

Chapter 7: Marketing, Tourism, and Traveler Services

Introduction

The Jacob's Ladder Trail Scenic Byway is an asset to the hilltowns region of Western Massachusetts, both for its scenic value and for its tourism potential. As noted in the recent marketing study conducted for the Byway, this route offers travelers the quintessential New England experience that includes rural landscapes and villages, vast natural resources, and cultural attractions, while also offering modern shopping and conveniences. The Byway winds through the small towns of Lee, Becket, Chester, Huntington, and Russell, providing views of the nationally designated Wild & Scenic Westfield River along the way. Each town has its own distinctive character, from the bustle of the restaurants and shops of downtown Lee, to the rural solitude of Becket and the industrial charms of Chester, to the classic New England village of Huntington and the quiet, tree-lined Main Street of Russell Village.

Nationwide, scenic byways are attracting an increasing number of "driving vacationers." These rural settings are attractive for the unique experiences offered and can be enjoyed by both local and regional residents who are limiting their trips to a smaller radius. Many travelers are drawn to the authentic experience of "hometown America" via back roads, rural scenery, and local shops and attractions.

Increases in the number of visitors help to sustain small town communities and create local jobs. The Byway extends 33 miles from Lee to Russell, through historic manufacturing-centered communities, which have been hit hard by the decline of such industries and the subsequent loss of jobs. Given a small population base, as well as a variety of recreational and cultural attractions, a viable way to stimulate the economy of the region is through the promotion of tourism. A growing tourism industry can attract new businesses, support existing businesses, expand local tax bases, and create jobs. If managed carefully, an increase in tourism should not compromise the area's rural character.

Jacob's Ladder Trail Scenic Byway, Inc., Jacob's Ladder Trail Business Association, and the towns along the Byway wish to moderately increase the level of year-round tourism as part of their overall plans for economic development. *The Jacob's Ladder Trail Tourism Marketing Strategy*, developed in 2004 by tourism and marketing firm Destination Development, recommends that the Byway concentrate on three market segments to attract more visitors:

- 1) Draw tourists already visiting the Berkshires onto the Byway for a day or overnight trip;

- 2) Draw drivers off the Massachusetts Turnpike to travel the Byway and its attractions; and
- 3) Establish the Byway as an “alternative” to driving the Massachusetts Turnpike.

The Jacob’s Ladder Trail Scenic Byway is punctuated by scenic vistas, historic town centers, and cultural and recreational attractions. The internationally renowned Jacob’s Pillow Dance Festival serves as the byway’s tourism “anchor;” however, small-scale family businesses make up the backbone of the tourism economy in the region. Such businesses offer friendly service and unique products differentiating them from urban and suburban establishments. Also important are various amenities which, although typically not attractions in and of themselves, can significantly enhance tourists’ experience of the area. The *Visitor/Tourism Assessment* that was done as part of the 2004 *Tourism Marketing Strategy* provides professional insights and recommendations for developing the Byway as a destination, thus attracting and capturing an increased volume of tourists to the region. The assessment offers these general guidelines for tourist destinations:

- 1) To become a destination you must have attractions to convince visitors to spend at least one night. Also, overnight visitors spend three times that of day visitors, and 10 times that of through travelers making a “pit stop.”
- 2) Develop attractions and amenities to keep visitors busy four times longer than it takes to arrive to the Byway region. Thus, if we attract visitors from the New York or Boston areas, which are approximately 2.5 – 3 hours away, the Byway must have enough to entertain them for at least one full day, preferably for two days.
- 3) Establish a critical mass of shops and/or restaurants to support pedestrian-oriented visitorship. This critical mass should include retail shops, gift and/or souvenir shops, outfitters and old fashioned general and/or hardware stores. Also included should be a mix of sit-down restaurants, cafés and dessert shops, and entertainment.

The original 1994 *Corridor Management Plan* for the Byway addressed tourism, economic development, and marketing only peripherally, mostly in terms of signage, as the plan was primarily concerned with making the route safer and more attractive to travelers. However, since then, two corridor-wide planning efforts (the *Development Guidebook* and *Vegetation Management Plan*) have addressed economic development and tourism issues, and numerous marketing pieces have been developed. As mentioned above, a comprehensive tourism marketing strategy was prepared in 2004.

This chapter inventories the tourist attractions, businesses and amenities along the Byway towns and assesses whether they meet the basic guidelines described above. It also provides a comprehensive examination of marketing and economic development efforts to date and assesses to what extent the 2004 marketing recommendations have been carried out thus far. Finally, it makes recommendations for future actions.

Analysis of Tourist Attractions and Amenities

The 2004 *Jacob's Ladder Trail Tourism Marketing Strategy* provides a comprehensive and in-depth tourism assessment and analysis of the Byway corridor. Some of the most salient points will be summarized here. The full report is available upon request from the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC) and the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission (BRPC).

There are two major tourist attractions within the Byway region that serve as "anchor" attractions: the Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival in Becket and Prime Outlets in Lee. Jacob's Pillow is a renowned dance festival that draws professional dancers and dance companies from around the globe. Prime Outlets is a village-style shopping center that features numerous brand name retail stores, similar in offerings to shopping destinations such as Kittery, Maine, and Manchester, Vermont.



During the summer months, Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival draws visitors from around the world to the Byway region. (Photo courtesy: Destination Development)

After these main attractions, the predominant type of attraction along the Byway is outdoor recreation, with at least 14 sites with varying types of recreational facilities. Campgrounds, such as those located in the state forests or private facilities such as the Bonny Rigg Campground, draw overnight visitors to the region. The region's many overnight summer camps draw families to the region during the drop-off and pick-up of children and during parents' visiting weekends. The Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival and most of the camping facilities operate only during the summer months, but a few remain active during other seasons. For example, Bonny Rigg operates year round and others,

such Chimney Corners, offer their facilities in spring and fall to outside groups for conferences and retreats.

The small towns themselves are attractions for those seeking the New England experience, and a number of arts, culture and heritage attractions, as well as significant railroad-related attractions, round out the offerings. The Byway also serves as a gateway into the Berkshires, a well developed tourist destination serving travelers from the metropolitan New York City and Boston areas, as well as national and international tourists. The Berkshires region is famous for its world-class cultural attractions, resorts and natural resources. The performing arts venues include Tanglewood (summer home of the Boston Symphony Orchestra), Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival (located on the Byway), Shakespeare and Company, and Berkshire Playhouse, while art museums include the Clark Art Institute, Norman Rockwell Museum, and the Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art. Resorts include Canyon Ranch, Kripalu, and Cranwell Resort. Most of these attractions are within a half hour's drive from the Jacob's Ladder Trail Scenic Byway.

The Berkshire and Jacob's Ladder Trail Scenic Byway tourist season is largely concentrated around the summer months of July and August, when Tanglewood and the various theater venues, including the Chester Theater, offer performances, and outdoor attractions are most frequented. Although the fall foliage season is also a busy season, it does not rival the sheer number of visitors that arrive in the summer. Winter is somewhat of a tourist season, but this is heavily reliant on winter weather and the viability of the region's ski areas. In general, those tourist businesses that are located within close proximity to ski areas benefit the most during winter. Overall, spring is the least visited time of year, despite a number of events and festivals in the small towns.

Outlined in the next section is a comprehensive inventory of attractions and amenities within the Byway region, taken as of April 2009. The attractions and amenities discussed in this chapter can be found on the map at the end of this chapter. Outdoor recreational facilities, such as forests, parks and campgrounds are discussed in more depth in the Natural Resources and Outdoor Recreation chapters of this plan.

Inventory of Tourist Attractions and Amenities

This section inventories the attractions, tourist-related businesses and amenities with potential to draw visitors to the Byway and/or support their experience while here. The inventory includes sites that are located within the Byway corridor (1/2 mile on either side of the road) or are located outside the corridor but within the boundaries of Byway communities. None of the sites outside the corridor are more than a 20-minute drive off

the Byway. The inventory is divided into four major categories as described in Table 7-1.

Table 7-1: Defining Attractions

Category	Inventory Items
Major Attractions	Major draws that bring tourists to the region, such as Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival and Prime Outlets at Lee.
Attractions	The many other cultural and recreational resources that, when grouped together, provide additional activities and itineraries for visitors. These are "things to do" once they are here.
Overnight Necessities	Lodging Dining
Traveler Amenities	Other things that enhance the experience of the Byway as a full-fledged destination: Information Centers and Wireless Internet Service Gas Stations Public Restrooms Banks, ATMs Country Stores and Gift Shops Small Grocery or Convenience Stores Turnouts, Overlooks, and Picnic Areas Other Public Parking

Major Attractions

There are few major attractions along the Byway that, on their own, have the power to draw visitors from outside the region. They include the Prime Outlets at Lee, Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival, the Westfield River Wildwater Races, and the region's campgrounds. Of these, only Jacob's Pillow (summer only) and the region's campgrounds (warm weather) consistently draw visitors for an overnight stay.

Lee

The **Prime Outlets at Lee** include 65 manufacturer direct outlet stores, arranged in a New England village style setting, offer everyday savings of 25-65 percent. The outlet village is located on the Byway, just off of Exit 2 of the Mass Pike. A Columbus Day Sidewalk Sale is an annual event. For more information: 1-877-GO-OUTLETS or www.primeoutlets.com.

