

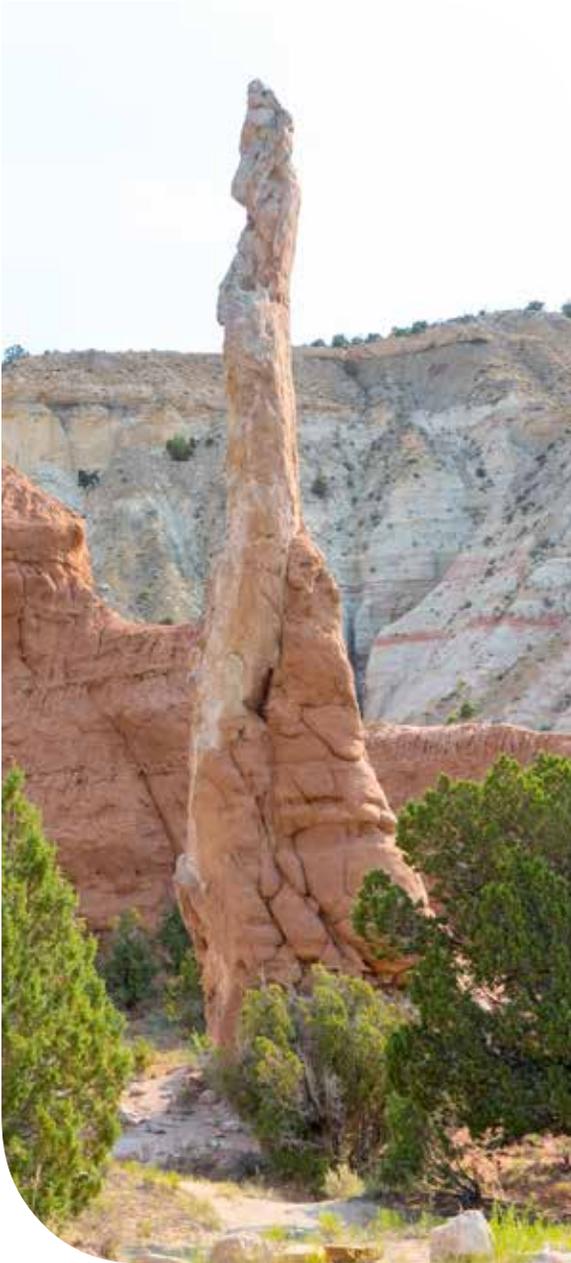


# Assessment Findings and Suggestions Report

Escalante, Utah

August, 2017

**ROGER BROOKS** >  
International



## Opportunity Assessment

### INTRODUCTION

In July of 2017, an Opportunity Assessment of Escalante, Utah was conducted, and the findings were presented in two a two-and-a-half hour workshop. The assessment provides an unbiased overview of Escalante—how it is seen by a visitor. It includes a review of local marketing efforts, signage, attractions, critical mass, retail mix, ease of getting around, customer service, visitor amenities such as parking and public restrooms, overall appeal, and the community’s ability to attract overnight visitors.

In performing the Opportunity Assessment, we looked at the area through the eyes of a first-time visitor. No prior research was facilitated, and no community representatives were contacted except to set up the project. The town and surrounding area were “secretly shopped.” Any person looking to relocate their business, industry, or residence will come to your community as a visitor first. Tourism is the front door to all your economic development efforts.

Once potential visitors find information about your area, are the marketing materials good enough to close the sale? In the Marketing Assessment, we reviewed your visitor website and print marketing materials.

A typical community has five opportunities to close the sale:

- 1) Personal contact (visitor information centers, trade shows, etc.)

- 2) Websites
- 3) Brochures and printed materials
- 4) Publicity (articles)
- 5) Word of mouth—the most effective means

We searched the internet for activities, requested and reviewed printed materials, and looked for articles and third-party information. As we prepared for travel to your community, we searched both commercial and organizational websites promoting the area, tourism websites, and read travel articles and guidebooks.

The marketing assessment determined how effective the marketing was in convincing a potential visitor that the area would be worth a special trip, a stop, or an overnight stay. The key to the marketing assessment is to see if you have a primary lure that makes you worth a special trip of a one-hour drive—or from further away. The question on most visitors’ minds is: What do you have that I can’t get closer to home? What makes you worth a special trip?

Where most communities falter is when they merely provide “lists” of what the community has, whether it’s truly “unique” or not. Nearly every community in North America promotes the usual list of diversions: local museums, shops and restaurants, plenty of lodging, golf, outdoor recreation, historic downtowns, scenic vistas, etc. Of course, nearly every visitor can do these things closer to home. So, what makes Escalante worth the trip?

Always promote your primary lure first - what makes you worth that special trip. THEN, promote your diversionary, or “complementary” activities.

Would you go to Anaheim, California, if Disneyland wasn't there? Do you think that Universal Studios and Knotts Berry Farm mind that Disneyland gets all the glory? Of course not. Eighty percent of all tourism spending is with those secondary activities. Disney does the heavy lifting in terms of advertising and promotion, and the diversionary activities benefit.

In a nutshell, the Marketing Effectiveness Assessment looks for what makes your community worth a special trip, or a great place to live, or to do business. We look for details, details, details. Do you give a reason for visiting, and do you provide enough information to make it easy to plan a trip? Are the marketing materials good enough to close the sale?

The second part of the assessment process is the On-site Assessment. During this part of the assessment, we spent several days in the area, looking at enticements from the highways (signs, billboards, something that would get a visitor to stop), beautification and overall curb appeal, wayfinding (ease of getting around), visitor amenities (public restrooms, visitor information, parking), activities, overall appeal, retail mix (lodging, dining, shopping), critical mass, customer service, area attractions, pedestrian friendliness, gathering spaces, evening activities, and the availability of marketing materials and their effectiveness.

The area benefits from tourism when visitors spend money, and they do that in the local gift shops, restaurants, hotels, etc. Therefore, the On-site Assessment includes a candid look at private businesses as much as public spaces and amenities.

For every shortcoming or challenge we note during the assessment process, we provide a low-cost "suggestion," where possible, on how the challenge can be corrected or overcome. The suggestions are not termed "recommendations," as they were developed without consulting the community first about possible restraints, future plans, or reasons why the suggestions may not be appropriate. Hopefully this assessment process will open dialogue within the community, leading people to adopt some or all of the suggestions, taking them from suggestions to recommendations.

It's important to note that to increase the town's tourism industry, fulfilling one or two of the suggestions may have little impact, but implementing a number of them, if not all, can have a profoundly successful impact on the town's ability to tap into the tourism industry.

Implementation of these suggestions must be a region-wide effort, involving both privately owned businesses as well as local, county, and state agencies, where appropriate. Every local organization plays a role in tourism, downtown revitalization, or economic development efforts. A Destination Marketing Organization (DMO, CVB, Chamber, TPA, etc.) will not be successful if the tourism effort is not region-wide.

In many cases, issues may come up that you are already aware of and are already working on. In that case, the assessment validates those efforts. But more often than not, the assessment will point out things that you are aware of but can't mention or bring up without paying a political price. Local politics can be a killer of the tourism industry.



While marketing efforts are important, product development is the most important factor of a successful tourism industry. Visitors want activities, not just things to look at. How much time can a visitor spend enjoying activities—that cater to their interests - in your area? Does your community have truly unique attractions the visitor can't get closer to home? You must be able to deliver on your marketing promises—otherwise visitors might come once, but they won't come back. It's much more cost effective to bring people back, than to always go out and entice new visitors into town. "Been there, done that" communities eventually run out of visitors and find they don't have a sustainable tourism industry, or they simply become pit stops or gateways on the way to somewhere else.

After spending several days reviewing marketing materials and assessing the community, we have looked at all of these issues, and have developed some suggestions and ideas the community can discuss and possibly implement to help increase tourism spending locally.

### **SUCCESSFUL TOURISM TRANSLATES TO CASH**

Tourism is successful when the community imports more cash than it exports. When residents spend their hard-earned money outside the community, the community is exporting cash – often referred to as "leakage." Tourism helps fill that gap, importing cash into the local economy without the necessity of having to provide extended social and other services. Visitors come, spend money, then go home. When you import more cash than you export, you have a positive "balance of trade." Communities with successful tourism

programs easily see that the industry subsidizes the community, whereas other communities find that they subsidize visitors – providing services visitors use without them leaving enough money behind to cover the cost of those services.

The primary goal of the tourism industry is to bring more cash into the local economy. This doesn't happen when visitors come into the community, get out of their cars, and take photographs. And it doesn't happen when visitors go swimming in the lake at your park all day, sunning, and eating the lunch they brought from home. And it doesn't happen when visitors hike down your trails, enjoy your interpretive centers, or stroll through your lovely arboretums. These are all great things to do, and, of course, you do want your visitors to do these – but, you also want to entice them into your shops, your cafes, espresso stands, restaurants, galleries, B&B's, and hotels, ultimately opening their wallets to make purchases. That is what helps your local economy, your small merchants, your hoteliers, and your tax coffers.

To entice visitors to spend money in your community, you need to have places for them to spend it—you need to have the right mix of shops, restaurants, entertainment, and lodging facilities, all in an attractive setting, as well as attractions that make them want to visit you in the first place.



## THE THREE TYPES OF TOURISM

### 1. Visiting friends and family

The number one reason people travel is to visit friends and/or family. If you did nothing to promote tourism, you would still have tourism in your community. However, when friends and family come to visit, do your residents take them out to eat, shop, dine locally? Or do they head to a neighboring community? Do your locals even know what you have to offer? An effective tourism marketing effort also includes educating locals as to what you have and how to find it through effective wayfinding signage, gateways and advertising.

### 2. Business travel

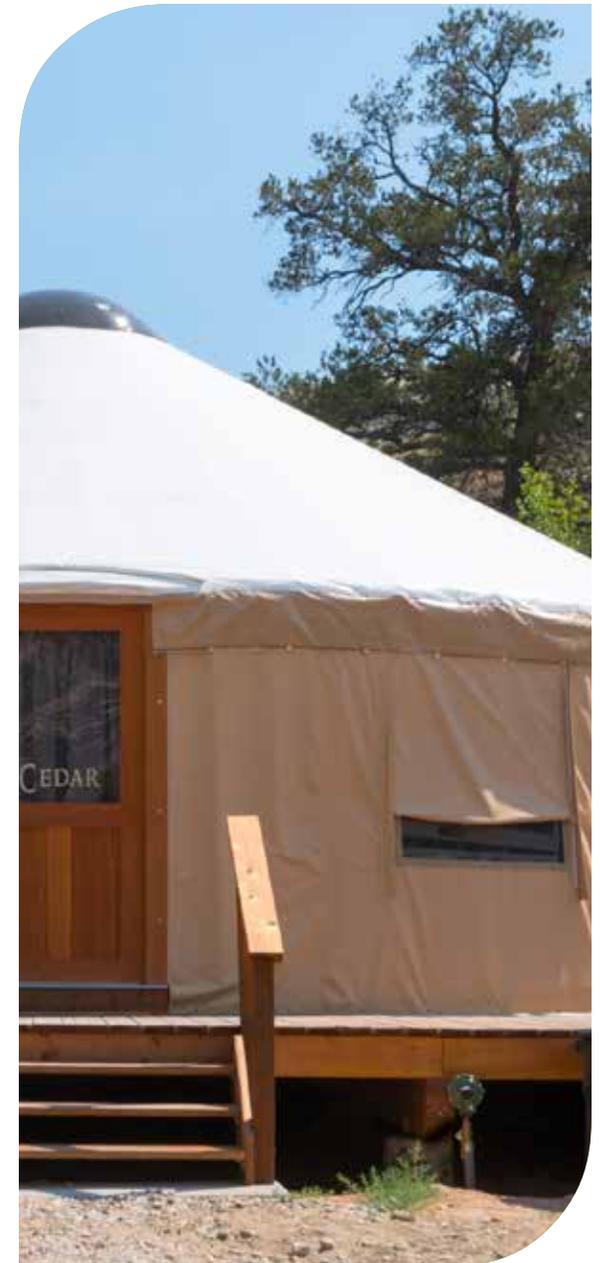
The second most popular reason for travel is business. Included in this category is educational travel: colleges and universities, as well as conventions and meetings, corporate travel, vendor travel, etc. Like leisure travelers, this group is looking for things to do “after hours” while in the area. The most successful convention and trade show towns are the result of their secondary activities or “diversions,” not simply because of their convention and exhibition facilities. Think Disneyworld, Disneyland, San Antonio’s River Walk, Banff, to name a few.

### 3. Leisure travel

The third, and most lucrative of all types of visitors, is the leisure traveler. They have no personal connections to the community, but are coming purely to enjoy themselves. They stay in commercial lodging establishments, eat virtually all their meals in local restaurants, and their top diversionary

activity is shopping and dining in a pedestrian-friendly setting.

The average leisure visitor is active 14 hours a day, yet typically only spends four to six hours with the primary lure. They then spend eight to ten hours with diversionary activities - things they could do closer to home, but will do while in the area. A good example of this is Branson, Missouri, the “live music-theater capital of the world.” This town of 6,500 residents hosts 7.5 million visitors a year. The primary “lure” is the 49 music theaters. The average visitor attends two shows a day over about





four hours. During the other hours of the day, the visitor will shop in local outlet malls, head to the water parks, theme parks, and other attractions, play a round of golf, hike, bike, fish, do some bird watching, and participate in any number of other activities they could do closer to home, but will do while visiting Branson.

### THE THREE STAGES OF TOURISM

#### 1. Status quo

If you take no action to develop the tourism industry, you will still have an element of tourism, simply because some travelers will pull off local highways or freeways for gas, food, or lodging, as well as the fact that the number one reason for travel is to visit friends or family. If you have residents, you will have some tourism.

#### 2. Getting people to stop

The first priority of developing a successful tourism industry is getting people to stop. Imagine how successful businesses in the community would be if just 50% of the vehicles traveling through pulled off the highway and spent just 30 minutes in your community – buying gas, an ice cream cone, a sandwich, a gift or souvenir?

If there's a strong pull, imagine the money spent if visitors stayed two hours in the community, which nearly always translates to additional spending.

The first goal is to get those travelers to stop.

#### 3. Becoming the destination

To become a destination community you must have attractions and supporting amenities that convince visitors to spend the night. And those attractions

must be different from what the visitor can get closer to home.

Overnight visitors spend three times that of day visitors, and nearly ten times that of visitors using your community as a pit stop on the way to somewhere else.

### THE FOUR-TIMES RULE

Visitors will make a point of stopping or staying in a community if it has enough activities that appeal specifically to them and will keep them busy four times longer than it took them to get there.

In other words, if a person has to drive 15 minutes to visit you, do you have enough for them to do to keep them busy for an hour? (4 times 15 minutes) If a visitor has to drive an hour, do you have the activities and amenities to keep them busy for four hours?

