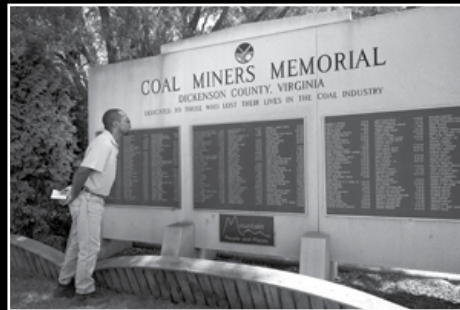


Virginia Coal Heritage Trail

- A Virginia Byway



This 325 mile route includes the counties of Buchanan, Dickenson, Lee, Russell, Scott, Tazewell, Wise and the City of Norton.



Proposal for:

- Corridor Management Plan
- Application for National Scenic Byway Designation
- Current & Potential Economic Impact Study

Submitted by: WMTH Corporation
P.O. Box 51153 | Bowling Green, Kentucky 42102
(270) 781-6858 Fax 721-0002 www.trailsrus.com



“We Make Things Happen”



April 15, 2010

Dear Virginia Coalfield Regional Tourism Authority,

WMTH Corporation, a certified DBE, is pleased to submit this proposal to research and prepare a corridor management plan that looks at the entire corridor to determine the most appropriate design practices, improvements and initiatives necessary to preserve and enhance the scenic vistas and natural, historical, archaeological, cultural, recreational, and tourism resources that define the byway. We believe the team at WMTH Corporation is uniquely qualified to assist you with this project.

Our strength is definitely in the fact that “we make things happen”. We have worked together as a team for a number of years and have a very strong track record for exceeding the expectations of the client. Where our strength lies is that we are very “hands-on” and can take the ideas and recommendations of many and meld them together into a unified plan that has strong public support and is designed to be implemented.

WMTH Corporation recently completed a very in-depth study for the Southwest Regional Recreation Authority of Virginia (SRRA). The study included a comprehensive plan, economic impact potential, county site visits, inventory of current tourism offerings, and maps of existing and potential trails which include the Virginia Coal Heritage Trail. We are very familiar with the area and have formed strong relationships with numerous people in the communities along the route.

The team at WMTH have written and obtained five scenic byway designations, wrote corridor management plans that have been adopted and are now being implemented and have been very successful in creating community “buy-in” and involvement for not just one community but multiple communities crossing both county and state lines. Upon reviewing our qualifications, we strongly feel you will find our firm is the best qualified to develop a corridor management plan for the Virginia Coal Heritage Trail, apply for scenic byway designation and conduct an existing and potential economic impact study for the byway.

Sincerely,

Debby Spencer

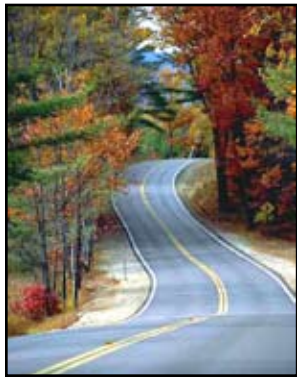


P.O. Box 51153 Bowling Green, Kentucky 42102
270.781.6858 | Fax 1.270.721.0002
www.wmthcorp.com or www.trailsrus.com

**EXPERIENCE IN DEVELOPING CORRIDOR MANAGEMENT PLANS,
OBTAINING SCENIC BYWAY DESIGNATIONS,
AND CONDUCTING ECONOMIC IMPACT STUDIES**

WMTH Corporation has been successful in applying for and receiving five scenic byway designations. These include the 400 mile Highway 68 Scenic Byway, the 283 mile Duncan Hines Scenic Byway and the Bill Monroe Bluegrass Trail, Merle Travis/Everly Brothers Rock'n Roll Trail, and W.C. Handy Blues Trail totaling over 300 miles. Scenic, natural, historic, cultural, recreation, tourism and archeological qualities were all addressed.

We have also been the driving force for establishing two heritage corridors along historic highways in over 50 counties across Kentucky. Through WMTH's assistance, the Highway 31W and 31E initiatives have now combined their efforts to encompass over 300 miles of road system through 19 counties and into two states; developed an extensive website, 4-color brochure and established a 501-c3 umbrella organization called the Louisville to Nashville Heritage Corridor Inc.



