

NEWS RELEASE

Trail Blazing Travel Destinations Special Events Are Key to Driving Room Nights

WINSTON-SALEM, N.C., Sept. 28, 2017 — Travel destinations that create and market a themed trail cite greater visitations and improved economic impact.

The Texas Historical Commission's study reported the Texas Heritage Trails program saw a 2 percent increase in revenue and a 13.9 percent increase in visitation. In Kent County, Mich., home to Grand Rapids' Beer City Ale Trail, 42,000 beer tourists with over 13,000 of that number from outside the state are responsible for driving a \$12 million dollar economic impact each year.

Tourism expert and destination marketer Lynn Fuhler, a principal of Flying Compass, strongly endorses the development of theme trails. Selecting popular but unique themes or, alternately, those assets in abundance in a city or region assures the spotlight shines brightly on a destination.

“A true trail experience is unguided, multidimensional and goes beyond a list of places,” advises Fuhler. “It shares a story, creates a connection and engages the visitor by weaving in related activities. For instance, a wine trail could incorporate an art exhibit on wine labels, a stop at a local wine shop devoted to local wines or include a list of restaurants serving wine from local vineyards.”

Recreation trails are typically used by residents while hiking and nature trails draw visitors and locals. Themed trails are geared towards visitors and showcase topics such as arts, architecture, crafts – pottery and quilts, craft beer, culture, gardens, history and heritage, moonshine, scenic beauty, shopping, vineyards and wine, among others.

As the principal of Flying Compass and noted tourism author, Lynn can talk about:

- Why breweries and wineries are lining up to participate in craft beer and wine trails.
- The types of things visitors will discover when traveling down theme trails.
- What visitors should include in every vacation or weekend getaway.
- Understanding the economic impact of tourism.
- The importance of delivering theme trails in brochure format and on electronic devices.

Credentials: Lynn Fuhler, the former tourism director of Clearwater Beach, FL, is co-founder and a principal of Flying Compass. A consultant, speaker and internationally known author of *Secrets to Successful Events: How to Organize, Promote and Manage Exceptional Events and Festivals*, she is the former chairman of the largest free jazz festival in the Southeast. A native of Illinois, Lynn holds a travel and tourism degree from St. Louis University's Parks College.

Flying Compass is a tourism marketing firm serving destination management organizations and the travel industry.

Availability: Nationwide by arrangement and via telephone and Skype

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