The more you have to offer, collectively, the further visitors will come, and the longer they will stay, and of course, the more they will spend. This is why it is so important for communities to market more than just their immediate geographic areas. By marketing neighboring activities and attractions, you present much more for a visitor to do, and you make the visit worth the trip.

Visitors don't care about city limits or county lines – so market the broader package and you'll be able to keep people in the area long enough to translate to another meal, some more shopping, and hopefully, an overnight stay.

### **SELL THE EXPERIENCE, NOT GEOGRAPHY**

Nearly every destination marketing organization is charged with promoting a geographic area, yet visitors couldn't care less about those boundaries. They are looking for activities that cater to their interests, and location is second to the experience. ALWAYS promote the primary lure first, then the location. People by the millions head to Disneyland, Disneyworld, Dollywood and other attractions. They are not going to Anaheim, Orlando or Pigeon Forge.

Always sell the activity - the experience - THEN the location.

### **LURES, DIVERSIONS AND AMBIANCE**

Too often communities promote the list of diversions that nearly every community has. The primary lure is the activity that a visitor can't find closer to home.

Always promote your primary lure, then the diversions. Do not try to be all things to all people. Have you ever gone anywhere because they had "something for everyone?" Of course not - you go there because they have something specific for you. Find your niche and promote it like crazy.

Historic downtowns provide ambiance - they are not attractions, diversions, nor are they a primary lure. It's what's in the buildings that makes a downtown a destination.

The same can be said for scenery. Unless your vista is a world-class scene, such as Niagara Falls or the Grand Canyon, scenic vistas create wonderful ambiance, but don't translate to spending, and they only last a few minutes. Then what?

All too often communities promote their heritage as a primary draw. How far would you travel to visit a mining museum? A timber museum? An agricultural center? A county historical museum? Heritage must be outstanding and pervasive throughout the community to be a primary lure, such as Plimoth Plantation or Salem, Massachusetts.

Thousands of communities are the "capital" of something. For instance, in California, Borrego Springs is the grapefruit capital of the world. Gilroy is the garlic capital. Modesto is the tomato capital. Gridley is the kiwi capital. Oxnard is the strawberry capital. Fallbrook is the avocado capital. But here's the question: Have you ever gone anywhere because it was the capital of a fruit or vegetable?

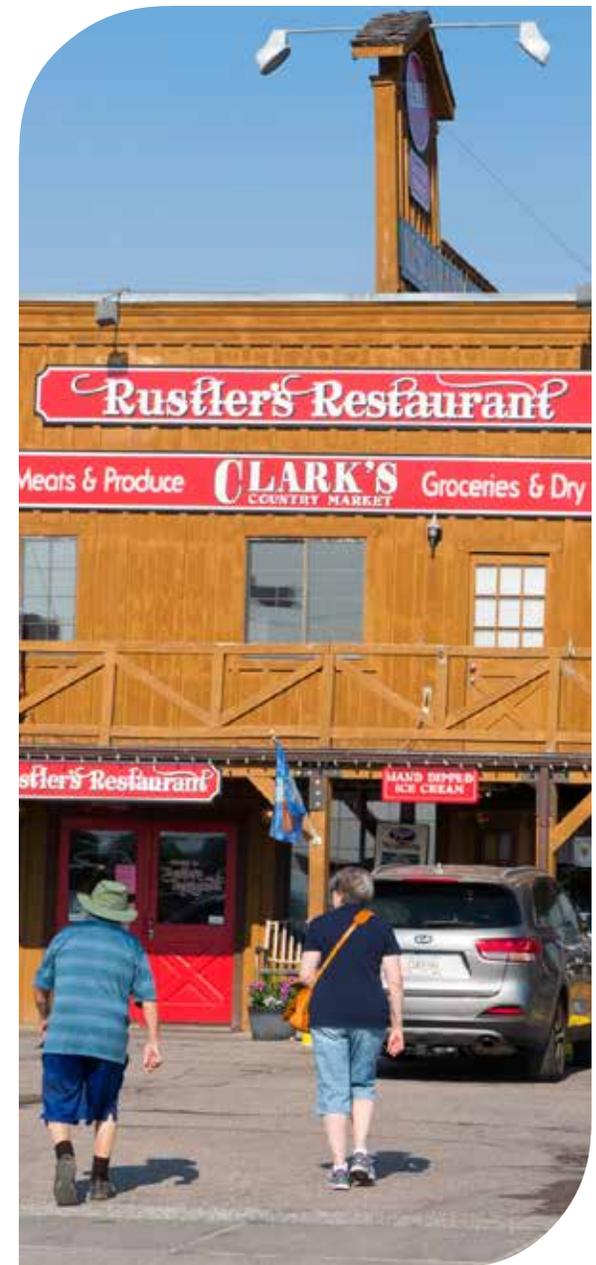
Your local heritage is important to the community and can set the ambiance, even becoming a diversionary activity. For local heritage to be a major attraction, it needs to combine activities with ambiance, and it needs to be pervasive throughout the area.

### **BE DIFFERENT OR THE BEST**

Why should a visitor come to your community if they can enjoy the same activities closer to home? Too many communities promote "outdoor recreation" as their primary draw. Unfortunately, that is the same attraction promoted by nearly every community in North America.

If you are different, then you have a reason for travelers to choose to visit you. If you are the best, then visitors will generally flock to your doors.

If you have great hiking trails, then market their unique qualities. Be specific and paint the image





of how wonderful they are in the minds of your potential visitors. If you have one fantastic restaurant in town, let people know about it – a unique dining experience is something many people will travel far to enjoy.

Ashland, Oregon, previously a depressed timber town, began its Shakespeare Festival, which now runs nine months of the year and draws hundreds of thousands of visitors who spend an average of six nights in the community. The Shakespeare Festival made Ashland different from any other community.

Leavenworth, Washington, another dying timber town, adopted a Bavarian architectural theme and produces dozens of Bavarian events every year. Some now say the town looks more genuinely Bavarian than towns in Bavaria. It is now one of the primary tourist destinations in Washington state, hosting more than 2.5 million visitors annually. They offer a different experience, an experience that is pervasive throughout town.

Okanogan County, Washington is an outdoor recreational paradise – just like 37 of the 38 other counties in Washington. So why go to the Okanogan? Because they are the best. They researched guidebooks, newspaper and magazine articles, and pulled quotes they could use in their advertising efforts. Like, “Pinch yourself, you’re in Okanogan Country with perhaps the best cross country skiing on the continent.” This, and other quotes like it, make it worth the drive to visit Okanogan Country. The third-party endorsements show that they are the best.

Set yourself apart from everyone else, and you’ll see that by being unique, you’ll be a greater attraction.



## CRITICAL MASS MEANS CASH

Although it may not be the primary reason why visitors come to your community, shopping and dining in a pedestrian setting is the number one activity of visitors. Besides lodging, it is also how visitors spend the most amount of money.

Do you have a pedestrian-friendly shopping district? If not, can you create one? Many communities have been highly successful with the development of a two or three block long pedestrian “village” including visitor-oriented retail shops, dining, visitor information, restrooms, etc., all in an attractive, landscaped setting.

The general rule of thumb in those two or three blocks (not spread out all over town) is 10+10+10: Ten destination retail shops, which includes galleries, antiques, collectibles, home accents and furnishings, artists in action, book stores, logo gear (clothing), souvenirs, outfitters, tour operators, activity shops such as kites, jewelry, wine or tobacco shops, and other specialties. The second ten is for food: ice cream, fudge and candy stores, soda fountains, sit-down dining, coffee shops, cafes, bistros, delis, etc. And the final ten are businesses open after 6:00 pm. This includes entertainment: bars, dance clubs, theaters (movies and performing arts), retail shops with activities (piano bar in a wine shop), etc.

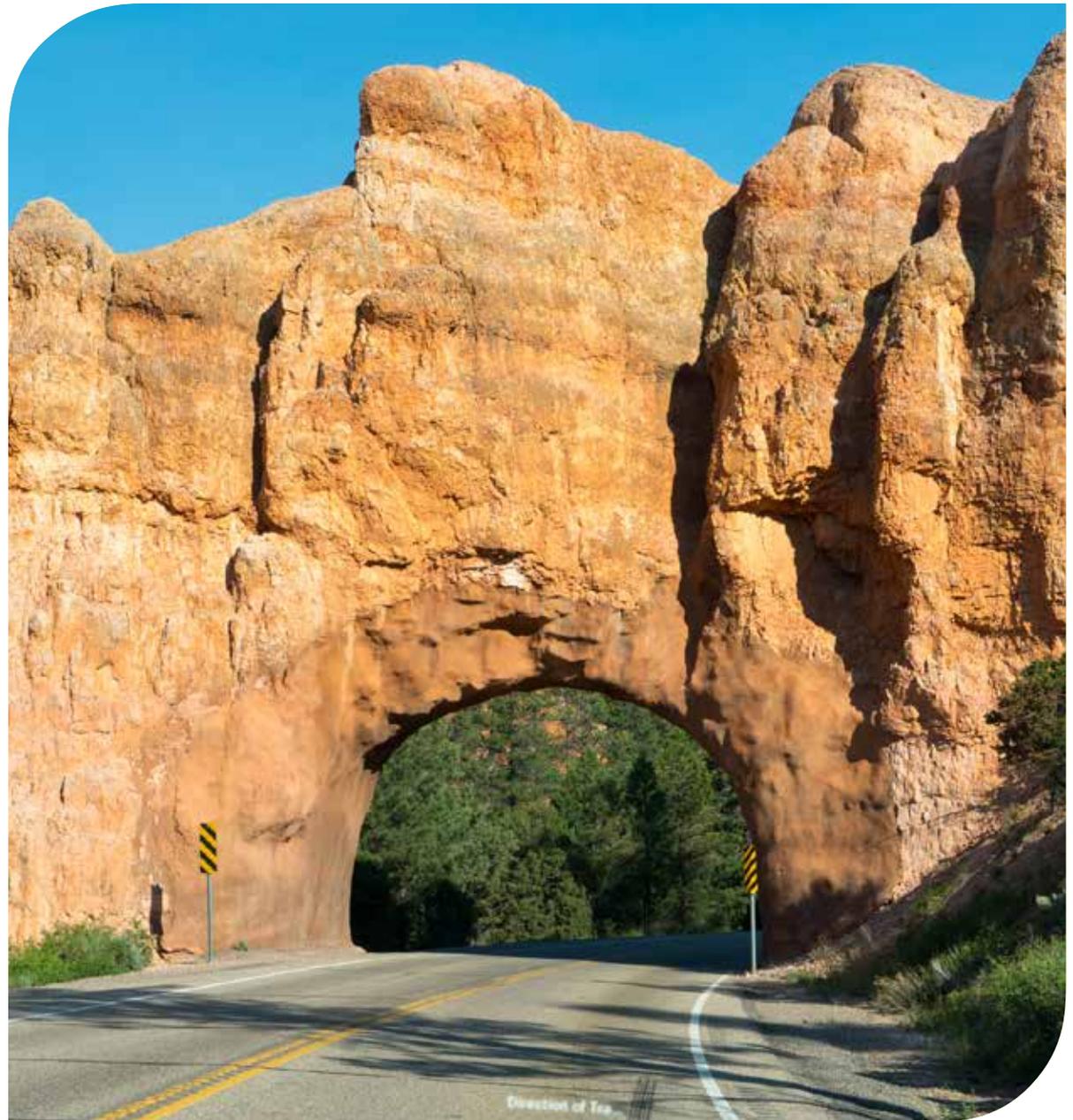
The important point is to group these businesses together to create the “critical mass” in a pedestrian-friendly setting. This will attract visitors as well as locals, and make it worth their while to stop and shop. People are always drawn to the critical mass –

the opportunity to have multiple choices, multiple experiences, all in a convenient and attractive setting.

**TOURISM IS AN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITY**

The goal of successful tourism is for people to come into the community, spend money, and go home. Tourism is nearly a \$947 billion dollar industry in the U.S., nearly \$82 billion in Canada, and supports millions of jobs. Ninety percent of tourism industry businesses are small businesses of which 90% have less than 15 employees. Tourism provides the opportunity for entrepreneurs to get started, for small family-run businesses to thrive, for artisans and craftspeople to find a market, and creates a basis for unique niche-retail environment including wineries, artists, crafts, etc. Tourism provides a diverse market within the community, expanding its potential. Enhancing the community through beautification efforts creates an attractive setting for both locals and visitors, key in revitalizing a community’s downtown. And a tourism-friendly town will attract non-tourism industries faster than others – new businesses will see the community as a visitor before they make a final determination about the community. Tourism is the front door to your economic development efforts.

The benefits of a healthy tourism industry can rejuvenate a town, foster community pride, encourage economic diversity, and lead the way to a vital, successful community.



## NEXT STEPS

The findings and suggestions in this report will provide many ideas, strategies, and goals to reach for. We hope that it fosters dialogue and becomes a springboard for the community in enhancing the tourism industry and other economic development efforts, leading to greater prosperity, rejuvenation, and enjoyment by all the citizens.

This report offers a first step in reaching that goal. To fully realize the benefits of this assessment, the community should take these findings and suggestions, discuss them and evaluate them, and develop a plan for implementation.

A detailed branding plan could help to build on the results of this assessment, adding in-depth research, evaluation, and local input to develop a unique brand and implementation program. The assessment process essentially provides a look at where you are today. RBI's BrandCamp program helps build your branding plan from the ground up—with local input, brainstorming, research, and creative planning. We can work with you to guide you through the process, helping create a plan that has local champions and community buy-in.

The next step in the planning process would be to provide public outreach and review past and current planning efforts. This would determine your goals as a region.

The third step would involve research, feasibility and market analysis, and determining your brand - what you are or hope to be known for.

Then comes the “development” portion of the plan or the “how to get there” program: determining

what product development initiatives need to be undertaken to reinforce and grow the brand. This also includes defining the roles of the various local organizations. Brand-building needs the whole community—everyone pulling in the same direction, each with their own “to do list.”

Finally, there's the detailed marketing plan: how and when you will tell the world who you are and what makes you special - the place to live, work and play.

The branding plan should be an “action plan” as opposed to a “strategic plan.” You want a to do list, by organization, not just general strategies, goals and objectives.