Becket

Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival, America's premiere international dance festival, is located on the site of Becket's historic Carter Farm, which dates from 1790. "The Pillow" is an international venue for dance performance and education, founded in the early

1940s by modern dance pioneer Ted Shawn. Today this 150-acre facility is open to the public from June through August. In the course of the ten-week festival, 150 performances are presented on three stages by companies from around the world representing contemporary, modern, ballet, dance-theatre, jazz, tap, hip-hop, and culturally-specific dance. More than 200 free events, including open rehearsals, outdoor performances, open studios, daily talks by Scholars-in-Residence, exhibits, film and video showings, and panel discussions, are available to the public. For information on current programs and events, call 413-243-9919 or visit www.jacobspillow.org

Huntington

The Westfield River Canoe Club has sponsored the **Westfield River Wildwater Races**, held in mid-April, for over 50 years. The race draws more than 200 novice and more than 100 experts annually for an event that originally started as a bar-room bet among eight friends. It is now considered the longest running whitewater race in the country. The races, held along rapids in Huntington and Russell, include an eight-mile course for novices and a 12-mile one for experts. It has increased in popularity because of the ability of the Army Corps of Engineers to regulate the flow of the Westfield River through the flood control dams at Littleville and Knightville. Clinics offered by the Westfield Canoe Club are offered the three Sundays preceding race weekend. The Westfield River has been designated a National Wild & Scenic River, and its watershed has been selected by The Nature Conservancy for nomination as a National Forest Legacy Area. For information: 413-354-6570.

Attractions

Many other, smaller attractions are appealing to regional visitors, local residents, and other visitors who are already in the area for one of the major attractions. Also, a set of several of these attractions, when combined together, could provide itineraries for day trips or even weekend visits. It should be noted that there are a number of outstanding outdoor recreational resources in the Byway region, but only a few – those that are considered the most probable tourist attractions – are being listed here. The complete list of these facilities is found in chapter 4 on Outdoor Recreation Resources.

Lee

Cranwell Resort Spa and Golf Club is a premier all-season resort located on the Lee/Lenox border. Amenities include lodging, fine dining, golf, cross-country skiing, and spa facilities. The resort utilizes two restored Gilded Age mansions, and is member of Historic Hotels of America. More information is available at www.cranwell.com.

The Byway travels through **Historic Downtown Lee - the Gateway to the Berkshires**, offering tourist amenities including shopping, dining and lodging. Lee has the densest compilation of shops, restaurants and lodging of all towns along the Byway. Most of the businesses and amenities, and most of the public parking, is concentrated along the

southern half of Main Street, but there are a few gems on upper Main Street, including higher-end shops, dining and lodging. The Lee Chamber of Commerce maintains a useful website, www.leechamber.org.

Lee holds its own birthday celebration, known as **Lee Founder's Day Weekend**, each fall, in late September/early October, with three days of events such as the "Taste of Lee," Hometown Parade, Festival Latino and the popular Classic Car Show. For more information, call the Lee Chamber of Commerce at 413-243-0852 or visit www.leechamber.org.

Berkshire Scenic Railway and Museum offers narrated train trips through the Housatonic River Valley towns of Lenox, Lee and Stockbridge on summer weekends and holidays. The trips take passengers in 1920s era passenger coaches, on a 20 mile, 1 ¼ hour round trip connecting Lenox, Lee and Stockbridge. For information: 413-637-2210 or www.berkshirescenicrailroad.com.

Built in 1858, the **First Congregational Church in Lee** is a beautiful Italianate style with the tallest wooden steeple in the country. The interior contains "trompe l'oeil" (fool the eye) stenciling, an excellent example of an almost-forgotten craft, and regarded as one of the finest examples of this work in the U.S. The choir loft and the 1927 organ are also noteworthy. For more information: 413-243-1033 or www.ucclee.org.

October Mountain State Forest covers the northeastern part of Lee and extends into several adjacent towns. At 16,460 acres, it is the largest state forest in Massachusetts. It offers 46 campsites, of which several are wheelchair accessible. Trails are available for every level of experience and include the famous Appalachian Trail, accessible from within the state forest or from a parking area on the Jacob's Ladder Trail Scenic Byway at the Lee/Becket border. The forest offers extensive snowmobile and ATV trails.

Becket

Known as the "A.T." to hikers, the **Appalachian Trail** intersects the Byway in Becket. It is America's longest walking trail - approximately 2,175 miles from Maine to Georgia. Ninety miles of the trail pass through Western Massachusetts, along the ridges and valleys of the Berkshire Mountains. The Appalachian Trail was established during the 1920s partly as a reaction to the burgeoning of auto-tourism. To the north of the Byway, the trail passes through October Mountain State Forest. To the south, the trail travels past scenic Upper Goose Pond. Backcountry campsites and shelters are available for hikers. Parking for the trail is located on the Byway at the Lee/Becket Border, where there is also an interpretive panel with a map of the area and tips on nearby trail conditions and highlights.

Becket Arts Center of the Hilltowns is housed in a fine example of an 1855 Greek Revival schoolhouse, located at the intersection of Route 8 and Brooker Hill Road in Becket Village (a few miles north of the Jacob's Ladder Trail Scenic Byway). It houses two galleries presenting exhibits and workshops from June to Labor Day. For information: 413-623-6635.

The trail system at **Canterbury Farms Cross-Country Skiing** was specifically designed for cross country skiing, and it has recently been adapted for ski skating as well. Twelve miles of trails are groomed and tracked daily. With a northern exposure, nestled high in the Berkshire Foothills, the facility gets the best snow in the area. Surrounding the Farm are 2,000 acres of state and private forestlands, allowing for wilderness skiing as well. The Farm's staff is available to fit guests with the proper ski equipment or provide lessons if needed. The Berkshire Room of the farmhouse has a cozy fireplace and hot food and drinks. For ski rates, lessons, and packages call (413) 623-0100 or log onto www.canterbury-farms.com.

The Jacob's Ladder Scenic Byway ascends to a height of 1,775 feet at Morey Hill, in the town of Becket. The **Jacob's Ladder Trail Scenic Byway Summit** is marked by a **Stone Cairn** originally placed there for the gala inauguration of the highway in September 1910. The cairn is all that is left of what was a very popular destination in its heyday. Nearby is Jacob's Well and Jacob's Spring: as the cars of the early 20th century often become overheated climbing the hills of what was then known as the Jacob's Ladder Trail, this was an important stop for water. These sites can be seen from the Becket turnout.

Chester

Founded in 1990, **Chester Theater Company**, presents plays featuring renowned stage actors, from the first week of July through Columbus Day weekend. The Theatre uses the auditorium of the Chester Town Hall for its productions. For information: 413-354-7771 or www.chestertheatre.org.

Founded in 2008, the **Vincent Dowling Theatre Company**, also uses the auditorium of the Chester Town Hall for its plays. Vincent Dowling was the founder of the Miniature Theatre Company of Chester, now the Chester Theatre Company (see above), and is an internationally acclaimed actor, director and producer.

Established in 1834, **Pine Hill Cemetery** is a Victorian-era cemetery, located atop of Pine Hill in Chester. It offers scenic views of the Westfield River Valley. Many of the headstones were cut from Chester granite and slate by local stone cutters. This cemetery is still used by Chester residents.

Keystone Arch Bridges and Trail located in Chester, Becket and Middlefield, Massachusetts, are the oldest bridges of their kind built for railroad use in the United States. These 70-foot high stone bridges, built without mortar or steel reinforcements, were built between 1833 and 1841, extending the Western Railroad across the deep gorges of the Westfield River on its route to New York. Major George Washington Whistler, father of the artist James Whistler, and William Gibbs McNeill were the chief engineers responsible for designing the bridges. The five remaining Keystone Arch Bridges are in the Middlefield-Becket Stone Arch Railroad Bridge District on the National Register of Historic Places.

The Keystone Arch Bridges Trail extends for 2.5 miles and provides the only public access to two of the bridges. The trail also provides beautiful views of the West Branch of the Westfield River, the first National Wild & Scenic River designated in Massachusetts. The hiking trail to the Arches originates off of Middlefield Road in Chester. A self-guided tour map is available at the Chester Railroad Museum, on the jacobsladderscenicbyway.com website, or call 413-354-7752 to arrange a guided tour.



The Chester Railroad Depot and Museum relates the historic importance of rail service to the Byway region. (Photo courtesy: Destination Development)

cars, including a 1923 tank car, a 1919 wooden caboose, and a 1929 restored wooden boxcar. The museum is open June through October on weekends from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. For information: The Chester Foundation at 413-354-7752.

This historic railroad town holds a bi-annual celebration of its heritage, called **Chester on Track Festival**, with a parade, live music, educational demonstrations and exhibits, antique car show, and more. The Chester Railroad Depot and Museum is open for viewing rare artifacts, and railroad cars are prominently displayed in and around the

Chester Railroad Depot and Museum, located in the restored depot at the end of Main Street, houses trains, railroad memorabilia, and artifacts from Chester's railroading days. Built around 1841, it was operated for many years along the line from Springfield to Albany, New York. Exhibits include

the Children's Heritage Boxcar Museum, and the depot is surrounded by a variety of historic railroad

depot. Held bi-annually in May, the festival has become one of the largest in the area. For more information: 413-354-6570.

The Old Chester Jail is a tiny 19th century jailhouse that is used as an historical museum. It includes a display of an enormous carborundum grinding wheel, formerly manufactured by local factories. Open the first Wednesday of the month, 9 to 11 a.m. or by appointment. For information: 413-354-7820.

Chester Center on Skyline Trail is an intact 18th and 19th century village that includes an old burial ground is surrounded by blueberry fields, open pastures, and sheep and cattle farms. The crest of Skyline Trail offers splendid views across the valley formed by the Westfield River.

In early spring, the Chester Hill Association holds the **Chester Hill Maple Festival**, during which farmers along Skyline Trail open their doors to the public, serving up pancake breakfasts, demonstrating the making of maple syrup products, and offering horse-pulled hay rides. The crest of Skyline Trail offers splendid views across the valley formed by the Westfield River. For information: 413-354-9696.

