

New CD a Boon to Nation's Byways



NYSG's Dave White, far right, facilitated three roundtable sessions that produced the ideas and inspiration for the financial sustainability CD. Photo taken on Alexandria Bay courtesy of Kara Dunn

National Scenic Byways parallel New York's Great Lakes-St. Lawrence and Lake Champlain-Hudson River shorelines, the Great Lakes Seaway Trail and the Lakes-to-Locks Passage. The coastal economies along the Great Lakes Seaway Trail and Lakes-to-Locks Passage byways rely heavily on water-based recreation, tourism and small businesses. Promotion of the byways falls to two small non-profit organizations that face the question of how to secure sustainable funding. New York Sea Grant's Great Lakes Program and Seaway Trail, Inc. partnered to answer that question not only for New York's byway organizations, but for the non-profits nationwide that are developing and promoting the national collection of America's Byways.

The answer comes in the form of the new "Driving Financial Sustainability for America's Byways Organizations" CD. NYSG's **David G. White** facilitated three roundtable discussions organized by Seaway Trail, Inc. Executive Director **Teresa Mitchell**. The sessions gathered byway representatives from across the U.S. They met in Buffalo, Rochester and Alexandria Bay - all along New York's Great Lakes Seaway Trail shoreline. Those sessions produced the information, ideas and inspiration for developing "real-world" case profiles for the CD, designed by NYSG's **Molly Thompson**.

Mitchell and White debuted the CD at the 2005 National Scenic Byway Conference in Cleveland, Ohio.

The profiles on the CD are categorized by corporations and businesses, events, foundations, government and academic institutions, individuals, and products and services. The stories

include successful publication advertising sales, an antique car road rally event, and Rural Philanthropy Day events that match regional organizations with representatives from foundations and other funders. The CD also includes measurement and tracking program models, a project advisors directory, and a resources list with more than 2,200 links.

Janet Kennedy, executive director of the Lakes-to-Locks Passage byway organization, says, "This CD has provided a terrific resource that we have already begun to utilize with our Byway's non-profits to address the financial needs for organizational capacity and service to the byway communities."

White says, "This project was an excellent way to help byway organizations across the country understand how they can broaden their potential for financially sustaining themselves, and it showcased the successes that New York's Seaway Trail, Inc. has built over its 26 years as a byway leader."

Seaway Trail, Inc. Executive Director Teresa Mitchell notes that the CD "is not only valuable to the non-profit organizations promoting America's Byways, but can be used by any type of non-profit." Seaway Trail, Inc. received a Federal Highway Administration grant for this project. The CD is accessible online at www.seawaytrail.com.

— **Kara Dunn**