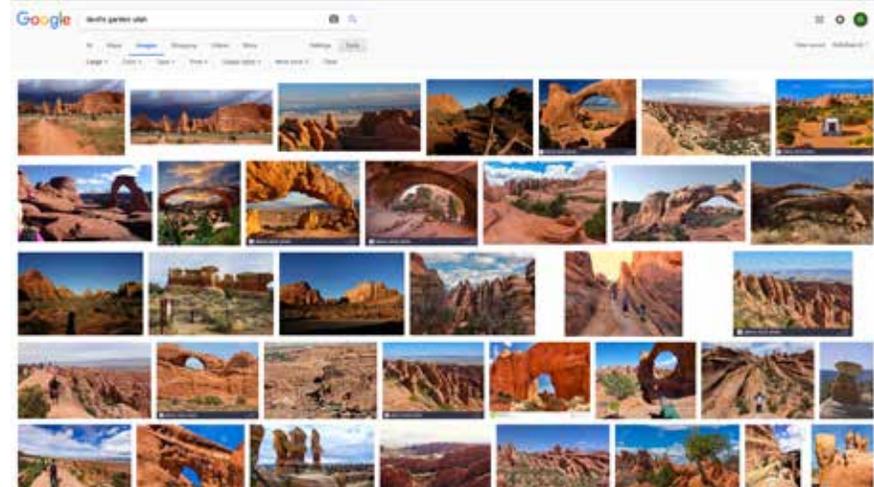
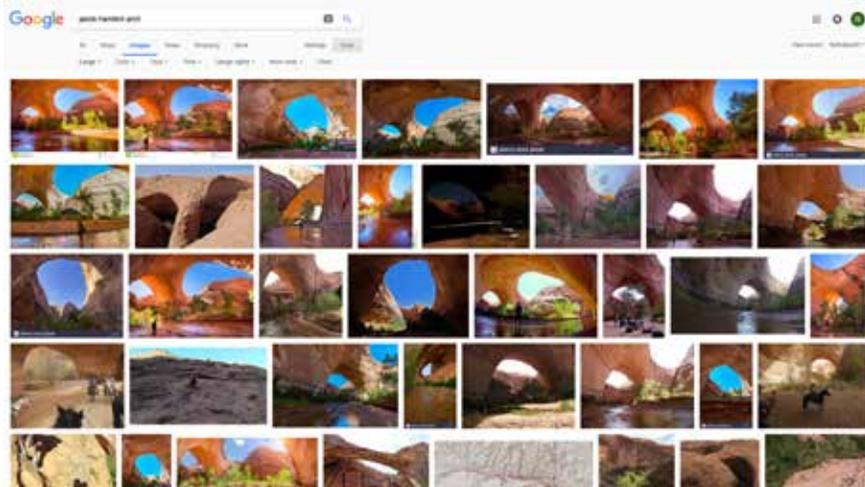
The recommendations should provide all the necessary steps for your town to be successful in attaining its goals of a more diverse economy with an enhanced tourism industry and to become more attractive and enjoyable for both visitors and citizens.

A good plan will provide a program to get local residents and the business community pulling together, building the town's unique image in the minds of visitors and residents alike. The result of your efforts will be a prosperous, enjoyable environment in which to live, work, and visit.





## Findings & Suggestions

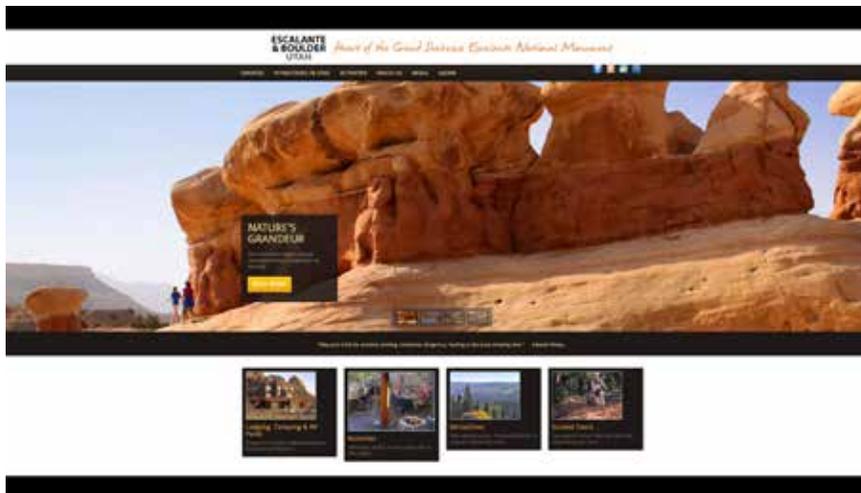


Our assessment process included reviewing Escalante’s marketing materials, plus looking at your online presence, reviews on TripAdvisor and other information sites, as well as performing the “secret-shopping” on-site assessment. We spent a week in Garfield County, looking at signage and wayfinding (how easy was it to find your attractions and amenities?), appeal, critical mass (were there places in the county to spend money?), your attractions, amenities, customer service, and more.

We looked at Escalante as: 1) a place to live and raise a family, 2) a place to work, invest in, or bring a business, and 3) a place to visit.

In assessing Escalante we decided to rent a house in Panguitch (top right) because we felt like it was the largest city in the area and be a good home base, where we stayed all week. However, when we made it to Escalante, we thought “Rats! We should have stayed here”.

When we began planning our assessment we looked at a variety of websites as well as googled a good number of attractions (lower left and right). This is true to the way a lot of visitors plan their trips, they look at images of the area to get a feel for it. We ended up with a huge list of things we wanted to do while we were here! Escalante has amazing sites to offer.

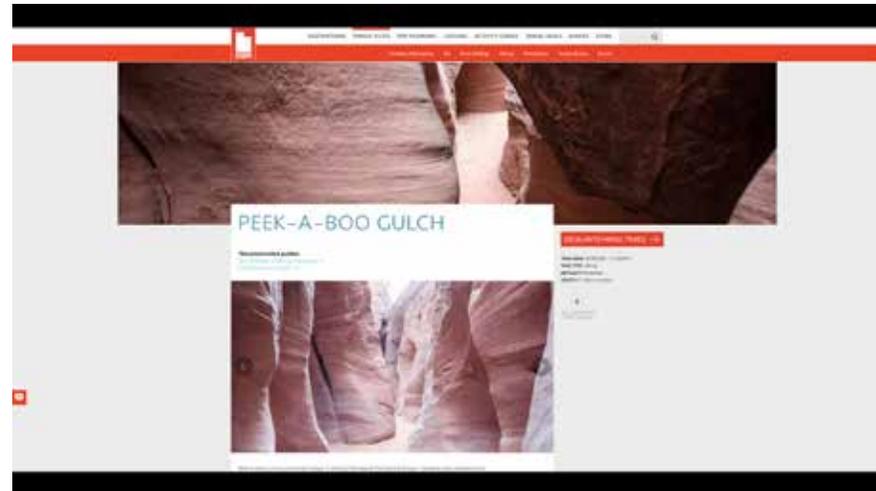
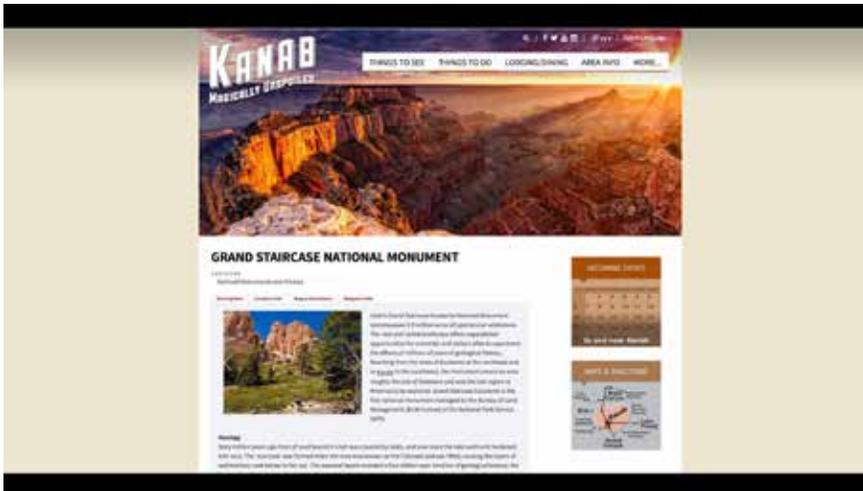


In our preparation, we also looked at websites. We'd heard that Scenic Highway 12 was one of the most beautiful routes in Utah, and I was looking forward to seeing it. Other attractions we noted were Grand Staircase, Calf Creek Falls, Capitol Reef.

We did get a copy of Bryce Canyon's Visitors Guide (upper right). We were so happy to find that you don't market counties. Visitors do not select a place to visit because it is a county. Marketing Bryce Canyon helps visitors imagine themselves in the area and leads to them seeing the Grand Staircase.

People will be enticed to the area because of Bryce Canyon, and then find that Escalante has so much to offer as well, and with fewer crowds. The Bryce Canyon guide is very beautiful and fulfills its purpose of getting you to say "We've got to go there". Nowhere in the United States even compares to the amazing geology of Utah. You have such amazing landscapes.

After a person decides to visit, the next step is finding out the specifics of how to plan their trip, which leads them to look at websites like the one for Escalante and Boulder (bottom left). These websites are very general, without a lot of specific information needed to plan a trip.



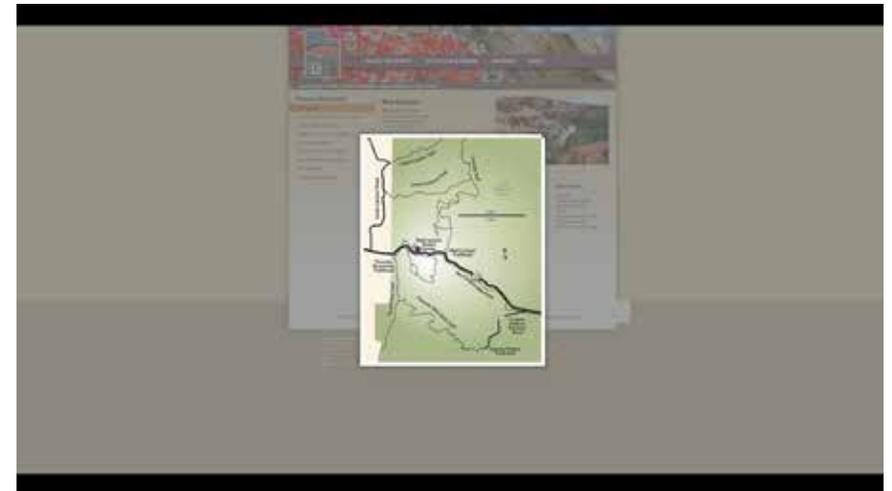
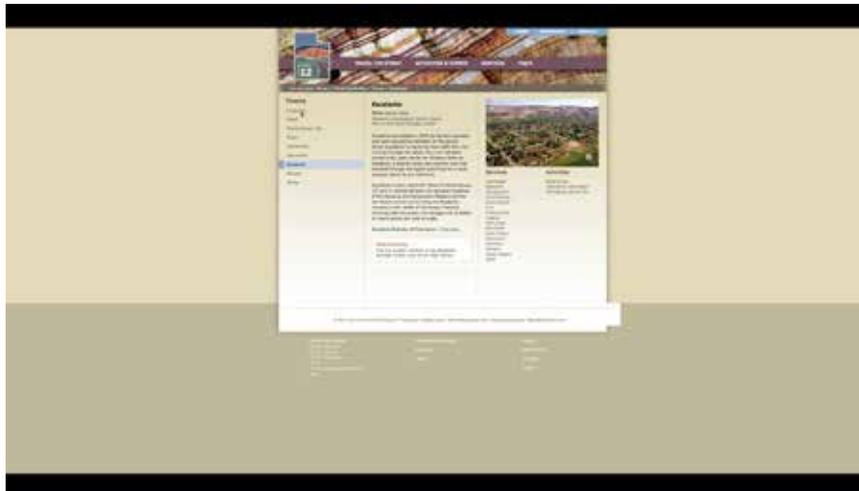
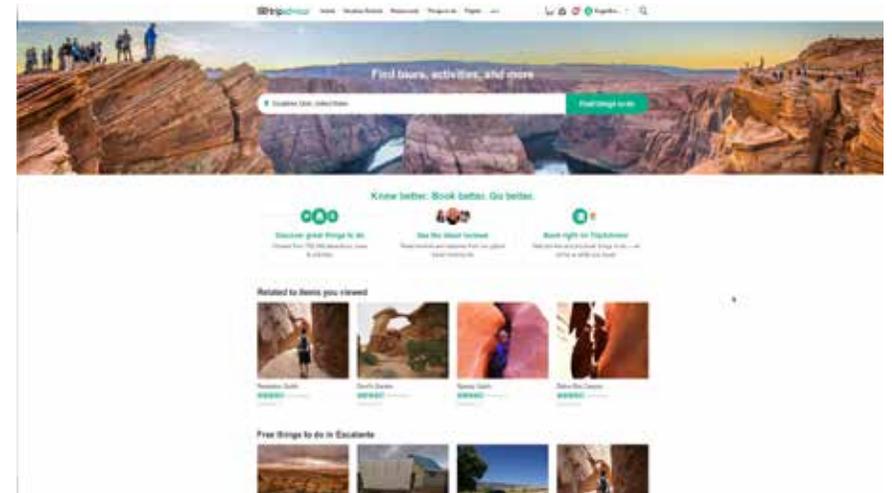
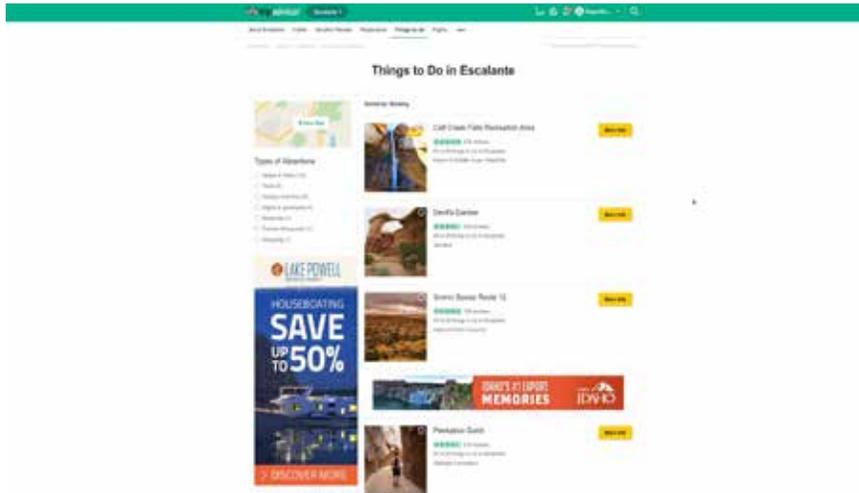
When trip planning, visitors need details. We read that there are great trails, but we can't find out where they are, what we'll see, when's the best time to visit, how long and hard the trails are, etc. Visitors need details. Work those details into suggested itineraries with specific information.

When I found the information about the Escalante Canyons Art Festival (top left), because they are the closest large town. But they should not market Arches or The Grand Staircase from Kanab. Visitors taking day trips will typically only travel 45 miles away one way—any further, and they'll stay closer to the destination. If your shops are closed in the evening, and visitors are gone all day, why should they come back to you when everything is closed?

On the Escalante city website (top right) they do a good job of using a wide

screen to post impressive landscape photos with text.

One thing to be cautious about is sending visitors out of the area for "day trips." A day trip should not be more than 45 miles away, with a few exceptions. For example, Kanab is fine marketing the north rim of the Grand Canyon (bottom left) Arches or The Grand Staircase from Kanab. Visitors taking day trips will typically only travel 45 miles away one way—any further, and they'll stay closer to the destination. If your shops are closed in the evening, and visitors are gone all day, why should they come back to you when everything is closed?

