intelligent. What a culture product he has to offer!”

“This was a very relevant presentation. Lots of facts and figures to illustrate the enormous arts and culture product range in Greenville, how it was funded and participation levels, etc.”

“This arts and council scene is very remarkable given the size of this community. Alan had a great attitude to promote the Arts.”

As a result of our visit to the Metropolitan Arts Council the following points have been noted:

1. The benefits of an Arts community as a contributor to the economy
2. The various arts and culture product range available from different funding and participation levels.

## 7. Upstate Alliance

### Background

Formed in 2000, the Upstate South Carolina Alliance is a public/private regional economic development organization designed to market the dynamic 10-county Upstate

region to the world. The 10 counties of the Alliance represent the commerce-rich northwestern corner of South Carolina.

The Upstate Alliance's vision is to "Position and market the Upstate SC region to successfully compete for business investment globally". The Alliance's goal is to spearhead an aggressive, innovative and comprehensive global marketing strategy to attract new investment to the Upstate region. By creating a powerful brand and image for the region, increased opportunities will ultimately lead to greater investment, enhancing the prosperity and quality of life for the entire Upstate.

Funding for the Upstate Alliance comes through two sources: member counties/cities and private sector business partners. The Alliance's private sector partners number more than 170 individual companies / organizations.

#### Contacts

Jennifer Noel – Vice President of Marketing  
Upstate Alliance  
124 Verdae Blvd. Suite 202  
Greenville, SC 29607  
<http://www.upstatealliance.com/>

#### Brief Description of activities / presentations

Jennifer conducted a presentation focusing on:

- Economic Development Structure
- How the Upstate region is similar/different to other areas (competitive differentiation)
- How regionalism has helped the area

#### Comments of the activity/presentations, and lessons learned

“Jennifer’s presentation was one of the most interesting. She was very willing to share knowledge and resources, and we really felt like we had a great understanding of the workings of the Upstate Alliance. She was very friendly and knowledgeable.”

“Wow! This lady knows her stuff. She gave an excellent offering of stats and examples. The format her organization used in recruitment is exceptional.”

“Fabulous information! She provide great ideas on marketing and business attraction – and how to present that information – simple but effective. “

“Jennifer gave a concise and insightful presentation on the Upstate Alliance and benefits of regionalism. This was a strong presentation and clear approach. This was very useful information.”

As a result of our visit with Jennifer Noel of the Upstate Alliance, the following points have been noted:

1. The benefits of regionalism in attracting new businesses
2. The importance of simplicity when marketing
3. Learned in depth about other ways to develop economically other than tourism development
4. The importance of knowing your partner's business in order to further develop within your industry
5. The value of a Regional Economic Development Model for successful development

## 8. Greenville Convention & Visitors Bureau

### Contacts

Lauren Posta – Marketing Manager  
Greenville Convention & Visitors Bureau  
631 S. Main Street, Suite 301  
Greenville, SC 29601  
<http://www.greenvillevb.com/>

### Brief Description of activities / presentations

Lauren delivered a presentation titled: How to break into the leisure tourism market while sustaining/building on a convention base

### Comments of the activity/presentations, and lessons learned

“Lauren’s presentation was one of my personal favorites, as I noted a lot of similarities to what we are trying to achieve at home.”

“She shared lots of interesting and useful information on existing and upcoming projects/initiatives. Very interesting!”

“This presentation was very relevant on tourism product developments. Interesting that Greenville and Asheville have similar products – revitalized downtown, restaurants, arts and culture with a connection to the mountains – and are struggling to find their niche. This resonates with us in the Atlantic Provinces.”

**Evaluation of Mission** (Taken from participant surveys and debrief discussions)

**Positive comments about the mission included:**

“The mix of the product we visited. The location could not have been better, nor the order in which we visited the venues (each became more relevant). The mix of the delegates was great, each with different perspectives/questions to ask.”

“Without question the major strength was the on site, visual experience. Seeing success stories rather than reading about them.”

“All the speakers gave me a lot of great information that will help me do my job better.”

“The presentations were excellent and relevant; tours were excellent. Bus driver was very pleasant and knowledgeable and accommodating – not overbearing at all. Our leader was great to keep on schedule – organized, kind. The people on the mission and contacts developed are assets for my work. The 2-hour drives were not cumbersome – actually enjoyable. The coach was very comfortable and roomy.”