Chester-Blandford State Forest, a 2,807-acre state forest, was created by the Civilian Conservation Corps during the Great Depression. It contains Sanderson Brook Falls and Goldmine Brook Falls, a semi-primitive campground and numerous hiking trails, including the H. Newman Marsh Trail, which offers spectacular views of the Westfield River Valley. It also includes the Boulder Park Accessible Trail, one of the few accessible facilities located on the Byway.

Huntington

Littleville Dam & Lake was built in 1963 in response to the devastating 1955 Westfield River flood. The two-and-a-half mile long impoundment created by the dam is popular for fishing and canoeing. It is located off of Route 112 in Huntington.

Knightville Dam & Wildlife Management Area stores water during flood conditions in a six-mile long reservoir adjacent to Route 112 in Huntington, just a few miles from the Byway. Among the many recreational opportunities are catch-and-release trout fishing, hunting, and hiking. Located at the northern end of the basin is Chesterfield Gorge, a Trustees of the Reservations property that is open to the public.

The southern terminus of the **Route 112 Scenic Byway** intersects with the Jacob's Ladder Trail Scenic Byway in Huntington center. Like the Jacob's Ladder Trail Scenic Byway, this Byway is rich in natural and outdoor recreational resources, featuring more than 15,000 acres of state public lands. Gardner State Park in Huntington is popular for picnicking, swimming and fishing. The DAR State Forest in Goshen offers the most

handicapped accessible facilities in the region, including camping, rest rooms, beaches, trails and a fishing pier. A warming hut and sit skis are offered in the winter. The Route 112 Byway travels northward, connecting the Jacob's Ladder Trail Scenic Byway to the Mohawk Trail Scenic Byway (Route 2), the region's most established Byway. For more information on the Mohawk Trail visit www.mohawktrail.com.

Russell

Blandford Ski Area, just three miles off of the Jacob's Ladder Trail Scenic Byway in Russell, has been owned and operated by the Springfield Ski Club since 1936 and is the oldest continuously operating club-owned ski area in North America. Located just a half-hour from Springfield, the ski area offers downhill skiing, ski sales, and ski instruction. The Blandford Ski Area is located on 2nd Division Road in Blandford. For ski conditions, call 413-568-4341, and for more information, visit www.skiblandford.org.

General Knox Marker is a 1927 marker in Russell that memorializes General Knox's crossing of the ridge of Glasgow Mountain during the Revolutionary War. Knox and his troops were marching with the cannons from Fort Ticonderoga, New York to Dorchester Heights in Boston. The arrival of the cannon forced the evacuation of the British. General Knox wrote in his diaries that this section of the trail was the most difficult portion of the entire trip.

Multiple Communities

Local Country Fairs held during the summer months include the Becket Village Country Fair, the Littleville Fair in Huntington, and the Middlefield Fair. These old-fashioned country fairs have arts and crafts, livestock shows, contests, food and activities for children. In the fall, you can attend the Blandford Fair and the Chester Hill Harvest Festival, old-fashioned country fairs with livestock, contests, and activities for children.

The Westfield River, a nationally designated Wild & Scenic River, flows along the Byway in the towns of Chester, Huntington, and Russell. With headwaters in the hilltowns to the north, the Westfield River traverses some of the wildest areas in Massachusetts, as well as cultivated landscapes of maple-shaded farms and historic villages. In the spring, the river attracts hundreds of paddlers from the eastern United States for the excellent whitewater canoeing and kayaking. The Hill and Dale Rapids in Russell is a popular viewing spot for the annual Westfield River Wildwater Races, the longest continuously held whitewater race in the country. During spring flood, when the river is at race level, this section of the Westfield River is a class 3 rapids.

Great River Ride Bicycle Tour is an annual 100-mile tour along the Jacob's Ladder Trail Scenic Byway and through surrounding areas. It is held annually on the Sunday of Columbus Day weekend. For information: 413-562-5237.

Lodging

There are a variety of lodging establishments located along the Byway, including resorts, hotels, motels, inns, bed and breakfast establishments (B&Bs) and campgrounds. A significant majority of these are located in the town of Lee, however, there are a few establishments in Becket, a B&B in Russell, and a campground in Chester. Because much of their business relies on the Berkshire summer tourist season, for many of the lodging establishments visitor attendance is lean during the winter and spring months. Some of them, especially inns and B&Bs, reduce their hours or close completely during these months.

Lee

Jonathan Foote 1778 House B&B is an old farmhouse situated next to stone walls that serves a full breakfast and baked goods in the afternoon. The maple trees on-site offer beautiful fall foliage.

Applegate B&B serves a gourmet breakfast each morning and a variety of wine and cheeses nightly in the formal living room. There are gardens and orchards with walking paths, and the inn also has a heated swimming pool. Applegate is located on West Park Street approximately one-half mile from Main Street.

Hawkmeadow Farm B&B has sunset and mountain views visible from its porch. Guests are also able to interact with the farm's llamas.

Crabtree Cottage B&B has air-conditioned rooms with private baths, televisions, and high-speed Internet. There is also a heated pool. The B&B is located on Franklin Street about one-quarter mile from the heart of Main Street.

Appleton House B&B has four guest rooms, all with private bathrooms. The B&B offers homemade breakfast and dining on the porch or patio. Appleton House is located directly on the Byway.

Oak N' Spruce Resort features a health club, indoor and outdoor pools, miniature golf, lounge games, fitness center, tanning beds, and time shares.

Chambery Inn, is a French-inspired converted schoolhouse with several suites. These rooms all contain fireplaces, whirlpool tubs, and cable TV.

The Inn at Laurel Lake has a porch for sitting, wireless Internet, and massages available on-site. It offers freshly prepared food in the morning and afternoon.

Devonfield Country Inn is located in an 1800s English Style Country House. The house includes a spacious living room, complete with a piano, library, and fireplace, and a television room. A guest pantry is always available for refreshments and includes a refrigerator for use by guests.

Federal House Inn serves freshly prepared baked goods and other items throughout the day. It also provides wireless Internet access.

Historic Merrell Inn is a preserved New England stagecoach inn with a riverside location. Four of the ten rooms have fireplaces; all have private baths.

Morgan House Inn is located along Lee's Main Street, this inn serves contemporary American cuisine. Famous guests have included Ulysses S. Grant and George Bernard Shaw.

America's Best Value Inn has jacuzzis in some rooms.

Pilgrim Inn has an outdoor pool and in-room Jacuzzis.

Rodeway Inn is an affordable choice for business or pleasure stays.

Super 8 Motel rooms have high-speed Internet service and televisions. There is a complementary breakfast and outdoor pool.

Sunset Motel has a pool and features a AAA discount.

Collins Guest House has a complementary breakfast and private baths for each room.

Hoplands Guest House rooms feature many distinctive antiques.

Golden Hill Guest House has a panoramic view of the area. It also includes wireless Internet service.

October Mountain State Forest offers camp sites, including a few select handicapped accessible sites.

Becket

Becket Motel has air-conditioned rooms with Internet service, television, and kitchen appliances. There is an outdoor pool and a playground, as well as grills and picnic tables.

Canterbury Farm Bed and Breakfast has cross-country skiing on well-maintained trails in the Berkshire hills. There are year-round activities and events in the Outdoor Center.

Bonny Rigg Campground has hiking trails and a fishing stream. It also has a pool and game room, and the campground provides entertainment activities including dances and hayrides, as well as cookouts and breakfast on Sundays. The campground is located near the Byway's intersection with Route 8.

Chester

Walker Island Family Campground has a pool, a recreation hall, a store, and laundry facilities. Each site is equipped with running water. The campground is located directly along the Byway.

Russell

Located on General Knox Road, **General Knox House**, has a pastoral setting, with ponds, ducks, geese, horses and goats.

Dining

A wide variety of dining establishments are available along the Byway, from formal restaurants to pizza places and cafés, as well as several fast food restaurants. The majority of all of the restaurants on the Byway are located in downtown Lee; however, there are at least two eateries in each of the other towns. Most of the restaurants feature American fare, but a few offer ethnic flavors, such as Bombay Grill, Pho Saigon Restaurant, and Chez Nous.

Lee

Cranwell Resort, Spa, and Golf Club offers fine dining in the mansion and casual fare in Founder's Grill. Views from the mansion are spectacular.

Cork 'N' Hearth offers fine dining in the dining room, which overlooks Laurel Lake, as well as pub fare in the bar area.

Joe's Diner is an old-fashioned diner which is reputed to have been the one depicted in Norman Rockwell's painting "The Runaway." Joe's carries a comprehensive list of traditional diner fare and is popular among locals, especially on Saturday mornings. Joe's is located directly along the Byway in Downtown Lee, immediately after it turns from Main Street to West Center Street.

The Grind serves coffee, pastries, sandwiches and salads. Homemade pastries and paninis are among the best in the region.

Bombay Bar and Grill offers a balance of both meat and vegetarian and mild and spicy dishes. The weekday lunch buffet and Sunday brunch are especially popular. Bombay Bar and Grill is located directly along the Byway/West Center Street.

Chez Nous is a modern bistro where the menu changes frequently and often makes use of locally grown produce. The restaurant offers a comprehensive wine list and French pastries and other desserts. Chez Nous is located on Route 20 /Main Street in Lee Center.

Sullivan Station is located in an historic railroad depot from the turn of the 20th century. Sullivan Station is still owned and operated by the Sullivan family. The menu includes kid-friendly items, as well as healthy options with fresh ingredients, and there is a deck available for dining. The original ticket window and office safe are preserved. Sullivan Station is located on Railroad Street less than a one-quarter mile from Main Street in Lee.

Salmon Run Fish House is one of the most highly recommended seafood restaurants in the Berkshires. Salmon Run Fish House is located on Route 20/Main Street in Lee Center.

Morgan House Inn, located on Main Street, has served the public continuously since it first opened in 1855 as a stagecoach stop. American fare is offered in the dining room, and there is also a pub menu offered in the tavern.