HIGHWAY 31W-31E HERITAGE CORRIDOR

WMTH Corporation has been successful in writing and receiving, on behalf of the 19 counties, two federally funded grants for the Highway 31W and Highway 31E Heritage Corridors. The first grant for \$50,000 and the second grant for \$60,000 provided the funds needed for an extensive study of both corridors including GIS mapping of every major attraction along the route, inventory of historic buildings and sites, and application forms filled out for National Historic Preservation status for any building and/or historic site not yet registered. A third grant is currently pending requesting an additional \$235,000 in funding for a uniform sign program, more in-depth website and marketing program. www.trailsrus.com/hwy31



HIGHWAY 68 HERITAGE CORRIDOR

The Highway 68 Heritage Corridor has also formed an organization that includes a 400 mile section of road through 24 counties, 60 communities and has over 500 participating members. Annually, a 4-day special event called "Antiques, Collectibles, and Stuff" is held along all 400 miles of the route to encourage people from across the United States to come travel this historic route and discover all it has to offer. Over 60 communities participate attracting over 20,000 people from as far away as California and Alaska, to "shop til they drop" in each of the small communities along the route. www.400mile.com

**HIGHWAY 68 BECOMES SCENIC BYWAY AND
RECEIVES FEDERAL FUNDING FOR
DEVELOPING A CMP**

In 2007, on behalf of the Highway 68-80 initiative, WMTH Corporation applied for and received scenic byway designation for the entire 400 miles. And in 2007, WMTH Corporation wrote and received \$80,000 in federal funding for the 24 participating counties to develop a corridor management plan for the entire route. <http://heritagecorridors.com/hwy68>





BLUEGRASS, BLUES & BBQ SCENIC BYWAY

In 2004, WMTH Corporation worked with 8 counties in creating three heritage corridors called the Bill Monroe Bluegrass Trail, the W.C Handy Blues Trail, the Merle Travis/ Everly Brothers Trail and which were merged together into the Bluegrass, Blues and BBQ Heritage Corridor and soon after designated as State Scenic Byways.

ALL THREE HERITAGE CORRIDORS BECOME SCENIC BYWAYS AND RECEIVE FEDERAL FUNDING FOR DEVELOPING A CMP

In 2006, WMTH applied for and received three scenic byway designations on behalf of the counties for the entire 280 mile route. In 2007, WMTH Corporation wrote and received \$60,000 in funding for the counties to develop a corridor management plan for the newly created Bluegrass, Blues and BBQ Scenic Byway. And in 2008, applied for and received an additional \$80,000 in federal funding to market the route. <http://heritagecorridors.com/bluestobluegrass/>



WMTH Corporation developed (in-house) extensive websites and 4-color brochures promoting all three corridors and has set up a preliminary website and 4-color brochure for the scenic byway trails at <http://heritagecorridors.com/>

CORRIDOR MANAGEMENT PLAN AND SCENIC BYWAY APPLICATION

In 2006, WMTH Corporation developed a corridor management plan for the Town of Bluffton South Carolina. In six months, the plan was completed and the entire document posted on the web. Over 1,000 residents signed petitions and wrote letters supporting both the CMP and the desire to have the entire route designated a national scenic byway. The Corridor Management Plan, in its entirety, is available for review at <http://trailsrus.com/sc46>



In 2009, WMTH Corporation assisted the community in completing their application for National Scenic Byway designation.

WMTH CORPORATION CREATED MULTIPLE THEMED TRAILS
In 2006, WMTH Corporation received two Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) federal grants to develop themed trails in both West Virginia and in Tennessee.



THEMED TRAILS DEVELOPED FOR TENNESSEE

Through an ARC federal grant, WMTH inventoried all tourism offerings in the Tennessee counties of Fentress, Morgan, Campbell, Clay, Scott, Pickett and Livingston as well as McCreary County in Kentucky and created numerous themed trails including equestrian, golf, marinas, bed & breakfast inns, wineries, crafters & artisans. A website was created at <http://bigsouthforkcountry.com>. From March 2009 to February 2010, the website received over 370,000 visits to different sections. A complete breakdown of which webpages people were viewing is available upon request. In 2007, a TEA-21 application was submitted on their behalf to implement a tourism sign program along the entire route.