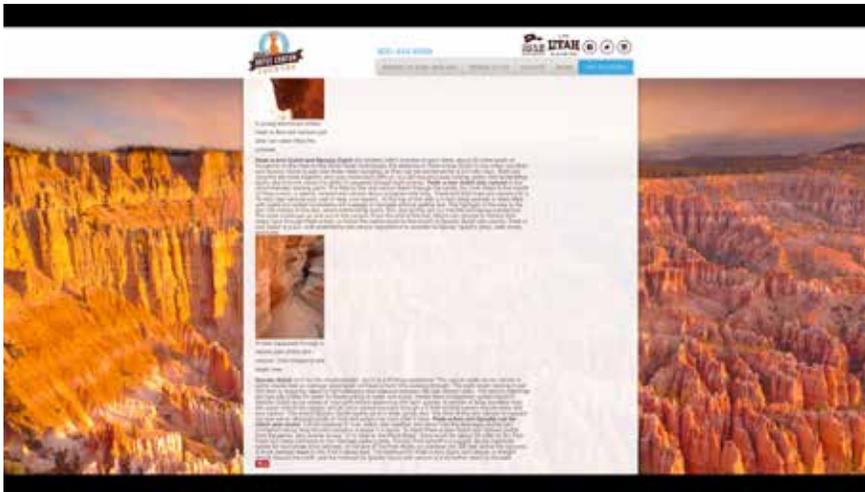
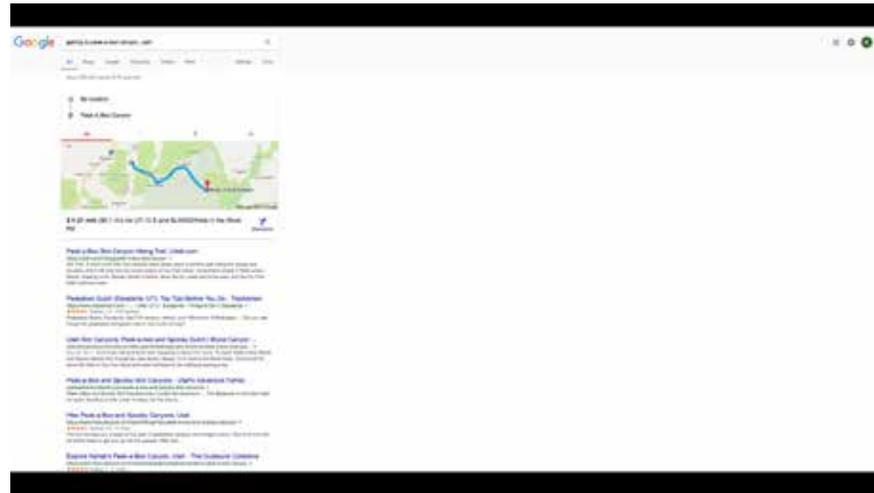
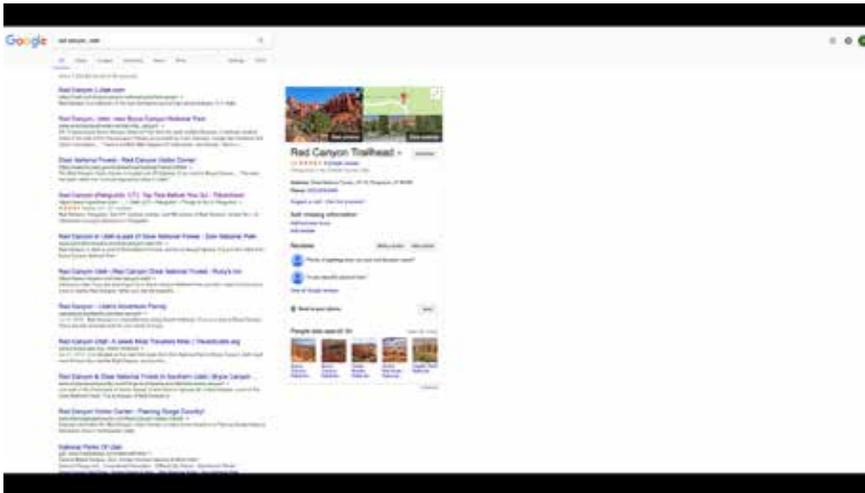


TripAdvisor is the world's most visited travel website, so it makes sense to use it to your benefit. You should sponsor your city's TripAdvisor page (top left) because that will allow you to add links to your websites. You can then make sure visitors get relevant information (are not sent to sites not realistically close by).

Searching for specific information, we even found the Highway 12 website (top left). But we had a hard time finding enough detail to be able to plan a day. The average visitor goes to 27 websites in order to plan a trip, and that

is frustrating for the visitor, and means a lot of visitors either give up or miss some great attractions and activities.

For businesses in Escalante, if they go to myGoogleBusiness.com, they can update their information for free. They can fill these areas up with information, that visitors will more easily find.



Back in TripAdvisor, we tried to figure out which section of Highway 12 would be best if we couldn't do the whole thing (top right).

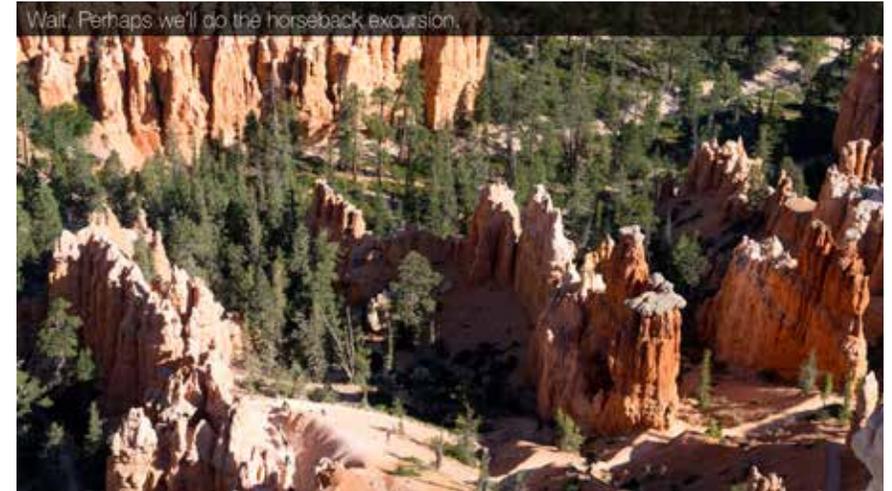
Investigating Red Canyon, finally we came to the county's website (bottom left) and we found the detailed information we were looking for about Peekaboo Canyon. This site gave us details that allowed us to be fully prepared as we planned a visit to this narrow stretch of canyon.

Although the county website came closest to providing detailed information, we concluded that we could not plan out the days of our visit before we left

based on what we could find in the printed materials and online. We decided that we would just figure it out once we arrived in Escalante.

After overnighting on Monday, we spend the day accessing Panguitch on Tuesday and then we came to Escalante. The beginning of Highway 12 and Red Canyon is spectacular. (bottom right)

A lot of the cars we saw in this first stretch had California plates and were driving up from California. We're amazed at the number of California visitors we've seen.



We did stop in the great little town of Tropic (top left).

When we got to Bryce Canyon I was amazed to see people hiking and horseback riding down into the canyon (top right), and we decided in the future, we would have to come back and do that. It looks amazing.

On our way out of Bryce Canyon we went to Kodachrome Basin State Park. It is great that they allow concessionaires (bottom right). We wish all the state parks did—it helps monetize tourism, bringing visitor dollars to small businesses in the area.



Once we arrived at Escalante, we were welcomed by the gateway sign (top left).

We stopped at the state park and took a look at some of the petrified wood there (top right).

We had no idea that you had a reservoir right here (top right). If visitors want to be on the water and in the desert, this is a perfect opportunity.

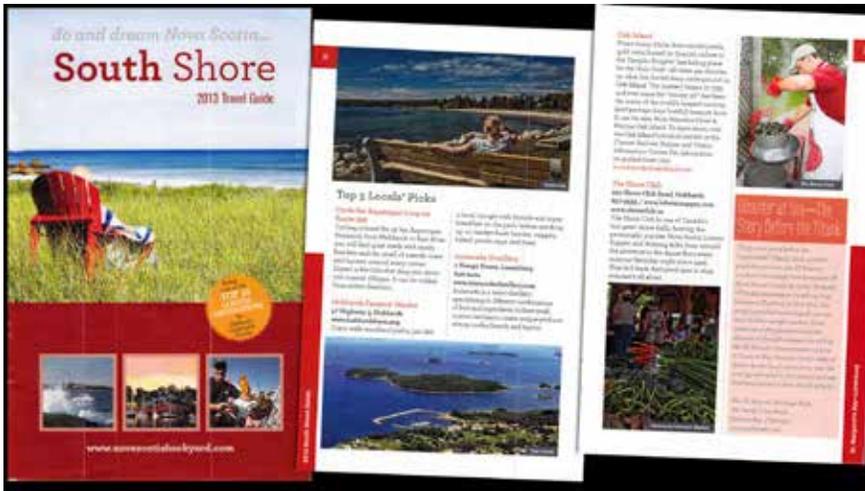
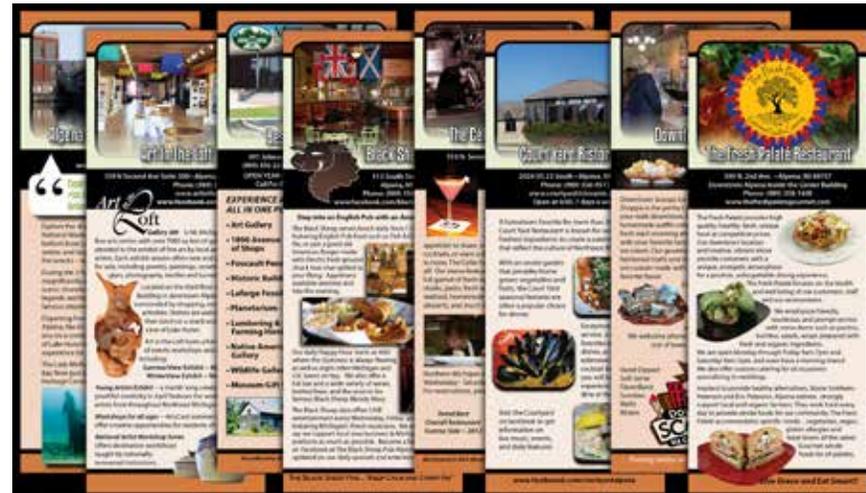
When we passed the Gallery Art signs on the road, we decided to check it out. The road took us to a house. We weren't sure this was the right location, but knocked on the door anyway. We found the gallery entrance (bottom left) and were able to meet the artist (bottom right). If he'd had more art available for sale we might have bought some. They produce some beautiful pieces!



We drove past the Grand Staircase Escalante at first, but we did see Boulder. This little road, The Hogsback, with its incredible views, was worth the trip to Escalante, alone (top right).

While in Boulder, we passed the Anasazi Museum but didn't stop as our focus was Escalante.

Suggestion: Create a new brochure—"The Very Best of Escalante, Utah."



One of the best ways to promote anchor tenants is to create a brochure about “The Very Best of Escalante.” (example, bottom left and top right) A “Best Of” guide can have a dramatic impact on visitor spending. You must vet and invite the participants.

It’s important that the brochure NOT look like a bunch of ads. Use an advertorial format; include lots of photos with specific, descriptive text.

- It’s critical to establish criteria to select the very best that you have, such as:
- Must have good curb appeal
  - Must be open year round
  - Must be open until at least 7:00 pm and be open six days a week (they can be

- closed on Mondays)
- Must be unique to the area (no chains)

Market your best: Restaurants (4); Retail shops and galleries (4); Activities and attractions (12) within a 45-minute drive.

In Nova Scotia’s South Shore, they produce this excellent visitor guide (bottom left and right). It shows the area’s best attractions, local picks, shops, etc. It also tells about what visitors can expect in each season, and what the best activities are to do during those different times of year. There is no reason Escalante can’t become a year-round destination.





**The Very Best of Escalante:**

- Highway 12 between Escalante and Boulder (The Hogsback)
- Anasazi Indian Village State Park
- Kodachrome State Park (day hikes - pick one)
- Grand Staircase Visitor Center

Suggestion: The Escalante Heritage Center (top left) should at least get a mention as a good place to stop in your 'Best Of's'.

Refer to your Escalante Interagency Visitor Center as just the Escalante Visitor Center in your marketing materials. Your Visitor Center is fantastic! (bottom left)—definitely the best anywhere in the region. We noticed that we were the oldest visitors anywhere around when we arrived. You are a hot destination for Millennials.

Suggestion: Make Highway 12 between Escalante and Boulder (The Hogsback) #1 on your 'The Very Best of Escalante' list. Also include: the Anasazi Indian Village State Park, a Kodachrome State Park day hike of your choice and the Grand Staircase Visitor Center.

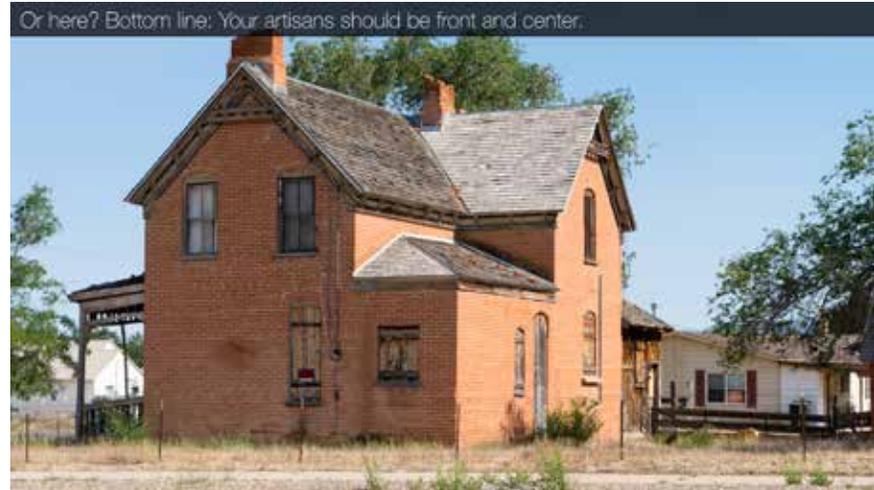
We spoke to a gentleman at the Grand Staircase Visitor Center (top right and bottom left) who spent a lot of time helping us determine which hikes were right for our interests and abilities. You are doing a fabulous job with this Visitor Center.



Another nice complementary activity in Escalante is a stop at this cabin (top left). Suggestion: Add a story here for your visitors letting them know more details about this cabin and the people who lived here. Tell your story.