“Well organized and structured. We had an excellent leader and bus driver. Out presenters were very professional and the communities very interesting. Lodging and restaurants were all excellent – everyone very friendly.”

“The greatest strength was being able to network with other small towns and communities. It was at this time that we discussed what we could take “home” with us as far as knowledge and being able to down size the ideas to implement them into our towns.”

“The topics covered were very relevant to me and our organization. It was interesting to know that I am doing the same types of projects and activities as these areas – although on a much, much smaller scale. We are all selling basically the same products and services – the key is to how we stand out.”

**Recommendations to improve future missions:**

“There was almost too much information to take in and process in the time available, especially as the budget and magnitude of development was hard to relate to for those from small-town rural communities.”

“Perhaps a little more time to walk and experience the downtown would have been nice.”

“There was a bit too much traveling in between places. At times, this left for insufficient time for Q&A in presentations.”

“The population and operating budget differences between our communities and the cities we visited.”

“I also would have liked to have formal introductions of all participants with a brief background of each and their expectations at the beginning of the trip.”

### 3. Lessons Learned / Recommendations

The results from the mission evaluation were positive. Participant surveys were completed upon the completion of the mission and in this post-mission evaluation form, 100% of the participants said that the mission met or exceeded their expectations. Participants were very satisfied with the overall mission leaving with reviews such as “This was a wonderful experience, I learned a great deal and it certainly exceeded my expectations. The general feeling among our group was that this was one of the best if not, the best mission.” Participants received new ideas for attracting new businesses, tourism and visitors, building tourism product, developing economic development models, defining a brand and taking it to market. Additionally, the rare opportunity to be exposed to successful city centre themed districts allowed the operators to see how other cities operate behind the scenes and relate this to their own operations.

Overall, this mission was viewed to be very educational and all involved will be bringing new ideas to their communities that will only increase the vitality of their respective districts. This invaluable information will help grow their community and Atlantic Canada as a whole.

Please see Appendix A for graphed results of the post-mission evaluation.