Arizona Pizza Company is open daily for lunch and dinner. Located in a lovely, restored Victorian home, Arizona Pizza offers outdoor dining, a full bar, and carry-out. Arizona Pizza is located directly on Route 20/Park Street, just before it turns into Main Street.

Cakewalk Bakery is a full-service bakery and café that serves various pastries, as well as lunch offerings and coffee drinks. Custom cakes are available.

Hot Harry's Fresh Burritos serves California-style Mexican for carry-out or eating in and includes a kids' menu.

Juice N' Java is open daily at 6:30 am, and sells an assortment of gourmet and flavored coffees, breakfasts, and toasted sandwiches. Free Internet service is provided.

Locker Room Sports Pub offers family-friendly dining for lunch and dinner.

Moe's Tavern serves a rotating collection of more than 50 craft beers from around the country and has a full pub-style menu. Moe's Tavern is located on Railroad Street less than a one-quarter mile from Main Street in Lee.

Pho Saigon Restaurant is a Vietnamese restaurant that is open for both lunch and dinner. It is located on Railroad Street less than one-quarter mile from Main Street in Lee.

Buckey's Tavern offers pub fare.

Red Apple, located in the downtown shopping center, has Chinese take-out.

Panayiotis Grill & Pizzeria serves Italian and Greek cuisine.

Athena's Restaurant & Pizzeria has classic pizzas and similar offerings.

Rose's Restaurant, a newly opened venue, is located on the Byway on Housatonic Street.

Greenock Country Club offers light fare in the tavern.

Historic Merrill Inn, located on Route 102, in the South Lee Historic District, offers good food in a comfortable setting.

Prime Outlets at Lee has an indoor food court that contains the following restaurants: Orientaste; Villa Pizza; Flamer's; Subway; The Cinnamon Café.

Fast Food Restaurants in Lee include a Friendly's, Subway, McDonald's and Dunkin' Donuts.

Lee Turnpike Rest Areas, one of which serves east-bound and one of which serves west-bound travelers. Each rest area contains fast food, rest rooms, convenience stores, ATMs and fuel. The rest areas are located between exits 1 and 2.

Becket

Jacob's Pillow Café offers fine dining under the tent on the Great Lawn. The Pillow Pub is a full-service restaurant offering casual family fare, takeout, a full bar, and an after-show menu. Jacob's Pillow also includes a coffee bar/ice cream bar. Jacob's Pillow is located in a wooded area on a driveway about one-half mile off the Byway and is open during the summer.

Dream Away Lodge is located on County Road, which connects the Byway to Route 8. The Dream Away offers fine food in an eclectic setting. Music is offered in the sitting room on weekends. Dinner reservations are a must.

Becket Country Store and Café offers coffee, baked goods, or selected convenience items. It is just a two-minute drive north on Route 8 from the intersection of Route 20 and Route 8.

Lake View General Store, nestled next to Robin Hood Lake, sells convenience items and operates a deli with sandwiches made to order. The general store is located at 437 Wells Road, just a mile from the Byway.

Chester

Carm's Restaurant serves soup and sandwiches. It is located directly on the Byway, in the same building as Charlie's gas station.

Pioneer Grill & Pizzeria serves contemporary American fare, burgers, pizza, steak and seafood. Vegetarian friendly soups and salads are also available. Pioneer Grill is located on Main Street, less than a one-quarter mile from the Byway.

Huntington

Huntington Country Store has picnic tables out on the front lawn, with trees to provide shade. This provides an ideal spot to enjoy the store's home-baked goods and gourmet coffees, and ice cream. The store is located on Route 112 about a mile north of the Byway.

Foothills Grill serves meat and fish dishes, which include local and fresh produce, in a down-to-earth atmosphere. The Foothills Grill is located on Route 112 about a one-half mile north of the Byway.

The Hut serves hamburgers and hot dogs and soft-serve ice cream. The Hut is located next to the Foothills Grill on Route 112 about a one-half mile north of the Byway.

Four Main Street Bar and Grill, located next to the Huntington town green, serves creative American fare, ranging from comfort foods to sophisticated entrees. The antiques and old photographs displayed on the walls give the place a sense of local history and make for a warm and inviting atmosphere. Four Main Street is located on Main Street in Huntington right off the Byway.

Russell

Bread Basket Bakery and Shoppe sells fresh baked breads, cookies, cakes, pies, and other pastries. The store also sells canned fruits and vegetables and other gift items. Picnic tables are located on the front lawn.

Russell Inn is a popular, family-friendly restaurant. Russell Inn serves Italian dishes as well as American fare. On the other side of the restaurant, the Inn operates a bar equipped with pool tables and televisions. The Inn also has an ATM.

Information Centers and Wireless Internet Service

There are a few established tourist information centers along the Byway, and these are listed below. Internet availability is dynamic and rapidly increasing along the Byway corridor. It was beyond the scope of this plan to get a detailed inventory of the availability of wireless Internet connections for the long list of tourist attractions and amenities found along the Byway. It is believed that wireless Internet is available in most lodging establishments, at the Lee Outlet Village and at Jacob's Pillow, and in some of the restaurants and shops.

Lee

Lee Information Center is a year-round tourist information booth located at Exit 2 off the Massachusetts Turnpike. Call 413-243-4929. For further information, e-mail info@leechamber.org, or visit www.leechamber.org.



Prime Outlets at Lee has visitor information available on a 24-hour basis and includes dozens of brochures as well as maps of Lee and surrounding towns.

The Lee Information Center provides listings and descriptions of attractions and accommodations to tourists visiting the region. (Photo courtesy: Destination Development)

Lee Chamber of Commerce is located at the corner of Park Street and High Street next to one of the public parking lots. Information is available outside the booth 24 hours a day. Located at 3 Park Place, P.O. Box 345, Lee, MA 01238. Call 413-243-0852, e-mail info@leechamber.org, or visit www.leechamber.org.

Becket

Jacob's Pillow has an indoor information center with dozens of area brochures and maps. Visitors can also read about the mission and history of Jacob's Pillow and view

historical and recent photographs. Jacob's Pillow is located in a wooded area on a driveway about one-half mile off of the Byway.

Chester

Visitor information is also available inside the **Chester Railroad Depot and Museum** during open hours (Saturdays through Tuesdays, July through September, from 11-3). Several area brochures are available. The Station is located at the end of Main Street, with the entrance on Prospect Street.

Online or Phone

As noted in the 2004 *Tourism Marketing Strategy*, the Internet will play an increasing role in how tourists plan their vacations and trips, and thus the Jacob's Ladder Trail Scenic Byway website must continue to evolve and be linked to fellow tourist businesses and organizations. The Jacob's Ladder Trail Scenic Byway, Inc. has recently redesigned and updated its website. The updates were supported with a Tourism Grant from the Massachusetts Turnpike Authority and with time donated by Jacob's Ladder Trail Scenic Byway, Inc. board member Steve Hamlin. The organization has applied for additional funding to further expand the website, but so far these efforts have not been successful.

The Lee Chamber of Commerce has a useful website. Links to all the businesses are active and take visitors directly to the site that interests them. The Berkshire Visitor Bureau's website is a world-class professional site that receives nearly as many hits a year as that of the Massachusetts Office of Travel and Tourism, the state tourism agency. The Greater Springfield Convention and Visitors Bureau also has a useful site, but many of its links were not active in spring of 2009. Thus, visitors must search for the webpage of the attraction or business that interests them.

Greater Springfield Convention and Visitor's Bureau. Serving Massachusetts' Pioneer Valley. www.valleyvisitor.com. Two Locations:

Berkshire Visitors Bureau. 866-444-4028. www.berkshires.org.

Lee Chamber of Commerce. 3 Park Place, P.O. Box 345, Lee, MA 01238. Call 413-243-0852, e-mail info@leechamber.org, or visit www.leechamber.org.

Jacob's Ladder Business Association. P.O. Box 19, Huntington, MA 01050. E-mail JLBusinessAssoc@netscape.net or visit www.jlba.org.

The Hidden Hills of Western Massachusetts. www.hidden-hills.com.

Berkshire/Folkstone Bed & Breakfast Homes. 1-800-762-2751 or 413-731-8785.
www.berkshirebnbhomes.com.

Massachusetts Office of Travel and Tourism. www.massvacation.com.

Gas Stations

There are few gas stations along the Byway; they range from 1 mile to nearly 15 miles apart. Some carry a small selection of groceries and other convenience-type items. The stations are listed below:

- Fourteen gas stations in Lee, many of which also sell convenience items
- Charlie's Garage in Chester (cash only, open limited hours)
- Gallagher's Olde Fashioned Services in Huntington
- Cumberland Farms in Russell, includes convenience items

Public Restrooms

Public restrooms are sparse along the Byway and are altogether absent in the towns of Chester, Huntington and Russell, except in restaurants. Public restrooms are available seasonally on the Jacob's Pillow grounds in Becket. Because of the abundance of gas stations/convenience stores along the commercial strip outside of downtown Lee, there are many public restrooms available in that area. They are also available at the Lee Outlets. The Lee Memorial Town Hall and library offer public restrooms during normal operating hours.

Banks/ATMs

Lee

Banks or ATMs can be found at the Lee Prime Outlets and at six locations in Downtown Lee.

Huntington

An ATM is available at the United Bank in Huntington. The bank is located directly on the Byway.

Russell

There is an ATM at the Russell Inn and Restaurant, located in the bar section on the left side of the building.

Country Stores and Gift Shops

Country stores and gift shops, with their unique offerings and local character, are an integral element of the tourism economy of the region. These establishments along the

Byway sell various locally-made products, antiques and other items typical in a rural New England setting. Country stores offer some prepared foods as well.