We got a copy of the Escalante Arts & Crafts Guide (top right) while visiting the cabin. It included a very helpful little map. We found the Serendad Gallery in this guide, but when we drove up to it (bottom left) it showed no signs that it was really open, so we didn't go in.

The next stop we tried on this list was in a private house (bottom right) and found out that it was by appointment only. So we did not get to see this one either.



We loved that there was a sandwich board for this location (top left). However, it was only open Thursday through Saturday from noon to 6:00 pm. We were here on a Wednesday, so we didn't get to see this shop either.

Suggestion: See if you can put an artists co-op gallery in this location (top right) until the building sells. Having an art co-op would allow the location to be open on a regular basis and let visitors see some local art. When people are able to meet an artist, they are actually four times more likely to purchase some of their art. And, art gives your destination cultural depth.

We saw some beautiful historic brick homes (bottom left and right) that we were concerned would fall into disrepair. With some grant funding, maybe one of these buildings could be refurbished and be used to house an Escalante Art Co-op.

Suggestion: Find places like these brick houses and turn them into artist co-ops or artist live/work spaces. We would love to see Escalante have a central place in your downtown for local artisans.



Tubac and Jerome, Arizona are great examples of best practices for showcasing local art (all the photos on this page). These towns are full of art galleries and art work spaces for their local artisans.

Little Jerome, Arizona even has a kaleidoscope store (bottom left) that is probably the nicest one in the United States. We suggest you play up your arts by having an easy to find location downtown where people can see the local art and artists at work.



Because arts and recreation go hand-in-hand, creating a place for local artisans will draw even more art-minded activities. There are not very many towns in Southern Utah that have the cultural depth that Escalante does. To put this aspect front and center, your artists need to have a place where they can display their creations.

Excursions of Escalante (top left) has beautiful curb appeal. They also do a great job of helping visitors, and they have ice cream sandwiches which are a perfect treat in the summertime. Suggestion: Include Excursions of Escalante on your 'Best Of' list.

We loved the Utah Canyon Outdoors shop (top right). Their signage and storefront are funky and fun. Having an outfitter in town is essential to being able to provide what people may need to enjoy the many things there are to do in the area. It also keeps visitors in town, since everything they may need is right here.

Absolutely add Utah Canyon Outdoors to your 'Best Of' list!



**The Very Best of Escalante:**

- Highway 12 between Escalante and Boulder (The Hogsback)
- Anasazi Indian Village State Park
- Kodachrome State Park (day hikes - pick one)
- Grand Staircase Visitor Center
- Excursions of Escalante
- Utah Canyon Outdoors
- High Adventure

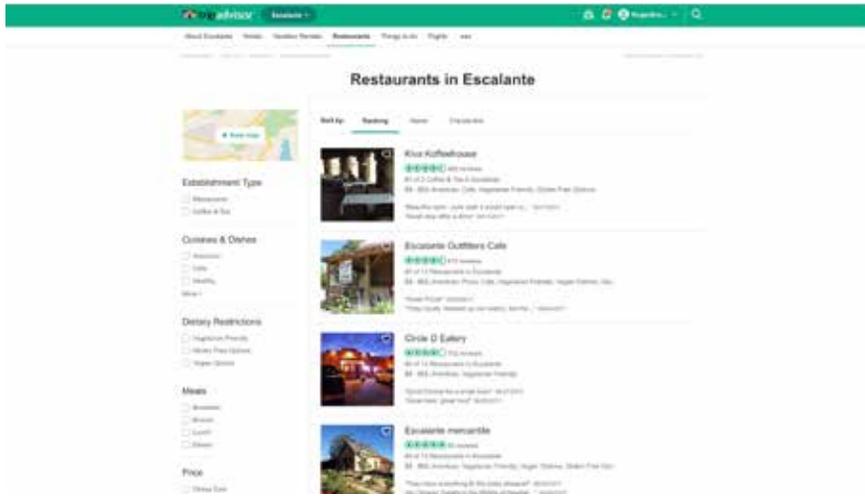


Right across the street, Escalante Outfitters is a very popular place (last photo on previous page). Even at 3:30pm in their restaurant (top left) there was only one table open. And their little store had so much merchandise available. Escalante Outfitters also needs to be on your 'Best Of' list for their food and gear.

Even, so this outfitter is excellent at having services, guides and vehicles for all types of off-road adventures. They would also customize adventures for visitors and handle the logistics. For these reasons, they should also definitely make the Escalante 'Best Of' list (bottom left).

We tried to visit High Adventure outfitter (top right) but were unable to find the shop manager. We then at least tried to locate a brochure with the services they offered, but all we could get was a website address.

The colorful umbrellas at the Circle D created some of the best curb appeal in town. The umbrellas help people know that they are open for business. The Circle D showed up as #2 on TripAdvisor's list of restaurants in Escalante. Put the Circle D Eatery also on your 'Best Of' list.



We could see that Escalante is the most "up and coming destination in Utah, if not the entire Western U.S." Hands down. There is a chalk board in town with these exact words (in quotes) written on it.

As time moves forward everyone has to adapt and change; however, the key is to evolve without losing what makes Escalante special. It's a fine balance.

I am assuming that this building (top right) is going to be a future hotel.

Suggestion: Add a sign here saying "Coming soon . ." and let people know what is being built here. Put up a sign to invite people back.

For a town of 800 residents, your school is incredible (bottom left). And the community center is amazing (bottom right).



This splash pad is always packed (top left)! And we noticed that there is a stage being built in this location.

It looks like this new building just opened (bottom left and top right). We saw that they had just poured the foundation for their sign. This little lodge is fabulous!

We also saw this (bottom right), which looks to be a resort. This location also needs a sign inviting people to come stay once they are open.

All of these buildings make it obvious that Escalante is in the process of changing from an old west town to place with a more modern vibe. Millennials are the audience of your future. We could see that Escalante is becoming a desirable and growing destination for visitors.

Make sure your businesses remain open throughout the year. A business needs at least eight months a year to make it viable, so you want your visitor season to be at least eight months long. That's entirely doable—in fact, some of your activities are best experienced during the shoulder seasons.

Escalante and Tropic: The two most "happening" places in the entire area!



10 Looks old and tired. Redevelop the signage and curb appeal. Please!



We came across the Canyon Country that was so busy (top left).

The process of change is evident in places that have a mix of old and new signage (top right).

There are still some places that have not updated their curb appeal. This little motel also had lots of signage, and overgrown shrubs, making it hard to determine what was available on site (bottom left).

Some businesses have already made the transition to more up scale and cool, with plenty of curb appeal (bottom right). We loved the cowboy on the motorcycle.

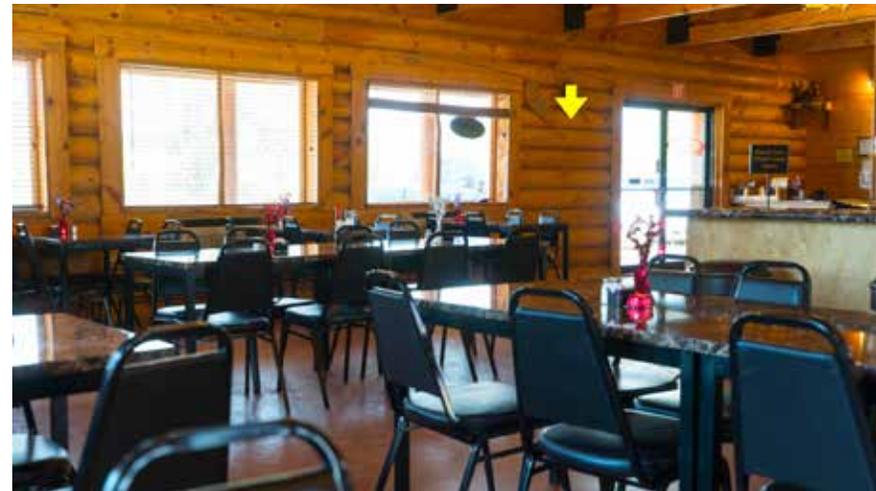


The Cowboy Country Inn would benefit from more landscaping in the front, but this Inn looked great overall (top left). Their figure on a motorcycle and old wagon out front were funky and fun—a good mix of new and old (top right).

We decided to eat at the Renegades Restaurant (bottom left). However, at first we weren't sure if it was part of the hotel because of the signs right above the motel sign (bottom right). It is always best to clearly separate a restaurant from a motel.

Suggestion: Update this old-style sign to just say the name of the motel, instead of just 'motel,' and take the restaurant portion off.

The smaller restaurant sign should be simplified to include no more than 8 words (and leave off the phone number), otherwise it is too hard to read (bottom right).

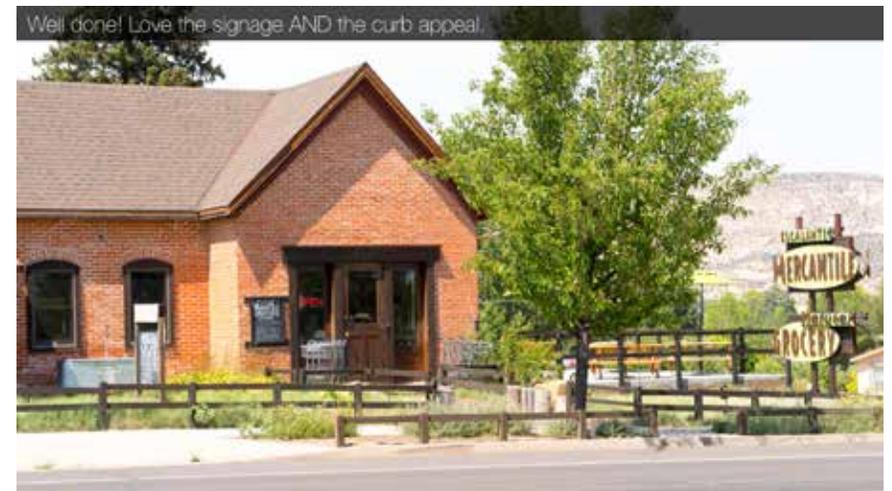


Plus, add how far away the restaurant is, where it is located—like, 'one block' with an arrow (top left).

Suggestion: Add more tables and chairs in the front of the restaurant (top right) with Catalina umbrellas that will catch passersby's attention. Bright umbrellas say 'we're open!' and pull people in.

Another suggestion: Take the bear (bottom left) out of the 'attic' and put him on the floor of the restaurant instead (bottom right). In this alternate location, he would create the perfect opportunities for photos. Know that if people are taking selfies and photos, social media will generate itself!

Also, put the photos down a little lower so diners don't have to crane their necks to look at them. They are interesting, and should be at eye level. An interior designer would be able to add some personality to the design here.

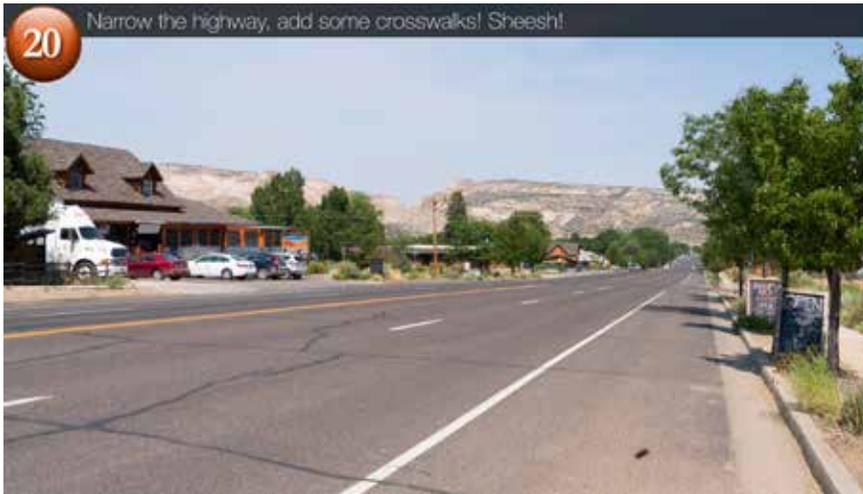


For example, this entry space (top left) would make an ideal location for paintings and art. Incorporate a gift shop or gallery here.

Restaurants need to be known for their speciality. Refine your menu to focus on your speciality.

The Prospector Inn (top right) is lacking in curb appeal. Conversely, the Escalante Showhouse (bottom left) looks great! Good job. They only lack one thing—add a Calendar of Events to the right of the door of this excellent showhouse.

The little Mercantile (bottom right) is also doing a great job of curb appeal.



Narrow the highway, add some crosswalks! Sheesh!



Ok, ok. How about some crosswalks!



Add some half barrels, hanging baskets, benches. Remove the weeds.

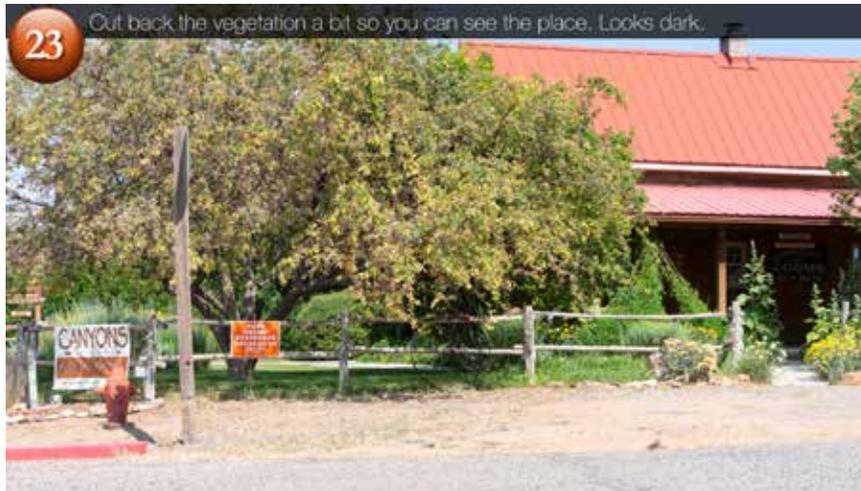
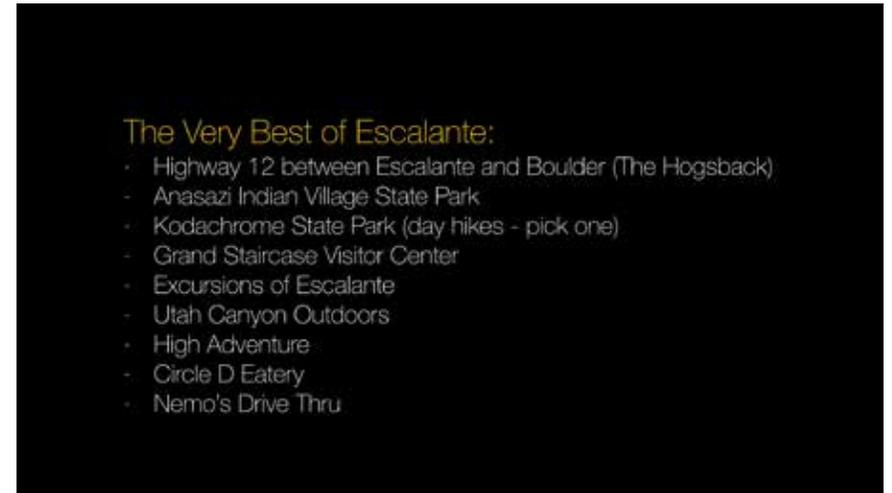
Crossing this street on a busy day is a nightmare (top left)! Suggestion: Narrow this highway and add some crosswalks. Congestion can be your best friend. It is always better to narrow the streets through your downtown and widen the sidewalks (instead of the street) to make it more pedestrian-friendly, with parking at either end of the street.