WMTH DEVELOPED RAIL-COAL THEMED TRAIL IN WV

In West Virginia through another federal grant from ARC, we focused specifically on a Rail-Coal themed driving tour through the counties of Braxton, Clay, Wyoming, Fayette, Logan, Lincoln, Mingo and McDowell. Over 40 rail and/or coal themed sites are now featured on the website at: <http://trailsrus.com/railcoalwv>



An inventory of all tourism offerings in each of the eight counties was also conducted and a website created at <http://trailsrus.com/westvirginia> featuring attractions, outfitters, lodging, dining, shopping and special events and festivals. This year the number of visitors per month to the West Virginia tourism website ranges from 20,037 to as high as 32,016 depending on the month. The WV Rail-Coal website which is more specialized receives on average 7,500 visitors per month. Overall the two websites received 390,931 visits from March 2009 to February 2010.

A TEA-21 application was also written and submitted to WVDOT in partnership with West Virginia's National Coal Heritage Association to develop and install interpretive signs and wayside exhibits along the entire route.



SCOPE OF WORK

We have reviewed the specifications for this request and can comply with all requirements therein. If selected by the Virginia Coalfield Regional Tourism Authority (DBA Heart of Appalachia Tourism Authority - HOATA), we shall provide the required and specified services which will include the following:

- ▲ Develop a detailed comprehensive scenic corridor management plan which includes existing conditions, future goals/visions, and a detailed action plan of how to obtain those goals as well as a complete inventory, photographs and detailed maps of all notable businesses as well as cultural and historic sites along the route.
- ▲ Hold a minimum of 4 town meetings and develop newsletters and press releases as needed working with local newspaper and other media sources to create an awareness of the initiative and to encourage public support and participation in the process.
- ▲ Develop a preliminary website and brochure featuring the route and the initiative. All newsletters, town meetings, etc. will be posted on the website. Maps, photographs, inventory lists, etc. will be added.
- ▲ Create a PowerPoint presentation highlighting major points of the management plan.
- ▲ Submit an application for National Scenic Byway designation for the Virginia Coal Heritage Trail possibly linking this byway with the nationally designated Coal Heritage Trail of West Virginia.
- ▲ Provide a projected economic impact analysis of the Virginia Coal Heritage Trail as a current Virginia Byway and as a potential National Byway and extension of the Coal Heritage Trail (of West Virginia). Analysis will include current overall economic impact, job creation, and taxes from available data with anticipated expected growth in all three areas based upon findings and studies of other similar byways.
- ▲ Provide guidances in finding potential funding sources to help implement the scenic corridor management plan and a marketing program once the corridor management plan is adopted.

The team at WMTH Corporation have created antique trails, Civil War trails, unique dining trails, train trails, golf trails, wildlife viewing trails, rock climbing opportunities, historic sites and even barn trails have been developed to encourage people to get off the major highways and “take the roads less traveled”.



Visit our website at <http://trailsrus.com> to view these and other projects of our firm.

HOW WILL THIS ALL BE ACCOMPLISHED?

CONCEPT TIMELINE: *Keep in mind, this is purely a concept timeline. Considerations will be made to find dates and a time frame that coordinates best with other meetings and events in the area in order to take advantage and/or avoid conflict.*



Month One: Orientation and Reconnaissance

At the beginning of the assignment, WMTH Corporation will meet with key representatives of the Virginia Coalfield Regional Tourism Authority (to be known as the Authority), city and county officials, possibly DOT and other stakeholders. Specific elements of this orientation meeting include:

- Review client objectives, scope of work and schedule.
- Discuss project concept development to date including scale and scope of project.
- Review of previous studies, information, materials, current Land Use and Development Ordinances, state signage guidelines, maps, etc.
- Identify key contacts and where additional information might be located or other organizations and/or agencies that need to be involved or may wish to provide input. These could be historical societies, chambers, tourist commissions, economic development organizations, civic groups, or even businesses and/or individuals who have an interest in the area.
- A contact list will be developed and notices will be sent out inviting people to participate in the process.



Reconnaissance: Key members of the team, along with members of the Authority, DOT and other parties who might provide input will tour the area and the proposed route to view key attractions, concentrations of visitor infrastructure and both business and tourism opportunities, threats and needs of the area. A better understanding of access, environmental impact, historical significance and other issues will be addressed. The reconnaissance will enable WMTH to gain a better understanding of the “lay of the land” and enable WMTH and the stakeholders to share insights, concerns, and ideas.