Lee

Prime Outlets at Lee have more than 60 shops, most of which are name brands. However, the village includes gift and specialty shops, such as: Aficionados Specialty Food, Wine and Cigars; Borders Outlet; Claire's Boutique; Fragrance Outlet; Harry and David; Hodge Podge Candy; JazzySadie's Polish Pottery; KB Toy Outlet; Mikasa Always Entertaining.

Karen Keenan Gifts & Home, located in a restored mid-century home, has an inviting atmosphere with seasonal candles and potpourri. Karen's carries well-known brands such as Crabtree & Evelyn along with lesser-known ones, and also offers complementary gift wrapping.

Berkshire Soul and Spirit Center sells jewelry, fair trade crafts, candles and incense, and books and CDs.

Retro Pop Shop is an antique store with a large selection of 1950s and 60s advertisements and other memorabilia.

Zabian's Jewelers specializes in fine jewelry and watches. It is Berkshire County's largest jeweler and is located in the heart of downtown.

Barrington Coffee Roasters sells many different varieties of coffee. Customers can view the coffee roasting process and visit the tasting room.

Soul Spa offers massage, exfoliation therapies, baths, and other skin and body treatments. The spa is located in downtown Lee.

Orchids Etc. of Lee. carries a full line of cut flowers and plants.

Paperdilly sells office supplies and also offers picture framing services.

Pumpkin Patch specializes in hand-made quilts and quilting equipment, as well as other country crafts.

Hats and Jewels and Wares and What-nots is an antique and novelty shop, located next to Joe's Diner. A must stop for those interested in nostalgic settings and items.

Becket

Jacob's Pillow is home to the summer-long Dance Festival, considered to be one of the best dance festivals in the world. In addition to performances, Jacob's Pillow offers many secondary attractions and amenities, including the Pillow Store, which offers gifts and souvenirs.

Chester

The Village Shoppe contains a variety of items, both useful and decorative. It also provides brochures and information on local attractions. It is located on Main Street in Chester about one-quarter mile from the Byway.

Pease Clothing Store, on Main Street, sells a wide selection of clothing, and is a particularly good destination for rugged outdoor clothes at reasonable prices. Other small gifts are also available.

Huntington

Huntington Country Store is stocked with country goods, gourmet chocolates and candy, stocking stuffers, jewelry, windchimes, baskets, Christmas ornaments and cards, toys, pewter figurines, kitchen gadgets and pottery. It also has picnic tables on the premises. The store provides local brochures and travel information. The store is located on Route 112 about one mile north of the Byway.

Trolley Line Gift and Floral Shop, located on the Byway in Huntington Village, features country gifts as well as fresh flower arrangements and gift cards.

Gateway Farm and Pet sells bird houses and other items appropriate for gifts. In addition, its 20-plus-foot time and temperature clock is a trail landmark. It is located directly on the Byway, outside of the town center.

Russell

Bread Basket Bakery and Shoppe sells fresh baked goods suitable for special occasions or gifts.

Small Grocery or Convenience Stores

Groceries and convenience items are available at many locations along the Byway, some as part of gas stations.

Lee

Clover's Organic Market sells health and diet foods, as well as vitamins and supplements.

Various Convenience Stores in Lee include O'Connell Convenience Plus & Lee Mobil, which are two out of a handful of convenience stores along the commercial strip between the Massachusetts Turnpike exit and downtown Lee.

Becket

Berkshire Berries offers homemade jellies and maple syrup. Fruit and syrup are locally grown and harvested.

Becket Country Store and Café offers coffee, baked goods, or selected convenience items. It is just a two-minute drive from the intersection of Route 20 and Route 8.

Lake View General Store, another two-minute drive from the Byway, sells convenience items and operates a deli with prepared sandwiches. The general store is located at 437 Wells Road, just a mile from the Byway.

Chester

A&L Meat and Grocery sells deli-sliced meats and a variety of grocery items. A&L is located on Main Street, less than one-quarter mile from the Byway.

Pease General Store, located on the Byway near Chester Village, offers essential items and has a lunch counter with both hot and cold items.

Huntington

Moltenbrey's Market carries a variety of items and has a deli that provides a wide selection of cheeses and meats such as home-made kielbasa and custom cuts of beef and pork. Fresh seafood is shipped in every Thursday. Moltenbrey's also offers fresh baked goods and hot prepared meals with weekly specials. Moltenbrey's is located on Route 112 about one mile north of the Byway.

B&D Variety is a large convenience store with hot coffee, fishing supplies and fax service. B&D Variety is located on Route 112 about a one-half mile north of the Byway.

Russell

Cumberland Farms sells a variety of convenience items.

Turnouts, Overlooks and Picnic Areas

Lee

Picnicking is allowed at the **Lee Town Park**, where there are several benches. The park is located at the intersection of Park Street and Main Street in downtown Lee.

Prime Outlets at Lee has a picnic table overlooking the surrounding hills, located next to the main parking lot on the site.

The Lee turn-out and an Appalachian Trail parking area and trailhead are located 6.6 miles east of the Lee/Lenox border. The site provides interpretive signage about the town of Lee, the Appalachian Trail, and the Jacob's Ladder Trail Scenic Byway.

Becket

Becket offers two turnouts with interpretive signage, **The Summit** and **Jacob's Well**. These signs describe the history of the Byway and the importance of the sites in that history.

The grounds of **Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival** are open to visitors during the summer season, and a number of picnic spots are available. There is interpretive signage with information on the festival and site.

Chester

Located 3.1 miles east of the Becket/Chester town line, the **Chester turn-out** provides interpretive signage and views across the Westfield River of rolling hills characteristic of the Byway. It is also possible to walk down to the river from this location.

A picnic area is located at the trailhead to the **Boulder Park handicap accessible trail**, which is on the Byway 6.3 miles east of the Becket/Chester town line. An interpretive sign shows a map of the trail and explanations of some natural features. Public parking is available.

Hampden Park has a picnic area and access to Walker Brook. It is located on Hampden Street in Chester, and there is public parking available.

Huntington

Huntington's turn-out, like those of the other towns, has an interpretive sign on the history of the town. It is located on the Byway 1.1 miles east of the intersection of Route 20 and Route 112, and public parking is available.

Customers can picnic on tables at the **Huntington Country Store**. The store is located on Route 112 about one mile north of the Byway.

Russell

Visitors can view the scenic Westfield River from the **Russell turn-out**, located 0.6 miles east of the Huntington/Russell town line. There is an interpretive sign about the town's

history here, as well as public parking. There is also a dirt path leading down to the banks of the river.

A **second pullover**, located immediately after the turn-out at 0.7 miles east of the Huntington/Russell town line, has a picnic area and an overlook of the river, as well as public parking. An interpretive sign describes the history of the Westfield River and its designation as a National Wild & Scenic River.

Other Public Parking

The inventory shows an abundance of public parking along the rural, woodland corridor sections of the Byway. Most of this parking is underutilized, likely because most of these sites revolve around a single viewshed or other natural attraction, or a single interpretive sign on local history. Conversely, public parking could be made more abundant and improved in some of the Byway's more developed areas where there are many businesses of interest to tourists.

Lee

Public parking is available in two designated public parking lots in downtown Lee, one off of Park Street and one on Consolati Way, one block west of Main Street. It is difficult to find available parking spaces at the town park during the busy summer months when tourism is highest. Activity is high at the town park, because this is an attractive sight for travelers who have just exited the Massachusetts Turnpike and it is where the tourist information booth is located. Lack of readily available parking spaces could inhibit the town's desire to increase tourist visitorship in the town center.

Additional parking is available at the Lee Outlets, located directly on the Byway. A seasonal tourist trolley car shuttles people between the Outlet Village, where there is ample parking, to the downtown area. Ridership on the trolley has increased in recent years, but it has not yet reached capacity. Trailhead parking is available at the Appalachian Trail crossing, but this parking lot is small and can be full during summer months.

Becket

Public parking is available directly on the Byway at the Becket turn-out, described above.

Russell

Public parking is available at the Russell turn-out. A second pullover, located immediately after the first, also has public parking. Parking is also available along Main Street.

Chester

Public parking is available at the trailhead to the Boulder Park handicapped accessible trail and at the Chester turn-out. One can also find parking near shops on Main Street, just off of the Byway, and across from the town hall on Middlefield Road, which intersects the Byway.

Huntington

Public parking is available at the Huntington turn-out and in the town center off of the Byway (behind the Huntington Liquor Store). There is also parking along most of Main Street, including behind the town offices.

Marketing and Economic Development Efforts

Since the 1992 designation of the Jacob's Ladder Trail as a scenic byway, and the development of its first corridor management plan, a variety of marketing and economic development planning efforts have been undertaken by the Jacobs Ladder Trail Scenic Byway, Inc. steering committee and the Pioneer Valley and Berkshire County regional planning agencies. (Table 7-2 provides a listing of these projects. Also see Appendix F for a detailed history of marketing and economic development planning efforts.)

In 1994, a Jacob's Ladder Trail logo was developed and was used on a set of roadside identification signs, as well as in the first trail-wide brochure that was developed the following year. Several other marketing products were developed during the 1990s:

- a bicycle and car touring guidebook;
- Discover Jacob's Ladder Trail brochure on recreational opportunities, cultural events and seasonal festivals along the Byway;
- antique postcard reproductions;
- off-road bicycle and multi-use trail maps;
- and an educational video; and
- five turnouts with interpretive signage, one in each town.

Several planning projects also made recommendations for future marketing and economic development efforts. A *Development Guidebook* includes recommendations for signage and for zoning bylaws that encourage appropriate commercial development, and a *Vegetation Management Plan* provides designs for visitor facilities and for the enhancement of the curb appeal of local businesses.