If people get out of their cars, they will spend more time in your downtown. Your retailers will benefit from this configuration.

Suggestion: Along this section of street through downtown (top right), keep your bike lane, keep the inner two lanes of traffic, and make the outer-most lanes (next to the bike lane) all landscaping with street trees.

Landscaping creates a buffer between pedestrians and traffic. Besides the benefit to your retailers and increased beautification, this new street configuration also would increase visitor safety.

The Griffin Grocery store would look much more attractive by adding half barrel planters, hanging baskets, benches, and taking out the weeds!



Nemo's is always busy, a favorite spot. Add Nemo's Drive Thru to your 'Best Of' list (top left).

Suggestion: Cut back the vegetation and tree branches at Canyons (bottom left) so you can actually see it. Currently, it is hard to tell if it is even still in operation due to the overgrown landscaping.

It seemed a little funny that the sign at Canyons (bottom right) said 'furnished rooms.' I should hope so! Instead, list your top amenities, like 'private bath' or 'open 24 hours.'



There was a large sign for the Farmers Market (top left) but no information about when it operates. Suggestion: Add a sign or sandwich board to let us know when it is open. Invite us back! This is a very low cost solution.

We came across this very cool 'Peoples Exchange' building (top right) but did not know what it was. Add some information, and let visitors know if it is open to the public. We now know that it is privately owned, but it would make a great location for a future Artists' Co-op.

Escalante has a number of cool, older brick houses like this one (bottom left). Some of these would be perfect to use as Airbnbs.

This location is currently for sale, and has the potential to be a great Airbnb (bottom right) for some lucky investor. The Millennial segment particularly is drawn to and utilizes Airbnbs.

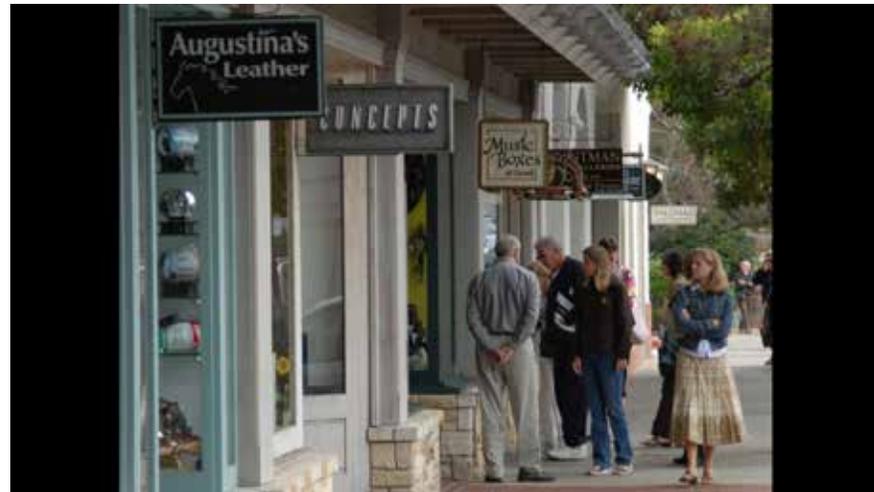
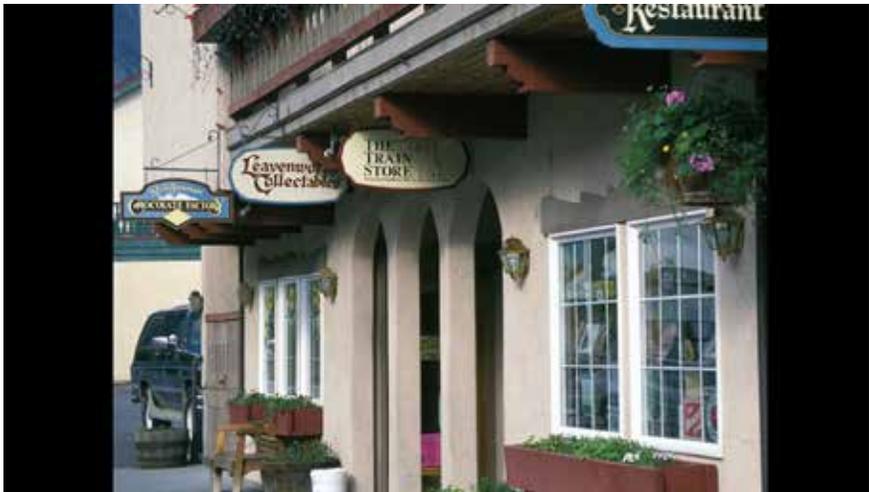


The Smoky Mountain Road (top left) for some reason had its own particularly large brown sign (top left). Is that because it takes you to the rodeo grounds (top right)?

Once at the rodeo grounds (top right), there was no information about what actually happens here.

Suggestion: Put up a readerboard with 2017 events. Letting people know what happens here will give them a reason to stay longer and/or come back.

An even better idea—use this location for concerts like this one in Red Rock (bottom right). People will drive for miles to come to a great concert venue.



This stretch of buildings was puzzling (top left and right). We could not figure out what these buildings were being used for. It appeared that they were not in use. Adding blade signs would let us know what was here.

There is not one readable sign on this row of buildings. Suggestion: If there is nothing currently in these buildings they would be perfect for an ice cream shop, a coffee shop and a little deli. The sidewalk could even be widened here to allow for outdoor dining.

These signs in Leavenworth, WA (bottom left) are excellent examples of effective blade signs. Chocolate, collectables, trains, restaurant—It's easy to see what kind of stores these are.

Here are some blade signs in Carmel, California (bottom right). Most successful downtowns have blade signs. They make it easy to see what stores are available, and they entice you to continue down the street with the promise of more interesting shops.



If there's a city ordinance preventing the use of blade signs, it needs to be changed. They should be consistent height and size, and they should be decorative. They should also promote what it is you're selling first, before the name of the store. These blade signs in Valparaiso, Indiana (top left) are slightly larger in scale because of the larger downtown core.

All shops in Canmore, Alberta, use blade signs (top right). They make it easy to see what stores are available, and they entice you to continue down the street with the promise of more interesting shops.

Creating outdoor restaurant seating areas, like this one in Nova Scotia (lower left and right) can drastically boost sales.

Restaurants can utilize some parking areas during the warmer months, to create an outdoor dining area on the sidewalk, with protected pedestrian lanes on the street side.



Note how this restaurant in Nova Scotia (top left) has built a deck for outdoor dining and has routed sidewalk pedestrian traffic around the deck on an additional custom-built deck area.

Another idea for this row of buildings (top right) would be to invite some vendor, temporary, pop-up businesses to use the spaces. These would be like food truck type businesses.

This would be a great opportunity to incubate small businesses.

While we were in Escalante, we had to check out the Escalante Yurts (bottom left and right). These yurts allow 'glamping' all year round. They are comfortable and fun, with air conditioning!

Places like this make you a destination. People love the unusual. Escalante Yurts is part of the change that is occurring that allows you to reinvent your destination and appeal particularly to the Millennial market segment.

We wanted to buy a couple of these swinging chairs (bottom right)!



**Fact #1**  
 Tourism and economic development  
 Tourism: Purest form.  
 Helps offset leakage.

**Fact #2**  
 Tourism and economic development  
 Tourism is the front door to your non-tourism economic development

**Fact #3**  
 Tourism proves your brand  
 The Desert Side of the Grand Staircase.  
 Bryce Canyon Country.  
 The best of both worlds.  
 High adventure without the crowds.

We saw a few of these brown ‘Scenic Backways’ signs (top left). But we had no idea where the road goes or how long a stretch it is, or where to find the answers to our questions.

The biggest issue of all for increasing local spending is about downtowns. Here are seven facts about downtowns:

- 1) For economic development, tourism and community development, there is nothing more important than downtown.

- 2) Tourism IS economic development. It is the front door to your non-tourism economic development efforts.
- 3) Tourism proves your brand. You have ‘high adventure’ without the crowds.

### Fact #4

#### The travel spending rules

**First:** Get people to stop.

**Second:** Get them to stay two hours & spending will double.

**Third:** Overnight visitors spend four times that of day visitors.

### Fact #5

#### Best attractions: Private sector

You **MUST** promote your local businesses that make you worth a special trip - or a stop.

Orlando • Branson • Napa Valley • Nashville

### Fact #6

The average visitor is active 14 hours a day.  
4 to 6 with the primary activity.  
8 to 10 with complementary activities.

### Fact #7

#### The top activity

of visitors in the world is shopping, dining and entertainment in a pedestrian-friendly setting.

This is where **80%** of all travel spending takes place.

- 4) The travel spending rules—You have ‘high adventure’ without the crowds, that will get people to stop, spend time and stay overnight.
- 5) Best attractions: Private sector—Quit promoting trails and free activities. Instead, promote guides, provisioners, lodging and restaurants. Many cities are known for their private sector attractions.

- 4) The average visitor is active 14 hours a day.
- 5) The top activity of visitors in the world is shopping, dining and entertainment in a pedestrian-friendly setting. Most of visitors’ time is spent with these complementary activities.

**33**

Create detailed itineraries:  
Include businesses!



**Peace Tree Juice Cafe**  
Monticello  
8:00 - 9:00 am

Also includes a gift shop with local artisans. Nice atmosphere. Focus on healthy foods.




**Head towards the Needles Overlook**  
Highway 191 to Hwy. 133  
9:00 - 10:00 am

It's an hour's drive and very scenic. [Any tips or notes]




**Arrive at the Needle Overlook**  
10:00 - 11:30

Absolutely stunning 270° views overlooking the Canyonlands National Park. A scenic paved trail that is handicap and stroller accessible. A leisurely walk along the rim (there are handrails) takes about an hour. This is one of the "must see" sites in the entire Four Corners area of Utah!

And there are restroom facilities!



Create detailed itineraries that include local businesses! They should include city names or routes, recommended length of time for each stop, as well as helpful information like where restrooms are located. List specific restaurants for each meal stop, specific sightseeing suggestions, fun facts about any of the places, and time durations. Also point out particular not-to-miss attractions.

These sample itineraries are from San Juan County, Utah, just to show you what types of specific details need to be included in your own itineraries.

Sample North Country Itinerary (with details in the photographs), DAY 1:

- Peace Tree Juice Cafe—Include a stop for breakfast. Allow an hour for this stop.
- Head towards Needles Overlook—Make sightseeing recommendations that include what roads to take, a time allotment of an hour for this activity and any travel tips.
- Arrive at the Needles Overlook—Give an hour and a half for this stop, let visitors know what they will be able to see and let them know restrooms are available here.



**Time for lunch at Wagon Wheel Pizza**  
12:30

It looks a bit rough on the inside - and outside - but the food is terrific. Order one of the pizza turn-overs, which are each hand made and baked to order.

This little pizza parlor is a TripAdvisor favorite!

[Any other fun facts, or notes]



**Monticello's Frontier Museum**  
1:30 - 2:30

The Frontier Museum showcases how life on the frontier was for the early pioneers who settled the area. BUT while there, head next door and check out the 110+ year old Emerson Tractor with wheels that stand nearly 8 feet tall. The tractor weighs a whopping 18,000 pounds and it runs!



**Monticello activities**  
2:30 - 3:30

This is an opportunity to promote some optional activities:

- Feature a couple of great shops
- Walk the Lloyd's Lake pathway
- Play a round of golf at The Hideout, the #2 rated golf course in Utah. (The whole afternoon)



**Visit either the Looking Glass Rock or the Wilson Arch**  
3:30 - 5:00

Looking Glass Rock (top) is out a dirt road (there are highway signs) - navigable in a normal car. If you climb up to the arch, make sure you have good climbing shoes! It's a smooth but rather steep surface.

The views from the arch are amazing.



Wilson Arch (left), on the other hand, is right next to the highway and is the most visited of the two. It's a rigorous, but relatively easy, hike (remember you're at 7,000 foot elevation). It's the larger of the two...

[more details, fun facts, views, etc.]

Both are about an hour from the Monticello Visitor's Center. Plan on spending an hour at either site.

- Time for lunch at Wagon Wheel Pizza—Give a specific menu item suggestion. Note what foods the restaurant is famous for.
- Monticello's Frontier Museum—Tell generally what the range of exhibits include. Note any nearby sights that are particular to Monticello, like the 110+ year old Emerson Tractor. Give details.
- Monticello activities—Note a couple interesting, nearby shops for an easy wind-down from the morning's activities.

- Visit either the Looking Glass Rock or the Wilson Arch—Allow an hour and a half for this activity. Give two options, with different levels of intensity so people can choose which is better for them.



**Line Camp Steakhouse**  
5:30

What a way to end the day! Often rated the best restaurant in the Four Corners area of Utah, the Line Camp is a rustic, but elegant, Old West eatery.

Head north Highway 191, just a few minutes north of town, and look for the portable sign on the right, heading back into the trees.

Chances are you'll meet Bob, the owner and one of San Juan County's most colorful characters.

He doesn't take reservations and it's a very relaxed atmosphere. The table linens are reminiscent of those the pioneers brought with them as they came across the plains to Utah.

[Hours, days, any other notes]

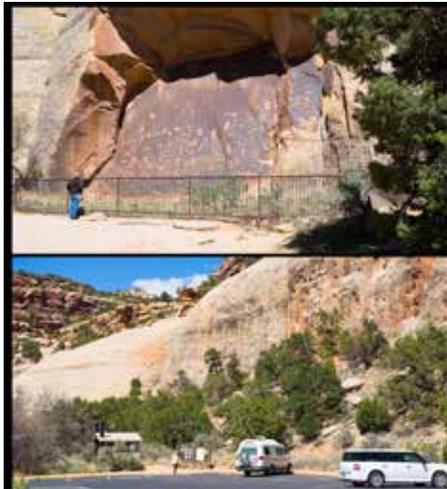


**DAY 2**  
**Blue Mountain Foods**  
Monticello  
9:00 am

Pick up drinks (lots of water), and a lunch. [Promote any specialties]

**Head to Canyonlands National Park - The Needles**  
9:30 am

From the center of town, head West on West 200 South following the road up the Abajo Mountains to nearly 8,000 feet - a stunning drive. From there turn onto the Indian Creek Scenic Byway (Highway 211) and stop at Newspaper Rock.



**Arrive at Newspaper Rock**  
10:15 am

Facebook as it was 2,000+ years ago. The greatest concentration of petroglyphs and stories in the region.