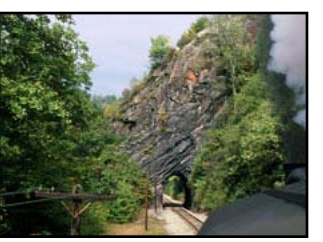


The first of four town meetings will be held to inform the community of the initiative and to get public buy-in and participation and to form an Advisory Committee. Opportunity will be given to all within the communities and along the route to provide input, help identify issues and concerns, and begin developing a vision for this portion of the Virginia Coal Heritage Trail recognizing too that this byway will be connecting to the nationally designated Coal Heritage Trail of West Virginia which needs to be addressed and included in the final plan.



One-on-one meetings will be set up with key individuals and/or organizations. A website will immediately be developed to keep the participants, media and the general public informed and engaged. Public participation will be encouraged throughout the entire process. Copies of the website will be made available for those that do not have access to the web.





Month Two: Preliminary analysis of the route and the initiative will be completed and an outline of the major points provided to the Authority and the Advisory Committee to determine direction to pursue. Photos will be taken, inventory compiled, needs assessment will begin to be developed. A second town meeting will take place in which the route will be showcased through a PowerPoint presentation and intrinsic qualities and sensitive areas noted.

**It is hoped that each Municipality will have at least one person represent them on the Advisory Committee who will serve as a liaison throughout the process to keep the officials for each jurisdiction informed.*

Month Three: By the third month, an overview of existing conditions will be compiled and future goals/visions will begin to be formulated. A review of information thus far obtained and preliminary conceptual plan for the scenic corridor document will be presented to the Authority and Advisory Committee. Once approved, it will be shared with the general public.

Month Four: Work will continue on the Corridor Management Plan with updates provided to the Authority, Advisory Committee and the communities. A third town meeting will be held. Grants and funding opportunities will be explored and a list provided to the Authority. All preliminary information for obtaining scenic byway designation will be compiled and forms filled out for national designation status.

Month Five: Corridor Management Plan will be reviewed by the Authority before final document is submitted. A PowerPoint presentation will be developed highlighting the major points of the plan to assist the Authority in obtaining final approval by all stakeholders and the general public.

Month Six: The Plan will be presented to the Authority and a possible final town meeting set up. Implementation of the action plan proposed in the Corridor Management Plan document could begin immediately upon acceptance.

**Often we have found the work can be completed in a much more timely manner and that it is better to shorten considerably the time period between the third and fourth town meetings in order to keep the public engaged in the process. Therefore, any notation to time noted above could be altered to better fit with the flow of the activities and those involved.*

We have also found that providing an opportunity for each community to host a meeting often helps to gain community support as well as support from the municipal officials in those areas.

All phases of the research, field work, and preparation of the final document will be coordinated with the Authority or its designated representatives. It is important to WMT Corporation that the final document fulfills not only the proposed requirements but surpasses one's expectations and helps the community obtain its goals. Progress reports and periodic meetings with representatives of the Authority will keep everyone informed of the progress of the project and will allow for a free exchange of ideas.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AND SUPPORT IS CRUCIAL

WMTH Corporation proposed to develop a Scenic Corridor Management Plan that will include existing conditions, future goals and visions, how the goals will be achieved, and a detailed action plan along the entire route. Community awareness throughout the entire process is crucial for the Byway initiative to reach its full potential. WMTH Corporation excels in this area as well as in creating public support and participation and in informing unique partnerships to obtain one's goal.

How successful a project is can be directly related to how much the public values the initiative. People are more likely to get involved if they understand up-front the goals and purpose and feel that they had a part in the decision-making. Therefore, it is important that from the very beginning, the public is involved.

To this end, WMTH Corporation will establish a website, develop and circulate an informative newsletter, provide press releases, create an informational brochure about the initiative, hold town meetings, and, if desired by the Authority, help the Authority and Committee plan a public awareness bus tour along the entire route.

LISTS OF PROJECTS UTILIZING PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT



Corridor Management Plan for SC 46, Bluffton, South Carolina:

Over a six month period, four town meetings were held, press releases written, a brochure created and a website developed to keep the public engaged. Community input was encouraged and received throughout the entire process. Over 1,000 signatures were collected of those within the community in support of the initiative and two neighborhood organizations were created to assist in implementation of the plan. The CMP has now been adopted and implementation has begun. In 2009, an application for National Scenic Byway was submitted and is under consideration.

