

**2005 INNOVATIONS AWARDS PROGRAM
APPLICATION
Deadline: April 4, 2005**

1. Program Name: Rediscover Your Roots...Connecting Urban Dwellers With Their Rural Heritage
2. Administering Agency: Missouri Division of Tourism - Cultural Heritage Marketing Program in partnership with Missouri Department of Agriculture - AgriMissouri Program, the Missouri Department of Conservation and the Missouri Travel Council
3. Contact Person: Debra Lee, Strategic Planner
4. Address: Missouri Division of Tourism
Truman State Office Building, Room 290
P.O. Box 1055
Jefferson City, MO 65102
5. Telephone Number: 573-526-3566
6. FAX Number: 573-751-5160
7. E-mail Address: debra.lee@ded.mo.gov
8. Web site Address: <http://www.VisitMo.com>
9. Please provide a two-sentence description of the program:
 - Missouri Division of Tourism, working in partnership with Missouri Department of Agriculture and the Missouri Department of Conservation, is giving travelers more places to visit and reasons to experience Missouri's agricultural and rural areas. The promotion of travel destinations involving work/stay farms and native grown produce is a blossoming trend coming of age for a variety of reasons including 1) increased demand for cultural heritage and historical experiences by visitors, 2) need for additional income in agricultural communities and 3) closing the gap on urban & rural diversity, reconnecting vital constituencies in a state polarized by an urban/rural split

10. How long has this program been operational (month and year)? Note: the program must be between 9 months and 5 years old on May 1, 2005 to be considered.

The joint-effort program started 1 year ago in April, 2004.

11. Why was the program created? What problem[s] or issue[s] was it designed to address? Indicate how the program applies to the “change driver” that you listed above.

Change Driver: New Economy

The Rediscover Your Roots Initiative increases economic vitality of rural regions through a non-traditional approach. It diversifies the agricultural product of rural communities and provides marketing opportunities. It generates revenue from existing farming businesses, keeps future generations involved in the family farm, and enhances the agricultural community’s image by making it a “tourism friendly” destination.

Change Driver: Polarization

The Rediscover Your Roots Initiative educates visitors about agriculture and teaches respect for the contribution rural areas provide to society. It also provides rural communities with a new perspective and respect for the economic benefit brought to their region by customers from urban areas. Interaction builds understanding and decreases tendencies for polarization based on economic, social or geographic values.

Program Creation Summary:

The Rediscover Your Roots partnership unofficially began as a sharing of information between Missouri Division of Tourism - Cultural Heritage Marketing Program and the Missouri Department of Agriculture – AgriMissouri Program. Missouri Division of Tourism was seeing an increased demand for cultural heritage products and activities including farm stays, bed and breakfasts, rural fairs and festivals, U-pick orchards, etc. At the same time, the Department of Agriculture found rural citizens and farmers were in need of new ways to supplement income. Concurrently, the Missouri Department of Conservation saw a widening disconnect between urbanites and their rural heritage. In some instances, the disconnect between urban and rural experience extends for six or seven generations.

The magic result is Rediscover Your Roots, a new economy for tourism promotion and agriculture/rural development. Many of the tourism opportunities offered in Missouri’s Rediscover Your Roots Initiative have turned into profitable ventures providing economic benefit as well as social value. Tourism’s promotion of cultural heritage attractions and events combined with educational initiatives for agriculture business development are inspiring urban citizens to visit small home-town communities for simple pleasures. It is an excellent opportunity to help close the urban and rural gap addressing polarization based on

geographic and social values. Both visitor and host learn a little more about each other in the experience and the farmers find new markets for a native grown products, which become souvenirs from the tourism experience.

The opportunities for establishing tourism around the cultural heritage of a community are as limitless as the imagination. Some visitors like pumpkin festivals or hayrides, while others prefer U-pick blueberry or apple orchards. The tourism experience could be horseback riding, wineries, bed and breakfasts, bluegrass festivals, corn mazes, or even lessons in gardening and canning. Folklore and storytelling are old forms of entertainment being rekindled through community theaters and tours. Cultural arts such as pottery making, basket weaving, and quilting are finding new audiences, too. Missouri Division of Tourism helps promote the experience after the Department of Agriculture helps set up the business which provides the experience. Together, the team is focused on creating a plethora of tourism opportunities from traditional agricultural activities and products giving an additional economic benefit to the community. Meanwhile, the Department of Conservation is the steward for hundreds of access points to Missouri's natural bounty and beauty. Yet most of these areas are little-known by urban dwellers.