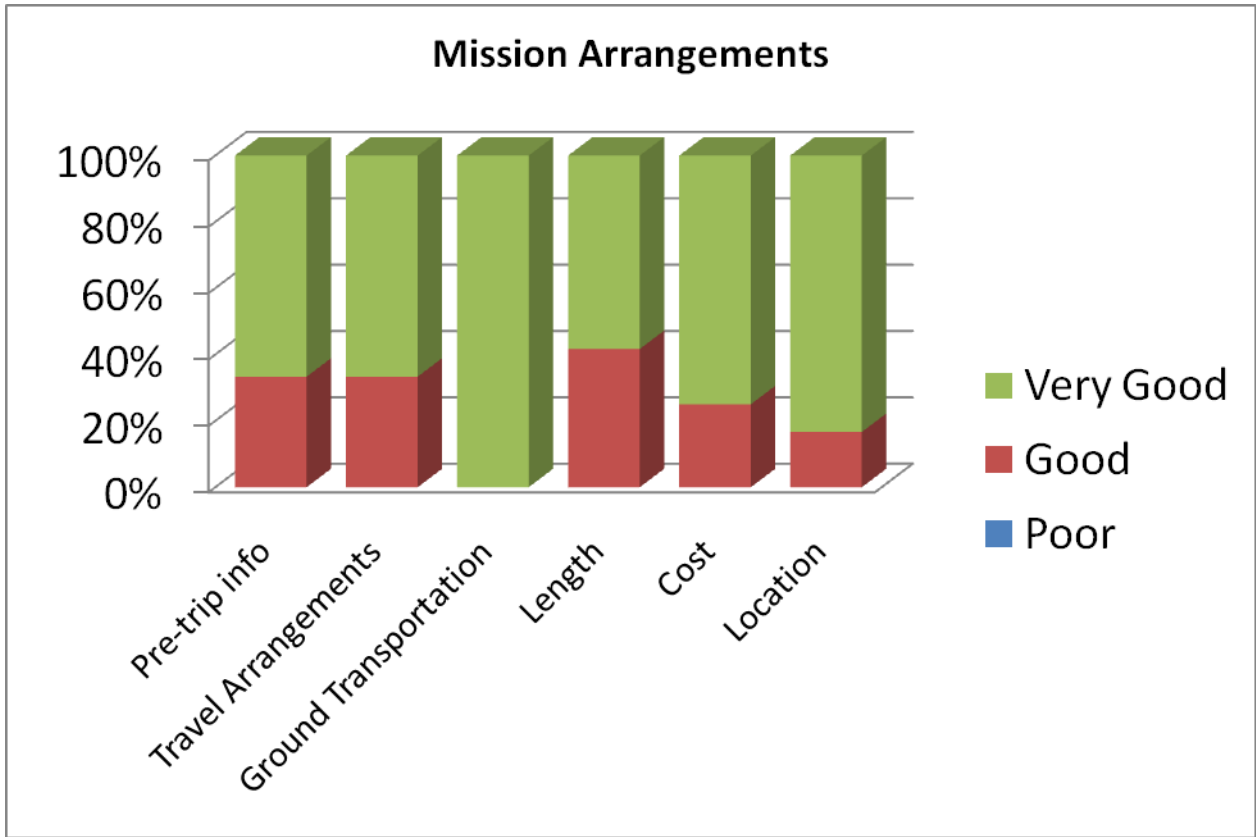
### Conclusion

Gatlinburg TN, Asheville NC, and Greenville SC, as Best Practices destinations, were very successful as they each have developed a successful city centre tourism product yet were contrasting in nature, so different products from each area could be applied in Atlantic Canada. Although the cities are more advanced in terms of operating budget and population, they still have the same problems as the Atlantic region and, thus, the participants could easily relate and compare themselves.

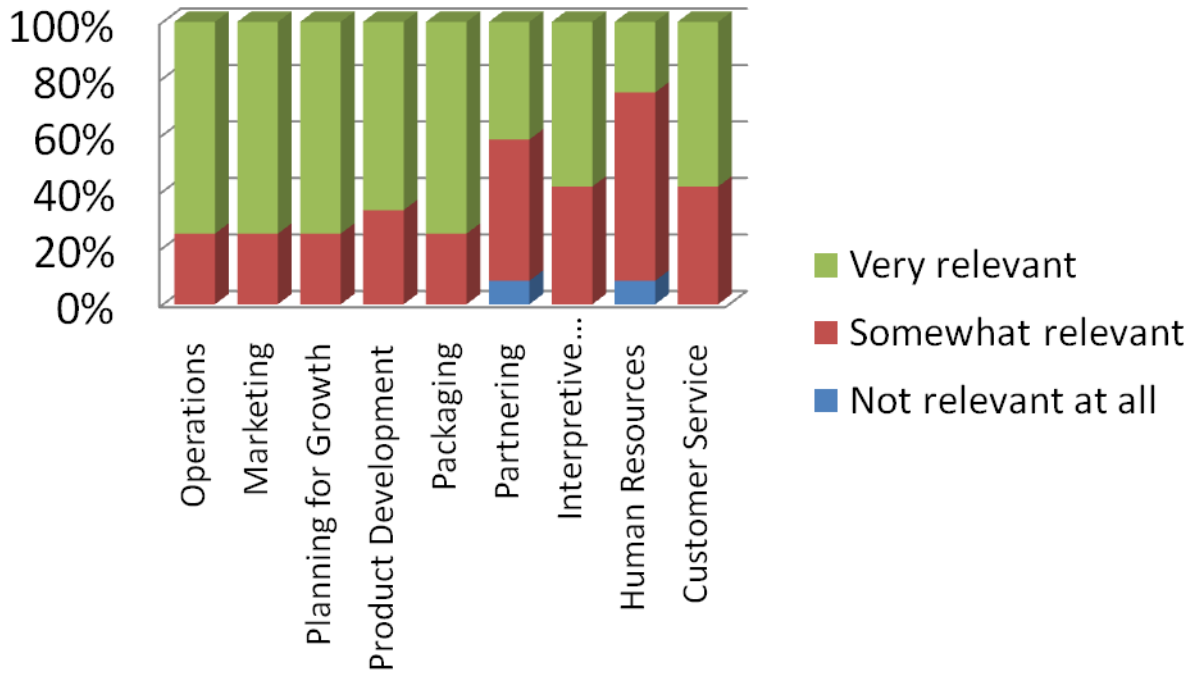
This mission was very educational and exposed Atlantic Canada operators to a broad scope of new ideas and practices that can translate into their own businesses. These missions not only inspire participants to improve their current operation, but also build confidence by reinforcing that they may be doing some things very well.