Start: Spring, 2006

Status: Complete



Historic Highway 68:

60 Communities, 490 members. Wrote and received grants. Sixth year of the 4-day, 400 Mile Sale Across Kentucky. With over 1,000 participants in the event setting up yard sales, sidewalk sales and special events along the 400 mile stretch of road and over 20,000 visitors coming back each year to "shop til they drop", this event continues to grow.

Start: 1999

Status: On-going



Knott County Adventure Tourism Trail System:

Over 150 Knott County citizens with an interest in ATVs, horseback riding, and/or wildlife viewing are assisting in developing hundreds of miles of trails throughout the entire county and beyond. The Knott Co. Trailriders (club for atvs and dirt bike riders) was formed in January 2007. A spring trail ride attracted over 500 ATV riders from five different states. The Knott Co. Saddle Club was formed in December 2006. A spring ride brought in 1,500 riders and over 1,000 horses from 8 states for the three-day event.

Start: Spring, 2006

Status: On-going

Contact: Randy Thompson, Judge Executive - Knott County. (606) 785-5592



Historic Highway 31W/31E:

19 counties, 350 members. Wrote grants, created maps, brochure and website. In-depth inventory of historic sites along the route. Established a 501c3 organization.

Start: 1998

Status: Complete 2005



McLean County:

Held four countywide charettes. Surveyed over 500 students. Engaged the public. Developed an extensive inventory of recreational offerings throughout the county as preliminary steps towards the development of Myer Creek Park, a 240 acre recreational park near Calhoun, Kentucky. Also developed an extensive website, four-color county brochure and driving tour brochure as well as holding county-wide photo contest to further engage the public, encouraging residents to look at their community differently.

Status: On-going

Contact: Larry Whitaker, Judge Executive - McLean County. (270) 273-3213



Fort Heiman:

Calloway County Kentucky, 24 members and support across the United States. Wrote and received three grants totaling over \$1 million dollars. Purchased property. Testified before United States Congress. Assisted National Park Service and community in uniting Fort Heiman and Fort Donelson Friends groups together. In the Fall of 2006, Fort Heiman became a part of the National Park Service.

Start: 1999

Status: Complete 2006

Contact: Larry Elkins, Judge Executive - Calloway County. (270) 753-2920



John Hunt Morgan

16 counties, 25 active members. Worked with a group to received grants, formed a permanent organization, produced a website and 4-color brochure, installed 72 permanent wayside exhibits and actively working with DOT to add directional signage to each of the sites.

Status: Near Completion

Contact: Betty Gorin-Smith, Historian (270) 465-8726; Chris Hamilton, Lebanon-Marion County Visitor's Bureau (270) 692-0021

PROJECT TEAM

There will be two primary principals assigned to this project. Debby Spencer, president of WMTH Corporation, has a master's degree in tourism research and marketing and was the vice-president of a 45-county economic development organization for nine years for the State of Kentucky. She will serve as the primary contact and project director for this initiative.

Judy Ross, co-owner of WMTH Corporation, has a degree in graphic design and extensive background in website and brochure development. She has won numerous award for both and will assist in developing informational media such as brochures, website, and maps as needed.

Resumes are provided on the following pages.

WMTH is a "hands-on DBE certified" economic development firm that specializes in assisting communities to grow in the areas of tourism, business and rural development.



REFERENCES

Bill Owens, Senior Vice President

Economic Research Associates
1101 Connecticut Ave., NW Suite 750
Washington, DC 20036
(202) 496-9870
William.owens@econres.com

Projects: 19 county study of the Mammoth Cave Region, 23 county, two-state study of Western Kentucky and Tennessee, and Adventure Tourism.

Randy Thompson, Judge Executive Knott County

54 West Main Street
Hindman, KY 41822
(606) 785-5592

Projects: County-wide Adventure Tourism initiative including ATVs, horseback riding, elk viewing and more.

Larry Elkins, Judge Executive Calloway County

101 South 5th Street
Murray, KY 42071
(270) 753-2920

Projects: Fort Heiman Civil War initiative which in the end designated a National Park.

Bill Burger, Senior Advisor to Lt. Governor of Kentucky

14 Reilly Road
Frankfort, KY 40601
(502) 564-2150

Project: Statewide Adventure Tourism initiative

Larry Whitaker, Judge Executive McLean County

P.O. Box 127
Calhoun, KY 42327
(270) 273-3213

Project: Bluegrass, Blues & Barbecue Scenic Byway Grants, McLean County Website, Myer Creek Park.