12. Describe the specific activities and operations of the program in chronological order.

Missouri Division of Tourism - Promotional Activities

First, the Division of Tourism provided free listings to the tourism industry on the VisitMo.com Web site and in the Missouri Vacation Planner. Web site listings can be updated online by the tourism industry through the Extranet any time 24/7. The listings are placed in a holding tank where the web site editor reviews and approves each listing before it is allowed on the VisitMo.com Web site. Listings must meet tourism industry web site criteria before they are approved.

In early Spring, the Division of Tourism produced a :30 television spot with the Department of Conservation highlighting the hundreds of Conservation spots, including river accesses, hiking trails and unique geographic features in Missouri.

The Missouri Vacation Planner, printed and disseminated last fall and winter, is the flagship fulfillment piece distributed to potential visitors calling or emailing to request Missouri tourism information. Missouri Division of Tourism provides free listings in the brochure for tourism industry members to promote their attraction, accommodation or event. The Missouri Vacation Planner editor utilizes the database from the Web site for the published listings and notifies the tourism industry via email and letter that the listings in the Web site database must be updated for the correct information to be published in the Vacation Planner. Listings from the previous year are dropped off the database to ensure the accuracy of information. Industry members are very responsive in keeping

their information current and notifying the Division of changes to their business listing.

Missouri Division of Tourism has a public relations team that offers opportunities for the tourism industry to participate in travel writer familiarization tours, advertorial, and media calls promoting the state. The team has taken the Rediscover Your Roots Initiative to domestic markets in targeted areas through newspaper inserts and magazine advertorial. There has been a great response from the press and readers alike. This spring there will be two media tours one on the Grape and Wine of Missouri and the other on Missouri Cuisine. Both have ties to agritourism.

Finally, this Spring, we feature an online "Getaway Guide" featuring "Rediscover Your Roots."

Missouri Department of Agriculture – AgriMissouri Business Development Activities

From farmers to supermarkets to consumers, agriculture supports us all. It is one of Missouri's top three industries and employers. When you buy Missouri products you know you are getting quality products at fair prices. Plus you are supporting the state's farmers, food producers, factory workers, brokers, distributors, clerks, and grocers. In other words, you're helping to fill the plates of thousands of Missouri families. The AgriMissouri Program helps you support your local producers, processors and your community by promoting the sale of Missouri products, which also helps to build a strong state economy

The Department of Agriculture assists agriculture-based business development, then utilizes the AgriMissouri program to brand products and provide marketing. Agritourism is one component of marketing and it relies on Missouri Division of Tourism for resources such as the Missouri Vacation Planner and VisitMo.com Web site to reach large numbers of visitors.

Missouri Travel Council - Support of Tourism Industry as a Key Partner:

Recently another partner has joined the mix. Missouri's tourism industry has a very active not-for-profit association called Missouri Travel Council. Its primary aim is to provide economic, social and educational benefits to its broadly based membership through professional development, public advocacy and cooperative state/regional marketing efforts. The AgriMissouri / Agritourism effort under the Department of Agriculture has developed a joint membership program with Missouri Travel Council. Businesses becoming members of both entities can receive membership for a discount of approximately \$100. Missouri Division of Tourism and Missouri Travel Council already share common goals for the future of tourism. Now Missouri Department of Agriculture is joining under the umbrella.

13. Why is the program a new and creative approach or method?

Two reasons: First, this is a cooperative and positive approach that stretches resources through organization, affiliation and shared workload. Many times budget constraints can cause territorial disputes over limited resources. It does not create more government but it looks at where the missions of four organizations touch and allows the agencies to assist each other through existing programs. It reevaluates niche markets, prioritizes tasks and redirects the current resources in order to reach new markets. Second, it reconnects two constituencies that continue to grow apart.

14. What were the program's start-up costs? (Provide details about specific purchases for this program, staffing needs and other financial expenditures, as well as existing materials, technology and staff already in place.)

Start up costs were absorbed under current marketing activities. No additional costs. Agritourism was already being highlighted by the Division of Tourism in advertising and promotions, but it was seen just as another tourism product and not identified as Agritourism. Missouri Division of Tourism and Missouri Department of Agriculture pulled the products together and put them under the Agritourism umbrella to emphasize and enhance the products bringing them more attention. The Department of Conservation paid for the promotion to the urban areas.