**Appendices**

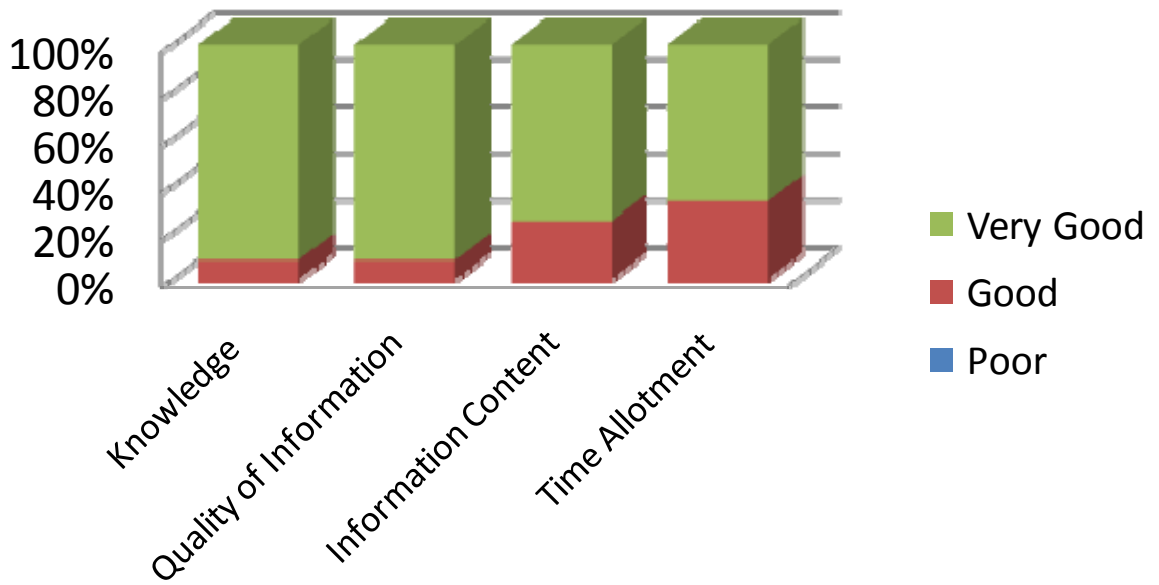
**Appendix A: Mission Evaluation Results**



### Relevance to Business



### Presentations and Seminars



## Appendix B: Mission Participants

### City Centre Themed Districts Asheville NC, Gatlinburg TN, Greenville SC March 24-29, 2008

NAME / TITLE	COMPANY / WEBSITE	ADDRESS	TEL/FAX/CELL EMAIL
John Johnston, Retail Development Manager	East Point Inc.	479 Rothesay Ave. Saint John, NB E2L 4G7	Tel: (506) 634-5711 Fax: (506) 634-2236 Email: <a href="mailto:johnsto@northrupgroup.ca">johnsto@northrupgroup.ca</a>
Sally Burnie Marketing/ Events Coordinator	Town of Annapolis Royal	285 St George Street PO Box 310 Annapolis Royal, NS B0S 1A0	Tel: (902) 532-2043 Fax: (902) 532-7443 Email: <a href="mailto:marketing@annapolisroyal.com">marketing@annapolisroyal.com</a> Website: <a href="http://www.annapolisroyal.com">www.annapolisroyal.com</a>
Jill Cruikshank	Region of Queens Municipality	249 White Point Road Liverpool, NS B0T 1K0	Tel: (902) 354-5741 Fax: (902) 354-7473 Email: <a href="mailto:jcruikshank@regionofqueens.com">jcruikshank@regionofqueens.com</a> Website: <a href="http://www.regionofqueens.com">www.regionofqueens.com</a> or <a href="http://www.queens.ca">www.queens.ca</a>
Stephen Jewczyk, City Planner	City of Mount Pearl	3 Centennial Street Mount Pearl, NL A1N 1G4	Tel: (709) 748-1075 Fax: (709) 748-1150 Email: <a href="mailto:sjewczyk@mountpearl.ca">sjewczyk@mountpearl.ca</a> Website: <a href="http://www.mountpearl.ca">www.mountpearl.ca</a>
Ron Casey, Executive Director	Downtown Summerside Inc.	1 Summer Street PO Box 121 Summerside, PE C1N 4P6	Tel: (902) 436-7546 Fax: (902) 436-7547 Email: <a href="mailto:ron@downtownsummerside.com">ron@downtownsummerside.com</a> Website: <a href="http://www.downtownsummerside.com">www.downtownsummerside.com</a>
Dawn Alan, General Manager	Downtown Charlottetown Inc.	PO Box 2641 Charlottetown, PE	Tel: (902) 368-8636 Fax: (902) 368-3570 Email: <a href="mailto:dawn@downtowncharlottetown.com">dawn@downtowncharlottetown.com</a> Website: <a href="http://www.downtowncharlottetown.com">www.downtowncharlottetown.com</a>