Paved parking, just a hundred feet to the site, and restrooms!

A great place for a little break.

[Any fun facts about Newspaper Rock]



**Arrive at Canyonlands National Park Visitors Center**  
11:30 am

From the Visitors Center there are a myriad of activities including:

- Nine mile scenic drive ending at the Big Spring Canyon Overlook.
- Numerous short or long hikes
- This is where you'll have the picnic lunch

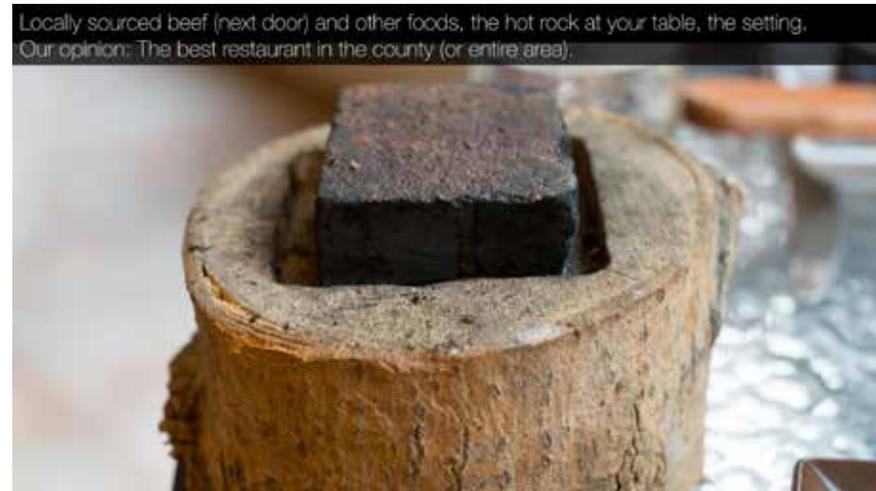
Take plenty of water, food, wear a hat, good walking shoes AND bring a camera.

You can spend all day here! The Visitors Center can assist you with your activities!

BUT they close at 4:30, so if you're planning on stopping on the way out, just note that they close rather early.

- Stop for dinner at Line Camp Steakhouse—Tell a little about what makes this restaurant special, maybe a little about the owner, the fact that they don't take reservations, and the vibe of the place.
- DAY 2, Blue Mountain Foods—Suggest a quick 1/2 hour stop to pick up beverages and a lunch to take. Promote any specialties they have.
- Head to Canyonlands National Park—The Needles—Give helpful directions. Let visitors know that they may have to stop for a herd of cows to pass!

- Arrive at Newspaper Rock—Suggest at stop at Newspaper Rock, or as we like to call it 'Facebook Rock!' Note that they will be able to see the highest concentration of petroglyphs in the region. Note that there is paved parking, the site is very near the parking lot and that there are restrooms.
- Arrive at Canyonlands National Park Visitors Center—Mention the variety of hikes that you can take here, that people should wear good walking shoes, bring food and water, and that there is plenty to do here for a full day. BUT, let them know that the Visitors Center closes early, at 4:30 pm.



Provide a range of itineraries with specific suggestions of what to see and where to go, with specific businesses included. Offer a number of proposed daily itineraries. The easier you make it for your customers, the more likely you are to close the sale!

When visitors arrive they won't know where to go or what to see. We created this simple itinerary of a one day walking tour in Seattle (top left). This was done in Word. Itineraries help visitors plan their activities and helps them imagine themselves enjoying your locale, your restaurants, and your activities.

You can have these on your website. Create itineraries that you can group by

vehicle, walking or hiking. Itineraries could also be listed by difficulty, number of people or with kids. Consider letting visitors explore online itineraries by season and passion.

One place that was recommended to us, was the North Creek Grill at Slot Canyons Inn (bottom left). When we arrived, we couldn't find a sign for the restaurant. We did locate it, but it wasn't open for another half hour. Luckily the owner gave us a fabulous suggestion for a quick hike. Once we were seated, we found out that the locally sourced beef was from the ranch next door. They had special hot rocks at each table for searing your beef. Such a cool speciality!



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- Utah Canyon Outdoors
- High Adventure
- Circle D Eatery
- Nemo's Drive Thru
- North Creek Grill

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**A private-sector opportunity:**  
 "The Hidden Gems of Escalante & The Grand Staircase"

REGIONAL BEST SELLER

-101 Things To Do In Door County-

Door County State Park

-101 Things To Do In Door County-

• 18 •  
 Take a Sunday stroll down Cottage Row.

Our favorite Sunday morning starts with breakfast at the White Gull Inn on Main St. in Fish Creek. Spherge on a slice of their famous Door County-herry some cream coffee cake; then take a much-needed stroll down Cottage Row. From The White Gull Inn follow Main St. to Cottage Row and turn right. The walk will take you north along the row of abandoned "cottages" about 1 mile before it turns up the steep bluff. At the base of the bluff is a sliver of a park known as Champagne Rock, named for the little rock that hangs over the water. Down and back is a perfect way to walk off breakfast and start the day.

Right in the lobby at the North Creek was one of those cool chairs (top left). Visitors who are staying at your smaller, speciality accommodations like the yurts or North Creek are spending the most. Those are the kind of visitors that you want to leverage, which is why upscaling will work in Escalante.

One of Door County, Wisconsin's most successful marketing pieces is a small book written by a private person called "101 Things to do in Door County" (bottom right). These are basically "hidden gems," and they are very specific,

fun, mini-itineraries about things to do while visiting Door County. These are things only locals would know about. They let visitors know about all the other fun things to do, besides your major attractions.

Your hidden gems are not the major attractions that would get us to travel to Escalante & The Grand Staircase, but while we're here, these are some fantastic little excursions and enjoyments we could have. These will get visitors to stay longer. This could be a privately produced marketing book that includes even just 50 Things To Do.

**The Very Best of Escalante:**

- Highway 12 between Escalante and Boulder (The Hogsback)
- Anasazi Indian Village State Park
- Kodachrome State Park (day hikes - pick one)
- Grand Staircase Visitor Center
- Excursions of Escalante
- Utah Canyon Outdoors
- High Adventure
- Circle D Eatery
- Nemo's Drive Thru
- North Creek Grill
- Peekaboo, Spooky & Dry Fork slot canyons (?)
- Hurricane Wash (spring and fall) (?) Jacob Hamblin Arch
- Cottonwood Road scenic drive (?)
- Calf Creek Falls (?)

**The Power of Itineraries**  
PRESENTED BY ROGER BROOKS

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Watch the video!

- What will I catch?
- Where do I get a fishing license?
- How much is it?
- What are the limits?
- When are the fishing seasons?
- What time of day is best?
- What kind of bait should I use?
- Is there a bait and tackle shop in town?
- Fishing guide services?
- How do I get to specific fishing spots?
- Is there a place to park?
- Anything else I should know?

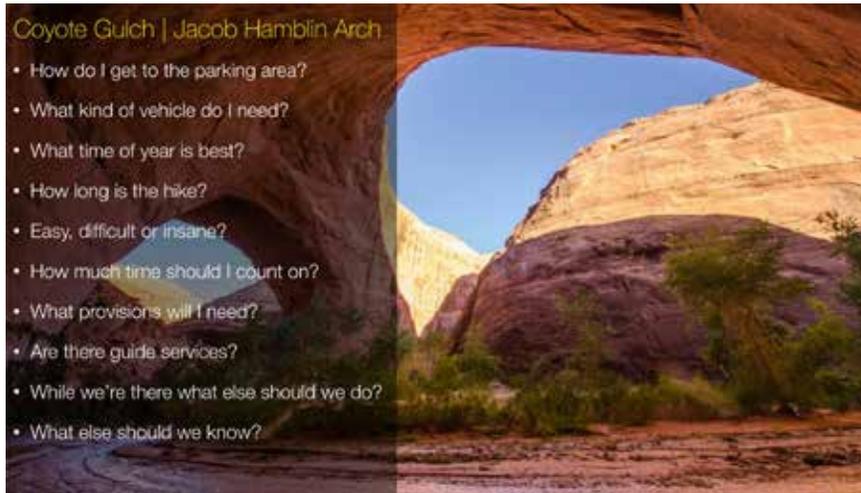
- Where can I rent an ATV | UTV?
- What are the costs?
- Do we need to trailer them to a trail head?
- What time of year is best?
- Trails by grade: Green, blue, black
- Trails by activity: scenic vistas, wildlife...
- Where can I rent a UTV?
- Can I ride them on the streets?
- Two hour, half-day, all day rides?
- Trail widths?
- Where do I provision up?
- At the end of the day?

Priority #1—Create a Very Best of Escalante brochure. This is the best thing you can do as a public/private partnership that is basically self-funding. Here is your list (top left). Feel free to add Hurricane Wash, Cottonwood Road scenic drive, and Calf Creek Falls that we did not get a chance to see but came highly recommended. Be sure to use your criteria to select the best you have! Your list is even better than Bryce Canyon!

Priority #2—Create detailed itineraries. List these by: skill level (easy to extreme), mode of travel (motorcycle, RV, bike, hiking . . .), time of year and type of experience.

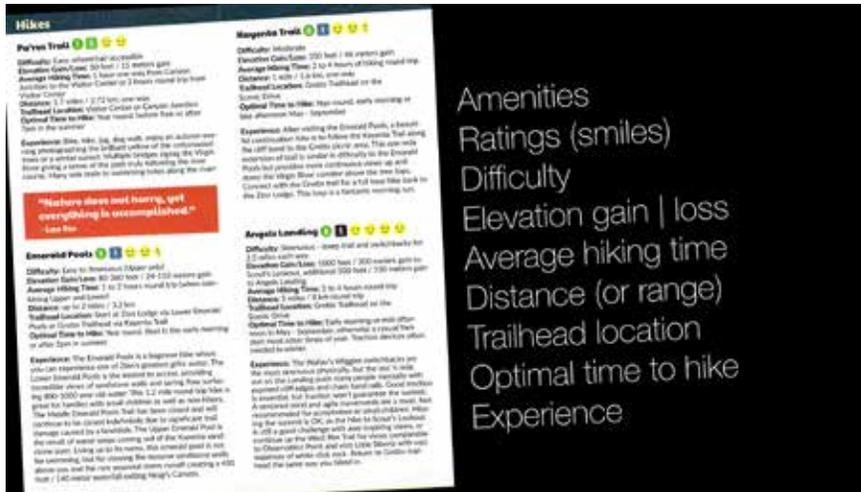
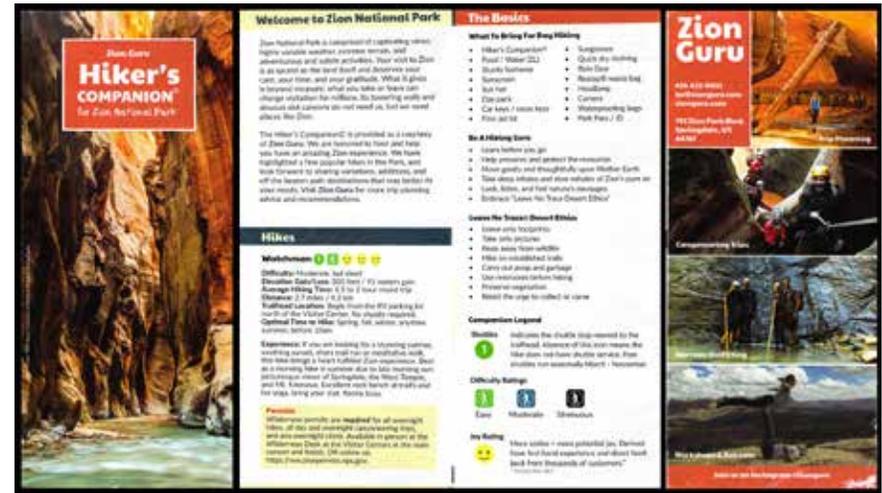
You will have access to the Roger Brooks International video library via Vimeo for the next six months for free. If you need help implementing any of these suggestions, this is a great resource that is there for you with all the details.

Priority #3—Details! Details! Details! The more details you give potential visitors, the more likely you are to close the sale. Here is an example of the type of details someone would be looking for if they wanted to try fishing at the state park (bottom left). And, an example of information someone would need if they wanted to do ATVing (bottom right). Having all the information will keep people from having to reference another web site to find it.

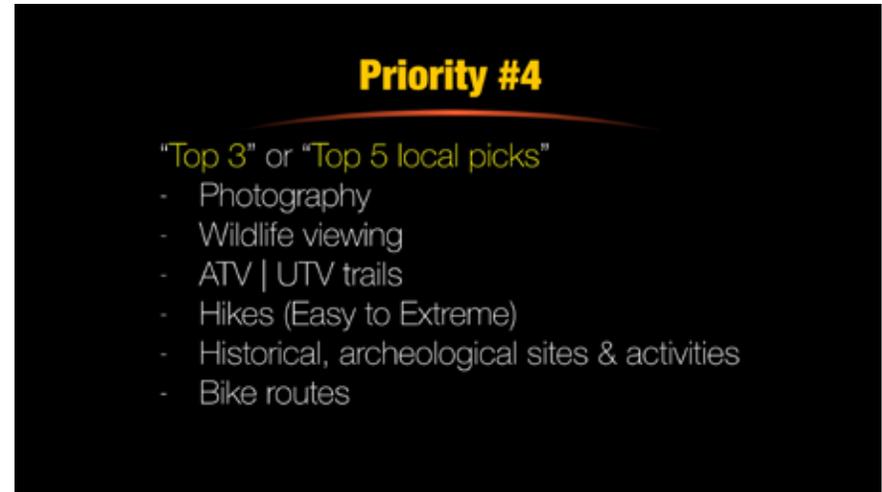


Coyote Gulch | Jacob Hamblin Arch

- How do I get to the parking area?
- What kind of vehicle do I need?
- What time of year is best?
- How long is the hike?
- Easy, difficult or insane?
- How much time should I count on?
- What provisions will I need?
- Are there guide services?
- While we're there what else should we do?
- What else should we know?



- Amenities
- Ratings (smiles)
- Difficulty
- Elevation gain | loss
- Average hiking time
- Distance (or range)
- Trailhead location
- Optimal time to hike
- Experience



Here is a specific list for Escalante, for what Coyote Gultch/Jacob Hamblin Arch visitors will need to know to make their plans (top left).

We recently assessed Springdale, and one of our favorite brochures was this "Hiker's Companion" (top right and bottom left), which was privately produced. It is very helpful for planning which hikes, among the many there, would be best to do. They have rated the hikes and included all the information a visitor would need to know, such as the difficulty level, elevation gain, hiking time, distance, and more. If you added ratings for Escalante's sites, you could do this

online, it would be very helpful for visitors planning their trip. We stopped at all 31 sites, except for the campgrounds, and we thought some of them were spectacular, and some weren't really worth the stop.