In the early 2000s, a single major marketing and educational project was completed: the *Jacob's Ladder Trail: From Wilderness to Scenic Byway* mobile exhibit and brochure. The mobile exhibit was set up in four locations over the next several years, including the Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival, the Chester Railroad Depot and Museum, the Lee Corporate Center, and the William C. Sullivan Visitors Information Center in Springfield. Meanwhile, several Byway enhancement projects moved forward, including park design, trail development and land protection.

As mentioned at the start of this chapter, in 2004, the first marketing study was done for the Jacob's Ladder Trail Scenic Byway. Prepared by Destination Development, Inc., the *Jacob's Ladder Trail Scenic Byway Tourism Marketing Strategy* includes a comprehensive assessment of the Byway experience, including scenic aspects, visitor amenities and attractions. The *Tourism Marketing Strategy* provides a list of detailed recommendations for future marketing efforts, and the status of each of these items is outlined below. One of the most significant recommendations was to shorten the Byway's name slightly for

marketing purposes, to “Jacob’s Ladder Scenic Byway.” This has not been fully implemented as of yet.

Since the completion of the 2004 *Tourism Marketing Strategy*, a Jacob’s Ladder Trail Scenic Byway website and press kit have been developed (two major recommendations of the study). The press kit and website are the first marketing materials to use the teaser “The Seven Hidden Gems of the Berkshire Foothills,” followed by the positioning statement “along Jacob’s Ladder Scenic Byway,” recommended by the *Tourism Marketing Strategy* as the primary branding language for the Byway.

Table 7-2: Jacob’s Ladder Trail Scenic Byway Marketing Products

1994	Jacob’s Ladder Trail Logo and Highway Identification Signs
1994	<i>Touring Jacob’s Ladder Trail by Bicycle or Car</i> guidebook
1996	“Discover Jacob’s Ladder Trail” Brochure
1998	Antique Postcard Reproductions
1999	Off-Road Bicycle & Multi-Use Trail Maps (eastern & western regions)
1999	Educational Video
2002	Mobile Exhibit and Brochure
2005	Website
2005	Press Kit

Three new marketing projects have been funded in the past several years, although contracts have not been finalized for implementation. The first project entails interpretive signage and wayfinding to address the *Tourism Marketing Strategy’s* suggestions to update the existing roadside signage, implement a signage program to direct visitors to the Byway and its attractions, and greatly expand and redesign interpretive signage. As part of this project, directional information will lead Massachusetts Turnpike travelers to the Jacob’s Ladder Trail Scenic Byway in Lee and Westfield and will draw Berkshires tourists from Lenox and Stockbridge. Directional signage to recreational, historic and cultural sites on the Byway will then further help travelers on their way. Once on the Byway, the road itself will be identified with new signage every two miles in each direction, and a number of new interpretive signs will be placed at the most significant and popular sites along the Byway. Finally, an activities guide will be created that will serve as a comprehensive resource for visitors.

The second project, the Jacob’s Ladder Trail Scenic Byway Marketing Implementation Project will complete six of the 25 marketing recommendations in the 2004 *Tourism Marketing Strategy*, including:

- getting recognition on other organizations’ maps and marketing materials;
- local interpretive materials distribution programs;
- regional interpretive materials distribution programs;

- implementation of a public relations and partnership program;
- implementation of visitor assessment suggestions; and
- creation of a brochure, bookmark, poster and tear-off map.

The third project is a Western Massachusetts Byways Promotional Campaign to create an integrated marketing program for all of Western Massachusetts scenic byways, which include the Jacob's Ladder Trail Scenic Byway, Route 112 Scenic Byway, Mount Greylock Scenic Byway, Mohawk Trail Scenic Byway, and the Connecticut River Scenic Byway. It will create a single tourism brand or theme for the five byways, develop a standardized and searchable inventory of the byways' assets, create and install a wayfinding sign program, develop a strategic marketing and promotional campaign, and design and produce maps and brochures. An additional byway was recently designated in this area as well – the Route 116 Scenic Byway – and may be included in these marketing efforts.

The 2004 Tourism Marketing Strategy

The 2004 *Tourism Marketing Strategy* is extremely comprehensive and should be consulted for additional background and guidance when implementing marketing projects. In developing the *Tourism Marketing Strategy*, Destination Development first conducted a visitor/tourist assessment of the Byway, providing a set of photographs focused on “trouble spots” as well as positive examples and a series of suggestions for how to improve conditions along the route. This assessment was presented to residents, businesses and other stakeholders along the Byway in the fall of 2004. Subsequently, a set of 25 recommendations was formulated to set forth a long-term strategic marketing plan. The recommendations were grouped by the following objectives: Visibility, Attractions and Lures, Branding Initiatives, Product Development, and Marketing. Here, each of the recommendations is reviewed to assess its current status. Each of the recommendations is reviewed here to assess its current status.

Visibility

The marketing study found that 19 out of 20 local residents and workers approached along the Byway are not aware of what or where the Byway is. Nearly all travelers along the Byway, estimated at 1.8 million per year, are unaware of it while driving it. A number of efforts suggested in the *Tourism Marketing Strategy* will spread awareness of the Byway among residents and workers in the region, as well as those passing through. Some of the initiatives in the plan will help to pull travelers off the Massachusetts Turnpike, via exits two or three, as they go through the area. A small number of other efforts will target Byway enthusiast niche groups nationwide through web-based marketing and related magazines. Table 7-3 describes the recommendations regarding visibility and the status of implementing each recommendation.

Table 7-3: Status of 2004 Tourism Marketing Strategy Recommendations on Visibility

2004 Marketing Strategy Recommendations - VISIBILITY	Status
<p>1) Gateway, Signage and Wayfinding Plan A gateway, signage, and wayfinding plan should be created, via a partnership between the Jacob's Ladder Trail Scenic Byway, Inc., and MassHighway and the MassTurnpike Authority. Professional services (a firm with tourism development expertise) should be retained to provide designs and construction and fabrication drawings for the entire signage program. This work would include exact locations for each sign, design of each sign, including an overall theme and exact wording, fabrication and installation costs, request for bid documents, and phasing and funding solutions.</p>	Not yet accomplished. A National Scenic Byway program grant has been obtained to complete a Jacob's Ladder Trail Scenic Byway interpretive signage and wayfinding project. The grant was awarded in FY06 but is not yet under contract with MassHighway.
<p>2) Name Change for Signage, Recall, and Visibility The official name, "Jacob's Ladder Trail Scenic Byway" should be shortened to "Jacob's Ladder Scenic Byway" when used on signage and in marketing titles and headers.</p>	√ - The shorter name has been used on the website and in all marketing materials developed since the report, but efforts must continue. One issue is that the legally established name of the advisory committee includes the word "trail," the Jacob's Ladder Trail Scenic Byway, Inc.
<p>3) Massachusetts Turnpike Signage The Byway needs to be identified on two Massachusetts Turnpike signs, in each direction, prior to exits two and three. Additionally, Jacob's Pillow should be identified on one sign in each direction, prior to the two exits.</p>	This has not yet been accomplished. It is intended to be part of the wayfinding plan.
<p>4) Gateways at Russell and Lee (part of the Wayfinding Plan) The towns of Lee and Russell anchor the "gateways" to the Byway. At each location prominent decorative signage should be developed on both sides of the roadway, creating a physical gateway to the Byway. The signs should be in keeping with overall signage design standards that would be created as part of the gateway, signage and wayfinding plan.</p>	Not yet accomplished. Existing gateway signs are serving this function, although they are not integrated with a signage plan, not particularly decorative, and are only on one side of the road.
<p>5) Identification Signage Along Route 20 Current Jacob's Ladder Trail Scenic Byway signage should be replaced with decorative, readable signage along the route.</p>	Not yet accomplished. Intended to be part of the wayfinding plan.
<p>6) Route Signage Where Highways Intersect Byway;</p>	Not yet accomplished. Intended to be part

<p>Additional Signage Identifying Attractions, Historical Markers and Waterways State highways 8 and 112 (now a scenic byway itself), along with several country roads, intersect Route 20 at different locations. At each of these primary intersections, decorative signage should be placed identifying the Byway. Additionally, signage needs to be placed to identify historical markers, interpretive sites, visitor information and amenities, and “hidden gems” unique to the Byway.</p>	of the wayfinding plan.
<p>7) Recognition on State and Regional Maps and Other Marketing Materials Jacob’s Ladder Trail Scenic Byway should be noted on state and regional maps as well as on brochures put out by other organizations and tourist bureaus. Work with the various mapping organizations, visitor bureaus, and publishers to highlight or note the Byway on maps of the area. Additionally, create a digital map of the region including the Byway. This map, in various editable formats, would be available for use by other organizations.</p>	<p>A fiscal year 2007 National Scenic Byway program grant for marketing implementation was awarded for a variety of marketing initiatives, including working with various parties to have the Jacob’s Ladder Trail Scenic Byway identified and highlighted on state and regional maps and tourism marketing materials. √ - A digital map in two editable formats has been created and included as part of a press kit and on the Jacob’s Ladder Trail Scenic Byway website. This map will be updated and improved to better meet the marketing plan’s recommendations.</p>
<p>8) Identification on Scenic Byway and Other Existing Websites While the previous recommendation was geared to get the Byway noted on physical maps of the area in printed materials, this recommendation takes it a step further: working with websites around the country that showcase scenic byways as well as other marketing sites that promote nearby attractions. Also provide written text and photography.</p>	<p>This will be included in the fiscal year 2007 marketing implementation grant. A map has been created and will be updated, and written materials and photography have been generated and can be sent to various organizations for inclusion on their websites.</p>
<p>9) Brochure Distribution Program (Phase I – local) Purchase single and multi-tiered brochure holders and distribute these to key locations in the region. Stock with brochures as indicated in <i>Tourism Marketing Strategy</i>.</p>	<p>This project is included in the fiscal year 2007 marketing implementation grant.</p>

Attractions, Lures, and Diversions

The 2004 *Tourism Marketing Strategy* pointed out that visitors are drawn to specific activities, things to see and do, when planning a trip to an area. These activities need to be unique and need to be promoted specifically. The top “lures” to the Byway, things

that make taking the route worth a special trip, include Jacob's Pillow, as the "anchor tenant," the Prime Outlets in Lee, and the quintessential towns that make up the Byway. As the *Tourism Marketing Strategy* points out, scenic drives do not generate visitor spending in themselves. Rather it is the people, the shops, and the ambience of the five towns that make the Jacob's Ladder Trail Scenic Byway unique. This is what needs to be promoted as a primary lure to the area alongside Jacob's Pillow and the outlet mall. Table 7-4 describes the recommendations regarding attractions, lures, and diversions and the status of implementing each recommendation.