Meredith Caissie, Tourism Manager	City of Bathurst	850 St Ann St. Bathurst, NB E2A 6X2	Tel: (506) 549-3201 Fax: (506) 548-0406 Email: <a href="mailto:city.tourism@bathurst.ca">city.tourism@bathurst.ca</a> Website: <a href="http://www.bathurst.ca">www.bathurst.ca</a>
Bill Schurman, Director of Community Services, Manager	The Summerside Wellness Centre	511 Notre Dame Street	Tel: (902) 432-1234 Fax: (902) 436-4596 Email: <a href="mailto:bschurman@city.summerside.pe.ca">bschurman@city.summerside.pe.ca</a>

Summerside Wellness Centre			Website: <a href="http://www.city.summerside.pe.ca">www.city.summerside.pe.ca</a>
Lisa Doyle-MacBain, Chair of Confederation Birthplace Initiative Advisory Board	Charlottetown Area Development Corporation (CADC)	5 Delta Court Charlottetown, PE C1E 1Z9	Tel: (902) 566-3639 Fax: (902) 368-7116 Email: <a href="mailto:macbain@eastlink.ca">macbain@eastlink.ca</a>
Keith Watton, Chairman of the Board	Corner Brook Downtown Business Association	19 Main Street Corner Brook, NL A2H 6C5	Tel: (709) 637-8352 Fax: (709) 639-0304 Email: <a href="mailto:keith.watton@aliant.ca">keith.watton@aliant.ca</a>
Esther Dares, Town Councillor	Town of Yarmouth	400 Main Street	Tel: (902) 742-2387 Email: <a href="mailto:councillor.dares@yarmouth-town.com">councillor.dares@yarmouth-town.com</a>
Carmel Avery-MacDonald, Development Officer	Guysborough County Regional Development Authority	PO Box 49 Guysborough, NS B0H 1N0	Tel: (902) 533-3731 Fax: (902) 533-2064 Email: <a href="mailto:clavery@gcrda.ns.ca">clavery@gcrda.ns.ca</a> Website: <a href="http://www.connectwithourenergy.com">www.connectwithourenergy.com</a>

## Appendix C: Mission Itinerary

**CITY CENTRE THEMED DISTRICTS**  
**BEST PRACTICES MISSION**  
*Asheville NC, Gatlinburg TN, & Greenville SC*  
*March 24-29, 2008*

---

### Monday, March 24<sup>th</sup>

- Day: Participants travel from Atlantic Canada to Charlotte, NC
- 3:30 p.m.: Meet at the Charlotte/Douglas International Airport in Charlotte, NC  
Meeting spot – *Charlotte Bistro* - located in Zone E just outside of International Arrivals on the Baggage/Ground Transportation – Lower Level
- 3:45 p.m.: Bus picks up group at Zone D and loads luggage
- 4:00 p.m.: Group travels to Asheville, NC (about a 2 hour and 14 min. drive)
- 6:15 p.m.: Check into Inn on Biltmore Estate

Inn on Biltmore Estate  
1 Antler Hill Road  
Asheville, NC 28803.