15. What are the program's annual operational costs?

This initiative utilizes existing programs for marketing. Operational costs for administering the Rediscover Your Roots initiative are distributed over several positions in a variety of marketing programs. The initiative utilizes approximately 1.5 staff members.

16. How is the program funded?

- Approximately \$30,000 comes from the Missouri Division of Tourism – Cultural Heritage Marketing Program budget and the other costs for Web site, Missouri Vacation Planner, etc. are absorbed in the Communications budget.
- Approximately \$50,000 is allocated for Agritourism from the Department of Agriculture.
- The Department of Conservation paid for production and dissemination of the media message to urban dwellers.
- Salaries of the estimated 1.5 staff members are included in the above figures.

17. Did this program require the passage of legislation, executive order or regulations?

No.

18. What equipment, technology and software are used to operate and administer this program?

Administration Equipment:

- Personal Computers
- Phones
- Internet Email
- Missouri Division of Tourism Website – <http://www.VisitMO.com>
- Missouri Division of Tourism Extranet - The tool the tourism industry uses to update their listing on the VisitMO.com Web site. The information is reviewed by the web site editor before it is posted to the web site.
- Missouri Department of Agriculture Web site – <http://www.Agrimissouri.com>

Web site Equipment / Hardware :

- Rack mount 2U server with Dual Xeon processors and 1gig of RAM

Software used on the server:

- Microsoft Windows 2003 Server
- Macromedia ColdFusion MX Application server
- Microsoft SQL Server 2000
- Microsoft IIS

Programming languages / technologies:

- Macromedia Colfusion MX
- Macromedia Flash
- SQL
- Java script
- XML

19. To the best of your knowledge, did this program originate in your state? If YES, please indicate the innovator's name, present address, telephone number and e-mail address.

Yes. While nationwide cultural heritage tourism and agritourism is gaining recognition, we believe we have a unique partnership among the four entities who have cooperated on the Rediscover Your Roots initiative. It is in the infant stages of development. Coordination of the effort seems to be experiencing challenges, but interest is growing.

20. Are you aware of similar programs in other states? If YES, which ones and how does this program differ?

Our agency is aware of cooperative efforts being discussed, however we do not know of any specific programs underway at this time. Most programs in other states are in their beginning stages and may not be receiving support from the state level.

21. Has the program been fully implemented? If NO, what actions remain to be taken?

No. It has not reached its full potential. But despite budget cuts in state government (or perhaps because of the cuts), this initiative is evolving and growing, but is dependent on market research. Marketing initiatives rely heavily on research depicting the best markets, strongest markets for return on investment, and viability to penetrate those markets.

22. Briefly evaluate (pro and con) the program's effectiveness in addressing the defined problem[s] or issue[s]. Provide tangible examples.

Pro

- Low start up cost
- Strong market response (According to the Travel Industry Association of America –TIA, cultural heritage travel is one of the leading reasons for leisure travel.)
- Cooperation between agencies, industry and non-profit organizations
- Good venue for supplemental economic growth in rural communities
- Added product to the tourism industry portfolio
- Identifies and brands the state through cultural, heritage and agricultural resources
- Reconnects vital constituencies in a state polarized by an urban/rural split.

Con

- Requires strong organizational skills and attention on the local level
- Some seasonality for marketing of agritourism (Crop-based tourism opportunities: U-pick farms, pumpkin festivals, Christmas tree farms, etc.)
- Agritourism is a by-product of agriculture and is somewhat dependent on the success of the primary product.

23. How has the program grown and/or changed since its inception?

Where there were two initiatives from the two different agencies, Missouri Division of Tourism and Missouri Department of Agriculture, they have combined efforts, increased communication and integrated with Missouri Travel

Council and the Missouri Department of Conservation to produce a cohesive marketing and development initiative.

24. What limitations or obstacles might other states expect to encounter if they attempt to adopt this program?

Two of the biggest obstacles: 1) Identifying and blending programs working in the same direction, and 2) Inventorying products and services that fall under the Agritourism umbrella. Agritourism is a subset of marketing programs in three agencies. Looking at the missions of those agencies made it much easier to determine what services each entity could provide without duplicating work. It helped the partners to set up a process for assisting agritourism businesses.

Add space as appropriate to this form. Return to:

CSG Innovations Awards 2005

The Council of State Governments

2760 Research Park Drive, P.O. Box 11910

Lexington, KY 40578-1910

innovations@csg.org