Table 7-4: Status of 2004 Tourism Marketing Strategy Recommendations on Attractions, Lures, and Diversions

2004 Marketing Strategy Recommendations – ATTRactions, LURES AND DIVERSIONS	Status
<p>10) Marketing Theme – The Seven Hidden Gems of the Berkshire Foothills In marketing the Byway the focus should not be on the road itself, but on what the area has to offer that sets it apart from other rural towns with scenic vistas in the Northeast. The lure should be "The Seven Hidden Gems of the Berkshire Foothills." Visitors will always want to know what the "hidden gems" are. That will create a lure to get potential customers to look further or read on. Whenever this headline or teaser is used, it should be followed by the tagline, "along Jacob's Ladder Scenic Byway."</p>	<p>√ - Accomplished. This theme and tagline (together known as a "positioning statement") have been incorporated into the recently developed website and press kit and will be used in any new marketing materials.</p>
<p>11) Primary Lures to the Scenic Byway Even among the "Seven Hidden Gems" there needs to be an anchor tenant, in this case, Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival. Jacob's Pillow is a world-class attraction that should be at the forefront of all marketing efforts. Being "the home to the world-renowned Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival" should be used in all marketing materials and in the opening paragraph of all professionally produced brochures. Also, Prime Outlets in Lee and the five rural towns and their hidden gems are primary lures.</p>	<p>Not yet accomplished. This should be incorporated into the website and any updates to the press kit. It should also be incorporated into any new marketing materials developed under the fiscal year 2007 marketing implementation program.</p>
<p>12) Diversions and Secondary Activities Diversions and secondary activities need to be promoted individually. While the primary activities are the drawing card, diversions are where the most money is spent. This includes dining, shopping, bike, boat or snowmobile rentals, and lodging. Promote these elements via a quality website, keeping the entries up to date. Do not use generic phrases; always promote specifics.</p>	<p>This has been done to some degree. The website, press kit and other materials promote many individual attractions, including some shopping places, cultural/historical attractions, and outdoor recreational attractions. However, more information could be provided on shopping opportunities, dining, and lodging.</p>

Branding Initiatives

Branding recommendations and the status in accomplishing each recommendation are described in Table 7-5.

Table 7-5: Status of 2004 Tourism Marketing Strategy Recommendations on Branding Initiatives

2004 Marketing Strategy Recommendations – BRANDING	Status
<p>13) New Scenic Byway Logo A new logo needs to be developed that will effectively promote the area and will be usable in all forms of media: signage, on business cards and stationery, in ads, on the Internet, etc. The logo should fit the ambiance of the area, should be simple, yet unique to Jacob’s Ladder Trail Scenic Byway.</p>	Not yet accomplished. This will be part of the fiscal year 2006 wayfinding project.
<p>14) Simplification of Marketing Efforts The marketing efforts for the region are confusing and include a lot of duplication of effort. These efforts need to be simplified. A number of different organizations are marketing the region using different names and covering different geographic areas. These organizations include Jacob’s Ladder Trail Scenic Byway, Inc., the Jacob’s Ladder Business Association, and Greater Springfield Convention and Visitor’s Bureau, using the names Jacob’s Ladder Trail, the Pioneer Valley, and the Hidden Hills of Western Massachusetts.</p>	Not yet accomplished.

Product Development Initiatives

Table 7-6 describes the recommendations regarding product development initiatives and the status of implementing each such recommendation in the 2004 *Tourism Marketing Strategy*. Other product recommendations were included under the “Marketing” category and include an activities guide, press kit, bookmark, poster, and tear-off map (see below).

Table 7-6: Status of 2004 Tourism Marketing Strategy Recommendations on Product Development Initiatives

2004 Marketing Strategy Recommendations – PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT	Status
<p>15) Information Gazebos in Each Community Each of the Byway communities, except Lee, has a roadside pull-off area, ideal for visitor information services. Each of these areas should be home to a visitor information gazebo complete with visitor information, along the line of the gazebo developed in Beatty, Nevada (pictured in the <i>Tourism Marketing Strategy</i>). Huntington has a gazebo that could be duplicated in other communities. However, it should have four-sided information panels plus brochure distribution holders. Each location also needs to develop a “visitor information” sign.</p>	Not yet accomplished.
<p>16) New Interpretive Signage Design and Priority Locations Design, fabricate and install interpretive signage at 12 locations and replace existing interpretive signs over the next 3 years.</p>	Not yet accomplished. However, the fiscal year 2006 interpretive signage and wayfinding project will provide for the development of a set of interpretive signs at key locations.

Marketing

The *Tourism Marketing Strategy* strongly suggests that marketing of Jacob’s Ladder Trail Scenic Byway be made part of a larger, regional effort to raise awareness of all five scenic byways in Western Massachusetts. Jacob’s Ladder Trail Scenic Byway does not host enough attractions of wide public interest to make it a two- or multi-day destination for many visitors. However, when combined with the attractions of nearby scenic byways, the region could become more of a weekend getaway destination. Regional marketing efforts should be targeted primarily to raise the visibility of the Byway through improved signage, an increased Internet presence, and other efforts.

The marketing program recommended by the 2004 *Marketing Tourism Strategy* is described in table 7-7 along with an indication of the status of implementing each recommendation.

Table 7-7: Status of 2004 Tourism Marketing Strategy Recommendations on Marketing

2004 Marketing Strategy Recommendations – MARKETING	Status
<p>17) New Website Creation Sixty-eight percent of all households now have Internet access and of these, a full 94 percent use the Internet as their primary travel resource. It is critical to have a website that can be easily found, and provides all the necessary information a customer needs to make a decision, draws potential customers into the site, and effectively closes the sale.</p>	<p>√ - A website has been created, with a Tourism grant from the Massachusetts Turnpike Authority. However, not all of the recommendations in the tourism marketing strategy have been incorporated, including the recommendation that there be continuity between the web site, an e-marketing program, and printed marketing materials. A follow-up grant application has been submitted to the Massachusetts Turnpike Authority.</p>
<p>18) Internet e-marketing program Once the new website has been developed it should include a “request for information” forms page that allows potential visitors to request additional information. It should also develop an e-marketing program and database, whereby a website visitor signs up for periodic newsletters, tailored to their interests.</p>	<p>Not yet accomplished.</p>
<p>19) Keyword Listings, Visibility and Links Keyword listings should be purchased on the major search engines – Yahoo, Google, AltaVista, AOL and Lycos.</p>	<p>√ - Have done work to improve the visibility of the website, including submitting the URL to the major search engines and soliciting reciprocal links. Have not had budget to purchase keyword listings.</p>
<p>20) Creation of an Activities Guide Next to a new website, the activities guide will be the most important marketing piece developed as part of this program. It will be a 4”x 9” booklet with approximately 36 pages and be professionally produced. The activities guide and website designs should mirror one another for continuity.</p>	<p>Not yet accomplished. This project will be completed as part of the fiscal year 2006 interpretive signage and wayfinding project.</p>
<p>21) Brochure Distribution Program (<i>Phase II – regional</i>) Once a new activities guide has been created and printed, a brochure distribution program should take place that includes major market regions such as the Albany area, all of Western Massachusetts, and even into Boston. This will require the services of brochure distribution companies.</p>	<p>This project is included in the fiscal year 2007 marketing implementation project.</p>
<p>22) Development of Press Kit and Photo Library</p>	<p>√ - Accomplished. The website also uses</p>

2004 Marketing Strategy Recommendations – MARKETING	Status
A press kit is a vital link in implementing a quality publicity program. It should include a presentation folder, pre-written pieces, letterhead, and a sample photo sheet. This material can also be used for the website and activities guide.	the press kit materials. The new activities guide can also make use of these materials and updates to them.
23) Public Relations and Partnership Program Establish marketing partnerships with the Greater Springfield Convention and Visitors Bureau and the Berkshire Visitors Bureau. The principal goal will be to identify and attract appropriate niche groups to the Byway.	This will be part of the fiscal year 2007 marketing implementation project.
24) Bookmark, Poster, and Tear-Off Map This should include the creation of a full-color glossy bookmark, a 17" x 24" full-color poster, and tear-off maps with side trips up to 10 miles away.	This will be part of the fiscal year 2007 marketing implementation project.
25) Assessment Suggestions Implementation The visitor assessment performed by the marketing consultant and included in the 2004 <i>Tourism Marketing Strategy</i> provided numerous suggestions for both private businesses and the communities. These suggestions should be implemented where possible.	This will be part of the fiscal year 2007 marketing implementation project.

Findings

It has been nearly five years since the marketing firm Destination Development completed the 2004 *Tourism Marketing Strategy*. This is an ideal time to assess progress and re-evaluate needs and goals. Over the past five years, many of Destination Development's recommendations have either been implemented or incorporated into successful funding applications. However, it will be several more years before all of these grant-funded projects are completed. There are also several recommendations that have not yet been addressed.