Priority #4—Include a "Top 3" or Top 5 local picks" in your visitor's guides (bottom right). Help visitors narrow down what they have to choose from. If they like one of your top picks, they will be back to try more.



Priority #5—Extend Your Seasons! If you want to be successful you need a minimum of eight months of operating at full tilt every year (March 1-November!). There is no reason that you can't do this. Operating for eight months will help sustain your younger populations. Peak travel times are now Mid-April through October! You need to be open during spring break and other school breaks to cater to travelers.

Priority #6—The 7-8-7 Rule. This is actually three rules, and the first is that 70% of all retail spending takes place after six p.m. That's not just visitor spending, but all spending. That's why big box retailers and most grocery stores are open

until midnight or are open 24 hours. They know they will miss out on most sales if they are closed after six.

For your visitors, they come to go out fishing, hiking, exploring during the day. When they come back to town, everything is closed, so how can they spend money in town? And why should they come back? The average visitor is active 14 hours a day, but spends only between four and six hours doing their primary activity, such as hiking or fishing. The rest of that time—between eight and ten hours—is spent doing other things, like shopping and dining. And that is where 80% of non-lodging tourism spending takes place.



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Work with your property owners on defined hours and days in lease agreements.

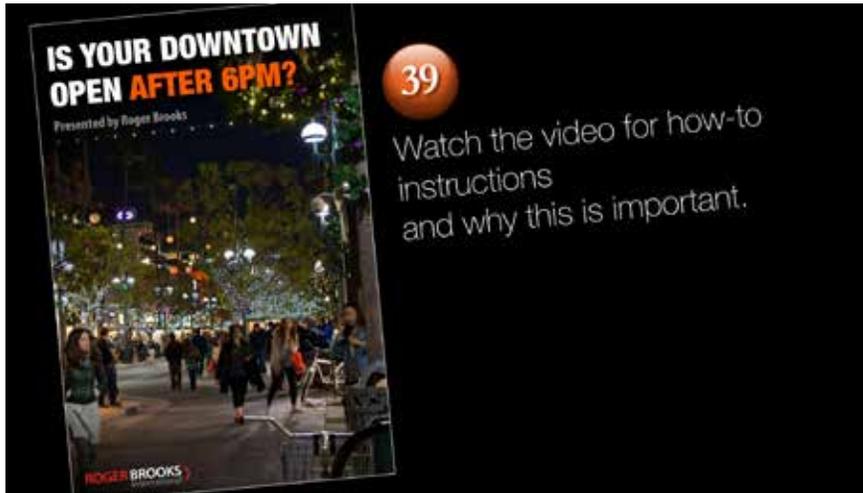
70% of first time sales come from curb appeal. Women account for 80% of all consumer spending. And 70% of all bricks and mortar retail spending takes place after 6:00 p.m.

So women account for 80% of all consumer spending. That means merchants need to appeal to women by making their shops or restaurants attractive and safe. Beautification (curb appeal) is an investment. Neenah, Wisconsin did a downtown makeover, adding beautification (before—opposite page, top right; and after—opposite page, bottom left). Sales in the block with beautification increased 35%. And it helps to add comfort—add benches.

Not just for the women, but for the men they are shopping with. Add benches downtown.

Benches should always be at the building facades facing out (top left and right). They should never be curbside. And make them decorative with pots flanking each side (top right).

The city should be responsible for curbside care and beautification, while the merchants and downtown organizations should be responsible for facade-side beautification. Merchants need to soften the transition between the sidewalk and the facade.



Priority #7—Put together the Escalante Extreme Team to turn these suggestions into action items.

Make it happen!

Here's to the bright future of Escalante!





## Escalante Marketing Assessment

The following pages contain an assessment by our secret shoppers, who researched the area from a distance, reviewing marketing materials to see if they could find the area, and if the materials were convincing enough to make them want to visit.

### **www.garfieldcounty.org**

A gorgeous scenic eye-candy photo lures you in immediately. Webpage is clean and easy to read, with a "Tourism" link.

Descriptive phrases like "a world class destination" with "charming towns offering eclectic shops, specialty restaurants and year-round festivals and athletic events." These phrases sound pretty, but they are very generic and don't really tell me anything specific. They could be used for just about any small town.

I found contact info for Office of Tourism, and I called to reach someone four times, getting voice mail each time. I left a voice mail with my name and phone number but no one returned my call. I called a couple more times, and on the last one I was willing to make, someone picked up the phone. A voice said, "Office of Tourism". I asked if I had reached the right number to request a map and suggestions for things to do in the area, places to stay or get a bite to eat. The person responded that she could help, but she sounded like I had interrupted her and she just wanted me off the phone. I felt embarrassed that I had called.

### **www.garfield.utah.gov/departments/tourism/**

Clicked on "Cities and Towns", listed in alphabetical order. NICELY DONE - REASONS TO VISIT EACH!!

The Utah.Gov websites are pretty massive – and beautifully done – but this time, not my favorite for Garfield County specific details.

Enjoyed the www.utah.gov "Garfield County – I Love History" page.

The Escalante area "Things To Do" clickable link is a loop back to www.Utah.com where there are lots more photographs and info about the state parks, i.e., Escalante Petrified Forest State Park.

I googled: "Escalante UT things to do" and found a list of ideas, some of which looked very interesting to me listed here:

- Calf Creek Falls in Capitol Reef National Park in Boulder UT is about 1 hour roundtrip hike
- Moqui Marbles looked interesting – but it was difficult finding detailed info
- Zebra Slot was interesting – but reviews were mixed and it sounds very difficult to get to.

It was hard to find area specific attractions in this website that weren't linked directly to Utah.com, where the photography lures you in, but once in this website you are bombarded with all of Utah's biggest tourist attractions, a bit overwhelming, especially if you are searching for specific things in a small area, such as Garfield County.

THE BEST OVERALL WEBSITE for detailed tourist info, specific to Garfield County Utah, was found googling "Top Ten Things To Do In Garfield County."

**www.brycecanyoncountry.com** - Tagline: Most Scenic Utah Drives are in Garfield County/Bryce Canyon

This website is beautiful with a panoramic photo of Utah's Canyon Country with an 800 number above the page's clickable ribbon of links to:

Where to Stay and Eat  
Things To Do  
Events  
More  
Trip Planner

Scrolling the page are gorgeous photos of the TOP 3 SCENIC BYWAYS:  
12 - Utah's All-American Road  
143 - nicknamed Utah's Patchwork Parkway  
Heritage Highway 83)

This is a well done webpage.

Opening the links provided gave me even more details and information with plenty of ideas!

Where to Stay and Eat displays a beautiful and easy-to-read map above a list of the cities and fun facts about each city with clickable links on the left panel of the page. Each link displays lodging and restaurants by city. Awesome!  
Area Activities included: shopping, bird watching, astronomy and museums!  
Did I mention I loved this website?!

It definitely opened my eyes up to a lot of things I might have missed if I were just driving through to another destination, without having searched the internet before I traveled.

Under Trip Planner are maps and sample itineraries.

### Another distance marketing assessment provided this input:

#### Marketing Materials/Collateral requested 5/8/17:

- <https://www.visitutah.com/attraction/garfield-county-office-of-tourism/>

The website sends you to this website for Tourism information:

- Garfield County Office of Tourism <http://www.brycecanyoncountry.com>

From here I was able to request a Utah's Bryce Canyon travel guide.

I searched to become familiar with the area of Garfield County:

From website <http://garfield.utah.gov>, section on Tourism <http://garfield.utah.gov/departments/tourism/> –

The Garfield County Office of Tourism works diligently to attract visitors to Garfield County's world-class destinations.

Garfield County provides access to nearly a dozen national/state parks and forest areas. Scenic Byway 12 – Utah's All-American Road, which meanders through the county, has been rated as one of the country's most beautiful highways.

The area's charming towns offer eclectic shops, specialty restaurants and year-round festivals and athletic events.

The Office of Tourism awards funding to countywide events and provides an opportunity for non-profit organizations and towns to apply for cooperative marketing funding. For more details about tourism in Garfield County or to plan your own vacation, visit: [www.brycecanyoncountry.com](http://www.brycecanyoncountry.com)

These sentences on the first page appeared to have an extra space between letters in words:

The area's charming towns of fer eclectic shops, specialty restaurants and year-round festivals and athletic events.

The Garfield County Of fice of Tourism works diligently to attract visitors to Garfield County's world-class destinations.

(since they are both sets of fs – it may be a format problem with that letter)

\*I could only request generic travel Utah info from this site. When I got this, I really only saw mentions of Tropic and Panguitch as gateways to Bryce Canyon in a mention on one page.

### **Utah's Bryce Canyon Country Travel Guide:**

This brochure includes many beautiful pictures of the rock formations in Bryce Canyon and Capitol Reef National Park. Photos also of the Grand Staircase, Scenic Byway 143, Anasazi State Park Museum, Escalante Petrified Forest State Park and Scenic Byway 12.

This guide includes a timeline of major events in Garfield County, which is interesting.

It shows people shopping in Panguitch, the old town street, and the Balloon Rally, as well as other events.

It also has a nice chart of a variety of accommodations and restaurants, grouped by area or city. Very handy for a traveler, with addresses, phone numbers and general price ranges.

This is followed by charts of Local Guides and Activities with enough information for visitors to narrow down what they are looking for.

At the end of the guide was a map with mileage from Bryce Canyon National Park, weather and a place for a few notes.

I think this brochure is outstanding. It would be good to include some quotes from visitors interspersed with the pictures and general area information in the first part of the guide. And it would be helpful to provide one- and two-day itineraries.

**At Utah.com**, I found the full list of cities for the county:

- ANTIMONY – Information for this town said they have a big 4th of July celebration with one of Utah's best fireworks shows at Otter Creek Reservoir.
- BOULDER – interesting features of this town are its scenic Byway 12 and its Anasazi State Park museum
- BRYCE – A definite stop for services or accommodations.
- CANNONVILLE – This town sounds pretty small, not sure I would stop here.

- ESCALANTE – I would definitely go here for its fossils of wood and dinosaur bones, rock features and hiking through petrified forests. The Wide Hollow Reservoir also sounds fun for canoeing and fishing.
- HATCH – Another access point for Bryce Canyon National Park (along with Bryce).
- HENRIEVILLE – This town sounds very rural.
- PANGUITCH – I would love to see the Quilt Walk (an annual event) and fish for their large rainbow trout, but not sure those are a big enough draw.
- TICABOO – It does not sound like it has anything specific for visitors to do in town.
- TROPIC – same with this town, seems pretty quiet. It does have a Heritage Center Museum though.

### **Then, I searched the internet specifically under 'visit Garfield County':**

<https://www.visitutah.com/attraction/garfield-county-office-of-tourism/>

This site is very attractive – with a top border of sky, and large panoramic pictures. Plus, the text on a white background and big orange headings (or white text on a dark blue background at the bottom of the page) are easy to read.

The **Visit Utah** site has several pages with sections for Panguitch and Escalante both.

### **Blogs**

<https://www.panguitchlake.com/blog/> This is a very simple blog with just 2 posts. The pictures were nice.

<http://www.escalanteut.com/media/blog/> It looks like there were some errors on this blog. Like maybe they tried to post one article several times. It needs to be cleaned up.

### **Facebook**

For the Escalante & Boulder Chamber of Commerce:

<https://www.facebook.com/Escalante-Boulder-Utah-Chamber-of-Commerce-634534689935871/>

Nice little page with reasonably recent posts and information. With a range of photos, very good reviews

Good that they have a Facebook presence.

### **Website**

<http://panguitch.com>- This is a very nice website, with attractive pictures.

One thing I noticed, is that on the home page, the upper left has a beige 'torn paper' square with 'PANGUITCH UTAH' written in it – that covers up the first tab of information so that it is not entirely readable. Since this section is the first one that comes up, it isn't that big a deal but could probably be fixed pretty easily.

And there are tiny buttons along the top of the panoramic picture in the middle of the page – for Facebook and their blog (I think) that are obscured by the photo description in light grey. There should be a better place for those buttons on the page – because you cannot hover over them to select them without the title getting in the way.

This site has a nice calendar of events, where you can hover over an event and find more information.

Some of their big events: June: quilt walk festival, Panguitch valley balloon rally, and in August: Pro Rodeo, County Fair, Bryce ATV/UTV Rally, and for most of October they have a scarecrow contest.

I would be interested in going to the quilt festival – it commemorates early settlers having to walk across snow on quilts to be able to get around. It features many events, and the quilts were varied and interesting:

2017 Quilt Walk Festival – June 7th through 10th Quilt Walk Retreat: Classes, Trunk Shows, Vendors, Dinner Theater, Heritage Fair, Pioneer Home Tours, Chocolate Fest The Balloon Rally also looks like a lot of fun.

**<https://www.panguitchlake.com> -**

This was a small site with a few nice pictures. It also hosted a tiny blog page. The big picture on the home page is a panoramic of the lake with a bunch of boats on it. It doesn't look like there are many buildings, if any, on the lake – but it gives you a good idea what the area looks like. Good.

Might also be nice to see vendor sites around the lake or boat slips on the lake – if there are any (at least see the site where you put boats in the lake). It's surrounded by the Dixie National Forest.

It would be nice to see sample itineraries of what you could do in a day, a few hours or a half day.

The Accommodations section was good because it told you how far away different options were from the lake.

There were also videos to watch in this section, set to music, of things to do, food, lodging and the Boulder Heritage Festival (after which there was a photo gallery).

The videos were good, and helped give me a feeling for the area.

**TripAdvisor –**

Top things to do in Panguitch:

Red Canyon

Historic GEM Theatre

Red Canyon Trails Powell Ranger Dixie National Forest

If I were staying in this city, I would like to stay at the Red Brick Inn of Panguitch – it got very good reviews. They said the owners were very friendly and had great attention to detail, and the food was great.

Escalante top things to do:

Calf Creek Falls Recreation Area – this area looked fabulous, easy hikes with beautiful views and vegetation, it got great reviews on TripAdvisor.

Devil's Garden

Scenic Byway Route 12

**My conclusions -**

**1. IF Garfield County were located two hours from your house, would you make a special trip there based on what you saw, read and learned?**

Yes. I wanted to go to the county fair in Panguitch as soon as I read about it, because it sounded so quaint. And the natural features of the region (large expanses of sandstone, valleys and cliffs) look like they are impressive on a grand scale. Just the geology of the area would be interesting to study and witness. Bryce Canyon National Park looks fantastic, and I would certainly want to see the Hoodoos and Queens Garden. I would hike in this park along the rim trail. Maybe spend a day doing this.

**2. IF you were driving through Garfield County (on your way to somewhere else), is there any place you'd stop?**

I would stop at Escalante to do some fishing, maybe for a day. Would love to fish for trout in the rivers – probably hire a fishing guide to find the best spots.

Would also like to paddleboard on the lake.

And, if the timing of my trip was right, I would love to go to some of the events I mentioned above: Panguitch Balloon Rally and the Quilt Walk. Probably spend a full day at either.



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