- 7:10 p.m.: Depart for dinner (about a 20 min. drive)
- 7:30 p.m.: Group Dinner at Café on the Square  
*Opportunity for introductions and to get to know each other*

### Tuesday, March 25<sup>th</sup>

Gatlinburg TN

Main contact: David Perella, Executive Director  
Gatlinburg Department of Tourism & Convention Centre

- 7:30 a.m.: Check out and load luggage
- 8:00 a.m.: Pick up breakfast at either
- 8:30 a.m.: Travel to Gatlinburg TN (about a 1 hour and 59 min. drive)
- 10:30 a.m.: **Presentation:**
- **Way-finding system development**
  - **Downtown events to attract tourists both locally and abroad**
- Presenter: David Perella, Executive Director  
Gatlinburg Department of Tourism & Convention Centre
- Location: W.L. Mills Conference Centre

- 11:45 a.m.: Lunch at W.L. Mills Conference Centre
- 12:30 p.m.: **Presentation:**
- **Infrastructure development – how it has changed the downtown area**
    - **Origination of Undergrounding and Streetscape Project**
  - **Public/private co-operative interests**
    - **Ripley’s Aquarium of the Smokies initiative**
- Presenter: Cindy Ogle, Gatlinburg City Manager  
Gatlinburg Department of Tourism & Convention Centre
- Location: W.L. Mills Conference Centre
- 1:30 p.m.: Travel to site visit
- 2:00 p.m.: Guided tour of Ripley’s Aquarium of the Smokies  
88 River Rd  
Gatlinburg, TN 37738
- 3:30 p.m.: Guided walking tour of city centre
- 4:30 p.m.: Bus to pick up group at the Gatlinburg Department of Tourism & Convention Centre
- 4:45 p.m. Transportation to hotel and check into Hampton Inn Gatlinburg

Hampton Inn Gatlinburg  
967 Parkway  
Gatlinburg, TN 37738

- 6:30 p.m.: Group dinner at the Park Grill Steakhouse – Abraham’s Creek private room  
1110 Parkway  
Gatlinburg, TN 37738

**Wednesday, March 26<sup>th</sup>**

Asheville, NC

Main contact: Kelly Miller Executive VP & Executive Director  
Asheville Convention & Visitors Bureau

- 7:30 a.m.: Breakfast & Check out (complimentary breakfast bar)
- 8:30 a.m.: Travel to Asheville NC (about a 1 hour and 50 min. drive)
- 10:30 a.m.: **Presentation: Building a Global Destination Brand: The story of how Asheville built a strong brand, city center and tourism products**
- Presenter: Cate Marvill, Tourism Product Development/Community Relations Manager  
Beth Anne McPheeters, Brand Marketing Manager

Location: Asheville Convention and Visitors Bureau  
Asheville Convention and Visitors Bureau Ashe Room  
36 Montford Avenue  
Asheville, NC 28801

- 11:45 a.m.: Working lunch  
*Climb aboard a historical trolley for a personalized city tour that will focus on what makes Asheville one of Frommer's top must see global destinations.*  
**Boarding at Visitors Centre at the Asheville Convention and Visitors Bureau**
- Montford Historic District
  - Grove Park Historic District
  - Grove Park Inn Resort & Spa
  - Grovewood Gallery
  - Art Deco-rich Downtown
  - River Arts District
  - Biltmore Village
- Contact: Deborah Helmken, owner of Gray Line Trolley Tours of Asheville  
Boxed lunches from Laurey's Catering & Gourmet to Go
- 12:00 p.m.: Start tour
- 1:15 p.m.: Trolley dropping group off at Visitors Centre  
Travel to City of Asheville Development Office
- 1:30 p.m.: **Presentation: City Centre Focus: Learn from leaders from the City of Asheville on the development of Asheville's strengths and challenges in preserving its unique city essence in the 21<sup>st</sup> century**  
Presenter: Sam Powers, Economic Development Director  
City of Asheville Development Office and other staff  
Location: City of Asheville Development Office  
29 Haywood Street  
Asheville, NC 28801
- 3:00 pm.: **Site visit: Walking tour of downtown Asheville with stops at Grove Arcade Public Market, Pack Square Park, etc.**  
Presenter: Officers from several downtown attractions  
Location: Downtown Asheville  
Kelly will have guide meet the group at the City of Asheville Development Office
- 4:40 p.m.: Bus to pick up group at Pack Square Park  
Transportation to Inn on Biltmore Estate (about a 20 min. drive)
- 5:00 p.m.: Check in