As stated at the beginning of this chapter, the *JLT Visitor/Tourism Assessment* had offered three general guidelines for tourist destinations:

1. You must have attractions to convince visitors to spend at least one night.

Finding: The Jacob's Ladder Trail Scenic Byway corridor has a few major tourist attractions, namely the Jacob's Pillow, the Lee Outlets and collectively the scattered camping venues, which have a fair number of campsites. If the attractions and

amenities within the boundaries of the five Byway communities are included, especially the campgrounds and outdoor recreational facilities, the likelihood of overnight visitorship is increased. As seen in this chapter's inventory, there are numerous and diverse lodging and dining facilities in the region, although the majority of these are clustered in the town of Lee. With the exception of the Cranwell Resort Spa and Golf Club, however, none of them are of a stature to be attractions on their own. This assessment reaffirms the recommendation to continue to link the Jacob's Ladder Trail Scenic Byway as an extension of the Berkshires or to neighboring scenic byways. It would be beneficial too to promote the Byway as extension of the Pioneer Valley region.

2. You must have attractions and amenities to keep visitors busy four times longer than it takes to arrive to the Byway region, which for the Jacob's Ladder Trial Scenic Byway should be enough to entertain them for at least one full day.

Finding: Although the Byway towns do offer a mix of attractions and amenities, including entertainment, shopping and outdoor recreation, there has been to date no effort to package these into a marketable product that would convince visitors to plan an overnight stay.

3. You should have a critical mass of shops and/or restaurants to support pedestrian-oriented visitorship.

Finding: The only critical mass of pedestrian-oriented activities is in the town of Lee.

Other findings based on the inventory and analysis in this chapter include:

- The intersection of the new Route 112 Scenic Byway with the Jacob's Ladder Trail Scenic Byway in Huntington Village provides an opportunity to cross-promote the two byways within the region.
- The Byway suffers from a slow "off-season" in winter and spring, yet the region has some tremendous winter recreational opportunities that are as of yet unheralded.
- Most existing and planned marketing pieces have focused on the full length of the Byway and a wide range of experiences along it. Reaching out to niche markets as the 2004 *Tourism Marketing Strategy* recommends will be necessary to tailor marketing to certain sectors. This could be accomplished through themed travel itineraries and brochures.
- Despite some improvement in visibility, the Jacob's Ladder Trail Scenic Byway is still unknown to many local residents and visitors.

- Jacob's Ladder Trail Scenic Byway, Inc. and Jacob's Ladder Business Association are in a position to actively recruit new commercial development. They have an intimate knowledge of the area and the opportunities available.
- Especially at the western end of the Byway, travelers do not usually know what is on the other end of the Jacob's Ladder Trail Scenic Byway.
- The area does not have many attractions, or combinations of attractions, that can sustain an overnight or weekend trip. However, the Byway is now linked to three other Western Massachusetts byways via the Route 112 Scenic Byway. This linkage provides an array of opportunities, including the expanded list of attractions and amenities that the 2004 marketing strategy stated was needed for overnight stays.
- Food service, gas stations, public restrooms and other amenities are sparse along most of the Byway, especially in Russell, Chester, and Becket
- Curb appeal is lacking for many businesses along the Byway. Many businesses are completely unaware of the image they are projecting to the public.
- A number of sites along the Byway are underused by tourists and visitors, due to lack of knowledge, difficult access, or misperception about potential uses.
- Downtown Lee has the greatest density of tourist amenities and necessities, including a tourist informational booth, but it is difficult to find public parking during the busy summer and fall tourist seasons.

Recommendations

Recommendations for marketing and economic development efforts described here follow up on the 2004 *Tourism Marketing Strategy* and take into account current conditions and funding opportunities. Recommendations are based on an analysis of the inventory of attractions and traveler amenities, the *Tourism Marketing Strategy*, and "best practices" identified in a number of other programs and studies. The latter include: the National Trust's "Main Street" Program, *Trail Towns: Capturing Trail-Based Tourism, A Guide for Communities in Pennsylvania*, by the Allegheny Trail Alliance, the *Pennsylvania Downtown Center Canal Town Report* for Hollidaysburg, Pennsylvania, the

Turquoise Trail Corridor Management Plan (New Mexico), the Mohawk Trail Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan (MA), Route 112 Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan (MA), Mount Greylock Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan (MA), and the Rangeley Lakes Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan (Maine).

Recommendations
Participate in developing the Western Massachusetts scenic byway website to highlight important recreational and cultural resources and tourism support services within the Byway corridor. Also provide potential connections to other scenic byways, and link to other websites with information about attractions in the region. This should include improving the effectiveness of the Jacob's Ladder Trail Scenic Byway website, by adding downloadable tourist documents and maps.
Promote diversions and secondary activities such as dining, shopping, recreational equipment rentals and lodging— via the website and the activities guide. Also, provide opportunities for local businesses to promote themselves, through the Byway website and other marketing initiatives.
As visitorship grows, promote lodging along the Byway beyond Lee and encourage additional facilities, especially Bed and Breakfasts, which retain the rural character of the area, support local residents, and can adapt to seasonal variations.
Cross-promote the Jacob's Ladder Trail Scenic Byway with the Route 112 Scenic Byway, along which is located one of the "Seven Hidden Gems," the Huntington Country Store.
Develop themed travel itineraries and brochures. The most prominent themes for the Jacob's Ladder Scenic Byway are: outdoor recreation, heritage (including railroad history), railroad theme (by itself), arts and culture, and shopping (ranging from outlet mall to New England country stores and antique, crafts, and gift shops). Work with area businesses and non-profit organizations to develop cooperative travel packages. Make package information and brochures available on the Byway website.
In conjunction with the new, more visible signage, prepare a series of informational articles, or encourage local journalists or other writers to do so, describing and illustrating the themes of the heritage landscape, railroad history, arts and culture, outdoor recreation, and New England shopping along the Byway. Establish cooperative marketing relationships for development and publication of these articles, i.e. with major cultural attractions, visitor's bureaus, and park management agencies. Distribute these articles to regional and national travel writers as resources for newspaper and magazine articles about the Jacob's Ladder Trail Scenic Byway. This is related to the <i>Tourism Marketing Strategy's</i> suggestions to reach out to niche groups and to cultivate press relations.
Foster a spirit of cooperative enterprise among Byway business owners by conducting ongoing educational and marketing seminars on signage, landscaping, window displays, hours of operation, customer service (as it pertains to knowledge of the town and Byway), other businesses along the Byway and how to collaborate in cross-promoting of businesses, and directing travelers to nearby amenities.
Display information about attractions and events in Becket and Lee at information centers in Chester, Huntington and Russell, and promote attractions throughout the Byway at the Lee Visitors Center and Prime Outlets.
Highlight Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival as the Byway's foremost attraction, with the wording "home of the world-renowned Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival" in all marketing materials, in the

Recommendations
opening paragraph of all brochures, and on the website (Recommendation #11 in the <i>2004 Tourism Marketing Strategy</i>).
Clarify and simplify distinctions between the Jacob's Ladder Trail Scenic Byway, the Jacob's Ladder Business Association, the Hidden Hills of Western Massachusetts, and the Pioneer Valley (the latter used by Greater Springfield Convention and Visitors' Bureau to include the Jacob's Ladder area. (Recommendation #14 from the <i>2004 Tourism Marketing Strategy</i>)
Build on the relationship with the region's visitor's bureaus and take full advantage of the opportunities to promote the Byway through Jacob's Ladder Trail Scenic Byway, Inc. membership in these organizations (provided there is funding available). The tourism agencies may provide a way to implement an e-marketing program. (Recommendation #16 from the <i>2004 Tourism Marketing Strategy</i>).
Inform any consultants working on Byway projects of the primary lures and "Seven Hidden Gems" as the Interpretive Signage and Wayfinding Project and the Marketing Implementation Project move forward. Be careful not to dilute the Byway's "brand" of being in "the Berkshire foothills" while also promoting its links to the other byways.
When incorporating Jacob's Ladder Trail Scenic Byway into other maps, be sure not to overlook the hand-drawn, "bird's-eye view" maps that depict the Berkshires area and Lee, put out by Resort Maps Franchise, Inc. (see ResortMaps.com), free to the public and found in nearly every store or attraction.
Design and install information gazebos along the Byway (Recommendation #14 from the <i>2004 Tourism Marketing Strategy</i>). While this project will fit well into a future National Scenic Byways Program grant application, this should wait until significant progress has been made on the wayfinding and interpretive signage programs so that recommendations, designs, and improvements in those projects can be incorporated and integrated with the gazebos. In fact, it would be useful to have the wayfinding plan identify precise locations for the gazebos, preferred construction designs, and visitor information signs to alert travelers to the gazebos (see page 41 of <i>Tourism Marketing Strategy</i>).
Work with tourist-oriented local businesses to encourage them to provide public restrooms where lacking. The regional planning agencies could also work with towns, businesses and business associations to develop optimum plans for restrooms, parking, seating, and trash facilities.
Certain marketing products and visitor guides would make excellent new products if updated and redesigned. These include the Bicycle and Car Touring Guidebook, the Off-Road Bicycle and Multi-Use Trail Maps, and the educational video, which could be converted to DVD and divided into "spots" to be used for various purposes.
Improve awareness, information, access and perceptions about sites along the Byway that are currently underused. For example, the Keystone Arch Bridges are a fantastic resource, but they are hard to access for the average traveler. The Chester Theater is a wonderful venue, but the shows are small, have short runs, and are not widely known. The Huntington Village Green is a beautiful site and could be enhanced for sitting, music playing, picnicking, and relaxing. Chester Village is also a very inviting environment but needs more benches and green spaces (planters, street trees) to encourage people to stop. Although a number of improvements have been made, the Chester Railroad Depot and Museum lacks visibility.