We Make Things Happen!

DEBBY SPENCER

PO Box 51153 • Bowling Green, KY 42102 • Phone (270) 792-5300 • spencerdebby@aol.com

EMPLOYMENT HISTORY

**2005 - Present Tourism/Economic Development Specialist/President
WMTH Corporation**

Specializing in tourism research, creative marketing and grant writing

- Project Director for 7-county comprehensive plan for SWVirginia Spearhead Trails Initiative.
- Project Director for developing the Knott County Adventure Tourism Park System which includes establishing ATV, Horseback Riding, and Elk/Wildlife Viewing trails county wide.
- Project Director 8-county ARC Trail Development in both Tennessee and West Virginia.
- Project Director for developing a Corridor Management Plan for SC 46 in Bluffton SC.
- Tourism Development Specialist for a 240 acre recreational park in McLean County, KY.
- Created partnerships with communities, counties, state & federal agencies.
- Heavily involved in research, marketing and promotions on initiatives statewide.

**2000 - 2004 Adjunct professor at Western Kentucky University in Commercial
Tourism/Recreation.**

**1996 - 2005 Vice President for a 45 county economic development firm covering
western KY.**

- Multi-county projects such as developing the John Hunt Morgan Civil War trail involving 13 communities, the Louisville-Nashville Initiative involving 16 counties, and the Hwy 68 Heritage Corridor involving over 60 communities.
- Wrote and received over \$2 million in grants.
- Partnered with Western Kentucky University, Murray State University and the University of Kentucky on numerous projects to provide assistance for entrepreneurs, small businesses, and community initiatives.
- Established the Statewide Agritourism Initiative providing assistance in grant writing, marketing, research/communication between the 450 members, Agritourism Advisory Council and State.
- Research Liaison between consultants and communities in two multi-county Tourism Studies, one involving 19 KY counties and the other 23 counties in both Kentucky & Tennessee.

1992 - 1996 Tourism Director for the Edmonson County KY Tourist Commission.

EDUCATION

- Master of Education in Tourism Research/Marketing University of Arkansas, Fayetteville, 1990.
- Bachelor of Science – Double Major Southwest Missouri State University, Springfield, 1982, Construction degree w/emphasis in Architectural Drafting & degree in Interior Design.



We Make Things Happen!

JUDY ROSS

PO Box 51153 • Bowling Green, KY 42102 • Phone (270) 779-0567 • judy.ross@wku.edu

EMPLOYMENT HISTORY

2005 - Present Project Development Director, WMTH Corporation

- Works with Tourism/Economic Development Specialist to develop maps, websites, and print media to benefit and market the client.
- Directs, establishes, maintains and plans overall policies and goals for projects/ initiatives developed by WMTH Corporation.
- Coordinates events and projects as identified by the team members of the Corporation.
- Works to implement development initiatives in tourism and business planning utilizing research, knowledge, media and any other resources appropriate for success of the client.
- Works with team members in facilitating client's needs to achieve goals as predetermined.
- Creates, maintains and develops the overall production of print media, website development and other types of communication information utilized by the Corporation.
- Facilitates the overall technical content and other related issues responsible for tracking of statistical information and provides such information in a usable format for client use.
- Plans and prepares for dissemination of information utilizing both web and print media.
- Writes, edits, proofreads and copy edits a variety of documents utilized by the Corporation.

2000-2005 Graphic Designer/Web Development for a 45 county economic development firm covering western KY.

- Worked with state agencies, national organizations and local representatives in research, design, layout and production of events, print media, press releases and websites.
- Designed and maintained two websites for WKC that totaled over 3,000 pages and received over 500,000 hits per month.
- Produced four Kentucky State Tourism Traverse Award winning brochures and two Kentucky State Tourism Traverse Awards for website development.
- Coordinated three statewide photo contests for Agriculture, Agritourism and Nature/ Wildlife.
- These contests were done in conjunction with the Kentucky Department of Agriculture, Kentucky Farm Bureau, Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife, National Forest Service, National Park Service and Corp of Engineers.
- Developed new websites for counties not represented on the internet and worked with communities in development of county publications on quality of life issues.

EDUCATION

B.F.A. Graphic Design, graduated Magna Cum Laude
- Western Kentucky University, Bowling Green, Kentucky 1998