Inn on Biltmore Estate  
1 Antler Hill Road  
Asheville, NC 28803.  
[www.biltmore.com](http://www.biltmore.com)

6:30 p.m.: Travel to dinner (about a 20 min. drive)

7:00 p.m.: Group dinner at the Market Place  
20 Wall Street  
Asheville, NC 28801  
*Owned by one of the founders of AIR – Asheville’s Independent downtown restaurant association (over 60 members) – **Mark Rosenstein** – will be addressing the group for discussion and Q&A focusing on how AIR plays a crucial role in city center development*

(Offer a “bar 100 menu” based on the casual dining concept of the market place. Based on ingredients available within 100 miles of Asheville, with the emphasis on local, seasonal & simple)

**Thursday, March 27<sup>th</sup>**

Greenville, SC

Main contact: Mary Douglas Neal, Downtown Development Manager  
City of Greenville- Economic Development

7:30 a.m.: Check out and load luggage

8:00 a.m.: Pick up breakfast at Bruegger’s Bagel Bakery (very close to entrance of Estate) 160 Hendersonville Road, Asheville NC

8:30 a.m.: Travel to Greenville, SC (about a 1 hour and 24 min. drive)

10:00 a.m.: **Presentation: How to work effectively in conjunction with local businesses and the community**

**To see the successful use of a city center product  
(leave some time for The Bounce Agency to discuss their marketing for the state tourism board)**

Presenter: Nancy Whitworth, Economic and Community  
Development Director  
Mary Douglas Neal – Downtown Development Manager  
City of Greenville Economic Development

Location: 201 RiverPlace, 4<sup>th</sup> floor in The Bounce Agency

11:00 a.m.: **Presentation: How the arts draw tourism to the area**

Presenter: Alan Ethridge, Executive Director  
Metropolitan Arts Council

Location: 201 RiverPlace, 4<sup>th</sup> floor in The Bounce Agency

11:50 a.m.: Travel to lunch location

12:00 p.m.: Lunch at Trio  
22 N Main Street  
Greenville, SC 29601

1:15 p.m.: Walking tour with Mary Douglas Neal focusing on:

- Public/private partnerships
- Downtown planning and development
- The arts as well as tourism

2:30 p.m.: Free afternoon to spend time walking downtown and shopping to get a real feel for the city centre

4:30 p.m.: Transportation to Hilton Greenville and check in

Hilton Greenville  
45 West Orchard Park Drive  
Greenville, SC 29615, USA

5:45 p.m. Travel to dinner (about a 10 min. drive)

6:00 p.m.: **Group dinner** at Overlook Grill (casual dining with good atmosphere near Liberty Bridge, Reedy River Falls, and Falls Park)  
601 S Main St.  
Greenville, SC 29601, US

### Friday, March 28<sup>th</sup>

8:00 a.m.: Breakfast and check out

9:15 a.m.: Travel to presentation (about a 10 min. drive)

9:30 a.m.: **Presentation:**

- **Economic Development Structure**
- **How the Upstate region is similar/different to other areas (competitive differentiation)**
- **How regionalism has helped the area**

Presenter: Jennifer Noel, Vice President Marketing  
Upstate Alliance

Location: 201 RiverPlace, 4<sup>th</sup> floor in The Bounce Agency

10:45 a.m.: Travel to presentation location (about an 11 min. drive)

- 11:00 a.m.: **Presentation: How to break into the leisure tourism market while sustaining/building on convention base**  
Presenter: Lauren Posta, Marketing Manager  
Greenville Convention & Visitors Bureau  
Location: The Lazy Goat restaurant (food to be catered afterwards)  
170 Riverplace Drive  
Greenville, SC 29601
- 12:00 p.m.: Lunch buffet at The Lazy Goat
- 1:00 p.m.: Travel to Charlotte, NC (about a 1 hour and 44 min drive)  
(Debrief with participants if not complete)
- 3:00 p.m.: Check into Wingate by Wyndham or fly out to Atlantic Canada – hotel 4 miles from the airport  
Wingate by Wyndham  
4238 Business Center Dr, Charlotte
- 6:00 p.m.: Optional group dinner

**Saturday, March 29th**

Morning: Free hot continental breakfast

*Group will make own arrangements to get to the airport (only 4 miles away) as they will be departing at different times (airport shuttle available)*